



CABINET

Date: Wednesday, 15 July 2026
Time: 2.00pm,
Location: Council Chamber
Contact: Lisa Jerome (01438) 242203
committees@stevenage.gov.uk

Members: Councillors: Richard Henry (Chair), Myla Arceno, Rob Broom,
Coleen DeFreitas, Tom Plater, Loraine Rossati and
Nazmin Chowdhury

AGENDA

PART 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES - CABINET 10 JUNE 2026

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2026.

PAGES 3 - 10

3. MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND SELECT COMMITTEES

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

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 15 June 2026
- Environment and Economy Select Committee – 16 June 2026

PAGES 11 - 16

4. ST NICHOLAS PRIDE IN PLACE FUNDING: BOARD ESTABLISHMENT AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT

To receive an update on the Pride In Place funding awarded to the St Nicholas area in Stevenage.

PAGES 17 - 50

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

To update Members on the 2025/26 outturn positions for the General Fund (GF), Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Capital and the Council's Subsidiary Companies and to seek approval for changes to 2026/27 working revenue budgets.

PAGES 51 - 88

6. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER 4 2025/26, ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26 AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SUITE 2026/27

To receive a comprehensive overview of the Council's performance at the end of the 2025/36 financial year and the proposed direction for the year ahead.

PAGES 89 - 166

7. DRAFT TENANCY STRATEGY 2026 - 2031

To receive the final version of the Tenancy Strategy 2026 – 2031.

PAGES 67 - 204

8. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

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

9. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

To consider the following motions –

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

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

10. PART II MINUTES - 10 JUNE 2026

To approve as a correct record the Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2026.

PAGES 205 – 208

11. SPORTS AND LEISURE CENTRE

To seek approval to the revised budget and revised funding strategy for the Stevenage Sports and Leisure Hub.

PAGES 209 – 220

12. CONTRACT AWARD - MATERIALS SUPPLIER FOR THE REPAIRS AND VOIDS SERVICE

To seek approval to reprocure a materials supplier the Repairs and Voids Service.

PAGES 221 – 232

13. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

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

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 10 June 2026

Time: 2.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Richard Henry (Chair), Myla Arceno, Rob Broom, Coleen De Freitas, Tom Plater and Loraine Rossati

Start / End Time: Start Time: 2.00pm
End Time: 3.30pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Nazmin Chowdhury.

Councillor Myla Arceno declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 6 relating to the Renters Rights Act Enforcement Policy as a landlord for a property in Stevenage.

2 MINUTES - CABINET 11 MARCH 2026

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 11 March 2026 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

3 MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND SELECT COMMITTEES

Cabinet received a summary of the issues covered at the most recent meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny and Select Committees including:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Biodiversity Duty Monitoring, Indoor Market relocation and implications of Local Government Reorganisation;
- Environment and Economy Select Committee – Draft Climate Change Action Plan, progress in response to the scrutiny review of recycling in flat blocks, work programme for 2026/27 which had identified fly-tipping as a priority area;
- Community Select Committee – Annual Crime and Disorder report, the Cabinet Member response to the Committee's Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion scrutiny review, work programme which had identified damp and mould as a key area for further scrutiny.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment expressed his appreciation for the work undertaken in relation to biodiversity. The Member welcomed the continued progress and development of the discussion in this area.

Members were pleased to note the inclusion of fly-tipping in the work plan which was a growing issue not only in Stevenage but nationally.

The progress being made in relation to recycling was welcomed, including the introduction of food waste recycling and wider changes to the Council's waste services. Appreciation was expressed to officers for their work in delivering these improvements. The Portfolio Holder also advised that a review of progress would be requested at the end of the month.

The Leader thanked the Scrutiny Committee Chairs and Members for their continued commitment and the valuable role they played in strengthening governance and decision-making.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Environment and Economy Select Committee and Community Select Committee meetings be noted.

4 **PAVEMENT LICENCE POLICY**

Cabinet received a report relating to the draft Pavement Licensing Policy setting out the Council's approach in the granting, monitoring and enforcement of Pavement Licences within the Borough of Stevenage (excluding the Town Centre), in accordance with the Business and Planning Act 2020. It was noted that the Policy established a clear, consistent and robust framework for the granting, monitoring and enforcement of pavement licences across Stevenage (excluding the Town Centre), supporting businesses such as cafés, restaurants and public houses to safely extend their offer into outdoor spaces.

Members were advised that the Policy had been informed by informal consultation, with feedback incorporated where appropriate. It had also been considered by the General Purposes Committee on 14 April 2026, which recommended its adoption to Cabinet without further amendment, providing additional assurance on its robustness and readiness for implementation.

A Member welcomed the work undertaken to improve accessibility and consistency in the use of outdoor dining areas across the High Street and local shopping areas. It was noted that revised arrangements, including the removal of equipment at the end of each day, would help maintain clear pavements and reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the recommendations of the Council's General Purposes Committee to adopt the Policy at their meeting on 14th April 2026 be noted.
2. That the proposed Stevenage Borough Council Pavement Licensing Policy 2026 (attached at appendix A) be approved.
3. That the Policy be recommended to Council for adoption.
4. That it be recommended to the Council that minor inconsequential amendments to the Policy, following its adoption be delegated to the Director of

Planning and Regulation, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member/Portfolio Holder.

5 **CIVIL PENALTIES POLICY**

Cabinet received a report requesting consideration of the Council's revised Civil Penalty Policy which set out the approach to determining the level of a civil penalty in all cases where regulatory breaches or offences were established under the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and other legislation relating to private rented sector housing standards.

Members were advised that the policy supported a robust approach to enforcement action where landlords failed to comply with their legal obligations to their tenants. It was noted that income recovered from paid civil penalties would continue to be ring-fenced for private sector housing enforcement work.

Members were advised that a public consultation exercise had not been conducted due to the policy revisions being largely determined by the relevant legislation and statutory guidance. Consultation had been carried out internally within the Environmental Health and Licensing service; no changes to the policy were required. The Portfolio Holder informed Cabinet that the General Purposes Committee had considered the Policy at its meeting on 14th April 2026 and no additional points or suggestions were made.

A Member expressed thanks to the Licensing Team for their work, to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Renters' Reform/ Renters' Rights legislation.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the Civil Penalty Policy, attached as Appendix A to the report be approved.
2. That the Policy be recommended to Council for adoption.

6 **RENTERS' RIGHTS ACT ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

Cabinet received a report requesting consideration of the proposed Renters' Rights Act 2025 Enforcement Policy. The Policy aimed to ensure that effective regulatory action would be taken where landlords failed to comply with their legal obligations and that enforcement powers were applied in a fair, transparent, proportionate and consistent manner.

Cabinet were advised that the policy provided clarity on the approach the Council would take. In summary, landlords were expected to be compliant with the law and where non-compliance was established, the Council would normally take formal action. Informal action might be taken to achieve compliance in the first instance where there were strong reasons for doing so.

Members were pleased to note that for residents, this would mean clearer rights with greater confidence that poor standards would be challenged, and stronger action taken where landlords failed to meet their legal responsibilities. The Policy set out a more assured and visible approach to enforcement, helping to improve housing conditions, tackle poor practice, and would create a more balanced and accountable private rented sector locally.

It was noted that a public consultation exercise was not conducted as much of the policy content related to matters prescribed by the legislation and statutory guidance. Internal consultation had taken place within the Environmental Health and Licensing and Housing Options services resulting in no changes to the policy were required. The General Purposes Committee had considered the Policy at its meeting on 14th April 2026 where no additional points or suggestions were made.

Members were pleased that the proposed measures would help to deliver safer and more stable housing for residents within the community and commended the work undertaken by Officers in progressing this locally. They were also pleased to note that the Council was taking a proactive approach to implementing forthcoming Renters' Rights legislation, particularly in relation to Section 21 "no-fault" evictions.

It was agreed that there might be some uncertainty regarding the scale of demand arising from these changes. Officers advised that while it was considered that current resources were sufficient, it would be important to keep capacity under review as the position develops.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the proposed Renters' Rights Act 2025 Enforcement Policy attached as Appendix A to the report be approved.
2. That the Policy be recommended to Council for adoption.

7 ADOPTION OF STEVENAGE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN PARTIAL UPDATE

Cabinet received a report providing an update on the outcomes of the Main Modifications consultation on the Stevenage Borough Local Plan Partial Update, following the Examination in Public Hearing Sessions.

Members were advised that through the Examination in Public Hearing, the Inspector had concluded that a number of Main Modifications were required to ensure the Plan could be found sound. These modifications were subject to public consultation between February and March 2026 and did not result in any substantive changes to the overall direction of the Plan.

Members were pleased to note that the majority of key strategic development sites had already secured planning permission and were now being delivered on the ground, supporting new homes, major regeneration schemes and the creation of jobs and opportunities for residents. Alongside this, the Council continued to play a direct and proactive role — building new council homes, accelerating regeneration across the town, and working to protect and enhance the natural and built

environment.

The Leader emphasised the importance of maintaining a long-term focus for the town in the context of Local Government Reorganisation and welcomed the update on the Local Plan which reflected the delivery of new homes, jobs, improved station facilities, enhanced leisure and cultural provision, and better links to the town centre. It was also noted that the changes would provide greater clarity and certainty for developers, residents and other stakeholders.

Members expressed their appreciation to the Planning Team for the significant work undertaken in progressing the Local Plan Partial Review over the past two years.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the Stevenage Borough Local Plan Partial Update, incorporating Main Modifications (Appendix C to E) and associated Proposals Map (Appendix F) be adopted.
2. That the Partial Update be recommended to Council for adoption.
3. That it be recommended to Council that minor inconsequential amendments to the Local Plan be delegated to the Director of Planning and Regulation, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member / Portfolio Holder, prior to the Local Plan being adopted.
4. That the feedback from the Planning & Development Committee on the content of this Cabinet Report be noted.

8 **ADOPTION OF REVISED COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY**

Cabinet received a report providing Members with an update on the progress of the Stevenage Borough Revised Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), following progression through the Examination in Public stage.

Cabinet was advised that the revised CIL reflected updated evidence on viability and development across the Borough, ensuring the right balance between supporting continued investment and development, while maximising contributions to the infrastructure that benefitted residents and communities.

It was advised that the work undertaken had placed the Council in a strong position for the future, particularly in providing a clear policy framework for developers. It was noted that this would be especially important in the context of Local Government Reorganisation.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the contents of the Inspector's Report (Appendix A), following the Examination in Public Hearing Session be noted and that the Stevenage Borough Revised Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule (Appendix B) be adopted.

2. That it be recommended to Council that the Stevenage Borough Revised Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule (Appendix B) be adopted.
3. That the feedback from the Planning & Development Committee on the content of this Cabinet Report be noted.

9 **LGR STRUCTURAL CHANGES ORDER SUBMISSION**

Cabinet received a report seeking approval to the Council's proposed response to a consultation from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), regarding the drafting of the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Structural Change Order for Hertfordshire.

The Leader advised that as the report was not circulated five clear days prior to the meeting, he had accepted the matter as urgent due to the requirement for Hertfordshire authorities to provide a single response within the timeframe to MHCLG. He also advised that the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny had agreed to waive call-in, reflecting both the urgency of the decision and the necessity of progressing within the limited time available.

Members were informed that the Structural Change Order would establish the detailed legislative and governance framework for transition to new unitary authorities, including how services, assets, responsibilities and decision-making arrangements would transfer and operate.

It was noted that Hertfordshire's proposed response had been developed through close collaboration across all eleven councils and reflected a shared officer-level view on the practical arrangements needed to support a smooth and effective transition.

The Chief Executive reported feedback from the Hertfordshire Leaders' Group. It was confirmed that the Structural Changes Order would establish joint committees covering proposed unitary arrangements. Members noted that naming conventions for the future authorities would be determined by shadow authorities at a later stage, although some initial preferences had been expressed. Clarification was also provided that the question regarding political proportionality on joint committees posed by MHCLG applies to Hertfordshire County Council.

The Chief Executive also advised that feedback had also been received from the MHCLG advisor which highlighted the strength of cross-party and cross-tier collaboration in Hertfordshire, encouraging early establishment of voluntary joint committees, emphasising the need to focus on improved outcomes for residents, and recognising the importance of addressing wider financial challenges across the public sector.

A Member emphasised that, throughout the transition period, it would be essential to ensure that residents continued to receive high-quality services, while also providing staff with as much clarity and stability as possible.

It was **RESOLVED** that the proposed responses detailed in Appendix A to the report be approved and authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to finalise the response and submit to MHCLG in accordance with the required timeframe.

10 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

11 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.
2. That the reasons for the following reports being in Part II were accepted, and that the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

12 **LAND AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE WITH CONTRACT AWARDS/LAND SALES BRAGBURY END SCHEME**

The Cabinet considered a Part II report in respect of the Land and Development Programme Update with Contract Awards/Land Sales Bragbury End Scheme.

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

13 **BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY CENTRE CONTRACT**

The Cabinet considered a Part II report in respect of the Business Technology Centre.

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

14 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Monday, 15 June 2026

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Ellie Plater (Chair), Matthew Hurst CC (Vice-Chair), Jim Brown, Andy McGuinness, Jeff Bullock, Leanne Brady, Peter Clark, Claire Parris, Jackie Hollywell, Ricki Rands, Jade Woods and Tom Wren

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

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Phil Bibby.

Councillor Tom Wren declared an interest in items 6 and 7 due to being a residential landlord and would not take part in the discussion of these items.

2 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 17 March 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

It was noted that the Terms of Reference be noted.

4 **WORK PROGRAMME 2026 - 27**

The Committee considered the proposed work programme for 2026 – 27 and noted the inclusion of items such as Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), ICT and cyber security, the social value of contracts, and routine Budget and Policy Framework matters.

It was noted that the Action Tracker would be reviewed by the Committee in July.

5 **PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - PAVEMENT LICENCE POLICY**

The Committee received an update from the Director of Planning and Regulation regarding the Pavement Licence Draft Policy.

Members were advised that the policy established a clear framework for the granting, monitoring and enforcement of pavement licences.

The Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

6 PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - CIVIL PENALTIES POLICY

The Committee received a presentation on the Civil Penalties Policy, which set out the Council's approach to determining civil penalties for regulatory breaches under the incoming Renters' Rights Act.

Members noted that the policy supported a robust enforcement approach where landlords failed to meet their legal obligations, and that income generated from civil penalties would be ring-fenced for private sector housing enforcement activities.

In response to questions, officers advised that the intention was for enforcement activity to be cost-neutral, supported by both civil penalty income and government funding.

Members were informed that the current number of civil penalties issued was low, however the new enforcement-first approach and increased penalty levels under the Renters' Rights Act were expected to result in more penalties being issued and a greater cost recovery.

Officers also advised that work was ongoing with the Council's legal team to strengthen arrangements for recovering unpaid penalties. Members requested that future updates on the implementation of the policy, enforcement activity and penalty recovery be reported back to the Committee and incorporated into the Council's performance reporting framework.

The Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

7 PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - RENTERS' RIGHTS ACT ENFORCEMENT POLICY

The Committee received a presentation on the Renters' Rights Act Enforcement Policy, which outlined the Council's approach to enforcing the new requirements introduced by the Act.

Members were advised that the policy largely reflected statutory requirements prescribed in legislation and had been developed following consultation with the Council's Environmental Health, Licensing and Housing Services teams. It was noted that the policy had previously been considered by the General Purposes Committee and subsequently approved by Cabinet.

Members welcomed the policy and commended officers for their work in ensuring the Council was prepared for the implementation of the legislation.

In response to questions regarding awareness and publicity, officers advised that communications had been undertaken to inform residents of the changes and that engagement with landlords had taken place to explain their new responsibilities. Members were informed that further communication and engagement activities

would continue as the legislation was implemented, including promotion of the proposed landlord database.

The Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

8 **PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - ADOPTION OF STEVENAGE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN PARTIAL UPDATE**

The Committee received an update on the adoption of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan Partial Update. Members were advised that the Partial Update had followed a public examination and incorporated a number of modifications recommended by the Planning Inspector.

Officers noted that broader issues relating to future growth and infrastructure would be considered through the preparation of a new Local Plan, which would be the subject of a future report to Cabinet.

Members questioned whether an adoption of the Partial Update would help protect the Council from the risk of being placed into planning special measures. Officers explained that having an up-to-date Local Plan provided additional protection against this risk.

The Committee also discussed the potential impact of LGR on the Local Plan and officers advised that the current plan would remain in force until its end date. However, forthcoming changes to the planning system, alongside LGR proposals, would require the preparation of new Local Plans and the introduction of Strategic Spatial Development Strategies at a wider authority level.

It was noted that LGR would include additional considerations, but officers would seek to minimise costs through shared evidence bases, efficient consultation processes and careful project management to avoid unnecessary expenditure.

The Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

9 **PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - ADOPTION OF REVISED COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY**

The Committee received a report on the adoption of the revised Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule.

Officers advised that the revised schedule had been subject to an examination process and was primarily focused on development viability.

Members were informed that the revised charging rates increased contributions in certain areas, particularly for residential and industrial development, and would help ensure that appropriate infrastructure was secured through future development proposals.

The Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

10

PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - LGR STRUCTURAL CHANGES ORDER SUBMISSION

The Committee received a report seeking approval of the Council's response to the Government consultation on the proposed Structural Changes Order for Hertfordshire as part of Local Government Reorganisation. Members were advised that the response had been developed collaboratively by all eleven Hertfordshire councils and would be submitted to Government by the consultation deadline.

Members were informed that the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to waive call-in of this item due to the necessity to provide a joint response for Hertfordshire in the timescales that the secretary of state had implemented.

Members sought clarification on the proposed governance arrangements, including the expected term of office for councillors elected to shadow authorities and the role of future joint committees.

Officers explained that, based on current proposals, the shadow authority councillors would serve an initial year preparing for vesting day followed by a four-year term. This however would be confirmed through the final Structural Changes Order.

Members were also advised that formal joint committee meetings would be held in public and would support preparations for the formation of the shadow authorities.

The Committee discussed the importance of maintaining Stevenage's local identity, civic traditions and ability to respond to local needs following reorganisation. Officers confirmed that proposals included arrangements to preserve civic functions through Charter Trustees and acknowledged the importance of ensuring local communities continued to be represented within any future governance structure.

The Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

11

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.

12

URGENT PART I BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

13

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.

14 **PART II DECISION OF THE CABINET - LAND AND DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME UPDATE WITH CONTRACT AWARDS/LAND SALES BRAGBURY
END SCHEME**

The Director of Land, Development and Neighbourhood Regeneration provided an updated to the Committee regarding the land development programme, contract awards and land sales at the Bragbury End scheme.

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

The Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

15 **PART II DECISION OF THE CABINET - BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY CENTRE
CONTRACT**

The Director of Planning and Regulation provided an updated on the Business Technology Centre Contract.

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

The Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

16 **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.

17 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR

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Part I – Release to Press



Agenda item: **##**

Meeting Cabinet
Portfolio Area Stronger Communities & Equalities
Date 15/07/26



ST NICHOLAS PRIDE IN PLACE FUNDING: BOARD ESTABLISHMENT AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT

KEY DECISION

Authors **Daryl Jedowski**, Head of Corporate Policy & Performance
Jane Konopka, Head of Community Development
Gemma Maret, Cooperative Neighbourhoods Programme Manager

Lead Officer **Julie Baird**, Strategic Director

Contact Officer **Daryl Jedowski**, Head of Corporate Policy & Performance

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The St Nicholas area of Stevenage has been awarded Pride in Place funding, providing access to up to £20 million over 10 years to support a resident-led programme of investment in the neighbourhood.
- 1.2 This report provides an overview of the funding awarded, the role of Stevenage Borough Council as the initial accountable body, and the proposed approach to establishing the St Nicholas Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board.
- 1.3 The report also sets out the proposed approach to Board recruitment, confirmation of the programme geography, early community engagement and development of the St Nicholas Pride in Place Plan for submission to government by February 2027.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the award of Pride in Place funding to the St Nicholas area and the role of Stevenage Borough Council as the initial accountable body for the programme.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the proposed approach to establishing the St Nicholas Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board to support the initial stages of the programme.
- 2.3 That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director (JB), having consulted with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Stronger Communities & Equalities, to develop the St Nicholas Pride in Place Plan for submission to government by February 2027.
- 2.4 That Cabinet agrees that a further report will be brought forward ahead of the February 2027 submission deadline, setting out the St Nicholas Pride in Place Plan.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Pride in Place Programme is a national programme led by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). It is designed to support long-term, resident-led investment in selected communities, with a focus on strengthening local pride, improving neighbourhood conditions and empowering local people to shape priorities for their area.
- 3.2 The first phase of the programme built on the previous Long-Term Plan for Towns approach and provided funding to 75 towns across the UK. The second phase changed the focus of the programme from larger town-based areas to smaller neighbourhood geographies, with places in England selected using Middle Layer Super Output Areas as the default geography.
- 3.3 In March 2026, government confirmed a further expansion of Phase 2, including St Nicholas in Stevenage. This places St Nicholas within the neighbourhood-based phase of the programme, rather than the earlier town-based model, and provides access to up to £20 million over 10 years to support a locally developed programme of investment.
- 3.4 The government's selection methodology for the Phase 2 expansion focused on identifying neighbourhoods with high levels of need. In England, this was based on three headline data sources:
 - 3.4.1 **Index of Multiple Deprivation:** the government's official measure of relative deprivation in England, bringing together factors including income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services, and living environment.
 - 3.4.2 **Community Needs Index:** a measure designed to identify places where social infrastructure and community capacity may be weaker, including issues such as access to services, community assets, participation and civic strength.
 - 3.4.3 **Community Life Survey:** a national survey used to understand community cohesion, belonging, volunteering, loneliness and civic

participation. For the Phase 2 expansion, this was used as a community cohesion filter alongside the measures of deprivation and community need.

- 3.5 Stevenage Borough Council has received £252,604 of capacity funding from MHCLG to support the establishment of the programme ahead of the submission of the St Nicholas Pride in Place Plan. This funding is intended to support activity such as Board establishment, early community engagement, development of the local evidence base, programme management and preparation of the Plan.
- 3.6 Following submission and approval of the Pride in Place Plan, the programme is expected to move into delivery funding, with up to £2 million available each year over the 10-year programme. The funding profile for Phase 2 areas is split between capital and revenue funding, with 63% allocated as capital and 37% allocated as revenue.
- 3.7 The funding will be paid to Stevenage Borough Council in its role as accountable body, with local priorities and investment activity to be shaped through the St Nicholas Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board and wider community engagement. The Council will support this process and ensure that funding is managed in line with relevant legal, financial and governance requirements.
- 3.8 The national programme is framed around three overarching aims. These aims are reflected in the breadth of interventions available through the programme:
 - 3.8.1 **Stronger communities**, including activity that supports community cohesion, volunteering, social action, local events, community leadership, neighbourhood safety, health and wellbeing, and stronger relationships between residents and local organisations.
 - 3.8.2 **Thriving places**, including investment in public realm, parks and green spaces, local centres, community buildings, youth facilities, heritage, arts and culture, active travel, local services and other physical improvements to the neighbourhood.
 - 3.8.3 **Taking back control**, including activity that gives residents a greater role in shaping local priorities, supports community-led decision making, improves access to opportunity, and helps local people influence the future of their area.
- 3.9 Despite these three aims, the prospectus and supporting guidance make clear that the programme is intended to give Neighbourhood Boards flexibility to respond to local evidence and resident priorities.
- 3.10 Indicative interventions include public realm and high street improvements, parks and community gardens, refurbishment of community and youth facilities, local arts and heritage activity, support for economically inactive residents, tailored skills provision, community cohesion activity, participatory engagement, social action, community-level health provision, active travel, crime prevention and school-based programmes for children and young people.

- 3.11 Examples from other Pride in Place areas show the breadth of activity that Neighbourhood Boards may consider, depending on local evidence and resident priorities:
- 3.10.1 **Canvey Island** in Castle Point has developed a broad plan covering Canvey Lake, parks and playgrounds, the seafront and town centre, alongside youth activity, skills and community facilities. It demonstrates how environmental, community and economic priorities can be brought together within a single place-based plan.
 - 3.10.2 **Newton-le-Willows** in St Helens has combined early projects, including playground investment, improvements at Earlestown Town Hall and library-based wellbeing activity, with longer-term town centre building improvements. It shows how visible early action can sit alongside preparation for future investment in community and heritage assets.
 - 3.10.3 **Spennymoor** in County Durham has developed a resident-shaped programme linking business support, street safety and active travel with a children and young people's fund. It demonstrates how locally led investment can support physical improvements alongside opportunity for residents.
 - 3.10.4 **Greenock** in Inverclyde has developed a regeneration plan to reconnect the town centre and waterfront, alongside a proposed Enterprise Hub, heritage-led renewal and work to strengthen local identity. It illustrates how a programme can combine physical regeneration with enterprise and a longer-term place narrative.

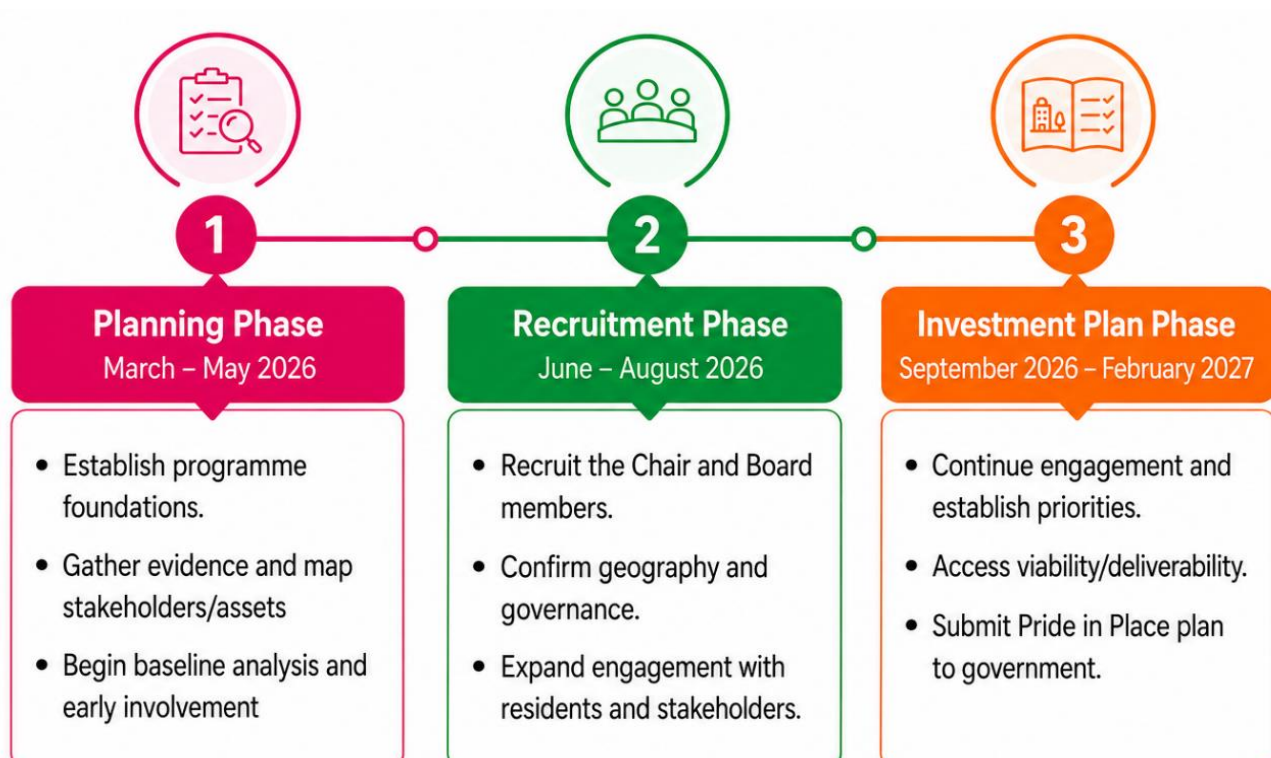
4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1 The immediate focus for the programme is to establish the St Nicholas Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board, confirm the programme geography, and begin the evidence gathering, engagement and planning work required ahead of submission.
- 4.2 Pride in Place is intended to be resident-led, with local priorities shaped through the Neighbourhood Board and wider community engagement. Stevenage Borough Council's role as the initial accountable body is to support the establishment of the Board, provide appropriate governance and financial oversight, and ensure that the programme is developed in line with national guidance.
- 4.3 A joint working group involving relevant Stevenage Borough Council members and officers, alongside representatives from the local Member of Parliament's office, has been established to support the early establishment of the programme. It is focused on Chair recruitment, Board membership, governance arrangements, communications and engagement. Its work is guided by the following principles:

- 4.3.1 **Working together as the core principle:** The shared starting point is that the Council and the MP's office are working together to support the best possible outcome for St Nicholas.
- 4.3.2 **Community-first approach:** Activity should be framed around what is right for the community, with decisions shaped by resident voice, local evidence and the emerging role of the Board.
- 4.3.3 **Co-production and openness:** The approach should be open, transparent and co-produced wherever possible, with issues surfaced early and worked through collaboratively.
- 4.3.4 **Aligning activity for shared impact:** Pride in Place should align with ongoing activity across St Nicholas and across partners, so that it both builds on, and adds momentum to, wider work already underway.
- 4.3.5 **Joint communications planning:** Communications should be developed and agreed jointly, with the comms side linked into the key working group so messaging is aligned from the outset.
- 4.3.6 **Small working nucleus:** A core working group between the Council and the MP's office can help keep momentum, manage issues and prepare clear steps for the Leader of the Council, the MP and the future Board.
- 4.3.7 **Decision support for local leadership and the Board:** The purpose of officer work in this phase is to support informed decision-making by the Council, the MP and, once established, the Board.

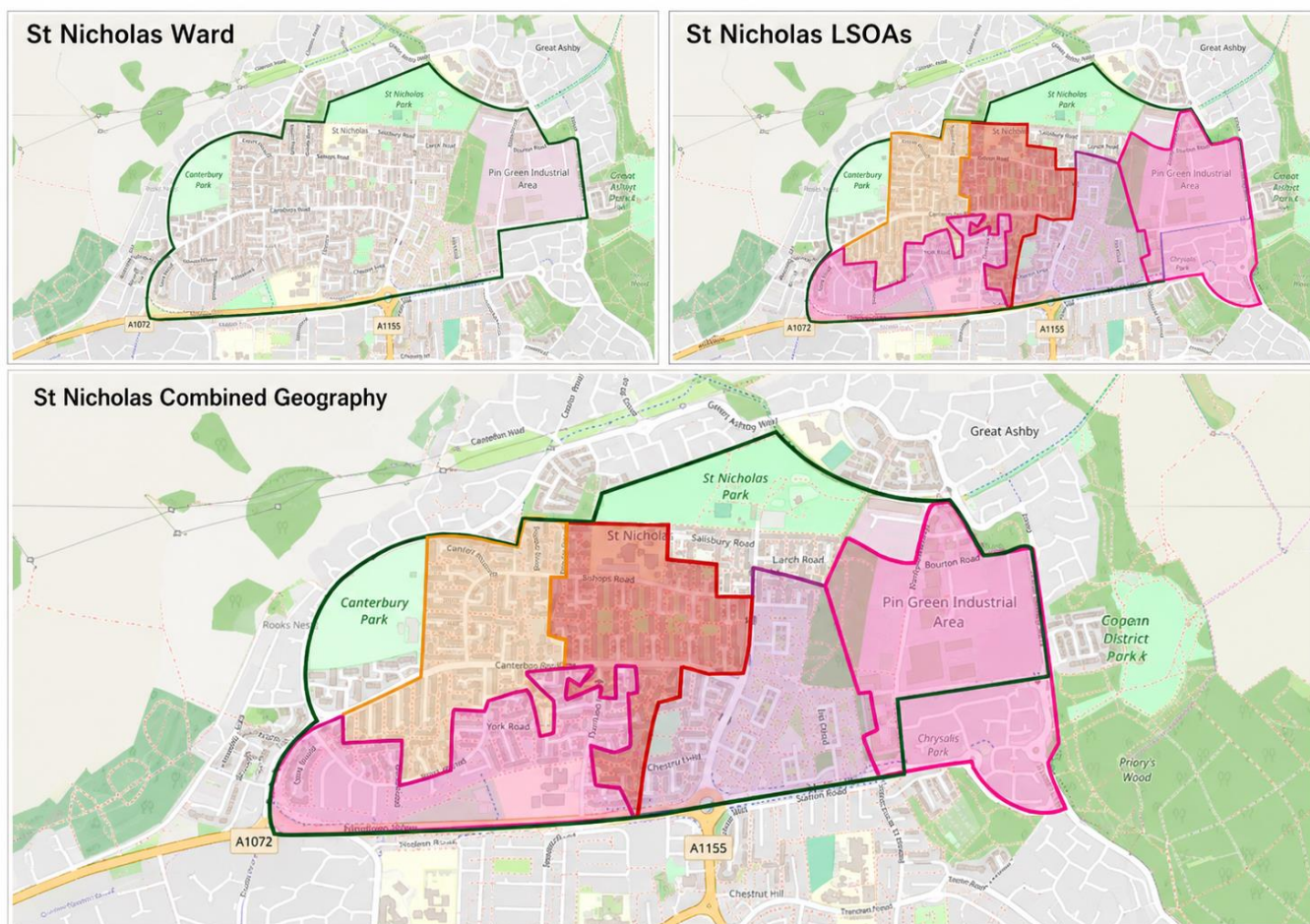
Programme Timeline

- 4.4 The programme can be organised across three broad stages, moving from early evidence and planning, into governance and engagement, and then into investment plan development.



Programme Geography

- 4.5 The default programme geography for Pride in Place is the St Nicholas Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA), rather than the St Nicholas Ward. MSOAs are statistical geographies used to present local data, while Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are smaller statistical areas that sit beneath them. The St Nicholas MSOA, also known as Stevenage 001, is made up of five LSOAs: Stevenage 001A, 001B, 001D, 001E and 001F.



- 4.6 The national guidance allows Phase 2 Neighbourhood Boards to make representations to alter the default geography, within the parameters set by government. For St Nicholas, the Council will work with the Chair, Board, local Member of Parliament, ward councillors and residents to consider the most appropriate geography for the programme. This will need to be confirmed alongside Chair and Board membership by 28 August 2026.
- 4.7 Government guidance is clear that an agreed geography must be established for the programme. However, St Nicholas is not an island and residents do not necessarily organise their lives around administrative boundaries on a map. The Board will therefore need to understand the neighbourhood as a lived place, while still ensuring that investment remains focused on the residents and communities the programme is intended to support.
- 4.8 A practical example of this is secondary education. There are no secondary schools within the St Nicholas Ward. If the Board wished to consider school-

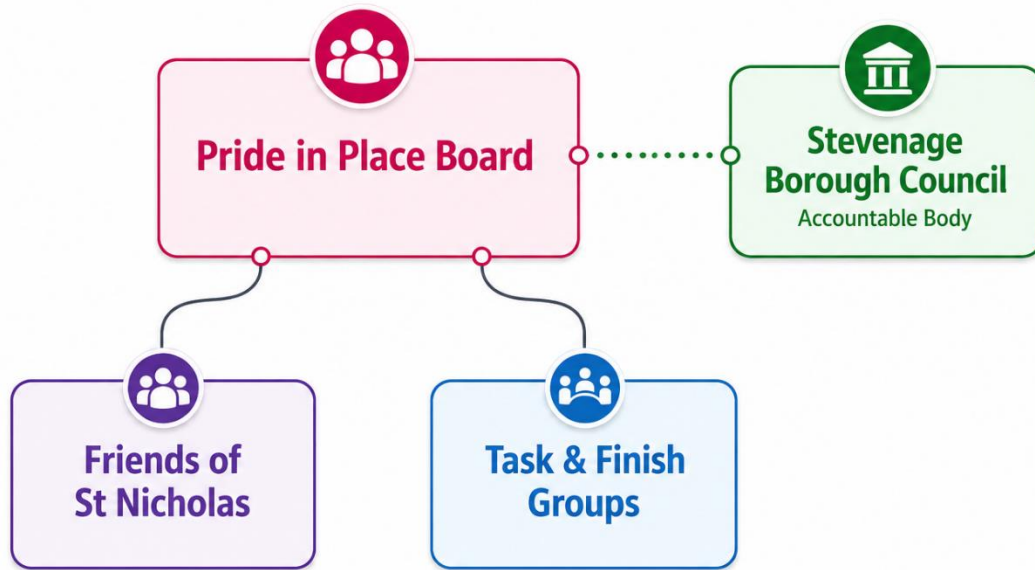
based activity in future, this would likely need to involve secondary schools serving St Nicholas residents, while focusing activity on pupils who live within the Pride in Place area.

- 4.9 The initial proposal to the Board will be to use a combined St Nicholas MSOA and St Nicholas Ward footprint as the baseline for confirming the programme geography. This would provide a clear starting point, while allowing the Board to consider how adjoining neighbourhoods and nearby assets relate to residents' everyday lives.

Establishing the Neighbourhood Board

- 4.10 The establishment of the St Nicholas Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board is the central requirement for the early phase of the programme. The Board will lead the development of the Pride in Place Plan, supported by the Council, local residents, community groups, businesses, the local Member of Parliament and other partners.
- 4.11 National guidance requires the Board to have at least eight members, with at least 51% living or working within the neighbourhood, and to include the local Member of Parliament and at least one ward councillor. Membership should broadly reflect the diversity of the local area.
- 4.12 Recruitment for the independent Chair has commenced ahead of this report being presented to Cabinet, to support the Board being in place by 28 August 2026. Recruitment to the Chair, Vice Chair and Board member roles will follow a clear and accessible process, supported by the Council and informed by learning from other Pride in Place areas. The Chair cannot be an elected representative and will be appointed through a process informed by discussion with the local Member of Parliament.
- 4.13 Draft governance documents have been prepared to support the establishment of the Board, including proposed Terms of Reference, declarations of interest arrangements, decision-making processes and secretariat support. These will be refined with the Chair and Board following appointment, before being formally agreed.
- 4.13.1 The Terms of Reference will set out the Board's role, composition and terms of office, alongside arrangements for rotation and succession. They will reflect the working principles set out above and establish expected behaviours, inclusive participation, transparency and the management of conflicts of interest.
- 4.13.2 They will also provide the framework for preparing the Pride in Place Plan, setting out how resident insight, local evidence and appropriate financial, legal and delivery assurance will inform Board decisions.
- 4.13.3 The proposed model places the Pride in Place Board as the lead decision-making body, with Stevenage Borough Council acting as accountable body. A wider Friends of St Nicholas group will support involvement and engagement, while Task and Finish Groups will help progress specific priorities. Board development,

community capacity, performance monitoring and impact evaluation will be built into the programme as it develops.



- 4.14 The national programme sets an ambition for areas to move towards more community-led delivery models over time. Any future change to accountable body arrangements would need to be considered carefully and only when the Board has the governance, capacity, resources and systems required to manage programme delivery independently.

Evidence Gathering, Engagement & Communications

- 4.15 A strong local evidence base will be essential to support the Board's early work. The Board will need to consider statistical data, local assets, resident experience, stakeholder insight and existing service or investment activity in and around St Nicholas.
- 4.16 It is proposed that capacity funding is used to commission an externally delivered, representative resident survey for St Nicholas. This would provide robust insight into resident priorities, perceptions and lived experience, helping the Board to make informed decisions when developing the Pride in Place Plan.
- 4.17 This work needs to begin before the Board is fully established. If the Council waited until the Board was in place before commissioning the survey, it is unlikely that the evidence would be available early enough to properly inform the development of the Plan ahead of the February 2027 submission deadline.
- 4.18 Engagement with residents, community groups, businesses, ward councillors, the local Member of Parliament and other local stakeholders will continue throughout the development of the Plan. This will include digital and in-person activity, alongside targeted work with residents who may be less likely to respond to general consultation. The approach will be designed to be inclusive and accessible, recognising barriers relating to disability, language, digital exclusion, age, cost, caring responsibilities and confidence to participate.

- 4.19 A joint communications and engagement approach will be important to ensure that residents understand the programme, the role of the Board and the opportunities to shape the Plan. This should include clear communication on what has been heard, how views have been considered and how the Board is developing its priorities.

Capacity Funding

- 4.20 Stevenage Borough Council has received £252,604 of capacity funding from the MHCLG to support the early establishment of the programme. This funding is intended to provide the practical capacity needed to establish the Board, support engagement and develop the Pride in Place Plan ahead of the first delivery funding being made available.

Funding Type	Amount
Capital	£117,604
Revenue	£135,000
Total	£252,604

- 4.21 It is proposed that this funding is used to support the following areas of activity:
- 4.21.1 **Resident survey, evidence gathering and baseline analysis:** commissioning a representative resident survey for St Nicholas. This will sit alongside local data analysis, asset mapping and work to understand relevant service, community and investment activity in and around the area.
- 4.21.2 **Officer capacity and Board support and development:** securing dedicated officer capacity for Chair and Board recruitment, Board administration, governance, meetings, resident engagement and Plan development. This will include induction and access to advice for the Chair and Board.
- 4.21.3 **Communications, engagement and community capacity activity:** supporting accessible communications and physical and digital engagement. This will include targeted work with residents less likely to engage through general consultation, alongside support for residents and local organisations to help develop, deliver and monitor the programme.
- 4.22 Using capacity funding before the Board is fully established is recommended because there are a number of practical steps that need to be progressed ahead of the main plan development period. Waiting until the Board is in place would create a significant delivery gap and would risk the Board not having the evidence, officer support and engagement infrastructure required to meet the February 2027 submission deadline.

Other Options Considered

- 4.23 A number of alternative options have been considered. As a default principle, decisions on the use of Pride in Place funding should be shaped through the Chair and Neighbourhood Board wherever possible. However, there are several practical steps that need to be progressed before the Board is fully established to ensure that the programme can meet the February 2027 submission deadline. The following points summarise the key decision areas linked to the recommendations in this report.
- 4.24 **Evidence and capacity:** delaying resident survey work, evidence gathering and officer capacity until after the Board is fully established is not recommended. The Chair and Board will need a robust evidence base to inform their early decision making, and the timetable requires this work to begin before the Board is fully in place. Without this, there is a significant risk that the Board would not have the resident insight, baseline data and officer support required during the main plan development period.
- 4.25 **Project development:** developing a more detailed set of proposed projects before the Board is established is not recommended. This would not reflect the resident-led principles of the programme and could undermine the role of the Neighbourhood Board in shaping local priorities.
- 4.26 **Geography:** interpreting the programme geography narrowly and focusing only on activity within strict administrative boundaries is not recommended. The Board will need to maintain a clear focus on St Nicholas residents, while also recognising the wider geography of everyday life and the role of nearby assets used by the community.

5 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no additional direct financial implications for the Council arising from the recommendations in this report, beyond its role as the initial accountable body for the Pride in Place funding.
- 5.2 The Council has received capacity funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to support the early establishment of the St Nicholas Pride in Place programme. The funding breakdown is set out in section 4 of this report.
- 5.3 The use of capacity funding is expected to include dedicated officer support for the programme. However, the Council's accountable body role will also require input from existing services, including finance, legal, procurement, communications, community development, policy and relevant delivery teams. This officer time will be managed within existing resources at this stage, with any future resource implications kept under review as the programme develops.
- 5.4 The wider programme provides access to up to £20 million over 10 years, subject to the submission and approval of the St Nicholas Pride in Place

Plan. Future delivery funding will be dependent on government approval of the Plan and will be subject to the funding conditions and requirements set by MHCLG.

- 5.5 Any future Council funding requirements, match funding, project-specific financial commitments, or financial risks arising from the Pride in Place Plan will be considered as part of future reports and decision-making processes.

Legal Implications

- 5.6 As the initial accountable body, the Council will be responsible for ensuring that Pride in Place funding is managed in accordance with the relevant grant conditions, legal requirements and internal governance arrangements.
- 5.7 Legal advice will be sought as required in relation to the governance of the Neighbourhood Board, the use of capacity funding, procurement activity, data protection requirements linked to resident engagement and survey work, and any agreements needed with delivery partners or commissioned providers.
- 5.8 The Neighbourhood Board will have an important role in shaping local priorities and the Pride in Place Plan. However, while the Council remains the accountable body, decisions and expenditure will need to be managed through appropriate legal, financial and governance processes.
- 5.9 Any future proposal to move towards a different accountable body arrangement would require further consideration, including legal, financial, governance and capacity implications, and would be subject to further advice and decision making at the appropriate time.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Implications

- 5.10 The Pride in Place programme is expected to run over 10 years and will therefore extend beyond the current anticipated timeline for Local Government Reorganisation in Hertfordshire. With vesting day currently anticipated for 1 April 2028, the programme, its governance arrangements and any accountable body responsibilities will need to be considered as part of transition planning.
- 5.11 Government guidance sets an expectation that Neighbourhood Boards may mature over time into more independent community-led bodies capable of managing funding directly. However, there is no guarantee that the St Nicholas Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board will have reached this stage ahead of vesting day.
- 5.12 Should the Council remain as the accountable body at the point of vesting, arrangements will need to be made for the transfer of accountable body responsibilities to the successor authority. This will need to include grant management, financial monitoring, governance records, Board support, risk management, legal agreements, procurement records and project documentation linked to the Pride in Place Plan.

Risk Implications

- 5.13 There are risks associated with the programme timetable, particularly the requirement to establish the Board, confirm the programme geography and develop the Pride in Place Plan for submission by February 2027. This is

being mitigated through early programme planning, the establishment of a working group with the local Member of Parliament's team, early Chair recruitment, and use of capacity funding to support evidence gathering and engagement.

- 5.14 There is a risk that the Board is unable to agree priorities, develop investable proposals or commit spend in line with the annual funding profile for the programme. As the programme is expected to operate on a cadence of up to £2 million per year, delays in agreeing priorities or progressing delivery could create a risk of future funding being paused, suspended or re-profiled by government. This will be mitigated through early evidence gathering, clear governance arrangements, officer support and a structured plan development process ahead of the February 2027 submission deadline.
- 5.15 There is a risk that resident expectations may develop ahead of the Board agreeing priorities and before government approval of the Pride in Place Plan. There is also a risk that the programme geography may not be easily understood by residents, particularly because the default MSOA geography does not directly match the St Nicholas Ward. These risks will be mitigated through clear mapping, accessible communications, careful engagement and a feedback loop that explains how resident views are being used to inform the Board's work.
- 5.16 There are accountable body risks linked to the management of public funding, including compliance with grant conditions, procurement requirements, financial controls and delivery oversight. These will be mitigated through the Council's established governance, finance, legal, procurement and risk management arrangements, supported by clear Board governance processes.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.17 Pride in Place funding has been awarded to St Nicholas in recognition of local need, with the national programme designed to support communities experiencing higher levels of deprivation, lower levels of community infrastructure and weaker indicators of local pride and cohesion.
- 5.18 The programme is expected to have positive equalities impacts by focusing investment, engagement and community-led planning in an area with identified need. Care will be needed to ensure that engagement reaches a broad range of residents, including people who may be less likely to respond to general consultation activity.
- 5.19 An Equalities Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix A. This will support the establishment of the Board, the approach to engagement and the development of the St Nicholas Pride in Place Plan.

APPENDICES

- A Pride in Place – Equality Impact Assessment

Estimated time taken to complete: 2 hours*

*Please note that this should be a working document and should be actively reviewed throughout the lifetime of the project/policy/service change



Pride in Place, St Nicholas Programme Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Form

September 2023-July 2027

Date created	June 2026
Approved by	Julie Baird
Owner	Jane Konopka/Daryl Jedowski
Version	1
Author	Jane Konopka
Business Unit and Team	Housing and Neighbourhoods

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 EqlA?

Title:	Pride in Place Programme	
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?	Yes	
Does it or could it potentially affect different groups of people differently (unequal)?	Yes	
Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities or exclusion issues?	Yes	
Will it have an impact on how other organisations operate?	Yes	
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?	Yes
Promote equal opportunities?	Yes
Encourage good relations?	Yes

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

Or if you answered 'No' to all of the questions and decide that your activity doesn't need an EqlA 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 EqlA is needed to inform the decision on the .

Name of assessor:

Decision approved by:

Role:

Role: Assistant Director

Date:

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?		Pride in Place Programme for St Nicholas Ward			
Lead Assessor	Jane Konopka Head of Community Development			Assessment team	Daryl Jedowski – Head of Corporate Policy Gemma Maret – Co-operative Neighbourhoods Programme Manager
Start date	May 2025	End date	July 2027		
When will the EqlA be reviewed? (Typically every 2 years)		End of programme			

Page 31

Who may be affected by the proposed project?	Residents across the borough, specifically those living and connected to St Nicholas, Community and Voluntary groups, local businesses, hard to reach and under-served groups
What are the key aims of the proposed project?	The Pride in Place Programme is a borough-wide initiative to improve neighbourhoods through environmental enhancements, community-led activity, and partnership working.

