

Meeting Executive
Portfolio Area All
Date 18 July 2023



CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER FOUR 2022/23, ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23 AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SUITE 2023/24

KEY DECISION

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight the Council's performance across key priorities and themes for the past year through the Annual Report 2022/23, including a particular focus on quarter four performance.
- 1.2 This report also proposes the Future Town, Future Council Co-operative Corporate Plan priorities and the Corporate Performance Suite for 2023/24.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the draft Annual Report 2022/23 (Appendix A) and Summary Action Plan/Plan on a Page (Appendix B) be agreed, subject to any changes discussed at the Executive meeting and with final sign off delegated to the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council.
- 2.2 That the significant progress in the delivery of priorities which form the Future Town, Future Council Programme and strong performance of the Council across the key themes for quarter four 2022/23, together with the latest achievements, be noted (see Appendices C and D).
- 2.3 That the proposed Corporate Performance Suite 2023/24 (Appendix F) be agreed.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Each year, the Council agrees its key outcomes and priorities for the town and the Council during the coming 12 months. These are framed within the Future Town Future Council (FTFC) Co-operative Corporate Plan, with delivery driven through service areas and the FTFC programme.
- 3.2 Throughout 2022/23 the Council has continued to make significant progress in delivering its ambitions under the Future Town Future Council programme. Continued effort is being applied to areas where improvements are needed, including re-focusing resources on specific action plans. This report sets out these achievements and areas of focus in more detail.
- 3.3 The achievements and areas of focus identified in 2022/23 should be considered in the context of another particularly challenging year for Stevenage residents, businesses and the Council. This has included:
 - 3.3.1 The ongoing pressures from the cost of living, caused by rising prices for fuel, energy, utility, rent / mortgages, food and other household expenses.
 - 3.3.2 The continued impact of the war in Ukraine, impacting on the availability and cost of fuel, energy, utility, food and construction materials as well as increased risk of cyber threats and interruptions to the supply of goods, services and labour.
 - 3.3.3 Continuing reductions in council funding from central government, exacerbated by difficult business environment impacting business rates and inflation continuing to be unstable.
- 3.4 It is highly likely that these issues will continue throughout 2023/24 and will continue to impact on the demand for and delivery of council services, and the achievement of priority programmes. These impacts will be closely monitored by Members and Officers and reported to the Executive as appropriate.

- 3.5 With the aforementioned in mind, the Council should be rightly proud of its achievements in the past year. The need to address the General Fund budget gap was recognised when the budget for 2023/24 was approved earlier this year and work is being undertaken to develop options for Members to consider ahead of a related report being presented to the Executive in September 2023.
- 3.6 This report aims to give Executive an overview of the achievements the Council has made during the last 12 months, with a particular focus on the previous quarter. It also identifies (through the Annual Report at Appendix A and the Corporate Performance Suite Appendix F) the priorities for 2023/24.
- 3.7 The Senior Leadership Team and Service Managers have been consulted to determine the appropriate content and to identify the key achievements.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

Future Town Future Council (FTFC) Programme

- 4.1 A summary of progress against the FTFC Programme is attached at Appendix C. The key highlights this quarter have also been included in the Annual Report 2022/23 (see Appendix A). The Annual Report 2022/23 is an external-facing document which sets out the Council's progress in delivering excellent services for Stevenage and achieving the strategic priorities of the Future Town Future Council Corporate Plan.
- 4.2 The content of the Annual Report 2022/23 has been structured around service performance across the 8 business units and the five FTFC strategic priorities of the Corporate Plan.

Particular highlights this year include:

- 4.2.1 Successfully launching the multipurpose space Event Island Stevenage, following the successful opening of the new bus interchange.
- 4.2.2 Progressing the building of a new Multi-Storey Car Park that became fully operational in quarter one 2023/24.
- 4.2.3 The successful procurement and mobilisation of the Everyone Active contract, which will include the refurbishment of the Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre and upgrades to other council leisure facilities.
- 4.2.4 Appointment of Morgan Sindell, as the Council's preferred consultants to commence the design of the new Sports and Leisure Hub.

