

Meeting: Executive

Agenda Item:

Portfolio Area: All

Date: 13 March 2018

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE FOR QUARTER THREE 2017/18

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To highlight the Council's performance across key priorities and themes for quarter three 2017/18.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That the delivery of priorities which form the Future Town, Future Council Programme and performance of the Council across the key themes during quarter three 2017/18 together with latest achievements be noted.
- 2.2. That the improvement plans for the Customer Service Centre and associated timeframe for delivery are endorsed (outlined in paragraphs 3.122 to 3.126).
- 2.3. That steps outlined to improve management of sickness absence across the Council are endorsed (outlined in paragraphs 3.135 to 3.138).

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. Members approved the new Cooperative Corporate Plan in December 2016. It reflects the Council's continuing focus on cooperative working and outlines the key outcomes and priorities for the town over the next five years through the Future Town, Future Council (FTFC) Programme as seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Future Town, Future Council Programme

- 3.2. The FTFC Programme consists of nine programmes with five external programmes focused on improving the quality of life for Stevenage residents through building houses, regenerating the town centre, improving housing services and how local people feel about their neighbourhoods. Four internal programmes aim to build strong foundations within the Council through improving processes and skills, and making sure the Council is fit for the future. This will aid delivery of the externally focused programmes.
- 3.3. During 2016/17, a senior management review was completed that will, at a strategic level, drive the development of a more sustainable, customer orientated and commercial operating model. The model is focused upon delivering the right services, to the right standards, at the right time for the town's residents and businesses, using the most cost/resource effective delivery models.
- 3.4. The senior management review resulted in the reorganisation of Business Units across three key delivery themes; Customer, Place, and Transformation and Support.
- 3.5. In addition to monitoring progress on the delivery of the FTFC Programme, performance across these themes is monitored to highlight achievements and identify any areas for improvement. This recognises the critical role all Assistant Directors play in the delivery of the Future Town, Future Council Programme, either as a lead on one or more of the nine FTFC programmes or as an enabler, delivering services across the three themes in support.
- 3.6. A complete set of performance measures across all themes (FTFC programme, and the customer, place, and transformation and support themes) is attached as Appendix One and an overview of results is provided at paragraph 3.76.

Future Town, Future Council programme progress update

- 3.7. The FTFC Programme was reviewed during the first half of 2017/18 to ensure governance arrangements remain effective as programmes move from planning to delivery during 2017/18. The focus and scope of programmes is monitored to ensure that the Programme continues to deliver the Council's priorities. The focus and scope of the FTFC programmes is outlined in Appendix Two.
- 3.8. The FTFC programme continues to perform well and is on track against delivery of the agreed outcomes. This is reflected in performance measure results aligned to FTFC delivery. Eleven measures were reported on for April to December 2017 (quarter 3) with just two measures not achieving target:
 - FS3: Percentage of General Fund savings identified to meet three year target – paragraphs 3.63 to 3.66 refer.
 - FS4: Percentage of HRA savings identified to meet three year target – paragraphs 3.63 to 3.66 refer.

Stevenage Centre Town Centre Regeneration Programme

3.9. Programme Outcomes

- A new vibrant town centre delivered through a phased regeneration programme.
- Two major regeneration schemes to advance – one completed by 2020/21 and one to begin 2019/20.

3.10. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Securing a development partner for the first phase of the town centre regeneration.
- Beginning development and progressing more detailed plans for a public sector hub in the town.
- Completing public realm improvements within the town centre.

3.11. Programme Delivery Update

3.12. The Council have appointed a development partner to take forward the Town Centre Regeneration. Mace, the international development and construction company behind some of the world's landmark developments – will be undertaking the first phase of regeneration (SG1). This ambitious scheme will bring £350million of private investment into the town centre and will see the area covering the Council (Daneshill House) offices, the Plaza, bus station and some of the adjacent car parks redeveloped with new shops, bars and restaurants, homes, new public spaces, and a central public sector hub accommodating the Council offices, a library, exhibition space, and health services.

3.13. Plans to improve the appearance of the North Façade buildings of Town Square and enhance the standard of the canopies were prepared during quarter. Tenders will be pursued during February with a view to a contractor being selected during March to carry out the improvements.

3.14. Initial designs for planned public realm improvements to Market Place have been developed and approved by Sponsors and Members. Engagement with local businesses is continuing to cover the timeframe, benefits and finished look of the planned enhancements. Options relating to the final designs will be completed during quarter four (January to March 2018).

3.15. Plans for the relocation of Council teams currently based in Swingate House are progressing. Engagement with teams affected has taken place setting out the plans for the area and identifying accommodation requirements. Relocation plans will be finalised during quarter four for approval by the relevant Assistant Director or Service Manager.

3.16. Plans are in place to open a visitor centre in the former subway unit in the town centre Plaza. Through a partnership involving the regeneration team, Mace, and Stevenage Museum, the centre will illustrate some of Stevenage's heritage as the first post-war New Town, celebrate some of the cutting-edge technology produced by the town's businesses (e.g. the Mars Rover), and inform residents about the exciting regeneration plans. The centre will be highly interactive, with visual displays, videos, models and artwork used to bring Stevenage to life as the Town enters a new chapter in its history.

- 3.17. Residents are being kept informed of regeneration plans through drop-in sessions, articles in the Stevenage Central magazine and information campaigns using the Stevenage Central branding.

Housing Development Programme

3.18. Programme Outcomes

- Increased number of affordable houses in Stevenage.
- Improve access to the housing market in Stevenage for greater number of residents.

- 3.19. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Delivering 43 homes across a range of planned schemes.
- Setting up a Council owned Housing Development Company to provide a variety of housing types across the town and consideration of a joint venture to bring further housing development forward.

