

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPENDIX B

FINANCIAL SECURITY OPTIONS 2021/22

Fund	Projected 2021/22	Projected 2022/23
General Fund	£1,462,182	£1,588,047
HRA	£241,546	£283,372
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,703,728</b>	<b>£1,871,419</b>

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FS1	Children, young people & Leisure	Play	Further rationalise Play Service and reduce dedicated holiday play schemes in Bedwell and Symonds Green to pop up activities as per Summer 2020 (The service received 47,310 attendances in 2019/20)			Y	Potential impact on children and families. The Play service rationalised in 2019/20 delivering a £50,000 saving. The service is highly regarded but discretionary and SBC remains one of the only councils to maintain a free play service. This option reduces activity for summer play schemes, currently dedicated to Bedwell and Symonds Green. These would be replaced with a rationalised pop-up play offer rotating across the town during School holidays. with some income generation through charges for professional child minders and those who are not <u>Stevenage residents</u> .	1 April 2021	15,000	0
FS2	Children, young people & Leisure	Stevenage Leisure Limited	Reduce Contract Sum working with SLL				The advance to SLL is based on no management fee for 2021/22 and 2022/23, however there is no plan as to how this will be delivered so an assumption of a £150K reduction has been assumed	1 April 2021	150,000	0
FS3	Community &Community Safety	PCSO's	Stop funding PSCO's		3	Y	Cease the funding to Hertfordshire Police for PCSOs. The council has introduced 4 Neighbourhood Wardens who maintain a visible neighbourhood presence. No performance data on the SBC investment is currently provided by the Police. A number of other districts in Hertfordshire have ceased funding of PCSOs in recent <u>years</u> .	1 April 2021	96,050	0
FS5	Environment & Regeneration	Allotments	Increase allotment fees to break even- Consider phasing the increase over 2 to 3 years, we have 16 sites and 100% occupation with a waiting list of 300.			Y	Allotments provide a leisure facility that supports physical health, mental wellbeing, and community. In order to breakeven, we would need to increase income from £39,890 to £71,570. The average plot size is 100.23m2 which currently costs £35.08 (at £0.35). The proposal to increase charges in 2020/21 was delayed and will implemented with the forthcoming charge for 2021/22, proposal was to increase to £54.00 per year on a 100.23m2). LSFSG recommended £60.00. (Increase would be £11K saving for 2020/21 and £4K saving 2021/22, total increase £15K) .For reference, in 2018/19 we charged £0.34/ m2 whilst WHDC and NHDC were charging £0.44 and £0.50/m2 respectively.	1 February 2021	4,000	0
FS6	Environment & Regeneration	Parks & Open Spaces	Leaving grass longer in parks - the reduction in cost will be from reduced agency and overtime costs			Y	Grass at Canterbury Way PF, Chells Park, Hampson Park, Meadway PF and Shephalbury Park will be largely left to grow long and be managed as meadow grassland i.e. a single cut, and clearance, once a year in September / October. Wide paths will be cut through the grass to enable access and closer enjoyment of the wildlife. Some reduction in area available for informal kickabouts, etc.	Spring 2021	60,000	0

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FS7	Environment & Regeneration		Stop strimming of obstacles in parks and open spaces- the reduction in cost will be from reduced agency and overtime costs				Longer grass around base of obstacles. No complaints received during 2020.	1 April 2021	25,000	0
FS10	Environment & Regeneration	Trade Waste & Junk removal	Recruit officer to sell trade waste service and related complementary SBC services			Y	Business case for expansion of current trade waste offer and development of total waste solutions offer with SLT for review. For year 1 potential revenue to be gained of £364k, net income of £109k dependent on the recruitment and performance of a Commercial Officer.		54,500	0
FS11	Environment & Regeneration	SDS overtime and Agency budgets	Reduce spend on overtime and agency costs in Stevenage Direct Services			Y	Reduce overtime/agency budgets across Stevenage Direct Services (SDS) through active management of staffing, there is a risk if there is significant sickness increase or turnover of staff costs may increase		50,000	0
FS12	Environment & Regeneration	Planning Policy	EC17 Planning Policy and ET700 Staff costs for Technical Support, AD and Business Relationship Manager	£0	0	Y	None. Declined demands as Local Plan and ass. Documents being completed and being replaced by more Joint Planning work across Herts. Saving from Junes team restructure	Immediate	14,000	0
FS13	Housing & Older People	Community Transport	Cease service entirely.(The Community transport service provides 95 trips per year and 310 registered users, at a cost of £1,566 per trip)	£51,000	5	Y	The service currently cannot be run due to the vulnerability of the users and the majority of drivers who are also in the vulnerable category. Due to the rationale that the service is not likely to be operational for a considerable amount of time and maybe the way this type of service is run will need to be changed permanently which would make the service not operable. This will be subject to consultation and require the vehicles to be sold.  Cease service completely and signpost to HCC service and North Herts Community Transport scheme.	1 May 2021	91,670	0
FS14	Leader of the Council	Fairtrade	Cease payment			Y	The Council pays a subscription which costs £1,500 per year.	1 April 2021	1,005	495
FS15	Leader of the Council	CE, Directors & Support	Reduce support to Directors and CE by reducing Executive support by 0.5FTE	£0	1	Y	Reduce the Executive support to 2.5FTE from 3.5FTE	1 April 2021	14,742	6,318
FS16	Leader of the Council	Members Expenses	Cease provision of refreshments			Y	Delete refreshment budgets due to new ways of working	1 April 2021	2,100	1,400
FS17	Leader of the Council	Democratic Services	Delete 18.5 hour post in Member services due to retirement	£0	1	Y	The post holder is retiring and the work will be absorbed within the existing team	1 April 2021	8,940	5,960

