
Meeting: EXECUTIVE

Portfolio Area: All

Date: 14 March 2019

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER THREE 2018/19

NON-KEY DECISION

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To highlight the Council's performance across key priorities and themes for quarter three 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 three 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 3.90 to 3.91).
- 2.3 That arrangements to meet new regulations (introduced October 2018) relating to the Licensing of Houses of Multiple Occupation be noted and endorsed (para 3.102 to 3.105)
- 2.4 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 future plans endorsed (para 3.115 to 3.121).
- 2.5 That the improvements in sickness management practice be noted and future plans endorsed (para 3.131 to 3.135).

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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.

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 3.86 (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.

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- 3.7 In addition to the monitoring of programme milestones, fifteen measures aligned to FTFC delivery were monitored and reported on for April to December 2018. The overview of FTFC focused results for April 2018 to December 2018 is outlined below:

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

- 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:

- Compl4: Percentage of stage 2 and 3 complaints upheld fully or partially (housing), April to December 2018 target 40%, achieved 43.08% - paragraph 3.34 refers
- CNM2g: Garage void rate: April to December 2018 target 12%, achieved 12.81% - paragraph 3.48 refers
- CTOC1: Customer complaints responded to within corporate deadline, April to December 2018 target 95%, achieved 89.66% - paragraph 3.57 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

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- 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
 - 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 the Council's preferred developer Mace, to progress the development agreement for the first phase of town centre regeneration (SG1) and anticipate the signing of the development agreement will be completed during quarter four.

3.14 Construction work has started on the redevelopment of Queensway North. The Council has partnered with one of the UK's leading mixed-use developers, Reef Group, to spearhead the £50m regeneration scheme comprising the former Marks & Spencer and adjoining retail parade. The development consists of approximately 45,000 square foot of new retail and restaurant space, a gym, new offices, an innovation and technology centre, and 116 apartments.

3.15 Following completion of public realm improvements to Market Place, a launch event was held in December to celebrate its completion which was well attended. 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 and art installation panels for the monoliths will be installed in January. The Wayfinding system couples the provision of an accurate functional system of navigation with high quality design.

3.17 Plans are progressing to open a visitor centre for residents and other visitors to the town to gain an understanding of the town centre developments and what the Stevenage of the future looks like.

Housing Development Programme

3.18 Programme Outcomes

- Increased number of affordable houses in Stevenage.

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- 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 The Kenilworth (236 homes) scheme was granted planning permission and work is now being carried out to identify the best route for delivery of the scheme. The delivery proposal for this to be considered by the Executive in April 2019. Included within this scheme is provision for new retail shops, a new community centre and an independent living scheme for older people.
- 3.22 The six new build homes at the Wedgewood Way site are complete and the properties have been transferred into the ownership of the Council.
- 3.23 The contractor for Burwell Court and Ditchmore Lane is on site and both developments are progressing well. At Burwell Court the second floor brickwork has been completed with the roof expected to be completed by the end of March, 2019 thereby giving a very visible indicator to local residents that the scheme is progressing.
- 3.24 Architectural and site preparation work is currently being completed for the following three development sites during 2019/20:
- The North Road Scheme - 21 homes: in a blended modern and period style: Plans have been finalised and submitted to planning and are expected to be considered at the April Planning Committee.
 - The Symonds Green Scheme - 29 homes: public consultation was carried out in December, and feedback is being sought via the Council's Facebook page. A planning application will be submitted by the end of February 2019.
 - The Shephall Way Scheme - 9 homes: The planning application is being prepared and it is expected to be submitted for planning by the end of February 2019.

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- 3.25 The Council's Housing Development programme has facilitated the completion of 168 (affordable) homes to December 2018. Thirty-six homes will have been delivered since the beginning of the financial year.
- 3.26 A further two open market acquisitions have been completed. One of these properties will be converted into seven units of temporary accommodation to enhance the supply of this property type and assist the Council to meet the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Excellent Council Homes Programme

3.27 Programme Outcome

- Transforming the Housing and Investment service to better meet the needs of its customers.
- 3.28 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.

