Appendix Two.

Future Town, Future Council Outcomes and Focus for 2018/19

External Facing Programmes

1. Stevenage Centre Town Centre Regeneration Programme

1.1. Programme Outcomes

- A new vibrant town centre delivered through a phased regeneration programme.
- Two major regeneration schemes to advance – one completed by 2020/21 and one to begin 2019/20.

1.2. Programme Overview

1.3. Regeneration of the town centre is the Council's number one priority and was the priority most often placed in residents' 'top three' in the town-wide survey undertaken this year. The Council wants to make Stevenage a destination of choice through delivering a new vibrant town centre, with quality shopping, office and leisure facilities.

1.4. The Council officially announced the appointment of Mace as the development partner for Town Centre regeneration in February. Mace, the international development and construction company behind some of the world's landmark developments, will be undertaking the first phase of regeneration (SG1).

1.5. Stevenage is now the single largest regeneration zone in the East of England. The key building blocks of SG1 include:

- **Stevenage Core** – signature public space, new retail, residential, restaurants and cafes; and other civic uses.
- **New Public Sector Hub** - new health facilities, a library, civic spaces and offices.
- **Southgate Park** – which will include new residential apartments, a linear park and potentially a new urban primary school.

1.6. During 2018/19 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Signing off the Development Agreement for SG1.
- Working with Mace to develop and consult on plans for SG1.
- Progressing more detailed plans for a public sector hub in the town.
- Completing improvements to the Market Place and wayfinding signage as well as developing plans to improve the Town Square.
- Establishing the "Stevenage Works" local labour market employment & training initiative in conjunction with North Herts College and Job Centre plus.

- Opening the visitors' centre to showcase the history of Stevenage as well as ambitious future plans.

2. Housing Development Programme

2.1. Programme Outcomes

- Increased number of affordable houses in Stevenage.
- Improve access to the housing market in Stevenage for greater number of residents.

2.2. Programme Overview

2.3. Providing decent, affordable homes appropriate to the needs of residents is one of the Council's key priorities. The Council is meeting this priority by delivering its own new build programme.

2.4. The Council progressed well with the adoption of the new Local Plan during 2017/18. A successful Public Examination of the plan was held, with the independent Planning Inspector giving a positive report after listening to the views of residents and businesses. The Council is now working with the Government to get the plan adopted. The plan should then provide the certainty to encourage developers to bring forward their schemes to provide a range of housing, including a proportion of affordable homes.

2.5. During 2018/19 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Completing and letting 54 new homes across a number of schemes.
- Starting work on a further 267 new/replacement homes across a range of planned schemes.
- Consulting with the public and securing planning permission for the Kenilworth Close site, including plans for the flagship older persons housing scheme.
- Exploring the viability of other potential areas of development across the town including opportunities to work in partnership with other providers.
- Continuing to work with partners to enable the delivery of affordable homes.

3. Excellent Council Homes Programme

3.1. Programme Outcomes

- Transforming the Housing and Investment service to better meet the needs of its customers.

3.2. Programme Overview

3.3. The Council's aim is to provide high quality, efficient and effective housing services. The Council has committed through the Excellent Council Homes programme to transform its housing services to better meet the needs of its customers.

3.4. During 2017/18 work started on Phase 1 of the programme to implement digital improvements and new ways of working and to provide staff with tools and skills to deliver excellent customer service. These improvements lay the essential foundations for Phase 2 of the programme, which will continue the delivery of digital improvements, embed new ways of working and enable customers to benefit from improved access to services through a wide range of methods, including online self-service services and additional support for those who need it.

3.5. During 2018/19 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Using customer insight information to develop a better understanding of customers' views and requirements, to enable provision of a more bespoke housing service for each individual customer and improved cohesion with services to the neighbourhood.
- Continuing to improve the way staff and customers use technology.
- Commencing implementation of mobile working in order to save time and enable staff to access information whenever and wherever it is needed.
- Beginning to digitalise the housing service offer in order to provide customers with an additional channel of communication and an opportunity to self-serve.
- Working with members of staff to create a lean, efficient and cohesive workforce that will work towards a 'One Team' approach and a 'Customer First' culture.