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FS46	Leader of the Council	Constitutional Services - Management Restructure	Streamlining management arrangements within Constitutional Services upon the retirement of the current Constitutional Services Manager post holder.	£0	3	Y	The current post holder for the position of Constitutional Services Manager is due to retire in October 2021. It is envisaged that current members of the Constitutional Services team would be appointed into the newly created roles and that there would be no redundancies. Option is to delete the Constitutional Services Manager (Grade 10) and Elections and Land Charges Manager (Grade 9) posts. Create a new Constitutional and Electoral Services Manager (Grade 12) role. Involves converting a Constitutional Services Officer(Grade 6) to a Senior Constitutional Services Officer (Grade 8) and the creation of a new Electoral Services Officer Post (Grade 4 and 0.5fte)	Nov 2021	6,624	4,416
FS19	Leader of the Council	Policy	Combine Residents and Star survey			N-every 3 years	Commission both surveys together and explore the potential to combine and rationalise. This may limit statistical reliability due to sample size, but could also supplement this with community engagement work with those who do not traditionally participate in surveys. i.e. children and young people	1 April 2021	8,500	8,500
FS20	Leader of the Council	Member Training	Reduce Member training by 50%			Y	Training will be limited to LGA related training and smaller training offer to Members	1 April 2021	2,550	1,700
FS47	Leader of the Council	Member General Expenses	Removal of budget			Y	No longer needed as have an alternative Miscellaneous Budget	1 April 2021	300	200
FS48	Leader of the Council	Member Travel Expenses	Reduction in travel expenses budget due to new ways of working e.g. remote meetings			Y	Reduction in Member Travel Expenses budget.	1 April 2021	1,200	800
FS18	Leader of the Council	Communications	Cease Community Reception dinner function			Y	Cease holding the evening function but still celebrate with awards.	1 April 2021	12,300	2,700
FS21	Neighbourhood & Co-operative working	Grants to sundry Bodies	Reduce grant funding			Y	There is a residual £17K of grant funding that can be removed from the budget and does not impact on CA funding		17,000	0
FS23	Neighbourhood & Co-operative working	CSC and Customer Focus Re-design and efficiencies, supported by implementation of new digital technology resulting in channel shift and automation.	Streamline Customer Focus and Customer Services into one team including: A reduction of 1 FTE Grade 9 post from the combining the Customer Focus and Customer Services Manager roles in a single post. A reduction of 1FTE Manager/Team Leader (currently 5 in total, assumed Grade 5). A reduction of 4FTE Customer Service Advisors at Grade2/3 A reduction of 1 Customer Insight Adviser at Grade 3.	£110,000	2	Y	<b>Customers</b> - Functionality enabled by the Digital Platform project in 2020/21 will enable some shift of contact away from more resource intensive telephony and face to face channels which will reduce the adviser levels needed in order to maintain current performance for customers. Aligning the customer focus team with customer services will ensure continuous improvement can be embedded in service delivery. <b>Other Business Units</b> - The reduction in the Customer Insight adviser (complaints) would be mitigated by implementing a new digital case work solution using Firmstep (which is less resource intensive than emails) and better early management of cases by customer services to reduce the escalation to formal complaints. Digital case management for complaints will make it easier to track and manage cases. However, there may be some temporary additional pressure on service areas in order to support complaints handling while the tools are embedded, and to deal with complex cases.	1 June 2021	69,668	100,401

