

Cabinet Member & Partners Response to Environment & Economy Select Committee review of the local Skills Agenda
Recommendations and final report

Date Recommendations of final report agreed by Environment & Economy Select Committee on 14 January 2025:

(Circulated to Cabinet Member and external partners 24 February 2025*)

*Circulation delayed due to rewriting of recommendations

Date responses should be made by:

Cabinet and partners responses should be received by
25 April 2025

Recommendations:	Executive & Partner Response:	Update Autumn 2026
<u>Expansion of Stevenage Works</u> <u>Recommendation 1 – (i) Expansion of Stevenage Works</u> - It is recommended that the Council be encouraged to expand Stevenage Works beyond construction into the health and social care sectors. <u>(ii) Expansion of Stevenage Works into “Green Construction” Solar and air source heat pump technology</u> - It is recommended that the Council be encouraged to expand Stevenage Works into a third iteration beyond health and social care sectors into Green Technologies.	<i>Response supported by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski, Investment Support Grant Manager, Greta Gardiner and Cabinet Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Economy, Skills & Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe:</i> <i>Stevenage Works has proven to be an invaluable initiative in providing apprenticeships and job experience in the construction sector. By leveraging the numerous building developments in Stevenage including the Council’s extensive regeneration projects — including town centre redevelopment, housing development, and the</i>	<i>Update response provided by SBC Resident Liaison Manager & Stevenage Works Lead, Greta Gardiner.</i> <i>During 2025/26, Stevenage Works has continued to grow in both size and impact, with more than 40 active partners contributing to the success of the initiative. Stevenage Works continues to provide valuable opportunities for local residents through apprenticeships; work placements and employment opportunities within the construction sector.</i> <i>These opportunities support local people in gaining the experience and skills needed to progress into</i>

