

Stevenage Even Better

presents the highlights
from 2022-23



2022-23 has been full of achievements for Stevenage. The Stevenage Bus Interchange became operational, and construction began at Event Island Stevenage, opening to the public in October. In May 2022, work began on the new multi-storey car park which opened to the public in May 2023.

Elsewhere, we saw our partners continue to work on sites across the town, including on the new HQ for Autolus, and The Guinness Partnership kicking off works with a ground-breaking ceremony where we will see 143 affordable homes delivered in the first phase.

The first phase of SITEC officially opened at North Herts College and construction sites continue to support young people looking to enter the field of construction.

Here we take a look at everything that has been achieved in 2022 - 23. 2023 - 24 promises to be an equally exciting year for the town, as we continue to expand our life sciences sector and watch developments take shape within the town centre.

Adrian Hawkins OBE, Chair of the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the Stevenage Development Board:

“Stevenage was the UK’s first New Town and the past year has shown that we really are on track to deliver the 20-year, £1bn regeneration programme - it truly will bring to life the benefits of living and working in the town.

“The regeneration project has already gone a long way to restoring Stevenage to its former glory and it’s clear we are creating a new and vibrant place where people can live, work and play.

“One of the key initial projects is SITEC, the Stevenage Innovation and Technology Centre. This will be an important piece for driving the aspiration of people in the town and helping to bring some of the real earning opportunities to the people that live here because there are great jobs out there.

“It has also been thrilling to see Stevenage Railway Station multi-storey car park open. This almost doubles the number of parking spaces of the former surface level car park and is just one of a number of the projects to have benefited from the Stevenage Town Investment Plan, set out by the Stevenage Development Board. This is clearly already benefiting both residents and businesses and is a real step-change for the town”.



Our regeneration programme is built around a number of key aspirations for Stevenage, growing our reputation for life sciences, transforming the town and introducing new uses including town centre living, leisure and experience whilst incorporating arts, culture and Stevenage’s unique heritage.



The interior of the SITEC building

Skills, Enterprise & Life Sciences

We are driving private sector investment and ensuring that our town has the space to support small business development, skills, and jobs, including the opportunity for our residents to gain experience and expand into the construction industry.

Stevenage is well recognised on the international stage for life sciences, and we are continuing to grow the third largest cell and gene therapy cluster globally alongside our partners.

Stevenage Innovation & Technology Centre (SITEC)

SITEC is a new venture created in partnership with the College, Stevenage Borough Council, and Hertfordshire LEP. It aims to make the most of Stevenage’s position in the Golden Triangle of Research and Development between Oxford, Cambridge, and London, providing a space for local people to the skills and knowledge needed for success in the many STEM businesses in the area. NHC have been busy this year preparing and launching phase one of SITEC utilising space available on their Stevenage campus. The repurposed space includes rebranding, refurbished laboratory, state of the art industry equipment and upgrades to lighting for sustainability improvements.



*Works ongoing at the Autolus site.
Credit: Sean Lee*

Autolus (Reef Group and funding partner UBS)

After securing planning permission in 2021 the ground-breaking ceremony marked the start of works on the old surface level car park and Autolus' £65 million investment into the new European HQ developed at rapid speed. The building is now operational with some public realm works ongoing.

The Forum (Reef Group)

The development in the town centre is a significant mixed-use development on the Forum buildings and car park. The scheme includes new buildings which will deliver over 400,000 sqft of laboratory and research office facilities, over 60,000 sqft of retail space and the creation of a new multi-storey car park with 326 spaces. In addition, new high quality public realm and important cycling and pedestrian connections will be implemented, most notably a Toucan (at grade) crossing across St. George's way and a new cycle path connecting to existing connections. Planning permission was issued in June.



*An artist's impression of The Forum development.
Credit: Reef Group*

Regeneration & Land Use

Delivering a self-sustaining town centre for the future that uses a new residential community, local employment, evening economy and a diverse range of facilities and amenities to maximise activity and provide the strongest local offer possible will ensure that the town is a thriving place for people and businesses.



