

Meeting Executive
Portfolio Area All
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CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER THREE 2020/21

KEY DECISION

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To highlight the Council's performance across key priorities and themes for quarter three 2020/21.

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 2020/21, together with the latest achievements, be noted.
- 2.2 That the impacts of the Government Directive on the provision of accommodation for "rough sleepers" during the Covid-19 Pandemic are noted. (para 3.60 to 3.67).

- 2.3 That the impact of the Government Directive on evictions during the course of COVID-19, as well as the effects of the Pandemic generally, on the Council's Housing Options Service be noted. The Housing First report on this agenda considers this. (para 3.68 to 3.72)
- 2.4 That the impacts of Universal Credit and COVID-19 on rent collection rate are noted and action plans endorsed (para 3.73 to 3.81).
- 2.5 That the impacts of COVID-19 on the Council's ability to deliver against the following key performance areas and, where appropriate the improvement actions outlined against them, as identified in the paragraphs outlined below, be noted:
- Job Creation/New Business Start Up through the Business Technology Centre (para 3.88 to 3.90)
 - Food establishment compliance checks (3.91 to 3.92)
 - Letting of council garages (para 3.95 to 3.99)
 - Collection of Council Tax (para 3.105 to 3.106)
 - Ability to identify and remove HRA/GF savings (para 3.107 to 3.110)
- 2.6 That the level of void loss is noted and how sheltered void properties and major works impact the void loss is noted, and improvement activities are endorsed (para 3.82 to 3.87).
- 2.7 That the proposals to further improve website satisfaction are endorsed (para 3.100 to 3.104).

3 BACKGROUND

Future Town Future Council Programme

- 3.1 Members approved the FTFC 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 At the Council meeting on 24 February 2021, Council agreed to continue with the current Co-operative Corporate Plan beyond the original 5 year term, subject to further review in Autumn 2022.
- 3.3 At its meeting on 8 July 2020, the Executive agreed both the deliverables for each of the FTFC programmes and the town and Council's recovery plans which have very strong synergies. Progress against the agreed actions is summarised within this report.

Customer, Place and Transformation and Support

- 3.4 In addition to monitoring progress on the delivery of the FTFC Programme, performance across all Council services is monitored throughout the year to highlight achievements and identify any areas for improvement.
- 3.5 A complete set of performance measures aligned to both service delivery and the FTFC programme delivery is attached as Appendix One. Summaries of performance measure results are outlined at paragraph 3.57.
- 3.6 Towards the end of Quarter 4 2019/20, Covid-19 began to impact on both FTFC programme activities and on council services. Covid-19 impacts on performance are highlighted throughout this report.

COVID-19

- 3.7 Given the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council's Directors have provided an overview of current performance. Many services have been adapted to provide support for local people. The effects of the pandemic have required the Council to scale up or adapt support for residents at short notice, for example to scale up the Stevenage Helps and the Local Outbreak teams during the second lockdown. Officers have and continue to strive to put resourcing plans in place to manage the business continuity of vital services in a time of disruption, thereby diverting colleagues into priority areas. This will result in some temporary capacity reduction within lower priority areas. The pandemic is having significant impacts on residents and businesses in the town, which is reflected in areas of increasing demand or pressures in different service areas such as homelessness support and advice, Council Tax and Housing Benefits, income and rents.
- 3.8 The Business Units are striving to remain focussed and engaged on delivery of the agreed priorities, from creating new social and affordable housing, to driving forward the regeneration of the town centre, cooperative neighbourhoods and wealth building.

Future Town, Future Council Programme progress update

- 3.9 The focus and scope of the FTFC programmes for 2020/21 is outlined in Appendix Two. Delivery of the agreed outcomes is monitored to ensure that the Programme remains on track.
- 3.10 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

Programme Delivery Update

- 3.11 The planning application for SG1 was submitted by Mace to the Council's Planning Committee in October, where a resolution to grant permission was approved. Government issued a holding directive whilst the Minister made a decision on whether to call in the application and but this has been lifted by the Secretary of State since the end of the quarter.
- 3.12 Discussions have continued to take place with the lead project sponsors to progress the hub project. A report outlining how the delivery of the SG1 scheme could be accelerated is on the agenda for this meeting.
- 3.13 The majority of enabling works have been completed on the site of the bus interchange. The next package of works has been agreed with the contractors and the associated works are being progressed.
- 3.14 Physical works to the Town Square projects are near completion. The North Block building is now in the handover stage with snagging work and final inspections underway. The majority of works to the public realm are also at the handover stage, with surveys to the Clock Tower being completed as well.
- 3.15 Plans for the multi-storey car park (MSCP) have been further developed following the Executive agreeing to fund the project using Growth Deal funds. As part of this work the costs associated with introducing cycling hubs are also being investigated. Discussions are ongoing internally with the Legal and Procurement teams regarding the contract.
- 3.16 The Stevenage Town Investment Plan was successfully submitted on the 30th October 2020, the Council is awaiting the first round of feedback. Initial scoping and preparation for the next 6 months is underway in anticipation of the next steps of the process.
- 3.17 The Even Better website has been updated to reflect changes across the whole programme, including the Towns Fund. Queensway, Town Square and

the Towns Fund. Social media campaigns and promotional work remain ongoing via regular communications updates.