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FS26	Neighbourhood & Co-operative working	Print Room	Remove the Document Centre Officer (Grade 3) post in ICT.	£60,000	1	Y	This requires services to find alternative solutions for printing or to reduce the need for bulk printing. The key users are Housing Investment and members (committee papers). Members would need to print their own committee papers or to use Modern Gov to view papers for meetings.	1 June 2021	12,722	8,841
FS27	Neighbourhood & Co-operative working	Printing and photocopiers	Remove 4 MFD's from Daneshill & reduce Click usage to 50% of 19/20's volume			Y	Reduce the amount of printing in 2019/20 there were 594,000 prints in qtr. 1 , this had reduced to 200,000 in qtr1 2020/21, increasing to 270,000 in qtr. 2 2020/21. If printing could be reduced by 50% this would give the saving shown	1 April 2021	9,157	6,363
FS28	Neighbourhood & Co-operative working	Reduce Postage costs	Reduce posted items through email and new ways of communicating during the pandemic			Y	Reduce the amount of postage but this requires staff to continue with new ways of working and contacting residents.	Immediate- savings taken as one off in year	21,730	23,270
FS28	Neighbourhood & Co-operative working	LCB budgets	Reduce LCB budgets.			Y	Reduce the amount of LCBs from £2,300 per Member to £1,500 per Member and reduce Youth Mayor LCB from £3,300 to £2,000. There is a growth bid of £18K to provide seed money for the Neighbourhood working. There will be less discretionary funding for community groups to bid for. Community Development Officers will also support groups in accessing other sources of funding.	1 June 2021	40,300	0
FS29	Resources	Commercial Properties	Projected change in lease renewals on the commercial portfolio			Y	While the market is very challenging at the moment the current rental projections show an increase in line with the assumed growth. This will be subject to business being able to remain profitable. There are 176 shops, 20 work shops, 54 misc. properties	1 April 2021	32,470	0
FS30	Resources	Facilities Management	Combine FM and compliance Manager role in one post and delete the FM manager and Compliance Manager, delete vacant FM roles (all posts vacant) , create data manager post to manage Assets and the insourced compliance contract.	£0	0	Y	Combining compliance and insourcing compliance is projected to reduce costs further. However these cannot be released until the backlog of repairs is completed a fuller assessment made.	Immediate	19,665	6,555
FS31	Resources	MRP, Interest Payments and Provisions	Reduce Revenue contributions to capital (RCCO) from £124K to zero. (Dependent on sale of Locality sites)	£0	0	Y- 6 years	The September MTFS had assumed that the RCCO to fund capital would reduce from £474,000 to £124,000 with the use of Locality Receipts. This left a remaining £124K to be funded from revenue, this is now proposed to be reduced to zero.	1 April 2021	124,000	0
FS32	Resources	Audit, Anti Fraud & Corp Banking Charges	Reduce the number of Audit days from Shared Anti Fraud Service (SIAS) by 10%.			Y	The number of Audit days was reduced a number of years ago, SIAS will be factoring this into their budgets next year. This could lead to a wait list for audits. There are currently 350 days and this would reduce the programme by 35 days. Potentially reducing operational audits but sufficient days for a council of SBC size.	1 April 2021	9,209	2,231

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FS33	Resources	Banking Charges	Reapportion cost between HRA & GF based on case load, the number of cases has increased for housing services			Y	This increases the cost to the HRA as the caseload data shows that a greater proportion of the service is used by the HRA (Stats:156 referrals of which 64 housing 2019/20 & 7 properties recovered and 1 RTB cancelled)	1 April 2021	22,400	-22,400
FS34	Resources	Revenues, Benefits and Local Taxation	Reduction in staff due to retirement opportunity			Y	There have been 2 posts removed by the service in the last 2 years, to go further may be difficult in a recessionary period, however reducing the headcount would mean slower claims handling and less overpayments handling, alternative delete visiting officers, however these posts identify where anomalies appear in rating lists and pick up unreported changes. (circa 103 staff shared between EHDC and SBC )	1 April 2021	11,000	0
FS35	Resources	Financial Services	Delete one Graduate Post and one apprentice post		posts vacant	Y	Reduce by one apprentices and one trainee not filled, this will reduce ability to react to organisation requests and will not allow for any succession planning. Significant proportion of the staff are 50+ and this reduces succession planning and does not alleviate current high work demands which was the intention when the structure was approved.	1 April 2021	50,944	11,096
FS36	Resources	Financial Services- procurement	Increase provision to EHDC and Hertsmere Borough Council (2.59FTE's , production of CSO's, training, Procurement Strategy, advice which ahs avoided legal challenges).			Y	The service has been shared with Hertsmere and East Herts and a total of circa £82K of costs reduced by sharing the equivalent of 0.91FTE out of 2.59FTE. The saving shown is the additional savings of the SLA's above that originally estimated.	1 April 2021	21,296	25,273

