



ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday, 11 June 2025

Time: 6.00pm,

Location: Council Chamber

Contact: Alex Marsh (01438) 242587

committees@atevenage.gov.uk

Members: Councillors: L Brady (Chair), A McGuinness (Vice-Chair), R Boyle, J Brown, F Chowdhury, A Gordon, C Parris, C Roopchand, A Wells, Wilkins and J Woods

AGENDA

PART 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS - 27 FEBRUARY, 11 MARCH & 20 MARCH 2025

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on Thursday 27 February, Tuesday 11 March and Thursday 20 March 2025.
3 – 18

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

To note the Committee's Terms of Reference as agreed at Annual Council on 22 May 2025.
19 – 20

4. CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDER AND EXTERNAL PARTNER RESPONSE TO THE SKILLS AGENDA REVIEW

To receive the Cabinet Portfolio Holder and External Partner response to the Committee's Skills Agenda review.
21 – 28

5. ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2025-26

To consider the Environment & Economy Select Committee's Work Programme for 2025-26.
29 – 36

6. DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT - WASTE & RECYCLING IN FLATS BLOCKS REVIEW

To receive the draft scoping document for the review of Waste & Recycling services in residential flat blocks.

37 – 40

7. ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER 2025

To consider the Environment & Economy Select Committee's Action Tracker for 2025 and for Members to indicate if they wish to receive an update on any previous reviews where they are not already covered in this year's work programme.

41 – 48

8. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

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

9. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

To consider the following motions –

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

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

10. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

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

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Thursday, 27 February 2025

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Rob Broom (Chair) (Chair), Andy McGuinness (Vice-Chair) (Vice Chair), Julie Ashley-Wren, Forhad Chowdhury, Alistair Gordon, Claire Parris, Ellie Plater CC, Nigel Williams and Jade Woods

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.00pm
End Time: 7.42pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Leanne Brady and Sarah Mead.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES - 14 JANUARY 2025

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Economy Select Committee be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 WASTE & RECYCLING PRESENTATION

The Chair introduced the Officers in attendance and provided an overview of Stevenage Borough Council's waste and recycling services, highlighting the team's dedication, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chair informed the Committee that the purpose of the presentation was to introduce waste and recycling, setting the stage for future scrutiny sessions.

Key Points from the Presentation:

Roles and Responsibilities: The Council served as the Waste Collection Authority, while Hertfordshire County Council oversaw waste disposal.

Statistics:

- 38,000 properties served, including 8,500 flats.
- 43 staff members (15 HGV drivers, 28 operatives).
- 495 trade customers.
- £807,000 income in 2023/24, with a net profit of £199,000.
- Staffing costs: £1.7 million.
- Net cost per property per week: £1.07.

Collection Arrangements:

- Gradual replacement of 240-litre refuse bins with 180-litre bins.
- Multiple recycling containers available upon request.
- Garden and food waste collected together in 240-litre brown bins.

Waste Processing:

- 75% of general waste sent to energy-from-waste plants.
- Recycling sent to paper mills and material recovery facilities.
- Over 30,000 tonnes of material processed in 2023/24.

Legislative Changes and Future Plans:

Simpler Recycling: Standardisation of recycling processes nationwide, aiming for a 65% recycling target by 2035.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR): Producers to fund packaging waste disposal, with councils receiving payments.

Deposit Return Scheme: Single-use plastic bottles and cans to carry a deposit charge from 2027.

Food Waste Project:**Implementation:**

- New service to be rolled out to trade customers in 2025 and households in 2026.
- Weekly food waste collections to be introduced.
- DEFRA funding allocated in three stages: Capital, Transitional, and Resource Funding.

Challenges and Solutions:

- Addressing odour control and pest issues in flats.
- Ensuring compliance with food waste storage regulations.
- Developing a comprehensive communications plan.

Members asked questions covering a wide range of topics, as set out below, along with the Officer responses:

Waste Travel Distance and Environmental Impact: Officers clarified that waste was sent to sites outside Hertfordshire due to the lack of local facilities. The County Council managed waste disposal contracts, and while new local facilities had been considered, none were currently planned.

Multiple Waste Destinations: Capacity limitations at different facilities necessitated multiple contracts for waste disposal across several locations.

Weekly Food Waste Collections: Officers explained that weekly collections aimed to minimise waste and prevent odour issues. DEFRA funding was available, but its

long-term sustainability remained uncertain.

Food Waste Recycling Rate: Officers did not have an exact figure as food waste was collected with garden waste. Previous analysis showed that only 64% of residents used their brown bin and approximately 35% of residual waste was food.

Garden Waste Disposal Methods: In-vessel composting (IVC) and windrow composting were used to process food and garden waste.

Environmental Impact of Kitchen Caddies: Officers confirmed that residents could use their existing containers to reduce unnecessary waste.

Public Street Bins for Food Waste: Officers acknowledged the potential benefits but stated it was not currently feasible due to resource constraints.

Contaminants in Recycling: The most common contaminant was food waste, followed by plastic bags. PET1 plastics were generally recyclable. Bin stickers were used to notify residents of contamination issues.

Retailer Role in Reducing Contamination: Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation aimed to improve packaging recyclability and implement a universal labelling system.

Residual Waste Figures: Figures represented total residual waste divided by the number of households.

Comparison with North Hertfordshire: North Hertfordshire's food waste collections and smaller refuse bins likely contributed to higher recycling rates.

Financial Implications: Stevenage generated income from recycling due to its separated collection system, whereas North Hertfordshire incurred additional costs for mixed recycling processing.

Contaminated Paper and Cardboard: Wet paper was dried and reprocessed at the Council's transfer station.

Neighbourhood Recycling Bring Banks: Enhancements funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Climate Change Community Fund grants aimed to reduce contamination and improve recycling rates.

Engagement with Younger Generation: School visits, assemblies, and re-establishing the Stevenage Green Network were planned to encourage sustainability.

The Chair thanked the Officers for their presentation and invited Members to discuss areas for detailed scrutiny. Members suggested flat blocks, bring banks, communications, and recycling rates.

A site visit to the Cavendish Road depot and observations of waste collections were suggested.

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

5 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Not required.

6 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Tuesday, 11 March 2025

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Rob Broom (Chair), Julie Ashley-Wren, Leanne Brady, Forhad Chowdhury, Alistair Gordon, Sarah Mead, Claire Parris, Nigel Williams and Jade Woods

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.00pm
End Time: 7.10pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andy McGuinness and Ellie Plater.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 CLIMATE CHANGE - SOCIAL HOUSING RETROFIT DECARBONISATION PROGRAMME

The Chair introduced the item by highlighting the purpose of the session, which was to provide an overview of the ongoing retrofit work being carried out by the Council on its housing stock. The Chair emphasised the dual benefits of this work, noting that it contributed to reducing carbon emissions while simultaneously lowering tenants' heating bills and improving the overall quality of housing. This was described as a "win-win" approach, beneficial both environmentally and financially for residents.

The discussion followed a recent site visit attended by the Chair, Councillors Woods and Gordon, and Council Officers, where they viewed renovated flat blocks in Bedwell. The Chair praised the extent and quality of the improvements and expressed hope that similar work could be continued, subject to identifying further funding opportunities. The retrofitted flats were presented as a strong example of what could be achieved in providing high-quality council housing.

The Chair advised that the evening's presentation would outline progress made to date on the retrofit programme and expressed the intention that the Committee's discussion would lead to constructive recommendations to support this ongoing work.

The Chair informed the Committee that Councillor Hollywell was in attendance in her capacity as Portfolio Holder for Housing and Housing Development, and Councillor Speller was also in attendance in his capacity as Portfolio Holder for Environment

and Performance.

The Chair invited officers to begin the presentation.

Officers delivered a presentation outlining the Council's work on improving the energy efficiency of its housing stock as part of its decarbonisation strategy. The presentation was structured around key topics as outlined below:

Energy Efficiency Goals:

Target: The Council aimed to achieve Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C for all social homes by 2030. This was in line with the government's expected consultation on requiring all social homes to reach EPC Band C by 2030.

Current Status: While a significant proportion of the Council's properties were already EPC Band C or above, over 2,000 homes were still rated EPC Band D or lower. These homes were the primary focus of current and future retrofit work.

Average SAP Rating: The average SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) rating across the housing stock stood at 69, which was slightly above the estimated UK average of 66.

Annual Carbon Emissions: The total annual carbon emissions from the housing stock were approximately 20,733 tonnes.

Data Management:

Systems Used: The Council employed Sava Intelligent Energy, integrated with the Keystone asset management system, to manage and model energy performance data.

Data Collection: Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) were gathered routinely through stock condition surveys and at the point of re-letting properties. Where EPCs were unavailable, data from completed improvement works, such as installations of new boilers, windows, and doors, was used to estimate energy performance.

