Part I – Release to Press

Agenda item: ##

Meeting	Cabinet
Portfolio Area	All
Date	15 July 2026

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER FOUR 2025/26, ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26 AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SUITE 2026/27

KEY DECISION

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1 PURPOSE

1.1 This report provides a comprehensive overview of the Council's performance at the end of the 2025/26 financial year and sets out the proposed direction for the year ahead. It brings together key performance data, strategic reflections, and forward-looking priorities to support Cabinet in reviewing progress and shaping the next phase of delivery.

1.2 The report focuses on three core areas:

- Reviewing performance across Quarter Four 2025/26, as captured in the Corporate Performance Suite.
- Presenting the 2025/26 Annual Report, which reflects on delivery across the Council's strategic priorities and cross-cutting themes.
- Setting out the proposed priorities and performance measures for the 2026/27 Corporate Performance Suite.

1.3 The report is supported by a suite of appendices that collectively underpin the Council's performance framework:

Appendix A — 2025/26 Annual Report

- Provides an overview of the Council's performance across the Making Stevenage Even Better (MSEB) strategic priorities and cross-cutting themes, as well as a look at the Council's ambitions for the coming year.

Appendix B — 2026/27 Key Performance Indicators

- Presents the proposed 2026/27 Corporate Performance Suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) detailing the strategic key performance indicators aligned to the Corporate Plan's main priorities and cross-cutting themes, and identifying the lead Portfolio Holders responsible for each area.

Appendix C — 2026/27 Making Stevenage Even Better Priorities

- Sets out the Council's delivery priorities across all MSEB priority areas. Like Appendix B, it is structured by Corporate Plan themes and includes lead Portfolio Holder accountability. Together, Appendices B and C form the two halves of the 2026/27 Performance Compendium.

Appendix D — Quarter Four 2025/26 Performance Compendium

- Summarises actual performance data up to the end of the 2025/26 financial year. This includes performance against key indicators and delivery milestones.

Appendix E — Quarter Four 2025/26 Ombudsman Determinations

- Summarises findings from the Housing Ombudsman, including any upheld complaints or learning points for the Council.

1.3.1 For Members' information, a presentation will be provided at the Cabinet meeting which will cover updates in relation to delivery against MSEB Priorities and the key themes emerging from the Quarter Four performance data.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the service performance against 52 corporate performance measures and delivery of key milestones in Quarter Four 2025/26 through the Making Stevenage Even Better Programme (Appendix D) be noted.

2.2 That the improvement actions being taken to improve void turnaround times and deliver value for money for tenants be noted (section 4.4.2).

2.3 That the strategic risk updates (section 4.9) be noted.

2.4 That the draft Annual Report 2025/26 (Appendix A) be agreed, subject to any changes discussed at the Cabinet meeting and with final sign off delegated to the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council.

2.5 That the proposed Corporate Performance Suite 2026/27 (Appendix B) and MSEB Priorities 2026/27 (Appendix C) be agreed.

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

3.2 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.

3.3 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 projects 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 are communicated to Members and residents.

Fig 1.

3.4 The Corporate Performance Suite for 2025/26 contains 52 measures which are aligned with the five MSEB strategic priorities. The 52 measures are complemented by statutory and local measures which are managed internally with performance overseen by the Strategic Leadership Team.

3.5 There are 10 baseline measures within the Corporate Performance Suite. The majority of these reflect the increased regulation and focus on housing compliance. Baseline measures provide a starting point from which to assess and compare performance in the future. The remaining 42 measures are relevant to the Council's focus on what matters to residents and progress made against the MSEB objectives.

3.6 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 its priorities as well as provide core services and implement new government legislation. The main challenge is when the Council must 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.

3.7 Each year, the Council agrees its key outcomes and priorities for the town and the Council during the coming 12 months. These are framed within the Making Stevenage Even Better (MSEB) Corporate Plan, with delivery driven through service areas and the MSEB programme.

3.8 Throughout 2025/26 the Council has continued to make significant progress in delivering its ambitions under the Making Stevenage Even Better programme. Continued effort is being applied to areas where improvements are needed, including re-focusing resources on specific action plans. This report sets out these achievements and areas of focus in more detail.