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FS37	Resources	Financial Services-paralegal (There are 2 paralegals posts or 1.91FTE dealing with RTB's, debt recovery, deeds)	Reduce hours in paralegal team, there are 2 posts or 1.67FTE. This would reduce the hours per week by 12 hours		vacant post	Y	The would take out the 0.27 FTE out of the service and would mean that debt recovery would be slowed as would RTB application process if caseload increases. This would reduce the capacity to deal with commercial arrears which are likely to increase due to COVID and the delay to evictions until the end of December 2020 as a result of non-payment.	Immediate	9,816	5,004
FS38	Resources	Garages	Current charge is for 50 weeks, the proposal is to charge for 52 weeks and not give 2 free rent weeks			Y	Garages are currently charged on a 50 week year and this proposal is to charge rents over a 52 week period. May cause some attrition to rental income	1 April 2021	100,000	0
FS39	Resources		Letting of garages remodelled and improved as part of the garage improvement programme			Y	This is the financial benefit for 2021/22 of the reduction in voids through the refurbishment of garages as part of the Garage improvement programme.	1 April 2021	40,000	0
FS40	Resources		Move the '£2 a week' VCS organisations to lower demand areas - £36k could be achieved by April 2021.			Y	Some of the VCO garages are in high demand areas and as such the proposal is move VCO's into lower demand areas and reduce the waiting lists in the higher demand areas		36,020	0
FS41	Resources		Increase the £2 a week rate to £2.25, benchmarking shows that many other councils charge VCS full rates.			Y	An admin charge of £2.00 was introduced for managing the VCO garages in April 2019. The proposed increase of 25pence per week is recommended		950	0
FS41	Resources		Increase on average in garage rents for Category A-C by £0.25 per week and Road facing garages by £0.30 per week			Y	Garages for 2021/22 will be as follows (excluding VAT) Category A £12.05, Category B £11.85, Category C £11.45 Road facing garages £13.70	1 April 2021	55,000	0
FS42	Resources	Human Resources and Training	Delete job advertising budgets- fund any costs from the vacancy of the post	£0	0	Y	There is a risk the transitional vacancy factor may not be achieved this will need to managed as part of the recruitment process. £45K-£50K has been traditionally spent on GF recruitment, exceeding the budget (there have been a number of senior recruitment drives) and for the HRA £6K-£26K over the last 3 years	1 April 2021	19,240	16,760
FS43	Resources		Reduce professional training budget			Y	Where ever possible all professional qualifications will be funded by the apprentice levy. In circumstances where professional qualification is deemed necessary for an individuals roles, SBC will now funded 50% of this through a bursary scheme and ask the individual to fund 50% themselves.	1 April 2021	3,000	4,000
FS44	Resources	Graduate Scheme (There are 3 graduates and AD's pitch for their services. One of the three is dedicated to Estates as a graduate to support the grow your own due to difficulties with recruitment)	Reduce professional training budget for graduates. Remaining budget will pay for NGDP development as part of the graduate scheme			Y	The graduate programme has already been reduced from four graduates to three (with a further saving due in 2021/22). The other area of spend is to reduce the training. The budget is £12K and the expenditure annually for the last two years has been £4-5K.	1 April 2021	6,000	0
NEW	Resources		Cease the graduate scheme			Y	This is in addition the saving shown above and would mean no graduate resource from 1 October 2021 (GF saving increases to £98K in 2022/23). This is likely to impact on the succession planning in the Estates team.	1 October 2021	67,114	16,663

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FS45	Resources	Cash Collection	Stop taking cash for car parks, depot and CSC ATM. (saving is the cash contract costs less projected increase in card fees) .			Y	During COVID no cash has been taken due to safety reasons, the alternative provision for those using the ATM has been to use the post office. This could be continued into 2021/22 to determine whether this causes any issues. NB: If car park card machine software goes off line no income can be taken	1 April 2021	45,000	5,000
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>£ 221,000</b>	<b>16</b>				<b>£1,462,182</b>	<b>£241,546</b>