Retrofit Strategy:

Approach: The Council followed a fabric-first approach, prioritising improvements such as loft and wall insulation, upgraded ventilation, and installation of efficient windows and doors. Floor insulation was not currently pursued due to its disruptive nature and cost-inefficiency in achieving EPC Band C.

Rationale: Improving the building fabric was essential to reducing heat loss and must be completed before other measures, such as renewable technologies, were considered. This approach aligned with national funding criteria, including the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF).

Improvement Plans:

EPC Band C Plan: The plan included all properties except 32 homes, which required further assessment to determine feasible improvement options.

Net Zero Plan: The estimated total cost to reach net zero carbon emissions was £168 million, in addition to the costs required to achieve EPC Band C.

Funding and Costs:

Estimated Cost: The broad estimate for achieving EPC Band C was approximately £20 million across 2,500 properties, equating to around £8,000 per property on average. Properties with lower starting EPC ratings typically incurred higher upgrade costs.

Funding Sources: Funding for achieving EPC Band C was included in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan. However, funding to reach net zero carbon was not currently included in the HRA Business Plan.

Completed and Ongoing Work:

Funding Secured: Over the past four years, the Council had secured £5.5 million in external grant funding, used to upgrade 359 homes under Local Authority Delivery LAD1B and Wave 1 of SHDF. These properties had now reached EPC Band C.

Current Projects: The current Wave 2 SHDF project was targeting 237 homes, including both flat blocks and street properties. All homes within this project would reach EPC Band C or higher, and in some cases, Band B.

Environmental Monitoring:

Technology: A small number of properties (approximately 40) were equipped with real-time environmental sensors. These devices monitored humidity, temperature, and heat loss, supporting early identification and intervention in damp and mould cases.

Benefits: The resident-facing version of the monitoring system included a smartphone app to help residents better manage ventilation and heating.

Resident Feedback:

Positive Response: Feedback collection was ongoing and had been overwhelmingly positive. Formal tracking would continue throughout the following year, particularly through the winter months, to assess the full impact on residents' comfort and energy use.

Support: Energy advice officers, trained through a specialised retrofit academy, assisted residents during and after the works, helping them understand and manage their upgraded systems.

Future Plans:

Wave 3 Funding: The Council had secured £3.8 million in funding for Wave 3, which included a focus on installing air source heat pumps in 10% of identified homes. This funding was part of a broader strategy to move towards full decarbonisation.

Challenges: Inflation, market fluctuations, and future funding availability were highlighted as significant challenges in completing all outstanding works by 2030.

Private Housing and Leaseholders:

Warm Homes Local Grant: The grant had secured £1.5 million to retrofit around 100 private properties over the next three years. This was a significant step forward in terms of progress compared to previous schemes.

Mixed-Tenure Properties: Addressing funding and participation challenges for leaseholders in mixed-tenure properties remained a challenge.

Throughout the presentation, Members asked questions covering a wide range of topics, as set out below, along with the Officer responses:

Average cost per property to achieve EPC Band C:

The estimated cost to achieve EPC Band C across 2,500 properties was approximately £20 million, equating to around £8,000 per property on average. However, the actual cost per property varied significantly depending on existing conditions and required measures. Properties with lower starting EPC ratings (e.g., EPC E) typically incurred higher upgrade costs, while those closer to the target (e.g., EPC D at 68 points) might only require minor, lower-cost interventions such as loft insulation.

Impact of retrofit work on biodiversity:

Concerns about the impact of retrofitting on wildlife, such as birds and bats living in older properties, were raised. This issue was suggested to be addressed outside the meeting, to explore potential solutions and mitigation strategies.

Adaptation of properties to summer heat:

Strategies for protecting properties against higher temperatures, wind, and rain were discussed. These included measures to improve insulation and ventilation, which not only enhanced energy efficiency but also helped maintain comfortable indoor temperatures during extreme weather conditions.

Challenges with mixed-tenure properties:

The funding framework was not designed to accommodate leaseholders, which presented challenges for mixed-tenure properties. Previous work allowed charging leaseholders for retrofitting due to prior Section 20 consultations. However, the next round of funding (Wave 3) would focus only on street properties, not flats, making it difficult to integrate private properties into the same project.

Skills shortage in retrofitting workforce:

Upskilling local workers and promoting green apprenticeships were critical steps to

address the potential skill shortages in the workforce for retrofitting projects. The Council was training its own workers, such as retrofitting advisors and coordinators, to reduce costs and ensure sufficient capacity for future work. Encouraging women and young people to enter the construction and retrofit industries was also highlighted as a priority.

Encouraging private developers to meet energy efficiency standards:

The Warm Homes Local Grant had secured £1.5 million for retrofitting around 100 private properties over the next three years. New climate policies under review included operationally net-zero or whole-life carbon net-zero targets for developers, depending on the scale of development. These policies were expected to be adopted by the end of the calendar year.

Impact of retrofitting on leaseholders:

Previous work allowed charging leaseholders for retrofitting due to prior Section 20 consultations. However, the funding framework is not initially designed to accommodate leaseholders, which remains a challenge, particularly for flats. The next round of funding (Wave 3) will focus only on street properties, not flats.

Low uptake of Home Upgrade Scheme:

The low uptake of the Home Upgrade Scheme was due to its stringent requirements. However, new funding options and expanded eligibility were expected to increase interest. Landlords could now receive full funding for the first property and partial funding for additional properties. The scheme now included three eligibility pathways, which should encourage greater participation from residents.

Support for tenants with heating issues:

Emphasis was placed on preventing issues like damp and mould through additional funding options. The Council was helping homes that weren't heated properly by suggesting additional funding options to prevent such issues. Real-time environmental sensors in properties helped identify and address heating issues early on.

3 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

4 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Not required.

5 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Thursday, 20 March 2025

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: Rob Broom (Chair), Andy McGuinness (Vice Chair),
Julie Ashley-Wren, Leanne Brady, Forhad Chowdhury,
Alistair Gordon, Claire Parris, Ellie Plater CC,
Nigel Williams and Jade Woods

Start / End Start Time: 6.00pm
Time: End Time: 7.45pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sarah Mead.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 UPDATE ON THE TREE & WOODLAND STRATEGY AND THE GREEN SPACE STRATEGY

The Chair introduced the item by providing an overview of the evening's topics, focusing on updates to the Tree & Woodland Strategy and the Green Spaces Strategy. They emphasised the importance of green spaces, not only for their aesthetic value but also for their crucial role in supporting physical and mental health, biodiversity, and carbon capture in urban environments.

The Chair framed the session as a discussion about the management of woodlands and green spaces, with an emphasis on community engagement and collaboration with stakeholders to enhance and maintain these areas, underscoring the importance of involving the community in the planning and management of green spaces and highlighting the benefits of collaborative efforts in achieving sustainable and effective outcomes.

The Chair invited officers to present to the Committee.

The Environmental Policy and Development Manager advised the Committee public engagement had included online consultations and in-person sessions, receiving around 400 responses. The strategies would undergo revisions in April and May 2025, aiming for Cabinet approval in June 2025, with final publication in Summer 2025.

The Arboriculture and Conservation Manager outlined the draft 10-year plan for the Tree & Woodland Strategy, reflecting best practices and stakeholder consultations.

Key highlights of the presentation included:

Benefits of trees:

Wildlife, climate change mitigation, health.

Success story:

Creation of three micro woodlands with a £36,000 grant from Defra.

Miyawaki Woodland Project:

High initial survival rate of trees, with natural die-off over time.

Strategy themes: expanding canopy cover, volunteer programs, management plans, biodiversity, and climate resilience.

Historic Environment and Tree Preservation:

Importance of protecting old trees, especially oak and ash.

Replacement policy for tree removal: 3:1 ratio, potentially increasing to 21:1 for significant trees.

Tree Selection and Maintenance:

Careful selection of tree species to avoid infrastructure damage.

Review process: 10-year strategy reviewed every five years, with interim updates every two years.

Members asked a number of questions, covering a number of topics, which were answered by Officers as set out below:

Resource Constraints:

Officers acknowledged historical budget cuts but noted recent funding successes and hopes for future funding.

Tree interception rates and their impact on the urban water cycle:

Officers advised they would follow up on the technical question.

Tree Planting in Streets:

Officers advised of careful planning and species selection to minimise issues.

Balancing Tree Planting and Park Space:

Officers emphasised the need to balance tree planting with future park space demands for sports, noting the importance of shaded spaces in parks.

Tree Removal for Energy Generation:

Officers reassured that trees were not removed solely for energy generation and emphasised planting fast-growing species for biomass.

Tree Replacement in Developments:

Officers explained the replacement policy and ongoing challenges with developers.

Wildfire Risk:

A Member commented about increasing wildfire risk and the need for specific action plans. Officers acknowledged the need for future planning and collaboration with the county council.

