



COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE

Date: Thursday, 23 July 2026

Time: 6.00pm,

Location: Council Chamber

Contact:

committees@stevenage.gov.uk

Members: Councillors: Jim Brown (Chair), Rob Henry (Vice-Chair), Julie Ashley-Wren, Lynda Guy, Dermot Kehoe, Jackie Hollywell, Matthew Hurst CC, Jaysica Marvell, Liam Morrell Phillips, Nigel Williams and Jade Woods

AGENDA

PART 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Community Select Committee held on 07 July 2026.

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**3. OFFICER PRESENTATION ON THE SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY REVIEW**

Members will receive an officer presentation regarding the committee's scrutiny review on the Support for Young People.

Report to follow.

4. COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER 2026

Members are invited to consider the Community Select Committee's Action Tracker for 2026 and to indicate if they wish to receive an update on any previous reviews where they are not already covered in this year's work programme.

7 - 12

5. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

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

6. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

To consider the following motions:

1. That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the ground that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 – 7 of

Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

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

7. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

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

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 7 July 2026

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Jim Brown (Chair), Rob Henry (Vice-Chair), Julie Ashley-Wren, Lynda Guy, Dermot Kehoe, Peter Clark, Matthew Hurst CC, Jaysica Marvell, Liam Morrell Phillips, Nigel Williams and Jade Woods

Start / End Start Time: 18:00
Time: End Time: 19:20

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jackie Hollywell

Councillor Peter Clark was present as a substitute for Councillor Jackie Hollywell.

2 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH 2026**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Community Select Meeting on 25 March 2026 be approved as correct records and signed by the Chair.

3 **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference be noted.

4 **COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2026-27**

The Committee received and considered the Community Select Committee Work Programme. Members noted the inclusion of forthcoming pre-decision scrutiny items on the Tenancy Strategy and Housing Strategy, providing an opportunity to comment on and help shape policy before Cabinet consideration. The Committee also considered the proposed scope for the review of support for young people and noted the programme of future meetings, including updates on the Housing Allocations Policy, damp and mould following the implementation of Awaab's Law, preparations for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), the annual Crime and Disorder Committee meeting, and a focused session on public health.

At this juncture the Chair clarified that the duty on crime and disorder to cooperate was a shared responsibility across partner organisations, including councils, health services, the police, fire and probation services, with each organisation contributing its respective role to achieve coordinated and effective outcomes.

It was also noted that the Action Tracker would be presented at the next meeting to

enable Members to monitor the progress of previous scrutiny reviews and recommendations.

During discussion, Members acknowledged the importance of reviewing previous scrutiny topics to ensure recommendations continued to deliver outcomes. The Committee recognised the close relationship between housing, public health and community wellbeing, and the value of maintaining engagement with health partners. Members also noted the balance between reactive scrutiny of Cabinet decisions and proactive policy development through committee-led reviews. It was acknowledged that the work programme may need to remain flexible to accommodate possible LGR developments during the municipal year.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Community Select Committee Work Programme, as presented, be approved, subject to amendments as required during the year to reflect emerging priorities.

5 **PRE-SCRUTINY POLICY DEVELOPMENT ITEM ON THE TENANCY STRATEGY**

The Director of Housing & Neighbourhoods presented the proposed Tenancy Strategy, which had been brought forward for consideration prior to its submission to Cabinet.

Members were advised that the strategy was a statutory requirement under the Localism Act 2011 and replaced the Council's previous strategy, last reviewed in 2013. The updated strategy reflected legislative changes, including the Renters' Rights Act and the Social Housing (Regulation) Act, and set out the Council's expectations of registered providers in relation to tenancy types, rent setting, tenancy sustainment, partnership working and the effective use of social housing stock.

Officers explained how the strategy complemented the Council's wider housing policies, including the Allocations Policy and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, with an emphasis on preventing tenancy failure, supporting vulnerable tenants, encouraging downsizing where appropriate, promoting mutual exchange and strengthening collaboration with registered providers.