4. Co-operative and Neighbourhood Management Programme

4.1. Programme Outcomes

- Residents feel that they can work with the council and other organisations to help meet the needs of the local area.
- Staff better understand the town's communities and through doing so are more able to deliver the change that is required.
- Public spaces are more attractive, better cared for by the council and residents, and help to give people pride in the place they live.
- The Council's Community centres are efficiently run, well-managed and most importantly, meet local needs.

4.2. Programme Overview

4.3. The Co-operative Neighbourhood Management programme sets out how the Council will work with communities to improve the neighbourhoods. Through working together with residents and other partners the Council believes public spaces can be made more attractive and in turn help to give people pride in the place they live. The programme was formally launched at Stevenage Day in June 2017 and is complemented by a new 'Our Neighbourhood' area on the Council's website.

4.4. Expenditure on the programme in 2017/18 amounted to £459,353, which was used for public realm and playground improvements in addition to the neighbourhood warden scheme. A total of £491,600 New Homes Bonus (NHB) has been allocated to fund further improvements and the neighbourhood wardens in 2018/19. In addition, £40,000 NHB will fund a pilot to trial community involvement in decision making in the wards where the programme has been implemented.

4.5. During 2018/19 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Responding to priorities identified through engagement with residents of St Nicholas and Martins Wood in 2017/18, by making significant investment in those wards to improve public spaces and the quality of life of local people. The focus will be on youth engagement/ provision, street lighting, parking issues resolution, open spaces and grounds maintenance and health and wellbeing.
- Engaging with ward Members, partners and communities on the next phase of planned investment in the wards of Bedwell and Longmeadow.
- Investing £230k in outdoor play sites in Bedwell and Longmeadow.
- Seeking Council agreement to a sustainable model for the provision and management of community centres.
- Procuring contractors to launch the Stevenage-wide garage refurbishment programme, with social value requirements being built into the contract.
- Supporting residents in becoming more active members of their community, who make a positive contribution to the town and local area.
- Designing a council-wide framework to support officers and Members in effective and meaningful community engagement.
- Creating a more streamlined approach to increase and enhance volunteering within the Council.

5. Connected to our Customers Programme

5.1. Programme Outcomes

- Use of self-service is encouraged, so more time can be spent with customers that need extra help.

- Increased customer satisfaction for residents interacting with key services.
- Online customer data will be protected, better used to provide useful insight, and the technology reliable.
- The Council uses technology to meet its ambitions and make its workforce more modern, efficient and responsive to customer needs.
- A simple and clearer website with more self-service choices.

5.2. Programme Overview

5.3. The 'Connected to our Customers' programme aims to improve the accessibility of Council services and the customer experience. It will enhance the way residents can access Council services through increasing the use of digital options, whilst ensuring that officers continue to spend time with those customers who require additional assistance.

5.4. The town-wide Resident Survey demonstrated support amongst residents for improved digital services: 39% of respondents put 'interacting more with residents and customers on-line' first on their list of ways the Council could save money, whilst 33% indicated that their preferred way to be kept informed was via the website and a further 29% viewed social media as the best channel of communication.

5.5. In February 2017 Members agreed to invest £2.1m over three financial years, of which a significant proportion was for the delivery of the Connected to our Customers Programme.

5.6. In 2017/18 it was recognised that IT improvements were needed to enable the delivery of the wider Connected to Our Customers programme. Therefore the majority of the programme was put on hold pending delivery of these improvements. In November 2017 an IT improvement plan was approved by the Executive. The overarching plan was informed by a range of activity to test the current position and set direction for the future. The improvement plan is based on four key areas of activity: improving resilience, strengthening security, adopting best practice management, and developing a longer-term forward strategy.

