
Meeting: EXECUTIVE

Agenda Item:

Portfolio Area: All

Date: 12 December 2018

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER TWO 2018/19

NON-KEY DECISION

Author – Elaine Wright Ext. 2192

Contributors – Richard Protheroe/Charlie Smith/Chloe Norton Ext. 2938/2457/2501,
All Assistant Directors

Lead Officer – Scott Crudgington Ext. 2185

Contact Officer – Richard Protheroe Ext. 2938

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To highlight the Council's performance across key priorities and themes for quarter two 2018/19.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the delivery of priorities which form the Future Town, Future Council Programme and performance of the Council across the key themes for quarter two 2018/19 together with the latest achievements be noted.
- 2.2 That the review of contractual arrangements for the management of health and safety compliance and measures implemented to ensure regulations continue to be met are noted and endorsed (para 3.88 to 3.91).
- 2.3 That the resource planning implemented to provide a sustainable solution to meeting the level of customer contacts through the Customer Service Centre and provide a more consistent level of service to customers are noted and endorsed (para 3.107 to 3.113).
- 2.4 That the improvements in sickness management practice be noted and endorsed (para 3.122 to 3.127).

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Members approved the Cooperative Corporate Plan in December 2016. It reflects the Council's continuing focus on cooperative working and outlines the key outcomes and priorities for the town over the next five years through the Future Town, Future Council (FTFC) Programme as seen in Figure 1.

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Future town future council



Figure 1: Future Town, Future Council Programme

- 3.2 The FTFC Programme was reviewed at March 2018 to ensure that it continued to reflect the Council's priorities. As it was apparent that working in partnership is embedded in the culture of the Council and there is a strong framework for future collaboration with other public sector bodies, the Partner of Choice Programme was closed. Development of partnerships continues as part of day-to-day business and any new shared service proposals will be considered and implemented within the Financial Security Programme.
- 3.3 Council services are organised into nine Business Units across three themes: Customer, Place and Transformation and Support. This structure is focused on delivering the right services, to the right standards, at the right time for the town's residents and businesses, using the most cost/resource effective delivery models.
- 3.4 In addition to monitoring progress on the delivery of the FTFC Programme, performance across these (Council Service) themes is monitored throughout the year to highlight achievements and identify any areas for improvement.
- 3.5 A complete set of performance measures across all themes (FTFC programme, and the customer, place, and transformation and support themes) is attached as Appendix One. Summaries of performance measure result status are outlined at paragraph 3.7 (FTFC focus) and paragraph 3.80 (Corporate Focus).

Future Town, Future Council Programme progress update

- 3.6 The focus and scope of the FTFC programmes is outlined in Appendix Two. Delivery of the agreed outcomes is monitored to ensure that the Programme remains on track.
- 3.7 In addition to the monitoring of programme milestones, fifteen measures aligned to FTFC delivery were monitored and reported on for April to September 2018. The overview of FTFC focused results for April 2018 to September 2018 is outlined below:

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Number of Measures Reported	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (urgent improvement action required)
15	12	1	2

3.8 Improvement activity for the performance measure results that did not achieve target is outlined in the relevant programme - Paragraphs that refer are indicated below:

- CNM2g: Garage void rate: April to September 2018 target 12%, achieved 12.62% - paragraph 3.45 refers
- CTOC1: Customer complaints responded to within corporate deadline, April to September 2018 target 95%, achieved 88.02% - paragraph 3.56 refers
- EoCInt: Percentage of roles recruited to that were filled by staff within the Council, September 2018 target 20%, achieved 39.02% - paragraph 3.73 refers

3.9 Programme delivery updates for the FTFC Programmes together with an outline of any focused activity being implemented to keep the programmes on track are set out in the following paragraphs.

External Facing Future Town, Future Council Programmes

Stevenage Town Centre Regeneration Programme

3.10 Programme Outcomes

- A new vibrant town centre delivered through a phased regeneration programme.
- Two major regeneration schemes to advance – one completed by 2021 and one to begin 2019/20.

3.11 During 2018/19 the programme is primarily focused on:

- Beginning the first phase of the town centre regeneration, working with our development partner
 - Signing off the Development Agreement for SG1
 - Working with Mace to develop and consult on plans for SG1
 - Opening the visitors' centre to showcase our history as well as our ambitious future
- Progressing more detailed plans for a public sector hub in the town
- Progressing the public realm improvements within the town centre

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- Completing improvements to the Market Place and wayfinding signage
- Developing plans to improve the Town Square
- Establishing the 'Stevenage Works' local labour market and employment initiative in conjunction with partners