- 4.2.5 Secured funding of £110,000 in partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association for the investment and refurbishment of the tennis courts at Shephalbury Park.
- 4.2.6 The first phase of the Stevenage Innovation and Technology Centre (SITEC) launched with the new facilities at the North Hertfordshire College Stevenage Campus.
- 4.2.7 Provided a mix of 49 new council and private homes over the past 12 months, bringing the total new homes since 2014 to 330, and secured planning permission for 27 one, two and three - bed supported accommodation unit at Dunn Close and 17 private homes at Courtlands.
- 4.2.8 Planting three community orchards and 4000 new trees as part of the new Community Woodland for Fairland Valley Park South Field, managed around 33 ha of meadow grasslands for wildlife, and successfully retained 5 Green Flag Awards confirming the high quality of local parks.
- 4.2.9 Improved the energy efficiency of 209 council owned properties through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 1 Programme. Also upgrading 7 Council Independent Living sites to hybrid gas boilers and air source heat pumps, with solar thermal systems added to 2 sites. The upgrades will reduce 34% of greenhouse gas emissions from these sites.
- 4.2.10 Received £760,000 from the government's Community Renewal Fund to support our Community Wealth Building initiatives, enabling the provision of carbon footprint and procurement training for local businesses.
- 4.2.11 Successfully securing £125,000 of funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to support a digital engagement offer as part of the Co-operative Neighbourhoods programme.
- 4.2.12 Launching the Nightlight Crisis Café in partnership with HertsMind Network, Healthy Hub Stevenage (Adult), Govia ThamesLink and wider key stakeholders to support service users with immediate mental health advice and signposting to other services.
- 4.2.13 Launching a Women's Centre with partners, to be used by local services including the probation service to meet with their vulnerable female clients.

4.2.14 Working in partnership with key stakeholders to build pride in place and increase life chances including supporting local businesses to improve their digital skills, working with the voluntary sector and working with young people to increase awareness of that Stevenage has to offer in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) as part of the funding received from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

4.2.15 Successfully launching the Council’s events brochure and filming offer to enhance commercial opportunities within the town.

4.2.16 Launched more online services including applications for bulky waste collections and digital garage lettings to improve the customer experience and forge a more flexible way for customers to interact with the Council.

4.3 Please note that a draft design version of the Annual Report will be circulated electronically to Members prior to the Executive meeting.

Corporate Performance 2022/23

4.4 In addition to tracking progress against the delivery of the FTFC Programme, performance across all Council services is monitored throughout the year to highlight achievements and identify areas for improvement. Results for the full set of current corporate performance measures for 2022/23 are attached at Appendix E. The overview of these results for quarter four 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
63	43	3	11	6

Spotlights and Areas for Improvement

4.5 Council teams continue to be focused and engaged on delivery of the agreed priorities, from creating new social and affordable housing, to driving forward the transformation of the town centre and embedding the co-operative neighbourhood approach.

4.6 Performance highlights for quarter four include:

4.6.1 The number of households in temporary/emergency accommodation was 149, this is significantly less than the end of year target of 205. Over the last twelve months the number of households in Bed & Breakfast has also reduced from 60 to 1. The Housing Options team

continue to proactively assist people who are struggling with the cost of living with advice to avoid homelessness and the need for temporary accommodation. The reduced need for bed and breakfast accommodation can in part also be attributed to a growth in the Council's own temporary accommodation housing stock and quicker processing of homelessness applications.

