



CABINET

Date: Wednesday, 9 July 2025

Time: 2.00pm,

Location: Council Chamber

Contact: Lisa Jerome (01438) 242203

committees@stevenage.gov.uk

Members: Councillors: R Henry (Chair), J Thomas (Vice-Chair), M Arceno, R Broom, C DeFreitas, J Hollywell, T Plater, L Rossati, S Speller and N Williams

AGENDA

PART 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES - CABINET 4 JUNE 2025

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4 June 2025 for signature by the Chair.

Page Nos. 5 - 8

3. MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND SELECT COMMITTEES

To note the following minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny and Select Committees:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 10 June 2025

Page Nos. 9 - 14

4. OUTTURN Q4 MONITORING REPORT FOR GENERAL FUND, HRA AND CAPITAL

To update Members on the 2024/25 outturn positions for the General Fund (GF), Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Capital, and the Council's Subsidiary Companies and to seek approval for changes to 2025/26 working revenue budgets.

Page Nos. 15 - 58

5. HOUSING HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

To consider the implications of and the Council's approach to meeting new legal and regulatory requirements in respect of housing health and safety hazards.

Page Nos. 59 - 102

6. Q4 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE 2024/25 AND ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25 AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SUITE 2025/26

To consider a report providing a comprehensive overview of the Council's performance at the end of the 2024/25 financial year and setting out the proposed direction for the year ahead.

Page Nos. 103 - 196

7. FLAT BLOCK RECYCLING IMPROVEMENTS

To consider a report requesting authority to spend some of the allocated £1.078m funding for 2025/6 to deliver the new and enhanced initiatives, aimed at achieving higher rates of recycling in Stevenage.

Page Nos. 197 - 218

8. HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL RETROFIT STRATEGY

To seek endorsement for, the adoption of the Local Area Retrofit Accelerator Strategy (LARA), led by the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership, of which the Council is a member.

Page Nos. 219 - 286

9. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

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

10. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

To consider the following motions –

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

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

11. PART II MINUTES - CABINET - 4 JUNE 2025

To approve as a correct record the Part II section of the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4 June 2025.

Pages 287 - 290

12. WRITE OFFS OVER £10K

To consider writing off Council Tax debt deemed irrecoverable which is properly due to the Council and is more than £10,000.

Pages 291 – 294

13. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

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

NOTE: Links to Part 1 Background Documents are shown on the last page of the individual report, where this is not the case they may be viewed by using the following link to agendas for Executive meetings and then opening the agenda for Wednesday, 9 July 2025 – <http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/have-your-say/council-meetings/161153/>

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 4 June 2025

Time: 2.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Richard Henry (Chair), Myla Arceno, Rob Broom, Coleen De Freitas, Jackie Hollywell, Tom Plater, Loraine Rossati, Simon Speller and Nigel Williams

Start / End Time: Start Time: 2.00pm
End Time: 3.00pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor Jeannette Thomas.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES - CABINET 12 MARCH 2025

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 12 March 2025 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

3 MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND SELECT COMMITTEES

Cabinet received an update on recent meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny and Select Committee meetings. This included:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Garage Asset Management, Community Infrastructure Levy – Draft Charging Schedule, Revised Supplementary Planning Documents, High Street Rental Auctions and Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution;
- Environment and Economy Select Committee – the provision of services to flat blocks, recycling bring-banks, waste and recycling and ways to improve recycling rates;
- Community Select Committee – Crime and Disorder, housing allocations, damp and mould and tenant enforcement, community centres and an update on resident engagement.

The Leader thanked the outgoing Chairs of the three Scrutiny Committees for their work and wished the three incoming Chairs well for the upcoming year.

Officers agreed to ensure that the attendance of Cabinet Portfolio Holders at any Scrutiny Committee be recorded in the minutes of relevant meetings.

Officers advised that a written response would be sent to all Cabinet Members relating to a question raised by Councillor Williams regarding the High Street Rental Auctions item.

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

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 21 January, 18 February and 18 March 2025;
Environment and Economy Select Committee – 27 February, 11 March and 20 March 2025; and
Community Select Committee – 26 March and 8 April 2025.

4 **GREEN SPACES STRATEGY AND TREE AND WOODLAND STRATEGY**

Cabinet received a report regarding the draft Green Spaces Strategy and Tree & Woodland Strategy which had been developed, following consultation with colleagues and residents, to support future delivery of further improvements over the next ten years in order to ensure that these assets continued to meet the needs of people and wildlife in the future.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment advised Members that the strategies were aligned with the corporate priorities and local policy documents.

The Leader referred to the work undertaken by the outgoing Portfolio Holder for this area who had led the development of the strategies over the last two years, working with community groups, partners and officers.

Members agreed that the many green spaces across the Town were a huge asset for the Town and that these strategies would support the Council's aims and ambitions to continue to improve and enhance these green spaces to provide a great environment for people to live, work and play.

Members were also pleased to note that compared to the surrounding areas, all residents could access green spaces including 20 hectare woods with a short distance of their homes. The new Country Park planned for the north of the town was also a much welcomed new asset to Stevenage.

Members thanked Officers for their hard work and due diligence in producing the Strategies.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Green Spaces Strategy and Tree & Woodland Strategy 2025 – 2035 be approved.

5 **PLANNING POLICY UPDATE INCLUDING REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME AND REVISED STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Cabinet received a report which provided an update to changes in National Planning Policy and Guidance announced by Government and the implications for plan making in Stevenage.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment advised that an update on the Stevenage Borough Local Plan – Review and Partial Update was also provided, with the aim to submit the Plan to the Secretary of State in June 2025

Officers advised that the report sought Members' approval to adopt a revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) and Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which consisted of minor updates affecting the Council's approach to both plan making and how the Council consults on planning applications concerning land in the Council's ownership.

It was noted that Members of the Planning and Development Committee had been consulted with no comments being made.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The revised Local Development Scheme be approved;
2. The revised Statement of Community Involvement be approved;
3. That the comments of the Planning & Development Committee on the content of the Cabinet Report be noted.

6 **TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES 2024/25**

Cabinet received a report highlighting the Council's performance against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) for 2024/25, when compared to the results from 2023/24.

Members noted that overall, the performance across the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, demonstrated a broadly positive trajectory, with several key areas showing marked improvement and others maintaining consistently high standards. It was noted that while a small number of indicators reflected minor reductions, these were not considered significant and were being actively addressed as required.

Members agreed the importance of remaining committed to building on these improvements in the coming year and to continue to deliver against the Regulator for Social Housing's Performance Improvement Plan beginning the journey towards securing a C1 grade.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing welcomed the addition of Councillor Nigel Williams to the Cabinet as Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Tenant Involvement who would contribute to ensuring meaningful engagement with Council tenants going forward.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The results of both the TSM Management Data and the Tenant Perception Surveys for 2024/25 and the improvement actions being undertaken to further improve tenant satisfaction levels be noted;
2. The publication of the TSM Management Measures on the Council's website be approved.

7 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

There was no urgent Part I Business.

8 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

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.

9 **PART II MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 12 MARCH 2025**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the Cabinet held on 12 March 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

10 **PIONEERING YOUNG STEM FUTURES**

The Executive considered a Part II report in respect of the provision of Pioneering Young STEM Futures.

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

11 **PROJECT DELIVERY AND PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR APPOINTMENT: THE OVAL**

The Executive considered a Part II report in respect of the provision of Project Delivery and Principal Contractor Appointment: The Oval.

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

12 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 10 June 2025

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: Jim Brown (Chair), Andy McGuinness (Vice-Chair), Stephen Booth, Robert Boyle, Kamal Choudhury, Peter Clark, Alistair Gordon, Lynda Guy and Ellie Plater

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.00pm
End Time: 7.00pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sandra Barr, Phil Bibby, Leanne Brady and Mason Humberstone.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18 March 2025 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

It was **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as approved at the Annual Council meeting held on 22 May 2025, be noted.

4 PART I DECISIONS OF THE CABINET

The Committee considered the following Part I Decisions of the Cabinet taken on 4 June 2025.

1. MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND SELECT COMMITTEES

The Strategic Director advised that the Select Committee had provided feedback on the scrutiny work, and no questions were raised by Cabinet in response.

2. GREEN SPACES STRATEGY AND TREE AND WOODLAND STRATEGY

The Assistant Director for Stevenage Direct Services reported that both the Green Spaces Strategy and the Tree and Woodland Strategy had been in development for

some time and had involved consultation with stakeholders and Council officers and specific policy development work with the Environment & Economy Select Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Members were informed that Cabinet members discussed the importance of green spaces in the town and agreed that the strategies were well-aligned with the Council's long term ambitions to enhance and protect these areas over the next ten years. Members welcomed the inclusion of the Forster Country Park, recognising it as a significant asset for Stevenage. The recommendations were approved.

Committee members also highlighted the town-wide importance of green spaces, with reference to the value of Fairlands Valley Park for residents of all age groups.

A question was raised about the funding available for implementing, and whether certain actions could be accelerated. In response, the Environmental Policy and Development Manager confirmed that an additional column had been added to the action plan to indicate where additional resources would be required. It was acknowledged that while full delivery of all actions over the ten-year period could not be guaranteed, the majority were considered achievable within current resources, particularly with the continuation of external funding streams.

3. PLANNING POLICY UPDATE INCLUDING REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME AND REVISED STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Assistant Director for Planning and Regulatory Services advised that Cabinet had been presented with a report containing details of updates to the Local Development Scheme and revisions to the Statement of Community Involvement.

A question was raised regarding how the report related to Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Officers clarified that the Local Development Scheme was a program management document and did not include policy recommendations.

A further question was raised regarding how existing Council strategies, such as the cycling strategy, would be incorporated into strategic planning documents. Officers confirmed that relevant strategies would be reflected in the Local Plan through land-use planning.

A question was raised in reference to paragraph 3.21 of the report regarding the inclusion of Broxbourne in the joint strategic plan, given the lack of a shared boundary. Officers explained that the plan was at a conceptual stage, with the intention to explore collaboration between multiple authorities on strategic growth proposals. Officers commented that it was not unusual for local authorities to collaborate on evidence gathering across a wider area.

Members noted the strong North-South dynamics in the area and speculated on how these patterns might influence future planning. Officers emphasised the importance

of reflecting real-world patterns in plan making, which supported the need for ongoing collaboration with neighbouring authorities.

At this juncture, the Assistant Director for Planning and Regulatory Services explained that the government was proposing changes to strategic planning through the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, which could result in secondary legislation. Officers confirmed that further reports would be brought to the committee as these proposals developed.

4. TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES 2024 / 25

The Assistant Director for Housing and Neighbourhoods informed the Committee that the report to Cabinet had outlined the Tenant Satisfaction Measures for 2024/25, which compared favourably to the results of 2023/24. Cabinet members were asked to note the contents and progress detailed in the report, along with the services improvements made by the Housing Department.

It was noted that Cabinet were asked to approve the publication of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures in accordance with the requirements set out by the Regulator of Social Housing.

In response to a member's question regarding the scoring metrics included in the report, officers confirmed that C1 represented the highest available grade.

A further question was raised regarding the range of metrics included in the report. Officers clarified that all metrics were prescribed by the Regulator of Social Housing, ensuring consistency and comparability across the sector.

5 WORK PROGRAMME 2025 - 26

The Chair introduced the Scrutiny Officer who provided an overview of the items on the agenda, noting that several fell within the Budget and Policy Framework items which followed the usual practice to scrutinise the Cabinet executive decisions within the call-in period for Cabinet decisions.

Officers also highlighted examples of previous scrutiny work undertaken by the committee, including:

- A review of the Customer Service Centre relocation, focusing on visitor usage and enquiry handling.
- An examination of website analytics, including user engagement with popular pages and feedback on content and design.
- A session on cybersecurity, covering IT services and threats to local government systems.

It was noted that the Committee would also take part in pre-scrutiny policy development, including the Council Tax Support Scheme, which was being redrafted due to Universal Credit changes. The originally proposed date for this item would be

revised, with a meeting expected in July or August 2025.

The Chair encouraged members to propose scrutiny topics, particularly those of a corporate-wide nature, not already within the remit of other select committees such as Environment & Economy or Community Select.

It was noted that an item on the development of the Your-Say Corporate Complaints System and consideration of the Committee's Action Tracker would be brought to future meeting of the Committee.

At this juncture, Members raised a question regarding the Mod.gov app and its use for accessing Overview and Scrutiny reports. The issue was noted, and officers stated that they would look into it and report back to Members.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2025/26, as set out in the agenda, be noted.

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

There was no Urgent Part 1 Decisions authorised by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7 URGENT PART I BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

8 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.

9 PART II MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18 March 2025 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

10 **PART II DECISIONS OF THE CABINET**

5. PIONEERING YOUNG STEM FUTURES

The Corporate Policy and Performance Manager updated the Committee on the Pioneering Young STEM futures proposal. The Committee asked a number of questions regarding this item, which were answered by the Corporate Policy and Performance Manager.

**6. PROJECT DELIVERY AND PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR APPOINTMENT:
THE OVAL**

The Housing Development Delivery Manager updated the Committee on the Project Delivery and Principal Contractor Appointed for The Oval Development. The Committee asked a number of questions regarding this item, which were answered by the Housing Delivery Manager.

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

The Committee noted that there had been no Urgent Part II Decisions authorised by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

12 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR

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Meeting: CABINET

Agenda Item: 4

Portfolio Area: Resources and Transformation



Date: 09 July 2025

OUTTURN Q4 MONITORING REPORT FOR GENERAL FUND, HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT, CAPITAL, AND GROUP COMPANIES.

KEY DECISION

Author – Veronika Mendy / Keith Reynoldson/Rhona Bellis

Lead Officer – Atif Iqbal

Contact Officer – Veronika Mendy / Keith Reynoldson/Rhona Bellis

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Members on the 2024/25 outturn positions for the General Fund (GF), Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Capital, and the Council's Subsidiary Companies and to seek approval for changes to 2025/26 working revenue budgets. The revenue spends included within this report is still subject to completion and audit of the 2024/25 statement of accounts.
- 1.2 To update Members on the Council's reserves and balances available to support revenue expenditure and/or the financial resilience of the Council.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 General Fund

- 2.1.1 That the 2024/25 actual General Fund net expenditure of £11.792 million be noted, subject to the 2024/25 audit of the Statement of Accounts.
- 2.1.2 That the 2024/25 actual core resources (government grants, business rates and council tax) of £12.994 million be noted, subject to the 2024/25 audit of the Statement of Accounts (paragraph 4.4).
- 2.1.3 That carry forward/spend requests totalling £262,070 be approved for the General Fund (paragraph 4.3).
- 2.1.4 That the Transfer to reserves of £1.450 million be approved for the General Fund (paragraph 4.7.1), subject to the 2024/25 audit of the Statement of Accounts.

- 2.1.5 That Members note the transfer from General Fund reserves to allocated reserves in 2024/25 of £150,000 as detailed in paragraph 4.2.1 (III) and included in the overall additional transfer to reserves as set out in para. 2.1.4.
- 2.1.6 That the transfer from reserves in 2025/26 from the Transformation reserves (£9,390 para.4.6.8 refers). Town Square reserves (£104,560 para 4.6.1 refers) and transfer to the Elections reserves (£60,000 para 4.6.7 refers) in 2025/26 be approved.
- 2.1.7 That Members approve the changes to the 2025/26 as set out in the table in paragraph 4.6.

2.2 Housing Revenue Account

- 2.2.1 That the 2024/25 in year HRA surplus of £341,243 be noted, subject to the audit of the Statement of Accounts.
- 2.2.2 That a carry forward request for fencing work of £120,000 (paragraph 4.11.1) is approved.

2.3 Capital Programme

- 2.3.1 That the General Fund capital budget re-phasing of £8 million from 2024/25 to future years be approved.
- 2.3.2 That the Housing Revenue Account capital budget re-phasing of £0.4 million from 2025/26 to 2024/25 be approved.
- 2.3.3 That the virements detailed on paragraph 4.17 be noted.

2.4 Council's Subsidiary Companies

- 2.4.1 That Members note the 2024/25 outturn position for the Council's subsidiary companies as set out in paragraphs 4.20 to 4.25.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1.1 The General Fund 2024/25 working revenue budget of £12.219 million was approved by Members at the March 2025 Cabinet, as part of the Quarter 3 monitoring report.
- 3.1.2 The HRA working revenue budget surplus of £206,920 was approved by Members at the March 2025 Cabinet, as part of the Quarter 3 monitoring report.

- 3.1.3 The Accounts and Audit Regulations set out the requirements for financial management, the preparation of annual accounts, and audit procedures. Under the amended regulations, there is no longer a requirement for Member approval of the Statement of Accounts prior to the completion of the external audit. Instead, only the Responsible Financial Officer is required to certify the presentation of the unaudited annual accounts before they are submitted for external audit.
- 3.1.4 Each financial year Stevenage Borough Council is required to produce and publish a draft set of accounts, allow public inspection of the draft accounts, have the draft accounts audited and to subsequently publish the final audited set of accounts. The deadlines set under regulation for the accounts prepared for the 2024/25 financial year are:
- publish draft set of accounts one day prior to the start of public inspection (30 June 2025).
 - public inspection to start no later than 1 July 2025 for a period of 30 working days.
 - completion of audit and publication of audited accounts by 27 February 2026.
- 3.1.5 The performance of subsidiary companies and relevant joint ventures has been reported to members through the individual governance arrangements in place for each entity. These have now been consolidated and reported from paragraph 4.21 onwards. An overview of the performance of these entities reported through their governance arrangements, including any implications for the Council will be included in future reports to improve transparency and oversight.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

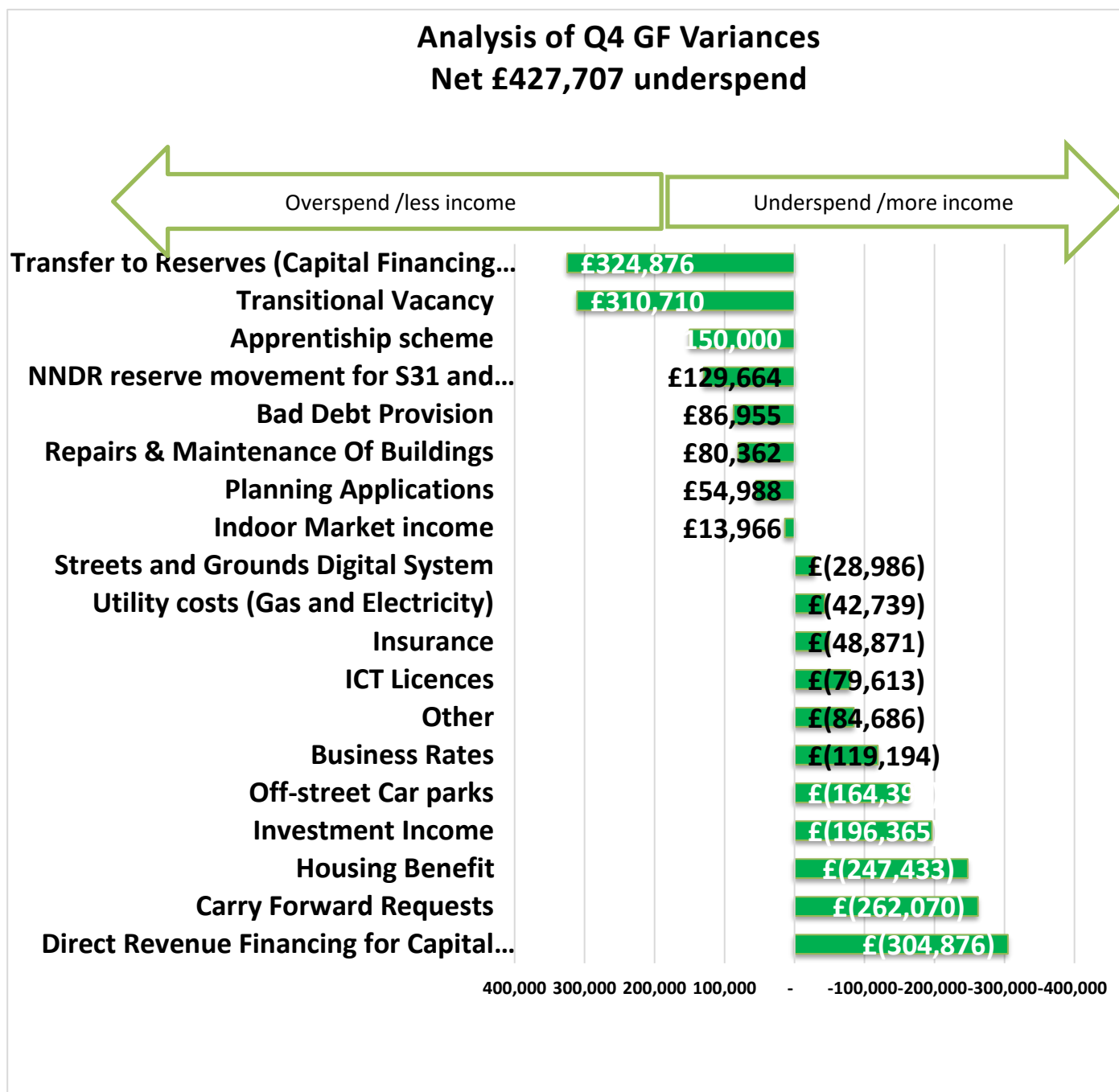
4.1 General Fund 2024/25 outturn

- 4.1.1. The 2024/25 actual Services Net Expenditure on the General Fund was £11.792 million, compared to a budget of £12.219 million. The in-year underspend (before carry forward requests) was £427K.
- 4.1.2. A high-level summary of the over and underspends split by the cost categories are shown in the table below.

| | Overspends | Underspend | Total |
|---|------------|--------------|------------|
| Employees: | | | |
| Transitional Vacancy | £310,710 | | £310,710 |
| Premises: | | | |
| Utility costs (Gas and Electricity) | | (£42,739) | (£42,739) |
| Repairs & Maintenance Of Buildings | £80,362 | | £80,362 |
| Business Rates | | (£119,194) | (£119,194) |
| Supplies & Services: | | | |
| ICT Licences | | (£79,613) | (£79,613) |
| Bad Debt Provision | £86,955 | | £86,955 |
| Insurance | | (£48,871) | (£48,871) |
| Housing Benefit | | (£247,433) | (£247,433) |
| Streets and Grounds Digital System | | (£28,986) | (£28,986) |
| Funding Capital: | | | |
| Direct Revenue Financing for Capital works | | (£274,603) | (£274,603) |
| Transfer to Reserves (Capital Financing not used in year) | £294,603 | | £294,603 |
| Income: | | | |
| Investment Income | | (£196,365) | (£196,365) |
| Off-street Car parks | | (£164,395) | (£164,395) |
| Indoor Market income | £13,966 | | £13,966 |
| Planning Applications | £54,988 | | £54,988 |
| Other | | (£84,686) | (£84,686) |
| Reserves: | | | |
| Apprentiship scheme | £150,000 | | £150,000 |
| S31 and Levy on NNDR | £129,664 | | £129,664 |
| Carry Forwards: | | | |
| Carry Forward Requests | | (£262,070) | (£262,070) |
| | | | |
| | £1,121,248 | (£1,548,955) | (£427,707) |

4.1.3. In addition, a few carry forward request totalling £262,070 have been received from officers, these requests are detailed in section 4.3.

4.2. Analysis of variances



4.2.1. The primary reasons for the variances are detailed below:

- I. **Transitional Vacancy £311K Overspend** – 4.5% saving on staffing costs is assumed across most of the service pay budgets, reflecting expected staff turnover and natural vacancy periods. The table below provides a breakdown by business unit where the transitional vacancy target was not achieved. While identified as a risk

of not being achieved during Quarter three, the overspend was not highlighted at the time, in anticipation that other underspends would offset this pressure. One of the reasons for not achieving the target includes the use of agency staff to cover vacancies to maintain operational services and a lower turnover of staff in services.

| Transitional Vacancies by Business Units | Total |
|--|-----------------|
| Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology | £19,160 |
| Corporate Services and Transformation | £13,500 |
| Finance and Estates | £20,290 |
| Housing and Neighbourhoods | £89,630 |
| Planning and Regulatory | £73,040 |
| Stevenage Direct services | £95,090 |
| Grand Total | £310,710 |

- II. **Transfer to Reserves (Capital Financing) £295K** – refers to leisure provision and garages not used 2024/25, to be used in 2025/26 (para. XIX refers).
- III. **Apprenticeship Scheme £150K Transfer to Reserve** – An Apprentice scheme and funding mechanism were approved at Full Council in February 2025 as part of the Final General Fund and Council Tax Setting 2025/26. The CFO recommended that a total of £150,000 of year end underspends are transferred to a ring-fenced reserve to part fund the scheme.
- IV. **S31 and Levy on NNDR £130K** – Paragraphs 4.4.2-4.4.3 set out the changes to NNDR Levy and Section 31 Grant in 2024/25. If there are gains above the £200K retained in the General Fund they are transferred to the NNDR reserve.
- V. **Bad Debt Provision £87K Increase** – in accordance with the Council's financial regulations, the bad debt provision is calculated based on both the value and the age of the outstanding debt. The reported overspend relates to a number of service areas which included garages and tenancy deposits. As debt ages the % provision of debt required increases. Bad debt has decreased for Housing Benefit overpayments as the arrears are reducing.

| Service Area | Total |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| | £ |
| Housing Benefits | (£109,255) |
| Garages | £81,679 |
| Commercial Property | £29,265 |
| Comm Prop-Town Square | £54,922 |
| Comm Prop-The Plaza | £21,289 |
| Miscellaneous | £9,055 |
| Grand Total | £86,955 |

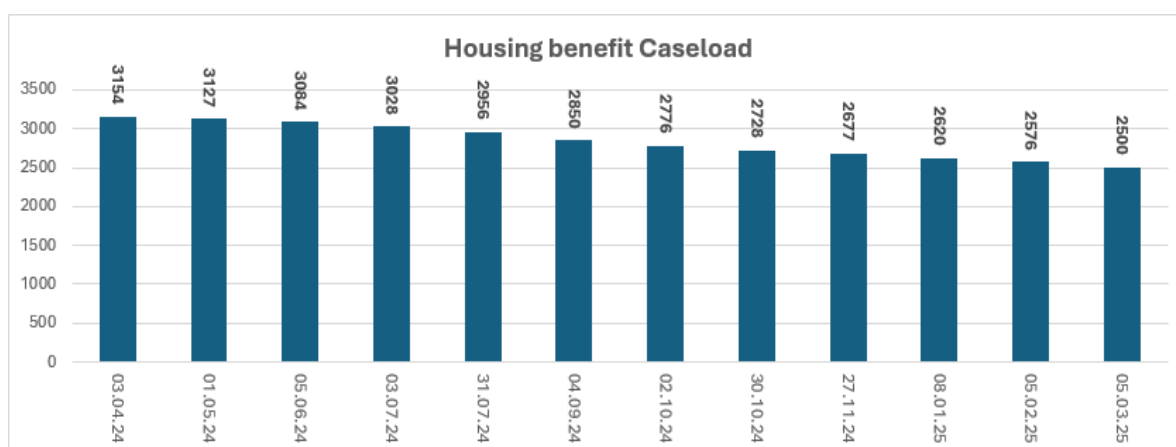
- VI. Repairs and Maintenance of Buildings £80K Overspend** – this has been driven by a combination of factors, including the ongoing demands of an ageing property portfolio and increased costs of materials. Circa £51K of additional expenditure relates to corporate buildings and further £29K was incurred on commercial properties. However, the pressure from commercial repairs was offset by higher rental income. The repairs and maintenance budget does not receive an automatic annual uplift and fluctuates year on year depending on reactive works required. Compared to 2023/24, there has been an overall increase in spend of approximately £50K (12%). The level of provision within this budget will be reviewed as part of the budget setting process to ensure it remains appropriate.
- VII. Planning Applications £55K Reduced Income** – during the 2024/25 financial year, the number of planning applications continued to decline compared to previous years, with notable reduction in both major and household application categories. According to national government statistics, the volume of applications received across England has decreased by 7% since 2023. This reduction in demand has also impacted Stevenage income levels which is resulting in reported £55K reduced income. However, new planning application fees are scheduled to take effect in 2025/26. These changes are expected to help mitigate income fluctuations and better support the full cost recovery of the service going forward.
- VIII. Indoor Market Income £14K Reduced Income** – There have been continuing pressures within the Indoor Market income arising from the departure of several larger stallholders increasing void rates, which stood at 46.21% as of March 2025. The forthcoming relocation of Indoor Market is intended to provide an improved trading environment. This move is designed to support local enterprise, reduce void rates, and enhance the long-term financial sustainability. The relocation, originally budgeted for April 2025, is now planned in October - November 2025. The existing market space will be leased to North Hertfordshire College (NHC), for a Construction Trades and Motor Vehicle skills delivery centre. This initiative supports Council's commitment to providing high level educational facilities that develop the local workforce of the future. The revised timetable will reduce the savings assumed in 2025/26 and will be updated as part of the 1st quarter budget monitoring update.
- IX. Streets and Grounds Digital System £29K Underspend** – the underspend is in relation to the Streets and Grounds digital system Alloy. The funding originally allocated within the 2024/25 budget has not been utilised due supplier availability issues. A request has been made to carry this funding forward into the 2025/26 financial year (section 4.3) to support the successful rollout of the system.

- X. Utility Costs £43K Underspend** – the reported underspend relates to savings on electricity (£29K) and gas (£14K). These savings are a combination of lower actual energy prices and lower usage during 2024/25. However, while the 2025/26 budget was based on 2024/25 usage and included an increase in costs of £67K, recent market analysis indicates a potential rise in energy prices - an additional cost pressure of £50K to the General Fund budget in 2025/26 - £42K for electricity and £8K for gas (para. 4.6.2 refers).
- XI. Insurance £49K** – the insurance budget is held corporately across all service areas, and it is a necessary safeguard in ensuring the Council can meet its legal obligations and protect public finances. While the financial impact of insurance is monitored throughout the year, the detailed position is reported at year end due to the evolving nature of the way claims histories develop. Despite the overall premium increasing to what we budgeted, the reason for the reduction was due to a lower provision being required than originally budgeted.
- XII. ICT Licences £80K Underspend** – this underspend is largely due to the timing of software implementation, with some applications scheduled for later installation than originally budgeted giving a one off in year saving.
- XIII. Other £85K Underspend** – a combination of various small underspends across the services.
- XIV. Business Rates £119K Additional Income** – this is largely due to a reduction in the number of vacant commercial properties owned by the Council. As more units have been successfully let to local businesses, the responsibility for paying business rates has transferred from the Council to the tenants.
- XV. Off-Street Car Parks £164K Additional Income** – The income exceeded forecasts. This positive variance was primarily driven by higher than anticipated usage at key locations, including Old Town car park, Railway North and Westgate. Additional contributing factors included the opening of Danesgate to non-season ticket holders in February 2025 (£9K) and Swingate car park contribution agreed with MACE (£95K). Despite budget being exceeded, the 2024/25 budget did include a £300K reduction to reflect the ongoing post-pandemic impact on car park usage, particularly due to the continued prevalence of hybrid working arrangements. For 2025/26, this impact has been reduced to £200K in anticipation of a gradual recovery in usage levels.
- XVI. Investment Income £196K Additional Income** – The interest earned for the year exceeded the forecast, due to average cash balances being higher than forecast in the last quarter of the year. This was partly driven by grant income already received and expected to be spent in 2025/26.
- XVII. Carry Forward Requests £262K** – para 4.3 refers for details.
- XVIII. Housing Benefits £247K** - The net underspend on Housing Benefit is £247K a combination of slightly lower benefit granted (-0.16%) and a higher level of subsidy claimed (+0.56%). The amount of benefit paid and claimed will also depend on whether any benefit paid is capped in terms of overpayments (40%) and benefit awarded above the Local Housing allowance. The number of claimants moving onto

universal credit (UC) is increasing and the 2025/26 benefit and subsidy budgets will be closely monitored.

| Housing Benefit | Working Budget | Actual 2024/25 | Variance | Variance to budget % |
|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Housing Benefit | £21,098,950 | £21,065,048 | (£33,902) | -0.16% |
| Housing Subsidy | (£20,433,348) | (£20,547,767) | (£114,419) | 0.56% |
| Overpayments raised | (£619,491) | (£718,603) | (£99,112) | |
| Net Cost | £46,111 | (£201,322) | (£247,433) | |

The amount of overpayments raised will be impacted by claimants moving onto UC reducing the amount raised as the Housing Benefit case load reduces (see claimants' caseload below). For note the 2023/24 and 2024/25 Housing Benefit subsidy claim audits have still to be completed and could change the amount claimed.



XIX. Direct Revenue Financing for Capital works £275K – This represents funding from the revenue budget that is used to support capital expenditure. While this initially appears as a reduction, £294,602 will be funded from reserves in 2025/26, rather than from the General Fund. As a result, the net impact is a £20K overspend, which was reported at Quarter One in 2024/25 but not added to the budget.

| Item | Amount (£000) | Description |
|---|---------------|--|
| Initial Direct Revenue Financing reduction (para. 4.2.1 (II) refers) | (275) | Reported decrease in revenue contribution to capital |
| Capital financing funded from reserves transferred to reserves in 2024/25 | 295 | Moved to 2025-26 and funded from reserves |
| Net overspend | £20 | Actual position after adjustments |

4.3. Carry Forwards

4.3.1. The carry forwards/spend requested for approval by Members is shown below and total £262K. This is broken down between carry forward/spend requests of £126K, and £136K timing delays.

| Service Area | Carry Forward/Spend Requests | £ |
|---------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Stevenage Direct Services | To fund the keys/tablets safe for entire vehicle fleet to provide the required security. | £45,000 |
| Facilities | Funding for continual AV Improvements works in committee rooms | £17,600 |
| | TOTAL Carry Forwards | £62,600 |
| Climate Change | To fund promotional activities in relation to the decarbonisation scheme | £33,000 |
| ICT | The underspend on ICT is required to fund the CRM software capital cost | £30,270 |
| | TOTAL Spend Requests | £63,270 |
| Garages | Dispensation claims not fully paid in year | £30,000 |
| Garages | Revenue contribution to fund a demolition & re-build project for the garage site | £12,000 |
| Environmental Development | Delays in implementation of new digital streets and grounds system (Alloy) | £29,000 |
| Climate Change | Support to Businesses for Climate Change initiatives | £65,200 |
| | TOTAL Timing | £136,200 |
| GRAND TOTAL | | £262,070 |

4.4. General Fund Core Resources

4.4.1. Budgeted level of Core Funding for 2024/25 (as detailed in the table below), was £12.848 million; the total amount included in the 2024/25 pre-audited accounts is £12.994 million, a surplus of £146K.

| Core Resources | 2024/25 Working Budget £ | 2024/25 Outturn £ | Variance £ |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Business Rates net of tariff | (£2,691,625) | (£2,691,625) | £0 |
| Levy payable | £776,901 | £677,545.00 | (£99,356) |
| Levy surplus redistributed | (£22,000) | (£21,574) | £426 |
| Section 31 Grant | (£2,556,087) | (£2,573,343) | (£17,256) |
| Transfer from the Collection Fund NNDR | (£838,057) | (£838,057) | (£0) |
| Council Tax SBC Precept | (£6,837,929) | (£6,837,929) | £0 |
| Transfer from the Collection Fund Council tax | (£162,404) | (£162,402) | £2 |
| Government Grants | (£517,511) | (£517,511) | £0 |
| Renewable Energy S31 Grant | £0 | (£1,518) | (£1,518) |
| Redmond Review Audit Grant | £0 | (£27,906) | (£27,906) |
| Total Core Funding Position | (£12,848,712) | (£12,994,320) | (£145,608) |

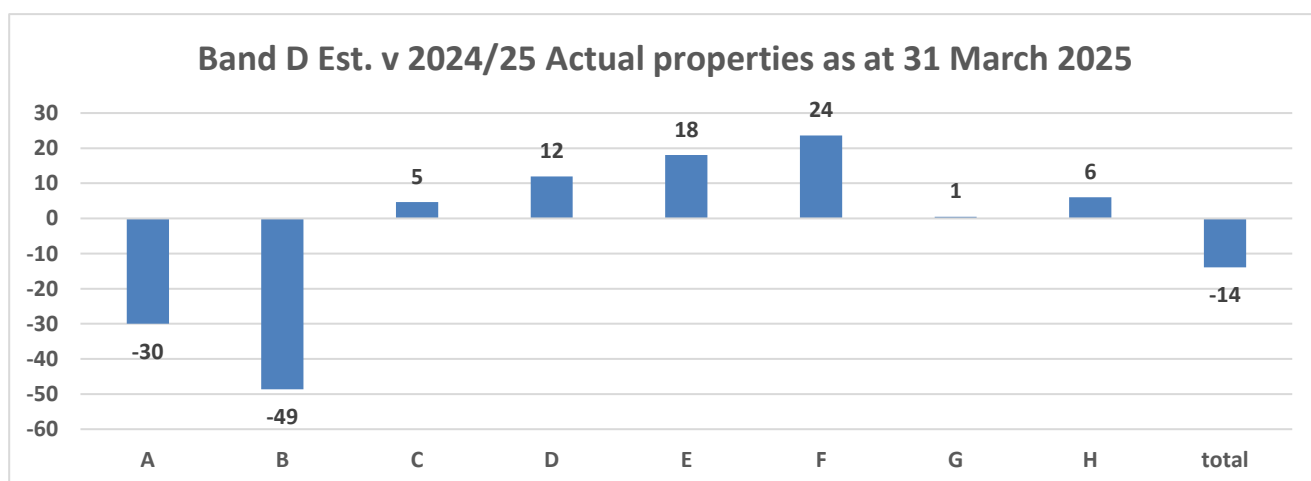
4.4.2. Business Rates credited to the General Fund do not change in year regardless of whether all the income is realised, and any changes identified as part of the 2025/26 Budget setting (NNDR 1) and actual as at 31 March 2025 will be recognised in 2025/26 and 2026/27. The only values that change are those transactions between the Government and the Council and these are:

- The Levy- Stevenage Borough Council pays a 50% levy on all applicable 'gains' above the baseline amount or the governments assessment of what SBC should retain. Members should note that the 'Needs Formula' has not been reviewed for over 10 years and the current government is proposing to revise this for the 2026/27 financial year.
- Section 31 Grants- the government pays Council for 'lost NNDR income' because of changes to the NNDR system such as freezing the small business multiplier.

4.4.3. The table below summarises the Original Budget NNDR, the changes approved in the January 2025 NNDR 1 report and the 2024/25 actual position. This shows that while the impact on the General Fund for 2024/25 was a net reduction in costs of £116,612, overall, there was a £67,026 reduction in NNDR related income and a deficit to return to the Collection Fund in 2026/27 of £183,637, which is in addition to the £124,439 reported in the January 2025 NNDR1 report. Members should note that this still represents a gain to the General Fund above the baseline amount of £1.4 million.

| | Original v Projected Reported Feb 2025 | | | included in Jan 2025 report | | Actual 2024/25 | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|---------|----------------|-----------|---------|
| | NNDR 1 24/25 £ | Projection 24/25 £ | Var to NNDR 1 £ | 24/25 | 25/26 | 24/25 | 24/25 | 26/27 |
| Net yield | (54,797,341) | (54,357,860) | 439,481 | | | (53,898,766) | | 459,094 |
| Stevenage share of yield | (21,918,936) | (21,743,144) | 175,793 | 0 | 175,793 | (21,559,506) | | 183,637 |
| Tariff | 19,227,311 | 19,227,311 | 0 | | | 19,227,311 | | |
| Share net of tariff | (2,691,626) | (2,515,833) | 175,793 | 0 | 175,793 | (2,332,195) | 0 | 183,637 |
| S31 grant payable | (2,526,046) | (2,529,981) | (3,935) | (3,935) | | (2,547,236) | (17,255) | |
| Baseline Funding Level | (2,812,960) | (2,812,960) | 0 | | | (2,812,960) | | |
| Gains before levy applied | (2,404,712) | (2,232,854) | | | | (2,092,578) | | |
| Gains applicable for levy | (1,622,536) | (1,527,698) | | 0 | | (1,355,089) | | |
| Levy due 50% | 811,268 | 763,849 | (47,419) | (47,419) | | 664,492 | (99,357) | |
| | | | 0 | 0 | | 0 | | |
| Retained Business Rates | (4,406,404) | (4,281,966) | 124,439 | (51,354) | 175,793 | (4,214,940) | (116,612) | 183,637 |
| Variance | | | | (51,354) | 175,793 | | (116,612) | 183,637 |
| | | | | | 124,439 | | | 67,026 |

- 4.4.4. Council Tax income included in the General Fund is also based on the estimated amount and not the year position, (after taking bad debt provision into account). There was 2024/25 council tax surplus returned to the General Fund of £162,402, which related predominately related 2023/24. At the 31 March 2025 there were 14 equivalent Band D properties less in the taxbase (after discounts) than the 2024/25 estimate, which equates to a loss of £3,261 in council tax.



- 4.4.5. When the 2025/26 budget was approved in February 2025 an assessment was made of the projected 2024/25 council tax collection fund year end deficit. This assumed a lower number of net properties than was realised, (see also paragraph 4.4.6) and a higher provision for bad debt than was required at the year end.

- 4.4.6. The year end loss on the collection fund for 2024/25 was only £8,364 and not the £168,694 estimated and to be returned to the collection fund in 2025/26. This means there will be a surplus return to the General Fund in 2026/27 of £160,330. A summary of the collection fund impacts for NNDR and council tax on future budgets is summarised in the table below.

| Core Resources- Collection Fund Movements | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | 2026/27 NEW |
|--|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| NNDR Collection Fund prior years | (£838,057) | £1,056,964 | £0 |
| NNDR Collection Fund 2024/25 | | £175,793 | £183,637 |
| Council Tax Collection Fund prior years | (£162,402) | £27,938 | |
| Council Tax Collection Fund 2024/25 | | £168,694 | (£160,330) |
| Total Core Funding Position | (£1,000,459) | £1,429,389 | £23,307 |

- 4.4.7. The amounts identified may seem significant, however particularly business rates can fluctuate due to rating changes and other associated discounts. The Council raised £53.9 million business rates and £62.9 million of council tax bills. It should be noted that the Stevenage's share of the retained business rates (and S31 payments) was 7.5%.
- 4.4.8. In addition to council tax and NNDR, the Council's core resources also include non-ringfenced grants and there was an additional £28,998 than included in the working budget, which mainly related to the audit grant which was published after the Council's General Fund was revised.

4.5. 2024/25 General Fund Budget

- 4.5.1. The outturn position for the General Fund budget is summarised in the table below and this provides some additional resilience to the Council as there was a reduction in the projected drawdown on balances of £573K, before the 2025/26 impact on the budget for carry forwards (£262K). This will be incorporated in the next General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) update.

| General Fund Outturn Position | 2024/25 Budget | 2024/25 Outturn | Variance |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Services Net Expenditure | £12,219,430 | £11,791,723 | (£427,707) |
| Core Resources (including TIG) | (£12,848,712) | (£12,994,320) | (£145,608) |
| General Fund Outturn Position | (£629,282) | (£1,202,597) | (£573,315) |
| Balance Brought Forward | (£5,303,224) | (£5,303,224) | £0 |
| Use of balances | (£629,282) | (£1,202,597) | (£573,315) |
| Balance Carried Forward | (£5,932,506) | (£6,505,821) | (£573,315) |

4.6. Impact on 2025/26 General Fund Budget

Recommended changes to the 2025/26 budget

- 4.6.1. **Town Square Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) £105K**– the Council is required by law to set aside money each year to repay borrowing undertaken to fund capital projects. The Council looked at MRP payments and asset life assumptions

in 2018/19. As a result, MRP payments were rephased. The 2025/26 payment due was omitted from the budget. The cost is funded from the Town Square reserves requiring a corresponding contribution from reserves is required to fund it.

- 4.6.2. **Utilities £50K** – as referenced in section 4.2.1 based on the latest forecasts, the utility costs are expected to exceed the original budget by £50K. This anticipated increase reflects the ongoing volatility in the energy market and will need to be closely monitored throughout the year.
- 4.6.3. **Asylum Dispersal Grant £472K** – the Home Office has notified the Council on 31 March 2025 of the additional grant funding for 2025/26. This grant provides funding to support local authorities in accommodating asylum seekers. The grant and an associated expenditure budget have now been incorporated into the 2025/26 budget.
- 4.6.4. **Housing Benefit Administration Subsidy (HBAS) Grant £15K** – The final grant funding allocations were confirmed by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in late March 2025 resulting in an additional £14,626 in HBAS funding for 2025/26. This grant provides a contribution towards the cost of administering Housing Benefit (HB). Although HB is being gradually replaced by Universal Credit (UC), the Council is still responsible for existing and legacy claims.
- 4.6.5. **Senior Pay changes £14K** – The impact of the changes to senior officer pay were set out in the 2025/26 Pay Policy Statement to the February Full Council meeting.
- 4.6.6. **Everyone Active (EA) contract, utility costs £50K** – when the Council retendered its Leisure Contract for 2023/24 utility prices were as a consequence a clause within the contract to ensure contractors bid was for the Council to cover utility cost fluctuations above a 5% threshold, this also applies should prices reduce as in 2024/25 (£340K reduction). Utility usage fluctuations remain the responsibility of the contractor. Energy prices for 2025/26 were tendered for in March 2025 and although officers were expecting increase in energy prices in the region of £70K the actual increase amounted to circa £120K resulting in a £50K shortfall.
- 4.6.7. **Elections £101K** – Funding was included in the 2025/26 for both a local and County election in error, officers have requested that £60K of the budget is transferred to an Election Reserve to support future Stevenage Borough Council's election base budget, which is not always sufficient to cover the full cost of running the annual election. The remaining £41K is a one-off 2025/26 saving.
- 4.6.8. **Streets and Grounds System £9K** – The Business Change team has agreed to fund the digitalisation of Streets and Grounds system. This investment will be funded from the Council's Transformation reserves and will be treated as a revenue contribution to capital (RCCO).

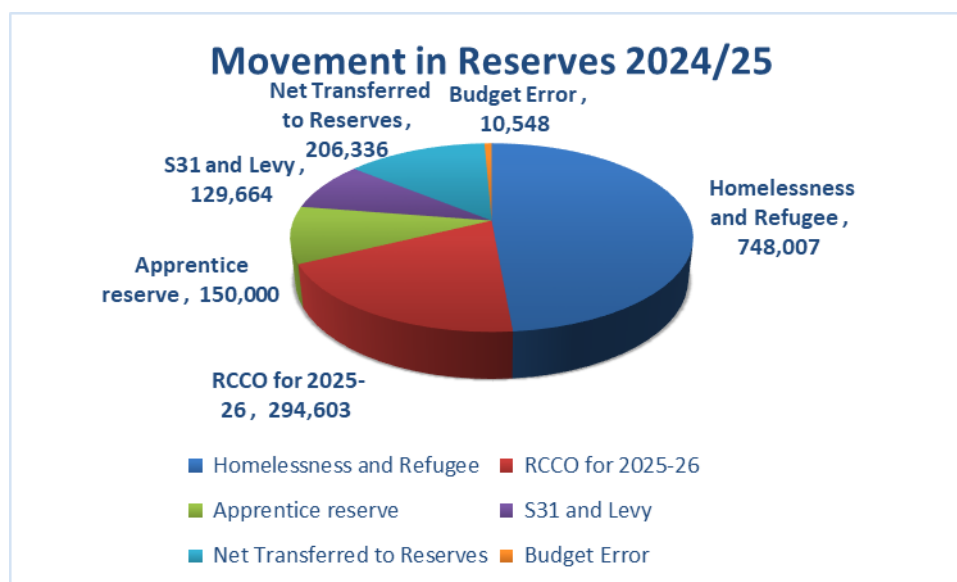
| | 2025/26 Budget changes £ | 2025/26 Revised Budget £ |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Original Budget | | £10,753,540 |
| Increased Spend: | | |
| Carry Forwards (para 4.3.1 refers) | £262,070 | |
| Town Square Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) (para 4.6.1 refers) | £104,560 | |
| Utility increases (para 4.6.2 refers) | £50,000 | |
| Senior Pay changes (para 4.6.5 refers) | £14,000 | |
| Everyone Active (EA) contract, utility costs (para 4.6.6 refers) | £50,000 | |
| Direct Revenue Financing -Streets and Grounds System (para 4.6.8 refers) | £9,390 | |
| Direct Revenue Financing- Leisure capital spend (para 4.2.1 (XIX) refers) | £219,320 | £709,340 |
| Increased grant & associated spend: | | |
| Asylum Dispersal Grant (para 4.6.3 refers) | (£471,600) | |
| Asylum Dispersal Grant Spend (para 4.6.3 refers) | £471,600 | |
| Housing Benefit Administration Subsidy (HBAS) Grant (para. 4.6.4 refers) | (£14,630) | (£14,630) |
| Reduction in Budget: | | |
| County Elections budget underspend (para 4.6.7 refers) | (£41,050) | |
| County Elections underspend to transfer to reserves (para 4.6.7 refers) | (£60,000) | (£101,050) |
| Use of reserves: | | |
| Use of Town Square reserve for MRP cost (para 4.6.1 refers) | (£104,560) | |
| Use of Transformation Reserve for streets & grounds (para. 4.6.8 refers) | (£9,390) | |
| Use of Leisure Reserve (reprofiled from 2024/25) (para 4.2.1 (XIX) refers) | (£219,320) | |
| County Elections Reserves (para 4.6.7 refers) | £60,000 | (£273,270) |
| Net Expenditure Budget | £320,390 | £11,073,930 |

Other Potential Impacts on the 2025/26 budget

- 4.6.9. The current **pay award for 2025/26** is still being negotiated between the unions and employers. The National Employers made an offer of 3.2% increase. This offer slightly exceeds the 3% provision currently budgeted for 2025/26. The indicative cost for the increase is £50K.
- 4.6.10. The Finance team is continuously reviewing underspends and overspends to assess any potential impact on the 2025/26 budget. The findings will be included in the Quarter 1 report, which will be presented to the Cabinet in September.

4.7. Reserves

- 4.7.1. Allocated Reserves - some balances are 'ring fenced' and have been set aside for specific purposes. The total value of allocated reserves available for the Council to spend on 31 March 2025 is £11 million. The movement in the year has been an increase of £2.272 million in to reserves. Cabinet has already approved £0.822 million of reserves movement during the year therefore Members are requested to approve the remaining £1.450 million.

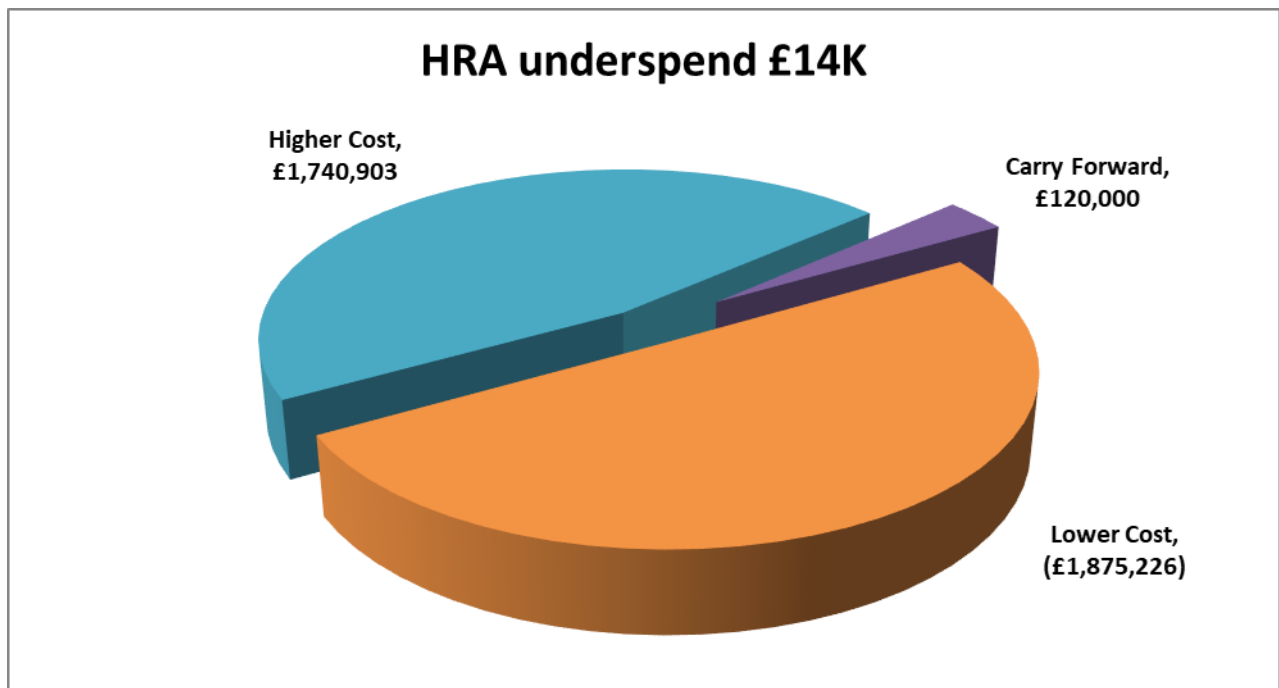


- 4.7.2. The reserve balances may seem a significant sum but are held for specific purposes, some of which are set out below. This mean they are not available to fund General Fund expenditure apart from NNDR gains and the income equalisation reserve.
- £1.711 million required to fund the holding costs of assets in the Town Square which includes assets for regeneration as part of SG1 (*note 2*)
 - £4.580 million of NNDR reserves relates to gains generated from previous years. Reserves remain high as there is a risk to the Council from unexpected appeals being given to businesses which may not been accounted in the provisions (*note 1*)
 - £773k to fund the Councils Transformation ambitions and to support the 'Balancing the Budget' priority (*note 4*)
 - £1.018 million of Homelessness and Refugee reserve - The Council received a higher level of grant support than initially anticipated for housing purposes in 2024/25. These included grants for general homelessness, refugees and asylum seeker support. Some of these grants are used over a few years to support specific cases and these reserves will diminish in the short to medium term. However, a detailed programme is also being constructed for use of a discretionary grant, where there are Government asylum seeker placements in the Council's jurisdiction. This proposed activity will be included in future quarterly budget monitoring reports during 2025/26. to help Council cover the costs associated with supporting asylum seekers including accommodation, services, and local pressures. (*note 3*)

| Reserves | Opening 2024/25 | Movement | Closing 2024/25 | Movement | Closing 2025/26 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| NHB reserve | (£253) | £243 | (£10) | £0 | (£10) |
| Transformation Reserve note 4 | (£690) | (£83) | (£773) | £9 | (£764) |
| Homeless reserve note 3 | (£390) | (£30) | (£420) | £0 | (£420) |
| Planning Delivery | (£287) | £89 | (£198) | £95 | (£103) |
| Queensway Car Park monies | (£122) | (£93) | (£215) | (£143) | (£358) |
| Town square reserve note 2 | (£1,507) | (£204) | (£1,711) | (£46) | (£1,757) |
| Regeneration Reserve | (£225) | (£21) | (£245) | £100 | (£145) |
| Insurance reserve | (£72) | £10 | (£62) | £0 | (£62) |
| ICT reserve | (£190) | £48 | (£142) | £0 | (£142) |
| Town centre | (£0) | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 |
| Leisure reserve | (£340) | £121 | (£219) | £219 | £0 |
| Commercial Property repair reserve | (£41) | £0 | (£41) | £0 | (£41) |
| Capital reserve | £0 | (£75) | (£75) | £75 | £0 |
| Future Councils reserve | (£459) | £261 | (£198) | £224 | £26 |
| Asylum reserve note 3 | (£500) | (£518) | (£1,018) | £0 | (£1,018) |
| Stevenage works | (£20) | £0 | (£20) | £0 | (£20) |
| Domestic abuse reserve | (£196) | £0 | (£196) | £0 | (£196) |
| Apprentice reserve | £0 | (£150) | (£150) | (£60) | (£210) |
| EPR reserve | £0 | £0 | £0 | (£1,078) | (£1,078) |
| Total Allocated for use | (£5,289) | (£403) | (£5,692) | (£604) | (£6,296) |
| Income equalisation Reserve | (£758) | £0 | (£758) | £200 | (£558) |
| Gains (NNDR) note 1 | (£2,711) | (£1,869) | (£4,580) | £709 | (£3,871) |
| Total Available to support the GF | (£3,469) | (£1,869) | (£5,338) | £909 | (£4,429) |
| Total allocated reserves | (£8,758) | (£2,272) | (£11,030) | £305 | (£10,726) |

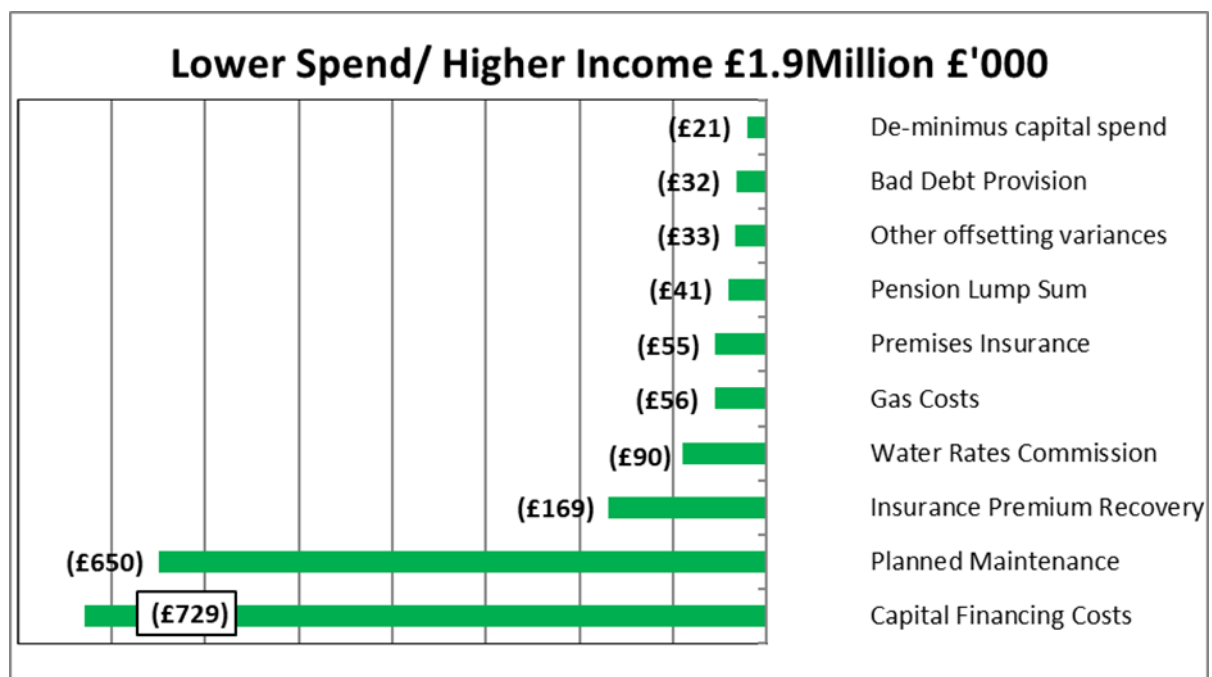
4.8. Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- 4.8.1. The 2024/25 outturn position on the HRA was an in-year surplus of £341,243, a £134,323 increase from the working budget surplus of £206,920. Allowing for carry forward requests of £120K, there is an underlying underspend of £14K. The main variances to the working budget are highlighted below. These have been split to show those areas where there was lower cost, or higher income and those where costs were higher, or income was lower.



4.9. Lower Costs / Higher income than budgeted

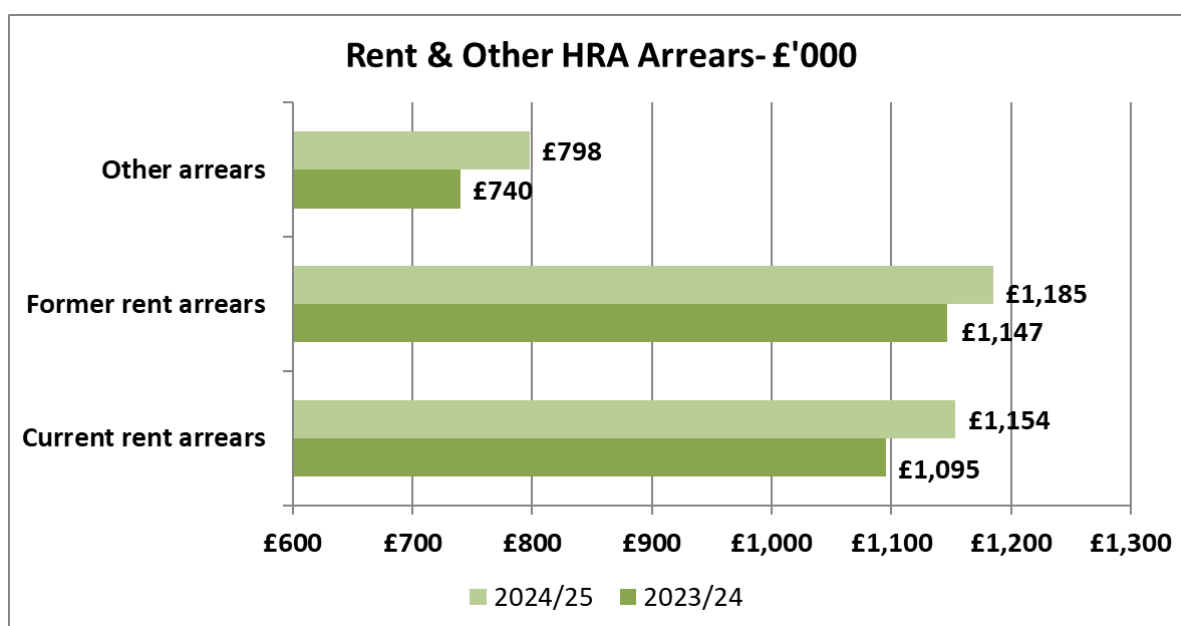
4.9.1. There were underspends, or increased income, of £1.9 million that are listed in the chart, with explanations in the following paragraphs.



4.9.2. **De-Minimus Capital Spend £21K Underspend** – A budget is held in the revenue accounts for items coded to capital expenditure (in year) that are either not qualifying capital expenditure, or where the total spent does not meet the minimum level of spend of £10K. There were no items found in the capital programme that needed to be recoded to revenue in 2024/25 and this resulted in a saving on the budget of £21K.

4.9.3. **Reduction in Bad Debt Provision £32K** – A provision is held in the HRA against outstanding debts, primarily on rental income. As rental income increases each

year, in line with the annual rent increase, it is expected that this figure will normally rise, but it is calculated based on the type and age of the debt outstanding at the year end. The graph below shows the closing position of rent arrears for 2024/25, split between current and former tenants and other arrears (for example rechargeable repair costs).



As illustrated in the graph, the year-on-year increase in arrears was £154k across all three categories. This, combined with the age and type of debt, led to a lower provision than estimated and gave a budget saving of £32K for the year. Total arrears for the HRA currently stand at £3.1 million and is covered by a provision of £2.1 million (66% coverage). The outstanding debt currently equates to 5.57% of the annual income budget for 2025/26.