3.12 Programme Delivery Update

- 3.13 The Regeneration team are working closely with developer Mace, the international development and construction company behind some of the world's landmark developments, to progress the development agreement for the first phase of town centre regeneration (SG1). This ambitious scheme will bring £350million of private investment into the town centre and will see the area covering the Council (Daneshill House) offices, the Plaza, bus station and some of the adjacent car parks redeveloped with new shops, bars and restaurants, homes, new public spaces, and a central public sector hub accommodating the Council offices, a library, exhibition space, and health services.
- 3.14 Planning permission for the redevelopment of Queensway North was granted by the Council in September. The scheme will refurbish the retail units on the ground floor as well as create new leisure and office opportunities on the first floor. The scheme will also bring forwards over 100 residential units which will help to add further footfall through the town centre. It is expected that construction will commence early in 2019.
- 3.15 Planned public realm improvements to Market Place have now been completed. The revitalised Market Place is now a 'family-fun' orientated street that will encourage family visits to the town centre through a new adventure themed play space for families as well as an attractive space to relax and enjoy the town centre that will give new life to a central part of the town's retail core.
- 3.16 The installation of thirty (wayfinder) signs to help residents and visitors find town centre shops and services is near completion. The Wayfinding system couples the provision of an accurate functional system of navigation with high quality design.
- 3.17 The Stevenage Works Board which comprises of senior officers from North Herts College (NHC), SBC and Job Centre Plus met for the first time at the end of October. The meeting was also attended by the Major Refurbishment Contract (Flat Block) contractors. The terms of reference have been finalised and the arrangements for establishing targets and tracking the performance of the initiative were discussed. Opportunities for contractor related training to be channelled through the College were also highlighted

Housing Development Programme

3.18 Programme Outcomes

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

3.19 During 2018/19 the programme is primarily focused on:

- Completing and letting 54 new high quality homes across a number of design and build schemes.
- Starting design work on a further 267 new/replacement homes across a range of planned schemes that deliver wider place shaping benefits.
- Consulting with the public and securing planning permission for the Kenilworth Close site, including plans for the flagship older persons housing scheme to meet the needs of the town's ageing population.
- 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.

3.20 Programme Delivery Update

3.21 Consultation on the Kenilworth Scheme, incorporating a flagship older persons housing scheme, has now been completed. The public consultation event was attended by more than 100 people, with 70% in favour of the development. Further public consultation was carried out at a Bragbury End resident day, and a meeting of the Bragbury End resident association. The planning application has now been submitted that includes changes reflecting some of the consultation, and architectural and planning officers' advice.

3.22 The six new build homes at the Wedgewood Way site are complete and now available for the Council to acquire. Contracts are with the Council's legal department and on track to exchange in quarter three.

3.23 The Twin Foxes Scheme to deliver 14 apartments (8 for affordable rent and 6 for social rent) has been completed. All the units have been let to applicants on the Housing Register. Prior to handover, the Housing Portfolio Holder and local ward councillors were invited to have a tour around the site and an open day was held at the site. Approximately eighty local residents attended with feedback being extremely positive and many seeking to try and purchase the new flats outright.

3.24 The March Hare Scheme to deliver fifteen new homes was granted planning permission on 5 December 2017. Initial foundation work is being completed. However, progress has been impacted by contractor liquidation. Officers have put the site back out to tender for a suitable contractor to ensure the scheme

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is delivered effectively with minimum delay. It is estimated that the scheme will complete during summer 2019 following retender.

- 3.25 Architectural and site preparation work is currently being completed for the three sites prioritised for development during 2018: Symonds Green, Shephall Way, North Road.
- The North Road Scheme for 21 apartments in a blended modern and period style: A positive pre-application meeting has been held and the planning application is being prepared. Site preparation is progressing well with demolition of the old structure being completed and site remediation works ongoing.
 - The Symonds Green Scheme: Architects are developing proposals. The initial proposals of 18 units on the site have been increased with current proposals for 29 units. Formal pre-application advice is scheduled during November.
 - The Shephall Way Scheme: The development proposal is currently for 9 units. Pre-application advice is complete and the planning application is being prepared, there has been little objection to this scheme.
- 3.26 The Ditchmore Lane Scheme to convert three existing properties into ten apartments has been out to tender and the selection process for the principal contractor is nearing completion.
- 3.27 The Council's Housing Development programme has facilitated the completion of 149 homes to June 2018.

Excellent Council Homes Programme

3.28 Programme Outcome

- Transforming the Housing and Investment service to better meet the needs of its customers.
- 3.29 During 2018/19 the programme is primarily focused 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.

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3.30 Programme Delivery Update

