

**Meeting** Cabinet  
**Portfolio Area** All  
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## CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER THREE 2024/25

### KEY DECISION

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### 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To highlight the Council's performance across key priorities and projects for Quarter 3 2024/25 and provide an update on progress against Cost-of-Living support for residents and current strategic risks.
- 1.2 For Member's information, a presentation will be provided at the Cabinet 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 52 corporate performance measures and delivery of key milestones in Quarter 3 2024/25 through the Making Stevenage Even Better Programme (Appendix A) be noted.
- 2.2 That the current status of Electrical Certification be noted (section 4.3.2).
- 2.3 That the issues with Garage Voids and planned improvements are noted (section 4.34).

- 2.4 That the Regulator of Social Housing Provider Improvement Plan be noted (section 4.6).
- 2.5 That the strategic risk updates (section 4.8) be noted.

**3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In January 2024, the Cabinet agreed the new Making Stevenage Even Better (MSEB) Corporate Plan until 2027. This includes five strategic priorities:
  - Transforming Our Town
  - More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes
  - Thriving Neighbourhoods
  - Tackling Climate Change
  - Balancing the Budget

The plan also includes three Cross-cutting themes:

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Health & Wellbeing
- Technology & Innovation

The plan was subsequently approved at Full Council in February 2024. The corporate performance suite was also updated to reflect existing and future programmes of work, resident priorities and regulatory and legislative housing requirements.

- 3.2 The Council’s approach to performance management demonstrates a clear link between service delivery and the strategic objectives in the MSEB 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 can simplify and streamline how performance monitoring and progress is communicated to Members and residents.

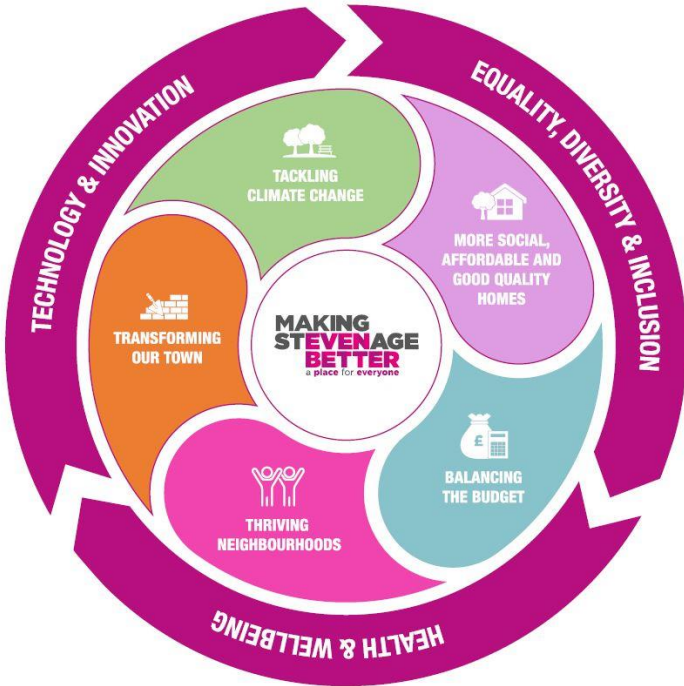


Fig 1.

- 3.3 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 the Council's capacity to deliver all of its priorities as well as provide core services and implement new government legislation. The main challenge is when the Council has to compete with roles against the private sector (e.g surveying roles), sometimes this can be compensated by using Market Forces supplements and work flexibility. 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.
- 3.4 The Corporate Performance Suite for 2024/25 contains 49 measures which are aligned with the 5 MSEB strategic priorities. There were also 13 measures relating to the Office for Local Government (OFLOG) which will be reported annually. OFLOG closed in December 2024 the data for these measures will still be collated, however considerations will be taken as to what happens with these in 2025/26. The 49 measures are complemented by statutory and local measures which are managed internally with performance overseen by the Strategic Leadership Team.
- 3.5 Following the Regulator of Social Housing Inspection in September 2024 (which is referenced within a separate report on this agenda) three additional measures were added in Quarter 2 'RSH Number of Overdue Fire Remedial Actions (High, Medium and Low)' and one added from Quarter 3 'RSH Number of Overdue Water Remedial Actions'. The new measures will give the Cabinet oversight of the number of remedial actions stemming from Fire Risk Assessment that have been completed as a percentage of the total that have been identified split into high, medium and low categories. Performance against the complete suite of compliance measures along with the associated mitigating actions is regularly monitored with oversight provided by the Council's Corporate Risk Group.
- 3.6 There are 23 baseline measures within the corporate performance suite. The majority of these reflect the increased regulation and focus on housing compliance for 2024/25. Baseline measures provide a starting point from which to assess and compare performance in future. The remaining 30 measures are relevant to the Council's focus on what matters to residents and progress made against the MSEB objectives.