What positive measures are in place (if any) to help fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment	The programme is underpinned by a Neighbourhood Board model, where local residents and stakeholders play a central role in shaping priorities and	Promote equal opportunities	The programme provides multiple accessible routes for involvement, enabling residents to engage in ways that suit their preferences, confidence levels, and	Encourage good relations	☐ The Neighbourhood Board provides a shared space for residents from different backgrounds to come together,

	decision-making. This ensures that a diverse range of voices are represented and that decision-making is not dominated by any single group. Clear expectations are set for all Board members, delivery partners, and funded groups to uphold equality, diversity and inclusion principles, with a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment, or exclusionary behaviour. Engagement activities, Board meetings, and events are designed as safe, respectful and inclusive spaces, with facilitation approaches that encourage all participants to contribute. Communications and engagement materials are designed to be		availability. These include: • Participation in the Neighbourhood Board • Joining or forming Friends of Groups or community-led initiatives • Attending local events and activities • Completing questionnaires, surveys and online engagement • Contributing ideas and feedback informally through outreach activities Decision-making on funding and project priorities is resident-led through the Neighbourhood Board, ensuring that investment reflects local needs,		discuss local issues, and make collective decisions, fostering mutual understanding and respect. Community-led activities, events, and environmental projects create opportunities for positive interaction between diverse groups, helping to break down barriers and reduce social isolation. The programme promotes a shared sense of ownership and pride in place, encouraging collaboration rather than competition between groups and communities. By supporting a wide range of ways to get involved—from informal engagement to structured leadership roles—the programme helps build stronger relationships, trust, and social cohesion
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	accessible and inclusive, ensuring that no group is excluded through language, format, or approach		experiences, and aspirations rather than top-down decisions. The programme recognises that some residents face barriers to participation and therefore adopts flexible and inclusive engagement approaches, including: • Outreach in community settings • Varied formats (in-person and digital) • Removing cost barriers to participation • Proactively seeking input from underrepresented groups All feedback, ideas and contributions—both formal and informal—are valued equally and fed into decision-making, ensuring a fair opportunity for all		across the neighbourhood.
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			residents to influence outcomes		
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What sources of data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	The assessment is informed by a mix of data, local insight and community engagement, including: • Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and local demographic data to understand need across neighbourhoods • Resident feedback gathered through discussions, surveys, questionnaires, and community events • Input from partners and community organisations, including voluntary, faith, and local groups • Learning from previous programmes and place-based initiatives • Qualitative insight and lived experience from residents, community representatives, and officers • The council's EqIA toolkit and equality guidance • Comparisons with county and national data
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In assessing the potential impact on people, are there any overall comments that you would like to make?	Overall, the Pride in Place programme is expected to have a positive impact across communities, particularly in improving local environments, increasing community pride, and strengthening social connections. The resident-led approach, through the Neighbourhood Board and wider engagement opportunities, helps ensure that decisions reflect a broad range of local voices and experiences. Multiple routes for involvement support inclusive participation and help reduce barriers for underrepresented groups. While no significant negative impacts have been identified, ongoing attention will be given to ensuring accessibility, broad representation, and equitable participation so that all residents can benefit from and influence the programme.
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Evidence and Impact Assessment

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

Page 35

Age					
Positive impact	Yes	Negative impact	None	Neutral Impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	The programme is expected to have a positive impact across all age groups. Improvements to local environments, increased community activity, and opportunities to engage in decision-making can benefit both younger and older residents. Younger people may benefit from increased opportunities to participate in community activities and have their voices heard, while older residents may benefit from enhanced local environments, improved accessibility, and reduced social isolation. The Neighbourhood Board and wider engagement methods (such as events and surveys) provide flexible ways for people of different ages to get involved, helping to ensure that decision-making reflects a broad range of perspectives. There is a risk that some age groups (particularly younger people or older residents with mobility or digital access barriers) may be less likely to participate. To mitigate this, the programme will adopt inclusive and varied engagement approaches, including in-person and informal opportunities, to ensure all age groups can contribute				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	A resident-led approach via the Neighbourhood Board ensures decisions on priorities and funding reflect diverse local views.		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	Improve representation: Review participation data and take action to increase representation of underrepresented groups on the Neighbourhood Board and in engagement activities.	

	Multiple ways to get involved (Board, Friends groups, events, surveys, informal feedback) support inclusive participation. Targeted outreach and partnership working help engage underrepresented groups and reduce barriers. Community-led activities and environmental improvements create accessible, welcoming spaces and promote a sense of belonging. Bringing people together through shared activity helps strengthen inclusion and community cohesion. Use of existing partnerships with community groups and organisations support residents		Identify and remove barriers: Gather feedback (e.g. through surveys and outreach) to understand barriers to participation and adjust delivery (e.g. timing, accessibility, formats) accordingly. Strengthen inclusive engagement: Monitor who is engaging and adapt methods to ensure a broader and more diverse range of residents are being reached. Ensure fair decision-making: Regularly review funding decisions and outcomes to confirm they are equitable and reflect community need. Measure impact over time: Collect ongoing feedback and monitor outcomes to assess how different groups are benefiting and make improvements where needed
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Disability e.g., physical impairment, mental ill health, learning difficulties, long-standing illness

Positive impact	Yes	Negative impact	None	Neutral impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Census and local demographic data on disability Resident feedback from surveys, and engagement Partner input, including organisations supporting disabled residents Officer insight on barriers to access and participation Learning from previous programmes				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	A resident-led approach via the Neighbourhood Board ensures disabled residents have opportunities to influence local priorities and funding decisions. Multiple and accessible ways to get involved (Board, events, surveys, informal feedback) support participation for people with different needs and preferences. Targeted engagement and partnership working help identify and reduce barriers for disabled residents. The programme creates opportunities to deliver accessible and inclusive environmental improvements. Bringing people together through inclusive activities helps reduce isolation and strengthen community inclusion. Ensuring communications and engagement is delivered in a way to reduce issues through digital divide.		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	Improve representation: Review involvement in the Neighbourhood Board and engagement activities and take action to increase participation from disabled residents where needed. Identify and remove barriers: Gather feedback to better understand accessibility barriers (e.g. physical access, communication formats, digital inclusion) and adjust delivery accordingly. Strengthen accessible engagement: Monitor and improve the accessibility of venues, communications, and activities to ensure inclusive participation. Ensure fair decision-making: Review funding decisions to ensure they reflect the needs of disabled residents and support inclusive outcomes. Measure impact over time: Collect ongoing feedback from disabled residents to assess	

	Ensure communications and engagement are accessible to community members for who english may be a second language.		whether accessibility and inclusion are improving and refine the programme as n
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Gender Reassignment					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Neutral impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	No specific impacts have been identified for people undergoing gender reassignment. The programme's inclusive approach, including safe and respectful engagement spaces and zero tolerance of discrimination, supports participation for all residents				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	The programme promotes inclusive and respectful environments through its engagement and delivery approach, ensuring all residents, including those undergoing gender reassignment, feel able to participate safely.		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Marriage or Civil Partnership					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Neutral impact	
Please evidence the data and information	No impacts have been identified in relation to marriage and civil partnership. This characteristic is not considered directly relevant to the delivery of the programme				

you used to support this assessment			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	No specific opportunities have been identified in relation to marriage and civil partnership, as this characteristic is not directly relevant to the programme. However, all activities are designed to be inclusive for all residents.	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

Pregnancy & Maternity					
Positive impact	yes	Negative impact		Neutral impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Local demographic/contextual data on families and young children Resident feedback from engagement activities Officer insight on participation barriers for parents/carers				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	The programme provides opportunities to create accessible, family-friendly environments and activities, supporting participation for those who are pregnant or have young children. Flexible engagement methods (e.g. events, informal activities and surveys) enable people to get involved in ways that suit their circumstances.		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

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Race

Positive impact	Yes	Negative impact	None	Neutral impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Census and local demographic data on ethnicity and population diversity across the borough Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and local insight highlighting areas where ethnic minority communities may experience inequalities Resident feedback from discussions, surveys, and community engagement activities Input from partners and community organisations, including voluntary, faith, and cultural groups representing diverse communities Officer knowledge and qualitative insight on barriers to participation and engagement for different ethnic groups Learning from previous programmes and engagement activity relating to inclusion and community cohesion The council's EqIA toolkit and equality guidance				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	A resident-led approach via the Neighbourhood Board ensures people from diverse ethnic backgrounds can influence priorities and funding decisions. Multiple ways to get involved (Board, events, surveys, informal engagement) support participation from a wide range of communities. Targeted outreach and partnership working with community, faith, and cultural		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	Improve representation: Review Neighbourhood Board and engagement participation to ensure diverse ethnic communities are represented and take action where gaps are identified. Identify and remove barriers: Gather feedback to understand any barriers to participation (e.g. language, trust, awareness) and adapt engagement methods accordingly.	

	organisations help engage underrepresented groups and reduce barriers. The programme supports community-led activities that reflect different cultures and experiences, promoting inclusion and a sense of belonging. Bringing people together through shared activity helps strengthen understanding, reduce inequalities in participation, and build community cohesion. Ensure communications and engagement are accessible to community members for who english may be a second language.		Strengthen inclusive engagement: Monitor how effectively different communities are being reached and work with partners to widen participation. Ensure fair decision-making: Review funding decisions to ensure they reflect the needs and priorities of diverse communities. Measure impact over time: Collect ongoing feedback to assess whether the programme is supporting inclusion and community cohesion across different ethnic groups
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Religion or Belief					
Positive impact	Yes	Negative impact		Neutral impact	No significant unequal impacts identified, though some groups may be less likely to participate without

					targeted engagement.
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Census and local demographic data on religion and belief Resident feedback from discussions, surveys, and engagement Input from community, voluntary and faith organisations Officer insight on participation and potential barriers Learning from previous engagement activity The council's EqIA toolkit and equality guidance				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	• A resident-led approach via the Neighbourhood Board ensures people of different faiths and beliefs can influence priorities and funding decisions. • Multiple ways to get involved (Board, events, surveys, informal engagement) support inclusive participation. • Partnership working with faith and community organisations helps engage diverse groups and build trust. • Shared activities and community projects create opportunities to promote understanding	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	Improve representation: Review participation to ensure people from different religions and beliefs are represented and take action where needed. Identify barriers: Gather feedback to understand any barriers (e.g. timing around religious observance, awareness) and adapt delivery. Strengthen inclusive engagement: Monitor reach and work with faith groups to widen participation. Measure impact over time: Assess whether the programme is supporting inclusion and positive relations between different groups		

	and strengthen community cohesion.		
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Sex					
Positive impact	Yes	Negative impact	None	Neutral impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Census and local demographic data on gender Resident feedback from discussions, surveys, and engagement Input from partners and community organisations Officer insight on participation and access to activities Learning from previous programmes and engagement activity The council's EqIA toolkit and equality guidance				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	A resident-led approach via the Neighbourhood Board ensures people of all genders can influence priorities and funding decisions. Multiple ways to get involved (Board, events, surveys, informal		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	Improve representation: Review participation to ensure balanced representation across genders and address any gaps. Identify barriers: Gather feedback to understand any barriers to participation (e.g. safety, confidence, timing) and adapt delivery.	

	engagement) support inclusive participation. The programme can support safer, more welcoming public spaces, particularly benefiting women and girls. Community activities provide opportunities to encourage equal participation and representation.		Strengthen inclusive engagement: Monitor engagement levels and ensure activities are accessible and welcoming to all. Measure impact over time: Assess whether the programme is supporting equal participation and positive outcomes across genders.
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Sexual Orientation e.g., straight, lesbian / gay, bisexual					
Positive impact	yes	Negative impact		Neutral impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	- Resident feedback from discussions, surveys, and engagement - Officer insight on participation and inclusion - Learning from previous programmes and engagement activity - The council's EqIA toolkit and equality guidance <i>(No specific impact identified due to the broad, place-based nature and target cohort of the programme.)</i>				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	A resident-led approach via the Neighbourhood Board ensures inclusive decision-making that reflects a wide range of perspectives. Multiple ways to get involved (Board, events, surveys, informal		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	Improve representation: Monitor participation to understand whether LGBTQ+ residents are engaging and take action if gaps are identified. Identify barriers: Gather feedback to understand any	

	engagement) support participation for all residents. The programme promotes safe, respectful and inclusive environments, encouraging participation from LGBTQ+ residents. Community activities provide opportunities to foster inclusion, visibility, and a sense of belonging.		barriers to participation (e.g. confidence, perceived inclusivity) and adapt delivery. Strengthen inclusive engagement: Ensure activities and communications promote safe and welcoming environments. Measure impact over time: Review whether the programme supports inclusive participation and positive community outcomes.
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Socio-economic¹ e.g., low income, unemployed, homelessness, caring responsibilities, access to internet, public transport users, social value in procurement					
Positive impact	yes	Negative impact		Neutral impact	Low risk, mitigated through targeted delivery
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and local data on income, employment, and deprivation levels Ward profiles and council intelligence on areas with higher socioeconomic need Resident feedback from discussions, surveys, and engagement				

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.

	Input from community and voluntary organisations working with disadvantaged groups Officer insight on barriers relating to cost, transport, digital access, and caring responsibilities Learning from previous place-based programmes The council's EqlA toolkit and equality guidance		
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	A resident-led approach via the Neighbourhood Board ensures funding decisions reflect the needs of communities experiencing disadvantage. Multiple free and accessible ways to get involved (Board, events, surveys, informal engagement) reduce barriers to participation. Targeting of resources towards areas of higher deprivation helps address inequalities. The programme supports community-led activity and capacity building, enabling local groups to access funding and opportunities. Environmental improvements and activities help create inclusive, accessible neighbourhoods and improve quality of life. Ensure communications and Engagement are delivered in a	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	• Improve reach: Monitor participation to ensure residents experiencing disadvantage are engaged and represented. • Identify barriers: Gather feedback on barriers (e.g. cost, transport, digital access, caring responsibilities) and adapt delivery. • Ensure fair allocation: Review funding decisions to ensure resources are reaching areas and groups most in need. • Strengthen inclusive engagement: Continue working with partners to reach underrepresented communities. • Measure impact over time: Assess whether the programme is reducing

	way that reduces impact from digital divide.		inequalities and improving outcomes in disadvantaged areas.
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Additional Considerations					
Please outline any other potential impact on people in any other contexts					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Neutral impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment					
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Consultation Findings

Document any feedback gained from the following groups of people:

Staff?		Residents?	
Voluntary & community sector?		Partners?	
Other stakeholders?			

Overall Conclusion & Future Activity

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		
Negative / unequal impact, barriers to inclusion or improvement opportunities identified	2a. Adjustments made	The assessment identifies no significant adverse impacts, however a number of opportunities to improve inclusion and participation have been identified. As a result, the programme includes the following adjustments: • A resident-led approach via the Neighbourhood Board to ensure decisions on priorities and funding reflect diverse local needs • Multiple and flexible ways to participate (e.g. Board, events, surveys, informal engagement) to reduce barriers • Targeted outreach and partnership working to engage underrepresented groups • A focus on accessible and inclusive delivery, including venues, communications, and environmental improvements • Ongoing monitoring and feedback to review participation, representation, and outcomes and make further improvements where needed The programme will therefore continue with these inclusive approaches embedded, ensuring it remains responsive and equitable for all residents.
	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?
Ensure diverse representation on the Neighbourhood Board	Promote equal opportunities; Encourage good relations	Jane Konopka/Gemma Maret	September 26	Regular review of membership and targeted recruitment as part of programme governance
Provide multiple accessible ways to engage (events, surveys, informal engagement)	Promote equal opportunities	Community Development	ongoing	. Embedded in engagement planning and delivery for all programme activity
Undertake targeted outreach with underrepresented groups and communities	Promote equal opportunities; Encourage good relations	Paula Mills – Community Development		Built into engagement plans and partnership working arrangements
Ensure all activities, venues and communications are accessible and inclusive	Remove discrimination; Promote equal opportunities	Paula Mills – Community Development		Accessibility requirements included in project planning, commissioning and delivery
Work with community, voluntary and faith organisations to widen participation	Promote equal opportunities; Encourage good relations	Paula Mills/Oonagh Sherlcok		Ongoing partnership working and stakeholder engagement
Monitor participation and feedback across different groups	Promote equal opportunities	Paula Mills/Gemma Maret/Daryl Jedowski		Incorporated into monitoring and evaluation processes and reporting cycles

Review funding decisions to ensure fair and transparent allocation	Remove discrimination; Promote equal opportunities	Jane Konopka/Daryl Jedowski/Gemma Maret		Embedded in governance processes and decision-making criteria
Collect and respond to feedback to improve inclusion and accessibility	Promote equal opportunities; Encourage good relations	Paula Mills/Gemma Maret		Continuous improvement approach built into programme delivery

Approved by Strategic Director: **Julie Baird**

Date: **06/07/26**

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

Meeting: CABINET

Agenda Item:

Portfolio Area: Resources and Performance



Date: 15 July 2026

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

KEY DECISION

Author – Veronika Mendy / Keith Reynoldson / Rhona Bellis

Lead Officer – Atif Iqbal

Contact Officer – Veronika Mendy / Keith Reynoldson / Rhona Bellis

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Members on the 2025/26 outturn positions for the General Fund (GF), Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Capital, and the Council's Subsidiary Companies and to seek approval for changes to 2026/27 working revenue budgets. The revenue, capital and company spends included within this report are still subject to completion and audit of the 2025/26 statement of accounts.
- 1.2 To update Members on the Council's reserves and balances available to support revenue expenditure and/or the financial resilience of the Council.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 General Fund

- 2.1.1 That it is to be noted that all the financial data is subject to the 2025/26 Statement of Accounts audit.
- 2.1.2 That the 2025/26 actual General Fund (GF) net expenditure of £10.078 Million be noted.
- 2.1.3 That the 2025/26 actual core resources (government grants, business rates and council tax) of £11.144 Million be noted (paragraph 4.4.1).
- 2.1.4 That carry forward/spend requests into 2026/27 totalling £309,150 be approved for the General Fund (paragraph 4.3).

- 2.1.5 That the 2025/26 transfer to reserves of £3.169 Million be approved for the General Fund (paragraph 4.7.1).
- 2.1.6 That Members note the transfer from General Fund reserves to allocated reserves in 2025/26 of £2.92 Million as detailed in paragraph 4.7.1.
- 2.1.7 That the 2026/27 transfer from reserves of £1.015 Million as set out in paragraphs 4.6.1 and 4.6.5 be approved.
- 2.1.8 That Members approve the changes to the 2026/27 budget of £117,030 as set out in the table in paragraph 4.6.

2.2 Housing Revenue Account

- 2.2.1 That the 2025/26 in year HRA surplus of £1,543,209 be noted, subject to the audit of the Statement of Accounts.
- 2.2.2 That carry forward requests of £783,140 (paragraph 4.11) are approved.
- 2.2.3 That the 2026/27 revised HRA budget of £942,260 deficit is approved as set out in paragraph 4.12.3.

2.3 Capital Programme

- 2.3.1 That the General Fund capital budget re-phasing of £4.4 Million from 2025/26 to future years be approved.
- 2.3.2 That the Housing Revenue Account capital budget re-phasing of £2 Million from 2025/26 to future years be approved.
- 2.3.3 That the new growth item detailed on paragraph 4.17.2 be approved.
- 2.3.4 That the virements totalling £177K detailed on paragraph 4.17.3 be approved.
- 2.3.5 That the changes in Capital Financing in paragraph 4.18 be approved for 2025/26 and 2026/27.

2.4 Council's Subsidiary Companies

- 2.4.1 That Members note the 2025/26 outturn position for the Council's subsidiary companies as set out in paragraph 4.20.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1.1 In March 2026, as part of the Quarter three monitoring report the Cabinet approved the working budgets for the GF, HRA and Capital as set out in the table below.

	GF	HRA	Capital GF	Capital HRA
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Q3 monitoring	£10,654	£646	£26,870	£32,794

3.1.2 The Accounts and Audit Regulations set out the requirements for financial management, the preparation of annual accounts, and audit procedures. Under the amended regulations, there is no longer a requirement for Member approval of the Statement of Accounts prior to the completion of the external audit. Instead, only the Responsible Financial Officer is required to certify the presentation of the unaudited annual accounts before they are submitted for external audit. The draft accounts were published by the deadline 30 June 2026 and available to view on the Council's website.

3.1.3 Each financial year Stevenage Borough Council is required to produce and publish a draft set of accounts, allow public inspection of the draft accounts, have the draft accounts audited and to subsequently publish the final audited set of accounts. The deadlines set under regulation for the accounts prepared for the 2025/26 financial year are:

- publish draft set of accounts one day prior to the start of public inspection (30 June 2026).
- public inspection to start no later than 1 July 2026 for a period of 30 working days.
- completion of audit and publication of audited accounts by 31 January 2027.

3.1.4 The performance of subsidiary companies and relevant joint ventures has been reported through the individual governance arrangements in place for each entity. These have now been consolidated and reported in summary in paragraph 4.20 and a further report to Members will be included in a Council companies update to the September Cabinet. An overview of the performance of these entities reported through their governance arrangements, including any implications for the Council will be included in future reports to improve transparency and oversight. The Council's subsidiaries and joint arrangements are included in the Statement of Accounts.

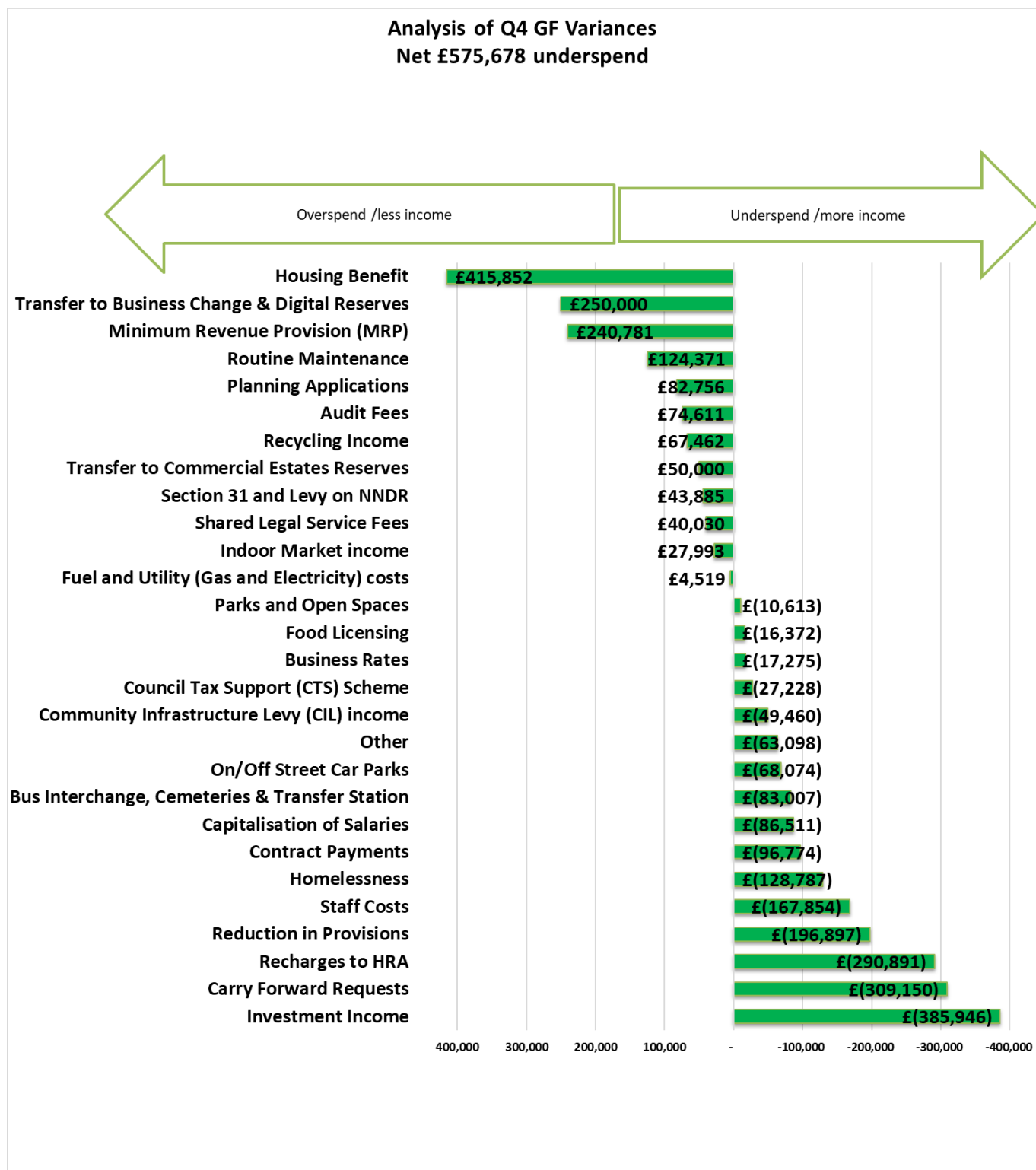
4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 General Fund 2025/26 outturn

4.1.1. The 2025/26 actual General Fund Net Expenditure was £10,078 Million, compared to a budget of £10,654 Million. The in-year underspend (which includes carry forward requests) was £576K. The overall increase in surplus was £649K which includes an increase in core resources of £73K as set out in para. 4.5.

4.2. Analysis of variances

4.2.1. A high-level summary of the over and underspends split by the cost categories are shown in the chart below.



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

- I. **Housing Benefit £416K Overspend** – relates to an increase in subsidy shortfall arising from a rise in supported housing provision within Stevenage and is part of a national trend affecting many Local Authorities. While Housing Benefit covers the accommodation provision, it does not fully reimburse the Council for the supported accommodation element, resulting in a funding gap. Officers are monitoring the position closely on a monthly basis to assess what the ongoing financial impact and any implications for future budgets will be included in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- II. **Transfer to Business Change & Digital (BC&D) reserves £250K** – the CFO recommends that part of General Fund underspend (£250K) is transferred to BC&D reserve. The reserve will support investment in business change, digital transformation and process improvement initiatives, helping to ensure the Council is well prepared for Local Government Reform with improvements in service efficiency and resilience.
- III. **Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) £241K Overspend** – £223K relates to the MRP required under statutory regulations, the Council's Wholly Owned Company (WOC), Marshgate, did not repay its loan to the Council in 2025/26 but is scheduled now for 2026/27, while remaining £18K belongs to the Indoor Market. The WOC MRP element has arisen due to delays to the construction of the substation and houses which impacted the sale of housing. As the loan remained outstanding at the year end, the Council was required to make an MRP charge in accordance with the regulations. This will be reversed in 2026/27 when loan is paid and paragraph 4.6 which covers the changes in 2026/27 budget already accounts for this credit back to the General Fund.
- IV. **Routine Maintenance £124K Overspend** – The variance includes several one-off compliance and remedial works undertaken during the year to maintain asset condition and support continued service delivery. This also includes additional repair and maintenance works required across operational assets and properties, together with inflationary pressures on materials and contractor costs. Whilst some elements of the pressure relate to one-off works, the 2026/27 budget has already been increased by £50K to address the ongoing cost pressures identified during the year.
- V. **Planning Applications £83K Reduced Income** – the reduction reflects continued challenging market conditions, including higher interest rates, increased construction costs and reduced mortgage affordability, which have impacted development activity and the volume of planning applications received.
- VI. **Audit Fees £75K Overspend** – this relates to higher than anticipated fees for the Housing Benefit subsidy audit for 2021/22. The audit fee was challenged by the Council resulting in a 10% reduction.
- VII. **Recycling Income £67K Reduced Income** – during Quarter four, market prices for recycled plastics fell significantly compared to budget assumptions, whilst recyclable tonnages were lower than forecast, reducing both material sales income and recycling credits received from Hertfordshire County Council. The variance demonstrates the ongoing exposure of recycling income to market conditions and

commodity price fluctuations. A detailed analysis is being completed to recognise the ongoing impact.

- VIII. Transfer to Commercial Estates Reserves £50K** – it is recommended that the £50K of the overall General Fund underspend is transferred to the Commercial reserve. Historically, budgets for repairs and maintenance across the commercial property portfolio have been limited, while the estate income has grown and void rates are low there is a need to be able to deal with reactive repairs pressures as mentioned in point IV above. The reserve will provide funding to meet unforeseen repairs helping to ensure that commercial assets remain safe, operational and fit for purpose.
- IX. Section 31 and Levy on NNDR £44K net reduction in income** – Paragraphs 4.4.2-4.4.3 set out the changes to NNDR Levy and Section 31 Grant in 2025/26.
- X. Shared Legal Service Fees £40K Overspend** – the increased expenditure reflects additional demand for legal advice and support required to deliver the Council's statutory responsibilities, governance requirements and service priorities. The September Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) will consider whether the further budget provision is required ongoing.
- XI. Indoor Market Income £28K Reduced Income** – the new Indoor Market at Park Place, opened in December 2025, while not all existing traders relocated to the new market, reducing occupancy and income. The Market's team is actively building a new mix of traders and increasing occupancy and based on the latest information available at the time of writing this report, there are 35 out of 43 stalls currently let, with more being marketed as the market becomes established.
- XII. Fuel and Utilities (gas and electricity) £5K Overspend** – fuel costs were £17K more than the budget, reflecting higher than anticipated fuel prices and operational demand during the year. This was largely offset by a £12K underspend on utility costs, resulting in a net pressure of £5K. The combined net variance represents less than 1% of the Council's combined fuel and utilities budget.
- XIII. Parks and Open Spaces £11K Additional Income** – this relates to additional income received for tree planting and tree maintenance works undertaken on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council during the year.
- XIV. Food Licensing £16K Additional Income** – reflecting slightly higher fee income than budgeted together with one-off income received following regulatory action undertaken by the Environmental Health team.
- XV. Business Rates paid by SBC on own building £17K Underspend** – reflects the reduction to property liabilities during the year, including a valuation reduction for the Museum.
- XVI. Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme review £27K Underspend** – A one-off budget was approved in 2025/26 to review the Council Tax Support (CTS) banding scheme. However, in light of the proposed timeline for the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), under which new unitary authorities are expected to be established from 1 April 2028, the Chief Finance Officer does not currently recommend implementing changes to the existing CTS scheme for a single year

ahead of reorganisation. This position is subject to the Government's announcement on LGR, which is anticipated in July 2026.

XVII. Community Infrastructure Income (CIL) £49K Additional Income – as the level of administration income is directly linked to the value and timing of CIL receipts including associated costs, income can vary from year to year depending on development activity.

XVIII. Other £63K Underspend - a combination of various small underspends across the services.

XIX. On/Off Street Car Parks £68K Additional Income – A reduction in income had been anticipated as a result of planned works around Corey's Mill, these works were delayed and the expected impact on parking demand did not materialise. The increase in income represents 1.2% of the total income budget.

XX. Bus Interchange, Cemeteries & Transfer Station £83K Additional Income – the favourable position includes £24.5K from Cemeteries and £18K from the Transfer Station, reflecting higher levels of activity and demand than assumed within the revised budget. A further £40K relates to the Bus Interchange and arose from the final negotiation and settlement of exit fees, resulting in a one-off financial benefit recognised in 2025/26.

XXI. Capitalisation of Salaries £87K Underspend – a greater proportion of staff time than anticipated was recorded against capital projects during the year. This primarily reflects increased Property team and ICT staff time in delivering the Council's capital programme reducing costs charged to the General Fund.

XXII. Homelessness £129K Underspend – Grant of £49K was awarded to the Council in March to complete a Supported Housing Strategy. This has been transferred to ringfenced reserves, as the work is due to be completed in 2026/27. The remainder of the variance is due to correction of Housing Benefit payments received that support bed and breakfast accommodation costs. These payments can be difficult to predict due to the time needed to calculate entitlement and finalise payments.

XXIII. Staff Costs £168K Underspend – the variance represents less than 1% of the Council's total employee budget, which does include a budgeted 4.5% transitional vacancy factor.

XXIV. Reduction in Bad Debt Provisions £197K Underspend – the level of provision required is reviewed in accordance with the Council's bad debt methodology and adjusted to reflect the latest assessment of expected losses. The reduction in the provision primarily relates to Housing Benefit overpayment debt.

XXV. Recharges to HRA £291K increased income – the main drivers were the relative allocation of the Municipal Mutual Insurance (MMI) provision between the General Fund and the HRA, together with increased recharges for the shared legal services, reflecting higher levels of legal support associated with HRA repairs and voids activity during the year.

XXVI. Carry Forward Requests £309K – para 4.3 refers for details.

XXVII. Investment Income £386K Additional Income – the Council maintained higher average cash balances than originally forecast during the year. Contributing to this was reprofiling of the capital programme, together with revenue underspends, which delay the use of available cash resources. As a result, higher balances were available for investment, generating additional interest income.

4.3. Carry Forwards

4.3.1. The carry forwards/spend requested for approval by Members is £309K as shown below. This is broken down between carry forward/spend requests of £256K, and £53K timing delays.

Service Area	Carry Forwards/Spend Requests/Timing	£
Community Development	Six month fixed term post approved to support the Valour Hub bid with start date 9 March 2026.	£27,350
Planning & Regulatory	New Burdens Funding received Q4 2-26 for work relating to Smoke Control Areas to be spent in 26-27.	£24,970
Planning & Regulatory	MHCLG funding received Q4 25-26 in relation to Renters Rights Act to be spent in 26-27.	£20,780
Environment & Leisure	Funding from the Football Foundation to support works at Playzones.	£25,000
Environment & Leisure	The underspend identified and requested to contribute towards the costs for Stevenage Day 2026.	£6,000
	TOTAL Carry Forwards	£104,100
Climate Change	For fixed term extension of employment contract until July 2027 to provide technical capacity within Climate Change team.	£22,310
Environment & Leisure	To fund 26-27 funding shortfall required for green spaces and leisure service review changes. Funding for 27-28 has been identified.	£52,600
Parks & Open Spaces	For the Solar lighting trial at Fairlands Valley Park following the lighting survey.	£10,050
Environment & Leisure	For fixed term agency GIS Support, Grounds digital system Alloy until 31 March 27.	£37,000
HR	Top up for member training budget for new Councillors.	£8,000
Planning & Regulatory	S&B analytics - reporting system for parking to aid in analysis of capacity and usage at car parks.	£22,000
	TOTAL Spend Requests	£151,960
Climate Change	Unspent funds relating to Green Grants Initiative resulting from delays in issuing grants.	£22,440
Environment & Leisure	Disturbance payments for asbestos related issues and cleaning of garages that were not fully paid in year.	£13,750
Environment & Leisure	New repairs contract implemented for Garages however delays to the works resulted in an underspend.	£16,900
	TOTAL Timing	£53,090
	GRAND TOTAL	£309,150

4.4. General Fund Core Resources

- 4.4.1. Budgeted level of Core Funding for 2025/26 (as detailed in the table below), was £11.071 Million; the total amount included in the 2025/26 pre-audited accounts is £11.144 Million, an increase of £73K.

Core Resources	2025/26 Working Budget £	2025/26 Outturn £	Variance £
Business Rates net of tariff	(£3,335,751)	(£3,335,751)	£0
Levy payable	£651,082	£674,302	£23,220
Section 31 Grant	(£2,185,159)	(£2,252,265)	(£67,106)
Transfer to GF Balance	£0	£0	£0
Transfer from the Collection Fund NNDR	£1,232,757	£1,232,757	£0
Council Tax SBC Precept	(£7,040,510)	(£7,040,510)	£0
Transfer from the Collection Fund Council tax	£196,632	£196,632	£0
Government Grants	(£589,911)	(£589,910)	£1
Renewable Energy S31 Grant	£0	(£1,597)	(£1,597)
Redmond Review Audit Grant	£0	(£27,766)	(£27,766)
Total Core Funding Position	(£11,070,860)	(£11,144,108)	(£73,249)

- 4.4.2. Business Rates credited to the General Fund do not change in year regardless of whether all the income is realised, and any changes identified as part of the 2026/27 Budget setting (NNDR 1) and actual as at 31 March 2026 will be recognised in 2026/27 and 2027/28. The only values that change are those transactions between the Government and the Council and these are:

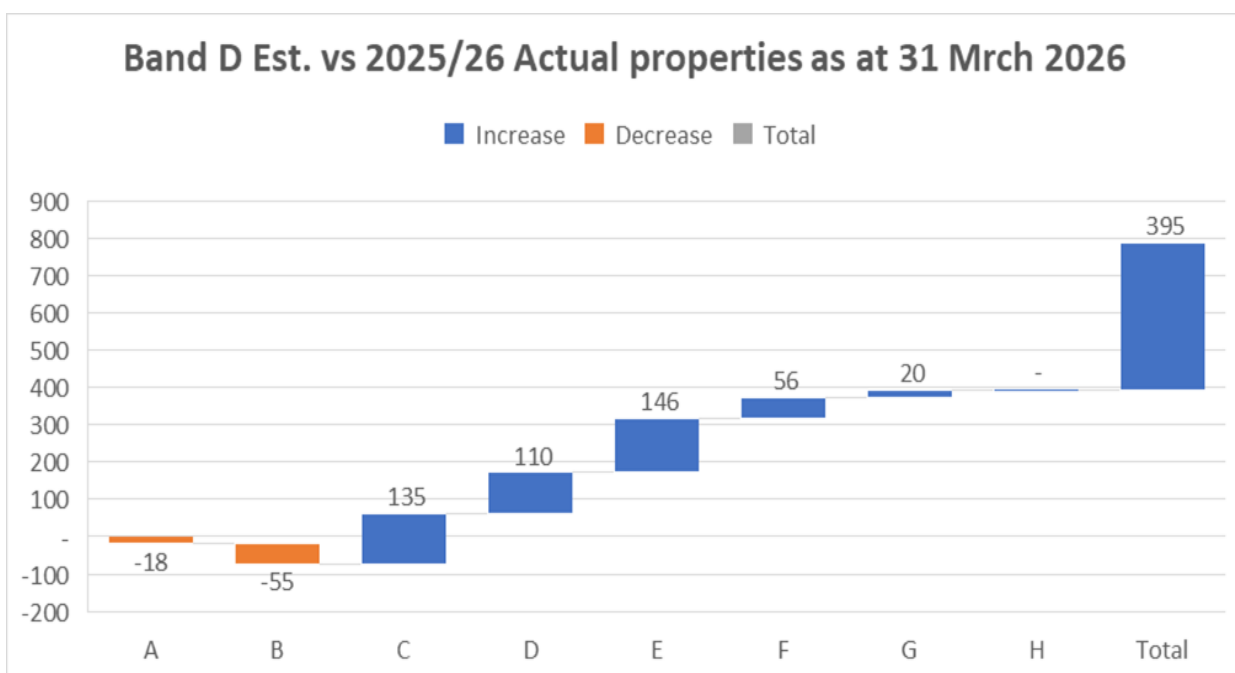
- The Levy - Stevenage Borough Council pays a 50% levy on all applicable 'gains' above the baseline amount or the governments assessment of what SBC should retain.
- Section 31 Grants - the government pays Council for 'lost NNDR income' because of changes to the NNDR system such as freezing the small business multiplier.

- 4.4.3. The table below summarises the Original Budget NNDR, the changes approved in the January 2026 NNDR 1 report and the 2025/26 actual position. The actual NNDR for 2025/26 was £4.278 Million which is £340K lower than the original estimate as a result of changes to collectable business rates in the year. This still represents a gain to the General Fund above the baseline amount of £1.3 Million. As a result of the full reset of business rates for 2026/27 no gains are projected for that year.

	Original v Projected Reported Feb 2026			included in Jan 2026 report		Actual 2025/26		
	NNDR 1 25/26 £	Projection 25/26 £	Var to NNDR1 £	25/26	26/27	25/26	25/26	27/28
Net yield	(57,060,170)	(55,718,377)	1,341,793			(55,504,245)		214,132
Stevenage share of yield	(22,824,068)	(22,287,351)	536,717		536,717	(22,201,698)		85,653
Tariff	19,488,317	19,488,317	0			19,488,317		
Share net of tariff	(3,335,751)	(2,799,034)	536,717	0	536,717	(2,713,381)	0	85,653
S31 grant payable	(2,210,373)	(2,185,158)	25,215	25,215		(2,226,160)	(41,002)*	
Baseline Funding Level	(2,851,146)	(2,851,146)	0			(2,851,146)		
Gains before levy applied	(2,694,978)	(2,133,046)				(2,088,395)		
Gains applicable for levy	(1,854,678)	(1,302,164)		0		(1,322,500)		
Levy due 50%	927,339	651,082	(276,257)	(276,257)		661,250	10,168	
			0	0		0		
Retained Business Rates	(4,618,785)	(4,333,110)	285,675	(251,042)	536,717	(4,278,291)	(30,834)	85,653
Variance				(251,042)	536,717		(30,834)	85,653
					285,675			54,819

- Excluding compensation grant of Green Plant & Machinery of £26,105

4.4.4. Council Tax income included in the General Fund is also based on the estimated amount and not the in-year position, (after taking bad debt provision into account). At Quarter three, total Council Tax projection was £65.737 Million, of which £7.1 Million (10.8%) was the Council's share. The Council Tax collection at the end of the year was £66 Million, of which £7.129 Million (10.8%) represents Stevenage's share with £29K improvement, which will be repaid to the General Fund in 2027/28.



4.4.5. Included in core resources was a council tax deficit repayable to the Collection Fund predominately relating to 2024/25 of £196,632, At the 31 March 2026 there were 395 equivalent Band D properties additional in the taxbase (after discounts) than the 2025/26 estimate. This will result in a return of the surplus to the General Fund in 2026/27 and 2027/28.

4.4.6. In addition to council tax and NNDR, the Council's core resources also include additional £73K which include Redmond review grant for Audit work of £28K notified in March and £69K S31 funding offset by £23K Levy payment, as shown as a result of the actual outturn position for NNDR (see also para. 4.4.1).

4.5. 2025/26 General Fund Budget

4.5.1. The outturn position for the General Fund budget is summarised in the table below and this provides some additional resilience to the Council as there was a reduction in the projected drawdown on balances of £649K, before the 2026/27 impact on the budget for carry forwards (£309K). This will be incorporated in the next General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) update.

General Fund Outturn Position	2025/26 Budget	2025/26 Outturn	Variance
	£	£	£
Services Net Expenditure	£10,653,540	£10,077,862	(£575,678)
Core Resources	(£11,070,860)	(£11,144,109)	(£73,249)
General Fund Outturn Position	(£417,320)	(£1,066,247)	(£648,927)
Balance Brought Forward	(£6,505,604)	(£6,505,604)	£0
Use of balances	(£417,320)	(£1,066,247)	(£648,927)
Balance Carried Forward	(£6,922,924)	(£7,571,851)	(£648,927)

4.6. Impact on 2026/27 General Fund Budget

Recommended changes to the 2026/27 budget

- 4.6.1. **Capital Slippage £340K** – is requested to reprofile funding into 2026/27 to reflect delays in the delivery of approved capital projects. As the expenditure will now be incurred in 2026/27, this is being transferred to a capital reserve in 2025/26 and returned to in 2026/27 to ensure sufficient funding remains available to complete the projects when they proceed.
- 4.6.2. **Members Enquiries System £7K** – following a meeting with all Members and comprehensive feedback from services, a set of improvements to the Council's approach to handling Member Enquiries and MP Enquiries (MMPEs) was agreed with a small additional cost. The improvements aim to reduce delays, improve consistency, strengthen customer experience, and provide better tracking, insight, and coordination across services, which will ultimately benefit residents.
- 4.6.3. **Members Access to Pension Scheme £18K** – to provide for the employer pension contribution costs associated with the reinstatement of eligible elected members' access to the Local Government Pension Scheme from May 2026. This reflects a change in pension regulations, and a budget provision has been included in the General Fund and will be adjusted based on future take up.
- 4.6.4. **Increase in Mileage Rates £6K** – The government has increased the His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) approved mileage allowance rate from 45p to 55p per mile for the first 10,000 business miles, effective from April 2026.
- 4.6.5. **Direct Revenue Financing – Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) £675K** – Funding for the EPR programme is supported through the use of reserves and Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO). Although funding was available for the full programme in 2025/26, only £44K of the capital budget for recycling initiatives was used during the year. The remaining £675K was transferred to the reserve in 2025/26 and will be transferred back in 2026/27 for recycling capital related spend in the current year.
- 4.6.6. **Pride in Place Grant £150K** – to reflect the expenditure associated with the delivery of the Government's Pride in Place Programme. The programme supports community led initiatives to improve local neighbourhoods and strengthen community engagement. The expenditure is fully funded through grant income, and a corresponding income budget has therefore been included, resulting in net nil impact on the Council's General Fund. This was transferred to Reserves in 2025/26 and reversed in 2026/27 as shown in the Reserves table below at paragraph 4.7.2. A report is included on this Cabinet's agenda.
- 4.6.7. **Housing Strategies Grant £49K** – late receipt of the Council's Supported Housing Strategy Fund. This funding will enable the Council to meet its statutory responsibilities by undertaking needs assessments, engaging with partners and preparing the strategy in accordance with requirements of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023. A corresponding grant expenditure budget has been included, resulting in net nil impact on the General Fund. This was also transferred to Reserves in 2025/26 and reversed in 2026/27 as shown in the table in paragraph 4.7.2.

- 4.6.8. The **Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) £223K** - raised during the year as per para 4.2.2 (III) will be reversed in 2026/27 in line with loan being repaid.

	2026/27 Budget changes £	2026/27 Revised Budget £
Original Budget		£13,587,330
Increased Spend:		
Carry Forwards (para 4.3.1 refers)	£309,150	
Capital Slippage (para 4.6.1 refers)	£340,030	
Members Enquiries System (para 4.6.2 refers)	£7,000	
Members access to pension scheme (para 4.6.3 refers)	£18,000	
Increase in mileage rates (para 4.6.4 refers)	£6,000	
Direct Revenue Financing- EPR spend (para 4.6.5 refers)	£674,810	£1,354,990
Increased grant & associated spend:		
Pride in Place Grant Spend (para 4.6.6 refers)	£150,000	
Housing Strategies Grant Spend (para. 4.6.7 refers)	£49,060	£199,060
Reduction in Budget:		
Reduced Spend:		
MRP reversal - WOC Loan to be repayed	(£223,120)	(£223,120)
Use of reserves:		
Housing Strategies Grant (para. 4.6.7 refers)	(£49,060)	
Pride in Place Grant (para 4.6.6 refers)	(£150,000)	
Capital Reserve Slippage (para 4.6.1 refers)	(£340,030)	
Use of EPR Reserve (reprofiled from 2025/26) (para 4.6.5 refers)	(£674,810)	(£1,213,900)
Net Expenditure Budget	£117,030	£13,704,360

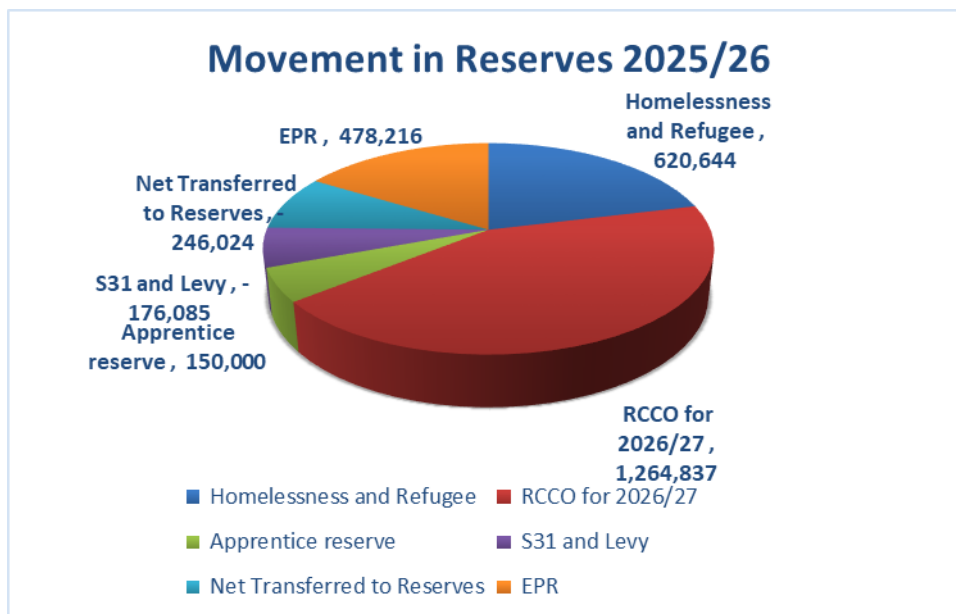
Other Potential Impacts on the 2026/27 budget

- 4.6.9. **The 2026/27 National Joint Council (NCJ) pay award** has not yet been agreed. National Employers have made a full and final offer of a 3.3% increase, effective from 1 April 2026. However, this has been rejected by the recognised trade unions and the national pay negotiations remain ongoing. The Council's 2026/27 budget includes provision for a 3.25% pay award. Should the final settlement be agreed at 3.3%, this would result in an estimated additional cost of approximately £10K, which will continue to be monitored as negotiations progress. It should be noted that whilst negotiations for employees covered by the NJC Green Book remain unresolved.
- 4.6.10. The Council Officers are continuously reviewing underspends and overspends to assess any potential impact on the 2026/27 budget. The findings will be included in the Quarter one report, which will be presented to the Cabinet in September.

