

Meeting OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY/EXECUTIVE

Portfolio Area RESOURCES

Date 19 MARCH /4 APRIL 2018



NEW HOMES BONUS 2018/19

KEY DECISION

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To approve a range of schemes and initiatives to be funded from the 2018/19 New Homes Bonus allocation.
- 1.2 The Leader announced the proposals at the Council meeting on 28 February 2018. As these form part of the budget but have not to date been considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee they being considered in order that the Committee’s comments may be reported to the Executive on 4 April and thereby allow the projects to commence in April 2018.
- 1.3 To update Members on the progress of 2017/18 New Homes Bonus schemes announced at February 2017 Council meeting and approved by Members at the March 2017 Executive.

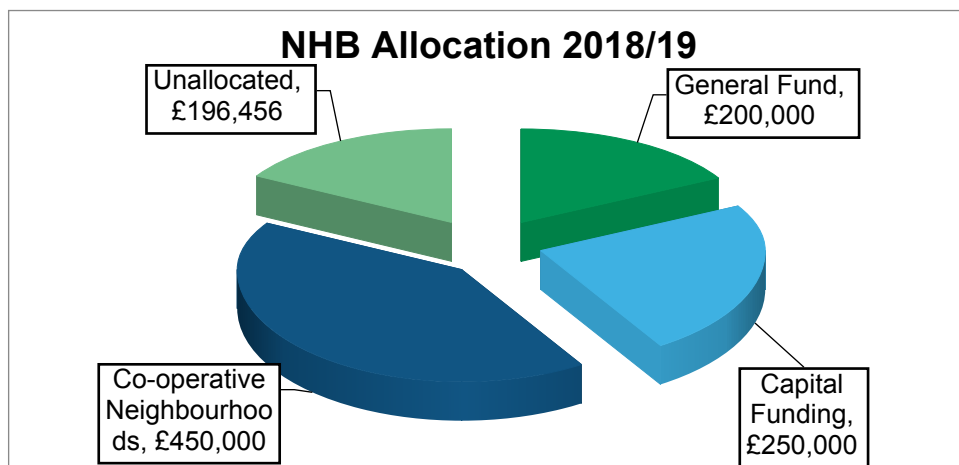
2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That an allocation of £260,600 from the 2018/19 New Homes Bonus allocation be approved for the implementation and delivery of the following schemes :
- Scheme 1- Neighbourhood Wardens £41,600;
 - Scheme 2- Stevenage Day £10,000;
 - Scheme 3- Acknowledging the end of World War 1 -£7,000;
 - Scheme 4- Stevenage Cycling Festival incorporating the Tour Series £90,000; (considered by Overview and Scrutiny 9 March 2018)
 - Scheme 5- Imagine Stevenage – Mobilising our Cultural Offer £40,000;
 - Scheme 6- Supporting Town Centre events £10,000;
 - Scheme 7- Participatory budgets £40,000;
 - Scheme 8- Recognising suffragette movement £7,000;
 - Scheme 9- Electric Charging points £15,000
- 2.2 That Members note the progress on the 2017/18 NHB initiatives.