Housing Development Programme

Programme Delivery Update

- 3.18 Work is continuing on the North Road site. Marketing for the one and two bedroom apartments has begun and there has been regular interest in the properties.
- 3.19 The schemes at Shephall Way (9 Homes) and Symonds Green (29 Homes) have continued to be progressed this quarter. At Shephall Way external blockwork is being laid on site, and internal work is progressing. At Symonds Green, the brickwork, blockwork and enhanced insulation is continuing on the ground floor in preparation for the first floor slab.
- 3.20 The contract documents for Kenilworth Close were finalised in December, and ground works continue on site at Malvern Close. Contractors are on site at the scheme carrying out the necessary diversion works and disconnections. Utilities to all remaining properties have been disconnected and the main site is fully established.
- 3.21 Work to progress and refine the masterplan for the Oval continues with the design team. The team are working to develop a regeneration document that will demonstrate the vision for the area. As well as this, the team will be examining the feasibility and order of the phased delivery of the scheme and will provide a guide on architectural styles, materials and design.
- 3.22 The report for the Wholly Owned Company (WOC) was reviewed ahead of being presented to the Executive at its January meeting.
- 3.23 A further open market acquisition (OMA) was completed this quarter. Works will now take place to make it ready to be let. Completion dates have not yet been provided for the remaining 3 properties which are currently in the pipeline.

Co-operative and Neighbourhood Management (CNM) Programme

Programme Delivery Update

- 3.24 The neighbourhood improvements programme has delivered some projects this quarter, but continues to be affected by limitations with regards to community engagement due to the pandemic. Plans for projects in quarter four are on-going including a community orchard in St Nicholas and Pin Green wards, art installations and targeted work in areas highlighted by the local communities.
- 3.25 Further progress has been made in relation to the implementation of the Co-operative Neighbourhoods programme this quarter. A meeting with operational leads for the six neighbourhood teams took place in December where challenges, successes and opportunities were discussed. Processes to

ensure comprehensive partnership working and resident involvement were also reviewed. The Strategic Board for the Co-operative Neighbourhoods programme, which is chaired by Cllr Broom will review the strategic direction of the new operating model in quarter four.

- 3.26 The Estates team continue to progress the Locality Reviews process including considerations to the long term sustainability of the Council's Community Centres assets. This includes the medium and long term benefit realisation of the Hub and Spoke model outlined as part of the Community Centre Review.
- 3.27 The Co-operative Council Innovation Network (CCIN) Policy Lab group met to re-scope its remit in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. The policy lab will be reframed so as to further develop the model of cooperative neighbourhood working and community networks to help build new models of collaboration in local communities. A commissioning process is currently underway for an external organisation to support this learning.

Excellent Council Homes Programme

Programme Delivery Update

- 3.28 Delivery of the flat-block refurbishment programme continues to be affected by the pandemic, but contractors and Council staff have worked hard to ensure adherence to government guidance. Throughout quarter three, work has continued steadily to external and internal areas and Council teams have continued to work closely with contractors to mitigate potential issues should the contract period need to be extended, owing to the pandemic.
- 3.29 The lift refurbishment programme has continued at good pace throughout quarter three. Lifts at Truro Court have been completed and Norman Court lift is near completion.
- 3.30 Concept designs have been completed for the Sprinkler project this quarter, and a consultant has been appointed to review the drawings. Once designs are agreed, construction drawings will be issued and a Building Control application will be submitted by the contractor.
- 3.31 The Rapid project, that looks to streamline back office databases for better use for staff when onsite, has continued to progress steadily. The caretaking app is now live following testing this quarter. Progress has also been made with the 'Chatbots' project, beginning with an initial supplier meeting to discuss proof of concept. The project is anticipated to begin in quarter four.
- 3.32 The Housing Older People Strategy (HOPS) was presented to the Executive in December 2020. It was agreed that the HOPS draft strategy 2020-2030 should be adopted, including the case for the financial resources needed to support the implementation of the action plan. Final amendments will be made prior to its publication.