4.7. Reserves

- 4.7.1. Allocated Reserves - some balances are 'ring fenced' and have been set aside for specific purposes. The total value of allocated reserves available for the Council to

spend on 31 March 2026 is £13.950 Million. The movement in the year has been an increase of £2.920 Million in to reserves. Cabinet has already approved £0.249 Million of draw down from reserves movement during the year therefore Members are requested to approve the remaining £3.169 Million.



4.7.2. The reserve balances may seem a significant sum but are held for specific purposes, some of which are set out below. This means they are not available to fund General Fund expenditure apart from NNDR gains and the income equalisation reserve.

- £1.798 Million required to fund the holding costs of assets in the **Town Square** which includes assets for regeneration as part of SG1 (*note 2*)
- £4.404 Million of **NNDR reserves** relates to gains generated from previous years. Reserves remain high as there is a risk to the Council from unexpected appeals being given to businesses which may not have been accounted for in the provisions (*note 1*)
- £1.153 Million is retained to support the delivery of the **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** programme. The funding will be used to finance the implementation of the Council's EPR related initiatives, including improvements to waste and recycling infrastructure and the introduction of enhanced recycling facilities where required. (*note 4*)
- £1.416 Million of **Homelessness and Refugee reserve** - these include grants for general homelessness, refugees and asylum seeker support. Some of these grants are used over a few years to support specific cases and these reserves will diminish in the short to medium term. (*note 3*)

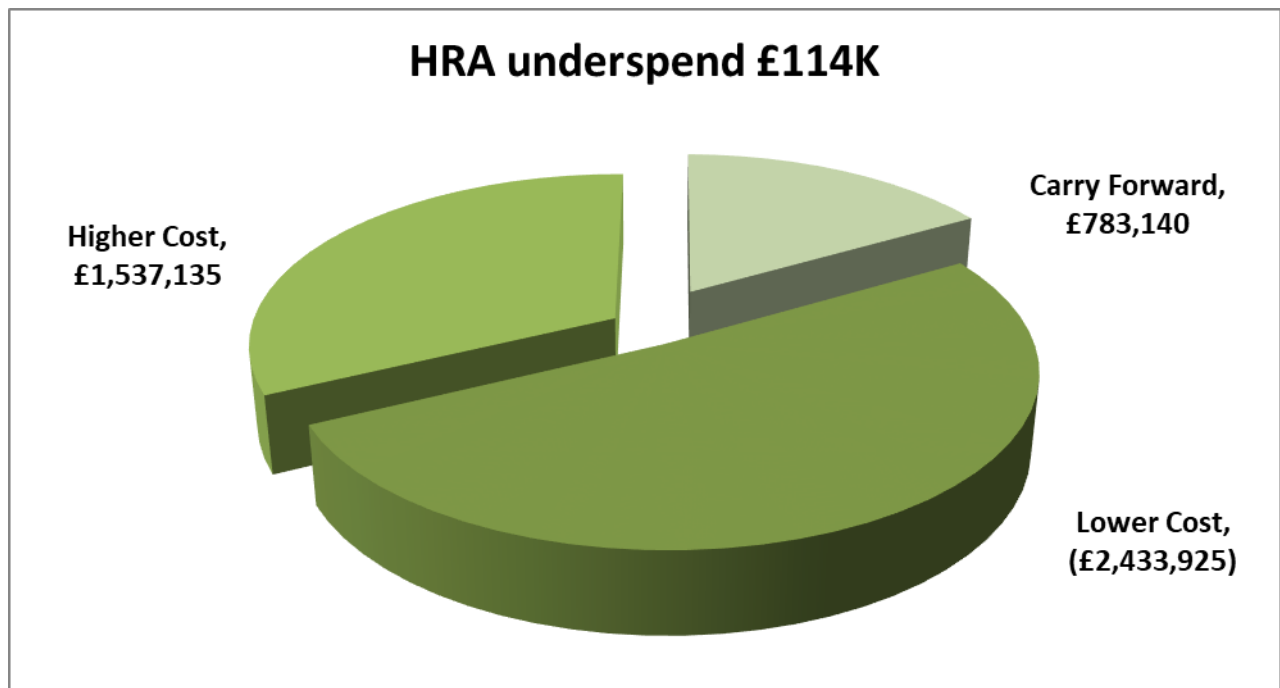
Reserves £'000	Opening 2025/26	Movement	Closing 2025/26	Movement	Closing 2026/27
NHB reserve	(£10,001)	£0	(£10,001)	£0	(£10,001)
Business Change & Digital Reserve	(£772,995)	(£214,989)	(£987,984)	£0	(£987,984)
Homeless reserve	(£420,339)	(£172,776)	(£593,115)	£95,875	(£497,240)
Planning Delivery	(£197,818)	(£145,393)	(£343,211)	£0	(£343,211)
Town Centre Reserve	(£0)	(£30,141)	(£30,141)	£0	(£30,141)
Town square reserve note 2	(£1,711,314)	(£86,519)	(£1,797,833)	£35,370	(£1,762,463)
Insurance reserve	(£61,549)	£0	(£61,549)	£0	(£61,549)
ICT reserve	(£141,861)	(£185,210)	(£327,071)	£0	(£327,071)
Leisure Reserve	(£219,322)	£219,322	£0	£0	£0
Stevenage works	(£19,523)	£19,523	£0	£0	£0
Asylum seekers reserve note 3	(£1,017,539)	(£398,808)	(£1,416,347)	£518,384	(£897,963)
Future Councils reserve	(£198,191)	£198,190	(£1)	£0	(£1)
Commercial Property repair reserve	(£40,512)	(£9,490)	(£50,002)	£0	(£50,002)
Capital reserve	(£75,281)	(£590,029)	(£665,310)	£415,310	(£250,000)
Domestic abuse reserve	(£195,597)	£0	(£195,597)	£0	(£195,597)
Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) grant note 4	£0	(£1,153,021)	(£1,153,021)	£699,385	(£453,636)
Elections Reserve	£0	(£50,000)	(£50,000)	£50,000	£0
Queensway monies	(£214,834)	(£193,000)	(£407,834)	(£333,000)	(£740,834)
Regeneration Reserve	(£245,239)	(£7,796)	(£253,035)	£0	(£253,035)
LEP Loan Reserve	£0	£0	£0	(£500,000)	(£500,000)
Apprentice Reserve	(£150,000)	(£150,000)	(£300,000)	(£150,000)	(£450,000)
Pride in Place	£0	(£150,000)	(£150,000)	£150,000	£0
Housing strategies	£0	(£49,062)	(£49,062)	£49,062	£0
UKSPF reserve	£0	(£13,392)	(£13,392)	£0	(£13,392)
Commuted sums	£0	(£133,716)	(£133,716)	£0	(£133,716)
Total Allocated for use	(£5,691,913)	(£3,296,307)	(£8,988,221)	£1,030,386	(£7,957,835)
Gains (NNDR) note 1	(£4,580,127)	£176,085	(£4,404,042)	£1,316,264	(£3,087,778)
Income equalisation Reserve	(£758,000)	£200,000	(£558,000)	£0	(£558,000)
Total Available to support the GF	(£5,338,127)	£376,085	(£4,962,042)	£1,316,264	(£3,645,778)
Total allocated reserves	(£11,030,041)	(£2,920,222)	(£13,950,263)	£2,346,650	(£11,603,613)

4.7.3. Table below provides further breakdown of reserves movement as at Quarter four of £3.433 Million. The main element of this movement is additional grants being received of £2.013 Million and then Business Rates movement of £595K followed by overs and under in use of reserves during the financial year. There was a movement of £340K into Capital reserve and some other minor movements equating to £134K.

	Original Budget 2025/26	Q3 approved	Q4	Total Movement		
	(£18,623)	£531,795	(£3,433,393)	(£2,920,222)		
Reserve	Overspend s/Underspend s	Grants	NNDR	Capital	Other	Total Q4 Movement
ICT Reserve	(£53,210)					(£53,210)
Business Change & Digital Reserve	(£224,749)					(£224,749)
Digital (Future Councils) Reserve						£0
Risk (Leisure) Reserve						£0
NNDR Collection Fund Reserve			(£594,832)			(£594,832)
Town Square Reserve	(£31,427)					(£31,427)
Commercial Property Reserve	(£50,000)					(£50,000)
Apprenticeship Reserve						£0
Regeneration SG1	(£18,782)					(£18,782)
Town Centre Reserve - Now Event Island	£26,335					£26,335
Commuted sums					(£133,716)	(£133,716)
Income equalisation Reserve						£0
Queensway Parking						£0
Elections Reserve						£0
Stevenage works						£0
UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Reserve		(£13,392)				(£13,392)
Extended Producer Responsibility		(£260,416)		(£674,805)		(£935,221)
Planning Delivery Grant		(£175,393)				(£175,393)
Homelessness		(£63,697)				(£63,697)
Pride in Place Programme Reserve		(£150,000)				(£150,000)
Supported Housing Strategies Funding		(£49,062)				(£49,062)
Asylum seekers		(£626,215)				(£626,215)
Capital Reserve				(£340,032)		(£340,032)
	(£351,833)	(£1,338,175)	(£594,832)	(£1,014,837)	(£133,716)	(£3,433,393)

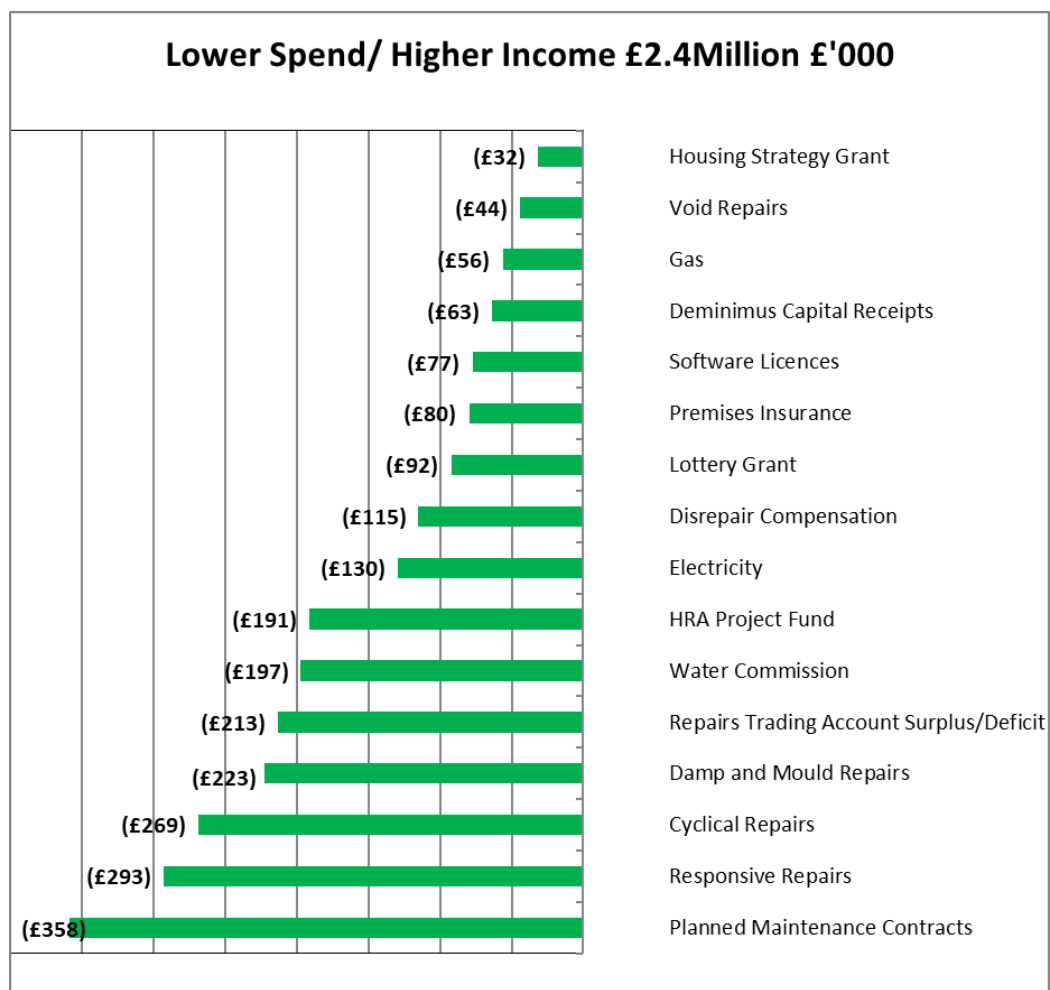
4.8. Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- 4.8.1. The 2025/26 outturn position on the HRA was an in-year surplus of £1,543,209, a £896,789 increase from the working budget surplus of £646,420 as reported in Quarter three. Allowing for carry forward requests of £783K, there is an underlying underspend of £114K. The main variances to the working budget are highlighted below. These have been split to show those areas where there was lower cost, or higher income and those where costs were higher, or income was lower.



4.9. Lower Costs / Higher income than budgeted

4.9.1. There were underspends, or increased income, of £2.4 Million listed in the chart below, with explanations in the following paragraphs.



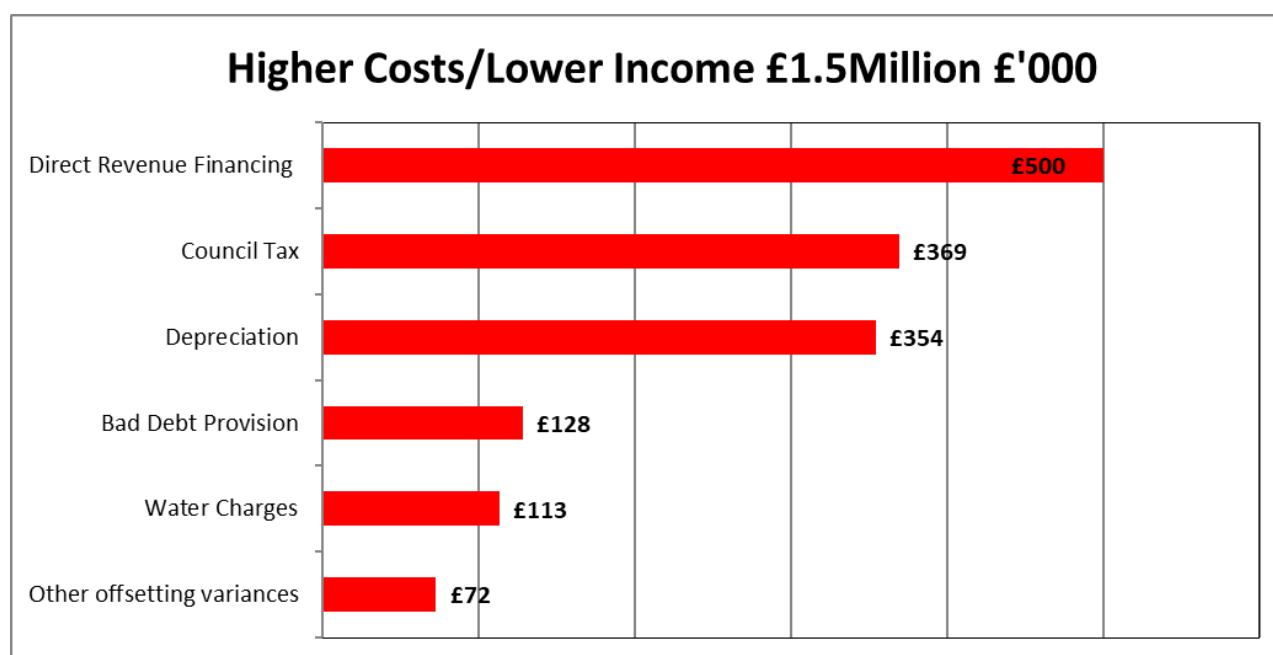
- 4.9.2. **Residential Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEPs) Funding £32K Additional Income** – The Council received a specific grant towards the creation and management of PEEPs, in support of new legislative requirements coming into force on 1st April 2026. This funding will be spent in supporting this duty in 2026/27 and is included in the carry forward requests.
- 4.9.3. **Void Repairs 44K Underspend** – Repair costs on returned (void) properties were 2% lower than the £2.2 Million working budget for the year.
- 4.9.4. **Gas £56K Underspend** – The HRA has a total budget of £453K for gas supply and the final costs were lower than estimated. Bills vary with usage levels, especially over the winter period, but this variance will be assessed for any ongoing impacts, including adjustment to service charge billing in 2026/27.
- 4.9.5. **De-minimis Capital Receipts £63K Additional Income** – Where the Council receives monies below the de-minimis capital receipt threshold of £10K, they are treated as revenue, as part of the year end process which identified £63K.
- 4.9.6. **Software licences £77K Underspend** – A budget had been set aside for additional modules for the NEC housing system, once this had been moved to a cloud based server. Due to the timing of this change the additional licences were not required in this year.
- 4.9.7. **Premises Insurance £80K Underspend** – The final combined insurance premium and provision was lower than the budgeted amount, this varies year to year as a result of the level of claims and the excess required on individual cases.
- 4.9.8. **Lottery Grant £92K Additional Income** – Lottery grant was received at the end of 2025/26, but the funded programme will continue into 2026/27, with the majority of this additional income (£55K) being used to fund the carry forward request in paragraph 4.11.
- 4.9.9. **Disrepair Compensation £115K Underspend** – There has been a carry forward request of £115K, offsetting this underspend, to meet the cost of open cases from 2025/26. There are currently 45 open cases, including 10 from 2025/26, with the potential for another 40 cases in this year. Last year around 60 cases were closed, and the target is to end this year with approximately only 25 open cases.
- 4.9.10. **Electricity £130K Underspend** – The HRA had a budget of £724K for electricity bills in 2025/26 and this matched the underlying usage. However, credits were received on the account from a historic billing review by the new energy officer and the billing post in the leasehold team. These were not included in the estimating process and have given a positive variance for this year.
- 4.9.11. **HRA Project Budget £191K Underspend** – The HRA project budget was intended to offset senior management support work on housing regulation, customer service improvement and the local government review in last year. However, as a result of in year HRA vacancies, extra costs were met by a vacancy savings, and the project budget was not used.
- 4.9.12. **Water Commission £197K Additional Income** – Due to the large national increase in water bills the Council's commission for collecting the payments from tenants on behalf of the water company increased. However, this has been offset against water bills that had been coded directly to holding accounts in error (see paragraph

4.10.7). The underlying variance is £84K and will be reflected in the ongoing working budget for 2026/27.

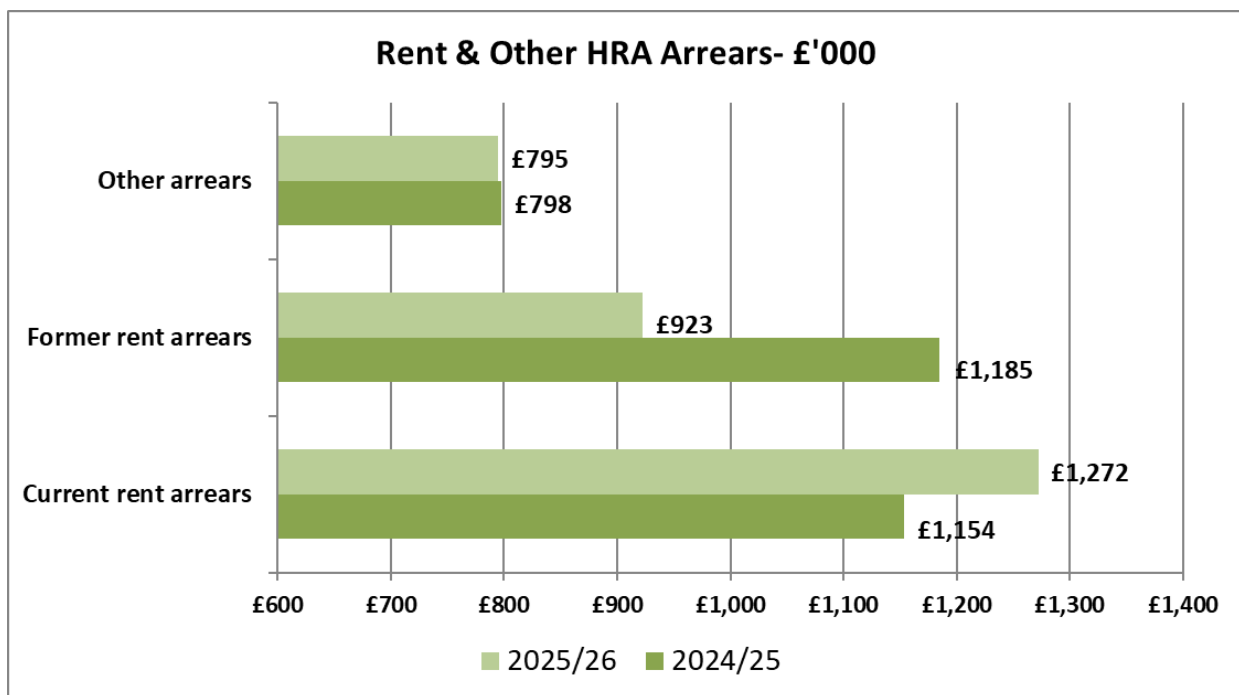
- 4.9.13. **Repairs Trading Account Surplus/Deficit £213K Underspend** - Lower costs in the trading accounts, mainly due to the use of sub-contractors, led to a reduction in the DSO deficit for the year. This is also consistent with the slightly lower levels of work seen in the responsive repairs' budgets, shown in paragraph 4.9.16.
- 4.9.14. **Damp and Mould Repairs £223K Underspend** – This underspend is mainly due to timing on expenditure, and a carry forward request for this amount has been made.
- 4.9.15. **Cyclical Repairs £269K Underspend** – The implementation of a cyclical repairs programme has been planned, and these resources will be needed to carry out the required work when the programme commences in 2026/27. Therefore a carry forward request has been made, so that this work can be completed in 2026/27.
- 4.9.16. **Responsive Repairs £293K Underspend** - The final outturn on responsive repairs, was lower than the working budget of £3 Million a 9.7% reduction. This is a demand led activity that can vary considerably but does represent a reduction compared to the 2024/25 spend of £4.9 Million. Spend in 2026/27 is being monitored for any ongoing downward trends in costs.
- 4.9.17. **Planned Maintenance Contracts £358K Underspend** - A carry forward request of £84K has been made on specific elements of spend, due to timing of the completion of works. However, the majority of this underspend relates to provision for the new decent homes standard that was expected in 2025/26 but has not been released by the Government yet.

4.10. Higher Costs / Lower income than budgeted

- 4.10.1. Offsetting the items listed above there was also higher costs/lower income of £1.5 Million, as part of the outturn variances. These are summarised below together with explanations.



- 4.10.2. **Repayment of Loan £500K Overspend** – the scheduled loan repayment and equivalent use of the loan reserve were omitted from the HRA 2025/26 budgets and therefore have been reported here. The loan repayment has been met from a dedicated reserve (see paragraph 4.13). While this has caused a technical budget variance in year, this was accounted for in the medium term financial strategy and HRA business plan projections.
- 4.10.3. **Council Tax £369K Overspend** – £350K of historic council tax adjustment has been accrued for in 2025/26. This has been highlighted as part of a reconciliation exercise exacerbated by changes to housing stock numbers through new development and increased right to buy sales and disputed bills dated back to 2020/21. An on-going process is now in place to review this on annual basis.
- 4.10.4. **Depreciation £354K Overspend** – The final depreciation and amortisation calculation was slightly higher than budgeted on a £13.1 Million budget. This money is ringfenced for capital investment and may result in lower RCCO or borrowing costs in future years that will be built into future Business Plan updates.
- 4.10.5. **Bad Debt Provision £128K Overspend** – After a major review of HRA debt an £800K write off was made in the last quarter of 2025/26. Most of this debt was covered by existing provision, with an additional £128K being required. There is also ongoing pressure relating to the universal credit which increases the challenge of rent collection.



- 4.10.6. As illustrated in the graph, the year-on-year decrease in arrears was £146K across all three categories and this was mainly due to the large write off of irrecoverable accounts. This, combined with the age and type of debt still outstanding, has led to an overall lower provision of £1.8 Million (£2.1 Million in 2024/25). However, the need to top up the provision after the write offs has led to a £128K variance in year. Total arrears for the HRA at the end of 2025/26 stood at £3.0 Million and are covered by a provision of £1.8 Million (61% coverage). This covers all arrears in the HRA and differs from the “pure” rent arrears reported in the Council’s performance report.

4.10.7. **Water Charges £113K Overspend** – Please see paragraph 4.9.12 for explanations.

4.10.8. **Other Offsetting Variances £72K Overspend** – There were other small one-off variances in the HRA accounts that net to a budget pressure of £72K for the year.

4.11. Carry Forwards

4.11.1. The table below identifies carry forward requests that are funded by the net underspend on the HRA for 2025/26. In total £783K is requested to be carried forward and most are due to timing differences on expenditure.

Service Area	Carry Forward Requests	Carry Forward Value £
Lottery Grant	The programmed expenditure for part of this grant will be spent in 2026/27 and a carry forward is requested to match this expenditure.	£55,480
Emergency Evacuation Plans Funding	This will be spent in next year, but the grant was received in this year and it is requested that the 2026/27 budget is increased to cover this cost.	£31,550
Cyclical Repairs	Commencement of the programme for cyclical repairs has been planned and hence a carry forward request has been made, so that these works can be completed in the current financial year.	£269,000
Planned Maintenance Contracts	Due to timing differences on some of the planned works a budget carry forward is requested to cover these costs in the current year.	£89,470
Damp and Mould Repairs	Due to the timing of work being completed on the current open cases a budget carry forward has been requested in this area.	£222,520
Damp and mould Compensation	After reviewing the current open cases a carry forward request has been made to cover the cases that are likely to conclude in 2026/27.	£115,120
Total		£783,140

4.12. 2025/26 – HRA Out-turn Position and 2026/27 Revised Budget

4.12.1. The impact of the outturn position for 2025/26 on HRA balances is summarised in the table below.

HRA Balance £'000	2025/26 Original Budget £	2025/26 Working Budget £	2025/26 Actual £	Variance to Working £
HRA Balance 1 April	(£10,925,848)	(£10,925,848)	(£10,925,848)	
In Year (Surplus) / Deficit	£667,980	(£646,420)	(£1,543,209)	£896,789
HRA Balance 31 March	(£10,257,868)	(£11,572,268)	(£12,469,057)	£896,789

4.12.2. While the final balance is significantly higher than the working budget position by £897K, it should be noted that the majority of this increase will be needed in the

current financial year to meet the requested carry forwards of £783K. The medium term financial strategy and the latest HRA Business Plan both indicate that there are significant pressures in the ring fenced account. These balances will be needed to meet service demands and to support the fund, while appropriate savings are made to balance the fund in the medium to long term.

- 4.12.3. The 2026/27 HRA budget is summarised below and includes the ongoing impacts from the 2025/26 outturn:

	2026/27 Budget changes £	2026/27 Revised Budget £
Original Budget		£243,120
Increased Spend:		
Carry Forwards (paragraph 4.11.1 refers)	£778,140	
Water Bills (paragraph 4.9.12 refers)	£113,000	
Increased HMRC Mileage Rate (45p to 55p)	£5,000	£896,140
Increased Income:		
Water Agency Commission (paragraph 4.9.12 refers)	(£197,000)	(£197,000)
Total	£699,140	£942,260

4.13. Usable reserves – Housing Revenue Account

- 4.13.1. The total value of revenue reserves available for the HRA to spend at 31 March 2026 is £16.8 Million and consists of two reserves.

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

- The **Debt Repayment Reserve** was created to reflect upcoming loan repayments in the HRA and to show a more realistic working balance in the main HRA account. This currently reflects loan repayments up to 2027/28 and a repayment of £500K was made in 2025/26.
- The **Transformation Reserve** was set up to fund elements of the transformation programme, due to complete over more than one financial year. The reserve was not used in 2025/26 and a balance of £86K has been carried forward to offset future projects.

Reserves	2025/26 Opening £'000	Use £'000	2025/26 Closing £'000	Use £'000	2026/27 Closing £'000
Debt Repayment Reserve	(£17,200)	£500	(£16,700)	£8,000	(£8,700)
Transformation Reserve	(£86)	£0	(£86)	£0	(£86)
Total Allocated Reserves	(£17,286)	£500	(£16,786)	£8,000	(£8,786)

4.14. Capital Monitoring

- 4.14.1. The revised Capital Strategy in the 3rd quarter monitoring report was approved by Cabinet on 12 March 2026. The 2025/26 approved budget for each fund was:

- I. General Fund £27 Million
- II. Housing Revenue Account £33 Million

4.14.2. The table below summarises the Capital outturn 2025/26 and the proposed changes including rephasing of capital budgets at Q4 into 2026/27.

4.14.3. Projects that have completed in the year resulted in underspends of £208k.

	2025/26			2026/27		2027/28	
£'000	Actual Spend to 31.03.26	Q3 Capital Strategy	Variance	Variance Q4	Revised Strategy	Variance Q4	Revised Strategy
Total GF Schemes	22,334	26,870	(4,536)	4,778	55,481	0	30,918
Total HRA Schemes	30,707	32,794	(2,087)	2,086	85,484	0	45,799
Total Capital Programme	53,041	59,664	(6,545)	6,864	140,965	0	76,717
<i>Re-phase detail:</i>							
Environment & Leisure			(772)	7785		0	
Land, Development & Neighbourhood Regeneration			(710)	710		0	
Estates			(528)	702		0	
Technology			37	(37)		0	
Regeneration			(2,396)	2,723		0	
Planning and Regulatory			(139)	(34)		0	
Deferred Works Reserve			(29)	(71)		0	
Total GF Re-phasing			(4,536)	4,778		0	
New Build (Housing Development)			(1,860)	1,860		0	
Digital & Transformation			(226)	226		0	
Total HRA Re-phasing			(2,086)	2,086		0	

Re-phasing

4.14.4. 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.

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

4.15. General Fund – re-phasing £4.4 Million - the main items are explained below:

III. Environment & Leisure £0.7 Million – £175k of this is due to the long lead times in the manufacturing of the refuse collection vehicles (14-16 months) resulting in three vehicles, ordered but not delivered until after March 2026. The budget for these had to be slipped to cover payment in the following financial year.

IV. A further £175k of rephasing is due to the works on flat block recycling which commenced in Q3 of 2025/26. This brings the total re-phased to £674K. The volume of work and the time required for each flat block improvement has resulted in the works progressing beyond 2025/26 and into 2026/27

V. Regeneration - Towns Fund £2.3 Million - the Towns Fund programme consists of nine different projects and draws upon the £37.5 Million secured from central government. The 2025/26 spend profile was originally aligned to the previous Towns Fund programme deadline of 31 March 2026. During the year, the Government simplified arrangements and extended delivery timescales to 31

March 2028 (report to Cabinet in October 2025). The extended spend deadline has enabled a rephasing of programme activity to better reflect delivery readiness, procurement timelines and market conditions. As a result, a proportion of planned expenditure has slipped into future years, with the programme continuing to progress in line with the revised funding window.

VI. Land, Development & Neighbourhood Regeneration £710K - The underspend relates to the neighbourhood regeneration of The Oval, with the project experiencing some delays on site primarily relating to delays from Statutory Utility providers in diverting existing services. This will be spent in 2026/27 as the progress at site accelerates.

4.16. HRA – re-phasing £2 Million - the main items are explained below:

VII. Housing Development - £1.8 Million – an underspend of £1.8 Million at the Oval impacted both GF and HRA, see explanation above.

VIII. The Shephall View development of £1 Million was as a result of a delay in the completion of the works at the site, however this has now been completed, and the slippage has already been spent in Quarter one 2026/27.

IX. Following the late award of LAHF funding, the service was successful in bringing forwards homes through its open market acquisitions programme. These properties deliver much needed temporary accommodation within the town, and the £1.8 Million spend will be principally covered by the grant allocation. The remaining overspend can be covered through slippage across the rest of the programme. SBC has received an allocation of £1.8 Million across the two most recent LAHF funding rounds, with £790K allocated for 2025/26 and the remainder is scheduled for payment in future financial years.

4.17. Net Underspend GF 2025/26 £207K

4.17.1. There are various projects that are complete with small underspend. The main project making up this underspend is related to Community Infrastructure Projects with underspend of £84K. This budget represents funding made available annually (through the Climate Change Community Fund) for the community to present, lead, and implement sustainability projects. Since this money is funded via the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), unspent monies return to the main CIL pot to be allocated to new infrastructure projects.

4.17.2. New Growth Item

X. The Council has received £117K of capital capacity funding in relation to Pride in place (PIP) to support the development of a PIP plan by February 2027. Members are asked **to note** that a cost centre to enable delivery will be added to the capital programme in July 2026. The overall programme is worth £20 Million over ten years.

4.17.3. Members are asked to approve the following virements:

XI. From KC918: £88K - St Georges lift reinstatement - no longer required to the below three cost centres:

- KE925: an additional £14.5K is required, on top of the £26K existing budget to enable the repair of St Nicholas' Church's failing wall to prevent a health and safety issues.
- KR151: £38.5K for repairs to the roof at Daneshill which has developed a number of holes resulting in leaks on the 4th floor of the building during wet weather.
- KR179: £35.5K to be utilised to resolve issues with Daneshill Building Management System which, since the boiler upgrade has not been operating correctly, requiring manual interventions. This budget is to identify the causes and rectify any issues.

XII. From Deferred Works reserve, £100K to fund the remediation of structural defects affecting a boundary wall fronting the former Shephalbury Depot Nursery site (KR916).

4.18. Capital Financing

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

£'000	2025/26			2026/27		2027/28	
	Actual Spend to 31.03.26	Q3 Capital Strategy	Variance	Re-phased Q4	Revised Strategy	Re-phased Q4	Revised Strategy
Total Capital Programme	53,041	59,664	(6,545)	6,864	140,965	0	76,717
Changes detail:							
Capital Receipts			(653)	76		0	
Towns Fund			(3,709)	3,821		0	
Other Grants and Contributions			620	691		0	
Other reserves			118	(128)		0	
Borrowing			(911)	317		0	
Total GF Financing changes			(4,535)	4,778		0	
MRR (Self Financing Depreciation)			498	(498)		0	
Capital Receipts			612	(612)		0	
Section 20 Contributions			(1,542)	1,542		0	
RTB Provisions			7,173	(7,173)		0	
Borrowing			(3,719)	3,719		0	
Grants			(5,108)	5,108		0	
Total HRA Financing changes			(2,086)	2,086		0	
Total Capital Financing			(6,623)	6,864		0	

4.19. Capital Receipts Forecast

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

Capital Receipts £000	Previous Forecast	Revised Forecast/Actual	Variance
Capital Receipts (GF)			
Year 2025/26 Forecast/Actual	2,058	180	(1,878)
Year 2026/27 Forecast	3,560	7,047	3,487
Year 2027/28 Forecast	36,314	42,128	5,814
Year 2028/29 Forecast	11,568	3,594	(7,974)
Year 2029/30 Forecast	0	199	199
Total Capital Receipts (GF)	53,500	53,148	(352)
2025/26 HRA Right to Buy Forecast	18,000	18,056	56
2026/27 Other Capital Receipts Forecast	500	500	0
Total Capital Receipts (HRA)	18,500	18,056	(444)

4.19.2. Until sold, the value of land sales can fluctuate from the forecast by value as well as timing.

4.20. Council's Subsidiary Companies

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

4.20.2. The table below summarises the relationships of these companies with the Council.

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

4.20.3. More details of the performance of the individual companies will be brought to Cabinet in September's Update on the Council's wholly Owned Companies and Joint Ventures Report.

4.20.4. The table below summarises the outturn results of these companies for 2025/26.

Company Name / £000 Deficit / (Surplus)	Budget 2025/26	Actual 2025/26	Variance 2025/26
Queensway Properties (Stevenage) LLP - (QLLP)	551	560	9
Marshgate Ltd (WOC)	34	12	(22)
Hertfordshire CCTV Partnership Ltd (CCTV)	105	169	64
Broste Rivers Ltd - (Building Control Company (group))	TBC	TBC	TBC
Swingate Developments LLP	-	-	-

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

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

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 None identified at this time.

5.3 Risk Implications

- 5.3.1 The financial risk facing the Council has reduced significantly as a result of the improved General Fund position arising from the Fair Funding 2 (FF2) settlement. Combined with the 2025/26 net surplus, this has strengthened the Council's financial resilience and sustainability, providing a stronger platform from which to address future financial pressures. Further updates will be provided through the Quarter one Monitoring Report to Cabinet.
- 5.3.2 Despite the larger than anticipated surplus in the HRA for 2025/26, the medium and longer term forecasts continue to indicate increasing cost pressures. Many of these pressures are also being experienced at a national level and the Government are continuing to review areas in the HRA, like the right to buy policy and the current rent settlement, to ensure that policy objectives can be met and that the social housing sector is viable. As reported last year, increased regulation and operating requirements, coinciding with higher borrowing costs, have significantly increased financial risk. The last business plan projections, in November 2025, identified the need to make significant year on year savings for the next four years in order to balance the account. Work towards meeting these targets for the 2027/28 budget year have already commenced, with options being costed and prepared for the budget cycle. While the outturn for 2025/26 has increased balances that can help to mitigate these financial risks, particularly in the short term, the overall balances are set to reduce in coming years. The impact of the current financial risks will continue to be monitored closely through the budget setting and monitoring processes, and appropriate mitigations will be put in place.

5.4 Climate Change Implications

- 5.4.1 There are no direct climate change implications arising from this report

5.5 Policy Implications

- 5.5.1 The budget framework reflects the continued development of a policy-led approach to budgeting across Council services and supports the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and HRA Business Plan.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.6.1 This report is of a technical nature, reflecting the actual outturn position for the General Fund and HRA for the year. The ongoing budget changes identified have arisen from efficiencies and do not alter existing equalities and diversity policies, nor do they have any impact on groups protected under statutory equalities duties.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

BD1 - 3rd Quarterly monitoring report General Fund and Housing Revenue Account

BD2 – 2025/26 Council Tax and General Fund Budget

BD3 – 2025/26 Final HRA Budget

BD4 – Accounts and Audit (Amendment) regulations 2024 and Subsequent Government Updates on the Local Audit Backlog

BD5 – 2026/27 Final GF and HRA Budget

APPENDICES

Appendix A – General Fund Capital Strategy Q4

Appendix B – HRA Capital Strategy Q4

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2025/26						2026/27			2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
		Actual Costs	Q3 Capital Strategy	Q4 Outturn	Variance	Under/overspend	Slippage	Q3 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy	Variance	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	General Fund - Schemes												
	Environment & Leisure	3,318,025	4,089,695	3,318,025	(771,670)	(70,155)	(701,515)	6,623,821	7,409,836	786,015	3,070,000	1,823,000	2,316,000
	Land, Development & Neighbourhood Regeneration	1,240,453	1,950,000	1,240,453	(709,547)	0	(709,547)	18,128,819	18,838,366	709,547	2,750,000	2,750,000	0
	Estates	603,262	1,131,609	603,262	(528,347)	(0)	(528,347)	2,046,066	2,747,913	701,847	0	0	0
	Technology	217,636	180,273	217,636	37,363	0	37,363	163,743	126,380	(37,363)	78,960	78,960	0
	Regeneration	16,606,750	19,002,375	16,606,750	(2,395,625)	(52,332)	(2,343,293)	22,309,533	25,032,576	2,723,043	24,713,593	2,434,295	0
	Planning & Regulation	348,264	486,951	348,264	(138,687)	(84,402)	(54,285)	949,644	915,929	(33,715)	55,000	45,000	0
	Deferred Works Reserve	0	29,073	0	(29,073)	0	(29,073)	500,000	429,073	(70,927)	250,000	0	0
	Total Schemes	22,334,390	26,869,976	22,334,390	(4,535,586)	(206,889)	(4,328,696)	50,721,626	55,500,073	4,778,446	30,917,553	7,131,255	2,316,000
	General Fund -Resources												
BG902	Capital Receipts		4,731,047	4,335,690	(395,358)	(206,889)	(188,468)	5,743,805	7,239,126	1,495,321	2,247,960	(66,040)	0
	SG1 Receipts		0	0	0		0	347,500	347,500	0	0	0	0
BG905	Ringfenced receipts		257,467	0	(257,467)		(257,467)	3,593,625	2,175,484	(1,418,141)	17,595,922	1,524,867	0
BG904	Towns Fund		8,520,302	4,811,248	(3,709,054)		(3,709,054)	13,824,508	17,645,125	3,820,617	580,000		0
BG904	Other Grants and other contributions		2,757,546	1,833,719	(923,826)		(923,826)	7,734,000	8,680,861	946,861	23,000	28,000	5,000
BG862	S106		1,409,418	1,291,884	(117,535)		(117,535)	147,000	149,408	2,408	0	0	0
BG904	Contractors Deposits		10,000	0	(10,000)		(10,000)	44,644	49,666	5,022	0	0	0
BG936	Priorities – Strategic CIL		0	1,488,606	1,488,606		1,488,606	4,824,422	4,824,422	0	1,137,671	909,429	0
BG937	Local – Neighbourhood CIL		109,375	24,864	(84,511)		(84,511)	327,500	327,500	0	0	0	0
BG903	Capital Reserve (Housing Receipts)		116,014	382,824	266,810		266,810	263,019	0	(263,019)	0	0	0
BG903	RCCO		287,000	72,195	(214,805)		(214,805)	2,249,968	510,163	(1,739,805)	1,318,000	1,312,000	78,000
BG906	Revenue Reserves		60,273	393,060	332,787		332,787	719,322	1,066,308	346,986	0	0	41,000
BG906	Capital Reserve (Revenue Savings)		0	0	0		0	75,281	665,313	590,032	0	0	0
BG906	EPR		0	0	0		0	500,000	1,174,805	674,805	0	0	0
-	Prudential Borrowing Approved		222,000	7,700,300	7,478,300		7,478,300	3,460,001	3,039,677	(420,324)	8,015,000	3,423,000	2,192,000
-	Short Term borrowing and funded from private sale		8,389,533	0	(8,389,533)		(8,389,533)	6,867,031	7,604,717	737,686	0	0	0
-	Funding Gap		0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Resources (General Fund)		26,869,976	22,334,390	(4,535,586)	(206,889)	(4,328,696)	50,721,627	55,500,074	4,778,447	30,917,553	7,131,255	2,316,000

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2025/26						2026/27			2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
		Actual Costs	Q3 Capital Strategy	Q4 Outturn	Variance	Under/overspend	Slippage	Q3 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy	Variance	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	Environment & Leisure												
	Parks & Open Spaces												
KC218	Hertford Road Play Area (S106 Funded)	0	0	0	0	0	0	25,000	25,000	0	0	0	0
KC256	Valley School Playzone (S106)	7,592	10,000	7,592	(2,408)	0	(2,408)	92,000	94,408	2,408	0	0	0
KE494	Green Space Access Infrastructure	29,307	52,024	29,307	(22,717)	(3,200)	(19,517)	0	69,517	69,517	0	0	0
KE542	Flat block waste management infrastructure	5,492	18,730	5,492	(13,238)	0	(13,238)	0	13,238	13,238	0	0	0
KE543	Shrub bed programme	44,763	46,779	44,763	(2,016)	0	(2,016)	0	152,016	152,016	0	0	0
KE911	Play Area Improvement Programme	69,279	63,599	69,279	5,680	0	5,680	26,602	160,922	134,320	0	0	0
KE916	Peartree skate park	106,264	103,064	106,264	3,200	3,200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KG002	Garages (GIP)	250,195	279,870	250,195	(29,676)	0	(29,676)	258,000	1,473,676	1,215,676	266,000	274,000	282,000
KG039	Garages (GIP) 10 year plan (£250k/annum)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KG040	Garages asbestos roof capital works	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,186,000	0	(1,186,000)	620,000	639,000	2,034,000
	Community & Neighbourhoods	0	0	0	0	0	0						
KC232	SALC and the Swim Centre Urgent and H&S Works includes roof	34,152	49,091	34,152	(14,939)	0	(14,939)	0	14,939	14,939	0	0	0
KC237	Fire stopping works at SALC	1,175	0	1,175	1,175	0	1,175	297,819	296,644	(1,175)	0	0	0
KE118	Lift replacement at SALC	156,149	177,000	156,149	(20,851)	0	(20,851)	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE005	FVP BUILDINGS	23,934		23,934	23,934	23,934				0			
KE040	Replacement Camera programme	8,150	15,052	8,150	(6,902)	0	(6,902)	0	6,902	6,902	0	0	0
KE052	Shephalbury Park	3,950	8,690	3,950	(4,740)	0	(4,740)	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE917	Ridllins Athletics Facility (boilers)	13,992	86,000	13,992	(72,008)	(72,008)		0	0	0	0	0	0
KE000	Ridllins Track Works	76,803	0	76,803	76,803	76,803		0		0	0	0	0
KE005	Toilets at TVP	0	0	0	0			31,887	52,738	20,851	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	2,900	2,900	0			2,152	2,152	0	0	0	0
KE118	Lighting Desk SALC - Equipmt & Tools	177,000	215,000	177,000	(38,001)	(37,001)	(1,000)	0	291,000	291,000	0	0	0
KC260	Carpet replacement -Theatre								100,000	100,000			
KC052	Shephalbury Park (floodlighting)								59,740	59,740			
KE606	Operational Plant	86,295	105,000	86,295	(18,705)		(18,705)	0	18,705	18,705	0	0	0
KE604	CCTV Upgrade	302,157	390,000	302,157	(87,843)	(34,521)	(53,322)	0	123,322	123,322	0	0	0
KE611	New pumps/aerators to FVP lakes	0	0	0	0			12,000	12,000	0	0	0	0
KC903	Golf course works	9,294	60,000	9,294	(50,706)		(50,706)	0	50,706	50,706	0	0	0
KG041	Padel Courts	0	0	0	0			10,000	10,000	0	0	0	0
KG075	Fairlands Valley Pk-improvement								20,000	20,000			
Growth	Growth bids	0	0	0	0			465,000	0	(465,000)	1,500,000	145,000	0
Growth	Growth bids	0		0	0			70,000	0	(70,000)	40,000	30,000	0
	Vehicles, Plant, Equipment												
Various	Vehicle/Plant replacement Programme	1,801,837	2,060,295	1,801,837	(258,458)	(27,362)	(231,096)	953,204	2,828,300	1,875,096	0	0	0
KE925	Repair closed church wall St Nicholas church	3,150	600	3,150	2,550		2,550	25,157	37,107	11,950	0	0	0
KE609	Fuel pumps at Cavendish Road fuel station.	0	30,000	0	(30,000)		(30,000)	0	47,000	47,000	0	0	0
KE609	Replacement work Cavendish Road fuel station - manhole covers	0	17,000	0	(17,000)		(17,000)	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE952	Flat block recycling (EPR & grant funded)	44,195	219,000	44,195	(174,805)		(174,805)	960,000	1,134,805	174,805	0	0	0
KE097	Replacement Bins (EPR) - Houshold and Public	0		0	0			225,000	260,000	35,000	0	0	0
KE954	Improve the vehicle/pedestrian movements at Cavendish		20,000	0	(20,000)		(20,000)		20,000	20,000		0	0
Growth	Growth Bids	0	0	0	0			1,609,000	0	(1,609,000)	544,000	685,000	0
Growth	Growth Bids	0	0	0	0			340,000	0	(340,000)	100,000	50,000	0
	Total Environment & Leisure	3,318,025	4,089,695	3,318,025	(771,670)	(70,155)	(701,515)	6,623,821	7,409,836	786,015	3,070,000	1,823,000	2,316,000