3.20. Programme Delivery Update

- 3.21. The Du-Pont Scheme is progressing with housing developers on site. Completion of this scheme will provide the Council with access to 34 properties for social rent in exchange for funding (approved by Executive July 2017).
- 3.22. Design proposals for the March Hare Scheme have been improved and will now deliver fifteen homes. The scheme was granted planning permission on 5 December 2017. The Council expects to assign developers during quarter four.
- 3.23. The Twin Foxes Scheme is progressing well with the installation of internal fixtures and fittings now being completed. As a result of a requirement for additional works and adverse weather the contractor has indicated that completion will take an additional six weeks.
- 3.24. Officers are working on development proposals for the Kenilworth Close Scheme for approval by Members during February prior to public consultation. Council officers continue to attend the Bragbury Centre Executive and carry out meetings with the Ward Councillors and residents of Asquith Court and Walpole Court to answer queries and offer reassurance.
- 3.25. Three sites for future development have been purchased by the Council during 2018. Hoarding has been put up around the sites and Stevenage Housing Development branding will be installed to identify that the Council owns the sites and plans to develop them to provide additional housing opportunities.
- 3.26. Thirty-three homes have been completed this year and by the end March 2018 the Council is expecting that figure to rise to 49 homes taking the total delivered by the Council's Housing development programme to 145 since it was established in 2014. Further good news has been received that the newly formed Ministry of Housing has awarded the Council's proposed scheme at Kenilworth Close over £900,000 of infrastructure funding. The scheme at Kenilworth will incorporate a flagship older persons housing scheme.

Excellent Council Homes Programme.

3.27. Programme Outcomes

- Transforming Housing Services

3.28. The focus of this programme is to transform Council housing services to provide high quality, efficient and effective housing services that better meet the needs of customers.

3.29. Programme Delivery Update

3.30. The Assistant Director for Housing and Investment has completed the 4th Tier Management Team restructure and the new management team is now in place:

- Housing Operations Manager – Managing Homes.
- Housing Operations Manager – Providing Homes.
- Housing Operations Manager – Investing in Homes and Properties.

3.31. Staff engagement in relation to the housing transformation programme is being sustained. In December, the Assistant Director (Housing and Investment) carried out information sessions for all staff outlining the vision for the programme. In February, a housing and investment staff meeting focused on managing change and team cohesion.

3.32. Residents were provided with an opportunity to give feedback on the housing services currently provided by the Council and potential areas for improvement through the 'Big Knock'. The aim is to incorporate residents' feedback into future phases of the programme including a digital housing offer. The findings of the survey are to be shared with tenants and leaseholders within the Spring edition of Chronicle.

Co-operative and Neighbourhood Management Programme

3.33. Programme Outcomes

- Residents feel that they can work with the Council and other organisations to help meet the needs of the local area.
- Staff better understand the town's communities and through doing so are more able to facilitate the change that is required.
- Public spaces are more attractive, better cared for by the Council and residents, and help to give people pride in the place they live.
- The Council's Community centres are efficiently run, well-managed and most importantly, meet local needs.

3.34. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Delivery of £800k of investment (including Green Space signage, public realm work, nine play areas, litterbins and hardstanding) into Pin Green, Shephall, St Nicholas and Martins Wood.
- Encouraging partner agencies to work in partnership with the Council to help improve public spaces and other local assets and engage with communities.
- Undertaking a Resident Survey to determine future neighbourhood priorities.

- Reviewing the effectiveness and usage of Community Centres.
- Engaging with partners and communities on the next phase of the planned physical improvement works in the wards of St Nicholas and Martins Wood.

3.35. Programme Delivery Update

3.36. Focused investment in neighbourhood improvements has continued to progress:

- Seven of the nine play area improvements have been completed across Pin Green, Shephall, St Nicholas and Martins Wood and the remaining two play areas are expected to be completed during quarter four (January to March 2018). During the summer, the Council will carry out consultation with the children that use the play areas to determine how well-used the play areas are and whether the children are happy with the improvements made.
- All litterbins have been replaced in Shephall and Pin Green and teams are now working to replace those on arterial (connecting) roads.
- Public realm enhancements across Pin Green and Shephall continue with the majority now completed. There has been a particular focus on community projects in Shephall with the Council taking a cooperative approach with Shephall Residents' Group to determining and completing improvements.

3.37. Demonstrating co-operative working, Council officers worked with teachers and pupils of Peartree Spring Primary School to clean-up an alleyway that is a popular route to the school for the children and their families. The Council will now make further improvements to include:

- Widening the footpath and replacing steps with a ramp to improve access.
- Installing new bins for the disposal of waste.
- Replacing damaged fencing.

In addition, the Council is putting arrangements in place that will allow the school community to progress their plans to make further visual enhancements to the area. As a result of the positive publicity this cooperative approach has achieved, another school has advised the Council that they would like to work in partnership with Council officers to make similar improvements in their community.

3.38. Council officers have discussed initial plans for the neighbourhood environment improvements to St Nicholas and Martins Wood with the Ward Members. Improvement work is scheduled to start in April 2018. Council officers are now considering feedback provided in the town-wide survey of residents and carrying out discussions with partners, local groups and the neighbourhood residents to identify potential areas of focus and opportunities to work in partnership. The information provided will be used to inform the focus of cooperative activity to improve the neighbourhoods.

3.39. A review of the Community Centres within Stevenage will be carried out during quarter four to determine options for their future management that will enable them to continue to provide community services long-term.

3.40. Council officers are identifying potential opportunities to celebrate and strengthen volunteering in Stevenage both within the community and among Council staff.

Connected to our Customers Programme

3.41. Programme Outcomes

- Use of self-service is encouraged, so more time can be spent with customers that need extra help.
- Increased customer satisfaction for residents interacting with key services.
- Online customer data will be protected, better used to provide useful insight, and the technology reliable.
- The Council uses technology to meet its ambitions and make its workforce more modern, efficient and responsive to customer needs.
- A simple and clearer website with more self-service choices.

3.42. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Delivering a Technology Improvement Plan to support a range of new digital applications and services.
- Recruiting digital specialists to drive the programme.
- Achieving quick wins to expand the customer self-serve offer through use of digital technologies, including new online Council Tax and Business rate services.
- A number of supporting projects relating to Public Sector Network and General Data Protection Regulation requirements to provide the Council with a resilient platform to establish a new range of digital applications and services.
- Completing the telephony upgrade across the Technology Shared Service to improve resilience and reduce costs.
- Working towards the development of a new website and intranet.