3.29 Programme Delivery Update

- 3.30 The review of the 5th tier management structure for Housing and Investment began in November. The proposals include a new leaner and more efficient staffing structure that is in line with the Council's Target Operating Model. Consultation with staff closed in December and feedback received is being reviewed. This will be further progressed within quarter four and is anticipated that the new structure will be in place from April 2019.
- 3.31 An external review on how the Council could further enhance the use of its current digital housing system has been completed. Plans will now be developed to implement the enhancement recommendations.
- 3.32 A range of new digital services are being implemented to help enhance service efficiency, these include:
- Electronic Document Management – this system now holds key customer, property and case management documents which will reduced the need for physical storage space and provide instant access to documents that will

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enable staff to better address customer enquiries at the first point of contact. Go live is planned for the beginning of March 2019 following extensive staff training.

- A new mobile digital application - this application is allowing housing support staff to spend more time out in the community as they now have access and update customer records on the go. Other service teams are appraising how the technology could help to enhance future service delivery.
- Implementation of Northgate Task Manager – this has led to an increase in collection of court costs as the system automatically starts to collect such costs once an account is clear of arrears. The improved functionality is also now automating the production of key government returns.

3.33 The Tenancy and Income team has undertaken a study of Universal Credit to better understand the journey and claiming patterns of current Universal Credit recipients. Further customer surveys are planned to gain more insight into the experiences of claimants as the numbers increase to help inform future service delivery.

3.34 Initial improvement in the nature and quality of customer feedback is evident as demonstrated by the level of complaints progressing to stage 2 & 3 in the following table. Performance continues to be monitored to determine any further interventions required.

Initial improvement - monthly performance for October to December		
October 2018	November 2018	December 2018
71.43%	57.14%	25.00%

- Compl4: Percentage of stage 2 and 3 complaints upheld fully or partially (housing), target 40%, April to December 2018 achieved 43.08%

Co-operative and Neighbourhood Management Programme

3.35 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.

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

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- 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.

3.37 Programme Delivery Update

3.38 Neighbourhood improvements in St Nicholas and Martinswood are being carried out. These include improvements to paths, street signs and verges. Additional enhancements including the installation of new litterbins and improvements to shrub beds which are due to be completed during quarter four.

3.39 Community mapping and engagement exercises are being used to inform the future use of participatory budgets (approximately £6,000). This dedicated resource is likely to be used in partnership with local businesses and community groups celebrating the diversity of the local area.

3.40 A series of ward walkabouts with senior officers, elected ward members and have been carried out to highlight areas in need of attention, inform future projects and celebrate recent successes.

3.41 Following consultation with children and young people earlier in the year, improvements have been delivered to 4 play areas in Longmeadow and Bedwell (Fairlands Valley Park, Blenheim Way, Holly Leys and Balmoral Close) and all opened in time for the October half term holiday.

3.42 A new approach to the identification and implementation of local improvement priorities is now being taken, informed by learning attained as a result of the partnership with University of Hull (UoH), University of Sheffield (UoS) and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Improvements will

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be delivered over two years with the first year focused on community engagement and involvement. Stevenage has been praised by UoH, UoS and DCMS for its open, honest and learning based approach to enabling social action partnership (ESAP).

- 3.43 Council officers have commenced discussions with residents from the Bedwell and Longmeadow Wards for the next phase of the programme. A special 'Our Neighbourhood' forum will be launched in both areas to explore current expenditure, mapping and delivery. The new co-operative forums will involve partners, business and local residents and will be co-ordinated by Community Development Officers from the Council.
- 3.44 The Executive received a report on the progress of the Community Centre Review during quarter 3. Consultation on the future of Council owned community centres also commenced during quarter 3 to help inform a new sustainable operating model. This will include exploring options relating to community association participation and structures under a new Cooperative Compact. This together with wider community consultation and focus groups will help shape the future provision of community buildings and services.
- 3.45 The Council's Community Select Committee completed a review of resident involvement during quarter 3 and a set of clear actions have been incorporated into a new Community Engagement Framework and toolkit which is due to be considered by the Executive during February 2019.
- 3.46 During October 2018 the Executive agreed for the garage refurbishment work to be added to the Council's major flat block refurbishment contract. The project team is now working with contractors to inspect and agree a work plan for the garage blocks that are to receive improvements in quarter 4. Refurbishment work has commenced on two pilot sites to test and finalise operational procedures that will be used across the remainder of the programme. Liaison with tenants and private garage owners is also now underway to ensure access arrangements are in place.
- 3.47 The Council is inviting private owners of garages in council garage blocks to take advantage of the reduced rates that it has obtained through the Major Works Contract.
- 3.48 Officers are identifying 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.
- The garage void rate is slightly higher than projected: April to December 2018 target 12%, achieved 12.81%

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Connected to our Customers Programme

3.49 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.