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2025/26						2026/27			2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
		Actual Costs	Q3 Capital Strategy	Q4 Outturn	Variance	Under/overspend	Slippage	Q3 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy	Variance	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Various KG038	<u>Land, Development & Neighbourhood Regeneration</u>												
	Housing Development Schemes (Joint GF/HRA)	1,240,453	1,950,000	1,240,453	(709,547)	0	(709,547)	15,678,569	16,388,116	709,547	2,750,000	2,750,000	0
	Marshgate Wholly Owned Housing Development Company (WOC)	0	0	0	0			2,450,250	2,450,250	0	0	0	0
	<u>Total Land, Development & Neighbourhood Regeneration</u>	<u>1,240,453</u>	<u>1,950,000</u>	<u>1,240,453</u>	<u>(709,547)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(709,547)</u>	<u>18,128,819</u>	<u>18,838,366</u>	<u>709,547</u>	<u>2,750,000</u>	<u>2,750,000</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>Estates</u>												
KE527	Depots: Planned Preventative Works (reroof) - constuct roof over refuse	9,945	22,960	9,945	(13,015)		(13,015)	0	13,015	13,015	0	0	0
KE529	Community Centres Urgent and H&S Works	2,996	3,970	2,996	(974)	(974)		0	0	0	0	0	0
KE536	Multi Storey Car Park - Installation of emergency lighting	110,293	200,299	110,293	(90,006)		(90,006)	5,000	130,006	125,006	0	0	0
KE927	Thermal Image Cameras	0	2,109	0	(2,109)	(2,109)		0	0	0	0	0	0
KE928	Health and Safety Works – Cavendish Depot	48,840	29,862	48,840	18,978		18,978	670,024	651,046	(18,978)	0	0	0
KR150	Vacant Premises	26,612	36,208	26,612	(9,596)	(9,596)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KR151	Daneshill: Urgent and H&S Works	15,792	48,951	15,792	(33,159)	(7,589)	(25,570)	0	64,070	64,070	0	0	0
KR152	BTC 2019/20 Backlog H&S Works	3,726	0	3,726	3,726		3,726	0	0	0	0	0	0
KR153	BTC Urgent and H&S Works	4,594	0	4,594	4,594		4,594	0	0	0	0	0	0
KR154	BTC Planned Works (combined)	115,999	248,565	115,999	(132,566)		(132,566)	216,000	340,247	124,247	0	0	0
KR155	EPC Surveys	32,209	8,251	32,209	23,958		23,958	69,508	45,550	(23,958)	0	0	0
KR156	EPC remedials	0	0	0	0			209,710	209,710	0	0	0	0
KR182	EV Cavendish	0	300,000	0	(300,000)		(300,000)	0	300,000	300,000	0	0	0
KR179	Daneshill House boilers	81,557	100,000	81,557	(18,443)		(18,443)	0	53,443	53,443	0	0	0
KR180	Fry Road Nursery	0	0	0	0		0	80,000	80,000	0	0	0	0
KR181	All buildings across corporate estate	0	10,000	0	(10,000)	(10,000)	0	15,000	15,000	0	0	0	0
KR181	Burwell Road shops - Reroofing,	543	0	543	543	543		267,167	267,167	0	0	0	0
KR173	Commercial - shop units roof works	12,654	3,424	12,654	9,230	9,230		0	0	0	0	0	0
KR174	Commercial properties - General refurbishment	31,028	10,535	31,028	20,493	20,493		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
KC153	Shephalbury Depot Nursery site								100,000	100,000			
KR183	Homestart, 4-5 Bedwell Park. Replacement flat roof.								55,000	55,000			
KR918	Stock Condition survey								150,000	150,000			
KR916	Commercial Properties Refurbishment (MRC Programme)	86,014	86,014	86,014	0			273,657	273,657	0	0	0	0
Growth	Growth Bids	0	0	0	0			240,000	0	(240,000)	0	0	0
	<u>Total Estates</u>	<u>603,262</u>	<u>1,131,609</u>	<u>603,262</u>	<u>(528,347)</u>	<u>(0)</u>	<u>(528,347)</u>	<u>2,046,066</u>	<u>2,747,913</u>	<u>701,847</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2025/26						2026/27			2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
		Actual Costs	Q3 Capital Strategy	Q4 Outturn	Variance	Under/overspend	Slippage	Q3 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy	Variance	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	Technology												
KS268	Infrastructure Investment	199,576	0	199,576	199,576		199,576	0		0	0	0	0
KS320	Telephony Hardware Refresh 2425	0	0	0	0		0	75,638	75,638	0	0	0	0
KS322	Hardware Replacment Program	0	150,000	0	(150,000)		(150,000)	25,225	6,669	(18,556)	0	0	0
KS324	SBC Idox Re-Tender, and Dell Memory (RAM) for Virtual desktop	0	0	0	0		0	31,860	31,860	0	0	0	0
Growth	Growth bids	0	0	0	0		0	31,020	0	(31,020)	78,960	78,960	0
	Total IT General	199,576	150,000	199,576	49,576	0	49,576	163,743	114,167	(49,576)	0	0	0
	Connected to Our Customer (CTOC)												
KS274	New CRM Technology	18,060	30,273	18,060	(12,213)		(12,213)	0	12,213	12,213	0	0	0
	Total Technology	217,636	180,273	217,636	37,363	0	37,363	163,743	126,380	(37,363)	78,960	78,960	0
	Regeneration												
KE506	Public Sector Hub	11,785	14,035	11,785	(2,250)		(2,250)	1,176,149	1,558,149	382,000	0	0	0
KE947	SG1 Joint Venture	7,853,300	7,910,632	7,853,300	(57,332)	(57,332)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE541	Railway MSCP	5,000		5,000	5,000	5,000		0	0	0	0	0	0
KE506	Stevenage Sports & Leisure Club (not TF Funded element)	1,132,856	1,132,856	2,621,462	1,488,606		1,488,606	7,277,863	5,789,256	(1,488,606)	24,133,593	2,434,295	0
KE551	Parkplace - works ahead of Indoor Market relocation (Boston House)	1,203,954	1,212,987	1,203,954	(9,033)		(9,033)	31,013	40,046	9,033	0	0	0
	Towns Fund:												
KE538	Towns Fund	69,124	(113,817)	69,124	182,941		182,941	(88,390)	(271,331)	(182,941)	0	0	0
KE560	Stevenage Enterprise Centre	(13,374)	23,142	(13,374)	(36,516)		(36,516)	1,820,583	1,857,099	36,516	0	0	0
KE551	Gunnels Wood Road Infrastructure	979,177	979,177	979,177	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE543	Marshgate Biotech	47,638	22,393	47,638	25,245		25,245	149,892	124,647	(25,245)	0	0	0
KE564	Stevenage Innovation & Technology Centre (SITEC)	1,455,463	1,140,982	1,455,463	314,481		(1,685,519)	1,648,793	3,334,312	1,685,519	0	0	0
	Old Indoor Market space - reconfiguration	0	2,000,000	0	(2,000,000)			0	0				
KE565	New Towns Heritage Centre	0	0	0	0			1,979,820	1,979,820	0	0	0	0
KE566	Stevenage Sports & Leisure Club	1,488,606	1,616,313	0	(1,616,313)		(1,616,313)	6,507,517	8,123,830	1,616,313	580,000	0	0
KE567	Cycling & Pedestrian Connectivity	951,935	1,500,000	951,935	(548,065)		(548,065)	502,304	1,050,369	548,065	0	0	0
KE568	Diversification of Retail & Garden Square	1,421,285	723,282	1,421,285	698,003		(142,389)	1,102,146	1,244,535	142,389	0	0	0
KE568	Diversification of Retail & Garden Square (Boston House)		840,392		(840,392)			201,844	201,844	0	0	0	0
Various	Towns Fund	6,399,855	8,731,865	4,911,249	(3,820,617)	0	(3,820,617)	13,824,508	17,645,125	3,820,617	580,000	0	0
	Total Regeneration	16,606,750	19,002,375	16,606,750	(2,395,625)	(52,332)	(2,343,293)	22,309,533	25,032,576	2,723,043	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	Q3 Capital Strategy	Q4 Outturn	Variance	Under/overspend	Slippage	Q3 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy	Variance	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	Planning & Regulation												
KC244	Community Climate Change Fund	24,864	109,375	24,864	(84,511)	(84,511)	0	97,500	97,500	0	0	0	0
KC262	Phase 1 CIL (CIL, BNG)			0	0			225,000	225,000	0			
KC916	Street Scene UKSPF	28,806	68,645	28,806	(39,839)		(39,839)	0	39,839	39,839	0	0	0
KC917	St Georges MSCP	30,642	31,000	30,642	(358)	(358)		0	0	0	0	0	0
KE558	MSCP resurface worn stairwell floor	0	283	0	(283)	(283)		0	0	0	0	0	0
KR172	MSCP fire door replacement	815	141	815	674	674		0	0	0	0	0	0
KE119	Phase 4 ENPR - Forum (Off Street Car Parks)	70,538	70,000	70,538	538	538		0	0	0	0	0	0
KE120	Park Place Remedials	4,978	10,000	4,978	(5,022)		(5,022)	44,644	49,666	5,022	0	0	0
KE201	Hard standings	5,313	18,583	5,313	(13,270)	(6,770)	(6,500)	0	26,500	26,500	0	0	0
KE217	Parking Restrictions	38,606	36,444	38,606	2,162	2,162	0	0	25,000	25,000	0	0	0
KE531	Workplace Travel Plan	75,825	71,845	75,825	3,980	3,980	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KC918	MSCP Lift Reinstatement	5,801	5,635		(5,635)	(5,635)		167,500	79,500	(88,000)	0	0	0
KC919	Car Parks Resurfacing	52,276	55,000	52,276	(2,724)		(2,724)	85,000	87,724	2,724	0	0	0
KC920	Car Parks - Lighting Phased Replacement (2 years)	9,800	10,000	9,800	(200)		(200)	30,000	30,200	200	0	0	0
KC918	MSCP Painting (westgate and st george's)	0	0	5,801	5,801	5,801		40,000	40,000	0	0	0	0
KC918	MSCP Fire Alarm Upgrade (st george's)	0	0		0		0	25,000	25,000	0	0		0
KC922	Replacing parking machines								80,000	80,000			
KC958	Town Square Improvements								30,000	30,000			
KC923	Christmas Decorations Phased Replacement								80,000	80,000			
Growth	Growth bids	0	0	0	0			235,000	0	(235,000)	55,000	45,000	0
	Total Planning & Regulation	348,264	486,951	348,264	(138,687)	(84,402)	(54,285)	949,644	915,929	(33,715)	55,000	45,000	0
	Balance to review				0	0			0				
KR911	Deferred Works Reserve	0	29,073	0	(29,073)		(29,073)	500,000	429,073	(70,927)	250,000	0	0

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APPENDIX B - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT CAPITAL STRATEGY

		2025/26	2025/26	2025/26	2025/27	2025/28	2026/27	2026/27	2026/27	2027/2028	2028/2029	2029/2030	2030/2031
Cost Centre	Scheme	Q3 Capital Strategy	Q4 Outturn	Variance	Under/Overspend	Re-phasing	Q3 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy	Variance	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Page 85	SUMMARY												
	Capital Programme Excl New Build (Housing Inv)	19,243,102	19,241,460	(1,642)	(1,470)	(173)	36,490,544	36,490,717	173	30,882,238	30,173,478	30,281,460	29,530,314
	New Build (Housing Development)	13,235,076	11,375,480	(1,859,596)		(1,859,596)	46,687,592	48,547,188	1,859,596	13,796,808	6,500,000	11,000,000	8,400,000
	Other Capital Schemes	316,037	89,907	(226,130)		(226,130)	219,000	445,130	226,130	1,120,000	1,287,400	922,084	784,000
	TOTAL HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME	32,794,215	30,706,847	(2,087,369)	(1,470)	(2,085,899)	83,397,136	85,483,035	2,085,899	45,799,046	37,960,878	42,203,544	38,714,314
	HRA USE OF RESOURCES												
	BH930 MRR (Self Financing Depreciation)	12,995,774	13,492,631	496,857	(1,470)	498,326	15,274,148	13,630,230	(1,643,918)	14,043,962	14,792,893	15,221,343	15,662,969
	BH902 Other Capital Receipts	-	570,688	570,688		570,688	500,000	500,000		-	-	-	-
	BH906 Section 20 Contribution (leaseholders income)	2,957,878	1,416,154	(1,541,724)		(1,541,724)	3,261,738	4,995,488	1,733,750	3,453,764	3,714,158	2,900,800	942,462
	BH901 (RTB) new Build provision	2,838,506	6,927,118	4,088,612		4,088,612	9,766,434	9,366,523	(399,911)	3,904,904	3,250,000	5,500,000	4,200,000
	BH903 RTB - Debt Provision Receipts	1,464,120	4,548,039	3,083,919		3,083,919	885,967	285,100	(600,867)	285,100	293,600	302,400	311,500
	Borrowing Prudential	6,458,850	2,781,198	(3,677,652)		(3,677,652)	39,423,258	36,183,211	(3,240,047)	16,604,000	15,910,000	18,279,000	17,597,000
	Direct Revenue Financing (was RCCO)	-					598,784	598,784		1,584,316	227	-	384
	BH904 Grant	6,079,087	971,020	(5,108,067)		(5,108,067)	13,686,806	19,923,698	6,236,892	5,923,000	-	-	-
	TOTAL HRA RESOURCES FOR CAPITAL	32,794,215	30,706,847	(2,087,368)	(1,470)	(2,085,898)	83,397,135	85,483,034	2,085,899	45,799,046	37,960,878	42,203,543	38,714,314
	BH950 Major Repair Reserve Bought Forward												
	Depreciation (increasing MRR)	(12,995,774)	(13,492,631)	(496,857)			(15,274,148)	(13,630,230)		(14,043,962)	(14,792,893)	(15,221,343)	(15,662,969)
	MRR Used (decreasing MRR)	12,995,774	13,492,631	496,857			15,274,148	13,630,230		14,043,962	14,792,893	15,221,343	15,662,969
	Major Repair Reserve Carried Forward												
	BH901 Total RTB Receipts Bought Forward	(6,974,610)	(6,974,610)				(20,671,984)	(13,499,453)		(7,987,351)	(8,065,322)	(8,929,864)	(3,429,864)
	Total RTB Receipts Received	(16,535,880)	(13,451,961)	3,083,919			(3,854,421)	(3,854,421)		(3,982,876)	(4,114,542)		(2,325,684)
	Total RTB Receipts Used HRA	2,838,506	6,927,118	4,088,612			9,766,434	9,366,523		3,904,904	3,250,000	5,500,000	4,200,000
	Total RTB Receipts Carried Forward	(20,671,984)	(13,499,453)	7,172,531			(14,759,971)	(7,987,351)		(8,065,322)	(8,929,864)	(3,429,864)	(1,555,548)

APPENDIX B - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT CAPITAL STRATEGY

		2025/26	2025/26	2025/26	2025/27	2025/28	2026/27	2026/27	2026/27	2027/2028	2028/2029	2029/2030	2030/2031
Cost Centre	Scheme	Q3 Capital Strategy	Q4 Outturn	Variance	Under/Overspend	Re-phasing	Q3 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy	Variance	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Various	CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXCL. NEW BUILD												
	Planned Investment including Decent Homes												
KH299	Decent Homes - Internal/External Works	7,674,650	6,555,168	(1,119,482)		(1,119,482)	20,337,295	21,456,777	1,119,482	21,078,338	20,235,978	20,308,360	19,804,614
	Insulation Measures	100,000	129,766	29,766		29,766	61,100	31,334	(29,766)	60,100	64,900	65,100	63,500
Various	Decent Homes - Flat Blocks	7,519,426	7,980,290	460,864	(1,640)	462,504	7,278,565	6,816,061	(462,504)	2,660,400	2,736,400	2,746,200	2,678,100
	Health & Safety												
	Fire Safety	650,010	840,752	190,742		190,742							
	Asbestos Management	310,000	407,885	97,885		97,885	367,100	269,215	(97,885)	358,100	389,600	391,000	381,300
	Subsidence	199,130	195,515	(3,615)		(3,615)	195,800	199,415	3,615	191,000	190,300	191,000	186,300
	Contingent Major Repairs	500,000	563,341	63,341		63,341	688,850	625,509	(63,341)	601,400	649,400	651,700	635,500
	Building safety						2,667,000	2,476,258	(190,742)	1,202,900	1,198,600	1,202,900	1,173,100
Various	Estate & Communal Area												
	Asset Review - Challenging Assets	329,629	210,730	(118,899)		(118,899)	680,334	799,233	118,899	619,400	617,200	619,400	604,000
	ASSET REVIEW NON RED SHELTER	1,662	1,832	170	170								
	Other HRA Schemes	2,058,595	2,485,946	427,351		427,351	4,275,600	3,848,249	(427,351)	4,170,700	4,156,000	4,170,900	4,067,400
	TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXCL. NEW BUILD	19,243,102	19,241,460	(1,642)	(1,470)	(173)	36,490,544	36,490,717	173	30,882,238	30,173,478	30,281,460	29,530,314

APPENDIX B - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT CAPITAL STRATEGY

		2025/26	2025/26	2025/26	2025/27	2025/28	2026/27	2026/27	2026/27	2027/2028	2028/2029	2029/2030	2030/2031
Cost Centre	Scheme	Q3 Capital Strategy	Q4 Outturn	Variance	Under/Overspend	Re-phasing	Q3 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy	Variance	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q4 Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Page 87	CAPITAL PROGRAMME NEW BUILD												
	KH233 Open Market Acquisitions (Social Rent) grant funded		1,367,397	1,367,397	1,367,397	0							
	KH244 Twin Foxes												
	KH245 March Hare in Burwell Road (Ineligible 141)	1,732,959	1,529,791	(203,168)		(203,168)	1,000,000	1,203,168	203,168				
	KH247 Kenilworth Close (105 units) (Ineligible 141)	171,497	316,391	144,894	144,894								
	Kenilworth Close 1 for 1 Expenditure (61.8%)												
	KH303 Dunn Close (27 units, 21 main block SA)	456,177	327,503	(128,674)		(128,674)		128,674	128,674				
	KH280 Symonds Green		34,470	34,470	34,470								
	KH282 North Road	120		(120)		(120)							
	KH333 Brent Court Social Rent (Ineligible 141)	3,000,000	2,753,462	(246,538)	(298,713)	52,175	26,497,893	26,445,838	(52,055)	5,987,000			
	Schemes Under Development	7,874,323	5,046,467	(2,827,857)	(1,248,048)	(1,579,809)	19,217,530	20,797,339	1,579,809	7,809,808	8,400,000	8,400,000	8,400,000
	TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME NEW BUILD	13,235,076	11,375,480	(1,859,596)		(1,859,596)	46,687,592	48,547,188	1,859,596	13,796,808	6,500,000	11,000,000	8,400,000
	OTHER CAPITAL SCHEMES												
	IT General (IT)												
	KH246 Infrastructure Investment	147,564	65,967	(81,597)		(81,597)	199,000	280,597	81,597	740,000	764,000	764,000	764,000
	KH283 Housing Improvements - Northgate online	118,670		(118,670)		(118,670)		118,670	118,670	360,000	503,400	138,084	
	KH304 Core ICT Equipment Equipmt & Tools	20,000		(20,000)		(20,000)	20,000	40,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
	Total General IT	286,234	65,967	(220,267)		(220,267)	219,000	439,267	220,267	1,120,000	1,287,400	922,084	784,000
	Connected To Our Customers (CTOC)												
	KH288 New CRM Technology (Digital Platform)	29,803	23,940	(5,863)		(5,863)		5,863	5,863				
	Total CTOC	29,803	23,940	(5,863)		(5,863)		5,863	5,863				
	TOTAL OTHER CAPITAL SCHEMES	316,037	89,907	(226,130)		(226,130)	219,000	445,130	226,130	1,120,000	1,287,400	922,084	784,000

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Meeting Cabinet
Portfolio Area All
Date 15 July 2026



CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER FOUR 2025/26, ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26 AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SUITE 2026/27

KEY DECISION

Author Charlotte Bott
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Richard Protheroe
Daryl Jedowski
Contact Officer Richard Protheroe

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report provides a comprehensive overview of the Council's performance at the end of the 2025/26 financial year and sets out the proposed direction for the year ahead. It brings together key performance data, strategic reflections, and forward-looking priorities to support Cabinet in reviewing progress and shaping the next phase of delivery.
- 1.2 The report focuses on three core areas:
 - Reviewing performance across Quarter Four 2025/26, as captured in the Corporate Performance Suite.
 - Presenting the 2025/26 Annual Report, which reflects on delivery across the Council's strategic priorities and cross-cutting themes.
 - Setting out the proposed priorities and performance measures for the 2026/27 Corporate Performance Suite.
- 1.3 The report is supported by a suite of appendices that collectively underpin the Council's performance framework:

Appendix A

2025/26 Annual Report

- Provides an overview of the Council's performance across the Making Stevenage Even Better (MSEB) strategic priorities and cross-cutting themes, as well as a look at the Council's ambitions for the coming year.

Appendix B

2026/27 Key Performance Indicators

- Presents the proposed 2026/27 Corporate Performance Suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) detailing the strategic key performance indicators aligned to the Corporate Plan's main priorities and cross-cutting themes, and identifying the lead Portfolio Holders responsible for each area.

Appendix C

2026/27 Making Stevenage Even Better Priorities

- Sets out the Council's delivery priorities across all MSEB priority areas. Like Appendix B, it is structured by Corporate Plan themes and includes lead Portfolio Holder accountability. Together, Appendices B and C form the two halves of the 2026/27 Performance Compendium.

Appendix D

Quarter Four 2025/26 Performance Compendium

- Summarises actual performance data up to the end of the 2025/26 financial year. This includes performance against key indicators and delivery milestones.

Appendix E

Quarter Four 2025/26 Ombudsman Determinations

- Summarises findings from the Housing Ombudsman, including any upheld complaints or learning points for the Council.

- 1.3.1 For Members' information, a presentation will be provided at the Cabinet meeting which will cover updates in relation to delivery against MSEB Priorities and the key themes emerging from the Quarter Four performance data.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the service performance against 52 corporate performance measures and delivery of key milestones in Quarter Four 2025/26 through the Making Stevenage Even Better Programme (Appendix D) be noted.
- 2.2 That the improvement actions being taken to improve void turnaround times and deliver value for money for tenants be noted (section 4.4.2).
- 2.3 That the strategic risk updates (section 4.9) be noted.
- 2.4 That the draft Annual Report 2025/26 (Appendix A) be agreed, subject to any changes discussed at the Cabinet meeting and with final sign off delegated to the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council.
- 2.5 That the proposed Corporate Performance Suite 2026/27 (Appendix B) and MSEB Priorities 2026/27 (Appendix C) be agreed.

3 BACKGROUND

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

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

The plan also includes three cross-cutting themes:

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

- 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.

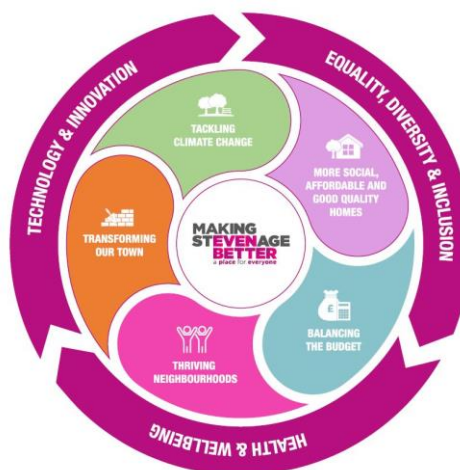


Fig 1.

- 3.4 The Corporate Performance Suite for 2025/26 contains 52 measures which are aligned with the five MSEB strategic priorities. The 52 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 42 measures are relevant to the Council's focus on what matters to residents and progress made against the MSEB objectives.
- 3.6 The Council is committed to the delivery of its priorities and its local services, to the benefit of local residents and businesses. This is challenging in a very competitive, employee-driven market and there is a risk that not being able to retain, attract and recruit the right people and skills at all levels could continue to impact the Council's capacity to deliver all its priorities as well as provide core services and implement new government legislation. The main challenge is when the Council must compete with roles against the private sector (e.g. surveying roles), sometimes this can be compensated by using Market Forces

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

- 3.7 Each year, the Council agrees its key outcomes and priorities for the town and the Council during the coming 12 months. These are framed within the Making Stevenage Even Better (MSEB) Corporate Plan, with delivery driven through service areas and the MSEB programme.
- 3.8 Throughout 2025/26 the Council has continued to make significant progress in delivering its ambitions under the Making Stevenage Even Better programme. Continued effort is being applied to areas where improvements are needed, including re-focusing resources on specific action plans. This report sets out these achievements and areas of focus in more detail.
- 3.9 This report aims to give Cabinet an overview of the achievements the Council has made during the last 12 months, with a particular focus on the previous quarter. These achievements are summarised in the Council's Annual Report (Appendix A). It also identifies key priorities and performance indicators as part of the 2026/27 Corporate Performance Suite.
- 3.10 The Senior Leadership Team and Service Managers have been consulted to determine the appropriate content and to identify the key achievements.
- 3.11 The Corporate Performance Suite for 2026/27 contains 52 measures which are aligned with the 5 MSEB strategic priorities. The 52 measures are complemented by statutory and local measures which are managed internally with performance overseen by the Strategic Leadership Team.
- 3.12 Four of the 52 measures were new and included at Quarter Three to support the introduction of Awaab's Law on 27th October 2025. These measures replace the two previous Damp and Mould measures.
- 3.13 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 future. The remaining 42 measures are relevant to the Council's focus on what matters to residents and progress made against the MSEB objectives.

LOCAL OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

- 3.14 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.
- 3.15 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.

- 3.16 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.

- 3.17 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 MAKING STEVENAGE EVEN BETTER (MSEB) PROGRAMME

- 4.1.1 A summary of progress against the MSEB programme is attached at Appendix D. The key highlights this quarter have also been included in the Annual Report 2025/26 (see Appendix A). The Annual Report 2025/26 is an external-facing document which sets out the Council's progress in delivering excellent services for Stevenage and achieving the strategic priorities of the MSEB corporate plan.
- 4.1.2 The content of the Annual Report 2025/26 has been structured around service performance across the five MSEB strategic priorities and three cross-cutting themes of the corporate plan.
- 4.1.3 Particular highlights this year include:
- 4.1.3.1 Signing a Development Agreement with Muse for the delivery of Stevenage Station Gateway, with support from ECF (the partnership between Homes England, L&G and Muse). This agreement will see the creation of up to 1,000 new homes, up to 60,000 sqm of commercial spaces, and roughly 1,500 new jobs to transform the area around the Railway Station.
 - 4.1.3.2 Commencing main construction works on the new Stevenage Sports & Leisure Centre on St George's Way. Following extensive design development and public engagement, the new structure combines the sports facilities currently located at both the Arts & Leisure Centre and Stevenage Swimming Centre.
 - 4.1.3.3 Securing a further £1.1m in funding over the next five years to continue and expand our Pioneering Young Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Futures partnership with Mission 44, a charitable foundation founded by Sir Lewis Hamilton to improve opportunities for disadvantaged young people.
 - 4.1.3.4 Beginning work on the neighbourhood regeneration scheme at The Oval, with the first phase delivering 91 new independent living homes, as well as a new Community Centre and Church.
 - 4.1.3.5 Introducing a new kerbside food waste collection service to all our residents, following Simpler Recycling legislation change and Central Government grants. The service is available to 38,000 properties on a weekly basis and involved the rollout of 77,000 new caddies to residents.
 - 4.1.3.6 Continuing to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse through regular Survivors Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) drop-in sessions. Additional funding was received to continue the Drop-In Service. The sessions run fortnightly and provide a safe space for survivors to come together and feel supported in a sensitive and client-led approach.
 - 4.1.3.7 Delivering and supporting a wide range of civic and community events within the town with over 50,000 people attending, including Stevenage Day that introduced a STEM Village this

- year, bringing skills, education and local employers into the heart of the event.
- 4.1.3.8 Completing the first year of operation using Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) across our entire diesel fleet, including vehicles and machinery. As a result, direct (Scope 1) emissions for the entire fleet, including petrol use in machinery, decreased by 96.4% in comparison to 2023/24.
 - 4.1.3.9 Administering and running a £85,500 Household Support Fund that helped local organisations to support vulnerable households across Stevenage, with £38,200 specifically funding community cafes and £47,300 for food and energy support organisations.
 - 4.1.3.10 Supporting the launch of a new Dementia Friendly Communities accreditation scheme with Herts Memory Service and Alzheimer's Society, alongside Stevenage Dementia Friends events and training.
- 4.1.4 Under each MSEB strategic priority and cross-cutting theme within the Annual Report 2025/26, a summary of highlights has been listed under their subheadings alongside a set of projections for the upcoming year.
 - 4.1.5 The 2025/26 Annual Report also includes a section on the Cooperative Council Commitment, summarising how the Council has worked closely with partners across the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network to support policy lab projects.
 - 4.1.6 Please note that a designed version of the council's Annual Report 2025/26 is attached as Appendix A.

4.2 QUARTER FOUR CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

- 4.2.1 As outlined in section three, the Corporate Performance Suite has been aligned with the five MSEB priorities set out in Figure 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.
- 4.2.2 Key highlights from the MSEB programmes are summarised in section 4.3. 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](#).
- 4.2.3 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 D.

Q4 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. 4
More Social Affordable and Good Quality Homes (24 measures)	8	13	0	2	1	18
Transforming Our Town (3 measures)	0	3	0	0	0	15
Thriving Neighbourhoods (12 measures)	2	10*	0	0	0	9
	*The data for 'NI191: Residual household waste per household (kgs)' and 'NI192: Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting' comes from an external source and is only available a quarter in arrears, therefore will be reported this way					
Tackling Climate Change (1 measures)	0	0	1	0	0	6
Balancing the Budget (12 measures)	0	11	0	1	0	7
Cross Cutting (0 measures)	0	0	0	0	0	6
TOTAL (52)	10	37	1	3	1	61

Fig 3.

4.2.4 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%.
- 100% of major planning applications were determined in thirteen weeks and 100% of Corporate Building Overall Compliance inspections were completed for the fourth consecutive quarter.
- 99.47% of repairs & inspections completed first time, a continual increase from 99.41% in Quarter Three and 94.82% in Quarter Two 2025/26.
- There were no overdue Fire Remedial Actions for Housing outstanding for the fourth quarter in a row; this has reduced from 286 medium overdue actions and 312 low overdue actions in Quarter two 2024/25.
- Satisfaction with the Customer Service Centre (CSC) remains high at 94.6%; this has been on an upward trend since the start of the 2025/26 financial year.

4.3 MSEB PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

- 4.3.1** 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.
- 4.3.2** Further details on the projects included in the MSEB programmes and corporate highlights can be found in Appendix A.
- 4.3.3** All programmes have made progress on the projects agreed at Cabinet in July 2025. The Quarter Four highlights are set out below. Unless otherwise stated, the updates reflect the position at the end of Quarter Four 2025/26. Where material progress has been made since then, this is included to provide the position at the time of reporting.

4.2.3.1 More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	
Brent Court Independent Living Scheme	Works continue on the site of the new Brent Court Independent Living Scheme, with the new parking area to the south of Brent Court open to existing residents. Demolition of the garages is now underway following the handover of the car park. The Gateway 2 submission, demonstrating how the proposed design meets necessary safety requirements, is still pending an outcome, with initial feedback having been received and being actioned.
Burwell Phase Two	Work continues at Phase Two of the Burwell scheme, with brick and block work currently underway on the final floor of the scheme, contributing to the site being close to achieving the topping out milestone as roof trusses are now also on site.
Kenilworth Phase Two	Work continues at Kenilworth Phase Two with the piling mat having been created on site and the foundation works are underway.
Courtlands	Electrical works at the Courtlands scheme are expected to take place in mid-April to bring the scheme to completion, with the first five homes projected to be ready three weeks after the conclusion of the electrical works. As of May 2026, these electrical works have begun as planned.
Resident Engagement and Scrutiny	Progress is being made on the Resident Engagement and Scrutiny project. Recruitment has commenced for a Resident Engagement Co-ordinator to broaden engagement opportunities and help to deliver more proactive outreach into communities and across neighbourhoods during spring and summer 2026. A full report of the year's activities, progress and outcomes was reviewed by the Executive Housing Working Group in April 26 and will also be fed back to the Regulator of Social Housing via the Provider Improvement Plan.

4.2.3.2 Transforming Our Town	
Pioneering Young STEM Futures	The Pioneering Young STEM Futures programme continues to progress with increased delivery of the future-focused STEM pathway programme. Access to All has involved 40 young people from three secondary schools (including some not in education) attending sessions that cover careers, pathways,

	qualifications and employer workshops from JCA Engineering and the Cell and Gene Therapy at Catapult.
SITEC Town Centre Campus	Construction on the new Stevenage Innovation & Technology Centre (SITEC) Town Centre Campus is progressing positively and remains on track for September 2026 student intake. North Hertfordshire College has signed the lease for the space during Q4 and has successfully installed the new banners above the entrances and along St George's Way.
SWAP Course	The latest Stevenage Works Health & Social Care sector-based work academy programme (SWAP) course was delivered in Stevenage in February 2026. Five students attended, and one has been offered employment with Hertfordshire Care Providers Association Care (HCPA). 23 participants have been successful in securing work in the care sector to date. The next cohort commenced in May 2026.
Arts & Heritage Trail	Officers are continuing to support the four chosen artists with their detailed design and community engagement work. The Stevenage Heart Trails was launched on 25 March with the unveiling of the first plaque for the Stacked Stories sculpture at the Bus Interchange, alongside a dedicated website, which provides an interactive guide to the trail and its features. This milestone signifies the first of over 300 installations across the trail, including interpretative text and wayfinding signage.
Diversification of Retail	Officers continue to work with the owners of the Westgate Centre on the entrance improvements to the south-west corner. Officers are awaiting final detailed design for review and sign-off which will enable a start on site. The works are expected to be completed in summer 2026.
SG1 Plot A	Overall construction on SG1 – Plot A is progressing positively, remaining on track. The Claxton House show apartments are now finished and open for viewings, the marketing suite will be located in a unit within Town Square.
Sports and Leisure Centre	Technical approval has been secured for the new entrance and exit on Fairlands Way, and works are scheduled to commence shortly. The communications strategy is being implemented ahead of the planned car park closure on 13 April. The logistics plan, including hoarding strategy and associated updates to emergency arrangements, has been agreed. The Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) for the temporary coach drop-off point is also in place, with associated works programmed. Contracts for works have been agreed, with RIBA Stage 4 design nearing completion. Overall, the project has reached several key milestones and continues to progress as planned. A report regarding the appointment of the works contract is due to be considered by Cabinet in Part 2 of this meeting.

4.2.3.3 Thriving Neighbourhoods

Operation Educ8	The short film <i>The Orphan</i> , developed in Stevenage and linked to the Council's Community Safety work, was screened at events in Stevenage and in Parliament. The Parliamentary screening provided a national platform for Operation Educ8, building on the film's message through wider events and
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	engagement focused on exploitation, early intervention and keeping young people safe.
Active Communities programme	The programme held a range of activity-based sessions across the town including 99 outreach classes that saw 723 attendances, weekly classes held at five independent living schemes that saw 285 attendances, and over 3,000 participants joining health and wellbeing sessions held within Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre.

4.2.3.4 Tackling Climate Change	
Climate Action Street Plan	The Climate Action Street Plan project is now captured as part of the CIL Green Projects programme, aligned with our Corporate priorities and established strategies. Implementation of Phase 1 projects is currently underway and a new application window for project funding under Phase 2 is expected to open shortly.
Simpler Recycling	The new food waste collection service went live across the whole town on 2 nd March 2026, in readiness for legislation changes that came into force on 31 st March 2026. Operationally the new service is running well with participation estimated at approximately 52.69%. As we progress with the service, more data will be collected around participation level and communications will continue to push the service. Further, works to flat blocks to improve recycling facilities continue and will be completed by the end of the summer.

4.2.3.5 Balancing the Budget	
GF & HRA Savings	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. 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.

4.4 PERFORMANCE MEASURES – AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

4.4.1 As highlighted in Figure 3, there are three 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 Four.

MEASURE NAME	BUSINESS UNIT	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual – Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2026/27 YTD
More Social, Affordable and Good Quality Homes								
% of standard damp & mould investigations completed within 10 working days of tenant report (AWAABs)	Building Safety and Housing Property Services				92.42%	86.00%	100.00%	
Average time taken to relet a routine void (GN) key to key	Building Safety and Housing Property Services	63 days	54 days	84 days	63 days	57 days	30 days	
Balancing the Budget								
Rent collection rate	Finance	98.13%	93.28%	95.47%	97.14%	97.59%	98.50%	

Fig.4

General Needs Voids

4.4.2 In Q4, 29 standard void properties were re-let. 86% of these voids required new asbestos reports and 80% of these properties required asbestos removal. The target for obtaining a new asbestos survey is three working days and the removals five working days, adding an additional eight working days on average to the overall turnaround times. Improvement work, involving collaboration with internal teams and contractors, continues, with positive progress being made in reducing this stage of the works for Q1 2026/27.

Voids General Needs	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Number of properties let	43	20	43	29
Average time taken to relet a routine General Needs Void	54 days	84 days	63 days	57 days
Excluding Hard to lets	54 days	52 days	52 days	57 days

Fig. 5

4.4.3 Through strengthened accountability, the property conditions at the end of tenancies in Q4 seemed to have improved compared to previous quarters. Tenant Accountability measures have been significantly reinforced to ensure properties are returned in an acceptable condition and costs are recovered where appropriate.

4.4.4 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 and are notified at the Pre Void inspections that are being carried out during the notice period.

- 4.4.5** The in-house voids delivery pilot was mobilised and commenced on 1st April 2026, supporting the integration of client and contractor functions across Repairs and Housing Asset Management. The pilot is scheduled to run for a six-month period, during which performance, cost efficiency, and operational impact will be closely monitored and reported to inform future service delivery models.
- 4.4.6** 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 by the end of 2026/27, and deliver value for money for tenants as presented to the Executive Housing Working Group in January 2026.

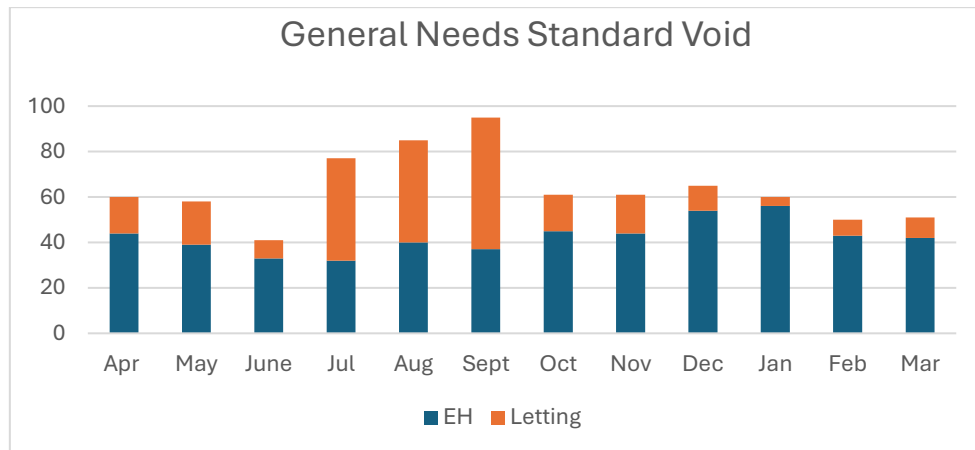


Fig.6

Awaab's Law

- 4.4.7** In Q4, the percentage of standard damp & mould investigations completed within 10 working days of tenant report was highlighted as a key area for improvement. This Awaab's Law linked measure saw consistently high demand during the quarter, which consequently impacted Surveyor capacity. This has been directly addressed through the recruitment of an additional surveyor during March 2026 to help proportionally address demand going forward.
- 4.4.8** Please also note that in nine out of 13 inspections in March, surveyors were unable to gain access to a property and two delays in cases were the result of appointments being made outside of the 10 working day target at the request of the tenant. The Access Policy is currently being reviewed.

Rent Collection Rate

- 4.4.9** Overall rent collection for 2025/26 was 97.59%, including arrears brought forward from previous years totalling £1.06 million. This is slightly lower than the 98.13% achieved in 2024/25.
- 4.4.10** Excluding historic arrears, rent collection performance remained strong at 99.44%, representing £55.74 million in rental income collected during the year.
- 4.4.11** The rent collection rate for Quarter Four was temporarily affected by the Easter bank holiday timing of income processing over the Easter bank holiday period. Approximately £203,797 of rent income received between 1 and 6 April 2026 was not processed until after the year-end reporting period. If this amount was included, collection rates would have been approximately 97.95% overall and 99.80% excluding historic arrears.
- 4.4.12** Therefore, although the measure is reported as red due to the tight performance targets set for this indicator, there are no significant concerns regarding service

performance. Steps will be taken to reduce the impact of similar timing issues in future reporting periods.

4.5 COMPLAINTS POLICY

- 4.5.1** The Complaints Policy has been reviewed and updated as part of a scheduled review and following feedback from the Housing Ombudsman Service in March 2026. The review was undertaken to ensure the policy continues to align with both the Housing Ombudsman and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Complaint Handling Codes.
- 4.5.2** As part of the review, a number of officers and service areas involved in complaint handling were invited to provide feedback on the existing policy ahead of the review. The Housing Ombudsman also identified several areas where the policy should be strengthened to more explicitly align with the Code.
- 4.5.3** The updated policy included a number of clarifications and minor wording changes to make it easier to understand and avoid misinterpretation, including clearer wording around complaint exclusions and insurance-related complaints, strengthened guidance around complaint acknowledgements and escalation handling, and additional detail on how residents will be kept informed where investigations are delayed or ongoing actions remain outstanding.
- 4.5.4** Overall, the changes strengthen the policy, provide greater clarity for residents and officers, and help ensure our complaints handling arrangements continue to reflect best practice.

4.6 OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINT HANDLING

- 4.6.1** 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).
- 4.6.2** Both Ombudsmen services will independently consider cases where they have been approached by residents and will then come to a determination concerning the matters which have been raised.
- 4.6.3** Under the Housing Ombudsman's Statutory Code of Complaint Handling, the Council is required to report the outcome of such cases quarterly. This report provides that detail.
- 4.6.4** The table in Appendix E provides details of the seven cases where an Ombudsman service has made a determination in Q4.
- 4.6.5** For the Housing Ombudsman Service, two cases were determined in Q4, with five by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. In all cases the orders, or agreed actions, have been completed.
- 4.6.6** The Council received its annual review letter for 2025-26 from the LGSCO on 20th May 2026, which contains a summary of the complaint statistics for the year ending 31 March 2026. This letter will be published on the [LGSCO Website](#) on the 15th of July, alongside the publicly available statistical data.
- 4.6.7** The information provides insight into the Council's approach to complaints and should be considered as part of its corporate governance processes. The findings highlight areas for improvement, while also recognising positive efforts to resolve complaints before escalation to the LGSCO.

4.6.8 The Council has produced an annual complaints report summarising this information. It includes statistics showing that Customer Services received 78,420 phone calls; 488 Stage 1 and 93 Stage 2 complaints were made; and four Ombudsman investigations resulted, three of which were upheld. The Council achieved 100% compliance with recommendations.

4.7 TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES

4.7.1 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) were introduced in 2023/24 as a regulatory requirement for all Registered Social Landlords in England.

4.7.2 The Council completed the final TSM surveys for the year this quarter, bringing the total number of responses to 987. This delivers a margin of error of $\pm 2.88\%$, well within the regulatory requirement of $\pm 4\%$.

4.7.3 As shown in the table below, year-end scores have exceeded last year's results across all measures, with overall satisfaction rising to 68.1%. The strongest improvements were in 'keeping tenants informed' and 'contribution to the neighbourhood'.

4.7.4 Q4 scores dipped slightly from the record highs seen in Q3. We expect to see natural quarter on quarter fluctuations - both positive and negative - going forward. The housing sector more broadly is also anticipated to be reaching a plateau, meaning the pace of improvement may slow or level off.

4.7.5 Housemark has been commissioned to deliver our perception surveys for the year ahead. We are currently shaping the delivery model, which we expect to remain largely consistent with last year's approach to support comparability. The core methodology is largely prescribed by the Regulator, so any changes are expected to focus on refining the qualitative questions rather than altering the overall approach.

4.7.6 There are two types of TSM: satisfaction measures, described above and listed in detail below; and management measures, monitored through the Council's quarterly performance compendium.

4.7.7 From 2026/27 Q1, the Council is required to report a new TSM management indicator linked to the proportion of homes for which all required electrical safety checks have been carried out. This new measure is in place for all large social housing landlords in England, i.e. those with more than 1,000 homes. To do this, the Council will ensure that all statutory obligations in relation to carrying out electrical safety checks relating to this unit are met, all physical checks have taken place and that these have been appropriately recorded. Electrical safety checks include inspections, testing and investigative work that relates to the electrical safety of electrical installations or electrical equipment provided by the landlord as part of the tenancy.

Ref	Question	2025/26	Previous Year - 2024/25	Difference (+/-)
TP01	Overall satisfaction	68.1%	66.9%	+1.2%
TP02	Repairs service overall	72.4%	70.8%	+1.6%
TP03	Speed of repairs	67.2%	64.4%	+2.8%

Ref	Question	2025/26	Previous Year - 2024/25	Difference (+/-)
TP04	Home is well-maintained	68.1%	67.7%	+0.4%
TP05	Home is safe	78.2%	76.4%	+1.8%
TP06	Listens to views and acts	57.7%	55.1%	+2.6%
TP07	Keeps tenants informed	66.6%	61.6%	+5.0%
TP08	Treats tenants fairly and with respect	76.9%	73.3%	+3.6%
TP09	Complaint handling	34.5%	34.1%	+0.4%
TP10	Communal areas are clean and well-maintained	66.5%	64.0%	+2.2%
TP11	Contribution to neighbourhood	67.6%	63.1%	+4.5%
TP12	ASB handling	61.8%	57.9%	+3.9%

Fig. 7

4.8 PRIORITIES FOR 2026/27

- 4.8.1** In January 2024, the priorities of the Making Stevenage Even Better (MSEB) Corporate Plan were approved by the Council.
- 4.8.2** There are 70 MSEB strategic priorities due to be delivered in 2026/27, as shown in Appendix C. Completion and reporting of these priorities will be vital to demonstrating a complete picture of performance.
- 4.8.3** In addition to performance and programme progress, the quarterly corporate performance report will be supplemented by information obtained from the quarterly Tenant Satisfaction Measures. The survey will contain 12 key questions covering areas such as tenant's satisfaction with repairs, maintenance, communal areas and views on the Council's willingness to engage and respond. The survey findings will be reported annually to the RSH and will also include the 10 RSH measures included in the Corporate Performance Suite (see Appendix B and measures starting 'RSH').
- 4.8.4** The proposed suite of corporate measures is based on input and conversations with the Strategic Leadership Team, research into best practice, benchmarking, and building on previous / existing measures where appropriate, including regulatory requirements.
- 4.8.5** Portfolio Holders and officers have reviewed the performance suite to ensure that the measures chosen as part of the Cabinet suite are meaningful, provide good business insight and are relevant to decision-making and the priorities of the Council. The Cabinet suite of 52 measures is supported by 50+ statutory and local measures which will be managed internally and overseen by the Strategic Leadership Team.
- 4.8.6** There are six new baseline measures where no target is required, as these are used for monitoring purposes rather than being red, amber or green. These cover food waste collection take-up, Everyone Active's overall footfall, online form satisfaction, Awaab's Law and accepted housing applications. Baseline

measures provide a starting point from which to assess and compare performance in the future.

- 4.8.7** The Council's streamlined approach to performance management and monitoring allows the organisation to proactively identify issues and challenges and ensure prompt management intervention. The fluid nature of the framework enables the Senior Leadership Team to proactively adapt service delivery models, where necessary, and support and drive forward additional improvements in services when required.
- 4.8.8** The proposed Corporate Performance Suite 2026/27 will form the basis of quarterly performance reports to Cabinet throughout the financial year. The proposed measures, targets and priorities present an accurate reflection of what the Council is seeking to deliver in 2026/27 and how it will monitor progress against these ambitions.

4.9 STRATEGIC RISK

- 4.9.1** The strategic risks were considered by Corporate Risk Group on 27 April 2026 and by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 2 June 2026.
- 4.9.2** 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

- 4.9.3** The strategic risk relating to Capacity has increased to High this quarter, reflecting the growing impact of Local Government Reorganisation on corporate capacity. While overall vacancy levels remain stable and workforce stability continues to be good, the scale, pace and uncertainty of LGR related activity is placing increasing pressure on the organisation. The impact will continue to be closely monitored and managed through service planning and prioritisation arrangements.
- 4.9.4** A new risk relating to Council companies and related entities has been added to the Strategic Risk Register. This reflects the potential for issues that might impact the Council's finances, services and reputation. The risk is rated 'Very High' currently and work is underway to strengthen oversight and ensure appropriate controls are in place.

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. 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 2025/26
- [MSEB Plan on a Page 2024/25](#)
- Local Outcomes Framework
- Annual Complaints Report 2025/26 – Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

7 APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Annual Report 2025/26

- Appendix B: Key Performance Indicators 2026/27
- Appendix C: MSEB Priorities 2026/27
- Appendix D: Performance Compendium Quarter Four 2025/26
- Appendix E: Housing Ombudsman Determinations Quarter Four 2025/26

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Stevenage Borough Council's Annual Report 2025-2026





Message from Richard Henry, Stevenage Borough Council



Welcome to our 2025/26 Annual Report. I am proud to share that over the past year, our ongoing efforts have continued to make our award-winning town a great place to live, work and visit.

Through the Council’s Corporate Plan – Making Stevenage Even Better (2024-2027), we have continued to deliver on the priorities that we know are important to you. We have achieved a balanced budget all whilst still progressing our plans to regenerate the town, including by sharing designs and beginning construction on the new Sports and Leisure Centre that brings together sports, leisure, swimming facilities and a cafe under one roof. We have also signed a development agreement with Muse this year for the delivery of Stevenage Station Gateway to help revitalise the town centre. Partnerships with organisations, such as Everyone Active and Muse, have enabled us to enhance future local prospects and strive to provide a town worthy of our great residents.