Community Projects with Felled Trees:

A Member inquired about reusing felled tree material for community projects. Officers mentioned providing wood chip or logs to schools and community groups.

Ecological Value of Trees:

Members emphasised considering the ecological value of trees when planting new ones.

Officers discussed diversifying tree species to enhance ecological benefits.

The Chair thanked the Arboriculture and Conservation Manager for their presentation and invited the Environmental Policy and Development Manager to address the Committee.

The Environmental Policy and Development Manager presented an overview of the draft Green Spaces Strategy, which outlined a 10-year plan for the development, management, and enhancement of Stevenage's green spaces. The presentation reflected the outcomes of the Winter 2023 public consultation and aligned with the approach taken in the Tree and Woodland Strategy. Key highlights of the presentation included:

Consultation Insights:

81% of respondents rated Stevenage's green spaces as good or excellent, though this dropped to 55% among younger people.

Top valued features included trees, cleanliness, and wildlife-friendly areas.

Concerns raised included safety at night, loss of green space to development, and the importance of maintaining any new facilities.

Strategic Themes and Actions:

Our Community: Focused on accessibility, improved communication and signage, stakeholder consultation, and developing a suite of safety measures in partnership with relevant agencies.

Our Environment: Aimed to enhance biodiversity, protect habitats, and work with partners to improve waterways and nature areas.

Our Spaces: Emphasised inclusive play, health and well-being through varied physical activity opportunities, maintenance standards, and increased partnership working to expand provision and usage.

Future Opportunities:

Proposals included exploring a multi-use wheeled sports facility and supporting inclusive design for children and young people with disabilities.

The “Share with Care” principle was noted as a possible solution for shared pedestrian and cyclist routes, albeit with recognition of potential conflicts.

Implementation Considerations:

While 63% of consultation respondents supported the proposed actions, some requested shorter timescales. The strategy remains ambitious yet realistic, taking into account available resources.

The Environmental Policy and Development Manager concluded with a commitment to regular review and adaptation of the strategy to reflect evolving community needs and funding availability.

Members asked a number of questions, covering a number of topics, which were answered by Officers as set out below:

Resident Engagement and Communication:

It was acknowledged that community engagement in parks required improvement, particularly in reaching disengaged or hard-to-reach groups.

Suggestions included making better use of community centres, partnerships with the voluntary sector, and refining social media targeting.

Officers emphasised that current engagement methods (e.g. in-person events, online surveys, children's artwork) had some success but further work was needed.

Members commented about fragmented communication and the need for consistent updates on what actions have resulted from resident feedback.

Officers agreed on the need to develop a more robust and inclusive communication strategy going forward.

Green Space Development and Facilities:

Members praised the potential of Stevenage parks and suggested incorporating maps and visuals in final documents to showcase facilities and improve public awareness.

Specific reference was made to Chells Park, where Members commented on a lack of pathways limits usability. Officers confirmed that circular and accessible walkways were being explored.

Funding and Commercial Opportunities:

The Committee discussed exploring diverse funding avenues:

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) was highlighted, with Stevenage noted as the first authority in Hertfordshire to receive and implement BNG funding.

Additional funding was expected from West of Stevenage development (approx. £2.5 million).

External bids and partnerships (e.g. franchising mobile cafes) were also noted as promising routes.

Monetisation ideas such as naming rights for parks or commercial activities were raised. Officers advised that these required careful balance to protect public interests.

Members commented on inequity in enforcement of commercial licensing (e.g. outdoor fitness groups). Officers acknowledged the need to distinguish between small local operators and larger commercial entities and agreed to review the current licensing framework.

Toilets and Amenities

Access to toilet facilities was cited as a key factor in encouraging longer and more inclusive use of parks.

Officers recognised the issue and agreed it should be a priority, noting both cost and antisocial behaviour as challenges.

Alternative models were discussed, including shared-use commercial facilities (e.g. café with public toilets) as seen in other authorities.

Future Opportunities for Scrutiny

The Committee proposed a future review topic focused on enhancing park facilities through commercial partnerships and infrastructure development, using examples such as Stanborough Lakes for comparison.

It was suggested that Select Committee scrutiny could support strategic planning and public value enhancement.

The Chair thanked the Environmental Policy and Development Manager for their presentation.

3 URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

4 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Not required.

5 URGENT PART II BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR

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ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE

1. Membership - 11 (not Members of the Cabinet)
2. Quorum - 4
3. Terms of Reference
 - 3.1 To determine a Scrutiny work programme to examine the spending, policies and administration of the Council's services within the purview of the Assistant Director (Regeneration), Assistant Director (Stevenage Direct Services (except caretaking and repairs)), Assistant Director (Housing Development) and Assistant Director (Planning & Regulatory) and relationships with partners and external agencies involved with these services, together with a timetable and method of study for each topic.
 - 3.2 To determine formal recommendations in relation to scrutiny studies undertaken for reporting to the Council, Cabinet, other Committees, Officers and / or partner agencies as appropriate.
 - 3.3 To review the Forward Plan of Key Decisions in relation to services within the Committee's remit, considering if it wishes to make any input to policy issues contained in the Plan and if so, how. In undertaking this work the Committee may call upon the relevant Cabinet Member and/or the Strategic Director to provide a briefing or take part in discussion.
 - 3.4 To consider any policy issues within the remit of the Select Committee referred by the Cabinet and raising any other issues it considers appropriate.
 - 3.5 To work with the Community Select Committee or the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, as appropriate when considering cross-cutting scrutiny studies and policy development when both Committees have so agreed.
 - 3.6 To consider matters referred to the Committee under the procedure for the Councillor Call for Action in relation to matters within the purview of the Assistant Director Stevenage Direct Services and Assistant Director Planning and Regulation.
 - 3.7 In conjunction with the Community Select Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, responsibility for the on-going development of the Policy Development and Scrutiny function of the Council.
 - 3.8 To report to the Cabinet, other committees or Council, as appropriate.

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<p align="center"><u>Cabinet Member & Partners Response to Environment & Economy Select Committee review of the local Skills Agenda Recommendations and final report</u></p>	
<p align="center">Date Recommendations of final report agreed by Environment & Economy Select Committee on 14 January 2025:</p> <p align="center">(Circulated to Cabinet Member and external partners 24 February 2025*)</p> <p>*Circulation delayed due to rewriting of recommendations</p>	
<p align="center">Date responses should be made by:</p> <p align="center">Cabinet and partners responses should be received by 25 April 2025</p>	
Recommendations:	Executive & Partner Response:
<p><u>Expansion of Stevenage Works</u></p> <p><u>Recommendation 1 – (i) Expansion of Stevenage Works</u> - It is recommended that the Council be encouraged to expand Stevenage Works beyond construction into the health and social care sectors. (ii) <u>Expansion of Stevenage Works into “Green Construction” Solar and air source heat pump technology</u> - It is recommended that the Council be encouraged to expand Stevenage Works into a third iteration beyond health and social care sectors into Green Technologies.</p>	<p><i>Response supported by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski, Investment Support Grant Manager, Greta Gardiner and Cabinet Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Economy, Skills & Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe:</i></p> <p><i>Stevenage Works has proven to be an invaluable initiative in providing apprenticeships and job experience in the construction sector. By leveraging the numerous building developments in Stevenage including the Council’s extensive regeneration projects — including town centre redevelopment, housing development, and the maintenance of council-owned properties — which include the Stevenage Works has successfully created opportunities for residents to gain vital industry experience.</i></p>

<p>Action: SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski.</p>	<p><i>Recognising the importance of broadening the scope of Stevenage Works, the Council is actively working to expand into the health and social care sectors. This will be a significant workstream over the 2025/26 period, ensuring that Stevenage Works continues to meet the needs of a rapidly evolving workforce and supports residents in accessing stable, rewarding careers.</i></p> <p><i>With respect to Green Construction, the Council acknowledges the growing importance of sustainable building technologies, including solar and air source heat pump technology. However, rather than establishing a separate workstream, these elements are already being embedded within the existing construction focus of Stevenage Works. Given the increasing adoption of green construction techniques across the industry, we see this as an organic evolution rather than a distinct third iteration of the initiative. We appreciate the committee's insights on this matter and will continue to ensure that sustainability remains a core component of our construction training programmes.</i></p>
<p><u>Recommendation 2 – Upskilling</u> - It is recommended that all partners including the DWP, Citizens Advice, Step2Skills, the Council and SMEs and larger employers should be encouraged to do this. Efforts from all partners would be needed to help lower skilled individuals obtain the skills they need to access higher skilled and higher paid roles which would directly tackle the problems associated with insecure employment from low-skilled, low-paid work, especially affecting a cohort of people aged in their late 20s to early 40s who still had decades left in the workforce.</p> <p>Action: SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski to lead on this and reach out to partners.</p>	<p><i>Response for SBC supported by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski and Cabinet Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Economy, Skills & Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe:</i></p> <p><i>Addressing skills gaps across different age groups is a central focus of the Council's workforce development strategy. The Stevenage Works Skills Framework provides a structured approach to supporting three primary cohorts: young people entering the workforce, adults who are currently unemployed, and adults in employment seeking to upskill or transition into new career pathways.</i></p> <p><i>Through our allocation of the UK Shared Prosperity fund we have been working in partnership with Hertfordshire Futures over the last three years. This delivery model has allowed us to act as commissioners in our</i></p>