A night time image of the new car park

Station Gateway

Construction started in May 2022 on the new multi-storey car park adjacent to Stevenage Railway Station, which opened in May 2023. The car park has spaces for electric vehicle charging, secure cycle parking for 80 bikes and blue badge spaces split across different levels. External metal facades incorporate images highlighting the achievements of Stevenage in the fields of science and technology and celebrating that the heart of a town lies in its people.

Councillor Richard Henry, Leader of Stevenage Borough Council

“Our town centre is changing, like many across the country. Well before the pandemic, we recognised the need for its shift in purpose. This is now more important than ever given the changing landscape of the retail industry with online shopping continuing to be prominent amongst many consumers. Working with our private sector partners, we are embracing this new world. Our vision is for a 21st Century New Town with improved transport facilities, leisure, culture, retail spaces, town centre living and a variety of job opportunities. We are part way through this ambitious £1bn transformation, delivering for the communities and businesses of today and tomorrow.”



Culture & Heritage

We are enhancing the vitality of the town through the introduction of new quality cultural and leisure assets, widening the cultural offer and celebrating the towns heritage to drive local growth through a thriving destination & evening economy.



An aerial image showing Event Island Stevenage and the Town Square. Credit: Sean Lee

Diversification of Retail, Event Island Stevenage

On the site of the old bus station, Event Island Stevenage is a new green space that offers a multi-purpose and informal play area with a variety of activities for informal play, featuring 11 news trees and planting. The ambition was to deliver a temporary space to generate activity for local communities to use and enjoy, a place to dwell and contribute positively to urban life. It was designed to play a key role in activating the vacant station site and adjacent retail frontages, enhancing the pedestrian movements across the space, attracting footfall and encouraging spend to support local businesses.

Pedestrian & Cycling Connectivity (incl. Arts & Heritage Trail)

This year saw the installation of three plaques in the Town Square celebrating the heritage of key pieces of artwork including the Peter Lyon Sculpture, C.W.S. Mural & the Joy Ride. The plaque design will be continued across the arts & heritage trail as it is developed this year. Secure cycle storage has been implemented as part of the new MSCP. This project is one that will be accelerating this coming year, watch this space!



Connectivity

Enhancing linkages within Stevenage and beyond by improving connectivity between jobs and services and between businesses and their markets, enhanced connectivity throughout the town will help to unlock new employment and apprenticeships/skills opportunities.

Bus Interchange

Opened in June 2022, this new facility improves the town's travel links with the expanded railway station and offers modern heated, covered waiting facilities with a café and toilets for users. The Interchange utilises sustainable drainage which funnels rainwater into the ground allowing bus users to enjoy new green landscaped areas with planted trees and wildflower meadow areas to increase local biodiversity.



Coming up this year

The next year promises to be full of excitement within the town, with projects moving to their delivery phases. There will be an increasing amount of community engagement, on specific schemes and the wider programme.

Guinness Partnership

The Guinness Partnership held an event to celebrate breaking ground on the first phase of their development at the former Matalan site. Lovell Partnerships, the appointed contractors will be starting construction at the prominent town centre site which was granted planning permission in 2021. The overall plans involve the construction of 526 one and two-bedroomed apartments along with 779 sq. m of flexible commercial space located at street level which aims to create active street frontages. The delivery of the new development will take place in phases, the first of which being two blocks located on the eastern part of the site facing Danestrete and the top end of Danesgate. Phase 1 will provide 143 one and two-bedroomed apartments and all new homes will be offered as affordable tenures, providing a new and very valuable source of low cost homes located in the heart of Stevenage. It will also include one of the internal landscaped gardens serving the development. The expected construction programme for the first phase is completion by the end of 2024/early 2025. Future phases are expected to follow from 2025 onwards.



Sport & Leisure Hub

Morgan Sindall Construction's Northern Home Counties business has been appointed by Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) to help deliver a multi-million-pound Sports and Leisure Hub, as part of the town's wider regeneration plans. Set to be situated adjacent to the main Town Centre Gardens on St George's Way, it will consolidate Stevenage's health and wellbeing offering, which is currently positioned across three different sites. Stevenage Sports and Leisure Hub will be a flexible state-of-the-art facility with swimming, studios, gym space and flexible sports facilities. Not only will the Stevenage Sports and Leisure Hub deliver significantly improved sports facilities that will promote healthy living for Stevenage residents, but it will also provide improved links between The Forum, Town Centre Gardens, Stevenage Old Town, King George V Playing Fields, and residential areas beyond. Throughout construction, local swimming provision will remain in operation.