- 3.31 A contractor, Hamilton Mercer, delivered customer service training to staff. Initial training with officers across Housing, Investment, the Customer Service Centre and Customer Focus Teams focused on strengthening customer service skills to ensure staff are helpful, efficient and professional. The provision of the training will help staff deal with customer feedback and enquiries more professionally, equip staff with more assertive and professional language and make sure staff members have tools which will help them not to be personally affected by any potential difficult conversations.
- 3.32 Customer champions will ensure that the skills attained are fully embedded in approaches to customer service and dealing with customer feedback. The nature and quality of customer feedback will be monitored to determine any further development opportunities.
- 3.33 The enhancement of Housing IT systems to ensure that new services are being captured on the IT modules has been implemented. The enhancements will support customers to self-serve in the future, enabling customers to take responsibility for their Personal Housing Plans which is now a requirement through the Homelessness Reduction Act. The following modules have been implemented:
- Task Manager Module– this will enable better workflow management where the right officer is allocated the right task in a timely way. It will enable better casework monitoring and improved customer communication.
 - Housing Advice Module - this automates the creation of personal housing plans for customers and enables clients to update their own progress against the plan themselves.
 - Key Details Module – will capture customer information in one place and will enable officers to make more informed decisions and provide a more effective response to customer enquiries.
- 3.34 The Northgate online system will also be implemented to provide customers with an opportunity to access information in their housing account through the Council website in order to make changes to personal information, apply for a council home (or garage), report a repair, pay their rent and complete additional functions.
- 3.35 To help enhance Housing & Investment service efficiency an electronic document management system has been procured following a review of the current systems used in the Housing service for document management. The system, already used by the Revenues and Benefits team, is directly linked to Northgate, which will allow teams to upload customer/property/case documents and access and search for them easily. This will allow them to process and store fewer documents; establish a sound process for allocating tasks and tracking the progress of complaints; and contribute to compliance with General Data Protection Regulations. Documents are being scanned to facilitate use of the system.

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3.36 Mobile IT devices are being used by staff to provide a more efficient service to customers to include a range of beneficial services such as showing residents their rent accounts, completing on-line housing benefit forms, reporting repairs and directly recording case notes.

Co-operative and Neighbourhood Management Programme

3.37 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 facilitate 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.

3.38 During 2018/19 the programme is primarily focused 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.
- Award and alignment of the works contract for the Garage Improvement Programme with the delivery of the Major Refurbishment Contract works to achieve economies of scale including an enhanced social value offer.
- 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.

3.39 Programme Delivery Update

3.40 Two Neighbourhood Action Groups are being established in St Nicholas and Shephall. Neighbourhood Forums will bring together a range public sector services, voluntary organisations and local residents to develop

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neighbourhood plans outlining community priorities and associated neighbourhood enhancement projects.

- 3.41 Council officers have continued discussions throughout the Summer with partners, local groups and neighbourhood residents of Hampson Park and St Nicholas, the Oval and the Hyde shopping centres in order to gain a better understanding of local people's priorities for their neighbourhood. Areas of focus include:
- The need for a community hub in the Hyde area.
 - Responding to community safety concerns.
 - Strengthening activity to deal with litter and street cleaning.
- 3.42 To determine local improvement priorities officers are working in partnership with the community engagement worker of the Oval Co-op supermarket on consultations. A business network group is being established at the Oval with match funding (to Council funding) being made available by the Co-op to deliver enhancement activity.
- 3.43 The review of Community Centres to develop a more sustainable model of operation for the future has progressed well. Initial analysis has now been completed and potential models discussed with Executive. Officers and members are working together to outline the process and structure of the review and the approach to consultation with community associations.
- 3.44 Council officers are working with Members of the Community Select Committee to identify an improved approach to engaging with Stevenage communities in a new Community Engagement Framework, with the aim of encouraging more co-operative working and input to Council decision-making. Holy Brook Associates carried out research on potential models that were presented to the Committee in September 2018. The Community Select Committee are now working with officers to develop the recommended approach for Executive consideration in quarter three.
- 3.45 At their October meeting, Executive agreed for the garage refurbishment work to be added to the Council's major refurbishment contract for flatblocks. The project team are working with the contractors to survey the garage blocks that are to receive improvement in early 2019 and are liaising with the tenants and private garage owners to make necessary access arrangements. These 33 blocks have a collective void rate of 38% and (fully-let) should yield an additional income of £100k per year. To support the programme's outcome that garage sites are more attractive and better cared for, the Council is inviting the owners of sold garages in our blocks to take advantage of the reduced rates that it has obtained and pay to have their own garages refurbished as part of our programme. Via the Cooperative and Neighbourhood Management programme, officers are working together to identify garage sites that attract anti-social behaviour so that by working co-operatively with local residents alongside the refurbishment work, these issues can be removed.

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- The garage void rate is slightly higher than projected: April to September 2018 target 12%, achieved 12.62%

Connected to our Customers Programme

3.46 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.

3.47 During 2018/19 the programme is primarily focused on:

- Launching a new customer strategy that sets out our ambitious plans to improve customer service, including a 'Promise' to our customers about how we aim to deliver a consistent customer service standard across the Council.
- Improving our online offer by delivering a simple and clearer website and straightforward on line self-service options for key routine transactions, helping our customers to self-serve on line and involving customers and staff in designing and testing new digital products and services before we launch them.
- Making sure our customer service centre is effectively resourced to meet customer demands and answer calls in a reasonable time; and is easy to use, especially for people who need it the most.
- Supporting our overall customer service offer and efficiency by improving back office processes and technology within the Council, and making sure all personal data is secure.

3.48 Programme Delivery Update

3.49 Arrangements for an improved Council website are progressing in partnership with East Hertfordshire Council. Senior management agreed the key development requirements that will guide delivery of a website that better meets customer needs. A new website platform has been procured and its content is scheduled to be developed between December 2018 and May 2019 and the launch is planned for July 2019.

