

A performance and governance system (InPhase) has been introduced to monitor performance and risk and is providing improved insight into corporate priority delivery. The new system is providing a range of corporate performance monitoring relating to service delivery, finances, staff, and customers, alongside consideration of the risks associated with the delivery of objectives in order to provide strategic insight and facilitate prompt implementation of any necessary improvement plans.

The status of performance for both the FTFC programme and the corporate programme with proposed improvement plans, where necessary, are discussed by senior management prior to Executive on a quarterly basis. In addition the Executive receive separate regular updates on the Council's financial position and quarterly overview reports.

A Performance Guide is available to staff on the Council's intranet. The guide sets out the Council's approach to:

- Identifying appropriate performance measures aligned to corporate and services priorities and resource
- Monitoring and reviewing performance measure results to help identify activity to improve outcomes for the community
- Identifying and celebrating business achievements
- Identifying and managing risk
- Ensuring that the overall governance of the organisation is robust.

All of this information provides business insight that helps to drive improvement and deliver outcomes that benefit the community.

The Council also has a Data Quality Policy which outlines the Council's commitment to ensuring data quality and arrangements are in place to monitor and enhance the quality of performance data.

Housing Development Programme

The Housing development programme aims to increase the affordable and social housing provision in the town (both within the town centre and the suburbs).

The Housing Development and Regeneration Executive Committee receives updates on the Housing Development Programme. During 2019/20 reports have been considered by the Executive as required. Progress of the programme and against key milestones is reported each month to the FTFC programme board. Budgets are also monitored by the Assets and Capital Board which meets bi-monthly to ensure spend is in line with predictions. New build schemes within the HRA form part of the HRA Business Plan, and the General Fund schemes are reported to Executive as part of the Capital Strategy updates.

On 19 July 2019, the Executive approved the procurement approach for the Kenilworth Housing Development Scheme. An internal audit of the procurement process was carried out in March 2020 and advised they were satisfied the decision to appoint the developer was made in line with internal procurement rules, there is good evidence to demonstrate the rationale for the procurement approach and SIAS were able to confirm that elected members were consulted and kept informed as the process evolved. SIAS advised that the procurement process had been subject to and passed several stages of extensive internal scrutiny from elected members

The various contracts for the building works commissioned by the Housing Development team are monitored through monthly site meetings attended by an officer representative as well as the contractor and an independent Employers Agent whose role is to administrate the effective running of the contract.

Regeneration

The Council, along with its development partners will be delivering a major, twenty year, £1bn regeneration programme designed to transform Stevenage. Stevenage First, the partnership formed

of Stevenage Borough Council, Local Enterprise Partnership, Hertfordshire County Council and the Chamber of Commerce are leading this regeneration work.

As part of the regeneration programme, the Council has partnered with Mace to deliver a £350m scheme called SG1. SG1 is a 14.5 acre site including a minimum of 1700 new homes, 60,000sq feet of ground floor retail and restaurant space, new public spaces and a public services hub, combining community assets such as health services, library, voluntary sector, café and Council offices. Following a competitive tender process, the Council selected Mace as its development partner to deliver SG1. The governance arrangements for this scheme include fortnightly Project Team meetings and monthly Steering Group meetings between Stevenage Borough Council and Mace with issues resolved through the business plan.

The Council has also signed a £50m development deal with Reef Estates to redevelop Queensway North. Development of the Queensway North area will form a significant early and important part of Stevenage's regeneration programme. Queensway North is a mixed-use redevelopment scheme transforming an existing town centre site into retail and leisure units, office space, and delivering 110 residential units. This will completely reposition a partly empty asset which included the vacant Marks and Spencer site, derelict for a number of years, and will act as a major regeneration catalyst.

On 1st November 2019, the government issued the Town Fund prospectus inviting 100 towns to develop proposals to benefit from up to £25M funding. The objective of the fund is to drive the economic regeneration of towns to deliver long term economic and productivity growth through: regeneration, planning and land use; skills and enterprise infrastructure and connectivity. In December, Executive agreed the approach and governance arrangements to enable the Council to make a Town Fund bid. A Stevenage Development Board has been set up which meets monthly and its terms of reference have been agreed.