3.9 This report aims to give Cabinet an overview of the achievements the Council has made during the last 12 months, with a particular focus on the previous quarter. These achievements are summarised in the Council's Annual Report (Appendix A). It also identifies key priorities and performance indicators as part of the 2026/27 Corporate Performance Suite.

3.10 The Senior Leadership Team and Service Managers have been consulted to determine the appropriate content and to identify the key achievements.

3.11 The Corporate Performance Suite for 2026/27 contains 52 measures which are aligned with the 5 MSEB strategic priorities. The 52 measures are complemented by statutory and local measures which are managed internally with performance overseen by the Strategic Leadership Team.

3.12 Four of the 52 measures were new and included at Quarter Three to support the introduction of Awaab's Law on 27th October 2025. These measures replace the two previous Damp and Mould measures.

3.13 There are 10 baseline measures within the Corporate Performance Suite. The majority of these reflect the increased regulation and focus on housing compliance. Baseline measures provide a starting point from which to assess and compare performance in future. The remaining 42 measures are relevant to the Council's focus on what matters to residents and progress made against the MSEB objectives.

LOCAL OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

3.14 The Local Outcomes Framework (LOF) is the Government's new national outcomes-based performance framework designed to measure progress against shared priority outcomes delivered at a local level by councils and their partners. It brings together a focused set of outcome areas and indicators, drawing on existing national data, covering themes such as housing and homelessness, health and wellbeing, children and adult social care, neighbourhood satisfaction, environment and transport. The Framework is intended to shift performance assessment away from activity and inputs towards a clearer focus on outcomes that matter most to residents, while strengthening transparency, accountability and collaboration between central and local government.

3.15 The first edition of the Local Outcomes Framework was published in February 2026 and is expected to begin being used from April 2026 as part of ongoing discussions on local performance and improvement. Stevenage Borough Council responded to the national consultation on the draft Framework in 2025, providing feedback to ensure that the approach recognises local context, the role of district and borough councils, and the importance of partnership working in influencing outcomes. The LOF will enable Stevenage to benchmark performance against comparable areas and support evidence-based conversations with partners on priorities for improvement.

3.16 There are 16 'Priority Outcome' areas that represent the government's top priorities and ambitions. Each priority outcome is underpinned by metrics drawn from existing data sources to avoid new data collection requirements. There are a limited number of placeholders for metrics that do not yet exist, but are in development, and will be included in future.

Priority	Indicative total number of measures	Local/ County/ National/ Other
Housing supply	0 (measures under development)	Likely to be a combination
Housing quality and safety	5	Local and MHCLG
Homelessness and rough sleeping	5	Local and MHCLG
Multiple disadvantage	7	MHCLG and Health
Best start in life	6	Department for Education
Every child achieving and thriving	17	County and Department for Education
Keeping children safe (children's social care)	Aligned to national CSC framework 16	County and Department for Education
Health and wellbeing	16	Health
Adult social care – quality	6	County
Adult social care – independence, choice and control	8	County
Adult social care – neighbourhoods and integration	2	County
Neighbourhoods	13	DCMS and DEFRA
Environment, circular economy and climate change	7	Health and Defra
Transport and local infrastructure	7	Transport
Economic prosperity (contextual)	16	ONS and MHCLG
Child poverty (contextual)	1	Department for Work and Pensions

Fig 2.

3.17 The Government's full Local Outcomes Framework report, along with consultation feedback, will be included as a background document to this Cabinet report for reference.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 MAKING STEVENAGE EVEN BETTER (MSEB) PROGRAMME

4.1.1 A summary of progress against the MSEB programme is attached at Appendix D. The key highlights this quarter have also been included in the Annual Report 2025/26 (see Appendix A). The Annual Report 2025/26 is an external-facing document which sets out the Council's progress in delivering excellent services for Stevenage and achieving the strategic priorities of the MSEB corporate plan.

4.1.2 The content of the Annual Report 2025/26 has been structured around service performance across the five MSEB strategic priorities and three cross-cutting themes of the corporate plan.

