

Meeting Executive
Portfolio Area All
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CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER THREE 2023/24

KEY DECISION

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To highlight the Council's performance across key priorities and projects for Quarter 3 2023/24 and provide an update on progress against the suite of Community Measures, Cost-of-Living support for residents 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 Corporate Plan Priorities and the key themes emerging from the Quarter 3 performance data.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the service performance against 35 corporate performance measures and delivery of key milestones in Quarter 3 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 voids (section 4.4.2) be noted, and the planned measures to improve performance be endorsed.
- 2.4 That the strategic risk updates (section 4.8) 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. Members will be aware that the new Making Stevenage Even Better Corporate Plan was approved for implementation at Council on the 21st February 2024. Reporting against the new Corporate Plan will commence from quarter one 2024/25.
- 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 planned significant investment (£24.6 million) in its social housing stock in 2023/24 is appropriately highlighted, 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 Council is committed to the delivery of its priorities and its local services, to the benefit of local residents and businesses. This is challenging in a very competitive, employee-driven market and there is a risk that not being able to retain, attract and recruit the right people and skills at all levels could continue to impact on the Council’s capacity to deliver all of its priorities as well as provide core services and implement new government legislation. The Council is

continually reviewing its recruitment and retention approaches to strive to ensure it maintains the right capacity, skills, values and experience amongst staff at all levels.

- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 There are 17 baseline measures within 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.
- 3.8 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 Quarter 3 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.
- 3.9 It is important that where targets are reprofiled mid-year the changes and the rationale are set out. The 'RP01a: Percentage of homes maintained as decent against national minimum Decent Homes standard' has been revised to reflect the latest profile of the planned programme of decent homes works for Qtr 3 (84.77%). This reprofiling does not reduce the Council's overall decent homes target for 23/24 and it is anticipated that the full year figure will be exceeded in Qtr 4. Performance against this measure will be monitored closely in Qtr 4 and further work will be undertaken with services as part of the annual performance cycle review to establish the targets for 24/25.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 QUARTER THREE 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, during 2023/24 progress against performance measures has been presented alongside key programme milestones. By taking this mixed-method approach, the Council has presented a holistic overview of its performance activity. This helps demonstrate to residents that the Council is on track to deliver key projects, programmes and

service improvements associated with FTFC, as well as highlighting 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).

4.1.3 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. 3
More Social Affordable and Good Quality Homes (19 measures)	8	10	0	1	0	8
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.					17
Co-operative Neighbourhoods (3 measures)	3	-	-	-	0	4
A Clean, Green, Safe and Thriving Town (7 measures)	5	1	0	0	1	17
Balancing the Budget (6 measures)	1	4	1	0	0	13
TOTAL (35)	17	14	1	1	1	59

Fig 2.

4.1.4 At the time of writing this report only one indicator (household waste) cannot be reported in Quarter 3. This is because this measure is calculated via an external source and can only be reported once the outturn figures are received. The data for Quarter 2 is now available and was green.

4.1.5 The Performance Team are now reviewing the Corporate Performance suite in preparation for the new financial year alongside Assistant Directors, Service

Managers and the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Performance. The results of this work are expected to be presented to the Executive in July 2024.

4.2 FTFC PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

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

- Public consultation was held for the Oval which generated over 7,000 responses in total. A planning application has now been submitted, which included plans to build 250 dwellings and improve the public realm amongst other commercial units.
- Both the Helston House and Kenilworth Close developments were handed over and completed. Helston House comprises of 29 two and three bed apartments, whilst Kenilworth Close includes 31 houses, 57 flats, 88 independent living homes, 7 shops and a new indoor community space.
- In November an event was held in partnership with Stevenage FC, Samaritans and Everyone Active at The Lamex stadium on a matchday. This launched the 'Real People, Real Stories' project to highlight support available and promoting the seeking of support when needed. Following on from the event a legacy project called 'On Your Side', has been developed in partnership with Stevenage FC Foundation which will benefit from mental health support delivered by MIND.
- As part of the Stevenage Works Skills Framework, a first cohort of young people aged 16-18 has been engaged in a programme to inspire careers in Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) delivered through STEMPOINT EAST. Building on this, a second cohort of 13-15 year olds will support development of the model moving into Phase Two of the Pioneering Young STEM Futures (PYSF) programme. Progress on this programme has been shared with the Mission44 Youth Advisory Board.
- As a commitment to the actions set out in the Council's Climate Change Strategy (2020) it was agreed that the Council will switch the fuel for its fleet to HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) fuel during the next financial year (2024/25). In addition, a roadmap to replace the current fleet with low carbon vehicles was outlined with small cars and vans due to be replaced in 2025, light duty vehicles in 2027, and HGVs in 2028.
- Construction has started on the Gridserve Stevenage Charging Service Station. This is due for completion by the end of 2024. Once completed, 34 electric vehicles will be able to charge simultaneously.
- Two Community Climate Change Fund (formerly known as Dragon's Den) were approved this quarter – The Elliot Road community garden and the Peartree shops water butt and flowerbed.
- The Customer Service Centre (CSC) was relocated to the reception at Daneshill House. The aim of this change was to create a single access point to the building for residents and to better connect up the services that they need.