Investing in our young people’s futures has also continued to be a key priority for us. We have carried on opening up access to outstanding skills, training and educational opportunities in growing local sectors through various job fairs, grant funding and business workshops. Securing a further £1.1million in funding over the next five years for our Pioneering Young STEM partnership with Mission 44 was a particular highlight as this partnership has already brought together local businesses, education leaders and key strategic partners across a variety of events and will now continue to improve opportunities for the young people in Stevenage.

We also introduced a new Simpler Recycling weekly food waste kerbside side collection service to all our residents, which involved the rollout of 77,000 new caddies to residents with the help of our five new Recycling Superheroes! We’ve also made key investments in improving recycling at flat blocks, with the invention of a new three-wheeled bin that is designed to be used on stairs easier. These key investments aim to improve the everyday lives of our residents, and that has always been the key priority of Stevenage Borough Council.

“Investing in our young people’s futures has also continued to be a key priority for us.”

As we await the Government’s local government reorganisation plans for Hertfordshire, following the publication of their Devolution White Paper in 2024, we look to work with our neighbouring Borough and County Councils to determine what this collaboration could look like. In light of this, I want to reassure you that our residents will remain at the forefront of every decision we make and I hope that this is reflected in this report through the volume and variety of work we have achieved this year.

Within this report, you will see just a few of the Council’s highlights and achievements from the past year, as well as a look at what our future ambitions are for the year ahead including beginning to invest £20 million Pride in Place Government funding for community-led development to the St Nicholas ward. I hope you enjoy reading this year’s Annual Report and join me in looking forward to seeing the Council have another productive and fulfilling year in 2026/27.

Message from Tom Pike – Chief Executive, Stevenage Borough Council



This is my second Annual Report as the new Chief Executive of Stevenage Borough Council and I am thrilled to show you how much we have achieved over the past year, as well as how close partnership working

has enabled us to support the community through a tough financial climate. As we prepare for what local government reorganisation changes may bring, I will carry on ensuring that we focus on prioritising what matters most to our residents and make Stevenage an even better place to live.

Our town has continued to evolve through the regeneration of the town centre and surrounding areas over the last year. The recent introduction of new and improved indoor market, skate park, homes, and businesses have demonstrated just how we have been transforming our town into a place that has something for everyone. Investing in a vibrant, cultured town has been a long-standing priority for us here at the Council, and you may recently noticed a number of arts and culture-centred additions to the town, including the unveiling of new permanent public artwork at the Stevenage Bus Interchange and the launch of the Stevenage Heart Trails across the town to connect over 27 miles of public art, cultural landmarks and green spaces.

We have also been investing in the futures of our local young people through opening up access to outstanding skills, training and educational opportunities in growing local STEM sectors such as life science, space and defence, and construction. Initiatives such as Generation Stevenage that welcomed local schools to explore future career opportunities from local businesses directly, revitalising the

old indoor market site into a new Engineering and Construction Campus for North Hertfordshire College, and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme has enabled us to directly invest in the local community's skills, economic growth and job prospects. Further, our Stevenage Works programme aims to develop skills and increase opportunities related to construction, with direct links to our regeneration ambitions. I look forward to seeing what new initiatives we can support throughout 2026/27 to continue to enhance the skillsets of our residents.

As a Council we have also surpassed our ambition to deliver 500 new affordable and sustainable homes by 2025, providing a total of 627 homes since 2014. The demand for local homes has never been higher, so through the great work of our council employees we are now aiming to exceed previous ambitions and provide a total of 1000 homes by 2030. Through schemes such as Claxton House and the Oval Regeneration, we're well on our way to achieving this goal, with 289 new homes currently on site and under construction, and a further 250 undergoing design development. As a Council, we provide circa 120 different services, and our work does not stop once these new homes have been built. Another key, long-standing focus for the council has been to provide a good quality tenancy, housing maintenance and repairs service to residents, and this year has been no different, with over 98% of our properties now deemed 'decent' as a result of our recent improvement programme; one of the highest proportions in the country.

I am extremely proud of what this council achieves on behalf of those we serve, and this report highlights just some of our many successes. Please take some time to read through what we have been doing to improve the town and Council, along with what we have planned for 2026/27.

Making Stevenage Even Better

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

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

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

At Stevenage Borough Council, we have circa 722 members of staff who deliver a range of different services including customer service support, housing, waste, environmental health, planning and leisure services. In 2025/26, we continued to ensure that council services operate for the benefit of local people and to a high-quality that provides value for money. This Corporate Plan ensures we provide a framework for our thinking, decision-making and resource allocation.

For each of our five strategic priorities and three cross-cutting themes, a set of accompanying outcomes and actions is published within this report and monitored annually to ensure we are on track to deliver on the outcomes we want to see. Progress over the last financial year (April 2025 – March 2026) and priorities for 2026/27 are summarised over the subsequent pages:



Transforming Our Town

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



REGENERATION

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

To continue this mission, this year we have:

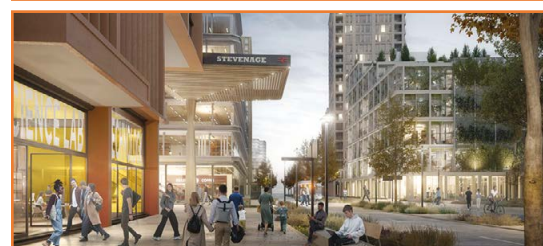


- Relocated Stevenage Indoor Market to a new, prominent town centre location at the ground floor of Boston House in Park Place. The new bespoke facility has been designed to increase footfall through a bright, welcoming and flexible trading space for local businesses. The move ensures the market's long term future while maintaining its important and historic role at the heart of Stevenage.

- Unveiled a new permanent public artwork at the Stevenage Bus Interchange and launched the Stevenage Heart Trails across the town. Created in collaboration with local artist Donna Reeves and Junction 7 Creatives, the Stacked Stories mosaic sculpture celebrates Stevenage's people and heritage. Funded through the Government's Towns Fund via the Stevenage Development Board, the artwork is the first commissioned piece within the Stevenage Heart Trails that connects over 27 miles of public art, cultural landmarks and green spaces.

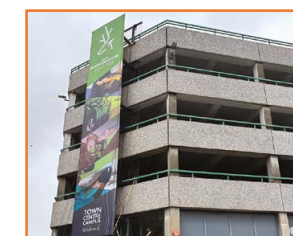


- Signed a Development Agreement with Muse for the delivery of Stevenage Station Gateway, with support from ECF (the partnership between Homes England, L&G and Muse). This agreement will see the creation of up to 1,000 new homes, up to 60,000 sqm of commercial spaces, and roughly 1,500 new jobs to transform the area around the Railway Station. This will also see the addition of new green space, public areas and improved connections between the station and town centre.



- Marked significant progress on Claxton House, the first phase of the SG1 masterplan. This milestone highlights strong progress in the delivery of 261 new homes and two ground floor commercial units on the former Swingate House site, bringing new housing into the heart of the town centre and supporting the creation of a more vibrant, mixed use neighbourhood.

- Started works to repurpose the former Indoor Market building into a new Engineering and Construction Campus for North Hertfordshire College. Funded through the Government's Towns Fund, the new Town Centre Campus will provide modern training facilities for students, apprentices and adult learners in key construction and engineering sectors while increasing daytime activity and footfall in the town centre.



- Commenced main construction works on the new Stevenage Sports & Leisure Centre on St George's Way. Following extensive design development and public engagement, the new structure combines the sports facilities currently located at both the Arts & Leisure Centre and Stevenage Swimming Centre. The new state of the art building will have a 25-metre, 10-lane swimming pool, a teaching pool, splash pad, soft-play, a six-court sports hall, fitness suite, multi-purpose studios and a café that can be accessed from the Town Centre Gardens. It will offer a wide range of innovative and exciting services and activities, promoting healthy living and wellbeing for residents.

- Welcomed the opening of Frequency Coffee in Stevenage Town Square. Located in the previously vacant 21 Town Square unit, Frequency Coffee transformed this space into a modern, design-led sit-in café. The arrival of this independent operator has strengthened the food and drink offer in the town centre, and added a destination that supports daytime, evening and weekend footfall. The new café forms part of the wider regeneration of the town centre, part-funded through Towns Fund via the Stevenage Development Board and supported by the Council.



Transforming Our Town continued...

In 2026/27, we will:

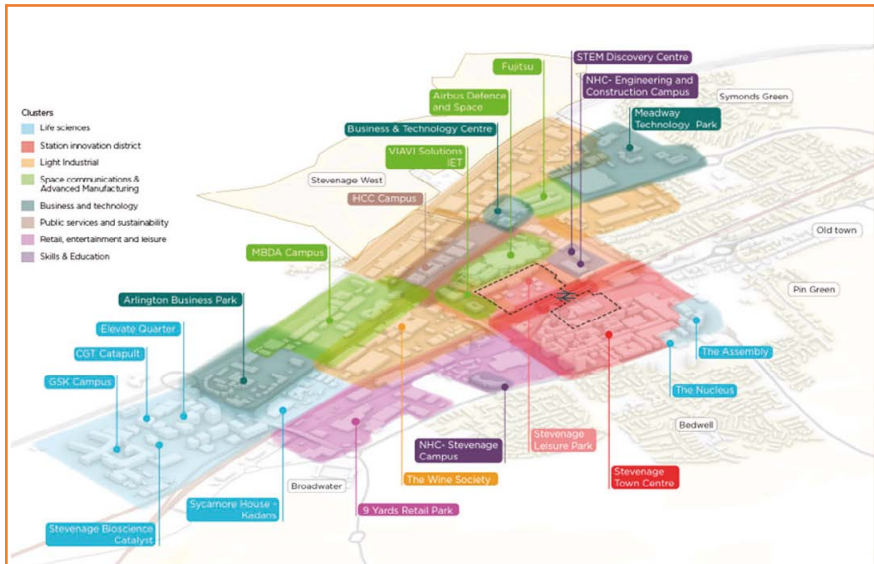


- Complete the delivery of Claxton House, with the first of the 261 new homes offer expected to become available to residents in the heart of the town centre at the end of 2026.
- Deliver improvement works at the Westgate Centre to enhance safety, accessibility and the arrival experience into Stevenage's retail core. Working in partnership with Glass Properties and supported by Towns Fund investment, improvements will transform the main car park entrance and create a modern, safe and welcoming gateway into the shopping centre.

- Support the opening of the new Engineering & Construction Campus for North Hertfordshire College within the former indoor market building. The first intake of students are expected from September 2026.



- Deliver new public artworks across the town as part of the Stevenage Heart Trails. Four new artworks are currently planned for locations such as Fairlands Valley Park, the Millennium Path and King George V Playground, to celebrate Stevenage's culture, heritage and natural environment while enhancing public spaces.



- Continue to support the growth of Stevenage's life sciences cluster through the development of infrastructure linked to the GSK and Elevate Quarter site. Following the granting of planning consent, the proposed expansion will support research, data and AI-enabled innovation alongside new infrastructure works, reinforcing Stevenage's role as a nationally important centre for science, technology and high value employment.

ENTERPRISE & SKILLS

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

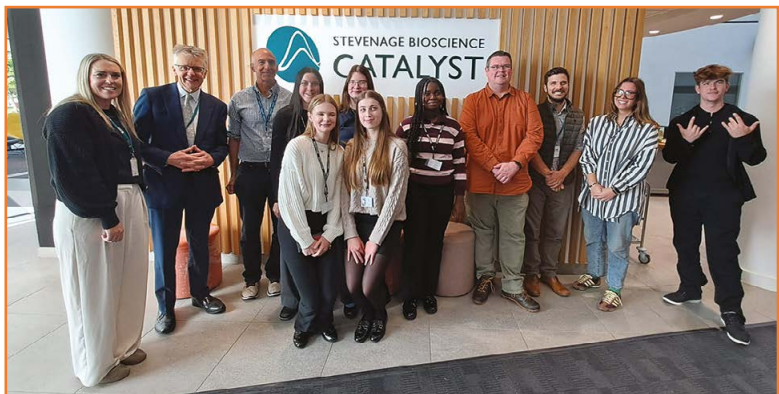
As a result, this year we have:

- Secured a further £1.1m in funding over the next five years to continue and expand our Pioneering Young Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Futures partnership with Mission 44, a charitable foundation founded by Sir Lewis Hamilton to improve opportunities for disadvantaged young people. The programme supports young people in Stevenage to access high-quality STEM opportunities, in partnership with North Hertfordshire College, the University of Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire Futures, and Airbus Defence & Space. This year, four Phase Two projects have been carried out with over 1,200 young people from primary schools and secondary schools, and with individuals not in mainstream school. These projects offer young people first-hand STEM experiences, broadening their awareness of STEM opportunities including local academic and employment pathways.



- Showcased how the Pioneering Young STEM Futures programme targets young people with STEM opportunities to Pat McFadden, Secretary of State for the Department of Work & Pensions.

- Delivered a £327,000 extension to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme for 2025/26, continuing investment into local people, businesses and communities. Working with partners including Hertfordshire Futures, Wenta and Step2Skills, has strengthened local support for enterprise, employment and skills, helped businesses to access advice, entrepreneurs to develop new ideas, residents to move closer to work and training, and attract further investment for key local growth sectors. Funding was also allocated through the Council's Co-operative Neighbourhoods programme to support locally targeted interventions.



- Held a series of careers sessions with four secondary schools, in partnership with Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst, to target and match KS5 STEM students with a STEM professional for tailored advice that supported their post-18 pathways. This included CV and cover letter advice, and support for those applying for university or apprenticeships.

Transforming Our Town continued...

- Delivered a programme of public STEM and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) engagement activities to inspire residents, and raise awareness of local opportunities in accessible and creative ways. This included:



- Hosting the Wonder of STEM event, in partnership with the University of Hertfordshire, that welcomed 200 residents to explore local academic pathways, employment opportunities and hands-on STEM activities.



- Delivery of the free Mad Science pantomime (The Reindeer Rebellion) that encouraged 77 residents and families to engage with STEM through an accessible and enjoyable event.



- Holding the Council's first STEAM event; the Stevenage Moon Palace Experience, in partnership with the University of Hertfordshire and Junction 7 Creatives. It enticed over 500 residents to explore a mobile observatory and planetarium, whilst also taking part in creative activities.



- Collaborated with the Education Support Centre & Stevenage Football Club Foundation to launch a pilot project with three primary schools to specifically support Year 6 students as they prepare to transition to secondary school.
- Helped host the Generation Stevenage careers fair that enabled local young people to meet local employers from across a broad range of sectors and discover future employment opportunities.

- Supported the Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor to gather the views of young people at community events, act as ambassadors for Stevenage's young people, and help the Council understand how to better meet the needs of its younger residents. They have also represented the Council at meetings at over 44 events between them, including Goodwood's Festival of Speed, Discover the Wonder of STEM, and at Schools' Parliament.



- Set up a Council Youth team to act as an overarching structure for the Council's key youth engagement activity, bringing together the Youth Mayor, Deputy Youth Mayor, Youth Advisory Board and Schools' Parliament. This has helped strengthen the Council's approach to youth voice and provided a clearer structure for engaging young people in local decision-making.

- Supported 46 new businesses and created 70 new jobs with our partner Wenta through our Business Technology Centre.



In 2026/27, we will:

- Continue our Pioneering Young STEM Futures programme, ensuring our reach includes both young people in mainstream education and young people outside of mainstream education benefit from the projects.
- Launch the Airbus project 'We WILL Build it Better' in numerous primary schools in Stevenage, in conjunction with the Primary Science Quality Mark. Funding is in place to spread this across various primary schools over the next few years.



- Continue offering free STEM and STEAM opportunities for residents to remove barriers, raise aspirations and inspire the next generation of innovators and problem solvers.
- Explore opportunities to create additional academic opportunities for young adults and adults keen to change career, with a focus on entry-level pathways and expanding industries such as health & social care, and ensure residents can easily access career pathway information.

- Collaborate with local organisations to encourage apprenticeship levy to be utilised, and expand opportunities available to residents.
- Establish our Youth Action Group to work alongside the Youth Advisory Board, offering more Stevenage young people the chance to shape what the Council does.

More Social, Affordable and Good Quality Homes

BUILDING NEW & SUSTAINABLE HOMES

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

Since 2014 the Council has provided 627 new homes, and has now set itself the ambitious target of delivering 1,000 new homes by 2030. We're well on our way to achieving this goal, with 289 new homes currently on site and under construction, and a further 250 going through design development.

This year, to help reach this goal we have:



Delivered new homes at eight sites in the town, with 50 new Council-let homes expected this year at Cartref, Burwell Road and Shephall View.

- Completed the scheme at Saxon Court – Dunn Close for 27 homes for supported accommodation.



- Begun work on the neighbourhood regeneration at The Oval, with the first phase delivering 91 new independent living homes, as well as a new Community Centre and Church.



In 2026/27 we will:

- Provide 67 new homes across a range of tenures to contribute towards our goal of delivering 1000 new homes by 2030.



- Continue to build on the Council's success in securing additional grant funding for new housing schemes in the town.

- Secured an additional £17m in funding from Homes England for the delivery of new genuinely affordable homes within the town.



- Started taking completions on new homes with enhanced accessibility requirements, with a number of new sites in the town identified to continue this delivery route.



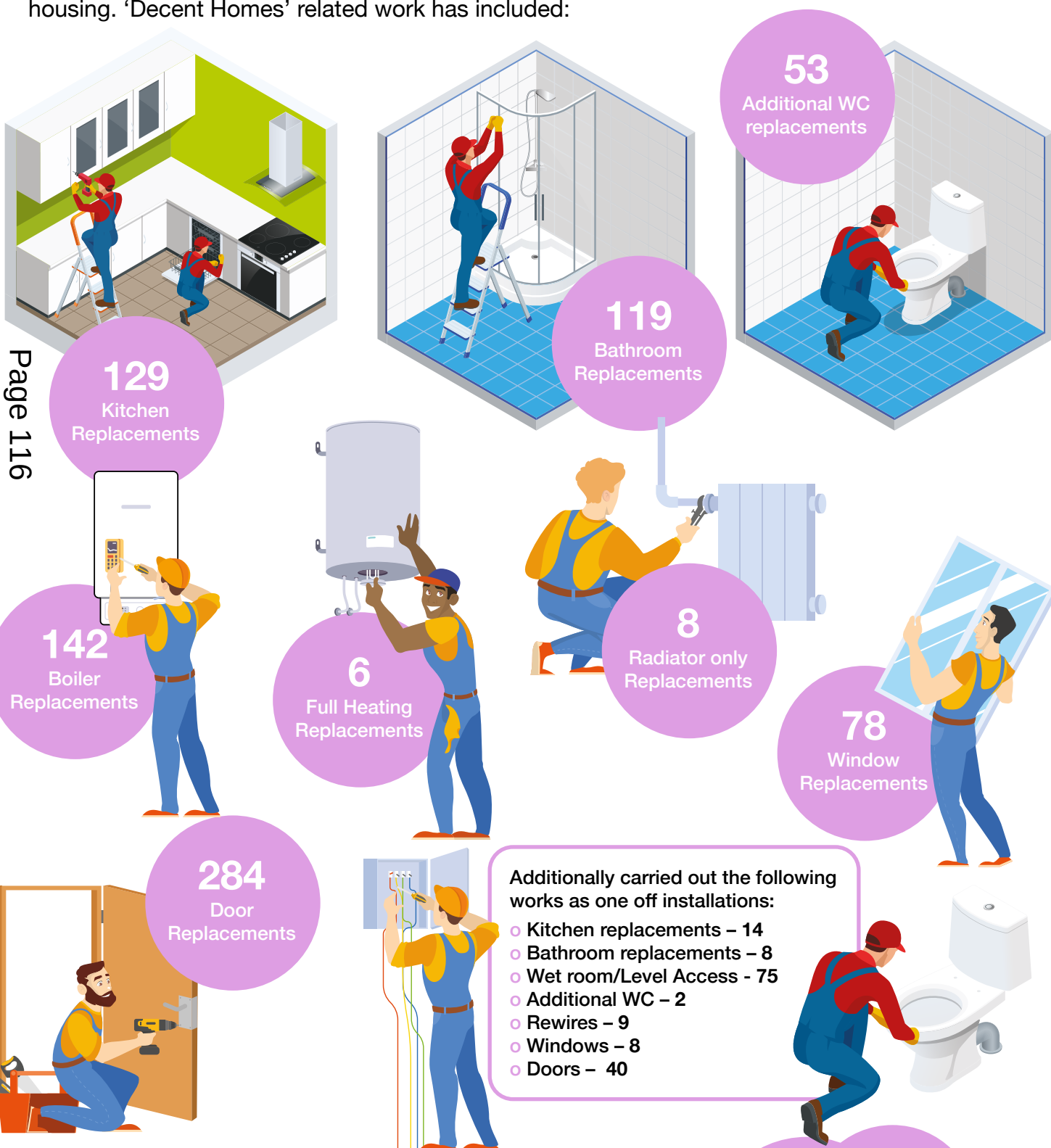
- Continue design development on a further 250 homes at various sites across the town to continue to meet the varied housing need in Stevenage.

MAINTAINING GOOD QUALITY HOMES

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

This year we have:

- Carried out improvements at a selection of our properties in order to meet the 'Decent Homes Standard (DHS)'. 98.86% of our properties are now deemed 'decent' as an outcome of the Council's improvement programme. All properties will be maintained to the Decent Homes standard through our major works programme and continued investment in the councils housing. 'Decent Homes' related work has included:



- Surveyed 2040 properties within the past year as part of our Stock Condition Survey Programme, reaching coverage of 98.93% of our overall stock. As a result of these surveys, The Council have raised various Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) cases that are logged and managed by various teams to ensure that any Category 1 or Category 2 Hazards are actioned within the recommended timescales.

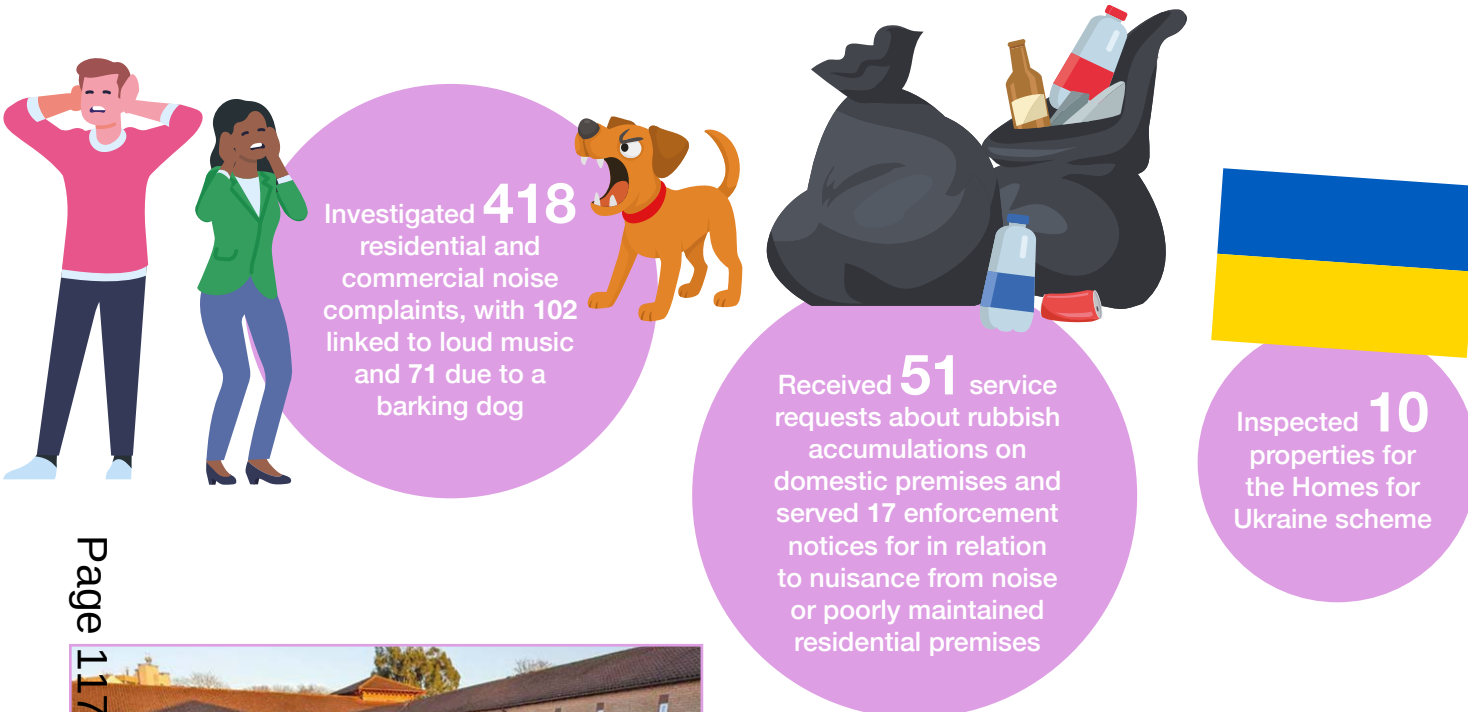
- Achieved an EPC rating of Band C or above in 66% of our Council homes.
- Invested £1m to deliver 521 home adaptations at over 488 properties, ranging from minor works such as grab rails and ramps to more complex installations like through floor lifts and level access showers.
- Completed 20,368 repair jobs across our properties, including:
 - 18,353 Non-Emergency jobs (90.10% of the total), and 95.43% were completed on time.
 - 1,990 Emergency jobs (9.89% of the total), and 98.76% were completed on time
 - 93.60% of repairs being fixed first time and 95.76% of all jobs being completed on time.
- Mobilised multiple specialist and back up repairs contracts, including Glazing, Roofing, Out of Hours, Drainage, General Building, Disrepair and Damp & Mould to support the in-house Repairs service.



- Reviewed the end-to-end customer journey through a series of internal workshops that specifically targeted improving the first point of contact. A number of actions have been identified, implemented and included in the service improvement plan.
- Introduced Awaab's Law compliance monitoring through an updated Damp and Mould policy, the establishment of new procedures, and key performance indicators.
- Responded to 100% of major planning applications within 13 weeks, 93.5% of minor applications within 8 weeks, and 81.5% of other applications within 8 weeks.
- Received 512 planning applications; an average of 3.67 per day, and of those 500 had a decision issued.

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

- Completed 145 house in multiple occupation licensed and non-licensed inspections, an increase from 95 last year.
- Received 49 private sector housing condition complaints, with four being served enforcement notices due to housing conditions.
- Issued no civil penalties to landlords for housing-related offences in 2025/26.



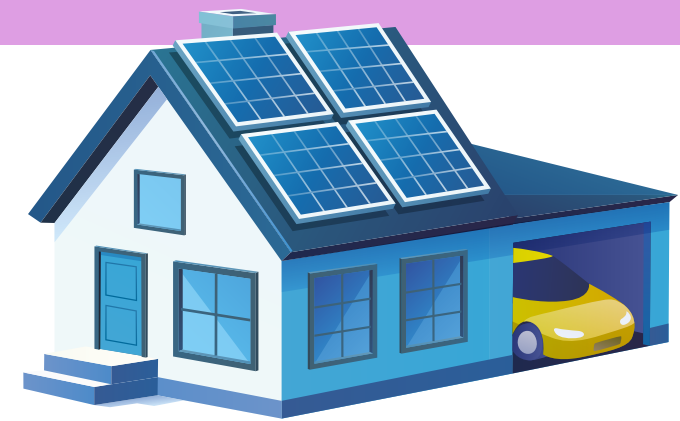
- Let 95 specialist accommodation properties between April 2025 and March 2026.
- Responded to 1,129 Care Connect 24/7 customer calls.
- Responded to 4,221 independent living residents calls.

- Completed 23,399 visits across the Council's 14 Independent Living scheme sites. The team also made 33,801 telephone calls and calls through the alarm system to independent living residents.
- Completed 1,743 calls and 1,005 visits to community support customers.
- Supported 40 residents to declutter their properties.



In 2026/27, we will:

- Continue the Warm Homes programme to include air source heat pumps, insulation works, solar panels and window and door replacements.
- Review and improve Aids & Adaptations processes, including referral handling, feasibility assessments, and communication pathways to improve efficiency, reduce tenant wait time, and the overall customer experience.
- Begin a multi-year Cyclical Maintenance Programme to look after all the blocks that had works carried out as part of MRC which will include floor covering replacements, decorations and minimal works to ensure the Council continues to provide good quality homes.



- Progress plans for the refurbishment of five high rise blocks in consultation with residents.
- Procure and mobilise a new materials supplier contract for repairs.
- Undertake a pilot to complete in-house delivery of works on void properties.

- Set up a 'Meet The Contractors' event with residents.
- Progress delivery of plans to improve the repairs and voids service.
- Prepare for the extension of Awaab's Law to other HHSRS related hazards.



Thriving Neighbourhoods



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

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

CLEAN NEIGHBOURHOODS & GREEN SPACES

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

This year we have:

- Introduced a new food waste kerbside collection service to all our residents, following Simpler Recycling legislation change and Central Government grants. The service is available to 38,000 properties on a weekly basis and involved the rollout of 77,000 new caddies to residents.



- Promoted the new food waste service through a competition for school children in Stevenage to design and name recycling superheroes that would appear on our new collection vehicles. Just under 100 entries were received and the winning characters (Sir Sort-a-lot, Charlie Core, Letty Lettuce & Captain Carrot) were selected by a panel including the Mayor and Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Holder Cllr Rob Broom.

- Promoted the importance of recycling to circa 3,000 children through 11 school assemblies.



- Continued recycling facilities improvements to 42 flat blocks, including the invention of a new three-wheeled bin that's designed to be used on stairs easier.



- Collected 17,375.91 tonnes of household waste from kerbside collections and 6,104 tonnes of recycling. This is the equivalent to 2.5 Elizabeth Towers that holds Big Ben (the bell)!
- Reported a 38.01% household recycling rate.
- Collected an average of 99% of waste bins throughout the year.
- Emptied 71,188 bins street litter bins.



- Upgraded eight neighbourhood recycling bring-bank sites to support waste diversion beyond kerbside collections. This involved installing new signage, bins, and improved infrastructure to make recycling more accessible for residents. The upgrades were funded through a combined approach.



- Helped residents plant 2,329 tree saplings as part of the Hertfordshire County Council's "Your Tree Our Future" tree giveaway scheme.
- Enhanced the borough's green canopy by planting 121 new street trees.

Thriving Neighbourhoods continued...



- Created a further 3 micro woods through a total of 3,000 whips planted at Miyawaki woods at Peartree Park, Chells Park and at Stebbings Farm in Symonds Green.



- Supported 309 volunteers across 26 litter picking sessions.
- Continued improving the landscape in the St. Nicholas ward through the removal of tired and bare shrub beds and targeting litter or fly tipping hot spots. These areas have been seeded and will be maintained as grass going forward. 6,500sqm of shrub beds have been converted to grass in the area, which is equal to nine tennis courts!
- Managed 1,278 abandoned vehicle reports, with an average of 25 inspections carried out per week.
- Carried out 372 inspections of 31 defibrillators across the town.

- Managed the maintenance of 30,103 trees, 18 woodlands, 399 ha of grass, and 24 ha shrub beds across the town.



- Improved our open spaces through our Green Space Volunteers giving over 1,700 hours. Activities included woodland coppicing, pond improvements, tree planting, and butterfly surveys.



- Responded to 155 reports through our Neighbourhood Liaison Officers covering tasks such as letter delivery for works, addressing overgrown hedgerows with landowners, and investigating parking issues in garage blocks.



- Delivered 65 projects through our Community Development Team, with 35 fully complete and 40 in progress. Projects have included the makeover of the outside patio area at Highfield Court Independent Living Scheme; the installation of two new water butts to harvest rainwater in the south of the town; and the continuation of the Covid Cobra project, with officers specifically installing the final two pillars and cementing the project as a key part of the town's social history.



- Received 108 applications through Members' Local Community Budget that totals £60,500. Funded projects have included outdoor area improvements at The Leys Primary & Nursery School's Early Years; supporting St Mary's Church's St Mary's Fete; free summer holiday activities including outdoor table tennis and multisport sessions at Bedwell Park; Stevenage World Forum's British Sign Language class; and Hertfordshire Constabulary's Supplies for Vulnerable Residents project that offered a programme of talks and community groups delivered at sheltered housing schemes.



- Carried out a Co-operative Neighbourhoods programme of locally focused practical improvements, resident engagement, and coordinated delivery across council teams and partners throughout the town. Ward dashboards were developed for all 13 wards to provide consistent information on priorities, funding, and project delivery. Ward audits or walkabouts remained a central part of the programme, enabling Councillors, officers, and partners to identify and respond to local issues directly. Key highlights include:
 - 78% attendance from Members and officers
 - 49 issues reported in real time
 - 43 permissions requests raised with council teams
 - 23 Community Payback Service (CPS) tasks scheduled
 - 21 UKSPF projects developed from walkabouts
 - 13 walkabouts delivered during each of the three rounds
 - 11 additional service requests escalated

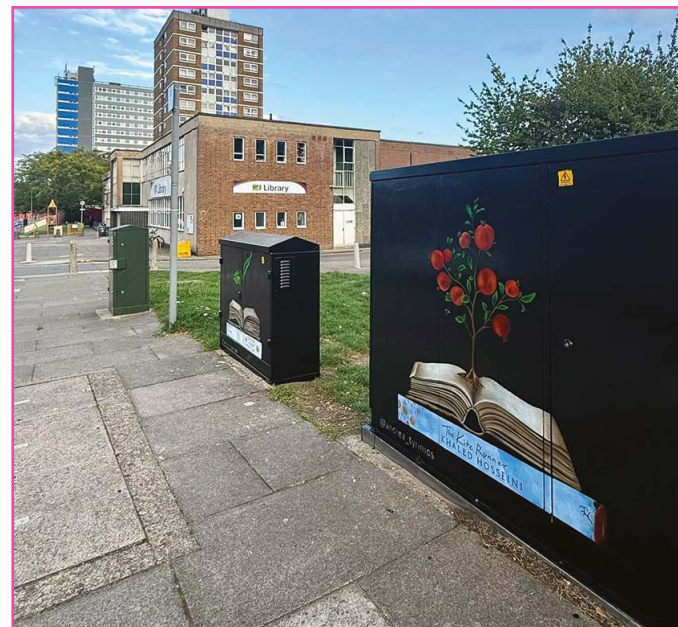
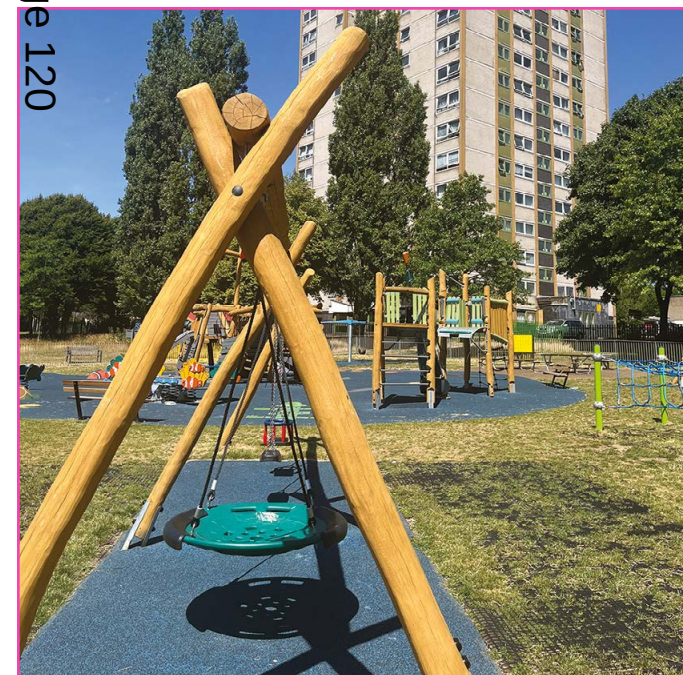
Thriving Neighbourhoods continued...

- Walkabouts identified a wide range of recurring local issues across wards, and resulted in significant number of actions were progressed across the year, such as environmental and maintenance works, repairs to fencing and paved areas, and support for community-led initiatives.



- Delivered 21 projects through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), focusing on improving local spaces and everyday facilities across Stevenage. Projects have included new and refurbished benches; art sculptures and statues; wildflower, bulb and tree planting; fencing works; development of a woodland trail; new signage at Hampson Park; and the installation and relocation of noticeboards.

- Decorated 22 cabinets across the town as part of the Only Connect project, with Junction 7 Creatives due to complete the remaining Councillor-funded cabinets in Spring 2026.



- Unveiled a new play area at the Town Centre Gardens, that was designed to encourage active outdoor play, with a focus on accessibility and long-term durability. Positive feedback has been received from the community and high usage rates seen during school holidays and warmer weather.

- Collaborated with Drift Skate Company and local skaters to design and deliver a new skate park at Peartree Park. This partnership ensured the facility reflected genuine user needs, supported a wide range of abilities, and created a high-quality space that strengthens youth engagement and active recreation opportunities.



- Carried out a series of bulb planting initiatives across the town, including Hampson Park, Edmunds Drive and Trent Close to enhance seasonal colour, visual appeal, and community pride in local green spaces.

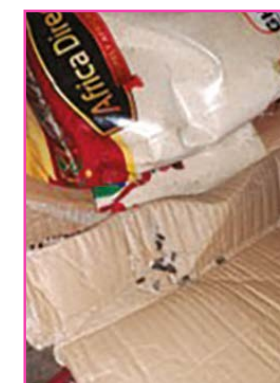
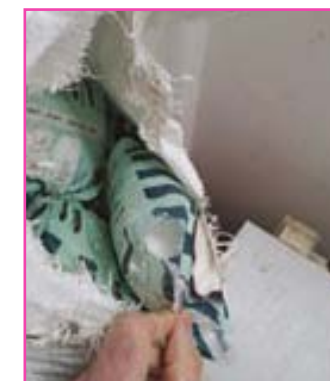


- Established two new wildflower meadow areas at Fairlands Valley Lakes and St Nicholas Park to support biodiversity, improve habitat connectivity, and promote pollinator populations, including bees and butterflies. 1 acre of wildflower meadow can feed 96,000 honeybees!



- Let out 1,016 allotments, with 400 new applicants and 184 tenancies in 2025.
- Began a five-year contract with "TCL" to manage repairs and maintenance across the garage stock. This will enable the Council to deliver better value for money, improve the rate of first-time repair completions wherever possible, enhance the quality and efficiency of repair services, and improve communication and customer engagement throughout the repairs process.

- Cleared up a total of 2,781 reported fly tipping cases.



- Undertook 219 food safety interventions / inspections; with six served with Hygiene Improvement Notices, one with a Voluntary Closure, one with a Prohibition Notice and one with a prosecution that resulted in a total fine of £29,126.84 (including fines, costs and victim surcharge).

Thriving Neighbourhoods continued...

Carried out:



In 2026/27, we will:

- Plant over 100 more trees.
- Continue to improve recycling facilities to flat blocks.
- Continue landscape improvements, with a projected focus of Bragbury End next year.
- Introduce a kerbside recycling service for collection of flexible plastics to all households by 31 March 2027 as part of continued legislation changes.



- Promote recycling initiatives through communications, legislative changes, and resident and school engagement.
- Implement further opportunities for rainwater harvesting at allotment sites like Greydells.
- Continue to work with Councillors and residents on community projects such as the finalisation of the Covid Cobra Project.

- Continue to offer residents and community groups the opportunity to deliver funded projects through the Local Community Budgets, in partnership with their local Councillors.
- Plant new trees to increase tree canopy coverage through tree replacement policies, Miyawaki micro-woods, the 'Your Tree, Our Future' scheme, and other local projects.



- Adopt the first phase of the new Forster Country Park at North Stevenage and add approximately 35 additional hectares of meadow grassland to our portfolio, along with woodland, hedges, wetland habitats, and pathways available for wildlife and enjoyment by residents and visitors.
- Carry out further bulb planting initiatives supporting pollinators and providing a flush of spring colour.
- Develop meadow improvement works funded by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- Carry out improvements to Fishers Green Common pond, funded by developer contributions.



- Continue work to bring 148 garages affected by asbestos-related issues back into management and make them available for renting. In addition, work will commence on replacing the remaining garage assets that still have asbestos roofs. This programme will help improve the condition of the garage portfolio and ensure compliance with current health and safety requirements.

Thriving Neighbourhoods continued...

COMMUNITY SAFETY

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

To accomplish this, we have:

- Worked closely with our partners to respond to:
 - 185 HCC Children Services Information requests
 - 88 Prevent checks for police intelligence sharing
- Completed:
 - 92 Adult Safeguarding/Care & Support referrals made to HCC
 - 89 Child safeguarding referrals made to HCC

To note, this was the first year that the number of adult referrals made by SBC staff was higher than the number made in regard to children due to legislative changes regarding parental consent now being needed to refer for children’s safeguarding, as well as the ever-increasing complex needs of the adult residents staff are working with.



- Continued to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse through regular Survivors Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) drop-in sessions. Additional funding was received to continue the SADA Stevenage and North Herts Drop Ins. The drop ins run fortnightly and provide a safe space for survivors to come together and feel supported in a sensitive and client-led approach.
- Received 967 SADA referrals and completed 62 placements into SADA Safe Accommodation.

- Hosted a Christmas party for families residing in SADA Safe Spaces with staff dressing up, an array of games, music, food, and presents on offer, and Santa’s appearance making the night unforgettable for children who may not have always had positive experiences of the festive season in the past.



- Hosted a 16 Days of Action SADA networking event, bringing together a wide range of partner services. The event provided a valuable opportunity to reconnect with existing partners, showcase the breadth of work delivered across SADA, and create space for services to meet, share knowledge, and strengthen professional relationships. The event also involved the screening of the journey of individuals accessing SADA Safe Space provision from the client’s perspective, which offered a compelling insight into the depth and impact of SADA’s work.



- Been approached by 1,477 customers for Housing Options advice. The team prevented 386 households from becoming homeless, with 134 of those being assisted into privately rented accommodation by our Next Step Lets service.
- Received 943 Referrals into the Welfare Debt and Benefit Advice Service. The team also specifically supported disabled tenants with benefit reviews during home visits, guiding tenants through formal debt processes, referrals for PIP and Attendance allowance.
- Received 75 referrals into the Family Intervention Project (FIP) service, providing invaluable support to customers and their families by assisting with sustaining their accommodation, family support, free school meals, new passports, and PIP claims.



- Developed 63 soon-to-be-available one and two-bed properties at Eagle House that will be directly filled from the Council’s housing register, in partnership with Sovereign HA.

- Collaborated with partners to create the film “The Orphan” that highlighted key issues surrounding County Lines, including exploitation and grooming, and offering insights into the challenges faced by vulnerable young people. To complement the resource, the Council hosted a range of engagement events including at Parliament, that involved the inclusion of individuals with lived experience, which brought the complex realities of exploitation to life and provided opportunities for discussion, feedback, and awareness-raising.



- Placed 157 households in temporary accommodation, as of 31st March 2026. This year, the team have set up and continue to run a county-wide Temporary Accommodation Managers Forum that meets regularly to share best practice and discuss common challenges such as B&B usage and supply issues. Further, the service has continued to perform well in Customer Service Centre satisfaction results for the support given to shared accommodation residents.
- Developed a new purpose-built TA scheme at Dunn Close which is nearing completion. It includes six self-contained flats, and 21 rooms (including 10 accessible ground floor units). This will significantly improve our ability to accommodate larger families and those requiring ground floor access and will help reduce reliance on B&B accommodation.

Thriving Neighbourhoods continued...

- Allocated 15 new family homes at Fairlands Gate to provide more council rented housing for local residents. The homes are part of a wider development by Keepmoat Homes delivering 57 new homes.



- Received 82 complex No More Service case referrals. The service continued to offer weekly drop ins where customers can attend for support, a hot meal, peer support and monthly karaoke. Further, over Christmas customers were invited for a Christmas Dinner and a New Years breakfast made by the support workers.



- Supported the completion of Phase 2 of Forster Park, delivering new accommodation for local residents.

- Let 275 General Needs properties.



- Found 16 individuals sleeping rough this year, with 14 of these either being housed or leaving the area. The Rough Sleeper Team have created the new Homelessness Community Hub in the town centre which now acts as a daily drop in for an average of 8-9 homeless or vulnerable customers each day. The hub provides hot meals, hot and cold drinks, clothing, advice, a safe space to watch TV and relax, and other activities like board games.

- Housed a number of entrenched, long-term rough sleepers during 2025-26 who were homeless for a number of years as a result of the determination and hard work of the Rough Sleeper Team building rapport with clients over long periods until they trust services enough to engage and allow the Council to help.

In 2026/27, we will:

- Increase awareness and accessibility of the Council as a Hate Crime Third Party Reporting Centre by delivering a targeted engagement and communications plan.



- Continue to embed the priorities of the Community Safety Strategy by raising awareness of key risks, whilst continuing to strengthen partnership working, supporting victims, and promoting early intervention and prevention across the community.
- Build on the ongoing work to raise awareness of exploitation by collaborating with partners to develop impactful resources that expose the hidden realities of county lines and child criminal exploitation across the UK, with a strengthened focus on how girls are disproportionately overlooked as victims, highlighting the links between criminal exploitation, grooming, and Violence Against Women and Girls.

- Collaborate with Hertfordshire Constabulary to deliver the Stevenage Safer Route project that aims to improve the safety and perception of key pedestrian routes across the town.



- Further develop and embed a strong partnership approach with key agencies to proactively safeguard vulnerable individuals at risk of cuckooing and home takeover.

CULTURE & LEISURE

Over 61,000 people attended Stevenage Borough Council's programme of civic and community events during 2025/26, reflecting continued strong engagement across the town and reinforcing the role of events in bringing communities together.

Across the year, the Council delivered eight major events and supported dozens of community-led activities, working in partnership with local groups and organisations to enhance neighbourhood provision.

This year we have:

- Welcomed approximately 30,000 attendees to Stevenage Day; remaining one of the largest free events in Hertfordshire. The event evolved further in 2025 with the introduction of a STEM Village, bringing skills, education and local employers into the heart of the event. A larger Pride area was also provided; strengthening the event's inclusive offer.



Thriving Neighbourhoods continued...

- Attracted around 25,000 attendees to the annual Stevenage Fireworks Display, thus continuing to provide a high-quality, safe and accessible large-scale community event for residents.



- Hosted a Remembrance Sunday service for approximately 3,000 attendees, delivering a poignant and well-supported civic service, alongside a further 500 attendees at Armistice Day.



- Enticed thousands of attendees to The Taste of the Caribbean Festival at Fairlands Valley Park, and Barrio Fiesta on Event Island, providing a vibrant, diverse, community-led cultural programme of events.



- Held a range of other seasonal and civic events including the Old Town Christmas Lights Switch-On, Teddy Bears Picnic at Hampson Park, VE Day commemorations, Stevenage Together Awards and Holocaust Memorial Day.
- Hosted Peartree Park Community Event with over 200 attendees and 8 stall holders in 2025 celebrating the installation of the new skate park.



- Welcomed 734,827 visits to our Everyone Active leisure centres, an increase of 37,491 on the previous year.
- Encouraged a total of 91,003 children to use Everyone Active facilities, a 8.26% improvement from 83,133 children last year.

- Delivered a vibrant programme of inclusive, accessible activities during This Girl Can Week 2025 to over 200 women and girls. This event is designed to inspire women and girls to get active in a way that suited them, with a wide range of sessions to choose from including fitness classes, walking netball, rugby, football, swimming and more. The week was delivered through strong partnership working, bringing together organisations such as Everyone Active, Stevenage Football Club Foundation, Datchworth Rugby Club and Azonto Fitness.



- Ran another year of Aqua parcs at Fairlands Valley Park to provide lake activities catering for all ages and abilities through a large inflatable obstacle course on the main lake. Additional activities including pedaloes, paddleboards and kayaks were also available. Activities ran from June to September and had a large impact on the footfall to the park.
- Continued to run a thriving and vibrant Cultural Forum with members of the community who are interested in arts, heritage and culture around the town, with the group meeting three times a year to network and share events.

- Put on 96 performances of the award-winning pantomime of Dick Whittington, with the Gordon Craig Theatre celebrating its 50th year in 2025. Did you know the first ever panto in 1976 was Dick Wittington, oh yes it was! A total of 43,884 seats were sold, with a 92.76% occupancy rate.
- Collaborated with the Football Foundation to develop a new PlayZone Development at King George V Playing fields. The PlayZone will be a 3G small-sided pitch floodlit pitch with seating and storage available. Investment and planning permission have been secured for this development with building works due to take place in Autumn 2026.



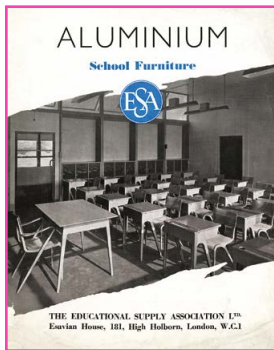
Thriving Neighbourhoods continued...