Connected to our Customers Programme

Programme Delivery Update

- 3.33 Following the successful launch of The Council's new look website in quarter two, focus is now on visual appeal and Stevenage showcasing, the website supporting digital journeys, transparent democracy and customer inclusion. This quarter has also provided an opportunity to collect a wide-range of service usage data, and to start the process of reviewing ideas and requests for further digital solutions.
- 3.34 Development to the digital platform has continued this quarter which will act as an enabler for future projects. Elements of this are now in final stages of testing and should be available for customers in quarter four. Training on the platform has also been rolled out to the wider members of the team which will improve team resilience and capability.

Place of Choice Programme

Programme Delivery Updates

Climate Change

- 3.35 The Climate Change Citizens Panel report was finalised in November 2020. Recommendations from the report will be discussed and actioned through the Climate Change Executive Member Group.
- 3.36 Stevenage signed up to the Race to Zero online platform in December 2020 as part of the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) global Race to Zero campaign. The Council also signed up to the revised UK100 pledge. This shows the Council's commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030 and working towards Stevenage wide net zero carbon emissions by 2045.

Community Safety

- 3.37 Work to update the Community Safety strategy and action plan continued this quarter. Consultation took place through various social media platforms, including using data from the Police's Echo platform. The team also completed telephone surveys, email and papers surveys, all which are used to help ensure that the right priorities and initiatives are in place.
- 3.38 An action plan has been completed for the No More Service and this will also be fed into the work to update the Community Safety Strategy and action plan. From April 2021 the No More Service will include work with young people who may be involved in knife crime and or Anti-Social Behaviour. We have met with the other Hertfordshire districts regarding knife crime and how this affects our communities and further work will be undertaken on the back of these discussions.

Community Wealth Building

- 3.39 The Council launched its Cooperative and Inclusive Economy Charter on 19th November 2020. The Charter aims to support a fairer society and more resilient economy, and provides some practical examples of how to achieve this. These include shopping locally, developing local supply chains, supporting the development of cooperatives, and offering work placements and apprenticeships. The Charter is aimed at both individuals and employers.

Healthy Stevenage

- 3.40 The Young People's Healthy Hub was launched in quarter three. A programme of activities has been scheduled with new agencies joining the network of partners including the Stevenage Secondary School pastoral leads and Change Grow Live (CGL). A dedicated counselling service for young people 11-16 years old is being launched in quarter four with a mixture of online and face-to face delivery.
- 3.41 An interim report from the National Institute for Health Research and University of Hertfordshire (UoH), on the subject of how coronavirus and the associated restrictions are affecting how people do everyday activities relating to food, such as shopping, cooking, and eating has been released. Healthy Stevenage partners are supporting colleagues at UoH with ongoing research with partners and their clients to help shape a food policy briefing and final report.
- 3.42 The Stevenage Dementia Involvement Group has hosted their first "mini" virtual meeting in December 2020. The topic for the group was "Physical Activity in Stevenage". A report summarising discussions has been produced.

Stevenage Re-Imagined

- 3.43 Planned cultural engagement and installation programmes have continued throughout quarter three, despite the pandemic. This included work on the COVID Cobra project and St Nicholas and The Oval arts programmes.
- 3.44 A successful partnership application was made to Hertfordshire Community Foundation to support BAME communities most impacted by COVID through racial equality training, community networking and intelligence building, and mental health support sessions.

Sustainable Transport

- 3.45 Stevenage was accepted onto Hertfordshire County Council's Sustainable Travel Town (STT) programme. The decision was finalised at a meeting of the County Council's Growth, Infrastructure, Planning and Economy Cabinet Panel in December as Councillors approved the officer recommendation, following the appraisal and assessment of bids from all over Hertfordshire.
- 3.46 The Council's Executive approved the public consultation of a draft version of a new Parking Strategy for Stevenage. The Council is responsible for much of the public parking in the borough and the emerging strategy will become the

overarching policy for public parking provision. It will therefore set out approaches that are in line with SBC's Co-operative Council Commitment to engage with the community and relevant stakeholders in managing parking. Following consultation, it is expected to be formally adopted by summer 2021.

- 3.47 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) was allocated money by the Department for Transport's Emergency Active Travel Fund Tranche 2. One of the key projects this money is to be spent on is cycling improvements on North Road from the Gyratory northwards to the improvements being provided as part of the North Road development. The combination of these two schemes will deliver a large portion of Route 1 as identified by the Stevenage Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, published in 2019.

