

Meeting Executive
Portfolio Area All
Date 20 September 2023



CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER ONE 2023/24

KEY DECISION

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To highlight the Council's performance across key priorities and Future Town Future Council (FTFC) projects for Quarter (Qtr.) 1 2023/24 and provide an update on progress against the suite Community Measures, the Cost-of-Living Action Plan and current strategic risks.
- 1.2 For Members information, a presentation will be provided at the Executive meeting which will cover updates in relation to delivery against FTFC Corporate Plan Priorities and the key themes emerging from the Qtr. 1 performance data.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the service performance against 35 corporate performance measures and delivery of key milestones in Qtr. 1 2023/24 through the Future Town Future Council Programme (Appendix A) be noted.

- 2.2 That the Council’s performance as demonstrated through the 13 Community Measures (Appendix B) be noted.
- 2.3 That the performance challenges in relation to homelessness preventions, number of homes provided, and voids (section 4.2) be noted, and the planned measures to improve performance be endorsed.
- 2.4 That the strategic risk updates (section 6) be noted.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In July 2023, the Executive agreed to the continuation of the strategic priorities of the Future Town Future Council (FTFC) Corporate Plan for another year. To ensure that the Council’s approach to performance management in 2023/24 remains representative of existing and future programmes of work, the corporate performance suite was also updated to reflect resident priorities and new regulatory and legislative housing requirements.
- 3.2 The Council’s approach to performance management indicates a clear link between performance and the strategic objectives in the FTFC Corporate Plan. By aligning performance measures and milestones under the 5 strategic priorities a ‘golden thread’ linking what the Council delivers, to the fulfilment of its strategic outcomes can be clearly seen. By taking this approach, the Council is seeking to simplify and streamline how performance monitoring and progress is communicated to Members and residents.
- 3.3 In addition, to ensure that the Council’s continued significant investment (£24.6 million) in its social housing stock in 2023/24 is clear, in July 2023 the Executive agreed to amend the FTFC priority of ‘More Social and Affordable Housing’ to include a focus on the provision of good quality homes. Therefore, the strategic priority of ‘More Social and Affordable Housing’ has been amended to include ‘Good Quality’ (see Figure 1).

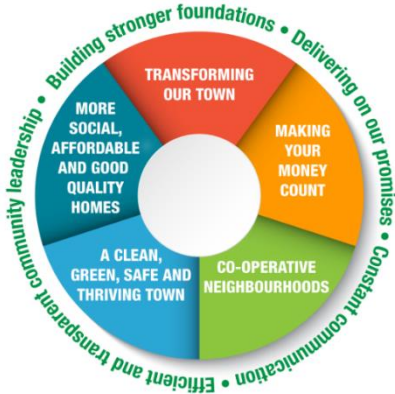


Fig 1.

- 3.4 The new Corporate Performance Suite for 2023/24 contains 35 measures which are aligned with the 5 FTFC strategic priorities. The 35 measures are complemented by 64 statutory and local measures which will be managed internally and overseen by the Strategic Leadership Team.
- 3.5 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.

- 3.6 There are 17 new baseline measures included in the corporate performance suite. The majority of these reflect the increased regulation and focus on housing compliance in 2023/24. These measures will provide a starting point from which to assess and compare performance in future. The remaining 18 measures are relevant to the Council's focus on what matters to residents and progress against the FTFC objectives.
- 3.7 Within the suite of measures, there are 13 'Community Measures', which focus specifically on 4 themes: climate change; anti-social behaviour; provision and maintenance of homes; and delivery of good local services. The 4 themes have been identified in response to analysis of resident engagement and tenants' surveys between 2021 and 2023 and seek to highlight what really matters to residents. The survey analysis is presented alongside the Qtr 1 performance in Appendix B. Progress against the Community Measure themes will be shared with residents through the delivery of engaging social media campaigns throughout the year.
- 3.8 In-line with the General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy update presented to the Executive in September, the 'Making Your Money Count' strategic priority will be amended to 'Balancing the Budget' from Qtr 2. All supporting performance documents and the corporate performance system will be updated accordingly.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 QUARTER ONE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