- The Stevenage Museum welcomed nearly 13,000 visitors, including academics from Harvard, Cambridge, Slovakia, Greece and the University of Hertfordshire who were interested in new towns. Over 1,600 students were also welcomed through visits or workshops held at schools across the town. A total of 2,253.5 hours volunteer hours were amassed and numerous exhibitions were put on throughout the year, including:

● Junction 7 Creatives takeover of the museum's temporary gallery showcasing local talent from artists including Trevor Herbert and Sandy Williams.

- Preacher, Punisher and Dredd: the work of British comic book legend Steve Dillon.
- 'The HERDS' international arts project, funded by the Arts Fund to celebrate life-size puppet animals travelling a 20,000km route from the Congo Basin to the Arctic Circle between April and August 2025. The project was embodied in Stevenage through three primary schools (over 500 children aged 7-11), two visual artists, a dance artist and a drone photographer creating puppets to create a stunning murmuration of starlings to symbolise their flight from climate disaster.



- James Leonard, Industrial Artist's story of a furniture design that emerged after the Second World War. James Leoanrd designed a range of modern, clean-lined school furniture fit for the future, using skills learnt in the manufacture of Mosquito aircraft wings. His designs went on to win international recognition, with examples held at the V&A, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, The Pompidou Centre in Paris, and now Stevenage Museum!



- Six Hills Secrets by Philip Buckingham. Artworks celebrated the people and places of Stevenage through combined traditional pen & ink illustrations of Stevenage's post-war architecture with comic portraits of local myths and legends.
- Attending a conference in Birmingham to mark the end of the New Jerusalem's project, leading a session on the use of oral histories in academic study.

In 2026/27, we will:

- Continue delivery of the events programme, with specific focus on Stevenage's 80th celebrations. This will involve expanding the scale and reach of events, further embedding community participation, and continuing to develop a diverse and inclusive offer across the town.



- Install a memorial statue of the Station Cat, Nala, with the planning application due to be submitted in April 2026 with the hopes it will be installed over the summertime. The sculpture will be made of bronze and depict Nala sat atop a ticket barrier and has already garnered a lot of support from the community.



- Deliver improvements to the Shephalbury Park Tennis Programme, including enabling all year round play on three of the courts.
- Continue to increase engagement with children and young people (under 16s) through expanded outreach and participation programmes delivered in partnership with Everyone Active.
- Host this year's pantomime of the popular Snow White at Gordon Craig Theatre - tickets on sale now!



Tackling Climate Change



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

This year we have:

- Maintained and updated our Climate Action Plan online tracker, providing residents with up-to-date information on 8 strategic climate themes and over 54 climate actions.
- Initiated the development of a new internal Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions reporting framework to standardise the collecting and reporting of our greenhouse gas emissions data.



Page 126

- Achieved a significantly improved performance in the 2025 Council Climate Action Scorecards. The Council’s total score increased to 35%, representing an 8% increase from 27% in 2023. Notable progress was seen in Governance & Finance (+23%) and Waste Reduction & Food (+19%), while Buildings & Heating (55%) and Collaboration & Engagement (52%) emerged as the highest-scoring categories.
- Successfully progressed the Local Plan Partial Update toward adoption in July 2026. The partial update aims to significantly strengthen planning policies regarding net-zero development, active travel, water conservation, and climate resilience.

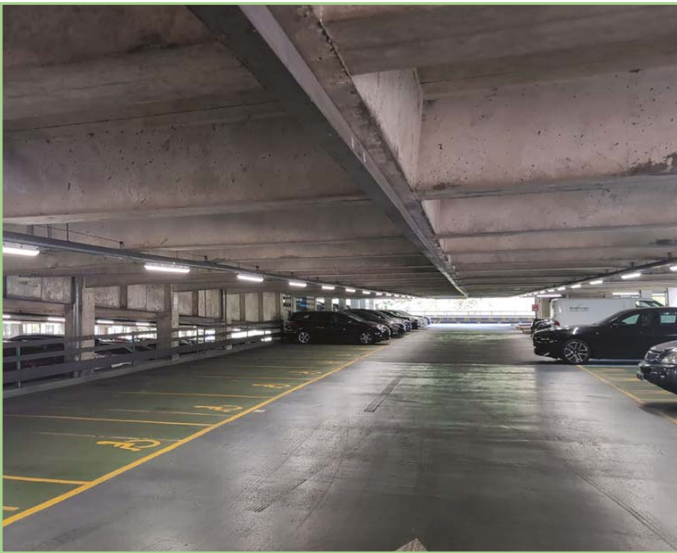
- Replaced the Town Centre Clocktower lighting with an LED system that aims to reduce energy consumption and maintenance costs while allowing the Clocktower to display a multitude of colours to mark days of national significance.



- Upgraded St George’s and Westgate Multi-Storey Car Parks’ fluorescent lighting to high-efficiency LED systems equipped with motion sensors to help reduce energy consumption.
- Completed Phase 1 of the Gordon Craig Theatre lighting project, installing the infrastructure for a new LED control system and replacing all auditorium house fittings from tungsten to high-efficiency LED units.
- Continued to provide financial support for community-led climate initiatives through our Climate Change Community Fund, allocating £7,500 per ward annually. Funded projects this year have included water butts, tree planting, energy efficiency upgrades, cycle hangars, and improved recycling facilities.



- Supported SMEs and charities awarded the Stevenage Green Business Grant by assisting them in implementing their approved energy-saving measures.



- Partnered with Wenta to offer 154 local businesses affordable net zero emissions services and support in reducing their carbon footprints.
- Launched a bespoke 1:1 Sustainability Support Programme in partnership with Sustainable X. This initiative provided tailored consultancy support to local Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to improve operational efficiency, reduce costs, improve resilience and enhance competitiveness in social value and sustainable supply chains.



- Adopted the new Stevenage Tree & Woodland Strategy that sets out 59 targeted actions to manage and enhance the borough’s trees, woodlands, and ancient hedgerows across 10 key themes that seek to strengthen Stevenage’s resilience to climate change.

Tackling Climate Change continued...



- Transitioned to a full Biodiversity Net Gain monitoring framework and integrated this framework into our development management procedures to ensure all qualifying planning applications meet the mandatory 10% net gain threshold.

Page 127

- The Council helped develop and endorsed the Hertfordshire Retrofit Strategy, a collaborative framework co-designed through the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP). The strategy aims to decarbonise the county's housing stock by standardising technical delivery, strengthening local green supply chains, and providing residents with a clear, trusted path to upgrading their homes.
- As of March 2025, 19 residents accepted solar and battery installations under the latest round of Solar Together. This totals 134 solar panels installed, 59 kW capacity, and £89,942 invested since the scheme began. Further, 11 installations included batteries, adding 90 kWh of storage.
- Managed our partnership with the National Energy Foundation to deliver the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) and the Great British Insulation Scheme. Throughout the year, 39 eligible homeowners and private tenants were assisted in accessing funding for energy efficiency measures to lower bills and carbon emissions.



- Progressed the "Wilder Stevenage" Biodiversity Action Plan (2024-2028) by implementing targeted conservation across five priority habitats.
- Successfully adopted the new Stevenage Green Spaces Strategy (2025-2035). This long-term policy framework outlines how the borough's parks, woodlands, and wildlife areas will be protected and enhanced to support biodiversity, climate resilience, and community well-being.



- Commenced the three-year delivery of retrofit works for private homes through the Warm Homes: Local Grant (WHLG), following the £1.5 million funding secured from Central Government to provide free energy performance upgrades and low carbon heating to privately owned or rented households with low incomes.

- Continued delivery of the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund (Wave 3) following the successful grant funding award of £3,856,822. Equans has now been appointed as the delivery partner to carry out the programme of works that will see an estimated 380 Council homes retrofitted, supporting progress towards homes achieving a minimum EPC rating of C.



- Enhanced Council resilience by updating our Climate Change Risk Assessment in alignment with DEFRA's Adaptation Reporting Power guidelines. This comprehensive review assessed climate impacts for Council services and assets across three different climate scenarios, ensuring a robust understanding of future vulnerabilities. The integration of the highest-scoring climate risks into our strategic and operational Council risk registers has begun, as well as development of a 5-Year Climate Adaptation Plan to provide a structured framework for medium-term preparedness.
- Updated our Social Value Themes, Outcomes, and Measures (TOMs) to include new sustainability metrics. These metrics ensure that the procurement process now subjects potential suppliers to enhanced rigorous environmental stewardship standards.
- Successfully adopted the new Cooperative Procurement Strategy (2025-2028) to support the goal of net-zero emissions by 2030 by establishing Sustainability as one of its five principal foundations.



- Continued the transition of our Council fleet to electric by procuring and incorporating additional electric vehicles, bringing the total to seven.
- Donated 240 bikes to the Recycle your Cycle scheme for refurbishment and reuse.



- Successfully re-launched the Stevenage Cycle Hire scheme, following a temporary pause to address vandalism. The scheme resumed with a phased approach, and as of early 2026, 140 of the original fleet of 150 bikes have been repaired with all 45 Beryl parking bays now fully operational. An additional five bikes have been provided by GSK along with a new bay at their site. A regular monitoring group with Beryl Bikes has been established to oversee operations and identify future service improvements to support active travel.



- Completed the first year of operation using Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) across our entire diesel fleet, including vehicles and machinery. As a result, direct (Scope 1) emissions for the entire fleet, including petrol use in machinery, decreased by 96.4% in comparison to 2023/24.

Tackling Climate Change continued...

- Advanced the rollout of the Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) project following the appointment of Urban Fox as the Charge Point Operator (CPO) for Stevenage, with the project is now moving into the site selection phase.



- Expanded the provision of lockable bike shelters by installing five cycle hangars across the town, with further installations planned. These hangars provide a vital storage alternative for residents in flats or small houses with limited space.

- Successfully implemented a new two-tier discount structure for taxi and private hire licensing fees that will last until 2030, in line with our net-zero targets and national policy. This initiative promotes the adoption of cleaner vehicles by offering a 50% discount for zero-emission vehicles (e.g. fully electric) and a 25% discount for Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs).

- Successfully completed the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 2.1 project. This scheme delivered essential energy efficiency upgrades, including wall insulation, loft insulation, and improved ventilation to 237 homes across the town.

Reached major milestones in the delivery of the new Stevenage Sports & Leisure Centre, a flagship fossil-fuel-free project. The state-of-the-art facility is designed to be all-electric, utilising Air Source Heat Pumps and Solar PV to eliminate reliance on gas. The project is also committed to a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain and will serve as a sustainable transport hub with EV charging and extensive cycle parking.



In 2026/27, we will:

- Complete improvement works at flats across the borough to ensure all flats have access to recycling services, in line with Simper Recycling legislation.
- Implement the Tree & Woodland Strategy's targeted actions, focusing on increasing canopy cover and enhancing nature connectivity.
- Continue implementation of the practices and actions outlined in the Green Spaces Strategy (2025-2035).
- Advance the Biodiversity Action Plan through targeted conservation across priority habitats.
- Operationalise the new Greenhouse Gas reporting framework, aligned with national Protocol, to standardise climate tracking across the Council.

- Explore opportunities for further decarbonisation and green energy generation across Council assets and sites.

- Complete the Climate Adaptation Plan and continue embedding high-priority climate risks into the Council's risk registers.

- Collaborate with Hertfordshire local authorities through the HCCSP to align sustainability services within the context of Local Government Reorganisation.

- Continue delivery of the Warm Homes Social Housing programme in partnership with Equans to upgrade approximately 380 homes by April 2028.

- Deliver Year 2 of the Warm Homes: Local Grant, providing energy performance upgrades and low-carbon heating to eligible low-income private households.



- Continue the Climate Change Community Fund, providing £7,500 per ward, while introducing an enhanced governance and engagement model to empower resident-led climate projects.

- Adopt the Local Plan Partial Update in July 2026, including comprehensive new and updated climate and environmental policies. Also, progress work on a new Local Plan that delivers beyond 2031 that will include a review of climate change and environmental policies and progress, in accordance with Government legislation.

- Continue monitoring Biodiversity Net Gain in accordance with the Government's Biodiversity Duty.

- Transition to implementing a dedicated delivery vehicle for the Hertfordshire Retrofit Strategy, supported by the Council.

- Commence the review of the Private Rented Sector Exemptions register for Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards and investigate exemptions, as necessary.

- Following the site selection phase, move toward the physical installation of public electric vehicle charging points, funded by LEVI in partnership with HCC.

- Assess future fleet requirements to build a roadmap for transitioning Council vehicles to electrification.

- Progress Phase 2 of the Gordon Craig Theatre lighting project; completing the purchase and installation of the LED stage lights, to finalise the transition to a high-efficiency system.

- Incorporate new sustainability objectives into the Pavement Licensing and Street Trading Policies by defining clear expectations for single-use plastic reduction and energy-efficient outdoor heating.



Balancing the Budget

Ensuring that sufficient resources are available to deliver the Council's priorities, while maintaining financial resilience in the face of continuing financial pressures, remains a core priority.

Since 2010/11, Stevenage Borough Council has experienced a significant reduction in Government funding, alongside sustained cost pressures driven by inflation, energy prices, and increased demand for services. These pressures continued to affect the Council in 2025/26, a year characterised by short term funding settlements and ongoing uncertainty in local government finance. However, this position will improve from 2026/27, when the Government confirmed the introduction of multi-year funding settlements, providing greater certainty and supporting more effective medium-term financial planning.

Despite this challenging context, the Council set a balanced budget for 2025/26, underpinned by prudent financial planning, effective use of reserves, and proactive management of budget pressures through its Medium Term Financial Strategy. This approach enabled the Council to protect key services, continue investment in regeneration and priority programmes, and maintain financial resilience while delivering for residents.



This year we have:



- Successfully been awarded Government grant funding of £15.7 million to build new housing.
- Paid out over £142k in Discretionary Housing Payments to provide financial support to help with rent or housing costs.
- Identified 2026/27 savings of £1.281 million to maintain the financial stability of the 2026/27 General Fund budget and delivered the majority of the 2025/26 savings identified for the year.
- Focused on service improvement by extending the town's parcel locker scheme; offering an expanded network, and increasing income to over £10,000 annually from a previous base line of £4,000.

- Provided £9.9 million in business rate relief.
- Administered £16.4 million in Housing Benefit to 1,738 residents.
- Awarded £6.8 million and supported 5,426 residents as part of our Council Tax Support scheme payments to help people struggling to pay their council tax.



- Yielded over £23,000 in income through our advertising contracts, which has helped to support essential services.



- Generated an annual income of £4,251,688.12 from the garage service, demonstrating the continued contribution of the garage stock to the Council's revenue objectives. Further, the garage stock achieved a void rate of 7.49%, reflecting strong occupancy levels across the portfolio.



- Taken a more consistent commercial approach across the Council, helping to support income levels while remaining aligned with our wider priorities.
- Administered and ran a £85,500 Household Support Fund that helped local organisations to support vulnerable households across Stevenage, with £38,200 specifically funding community cafes and £47,300 for food and energy support organisations. The fund helped to support 18 local community organisations and services, 6 food provision services delivering emergency and ongoing support, and 12 community cafés and local hubs that aim to address isolation and loneliness for residents as well as provide cost-of-living advice and support. In total, there were 34,792 visits to food provision services and community cafés.

In 2026/27, we will

- Increase income growth through the optimisation of existing concession contracts and traded services, alongside the development of new opportunities where appropriate.
- Undertake a review of services delivered by external suppliers or third-party providers on behalf of the Council, in line with the objectives set out in the Insourcing Roadmap 2023–26.
- Build organisational capability to support commercialisation and value for money by providing targeted training, practical tools, and clear communication to enable staff to identify and implement opportunities.
- Identify and deliver business change and digital efficiencies to support the Council's Balancing the Budget targets and strengthen medium-term financial sustainability.
- Pilot the parcel locker scheme into residential areas for our residents. This will drive further income to front line services with an estimate commercial uplift in total income to £34,000 by the end of 2026.
- Work with a supplier to develop a social value fund to the value of £50,000. This will be in support of local environmental improvements around the town and in support of small grants to be made available to local community and charity projects.



Cross-Cutting Themes

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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

This year we have:

- Launched the EDI Action Plan for 2025/26 that holds 18 actions across six key objectives to ensure the rights of individuals across our workforce and local communities are continued to be championed.
- Hosted regular Officer Equality Group and Equality, Diversity Governance Group meetings where discussions covered the quarterly EDI action plan updates such as Stevenage Equalities Commission activities; the event calendar; the Council Motion to add Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic; Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller Community training; Windows 11 accessibility; the newly established Youth Action Group; the LGBTQ+ Network and more.



- Hosted an internal LGBTQ+ History Month bake off. The Officer Equality Group held a charity bake off event, where colleagues competed to bake the tastiest cakes and raised a total of £361 for Mermaids, a charity that supports trans+ young people and their loved ones. At the event, there was also a short talk by Barry Nixon from Airbus Stevenage, to provide an overview of Airbus' Pride network as a key founder.
- Teamed up with Unison and the Time of The Month charity to bring internal staff free sustainable period products at Council sites, with the help of our Community Development team.

- Celebrated Pride at Stevenage Day 2025 that featured a dedicated Pride area highlighting the LGBTQ+ community.



- Completed over 22 Equality Impact Assessments when reviewing and implementing a range of policies, strategies and procedures.
- Published our Equality & Diversity Annual Report for 2024/25 summarising the key demographics that make up our community and workforce, as part of our Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Published the Council's latest Gender Pay Gap Report that highlighted a mean gender pay gap of -1.09% and a median gender pay gap of 0% for 2025, outlining our continued commitment to gender equality.



- Published the Council's first ethnicity pay gap report whereby for 2024 it was announced that the mean ethnicity pay gap was -2.00% and the median ethnicity pay gap was -5.71%. This means that colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds are, on average, paid slightly more than those who identify as White British.
- Established an internal Neurodiversity Networking Group that aimed to champion reasonable adjustments for neurodivergent people, and those who struggle with their mental health or hidden disabilities. It has helped to raise awareness about neurodiversity, and establish the Council as a supportive environment for those with neurodiverse needs.



- Continued to support the work of the Stevenage Equalities Commission in moving recommendations into delivery, with specific focus on strengthening community engagement, developing action plans, and laying the foundations for long-term, community-led infrastructure this year. As part of this, significant progress was made towards the formalisation of the group into a formalised organisation to be known as Stevenage Race Equality Co-operative. This has involved engaging with over 40 organisations and individuals to shape the model, agree six clear thematic priority areas and the development of governance frameworks.

- Partnered with Operation Black Vote, through the Stevenage Equalities Commission, to design a Citizenship and Civic Engagement Programme. This responds directly to the Commission's findings regarding underrepresentation in civic and democratic life. Work this year has focused on agreeing the programme structure and delivery model, reviewing local data and Commission findings to shape the approach, and planning a 4-6 week programme to support civic participation.



- Maintained a visible presence at key local events through Stevenage Equalities Commission to help raise awareness, build trust, and gather feedback from residents at key events such as Stevenage Day, International Day and community outreach activity with over 200 residents.

Cross-Cutting Themes continued...

- Continued to play a central role in bringing organisations together across Stevenage to reduce inequality and improve residents' quality of life through the Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP). Significant progress has been made towards formalising SIP into a more structured, sustainable and co-operative model. Further, a core focus for the partnership this year has been to support the voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise sector to facilitate co-ordination between services.

In 2026/27, we will:

- Publish a EDI Action Plan 2025/26 Progress Report and launch a revised action plan for 2026/27 to ensure the rights of individuals across our workforce and local communities are continued to be championed.



- Continue to host internal workshops on a range of key EDI topics throughout the year.
- Carry on monitoring our approach to Equality Impact Assessments through Service Plans, and utilise the information to inform decision making and the wider understanding of existing and future community needs.
- Finalise and launch the Stevenage Race Equality Co-operative, beginning full membership onboarding and working group delivery.

- Deliver the Civic Leadership Programme with Operation Black Vote and utilise programme findings to shape future civic participation and leadership pathways.
- Continue progressing the Social Inclusion Partnership into a formal incorporation as a Community Consortium Co-operative that seeks to expand joint delivery approaches.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

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

This year we have:

- Supported the delivery of the Summer Parks programme, alongside the Hertfordshire Sports & Physical Activity Partnership. This initiative aimed to fill the gap in provision for 12- to 16-year-olds over the summer holiday period. The 2025 programme took place in King George V Playing Fields, offering a range of sports, wellbeing, and arts activities, as well as providing young people with a voucher to redeem a nutritious meal from a local food provider in the Old Town. 258 attendees joined and 240 food vouchers were used.



- Continued to support our aging residents through our Age-Friendly Stevenage initiative. This year in particular, The Council has collaborated with Hertfordshire County Council and Age UK Herts to survey our older residents to find out what is important to them. A total of 214 responses were received for Stevenage that outlined resident's positivity towards their access to green spaces, indoor services such as libraries and community centres, and the perceived strong community infrastructure.



- Celebrated International Day of Older People event with over 250 attendees and 40 stalls.
- Been awarded Public Health funding through the Age UK and Herts Sports & Physical Activity Partnership to enhance the Age-Friendly and Live Longer Better work within local areas. This funding will provide a localities officer for Stevenage, North Herts and Welwyn & Hatfield to support our work to improve our town for older residents.
- Welcomed 3,675 attendees to 278 walks as part of the Stevenage Health Walks scheme. Four new walks were added this year, therefore totalling seven Health Walks in Stevenage, with new locations added at the Stevenage Library and Hampson Park.
- Continued to provide health and wellbeing support through the Stevenage Healthy Hub. This included hosting the HOPE Support Service run by MacMillan to provide support to those living with cancer, and a Bereavement Café.



- Held the second Stevenage Dementia Festival community event, attracting over 250 attendees. The event provided an important platform to showcase local services and support available for people living with dementia and their carers.

Cross-Cutting Themes continued...



- Supported the Stevenage Dementia Friends Event at Stevenage Football Club; a free community event aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of dementia. The event featured training sessions, guidance on achieving Dementia Friendly Accreditation, and a marketplace of local support services. 100 people attended and 23 new people were trained as Dementia Friends. Alongside this we have continued to provide Dementia Friends Training to partners and our frontline staff with 77 trained to date.

- Supported the launch of a new Dementia Friendly Communities accreditation scheme with Herts Memory Service and Alzheimer's Society.

- Carried out 394 community outreach sessions with 2,379 attendees as part of the Active Communities Programme, delivered in collaboration with Everyone Active. This programme enabled physical activity to be more accessible by delivering free or low-cost sessions directly within local communities. Since its launch in July 2023, 696 community outreach sessions have occurred with a total of 4,226 attendees. This Active Communities Leisure Management contract also made Stevenage Borough Council a finalist of the Best Procurement Delivery Award - Local Government and Health at the UK Go Awards in May 2025 that celebrates excellence in the public sector!



In 2026/27, we will:



- Create an inclusive and accessible 3G pitch within King George V Playing Fields as part of the PlayZone initiative, led by the Football Foundation.
- Support the delivery of Everyone Active's Community Outreach Programme.
- Continue to support older residents through our Age-Friendly Stevenage initiative, and create a linked Age-Friendly action plan to champion this.



- Continue to drive our Dementia Friends Stevenage programme working in partnership with our Licensing Team to rollout basic mandatory training to taxi drivers. Support local organisations to sign up to Dementia Friendly Accreditation and deliver our annual Dementia Festival in Fairlands Valley Park.
- Carry out more walks as part of the Stevenage Health Walks scheme, and bring new walks to the St Nicholas and Symonds Green wards.
- Recruit an additional Co-ordinator as part of the Stevenage Healthy Hub to offer in-house 'Stop Smoking' services, preventive support, and wellbeing checks within the Hub and community venues.
- Launch the Council's Healthy Stevenage Strategy, in collaboration with partners, to focus on reducing local health inequalities through prevention, early intervention, and strengthened cross-sector partnerships.

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

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

This year we have:



- Dealt with 106,810 enquiries since the relocation of the Customer Service Centre to the main reception at Daneshill House, including:



14,900 emails

29,793 online forms submitted via the Council website



1,808 post enquiries

78,420 calls

Page 133

92.3% customer satisfaction rate

9,574 enquiries received at Reception

2,013 customers served face to face

1.1 million page views to the Council website, averaging over 100,000 visits per month



25 social media enquiries

Assisted 70 customers with self-serve services

- Supported residents through our Customer Services team in ensuring access to advice, support and statutory services.
- Won an industry award for transforming complaints handling and delivering better services to residents.
- Embedded a new digital system for managing parks, streets and environmental nuisance, focussed on online reporting to enable more efficient service operations.
- Developed additional digital functionality to support the expansion of the Council's commercial waste services.
- Enhanced online services for Revenues and Benefits customers; making them easier to use, enabling staff to focus on customer needs and delivering savings.



- Created new teams focused on community activities, delivering savings and enabling staff to provide more comprehensive events and community development services.
- Commenced scanning of microfiche records in conjunction with the Land Registry's national project to preserve archival material and enable digital access.

- Started using digital signature technology to speed up the process for legal agreements, providing housing options customers and new tenants with the ability to digitally sign documents and as a result, reduce the use of paper.
- Identified opportunities to improve translation and interpretation services, to improve service access and value for money.
- Launched the Digital Strategy 2026-28, committing to four priority themes of developing digital solutions, improving the website and intranet, adopting AI, and driving the use of digital services.



Cross-Cutting Themes continued...

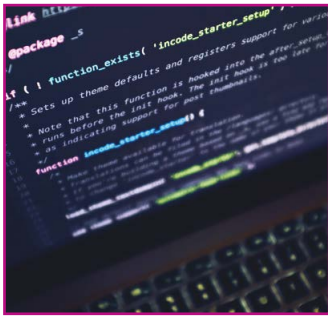
- Completed a comprehensive Data Centre Refresh by replacing ageing hardware with energy-efficient servers to provides a stable, modern platform for all digital services for the next decade.
- Modernised data storage systems to provide faster and more responsive digital services. This new high-performance solution significantly increases processing speeds, ensuring that resident-facing applications and online portals run smoothly without the delays associated with older technology.
- Migrated the internal pay system to the Cloud to improve service delivery and provide a seamless and modern experience for residents paying for council services online. It also integrates better with our other digital systems, making the entire financial journey more transparent and user-friendly.
- Rolled out a new Streets and Grounds Maintenance System to modernise local operations. This digital tool replaces older paper-based processes with a more efficient electronic workflow, enables teams to manage their daily tasks more effectively, and ensures resources are sent to the areas that need them most.
- Upgraded the Council’s Wi-Fi networks to provide faster and more stable internet connectivity for visitors accessing services. It also supports our “agile working” policy, allowing staff to serve residents more effectively from any council location.



In 2026/27, we will:



- Build on Digital Skills Survey findings by investing in training resources and optimising the M365 functionality available to staff and Members alike.
- Introduce a digitised system for Member Enquiries.
- Progress with the digitisation of data through a variety of essential projects in preparation for Local Government Reorganisation.
- Support the improvement of translation services.
- Pilot the use of AI to provide better access to Council online information and services.
- Expand the use of digital document signing to improve efficiency.
- Work collaboratively with the Housing Repairs service to provide customers with a smoother experience.



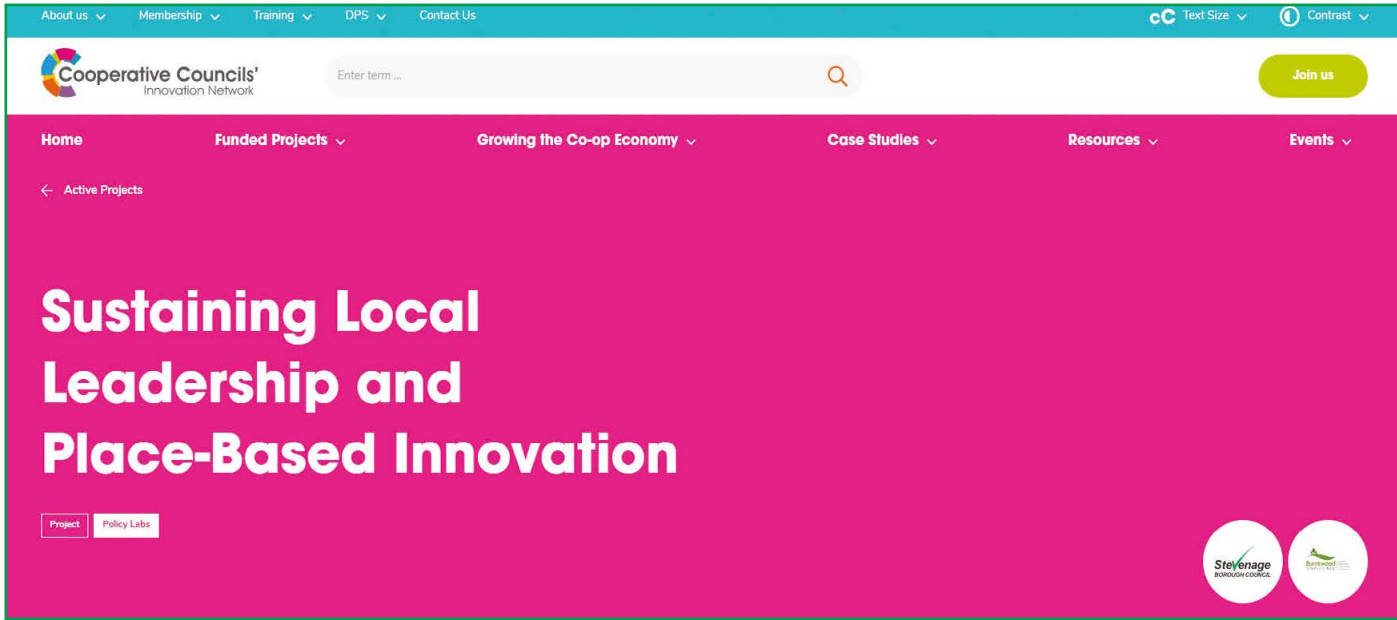
A Cooperative Council

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

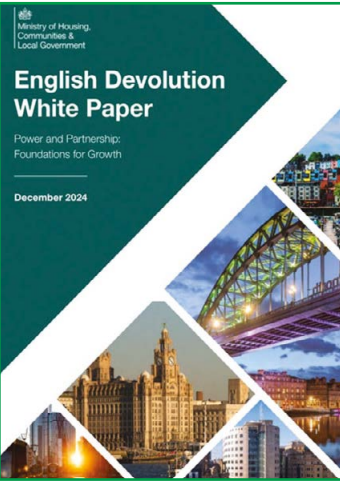
This year in particular, we have worked closely with partners across the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network to support the following policy lab project:



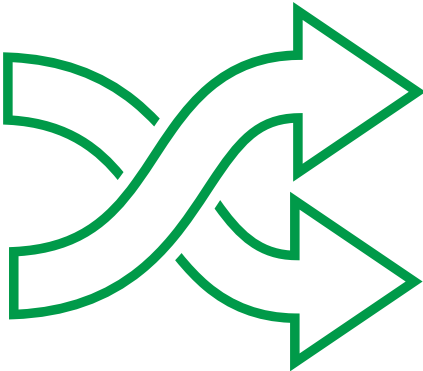
- Sustaining Local Leadership and Place-Based Innovation Policy Lab**
This two-year project focuses on strengthening community leadership and developing new ways of working with residents to tackle local challenges. Comprised of five key phases, the first two were delivered in 2025-26 and involved engaging with 25+ voluntary and community organisations across all areas and established local stakeholder groups, then designing and producing a Succession Planning Toolkit across three cross-council workshops. The policy lab is led by Stevenage Borough Council and Brent Council, working in partnership with Tamworth Borough Council; South Swindon Parish Council; Swindon Borough Council and Burntwood Town Council.



Local Government Reorganisation



During 2025/26, Local Government Reorganisation and devolution became a major area of focus for councils across Hertfordshire. The Government’s English Devolution White Paper set out an ambition to simplify local government structures in two-tier areas and strengthen devolution across England. In Hertfordshire, this means replacing the existing county, district and borough council arrangements with new unitary councils, alongside the longer-term opportunity to secure greater devolved powers for the county. This is therefore the largest change for local government in a generation.

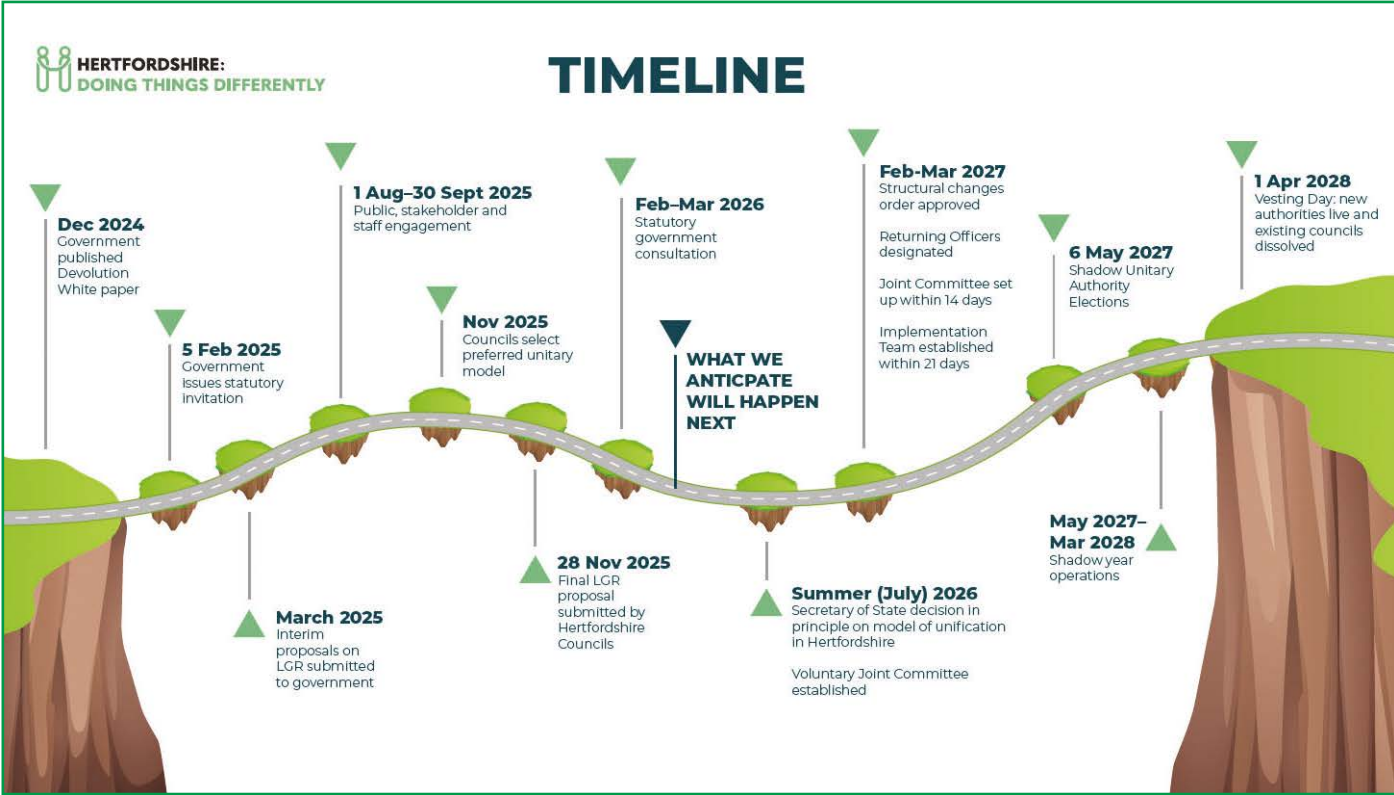


In November 2025, proposals for two, three and four unitary council models were submitted to Government for consideration. At a Special Cabinet meeting, Stevenage Borough Council indicated its support for the four unitary council proposal as its preferred approach. It was recognised that different proposals had different strengths, and the Cabinet expressed support for the four unitary proposal. The four unitary proposal was considered to offer the strongest basis for protecting local identity, maintaining democratic accountability, reflecting established economic and community relationships, and supporting growth, housing delivery, skills, regeneration and public service reform.



Alongside the development of formal proposals, the Council has begun to consider the implications of Local Government Reorganisation for service planning, governance, finance, workforce capacity and partnership working. This includes ensuring that the Council continues to deliver its existing priorities through the Making Stevenage Even Better Corporate Plan, while also preparing for the potential transition to new unitary arrangements.

As we await the Government’s decision on how many unitarities should exist within Hertfordshire, the Council will continue to work constructively with Government, Hertfordshire County Council, district and borough councils, the Police and Crime Commissioner, and wider partners as the process develops (see timeline below). Throughout this period, Stevenage Borough Council’s focus will remain on maintaining high-quality services, protecting residents’ interests, and ensuring that the opportunities created through reform and devolution support the long-term success of Stevenage and Hertfordshire.





Stevenage Borough Council's Annual Report

(2025-2026)

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equalities@stevenage.gov.uk

Appendix B – Corporate Performance Suite 2026-27 Key Performance Indicators

MORE SOCIAL, AFFORDABLE AND GOOD QUALITY HOMES (10 CABINET MEASURES, 16 HOUSING MEASURES)										
Corporate Plan Subset	Business Unit	Service	Portfolio Holder	Categorisation	KPI Name & Description	Q4 2025/26 Actual	2026/27 Quarterly Targets			
							Q1 26/27	Q2 26/27	Q3 26/27	Q4 26/27
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	Housing Asset Management	Loraine Rossati	Cabinet	RP01a: Percentage of homes maintained as decent against national minimum DH standard	98.86%	98.5	98.5	99	99
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	Repairs & Maintenance	Loraine Rossati	Cabinet	Percentage of standard investigations completed within ten working days of tenant report (Awaab's Law)	NEW	100	100	100	100
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	Repairs & Maintenance	Loraine Rossati	Cabinet	New emergency hazards reported per 1,000 properties (Awaab's Law)	NEW	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	Repairs & Maintenance	Loraine Rossati	Cabinet	New significant damp and mould hazards reported per 1,000 properties (Awaab's Law)	NEW	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	Repairs & Maintenance	Loraine Rossati	Cabinet	RSH Rep1: Percentage of emergency responsive repairs completed within target timescale	99.20%	100	100	100	100
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	Repairs & Maintenance	Loraine Rossati	Cabinet	RSH Rep2: Percentage of non-emergency (routine and urgent) responsive repairs completed within target timescale	96.90%	95	95	95	95
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	Repairs & Maintenance	Loraine Rossati	Cabinet	Rep4: Percentage repairs fixed first time	99.47%	90	90	90	90
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Housing Development	Housing Development	Loraine Rossati	Cabinet	HDD1d: Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) by the Council (since 2014)	533.00	531	532	547	549
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Housing & Neighbourhoods	Community Advice & Support	Loraine Rossati	Cabinet	Homelessness Preventions	186.00	30	60	90	120
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	Building Safety	Loraine Rossati	Housing	RSH BS01: Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas certificate	100%	100	100	100	100
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	Building Safety	Loraine Rossati	Housing	RSH BS02: Percentage of dwellings with a valid Fire Risk Assessment	100%	100	100	100	100
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	Building Safety	Loraine Rossati	Housing	RSH BS03: Percentage of properties that require an annual asbestos inspection / survey	100%	100	100	100	100
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	Building Safety	Loraine Rossati	Housing	RSH BS04: Percentage of sites with valid legionella inspections certificate	100%	100	100	100	100
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	Building Safety	Loraine Rossati	Housing	RSH BS05: Percentage of domestic passenger lifts with an in date LOLER inspection	100%	100	100	100	100
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	Building Safety	Loraine Rossati	Housing	RSH BS06: Proportion of homes for which all required electrical safety checks have been carried out	NEW	100	100	100	100

Page 138

More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	Building Safety	Loraine Rossati	Housing	RSH Number of Overdue Fire Remedial High Risk Actions	0	0	0	0	0
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	Building Safety	Loraine Rossati	Housing	RSH Number of Overdue Fire Remedial Medium Risk Actions	0	0	0	0	0
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	Building Safety	Loraine Rossati	Housing	RSH Number of Overdue Fire Remedial Low Risk Actions	0	0	0	0	0
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	Building Safety	Loraine Rossati	Housing	RSH Number of Overdue Water Remedial Actions	6	0	0	0	0
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Housing Management	Housing Management	Loraine Rossati	Housing	RSH CH01 (part 2): Number of stage two complaints made by tenants	106	No Target Required	No Target Required	No Target Required	No Target Required
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Housing Management	Housing Management	Loraine Rossati	Housing	RSH CH01 (part1): Number of stage one complaints made by tenants	605	No Target Required	No Target Required	No Target Required	No Target Required
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Housing Management	Housing Management	Loraine Rossati	Housing	RSH CH02 (part1): Number of stage 1 complaints made by tenants and responded to within CH Timescale	534	100	100	100	100
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Housing Management	Housing Management	Loraine Rossati	Housing	RSH CH02 (part2): Number of stage 2 complaints made by tenants and responded to within CH Timescale	74	100	100	100	100
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Housing Management	Housing Management	Loraine Rossati	Housing	RSH NM01(part1): ASB cases opened by or on behalf of the provider during the year (SBC tenants)	157	No Target Required	No Target Required	No Target Required	No Target Required
More Social, Affordable And Good Quality Homes	Housing Management	Housing Management	Loraine Rossati	Housing	RSH NM01(part2) ASB cases that involve hate incidents opened/on behalf of the provider (SBC tenants)	5	No Target Required	No Target Required	No Target Required	No Target Required

TRANSFORMING OUR TOWN (3 MEASURES)										
Corporate Plan Subset	Business Unit	Service	Portfolio Holder	Categorisation	KPI Name & Description	Q4 2025/26 Actual	2025/26 Quarterly Targets			
							Q1 26/27	Q2 26/27	Q3 26/27	Q4 26/27
Regeneration	Planning & Regulation	Planning	Rob Broom	Cabinet	NI157a: Percentage of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks	100%	60%	60%	60%	60%
Regeneration	Planning & Regulation	Planning	Rob Broom	Cabinet	NI157b: Percentage of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks	93.5%	70%	70%	70%	70%
Regeneration	Planning & Regulation	Planning	Rob Broom	Cabinet	NI157c: Percentage of other planning applications determined in 8 weeks	81.5%	70%	70%	70%	70%

THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS (6 MEASURES)										
Corporate Plan Subset	Business Unit	Service	Portfolio Holder	Categorisation	KPI Name & Description	Q4 2025/26 Actual	2025/26 Quarterly Targets			
							Q1 26/27	Q2 26/27	Q3 26/27	Q4 26/27
Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces	Environment & Leisure	Environmental Services	Rob Broom	Cabinet	ES1: Percentage of residential bins collected	99.69%	99%	99%	99%	99%
Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces	Environment & Leisure	Environmental Services	Rob Broom	Cabinet	Graffiti Clearance	74.00%	80%	80%	80%	80%

Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces	Environment & Leisure	Environmental Services	Rob Broom	Cabinet	NI191: Residual household waste per household (kgs)	119.83 [Q3 figure as reported in arrears]	130	245	360	495
Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces	Environment & Leisure	Environmental Services	Rob Broom	Cabinet	Food waste collection take-up (tonnage)	NEW	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Culture & Leisure	Environment & Leisure	Leisure & Green Spaces	Myla Arceno	Cabinet	Everyone Active Overall Footfall	NEW	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Community Safety	Housing & Neighbourhoods	Community Advice & Support	Nazmin Chowdhury	Cabinet	Number of accepted housing applications	NEW	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE (2 MEASURE)										
Corporate Plan Subset	Business Unit	Service	Portfolio Holder	Categorisation	KPI Name & Description	Q4 2025/26 Actual	2025/26 Quarterly Targets			
							Q1 26/27	Q2 26/27	Q3 26/27	Q4 26/27
Tackling Climate Change	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	Housing Asset Management	Rob Broom	Cabinet	CC1: Percentage of homes that have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of band C or above	67.22%	70	70	70	70
Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces	Environment & Leisure	Environmental Services	Rob Broom	Cabinet	NI192: Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	36.20% [Q3 figure as reported in arrears]	40%	40%	35%	32%

Page 139

BALANCING THE BUDGET (8 MEASURES)										
Corporate Plan Subset	Business Unit	Service	Portfolio Holder	Categorisation	KPI Name & Description	Q4 2025/26 Actual	2025/26 Quarterly Targets			
							Q1 26/27	Q2 26/27	Q3 26/27	Q4 26/27
Balancing the Budget	Finance	Finance	Tom Plater	Cabinet	Finance BV9: % of Council Tax Collected	94.7%	33%	60%	86%	95.80%
Balancing the Budget	Finance	Finance	Tom Plater	Cabinet	Finance BV10: Percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year received by the authority	98.52%	36%	60%	89%	98.80%
Balancing the Budget	Business Change & Digital	Customer Service	Tom Plater	Cabinet	CompGF1: % of council service customer complaints responded to within deadline	87.60%	80%	80%	80%	80%
Balancing the Budget	Business Change & Digital	Customer Service	Tom Plater	Cabinet	CSC Sat: Customer satisfaction with CSC customer service	94.60%	80%	80%	80%	80%
Balancing the Budget	Business Change & Digital	Customer Service	Tom Plater	Cabinet	Average customer satisfaction score for online interactions	NEW	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Balancing the Budget	Housing & Neighbourhoods	Housing Management	Tom Plater	Cabinet	BV66a: Rent Collection Rate	97.59%	88.50%	95%	97%	98.50%
Balancing the Budget	Estates	Estates	Tom Plater	Cabinet	% of Corporate Building Overall Completed Remedials	88.39%	88.5%	95%	97%	98.5%
Balancing the Budget	Estates	Estates	Tom Plater	Cabinet	% of high-risk statutory compliance remedial actions completed within agreed timescales	NEW	97%	98%	98%	98%

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Appendix C – Making Stevenage Even Better Priorities 2026-27

Making Stevenage Even Better Priority	Project Title	Milestones
Transforming Our Town - Enterprise & Skills Page 141	Stevenage Works	- Secure social value benefits, including jobs, training and local opportunities, through key contracts and projects across Housing Investment, Housing Development and Regeneration. - Extend Stevenage Works into health and social care pathways, helping residents access employment, training and progression opportunities in the sector. - Publish the annual Stevenage Works impact report and deliver the Community Chest Fund.
	Talent Development	- Support and evaluate the first apprenticeship cohort, while exploring the opportunity to establish a second cohort. - Provide work experience placements for local people. - Evaluate the first leadership programme cohort and establish a second cohort, including Level 3 and Level 5 development opportunities.
	Business Technology Centre Contract Renewal	- Following completion of the procurement process, confirm the operator for the next Business Technology Centre contract period. - Mobilise the renewed contract arrangements, ensuring continuity of support for businesses based at the Centre.
	Enterprise and Skills: PYSF Phase Two	- Deliver Pioneering Young STEM Futures Phase Two activity across the academic year, monitoring participation, reach and progression. - Establish and support the Youth Advisory Board, including oversight of the Youth Innovation Fund. - Complete an interim evaluation and year-end impact update for Phase Two.
	Impact Reporting & Communications	- Build on the existing communications approach, using resident and partner stories alongside clear measures of reach and impact. - Publish the first combined Enterprise & Skills impact report, showcasing case studies and performance data.
	Adult Cohorts Pilot Project	- Agree the pilot scope, delivery model and outline proposal. - Confirm target cohorts, referral routes, success measures and the approach to evaluation. - Launch the pilot, monitoring resident participation, progression and case studies. - Review pilot outcomes and recommend next steps for 2027/28.
	Pathways & Signposting	- Complete a review of skills, employment and business-support pathways. - Publish refreshed resident-facing information and signposting across Council and partner channels.

Making Stevenage Even Better Priority	Project Title	Milestones
Transforming Our Town - Regeneration Page 142	Maximising lettings in town centre	• Deliver a targeted lettings programme for vacant units in the Plaza, supporting continued activity ahead of SG1 regeneration. • Deliver a targeted lettings programme for vacant units in Town Square, supporting continued activity ahead of SG1 regeneration.
	Deliver Local Plan Review and Partial Update 2026 and development of new Local Plan beyond 2031	• Carry out the partial update and review of the Council's Local Plan. • Produce a visioning document exploring how Stevenage can continue to contribute as an economic and growth hub within future local government arrangements.
	Planning and Infrastructure Bill	• Prepare the planning service for anticipated changes arising from the Planning and Infrastructure Bill.
	Indoor Market Growth	• Agree and implement an action plan to improve occupancy, income performance and operational arrangements at the relocated Indoor Market.
	Station Gateway	• Progress external infrastructure funding opportunities. • Establish a strategic delivery programme for the scheme. • Undertake community consultation on the emerging proposals.
	SG1 - Claxton House	• Complete construction of the first phase of homes.
	Sports and Leisure Centre	• Progress construction of the new facility in line with the approved delivery programme. • Complete the new facility by 2028. • Complete demolition of the existing swimming pool to enable the next phase of development.
	SITEC 2nd Phase	• Complete construction of the new Town Centre Construction Campus in the former Indoor Market. • Complete feasibility and design work for Phase 2b, supporting further skills capacity, then seek cabinet approval to proceed.