Progress of significant governance (2018/19 AGS) action to facilitate compliance with the CIPFA/SOLACE Governance Framework:

Governance of Key Regeneration Projects: The Housing Development and Regeneration Executive Committee receives updates on both the Housing Development Programme and an overview of the Regeneration Programme. Integrating regeneration into this existing meeting to become a joint meeting has been very positive and enabled Councillors to have sight of emerging opportunities. During 2019/20 regular reports have been considered by the Executive as required. Progress of the programme and against key milestones is reported each month to the FTFC programme board. Monthly and quarterly reporting with Hertfordshire LEP takes place, together with Stevenage Borough Council financial reported to track LEP related expenditure.

Board-level meetings are held with two of our key partners, Mace and Reef, on a monthly and quarterly basis respectively. This is supported by regular operational meetings. The strength of these partnerships has been vital in preparing COVID-19 mitigation measures in March 2020.

Good progress has been made towards implementing the recommendations of a recent internal audit. Key actions completed to date include the streamlining of governance functions to ensure a single highlight report is used to update multiple meetings, and a shift in emphasis towards empowering project managers and project sponsors to operate more autonomously within established criteria.

The Council also opened the Stevenage Regeneration Visitor Centre where visitors can learn more about the town's regeneration plans in an informative and interactive exhibition and a specialist officer is on site to answer questions. Thousands of residents have visited the centre and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, both towards the proposals and the way in which we are engaging in a transparent and co-operative way

The Council launched Stevenage Even Better. Stevenage Even Better is the result of work from a number of organisations, including Stevenage Borough Council, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce. Stevenage Even Better launched its own interactive website this year and has received positive engagement with
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The terms of reference for the new Stevenage Development Board which is working up the bid for the Towns Fund and unallocated Growth Deal monies, have been agreed and monthly meetings are now being held of the Board to progress the Town Investment Plan. Information about the Board will soon be added to the Stevenage Even Better website.

Information regarding continued enhancement activity proposed for 2020/21 and timeline for delivery is reflected on page 32).

Progress of significant governance (2018/19 AGS) action to facilitate compliance with the CIPFA/SOLACE Governance Framework:

Community Safety: Changes to procedures to enhance document retention arrangements in relation to the enforcement of anti-social behaviour action have been implemented. This action is therefore now complete and will not be carried over to 2020/21.

Progress of significant governance (2018/19 AGS) action to facilitate compliance with the CIPFA/SOLACE Governance Framework and SBC Local Code of Governance:

Shared Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency (HHIA) service: In 2017, Hertfordshire County Council created the HHIA as a specific model for collaborative working between the upper and lower tiers of local government in Hertfordshire, with the aim of providing a centralised service to assist residents to improve or adapt their home for continued independent and safe living. Stevenage Borough Council joined this centralised service in April 2018. In response to an internal audit of the new shared service, the following action has been taken to ensure that the Service can deliver its financial targets in the medium term, as well as ensure that minimum key standards are being met, enhance its governance structure and ensure the HHIA Board is offering value for money the following activity is planned by Hertfordshire County Council:

- A new senior management team is now in place and a new Business Analyst has been appointed to provide strategic and operational statistics alongside case monitoring.
- A new Case Worker and Technical Officer have also been appointed.
- Standard Operating Procedures have been produced and a review of the service's team structure is taking place.
- The Customer Management System has been reviewed and process mapping is complete. A report is to be submitted to the HHIA Board regarding potential options which could include replacing the CMS system when the current contract ends in September 2020.
- All HIA staff have undertaken training to ensure all staff are 'up skilled'.

Information regarding continued enhancement activity proposed for 2020/21 and timeline for delivery is reflected on page 32).