## **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 MSEB priorities set out in Figure 1. In addition, during 2024/25 progress against performance measures has been presented alongside key programme milestones. By taking this mixed-method approach, the Council is able to present 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 MSEB, as well as highlighting performance against key service delivery targets.
- 4.1.2 Key highlights from the MSEB programmes are summarised in section 4.2. For further information on the aims and objectives of the MSEB programme in 2024/25 please refer to MSEB Plan on a Page, which was presented to the

4.1.3 The total number of measures by Red, Amber & Green (RAG) rating is shown in Figure 2 below. The full set of current corporate performance measures results and MSEB milestones are attached at Appendix A.

Q3 2024/25 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW						
MSEB Programme	Baseline measure for 2024-25	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 (25 measures)	13	7	4	1	0	17
Transforming Our Town (3 measures)	0	3	0	0	0	8
Thriving Neighbourhoods (11 measures)	5	5*	0	1	0	1
	*The data for 'NI191: Residual household waste per household (kgs)' and 'NI192: Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting' comes from an external source and is only available a quarter in arrears, therefore will be reported this way					
Tackling Climate Change (1 measures)	0	1	0	0	0	7
Balancing the Budget (13 measures)	5	8	0	0	0	10
<b>TOTAL (53)</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>43</b>

Fig 2.

4.1.4 There were several strong areas of performance this quarter which are highlighted below:

- The percentage of repairs fixed first time remains high with 95.83% (4690 of 4894) being fixed on the initial visit.
- Compliance certification and documentation for Gas Safety, Fire Safety, Asbestos, Legionella and Lifts are at 100%.
- Satisfaction with the CSC customer service remains high at 93.1%, the highest in the last five quarters. however as always it is recognised that there is still room for further improvement to be made in this area.
- All Planning measures have achieved their targets, with 100% of major applications being determined within target timescales.

## **4.2 MSEB PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS**

4.2.1 Alongside performance, the council also captures quarterly updates on the milestones associated with the strategic priorities set out in the MSEB Corporate Plan and subsequent service planning and priority setting activities. All programmes have made progress on the projects agreed at Cabinet in July 2024, with Quarter 3 highlights including:

- A new Allocations policy was implemented which ensures the Council meets statutory duties and makes best use of housing stock.
- New park equipment has been installed at Brent Court Garages and will likely be open to the public by the end of January 2024.
- A contractor has been appointed for the Ellis Avenue housing development and the demolition of existing buildings has been scheduled. The scheme will include seven two bedroom and four one bedroom flats.
- A contractor has been appointed for Phase 2 of the Kenilworth Close scheme, start on site is taking place beginning with the demolition of Walpole Court.
- Planning permission was granted to build 38 homes at the former Cartref site in Symonds Green.
- The Regeneration team have completed a successful tender process for the arts and heritage trail. The company, Landmark, have begun scoping works and are starting to conduct site visits to gather information for the design phase.
- Phase one of a development of a new Enterprise Centre within the town is on site and scheduled to completed in Quarter 4. A full options appraisal for Phase 2 has been conducted, coinciding with SITEC development partners. The team are working through the outcome with a view to progress these projects in tandem.
- Delivery of the UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) continues to make good progress. Junction 7 have now completed the painting of 14 telecom boxes across the town centre and old town, with 6 more planned, pending approval from telecom companies. The government has announced an extension to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for the 2025/26 financial year. This is a reduced allocation from what the council received in 2024/25 and plans are being drawn together, ahead of approval from cabinet.
- The procurement of new recycling and refuse receptacles has been completed and will be delivered by the end of Quarter 4.
- 260 of 286 garages that contain asbestos are now back in the Council's control. The last garages are due to be taken back by way of repossession. The garages team are also awaiting completed forms from licence holders who have requested their items back.
- The garages team are proactively marketing commercial garages. There are currently just 3 voids – 2 are awaiting repair and 1 is on digital lettings.

