



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday, 17 March 2026

Time: 6.00pm,

Location: Council Chamber

Contact: Gemma O'Donnell (01438) 242216

committees@stevenage.gov.uk

Members: Councillors: Jim Brown (Chair), Andy McGuinness (Vice-Chair), Sandra Barr, Phil Bibby, Stephen Booth, Robert Boyle, Leanne Brady, Kamal Choudhury, Peter Clark, Akin Elekolusi, Alistair Gordon, Lynda Guy, Ellie Plater and Ceara Roopchand

AGENDA

PART 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 February 2026.

5 – 10

3. PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - STEVENAGE BIODIVERSITY DUTY MONITORING

To consider the Council's first Stevenage Borough Biodiversity Duty report as required by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021).

Notice of Decisions to follow in separate document.

11 – 38

4. PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - CORPORATE PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 3 2025/26

To consider the decision of the Cabinet to highlight the Council's performance across key priorities and projects for Quarter Three 2025/26 and provide an update on progress against current strategic risks.

Notice of Decisions to follow in separate document.

39 – 94

5. PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - QUARTER 3 BUDGET MONITORING

To consider the decision of Cabinet on the projected General Fund (GF), Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital 2025/26 net expenditure and seek approval to amend the General Fund, HRA and Capital budgets as part of the quarterly revenue monitoring review.

Notice of Decisions to follow in separate document.

95 – 126

6. PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - REVOCATION AND VARIATION OF TAXI RANKS TO THE HIGH STREET, STEVENAGE

To consider the decision of the Cabinet to revoke the existing taxi rank located on the southbound side of the High Street, Stevenage and vary the taxi rank located on the northbound side of the High Street, Stevenage.

Notice of Decisions to follow in separate document.

127 – 148

7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2025-26

To note progress of delivery of the 2025-26 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme and to consider including any potential work programme items for 2026-27.
149 – 154

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

To consider any urgent Part I Decisions authorised by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

9. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

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

10. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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 OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

To approve as a correct record the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 February 2026.

12. URGENT PART II DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To consider any urgent Part II Decisions authorised by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

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

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 17 February 2026

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Jim Brown (Chair), Philip Bibby, Stephen Booth, Peter Clark, Alistair Gordon, Lynda Guy, Ellie Plater and Ceara Roopchand

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

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sandra Barr, Robert Boyle, Leanne Brady, Kamal Choudhury, Akin Elekolusi and Andy McGuinness.

Councillor Ceara Roopchand declared an interest as she worked in the insolvency sector.

The Chair noted that attendance at Committees was important. The Chair asked if apologies could be communicated in good time and added that continuity of attendance was helpful, but reminded members that substitution was possible where absence was unavoidable.

2 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 20 January 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 **PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - FINAL GENERAL FUND AND COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2026/27**

The Strategic Director (Chief Financial Officer, CFO) updated the Committee that the report did not reflect the final settlement, as this had only been received on 9 February 2026 and the CFO advised a verbal update was provided to Cabinet.

Members were advised that as part of the final settlement additional Government funding was made available nationally to ensure that no Councils were disadvantaged as a result of technical issues relating to the pooling of gains.

It was reported that, for the Council, the final settlement had resulted in a positive impact through additional ring-fenced funding of £83,000. It was noted that the CFO confirmed the outcome of the fair funding review was good news for Stevenage.

The CFO advised that the report to Council would include an update setting out the

differences between the provisional and final settlement, including the additional grant funding.

In response to questions, Officers explained that the budget allowed for an annual hard prune of areas across the town.

Questions were raised regarding the total amount provisioned for Local Government Reorganisation. The Committee were advised that while some work to date had been absorbed within existing staff resources, additional capacity is required across Hertfordshire.

Members were also informed that, as the programme moved into the transition phase, district and borough councils had collectively agreed to contribute £1 million over two years, alongside a £10 million contribution from the County Council. The funding would be required to support work up to the establishment of the shadow authority, which could not be delivered within existing resources.

Members sought assurance on how the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding was allocated. Members were advised that decisions were made through the established governance process, with strategic allocations approved by Cabinet. Officers explained they would provide a summary of CIL commitments and remaining balances in the 4th Quarter Monitoring report (Revenue and Capital). The Director of Planning and Regulation stated that there were limitations regarding what CIL monies could be spent on.

It was noted that if the CIL amount was above £75,000 it would go to Cabinet and if it was below this amount it would be delegated to the relevant Officer.

The Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

4 **PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - FINAL CAPITAL STRATEGY 2025/26 TO 2029/30**

The Director of Finance presented the Final Capital Strategy 2025/26 to 2029/30. The Strategy confirmed a total investment of £118 million, including £7.9 million in approved growth bids.

It was noted that all 27 proposals listed in Appendix A were agreed by the cross-party Council Financial Scrutiny Group (CFSG).

A further CFSG meeting was held on 13 January 2026 to review unfunded capital bids, but these remained unsupported at this stage.

The Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

5 **PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - STEVENAGE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN PARTIAL UPDATE: MAIN MODIFICATIONS FOLLOWING EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC HEARINGS**

The Director of Planning and Regulation discussed the Local Plan Partial Review.

The report outlined the changes required by the Planning Inspectorate to ensure the plan was considered sound.

Questions were raised about the retail hierarchy, and Officers explained that the retail policy had not changed as part of this partial review and remained as set out in the adopted 2019 Local Plan.

Members asked about the target set for new homes to be built on previously developed land, and Officers explained that the wording had been reinstated following the Planning Inspector's direction to ensure the plans were sound. It was noted that this partial review did not change the overall housing target, and that wider housing capacity issues would be considered in a future full review of the plan.

Further questions focused on climate change policies, including the use of wording such as "aim to achieve," the removal of carbon offsetting references, and the shift from new developments to major developments.

Officers explained that these changes were required by the Planning Inspector to align the plan with national policy and to pass tests which were necessary to secure adoption of a legally compliant plan.

Members requested further information on the Council's approach to allocating Community Infrastructure Levy monies. The Director of Planning and Regulation set out that strategic monies were allocated through the existing Capital Spending Strategy but outlined that further information on the precise spending allocations would be provided separately.

The Head of Planning Policy agreed to send the Committee the definition of a major development and agreed to provide further clarification of offsetting to the Committee.

The Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

6 **PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2026/27**

The Committee noted that Cabinet received the Annual Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27, which set out how the Council would manage its borrowing, financing, investments and cash flows in accordance with the codes and guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

It was noted that the Council remained compliant with all relevant legislation and that the ongoing importance of Member training and management of interest rates were emphasised.

Discussions took place regarding ethical investment, and it was explained that the Council's treasury investments were primarily short-term and largely comprised deposits with other local authorities, banks and money market funds.

The Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

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

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

8 **URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

9 **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.

10 **PART II DECISION OF THE CABINET - WRITE OFFS OVER £10K**

The Director of Finance provided an update to the Committee regarding the Write Off's over £10,000 report.

The Committee asked a number of questions which officers responded to.

The Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

11 **PART II DECISIONS OF THE CABINET - GRANT OF AN OPTION AGREEMENT FOR THE SALE OF LAND**

The CFO informed the Committee about the Grant of an Option Agreement for the sale of land.

The Committee asked a number of questions which officers responded to.

The Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

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

There were no Urgent Part II Decisions authorised by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

13 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR

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Meeting Cabinet
Portfolio Area Environment and Regeneration
Date 11 March 2026



STEVENAGE BIODIVERSITY DUTY MONITORING REPORT

KEY DECISION

Author Sally Talbot | 2176
Lead Officer Alex Robinson | 2257
Contact Officer Sally Talbot | 2176

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide Members with the Council's first Stevenage Borough Biodiversity Duty report as required by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021).
- 1.2 This report provides Members with information on how Biodiversity Net Gain has been monitored within the Borough as well the actions and strategies in place to enhance the environment. This is a statutory report for information only and does not require a decision.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- That Cabinet:
- 2.1 Note the information within the Biodiversity Duty Report, set out in Appendix A.

3 BACKGROUND

What is biodiversity?

- 3.1 Biodiversity refers to the variety of all living things on Earth — including plants, animals, fungi, and microorganisms — as well as the ecosystems they form and the natural processes that support life. Healthy biodiversity underpins clean air, fertile soils, pollination, climate regulation, and the overall resilience of the natural environment. When biodiversity is rich and thriving, nature is better able to adapt to pressures such as climate change, pollution, and development.

What is Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)?

- 3.2 Biodiversity Net Gain is a planning approach that ensures development leaves nature in a measurably better state than before. Under BNG, developers must assess the existing biodiversity value of a site and then deliver at least a 10% improvement through habitat creation, enhancement, or long-term management. This makes BNG a practical tool for reversing nature loss, supporting local ecological priorities, and integrating high-quality green spaces into new development.
- 3.3 Biodiversity is important within the borough and the Council is committed to enhancing the quality of the environment as well as biodiversity. The “Making Stevenage Even Better” Corporate Plan [BD1] shows within its main objectives how important biodiversity and the environment are, because it sets the strategic direction that biodiversity actions must support. The plan’s focus on regeneration, high quality neighbourhoods, environmental stewardship, and climate resilience provides a strategic framework for enhancing habitats, improving green infrastructure, and embedding biodiversity considerations across all services.
- 3.4 Delivery of the biodiversity duty directly supports the Council’s ambitions for a cleaner, greener, healthier and more sustainable Stevenage.
- 3.5 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) was introduced to the planning system to ensure habitats for wildlife and the natural environment are left in a measurably better state than they were before the development. In England, BNG is now mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/schedule/14/enacted>)).
- 3.6 Under the new legislation, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/schedule/14/enacted> developments must now deliver a BNG of 10%. Before this, the Council’s “The Impact of Development on Biodiversity SPD” was in place to deliver 10% BNG. It provided a transparent and auditable mechanism for assessing the impact of applications on biodiversity and meeting the requirements of the National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) to achieve measurable net gains to biodiversity through development. It also provided policy guidance on protecting ecology and biodiversity, further than what was prescribed in the NPPF, Planning Policy Guidance and local guidance. Following BNG becoming mandatory, the SPD has been revoked (9 October 2024) [BD2].
- 3.7 Mandatory BNG came in to force for major developments on 12 February 2024 and minor developments on 2 April 2024. For the purposes of BNG, biodiversity value is measured in standardised biodiversity units.
- 3.8 The Biodiversity Duty is a legal requirement placed on public authorities in England under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act

2006, strengthened by the Environment Act 2021. Its purpose is to make sure public bodies actively help nature recover rather than unintentionally contribute to its decline. It will also report quantitative data from the BNG metrics submitted through planning applications.

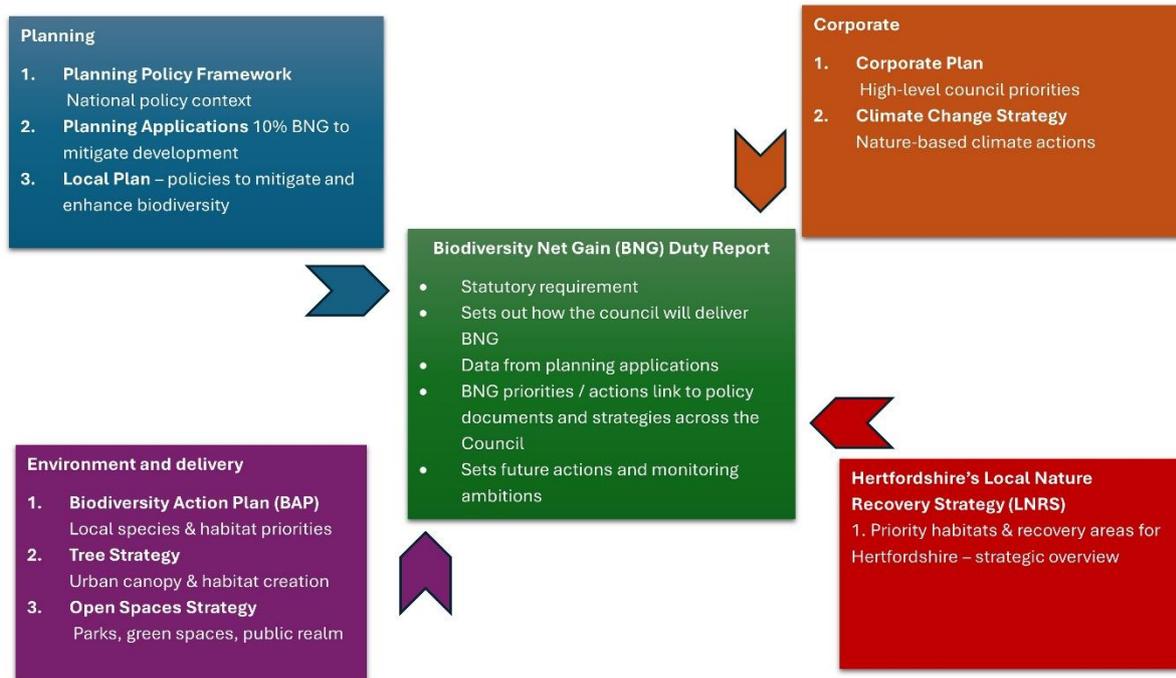
- 3.9 Local authorities are expected to publish a Biodiversity Report at least once every 5 years from the publication of the first duty report. Public authorities, including councils, planning authorities, and other bodies that manage land or make decisions affecting the natural environment are responsible to produce a report.
- 3.10 The Duty Report shows the breakdown of biodiversity mitigation from development as well as the actions and strategies in place to strengthen our natural environment. The reporting period for the Council's first Duty Report is from 12 February 2024 to 1 January 2026.
- 3.11 The Council will look to collect data annually by calendar year thereafter. This will feed into other monitoring documents such as the Council's Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) to ensure effective monitoring is in place to protect and enhance the environment.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

Recommendation 2.1: That Cabinet note the information within the Biodiversity Duty Report, set out in Appendix A.

Purpose of Biodiversity Duty Report

- 4.1 The report demonstrates compliance with the Biodiversity Duty (section 40) and the new Biodiversity Duty Reporting Requirements (section 102) from the Environment Act 2021. The report shows how the authority has considered biodiversity in its decisions, policies, land management, and planning work. This provides transparency to residents, partners, and government about local nature recovery efforts. The report follows a format set by DEFRA for the reporting of information.
- 4.2 The report will include actions taken to conserve or enhance biodiversity, for example, habitat improvements or land management changes. It will also consider how biodiversity was considered in planning decisions, strategies, and internal policies, in particular the Local Plan Partial Update [BD3] and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) [BD4]. It will also show links to national strategies such as Local Nature Recovery Strategies and Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.
- 4.3 It will also consider future plans and objectives for improving biodiversity, as well as quantitative information on proportion of habitats created through BNG within the reporting period. The data tables within the report were also created by DEFRA as a template for local planning authority statutory reporting. This information is acquired from the Habitat and Wildlife Management Plans agreed through planning applications.
- 4.4 BNG reporting will help authorities contribute to national biodiversity targets and provide measurable, numerical evidence of what they are doing for biodiversity.
- 4.5 The diagram below shows how the Biodiversity Duty Report sits within policies, strategies and departmental services.



Actions considered by the Council

4.6 Stevenage Borough Council has taken a series of coordinated actions to implement the statutory requirements of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and embed biodiversity considerations into the planning process. These actions include:

- Integrating BNG requirements into the Council's Development Management procedures, ensuring all qualifying applications are assessed against the mandatory 10% net gain threshold.
- Training planning officers and validation teams on the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric, biodiversity gain plans, and long-term habitat management obligations.
- Updating local planning guidance and signposting developers to national BNG requirements, including the need for 30-year habitat management and monitoring secured through planning obligations or conservation covenants.
- Establishing internal processes for reviewing biodiversity gain plans, including ecological input where required, and ensuring compliance before planning permission is granted.
- Beginning the integration of BNG monitoring into the Council's wider Climate Action Plan [BD5], particularly under Action B18, which focuses on implementing and monitoring BNG delivery.

How biodiversity was considered in the planning process

4.7 Biodiversity was embedded into the planning process through a combination of policy, assessment, and long-term management requirements:

- All relevant planning applications are required to submit a Biodiversity Gain Plan, demonstrating how the proposal meets or exceeds the 10% net gain requirement using the DEFRA Metric [BD6].
- Applications were assessed for opportunities to retain and enhance existing habitats, prioritising on site improvements wherever feasible.

- Where on site delivery was not possible, applicants are directed to identify suitable off site habitat creation within Stevenage or the wider ecological network.
- Biodiversity considerations are aligned with the Council's Biodiversity Action Plan: A Wilder Stevenage 2024–2028 [BD4] and Local Plan, ensuring that development contributes to local habitat priorities such as grassland, woodland, hedgerows, and wetlands.
- Long term ecological management was secured through planning conditions or obligations, ensuring habitats are maintained for at least 30 years, as required by the Environment Act.

Strategies considered and future plans

- 4.8 Stevenage Borough Council has considered several strategic approaches to strengthen BNG delivery and ensure long term ecological enhancement across the borough:
- Aligning BNG implementation with the Wilder Stevenage 2024–2028 strategy, focusing on priority habitats and landscape scale ecological connectivity.
 - Exploring opportunities for a local habitat bank to support off site BNG delivery and provide consistent, high quality ecological outcomes.
 - Developing a structured BNG monitoring framework, including annual reporting, site inspections, and digital tracking of habitat condition over the 30-year management period.
 - Strengthening partnerships with Hertfordshire ecological networks, local wildlife organisations, and community groups to support habitat creation and stewardship.
 - Aligning with the Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and;
 - Continuing officer training and capacity building to ensure the Council remains aligned with evolving national BNG guidance and best practice.

Results over the reporting period

- 4.9 The Council achieved several significant biodiversity improvements during the reporting period. This included adopting both the Green Spaces Strategy and the Tree and Woodland Strategy, each with measures to enhance habitats, increase ecological resilience, and support long-term nature recovery.
- 4.10 Over the course of the reporting period (12 February 2024 for major developments and 2 April 2024 for minor developments, to the 1 January 2026), Stevenage Borough Council received 10 BNG-qualifying planning applications. This resulted in the approval and securing of 5 Habitat Management Plans, each committing to a minimum 30-year period of habitat creation, enhancement, and monitoring.
- 4.11 Out of the 5 approved gain plans, 4 include both on- and off- site habitat enhancements and 1 has on-site enhancements only. There were no applications that secured biodiversity uplift through statutory credits.
- 4.12 In summary, out of a total of 1.11 units gained from development gain plans between 12 February 2024 and 1 January 2026, 1.03 were bought from outside the Stevenage local authority boundary and 0.08 were created within the boundary.

- 4.13 Off-site gain sites for developments within Stevenage are located in North Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Surrey.
- 4.14 The reasons for the imbalance in the number of units created within and without the borough council boundaries are due to the location of gain sites (habitat banks). Gain sites are areas of land where new habitats – like meadows, woodlands, hedgerows, and ponds – are strategically added and managed for the long term (initially 30 years) to create greater biodiversity. This area can be divided into habitat units. These units can then be sold to developers to compensate for habitats lost because of the development.
- 4.15 Biodiversity Net Gain monetises nature in very specific terms dependent on habitat type, size, distinctiveness, condition, location and whether it is included in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Gain site habitat unit pricing then depends on the market values and the availability of the habitat. The most expensive to buy at present are watercourse units at an average of £203,861 per unit. The least expensive is Other Neutral Grassland at an average of £24,098 per unit. These costs reflect the cost to create, maintain and monitor the habitat over 30 years. The greater the number of gain sites coming online will probably lead to the reduction in these prices. General opinion at present is that supply will outstrip demand. Local gain sites would have an advantage within the metric for local developments, but they would still have to price competitively to ensure this advantage is not undercut from gain sites elsewhere.
- 4.16 Section 6 of the Duty Report also highlights the achievements within the Borough. A small snapshot of success include:
- New species-rich meadows were established at Fairlands Southfield and St Nicholas Park;
 - Tree-planting initiatives progressed with the creation of three micro-woodlands at St Nicks, Hampson, and Shephalbury Park;
 - Strengthened monitoring, reporting, and delivery of the Biodiversity Action Plan with adoption of the Kausal software platform which enables a clearer oversight of progress and improved data management, and;
 - The annual butterfly survey—delivered by Green Space Volunteers—recorded the highest counts to date, demonstrating both a thriving monitoring network and encouraging signs for local species populations.

5 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

5.1 Any potential future duty reports will be produced within allocated resources.

5.2 The implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has several financial implications for the Council, both in terms of new statutory responsibilities and potential income generation.

a. Revenue Costs

5.3 The introduction of mandatory BNG requirements will increase demand on the Council's planning and environmental services. Additional specialist capacity is required to assess biodiversity metrics, review BNG plans, and undertake long-term monitoring and enforcement. This is expected to result in:

- Additional staffing costs for ecological and monitoring expertise;
- Training and upskilling of existing officers;
- Investment in digital systems to record, track, and report BNG delivery;

These costs will be met initially from existing service budgets and BNG grants.

b. Income Generation

5.4 The Council will be able to recover certain costs through statutory BNG fees, including:

- Application fees associated with BNG assessments;
- Monitoring fees for the 30-year delivery period;
- Grants from Central Government.

c. Long-Term Liabilities

5.5 BNG creates legally binding obligations for habitat delivery and monitoring over a 30-year period. The Council must ensure adequate resourcing for:

- Ongoing ecological monitoring;
- Remedial works where habitats fail to achieve required outcomes;

These liabilities will be incorporated into the Council's long-term financial planning.

d. Financial Risks

5.6 Key financial risks include:

- Uncertainty in the emerging BNG market and unit values;
- Potential mismatch between statutory fee income and actual service costs;
- Inflationary pressures on habitat creation and maintenance;
- Risk of non-compliance by developers, leading to enforcement costs;

These risks will be managed through regular monitoring.

Planning and Legal Implications

- 5.7 The Stevenage Biodiversity Duty Report has been prepared in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) and Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Risk Implications

- 5.8 The risk to not producing the Biodiversity Duty Report is not demonstrating compliance with the Environment Act 2021. DEFRA has stated it intends to reference these reports in future reviews of the Act's implementation and if not published, it will be a visible gap in compliance.

Environmental Implications

- 5.9 The proposals outlined in this report have been assessed for their potential environmental impact in line with Stevenage Borough Council's sustainability objectives and the commitments set out in the Climate Change Strategy. No significant adverse environmental impacts have been identified at this stage.
- 5.10 Mitigation measures will be incorporated into the delivery plan where necessary to ensure compliance with statutory environmental obligations and to protect local ecosystems.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.11 The Biodiversity Duty report includes the Local Plan Partial Update policies relating to tackling climate change in the borough. This has been informed by internal consultation by officers with officers in the Climate Change team, to ensure the relevant policies created and updates incorporated.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.12 There are no significant equalities and diversity risks associated with producing a Biodiversity Duty Report.

Community Safety Implications

- 5.13 There are no significant community safety implications associated with producing a Biodiversity Duty Report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- BD1 Making Stevenage Even Better: Corporate Plan 2024–2027 (April 2024)
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/corporate-plan/appendix-a-making-stevenage-even-better-2024-2027.pdf>
- BD2 Meeting of the Stevenage Borough Council Cabinet: Item 4: Public Consultation on revised supplementary planning documents and proposed revocation of The Impact of Development on Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (October 2024)
<https://democracy.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/s37392/4%20Final%20Cabinet%20Report%20-%20SPDs%20270924%20Planning%20Policy.pdf>
- BD3 Partial Update of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011 – 2031: Schedule of Changes from Adopted Local Plan to Submission Version – Changes since Adoption of Local Plan in May 2019 (August 2025)
<https://www.hwa.uk.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/CD3-Schedule-of-Changes-Adopted-Local-Plan-to-Partial-Update-Submission.pdf>
- BD4 Stevenage Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP): A Wilder Stevenage 2024–2028)
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/environment/biodiversity-action-plan-a-wilder-stevenage-2024-2028.pdf>
- BD5 Stevenage Climate Change Strategy (September 2020)
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/about-the-council/climate-change-strategy/climate-change-strategy-september-2020.pdf>
- BD6 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Biodiversity Metric for Biodiversity Net Gain (July 2021)
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-metric-calculate-the-biodiversity-net-gain-of-a-project-or-development>

APPENDICES

- A Stevenage Borough Council Biodiversity Duty Report (February 2026)

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Stevenage Borough Council

Biodiversity Duty Report

March 2026



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Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1 Biodiversity is essential to the health, resilience, and long-term sustainability of our natural environment. Public authorities have a statutory responsibility to consider, conserve, and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. This duty, strengthened by the Environment Act 2021, requires organisations to integrate biodiversity into decision-making, policy development, land management, planning, and service delivery.
- 1.2 Within the planning system, Biodiversity Net Gain is an approach to development. It makes sure that habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than they were before the development.
- 1.3 In England, BNG is mandatory under [Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 \(as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021\)](#).
- 1.4 Developments must deliver a BNG of 10%. This means a development will result in more or enhanced natural habitat than there was before development.
- 1.5 Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) came in to force for major developments on the 12 February 2024 and minor developments on the 2 April 2024. For the purposes of BNG, biodiversity value is measured in standardised biodiversity units. This is quantified within this report to show the breakdown of biodiversity mitigation from development. The reporting period for the Council's first Duty Report, is from the 12 February 2024 to 1 January 2026.
- 1.6 This Biodiversity Duty Report sets out how the authority has met these obligations during the reporting period. The report will show:
 - What actions the council has taken;
 - How the council has integrated biodiversity into their functions;
 - What outcomes have been achieved (e.g data on habitats);
 - Future plans for enhancement.

This creates transparency and accountability.

- 1.7 By documenting progress and identifying opportunities for further improvement, this report demonstrates the authority's commitment to playing an active role in reversing biodiversity decline and supporting a thriving, resilient natural environment for current and future generations.

Section 2: Your policies, objectives and actions

Local Plan Partial Update 2011 – 2031

- 2.1. The Local Plan is a statutory planning document that every local authority in England must produce. It sets out a vision and strategy for the local area considering where development should go, what should be protected and how places should grow over a 15-to-20-year period.
- 2.2. Stevenage Borough Council undertook a partial update of their Local Plan in 2024 – 2025 to ensure the policies remained effective and up to date. The Local Plan was examined in Public in December 2025 to review if these updates were sound. Subject to Main Modifications, the Partial Update is proposed for Adoption in 2026.
- 2.3. Local Planning Authorities are required to review their plans every five years and the review identified that while areas remained sound, several policies relating to climate change and sustainable drainage required strengthening.
- 2.4. The Partial Update introduces:
 - A new strategic climate change policy
 - A new chapter of detailed climate change policies
 - Revised policies on sustainable drainage and flood risk
- 2.5. These changes strengthen the plan’s approach to environmental resilience and ecological protection.
- 2.6. Table 1 shows an overview of the Local Plan policy areas, and the actions needed to achieve its objectives.

Table 1:

Policy Area	Objectives	Actions
Housing	- Meet revised housing targets - Provide affordable & specialist homes	- Build out housing allocations - Strengthen affordable housing requirements - Support mixed-tenure developments
Town Centre	- Regenerate Stevenage town centre - Create vibrant mixed-use hub	- Encourage retail, leisure & office redevelopment - Flexible use of retail space - Support cultural venues
Transport	- Promote sustainable travel - Reduce car dependency	- Expand cycling & walking networks - Improve bus & rail integration - Require sustainable transport plans for new developments
Environment & Climate	- Achieve biodiversity net gain - Reduce carbon emissions - Increase resilience to climate	- Encourage renewable energy standards - Protect & enhance green belt - Require sustainable design in new builds – protect

	change – enhancing our natural environment	open space – enhance Biodiversity and wildlife habitats.
Economy & Employment	- Support local jobs & innovation - Protect employment land	- Safeguard key employment sites - Encourage investment in tech & innovation sectors - Flexible workspace provision
Community & Wellbeing	- Enhance quality of life - Protect heritage & green spaces	- Improve parks & open spaces - Support community facilities - Strengthen heritage protection policies

2.7. Under the Environment Act 2021, public authorities must

- Conserve and enhance biodiversity,
- Embed biodiversity into decision making, and
- Produce a biodiversity duty report showing how they have done so.