Members noted the significant demand for social housing, with over 1,500 households on the housing register, and acknowledged that demand continued to exceed supply despite the Council's ongoing housebuilding programme.

During discussion, Members raised questions regarding public consultation, succession of tenancies, tenant engagement, void property management, older persons' housing, downsizing incentives, registered providers' responsibilities, housing standards and future housing supply.

Officers confirmed that consultation with registered providers had been undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements and that public consultation had attracted limited responses, although the feedback broadly supported the strategy and highlighted the need for additional affordable housing and enhanced tenancy support.

Members suggested strengthening references to tenant engagement within the strategy and sought reassurance regarding support for tenants, improvements to the management of void properties and measures to encourage downsizing. Officers confirmed that tenancy audits, revised downsizing incentives and continued partnership working with registered providers formed part of the Council's approach. The Committee also discussed the challenges of balancing investment in existing housing stock with the need to deliver new affordable homes and recognised the continuing pressures on the social housing system.

It was **RESOLVED** That the Committee noted the proposed Tenancy Strategy, requested that consideration be given to strengthen tenant engagement and the feedback provided by Members during the discussion be included at Cabinet in July.

6 **DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT FOR REVIEW OF SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Committee considered the draft scoping document for the proposed review into support for young people and discussed the need to refine its scope and key lines of enquiry.

Members agreed that a clear definition of "young people" was required to ensure the review remained focused, with discussion centring on an age range broadly between 14 and 25 years to include secondary education, further and higher education, training, employment and young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Members also suggested examining services previously provided by the Council that were no longer available, like the play bus and play centres, assessing their impact, and considering the effectiveness of current engagement mechanisms such as the Youth Council.

Additional areas identified for inclusion included support for looked after children and care leavers, particularly the transition into adulthood, and the involvement of Hertfordshire County Council and other relevant agencies to provide evidence on transition arrangements and responsibilities.

Members further agreed that the review should adopt a partnership approach by engaging schools, health services and other key organisations. It was noted that previous scrutiny work on skills had been comprehensive and should not be duplicated. Instead, Members proposed a stronger emphasis on young people's mental health, access to services including CAMHS, support for families, neurodiversity, and the impact these issues had on education and wellbeing.

Members also highlighted the importance of considering educational inequalities, including the underachievement of some demographic groups, to ensure the review reflected equality and inclusion objectives. The Chair concluded that the discussion had provided a strong foundation from which officers could refine the scope and develop more detailed lines of enquiry.

It was **RESOLVED** That the draft scoping document be amended to reflect Members' comments, including a clearer definition of the target age range, revised lines of enquiry, and additional evidence sources.

7 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

8 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That under Section 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.