4.1.3 Particular highlights this year include:

4.1.3.1 Signing a Development Agreement with Muse for the delivery of Stevenage Station Gateway, with support from ECF (the partnership between Homes England, L&G and Muse). This agreement will see the creation of up to 1,000 new homes, up to 60,000 sqm of commercial spaces, and roughly 1,500 new jobs to transform the area around the Railway Station.

4.1.3.2 Commencing main construction works on the new Stevenage Sports & Leisure Centre on St George's Way. Following extensive design development and public engagement, the new structure combines the sports facilities currently located at both the Arts & Leisure Centre and Stevenage Swimming Centre.

4.1.3.3 Securing a further £1.1m in funding over the next five years to continue and expand our Pioneering Young Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Futures partnership with Mission 44, a charitable foundation founded by Sir Lewis Hamilton to improve opportunities for disadvantaged young people.

4.1.3.4 Beginning work on the neighbourhood regeneration scheme at The Oval, with the first phase delivering 91 new independent living homes, as well as a new Community Centre and Church.

4.1.3.5 Introducing a new kerbside food waste collection service to all our residents, following Simpler Recycling legislation change and Central Government grants. The service is available to 38,000 properties on a weekly basis and involved the rollout of 77,000 new caddies to residents.

4.1.3.6 Continuing to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse through regular Survivors Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) drop-in sessions. Additional funding was received to continue the Drop-In Service. The sessions run fortnightly and provide a safe space for survivors to come together and feel supported in a sensitive and client-led approach.

4.1.3.7 Delivering and supporting a wide range of civic and community events within the town with over 50,000 people attending, including Stevenage Day that introduced a STEM Village this year, bringing skills, education and local employers into the heart of the event.

4.1.3.8 Completing the first year of operation using Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) across our entire diesel fleet, including vehicles and machinery. As a result, direct (Scope 1) emissions for the entire fleet, including petrol use in machinery, decreased by 96.4% in comparison to 2023/24.

4.1.3.9 Administering and running a £85,500 Household Support Fund that helped local organisations to support vulnerable households across Stevenage, with £38,200 specifically funding community cafes and £47,300 for food and energy support organisations.

4.1.3.10 Supporting the launch of a new Dementia Friendly Communities accreditation scheme with Herts Memory Service and Alzheimer's Society, alongside Stevenage Dementia Friends events and training.

4.1.4 Under each MSEB strategic priority and cross-cutting theme within the Annual Report 2025/26, a summary of highlights has been listed under their subheadings alongside a set of projections for the upcoming year.

4.1.5 The 2025/26 Annual Report also includes a section on the Cooperative Council Commitment, summarising how the Council has worked closely with partners across the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network to support policy lab projects.

4.1.6 Please note that a designed version of the council's Annual Report 2025/26 is attached as Appendix A.

4.2 QUARTER FOUR CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

4.2.1 As outlined in section three, the Corporate Performance Suite has been aligned with the five MSEB priorities set out in Figure 1. Progress against performance measures is presented alongside key projects. 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.

4.2.2 Key highlights from the MSEB programmes are summarised in section 4.3. For further information on the aims and objectives of the MSEB programme in 2025/26, please refer to MSEB Priorities & Projects 2025/26, which was presented to the Cabinet in July 2025: MSEB Priorities & Projects 2025/26.

4.2.3 The total number of measures by Red, Amber & Green (RAG) rating is shown in Figure 3 below. The full set of current corporate performance measures results and MSEB projects are attached at Appendix D.

Q4 2025/26 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW						
MSEB Programme	Baseline measure for 2025-26	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (Within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (Urgent improvement action required)	Unavailable Data	Projects Reported Qtr. 4
More Social Affordable and Good Quality Homes (24 measures)	8	13	0	2	1	18
Transforming Our Town (3 measures)	0	3	0	0	0	15
Thriving Neighbourhoods (12 measures)	2	10*	0	0	0	9
	*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	0	1	0	0	6
Balancing the Budget (12 measures)	0	11	0	1	0	7
Cross Cutting (0 measures)	0	0	0	0	0	6
TOTAL (52)	10	37	1	3	1	61

Fig 3.