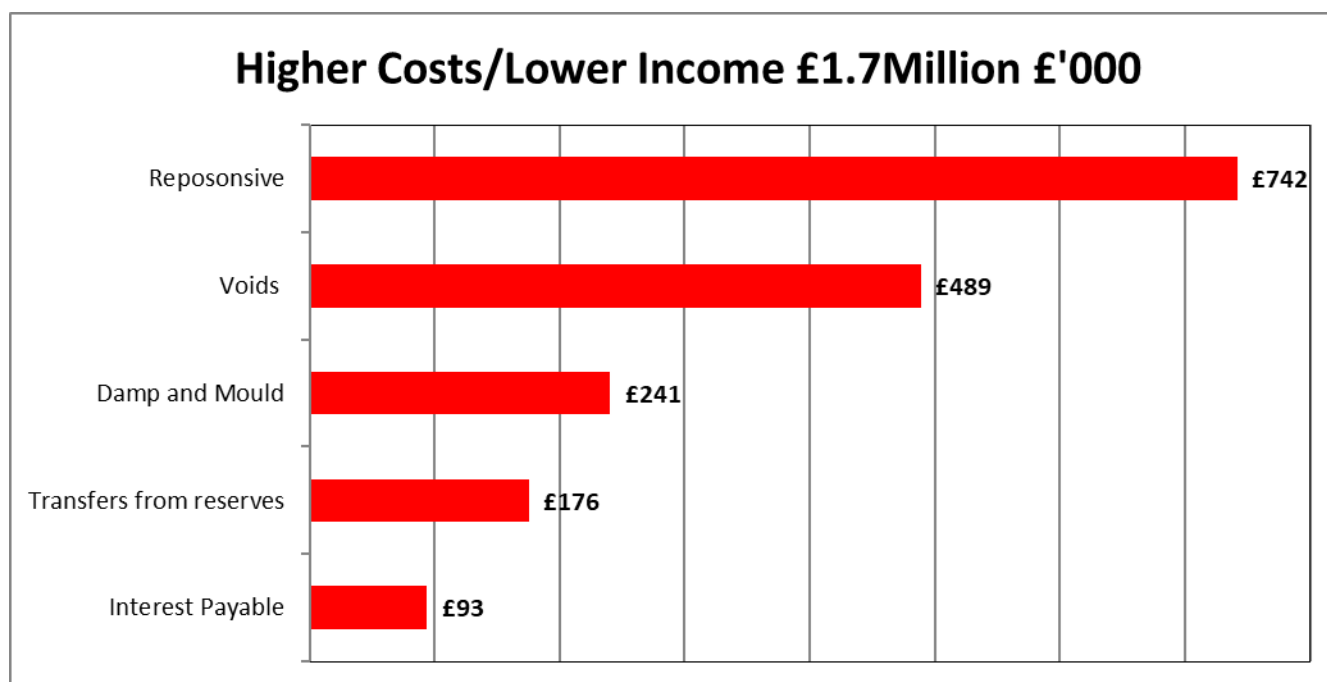
- 4.9.4. **Pension Lump Sum £41K Underspend**—The Council makes contributions based both on current employees and a lump sum payment for historic deficits. The lump sum payments are split between the General Fund and the HRA, based on annual activity in each fund and this was slightly lower for the HRA resulting in a budget saving of £41K for the year.
- 4.9.5. **Premises Insurance £55K Underspend** – The budgets for insurance include both premiums and a provision for uninsured losses. While premium costs were slightly higher than anticipated, the amount of provision required on premises insurance, based on current claims, was lower and resulted in a budget saving of £55K in year.
- 4.9.6. **Gas Utility Payments £56K Underspend** – There was a £56K saving on the £471K budget for 2024/25. This budget can fluctuate with actual gas usage over the winter months and this year was lower than estimated. The impact of any higher utility costs (as experienced for the General Fund) will be included in the 1st quarter monitoring report.
- 4.9.7. **Water Rates Commission £90K Increased Income** – The Council acts as an agent in billing and collecting water charges on over 6,700 of the current 8,000 housing stock. Under this agreement tenants are billed the same amount as the water company would charge, but the Council receive a commission and allowances

for empty properties and bad debts. This money is then re-invested in the housing service for the tenants.

- 4.9.8. **Insurance Premium Recovery £169K Increased Income** – While the premium cost for the tenant's insurance scheme was correctly included in the budget the income recovery of these costs was not set at a high enough rate and has led to an increased income of £169K. This will also need to be adjusted in the 2025/26 budget and will be included in the quarterly monitoring statements for 2025/26.
- 4.9.9. **Planned Maintenance £650K Underspend** – There were several areas in planned maintenance with significant under spends in the last financial year. A budget provision of £269K had been made for the implementation of a new "Decent Homes" standard, but this has yet to be agreed by the Government and led to an in-year saving. There was also a budget saving of £189K cyclical maintenance, which is currently being reviewed to procure the service. These two areas were also held in reserve against the additional costs identified in 4.10.2 below. There was also a £120k underspend on the fencing budget, due to the timing of the programme, but this has been requested as a carry forward at paragraph 4.11.1. Lastly, there was a further £72K saving on various planned maintenance budgets against a total annual budget of £5 million.
- 4.9.10. **Capital Financing Costs £729K Underspend** – There was a budgeted contribution to capital of £16.9 million in last year. However, due to a combination of total spend on capital projects and other receipts available for financing, the required revenue contribution dropped to £16.2 million. Further detail on the HRA capital programme is included in section 4.14 below.
- 4.9.11. **Other offsetting variances £33K Underspend** – Finally, there were other net variances on the accounts, totalling £33K against the working budget.

4.10. Higher Costs / Lower income than budgeted

- 4.10.1. In contrast to lower costs/increased income of £1.9 million, there were also higher costs/lower income of £1.7 million which are summarised below together with explanations.



4.10.2. The three main revenue repair areas of responsive, void property and damp and mould repairs saw the largest budget pressure at Q4. Members will be aware that this area of the HRA has been under significant pressure over the last year and additional budget provision was agreed, during 2024/25, to ensure that service levels and regulatory requirements continued to be met for tenants. However, despite these additional resources the outturn was higher than the projection included in the 3rd quarter monitoring report detailed below.

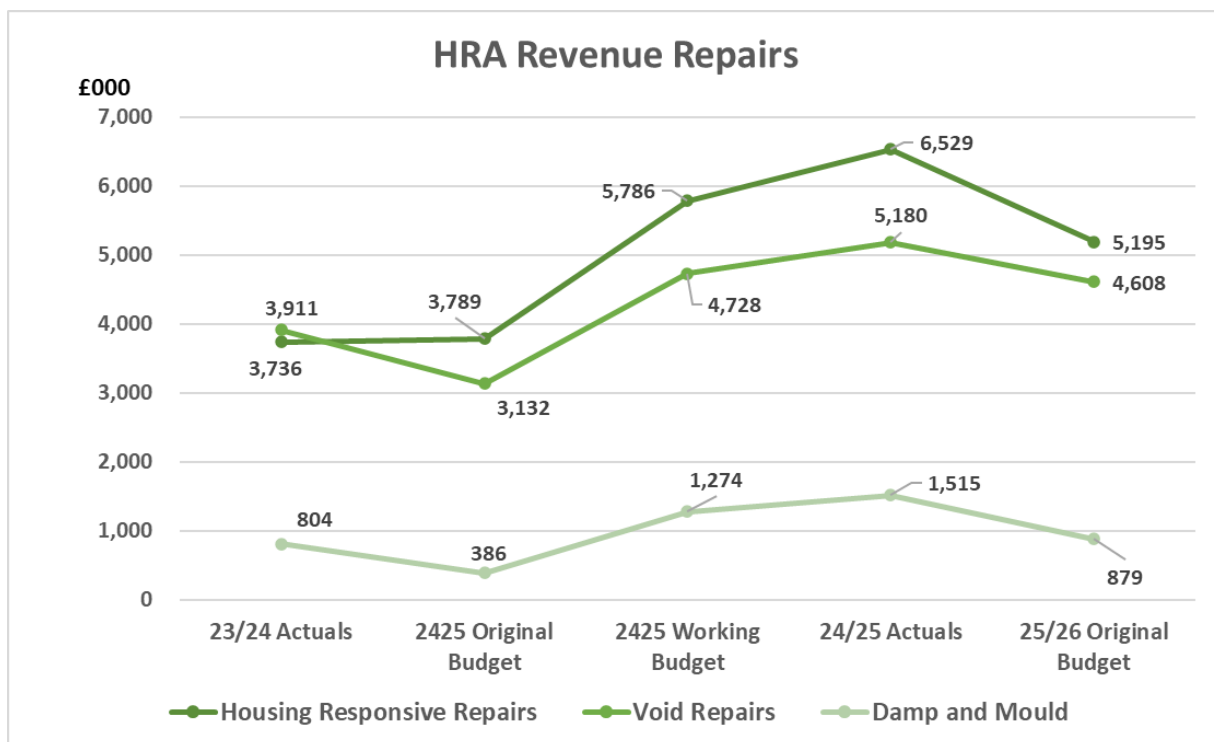
4.10.3. **Responsive Repairs Costs £742K Overspend** – Responsive repair costs have risen significantly from the original budget position of £3.8 million. The working budget was increased during the year to £5.7 million, but the final outturn gave a £742K overspend. This was a result of both volumes of work completed that were higher than forecast and demand led, and the cost of some specialist works that require external contractors to complete.

4.10.4. **Void Property Repairs £489K Overspend** – The last budget projection for works to void unoccupied properties assumed an average cost of approximately £12,800 and that there would be 450 in the year. In the final outturn there were 515 void properties in the year at a cost of approximately £12,600. There were exceptional circumstances that increased the level of voids in the last quarter of the year, as the commissioning of the new sheltered accommodation at Brodie Court generated an additional 58 moves within the housing stock. Many of these moves enabled downsizing from family sized accommodation and will enable the Council to allocate those homes to larger family groups, but this has generated an exceptional cost in 2024/25.

4.10.5. **Damp and Mould Repairs £241K Overspend** – This area of work also came under increased pressure in the last quarter of the financial year. There had been a substantial in year budget increase from £390K to £1.274 million for this work, but high demand in the last two months of the year led to a £241K overspend. Increased regulation in this area is likely to see continuing pressure on these types of repairs, but mitigation actions are being put in place, relating to management and

procurement of specialist contractors, to ensure value for money and high technical compliance in this sensitive area of the repairs operation.

- 4.10.6. Overall, the responsive repairs were £1.5 Million over the projected figure. However, as mentioned in paragraph 4.9.9, there were compensating underspends on some planned maintenance programmes that offset this additional cost by £650K. Looking forward to 2025/26 there are several mitigations that should ensure that overall costs reduce, and the comparative trends are shown in the graph below.



- 4.10.7. This graph clearly shows the rise in costs from the actual position for 2023/24 through to the 2024/25 outturn and illustrates the challenging targets set in the 2025/26 budget. Since the spike in costs in last year a detailed management action plan has been put in place to control and reduce overall costs in this area. This has included successful recruitment to senior management roles, new procurement of key contractors across the repairs service and new management processes and controls, particularly regarding void property management. However, this area remains a high risk going into 2025/26 and will be monitored closely during the year. For note as part of the budget process a risk assessment of HRA balances is made and the current risk assessed balances of £6.3 million identifies £1.9 million against repairs budgets in 2025/26.

- 4.10.8. **Transfer from Reserves £176K Overspend** – As detailed in paragraph 4.13.2 below, £3.4 million was returned to the HRA from a specific reserve to cover interest rate risk on planned borrowing. This was initially estimated at a slightly higher amount and led to a £176K budget pressure in the outturn for the year.

- 4.10.9. **Increased Interest Payable £93K Overspend** – the interest payments on HRA debt and leases were £93K higher than the budget of £8.2 million. These costs are dependent upon the prevalent rates when debt is taken out and the actual rates were slightly higher than budgeted. This will also need to be adjusted in the 2025/26 budget, as part of the quarterly monitoring process.

4.11. Carry Forwards

4.11.1. As part of Quarter 4 monitoring, only one carry forward has been identified. There is a request to carry forward £120,000 on the fence replacement programme due to timing of completion of the works.

4.12. 2024/25 – HRA Out-turn Position

4.12.1. The impact of the outturn position for 2024/25 on HRA balances is summarised in the table below.

| HRA Balance £'000 | 2024/25 Original Budget £ | 2024/25 Working Budget £ | 2024/25 Actual £ | Variance to Working £ |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| HRA Balance 1 April | (£10,584,486) | (£10,584,486) | (£10,584,486) | |
| In Year (Surplus) / Deficit | £261,110 | (£206,920) | (£341,243) | £134,323 |
| HRA Balance 31 March | (£10,323,376) | (£10,791,406) | (£10,925,729) | £134,323 |

4.12.2. The HRA Budget Report, presented to members in January 2025, highlighted the ongoing and significant pressures facing the ring-fenced account. As reported last year, a combination of inflationary pressures, rent capping by the Government, higher interest rates on borrowing and increased regulation and statutory requirements have all contributed to future budget uncertainty and higher risk.

4.13. Usable reserves – Housing Revenue Account

4.13.1. The total value of revenue reserves available for the HRA to spend at 31 March 2025 is £17.3 million consisting of two reserves.

4.13.2. The reserves are summarised in the table below with an explanation for each.

- The **Debt Repayment Reserve** was created to reflect upcoming loan repayments in the HRA and to show a more realistic working balance in the main HRA account. This currently reflects loan repayments up to 2027/28, but no loan repayments were due in 2024/25, and the reserve was not used.
- The **Interest Equalisation Reserve** was set up to allow the HRA to absorb interest rate increases in the short term. Due to recent higher interest rates and the planned conversion of internal debt to external borrowing, this reserve has been reversed into general HRA balances for use in meeting current and future interest payments.
- The **Transformation Reserve** was set up to fund elements of the transformation programme, due to complete over more than one financial year. There was a further £32K drawdown in 2024/25, leaving a balance of £86K carried forward. This is likely to be used in the current financial year.

| Reserves | 2023/24 Opening £'000 | Use £'000 | 2023/24 Closing £'000 | Use £'000 | 2024/25 Closing £'000 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Debt Repayment Reserve | (£17,200) | £0 | (£17,200) | £0 | (£17,200) |
| Interest equalisation reserve | (£3,423) | £0 | (£3,423) | £3,423 | £0 |
| Transformation Reserve | (£208) | £90 | (£118) | £32 | (£86) |
| Total Allocated Reserves | (£20,831) | £90 | (£20,741) | £3,455 | (£17,286) |

4.14. Capital Monitoring

4.14.1. The revised capital strategy in the 3rd quarter monitoring report was approved by Cabinet on 12 March 2025. The 2024/25 approved budget for each fund was:

- General Fund £21 million
- Housing Revenue Account £31 million

4.14.2. The table below summarises the Capital outturn 2024/25 and the proposed changes including rephasing of capital budgets at Q4 between 2024/25 and future years.

4.14.3. Projects that have completed in the year resulted in underspends of £321K.

4.14.4. An additional £27K has been added to the GF budget in 2026/27 for the Community Climate Change Fund budget (funded by CIL) of £7.5K per ward already approved by members.

| | 2024/25 | | | 2025/26 | | 2026/27 | |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| £000 | Actual Spend to 31.03.25 | Q3 Capital Strategy | Variance | Re-phased Q4 | Revised Strategy | Re-phased Q4 | Revised Strategy |
| Total GF Schemes | 13,347 | 21,659 | (8,312) | 7,986 | 60,614 | 63 | 8,439 |
| Total HRA Schemes | 31,074 | 30,708 | 366 | (366) | 51,987 | 0 | 57,249 |
| Total Capital Programme | 44,421 | 52,367 | (7,946) | 7,620 | 112,601 | 63 | 65,688 |
| <i>Re-phase detail:</i> | | | | | | | |
| Stevenage Direct Services | | | (1,880) | 1,876 | | 0 | |
| Housing Development | | | 126 | (126) | | 0 | |
| Finance & Estates | | | (403) | 285 | | 0 | |
| Digital & Transformation | | | 169 | (139) | | 0 | |
| Regeneration | | | (5,625) | 5,591 | | (34) | |
| Communities and Neighbourhoods | | | (366) | 236 | | 0 | |
| Planning and Regulatory | | | (168) | 98 | | 98 | |
| Deferred Works Reserve | | | (165) | 165 | | 0 | |
| Total GF Re-phasing | | | (8,312) | 7,986 | | 63 | |
| Capital Programme Excluding New Build (Housing Investment) | | | 758 | (758) | | 0 | |
| New Build (Housing Development) | | | (363) | 363 | | 0 | |
| Digital & Transformation | | | (29) | 29 | | 0 | |
| Total HRA Re-phasing | | | 366 | (366) | | 0 | |

Re-phasing

4.15. 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.

4.15.1. Forecasting spend during the year involves making assumptions about future events that may be out of the control of service managers e.g. Weather, thus re-phasing is a normal part of capital monitoring.

4.15.2. General Fund – re-phasing £8 million - the main items are explained below:

- Stevenage Direct Services £1.9 million - recycling and food collection vehicles, were ordered in August with 3 out of the 4 still to be delivered due to an increase in the lead time from 16 weeks to 26 weeks. .
- Regeneration - Towns Fund £3 million - the Towns Fund programme consists of nine different projects and draws upon the £37.5 million secured from central government. The regeneration programme team administer the programme on behalf of the Stevenage Development Board. The Council has two roles within this programme; the first, delivery of some projects directly through the regeneration team (such as the Sports and Leisure Hub), the second, acting as Accountable Body to enable projects to utilise Towns Fund monies by other delivery mechanisms (such as Gunnels Wood Road) and monitor and evaluate the success of the overall Towns Fund programme. The spend profile for 2024/25 was an ambitious target which relied on elements of the projects aligning as many are interlinked in terms of delivery. The team are working with internal and external partners to ensure delivery continues at pace throughout 2025/26 to reach the spend target set.
- Regeneration - Swingate Joint venture £1.4 million, development work is now underway, some deliver has now been re-profiled into 2025/26.

4.15.3. HRA – re-phasing £0.4 million - the main items are explained below:

- Housing development - £(187)k - Brent Court Garages scheme - this scheme requires additional design work before meaningful construction work can begin because of the new Building Safety Regulations. As a result, progress has been slightly slower than anticipated.
- Housing investment - £758k – additional spend on void capital works which fell outside the planned improvements programmes in 2024/25 has resulted in the requirement to re-phase budgets back from 2025/26 to cover these essential works. See also HRA revenue void costs for further information.

4.16. Net Underspend GF 2024/25 £321K

4.16.1. The main project making up this underspend is the release of the remaining post SLL contract leisure capital works budget - which is no longer required - £135K underspend.

4.17. Virements to note.

4.17.1. Members are asked to note the following virements:

- From KC242 - SLL Leisure end of contract to KC309 Fairlands Valley Park - £25,000 for replacement boilers.
- From KC242 - as above, to KC242 SALC - £13,000 capital roof works.
- From KC242 - as above to KC242 Swim centre - £14,000 capital roof works.
- From KC242 - as above to KC242 Ridlins - £10,000 track enhancements.

4.18. Capital Financing

4.18.1. The table below sets out the change in the Capital Financing position since Q3, because of changes to the expenditure phasing discussed above.

| £000 | 2023/24 | | | 2024/25 | | 2025/26 | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| | Actual Spend to 31.03.24 | Q3 Capital Strategy | Variance | Re-phased Q4 | Revised Strategy | Re-phased Q4 | Revised Strategy |
| Total Capital Financing | 44,421 | 52,367 | (7,946) | 7,620 | 112,601 | 63 | 65,688 |
| Changes detail: | | | | | | | |
| Capital Receipts | | | (3,119) | 3,133 | | 0 | |
| Towns Fund | | | (3,068) | 2,982 | | (35) | |
| Other Grants and Contributions | | | (727) | 564 | | 98 | |
| Other reserves | | | (84) | (6) | | 0 | |
| Borrowing | | | (1,314) | 1,313 | | 0 | |
| Total GF Financing changes | | | (8,312) | 7,986 | | 63 | |
| MRR (Self Financing Depreciation) | | | 844 | (245) | | 0 | |
| Capital Receipts | | | 1,087 | (387) | | 0 | |
| Leaseholder Contributions | | | (945) | (5) | | 0 | |
| Direct Revenue Financing | | | (1,100) | 1,156 | | 0 | |
| Grants | | | 480 | (885) | | 0 | |
| Total HRA Financing changes | | | 366 | (366) | | 0 | |
| Total Capital Financing | | | (7,946) | 7,620 | | 63 | |

4.19. Capital Receipts Forecast

4.19.1. A key recommendation from the June 2020 MTFS COVID recovery report was that a pipeline of land disposals be identified from Locality Reviews to help maintain the resilience of General Fund balances. This strategy continues and along with other property sales and housing development receipts support the delivery of capital projects.

4.19.2. The tables below summaries the current capital receipts forecasts for the General Fund.

| Table 5: Capital Receipts | Previous Forecast £000 | Revised Forecast/Actual £000 | Variance £000 |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Capital Receipts (including Locality) | | | |
| Year 2024/25 Forecast / Actual | 6,704 | 6,369 | (335) |
| Year 2025/26 Forecast | 3,045 | 3,885 | 840 |
| Year 2026/27 Forecast | 12,240 | 13,465 | 1,225 |
| Grant Total Capital Receipts | 21,989 | 23,719 | 1,730 |
| Sales Costs 4% | (634) | (698) | (64) |
| Contingency adjustment | (145) | 0 | 145 |
| Total Net Receipts | 21,210 | 23,021 | 1,811 |

4.19.3. Until sold, the value of land sales can fluctuate from the forecast as can be seen. The overall increase in the forecast is mainly due to the inclusion of potential additional land sale in 2025/26.

4.20. Council's Subsidiary Companies

4.20.1. The Council own or part own a few companies. The responsibilities for producing accounts and those being audited are with the Directors of those companies.

4.20.2. The table below summarises the relationships with the Council.

| Company Name | Wholly owned either directly or indirectly by SBC | Included as a material subsidiary in council group accounts 2024/25 |
|--|--|--|
| Queensway Properties (Stevenage) LLP - (QLLP) | Yes | Yes |
| Marshgate Ltd (WOC) | Yes | Yes |
| Hertfordshire CCTV Partnership Ltd (CCTV) | No – 37% share | No |
| Broste Rivers Ltd - (Building Control Company (group)) | No - 12.5% share | No |
| Swingate Developments LLP | No – JV with MACE, SBC 50% interest. | 50% |

4.20.3. More details of the individual companies can be found in the following paragraphs.

4.21. Queensway Properties (Stevenage) LLP – (QLLP)

Background

4.21.1. QLLP was set up in 2018 as a new partnership between Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) and Marshgate (WOC) to implement a multi-million-pound regeneration of 85 Queensway, 89-103 Queensway, 24-26 The Forum and Marshgate, an area of Stevenage town centre. This project was initiated as a catalyst for regeneration in the town centre and has been followed by the delivery of the new Autolus life sciences building creating up to 400 new jobs for the local economy, and planning consent for a mixed life-sciences, retail and commercial

scheme in the Forum that could create up to 1,800 new jobs. The Queensway project was structured so that the Council established an entity (and LLP) to manage the asset, holding a long-term lease from the owner (and development funder, Aviva) with an option to acquire the asset for £1 at the end of the lease term. The total cost of the development was c£45 million, funded by Aviva with the Council taking a lease and making an annual payment to Aviva.

- 4.21.2. The benefits realised by the Queensway regeneration scheme include the enhancement of the existing shop fronts, canopies and facades, exciting new retail, fitness and food and beverage offers, rebranding the wayfinding and enlivenment, and the development of 110 brand new residential apartments in Queensway and Marshgate which is located behind Queensway. The aims of the scheme were to reposition the retail, create an enticing environment for retailers and customers, increase the night-time economy, improve the public realm, enhance new retail and leisure spend, increase dwell times, let vacant accommodation and increase occupational income and lease terms with existing tenants.
- 4.21.3. The accounts of QLLP for the 12 months to 31 March 2025 are incorporated into the SBC group accounts as a material subsidiary. Management accounts are presented to the Board of QLLP on a quarterly basis and costs and revenues scrutinised.
- 4.21.4. ReefOrigin (Reef) who manage the site for the company, compile and present operational quarterly reports to the LLP Board at their quarterly meetings. Progress against the business plan is monitored, including full financial budget and expenditure, anticipated, agreed or expired lettings on retail, office and residential property, key milestones during the next quarter, health and safety and risk management. In addition to the quarterly meetings, Reef produces monthly written reports and attends other associated meetings on request.

Outturn 2024/25

- 4.21.5. The outturn below compares the actual performance for the year against the budget. forecasts presented to the QLLP Board at quarter 3. Future budgeting is based on the latest cash flow projections using information from QLLP leading property development and investment specialists, ReefOrigin and their subcontractors (Cortland and Colliers), as well as SBC officers. Note - overheads in the table below mainly consist of depreciation £497K and a lease adjustment for the principal element included in lease payments of £ (361) K, both of which are non-cash year end transactions.

| £000 | Outturn 2024/25 | Budget 2024/25 | Variance 2024/25 | Draft Budget 2025/26 |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Commercial | 484 | 428 | 56 | 496 |
| Residential | (102) | (145) | 43 | (71) |
| Operational Combined | 382 | 283 | 99 | 425 |
| Overheads | 131 | 151 | (21) | 138 |
| Net Operating Profit / loss | 513 | 434 | 78 | 563 |

- 4.21.6. The costs for 2024/25 also include the sublease on Queensway of £1.7 million. This cost should but are not yet covered by net rents from commercial and residential

tenancies. The development completed in 2021/22, with new residential and commercial spaces to be let commercially. There remain challenges within the commercial unit's performance because of tough retail environment and the need to offer lower rents as well as rent free incentives and contributions to fit out costs. These pressures contributed to an overall loss on the operations of £382K in 2024/25 (£569K in 2023/24). Residential lettings continue to perform, generating surplus income.

- 4.21.7. The Board and partners are actively engaged in managing the associated risks and challenges. A series of workshops between officers and partners have taken place reviewing cash forecasts, costs and income, investigating options and determining actions needed to develop the business to reduce financial risks in the medium to long term. As part of this ongoing process, Reef will be drawing up an updated business plan for 2025/26 that reflects the current state of the Residential, Commercial and Retail markets in Stevenage, and the Board's wish to adjust the building's mix and offer to make the development more financially sustainable in the coming years.
- 4.21.8. The draft operational budget for 2025/26 is based on current experience adjusted for cost inflation. As mentioned above actions is being undertaken by the working group in conjunction with Reef that should result in further improvements to the financial position in future years, stabilising the performance of this asset over the medium-term to long-term. Within the MTFS process the Council is building up a reserve for future fit out contributions or remodelling to further improve financial performance. This reserve balance is £215K as at 31 March 2025, £50K will be added incrementally in future years.

4.22. Marshgate Ltd (WOC)

Background

- 4.22.1. Marshgate Ltd was a company setup in 2018 originally with the principal purpose of forming a partnership with SBC - Queensway Properties (Stevenage) LLP. From 2021, Marshgate Ltd begun expanding its operations beyond this initial remit and is now operating within the residential property market within Stevenage as a property developer. This includes the purchase of land and properties for development and sale in the Stevenage area.
- 4.22.2. The accounts of Marshgate Ltd for the 12 months to 31 March 2025 are incorporated into the SBC group accounts as a material subsidiary. Management accounts are presented to the Board of Marshgate Ltd on a quarterly basis and costs and revenues scrutinised.

Outturn 2024/25

- 4.22.3. The main operating activity during the year has been the continuing development of the Courtland site. As a result, much of the company's costs have been capitalised and will be released through the profit and loss account when units are sold – planned for 2025/26.
- 4.22.4. The costs and income associated with the lease of 10 properties to the HRA is reflected in the gross profit of £2K below. Although the financing costs of the loan from SBC is capitalised, the income earned on placing surplus cash on the Money

Markets is a revenue income stream (£90K). Overall, the company made £41K before tax in 2024/25.

| £000 | Outturn 2024/25 | Revised Budget 2024/25 | Variance 2024/25 | Budget 2026/27 |
|---|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Total Sales | (57) | (57) | - | (12,878) |
| Total Cost of sales | 55 | 55 | - | 10,335 |
| Gross Profit | (2) | (2) | - | (2,543) |
| Total Other Costs | 51 | 46 | 5 | 35 |
| Interest Earned | (90) | (80) | 10 | (10) |
| Tax Provision | 9 | 9 | - | 629 |
| (Profit)/Loss after tax | (32) | (27) | 15 | (1,889) |
| Investment in Development at Courtlands | 9,609 | | | |
| Cash at Bank | 1,839 | | | |
| Net SBC liabilities | (12,120) | | | |

- 4.22.5. Loans from SBC have been invested in the development at Courtlands with the balance in cash as above. The net liability is made up mainly of these loans, due to be repaid in 2025/26, when the units are sold. Delays on site due to poor weather and beneficial redesign work has meant sales originally planned for 2024/25 are now due 2025/26.

4.23. Hertfordshire CCTV Partnership Ltd (CCTV)

Background

- 4.23.1. The Council has one jointly controlled operation for the provision and management of CCTV in the Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire area. This arrangement is with Stevenage Borough Council (SBC), North Hertfordshire District Council, East Hertfordshire District Council and Hertsmeire Borough Council. On the 1 April 2015 a new company, Hertfordshire CCTV Partnership Ltd, was incorporated to conduct the commercial trading affairs of the CCTV Partnership. SBC holds 37% of the shares and “owns” 37% of the losses or profits. The company is not material and not included in the group accounts of SBC.

Outturn 2024/25

- 4.23.2. The company made £18K profit after tax in the year to 31 March 2025. The SBC share of this is £7K.

4.24. Building Control

- 4.24.1. On the 8 August 2016 Hertfordshire Building Control was formed under the trading name Broste Rivers Ltd, incorporating services from seven Hertfordshire Local Authorities including Stevenage. The company formed to cover all building control service, some authorities DFG works and warranties and at the end of 2019, Dacorum joined and by 2021 Broste Rivers made a strategic move by acquiring Build Insight Group a private approved inspector and in 2023 the new CEO took over.

- 4.24.2. As part of the set up the company partner Councils gave a loan facility to the company which was adjusted to £107K when Dacorum joined, and interest is currently paid at a commercial rate of 6%. Members have agreed in principal that the loan facility can be increased by a similar amount to the existing loan, funded from the business rates reserve if required in 2024/25. This loan was not required in 2024/25, and no facility has been requested for 2025/26.
- 4.24.3. Whilst trading has continued to be a challenge in 2024/25, the group's results are a draft profit of £3K of which the councils share is 1/8th and this is an improvement on the previous year which saw a year end deficit position. The company has been on a programme of improvement over the last year since the new Managing Director was appointed.

4.25. Swingate Developments LLP - Joint Venture with MACE

- 4.25.1. The Council entered a formal Joint Venture with Mace in 2024/25 to redevelop Swingate (Plot A) site which commenced in the Autumn of 2024. The costs and benefits of the agreement are shared 50:50 with Mace who manage the delivery vehicle on which the council has a director on the board - Swingate Developments LLP.
- 4.25.2. Mace invoices the Council for 50% of costs as they arise up to the agreed equity share. In 2024/25 this drawdown amounted to £1.8 million. The budget for 2026/27 is £7.5 million with expected return on investment schedules for 2027/28.
- 4.25.3. This cost is shown in the statement of accounts as a long-term investment. The council accrues interest on the outstanding investment balance monthly, which is credited to the Council's revenue account. For 2024/25 this was £35,756.
- 4.24.4 Current projections on the construction cashflow, interest rate projections and sales forecasts show that the net return to the Council is projected to be £5.4 million (including the return on the equity debt, profit share and car parking income foregone).

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

- 5.1.1 This report is financial in nature and consequently financial implications are included in the body of the report.

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 None identified at this time.

5.3 Risk Implications

- 5.3.1 Although the final outturn position in 2024/25 is showing a net underspend, there are still many uncertainties facing the Council in the coming years, from delayed local government funding reform, to cost of living crisis and legacy impacts from COVID. The 2024/25 General Fund surplus will improve financial resilience during this period of higher financial risk. The Council has a Strategy in place to address the financial

impacts and the 1st Quarter Monitoring report to September Cabinet will provide a further update.

- 5.3.2 The budget pressures seen in the HRA for 2024/25 clearly illustrate the current financial risks. Many of these pressures are also being experienced at a national level and the Government are currently reviewing several areas in the HRA, like the right to buy policy and the current rent settlement, to ensure that policy objectives can be met and that the social housing sector is viable. For Stevenage, increased regulation and operating requirements, combined with high inflation and recent rent capping, have significantly increased financial risk. Preliminary budget work for the 2026/27 year, has already identified the need to find savings of over £2 million and this trend is likely to continue. A full HRA Business Plan re-write is currently under way and will be used to inform future budget positions and help identify mitigations to the current financial risks faced by the ring-fenced account. The Council also hold risk assessed balances, but overall balances are set to reduce in coming years and this risk will need to be monitored closely.

5.4 Climate Change Implications

- 5.4.1 There are no specific climate change implications resulting from this report.

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 and HRA Business Plan.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.6.1 This report is of a technical nature reflecting the actual spend for the year for the General Fund and HRA. The identified ongoing budget changes reported have arisen through efficiencies and do not change any existing equalities and diversity policies, nor will they impact on any groups covered by statutory equalities duties.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- BD1 - 3rd Quarterly monitoring report General Fund and Housing Revenue Account
- BD2 – 2024/25 Council Tax and General Fund Budget
- BD3 – 2024/25 Final HRA Budget
- BD4 – National Audit Office – Supplementary Guidance Note (SGN) 04
- BD5 – Local Audit Delays Update March 2024

APPENDICES

Appendix A – General Fund Capital Strategy Q4
Appendix B – HRA Capital Strategy Q4

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY



| | | 2024/25 | | | | | 2025/26 | | | 2026/27 | | |
|-------------|---|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Cost Centre | Scheme | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Q4 Outturn | Under / Overspend | Slippage | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Variance Q4 v Q3 | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Variance Q4 v Q3 |
| | | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| | General Fund - Schemes | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Stevenage Direct Services | 4,662,228 | 2,825,299 | 2,782,061 | (3,368) | (1,876,798) | 2,578,762 | 4,455,560 | 1,876,798 | 4,166,000 | 4,166,000 | 0 |
| 0 | Housing Development | 811,000 | 937,416 | 937,416 | 0 | 126,416 | 17,330,487 | 17,204,071 | (126,416) | 2,874,748 | 2,874,748 | 0 |
| (0) | Finance and Estates | 867,723 | 502,275 | 464,060 | (117,820) | (285,844) | 2,376,378 | 2,662,222 | 285,844 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| (30,273) | Digital & Transformation | 230,217 | 399,472 | 399,472 | 0 | 138,982 | 451,978 | 312,996 | (138,982) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| (0) | Regeneration | 13,260,911 | 7,635,467 | 7,635,467 | (69,416) | (5,556,028) | 28,177,066 | 33,767,983 | 5,590,917 | 1,335,670 | 1,300,781 | (34,889) |
| (1) | Communities and Neighbourhoods | 616,124 | 260,562 | 250,587 | (129,957) | (235,580) | 970,916 | 1,206,496 | 235,580 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| (0) | Planning and Regulatory | 1,046,213 | 923,539 | 877,943 | (0) | (168,270) | 710,119 | 807,967 | 97,848 | 0 | 97,500 | 97,500 |
| 0 | Deferred Works Reserve | 164,732 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (164,732) | 32,000 | 196,732 | 164,732 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| - | Total Schemes | 21,659,148 | 13,484,030 | 13,347,007 | (320,561) | (8,021,854) | 52,627,706 | 60,614,027 | 7,986,321 | 8,376,418 | 8,439,029 | 62,611 |
| | General Fund - Resources | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BG902 | Capital Receipts | 3,472,168 | 1,545,411 | 1,437,923 | (251,146) | (1,783,099) | 6,075,552 | 8,408,138 | 2,332,586 | 2,674,498 | 2,674,498 | 0 |
| | SG1 Receipts | 521,000 | 521,000 | 521,000 | 0 | 0 | 829,000 | 829,000 | 0 | | | 0 |
| | Locality Review receipts | 14,903 | 14,903 | 14,903 | 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| BG905 | Ringfenced receipts | 1,402,986 | 212,802 | 212,802 | 0 | (1,190,184) | 243,432 | 1,435,916 | 1,192,484 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| BG904 | Towns Fund | 7,585,930 | 4,517,560 | 4,517,560 | (69,415) | (2,998,955) | 18,869,731 | 21,851,776 | 2,982,045 | 1,335,670 | 1,300,781 | (34,889) |
| BG904 | Other Grants and other contributions | 1,995,035 | 1,332,674 | 1,332,674 | 0 | (662,361) | 9,174,603 | 9,744,345 | 569,742 | 42,000 | 42,000 | 0 |
| BG904 | Contractors Deposits | 60,000 | 39,909 | 39,909 | 0 | (20,091) | 34,553 | 54,644 | 20,091 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| BG937 | Local – Neighbourhood CIL | 182,083 | 137,156 | 137,156 | 0 | (44,927) | 122,995 | 97,500 | (25,495) | 0 | 97,500 | 97,500 |
| BG903 | Capital Reserve (Housing Receipts) | 482,897 | 590,531 | 590,531 | 0 | 107,634 | 582,260 | 533,180 | (49,080) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| - | RCCO | 104,394 | 124,589 | 124,589 | 0 | 20,195 | 150,000 | 159,394 | 9,394 | 118,000 | 118,000 | 0 |
| VAR | Revenue Reserves | 462,034 | 357,735 | 357,735 | 0 | (104,299) | 340,000 | 249,595 | (90,405) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| BG916 | Capital Reserve (Revenue Savings) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| - | Prudential Borrowing Approved | 1,995,610 | 2,040,740 | 2,040,740 | 0 | 45,130 | 2,712,000 | 2,712,000 | 0 | 4,206,250 | 4,206,250 | 0 |
| - | Short Term borrowing and funded from private sale | 3,380,108 | 2,019,484 | 2,019,484 | 0 | (1,360,624) | 13,493,580 | 14,568,813 | 1,075,233 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| - | Funding Gap | | | | | | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Total Resources (General Fund) | 21,659,147 | 13,454,495 | 13,347,007 | (320,561) | (7,991,580) | 52,627,706 | 60,644,300 | 8,016,594 | 8,376,418 | 8,439,029 | 62,611 |

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY



| | | 2024/25 | | | | | 2025/26 | | | 2026/27 | | |
|-------------|---|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Cost Centre | Scheme | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Q4 Outturn | Under / Overspend | Slippage | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Variance Q4 v Q3 | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Variance Q4 v Q3 |
| | | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| | Stevenage Direct Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | | (30,274) | | | | | | |
| | Parks & Open Spaces | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KC218 | Hertford Road Play Area (S106 Funded) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25,000 | 25,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE494 | Green Space Access Infrastructure | 53,018 | 50,994 | 50,994 | 0 | (2,024) | 0 | 52,024 | 52,024 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE542 | Flat block waste management infrastructure | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 18,730 | 18,730 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE911 | Play Area Improvement Programme | 457,162 | 458,728 | 458,728 | 0 | 1,566 | 98,168 | 96,602 | (1,566) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE916 | Peartree skate park | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 90,000 | 90,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KS263 | Waste and Recycling System | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE377 | Transfer Station Can Compactor Equipmt & Tools | | | (2,732) | (2,732) | 0 | | 0 | | | | |
| KE453 | Rep JCB Shovel Equipmt & Tools | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | | | | |
| KE520 | Welfare improvements at out based hubs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE543 | Shrub bed programme | 47,109 | 44,330 | 44,330 | 0 | (2,779) | 44,000 | 46,779 | 2,779 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KG002 | Garages (GIP) | 1,564,199 | 1,564,199 | 1,534,329 | | (29,870) | 0 | 29,870 | 29,870 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KG039 | Garages (GIP) 10 year plan (£250k/annum) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 250,000 | 250,000 | 0 | 250,000 | 250,000 | 0 |
| KG040 | Garages asbestos roof capital works | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 584,000 | 584,000 | 0 | 3,916,000 | 3,916,000 | 0 |
| KG041 | Parks Infrastructure | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 50,000 | 0 | (50,000) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Vehicles,Plant,Equipment | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | | | | |
| KE497 | Trade Waste Containers | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Various | Vehicle/Plant replacement Programme - see Appendix 'A1 Vehicles' | 2,424,361 | 590,668 | 590,033 | (635) | (1,833,692) | 1,196,107 | 3,029,799 | 1,833,692 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE423 | Vehicle replacement for KE008ACU (Fiesta) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| KE512 | Vehicle replacement for LK08PVT Roll On/Off FAD CF85 410 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| KE951 | Domestic Recycling Collection Vehicles (x3) | 1,241,900 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (1,241,900) | 0 | 1,241,900 | 1,241,900 | 0 | 0 | |
| KE918 | Cleaning machine for the town centre | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| KE934 | Receptacles for new rounds etc | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 160,000 | 160,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| KE935 | Westin Road ABS Pump | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5,500 | 5,500 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| KE936 | Vehicles | 124,205 | 124,205 | 123,815 | (390) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| KE937 | Trailar vehicle solar panels | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16,300 | 16,300 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| KE598 | Food collection vehicles (x5) and associated costs | 593,397 | 1,605 | 1,605 | 0 | (591,792) | 36,603 | 628,395 | 591,792 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE599 | Replace four refuse vehicles - VU66 NPY, VU66 NPZ, VU66 NRE, VX17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE600 | Replace Sweeper - LK20 EJO | 61,156 | 61,156 | 61,156 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (0) | (0) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE601 | Shovel Loader to replace - FN69 XSU | 200,950 | 200,950 | 200,704 | (246) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE603 | Operational Vehicles | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 962,704 | 962,704 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE602 | Stand on Mowers to replace AN100520 & AN100559 | 14,903 | 14,903 | 14,903 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (0) | (0) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE938 | Purchase of new MEWP (Mobile Elevated Work Platform) | 73,850 | 73,850 | 73,850 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| KE942 | Replace Water Bowers - TRK 16 and TRK25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15,000 | 15,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| KE943 | Maxi Truck EL 4WD 48V 4WD articulated truck with a 1,000kg - 1,500kg l | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| KE945 | Tomcat Industrial Scrubber Dryer - 3 vehicles: MaxVac Urban (57.9), Kec | 114,000 | 114,000 | 114,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| KE925 | Repair closed church wall St Nicholas church | 4,243 | 4,243 | 4,243 | 0 | 0 | 25,757 | 25,757 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE926 | roof residual waste bay Cavendish Transfer Station | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 150,000 | 150,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE609 | Fuel pumps at Cavendish Road fuel station. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30,000 | 30,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE610 | Replacement work Cavendish Road fuel station - manhole covers | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17,000 | 17,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE929 | Digital system fleet and workshop operation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE930 | Digital system streets and grounds services | 110,440 | 110,440 | 100,440 | | (10,000) | 0 | 10,000 | 10,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE931 | Digital system play area inspections/managment | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE932 | Digital book of remembrance | 1,696 | 1,696 | 1,696 | (1) | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE933 | Asset Management system | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Total Stevenage Direct Services | 4,662,228 | 2,825,299 | 2,782,061 | (3,368) | (1,876,798) | 2,578,762 | 4,455,560 | 1,876,798 | 4,166,000 | 4,166,000 | 0 |
| | Housing Development Scheme (Joint GF/HRA) | | | | 1 | 0 | | | | | | |
| KG035 | Kenilworth - Community Centre | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,223,580 | 1,211,538 | (12,042) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KG034 | Kenilworth - Retail | | 12,042 | 12,042 | 0 | 12,042 | 0 | | 0 | | | |
| KG042 | The Oval (Redevelopment) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9,000,000 | 9,000,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY



| | | 2024/25 | | | | | 2025/26 | | | 2026/27 | | |
|-------------|--|---------------------|---------------------|------------|-------------------|----------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Cost Centre | Scheme | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Q4 Outturn | Under / Overspend | Slippage | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Variance Q4 v Q3 | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Variance Q4 v Q3 |
| | | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| KG036 | Kenilworth - private sale (Malvern Close & Blocks A3&A6) | 200,000 | 314,374 | 314,374 | 0 | 114,374 | 7,106,907 | 6,992,533 | (114,374) | 424,498 | 424,498 | 0 |
| Various | Housing Development Schemes (Joint GF/HRA) | 200,000 | 326,416 | 326,416 | 0 | 126,416 | 17,330,487 | 17,204,071 | (126,416) | 424,498 | 424,498 | 0 |
| KG038 | Marshgate Wholly Owned Housing Development Company (WOC) | 611,000 | 611,000 | 611,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2,450,250 | 2,450,250 | 0 |
| | | | | | 0 | | | | | | | |
| | Total Housing Development (including grants to Registered Providers) | 811,000 | 937,416 | 937,416 | 0 | 126,416 | 17,330,487 | 17,204,071 | (126,416) | 2,874,748 | 2,874,748 | 0 |

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY



| | | 2024/25 | | | | | 2025/26 | | | 2026/27 | | |
|-------------|---|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Cost Centre | Scheme | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Q4 Outturn | Under / Overspend | Slippage | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Variance Q4 v Q3 | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Variance Q4 v Q3 |
| | | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| | Finance & Estates | | | | 0 | | | | | | | |
| | Estates | | | | 0 | | | | | | | |
| KE526 | Cavendish Fire Protection : Urgent and H&S Works (delete) | 4,563 | 4,563 | 4,563 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE527 | Depots: Planned Preventative Works (reroof) - constuct roof over | 257,240 | 138,832 | 138,832 | (113,408) | (5,000) | 0 | 5,000 | 5,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE529 | Community Centres Urgent and H&S Works | 0 | 2,857 | 2,857 | 2,857 | | 3,970 | 3,970 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE536 | Multi Storey Car Park - Installation of emergency lighting | 94,003 | 1,135 | 1,135 | 0 | (92,868) | 112,431 | 205,299 | 92,868 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE554 | Bedwell Neighbourhood centre canopy repairs | 7,555 | 7,555 | 7,024 | (531) | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE555 | 8-10 The glebe roof replacement | 1,111 | 1,111 | 1,111 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE558 | MSCP resurface worn stairwell floor | 9,856 | 1,715 | 1,715 | 0 | (8,141) | 70,000 | 78,141 | 8,141 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE927 | Thermal Image Cameras | 140,000 | 140,000 | 116,989 | | (23,011) | 0 | 23,011 | 23,011 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE928 | Install misting system Cavendish | 5,000 | 240 | 240 | (4,760) | | 345,000 | 345,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE559 | MSCP / Indoor Market guttering | 1,000 | 1,000 | 383 | (617) | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR150 | Works to improve vacant premises prior to re-letting | 19,476 | 19,476 | 23,737 | 4,261 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR151 | Daneshill: Urgent and H&S Works | 19,088 | 19,088 | 10,138 | | (8,951) | 40,000 | 48,951 | 8,951 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR152 | BTC 2019/20 Backlog H&S Works | 0 | 892 | 892 | 892 | | 27,930 | 27,930 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR153 | BTC Urgent and H&S Works | 0 | 1,203 | 1,203 | 1,203 | | 65,780 | 65,780 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR154 | BTC Planned Preventative Works | 19,188 | 3,332 | 3,332 | 0 | (15,855) | 160,000 | 175,855 | 15,855 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR155 | EPC Surveys | 81,896 | 4,136 | 4,136 | 0 | (77,759) | 0 | 77,759 | 77,759 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR156 | EPC remedials | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 209,710 | 209,710 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR157 | Building condition and Insurance valuation Survey | 18,800 | 18,800 | 23,318 | 4,517 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR162 | Fairlands valley farmhouse roofing works | 0 | 0 | 1,950 | 1,950 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR165 | Cavendish Road reception access enhancement | 189 | 189 | 189 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR166 | Cavendish Road manhole covers | 48,079 | 48,079 | 26,988 | (21,092) | 0 | 0 | (0) | (0) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR167 | Cavendish Road penstock valve - stops runoff going to sewage | 0 | 0 | 422 | 422 | 0 | 49,886 | 49,886 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR169 | MSCP replacement fuse boards | 7,080 | 7,080 | 7,080 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR170 | BTC Essential works - Replace / upgrade doors, Lighting and control | 0 | 1,649 | 1,649 | 1,649 | | 195,000 | 195,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR179 | Daneshill House boilers | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 197,000 | 197,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR180 | Fry Road Nursery | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 80,000 | 80,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR181 | All buildings across corporate estate | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25,000 | 25,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE921 | Improvement works to Hampson Park depot | 42,600 | 42,600 | 42,600 | (0) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Estates Cont. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KR171 | Burwell Road shops - Reroofing, | 5,000 | 1,053 | 1,053 | 0 | (3,947) | 55,000 | 58,947 | 3,947 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR172 | MSCP fire door replacement | 5,000 | 1,867 | 1,867 | 0 | (3,133) | 30,000 | 33,133 | 3,133 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR173 | Commercial - shop units roof works | 50,000 | 2,821 | 2,821 | 0 | (47,179) | 75,000 | 122,179 | 47,179 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR174 | Commercial properties - General repairs | 0 | 0 | 4,612 | 4,612 | 0 | 100,000 | 100,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR175 | cavendish - IT server room works | 0 | 0 | 1,722 | 1,722 | 0 | 65,000 | 65,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR176 | King George V Pavilion - Works to existing Fascia boards | 0 | 0 | 851 | 851 | 0 | 20,000 | 20,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR177 | Replace 1 FM Team vehicle | 28,000 | 28,000 | 24,977 | (3,023) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR178 | Cavendish - generator | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 90,000 | 90,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KR916 | Commercial Properties Refurbishment (MRC Programme) | 0 | 0 | 821 | 821 | 0 | 359,671 | 359,671 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KS278 | New Management Software | 3,000 | 3,000 | 2,853 | (147) | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Total Estates | 867,723 | 502,275 | 464,060 | (117,820) | (285,844) | 2,376,378 | 2,662,222 | 285,844 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Total Finance & Estates | 867,723 | 502,275 | 464,060 | (117,820) | (285,844) | 2,376,378 | 2,662,222 | 285,844 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY



| | | 2024/25 | | | | | 2025/26 | | | 2026/27 | | |
|-------------|---|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Cost Centre | Scheme | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Q4 Outturn | Under / Overspend | Slippage | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Variance Q4 v Q3 | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Variance Q4 v Q3 |
| | | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| | Corporate Projects, Customer Services & Technology | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | IT General | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KS268 | Infrastructure Investment | 125,000 | 294,255 | 398,262 | 104,007 | 169,255 | 169,255 | 0 | (169,255) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KS318 | Core ICT Equipment | 0 | 0 | 1,210 | 1,210 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KS320 | Telephony Hardware Refresh 2425 | 22,500 | 22,500 | 0 | (22,500) | 0 | 75,638 | 75,638 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KS321 | VDI hosting Hardware Refresh | 11,250 | 11,250 | 0 | (11,250) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KS322 | Hardware Replacment Program | 78,660 | 78,660 | 0 | (78,660) | 0 | 75,225 | 75,225 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KS323 | Hardware Replacment Program (HRA Element) | (37,466) | (37,466) | 0 | 37,466 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KS324 | SBC Idox Re-Tender, and Dell Memory (RAM) for Virtual desktop | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 131,860 | 131,860 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Total IT General | 199,944 | 369,199 | 399,472 | 30,273 | 169,255 | 451,978 | 282,723 | (169,255) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Connected to Our Customer (CTOC) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KS274 | New CRM Technology | 30,273 | 30,273 | 0 | (30,273) | (30,273) | 0 | 30,273 | 30,273 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Total CTOC | 30,273 | 30,273 | 0 | (30,273) | (30,273) | 0 | 30,273 | 30,273 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Total Corporate Projects, Customer Services & Technology | 230,217 | 399,472 | 399,472 | 0 | 138,982 | 451,978 | 312,996 | (138,982) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Regeneration | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KE506 | Public Sector Hub | 929,988 | 119,555 | 119,555 | 0 | (810,434) | 0 | 810,434 | 810,434 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE541 | Railway Station MSCP BUILDINGS | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Lease buy outs | 379,750 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (379,750) | 0 | 379,750 | 379,750 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE949 | Gunnels wood LEP Funded | 492,183 | 492,183 | 492,183 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE585 | Public Sector Hub Assembly | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE585 | Ring fenced Receipts Funding | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE947 | SG1 Joint Venture | 3,180,108 | 1,814,368 | 1,814,368 | 0 | (1,365,740) | 6,169,892 | 7,535,632 | 1,365,740 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE251 | Parkplace - works ahead of Indoor Market relocation (Boston House) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,100,000 | 1,100,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KE012 | Old Indoor Market space - reconfiguration | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2,100,000 | 2,100,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE948 | Spur Road (Grant funded) | 599,705 | 599,705 | 599,705 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Towns Fund: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KE538 | Towns Fund | 0 | 113,817 | 113,817 | 0 | 113,817 | 0 | (113,817) | (113,817) | (88,390) | (88,390) | 0 |
| KE560 | Stevenage Enterprise Centre | 1,500,000 | 2,156,274 | 2,156,274 | 0 | 656,274 | 2,500,000 | 1,843,726 | (656,274) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE561 | Gunnels Wood Road Infrastructure | 979,177 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (979,177) | 0 | 979,177 | 979,177 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE562 | Station Gateway | 500,000 | 430,584 | 430,584 | (69,416) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE563 | Marshgate Biotech | 0 | 34,889 | 34,889 | 0 | 34,889 | 207,174 | 207,174 | 0 | 0 | (34,889) | (34,889) |
| KE564 | Stevenage Innovation & Technology Centre (SITEC) | 100,000 | 210,225 | 210,225 | 0 | 110,225 | 2,900,000 | 2,789,775 | (110,225) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Old Indoor Market space - reconfiguration | | | | | | 2,000,000 | 2,000,000 | 0 | | | |
| KE565 | New Towns Heritage Centre | 100,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (100,000) | 1,400,000 | 1,500,000 | 100,000 | 479,820 | 479,820 | 0 |
| KE566 | Stevenage Sports & Leisure Club | 2,000,000 | 1,066,525 | 1,066,525 | 0 | (933,475) | 7,450,000 | 8,383,475 | 933,475 | 326,930 | 326,930 | 0 |
| KE567 | Cycling & Pedestrian Connectivity | 1,200,000 | 511,016 | 511,016 | 0 | (688,984) | 1,200,000 | 1,888,984 | 688,984 | 113,320 | 113,320 | 0 |
| KE568 | Diversification of Retail & Garden Square | 700,000 | 76,718 | 76,718 | 0 | (623,282) | 1,150,000 | 1,773,282 | 623,282 | 503,990 | 503,990 | 0 |
| KE568 | Diversification of Retail & Garden Square (Boston House) | 600,000 | 9,608 | 9,608 | 0 | (590,392) | | 590,392 | 590,392 | | | |
| Various | Towns Fund | 7,679,177 | 7,679,177 | 4,609,657 | (69,416) | (3,000,104) | 18,807,174 | 21,842,167 | 3,034,993 | 1,335,670 | 1,300,781 | (34,889) |
| | Total Regeneration | 13,260,911 | 7,635,467 | 7,635,467 | (69,416) | (5,556,028) | 28,177,066 | 33,767,983 | 5,590,917 | 1,335,670 | 1,300,781 | (34,889) |

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY



| | | 2024/25 | | | | | 2025/26 | | | 2026/27 | | |
|-------------|--|---------------------|---------------------|------------|-------------------|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Cost Centre | Scheme | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Q4 Outturn | Under / Overspend | Slippage | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Variance Q4 v Q3 | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Variance Q4 v Q3 |
| | | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| | Community & Neighbourhoods | | | | 0 | | | | | | | |
| KC202 | Fairlands Valley Park - Aqua | 3,571 | 3,571 | 0 | (3,571) | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KC232 | SALC and the Swim Centre Urgent and H&S Works | 57,992 | 40,971 | 40,971 | 0 | (17,021) | 0 | 17,021 | 17,021 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KC231 | SALC, Swim Centre, and Fairlands Valley Sailing Centre 2019/20 Backlog H&S Works | 16,615 | 16,615 | 16,615 | (0) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KC242 | SLL Leisure management - end of contract capital provision | 235,970 | 40,714 | 40,714 | (133,256) | (62,000) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KC237 | Fire stopping works at SALC | 0 | 0 | 2,431 | 2,431 | | 77,819 | 77,819 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KC255 | Pool cover (to be grant funded) | 36,000 | 36,000 | 38,677 | 2,677 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KC238 | Lift replacement at SALC | 45,000 | 6,715 | 6,715 | 0 | (38,285) | 0 | 38,285 | 38,285 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KC240 | Replacement Camera programme | 40,000 | 40,000 | 34,948 | | (5,052) | 10,000 | 15,052 | 5,052 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KC052 | Shephalbury Park | 0 | 0 | 2,584 | 2,584 | 0 | 5,600 | 5,600 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KC236 | Ridlins Athletics | 56 | 56 | 0 | (56) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE917 | Ridlins Athletics Facility | 15,916 | 15,916 | 15,154 | (762) | 0 | 0 | 10,000 | 10,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KC243 | New Leisure Contract - roof works | 4 | 4 | 0 | (4) | 0 | 0 | 27,000 | 27,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KC245 | Equipment replacement at Fairlands Valley Sailing Centre | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 31,887 | 31,887 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KC246 | Aqua Park - Rubber crumb surface replacement | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 35,000 | 35,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KC247 | Lighting of clock tower - permanent install | 65,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (65,000) | 0 | 65,000 | 65,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KC250 | Fire stopping at SALC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 220,000 | 220,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KC252 | Lift procurement at SALC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 158,200 | 158,200 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KC253 | Sailing Centre | 10,000 | 10,000 | 4,948 | | (5,052) | 0 | 5,052 | 5,052 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE118 | Lighting Desk SALC - Equipmt & Tools | 50,000 | 50,000 | 46,830 | | (3,170) | 155,510 | 158,680 | 3,170 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE606 | Operational Plant | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 105,000 | 105,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE604 | CCTV Upgrade | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 159,900 | 159,900 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KE611 | New pumps/aerators to FVP lakes | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12,000 | 12,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KC210 | Riddlin - Bolier and Hot Water System | 40,000 | | 0 | 0 | (40,000) | 0 | 65,000 | 65,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Total Community & Neighbourhoods | 616,124 | 260,562 | 250,587 | (129,957) | (235,580) | 970,916 | 1,206,496 | 235,580 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY



| | | 2024/25 | | | | | 2025/26 | | | 2026/27 | | |
|------------------|--|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Cost Centre | Scheme | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Q4 Outturn | Under / Overspend | Slippage | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Variance Q4 v Q3 | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Variance Q4 v Q3 |
| | | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Page 53 CR911 | <u>Planning & Regulatory</u> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | KC244 Community Climate Change Fund | 92,083 | 92,083 | 47,156 | 0 | (44,927) | 122,995 | 97,500 | (25,495) | 0 | 97,500 | 97,500 |
| | KC916 Street Scene UKSPF | 145,075 | 136,830 | 136,830 | 0 | (8,245) | 60,400 | 68,645 | 8,245 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | KC917 St Georges MSCP - conversion of store room and boiler room to office space | 12,829 | 12,829 | 12,829 | (0) | 0 | 37,171 | 37,171 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | KE119 Off Street Car Parks (Multi Storey Car Parks) | 529,000 | 529,000 | 531,028 | 2,028 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | KE119 Phase 4 ENPR - Forum | 70,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (70,000) | | 70,000 | 70,000 | | | |
| | KE120 Park Place Remedials | 60,000 | 39,909 | 39,909 | 0 | (20,091) | 34,553 | 54,644 | 20,091 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | KE201 Hard standings | 34,338 | 10,000 | 6,950 | (10,943) | (16,444) | 0 | 16,444 | 16,444 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | KE217 Parking Restrictions | 30,000 | 38,563 | 38,272 | 8,272 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | KE470 Electric Car Charging Points (Grant funded) | 33,750 | 33,750 | 33,750 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | KE530 Car Park Equipment - Digitalisation | 0 | 0 | 723 | 723 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | KE531 Workplace Travel Plan | 9,213 | 650 | 650 | | (8,563) | 0 | 8,563 | 8,563 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | KG011 Dis.Fac. Grants GRANTS | 29,925 | 29,925 | 29,925 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | | | |
| | KC918 MSCP Lift Reinstatement | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 200,000 | 200,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | KC919 Car Parks Resurfacing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 140,000 | 140,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | KC920 Car Parks - Lighting Phased Replacement (2 years) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 40,000 | 40,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | KC918 MSCP Painting | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 40,000 | 40,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | KC918 MSCP Fire Alarm Upgrade | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25,000 | 25,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | KE921 Parking Restrictions | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10,000 | 10,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | KE569 Cashless on street parking transition | 0 | 0 | (81) | (81) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Total Planning & Regulatory | 1,046,213 | 923,539 | 877,943 | (0) | (168,270) | 710,119 | 807,967 | 97,848 | 0 | 97,500 | 97,500 |
| | | | | | 0 | | | | | | | |
| | Deferred Works Reserve | 164,732 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (164,732) | 32,000 | 196,732 | 164,732 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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HOUSING CAPITAL STRATEGY



| Cost Centre | Scheme | 2024/25 | | | 2025/26 | 2025/26 | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | 2027/2028 | 2028/2029 |
|--|---|---------------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 outturn | Slippage | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Variance Q4 v Q3 | Q4 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy |
| | | £ | £ | | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Page 55 BH930 BH902 BH906 BH901 BH903 BH906 BH905 | SUMMARY | | | | | | | | | |
| | Capital Programme Excl New Build (Housing Investment) | 24,431,083 | 25,195,463 | 728,306 | 23,424,077 | 22,665,090 | (758,987) | 19,993,134 | 21,519,212 | 21,543,326 |
| | Special Projects & Equipment | 36,073 | 30,680 | 30,680 | | | | | | |
| | New Build (Housing Development) | 6,044,513 | 5,681,172 | (363,340) | 28,642,949 | 29,006,289 | 363,340 | 37,057,000 | 18,770,580 | 8,400,000 |
| | Digital & Transformation | 196,637 | 166,899 | (29,738) | 286,299 | 316,037 | 29,738 | 199,000 | 740,000 | 764,000 |
| | TOTAL HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME | 30,708,306 | 31,074,215 | 365,908 | 52,353,325 | 51,987,416 | (365,909) | 57,249,134 | 41,029,792 | 30,707,326 |
| | (31,074,214.56) | | | | | | | | | |
| | HRA USE OF RESOURCES | | | | | | | | | |
| | BH930 MRR (Self Financing Depreciation) | 18,468,068 | 19,312,070 | 844,003 | 13,340,935 | 13,096,238 | (244,697) | 13,532,319 | 13,938,288 | 14,356,438 |
| | BH902 Other Capital Receipts | - | - | - | 1,375,000 | - | (1,375,000) | - | - | - |
| | BH906 Section 20 Contribution (leaseholders income) | 1,226,056 | 281,157 | - 944,899 | 2,962,878 | 2,957,878 | (5,000) | 3,261,738 | 1,173,177 | 805,409 |
| | BH901 (RTB) new Build provision | 5,238,369 | 5,625,794 | 387,425 | 10,199,159 | 11,186,734 | 987,575 | 3,854,421 | 3,982,876 | 4,114,542 |
| | BH903 RTB - Debt Provision Receipts | 428,523 | 1,128,962 | 700,439 | 1,464,120 | 1,464,120 | | 1,050,506 | 1,076,769 | 1,103,688 |
| | Borrowing Prudential | - | - | - | 14,335,365 | 14,335,365 | | 30,959,784 | 12,280,024 | 9,327,249 |
| | Borrowing Short term | | | - | | | | | | |
| | S106 | | | - | | | | | | |
| | BH906 Developer Contributions (Kenilworth) | | | - | | | | | | |
| | Direct Revenue Financing (was RCCO) | 3,937,350 | 2,836,259 | - 1,101,091 | 229,868 | 1,386,326 | 1,156,458 | 3,390,366 | 4,438,658 | - |
| | BH905 Grant | 1,409,940 | 1,889,973 | 480,033 | 8,446,000 | 7,560,755 | (885,245) | 1,200,000 | 4,140,000 | 1,000,000 |
| | TOTAL HRA RESOURCES FOR CAPITAL | 30,708,306 | 31,074,215 | 365,909 | 52,353,325 | 51,987,416 | (365,909) | 57,249,134 | 41,029,792 | 30,707,326 |
| | | | | | | 0 | (0) | | | |
| | Major Repair Reserve Bought Forward (BH930) | (5,915,321) | (5,955,632) | | (81,721) | | 81,721 | (41,936) | (41,936) | (41,937) |
| | Depreciation (increasing MRR) | (12,755,509) | (13,356,438) | | (13,138,174) | (13,138,174) | | (13,532,319) | (13,938,289) | (14,356,438) |
| | MRR Used (decreasing MRR) | 18,468,068 | 19,312,070 | | 13,340,935 | 13,096,238 | (244,697) | 13,532,319 | 13,938,288 | 14,356,438 |
| | Major Repair Reserve Carried Forward | (202,762) | | | 121,040 | (41,936) | (162,976) | (41,936) | (41,937) | (41,937) |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BH901 Total RTB Receipts Bought Forward | (7,878,356) | (7,878,356) | | (4,366,449) | (6,428,767) | (2,062,317) | (1,100,008) | (1,100,008) | (1,100,007) |
| | Total RTB Receipts Received | (1,701,197) | (4,176,205) | | (5,857,975) | (5,857,975) | | (3,854,421) | (3,982,876) | (4,114,542) |
| | Total RTB Receipts Used HRA | 5,238,369 | 5,625,794 | | 10,199,159 | 11,186,734 | 987,575 | 3,854,421 | 3,982,876 | 4,114,542 |
| | Total RTB Receipts Carried Forward | (4,341,184) | (6,428,767) | | (25,266) | (1,100,008) | (1,074,742) | (1,100,008) | (1,100,007) | (1,100,007) |