Ongoing monitoring is planned in mitigation of risks relating to the delivery of agreed outcomes:

The Council continues to assess the potential impact of Welfare Reform changes on the community. In October 2018, Universal Credit Live was rolled out in Stevenage. The Council is continuing to identify and work with tenants affected by the reduction in the benefit cap, and under occupancy charges. Together with migration to Universal Credit and later managed migration (legacy benefit claimants moving on to UC), and more recently to support mixed age couples where the youngest partner is below pension credit age. The council are continuing to support tenants on legacy benefits and council tax support

In addition, the following governance activity pertaining to best practice has also been delivered:

- A new ICT Programme Management Office has been established and is implementing procedures to ensure that ICT projects are delivered to a consistent standard with appropriate governance arrangements.
- A new Data Analyst is working with performance measure owners to review the potential to extract performance data automatically from systems and to input it directly into the Council's performance management system.

Principle E: Leadership capacity and capability

Principle E: Developing the organisation's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it. The appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills and values, enable the Council to operate efficiently and effectively and achieve the best possible outcomes for the community.



Summary of 2019/20 Review of Effectiveness:

The Council's Political Management Structure:

Figure 10: Political Management Structure 2019/20 The Political Management Structure diagram summarises the Council's political structure.

All Councillors meet together as the Council. Meetings are generally open to the public and feature a main topical debate item. The Council has an approved Constitution which details how the Council operates, how decisions are made,

including delegation of decisions and the procedures that are to be followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. The Monitoring Officer ensures that the Constitution remains fit for purpose, that legal requirements are met and that the public interest is paramount in all decision making.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the government has brought in new arrangements for meetings to be held remotely. The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ('the Regulations') came into force on 4 April 2020 and apply to local authority and police and crime panel meetings that are required to be held, or held before 7 May 2021. The Council has therefore put in place arrangements for meetings to be held remotely in line with these new regulations. A protocol has been written for the management and conduct for remote meetings. Meetings can be viewed by the public via YouTube.

Audit Committee meets quarterly and its duties include advising and commenting on internal and external audit matters, anti-fraud and corruption issues, risk management and governance, the Council's Constitution in respect of Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and the

Statement of Accounts and related Capital determinations. The Audit Committee has been constituted in line with best practice recommendations from CIPFA guidance.

The Council has structured its processes and procedures for the Executive and Scrutiny Committees plus other Committees such as the regulatory ones, to minimise the risk of it acting in contravention of its own policies and external laws and regulations. The Council also appoints officers qualified to undertake statutory responsibilities, such as:

- Chief Financial Officer (Strategic Director (Chief Finance Officer)) as contained within Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.
- Monitoring Officer (Borough Solicitor) to meet Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

There is a Modern Members Programme which provides Members with a programme of training to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to ensure effective and informed decision making. This training programme covers essential skills such as understanding budgets as well as topical items and briefing on new legislation. The Modern Members Programme is arranged for all elected members, based on their feedback and requests. There is also a programme of induction training and meetings with key officers for newly elected Members.

The Council's Officer Structure:

The Council aims to create a flexible, collaborative, creative and modern workforce to ensure the Council can deliver the priorities set out in the FTFC programme and give residents the standard of services they expect.

The senior leadership team has been structured to drive the development of a 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.

A number of key appointments to strategic posts have taken place this year. The Council appointed its new Chief Executive in July 2019. This led to the appointment to the roles of Deputy Chief Executive and Strategic Director.

An additional Strategic Director (Chief Finance Officer) role was created to ensure the Council can meet future financial challenges and opportunities and this role has recently been appointed to. This has led to the post of Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) becoming vacant and an appointment to this post has been made.

The roles of Assistant Director Digital and Transformation and Assistant Director Stevenage Direct Services have both now been appointed and they will both be taking up their new roles in May 2020.

The Council's Employer of Choice programme is transforming the way the Council works, ensuring staff have the skills, abilities and experience to deliver excellence.

The Council uses a Human Resources Management system to support workforce planning, training, development and the implementation of the Council's new competency framework structure. The Council's Competency Framework provides a map of the behaviours, as well as the skills, that are valued and recognised by the Council.

The Council has a staff Performance and Improvement Policy and Manager Toolkit, as well as associated policies (Absence Management, Dignity at Work, Disciplinary, Grievance and Appeals policies, Organisational Change Policy, Sickness Absence Policy) to encourage all employees to personally deliver the highest standards of service possible and for managers to proactively address performance issues. The Council has a rolling appraisal process called REAL Conversations with regular meeting arrangements providing a framework for achieving the best performance on a day to

day basis. These conversations typically include objectives, development, engagement and wellbeing, but they are also tailored to individuals.