	<p><i>relationship with Hertfordshire Futures, allowing us to tailor the programme to local needs.</i></p> <p><i>This support is aimed at businesses and residents with programmes offering training opportunities that can be accessed by the 20s to 40s cohort referenced in the recommendation.</i></p> <p><i>Government has confirmed a continuation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for the 2025/26 financial year and we have agreed a further commitment to continue a suite of interventions in partnership with Hertfordshire Futures.</i></p>
<p><u>Recommendation 3 – Promotion of apprenticeships supporting nursery childcare for the local economy</u> - Apprenticeships in nursery childcare would both support parents in the local economy with the provision of more childcare and would support the apprentice to learn new skills and earn an income helping towards living costs whilst being trained. Members are aware that this is a national policy area which the Council can lobby on but has no direct control over.</p> <p>Action: SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski to liaise with external partners in the childcare sector.</p>	<p><i>Response for SBC supported by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski and Cabinet Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Economy, Skills & Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe:</i></p> <p><i>The Council acknowledges the importance of increasing the availability of apprenticeships in nursery childcare, both to support working parents and to provide meaningful career opportunities for apprentices. While national policy plays a significant role in shaping this sector, we are committed to exploring local opportunities in collaboration with North Herts College and other training providers.</i></p> <p><i>As highlighted during the committee's review, North Herts College already offers flexible vocational career programmes and is responsive to local employer demands. The Council will engage with the college to determine how existing training provisions can be expanded to support the childcare sector and explore how apprenticeship programmes in this area can be effectively promoted within the local community.</i></p>
<p><u>Recommendation 4 – Challenge to HCC & Local Children Centres regarding providing clear accessible information on what funding is available for families for childcare</u> – The funding position is currently confusing to parents so clarity would help in this area.</p>	<p><i>Response from HCC Children's Services & Local Children Centres:</i></p>

<p>Action: HCC Children's Services & Local Children Centres</p>	
<p><u>Recommendation 5 – Promotion of work experience opportunities</u> - It is recommended that (i) the Council's Business Relationship Manager, Mena Caldbeck and the Enterprise & Skills Partnership Officer works with colleagues and local employers to promote opportunities for young people to connect with those local employers for work experience; (ii) That SBC offers a range of work experience opportunities for young people across the organisation, and that these are offered consistently every year to local schools and colleges; and (iii) That SBC social media is used to share local job fares, open days, and work experience opportunities.</p> <p>Action: SBC Business Relationship Manager, Mena Caldbeck SBC Enterprise & Skills Partnership Officer, Carol Richardson</p>	<p><i>Response from the SBC Business Relationship Manager, Mena Caldbeck and Enterprise & Skills Partnership Officer, Carol Richardson:</i></p> <p><i>The Council has a strong track record of supporting work experience initiatives and is committed to expanding these opportunities further. One of our flagship initiatives is Generation Stevenage, an annual employment and skills event run in partnership with Hertfordshire Futures. This is part of a series of 'Generation' events throughout Hertfordshire. This event connects young people with local employers, providing them with first-hand insight into career pathways across various industries.</i></p> <p><i>In 2025, the Council will enhance its direct work experience offerings, collaborating with four local schools—Barnwell, Nobel, Marriotts, and St John Henry Newman—to facilitate placements for both Year 10 and Year 12 students. We see this as an essential step in demonstrating our leadership in promoting work experience and encouraging businesses to follow suit.</i></p> <p><i>Social media remains an important tool in engaging young people with work experience and job opportunities. The Council will work closely with its communications team and educational partners to ensure that information about work experience placements, job fairs, and career development programmes reaches the widest possible audience through platforms preferred by young people.</i></p>
<p><u>Recommendation 6 – Promotion of success stories from Stevenage</u>- It is recommended that members and officers consider ways to promote success stories from the local community, celebrating successes by the college and schools where students show personal development or attain excellent skills outcomes, as they in turn become the role models for successive years of students, i.e. 'Mayors Award for</p>	<p><i>Response from SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski and the Leader on behalf of the civic office of the Mayor:</i></p> <p><i>Celebrating the achievements of local individuals is an effective way to inspire future generations and showcase the opportunities available in Stevenage. The Council already recognises outstanding achievements</i></p>

<p>Achievement'. This could be focused on those who have overcome challenges to achieve personal development, rather than focusing on the high academic achievers who traditionally already receive the recognition.</p> <p>Action: SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski to liaise with the Leader</p>	<p><i>through the Stevenage Together Awards, which include the Rising Star category.</i></p> <p><i>In response to this recommendation, we propose either enhancing the existing award or introducing a new accolade focused on individuals who have overcome challenges to achieve personal and professional growth. This initiative would align with the Council's commitment to supporting those from diverse backgrounds and promoting social mobility.</i></p> <p><i>To further elevate this recognition, we suggest that this award be overseen by the Youth Mayor, adding a new layer of engagement and credibility among young residents.</i></p>
<p><u>Recommendation 7 – Promotion of a clear local careers advice service</u> (i) Work with partners towards a credible local careers advice service. Establishing a clear source of objective careers information which is available to pupils, students, and those wanting to re-train, or change direction. That a local link within the National Careers service is readily available, and that this reflects national standards in career entry qualifications, but also what is available in Stevenage, and wider Hertfordshire; and (ii) Members proposed consideration of the creation of a centralised information hub on the council's website to provide accessible details about job opportunities, training, apprenticeships, and other resources. This platform would also allow businesses, schools, and colleges to contribute information.</p> <p>Action: SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski SBC Enterprise & Skills Partnership Officer, Carol Richardson – regarding links to the Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal (HOP).</p>	<p><i>Response from Response for SBC supported by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski SBC Enterprise & Skills Partnership Officer, Carol Richardson and Cabinet Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Economy, Skills & Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe:</i></p> <p><i>The Council acknowledges the need for clear and accessible careers advice and supports the continued development of the Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal. This platform, managed by Hertfordshire Futures, already serves as a key resource for schools, students, and jobseekers in the region. Rather than duplicating efforts, in response to this recommendation we would aim to enhance the visibility of this resource by improving signposting on the Council's website and through our outreach efforts.</i></p> <p><i>Additionally, we are exploring opportunities to expand the Stevenage-specific content on the portal, ensuring that residents can easily access information about local training programmes, apprenticeships, and job opportunities. This builds on work undertaken through the council's successful funding application to the Community Renewal Fund in 2022. As part of this we led on a countywide initiative to increase visibility of Public Sector careers on the HOP platform.</i></p>

<p><u>Recommendation 8 – Commendation to North Herts College and Barnwell School for their work in promoting skills</u> - It is recommended that North Herts College and Barnwell School be commended for their work to promote skills to their students (Noting that for context the review only interviewed these two academic institutions, but Members are aware of other good practice towards enhancing skills that is happening in the area). North Herts College by providing Industry standard facilities and equipment the college are equipping young people with the skills they need to move straight into higher level courses, apprenticeships or employment and are responding to what employers have been saying for some time that young entrants don't have the necessary skills to be work ready. Barnwell School are offering an excellent peer to peer mentoring to ready pupils for university applications and interviews as well as collaboration with the University of Hertfordshire through their "zero gravity" and "Brilliant Club" initiatives.</p> <p>Action: SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski to reach out to partners at NH College and Barnwell School.</p>	<p><i>Response supported by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski to NH College and Barnwell School</i></p> <p><i>The Council recognises the exceptional work of North Herts College and Barnwell School in equipping students with essential skills for their future careers. Both institutions play a pivotal role in the local skills landscape and have been instrumental in working in partnership with us to augment local skills provision.</i></p> <p><i>As part of our commitment to acknowledging their contributions, we will formally commend both institutions and work with them to develop case studies highlighting their impactful programmes. These case studies will be shared across our social media platforms to inspire students and showcase best practices in skills development.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 9 – Devolved, local skills strategy.</p> <p>'One size fits all' solutions towards skills are ineffective. Localised strategies are better suited to address skill shortages.</p> <p>(i) That SBC along with its partners in the broadest sense (Herts Growth Board, Job Centre Plus, North Herts College, Local Secondary Schools, Local Employers) continue to work to develop and genuine, local skills strategy, which reflect local skills opportunities and challenges within the local economy; (ii) partners consider the provision of targeted support to engage those in insecure roles, providing a second-chance for those already in work but looking to transition to more fulfilling and secure career opportunities.</p>	<p><i>Response supported by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski and Cabinet Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Economy, Skills & Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe:</i></p> <p><i>The Stevenage Works Skills Framework, approved by Cabinet in February 2024, serves as a guiding document for the Council's localised approach to skills development. Alongside this, key documents such as the Stevenage Town Investment Plan, Stevenage 2040 Investment Prospectus, and the emerging Hertfordshire Economy Strategy, ensures a cohesive and locally relevant approach to skills development that links into the council's broader strategic ambitions and provides a local iteration of the approach being adopted across the county.</i></p>