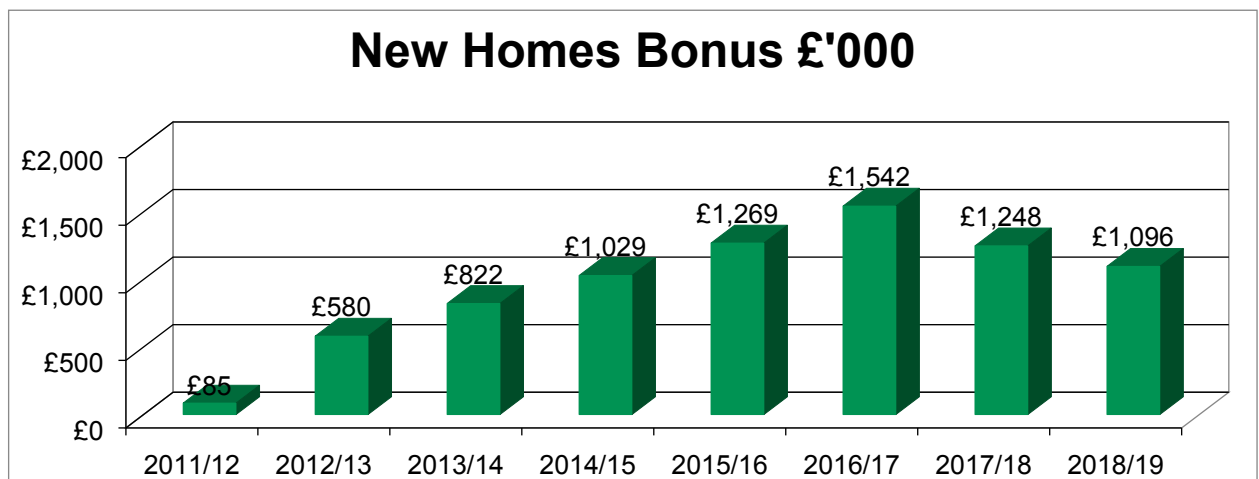
3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The New Homes Bonus scheme was originally designed to be a financial incentive for Council's to deliver housing growth and as such replaced the Housing and Planning Development Grant. It was also intended to make the link between growth and new finance more visible.
- 3.2 The original scheme started in April 2011 matching the additional Council Tax raised for new homes and properties brought back into use, with an additional amount of £350 for each affordable home for the following six years. In two tier areas the New Homes Bonus is split 80/20 between the District and County Councils.
- 3.3 The mechanism for determining the number of additional properties is to take the council tax base form completed by Council's in October, called the CTB1 and compare the number of properties between the current and previous year, less any long term empty properties. The value then applied is at 80% of the equivalent national average value Band D property.
- 3.4 For the 2017/18 NHB allocation the government revised the calculation for the NHB award from retaining an annual allowance for six years to four years and in addition a threshold of 40% increase in property numbers needs to be achieved before any NHB becomes payable. The government had consulted on the former change, however including the threshold calculation was not known until that years' allocation became due.

- 3.5 It has been the Council's policy to date not to rely on temporary income streams to fund permanent services, which includes the use of New Homes Bonus (NHB). To date, only £200,000 has been added to the General Fund base budget from NHB (and £250,000 for capital). Although it continues to be the view of the Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) that NHB should support one-off projects, a number of projects have received funding for the last few years. As part of the Business Unit Reviews (BUR) funding for three neighbourhood wardens has been secured from 2019/20. Other priority services such as the domestic abuse services and No More project may need to be resources from the General Fund to secure their future long term.
- 3.6 Members have previously approved to ring fence funding of £450,000 for the co-operative neighbourhood FTFC work stream, which supports initiatives such as the playground improvement programme. The chart below details the 2018/19 NHB allocation of £1.096Million.



- 3.7 In addition to the £196,456 available for new schemes there is a further £67,645 that has not been allocated or returned to the NHB reserve as a result of actual costs being lower than budgeted. This means there is a total of £264,410 available to be allocated to new schemes.
- 3.8 Since 2011/12 the council has received £7.67Million of NHB as shown in the chart below. The impact of reducing the award from six to four years and the threshold is clearly shown as the 2018/19 award has reduced to in line with that received in 2014/15.



3.5

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 2018/19 Schemes

- 4.1.1 A number of New Homes Bonus proposals were announced as part of the Leader's Budget Speech at Council on 28 February 2018. The following schemes for the 2018/19 New Homes Bonus have therefore been identified for implementation:

Scheme 1 : Neighbourhood Wardens	
Lead Portfolio Holder : Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Council	
Allocation : £41,600	Delivery Lead : Assistant Director Communities and Neighbourhoods
Timescales : 2018/19 This allocation will top up funding for the existing three wardens cost in 2018/19 (£6,500) and fund a fourth warden in 2018/19.	
Priorities Supported : Co-operative Neighbourhood Management	

- 4.1.2 Three wardens are currently employed and the top up funding ensures funding up to the 31 March 2019, thereafter the three wardens will be funded from the Council's General Fund (as part of the BUR's).
- 4.1.3 The remaining allocation will fund a fourth warden for one year, currently no on-going funding has been identified for the new warden and will need to be supported by NHB if no efficiencies can be found through the business reviews. The neighbourhood wardens will champion the areas they are responsible for, but have worked across the Borough. These wardens will be the single point of contact to ensure a council-wide joined up approach to improving the environment for the residents of Stevenage.
- 4.1.4 The wardens will also report and help deal with problems caused by crime and anti-social behaviour. Neighbourhood wardens will predominantly spend their time out on the streets, having a visible presence and reporting/resolving public realm disrepair issues. They will also investigate and deal with problems while on patrol in response to concerns from Members, the public and other council departments. They will play an active role in the community and help to improve resident's sense of place.