Action: SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski.	<i>maintenance of council-owned properties — which include the Stevenage Works has successfully created opportunities for residents to gain vital industry experience.</i> <i>Recognising the importance of broadening the scope of Stevenage Works, the Council is actively working to expand into the health and social care sectors. This will be a significant workstream over the 2025/26 period, ensuring that Stevenage Works continues to meet the needs of a rapidly evolving workforce and supports residents in accessing stable, rewarding careers.</i> <i>With respect to Green Construction, the Council acknowledges the growing importance of sustainable building technologies, including solar and air source heat pump technology. However, rather than establishing a separate workstream, these elements are already being embedded within the existing construction focus of Stevenage Works. Given the increasing adoption of green construction techniques across the industry, we see this as an organic evolution rather than a distinct third iteration of the initiative. We appreciate the committee's insights on this matter and will continue to ensure that sustainability remains a core component of our construction training programmes.</i>	<i>sustainable employment within the construction industry. Stevenage Works continues to monitor and promote social value through its partnership with local organisations and building developments across Stevenage. The initiative works closely with the Council's extensive regeneration programme, helping to ensure that major development activity continues to deliver opportunities and benefits for local residents. Stevenage Works currently connects with a range of Council departments and areas of activity, including Town centre regeneration; Housing development; Maintenance of Council-owned properties and wider projects. Through these partnerships and connections, Stevenage Works has successfully created opportunities to gain valuable industry experience, develop skills and access pathways into employment.</i> Stevenage Works expansion into Health & Social Care 2025/26 - Following approval of the Terms of Reference in June 2025, Stevenage Works partners, including North Herts College, Jobcentre Plus, the Hertfordshire Care Providers Association (HCPA) and Hart Learning, worked together to promote employment and training opportunities within the care sector. An information event was held at the local Job Centre Plus in August 2025 to provide customers with an insight into working in care, address misconceptions and promote further training. This was followed by the first two-week Care Sector-Based Work Academy Programme (SWAP) in September 2025, All 12 candidates who attended interviews were successful at the HCPA
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		stage, with three subsequently securing employment in the care sector. A second Care Assistant SWAP was delivered in November 2025, attracting 11 participants, all of whom were considered suitable by HCPA. Further Health & Social Care SWAP programmes have since continued, with participants being offered employment opportunities with HCPA. Overall, the programme has strengthened collaboration between local partners and increased pathways into training and employment within the care sector. The Green Construction workstream - The Council does not have a dedicated Stevenage Works Green Construction workstream. Instead, it works with contractors and suppliers to incorporate green initiatives into procurement and the delivery of works and services. Stevenage Works will continue to collaborate with the SBC Climate Action Group and other partners to support, monitor, and ensure agreed environmental commitments are delivered. Examples include - Morgan Sindall delivering green initiative workshops; Contractors offering free trees for planting; Hill include environmental and sustainable measures in their development incorporating energy saving features into building designs. Minimising carbon footprint and impact on those living and working around the construction site. Equans are delivering energy efficiency retro fit works to some SBC Council homes which includes Insulation, Solar Panels and Air Source heat pumps and other elements under the Warm
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		Homes programme. Sureserve one of our heating contractors have targets for carbon emissions reduced and All fleet vehicles are EV or Euro 6.
<u>Recommendation 2 – Upskilling</u> - It is recommended that all partners including the DWP, Citizens Advice, Step2Skills, the Council and SMEs and larger employers should be encouraged to do this. Efforts from all partners would be needed to help lower skilled individuals obtain the skills they need to access higher skilled and higher paid roles which would directly tackle the problems associated with insecure employment from low-skilled, low-paid work, especially affecting a cohort of people aged in their late 20s to early 40s who still had decades left in the workforce. Action: SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski to lead on this and reach out to partners.	<i>Response for SBC supported by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski and Cabinet Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Economy, Skills & Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe:</i> <i>Addressing skills gaps across different age groups is a central focus of the Council's workforce development strategy. The Stevenage Works Skills Framework provides a structured approach to supporting three primary cohorts: young people entering the workforce, adults who are currently unemployed, and adults in employment seeking to upskill or transition into new career pathways.</i> <i>Through our allocation of the UK Shared Prosperity fund we have been working in partnership with Hertfordshire Futures over the last three years. This delivery model has allowed us to act as commissioners in our relationship with Hertfordshire Futures, allowing us to tailor the programme to local needs.</i> <i>This support is aimed at businesses and residents with programmes offering training opportunities that can be accesses by the 20s to 40s cohort referenced in the recommendation.</i> <i>Government has confirmed a continuation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for the 2025/26 financial year and we have agreed a further</i>	<i>Update response provided by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski</i> <i>As set out in the previous update, unemployed adults and adults already in work are priority groups within the Stevenage Works Skills Framework. A substantial adult skills offer already exists, but awareness of the opportunities available, time to participate and the ability to fit learning around work and other responsibilities can be greater barriers than the availability of courses. Improving access to existing provision is therefore an important part of responding to the review's focus on helping residents move into more secure and better paid employment.</i> <i>The Council has been working with North Hertfordshire College during 2026 to develop an Adult Cohorts Pilot designed to respond to gaps in existing provision, particularly in targeted workforce transition and employability support. It will support adults experiencing organisational change, including redundancy, to strengthen their confidence, employability and readiness for new opportunities. The pilot will augment the college's existing adult skills provision. Its focus is as much on helping people understand and access the options already available to them as it is on developing new routes into employment and training.</i>