3.43. Programme Delivery Update

- 3.44. The “Customer Conscience” initiative was launched with staff in January. Several life-size cardboard customer images have been used across Council offices in Daneshill House and Cavendish Road to remind staff that customers are at the heart of everything the Council does. Further activity will take place in April to explore what customer service means to Stevenage, and how managers can make practical improvements.
- 3.45. Sixteen Council Tax, Benefits and Business Rates eForms are being built and will be available on the Council’s website in April. These are services that customers use frequently and establishing the eforms will allow customers to electronically submit applications directly to the Council, instead of needing to print out and post a form – which is inefficient for both customers and the Council.
- 3.46. To improve services provided to customers through the Council’s Customer Service Centre, Council officers are identifying opportunities to deliver digital access to services alongside current methods of customer service.
- 3.47. To inform the delivery of new digital services and ensure that IT services meet customer needs Council officers are consulting with customers, staff and elected Members.

3.48. In partnership with East Hertfordshire Council, work has started on a replacement staff Intranet, which is considered a high priority improvement action.

Partner of Choice Programme

3.49. Programme Outcomes

- Develop new and existing shared services with the Council's preferred partners to improve resilience, create efficiencies and establish income opportunities.
- Develop reputation as a professional partner to work with.

3.50. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Finalising the legal shared services arrangements.
- Setting out further potential shared service options.

3.51. Programme Delivery Update

3.52. An approach to developing shared services opportunities was agreed by the Strategic Leadership Team in July. Informal discussions have been carried out at a senior management level with the Council's partner authorities, to understand whether there is a common view on further development opportunities. Agreement on the future focus of the programme is anticipated by the end of March.

Performing at our Peak Programme

3.53. Programme Outcomes

- The provision of high quality performance management software tools.
- Streamlined governance structures that ensure effective and timely decision making.
- A strong performance culture is embedded across the organisation.

3.54. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Continuing to build dashboards at a business unit level and ensuring service managers have the right skills to use the tool robustly to analyse information and make informed decisions that result in improved services for the Council's customers.
- The introduction of a new devolved governance and performance framework, including a new scheme of delegation, to help improve decision making and accountability at a business unit level.

3.55. Programme Delivery Update

3.56. The Council's performance and governance system (InPhase) provides the Strategic Leadership Team with access to data and information that form strategic insight. InPhase is providing a clearer picture of performance to senior management to help inform faster action planning and decision making. In addition, access is provided across all of the Assistant Director briefing books to provide corporate wide transparency of performance and governance information.

- 3.57. To expand the use of the strategic insight information captured and enhance improvement action planning, access to the system is now being provided to managers across the business units.
- 3.58. Steps are being taken to enable council officers to automate the capture of service data that will provide more up-to-date information to inform decisions.
- 3.59. The Council has carried out a review of internal Council meetings and groups and begun a process to streamline and simplify arrangements that will ensure continued robust decision-making by all council officers.

Financial Security Programme

3.60. Programme Outcomes

- As set out in Figure 2: Financial Security Workstreams.

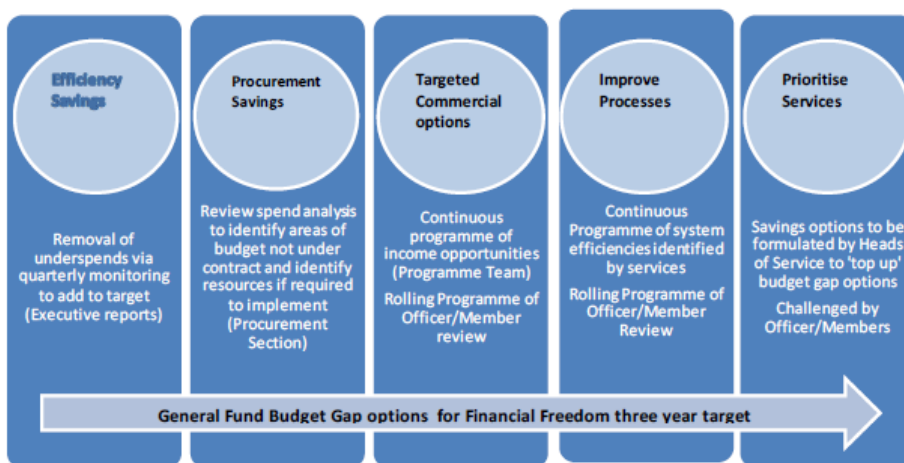


Figure 2: Financial Security Workstreams

- 3.61. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:
- Generating significant savings from the leisure contract.
 - Finalise savings of approximately £40k per annum through a move to digital post.
 - Prioritise services to generate further savings and ensure a balanced budget.

3.62. Programme Delivery Update

- 3.63. The November Financial Security report reset the savings target for both the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the General Fund (GF) for future years. Business Unit Reviews will refocus on delivering Financial Security savings through targeted commercialisation and improved processes to enhance efficiency and deliver savings. Some of these projects apply to working in partnership with East Herts Council and are to the benefit of both Councils. A number of options have been identified for delivery in 2018/19 to contribute towards the three year target.

- 3.64. The commercial property investment initiative has resulted in the purchase of one property and further sites are being actively sought. The acquisition of sites is focused on ensuring economic growth within the town.

- 3.65. The HRA savings target for 2018/19 was achieved and options just exceeding the target of £225,959 were included in the Financial Security report to the November Executive. A package of financial security savings for both the GF and the HRA totalling £568,360 were approved by Members at the November Executive (with final approval at Council in January and February 2018).
- 3.66. Saving options totalling an estimated £170,000 are either identified or being progressed to contribute to the 2019/20-2021/22 Financial Security Target
- FS3: Percentage of GF savings identified to meet three year target (April to December 2017 target 63%, achieved 59.1%)
 - FS4: Percentage of HRA savings identified to meet the three year target (April to December 2017 target 64%, achieved 27.6%).

Employer of Choice Programme

3.67. Programme Outcomes

- Improved employee engagement.
- Right person, right place, right time – recruiting/retaining staff to hard to fill posts.
- Improved managerial competency.
- Improved reputation as a place to work.
- Evidence of staff progressing to higher grades and new roles.

3.68. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Further rollout of online services for staff, including a new e-learning system and intranet.
- Creation of new leadership and management development programmes.
- Development and implementation of a competency framework for staff up to Grade 9 of the Council's pay structure.
- Introduction of new performance management policies, tools and processes.