Scheme 2 : Stevenage Day	
Lead Portfolio Holder : Children, Young People and Leisure	
Allocation : £10,000	Delivery Lead : Assistant Director Communities and Neighbourhoods
Timescales : June 2018 The additional funding for 2018/19 will allow provision of a wide, extensive and diverse range of free activities for the family and allow the voluntary sector the	

opportunity to fund raise.

Priorities Supported : Co-operative Neighbourhood Management

- 4.1.5 Income for Stevenage Day is generated by two primary areas of catering and funfair franchises. Additional income is generated from stall fees which are dominated by charities and the voluntary sector. Over the last few years live music stages have been added and the last two years we have worked with Stevenage Festival to bring back Rock in the Park.
- 4.1.6 Infrastructure costs have increased significantly for, fencing, twin stages, PA lighting, welfare and security. Whilst the charitable and voluntary sector provide some free activities many use Stevenage Day as the biggest fund raising opportunity of the year.
- 4.1.7 The additional funding will allow free activities to be included and this in turn will increase the footfall and the benefit to the third sector.

Scheme 3 : Acknowledging the end of World War 1

Lead Portfolio Holder : Children, Young People and Leisure

Allocation : £7,000

Delivery Lead : Assistant Director Communities and Neighbourhoods

Timescales : November 2018

Various events to commemorate the end of WW1

Priorities Supported : Co-operative Neighbourhood Management

- 4.1.8 SBC supported the community and hosted a range of events and programmes marking the start of WW 1. In 2018 it will be 100 years since the end of WW1 and therefore the intention is provide a range of small but significant events and programmes to commemorate the end WW1. Pump prime funding of £3,000 was provided by the NHB fund for 2017/18 this has been used to plant poppies in various locations around the town which will flower in 2018.
- 4.1.9 There are a number of activities planned which are:
- To lay a wooden cross at each WW1 War Grave at St Nicholas and St Mary's. Last Post could be played at the Lynch Gate (November 10)
 - There will be a National Tribute to remember the end of the WW1 War it will be called "Battle's Over" A Nations Tribute. It has been prepared by The Royal Pageant-master will be supported by The Royal British Legion. The pageant will have four main themes, each theme starting at a different time during the day. (November 11)
 - 06.00 Battles Over- Sleep in peace, now the battles over.-this will be the start of the day with over 1,000 pipers playing the tune at each Cathedral

throughout the country. In Stevenage the piper will play at the War Memorial at 06.00am (11 November)

Scheme 4 : Stevenage Cycling Festival incorporating the Tour Series	
Lead Portfolio Holder : Children, Young People and Leisure	
Allocation : £90,000	Delivery Lead : Assistant Director Communities and Neighbourhoods
Timescales : 2018/19 A wide range of events from Easter until October with a highlight of hosting a combined HCC Hertfordshire Tour Launch and a round of the Tour Series on May 28 Bank Holiday Monday	
Priorities Supported : Co-operative Neighbourhood Management	

- 4.1.10 Stevenage has already successfully hosted the Women’s Tour in 2015, the Pearl Izumi Tour Series in 2016 and The Tour Series final in 2017. This has demonstrated that high profile national and international sporting events provide an unrivalled profile for the Town. The hour long TV coverage includes a showcase segment highlighting to the viewing public the significant lifestyle, business, employment and travel benefits of Stevenage. As a major opportunity area the event will be an aid to draw a market from a mix of public and private sectors.
- 4.1.11 Building upon previous cycling events the 2018/19 event will show benefits of working in partnership with the community in a co-operative structure, prior to the main professional races in May we will work with local cycling clubs, HCC and schools to co-produce an extensive cycling programme. This will provide the community with more involvement and control of what is delivered for the educational and community programme.
- 4.1.12 The cycling festival is looking to improve our neighbourhood areas by utilising our cycle network encouraging students, residents and people who work in Stevenage to be inspired to cycle and builds on the health agenda for the Town.
- 4.1.13 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered this initiative at its meeting of the 8 March 2018 and recommended no changes to the scheme. In order to ensure that the relevant road closures are in place, call in period for this scheme has been waived by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny.

Scheme 5 : Imagine Stevenage – Mobilising our Cultural Offer	
Lead Portfolio Holder : Children, Young People and Leisure	
Allocation : £40,000	Delivery Lead : Assistant Director Communities and Neighbourhoods

Timescales : 2018/19

The initiative links to the launch of Stevenage's Cultural Strategy in 2018.