	<i>commitment to continue a suite of interventions in partnership with Hertfordshire Futures.</i>	<i>The college's existing provision includes flexible adult courses and shorter Skill Booster programmes covering areas such as digital workplace skills, care and education. The Adult Skills Fund provides an important source of national support for adult learning, including English, maths, essential digital skills and vocational training, with full funding available to eligible learners. Alongside this, the Government's Free Courses for Jobs offer supports eligible adults to gain approved qualifications and has expanded in 2026/27 to include more Level 2 engineering and manufacturing courses. The Council's role is to help partners identify gaps, improve awareness and connect residents with provision suited to their needs and circumstances.</i> <i>Alongside support for adults changing or progressing in work, the wider skills framework also responds to the Government's increased focus on reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). Through the Youth Guarantee and apprenticeship reforms, national policy is placing greater emphasis on helping young people enter employment, including through the expansion of Level 2 foundation apprenticeships. These combine paid work with structured training and employability skills, providing an accessible starting point from which young people can progress into more specialised or higher-level apprenticeships.</i>
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<u>Recommendation 3 – Promotion of apprenticeships supporting nursery childcare for the local economy</u> - Apprenticeships in nursery childcare would both support parents in the local economy with the provision of more childcare and would support the apprentice to learn new skills and earn an income helping towards living costs whilst being trained. Members are aware that this is a national policy area which the Council can lobby on but has no direct control over. Action: SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski to liaise with external partners in the childcare sector.	<i>Response for SBC supported by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski and Cabinet Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Economy, Skills & Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe:</i> <i>The Council acknowledges the importance of increasing the availability of apprenticeships in nursery childcare, both to support working parents and to provide meaningful career opportunities for apprentices. While national policy plays a significant role in shaping this sector, we are committed to exploring local opportunities in collaboration with North Herts College and other training providers.</i> <i>As highlighted during the committee's review, North Herts College already offers flexible vocational career programmes and is responsive to local employer demands. The Council will engage with the college to determine how existing training provisions can be expanded to support the childcare sector and explore how apprenticeship programmes in this area can be effectively promoted within the local community.</i>	<i>Update response provided by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski</i> <i>North Hertfordshire College is well placed to support this recommendation through its existing early years provision and relationships with local nurseries and education settings. Its offer includes an Education and Early Years T Level, combining study with practical experience and providing a route into employment or further training.</i> <i>Apprenticeship provision is available through Hart Learning & Development, which sits alongside the college within the Hart Learning Group. This includes Early Years Practitioner at Level 2 and Early Years Educator at Level 3, enabling people to earn whilst developing the qualifications and experience needed to work in childcare.</i> <i>The University of Hertfordshire has also introduced an Early Years Teacher Degree Apprenticeship for September 2026, leading to a BEd (Hons) in Early Years Education with Early Years Teacher Status. This provides a further route for new entrants and existing staff to develop their careers whilst working in an early-years setting.</i>
<u>Recommendation 4 – Challenge to HCC & Local Children Centres regarding providing clear accessible information on what funding is available for families for childcare</u> – The funding position is currently confusing to parents so clarity would help in this area. Action: HCC Children's Services & Local Children Centres	<i>Response from HCC Children's Services & Local Children Centres:</i> It has not been possible to provide a response for this recommendation.	It has not been possible to provide an update response for this recommendation.

<u>Recommendation 5 – Promotion of work experience opportunities</u> - It is recommended that (i) the Council's Business Relationship Manager, Mena Caldbeck and the Enterprise & Skills Partnership Officer works with colleagues and local employers to promote opportunities for young people to connect with those local employers for work experience; (ii) That SBC offers a range of work experience opportunities for young people across the organisation, and that these are offered consistently every year to local schools and colleges; and (iii) That SBC social media is used to share local job fares, open days, and work experience opportunities. Action: SBC Business Relationship Manager, Mena Caldbeck SBC Enterprise & Skills Partnership Officer, Carol Richardson	<i>Response from the SBC Business Relationship Manager, Mena Caldbeck and Enterprise & Skills Partnership Officer, Carol Richardson:</i> <i>The Council has a strong track record of supporting work experience initiatives and is committed to expanding these opportunities further. One of our flagship initiatives is Generation Stevenage, an annual employment and skills event run in partnership with Hertfordshire Futures. This is part of a series of 'Generation' events throughout Hertfordshire. This event connects young people with local employers, providing them with first-hand insight into career pathways across various industries.</i> <i>In 2025, the Council will enhance its direct work experience offerings, collaborating with four local schools—Barnwell, Nobel, Marriotts, and St John Henry Newman—to facilitate placements for both Year 10 and Year 12 students. We see this as an essential step in demonstrating our leadership in promoting work experience and encouraging businesses to follow suit.</i> <i>Social media remains an important tool in engaging young people with work experience and job opportunities. The Council will work closely with its communications team and educational partners to ensure that information about work experience placements, job fairs, and career development programmes reaches the widest possible audience through platforms preferred by young people.</i>	<i>Update response provided by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski</i> <i>The previous update set out the Council's intention to strengthen its own work experience offer in partnership with local schools. This has been taken forward through placements for cohorts of Year 10 and Year 12 students in both 2025 and 2026. These placements have introduced young people to the range of careers within local government and given them experience of working within the organisation.</i> <i>Alongside these placements, the Council has welcomed its latest cohort of eight apprentices, who commenced their programmes in 2025. They are undertaking a variety of roles and qualification levels, including degree-level apprenticeships in surveying and finance which run over four years. These programmes reflect the Council's continuing investment in developing its future workforce and providing opportunities to gain qualifications alongside practical experience.</i> <i>Providing work experience and apprenticeships is an important part of the Council's contribution as a local employer. It provides practical experience to draw on when encouraging businesses and other public sector institutions to offer similar opportunities, and demonstrates the same commitment that the Council is asking of its partners.</i> <i>This sits alongside wider work through Stevenage Works, Generation Stevenage and Pioneering</i>
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		<i>Young STEM Futures to connect education providers, young people and employers. Social media remains an important route for sharing placements, careers events and other opportunities.</i>
<u>Recommendation 6 – Promotion of success stories from Stevenage</u>- It is recommended that members and officers consider ways to promote success stories from the local community, celebrating successes by the college and schools where students show personal development or attain excellent skills outcomes, as they in turn become the role models for successive years of students, i.e. ‘Mayors Award for Achievement’. This could be focused on those who have overcome challenges to achieve personal development, rather than focusing on the high academic achievers who traditionally already receive the recognition. Action: SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski to liaise with the Leader	<i>Response from SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski and the Leader on behalf of the civic office of the Mayor:</i> <i>Celebrating the achievements of local individuals is an effective way to inspire future generations and showcase the opportunities available in Stevenage. The Council already recognises outstanding achievements through the Stevenage Together Awards, which include the Rising Star category.</i> <i>In response to this recommendation, we propose either enhancing the existing award or introducing a new accolade focused on individuals who have overcome challenges to achieve personal and professional growth. This initiative would align with the Council’s commitment to supporting those from diverse backgrounds and promoting social mobility.</i> <i>To further elevate this recognition, we suggest that this award be overseen by the Youth Mayor, adding a new layer of engagement and credibility among young residents.</i>	<i>Update response provided by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski</i> <i>The Council has taken forward this recommendation through the existing Stevenage Together Awards, involving the Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor in judging, with a particular focus on the Rising Star award. Their involvement gives young people a direct role in recognising achievement and identifying local role models.</i> <i>The 2025 Rising Star winner, Winnie-Marie Stewart, was recognised for raising more than £5,000 for the Little Princess Trust through donating her hair at the age of seven. Her example demonstrates how the awards can recognise initiative and contribution to others beyond formal academic achievement, reflecting the committee’s wish to promote a broader range of local role models.</i> <i>Young people from Stevenage have also been highlighted through both the Department for Work and Pensions’ and Mission 44’s social media channels, bringing their experiences to wider audiences. This has included DWP coverage of the visit by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Pat McFadden MP, to North Hertfordshire College, where he met young people involved in the Council’s Pioneering Young STEM</i>