Progress of significant governance actions (2018/19 AGS) to facilitate compliance with the CIPFA/SOLACE Governance Framework:

Corporate Capacity: Activity to ensure the Council has corporate capacity to deliver its FTFC aims as well as deliver sustainable services that meet the needs of customers the following activity has taken place:

- There has been a significant amount of work on Future Council Business Unit Reviews. The Fourth Tier (roles reporting to Assistant Directors) review is now almost complete across the whole Council.
- Work has commenced to establish a Manager's Leadership forum and work is underway to develop a leadership vision and an aligned development programme to support and empower manager's to deliver that vision. Wider business unit skill gaps will be assessed once business unit reviews are complete and staff have been recruited for the posts.
- The Council introduced a new Managing Organisational Change policy which is more holistic and considers how to manage change and the impact on our people. Managers also received training on this at the time of launching the new policy.
- A Manager and Senior Leadership Team Development Programme was agreed and is now in place.
- The Leadership Competency Framework was developed and implemented during 2016 to signal to the organisation the expected behaviours and skills that would be valued. The Competency Framework has now been extended for all staff. A communications plan to publicise the Competency Framework to staff has been developed and agreed and will link to the Council's employer brand.
- As part of the Council's response to COVID-19 we have prioritised key roles for recruitment and these processes are continuing remotely with interviews taking place through video conferencing.

Information regarding continued enhancement activity proposed for 2020/21 and timeline for delivery is reflected on page 33).

In addition, the following governance activity pertaining to best practice has also been delivered:

- The Council adopted the charity Mind's Wellbeing Action Plan which helps individuals manage their mental health
- The Council's approach to sickness management was enhanced with the launch of First Care. This nurse led service provides advice and guidance on health concerns and informs managers of any sickness absence
- Council staff attended fraud awareness training in areas such as procurement and contract fraud, housing/tenancy fraud and identity fraud.
- An e-learning package for staff and Members to raise awareness of fraud as a risk is now available
- Stevenage Anti-Fraud Service Managers now form part of the Council's Corporate Governance Group and also sit on the Joint Action Group, which is a partnership of police and the Council, set up to tackle various low level but prolific or persistent offending
- A newly developed Learning and Development Module for staff is now available on the MyView system.

- A new Learning and Development Policy has been produced and a map of Learning and Development is currently being developed. Work is currently underway on a new Learning and Development Strategy.

Principle F: Managing Risks – The Council’s risk governance arrangements

Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management. Risk management, together with a strong system of financial management are integral parts of a performance management system and are crucial to the achievement of outcomes.

Summary of 2019/20 Review of Effectiveness:

Risk Management

The Council consider and counter risk across a broad range of areas. The Council has an approved Risk Management Policy and a Risk Management Guide is available to all employees. Strategic risks are linked to the Council’s priorities and the Strategic Risk Register is reviewed and monitored on a quarterly basis. Operational risks are also developed and monitored.

Figure 13: Risk Management Arrangements



A Corporate Risk Management Group meets quarterly to oversee and review the process and development of the Council’s approach to risk.

To support service delivery improvements, the Council welcomes constructive challenge as a result of scrutiny from internal/external audit activity, the work programme of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and other external review agencies and inspectorates.

The Shared Anti-Fraud Service’s annual Action Plan ensures compliance with the best practice issued by central government, National Audit Office and CIPFA. The Council has an Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy as well as a Whistle-blowing Policy. Data Protection and Information Security responsibilities for staff, and processes for the management of both electronic and manual records are also available.

Information Technology

The ability to identify and assimilate new technologies is an integral part of the Council’s aim to achieving its strategic objectives. The Council has a Shared IT service with East Herts which is responsible for developing the shared IT platform as well as delivering IT services. The shared service was established through a partnership agreement between the two Councils in 2013.

The Councils have established an Information Technology Steering Group (ITSG), which meets on a monthly basis and oversees the operation of the Shared IT Service. In addition, the Councils have

established an ICT Partnership Board, which also meets on a monthly basis and is responsible for the strategic direction of the service. Both the ITSG and the ICT Partnership Board include senior members of staff from both Councils.