Priorities Supported : Co-operative Neighbourhood Management

4.1.14 A time limited-post will bring additional capacity to support the launch and mobilisation of the strategy to become an embedded part of the way the council and its partners think about the future of the town, with a shared narrative and a shared set of ambitions, creating new opportunities for cultural investment.

4.1.15 Deliverables will include:

- The establishment of a cultural partnership for the town.
- A minimum of 3 successful grant bids to cultural funders to support further cultural events/festivals/installations in Stevenage in 2018; including Stevenage Day, the Suffragette's Centenary Celebrations and Celebrate Stevenage.
- Public art installations as part of the Town Centre regeneration programme/Cycle network.
- Further stakeholder engagement with cultural organisations and cultural investors.

Scheme 6 : Supporting Town Centre events

Lead Portfolio Holder : Environment & Regeneration

Allocation : £10,000

Delivery Lead : Assistant Director Planning & Regulation

Timescales : 2018/19

This additional funding will support and enhance a schedule of events to be held throughout the year in the town centre.

Priorities Supported : Town Centre Regeneration

4.1.16 Since the Council took back the management of town centre events, a Town Centre Manager has been appointed to promote business and events to bring footfall in the town centre either by promoting the Stevenage offer through a new website or staging year round events. The additional £10,000 allocation will help with supporting a full programme year round programme which will include (but not exclusively):

- Outdoor cinema
- Animal Crackers

- Stevenage International Day (celebrating music, food & dance from different cultures)
- Halloween-Tastic
- And generally supporting a presence / activity in the town on a monthly basis.

Scheme 7 : Participatory budgets	
Lead Portfolio Holder : Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Council	
Allocation : £40,000	Delivery Lead : Assistant Director Communities and Neighbourhoods
Timescales : 2018/19-2019/20 A pilot to trial community involvement in decision making in the two wards where the co-operative neighbourhood management programme has been implemented.	
Priorities Supported : Co-operative Neighbourhood Management	

4.1.17 This bid is to pilot participatory budgets in the wards that the CNM programme has commenced in, to allow community input into decision making in those areas. The monies are proposed to be used by the areas in the CNM programme cycle the first area being St Martins wood, St Nicholas and Shephall, the monies to be divided for each area. This will involve participation by residents and to get meaningful consultation the monies may be spent in 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Scheme 8 : Recognising suffragette movement	
Lead Portfolio Holder : Leader of the Council	
Allocation : £7,000	Delivery Lead : Assistant Director Communities and Neighbourhoods
Timescales : 2018/19 Celebrating the suffragette movement with a series of events in conjunction with services such as the museum.	
Priorities Supported : Co-operative Neighbourhood Management	

4.1.18 This money will be used in conjunction with and complementary to the programme of events to be delivered by the museum. The monies will be used to celebrate in November when women could first become MP's and then December 2018 when women could vote in an election.

4.1.19 It is envisaged that this will include a town centre event which will be educational and involve local school children.