9 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR

Review Title & Committee	Date added to the work programme	Scoping started complete/upd	Review start date (& follow-up dates)	Review Status (date if completed)	Key Recommendations	Executive Portfolio Holder	Date brought back to monitor
Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion	29/04/24	Scoping Document - 08 01 25	08 01 25	Report - 11 November 2025	Recommendation 1- working with the local community to encourage a more diverse range of people involved in leadership roles Recommendation 2 – Increased collaboration between Members and the Equalities Commission Legacy Group Recommendation 3 – The voices and lived experience of the trans community are heard in discussions and at events to help combat misconceptions and hatred Recommendation 4 – carry out an audit of the provision of benches and seating in the town centre Recommendation 5 – Address concerns around digital exclusion for older people be addressed Recommendation 6 – Address concerns raised by Age Concern around the lack of provision of mobility scooter hire service from the bus interchange Recommendation 7 – Address the needs of young people by supporting extracurricular activities in schools and in the community via sports, interests and social clubs Recommendation 8 – To address support for neurodiversity encourage better collaboration between the Council and external mental health experts Recommendation 9 – Address the needs of the sight loss community	Portfolio Holder & Partner Response - 25 March 2026	Not applicable yet
Housing Repairs	09/03/23 & 27/06/23	27/06/23	27/06/23	Final Report 08/01/2024	Rec 1- Development of a suite of Policies and Procedures for Housing Property Services - Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing Property Services be recommended to develop a suite of policies, procedures and processes so that issues like quantifying the level of a repair into an agreed standard can be established which should help the authority manage repairs in a more planned way. Rec 2 – Improved Communication both internal and external (i) AD Building Safety and Housing Property Services be recommended to improve communication both internal and external, ensuring that all team members communicate effectively with tenants and with colleagues to get repairs resolved quickly and efficiently; and (ii) the repairs service improve communications with tenants via direct engagement, social media and newsletters. Rec 3 – Make better use of technology - this could include (i) encouraging tenants to send in digital photos and videos of the repair; (ii) using data on in year repairs against previous years to see trends and to profile the type of work that would be expected in different age/style housing stock; (iii) consider using remote diagnostic tools that are available in the housing sector or the development of an in-house housing App that tenants could use to report on repairs and general stock condition. Rec 4 – Work with the Customer Service Centre regarding training - AD Building Safety and Housing Property Services (i) be invited to work with the Customer Services Centre to improve training to help them clearly identify if the work is a repair or planned investment and (ii) develop a checklist of questions for use with CSC Officers to ask the tenants to ascertain as much information to accompany the original request. Rec 5 – Review of the booking system - That the scheduling system (DRS) be reviewed by the repairs team after the original booking and prior to sending out repairs operatives to ensure everything is in place to avoid the need for a future visit. Rec 6 – Streamline working between Investment and Repairs - Even though they are now one team, there is still a need for the investment and repairs teams to have closer collaboration between them with a standardised process whereby the repair’s team are not relied upon to attend a job to discover it is investment team work, not a repair. Communication to be provided to the tenant to avoid the case appearing to fall into a ‘black hole’ and to avoid confusion and frustration. Rec 7 – Development of an audit trail via a tracker for each repair /enquiry - That the process and journey of each tenant’s request for a repair (whether it be defined as a repair or housing investment) be able to be traced and the initial request is the start of the timeline for the resident.	03/04/24	The Chair has requested regular updates as matters progress

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					Rec 8 – Development of Customer Self-serve App - That the booking hub that is currently under development be brought back to Community Select Committee Members to establish the efficacy of the booking system. While there are improvements in use of technology, it will remain the case that there will be residents who cannot access it and officers will need to resume a client facing approach. Rec 9 – Collecting feedback from all stakeholders - To collect feedback on performance from all stakeholders.		
Housing	16/03/22	11/10/22	05/09/22	Final report	Rec 1- Carry out programmed Tenancy Audit of properties - Consideration would need to be given to how such an	27 06 23	To be