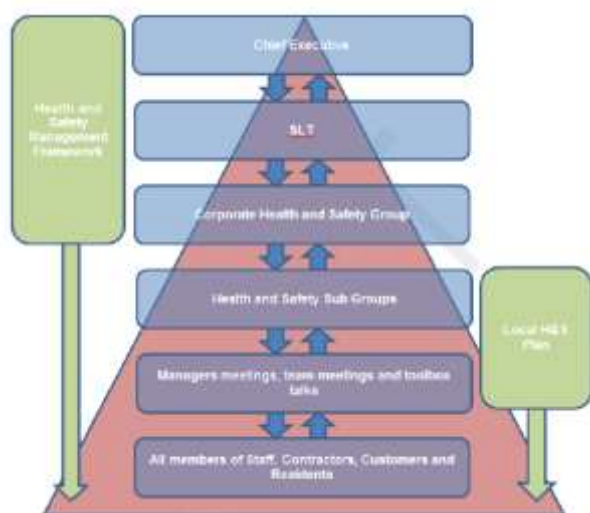
The IT Steering Group and the IT Programme Management Office function facilitates delivery of the projects that supports the Council's Future Town, Future Council programme and the Council's Business Unit reviews alongside the day to day IT service.

The IT service is committed to embracing new digital opportunities to better meet the needs of residents, achieve savings and transform services. A secure, resilient, effective and forward looking Technology Service is critical in delivering these aims.

A new ICT strategy and Road Map, approved in 2019/20 by both Council Stevenage Borough Council and East Herts District Council and provides a united vision for the ICT service over the next three years. The ICT Strategy articulates the ICT vision and objectives now and in the future. The Partnership vision is to create a modern, secure, resilient and transformational ICT service that drives and supports delivery of joined up services to customers through the effective use of technology.

Health and Safety

Figure 14: Council's Health and Safety Framework



To ensure and maintain corporate wide oversight and clarity on health and safety compliance and performance across the Council, a new corporate health and safety governance structure is in place that provides assurance to senior management that health and safety assessments and activity across the Council are being effectively managed. Assistant Directors have ensured that health and safety responsibilities at each level of management within their business units are clear. An ongoing schedule of review by Assistant Directors and internal/external peers is providing assurance that key health and safety risks are being suitably controlled while identifying areas where improvements can be made and including these into the ongoing action plan. Senior management representation on the Corporate

Health and Safety Group ensures the group is providing senior management with the assurances that are required. The Council has a complete database of health and safety risk assessments for all services and all Assistant Directors have carried out self-audits of their services.

The COVID-19 emergency, the most serious public health crisis in the UK for over a Century, has and will continue to present a challenge for the Council to ensure the health and safety of its staff, Members and customers. Risk assessments and appropriate measures and changes to service delivery arrangements have been put in place to ensure that the government restrictions and guidelines are adhered to throughout the crisis. This has included closure of buildings, cessation/limiting of services, provision of PPE to appropriate frontline staff, as well as other measures. Further work will be required to ensure that future Government guidance is reflected in the Council's working arrangements as the national and local position changes.

Business Continuity

The Council has business continuity plans for all of its key services and a Corporate Business Continuity Plan is in place to manage the corporate response to an incident. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak and to ensure business continuity of its essential services, the Council instigated an Incident Management Team which is co-ordinating the local emergency response

within Stevenage. This includes the establishment of eight response cells each led by an Assistant Director or senior Manager, which includes a Business Continuity Cell.

Information and Records Governance

New General Data Protection Regulations were approved by the EU Parliament on 14 April 2016 and were enforced on 25 May 2018. The primary objectives of the GDPR are to give citizens and residents back control of their personal data and to simplify the regulatory environment.

Overall responsibility for information management at the Council has been assigned to the Council's Information and Records Governance Manager, who is also the joint Data Protection Officer for both Stevenage and East Herts Councils since November 2019. The Council has a Corporate Information Governance Group in place, which oversees the Council's information governance arrangements.