2.8. The Partial Update supports these duties by:

- Embedding biodiversity considerations into spatial planning through the updated environmental and climate policies, which ensure that biodiversity is a consideration in development decisions.
- Strengthening requirements for nature-based solutions with revised sustainable drainage and flood-risk policies to promote multifunctional green infrastructure, which supports habitats and species.
- Supporting long-term ecological resilience with climate-focused policies which help to ensure that development contributes to adaptation and mitigation, which is essential for protecting biodiversity under changing climate conditions.
- The statutory five-year review requirement ensures that biodiversity-related policies are not static but are periodically refreshed to reflect new evidence and national policy shifts.

2.9. The Stevenage Local Plan Partial Update strengthens the Council’s ability to meet its biodiversity duty by updating key environmental, climate change, and sustainable drainage policies to ensure they remain effective, evidence-based, and aligned with national requirements. The update embeds biodiversity considerations across the plan, promotes nature-based solutions, supports ecological resilience, and ensures that biodiversity is integrated into development management and strategic planning decisions.

Biodiversity Action Plan (2024–2028): A Wilder Stevenage

2.10. Biodiversity is the variety of life all around us, from garden insects to ancient trees, found everywhere from window boxes to wild landscapes. It underpins our daily lives, providing clean air and water, fertile soil, food, climate regulation, and contributing to our economy, health, wellbeing and quality of life.

2.11. In the last 50 years, 76 species (1% of those assessed) became extinct in Hertfordshire; more than three species every two years. Of these, 35 were invertebrates, 26 were plants, 13 were vertebrates and 2 were lichens. A total of 1,446 species (19% of those assessed) are currently threatened with extinction in

Hertfordshire. This includes over 1,000 invertebrates and 260 plants. A Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is a strategic document, developed at national or local levels, to protect, conserve, and enhance the variety of life (species, habitats, ecosystems) by setting specific goals, identifying priority areas, and outlining actions. Its core purpose is to reverse nature's decline, manage the environment better, and creating a healthy natural legacy for future generations through collaboration and targeted efforts.

2.12. The focus and objectives of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) are:

Habitat Focus: Grasslands, woodlands, hedgerows, wetlands, and urban green spaces.
Key Objective: Enhance habitats, connectivity and ecological networks.

2.13. This plan outlines strategic actions across various habitat types to support biodiversity shown in the Table 2:

Table 2:

Habitat	Actions
Grasslands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhance species-rich grasslands and roadside verges. ○ Promote sustainable mowing regimes and wildflower planting.
Woodlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improve woodland structure and connectivity. ○ Encourage native tree planting and sustainable woodland management.
Ancient Hedgerows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protect and restore hedgerows using traditional techniques. ○ Promote hedgerow surveys and community involvement.
Wetlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Restore ponds, streams, and wetland habitats. ○ Improve water quality and support aquatic species.
Neighbourhood Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase green infrastructure in urban areas. ○ Support community-led biodiversity projects and education

Climate Adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Integrate biodiversity into climate resilience strategies. ○ Promote nature-based solutions to mitigate climate impacts. ○ Promote native species and reduce invasive species. ○ Support climate resilience through nature-based solutions. ○ Engage communities in biodiversity education and stewardship.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 2.14. BNG has replaced the Council's Biodiversity. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a UK legal requirement under the Environment Act 2021 ensuring most new developments leave habitats measurably better for wildlife, typically requiring a 10% increase in biodiversity. This came into effect in February 2024
- 2.15. Before development begins, an ecologist carries out a baseline survey. This survey maps and measures all the habitats and their condition on the site, such as grassland, trees, ponds, or hedgerows.
- 2.16. On developments that require BNG (there are exemptions), these existing habitats, along with post- development habitats (including buildings, roads, and landscaped areas), are entered into a government-designed spreadsheet. This spreadsheet uses carefully calculated formulas to work out how much habitat will be lost or gained with the development.
- 2.17. Any habitat loss must be fully replaced by the same habitat or one of higher distinctiveness, and in addition the developer must deliver at least an extra 10% biodiversity gain. This means the finished project should support more wildlife than the site did before development started.
- 2.18. Habitats can be enhanced or newly created, either:
- on the development site itself (this is the preferred option),
 - elsewhere within the local planning authority, or
 - outside the planning authority area
- 2.19. The further away the replacement habitat is (the less favourable it is in the calculations), the greater the area and/or quality of habitat needs to be created to replace it. All habitat creation or enhancement is paid for by the developer.
- 2.20. These habitats are secured through a legal agreement for 30 years during which time they are monitored on a regular basis to ensure compliance.
- 2.21. Every planning authority must publish data on the previous five years of development requiring BNG within its boundary. The first reporting period from implementation is shorter, covering from February 2024 to January 2026. Reports must outline actions

taken to comply with the biodiversity duty, including quantitative data on biodiversity gains (measured in units), off-site/on-site gains, and future planned actions.

2.22. BNG has replaced the Council's Biodiversity In line with the Environment Act. Developments (depending on scale) must deliver a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity.

Implementation:

- On-site or off-site habitat creation/restoration.
- Legal agreements to secure 30-year habitat management.
- Monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

2.23. Stevenage requires:

- **Minimum 10% Net Gain**
 - Developments must deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain.
- **30-Year Habitat Management**
 - Long-term plans must be secured via legal agreements or conservation covenants.
- **On-site or Off-site Delivery**
 - Biodiversity improvements can be delivered locally or via national credit schemes.

Legal Context

2.24. Under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, public authorities must consider biodiversity in all their functions. Stevenage Borough Council fulfils this duty through strategic planning, development control, and community engagement.

Delivery Mechanisms

2.25. Delivery Mechanisms include:

- Planning Conditions and Obligations: Enforce biodiversity enhancements through Section 106 agreements and planning conditions.
- Partnerships: Collaborate with Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust, Hertfordshire County Council, local schools, and community groups.
- Monitoring: Track progress via habitat surveys, ecological reports, and public feedback.

Section 3: Your future actions

3.1. Stevenage Borough Councils plans to fulfil the biodiversity duty over the next five years by:

- Monitoring BNG units for all relevant developments through specialised software.
- Ensure biodiversity training is incorporated for all staff.
- Annual ecological surveys carried out at key sites where necessary.
- Use GIS mapping to track changes over time.

- Establish enhanced habitat and maintain habitats already created on Stevenage Borough Council lands.

Section 4: Biodiversity net gain information

- 4.1. Gain plans are a requirement of planning approval. They are required when a planning application triggers BNG and doesn't come under any of the exemption categories. A biodiversity gain plan is a document where in a single document it shows how a development will achieve 10% biodiversity net gain. It sets out responsible parties, the on-site and off-site units of the pre- and post- development biodiversity and cites the documents that support this data.
- 4.2. Within Stevenage Borough Council between the start dates of 12th February 2024 for major developments and 2nd April 2024 for minor developments, and the end date of 1st January 2026 there have been 10 applications that required BNG and 5 approved gain plans. Out of the 5 approved gain plans, 4 include both on- and off- site habitat enhancements and 1 has on-site enhancements only. There were no applications that secured biodiversity uplift through statutory credits.
- 4.3. Statutory credits are the least favourable way to achieve the required net gain. They are credits bought from the government which are then used for their biodiversity projects. They are priced to make them unattractive to developers.
- 4.4. The following tables were created by DEFRA as a template for local planning authority statutory reporting of BNG data and have been completed with data from Stevenage Borough Council planning authority.
- 4.5. The losses and gains of biodiversity by area habitat type are in Table 3. These figures are for the approved gain plans only and include both on-site and off-site from within and without the borough. Cropland and individual trees show losses in area whilst grassland, heathland and urban show gains. As regards unit change apart from cropland all other relevant habitats show a unit gain. There is a net gain of 1 habitat unit from the 5 gain plans.
- 4.6. The difference between the positive and negative unit and the positive and negative area change can be explained by an increase in condition of the proposed habitats resulting in an increase in proposed units, whilst the area may still decrease.

Table 3: Combined On- and Off-site Baseline vs Post-Development Biodiversity and Habitat Area by Habitat Type

Habitat Type - Area	Total biodiversity units at baseline	Total hectares at baseline	Total biodiversity units post - development	Total hectares post - development	Net change in biodiversity units	Net change in hectares
Cropland	0.51	0.18	0	0	-0.510	-0.180
Grassland	0.65	0.2	1.91	0.353	1.260	0.153
Heathland and Scrub	0	0	0.45	0.071	0.450	0.071
Lakes	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000
Sparsely Vegetated Land	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000
Urban	0.17	0.31	0.12	0.4	-0.050	0.090
Wetland	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000
Woodland and Forest	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000
Intertidal sediment	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000
Coastal Saltmarsh	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000
Rocky Shore	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000
Coastal Lagoons	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000
Intertidal Hard Structures	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000
Watercourse footprint	not applicable		not applicable		not applicable	
Individual Trees	1.18	0.15	1.03	0.19	-0.15	0.04
Total	2.51	0.84	3.51	1.01	1.00	0.17

4.7. The losses and gains of biodiversity by linear habitat type are in Table 4. This shows a gain in hedgerow habitat.

Table 4: Combined On- and Off-site Baseline vs Post-Development Biodiversity and Habitat length by Habitat Type

ID	Habitat type - hedgerows and lines of trees	Total units at baseline	Total kilometers at baseline	Total units post - development	Total kilometers post - development	Net change in units	Net change in kilometers
A	Species-rich native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch						
B	Species-rich native hedgerow with trees						
C	Species-rich native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch						
D	Native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch						
E	Species -rich native hedgerow						
F	Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch						
G	Native hedgerow with trees	0	0	0.11	0.04	0.11	0.04
H	Ecologically valuable line of trees						
I	Ecologically valuable line of trees - associated with bank or ditch						
J	Native hedgerow						
K	Line of trees						
L	Line of trees associated with bank or ditch						
M	Non-native and ornamental hedgerow						
	Total	0	0	0.11	0.04	0.11	0.04

4.8. Table 5 Shows that 96% of the off-site biodiversity units within the 5 approved gain plans were located out of Stevenage LPA boundary.

Table 5: Location of off-site biodiversity units

Location of off-site biodiversity units	Total	Proportion
Number of off-site biodiversity units located inside LPA boundary or NCA of impact site.	0.04	0.037
Number of off-site biodiversity units located outside LPA or NCA of impact site, but in neighbouring LPA or NCA	0	0
Number of off-site biodiversity units located outside of LPA or NCA of impact site and neighbouring LPA or NCA	1.03	0.963

4.9. In summary, out of a total of 1.11 units gained from development gain plans between 12th Feb 2024 and 1st Jan 2026, 1.03 were bought from outside the Stevenage Local Authority boundary and 0.08 were created within the boundary.

4.10. Stevenage developments at present have led to a loss of mainly grassland, hedges, scrub and individual trees.

4.11. Off-site gain sites for developments within Stevenage are located in North Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Surrey.

4.12. The reasons for the imbalance in the number of units created within and without the borough council boundaries are due to the location of gain sites (habitat banks). Gain sites are areas of land where new habitats – like meadows, woodlands, hedgerows, and

ponds – are strategically added and managed for the long term (initially 30 years) to create greater biodiversity. This area can be divided into habitat units. These units can then be sold to developers to compensate for habitats lost because of the development.

- 4.13. Gains sites can be created through a landowner having an s106 agreement with a Local Authority (LA), or by having a conservation covenant (legal agreement) with a Responsible Body (a government recognised and registered organisation), or an LA having a conservation covenant or s106 with a neighbouring LA, or potentially with another separate department within the same LA. The legal agreement lasts for 30 years. The land for the gain site must be mapped, measured and surveyed; and a gain plan and a habitat management and monitoring plan must be created. This site can then be registered with the government as a gain site. Once registered, the gain site cannot be changed for 30 years except in exceptional circumstances and with application to the Secretary of State. The habitat units can then be sold. The LPA or Responsible Body would then oversee and ensure the gain site is being managed correctly by reviewing monitoring reports.
- 4.14. There are no gain sites at present in Hertfordshire. There are three that will be on-line soon, two in North Herts District Council which is a collaboration between North Herts and HCC, and one in St Albans City and District Council.
- 4.15. Biodiversity Net Gain monetises nature in very specific terms dependent on habitat type, size, distinctiveness, condition, location and whether it is included in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Gain site habitat unit pricing then depends on the market values and the availability of the habitat. The most expensive to buy at present are watercourse units at an average of £203,861 per unit. The least expensive is Other Neutral Grassland at an average of £24,098 per unit. These costs reflect the cost to create, maintain and monitor the habitat over 30 years. The greater the number of gain sites coming online will probably lead to the reduction in these prices. General opinion at present is that supply will outstrip demand. Local gain sites would have an advantage within the metric for local developments, but they would still have to price competitively to ensure this advantage is not undercut from gain sites elsewhere. Nearly 5,000 hectares in England are now set aside for restoration and measurable biodiversity uplift.
- 4.16. Stevenage recognises the benefit of retaining habitat within its boundaries via gain sites for the town and its communities. The team are at present in the process of assessing the feasibility of creating, maintaining and monitoring gain sites for 30 years within the borough. The considerations include legal, financial, resource capacity, location, viable scale, achievable habitat type and condition, and the BNG market. There is no guarantee that a gain site will return its outlay from the market.
- 4.17. There has been little evidence that BNG is slowing the planning process.

Section 5: Information about your Authority

5.1. Stevenage Borough Council is a district level local authority responsible for delivering a wide range of public services. Its core functions include:

- Planning and development management, including preparing and implementing the Local Plan and working through planning applications within the Borough.
- Housing management, including council-owned homes and estates.
- Environmental services, such as open spaces, parks, waste and recycling.
- Community services, including leisure, culture and public health initiatives.
- Regulatory Services such as environmental health and licensing.

5.2. Stevenage is a compact, urban borough of around 25 km² with a population of approximately 90,000 people. The Council manages a significant portfolio of housing estates, parks, green spaces, and community assets across the borough.

How Stevenage Borough Council Can Affect Biodiversity

5.3. Table 6 below shows how the Council works to regulate its impact on the environment.

Table 6:

Council Operation	Positive or Negative impacts on Biodiversity
<p>➤ <u>Land and Estates Management</u></p> <p>The Council manages a network of parks, woodlands, green corridors, amenity grassland, and local nature sites.</p>	<p>Biodiversity can be affected through: Positive impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Habitat creation and enhancement ○ Sustainable management of parks and open spaces ○ Protection of designated sites and wildlife corridors <p>Possible negative impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Intensive maintenance regimes, if not managed; ○ Loss of habitat through redevelopment of council-owned land. <p>The Council work to ensure biodiversity is managed appropriately.</p>
<p>➤ <u>Planning and Development Decisions</u></p>	<p>As the local planning authority, the Council has a major influence on biodiversity through:</p> <p>Positive impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requiring biodiversity net gain; ○ Protecting designated sites and green infrastructure; ○ Embedding climate change policies in the Local Plan and its partial update. <p>Possible Negative impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development pressure on greenfield land if not managed; ○ Fragmentation of habitats if not properly mitigated.
<p>➤ <u>Advice and Guidance</u></p> <p>The Council provides advice to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developers (e.g., pre-application guidance on biodiversity requirements) ● Landowners and community groups ● Internal teams (e.g., housing, estates, and regeneration) 	<p>This advice can promote biodiversity-positive practices or, if insufficient, lead to missed opportunities for enhancement.</p>
<p>➤ <u>Raising Awareness in the Community</u></p>	<p>The Council influences biodiversity through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Public engagement campaigns ● Support for volunteer groups and “friends of” organisations ● Events, education programmes, and community planting schemes <p>These activities help build understanding and support for nature recovery.</p>
<p>➤ <u>Environmental Impact of Council Operations</u></p> <p>The Council's environmental policies and climate strategies help minimise negative impacts and maximise opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.</p>	<p>Council operations can affect biodiversity through:</p> <p>Positive impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sustainable procurement ○ Low-carbon initiatives ○ Nature-based climate adaptation measures <p>Possible Negative impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Vehicle emissions; ○ Use of chemicals or pesticides; ○ Construction and maintenance activities. <p>Therefore, the Council works to ensure its strategies and operations work to ensure biodiversity is properly mitigated</p>

Section 6: Examples of BNG in the Borough

- 6.1. The Council achieved several significant biodiversity improvements during the reporting period. This included adopting both the Green Spaces Strategy and the Tree and Woodland Strategy, each with measures to enhance habitats, increase ecological resilience, and support long-term nature recovery.
- 6.2. Fishers Green – the slope on the sound barrier has been planted with 48 scrub trees and plants including Wych Elm (*Ulmus glabra*), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), Box (*Buxus sempervirens*) and Wayfaring Tree (*Viburnum lantana*) to create an area of approximately 0.2ha of mixed scrub and individual trees. The top and bottom of the grassy banks, at present dominated with False-oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) will be enhanced as meadow.
- 6.3. Ecological evidence continued to guide decision-making. A detailed ecological survey was commissioned to inform habitat improvements at Fishers Green Pond, and a comprehensive bat survey at Fairlands Valley Park is guiding lighting proposals to protect nocturnal species. The survey confirmed the park as a site of county-level importance for bats, with 10 of Hertfordshire's 12 species recorded
- 6.4. A programme of specialist orchard-management training was delivered, alongside ongoing implementation of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) actions over the winter period, including targeted pond and meadow restoration.
- 6.5. New species-rich meadows were established at Fairlands Southfield and St Nicholas Park, complementing extensive bulb-planting across multiple sites—introducing naturalised swathes of crocus, snowdrop, narcissus, and tulip to enhance early-season pollinator support.
- 6.6. Tree-planting initiatives progressed with the creation of three micro-woodlands at St Nicks, Hampson, and Shephalbury Park. Three additional sites are currently under development at Stebbings Farm, Chells Park, and Peartree Park.
- 6.7. Work to address invasive Himalayan balsam also advanced: the Environment Agency is investigating the deployment of a rust fungus trial at Wychdell Flood Meadow. We also developed a close partnership with the River Beane Restoration Association to coordinate action along Stevenage Brook.
- 6.8. To strengthen monitoring, reporting, and delivery of the Biodiversity Action Plan, the Council adopted the Kausal software platform, enabling clearer oversight of progress and improved data management.
- 6.9. The annual butterfly survey—delivered by Green Space Volunteers—recorded the highest counts to date, demonstrating both a thriving monitoring network and encouraging signs for local species populations.
- 6.10. BNG / UKHab surveys were carried out at the Shackledell extension at Fairlands Valley Park (other neutral grassland of moderate condition) and Lantern Wood (other

woodland: mixed of moderate condition). The Shackledell extension was modified grassland and has been seeded with native wildflower seeds.

Section 7: Other strategies

- 7.1. The Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) provides a countywide, evidence-based framework for identifying the most important areas for nature recovery and the actions needed to restore habitats and species. As a district level authority within Hertfordshire, Stevenage Borough Council must take account of the LNRS when exercising its biodiversity duty under the Environment Act 2021.
- 7.2. Stevenage will use the LNRS to guide how biodiversity is embedded across its functions. This includes:
- **Aligning local policies and strategies**—such as the Local Plan Partial Update, Green Infrastructure Strategy, and climate adaptation work—with LNRS priorities and opportunity areas
 - **Ensuring planning decisions** reflect the LNRS’s spatial priorities for habitat creation, enhancement, and connectivity
 - **Using LNRS mapping and evidence** to inform assessments of development proposals, especially regarding biodiversity net gain and habitat connectivity.
- 7.3. Stevenage Borough Council will consider the Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) by aligning its policies, land management, planning decisions, and community engagement activities with the LNRS’s priorities and opportunity areas. The LNRS provides the strategic framework that guides how the Council contributes to nature recovery, supports biodiversity net gain, and embeds ecological enhancement across its functions as part of its statutory biodiversity duty.
- 7.4. Biodiversity considerations will also be aligned with:
- the Council’s Biodiversity Action Plan: A Wilder Stevenage 2024–2028
 - the Council’s Woodland and Tree Strategy 2025 – 2035
 - the Council’s Stevenage Climate Change Strategy (September 2020) and
 - Making Stevenage Even Better: Corporate Plan 2024–2027 (April 2024).

Section 8: How have the Council raised awareness and educated the community

- 8.1. There is a local volunteering group called the Stevenage Green Space Volunteers, run by SBC Green Spaces team. Volunteer events are often planned and implemented within the recommendations of the BAP to either create environments or maintain them. There are a variety of activities such as tree planting, wildflower seed sowing, pond maintenance, coppicing etc. The volunteers are trained on the practical skills to achieve these tasks but also informed of the background and reasoning for the work and

outcome involved.

- 8.2. There is a recently launched Stevenage Borough Council website (<https://www.climate.stevenage.gov.uk/biodiversity>) that explains biodiversity, the local BAP, and what stages the BAP recommendations are at regarding planning and implementation. The information from the BNG duty report will be incorporated into the webpages to enable easy access.
- 8.3. There are local SBC events such as Stevenage Day and Teddy Bears Picnic. In 2025 the theme was Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics and within this there were activities for children and adults that explore biodiversity.

Section 9: Conclusion

- 9.1. Stevenage Borough Council has taken significant steps to conserve and enhance biodiversity across the borough.
- 9.2. The next five-year period will focus on strengthening ecological networks, improving monitoring, and embedding biodiversity further into strategic decision-making.

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Meeting Cabinet
Portfolio Area All
Date 11 March 2026



CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER THREE 2025/26

KEY DECISION

Authors Chloe Pullen
Contributor Strategic Leadership Team
Lead Officers Tom Pike
Richard Protheroe
Contact Officer Richard Protheroe

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To highlight the Council's performance across key priorities and projects for Quarter Three 2025/26 and provide an update on progress against current strategic risks.
- 1.2 For Members' information, a presentation will be provided at the Cabinet meeting which will cover updates in relation to delivery against Corporate Plan Priorities and the key themes emerging from the Quarter Three performance data.
- 1.3 The Council has successfully completed another quarter of Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) surveys, meeting regulatory responsibilities and continuing to build a robust evidence base for understanding tenant perceptions. Notably, almost all indicators have achieved their highest performance since surveys began.
- 1.4 Alongside performance data, the report provides the regular quarterly update on complaints made to the Housing Ombudsman and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the service performance against 54 corporate performance measures and progress of key projects in Quarter Three 2025/26 through the Making Stevenage Even Better Programme (Appendix A) be noted.
- 2.2 That the proposal to replace the two Housing Complaints Satisfaction measures is agreed (section 4.3.9).
- 2.3 That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director (RP), to approve amendments to the Landlord's Complaints Policy arising from the Housing Ombudsman Service review, having consulted with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Housing Development (section 4.4.4).
- 2.4 That the improvement actions being taken to improve void turnaround times and deliver value for money for tenants be noted (section 4.3.2).
- 2.5 That the strategic risk updates (section 4.6) be noted.

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
- 3.2 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.
 - 3.3 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 projects 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 are communicated to Members and residents.



Fig 1.

- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 There are 10 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 the future. The remaining 41 measures are relevant to the Council's focus on what matters to residents and progress made against the MSEB objectives.
- 3.6 An additional four measures have been included for Quarter 3 to support the introduction of Awaab's Law on 27th October 2025. These measures replace the two previous Damp and Mould measures. This makes 55 measures in the suite including 10 baseline measures.

LOCAL OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

- 3.7 The Local Outcomes Framework (LOF) is the Government's new national outcomes-based performance framework designed to measure progress against shared priority outcomes delivered at a local level by councils and their partners. It brings together a focused set of outcome areas and indicators, drawing on existing national data, covering themes such as housing and homelessness, health and wellbeing, children and adult social care, neighbourhood satisfaction, environment and transport. The Framework is intended to shift performance assessment away from activity and inputs towards a clearer focus on outcomes that matter most to residents, while strengthening transparency, accountability and collaboration between central and local government.
- 3.8 The first edition of the Local Outcomes Framework was published in February 2026 and is expected to begin being used from April 2026 as part of ongoing discussions on local performance and improvement. Stevenage Borough Council responded to the national consultation on the draft Framework in 2025, providing feedback to ensure that the approach recognises local context, the role of district and borough councils, and the importance of partnership working in influencing outcomes. The LOF will enable Stevenage to benchmark performance against comparable areas and support evidence-based conversations with partners on priorities for improvement.

3.9 There are 16 'Priority Outcome' areas that represent the government's top priorities and ambitions. Each priority outcome is underpinned by metrics drawn from existing data sources to avoid new data collection requirements. There are a limited number of placeholders for metrics that do not yet exist, but are in development, and will be included in future.

Priority	Indicative total number of measures	Local/ County/ National/ Other
Housing supply	0 (measures under development)	Likely to be a combination
Housing quality and safety	5	Local and MHCLG
Homelessness and rough sleeping	5	Local and MHCLG
Multiple disadvantage	7	MHCLG and Health
Best start in life	6	Department for Education
Every child achieving and thriving	17	County and Department for Education
Keeping children safe (children's social care)	Aligned to national CSC framework 16	County and Department for Education
Health and wellbeing	16	Health
Adult social care – quality	6	County
Adult social care – independence, choice and control	8	County
Adult social care – neighbourhoods and integration	2	County
Neighbourhoods	13	DCMS and DEFRA
Environment, circular economy and climate change	7	Health and Defra
Transport and local infrastructure	7	Transport
Economic prosperity (contextual)	16	ONS and MHCLG
Child poverty (contextual)	1	Department for Work and Pensions

Fig 2.

3.10 The Government’s full Local Outcomes Framework report, along with consultation feedback, will be included as a background document to this Cabinet report for reference.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 QUARTER THREE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

4.1.1 As outlined in section 3, the corporate performance suite has been aligned with the five MSEB priorities set out in Figure 1. Progress against performance measures is presented alongside key projects. 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.

4.1.2 Key highlights from the MSEB programmes are summarised in section 4.2. For further information on the aims and objectives of the MSEB programme in 2025/26, please refer to MSEB Priorities & Projects 2025/26, which was presented to the Cabinet in July 2025: [MSEB Priorities & Projects 2025/26](#)

4.1.3 The total number of measures by Red, Amber & Green (RAG) rating is shown in Figure 3 below. The full set of current corporate performance measures results and MSEB projects are attached at Appendix A.

Q3 2025/26 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW						
MSEB Programme	Baseline measure for 2025-26	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (Within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (Urgent improvement action required)	Unavailable Data	Projects Reported Qtr. 3
More Social Affordable and Good Quality Homes (27 measures)	8	13	3	1	2	25
Transforming Our Town (3 measures)	0	3	0	0	0	14
Thriving Neighbourhoods (12 measures)	2	9*	0	1	0	12
	*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					

Fig 3.

Q3 2025/26 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW						
MSEB Programme	Baseline measure for 2025-26	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (Within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (Urgent improvement action required)	Unavailable Data	Projects Reported Qtr. 3
Tackling Climate Change (1 measures)	0	0	1	0	0	6
Balancing the Budget (12 measures)	0	12	0	0	0	9
Cross Cutting (0 measures)	0	0	0	0	0	8
TOTAL (55)	10	36	4	2	2	74

4.1.4 There were several strong areas of performance this quarter which are highlighted below:

- Compliance certification and documentation for Gas Safety, Fire Safety, Asbestos, Legionella and Lifts are at 100%.
- There are no overdue Fire Remedial Actions outstanding for the third quarter in a row; this has reduced from 286 medium overdue actions and 312 low overdue actions in Quarter two 2024/25.
- The percentage of remedial actions completed across corporate buildings has exceeded target and is at its highest level in the last year, with the overall compliance position continuing to improve.
- Satisfaction with the CSC customer service remains high at 92.6%; however, as always, it is recognised that there is still room for further improvement to be made in this area.