- 4.1.1 As outlined in section 3, the corporate performance suite has been aligned with the five FTFC priorities set out in Figure 1. In addition, in 2023/24 progress against performance measures will be presented alongside key programme milestones. By taking this mixed-method approach, 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.
- 4.1.2 Key highlights from the FTFC programmes are summarised in section 4.2. For further information on the aims and objectives of the FTFC programme in 2023/24 please refer to FTFC Plan on a Page, which was presented to the Executive in July 2023 as Appendix B of the Quarter Four Corporate Performance Executive report: [Future Town Future Council Summary \(stevenage.gov.uk\)](https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/~/media/2023/07/23/Future-Town-Future-Council-Summary-2023-24.pdf).

4.1.1 The total number of measures by Red, Amber & Green (RAG) rating is shown in Figure 2 below. For the purposes of this report only commentary for Red Status measures is provided. The full set of current corporate performance measures results and FTFC milestones are attached at Appendix A.

FTFC Programme	Baseline measure for 2023-24	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (Within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (Urgent improvement action required)	Unavailable Data	Milestones Reported Qtr. 1
More Social Affordable and Good Quality Homes (19 measures)	8	7	1	3	0	4
Transforming Our Town (0 measures)	The primary focus of this strategic priority is FTFC programme delivery. Performance is monitored through delivery of project milestones. Please see section 4.2.					11
Co-operative Neighbourhoods (3 measures)	3	-	-	-	0	3
A Clean, Green, Safe and Thriving Town (7 measures)	5	1	0	0	1	14
Making Your Money Count (6 measures)	1	4	1	0	0	2
TOTAL (35)	17	12	2	3	1	34

Fig 2.

4.1.2 At the time of writing, there is one indicator for household waste that cannot be reported in Qtr. 1. This is because this measure is via an external source and can only be provided in arrears.

4.1.3 Two measures, which were due to be reported in Qtr. 1 (RV1: The time take (days) to repair major voids and RV2: The time taken to repair standard voids) cannot be provided due to the existing backlog of voids impacting the overall accuracy of the performance picture. In response, the Council has introduced a new measure (RV3: Number of Voids returned by Contractor), which will inform understanding of the Council’s ability to clear the Voids backlog, specifically the number of voids provided to the contractor compared to the number of voids returned. This measure will be supplemented from the end of September with the introduction of indicators monitoring contractor void turnaround within 5, 10 and 15 days. For further information please see section 4.4.5 of this report.

4.2 FTFC PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

4.2.1 All programmes have made progress on the projects agreed at the Executive in July 2023, with particular highlights including:

- Work started on the Burwell Road site - the previously approved application for Burwell Road was initially only for five affordable homes and this was increased to 20 affordable homes in July 2023
- The newly approved planning application for the former garage site at Brent Court was shared with Executive on 18 July for a new state-of-the-art independent living scheme, which will provide an opportunity for older residents within the local area of Stevenage, to downsize to high-quality supported housing. This, in turn, will free up much-needed 2, 3 and 4-bed council properties for families in housing need
- The Arts & Heritage Trail has been scoped, looking at both the status of the existing cycleways as well as the stops and artwork along the trail. Further engagement with the public and key stakeholders will take place
- Morgan Sindall were appointed to deliver the Sport & Leisure Hub design and the design period is underway. This will be reported to the Leisure Programme Board, chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Information Technology
- The forward plan of Co-operative Neighbourhood walkabouts was completed and workshops for all 6 Co-operative Neighbourhood areas developed
- Analysis of 2022/23 engagement data from residents, using the Proptech Digital tool, was completed and has highlighted 5,807 prioritised themes down to ward level. The information was shared with Executive Members at an Informal Executive meeting and this will inform future decision making, including the scope of the future new Corporate Plan
- The Marshgate Biotech Construction is complete and Autolus HQ held an opening ceremony in May
- Shephalbury Park Tennis Courts were launched at the end of April and a successful open day with the Mayor was held in May
- The Young People's Healthy Hub (YPHH) has seen a 125% increase in accounts with a 6.4% increase in accounts on the YPHH Instagram page
- The Stevenage Walking Festival took place in May with 351 walkers taking part. A family trail also took place with 92 families taking part

4.2.2 Service performance highlights for Qtr. 1 include:

- Over 85% of Council services non-housing complaints were responded to within deadline (target 75%)
- 88% of customers accessing the Customer Service Centre (CSC) were satisfied with the service
- There has been a 6% increase in payments made via the Council's website compared to Qtr. 1 2022/23
- 1,700 residents took part in local engagement activities as part of the Communities and Neighbourhoods programme of work to improve understanding of residents' views on neighbourhood activities

- 4.2.3 Further details on the projects included in the FTFC programmes and corporate highlights can be found in Appendix A.