Facts



260

entries were received from school children as part of a competition to name the vacant bus station - now known as Event Island Stevenage.

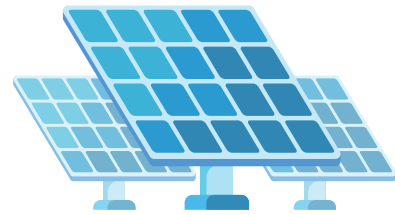
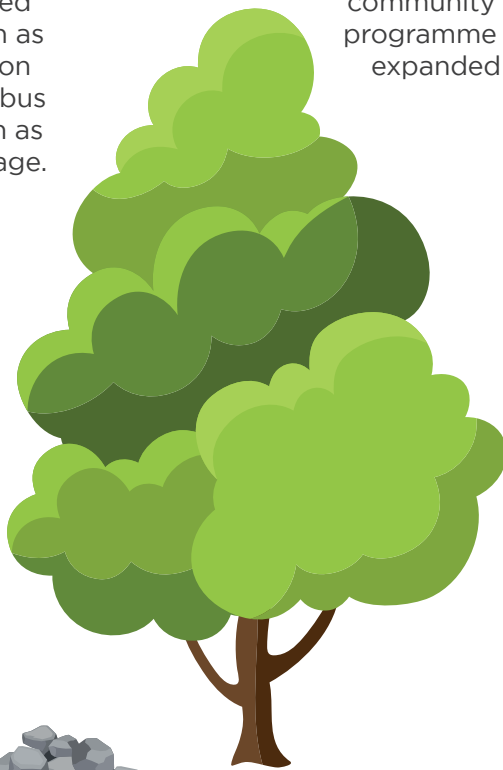


11

community centres have been visited as part of a programme of community outreach, which will be expanded on over the course of the next year

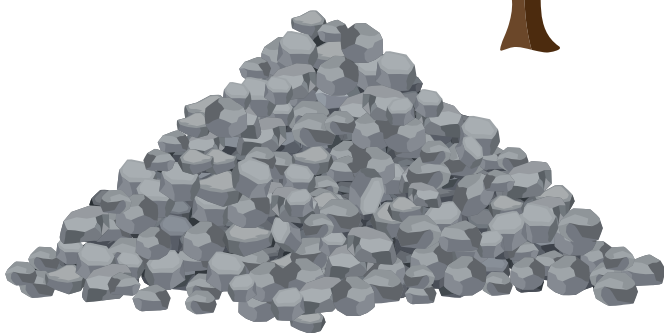
11

new trees have been planted - and all the original trees retained - at Event Island Stevenage



76

solar panels have been installed as part of the new multi-storey car park and secure cycle storage



263m³

Recycling materials across construction sites forms an important part of our sustainability approach. 263m³ of crush from the site of the former Swingate House was used to help construct Event Island.



1,800

Greening our town centre is important to encourage people to visit. At Event Island Stevenage, 1800 new plants and flowers have been planted to support this initiative.

Raising the profile of Stevenage

People are talking about Stevenage. There has been tangible delivery on the ground and the change that is taking place has been recognised.

Throughout the industry, Stevenage is well-known and is increasing in prominence as a town undergoing successful transformation. We continue to attract interest and investment.

Partnership working and the dedicated support of a wide number of individuals, including the members of the Stevenage Development Board, is helping an ambition to be realised that offers opportunities to our communities, residents and businesses.