3.50 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.

3.51 Programme Delivery Update

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

3.53 Key digital initiatives underway include:

- A new corporate website - Zengenti has been commissioned to deliver the Council's website and the key development requirements that will guide the delivery of the new website that better meets customer needs have been agreed. A cross party Member group has been established to help inform the development of the new website.

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- A new Customer Relationship Management System and Digital Platform: Procurement for these new systems is due to take place in quarter 4 and will be launched in quarter three 2019/20.
 - Northgate housing online service module - This will facilitate the provision of self-serve functionality for all modules of the Housing Management system to include in summary:
 - Housing Advice
 - Homelessness and Allocations
 - Tenancy Services
 - Income
 - Property purchase and leasehold service charges
 - Supported housing and repairs.
 - A new waste and recycling management system - this will replace existing spreadsheets, lists and paper records. This project will be a key enabler for mobile working for the freighter crews, providing more timely and detailed performance data, and online customer self-service. The business case for the new system is due to be considered by the Strategic Leadership Team during February 2019.
- 3.54 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 through the budget setting process for 2019/20.
- 3.55 Work is being carried out to ensure the Council is compliant with new online accessibility legislation. All new web material must be fully compliant and a timeline for compliance of existing websites and mobile apps has been defined within the regulations.
- 3.56 Customer service training was delivered to housing staff in October/November across Housing, Investment, the Customer Service Centre and Customer Focus Teams by Hamilton Mercer focused on strengthening customer service skills. Customer champions will ensure that the skills attained are fully embedded so staff are helpful, efficient and professional when interacting with customers.
- 3.57 The Senior Leadership Team monitors the performance and management of customer feedback across business units and directs that responsible officers respond promptly, professionally and comprehensively within a reasonable timeframe. There is a positive performance trend however the number of complaints responded to within the corporate deadline is unlikely to meet the end of year 95% target.

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CTOC1: Customer complaints responded to within corporate deadline Target 95%		
April to June 2018	April to September 2018	April to December 2018
83.66%	88.02%	89.66%

Internal Facing Future Town, Future Council Programmes

Financial Security Programme

3.58 Programme Outcomes

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



Figure 2: Financial Security Work streams.

3.60 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.

3.61 Programme Delivery Update

3.62 The Financial Security Programme Board has been refreshed with new terms of reference ready for adoption. New templates have been set up for each strand to monitor:

- The delivery of 2019/20 options
- Progress of future 2020/21 and beyond options approved at the November Executive meeting
- New options across the six workstreams.

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- 3.63 The Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Strategy (2018/19 – 2022/23) and Business Plan Update were reported to the November Executive.
- 3.64 The 2018/19 Mid-Year Treasury Management Review and Financial Security Report setting out the Financial Security options for the Housing Revenue Account and General Fund were also reported to the November Executive. Targets for both funds have been revised, firstly in the Financial Security report (November) to reflect the shortfall in 2019/20-2021/22 target (£438K for General Fund and £450K for Housing Revenue Account) and then again in the Final Housing Revenue Account budget report to the January Executive (£650K 2020/21-2022/23) and the draft General Fund report to the January Executive (£1.2Million 2020/21-2022/23).
- 3.65 There remain significant pressures as identified in the General Fund report considered by the Executive in January which will mean that the Financial Security targets will need to be revised to meet a contribution to balances in 2022/23.
- 3.66 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 and have now been approved by the Executive. A new, three year approach to reviewing fees and charges has also been adopted.
- 3.67 **Employer of Choice Programme**
- 3.68 **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.
- 3.69 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.

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3.70 Programme Delivery Update