4.2.2 Further details on the projects included in the MSEB programmes and corporate highlights can be found in Appendix A.

## **4.3 PERFORMANCE MEASURES – AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

4.3.1 As highlighted in Figure 2, there are two measures that are red this quarter, 'VED1: Percentage of dwellings with a valid EICR Electrical Certificate' and 'CNM2g: Garage voids as a percentage of stock'. The table below outlines the

actual performance and the target that was set for the performance measure. The paragraphs that follow set out the reasons for improvement in Quarter 3.

<u>MEASURE NAME</u>	<u>BUSINESS UNIT</u>	Actual - Quarter 3 2023/24 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD	Actual – Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Target - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD
<b>More Social, Affordable, Good Quality Homes</b>								
<b>VED1: Percentage of dwellings with a valid EICR Electrical Certificate</b>	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	99.78%	99.78%	99.58%	99.14%	98.41%	100%	100%
<b>Thriving Neighbourhoods</b>								
<b>CNM2g: Garage voids as a percentage of stock</b>	Stevenage Direct Services	11.07%	11.07%	6.99%	7.50%	8.04%	6.67%	6.47%

Fig.3

**VED1: Percentage of dwellings with a valid EICR Electrical Certificate**

- 4.3.2 The percentage of dwellings with a valid EICR Electrical Certificate at the end of December 2024 is 98.41% against a target of 100%. 7744 out of 7869 dwellings have a valid EICR Electrical certificate leaving 125 outstanding.
- 4.3.3 The current shortfall on EICR satisfactory certification is down to no access properties and SBC having a "zero" tolerance approach to not being 100% compliant. SBC are 98% compliant in this area which compares very favourably with other organisations performance for electrical certification. A process is in place to address non-access issues and ensure electrical checks can be completed.

**CNM2g: Garage voids as a percentage of stock**

- 4.3.4 The residential garage void rate at the end of December 2024 is 8.04% against a target of 6.67%.
- 4.3.5 In Quarter 3 terminations were lower than Quarter 2 (96 in comparison to 120), however the number of offers fell by 20% to 153 for the quarter with demand for garages declining.
- 4.3.6 The drop in demand for garages is thought to be due to:
  - continued cost of living pressures (reduced spend on discretionary items)
  - competition from local storage solutions who are offering very attractive introductory rates.
  - less attractive garages being available and a natural plateauing (there are only c.375 voids across the whole stock and some have poor access)

- 4.3.7 Despite a high number of garages being available, December 2024 had the lowest number of bids since digital lettings was introduced in 2022. The acceptance rate was also low as many garages could not be offered due to existing debts on prospective tenant accounts. In total 59 bids were refused due to existing debts. This equated to 41 applicants as some made multiple bids.
- 4.3.8 Garage services will continue with a proactive marketing strategy which includes working with local housing associations and issuing surveys to license holders who live outside the town to better understand their needs.
- 4.3.9 Further improvements to the online digital service including a mapping feature are anticipated to be implemented by April 2025.

**4.4 TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES (TSM)**

- 4.4.1 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) were introduced in 2023/24 as a regulatory requirement for all Registered Social Landlords in England. There are 22 TSMs – of which 12 are sourced from a tenant perception surveys. The Council has commissioned Housemark to conduct the tenant perception surveys quarterly during 2024/25. The Council are required to complete at least 570 surveys for its stock size. However, for 2024/25, 1000 responses will be collated over the year to ensure further statistical accuracy. The aim is for 90% of surveys to be completed over the phone with the remaining 10% online.
- 4.4.2 In Quarter 3 for 2024/25, 261 surveys were completed, 200 over the phone and 61 online. This brings the total number of surveys completed to date for 2024/25 to 770. The Q3 satisfaction results can be seen in the table below:

Ref	Question	Previous year (2023/24)	Cumulative (2024/25)	Difference (+/-)
TP01	Overall satisfaction	56.0%	65.8%	+9.8%
TP02	Repairs service overall	62.7%	68.7%	+6.0%
TP03	Speed of repairs	52.4%	64.8%	+12.4%
TP04	Home is well-maintained	59.2%	66.6%	+7.4%
TP05	Home is safe	69.9%	74.7%	+4.8%
TP06	Listens to views and acts	44.9%	52.8%	+7.9%
TP07	Keeps tenants informed	50.9%	60.2%	+9.3%
TP08	Treats tenants fairly and with respect	70.2%	72.0%	+1.8%
TP09	Complaint handling	22.8%	34.2%	+11.4%
TP10	Communal areas are clean and well-maintained	53.3%	61.2%	+7.9%
TP11	Contribution to neighbourhood	47.7%	60.8%	+13.1%
TP12	ASB handling	49.5%	56.5%	+7.0%

Fig 4

- 4.4.3 The Council has seen an improvement across all twelve measures compared to the 2023/24 year end data, with the cumulative overall satisfaction at 65.8% representing an increase of 9.8%. The highest increase relates to satisfaction with speed of repairs which is now 64.8% an increase of 12.4%. Tenants are most satisfied with being provided with a home that is safe at 74.3% representing an increase of 4.8%.
- 4.4.4 It should be noted that the Quarter 3 scores were achieved with a combination of online and phone call surveys. Housemark has generally seen lower satisfaction results for online surveys compared to telephone surveys for the social housing providers it is supporting. Overall satisfaction by method of data collection for Quarter 3 stands at 47.5% for tenants who completed the online survey and 78% for telephone responses.
- 4.4.5 In addition to the twelve standard questions, the Council has opted to ask two additional questions which will vary each quarter. For Quarter 1, 2 and 3 tenants were asked to set out the reason for their initial overall satisfaction score. For Quarter 3 tenants were also asked whether they have experienced ASB within the last 12 months and if so, how long it lasted. Of the 19.5% of tenants that reported they had experienced ASB in the last 12 months, 72.5% of these highlighted that the issue is still ongoing.
- 4.4.6 As part of the survey tenants are able to use free text to provide additional detail. Feedback from the surveys is being used to help inform and implement a new Resident Engagement Strategy along with specific development and improvement work across service areas. Of the tenants that provided a reason for overall satisfaction and have given permission for their responses to be shared, 33% of these have been reported to individual teams for further contact to be made. 51% of the follow ups requested are in relation to repairs (including damp and mould).
- 4.4.7 Quarter 4 surveys commenced in January 2025 and 100% of these surveys will be carried out over the phone.

## **4.5 COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT HANDLING**

- 4.5.1 As set out within the Council's Complaints Policy residents are able to contact either the Housing Ombudsman Service, mainly for issues which relate to the Council as a landlord or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for areas such as Homelessness, the Housing Register and associated advice.
- 4.5.2 Both Ombudsmen services will independently consider cases where they have been approached by residents and will then come to a determination concerning the matters which have been raised. In line with the Housing Ombudsmen's new Statutory Code of Complaint Handling, the Council is required to report the outcome of such cases, and this will be provided to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.
- 4.5.3 The Quarter 2 Corporate Performance Report committed to providing an update from the Monitoring Officer to report decisions upheld by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman as part of the Performance Suite. From then on, judgements and findings of both the Housing and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman will be reported quarterly alongside the council's performance information as part of this report.



- 4.5.4 In the third quarter, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman reached determinations in respect of two complaints. Both cases are being resolved following formal interventions.
- 4.5.5 With regards to the Housing Ombudsman, 4 cases were considered in quarter 3, the details of which are set out in Appendix B. No formal determinations have been made in respect of these cases. Two of the cases were resolved following intervention and advice and in one case the Ombudsmen wanted the Council to consider the case first through its internal process before they would consider getting involved.
- 4.5.6 The Council has reviewed its Complaints Policy in line with the latest regulatory and legal requirements. Details of this along with the Annual Self-Assessment of Complaint Handling against the Housing Ombudsmen's Code. This has seen the introduction of a new Member for Complaints (Housing) role within the Cabinet as well as the introduction of a fortnightly Housing Complaint Clinic with the purpose of reviewing trends and undertaking root cause analysis to help drive improvements and learning.
- 4.5.7 The Annual Housing Complaints and Service Improvement Report were considered initially by the Executive Housing Working Group, which is Chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and attended by other key Councillors including the Leader of the Council, prior to being approved by the Cabinet on 5 June 2024.
- 4.5.8 Tenant Satisfaction Measure Perception Surveys for the year to date indicate that 34.2% of respondents were either very or fairly satisfied with the handling of their complaint which represents an improvement of 11% compared to the 2023/24 year end figure.
- 4.5.9 The Housing Complaint Clinic is continuing to take a lead in monitoring and improving performance, Full details of this work and performance are presented as part of the Council's Quarterly Performance Framework.