4.2 MSEB PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

4.2.1 Alongside performance, the Council also captures quarterly updates on the milestones associated with the strategic priorities set out in the MSEB Corporate Plan and subsequent service planning and priority setting activities.

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

4.2.3 All programmes have made progress on the projects agreed at Cabinet in July 2025, with Quarter Three highlights including:

4.2.3.1 More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	
Brent Court Independent Living Scheme	Works are underway, with the new parking area to the south of Brent Court anticipated to hand over in Quarter Four. The Gateway 2 submission has been made, and the outcome is forecasted for March 2026. Demolition of the garages will commence following the handover of the parking.
Burwell Phase Two	Work continues with first floor slab installed on site. Brick and block work will continue with a view to top out this financial year
Courtlands	Progress has been made with electrical works; this will enable more rapid construction. The expectation is that the show home will be available in Quarter Four. The delays associated with the electrical works has meant it has not been possible to secure sales as initially anticipated. As a result, a restructuring of the loan will be required to match the revised anticipated sales cashflow.
Garage Site Sales	Plans for the Broadview garages site have progressed and are anticipated to be submitted to Planning in Quarter Four. Work to secure full ownership of the various garage sites is underway. A funding bid for £150K has been submitted to the Brownfield Land Release Fund to facilitate demolition at the Broadview site. The garages currently have asbestos issues and there are a limited number being purchased.
The Oval	Work continues with vacant possession of the Rabani church now secured, and demolition works beginning in the near future. A breaking ground event took place in January, and works will progress at pace. Work to secure vacant possession for Phase 2 is also progressing, with a lease surrender of the Times Club now secured.
Awaab's Law	Awaab's Law has been fully integrated into the policy and procedures for Damp and Mould. The suite of KPI's is being reported and monitored monthly through Executive Housing Working Group.
Resident Engagement and Scrutiny	Good progress is being made with a Tenant Chair appointed for the High Rise Building Residents Meeting, under formalised guidance and work is progressing to recruit an overarching tenants panel.

4.2.3.2 Transforming Our Town	
Pioneering Young STEM Futures	The programme continues to progress with increased delivery of the future focused STEM pathway programme. Access to All has launched to take opportunities directly to students, connecting STEM experiences to careers and clear next steps.
Stevenage Works	Stevenage Works held a 2 week pilot for a Care work based academy programme. 12 out of 12 students who attended were successful and have

	since found work in the care sector. The same pilot took place in November and all 11 participants were successful.
Arts & Heritage Trail	Following the successful pilot on new public art at the Bus Interchange, officers undertook a public call for four new pieces of artwork. Four artists have now been chosen and officers are supporting a detailed design alongside community engagement to inform the final artwork.
Diversification of Retail	An Accountable Body Agreement has been executed with the owners of Westgate, under the new gateway to retail core project. This project looks to improve the South-West Entrance to the centre driven by the need to improve the visual appeal, creating a more welcoming visitor experience which integrates usability and improves access.
Indoor Market Move	The indoor market has relocated to Boston House on Park Place. By relocating to Park Place, the market will continue to play a vital role in supporting small businesses and encouraging residents to shop local as it has done for the last 50 years. The reopening event on 6 December drew over 1,000 visitors. There are a small amount of outstanding works to be completed throughout Quarter Four which will be undertaken outside trading hours to accommodate and minimise any disruption.
SG1 Plot A	Construction is progressing at SG1 Plot A (formerly Swingate House). A topping out ceremony for Claxton House has taken place in Quarter Four.
Sports and Leisure Centre	Following successful planning permission, Officers received approval from Cabinet and Full Council to enter into full contract with Morgan Sindall for the new Sports & Leisure Centre. Final detailed design elements are being considered with a start on site anticipated in January 2026.

4.2.3.3 Thriving Neighbourhoods	
Social Inclusion Partnership	The partnership continues to be formalised as the Stevenage Co-operative Action Network. The process is progressing steadily, with time being taken to ensure the structure and arrangements are right. Partner organisations are now taking steps to agree the governance documents. Once agreed, they will be submitted to Co-operatives UK to check suitability.
Operation Educ8	Filming has now concluded for the creation of a sustainable resource aimed at raising awareness of complex issues. The project has been supported by local schools and the police and is currently in the editing phase. The aim for Quarter Four is to host a viewing event to share the finished resource with partners and key stakeholders. This will support awareness, prevention and safeguarding efforts.
Green Spaces and Tree and Woodland Strategies	The strategies have been approved and published. The ten-year plans will ensure the delivery of a network of well-used, well-loved and well cared for spaces that can be enjoyed by the whole community. They will provide opportunities for health and wellbeing, wildlife, culture, learning and community.

Play Area Improvement Programme	The final sites have been completed. The team are currently planning for the 2026/27 work programme subject to capital approval.
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4.2.3.4 Tackling Climate Change

Climate Action Street Plan	The project has been rebranded into Green Neighbourhood Project and CIL Green Projects. A series of project options are being considered for delivery in the short term.
Simpler Recycling	Works are progressing on with caddies being delivered to all properties from w/c 12th January. Trial areas in Symonds Green and Martins Wood have had collections from 2nd February. The whole town roll out will commence 2nd March. Communications were delivered at Christmas, with additional information included within the caddies. There will also be adverts on two buses and will use our website and social media platforms to promote.

4.2.3.5 Balancing the Budget

GF & HRA Savings	<p>Based on the Quarter 3 budget monitoring for the 2025/26 financial year, the Council is on track to achieve the majority of its planned savings, representing 97% of the total savings programme. However, one savings scheme is not expected to meet its target this year: the relocation of the Indoor Market to Park Place. Although the market has now opened, the delayed opening date means the full savings will not be realised in 2025/26 and are instead reprofiled for 2026/27.</p> <p>Looking ahead, elements of the budget savings programme required to balance the budget have now been incorporated into the General Fund and HRA Budgets for 2026/27. These budgets have been approved by Cabinet and reviewed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and approved by Full Council in February 2026.</p>
HRA Business Plans	The new iteration of the 30 Year HRA Business Plan was approved by Cabinet in November 2025. Progress will be monitored throughout the next financial year, aligned to quarterly budget monitoring. The 2026/27 budget was an improvement on the HRA Business Plan by circa £320k.

4.3 PERFORMANCE MEASURES – AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

4.3.1 As highlighted in Figure 3, there are two measures that are red this quarter. The table below outlines the actual performance and the target that was set for the performance measures. The paragraphs that follow set out the reasons for improvement in Quarter Three.

<u>MEASURE NAME</u>	<u>BUSINESS UNIT</u>	Actual – Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual – Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual – Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual – Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual – Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD
More Social, Affordable and Good Quality Homes								
Average time taken to relet a routine void (GN) key to key	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	85 days	63 days	54 days	84 days	63 days	35 days	30 days
Thriving Neighbourhoods								
Value (£) invested into neighbourhood areas from UKSPF	Housing & Neighbourhoods	£142,423	£266,365	0	0	£3,500	£13,000	£55,278

Fig.4

General Needs Voids

- 4.3.2 Quarter 3 presented a temporary challenge for the Council in managing void properties, primarily due to staffing shortages within the Empty Homes Team until halfway through the quarter.
- 4.3.3 The majority of properties required asbestos removals during Quarter 3 which caused further delays, 26 standard void properties required up to date surveys and subsequent asbestos removals causing delays to the void works stage. On average, for a new survey to be requested and received takes 3-5 days and removals from order requested a further 5-7 days.
- 4.3.4 Despite these pressures, 43 standard void properties were successfully let during the quarter, including 4 historic voids requiring Aids and Adaptations and 5 properties offered to downsizing tenants. These properties had been vacant for an extended period, but their completion reflects improvements in processes and closer collaboration between all Housing Teams. Excluding these cases, average turnaround improves from 63 days to 52 days. The table below (Figure 5) shows the impact of hard to let properties.

Voids General Needs	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26
Number of properties let	43	20	43
Average time taken to relet a routine General Needs Void	54 days	84 days	63 days
Excluding Hard to lets	54 days	52 days	52 days

Fig. 5

- 4.3.5 Contractor performance has also improved 23 days average Quarter 2, 21 days average Quarter 3 and further enhancements are planned. Two dedicated contractors for void works will be appointed by the end of February 2026, and a pilot in-house team is expected to launch in Quarter 4, adding resources and supporting innovation.
- 4.3.6 Property condition remains a challenge, with many voids (22 of 89 completed in Quarter 3) requiring substantial work before re-letting. While these homes do not meet the criteria for Major Works, they still demand considerable effort/cost.

The Council continues to focus on efficient turnaround without compromising quality. Accountability measures have been significantly reinforced to ensure properties are returned in an acceptable condition and costs are recovered where appropriate.

- 4.3.7 In Quarter 3, recharges were applied to 50 properties, totalling circa £96,000, primarily for the clearance of belongings left inside and outside homes. Clearance was required on 7 out of the 43 properties (averaging 4 days from start to completion) amounting to 70% of recharges along with standard repairs to damaged internal doors and extensive environmental cleans. Higher cost recharges related to decent homes elements (damaged kitchens) are accounted for through the major void pathways.
- 4.3.8 To prevent avoidable costs, Tenancy Leaving Standards are issued at the point of notice to quit or transfer, providing clear guidance on how properties should be left and outlining tenant responsibilities. Any works identified as the tenant's responsibility are fully rechargeable to the outgoing tenant or their estate.
- 4.3.9 To strengthen consistency and transparency, the Tenants Recharge Policy is currently being finalised under the leadership of the Head of Housing Management. This policy will provide a robust framework for managing recharges, ensuring fairness and clarity for tenants while supporting the council's commitment to maintaining property standards
- 4.3.10 Although some properties were harder to let within target timescales due to specific challenges, the overall trend since the beginning of the year has been positive. The Council has developed an expanded improvement plan to sustain progress, achieve the 35 day target, and deliver value for money for tenants as presented to the Executive Housing Working Group in January 2026.

Value (£) invested into neighbourhood areas from UKSPF

- 4.3.11 Although expenditure is currently behind the quarterly profile and the indicator is reporting outside target and tolerance, all UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) funding is allocated and projects are scheduled for delivery in Quarter 4.
- 4.3.12 UKSPF monitoring returns are submitted to government on a six-monthly basis and targets are set annually, so the quarterly status reflects internal profiling rather than a breach of government reporting requirements.
- 4.3.13 To further ease time pressure on delivery, the deadline for eligible UKSPF expenditure has been extended from March 2026 to September 2026. Despite this extension, the Council has not reprofiled its targets for this year, as delivery plans continue to assume full spend by the end of March 2026.
- 4.3.14 As a result, while spend to date is lower than the original quarterly profile, the Council remains confident that the full UKSPF allocation will be spent in 2025–26 and that no funding will need to be returned.

Housing Complaints Handling

- 4.3.15 The two measures that relate to Housing Complaint Satisfaction (stage one and two) are unable to be reported this quarter.
- 4.3.16 The Housing service began piloting a new automated transactional satisfaction survey for complaint handling as part of the Govmetric system implementation in July 2025. It is noted that initial results have indicated a reduction in satisfaction from the previous independent phone-based surveys with respondents referring to the outcome of their complaint, rather than how the complaint was handled.

- 4.3.17 A complaints performance clinic was held in December 2025 to focus on this area and revise the transactional survey methodology and approach. Work is underway to review this approach, and make sure the measure is fit for purpose. This will ensure the Council is following good practice and is able to obtain robust and transparent feedback.
- 4.3.18 In the meantime, the Tenant Satisfaction Survey which is an industry benchmarked indicator set by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), provides an insight into 'Satisfaction with complaint handling', which for Quarter 3 stands at 32.6% which is an uptick of 4.8% when compared to Quarter 2. The Tenant Satisfaction Perception Survey results are gathered by HouseMark, an independent body specialising in benchmarking of housing services, using the technical requirements as set out by the RSH. It is advised that for now, this Tenant Satisfaction Measure replaces the two Housing Complaints Satisfaction measures until the future approach can be resolved.

4.4 OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINT HANDLING

- 4.4.1 As set out within the Council's 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 (LGSCO), for areas such as homelessness, the housing register and associated advice.
- 4.4.2 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.
- 4.4.3 In line with the Housing Ombudsman's Statutory Code of Complaint Handling, the Council is required to report the outcome of such cases, and this is provided to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.
- 4.4.4 The Housing Ombudsman Service recently undertook a review of the Landlord's Complaints Policy, and the recommendations have now been received. The recommended changes are marginal in nature, equating to clarifications in wording. It is recommended that these minor amendments are delegated following consultation with the Portfolio Holder, and a summary will be included in the next Performance Report in Q4, for transparency.
- 4.4.5 The table in Appendix B provides details of the six cases where an Ombudsman has made a determination in Quarter 3 (2025/26), in this quarter all cases were from the Housing Ombudsman Service. No cases were determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO), in this period. In all cases, any orders or agreed actions have been completed.
- 4.4.6 It should be noted that there continues to be lengthy delays in the Housing Ombudsman Service requesting information from SBC where Stage 2 complaints have been escalated to them, as well delays to decision-making, despite landlords being required to meet very tight timescales not only for the provision of evidence but also for compliance with determinations. There are currently 6 legacy complaints from 2023 and 2024 where the Housing Ombudsman has not yet made a determination due to a backlog in casework. Service improvements for these outstanding cases will have already been implemented where Stage 2 complaints were upheld or partially upheld. There are no specific trends in relation to the outstanding Ombudsman cases.
- 4.4.7 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) launched its Complaint's Handling Code ("the Code") in February 2024. The Code has been

issued as “advice and guidance” for all local councils in England. Whilst adoption is not statutory, the LGSCO, state that councils should consider the Code when developing complaint handling policies and procedures and when responding to complaints.

4.4.8 The LGSCO has confirmed that it intends to start considering the Code as part of its processes from April 2026 at the earliest and that if a council decides not to follow the Code they would expect it to have a good reason for this. MHCLG have confirmed that that councils are best place to decide whether to adopt the Code for themselves but encourages consideration for its adoption.

4.5 TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES

4.5.1 The Council has completed another quarter of Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) surveys, bringing the year-to-date total to 736 responses. The current margin of error stands at $\pm 3.43\%$, well within the regulatory requirement of $\pm 4.0\%$.

4.5.2 As seen in the table below (Figure 6), Quarter 3 results show a positive trend, with nearly all measures improving on 2024/25 scores. Notably, almost all indicators have achieved their highest performance since TSM surveys began, surpassing the previous record set in Quarter 1 2025/26.

Ref	Question	Previous Year (24/25)	Q3 2025/26	Difference (+/-)
TP01	Overall satisfaction	66.9%	76.5%	+0.7%
TP02	Repairs service overall	70.8%	79.8%	+2.7%
TP03	Speed of repairs	64.4%	76.7%	+2.1%
TP04	Home is well-maintained	67.7%	78.9%	+0.8%
TP05	Home is safe	76.4%	88%	+1.4%
TP06	Listens to views and acts	55.1%	67.2%	+2.2%
TP07	Keeps tenants informed	61.6%	75%	+3.6%
TP08	Treats tenants fairly and with respect	73.3%	86.5%	+2.9%
TP09	Complaint handling	34.1%	32.6%	-1.5%
TP10	Communal areas are clean and well-maintained	64.0%	76.9%	+1.6%
TP11	Contribution to neighbourhood	63.1%	74.5%	+4.0%
TP12	ASB handling	57.9%	69.6%	+3.0%

Fig.6

- 4.5.3 It should be noted that whilst these results currently show an improving position, analysis of the data illustrates that the Council may now be reaching a point of plateauing and the expectation is that the level of improvement will slow down or halt, and we will see quarter on quarter variances that are both positive and negative. This trend is being reported across the housing sector and has been recognised by the Regulator of Social Housing as being in line with their expectations going forward.
- 4.5.4 Analysis of responses to the two non-prescribed questions highlights:
- Drivers of high satisfaction (TP01): Good customer service, efficient repairs, and positive staff attitudes.
 - Drivers of dissatisfaction (TP01): Slow repair completion and poor communication.
- 4.5.5 The final survey wave is scheduled for February–March 2026, increasing the sample size to 1,000 responses, exceeding regulatory requirements and further strengthening the Council’s understanding of tenant experience.
- 4.5.6 Performance remains consistent with long-term trends, and year-end scores are expected to surpass 2024/25 results.

4.6 STRATEGIC RISK

- 4.6.1 The strategic risks were considered by Corporate Risk Group on 5 February 2026 and are due to be considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 24 March 2026.
- 4.6.2 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.

HIGHLIGHTED RISKS

- 4.6.3 The strategic risk relating to Balancing the Budget has been reviewed in light of the Fair Funding Settlement and the certainty that provides regarding Government funding for the next three years.
- 4.6.4 Consideration is also being given to how risks relating to Council companies are captured within the Strategic Risk Register

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

5.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

5.3 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

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

5.4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

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

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

5.5 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

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

5.6 OTHER CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

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

6 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- Strategic Risk Register (Part II Audit Committee Report)
- Annual Governance Statement 2024/25
- MSEB Corporate Performance Suite 2025/26
- MSEB Priorities & Projects 2025/26
- Local Outcomes Framework

7 APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Quarter Three Corporate Performance Compendium
- Appendix B – Quarter Three Ombudsman Case Update

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Corporate Performance Report 2025/26
Quarter 3 (October, November, December)



Key to Performance Status Symbols

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

Key to Milestone Status Symbols

- ▲** - Severe delays
- - Some delays
- ★** - On track
- ✔** - Completed

MORE SOCIAL, AFFORDABLE & GOOD QUALITY HOMES 2025/26 PERFORMANCE

	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Comments
Page 55 % of emergency damp & mould investigations and safety works completed within 24hrs of award process (AWA)					100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	31/12/2025 Two cases were logged and completed within the 24 hour target.
% of relevant safety works for significant hazards completed within 5 working days of damp and mould					92.00%	100.00%	100.00%	31/12/2025 Contractor "Principal" has been issued multiple jobs, with the majority attended on time. Full automation of contractor performance tracking is in progress via the new contractor portal, scheduled for completion in the coming weeks. All non compliant cases have been due to access issues. There is currently work ongoing across Housing to address no access as a whole.
% of standard damp & mould investigations completed within 10 working days of tenant report (AWAABs)					92.42%	100.00%	100.00%	31/12/2025 This quarter 61 of 66 standard investigations were completed within the 10 working days. Five duplicated work orders caused the shortfall. With these corrected, the KPI would also achieve 100%. Training is being provided to address data accuracy.
% of supplementary preventative works begun within 5 working days of damp and mould investigation co					92.00%	100.00%	100.00%	31/12/2025 Performance data is sourced from the contractor tracker and will be automated through the Housing IT team as part of the portal rollout. All non complaint have been due to access issues. There is work ongoing to address no access cases across Housing.

	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Comments
% of tenants satisfied with how their complaint was handled at stage one (Housing)	55.00%	0.00%		18.00%		40.00%	40.00%	<p>31/12/2025</p> <p>The Housing service began piloting a new automated transactional satisfaction survey for complaint handling as part of the Govmetric system implementation in July 2025. It is noted that initial results have indicated a reduction in satisfaction from the previous independent phone-based surveys with respondents referring to the outcome of their complaint, rather than how the complaint was handled. A complaints performance clinic was held in December 2025 to focus on this area and revise the transactional survey methodology and approach. Work is underway to review this approach, and make sure the measure is fit for purpose. This will ensure the Council is following good practice and is able to obtain robust and transparent feedback.</p> <p>In the meantime, the Tenant Satisfaction Survey which is an industry benchmarked indicator set by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), provides an insight into 'Satisfaction with complaint handling', which for Quarter 3 stands at 32.6%. The Tenant Satisfaction Perception Survey results are gathered by HouseMark, an independent body specialising in benchmarking of housing services, using the technical requirements as set out by the RSH.</p>
Page 56 % of tenants satisfied with how their complaint was handled at stage two (Housing)	27.00%	0.00%		11.00%		40.00%	40.00%	<p>31/12/2025</p> <p>The Housing service began piloting a new automated transactional satisfaction survey for complaint handling as part of the Govmetric system implementation in July 2025. It is noted that initial results have indicated a reduction in satisfaction from the previous independent phone-based surveys with respondents referring to the outcome of their complaint, rather than how the complaint was handled. A complaints performance clinic was held in December 2025 to focus on this area and revise the transactional survey methodology and approach. Work is underway to review this approach, and make sure the measure is fit for purpose. This will ensure the Council is following good practice and is able to obtain robust and transparent feedback.</p> <p>In the meantime, the Tenant Satisfaction Survey which is an industry benchmarked indicator set by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), provides an insight into 'Satisfaction with complaint handling', which for Quarter 3 stands at 32.6%. The Tenant Satisfaction Perception Survey results are gathered by HouseMark, an independent body specialising in benchmarking of housing services, using the technical requirements as set out by the RSH.</p>

	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Comments
Average time taken to relet a routine void (GN). key to key	85.00	63.00	54.00	84.00	63.00	35.00	30.00	31/12/2025 Quarter 3 performance was impacted by temporary staffing shortages and a high number of voids requiring asbestos removal. Despite this, 43 standard void properties were re-let, including several long-term and historic voids, reflecting improved processes and stronger cross-team working. Excluding these cases, average turnaround times improved from 63 days to 52 days, alongside continued improvements in contractor performance. Property condition remains a key challenge, with a proportion of voids requiring significant works prior to re-letting. Accountability has been strengthened through increased recharges and clearer tenancy leaving standards, with further improvements planned through additional contractor capacity, a pilot in-house team, and an expanded improvement plan to achieve the 35 day turnaround target. Further detail is provided in the full report.
Homelessness preventions	82.00	117.00	47.00	101.00	155.00	90.00	120.00	31/12/2025 The Housing Options Team completed 54 homelessness preventions between October and December, demonstrating continued progress in helping households avoid homelessness. This has been supported by improved triage and increased confidence across the team in delivering early interventions. Work continues to understand why some households still approach at a later stage, and this insight will inform further preventative work. The aim remains to increase the proportion of cases resolved through early advice, negotiation, and tenancy sustainment rather than statutory intervention. The team are also exploring how the service can be utilised to be able to assist those engaging with the Income service to avoid eviction.
Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) by the Council (since 2014)	498.00	500.00	501.00	529.00	531.00	529.00	530.00	
Percentage of homes maintained as decent against national minimum DH standard	92.22%	96.64%	96.42%	97.74%	98.82%	98.50%	98.50%	
Percentage repairs & inspections completed first time	95.83%	93.07%	84.86%	94.82%	99.41%	90.00%	90.00%	

	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Comments
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	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
RSH BS05: Percentage of domestic passenger lifts with an in date LOLER inspection	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
RSH CH01 (part 2): Number of stage two complaints made by tenants	57	85	34	69	95			
RSH CH01 (part1): Number of stage one complaints made by tenants	516	688	134	290	450			
RSH CH01 (part1): Number of stage 1 complaints made by tenants and responded to within CH Timescale	493	651	125	267	401			31/12/2025 160 stage 1 complaints were received during the quarter for Housing Services (this excludes Allocations, Options and such like) 136 of these cases were closed: 134 cases were closed within time 2 cases were closed out of time 24 cases were active and within target time at the end of the quarter
RSH CH02 (part2): Number of stage 2 complaints made by tenants and responded to within CH Timescale	51	69	28	51	68			31/12/2025 26 stage 2 complaints were received during the quarter for Housing Services (this excludes Allocations, Options and such like) 17 of these cases were closed: 16 cases were closed within time 1 case was closed out of time 9 cases were active and within target time at the end of the quarter
RSH Number of Overdue Fire Remedial High Risk Actions	0	0	0	0	0			
RSH Number of Overdue Fire Remedial Low Risk Actions	215	122	0	0	0			
RSH Number of Overdue Fire Remedial Medium Risk Actions	159	81	0	0	0			
RSH Number of Overdue Water Remedial Actions	71	59	27	22	9			

	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Comments
RSH Rep1: Proportion of emergency responsive repairs completed within target timescale	99.08%	98.45%	98.30%	99.10%	98.50%	99.00%	99.00%	31/12/2025 Commentary There are no major concerns this quarter. Service performance remains strong, as reflected in completion times of 98.5% for emergency jobs (every late case being down to user date entry error, or would be 100%) and 94.55% for all non-emergency jobs, alongside a first-time fix rate of 98.28%. Of 602 emergency repairs dealt with in Q3 593 were completed on time. Notably, work has commenced this quarter with the Business Change Team to review the end-to-end customer journey and the processes that sit behind the KPIs. This work will focus on two key areas for improvement: the first point of contact and follow-on works, with the ultimate aim of increasing customer satisfaction. Collaboration with the Housing Asset Management Team also continues, particularly in relation to setting and refining KPIs for the year ahead and for the longer term.
RSH Rep2: Proportion of non-emergency (Routine and Urgent) responsive repairs completed within target timescale	77.17%	91.45%	95.60%	94.60%	94.55%	95.00%	95.00%	31/12/2025 Commentary There are no major concerns this quarter. Service performance remains strong, as reflected in completion times of 98.5% for emergency jobs (every late case being down to user date entry error, or would be 100%) and 94.55% for all non-emergency jobs, alongside a first-time fix rate of 98.28%. Notably, work has commenced this quarter with the Business Change Team to review the end-to-end customer journey and the processes that sit behind the KPIs. This work will focus on two key areas for improvement: the first point of contact and follow-on works, with the ultimate aim of increasing customer satisfaction. Collaboration with the Housing Asset Management Team also continues, particularly in relation to setting and refining KPIs for the year ahead and for the longer term.
VED1: Percentage of dwellings with a valid EICR Electrical Certificate	98.41%	99.61%	98.33%	98.86%	99.39%	100.00%	100.00%	

MORE SOCIAL, AFFORDABLE & GOOD QUALITY HOMES 2025/26 MILESTONES

		Milestones	Performance	Comments
Building New & Sustainable Homes		Bragbury End	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Planning permission and sale of 500 unit scheme at Bragbury End. * Public consultation * Planning permission submitted * Planning decision * Sales agent appointed 	 31 Dec 2025 Scheme is currently in Planning awaiting a decision. Expectation is that the Planning Committee will be this financial year. All contract documents drafted ahead of marketing of the site which commenced in January.
		Brent Court - Independent Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	 31 Dec 2025 Works are currently underway on site with new parking area to the South of Brent Court anticipated to handover in mid January. The Gateway 2 submission has been made, and outcome currently forecast for March 2026. Demolition of the garage will commence following the handover of the parking.
		Burwell Phase Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Topping out of 20 homes for affordable rent. 	 31 Dec 2025 Work continues at pace on site with first floor slab installed on site. Brick and blockwork will continue on site with a view to top out this financial year in line with target. The team have been successful in securing £2.2m in Homes England funding for the site.

		Milestones	Performance	Comments
	Cartref	* Delivery of land receipt and affordable homes.		31 Dec 2025 The scheme is subject to Keepmoat's design amendments in Planning with the aim of a renewed permission being granted in February 2026. The contract will then complete, and works to the affordable element of the site will begin.
	Courtlands	* Completion of 17 unit private sale scheme.		31 Dec 2025 Progress has been made in the electrical diversions at the site which will enable more rapid construction progress on the site. The expectation is that the show home will be available in early January, allowing sales progress to speed up. The delays with the electrical diversions have had an overall impact on progress meaning sales of units may be difficult in this financial year.
	Defects	* Ongoing delivery of defects provision		31 Dec 2025 Defects works at Dunn Close began in Quarter 4, and a number of outstanding defects at Kenilworth Close remain with Hill to resolve. The team work daily to close out the remaining defects. Defects are project based. They're reducing on Kenilworth as the contractor works through outstanding works, and then as Dunn
	Ellis Avenue	* Delivery of 11 homes for Council Rent. * Demolition Completed		31 Dec 2025 Additional highways works are required to form full access before meaningful works can take place on site. A Section 278 application has been submitted to Highways and we are awaiting an outcome.
	Garage Sites Sales	* Cabinet approval for disposal of sites * Appoint architect for scheme development * Initial Design approval		31 Dec 2025 Plans for the Broadview site have progressed and are anticipated to be submitted to Planning in the new year. Work to secure full ownership of the various garage sites is underway. A funding bid for £150K has been submitted to the BLRF to facilitate demolition at the Broadview site.