3.69. Programme Delivery Update

- 3.70. A new E-learning package was launched in December that will develop staff knowledge and capability. The training available will now be expanded, informed by consultation with Council staff, to ensure that the learning provides access to skills that align with planned service enhancements focused on improving services to customers.
- 3.71. Agency worker usage as a percentage of the workforce has shown a downward trend since April and is now better than the March 2018 target of 10%, at 9.55%.
- 3.72. The initial research and planning for a new corporate appraisal scheme has been completed. The plans will be developed further during quarter 4 (January to March) to ensure that the final scheme provides appropriate feedback and direction to staff.
- 3.73. The approach to Strategic Leadership Team learning is being developed. HR are working with Business Units to identify the skills focus that is required to ensure the

delivery of the Council's change programme (Future Town, Future Council) together with planned service enhancements.

3.74. The development of a Corporate Social Responsibility approach for the Council has begun, to include a focus on volunteering, charity activities and health and wellbeing activity. This will be joined up across the Employer of Choice and Cooperative Neighbourhood Management Programme to identify a consistent approach that will encourage staff to engage in activities in the local community.

3.75. Corporate Performance highlights and areas for improvement

3.76. Results for the full set of current corporate performance measures across all themes (FTFC programme, and the Customer, Place, and Transformation and Support themes) are attached as Appendix One. The overview of results for April to December 2017 (quarter 3 2017/18) is outlined below:

Number of Measures Reported	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (urgent improvement action required)
47	30	6	11

3.77. The Strategic Leadership Team has requested that Assistant Directors identify improvement activity for performance measures that did not meet the target set. The improvement activity identified is being aligned to the Business Unit Reviews that aim to deliver sustainable services that better meet the needs of customers. This transformation of service delivery requires longer-term improvement planning and the impact on performance results may be minimal for the current year. The impact of the broad transformation being applied across the Council will be considered when determining appropriate measures and targets to monitor performance throughout 2018/19.

3.78. A summary of highlights and areas for improvement is set out in the following paragraphs across the three key delivery themes; Customer, Place, and Transformation and Support (FTFC theme measures are referred to in paragraphs 3.63 to 3.66).

3.79. Key Business Unit Themes Update

3.80. Thirty-six measures were reported on for April to December 2017 (quarter 3) aligned to the three business unit themes of Customer, Place, and Transformation and Support.

Customer Theme

3.81. The Customer Theme incorporates the following Business Units:

- Housing and Investment
- Communities and Neighbourhood

Housing and Investment

- 3.82. To support vulnerable residents, Housing and Investment officers are working in partnership with paramedics in relation to emergency call-outs and working with Hertfordshire Careline to ensure partnership arrangements meet the needs of customers.
- 3.83. To support future housing development at Kenilworth Close the Housing and Investment team have worked with affected residents at both Asquith and Walpole Court. The team have agreed individual solutions for each household to support their requirements which in some cases has meant a move to other suitable independent living schemes. Officers aim to have supported all affected residents at Asquith Court with a move to an appropriate new home by the end of March 2018.
- 3.84. The Tenancy Support team has helped three residents of Wellfield Court secure work.
- 3.85. The Housing and Investment team have redesigned the layouts of several void properties in the Council's independent living schemes to improve future demand and as a result of improved advertisement and promotion successfully allocated 20 independent living properties during quarter three.

Health and Safety compliant Council buildings (Assets 5)

- 3.86. Compliance tasks are being completed on Council buildings. There are no current concerns in relation to meeting statutory Health and Safety requirements, but compliance certification is required to demonstrate that the Health and Safety standards that the Council defines are achieved and these were not received due to the contractor experiencing ICT issues during December.
- 3.87. Performance is being monitored on a weekly basis and the contractor has confirmed that resources will be focused on provision of the necessary certification.
- Assets 5: Health and Safety compliance of Council Buildings, April to December 2017 target 100%, achieved 95%.

Homelessness preventions (BV213)

- 3.88. There has been a significant improvement in the number of homelessness preventions during quarter 3 (October to December) and the target for this quarter has been achieved (Target 90, Achieved 92). In addition 237 cases were being actively managed by the Housing Service at the end of December which will contribute to the prevention outcomes achieved for January 2018 to March 2018.
- 3.89. Performance during quarter 4 (January to March) is expected to meet the target for the quarter (90) as a result of the plans put in place during quarter 3 to improve performance:
- A service has been introduced in the Customer Service Centre (6 November 2017) to enable initial prompt assessments to take place when a customer requests assistance in relation to homelessness. This allows the team to

intervene in cases at an earlier stage and increase the potential for a homeless prevention outcome.

- Interim arrangements have been agreed to use agency workers to improve capacity in the team.
- The Housing Advice and Homeless Manager introduced weekly meetings to monitor and manage target delivery with the team and carries out a random audit of cases to ensure all prevention outcomes have been recorded.

3.90. However, as a result of Housing Service staff resourcing issues that impacted on performance for April to September 2017, as advised to the Executive (September), the cumulative target for the year will not be achieved.

- BV213: Homelessness preventions, April to December 2017 target 270, achieved 177.

Communities and Neighbourhood

3.91. The Play Service have been shortlisted for the Team of the Year at the LGC Awards 2018 demonstrating the positive contribution the service makes in supporting local communities. The outcome will be known at the Awards ceremony in March.

3.92. In recognition of the Council's strong arrangements relating to the Safeguarding of Adults, a positive assurance response was received from the Quality Assurance Visit conducted by Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board in December.

3.93. An outline of plans to improve health and well-being for Stevenage residents has been developed informed by a Health Summit held in December attended by more than 80 local organisations.

3.94. The Leisure Team were successful in a stage one bid to the Sport England Tackling Inactivity and Economic Disadvantage Fund. This has been a collaborative process between six other local authorities in Hertfordshire with Stevenage leading the project. The project has been selected from 475 expressions of interest that requested over £55m of investment from an available pot of £3m. The value of the bid is £450k and the stage 2 deadline is in early March.

3.95. Planters at Roebuck shops have been adopted by local residents. United Living helped the residents group to clear the planters and donated some money for them to be re-planted as part of their community investment commitment.

3.96. The Resident Involvement Team supported a problem-solving meeting with council staff and other organisations at Roundmead. This has led to a number of positive outcomes and demonstrates strong joint working across council departments.