3.50 Slippage has occurred within the programme mainly due to reduced staffing capacity and legacy IT infrastructure challenges. This will be partially resolved through the recruitment of a new Assistant Director (Digital Services and Transformation) who will be responsible for reviewing and rebasing the programme. In addition two project managers have been recruited who will help move a number of the digital projects forward.

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- 3.51 Customer Service team leaders and senior advisers were trained on the self-service module for Revenue and Benefits customers 'Connect and Serve' in August and scoping for a customer 'self-scanning' solution started in September 2018.
- 3.52 Training is well underway to develop digital champions at SBC that include representatives from all service areas to help deliver best practice web content.
- 3.53 A series of IT Infrastructure enhancements are being implemented to provide a more reliable and secure service that supports delivery of more digital solutions for customers and staff. Elements of capital funding required have been established in the Capital Programme and the Shared IT Partnership Board has agreed buy-in of additional resources.
- 3.54 Work has been carried out to ensure Stevenage Borough Council is General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant and to make sure staff are aware of their responsibilities with regards to the management of customer data. Training to help service teams understand the importance of good customer information handling has included:
- Mandatory GDPR e-learning
 - Bespoke training delivered to field –based operatives (Cavendish Depot)
 - Bitesize lunchtime learning sessions
- 3.55 Training initially being offered to officers across Housing, Investment, the Customer Service Centre and Customer Focus Teams in quarter three focused on strengthening customer service skills to ensure staff are helpful, efficient and professional (referred to in paragraph 3.31) will be offered to relevant staff in other business units later in the year.
- 3.56 The Senior Leadership Team monitor the performance and management of customer feedback across business units and direct that responsible officers respond promptly, professionally and comprehensively within a reasonable timeframe.
- CTOC1: Customer complaints responded to within corporate deadline, April to September 2018 target 95%, achieved 88.02%.

Internal Facing Future Town, Future Council Programmes

Financial Security Programme

3.57 Programme Outcomes

3.58 As set out in Figure 2: Financial Security Work streams.



Figure 2: Financial Security Work streams.

3.59 During 2018/19 the programme is primarily focused on:

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

3.60 Programme Delivery Update

3.61 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was reported to the September Executive setting out the Financial Security Target and General Fund reserves and outlining the need to prioritise resources to continue to meet the Council's Future Town, Future Council (FTFC) priorities.

3.62 The financial security process is a year round process and officers and Members (Leaders Financial Security Group) have met during 2018/19 to test options and support managers in working up business cases. The budget setting timetable dictates that recommended assumptions are approved by Members and locked in at budget setting stage.

3.63 The Financial Security Programme saving options aligned to the various strands have been considered by senior management and reported to (November) Executive.

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3.64 The proposals for Fees and Charges have been through a rigorous challenge process by the Fees and Charges Group and considered by the Leader's Financial Security Group.

3.65 Employer of Choice Programme

3.66 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.

3.67 During 2018/19 the programme is primarily focused 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.

3.68 Programme Delivery Update

3.69 Work to build the new Intranet with improved content is progressing well. Service managers were provided with an opportunity to see initial development at the Leadership Forum in July and launch of the new Council Intranet is planned during quarter three.

3.70 Working collaboratively with the Council's recognised Trade Unions, staff have been offered the opportunity to develop their literacy, maths and computing skills and attain formal qualifications.

3.71 A calendar of charitable events in the workplace has been established with 'dress-down' days to encourage engagement and raise money for charities. A Volunteering Policy has been developed to incentivise staff to carry out charitable activities. The Senior Leadership Team have led the way by undertaking a pond clean up in Stevenage in September 2018.

3.72 Staff were provided with an opportunity to share their views about how the Council works and whether they feel that their contributions are properly valued and rewarded through the organisational staff survey. The Council has seen a positive direction of travel in the feedback received from staff. There is a solid awareness and understanding of the Council's objectives and priorities

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and individual employees understand how their roles contribute to the Council's objectives. The majority feel challenged at work and their work gives them a sense of achievement. Most also feel that they are treated fairly and with respect at work and feel valued. The views expressed by staff are being assessed and where necessary improvement plans are being developed.

3.73 The Council aims to maintain a balance between the development of current staff, retaining existing skills and knowledge and the introduction of new staff with new skills and knowledge. The number of roles recruited to that are filled by existing staff is currently exceeding a threshold assigned to help achieve this balance. This demonstrates the retention of existing skills and knowledge and our commitment to supporting the continuous development of our employees. The implementation of annual Workforce Plans, which are being developed by Assistant Directors, will help to ensure we have the right people, with the right skills.

- EoCInt: Percentage of roles recruited to that were filled by staff within the Council, September 2018 target 20%, achieved 39.02%

Performing at our Peak Programme

3.74 Programme Outcomes

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

3.75 During 2018/19 the programme is primarily focused 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.

3.76 Programme Delivery Update

3.77 The performance and governance system (InPhase) was upgraded to a new major version called Halo in August. This provides major advances in usability and use of visualisations. A particular improvement is the automatic new dashboard tool MyPage. This makes it easier for users to visually monitor performance and risk across services and programmes, with InPhase highlighting key areas for review.