		Milestones	Performance	Comments
		Kenilworth Phase Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	 31 Dec 2025 All pre-commencement conditions have now been discharged, allowing foundation work to start on site with a piling rig due to be delivered at the site in Quarter 4. The stopping up application is now progressing with an easement agreed with Cadent to allow them to remove their objection.
		Locality Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Provision of strategy to meet Neighbourhood Renewal Requirements and design development of initial sites. 	 31 Dec 2025 Plans are advancing for two local plan locations which were identified within the approved Cabinet Report on Locality Reviews. The expectation is that these will progress towards a Planning application in 2026.
		The Oval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Delivery of mixed used phase neighbourhood regeneration. * Contractor appointed * Demolition for phase 1 completed * Start on Site 	 31 Dec 2025 Work has begun on site with vacant possession of the Rabani church now secured, and demolition works beginning in the new year. A breaking ground event took place in January, and works will progress at pace. Work to secure vacant possession for Phase 2 is also progressing, with a lease surrender of the Times Club now secured.
Maintaining Good Quality Homes		Building & Fire Safety Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Delivery of the Building Safety Action Plan 	 31 Dec 2025 Building Safety is still maintaining a strong compliance position. The action plan is monitored and reviewed regularly.
		Decarbonisation (Wave 3.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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. 	

		Milestones	Performance	Comments
	Fair Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 		31 Dec 2025 Journey mapping across the repairs service is currently in train to improve the overall experience for tenants. The Housing portal is being used more effectively to segment tenant information to communicate in a more targeted and effective manner.
	Housing Asset Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Procure consultant support * Produce and provide performance data for input into the model * Staff workshops for perception measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Data analysis and report * Agree recommendations and produce action plan * Report to EHWG on findings and recommendations 		31 Dec 2025 Ark presented the High Rise blocks outcomes to senior management to show how the stock is performing. The full written report for this will be sent across this week and the full asset report for the asset review will be sent across by the end of January 2026, if not sooner to be shared with the wider team. Following on from this, the team will be organising training within Asset Management (by end of Feb 26) to understand how the Viability model can be used within the team; to ensure that the team consider the larger value work items carried out and whether it would be feasible or not to invest in current stock based on it's current status.
	MRC Refurbishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Delivery of the final year of MRC - a refurbishment programme to the council's flat blocks (excluding high rises). 		31 Dec 2025 This project is on track for completion of the MRC programme in 2025/26. All works to complete the project have now been issued.

		Milestones	Performance	Comments
	New Legislation and policy	<p>* 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.</p> <p>* Consultation on a new Decent Homes standard and implications for Stevenage</p>		31 Dec 2025 Awaab's Law has been fully integrated into the policy and procedures for Damp & Mould. The suite of KPI's are being reported and monitored monthly. The Policy is being approved in Q4.
	Provider Improvement Plan & Journey to C1	<p>* Delivery of the actions outlined in the Regulator for Social Housing Provider Improvement Plan following inspection in September 2024.</p>		31 Dec 2025 Productive quarterly meetings with the RSH are continuing, with progress being made across all areas. The Provider Improvement Plan (PIP) is shared quarterly with the Executive Housing Working Group to monitor that delivery remains on track.
	Repairs (inc Disrepair and D & M) Service Improvement Plan	<p>* Completion of all team process workshops and development of action plans</p> <p>* Easily accessible processes in place for all teams</p> <p>* Implementation of all action plans</p> <p>* Stakeholder mapping/touch points - as per 3.1: The original programme of work to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the repairs service has been completed, including a series of workshops held across the service. This work has now been superseded and will be incorporated into a new, end-to-end customer journey and a comprehensive service review being delivered in partnership with Business Change.</p>		31 Dec 2025 Following a series of internal workshops conducted with all teams during Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of this year, the initiative has progressed into a comprehensive end-to-end review of customer journey service delivery. This is being undertaken in collaboration with the Housing Asset Management and Business Change teams. The review remains ongoing, with identified quick wins under evaluation and planned for implementation. Separately, but with some areas of overlap, this includes a collaborative project with CSC that is specifically focused on improving the first point of contact and subsequent follow-on works.

		Milestones	Performance	Comments
	Repairs Health & Safety	* To implement all improvements from recent audit and proposals from the H and S team - all complete		31 Dec 2025 All audit recommendations and Phase 1 works have been fully implemented, and a revised Phase 2 action plan has been formally agreed with the Health and Safety Team, resulting in strengthened arrangements across key areas including induction and training, risk assessments and safe systems of work, driving for work, site inspections, manual handling, COSHH and electrical safety, first aid, accident reporting and investigation, housekeeping and contractor management, monitoring systems, PPE and asbestos management, as well as toolbox talks and overall staff safety. Phase 2 will look at opportunities to move from good to excellent practice and embedding consistency, accessibility and safety culture.
	Resident Engagement & Scrutiny	* Delivery of the Resident Engagement Strategy and Framework. * Operating tenant panel and scrutiny panel in place		31 Dec 2025 Good progress is being made in this area with a Tenant Chair appointed for the High Rise Building Residents Meeting, under formalised guidance and work is progressing to recruit an overarching tenants panel. The Caretaking Service Consultation received in excess of 200 responses to help inform improvements to future service delivery and the Annual Housing Report is currently being adapted into a tenant friendly version for distribution and information.
	Service Review Independent Living Service	* Review of service delivery and related charges that considers activity led functions across the wider housing service to create		31 Dec 2025 The review is underway with an outline report progressing on the detail of the current operating model. The ILS cleaning service review is almost complete and will ensure savings targets identified as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process are realised.

		Milestones	Performance	Comments
	Service Review Temporary Accommodation	* Review the service delivery of the Temporary Accommodation Service.		31 Dec 2025 Steady progress against the action plan is being made which for Q3 includes revised operational KPI's that are monitored on a monthly basis to enhance service efficiency and identify pressures more quickly, adapted void path ways to ensure the use of B&B is minimised and a more regular schedule of property inspections to ensure that support needs for more vulnerable service users are identified quickly and addressed.
	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		31 Dec 2025 Tenant profile data continues to be collected at various points of contact and customer interaction. Vulnerability data is being proactively captured and monitored as part of the complaint handling process and inform responses. Data is being used to communicate with tenants according to their preferences as far as possible and the migrated NEC Housing Management system will open up further opportunities to hone and use tenant profile data.
	Void Service Improvement Programme	*Delivery of the Voids Improvement Plan * Establishment of a small in-house team to carry out void works - Final agreement sought		31 Dec 2025 The voids improvement plan continues to be implemented – following a procurement process contract to be awarded and mobilised for void works during Quarter 4. A pilot in-house voids team is also to be established in Quarter 4 to test performance against assumptions used for the hybrid delivery model agreed in principle by Cabinet in October 2024. An updated improvement plan to be presented to EHWG in January 2026.

TRANSFORMING OUR TOWN 2025/26 PERFORMANCE

	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target Quarter 4 2025/26 ytd	Comments
Percentage of major planning applications determined in thirteen weeks	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	60.0%	60.0%	
Percentage of minor planning applications determined in eight weeks	98.5%	98.8%	100.0%	92.9%	95.7%	70.0%	70.0%	
Percentage of other planning applications determined in eight weeks	97.1%	97.8%	100.0%	91.7%	79.6%	70.0%	70.0%	

TRANSFORMING OUR TOWN 2025/26 MILESTONES

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Enterprise & Skills	 Business Technology Centre Contract Renewal	* Explore options for Business Technology Centre Contract Renewal.		31 Dec 2025 A robust Spec has been produced with support from council's finance, estates, property, insurance, procurement, commercial and Hertfordshire County Council's legal team. The Management Contract and Property Agreements for BTC and CIU, alongside Schedule of Programmed Maintenance and Lifecycle Replacement Responsibility Matrix to support Repairs and Maintenance are being produced as part of the suite of documents to support the tender. A new Mission Statement, with strategic outcomes, key objectives and underlying objectives have been produced to support the council's aims and aspirations for the BTC and CIU. A vast amount of work has been undertaken to develop a suitable financial model, which provides optimal income levels for the council and performance bonus incentives for the supplier.

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
	 <p>Pioneering Young STEM Futures - P2</p>	<p>* Secure Phase Two of the Pioneering Young STEM Futures programme with funding from M44. Begin delivery of Year One.</p>		<p>31 Dec 2025</p> <p>A busy quarter within Phase Two of Pioneering Young STEM Futures has seen increased delivery of the future-focused STEM pathway programme, expanding reach while strengthening career progression routes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next Gen Mentoring 3.0 has restarted at Marriott, and Nobel launches next week with the offer extended to Thomas Alleyne Academy and Barclay. • Zero Gravity is embedding sustained peer mentoring through in-person support, a digital platform and university student mentors across secondary schools. • Community engagement remains strong through a targeted STEM inspiration panto for 77 families, and planning is underway for a Moon Bus visit in partnership with the University of Hertfordshire, with a potential M44 visit to showcase key projects at the start of March. • Delivery has also been boosted through renewed Academy Challenge activity at the STEM Discovery Centre involving Thomas Alleyne Academy, Barnwell and elective home education students. • New project, Orbyts is now running in Thomas Alleyne Academy and Barnwell as a University of Hertfordshire Maths/Physics research project, and PSQM has been offered to all with four taking up the offer, two of which being high-need schools. • Access to All has launched to take opportunities directly to students, connecting STEM experiences to careers and clear next steps.

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
	 <p>Stevenage Works - Health & Social Care Expansion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Establishment of supporting Governance Framework. * Establishment of a pilot cohort of care providers alongside partners. * Review of initial pilot cohort of care providers. 		<p>31 Dec 2025</p> <p>Following the approval of the Terms of Reference at the SW Board meeting in June 2025, subsequent meetings have taken place between North Herts College, Job Centre Plus and other potential partners within the Care Industry. The Pilot 2-week Care sector-based work academy programme (SWAP) course took place in September 2025. 12 out of 12 students who attended interviews were successful at the Hertfordshire Care Providers Association (HCPA) stage. 3 participants have found work in the care sector. A second Care Assistant SWAP took place in November 2025 with 11 participants, all of which were deemed suitable by HCPA</p>
	 <p>Stevenage Works - Social Value & Procurement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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. 		<p>31 Dec 2025</p> <p>Regular meetings continue between Stevenage Works and contractors working in the area, to track Social Value delivered against commitments made. This includes offering support and signposting where required. Stevenage Works is now working with more departments across the organisation to leverage social value in contracts; Currently working with Contractors/suppliers in Planning, Housing Asset Management, Regeneration, Housing Development, Repairs and Facilities departments. The 2024 Stevenage Works Impact Report has been published on the Stevenage Borough Council website. The 2025 Impact Report is being compiled and will be published when complete. Winners of funds from the Stevenage Works Community Chest Fund are continually monitored to provide proof of spends, including receipts and photographic evidence. Donations for the 2025 fund have been made; the bidding has taken place, and the 9 winners have been invited to the presentation event at The Council Office on 9 January 2026.</p>

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Regeneration	 Cycling & Pedestrian Connectivity - Arts & Heritage Trail	* Design and implementation of an Arts & Heritage Trail.		31 Dec 2025 Officers continue to work with Made by Landmark on the implementation of the Stevenage Heart Trails, the programme for installation is expected early in Q4. Following the successful pilot on new public art at the Bus Interchange, Officers undertook a public call for four new pieces of artwork, linking in with the Trail. Following an extensive procurement process, four artists have been chosen and Officers are now supporting the detailed design alongside community engagement to inform the final artwork.
	 Diversification of Retail	* Utilising towns fund money to catalyse the diversification of retail in the town centre. * Successful relocation of the Indoor Market * Finalise scheme for new gateway to retail core * Retail Action plan agreed		31 Dec 2025 An Accountable Body Agreement has been executed with the owners of Westgate, under the new gateway to retail core project. This project looks to improve the South-West Entrance to the centre driven by the need to improve the visual appeal, creating a more welcoming visitor experience which integrates usability and improves access. A commencement meeting is scheduled for January. The team are also pleased to confirm Frequency Coffee has opened in 21 Town Square during this quarter. It is their first site outside London and their first location with its own in-house roastery. This all-day venue will offer coffee, workspace, and an evening economy, strengthening the town's business environment.
	 Gunnelswood Road Infrastructure	* Introduction of new infrastructure to a key roundabout to support the GSK development.		31 Dec 2025 Developer Reef Origin continue to work through their masterplan design for the site as a whole and are anticipating the main works to begin mid-2026.

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
	 Indoor Market Move	* Move of current indoor market tenants to the units along Park Place in the Town Centre.		31 Dec 2025 The indoor market has relocated to Boston House on Park Place. It's a stone's throw away from the current location but provides a modern building that's both warm and welcoming, creating greater visibility and accessibility for both customers and traders. By relocating to Park Place, the market will continue to play a vital role in supporting small businesses and encouraging residents to shop local as it has done for the last 50 years. The reopening event on 6 December drew over 1,000 visitors—showing strong community support. There are a small amount of outstanding works to be completed throughout Quarter 4. These includes items such a roller shutters to the individual stall units which were delayed due to material availability and a feature ceiling trellis above the food court area. Any remaining works are being undertaken outside trading hours to accommodate and minimise any disruption. The Regeneration Team continues to work closely with Estates, Facilities and Town Centre and Market Management throughout the handover period.
	 Local Plan Review & Partial Update	* Partial update and review of the council's Local Plan.		31 Dec 2025 Hearing Sessions 2 - 10 December 2025. Cabinet February 2026 to approve Main Modifications for consultation, which will run February / March 2026. Back to Cabinet June 2026 to agree adoption.
	 SG1 - Plot A	* Phase 1A of the SG1 Programme - previous Swingate House site. * Completion of early works and drawdown of site * Design and procurement complete (SG1 Plot A)		31 Dec 2025 Construction is progressing positively and within programme on site. A topping out ceremony for Claxton House took place in January.

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
	 SG1 - Public Sector Hub	* 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		31 Dec 2025 Engagement with partners and potential funder continued throughout Q3. Officers continue to work with architects for a feasibility study looks to understand the potential implications of Local Government Reorganisation.
	 Sports & Leisure Centre	* Finalisation of design, submission and approval of planning permission and construction to start on site.		31 Dec 2025 Following successful planning permission, Officers received approval from Cabinet and Full Council to enter into full contract with Morgan Sindall for the new Sports & Leisure Centre. Final detailed design elements are being considered with a start on site anticipated in January 2026.
	 Station Gateway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Activating the Station Gateway area by working with a developer to create a viable scheme. * Initial masterplan complete * Cabinet decision to enter into a Development Agreement * Enter into Development Agreement 		31 Dec 2025 An informal all-member drop-in session was held in October for the overall scheme, as well as an all-staff event; they were well attended and positively received. In November 2025, Officers received delegated authority from Cabinet to negotiate and enter into a Development Agreement with Muse for the Station Gateway major opportunity area. Final negotiations and drafting of legal and commercial detail took place during December, culminating in the Development Agreement being signed, sealed and exchanged on 22nd December. A public press release is being prepared to be published in early-2026.

THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS 2025/26 PERFORMANCE

	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Comments
Number of people engaged in Cooperative Neighbourhood 'Community & Place' initiatives	478	954	1,103	1,103	1,103	1,000	1,500	31/12/2025 No neighbourhood newsletter issued during this period and no resident consultation took place. A neighbourhood newsletter is scheduled to be distributed in Quarter 4. Target is likely to be achieved at the end of the financial year
RSH NM01(part1): ASB cases opened by or on behalf of the provider during the reporting year	64	107	44	74	103			31/12/2025 The team received 30 Cases of ASB this quarter with 29 cases involving an SBC Tenant. ASB reports included various categories including Drug Use/Dealing. Last quarter the team were successful in obtaining a partial Closure Order alongside Police Partners for an address in Stevenage, this has had a positive impact on the neighbours as reports have significantly decreased.
RSH NM01(part2) ASB cases that involve hate incidents opened by or on behalf of the provider during	3	4	1	4	5			31/12/2025 There has been one report of Hate Crime this quarter and this case is still open and under investigation with the team.
# of neighbourhood improvements, events, projects, activities using UKSPF funding	54	138	0	0	27	10	50	31/12/2025 St Nicholas - 3 Almond Hill - 3 Bedwell - 1 Roebuck -1 Martins Wood - 3 Bandle Hill/Poplars - 3 Longmeadow - 3 Chells - 2 Manor - 2 Old Town - 2 Woodfield - 1 Symonds Green - 1 Shephall - 2
% of Graffiti Clearances completed	81.82%	93.75%	100.00%	66.00%	100.00%	80.00%	80.00%	30/11/2025 The dedicated resource has been fully staffed with no machinery issues. Therefore we have been able to maintain performance levels.

	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Comments
ASB6: Percentage of ASB cases resulting in successful enforcement action	92.00%	94.00%	92.00%	93.00%	84.00%	80.00%	80.00%	31/12/2025 Of 25 cases closed 84% of are resolved with successful enforcement action, 10 cases were resolved following verbal warnings being given. 7 Cases were resolved through written warnings, 3 of these were NSPW's, 1 ABA and 3 Bans from Customer Service Centre. There were 4 cases where the complainant stopped engaging with the Council and after attempting to get back in contact the cases were closed.
Contamination rate of recycling - calculated as estimated proportion that is rejected of total amount	1.62	1.38	1.09	1.11	2.96	2.00	2.00	31/12/2025 Contamination has increased slightly. In winter, due to adverse weather conditions, kerbside paper and card can become moist due to exposure to rain and damp condition. Approx. 20% is the limit that is acceptable.
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	35.60%	32.00%	40.00%	38.10%		35.00%	32.00%	31/12/2025 This measure is reported in arrears from an external source. The figure for Q3 will not be available until the end of March 2026.
Percentage of residential bins collected	99.67%	99.73%	99.70%	99.72%	99.74%	99.00%	99.00%	31/12/2025 It is encouraging to see a continued reduction in the number of missed bins. Increased monitoring, clearer crew instruction, and ongoing resident education are all contributing to a better-quality service. In addition, the Bartec digital system for Refuse and Recycling enables crews to record bins that have not been presented, preventing these households from subsequently logging a missed collection and removing these erroneous reports from our totals. Bartec also highlights properties that have historically been missed due to location, ensuring crews are made aware in advance and can take proactive steps to prevent repeat occurrences.
Residual household waste per household (kgs)	372.86	494.96	120.18	119.40		360.00	495.00	31/12/2025 This measure is reported in arrears from an external source. The figure for Q3 will not be available until the end of March 2026.
Value (£) invested into Neighbourhood areas	142,423.64	266,365.57	0.00	0.00	3,500.00	13,000.00	55,278.00	31/12/2025 Projects are all planned and total UKSPF is expected to be allocated in Q4
CWLS1: EvAc - No of under 16 using facilities and outreach prog at least once p/w	17,468	19,715	26,395	19,586	24,967	17,000	19,500	

THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS 2025/26 MILESTONES

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces Page 77	 CCIN Policy Lab	* 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		31 Dec 2025 The project is moving into phase 2 where the partner organisations have split into focus delivery groups to work on producing the outcomes for the toolkit, mentoring programme and workshop delivery aspects of the programme.
	 Green Space / Tree & Woodland Strategy	* Development of Green Spaces Strategy and Tree & Woodland Strategy.		31 Dec 2025 The Green Spaces and Tree and Woodland Strategies have been approved and published.
	 Play Area Improvements	* Deliver capital programme of improvements to remaining sites and an options report to support future funding.		31 Dec 2025 The final sites under the play improvement programme have been completed. The team are currently planning for 2026/27 work programme subject to capital approval.
	 Social Inclusion Partnership Formalisation	* Work with the Social Inclusion Partnership, made up of our key voluntary sector partners to formalise as a multi-stakeholder cooperative.		31 Dec 2025 The Social Inclusion Partnership continues to be formalised as the Stevenage Co-operative Action Network. The process is progressing steadily, with time being taken to ensure the structure and arrangements are right. Partner organisations are now taking steps to agree the governance documents. Once agreed, they will be submitted to Co-operatives UK to check suitability.

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Community Safety TN Page 78	 ASB Services Delivery Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Review of ASB case management, escalation procedures and partnership working, in line with Ombudsman spotlights, Crime & Policing Bill 2025 and Tenancy Standard. * Development of recording and case management framework and escalation procedures * Realignment of ASB patches with neighbourhood patches and identify what sits with housing officers and ASB officers 		
	 Evolve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Work with domestic abuse perpetrators through the Evolve programme. Explore potential funding opportunities to expand this provision into young people. 		31 Dec 2025 Quarter 3 saw a successful move in completed with a new client, with all properties now fully occupied. Everyone in the NMS team has now been trained to deliver the Evolve programme.
	 Operation Educ8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Educate young people around the impact of Graffiti on the local community. 		31 Dec 2025 Following on from the work undertaken in Quarter 2, filming has now concluded for the creation of a sustainable resource aimed at raising awareness of complex issues. The project has been supported by local schools and the police and is currently in the editing phase. The aim for Q4 is to host a viewing event to share the finished resource with partners and key stakeholders.
	 SADA Safe Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Obtain properties to use as dispersed accommodation for family dynamics that would not fit refuge provisions. 		31 Dec 2025 For Quarter 3, the SADA accommodation team provided safe accommodation for 14 families and individuals ensuring that the team are sticking to the commitment of providing safe and accessible accommodation to those in need. The team continue to deliver intensive support work for clients ensuring that their needs and values were met.

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Page 80	 Arts & Culture Programme	* An ambitious programme of activity delivered in partnership between Junction 7 Creatives and Stevenage Museum.		31 Dec 2025 Vision and Values meeting undertaken at the museum Start to form a programme of events relating to the 80 anniversary to include: Exhibitions at the museum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with artists. ▪ Work to expand our oral histories.
	 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.		31 Dec 2025 The PlayZone Development at KGV Playing Fields on part of the dilapidated tennis courts has been submitted for planning approval so far, there have been two letters of support and no objections. If approved, it is envisaged that the facility will be open by the summer.
	 Review of Cultural Strategy	* Undertake a review of the council's Cultural Strategy in line with council's current ambitions.		31 Dec 2025 The light touch review will take place this year looking back at achievements and consulting with key partners, stakeholders and members to refresh the strategy.

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE 2025/26 PERFORMANCE

	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2025/25 YTD	Target - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Comments
CC1: Percentage of homes that have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of Band C or above	65.89%	66.46%	67.82%	67.82%	66.48%	68.00%	69.60%	31/12/2025 The KPI is currently rated amber due to the transition from RdSAP 9.94 to RdSAP 10, RdSAP is the standard methodology used to calculate EPC ratings for residential properties which was updated in June 2025. This update has introduced changes to the EPC calculation methodology, resulting in revised EPC scores for some homes that have received new EPCs.

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE 2025/26 MILESTONES

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Tackling Climate Change	 Climate Action Street Plans	* Develop street plans led by Councillors, with the support of officers to deliver community projects		31 Dec 2025 This project has been rebranded into Green Neighbourhood Projects and CIL Green Projects. It has been presented to SLT for decision in December 2025 and currently a series of project options are considered for delivery in the short term.
	 Climate Change Community Fund	* Assess, support and advise on community-led climate projects, review alternative schemes of delivery.		31 Dec 2025 CCCF projects continue to be assessed, approved by the panel (CCPG), delivered, and monitored. This is an ongoing opportunity for residents and community organisations to present their sustainability project ideas. While the fund is permanently open and promotional activities are regularly conducted, CCCF is currently expected to under-deliver relative to the available budget.

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
	 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.		31 Dec 2025 Plans are progressing with caddies being delivered to all properties from w/c 12th Jan. Trial areas in Symonds Green and Martins Wood will have collections from 2nd Feb. Whole town roll out will commence 2nd March. Comms were delivered at Christmas, with additional information included within the caddies. There will also be adverts on 2 buses and using the Council's website and social media platforms to promote.
	 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)		31 Dec 2025 Progress is underway, 6 businesses have been supported for bespoke in depth support with businesses receiving 121 support and with clearer sustainability naratives for customers, buyers and funders. This includes the following outcomes: • Carbon baseline established across core operations • Priority reduction actions identified for energy and materials • Improved readiness for customer sustainability due diligence • Environmental priorities aligned with customer expectations • Clear roadmap and metrics for strengthening environmental data and reporting • Ecovadis certification achievement • Short-term and medium-term reduction actions prioritised • Increased confidence in responding to customer sustainability questions • Clear sustainability narrative suitable for tenders and proposals • Sustainability audit tailored to a digital business model • Carbon footprint focused on energy, digital infrastructure and travel • Practical reduction actions and communications guidance

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
	 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.		31 Dec 2025 All planned trees for this year have been planted at various locations across the town. In addition to these, the team are currently planting 3 new Miyawaki Woods between now and the end of February funded via CIL money.
	 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.		31 Dec 2025 Delivery of the scheme have started, with social media and digital communications being delivered, plus letters and a door knocking activity setup in January 2026. However, the uptake has been very low up to now, and while the Council is exploring further communicational actions to reach eligible homes, it is also likely that we underdeliver by the end of the financial year and some of the allocated A&A costs must be returned to DESNZ.