Review Title & Committee	Date added to the work programme	Scoping/ started complete/upd	Review start date (& follow-up dates)	Review Status (date if completed)	Key Recommendations	Executive Portfolio Holder	Date brought back to monitor
Voids	& 07/07/22		11/10/22 13/10/22 (Site visit) 02/11/22 (site visit) 02/11/22 09/03/23	09 03 23	Rec 2 – Carry out parallel processes (i) When a tenant has given the Council notice and hands in the keys early, the voids team will carry out works and administrative processes that are required to minimise the void loss period. (ii) In cases where it is clear that the tenant has abandoned the property, and where the Council is legally able to do so, that the works that are required in the property be carried out in parallel to the legal process of formally regaining the property via the notice to quit period and the repossession order.		scheduled - suggested monitoring item early in the 2024-25 Municipal Year.
					Rec 3 - Regular sharing of data on voids with Members - (i) Provide data on all void properties for a twelve-month period. To see what the actual performance of Void properties with general needs had a standard target of 26 days, and some properties with major needs had a turnaround of up to 64 days. (ii) That until Members are confident that there are new robust monitoring procedures in place for the voids process then Members will be recommending that there should be regular monitoring of progress with voids which is shared with Members on a quarterly basis.		
					Rec 4 – Recruitment Provide periodic updates to the Executive Portfolio Holder for Housing and Housing Development, and in turn the Community Select Committee on the progress with recruitment and retention of DSO officers and with any temporary outsourcing of voids work to external contractors.		
					Rec 5 - a revised Officer data capture of end-to-end void process That officers provide Members with a detailed proposal of the end-to-end void process so they can make a view as to whether this process is likely to have the desired Impact of raising the current performance levels of the voids service.		
					Rec 6 – investigate potential incentives and penalties to encourage tenants to maintain their rented properties in a reasonable condition The Committee is keen for officers to explore ways to hold tenants to account for keeping SBC’s property/their home in good repair. Where there are rechargeable repairs identified in inspection activity or otherwise, throughout the term of the tenancy, that the tenant is charged, at discretion, to avoid leaving multiple repairs and a large bill at the end of the tenancy. This should include unauthorised modifications.		
					Rec 7 - Pursue better benchmarking with similar local authorities Officers saw the benefit of local, meaningful benchmarking discussions and future sharing of data compared with the current national benchmarking group – Housemark. Housing officers will continue to reach out to other similar sized authorities who have a retained housing stock to share experiences and where possible data.		
Pre-scrutiny into the New Towns Heritage Centre	16 03 22	Scoping Agreed 11 11 22	21 09 21 03 11 21 30 11 21 16 03 22	16 03 22	Rec 1 - Curation (Arts programme)/engagement with the community/ Governance structure (i)That Stevenage Museum’s curation should continue to be led by the expertise of the Museum Curator and engage with local residents through co-curation projects to provide a mix of: aspirational, informative, inclusive, accessible and affordable museum and arts offers to Stevenage people.(ii) As well as a New Towns focus consideration should be given to having a unique selling point/exhibition, outside of the New Towns story, so could be worth considering – e.g. Mars Rover Space Exploration.	Not applicable as the report was pre-scrutiny	To be scheduled

Review Title & Committee	Date added to the work programme	Meeting started complete/upd	Review start date (& follow-up dates)	Review Status (date if completed)	Key Recommendations	Executive Portfolio Holder	Date brought back to monitor
					Rec 2 - Community Engagement That it is important that, whatever is offered at the Museum or any public art that is provided within the Hub, that it is accessible to the whole of the community, so engagement with all members of the local diverse community should happen to see what would they like to have included?	policy developm't	
					Rec 3 - Management/Governance Structure That serious consideration is given by the Executive to the New Towns Heritage Centre’s governance arrangements, setting up an independent culture body to provide autonomy for the Heritage Centre made up of a mix of stakeholders, similar to the model with the Regeneration Town Centre Board, this type of independent governance body could be supported by a panel of people who are outside of the Council and have a specialist arts and heritage expertise from Stevenage, Herts and/or the Eastern Region.		
					Rec 4 - Museum without walls – Use of technology virtual museum and QR codes around the town (i) That the Executive consider, as well as a physical New Towns Heritage Centre as part of the new Civic Hub building in the regenerated Town Centre, pursuing the concept of “Museums without walls”. This could include providing funding from the Towns Deal fund or Members Local Community Budgets (LCB) towards a dedicated website for the Museum that is independent of the Council’s website. It was quoted that with the existing Council website to have compressed digital photos with the current provider would cost in the region of £8.5k....(ii) That the Executive considers approaching the City		
					Rec 5 - Building – design features – use of technology in the building That the Executive consider as part of the New Towns Heritage Centre 21st Century design features. The building should have the highest possible environmental credentials and be a carbon neutral building and incorporate the use of technology in the building. (Members recommend 6 specific design features listed in the final report and recommendations) .		
					Rec 6 - Commercial activity /Funding/Cost point for entry That the Executive consider the possible Commercial activities associated with the New Towns Heritage Centre. During the site visits Members were taken with the crucial role that various commercial activities can do to support the users of the building - (Members recommend 7 specific design features listed in the final report and recommendations).		
					Rec 7 - Developing a hub and spoke approach for arts & historical heritage across the town - That the Executive consider continuing a hub and spoke model which makes best use of our CNM and Play Services infrastructure, i.e. in our neighbourhoods which would support the main hub core offer at the New Towns Heritage Centre.		
Sports & Leisure	01/04/19	4 June 2019/updated	04/06/2019 03/07/2019	Report & Recommen	There were 24 recommendations in total: (see the final report for all of the recommendations)	Not applicable	To be scheduled