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

- Compliance certification and documentation for Gas Safety, Fire Safety, Asbestos, Legionella and Lifts are at 100%.
- 100% of major planning applications were determined in thirteen weeks and 100% of Corporate Building Overall Compliance inspections were completed for the fourth consecutive quarter.
- 99.47% of repairs & inspections completed first time, a continual increase from 99.41% in Quarter Three and 94.82% in Quarter Two 2025/26.
- There were no overdue Fire Remedial Actions for Housing outstanding for the fourth quarter in a row; this has reduced from 286 medium overdue actions and 312 low overdue actions in Quarter two 2024/25.
- Satisfaction with the Customer Service Centre (CSC) remains high at 94.6%; this has been on an upward trend since the start of the 2025/26 financial year.

4.3 MSEB PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

4.3.1 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.

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

4.3.3 All programmes have made progress on the projects agreed at Cabinet in July 2025. The Quarter Four highlights are set out below. Unless otherwise stated, the updates reflect the position at the end of Quarter Four 2025/26. Where material progress has been made since then, this is included to provide the position at the time of reporting.

4.2.3.1 More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	
Brent Court Independent Living Scheme	Works continue on the site of the new Brent Court Independent Living Scheme, with the new parking area to the south of Brent Court open to existing residents. Demolition of the garages is now underway following the handover of the car park. The Gateway 2 submission, demonstrating how the proposed design meets necessary safety requirements, is still pending an outcome, with initial feedback having been received and being actioned.
Burwell Phase Two	Work continues at Phase Two of the Burwell scheme, with brick and block work currently underway on the final floor of the scheme, contributing to the site being close to achieving the topping out milestone as roof trusses are now also on site.
Kenilworth Phase Two	Work continues at Kenilworth Phase Two with the piling mat having been created on site and the foundation works are underway.
Courtlands	Electrical works at the Courtlands scheme are expected to take place in mid-April to bring the scheme to completion, with the first five homes projected to be ready three weeks after the conclusion of the electrical works. As of May 2026, these electrical works have begun as planned.
Resident Engagement and Scrutiny	Progress is being made on the Resident Engagement and Scrutiny project. Recruitment has commenced for a Resident Engagement Co-ordinator to broaden engagement opportunities and help to deliver more proactive outreach into communities and across neighbourhoods during spring and summer 2026. A full report of the year's activities, progress and outcomes was reviewed by the Executive Housing Working Group in April 26 and will also be fed back to the Regulator of Social Housing via the Provider Improvement Plan.

4.2.3.2 Transforming Our Town	
Pioneering Young STEM Futures	The Pioneering Young STEM Futures programme continues to progress with increased delivery of the future-focused STEM pathway programme. Access to All has involved 40 young people from three secondary schools (including some not in education) attending sessions that cover careers, pathways,

	qualifications and employer workshops from JCA Engineering and the Cell and Gene Therapy at Catapult.
SITEC Town Centre Campus	Construction on the new Stevenage Innovation & Technology Centre (SITEC) Town Centre Campus is progressing positively and remains on track for September 2026 student intake. North Hertfordshire College has signed the lease for the space during Q4 and has successfully installed the new banners above the entrances and along St George's Way.
SWAP Course	The latest Stevenage Works Health & Social Care sector-based work academy programme (SWAP) course was delivered in Stevenage in February 2026. Five students attended, and one has been offered employment with Hertfordshire Care Providers Association Care (HCPA). 23 participants have been successful in securing work in the care sector to date. The next cohort commenced in May 2026.
Arts & Heritage Trail	Officers are continuing to support the four chosen artists with their detailed design and community engagement work. The Stevenage Heart Trails was launched on 25 March with the unveiling of the first plaque for the Stacked Stories sculpture at the Bus Interchange, alongside a dedicated website, which provides an interactive guide to the trail and its features. This milestone signifies the first of over 300 installations across the trail, including interpretative text and wayfinding signage.
Diversification of Retail	Officers continue to work with the owners of the Westgate Centre on the entrance improvements to the south-west corner. Officers are awaiting final detailed design for review and sign-off which will enable a start on site. The works are expected to be completed in summer 2026.
SG1 Plot A	Overall construction on SG1 – Plot A is progressing positively, remaining on track. The Claxton House show apartments are now finished and open for viewings, the marketing suite will be located in a unit within Town Square.
Sports and Leisure Centre	Technical approval has been secured for the new entrance and exit on Fairlands Way, and works are scheduled to commence shortly. The communications strategy is being implemented ahead of the planned car park closure on 13 April. The logistics plan, including hoarding strategy and associated updates to emergency arrangements, has been agreed. The Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) for the temporary coach drop-off point is also in place, with associated works programmed. Contracts for works have been agreed, with RIBA Stage 4 design nearing completion. Overall, the project has reached several key milestones and continues to progress as planned. A report regarding the appointment of the works contract is due to be considered by Cabinet in Part 2 of this meeting.