BALANCING THE BUDGET 2025/26 PERFORMANCE

	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Comments
% of commercial rent collected from estates	91%	91%	90%	88%	90%	90%	90%	
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 84</p> <p>% of Corporate Building Overall Completed Remedials</p>	76.54%	75.15%	85.85%	88.35%	89.61%	80.00%	80.00%	<p>31/12/2025 Please note that the Corporate remedial statistics are accurate as of 31/12/25</p> <p>The Facilities Team has continued to make strong progress with compliance remedial actions, with the overall compliance position now at 89.61%. This reflects sustained improvement across the estate and demonstrates the team's commitment to maintaining safe and compliant operations.</p> <p>A total of 3,625 actions have been completed and 841 have been assessed as not required, leaving 518 remedials outstanding. The Facilities Team continues to work closely with service providers and remains focused on achieving the 90% compliance milestone.</p> <p>This shows that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legionella carries the highest proportion of high-risk items • Fire is dominated by medium risk actions • Electrical is split between low and medium risk with no high-risk actions • Gas risk remains minimal <p>Key observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low and Medium risk actions are mainly Physical • High risk actions are driven by Policies and Procedures • Training forms the smallest contribution across all risk levels <p>Summary Position</p> <p>The following figures reflect performance up to 31/12/25 and show continued progress across the estate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall completion: 89.61% • Change since October: -0.01% (Was 89.62%) • Outstanding: 518 items • Completed and Not Required: 4,466 items • Short-term target: +20 completions required to reach 90% • Medium-term target: +269 additional completions required to reach 95% <p>The Facilities Team has a clear understanding of where risk sits across the estate. High and medium risk actions remain the priority for the coming period, supported by targeted workstreams and ongoing collaboration with service providers. Progress continues at pace and the team remains on track to reach the 90% compliance milestone.</p>

	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Comments
% of council service customer complaints responded to within deadline	90.00%	77.40%	85.00%	86.00%	93.30%	80.00%	80.00%	31/12/2025 Complaints performance remains strong, supported by service managers who are responsible for responding within their service areas. The introduction of a new complaints management system in Q4 24/25 has improved tracking and oversight, while a new corporate support process within the Customer Services team provides reminders and targeted support to services, particularly for more complex cases. This work has resulted in improved performance during 25/26.
% of Corporate Building Overall Compliance Inspections completed	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
Customer satisfaction with CSC customer service	93.10%	88.80%	93.00%	92.10%	92.60%	80.00%	80.00%	
Dig2: Number of online payments	88,823	117,255	31,748	63,215	93,576	94,000	124,500	31/12/2025 The volume of online payments in Q3 increased by 2% compared to the same period last year, reflecting continued growth. However, as anticipated in forecasts, Q3 volumes were marginally lower than those in Q1 and Q2, attributable to seasonal variation associated with the Christmas period, which typically results in fewer payments.
Garage Voids (residential) as a percentage of stock	8.04%	7.76%	7.87%	7.38%	7.34%	7.26%	7.26%	31/12/2025 The residential garage void rate for Q3 is 7.34% against a target of 7.26%. There were 112 terminations in quarter 3 compared to 123 in quarter 2, an decrease of 8% with main reasons being as moving house and cost of garage. There was a 5% increase in the offers during Q3 and the acceptance rate increased by 4% due to an increase of demand during December. The Digital Lettings platform has now been in use for 3 years. During Q3 a new feature was added to the platform which allows users to prioritise their bids with a 1 and 2 choice option. Adjustments were made to the garage terms and conditions to incorporate both storage and vehicle use into one document and allows for the Council to contact licence holders electronically. This will be beneficial in digitising the service further as we move into 26/27 with corresponding with customers via email methods and using the Housing Online system to display letters. The service are engaging with Charity Groups within Stevenage to take the hard to let blocks and continue to explore new marketing initiatives. Promotion of availability with existing customers via E-Newsletter will be issued in Q4.
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%	100.00%	100.00%	

	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Comments
Percentage of council tax collected	85.50%	94.50%	32.09%	59.00%	85.20%	86.00%	95.80%	
Percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year received by the authority	90.00%	99.21%	37.05%	61.47%	89.14%	89.00%	98.80%	
Rent collection rate	98.60%	98.13%	93.28%	95.47%	97.14%	97.00%	98.50%	<p>31/12/2025</p> <p>Income collection performance for Quarter 3 2025/26 closed at 97.14%, representing a significant improvement on Quarter 2 performance of 95.57%. Encouragingly, when excluding brought-forward arrears, in-year rent collection remains strong at 99.56%. Please also note due to the office being closed on the 2 January approximately £250,000 (£110,000 in current rent due and £140,000 in arrears) was not posted until the 5 January arising from payments being made during the festive period but not being processed. These payments will however be included in Quarter 4 performance.</p> <p>To strengthen overall collection performance and address historical arrears, a range of targeted actions are being progressed, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused arrears recovery initiatives • Enhanced and earlier customer engagement • Improved data analytics to support account segmentation and prioritisation • Strengthened internal monitoring, assurance, and performance oversight <p>A continued emphasis will be placed on reducing legacy arrears while ensuring proactive and preventative management</p>
Time taken (days) to process housing benefit new claims and change events	5.39	2.01	5.89	6.31	5.86	10.00	10.00	

BALANCING THE BUDGET 2025/26 MILESTONES

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Balancing the Budget	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Business Change & Digital Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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. 		31 Dec 2025 In addition to the ongoing financial benefits tracking, which is showing higher than expected savings, key projects are concluding: Localities reorganisation is completed and savings are on track, creating suitable structure and approach for teams working in the community; Revenues and Benefits savings are on track and the programme continues with targeted changes to improve online services and customer experience and modern work processes. In addition, work is underway with Business Units to explore and prioritise ideas for change and improvement in 26-27, including leveraging the ambitions outlined in the new Digital Strategy.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Business Change and Digital - Financial Returns	- Projects that deliver financial returns (increased income/commercial opportunities/tangible savings/cost avoidance)		31 Dec 2025 Streets & Grounds Project is concluding, providing digital solutions for the service area and the foundation for cost management through savings and/or commercial opportunities in the future. In addition, work is underway to support savings delivery for 26-27, looking at ideas including building on the discovery work for reducing cost of Print & Post with an initial pilot being undertaken with Garages. Further opportunities are starting to be explored with key service areas to shape BC&D priorities for 26-27.

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Business Change and Digital - Service Improvements	- Projects that deliver improved service quality, customer experience and modern work processes that save time		31 Dec 2025 Changes are underway including initiating projects to improve customer experience and modernise work processes through: Electronic Signing and Sealing, Website Chatbot and improvement of online services including changes required to meet Food and Waste legislation and new online forms for Commercial Waste which are due to go live in the new year. In addition, further changes are being scoped including ideas for whole workforce modernisation through M365 adoption to improve productivity across a range of daily tasks and both routine and one off business processes.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial Culture Development	* Operating the Council in more of a business-like way by equipping staff with the right skills and engendering commercial behaviour.		31 Dec 2025 The team continue to work across workstreams and service areas to develop and deliver a culture of commercial behaviours. The team worked with economic development on the BTC tender and are presently working with planning on new charges and services. Work with Estates continues and we are looking at asset portfolio and commercial opportunities
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	* Adopt a CIL spending protocol to bring together commitments made and provide a structure around future spending decisions.		31 Dec 2025 Being developed first for Neighbourhood CIL; draft Protocol February / March 2026.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fees & Charges	* Review of fees and charges		31 Dec 2025 Work will commence on next round of F&C in the new FY

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Fund & HRA Savings 2026/27	* Approve balanced budgets for 2026/27 for HRA in January 2026 and GF in February 2026.		31 Dec 2025 Based on the Quarter 3 budget monitoring for the 2025/26 financial year, the Council is on track to achieve the majority of its planned savings, representing 97% of the total savings programme. However, one savings scheme is not expected to meet its target this year: the relocation of the Indoor Market to Park Place. Although the market has now opened, the delayed opening date means the full savings will not be realised in 2025/26 and are instead expected to be delivered in 2026/27. Looking ahead, elements of the budget savings programme required to balance the budget have now been incorporated into the General Fund and HRA Budgets for 2026/27. These budgets have been approved by Cabinet and will be subject to consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Full Council in February.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HRA Business Plan	* Undertake a review of the HRA Business Plan to help ensure a sustainable picture for the HRA going forward.		31 Dec 2025 The new iteration of the 30 Year HRA Business Plan was approved by Cabinet in November 2025. Progress will be monitored throughout the next financial year, aligned to quarterly budget monitoring.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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.		31 Dec 2025 The team continue to look at and consider possibilities. The Commercial team is working with Estates on the possibility of some assets. LGR outcome will mean that the team will review the insourcing strategy looking at new assets and activities that come into SBC post LGR.

CROSS CUTTING 2025/26 MILESTONES

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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.		31 Dec 2025 Quarter one updates were provided in October for the EDI Action Plan, with quarter two updates due in February 2026. The Equality and Diversity Report for 2024/25 was formally published on the external website in November. An overview of both the action plan and the annual equality report were given at the latest EDGG meeting in November, alongside an update on the Stevenage Equalities Commission and the formal grading of 'Substantial Assurance' by the Shared Internal Audit Service on equality, diversity and inclusion governance at the Council.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stevenage Equalities Commission Legacy Group	* Support the development of the Stevenage Equalities Commission Legacy Group, including its formalisation as a Multi-stakeholder Cooperative.		31 Dec 2025 The commissioners have contracted Operation Black Vote to deliver a civic engagement programme through February and March to work with communities to identify gaps and provide recommendations for improving civic engagement in the BAME community.
Health & Wellbeing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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.		31 Dec 2025 Since the previous update, a formal motion has been passed at Full Council to 'Establishing a Lasting and Sustainable Commitment to Age Friendly Communities and Dementia-Friendly Action in Stevenage.' Following this motion the team have refreshed the Age-Friendly Action Plan. This action plan has been separated into three workstreams: engaging with older adults, supporting older adults and dementia friendly communities. This will continue to bring Council and local services together whilst working in partnership with Age UK and HCC as part of their Age-Friendly Hertfordshire programme. Key updates this quarter: - Age Friendly Survey results. Key findings show positives in access to green spaces, indoor spaces and leisure facilities highlighting strong community infrastructure. Areas for improvement include safety concerns, public toilet access and rest areas. These results will support future projects in partnership with HCC and Age UK. - County Dementia Accreditation is launching in the new year. Alongside this we are including mandatory dementia and Age-Friendly training to Taxi Drivers.

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dementia Friendly Communities	<p>* Dementia Friendly Communities is delivered in collaboration with local organisation to support those living with dementia in Stevenage.</p>		<p>31 Dec 2025 As part of the Age-Friendly Action Plan, the Dementia Friendly Communities workstream continues to develop. Here are the latest updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dementia Café continues to run weekly and provides vital support to those with dementia and respite to carers. Average attendance is between 30 and 40 each week. - Working with the Licensing Team, dementia and Age-Friendly training is being added to the mandatory training for all Taxi drivers. This will enable Taxi Drivers and companies to be more aware of additional support residents may need. There will also be an opportunity for drivers and companies to receive additional free training should they wish to. - Working with HCC and Alzheimer's Society, we have been supporting the county dementia friendly accreditation scheme. This is due to be implemented in January. - There are plans to hold additional training in early 2026, which will be available to staff, partner organisations and businesses.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Healthy Hub	<p>* Funding received for a further two years of delivery through HCC Public Health.</p>		<p>31 Dec 2025 Healthy Hub continues to provide free advice and signposting to health services. November has seen a total footfall of 496 come into the HH. The HH continues to run programmes for Dementia, Pulmonary Rehab, Menopause Support, NHS Health Checks and weight management. There have been some delays in launching the Stop Smoking clinics through the HH. The team are looking into recruiting a new HH Co-Ordinator to deliver this service in the new year.</p>
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Healthy Stevenage Strategy Revision	<p>* A revision of the councils current Health Stevenage Strategy delivered in cooperation with HCC Public Health and other partners.</p>		<p>31 Dec 2025 Progression has been made with the Healthy Stevenage Strategy, with a draft in production. There have been a number of meetings to share thoughts on emerging priorities including a meeting with the Primary Care Partners and Integrated Care Board. Alongside this updates were shared at informal cabinet to share progression, themes, potential priorities and collaboration ideas moving forward. A shared strategy with health partners has emerged as a key theme to ensure alignment between Council services and resources to tackle health inequalities, promoting prevention.</p>

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Technology & Innovation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Digital Strategy	<p>* Our digital strategy focuses on enhancing customer experience, boosting efficiency, and increasing self-service use through three key pillars:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 		<p>31 Dec 2025</p> <p>The Digital Strategy 2025-28 was agreed by Cabinet in December 2025, and focusses on service modernisation through four key pillars: 1. Developing Digital Solutions: maximising the ability to utilise self-service, automation, and case management to be more efficient and provide customers with modern services 2. Improving the Website and Intranet: reflecting the need to constantly modernise and build engagement to meet customer expectation 3. Adopting AI: driving efficiency and delivering smarter, modern services that genuinely improve outcomes for residents and staff 4. Driving the use of Digital Services: encouraging the use of online services. Initial projects are now in development.</p>
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ICT Strategy & Assurance	<p>* Cyber First: Ensuring security, data-driven decisions, and adaptability.</p> <p>* Data-driven Decision-Making: Utilising data for strategic planning.</p> <p>* Innovate, Adapt, and Empower: Encouraging innovation and continuous learning.</p>		<p>31 Dec 2025</p> <p>The IT strategy is also being developed to ensure it is LGR-proof, and it remains on schedule, with publication expected by June.</p>

APPENDIX

The table below sets out details of decisions issued within Q3 by both the Housing Ombudsman and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, which relate to the Council's 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	Ombudsmen Decision	Issue	Determination/Outcome	Order/Action	Ombudsmen
13	2 Oct 2025	1. Repairs 2. Complaint Handling	1. Local Redress 2. Maladministration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written apology Compensation £100 	Housing Ombudsman
14	15 Oct 2025	1. Damp & Mould	1. Resolved with no intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written apology Compensation £500 	Housing Ombudsman
15	15 Dec 2025	1. Damp & Mould 2. Complaint Handling	1. Maladministration 2. Maladministration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written apology Compensation £750 	Housing Ombudsman
16	10 Nov 2025	1. Repairs 2. Complaint Handling	1. No Maladministration 2. No Maladministration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	Housing Ombudsman
17	26 Nov 2025	1. Decant 2. Repairs 3. Asbestos 4. Complaint Handling	1. Maladministration 2. Maladministration 3. Maladministration 4. Local redress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written apology Compensation £1,000 Undertake repairs Undertake asbestos related works Damp and Mould Inspection Order 	Housing Ombudsman
18	18 Nov 2025	1. Mutual Exchange 2. Damp & Mould 3. Complaint Handling	1. No maladministration 2. Maladministration 3. Complaint Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensation £200 	Housing Ombudsman

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Meeting: CABINET

Agenda Item:

Portfolio Area: Resources and Performance



Date: 11 March 2026

3RD QUARTER REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT 2025/26 – GENERAL FUND AND HRA

KEY DECISION

Author – Veronika Mendy/Keith Reynoldson/Rhona Bellis
Contributor – Atif Iqbal, Finance team and budget Managers
Lead Officers – Atif Iqbal
Contact Officer – Atif Iqbal

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Members on the projected General Fund (GF), Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital 2025/26 net expenditure and seek approval to amend the General Fund, HRA and Capital budgets as part of the quarterly revenue monitoring review.
- 1.2 To update Members on the reserves and balances available to support revenue expenditure and seek approval for revisions to the allocated reserves.
- 1.3 To seek approval for pavilion related Fees & Charges for the financial year 2026/27.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

General Fund

- 2.1 That the 2025/26 third quarter projected net increase in General Fund expenditure of £68,060 be approved.
- 2.2 That Members note the proposed movement on reserves as detailed in paragraph 4.3.1.
- 2.3 That pavilion related Fees & Charges for financial year 2026/27 for the General Fund (GF), as shown at Appendix C, be approved.

Housing Revenue Account

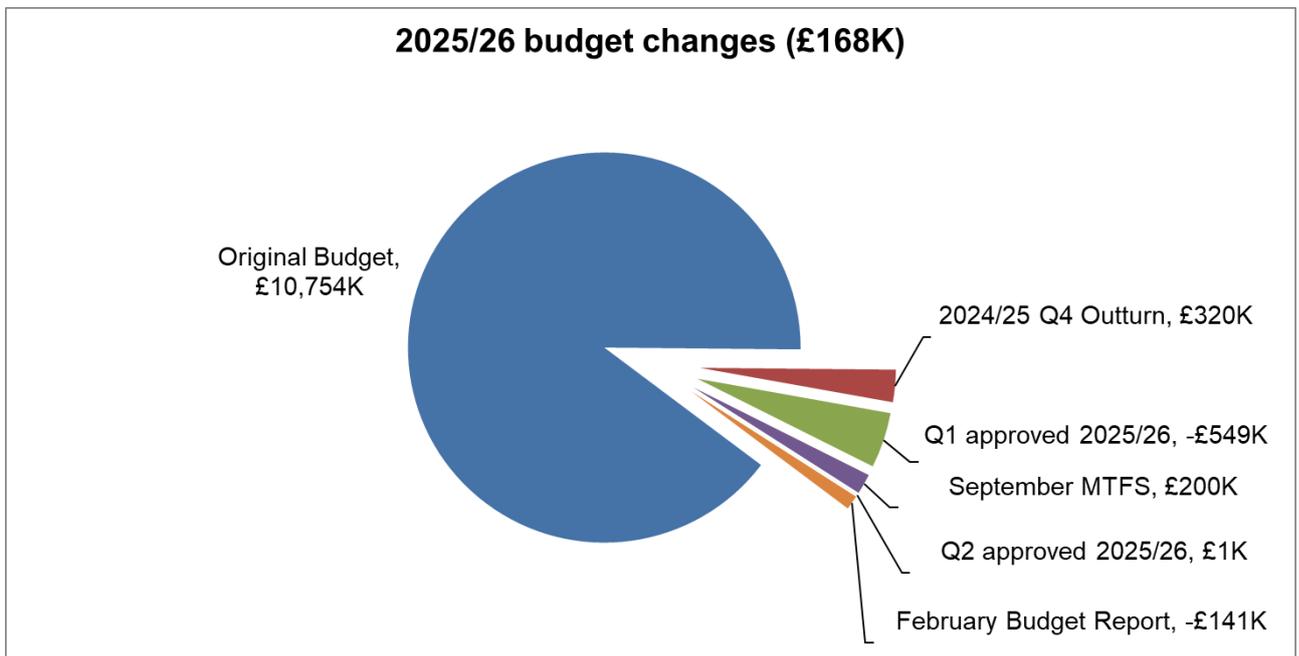
- 2.4 That the 2025/26 third quarter net decrease in HRA expenditure of £1,234,310 be approved.

Capital Programme

- 2.6. That the General Fund capital budget re-phasing of £3,260,842 from 2025/26 to future years be approved.
- 2.7. That the Housing Revenue Account capital budget re-phasing of £7,762,388 from 2025/26 to future years be approved.
- 2.8. That net changes to budgets of £230,000k fully funded by external contributions in paragraph 4.9.2 be noted.
- 2.9. That General Fund virement and update of £90,000 in paragraph 4.9.2 be approved.
- 2.10. That the proposed changes to the funding of the General Fund and HRA capital budgets in section 4.10 be approved.

3. BACKGROUND - GENERAL FUND

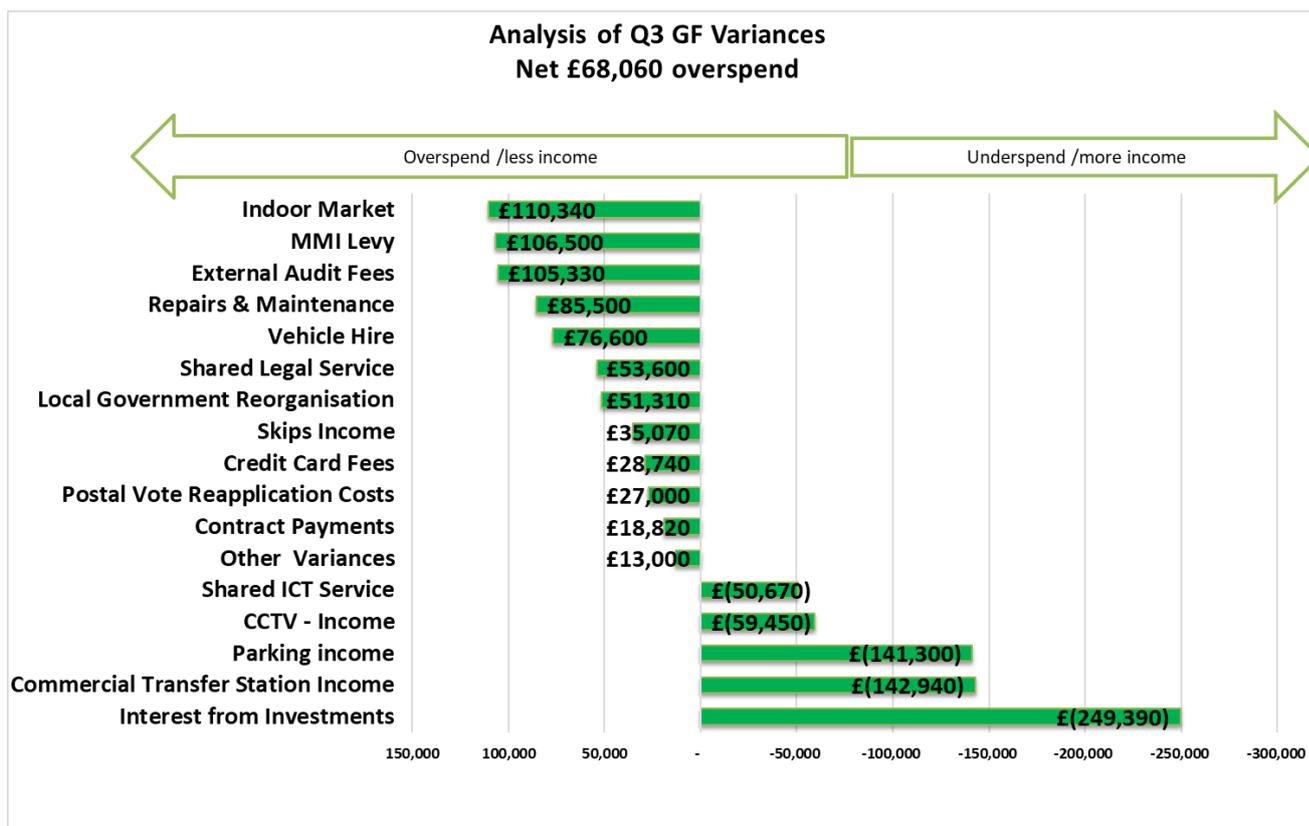
- 3.1. Since the General Fund net budget of £10,753,540 was approved at February 2025 Council, Members have since approved further net budget changes of £168,060 as detailed in the chart below:



4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 General Fund – Budget Review

- 4.1.1 Following the third quarter review of the General Fund budgets officers are projecting an increase in the forecast budget spend for the year of £68,060.



4.1.2 The reasons for the overspend or less income are detailed below:

- Indoor Market £110K (Increased Expenditure & Reduced Income)** – The budget shortfall at the Indoor Market reflects a combination of factors, primarily linked to the revised opening date in Park Place. A number of factors changed including the retention of existing traders, resulting in reduced initial income and increased void costs. The team continues to work proactively to attract new traders at Park Place, with the aim to be fully let by April 2026. In addition, the one-off contractual and transitional costs associated with the move to Park Place were higher. Operational costs at Park Place are expected to be lower than those previously incurred at St George’s, and it is anticipated that the financial benefits of the relocation will be realised in 2026/27.
- MMI Levy £107K (Increased Expenditure)** - Municipal Mutual Insurance (MMI Ltd) was the Council's insurer between 1971 and 1993 and ceased writing new insurance policies on 1 October 1992. MMI is subject to a Scheme of Arrangement, which was triggered in November 2012 when it became clear that a solvent run-off with full statement of agreed claims could no longer be achieved. Under the Scheme, an initial levy of 10% was applied in January 2014, increasing to 25% from April 2016. The Council is required to contribute 25% of the value historic claims previously settled by MMI, while 75% of the cost of any new claims met by the Council can be recovered through the Scheme. The MMI reserve was established to recognise the contingent liability and to fund levy contributions arising from both historic and future claims. As the Scheme of Arrangement is now active, all eligible claims are subject to the

same levy arrangements. Based on the latest assessment of liabilities under the Scheme, an additional provision of £214k is required. This cost is split equally between the General Fund and HRA.

External Audit Fees £105K (Increased Expenditure) –The increase in external audit fees reflects a combination of ongoing costs pressures associated with the historic delays in audits and increased audit requirements across the public sector. For the 2024/25 audit, additional fee pressures of £74K have arisen, reflecting the increased external audit workload. This pressure is split between the General Fund £48K and the HRA £26K. The Council received £60K of government funding in 2025/26 through the Audit Build Back Better grant to help offset the cost of addressing the national audit backlog (already reported). In addition to the costs of the main audit there is a further cost pressure of £57K relating to the 2021/22 Housing Benefit audit, the Council has requested a detailed justification from the auditors due to the significant increase.

- **Repairs & Maintenance £86K (Increased Expenditure)** – The overspend on repairs and maintenance is primarily driven by asbestos-related works, alongside additional repair requirements across commercial properties and operational sites during the year. The largest element of the variance related to (1) asbestos works at Daneshill House, which were required to enable the delivery of planned Wi-Fi upgrade works (£39K). These costs have been offset through an underspend within ICT budgets, as set out in paragraph 4.1.3. (2) £27K extra costs is projected within the commercial properties repairs and maintenance budget based on spend incurred to date. However, these costs have been funded from the additional commercial property income and reserve. (3) The remaining variance of approximately £20K relates to higher than budgeted routine maintenance at Cavendish Road Depot, driven by day-to-day repairs, materials, statutory safety checks, and essential compliance works, together with minor non routine items including heating, air-conditioning, and wash-down bay drainage works. An increase in repair costs of £50K has been incorporated into the 2026/27 budget.
- **Vehicle Hire £77K (Increased Expenditure)** – The pressure on vehicle hire costs is due to seasonal needs and unplanned vehicle downtime. Caged tippers are hired each year to support the green waste leafing programme, transporting leaves to the transfer station. Although normally required for a short period, this year they were also used for delivering food waste caddies, extending the hire period. Previously, these costs were covered by in year underspends, and this year they are offset by surplus commercial transfer station income (para 4.1.3). Additional costs also arose from hiring replacement sweepers, as both compact sweepers were out of service for several weeks during peak leafing season. These extra hire costs will also be funded from surplus commercial transfer station income.
- **Shared Legal Services £54K (Increased Expenditure)** - Shared legal services charges are higher than budgeted based on spend incurred to date, the full year pressure is currently projected at circa £80K, split £53.6K to the General Fund and £26.4K to the HRA. The service is charged on hours worked

and relates to higher volume or work than predicted. The most significant areas of demand relate to repairs and voids management, estates related matters and HR cases.

- **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) £51K (Increased Expenditure) –** The Council estimated a cost of £50K for supporting LGR and a further £51K cost is projected. These costs reflect the additional capacity, professional support, and preparatory work required to meet statutory and programme requirements associated with LGR.
- **Skips Income £35K (Reduced Income) –** Income from skips has continued to decline during the year, with only £5K generated year to date against the budget. This reflects an ongoing reduction in demand for the service. The 2026/27 budget has been reduced to reflect a lower level of activity.
- **Credit Card Fees £29K (Increased Expenditure) -** The increase in credit card fees reflects higher car park usage during the year (£141K increase see para 4.1.3), resulting in increased transaction volumes and associated merchant charges. Members should note that the Council migrated to a new credit card processing contract in December and savings are projected for 2026/27.
- **Postal Vote Re-application Costs £27K (Increased Expenditure) –** The overspend relates to costs incurred in delivering the postal vote re-application process. The Electoral Commission states that, UK postal voters must re-apply every three years as previously postal votes used to last indefinitely. This has involved additional administration, correspondence, and verification activity during the year. This additional budget requirement will be built into the future budget setting process for every third year. These costs are partially offset by government New Burdens funding.
- **Contract Payments £19K (Increased Expenditure) –** The variance relates to increased fees for enforcement officers delivering on-street parking services following the commencement of a new contract in January 2026. The revised contract rates resulted in costs being higher than those assumed within the current year budget. Members should note the 2026/27 budget has been increased to reflect the revised contract rates.
- **Other Variances £13K Overspend –** a combination of small variances across the service.

4.1.3 The reasons for the underspend or increased income are detailed below:

- **Shared ICT Service £51K (Reduced Expenditure) –** The underspend reflects a combination of in-year staffing and non-pay efficiencies. The primary driver has been one-off salary savings arising from the timing in recruiting to vacant posts, alongside lower than anticipated costs for software licences across both shared and service specific budgets. It is proposed that out of total £201K underspend, £150K is transferred to reserves to support MS Training rollout in 2026/27 leaving £51K being declared in Q3. This will fund fixed-term posts to support the Microsoft training rollout.

- **CCTV Income £59K (Increased Income)** - Following approval by the CCTV Board, the out of hours (OOH) service is now recharged directly through the partnership, instead of invoicing via the company. This change has resulted in additional income being recognised within the partnership (rather than company), with, partner contributions for the current financial year being adjusted and refunded.
- **Parking Income £141K (Increased Income)** – Parking income has performed well during the year, with the majority of car parks exceeding budget, although this has resulted in higher card fees as set out above. This has been supported by additional income from commercial deals alongside the initial impact of recently implemented fee increases. Railway North car park has seen increased usage, reflecting higher demand for longer-stay parking and commuter activity in the area. In addition, income from on street town centre ticket machines increased in the Q3 and is expected to remain broadly stable for the remainder of the year.
- **Commercial Transfer Station Income £143K (Increased Income)** – In September 2025, a commercial operator commenced a trial arrangement with the Council to use the transfer station for the disposal of waste. Between September and December, over 2,000 tonnes of waste was taken. It is expected that the monthly tonnages will remain in line with these figures for the rest of the year. Subject to the successful completion of the trial and the agreement of a permanent contract, this arrangement is expected to generate additional ongoing income of approximately £230K in 2026/27, partly offset by increased operational costs. This impact will be reflected in a future monitoring update report and contribute to future years saving targets.
- **Interest on Investment £249K (Increased Income)** - based on the Council's latest cashflow projections, investment returns are expected to remain above the original budget assumptions for the remainder of the financial year. This is due to slippage on capital expenditure and also holding reserves balances.