Community Safety

3.97. Partner organisations have worked together through the SoSafe partnership on joint activity to improve community safety across the town and on the delivery of enforcement action and events. In response to resident feedback through a town-wide survey a campaign is being planned to reassure residents that Stevenage remains a safe town.

3.98. Hertfordshire Police have a high level of crime resolution - To help provide evidence that will inform prosecutions of crime, mobile community safety cameras are now being used.

3.99. Increases in crime rates are evident nationally:

- CS8: Anti-social behaviour per 1,000 population, April to December 2016: 30.4 incidents per 1,000 population, April to December 2017: 31.49 incidents per 1,000 population against threshold of 29.75.
- CS9: Criminal damage per 1,000 population, April to December 2016: 7.64 incidents per 1,000 population, April to December 2017: 9.93 incidents per 1,000 population against a threshold of 7.75.
- Incidents of violent crime have reduced in comparison to 2016/17 levels, NI15b: the rate of violence against the person (victim based crime) per 1,000 population, April to December 2016: 25.75 incidents per 1,000 population, April to December 2017: 25.65 incidents per 1,000 population against a threshold of 30.13. The scope of crimes now classified as 'violent' was expanded for 2017/18.

Place Theme

3.100. The Place Theme incorporates the following Business Units:

- Planning and Regulation
- Stevenage Direct Services
- Regeneration
- Housing Development

(The Regeneration and Housing Development Business Units are primarily focused on delivery of the Stevenage Town Centre Regeneration and Housing Development Programmes of FTFC. Delivery updates for these programmes are summarised in paragraphs 3.12 to 3.17 and 3.19 to 3.26 respectively.)

Planning and Regulation

3.101. Planning continues to deal with planning applications within corporate and statutory targets.

3.102. As of December 2017, 100% of known Houses of Multiple Occupation are free from category 1 hazards (as set in the Housing Act 2004, Housing Health and Safety Rating System).

3.103. In addition, 96% of food establishments in the area are assessed as broadly compliant with food hygiene law. This means that, as a minimum, they are considered 'generally satisfactory' in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme that assesses the hygiene, structure and confidence in management of the premises.

Stevenage Direct Services

3.104. To support improved play areas for toddlers through to teenagers, Executive approved £1.5 million of capital over the next five years, together with £37k annually to support improved maintenance. Officers consulted with over 200 children and

young people over the spring/summer to help inform significant play area improvements to six sites. Work on two play areas was completed in July and a further three completed by December.

3.105. To improve the safety of visitors to Fairlands Valley Park, water safety and rescue equipment provision has been improved.

3.106. Council officers and volunteers (Friends of Hampson Park) organised a Christmas event that brought local communities together in celebration.

3.107. **Repairs and Voids**

3.108. Repairs satisfaction surveys are currently recorded using e-forms and feedback cards. During quarter 2 (July to September 2017), the Service put additional arrangements in place for telephone surveys to encourage customer feedback and capture customers' views on their experience of the repairs service delivered. The level of satisfaction has been improving. Customers advised a 92.5% satisfaction level with the service provided for April to December 2017 (90.6% April to September 2017).

3.109. The completion of repairs by the Council's team continues to meet targets achieving an average completion time of 8.5 days during quarter 3 (target 9.5 days). The performance of external contractors has also improved. The overall time taken to complete a repair from time of reporting was 10.2 days for April to December 2017 compared to 11.43 days April to September 2017. As part of the arrangements to implement and embed the Repairs and Voids improvement programme a Contract Manager will be assigned to manage contractor performance.

3.110. The rate of repairs fixed first time has also improved. The Council continue to monitor revised service delivery arrangements introduced during quarter 2 (July to September 2017) to ensure that the materials required are available at the time of repair. (ECH-Rep4: Percentage repairs fixed first time, April to December 2017 target 90%, achieved 84.88%).

3.111. VoidsSheltered: The time taken to re-let standard sheltered voids.

3.112. On a positive note, an increased focus on the advertisement of particular void properties resulted in the letting of 20 sheltered properties together with the resulting increase in income. Ten of these properties were void for a significant period and once properties are let that have been void for a significant period, the performance figures are negatively affected.

- Voids sheltered: the time taken to re-let standard sheltered voids, April to December 2017 target 70 days, achieved 109.47 days.
- Additional information measure - Time taken from tenancy termination to ready to let for standard sheltered voids, April to September 2017 achieved 23.56 days, April to December 2017 achieved 19.49 days.

3.113. To enhance awareness of properties available, the service is liaising with other registered service providers and tenants that meet the criteria set out in the Council's Housing Allocations Policy that may have a preference for a move to sheltered housing.

- 3.114. Void properties continue to be assessed to: Determine where there is potential to redesign property layout to improve future demand; determine whether a property needs to be removed from management; identify those properties that will continue to be advertised.
- 3.115. VoidsGN: The time taken to re-let standard general needs voids, April to December 2017 target 28 days, achieved 33.18 days.
- 3.116. Average re-let time performance for April to December 2017 (33.18 days) has improved on performance to September (33.84 days).