4.2.3.3 Thriving Neighbourhoods	
Operation Educ8	The short film *The Orphan*, developed in Stevenage and linked to the Council's Community Safety work, was screened at events in Stevenage and in Parliament. The Parliamentary screening provided a national platform for Operation Educ8, building on the film's message through wider events and

	engagement focused on exploitation, early intervention and keeping young people safe.
Active Communities programme	The programme held a range of activity-based sessions across the town including 99 outreach classes that saw 723 attendances, weekly classes held at five independent living schemes that saw 285 attendances, and over 3,000 participants joining health and wellbeing sessions held within Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre.

4.2.3.4 Tackling Climate Change	
Climate Action Street Plan	The Climate Action Street Plan project is now captured as part of the CIL Green Projects programme, aligned with our Corporate priorities and established strategies. Implementation of Phase 1 projects is currently underway and a new application window for project funding under Phase 2 is expected to open shortly.
Simpler Recycling	The new food waste collection service went live across the whole town on 2nd March 2026, in readiness for legislation changes that came into force on 31st March 2026. Operationally the new service is running well with participation estimated at approximately 52.69%. As we progress with the service, more data will be collected around participation level and communications will continue to push the service. Further, works to flat blocks to improve recycling facilities continue and will be completed by the end of the summer.

4.2.3.5 Balancing the Budget	
GF & HRA Savings	Based on the Quarter 3 budget monitoring for the 2025/26 financial year, the Council is on track to achieve the majority of its planned savings, representing 97% of the total savings programme. However, one savings scheme is not expected to meet its target this year: the relocation of the Indoor Market to Park Place. Although the market has now opened, the delayed opening date means the full savings will not be realised in 2025/26 and are instead reprofiled for 2026/27. Looking ahead, elements of the budget savings programme required to balance the budget have now been incorporated into the General Fund and HRA Budgets for 2026/27. These budgets have been approved by Cabinet and reviewed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and approved by Full Council in February 2026.

4.4 PERFORMANCE MEASURES – AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

4.4.1 As highlighted in Figure 3, there are three measures that are red this quarter. The table below outlines the actual performance and the target that was set for the performance measures. The paragraphs that follow set out the reasons for improvement in Quarter Four.

MEASURE NAME	BUSINESS UNIT	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Actual – Quarter 3 2025/26 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2026/27 YTD
More Social, Affordable and Good Quality Homes								
% of standard damp & mould investigations completed within 10 working days of tenant report (AWAABs)	Building Safety and Housing Property Services				92.42%	86.00%	100.00%	
Average time taken to relet a routine void (GN) key to key	Building Safety and Housing Property Services	63 days	54 days	84 days	63 days	57 days	30 days	
Balancing the Budget								
Rent collection rate	Finance	98.13%	93.28%	95.47%	97.14%	97.59%	98.50%	

Fig.4

General Needs Voids

4.4.2 In Q4, 29 standard void properties were re-let. 86% of these voids required new asbestos reports and 80% of these properties required asbestos removal. The target for obtaining a new asbestos survey is three working days and the removals five working days, adding an additional eight working days on average to the overall turnaround times. Improvement work, involving collaboration with internal teams and contractors, continues, with positive progress being made in reducing this stage of the works for Q1 2026/27.

Voids General Needs	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Number of properties let	43	20	43	29
Average time taken to relet a routine General Needs Void	54 days	84 days	63 days	57 days
Excluding Hard to lets	54 days	52 days	52 days	57 days

Fig. 5

4.4.3 Through strengthened accountability, the property conditions at the end of tenancies in Q4 seemed to have improved compared to previous quarters. Tenant Accountability measures have been significantly reinforced to ensure properties are returned in an acceptable condition and costs are recovered where appropriate.