Making Stevenage Even Better Priority	Project Title	Milestones
	Towns Fund	- Gunnelswood Road Infrastructure - Work with the private developer to introduce new infrastructure at a key roundabout to support the GSK development. - Cycling & Pedestrian Connectivity - Deliver a new ground-level pedestrian and cycle crossing linking the town centre with the new leisure facility. - Deliver the Stevenage Arts Trail, including community engagement, artwork production and installation. - Diversification of Retail - Complete works to create a new entrance to the Westgate retail area.
Page 143 More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes - Building New & Sustainable Homes	Bragbury End	- Conclude the marketing process for the site. - Finalise the sale of the land, enabling development proposals to progress.
	Brent Court - Independent Living	- Begin main construction works on site. - Reach the topping out stage, with the building's main structure completed to its full height.
	Cartref	- Begin main construction works on site. - Reach the topping out stage for the affordable homes block, with its main structure completed to its full height.
	Courtlands	Commence and complete sales of the homes at Courtlands to generate a capital receipt and enable Marshgate Ltd to repay its loan to the Council. * * The delivery programme has been affected by delays to power connectivity. Regular reports will be brought to Cabinet on Marshgate Ltd's performance and sales progress.
	Burwell Phase 2	Reach the wind and watertight stage, with the homes enclosed so internal works can progress.
	Ellis Avenue	- Reach the topping out stage, with the building's main structure completed to its full height. - Reach the wind and watertight stage, with the homes enclosed so internal works can progress.
	Kenilworth Phase 2	- Complete the legal process required to alter existing highway arrangements. - Reach the wind and watertight stage for the first phase, with the homes enclosed so internal works can progress. - Open a show home so prospective residents can view the completed standard of accommodation.

Making Stevenage Even Better Priority	Project Title	Milestones
	Neighbourhood Developments	Seek planning permission for a pipeline of new housing schemes that will support investment in Stevenage's neighbourhoods and neighbourhood centres.
	Bidding for Social & Affordable Homes Funding	Develop funding proposals and submit bids, where appropriate, to support current and pipeline social and affordable housing schemes, in line with Cabinet-approved priorities.
	The Oval	- Reach the topping out stage for the new Community Centre, with the building's main structure completed to its full height. - Reach the topping out stage at Roland Court, with the building's main structure completed to its full height.
	Shephall View	- Secure grant funding to support delivery of new homes. - Complete the legal agreements needed to progress the scheme. - Complete the development and hand over the new homes for occupation.
Page 144 More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes - Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Key Enablers for Journey to C1	- Deliver the priority actions within the Housing Improvement Plan, building on the Council's previous inspection score and supporting progress towards a C1 consumer grade from the Regulator of Social Housing. - Move the NEC housing management system to cloud hosting. - Prepare for the new Regulator of Social Housing Competency and Conduct Standard.
	Targeted Investment in Homes	- Review the existing Housing Asset Management Strategy and seek approval for an updated strategy. - Complete the Asset Programme Review, setting out future investment priorities for Council homes. - Complete further review of the Independent Living Schemes to inform future investment decisions. - Deliver the final year of the Major Refurbishment Contract programme. - Present options and recommendations for high-rise refurbishment to Cabinet.
	Warm and Safe Homes	- Deliver the Building Safety Action Plan. - Prepare for and implement the next phase of Awaab's Law requirements.
	Optimising Repairs and Voids Services	Complete and evaluate the repairs and voids pilot and agree the next steps for the future service model.

Making Stevenage Even Better Priority	Project Title	Milestones
	Tenancy Management and Resident Support	• Deliver the Resident Engagement Strategy and Framework, including embedding the new scrutiny panel. • Implement the agreed Fair Access improvements, making it easier for residents to access housing services. • Draft a new tenancy agreement. • Develop a Landlord Housing Strategy.
Page 145 Thriving Neighbourhoods - Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces	CIL Review and Spending Protocol	• Adopt the Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule. • Allocate Community Infrastructure Levy funding to strategic and neighbourhood projects that benefit Stevenage.
	Forster Country Park	• Complete the phase 1 handover of Forster Country Park in line with the legal agreement and approved design specification. • Confirm arrangements for the park's long-term maintenance and management. • Deliver a communications and marketing plan to support the opening of the new country park.
	Play Equipment Replacement	• Complete the planned programme of improvements to priority play spaces across the town.
	CCIN Policy Lab	• Deliver the second year of a two-year Cooperative Councils Innovation Network Policy Lab, co-led by Stevenage Borough Council and the London Borough of Brent with five other member councils, to strengthen community leadership and innovate local service delivery through cooperative, place-based approaches.
	Pride in Place	• Establish the St Nicholas Neighbourhood Board and supporting governance arrangements. • Build the St Nicholas evidence base, confirm the programme geography and review the local pipeline of projects and activity. • Deliver early community engagement and use capacity funding to support board development, plan preparation and early community-backed priorities. • Prepare and submit the St Nicholas Pride in Place Plan, including the first four-year investment plan.
	Renters' Rights Act	• Prepare for the implementation of new requirements arising from the Renters' Rights Act. • Provide training for relevant staff and ensure the necessary capacity is in place to deliver the new requirements.
Thriving Neighbourhoods - Community Safety	County Lines	• Deliver a targeted prevention and awareness programme with police, schools and other partners on county lines, exploitation and grooming.

Making Stevenage Even Better Priority	Project Title	Milestones
	SoSafe Action Plan	Deliver the priority actions within the SoSafe partnership plan, supported by quarterly progress reviews with partner organisations.
	Prevention of Homelessness	Expand the Community Drop In to reach more residents who need advice, support and signposting.
Thriving Neighbourhoods - Culture & Leisure Page 146	PlayZone Programme	Create an inclusive and accessible all-weather 3G football pitch at King George V Playing Fields.
	Town of Culture Bid & Review of Cultural Strategy	- If successful, progress development of the Town of Culture bid. - Undertake a proportionate review of the Council's Cultural Strategy, reflecting current ambitions.
	Stevenage 80th Celebrations	Develop and deliver a programme of activities marking Stevenage's 80th anniversary.
	Ridlins 2027/28 Preparations	Complete a feasibility study and engage users to inform future investment in facilities at Ridlins.
	New opportunities SALC	- Work with partners to define the scope, specification, costs and business case for potential new opportunities at Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre. - Explore opportunities for wider public-service use, including with health partners. - Progress development of the scheme in line with the approved Capital Strategy, with the aim of opening in June 2028.
Tackling Climate Change	Reviewing Fleet Options	Develop a strategy setting out how and when the Council fleet will transition to lower-emission and / or electric vehicles through to 2028.
	Climate Change Community Fund	Launch and operate the revised Climate Change Community Fund, supporting community-led climate projects across Stevenage.
	Sustainable energy projects	- Prioritise Council sites for further investigation of energy-generation opportunities. - Complete initial feasibility assessments for priority sites. - Complete a community energy assessment and strategy.
	Bidding for Energy Supply Funding	Submit bids to relevant funding programmes to support energy-efficiency investment and reduce energy costs.

Making Stevenage Even Better Priority	Project Title	Milestones
	Warm Homes Programme	• Deliver the Warm Homes Local Grant by identifying and supporting eligible households to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy costs.
	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	• Allocate the Council's remaining funding from its existing Biodiversity Net Gain pot to priority nature-recovery and environmental improvement projects. • Bring proposals for the use of West of Stevenage Biodiversity Net Gain funding to Cabinet for approval, as required.
	Tree Planting	• Create new micro-woodlands. • Plant trees in areas with low tree cover, helping to increase Stevenage's tree canopy.
	Simpler Recycling (including Flat Block Recycling)	• Review kerbside collections in response to new national recycling requirements and implement the necessary changes. • Improve recycling facilities in flat blocks and deliver targeted resident communications to increase participation.
Page 147 Local Government Reorganisation	Section 24 Preparation	• Prepare for Section 24 Directions following the Structural Change Order, including the internal processes and governance arrangements needed to support implementation.
	Designing and delivering the programme to take Stevenage through LGR	• Deliver the Council's Local Government Reorganisation readiness programme, ensuring the Council is prepared for a Government decision and the transition arrangements that follow.
	Local Government Reorganisation - Preparation for Shadow Elections	• Following a Government decision, prepare for shadow authority elections to the new unitary councils, in line with the statutory arrangements then in place.
Balancing the Budget	Business Change & Digital - Financial Returns	• Deliver the agreed housing management letters, payment card security compliance and archive storage projects, generating additional income, savings or avoided costs.
	Corporate Landlord: Non-Housing	• Complete required statutory compliance inspections across corporate buildings and address priority actions. • Complete a year-end compliance assurance review and agree a prioritised 2027/28 compliance investment programme.

Making Stevenage Even Better Priority	Project Title	Milestones
	Corporate Estate Energy Performance Improvement	Complete an energy-performance review of the corporate and commercial estate and agree a prioritised programme of energy-efficiency improvements.
	HRA Savings 2026/27	- Deliver the approved Housing Revenue Account savings programme for 2026/27. - Develop proposals to support a balanced Housing Revenue Account budget for 2027/28.
	General Fund 2026/27	- Deliver the approved General Fund budget for 2026/27. - Review fees and charges, supporting service areas to develop proposals for approval. - Develop proposals to support a balanced General Fund budget for 2027/28.
	Garage Site Sales	- Progress planning and funding requirements for the initial programme of garage site disposals. - Generate the first capital receipt from the programme, subject to completion of the relevant transactions.
Page 148 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	Stevenage Equalities Commission Legacy Group	Support development of the Stevenage Equalities Commission Legacy Group, including its formalisation as a multi-stakeholder cooperative.
	Armed Forces Covenant	Deliver the first year of the Armed Forces Covenant support programme, including building relationships with veterans and partners, establishing referral pathways and progressing the development of a local support hub.
Health & Wellbeing	Age & Dementia Friendly Communities	Create and begin delivery of an Age-Friendly and Dementia-Friendly Action Plan.
	Healthy Stevenage Strategy Revision	Refresh the Healthy Stevenage Strategy in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council, Public Health and other partners.
Technology & Innovation	Business Change & Digital - Service Improvements	Deliver the agreed digital service-improvement projects, including a website chatbot, improved repairs processes, electronic signing, Microsoft 365, microfiche digitisation, and improved handling of Member and MP enquiries.
	Digital Strategy	Deliver the agreed 2026/27 Digital Strategy implementation plan, focused on self-service, automation, website improvements and responsible use of artificial intelligence.
	Cyber Accreditation Programme (CAF)	- Complete the Cyber Assessment Framework baseline assessment. - Deliver the improvements needed to meet the Framework's requirements. - Work towards achieving Cyber Assessment Framework accreditation.

Corporate Performance Report 2025/26 Quarter 4 (January, February, March)



Key to Performance Status Symbols

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

Key to Milestone Status Symbols

▲	- Severe delays
●	- Some delays
★	- On track
★✓	- Completed

	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2026/27 (YTD)	Comments
% of emergency damp & mould investigations and safety works completed within 24hrs of awareness (AWAABs)				100.00%	100.00%	100.00%		31/03/2026 Based on 2 cases in January, 1 case in February and no cases in March
% of relevant safety works for significant hazards completed within 5 working days of damp and mould				92.00%		100.00%		31/03/2026 Measures to monitor damp and mould performance in response to Awaab's Law were added to the strategic performance suite in Quarter 3. Unlike most new measures, targets were set from the outset rather than first being introduced to establish a performance baseline, as they relate directly to statutory requirements and resident safety. Learning from the first reporting period is now being used to identify the strongest measures. The current measure is therefore likely to be refined and replaced through Quarter 1 reporting and as part of the 2026/27 Performance Suite. Since April 2026, a 'shield and clean' approach has separated immediate safety works from follow-on or preventative activity, supporting clearer reporting against the required timescales.
% of standard damp & mould investigations completed within 10 working days of tenant report (AWAABs)				92.42%	86.00%	100.00%		31/03/2026 Consistently high demand during Q4 impacted on Surveyor capacity which has been addressed through recruitment of an additional surveyor during March 2026. Unable to gain access was a factor in some cases - for example for 9 out of 13 inspections not completed in time during March this was due to issues with gaining access and in a further 2 cases appointments were made outside of the 10 working day target at the request of the tenant. The Council is reviewing its Access Policy in light of Awaabs Law.
Average time taken to relet a routine void (GN). key to key	63.00	54.00	84.00	63.00	57.00	30.00		31/03/2026 In Quarter 4, a total of 29 standard void properties were re-let. While average turnaround times remain high, there are early signs of gradual improvement. Accountability has also been strengthened through increased recharges and clearer tenancy exit standards. However, the condition of properties upon handover continues to present a significant challenge. The use of interim contracts for void works has also impacted overall performance during Quarter 4. Nevertheless, the planned introduction of longer-term contractual arrangements for the 2026/27 financial year is expected to deliver greater consistency and enhance overall service delivery. As of 1 April 2026, the pilot for the in-house voids team has been mobilised and commenced work on void properties alongside external contractors. Progress and performance are being monitored throughout the pilot period. The Voids Improvement Plan

	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2026/27 (YTD)	Comments
								has been refreshed and strengthened. Progress against the plan is regularly reported and monitored through the HSLT and the EHWG.
Homelessness preventions	117.00	47.00	101.00	155.00	186.00	120.00		31/03/2026 Prevention outcomes have continued to increase, with 31 additional cases successfully prevented during the quarter. While this represents ongoing progress, the rate of increase has moderated compared to earlier quarters, reflecting the complexity of presenting cases and the continued trend of later engagement. Improvements to triage and front-line assessment processes are supporting more targeted and timely interventions. The service continues to prioritise tenancy sustainment, negotiation, and cross-service collaboration, including closer alignment with Income services to mitigate the risk of eviction. Further work is required to better understand barriers to early approach and to maximise prevention opportunities.
Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) by the Council (since 2014)	500.00	501.00	529.00	531.00	533.00	530.00		
Percentage of homes maintained as decent against national minimum DH standard	96.64%	96.42%	97.74%	98.82%	98.86%	98.50%		
Percentage repairs & inspections completed first time	93.07%	84.86%	94.82%	99.41%	99.47%	90.00%		
RSH BS01: Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas certificate	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%		
RSH BS03: Percentage of properties that require an annual asbestos inspection / survey	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%		
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%		
RSH CH01 (part 2): Number of stage two complaints made by tenants	85	34	69	95	106			
RSH CH01 (part1): Number of stage one complaints made by tenants	688	134	290	450	605			
RSH CH02 (part1): Number of stage 1 complaints made by tenants and responded to within CH Timescale	651	125	267	401	534			31/03/2026 155 stage 1 complaints were received during this quarter for Housing Services - 134 of these cases were closed - 133 cases were closed within time - 1 case closed out of time - 21 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	69	28	51	68	74			31/03/2026 11 stage 2 complaints were received during this quarter for Housing Services (this excludes Allocations, Options and such like)

	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2026/27 (YTD)	Comments
								6 cases closed within target / 0 closed out of time / 5 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	122	0	0	0	0			
RSH Number of Overdue Fire Remedial Medium Risk Actions	81	0	0	0	0			
RSH Number of Overdue Water Remedial Actions	59	27	22	9	6			31/03/2026 Six overdue water remedial actions remained at year end, relating to a small number of properties where access has not yet been secured. The Council continues to pursue access through appointments, letters and home visits, alongside a review of its access policy to support more timely completion.
RSH Rep1: Proportion of emergency responsive repairs completed within target timescale	98.45%	98.30%	99.10%	98.50%	99.20%	99.00%		31/03/2026 All emergency jobs were completed within 24 hours – Officers continue to work with contractors to ensure stronger data integrity.
RSH Rep2: Proportion of non-emergency (Routine and Urgent) responsive repairs completed within target	91.45%	95.60%	94.60%	94.55%	96.90%	95.00%		31/03/2026 96.9% of all non emergency jobs were completed on time - and an overall year end position of 95.43%, above target.
VED: Percentage of dwellings with a valid EICR Electrical Certificate	99.61%	98.33%	98.86%	99.39%	99.85%	100.00%		

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

		Milestones	Performance	Comments
Building New & Sustainable Homes	Bragbury End	• Planning permission and sale of 500 unit scheme at Bragbury End. • Public consultation • Planning permission submitted • Planning decision • Sales agent appointed	★	31 Mar 2026 Resolution to grant planning permission was given in March, and sales exercise concluded at the end of March. Work currently underway to evaluate offers.
	Brent Court - Independent Living	• Delivery of 96 unit Independent Living scheme on site of former Brent Court Garages. • Gateway 2 submission made • Gateway 2 permission • Demolition of Garages • Foundation work completed	★	31 Mar 2026 A Gateway 2 application is still pending an outcome, with some initial feedback from the Building Safety Regulator received and being worked on. Demolition of the garage block is underway, and the new parking area is open to the existing residents of Brent Court.
	Burwell Phase Two	• Topping out of 20 homes for affordable rent.	★	31 Mar 2026 Brick and block work is being completed on the final floor of the scheme meaning the site is close to achieving topping out level with roof trusses also now on site.
	Courtlands	• Completion of 17 unit private sale scheme.	●	31 Mar 2026 Electrical works required by UKPN were expected to take place in mid April allowing the scheme to progress to completion. The expectations is that the first five homes will be ready 3 weeks after the conclusion of these electrical works.

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

		Milestones	Performance	Comments
				May 2026 Update: Electrical Works required by UKPN have begun as expected, which allows progress to be made on the delivery of the first 5 homes to practical completion during Qtr 1.
	Defects	Ongoing delivery of defects provision	★	31 Mar 2026 Defects work is ongoing at Dunn Close, with actions at Kenilworth Close continuing to be worked through with Hill Partnership.
	Ellis Avenue	- Delivery of 11 homes for Council Rent. - Demolition Completed	★	31 Mar 2026 Demolition works are completed and foundation works are underway at the site.
	Garage Sites Sales	- Cabinet approval for disposal of sites - Appoint architect for scheme development - Initial Design approval	★	31 Mar 2026 Architects have been appointed across the key sites with design work underway. Demolition of two garage blocks underway, and work to go to market for a purchaser has begun.
Page 152	Kenilworth Phase Two	- Delivery of 24 home Private sale scheme, building on the completion of Phase One of the Kenilworth site. - Demolition of Walpole Court Completed - Foundation work completed - Estate Agent appointed	★	31 Mar 2026 The site has been prepared for construction and the next stage of works is now under way, with foundation work progressing.
	Neighbourhood Reviews	Provision of strategy to meet Neighbourhood Renewal Requirements and design development of initial sites.	★	31 Mar 2026 One scheme is pending the outcome of a pre-app review, and the other is undergoing design development. The schemes are still on track for a 2026 Planning submission.
	The Oval	- Delivery of mixed used phase neighbourhood regeneration. - Contractor appointed - Demolition for phase 1 completed - Start on Site	★	31 Mar 2026 Demolition works at the site are now completed, and construction works well underway across the site, including piled foundations. The Legal agreement with the Shared Churches is also now complete enabling vacant possession at Phase 2 upon completion of Phase 1.
Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Building & Fire Safety Compliance	Delivery of the Building Safety Action Plan	★	31 Mar 2026 Building Safety is active, and monitored and reviewed regularly.
	Fair Access	- Housing Transformation Programme - Fair Access to services for residents. - Mapping of customer journey across multiple contact pathways - Delivery of channel shift and opportunities to engage digitally with services	●	31 Mar 2026 Work has begun to understand the drivers for telephone contact for housing services. Housing management and income-collection letters and processes are being reviewed to make them clearer, simpler and easier to understand. Tenant-friendly information is also being developed on key policies and tenancy changes, helping residents understand service standards and shared responsibilities. A key enabler for the next stage of this work is the housing management system upgrade, which will provide improved functionality and more options for residents to access services.
	High-Rise Refurbishment	- Procurement of a main contractor for refurbishment works. - Gateway 2 submission for refurbishment works. - Mobilisation of refurbishment works.	★	31 Mar 2026 Procurement of a main contractor for the refurbishment works has not yet started. Financial modelling is being completed ahead of Cabinet consideration, which is included on the Forward Plan for autumn 2026. Subject to Cabinet approval of the preferred option or options, and Section 20 consultation with leaseholders, procurement will then commence. A Gateway 2 submission has not yet started and will follow Cabinet's decision on the preferred option or options and completion of the Section 20 consultation. Subsequent timescales will be dependent on the Building Safety Regulator.

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

		Milestones	Performance	Comments
				Mobilisation of the refurbishment works has not yet started. Timescales will depend on Cabinet approval of the preferred option, the Section 20 consultation and the outcome of the Gateway 2 process and Building Safety Regulator requirements.
	MRC Refurbishment	• Delivery of the final year of MRC - a refurbishment programme to the council's flat blocks (excluding high rises).	★	31 Mar 2026 The MRC refurbishment programme is entering its final phase. Most of the remaining residential blocks across Trumper Road, Canterbury Way and Ingleside Drive are nearing completion, with snagging, handover and final billing activity under way. The remaining shop blocks and Purcell Court represent the final elements of the programme to be completed. Subject to the scale of the remaining works and suitable weather conditions, the programme is expected to be completed by the end of 2026.
	New Legislation and policy	• Awaabs Law - Alongside changes to HHSRS Legislation will have a phased implementation from October 2025 (damp and mould) and extended to other hazards during 2026 and 2027. • Consultation on a new Decent Homes standard and implications for Stevenage	★	31 Mar 2026 The Government response to the Decent Homes and MEES consultation has been released and the impact of the proposals for Stevenage is being assessed. A further update will be provided to the Executive Housing Working Group, with further Government guidance awaited.
	Provider Improvement Plan & Journey to C1	• Delivery of the actions outlined in the Regulator for Social Housing Provider Improvement Plan following inspection in September 2024.	★	31 Mar 2026 Meetings with the Regulator of Social Housing continue to be productive and work towards completion of the Provider Improvement Plan remains consistently on track. C2 to C1 challenge sessions have been held throughout March and April across the housing service to help refresh service plans and continue improvement needed to attain a C1 grading.
Page 153	Repairs (inc Disrepair and D & M) Service Improvement Plan	• Completion of all team process workshops and development of action plans • Easily accessible processes in place for all teams • Implementation of all action plans • Stakeholder mapping/touch points - 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.	★	31 Mar 2026 The Repairs Improvement Plan has been developed and delivered through five themes: People, Policy, Procurement, Process and Technology. People: There are two vacant Repairs Manager roles that require recruitment. Policy: This workstream has been completed, although policies will continue to be kept under review to ensure they reflect new and emerging legal and regulatory requirements, including Awaab's Law. Procurement: Support contractors have been procured and mobilised over the past year. The final stage is the migration away from Excel-based trackers onto the NEC Contractor Portal. In addition, a long-term materials supplier contract is being procured and is expected to be awarded later this calendar year. Process: Staff workshops and process mapping led to a further review with the Business Change Team, resulting in an end-to-end customer journey project. This identified a number of quick wins, which have been progressed alongside the wider review, and included a collaboration project with the Customer Service Centre. That project ran for 12 weeks between February and May 2026 and has now concluded. Technology: Work to make better use of IT is currently on hold pending the migration of the housing system, NEC, to the cloud, which is currently forecast to be completed in October 2026.
	Resident Engagement & Scrutiny	• Delivery of the Resident Engagement Strategy and Framework. • Operating tenant panel and scrutiny panel in place	★	31 Mar 2026 Recruitment has commenced for a Resident Engagement Co-ordinator to broaden engagement opportunities and help deliver more proactive outreach into communities and neighbourhoods during spring and summer 2026. A full report on the year's activities, progress and outcomes was presented to the Executive Housing Working Group in April 2026 and will also be shared with the Regulator of Social Housing through the Provider Improvement Plan.

MORE SOCIAL, AFFORDABLE & GOOD QUALITY HOMES 2025/26 MILESTONES				
		Milestones	Performance	Comments
	Service Review Independent Living Service	Review of service delivery and related th id h i t t charges that considers activity led functions across the wider housing service to create efficiencies and a leaner cost model		31 Mar 2026 This review is still on-going and is expected to bring forward options for future delivery by December 2026. It is a complex service with many elements that need effective cost analysis to ensure that the baseline model is fully understood before options can be brought forward.
	Service Review Temporary Accomodation	Review the service delivery of the Temporary Accommodation Service.		31 Mar 2026 As per the last quarter, progress is being made with the action plan, focus this quarter has been on minimising void turnaround times.
	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 Mar 2026 Work to focus Tenancy Audits is progressing this quarter, with an emphasis on triangulating data to prioritise households who are vulnerable, who will be transferring in the near future, where there are access issues for routine repairs or compliance checks and also identifying households who have not reported repairs or made contact with the council for some time. A Data Manager post is progressing through recruitment to help with insight and segmentation of tenant profiles to drive service delivery and improvement.
	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 from Finance. All ready to mobilise after green light and necessary back filling		31 Mar 2026 The Voids Improvement Plan has been refreshed. Progress against the plan is regularly reported and monitored, an update on the plan will be shared at internal officer groups in May 2026.

TRANSFORMING OUR TOWN 2025/26 PERFORMANCE								
	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Target Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Target Quarter 1 2026/27 YTD	Comments
Percentage of major planning applications determined in thirteen weeks	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	60.0%		
Percentage of minor planning applications determined in eight weeks	98.8%	100.0%	92.9%	95.7%	93.5%	70.0%		
Percentage of other planning applications determined in eight weeks	97.8%	100.0%	91.7%	79.6%	81.5%	70.0%		

TRANSFORMING OUR TOWN 2025/26 MILESTONES				
MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Enterprise & Skills	Business Technology Centre Contract Renewal	Explore options for Business Technology Centre Contract Renewal.		31 Mar 2026 Discussions are at an advanced stage to make a direct award to an operator. June 2026 update: a contract has been signed with Wenta to operate the Business Technology Centre.
	Pioneering Young STEM Futures - P2	Secure Phase Two of the Pioneering Young STEM Futures programme with funding from M44. Begin delivery of Year One.		31 Mar 2026 Projects from the Pioneering Young STEM Futures programme have been running this academic year to provide inspirational, first-hand experiences to over 1,350 young people from primary age to secondary age across eight schools. The projects have involved young people from mainstream education as well as young people out of mainstream education. Projects have focused on: supporting young people in gaining a better understanding of STEM carers, pathways and qualifications - engaging local key STEM organisations in the

TRANSFORMING OUR TOWN 2025/26 MILESTONES

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
				delivery; providing young people with hands-on STEM skills and knowledge; providing mentors for young people to boost their chances and targeting primary science leads to improve science across the primary year groups.
	Stevenage Works - Health & Social Care Expansion	- Establishment of supporting Governance Framework. - Establishment of a pilot cohort of care providers alongside partners. - Review of initial pilot cohort of care providers.	★	31 Mar 2026 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 latest Stevenage Works Health & Social Care sector-based work academy programme (SWAP) course was delivered in Stevenage on 23rd February 2026. 5 students attended, one has been offered employment with Hertfordshire Care Providers Association Care (HCPA). The next cohort is scheduled to commence in May 2026.
	Stevenage Works - Social Value & Procurement	- Continue to leverage social value on contracts through Stevenage Works and deliver a similar approach across the organisation. - Create and publish the Stevenage Works impact Report. - Manage and deliver the Stevenage Works Community Chest Fund.	★	31 Mar 2026 Stevenage Works continues to work with contractors to secure, track and deliver the social value commitments linked to Council investment. The 2025 Stevenage Works Impact Report has been published. At the January Community Chest Awards, contractors contributed £19,337 to support nine local community projects. Funding recipients are supported to demonstrate how grants have been used and the benefit they have delivered.
Page 155	Sustainable Technology Centre - SITEC Phase 2	Delivery of the second phases of both the Stevenage Innovation & Technology Centre (SITEC) & Enterprise Centre, in partnership with North Herts College.	★	31 Mar 2026 Construction on the new Town Centre Campus remains on track for September 2026 student intake. North Hertfordshire College has signed the lease for the space during this quarter and the college have successfully installed the new banners above the entrances and along St George's Way.
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	Deliver the 2025/26 extension of UKSPF. Establish plans for 2026/27 UKSPF replacement.	●	31 Mar 2026 Support delivered by Hertfordshire Futures has continued throughout Q4, helping Stevenage residents to access business and skills opportunities as the current funding period draws to a close at the end of the financial year. Q3 monitoring indicates that delivery is progressing well against profile, with several targets already achieved or exceeded. The Q4 return is expected by the end of April, and current performance suggests that most targets will be met or surpassed by year end. Pioneering Young STEM Futures (Phase Two) has continued to progress well and will continue into 2026/27. Although this funding was originally intended for delivery within 2025/26, an extension has been agreed for all councils until the end of September 2026. This does not represent additional funding, but provides more time for the approved allocation to be spent effectively. While this is expected to be the final tranche of UKSPF, the announcement of Pride in Place funding may present further opportunities for the neighbourhood initiative to continue.
Regeneration	Cycling & Pedestrian Connectivity - Arts & Heritage Trail	Design and implementation of an Arts & Heritage Trail.	★	31 Mar 2026 Officers are continuing to support the four chosen artists with their detailed design and community engagement work. The Stevenage Heart Trails was launched on 25 March with the unveiling of the first plaque for the Stacked Stories sculpture at the Bus Interchange, alongside a dedicated website, which provides an interactive guide to the trail and its features. This milestone signifies the first of over 300 installations across the trails boundary, including interpretative text and wayfinding signage.
	Cycling & Pedestrian Connectivity - New Leisure Centre	- Design and implementation of pedestrian connectivity to the new Leisure Centre. - Implementation of new at-grade crossing - Public realm complete	★	31 Mar 2026 The new crossing on St George's Way, adjacent to the new leisure centre, was progressing through its final design and delivery arrangements during the Q4 reporting period, with officers working in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council. As of July 2026, the crossing has been installed and the works are now complete.

TRANSFORMING OUR TOWN 2025/26 MILESTONES

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
	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 Mar 2026 Towns Fund investment is supporting a more varied and attractive town centre. The completed Activating Spaces programme has brought Event Island into use, supported Frequency Coffee to occupy a previously vacant unit and enabled the relocation of the Indoor Market. Work is continuing to develop proposals for improvements to the Westgate entrance, strengthening the connection to the retail core, with delivery timings to be confirmed as design work progresses.
	Gunnelswood Road Infrastructure	Introduction of new infrastructure to a key roundabout to support the GSK development.	★	31 Mar 2026 Developer Reef Origin, in joint venture with UBS, received planning consent in relation to the GSK expansion project (Elevate Quarter - a 30-acre Life Science and Knowledge Campus at the heart of one of the UK's fastest-growing innovation clusters). Consent was granted for the development of two state-of-the-art data centres within this development. This milestone marks a significant step forward in delivering next-generation digital infrastructure to support the region's expanding life science, research, and technology ecosystem. The project will bring together advanced data centre capacity, supercomputing capability, and high-value knowledge occupiers, strengthening Stevenage's position as a nationally important hub for science and innovation. This milestone reflects their commitment to delivering next-generation digital infrastructure that supports high-value jobs, research excellence, and long-term regional growth. Physical works continue through the utilities, power and infrastructure improvements which are due to complete at the end of 2026.
Page 156	Local Plan Review & Partial Update	Partial update and review of the council's Local Plan.	★	31 Mar 2026 Main Modifications consultation closed 31 March 2026. Cabinet in June to agree adoption of Local Plan Partial Update which will go to Full Council for formal adoption in July 2026.
	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 Mar 2026 Overall construction is progressing positively and remains on programme. The show apartments have been completed and are now open for viewings. The marketing suite will be located in a unit within Town Square.
	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 Mar 2026 Design development to RIBA stage 2 completed, with further feasibility options outlined. Engagement with partners continuing, but awaiting external funding route and local government reorganisation decision.
	Sports & Leisure Centre	Finalisation of design, submission and approval of planning permission and construction to start on site.	★	31 Mar 2026 Preliminary works required to progress the construction of the Sports & Leisure Centre are underway. Technical approval has been secured for the new entrance and exit on Fairlands Way, and works are scheduled to commence shortly. The communications strategy is being implemented ahead of the planned car park closure on 13 April. The logistics plan, including hoarding strategy and associated updates to emergency arrangements, has been agreed. The Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) for the temporary coach drop-off point is also in place, with associated works programmed. Contracts for works have been agreed, with RIBA Stage 4 design nearing completion. Final cost plans and the main construction contract are currently being developed in parallel. Overall, the project has reached several key milestones and continues to progress as planned.
	Station Gateway	- 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 Mar 2026 The signing of the Development Agreement with Muse and ECF generated national and local press coverage, with Sir Michael Lyons visiting Stevenage for the occasion. The project governance is now in place with delivery and steering groups established, MP and board briefings completed, dialogue underway with key external partners and local businesses, and progress made on consultant appointments and land strategy.

THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS 2025/26 PERFORMANCE

	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Target Quarter 1 2026/27 YTD	Comments
Number of people engaged in Cooperative Neighbourhood 'Community & Place' initiatives	954	1,103	1,103	1,103	7,603	1,500		31/03/2026 A co-operative neighbourhoods newsletter was distributed to 6500 residents covering an Autumn (Q3) round up and projects, activities and events for Winter (Q4)
RSH NM01(part1): ASB cases opened by or on behalf of the provider during the reporting year	107	44	74	103	157			31/03/2026 The team received 63 Cases of ASB this quarter with 54 cases involving an SBC Tenant. ASB reports included various categories including Drug Use/Dealing. Last quarter the team were successful in obtaining a full Closure Order alongside Police Partners for an address in Stevenage, this has had a positive impact on the neighbours as reports have significantly decreased and residents have expressed their gratitude for the enforcement taken. The Council have applied to court for Possession of this property.
RSH NM01(part2) ASB cases that involve hate incidents opened by or on behalf of the provider during	4	1	4	5	5			31/03/2026 The Council have had no reports of Hate Crime this quarter. Total shown is due to this being a cumulative measure.
# of neighbourhood improvements, events, projects, activities using UKSPF funding	138	0	0	27	136	50		31/03/2026 Almond Hill -10 Bandle Hill & Poplars - 12 Bedwell - 5 Chells - 7 Longmeadow - 12 Manor - 4 Martins Wood - 6 Old Town - 15 Roebuck - 11 Shephall - 9 St Nicholas - 5 Symonds Green - 9 Woodfield - 4
% of Graffiti Clearances completed	93.75%	100.00%	66.00%	100.00%	74.00%	80.00%		31/03/2026 Fourteen of the nineteen graffiti clearance requests received during Quarter 4 were completed. Recruitment is under way to strengthen the cleansing team, supporting a more consistent response and continued improvement in clearance performance.
ASB Percentage of ASB cases resulting in successful enforcement action	94.00%	92.00%	93.00%	84.00%	76.00%	80.00%		31/03/2026 Of the 21 cases closed during Quarter 4, 76% resulted in successful enforcement action. This included verbal and written warnings, formal possession-related notices and an exclusion from the Bus Interchange. In the remaining cases, the complainant withdrew engagement or the person responsible had moved away.
Contamination rate of recycling - calculated as estimated proportion that is rejected of total amoun	1.38	1.09	1.11	1.34	1.38	2.00		31/03/2026 The highest level of contamination are still reported as food waste within food packaging (i.e. - not being cleaned out before putting out for collection) and moisture within the paper from rainfall on collection days.To help address this, guidance on recycling is on The Council's website and regular social media posts on recycling and what should be done are uploaded. Officers regularly attend school assemblies to highlight recycling and how this should be done correctly, with nine having been carried out so far this year. New pink bins are being used by the collection crews, short promo messages will be on these, such as thanks for recycling, please washout your containers etc. With regards to the moisture content, unfortunately, there is little the Council can do as this occurs on collection days at the kerbside when raining, however paper is kept undercover at Cavendish Road. Work continues on educational material for flat block residents, as they have the highest rates of contamination.
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	32.00%	40.00%	38.10%	36.20%		32.00%		31/03/2026 This measure is reported in arrears and will be available at the end of Q1.
Percentage of residential bins collected	99.73%	99.70%	99.72%	99.74%	99.69%	99.00%		31/03/2026 The Council have seen a slight increase in missed bins, therefore a decrease in bins collected. The Council believe this is connected to the new food waste service going live. This can be attributed to residents adapting to the new service and put their bins out late as they get accustomed to the new weekly service.
Residual household waste per household (kgs)	494.96	120.18	119.40	119.83		495.00		31/03/2026 This measure is reported in arrears from an external source. The figure for Q4 will not be available until the end of Q1.

THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS 2025/26 PERFORMANCE

Value (£) invested into Neighbourhood areas	266,365.57	0.00	0.00	3,500.00	54,247.00	55,278.00		31/03/2026 UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment supported new benches, bulb planting and seeding, restoration of two public sculptures and neighbourhood improvements across Stevenage.
CWLS1: EvAc - No of under 16 using facilities and outreach prog at least once p/w	19,715	26,395	19,586	24,967	20,055	19,500		

THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS 2025/26 MILESTONES

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces	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 Mar 2026 The Co-operative Councils Innovation Network Policy Lab is focused on strengthening community leadership and community capacity, particularly among younger generations. It will explore practical ways to encourage more people to take an active role in building their communities, supported by shared learning, tools and case studies.
	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 Mar 2026 Partners have agreed priorities for 2026/27 and are establishing focused delivery groups. This provides the shared purpose, structure and joint activity needed to support the formalisation of the Social Inclusion Partnership as a multi-stakeholder co-operative.
Community Safety TN	Evolve	Work with domestic abuse perpetrators through the Evolve programme. Explore potential funding opportunities to expand this provision into young people.	★	31 Mar 2026 Both properties are currently occupied, with residents actively engaging with the Service. Individuals living in Evolve accommodation have either successfully completed the Evolve programme or are in the process of doing so, demonstrating ongoing participation and progression through the support pathway.
	Operation Educ8	Educate young people around the impact of Graffiti on the local community.	★	31 Mar 2026 During Quarter 4, the short film 'The Orphan', developed in Stevenage and linked to the Council's Community Safety work, was screened at events in Stevenage and in Parliament. The Parliamentary screening provided a national platform for Operation Educ8, helping it build on the film's message through wider events and engagement focused on exploitation, early intervention and keeping young people safe. This supports Operation Educ8's wider programme of events, education and awareness activity.
	SADA Safe Accomodation	Obtain properties to use as dispersed accommodation for family dynamics that would not fit refuge provisions.	★	31 Mar 2026 During Q4 The SADA accommodation team provided safe housing for six families and individuals, upholding their commitment to accessible, secure accommodation. The team continues to ensure clients' needs are met, providing intensive support as required during their stay in SADA Safe Space accommodation.
Culture & Leisure TN	Active Communities	Everyone Active's AC programme brings physical activity to community venues such as community centres , pavilions and schools.	★	31 Mar 2026 Key highlights in Q4: The Council delivered 99 community outreach classes in Q4 with 723 attendances to sessions. The Council also continued to deliver weekly classes in 5 independent living schemes with 285 attendances At the Stevenage Golf and Conference Centre, the Council continued to deliver weekly long term health conditions golf sessions with roughly 6 attendances each week. At the Stevenage Swimming Centre in Q4, The Council had 154 attendances at our ladies only swimming sessions and 42 attendances to our inclusive quiet swimming sessions.
	Arts & Culture Programme	An ambitious programme of activity delivered in partnership between Junction 7 Creatives and Stevenage Museum.	★	31 Mar 2026 Twenty-two Only Connect locations have now been completed, with the remaining Phase 1 installations progressing. Stevenage Heart Trails will help

THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS 2025/26 MILESTONES

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
				residents and visitors discover local art and heritage through new on-street installations and digital content. Four new sculptures are planned for green spaces, alongside a new artwork celebrating Nala, Stevenage's much-loved station cat. Options for a further phase of Only Connect continue to be explored.
	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 Mar 2026 Planning permission has been secured for a new multi-use games area (MUGA), including an inclusive, all-weather 3G community pitch, at King George V Playing Fields. The Council and Football Foundation are progressing the remaining approvals and delivery arrangements to enable work to begin on site.
	Review of Cultural Strategy	Undertake a review of the council's Cultural Strategy in line with council's current ambitions.	★	31 Mar 2026 An initial draft has been completed and a meeting held with the Portfolio holder prior to going out to wider consultation. The 10 year Cultural Strategy will undergo a light touch review by the end of 2026.

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE 2025/26 PERFORMANCE

	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2025/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Target Quarter 1 2026/27 YTD	Comments
CC1: Percentage of homes that have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of Band C or above	66.46%	67.82%	67.82%	66.48%	67.22%	69.60%		

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 Mar 2026 This project has been rebranded into CIL Green Projects, aligned with our Corporate priorities and established strategies. Following presentation of Phase 1 to SLT in December 2025, Phase 2 of the project was presented to SLT in March 2026 for decision. Implementation of Phase 1 projects is currently underway. A new application window for project funding under Phase 2 is expected to open shortly.
	Climate Change Community Fund	Assess, support and advise on community-led climate projects, review alternative schemes of delivery.	●	31 Mar 2026 The Climate Change Community Fund continues to give residents and community organisations a route to bring forward practical sustainability projects, with three further projects approved in March. A refreshed delivery approach is being developed for 2026/27 to make the Fund easier to access, strengthen promotion and support a wider range of community-led climate action.
	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 Mar 2026 Stevenage's new weekly food-waste collection launched across the town on 2 March 2026, ahead of national requirements. Participation was around 30% at the end of Quarter 4 and had risen to 52.69% by the end of June, showing encouraging early take-up. Communications will continue to support further growth, alongside improvements to recycling facilities at flats, due to complete by the end of summer.
	Sustainability Business Support	Deliver workshops, mentoring, coaching and supply chain support activities for Stevenage businesses across three projects: 1. Green Business Start Up	★	31 Mar 2026 Additional support provided including: • Carbon footprint and Carbon Reduction Plan • Governance and policy strengthening guidance, including metrics and

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE 2025/26 MILESTONES				
MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
		Scheme. 2. Sustainable X Business Support Programme 3. Action Zero Programme (Wenta)		targets set • Impact reporting • Sustainability and Social value positioning and narrative development • Sustainability audit tailored to a digital business model • Carbon footprint focused on energy, digital infrastructure and travel
	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 Mar 2026 The 3 new micro woods were completed in January concluding our tree planting. In total, 3000 whips and 121 standard trees were planted.
	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 Mar 2026 Delivery of the scheme for the first financial year has now concluded, with £101k allocated to retrofit private homes out of the total £318k budget for the scheme. Promotional activities and feedback sessions to improve delivery in the coming years are currently underway with our partner, the National Energy Foundation, as part of this ongoing three-year programme.

BALANCING THE BUDGET 2025/26 PERFORMANCE								
	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Target Quarter 1 2026/27 YTD	Comments
% of commercial rent collected from estates	91%	90%	88%	90%	91%	90%		
% of Corporate Building Overall Completed Remedials	75.15%	85.85%	88.35%	89.61%	88.39%	80.00%		31/03/2026 The overall compliance position across corporate buildings improved from 88.39% at the end of Quarter 4 to 90.28% on 8 May 2026, meeting the short-term target. Progress has included a reduction in outstanding, overdue and high-risk actions. Work continues to address the remaining priority actions, particularly fire-safety requirements, and to progress towards the medium-term 95% target.
% of council service customer complaints responded to within deadline	77.40%	85.00%	86.00%	93.30%	87.60%	80.00%		
% ofCorporate Building Overall Compliance Inspections completed	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%		
Customer satisfaction with CSC customer service	88.80%	93.00%	92.10%	92.60%	94.60%	80.00%		
Dig2: Number of online payments	117,255	31,748	63,215	93,576	121,716	124,500		31/03/2026 Payment volumes typically reduce in the final quarter due to the profiling of regular bills, such as housing rent catch-up weeks. While the Q4 target was therefore set lower than Q3 to reflect this, online payments fell by 7%, exceeding the expected reduction. However, the total value of payments decreased by less than 2%, suggesting customers made fewer but higher-value transactions. Over the same period, other payment channels experienced larger declines, with Post Office payments down 17% and automated telephone payments down 11%, indicating that the reduction in online payment volumes reflects a wider shift in customer payment behaviour rather than an issue specific to the website.
Garage Voids (residential) as a percentage of stock	7.76%	7.87%	7.38%	7.34%	7.49%	7.26%		31/03/2026 In January, a new Garage Newsletter was issued to all garage licence holders. This enabled the team to promote the service more positively and actively engage with customers. The initiative proved highly successful, with a spike in demand during the first week of January, when 57 bids were received (compared with 38 in January 2025). The newsletter will now be issued on a quarterly basis. Overall, there was an increase in demand for the service, with 501 bids received during Q4 compared with 438 in Q3.
Garage/Commercial/Parking-income raised vs budget for	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%		

BALANCING THE BUDGET 2025/26 PERFORMANCE							
the top 3 income streams of the General Fund							
Percentage of council tax collected	94.50%	32.09%	59.00%	85.20%	94.70%	95.80%	31/03/2026 The Council collected 94.7% of council tax due in 2025/26, an improvement on 94.5% in the previous year. While below the 95.8% target, the Council's Revenues and Benefits Service is taking targeted action to improve collection in 2026/27, including tailored recovery activity, contact through text, email and telephone, and improved digital options for residents.
Percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year received by the authority	99.21%	37.05%	61.47%	89.14%	98.52%	98.80%	
Rent collection rate	98.13%	93.28%	95.47%	97.14%	97.59%	98.50%	31/03/2026 Rent collection for 2025/26 closed at 96.59%, including arrears brought forward from earlier years. Excluding those historic arrears, collection remained strong at 99.44%, representing £55.74m collected during the year. Around £203,797 of payments received between 1 and 6 April had not been processed at year end because of the Easter bank holiday and will be reflected in the subsequent period.
Time taken (days) to process housing benefit new claims and change events	2.01	5.89	6.31	5.86	3.39	10.00	31/03/2026 Quarter 4 performance benefits from the inclusion of automated uprating cases, which are legitimately reportable under DWP guidance but reduce the average processing time. These uprating cases are counted as one-day transactions and do not occur in earlier quarters, which explains the significantly stronger Q4 result.

BALANCING THE BUDGET 2025/26 MILESTONES				
MSB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Page 161 Balancing the Budget	Business Change & Digital Projects	- 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 Mar 2026 In addition to the ongoing financial benefits tracking, which is showing higher than expected savings, the priority BC&D work in these specific projects (Community Advice & Support, Localities, Revenues & Benefits) is concluded and change is being embedded by the services. 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.
	Business Change and Digital - Financial Returns	Projects that deliver financial returns (increased income/commercial opportunities/tangible savings/cost avoidance)	★	31 Mar 2026 The Streets & Grounds Project is completed and will deliver financial savings once the return on investment in the new technology has been achieved, this will be tracked through financial security monitoring. 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 before being extended into Housing. A review of card payments (PCI Compliance Assessment) is underway to understand and current processes areas of risk. Further opportunities are starting to be explored with key service areas to shape BC&D priorities for 26-27 including a the new theme of work called 'Digitising our Data' which includes opportunities for improving customer communication and reducing costs of letters.
	Business Change and Digital - Service Improvements	Projects that deliver improved service quality, customer experience and modern work processes that save time	★	31 Mar 2026 Changes have been completed for Environmental Services customer facing services and online services as well as internal business processes, to modernise and meet new legislative requirements (for Streets and Grounds, Food and Waste and Commercial Waste). Changes are underway including initiating projects to improve customer experience and modernise work processes through: Website Chatbot and improving all business processes relating to customer letters, emails and text notifications, including where customers signatures are required. Elections processes have also been improved as well as internal business process improvements for Customer

BALANCING THE BUDGET 2025/26 MILESTONES

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
				Services and Finance teams. In addition, further changes are being scoped including the business case for whole workforce modernisation through M365 adoption to improve productivity across a range of daily tasks and both routine and one-off business processes.
	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 Mar 2026 The Council is developing new commercial income opportunities across filming, advertising, asset use and small-cell infrastructure, with five corporate agreements close to completion. Social-value considerations are also being incorporated into relevant commercial arrangements, while services continue to review fees, charges and other viable opportunities.
	Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	Adopt a CIL spending protocol to bring together commitments made and provide a structure around future spending decisions.	●	31 Mar 2026 Protocol for Neighbourhood CIL is advanced. Bids for funding opening from Spring 2026. Wider CIL protocol for Strategic CIL being considered. The protocol will be reported to Members in due course, with the revised CIL rates going to Cabinet on 10th June. Looking ahead, the Council will be implementing a spending protocol to guide future CIL spending decisions. This will ensure that they align with Council priorities, as expressed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The Council have agreed a first round of spending relating to Neighbourhood CIL, with a second round currently being discussed.
Page 162	General Fund & HRA Savings 2026/27	Approve balanced budgets for 2026/27 for HRA in January 2026 and GF in February 2026.	★	31 Mar 2026 Based on the Quarter 3 budget monitoring position for the 2025/26 financial year, the Council remains on track to deliver the vast majority of its planned savings, with 97% of the programme expected to be achieved. This position has not materially changed as The Council work towards finalising the year-end outturn. One scheme is below its 2025/26 savings target: the relocation of the Indoor Market to Park Place. While the market is now open, the later-than-planned opening date means the full savings will not be realised in 2025/26. These savings are now expected to be delivered in full during 2026/27. Looking ahead, all savings required to balance the 2026/27 budget have been incorporated into the approved General Fund and HRA budgets. These were agreed by Council in February and will be monitored throughout 2026/27 as part of the Council's regular budget management processes.
	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 Mar 2026 The Council is continuing to assess potential opportunities to bring services in-house where this could improve value, resilience and control. The outcome of Local Government Reorganisation will help inform the longer-term approach to future service delivery.