- 3.71 The Council received an Armed Force Covenant Silver Award in November, recognising the Council as an employer of choice for ex-service personnel and reservist employees.
- 3.72 The new corporate intranet was successfully launched during quarter 3 and officers have received a lot of positive feedback from users. Early analytics show that there has been a significant take up in the use of the new collaborative tools including the establishment of thirty-five officer network groups that enable innovation, improved communication, shared learning and knowledge transfer across the organisation.
- 3.73 A 4th Tier Leadership Network has been established with an initial meeting in December. A poll is currently running on the intranet to see what development areas are most popular amongst the 4th tier leadership team. Further events are planned from February 2019 onwards.
- 3.74 The Stevenage Borough Council Competency Framework for levels up to grade 10 was shared with Trade Unions in December completing consultation with staff. This will sit alongside the leadership competency framework that was implemented in 2017. The launch of the framework to staff is being planned for quarter four.
- 3.75 A corporate wide pay and benefits review has commenced with an initial focus on standby and callout payments.
- 3.76 Manager training events were delivered during December to further support the implementation of the REAL Conversations approach. R.E.A.L. Conversations is a rolling appraisal process which gives employees regular and on-going opportunities to:
- *Review* and appraise their contributions
 - *Engage* in discussing their well-being, their objectives and priorities
 - *Act* by doing what is most needed for them and the team at that time and
 - *Learn* through sharing any ambitions they might have or thoughts about skills and knowledge that might be useful to them now or in the future.
- 3.77 The HR Payroll system is being further developed to allow employees to self-serve and request learning and development via the system. This will allow for improved intelligence in regards to learning and development requirements across the organisation and an improved training programme.
- 3.78 Further charitable events in the workplace have been carried out during quarter three to include 'dress-down' days that encourage officer engagement and raise money for charities. Further discussions regarding future activities for 2019/20 have been scheduled and a calendar of activities is being developed for circulation.

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Performing at our Peak Programme

3.79 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.

3.80 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.

3.81 Programme Delivery Update

3.82 The Corporate Performance and Improvement Team are continuing to further exploit the Council's business intelligence system (InPhase). This now includes the capture and enhancement activity relating to corporate governance and business unit governance.

3.83 Arrangements for the update of business unit risk and associated mitigation activity through InPhase are progressing. A business unit risk pilot has been conducted for the Corporate Services Business Unit, with teams now managing their risks within InPhase. Learning from this is being used in the rollout to Stevenage Direct Services and other service areas. Implementation of this new digital service will enhance organisation-wide transparency that will better inform decision making.

3.84 The arrangements in place for officer decision making (scheme of delegation) were approved by Council in December. The speed and transparency of decision making will be considerably improved; officers are clearly empowered to make certain decisions, improving the speed of decision making and providing clarity and transparency of decision making. Work is proceeding on the development of the equivalent scheme for Executive delegated functions.

Corporate Performance highlights and areas for improvement

3.85 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 December 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)	Not Available
42	32	0	7	3(*)

(*Results for three measures relating to Community Safety are not available – paragraph 3.96)

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

A: Customer Theme

3.88 The Customer Theme incorporates the following Business Units:

- Housing and Investment
- Communities and Neighbourhood

Housing and Investment

Homelessness Preventions (BV213)

3.89 Despite embedding three new members of staff during quarter 3 the Housing Options Team achieved the projected number of homelessness preventions.

Spotlight: Health and Safety compliant Council buildings

3.90 The Council Compliance Manager has reviewed the management arrangements associated to health and safety compliance. Officers are working with the current contractor to ensure that regulations are met and certification provided promptly. Performance is now improving steadily. Third party audits will be completed in the future to help provide quality assurance.

- Assets 5a: Percentage of (Council) assets known to be Health and Safety compliant (statutory), target 100%, September 2018 achieved 90%, December 2018 achieved 98%
- Assets5b: Percentage of (Council) assets known to be Health and Safety compliant (as per SBC enhanced definition), target 100%, September 2018 achieved 91.70%, December 2018 achieved 97%

3.91 The current compliance contract expires at the end of the financial 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.

Communities and Neighbourhood

3.92 During the third quarter a number of successful community events were delivered by the council and local partners. This included specific commemorations around the centenary of the end of WW1, which culminated in the Armistice Day Parade in the Old Town.

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- 3.93 To mark 100 years of Suffrage Stevenage Museum successfully secured additional funds to drive a youth education programme and launch a dedicated exhibition in December. Suffrage was also the theme for the town's annual Fireworks Event, which saw over 30,000 residents in attendance.
- 3.94 The council also worked in partnership with Community Park Life to host an Oktoberfest event on King George V Playing Fields.
- 3.95 The Youth Council at the Council meeting in October presented its plans to broaden youth voice and engagement in local issues. This has since led to an increase in youth council members and the development of new engagement opportunities to ensure young people across the town are involved in shaping plans and services.