4.4.4 To prevent avoidable costs, Tenancy Leaving Standards are issued at the point of notice to quit or transfer, providing clear guidance on how properties should be left and outlining tenant responsibilities. Any works identified as the tenant's responsibility are fully rechargeable to the outgoing tenant or their estate and are notified at the Pre Void inspections that are being carried out during the notice period.

4.4.5 The in-house voids delivery pilot was mobilised and commenced on 1st April 2026, supporting the integration of client and contractor functions across Repairs and Housing Asset Management. The pilot is scheduled to run for a six-month period, during which performance, cost efficiency, and operational impact will be closely monitored and reported to inform future service delivery models.

4.4.6 The overall trend since the beginning of the year has been positive. The Council has developed an expanded improvement plan to sustain progress, achieve the 35 day target by the end of 2026/27, and deliver value for money for tenants as presented to the Executive Housing Working Group in January 2026.

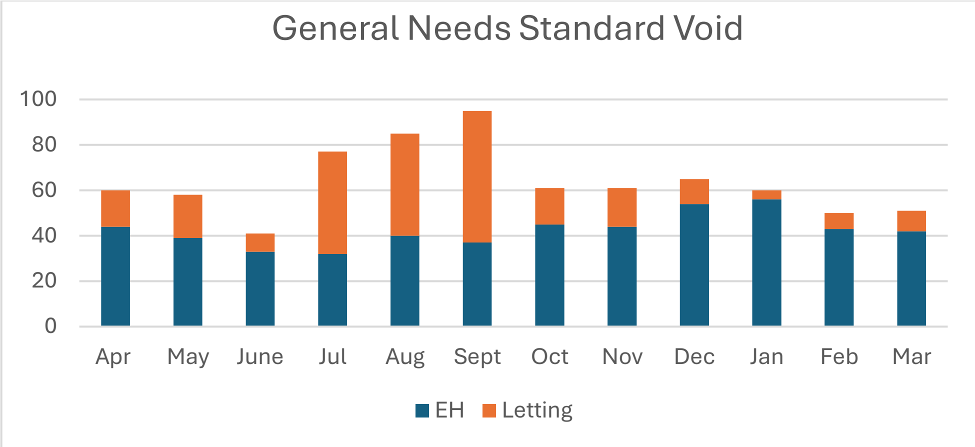

Fig.6

Awaab's Law

4.4.7 In Q4, the percentage of standard damp & mould investigations completed within 10 working days of tenant report was highlighted as a key area for improvement. This Awaab's Law linked measure saw consistently high demand during the quarter, which consequently impacted Surveyor capacity. This has been directly addressed through the recruitment of an additional surveyor during March 2026 to help proportionally address demand going forward.

4.4.8 Please also note that in nine out of 13 inspections in March, surveyors were unable to gain access to a property and two delays in cases were the result of appointments being made outside of the 10 working day target at the request of the tenant. The Access Policy is currently being reviewed.

Rent Collection Rate

4.4.9 Overall rent collection for 2025/26 was 97.59%, including arrears brought forward from previous years totalling £1.06 million. This is slightly lower than the 98.13% achieved in 2024/25.

4.4.10 Excluding historic arrears, rent collection performance remained strong at 99.44%, representing £55.74 million in rental income collected during the year.

4.4.11 The rent collection rate for Quarter Four was temporarily affected by the Easter bank holiday timing of income processing over the Easter bank holiday period. Approximately £203,797 of rent income received between 1 and 6 April 2026 was not processed until after the year-end reporting period. If this amount was included, collection rates would have been approximately 97.95% overall and 99.80% excluding historic arrears.

4.4.12 Therefore, although the measure is reported as red due to the tight performance targets set for this indicator, there are no significant concerns regarding service performance. Steps will be taken to reduce the impact of similar timing issues in future reporting periods.