HOUSING CAPITAL STRATEGY



| Cost Centre | Scheme | 2024/25 | | | 2025/26 | 2025/26 | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | 2027/2028 | 2028/2029 |
|--|---|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 outturn | Slippage | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Variance Q4 v Q3 | Q4 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy |
| | | £ | £ | | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Various KH299 Various Various KH205 KH321 KH332 KH335 KH312 KH114 KH144 KH122 KH157 KH327 KH223 KH224 | CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXCL. NEW BUILD | | | | | | | | | |
| | Planned Investment including Decent Homes | | | | | | | | | |
| | Decent Homes - Internal/External Works | 3,795,020 | 2,997,010 | (777,848) | 8,430,690 | 8,430,690 | | 10,685,510 | 11,826,610 | 12,814,090 |
| | Decent Homes External Works | | | | | | | | | |
| | Insulation Measures | | | | 51,720 | 51,720 | | 58,260 | 58,260 | 63,120 |
| | Decent Homes - Roofing | | | | | | | | | |
| | Decent Homes - Flat Blocks | 10,890,790 | 12,417,750 | 1,470,720 | 7,406,687 | 6,806,700 | (599,987) | 288,780 | 291,300 | 315,620 |
| | Communal Heating | | | | 103,440 | 59,440 | (44,000) | 115,510 | 116,520 | 126,250 |
| | High Rises - Improvement Works | 1,271,530 | 267,511 | (1,004,018) | 3,810,270 | 3,310,270 | (500,000) | | | |
| | New Schemes to be created | | | | | | | 2,021,490 | 2,039,070 | 2,209,330 |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Health & Safety | | | | | | | | | |
| | Fire Safety | 300,000 | 949,304 | 949,304 | | | | | | |
| | Asbestos Management | 230,100 | 335,629 | 105,530 | 250,000 | 250,000 | | 346,540 | 349,550 | 378,740 |
| | Subsidence | 137,630 | 115,082 | (22,545) | 124,130 | 124,130 | | 138,620 | 139,820 | 151,500 |
| | Contingent Major Repairs | 552,090 | 711,469 | 159,380 | 577,550 | 577,550 | | 577,570 | 582,590 | 631,240 |
| | StockCondSurvey | | | | | | | | | |
| | Dhredecs | | 849 | 849 | | | | | | |
| | Building safety | | | (300,000) | 870,000 | 870,000 | | 1,155,140 | 1,165,180 | 599,670 |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Estate & Communal Area | | | | | | | | | |
| | Asset Review - Challenging Assets | 601,891 | 490,574 | (111,317) | 464,400 | 464,400 | | 479,261 | 494,597 | 510,424 |
| | Asset Review Non Red Shelter | | 32,588 | 32,588 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Various | Other HRA Schemes | | | | | | | | | |
| | TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXCL. NEW BUILD | 24,431,083 | 25,195,463 | 728,306 | 23,424,077 | 22,665,090 | (758,987) | 19,993,134 | 21,519,212 | 21,543,326 |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | SPECIAL PROJECTS & EQUIPMENT | | | | | | | | | |
| | HRA Equipment | | | | | | | | | |
| KH015 | Capital Equipment (including Supported Housing Equip) | 36,073 | 30,680 | 30,680 | | | | | | |
| | Sub Total Special Projects & Equipment | 36,073 | 30,680 | 30,680 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |

HOUSING CAPITAL STRATEGY



| Cost Centre | Scheme | 2024/25 | | | 2025/26 | 2025/26 | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | 2027/2028 | 2028/2029 |
|---|---|---------------------|------------|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 outturn | Slippage | Q3 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Variance Q4 v Q3 | Q4 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy | Q4 Capital Strategy |
| | | £ | £ | | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| KH233 KH244 KH245 KH247 KH303 KH279 KH280 KH282 KH283 | CAPITAL PROGRAMME NEW BUILD | | | | | | | | | |
| | New Build Programme - eligible for 1-4-1 | 4,382,769 | 3,880,890 | (501,879) | 21,777,041 | 21,809,730 | 32,689 | 14,612,000 | 12,783,580 | 8,400,000 |
| | New Build Programme - ineligible | 1,661,744 | 1,800,282 | 138,539 | 6,865,908 | 7,196,559 | 330,651 | 22,445,000 | 5,987,000 | |
| | Open Market Acquisitions (Social Rent) | 1,500,000 | 1,868,418 | 368,418 | | | | | 891,790 | |
| | Twin Foxes | | | | | | | | | |
| | March Hare in Burwell Road (15 Units) | 100,000 | 261,519 | 161,520 | 2,644,479 | 2,482,959 | (161,520) | | (1,800,000) | |
| | Kenilworth Close (105 units) (Ineligible 141) | 643,723 | 941,416 | 297,693 | | 171,497 | 171,497 | | | |
| | Kenilworth Close 1 for 1 Expenditure (61.8%) | 469,190 | | (469,190) | | | | | | |
| | Dunn Close (27 units, 21 main block SA) | 1,300,000 | 1,259,790 | (40,210) | 415,967 | 456,177 | 40,210 | | | |
| | 29 Shephell Way | 8,834 | | (8,834) | | | | | | |
| | Symonds Green | 16,731 | 83,991 | 67,260 | | | | | | |
| | North Road | 12,043 | 11,923 | (120) | | 120 | 120 | | | |
| | Brent Court Social Rent | 1,001,092 | 814,107 | (186,985) | 6,865,908 | 7,052,893 | 186,985 | 22,445,000 | 5,987,000 | |
| KH288 KH315 KH336 | Schemes Under Development | 992,900 | 440,009 | (552,892) | 18,716,595 | 18,842,643 | 126,048 | 14,612,000 | 12,800,000 | 8,400,000 |
| | TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME NEW BUILD | 6,044,513 | 5,681,172 | (363,340) | 28,642,949 | 29,006,289 | 363,340 | 37,057,000 | 18,770,580 | 8,400,000 |
| | INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY | | | | | | | | | |
| | IT General (IT) | | | | | | | | | |
| | Infrastructure Investment | 25,000 | 136,247 | 88,932 | 266,299 | 177,367 | (88,932) | 199,000 | 740,000 | 764,000 |
| | Core ICT Equipment Equipmt & Tools | | 849 | | | | | | | |
| | 2024/25 | | | | 20,000 | 20,000 | | | | |
| | Total General IT | 25,000 | 137,096 | 88,932 | 286,299 | 197,367 | (88,932) | 199,000 | 740,000 | 764,000 |
| | Connected To Our Customers (CTOC) | | | | | | | | | |
| | New CRM Technology (Digital Platform) | 52,967 | 29,803 | | | | | | | |
| | Total CTOC | 52,967 | 29,803 | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Housing All Under One Roof programme (HAUOR) | | | | | | | | | |
| | Housing Improvements - Northgate online | 118,670 | | (118,670) | | 118,670 | 118,670 | | | |
| | Total HAUOR | 118,670 | | (118,670) | | 118,670 | 118,670 | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | TOTAL ICT INCLUDING DIGITAL AGENDA | 196,637 | 166,899 | (29,738) | 286,299 | 316,037 | 29,738 | 199,000 | 740,000 | 764,000 |

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Part I – Release to Press



Agenda item: **##**

Meeting Cabinet
Portfolio Area Housing and Housing Development
Date 9 July 2025



HOUSING HEALTH AND SAFETY NEW LEGAL AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

LEAD OFFICER: DENISE LEWIS

NON-KEY DECISION

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 Stevenage Borough Council is committed to providing warm, safe and sustainable homes. This commitment is reflected in the Council's 'Making Stevenage Even Better Corporate Plan', through budget commitments and a programme of work to continue investment into current and new social housing. The purpose of this report is to set out the implications of and the Council's approach to meeting new legal and regulatory requirements in respect of housing health and safety hazards. A number of actions are proposed, which are to be implemented through a phased approach from October 2025.
- 1.2 The report also advises on the proposed introduction of of electrical safety regulations for the social housing from November 2025 and the actions being taken to ensure compliance.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the new legal and regulatory requirements in relation to housing health and safety hazards as set out in the Social Housing Regulation Act

2023 which are due to be implemented by way of secondary legislation with the initial phase to come into effect from 25 October 2025.

- 2.2 To note the planned introduction of new electrical safety standards for the social housing sector in November 2025.
- 2.3 To endorse the work being carried out to ensure compliance with the new requirements in relation to damp, mould and condensation and all types of emergency hazards.
- 2.4 To note that the Executive Housing Working Group (EHWG) will receive regular updates on compliance with the new housing health and safety legal requirements both prior to and following their introduction in October 2025. These updates will include implications of the planned widening of the scope of the new legal requirements during 2026 and 2027 and actions required to ensure compliance once known.
- 2.5 To approve the amended Repairs and Maintenance Policy as attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.6 To delegate authority to the Strategic Director (Richard Protheroe) to agree any further minor changes to the Repairs and Maintenance Policy and/or Damp and Mould Policy after consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder.
- 2.7 To note the potential resourcing implications for the proposed extension of the new legal and regulatory requirements to other Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) hazards in 2026 and 2027.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Making Stevenage Even Better Corporate Plan 2024-27 includes a commitment to maintaining good quality homes. The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) inspection against the Consumer Standards in September 2024 recognised the work the Council already does to ensure tenant's homes are safe and well maintained through the C2 grading awarded. The Council is fully committed to doing the right thing to support tenants and residents, and being a C1 social housing landlord and, in that context, the new legal housing health and safety requirements outlined in this report are to be welcomed.
- 3.2 Following the tragic death of 2-year-old Awaab Ishak in December 2020 because of prolonged exposure to damp and mould in his social rented home in Rochdale the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 provides for the implementation of 'Awaab's Law' by effectively inserting into social housing tenancy agreements an implied term that will require landlords to comply with new requirements, as set out in detail through secondary legislation.
- 3.3 A consultation on the key proposals to be included within Awaab's Law was carried out between 9 January and 5 March 2024. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) confirmed in February 2025 that Awaab's Law will come into place in a phased approach as set out in the table below. The phased introduction of Awaab's Law is designed around a 'test and learn' approach to ensure that the reforms are delivering benefits for tenants.

| Timeline | New Legal and Regulatory Obligations |
|--------------|---|
| October 2025 | <p>Address the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk of harm to tenants within fixed timescales. 2. All emergency repairs including but not limited to damp and mould hazards as soon as possible and within no longer than 24 hours. |
| 2026 | <p>Requirements will be expanded to a wider range of hazards including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - excess cold and excess heat - falls - structural collapse - fire, electrical and explosions - hygiene hazards. |
| 2027 | <p>Requirements will extend to include all remaining hazards as defined by the HHSRS (excluding overcrowding).</p> <p>The full list of hazards can be found in schedule 1 to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (England) Regulations 2005.</p> |

- 3.4 The HHSRS is a risk-based evaluation tool to help identify and protect against potential health and safety related risks and hazards introduced under the [Housing Act 2004](#) and applies to residential properties in England and Wales.
- 3.5 A hazard is any risk of harm to the health or safety of an actual occupier of accommodation that arises from a deficiency in the dwelling.
- 3.6 Category 1 hazards are those where the most serious harm outcome is identified, for example, death, permanent paralysis, permanent loss of consciousness, loss of a limb or serious fracture. If a hazard is less serious or less urgent, this is known as a category 2 hazard.

4 CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 On 25 June 2025 in a letter received from Matthew Pennycook MP, Minister of State for Housing and Planning it was confirmed that the regulations had been laid on that date to enable introduction of phase 1 of Awaab's Law from 25 October 2025.
- 4.2 This initial phase will require social landlords to investigate and fix dangerous damp and mould hazards within set time periods as well as repair all types of emergency hazards within 24 hours. Social landlords who fail to comply face

being taken to court by tenants who will be able to hold them to account by taking legal action for a breach of contract.

4.3 The key provisions within the final proposals reflect feedback provided through the Government's consultation process and are summarised as follows:

1. Within 10 working days of becoming aware of a potential hazard investigate whether such a hazard exists.
2. Produce a written summary of the findings of the investigation (in most circumstances) and provide this to residents within 3 working days of the investigation concluding.
3. If the investigation finds that a hazard presents a significant risk of harm to the health or safety of a resident, the social landlord must, in most circumstances, within 5 working days of the investigation concluding, make the property safe (using temporary measures if necessary) and begin any other work needed to stop the problem coming back as soon as possible, and no later than 12 weeks after the end of the investigation. The social landlord must satisfactorily complete repair works within a reasonable time period.
4. In an emergency situation, investigate and action any emergency repairs as soon as reasonably practicable and, in any event, within 24 hours.
5. If the property cannot be made safe within the specified timescales for Awaab's Law, offer to arrange for the residents to stay in suitable alternative accommodation, at the social landlord's expense, until it is safe to return.

Examples of an 'emergency hazard' as set out in the consultation document include:

- gas leaks.
- broken boilers.
- lack of water supply.
- electrical hazards such as exposed wiring.
- significant leaks.
- broken external doors or windows that present a risk to home security.
- prevalent damp and mould that is impacting a resident's ability to breathe.

4.4 Awaab's Law implements significant changes for social landlords and all frontline staff, not just Repairs teams, will need to familiarise themselves with the 28 relevant HHSRS hazards, as well as ensuring that they can identify an emergency repair under the new legislation. Emergency hazards will need to be prioritised and escalated appropriately.

4.5 Achieving required response times and being able to evidence compliance with the new requirements will necessitate clear and accurate records to be

maintained of all interactions with tenants and contractors regarding any hazards which will be challenging.

- 4.6 All attempts at access will need to be documented. Whilst it will be important to understand tenants' concerns and individual circumstances including any vulnerabilities it will be important to take a robust approach so that inspections and subsequent repair work can proceed. Where access is denied, or a tenant fails to respond to requests, access injunctions will need to be considered.
- 4.7 The new requirements are likely to lead to further pressure on Repairs and Maintenance services and associated budgets.

5 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- 5.1 In relation to Damp and Mould hazards having a dedicated team responsible for managing such cases mitigates the potential pressures and risk of non-compliance. However, the service is currently reliant on agency staffing resources and as presents a risk a transition to a permanent staffing structure is in progress. A review of processes and resourcing has also taken place to ensure that the prescriptive timescales for carrying out investigations and commencement of works can be met. In 2024/25 the performance targets were aligned with those expected to be introduced under Awaab's Law.
- 5.2 The following table summarises the various actions and activities that have been completed or are planned to ensure SBC are well prepared for the implementation of Awaab's Law in relation to Damp and Mould:

| Activity/Action | Description | Status |
|-----------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. People | Conclude recruitment to vacant and agency filled roles in the Damp and Mould team to ensure a permanent staffing establishment is in place to deliver and embed improvements. | Estimated completion 31 July 2025 |
| | Recruit to an additional 1 x FTE Business Support Officer role to ensure robust and up to date performance data is available to demonstrate compliance. This post is to be funded within existing budgets. | Estimated completion 31 July 2025 |
| | A programme of HHSRS training delivered for all front-line teams. | Completed 2024/25 |
| | HHSRS training to be included on induction plan for new starters. | 2025/26 |
| | Mandatory refresher training to be provided for all relevant staff at an agreed frequency. | 2025/26 |
| 2. Processes | Review and update processes to reflect | Estimated |

| Activity/Action | Description | Status |
|-----------------|--|--|
| | target timescales for completion of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inspections - Issuing a report to the tenant - Completing works. | completion 31 July 2025 |
| | A workshop with relevant staff held on 15 May to identify issues within the current processes and an action plan developed. Follow-up workshops planned to finalise processes and embed change. | Estimated completion 31 July 2025 |
| | No-access process in place across the wider Housing service which has been informed by relevant teams. | Completed |
| 3. Procurement | Appoint support contractors to carry out specialist damp and mould related works. A report on the procurement of support contractors for Repairs and Voids was presented to Cabinet for approval in February 2025. The associated contract awards were approved by the Strategic Director (Richard Protheroe) in March 2025 and mobilisation commenced in late May/early June 2025. | Completed |
| 4. Policy | The Damp and Mould Policy has been reviewed and an updated version is available on the website Damp, Condensation and Mould | Completed |
| | However, the Policy will be further reviewed to ensure it is consistent with the secondary legislation and associated guidance. | In progress |
| | The current Repairs and Maintenance Policy was approved by Cabinet in December 2024. In light of Awaab's Law and in response to some recent Housing Ombudsman Service determinations the Policy has been updated to include the following: | Completed |

| Activity/Action | Description | Status |
|-----------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| | <p>1. Definition of a routine repair and where a repair falls outside of that definition the target timescale(s) for completion.</p> <p>2. Reference to vulnerabilities being reflected in the assessment of the priority to be awarded to a repair.</p> <p>An amended version of the Policy which highlights the proposed amendments is attached as Appendix 1 for approval.</p> <p>The Policy will be further reviewed to ensure it is consistent with the secondary legislation and associated guidance.</p> | In progress |
| 5. Performance | <p>In 2024/25 Damp and Mould KPI's were introduced as part of the corporate quarterly performance suite. The KPI's reflected the target timescales expected to be introduced under Awaab's Law.</p> <p>Some data integrity issues have been identified due to historic inspections not being closed and/or updated in a timely manner.</p> | Completed |
| | <p>For 2025/26 the KPI definitions and parameters are being reviewed to ensure reporting reflects current performance and is aligned with the prescribed target timescales as set out in the secondary legislation.</p> | To be agreed by Cabinet in July 2025 |
| 6. Technology | <p>To enable inspection reports can be provided to tenants within the 3 working day target following an investigation/inspection an app is being utilised as an interim solution.</p> | Completed |
| | <p>In the longer term the plan is to have a system-based solution which will enable a case management approach to be more effectively implemented in accordance with the recommendations of the CSC following their scrutiny review of damp and mould. This is included on the Housing Systems road map which will be implemented once</p> | Estimated completion 2026/27 |

| Activity/Action | Description | Status |
|-----------------|--|--------|
| | the NEC migration to the Cloud project has been completed and the necessary system upgrades carried out. | |

- 5.3 Whilst planning for the implementation of Awaab's Law in respect of Damp and Mould is well underway performance in Q1 of 2025/26 has been impacted by capacity issues due to agency staff leaving. New interim cover arrangements have been put in place pending completion of the recruitment processes referred to above.
- 5.4 With regards to all types of emergency hazard the Repairs and Maintenance Policy already includes a target for emergency repairs to be completed within 24 hours.
- 5.5 However, following the publication of the supporting guidance the Repairs and Maintenance Policy and associated procedures will be further reviewed and staff made aware of any changes needed to ensure compliance. This will include how we record and monitor such repairs to ensure that we can evidence and report on compliance as required.
- 5.6 As referenced in the summary table above the Repairs and Maintenance Policy has been reviewed and it has been identified that it would benefit from the inclusion of a definition of 'routine' repairs which can be completed within 20 working days and 'other' repairs which will have longer timelines for completion for reasons as set out in the proposed definitions.

| Repair priority category | Definition |
|--------------------------|--|
| Routine | <p>Routine repairs are completed within 20 working days if it causes only minor inconvenience and tenants can reasonably live with for a period and will have no impact on the health and/or safety of a person or property if completed within 20 working days.</p> <p>Examples of routine responsive repairs to tenant properties include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ease and adjust windows or doors • bath panel repair/replace • non urgent roof leak or defective roof covering • door entry phone not working (except in Independent Living) • mechanical extractor fan not working • single light failure in communal areas • re-glazing in communal areas following making safe • repairs to communal TV aerials |

| Repair priority category | Definition |
|--------------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blocked or broken gutters or downpipes • remedial works to wall/ceiling plaster and finishes (if safe). |
| Other | <p>A repair that does not cause immediate inconvenience or pose any health and/or safety risk to tenants or the public but cannot wait for programmed maintenance including:</p> <p>Complex repairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special or bespoke materials such as windows and doors are required, and these are only supplied by a specific manufacturer with a long lead-time and/or delivery period. • Specialist work is required which requires further investigation such as dampness or invasive structural repair, telecommunications, drainage faults that require extensive excavations. • The repair is a one-off major component repair or replacement, or higher value works that are subject to contract procedure rules, for example the replacement of a roof covering or repairs that involve utility companies (electricity, gas, and water). <p>Planned repairs: can consist of a replacement rather than a repair of a component, examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fencing repairs or replacement • Bricklaying work • Renewing joinery • Plastering large areas • Kitchen or bathroom full or partial replacements <p>Small works: non-urgent repairs which can be undertaken in batches, to ensure that the Council can secure the best price for the works. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repairs to footpaths, steps, etc. where there is no immediate health and safety risk. • Remedial works to the external fabric of the building such as render. • Rising damp treatments • Gutter clearance and/or maintenance • Repairs to fencing, gates that are near busy or main roads. <p>Specialist repairs and complete replacements may take longer due to the need to measure, source, and manufacture specific components or equipment. Changes in regulations may also require extra building</p> |

| Repair priority category | Definition |
|--------------------------|---|
| | <p>work.</p> <p>Repairs in this category will be completed within a target timescale of between 12 and 26 weeks depending on the nature of the works – tenants will be advised of expected timeline for completion and kept up to date on progress.</p> |

- 5.7 To ensure there is an explicit link between the repairs category allocated and the needs of the tenant it is also proposed that the following wording is inserted into the Repairs and Maintenance Policy:

There may be instances (such as a disability or vulnerability) where the repairs category applied should be enhanced. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and consideration will be given to the individual circumstances and the repair.

In assigning the repair priority, the effect of delay on particular occupants should be considered. For example, a repair that may normally be categorised as routine should be upgraded to urgent if an occupant has a vulnerability such as age or ill health where a delay could have a particularly adverse effect.

- 5.8 There may be other amendments required to policies to ensure these are aligned with the regulations as laid down and/or supporting guidance in which case it is proposed that these be agreed by the Strategic Director (Richard Protheroe) after consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder.
- 5.9 There is already a process in place for capturing and monitoring work to address notified HHSRS category 1 and 2 hazards. This process will, however, need to be reviewed to enable the relevant priority to be attached to hazards and associated works such that hazards can be addressed within the required timeframes. An HHSRS hazard can be reported from various sources including a tenant, a member of staff or a contractor.

6 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 The Community Select Committee (CSC) carried out a scrutiny review of how the Council manages damp and mould issues in its homes in 2017 which resulted in a new Policy being adopted in 2020, the appointment of specialist contractors and a new case management approach was proposed to enable more effective handling of damp cases and new contract specifications to take a holistic approach.
- 6.2 The CSC have since received updates on progress with improvements to the management of damp and mould cases the most recent being in January 2023 and November 2024.
- 6.3 A further update has been requested by the CSC for inclusion on their programme for the current municipal year. It is proposed that this be

scheduled for September 2025 subject to the CSC agreement for inclusion on their work programme at their meeting on 3 July. This will provide an opportunity for the CSC to consider progress against implementation plans and assess the Council's readiness for implementation of Awaab's Law in October.

- 6.4 A draft of this report was included on the agenda for the Executive Housing Working Group (EHWG) meeting on 24 June.
- 6.5 The EHWG will continue to receive updates on progress with the implementation plans for Awaab's Law to provide assurance on the effectiveness of actions that have and/or will be taken to ensure compliance with these new legal and regulatory requirements. These updates will include implications of and plans to ensure compliance with the extension of the scope of Awaab's Law to other hazards during 2026 and 2027 as and when details are made available.

7. ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- 7.1 In the letter received on 25 June 2025 it was also confirmed that following a consultation in 2022 new electrical safety standards are to be introduced for the social housing sector from November 2025. These new standards will mean the existing best practice of carrying out an electrical safety check every five years becomes a legal requirement and mirror regulations already in place in the private rented sector.
- 7.2 There are no significant implications arising from the introduction of the new electrical safety standards as SBC has a 5-year electrical safety testing programme in place with an associated budget. However, the guidance published alongside the new regulations will be reviewed to ensure that SBC is fully compliant and can demonstrate such compliance.

8 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 8.1 The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Consumer Standards set out expectations on health and safety, repairs and providing homes that are decent, safe and well-maintained. Social landlords (stock owning local authorities and housing associations) are required to inform the RSH of any material actual or potential non-compliance with the consumer standards. This would include any breaches of Awaab's Law. The implications for SBC of the implementation of Awaab's Law were assessed in advance of the secondary legislation being laid before Parliament to ensure that SBC is well placed to comply with the new legal requirements in relation to the management of damp and mould cases and dealing with emergency hazards of all types.
- 8.2 Following the letter received from the Matthew Pennycook MP, Minister of State for Housing and Planning on 25 June announcing that the regulations to introduce phase 1 of Awaab's Law had been laid alongside publication of guidance to support social landlords with implementation preparations

outlined in this report are being reviewed to ensure these are aligned with the new legal and regulatory requirements. Further updates will be provided to the Executive Housing Working Group (EHWG) to ensure effective oversight is provided prior to and post implementation.

- 8.3 The widening of the scope of the new legislation during 2026 and 2027 will mean the Council will need more oversight and likely require more officers to be able to demonstrate compliance. A growth bid will be submitted once additional resourcing needs are known which will be informed by experience of the implementation process for the initial phase of introduction and learning from others to ensure emerging best practice is embedded alongside compliance.
- 8.4 The planned introduction of electrical safety standards from November 2025 will place current best practice on a statutory footing. The Council is well placed to demonstrate compliance with these new regulations with a related KPI included in the current corporate performance suite which is reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

9 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 9.1 The estimated additional costs associated with implementation of the initial phase of Awaab's Law from October 2025 are to be met within existing budgets. These include the estimated cost in 2025/26 of an additional FTE business support role which will be met within the approved budget through a virement or underspends within the wider service staffing budgets due to vacancies.
- 9.2 The planned widening of the scope of Awaab's Law to the other HHSRS hazards over the next 2 years will mean that the Council needs more oversight of compliance, and this will likely require additional staffing resource, for example surveying and/or business support roles. A growth bid will be submitted once detailed requirements are known.

Legal Implications

- 9.3 The new legal and regulatory requirements to be introduced through Awaab's Law in a phased approach from October 2025 will enable tenants to hold social landlords to account through the introduction of a statutory framework for the completion of repairs within set timescales. The RSH will also expect landlords to demonstrate compliance through the Consumer Standards.
- 9.4 The introduction of electrical safety standards for social housing will place current best practice on a statutory footing and mirror those already in place within the private rented sector.

Risk Implications

- 9.5 The key risks are summarised in the table below:

| Risk Description | Rating before mitigations | Mitigations | Rating after mitigations |
|---|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Insufficient staffing capacity and skills to ensure compliance with new legal and regulatory requirements | Medium | <p>Review of staffing resources in Damp and Mould team completed.</p> <p>Additional 1 x FTE role to be established in the Business Support team funded within the 2025/26 budget.</p> <p>Recruitment to vacant and agency filled roles in progress.</p> | Low |
| Policies and processes do not align with new statutory requirements | Medium | All related policies have been reviewed and updated as appropriate as set out in this report. | Low |
| Lack of staff awareness and understanding of HHSRS hazards | Medium | Staff training on HHSRS was carried out with all front-line teams in 2024/25. Further training will be arranged for new starters and refresher training will be provided on an agreed frequency which will be mandatory for all staff in relevant teams. | Low |
| Inability to demonstrate compliance with new statutory timescales for completion of repairs | Medium | KPI's introduced from 2024/25 which track performance against the proposed new statutory timescales. These will be reported to Cabinet as part of the quarterly performance report. | Low |

| Risk Description | Rating before mitigations | Mitigations | Rating after mitigations |
|--|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Additional costs associated with an increase in legal claims against the council as ambulance-chasing solicitors may look to take advantage of the enforcement powers available to tenants for failure to meet the new statutory timeframes. | Medium | <p>Effective implementation of and compliance with Awaab's Law to avoid potential legal claims against the Council.</p> <p>MHCLG are working with the Ministry of Justice to tackle claims farming on housing disrepair cases as it is recognised that this is a rising concern for landlords and tenants.</p> | Medium |

Policy Implications

- 9.6 The following related policies have been and will be further reviewed as necessary to ensure alignment with the new legal and regulatory requirements as set out in regulation laid on 25 June 2025:

| Policy | Date Approved | Comments and actions required |
|-------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Repairs and Maintenance | December 2024 | <p>Proposed minor amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include a definition of 'routine' repair and for types of works which fall outside of that definition a target timescale for their completion. - Make clear that vulnerabilities will be taken into consideration when assigning the priority for a repair. For example, upgrading the priority where a delay could have an adverse impact on the individual due to age, disability or medical condition. <p>An updated version of the policy which incorporates the above is attached for</p> |

| Policy | Date Approved | Comments and actions required |
|----------------|---------------|---|
| | | approval at Appendix 1 . Should any further amendments be required to ensure this policy is consistent with the secondary legislation and associated guidance as published on 25 June 2025 it is proposed that delegated authority be awarded to the Strategic Director (Richard Protheroe) to approve such changes after consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder. |
| Damp and Mould | April 2024 | The updated Policy reflects the proposed new legal and regulatory requirements as set out in the Government consultation document. However, following the publication of the regulations and associated guidance on 25 June 2025 checks will be made to ensure full alignment with the detailed provisions. Should any further amendments be required it is proposed that delegated authority be awarded to the Strategic Director (Richard Protheroe) to approve such changes after consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder. |
| Decants | February 2025 | The updated Policy aligns with legal and operational requirements. |

Climate Change Implications

9.7 None.

Staffing and Accommodation Implications

9.8 The proposed introduction of Awaab's Law has necessitated a review of staffing resources within the Damp and Mould team to ensure that the Council is well placed to demonstrate compliance. As maintaining accurate records and communicating well with tenants will be critical to successful implementation it has been agreed to increase the level of business support within the Repairs and Voids service by 1 x FTE. An appointment to the proposed new role is anticipated to be made ahead of the implementation date.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 9.9 The government published an equalities impact analysis with the consultation document which, based on the demographic data available on social renters, indicates that any policy affecting the social rented sector as a whole is likely to have a particular impact (whether positive or negative) on women, older people, people with disabilities and people of ethnic minorities, because these groups are all disproportionately likely to live in the social rented sector.
- 9.10 Awaab's Law is expected to have a net positive beneficial impact on social housing tenants, and as such will have a disproportionately positive impact on those groups from protected characteristics which are disproportionately represented in social housing in general.
- 9.11 There is no evidence to suggest that the new regulations would have a substantial adverse equality impact on any of the protected groups.

Service Delivery Implications

- 9.12 The implementation of Awaab's Law has required processes to be reviewed and resources aligned with the new statutory timescales for completion of repairs.
- 9.13 All frontline services will need an awareness of the new statutory responsibilities and ensure that any relevant hazards are reported so they can be dealt with in accordance with the internal referral processes.
- 9.14 It will not only be important to comply with the new statutory timeframes but evidence compliance so ensuring robust records and reporting is in place are key elements of the implementation plan.

Information Technology Implications

- 9.15 An application is being used to support with the inspection of damp and mould cases and production of the report on outcomes that has to be provided to the tenant within 3 working days of an investigation being concluded. This is an interim solution pending a system-based option being investigated once the housing system (NEC) has been migrated to the Cloud and upgraded to the latest version.
- 9.16 For reporting purposes NEC is already being used to hold data on inspections and works completions.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 1.1 All documents that have been used in compiling this report, that may be available to the public, i.e. they do not contain exempt information, should be listed here:**

- BD1 [Damp and Mould Policy - April 2024](#)
- BD2 [Awaab's Law: Consultation on timescales for repairs in the social rented sector - GOV.UK](#)
- BD3 [Awaab's Law: Consultation on timescales for repairs in the social rented sector - government response - GOV.UK](#)
- BD4 [Social Housing quality reforms: Letter to chief executives and council leaders - GOV.UK](#)

APPENDICES

- 1 Amended Repairs and Maintenance Policy

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Responsive Repairs & Maintenance Policy

Stevenage Borough Council

2025

| | |
|--|---|
| Date created | January 2024 as amended May 2025 |
| Approved by | Cabinet December 2024 and July 2025 |
| Owner | Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing Property Services |
| Version | Amended Final |
| Business Unit and Team | Building Safety and Housing Property Services – Repairs and Maintenance |
| Policy Review Date | March 2026 |
| Equality Impact Assessment Date | January 2024 (reviewed May 2025) |

For translations, braille or large print versions of this document please email equalities@stevenage.gov.uk.

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1. Purpose

1.1 What is the policy position?

The aim of this policy is to outline the framework within which the Repairs service operates, and through this:

- to demonstrate how decisions regarding responsive repairs are made for both tenants' homes and communal areas.
- to document the principles on which future service developments and improvements can be designed and implemented.

For Leaseholders, it aims to provide a clear framework within which the Responsive Repairs policy will operate regarding communal repairs and leaseholder issues and alongside other Council services where relevant. It also explains where responsibility for an issue may rest with the leaseholder, not the Council. In all cases leaseholders are advised to check their individual lease for specific information about their individual liabilities for repairs. Through the policy leaseholders will be able to see how decisions regarding responsive repairs to communal areas, or where a leaseholder's home is involved, are made and where responsibility lies.

1.2 What does it aim to achieve?

The policy will assist the Responsive Repairs team to deliver a service that:

- meets the routine, urgent and emergency repair needs of Stevenage Borough Council's (the Council) tenants either at their request, or at the request of a legitimate third party; in relation to the Landlords repairing obligations under the relevant legislation.
- meets customer expectations in line with published service standards and timeframes and achieves an agreed level of customer satisfaction.
- addresses customer-related damage and misuse of the Council's housing stock and Repairs services to safeguard council properties and minimise unnecessary spending on repairs;
- uses available budgets effectively and efficiently in the delivery the service;
- complies with legal and statutory requirements.

1.3 Does it replace an existing Policy?

This policy replaces a previous draft Responsive Repairs and Maintenance Policy.

2. Scope

2.1 Who does this policy apply to?

By definition, a responsive repair is an item of routine, urgent or emergency maintenance within a council-owned home or communal area, undertaken in response to a request from a tenant, leaseholder or a legitimate third party in line with the council's repairing obligations.

The Repairs service does not cover gas servicing, issues relating to fire safety, cyclical maintenance, void properties, initial damp and condensation investigations, mechanical and electrical issues, aids and adaptations, planned maintenance programmes and other types of work that may be perceived as repairs. These works are completed by other service areas and will have their own policies and/or guidance.

This policy scope covers how the Repairs service will meet its obligations as a landlord to council tenants and leaseholders, as set out by statute and/or under the terms of the lease.

Communal and structural repairs responsibilities will usually fall to the Council. Leaseholders should refer to their individual lease for further information. Repairs within the leaseholder's property are the responsibility of the leaseholder.

3. Legal Framework

3.1 What legislation is this policy associated with? What are the legislative requirements that the Council must fulfil?

Key legislation relating to this policy and statutory provisions of the relevant acts are as follows:

Tenants:

Landlord and Tenant Act 1985: This Act gives landlords an absolute obligation to carry out basic repairs, including to the structure and exterior of the property and installations for the supply of water, gas and electricity, and for sanitation, space heating and heating water.

Defective Premises Act 1972: Section 4 of this Act places a duty on the landlord to take reasonable care to ensure that anyone who might be expected to be affected by defects in the property is reasonably safe from injury or damage to their property.

Environmental Protection Act 1990: This Act makes provision for the control of premises whose conditions are considered to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance.

The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994: The Right to Repair legislation gives the right to tenants to have small emergency or urgent repairs carried out quickly and to receive payment if the landlord fails to meet obligations.

Housing Act 2004: Replaced the existing housing fitness standard with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. It introduced mandatory HMO licensing, additional & selective licensing and the tenancy deposit protection scheme.

Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation Act) 2018: This Act states that any property offered by the Council must be fit for human habitation at the time of the Tenancy commencing, and for the duration of that Tenancy.

Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023: This Act sets out requirements for Social Housing landlords with regards to ensuring tenants and leaseholders are safe in their home and it meets the required quality standard (Decent Homes) communicating landlord performance and having complaints dealt with promptly and fairly. Subject to secondary legislation, will also introduce Awaab's Law.

Leaseholders:

The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (Reasonableness and the Tribunal) (as amended): states that a service charge is only recoverable by a landlord so far as the costs have been reasonably incurred. It further states that the service charge is only recoverable if the works have been carried out to a reasonable standard.

The Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002, section 151 (known as Section 20): explains the consultation process a landlord must follow by law with leaseholders before carrying out qualifying work or entering into a long-term agreement for providing services.

Section 20B of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (Limitation Period on Recovery of Service Charge Costs): states that a landlord cannot recover service charge costs that were incurred more than 18 months before they formally demand them, unless they have written to the leaseholder within 18 months of incurring the costs and informing them that they incurred costs, the amount and that they will be demanded in due course.

Section 22 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985: explains the leaseholder's right to inspect accounts, receipts and other documents supporting a summary of service charge expenditure and the period allowed for the leaseholder to request this.

Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023: This Act sets out requirements for Social Housing landlords with regards to ensuring tenants and leaseholders are safe in their home, communicating landlord performance and having complaints dealt with promptly and fairly.

4. Equalities

Under the Equality Act (2010) the Council has a legal duty to fulfil the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Through this duty and in the application of this policy, the council will carry out its functions in a way that:

- a. Removes discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is unlawful under the Equality Act (2010).
- b. Promotes equal opportunities between people who have a protected characteristic(s) and those who don't.
- c. Encourages good relations between people who have a protected characteristic(s) and those who don't.

Further information on the Council's fulfilment of the Equality Act (2010) is set out in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy (2022) and Reasonable Adjustment Policy (2024).

5. Data Protection

The Council regards respect for the privacy of individuals and the lawful and careful treatment of personal information as very important to delivery of services.

The Council will ensure that it treats personal information lawfully and proportionately as set out in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act (2018). For further information on the Council's approach to handling information please see [Data Protection Act \(stevenage.gov.uk\)](https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/data-protection-act)

6. Policy

The Council values our tenants and leaseholders' views and is keen to ensure they have a say in how the service is delivered. The main objective of this policy is to keep residents' homes safe and in a good state of repair, and in so doing provide assurance that the Council is meeting legal and regulatory requirements. The feedback received during the consultation process has helped inform the development of this policy.

6.1 Responsive Repairs Responsibilities - Tenants

Responsive Repairs responsibilities are fulfilled by the Responsive Repairs service within the Council. Below is a list of repairs showing which are SBC responsibility and which are tenant's responsibility. Please note this is not an exhaustive list:

| Repair | Details | SBC | Tenant |
|------------------|---|-----|--------|
| Baths and basins | Sanitary ware, plumbing connections, bath seals, tiling around the bath | ✓ | |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Bathroom fixtures and fittings | Toilet seats, bathroom cabinets, mirrors, shower curtains, unheated towel rails, toilet holders, plugs, chains | | ✓ |
| Blockages | Bath, basins and toilets isolated within council homes | | ✓ |
| Blockages | Where blockages occur outside of homes or are directly affecting council homes | ✓ | |
| Boilers | Annual servicing and breakdown | ✓ | |
| Ceilings | | ✓ | |
| Communal areas | Including lighting, doors, door locks, door entry phones, bin stores, recycling areas, cleaning, lifts, communal heating, and ground maintenance | ✓ | |
| Decoration | External | ✓ | |
| Decoration | Internal | | ✓ |
| Entrance door (front, back and side) | Including frame and door and draught excluders | ✓ | |
| Entrance door locks | Including loss of keys and repairs to forced entry if you get locked out | | ✓ |
| Internal doors | Repairing or replacing door and/or frames | ✓ | |
| Door furniture | Including handles, letterboxes and door bells | | ✓ |
| Drains | Outside, blocked or damaged within the property boundary | ✓ | |
| Electric appliances | Such as cookers, fridges, washing machines and dishwashers | | ✓ |
| Fences and gates | Where provided by SBC in line with the Fencing Policy. | ✓ | |
| Fixtures and fittings | Such as coat hooks, curtains, curtain rails | | ✓ |
| Flat blocks main and rear entry door | Both manual and electronic | ✓ | |
| Floorboards and subfloors | Floorboards and latex levelling of hard floors | ✓ | |
| Floor coverings | Including adapting floors to accommodate carpets | | ✓ |
| Garden to individual home | Including turf, repairs or replacement of dustbins/wheelie bins and recycling refuse areas, trees and shrubs | | ✓ |
| Garages | Attached garages only (excluding garage blocks) | ✓ | |
| Glazing | If broken into, tenant must get a crime reference number | | ✓ |
| Glazing | Glazing accidentally broken caused by Council or contractors | ✓ | |
| Gutters | Repairs with clearing and cleaning subject to the cyclical maintenance policy. | ✓ | |
| Heating | Including solar thermal or PV panels | ✓ | |
| Hot water heaters | Including immersion heaters | ✓ | |
| Infestations | Including cockroaches, mice, rats or bedbugs and squirrels (treatments for these types of pests are free of charge for council tenants) | ✓ | |
| Infestations | Treatment for all other pests not mentioned above are chargeable | | ✓ |
| Infestations | Where pests are affecting homes from neighbouring properties or communal areas, these will be investigated and remedied on a case-by-case basis | ✓ | |
| Kitchen units | Including worktops | ✓ | |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|
| Light fittings | Light bulbs, fuses, pull cords and fluorescent tubes (including bulbs in sealed units) | | ✓ |
| Paths | Including path repairs, steps, footpaths and ramps | ✓ | |
| Pilot lights | Including resetting any heating controls | | ✓ |
| Plastering | Including making good post repair works | ✓ | |
| Plumbing repairs and leaks | Including outside pipes | ✓ | |
| Porches and canopies | | ✓ | |
| Roofing and outside walls | Ensuring the property is weatherproof and watertight | ✓ | |
| Showers | Where provided by SBC only. | ✓ | |
| Stairs | Including banister, handrail and staircases | ✓ | |
| Switches and sockets | | ✓ | |
| Telephone points | | | ✓ |
| TV aerial points | In tenant owned properties only. SBC responsible for communal lounges | | ✓ |
| Ventilation systems | Including heat recovery systems and mechanical extraction fans. | ✓ | |
| Wall tiling | Including patch repairs and making good post repairs works | ✓ | |
| Washing lines | Including rotary lines (unless in communal areas) | | ✓ |
| Water leaks | Including sealant around sinks and bath | ✓ | |
| Windows | Including blown units, seals, windowsills, sash cords, catch, frames, hinges, and handles | ✓ | |

In line with the Tenancy Agreement and Conditions of Tenancy, the Repairs service does not accept requests where the responsibility for the repair rests with the tenant. Further clarification is available on the Council's website and in the Tenancy Agreement and Conditions of Tenancy.

The Repairs service will not accept responsive repairs requests in some situations if basic checks or preparation work have not yet been completed by the tenant to make sure the repair is required and/or prepare the work area. The following list of examples is not exhaustive, but includes:

- checking and resetting trip switches to help identify if the issue relates to an electrical item within the home or an electrical fault in the property;
- attempting to clear blockages in wastes, gullies and toilets;
- cleaning out shower heads;
- removing items such as furniture that would otherwise prevent an operative from accessing the repair area;
- lifting any fitted carpets, laminate flooring and similar that may be required to access and complete the repair;
- maintaining the property to a standard of cleanliness and without a build-up of clutter or rubbish that will allow an operative to carry out repairs safely;
- moving white goods and/or furniture out of the area to be worked on.

Furthermore, the Repairs service:

- requires a suitable and sufficient accessible route to and from the area to be worked on to complete repairs.
- may not accept repairs requests from tenants with regards to fixtures and fittings added to the property by the current or previous tenants.

- does not offer lock changes, fit additional locks, fixtures and fittings, or install tenants own purchased goods, fixtures and fittings.
- will not decorate any areas affected by the works following completion of the repair.
- will ensure that during any repair work, disruption is kept to a minimum and that following any repair work, the area is left clean and tidy.
- does not assist to gain entry to their properties. In exceptional circumstances, only following a referral from another team or from the Police will this take place. The named tenant must be present when the lock change is carried out in order to take ownership of the keys.

The Council acknowledges that sometimes a tenant may encounter an exceptional circumstance that requires additional consideration for a repairs-related decision to be made. If a tenant believes they have an exceptional circumstance that cannot be resolved within the scope of the Responsive Repairs policy, the Repairs service will liaise with Resident and Estates Services and/or other services as necessary regarding the circumstances to agree a solution. If the special consideration is agreed to be necessary to safeguard either person or property and also found to be outside the tenant's ability to fulfil, this will be taken into consideration in reaching a decision. SBC will also make reasonable adjustments to enable fair and equal access to the Repairs service.

In the unlikely event that any request made for additional consideration results in a referral that cannot be fulfilled by the Repairs service using available resources, or where they feel insufficient information has been obtained to make the referral, they reserve the right to decline the request to allow the referring officer to then look at alternative options in other areas. If a referral is made, the Repairs service will also explain why they are unable to carry out the work requested.

In some cases where disrepair or damage falls within the scope of the Repairs service, the extent of the repair required may result in the Council:

- temporarily cutting off services;
- temporarily stopping all rights of access to the property;
- permanently diverting rights of access (such as paths or water pipes) as long as it is no less beneficial to the property;
- decanting the tenant to an alternative property in line with the Council's Decant Policy to enable the repair to be carried out.

In some cases, a repair issue may be covered by the Council's buildings' insurance (for example, water damage or fire). In order for a potentially eligible repair to be investigated, a tenant must initially:

- report the damage within 30 days of it occurring;
- report any act of criminal damage or vandalism that caused the repair to the Police and obtain a valid crime reference number.

6.2 Responsive Repairs – Leaseholder

6.2.1 Responsibilities

| Council's responsibilities | |
|---|---|
| All communal repairs to an estate and block, including: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the structure and outside of the block including the roof; • shared areas; • shared services, water tanks, plumbing and electricity supplies; • drainage, gutters, rainwater and soil pipes; • outside areas of the estate, estate walls and shared fences. |

| Leaseholder's responsibilities | |
|---|---|
| Keeping the inside of their home in good condition. This includes fixing and maintaining the following: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cisterns, tanks, pipes and wires which serve only the leasehold property; • stop taps, including those between the mains supply and pipes serving the leasehold property; • non-structural walls; • doors and frames inside the property including other internal wooden features; • any flat entrance doors and frames which open onto a landing or corridor and not the outside of the building; • plaster, tiling and other wall and ceiling surfaces; • inside wall surfaces; • any heating or hot water services which are only provided for the leasehold property; • ensuring that any water flowing from their overflow pipe does not cause damage to the external structure of the building. |
| Reporting any problems or defects relating to the following: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the structure of the building; • any issue within their property that is damaging or is likely to damage the homes surrounding the leasehold property and/or the structure of the building/and/or the health and safety of others; • repairs issues identified within communal areas and the estate; • communal heating systems. |
| Actions of anyone visiting or associated with their property. | |
| Costs associated with remedying any leaks in their property and leaks from their property into any other resident's property as a result of overflowing baths, sinks, basins or showers, or as a result of wear and tear or damage relating to pipework, and also faulty work carried out by the leaseholder or their representative. | |
| Ensuring that any water flowing from their overflow pipe does not cause damage to the external structure of the building. Where repairs associated are not carried out in a timely fashion and damage is caused to the building, the Repairs service will repair the damage and the full cost of any action taken to put things right will be charged to the leaseholder. | |
| Making reasonable checks when reporting communal and structural work directly to ensure that another order for the same work has not already been raised. If reporting through their Housing Online account, leaseholders will be able to see orders already raised against their block and estate to see if the work has already been reported. | |

Repairing responsibilities are fulfilled by several specialist teams within the Council depending on the nature and type of work, whether it is cyclical or part of a planned maintenance programme. The Council may ask the leaseholder to complete specified repairs that are the leaseholder's responsibility within a reasonable timeframe, and it is the leaseholder's responsibility to arrange this.

The Repairs service will ensure that during any repairs work carried out to communal areas and within the estate, disruption is kept to a minimum and that following any repair work, the area is left clean.

In some cases, the extent of the responsive repair required may result in the Council:

- temporarily cutting off services to the estate and/or block;
- temporarily stopping all rights of access to the estate and/or block;

- diverting rights of access (such as paths or water pipes) as long as it is no less beneficial to the estate and/or block.

Leaseholders are required to pay a proportion of the full cost of repairs and maintenance to the structure and exterior of the block and communal areas as set out in their lease. For more information, please visit: <https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/housing/leaseholders/your-leaseholder-service-charges/your-leaseholder-service-charges-explained>

As part of their commitment to managing repairs to Council properties efficiently and effectively, the Repairs service will investigate repeated attendance requests and investigate, considering other factors such as warranties and defect periods in their investigation, and will seek to address the issue liaising with other Council services as appropriate to find a solution.

6.2.2 Leaseholder Responsive Repairs – Building’s Insurance

In some cases, a leaseholder’s repair issue may be covered by the Council’s building’s insurance policy. Eligible work, once assessed, may be completed by the Repairs service, another Council service or a third party through the insurance providers depending on the repairs issue.

All leasehold flats within Council-owned blocks are insured on a block policy. Repairs issues covered by the leaseholders’ block building’s insurance policy which relate to communal areas and the estate should be reported to the council, to prevent cost recharged incorrectly to leaseholders. All other claims should be made through the building’s insurance policy provider. For more information, visit <https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/housing/leaseholders/leaseholder-buildings-insurance> or contact the Resident and Estates Services.

Where a repair to a communal area or within the estate is required as a result of vandalism or criminal damage, the leaseholder should report the damage as soon within 90 days of the damage occurring and also report the damage to the police to obtain a valid crime reference number to be presented at the time of reporting the work to the Council.

Leaseholders are also reminded that not all work will be covered by Council responsibility or buildings’ insurance. In respect of non-building related items leaseholders are advised to take out their own contents’ insurance. Such schemes are widely available, and leaseholders can choose one to meet their own needs. Information on a home contents insurance scheme provided by the Council can be found on the Council’s website: <https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/housing/home-contents-insurance>.

6.2.3 Leaseholder - Leaks

Where a leaseholder incurs a leak into their property which they believe to be from another property, they should first try to speak to the resident in the adjoining property to allow them to locate and stop the leak.

If the adjoining property is a Council property, the tenant should also be advised to notify the Council immediately to allow them to take action and stop the leak. Leaks need to be dealt with in as timely a manner as possible and the leaseholder is encouraged to contact the Council with details of the leak, what is thought to be causing it and the flat number from where it is thought to be coming from as early as possible for investigations and further appropriate action to be taken.

The leaseholder may also contact the council’s buildings insurer who may be able to offer further advice. Please see section 6.2.2.

If a leaseholder is notified by the Council that a leak is coming from their property into an adjoining property, they should act on this promptly and contact the Resident and Estates Services with

either their findings or plans to rectify the leak. Failure to do so could result in the Council gaining access to the leaseholder property and turning off the water supply. If this action is taken, all costs of repair including the forced access will be recharged to the leaseholder.

If forced entry must be made to turn off a leaseholder's water supply, the Council will not be held liable for the repair of any door fittings and fixtures damaged as a result of gaining entry, nor will it be under any obligation to repair the leak if it is located within the leaseholder's property. The leaseholder will need to arrange for immediate repairs to be made to rectify the issue before they turn the water back on.

6.3 Reporting a responsive repair

Tenants and leaseholders have a responsibility to report any disrepair or damage to Council property (only tenants) and communal areas, including criminal damage, damage caused by neglect or through the fault of a third party, accidental damage and fair wear and tear.

The easiest and most effective way to raise a responsive repair is through their **Housing Online - My Repairs** account. Where a repair cannot be reported through Housing Online – My Repairs, please contact the Council's Customer Service Centre.

The Repairs service will investigate repairs requests from leaseholders relating to the structure of the building, communal area and estate repairs and issues relating to the supply of services to each property and take appropriate action. The leaseholder should first check the repairs raised on the block to see if there is already an order open for the work. Failure to check this may lead to duplicated orders and unnecessary attendances which may then also be reflected in leasehold service charges for the block.

Emergency repairs should be reported by telephone to the Customer Service Centre during normal working hours (Mon to Fri 09:00 – 17:00) on one of the following numbers: 01438 211011 / 0800 1123444.

Emergency communal repairs that pose a risk to the safety of residents or the structure of the building and which occur out of hours, including at weekends and during bank holidays, should be reported to the Council's out of hours service on the following number: 01438 314963.

6.4 Who can report a responsive repair?

Tenants:

Responsive repairs can be reported by a tenant, a known household member or a legitimate third party. If a named tenant wishes to have another person act on their behalf and at their own risk to manage their responsive repairs, details must be provided in writing with the required permissions. This is required to comply with data protection legislation.

Leaseholders

Responsive repairs in communal areas and within the estate can be reported by the leaseholder, a member of their household or a legitimate third party. Council tenants are also expected to report repairs issues in these areas.

If a named leaseholder wishes to have another person act on their behalf and at their own risk to manage their reports and interactions with the Repairs service concerning communal and estate responsive repairs, details must be provided in writing with the required permissions. This is required to comply with data protection legislation.

6.5 Repairs Priorities and Timescales

The Repairs service works within a clear framework of priorities and timescales to assess incoming repairs from tenants and repairs to communal areas or within the estate for leaseholders. The different priorities within the framework are outlined below to help understand how their requested repair will be handled and within what timeframe.

The Repairs service cannot always accurately diagnose faults at the point of reporting, but the framework enables the service to identify the trade, priority type and timeframe required and send an operative to fully diagnose and complete the repair.

All response times reflect the period from the responsive repair being reported to its completion.

The reporting to completion times (which in some cases may be through inspection, rather than repair in the first instance) within the Responsive Repairs framework are as follows:

- Emergency Repairs: 24 hours
- Urgent Repairs: 5 working days
- Routine Repairs: 20 working days
- Other: up to 12 weeks

Tenants and leaseholders may be asked to repay in full any costs or liabilities incurred by the Repairs service resulting from misuse of the service. Examples of misuse include (although not exhaustively):

- Providing misinformation to obtain a faster response time.
- Failing to be at the property when the operative attends the arranged appointment or emergency attendance.

The Repairs service reserves the right to amend repairs timeframes on a temporary basis in certain circumstances. Examples include, although not exhaustively:

- an extended period for fencing repairs following a period of extreme weather that has resulted in a significant amount of additional work in this area being reported;
- an extended period for guttering repairs following a period of extreme weather or seasonally when demand for such work rises to a level that it cannot reasonably be met within the stated timeframe with available resources.

There may be instances (such as a disability or vulnerability) where the repairs category applied should be enhanced. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and consideration will be given to the individual circumstances and the repair.

In assigning the repair priority, the effect of delay on particular occupants should be considered. For example, a repair that may normally be categorised as routine should be upgraded to urgent if an occupant has a vulnerability such as age or ill health where a delay could have a particularly adverse effect.

The service will always endeavour to complete all requested responsive repairs works within the stated timeframes. When this isn't possible, those requesting the affected responsive repair will be notified either at the time of reporting, or within 5 working days depending on how the report is made, that delays are occurring and why and will be given a revised timeframe for the completion of the work.

Leaseholders can view jobs raised against their block, including jobs that are currently open and awaiting completion, through their Housing Online account.

6.6 Emergency responsive repairs

A responsive repair is assessed as Emergency and attended to within 24 hours if one or more of the following criteria are met at initial assessment:

- a. there is a probable health or safety risk to a person or persons if the repair isn't resolved or made safe;
- b. there is a probable risk to the structure of the property and/or other fixtures and fittings if the repair isn't resolved or made safe;
- c. there is a probable risk of severe hardship to a person or persons if the repair isn't resolved or alternative facilities provided.

For tenants, emergency responsive repairs examples might include, although not exhaustively:

- an insecure external window, door or lock if ground floor;
- total loss of electric power;
- an unsafe power or lighting socket or electrical fitting;
- leak from a water or heating pipe, tank or cistern if not containable;
- total loss of water supply to the property;
- a blocked or leaking foul drain, soil stack or (where there is no other working toilet in the dwelling or house) toilet pan;
- total or partial loss of electric or water heating between 31 October and 1 May in a property that does not have a gas heating and/or hot water system.

The primary aim of an emergency responsive repair attendance is to eliminate the initial factor(s) causing the emergency and repair during the attendance where possible. Follow-on work if required will be prioritised as either **urgent, routine, or other**, depending on the type of work required and in line with other repairs of a similar nature where no emergency element exists.

6.7 Emergency out-of-hours responsive repairs

The Out of Hours service is available to customers outside working hours (17:00-09:00) only where there is an immediate risk to a person or property if the repair is not made safe at the earliest opportunity. This implies the repair cannot be reasonably managed until 09:00 the following working day.

The daytime Repairs service reserves the right to refer assessed emergency responsive repairs to the Council's Out of Hours service to be completed or made safe outside normal working hours where this is required.

Where the repair does not meet the criteria for an emergency out of hours attendance, the customer will be advised to contact the Repairs service via the Customer Service Centre from 09:00 on the next working day.

If the repair requires further work, an appointment will be scheduled. As the element of the emergency repair that was posing an immediate risk to a person or property has been addressed, the remaining work required will be allocated a priority of **urgent, routine, or other**.

In specific circumstances where it's not possible to make safe through the Out of Hours service (adverse weather), the reporting party will be advised to contact the Council from 09:00 the next working day and offered basic advice to manage the situation. If the issue occurs over a weekend

or prior to a Bank Holiday, the Out of Hours service will further advise the customer to call back if the situation deteriorates to be reassessed and put out to contractor, should it be safe to do so.

If it is unsafe for the occupants to remain in the property, alternative accommodation arrangements will be made. This may be on a day-by-day basis or a temporary decant (please note this may be a hotel) to an alternative property, depending on availability. Council officers will make necessary decant arrangements to suitable accommodation in line with the Council's Decant Policy.

Customers may be asked to repay in full any costs or liabilities incurred by the Repairs service resulting from misuse of the Out of Hours service. Standard charges can be viewed on the Council website - www.stevenage.gov.uk.

The Repairs service will monitor usage of the Out of Hours service and will refer instances of misuse or concern to Resident and Estates Services and other services where relevant. Examples of misuse or concern include, but not exhaustively:

- mis-reporting a repair that is not an immediate risk to a person or property in order to get an out of hour attendance;
- regularly reporting avoidable circumstances;
- failure to be at the property when the out of hours operative attends;
- a pattern of reporting issues solely to the out of hours service which may suggest the user is making a conscious decision to bypass the daytime service and obtain preferential treatment;
- concern about the welfare of the caller;
- concern about the behaviour of the caller towards out of hours staff or attending contractors.

6.8 Urgent responsive repairs

A responsive repair is assessed as urgent if it may cause substantial discomfort to the customer and potential damage to the property if not repaired. The repairs in this priority category are defined by legislation. An urgent responsive repair will be completed within 5 working days. Examples of urgent responsive repairs to tenant properties include:

- partial loss of electric power;
- partial loss of water supply to property;
- total or partial loss of electric space or water heating between 1 May to the 31 October in a property that does not have a gas heating and/or hot water system;
- blocked sink, bath or basin;
- a toilet not flushing (where there is no other working toilet in the dwelling or house);
- tap which cannot be turned;
- loose or detached banister or hand rail;
- rotten timber flooring or stair tread;
- some window repairs relating to securing the property;
- a leaking roof or mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working.

6.9 Routine responsive repairs

A responsive repair is assessed as routine when it does not fall within the emergency and urgent categories and cannot be deferred until a future cyclical or planned maintenance programme. Routine repairs are completed within 20 working days if it causes only minor inconvenience and tenants can reasonably live with for a period of time and will have no impact on the health and/or safety of a person or property if completed within 20 working days.

Examples of routine responsive repairs to tenant properties include:

- ease and adjust windows or doors

- bath panel repair/replace
- non urgent roof leak or defective roof covering
- door entry phone not working (except in Independent Living)
- mechanical extractor fan not working
- single light failure in communal areas
- re-glazing in communal areas following making safe
- repairs to communal TV aerials
- blocked or broken gutters or downpipes
- remedial works to wall/ceiling plaster and finishes (if safe)

6.10 Other Repairs

A repair is assessed as other, where there is a non-urgent routine repair that does not cause immediate inconvenience or pose any health and/or safety risk to tenants or the public but cannot wait for programmed maintenance. Other repairs would include the following categories:

Complex repairs: this is where the target timescales for routine repairs cannot be achieved because:

- Special or bespoke materials such as windows and doors are required, and these are only supplied by a specific manufacturer with a long lead-time and/or delivery period.
- Specialist work is required which requires further investigation such as dampness or invasive structural repair, telecommunications, drainage faults that require extensive excavations.
- The repair is a one-off major component repair or replacement, or higher value works that are subject to contract procedure rules, for example the replacement of a roof covering or repairs that involve utility companies (electricity, gas, and water).

Planned repairs: there are some repairs that require further time required to complete. Planned repairs can also consist of a replacement rather than a repair of a component, examples include:

- Fencing repairs or replacement
- Bricklaying work
- Renewing joinery
- Plastering large areas
- Kitchen or bathroom full or partial replacements

Small works: These are non-urgent repairs which can be undertaken in batches, to ensure that the Council can secure the best price for the works. Examples of this include:

- Repairs to footpaths, steps, etc. where there is no immediate health and safety risk.
- Remedial works to the external fabric of the building such as render.
- Rising damp treatments
- Gutter clearance and/or maintenance
- Repairs to fencing, gates that are in close proximity to busy or main roads.

Specialist repairs and complete replacements may take longer due to the need to measure, source, and manufacture specific components or equipment. Changes in regulations may also require extra building work.

Other repairs will be completed within a target timescale of between 12 and 26 weeks depending on the category of works – tenants will be advised of expected timeline for completion and kept up to date on progress.

6.11 Right to Repair

The Repairs service Right to Repair obligations are fully met through the terms of this policy. For more information:

<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/repairs/right-to-repair>

6.11 Ensuring the service meets customer's needs

The Repairs service recognises that some tenants or members of their household may require additional considerations to be made to facilitate the completion of their responsive repairs and can request that the council make reasonable adjustments in person, in writing for example by email or post or by telephone.