The cumulative changes made to the General Fund net budget, remain within the £400,000 increase variation limit delegated to the Cabinet as shown in the table below.

Cabinet Delegation - General Fund	£'000
Original Net General Fund Budget	10,754
Previously approved Budget Changes	(168)
Revised GF Budget agreed	10,585
Quarterly monitoring Q3 projection	68
Updated GF Budget	10,654
Increase Variation Limit Delegated	400
Variations to date	(100)
Within Cabinet Delagated Limit	500

4.2 Collection Fund

4.2.1 The Council is responsible for the collection of both Council Tax and Business Rates, also known as National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR), which are administered through the Collection Fund. Income from these sources is monitored throughout the year and compared against the anticipated levels set during the budget-setting process.

4.2.2 Although the income credited to the Council's General Fund revenue account is determined through the annual Council Tax precept (approved each February) and the NNDR1 government return (which sets the Council's share of business rates income), any difference between actual and budgeted income is held within the Collection Fund. These variances are then carried forward as either a surplus or deficit and subsequently released to, or recovered from, the General Fund in future financial years.

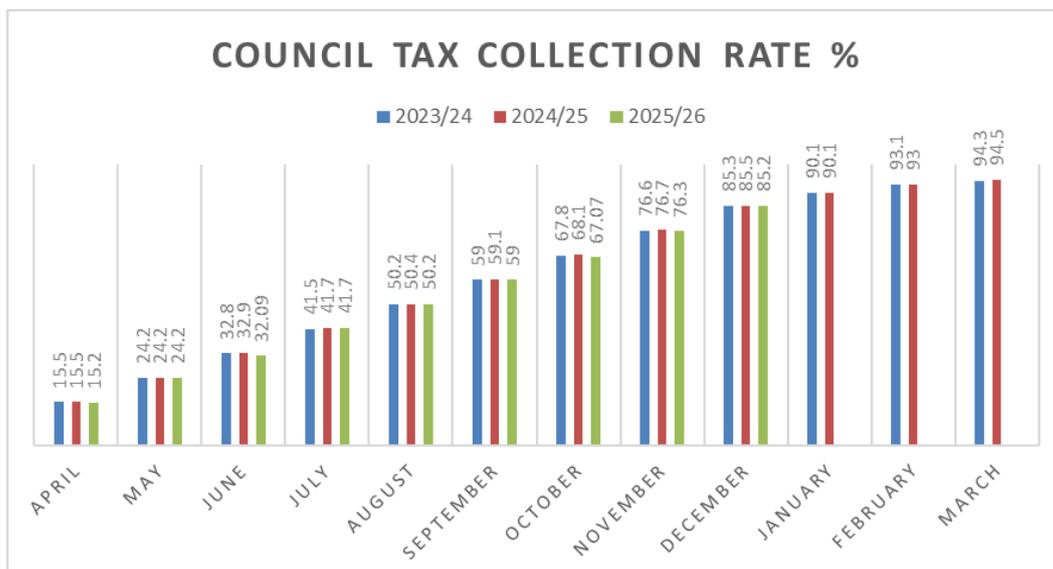
4.2.3 Council Tax Receipts

4.2.4 Council Tax income is collected on behalf of all precepting bodies (Stevenage Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council, and the Hertfordshire Police Authority) and distributed in accordance with the approved precepts.

4.2.5 For 2025/26, the total Council Tax liability raised for collection (after allowing for discounts, exemptions, and reductions) amounts to £65.737 Million, of which £7.100 Million (10.8%) represents the Council's share.

4.2.6 Monitoring performance involves assessing the proportion of cash collected at the end of each accounting period, expressed as a percentage of the total amount billed. This is compared against historical collection trends to determine whether current performance is on target, exceeding expectations, or underperforming.

4.2.7 The graph below shows how current year collections compare against previous years:



4.2.8 As at the end of December 2025, total Council Tax collections equated to 85.2% of the total liability (85.5% 2024/25 and 85.3% 2023/24), which is only marginally below the corresponding percentage collected in December in previous year.

4.2.9 **Council Tax – Tax Base**

4.2.10 The Council Tax Base represents the estimated number of chargeable properties within the Borough, adjusted for discounts, reliefs, and exemptions, and expressed as a number of band D equivalent properties. This figure is further adjusted to reflect the assumed collection rate, accounting for potential bad debts.

4.2.11 For 2025/26, the approved tax base was 29,155 Band D equivalent properties (prior to adjustments for non-collection). This will vary in practice and any variation between the forecasted and actual number of chargeable dwellings will result in either a surplus or deficit within the Collection Fund which will impact on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

4.2.12 Monitoring as at the end of December 2025 shows a current tax base of 29,322, which is higher than the budgeted tax base. The projected surplus for 2025/26 was revised as part of the 2026/27 budget and a return to the General Fund of £74.7K was assumed in 2026/27.

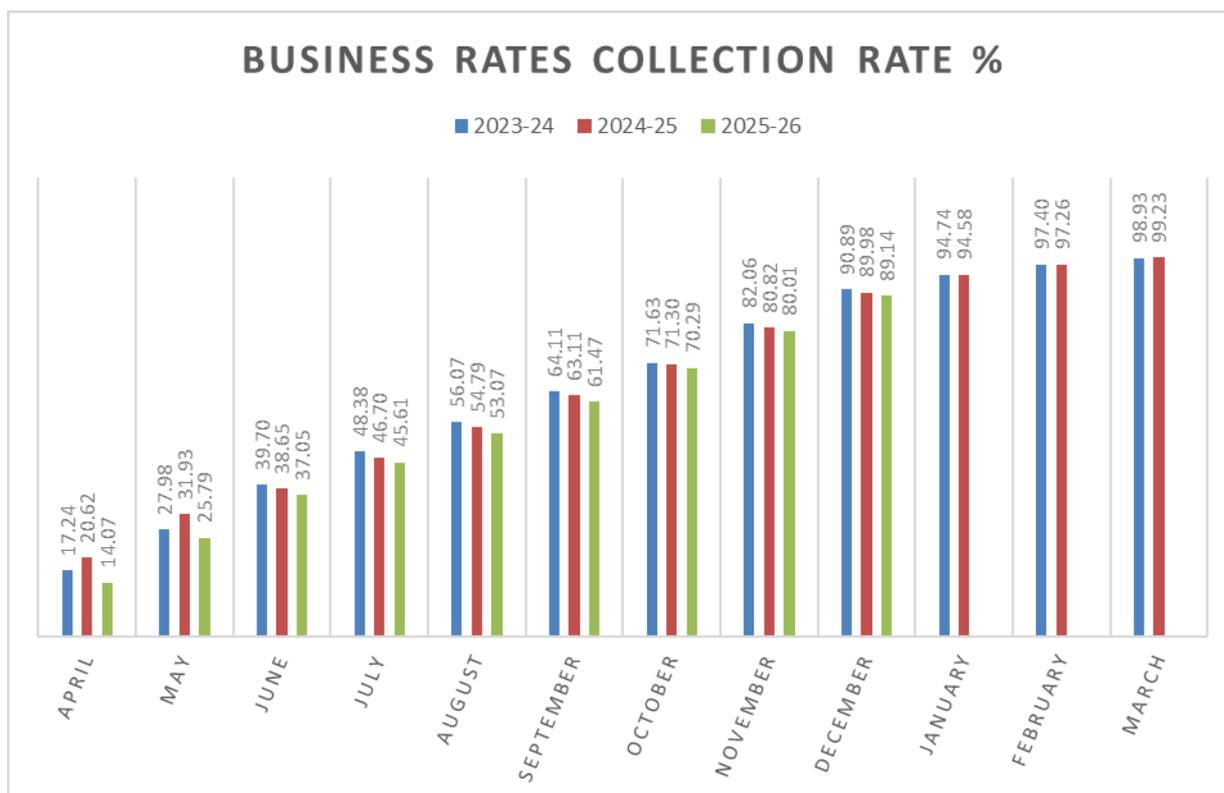
4.2.13 **Council Tax Forecast**

4.2.14 Although the current in-year collection rate of 85.2% is slightly below the 86% target, the projection for the in-year Council Tax position has not changed much in comparison to what was reported in 2026/27 Budget Setting report in February 2026.

4.2.15 **Business Rates**

4.2.16 The 2025/26 projected business rate gains were £1.239Million and as part of the budget setting 2026/27 report this was projected to reduce by £286K. As at Quarter Three the deficit has increased to £371K, giving an anticipated gain for 2025/26 of £868K . The final position may change depending on various factors like collection rates, discounts, deletions, or additions of properties.

4.2.17 The following table illustrates the business rates collection rate achieved to the end of December 2025, compared with the same period in previous years:



4.2.18 Analysis shows that the collection rate for December 2025 stands at 89.14%, which is above the Quarter 3 target of 89%, and represents a marginal decrease compared with strong collection rates achieved in previous years (89.98% in 2024/25 and 90.89% in 2023/24).

4.3 Review of General Fund Balances

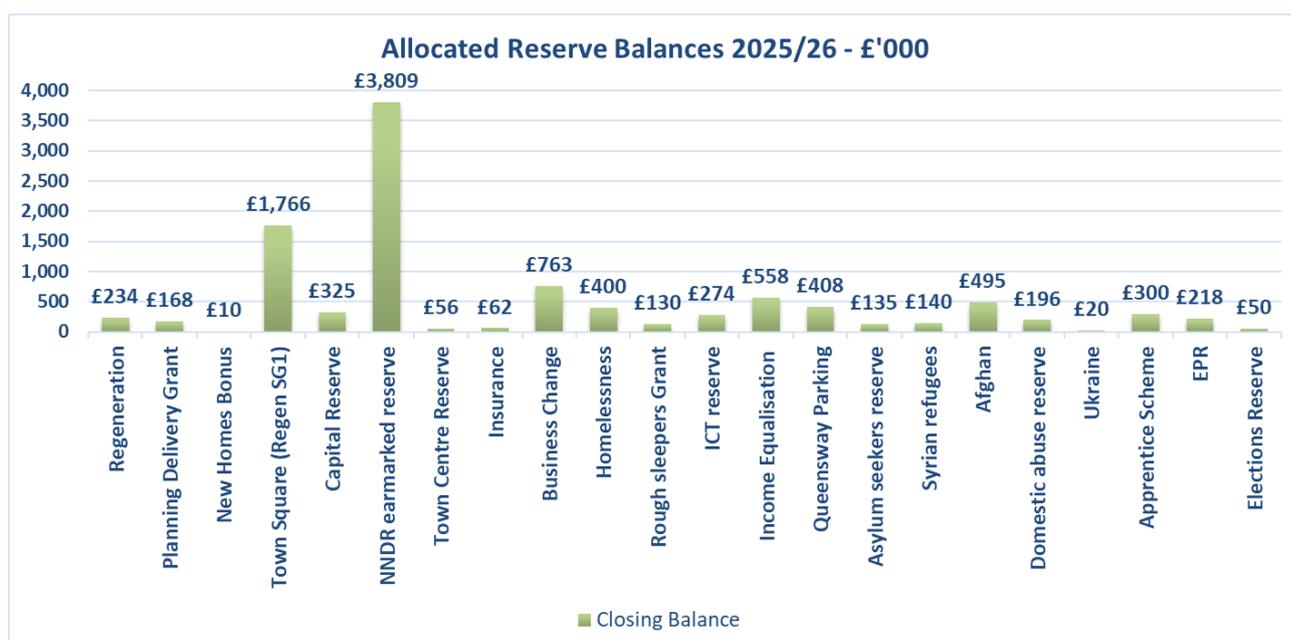
4.3.1 **Allocated Reserves** - these balances are 'ring fenced' and have been set aside for specific purposes. The estimated total value of (revenue) allocated reserves as at 31 March 2026 is £10,516,827 (31 March 2025, £11,030,040). During quarter three, the following movement between reserves have been recommended and are not included in the under/overspends in the report.

	Q3 To Be Approved
Regeneration SG1	(95,630)
Planning Delivery Grant	(65,000)
Business Change	324,230
ICT Reserve	(132,000)
Commercial property reserve	40,510
Total	72,110

*() represents movement to reserves

- **Regeneration SG1** – the forecast transfer to reserves for the year is based on the latest activity profile for 2025/26.

- **Planning Delivery** – the approved budget included an expected drawdown from reserves to support Planning Policy activity, primarily to fund contract payments and consultant support associated with the Local Plan. During the year, the team secured external funding from MHCLG, which was used to backfill a Planning Officer post and extend agency capacity. This reduced the level of reserve funding required, resulting in a transfer back to reserves of £65K.
- **Business Change** – as part of the approved Localities Review, redundancy costs were included within the original financial modelling and netted off against future savings arising from the restructure. Exit costs were initially estimated to be in a range of £172K - £230K. Following implementation, the actual cost was £321K (£86K has already been reported in previous monitoring reports). The recommendation contained within the report to implement the Localities Review identified the costs should be met from the Business Change reserve. In addition to the costs identified above a further £48K of investment is required for the Housing system NEC to the Cloud project partly funded through Future Councils digital government grants previously awarded.
- **ICT Reserve** – as set out earlier in this report, a transfer to reserves has been proposed for the MS Training rollout in 2026/27.
- **Commercial Property Reserve** – this has been utilised to support one-off repair costs identified within the repairs and maintenance as set out earlier in this report (para 4.1.2). These costs primarily relate to additional reactive repairs arising from the conditions of aging commercial property stock.



4.3.2 General Fund Balance – Following the 3rd quarter review the General Fund balance as at the 31 March 2026 is now forecast to be £6,671,701.

General Fund Balances	Working Budget £'000
Original Net General Fund Budget	10,754
Approved budget changes	(168)
Net Working budget approved to Date	10,585
3rd Quarter Review	68
Total Net Expenditure post Q3 review	10,654
Less core resources at Budget Setting Report	(10,820)
Transfer (to)/from General Fund balances	(166)
General Fund balance 31/3/25	(6,506)
Transfer (to)/from General Fund balances	(166)
Projected General Fund balance 31/3/26	(6,672)
Allocated Revenue Reserves (Paragraph 4.3.1)	(10,517)
Total General Fund Revenue balances (estimated 31/3/26)	(17,189)

4.3 **Review of Savings** – As part of the 2025/26 budget setting, the Council agreed savings of £1.245 Million. The table below represents the RAG rated delivery of those schemes.

Target	RAG		% of Target
1,245,450	Delivering	1,205,450	97%
	Partially Achieving	-	0%
	Not Achieving	40,000	3%
1,245,450		1,245,450	

4.3.1 Based on the third quarter expenditure position, the Council is on track to deliver the majority of its planned savings which equates to 97%. However, one savings scheme is not expected to meet its savings target:

- **Indoor Market** – the savings associated with the relocation of the Indoor Market to Park Place will not be fully realised in 2025/26 (see also paragraph 4.1.2), while the market has now opened the full saving will be delivered in 2026/27.

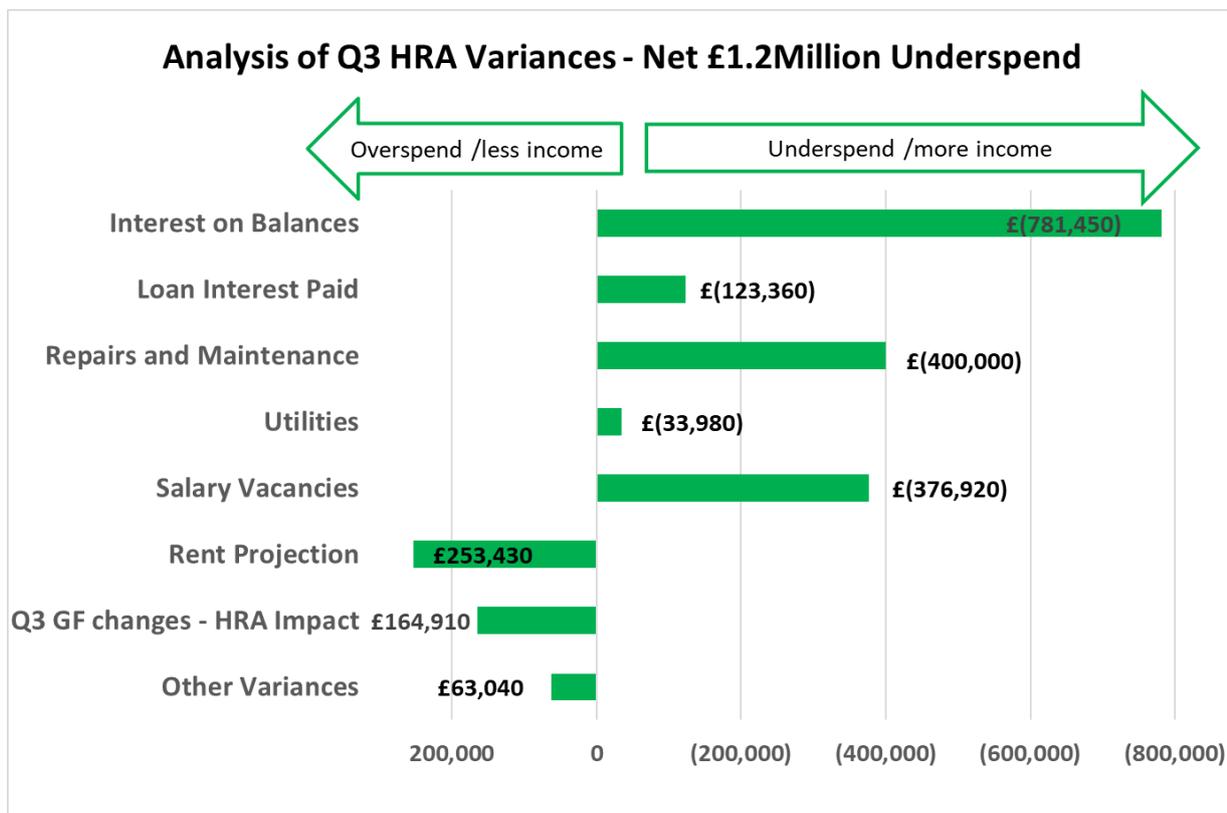
4.4 Housing Revenue Account

4.4.1 For 2025/26 the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) net budget deficit of £668K was approved at Council in January 2025, since then Members have further approved a net reduction of £80K shown in the following table.

HRA Working Budget	£'000
Original Budget 2025/26	668
24/25 Q4 Carry Forwards	120
1st Quarter Net Projected Underspend	(36)
2nd Quarter Net Projected Underspend	(165)
Total Working Budget	588

4.5 Housing Revenue Account - Budget Review

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



4.5.2 **Interest on Balances £781K (Increased Income).** The HRA is credited with investment income earned on its reserve balances, in the financial year the budget was reduced at the 2nd quarter by £700K assuming more internal borrowing due to higher PWLB rates. Since then, a combination of higher sales of RTB properties in the year (an estimated 102 properties against a previous budget of 75) and the timing of capital expenditure have led to larger balances than previously forecast and this has substantially increased investment income for the HRA in this year. However, the latest HRA business plan anticipates that reserve levels will fall in future years, so investment income will reduce as the capital reserves are invested in new and existing housing stock.

4.5.3 **Loan Interest Paid £123K (Reduced Expenditure).** The latest projection for the timing and amount of anticipated loans required in the HRA has given a

small reduction of £123K to the annual budget of £8.6Million. This is purely driven by the timing of new debt at lower rates than planned, due to short term borrowing and does not currently change the longer term projections detailed in the HRA 30 year business plan.

4.5.4 **Repairs and Maintenance £400K (Reduced Expenditure).** There has been a period of increased maintenance cost, seen in last year's outturn, and this has led to intensive cost control work including re-tendering of contracts. While cost pressures still remain in this area, driven by both demand and new regulations, repairs and maintenance costs are currently projected to be slightly less than budgeted by a net £400K on a budget of £7.8Million. This consists of:

- **Responsive Repairs £276K (Reduced Expenditure).** There is currently a forecast underspend on responsive repairs of £276K, on a total budget of £3.4Million. This activity is demand led and has a level of variability, so it will continue to be monitored closely until the year end to confirm this projected underspend.
- **Disrepairs £250K (Reduced Expenditure).** The initial 2025/26 budget of £600K to cover disrepair works, legal and compensation costs was increased to £800K, based on the number of cases experienced in last year. However, the number of cases has reduced from approximately 50 in 2024/25 to 22 so far in this year and the cost of works has fallen from £9K per case to £5K, after the introduction of a newly procured contractor. This has combined to give a projected budget saving in this area of £250K.
- **Damp and Mould £250K (Increased Expenditure).** This area is now subject to increased regulation and operating standards with the introduction of Awaab's Law in October 2025. Initially, £625K was budgeted to cover these works and earlier in the year this was reduced to £600K reflecting activity at that time. However, current projections and outstanding work orders show an expected £250K budget pressure for the year.
- **Repairs and Maintenance Trading Account £124K (Reduced Expenditure).** The trading account recharges the HRA for £6.7Million of repairs costs. The latest projections show budget savings of £124K across salaries, subcontractor costs, and materials.

4.5.5 **Utilities £34K (Reduced Expenditure).** The latest forecast for both gas and electricity has been included in the projection and show an overall small reduction of £34K, based on a £1.2Million budget for the year.

4.5.6 **Salary Vacancies £377K (Reduced Expenditure).** There is a £377K variance on the budget of £13Million representing a 2.9% underspend for the year. The largest variance of £331K mainly relates to new posts that have been included in response to new regulations and service improvement. Officers are considering business and legislative requirements when recruiting and it is anticipated that these posts will be in the coming months.

4.5.7 **Rent Projection £253K (Reduced Income).** The latest rent and service charge projections show a reduction in income of £253K or 0.5% variance against a budget of £54.1Million. Of this reduction, £174K relates to the timing of new property developments, with delivery of three schemes now expected in

£000	2025/26				2026/27		2027/28	
	Actual Spend Q3	Approved Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Strategy	Variance	Re-phased	Q3 Revised Strategy	Re-phased	Q3 Revised Strategy
Total GF Schemes	19,117	29,831	26,870	(2,961)	3,260	50,722	-	30,918
Total HRA Schemes	17,658	40,557	32,794	(7,762)	7,762	83,397	-	45,799
Total Capital Programme	36,775	70,388	59,664	(10,723)	11,022	134,119	-	76,717
<i>Re-phase detail:</i>								
Environment & Leisure				(448)	698		-	
Land, Development & Neighbourhood Regeneration				(950)	950		-	
Technology				(25)	25		-	
Regeneration				(1,095)	1,095		-	
Planning & Regulation				(322)	392		-	
Deferred works reserve				(120)	100		-	
Total GF Re-phasing				(2,961)	3,260		-	
Investment in existing stock				(4,340)	4,340			
New Build (Housing Development)				(3,422)	3,422		-	
Total HRA Re-phasing				(7,762)	7,762		-	

Re-phasing

4.8. 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.

4.8.1. 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.

4.8.2. General Fund – re-phasing £3 million - the main items are explained below:

- **Environment & Leisure** – re-phasing of £500k for Flat block recycling which is funded from grants into 2026/27. This is a varied and complex project delivery of which has now slipped into 2026/27.
- **Land, Development & Neighbourhood Regeneration** - Kenilworth – Malvern Close - £950k re-phased into 2026/27. Progress on site has been slower than planned due to delays in securing an easement with the utility supplier
- **Regeneration** - £1.1million spend on the Stevenage Sports & Leisure Club has now been rephased into 2026/27 to reflect the latest cashflow forecast .

4.8.3. HRA – re-phasing £7.7 million - the main items are explained below:

- **Housing Development (HRA)** – £4.3Million – Brent Court, delays from the Building Safety Regulator in providing Gateway 2 Approval have limited

progress on site. This is due to the additional higher safety protocols for higher buildings.

- **Housing investment in existing stock** – £3.4Million - High Rises - Improvement Works, the discovery phase has now been completed and work on the modelling and feasibility reports for all options is being developed. Final approval on schemes is anticipated to be in July 2026 to start procurement to deliver the project. This means the budget for the construction costs has been slipped into 2026/27.

4.9. Virements and Updates to note.

4.9.1. Members are asked to approve the following:

4.9.2. General Fund:

- Improvements to vehicle and pedestrian movements at Cavendish Road have been identified following a recent safety review. To enhance operational safety, a proposal has been developed to install a traffic-light-controlled system at the main gate and provide a dedicated safe pedestrian route to the weighbridge terminal. The estimated cost of approximately £20K can be met from the deferred works reserve.
- A budget of £70k for the completion of the 2024/25 ANPR barrier upgrade in the Council's car parks was removed from the final capital strategy in error. This is requested to be reinstated and funded from the deferred works reserve.
- The CCTV upgrade budget has been increased to include contributions from CCTV partnership authorities and Hertfordshire CCTV Ltd - £230k

4.9.3 Following the virements from the deferred works reserve the total remaining budget is £29K.

4.10. Capital Financing

4.10.1. The table below sets out the change proposed to the approved Capital Financing, because of changes to the expenditure phasing discussed above. Additional capital receipts from right to buy sales have enabled a reduction in borrowing and reliance on revenue contributions for the HRA.

£000	2025/26			2026/27		2027/28	
	Approved Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Strategy	Variance	Re-phased	Q3 Revised Strategy	Re-phased	Q3 Revised Strategy
Total Capital Financing	70,388	59,664	(10,723)	11,022	134,119	-	76,717
Changes detail:							
Capital Receipts			(474)	485		-	
Grants and Contributions			(884)	1,172		-	
Short Term Borrowing			(825)	825		-	
RCCO & Revenue Reserves			(778)	778		-	
Total GF Financing changes			(2,961)	3,260		-	
MRR			(142)	-		-	
Capital Receipts			(513)	655			
Borrowing			(4,737)	4,737			
Grants			(2,370)	2,370			
Total HRA Financing changes			(7,762)	7,762		-	
Total Capital Financing			(10,723)	11,022		-	

4.11. Capital Receipts Forecast

4.11.1. The table below summaries the current capital receipts forecasts for the General Fund. These include capital receipts already ringfenced for future capital works or for the repayment of short-term internal borrowing.

Capital Receipts	Previous Forecast £000	Revised Forecast/Actual £000	Variance £000
Capital Receipts (GF)			
Year 2025/26 Forecast	2,057	2,047	(11)
Year 2026/27 Forecast	3,560	5,533	1,973
Year 2027/28 Forecast	36,314	41,716	5,402
Year 2028/29 Forecast	11,568	3,594	(7,974)
Year 2029/30 Forecast	-	199	199
Total Capital Receipts (GF)	53,499	53,089	(411)
2025/26 HRA Right to Buy Forecast	18,000	18,000	-
2026/27 Other Capital Receipts Forecast	500	500	-
Total Capital Receipts (HRA)	18,500	18,500	-

4.11.2. Until sold, the value of land sales can fluctuate from the forecast as can be seen. Significant receipts from right to buy have been received 2025/26 as a result of demand linked to changes in purchasing conditions. These receipts will be re-invested in new dwellings to replace sold properties. It is expected that sales will fall to less than 10 properties per annum from 2026/27.

4.12. Pavilions Related Fees & Charges 2026/27

- 4.12.1. Pavilions, Parks, and Playing Field Fees & Charges for 2026/27 are set out in Appendix C, for implementation during 2026/27 depending on the start of the season.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

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

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 The objective of this report is to outline the projected General Fund net expenditure, HRA and Capital Strategy for 2025/26 and the impact on the General Fund and HRA balances. While there are no legal consequences at this stage Members are reminded of their duty to set a balanced budget.

5.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

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

5.4 Risk Implications

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

5.5 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.