Enabling Future Town, Future Council Programmes

Financial Security Programme

Programme Delivery Update

- 3.48 The 2021/22 HRA budget and 2021/22 General Fund budget were presented to Full Council in January and February 2021 following reporting during the third quarter to the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny. The report included proposed growth (subject to available funding), savings proposals and fees and charges. The savings proposals related to one rather than the normal three year target due to the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's finances and uncertainty surrounding the medium to longer term impacts of the pandemic.
- 3.49 In addition Members approved that a further £500K of options would be worked up during March 2021 in the event that the financial position as a result of Covid-19 requires further savings.
- 3.50 The Council's Commercialisation & Insourcing Strategy was agreed by the Executive in August 2020, and regular updates are being provided to Members. The strategy is focussed on ideas to find savings to contribute to the Financial Security target and a number of options are being explored.

Employer of Choice Programme

Programme Delivery Update

- 3.51 Activities throughout quarter three focused on supporting the Council's response to Covid-19 and the associated recovery planning, which has resulted in the temporary pausing of some elements of the Employer of Choice Programme. The programme has continued to focus upon future ways of working, through learning lessons about how our workforce is working differently during the Covid-19 response.
- 3.52 Extensive work was undertaken to develop a new Workforce and Organisational Development strategy during quarter two, including consultation and engagement with SLT, staff, trade union and Portfolio Holder

Advisory Group (PHAG) engagement. The strategy was presented and approved by the Executive in quarter three.

- 3.53 In line with the new Workforce Strategy work commenced during quarter two to draft a new Remote Working policy for which consultation commenced in quarter three.
- 3.54 Work has been progressing to launch a new digital Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) system which will be used for current and new employees, and for taxi licensing. This reaffirms our commitment to safeguarding, and supports the new remote ways of working and streamlining processes. The digital DBS system is on track to launch in quarter four.
- 3.55 Additionally the retender of current agency supply framework is underway and due to conclude in March 2021. The report is on the agenda of this Executive meeting.

Performing at our Peak Programme

Programme Delivery Update

- 3.56 Enhancements have been made to the risk module of the InPhase performance management system during Q3, including a new style of reporting for the Corporate Risk Group and Audit Committee. However, there has been insufficient capacity to undertake further development work in relation to this programme due to resource being diverted to Resilience activities associated with the response to Covid-19. It is anticipated that the main focus of the corporate performance/governance function will continue to be on 'business as usual' activity for the remainder of the year.

Corporate Performance highlights and areas for improvement

- 3.57 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 these results for April 2020 to December 2020 are outlined below:

Number of Measures Reported	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (urgent improvement action required)	Missing Data
53	32	5	10	6*

* (Explanations in paras 3.111 to 3.118) CSC13a: % of calls to the CSC resolved within the CSC, Pe1: Workforce Stability, Pe2: Agency Usage, ECHFL5: Repairs satisfaction missing, FS3 & 4 % of savings identified for 3 year target

- 3.58 A summary of areas for improvement for April 2020 to December 2020 is set out in the following paragraphs across the three key delivery themes: Customer, Place, and Transformation and Support.

Spotlights and Areas for Improvement

- 3.59 The measures below were reported to be at red or amber status for Quarter 3.

Households in Emergency/Temporary Accommodation

NI156: Number of Households in Emergency/Temporary Accommodation

- December 2020 target 120
- December 2020 actual 166 (red)

- 3.60 There are a large number of clients residing within hotel accommodation due to the ongoing and prolonged demands that have been placed upon the Housing Options team.
- 3.61 The impact of COVID-19 has meant that applicants are spending longer periods of time in temporary accommodation. The Providing Homes team continue to work hard to move applicants out of hotel accommodation and into the council's own stock, which has increased by 36 units in this financial year.
- 3.62 Further to this the team is completing essential moves only but prioritising all moves for those owed a duty in Temporary Accommodation, duty through the Housing Register and in the Private Rented Sector.
- 3.63 It is unlikely that the numbers of applicants placed in Emergency and Temporary Accommodation will substantially reduce whilst we remain in a period of national restrictions and continue to see a constant flow of approaches to the Housing Options team.
- 3.64 The Council is continuing to source accommodation at pace. The Housing Supply team have rehoused 26 rough sleepers within the private rented sector this financial year to date and also continuing to seek to source additional accommodation.
- 3.65 Key officers meet every 6 weeks to review B&B spend, monitor B&B usage and to agree what actions are being taken to reduce this.
- 3.66 The Housing Options team have seen 156 rough sleepers approach for assistance since the 'Everyone In' directive was put in place on 26 March 2020. Since this time, placements have continued as detailed in the Housing First Executive report (November 2020) and there is a project underway to engage and rehouse the remaining 39 cases who were rough sleeping or at imminent risk of rough sleeping.
- 3.67 The second report relating to the new Housing First model is included on the agenda for this Executive meeting. The team were successful in their proposals for the MHCLG Next Steps revenue and capital funding which totals approximately £1.3million for accommodation, support, security and Severe

Weather Emergency Provision. A further £20k worth of security costs can be claimed from the Cold weather fund and the team are yet to bid for a £20k fund for continuing to place cases in the period of the third national restrictions.