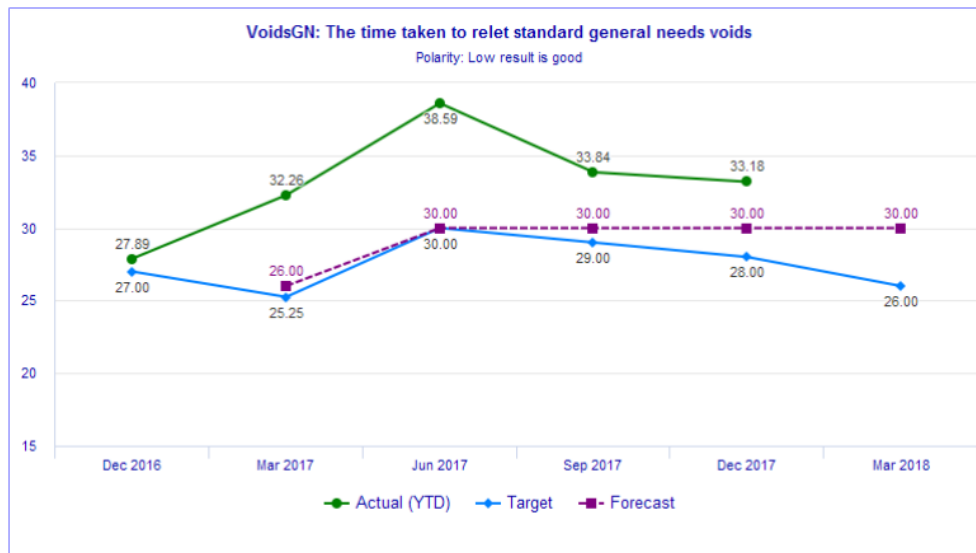


Figure 3: VoidsGn – The time taken to re-let standard general needs voids

- 3.117. The service has focused on making improvements to repairs service delivery during quarter three to make properties available for letting. Service performance has been affected by additional workload temporarily directed to the team as a result of a change in contractor relating to the delivery of decent homes and major works. Mobilisation of a new contractor has commenced this month. Rental income loss associated with void properties at the end of quarter three is in line with the budgeted position for the quarter.
- 3.118. The Assistant Director for Stevenage Direct Services and the Service Delivery Manager for Repairs and Voids (R&V) carried out a review of the first phase of the R&V improvement programme that was approved by the Council's Executive in January 2016 to inform the next phase of the project and to ensure that the new business unit management team have complete and informed ownership and accountability for its delivery.
- 3.119. The second phase of the R&V improvement programme will address any outstanding elements from the first phase, include a review of unit costs for repairs and voids and incorporate any new projects that are deemed necessary. A purge of active void cases will be implemented during quarter four 2017/18 to minimise the number of void cases carried forward into the new financial year.
- 3.120. The ultimate aim of the improvement programme is to ensure that the R&V function is operating successfully and serving its customers well which will help enable it to take on further work when deemed appropriate in due course.

Transformation and Support Theme

3.121. The Transformation and Support Theme incorporates the following Business Units:

- Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology
- Corporate Services and Transformation
- Finance and Estates

Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology

Spotlight: Customer Services

3.122. A significant number of calls to the Customer Service Centre (CSC) are resolved by the CSC advisor that initially answers the call (57.7%). An additional 14% are passed to a more appropriately skilled advisor within the CSC in order to provide a response that will meet the customer need at this first point of contact with the Council.

- CSC13: Percentage of calls closed at first point of contact by the CSC, April to December target 62%, achieved 57.7%.

3.123. In response to CSC performance interim agency staff were recruited in October to provide short-term capacity and this helped to improve performance during the quarter.

- Calls answered within 20 seconds (CSC4) July to September achieved 50.1%, October to December achieved 51.6%
- Calls abandoned (CSC12) November 8.3% abandoned, December 6.9% abandoned.

3.124. During quarter three the service appointed to two permanent roles and a programme of training to increase the availability of skills on all telephone lines and walk-in services is being carried out across the Customer Service Team.

3.125. Satisfaction in CSC however remains high and the Council regularly appears in the top ten performing Councils nationally for customer satisfaction for the call centres' walk in services and telephony (captured through Govmetric). Customers like how they are treated by advisers and appreciate the time given to them during a call.

- CSC4: Percentage of telephone calls to the Customer Service Centre answered within 20 seconds, April to December 2017 target 55%, achieved 51.8%.
- CSC12: Percentage of calls abandoned in the Customer Service Centre, April to December 2017 target 4%, achieved 9.2%.
- CSC5: Percentage of walk-in customers to the Customer Service Centre served within 20 minutes, April to December 2017 target 85%, achieved 73.6%.

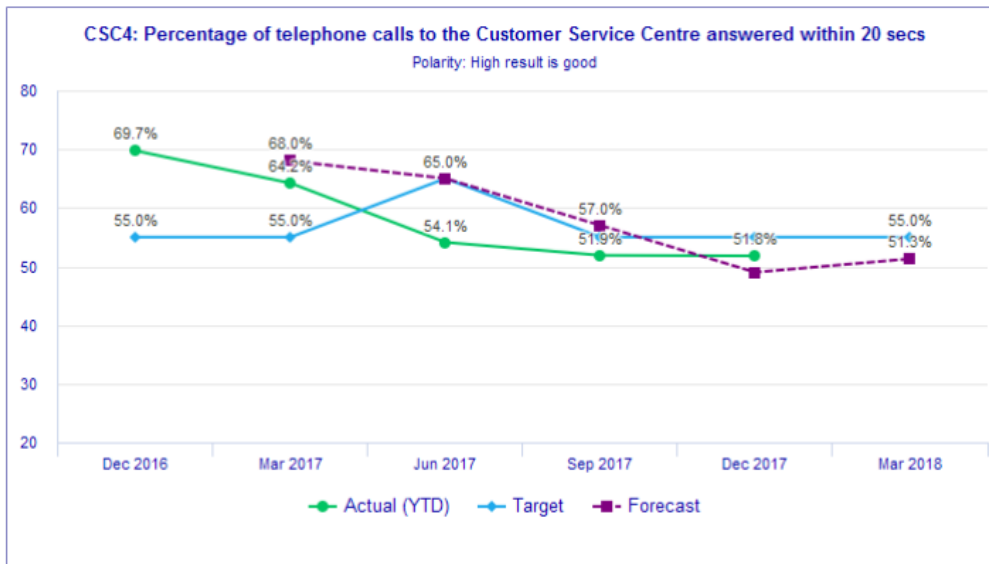


Figure 4: CSC4 – Percentage of telephone calls to the CSC answered within 20 seconds