CROSS CUTTING 2025/26 MILESTONES

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	EDI Action Plan, Annual Report & EDGG	Deliver on the 18 actions highlighted as part of the EDI Action Plan, report these through EDGG and the councils Equalities Annual Report.	★	31 Mar 2026 Progress against the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan is being reviewed ahead of its renewal this summer. A summary of delivery and learning will inform the refreshed plan and its priorities.
	Stevenage Equalities Commission Legacy Group	Support the development of the Stevenage Equalities Commission Legacy Group, including its formalisation as a Multi-stakeholder Cooperative.	★	31 Mar 2026 Operation Black Vote have started to deliver the research and engagement project looking at the status of civic engagement in Stevenage. Over the next few weeks, desk-based research, and individual interviews with VCFSE groups and community members will take place with workshops happening following the May elections. A next steps report is expected in June.

CROSS CUTTING 2025/26 MILESTONES

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Health & Wellbeing	Age Friendly Communities	Age-Friendly Communities is a collaborative programme with HCC and Age UK to deliver projects and events to support older residents in Stevenage.	★	31 Mar 2026 Following the motion on Age Friendly Communities, The Council have developed an action plan that sets out our key areas of work and helps provide a clear focus for delivery. The Council have also started planning for International Day of Older People in October, which will be an important opportunity to celebrate older residents and promote local support and activity. In addition, Hertfordshire County Council and Age UK have begun recruiting a Localities Officer, which will provide extra capacity and support for developing and delivering local age friendly projects across Stevenage.
	Dementia Friendly Communities	Dementia Friendly Communities is delivered in collaboration with local organisation to support those living with dementia in Stevenage.	★	31 Mar 2026 The Council have continued to support Dementia Friendly work in Stevenage by working with Hertfordshire County Council and Herts Memory Service on the new Hertfordshire Dementia Accreditation Scheme. This included supporting a launch event at Stevenage FC, which gave local organisations the opportunity to learn more about the scheme and take part in Dementia Friends training. The Council also continue to see good attendance at our weekly Dementia Café, which remains an important source of support and social connection for residents. In addition, our Dementia Festival was planned to take place at Fairlands on 6 June however was cancelled due to high levels of rain so will now occur in September 2026. Alongside this, our Licensing Team has incorporated mandatory age and dementia awareness training for taxi drivers, which went live in April.
Page 163	Healthy Hub	Funding received for a further two years of delivery through HCC Public Health.	★	31 Mar 2026 The Council continue to see good footfall at the Healthy Hub, showing the ongoing demand for accessible health and wellbeing support in the town centre. The Council have also successfully recruited a new Healthy Hub Co-ordinator, who will lead on delivering wellbeing checks and stop smoking clinics. Alongside this, the Council have started planning an outreach programme that will include pop up sessions in community spaces, helping us take support directly into neighbourhoods and reach more residents. Funding is also confirmed for 2026/27 from Herts Public Health for the HH delivery.
	Technology & Innovation	- Cyber First: Ensuring security, data- driven decisions, and adaptability. - Data-driven Decision-Making: Utilising data for strategic planning. - Innovate, Adapt, and Empower: Encouraging innovation and continuous learning.	●	31 Mar 2026 The ICT Strategy is being finalised, with supporting assurance and consultation activity continuing over the summer. It is scheduled to be presented to Cabinet for approval in October 2026.

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APPENDIX E

The table below sets out details of decisions issued within Q4 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.

Council Process Ended	Ombudsmen Decision Date	Issue	Determination/Outcome	Order/Action	Ombudsmen
27 June 2024	13 January 2026	Unsuitable accommodation	Service Failure	- Written apology - Compensation £5,500 - Specific resolution actions to be completed - Review process for procurement of larger properties	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
14 Aug 2025	20 Jan 2026	Housing Register Application	LGSCO not progressing	None	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
17 Oct 2025 (Allocations review outcome)	11 February 2026	Housing Register Application	LGSCO not progressing	None	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
8 October 2025	20 February 2026	Boundary Dispute	LGSCO not progressing	None	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
14 August 2025	23 February 2026	Housing Register Application	LGSCO not progressing	None	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
27 Aug 2025	27 Feb 2026	- Repairs - Complaint Handling	- Service Failure - No Maladministration	Compensation £175	Housing Ombudsman
4 Mar 2024	18 Mar 2026	- Damp and Mould - Complaint Handling	- Maladministration - Maladministration	- Compensation £600 - Apologise	Housing Ombudsman

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Part I – Release to Press



Agenda item: **##**

Meeting Cabinet
Portfolio Area Housing & Housing Development
Date 15th July 2026



DRAFT TENANCY STRATEGY 2026 - 2031

AUTHORS: SARAH PATEMAN
CONTRIBUTOR:
LEAD OFFICER: KERRY CLIFFORD

KEY DECISION

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To present the final version of the Tenancy Strategy 2026-2031.
- 1.2. The Strategy fulfils the Council's statutory duty under the Localism Act 2011 to publish a Tenancy Strategy that sets out expectations for Registered Providers operating within the Borough. It aligns with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards (April 2024), the Tenancy Standard, and emerging national reforms including the Renters' Rights Act 2025.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the duty placed on Stevenage Borough Council to fulfil its duties under the Localism Act 2011 to publish a Tenancy Strategy.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the content and the adoption of the Tenancy Strategy 2026-2031, as seen in Appendix A.
- 2.3 That Cabinet approves that the Strategic Director (RP), be given delegated authority to make minor updates and changes to the Strategy arising from new legislation, after consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Local Councils have a duty under the Localism Act 2011 to publish a Tenancy Strategy setting out expectations for Registered Providers operating within the Borough. Each local housing authority in England had to prepare and publish its first Tenancy Strategy by January 2013. The Council's current Tenancy Strategy, published on the website, is dated 2013 and has not been reviewed since this time. In order to keep pace with regulatory and legislative requirements, a Tenancy Strategy should be reviewed at least every five years and should reflect any changes which may have impacted the allocation of social housing.
- 3.2 The Tenancy Strategy establishes clear expectations regarding the tenancy types used across the Borough. The Council's preference remains for secure, long-term tenancies in general needs housing to promote stability and sustainable communities, as set out in the Council's own Tenancy Policy.
- 3.3 Alternative tenancy types are recognised where appropriate, particularly in temporary, supported or specialist accommodation. Registered Providers are expected to clearly define the tenancy types they use, the length of those tenancies, and how they support long-term sustainability and effective housing management.
- 3.4 The Strategy reinforces the expectation that rents, and service charges, remain compliant with national regulation while being mindful of local income levels and cost-of-living pressures.
- 3.5 Providers are expected to assess affordability at the point of letting and intervene early where financial pressures arise, reducing the risk of arrears and eviction.
- 3.6 The Strategy emphasises early intervention and proactive support to prevent tenancy breakdown. Providers are expected to adopt a preventative approach, working collaboratively with the Council and relevant agencies to support vulnerable households.
- 3.7 Given ongoing demand pressures, the Strategy prioritises efficient use of existing housing stock. This includes tackling under-occupation, addressing overcrowding, promoting downsizing and mutual exchange, and ensuring adapted properties are allocated appropriately.
- 3.8 The Strategy reinforces the Council's strategic housing authority role and its nomination arrangements with Registered Providers. Through retained nomination rights and structured monitoring, the Council ensures that social housing across all landlords contributes to Borough-wide priorities.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1 This Tenancy Strategy for Stevenage Borough Council responds to a statutory duty, providing a clear framework for how social and affordable housing tenancies should be allocated, managed, and reviewed across the Borough. It seeks to ensure that the use of tenancies contributes to sustainable communities, makes best use of limited housing stock, and supports residents through changing personal and economic circumstances.
- 4.2 The goal of the strategy is to provide consistency, transparency, and fairness in how tenancies are managed, while allowing Registered Providers the flexibility to operate in a way that responds to the unique needs of Stevenage's residents.

- 4.3 The Renters' Rights Act 2025 received Royal Assent on October 27, 2025, and its provisions came into effect on the 31st May 2026. The Act abolishes fixed term assured tenancies and assured shorthold tenancies, imposing obligations on private landlords and others in relation to rented homes, temporary and supported accommodation. This strategy has been developed having consideration to this new act and will be reviewed as additional guidance is published.
- 4.4 This Tenancy Strategy sets out the Council's position as a Strategic Housing Authority, it expects and requires that all Registered Providers operating within the Borough to develop their own Tenancy Policy, this policy should align with the Localism Act 2011 and the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenancy Standard.
- 4.5 The draft Tenancy Strategy 2026 – 2031 highlights that since the previous Strategy was published in 2013, there has been a decrease in approximately 1300 council homes, mainly under the right to buy regime. The most significant impacts have been across one-, three- and four-bedroom provision. The lack of social and affordable housing is affecting residents at both national and Borough levels and means that it is more important than ever that the Council works effectively with other local providers of social housing to ensure that social housing can be allocated effectively and fairly to those who are most in need.
- 4.6 The Strategy also emphasises that the gap between social and affordable rents and rents in the private sector is widening, placing significant financial strain on low-income households and in many cases, making private rent properties unattainable. It is also clear that Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates (the system used in the UK to calculate the maximum housing support element that a tenant can receive through Universal Credit or Housing Benefit) has not kept pace with market rent. LHA has been frozen until at least 2026/27, pushing many families into financial insecurity, unable to afford essential utilities and food and placing them at risk of homelessness. Citizens Advice estimate that rents in the private sector have risen by 14% since LHA rates were last revised.
- 4.7 The net impact is that more families require the need for temporary accommodation, having been evicted for rent arrears in the private sector. Not only does this create unstable housing environments for families, it also raises temporary accommodation costs for local authorities. Combined with the need for more social and affordable homes, where demand outstrips supply, it is again essential that the Tenancy Policies of local providers underpin the principles set out with the Council's Tenancy Strategy.
- 4.8 The Council has consulted on the draft Tenancy Strategy with residents of Stevenage as well as Registered Providers operating within the Borough. The consultation ran for four weeks starting on the 11th June 2026 and concluded on the 11th July 2026.
- 4.9 The consultation was available on the Council's website and was promoted via social media. The consultation was also shared with all housing register applicants through the on-line bidding system. Tenants of Stevenage Borough Council were also encouraged to complete the consultation via an email from the Council's Housing Portal.
- 4.10 Registered Providers have been engaged separately through meeting with them and were also invited to complete a consultation questionnaire.
- 4.11 The draft Tenancy Strategy 2026-2031 will also be shared with the Council's cross-party Community Select Committee on the 7th July 2026 and comments will be updated to Cabinet on the 15th July 2026.

- 4.12 As of the 6th July 2026, there were 10 respondents to the consultation, 5 of whom were SBC tenants and 5 recognised themselves as homeless or in temporary accommodation. The main message from the consultation is the need for more affordable and accessible housing, with respondents highlighting shortages and long wait times for social homes. Respondents also felt that good tenancy support was important as well as responsive repairs and access to financial support and advice.
- 4.13 There was also support for closer working between the Council and Housing Associations, with respondents wanting to receive better communication and a more joined up approach to improving housing services. Overall, the feedback supports the priorities as set out in the Strategy. Once the Strategy is adopted, the Council will commence further work with Registered Providers to enhance relationships and ensure that affordable housing need is met by ensuring providers place maximum emphasis on tenancy support and accepting nominations from the Council for those most in need of social housing, including homeless cohorts and those on low incomes.
- 4.14 The Council continues its ambitious build programme to develop new and affordable homes and is on target to deliver over 1000 new properties by 2030.
- 4.15 Stevenage Borough Council's Tenancy Strategy will be reviewed and updated every 5-years, or sooner in the event of significant changes in legislation or factors impacting on the provision of social housing.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

The Tenancy Strategy itself does not create new direct financial commitments. Effective tenancy sustainment and improved stock utilisation support the HRA Business Plan by:

- Reducing void loss
- Minimising arrears
- Preventing costly homelessness interventions

Any resource implications arising from legislative changes will be reported separately where required.

5.2 Legal Implications

The Strategy fulfils the Council's duty under the Localism Act 2011. It aligns with:

- The Housing Act 1996
- The Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards (April 2024)
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Renters' Rights Act 2025

5.3 Risk Implications

The strategic commitment of the Council and its partners in the implementation of this strategy will help mitigate key risks. Failure to maintain close working relationships with Registered Providers increases the risk of service disruption and ineffective delivery.

5.4 Policy Implications

The Strategy supports delivery of the Corporate Plan priority: “More Social, Affordable and Good Quality Homes”, particularly under the sub-priorities of Building New & Sustainable Homes and Maintaining Good Quality Homes.

The Strategy strengthens the Council’s strategic housing role and ensures Registered Providers operate consistently within local priorities.

5.5 Staffing and Accommodation Implications

There are no implications arising from this report.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity Implications

The Strategy supports the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. It promotes fairness, transparency and equal access to housing.

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken.

5.7 Service Delivery Implications

The Strategy will influence and shape the future work of the Council with its Registered Providers and is aware that effective service delivery is dependent on strong working relationships with those Registered Providers.

5.8 Information Technology Implications

There are no implications arising from this report.

6 APPENDICES

Appendix A – Draft Tenancy Strategy 2026-2031

Appendix B – EQIA

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Tenancy Strategy 2026-2031



Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction	4
Strategic Aims	5
Local Context	6
<i>Affordability of Housing</i>	7
<i>Housing Need and Partnership Approach</i>	9
<i>Operational Expectations of Registered Providers</i>	10
<i>Type and Length of Tenancy</i>	11
<i>Tenancy Management and Sustainment</i>	14
<i>Best Use of Stock</i>	15
<i>Review and Appeals</i>	17
Consultation	18
Monitoring and Review	19
Equalities	19
Appendix A: Social Housing Data	20

Foreword

Stevenage has a proud tradition of providing secure, affordable, and high-quality housing for its residents. As one of the first New Towns, our commitment to fostering strong communities and offering homes that support health, opportunity, and stability remains at the heart of everything we do.

In recent years, the housing landscape has changed significantly. Pressures from increasing demand, the ongoing cost of living challenges, and the need for more sustainable housing solutions require a responsive, fair, and forward-thinking approach to how tenancies are managed across the borough.

This Tenancy Strategy sets out Stevenage Borough Council's vision and principles for the management of social and affordable housing tenancies in

partnership with Registered Providers. It aims to ensure that tenancies support residents' long-term wellbeing, promote social mobility, and make best use of our valuable housing stock.

At its core, the strategy reflects our values - fairness, inclusivity, and sustainability. It is a framework to guide how we balance security and flexibility, ensure transparency in housing decisions, and support residents through changes in their housing needs over time.

Together, we will continue to build a Stevenage where everyone has a place to call home.

Loraine Rossati
Cabinet Member – Housing



Introduction

The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities, including Stevenage Borough Council, to develop a Tenancy Strategy in consultation with social housing providers within the borough. This strategy outlines the expectations for social landlords and offers guidance on the Council's preferred approach to tenancy types, tenure arrangements, and affordability standards.

This Tenancy Strategy for Stevenage Borough Council responds to that statutory duty, providing a clear framework for how social and affordable housing tenancies should be allocated, managed, and reviewed across the borough. It seeks to ensure that the use of tenancies contributes to sustainable communities, makes best use of limited housing stock, and supports residents through changing personal and economic circumstances.

For the purposes of this document, the term "tenants" refers to all individuals occupying affordable housing, including those who pay both social and affordable rents. "Affordable housing for rent" encompasses all housing offered at affordable and social rent levels.

As well as being a stock holding Local Authority, the Council works with other Registered Providers; these are organisations such as housing associations that are registered with the Regulator of Social Housing to provide social and affordable housing.

Stevenage faces a number of housing challenges, including growing demand for housing, affordability pressures, and the need to provide homes that are suitable for an increasingly diverse and evolving population. This strategy sets out our expectations for the type and length of tenancies granted, the circumstances under which tenancies may be ended or not renewed, and how we will support vulnerable households throughout their housing journey.

The goal of this strategy is to provide consistency, transparency, and fairness in how tenancies are managed, while allowing Registered Providers the flexibility to operate in a way that responds to the unique needs of Stevenage's residents.

Renters' Rights Act 2025

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 received Royal Assent on October 27, 2025, and its provisions came into effect on 1st May 2026.

The Act has abolished fixed term assured tenancies and assured shorthold tenancies and has ended the Section 21 'no fault' eviction notice on private tenancies. The Act has also imposed obligations on landlords and others in relation to rented homes, temporary and supported accommodation. This strategy has been developed having consideration to this new act and as additional guidance is published it will review as required.

Strategic Aims

The Council's Corporate Plan 2024/2027, '*Making Stevenage Even Better*', clearly prioritises the provision of *More Social, Affordable, and Good Quality Homes*. This Tenancy Strategy turns that priority into practical choices about how we let, manage and sustain tenancies. It directly aligns with the two sub-priorities under this theme: Building New & Sustainable Homes and Maintaining Good Quality Homes.

These outcomes directly align with the Corporate Plan's theme and sub-priorities.

- Building New & Sustainable Homes is primarily advanced by increasing access to affordable homes and supporting moves that match the evolving needs of residents.
- Maintaining Good Quality Homes is advanced through continuous improvements to the quality, safety, and management of homes, as well as by involving customers in shaping services.
- Securing Funding is fundamental to both sub-priorities, enabling the long-term investment required to deliver and sustain housing provision in Stevenage.

This Tenancy Strategy operates within the wider framework of the Council's key housing documents, including the Adopted Local Plan, Corporate Plan, HRA Business Plan, HRA Asset Management Strategy, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, and the Allocations Policy. Progress towards these strategic aims will be monitored through the Council's corporate performance arrangements to ensure we are on track to deliver the goals set out in the Corporate Plan.



Local Context

Stevenage is a vibrant town in Hertfordshire, known for its strong sense of community and high quality of life. According to the 2025 Resident Survey, 83% of those surveyed reported being 'satisfied with Stevenage as a place to live'. This reflects the town's excellent local amenities, well-established infrastructure, and ongoing efforts to improve the community's well-being.

Whilst house prices are the lowest in Hertfordshire these, in common with rents in the private sector, they continue to rise beyond the reach of many residents. Stevenage experiences significant levels of housing need and demand is high for housing of all tenures. As of the latest data, there are over 1,300 households on the Council's Housing Register, and the demand for homes continues to outstrip supply.

As of April 2026, of the 1,552 households on the Register 1,541 of these are in Reasonable Preference groups, this means that they are households that the Council has a duty to assist as they are in greatest need. This housing need can be met through a number of ways including the provision of new housing by either the Council or our partner landlords.

On average about 500 homes are available for letting each year from Registered Providers, including the Council, and approximately 75% of these being general needs housing and the remainder being supported housing

Stevenage Borough Council works with a number of Registered Providers to meet the housing needs of the borough's residents. These partnerships are key in providing both social and affordable housing options, ensuring that housing is available to those who need it most.

The main Registered Providers working with Stevenage Borough Council include:

- The Guinness Partnership
- Genesis Housing Association
- Sovereign Network Group
- Hastoe
- Peabody
- Clarion
- First Garden City Homes
- Origin
- Metropolitan Thames Valley
- SettleParadigm

These organisations work alongside the Council to deliver a range of affordable homes, including general needs housing, supported housing, and homes for those with specific needs, helping to ensure that housing supply keeps pace with demand.

Stevenage has one of the highest proportions of social housing in the country, reflecting the Council's long-standing commitment to affordable housing provision. There are currently over 9,000 social housing units managed by the Council and other Registered Providers working in the borough.

Housing Needs in Stevenage as of April 2026:

- Total households on the housing register: 1,552
- Households in reasonable preference: 1541
- Total lettings in General Needs housing: 275
- Total lettings in Supported Housing: 92
- Total lettings through nomination agreements: 92
- Total lettings across all categories: 459

This Tenancy Strategy has been developed to response to the growing housing need within Stevenage. Statistical information used to inform this Tenancy Strategy is given throughout the text, and in more detail in the Appendix below. Further details are also available in the Combined Strategic Housing Market Assessment report published in partnership with North Herts published in November 2023.

Affordability and Suitability of Housing

Affordability and suitability are core principles in the provision and management of affordable housing, particularly within the context of a Tenancy Strategy.

Affordability ensures that households can access and maintain housing without experiencing financial hardship or compromising other essential needs such as food, healthcare, and education. When housing costs are proportionate to income, tenants are more likely to sustain their tenancies. Which in turn, reduces the risk of arrears, evictions, and homelessness. This stability maintaining a tenancy not only benefits individual households but also supports broader community wellbeing and reduces pressure on public services.

Based on the Office of National Statistics Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), the Median gross salary for full-time employees living in Stevenage is around £38,900. The average price for a 1-bedroom social tenancy property in Stevenage is £773.51, rising to £1,247.40 for a 3-bed family home.

The average monthly private sector rent for a 1 bed property is £967.00, rising to £1,466.00 for a 3-bed property.

The Council's priority is to ensure affordable housing is as accessible as possible to local people. While the Council cannot directly set rent levels, it expects Registered Providers and private landlords to consider affordability when setting rents and service charges.

At the same time the Council understands that the cost of running a home may be relevant when assessing affordability, and that higher rents may be



partly offset by high levels of energy efficiency providing good levels of affordable warmth.

The impact of welfare reform on housing affordability has been significant. As a result, the Council will continue to review and improve its affordability data to ensure it reflects the changing economic landscape.

Stevenage Borough Council is actively managing and monitoring rent levels along with other associated factors to keep housing affordable within the borough.

Suitability, on the other hand, ensures that housing meets the specific needs of tenants in terms of size, accessibility, location, and condition. A suitable home is vital for tenants' physical and mental health, educational attainment, and employment opportunities. For instance, overcrowded or poorly maintained housing can exacerbate health issues and hinder children's development.



Image: Stantec

By prioritising suitability in housing supply and management, our Tenancy Strategy will promote long-term sustainability, tenant satisfaction, and community cohesion. Together, affordability and suitability form the foundation of a responsive and equitable housing system that supports diverse needs and fosters resilience.

The Council acknowledges that to meet the challenges of housing demand and supply, it must work closely with Registered Providers who operate within the borough. This partnership is crucial for achieving a balance between increasing the housing supply and ensuring that rented homes remain both affordable and suitable for those who need assistance in meeting their housing needs.

Housing Need and Partnership Approach

An independent housing needs assessment for Stevenage projects that an additional 110 households will require affordable housing annually from 2022–2031. This reflects the rising demand from households unable to access market housing, highlighting the Council's priority to increase the supply of affordable housing.

The Council plays a central role in identifying housing needs, allocating land, and shaping developments through planning policies and partnerships. Working closely with Registered Providers, the Council ensures new homes align with local priorities and community needs, particularly through Homes England grant funding, which helps make affordable developments financially viable.

Developers also contribute significantly, particularly through planning obligations such as Section 106 agreements, ensuring that affordable housing requirements are met in new developments. However, the Council remains focused on maintaining rent levels to ensure these homes stay genuinely affordable.

Between 2019 and March 2024, over 550 new homes were completed in Stevenage, exceeding the target of 500 by 2025, in partnership with developers and Registered Providers.

The Council and providers work together through nominations agreements to ensure suitable tenants are allocated to affordable homes. Under these agreements:

- Registered Providers are required to consider applicants nominated by the Council, ensuring compliance with their rules, and must notify the Council of any changes to these rules.
- Nominations are assessed based on factors such as household size, health, ability to meet rental commitments, and willingness to live in the area.
- If an applicant is rejected, the provider must inform the Council, providing reasons for rejection (excluding discriminatory grounds such as race, gender, or disability).
- Providers must notify the Council within five working days of vacancies, with the Council then providing a list of suitable nominees. If insufficient nominations are made, the provider can offer the property to someone else after three attempts at advertising.
- The Council has the right to provide nominations for both initial lettings and relets, with specific timelines for submission and actions in case of vacancies or rejections.

Not all properties are covered by nominations agreements, Registered Providers will retain some properties for allocation for management of current tenants, for example management moves or specialist housing schemes. In these cases, the Council works with providers to maintain fairness, and ensure allocations

continue to support local needs and the objectives of the Tenancy Strategy.

Operational Expectations of Registered Providers

This Tenancy Strategy sets out the Council's position as a Strategic Housing Authority, it expects and requires that all registered providers operating within the Borough to develop their own Tenancy Policy, this policy should align with the Localism Act 2011 and the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenancy Standard have regard to the following principles when developing and applying their tenancy policies:

1. Types of Tenancy

- Clearly set out the types of tenancy to be offered and ensure they are appropriate for the household's needs and the purpose of the accommodation.

2. Circumstances for Granting Tenancies

- Explain when different tenancy types will be used, including any probationary arrangements (e.g., starter tenancies) and how these support tenancy sustainment and community stability.

3. Length of Tenancy

- The policy should clearly set out terms that will be used, when these will be used and details of how they will promote security and improve sustainability.

4. Renewal and non-renewal

- Set out clear criteria for reviewing and renewing tenancies at the end of the term, including how decisions will be communicated and how vulnerable households will be supported.

5. Affordability and Suitability

- Ensure rent levels comply with the Rent Standard and take account of local incomes and affordability. Properties should meet household needs in terms of size, accessibility, and condition.

6. Tenancy Sustainment

- Provide advice and support to help tenants maintain their tenancy, including early intervention for arrears, budgeting support, and referrals to specialist services.

7. Under-Occupation and Best Use of Stock

- Work with the Council to tackle under-occupation and overcrowding, offering downsizing incentives and mutual exchange options where appropriate.

8. Compliance and Monitoring

- Share data on lettings, tenancy types, renewals, and evictions to support strategic monitoring and ensure transparency.

Type and Length of Tenancy

A Tenancy Agreement is an important document; it is a legal contract between the landlord and tenant. The agreement gives certain rights to both parties, including the tenant's right to occupy the accommodation and the landlord's right to receive rent for letting the property.

A clear and fair tenancy agreement ensures that both parties understand their obligations, helping to prevent disputes and fostering stable living arrangements for tenants. All agreements provided must meet the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards including the requirements of the Tenancy Standard, with all providers completing the CORE Statistical returns.

Secure Tenancy

This is a long-term tenancy granted usually by the Council that provides tenants with strong rights and protections, including the right to remain in their home indefinitely as long as they comply with the tenancy conditions.

The Council's preference is for secure tenancies (lifetime), as they promote settled lifestyles, achieve and maintain sustainable communities. These types of tenancies follow an introductory tenancy and give tenants' additional rights in some circumstances and can include:

- The right to mutual exchange with other tenants, for relevant properties.
- The right to succession.
Whilst this doesn't guarantee that, for example, a spouse would succeed the property should the tenant die, it does give reassurance that the spouse will have a tenancy.
- Tenants may have a joint tenancy.

These rights enhance tenants' security and contribute to fostering stable, cohesive communities where individuals can thrive.

A secure tenancy can be demoted to a tenancy with fewer rights and less security in the event of anti-social behaviour or breaches of tenancy conditions. In other cases, usually in the case of rent arrears the court may also decide to "suspend" an eviction, but the tenant is required to adhere to specific conditions enabling them to reside in the property. If they breach these conditions the landlord can apply to the courts for a warrant to evict.

The Council believes that tenants should be given an opportunity to maintain their tenancies through adherence to tenancy conditions. However, where behaviour is disruptive or rent arrears are not addressed, action may be necessary to ensure fairness to other tenants.

Introductory Tenancy

An Introductory Tenancy is usually a 12-month probationary tenancy granted to new tenants, normally for those in Council owned properties. If the conditions of the tenancy are met during this period, it will typically convert to a secure tenancy. The introductory tenancy can be extended for a further six months if the tenant fails to comply with the terms of the agreement during the initial 12-month period.

Introductory tenancies allow the Council to assess the suitability of tenants for long-term housing while ensuring that those new to the system are given the chance to demonstrate their ability to meet the terms of their tenancy.

Non-Secure Tenancy

A Non-Secure Tenancy is generally granted in cases where temporary accommodation is provided as part of the Council's duties under the Housing Act 1996, for example, when someone applies for Council housing due to homelessness.

A non-secure tenancy does not offer the same rights as a secure tenancy. For example:

- The tenant cannot mutually exchange as a non-secure tenant.
- The tenancy can be ended after 4 weeks following the issue of a valid notice to quit the accommodation.

Non-secure tenancies are used for temporary housing solutions, often in emergency or transitional circumstances. The lack of long-term rights is in line with the temporary nature of the accommodation and the need to prioritise those in longer-term need.

Licences Used for Homeless Temporary Accommodation

Licence Agreements are for emergency and temporary placements where the Council provides accommodation under homelessness duties (Housing Act 1996, Part VII).

These agreements do not grant exclusive possession, making it easier for the Council to move households between rooms or properties as needed and are typically used in hostels or other accommodation with shared facilities.

Licences can usually be ended with short notice (often 7–28 days), depending on the agreement terms and statutory requirements.

Assured Shorthold Tenancy

An Assured Shorthold Tenancy is a type of tenancy typically granted by Registered Providers or private landlords. It is a 6 to 12-month probationary tenancy offered by housing associations. After the allocated months, the tenancy should transition to an Assured Tenancy, providing tenants with more long-term security.

Assured shorthold tenancies help Registered Providers assess the suitability of tenants while giving them the opportunity to establish long-term tenancies after a successful probation period, contributing to tenant stability.

With the enactment and implementation of the Renters Rights Act on 1st May 2026, Assured/Assured Shorthold tenancies will become Assured Periodic tenancies rolling from month to month, abolishing the Section 21 notice to evict and giving tenants more security. The change aligns with national housing reforms aimed at enhancing tenant protection and ensuring greater housing stability, which the Council supports in fostering long-term tenancies and community sustainability.

Agreements for Sheltered and Supported Housing

Due to the nature of this type of accommodation the agreements will vary to reflect the individual requirements of the accommodation and the residents but will generally be expected to adopt the following formats.

- **Secure Tenancy:** For sheltered housing owned by the Council, offering long-term security and rights.
- **Assured Tenancy:** For sheltered housing managed by Registered Providers, providing similar security.
- **Licence Agreements:** Used in supported housing where accommodation is linked to care or support services and may involve shared facilities. Licences allow providers to manage placements flexibly.
- **Short-Term Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST):** Sometimes used in transitional supported housing where the intention is to move residents on to general needs housing.
- **Specialist Agreements:** For schemes regulated under the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023, agreements may include enhanced terms linked to care plans and compliance with local licensing standards.



Image: Archant: Archer Road, Stevenage

Tenancy Management & Sustainment

Stevenage Borough Council's Tenancy Support Service offers one-to-one support through a dedicated Tenancy Advisor, aimed at helping tenants sustain their tenancies and prevent eviction. Services provided include:

- Budgeting assistance
- Discretionary housing payments support
- Bill management
- Access to welfare benefits
- General life skills support

These efforts are designed to ensure that tenants are equipped to maintain stable tenancies, avoiding rental arrears and potential eviction. Ensuring that tenants have access to the right support services is critical for reducing tenancy breakdowns and preventing homelessness.

They also conduct tenancy visits as part of an audit programme; visiting all Council homes to check property conditions, identify safeguarding concerns, spot early risks of tenancy issues (including potential fraud), and naturally build rapport between tenants and housing officers.

Proactive tenancy visits help identify and address issues early, ensuring that tenants have the support they need and that properties are properly maintained. This approach supports long-term tenancy sustainability. Any cases of Suspected fraud are referred to the Shared Anti-Fraud Service (SAFS) to investigate and prevent fraudulent activities that could undermine the housing system.

The Council offers targeted support for specific groups who may need additional help, including:

- Care Leavers: Under the Hertfordshire Joint Housing Protocol, care leavers are supported through their introductory tenancy, with continued support through the Tenancy Sustainment Service if required.
- Moving on from Supported Living: Individuals transitioning from supported living arrangements receive tenancy sustainment support for one year, with longer-term assistance available if needed.
- Hoarding Support: Specialist officers assist tenants with hoarding concerns, helping with decluttering, improving safety, and collaborating with fire services and other agencies to enhance wellbeing.
- Domestic Abuse: Specialist officers provide tailored support, including housing and tenancy advice, home security measures, debt/benefits advice, legal referrals, emotional support, and drop-in sessions.

Providing tailored support ensures that vulnerable groups are equipped to manage their tenancies and overcome specific challenges, improving housing

stability and preventing tenancy breakdown.

The Council expects Registered Providers to proactively manage tenancies to ensure long-term sustainability and support residents in maintaining their homes. This includes providing timely advice and early intervention for tenants facing financial, social, or health challenges, addressing rent arrears, tenancy breaches, and anti-social behaviour promptly and fairly, and promoting tenancy sustainment through tailored support and community engagement. Registered Providers are also expected to work collaboratively with the Council and partner agencies, participate in monitoring and reporting on tenancy outcomes, and ensure compliance with the Tenancy Strategy and local lettings plans. Through these measures, the Council aims to maximise tenancy stability, prevent homelessness, and foster safe, resilient communities.

Best Use of Stock

Lettable Standards

The Council's Lettable Standard and Voids Management Policy focuses on turning around empty homes swiftly, maintaining quality, reducing income loss, and ensuring value for money. It sets clear standards for outgoing tenants, contractors, and new occupants, and tracks performance and tenant satisfaction. Efficient void management reduces the time properties remain vacant, ensuring that homes are re-let quickly and that rental income is maximized. It also ensures homes are maintained to a high standard before being re-occupied.

Registered Providers are expected to maintain properties to a lettable standard, ensuring homes are safe, clean, and in good repair before they are offered to new tenants. This helps to improve tenant satisfaction, reduce void times, and make efficient use of housing stock.

Downsizing

As of April 2025, approximately 660,000 working-age social housing tenants in England are subject to the under-occupation charge, which reduces benefits by 14% for one spare bedroom or 25% for two or more. While it is unclear how many social rented homes in Stevenage are currently under-occupied, the Council will support tenants who wish to downsize.

The Council seeks to work more closely with Registered Providers (RPs) in the town to make better use of existing housing stock and support tenants who are affected by the under-occupation charge.

Downsizing helps to address under-occupation in the social housing stock, maximising the use of available properties and providing tenants with homes better suited to their needs, while also helping to reduce the impact of the under-occupation charge.

We expect that our Registered Partners also should actively encourage and support tenants who are under-occupying larger homes to move to smaller, more suitable properties. This helps free up larger homes for families in need and ensures stock is used effectively to meet demand.

Overcrowding

The Council understands that overcrowding can have significant impacts on health, wellbeing, and community stability, so we are committed to identifying households at risk and supporting moves to more suitable accommodation. We will actively manage and match available properties to household needs, optimising the allocation of larger homes. Improving the use of our existing stock, we aim to reduce pressure on temporary accommodation, enhance housing outcomes for residents, and ensure that homes are allocated efficiently and fairly.

The expectation is that our Registered Providers prioritise re-housing and property moves for households experiencing overcrowding, ensuring that homes are allocated fairly based on household size and need.

Aids and Adaptations

The Council supports tenants to move into homes that already meet their accessibility needs, offering a faster and more cost-effective solution. In addition, Independent Living and Flexi-care housing schemes are available for further support with suitable living arrangements.

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on landlords to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, although the Act expressly states that this does not require the Council to remove or alter the physical features of a building, where possible, the Council prioritises tenant independence by installing aids and adaptations in properties. Adapted properties are then strategically let to households whose needs they meet, optimising the use of housing stock and funding.

This work is carried out in close collaboration with Adult Care, Children's Services, and the NHS, ensuring a joined-up, effective approach.

Collaborative working ensures that tenants receive the most appropriate support, with resources and services being used effectively across agencies.

We expect that our Registered Providers will also ensure that properties are adapted appropriately to meet the needs of tenants with disabilities or mobility issues.

Mutual Exchange

Tenants can apply to exchange homes with other Council tenants, or even tenants of other Registered Providers, in some circumstances and subject to

landlord permission. This allows occupants to move voluntarily to more suitable properties without creating additional vacancies.

Mutual exchanges provide tenants with greater flexibility in choosing homes that suit their needs, while also freeing up homes for those in greater need, without placing additional pressure on the housing waiting list.

We expect Registered Providers to facilitate mutual exchanges between tenants as a way to match households to properties that better suit their needs. Promoting this approach increases tenant choice, helps address overcrowding or under-occupation, and improves overall stock utilisation

Reviews and Appeals

Stevenage Borough Council is committed to ensuring that all housing allocation and letting decisions are fair, transparent, and consistent with the Council's Housing Allocations Policy. Applicants have the right to request a review or appeal if they believe a decision has been made incorrectly or unfairly.

Reviews may be requested in relation to decisions about eligibility, qualification for the Housing Register, priority banding, medical assessments, or property offers. Requests must normally be made within 21 days of the decision.

Applicants are notified of the outcome in writing, with clear reasons provided. This process helps maintain fairness, transparency, and public confidence in the Council's approach to social housing lettings.



Image: Ripon Road, Stevenage

Consultation

Stevenage Borough Council has worked closely with its partner Registered Providers to ensure that the allocation and management of tenancies is both fair and transparent. Through a series of collaborative consultations, the Council has engaged with local Registered Providers to review and refine the processes used to allocate housing, aiming to meet local housing needs while ensuring that the approach is equitable and consistent.

The consultation process included discussions on the criteria for housing allocation, taking into account factors such as household size, vulnerability, and local connection, ensuring that the system works for those who need it most. Registered Providers and the Council have also explored best practices for tenancy management, with a focus on creating sustainable tenancies, supporting tenants, and addressing issues such as rent arrears, under-occupation, and anti-social behaviour.

The outcome of these consultations has been a jointly agreed framework for tenancy allocation, underpinned by shared values of fairness, transparency, and inclusivity. The framework ensures that tenants are provided with clear information on how decisions are made, and that the process remains responsive to changes in local need. This collaborative approach aims to enhance the overall tenant experience while ensuring that available social housing is used effectively to support those who require it.

An important aspect of this partnership is that the Council retains 75% of allocation rights for any Registered Providers it collaborates with on subsequent lettings. This guarantees that properties - whether managed directly by the Council or through a housing association - are allocated in accordance with local priorities and needs. This approach ensures a consistent and equitable distribution of tenancies, making sure that every household receives the support and opportunity they require to sustain a successful tenancy. The remaining 25% of lettings after the initial let are retained for allocation by the Registered Providers for management of current tenants, for example management moves or specialist housing schemes.

By having the majority of allocation rights, the Council can better manage housing demand, target resources effectively, and ensure that those in greatest need have access to the homes available. This also strengthens the relationship between the Council and its partners, enabling a joined-up approach to tenancy management and support across the borough.

Involving Registered Providers in the consultation process ensures that tenancy allocation and management is designed to reflect local priorities and needs, while fostering a partnership approach that improves service delivery and accountability for tenants.

Monitoring and Review

The Council will continue to monitor the impact of affordable rents, national and local policies on the housing market, both internally and through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. We will actively encourage the input of providers into this process, to ensure that sufficient and appropriate information is available. This strategy will be reviewed periodically in light of this market information. As standard, the strategy will be reviewed every five years, but an earlier review will be undertaken to reflect the implications of the Renters (Rights) Act.

Effective monitoring and review are central to ensuring that partner Registered Providers are delivering in line with the Council's Tenancy Strategy. The Council will engage regularly with Registered Providers to ensure tenancies are being awarded appropriately and that nominations are being made in accordance with agreed arrangements. As part of this engagement, Registered Providers will be asked to provide reports detailing their local lettings activity, including total lettings, nominations made to the Council, tenancy types, issues identified through inspections, and compliance with local lettings plans. This approach will allow the Council to assess performance beyond rent policies and tenancy impacts, ensuring transparency, accountability, and that the Council's nomination rights are effectively exercised.

Equalities and Data Protection

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix A

2025/2026

Social Housing Data

Bedrooms	Average Monthly Rate
Shared accommodation (room)	£435.41
1-bed self-contained	£773.51
2-bed self-contained	£973.24
3-bed self-contained	£1,247.40
4-5 bed self-contained	£1,597.50

Private Housing Data

Bedrooms	Average Monthly Rate
Shared accommodation (room)	£640–£775
1-bed self-contained	£950 – £1,250
2-bed self-contained	£1,400 – £1,600
3-bed self-contained	up to £1,785
4-5 bed self-contained	£2,338

Local Housing Allowance Data

Bedrooms	Average Weekly Rate
Shared accommodation (room)	£100.38
1-bed self-contained	£178.36
2-bed self-contained	£224.38
3-bed self-contained	£287.67
4-5 bed self-contained	£368.22

Number of applications on the Housing Register: 1,552

1,541 of these applications are in Reasonable Preference groups.

The main **reasonable preference groups** are:

- People who are homeless or owed a homelessness duty.
- People occupying insanitary, overcrowded, or otherwise unsatisfactory housing.
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including disability-related needs.
- People who need to move to avoid hardship to themselves or others (for example, to access employment, education, or support networks).
- People occupying accommodation secured under homelessness legislation.

Social Housing Stock for Stevenage Borough Council

Studio Provisions	297
1 Bed Provisions	1219
2 Bed Provisions	2019
3 Bed Provisions	2948
4 Bed Provisions	350
Homeless/Emergency Provisions	147
Sheltered Accommodation Provisions	937
Total:	7,917

Property Size Needs

	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3
1 Bedroom	75	156	436
2 Bedroom	27	124	255
3 Bedroom	35	72	210
4 Bedroom	18	38	66
5+ Bedroom	8	28	4

This does not include other Stevenage Social Housing Providers

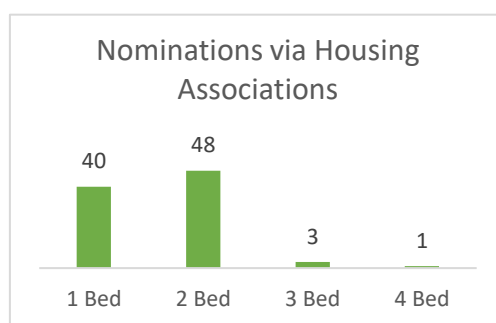
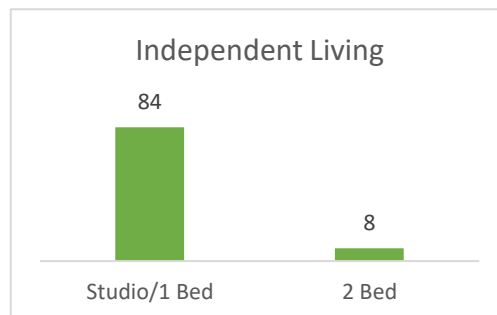
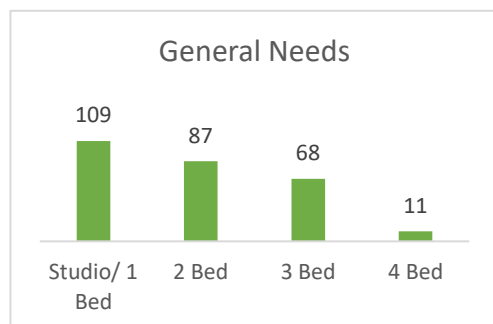
Stevenage Lettings Data

During 2025/2026 there were 459 Lettings which are broken down as follows:

General Needs: 275

Independent Living: 92

Nominations via Housing Associations: 92



National turnover for Social Housing

Statistics from the [English Housing Survey](#) for 2023/24 show the national turnover rate for social housing in England was roughly 4.2% for Local Authority properties. Average length of residence for social renters was 11.7 years.

Length of Tenancy	% of Social Renters
10+ years	61%
3-10 years	23%
Less than 3 years	15%



Tenancy Strategy

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Form

2026-2031

Date created	February 2026
Approved by	Executive/SLT
Owner	Sarah Pateman
Version	X
Author	Chloe Goodchild Quality Assurance Manager
Business Unit and Team	Community Advice and Support

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 EqlA?

Title:	Tenancy Strategy	
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)?	Yes	
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?	Yes	
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?	Yes
Promote equal opportunities?	Yes
Encourage good relations?	Yes

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

Or if you answered 'No' to all of the questions and decide that your activity doesn't need an EqlA 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.

--

I determine that no EqlA is needed to inform the decision on the .

Name of assessor:

Decision approved by:

Role:

Role: Director Housing & Neighbourhoods

Date:

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?		Tenancy Policy			
Lead Assessor	Sarah Pateman			Assessment team	Community Advice and Support
Start date	2026	End date	2031		
When will the EqlA be reviewed? (Typically every 2 years)		February 2028			

Page 197

Who may be affected by the proposed project?	The main people impacted by the Tenancy Strategy would be tenants of Registered Providers of Social Housing including the council. The route to a council tenancy or a home provided by another Registered Provider is predominantly via the Council's Choice Based Lettings system which provides a single database of applicants seeking social housing in Stevenage.
What are the key aims of the proposed project?	The Council's existing tenancy strategy was implemented in 2012 and is now considerably out of date and no longer reflects that current legislative and regulatory framework affecting social housing.

What positive measures are in place (if any) to help fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment	Remove discrimination & harassment	SBC is a third party reporting centre for hate crime / discrimination and actively encouraging	Promote equal opportunities	The service priorities aim to promote equalities through partnership working to ensure that all Stevenage	Encourage good relations

		more organisations to sign up as third party reporting centres to reach the wider community.		resident have equal opportunity access services.	
--	--	--	--	--	--

What sources of data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	SBC Corporate Plan SBC Housing Strategy SBC HRA business plan SBC HRA asses management plan SBC Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy SBC Allocations Policy
---	---

In assessing the potential impact on people, are there any overall comments that you would like to make?	As a Local Authority we need to monitor and assess the impact of the Strategy to ensure that all our practices are guided by the principles of the Equality Act 2010, ensuring our housing services are inclusive and unbiased for all.
--	---

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	YES	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None

Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	The preference for lifetime tenancies will benefit tenants and potential tenants of all ages, offering security and stability. The Tenancy Strategy will positively support older people, as it will encourage landlords to have robust support systems in place to ensure that residents can stay in their home for as long as it remains suitable for them to do so. For those who need changes, such as downsizing, they will be supported by their landlord to make informed choices.		
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Continue to assess suitability for all applicants and offer Independent Living Schemes to tenants where possible.	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	YES	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	The preference for lifetime tenancies will benefit tenants and potential tenants with disabilities by providing stability and security of tenure. The change will also benefit those with mental impairments, ensuring their mental health is not adversely affected by the stress and anxiety of moving and that they can access support services they require without interruption.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Continue to assess the needs for all applicants and work with partnership services to offer suitable properties.	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Gender Reassignment					
Positive impact	None	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None

Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	The strategy is for all residents of Stevenage, irrespective of gender reassignment. There is no evidence that shows that a particular demographic is disproportionately represented or effected by this strategy.		
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	None	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	This strategy is for all tenants, whether married, single or in a civil partnership. There is no evidence that shows that any of these demographics are disproportionately represented or effected by this strategy.				
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	None	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	This strategy will be for all those living within Stevenage, including those experiencing pregnancy/maternity. There is no evidence that shows that this group is disproportionately represented or effected by this strategy.				
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	None	Positive impact	None	Positive impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	This strategy will be for all those living within Stevenage, Including ethnic minority groups. There is no evidence that shows that a particular demographic is disproportionately represented or effected by this strategy.				
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	None	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	The strategy is for all within Stevenage irrespective of religion or beliefs. There is no evidence that shows that a particular demographic is disproportionately represented or effected by this strategy.				
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	None	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None

Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	The strategy is for all residents of Stevenage. There is no evidence that shows that a particular sex is disproportionately represented or effected by this strategy.			
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	None	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	The strategy is for all residents of Stevenage irrespective of sexual orientation There is no evidence that shows that a particular demographic is disproportionately represented or effected by this strategy.				
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					
Positive impact	None	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None

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.

Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	The strategy is for all residents of Stevenage irrespective of socio-economic backgrounds. However, we do recognise that individuals with lower socio-economic resources are further impacted by rent prices.		
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Continue to support all tenants with Tenancy Sustainment support as well as Debt & Welfare Advice and assist with applications for any unclaimed benefits as well as discretionary housing payments.	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

Consultation Findings

Document any feedback gained from the following groups of people:

Staff?	Staff reported that working with partners is the key to problem solving and providing support to residents.	Residents?	Update once consultation is complete
Voluntary & community sector?	Voluntary Sectors agree that in order to make a difference it is essential that we work co-operatively, and information is shared regularly.	Partners?	Update once consultation with RP's is complete
Other stakeholders?			

Overall Conclusion & Future Activity

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		
Negative / unequal impact, barriers to inclusion or improvement opportunities identified	2a. Adjustments made	
	2b. Continue as planned	x
	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?

Approved by Director / Strategic Director: Kerry Clifford

Date:

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

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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