Examples of reasonable adjustments include:

- Giving residents the opportunity to be accompanied by a representative when meeting with the Council.
- Provision of auxiliary aids such as hearing loops and adapted computer software and devices.
- Interpretation service (for example British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter).
- Print off and provision of accessible documents (for example in large print, braille, easy read).
- Arranging for residents to provide details over the phone or in-person rather than on-line or paper copy.

We're committed to listening to the voices of the communities we serve. This is underpinned by our fulfilment of the Public Sector Equality Duty set out in the Equality Act (2010) and through the implementation of the Council's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy (2022-2026). As a Council we will make reasonable adjustments to make sure that anyone who wishes to access our repairs service can do so.

6.12 Appointments

Appointments are not offered to customers reporting an Emergency responsive repair, as the Repairs service will attend within 24 working hours. The tenant or a representative of the tenant aged 18 or over is expected to remain at the property over this period to give access and also stay at the property until the repair is made safe or completed.

Appointments are not offered on communal repairs. These will be attended by an operative (or nominated contractor) in line their assessed priority and attached timeframe.

We will offer appointments on all responsive repairs work assessed as Urgent or Routine within a tenanted property on a slot basis as follows (excluding Bank Holidays):

- am: Monday to Friday 08:00 – 13:00
- pm: Monday to Friday 12:00 – 16:00
- school run: Monday to Friday 09:30 – 14:30

Examples of situations that may result in the need to move appointments may include, although not exhaustively:

- diagnosis on attendance that work required is of a more extensive nature than originally anticipated and/or requires immediate attention and an extension to the appointment time allotted.
- a report of a serious emergency that requires immediate attention and may also require more than one operative/sub-contractor.
- severe weather conditions affecting the ability to travel around the town safely.
- a sudden reduction in available resource, for example the temporary loss of staff members through illness.
- the introduction of national or regional government restrictions.

6.13 Tenants allowing access

In line with the Tenancy Agreement and Conditions of Tenancy, tenants must allow access to the Repairs service for the following purposes:

- to inspect requested responsive repairs in the property, or to the communal areas, block or estate of which the property forms a part.
- to carry out Emergency, Urgent and Routine responsive repairs or other necessary works to the property, or to the communal areas, block or estate of which the property forms a part.
- to carry out safety checks in areas managed by the service.

Operatives from the Repairs service and/or contractors will show an official identification card prior to starting the inspection or work in a property.

The Repairs service requires that young children and pets are kept away from the area of repair work whilst the attending operative/sub-contractor carries out the repair.

Failure to allow access to your property for a pre-arranged appointment is a breach of your responsibilities as outlined in the Tenancy Agreement and Conditions of Tenancy.

In some cases, and in accordance with the Tenancy Agreement and Conditions of Tenancy, immediate access to a property is required such as in cases of serious water or sewage leaks or unsafe electrics. The tenant agrees that the Repairs service can enter the property without prior access agreed and without written notice whether they are there or not in the following circumstances:

- to inspect a property and carry out any responsive repairs needed to make a serious emergency responsive repair safe, such as major leaks, electrical or gas safety;
- (by force as necessary) if there is a fire, flood or danger to Health and Safety.

In cases where forced entry is required the Repairs service will make sure the property is left secure but reserves the right to charge the tenant for the costs of forcing entry.

If an operative or officer attending an appointment is subject to any form of harassment, abuse, violence or the threat of violence, they are within their rights to leave the property. The Council takes all reports of such incidents directed against council employees very seriously and will refer the matter to the Police and/or other relevant authorities.

6.14 Leaseholders allowing access

The Repairs service does not carry out repairs and maintenance work within and relating to the leaseholder's specific property. This is the leaseholder's responsibility. Leaseholders can find further guidance within their individual lease.

After previous notice in writing, the Repairs service and/or authorised representatives, have the right to enter a leaseholder property at all reasonable times for the purposes of carrying out its responsibilities under the lease. Failure to allow access in such circumstances is a breach of the terms of the lease and the Repairs service will forward details to the Resident and Estates team, who will work with the Repairs service to take appropriate action.

The leaseholder agrees that in the event of a serious situation (such as fire or flood) where immediate action is required to remove an imminent risk to either person or property, and where the leaseholder cannot be contacted through the methods they have provided, the Council may need to force entry into the leaseholder property without prior agreement and without written notice to contain the serious situation. The matter will be referred to the Resident and Estates Services and may be reported to the Emergency Services so that access can be obtained, and the issue made safe. The property will be made secure at the end of the visit. The leaseholder will be financially liable for any costs incurred during this process, including the cost of any responsive repairs work required to make safe.

It is the leaseholder's responsibility to ensure that contact details held for them by the Council are kept up to date to minimise the need for forced entry should a serious situation occur.

6.15 Missed appointments

The nature of the Repairs service means that sometimes exceptional situations will arise that require re-routing of work and/or resources leading to an appointment being missed or rearranged at very short notice. In such circumstances the Repairs service will contact the tenant at the earliest possible opportunity and arrange for the work to be completed at a later date. If attempts to reach the tenant have been made and the tenant is uncontactable, the Repairs service reserves the right to move the appointment even if the tenant cannot be reached.

Tenants can amend appointments made for responsive repairs to a new date and time up to the day of the appointment. It is the tenant's responsibility to notify the Repairs service if they wish to rearrange or cancel an appointment.

The Council does not make compensation payments for problems resulting from matters beyond its control, including the need to reschedule work and resources at short notice. However, if the Council fails to keep a prearranged appointment without good reason, it is envisioned a compensation payment will be offered.

The Repairs service has a responsibility to monitor missed appointments by customers. If the customer is not home or fails to allow access to a pre-arranged appointment or emergency attendance, it is a breach or failure of their responsibilities. It is envisioned the Council will determine the level of recharge applicable for the missed appointment.

In the event of a missed appointment, the attending operative or officer will attempt to contact the customer through the contact details held by the service. If no contact can be made, or if the customer is unable to come to the property immediately to allow access, photographic evidence will be taken recording the date and time the property was visited, and a card was left.

It is the responsibility of the customer to make sure that correct contact details are provided at the time of reporting the responsive repair.

At this stage, the repairs order will be closed. It is the responsibility of the customer to re-order the work and arrange a new appointment if work is still required.

6.16 Charges and upfront payments

The Head of Repairs and Maintenance has overall accountability for:

- identifying chargeable work carried out by the Repairs service;
- providing customers with the costs of chargeable work;
- providing details of chargeable work to the Residents and Estates Services and the Income Services team so that costs can be effectively recovered;

Further information about chargeable repairs and upfront payments can be found in the Council's Housing Income policy.

It is envisaged the Repairs service will monitor requests for responsive repairs per properties and per block. Such monitoring will help identify:

- properties where additional repairs or maintenance intervention may be required to minimise ongoing repairs;
- blocks where communal and estate repairs requests are above average;
- properties where the actions or inactions of the tenant or leaseholder may be contributing to the high repair needs of the property or block.

This information will enable the Council to look at strategies to help reduce repairs and maintenance costs and it will also be referred to Resident and Estates Services for further investigation. The tenant or leaseholder may be subject to charges by the Repairs service for any work carried out that is not deemed to be a result of fair wear and tear.

Tenants

The Repairs service does not accept repairs requests for items or issues that are the tenant's responsibility. In individual cases where a repair is the tenant's responsibility, but the tenant lacks the financial resources to effect the repair, the tenant should contact the Income Services team for advice. Depending on the nature of the repair and circumstances of the tenant, it may be possible to arrange payment upfront in instalments so that the repair can be referred on collection of the full amount and completed by the Repairs service.

In cases where the repair is the tenant's responsibility and it also poses a risk to person or property, where the tenant lacks the financial resources to effect the repair, the Repairs service may attend and make safe and the tenant will be liable for a standard attendance fee and the cost

of any works completed plus VAT. Arrangements to pay this amount will then be made through the Income Services team.

The Repairs service has a duty to inform liable parties of the costs they may incur if a responsive repair is chargeable. Details of standard amounts for chargeable repairs can be found on the Council's website www.stevenage.gov.uk. Further advice can be obtained from the Repairs service.

Tenants are responsible for carrying out most repairs that are caused by accidental damage, misuse or neglect by any member of the household, any visitors to the household and includes issues in both individual properties and communal areas.

Tenants will be charged for any responsive repairs attended where the Repairs service has reason to believe that the repair is necessary for any reason other than wear and tear. Such cases will be referred with full information to Income Services for perusal of recharged costs.

The Repairs service does not charge for repairs in the following circumstances:

- the damage is as a result of domestic violence, except where the perpetrator is a named tenant of the property;
- damage due to some other violent incident directed towards the tenant or a member of their household by an external third party where the damage has been reported within 30 days of the incident and the tenant has also received a crime reference number;
- damage due to hate crime directed towards the tenant or a member of their household by an external third party where the damage has been reported within 30 days of the incident and the tenant has also received a crime reference number;
- cracked, broken or damaged glazing, damaged door frames and/or landlord's fixtures and fittings where the damage has been caused as a result of a break-in or burglary where the damage has been reported within 30 days and the tenant has also received a crime reference number;
- a small number of circumstances where the accidental damage meets specific criteria meaning that it is covered by the Council's buildings' insurance.

The Council has a responsibility to recover costs from tenants following an agreed upfront responsive repair referral that is the tenant's responsibility.

Leaseholder

All leaseholders are required to pay a proportion of the full costs of repairs and maintenance to the structure and exterior of the block, communal areas and the estate as set out in their lease.

The Council has a responsibility to recover costs from leaseholders as a result of a responsive repair or other circumstance.

6.17 Circumstances when a responsive repairs request cannot be accepted

Responsive repairs requests will not be accepted in the following circumstances:

- the repair to the property, or communal area or estate repairs requested is due to be completed as part of a planned investment programme, capital project or major works scheme and there will be no risk to person or property until this work is carried out;
- the tenant has started the Right to Buy process;
- an abandonment notice has been issued;
- the tenant is refusing to give access for the annual gas safety service.

Where the tenant has started the Right to Buy process, the Repairs service will only accept and/or fulfil requests where there is a legal obligation to do so (in emergency cases). This extends to repairs previously ordered but not yet completed and where there is no legal requirement to complete. These works will be cancelled at the point the Right to Buy process is initiated.

6.18 Use of specialist contractors

The Repairs service reserves the right to pass work to approved contractors for completion. All contractors working on behalf of the Repairs service will carry identification.

Contractors are, in effect, an extension of the Repairs service. Any issues or feedback relating to contractors, or their work can be reported to the Repairs service in the usual way or submitted through the council's compliments and complaints system.

6.19 Notifying leaseholders

A Section 20 notice (S20) is a notice to tell you that we intend to carry out works or provide a service that Leaseholders will need to pay towards. The consultation process (as it's referred to), has three stages:

- The first stage is where we notify you of our intention to do works.
- The second stage is to notify you of the estimates we have obtained.
- The third stage is to notify you (where applicable) of award of contract to who will carry out the works.

6.20 Quality Control

The Repairs service will carry out random post-inspections on both in-house and contracted works and will monitor and report on overall service quality control as a key performance indicator. Post-inspections will be arranged to cover a random sample of different repair types, property types, communal and estate areas and across different geographical areas of the town.

Where a customer has reason to believe that work completed falls below an acceptable level of quality, they have the right to contact the Repairs service and ask for a post-inspection to be carried out.

6.21 Health and Safety

To ensure that standards of health, safety and employee and resident welfare are met, the Repairs service and its contractors comply with all relevant legislation, codes of practice, guidance notes and the Council's own Health and Safety Management Framework.

6.22 Performance and Delivery

Performance indicators will be set and reviewed with specific, clear and attainable targets to ensure that the Repairs service is delivered effectively and in a timely manner.

6.23 Customer Satisfaction

The Repairs service will contact tenants and leaseholders from time to time to ask for comments and feedback on the service received. Feedback is used to review and improve service delivery and achieve the agreed level of customer satisfaction. The information received from the customer satisfaction surveys will feed into the service key performance indicators (KPIs). This could be by phone call, text message, email, face-to-face or other media as appropriate.

Surveys are based on specified work recently completed. This means that tenants and leaseholders may be invited to give feedback more than once in any given year if various jobs have been carried out. The service values and appreciates all feedback provided.

6.24 Complaints

The Council operates a complaints process which is available to any customer who is not satisfied with the way their repair request has been dealt with. Details of the complaints process can be found on the council's website – www.stevenage.gov.uk.

7 Consultation

7.1 As a Cooperative Council, we are passionate about our communities and making sure they have a say in how services are delivered.

7.2 The policy was consulted with the Cabinet, the relevant Portfolio Holder and the Executive Housing Working Group.

7.3 The Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) from 2023/24 were reviewed to analyse responses that mentioned Repairs as a factor in the tenant's overall satisfaction. 1,000 tenants were surveyed in total. Questions related to the Council's Responsive Repairs and Maintenance service (TP02 and TP03) were qualified questions, where tenants would have to have completed a repair in that last 12 months. 607 tenants said 'yes' to a repair in the last 12 months, and therefore answered TP02 and TP03:

| TP02 – Satisfaction with repairs | Percentage |
|---|-------------------|
| Very satisfied | 36.4% |
| Fairly satisfied | 26.3% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 15.4% |
| Fairly dissatisfied | 12.3% |
| Very dissatisfied | 9.6% |

| TP03 – Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair | Percentage |
|---|-------------------|
| Very satisfied | 29.9% |
| Fairly satisfied | 22.5% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 16.7% |
| Fairly dissatisfied | 13.4% |
| Very dissatisfied | 17.5% |

The individual responses related to Repairs included the following:

| Overall theme | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------|
| Delays | 35% |
| Quality | 14% |
| No action taken | 7% |
| Fences | 8% |
| Windows | 8% |
| Other specific repairs | 7% |
| Roof | 3% |
| Maintenance | 1% |
| Positive feedback | 13% |
| Other general comments | 5% |

This policy has considered the individual responses from the TSMs in the information of this policy and will continue to be reviewed following further TSM results.

7.3 Responsive Repairs and Maintenance Service Survey

Tenant and Leaseholder consultation regarding the Council's Responsive Repairs and Maintenance service took place between February and April 2024. This initially targeted tenants and leaseholders who had raised a repair in the last 12 months. It was later expanded to focus groups and pop-up events across the town and social media. 95 responses were received by the end of June 2024. These responses helped shaped further consultation which took place during the summer of 2024.

Key feedback themes include the need to:

- improve communication and information sharing (newsletters, reminders, leaflets);
- listen to customers and acting on feedback;
- clear roles and responsibilities between SBC and customers;
- undertake regular inspections of all council owns homes;
- improve the level of customer service;
- reduce waiting times for certain jobs and ensure all repairs are completed within timescales.

8 Monitoring and Review

The Assistant Director for Building Safety and Housing Property Services has overall responsibility for the policy and for ensuring it is fully implemented and operating effectively.

The Head of Repairs and Maintenance is responsible for:

- the effective implementation and delivery of the policy;
- monitoring performance and delivery;
- developing processes and procedures in line with the policy;

The Head of Housing Asset Management is responsible for:

- reviewing the policy;
- ensuring that the policy aims and terms are adhered to.

This policy will be reviewed by the Head of Housing Asset Management every 2 years or earlier if there is a change in any relevant legislation and/or regulatory standards. Where more than 10% of the policy content is changed the Assistant Director and appropriate Portfolio Holder will be required to decide if the policy needs to be formally reconsidered by the Cabinet or appropriate decision-making body.

Where there is a request for the content of the policy to be reviewed in response to a complaint, the relevant Business Unit's Assistant Director will be notified. If the Assistant Director agrees that a review of policy is required, this will be discussed with the appropriate Portfolio Holder. The Head of Service will be responsible for implementing a subsequent policy review.

9 References and Resources

| Links (Internal) | Links (External) |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenancy and Tenancy Agreement Conditions • Individual Lease Terms • Income Services Policy • Damp and Mould Policy • Decant Policy • Mutual Exchange Policy • Safeguarding Policy • Housing Asset Management Strategy • Complaints Policy • Asbestos: Management and Action Policy • SBC Staff Protection Policy • SBC Passport to Safety Handbook • Equalities and Diversity Policy • Reasonable adjustments Policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 • The Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002 • Housing Act 2004 • Defective Premises Act 1972 • Environmental Protection Act 1990 • The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994 • Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation Act) 2018 • Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 • Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) • Equality Act 2010 • Decent Homes Standard |

9 Abbreviations and Definitions

EDI: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

GDPR: General Data Protection Regulation

PSED: Public Sector Equality Duty

The Council: Stevenage Borough Council

10 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Fencing Policy

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

11 Version History

| Date | Outlined Amendments | Author |
|------|---------------------|--------|
|------|---------------------|--------|

| | | |
|---------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| January 2024 | Creation | Ana Hetherington/Leanne Kamoga |
| May 2025 | Clarification of priority category definitions | Leanne Kamoga |

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Meeting Cabinet
Portfolio Area All
Date 9 July 2025



CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER FOUR 2024/25, ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25 AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SUITE 2025/26

KEY DECISION

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Richard Protheroe

Contact Officer Richard Protheroe

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report provides a comprehensive overview of the Council's performance at the end of the 2024/25 financial year and sets out the proposed direction for the year ahead. It brings together key performance data, strategic reflections, and forward-looking priorities to support Cabinet in reviewing progress and shaping the next phase of delivery.
- 1.2 The report focuses on three core areas:
- Reviewing performance across Quarter Four 2024/25, as captured in the Corporate Performance Suite.
 - Presenting the 2024/25 Annual Report, which reflects on delivery across the Council's strategic priorities and cross-cutting themes.
 - Setting out the proposed priorities and performance measures for the 2025/26 Corporate Performance Suite.

- 1.3 The report is supported by a suite of appendices that collectively underpin the Council's performance framework:
 - 1.3.1 Appendix A contains the 2024/25 Annual Report and provides an overview of the Council's performance across the Making Stevenage Even Better (MSEB) strategic priorities and cross-cutting themes, as well as a look at the Council's ambitions for the coming year.
 - 1.3.2 Appendix B presents the proposed 2025/26 Corporate Performance Suite, detailing the strategic key performance indicators aligned to the Corporate Plan's main and sub-themes, and identifying the lead Portfolio Holders responsible for each area.
 - 1.3.3 Appendix C outlines the proposed 2025/26 MSEB Priorities, setting out the Council's delivery priorities across all MSEB priority areas. This year the approach has been amended to report on priorities rather than individual milestones to provide a more concise update on each priority, milestones are still included in the description for reference. Like Appendix B, it is structured by Corporate Plan themes and includes lead Portfolio Holder accountability. Together, Appendices B and C form the two halves of the 2025/26 Performance Compendium.
 - 1.3.4 Appendix D provides the Quarter Four 2024/25 Performance Compendium, summarising actual performance data up to the end of the financial year. This includes performance against key indicators and delivery milestones.
 - 1.3.5 Appendix E contains the Quarter Four 2024/25 Ombudsman Determinations, summarising findings from the Housing Ombudsman and highlighting any upheld complains or learning points for the Council.
- 1.4 For Member's information, a presentation will be provided at the Cabinet meeting which will cover updates in relation to delivery against MSEB Priorities and the key themes emerging from the Quarter Four performance data.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the service performance against 53 corporate performance measures and delivery of key milestones in Quarter Four 2024/25 through the Making Stevenage Even Better Programme (Appendix D) be noted.
- 2.2 That the challenges with Garage Voids and planned improvements are noted (section 4.2.5).
- 2.3 That the strategic risk updates (section 4.6) be noted.
- 2.4 That the draft Annual Report 2024/25 (Appendix A) be agreed, subject to any changes discussed at the Cabinet meeting and with final sign off delegated to the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council.
- 2.5 That the proposed Corporate Performance Suite 2025/26 (Appendix B) and MSEB Priorities 2025/26 (Appendix C) be agreed.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In January 2024, the Cabinet agreed the new Making Stevenage Even Better (MSEB) Corporate Plan until 2027. This includes five strategic priorities:

- Transforming Our Town
- More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes
- Thriving Neighbourhoods
- Tackling Climate Change
- Balancing the Budget

The plan also includes three cross-cutting themes:

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Health & Wellbeing
- Technology & Innovation

The plan was subsequently approved at Full Council in February 2024. The corporate performance suite was also updated to reflect existing and future programmes of work, resident priorities and regulatory and legislative housing requirements.

- 3.2 The Council's approach to performance management demonstrates a clear link between service delivery and the strategic objectives in the MSEB 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 can simplify and streamline how performance monitoring and progress is communicated to Members and residents.

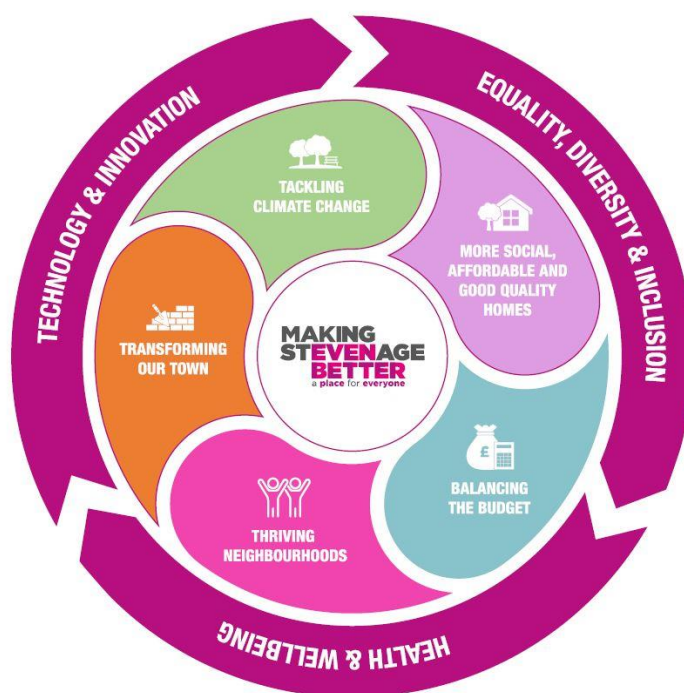


Fig 1.

- 3.3 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 the Council's capacity to deliver all its priorities as well as provide core services and implement new government legislation. The main challenge is when the Council must compete with roles against the private sector (e.g. surveying roles), sometimes this can be compensated by using Market Forces supplements and work flexibility. 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.

- 3.4 Each year, the Council agrees it's key outcomes and priorities for the town and the Council during the coming 12 months. These are framed within the Making Stevenage Even Better (MSEB) Corporate Plan, with delivery driven through service areas and the MSEB programme.
- 3.5 Throughout 2024/25 the Council has continued to make significant progress in delivering it's ambitions under the Making Stevenage Even Better programme. Continued effort is being applied to areas where improvements are needed, including re-focusing resources on specific action plans. This report sets out these achievements and areas of focus in more detail.
- 3.6 This report aims to give Cabinet an overview of the achievements the Council has made during the last 12 months, with a particular focus on the previous quarter. These achievements are summarised in the council's Annual Report (Appendix A). It also identifies key priorities and performance indicators as part of the 2025/26 Corporate Performance Suite.
- 3.7 The Senior Leadership Team and Service Managers have been consulted to determine the appropriate content and to identify the key achievements.
- 3.8 The Corporate Performance Suite for 2025/26 contains 51 measures which are aligned with the 5 MSEB strategic priorities. The 51 measures are complemented by statutory and local measures which are managed internally with performance overseen by the Strategic Leadership Team.
- 3.9 Following the Regulator of Social Housing Inspection in September 2024 three additional measures were added in Quarter 2 'RSH Number of Overdue Fire Remedial Actions (High, Medium and Low)' and one added from Quarter three 'RSH Number of Overdue Water Remedial Actions'. The new measures will give the Cabinet oversight of the number of remedial actions stemming from Fire Risk Assessment that have been completed as a percentage of the total that have been identified split into high, medium and low categories. Performance against the complete suite of compliance measures along with the associated mitigating actions is regularly monitored with oversight provided by the Council's Corporate Risk Group.
- 3.10 There are 23 baseline measures within the corporate performance suite. The majority of these reflect the increased regulation and focus on housing compliance. Baseline measures provide a starting point from which to assess and compare performance in future. The remaining 30 measures are relevant to the Council's focus on what matters to residents and progress made against the MSEB objectives.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 MAKING STEVENAGE EVEN BETTER (MSEB) PROGRAMME

- 4.1.1 A summary of progress against the MSEB Programme is attached at Appendix D. The key highlights this quarter have also been included in the Annual Report 2024/25 (see Appendix A). The Annual Report 2024/25 is an external-facing document which sets out the Council's progress in delivering excellent services for Stevenage and achieving the strategic priorities of the MSEB Corporate Plan.

- 4.1.2 The content of the Annual Report 2024/25 has been structured around service performance across the five MSEB strategic priorities and three cross-cutting themes of the corporate plan.
- 4.1.3 Particular highlights this year include:
- 4.1.3.1 Beginning the development of new town centre homes including the completion of the first phase of the Guinness Partnership development on the former Matalan site, delivering 143 affordable one- and two-bedroom homes for social rent.
 - 4.1.3.2 Providing 595 new homes since 2014 and meeting the Council's ambition to deliver 500 new affordable homes by 2025. As a result, we are now aiming to have provided a total of 1000 homes by 2030.
 - 4.1.3.3 Fully letting the new Independent Living Scheme at Brodie Court, freeing up 52 family homes as residents have downsized to take up the new homes on offer.
 - 4.1.3.4 Upgrading approximately 240 homes, including 16 flat blocks and 100 houses, to meet the energy performance certificate (EPC) Band C target (with some reaching an EPC Band B) as part of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 2 programme.
 - 4.1.3.5 Hosting a summit at Knebworth House to celebrate the success of the Council's Pioneering Young STEM Futures partnership with Mission44, bringing together local businesses, education leaders and key strategic partners to reflect on achievements and shape the next phase of collaboration.
 - 4.1.3.6 Delivering improvements to eight play areas across the town following consultation with over 300 children and young people.
 - 4.1.3.7 Continuing to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse through the Survivors Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) programme.
 - 4.1.3.8 Delivering and supporting a wide range of civic and community events within the town with over 60,000 people attending, including Stevenage Day which hosted over 200 stalls, a variety of rides and attractions and celebrated the theme of Pride this year.
 - 4.1.3.9 Funding a range of community-led climate initiatives through our Climate Change Community Fund including water butts, tree planting, energy efficiency upgrades at community centres, cycle hangers, a permanent Christmas tree in the Old Town, and better recycling facilities.
 - 4.1.3.10 Administering and running a £140,800 Household Support Fund that helped local organisations to reduce food and energy poverty across the town.
 - 4.1.3.11 Launching the EDI Action Plan for 2024/25 that held 18 actions across six key objectives to ensure we continued to champion the rights of individuals across our workforce and local communities.

- 4.1.3.12 Made physical activity more accessible by delivering free or low-cost sessions directly within local communities through the Active Communities Programme. Through over 245 outreach sessions with 1,558 attendees since July 2023, the programme has significantly expanded leisure provision and community engagement across Stevenage.
- 4.1.3.13 Investments in digital initiatives such as the migration from legacy systems, improvements to online customer services, and enhanced cyber security.
- 4.1.4 Under each MSEB strategic priority and cross-cutting theme within the Annual Report 2024/25, a summary of highlights have been listed under their subheadings alongside a set of projections for the upcoming year.
- 4.1.5 The 2024/25 Annual Report also includes a section on Cooperative Council Commitment, summarising how the Council have worked closely with partners across the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network to support policy lab projects.
- 4.1.6 The MSEB Corporate Plan categorises all the council's services under five key strategic priorities and three cross-cutting themes. So, whilst previous annual reports also included separate sections on the Cost of Living Crisis and Delivering for Stevenage with key performance statistics, these have now been embedded across the MSEB strategic priorities to sit beside linked information.
- 4.1.7 Please note that a graphic designed version of the Annual Report 2024/25 will be circulated electronically to Members prior to the Cabinet meeting.

4.2 QUARTER FOUR CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

- 4.2.1 As outlined in section three, the corporate performance suite has been aligned with the five MSEB priorities set out in Figure One. In addition, during 2024/25 progress against performance measures has been presented alongside key programme milestones. By taking this mixed-method approach, the Council is able to present 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 MSEB, as well as highlighting performance against key service delivery targets.
- 4.2.2 Key highlights from the MSEB programmes are summarised in section 4.1. For further information on the aims and objectives of the programmes in 2024/25 please refer to the MSEB Plan on a Page, which was presented to the Cabinet in July 2024 as Appendix C of the Corporate Performance Suite 2024/25 report: [MSEB Plan on a Page 2024/25 \(stevenage.gov.uk\)](https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/mseb-plan-on-a-page-2024-25)
- 4.2.3 The total number of measures by Red, Amber & Green (RAG) rating is shown in Figure Two below. The full set of current corporate performance measures results and MSEB milestones are attached at Appendix D.

| Q4 2024/25 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------|--|---|------------------|----------------------------|
| MSEB Programme | Baseline measure for 2024-25 | Meeting or exceeding target | Amber Status (Within a manageable tolerance) | Red Status (Urgent improvement action required) | Unavailable Data | Milestones Reported Qtr. 4 |
| More Social Affordable and Good Quality Homes (25 measures) | 13 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 |
| Transforming Our Town (3 measures) | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| Thriving Neighbourhoods (11 measures) | 5 | 4* | 1 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| | *The data for 'NI191: Residual household waste per household (kgs)' and 'NI192: Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting' comes from an external source and is only available a quarter in arrears, therefore will be reported this way | | | | | |
| Tackling Climate Change (1 measure) | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| Balancing the Budget (13 measures) | 5 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| TOTAL (53) | 23 | 27 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 57 |

Fig 2.

4.2.4 As highlighted in Figure Two, there is one measure that is red this quarter, 'CNM2g: Garage voids as a percentage of stock'. The table below outlines the actual performance over the last four quarters and the Q4 target. The section that follows provides an overview of the factors contributing to the below-target performance and the actions being taken in response.

| MEASURE NAME | BUSINESS UNIT | Actual - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD | Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Thriving Neighbourhoods | | | | | | | |
| CNM2g: Garage voids as a percentage of stock | Stevenage Direct Services | 11.07% | 6.99% | 7.50% | 8.04% | 7.76% | 6.47% |

CNM2g: Garage voids as a percentage of stock

- 4.2.5 The residential garage void rate at the end of March 2025 is 7.76% against a target of 6.47%, this is predominantly due to a high number of terminations (99). This is an improvement from last quarter where the residential void rate was 8.04%.
- 4.2.6 Economic factors have contributed to the void rate, with the cost of living being cited as one of the main reasons for terminations, as well as many residents moving house, possibly to take advantage of the stamp duty discount which ended on 31st March 2025.
- 4.2.7 However, although terminations were high in quarter four, offers also increased by 22%, with 188 offers being made. 76% of offers were accepted and garage services will continue to build solutions to assist in reducing issues for non-acceptance.
- 4.2.8 Garage services will continue with a proactive marketing strategy which includes working with local housing associations and issuing surveys to license holders who live outside the town to better understand their needs.
- 4.2.9 Further improvements to the online digital service including a mapping feature were implemented in April 2025. This has stopped a lot of location queries and enhances the self-serve feature.

4.3 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE CLINICS

- 4.3.1 As part of the Council's ongoing Performance and Risk Management cycles, targeted Performance Clinics are scheduled periodically to provide focused support and challenge in areas where performance pressures, operational complexity, or emerging risks have been identified. These sessions bring together senior officers and relevant service leads to explore performance data, identify barriers to delivery, and agree on improvement actions.
- 4.3.2 Each clinic is structured around three core elements:
- Analysis of Service Performance Data
 - Identification of Challenges and Issues
 - Outline of Planned Improvements
- 4.3.3 Three Performance Clinics are currently scheduled for Q2 2025:
- Customer Service Centre – This session will explore workforce-related challenges and opportunities for service optimisation within the Customer Service Centre.
 - Corporate & Community Asset Remediation – This clinic will focus on compliance and remedial activity across the Council's corporate, commercial and community estate portfolio.
 - Damp, Mould & Disrepair – This session will consider service pressures and legislative developments affecting the Council's approach to housing condition and repairs, including preparations for the implementation of Phase One of Awaab's Law, which is due to come into effect from October 2025.
- 4.3.4 The insights and actions emerging from these clinics will directly inform future cycles of performance and risk management. They play a key role in shaping updates to the Corporate Performance Suite and Strategic Risk Register,

ensuring that service planning and improvement activity are grounded in current data, operational challenges, and strategic priorities.

4.4 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) IN-YEAR COST PRESSURES

- 4.4.1 During 2024/25, the Council experienced significant in-year cost pressures across key housing repair functions. These pressures were driven by increased demand, operational complexity, and the need to meet higher regulatory expectations. Further detail on the financial position and service pressures is provided in the Q4 Outturn Monitoring Report, which is also being presented to July Cabinet.
- 4.4.2 A combined overspend of approximately £1.5 million was recorded across Responsive, Void, and Damp-and-Mould repairs. Additional budget provision had been approved during the year to provide extra resources to these areas; however, the final outturn was higher than projected in the third-quarter monitoring report. The increased spend was driven by a combination of higher volumes of work (including a higher level of voids), enhanced regulatory standards, and the complexity of repairs, which often required specialist contractors. These pressures were partially offset by underspends in planned-maintenance budgets, including the timing of cyclical-maintenance procurement and the implementation of the new Decent Homes Standard.
- 4.4.3 To address this, the Council has implemented a management action plan that includes recruitment to senior operational roles, re-procurement of key contractors, and strengthened internal controls to improve cost management and service delivery.
- 4.4.4 These pressures reflect not only increased demand but also the Council's strategic decision to invest in service delivery to meet regulatory expectations and improve outcomes for tenants. This approach is consistent with the Council's commitment to continuous improvement, as set out in the Council's Provider Improvement Plan agreed with the Regulator for Social Housing. The Council has sought to address known service pressures early, particularly in areas where regulatory scrutiny has increased and where tenant feedback has highlighted the need for sustained focus.
- 4.4.5 Governance arrangements have supported this proactive stance. Through the Housing Senior Leadership Team and Executive Housing Working Group, Portfolio Holders and officers have continued to meet monthly, guided by a defined forward plan and work programme. This has enabled the Council to respond dynamically to emerging pressures and maintain momentum on improvement activity.
- 4.4.6 These themes will be explored further through the Council's targeted Performance Clinics in Quarter 2 of 2025. In particular, the upcoming clinic on Damp, Mould and Disrepair will provide an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of current interventions, identify barriers to delivery, and shape the next phase of improvement activity.

4.5 TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES (TSM)

- 4.5.1 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) were introduced in 2023/24 as a regulatory requirement for all Registered Social Landlords in England. There are 22 TSMs – of which 12 are sourced from a tenant perception survey. The Council has commissioned Housemark to conduct the tenant perception surveys quarterly during 2024/25.

- 4.5.2 Although quarterly updates have previously been included in this report the TSM information was presented in Cabinet to June 2025 to meet the requirement to publicly report the data by the 30th of June.

4.6 COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT HANDLING

- 4.6.1 As set out within the Councils Complaints Policy residents are able to contact either the Housing Ombudsman Service, mainly for issues which relate to the Council as a landlord or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for areas such as Homelessness, the Housing Register and associated advice.
- 4.6.2 Both Ombudsmen services will independently consider cases where they have been approached by residents and will then come to a determination concerning the matters which have been raised. In line with the Housing Ombudsmen's new Statutory Code of Complaint Handling, the Council is required to report the outcome of such cases, and this will be provided to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.
- 4.6.3 The Council has reviewed its Complaints Policy in line with the latest regulatory and legal requirements. Details of this along with the Annual Self-Assessment of Complaint Handling against the Housing Ombudsman's Code are published annually, and work on the new Annual Housing Complaint Report is now underway and will be reported to future meetings for consideration prior to publication. The Councils new Complaint Handling System is now online, the Housing Complaint Clinic continues with the purpose of reviewing trends and undertaking root cause analysis to help drive improvements and learning. New transactional surveys for complaint handling are due to be rolled out in the next quarter as part of the Councils new system, and details of these will be included in future reports.
- 4.6.4 As part of the Housing Complaint Management process, complaints are reviewed by an internal officer working group that includes the Strategic Director and other senior officers, working alongside the Housing Portfolio Holder. This group, known as the Housing Complaint Handling Clinic, considers full details of all stage two complaints and those that may progress to the Ombudsman. Its role is to ensure that investigations are robust, responses are appropriate, and that any learning or service improvements are identified and monitored.
- 4.5.5 The Council's Quarterly Performance Reports include a dedicated section and appendix on Housing Ombudsman determinations. In Quarter Four, the Ombudsman issued determinations on three cases, each involving multiple findings. All cases resulted in findings of maladministration, with remedies including written apologies, compensation payments, and actions such as reviewing complaint handling processes and improving record management. Full details are provided in Appendix E.
- 4.6.6 Whilst formal benchmarking of individual Housing Ombudsman determinations is not currently available, the Council uses its internal governance processes to monitor outcomes and identify areas for improvement. Broader benchmarking is undertaken annually in line with the publication of the Housing Ombudsman's Annual Report. This was included in the Q3 2024/25 Performance Report to provide national context and will continue to inform the Council's understanding of its relative performance and areas for improvement.
- 4.6.7 Tenant Satisfaction Measure Perception Surveys for the year indicate that 34.1% of respondents were either very or fairly satisfied with the handling of their complaint which represents an improvement of 11.3% compared to the 2023/24 year end figure.

- 4.6.8 This result places the Council broadly in line with the national median (34.5%) and above the peer median (29.1%) as reported by Housemark. While there remains room for improvement, the data suggests that the Council's performance is comparable to other providers and is trending in a positive direction.
- 4.6.9 In the fourth quarter (Q4), there were no new investigations or determinations reached by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). The Council received its annual review letter for 2024-25 from the LGSCO on 21st May 2025 which contains a summary of the complaint statistics for the year ending 31 March 2025. This letter will be published on the [LGSCO Website](#) on the 16th of July, alongside the publicly available statistical data.
- 4.6.10 The information provides insight into the Council's approach to complaints and should be considered as part of its corporate governance processes. The findings highlight areas for improvement, while also recognising positive efforts to resolve complaints before escalation to the LGSCO. They demonstrate that the vast majority of complaints are handled appropriately. A number of actions have been undertaken in 2024–2025 to improve handling and resolution of complaints including investment in systems and improved tracking of cases and remedies, as well as support to write better complaints responses.
- 4.6.11 As part of this Q4 update, a summary of the statistics contained in the letter are as follows:
- 4.6.12 Between 1st April 2-24 to 31st March 2025, the LGSCO dealt with 17 complaints. Of these, 5 were not for them or not ready for them to investigate. The LGSCO assessed and closed 9 complaints and investigated 3.
- 4.6.13 In terms of the 3 complaints that were investigated the LGSCO upheld all 3 of them which equates to 100% of complaints being upheld which means they found evidence of fault. In terms of satisfactory remedies, the LGSCO found that in 0 of the 3 cases they did not agree with how the Council had offered to put things right as part of its internal complaints handling. The LGSCO recorded compliance outcomes in 3 out of the 3 cases which means they were satisfied with the actions taken by the Council in terms of remedies.
- 4.6.14 The LGSCO publishes the anonymised final decisions for the upheld complaints as part of the annual report letter. For the purposes of this report, a summary of those complaints is provided below:

| Case Number | Complaint Type | Complaint Summary | Decision |
|-------------|-----------------------|---|---------------|
| 1 | Housing - allocations | X complained the Council did not properly consider their disabilities and health conditions and so allocated the wrong housing priority band. LGSCO discontinued investigation as the Council has taken action and X has been rehoused in suitable accommodation. | Upheld |
| 2 | Housing - allocations | X complained about the way the Council dealt with their housing application. We found no fault in the way the Council made its decision. However, we found fault with the Council's failure to assess if they were homeless. This caused uncertainty to X. The | Upheld |

| Case Number | Complaint Type | Complaint Summary | Decision |
|-------------|--|--|---------------|
| | | Council will apologise for this and consider their case again. | |
| 3 | Housing - Council house sales and leaseholders | Y complained about the way the Council dealt with their Right to Buy application. We have found fault by the Council, causing injustice, in failing to communicate properly and keep proper records regarding their application, and its poor complaint handling. The Council has agreed to remedy this injustice by apologising to Y, making a symbolic payment to reflect the upset caused and reporting on improvements to its service. | Upheld |

4.7 PRIORITIES FOR 2025/26

- 4.7.1 In January 2024, the priorities of the Making Stevenage Even Better (MSEB) Corporate Plan were approved by the Council.
- 4.7.2 There are 80+ MSEB priorities due to be delivered in 2025/26, as shown in Appendix C. Completion and reporting of these priorities will be vital to demonstrating a complete picture of performance.
- 4.7.3 In addition to performance and programme progress, the quarterly corporate performance report, will be supplemented by information obtained from the quarterly Tenant Satisfaction Measures. The survey will contain 12 key questions covering areas such as tenant's satisfaction with repairs, maintenance, communal areas and views on the Council's willingness to engage and respond. The survey findings will be reported annually to the RSH and will also include the 10 RSH measures included in the corporate performance suite (see Appendix B and measures starting 'RSH').
- 4.7.4 The proposed suite of corporate measures is based on input and conversations with the Strategic Leadership Team, research into best practice, benchmarking, and building on previous / existing measures where appropriate, including regulatory requirements.
- 4.7.5 A significant period of discussion has been undertaken with Portfolio Holders and Officers, seeking to ensure that the measures chosen as part of the Cabinet suite are meaningful, provide good business insight and are relevant to decision-making and the priorities of the Council. The Cabinet suite of 52 measures is supported by 50+ statutory and local measures which will be managed internally and overseen by the Strategic Leadership Team.
- 4.7.6 There are 10 measures where there is no target required, these are measured that are used for monitoring purposes rather than being red, amber or green. The aim for the four remedial risk actions is to see a downward trend.
- 4.7.7 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.

- 4.7.8 The proposed Corporate Performance Suite 2025/26 will form the basis of quarterly performance reports to Cabinet throughout 2025/26. The proposed measures, targets and priorities present an accurate reflection of what the Council is seeking to deliver in 2025/26 and how it will monitor progress against these ambitions.

4.8 STRATEGIC RISK

- 4.8.1 The strategic risks were considered by Corporate Risk Group on 29 April 2025, agreed by the Senior Leadership Team on 13 May 2025 and by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 3 June 2025.
- 4.8.2 The Audit Committee receives a detailed Strategic Risk Report each quarter. The report to the Audit Committee considers the actions which have been identified to mitigate each of the identified risks and the progress of those actions. 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 the Cabinet within this quarterly report.
- 4.8.3 Two new risks have been added to the Strategic Risk Register this quarter: Local Government Reorganisation and Lithium-ion Battery Fires. These reflect emerging national and operational challenges that could have implications for service delivery and community safety. Both risks have been reviewed through the Council's established risk governance process, with oversight from the Corporate Risk Group and Audit Committee. Mitigations and monitoring arrangements are in place and will continue to be tracked through the quarterly risk reporting cycle.

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.

5.2 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.3.1 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.

- 5.3.2 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.

5.4 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.4.1 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 the Annual Report 24/25, although examples are given where positive action has been taken to tackle climate change across our workforce and the community. These examples are included within the MSEB Corporate Plan's strategic priority of Tackling Climate Change. The officers responsible for delivering the improvements are charged with identifying and addressing any related climate change considerations.

5.5 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.5.1 There are no direct equality, diversity and inclusion implications arising from the Annual Report 24/25, although examples are given where positive action has been taken to advance equality, diversity and inclusion across our workforce and the community. These examples are included within the MSEB Corporate Plan's cross-cutting theme of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), and cut across the delivery of all strategic priorities.
- 5.5.2 Where necessary, Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) will be completed for programmes, projects, service changes and improvement activity identified.

5.6 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.6.1 There are no direct community safety implications arising from the Annual Report 24/25, although examples are given where positive action has been taken to advance community safety across our workforce and the community. These examples are included within the MSEB Corporate Plan's strategic priority of Thriving Neighbourhoods – Community Safety.

5.7 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.7.1 There are no direct information technology (IT) implications arising from the Annual Report 24/25, although examples are given where positive action has been taken to advance IT across our workforce and the community. These examples are included within the MSEB Corporate Plan's cross-cutting theme of Innovation and Technology and cut across the delivery of all strategic priorities.

5.8 OTHER CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.8.1 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)
- Annual Governance Statement 2024/25
- [MSEB Plan on a Page 2024/25 \(stevenage.gov.uk\)](https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/mseb-plan-on-a-page-2024-25)

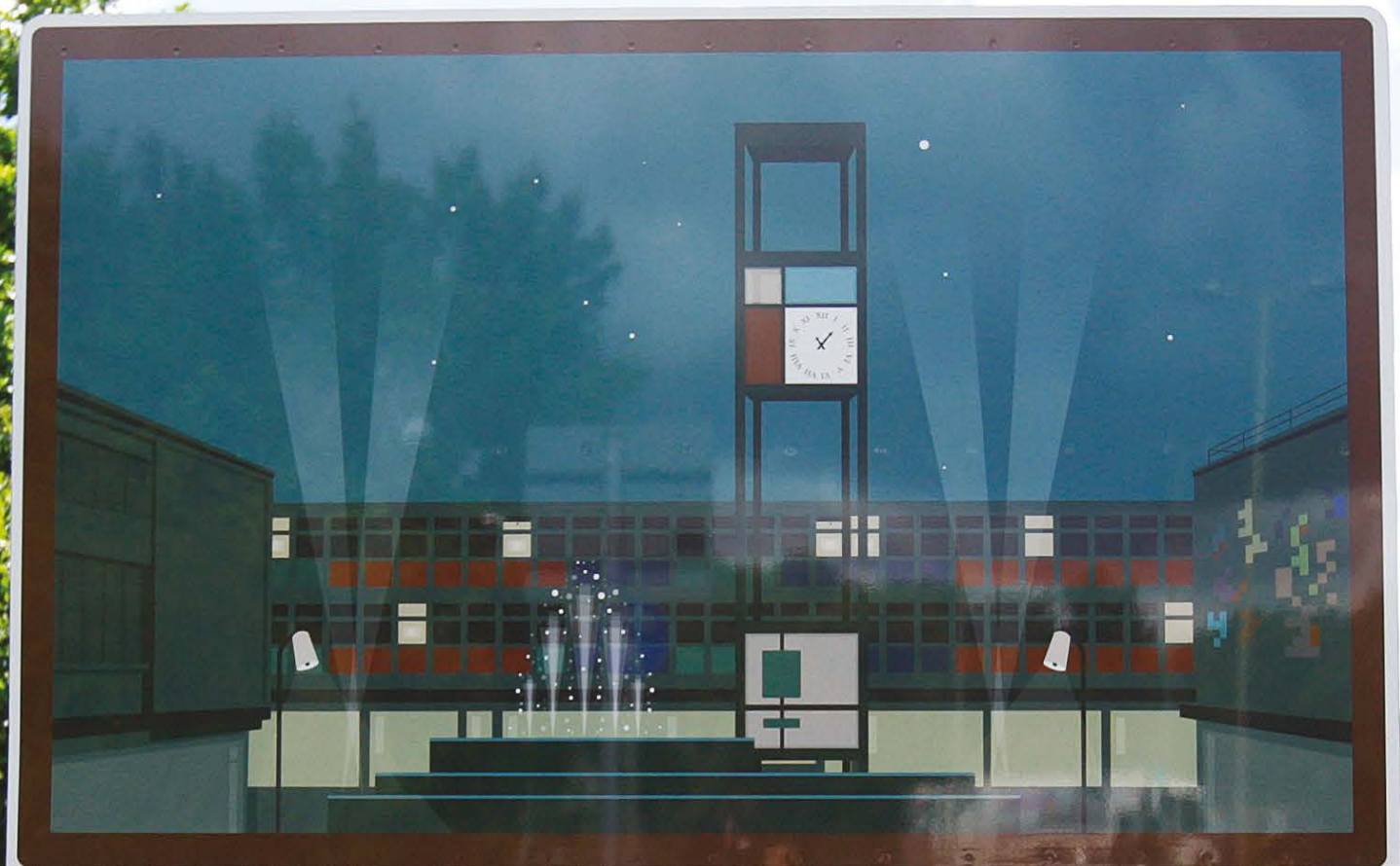
7 APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Annual Report 2024/25
- Appendix B: Corporate Performance Suite 2025/26
- Appendix C: MSEB Priorities 2025/26
- Appendix D: Performance Compendium Quarter Four 2024/25
- Appendix E: Housing Ombudsman Determinations Quarter Four 2024/25

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Stevenage Borough Council's Annual Report 2024-2025





Welcome to
STEVENAGE

The heart of a town lies in its people

Message from Richard Henry, Stevenage Borough Council



Welcome to our 2024/25 Annual Report. I am proud to share that over the past year, our ongoing efforts have continued to make our award-winning town a great place to live, work and visit.

Our commitment to working with residents is central to our approach in shaping services. Your views were a key consideration when in February 2024, Full Council unanimously approved the council's new Corporate Plan – Making Stevenage Even Better (2024-2027). The plan set out the council's direction of travel for the next three years and was informed by what matters most to you. Since its introduction, this corporate plan has given us a chance to demonstrate clearly how residents are at the heart of all our decisions.

Through the new corporate plan, we have continued to deliver on the priorities that we know are important to you. We have progressed our plans to regenerate the town by sharing the design for the new Sports and Leisure Centre that brings together sports, leisure, swimming facilities and a cafe under one roof. Partnerships with organisations, such as Everyone Active, have enabled us to offer a range of events, activities and classes designed to inspire and empower residents to get active.

Investing in our young people's futures has also continued to be a key priority for us. We have carried on opening up access to outstanding skills, training and educational opportunities in growing local sectors through various job fairs, grant funding and business workshops. Hosting a dedicated Pioneering Young STEM Futures Summit, in partnership

with Mission44, was a particular highlight as it brought together local businesses, education leaders and key strategic partners to reflect on achievements and shape the next phase of collaboration.

Also to note, the Government recently published a Devolution White Paper highlighting their ambitions for local government reorganisation. Whilst we look to work with our neighbouring Borough and County Councils to determine what this may look like in Hertfordshire; I want to reassure you that our residents will remain at the forefront of every decision we make and I hope that this is reflected in this report through the work we have achieved this year.

Within this report, you will see just a few of the council's highlights and achievements from the past year, as well as a look at what our future ambitions are for the year ahead. I hope you enjoy reading this year's Annual Report and join me in looking forward to seeing the council have another productive and fulfilling year in 2025/26.



Message from Tom Pike – Chief Executive, Stevenage Borough Council



This is my first Annual Report as the new Chief Executive of Stevenage Borough Council. Having worked in local government for 20 years and joining Stevenage in 2016, I am thrilled to show you how much we

have achieved over the past year since we launched our new Making Stevenage Even Better Corporate Plan (2024-27), as well as how close partnership working has enabled us to support the community through even the toughest of times. As I begin my new role, I will ensure we continue to make further strides to focus on prioritising what matters most to our residents and make Stevenage an even better place to live.

Our town has continued to evolve through the regeneration of the town centre and surrounding areas over the last year. The recent introduction of new and improved play areas, homes, and workspaces have demonstrated just how we have been transforming our town into a place which has something for everyone. You may have also noticed a number of arts and culture-centred additions to the town, including the unveiling of new underpass murals in Sish Lane, Gunnels Wood Road and Martins Way that honour Stevenage's heritage and celebrates the creativity of local school pupils. Investing in a vibrant, cultured town has continued to be a priority for us here at the council, and this will remain the case during my first full year as Chief Executive.

We have also been investing in the futures of our local young people through opening up access to outstanding skills, training and

educational opportunities in growing local STEM sectors such as life science, space and defence, and construction. Initiatives such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme have enabled us to directly invest in the local community's skills, economic growth and job prospects. I look forward to seeing what new initiatives we can support as this programme continues to grow throughout 2025/26.

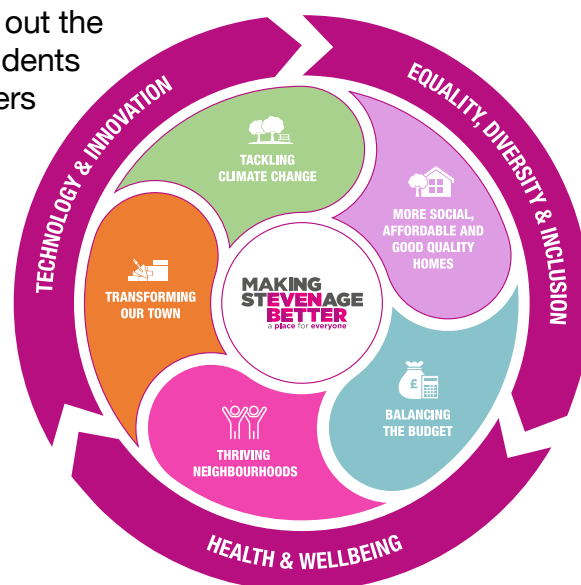
As a council we have also surpassed our ambition to deliver 500 new affordable and sustainable homes by 2025, providing a total of 595 homes since 2014. The demand for local homes has never been higher, so through the great work of our council employees we are now aiming to surpass previous ambitions and provide a total of 1000 homes by 2030. Stevenage Borough Council provides circa 120 different services, and our work does not stop once these new homes have been built. A key, long-standing focus for the council has been to provide a good quality tenancy, housing maintenance and repairs service to residents, and this year has been no different, with over 96% of our properties being upgraded as part of our recent improvement programme. Our hard work is also reflected in the Council's recent C2 grading following an inspection from the Regulator for Social Housing. This grading reaffirms that the Council meets the Consumer Standards in many areas, with only minimal areas for improvement that will all be addressed as we embark on the journey towards achieving a C1 grading in the coming year.

I am extremely proud of what this council achieves on behalf of those we serve, and this report highlights just some of our many successes. Please take some time to read through what we have been doing to improve the town and the council, along with what we have planned for 2025/26.

Making Stevenage Even Better

The new Making Stevenage Even Better Corporate Plan set out the council's priorities for the next three years (2024-2027). Residents have been at the heart of developing this plan as what matters most to our residents, matters to us. We have listened to these views, and provide a clear framework by which existing partnership commitments and programmes can be reflected. Our services are categorised into five strategic priorities and three cross cutting themes that will be delivered across the Corporate Plan:

- Transforming our Town
 - Regeneration
 - Enterprise & Skills
- More Social, Affordable and Good Quality Homes
 - Building New & Sustainable Homes
 - Maintaining Good Quality Homes
- Thriving Neighbourhoods
 - Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces
 - Community Safety
 - Culture & Leisure
- Tackling Climate Change
- Balancing the Budget
- Cross-Cutting Themes
 - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
 - Health & Wellbeing
 - Technology & Innovation



**MAKING
STEVENAGE
BETTER**
a place for everyone

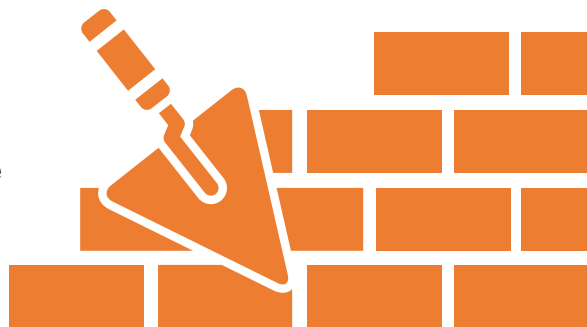
Each cross-cutting theme represents the need to raise awareness of important social benefits and the importance we place on effective partnership working and existing commitments to tackle health inequalities, champion equality, encourage inclusivity, embrace diversity and provide innovative solutions for residents. By maintaining focus on these three themes, we can ensure a comprehensive and well-rounded approach to delivering outcomes for the benefit of our community.

At Stevenage Borough Council we have circa 670 members of staff who deliver circa 120 different services including customer service support, housing, waste, environmental health, planning and leisure services. In 2024/25, we continued to ensure that council services operate for the benefit of local people and to a high-quality that provides value for money. This corporate plan ensures we provide a framework for our thinking, decision-making and resource allocation.

For each of our five strategic priorities and three cross-cutting themes, a set of accompanying outcomes and actions is published within this report and monitored annually to ensure we are on track to deliver on the outcomes we want to see. Progress over the last financial year (March 2024 – April 2025) and priorities for 2025/26 are summarised below:

Transforming Our Town

Our town is evolving and becoming Even Better, with the introduction of new and improved play areas, arts and culture, workspaces, and homes. By providing new spaces for our communities and improving the vibrancy of the town centre, we are supporting our businesses and transforming our town into a place which has something for everyone. We are on a mission to create a radiant town centre where people want to live, work and play.



REGENERATION

The aim of the regeneration of the town centre and surrounding areas has always been to deliver a range of increased benefits to residents. Improved public services, local amenities, employment opportunities, homes, transport links and access to green spaces has helped to achieve this.

To continue this mission, this year we have:

- Begun the development of new town centre homes including:



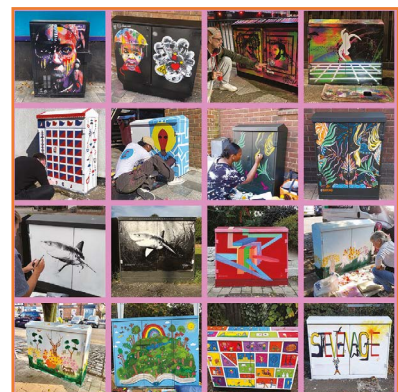
- The first phase of the SG1 masterplan, with construction beginning on Claxton House, on the site of the former Swingate House. The site is being brought forward by Mace, in partnership with the council. Works include piling works and erecting the first crane on site. The development will bring 261 high-quality new homes and a ground-floor commercial unit right into the heart of the town.



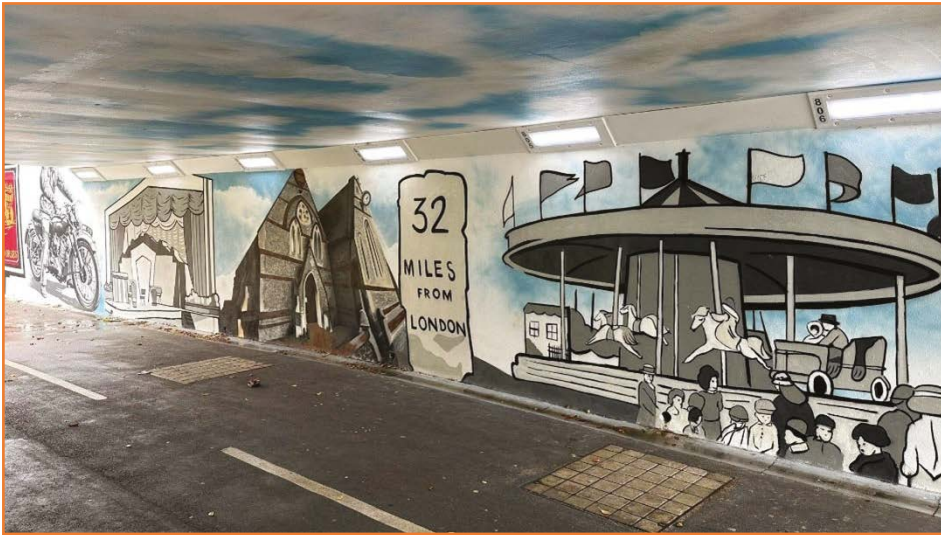
- The completion of the first phase of the Guinness Partnership development on the former Matalan site, delivering 143 affordable one- and two-bedroom homes for social rent. This provides a new and valuable source of affordable homes located in the heart of the town.



- Delivered more flexible workspace through the expansion of Co-Space in the Town Square. An additional 150 desks were added into this modern, flexible office space that supports small businesses and local entrepreneurs, whilst also increasing footfall into the town centre.

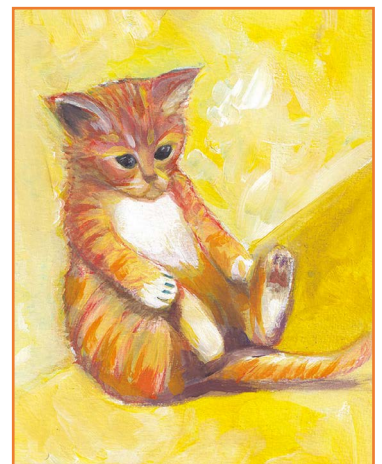


- Made public realm improvements to Market Square to make it more welcoming and feel safer, including a widened footpath, raised crossing, improved lighting, as well as the addition of urban artworks and greenery.



- Unveiled a new mural at Sish Lane underpass in October 2024 celebrating Stevenage's heritage and transforming a key pedestrian link between the Old Town and New Town.

- Celebrated creativity and community through public art by school pupils submitting over 950 entries for an art competition, with 268 winning designs chosen to brighten up the Gunnels Wood Road and Martins Way underpass. These are expected to be unveiled in Spring 2025. Alongside this, a permanent mosaic sculpture is being created for the Stevenage Bus Interchange, built using memories and objects donated by local residents.



- Progressed plans for the new £45m Sports and Leisure Centre in Stevenage. Designs were shared with the public for consultation throughout the year and demonstrates our ambition to bring together sports, leisure, swimming facilities and a cafe under one roof.

Transforming Our Town continued...

In 2025/26, we will:

- Bring more homes to the town centre through continuing work on Claxton House, the first phase of SG1. Works began in October 2024 and are expected to take approximately two years to complete. Further phases of the Guinness development are hoped to progress soon, delivering more homes and new commercial space.
- Continue to bring public art to life through the installation of a new mosaic sculpture at the Stevenage Bus Interchange and the school-designed mural panels that will be unveiled at Gunnels Wood Road and Martins Way underpass, continuing to brighten our shared spaces.



- Relocate the Indoor Market to Park Place to create a more prominent and accessible location for market traders, helping to boost footfall and support a thriving, modern retail experience in the town centre.

- Begin site preparation works for the new Sports & Leisure Centre later this year ahead of construction starting in early 2026, subject to planning.
- Design and stakeholder work will continue on the proposed new town centre Public Sector Hub building, which aims to combine the museum, a new library, health organisations and other public services in a central location.
- Continue to invest in improvements to our town centre environment, making it greener, safer, and more attractive. These improved spaces will host events, encourage walking and cycling, and support local businesses.



ENTERPRISE & SKILLS

Opening up access to outstanding skills, training and educational opportunities in growing local sectors such as life science, space and defence, and construction has been a key priority for the council for a number of years. Our community benefits from economic growth, skills and improved job prospects so we want to support this growth as much as we can.

As a result, this year we have:

- Hosted a summit at Knebworth House to celebrate the success of our Pioneering Young Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Futures partnership alongside Sir Lewis Hamilton's Mission44 charity. This summit brought together local businesses, education leaders and key strategic partners, including North Hertfordshire College, the University of Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire Futures, to reflect on achievements and shape the next phase of collaboration.



- Completed the final year of our original UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme, investing £650,000 into our people, communities and local businesses. Funded initiatives included a 'Meet the Buyer' event with over 90 representatives from local businesses at Knebworth Barns; a business sustainability programme in partnership with Sustainable X to support local neighbourhood centre enterprises; and a countywide business support network led by Hertfordshire Futures, with delivery from partners such as Step2Skills and Wenta.



- Secured dedicated funding from Mission44 to create a new Enterprise & Skills Partnership Officer role. This role will be focused on strengthening connections between Stevenage's business community, education providers and public sector organisations to help drive skills development and inclusive economic growth.



- The Glebe Neighbourhood Centre was also transformed with vibrant artwork through funding from the UKSPF and support from the Communities Team.

Transforming Our Town continued...

- Supported Hertfordshire Futures with the successful delivery of the Generation Stevenage skills fair at Knebworth House. Over 1,000 students from Stevenage and the surrounding area attended to engage with local employers and explore future career pathways.