The Council has identified and documented its information assets and data flows and developed an information asset register. The Council has an Information Management Policy and a Security Incident Management Policy which define the Council's procedures with regards to information governance and the management of data security incidents. Both of these policies are currently under review. Specific guidance on records management with defined responsibilities of information asset owners is also in development which will apply to all staff across the organisation. Document retention guidance has been produced and communicated to all members of staff, which includes a defined and enforced corporate records retention schedule in line with the requirement of the GDPR and good practice. There are also defined procedures in place for the disposal and destruction of information.

Progress of significant governance actions (2018/19 AGS) to facilitate compliance with the CIPFA/SOLACE Governance Framework:

Cyber Security and IT Resilience: Improvement activity has continued to ensure the Council's ICT and telephone systems continue to provide a secure and high performing ICT environment:

- A new ICT strategy and road map was approved by both Stevenage Borough Council and East Herts District Council.
- Migration of the Council's telephone system is now complete.
- A Security and Network Team has now been established.
- New email and website security software has been implemented to ensure outgoing emails are being encrypted.
- The shared service storage hardware has been replaced and 99% of the Council's systems and data are running on it. The remainder is scheduled to be transferred shortly.
- Work has commenced to upgrade from Windows 7 to Windows 10 on the latest version and VMware Horizon on new hardware. This will increase performance, in particular login times, and due to changes in the software structure will enable ICT to update systems with less impact on the entire Council.
- A project to install new network security and reporting tools has commenced.
- Microwave (resilient link) implementation is underway, which on completion will give a secondary link alongside a cable connection between both datacentres, meaning that if one of the connections is disrupted there will be no reduction in provision.
- Upgrading of Horizon VDI desktops has started and the project to install a microwave link between the data centres at Daneshill House and Cavendish Road is nearing completion.

Information regarding continued enhancement activity proposed for 2020/21 and timeline for delivery is reflected on page 33-34).





Arrangements reflect those summarised in the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance – No significant opportunities to enhance governance have been identified.

Corporate Governance Calendar 2019/20

The following corporate governance calendar on the next two pages summarises activity delivered throughout the year to ensure compliance with the corporate governance arrangements outlined in the Council's Local Code.

Corporate Governance Calendar April 2019 - September 2019 - this is not yet totally complete – not required for SLT approval – to be updated prior to Audit Committee upload






Apr 2019

-  Internal Audit of **Corporate Governance** arrangements achieves '**Good**' assurance for areas assessed
-  Internal Audit of **Risk Management** arrangements achieves '**Good**' assurance for areas assessed
-  **Corporate Governance Group** carried out a **review of Principle E** of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework
-  New **Local Development Scheme** agreed by Executive






May 2019

-  **Annual Council** agree the political management structure of the Council
-  **New Members** attend **induction programme**

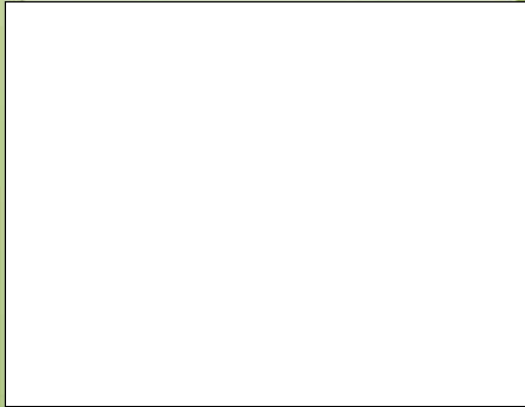
June 2019

-  **Audit Committee** recommended the **2018/19 AGS** to **Statement of Accounts Committee**
-  **Head of Assurance** confirms to Audit Committee the '**fitness for purpose**' of **internal audit** to carry out the work that informs the assurance opinion for 2019/20
-  **Twelve month review of shared Herts Home Improvement Agency** considered by Executive
-  Executive receives an update on the **Town Centre Regeneration Programme**
-  **Q4 Performance** reported to Executive

July 2019

-  **Annual Scrutiny Report** submitted to Council
-  **Council** appoints its new **Chief Executive**
-  **2018/19 Annual Report and Performance Review** approved by Executive
-  **2017/18 Statement of Accounts** reported to the Statement of Accounts Committee
-  **Corporate Governance Group** carried out a **review of Principles C and G** of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework

Aug 2019



Sep 2019

- Executive approves **General Fund and HRA MTFS 2019/20-2022/2023**
- Annual report of Shared **Anti-Fraud Service for 2018/19** to Audit Committee
- Annual report of **Shared Internal Audit Service for 2018/19** to Audit Committee
- Audit Committee consider **HHIA Audit report**

Corporate Governance Calendar October 2019 - March 2020

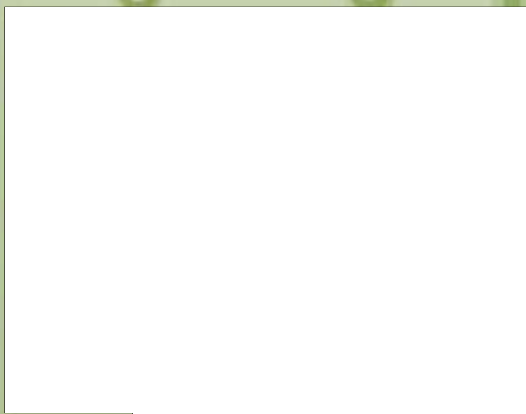
Oct 2019

- Council approves the **Annual Treasury Management Review of 2019/120 including prudential code**
- Corporate Governance Group** carried out a **review of Principles A and B** of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework

Nov 2019

- External Auditors** advise **Audit Committee** that the council's **financial statements give a true and fair view** of the financial position of the Council at 31 March 2019 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended
- New Strategic Director appointed





Dec 2019




Jan 2020

- Council approve the **Housing Revenue Account Final Budget Proposals, Rent Setting and Draft Council Tax Support Scheme 2020/21**
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the **2020/21 Draft Capital Forward Plan, Five Year Capital Strategy Update and 2020/21 Council Tax setting and General Fund Budget** for submission to Executive and Council

Feb 2020

	Council approves the 2020/21 Council Tax, General Fund and Capital budgets, and the Annual Treasury Management Strategy including Prudential Code Indicators 2020/21
	Members' Allowances Scheme 2020-21 approved at Council
	Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21 approved by Council
	Appointment Committee appoints new Strategic Director (Chief Finance Officer)

Mar 2020

	Quarter 3 Performance considered by Executive
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Planned Improvement Activity for 2020/21:

Significant internal control and governance issues identified as part of the 2019/20 review of the Governance Statement are summarised on page 4, identified in the relevant section throughout this Statement and set out in the following Action Plan.

Enhancement activity is deemed significant if recommended for reflection in the Annual Governance Statement by the Shared Internal Audit Service following reviews of control arrangements to meet the Audit Plan, or if identified as key to the management of 'very high/high level' strategic risks. By adopting this approach, any concerns over key controls that have a material effect on corporate governance arrangements and the associated delivery of priority outcomes should be addressed.

There are currently a few high level strategic risks where related mitigation activity is identified throughout this document as ongoing governance monitoring rather than as enhancement activity, such as:

- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan, (agreed by Executive November 2018 and reviewed and updated in December 2019) is under ongoing review to ensure a balanced HRA financial plan for the next 30 years, and to ensure there are sufficient HRA funds to support the Council's Housebuilding and Acquisitions Programme and the Housing Asset Management Strategy.

The HRA and General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategies and Capital Programme are under ongoing review to ensure finances remain robust in the long term and ensure the Council can deliver the ambitions set out in its Future Town Future Council Programme; deliver a once in a generation investment in the town, through town centre regeneration, housing development and investment in neighbourhoods and become financially self-sufficient. The General Fund and HRA Medium Term Financial Strategies and Capital Programme will need to be urgently reviewed to reflect the significant impact on the Council's financial situation as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

- Risks associated with the impact of Welfare Reform on the community and Council have been identified. The Council is continuing to assess potential impacts through business insight.