4.3 COMMUNITY MEASURE HIGHLIGHTS

- 4.3.1 As mentioned in section 3.6, in July 2023 the Executive agreed to a focus on resident priorities as expressed through 13 'Community Measures', specifically: anti-social behaviour; climate change; provision and maintenance of homes; and delivery of good local services. The Novoville/PropTech (2022/23), Resident Survey (2021) and Tenants Survey (2021) analysis has been provided alongside the Qtr. 1 data to help provide context (see Appendix B).
- 4.3.2 The 'Key Facts' section of Appendix B will be updated each quarter to provide Members and Residents with a clear oversight of performance in the areas that matter to them most. The intention is that these short statements will inform discussion and help drive improvement in these areas. Progress in these areas will then be shared more widely through engaging social media campaigns and promotion through the Council website and the Chronicle magazine.
- 4.3.3 Community Measure performance highlights for Qtr. 1 include:

Anti-Social Behaviour

- **There has been a 18.6% decrease in ASB cases** when comparing Qtr 1 in 2023/24 with the same period last year. This decrease is in response to the strong joint working between the Council and partners as part of the SoSafe Partnership, specifically the proactive policing evidenced through initiatives such as 'Clear, Hold, Build' (most recently seen in Fishers Green)
- **There has been a decrease in the number of fly-tipping cases** when comparing to the same period last year (84 down to 82). In 2022/23, 35% of residents indicated that maintenance and appeal of local areas (e.g., littering & cleanliness, pathways & pavements etc) was a priority

Climate Change

- In 2022/23, 21.4% of residents indicated that climate change investments were a priority. In Qtr 1, **55% of Housing Stock had an EPC rating of C or above**. To ensure that the Council meets the national average of 57% of social housing stock, it is working with SAVA (Software Development Company) to help ensure that the Council has the most accurate presentation of stock status. This will also help the Council identify additional works that would inform understanding of social housing stock decarbonisation opportunities.

Provision and Maintenance of Homes

- The Council has provided **339 new homes since 2014 with a target of 394 in place for Qtr 2**. This proactive approach to building new homes is underpinned by the Council's ability to turnaround planning applications within timescale targets. The Council continues to demonstrate good performance in this area.
 - **80% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks**
 - **100% of minor applications determined within 8 weeks**
 - **98.3% of other applications determined within 8 weeks**

- In 2021, two thirds (65%) of tenants reported that they were satisfied with the overall quality of the home, this represented a drop from three-quarters (74%) in 2018. Since then, the Council has sought to maintain a high percentage of homes that meet the national minimum Decent Homes standard. In Qtr 1 **82.44% of Council homes fulfilled the national DH standard.**

Good Local Services

- In 2021, More residents placed these areas in their top three priorities than in 2017:
 - ‘Good local shops and facilities in neighbourhood areas’
 - ‘Good sports & leisure facilities as well as activities to support health & wellbeing’
 - ‘Activities and support for children and younger people’
- Under its new leisure arrangement with Everyone Active, the Council is keen to see young people participating in outreach programmes. In Qtr 1, **22,139 children used Everyone Active facilities and participated in programmes.**
- In 2022/23, 21.4% of residents indicated that access to Services (e.g., Council house maintenance, customer services, waste collection etc) was of importance. In Qtr 1 **99.45% of bins were collected.**

4.4 PERFORMANCE MEASURES – AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- 4.4.1 As highlighted in Figure 2, there are three areas identified for improvement. Figure 3 below outlines the actual performance and the target that was set for the performance measure. The paragraphs that follow set out the reasons why performance has been below expectation and the activities in place to reach target for Qtr. 2.