Community Safety

- 3.96 The Police have been implementing a new Crime Recording System called ATHENA and are adopting a revised approach to reporting. The accuracy of performance figures is now being assessed prior to formal reporting.
- 3.97 Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) has secured funding of approximately £168k from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to help resource both SADA and the No More Service until March 2021.
- 3.98 The SADA service also led the activities for the White Ribbon Campaign and associated 16 Days of Action in November which saw over 15 champions come forward from across the council.
- 3.99 The Council became the first local authority in Hertfordshire to sign up to the Modern Slavery Charter. The Charter represents a commitment from the Council to actively challenge business practices which may enable modern slavery to occur.

B: Place Theme

- 3.100 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 3.10 to 3.17 and 3.18 to 3.26 respectively)

Planning and Regulation

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

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Spotlight: Licensing Houses of Multiple Occupation

- 3.102 New licensing regulations were introduced on 1 October 2018 for Houses in Multiple Occupation. Mandatory licensing is no longer limited to just HMOs of 3 or more storeys. The requirement for the HMO to be occupied by 5 or more persons, from 2 or more households, remains unchanged.
- 3.103 The Council has encouraged owners to apply for licenses through mailshots, advice and publicity and had previously developed a comprehensive knowledge of where HMOs are in Stevenage. Extensive development work was carried out on the Council's Uniform database to ensure the HMO Licensing module was available in order to facilitate effective tracking of applications through the licensing process. The majority of the landlords who did not submit applications have been contacted and have elected to downsize their properties to accommodate fewer tenants, avoiding the need for them to seek a licence. Staffing resources were prioritised to accommodate the anticipated influx of applications.
- 3.104 The Act makes it a criminal offence if a person controlling or managing an HMO does not have the required licence. A person found guilty of such an offence will be subject to an unlimited fine. Breaching any condition of a licence is also an offence, punishable by an unlimited fine. The Council has the ability to impose financial penalties for breaches of the legislation. Initially informal action will be taken against any landlord that does not apply for a licence when required. Ultimately formal action may be considered. Similarly, any breach of conditions will initially be dealt with informally, but if the breach continues or is serious, legal proceedings or financial penalty will be considered.
- 3.105 To date 174 additional properties are the subject of a licence application; this is in addition to 48 that were licensed prior to October 2018. Most applications have now moved to the Notice of Intention stage and all will be inspected prior to licences being issued. Seventy-three licences have been issued, 23 are pending consultation and 58 are awaiting inspection or notice of intention (as at 5 Feb 2019).
- Percentage of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) that are broadly compliant with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (Housing Act 2004), December 2018 target 92.5%, achieved 87.5%.

Stevenage Direct Services (SDS)

- 3.106 During quarter 3, the Environmental Performance and Development Team delivered activities with Green Space Volunteers that amounted to approximately 250 hours of volunteer time being given to enhance community green spaces around the town, including maintenance of the Town Centre Gardens.
- 3.107 During November, the team also worked in partnership with Yes Futures to provide 60 Stevenage secondary school students with an opportunity to carry out volunteer work across the town that included maintenance and

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enhancement of the Weston Road Cemetery, Fairlands Valley Park and Town Centre Gardens. The Yes Futures 'Play Your Part' days are a chance for students to realise the benefits of volunteering and learn more about their local area. The Chief Executive of Yes Futures contacted the team to advise of the brilliant experience the students received and thank the team for their work in hosting.

- 3.108 Refuse from Stevenage households is now collected in bulk from Cavendish Road following new arrangements agreed with Hertfordshire County Council. Collection crews no longer need to travel to tip waste collected resulting in reduced time to complete collection rounds and associated financial savings (estimated £90k). The new arrangements are proving successful.
- 3.109 Two Hundred and Seventy households were invited to participate in a pilot for the use of recycling bags instead of the blue and black boxes currently provided. Consultation has been carried out with participants at the half way point of the trial period and these are being analysed. Focus group sessions are to be held at the end of January 2019 with residents interested in providing further feedback.

Repairs and Voids

- 3.110 Turn-around times for property repairs and voids remain a major area of focus for the Repairs and Void team. Officers have adopted a case management approach to ensure each case is effectively 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), December target 1 day, achieved 0.47 day.
 - RepTime2: Urgent Repairs - Average end to end repairs time (days), December target 5 days, achieved 3.99 days.
 - RepTime3: Routine Repairs - Average end to end repairs time (days), December target 20 days, achieved 9.81 days.
- 3.111 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, April to December achieved 27.3 days). However, turn-around times for general needs properties requiring major works and sheltered properties continue to exceed target.
- 3.112 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.
 - A collaborative approach between the Housing Investment and Empty Homes Teams, including co-locating both teams to improve communication.