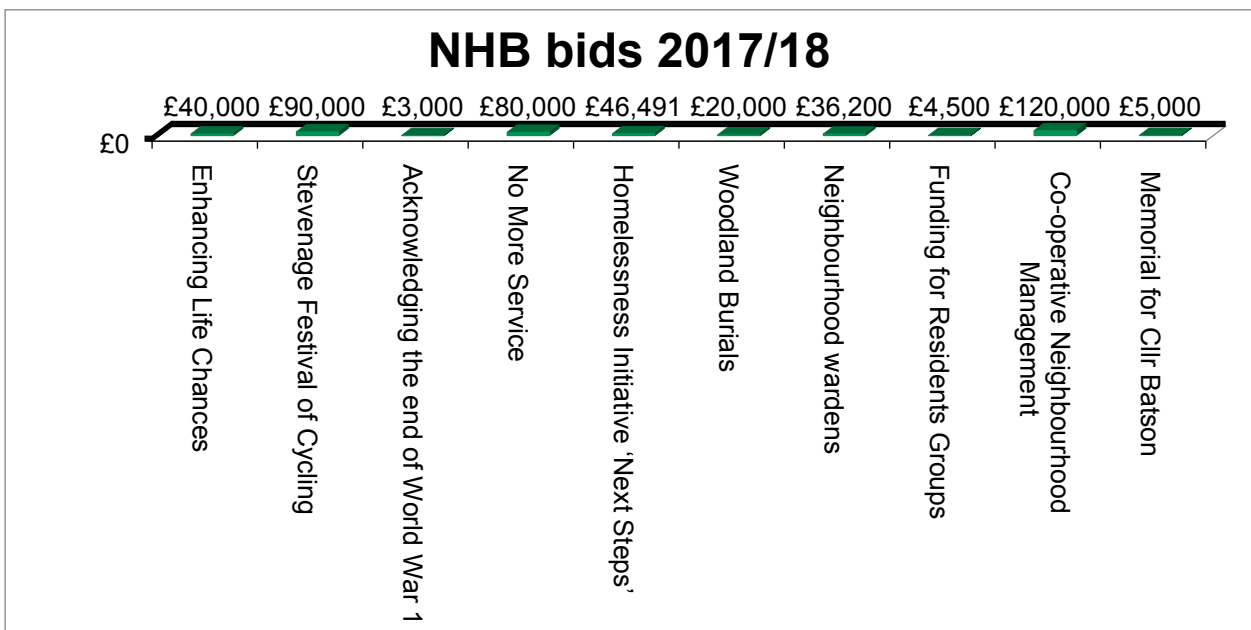
Scheme 9 : Electric Charging Points	
Lead Portfolio Holder : Economic, Enterprise and Transport	
Allocation : £15,000	Delivery Lead : Assistant Director Planning & Regulation
Timescales : 2018/19 Installation of electric charging points	
Priorities Supported : Town Centre Regeneration	

4.1.18 The installation of two twin charging point for electric vehicles in four existing parking bays in the Quadrant. The scheme will recover electricity charges through increased charge for parking in the bays. Charging charges will match those at the other privately run bays in the town centre, but not require users to be a member of a scheme. The users will still pay the parking charges for the bays.

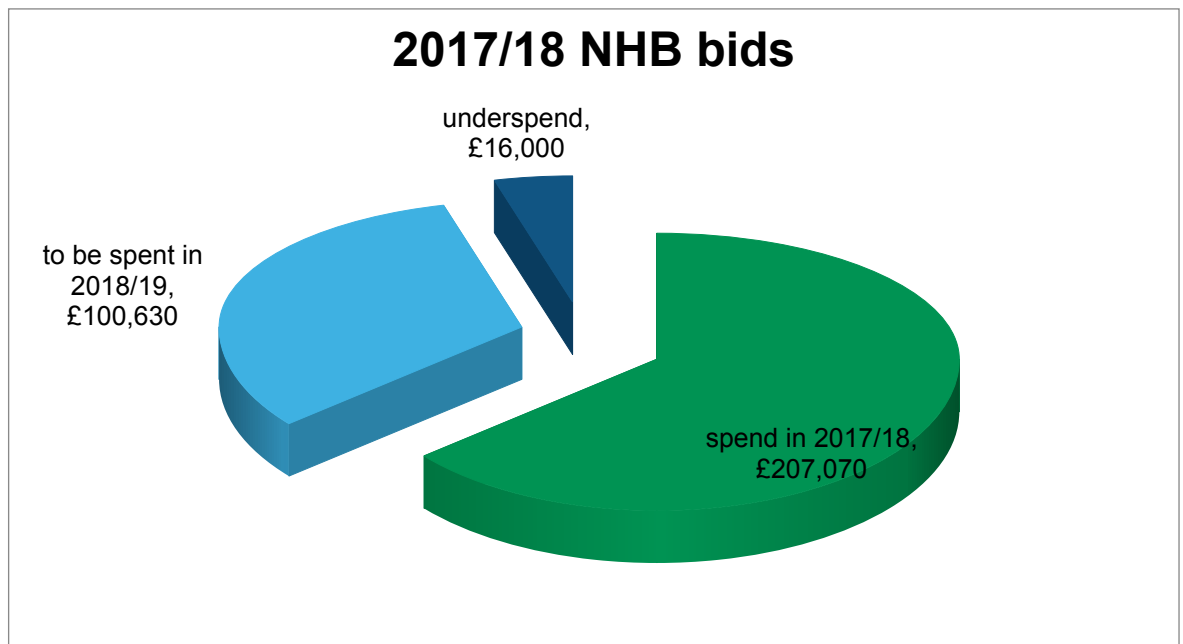
4.1.19 This will support the improvements of the town centre offer, in supporting the Council's sustainable transport policies, helping improve air quality for our residents.