<u>MEASURE NAME</u>	<u>BUSINESS UNIT</u>	Actual – Quarter 2 2022/23 YTD	Actual – Quarter 3 2022/23 YTD	Actual – Quarter 4 2022/23 YTD	Actual – Quarter 1 2023/24 YTD	Target – Quarter 1 2023/24 YTD
More Social, Affordable and Good Quality Homes						
BV213: Homelessness Preventions	Providing Homes	120	191	242	27	50
HDD1e: Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) by the Council (since 2014)	Housing Development	37	5	1	3	29
RV3: Number of Voids returned by Contractor					104	150

Fig.3

BV213: Homelessness Preventions

- 4.4.2 BV213 measures the number of cases where the Council has been able to prevent a main housing duty being owed. This includes all cases within the prevention and relief duty stages. The target of 50 preventions was not met in Qtr. 1. This outcome can be linked to an 11.7% increase in the number of residents seeking homelessness advice compared to Qtr 1 last year, in addition, further staff vacancies have meant that the Team were unable to quickly respond to the increased volume in cases. The complexity of cases (e.g., domestic abuse and mental health issues) and a change in housing management systems (move from Northgate to Jigsaw) have also had an impact on the ability to meet target.
- 4.4.3 To improve the position, a period of recruitment has taken place and all vacancies will be filled by the 1 August. Training on the new system has been rolled-out to staff and the team are already reporting benefits, including improved workstream efficiencies. The introduction of new system efficiencies will ensure that Senior Officers are able to effectively triage the homelessness prevention workload and undertake more complex casework.

HDD1e: Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) by the Council (since 2014)

- 4.4.4 The scheme at Helston House in Symonds Green, which is a total of 29 new homes, has been delayed pending highway works by Hertfordshire County Council. These works have now taken place and an 8-week notice has been issued. Handover is therefore now forecast for Qtr. 2 delivery, meaning performance will be back on schedule.

RV3: Number of Voids returned by Contractor

- 4.4.5 In order to provide insight into voids backlog performance, it has been necessary to introduce a new corporate measure which monitors the number of voids given to the Contractor and compares this to the number of voids returned. In June 2023, the decision was taken to freeze the voids programme for a period of time to allow the Council to renegotiate more competitive contract rates. The negotiations have now been successfully completed and the voids programme was remobilised in Q2. The Contractor will continue to scale up the programme during September by bring in additional resources through its existing and new supply chains, with the objective to clear the current backlog during quarter 3.

4.5 COST OF LIVING

- 4.5.1 The Cost-of-Living (CoL) Action Plan for Stevenage was approved by the Executive in October 2022. The plan sets out how the Council and its partners would respond to the cost-of-living crisis, and seek to mitigate the potential impacts on residents, businesses, Council employees and Council finances. This included the implementation of 15 Warm Spaces, the launch and maintenance of the CoL Website Hub, local events to support local businesses, and grant funding to local voluntary sector groups to help the most vulnerable.
- 4.5.2 The activities delivered through the Action Plan have been mainstreamed into service delivery across the Council and with partners. This recognises there is a significant amount of “business as usual” activity for the Council and partners that is specifically targeted at supporting people facing financial, housing and

other difficulties. This approach also recognises that the crisis will continue for some time, impacting people in different ways at different times.

- 4.5.3 A key outcome of the Action Plan has been the co-ordination of Council and partner services, ensuring that meaningful information, advice, and guidance can be shared with local residents in a timely manner. Support initiatives are widely promoted on the Council's website with dedicated pages covering Stevenage Warm Spaces Network (launched in November 2022), as well as links to partners websites, food bank provision, benefit guidance and a summary of the Government funding available to residents, local businesses and community groups. The information is also promoted via community noticeboards, direct mail, the Chronicle magazine and through community centre partners, recognising that not all residents have digital means to access information.
- 4.5.4 The Income Services team along with the help of Managing Homes recently carried out a Tenants Wellbeing day. The theme of the event was to capture those tenants who are affected by the benefit cap and/or under occupying. 104 tenants received a letter, and 67 audits were completed. 12 referrals were made for downsizing and 11 referrals were made for financial assistance. Financial help has also been issued to 108 tenants totalling £13,150 from the Household Support Fund. Officers are currently sourcing additional funding from the Household Support Fund for this financial year.
- 4.5.5 The Community Kitchen programme is beginning to be delivered across Stevenage in partnership with Stevenage Football Foundation. The programme is designed for families with children aged 5-12, to learn how to cook healthy, simple meals without breaking the bank and spend time together as a family. The 90-minute sessions will be held online or in local school venues and will be led by a culinary tutor who will take families through all aspects of preparing meals. The food and recipes will be provided, and different educational topics will be covered each week. Additional support will also be provided around managing food budgets, food hygiene and leading a healthy active lifestyle and the face-to-face sessions will give people a chance to meet families in their neighbourhoods. This programme will be delivered over the next 10 months.