#### **4.6 REGULATOR OF SOCIAL HOUSING PROVIDER IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

- 4.6.1 In November 2024 the Council was notified by the Regulator of Social Housing that it has been awarded a C2 grade following on-site inspection against the Consumer Standards. Cabinet was notified of the inspection outcome in December 2024 and approved the recommendation that delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director (RP), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to develop and approve a Provider Improvement Plan (PIP) with the Regulator of Social Housing. Cabinet also approved the recommendation that the PIP would be reported to Cabinet as part of the Quarterly Corporate Performance Framework.
- 4.6.2 The Council met with the Regulator in January 2025 to open dialogue on what the PIP should include, and a draft version is attached at Appendix C, also detailing progress made since the inspection took place and the judgement was confirmed.
- 4.6.3 The Council met with the Regulator again at the end of February to ratify the PIP and submitted supporting evidence of the progress that the council has made. The Regulator has also requested that root causes of any weaknesses be identified and included in the PIP to ensure that learnings are embedded into future service delivery.
- 4.6.4 The Executive Housing Working Group will receive progress updates on the planned improvements on a bi-monthly basis and the Council will meet with the

Regulator of Social Housing on a monthly basis, moving to quarterly, once strong assurance is gained that the Council is making sufficient progress.

#### **4.7 COST OF LIVING**

- 4.7.1 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 that is specifically targeted at supporting people facing financial, housing and other difficulties.
- 4.7.2 A vital component of CoL activities has been the work with partners to reach a broad range of residents in as many compelling ways as possible.
- 4.7.3 In Quarter 1, the Council continued to provide funding to Irish Network, Bedwell, Chells Manor, St Nicholas and The Oval Community Centres, Junction 7 and Crossroads Care for their community cafes. These are funded until the end of March 2025. Funding for the cafes is to be distributed to enable them to continue until September 2025.
- 4.7.4 The Council continues to administer the Household Support Fund Scheme. A total of £50,000 has been distributed to groups and organisations that are directly supporting Stevenage residents with food and energy poverty. The current funding has been allocated and the Council is yet to hear if there will be further tranches distributed in April 2025.
- 4.7.5 The Council is awaiting confirmation from Hertfordshire County Council as to the allocation split between food and energy for the next tranche. Groups that have been supported previously include foodbanks, daycare support centres and community cafes offering free food and refreshments, along with social interaction and support. For the September 2024 – March 2025 allocation £6000 energy and £44,000 food poverty and has been distributed within these guidelines.

#### **4.8 STRATEGIC RISK**

- 4.8.1 The strategic risks were considered by Corporate Risk Group on 5 February 2025, agreed by the Senior Leadership Team on 4 March 2025 and will be considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 25 March 2025.
- 4.8.2 The Audit Committee receives a detailed Strategic Risk Report each quarter. The report to the Audit Committee considers the actions which have been identified to mitigate each of the identified risks and the progress of those actions. 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 the Cabinet within this quarterly report.

#### **HIGHLIGHTED RISKS**

- 4.8.3 This quarter the risk score for the HRA Business Plan has been increased. There has been a revision to the current risk description with specific reference to cost pressures. This change to description has meant the risk score has increased from high to very high. Work continues to progress the actions to mitigate high and very high risks. For further information on the mitigations in place please contact the Corporate Policy & Business Support Team at [policy@stevenage.gov.uk](mailto: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 are charged with identifying and addressing any related climate change considerations.

### **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)

- Annual Governance Statement 2024/25
- [MSEB Plan on a Page 2024/25 \(stevenage.gov.uk\)](https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/mseb-plan-on-a-page-2024-25)

## **7 APPENDICES**

- Appendix A: Compendium of Performance Results Quarter Three 2024/25
- Appendix B: Ombudsman Determinations Quarter Three 2024/25
- Appendix C: RSH Improvement Plan
- Appendix D: Housing Ombudsman Annual Report 2023/24