4.2.2 A pilot for telephony automation to help direct customers to online services for transactional enquiries has been introduced. Data indicates that 42% of Revs and Bens phone enquiries and 72% of customers enquiring about Waste and Environmental services have been successfully transferred, ensuring that

customers can efficiently access the information they need when they want it. Service performance highlights for Quarter 3 include:

- Over 91% of Council services non-housing complaints were responded to within deadline (target 75%)
- 91.6% of customers accessing the Customer Service Centre (CSC) were satisfied with the service (the highest satisfaction level since Quarter 3 2021/22)

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 3.7, 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 Quarter 3 data to help provide context (see Appendix B).

4.3.2 The 'Key Facts' section of Appendix B is 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. 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 Quarter 3 include:

Anti-Social Behaviour

- **There has been a 22.9% decrease in ASB cases** when comparing Quarter 3 in 2023/24 with the same period last year. This decrease is in response to the strong joint working between the Council and partners through the SoSafe Partnership. This includes proactive policing evidenced through initiatives such as the 'Clear, Hold, Build' programme which will result in the development of locally led plans to tackle ASB.
- In Quarter 3, **77% of ASB cases resulted in successful resolution**, in comparison to 26% in Quarter 2. The increase in successful resolution in Quarter 3 is as an outcome of an internal review of enforcement processes and inclusion of preventative resolution methods. An example of prevention may be a conversation with a tenant prior to Notice being issued for breach of tenancy. This preventative approach is a key tool in the Council's approach to tackling ASB.

Provision and Maintenance of Homes

- The Council has provided **401 new homes since 2014 with an accumulative target of 485 in place for Quarter 4**. The Council's proactive approach to building new homes is underpinned by its ability to turnaround planning applications within statutory targets. In Qtr 3 the Council continues to demonstrate good performance in this area:

- **66.7% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks**
- **100% of minor applications determined within 8 weeks**
- **97.4% of other applications determined within 8 weeks.**

Good Local Services

- Under its new leisure contract management arrangement with Everyone Active, the Council is keen to see young people participating in outreach programmes. In Quarter 3, **15,141 children used Everyone Active facilities and participated in programmes.** Everyone Active delivered a range of projects and activities aimed at under 16 year olds in Quarter 3. These include:
 - 4217 swimming lessons
 - 3338 casual swim sessions
 - 900 martial art sessions
 - 900 dance fitness classes
- 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 Quarter 3 **99.67% of waste bins were emptied.**

4.4 PERFORMANCE MEASURES – AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

4.4.1 As highlighted in Figure 2, one voids measure has been 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 in Quarter 3 and the activities in place to seek to achieve target for Quarter 4.

<u>MEASURE NAME</u>	<u>BUSINESS UNIT</u>	Actual – Quarter 1 2023/24 YTD	Target – Quarter 1 2023/24 YTD	Actual – Quarter 2 2023/24 YTD	Target – Quarter 2 2023/24 YTD	Actual – Quarter 3 2023/24 YTD	Target – Quarter 3 2023/24 YTD	Target – Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD
More Social, Affordable and Good Quality Homes								
RV3: Number of Voids returned by contractor	Housing Property Services	104	150	110	150	77	195	173

Fig.3

RV3: Number of Voids returned by Contractor

4.4.2 To provide insight into voids backlog performance and keep track of progress, the Council monitors the number of voids provided to its Contractor and compares this to the number of voids returned. The Contractor started work on the voids programme at the end of January 2023. In Quarter 1 2023, the decision was taken to pause the voids programme for a period of time to allow the Council and its Contractor to review arrangements. The voids programme was remobilised in Quarter 2, with a commitment made by the Contractor to increase resourcing with an intention to expedite clearance of the voids backlog.

4.4.3 In Quarter 3, 63 new void properties were returned to the Council by tenants, of which, 58 were assigned to our Contractor, this is in addition to the 109 assigned in Quarter 2. Despite the Contractors best endeavours to put a supply chain in place, only 77 properties were returned (compared to 92 in Quarter 2). In order to seek to improve performance the following action has been taken:

- During the latter part of Quarter 3 the team started to trial the use of some alternative Contractors to test their capacity to deliver against the Council's void specification and timescales
- Based on outcomes from the trial the decision has been taken, in consultation with our existing Contractor, to move from a single main contractor to multiple Contractors
- All new voids will be allocated to the 4 new Contractors in order to reduce the number of Voids by Quarter 4
- The team are currently in the process of working with the existing Contractor with a view to completing the remaining backlog of 45 voids before the end of February 2024
- Internally the team have reviewed the way we manage the delivery of voids to ensure that there is full accountability and ownership by the team/individuals going forward – this has also included some additional staffing resource. This is now part of the Corporate Transformation Programme; and on-going work will be overseen by the Transformation Portfolio Board
- A review of the Council's Voids Service has been completed and a business case for the future delivery model will be presented to the Executive for approval early 2024/25. Improvements will result in improved customer satisfaction, improved housing quality, value for money and reduced turnaround times.