- Offered grant funding through the Stevenage Business Start-up Grant Scheme to help boost business ideas and growth plans. Up to £10,000 of grant funding was also offered through the Stevenage Green Business Grant. This scheme sponsored 8 small businesses and charities to tackle rising energy costs, reach net zero, and build climate resilience by implementing greener solutions.



- Sponsored a series of standalone business workshops in partnership with Action Coach. Topics have included leadership and management strategies, future proof businesses, and accelerating sustainable growth.
- Raised awareness of 34 local small businesses through our Christmas Grottos and Trails as part of the Small Business Saturday initiative.
- Supported 60 new businesses and created 77 new jobs with our partner Wenta through our Business Technology Centre.



- Assisted with the delivery the 'Inclusive Jobs Fair', in partnership with Step 2 Skills and Job Centre Plus at Stevenage Football Club. Over 200 visitors were welcomed by 15 organisations across work taster sessions, interviews, access to training and upskilling opportunities to secure future employment, as well as several permanent job roles.



In 2025/26, we will:

- Continue our partnership with Mission44 and seek further investment to extend the Pioneering Young STEM Futures programme for the next three years. This next phase will broaden and deepen the support available for young people through expanded STEM activities, coaching and mentoring, and stronger links to key local employers.



- Deliver our newly awarded 2025/26 allocation of the UKSPF, following the successful extension of the scheme. This additional £325,000 investment will enable us to continue supporting our communities, people and local businesses through a range of pre-existing and new initiatives.

- Expand our successful Stevenage Works programme, continuing to leverage social value from major construction contracts across regeneration, housing development and asset management, while also launching a new strand focused on health and social care. This will see us work with partners including North Hertfordshire College and Job Centre Plus to create a talent pipeline supporting local employers.
- Invest in our own workforce with the rollout of enhanced apprenticeship and leadership development opportunities, beginning with the recruitment of six new apprenticeships in Spring 2025 as part of a five-year commitment to growing internal talent and supporting long-term career progression within the council.
- Work alongside North Hertfordshire College to relocate their Trade Skills and Engineering campus to the current Stevenage Indoor Market site to help bring new life to the town centre and increase access to technical education, following the successful transition of market traders to their new location.



- Support the return of the Generation Stevenage skills fair in May 2025 with the aim of exceeding 2024's attendance and broaden participation from local employers to help inspire and connect even more young people with opportunities in growing sectors.



- Continue to champion local enterprise and help sustain a vibrant and resilient local economy through providing business start-up grants, bespoke training, mentoring support, and ongoing assistance to local businesses in our high street and neighbourhood centres.

More Social, Affordable and Good Quality Homes

BUILDING NEW & SUSTAINABLE HOMES

The demand for local homes has never been higher, so through the provision of More Social, Affordable, and Good Quality Homes as part of our MSEB Corporate Plan, we have strived to build a range of new and sustainable homes.

Since 2014, the council has provided 595 new homes, and met its ambition to deliver 500 new affordable homes by 2025. As a result, we are now aiming to have provided a total of 1000 homes by 2030.

This year, to help reach this goal we have:



- Fully let the new Independent Living Scheme at Brodie Court, freeing up 52 family homes as a host of residents have downsized to take up the high quality homes on offer.



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- Begun construction at a further 210 homes across the town, including the new town centre independent living scheme, and new council homes at Ellis Avenue and Cartref.



- Begun finalising construction of the Dunn Close development of 27 homes, which will complete in May 2025.



- Received planning permission for the regeneration of The Oval Neighbourhood Centre, with plans for up to 330 new homes at the site. The council also secured funding for up to £9.2m from Homes England to support this.

- Identified and began works on opportunities for aids and adaptations at a selection of new homes to meet the housing needs of those with additional accessibility requirements.
- Won the regional award for the Planning Authority of the Year - East of England at the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) East of England Awards for all the great work our planning team accomplished this year.



In 2025/26, we will:

- Provide 49 new homes across a range of tenures to contribute towards our goal to deliver 1000 new homes by 2030.
- Continue or begin construction on a further 308 homes across the town to meet the varied housing need across the town.
- Seek to secure additional external grant funding to support the delivery of new additional council homes across the town.
- Submit planning applications for new homes, including at garage sites experiencing low demand.



MAINTAINING GOOD QUALITY HOMES

Providing a good quality tenancy, housing maintenance and repairs service to residents has been a key, long-standing focus for the council.

This year we have:

- Upgraded approximately 240 homes with £2.6m in funding (£3.9m co-funding), including 16 flat blocks and 100 houses, to meet the energy performance certificate (EPC) Band C target, with some reaching an EPC Band B as part of the SHDF Wave 2 programme. Therefore, so far ensuring 66.46% of council homes now have an EPC rating of Band C or above.



- Carried out improvements at a selection of our properties in order to meet the 'Decent Homes Standard (DHS)'. 96.64% of our properties are now deemed 'decent' as an outcome of the council's improvement programme, and the remaining properties will be included in our future major works programmes to achieve 100% decency overall by the end of next year. 'Decent Homes' related work has included:

443
Boiler
replacements



18
Kitchens



74
Bathrooms



13
Full Heating
Systems



14
Door
replacements

*(overhauls to
windows and doors
were also carried
out where there
was no need for a
full replacement)*

3
3 Window
replacements



More Social, Affordable and Good Quality Homes continued...



- Surveyed 2866 properties within the past year as part of our Stock Condition Survey Programme, totalling 4619 since the programme commenced. In collaboration with Pennington's, all of our existing stock has received a survey within the last 5 years to meet the July 2025 target date. As a result of these surveys, we have raised various Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) cases that are now being logged and managed by various teams to ensure that we action any Category 1 or Category 2 Hazards within the recommended timescales.

- Awarded a C2 grade during our recent Regulator for Social Housing inspection, where C1 is the very best achievable grade and C4 is the lowest. The Regulator attended a tenant workshop, and met with tenants, council officers and councillors and reviewed council documents. This grading confirms the council has provided assurance that it meets the Consumer Standards in many areas, with only minimal areas for improvement highlighted that will be addressed in the coming year.
- Renewed a range of new policies, including Responsive Repairs and Maintenance, Damp and Mould, Aids and Adaptations and Voids.
- Completed 18,096 repair jobs across our properties, including:
 - 16,327 Non-Emergency jobs (90.22% of the total), and 89.44% were completed on time.
 - 1,769 Emergency jobs (9.78% of the total), and 98.99% were completed on time
 - 95.72% of repairs being fixed first time and 90.37% of all jobs being completed on time.
- Responded to 100% of major planning applications within 13 weeks, 98.8% of minor applications within 8 weeks, and 97.8% of other applications within 8 weeks.



- Procured a number of repairs contracts covering services such as out-of-hours repairs, window and door repairs, roofing, scaffolding, disrepair, and general building works.
- Completed 95 house in multiple occupation licensed and non-licensed inspections.

- Received 87 private sector housing condition complaints, with 4 being served enforcement notices due to housing conditions, and works carried out when necessary.
- Issued no civil penalties to landlords for housing-related offences in 2024/25.



Investigated **450** residential and commercial noise complaints, with 108 linked to loud music and 88 due to a barking dog.



Received **53** service requests about rubbish accumulations on domestic premises and served 16 enforcement notices for in relation to nuisance from noise or poorly maintained residential premises.

In 2025/26, we will:

- Carry out an Asset Review for the council's housing stock to establish where future investment is required.
- Continue to deliver the Decent Homes Programme to achieve 100% of housing stock meeting national standards, including the installation of:

Inspected **10** properties for the Homes for Ukraine scheme.



3936
heating
upgrades

1316
new kitchens
or bathrooms

1014
window
or door
upgrades

379
properties will also
receive energy
efficiency works over
the next three years

- Carry out Stock Condition Surveys to ensure that all properties have received a survey within the last 5 years and HHSRS hazards addressed.
- Review existing processes within the Repairs team and work with our new contractors and in-house team to drive improvements across the service, including preparation for the implementation of Awaab's Law.
- Finalise refurbishment plans for the 5 high rise blocks, including building safety related works and commence works subject to the necessary consents and procurement of a suitably qualified contractor and in consultation with residents.
- Launch an online Booking Hub to enable tenants to book an appointment for specific types of repairs when reporting.
- Work on reintroducing an in-house team to carry out works to void properties.
- Deliver the Building Safety Action Plan to ensure 100% compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

Thriving Neighbourhoods



Improving the quality of life for Stevenage residents and enhancing the experience of visitors has always been Stevenage Borough Council's ambition. We achieve this through our approach to ensuring clean neighbourhoods & green spaces, our focus on community safety, and our vision for culture and leisure. Close partnership working has enabled our activities in these areas to thrive and ensured that we remain a dynamic town for residents and visitors alike.

Our neighbourhood-based teams also work co-operatively with residents, Councillors and local businesses to shape the services in their area. Through this work we seek to make services more responsive to the strengths, needs and aspirations of communities and localities.

CLEAN NEIGHBOURHOODS & GREEN SPACES

We aim to ensure residents can be proud of the area they live in, as a result it is a key priority for us to ensure your neighbourhoods and green spaces are well-maintained and kept clean.

This year we have:

- Delivered improvements to eight play areas across the town following consultation with over 300 children and young people. Provision for toddlers and teenagers alike has been implemented to provide fun and exciting places for all to enjoy. This year, in particular, the following sites have benefitted from improvements to their equipment provision:

- Camps Hill
- Canterbury Way Playing Field
- Chancellors Road
- Lapwing Rise
- Parishes Mead
- Riccat Lane
- Shearwater Close
- Town Centre Gardens



- Organised Great British Spring Clean community litter picks with 7 schools, where 28 bags of rubbish were collected with the help of 127 students. The most commonly picked litter included single use vapes, cigarette ends, and sweet / chocolate wrappers. Whilst the strangest items picked included a frying pan and plug-in electrical air freshener.

- Improved our open spaces through our Green Space Volunteers giving over 1,700 hours to carry out woodland coppicing, pond improvements, tree planting, and butterfly surveys. A training programme to support Green Space Volunteers in the future management of our Community Orchards was also introduced.

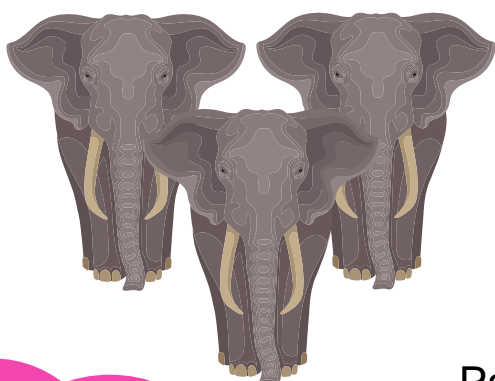


- Created new micro-woods at St Nicholas Park, Hampson Park and Shephalbury Park with the help of the community and local schools.

- Helped residents claim 3,169 tree saplings as part of the Hertfordshire County Council's "Your Tree Our Future" tree giveaway scheme



- Consulted residents on the draft Green Space Strategy and Tree & Woodland Strategy.
- Supported community projects such as the delivery of events organised by the Friends of Hampson Park, and the installation of new benches to the Millennium Gardens.
- Reported a 38% household recycling rate.
- Collected an estimated 19,011 tonnes of refuse, the equivalent to roughly 3 adult African Elephants!



Thriving Neighbourhoods continued...



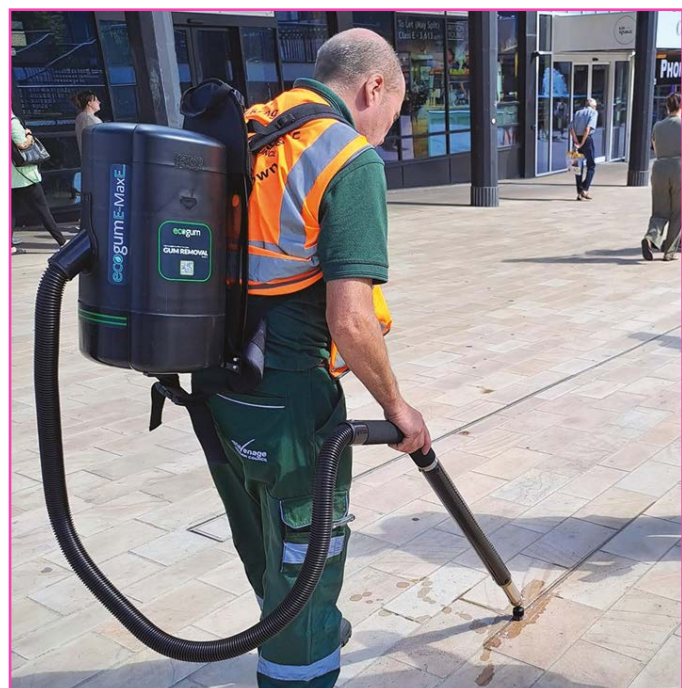
- Recycled, reused or composted an estimated 11,733 tonnes, just slightly over the weight of the Eiffel Tower!
- Collected an average of 99.73% of waste bins throughout the year.
- Cleared up a total of 3,058 reported fly tipping cases.



- Completed 93.75% of graffiti clearances following resident reports.
- Undertook 193 food safety interventions at food businesses, registered 98 new premises and inspected 37 new businesses.
- Carried out 190 vehicle condition checks on taxi and private hire vehicles.
- Received 43 public health burial service requests.

In 2025/26, we will:

- Implement a Green Spaces Strategy and a Tree & Woodland Strategy, and develop an allotment policy.



- Deliver improvements to the neighbourhood recycling bring bank sites.

- Develop and deliver a varied programme of volunteering opportunities.



- Deliver second phase of a pilot scheme to improve recycling at flat blocks.
- Plant new trees to aid in increasing tree canopy coverage.

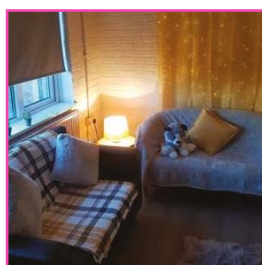


COMMUNITY SAFETY

It is essential that residents live in safe communities where crime and anti-social behaviour are reduced through effective partnership working.

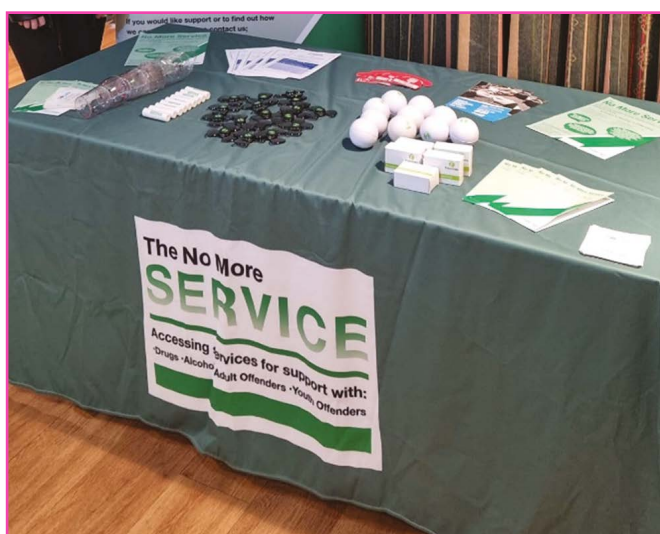
To accomplish this, we have:

- Continued to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse through regular Survivors Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) drop-in sessions running virtually and in person. This year, there has been a focus on keeping active and providing individuals and families with groceries, including cupboard items, fresh food and toiletries.



- Received a total of 1,375 domestic abuse referrals, with 92 of those for high-risk clients and 36 placed within SADA accommodation.

- Offered support to 151 customers via The No More Service. This vital weekly drop-in service provides access to advice, a hot meal, and the opportunity to meet with other service users.



- Worked closely with our partners to respond to:
 - 39 Adult safeguarding referrals made to HCC
 - 85 Child safeguarding referrals
 - 203 Information requests from HCC Children services completed
 - 55 Prevent checks for police intelligence sharing



- Offered support to customers through our rough sleeper team across the town, including sourcing accommodation through our Housing Futures programme and supporting those that slept rough during winter.

Thriving Neighbourhoods continued...

- Received an average of 24 Rough Sleeper referrals per month, reaching a total of 284 throughout the year. Of these, 24 of which were then moved into supported accommodation, and 31 were moved into secure accommodation (PRS or social tenancy, not supported accommodation). There were also 4 periods of Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) throughout the year that resulted in 24 placements.
- Continued to support and fund 11 warm spaces, cafés, and craft clubs across the town to provide a place for people to keep warm, get some food and drink, and access support services.
- Provided education sessions for students through Op Edu8 at schools in Stevenage as part of our Community Safety SoSafe Partnership. These sessions highlighted the dangers of gang affiliation, County lines and drug possession.
- Carried out 315 lettings, by Lettings Officers.
- Nominated 148 applicants from the housing register to Guinness HA for one and two bedroom flats in new build developments at Danesview House and Newton House.
- Nominated 20 applicants from the housing register to Clarion for homes at Wesleyan Way, a new development by Lister Hospital.
- Purchased 1 affordable/low-cost property and submitted a further bid for an additional 2 properties via the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) phase 3, to host the increased number of refugee arrivals from Afghanistan.
- Placed 22 prison leavers, into private rented fixed term assured shorthold tenancies with a minimum 6-months, with Government funding, to help rebuild their lives and aid efforts to prevent them from returning to prison. Also agreed 20 placements for Phase 2 of Accommodation for Ex Offenders (AFEO), as well as partial placements where prison leavers have had a positive outcome such as being accepted into hostels or supported housing.
- Received 1,022 debt advice referrals.



In 2025/26, we will:

- Plan further educational sessions alongside the police to help support parents with the concerns around County Lines, peer pressure and drug use.
- Engage with the community and work co-operatively with partners/residents and those that visit the town.
- Embed Violence Against Women and Girls, including domestic abuse, as a key area of concern within our partnership action plan, following our review and community consultation of the Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment.



- Focus on the following six areas highlighted within our newly launched Community Safety Strategy, that will last for 3 years:
 - Highlight the risks to the community of drug possession and crime.
 - Provide safe reporting and support to victims of Violence Against Women and Girls, including Domestic abuse.
 - Promote awareness of Cuckooing and the support available to victims.
 - Divert individuals from becoming involved in Anti-Social Behaviour.
 - Collaborate with Partners and Young People regarding the risks around County Lines and associated Anti-Social Behaviour.
 - Raise awareness around online fraud and the warning signs to the community.

Thriving Neighbourhoods continued...

CULTURE & LEISURE

Close partnership working within the culture and leisure sector improves quality of life for residents, benefits the local economy, and enables a vibrant, thriving, creative town to flourish.

This year we have:

- Delivered and supported a wide range of civic and community events within the town with over 60,000 people attending. These include:
 - Stevenage Day
 - Stevenage Fireworks Display
 - Armed Forces Day
 - Remembrance Sunday & Armistice Day
 - Stevenage Together Awards
 - Christmas Light Switch On
 - Hosting Town Twinning
 - St Nicholas Day



- Hosted over 200 stalls, a variety of rides and attractions and the infamous Rock in the Park stage at Stevenage Day 2024. The event also celebrated Pride and the LGBTQ+ Community with a dedicated marquee, stage and support partners.



- Operated at Fairlands Valley Park for the first season last summer. Through the procurement of an operator to provide lake activities catering for all ages and abilities, Aqua Parcs successfully opened and offered a large inflatable obstacle course on the main lake. Additional activities including pedaloos, paddleboards and kayaks were also available. Activities ran from June to September and had a large impact on the footfall to the park.



- Celebrated women and girls in sport during This Girl Can Week 2024. This vibrant celebration was delivered in partnership with Everyone Active and local community organisations, featured a wide range of free activities and classes designed to inspire and empower participants to get active, and attracted 188 women and girls to take part. The campaign also gained fantastic recognition, including a feature on BBC Three Counties Radio, helping to shine a spotlight on the positive impact of the programme across the community.
- Hosted nearly 400 walkers as part of Active Travel Day for the Stevenage Walking Festival at Fairlands Valley Park.
- Combined our successful Health Walks programme with Hertfordshire Health Walks, and created new walks in Bedwell and from the Town Centre library, with further new walks planned for the Oval and St Nicholas.
- Encouraged a total of 83,133 children to use Everyone Active facilities, a 7.2% improvement from 77,178 children last year.



- Celebrated the return of 'Covid Cobra' to Grace Way, where a selection of the 10,085 painted stones and pebbles were unveiled to over 50 people across four pillars, alongside a linked underpass mural created by local artists.

Thriving Neighbourhoods continued...

- Utilised a £145,079 capital budget, effectively delivering projects across all 13 wards, including a variety of infrastructure and public space improvements aimed at enhancing community environments and supporting local businesses.
- Gained 1,350 responses from our residents around local priorities, allowing us to tackle issues raised in our neighbourhoods.



- Continued to promote STEM opportunities across our neighbourhoods including events at Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst, the creation of youth engagement vehicle to shape future prospects, and a dedicated webpage for the council website and on the Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal. We also supported The IET to distribute free LEGO League kits to primary schools.
- Maintained over 5,600 subscribers to our digital newsletters, which provide regular updates on what is going on in the local area

- Awarded £60,000 through our local community budgets and supported over 50 organisations to help improve their neighbourhoods



- Continued to work with local residents and organisations to provide support and services that matter to them through our Community Development team.
- Maintained a suite of defibrillators across town to help to save lives in the local community through Councillors' Local Community Budgets.



- The Stevenage Museum welcomed 16,566 visitors, amassed over 2000 volunteer hours, hosted 8 work experience students, supported 5 students with their Duke of Edinburgh award. Numerous exhibitions throughout the year were put on, including:
 - 'Stories from Contemporary Life: 50 years on' that explored the now listed underpass by Bill Mitchell between the Town Centre and the Town Centre gardens on St George's Way.
 - 'Perform Transform' installation based on stories and experiences of living in Stevenage today made by participants in workshops organised by BEEE Creative and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.





- ‘Stevenage on Wheels’ that was a celebration of the roads that have been so important in the town’s story and all the many and varied forms of transport that we use to travel along them, from the Coaching Age to modern-day tales of speed including Vincent HRD motorbikes. Formula 1 World Champion Sir Lewis Hamilton’s first racing car was also showcased as part of this and attracted over 400 people. Further, ‘Speed is Expensive: The Phillip Vincent Story’ was shown at Thomas Alleyne’s Academy and drew in over 100 people.

- ‘In My Mind’s Eye, Trevor Herbert 2000-2024’ was a collaboration with Junction 7 Creatives and showcased one of their artists alongside a spoken word performance and singing.
- ‘Extinction!’ explored the love of the natural world, asked if we are in the sixth great extinction and if there is anything we can do to prevent it. This exhibition included a live animal event, a dinosaur day and a craftivist making session.



- ‘Remembering Ken Hensley and his band Uriah Heep’ was a combination of two live music events and a small foyer exhibition about a musical legend who grew up in Stevenage, and was organised with his family.
- A pop up gallery at 21 Town Square throughout September attracted roughly 2750 people across a daytime art workshop for students, drop in activities throughout the month, and a Drink and Draw event funded by the Stevenage Museum.



- Additional activities included a Roman Day, the Peculiar Market on Event Island, a talk at Lonsdale school, and the Museum’s 70th birthday celebrations.



Thriving Neighbourhoods continued...

In 2025/26, we will:

- Increase engagement with children and young people (under 16s) through expanded outreach and participation programmes delivered in partnership with Everyone Active.
- Continue to target areas of high deprivation by delivering inclusive leisure programmes tailored to the needs of our most disadvantaged communities.
- Complete and launch the Stevenage Arts and Heritage Trail, making use of the town's network of cycleways and footpaths to create an engaging public experience.
- Progress initial concept designs for a new cultural museum offer that showcases Stevenage's unique New Town story and heritage.



Tackling Climate Change

Progress towards the reduction of carbon emissions to be net zero by 2030 has been a significant priority for the council for a number of years, as well as providing support to residents and business to do the same.



This year we have:



- Transitioned our entire diesel fleet, including road and non-road vehicles and machinery, to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), a low-carbon biofuel made from waste vegetable oil. This switch reduced the net carbon emissions of our fleet by up to 90% and required no vehicle modifications.
- Continued the transition of our fleet by procuring and incorporating three additional electric vehicles, bringing the total to six.
- Identified up to 50 potential locations across park land, leisure sites, and garages compounds that are viable to install EV charging points through LEVI (Local EV Infrastructure) funding, by assessing the layout, ownership and the power grid.
- Monitored our electricity consumption across 30 council sites, including Daneshill House and Cavendish Road Depot, through a digital meter explorer, understanding our demand during open, closed, and holiday periods.
- Installed EV charging infrastructure at Bedwell Shops, the Glebe Shops, Oaks Cross Shops, The Hyde Shops, St Nicholas Pavilion, Archer Road Shops, and Filey Close Shops using ORCS funding from OZEV.
- Maintained and updated our Climate Action Plan online tracker, providing residents with up-to-date information on 8 specific strategic climate themes and over 50 climate actions.
- Funded a range of community-led climate initiatives through our Climate Change Community Fund that allocates £7,500 to each ward annually. Funded projects included water butts, tree planting, energy efficiency upgrades at community centres, cycle hangers, and better recycling facilities. We also installed a permanent Christmas tree in the Old Town that will help reduce transport emissions from purchasing a new tree each year, isolate local carbon and pollutants, while also providing an additional local habitat for birds and insects.



Tackling Climate Change continued...



- Adopted the new Stevenage Biodiversity Action Plan (2024-2028) as a strategic framework to guide local efforts to protect and enhance biodiversity through targeted actions across the borough.



- Installed solar panels to 48 residents under the recently completed round of Solar Together scheme, with 30 systems completed by September 2024. The initiative has totalled 333 solar panels, 130 kW capacity, and £286,959 invested so far. 28 installations included batteries, adding 200 kWh of storage. A new Solar Together round has been launched in 2025, with 115 households and 47 businesses already expressing interest in solar installations by March 2025.
- Supported the delivery of the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2), a UK Government scheme offering free energy-saving upgrades for low-income, off-gas grid privately owned or rented households. Installed measures included cavity wall insulation, electric storage heating, loft insulation, solar PV, and ventilation.
- Entered into an agreement with the National Energy Foundation (NEF) to assist eligible homeowners and private tenants to access funding for the installation of home energy efficiency measures through the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS). The schemes are promoted by NEF-approved suppliers who assist eligible households with the process of applying for financial assistance and carry out the installation of approved energy efficiency measures.
- Completed our first Climate Change Risk Assessment to identify and start addressing climate-related risks across our operations and services.
- Secured a Warm Homes: Local Grant (WHLG) funding of £1,500,000 to provide energy performance upgrades and low carbon heating to privately owned households with low incomes. This grant will be delivered from 2025 until 2028.
- Continued implementing Social Value as part of our procurement processes and prepared an updated Cooperative Procurement Strategy including new sustainability guidelines.
- Donated 133 bicycles to the Recycle Your Cycle scheme for refurbishment and reuse.



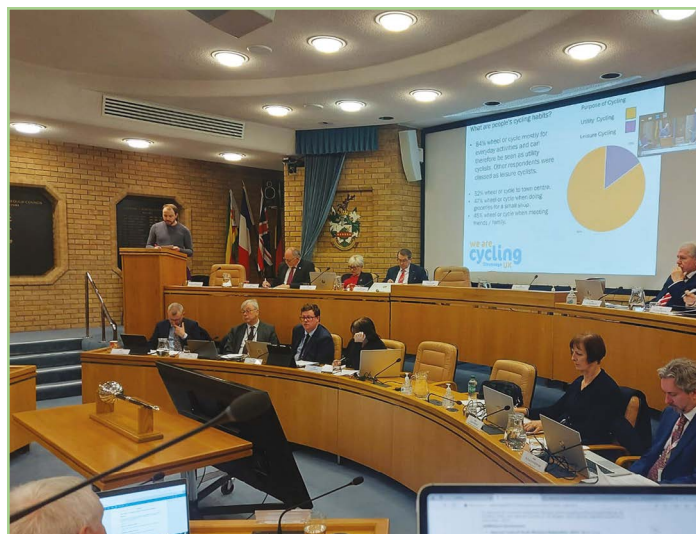
- Adopted a new Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy in April 2024, incorporating new environmental considerations for an eco-friendly fleet, with more stringent emissions standards, and a subsidised license fee for electric or hybrid vehicles, while continuing to discuss environmental issues through its established Taxi Forum.
- Implemented energy efficiency measures through our leisure facility management contract with Everyone Active including LED lighting, Building Management Systems upgrades, and insulation works.



- Secured £36,000 from Sport England to aid decarbonisation of our public swimming pool. Works included lagging of key pool plant equipment and the installation of a pool cover. Over 3 years, it will reduce our carbon footprint by over 292 tonnes of CO₂ and reduce our water usage by 3,699 cubic metres. The payback on investment of this project is just over 3 years.
- Successfully been allocated a grant amount of £3,856,822 for Wave 3 of the Warm Homes: Social Housing fund.

- Adopted new Supplementary Planning Documents to encourage sustainable forms of development and design, use of renewables, and incorporating active travel measures.

- Progressed the Local Plan Review, including Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 consultations, before submission to the Planning Inspectorate for examination in public (EiP), and incorporating relevant updated and new climate policies on emissions targets, energy efficiency, water management, and the green economy.



- Researched how Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) monitoring systems can work with planning software to ensure BNG schemes can be captured and monitored over a period of time.
- Established an internal Climate Champions Officers Group to discuss sustainability matters in the way we conduct our work and identify projects to implement over the next year, fostering collaboration.
- Organised Carbon Literacy Training, delivered by Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) for 40 officers, including our Climate Champions, covering sustainable building features and certifications was delivered for key officers.

Tackling Climate Change continued...

- Published an Events Sustainability Guidance as a key part of the Community Event Toolkit to provide advice on how to incorporate sustainable practices when organising events.
- Launched our commercial food waste collection service for businesses and schools across Stevenage.

In 2025/26, we will:

- Keep on supporting the delivery of the Stevenage Green Business Grant and the businesses to move forward with their plans.
- Help local businesses navigate sustainability and contract readiness, as part of additional support for businesses.



- Introduce separate weekly food waste collections to all households in Stevenage by 31 March 2026, in accordance with new Simpler Recycling government recycling legislation. Procurement of new vehicles and food waste containers to support the new service has already been completed. It is anticipated that this service could increase our recycling rate by 5% as the diversion of food waste for recycling or composting will create less waste and reduce carbon emissions further.

- Continue implementing the Climate Change Community Fund, seeking operational efficiencies and exploring street plan options to engage the public in projects that enhance biodiversity, active travel, reduce carbon emissions, and improve the local environment.

- Develop a Climate Change Adaptation report that includes a risk assessment of the Council's operations, services, and assets, along with a five-year adaptation action plan, in line with DEFRA guidelines. In parallel, collaborate with other Hertfordshire local authorities to support county-wide climate adaptation work.

- Start delivering retrofit works to improve the energy efficiency of Stevenage's private homes through Warm Homes: Local Grant as part of a three-year programme.



- Deliver retrofit works to improve the energy efficiency of social housing homes through the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund Wave 3, as part of the three-year programme which will be delivered until 2028/2029.



- Complete a project to replace the Town Centre Clocktower lighting system with an LED system that will not only reduce energy consumption and maintenance costs but also allow us to display a multitude of colours which will rejuvenate the Clocktower and mark days of national significance by lighting it in specific colours (e.g., red, white & blue for VE Day).
- Submit the Local Plan Partial Review to the Planning Inspectorate for examination in public (EiP), including comprehensive new and updated climate policies, aiming for adoption in early 2026.

- Plan to install more cycle hangars across town to provide a bike storage alternative for residents living in flats or small houses with little or no safe storage for their bikes.
- Support the installation of EV charging points across town using the LEVI funding through a collaboration agreement with HCC.
- Replace the current lighting of St George's Multi Storey Car Park with efficient LED systems.



Balancing the Budget

Ensuring there are sufficient resources available to deliver the council's priorities while remaining resilient to the impact of increasing financial pressures remains a priority for us.

Since 2010, there has been a significant reduction in Government funding to councils across England. This has led to significant financial pressures across local government which have been exacerbated by national policy decisions on welfare and social rent, rising inflation, as well as energy and food costs.

Despite these challenges, the council has remained financially resilient, ensured sufficient resources are available and has continued to work hard to deliver for its residents.



This year we have:

- Provided £9.7million in business rate relief.
- Administered £20.7million in Housing Benefit to 3,208 residents.
- Awarded £6.1million and supported 5,016 residents as part of our Council Tax Support scheme payments to help people struggling to pay their council tax.
- Paid out over £145,000 in Discretionary Housing Payments to provide financial support to help with rent or housing costs.



- Earned £3,050 through businesses using Stevenage as a filming location.



- Received 250,460 online transactions, including 29,059 online forms submitted.
- Identified 2025/26 savings of £1.171million to maintain the financial stability of the 2025/26 General Fund budget and delivered the majority of the 2024/25 savings identified for the year.

- Successfully been awarded Government grant funding of £21.6million to build new housing.

- Administered and ran a £140,800 Household Support Fund that helped local organisations to reduce food and energy poverty across the town. The project reached 18 organisations including charities, local community groups, and 10 community cafés that aim to address isolation and loneliness for residents as well as provide cost-of-living advice and support. This year we have also provided £90,100 to food and energy poverty support organisations across the town, and £50,700 to community cafes that act as weekly open access warm spaces with food support throughout the year and during Ramadan.



In 2025/26, we will:



- Increase growth from current and new concessions contracts and traded services.
- Review of all services provided to or on behalf of the council by external supplier or third party, as per the Insourcing Roadmap 2023-26.
- Develop a commercial culture across the organisation through providing training, tools and communication plans.
- Identify business change and digital savings to support the Balancing the Budget target.

Cross-Cutting Themes

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (EDI)

The council continues to work with partners, staff, local businesses, and community groups to advance EDI across the workforce and community.



This year we have:

- Launched the EDI Action Plan for 2024/25 that holds 18 actions across six key objectives to ensure we continue to champion the rights of individuals across our workforce and local communities.
- Hosted regular Officer Equality Group and Equality, Diversity Governance Group meetings where discussions covered the quarterly EDI action plan updates, Stevenage Equalities Commission activities, ethnicity terminology, the event calendar, invisible disabilities, the Prevention of Sexual Harm Strategy, the accessibility of the social and leisure hub regeneration and more.



- Celebrated Pride at Stevenage Day 2024 that featured a dedicated Pride area highlighting the LGBTQ+ community.
- Hosted webinars and welcomed guest speakers internally on topics such as Neurodiversity, Menopause, and the LGBTQ+ community.
- Celebrated our older community members and Age Friendly Communities in Stevenage and Hertfordshire at the International Day of Older Persons in October.
- Teamed up with Unison and the Time of The Month charity to bring internal staff free sustainable period products at both council sites, with the help of our Community Development team.
- Opened a new multi-faith room offering a tranquil space for all staff to use at the Daneshill office.
- Completed over 20 Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) when reviewing and implementing a range of policies, strategies and procedures.
- Published our Equality & Diversity Annual Report for 2023/24 summarising the key demographics that make up our community and workforce.
- Published our latest Gender Pay Gap Report that highlights our continued commitment to gender equality as our mean gender pay gap stands at an impressive -0.98% this year.





- Participated in global celebrations for International Women's Day 2025 through the council's Women in Business Network, over 70 women-led businesses or women in leadership took part in an informal business networking event at Hotel Cromwell Stevenage.

- Continued to support the Stevenage Equalities Commission Legacy Group that was set up to help the council and our partners in addressing the inequalities ethnically diverse communities face in Stevenage. The group took part in a variety of events, including:

- Health Action Day
- International Day
- International Day of Older Persons Event
- Older Persons Activity Learning and Safety Event
- Stevenage Day
- Taste of the Caribbean Event



The Commission also put on their own dedicated conference titled 'The Stevenage Equalities Commission: Beyond Barriers Conference'. It was held at The Gordan Craig Theatre during Black History Month in October and was attended by just under 90 residents, staff partners, and Councillors alike. Workshops and panels were held throughout the day on a variety of topics such as Health Inequalities, Criminal Justice, Political and Civic Representation, Culture, and Education, as well as a special performance by the Drumming with Iroko Theatre Company!

Cross-Cutting Themes continued...

In 2025/26, we will:

- Publish a EDI Action Plan 24/25 Progress Report and launch a revised action plan for 2025/26 to ensure we continue to champion the rights of individuals across our workforce and local communities.
- Continue to host internal 'Champion' workshops on a range of key EDI topics throughout the year.
- Carry on monitoring our approach to EqIAs through Service Plans, and utilise the information to inform decision making and the wider understanding of existing and future community needs.
- Support the Stevenage Equalities Commission to continue to engage with Black and Brown communities and partners in Stevenage to understand their perspective on how to meet the challenges they face every day.
- Work with the Stevenage Equalities Commission and Voice4Change to formalise the group into a Multi Stakeholder Co-operative.
- Work with the Stevenage Equalities Commission and Operation Black Vote charity to carry out formal Civic leadership Programme Diagnostic/Familiarisation research and analysis into the democratic deficit in Stevenage to develop an understanding of the key issues facing the town. This research will then be used, alongside data and feedback from the community and partners, to understand the context of community leadership and design a civic and citizen programme for Stevenage.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

The council continues to work with partners to tackle health inequalities and improve the health and wellbeing of residents.

This year we have:

- Made physical activity more accessible by delivering free or low-cost sessions directly within local communities through the Active Communities Programme. Designed to support the “30 minutes of activity, five times a week” goal, the programme offers a broad range of inclusive activities for all ages and abilities, ranging from strength and mobility classes to youth basketball camps and disability-friendly sports. The initiative not only supports physical and mental wellbeing but also promotes social inclusion through community cafés and targeted programmes such as those for ex-offenders and asylum seekers. With over 245 outreach sessions and 1,558 attendees to date since its launch in July 2023, the programme has significantly expanded leisure provision and community engagement across Stevenage.
- Healthy Hub merged this year with the Young People's Healthy Hub to deliver a combined programme of health and wellbeing support for all ages. This included mental health counselling for young people, Stop Smoking support, Family Centre courses and the annual Health Action Day that saw over 20 different stalls and over 300 people throughout the day.



- Delivered our Place-based Health Inequalities Programme to over 200 people following GP referrals, in partnership with Everyone Active. This weight management programme provides free physical activity, advice and guidance to those wanting to live a healthier lifestyle.



- Continued to support the Herts Mind Network's Crisis Café that provides provision for those in crisis situations. Supplying emergency help and onwards referrals to get mental health support and advice, this outstanding work was recognised by receiving a National APSE Award for Best Health & Wellbeing Initiative 2024.



- Launched our Age-Friendly Stevenage status on the International Day for Older Persons. In partnership with the Centre for Better Aging, Age UK and Everyone Active, we hosted over 200 attendees and 30 stallholders that resulted in a total of 1,100 interactions occurring throughout the day.

- After Stevenage became a Dementia Friendly Community, we hosted a Dementia Friendly event as part of the Herts Dementia Festival. It was organised for people living with Dementia as well as their carers and families with the help of Alzheimer's Society, Hertswise, The Red Shed, Purple All Stars Sing Rocks and many more.



- We also hosted an internal Dementia Friends training session, provided by the Alzheimer's Society. The training gave employees a chance to train as a 'dementia friend' that can support their community.

Cross-Cutting Themes continued...

In 2025/26, we will:

- Launch a new five-year Healthy Stevenage Strategy, focused on reducing local health inequalities through prevention, early intervention, and strengthened cross-sector partnerships.
- Support the development of new wellbeing initiatives that address key public health challenges, including obesity, frailty, and mental wellbeing.
- Enhance access to local physical activity by supporting leisure provision and promoting behaviour change projects in collaboration with local partners.

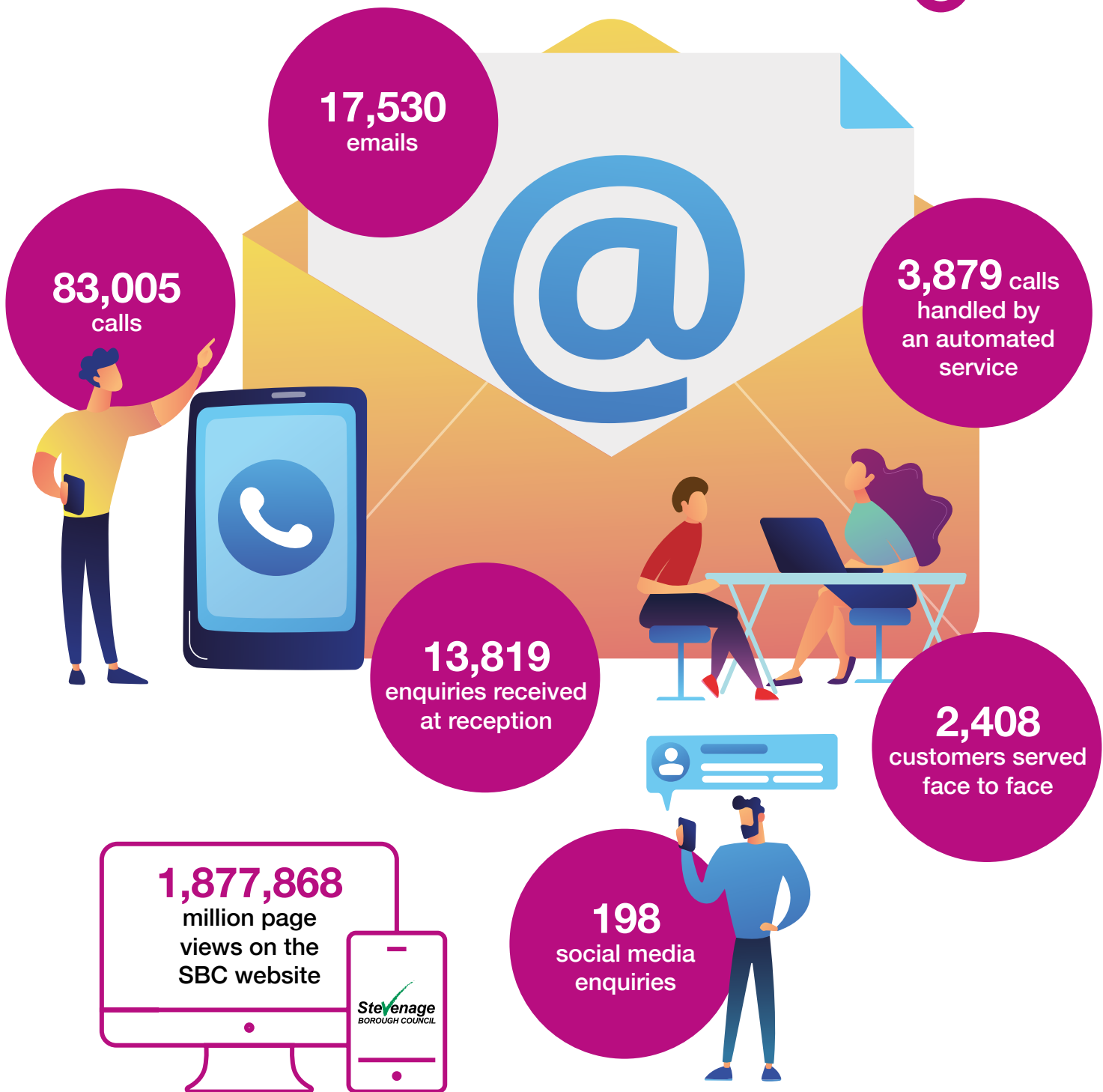
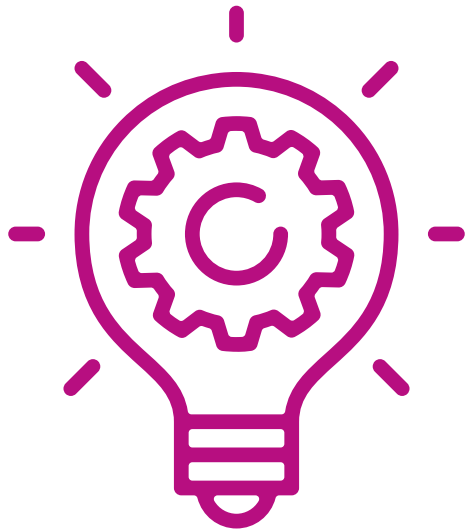


TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

The council has always embraced technology and innovation to enhance how we operate, and deliver system efficiencies that empower residents to use digital services too.

This year, in particular, we have:

● Dealt with 120,839 enquiries since the relocation of the Customer Service Centre to the main reception at Daneshill House, including:



Cross-Cutting Themes continued...

- Invested in transformation initiatives that seek to improve how services are delivered to customers and internal business processes within the council across areas such as:
 - A £650,000 investment in technology has facilitated the migration from legacy systems, resulting in improved functionality for our Housing Management System and HR system. This upgrade has streamlined operations, increased data accuracy, and enhanced user experience across all platforms. Teams can now perform tasks more efficiently, leading to higher productivity and better service delivery.
 - A £70,000 investment in new technology to boost our cyber security and staff training, making our systems stronger and more efficient. We have also enhanced our training programs to better prepare our staff for potential cyber incidents. By using advanced technology and improving our response skills, we aim to create a safer and more effective working environment. This proactive strategy has safeguarded our data and reassured our clients and stakeholders about our commitment to high security standards.
 - Improvements to online customer services by implementing a telephony solution that encourages usage. This involved creating a new phone messaging system that sends customers direct text messages signposting them to relevant online services, resolve queries. It has also allowed customers to navigate the system easier, reduce their wait time and increase their satisfaction. Additionally by directing inquiries to online services, we have reduced the number of calls that customer service representatives handle, allowing them to focus on more complex issues that require personal attention.
- Enhanced website and online services for customers through:
 - Improving website accessibility for key online services
 - Introducing new online services for Complaints, Abandoned Vehicle Reporting and Health & Safety services.
 - Improving feedback methods to continually improve online services, with a new 'customer feedback survey' for customers to feedback immediately after using an online service.
 - Introducing new website analytics tool to understand how customers use the website
- Internal business process and technology improvements, such as:
 - Making use of the cloud to enhance internal business systems
 - Modernising business processes, including improving ways of working within streets and grounds maintenance service and piloting improvements to customer contact to help with debt management

In 2025/26, we will:

- Complete a review to understand digital accessibility compliance and develop an action plan to track progress
- Ensure full utilisation and value for money of all business insight, systems, and Office 365 apps across the council
- Develop and implement a new ICT and Data Strategy, along with a new ICT Policy project.

A Cooperative Council

As a Cooperative Council, we are passionate about our communities and enabling them to co-produce projects and service related policies. Central to this approach is the principle of community wealth building, which focuses on how much money is held and reinvested in an area for the benefit of local communities. As one of the largest procurers of goods and services locally, we are committed to ensuring that not only do we champion this approach to other partners and businesses, but through our actions too.

This year in particular, we have worked closely with partners across the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network to support the following policy lab projects:



● Little Bank of Kindness

A core tenant of our Co-operative Neighbourhoods approach is working co-operatively with residents to highlight priorities for our communities, establish local ownership and support genuine resident agency and involvement. We partnered with Made Open to pilot a “Little Bank of Kindness” community timebank within the St Nicholas Community Centre. Timebanking is the process of exchanging time and skills with other people in your community. Examples of timebank community activities have included dog walking, gardening support and companionship. The yearlong pilot concluded in May 2024 with the next steps for this project aiming to build a stronger volunteer framework.

● Councils' Cooperative Development Toolkit

This policy lab project aimed to establish a framework that supported the identification of opportunities to improve the local cooperative development context and move towards action. The project ran in three phases:

- Collaboration and research: Framework identification/development and resource consolidation
- Testing: Application of resources
- Dissemination: Development and promotion of a toolkit and report

The toolkit was launched at the CCIN conference in February 2025, and is available on the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network website. Involvement in this policy lab was invaluable to our work supporting community organisations such as the Social Inclusion Partnership and the Stevenage Equalities Commission Multistakeholder Co-operatives.



Stevenage Borough Council's Annual Report

(2024-2025)

If you'd like this publication in another format
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equalities@stevenage.gov.uk

| MORE SOCIAL, AFFORDABLE AND GOOD QUALITY HOMES (25 MEASURES) | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------|------------------|---|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Corporate Plan Subset | Business Unit | Service | Portfolio Holder | KPI Name & Description | Q4 2024/25 Actual | 2025/26 Quarterly Targets | | | |
| | | | | | | Q1 25/26 | Q2 25/26 | Q3 25/26 | Q4 25/26 |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Building Safety & Housing Property Services | Building Safety | Jackie Hollywell | RSH BS01: Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas certificate | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Building Safety & Housing Property Services | Building Safety | Jackie Hollywell | RSH BS02: Percentage of dwellings with a valid Fire Risk Assessment | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Building Safety & Housing Property Services | Building Safety | Jackie Hollywell | RSH BS03: Percentage of properties that require an annual asbestos inspection/survey | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Building Safety & Housing Property Services | Building Safety | Jackie Hollywell | RSH BS04: Percentage of sites with valid legionella inspections certificate | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Building Safety & Housing Property Services | Building Safety | Jackie Hollywell | RSH BS05: Percentage of domestic passenger lifts with an in date LOLER inspection | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Building Safety & Housing Property Services | Building Safety | Jackie Hollywell | VED1: Percentage of dwellings with a valid EICR (Electrical Certificate) | 99.61% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Building Safety & Housing Property Services | Building Safety | Jackie Hollywell | RSH Number of Overdue Fire Remedial High Risk Actions | 0 | No target required | No target required | No target required | No target required |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Building Safety & Housing Property Services | Building Safety | Jackie Hollywell | RSH Number of Overdue Fire Remedial Medium Risk Actions | 81 | No target required | No target required | No target required | No target required |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Building Safety & Housing Property Services | Building Safety | Jackie Hollywell | RSH Number of Overdue Fire Remedial Low Risk Actions | 122 | No target required | No target required | No target required | No target required |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Building Safety & Housing Property Services | Building Safety | Jackie Hollywell | RSH Number of Overdue Water Remedial Actions | 59 | No target required | No target required | No target required | No target required |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Building Safety & Housing Property Services | Housing Asset Management | Jackie Hollywell | Average re-let time (working days) - GN Standard | 63 | 35 | 30 | 28 | 28 |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Building Safety & Housing Property Services | Housing Asset Management | Jackie Hollywell | % of Damp and Mould cases resolved on time. | 80.13% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Building Safety & Housing Property Services | Housing Asset Management | Jackie Hollywell | % of Damp & Mould Inspections completed on time. | 72,95% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Building Safety & Housing Property Services | Housing Asset Management | Jackie Hollywell | RP01a: Percentage of homes maintained as decent against national minimum DH standard | 96.64% | 96.64% | 97.50% | 98.50% | 98.50% |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Building Safety & Housing Property Services | Repairs & Maintenance | Jackie Hollywell | RSH Rep1: Percentage of emergency responsive repairs completed within target timescale | 98% | 99% | 99% | 99% | 99% |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Building Safety & Housing Property Services | Repairs & Maintenance | Jackie Hollywell | RSH Rep2: Percentage of non-emergency (routine and urgent) responsive repairs completed within target timescale | 91.45% | 95% | 95% | 95% | 95% |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------|------------------|--|--------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Building Safety & Housing Property Services | Repairs & Maintenance | Jackie Hollywell | Rep4: Percentage repairs fixed first time | 93.07% | 90% | 90% | 90% | 90% |
| Building New & Sustainable Homes | Housing Development | Housing Development | Jackie Hollywell | HDD1d: Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) by the Council (since 2014) | 500 | 501 | 528 | 529 | 530 |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Housing & Neighbourhoods | Housing Management | Jackie Hollywell | % of tenants satisfied with how their complaint was handled at stage one (Housing) | 0% | 40% | 40% | 40% | 40% |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Housing & Neighbourhoods | Housing Management | Jackie Hollywell | % of tenants satisfied with how their complaint was handled at stage two (Housing) | 0% | 40% | 40% | 40% | 40% |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Housing & Neighbourhoods | Housing Management | Jackie Hollywell | RSH CH01 (part 1): Number of stage one complaints made by tenants | 688 | No target required | No target required | No target required | No target required |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Housing & Neighbourhoods | Housing Management | Jackie Hollywell | RSH CH01 (part 2): Number of stage two complaints made by tenants | 85 | No target required | No target required | No target required | No target required |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Housing & Neighbourhoods | Housing Management | Jackie Hollywell | RSH CH02 (part 1): Number of stage one complaints made by tenants and responded to within the CH timescale | 651 | No target required | No target required | No target required | No target required |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Housing & Neighbourhoods | Housing Management | Jackie Hollywell | RSH CH02 (part 2): Number of stage two complaints made by tenants and responded to within the CH timescale | 69 | No target required | No target required | No target required | No target required |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes | Housing & Neighbourhoods | Community Advice & Support | Jackie Hollywell | Homeless Preventions | 117 | 30 | 60 | 90 | 120 |

| TRANSFORM OUR TOWN (3 MEASURES) | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|---|-------------------|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Corporate Plan Subset | Business Unit | Service | Portfolio Holder | KPI Name & Description | Q4 2024/25 Actual | 2025/26 Quarterly Targets | | | |
| | | | | | | Q1 25/26 | Q2 25/26 | Q3 25/26 | Q4 25/26 |
| Regeneration | Planning & Regulation | Development Management | Rob Broom | NI157a: Percentage of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks | 100% | 60% | 60% | 60% | 60% |
| Regeneration | Planning & Regulation | Development Management | Rob Broom | NI157b: Percentage of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks | 98.80% | 70% | 70% | 70% | 70% |
| Regeneration | Planning & Regulation | Development Management | Rob Broom | NI157c: Percentage of other planning applications determined in 8 weeks | 97.80% | 70% | 70% | 70% | 70% |

















| THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS (11 MEASURES) | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------|--|-------------------|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Corporate Plan Subset | Business Unit | Service | Lead Officer | KPI Name & Description | Q4 2024/25 Actual | 2025/26 Quarterly Targets | | | |
| | | | | | | Q1 25/26 | Q2 25/26 | Q3 25/26 | Q4 25/26 |
| Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces | Stevenage Direct Services | Environmental Services | Kris White | ES1: Percentage of residential bins collected | 99.73% | 99% | 99% | 99% | 99% |
| Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces | Stevenage Direct Services | Environmental Services | Kris White | Graffiti Clearance | 93.75% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% |
| Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces | Stevenage Direct Services | Environmental Services | Julia Hill | NI191: Residual household waste per household (kgs) | 372.86 | 130 | 245 | 360 | 495 |
| Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces | Stevenage Direct Services | Environmental Services | Julia Hill | NI192: Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting | 35.60% | 40% | 40% | 35% | 32% |
| Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces | Stevenage Direct Services | Environmental Services | Julia Hill | Contamination rate of recycling - calculated as estimated proportion that is rejected of total amount of household waste sent for recycling. | New Measure | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% |
| Culture & Leisure | Stevenage Direct Services | Culture & Leisure | Geoff Caine | Everyone Active - Number of children (aged under 16) participating in facilities and outreach programmes at least once per week | 19,715 | 26,000 | 19,500 | 17,000 | 19,500 |










| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|--|----------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Community Safety | Housing & Neighbourhoods | Housing Management | Jess Warren | RSH NM01 (part 1): NM01: Anti-social behaviour cases relating to the landlord function | 107 | No target required | No target required | No target required | No target required |
| Community Safety | Housing & Neighbourhoods | Housing Management | Jess Warren | RSH NM01 (part 2): ASB hate related cases relating to the landlord function | 4 | No target required | No target required | No target required | No target required |
| Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces | Housing & Neighbourhoods | Communities & Neighbourhoods | Jane Konopka | CD1: Number of people engaged in cooperative neighbourhood 'Community & Place' initiatives | 954 | 500 | 1,000 | 1,500 | 2,000 |
| Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces | Housing & Neighbourhoods | Communities & Neighbourhoods | Jane Konopka | CD2: Value (£) invested into Neighbourhood areas from UKSPF funding | £266,365 | £10,000 | £23,000 | £36,000 | £55,278 |
| Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces | Housing & Neighbourhoods | Communities & Neighbourhoods | Jane Konopka | # of neighbourhood improvements, events, projects or activities undertaken using UKSPF funding | 84 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 12 |










| TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE (1 MEASURES) | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|------------------|--|-------------------|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Corporate Plan Subset | Business Unit | Service | Portfolio Holder | KPI Name & Description | Q4 2024/25 Actual | 2025/26 Quarterly Targets | | | |
| | | | | | | Q1 25/26 | Q2 25/26 | Q3 25/26 | Q4 25/26 |
| Tackling Climate Change | Building Safety & Housing Property Services | Housing Asset Management | Rob Broom | CC1: Percentage of homes that have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of band C or above | 66.46% | 66.46% | 67% | 68% | 69.60% |












| BALANCING THE BUDGET (12 MEASURES) | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------|---|-------------------|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Corporate Plan Subset | Business Unit | Service | Portfolio Holder | KPI Name & Description | Q4 2024/25 Actual | 2025/26 Quarterly Targets | | | |
| | | | | | | Q1 25/26 | Q2 25/26 | Q3 25/26 | Q4 25/26 |
| Balancing the Budget | Stevenage Direct Services | Garages | Jeannette Thomas | CNM2g: Garage Voids (residential) as a percentage of stock | 7.76% | 7.26% | 7.26% | 7.26% | 7.26% |
| Balancing the Budget | Finance | Finance | Jeannette Thomas | Finance BV9: % of Council Tax Collected | 94.50% | 33% | 60% | 86% | 95.80% |
| Balancing the Budget | Finance | Finance | Jeannette Thomas | Finance BV10: Percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year received by the authority | 99.21% | 36^ | 60% | 89% | 98.80% |
| Balancing the Budget | Finance | Finance | Jeannette Thomas | NI181: Time taken (days) to process housing benefit new claims and change events | 2.01 | 12 | 12 | 10 | 10 |
| Balancing the Budget | Finance | Finance | Jeannette Thomas | Garage/commercial/parking- income versus budget for the top 3 income streams of the General Fund. | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Balancing the Budget | Business Change & Digital | Customer Services | Jeannette Thomas | CompGF1: % of council service customer complaints responded to within deadline | 77.40% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% |
| Balancing the Budget | Business Change & Digital | Customer Services | Jeannette Thomas | CSC Sat: Customer satisfaction with CSC customer service | 88.80% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% |
| Balancing the Budget | Business Change & Digital | Digital | Jeannette Thomas | Dig2: Number of online payments | 117,255 | 31,500 | 31,500 | 31,000 | 30,500 |
| Balancing the Budget | Housing & Neighbourhoods | Housing Management | Jeannette Thomas | BV66a: Rent Collection Rate | 98.13% | 88.50% | 95% | 97% | 98.50% |
| Balancing the Budget | Estates | Estates | Jeannette Thomas | % of Corporate Building Overall Completed Remedials | 75.15% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% |
| Balancing the Budget | Estates | Estates | Jeannette Thomas | % of Corporate Building Overall Compliance Inspections Completed | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Balancing the Budget | Estates | Estates | Jeannette Thomas | CR1: % of commercial rent collected from estates | 91% | 90% | 90% | 90% | 90% |