<p>Action: SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski</p>	<p><i>This is further cemented by the inclusion of Enterprise & Skills as a headline priority as part of the Making Stevenage Even Better Corporate Plan (2024-27) which highlights the importance to the administration, despite the statutory responsibility for Skills provision resting with the County Council. The need for a localised approach that best responds to the needs of Stevenage residents was a primary driving factor behind this inclusion and gives officers a clear mandate to galvanise local partners</i></p> <p><i>Rather than being static document, the framework contains an action plan which guides an ambitious, ongoing programme of activities aimed at addressing local skills shortages and improving employment opportunities for residents. In the continued development of the Skills Framework we will draw in the committee's recommendations, especially those referenced here and recommendation 2 around Upskilling.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 10: Collaboration with Employers to Promote Employment Opportunities</p> <p>The Council continues to engage and build on the widest possible cohort for opportunities, continuing to engage with employers in the aerospace and pharmaceutical industries and recruiters in Stevenage, to ensure high-skilled job opportunities are widely advertised and accessible to local residents. Many high-paid, high-skilled jobs are not visible to job seekers, as they are often gatekept by recruiters. The review proposes working with companies and recruiters to address this because collaboration with local businesses was essential to bridge the gap and increase awareness of available opportunities.</p> <p>Action: SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski.</p>	<p><i>Response supported by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski and Cabinet Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Economy, Skills & Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe:</i></p> <p><i>The Council continues to work closely with local employers, including those in the aerospace and pharmaceutical industries, to ensure that high-quality job opportunities are accessible to Stevenage residents.</i></p> <p><i>As previously referenced, the Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal remains the primary jobs board supported by the Council, and we actively work with businesses to increase their visibility and engagement with the platform.</i></p> <p><i>The Council is optimistic about future employment prospects in Stevenage with many local businesses, particularly as they scale up operations, require skilled technicians and mid-level specialists providing more accessible opportunities to high paying meaningful work to our residents.</i></p>

A specific example of this, is Autolus, who have just moved into premises in the town centre, and who have established an apprenticeship programme through North Herts College.

Such initiatives provide highly skilled technical roles that do not require traditional university degrees, broadening access to stable and well-paying careers. We will continue to foster employer collaboration to ensure that more residents benefit from these opportunities.

Lead AD	AD (Stevenage Direct Services) Steve Dupoy
Deputy	AD (Planning & Regulation) Alex Robinson
Chair	Cllr Leanne Brady
Vice-Chair	Cllr Andy McGuinness

Environment & Economy Select Committee Scrutiny Work Programme 2025-26

(Including main review items, one-off meetings, review revisits and policy development items)

The work programme is the main guide to the Committee's work throughout the year. However individual items can be raised at Committee meetings and consider as one-off items on a case-by-case basis at future meetings.

Scrutiny Review items 2025/26: (Main review, one-off updates, briefings etc.)	Strategic Director, Assistant Director, Lead Officer(s) & Portfolio Holder	Provisional meeting date(s) identified	Other details: i.e. (i) Number of meetings item can be covered in? (ii) Whether scoping required? (iii) Expectation/ style of meeting & (iv) other details	Comments by Members when the issue was raised/agreed and or from the lead Assistant Director	Chair/ Vice-Chair Preference & Priority
(Main review) Waste & Recycling	Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment, Cllr Rob Broom, AD Stevenage Direct Services, Steve Dupoy, Operations	Date 2025 (11 June 2025)– Draft Scoping Document considered by the Committee. Date – 8 July 2025 - Officer presentation on flat bock recycling	(i) meetings to be completed. (ii) A full scope would need to be completed. (iii) Interviews and evidence gathering	Following on from the 27 Feb 2025 E&E meeting, which introduced the waste and recycling service and challenges, Members agreed to explore the service in-depth around a specific issue such as improving the offer to the Council's 74 <u>flat blocks</u> and	The Chair has said that this is a high priority. Possible witnesses could be with a local authority waste collector service that has a

Scrutiny Review items 2025/26: (Main review, one-off updates, briefings etc.)	Strategic Director, Assistant Director, Lead Officer(s) & Portfolio Holder	Provisional meeting date(s) identified	Other details: i.e. (i) Number of meetings item can be covered in? (ii) Whether scoping required? (iii) Expectation/ style of meeting & (iv) other details	Comments by Members when the issue was raised/agreed and or from the lead Assistant Director	Chair/ Vice-Chair Preference & Priority
	Manager SDS, Kris White.	<p>Date –Sep 2025 witness interviews – with external waste professional from a Herts authority.</p> <p>Date – Oct 2025 witness interviews.</p> <p>Site Visits – Date (July – proposed Mon 21 July) Visit examples of flat blocks (good and bad) Refuse & Recycling Freighter & Date (Week commencing 8 September) Visit Refuse site</p> <p>Date – Nov 2025 Final</p>		<p><u>improved comms for new service offers such as food caddies.</u></p> <p>It was also agreed that Members undertake site visits to the Cavendish Road Depot and "ride-alongs" with collection crews to gain firsthand insight into operations.</p>	<p>good reputation for collecting in flat blocks, to see what learning they can share.</p> <p>WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) Global Environmental Action NGO) or Trade body/LGA</p> <p>HCC – as the waste processing authority for waste collected by SBC.</p>

Scrutiny Review items 2025/26: (Main review, one-off updates, briefings etc.)	Strategic Director, Assistant Director, Lead Officer(s) & Portfolio Holder	Provisional meeting date(s) identified	Other details: i.e. (i) Number of meetings item can be covered in? (ii) Whether scoping required? (iii) Expectation/ style of meeting & (iv) other details	Comments by Members when the issue was raised/agreed and or from the lead Assistant Director	Chair/ Vice-Chair Preference & Priority
		Interviews/Emerging Recommendations. Date- Dec 2025 Final report & recommendations of the review			
(Update) Ongoing monitoring/watching brief on the Climate Emergency	Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment, Cllr Rob Broom, AD Planning and Regulatory, Alex Robinson, Head of Climate Action, Fabian Oyarzun.	2 sessions: (i) Nov 2025 (ii) March 2026	(i) This would take two meetings to be completed. (ii) No scope required. (iii) Interviews with Executive Portfolio Holder for the Environment, Cllr S Speller & Head of Climate Action & AD	E&E should continue with 2 sessions during the year in Oct/Nov to coincide with the Annual Climate Change update to Council and in March to drill down on some specific measures. The Chair will consider a focus for a deep dive around a specific focus for the March 2026 meeting.	The Chair has stated this continues to be a high priority area for the Committee to monitor.
(One-off performance review meeting) Enforcement of fly-tipping	Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment Cllr Rob Broom.	To be advised – could be June or July 2025.	One meeting. (ii) a simple scope would be required. (iii) Interview with AD Alex Robinson	Members have agreed for the Committee to allocate a meeting on enforcement-focusing on enforcement against fly-tipping, with calls	The Chair is looking for a focus to help:

Scrutiny Review items 2025/26: (Main review, one-off updates, briefings etc.)	Strategic Director, Assistant Director, Lead Officer(s) & Portfolio Holder	Provisional meeting date(s) identified	Other details: i.e. (i) Number of meetings item can be covered in? (ii) Whether scoping required? (iii) Expectation/ style of meeting & (iv) other details	Comments by Members when the issue was raised/agreed and or from the lead Assistant Director	Chair/ Vice-Chair Preference & Priority
	<p>Fly tipping lead – AD Stevenage Direct Services Steve Dupoy.</p> <p>Enforcement covered by the Neighbourhoods Community Safety Team, Kerry Clifford AD Housing & Neighbourhoods.</p>		(enforcement) & AD Steve Dupoy (clean up) and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment, Cllr Rob Broom.	for stronger responses and follow-ups to reduce incidents and costs.	<p>-provide a better focus of the service</p> <p>-come up with practical ways to improve the service</p> <p>-raise the awareness of the Household Waste & Recycling Centres (Stevenage – Caxton Way)</p> <p>-Take up of bulky waste – is the price point and offer right?</p>
(One off presentation leading to a further session)	Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment, Cllr Rob Broom, AD	Initial introductory session /presentation, leading to a further detailed session. This		Transport Accessibility - Members have suggested incorporating issues with car park availability, especially for	The Chair suggested a holistic review of transportation,