		<i>Futures programme. The coverage featured a student explaining how practical study and research laboratory work experience had helped inform her decision to pursue biomedical science at university. Mission 44 has also shared the experiences of young people participating through Stevenage Borough Council in its STEM activities at Silverstone.</i> <i>North Hertfordshire College and its learners have received further national exposure through the BBC documentary series Natalie Cassidy: Caring Together. The series followed Cassidy studying Health and Social Care at the college's Stevenage campus alongside other learners. It featured students' personal experiences and ambitions, including the experience of being a young carer, and showed how they applied their classroom learning during placements in care settings.</i>
<u>Recommendation 7 – Promotion of a clear local careers advice service</u> (i) Work with partners towards a credible local careers advice service. Establishing a clear source of objective careers information which is available to pupils, students, and those wanting to re-train, or change direction. That a local link within the National Careers service is readily available, and that this reflects national standards in career entry qualifications, but also what is available in Stevenage, and wider Hertfordshire; and (ii) Members proposed consideration of the creation of a centralised information hub on the council's website to provide accessible details about job opportunities, training, apprenticeships, and other resources. This	<i>Response from Response for SBC supported by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski SBC Enterprise & Skills Partnership Officer, Carol Richardson and Cabinet Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Economy, Skills & Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe:</i> <i>The Council acknowledges the need for clear and accessible careers advice and supports the continued development of the Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal. This platform, managed by Hertfordshire Futures, already serves as a key resource for schools, students, and jobseekers in the region. Rather than duplicating efforts, in response to this recommendation we would aim to</i>	<i>Update response provided by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski</i> <i>The Council continues to work closely with Hertfordshire Futures to improve the Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal (HOP), providing local tailoring to the wider county offer. This takes forward the commitment in the previous update to improve signposting and develop more Stevenage-specific content. The dedicated Find Your Future in Stevenage page, developed with the Council, brings together information on jobs, apprenticeships and training, with links to Stevenage Works and North Hertfordshire College.</i>