3.78 Arrangements for the update of business unit risk and associated mitigation activity through InPhase are progressing. An initial trial has been completed

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and will now be progressed across all business units. Implementation will enhance organisation-wide transparency that will inform decision making.

3.79 The arrangements in place for decision making (scheme of delegation) are being outlined for approval at Council in December. The Scheme of Delegation will ensure continued robust and efficient decision-making by Council officers at the appropriate level of seniority.

3.80 Corporate Performance highlights and areas for improvement

3.81 Results for the full set of current corporate performance measures across all themes (FTFC programme, and the Customer, Place, and Transformation and Support themes) are attached as Appendix One. The overview of corporate focused results for April 2018 to September 2018 is outlined below:

Number of Measures Reported	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (urgent improvement action required)
39	30	1	8

(Results for three measures relating to Community Safety are not available – paragraph 3.97)

3.82 A summary of highlights and areas for improvement for April 2018 to September 2018 is set out in the following paragraphs across the three key delivery themes: Customer, Place, and Transformation and Support.

A: Customer Theme

3.83 The Customer Theme incorporates the following Business Units:

- Housing and Investment
- Communities and Neighbourhood

Housing and Investment

3.84 The restructuring of the Housing Advice and Homelessness Team (to Housing Options and Supply) is nearing completion with the new team expected to be in place during quarter three. The team will continue to enhance service delivery to ensure that those that present as homeless receive the best possible service. The feedback received from Human Resources on the review has been mainly constructive and positive, and staff members have felt they have been listened to.

Homelessness Preventions (BV213)

3.85 As a result of focused improvement activity and the implementation of the Housing Advice and Homelessness Team restructure referred to above (paragraph 3.84) the results for homelessness preventions (previously a performance improvement 'Spotlight' area), have achieved target for two consecutive quarters.

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- 3.86 The service established a number of actions to improve performance:
- A training programme for all housing advice staff was carried out during quarter 1 2018/19.
 - Training on the Homelessness Reduction Act which came into force 3 April 2018 was provided for other housing teams and services during quarter 1 2018/19.
- 3.87 Council officers continue to monitor the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act and the use of new IT software. Stevenage Borough Council is collaborating county wide to meet the demand of the new legislation through the Hertfordshire Heads of Housing Group meetings.
- BV213: Homelessness preventions, April to Sept 2018, target 180, achieved 182.

Spotlight: Health and Safety compliant Council buildings

- 3.88 The Council's new Compliance Manager has reviewed contractual arrangements for the management of health and safety compliance. To monitor performance two new measures have been established in the corporate set:
- Assets 5a: Percentage of (Council) assets known to be Health and Safety compliant (statutory), September 2018 target 100%, achieved 90%
 - Assets5b: Percentage of (Council) assets known to be Health and Safety compliant (as per SBC enhanced definition), September 2018 target 100%, achieved 91.70%
- 3.89 The Council are working with the contractor to ensure that regulations are met with some site activity (reparation functions) being carried out by Council teams. Performance is now improving steadily and the majority of outstanding actions as at 30 September 2018 have been completed and certification is being uploaded on the Council's business system to confirm compliance. Third party audits will be completed to provide quality assurance.
- 3.90 The current contract expires at the end of the year and the team are working with the exiting contractor to ensure a smooth transition as well as beginning the mobilisation of the new contract to ensure that it is fit for purpose and the monitoring arrangements are clear.
- 3.91 To ensure and maintain corporate wide oversight and clarity on health and safety compliance and performance across the Council, a new corporate health and safety governance structure is in place that provides assurance to senior management that health and safety assessments and activity across the Council are being effectively managed.

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Communities and Neighbourhood

- 3.92 Stevenage Museum, working with North Hertfordshire Museum, Knebworth House, the Garden City Collection and YC Hertfordshire, attained Heritage Lottery Fund support to celebrate *Stevenage and North Herts Suffrage Stories: 100 years of votes for women*. During the Summer young people aged 14 to 24 were provided with an opportunity to get involved in research including trips to Knebworth House Archive, the Museum of London and the Women's Library at the London School of Economics. Working with an artist, the young people created a celebration in light for the town centre during November.
- 3.93 Arts Council England awarded the Council £10,000 to support the implementation of the Cultural Strategy, *Stevenage re-imagined*. An Arts and Heritage Forum has been established and further bids are being prepared for external investment in arts and culture for the town.
- 3.94 Stevenage against Domestic Abuse (SADA) has been commissioned by North Hertfordshire District Council reflecting the value that partners place on the service that Stevenage provides. SADA works in partnership with Hertfordshire Police, North Hertfordshire District Council and a number of volunteers to support victims of domestic abuse.
- 3.95 Four young people attending North Hertfordshire College completed their Community Safety Ambassador accreditation. Ambassadors deliver key community safety messages across Stevenage whilst gaining valuable skills and experience with a variety of community safety partners.
- 3.96 The Council's summer holiday play schemes continue to be popular with an average weekly attendance of more than 900 young people at play centres during the school holidays.