Scrutiny Review items 2025/26: (Main review, one-off updates, briefings etc.)	Strategic Director, Assistant Director, Lead Officer(s) & Portfolio Holder	Provisional meeting date(s) identified	Other details: i.e. (i) Number of meetings item can be covered in? (ii) Whether scoping required? (iii) Expectation/ style of meeting & (iv) other details	Comments by Members when the issue was raised/agreed and or from the lead Assistant Director	Chair/ Vice-Chair Preference & Priority
Focus on Active Travel & Accessibility re Transport & the Public Realm	Regeneration, Dave Wells – (other lead officers?) HCC Public Health lead.	could be considered earlier in the work programme (end of the Civic Year) ahead of the main review on Refuse & Recycling depending on the operational needs of Stevenage Direct Services.		<p>disabled parking, and the negative impact on accessibility for individuals with mobility challenges.</p> <p>Other accessibility issues for disabled persons including problems with the lift at Stevenage Station.</p> <p>Accessibility in the Public Realm - Members would like to address neurodiversity by creating autism-friendly spaces, better signposting, and quiet zones to support a less overwhelming shopping experience.</p> <p>Members raised issues with covered walkways being repurposed by businesses, making them less accessible, and the general lack of</p>	<p>including cycling, pedestrian routes, and parking strategies, while addressing the impacts of reduced car parks and encouraging modal shifts to more sustainable options.</p> <p>The Chair suggested that the work should focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What is the statutory responsibility -Signage, seating, ramps, lighting. -Autism & Dementia Friendly

Scrutiny Review items 2025/26: (Main review, one-off updates, briefings etc.)	Strategic Director, Assistant Director, Lead Officer(s) & Portfolio Holder	Provisional meeting date(s) identified	Other details: i.e. (i) Number of meetings item can be covered in? (ii) Whether scoping required? (iii) Expectation/ style of meeting & (iv) other details	Comments by Members when the issue was raised/agreed and or from the lead Assistant Director	Chair/ Vice-Chair Preference & Priority
				<p>cohesive design for accessibility in public areas.</p> <p>Cycling and Active Travel - Members discussed the need to revisit the 2019 cycling and pedestrian strategy in light of current needs and priorities. There were suggestions to incorporate colour-coded signage on cycleways and walkways to encourage active travel and make navigation easier and more engaging.</p> <p>Update on take up of Berol Bikes.</p>	<p>Hear about the plans for the public gateway.</p> <p>Gather witnesses from disabled groups.</p>

Monitoring of Previous Reviews Recommendations/Actions							
Scrutiny Items:	Provisional meeting date(s) identified	Number of meetings item can be covered in?	Expectation/ Style of meeting/ date	Scoping details (Whether full scope or simple scope required)	Other details	Comment by lead Assistant Director/ Deputy	Complete ✓ ✕
Consider the Committee's Action Tracker	June/July 2025 11 June 2025.	One meeting	Members comment on the document – which may lead to further monitoring	No scope required			

Any monitoring of previous reviews will be agreed when the Committee considers the action tracker at its meeting on 11 June 2025.

Policy Development Items:	Strategic Director, Assistant Director, Lead Officer(s) & Portfolio Holder	Provisional meeting date(s) identified	Number of meetings item can be covered in?	Expectation/Style of meeting	Scoping details (Whether full scope or simple scope)	Other details	Comment by lead Assistant Director/ Deputy
(One-off pre-scrutiny policy development) Updates on the development of Green Space	Green Spaces & Environmental Performance Manager, Julia Hill, Arboriculture &	Following the pre-scrutiny policy development meeting in March 2025 it was suggested	1 site visit	Site visit		Following the site visit notes will be circulated to E&E & the Cabinet Portfolio Holder focusing on issues for	

Policy Development Items:	Strategic Director, Assistant Director, Lead Officer(s) & Portfolio Holder	Provisional meeting date(s) identified	Number of meetings item can be covered in?	Expectation/Style of meeting	Scoping details (Whether full scope or simple scope)	Other details	Comment by lead Assistant Director/ Deputy
Strategies – Parks & Open Spaces	Conservation Manager, Cristian Pinta, Exec Portfolio Holder for Environment, Rob Broom	that E&E Members may wish to carry out a site visit to Stanborough Lakes in Welywn Garden City to see what a neighbouring authority is offering re green spaces. Date to be advised.				development at Fairlands Valley Park and the towns other green spaces.	

DRAFT

Template Scoping Document

<u>Environment & Economy Select Committee</u>	
<u>Scrutiny Review Title:</u>	Scrutiny of Waste & Recycling – Flat Block Recycling
<u>Background issues</u> to review – rationale for scrutinising this issue:	Members considered a presentation on the Stevenage's Waste & Recycling Service at a meeting of the E&E Select Committee on 27 February 2025, and the Committee agreed at its meeting on 14 January 2025 to include this theme in the Committee's Work Programme for 2025-26.
Is this issue covered by Corporate Plans?	Yes, this is a core strand of the Council's Corporate Plan – Future Town Future Council – Clean, Green, Safe and Thriving Town
<u>Focus of the review:</u> (State what the review focus will be)	<p>The Committee held a session on Stevenage's Waste & Recycling Service at the Committee's meeting on 27 February 2025. Following this session Members agreed that there should be a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• flat blocks• recycling bring banks• communications• recycling rates
<u>Timing issues:</u> Are there any timing constraints to when the review can be carried out?	
The Committee will meet on (provide <u>dates</u> if known):	<p>Dates: Day/Month/Time/Venue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 11 June 2025 – Draft Scoping Document considered by the Committee.• 8 July – Presentation to the Committee by SDS officers• 14 July or 21 July – Site visits to flat blocks and bring site.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W/C 8 September – An opportunity for Committee members to visit the depot and take part in a ride-a-long with the front-line teams. • September / October – witness interview(s) - TBC • November – Final witness interviews/Draft Report & Recommendations - (either 3 or 11 Nov) • December – Final Report & Recommendations - (either 9 or 11 Dec)
<u>SBC Leads</u> (list the Executive Portfolio Holders and SD's Heads of Service who should appear as witnesses):	<p><i>Officers have suggested the following people:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cllr Rob Broom, Portfolio Holder, Environment</i> • <i>Steve Dupoy, AD Stevenage Direct Services</i> • <i>Kris White, Stevenage Direct Operations Manager</i> • <i>Colin Littlechild – Assistant Operations Manager</i> • <i>Claire Nicholls – Project Manager – Waste</i> • <i>Claire Murrell - Environmental Development Officer</i>
Any <u>other witnesses</u> (external persons/critical friend)?:	<p>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting. <i>Possible options identified by officers as witnesses and evidence base:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>An officer from a neighbouring authority who are a social housing stock holding authority and has experience of introducing recycling in flat blocks.</i>
<u>Allocation of lead Members</u> on specific individual issues/questions: Any other Questions Members wish to cover:	<p>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting.</p> <p>Members will undertake their own desktop and fact-finding research and ask questions on the following areas (list the issues to address during the interviews):</p> <p><i>To be identified</i></p>
<u>Site visits and evidence gathering in the Community</u>	A site visit is arranged for July and September – details to follow.
<u>Equalities and Diversity issues:</u>	It was agreed that the review would address equalities and diversity issues directly in the review.