Over the course of the year, we have welcomed a number of industry stakeholders to the town to see the work underway. Prominent visits include:

● Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

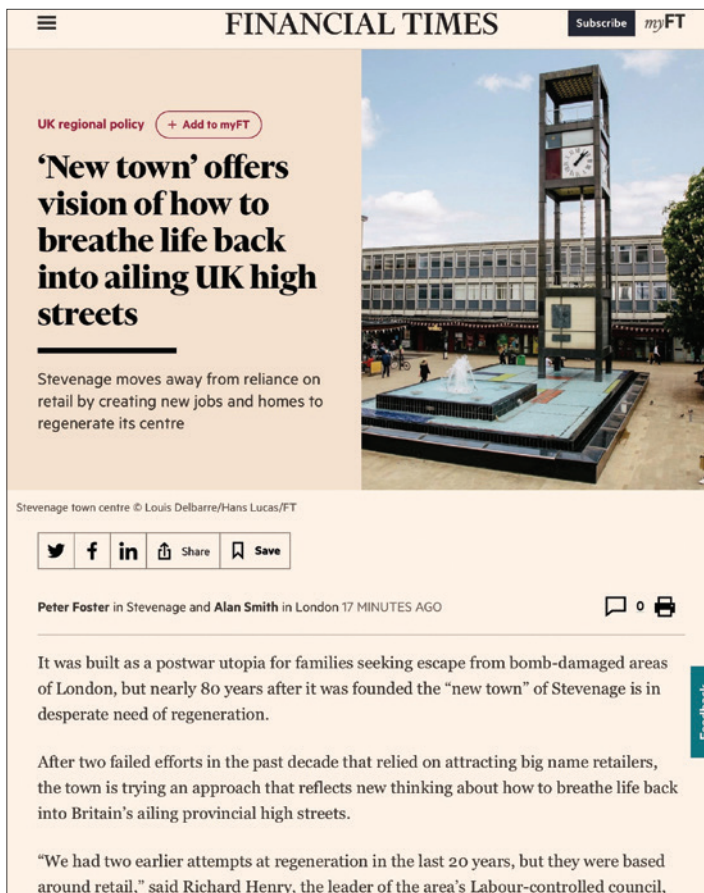
Visit from DLUHC regional team to SBC and HCC to see services from community safety and house building and a tour of the town centre.

● David Locke Associates

Joint visit from David Locke Associates and Sports England, who are using Stevenage as a case study for updated national Active Design guidance.

● High Streets Task Force - Unlocking Your Place Potential

Funded place-expert to learn what is happening in the town, challenges to transformation and provide diagnostic report on future recommendations



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'New town' offers vision of how to breathe life back into ailing UK high streets

Stevenage moves away from reliance on retail by creating new jobs and homes to regenerate its centre

Stevenage town centre © Louis Delbarre/Hans Lucas/FT

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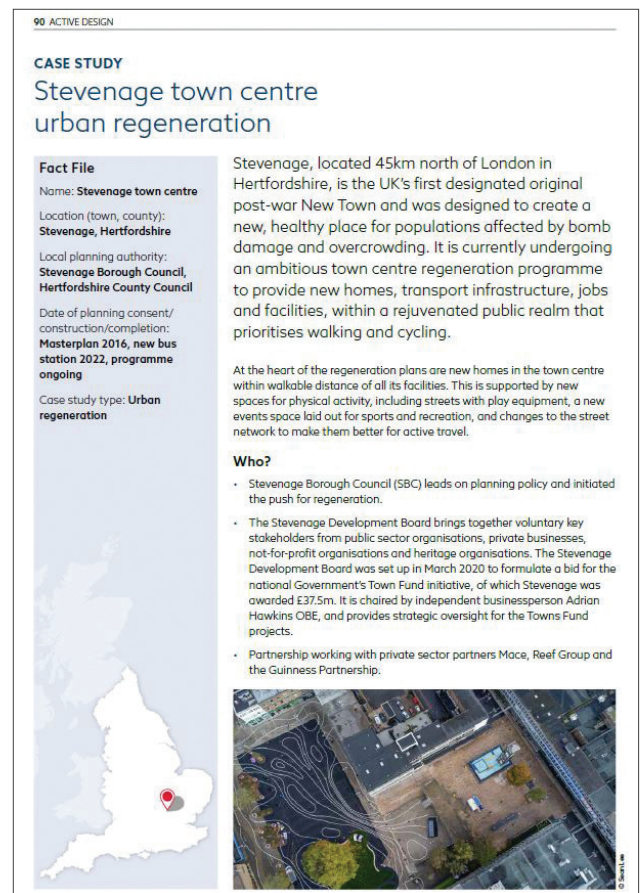
Peter Foster in Stevenage and Alan Smith in London 17 MINUTES AGO

It was built as a postwar utopia for families seeking escape from bomb-damaged areas of London, but nearly 80 years after it was founded the "new town" of Stevenage is in desperate need of regeneration.