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- General Needs Voids – Major Works, target 65 days, April to Sept 2018 achieved 93.53 days, April to December 2018 achieved 83.24 days.

3.113 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 introduce more relevant performance measures for the 2019/20 financial year.

C: Transformation and Support Theme

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

- Corporate Services
- Digital and Transformation
- Finance and Estates

Corporate Services

Spotlight: Customer Services

3.115 Service delivery through the Customer Service Centre (CSC) was identified as a focus for improvement (spotlight) at quarter 3 2017/18 (March 2018 Executive). This focus will be retained until initial performance improvement is sustained across the full set of CSC measures.

3.116 The CSC Improvement Plan has continued to support the recovery of performance levels during quarter three 2018/19. The Assistant Director (Corporate Services) 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.

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

3.118 Activities to recruit, train and on-board specialist skills has reduced the number of vacancies. Staff resourcing levels as at 31 December 2018 stood at 96% with further recruitment arrangements underway. The improved training delivery and upskilling of CSC Advisers is having a positive impact on performance with improvement now evident. However, performance results for January 2019 are likely to be impacted by a new housing system upgrade and reduced resource as a result of two multi skilled members of staff leaving. Performance is not forecast to achieve the 2018/19 targets despite an upward performance trend.

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- CSC4: Percentage of telephone calls to the Customer Service Centre answered within 20 seconds, target 55%, April to September 2018 achieved 40.9%, April to December achieved 48.4%.

Initial improvement - monthly performance for October 2018 to Jan 2019				Forecast if staff levels remain at full establishment level
October	November	December	Jan 2019	April 2018 to March 2019
55.7%	67.6%	76.6%	54.1%	49.6%

- CSC12: Percentage of calls abandoned in the Customer Service Centre, April to June/Sept 2018 target 8%, April to June 2018 achieved 13.9%, April to Sept 2018 achieved 17.1%, April to December 2018 target 7%, achieved 14.4%

Initial improvement - monthly performance for October 2018 to Jan 2019				Forecast if staff levels remain at full establishment level
October	November	December	Jan 2019	April 2018 to March 2019
11.2%	8.2%	4.7%	13.6%	15.1%

3.119 Collaborative working with other service areas across the organisation is also key to driving further improvements in performance. Following a successful pilot, initial improvements are being developed for the housing repairs services provided through the CSC.

3.120 Self service facilities through the Connected to our Customers Programme 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%, April to December 2018 achieved 71.8%

Initial improvement - monthly performance for October 2018 to Jan 2019				Forecast if staff levels remain at full establishment level
October	November	December	Jan 2019	April 2018 to March 2019
62.57%	81.32%	84.17%	81.83%	78%

3.121 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. Management have adopted a new approach to ensure a continued focus on coaching and development.

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

Technology

3.123 The Shared IT Partnership governance arrangements continue to be enhanced during 2018/19. The Shared Services Partnership Board is

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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.

- 3.124 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 during March 2019. This will outline a two year plan for approval due to the scale of the work and level of financial resource required.
- 3.125 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.
- 3.126 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.

Our staff

- 3.127 Staff Appraisals: The Council's Human Resources Team worked with service managers during quarter three to ensure that all Council staff appraisals and objective setting meetings were completed and that 'REAL' conversations (appraisal meetings) are taking place. Status is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and performance to December 2018 has improved.
- Appraisal completion rate to corporate deadlines, target 100%, April to September 2018 achieved 90.1%, April to December 2018 achieved 99.1%.
- 3.128 Agency Usage: There are three type of agency use within the Council. Firstly there are a number of short term assignments within SDS to cover sickness and leave; this will be resolved with the next phase of the SDS Business Unit Review. The second category is interim assignments to cover key strategic roles within the establishment whilst we progress through the change programme of Business Unit Reviews, examples of these assignments include Communications, Finance, IT and Estates, and these will conclude when the permanent appointments are made. The third category is the one off project based agency assignments. Agency usage is likely to remain slightly higher whilst we progress through the change programme of Business Unit Reviews.
- 3.129 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 and Corporate Services commencing staff consultation on a set of staffing proposals during quarter three.

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- Agency usage as a percentage of the total workforce, target 10%, April to September 2018 achieved 14.4%, April to December 2018 achieved 11.5%.

3.130 Health and Safety: 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 has been established that provides assurance to senior management that health and safety assessments and activity across the Council are being effectively managed.