<p>The review will consider what the relevant equalities and diversity issues are regarding the Scrutiny subject that is being scrutinised</p>	<p><u>Equalities & Diversity Issues</u> – Are there any E&D issues to consider in this review? –</p> <p>The review should consider what equality and diversity issues there could be regarding accessing refuse & recycling services including age, disability (special collection services).</p>
<p><u>Constraints</u> (Issues that have been highlighted at the scoping stage but are too broad/detailed to be covered by the review):</p>	<p><i>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting</i> (These issues can be captured and dealt with via other means – Briefings/email/officer action etc)</p>
<p><u>Background Documents/data</u> that can be provided to the review</p>	<p><i>As identified by the Committee at the draft scoping meeting:</i> Evidence requested:</p>
<p><u>Agreed Milestones and review sign off</u> -To be agreed by Members and officers</p>	<p><i>Formal response from Cabinet Portfolio Holder (Executives have a Statutory requirement to respond to Scrutiny review recommendations two months after receiving a final report and recommendations of a review: Date Cabinet Portfolio responses are expected (dependent on the final report & executive portfolio response template publishing date): DD MM YY</i></p> <p><i>Date for monitoring implementation of recommendations – final sign off (typically one year from completion of the review): DD MM YY</i> (Close to this date the Select Committee will receive a report at a Committee meeting to agree the final sign off of the review recommendations)</p>

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Environment & Economy Select Committee - Action Tracker							
Review Title & C'ttee	Date added to the work programme	Scoping/ started complete/ updated	Review start date (& follow-up dates)	Review Status (date if completed)	Key Recommendations	Exec Portfolio Holder Response	Date brought back to Committee for monitoring
Skills Agenda Review	12/02/24	16/07/24	16/07/24	Final Report & Recs 14 01 24 - Skills Agenda Review	Rec 1 (i) Expansion of Stevenage Works - It is recommended that the Council be encouraged to expand Stevenage Works beyond construction into the health and social care sectors. (ii) Expansion of Stevenage Works into “Green Construction” Solar and air source heat pump technology - It is recommended that the Council be encouraged to expand Stevenage Works into a third iteration beyond health and social care sectors into Green Technologies.	11/06/25	To be scheduled
					Upskilling - It is recommended that all partners including the DWP, Citizens Advice, Step2Skills, the Council and SMEs and larger employers should be encouraged to do this. Efforts from all partners would be needed to help lower skilled individuals obtain the skills they need to access higher skilled and higher paid roles which would directly tackle the problems associated with insecure employment from low-skilled, low-paid work.		
					Promotion of the T-Level qualification for nursery childcare into the local economy - The potential of new T-level qualifications that involved hands-on learning, could help nurseries train staff more efficiently. It is recommended that North Herts College be encouraged to expand the T-Level qualification in nursery care to help train more people locally to expand the provision of trained staff.		
					Challenge to HCC & Local Children Centres regarding providing clear accessible information on what funding is available for families for childcare – The funding position is currently confusing to parents so clarity would help in this area.		
					Promotion of work experience opportunities - It is recommended that (i) the Council’s Business Relationship Manager works with colleagues to promote opportunities for young people to connect with local employers for work experience; (ii) That SBC offers a range of work experience opportunities for young people across the organisation, and that these are offered consistently every year to local schools and colleges; and (iii) That SBC social media is used to share local job		
					Promotion of success stories from Stevenage - It is recommended that members and officers consider ways to promote success stories from the local community, celebrating successes by the college and schools where students attain excellent skills outcomes, as they in turn become the role models for successive years of students, i.e. Mayors Award for Learning.		
					Promotion of a clear local careers advice service Work with partners towards a credible local careers advice service. Establishing a clear source of objective careers information which is available to pupils, students, and those wanting to re-train, or change direction. That a local link within the National Careers service is readily available, and that this reflects national standards in career entry qualifications, but also what is available in Stevenage, and wider Hertfordshire.		
					Commendation to North Herts College and Barnwell School for their work in promoting skills - It is recommended that North Herts College and Barnwell School be commended for their work to promote skills to their students. North Herts College by providing Industry standard facilities and equipment the college are equipping young people with the skills they need to move straight into higher level courses, apprenticeships or employment and are responding to what employers have been saying for some time that young entrants don’t have the necessary skills to be work ready. Barnwell School are offering an excellent peer to peer mentoring to ready pupils for university applications and interviews as well as collaboration with the University of Hertfordshire through their “zero gravity” and “Brilliant Club” initiatives.		

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					Rec 9 Devolved, local skills strategy That SBC along with its partners in the broadest sense (Herts Growth Board, Job Centre Plus, North Herts College, Local Secondary Schools, Local Employers) continue to work to develop and genuine, local skills strategy, which reflect local skills opportunities and challenges within the economy.		
Bus Scrutiny	23/03/23	14/06/23	14/06/23	16/01/24	Rec 1 SBC Executive Portfolio Holder for Transport be invited to consider holding a yearly transport seminar for Stevenage bringing together the HCC transport unit and the public transport providers to hold them to account regarding the performance of their contracts with a view to champion local users' needs and bring a focus on improved performance.	16 July 2024 - Cabinet Member & external partner response	
					Rec 2 It is recommended that (i) Arriva be strongly encouraged to update the real time information for bus services on their website and App , as bus users rely on this information to wait for bus services, if cancelled or delayed; and (ii) that real-time information also be included at bus stops, so passengers know when the next bus is due and also if a service is not running etc.		
					Rec 3 (i) to help wheelchair users and disabled and the visually impaired that some (a least two or three) of the information screens in the bus interchange be lowered and the contrast of those screens be adjusted to provide a good contrast to enable those users to be able to read the information more easily, and (ii) in addition, that a similar sign to the RNIB signage used near the ticket office at the railway station be installed at the bus interchange.		
					Rec 4 (i) The HCC Passenger Transport Unit and Arriva need to engage in an open and ongoing conversation with disability groups like Herts Vision Loss to help refine and shape the services, as it appeared to Members that this was not currently the case; and (ii) the use of trusted apps for those with disabilities be championed by bus providers and transport authorities at HCC.		
					Rec 5 Arriva should revisit their driver training regarding courtesy and care towards disabled passengers. This should be looked at based on the evidence submitted by Herts Vision Loss, who reported that their members were, on occasion, not given sufficient time to be seated when boarding or were dismissed or ignored by some drivers when asking for assistance or information about the bus route etc.		
					Rec 6 HCC Passenger Transport Unit and Arriva advance the roll out of audio announcement on buses as well as visual displays screens, which need to be retrofitted to all existing fleet and be provided as standard on any new fleet stock.		
					Rec 7 (i) In the first instance, bus companies should be encouraged to consider electric vehicles or other alternatives to move away from fossil fuels ; and (ii) during the long transition to EV electric replacement buses and considering the variable supply of hydrogen, that HCC and Arriva be invited to consider using a more environmentally friendly Biodiesel which produces 90% less carbon than conventional diesel.		

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					Rec 8 Regarding new housing developments, that SBC Planning and Development Officers should consult with Bus Companies regarding their views to help avoid any unintended consequences to buses using routes into new housing developments and that HCC Highways Officers should be invited to consult with bus companies regarding the introduction of traffic calming measures such as speed bumps, narrowed roads or chicanes that can make bus journeys slower and therefore not run to optimum journey times. If there are to be any changes made to road schemes for traffic calming these should consider such measures as bus gates.		
					Rec 9 (i) SBC, fully consider the use of the Bus Station in its new location, and the user experience. In respect of the pedestrian access from the Bus Station through to the shops, the existing signage be reviewed ; (ii) Consider means of assisting older and disabled users to move from the Bus Station into the town, such as a shuttle bus (iii) that the provision of WiFi be considered at the Bus Interchange to help passengers access the Arriva App; and(iv) that Officers and Partners consider all available options to ensure that there is a safe and comfortable user experience at the Bus Station.		
					Rec 10 It is recommended that as part of the regeneration of the town centre strategically placed bus stops near public infrastructure will need to be provided , for example there should be a bus stop provided at the new leisure centre when this is built at the town centre gardens, St Georges Way site, as well as consideration of a new bus route to service any new stops.		
					Rec 11 It is recommended that Arriva and HCC be encouraged to consider the provision of a spine route running from the north to the south of the town.		
					Rec 12 It is recommended that SBC via the Executive Portfolio Holder for Enterprise and Transport lobby HCC to consider different funding models for the provision of bus travel for Hertfordshire as it was felt that it was right to challenge the funding model which was not currently delivering a service that was fit for purpose.		
					Rec 13 It Is recommended that consideration should be given to a circular bus route between Roaring Meg, Leisure Park, Old Town and the Town Centre , and that officers of the Council review this to identify any funding opportunities, if possible as an electric bus service.		

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E&E Final Report & Recs Climate Emergency	Continuation of review (23 03 22)	N/A continuation of review	Final part of review started 23 06 22	Final report 17 01 23	1 SBC & Area Wide Pathway & Targets - It is recommended that clear targets and a pathway to 2030 for both SBC targets and area wide targets need to be established. It is not currently clear what the targets or pathway are to see how Stevenage gets from where it is now to 2030. The way progress against the 2018 baseline figure is measured and publicised needs to be thought through so that this is clearly described to show what progress is being made each year and understood by officers, Members and by the public.	Exec Member response - 23 03 23	The E&E Select Committee receives a twice yearly update on Climate Change in November and March
					2 Pace - Is the climate emergency really being treated as an emergency? It is recommended that there is a need to ramp up the pace to get to net zero for the town by 2030. Members accept there are challenges around funding but where it sits in corporate priorities is an area that is a decision for the authority. Members will be looking to see how the pace is picked up leading to 2030.		
					3 Adaptations - The review established that due to extreme weather events linked to climate change there is already a need for adaptations to buildings and for up-to-date emergency response plans to care for older residents in sheltered housing schemes. It is recommended that there be an audit of all adaptations required across the Council.		
					4 Behaviour Change - It is recommended that officers from SBC link up with officers from the HCC Behaviour Change unit to work together on behaviour change initiatives.		
					5 Review - It has been recommended by the Chair of the Environment and Economy Select Committee that the issue of the climate emergency should be under regular review by the Committee and that a progress report should be brought back to the committee on a yearly basis.		
					6 Training - The Committee recommends the creation of a training package for members, and additional training for senior officers, on climate change mitigations and adaption, so that future decision makers are well informed in all aspects of the councils' operations, and the bearing climate change mitigation and adaption may have on them.		