4.5 COMPLAINTS POLICY

4.5.1 The Complaints Policy has been reviewed and updated as part of a scheduled review and following feedback from the Housing Ombudsman Service in March 2026. The review was undertaken to ensure the policy continues to align with both the Housing Ombudsman and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Complaint Handling Codes.

4.5.2 As part of the review, a number of officers and service areas involved in complaint handling were invited to provide feedback on the existing policy ahead of the review. The Housing Ombudsman also identified several areas where the policy should be strengthened to more explicitly align with the Code.

4.5.3 The updated policy included a number of clarifications and minor wording changes to make it easier to understand and avoid misinterpretation, including clearer wording around complaint exclusions and insurance-related complaints, strengthened guidance around complaint acknowledgements and escalation handling, and additional detail on how residents will be kept informed where investigations are delayed or ongoing actions remain outstanding.

4.5.4 Overall, the changes strengthen the policy, provide greater clarity for residents and officers, and help ensure our complaints handling arrangements continue to reflect best practice.

4.6 OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINT HANDLING

4.6.1 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 (LGSCO).

4.6.2 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.

4.6.3 Under the Housing Ombudsman's Statutory Code of Complaint Handling, the Council is required to report the outcome of such cases quarterly. This report provides that detail.

4.6.4 The table in Appendix E provides details of the seven cases where an Ombudsman service has made a determination in Q4.

4.6.5 For the Housing Ombudsman Service, two cases were determined in Q4, with five by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. In all cases the orders, or agreed actions, have been completed.

4.6.6 The Council received its annual review letter for 2025-26 from the LGSCO on 20th May 2026, which contains a summary of the complaint statistics for the year ending 31 March 2026. This letter will be published on the LGSCO Website on the 15th of July, alongside the publicly available statistical data.

4.6.7 The information provides insight into the Council's approach to complaints and should be considered as part of its corporate governance processes. The findings highlight areas for improvement, while also recognising positive efforts to resolve complaints before escalation to the LGSCO.

4.6.8 The Council has produced an annual complaints report summarising this information. It includes statistics showing that Customer Services received 78,420 phone calls; 488 Stage 1 and 93 Stage 2 complaints were made; and four Ombudsman investigations resulted, three of which were upheld. The Council achieved 100% compliance with recommendations.

4.7 TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES

4.7.1 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) were introduced in 2023/24 as a regulatory requirement for all Registered Social Landlords in England.

4.7.2 The Council completed the final TSM surveys for the year this quarter, bringing the total number of responses to 987. This delivers a margin of error of ±2.88%, well within the regulatory requirement of ±4%.

4.7.3 As shown in the table below, year-end scores have exceeded last year’s results across all measures, with overall satisfaction rising to 68.1%. The strongest improvements were in ‘keeping tenants informed’ and ‘contribution to the neighbourhood’.

4.7.4 Q4 scores dipped slightly from the record highs seen in Q3. We expect to see natural quarter on quarter fluctuations - both positive and negative - going forward. The housing sector more broadly is also anticipated to be reaching a plateau, meaning the pace of improvement may slow or level off.

4.7.5 Housemark has been commissioned to deliver our perception surveys for the year ahead. We are currently shaping the delivery model, which we expect to remain largely consistent with last year’s approach to support comparability. The core methodology is largely prescribed by the Regulator, so any changes are expected to focus on refining the qualitative questions rather than altering the overall approach.

4.7.6 There are two types of TSM: satisfaction measures, described above and listed in detail below; and management measures, monitored through the Council’s quarterly performance compendium.

4.7.7 From 2026/27 Q1, the Council is required to report a new TSM management indicator linked to the proportion of homes for which all required electrical safety checks have been carried out. This new measure is in place for all large social housing landlords in England, i.e. those with more than 1,000 homes. To do this, the Council will ensure that all statutory obligations in relation to carrying out electrical safety checks relating to this unit are met, all physical checks have taken place and that these have been appropriately recorded. Electrical safety checks include inspections, testing and investigative work that relates to the electrical safety of electrical installations or electrical equipment provided by the landlord as part of the tenancy.