4.6.2 There were 27 new business start-ups in the Business Technology Centre (BTC) against a target of 8 this was an outcome of the business sector beginning to recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic and work with partners to promote BTC services

4.6.3 It took on average 5.6 days to process new housing benefit claims and change events against a target of 10 days

4.6.4 The letting of residential Garages exceeded expectations in 2022/23. Significant progress has been made in this area following the implementation of a range of actions that resulted from a Performance Improvement Clinic held in April 2022, including the launch of digital garage lettings making it easier for residents to apply for a garage online. The Garage Improvement Programme also refurbished 95 garages over 10 sites and 47 void garages were made available for letting as a result. This led to an additional yearly income of £16,000, with a further 26 garages to let.

4.7 As reported for quarter 3, there are some areas where performance is not yet at the desired levels, specifically housing voids, customer service and human resources. Improvement Plans, which set out how officers are seeking to address the performance concerns, are in place and are regularly monitored. The plans are owned by the relevant service and overseen by the responsible Portfolio Holder.

4.8 Appendix D sets out in more detail some of the activities that the Council have implemented as part of Improvement Plans to address these challenges:

- Customer Service Centre (CSC) (see para 1.2.4 to 1.2.8)
- Housing Repairs & Voids (see para 1.3.5/6/7 & 1.4.4)
- Human Resources (Agency Staff) (see para 1.2.10)

Officers and Portfolio Holders will continue to focus on these challenges and progress activities in 2023/24.

Priorities for 2023/24

4.9 In December 2016, the priorities of the Future Town Future Council (FTFC) Cooperative Corporate Plan were approved by the Council. In February 2021, the Council agreed to continue with the Plan beyond its original 5-year term. Following discussion at the Informal Executive meeting in June 2023 it was agreed that the strategic priorities of FTFC would be continued for another year.

A new Corporate Plan will be presented to the Council for agreement alongside the General Fund budget in February 2024.

- 4.10 There are 200+ FTFC milestones due to be delivered in 2023/24, and the milestones presented in Appendix F represent a small sub-set of these. Completion and reporting of these milestones will be vital to demonstrating a complete picture of performance i.e., activities that can be measured quantitatively, such as number of homes provided, as well as those that cannot, such as the launch of a new Cultural Strategy.
- 4.11 To ensure that the Council's continued significant investment (£24.6 million) in its social housing stock in 2023/24 is clear, it is sensible that the FTFC priority of 'More Social and Affordable Housing' is amended to include a focus on the provision of good quality homes. Therefore, in 2023/24, 'More Social and Affordable Housing' has been amended to include 'Good Quality' (see Figure 1).



Figure 1

- 4.12 As an outcome of the continuation of FTFC, and to ensure that the Council's approach to performance management remains representative of existing and future areas of focus, the approach to performance monitoring has been amended to reflect the following:
- resident priorities as expressed through tenant, resident and engagement surveys, specifically:
 - climate change
 - anti-social behaviour
 - provision and maintenance of homes
 - delivery of good local servicesThese measures have been classified as 'Community Measures', of which there are 13.
 - the significant investment (£24.6 million in 2023/24) in good quality housing through provision of new homes and maintenance of existing social housing stock – particularly in response to new regulatory and