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E&E Interim report & Reccs Climate Emergency	E&E Select Committee 22 09 20 - Work Programme	E&E Select Committee - 4 Oct 2021 - Scoping Document	04 10 21	Interim report & recommendations complete - 23 03 22	1 Recognising the main areas of emissions for the Stevenage area - (Transport and domestic emissions combined 2/3 of the overall emissions (64%) (i) Provide details of plans to decarbonise the housing stock & (ii) share plans for influencing local people, modal shift.	Date sent 05/04/22 Date due 31/05/22	The E&E Select Committee receives a twice yearly update on Climate Change in November and March
					2 Resident engagement - Regards the Citizens Panel, handling of future iterations needs to be improved re feedback.		
					3 Refine Baseline figures - measuring our Net Zero targets for 2030 Rec'mndation: Continue to work with the Uni of Herts Zero Carbon Lab towards our zero carbon ambitions.		
					4 Est.of a Climate Change Lead Officer Rec'mndation: that the post be made permanent.		
					5 HEART – Challenge Rec'mndation: engage with HEART to provide Member seminars & team up in support of a social enterprise such as a Climate Emergency Centre.		
					6 Mainstreaming of Climate Emergency thinking re all Council activities. Rec'mndation: (i) consider how an activity or an event can be made as low carbon as possible.		
					7 Tree Canopy - Rec'mndation: Exec establish an ambitious plan to meet the 2% gap in Stevenage's Tree Canopy, then expand the number of trees in Stevenage or offset elsewhere, as this offers the		
					8 Planning & Development Rec'mndation: Within the constraints of exiting legislation, establish a plan to make Climate change a planning consideration for all applications.		
					9 Focus on improved Recycling Exec brings back a report on the actions and strategy to improve the Council's recycling rates.		
					10 Protecting climate emergency targets in the budget setting process (i) Mbrs and Officers involved in the budget setting process, consider the climate change implications of any budget decisions, with no cut to services if there is a detrimental climate change implication; & (ii) Exec consider creating a small ring fenced budget to investigate the long term budget implications of climate change for business units.		
					11 EV Charging in neighbourhood centres: (i) were possible, the locations used should be close to the cycle network; (ii) when Electric Car Club charging equipment is reinstalled a promotion campaign with neighbouring residents be carried out & (iii) consider rebranding it, making it clear		
					12 SBC Social Housing (i) That new tenants receive info on climate change in their "welcome packs", to include the Council's ten climate change pledges & info on recycling at their property; (ii) more be done with residents groups to move away from day to day housing tenant issues to consider wider Climate change matters (iii) encourage very local, small scale events that focus residents on environmental projects (gardens/trees) or community kitchen/growing or bulk buying schemes.		

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					13 Recommendations of Informal Member Working Group (i) devise a strategy re tree management & P&D (Strategic); (ii) Mbrs & Officers lead by example, even if benefits small e.g. plastic bottles, drinks cups etc. (Quick wins); (iii) Consider how to represent the progress of the strategy? Fishbone chart/Gantt chart, target lines, KPIs (Strategic); (iv) Communications plan is needed with channels, calendar, etc. start with a campaign to reduce your heating by 2 degrees (Strategic); (v) Review Council activities to ensure carbon friendly practices are truly embedded. (Strategic) (vi) Engage with young people via schools, Youth Mayor and Mayor's activities. (Distinct Project); (vii) Promoting the 20 Minute Neighbourhood theory, encourage local businesses to tap into big business. Would suit a workshop to be facilitated externally to tease out tangible actions. (Distinct Project).		

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E&E - Economic Impact of Covid-19	E&E Select Committee - 22 09 20 - Work Programme	E&E Select Committee - 10 Nov 2020 - Scoping Document	10/11/20	Complete - 21 10 21	1 Executive supports, with whatever means are at its disposal (in kind buildings/officer time/promotion via LCB funding), the efforts of STEMPOINT East to provide some hands on events in 2022 of STEM sessions looking to promote and build "science capital" in young people.	E&E Select Committee - 23 03 22 - Exec Member Response	To be scheduled
					2 Exec consider the case study of partners working in micro areas (sub-neighborhoods) such as at the Oval project, with 8 or 9 Young People who would be in danger of becoming NEET and that the AD for Communities & Neighbourhoods meet with the interested parties from HCC YCH, STEMPOINT and NH College to explore what role SBC could do to further support.		
					3 Exec consider the case study of Brandles School foodbank outreach to vulnerable families. Exec to provide examples of where they are already doing this type of outreach through the Co-operative Neighbourhood Management or other programmes and to consider new opportunities to reach out to vulnerable families to help young people access services and opportunities.		
					4 establish a local work experience project for Stevenage school leavers in 2022 to enable them to find local employers who can offer work experience.		
					5 Exec consider the case study of the Herts Careers School Hub that all partners work together to establish how funding can be found to assist the STEM Centre to secure its future funding.		
					6 The Exec lobby HCC and partners via the Covid-19 Community Reassurance Cell to check that they carry out a revised impact assessment on the impact on BAME, Disabled and Young People, looking at all ten districts not just the County as a whole, as Stevenage had particular challenges with disabled, BAME and young people, who in many cases stated the pandemic in a deficit position and were in danger of this being further compounded.		
E&E - Neighbourhood Centres	13/03/19	25/06/19	11/02/2020, 10/03/2020 & 22/09/2020	Complete - 13 01 2021	1 Small scale timely interventions including routine maintenance, cleansing, repair and using existing budgets/Local Community Budgets via funding bids as well as local HCC LCBs.	05-Jul-21	To be scheduled
					2 Approach partner authorities/partner bodies to hold them to account for failure to maintain infrastructure.		
					3 That the Co-operative Neighbourhood Management approach to addressing local issues in the Neighbourhood Centres be monitored by the Executive Member with Portfolio responsibility for Neighbourhoods and Co-Operative Working to see if this is working.		
					4 That each Neighbourhood Centre area establishes a friends group to help with projects and community gardens at each Centre.		
					5 When Members have met with Head of Estates and AD Housing Development they will then be able to include a relevant recommendation in regard of these plans.		

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E&E - Post Offices	13/03/19	25/06/19	25/06/2019 03/09/19 & 20/11/19	Complete 20/11/2019 Members wish to keep	1 That Officers be requested to approach Post Office Ltd to seek provision of an emergency post office the Old Town and to provide such assistance as necessary to facilitate the arrangement.	N/A	To be scheduled
					2 That the subject of post office provision be reviewed at a meeting in the New Year.		
E&E - Rail Station Update	13/06/18	N/A 2nd meeting 28/02/2019	Initail meeting 18/10/2018 then update follow ups on 28/02/2019 & 29/07/2019	Commitment from GTR & Railtrack to bring an update to the Committee. With the changes	1 the Committee considers holding a follow up meeting for all stakeholders in the spring of 2019, following the December 2018 timetable changes (February/March)	N/A	29 07 2019 for update. Any further date to be scheduled
					2 That GTR and other operators provide statistics about the number of Stevenage commuters at peak times		
					3 There were a number of other recommendations regarding consultaion with users and with the Council and specifically the shceduled May 2019 Timetable changes. Finally in July 2019 the Committee noted the updates on the Stevenage Turnback (5th Platform) project, the Govia Thameslink Spring 2019 timetable and the wider works along the East Coast Main Line in support of the King's Cross remodelling project.		
E&E - Indoor Market	01/03/17	03/07/17	Review met on 5 occassions from 03/0717 to 16/01/18	16/01/18	x Engage an external company to carry out market research to find out what kind of market offer local people want. Other recommendations included:	21/03/18	03/12/18
					1 restore access to the multi-storey car park		
					2 incentives for Market Traders to keep to the opening trading times and days		
					3 consider options open to varying the car parking charges		
					4 Town Centre Manager to incorporate the Indoor Market into Town Centre events		
					5 discuss with the MTA ways to encourage a wider diversity of traders in the Market		
					6 staggered rent for new traders		
					7 promote other uses of void spaces and to casual traders		
					8 options for a future alternative location for the indoor market be included in the town centre regeneration plans		
					9 if a wholesale move for the indoor market can't be achieved then purchase a smaller satellite retail site with footfall from the town centre be considered for a smaller reconfigured market with a focus on business start-ups in the regenerated Town Centre		
					10 consider approaching an independent company to administrate the market on a commercial basis for the Council		