Homelessness Preventions

BV213: Homelessness Preventions

- December 2020 target 270 preventions
 - December 2020 actual 217 preventions (red)
- 3.68 The current caseload is 550. This includes those who are seeking housing advice, but who may not currently be threatened with homelessness. The team are currently operating at approximately 50% capacity due to sickness and vacancies, which is affecting the number of preventions. Efforts are continuing to recruit to the vacant roles.
- 3.69 The Housing Options team have increased staffing by two Housing Options Caseworkers, two senior Housing Options Caseworkers and three rough sleeper co-ordinators. Investigations are currently ongoing to explore any additional staffing needs to assist with achieving preventions for a backlog of cases that built up during lockdown which should also assist to ease the numbers in emergency/temporary accommodation.
- 3.70 The Senior Housing Options Caseworkers are funded through the flexible homeless support grant, with one post leading on the day to day management of the Rough Sleeper outreach team, some Housing Options Caseworkers and another working with the remaining Housing Options Caseworkers.
- 3.71 The demand for the service has grown significantly and year on year since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act. Approaches from customers to the service are detailed below;
- During 2018 /19 there were 1314 approaches to the service (equates to 25 approaches per week)
 - During 2019/20 there were 1571 approaches to the service (equates to 30 cases per week) which is a year on year increase of 20%
- 3.72 Our records show that there has also been an increase in approaches during this financial year compared to last:

Approaches to Housing Options		
Period	Number	Percentage Increase from last financial year
Jan-March 2020 (pre COVID-19 restrictions)	471	36% increase on same quarter last year
April- June 2020 (during Lockdown 1.0)	381	Static on last year
July-Sep 2020	369	Static on last year
Oct 2020	149	81% increase on same period last year
November 2020 (during Lockdown 2.0)	116	68% increase on same period last year

Rent Collection

BV66a: Rent Collection Rate

- December 2020 target 97.8%
- December 2020 actual 96.4% (red)

- 3.73 Income collection for the end of December is below target due to unprecedented challenges from the impacts of COVID-19; however the performance has improved over that recorded in the previous quarter by 2.95%.
- 3.74 The number of Universal Credit (UC) cases since end of March 2020 has continued to increase and stood at 1529 as at end of December. Of these accounts 1026 are in arrears totalling £675,116.82, which equates to 65.4% of the overall gross arrears. Although there is an increase in the number of cases, the level of arrears reduced by 11.84% in Quarter 3 when compared to Quarter 2.
- 3.75 The number of tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit (HB) has continued to decrease since March 2020 and is currently standing at 36.46 % of the total number of current tenants (a reduction of 1.26% from the end of Quarter 2). This could be a direct result of the increase in tenants in receipt of UC.
- 3.76 There has been an increase in Emergency (EA) and Temporary Accommodation (TA) arrears. The total number of cases is 158, of those 118 are in arrears totalling £65,765.70. The team continue to experience high levels of homeless presentations confirmed by the suite of indicators for Homelessness.
- 3.77 There has been an increase in the number of tenants that have been affected and are furloughed, on job retention schemes or made redundant. Please see the table below:

	No of Cases	No in Arrears	Total Arrears
Furloughed	261 (175 in November)	207 (150 in November)	£175,695.05 (£118,483.56 in November)
Retention	77 (54 in November)	65 (43 in November)	£51,405.18 (£34,113.29 in November)
Redundancy	30 (20 in November)	22 (15 in November)	£19,897.58 (£11,930.27 in November)
Total	368	294	£246,997.81

- 3.78 Although Government suspension of legal proceedings in court was lifted at the end of August 2020 and we have resumed taking cases to court. There

are however delays in obtaining hearing dates. This has resulted in a large backlog of cases which has an impact on arrears recovery. The income team have served 268 Notices of Seeking Possession since April 2020.

- 3.79 Government restrictions on eviction action that have been extended to 21 February 2021 have had an impact on the level of arrears. There are 25 cases that would have taken through the eviction process this year totalling £58,863.91.
- 3.80 The combined insecurity of the COVID-19 pandemic and increased financial pressure has seen some of our tenants opting for permanent debt solutions and so far we have 7 cases in the process of obtaining Debt Relief Orders (DRO) with arrears totalling £18,675.79.
- 3.81 It is projected that more tenants are likely to migrate to full-service UC over the next 12 months; however this projection could be increased further dependent on the impact of the post-lockdown furlough process ending. Work to mitigate the impact will continue focusing on sustaining income collection and arrears recovery and tenancy sustainment.