Community Safety

- 3.97 The Police have been implementing a new Crime Recording System called ATHENA and a revised approach to reporting. Complete results for April to September 2018 have not yet been advised. An update is not expected until January 2019.

B: Place Theme

- 3.98 The Place Theme incorporates the following Business Units:
- Planning and Regulation
 - Stevenage Direct Services
 - Regeneration
 - Housing Development

(The Regeneration and Housing Development Business Units are primarily focused on delivery of the Stevenage Town Centre Regeneration and Housing Development Programmes of FTFC. Delivery updates for these programmes are summarised in paragraphs 3.13 to 3.16 and 3.20 to 3.26 respectively.)

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Planning and Regulation

- 3.99 Planning applications continue to be determined within corporate and statutory targets.

Stevenage Direct Services

- 3.100 Coveted green flag awards continue to fly at Fairland's Valley Park, Hampson Park and Town Centre Gardens. The Green Flag Award scheme recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces. Council officers worked together with the volunteer groups of each park to maintain the parks and successfully retain the awards.
- 3.101 During quarter 2, the Environmental Performance and Development Team delivered activities with Green Space Volunteers that amounted to approximately 250 hours of Green Space Volunteer time being given to enhance community green spaces around the town, five new volunteers opted in to the team and officers worked with the volunteers to develop the Winter programme of activity.

Repairs and Voids

- 3.102 Turn-around times for property repairs and voids remain a major area of focus for the team. The team have placed major focus on a case management approach to each case dealt with. This coupled with efforts to review and improve processes has improved performance and productivity:
- RepTime1: Emergency Repairs - Average end to end repairs time (days), target 1 day, achieved 0.45 day.
 - RepTime2: Urgent Repairs - Average end to end repairs time (days), target 5 days, achieved 4.5 days.
 - RepTime3: Routine Repairs - Average end to end repairs time (days), target 20 days, achieved 10.83 days.
- 3.103 The time taken to re-let general needs standard voids (requiring minor works prior to re-let) continues to improve (Target 32 days, April to June achieved 29 days, April to Sept achieved 27.5 days). However, turn-around times for general needs properties requiring major works and sheltered properties continue to exceed target.
- 3.104 Officers have introduced a number of initiatives to reduce these void times including:
- Seeking to relet properties (that meet the lettable standard) and schedule major works while the tenant is in the property and not when void.
 - Collaborative approach between investment and empty homes teams, including relocating repairs and voids team to Daneshill House to improve communication.

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- General Needs Voids – Major Works, April to Sept 2018 target 65 days, achieved 93.53 days.

3.105 Key Performance Indicators that are impacted by hard to let properties will be reviewed. Proposals will be developed for new indicators that highlight the Council's work to adapt or convert certain housing types to better match demand in the market place (e.g. conversion of studio apartments to one bedroom flats). Conversion works require more time than a major works repair and skew actual performance data under the existing arrangements where data relating to conversions is incorporated with repair data. Proposals will be considered with a view to new measures being agreed for the 2019/20 financial year.

C: Transformation and Support Theme

3.106 The Transformation and Support Theme incorporates the following Business Units:

- Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology
- Corporate Services and Transformation
- Finance and Estates

Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology

Spotlight: Customer Services

3.107 Service delivery through the Customer Service Centre (CSC) was identified as a focus for improvement (spotlight) at quarter 3 (March 2018 Executive). This focus will be retained until initial performance improvement is sustained across the full set of CSC measures.

3.108 The Assistant Director (Corporate Services and Transformation) is continuing to work closely with the CSC and back office service teams to review the Council's customer service approach and to identify additional governance and operational interventions that could further strengthen the CSC Improvement Plan.

3.109 Historical performance data demonstrates performance in the Customer Service Centre (CSC) is closely related to the amount of skilled advisers available.

3.110 Activities to recruit, train and on-board specialist skills took place during quarters one and two 2018/19 which has reduced the number of vacancies down to one at the end of November 2018. Initial improvement is now evident. However, performance is not forecast to achieve the 2018/19 targets.

- CSC4: Percentage of telephone calls to the Customer Service Centre answered within 20 seconds, April to Sept 2018 target 55%, achieved 40.9%.

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Initial improvement - monthly performance for July to October				Forecast if staff levels remain at full establishment level	
July	August	September	October	April 2018 to December 2018	April 2018 to March 2019
32.8%	40.5%	52.9%	55.7%	47.3%,	49.6%

- CSC12: Percentage of calls abandoned in the Customer Service Centre, April to Sept 2018 target 8%, April to June 2018 achieved 13.9%, April to Sept 2018 achieved 17.1%.