Ref	Question	2025/26	Previous Year - 2024/25	Difference (+/-)
TP01	Overall satisfaction	68.1%	66.9%	**+1.2%**
TP02	Repairs service overall	72.4%	70.8%	**+1.6%**
TP03	Speed of repairs	67.2%	64.4%	**+2.8%**

Ref	Question	2025/26	Previous Year - 2024/25	Difference (+/-)
TP04	Home is well-maintained	68.1%	67.7%	**+0.4%**
TP05	Home is safe	78.2%	76.4%	**+1.8%**
TP06	Listens to views and acts	57.7%	55.1%	**+2.6%**
TP07	Keeps tenants informed	66.6%	61.6%	**+5.0%**
TP08	Treats tenants fairly and with respect	76.9%	73.3%	**+3.6%**
TP09	Complaint handling	34.5%	34.1%	**+0.4%**
TP10	Communal areas are clean and well-maintained	66.5%	64.0%	**+2.2%**
TP11	Contribution to neighbourhood	67.6%	63.1%	**+4.5%**
TP12	ASB handling	61.8%	57.9%	**+3.9%**

Fig. 7

4.8 PRIORITIES FOR 2026/27

4.8.1 In January 2024, the priorities of the Making Stevenage Even Better (MSEB) Corporate Plan were approved by the Council.

4.8.2 There are 70 MSEB strategic priorities due to be delivered in 2026/27, as shown in Appendix C. Completion and reporting of these priorities will be vital to demonstrating a complete picture of performance.

4.8.3 In addition to performance and programme progress, the quarterly corporate performance report will be supplemented by information obtained from the quarterly Tenant Satisfaction Measures. The survey will contain 12 key questions covering areas such as tenant's satisfaction with repairs, maintenance, communal areas and views on the Council's willingness to engage and respond. The survey findings will be reported annually to the RSH and will also include the 10 RSH measures included in the Corporate Performance Suite (see Appendix B and measures starting 'RSH').

4.8.4 The proposed suite of corporate measures is based on input and conversations with the Strategic Leadership Team, research into best practice, benchmarking, and building on previous / existing measures where appropriate, including regulatory requirements.

4.8.5 Portfolio Holders and officers have reviewed the performance suite to ensure that the measures chosen as part of the Cabinet suite are meaningful, provide good business insight and are relevant to decision-making and the priorities of the Council. The Cabinet suite of 52 measures is supported by 50+ statutory and local measures which will be managed internally and overseen by the Strategic Leadership Team.

4.8.6 There are six new baseline measures where no target is required, as these are used for monitoring purposes rather than being red, amber or green. These cover food waste collection take-up, Everyone Active's overall footfall, online form satisfaction, Awaab's Law and accepted housing applications. Baseline measures provide a starting point from which to assess and compare performance in the future.

4.8.7 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.

4.8.8 The proposed Corporate Performance Suite 2026/27 will form the basis of quarterly performance reports to Cabinet throughout the financial year. The proposed measures, targets and priorities present an accurate reflection of what the Council is seeking to deliver in 2026/27 and how it will monitor progress against these ambitions.

4.9 STRATEGIC RISK

4.9.1 The strategic risks were considered by Corporate Risk Group on 27 April 2026 and by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 2 June 2026.

4.9.2 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

4.9.3 The strategic risk relating to Capacity has increased to High this quarter, reflecting the growing impact of Local Government Reorganisation on corporate capacity. While overall vacancy levels remain stable and workforce stability continues to be good, the scale, pace and uncertainty of LGR related activity is placing increasing pressure on the organisation. The impact will continue to be closely monitored and managed through service planning and prioritisation arrangements.

4.9.4 A new risk relating to Council companies and related entities has been added to the Strategic Risk Register. This reflects the potential for issues that might impact the Council's finances, services and reputation. The risk is rated 'Very High' currently and work is underway to strengthen oversight and ensure appropriate controls are in place.

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. 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 2025/26
- MSEB Plan on a Page 2024/25
- Local Outcomes Framework
- Annual Complaints Report 2025/26 – Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

7 APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Annual Report 2025/26

- Appendix B: Key Performance Indicators 2026/27
- Appendix C: MSEB Priorities 2026/27
- Appendix D: Performance Compendium Quarter Four 2025/26
- Appendix E: Housing Ombudsman Determinations Quarter Four 2025/26