Void Loss, Voids Sheltered & Voids Sheltered Major Works

VoidLoss1: Void Loss in year (£)

- December 2020 target £239,856
- December 2020 actual £289,844 (red)

VoidsSheltered: The time taken to relet standard sheltered voids

- December 2020 target 70 days
- December 2020 actual 107.72 days (red)

Voids ShelteredMW: The time taken to relet major works sheltered voids

- December 2020 target 70 days
- December 2020 actual 98 days (red)

- 3.82 Void loss is red this quarter and continues to be closely monitored. After 9 months of the current financial year the Void Loss is 20% over the target at this stage. The voids team are seeing an increasing number of Independent Living and Flexicare properties becoming void as a direct result of the Covid19 pandemic. These are the slowest properties to re-let. Although there is an increase in voids due to the pandemic, the council has continued to let properties during this time. For example:
- 1st April 2019– 12th February 2020 – the team let 76 properties
 - 1st April 2020 – 12th February 2021 – the team let 66 properties.
- 3.83 The team is only 10 lets behind where it was this time last year. This is largely down to the efforts of the Accommodation and Complex Needs Officer (this post did not start until July 20) who has been proactively working in

partnership to support people being able to move to independent living and Flexicare accommodation.

- 3.84 The pandemic has also resulted in restrictions to viewings and Lettings which will inevitably compound rent loss. The largest contributor to rent loss continues to be the list of historical sheltered properties that is accumulating an average of £17k rent loss every month; were the team not operating with this challenge the void loss figure would be approximately £137k, £103k under target. The service will also continue to accumulate rent loss from the Hobbs Court properties that are not being refurbished or returned to the housing stock as they become void (whilst awaiting regeneration).
- 3.85 Of the 18 Standard Sheltered Voids Let in Quarter 3, 12 (out of 18) took over 100 days, including 3 properties that took 252, 329 and 574 days to let. The latter was a Management Void conversion to a 1 bed flat delivered by the Investment team. These are all against a target of 70 days.
- 3.86 The Repairs team is achieving its target for turnaround time for Major Works Sheltered Voids, but the overall KPI performance continues to be affected by voids that have historically been hard to let. There has only been 1 sheltered major works void let in Quarter 3 and this had an overall turnaround time of 98 days (which represents an improvement from 127days in Quarter 2). The Repairs element was completed in 57 days (within target), with the remainder of the time taken to let the property. One property in July took over 200 days to let and we will see the KPI impacted while these older and long term voids are let, so the impact of this one property has significant impacts on the total KPI. Once these are cleared we should see the long term benefits for both this KPI and the void loss figure.
- 3.87 An officer working group is in place and has been tasked with reducing void loss and improve turnaround times for both standard sheltered voids and major works sheltered voids, however the work of this group has been heavily impacted by the Covid-19 restrictions.

Jobs Created and New Business start-ups through the Business Technology Centre

BTC1a: New jobs created through the BTC (ytd)

- December 2020 target 35
- December 2020 actual 22 (red)

BTC1b: New business start up through the BTC (ytd)

- December 2020 target 18
- December 2020 actual 17 (amber)

- 3.88 During Quarter 3 the jobs created and new business start-up through the Business Technology Centre (BTC) did not meet the target, however they still managed to create 10 jobs and supported 7 new businesses starting up in challenging economic circumstances.

- 3.89 The target output for jobs created for the whole of this financial year is 60 and for new businesses is 24. These figures relate to a funding agreement between the council and EEDA (East of England Development Agency) for the second phase, to support an extension at the BTC. EEDA are no longer in existence and responsibility now lies with Homes England. The agreement ceases November 2022.
- 3.90 There is evidence that more self-employed people are taking on paid employment currently, as certain types of businesses have not been supported by Government measures. The BTC has seen the number of enquiries for start-up decrease quite dramatically for these reasons. Businesses are currently concerned with safeguarding the jobs they currently provide, rather than recruitment. This can be evidenced by national data on the number of job vacancies since the pandemic began.

Food Establishment Compliance

NI184: Food Establishments in the Area Broadly Compliant with Food Hygiene Law

- December 2020 target 95%
 - December 2020 actual 90.6% (amber)
- 3.91 Food safety inspections remain largely paused at the instruction of the Food Standards Agency (FSA), in all but the highest risk cases. This, coupled with a surge in new businesses registering with the Council, has diluted the overall number of food businesses that are broadly compliant.
- 3.92 During quarter 4, the Commercial Team will be prioritising inspections in premises that are new and at existing non-broadly compliant premises, in accordance with the priorities outlined by FSA.