platform would also allow businesses, schools, and colleges to contribute information. Action: SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski SBC Enterprise & Skills Partnership Officer, Carol Richardson – regarding links to the Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal (HOP).	<i>enhance the visibility of this resource by improving signposting on the Council's website and through our outreach efforts.</i> <i>Additionally, we are exploring opportunities to expand the Stevenage-specific content on the portal, ensuring that residents can easily access information about local training programmes, apprenticeships, and job opportunities. This builds on work undertaken through the council's successful funding application to the Community Renewal Fund in 2022. As part of this we led on a countywide initiative to increase visibility of Public Sector careers on the HOP platform.</i>	<i>The Council's Making Stevenage Even Better regeneration website has also been updated with skills and opportunities content, including case studies on HOP and the Stevenage Innovation and Technology Centre (SITEC), and direct signposting to HOP. This helps connect information about the town's regeneration and growing industries with practical advice on how residents can access the opportunities being created.</i> <i>During 2026/27, improving the visibility of pathways is a specific strand of delivery under the Enterprise and Skills pillar of the Corporate Plan. The Council's newly established Youth Advisory Board is helping to inform this work, providing a sounding board for how opportunities are presented and the best ways to communicate with young people. Its involvement helps the Council test whether information is clear and relevant, and reach young people who may not engage with existing communications.</i>
<u>Recommendation 8 – Commendation to North Herts College and Barnwell School for their work in promoting skills</u> - It is recommended that North Herts College and Barnwell School be commended for their work to promote skills to their students (Noting that for context the review only interviewed these two academic institutions, but Members are aware of other good practice towards enhancing skills that is happening in the area). North Herts College by providing Industry standard facilities and equipment the college are equipping young people with the skills they need to move straight into higher level courses, apprenticeships	<i>Response supported by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski to NH College and Barnwell School</i> <i>The Council recognises the exceptional work of North Herts College and Barnwell School in equipping students with essential skills for their future careers. Both institutions play a pivotal role in the local skills landscape and have been instrumental in working in partnership with us to augment local skills provision.</i>	<i>Update response provided by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski</i> <i>The Council continues to work closely with Barnwell School and North Hertfordshire College, and their involvement remains integral to its skills activity. Both partners help connect the ambitions of the Stevenage Works Skills Framework with the needs of local pupils, students and employers.</i> <i>The college's contribution spans technical education, apprenticeships and adult learning, whilst Barnwell provides an important link to</i>

or employment and are responding to what employers have been saying for some time that young entrants don't have the necessary skills to be work ready. Barnwell School are offering an excellent peer to peer mentoring to ready pupils for university applications and interviews as well as collaboration with the University of Hertfordshire through their "zero gravity" and "Brilliant Club" initiatives. Action: SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski to reach out to partners at NH College and Barnwell School.	<i>As part of our commitment to acknowledging their contributions, we will formally commend both institutions and work with them to develop case studies highlighting their impactful programmes. These case studies will be shared across our social media platforms to inspire students and showcase best practices in skills development.</i>	<i>school-age young people and their preparation for further study and employment. The Council continues to draw on both institutions' experience when developing and delivering local interventions, maintaining the close partnership recognised by the committee.</i>
Recommendation 9 – Devolved, local skills strategy. 'One size fits all' solutions towards skills are ineffective. Localised strategies are better suited to address skill shortages. (i) That SBC along with its partners in the broadest sense (Herts Growth Board, Job Centre Plus, North Herts College, Local Secondary Schools, Local Employers) continue to work to develop and genuine, local skills strategy, which reflect local skills opportunities and challenges within the local economy; (ii) partners consider the provision of targeted support to engage those in insecure roles, providing a second-chance for those already in work but looking to transition to more fulfilling and secure career opportunities. Action: SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski	<i>Response supported by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski and Cabinet Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Economy, Skills & Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe:</i> <i>The Stevenage Works Skills Framework, approved by Cabinet in February 2024, serves as a guiding document for the Council's localised approach to skills development. Alongside this, key documents such as the Stevenage Town Investment Plan, Stevenage 2040 Investment Prospectus, and the emerging Hertfordshire Economy Strategy, ensures a cohesive and locally relevant approach to skills development that links into the council's broader strategic ambitions and provides a local iteration of the approach being adopted across the county.</i> <i>This is further cemented by the inclusion of Enterprise & Skills as a headline priority as part of the Making Stevenage Even Better Corporate Plan (2024-27) which highlights the importance to the</i>	<i>Update response provided by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski</i> <i>The Stevenage Works Skills Framework remains the guiding document for the Council's local approach, supported by the Enterprise and Skills pillar of the Making Stevenage Even Better Corporate Plan. It provides the basis for targeting support towards young people entering the workforce, unemployed adults and those in work seeking to improve their skills or move into more secure employment.</i> <i>The previous update highlighted the emerging Hertfordshire Economic Strategy as an important part of the wider context for the Stevenage Works Skills Framework. That strategy has now been published, covering 2026–2036. Its Hertfordshire Works for Everyone priority emphasises progression through work, tackling barriers to employment and improving skills in essential sectors such as health, care and education. This</i>