5.6 Climate Change Implications

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

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

BD1 – Housing Revenue Account Budget and Rent Setting 2026/27 (Council 21 January 2026)

BD2 – General Fund and Council Tax Setting 2026/27 and Capital Strategy 2025/26 to 2029/30 (Council 25 February 2026)

BD3 – 2nd Quarter Monitoring Report for General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Monitoring 2025/26 (Cabinet 12th November 2025)

Appendices

- A General Fund Capital Strategy Q3 (2025/26)
- B HRA Capital Strategy Q3 (2025/26)
- C Fees and Charges 2026/27

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GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2025/26				2026/27			2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
		Actual Costs	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Variance	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Variance	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	General Fund - Schemes										
	Environment & Leisure	3,156,515	4,538,054	4,089,695	(448,359)	5,925,361	6,623,821	698,460	3,070,000	1,823,000	2,317,000
	Land, Development & Neighbourhood Regeneration Estates	311,282	2,900,000	1,950,000	(950,000)	17,178,819	18,128,819	950,000	2,750,000	2,750,000	0
	Technology	467,363	1,131,609	1,131,609	0	2,046,066	2,046,066	0	0	0	0
	Regeneration	96,008	205,498	180,273	(25,225)	138,518	163,743	25,225	78,960	78,960	0
	Planning & Regulation	14,771,452	20,097,388	19,002,375	(1,095,013)	21,214,520	22,309,533	1,095,013	24,713,593	2,434,295	0
	Deferred Works Reserve	313,954	809,095	486,951	(322,144)	557,500	949,644	392,144	55,000	45,000	0
		0	149,073	29,073	(120,000)	400,000	500,000	100,000	250,000	0	0
	Total Schemes	19,116,574	29,830,717	26,869,976	(2,960,741)	47,460,784	50,721,626	3,260,842	30,917,553	7,131,255	2,317,000
	General Fund -Resources										
BG902	Capital Receipts		4,382,860	4,282,412	(100,447)	5,604,926	5,743,805	138,879	1,942,960	330,000	900,000
	SG1 Receipts		823,000	448,635	(374,365)		347,500	347,500	0	0	0
BG905	Ringfenced receipts		257,467	257,467	0	3,593,625	3,593,625	0	17,595,922	1,524,867	0
BG904	Towns Fund		9,584,302	8,520,302	(1,064,000)	12,760,508	13,824,508	1,064,000	580,000	0	0
BG904	Other Grants and other contributions		2,469,012	2,757,546	288,534	7,734,000	7,734,000	0	23,000	28,000	5,000
BG904	S106		1,472,418	1,409,418	(63,000)	84,000	147,000	63,000	0	0	0
BG904	Contractors Deposits		54,644	10,000	(44,644)	0	44,644	44,644	0	0	0
BG906	Priorities – Strategic CIL		0	0	0	4,824,422	4,824,422	0	1,137,671	909,429	0
BG907	Local – Neighbourhood CIL		109,375	109,375	0	327,500	327,500	0	0	0	0
BG903	Capital Reserve (Housing Receipts)		116,014	116,014	0	263,019	263,019	0	0	0	0
BG903	RCCO		944,819	287,000	(657,819)	2,149,968	2,249,968	100,000	1,273,082	1,268,592	31,143
VAR	Revenue Reserves		180,273	60,273	(120,000)	41,503	719,322	677,819	0	0	0
BG908	Capital Reserve (Revenue Savings)		0	0	0	75,281	75,281	0	105,000	133,960	0
	EPR					500,000	500,000	0			
-	Prudential Borrowing Approved		97,000	222,000	125,000	3,585,001	3,460,001	(125,000)	8,259,918	2,936,408	1,380,857
-	Short Term borrowing and funded from private sale		9,339,533	8,389,533	(950,000)	5,917,031	6,867,031	950,000	0	0	0
	Total Resources (General Fund)		29,830,717	26,869,976	(2,960,741)	47,460,785	50,721,627	3,260,842	30,917,553	7,131,255	2,317,000

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2025/26				2026/27			2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
		Actual Costs	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Variance	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Variance	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	Environment & Leisure						(0)	0			
	Parks & Open Spaces										
KC218	Hertford Road Play Area (S106 Funded)	0	0	0	0	25,000	25,000	0	0	0	0
KC256	Valley School Playzone (s106)	7,592	73,000	10,000	(63,000)	29,000	92,000	63,000	0	0	0
KE494	Green Space Access Infrastructure	32,957	52,024	52,024	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE542	Flat block waste management infrastructure	5,492	18,730	18,730	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE543	Shrub bed programme	0	46,779	46,779	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE911	Play Area Improvement Programme	64,791	96,602	63,599	(33,003)	0	26,602	26,602	0	0	0
KE916	Peartree skate park	103,064	96,663	103,064	6,401	0	0	0	0	0	0
KG002	Garages (GIP)	229,669	29,870	279,870	250,000	0	258,000	258,000	0	0	0
KG039	Garages (GIP) 10 year plan (£250k/annum)	0	125,000	0	(125,000)	383,000	0	(383,000)	266,000	274,000	282,000
KG040	Garages asbestos roof capital works	0	0	0	0	1,186,000	1,186,000	0	620,000	639,000	2,035,000
	Community & Neighbourhoods	0									
KC231	SALC and the Swim Centre Urgent and H&S Works includes roof	31,502	53,181	49,091	(4,090)	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE542	SLL Leisure management - end of contract capital provision	10,555	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE547	Fire stopping works at SALC	0	177,819	0	(177,819)	120,000	297,819	177,819	0	0	0
KC238	Lift replacement at SALC	154,091	177,000	177,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KC252	Lift procurement at SALC	0	1,850	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KC240	Replacement Camera programme	7,861	15,052	15,052	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE953	Shephalbury Park	3,950	10,600	8,690	(1,910)	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE917	Ridlings Athletics Facility (boilers)	13,024	80,000	86,000	6,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
KC210	Ridlings Track Works	41,492	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KC245	Toilets at TVP	0	31,887	0	(31,887)	0	31,887	31,887	0	0	0
KC246	Aqua Park - Rubber crumb surface replacement	0	0	0	0	35,000	35,000	0	0	0	0
KC247	Lighting of clock tower - permanent install	60,000	60,000	60,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KC253	Sailing Centre	2,900	5,052	2,900	(2,152)	0	2,152	2,152	0	0	0
KE118	Lighting Desk SALC - Equipmt & Tools	145,849	215,000	215,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE606	Operational Plant	110,229	105,000	105,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE604	CCTV Upgrade	302,157	159,900	390,000	230,100	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE611	New pumps/aerators to FVP lakes	0	12,000	0	(12,000)	0	12,000	12,000	0	0	0
KC903	Golf course works	5,948	60,000	60,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Padel Courts	0	10,000	0	(10,000)	0	10,000	10,000	0	0	0
Growth	Growth bids	0	0	0	0	465,000	465,000	0	1,500,000	145,000	0
Growth	Growth bids	0	0	0	0	70,000	70,000	0	40,000	30,000	0
	Vehicles, Plant, Equipment										
Various	Vehicle/Plant replacement Programme	1,815,900	2,060,295	2,060,295	0	953,204	953,204	0	0	0	0
KE925	Repair closed church wall St Nicholas church	600	600	600	0	25,157	25,157	0	0	0	0
KE609	Fuel pumps at Cavendish Road fuel station.	0	30,000	30,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE609	Replacement work Cavendish Road fuel station - manhole covers	0	17,000	17,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE952	Flat block recycling (EPR & grant funded)	5,042	719,000	219,000	(500,000)	460,000	960,000	500,000	0	0	0
New	Replacement Bins (EPR) - Household and Public	0	0	0	0	225,000	225,000	0	0	0	0
	Improve the vehicle/pedestrian movements at Cavendish			20,000	20,000			0		0	0
Growth	Growth Bids	0	0	0	0	1,609,000	1,609,000	0	544,000	685,000	0
Growth	Growth Bids	0	0	0	0	340,000	340,000	0	100,000	50,000	0

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2025/26				2026/27			2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
		Actual Costs	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Variance	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Variance	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	<u>Total Environment & Leisure</u>	3,156,515	4,538,054	4,089,695	(448,359)	5,925,361	6,623,821	698,460	3,070,000	1,823,000	2,317,000

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2025/26				2026/27			2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
		Actual Costs	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Variance	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Variance	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	Land, Development & Neighbourhood Regeneration										
KG035	Kenilworth - Community Centre	0	0	0	0	1,211,538	1,211,538	0	0	0	0
KG042	The Oval (Redevelopment)	0	1,400,000	1,400,000	0	7,600,000	7,600,000	0	2,750,000	2,750,000	0
KG036	Kenilworth - private sale (Malvern Close & Blocks A3&A6)	311,282	1,500,000	550,000	(950,000)	5,917,031	6,867,031	950,000	0	0	0
Various	Housing Development Schemes (Joint GF/HRA)	311,282	2,900,000	1,950,000	(950,000)	14,728,569	15,678,569	950,000	2,750,000	2,750,000	0
KG038	Marshgate Wholly Owned Housing Development Company (WOC)	0	0	0	0	2,450,250	2,450,250	0	0	0	0
	Total Land, Development & Neighbourhood Regeneration	311,282	2,900,000	1,950,000	(950,000)	17,178,819	18,128,819	950,000	2,750,000	2,750,000	0
	Estates										
KE527	Depots: Planned Preventative Works (reroof) - construct roof over refuse bay	6,274	22,960	22,960	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE529	Community Centres Urgent and H&S Works	2,996	3,970	3,970	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE536	Multi Storey Car Park - Installation of emergency lighting	107,509	200,299	200,299	0	5,000	5,000	0	0	0	0
KE927	Thermal Image Cameras	0	2,109	2,109	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE928	Health and Safety Works – Cavendish Depot	16,020	29,862	29,862	0	670,024	670,024	0	0	0	0
KE930	Daneshill Accomodation improvements	13,752									
KE930	Vacant Premises	16,417	36,208	36,208	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE931	Daneshill: Urgent and H&S Works	9,623	48,951	48,951	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KR152	BTC 2019/20 Backlog H&S Works	3,726	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KR153	BTC Urgent and H&S Works	2,659	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KR154	BTC Planned Works (combined)	62,245	248,565	248,565	0	216,000	216,000	0	0	0	0
KR155	EPC Surveys	3,976	8,251	8,251	0	69,508	69,508	0	0	0	0
KR156	EPC remedials	0	0	0	0	209,710	209,710	0	0	0	0
KR182	EV Cavendish	0	300,000	300,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KR179	Daneshill House boilers	81,557	100,000	100,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KR180	Fry Road Nursery	0	0	0	0	80,000	80,000	0	0	0	0
KR181	All buildings across corporate estate	0	10,000	10,000	0	15,000	15,000	0	0	0	0
KR171	Burwell Road shops - Reroofing,	0	0	0	0	267,167	267,167	0	0	0	0
KR173	Commercial - shop units roof works	6,283	3,424	3,424	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KR174	Commercial properties - General refurbishment	22,131	10,535	10,535	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KR176	King George V Pavilion - Works to existing Fascia boards	20,461	20,461	20,461	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KR916	Commercial Properties Refurbishment (MRC Programme)	91,734	86,014	86,014	0	273,657	273,657	0	0	0	0
Growth	Growth Bids	0	0	0	0	240,000	240,000	0	0	0	0
	Total Estates	467,363	1,131,609	1,131,609	0	2,046,066	2,046,066	0	0	0	0

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2025/26				2026/27			2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
		Actual Costs	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Variance	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Variance	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	Technology										
KS268	Infrastructure Investment	77,948	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KS320	Telephony Hardware Refresh 2425	0	0	0	0	75,638	75,638	0	0	0	0
KS322	Hardware Replacment Program	0	175,225	150,000	(25,225)	0	25,225	25,225	0	0	0
KS324	SBC Idox Re-Tender, and Dell Memory (RAM) for Virtual desktop	0	0	0	0	31,860	31,860	0	0	0	0
Growth	Growth bids	0	0	0	0	31,020	31,020	0	78,960	78,960	0
	Total IT General	77,948	175,225	150,000	(25,225)	138,518	163,743	25,225	0	0	0
	Connected to Our Customer (CTOC)										
KS274	New CRM Technology	18,060	30,273	30,273	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total CTOC	18,060	30,273	30,273	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Technology	96,008	205,498	180,273	(25,225)	138,518	163,743	25,225	78,960	78,960	0
	Regeneration										
KE506	Public Sector Hub	7,335	14,035	14,035	0	796,399	796,399	0	0	0	0
	Lease buy outs	0	0	0	0	379,750	379,750	0	0	0	0
KE501	SG1 Joint Venture	7,864,197	7,910,632	7,910,632	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE501	Railway MSCP	(35,980)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE506	Stevenage Sports & Leisure Club (not TF Funded element)	0	1,132,856	1,132,856	0	7,277,863	7,277,863	0	24,133,593	2,434,295	0
KE501	Parkplace - works ahead of Indoor Market relocation (Boston House)	1,101,104	1,244,000	1,212,987	(31,013)	0	31,013	31,013	0	0	0
Various	Towns Fund	5,834,796	9,795,865	8,731,865	(1,064,000)	12,760,508	13,824,508	1,064,000	580,000	0	0
	Total Regeneration	14,771,452	20,097,388	19,002,375	(1,095,013)	21,214,520	22,309,533	1,095,013	24,713,593	2,434,295	0

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2025/26				2026/27			2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
		Actual Costs	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Variance	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Variance	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy	Q3 Revised Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	Planning & Regulation										
KC244	Community Climate Change Fund	13,938	109,375	109,375	0	97,500	97,500	0	0	0	0
Growth	Phase 1 CIL (CIL, BNG)					225,000	225,000	0			
KC916	Street Scene UKSPF	13,431	68,645	68,645	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KC917	St Georges MSCP	30,642	31,000	31,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE504	Station Ramp	775				0	0	0	0	0	0
KE558	MSCP resurface worn stairwell floor	665	283	283	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KR172	MSCP fire door replacement	141	141	141	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE119	Phase 4 ENPR - Forum (Off Street Car Parks)	70,538	0	70,000	70,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE120	Park Place Remedials	2,618	54,644	10,000	(44,644)	0	44,644	44,644	0	0	0
KE201	Hard standings	5,313	16,444	18,583	2,139	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE217	Parking Restrictions	36,443	20,000	36,444	16,444	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE221	Workplace Travel Plan	71,825	63,563	71,845	8,282	0	0	0	0	0	0
KC918	MSCP Lift Reinstatement	5,549	200,000	5,635	(194,365)	0	167,500	167,500	0	0	0
KC919	Car Parks Resurfacing	52,276	140,000	55,000	(85,000)	0	85,000	85,000	0	0	0
KC920	Car Parks - Lighting Phased Replacement (2 years)	9,800	40,000	10,000	(30,000)	0	30,000	30,000	0	0	0
KC918	MSCP Painting (westgate and st george's)	0	40,000	0	(40,000)	0	40,000	40,000	0	0	0
KC918	MSCP Fire Alarm Upgrade (st george's)	0	25,000	0	(25,000)	0	25,000	25,000	0	0	0
Growth	Growth bids	0	0	0	0	235,000	235,000	0	55,000	45,000	0
	Total Planning & Regulation	313,954	809,095	486,951	(322,144)	557,500	949,644	392,144	55,000	45,000	0
KR911	Deferred Works Reserve	0	149,073	29,073	(120,000)	400,000	500,000	100,000	250,000	0	0

APPENDIX B - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT CAPITAL STRATEGY

		2025/26	2025/26	2025/26	2025/26	2026/27	2027/2028	2028/2029	2029/2030	2030/2031	
Cost Centre	Scheme	Actuals costs Q3 £	HRA Budget 26/27 Capital Strategy £	Q3 Capital Strategy £	Variance 26/27 Budget v Q3 £	Q3 Capital Strategy £	Comments				
	SUMMARY										
	Capital Programme Excl New Build (Housing Inv)	9,867,850	22,665,090	19,243,102	(3,421,988)	36,490,544	30,882,238	30,173,478	30,281,460	29,530,314	
	New Build (Housing Development)	7,755,550	17,575,476	13,235,076	(4,340,400)	46,687,592	13,796,808	6,500,000	11,000,000	8,400,000	
	Other Capital Schemes	35,073	316,037	316,037		219,000	1,120,000	1,287,400	922,084	784,000	
	TOTAL HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME	17,658,473	40,556,603	32,794,215	(7,762,388)	83,397,136	45,799,046	37,960,878	42,203,544	38,714,314	
	HRA USE OF RESOURCES										
BH930	MRR (Self Financing Depreciation)		13,138,170	12,995,774	(142,396)	15,274,148	14,043,962	14,792,893	15,221,343	15,662,969	
BH902	Other Capital Receipts		-	-		500,000	-	-	-	-	
BH906	Section 20 Contribution (leaseholders income)		2,957,878	2,957,878		3,261,738	3,453,764	3,714,158	2,900,800	942,462	
BH901	(RTB) new Build provision		3,153,844	2,838,506	(315,338)	9,766,434	3,904,904	3,250,000	5,500,000	4,200,000	
BH903	RTB - Debt Provision Receipts		1,661,487	1,464,120	(197,367)	885,967	285,100	293,600	302,400	311,500	
	Borrowing Prudential		11,196,331	6,458,850	(4,737,481)	39,423,258	16,604,000	15,910,000	18,279,000	17,597,000	
	Direct Revenue Financing (was RCCO)		-	-		598,784	1,584,316	227	-	384	
BH930	Grant		8,448,893	6,079,087	(2,369,806)	13,686,806	5,923,000	-	-	-	
	TOTAL HRA RESOURCES FOR CAPITAL		40,556,603	32,794,215	(7,762,388)	83,397,135	45,799,046	37,960,878	42,203,543	38,714,314	
				(0)		(1)					
	Major Repair Reserve Bought Forward (BH930)							105,673	542,128	1,407,033	
	Depreciation (increasing MRR)		(14,037,442)	(12,995,774)	1,041,668	(15,274,148)	(13,938,289)	(14,356,438)	(14,356,438)	(14,356,438)	
	MRR Used (decreasing MRR)		13,138,170	12,995,774	(142,396)	15,274,148	14,043,962	14,792,893	15,221,343	15,662,969	
	Major Repair Reserve Carried Forward		(899,272)		899,272		105,673	542,128	1,407,033	2,713,565	
BH901	Total RTB Receipts Bought Forward		(6,974,610)	(6,974,610)		(20,671,984)	(14,759,971)	(14,837,942)	(15,702,484)	(10,202,484)	
	Total RTB Receipts Received		(16,338,513)	(16,535,880)	(197,367)	(3,854,421)	(3,982,876)	(4,114,542)		(2,325,684)	
	Total RTB Receipts Used HRA		3,153,844	2,838,506	(315,338)	9,766,434	3,904,904	3,250,000	5,500,000	4,200,000	
	Total RTB Receipts Carried Forward		(20,159,279)	(20,671,984)	(512,705)	(14,759,971)	(14,837,942)	(15,702,484)	(10,202,484)	(8,328,168)	
	CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXCL. NEW BUILD										
	Planned Investment including Decent Homes										
Various KH299	Decent Homes - Internal/External Works	2,983,736	8,430,690	7,674,650	(756,040)	20,337,295	21,078,338	20,235,978	20,308,360	19,804,614	
	Insulation Measures	21,785	51,720	100,000	48,280	61,100	60,100	64,900	65,100	63,500	
Various KH205	Decent Homes - Flat Blocks	3,802,616	10,176,410	7,519,426	(2,656,984)	7,278,565	2,660,400	2,736,400	2,746,200	2,678,100	
	Communal Heating	(2,220)	59,440		(59,440)	297,540	120,300	129,900	130,400	127,200	
KH321	High Rises - Improvement Works	633,687	3,310,270	676,427	(2,633,843)	4,363,291	2,105,000	2,272,700	2,280,800	2,224,200	
KH332	New Schemes to be created										
	Health & Safety										

176,601,135

APPENDIX B - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2025/26	2025/26	2025/26	2025/26	2026/27	2027/2028	2028/2029	2029/2030	2030/2031	Comments
		Actuals costs Q3	HRA Budget 26/27 Capital Strategy	Q3 Capital Strategy	Variance 26/27 Budget v Q3	Q3 Capital Strategy					
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
KH085	Fire Safety	625,503		650,010	650,010						
KH112	Asbestos Management	255,204	250,000	310,000	60,000	367,100	358,100	389,600	391,000	381,300	
KH114	Subsidence	116,151	124,130	199,130	75,000	195,800	191,000	190,300	191,000	186,300	
KH144	Contingent Major Repairs	362,350	577,550	500,000	(77,550)	688,850	601,400	649,400	651,700	635,500	
KH327	Building safety		870,000		(870,000)	2,667,000	1,202,900	1,198,600	1,202,900	1,173,100	
	Estate & Communal Area										
KH223	Asset Review - Challenging Assets	117,141	464,400	329,629	(134,771)	680,334	619,400	617,200	619,400	604,000	
KH224	ASSET REVIEW NON RED SHELTER	1,662		1,662	1,662						
Various	Other HRA Schemes	972,021									
	TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXCL. NEW BUILD	9,867,850	22,665,090	19,243,102	(3,421,988)	36,490,544	30,882,238	30,173,478	30,281,460	29,530,314	
						36,490,543					
	CAPITAL PROGRAMME NEW BUILD										
	New Build Programme - eligible for 1-4-1	5,472,695	10,378,917	10,063,579	(315,338)	19,189,699	7,809,808	6,500,000	11,000,000	8,400,000	
	New Build Programme - ineligible	2,282,855	7,196,559	3,171,497	(4,025,062)	27,497,893	5,987,000				
KH238	Open Market Acquisitions (Social Rent) grant funded	987,789									
KH244	Twin Foxes										
KH245	March Hare in Burwell Road (Ineligible 141)	1,115,229	1,732,959	1,732,959		1,000,000					
KH247	Kenilworth Close (105 units) (Ineligible 141)	(42,655)	171,497	171,497							
	Kenilworth Close 1 for 1 Expenditure (61.8%)										
KH303	Dunn Close (27 units, 21 main block SA)	242,383	456,177	456,177							
KH280	Symonds Green	(29,610)									
KH282	North Road		120	120							
KH333	Brent Court Social Rent (Ineligible 141)	2,325,511	7,052,893	3,000,000	(4,052,893)	26,497,893	5,987,000				

APPENDIX B - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2025/26	2025/26	2025/26	2025/26	2026/27	2027/2028	2028/2029	2029/2030	2030/2031	Comments
		Actuals costs Q3	HRA Budget 26/27 Capital Strategy	Q3 Capital Strategy	Variance 26/27 Budget v Q3	Q3 Capital Strategy					
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
	Schemes Under Development	3,156,903	8,161,830	7,874,323	(287,507)	19,217,530	7,809,808	8,400,000	8,400,000	8,400,000	
	TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME NEW BUILD	7,755,550	17,575,476	13,235,076	(4,340,400)	46,687,592	13,796,808	6,500,000	11,000,000	8,400,000	
	OTHER CAPITAL SCHEMES										
	IT General (IT)										
KH268	Infrastructure Investment	11,133	147,564	147,564		199,000	740,000	764,000	764,000	764,000	
KH283	Housing Improvements - Northgate online		118,670	118,670							
KH336	Core ICT Equipment Equipmt & Tools		20,000	20,000		20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	
	Total General IT	11,133	286,234	286,234		219,000	760,000	784,000	784,000	784,000	
	Connected To Our Customers (CTOC)										
KH288	New CRM Technology (Digital Platform)	23,940	29,803	29,803							
	Total CTOC	23,940	29,803	29,803							
	Housing Maintenance Vehicles										
KH288	Housing Improvements - Northgate online						360,000	503,400	138,084		
	Total Vehicles						360,000	503,400	138,084		
	TOTAL OTHER CAPITAL SCHEMES	35,073	316,037	316,037		219,000	1,120,000	1,287,400	922,084	784,000	

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FEES AND CHARGES 2026/27

Service	2025/26 Fee	2026/27 Fees & Charges	2026/27 Proposed Increase (£)	2026/27 Proposed Increase (%)	Comments
Pitches, Pavilions & Bowls					
Senior Pitches (no facilities) 2 hours**	£62	£65	£3	4.84%	Based on benchmarking
Junior / 9 vs 9 (no facilities) 2 hours**	£31	£32	£1	3.23%	Based on benchmarking
5 vs 5 / 7 vs 7 (no facilities) 1 hour**	£28	£29	£1	3.57%	Based on benchmarking
St Nicholas Pavilion (whole pavilion p/h)	£50	£55	£5	10.00%	Based on benchmarking
St Nicholas Pavilion Meeting Room (p/h)	£20	£20	£0	0.00%	Kept same
Peartee Pavilion (p/h)	£25	£25	£0	0.00%	Kept same
Outdoor Bowls Rink Hire (per rink/per season) *	£1,582	£1,700	£118	7.46%	Based on benchmarking
Fairlands Valley Park- meeting room (per hour)					
Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm	£15	£17	£2	10.00%	Based on benchmarking
Monday–Friday, 5pm–10pm	£20	£22	£2	10.00%	Based on benchmarking
Saturday–Sunday, 9am–10pm	£20	£22	£2	10.00%	Based on benchmarking
King George V Playing Field					
Pavilion (annual)	£11,400	£11,700	£300	2.63%	Based on agreement
Field hire (Annual) **	£3,645	£3,850	£205	5.62%	Based on agreement
Cricket Square Hire (per session)	£35	£37	£2	5.71%	Based on agreement
Park Event Hire (subject to negotiation)					Prices subject to negotiations

Notes:

* Implementation from 01 May 2026 in line with bowls season which may vary

** Implementation from 01 September 2026 in line with football season

All other charges Implementation from 01 April 2026

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Meeting Cabinet
Portfolio Area Environment and Climate Change
Date 11th March 2026



LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1976 – REVOCATION & VARIATION OF TAXI RANKS, HIGH STREET, STEVENAGE.

Authors Julie Dwan – Licensing Manager | 2493
Lead Officers Alex Robinson – Director for Planning and Regulation | 2288
Contact Officer Julie Dwan | 2493

NON-KEY DECISION

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek approval to revoke the existing taxi rank located on the southbound side of the High Street, Stevenage and vary the taxi rank located on the northbound side of the High Street, Stevenage increasing the length from 35m to 54m, in accordance with Section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the revocation of the existing, adopted taxi rank located on the southbound side of the High Street, Stevenage, in order to facilitate improvement works being undertaken by Hertfordshire County Council.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the variation of the existing, adopted taxi rank located on the northbound side of the High Street, Stevenage, increasing the length of the rank from 35 metres to 54 metres.

- 2.3 That Cabinet approves a change to the operating hours of the taxi rank which is to remain on the northbound side of High Street, Stevenage, extending the operating hours by two and a half hours, with the new times being from 18:30 to 04:00 (currently 21:00 to 04:00).
- 2.4 That Cabinet note the proposed dual use of the remaining taxi rank during the daytime and note the provision of signage indicating this.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Stevenage Borough Council (SBC), pursuant to its powers under Section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, formally adopted the Hackney Carriage stand in High Street, Stevenage on 13th November 2000. A copy of the order and schedule can be viewed in background documents.
- 3.2 The removal and variation of the existing taxi rank are necessary to enable the implementation of Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) scheme on the High Street to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and accessibility to be funded by the Department of Transport's Active Travel Fund.
- 3.3 Pursuant to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, Hertfordshire County Council (Highways) undertook a statutory public consultation between 27 November 2025 and 18 December 2025 in relation to the *Hertfordshire (High Street, Stevenage) (Prohibition of Waiting Except Taxis) Order 2025*. This proposed Order forms part of the Stevenage High Street Pedestrian and Cycling Improvement scheme and has been combined with other associated traffic regulation orders to support the overall design and operational changes to the High Street.
- 3.4 No objections were received in response to the consultation; however, two comments were submitted relating to cycling considerations and disabled parking hours. These comments did not relate to the taxi element of the scheme.
- 3.5 HCC engaged with the taxi trade through a Taxi Forum hosted by Stevenage Borough Council's Licensing Team on 15 July 2025. The forum provided an opportunity for HCC to outline the proposals for the Old Town works, consider feedback from the trade, and address any concerns raised.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1 Following the revocation/adoption of the Lister Hospital taxi rank in December 2025, Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) are seeking the removal and variation of the existing High Street taxi ranks, this is necessary

to enable the implementation of two new zebra crossings nearby and to support wider, holistic improvements to the High Street. The reconfiguration of the existing taxi ranks aims to provide more appropriate crossing locations outside the Red Lion and The Mulberry Tree Public Houses, which would require the removal of the existing zebra crossing outside Austin's Funeral Directors.