Household Waste sent for Recycling, Reuse or Composting

NI192: Percentage of Household Waste sent for Reuse, Recycling or Composting

- December 2020 target 40%
 - December 2020 estimate 37% (amber)
- 3.93 Quarter 3 figures are still estimates until March due to the way this measure is reported from outside sources. The estimate is based on the actual figure for the same period last year. Due to the impacts of COVID-19 it is thought that the target is optimistic for the year.
- 3.94 The impact of the lockdown with residents being at home either through furlough or home working has increased our tonnages collected for waste and recycling.

Garage Voids

CNM2g: Garage Voids as a Percentage of Stock

- December 2020 target 14.74%
- December 2020 actual 15.69% (amber)

- 3.95 Garage lettings have continued during the pandemic and the Garages team is receiving at least 80 garage applications per month; however there have been several factors that have continued to prevent the void rate from reducing. The team have been investigating why applicants are not accepting the offers. This often comes down to applicants no longer requiring a garage or the garage being offered being located too far from their property. There are intentions to continue contacting those applicants that do not respond to offers to see if anything can be done to support them.
- 3.96 It is anticipated that, with the move to Choice Based Lettings in April 2021, the uptake of garage offers will increase as customers will be able to bid for their preferred garages online. Initially this will be for those low demand garages freeing up officers time to concentrate on offering garages of high demand using our extensive waiting list.
- 3.97 There has been a slow return of garages that have been sent out for pre-asbestos inspections, however is being addressed and through the local KPIs the team are aiming for a weekly stream of at least 20 offers per week and a 50% acceptance rate. At this time the current acceptance rate is on average 36%.
- 3.98 There are 3 large garage sites where refurbishment work has been completed, where the voids are high, and offers have already begun on these sites from the first week of January and will continue over the coming weeks. There are 10 more sites with work due to begin in January.
- 3.99 As a result of targeted communications, arrears have continued to decrease in the past weeks and there has been a 1% reduction in arrears compared with arrears in November, with tenants actively approaching SBC to make payments or set up arrangements. This is currently 2.28% of the estimated yearly income and contact with tenants continues to be made and regular repossessions are being carried out on cases where arrears are pre-Covid-19.

Website Satisfaction

WebSat1: Customer Satisfaction with Council website (-1 negative score, 0 neutral score, +1 positive score)

- December 2020 target 0.26
- December 2020 actual -0.08 (red)

- 3.100 Quarter 3 website satisfaction was particularly impacted by 3 factors, which were all improving by the end of the period.

- 3.101 Firstly, the new website launched at the end of September, breaking some links and changing the look, feel and navigation of the site which had remained mostly the same over the previous 10 years. Understandably this did generate some negative (and positive) responses in the initial weeks after launch. Further to this officers are looking at options to improve the search function.
- 3.102 Secondly, there was an intermittent problem causing the online payment system to be unavailable, which was very frustrating for customers. The cause of this hasn't been definitively identified, but it has performed more reliably towards the end of the quarter and into January.
- 3.103 Finally, the supplier commissioned to provide the new bin collection day checker took several weeks longer than they originally proposed, and many customers found the downloadable calendar of collections difficult to use in the interim. These difficulties were compounded by the late approval of the Q3 waste and recycling collection schedules; we weren't able to publish the October collection days until the very end of September, and the Christmas collections weren't available until December. A large number of negative comments from customers indicated that they want to see a whole year's worth of collections in advance. The new bin collection checker is now available, and customers can find it published here:
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/find>
- 3.104 Performance on this measure started to recover in December and is expected to continue to improve in Q4.



Council Tax

BV9: % Council Tax Collected

- December 2020 target 88%
- December 2020 actual 87% (amber)

- 3.105 The collection rate was 1% lower at 87% as at December 2020, this had risen to 91.4% by the end of January (an increase of 4.4%). Based on this trend the target of 96.8% may be achieved.
- 3.106 During 2020/21 a, larger than normal, number of payment arrangements were made to help those whose incomes had been impacted by Covid-19, by January 5764 households had agreed alternative plans.

GF/HRA Savings

FS1A: % GF approved savings removed from GF for current year

- December 2020 target 92%
- December 2020 actual 67% (red)

FS2A: % HRA approved savings removed from HRA for current year

- December 2020 target 91%
- December 2020 actual 40% (red)

- 3.107 There has been a reduction in the 2020/21 savings/income generation achievable due to the impacts of Covid-19.
- 3.108 Normally, a three year view of savings is proposed as part of the Budget Setting process (MTFS) and agreed by Members to ensure that there are sufficient options in the pipeline to deliver a sustainable budget.
- 3.109 However due to considerable uncertainty about the future year impacts of Covid-19, Brexit and any recession on the Council's budgets, along with the financial pressures this has had and will continue to have on the Council's services, a one year budget setting approach is being taken for 2021/22. Due to this decision the team are unable to report on the measures, FS3: % of GF savings identified for 3 year target, and also, FS4: % of HRA savings identified for 3 year target.
- 3.110 This applies to both the General Fund and the HRA. The GF savings for 21/22 are £1.462m and for the HRA are £242k.