4.4.4 In addition to the review of the Council's Voids service, and following completion of the external Ridge review, an improvement programme has been developed with the aim of delivering a more effective and efficient repairs service. This includes enhancing the Council's inhouse Repairs Service and the implementation of a new contractor supply chain. The procurement of the new contractor framework will commence in March 2024 and the outcome will be reported to the Executive to enable contracts to be awarded in June/July 2024.

4.5 COST OF LIVING

4.5.1 Following approval of the Cost of Living (CoL) Action Plan in October 2022, a number of activities were 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.

4.5.2 One of the key mechanisms for supporting residents impacted by Cost of Living is through monitoring rent arrears and providing timely support to tenants, Case management is provided by the Income Officers, with tenants signposted to support provided by the Welfare Benefit and Debt Advice Team, and partners such as Citizens Advice. The team is also proactively supporting tenants to access the Alternative Payment Arrangement mechanism when required. To further enhance these services, the Council have recruited an Income Officer to

support households in Emergency and Temporary Accommodation. The dedicated support for tenants from this role will help ensure that more intense support and case management can be provided. The Council continues to promote its Council Tax Support Scheme to residents.

- 4.5.3 A vital component of CoL activities has been the co-ordination of Council and community services. Vineyard Foodshed run by the Vineyard Church, is the main foodbank for residents and the Council provide regular grants from the Household Support Fund and have previously provided them with emergency storage and transport of food. In addition, several initiatives have been set-up using Local Community Budgets (LCB), including an activity with Grace Community Church in Shephall and support for their partnership with Barnardo's children's centres.
- 4.5.4 The Council are also providing funding to Holy Trinity, St Hugh and St John Churches and the Salvation Army for their warm space cafés and craft clubs. Dedicated pages covering the Stevenage Warm Spaces Network (launched in November 2022) are regularly updated and information is also promoted via community noticeboards, direct mail, the Chronicle magazine and through Community Associations, recognising that not all residents have digital means to access information.

4.6 TENANCY SATISFACTION MEASURES

- 4.6.1 In addition to the 10 housing compliance measures introduced in response to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) requirements, the Council are also required to report against 12 Tenancy Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). The purpose of the TSM's is to understand tenants' satisfaction with the provision of Council services in relation to tenant engagement, home maintenance, repairs, ASB, complaint handling and communal spaces. An independent research company have been commissioned to undertake the survey and the findings will be presented to the Executive in Q1 2024/25.

4.7 OFFICE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT (OFLOG)

- 4.7.1 In July 2023, a new performance body, the Office for Local Government (OfLoG) was launched by the Government with the stated aim to increase understanding of local government performance; support improvements, highlight excellence and identify risks of failure. Alongside this a consultation on draft Best Value Duty (BV) guidance was launched. The statutory BV Duty is set out under section 26 of the Local Government Act (1999) and requires local authorities to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness".
- 4.7.2 A key component of the BV Guidance is the use of OfLoG metrics to help inform understanding of BV compliance and provide insight into Councils that might be at risk. The metrics cover adult social care; adult skills; waste and finance; roads; business and economic growth; waste management; corporate & finance; and planning. Of these, 18 metrics are applicable to the Council. Subject to approval, the intention is that all 18 OfLoG metrics will be included in the Council's corporate performance suite for 2024/25, this will be alongside existing regulatory and locally agreed Key Performance Indicators, and a report to the Executive will follow in June 2024

4.8 STRATEGIC RISK

- 4.8.1 The strategic risks were considered by Corporate Risk Group on 5 February 2024, and agreed by the Senior Leadership Team on 20 February 2024 and will be considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 26 March 2024.
- 4.8.2 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.

HIGHLIGHTED RISKS

- 4.7.4 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

- 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 impact of the under/over achievement of Corporate Performance Indicators will be reported as part of the Quarterly Monitoring report.

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. Where required, 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 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 provides good governance assurance.

5.5 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

5.5.1 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, except for 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

5.6.1 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 \(Part II Audit Committee Report\)](#)
- [FTFC Plan on a Page](#)

7 APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Compendium of Performance Results Quarter Three 2023/24
- Appendix B: Community Measures Quarter Three 2023/24