Initial improvement - monthly performance for July to October				Forecast if staff levels remain at full establishment level	
July	August	September	October	April 2018 to December 2018	April 2018 to March 2019
21.4%	21.4%	17.1%	15.1%	14.8%	15.1%

3.111 Self service facilities are being planned to help meet service demand for walk-in customers.

- CSC5: Percentage of walk-in customers to the Customer Service Centre served within 20 minutes, target 80%, April to June 2018 achieved 69.7%, April to Sept 2018 achieved 65.2%.
 - Forecast April 2018 to March 2019: 78%

3.112 Effective resource planning will help ensure that sufficient staff are available to meet the rise and demand of customer contacts to provide a more consistent level of service to customers and a 365 day approach to recruitment is being put in place to include a social media campaign and open days.

3.113 Customer satisfaction with Customer Service Centre remains high (88.4%).

Technology

3.114 The Shared IT Partnership governance arrangements continue to be enhanced during 2018/19. The Shared Services Partnership Board is overseeing the development and implementation of a single IT strategy that will deliver the Council's digital transformation ambitions and ensure that services are delivered that meet customer needs and are fit for the future.

3.115 The IT Steering Group and the IT Programme Management Office (IT PMO) function facilitates delivery of the projects that support the Council's Future Town, Future Council programme and the Council's Business Unit Reviews (and their equivalent programmes at East Herts Council) alongside the day to day IT service.

3.116 The Shared IT Service is working with Microsoft to develop a programme of activity to enhance IT infrastructure and resilience. A draft ICT strategy & road map is anticipated by February 2019. This will outline a two year plan for approval due to the scale of the work and level of financial resource required.

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3.117 The new Strategic IT and Partnerships Manager is assessing performance management arrangements to ensure that robust information is provided to support delivery of the Council's digital transformation ambitions, operational frameworks to drive forward service improvement using International IT Service Management Standards and core service delivery.

3.118 Corporate Services and Transformation

Our staff

3.119 The Council's Human Resources Team continue to work with service managers to ensure that all Council staff appraisals and objective setting meetings are completed and status is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team. A number of appraisals in the Corporate Projects, Customer Service and Technology business unit are outstanding due to the vacant AD post associated with transition to the new Digital Services and Transformation business unit. The AD Corporate Services and Transformation is working specifically with the IT management team to ensure objective setting meetings and 'REAL' conversations (appraisal meetings) are taking place.

- Appraisal completion rate to corporate deadlines, April to Sept 2018 target 100%, achieved 90.1%

3.120 Agency Usage: The primary reason for the use of agency staff is to ensure continuous service delivery where there are staff vacancies or sickness absence, particularly for refuse and grounds maintenance services. The Stevenage Direct Services Business Unit Review (Autumn 2018) will aim to reduce the need to engage agency staff.

3.121 Recruitment is underway for a number of key posts across the Council that will enhance capacity and key skills. The Fourth Tier management reviews are nearing completion, with Stevenage Direct Services consultation on proposals commencing November and Corporate Services and Transformation planning to consult on the next set of proposals before the end of the year.

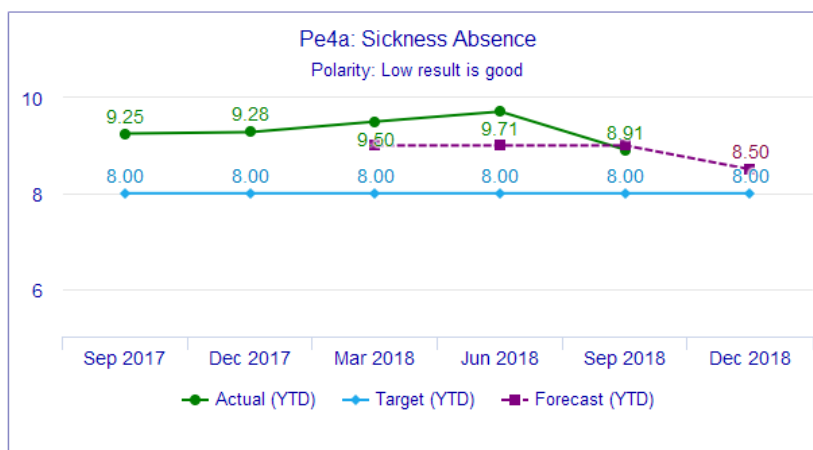
- Agency usage as a percentage of the total workforce, April to September 2018 target 10%, achieved 14.4%.

Spotlight: Sickness Absence

3.122 The level of sickness absence has reduced for the last five consecutive months.

- Sickness absence rate threshold for twelve months to September 2018 2018 per fte 8 days, achieved 8.91 days, twelve months to October achieved 8.26 days.

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3.123 At September 2018,

4 out of 10 business units were achieving their new individual sickness absence service targets. Service managers are provided with access to real time sickness information to support absence management through the HR system 'MyView'.