	<i>administration, despite the statutory responsibility for Skills provision resting with the County Council. The need for a localised approach that best responds to the needs of Stevenage residents was a primary driving factor behind this inclusion and gives officers a clear mandate to galvanise local partners</i> <i>Rather than being static document, the framework contains an action plan which guides an ambitious, ongoing programme of activities aimed at addressing local skills shortages and improving employment opportunities for residents. In the continued development of the Skills Framework we will draw in the committee's recommendations, especially those referenced here and recommendation 2 around Upskilling.</i>	<i>supports the Council's focus on ensuring that local residents can benefit from the county's economic growth.</i> <i>The Council's approach also aligns with Get Britain Working, which brings employment, health and skills support together around local needs, and the Government's modern Industrial Strategy and sector plans. The emphasis on life sciences, advanced manufacturing, defence, and digital and technologies is particularly relevant to Stevenage's economy.</i> <i>The Skills Framework is designed to translate national and Hertfordshire skills and economic policy into local activity, shaped by the needs of Stevenage's residents and employers. The Council's Making Stevenage Even Better priorities for 2026/27 respond to these newer national and county strategies through targeted adult support, clearer information about routes into work and training, and stronger engagement with young people and employers.</i>
Recommendation 10: Collaboration with Employers to Promote Employment Opportunities The Council continues to engage and build on the widest possible cohort for opportunities, continuing to engage with employers in the aerospace and pharmaceutical industries and recruiters in Stevenage, to ensure high-skilled job opportunities are widely advertised and accessible to local residents. Many high-paid, high-skilled jobs are not visible to job seekers, as they are often gatekept	<i>Response supported by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski and Cabinet Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Economy, Skills & Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe:</i> <i>The Council continues to work closely with local employers, including those in the aerospace and pharmaceutical industries, to ensure that high-quality job opportunities are accessible to Stevenage residents.</i>	<i>Update response provided by SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski</i> <i>The Council continues to work with employers in Stevenage's growth sectors to improve residents' access to local career opportunities. Its skills partnerships include Airbus, MBDA, GSK, Autolus and Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst, alongside education and training providers. These relationships help connect the skills employers need with the pathways available to local people.</i>

by recruiters. The review proposes working with companies and recruiters to address this because collaboration with local businesses was essential to bridge the gap and increase awareness of available opportunities. Action: SBC Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, Daryl Jedowski.	<i>As previously referenced, the Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal remains the primary jobs board supported by the Council, and we actively work with businesses to increase their visibility and engagement with the platform.</i> <i>The Council is optimistic about future employment prospects in Stevenage with many local businesses, particularly as they scale up operations, require skilled technicians and mid-level specialists providing more accessible opportunities to high paying meaningful work to our residents.</i> <i>A specific example of this, is Autolus, who have just moved into premises in the town centre, and who have established an apprenticeship programme through North Herts College.</i> <i>Such initiatives provide highly skilled technical roles that do not require traditional university degrees, broadening access to stable and well-paying careers. We will continue to foster employer collaboration to ensure that more residents benefit from these opportunities.</i>	<i>GSK's announcement that it intends to relocate its research and development operations from Stevenage to Cambridge by 2029 has added a significant new dimension to this work. Cabinet considered the implications and the Council's response on 10 September 2026, agreeing to establish a partnership Taskforce to coordinate activity with Government, Hertfordshire partners, businesses, education providers and other stakeholders.</i> <i>Supporting affected employees, retaining skills within the local economy and connecting people with alternative employment and retraining opportunities are central to this response. The work will also consider the implications for businesses within GSK's supply chain. Alongside this, the Council is continuing discussions with GSK about its local legacy, including skills and apprenticeship opportunities during the period leading up to its departure.</i> <i>HOP remains a shared resource for promoting opportunities and explaining routes into local industries. Its Employer Spotlight section includes GSK, Airbus, MBDA and Stevenage-based electronics manufacturer Nemco. Such information helps residents understand the range of employers and careers available, including opportunities accessible through apprenticeships and technical training.</i>
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