Spotlight: Sickness Absence

3.131 The reduction in the level of sickness absence has been sustained this quarter.

- Sickness absence rate threshold for twelve months to December 2018 2018 per fte 8 days, twelve months to September achieved 8.91 days, twelve months to December achieved 8.57 days

3.132 At December 2018, 4 out of 10 business units were achieving their individual sickness absence service targets. Stevenage Direct Services sickness absence levels have also decreased and are now only slightly above target. Service managers are provided with access to real time sickness information to support absence management through the HR system 'MyView'.

3.133 The Council are also in the process 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. Work continues on the development to implement First Care and we are awaiting the final recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on sickness absence before we take any further steps.

3.134 Officers from the Human Resources Team continue to support managers with managing sickness absence cases and long term absence has reduced from 60% to 52% of overall absence.

3.135 The Senior Leadership Team will continue to monitor the performance and management of sickness absence until revised policy and practice results in a sustained reduction in levels of sickness absence.

Finance and Estates

3.136 The Revenues and Benefits service continue to exceed targets for Council Tax collection rates and Housing Benefit processing times.

- Percentage of Council Tax collected (BV9), April to December 2018 target 89%, achieved 90%.

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- 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
 - April to December 2018 target 11 days, achieved 8.12 days.

Senior Leadership Team perspective

3.137 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 December 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 collection rate for Council tax exceeds the target set
- The time taken to process Housing Benefit new claims and change events continues to exceed target.

3.138 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.

3.139 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 the Council's health and well-being policy.

Homelessness Reduction Act

3.140 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.

3.141 The newly formed Housing Options and Supply Teams have achieved the additional preventions through 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.

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- Enhanced working practices to include a new process of the same caseworker managing and supporting a person/household presenting as homeless to appropriate resolution/conclusion.
 - BV213: Homelessness preventions, April to Sept 2018, target 180, achieved 182. April to December target 270, achieved 279
- 3.142 The Assistant Director Housing and Investment will continue to monitor performance and advise the Senior Leadership Team should there be any indications that the performance level is not being sustained.

Customer Service Centre

- 3.143 The Customer Service Centre has started to implement improvement activity that is having an initial positive impact on performance but the Senior Leadership Team will continue to monitor performance to ensure that performance improvement is being sustained into the new performance year (that commences April 2019).

Sickness Absence

- 3.144 The reduction in the level of sickness absence has been sustained this quarter.
- Sickness absence rate threshold for twelve months to December 2018 2018 per fte 8 days, twelve months to September achieved 8.91 days, twelve months to December achieved 8.42 days
- 3.145 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is carrying out a scrutiny review of the Council's sickness management arrangements. The review is focused on factors that are or may be affecting sickness absence within the organisation. Enhancement activities being considered include:
- The development and implementation of a staff communication plan prior to the introduction of First Care with a focus on the aim to improve staff well-being and post implementation of First Care measure the return on investment
 - HR to work with Members to identify specific interventions which might help reduce sickness absence associated with stress, anxiety and depression and sickness absence specifically associated with the undertaking of the Business Unit Reviews.
 - HR to ensure that the impact of ill-health and pressure on officers that are carers is considered and reflected in the Council's sickness policy and other Council policies.
- 3.146 The Senior Leadership Team will continue to monitor the performance and management of sickness absence until revised policy and practice results in a sustained reduction in levels of sickness absence.
- 3.147 At December 2018, the following improvement plans have been identified for ongoing focused monitoring by the Senior Leadership Team:

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- Improvement plans being implemented to ensure that compliance with Health and Safety regulations is effectively monitored and recorded (paragraph 3.90 refers)
- Arrangements to meet new regulations (introduced October 2018) relating to the Licensing of Houses of Multiple Occupation (paragraph 3.102 to 3.105 refer)
- Agreeing and embedding the new future service model in the Customer Service Centre to continue to enhance resilience and increase the availability, skills and knowledge of customer service advisers resulting in sustained performance improvement (paragraphs 3.115 to 3.121 refer)
- The management of sickness absence and alignment to council health and well-being policy. (paragraphs 3.131 to 3.135 refer)

3.148 In addition, the development and implementation of the IT strategy will continue to 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.

3.149 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.

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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.

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 12 December 2018: Corporate Performance Quarter Two

APPENDICES

- Appendix One: Compendium of performance results
- Appendix Two: Future Town, Future Council Programme Scope/Focus