- 3.124 The Senior Leadership Team continues to monitor the performance and management of sickness absence. Focus will be retained until revised policy and practice results in a sustained reduction in levels of sickness absence.
- 3.125 The significant levels of staff restructuring through the Future Council Business Unit Reviews is believed to be impacting on sickness absence levels and analysis of sickness absence has shown that on average 1.5 days of the total absence is a result of the impact of change. Staff affected through the reviews are offered support and advice and are consulted on the proposals that are presented.
- 3.126 Officers from the Human Resources Team are supporting managers with managing sickness absence cases and have organised health and wellbeing events to support and promote employee wellbeing. The Council are also in the progress of preparing to implement a third party sickness absence provider (First Care) who will provide a nurse led sickness reporting facility for all employees, which will provide advice and challenge on fitness for work to both individuals and managers and ensure consistency of approach/advice on sickness absence. They will also follow up to ensure appropriate application of policy and return to work and provide regular and timely management information. First Care advise that they are likely to reduce sickness absence by somewhere between 15-25% over a 5 year period, with a predicted 2% reduction in year one.
- 3.127 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed on 10 September 2018 to bring forward a scrutiny review of the Council's sickness management arrangements following encouragement from the Executive when it considered the quarter 1 corporate performance report at its meeting on 5 September 2018. The review is to give consideration to the specific factors that are or may be affecting sickness absence within the organisation. The aim for the committee is to identify any potential changes required to the current Absence Management Policy and its application. In addition it will be

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aiming to make recommendations on future data collection and performance management requirements in respect of sickness absence

Finance and Estates

3.128 The Revenues and Benefits service continue to exceed targets for Housing Benefit processing times.

- Time taken to process Housing Benefit new claims and change events (NI181)
 - April to June 2018 target 14 days, achieved 10.35 days.
 - April to September 2018 target 12 days, achieved 8.88 days.

Senior Leadership Team perspective

3.129 High levels of performance across all three key delivery themes (Customer, Place, Transformation and Support) that were evident at the end of 2017/18 have been sustained for April to September 18, to include the following:

- The number of households in temporary accommodation has been maintained below the thresholds set.
- The determination of planning applications exceeded national targets.
- The time taken to process Housing Benefit new claims and change events continues to exceed target.

3.130 The Senior Leadership Team request that the Assistant Directors responsible for areas of improvement focus assess the factors impacting on performance and develop/implement plans that will provide sustainable performance improvement.

3.131 At September 2018, the following improvement plans were identified for ongoing focused monitoring by the Senior Leadership Team:

- Implementation and application of the Homelessness Reduction Act.
- Improving the performance in the Customer Service Centre through a revised service model that will enhance resilience and increase the availability, skills and knowledge of customer service advisers.
- The management of sickness absence and alignment to council health and well-being policy.

3.132 The activity carried out to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act and the restructuring of the Housing Advice and Homelessness Team (to Housing Options and Supply) have contributed to an improvement in the number of homelessness preventions over the last two quarters and this level of performance is forecast to be sustained.

3.133 The Customer Service Centre has started to implement improvement activity that is having an initial positive impact on performance but this will continue to be monitored until sustained performance improvement is evident.

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- 3.134 The rate of sickness absence has improved for each of the last five consecutive months. Additional improvement activity for the management of sickness absence is yet to be implemented and impact will continue to be monitored.
- 3.135 The Senior Leadership Team are also monitoring the impact of the improvement plans implemented to ensure that compliance with Health and Safety regulations is effectively monitored and recorded.
- 3.136 In addition, the development and implementation of the IT strategy will be monitored by the IT Shared Service Partnership Board to ensure that services are delivered that meet customer needs and are fit for the future.
- 3.137 The Council's 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 amend targets to ensure that they continue to reflect revisions to service delivery models where necessary and to support and drive forward additional improvements in services for the benefit of internal and external customers.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1 The information presented in this report is collated from the information provided to monitor delivery of the Future Town, Future Council Programme and corporate performance for the quarter. It aims to give Executive an overview of the achievements the Council has made for the year to date, with a focus on the current quarter and identifies plans for continued improvements in some areas to ensure the Council is fit for the future.
- 4.2 The Senior Leadership Team and Service Managers have been consulted to determine the appropriate content and to identify the key achievements.
- 4.3 A number of areas have been identified in section 3 of this report where a particular focus on improvement is required and outline plans have been set out. The Executive is recommended to note and endorse these improvement plans.

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 improvement activity identified will need to identify and consider any resulting financial implications.

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5.2 Legal Implications

5.2.1 There are no direct legal implications from the recommendations contained in this report. However, officers responsible for improvement activity identified will need to identify and consider any resulting legal implications.

5.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

5.3.1 The report outlines performance against key priorities that form the Future Town, Future Council Programme and performance of the Council across key business unit themes. Where necessary, Equality Impact Assessments will be completed for improvement activity identified.

5.4 Risk Implications

5.4.1 There are no direct significant risks to the Council in agreeing the recommendation(s). Officers responsible for developing performance improvement plans will need to consider any risk implications from the improvement activity identified.

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 also provides good governance assurance.

5.5 Other Corporate implications

5.5.1 Improvement activity outlined may impact on the development of future policy or procedure.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Executive Report - 5 September 2018: Corporate Performance Quarter One

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Compendium of performance results
- Appendix 2: Future Town, Future Council Programme Scope/Focus