

Meeting Cabinet
Portfolio Area All
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CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SUITE 2024/25, PRODUCTIVITY PLAN 2024/25 AND ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

KEY DECISION

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight the Council’s achievements for 2023/24 through its delivery of the Future Town Future Council Corporate Plan (2016-2024), whilst also looking to the Council’s priorities for next year as part of the Making Stevenage Even Better (MSEB) Corporate Plan (2024-2027), and as monitored through the Corporate Performance Suite for 2024/25.
- 1.2 This report also includes the Council’s Productivity Plan 2024/25 which has been produced in response to Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) request for all councils to publish service delivery productivity and efficiency reports.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the significant progress in the delivery of the Future Town, Future Council programme as set out in the Annual Report 23/24 (Appendix A), be noted and agreed, and that a fully designed version of the report will be shared with the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council for agreement post Cabinet.
- 2.2 That the draft Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Corporate Performance Suite (Appendix B), MSEB Plan(s) on a Page (Appendix C) and Productivity Plan (Appendix D) for 2024/25 be agreed.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Throughout 2023/24, the Council has continued to make significant progress in delivering its ambitions under the previous Corporate Plan - Future Town Future Council (2016-2024). During the year continued effort was applied to areas where improvements were needed, including re-focusing resources in response to new regulatory or legislative requirements. The Annual Report (Appendix A) provides Cabinet with an overview of the achievements the council has made during the last 12 months and the priorities for 2024/25.
- 3.2 The Council's achievements in 2023/24 should be considered in the context of another particularly challenging year for the public sector. This has included:
 - 3.2.1 The ongoing pressures from the cost of living, caused by rising inflation, fuel, energy, utility prices.
 - 3.2.2 Staffing challenges as an outcome of the very competitive, employee-driven market and the impact on retention and recruitment of the right people and skills at all levels to provide core services and implement new government legislation.
 - 3.2.3 Continuing reductions in council funding from central government, exacerbated by difficult business environment impacting business rates and inflation continuing to be unstable.
- 3.3 Despite these challenges, the Council has continued to deliver against the ambitious FTFC agenda, whilst maintaining a balanced budget through savings and income generation. It is highly likely that the pressures on the sector will continue throughout 2024/25 with recent Local Government Association reports indicating that that councils in England now face a funding gap of £6.2 billion over the next two years driven by rising cost and demand pressures. These considerations have been key to shaping the Council's key outcomes and priorities for the next 12 months and will be closely monitored by Members and Officers through the quarterly performance and finance monitoring arrangements.
- 3.4 In 2024/25, following unanimous Full Council approval of the new Corporate Plan – Making Stevenage Even Better (MSEB) (2024-2027), the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Milestones of the Corporate Performance Suite (Appendix B & C) will be aligned with the MSEB 5 strategic priorities and 3 cross-cutting themes of the MSEB programme, ensuring transparency and setting out a clear pathway for monitoring progress.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND OTHER OPTIONS

Future Town Future Council (FTFC) Programme

4.1 A summary of key highlights against the FTFC Programme over the past year has been included in the Annual Report 2023/24 (see Appendix A). This report is an external-facing document that sets out the Council's progress in delivering excellent services for Stevenage and achievement of the strategic priorities in the FTFC Corporate Plan.



4.2 The content of the Annual Report 2023/24 has been structured around service performance across the five strategic priorities of the FTFC Corporate Plan.

Particular highlights this year include:

4.2.1 Opening the Railway North multi-storey car park that boasts 622 spaces, 30 blue badge spaces, 30 EV Charging points powered by solar panels, and a secure cycle storage facility for 80 cycles. It was also the first in Hertfordshire to receive the Park Mark Plus award and was jointly awarded 'Best Car Park in a Town or City' at this year's British Parking Awards.

4.2.2 Delivering 191 new homes, including the completion of phase one of Kenilworth Close that includes seven new retail units as part of the wider neighbourhood regeneration, and the Helston House development in Symonds Green. As well as beginning construction on a further 160 homes and submitting planning applications for a further 400 new homes.