4.2 Update on 2017/18 schemes

4.2.1 The 2017/18 schemes approved in the March 2017 report are summarised in the chart below.



- 4.2.2 Subsequent to the initial approval in April 2017, the 'next steps' project NHB funding was removed, as alternative central government homeless funding was given for 2017/18 which was used to resource the project.
- 4.2.3 A new project was approved by Members (included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy to the September Executive) to support the Stevenage Credit Union to be able to expand its membership and offer and by introducing a ICT system to allow greater functionality and the Assistant Director Finance and Estates proposed a number of KPI's to demonstrate the success of the new software and server once they were implemented.
- 4.2.4 A summary of the 2017/18 scheme progress is included in Appendix A to this report and the projected amounts to be spent are summarised in the chart below.



4.3 Comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 4.3.1 At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 8 March, Members considered the NHB bid for the Stevenage Cycling Festival incorporating the Tour Series (£90,000). Members asked a number of questions about the event, including the logistics of running the event, quantifying the positive impact on the businesses and improvements to the cycle ways by HCC. Members did not make any changes to the proposal.
- 4.3.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee comments from their meeting of the 19 March will be updated to the Executive at their meeting of the 4 April 2018.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

- 5.1.1 The final New Homes Bonus allocations for 2018/19 have been published, with amounts paid monthly direct to councils with the first monthly payment April 2018.
- 5.1.2 As part of the budget setting process, Council approved a General Fund Revenue Account Contingency Sum in the Budget and Policy Framework for 2018/19 of £400,000 for expenditure determined by the Executive. This expenditure is funded from the New Homes Bonus reserve and the impact on the General Fund is neutral.
- 5.1.3 Part of the New Homes Bonus has been earmarked for previously approved budget policy commitments these summarised below:

Policy Commitments	2017/18
Contribution to the General Fund	£200,000
Contribution to the Capital Reserve	£250,000
Contribution to Co-operative Neighbourhood Management	£450,000
Total	£900,000

- 5.1.4 The total new homes bonus expenditure for 2018/19 is summarised below.

2018/19 New Homes Bonus Allocation	£1,096,456
Balances from previous year unused/returned	£67,645
Total Possible allocation	£1,164,101
Less : Contribution to General Fund Budget	-£200,000
Less : Contribution to Capital Reserve	-£250,000
Less: Neighbourhood Improvements programme	-£450,000
Less : Contingency left in reserve for scheme over-runs	-£3,501
Allocation Remaining to Support Schemes	£260,600

New Homes Bonus	Spend
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New Homes Bonus	Spend
Scheme 1- Neighbourhood Wardens	£41,600
Scheme 2- Stevenage Day	£10,000
Scheme 3- Acknowledging the end of World War 1	£7,000
Scheme 4- Stevenage Cycling Festival incorporating the Tour Series	£90,000
Scheme 5- Imagine Stevenage – Mobilising our Cultural Offer	£40,000
Scheme 6- Supporting Town Centre events	£10,000;
Scheme 7- Participatory budgets	£20,000
Scheme 8- Recognising suffragette movement	£7,000;
Scheme 9- Electric Charging points	£15,000
Total	£260,600

5.2 Legal Implications

5.2.1 The New Homes Bonus funding is a non ring-fenced grant and such can be spent as recommended by Members.

5.3 Risk Implications

5.3.1 An amount of £3,501 has not been allocated to allow for any potential overspends. The schemes are monitored throughout the year and reported as part of the quarterly monitoring process.

5.4 Policy Implications

5.4.1 The £260,600 of expenditure will be considered at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting of the 19 March 2018, before it is presented to the Executive on the 4 April 2018.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity Implications

5.5.1 Stevenage Borough Council has committed itself to providing high quality services that are relevant to the needs and responsive to the views of all sections of the local community, irrespective of their race, gender, disability, culture, religion, age, sexual orientation or marital status. The General Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) requires the council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in the exercise of its functions. These considerations are the duty of decision makers. Initial Equality Impact Assessments (EqlAs) have been carried out on the recommended New Homes Bonus schemes and

further full EqlAs will be carried out, where appropriate, if the schemes go ahead. It is anticipated that there will be a positive impact from the schemes and EqlAs will be used to ensure that all sections of the community can benefit from them.

6. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

BD1 New Homes Bonus Report 2017/18 March 2017 Executive

BD2 General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy (2017/18-2021/22)
September 2017 Executive

7. APPENDICES

A Appendix A- 2017/18 New Homes Bonus Bids progress