After two failed efforts in the past decade that relied on attracting big name retailers, the town is trying an approach that reflects new thinking about how to breathe life back into Britain's ailing provincial high streets.

"We had two earlier attempts at regeneration in the last 20 years, but they were based around retail," said Richard Henry, the leader of the area's Labour-controlled council,

An article in the Financial Times on Saturday 20 May



90 ACTIVE DESIGN

CASE STUDY

Stevenage town centre urban regeneration

Fact File

Name: **Stevenage town centre**

Location (town, county): **Stevenage, Hertfordshire**

Local planning authority: **Stevenage Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council**

Date of planning consent/ construction/completion: **Masterplan 2016, new bus station 2022, programme ongoing**


Case study type: **Urban regeneration**

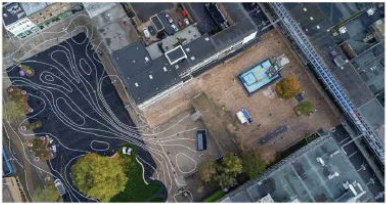
Stevenage, located 45km north of London in Hertfordshire, is the UK's first designated original post-war New Town and was designed to create a new, healthy place for populations affected by bomb damage and overcrowding. It is currently undergoing an ambitious town centre regeneration programme to provide new homes, transport infrastructure, jobs and facilities, within a rejuvenated public realm that prioritises walking and cycling.

At the heart of the regeneration plans are new homes in the town centre within walkable distance of all its facilities. This is supported by new spaces for physical activity, including streets with play equipment, a new events space laid out for sports and recreation, and changes to the street network to make them better for active travel.

Who?

- Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) leads on planning policy and initiated the push for regeneration.
- The Stevenage Development Board brings together voluntary key stakeholders from public sector organisations, private businesses, not-for-profit organisations and heritage organisations. The Stevenage Development Board was set up in March 2020 to formulate a bid for the national Government's Town Fund initiative, of which Stevenage was awarded £37.5m. It is chaired by independent businessperson Adrian Hawkins OBE, and provides strategic oversight for the Towns Fund projects.
- Partnership working with private sector partners Mace, Reef Group and the Guinness Partnership.





Stevenage as a case study in Sport England's Active Design Guidance (2023)

Industry Events

The team and partners attended UKREiiF in May 2023, taking a stand alongside two other Hertfordshire authorities to further share the story of Stevenage. Highlights included an event on the stand, opened by Adrian Hawkins OBE, and a panel discussion on Using Science and Innovation for Good Growth, with panellists including Cllr Richard Henry and Kasia Averall from The Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult.



Adrian Hawkins OBE speaking at the stand event, UKREiiF (2023)



Council Leader Cllr Richard Henry and Kasia Averall from The Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult speak on a panel at UKREiiF (2023)

Awards

We are entering a number of projects for awards, demonstrating the progress achieved and how Stevenage is a town that is delivering.

To date, awards entered include:

- **Visa's Let's Celebrate Towns initiative.** Stevenage was shortlisted as a Champion Town.
- **The Pineapple Awards.** Event Island Stevenage was entered for these awards, celebrating placemaking and the contribution that the new space is making.
- **Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire Constructing Excellence Awards.** Co-Space and The North Block won the 'Excellence in Innovation' award. The award recognises projects that have developed innovative approaches to overcome challenges.

Engaging with the Community

Part of our work this year has been expanding our community outreach programme, visiting a number of community centres across the borough to explain the story of regeneration and seek feedback.

This programme will continue throughout the year, alongside some more targeted programmes of engagement.

STEVENAGE BETTER

a place for everyone

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Stevenage
BOROUGH COUNCIL