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| MORE SOCIAL, AFFORDABLE & GOOD QUALITY HOMES 2025/26 PRIORITIES | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Milestones |
| Building New & Sustainable Homes |  Bragbury End | * Planning permission and sale of 500 unit scheme at Bragbury End. * Public consultation * Planning permission submitted * Planning decision * Sales agent appointed |
| |  Brent Court - Independent Living | * Delivery of 96 unit Independent Living scheme on site of former Brent Court Garages. * Gateway 2 submission made * Gateway 2 permission * Demolition of Garages * Foundation work completed |
| |  Burwell Phase Two | * Topping out of 20 homes for affordable rent. |
| |  Cartref | * Delivery of land receipt and affordable homes. |
| |  Courtlands | * Completion of 17 unit private sale scheme. |
| |  Defects | * Ongoing delivery of defects provision |
| |  Ellis Avenue | * Delivery of 11 homes for Council Rent. * Demolition Completed |
| |  Garage Sites Sales | * Cabinet approval for disposal of sites * Appoint architect for scheme development * Initial Design approval |
| |  Kenilworth Phase Two | * Delivery of 24 home Private sale scheme, building on the completion of Phase One of the Kenilworth site. * Demolition of Walpole Court Completed * Foundation work completed * Estate Agent appointed |
| |  Locality Review | * Provision of strategy to meet Locality Review Requirements and design development of initial sites. |
| |  The Oval | * Delivery of mixed used phase neighbourhood regeneration. * Contractor appointed * Demolition for phase 1 completed * Start on Site |
| Maintaining Good Quality Homes |  Building & Fire Safety Compliance | * Delivery of the Building Safety Action Plan |
| |  Decarbonisation (Wave 3.1) | * Procurement of works for a multi year programme linked to a 3 year funding allocation received from Warm Homes - Social Housing Fund * Start delivery of programme once procurement of a contractor has taken place. |
| |  Fair Access | * Housing Transformation Programme - Fair Access to services for residents. * Mapping of customer journey across multiple contact pathways * Delivery of channel shift and opportunities to engage digitally with services |
| |  Housing Asset Review | * Procure consultant support * Produce and provide performance data for input into the model * Staff workshops for perception measures * Data analysis and report * Agree recommendations and produce action plan * Report to EHWG on findings and recommendations |
| |  MRC Refurbishment | * Delivery of the final year of MRC - a refurbishment programme to the council's flat blocks (excluding high rises). |








| | | Milestones |
|--|---|--|
| |  New Legislation and policy | * Awaabs Law - Alongside changes to HHSRS Legislation will have a phased implementation from October 2025 (damp and mould) and extended to other hazards during 2026 and 2027. * Consultation on a new Decent Homes standard and implications for Stevenage |
| |  Provider Improvement Plan & Journey to C1 | * Delivery of the actions outlined in the Regulator for Social Housing Provider Improvement Plan following inspection in September 2024. |
| |  Repairs (inc Disrepair and D & M) Service Improvement Plan | * Completion of all team process workshops and development of action plans * Easily accessible processes in place for all teams * Implementation of all action plans * Stakeholder mapping/touch points |
| |  Repairs Health & Safety | * To implement all improvements from recent audit and proposals from the H and S team |
| |  Resident Engagement & Scrutiny | * Delivery of the Resident Engagement Strategy and Framework. * Operating tenant panel and scrutiny panel in place |
| |  Service Review Independent Living Service | * Review of service delivery and related charges that considers activity led functions across the wider housing service to create efficiencies and a leaner cost model. |
| |  Service Review Temporary Accomodation | * Review the service delivery of the Temporary Accomodation Service. |
| |  Tenant Profile | * Capture of up to date tenant profile data including household details, vulnerabilities and preferences. * Develop IT system to enable the effective collection and profiling of tenant and household data |
| |  Void Service Improvement Programme | *Delivery of the Voids Improvement Plan * Establishment of a small in-house team to carry out void works |








| TRANSFORMING OUR TOWN 2025/26 PRIORITIES | | |
|--|--|---|
| MSEB Sub Priority | Project | Milestones |
| Enterprise & Skills |  Apprentice Programme | * Begin the delivery of new Apprenticeship & Leadership Development programmes, aligned with the new Workforce Strategy. |
| |  Business Technology Centre Contract Renewal | * Explore options for Business Technology Centre Contract Renewal. |
| |  Pioneering Young STEM Futures - P2 | * Secure Phase Two of the Pioneering Young STEM Futures programme with funding from M44. Begin delivery of Year One. |
| |  Stevenage Works - Health & Social Care Expansion | * Establishment of supporting Governance Framework. * Establishment of a pilot cohort of care providers alongside partners. * Review of initial pilot cohort of care providers. |
| |  Stevenage Works - Social Value & Procurement | * Continue to leverage social value on contracts through Stevenage Works and deliver a similar approach across the organisation. * Create and publish the Stevenage Works impact Report. * Manage and deliver the Stevenage Works Community Chest Fund. |
| |  Sustainable Technology Centre - SITEC Phase 2 | * Delivery of the second phases of both the Stevenage Innovation & Technology Centre (SITEC) & Enterprise Centre, in partnership with North Herts College. |
| |  UK Shared Prosperity Fund | * Deliver the 2025/26 extension of UKSPF. Establish plans for 2026/27 UKSPF replacement. |
| Regeneration |  Country Park Handover | * The handover of the Country Park as part of the new Forster Park development in Woodfield. |
| |  Cycling & Pedestrian Connectivity - Arts & Heritage Trail | * Design and implementation of an Arts & Heritage Trail. |







| MSEB Sub Priority | Project | Milestones |
|-------------------|--|--|
| | <div></div> <div>Cycling & Pedestrian Connectivity - New Leisure Centre</div> | <div>* Design and implementation of pedestrian connectivity to the new Leisure Centre.</div> <div>* Implementation of new at-grade crossing</div> <div>* Public realm complete</div> |
| | <div></div> <div>Cycling & Pedestrian Connectivity - Underpass Improvements</div> | <div>* Improvement works and installation of artwork on nine underpasses within the Arts & Heritage Trail.</div> |
| | <div></div> <div>Diversification of Retail</div> | <div>* Utilising towns fund money to catalyse the diversification of retail in the town centre.</div> <div>* Successful relocation of the Indoor Market</div> <div>* Finalise scheme for new gateway to retail core</div> <div>* Retail Action plan agreed</div> |
| | <div></div> <div>Gunnelswood Road Infrastruture</div> | <div>* Introduction of new infrastructure to a key roundabout to support the GSK development.</div> |
| | <div></div> <div>Indoor Market Move</div> | <div>* Move of current indoor market tenants to the units along Park Place in the Town Centre.</div> |
| | <div></div> <div>Local Plan Review & Partial Update</div> | <div>* Partial update and review of the council's Local Plan.</div> |
| | <div></div> <div>Regeneration Comms & Marketing</div> | <div>* Regeneration communications and marketing strategy agreed for 25/26, including engagement and consultation.</div> |
| | <div></div> <div>SG1 - Plot A</div> | <div>* Phase 1A of the SG1 Programme - previous Swingate House site.</div> <div>* Completion of early works and drawdown of site</div> <div>* Design and procurement complete (SG1 Plot A)</div> |
| | <div></div> <div>SG1 - Public Sector Hub</div> | <div>* Partner engagement and design of a civic hub offering a one stop location for public services in the heart of the town centre, including the new Museum</div> |
| | <div></div> <div>Sports & Leisure Centre</div> | <div>* Finalisation of design, submission and approval of planning permission and construction to start on site.</div> |
| | <div></div> <div>Station Gateway</div> | <div>* Activating the Station Gateway area by working with a developer to create a viable scheme.</div> <div>* Initial masterplan complete</div> <div>* Cabinet decision to enter into a Development Agreement</div> <div>* Enter into Development Agreement</div> |



| THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS 2025/26 PRIORITIES | | |
|--|--|---|
| MSEB Sub Priority | Project | Milestones |
| Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces | <div></div> <div>CCIN Policy Lab</div> | <div>* Two-year, £13,000 initiative led by Stevenage and Brent Councils, partnering with five other authorities, to strengthen community leadership and innovate local service delivery through cooperative, place-based approaches</div> |
| | <div></div> <div>Green Space / Tree & Woodland Strategy</div> | <div>* Development of Green Spaces Strategy and Tree & Woodland Strategy.</div> |
| | <div></div> <div>Play Area Improvements</div> | <div>* Deliver capital programme of improvements to remaining sites and an options report to support future funding.</div> |
| | <div></div> <div>Social Inclusion Partnership Formalisation</div> | <div>* Work with the Social Inclusion Partnership, made up of our key voluntary sector partners to formalise as a multi-stakeholder cooperative.</div> |
| Community Safety TN | <div></div> <div>ASB Services Delivery Review</div> | <div>* Review of ASB case management, escalation procedures and partnership working, in line with Ombudsman spotlights, Crime & Policing Bill 2025 and Tenancy Standard.</div> <div>* Development of recording and case management framework and escalation procedures</div> <div>* Realignment of ASB patches with neighbourhood patches and identify what sits with housing officers and ASB officers</div> |
| | <div></div> <div>Evolve</div> | <div>* Work with domestic abuse perpetrators through the Evolve programme. Explore potential funding opportunities to expand this provision into young people.</div> |

| MSEB Sub Priority | Project | Milestones |
|----------------------|---|--|
| |  Operation Educ8 | * Educate young people around the impact of Grafiti on the local community. |
| |  SADA Safe Accomodation | * Obtain properties to use as dispersed accommodation for family dynamics that would not fit refuge provisions. |
| Culture & Leisure TN |  Active Communities | * Everyone Active's AC programme brings physical activity to community venues such as community centres , pavilions and schools. |
| |  Arts & Culture Programme | * An ambitious programme of activity delivered in partnership between Junction 7 Creatives and Stevenage Museum. |
| |  PlayZone Programme | * Create an inclusive and accessible 3G pitch within King George V Playing Fields. As part of the PlayZone initiative, led by the Football Foundation, aims to create an inclusive, and accessible outdoor 3G pitch within KGV Playing Fields. |
| |  Review of Cultural Strategy | * Undertake a review of the council's Cultural Strategy in line with council's current ambitions. |

| TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE 2025/26 PRIORITIES | | |
|--|--|---|
| MSEB Sub Priority | Project | Milestones |
| Tackling Climate Change |  Climate Action Street Plans | * Develop street plans led by Councillors, with the support of officers to deliver community projects |
| |  Climate Change Community Fund | * Assess, support and advise on community-led climate projects, review alternative schemes of delivery. |
| |  Low Carbon Skills Funding Application | * Submit an application for Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF) grant aligned with the Council's climate targets. This will assist with decarbonisation projects such as retrofitting public buildings. |
| |  Simpler Recycling (including Flat Block Pilot) | * Review of kerbside collections in accordance with new government legislation and deliver programme of change. Deliver schemes to improve recycling rates at flat blocks. |
| |  Sustainability Business Support | * Deliver workshops, mentoring, coaching and supply chain support activities for Stevenage businesses across three projects: 1. Green Business Start Up Scheme. 2. Sustainable X Business Support Programme 3. Action Zero Programme (Wenta) |
| |  Tree Planting | *Micro Woods - Deliver new micro woods. * Canopy Cover - Plant new trees to support increasing tree canopy cover in areas of the town with deficiency. |
| |  Warm Homes Local Grant Scheme | * Identify and support eligible households to improve energy efficiency, combat fuel poverty and reduce energy costs. Coordinate delivery of the Solar Together scheme in Stevenage. |

| BALANCING THE BUDGET 2025/26 PRIORITIES | | |
|---|---|---|
| MSEB Sub Priority | Project | Milestones |
| Balancing the Budget |  Business Change & Transformation | * Community Advice & Support - Service Improvements to embed the activity-led Community Advice and Support (CA&S) team. * Localities - Service improvements for Business Units working in the local community. * Revenues & Benefits - Deliver service improvements and efficiencies jointly with East Herts. |
| |  Commercial Culture Development | * Operating the Council in more of a business-like way by equipping staff with the right skills and engendering commercial behaviour. |
| |  Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) | * Adopt a CIL spending protocol to bring together commitments made and provide a structure around future spending decisions. |
| |  Fees & Charges | * Review of fees and charges |
| |  General Fund & HRA Savings 2025/26 | * Approve balanced budgets for 2026/26 for HRA in January 2026 and GF in February 2026. |
| |  HRA Business Plan | * Undertake a review of the HRA Business Plan to help ensure a sustainable picture for the HRA going forward. |
| |  Review Insourcing Options | * As per the Insourcing Roadmap 2023-26, review of all services provided to or on behalf of the council by external supplier or third party. |

| CROSS CUTTING 2025/26 PRIORITIES | | |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| MSEB Sub Priority | Project | Milestones |
| Equality, Diversity & Inclusion |  EDI Action Plan, Annual Report & EDGG | * Deliver on the 18 actions highlighted as part of the EDI Action Plan, report these through EDGG and the councils Equalities Annual Report. |
| |  Stevenage Equalities Commission Legacy Group | * Support the development of the Stevenage Equalities Commission Legacy Group, including its formalisation as a Multi-stakeholder Cooperative. |
| Health & Wellbeing |  Age Friendly Communities | * Age-Friendly Communities is a collaborative programme with HCC and Age UK to deliver projects and events to support older residents in Stevenage. |
| |  Dementia Friendly Communities | * Dementia Friendly Communities is delivered in collaboration with local organisation to support those living with dementia in Stevenage. |
| |  Healthy Hub | * Funding received for a further two years of delivery through HCC Public Health. |
| |  Healthy Stevenage Strategy Revision | * Revision of the councils current Health Stevenage Strategy delivered in cooperation with HCC Public Health and other partners. |

| MSEB Sub Priority | Project | Milestones |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Technology & Innovation |  Digital Strategy | * Our digital strategy focuses on enhancing customer experience, boosting efficiency, and increasing self-service use through three key pillars: 1) Improving the website to meet rising expectations and retain users online; 2) Expanding digital tools to enable self-service, automation, and efficient case management; and 3) Promoting online services through targeted messaging, updated communications, and triage methods. |
| |  ICT Strategy & Assurance | * Cyber First: Ensuring security, data-driven decisions, and adaptability. * Data-driven Decision-Making: Utilising data for strategic planning. * Innovate, Adapt, and Empower: Encouraging innovation and continuous learning. |

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Corporate Performance Report 2024/25

Quarter 4 (January, February, March)



- Key to Performance Status Symbols
- Red - Focus of Improvement
 - Amber - Initial Improvement Activity Identified
 - Green - Achieving Target
 - Pink - Baseline Measure

- 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 & GOOD QUALITY HOMES 2024/25 PERFORMANCE

| | Actual - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD | Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD | Comments |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| <div> <div>Page 173</div> <div>% of customers satisfied with how their complaint was handled at stage two (Housing)</div> </div> | | 0.00% | 0.00% | 27.00% | 0.00% | | 40.00% | <div>31/03/2025</div> <div>As part of the rollout of the Councils new Complaints Handling System the approach to these transactional surveys is changing. The council will be implementing a new, fully automated process through the GovMetric platform. As of the end of Q4 the survey system had not yet gone live and as such, no transaction surveys have been undertaken this quarter. We are working closely with our service provider to implement the surveys in 2025/26.</div> <div>Whilst the survey function within the Complaints Handling System is being developed, the Councils Housing Service is still collating data on complaint satisfaction through our Tenant Satisfaction measures. Compared with our initial 2023/24 results, our 2024/25 figures are significantly improved in this regard. This measure serves to augment that dataset and provide further insight from residents.</div> |

| | Actual - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD | Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD | Comments |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| % of Damp and Mould cases completed on time | | 64.00% | 73.06% | 79.00% | 80.13% | | 85.00% | <p>31/03/2025</p> <p>Our contractors have encountered challenges due to restricted access to properties, resulting in work orders being recorded beyond the target timeframe in the NEC system. The situation has been further complicated by an increased workload stemming from a backlog of HHSRS assessments, coupled with the usual seasonal pressures.</p> <p>Furthermore, the surge in workload due to the backlog of HHSRS assessments, alongside the typical seasonal demands for this period, has added additional pressure on our operations. During Q4, we experienced a reduction in staffing capacity due to vacancies that arose at one of the busiest times of the year for our service. This has affected our ability to effectively manage both new and existing cases while maintaining a balanced workload.</p> <p>In order to improve performance in the new financial year, we have been utilizing interim agency staff, who have had to depart on short notice. In response, we are implementing arrangements to increase our capacity and are launching a recruitment campaign in Q4 to fill vacant roles as well as positions currently occupied by agency staff. This campaign will continue into Q1 of the new year. To address the issue with NEC, our team continues to work closely with the resident liaison team to improve our no-access performance KPI. However, our efforts in this area significantly depend on gaining access from residents.</p> |
| % of Damp and Mould inspections completed on time | | 72.00% | 82.22% | 85.69% | 72.95% | | 85.00% | <p>31/03/2025</p> <p>In the recently concluded quarter, our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to inspections were adversely affected by several properties where access was not granted. This resulted in recorded missed target times within the NEC system. The situation has been further complicated by an increased workload stemming from a backlog of HHSRS assessments, coupled with the usual seasonal pressures. Additionally, during Q4, we faced reduced staffing capacity due to vacancies within the team at one of the busiest times of the year for our service.</p> <p>In order to improve performance in the new financial year, we have been utilizing interim agency staff, who have had to depart on short notice. In response, we are implementing arrangements to increase our capacity and are launching a recruitment campaign in Q4 to fill vacant roles as well as positions currently occupied by agency staff. This campaign will continue into Q1 of the new year. To address the issue with NEC, our team continues to work closely with the resident liaison team to improve our no-access performance KPI. However, our efforts in this area significantly depend on gaining access from residents.</p> |

| | Actual - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD | Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD | Comments |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| % of tenants satisfied with how their complaint was handled at stage one (Housing) | | 36.00% | 47.00% | 55.00% | 0.00% | | 40.00% | <p>31/03/2025</p> <p>As part of the rollout of the Councils new Complaints Handling System the approach to these transactional surveys is changing. The council will be implementing a new, fully automated process through the GovMetric platform. As of the end of Q4 the survey system had not yet gone live and as such, no transaction surveys have been undertaken this quarter. We are working closely with our service provider to implement the surveys in 2025/26.</p> <p>Whilst the survey function within the Complaints Handling System is being developed, the Councils Housing Service is still collating data on complaint satisfaction through our Tenant Satisfaction measures. Compared with our initial 2023/24 results, our 2024/25 figures are significantly improved in this regard. This measure serves to augment that dataset and provide further insight from residents.</p> |
| <div>Page 175</div> <p>Average time taken to relet a routine void (GN). key to key</p> | | 100.00 | 89.00 | 85.00 | 63.00 | | 35.00 | <p>31/03/2025</p> <p>The Quarter 4 key to key turnaround time did not meet the target for general needs standard voids but has shown significant improvements from the previous quarter of 85 days. There have been many contributing factors to the delay of the relet time for quarter 4. In quarter 4 both the voids works stage and the ready to let period have taken longer than we would have hoped with 86 general needs properties being let in total of which 54 were standard voids. 28% were let in target (6 days) and 16% met the targets for the void works stage (22 days for standard and 50 days for major voids). The Council are in the process of procuring a long term voids contract which will improve the works stage turn around time. Quarter 4 included the letting of historic void properties from previous quarters resulting in a higher overall turnaround time.</p> |









| | Actual - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD | Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD | Comments |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| HDD1d: Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) by the Council (since 2014) | 495.00 | 497.00 | 497.00 | 498.00 | 500.00 | 490.00 | 501.00 | |
| Page 176 Homelessness preventions | 206.00 | 37.00 | 58.00 | 82.00 | 117.00 | 120.00 | 30.00 | <p>31/03/2025</p> <p>During this quarter, the Housing Options service has experienced notable disruption due to staff sickness, maternity leave, and team turnover, resulting in multiple recruitment rounds. These staffing challenges have placed pressure on casework capacity. Nonetheless, the service has remained focused on its core aim of preventing and relieving homelessness.</p> <p>The continued use of Housing Options Assistants has proven valuable in triaging and prioritising cases, ensuring that limited caseworker capacity is directed toward those with the highest need. This model supports more effective case management and allows for earlier identification of applicants who may require intervention.</p> <p>The PRS team's success in securing additional rental properties has been an important factor in enabling both preventions and reliefs. However, the broader environment—marked by an acute lack of affordable private rented accommodation—continues to drive high service demand and limits the potential for prevention in many cases.</p> <p>Looking ahead, the current recruitment efforts are expected to improve caseload distribution and enhance service delivery. Focus remains on improving early intervention efforts and maintaining statutory compliance while continuing to adapt to a difficult and high-pressure housing landscape.</p> <p>The number of presentations remains high, reflecting continued demand for housing advice and assistance. This aligns with ongoing pressures in the housing market, including a shortage of affordable rental accommodation and increased financial hardship among applicants. Despite these challenges, the team has maintained a strong front-line response.</p> <p>Comparison for BV213 (Prevention) & HHA1 (Relief).</p> <p>Both measures have been added together due to how previous years were completed & are cumulative figures.</p> <p>22 – 23 23 – 24 24 – 25 Q167 27 78 Q2120 (53)97 (70) 139 (61) Q3191 (71)156 (59)205 (66) Q4242 (51)206 (50)283 (78)</p> |







| | Actual - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD | Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD | Comments |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Rep4: Percentage repairs fixed first time | 94.96% | 96.79% | 97.19% | 95.83% | 93.07% | 90.00% | 90.00% | 31/03/2025 This measure has dropped by 2.76% since Quarter 3, however remains within target. There have been known challenges with the timely provision of tablets, which has hindered live updates, as well as supply issues with our supplier related to specific materials. Mitigations for these issues are being implemented, and it is anticipated that performance will improve further in the new financial year. |
| RP01a: Percentage of homes maintained as decent against national minimum DH standard | 94.00% | 95.40% | 95.97% | 92.22% | 96.64% | 87.00% | 98.50% | 31/03/2025 In Quarter 2 7672 of 7939 council homes were maintained as decent against the national minimum Decent Homes standard |
| 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 | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% | |
| RSH BS04: Percentage of sites with valid legionella inspections certificate | 96.65% | 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 | 88 | 21 | 36 | 57 | 85 | | | 31/03/2025 CUMULATIVE MEASURE |
| RSH CH01 (part1): Number of stage one complaints made by tenants | 818 | 214 | 357 | 516 | 688 | | | 31/03/2025 CUMULATIVE MEASURE At the end of Quarter 4 94.62% (651 of 688) of stage one complaints made by tenants were responded to within complaint handling timescales. |
| RSH CH02 (part1): Number of stage 1 complaints made by tenants and responded to within CH Timescale | 631 | 199 | 337 | 493 | 651 | | | 31/03/2025 CUMULATIVE MEASURE At the end of Quarter 4 81.18% (69 of 85) of stage two complaints made by tenants were responded to within complaint handling timescales. |

| | Actual - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD | Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD | Comments |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| RSH CH02 (part2): Number of stage 2 complaints made by tenants and responded to within CH Timescale | 61 | 19 | 30 | 51 | 69 | | | 31/03/2025 CUMULATIVE MEASURE |
| RSH Number of Overdue Fire Remedial High Risk Actions | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| RSH Number of Overdue Fire Remedial Low Risk Actions | | | 312 | 215 | 122 | | | |
| RSH Number of Overdue Fire Remedial Medium Risk Actions | | | 286 | 159 | 81 | | | |
| RSH Number of Overdue Water Remedial Actions | | | | 71 | 59 | | | |
| RSH Req 1: Proportion of emergency responsive repairs completed within target timescale | 88% | 99% | 99% | 99% | 98% | 98% | 99% | 31/03/2025 Q4 reflects in the large positive against the previous quarter and reflects the successful filling of vacancies in both the Planning and Operatives teams, along with the positive impact of new starters who joined earlier in the year and have now settled in. Completion of Emergency jobs, which overall increased in number by 73 jobs, dropping slightly by 0.65% to 98.43%. |
| | | | | | | | | 31/03/2025 |

MORE SOCIAL, AFFORDABLE & GOOD QUALITY HOMES 2024/25 MILESTONES

| | Performance | Comments |
|--|-------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brent Court Garages - Park improvements | ✓ | 31 Mar 2025 Park is open to the public, with open event taking place on 11th March 2025. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brent Court Garages - Start on site for new build of 96 home Independent Living Scheme | ✓ | 31 Mar 2025 Start on site has taken place, with the contractor carrying out works to existing garage block and clearing surrounding trees. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Burwell Phase 2 - Topping out of 20 homes for affordable rent | ✓ | 31 Mar 2025 Extensive excavation and foundation work is ongoing, with the concrete slab to be poured in the next month, with brick and block work taking place immediately after. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caretaking Improvement Plan - Project plan agreed following Ridge Review | ✗ | 31 Mar 2025 This is a Housing led improvement plan so updated need to be provided by new Head of Housing once in post. |















| | Performance | Comments |
|--|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure that our policies are fit for purpose and clear for staff and tenants and meet our regulatory |  | 31 Mar 2025 Strategy and Policy register is in place. Majority of policies have been approved and adopted, the remaining are identified on the forward plan with key target dates. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Establish client and contractor functions |  | 31 Mar 2025 Challenges with recruitment to key management roles has further delayed full implementation of the client/contractor functions but appointments have been made to 2 of the 4 roles with new recruitment processes to be carried out for the remaining 2 roles in Q1 of 2025/26. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evidence outcomes of how Tenants and Leaseholders have helped shape service delivery |  | 31 Mar 2025 Framework now in place to monitor and measure feedback and how it has shaped service delivery. You said we did mechanisms in place. Will be measured via Provider Improvement Plan with RHS on-going and via EHWG. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High Speed Broadband - Work with selected option to develop implementation plan |  | 31 Mar 2025 After consulting with the suppliers this is likely to be rolled out across Stevenage in stages. There is not a viable option to deliver outside of this so the team will continue to liaise with the broadband providers. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing Tenant Engagement & Performance - Establish a Housing Engagement & Performance working group |  | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implementation of preferred future delivery model |  | 31 Mar 2025 Mobilisation plan to be worked up in Q1 of 2025/26. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Know our tenants, identify support needs and make better use of our stock |  | 31 Mar 2025 Tenancy Audit programme in place and reported on. Data used to inform support needs and assess vulnerability |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Repairs Service Review Implementation - Process development and documentation |  | |








| | Performance | Comments |
|--|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Responsive Repairs Improvement Plan - Award Contract |  | 31 Mar 2025 As at end of March 2025 the procurement process was at contract award/mobilisation stage with delegated authority approved by Cabinet in February 2025. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Housing Decarbonisation - Develop carbon reduction plan for high emission stock |  | 31 Mar 2025 Secured an allocation from the Warm Homes - Social Housing Fund for 2025-28 which will enable works to circa 380 properties to achieve EPC rating of at least C. The longer term options will be considered as part of the HRA business plan refresh. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Oval - Appoint contractor |  | 31 Mar 2025 Procurement is out to tender with the expectation that an appointment will be made at the June Cabinet. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To be able to demonstrate to the regulator for social housing that we meet the legislative requireme |  | 31 Mar 2025 C2 grading achieved after onsite inspection from RSH. Some weaknesses identified which will be monitored via a provider improvement plan |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Voids Service Review - End to end digitalisation of the voids process |  | 31 Mar 2025 This is dependent on access to new modules on NEC which cannot be implemented until NEC migration to the Cloud and subsequent system upgrades are complete. Timeline to be developed as part of housing systems roadmap. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Voids Service Review - Review of lettable standard vs consumer standard inc consultation/approval |  | 31 Mar 2025 Complete - revised Lettable Standard approved by Cabinet in March 2025 alongside new Voids Management Policy. |

TRANSFORMING OUR TOWN 2024/25 PERFORMANCE

| | Actual - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD | Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target Quarter 1 2025/26 ytd | Comments |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------|
| NI157a: Percentage of major planning applications determined in thirteen | 83.3% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 60.0% | 60.0% | |
| Ni157b: Percentage of minor planning applications determined in eight weeks | 98.5% | 100.0% | 97.1% | 98.5% | 98.8% | 70.0% | 70.0% | |

| | Actual - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD | Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target Quarter 1 2025/26 ytd | Comments |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| NI157c:Percentage of other planning applications determined in eight weeks | 96.3% | 98.2% | 96.1% | 97.1% | 97.8% | 70.0% | 70.0% | |

| TRANSFORMING OUR TOWN 2024/25 MILESTONES | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| | Performance | | | | Comments | | | |
|  Business Resilience Support - Engagement visits and health checks | | |  | | | | | |
|  Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements Arts and Heritage trail - Construction begins | | |  | | 31 Mar 2025 Within Q4 a huge amount of work has been undertaken to move forward the Arts & Heritage Trail. Made by Landmark were appointed to the project and produced a large amount of research, site visits and audits to gather information ahead of the design phase. These findings were shared with key stakeholders. Concept designs were worked up and shared with the team, which are being reviewed ready for tender preparations next quarter. | | | |
|  Diversification of retail project - Action plan confirmed | | |  | | 31 Mar 2025 This Towns Fund project is fully allocated against a number of workstreams, including projects like the relocation of the indoor market. | | | |
|  Generation Stevenage - Event to support young people with employment opportunities in Stevenage | | |  | | | | | |
|  Museum - Complete Early design | | |  | | 31 Mar 2025 Completed in line with early design for the Public Services Hub | | | |
|  SG1 Plot A - Construction begins | | |  | | | | | |
|  SG1 Plot K - Exploration of delivery mechanisms | | |  | | | | | |

| | Performance | Comments |
|--|--|---|
|  Sports and Leisure Hub Design - Design to RIBA 3 complete |  | 31 Mar 2025 Work continues on RIBA 3 within this period - the extension of the design and key deliverables is expected to be completed within the next quarter. Cabinet approval has been achieved to progress the project to RIBA 4 and to submit planning permission. |
|  Sports and Leisure Hub Design - Planning submitted |  | 31 Mar 2025 To be expected next quarter. |
|  Sports and Leisure Hub Funding and business case - Executive draft business case |  | 31 Mar 2025 Cabinet approval achieved within this period. |
|  Station Gateway - Masterplanning and engagement |  | 31 Mar 2025 Completion of masterplanning vision study and part of Towns Fund investment. |
|  Stevenage Skills Framework- Create/deliver action plan for STEM programme alongside phase 2 proposal |  | 31 Mar 2025 As before complete as an action, but action plan is being utilised as a live document. |
|  UK Shared Prosperity Fund/Mission44 general, life skills & education support |  | 31 Mar 2025 As per previous update, outputs and outcomes will be captured through to March 2025. However, against a majority of categories we have already exceeded our proposed targets and expect the final return of the year will capture significant additionality against many categories. |

THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS 2024/25 PERFORMANCE




| | Actual - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD | Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD | Comments |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| CD1 Number of people engaged in Cooperative Neighbourhood 'Community & Place' initiatives | 2,200.00 | 0.00 | 241.00 | 478.00 | 954.00 | | 500.00 | 31/03/2025 CUMULATIVE MEASURE Engagement numbers are down in comparison to 2023/24. However, this is a result of specific UKSPF being in place in the previous financial year to help bolster engagement. Whereas in this year funding was directed towards delivery. In 2025/26 there is no additional UKSPF funding for engagement, however the Council is undertaking a residents survey which will capture over 1,000 responses from residents across the town. This combined with this years output will give reach figures similar to 2023/24. |
| RSH NM01(part1): ASB cases opened by or on behalf of the provider during the reporting year | 108.00 | 21.00 | 37.00 | 64.00 | 107.00 | | | 31/03/2025 We have started to report all low level ASB enforcement as well as Medium and High, this shows a true reflection of all cases in real time. |
| RSH NM01(part2) ASB cases that involve hate incidents opened by or on behalf of the provider during | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 3.00 | 4.00 | | | 31/03/2025 In Quarter 4 there was one case reported as a Hate Crime this quarter. This was reported this to the Police and it was investigated by the Police Hate Crime Officer. |
| # of neighbourhood improvements, events, projects, activities using UKSPF funding | | 18 | 36 | 54 | 138 | 52 | 10 | 31/03/2025 Work began in January across all 13 wards to implement capital projects aimed at improving infrastructure and delivering community benefits. All projects have now been completed, with the full allocation of funding successfully utilised. 84 is a cumulative number |
| % of Graffiti Clearances completed | | 18.00% | 71.00% | 81.82% | 93.75% | | 80.00% | 31/03/2025 The continued resource of a permanent team member to tackle graffiti has significantly enhanced our ability to achieve higher levels of clearances. |
| CD2: Value (£) invested into Neighbourhood areas from UKSPF | 85,236.00 | 85,236.00 | 214,241.00 | 356,664.64 | 623,030.21 | | 10,000.00 | 31/03/2025 Projects and spend is now complete |
| ES1: Percentage of residential bins collected | 99.67% | 99.64% | 99.67% | 99.67% | 99.73% | 99.00% | 99.00% | 31/03/2025 Successfully maintaining performance at the levels established in earlier quarters |

| | Actual - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD | Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD | Comments |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| NI191: Residual household waste per household (kgs) | 483.49 | 126.70 | 248.60 | 372.86 | | 495.00 | 130.00 | 31/03/2025 This measure is reported in arrears from an external source. The figure for Q4 will not be available until the end of June 2025. |
| NI192: Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting | 34.00% | 42.20% | 40.30% | 35.60% | | 32.00% | 40.00% | 31/03/2025 This measure is reported in arrears from an external source. The figure for Q4 will not be available until the end of June 2025. |
| CWLS1: EvAc - No of under 16 using facilities and outreach prog at least once p/w | 20,094.00 | 26,117.00 | 19,833.00 | 17,468.00 | 19,715.00 | 20,000.00 | 26,000.00 | 31/03/2025 Schools swimming has reduced due to schools making less trips to the pool to save costs. Badminton has significantly reduced despite the increase in junior badminton sessions put on by EA. Unfortunately the Herts Schools badminton tournaments that use to take place with SALC no longer exists. Inflatable parties have also reduced in 24/25. Key success has been gained through more swim galas, increase in swim lesson memberships at the pool. At SALC the gym has seen a significant increase in junior memberships and the start of a successful Futsal club. The outreach has also seen increases obtained in Home Ed sessions. The theatre also had a busy year with dance schools and hires of the theatre. |

THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS 2024/25 MILESTONES

| | Performance | Comments |
|--|-------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building a Better Bedwell- Start regular partner meetings to identify potential victims of cuckooing | ✓ | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Co-operative Neighbourhood Plans - Develop first draft on CN plans based on member engagement | ✓ | 31 Mar 2025 All planned CN projects for 24/25 have been successfully completed, with the full UKSPF allocation used to deliver member-led improvements across town neighbourhood centres. Officers met all deadlines with no underspend, maximising the funding for community benefit. With additional funding confirmed for 25/26, the team is preparing to launch the next phase. Member engagement will begin after the May elections, with initially walkabouts scheduled for June. The delivery approach will mirror last year's— starting with walkabouts to gather ideas and priorities from members, followed by feasibility work, resident engagement, and then implementation. The team will also revisit several suggestions raised during 24/25, using them to inform early discussions and ensure valuable ideas are not lost. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Co-operative Neighbourhoods Projects- Deliver local projects using the £176k funding from UKSPF | ✓ | 31 Mar 2025 The full £176k budget has been effectively utilised, resulting in the successful delivery of several key projects. The telecoms cabinet painting project with Junction 7 has been completed, with 16 boxes painted. The graffiti removal initiative has also been highly effective, with significant amounts of graffiti cleared from the town centre, multi-storey car park, and underpasses. The introduction of the new online reporting system is expected to further improve clearance times. All capital works have been delivered across all 13 wards, including a variety of infrastructure and public space improvements aimed at enhancing community environments and supporting local businesses. Feedback from residents, businesses, and ward members has been overwhelmingly positive, reflecting the visible impact of the programme. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Volunteering - Develop a programme of volunteering opportunities | ✓ | 31 Mar 2025 Activities delivered to FVP, Hampson Park, Shackledell, Shephalbury Park, St Nicholas Park, and Town Centre Gardens. Orchard management training programme started with GSV's. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No More Perpetrator - Review the service provisio and the accommodation attached to the project | ✓ | 31 Mar 2025 The accommodation continues to be utilised. The accommodation was reviewed by the SADA Board and a Board member visited the properties. The accommodation has been successful with 5 customers in the past twelve months completing the Evolve programme alongside the accommodation, of the 5 only 1 has re-offended and this offence was not linked to domestic abuse |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Op Educ8 - Complete sessions around key issues including cannabis and graffiti | ✓ | 31 Mar 2025 Funding has been applied for to continue the project to 2025/26 with a strand supporting and educating parents. There have been different strands to this project including sessions in schools around gang affiliation and County lines |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Play Area Improvements - Deliver play area improvements to remaining sites | ✓ | 31 Mar 2025 Works to 8 sites (Bandlely Hill, Chells, Woodfield and Town Centre Gardens) successfully completed in 2024/25. |



| | Performance | Comments |
|--|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SADA Safe accommodation - Obtain properties to be used as emergency accommodations for victims of DA |  | 31 Mar 2025 The team continue to add to their portfolio of properties whilst allowing some customers to remain in their safe space as their forever home |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shrub Bed Improvement - Complete works to sites that require shrub bed removal & conversion to grass |  | 31 Mar 2025 Works have been completed.136 shrub beds/hedges have been removed, totalling 4868.06sqm. These areas have been seeded and will be maintained as part of our grass cutting schedule |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Street Scene Digital System - Implement digital Street Scene system |  | 31 Mar 2025 Work is progressing well. The first data upload has been completed and Causeway are currently building our system from this data. UAT (user acceptance training) will commence at the end of April. A second data upload will happen after this is complete. Go live with the system is on schedule for June 2025 |

| | Actual - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD | Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD | Comments |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| CC1: Percentage of homes that have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of Band C or above | 58.00% | 62.33% | 64.43% | 65.89% | 66.46% | 65.00% | 66.46% | 31/03/2025 We have slightly exceeded the target figure for the full year and number of homes with an EPC of Band C or above. |

| | Performance | Comments |
|--|-------------|--|
| <div style="float: left; width: 60px;">Page 187</div> <div style="clear: both;"></div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 year local plan Cabinet approval (June) Consultation (July Aug) | | 31 Mar 2025 <i>Local Plan – Partial Review and Update</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission to Secretary of State: No later than 23 June 2025 • Examination in Public: Autumn 2025 • Inspector's Report: By end of 2025 • Adoption: December 2025 / January 2026 <i>Timescales ahead are likely to change as once we submit the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update, we are subject to the Planning Inspectorate in terms of dates for the Examination in Public and therefore the timescales following this</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) - Monitor first Biodiversity net gain schemes | | 31 Mar 2025 Monitoring of existing 2 sites planned for spring/summer 2025 to determine any additional works required at this time. Appointment of Ecology Officer will support the planning and delivery of further sites during winter 2025/26. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change - Finalise Climate Change adaptation report. Update risk register. | | 31 Mar 2025 Climate Change Adaptation Report being produced aimed to be completed by July/August 2025. This is a new updated version of the previous Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) finished in August 2024, but not considering methodological aspects from the ARP4 (Adaptation Reporting Power) of DEFRA. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change Community Fund-Implement scheme & funding infrastructure to support community actions | | 31 Mar 2025 Climate Change Community Fund (CCCCF) being implemented and projects running. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy Topic Reference Panel - Objectives and participants of panel agreed | | 31 Mar 2025 A Community Energy Group to be set up by the Council is now part of the Climate Champions Work Programme for FY 2025/26. This includes training and creating capacity within the Council officers first regarding the Community Energy landscape, and then surveying the town residents, businesses and stakeholders to create the group and run the discussions. |













| | Performance | Comments |
|---|-------------|---|
| ✓ Low Carbon Fleet - Transition SBC fleet to low carbon fuel implementation | ✓ | |
| ✓ Refuse/Recycling Review - Finalise structure for refuse and recycling | ✓ | |
| ✓ Refuse/Recycling Review - Implement refuse/recycling review in line with new government legislation | ✓ | 31 Mar 2025 Commercial collections for food are now live. Receptacles have been ordered and delivery of these to us will commence in May, going through to June. New trade vehicle will arrive in April, whilst the residential vehicles will arrive in November. We are still waiting to hear from the Environment Agency regarding the transfer station licence. The team will be undertaking a survey of recycling needs in our flat blocks, approx. 70 currently do not have recycling facilities. |
| ✓ Staff Travel Incentives - Draft new workplace travel plan | 🔄 | 31 Mar 2025 Decision to be made on the scope of a new Workplace Travel Plan and its time frame during 2025. |
| ✓ Staff Travel Incentives - New workplace travel plan in place | ✓ | 31 Mar 2025 Induction pack for new staff members on active travel and public transport incentives for commuting and business travel being developed and adjusted. It will be discussed with the Climate Champions group during the first part of the FY 2025/26. |
| ✓ Sustainable Organisation Culture - Training for climate champions | ✓ | 31 Mar 2025 Training provided on Carbon Literacy for officers and members. Good feedback received from officers on the course delivery. Specific training has also been provided on Sustainable Buildings Certifications. |
| ✓ Tree Planting - Plant new Miyawaki Woods from Coronation Living Heritage Fund | ✓ | 31 Mar 2025 Planting of 5000 saplings to create micro-woods at St Nicholas Park, Hampson Park and Shephalbury Park completed with support from schools and residents. |





| BALANCING THE BUDGET 2024/25 PERFORMANCE | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| | Actual - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD | Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD | Comments |
| % of Corporate Building Overall Completed Remedials | | 84.00% | 82.50% | 76.54% | 75.15% | | 80.00% | 31/03/2025 Compliance Remedials – March 2025 Update The Facilities Team continues to make strong progress in addressing compliance remedial actions. As of the end of March 2025, 3,123 out of 4,693 remedials have been either completed or confirmed as not required, equating to 75.15% of the total workload. There are currently 1,025 outstanding remedials, which represents 24.85% of the overall total. This is a net increase of 85 remedials since the previous reporting period, largely driven by new actions identified through ongoing risk assessments and audits. The breakdown of outstanding tasks is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 614 relate to physical works• 36 concern policies and procedures• 375 involve training requirements The team remains focused on closing out these outstanding actions, with particular attention on physical and training-related remedials where the majority of the backlog currently sits. Work is already underway to address Legionella-related policies, procedures, and training, which alone account for over 300 remedials. Once these are completed, the overall compliance completion rate is expected to exceed 80%, marking a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts. The Facilities Team continues to prioritise higher-risk actions and work closely with service providers to ensure timely and effective resolution. |
| % of Corporate Building Overall Compliance Inspections completed | | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% | | 100.00% | 31/03/2025 The position at the end of Q4 2024/25 remains at 100% with 58 out of 58 of inspections required completed. This position has been consistent throughout 2024/25 and is expected to remain at 100% throughout 2025/26 |
| BV10: Percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year received by the authority | 98.99% | 38.65% | 63.11% | 90.00% | 99.21% | 98.75% | 36.00% | |

| | Actual - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD | Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD | Comments |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| BV66a: Rent collection rate | 97.46% | 89.44% | 97.00% | 98.60% | 98.13% | 98.30% | 88.50% | <p>31/03/2025</p> <p>As of the end of Q4 (March 2025), the income collection rate stands at 98.13%, which includes arrears of £1,066,658.29 carried over from the previous financial year. For the full period from April 2024 to March 2025, the collection rate on the total debit reached 100.06%. This marks an improvement from the 2023/2024 financial year, when the overall income collection rate was 97.46%, including arrears brought forward from previous year of £1,065,941. The latest figures reflect a 0.67% increase in collection performance year-on-year.</p> <p>We continue to monitor accounts closely to maximise income collection and debt recovery. At the same time, we support tenants in sustaining their tenancies through timely payments and by offering tailored payment arrangements to those with outstanding debt. We are also refining our internal processes to ensure continued progress and success in this area</p> |
| BV9: Percentage of council tax collected | 94.30% | 32.90% | 59.10% | 85.50% | 94.50% | 95.80% | 33.00% | |
| CNM2g: Garage Voids (residential) as a percentage of stock | 11.07% | 6.99% | 7.50% | 8.04% | 7.76% | 6.47% | 7.26% | <p>31/03/2025</p> <p>The garages void rate for quarter 4 has dropped to 7.76%, down from 8.04% in quarter 3. However the void rate is higher than the quarter 4 target of 6.67%, predominantly due to a high number of terminations in quarter 4, equating to 99.</p> <p>Wider economic factors are at play, with the cost of living being cited as one of the main reasons for terminations, as well as many residents moving house, possibly to take advantage of the stamp duty discount which ended on 31st March 2025. However, although terminations were high in quarter 4, offers also increased by 22%, with 188 offers being made. 76% of offers were accepted and garage services will continue to build solutions to assist in reducing issues for non acceptance. One such solution is the mapping facility that was introduced to Digital Lettings on 7th February, which allows customers to view the location of the garage prior to bidding on it.</p> |
| CompGF1: % of council service customer complaints responded to within deadline | 87.60% | 82.20% | 87.00% | 90.00% | 77.40% | 80.00% | 80.00% | |







| | Actual - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD | Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD | Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD | Target - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD | Comments |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| CR1: % of commercial rent collected from estates | 92% | 91% | 91% | 91% | 91% | 90% | 90% | |
| CSC 201: Customer satisfaction with CSC customer service | 91.00% | 92.80% | 92.10% | 93.10% | 88.80% | 80.00% | 80.00% | 31/03/2025 Despite the ongoing challenges, customer satisfaction remains high at 88.8%. Feedback indicates that our customers consistently find our advisers to be polite, helpful, and effective in resolving their issues whenever possible. |
| Dig2: Number of online payments | 115,124.00 | 29,182.00 | 59,095.00 | 88,823.00 | 117,255.00 | 121,000.00 | 31,500.00 | 31/03/2025 In Q4 28,432 online payments were made, slightly fewer than in Q3 (29,278), but still an increase compared to the same quarter last year (27,865). The small drop from Q3 is likely due to seasonal factors, including the shorter month of February and a rent-free week at the end of March. These will be considered when setting more accurate targets for 2025/26. Year-on-year growth highlights the continued shift towards using the website for paying council bills and an overall increase in the use of digital services. |
| Garage/Commercial/Parking- income raised vs budget for the top 3 income streams of the General Fund | | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% | | 100.00% | |
| NI181: Time taken (days) to process housing benefit new claims and change events | 4.72 | 7.70 | 7.82 | 5.39 | 2.01 | 10.00 | 12.00 | |

BALANCING THE BUDGET 2024/25 MILESTONES

| | Performance | Comments |
|--|---|---|
|  Asbestos in Garages - All garages to be back in Council's control |  | 31 Mar 2025 94% of the sprayed asbestos garages have already been returned back to the Council where licence holders have terminated their licence. It is expected that 15 garages will be returned back to the Council during Q1 of 25/26. Estates and Housing Development have begun reviewing these sites. |
|  Budget - Agree 2025/26 Budgets |  | |
|  Business Process improvements/efficiencies |  | 31 Mar 2025 Quarter 4 saw the completion and presentation of the review work for the CCTV Partnership around business models, as well as the completion of work on alternative delivery models for Stevenage Museum. A report benchmarking the performance of the Business Technology Centre (BTC) and Chells Industrial Units was presented to the March meeting of the Commercial and Investment Working Group and will help inform future procurement. |
|  Commercial Garages - Actively advertise commercial garages & include in trade waste brochure |  | 31 Mar 2025 The void rate for commercial garages has fallen to 2%, ahead of the 5.46% target. Proactive marketing and collaborative work across the Council continues to support lettings in this area. |
|  Garage Voids - Reduce garage voids |  | 31 Mar 2025 The garages void rate for quarter 4 has dropped to 7.76%, down from 8.04% in quarter 3. However the void rate is higher than the quarter 4 target of 6.67%, predominantly due to a high number of terminations in quarter 4, equating to 99. Wider economic factors are at play, with the cost of living being cited as one of the main reasons for terminations, as well as many residents moving house, possibly to take advantage of the stamp duty discount which ended on 31st March 2025. However, although terminations were high in quarter 4, offers also increased by 22%, with 188 offers being made. 76% of offers were accepted and garage services will continue to build solutions to assist in reducing issues for non acceptance. One of the solutions is the mapping facility that was introduced to Digital Lettings on 7th February, which allows customers to view the location of the garage prior to bidding on it. |
|  Increased Sustainable Income - report increased income to Commercial and Investment Working Group |  | 31 Mar 2025 In quarter 4, the 2025 Events Brochure was launched and has generated sponsorship income from local businesses. Advertising and Sponsorship across Council assets also performed well, with a billboard, 5 poster sites and 2 roundabouts being sold. Although filming remains slow across the industry, a music video was filmed in Stevenage. In the Engineering team, the new pricing structure for external works pricing was implemented. |

| | Performance | Comments |
|---|---|---|
|  Insourcing Options- review of services provided to or on behalf of the council by external supplier |  | |
|  Ways of Working - Reduction in space used in DHH (including closure of at least one floor) |  | 31 Mar 2025 The second floor has been hard closed. The rest of the ways of working changes will be completed at service level going forward. |

CROSS CUTTING 2024/25 MILESTONES

| | Performance | Comments |
|--|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cyber Accreditation - Complete cyber accreditation programme |  | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivery of Place Based Health Inequalities Project with Healthy Hubs, Stevenage North & South PCNs. |  | <p>31 Mar 2025</p> <p>Since last update this project has gone from strength to strength having received 292 number of referrals which is really impressive. This number has been a result of improve relationships with the PCNs which has enabled GPs to refer into the programme. Of these referrals 154 individuals are actively taking part in the programme, gaining access to advice and support of eating health and physical activity. We have seen a number of people reduce their weight significantly. For example, 2 participants at 6-weeks had lost 7kg and 11.5kg each, with another participant at 12 weeks losing 1 stone which shows the impact this programme is having.</p> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Healthy Stevenage - Launch new 5 year strategy |  | <p>31 Mar 2025</p> <p>Public Health have consulted with local organisations and other health partners to draft a JSNA for health in Stevenage. We are awaiting final draft before general themes can be formed and partner consultation can begin.</p> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ICT & Data Strategy - Implement new ICT & Data Strategy |  | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Server Compute Project - Replace and upgrade existing server hardware |  | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Telephony Project - Review and replace telephony service |  | |

APPENDIX E

The table below sets out details of decisions issued with Q4 by both the Housing Ombudsman and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsmen which relate to the Councils Housing Services. In all cases Orders or actions have been completed. No further action is required in respect of any of these cases and this item is for information only.

| Complaint No | Council Process Ended | Ombudsmen Decision | Issue | Determination/Outcome | Order/Action | Ombudsmen |
|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|---|-------------------|
| 14 | 14/10/22 | 15/01/25 | Boundary Fence | Maladministration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written apology Compensation £500 | Housing Ombudsmen |
| | | | Complaint Handling | Maladministration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written apology Compensation £100 | Housing Ombudsmen |
| 15 | 14/06/23 | 18/03/25 | Repairs and Asset Management | Maladministration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written apology Compensation £500 | Housing Ombudsmen |
| | | | Complaint | Maladministration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written Apology Compensation £200 Review Complaint handling process | Housing Ombudsmen |
| 16 | 22/01/24 | 27/01/25 | Repairs and Asset Management | Maladministration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written apology Compensation £600 Check issues resolved | Housing Ombudsmen |
| | | | Complaint Handling | Maladministration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written apology Compensation £150 Revise complaint handling process | Housing Ombudsmen |
| | | | Record Keeping | Maladministration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written apology Update record management | Housing Ombudsmen |

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| | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| Meeting | Cabinet |
| Portfolio Area | Environment and Planning |
| Date | 9 July 2025 |
| Author | Steve Dupoy |



Proposals for the use of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Funding to Improve Recycling Participation

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report builds on the February 2025 General Fund budget report to Cabinet. That report outlined Government Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) funding to improve local authority recycling rates, along with its announcements on 'Simpler Recycling' (sometimes referred to as the 'four bin approach'), that Councils also need to take account of.
- 1.2 The Government allocated fixed amounts to local authorities for 2025/6, to enable early implementation of initiatives, pending the (currently draft) 'Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging and Packing Waste) Regulations coming into force.
- 1.3 This report seeks authority to spend some of the allocated £1.078m funding for 2025/6 to deliver the new and enhanced initiatives set out in this report, aimed at achieving higher rates of recycling in Stevenage. This includes the introduction of facilities at flat blocks that currently have no/limited on-site provision and/or require building works to enable level access for collection purposes.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the use of up to £719,000 from EPR funding to deliver recycling improvements to seventy-four flat blocks, to provide the necessary opportunities for residents to recycle plastics, glass, cardboard and food.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves up to £199,000 from EPR funding to support the implementation of separate food waste collections to residents, should the funding received for this from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) need to be increased.
- 2.3 That Cabinet approves an allocation of £52,000 from the EPR funding to fund the SDS waste project manager costs in 25/26 and commits to a subsequent allocation to fund the salary (with any pay increase) in 26/27 (subject to funding), to deliver the legislative requirement for separate weekly food waste collections from residential premises from April 2026, and to support the delivery of the flat block recycling improvements.

3. BACKGROUND

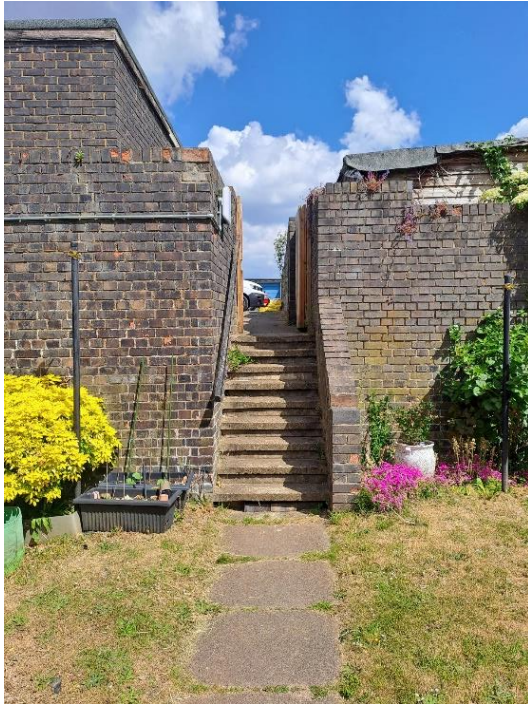
- 3.1 Simpler Recycling is a UK Government initiative aimed at standardising and streamlining recycling practices across England. Introduced by DEFRA, the policy addresses the long-standing issue of inconsistent recycling rules across local councils, which has led to confusion and inefficiencies.
- 3.2 From April 2026, all residents must be provided with the ability to dispose of waste and recycling, at the kerbside, in accordance with 'Simpler Recycling' and 'standardised waste streams' principles. This will require most households and workplaces to separate waste into four main containers: -
- Residual (non-recyclable) waste
 - Food waste (can be mixed with garden waste)
 - Paper and Card
 - Dry recyclables (plastic, metal and glass)
- 3.3 EPR in England is a major environmental reform that shifts the cost of managing packaging waste from taxpayers to the producers who create it. EPR requires producers, such as manufacturers, importers, and brand owners, to pay the full net cost of collecting, sorting, treating, and recycling the packaging waste they generate.
- 3.4 For 25/26, the Council will receive its £1,078,000 one year only allocation in three instalments: November '25, January '26 and March '26. As it was only guaranteed for one year, the funding is not included within the 25/26 base budget. From 26/27 it will be included with the Council's Core Spending Power (CSP). However, it should be noted that it is anticipated EPR funding for 26/27, and future years, will not be to the level received for 25/26. While EPR funding is not ringfenced, DEFRA guidance

recommends it is used for waste collection operations and for improving recycling performance.

- 3.5 In 2023, a pilot scheme was introduced at six flat block locations to seek to increase recycling participation. As part of the initiative, new bins and bin stores were installed, accompanied by clearer signage, and participation levels were closely monitored. The initial results showed a 185% increase in recycling. Further monitoring in late 2024 indicated a reduction, however recycling rates remained significantly higher than they were before the pilot at 85% above pre-pilot levels. Further details are provided in Appendix B.
- 3.6 The Council's recycling performance is currently 39%. This is below the national average of 44% in England and the lowest compared to neighbouring authorities in Hertfordshire. The high proportion of flats in the town is a key factor in the current rate, which further evidences the need to provide recycling facilities at flat blocks. The additional provision at flats will boost Stevenage's drive to achieve its higher target of recycling 60% of the town's waste by 2030.

4. FUNDING REQUIREMENTS – FLAT BLOCKS

- 4.1 It has been identified that seventy-four flat blocks, both Council and privately owned, currently do not have recycling provisions. These blocks also have limited general waste provision, utilising Council issued purple bags for waste disposal, as opposed to the standard wheeled bin used across the town.
- 4.2 A survey to document the level of recycling deficiencies, physical constraints to recycling, what was required to be able to provide recycling, and to identify the barriers and challenges for implementation was completed in June 2025. This also identified that of the seventy-four blocks, fifty-nine were Council owned.
- 4.3 Access was the principal concern identified, with many having either steps leading up to, or down into, the grounds and to where the current bin provision is located. Steps pose a challenge to safely removing wheeled bins for emptying by the waste and recycling operatives. Example of physical challenges at flat blocks are shown below.

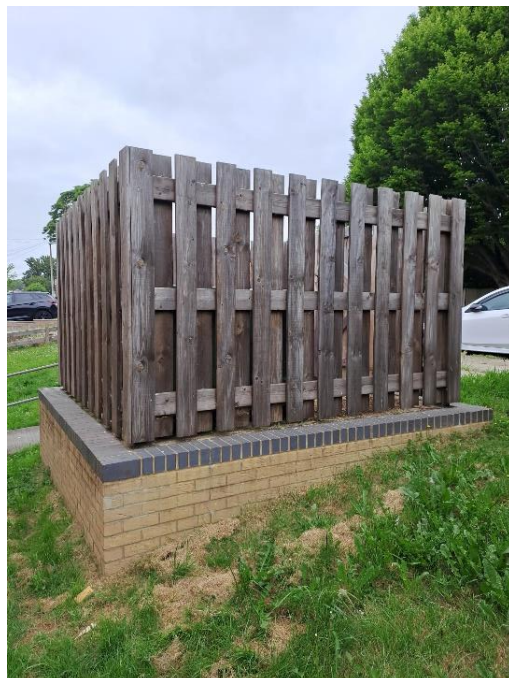


4.4 Structural works are required to provide the necessary bin allocation for both recycling and waste, such as: ramp installation, bin store refurbishment and installation of new bin stores to the front of properties.

4.5 Examples of locations that have been previously upgraded are shown below. The first photograph shows a ramp replacing steps. Photograph two shows a newly installed bin store.



2.



4.6 The surveys completed in June 2025 identified forty-one Council owned blocks that need structural works. Each block has separate requirements, but the focus of the work will in the main include:

- Access ramps replacing steps so wheeled bins can be safely emptied by the collection teams
- Improvements to existing bins stores to allow for additional bin storage
- New bin stores being constructed
- Enhanced signage to provide clear instructions on what items go in each bin

The remaining blocks were either private, already had the infrastructure in place for bins to be directly placed or will be serviced by the Council's self-designed wheeled bin for use with steps. Some of the privately owned blocks will receive signage improvements.

4.7 The image below illustrates this innovative design. Having explored whether this design already existed with wheeled bin suppliers, and establishing it did not, Council officers designed, sourced parts and fabricated the bin in-house. The bin is currently being trialled and if proven to be fit for purpose, will reduce the need for costly construction works to be undertaken in some locations.

SBC designed wheeled bin



- 4.8 The estimated budget required for the works to forty-one blocks is £719,000. This has been calculated using the most prudent estimated option costed to mitigate the need for any additional requests. Currently, options are still being evaluated but the cheapest option being £266,000 with an average total cost of options at £471,000. Members will be updated on costs and, should the works cost less than £719,000, this will offer funding for further initiatives that can improve recycling participation / reduce waste in the future.
- 4.9 It is intended to commence the physical improvement works in August 2025 with completion scheduled for April 2026. While the volume of works required means this is an ambitious timeframe, works will be procured and coordinated via the Council's in-house teams which should minimise delay and achieve a competitive price.
- 4.10 Appendix A provides an overview of the locations and scope of the works required. The survey specifies up to three options per block. The most suitable option and exact cost are still to be established. This exercise will be completed by August 2025.
- 4.11 Residents will be engaged to explain the planned works, the reasons behind the changes, and the positive impact recycling can have; both for individuals and the wider environment. These benefits include increased recycling rates, less waste sent to landfill, and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- 4.12 A comprehensive communication plan is being developed, which will be implemented across the town to highlight the planned changes. Key among these is the introduction of a separate weekly food waste collection service. The rollout will make use of social media platforms, local publications such as the Chronicle and the Comet, alongside the distribution of leaflets and bin stickers. Tailored messaging will be provided to residents living in flat blocks to ensure everyone is well informed.
- 4.13 It is important to note that the current waste and recycling collection service in Stevenage is well regarded by residents. The missed bin collection rate consistently remains below 1%, reflecting strong performance. Officers continue to seek opportunities to enhance efficiency and further improve service delivery.

5. INTRODUCTION OF DOMESTIC FOOD WASTE COLLECTION – DEFRA FUNDING GAP

- 5.1 DEFRA has provided both capital and revenue grant funding to facilitate the implementation of a weekly food waste collection, as part of Government's 'Simpler Recycling' initiative. The details of the legislation, and implications for Stevenage, were presented to Cabinet in July 2024.
- 5.2 The 'transitional funding' allocation for Stevenage has been released and totals £232,000. This funding is for the delivery of waste receptacles, communications and project management.
- 5.3 This funding does not cover the cost of operational staffing, who will need to be recruited and trained prior to launching the service. Additional works to the

Cavendish transfer station, including a licence variation with the Environment Agency, are also not covered in the funding allocated.

- 5.4 A Project Manager has been appointed to lead the implementation of changes to the Council's waste and recycling services. Utilising EPR funding to support this role; both now and in future recycling initiatives, would offer a strategic advantage in boosting recycling rates across Stevenage.
- 5.5 It has been calculated that the funding shortfall is approximately £199,000. Officers are submitting an appeal to DEFRA, highlighting costs that have not been considered. It is requested that this allocation of EPR funding is ringfenced in a designated pot to use should DEFRA refuse the request. This would also ensure there is no pressure on the general fund.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There is no allocation within the Council's existing budgets to support the works required at the flat blocks to meet the legislative requirements of Simpler Recycling.
- 6.2 The establishment budget for refuse and recycling supports forty-three operational roles. The introduction of the weekly food waste service will require an additional 9 staff. On-going grant funding (April '26) from DEFRA is expected to cover staffing costs for at least the first year. However, there is no funding to cover recruiting staff and training them prior to launching the service, and there is no existing establishment budget to support this.
- The EPR allocation for 25/26 is £1,078,000
 - Required Budget for flat blocks = £719,000
 - Required Budget for DEFRA funding shortfall = £199,000
 - Required budget for project Management = £52,000
 - Remaining EPR balance = £108,000
- 6.3 Any remaining funding from the £1,078,000 EPR allocation from 25/26 could be utilised for further initiatives once the 26/27 EPR funding allocation has been confirmed. Members will be updated and consulted on further initiatives at the appropriate point.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Simpler Recycling became law on 31 March 2025. The works detailed in this report are required to ensure the council comply with this new legislation.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There is reputational risk if the Council does not provide the facilities and service provision to residents in accordance with Simpler Recycling legislation.

9. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Some proposed bin store structures may require planning permission, to be agreed prior to work commencing.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There will be loss of grass and/or shrub bed areas to accommodate new bins stores within the flat block grounds. However, this will be minimal, and the works will support environmental benefits from increased recycling rates.

11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 In providing the facilities essential for recycling waste, the Council is ensuring that all flat block residents have the opportunity to recycle their waste within the flat block areas.