Missing Measures

- 3.111 There is no data for Quarter 3 for the measures below.

Repairs Measures

ECHFL5: % of repairs service customers satisfied

- 3.112 The Repairs Team are unable to provide data for this measure for Quarter 3. This is due to a fault with the Cloud Dialogues SMS system, which is used for satisfaction surveys. Housing IT Systems officers are seeking to resolve this issue.

HR Measures

Pe1: Total Human Capital – measures workforce stability

Pe2: Agency Usage as a percentage of the total workforce

- 3.113 Due to the ongoing additional workload of the HR and OD team to support the Council's Covid-19 response, the establishment of the vaccination centre within Stevenage, and the requirement for the HR Systems Manager to support the running of the payroll in January 2021, measures Pe1 and Pe2 were not completed.
- 3.114 These measures will be completed at the end of Quarter 4 to give a year end outturn figure.

CSC Measures

CSC13a: % of calls to the CSC resolved within the CSC (by CSC advisors)

- 3.115 The Covid-19 pandemic has massively affected normal working practices and required IT to re-prioritise resources to enable homeworking and delivery of critical components of the IT Strategy. This meant they were not able to provide access to the reporting systems needed to measure CSC13a until December 2020, which was much later than originally intended. The data is now available to access, including historic data, and the team are working on interpreting the data which should be reported in Quarter 4.
- 3.116 The reporting for CSC13a is now being developed and will need to be re-baselined to take account of new processes which have been introduced within Customer Services. This is a very time consuming task as what counts as resolved “at first point of contact” has to be considered for each individual process. Alongside this a new suite of measures is being developed to support new ways of working.
- 3.117 While the team haven't been able to monitor CSC13a they have secured a very good customer satisfaction rate (measure EAA1) of 96% throughout the year, which is well ahead of the 90% target, and is the strongest performance of this measure since recording commenced in 2015. This should provide some reassurance that the focus on delivering for customers has continued in Customer Services throughout this difficult year.
- 3.118 There is also growth in customers self-serving online using the new digital platform (table below). It has grown approximately four-fold since the platform was launched online in June. The team are looking at how best to report on self-service usage in next year's performance figures.

Period	% of Digital platform transactions self-service (rather than Customer Service telephone/ email / face to face)
2020	
Jun	4.4%
Jul	4.5%
Aug	6.3%
Sep	9.7%
Oct	12.0%
Nov	12.1%
Dec	12.3%
2021	
Jan	13.5%

Next Quarter Focus

3.119 The Assistant Directors are responsible for improving the performance of measures that fall within their Business Units.

3.120 Following a number of assessments, and the new red and amber measures arising at December 2020, the improvement activities outlined below have been identified for ongoing monitoring by the Senior Leadership Team:

- Continue to monitor satisfaction with the new Council website after introduction of the new site and monitor issues with online payments (para 3.100 to 3.104)
- Continuing to implement recovery plans for Temporary/Emergency accommodation use caused by Covid-19 (paragraphs 3.60 to 3.67)
- Continuing to implement Housing First plans to assist with Homelessness Preventions (para 3.68 to 3.72)
- Continuing to implement recovery plans for Rent Collection (para 3.73 to 3.81)
- Continuing to implement plans and improve processes for Void loss, Sheltered Voids and Sheltered Major Works Voids (para 3.82 to 3.87)
- Continuing to work with/follow advice from WENTA about BTC job creation and new business start-up (para 3.88 to 3.90)
- Ensuring that compliance checks for food establishments resume and checks for high risk establishments continue (para 3.91 to 3.92)
- Monitor the level of waste sent for reuse/recycling/composting (3.93 to 3.94)
- Ensuring that issues with the letting of council garages due to Covid-19 are recognised and performance is monitored closely. Implement plans to improve the process of garages lettings (paragraphs 3.95 to 3.99)
- Ensuring that improvement plans for collection of Council Tax are in place (para 3.105 to 3.106)

- Ensuring that General Fund and HRA savings are closely monitored (para 3.107 to 3.110)

3.121 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.

3.122 The Senior Leadership Team will also continue to closely monitor the impact of Covid-19 on performance across all service areas during 2020/21 and most performance results will be compared to actuals or targets in the equivalent period last year. This will help to establish the level of impact and inform where activity and resources need to be allocated.

3.123 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 previous 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 or COVID-19 recovery 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.

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 10 July 2019: 2018/19 Annual Report & Performance Overview

APPENDICES

- Appendix One: Compendium of Performance Results
- Appendix Two: Future Town, Future Council Programme Scope/Focus for 2020/21