- legislative requirements (such as those set out by the Regulator of Social Housing and through the Building Safety and Fire Safety Act)
 - streamlined and improved reporting of performance information against the 5 FTFC strategic objectives
- 4.13 By renewing focus in the areas that matter most to residents and providing a clear link between performance and the strategic objectives in the FTFC Corporate Plan, the Council will simplify and streamline how performance monitoring and progress is communicated. By refining the list of corporate measures, the Council will sharpen focus on the areas that really matter to residents, rather than reporting on everything equally across all services. An outcome of this is that outdated performance themes of 'Place, 'Transformation and Support' and 'People' are replaced, and performance progress against the 5 FTFC priorities clearly indicated. The renewed focus on demonstrating performance against these priorities has resulted in the 63 measures reported in 2022/23 being reduced to 36 for 2023/24.
- 4.14 In addition, to help the Council demonstrate a more complete picture of activity, in 2023/24 the FTFC milestones (which were previously monitored and reported through a separate internal programme arrangement) will now be reported through the Council's performance management system. By taking this mixed-method approach and linking the corporate measures in the quarterly compendium to programme milestones, the Council will be able to present a holistic overview of performance activity. This will help communicate to residents that the Council is on track to deliver key projects, programmes and service improvements associated with FTFC, as well as demonstrating performance against key service delivery targets.
- 4.15 In addition to performance and programme progress, the quarterly corporate performance report, will be supplemented by information obtained from the quarterly Tenant Perception Survey. The implementation of a Tenant's Perception Survey is a new requirement for Landlords introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). The survey will be sent out to 150 tenants per quarter. It will contain 12 key questions covering areas such as tenant's satisfaction with repairs, maintenance, communal areas and views on the Council's willingness to engage and respond. The survey findings will be reported annually to the RSH and will also include the 10 RSH measures included in the 2023/24 corporate performance suite (see Appendix F and measures starting 'RSH').
- 4.16 There are 14 new measures included in the corporate performance suite for 2023/24 and the majority of these reflect the increased regulation and focus on housing compliance in 2023/24. As these are new, they are known as 'Baseline' measures and will provide a starting point from which to assess and compare performance in future. The remaining 22 are existing measures which are relevant to the Council's renewed focus on what matters to residents and progress against the FTFC objectives.
- 4.17 The proposed suite of corporate measures is based on input and conversations with the Strategic Leadership Team, Cllr Speller (Portfolio Holder for Climate Change & Performance), Cllr Henry (Leader of the Council), research into best

practice, benchmarking, and building on previous / existing measures where appropriate, including regulatory requirements.

- 4.18 A significant period of discussion has been undertaken with Officers, seeking to ensure that the measures chosen as part of the Executive suite are meaningful, provide good business insight and are relevant to decision-making and the priorities of the Council. The Executive suite of 36 measures is supported by 64 statutory and local measures which will be managed internally and overseen by the Strategic Leadership Team.
- 4.19 The Council's streamlined 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 proactively adapt service delivery models, where necessary, and support and drive forward additional improvements in services when required.
- 4.20 The proposed Corporate Performance Suite 2023/24 will form the basis of quarterly performance reports to Executive throughout 2023/24. The proposed measures, targets and milestones present an accurate reflection of what the Council is seeking to deliver in 2023/24 and how it will monitor progress against these ambitions.

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 delivering the priorities over the coming year and implementing any improvement activity set out within this report will need to identify and consider any resulting financial implications. Any financial impacts will be reported as part of the quarterly corporate performance reporting cycle.

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 There are no direct legal implications from the recommendations contained in this report. However, officers responsible for delivering the priorities over the coming year and implementing any improvement activity set out within this report will need to identify and consider any resulting legal implications.

5.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.3.1 There are no direct equality, diversity and inclusion implications arising from this report, although examples are given in the Annual Report 2022/23 where positive action has been taken to advance equality, diversity and inclusion across our workforce and the community. Where necessary, Equality Impact Assessments will be completed for programmes, projects, service changes and improvement activity identified.

5.4 Risk Implications

5.4.1 There are no direct significant risks to the Council in agreeing the recommendation(s). However, officers responsible for delivering the priorities over the coming year and implementing any improvement activity set out within this report will need to consider any risk implications that arise.

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

5.5.2 Implementing the priorities and improvement activity outlined in this report may impact on the development of future policy or procedure.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Draft Annual Report 2022/23, including priorities and FTFC programme focus for 2023/24
- Appendix B: Plan on a Page / Summary Action Plan 2023/24
- Appendix C: FTFC Summary Quarter 4 2022/23
- Appendix D: Corporate Performance Summary Quarter 4 2022/23
- Appendix E: Compendium of Performance Results
- Appendix F: Proposed Corporate Performance Suite 2023/24