12. SUMMARY

- 12.1 To comply with Simpler Recycling legislation, funding is requested to ensure the Council's flat block infrastructure supports residents' ability to recycle responsibly.
- 12.2 Funding is also requested to support any shortfall between DEFRA grant funding and the actual cost to implement the operational changes required to meet Simpler Recycling.
- 12.3 Overall, an allocation of £970,000 is requested from EPR funds to support flat block improvements and operational staffing needs for Simpler Recycling. This will leave a balance of circa £108,000.

| Address | Area | Option 1 | Estimated Cost |
|---------------------------|-------------|---|----------------|
| Archer Road - 93 - 99 | Almond Hill | Build hard stand for bins to front and path across grass to exisiting path (8sqm) | 2860 |
| Archer Road - 519-531 | Almond Hill | Remove concrete tops from bin store and use new bin | 1734.06 |
| Grace Way - 60-68 | Almond Hill | Install ramp | 29340 |
| Grace Way 106-114 | Almond Hill | Build key clamp hard stand for bins. Install ramp | 50600 |
| Grace Way - 146-158 | Almond Hill | Build key clamp hard stand for bins. Install ramp | 31040 |
| Grace Way - 300-310 | Almond Hill | Use new bin | 534.06 |
| Grace Way - 356-368 | Almond Hill | Remove steps to create bin area in same location. Creat new entrance through wall to drying area | 15000 |
| Lonsdale Road - 87-97 | Almond Hill | Install ramp | 22820 |
| Lonsdale Road - 143-153 | Almond Hill | Install ramp | 26080 |
| Lonsdale Road - 549a-551a | Almond Hill | Replace door giving access under steps and close steps off. This will create a bin store | 6000 |
| Lonsdale Road - 595-605 | Almond Hill | Install ramp | 29340 |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------|---|---------|
| Popple Way - 2A-12A | Almond Hill | Install gate in current metal fence and create key clamp bin store | 3700 |
| Bedwell Crescent - 107a-119a | Bedwell | Build enclosed bin store under steps | 12000 |
| Bedwell Crescent - 121a-127a | Bedwell | Build enclosed bin store | 12000 |
| Oaks Cross - 110a-118a | Longmeadow | Build enclosed, purpose built, bin store between both blocks | 12000 |
| Oaks Cross - 120a-130a | Longmeadow | Build enclosed, purpose built, bin store between both blocks | 12000 |
| Derby Way 64-70 | Martins Wood | Build bin store on sloped shrub bed by entrance gate. Remove section of shrub bed | 12000 |
| Derby Way 84-90 | Martins Wood | Use new bin | 534.06 |
| Douglas Drive 11-17 | Martins Wood | Build platform at top of steps for bin store to go on. | 15000 |
| Meredith Road 24-36 | Martins Wood | Remove concrete tops from bin area and use new bin | 1734.06 |
| Meredith Road 94-106 | Martins Wood | Remove concrete tops from bin area and use normal bins | 1200 |
| Meredith Road 114-124 | Martins Wood | Remove concrete tops from bin area and use normal bins | 1200 |
| Mildmay Road 54-66 | Martins Wood | Build enclosed bin store at front of block | 12000 |

| | | | |
|------------------------|--------------|---|--------|
| The Oval - 1a-19a | Martins Wood | Build bin store under steps | 12000 |
| The Oval - 2a-22a | Martins Wood | Secure existing bin store under steps, with doors, and extend | 12000 |
| Sefton Road 62-68 | Martins Wood | Use new bin | 534.06 |
| Sefton Road 71-77 | Martins Wood | Use new bin | 534.06 |
| Trumper Road - 159-169 | Martins Wood | Move bin store to front of block on grass area. Installed sloped pathway to roadside. | 13305 |
| Vardon Road - 21-33 | Martins Wood | Build platform at top of steps for bin store to go on. | 12000 |
| Vardon Road - 49-61 | Martins Wood | Remove concrete tops from bin area and use normal bins | 1200 |
| Vardon Road - 189-199 | Martins Wood | Install, enclosed, purpose build, bin store to car park by steps | 12000 |
| Vardon Road - 473-481 | Martins Wood | Install sloped path at front to pull bins to road. Change of collection day | 1015 |
| Verity Way - 133-143 | Martins Wood | Install, enclosed, purpose build, bin store to car park by steps (*shared with below) | 12000 |
| Verity Way - 149-161 | Martins Wood | Install, enclosed, purpose build, bin store to car park by steps (*shared with above) | 12000 |
| Webb Rise 81-93 | Martins Wood | Install double ramp | 52160 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--|--------|
| Webb Rise 123-135 | Martins Wood | Use new bin | 534.06 |
| Webb Rise 163-173 | Martins Wood | Use new bin | 534.06 |
| Broadwater Crescent - 90a-108a | Roebuck | Build new bin store (and extend) | 1700 |
| Broadwater Crescent - 181-187 | Roebuck | Build key clamp hard stand for bins, cut into sloped grass area | 6400 |
| Broadwater Crescent - 239a-24 | Roebuck | Build enclosed, purpose built, bin store between both blocks | 12000 |
| Broadwater Crescent - 253a-259 | Roebuck | Build enclosed, purpose built, bin store between both blocks | 12000 |
| Broadwater Crescent - 353-363 | Roebuck | Build key clamp hard stand for bins. Install sloped pathway at front | 6400 |
| Burydale - 20-26 | Roebuck | Build key clamp hard stand for bins. | 1700 |
| Marymead Drive - 13-19 | Roebuck | Build enclosed bin store at front of block on current grass area | 12000 |
| Hydean Way - 1a-11a | Shephall | Build enclosed, purpose built, bin store on grass verge | 12000 |
| Fovant Court - 1-12 | Woodfield | Build key clamp hard stand for bins at rear, on grass area | |

| Option 2 | Estimated Cost | Option 3 | Estimated Cost | Least Expensive |
|--|----------------|---|----------------|-----------------|
| Remove concrete tops from bin store and use new bin | 1734.06 | | | 1734.06 |
| Remove concrete tops from bin store, install ramp (approx 10 sqm) and remove shrub bed | 33800 | | | 1734.06 |
| Use new bin | 534.06 | Step ramps to assist with normal bins | 1000 | 534.06 |
| Build key clamp hard stand for bins. Use new bins | 2234.06 | Issue recycling boxes - check with crew | 0 | 2234.06 |
| Build key clamp hard stand for bins. Use new bins | 2234.06 | Build key clamp hard stand for bins. Use step ramps | 2700 | 2234.06 |
| Issue recycling boxes - check with crew | 0 | | | 0 |
| Create new entrance through wall and put bin store in drying area | 8000 | | | 8000 |
| Use new bin | 534.06 | Step ramps to assist with normal bins | 1000 | 534.06 |
| Use new bin | 534.06 | Step ramps to assist with normal bins | 1000 | 534.06 |
| | | | | 6000 |
| Use new bin | 534.06 | Step ramps to assist with normal bins | 1000 | 534.06 |

| | | | | |
|--|---------|--|------|---------|
| Remove shrub bed and build purpose built bin store. | 13700 | | | 3700 |
| | | | | 12000 |
| | | | | 12000 |
| | | | | 12000 |
| | | | | 12000 |
| | | | | 12000 |
| | | | | 534.06 |
| Remove concrete tops from bin store, install double ramp | 63140 | Bring existing gate forward to enclose approaching pathway to flat block, on current open public land. | 3150 | 3150 |
| | | | | 1734.06 |
| Remove concrete tops from bin area and use new bins | 1734.06 | | | 1200 |
| | | | | 1200 |
| | | | | 12000 |

| | | | | |
|--|--------|--|------|--------|
| Keep bring bank site | 0 | Add corral to car park to secure bins | 1520 | 12000 |
| | | | | 12000 |
| Step ramps to assist with normal bins | 1000 | | | 534.06 |
| Step ramps to assist with normal bins | 1000 | Only 3 steps, could manage with normal bin | 0 | 534.06 |
| Build bin store at top of steps on sloped shrub bed area | 12000 | | | 12000 |
| Install double ramp and remove tops of bin store area | 53860 | | | 12000 |
| Add new hardstand and key clamp for bins in current, bare shrub bed. | 1700 | Step ramps to assist with normal bins | 1000 | 1000 |
| | | | | 12000 |
| Use new bin | 534.06 | Step ramps to assist with normal bins | 1000 | 534.06 |
| | | | | 12000 |
| | | | | 12000 |
| Build platform at top of steps for bin store to go on. | 15000 | | | 15000 |

| | | | | |
|---|-------|--|-------|----------|
| Install ramp | 29340 | Only 3 steps, could manage with normal bin | 0 | 534.06 |
| Install ramp | 39120 | Build new bin store to front like chertsey | 12000 | 534.06 |
| | | | | 1700 |
| | | | | 6400 |
| | | | | 12000 |
| | | | | 12000 |
| | | | | 6400 |
| | | | | 1700 |
| Build key clamp hard stand for bins and install gate in current fence | 3400 | | | 3400 |
| | | | | 12000 |
| | | | | |
| | | | | 265860.9 |

| Most Expensive | Average |
|----------------|----------|
| 2860 | 2297.03 |
| 33800 | 17767.03 |
| 29340 | 10291.35 |
| 50600 | 26417.03 |
| 31040 | 11991.35 |
| 534.06 | 267.03 |
| 15000 | 11500 |
| 22820 | 8118.02 |
| 26080 | 9204.69 |
| 6000 | 6000 |
| 29340 | 10291.35 |

| | |
|---------|----------|
| 13700 | 17400 |
| 12000 | 12000 |
| 12000 | 12000 |
| 12000 | 12000 |
| 12000 | 12000 |
| 12000 | 12000 |
| 12000 | 12000 |
| 534.06 | 534.06 |
| 63140 | 27096.67 |
| 1734.06 | 1734.06 |
| 1734.06 | 1467.03 |
| 1200 | 1200 |
| 12000 | 12000 |

| | |
|-------|---------|
| 12000 | 12000 |
| 12000 | 12000 |
| 1000 | 767.03 |
| 1000 | 767.03 |
| 13305 | 12652.5 |
| 53860 | 32930 |
| 1700 | 1300 |
| 12000 | 12000 |
| 1015 | 849.69 |
| 12000 | 12000 |
| 12000 | 12000 |
| 52160 | 33580 |

| | |
|-----------|----------|
| 29340 | 14937.03 |
| 39120 | 17218.02 |
| 1700 | 1700 |
| 6400 | 6400 |
| 12000 | 12000 |
| 12000 | 12000 |
| 6400 | 6400 |
| 1700 | 1700 |
| 12000 | 7700 |
| 12000 | 12000 |
| | |
| 718156.24 | 470478 |

Flats Recycling Trial – Phase One – 2023

- Installation of new infrastructure, signage and bins at 6 sites across Stevenage.
- The objective was to increase participation and therefore recycling by providing new infrastructure and communications material.
- Research undertaken to inform the project included a survey to residents and pre-installation monitoring to determine how well the bins were being used.
- A key barrier to recycling, identified through the survey, was a lack of information about what can be recycled.



- A range of interventions were identified including – new frames, signage, bins, stickers and a recycling leaflet.
- Post-installation monitoring showed a 185% increase in recycling.
- SBC receives income for the sale of our recycling. Based on the average price per tonne at the time, it is estimated that £3.5K of recycling revenue could be generated annually at these 6 sites.



- Further monitoring in Autumn 2024 at the phase one sites has shown a sustained increase in recycling, averaging at around 85%.
- This helps to inform roll out of recycling to more sites.

| Location | Pre-works Tonnage | 2023 Tonnage | 2025 Tonnage | % Change from Pre-works |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 288-294 Wisden Road | 440 | 1070 | 968 | 120% |
| 296-302 Wisden Road | 475 | 945 | 923 | 94% |
| Cavalier Court | 1100 | 9270 | 1733 | 57% |
| Cranbourne Court | 792 | 495 | 1140 | 44% |
| 24-28 Tintern Close | 510 | 585 | 630 | 23% |
| 31-36 Tintern Close | 345 | 570 | 900 | 161% |

Part I – Release to Press



Agenda item: **##**

Meeting Cabinet
Portfolio Area Environment
Date 09 July 2025



ENDORSEMENT OF THE HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL RETROFIT STRATEGY

NON KEY DECISION

Author Fabian Oyarzun – Head of Climate Action
Lead Officer Alex Robinson – Assistant Director Planning & Regulation
Contact Officer Fabian Oyarzun – Head of Climate Action

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report briefs Members on, and seeks Cabinet's endorsement for, the adoption of the Local Area Retrofit Accelerator Strategy (LARA), led by the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership, of which the Council is a member.
- 1.2 The report highlights the collaborative development of the Strategy and seeks Cabinet's endorsement of the Council's ongoing commitment to supporting cross-sector engagement towards the development of a long-term, collaborative delivery model for retrofitting within the residential sector.
- 1.3 Cabinet is also asked to endorse the Council's use of its £1.5m Warm Homes Local Grant funding to deliver retrofitting to private properties in the town.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To agree the adoption of the Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy (the Strategy).
- 2.2 To note the receipt of Warm Homes funding by the Council to date and approve its application in accordance with the conditions of the grant.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The residential sector is the second-largest contributor to GHG emissions in Stevenage, accounting for approximately 29% of the borough's total territorial emissions. This includes emissions from domestic space heating, cooking, hot water usage, and electricity consumption within households.
- 3.2 Given this significant impact the Council has prioritised retrofitting initiatives to enhance the energy efficiency of both social and private housing. These efforts align with the Council's broader commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2030.
- 3.3 The Council aims to ensure that all council-owned homes achieve at least an EPC C rating by 2030.
- 3.4 To support this commitment the Council has secured funding through the Warm Homes: Social Housing (WHS) fund (formerly the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund) across multiple waves.
 - Wave 1 (2022): £1.84 million grant, supplemented by £1.6 million from the Council, to retrofit 209 homes.
 - Wave 2 (2023): £2.62 million grant, with an additional £3.97 million from the Council, to improve a further 237 homes.
 - Wave 3 / WHS (2025): £3.85 million with an additional £3.15 million from the Council, to upgrade another 379 homes.
- 3.5 These retrofitting projects have incorporated measures such as external wall insulation, loft and cavity wall insulation, solar panels, ventilation, energy-efficient lighting, and heat pumps, significantly improving the energy efficiency of the housing stock and contributing to the Council's decarbonisation goals.
- 3.6 In addition, in 2025 the Council has secured £1.5 million through the Warm Homes: Local Grant to support retrofitting of private housing across the borough. Eligible households can receive up to £30,000 in fully funded (free) energy-saving home improvements. Following the completion of procurement, the Council is partnering with the National Energy Foundation (NEF) to deliver the grants to qualifying residents. The scheme is subject to national eligibility criteria. The Council's only discretion lies in determining the approach if the scheme is oversubscribed; a first-come, first-served basis is the preliminary proposal in such case. More information on this scheme is available at: [Warm Homes: Local Grant \(gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/warm-homes-local-grant).
- 3.7 The Local Area Retrofit Accelerator (LARA) has been led by the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP), of which the Council is an active member, and facilitated by Dark Matter Labs (regarding

systems change), Collaborate CIC (in terms of community engagement) and the MCS Foundation (on retrofit landscape expertise). The LARA initiative was established to address systemic barriers to large-scale domestic retrofit delivery.

- 3.8 The primary output of the LARA initiative is the Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy (the Strategy), which significantly complements the Council's current actions in retrofitting both social and private housing.
- 3.9 The Strategy constitutes a three-year, structured, and actionable roadmap aimed at accelerating domestic retrofit across Hertfordshire, underpinned by clearly defined priorities and governance arrangements. It has been co-developed through a series of workshops involving local authorities, colleges, landlords, contractors, community groups, and other key stakeholders.
- 3.10 The Strategy offers a coordinated, evidence-based approach to retrofit planning, delivery, funding, and governance. It sets out strategic priorities and actions to guide retrofit delivery across Hertfordshire, including in Stevenage.
- 3.11 Importantly, the Strategy promotes collaboration without imposing financial or legal obligations to the Council at this stage.
- 3.12 The vision of the Strategy is: *“Every home in Hertfordshire is fit for now and for our future”*, whereas its mission has been outlined as: *“Collaborating to retrofit homes in need to enhance our environment and climate resilience, address fuel poverty, improve health, and support local jobs”*.
- 3.13 The anticipated benefits of the Strategy include enhance collaboration, improved access to funding, robust capacity-building and training, more efficient resource use, and better strategic alignment.
- 3.14 The intended outcomes of the Strategy include:
 - Health: Improved mental and physical wellbeing.
 - Equity: Enhancement in people's life outcomes.
 - Affordability: Increased ability to maintain homes at healthy temperatures without financial strain.
 - Energy Efficiency: Reduced energy consumption and emissions from heating, cooling, and powering homes.
 - Productivity: Growth in high-skilled, sustainable employment and local businesses.
 - Resilience: Homes that are prepared for future environmental and climate conditions.
- 3.15 The strategic priorities for the Strategy, reflected in its goals and sub-goals, include:
 - Increasing the uptake of appropriate retrofit measures.
 - Maximising co-benefits of retrofit.
 - Strengthening the local supply chain.
 - Ensuring a coordinated and trusted delivery model.

- 3.16 These priorities have been articulated through four main goals and their corresponding sub-goals, as indicated below:
- Goal 1: Increase uptake and demand for successful delivery of retrofit advice and measures.
 - Goal 2: Realise the co-benefits of retrofit for Hertfordshire.
 - Goal 3: Increase supply chain capacity and quality in Hertfordshire through improved standards and demand.
 - Goal 4: Create a confident and trusted retrofit environment.
- 3.17 A comprehensive list of the goals, sub-goals, and associated actions (including the prioritised ones) is included in the “*Appendix A - Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy*”, where each of the four goals is further detailed alongside their sub-goals and associated actions.
- 3.18 Key prioritised actions in the current version of the Strategy include:
- Launching a general support service providing advice and signposting via web, phone, and email.
 - Piloting a place-based approach to engage citizens in retrofit.
 - Trialling bulk-purchasing schemes for retrofit measures to reduce costs and ensure quality.
 - Supporting social landlords with limited capacity to apply for and deliver grant schemes.
 - Coordinating with Public Health, Social Care, and Integrated Care Systems to build an enabling retrofit environment and create a shared language, work, and understanding.
 - Developing and delivering SME-friendly social impact standards to guide all relevant retrofit projects and procurement.
 - Establishing processes linking supply chains, commissioners, and training providers to ensure training provision matches needs.
 - Establishing a delivery vehicle, governance, and reporting structure for effective Strategy implementation, involving all relevant stakeholders.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1 By endorsing the Strategy, the Council will strengthen its ability to deliver effective retrofit initiatives, support local economic growth, and contribute meaningfully to sustainability goals at local, county, and national levels.
- 4.2 The endorsement will also foster the Council's broader engagement to facilitate knowledge-sharing, capacity building, and funding collaboration. Additionally, it will promote internal collaboration to ensure alignment across relevant departments and with strategic priorities.

- 4.3 Endorsing the Strategy will provide a clear mandate for the Council's continued participation in future phases of retrofit action, positioning it as a proactive leader in addressing retrofit challenges.
- 4.4 This endorsement will not hinder the Council's ability to pursue its own retrofit programmes or funding bids. Rather, it complements and adds value to the Council's existing efforts through increased collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and strategic alignment.
- 4.5 From a resourcing perspective, endorsement does not commit the Council to any new financial or legal obligations at this stage, nor does it require significant additional officer time or capacity.
- 4.6 Furthermore, as noted above, any future financial considerations will be brought back to the Council as part of specific project proposals or implementation plans, ensuring transparency and appropriate governance at each stage
- 4.7 Alternative options to endorsement would include:
- Taking no formal position on the Strategy, which may diminish the Council's influence on county-wide priorities and limit access to shared tools, resources, and funding opportunities.
 - Developing a standalone local strategy, which would likely result in duplication of effort and miss the opportunity to benefit from economies of scale, regional collaboration, and collective impact.
- 4.8 Given the Council's active role in HCCSP and its ongoing commitment to retrofit delivery, the recommended course of action presents a low-risk, high-value opportunity to support long-term improvement of energy performance across Stevenage's housing stock.

5 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from the endorsement of the Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy at this stage.
- 5.2 Any future financial considerations will be submitted to the Council as part of specific project funding applications or implementation plans.

Legal Implications

- 5.3 There are no legal implications arising from the endorsement of the Strategy at this stage.

Risk Implications

- 5.4 The endorsement of the Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy presents minimal risk to the Council.
- 5.5 Key risks and corresponding mitigations include:

- Risk of resource strain: The Strategy does not require significant additional officer time or new financial commitments currently, mitigating the risk of overburdening Council staff or budgets.
- Risk of reduced influence: Not endorsing the Strategy could limit the Council's ability to shape retrofit priorities at the county level and reduce access to shared resources, funding, and opportunities.
- Risk of misalignment: Continued internal coordination is necessary to ensure the Strategy aligns with the Council's own retrofit initiatives and strategic priorities, minimising duplication or conflicting efforts.
- Future financial risks: Any potential financial commitments or risks will be subject to separate approvals and brought to the Council for transparent decision-making.

5.6 Overall, the benefits of endorsement outweigh potential risks, and established governance and multi-agency collaboration mechanisms will be in place to manage delivery effectively.

Policy Implications

5.7 The Strategy focuses on ensuring that local policies support retrofit efforts, including coordinated policy development and implementation, as well as considering the integration of retrofit targets into Local Plans to align the with 2050 sustainability targets. While this is not a prioritised action, it remains an area where stakeholders, including the Council, will need to collaborate and ensure compatibility with our own corporate objectives.

Planning Implications

5.8 The Strategy focuses on ensuring that local policies support retrofit efforts, including coordinated policy development and implementation, as well as considering the integration of retrofit targets into Local Plans to align the with 2050 sustainability goals. While this is not a prioritised action, it remains an area where stakeholders, including the Council, will need to collaborate and ensure compatibility with our own corporate objectives.

5.9 No immediate short-term planning implications have been identified at this stage.

Environmental Implications

5.10 The Strategy is expected to generate significant environmental benefits by accelerating the adoption of energy efficiency measures in domestic buildings across the borough. These benefits include:

- Resource conservation, focusing on retrofitting rather than demolition and new buildings.
- Sustainable supply chains, by encouraging the use of local suppliers and SMEs, promoting sustainable sourcing of materials, and reducing transportation-related impacts.
- Improved indoor environmental quality, including air quality and thermal comfort.

- Positive health outcomes.
- Waste reduction.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.11 The Strategy is aligned with broader climate goals and is expected to contribute significantly to the Council's climate change mitigation and adaptation by reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, supporting net-zero targets, enhancing climate resilience, and encouraging behavioural change.

Human Resources Implications

- 5.12 At this stage, the Strategy does not necessitate changes to the Council's human resources. Future phases of implementation may involve officer training to support effective delivery, which could benefit the Council by building internal capacity.

Service Delivery Implications

- 5.13 The endorsement of the Strategy and the implementation of its future refined action plan may have several positive synergies with Council's service delivery, particularly in areas related to housing asset management, and maintenance and repairs of the Council-owned homes. These implications will become clearer once the action plan is finalised.

Other Corporate Implications

- 5.14 The Strategy supports the Council's commitment to delivering more affordable, and good quality homes, as stated in its corporate plan. Additionally, it also aligns with the Council's "Tackling Climate Change" priority, which aims to reduce GHG emissions to net zero by 2030. Retrofit initiatives, such as improving energy efficiency and reducing emissions from housing, are key components in achieving this objective.

Other Implications

- 5.15 By fostering strong cross-sector partnerships, shared governance arrangements, and coordinated delivery models, the Strategy sets a positive precedent for joint working and resource sharing among local authorities.
- 5.16 This collaborative framework can serve as a foundation for more integrated service delivery and policy alignment under the future governance structures introduced by the reform and devolution agenda.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

N/A

APPENDICES

A Appendix A - Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy - Final Text

Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy 2025 to 2028
Final text for stakeholder endorsement
Spring 2025

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1. Executive summary

- 1.1. The Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy (the “Strategy”) sets out a three year, structured and actionable roadmap for accelerating domestic retrofit in Hertfordshire, ensuring clear priorities, governance, and implementation steps. In alignment with county wide Net Zero targets, the Strategy sets out to address inefficiencies in Hertfordshire's housing stock. It is a people-led approach to improve the energy efficiency in homes to a high standard through a diverse range of measures. Critically, the Strategy itemises how, by working collaboratively, more can be delivered.
- 1.2. Key strategic priorities include:
 - 1.2.1. **Increasing the uptake of appropriate retrofit measures** through enhanced advice services and financial mechanisms.
 - 1.2.2. **Maximising co-benefits** such as local economic growth, health improvements, and environmental resilience.
 - 1.2.3. **Strengthening the local supply chain** by boosting skills, quality assurance, and contractor capacity.
 - 1.2.4. **Ensuring a coordinated, trusted delivery model** through strong governance, partnerships, and policy alignment.
- 1.3. This strategy moves beyond pilot stage to establish a coordinated, structured, long-term delivery framework, establishing good governance and oversight to ensure transparency and effectiveness.
- 1.4. The Hertfordshire approach is summarised through this ‘Strategy House’ and the underlying goals and actions illustrated here. Shown here are each of the four goals (in teal) and then the associated actions. The actions are in grey under each goal, with Priority actions in dark blue.



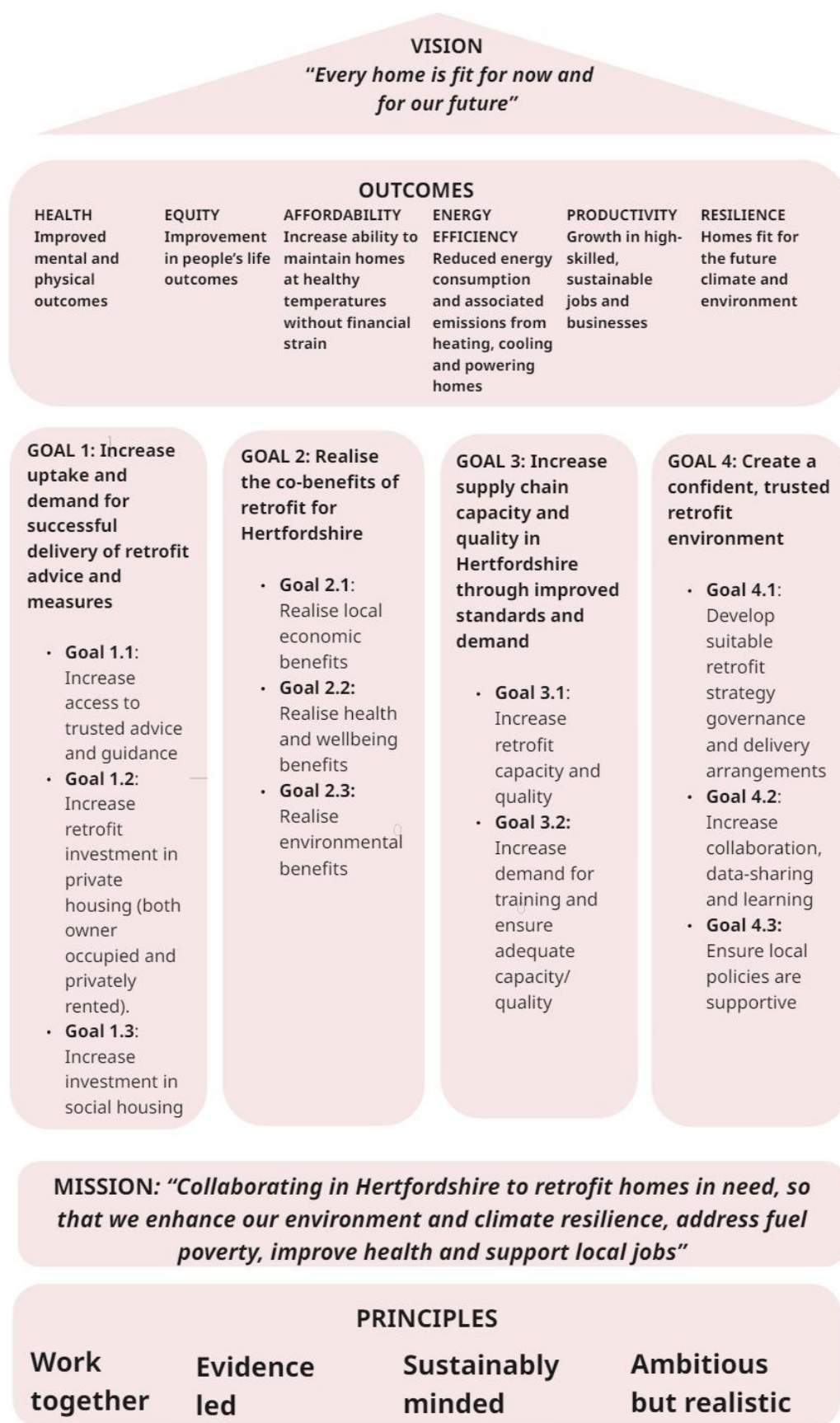
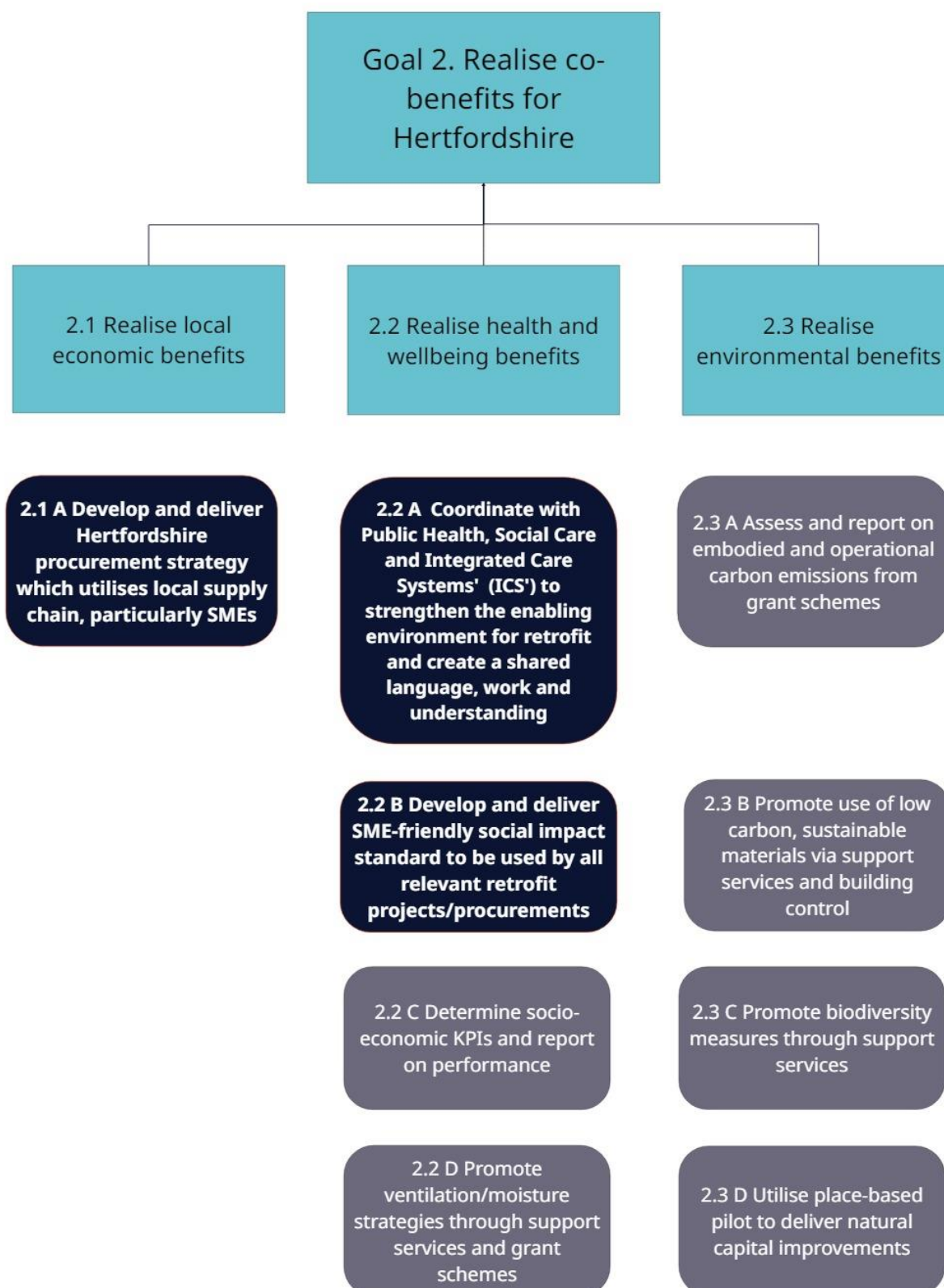
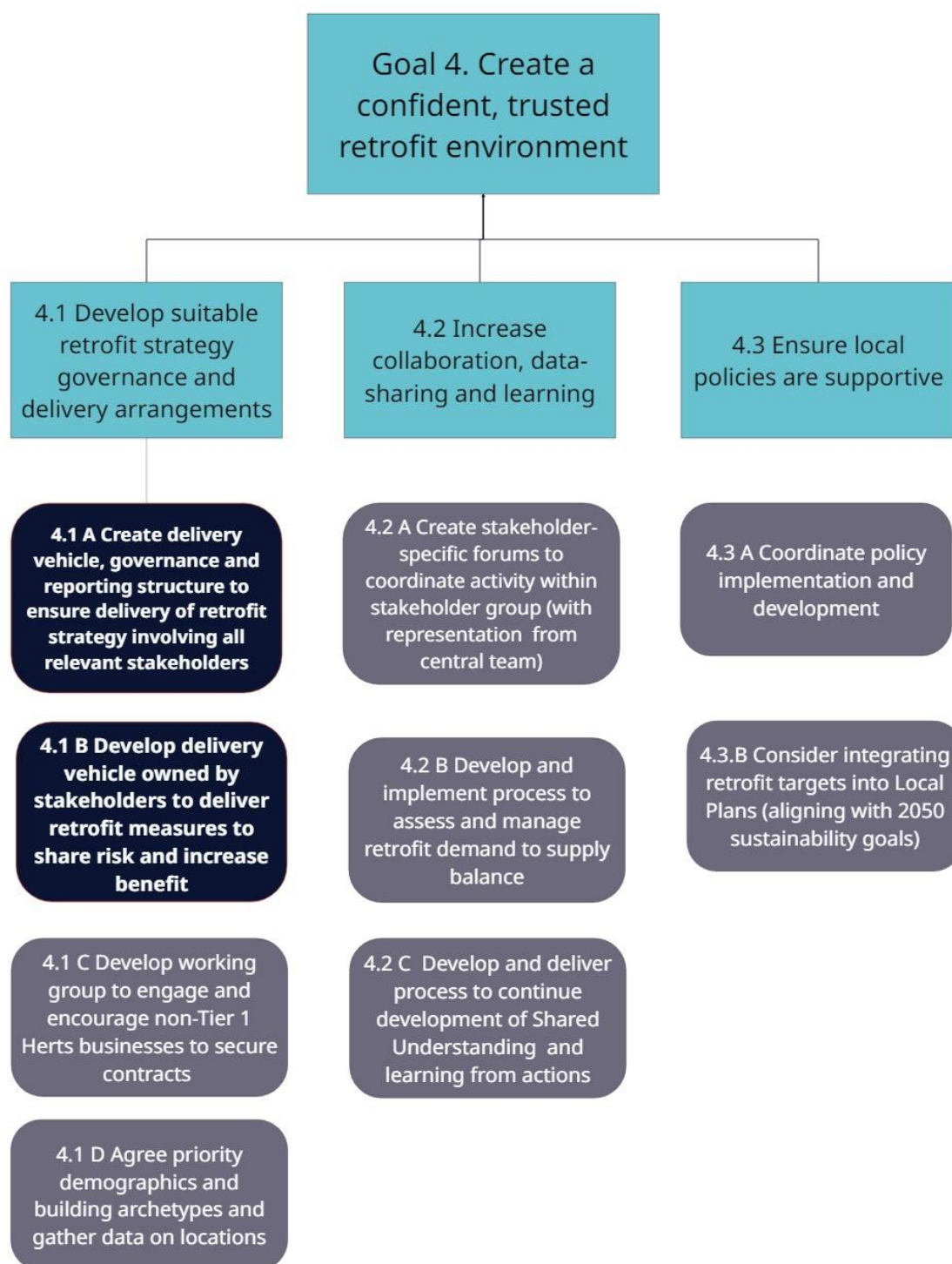


Figure 1: Strategy house, with the roof representing the vision and outcomes, supported by goals and resting on mission and shared principles.









2. Definitions

The terms used in this document are defined as follows:

Central Team: The operational team responsible for the operational progress of the Retrofit Strategy for Hertfordshire. In its early stages this team will include the Manager and the Support Officer (HCCSP), Programmes Director (MCS Foundation), Chair of HSOG (Head of Sustainability, HCC) and the Chair of the Carbon Subgroup (Programme Manager, Carbon, HCC). Once a dedicated retrofit officer is recruited, that individual will also join the central team.

Emissions: refers to the release of greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming. This includes carbon dioxide (CO₂) and carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions, primarily generated from the burning of fossil fuels.

External factors: Any factors outside the direct control of stakeholders involved in the LARA process. These may include national policies on incentives to install retrofits, the financial markets' interest in investing in retrofit schemes, or the fluctuating price of electricity or fossil fuels that impact residents and the choices they may make.

Governance Working Group: The working group volunteered during the LARA process whose membership includes HSOG Chair, HCCSP Manager, and representatives from public health, training colleges, energy charities, and some of the local authority sustainability officers of Hertfordshire.

Internal factors: Any factors that can be influenced or controlled by LARA stakeholders. Examples include the ability to apply for available grants, a college expanding its training courses, or a community organisation sharing relevant communications with its audiences.

Local: predominantly means the geographic county of Hertfordshire with the qualifying phrases intending to mean:

- **Local demand:** The market for retrofit work, products and services within the geographic area of Hertfordshire.
- **Local contractors:** The practice of appointing contractors based in or near Hertfordshire, with preference given to those within 50 miles of Welwyn Garden City as the central point in Hertfordshire, where legally permissible. This approach supports the local economy by creating jobs, reducing traffic related emissions and congestion and strengthening the regional supply chain. It also enables closer collaboration with local training providers such as colleges and universities. Where local contractors are unavailable, proximity-based selection should still be considered, subject to procurement regulations.
- **Local benefits:** The co-benefits of retrofit work that improve the health, wellbeing and environmental conditions of the human and natural communities within Hertfordshire.

Local Area Retrofit Accelerator or “LARA” Process: Refers to the LARA process a series of three workshops involving key stakeholders from the retrofit supply chain in Hertfordshire. The outputs of this process include the LARA Commitment document and this Retrofit Strategy.

Natural Capital: The world's stocks of natural assets including geology, soil, air and water and all living things which provide ecosystem services essential to life and human wellbeing¹.

Task and Finish Group: Any task-specific group formed from the pool of wider LARA stakeholders (and beyond), created to address a particular action or initiative related to the retrofit process.

¹ <https://naturalcapitalforum.com/about/>

Wider LARA Stakeholders: The full list of representatives from stakeholder groups involved in the retrofit system in Hertfordshire, detailed in the appendices of this strategy.

Any other terms, acronyms or references are expanded in the text or available on a simple internet search.

3. The Retrofit Strategy

Introduction

- 3.1.1. The Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy sets out how Hertfordshire can make progress in tackling greenhouse gas emissions (“emissions”) from the heating and cooling of domestic buildings and the alleviation of fuel poverty. The Strategy sets out a plan to support growth in the green sector, with investment in both private and social housing whilst creating skilled and well-paid jobs. The Strategy is centred around decision making which balances economic, social and environmental factors, and focuses on forward planning for the climate to come. These themes are captured in the [vision](#) and [mission](#) and are articulated in the [goals](#) and [actions](#) to achieve them.
- 3.1.2. The Strategy was developed as part of the Local Area Retrofit Accelerator project (“LARA”) held in the autumn and winter of 2024/25. This initiative considered a systems approach to tackling retrofit, using baselining and visioning to agree a series of actions and goals to lead to an agreed outcome. More details on LARA, the facilitators and funding, and the co-collaboration efforts of the participants to develop this Strategy, are provided in the [Appendices](#).
- 3.1.3. Identified strategic goals are:
 - Increasing the uptake of appropriate domestic retrofit measures through enhanced advice services and financial mechanisms.
 - Maximising co-benefits such as local economic growth, health improvements, and environmental resilience.
 - Strengthening the supply chain by boosting skills, quality assurance, and contractor capacity.
 - Ensuring a coordinated, trusted delivery model through strong governance, partnerships, and policy alignment.
- 3.1.4. To transition from strategy to implementation, the following immediate steps are recommended:
 1. **Establish oversight and operational mechanisms:** A governance body will oversee implementation and monitor progress. It will have broad stakeholder representation from the LARA stakeholder group while remaining independent of HCCSP. The exact structure and level of involvement will be shaped collaboratively to balance capacity and effectiveness.
 2. **Develop a financial roadmap:** Identify and align funding opportunities and needs with strategic priorities to ensure sustainable investment.
 3. **Launch targeted pilot initiatives:** Deploy early interventions to build confidence, refine delivery models, and scale successful approaches.
 4. **Enhance stakeholder coordination:** Formalise engagement mechanisms to continue collaboration across public, private, and community sectors.
- 3.1.5. By focusing on structured delivery, Hertfordshire can lead the way in scaling retrofit at pace and ensuring homes are fit for the future.
- 3.1.6. The Strategy has been endorsed by the following organisations:

[Page of Logos]

4. Vision & Mission

Vision Statement

“Every home is fit for now and for our future”

Mission Statement

“Collaborating in Hertfordshire to retrofit homes in need, so that we enhance our environment and climate resilience, address fuel poverty, improve health and support local jobs.”

5. SWOT Analysis

The Strategy is underpinned by a comprehensive shared understanding of the current retrofit system in Hertfordshire as at autumn 2024 (see [Appendices](#)), recognising the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

- 5.1.1. **Strengths** include established collaborative networks such as HCCSP and Hertfordshire Futures, a green skills programme, the pilot project experience through LARA, varied population types for testing retrofit models, homeownership levels that favour private funding, and a history of attracting grants.
- 5.1.2. **Weaknesses** involve a lack of clear regional priorities and alignment across stakeholders, skills gaps, procurement issues, and public misunderstandings of retrofitting. Addressing these will require strategic actions across governance, policy, and resource management.
- 5.1.3. **Opportunities** identified include the potential for developing a county-wide retrofit strategy, securing funding, promoting local job creation, leveraging innovation, working with local communities, and partnering with private investment. Also, aligning with health and social care objectives could provide opportunities to integrate retrofit with broader public health goals and broaden opportunities for identifying funding.
- 5.1.4. **Threats** primarily stem from a lack of consistent funding and access to grants, policy delays, capacity strain, and the urgency of climate change response. Regulatory changes and shifts in funding priorities could slow progress, so these will need to be managed with a clear, adaptable strategy.

This analysis provides a context for actions to sit within, addressing weaknesses while building on strengths, maximising opportunities and maintaining an awareness of the impact of external threats outside of the wider LARA stakeholders' influence.

6. Shared Principles

The Strategy is guided by four core principles that shape all actions and commitments by signatories:

Work Together

- 6.1.1. Collaboration and partnership working require commitments to fairness, honesty, equity, and shared accountability.

Evidence-Led Approach

- 6.1.2. Actions should be based on clear evidence, with data collection and evaluation ensuring continuous learning.

Sustainability Focused

- 6.1.3. Solutions must balance environmental, economic, and social impacts while maximising local benefits.

Ambitious but Realistic

- 6.1.4. The Strategy should balance risk awareness with bold action, aiming to optimize outcomes rather than maximise risks.

In May 2025, the Commitment to Retrofit was endorsed by stakeholders to ensure these principles remain at the core of all activities.

7. Outcomes

Introduction

- 7.1.1. The Strategy is designed to deliver measurable improvements in the following areas:

- **HEALTH:** Improved mental and physical outcomes
- **EQUITY:** Improvement in people's life outcomes
- **AFFORDABILITY:** Increased ability to maintain homes at healthy temperatures without financial strain
- **ENERGY EFFICIENCY:** Reduced energy consumption and associated emissions from heating, cooling and powering homes
- **PRODUCTIVITY:** Growth in high-skilled, sustainable jobs and businesses
- **RESILIENCE:** Homes fit for the future climate and environment

- 7.1.2. These outcomes are interdependent and will be collectively achieved across all Strategy goals, reflecting the systems-based approach at the heart of this work. Progress will be monitored through a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which will be defined as part of [actions 2.2C, 2.3A, 4.1A and 4.2B](#). Some KPIs may rely on proxy measures where

direct measurement is challenging – for example, assessing the impact of ‘knowledge sharing’. At this stage we would expect the following to be part of that suite:

- Average EPC rating across Hertfordshire, adjusted for building age and tenure to provide a fair reflection of housing stock.
- Total number of retrofits completed and measures installed.
- Fuel poverty indices to track the impact of retrofit interventions.
- Number of people employed in retrofit careers, including apprenticeships and training completions.
- Number of accredited installers (e.g. MCS, Trustmark) operating in Hertfordshire.
- Health data: prevalence of health issues due to damp and/or mould.
- Collaboration and partnership activity: Amount of high-quality and impactful joint initiatives and strategic partnerships in the retrofit system.
- Amount of high-quality and impactful active community-funded retrofit projects and community energy organisations.
- Number of MCS accredited low carbon technology installations per year.
- Investment secured and delivered through a retrofit body (see [action 4.1 B](#))
- Monitored value for money of installing retrofit measures compared to a baseline.

8. Goals

The following goals and sub-goals have been determined:

- 1. Increase uptake and successful delivery of domestic retrofit advice and measures**
 - 1.1. Increase access to trusted advice and guidance
 - 1.2. Increase retrofit investment in private housing (both owner occupied and privately rented)
 - 1.3. Increase retrofit investment in social housing
- 2. Realise the co-benefits for Hertfordshire**
 - 2.1. Realise local economic benefits
 - 2.2. Realise health and wellbeing benefits
 - 2.3. Realise environmental benefits
- 3. Increase supply chain capacity and quality in Hertfordshire through improved retrofit standards and demand**
 - 3.1. Increase retrofit capacity and quality
 - 3.2. Increase demand for training and ensure adequate capacity/quality
- 4. Create a confident, trusted retrofit environment**
 - 4.1. Develop suitable retrofit strategy governance and delivery arrangements
 - 4.2. Increase collaboration, data-sharing and learning
 - 4.3. Ensure local policies are supportive

Goal 1: Increase uptake and successful delivery of domestic retrofit advice and measures

- 8.1.1. **Rationale:** This goal is to directly increase the number of retrofit measures being carried out in homes in Hertfordshire and therefore become 'fit for now and the future'. The sub-goals split this between the two main domestic ownership groups: private (owner-occupied, and privately rented) and social housing. There are some actions that will help both tenures but there is value in treating them differently. For example, private homeowners and social landlords can access different grant schemes and are affected by different regulations. Individual behaviour as a tenant or an owner may need different approaches also. A large focus of this goal is in supporting and facilitating action and a reliance on grants and/or value for money evidence to help bring it about.
- 8.1.2. **Assumptions:** The goal assumes grants, low-interest loans or private investment will be accessed when a persuasive offer can be told and a supply chain able to deliver. Economic conditions will have a big impact on the ability to deliver this goal. The goal also assumes that any short-term increase in demand can be delivered by the existing supply chain or with minimal formal training concurrently with the increased supply chain capacity being developed through Goal 3.

Goal 2: Realise the co-benefits for Hertfordshire

- 8.1.3. **Rationale:** This goal is to help drive take up of appropriate, high-quality retrofit measures by maximising the benefit it provides to the locality and therefore improve the local business case. For example, if people can see retrofit delivers local jobs and better life outcomes then they are more likely to engage with retrofit. Whether that be as an informal promoter, by purchasing measures or working in the supply chain. The sub-goals split this between the three main types of benefits: economic, social and environmental. This goal will also help to reinforce the benefit of retrofit to stakeholders involved in delivering the Strategy. Through articulating these co-benefits, there are opportunities for enhancing scarce resources through shared outcomes, aligned funding applications (where different groups are eligible for related but different resources) and broader stakeholder opportunities.
- 8.1.4. **Assumptions:** The goal assumes retrofit can deliver a wide range of benefits and that these can be measured directly or indirectly to determine performance.

Goal 3: Increase local supply chain capacity and quality in Hertfordshire through improved retrofit standards and demand

- 8.1.5. **Rationale:** This goal is the counter to goal 1, developing supply to meet current and future demand. Importantly for delivery of the vision, this goal also works towards ensuring quality within the supply chain. This is important to ensure emissions-reductions are delivered but also to give consumers trust and confidence in the works and increase demand. The sub-goals split this between ensuring demand for training, capacity to deliver training and delivery of informal training support, particularly for micro and small to medium-sized (SME) businesses.
- 8.1.6. **Assumptions:** The goal assumes formal and informal training courses are available. Also, that there will be an increase in demand in the medium-long term. With many training courses taking c. 3 years to complete, work needs to start now to meet the stated demand growth.

Goal 4: Create a confident, trusted retrofit environment

- 8.1.7. **Rationale:** This goal is to ensure the vision and strategy has a supportive and trusted ecosystem. Critically this goal covers the governance and people element needed to deliver the Strategy but also highlights actions to ensure continued collaboration. Much of the retrofit system is affected by public policy and this goal covers policy-related actions.
- 8.1.8. **Assumptions:** The goal assumes a governance arrangement can be achieved which all strategy signatories can agree to, which can be resourced for sufficient time to embed the growth of retrofit into 'business as usual' across Hertfordshire.

9. Conclusion: A Collective Commitment to Action

The Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy is not just a plan—it is a commitment to action. By aligning stakeholders, resources, and expertise, we are setting the foundation for lasting change in the way homes are adapted for a low-carbon future and the future climate. The journey ahead will require sustained collaboration, innovative approaches, and collective determination.

Success will be measured not just in KPIs but in warmer and cooler homes, healthier residents, thriving local businesses, and a community empowered to take charge of its energy future. The Strategy provides a clear path forward—now, it is up to all of us to turn ambition into impact.

With governance structures in development, funding pathways envisioned, and stakeholder partnerships established, the next steps are clear. Hertfordshire has the opportunity to demonstrate that a well-coordinated, place-based approach to retrofit can deliver meaningful results for people, the economy, and the planet.

From determined but disparate first steps in retrofit over recent years, this Strategy will be the acceleration Hertfordshire needs for a sustained, ambitious journey—one that ensures every home in Hertfordshire is fit for now and for the future.

10. Appendices

To maintain clarity and focus within the strategy document, details on developing the Strategy through LARA, and how key principles and outcomes were developed, have been moved to this Appendix. This section provides transparency on stakeholder engagement, methodology, and decision-making processes as well as an indicative direction to aid the development of action plans, budgets and planning for next steps.

1. The LARA Pilot

Introduction

- 1.1.1. This Strategy came from a series of workshops and working groups attended by stakeholders involved in retrofit within Hertfordshire. The Pilot team, consisting of experts in systems change ([Dark Matter Labs](#)), community engagement ([Collaborate CIC](#)) and the retrofit landscape ([MCS Foundation](#)) carried out research to help inform decisions and facilitated conversations enabling the Strategy to emerge. [Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership](#) (“HCCSP”) were the lead organisation for the process. The Pilot team worked closely with HCCSP from the start. An extensive list of stakeholders was developed with HCCSP. Interviews were held with a sample of stakeholders and findings were combined with desk-based research to build a picture of the area, the Locality Assessment. This then guided work at the first workshop to develop a Shared Understanding of how things were working currently. From this the attendees started to develop themes for a vision. This was then honed by one of the working groups (self-selected, smaller groups of workshop attendees, getting together between workshops) and approved at the next workshop. Once the vision was in place the stakeholders could start to develop the goals and actions needed. Importantly, they also agreed on the shared principles needed to ensure they can work together and achieve the vision.
- 1.1.2. A systems approach is a way of thinking about problems and solutions by considering the entire system, rather than just individual parts. It's a holistic and interdisciplinary method that emphasises how different elements interact. The Pilot also aimed to take a place-based approach, that is an approach using a collaborative process to address the needs of a community by working together to improve the quality of life. It involves understanding a place's social context and physical setting. In this context the place was Hertfordshire and stakeholders from across the retrofit system in Hertfordshire were invited to co-develop the Strategy.
- 1.1.3. The Strategy has the following defined terms:
 - **ACTIONS: Things done** by people and organisations in Hertfordshire in support of goals, by individuals or groups
 - **GOALS: Something Hertfordshire hopes to achieve** which is formed of multiple actions and achieved by multiple parties
 - **MISSION: How the work** needed to achieve the vision will be taken forward
 - **OUTCOMES: The result of something**, or the consequence of it, is the outcome
 - **STRATEGY: A plan** for Hertfordshire made up of multiple goals (under which sit actions) toward a wider mission and vision
 - **VISION: One sentence that describes the future-facing, longer term ambition** of the Strategy and offers inspiration and motivation
- 1.1.4. The Pilot was funded and led by The MCS Foundation which is a charity working to decarbonise all homes in the UK. The Pilot has been delivered in partnership with Ashden,

National Retrofit Hub, Greater Southeast Net Zero Hub and the UK Green Building Council. The Pilot team would also like to thank UK Green Building Council, who supported the workshops held in Hertfordshire. The workshops were designed by Dark Matter Labs and Collaborate CIC and delivered by The MCS Foundation and Collaborate CIC.

Organisations Represented:

Over 100 stakeholders took part in this project representing over 60 organisations across three workshops. This includes local authorities, Hertfordshire Futures, training colleges and institutions, private landlords and social landlords, community groups, local organisations responsible for supporting heritage areas (such as [Letchworth Heritage Foundation](#) and [Welwyn Garden City Estate Management Scheme](#)), contractors responsible for building and retrofit work (including technical low emission installers and general construction companies with retrofit expertise), and energy advice charities:

| | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| Ashden | Grand Union Community Energy | Oaklands College |
| Black Architecture | | PyramidEco |
| Braughing Old Boys School Community Trust | Greater South East Net Zero Hub | Sawbridgeworth Town Council |
| Braughing Parish Council | Green Heat Coop | Settle Housing Group |
| Broxbourne Council | HCCSP | St Albans City and District Council |
| Carbon Rewind Ltd | Hertford Regional College | Stevenage Borough Council |
| Centre for Ageing Better | Hertfordshire County Council | Sustain Homes |
| Clarion Housing Group | Hertfordshire Futures | Three Rivers District Council |
| Dacorum Borough Council | Hertsmere Borough Council | Thrive Homes |
| E.ON Energy | Knebworth Environment Group | University of Hertfordshire |
| East Herts District Council | Letchworth Garden City | Wates |
| Education for a Sustainable Future | Heritage Foundation | Watford and Three Rivers Friends of the Earth |
| EELGA | LGA | Watford Borough Council |
| Energy Saving Trust | Multiverse Consultants | Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council |
| Envol Labs | NEF | West Herts College |
| Estu Global | North Herts & Stevenage Green Party | |
| | North Herts Council | |

2. Vision and Mission

Introduction

- 2.1.1. Work on the vision started during workshop one. Please see the [workshop report](#) for more information.

- 2.1.2. The vision exercise revealed several key themes shaping individual and organisational aspirations. These included achieving a net-zero Hertfordshire, fostering innovation, ensuring equity, financial and business sustainability, adaptability and resilience, and strengthening partnerships. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of inter-generational justice, affordable warmth, and community-centred approaches. The discussion then shifted to how stakeholders are already working together and how collaboration could be improved, focusing on spheres of influence. Councils can facilitate change through grants, policymaking, planning, multi-agency initiatives and as landlords, while businesses can influence customer demand, skills development, and investment in growth and new technologies. To enhance collaboration, participants recognised the need to work together on accessing funding, data sharing, building consumer trust, and connecting and growing supply chains.
- 2.1.3. A working group was set up to refine the vision. The working group drafted a vision statement that was reviewed and revised during Workshop two. Participants proposed an amendment to separate the statement into a vision and a mission. The agreed upon vision statement was: *“Every home is fit for now and for our future,”*. The mission statement says: *“Collaborating in Hertfordshire to retrofit homes in need, so that we enhance our environment and climate resilience, address fuel poverty, improve health and support local jobs.”* Following a voting system, the group adopted the vision and mission. Please see the [workshop report](#) for more information.

3. SWOT

Introduction

- 3.1.1. The SWOT was developed over several phases. The Pilot team conducted qualitative and quantitative research published in the Locality Assessment with data gathered through desk-based research and stakeholder interviews. The Locality Assessment informed the workshops, particularly the Shared Understanding and set a baseline understanding of Hertfordshire’s retrofit system. The Locality Assessment report [\[insert link\]](#) details specific geographic and demographic information about the locality. It also provides insight into activity within the locality in relation to six pillars of a retrofit system². The ‘six pillars’ are a tool to understanding a system as follows:
- Community:
 - Awareness and appetite for retrofitting from residents
 - Trust building
 - Participation & engagement
 - Skills and Training:
 - Market size and quality of works
 - Range of different programmes, tenures & building typologies
 - Skills pipeline needed for future works
 - Homes:
 - Building types and tenures across the area
 - Approach to the carbon and energy saving
 - Low carbon technology:

² A process developed by [Dark Matter Labs](#)

- Heat pump 'readiness'
 - Energy generation & storage
 - Planning & infrastructure e.g. grid constraints
 - Financial resourcing:
 - Funding and finance
 - Variations across tenures & delivery models
 - Impacts on quality retrofit works e.g. user-centred service models
 - Governance
 - Ownership and governance
 - Procurement policy e.g. community wealth building
- 3.1.2. After Workshop one, the Shared Understanding Working Group met to start creating and refining a SWOT based on the Locality Assessment and outputs from the workshop. This was presented during Workshop two, and highlighted the county's strengths in collaborative networks, green skills programmes, and successful grant funding, while finding challenges such as resource limitations, skills gaps, and public hesitation. Opportunities included community engagement, local supply chains, and collective purchasing, counterbalanced by threats like funding uncertainty, supply chain constraints, and regulatory delays. This was reviewed and revised by the group and a revised SWOT put to stakeholders for approval, with 98% of stakeholders agreeing with the final document.

Strengths

- 3.1.3. Strength 1: Collaborative networks and established governance
- Further information: Partnerships and governance already exist through HCCSP. Shared learning and alignment of county-wide goals. Collaboration opportunities through existing partnerships
 - Response: Build on through [action 4.1 A](#) and [action 4.1 B](#)
- 3.1.4. Strength 2: Established green skills programme
- Further information: Training providers are ready and waiting for students and trainers
 - Response: Build on through [action 3.2 A](#), [action 3.2 B](#) and [action 3.2 C](#)
- 3.1.5. Strength 3: Previous experience establishing pilot projects
- Further information: Development of retrofit projects, e.g. Greener Homes, and participation in LARA pilot
 - Response: Take experience into delivery of Strategy and particularly [action 1.1 A](#), [action 1.1 B](#), [action 1.1 D](#), [action 1.2 A](#), [action 2.1 A](#), [action 4.1 B](#)
- 3.1.6. Strength 4: Mixed populations, rural and urban
- Further information: Provides a good testing ground for different delivery models with large urban populations providing opportunities for large scale retrofit programmes or Heat Networks
 - Response: Can be utilised for [action 1.1 B](#) and [action 1.2 C](#)

3.1.7. Strength 5: High level of home ownership & affluence

- Further information: Good opportunity to test private funding models and opportunity to market retrofit projects to homeowners
- Response: Can be utilised by [action 1.1 A](#) and [action 1.1 E](#)

3.1.8. Strength 6: Similar housing archetypes in specific locations

- Further information: Housing tends to be built at scale in certain periods and locations e.g. Garden cities have very similar property types, making mass retrofit potentially less complex
- Response: Can be utilised by [action 1.1 A](#), [action 1.1 E](#) and [action 1.2 A](#)

3.1.9. Strength 8: Proven track record of attracting grant funding

- Further information: Councils and consortia successful in securing LAD and HUG funding under all rounds
- Response: Can be utilised across Strategy but particularly by [action 1.2 B](#) and [action 1.3 A](#)

3.1.10. Strength 9: Recognition of the climate emergency and political will

- Further information: N/A
- Response: Will support Strategy delivery and be supported by [action 2.2 C](#) and [action 2.3 A](#)

3.1.11. Strength 10: Established industry leaders e.g. GSK

- Further information: N/A
- Response: No specific actions but needs to be utilised by [action 4.1 A](#)

Weaknesses

3.1.12. Weakness 1: Lack of objective priorities

- Further information: Range of options leads to potential for scattergun and disconnected approaches, potentially contradictory and/or unsuccessful
- Response: Strategy directly responds to weakness and supported by [action 4.1 A](#) and [action 4.2 A](#)

3.1.13. Weakness 2: Lack of retrofit strategy

- Further information: The absence of a formal Hertfordshire retrofit strategy limits clear direction and coordinated county-wide action on retrofitting, creating uncertainty in planning and project prioritisation
- Response: Development and endorsement of the Local Retrofit Strategy and managed going forward through [action 4.1 A](#)

3.1.14. Weakness 3: Limited resources and capacity

- Further information: Capacity constraints within local authorities could hinder the ability to deliver retrofit initiatives at the necessary scale
- Response: [action 4.1 A](#) aims to deliver central capacity to coordinate and deliver whilst facilitating others

3.1.15. Weakness 4: Lack of marketplace for graduates or potential employees for skills programmes

- Further information: N/A
- Response: Mitigated in part through demand development actions sitting under goal 1 but also directly through [action 3.1 C](#) and [action 3.2 D](#)

3.1.16. Weakness 5: Collaboration between all stakeholders could complicate project oversight if governance, roles, and responsibilities aren't clearly defined, especially in the absence of a guiding strategy

- Further information: N/A
- Response: To be mitigated through the Strategy itself and [Shared Principle 1](#) but also [action 4.1 A](#), [action 4.2 A](#) and [action 4.3 A](#)

3.1.17. Weakness 6: Limited stakeholder engagement and lack of public understanding

- Further information: Public and stakeholder understanding of retrofitting, especially around its adaptation benefits, may be limited, requiring further education and engagement efforts
- Response: Mitigated for the public through [action 1.1 A](#), then reporting on performance via [action 2.2 C](#) and [action 2.3 A](#), policy support via [action 4.3 A](#) and for stakeholders through engagement via [action 4.2 A](#)

3.1.18. Weakness 7: Procurement reticence

- Further information: Anxiety in public sector around risk, responsibility, and reputation, preventing 'preferred' suppliers being shared beyond LA organisations. Need for procurement to be inclusive of government legislation.
- Response: Mitigated through [action 2.1 A](#)

3.1.19. Weakness 8: Skills shortage and limited installation capacity

- Further information: The existing workforce is not equipped to meet the scale of retrofitting required (c. 500k homes by 2050)
- A lack of knowledge in the construction, materials and behaviour of traditional (pre-c.1919) buildings – approximately 25% of UK homes – may result in inappropriate retrofit interventions which can cause long term damage.
- Response: Mitigated in part through demand development actions sitting under goal 1 and supply actions under [goal 3.1](#) and [goal 3.2](#)

3.1.20. Weakness 9: Higher than national average of listed and conservation properties

- Further information: Could make retrofit programmes more complex, expensive and take longer to deliver
- Response: Possibly mitigated in part through [action 4.1 D](#) but needs monitoring as affects a number of actions such as [action 1.1 A](#) and [action 2.2 D](#)

3.1.21. Weakness 10: Limited numbers of community energy groups and not seen as a partner

- Further information: N/A
- Response: To be mitigated through [action 4.2 A](#) and possibly [action 4.1 A](#) but could be key to successful delivery of [action 1.1 A](#) and [action 1.1 B](#)

3.1.22. Weakness 11: Colleges ready but not getting students

- Further information: Training providers not getting demand for retrofit courses
- Response: Mitigated in part through demand development actions sitting under goal 1 but specifically via [action 3.1 C](#) and [action 3.2 D](#)

3.1.23. Weakness 12: Policy environment and communication from government

- Further information: Lack of short and long term supportive national policy and awareness campaigns supplemented by inconsistent communication when initiatives are launched.
- Response: Government policy sits outside of the Strategy's scope but may be mitigated through actions sitting under [goal 1.1](#), increasing consumer confidence through actions sitting under [goal 3.1](#) and [goal 3.2](#) and specifically [action 4.3 A](#)

3.1.24. Weakness 13: Lack of confidence in technology, installation quality and trusted and knowledgeable local intermediaries

- Further information: N/A
- Response: Mitigated through actions sitting under [goal 1.1](#), [goal 3.1](#) and [goal 3.2](#)

3.1.25. Weakness 14: Lack of public/householder demand

- Further information: N/A
- Response: Mitigated through actions sitting under [goal 1.1](#), [goal 1.2](#) and [goal 1.3](#)

3.1.26. Weakness 15: Lack of show homes and other visible/accessible opportunities to see tech in person

- Further information: N/A
- Response: Could be mitigated through specific actions as part of [action 1.1 A](#) and [action 1.1 B](#)

Opportunities

3.1.27. Opportunity 1: Strategy development

- Further information: The opportunity exists to develop a county-wide Hertfordshire retrofit strategy, informed by local pilots, like the LARA project, and national climate priorities
- Response: Development of the Local Retrofit Strategy and specifically [action 4.1 A](#) to guide and ensure delivery of the [vision](#) and [goal](#)

3.1.28. Opportunity 2: Funding availability

- Further information: Strong collaborations through HCCSP's stakeholders could help secure and leverage potential and existing funding for retrofitting initiatives, enabling broader reach and more impactful results across both public and private buildings
- Response: Realisation specifically through [action 4.1 A](#) and actions under [goal 4.1](#) and [goal 4.2](#)

3.1.29. Opportunity 3: Innovation and knowledge sharing

- Further information: Programmes like LARA offer opportunities to co-create solutions and share knowledge across sectors, boosting the effectiveness of

retrofit projects. Herts Insight as a portal for aligning better data will help stakeholders reach aligned conclusions for action.

- Response: To be utilised by [action 4.1 A](#), and actions sitting under [goal 4.2](#) and [goal 4.3](#)

3.1.30. Opportunity 4: National and local policy alignment

- Further information: Hertfordshire's commitment to green growth and climate resilience aligns with UK government priorities, which may attract policy incentives or increased funding
- Response: To be utilised by [action 4.1 A](#), [action 1.2 B](#) and [action 1.3 A](#)

3.1.31. Opportunity 5: Local job creation

- Further information: Aligning ambition with a consistent work programme could help provide market stability and confidence to improve and keep workforce in the local area
- Response: To be utilised by actions sitting under goal 1 and mitigated through [action 2.1 A](#) and [action 4.2 B](#)

3.1.32. Opportunity 6: Leverage co-benefits through aligned procurement

- Further information: Appetite for aligned procurement approaches proven through [Regional Climate Change Forum](#) procurement working groups and Supply Hertfordshire, with a possible undertaking for a countywide procurement charter to help align ambition for a sustainable supply chain
- Response: To be realised through [action 2.1 A](#) and supported by [action 4.1 C](#)

3.1.33. Opportunity 7: Skills training and career development for young people

- Further information: N/A
- Response: To be realised through actions under goal 3

3.1.34. Opportunity 8: Working with local communities

- Further information: N/A
- Response: To be realised through [action 1.1 C](#)

3.1.35. Opportunity 9: Decentralise electricity grid and develop renewable heat networks

- Further information: N/A
- Response: Not specifically realised through actions but could well be part of response coming out of [action 1.1 B](#), [action 4.3 A](#) and [action 4.3 B](#)

3.1.36. Opportunity 10: Mobilise the repair and maintenance industry

- Further information: N/A
- Response: To be realised through demand-side actions sitting under [goal 1.1](#), [goal 1.2](#) and [goal 1.3](#) and [action 3.1 A](#) and [action 3.1 B](#)

3.1.37. Opportunity 11: Engage health professionals and align to health and social care objectives

- Further information: N/A
- Response: Realised through [action 2.2 A](#) and [action 4.3 A](#)

3.1.38. Opportunity 12: Group buying

- Further information: N/A
- Response: To be realised through [action 1.2 A](#)

3.1.39. Opportunity 13: Retrofit as a springboard to encourage behaviour change

- Further information: N/A
- Response: No directly related action but feeds into [action 2.2 A](#)

3.1.40. Opportunity 14: Partnering with private investment

- Further information: N/A
- Response: No directly related action but feeds into [actions](#) sitting under [goal 1.2](#)

3.1.41. Opportunity 15: Local government reform

- Further information: Following the [English Devolution White Paper](#) outlining plans for local government reform, changes in funding and powers at a local level could affect mandate and resources to effect change in the county.
- Response: To be monitored by output from [action 4.1 A](#)

Threats

3.1.42. Threat 1: Funding gaps or uncertainty

- Further information: Uncertainty around funding availability for retrofitting could delay projects or reduce their scope, securing continuous financial support is critical
- Response: To be managed by output from [action 4.1 A](#)

3.1.43. Threat 2: Funding bodies changing priorities

- Further information: Choice to follow the funding or develop a strategy that can stand alone, waiting for relevant funding to develop.
- Response: To be managed by output from [action 4.1 A](#) and an endorsed Local Retrofit Strategy

3.1.44. Threat 3: Capacity strain

- Capacity within local authorities could be overstretched, particularly as collaboration increases in scale and complexity. Capacity will also be challenged by potential challenges of local government reform.
- Response: To be managed by output from [action 4.1 A](#) and collaborative working facilitated through [action 4.2 A](#) and endorsement of [Shared Principle 1](#).