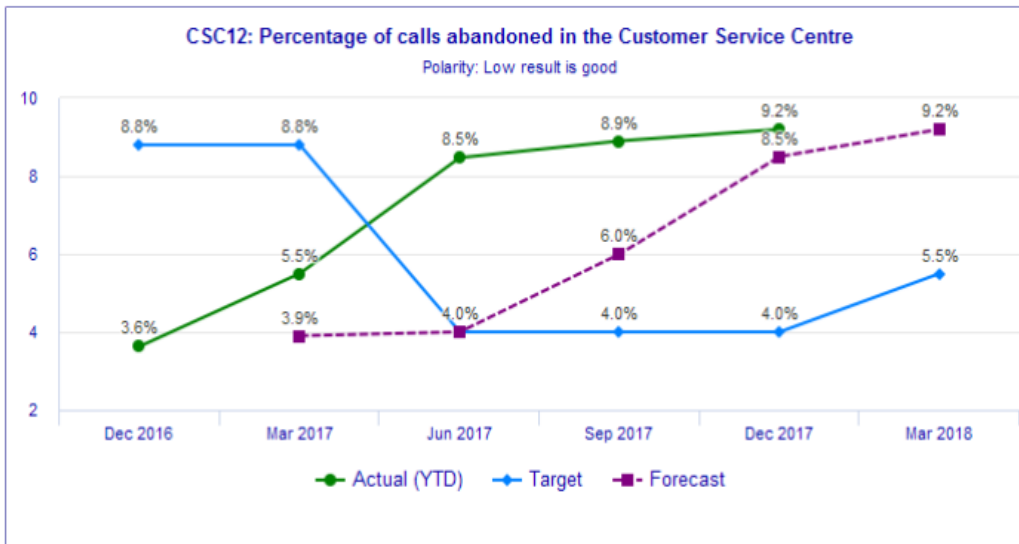


Figure 5: CSC12 – Percentage of calls abandoned in the Customer Service Centre.

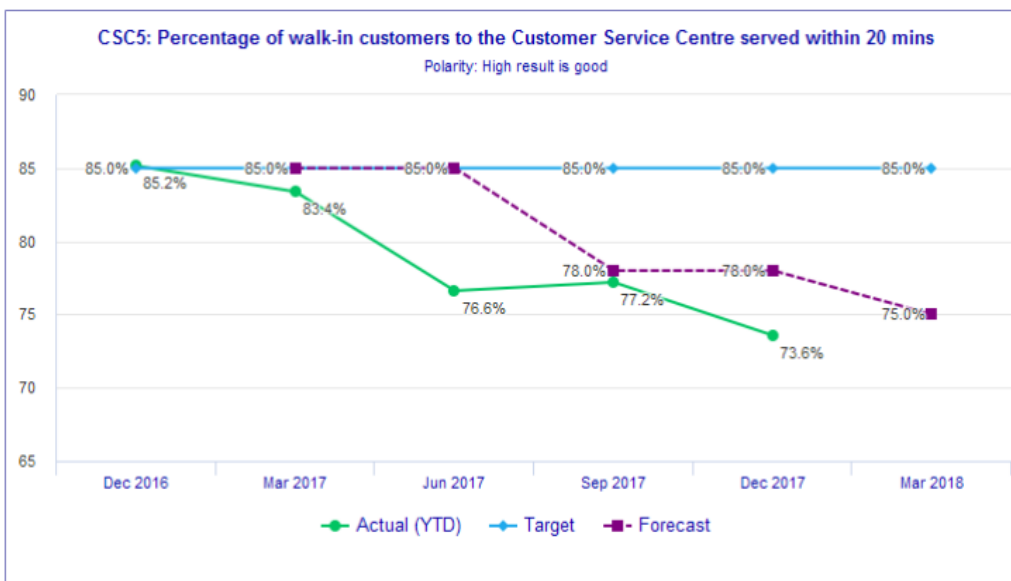


Figure 6: CSC5: Percentage of walk-in customers to the CSC served within 20 minutes

3.126. The Assistant Director (Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology) is currently carrying out a review of working practices within the CSC. Activity has started that aims to stabilise and sustain future CSC performance through:

- An initial focus on improving the availability of advisors by:
 - Recruiting more CSC advisors to maintain service levels when there is a high staff turnover and associated loss of skills.
 - Applying new innovative approaches to recruitment to enable posts to be filled more effectively and quickly.
 - Increasing the delivery of an enhanced programme of training for CSC advisors.
(Delivery by April 2018)
- Implementation of a revised service delivery model, resulting from:
 - A review of working practices within the CSC (considering options such as home working, appointments in the walk-in, and a review of opening hours).
 - The implementation of digital self-service options for customers as part of the Connected to Our Customers programme to drive down transactional and avoidable contact, leaving capacity to provide in-depth services for those in need.
(Delivery by March 2019)

Customer Feedback

3.127. As advised to Executive (December) senior management reminded service managers of the importance of considering all the evidence available when a complaint is received, to enhance the quality of response and to act upon information to enhance future service delivery. The percentage of complaints progressing to stage two and three that are upheld (Cust1) has improved significantly during quarter three:

- The percentage of complaints that progressed to stage 2 or 3 and were upheld (April to September 2017 target 40%, achieved 52.8%, April to December 2017 achieved 42.9%).

3.128. To enhance the handling of complaints and quality of complaint responses, the Customer Feedback team routinely offers training to officers with responsibilities for administrating complaints. In addition, services must capture learning on upheld complaints and then record implemented or planned service improvements to improve the service offer and encourage a reduction in customer complaints.

Technology

3.129. IT resilience and availability was tested over the August Bank Holiday due to a fibre break. The availability of core IT systems for October to December during supported hours achieved 99.86%.

- (ICT1: Percentage availability of core systems during supported hours, April to December 2017 target 99.5% achieved 98.7%)

3.130. A Technology Shared Service Improvement Plan developed for the Council (and its shared service partner) was considered by Executive (November). Initial activity included within the Technology Shared Service Improvement Plan targets improved

IT resilience and security and will be followed by adoption of an improved operational framework based on recognised ITIL standards and development of future IT Strategy to support organisational change and digital service delivery. This will ensure that services are delivered that meet customer needs and are fit for the future.

- 3.131. Delivery of the improvement programme will ensure the Technology Shared Service has the skills, capacity and reliable foundation to support the delivery of the Council's Connected to Our Customers programme and enable the technology and system changes that will be required by the Council's Business Unit Reviews (and their equivalent programmes at East Herts Council).

Corporate Services and Transformation

Council staff

- 3.132. The Council's Human Resources team continue to work with service managers to ensure that all Council staff appraisals and objective setting meetings are completed (to include new officers appointed). The rate of completion for staff appraisals is now 99.8%.
- 3.133. Spotlight: Sickness Absence
- 3.134. Active management of sickness absence is continuing across all Business Units and the Absence Management Policy has been revised to enable managers to take supportive but robust action more quickly.
- 3.135. There has been an increase in the number of long-term complex health conditions being managed and long-term absence now accounts for 60% of sickness absence.
- 3.136. Council officers are developing plans to improve the management of sickness absence across the Council. Initial steps include the following:
- A programme of training is being delivered to provide Assistant Directors and service managers with the skills to effectively manage sickness absence.
 - Improving the sickness absence management information provided to service managers to facilitate timely management interventions.
 - Prioritising HR business partnering support for business units and service teams that have high levels of sickness absence to effectively review sickness absence information and ensure compliance with the application of the Absence Management Policy.
 - Aligning health and well-being activity to the primary reasons for sickness absence.
 - Developing a business case for the potential introduction of a third party reporter service that would ensure staff receive early advice and support to help improve their attendance.