Review Title & Committee	Date added to the work programme	Scoping/ started complete/upd	Review start date (& follow-up dates)	Status (date if completed)	Key Recommendations	Executive Portfolio Holder	Date brought back to monitor
		3 July 2019	17/09/2019 04/11/2019 08/01/2020 21/10/2020	Recommendations 21 10 20	• 6 recommendations specifically around improved accessibility to sports & leisure opportunities linked to health benefits • 9 recommendations around improved marketing opportunities and use of the website • 6 recommendations regarding infrastructure improvements • 3 recommendations suggesting improved liaison between SBC and SLL	as the report included an Exec response due to Covid	
Housing Allocations Review		13/07/17	13/07/2107 26/09/2017 01/11/2017 08/01/2018 07/02/2018	Complete 07/02/18	Rec 1. Staff training with regards to advice when moving between properties, more support for tenants with literacy or language problems or limited access to online services. Rec 2. Consider the provision of shared accommodation for under 35s who will be impacted by the Housing Benefit Cap. Rec 3. Priority be given to under occupiers wishing to downsize their properties. Rec 4. Review the local connection criteria for persons moving into areas close to the Borough whilst on the housing waiting list. Rec 5. Make alternative and improved use of hard to let sheltered accommodation. Rec 6. Arrange a communications campaign to help 'myth bust' and revisit the terminology used with bidders to be clear and help manage expectations. Rec 7. Stop the current practise of automatically informing housing bidders where their bid was within the top 50 bids. Rec 8. For all new tenancies, an up-to-date gas check be completed on the property and be fully working before the new tenant moves in.	05/06/18	21/10/25
Resident Engagem'nt		Revised Scoping Document - 12 July 2019	20/06/18 12/07/18 04/09/18 02/10/18	Final Report - 24 01 19	• 4 recommendations on the digital agenda including improved website to capture resident comment and touch screens and digital boards	22/03/23	To be scheduled

Review Title & Committee	Date added to the work programme	Review started complete/upd	Review date (& follow-up dates)	Status (date if completed)	Key Recommendations	Executive Portfolio Holder	Date brought back to monitor
		July 2018	02/10/18 07/11/18 09/01/19 24/01/19		• A recommendation to improve face-to-face engagement with residents and manage expectations of residents during community engagement work		
					• 3 recommendations on integrating community engagement work into individual business units		
					• 2 recommendations on improved consultation demographics		
					• 2 recommendations on promotion of engagement methods and branding		
					• 2 recommendations on engagement toolkits and including in corporate reports		
					• A recommendation on increasing the number of Neighbourhood Wardens to at least one per County Council electoral division		
					• A recommendation on addressing the diversity of people on existing structures such as the Housing Management Advisory Board and Customer Scrutiny Panel		
					• A recommendation on publicising the results of consultation and then responding to it		
					• A recommendation that the consultation toolkit should promote ways to engage the public in local time bound projects that build engagement between residents and the Council		
					• A recommendation that there be an annual revisit to the Resident Engagement Framework to check if the methodology used is still relevant		
Damp and Mould 1908 12	Mar-16	Jun-16	Sep-16	Complete January 2017	The review made 10 recommendations about how the Council responds to damp and mould cases including: the way it treats tenants, logging cases, agreed response times, budget provision to address in small flat blocks.	Mar-17	09 01 23
					On 02 10 18 the Committee brought back the recommendations for monitoring and again on 30 11 19 and again most recently on 09 01 23.		