5.7. In partnership with East Herts District Council a series of IT infrastructure enhancements were delivered during 2017/18 including the installation of new storage capacity and the decommissioning of legacy business systems.

5.8. During 2018/19 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Improving the online offer by delivering a simple, clearer website and straightforward online self-service options for key routine transactions, helping customers to self- serve.
- Involving customers and staff in designing and testing new digital products and services before launching them.
- Launching a new customer strategy that sets out the Council's ambitious plans to improve customer service and promises to deliver a consistent customer service standard across the Council.
- Supporting the overall customer service offer and efficiency by improving back office processes and technology within the Council, and making sure all personal data is secure.

Internal Facing Programmes

6. Financial Security Programme

6.1. Programme Outcomes

- As set out in Figure 1: Financial Security Work streams

Figure 1: Financial Security Work streams

6.2. Programme Overview

6.3. This programme aims to ensure that the Council has sufficient funds available to deliver quality services that residents want and need. The Council aims to break away from the cycle of dependency on Government grant through becoming more efficient in its processes and developing new and innovative funding streams to ensure it has the resources it needs to be a Council fit for the future and build a vibrant town that residents deserve.

6.4. During 2018/19 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Identifying Financial Security options that meet the three-year Financial Security targets (£2.2Million General Fund and £1Million HRA).
- Managing budgetary efficiency through regular monitoring, analysis of trends and robust challenge of spend as part of the efficiency work stream.
- Setting targets and delivering savings against each individual Financial Security work stream including Fees and Charges.

7. Employer of Choice Programme

7.1. Programme Outcomes

- Improved employee engagement.
- Right person, right place, right time – recruiting/retaining staff to hard to fill posts.
- Improved managerial competency.
- Improved reputation as a place to work.
- Evidence of staff progressing to higher grades and new roles.

7.2. Programme Overview

7.3. The Council aims to create a flexible, collaborative, creative and modern workforce to ensure it can deliver the priorities set out in the FTFC programme and give residents the standard of services they expect. This programme aims to transform the way the Council works, ensuring that staff have the skills, abilities and experience to deliver excellence. The Council must become an employer of choice so that it can compete in today's market place and attract and retain the best staff to build for the future.

7.4. During 2016/17 the Senior Management Review was completed and a new leadership team is now in place. Through Future Council Business Reviews, work began during 2017/18 on shaping the next stage of the transformation programme to ensure the Council has the right structures, teams and people in place.

7.5. During 2018/19 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Establishing a compelling employer brand with a competitive pay and benefit offer.
- Developing and implementing a competency framework for staff from Grade 1- 9 of the Council's pay structure.
- Managing Organisational Change effectively with a new appraisal process and valuing staff's health and wellbeing.
- Enabling new ways of working to equip staff for the future including policies, practices and culture.
- Developing digital skills and tools to enable staff self-service.
- Creating a new Learning and Development Strategy.

8. Performing at our Peak Programme

8.1. Programme Outcomes

- The provision of high quality performance management software tools.
- Streamlined governance structures that ensure effective and timely decision making.
- A strong performance culture is embedded across the organisation.

8.2. Programme Overview

8.3. The Council aims to become an insightful Council with improved service performance and slimmed down decision-making processes. The programme will improve the organisation's insight, analysis and intelligence to help us to make better informed business decisions. This is being achieved through more timely coordination of data and the adoption of tools to support ongoing strategic and operational analysis.

8.4. During 2018/19 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Enhancing business insight through data connectivity and ensuring service managers have the right skills to use the performance management tool robustly to analyse information and make informed decisions that result in improved services for customers.
- Embedding the performance culture through the effective use of new tools and procedures, to enable lasting performance improvement.
- Completing a review of arrangements for decision making (scheme of delegation) to ensure continued robust and efficient decision-making by council officers at the appropriate level of seniority.