3.1.45. Threat 4: Regulatory and policy delays

- Further information: Delays in policy and shifts in direction cause uncertainty and slower progress
- Response: Mitigated through endorsed Local Retrofit Strategy and development of local market using actions under goal 1 and goal 3

3.1.46. Threat 5: Urgency of Climate Impact Response

- Further information: Shift of focus away from long-term retrofit plans, with resulting negative impacts on fuel poverty, carbon emissions, thermal comfort,

intergenerational equality, health and wellbeing and other interrelated impacts of inaction.

- Response: An important threat, particularly to potentially long-term initiatives such as action 1.1 B, that needs to be managed by output from [action 4.1 A](#) and data from [action 2.2 C](#) and [action 2.3 A](#)

3.1.47. Threat 6: Ability to conduct housing stock analysis

- Further information: Although potential sources of housing data exist (e.g. Herts Insights, Parity Projects, etc) these rely on knowledge and capacity to be able to create meaningful analysis and alongside an understanding of the right data queries. More detailed and accurate housing stock analysis relies on specific budget: but difficult to know whether the cost/benefit analysis aligns.
- Response: To be managed by output from [action 4.1 A](#) and collaborative working facilitated through [action 4.2 A](#) and endorsement of [Shared Principle 1](#), impacts on [action 1.3 B](#)

3.1.48. Threat 7: Difficulties in developing the workforce

- Further information: Loss of younger people in the workforce to neighbouring (cheaper) counties and London
- Response: To be mitigated through demand-side actions sitting under [goal 1.1](#), [goal 1.2](#) and [goal 1.3](#) and [action 3.1 A](#) and [action 3.1 B](#)

3.1.49. Threat 8: Supply chain constraints

- Further information: High demand for materials and technologies could lead to supply shortages
- Response: To be managed through [action 4.2 B](#)

3.1.50. Threat 9: Poor public perception and engagement in retrofit

- Resistance or apathy towards retrofitting due to financial, disruption and trust barriers
- Response: To be managed through [action 1.1 A](#), [action 1.2 B](#) and [action 1.3 A](#)

3.1.51. Threat 10: Liabilities from consortia and risk averse councils

- Further information: N/A
- Response: Key risk to be mitigated through output from [action 4.1 A](#) and an endorsed Local Retrofit Strategy with agreed [Shared Principles](#)

3.1.52. Threat 11: Energy pricing uncertainty and volatility

- Further information: N/A
- Response: Threat sits mainly outside of the Local Retrofit Strategy's scope but [action 1.1 A](#) will provide a response

3.1.53. Threat 12: Politicisation of climate change conversation

- Further information: N/A
- Response: To be understood more but [action 1.1 B](#) and [action 1.1 C](#) is in response, in part, to this Threat

3.1.54. Threat 13: Poor quality work undermines trust and confidence

- Further information: N/A
- Response: To be mitigated through actions sitting under [goal 3.1](#) and [goal 3.2](#)

3.1.55. Threat 14: Devolution process derails agendas

- Further information: N/A
- Response: To be managed by output from [action 4.1 A](#) and collaborative working facilitated through [action 4.2 A](#)

4. Principles

Introduction

- 4.1.1. During workshop two, participants engaged in a systems simulation game to explore principles and strategies for collaborative retrofit initiatives in Hertfordshire. The exercise highlighted challenges such as siloed actions, lack of coordination, and minimal strategic oversight in Round 1. This evolved into greater collaboration, shared goals, and efficient resource use in Round 2. Groups then used this learning to reflect on real-life changes they want to see in Hertfordshire's retrofit system.
- 4.1.2. Key principles for a better retrofit system were identified, including equity, sustainability, collaboration, and accountability. Priorities found included shared vision, workforce upskilling, community engagement, targeted funding, and innovative financing models. The follow-up discussions emphasised leveraging local resources, fostering partnerships, and applying insights to real-world challenges to drive systemic change and accelerate retrofitting efforts effectively.
- 4.1.3. These shared principles will guide all activity by signatories to the Strategy. The governance agreements between signatories to the Strategy will formally ensure their importance. The principles below have influenced the goals and actions and are critical in achieving the vision.

The principles

- 4.1.4. Principle 1: Work together
 - Principle of collaboration and partnership working which may require commitments to fairness, honesty, equity, clear lines of accountability with risks shared
 - "Collaboration is key, as we are stronger together"
 - "A collaborative approach to resource allocation ensures that no region or group is left behind"
- 4.1.5. Principle 2: Evidence led
 - Principle to ensure, wherever, possible that actions are based on evidence, data is gathered, and actions are evaluated to enable a sense of purpose
 - "Generate enough activity to create learning in the market and improve over time"
 - "Incremental progress ensures that strategies evolve and adapt as lessons are learned"
- 4.1.6. Principle 3: Sustainably minded
 - Principle that solutions must balance and understand their environmental, economic, and social value whilst maximising local benefit

- “Solutions must balance environmental impact, cultural relevance, and long-term financial viability”

4.1.7. Principle 4: Ambitious but Realistic

- Principle to help strive a balance between being too risk-averse and too careless which can only be done by understanding risks and collective accountability, some time aiming to optimise rather than maximise
- “Be realistic about ambitions and act on them—ambitious goals should be balanced with practical steps”

5. Outcomes, Goals and Actions:

Outcomes

- 5.1.1. During workshop one, participants engaged in a visioning exercises. The results from this have informed the development of a set of outcomes for the strategy.
- 5.1.2. Data from Locality Assessments and national best practices informed outcome priorities.
- 5.1.3. Final outcomes were tested with stakeholders to ensure relevance and feasibility.

Goals

- 5.1.4. During workshop two, participants engaged in a simulation game to explore principles and strategies for collaborative retrofit initiatives in Hertfordshire – see 5.1.1. Priorities identified included shared vision, workforce upskilling, community engagement, targeted funding, and innovative financing models. The follow-up discussions emphasised leveraging local resources, fostering partnerships, and applying insights to real-world challenges to drive systemic change and accelerate retrofitting efforts effectively.
- 5.1.5. The Pilot team then took the findings from workshop two and began drafting potential goals reflecting where stakeholders want to be, the vision, and the agreed priorities and principles. These were presented and agreed at workshop three.

Actions for each goal

5.1.6. Introduction

- 5.1.6.1. The Pilot team then took the findings from workshop two and started drafting potential actions reflecting where stakeholders want to be, the vision, and the agreed priorities and principles. These were presented, refined and agreed at workshop three.
- 5.1.6.2. Each action has the following further information:
 - CONTEXT: The problem or issue the action is planning to affect
 - APPROACH: High-level plan of how the action could be completed
 - ASSUMPTIONS: The assumptions are we making to justify the desired action
 - RESOURCES: Estimated resources needed to deliver the action: these are indicative costs to assist with planning, funding and prioritisation and will be subject to further specification, procurement processes and individual decisions by the particular working group or system actor who may be responsible for progressing that action.

- LINKS: Any other action that needs to be completed beforehand or are strongly linked
- STRATEGIC FIT: Which element of the SWOT and Shared Principles the action responds to and who the 'direct beneficiaries' who will see the primary benefit of the action

5.1.6.3. The phasing of actions will need to be determined. The Links section outlines dependencies and related actions. At this stage we recommend prioritising:

- [Action 4.1 A](#), "Create delivery vehicle, governance and reporting structure to ensure delivery of the Retrofit Strategy involving all relevant stakeholders". This should be the first action as it enables decision-making and ensures capacity to facilitate or directly deliver actions.
- [Action 4.2 A](#), "Create stakeholder-specific forums to coordinate activity within stakeholder group (with representation from central team)". This would be the second action as this could help distribute the workload of further actions.
- Action 2.2 C "Determine socio-economic KPIs and report on performance". This, along with KPIs and reporting frameworks within governance and reporting structures at 4.1A, will help to keep stakeholders engaged and secure external funding

Error! Reference source not found. below sets out the actions in **grey** under each goal, in **teal**, with Priority actions in **dark blue**.



Figure 3: goals and actions

All the proposed actions are linked together because the Strategy takes a systems-based approach – retrofit involves a web of linked challenges and opportunities that need to be tackled together, not in isolation. The following diagrams shows some of the strongest links (teal lines) and proposed pre-cursors (green lines with arrow pointing to second task)



Figure 4: action linkages and order

Goal 1.1: Increase uptake and successful delivery of domestic retrofit measures

5.1.7. **Strategic fit** (across all goal actions):

- Weakness 12: Policy environment and communication from government
- Weakness 13: Lack of confidence in technology, installation quality and trusted and knowledgeable local intermediaries
- Weakness 14: Lack of public/householder demand
- Opportunity 5: Local job creation
- Opportunity 10: Mobilise the repair and maintenance Industry
- Threat 4: Regulatory and policy delays
- Threat 7: Difficulties in developing the workforce

5.1.8. **Action 1.1 A: Launch general support service providing advice and signposting via web, phone and email**

- 5.1.8.1. **Context:** Lack of knowledge and support is stopping citizens from carrying out retrofit measures and/or seeing benefit from said measures, can build on work by local community energy organisations
- 5.1.8.2. **Approach:** Research effectiveness of different approaches to establish *level of service* required to meet Strategy aims, potential service providers (including Hertfordshire-based organisations), secure budget, develop specification and procure delivery partner ensuring evaluation plan put in place
- 5.1.8.3. **Assumptions:**
- Provision of free bespoke advice and support will convert into action
 - Service providers are available locally/nationally who can deliver a suitable level of service
 - There is demand for local, free, one to one, retrofit and fuel poverty advice in Hertfordshire
- 5.1.8.4. **Resources:** Likely to require one or more entities to contract with a service provider and pay for service provision
- People: Project Manager, Procurement Officer
 - Money: c. £50,000 per year for external service provision
- 5.1.8.5. **Links:**
- Pre-cursor to all homeowner/ tenant support-related activity such as [action 1.1 D](#), [action 1.1 E](#), [action 1.2 A](#), [action 1.2 C](#), [action 2.2 D](#), [action 2.3 B](#)
 - Likely benefit from being in place prior to [action 1.1 B](#)
- 5.1.8.6. **Strategic fit:**
- Principle 1 Working Together: Potential for service to be acting on behalf of several stakeholders and supporting a range of local policy objectives

- Direct beneficiaries: Homeowners, tenants, local authorities, public health, supply chain
- Added-value potential through use of local contractor(s)
- Strength 3: Previous experience establishing pilot projects
- Strength 6: Similar housing archetypes in specific locations
- Weakness 4: Lack of marketplace for graduates or potential employees for skills programmes
- Weakness 6: Limited stakeholder engagement and lack of public understanding
- Weakness 9: Higher than national average listed and conservation properties
- Weakness 10: Limited numbers of community energy groups and not seen as a partner
- Threat 9: Poor public perception and engagement in retrofit

5.1.9. **Action 1.1 B: Pilot a place-based approach to engaging citizens in retrofit**

- 5.1.9.1. **Context:** Many residents, particularly those in fuel poverty, are not engaging with retrofit grant initiatives due to a lack of trust in providers and poor understanding of the benefits. In Hertfordshire, 7% of households are in fuel poverty, but a large proportion of households are ineligible for funding. The challenge is to engage these households in retrofit efforts too.
- 5.1.9.2. **Approach:** Research potential engagement approaches and delivery partners, identify supporting contractors, engage with community energy groups, select a pilot location, secure budget, develop project specification and procure a delivery partner(s) ensuring evaluation plan put in place.
- 5.1.9.3. **Assumptions:**
- Better outcomes are possible through approaching and meeting people 'where they are'
 - People feel decarbonisation activity is done to them and not with them
- 5.1.9.4. **Resources:** Likely to require one or more entities to contract with a service provider and pay for service provision. Stronger internal collaboration between departments will also be necessary.
- People: Project Manager, Procurement Officer, Marketing/Communications Officer
 - Money: TBC
- 5.1.9.5. **Links:**
- Likely to benefit from [action 1.1 C](#) being started or completed first
 - May require [action 2.3 D](#) to be completed first or at least initial research
 - Likely will need [action 4.1 D](#) to be completed first
- 5.1.9.6. **Strategic alignment:**
- Principle 3 Sustainably minded: Potential to provide holistic support to a locality, maximising local benefit

- Direct beneficiaries: Homeowners, tenants, local authorities, social landlords, supply chain
- Strength 3: Previous experience establishing pilot projects
- Strength 5: High level of home ownership & affluence
- Weakness 4: Lack of marketplace for graduates or potential employees for skills programmes
- Weakness 10: Limited numbers of community energy groups and not seen as a partner
- Weakness 15: Lack of show homes and other visible/accessible opportunities to see tech in person
- Opportunity 9: Decentralise electricity grid and develop renewable heat networks
- Threat 12: Politicisation of climate change conversation

5.1.10. Action 1.1 C: Engage and develop partnerships with trusted intermediaries (including faith groups) to support delivery of goals

- 5.1.10.1. **Context:** There is distrust in grant schemes and retrofit interventions more generally and therefore activities are needed to be delivered to rebuild relationships with communities and increase rates of retrofit delivery
- 5.1.10.2. **Approach:** Conduct stakeholder mapping and assessment, research best practice, determine engagement strategy, implement strategy, and develop partnership initiatives
- 5.1.10.3. **Assumptions:**
- Use of grants hindered by lack of trust in schemes
 - Partnerships with trusted intermediaries can increase delivery of retrofit measures
 - Trusted intermediaries (consider community, cultural, faith groups as well as GPs and other trusted advocates) can be engaged
 - [ECO](#) and other grant providers find it difficult to find eligible customers
- 5.1.10.4. **Resources:** Focus will be people but when moving into the engagement and delivery phase marketing spend may be needed, specialist support may also be needed. Note at the time of writing this strategy, no stakeholders are obligated to commit resource, and no fixed implementation timelines are agreed
- People: Project Manager, Project Support Officer, community engagement specialists (TBC)
 - Money: c. £20,000 for external contractors and marketing activity.
- 5.1.10.5. **Links:**
- Precursor to [action 1.1 B](#) as potentially important in effective delivery of place-based initiative or could be incorporated
 - Likely will need [action 4.1 D](#) to be completed first
- 5.1.10.6. **Strategic alignment:**

- Principle 1 Work together: Collaborating fully with local community organisations by meeting them 'where they are' and building trust
- Direct beneficiaries: Local authorities, social landlords, ECO providers
- Weakness 4: Lack of marketplace for graduates or potential employees for skills programmes
- Weakness 15: Lack of show homes and other visible/accessible opportunities to see tech in person
- Opportunity 8: Working with local communities, considering community, cultural, faith groups as well as GPs and other trusted advocates faith groups
- Threat 12: Politicisation of climate change conversation

5.1.11. Action 1.1 D Develop a 'Warm Homes Prescription' service facilitated by shared work on co-benefits

5.1.11.1. **Context:** Retrofit measures can deliver health benefits and with GPs being a critical part community health they can be utilised to engage those most in need

5.1.11.2. **Approach:** Conduct stakeholder mapping and assessment, research best practice, determine GP engagement strategy, consult with GPs on potential initiatives, develop business case

5.1.11.3. **Assumptions:**

- ECO providers struggle to find eligible customers but health service can
- Health service pathways can deliver customers for grant schemes and benefit stakeholders
- Retrofit measures can deliver health benefits
- Best practice to be replicated
- GPs can be engaged to partner in delivery of service

5.1.11.4. **Resources:** Focus will be people but when moving into the engagement and delivery phase marketing spend may be needed, specialist support may also be needed

- People: Project Manager, Project Support Officer, Warm Home Prescription specialists (TBC)
- Money: c. £20,000 for external contractors and marketing activity

5.1.11.5. **Links:**

- Benefit from [action 1.1 A](#) being completed first
- Overlap with [action 1.1 C](#) so some activity could be incorporated
- Strong link with [action 2.2 A](#)

5.1.11.6. **Strategic alignment:**

- Principle 1 Work together: Collaborating fully with local community organisations and helping to ensure equity by supporting those most in need
- Direct beneficiaries: Public health, local authorities, supply chain
- Strength 3: Previous experience establishing pilot projects

- Weakness 4: Lack of marketplace for graduates or potential employees for skills programmes

5.1.12. Action 1.1 E Develop business plan to launch specialist technical support for homeowners

- 5.1.12.1. **Context:** The delivery of retrofits often requires detailed assessments of homes and occupants to determine the right solutions, correct design and checking that works have been done correctly
- 5.1.12.2. **Approach:** Research potential business models and comparative risks, consult with stakeholders on preferred models, develop fully costs business plan and secure funding
- 5.1.12.3. **Assumptions:**
 - There is a small but important market for paid-for technical retrofit services to enable development of sustainable market
 - Subsidising retrofit assessments increases engagement and can convert to action
 - Best practice to be replicated
- 5.1.12.4. **Resources:** Initially mainly a research and desk-top exercise but may require consultation with Procurement Officers in relation to securing external service providers
 - People: Project Manager, Project Support Officer, Procurement Officers, independent Retrofit Adviser
 - Money: Minimal to develop business plan but would require seed funding (c. £250k +)
- 5.1.12.5. **Links:**
 - Service could be added on to general support service output from [action 1.1 A](#)
 - Link with [action 4.1 B](#)
- 5.1.12.6. **Strategic alignment:**
 - Principle 4 Realistic and ambitious: When the need has been fully figured out, striving to be entrepreneurial
 - Direct beneficiaries: Homeowners, supply chain
 - Strength 5: High level of home ownership & affluence
 - Strength 6: Similar housing archetypes in specific locations
 - Weakness 4: Lack of marketplace for graduates or potential employees for skills programmes

Goal 1.2: Increase retrofit investment in owner occupied and private landlord housing

5.1.13. **Strategic fit** (across all goal actions):

- Weakness 14: Lack of householder/tenant demand
- Opportunity 5: Local job creation
- Opportunity 10: Mobilise the Repair, Maintenance Industry

- Opportunity 14: Partnering with private investment
- Threat 4: Regulatory and policy delays
- Threat 7: Difficulties in developing the workforce

5.1.14. **Action 1.2 A: Trial bulk-purchasing scheme for retrofit measures to deliver cost savings and quality installations**

5.1.15. **Context:** Cost of retrofit measures acts as a barrier to take up

5.1.15.1. **Approach:** Research potential providers of service and, if available, develop specification and procure delivery partner ensuring evaluation plan put in place.

5.1.15.2. **Assumptions:**

- Bulk-purchasing of low carbon retrofit technology can deliver costs savings to the consumer and still provide high quality customer service and installation
- A pilot could be developed like Solar Together for different retrofit measures (for example for Air Source Heat Pumps)
- There is a market for retrofit measures
- One or more entities will contract with a service provider and invest funding (likely for marketing campaign if like Solar Together model)
- Earlier Solar Together schemes show this type of initiative can deliver benefits

5.1.15.3. **Resources:** Likely to require one or more entities to contract with a service provider and invest in marketing campaign

- People: Project Manager, Procurement Officer, external service provider (TBC)
- Money: c. £50,000 for marketing campaign

5.1.15.4. **Links:**

- May benefit from launching after [action 1.1 A](#) has launched General Support Service
- Link with [action 2.1 A](#) as local SMEs could be supported in securing contract

5.1.15.5. **Strategic alignment:**

- Principle 2 Evidence led: Building on successful past projects to deliver more
- Direct beneficiaries: Homeowners
- Strength 3: Previous experience establishing pilot projects
- Strength 6: Similar housing archetypes in specific locations
- Weakness 4: Lack of marketplace for graduates or potential employees for skills programmes

5.1.16. **Action 1.2 B: Support eligible entities without capacity to apply for and deliver government grant schemes (incl. ECO)**

5.1.16.1. **Context:** Current grant schemes require local authorities ([Warm Homes Local Grant](#), [ECO LA Flex](#)) or social landlords (Warm Homes Social Housing) to secure

funding and deliver projects and some do not have the capacity to apply and/or deliver

5.1.16.2. **Approach:** Consult with stakeholders to figure out capacity/knowledge gap, develop plan to increase delivery with initial focus on ECO LA Flex as other grant schemes closed for applications, agree plan with stakeholders and implement

5.1.16.3. **Assumptions:**

- Majority of retrofit activity will be stimulated by grants or compliance
- Grant funded measures can deliver good outcomes
- Some local authorities and social landlords do not have internal capacity or access to match funding to secure and deliver grant schemes
- Best practice, particularly around e.g. ECO LA Flex, is available for replication
- E.g. ECO providers looking for properties but struggle to find so need intermediaries

5.1.16.4. **Resources:** Coordination, research and planning like to be main tasks and not require external support but may require analysis of housing stock

- People: Project Manager, Project Support Officer
- Money: c. £20,000 for analysis of housing stock

5.1.16.5. **Links:**

- Supported by [action 4.2 A](#)

5.1.16.6. **Strategic alignment:**

- Principle 1 Working together: Providing support, sharing best practice, and making best of cost efficiencies through collaboration
- Direct beneficiaries: Homeowners, local authorities, e.g. ECO providers, supply chain
- Strength 8: Proven track record of attracting grant funding
- Weakness 4: Lack of marketplace for graduates or potential employees for skills programmes
- Opportunity 4: National and local policy alignment
- Opportunity 12: Group buying
- Threat 9: Poor public perception and engagement in retrofit

5.1.16.7. **Development:**

- Proposed by LARA Project Team at Workshop three
- Endorsed by stakeholders at Workshop three and classed as Priority action
- Revised by LARA project team following feedback during Exercise Reviewing goals, actions and Priorities

5.1.17. Action 1.2 C: Introduce Private Landlord register and provide with guidance/ support

5.1.17.1. **Context:** Using register communications with private landlords can be improved and therefore their use of support service and grants

- 5.1.17.2. **Approach:** Consult with stakeholders to determine current services, research other models to provide options, consult with stakeholders on options, implement recommendations
- 5.1.17.3. **Assumptions:**
- Private rental properties are a considerable proportion of housing
 - Private rental properties are often most in need of retrofit measures
 - Majority of retrofit activity will be stimulated by grants or compliance
 - Lack of enforcement capacity means opportunities to stimulate action are being missed
 - Likely to be regulations coming in requiring improvement in performance of rental housing
 - Best practice to be replicated
- 5.1.17.4. **Resources:** Research and planning at first but implementation may require addition of activities to existing staff or increase in capacity or use of external contractors to develop online service
- People: Project Manager, Project Support Officer
 - Money: Dependent on preferred option
- 5.1.17.5. **Links:**
- Support element could be delivered through [action 1.1 A](#) so this may need to be completed prior to launch
- 5.1.17.6. **Strategic alignment:**
- Principle 2: By engaging with private landlords, we can best determine needs and appropriate improvement actions to achieve mutual benefits
 - Direct beneficiaries: Private landlords, local authorities, supply chain
 - Weakness 4: Lack of marketplace for graduates or potential employees for skills programmes
- 5.1.18. Action 1.2 D Develop and implement retrofit measures plan for Building Control including planning policy
- 5.1.18.1. **Context:** Building control are often involved in home improvements, particularly extensions, so could support delivery of retrofit measures either within context of building regulation compliance or signpost to further support
- 5.1.18.2. **Approach:** Consult with building control stakeholders to determine need and potential new services, research any best practice in UK, develop options paper and implement recommendation(s)
- 5.1.18.3. **Assumptions:**
- There is an interaction point with Building Control at which retrofit could be stimulated
 - Some retrofit measures can be delivered through ensuring compliance with building regulations – noting that not all retrofit measures come under building control.
 - Building Control may lack up to date knowledge of retrofit design and installation best practice

- Homeowners carrying out building improvements may be encouraged to carry out retrofit measures when supported
- 5.1.18.4. **Resources:** Research and planning at first but implementation may require additional activities for existing staff or production of guidance
 - People: Project Manager, Project Support Officer
 - Money: Dependent on preferred option and required guidance documentation
- 5.1.18.5. **Links:**
 - May benefit from [action 4.2 A](#) and [action 4.3 A](#) being started or completed first
- 5.1.18.6. **Strategic alignment:**
 - Principle 1 Work Together: Engaging and working collaboratively with a stakeholder that can leverage an important trigger point
 - Direct beneficiaries: Homeowners
 - Weakness 4: Lack of marketplace for graduates or potential employees for skills programmes

Goal 1.3: Increase retrofit investment in social housing

5.1.19. **Strategic fit** (across all goal actions):

- Weakness 14: Lack of public/householder and tenant demand
- Opportunity 5: Local job creation
- Opportunity 10: Mobilise the Repair, Maintenance Industry
- Threat 4: Regulatory and policy delays
- Threat 7: Difficulties in developing the workforce

5.1.20. Action 1.3 A: Provide support for those social landlords without capacity to apply for and deliver grant schemes (incl. ECO)

- 5.1.20.1. **Context:** Current grant schemes require local authorities (Warm Homes Local Grant, ECO LA Flex) or social landlords (Warm Homes Social Housing) to secure funding and deliver projects and some do not have the capacity to apply and/or deliver
- 5.1.20.2. **Approach:** Consult with stakeholders to determine capacity/knowledge gap, develop plan to increase delivery as grant schemes open for applications, agree plan with stakeholders and implement. Ensure awareness of [RISE](#) service and other products already providing this service to these stakeholders. Consider option of low-cost procurement framework such as Watford/Three Rivers to support coordinated approach.
- 5.1.20.3. **Assumptions:**
 - Majority of retrofit activity will be stimulated by grants or compliance
 - Grant funded measures can deliver good outcomes
 - Some local authorities and social landlords do not have internal capacity or access to match funding to secure and deliver grant schemes

- Best practice is available for replication
- Providers are looking for properties but struggle to find so need intermediaries
- 5.1.20.4. **Resources:** Coordination, research and planning likely to be main tasks and will not require external support but may require analysis of housing stock
 - People: Project Manager, Project Support Officer
 - Money: c. £20,000 for analysis of housing stock
- 5.1.20.5. **Links:**
 - Replication of [action 1.2 B](#) but for social landlords
- 5.1.20.6. **Strategic alignment:**
 - Direct beneficiaries: Tenants, social landlords, stock-holding local authorities, ECO providers, supply chain
 - Strength 8: Proven track record of attracting grant funding
 - Weakness 4: Lack of marketplace for graduates or potential employees for skills programme
 - Opportunity 4: National and local policy alignment
 - Threat 9: Poor public perception and engagement in retrofit
- 5.1.21. Action 1.3 B Support social landlords in having up to standard housing stock data
 - 5.1.21.1. **Context:** Effective delivery of retrofit strategies needs to be built on good stock data and benefits grant applications
 - 5.1.21.2. **Approach:** Consult with social landlords to determine current level of data, research standards and best practice, determine gap, develop business case for improving data and secure internal/external funding
 - 5.1.21.3. **Assumptions:**
 - Levels of building stock data vary between social landlords
 - Best practice and/or standard is available
 - Having good stock data provides financial savings for social landlords and therefore a business case for investment can be made
 - 5.1.21.4. **Resources:** Research and planning at first but implementation may require addition of activities to existing staff or external specialist support (software)
 - People: Project Manager, Project Support Officer
 - Money: Dependent on preferred option
 - 5.1.21.5. **Links:**
 - May need completion to enable [action 1.3 A](#) and [action 4.2 A](#) to be effective
 - May need [action 1.3 C](#) to be completed in parallel
 - 5.1.21.6. **Strategic alignment:**
 - Direct beneficiaries: Tenants, social landlords
 - Weakness 4: Lack of marketplace for graduates or potential employees for skills programmes

- Threat 6: Ability to conduct Housing stock analysis

5.1.22. Action 1.3 C Support integration of retrofit into regular asset management by social landlords

- 5.1.22.1. **Context:** Social landlords continually carry out improvement works, and this provides opportunity to expand into retrofit measures at less of an opportunity cost than when doing separately
- 5.1.22.2. **Approach:** Consult with social landlords to determine current practices, research best practice, develop business case for additional investment in retrofit over and above 'business as usual' and options paper and consult to determine improvement action
- 5.1.22.3. **Assumptions:**
- Opportunities to add retrofit measures to general maintenance being missed
 - Guidance available on how to integrate retrofit into general maintenance
- 5.1.22.4. **Resources:** Research and planning at first but implementation may require addition of activities to existing staff or external specialist support (software)
- People: Project Manager, Project Support Officer
 - Money: Dependent on preferred option
- 5.1.22.5. **Links:**
- May need [action 1.3 B](#) to be completed in parallel
- 5.1.22.6. **Strategic alignment:**
- Direct beneficiaries: Social landlords, tenants, supply chain
 - Weakness 4: Lack of marketplace for graduates or potential employees for skills programmes

5.1.23. Action 1.3 D Link up social landlord and private tenure grant schemes to maximise benefit/efficiencies

- 5.1.23.1. **Context:** Social landlords will be carrying out grant-funded and non-grant funded retrofit works which may be in areas with non-social housing property and therefore economies of scale could be found.
- 5.1.23.2. **Approach:** Consult with social landlords and local authorities to determine current and planned works, assess to see if opportunities to deliver works in partnership, develop business case and options paper and consult to determine improvement action
- 5.1.23.3. **Assumptions:**
- Costs can be reduced through pooling works
 - Grant schemes available for both social and non-social housing
 - Procurement and contractual strategies can be delivered to enable partnership delivery of retrofit measures
- 5.1.23.4. **Resources:** Research and planning at first but implementation may require addition of activities to existing staff or external specialist support (procurement, contracting)
- People: Project Manager, Project Support Officer

- Money: Dependent on preferred option

5.1.23.5. **Links:**

- Likely need [action 4.2 A](#), [action 1.2 B](#) and [action 1.3 A](#) to be completed first

5.1.23.6. **Strategic alignment:**

- Direct beneficiaries: Local authorities, social landlords, private landlords, tenants, homeowners
- Weakness 4: Lack of marketplace for graduates or potential employees for skills programmes

Goal 2.1: Realise local economic benefits

5.1.24. **Strategic fit** (across all goal actions):

- N/A

5.1.25. Action 2.1 A: Develop and deliver Hertfordshire procurement strategy which utilises local supply chain, particularly SMEs

5.1.25.1. **Context:** Current procurement policies and processes hinder involvement by local contractors, particularly SMEs and therefore minimise local benefit

5.1.25.2. **Approach:** Create procurement working group with representation from local authorities and social landlords to review processes/policies, develop potential intervention(s) (e.g. standard tender template, reduced data entry requirements for contractors), consult on interventions and agree improvement plan.

5.1.25.3. **Assumptions:**

- There are significant barriers to smaller (Tier 2 and 3) installers in procurement, which limits the growth of the sector)
- Local benefit can be provided and comply with regulations
- Local suppliers can deliver greater socioeconomic value
- Public procurement regulations allow for emphasis on local suppliers
- SMEs report a perception of complexity and technicality in public procurement which hinders their involvement

5.1.25.4. **Resources:** Likely to require specialist procurement input and potentially legal advice and may well need IT support to develop online systems

- People: Project Manager, Procurement Officer(s)
- Money: £20,000 - £30,000 for legal support, £20,000 for web support/data entry

5.1.25.5. **Links:**

- Pre-cursor to [action 2.2 B](#)
- [action 1.2 A](#) may benefit from action 2.1 A being completed first

5.1.25.6. **Strategic alignment:**

- Direct beneficiaries: Supply chain (local)
- Strength 3: Previous experience establishing pilot projects

- Weakness 7: Procurement reticence
- Opportunity 5: Local job creation
- Opportunity 6: Leverage co-benefits through aligned procurement

Goal 2.2: Realise health and wellbeing benefits

5.1.26. **Strategic fit** (across all goal actions):

- N/A

5.1.27. Action 2.2 A Coordinate with Public Health, Social Care and Integrated Care System's (ICS') to strengthen the enabling environment for retrofit and create a shared language, work and understanding of it

- 5.1.27.1. **Context:** Retrofit can deliver public health benefits but there is a lack of understanding, capacity and process to enable this to happen
- 5.1.27.2. **Approach:** Develop Retrofit and Health working group with representation from public health, social care and ICS', review existing policy framework and determine improvement actions
- 5.1.27.3. **Assumptions:**
- Some public health grant schemes can benefit from retrofit
 - Retrofit can deliver public health and social benefits
- 5.1.27.4. **Resources:** Likely to require stakeholder time for meetings and officer time to develop material for working groups, research aspects of the work
- People: Project Manager, public health/social care officers
 - Money: Dependent on need for additional research
- 5.1.27.5. **Links:**
- Links with [action 4.3 A](#)
 - Likely a pre-cursor to [action 1.1 D](#)
- 5.1.27.6. **Strategic alignment:**
- Direct beneficiaries: Public health, local authorities
 - Opportunity 11: Engage health professionals and align to health and social care objectives
 - Opportunity 13: Retrofit as a springboard to encourage behaviour change

5.1.28. Action 2.2 B: Develop and deliver SME-friendly social impact standard to be used by all relevant retrofit projects/procurements

- 5.1.28.1. **Context:** Social value is a defined term and part of public procurements which enables contractors to invest in specific activities that deliver social good
- 5.1.28.2. **Approach:** Determine best practice in social value standards, review with stakeholders (including SMEs), secure stakeholder approval and then implement standard in public sector procurements
- 5.1.28.3. **Assumptions:**
- Levels of social value from projects could be improved

- Best practice available for replication
- Maximising social value may increase take up of retrofit measures
- 5.1.28.4. **Resources:** Researcher needed to review existing standards, working group of procurement officer to create draft then stakeholder group to consult with
 - People: Project Manager, procurement officers
 - Money: Dependent on need for additional research and legal advice
- 5.1.28.5. **Links:**
 - Will likely need [action 2.1 A](#) completed first or in parallel
- 5.1.28.6. **Strategic alignment:**
 - Direct beneficiaries: Supply chain, local authorities, social landlords
 - Opportunity 13: Retrofit as a springboard to encourage behaviour change
- 5.1.29. Action 2.2 C: Determine socio-economic KPIs of the Strategy and report on performance
- 5.1.29.1. **Context:** Socio-economic benefits of retrofit is important to stakeholders and therefore performance needs to be evaluated to figure out progress towards outcomes.
- 5.1.29.2. **Approach:** Research socio-economic KPIs and data sources as well as data gathering processes, map against outcomes, consult with stakeholders on findings, develop improvement action proposal with budget requirements, consult with stakeholders and implement
- 5.1.29.3. **Assumptions:**
 - Reporting on impact important to keep stakeholders engaged and secure external funding
 - KPIs can be found to measure direct/in-direct impact
- 5.1.29.4. **Resources:** Research and planning at first but implementation may require addition of activities to existing staff or external specialist support (data gathering)
 - People: Project Manager, Project Support Officer
 - Money: Dependent on final process
- 5.1.29.5. **Links:**
 - May receive help from integration into [action 2.3 A](#).
- 5.1.29.6. **Strategic alignment:**
 - Direct beneficiaries: System-wide
 - Strength 9: Recognition of the climate emergency and political will
 - Weakness 6: Limited stakeholder engagement and lack of public understanding
 - Threat 5: Urgency of Climate Impact Response
- 5.1.30. Action 2.2 D: Promote ventilation/moisture strategies through support services and grant schemes
- 5.1.30.1. **Context:** Some houses suffer from poor ventilation and damp and making buildings more air-tight or installing insulation can cause other problems

- 5.1.30.2. **Approach:** Research best-practice strategies, consult with stakeholders on findings, develop improvement actions for use by support services and grant scheme designers
- 5.1.30.3. **Assumptions:**
- Retrofit can deliver improved ventilation
 - Benefits of good ventilation strategies not well known
 - Improved ventilation can deliver health benefits
 - Best practice strategies can be found
- 5.1.30.4. **Resources:** Research and planning at first but implementation may require addition of activities to existing staff or external specialist support (technical guidance)
- People: Project Manager, Project Support Officer
 - Money: Dependent on final process
- 5.1.30.5. **Links:**
- Will require [action 1.1 A](#) to be completed to enable provision of support to population
- 5.1.30.6. **Strategic alignment:**
- Direct beneficiaries: Homeowners, tenants, health services
 - Weakness 9: Higher than national average listed and conservation properties

Goal 2.3: Realise environmental benefits

5.1.31. **Strategic fit** (across all goal actions):

- N/A

5.1.32. Action 2.3 A: Assess and report on embodied and operational carbon emissions from grant schemes

- 5.1.32.1. **Context:** Delivering retrofit measures requires materials and these will come with their own carbon footprints which negatively impact on the carbon-savings the measures are delivering
- 5.1.32.2. **Approach:** Research embodied carbon of retrofit measures to decide if process possible (e.g. database available), develop reporting process, consult with stakeholders, implement improvement action
- 5.1.32.3. **Assumptions:**
- Awareness of carbon impact from measures can deliver change in behaviours
 - Embodied carbon tool available
- 5.1.32.4. **Resources:** Mainly research activity at first then consultation but may require technical support to develop reporting tool
- People: Project Manager, Project Support Officer
 - Money: Dependent on final improvement action

5.1.32.5. **Links:**

- May benefit from focus on [action 2.2 C](#) prior to completion or integration of actions.

5.1.32.6. **Strategic alignment:**

- Direct beneficiaries: System-wide
- Strength 9: Recognition of the climate emergency and political will
- Weakness 6: Limited stakeholder engagement and lack of public understanding
- Threat 5: Urgency of Climate Impact Response

5.1.33. Action 2.3 B: Promote use of low carbon, sustainable materials via support services and building control

5.1.33.1. **Context:** Delivering retrofit measures requires materials and these will come with their own ecological footprints which negatively impact on the sustainability benefits the measures are delivering

5.1.33.2. **Approach:** Research databases of low carbon, sustainable materials, develop information sharing process, consult with stakeholders, implement improvement action. Consider use of Energy Technology List and other independent sources of best practice data.

5.1.33.3. **Assumptions:**

- Retrofit works offers opportunity to carry out improvement measures
- Low carbon materials available

5.1.33.4. **Resources:** Mainly research activity at first then consultation but may require technical support to develop reporting tool

- People: Project Manager, Project Support Officer
- Money: Dependent on final improvement action

5.1.33.5. **Links:**

- Implementation will be dependent on completion of [action 1.1 A](#) and would be supported by [action 1.1 E](#)

5.1.33.6. **Strategic alignment:**

- Direct beneficiaries: Supply chain
- Threat 5: Urgency of Climate Impact Response

5.1.34. Action 2.3 C: Promote biodiversity measures through support services

5.1.34.1. **Context:** Biodiversity in the UK is declining, with many species threatened with extinction and the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. Resources and expertise exist and potentially interconnect with HNRS, Local Authority Biodiversity Duty and other regulatory expectations, that can be amplified through partnership working.

5.1.34.2. **Approach:** Consult with HNRS to highlight biodiversity measures that could be included in a retrofit, develop information sharing process, consult with stakeholders on ability to implement measures, implement improvement action

5.1.34.3. **Assumptions:**

- Measures possible that can have positive nature impacts
- Best practice available for replication
- 5.1.34.4. **Resources:** Mainly research activity at first then consultation but may require technical support to develop reporting tool
 - People: Project Manager, Project Support Officer
 - Money: Dependent on final improvement action
- 5.1.34.5. **Links:**
 - Implementation will be dependent on completion of [action 1.1 A](#) and would be supported by [action 1.1 E](#)
 - Link with [action 2.3 D](#)
- 5.1.34.6. **Strategic alignment:**
 - Direct beneficiaries: System-wide
 - Threat 12: Politicisation of climate change conversation
- 5.1.35. Action 2.3 D: Utilise place-based pilot to deliver natural capital improvements
 - 5.1.35.1. **Context:** Natural capital in urban areas is decreasing due to the expansion of built-up areas, leading to the loss of green spaces, destruction of natural habitats, and reduced biodiversity, ultimately impacting ecosystem services like air purification, water filtration, and climate regulation as cities grow and develop
 - 5.1.35.2. **Approach:** Research natural capital improvement measures/schemes, develop information sharing process, consult with stakeholders on ability to implement measures, implement improvement action
 - 5.1.35.3. **Assumptions:**
 - Delivering nature improvements can build trust and therefore aid place-based initiatives
 - Communities engage with natural improvements more than retrofit
 - 5.1.35.4. **Resources:** Mainly research activity at first then consultation but may require technical support to develop reporting tool
 - People: Project Manager, Project Support Officer
 - Money: Dependent on final improvement action
 - 5.1.35.5. **Links:**
 - Implementation will be dependent on [action 1.1 B](#) and may be considered a pre-cursor
 - Link with [action 2.3 C](#)
 - 5.1.35.6. **Strategic alignment:**
 - Direct beneficiaries: Homeowners, tenants
 - Threat 12: Politicisation of climate change conversation

Goal 3.1: Increase local supply chain capacity and quality through improved retrofit standards and demand. Strategic fit (across all goal actions):

- Weakness 12: Policy environment and communication from government
- Weakness 13: Lack of confidence in technology, installation quality and trusted and knowledgeable local intermediaries
- Opportunity 7: Skills training and career development for young people
- Threat 4: Regulatory and policy delays
- Threat 13: Poor quality work undermines trust and confidence

5.1.36. Action 3.1 A: Develop and manage lists of good and trusted suppliers

- 5.1.36.1. **Context:** Quality within the supply chain is an issue and holds back take up of measures through a lack of consumer confidence
- 5.1.36.2. **Approach:** Research best practice within UK, create procurement working group with representation from local authorities and social landlords to review findings and develop proposals, consult with supply chain and develop business plan. Consider incentives for suppliers to be on list to ensure integrity and variety.
- 5.1.36.3. **Assumptions:**
- Holder of list can manage risk of 'recommendation'
 - Definition of 'good' is possible and can be assessed against
 - Intervention can help to match supply and demand and to increase commissioner/consumer trust
- 5.1.36.4. **Resources:** Likely to require research time and legal advice to decide how to manage risk
- People: Project Manager, Procurement Officer(s)
- 5.1.36.5. **Money:** £20,000 - £30,000 for legal support
- 5.1.36.6. **Links:**
- If to be used by public sector organisations may benefit from completion of [action 2.1 A](#) beforehand
- 5.1.36.7. **Strategic alignment:**
- Direct beneficiaries: Homeowners, social landlords
 - Weakness 8: Skills shortage and limited installation capacity
 - Opportunity 10: Mobilise the Repair, Maintenance Industry
 - Threat 7: Difficulties in developing the workforce
- 5.1.37. Action 3.1 B: Develop and deliver support network for local installers with training including Continuing Professional Development sessions
- 5.1.37.1. **Context:** Retrofit knowledge within the supply chain is low but there is likely to be a number of installers who could be engaged with and a network grown
- 5.1.37.2. **Approach:** Research best practice within UK, produce options paper, consult with stakeholders, revise and develop business plan and secure funding
- 5.1.37.3. **Assumptions:**

- Appropriate qualified and non-qualified courses are available
- Best practice available to be replicated
- Demand from installers
- 5.1.37.4. **Resources:** Likely to require research time and then project management to develop options paper and secure funding, possible external contractor support
 - People: Project Manager, Project Support Officer
- 5.1.37.5. **Money:** £20,000 - £30,000 for external support and run engagement activities
- 5.1.37.6. **Links:**
 - May benefit from completion of [action 2.1 A](#) beforehand so supply chain can see demand generation activity happening and therefore encourage engagement
 - Would tie in with launch of specialist support service under [action 1.1 E](#)
 - Could support [action 3.1 A](#)
- 5.1.37.7. **Strategic alignment:**
 - Direct beneficiaries: Supply chain
 - Weakness 8: Skills shortage and limited installation capacity
 - Opportunity 10: Mobilise the Repair, Maintenance Industry
 - Threat 7: Difficulties in developing the workforce
- 5.1.38. Action 3.1 C: Develop and deliver apprenticeship support service for stakeholders (particularly businesses)
- 5.1.38.1. **Context:** Supply chain often finds it difficult to take on apprentices, but capacity is falling and therefore we need to engage new entrants
- 5.1.38.2. **Approach:** Research best practice within UK, produce options paper, consult with stakeholders, revise and develop business plan and secure funding
- 5.1.38.3. **Assumptions:**
 - Full cost of apprenticeships to employers is hindering their use
 - Apprentice completion rates are an issue
 - Funding can come from apprenticeship levy transfer schemes
 - Successful support models to be replicated, such as flexi-apprenticeship model
 - Current apprenticeship offers not increasing numbers of entrants of diversification
 - Apprenticeships can encourage people into supply chain
- 5.1.38.4. **Resources:** Likely to require research time and then project management to develop options paper and secure funding, possible external contractor support
 - People: Project Manager, Project Support Officer
- 5.1.38.5. **Money:** Dependent on chosen option(s)
- 5.1.38.6. **Links:**

- May benefit from completion of [action 3.2 A](#) and [action 3.2 B](#) first

5.1.38.7. **Strategic alignment:**

- Direct beneficiaries: New entrants, supply chain
- Weakness 4: Lack of marketplace for graduates or potential employees for skills programmes
- Weakness 8: Skills shortage and limited installation capacity
- Weakness 11: Colleges ready but not getting students

Goal 3.2: Increase demand for training and ensure adequate capacity/quality

5.1.39. Strategic fit (across all goal actions):

- Weakness 12: Policy environment and communication from government
- Weakness 13: Lack of confidence in technology, installation quality and trusted and knowledgeable local intermediaries
- Opportunity 7: Skills training and career development for young people
- Threat 4: Regulatory and policy delays
- Threat 13: Poor quality work undermines trust and confidence

5.1.40. Action 3.2 A: Develop process between supply chain, commissioners, and training providers to ensure training provision meets needs

5.1.40.1. **Context:** There are interconnections between the supply chain, contract commissioners (e.g. local authorities, social landlords) and training providers which would benefit from support and coordination

5.1.40.2. **Approach:** Research current informal/formal relationships between stakeholders, research any best practice nationally, figure out gap, develop options paper, consult with stakeholders, develop business plan and secure funding to implement

5.1.40.3. **Assumptions:**

- Better coordination can deliver benefits to stakeholders
- Best practice available that can be replicated
- Mismatch is holding back delivery of retrofit measures

5.1.40.4. **Resources:** Likely to require research time and project management with further activity dependent on chosen improvement actions

- People: Project Manager, Procurement Officer(s)

5.1.40.5. Money: TBC when improvement actions determined

5.1.40.6. **Links:**

- Could support effective delivery of [action 3.1 C](#) and [action 3.2 B](#)

5.1.40.7. **Strategic alignment:**

- Direct beneficiaries: Supply chain, local authorities, social landlords, training providers
- Strength 2: Established green skills programmes

- Weakness 8: Skills shortage and limited installation capacity

5.1.41. Action 3.2 B: Develop installer and training-provider collaboration (e.g. trainer mentoring, on-site training)

- 5.1.41.1. **Context:** Training providers may find it difficult to keep up with development and best practice within the supply chain
- 5.1.41.2. **Approach:** Research any current links between local training providers and the supply chain, research best practice, develop options paper, consult with stakeholders, develop business plan and secure funding to implement
- 5.1.41.3. **Assumptions:**
 - Valuable knowledge can be transferred from supply chain to training providers and back again
 - Learning opportunities at live retrofit sites
- 5.1.41.4. **Resources:** Likely to require research time and project management with further activity dependent on chosen model
 - People: Project Manager, Procurement Officer(s)
- 5.1.41.5. **Money:** c. £50,000 per year for delivered service
- 5.1.41.6. **Links:**
 - May benefit from completion of [action 3.2 A](#) first
 - May well benefit from [action 3.1 A](#) and [action 3.1 B](#)
- 5.1.41.7. **Strategic alignment:**
 - Direct beneficiaries: Supply chain, training providers
 - Strength 2: Established green skills programmes
 - Weakness 8: Skills shortage and limited installation capacity

5.1.42. Action 3.2 C: Secure funding to deliver training provision improvements

- 5.1.42.1. **Context:** Training providers require improvement in training facilities to meet demand for retrofit training and to meet demand for increased levels of trainee knowledge
- 5.1.42.2. **Approach:** Review and update current training provision and any national best practice/ standards, figure out gap, develop options paper, consult with stakeholders, develop business plan and secure funding to implement
- 5.1.42.3. **Assumptions:**
 - Funding can be secured to deliver improvements
 - Training centres may not have adequate facilities to teach all retrofit measures
- 5.1.42.4. **Resources:** Likely to require research time and project management with further activity dependent on chosen improvement actions
 - People: Project Manager, Procurement Officer(s)
 - Money: TBC when improvement actions determined
- 5.1.42.5. **Links:**

- Benefit from completion of [action 3.2 A](#) first

5.1.42.6. **Strategic alignment:**

- Direct beneficiaries: Training providers
- Strength 2: Established green skills programme
- Weakness 8: Skills shortage and limited installation capacity

5.1.43. Action 3.2 D: Engage with careers services and coordinate retrofit careers promotional activity, with a focus on diversifying the workforce

5.1.43.1. **Context:** A career in the construction sector is often not seen as a good career path and particularly for women, minorities and disadvantaged groups

5.1.43.2. **Approach:** Research careers advice system in locality and current provision, research any national best practices, figure out gap, develop options paper, consult with stakeholders, develop business plan and secure funding to implement

5.1.43.3. **Assumptions:**

- Current supply chain capacity will not meet demand in 3-yrs
- Greater levels of diversification in the supply chain would have positive impact
- Lack of retrofit career knowledge is hindering promotion by advisors

5.1.43.4. **Resources:** Likely to require research time and project management with further activity dependent on chosen improvement actions

- People: Project Manager, Procurement Officer(s)
- Money: TBC when improvement actions determined

5.1.43.5. **Links:**

- Would benefit from completion of [action 3.2 A](#) first

5.1.43.6. **Strategic alignment:**

- Direct beneficiaries: Careers services, supply chain, training providers
- Weakness 4: Lack of marketplace for graduates or potential employees for skills programmes
- Weakness 8: Skills shortage and limited installation capacity
- Weakness 11: Colleges ready but not getting students

Goal 4.1: Develop suitable retrofit strategy, governance and delivery arrangements

5.1.44. **Strategic fit** (across all goal actions):

- Opportunity 2: Funding availability

5.1.45. Action 4.1 A: Create delivery vehicle, governance and reporting structure to ensure delivery of retrofit strategy involving all relevant stakeholders

5.1.45.1. **Context:** The Local Retrofit Strategy will require a centralised or decentralised team to deliver, and processes put in place to ensure decisions are effectively taken on behalf of stakeholders

5.1.45.2. **Approach:** Put in place LRS project delivery team and board to develop and deliver actions either directly or via stakeholder/third-party

5.1.45.3. **Assumptions:**

- Needs to be a central point bringing together and transferring knowledge
- LRS will require ongoing support to ensure delivery of outcomes
- Critical to success is ownership of strategic goals
- Lack of capacity is holding back interventions to increase retrofit

5.1.45.4. **Resources:** Likely to require Project Manager and Project Officer(s) and then board representatives from stakeholders

- People: Project Manager, Project officer(s)
- Money: c. £100,000 per year to run project delivery team

5.1.45.5. **Links:**

- Recommend as pre-cursor to all other actions

5.1.45.6. **Strategic alignment:**

- Direct beneficiaries: Local authorities, social landlords, training providers, community energy organisations, supply chain
- Strength 10: Established industry leaders e.g. GSK
- Weakness 1: Lack of objective priorities
- Weakness 2: Lack of retrofit strategy
- Weakness 3: Limited resources and capacity
- Weakness 5: Collaboration between all stakeholders could complicate project oversight if governance, roles, and responsibilities aren't clearly defined, especially in the absence of a guiding strategy
- Opportunity 1: Strategy development
- Opportunity 2: Funding availability
- Opportunity 3: Innovation and knowledge sharing
- Opportunity 4: National and local policy alignment
- Opportunity 15: Devolution
- Threat 1: Funding gaps or uncertainty
- Threat 5: Urgency of Climate Impact Response
- Threat 10: Liabilities from consortia and risk averse councils
- Threat 14: Devolution process derails agendas

5.1.46. **Action 4.1 B: Develop delivery vehicle owned by stakeholders to deliver retrofit measures to share risk and increase benefit.**

5.1.46.1. **Context:** Retrofit is an emerging market with limited capacity in the supply chain and high costs therefore ways to maximise capacity, minimise costs and maximise benefits can support development of a wider supply chain

- 5.1.46.2. **Approach:** Research existing examples of best practice, form working group to review, develop proposals for consultation and then develop business plan.
- 5.1.46.3. **Assumptions:**
- Risks can be reduced through becoming managing agent
 - Potential for SPV to deliver greater benefits to stakeholders
 - Emerging models to be replicated
- 5.1.46.4. **Resources:** Project Manager and Project Officer(s) to carry out research and develop business plan
- People: Project Manager, Project officer(s)
 - Money: TBC
- 5.1.46.5. **Links:**
- Require [action 4.1 A](#) to be completed first
 - May benefit from following [action 1.1 A](#)
 - Could be used to deliver measures as part of [action 1.1 B](#)
 - May be incorporated with [action 1.1 E](#)
- 5.1.46.6. **Strategic alignment:**
- Direct beneficiaries: Local authorities, social landlords
 - Strength 1: Collaborative networks and established governance
 - Weakness 10: Limited numbers of community energy groups and not seen as a partner
- 5.1.47. Action 4.1 C: Develop working group to engage and encourage non-Tier 1 Herts businesses to secure contracts
- 5.1.47.1. **Context:** Achieving the strategic vision will require an increase in supply chain capacity and SMEs can find it difficult to win contracts and therefore will not be stimulated to invest
- 5.1.47.2. **Approach:** Define draft terms of reference for Working Group, invite stakeholders to take part, review and agree terms of reference, find chair and arrange meetings
- 5.1.47.3. **Assumptions:**
- Recognises the need for distinct support for non-Tier 1 contractors, either directly or through existing frameworks and contracts with Tier 1 contractors
 - Already has momentum and commitment through LARA
 - Non-tier 1 contractors struggling to win local retrofit contracts even though they can deliver specification
- 5.1.47.4. **Resources:** Project Manager and Project Officer(s) to carry out development and then facilitate meetings
- People: Project Manager, Project officer(s)
 - Money: Minimal
- 5.1.47.5. **Links:**
- Require [action 4.1 A](#) to be completed first

- Probable pre-cursor to [action 2.1 A](#)
- Provide feedback for options coming from [action 2.2 B](#)

5.1.47.6. **Strategic alignment:**

- Direct beneficiaries: Supply chain (local)
- Strength 1: Collaborative networks and established governance
- Strength 3: Previous experience establishing pilot projects
- Opportunity 6: Leverage co-benefits through aligned procurement

5.1.48. Action 4.1 D: Agree priority demographics and building archetypes and gather data on locations

5.1.48.1. **Context:** With limited resources the use of prioritisation could enable more efficient delivery of vision

5.1.48.2. **Approach:** Use Locality Assessment and Herts Insight to develop potential prioritisation models, consult with stakeholders, develop final plan and implement

5.1.48.3. **Assumptions:**

- Some demographics may be considered to have greater need than others and/or resonate with vision more, or groups in greater need may already have been extensively targeted through grant funding.
- Metrics available to decide demographics and/or archetypes
- Data can be found to decide locations of prioritised demographics/archetypes

5.1.48.4. **Resources:** Project Manager and Project Officer(s) to carry out development and then support, directly and indirectly through stakeholders, the evidenced prioritised demographics/archetypes

- People: Project Manager, Project officer(s)
- Money: TBC when approach is determined

5.1.48.5. **Links:**

- To be completed prior to [action 1.1 B](#)
- Likely need to be completed prior to [action 1.2 B](#) and [action 1.3 A](#)

5.1.48.6. **Strategic alignment:**

- Direct beneficiaries: TBC
- Weakness 9: Higher than national average listed and conservation properties

5.1.48.7. **Development:**

- Developed by Procurement Working Group
- LARA Project Team revised and proposed action at Workshop three
- Endorsed by stakeholders at Workshop three

Goal 4.2: Increase collaboration, data-sharing and learning

5.1.49. **Strategic fit** (across all goal actions):

- Opportunity 2: Funding availability
- Opportunity 3: Innovation and knowledge sharing

5.1.50. Action 4.2 A: Create stakeholder-specific forums to coordinate activity within stakeholder group (with representation from central team)

5.1.50.1. **Context:** Critical to success is continued collaboration within stakeholder groups

5.1.50.2. **Approach:** Define draft terms of reference for Stakeholder Groups and appropriate stakeholder types, invite stakeholders to take part, review and agree terms of reference, find chair and arrange meetings

5.1.50.3. **Assumptions:**

- Stakeholders will see value in continuing to collaborate
- Sharing of knowledge will improve benefits and ability to achieve vision

5.1.50.4. **Resources:** Project Manager and Project Officer(s) to carry out development and then facilitate meetings

- People: Project Manager, Project officer(s)
- Money: Minimal

5.1.50.5. **Links:**

- Require [action 4.1 A](#) to be completed first and then likely pre-cursor to all further actions

5.1.50.6. **Strategic alignment:**

- Direct beneficiaries: System-wide
- Weakness 1: Lack of objective priorities
- Weakness 5: Collaboration between all stakeholders could complicate project oversight if governance, roles, and responsibilities aren't clearly defined, especially in the absence of a guiding strategy
- Weakness 6: Limited stakeholder engagement and lack of public understanding
- Weakness 10: Limited numbers of community energy groups and not seen as a partner
- Threat 1: Funding gaps or uncertainty
- Threat 14: Devolution process derails agendas

5.1.51. Action 4.2 B: Develop and implement process to assess and manage retrofit demand to supply balance

5.1.51.1. **Context:** If demand outstrip supply consumers may lose interest and prices increase and if supply outstrips demand suppliers may lose interest and disinvest, with both scenarios creating a lag on rectification

5.1.51.2. **Approach:** Decide process to ascertain supply and demand, consult with stakeholders, revise and implement plan

5.1.51.3. **Assumptions:**

- Demand and supply can be figured out through consultation with supply chain and commissioners of services (e.g. local authorities, social landlords)
- Demand and supply can be determined to a level that enables corrective/improvement actions
- actions can be put in place to alter levels of demand or supply
- actions can be put in place to ensure demand and supply balance in the future

5.1.51.4. **Resources:** Project Manager and Project Officer(s) to carry out development and then deliver process

- People: Project Manager, Project officer(s)
- Money: TBC

5.1.51.5. **Links:**

- Require [action 4.1 A](#) and [action 4.2 A](#) to be completed first

5.1.51.6. **Strategic alignment:**

- Direct beneficiaries: Training providers, supply chain, local authorities, social landlords
- Opportunity 5: Local job creation
- Threat 8: Supply chain constraints

5.1.52. Action 4.2 C: Develop and deliver process to continue development of Shared Understanding and learning from actions

5.1.52.1. **Context:** In a complex system we can't be sure what will work, so we need to continually learn, adapt and improve

5.1.52.2. **Approach:** Develop evaluation framework based on Shared Understanding process, consult with stakeholders, develop final plan and implement

5.1.52.3. **Assumptions:**

- Indicators can be found to figure out progress
- Learnings from actions can lead to improvements

5.1.52.4. **Resources:** Project Manager and Project Officer(s) to carry out development and then facilitate learning process

- People: Project Manager, Project officer(s)
- Money: TBC when process determined

5.1.52.5. **Links:**

- Likely to need [action 4.1 A](#) and [action 4.2 A](#) completed first
- Could be incorporated with [action 2.2 C](#)

5.1.52.6. **Strategic alignment:**

- Direct beneficiaries: Local authorities, social landlords, training providers, community energy organisations, supply chain

Goal 4.3: Ensure local policies are supportive

5.1.53. **Strategic fit** (across all goal actions):

- Opportunity 3: Innovation and knowledge sharing

5.1.54. Action 4.3 A: Coordinate policy implementation and development

- 5.1.54.1. **Context:** Retrofit offers a wide range of benefits and therefore touches on several policy areas
- 5.1.54.2. **Approach:** Map stakeholder policies relating to retrofit benefits, review areas to see how or if retrofit incorporated, consult with relevant stakeholders and determine improvement actions, implement actions.
- 5.1.54.3. **Assumptions:**
- Critical to success is to continue co-development of actions and policy across system
 - Greater alignment can improve outcomes and unlock resources
 - Benefits of retrofit known
- 5.1.54.4. **Resources:** Project Manager and Project Officer(s) to carry out development and then facilitate delivery of improvement action but will require input from public sector policy officers
- People: Project Manager, Project officer(s)
 - Money: TBC
- 5.1.54.5. **Links:**
- May benefit from [action 4.2 A](#) being completed first as a policy group could be set up
 - Likely links with [action 2.2 A](#)
 - Potential pre-cursor to [action 1.2 D](#) to give rationale/ support for improvement actions
- 5.1.54.6. **Strategic alignment:**
- Direct beneficiaries: Local authorities, public health
 - Weakness 5: Collaboration between all stakeholders could complicate project oversight if governance, roles, and responsibilities aren't clearly defined, especially in the absence of a guiding strategy
 - Weakness 12: Policy environment and communication from government
 - Opportunity 9: Decentralise electricity grid and develop renewable heat networks

Opportunity 11: Engage health professionals and align to health and social care objectives

5.1.55. Action 4.3 B: Consider integrating retrofit targets into Local Plans (aligning with 2050 sustainability goals)

- 5.1.55.1. **Context:** A local plan outlines how an area will develop in the future and created by a local planning authority following consultation
- 5.1.55.2. **Approach:** Review existing Local Plans for retrofit inclusion, find best practice nationally, determine potential improvements, consult with relevant stakeholders,

implement improvement actions, considering relevant policy changes from central government and any upcoming local government reorganisation and its implications to align policies and plans with aligned retrofit targets.

5.1.55.3. **Assumptions:**

- Local Plans are a statutory instrument and so can put weight behind retrofit ambitions and influence building control

5.1.55.4. **Resources:** Project Manager and Project Officer(s) to carry out development and then facilitate delivery of improvement action but will require input and on-going support from planning officers

- People: Project Manager, Project officer(s)
- Money: TBC

5.1.55.5. **Links:**

- May benefit from [action 4.2 A](#) being completed first as a Planning group could be set up
- Links with [action 4.3 A](#)

5.1.55.6. **Strategic alignment:**

- Direct beneficiaries: Local authorities

Opportunity 9: Decentralise electricity grid and develop renewable heat network

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