3.137. The method of calculating sickness absence has been revised to ensure that it reflects levels for current staff. In addition, realistic, but stretching thresholds are to be set for each business unit to align to the corporate aim for absence levels that do not exceed 8 days. (Pe4a: Sickness Absence rate threshold for twelve months to December 2017 per fte 8 days, achieved 9.28 days)

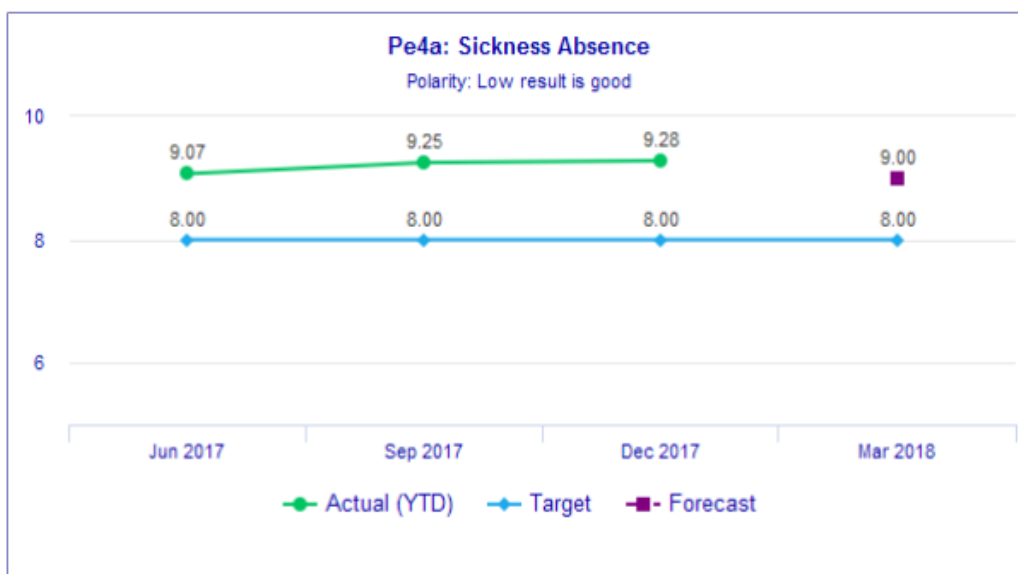


Figure 7: PE4a: Sickness Absence rate for the current workforce (days per fte)

Finance and Estates

3.138. Housing Benefit Claims and changes are now being processed in just 7.11 days and have consistently improved during 2017/18.

- Time taken to process Housing Benefit new claims and change events (NI181) April to June 2017 achieved 13.94 days, April to September achieved 8.03 days, April to December achieved 7.11 days.

Senior Leadership Team perspective

3.139. There has been some sustained high levels of performance across all three key delivery themes (Customer, Place, Transformation and Support) for April to December 2017, to include the following:

- The number of households in temporary accommodation has been maintained below the thresholds set across the year.
- The determination of planning applications has consistently exceeded national targets.
- Collection rates for Council Tax and non-domestic rates have met or exceeded target.

3.140. During the year, the Senior Leadership Team requested that the Assistant Directors responsible for areas of improvement focus assess the factors impacting on performance and outline robust improvement plans.

3.141. In response to quarter two performance Executive were advised (December 2017) of:

- The plans in place to progress and embed the Repairs and Voids Improvement Programme to ensure that the service is operating successfully and serving its

customers well. Initial performance improvement is now evident (paragraphs 3.108 to 3.120 refer). The Senior Leadership Team will continue to monitor performance to ensure improvement is sustained.

- The plans to increase the availability, skills and knowledge of Customer Service Advisers to improve performance in the Customer Service Centre. This remains an area of improvement focus – A summary of the improvement plans together with associated timeline for delivery have been outlined (paragraph 3.126 refers)

3.142. In response to quarter three performance (April to December 2017) the Senior Leadership Team have also requested a focus on improving sickness absence management (paragraphs 3.134 to 3.138 refer)

3.143. Assistant Directors have been requested to determine targets for 2018/19 having consideration for the 2017/18 trends, planned reviews of /revisions to service delivery models and alignment to 2018/19 budgets.

3.144. The Council's 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 new performance framework enables the Senior Leadership Team to amend targets in year to drive forward additional improvement in services and processes where appropriate. Although there is no guarantee services will meet these increased targets, it is important for the Council to aspire to improve performance levels and standards for the benefit of internal and external customers.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1. The information presented in this report is collated from the information provided to monitor delivery of the Future Town Future Council and corporate performance for the quarter. It aims to give Executive an overview of the achievements the Council has made for the year to date, with a focus on the current quarter and identifies plans for continued improvements in some areas to ensure the Council is fit for the future.

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

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 improvement activity identified will need to identify and consider any resulting financial implications.

5.2. Legal Implications

5.2.1. There are no direct legal implications from the recommendations contained in this report. However, officers responsible for improvement activity identified will need to identify and consider any resulting legal implications.

5.3. Risk Implications

- 5.3.1. There are no direct significant risks to the Council in agreeing the recommendation(s). Officers responsible for developing performance improvement plans will need to consider any risk implications from the improvement activity identified.
- 5.3.2. 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 also provides good governance assurance.

5.4. Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.4.1. The report outlines performance against key priorities that form the Future Town, Future Council Programme and performance of the Council across key business unit themes. Where necessary, Equality Impact Assessments will be completed for improvement activity identified.

5.5. Other Corporate Implications

- 5.5.1. Improvement activity outlined may impact on the development of future policy or procedure.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

BD1 - Executive Report 12 December 2017

<http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/content/committees/182083/182087/182091/Executive-12-December-2017-Item8.pdf>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Compendium of performance results

Appendix Two: Future Town, Future Council Programme Scope/Focus