4.6 STRATEGIC RISK

- 4.6.1 The strategic risks set out in section 4.6.5 were considered by Corporate Risk Group on 31 July 2023, agreed by the Senior Leadership Team on 8 August 2023 and noted by Audit Committee at its meeting on 6 September 2023.
- 4.6.2 The Audit Committee receives a detailed Strategic Risk Report each quarter. The report to Audit Committee considers the actions which have been identified to mitigate each of the identified risks and the progress of those actions identifying whether actions are on track. Changes to the way risk is managed at the Council are also highlighted and considered by the Audit Committee. Where the Committee raises specific concerns about the risks or the process for managing them, these are highlighted to Executive within this quarterly report.
- 4.6.3 A risk is a future event which has the potential to impact on the Council's ability to deliver services, projects and achieve its ambitions. By being alert to and putting in place mechanisms to manage both the risks and opportunities effectively, the Council is in a better position to continue to deliver services,

remain viable, continue to innovate and use resources more efficiently. Some risks will always exist and will never be eliminated.

4.6.4 Each risk is measured in terms of a combination of the likelihood of a perceived threat or the opportunity occurring and the magnitude of its impact on the Council's objectives. The table below outlines both the inherent and residual risk scores. Inherent risk is the risk present in any scenario where no attempts at mitigation have been made and no controls or other measures have been applied to reduce the risk from initial levels to levels more acceptable to the Council. Residual risk is the risk remaining after efforts have been made to reduce the inherent risk.

4.6.5 The following summarises the strategic risks which are monitored and updated through Audit Committee:

- General Fund Asset Management
- Building Management
- Building Safety/Fire Safety Act
- Staff Capacity to deliver services
- Commercialisation
- Contract Management
- Council Housebuilding and Acquisitions Programme
- Covid-19/Flu/Pandemic
- Fraud
- IT Resilience and Cyber Security
- Health & Safety
- Housing Revenue Account Business Plan
- Information Governance
- Leisure Provision
- Balancing the Budget (Medium & Long Term)
- Regeneration/Capital Funding
- Regeneration Delay
- Repairs and Maintenance
- Social Housing Regulation Bill
- Socio Economic Impacts
- Transformation

Highlighted Risks

4.6.6 There were no changes to any risk scores this quarter. Work continues to progress the actions to mitigate high and very high risks. For further information on the mitigations in place please contact the Policy & Performance Team at policy@stevenage.gov.uk.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

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.

5.2 Legal Implications

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

There are no direct equality, diversity and inclusion implications arising from this report. Where required, Equality Impact Assessments will be completed for programmes, projects, service changes and improvement activity identified.

5.4 Risk Implications

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

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 Climate Change Implications

The Council declared a climate change emergency in June 2019 with a resolution to work towards a target of achieving net zero emissions by 2030. There are no direct climate change implications arising from this report, with the exception of those activities that seek to have a positive impact in this area, and the officers responsible for delivering the improvements will need to identify and address any climate change considerations in the implementation of activities

5.6 Other Corporate implications

Implementing the priorities and improvement activity outlined in this report may impact on the development of future policy or procedure, which will be monitored through the formal policy/procedure sign-off process via the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

6 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- [Strategic Risk Register \(Part II\)](#)
- [FTFC Plan on a Page](#)
- [Corporate Performance for Quarter 4 22/23](#)

7 APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Compendium of Performance Results Quarter One 23/24
- Appendix B: Community Measures Suite 23/24