4.2.3 Hosting the inaugural Youth Skills Summit at Airbus Defence and Space where local students and organisations came together to discuss transforming education, career opportunities and the importance of diversity in STEM.

4.2.4 Officially opening Phase 1 of Stevenage Innovation and Technology Centre (SITEC) at the North Hertfordshire College providing a space for local people to the skills and knowledge needed for success in the many STEM businesses in the area.

4.2.5 Launching our Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF) that makes £7,500 available per ward, per year for residents-led projects, such as improving air quality, soil health and biodiversity, producing local food, creating habitats for wildlife, offering natural shade, and saving water and energy.

4.2.6 Officially opening Fairlane Wood where the Council planted one hectare of new woodland with the help of the community and local schools on the Southfield of Fairlands Valley Park.

4.2.7 Installing solar panels on the rooftops of our seven refuse collection lorries, saving up to 1,100 litres of diesel per year and lorry, reducing emissions and saving

4.2.8 Relaunching Shephalbury Park Tennis Courts after a £112,000 refurbishment

4.2.9 Achieving Dementia Friendly Community Status through the hard work of our Leisure and Health team.

4.2.10 Hosting a range of events at our Event Island including Childrens Playday, Halloween activities, International Day, Cycle Hire event, Stevenage Older People's Network event, Barrio Fiesta and the extremely well attended Christmas lights 2023 switch on.

4.2.11 Delivered the Stevenage Skills Framework with specific focus on providing residents with the tools to make the most of the opportunities available on their doorstep by working with key partners, industry, and educators.

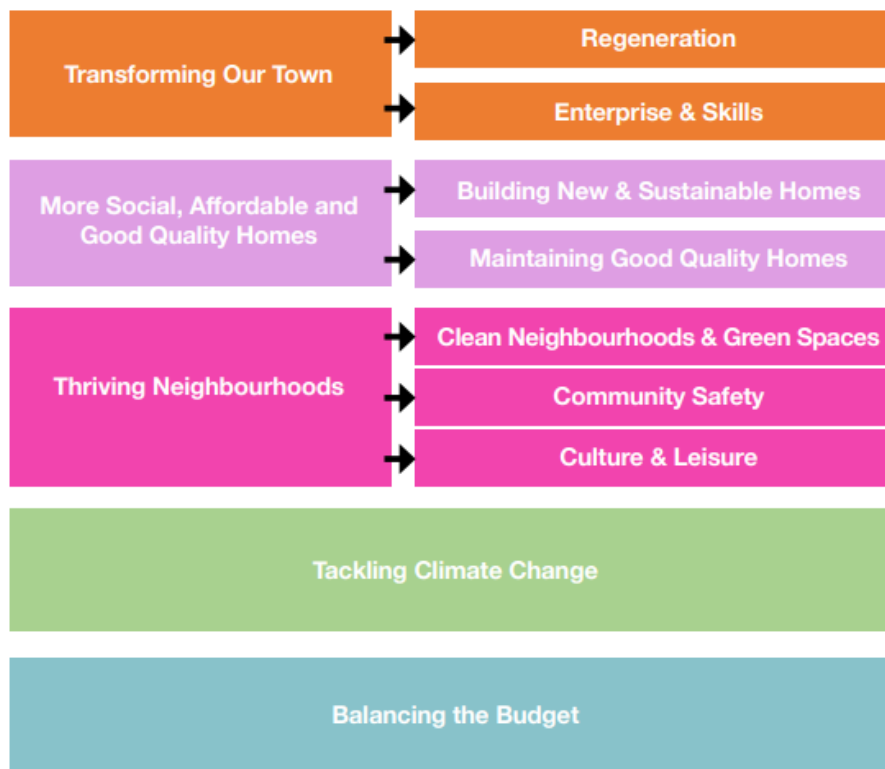
Priorities for 2024/25

4.3 The suite of 62 corporate KPIs (Appendix B) and 117 Milestones (Appendix C) for 2024/25 is based on input from Portfolio Holders, Strategic Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Service. The selection of KPIs and Milestones is shaped in response to the significant regulatory requirements introduced through the Social Housing Regulation Act (2023), the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and the increased focus on council performance across waste, planning, finance and complaints metrics as identified by the Office for Local Government (OfLoG). Of the 62 KPIs:

- 17 KPIs > Regulator of Social Housing (RSH)
- 18 KPIs > Office for Local Government (OfLoG)
- 27 KPIs > Making Stevenage Even Better (MSEB) local priorities

The suite also reflects the need to pre-empt future housing regulatory requirements, such as those linked to damp and mould legislation and the future Decent Homes Standard.

4.4 All corporate KPIs and Milestones are aligned to the 5 strategic priority subsets and 3 cross-cutting themes set out in the Corporate Plan – Making Stevenage Even Better (2024-2027).



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)	The council will work with partners, staff, local businesses, and community groups to advance EDI across the workforce and community
Health & Wellbeing	The council will work with partners to tackle health inequalities and improve the health and wellbeing of residents.
Technology & Innovation	The council will embrace technology and innovation to enhance how we operate as a council. We will deliver systems efficiencies that empower residents to use digital services.

- 4.5 The KPIs and Milestones have been selected to ensure that there is a clear link between the Council's performance and the outcomes identified in MSEB. The KPI targets have been agreed following consultation with Portfolio Holders and the Senior Leadership Team. They are based on previous performance data, and also benchmarking and comparative data from similar sized councils, by taking this approach the Council can ensure that it will continue to stretch itself and maintain continuous improvement as required.
- 4.6 Presenting both quantitative (KPI) and qualitative (Milestone) information in this way provides a complete picture of the range of ways in which the council delivers services. It demonstrates to residents that performance is not just limited to management data but can also be demonstrated by providing updates on delivery of key projects, programmes, and service improvements. This will be demonstrated through timely reporting of quarterly updates from the Council on progress against Milestones. The Milestones which are due to be monitored in 24/25 are listed in Appendix C and to help ensure that this information is communicated effectively, is clear and visually appealing, each strategic priority and cross cutting theme is presented as a Plan on a Page (PoP) (please see Appendix C for suite of Plans on a Page).

Productivity Plan 2024/25

- 4.7 In response to the recent Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) drive to review productivity across local government and as a requirement of the additional funding included in the final 2024/25 funding settlement, the Council will be required to publish and submit a Productivity Plan to DLUHC by 19 July 2024. The outline Productivity Plan is included in Appendix D. The Plan has been compiled addressing the lines of questions as set out in a letter to Chief Executives on the 14 April 2024, and covers the following:
- How the Council has transformed the way it designs and delivers services to make better use of resources
 - How the Council plan to take advantage of technology and make better use of data to improve decision making, service design and use of resource
 - The Council's plans to reduce wasteful spend within the organisation and systems
 - The barriers preventing progress that the Government can help to reduce or remove
 - Councils are advised that the plan should be approx. 3 to 4 pages long and to include relevant metrics and KPIs that will allow residents to monitor progress. However, in addressing the questions asked and to give a full account the Council has provided a more comprehensive document.

- 4.8 DLUHC have advised that plans will not be rated or scored, nor will there be any kind of league table. The sector has been advised that a DLUHC panel will be set up to consider the emerging themes and evidence, and this panel will include the Local Government Association (LGA) and OfLoG. It is not yet clear what other political parties position is on the use of Productivity Plans and the impact that the General Election will have on future arrangements. The Cabinet will be notified of developments in this area as further information is published.

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 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 2023/24 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 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

[Future Town Future Council Plan on a Page](#)

[Making Stevenage Even Better \(2024-27\) Corporate Plan](#)

7 APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Annual Report 2023/24
- Appendix B: MSEB KPI Corporate Performance Suite 2024/25
- Appendix C: MSEB Plan(s) on a Page 2024/25
- Appendix D: Productivity Plan Outline 2024/25