- 4.2 The reconfiguration aims to support and encourage more sustainable modes of transport, including walking, wheeling, cycling and the use of public transport, by making it safer and easier to get around Stevenage. These improvements also form part of HCC's broader strategy to encourage fewer car journeys, enhance the overall travel experience and encourage greater use of public transport in the region.
- 4.3 The existing northbound and southbound taxi ranks are each 35 metres in length, accommodating approximately six vehicles per rank. It is proposed that the southbound rank is to be removed. Under the proposed changes, the taxi rank on the northbound side would be extended to 54 metres, providing sufficient capacity for approximately nine vehicles.
- 4.4 Overall, the total length of taxi rank provision would be reduced from 70 metres to 54 metres. This reduction is necessary to ensure an appropriate and safe distance is maintained from the junction with Drapers Way.
- 4.5 While this represents a reduction of three vehicles compared to the current rank provision, we do not anticipate a significant impact on operations.
- 4.6 The location of the taxi rank to remain on the northern side of the High Street is situated approximately 100m from the taxi rank located on the southern side of the High Street which is to be revoked.
- 4.7 It is also proposed that the operating hours of the taxi rank, which will remain located on the northbound side of the High Street be amended. Extending the operating hours by two and a half hours, with the new times being from 18:30 to 04:00 (currently 21:00 to 04:00).
- 4.8 It is proposed that the remaining rank will operate on a dual-use basis during the daytime, with the provision of appropriate signage to indicate the restrictions which are in place. The Parking Enforcement Service will be responsible for enforcing these arrangements, there will be evening patrols between 6.30pm and 9pm to address unauthorised vehicle use, alongside routine enforcement of the limited waiting restrictions. It is anticipated that the number of Penalty charge Notices issued by the Service will increase, as a result of these proposed changes.

Consultation

- 4.9 In line with the statutory requirements set out in sections 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Council must give notice to the Chief Officer of Police. A public notice must also be provided in one local newspaper. Any objections which are received within 28 days of the first publication of the public notice must be taken into account, including any comments from the Chief Officer of Police, before such a stand is appointed, revoked or varied.

- 4.10 The Licensing Authority conducted a 28-day public consultation on the proposed revocation and relocation of the existing taxi rank. The consultation was held between 26th January and 23rd February 2026. Full details of the reconfiguration of the High Street Taxi Ranks were published on the Council's website, including a plan of the works to be carried out, an explanation of the reasons for the changes, information about the consultation period and instructions on how to submit representations. In addition to this, a Public Notice was displayed at the Customer Service Centre, Daneshill House, and published in the Comet newspaper on 29th January 2026. A plan outlining the location of the existing ranks and the proposals for their reconfiguration can be found in **Appendix A**.
- 4.11 An email notification was also circulated to all Stevenage-licensed taxi and private hire drivers, vehicle proprietors, and operators; and a taxi forum was held during the consultation period, where the Licensing team were available to discuss the proposals, answer queries and listen to any concerns raised by members of the trade. Social media posts went out on 16th February 2026 for the remainder of the consultation period. Copies of all public notices are included as background documents.
- 4.12 No responses were received from the trade indicating concerns about the reduced capacity during the consultation period. As such, we believe the new rank will meet the operational needs of the area without causing any undue disruption to service levels, particularly with the extended operating hours of the remaining rank.
- 4.13 The Council received no objections or comments from members of the public. The Police responded to confirm that the proposal has been noted and that there are no observations or comments from Stevenage Police.
- 4.14 HCC has confirmed that all reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that an appropriate level of taxi provision is maintained throughout the duration of the works. The rank will be kept in its current and proposed locations as far as practicable. Where this is not achievable, the rank will be relocated.
- 4.15 No formal authorisation is required for a temporary taxi rank. The temporary rank will be managed by the contractor carrying out the works through the repurposing of some of the parallel parking bays on the Tesco Express service road at the northern end of the High Street. This avoids the need for multiple relocations during the construction period. HCC will ensure that the contractor maintains an adequate and safe area to maintain taxi availability throughout the duration of the works. Temporary traffic management will be provided to include clearly signed pedestrian routes, appropriate barriers, fencing and suitable lighting where required.
- 4.16 The relocation of the taxi rank will not be required until the later stages of the project, potentially after July. Further details will be confirmed once additional

clarification is provided by the contractor, which is anticipated by approximately mid-March.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

- 5.1.1 The costs associated with reconfiguring the taxi ranks, including the removal and addition of road markings, signage, and statutory notices, will be covered by Hertfordshire County Council. This funding has been secured through the Department of Transport's Active Travel Fund, which aims to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and accessibility.
- 5.1.2 However, should the scheme fail to meet its objectives, there is a risk of reduced future funding. Furthermore, any expenditure already incurred on design work and preparations that do not result in a successful outcome could be deemed wasted, leading to financial losses for abortive work completed up to this stage. The construction work will be carried out by HCC in its entirety without cost or liability to SBC
- 5.1.3 There are no anticipated ongoing financial implications for SBC.

5.2 Legal Implications

Under Section 63(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Council has the power to appoint, alter, or remove taxi ranks (hackney carriage stands) within the district. However, this power is subject to the procedural requirements set out in Section 63(2), which must be strictly followed to ensure legality and to mitigate the risk of challenge.

5.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed on 2nd February 2026. The taxi rank proposed for revocation is located a short walking distance from the remaining taxi rank on the northbound side of the road. To support safe pedestrian access, it is proposed that additional zebra crossings will be installed. Alternative pick-up and drop-off arrangements will also remain available, including accessible parking bays and drop-off points along the High Street.

- 5.3.1 The proposal is anticipated to have a positive impact on people with protected characteristics, particularly older people, disabled users, and those with mobility impairments, by improving access to safe and convenient taxi provision earlier in the evening. The extended hours will support greater accessibility along the High Street, including for those who may find walking longer distances difficult or who rely on taxis as their primary mode of transport.

5.3.2 The proposal is not expected to adversely impact equality of access. A copy of the Equalities Impact Assessment can be found at **Appendix B**.

5.4 Community Safety Implications

5.4.1 The removal of a designated taxi rank has several potential implications for community safety, which must be carefully considered as part of the decision-making process under Section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

5.4.2 The revocation of the existing taxi rank on southern side of the High Street is not anticipated to have a negative impact on community safety. The remaining taxi rank will be situated on the northern side of the road, close to the main night-time economy premises, and will be supported by additional zebra crossings to maintain safe and accessible pedestrian movement.

5.4.3 Overall, the revised arrangement is expected to enhance safety and accessibility along the High Street. HCC have confirmed that there will be no loss of taxi provision during the High Street works, and reconfiguration of the taxi ranks take place.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

BD1 [Local Government \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 1976](#)

BD2 HCC proposed improvements to the High Street in Old Town, Stevenage [storymap](#)

BD3 Consultation Email

BD4 Newspaper Notice

BD5 Social Media Post

BD6 Copy of the Order for the adoption of the High Street Taxi ranks dated 13/12/2000



Background



Background

Documents- Hackney Documents - Part 2 -†

APPENDICES

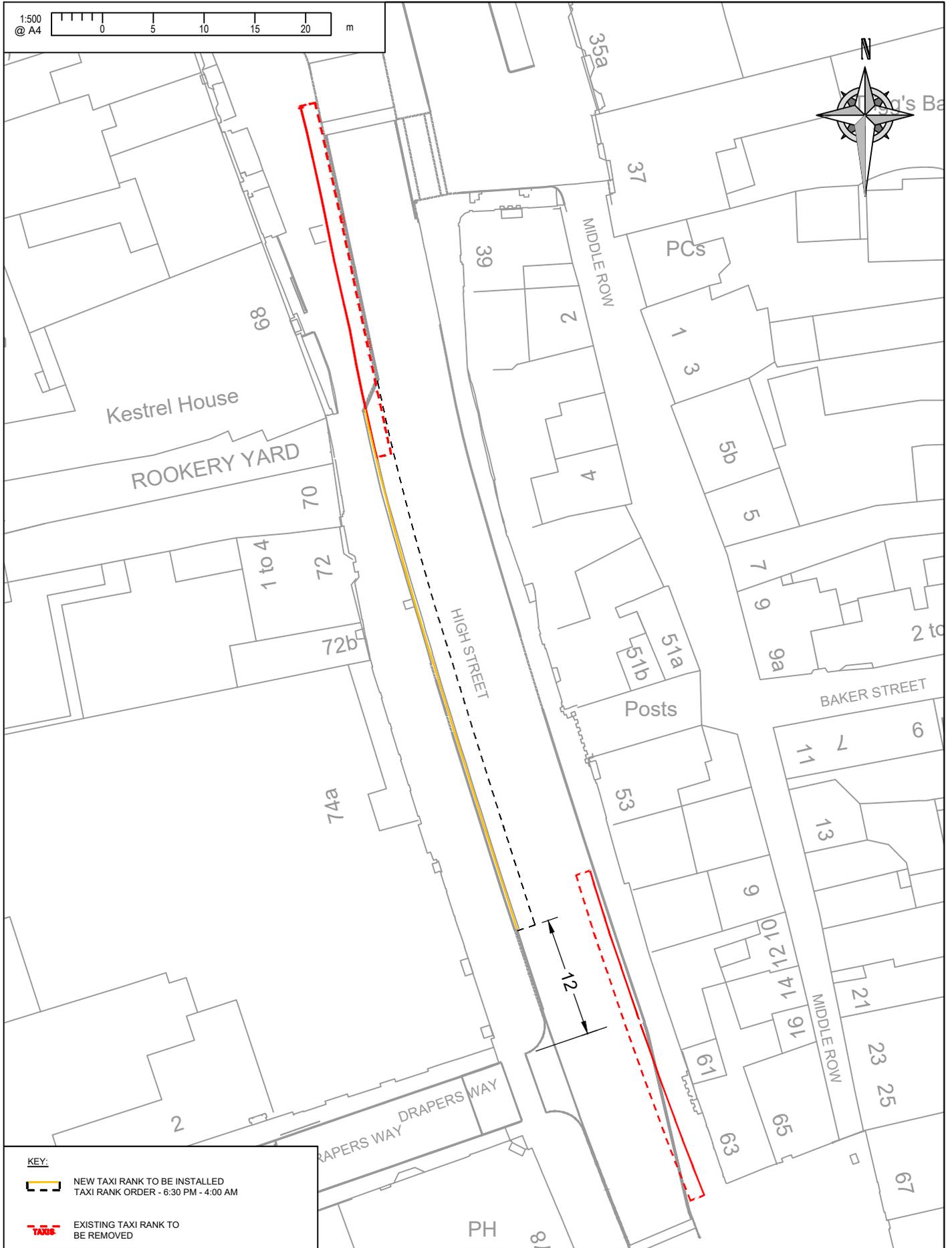
A A Plan showing the existing taxi rank and the location of the proposed new taxi rank

B Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)

1:500
@ A4
0 5 10 15 20 m



100mm
50
20
10mm
0



KEY:

 NEW TAXI RANK TO BE INSTALLED
TAXI RANK ORDER - 6:30 PM - 4:00 AM

 EXISTING TAXI RANK TO BE REMOVED



County Hall
Pegs Lane
Hertford, Herts
SG13 8DN
www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/highways

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Project
MAJ230001-1
ATF HIGH STREET STEVENAGE
PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING IMPROVEMENTS

Sheet
TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER DRAWING
PROPOSED TAXI RANK
SHEET 01 OF 01

Rev	Date	Description of Revisions	Drawn	Chkd	Appr	Drawn	Designed	Checked	Approved	Approved Date
REV0	28/10/25	FIRST ISSUE	HH	CB	KF	HH	HH	CB	KF	23/01/26
REV1	23/01/26	MODIFICATION	HH	CB	KF	Signature	Signature	Signature	Signature	23/01/26

Project No.	Sheet No.	Revision
HCC-MAJ230001-1-JAC-LSI-DR-ZL-0081	01	REV1

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Revocation/Variation of the Taxi Ranks on the High Street, Old Town,
Stevenage

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Form

February 2026

Date created	February 2026
Approved by	Cabinet/SLT
Owner	Julie Dwan – Licensing Manager
Version	1.0
Author	Julie Dwan
Business Unit and Team	Planning & Regulation (Environmental Health & Licensing)

Please [click this link](#) to find the EqIA guidance toolkit for support in completing the following form.

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

First things first:

Does this policy, project, service, or other decision need an EqIA?

Title:	Revocation/Variation of the Taxi Ranks, High Street, Old Town, Stevenage	
Please answer Yes or No to the following questions:		
Does it affect staff, service users or the wider community?		Yes
Has it been identified as being important to particular groups of people?		No
Does it or could it potentially affect different groups of people differently (unequal)?		No
Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities or exclusion issues?		No
Will it have an impact on how other organisations operate?		No
Is there potential for it to cause controversy or affect the council's reputation as a public service provider?		Yes

Where a positive impact is likely, will this help to:	
Remove discrimination and harassment?	No
Promote equal opportunities?	No
Encourage good relations?	No

If you answered 'Yes' to one or more of the above questions you should carry out an EqIA.

Or if you answered 'No' to all of the questions and decide that your activity doesn't need an EqIA you must explain below why it has no relevance to equality and diversity.

You should reference the information you used to support your decision below and seek approval from your Assistant Director before confirming this by sending this page to equalities@stevenage.gov.uk.

N/A

I determine that no EqIA is needed to inform the decision on the Revocation of the Taxi Rank in Danestrete, Stevenage.

Name of assessor:

Decision approved by:

Role:

Date:

Role:

Date:

Equality Impact Assessment Form

For a policy, project, strategy, staff or service change, or other decision that is new, changing or under review

What is being assessed?		Revocation (Removal) and relocation (Adoption) of the Taxi Rank – Lister Hospital, Coreys Mill Lane, Stevenage			
Lead Assessor	Julie Dwan		Assessment team		
Start date	February 2026	End date			
When will the EqIA be reviewed? (Typically, every 2 years)					

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Who may be affected by the proposed project?	Taxi drivers, members of the public
What are the key aims of the proposed project?	<p>The proposal seeks to revoke the existing taxi rank located on the southbound side of the High Street, Stevenage, and the variation of the existing rank on the northbound side of the High Street, increasing its length from 35 metres to 54 metres. The proposal also includes a variation to the taxi rank operating hours, with the new times being 18.30 to 04.00 (currently 21.00 to 0400) It is proposed that during the daytime, the rank on the northbound side of the High Street will be made available for general parking when not in use by taxis. Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) is carrying out works on the High Street to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and accessibility. The removal and variation of the existing taxi rank are necessary to enable the implementation of two new zebra crossings nearby and to support wider, holistic improvements to the High Street.</p> <p>The reconfiguration aims to provide more appropriate crossing locations outside the Red Lion and The Mulberry Tree Public House, which would require the removal of the existing zebra crossing outside Austin's Funeral Directors.</p>

	The reconfiguration aims to support and encourage more sustainable modes of transport, including walking, wheeling, and cycling and the use of public transport, by making it safer and easier to get around Stevenage.
--	---

What positive measures are in place (if any) to help fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment	N/A	Promote equal opportunities	N/A	Encourage good relations	The existing northbound and southbound taxi ranks are each 35 metres in length accommodating approximately 6 vehicles per rank. Whilst it is proposed that the southbound rank is revoked. The remaining taxi rank on the northbound side of the High Street which is currently 35 metres in

					<p>length and can accommodate 6 vehicles will be extended to 54 metres providing capacity for 9 vehicles. Though this is a reduction of 3 vehicles compared to the current arrangement. The remaining rank is to be located close to the main night-time economy premises and will be supported by additional zebra crossings to maintain safe and accessible pedestrian movement. The extension of the ranks operating hours will ensure improved taxi provision earlier in the evening supporting demand during early evening periods.</p>
--	--	--	--	--	--

<p>What sources of data / information are you using to inform your assessment?</p>	<p>Taxi Unmet Demand Survey carried out in September 2023. Public Consultation responses, as a result of a 28-day consultation.</p>
--	---

In assessing the potential impact on people, are there any overall comments that you would like to make?	The remaining rank on the northbound side of the High Street is in close proximity of the rank to the southbound side which is to be removed with a distance of approximately 100m. The revised arrangement is expected to enhance safety and accessibility along the High Street. HCC have confirmed that there will be no loss of taxi provision whilst the High Street works, and reconfiguration of the taxi ranks take place.
--	--

Evidence and Impact Assessment

Explain the potential impact and opportunities it could have for people in terms of the following characteristics, where applicable:

Age					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	N/A Impact not expected.				

What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	
---	--	--	--

Disability e.g., physical impairment, mental ill health, learning difficulties, long-standing illness

Positive impact	X	Negative impact		Unequal impact	
-----------------	---	-----------------	--	----------------	--

Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	<p>The remaining taxi rank on the northbound side of the High Street is located within a short walking distance of the rank proposed for removal and will be supported by safe pedestrian crossing facilities. The proposal is not anticipated to have a disproportionate adverse impact on people with protected characteristics, including disabled users, older people, or those with mobility impairments. Alternative pick-up and drop-off arrangements will continue to be available along the High Street, including accessible parking bays and designated drop-off points. The proposal is considered to support continued accessibility within the High Street.</p>				
--	---	--	--	--	--

What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	
---	--	--	--

Gender Reassignment

Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
-----------------	--	-----------------	--	----------------	--

Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	N/A Impact not expected.		
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

Marriage or Civil Partnership					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	N/A Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Pregnancy & Maternity					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	N/A Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Race					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	N/A Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Religion or Belief					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	N/A Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Sex					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	

Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	N/A Impact not expected.		
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

Sexual Orientation e.g., straight, lesbian / gay, bisexual					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	N/A Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Socio-economic¹
e.g., low income, unemployed, homelessness, caring responsibilities, access to internet, public transport users, social value in procurement

¹Although non-statutory, the council has chosen to implement the Socio-Economic Duty and so decision-makers should use their discretion to consider the impact on people with a socio-economic disadvantage.

Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	N/A Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Additional Considerations					
Please outline any other potential impact on people in any other contexts					
Positive impact	X	Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	The proposal is anticipated to have a positive impact on people with protected characteristics, particularly older people, disabled users, and those with mobility impairments, by improving access to safe and convenient taxi provision earlier in the evening. The extended hours will support greater accessibility along the High Street, including for those who may find walking longer distances difficult or who rely on taxis as their primary mode of transport. No adverse impacts have been identified as a result of the proposed change.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		N/A

Consultation Findings

Document any feedback gained from the following groups of people:

Staff?	Public Consultation – No responses received	Residents?	Public consultation – No responses received
Voluntary & community sector?	Public consultation -No responses received	Partners?	Police Consulted – The Police responded to confirm that the proposal has been noted and

			that there are no observations or comments from Stevenage Police.
Other stakeholders?	Licensed Taxi/Private Hire Trade consulted – no responses received		

Overall Conclusion & Future Activity

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Explain the overall findings of the assessment and reasons for outcome (please choose one) :		
1. No inequality, inclusion issues or opportunities to further improve have been identified	No responses/objections were received as a result of the 28-day consultation period which ran between 26 th January and 23 rd February 2026; therefore, I recommend to Cabinet that the taxi rank on the southbound side of the High Street be revoked and the remaining taxi rank on the northbound side of the High Street be extended. Furthermore, I recommend that Cabinet approve the extension of the operating hours of the taxi rank with the new times being from 18:30 to 04:00 (currently 21:00 to 04:00).	
Negative / unequal impact, barriers to inclusion or improvement opportunities identified	2a. Adjustments made	
	2b. Continue as planned	
	2c. Stop and remove	

Detail the actions that are needed as a result of this assessment and how they will help to remove discrimination & harassment, promote equal opportunities and / or encourage good relations:

Action	Will this help to remove, promote and / or encourage?	Responsible officer	Deadline	How will this be embedded as business as usual?
Taxi Unmet Demand survey to be carried out every three years	To assess the demand surrounding each taxi rank and to determine whether there is a need for additional licensed taxis (hackney carriages) to promote equal opportunities.	Julie Dwan	August 2026	

Approved by Assistant Director:

Date:

Please send this EqIA to equalities@stevenage.gov.uk for critical friend feedback and for final submittance with the associated project.

Lead AD	SD Richard Protheroe
Deputy	
Chair	Cllr Jim Brown
Vice-Chair	Cllr Andy McGuinness

Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2025-26
(Including review items, statutory Budget and Policy Framework items, and policy development items)

Scrutiny Review items 2025/26:	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	Comment by lead Strategic Director/Assistant Director	Other Details	Complete ✓ ✗	Inclusion in work programme for 2026/27
Pre-scrutiny policy development – Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)	Head of HR & OD, Kirsten Frew, Head of Corporate Policy & Performance, Daryl Jedowski, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Devolution, Cllr Loraine Rossati.	6 Nov 2025	(i) Informal one off pre-scrutiny policy development meeting (ii) No scope required (iii) Informal private meeting of O&S - Presentation from officers leading to a Q&A with Scrutiny Members.		The Chair of O&S will meet with the Deputy CE, Strategic Director, Richard Protheroe to discuss how scrutiny can assist with the LGR decision making process in 2026-27	✓ Members undertook scrutiny of LGR at a number of meetings in 2025-26	✓ O&S Members will continue to scrutinise LGR at various stages throughout the year
Corporate Communications (as a distinct topic)	Head of Communications & Marketing, Sandy Eaton, Interim Strategic Director Kathryn Carr.	26 Nov 2025	(i) informal O&S Meeting (ii) No scope required (iii) Informal private meeting - Presentation from officers leading to a Q&A with Scrutiny Members.		O&S Members made recs to the Head of Comms regarding improvements to the service.	✓	✗ Responses to monitoring of the recs can be circulated to O&S Members and will be included in the

Scrutiny Review items 2025/26:	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	Comment by lead Strategic Director/Assistant Director	Other Details	Complete ✓ ✘	Inclusion in work programme for 2026/27
							Action Tracker with a timeline for future monitoring.
Member Enquiries/ Complaints - YourSay System – What will the new system provide? 150	Director Business Change & Digital, Nadia Capuano. Business Improvement Manager, Greg Arends. Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Resources & Performance, Cllr Jeannette Thomas.	1 Dec 2025	(i) One meeting. (ii) No scope required. (iii) Presentation from officers leading to a Q&A with Scrutiny Members. This meeting was undertaken as an informal meeting of the O&S Committee.	Focus on: Member Enquiries: -How to improve trackability for Member Enquiries, with a reference number -How to improve officer response rate to Members -How to get an overview of enquiry themes -How to balance making improvements to enquiries & continue with less formal methods	O&S Members made recs to the Director of Business Change and Digital and the Head of Customer & Digital Services regarding improvements to the service.	✓	✘ Responses to monitoring of the recs can be circulated to O&S Members and will be included in the Action Tracker with a timeline for future monitoring.
Workforce (covering workforce survey and profile)	Head of HR & OD, Clare Davies, Assistant HR Business Partner, Vicky Hickford.	20 Jan 2026	(i) One meeting. (ii) No scope required. (iii) Presentation from officers leading to a Q&A with Scrutiny Members.		O&S Members made recs to the Head of HR, regarding improvements to the service.	✓	✘ Responses to monitoring of the recs can be circulated to O&S Members and will be included in the Action Tracker with a timeline

Scrutiny Review items 2025/26:	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	Comment by lead Strategic Director/Assistant Director	Other Details	Complete ✓ ✗	Inclusion in work programme for 2026/27
							for future monitoring.
ICT Cyber Security	Director, Chief Technology Officer & Senior Information Risk Owner, Matt Canterford.	17 Feb 2026 (or separate informal O&S meeting)	(i) One meeting. (ii) No scope required. (iii)Presentation from officers leading to a Q&A with Scrutiny Members.	The ICT Strategy is due to go to the Cabinet in June 2026, and Cyber Security features as a significant part of the strategy so can be scrutinised at this time.		✗	✓ It is recommended that the Director for IT, Matt Canterford, attend the O&S to present the strategy
Social Value and Ethical Investments (as a subset of financial oversight)	Director Finance, Atif Iqbal	17 March 2026 (or separate informal O&S meeting)	(i) One meeting. (ii) No scope required. (iii)Presentation from officers leading to a Q&A with Scrutiny Members.		The Strategic Director and Sec 151 Officer, Clare Fletcher, provided an explanation to the O&S Committee that the investments held by the Council as part of its treasury management are short term deposits with other local authorities, banks and money market funds, which were unlike Pension Funds, so the authority would not be able to use the same ethical investment	✗	✓ Members could receive presentation on the Council's initiatives regarding social value in contracts and updated Stevenage Works in 2026/27

Scrutiny Review items 2025/26:	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	Comment by lead Strategic Director/Assistant Director	Other Details	Complete ✓ ✘	Inclusion in work programme for 2026/27
					decisions regarding these short term investments.		

Monitoring of Previous Recommendations/Actions								
Scrutiny items: Page 152	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 required)	Other details	Comment by lead Assistant Director/ Deputy	Complete ✓ ✘
Consider the Committee's Action Tracker	Deputy CE & Strategic Director, Richard Protheroe, Scrutiny Officer, Stephen Weaver.	15 July 2025	One meeting	Members comment on the document – which may lead to further monitoring	No scope required	This item will be scheduled for consideration at the O&S in July 2026.		✓

Any monitoring of previous reviews will be agreed when the Committee considers the action tracker at its meeting in July 2026.

Statutory Budget & Policy Framework 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 required)	Other details Completed ✓ ✗
The 2026/2027 HRA and Rent Setting	Clare Fletcher SD Sec 151 Officer/ Portfolio Holder for Resources	December 2025	Yes, covered in one meeting	Presentation by AD with supporting papers	No scoping required	✓
Budget Options 2026/27	Clare Fletcher SD Sec 151 Officer/Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Resources	November 2025	Yes, covered in one meeting	Presentation by SD with supporting papers	No scoping required	✓
Council Tax Support Scheme (refresh of scheme reviewed annually by the Cabinet)	Clare Fletcher SD Sec 151 Officer Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Resources	January 2026	Yes, covered in one meeting	Presentation by SD & AD with supporting papers	No scoping required	✓
General Fund Budget and Council Tax Setting	Clare Fletcher SD Sec 151 Officer/Executive Portfolio Holder for Resources	January 2026	Yes, covered in one meeting	Presentation by SD & AD with supporting papers	No scoping required	✓

Pre-Scrutiny Policy Development Items:	Strategic Director, Assistant Director, Lead Officer(s) & Portfolio Holder	Provisional meeting date(s) identified	Number of meetings item covered in?	Expectation/ Style of meeting	Scope details	Other details	Complete ✓ ✘
<p><u>Council Tax Support Scheme and Universal Credit</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 154</p>	<p>Clare Fletcher SD Sec 151 Officer Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Resources & Performance, Cllr Jeannette Thomas.</p>	<p>Targeting week of 18 – 21 August 2025</p>	<p>One</p>	<p>Lead by the SD and Chaired by the Chair of O&S. This provides an opportunity for Scrutiny Members to meet with officers and the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to carry out some pre-scrutiny of the any proposed changes or amendments to the Council Tax Support Scheme and to discuss the content and shape of a Policy document before it is finalised in order to help shape the final outcome.</p>		<p>An item will be scheduled with O&S Members as a pre-scrutiny policy development item in the summer 2026.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✘</p> <p>This item did not take place for 2025/26 due to the complexity of the modelling between the two systems.</p>

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