Action Ref	Action	Target Date
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Action Ref	Action	Target Date
1	<p>To implement the General Fund Asset Management Strategy the following activity is planned (AD Finance and Estates):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the review of the Council's commercial portfolio • Complete Local Asset reviews of the Council's current land and buildings to identify new opportunities for better use of existing buildings • Identify potential sites for release for sale and identify land for the Council's own house building programme 	<p>August 2020</p> <p>July 2020</p> <p>March 2021</p>
2	<p>To ensure good governance of the key regeneration projects including the Queensway and SG1 Schemes the following activity is planned (AD Regeneration)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued progress reporting on key projects to Housing Development and Regeneration Executive Committee • Anticipating the implementation of new partnership governance for regeneration schemes, as part of agreed GD3 funding package and new opportunities indicated in Town Deal prospectus • Continuation of the partnership governance arrangements between SBC and Mace; and Queensway Limited Liability Partnership and Reef • Implementation of recommendations arising from the internal audit review of Regeneration Programme Management • Continued internal programme reporting via FTFC Programme Board • Continued monthly and quarterly reporting with Hertfordshire LEP, in addition to Stevenage Borough Council financial reporting to track LEP related expenditure 	<p>Ongoing to March 2021</p> <p>March 2021</p> <p>Ongoing to March 2021</p> <p>September 2020</p> <p>Ongoing to March 2021</p> <p>Ongoing to March 2021</p>
3	<p>To ensure that the Shared Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency (HHIA) service, operated by Hertfordshire County Council, can deliver its financial targets in the medium term, as well as ensure that minimum key standards are being met, enhance its governance structure and ensure the HHIA Board is offering value for money, the following, the following activity is planned by Hertfordshire County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the current business continuity and succession planning arrangements to ensure the service can continue to function in the absence of key officers • Further training to be provided to HHIA staff to ensure the case management system is completed and updated and carry out regular data quality checks to obtain assurance that records are updated in an accurate and timely manner • Enhance financial monitoring and reporting • Enhance performance monitoring and reporting 	<p>May 2020</p> <p>May 2020</p> <p>May 2020</p> <p>May 2020</p>

Action Ref	Action	Target Date
4	<p>New for 2020/21: To ensure there is a clear governance structure through a corporate landlord function and ensure compliance of the Council's non-housing property, a review of the current arrangements and responsibilities for managing non-housing property is required. This will be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the new action plan (informed by a recent CIPFA review) to implementation of a new Corporate Landlord function. The action plan has been informed by a recent CIPFA review to conduct a high level review of the corporate landlord function through a review of documentation and interviews with key stakeholders. CIPFA's findings will provide options on the structure of a new corporate landlord model Produce a preferred model for provision of the compliance contract 	<p>???</p> <p>???</p>
5	<p>New for 2020/21: To ensure that the Council's ambitious commercial agenda can be achieved, a programme of work is required to enhance the capacity, information, financial and legal skills of statutory officers and elected members involved in complex investment or commercial decision making. This will be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of a Commercial Manager Development and approval of a Commercial Strategy A programme of training 	<p>April 2020</p> <p>September 2020</p> <p>???</p>
6	<p>New for 2020/21: In response to the COVID-19 crisis and to ensure the Council can reinstate and continue to deliver services, continue to meet its FTFC ambitions and aims and enable recovery from the effect of the virus in the town, the following action is planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out a review of the General Fund and HRA Medium Term Financial strategies in light of the financial pressures arising from the COVID-19 emergency Carry out a review the Council's Capital programme Carry out a review of the FTFC Programme to help identify which planned projects can be delivered in the year or where necessary adapted. Produce and implement a town wide Recovery Plan Produce and implement an internal Stevenage Borough Council Recovery Plan 	<p>June 2020</p> <p>June 2020</p> <p>June 2020</p> <p>June 2020</p> <p>June 2020</p>
7	<p>To ensure there is corporate capacity to deliver sustainable services that meet the needs of customers, the following activity is planned (All Assistant Directors):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through strategic workforce planning, undertake skills/capacity gap analysis and put in place targeted management and staff development activity in response. Introduce tools and techniques to manage change effectively whilst maximising levels of staff engagement 	<p>June 2020</p> <p>June 2020</p>

Action Ref	Action	Target Date
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop communication/engagement strategies that enable all staff to have a clear understanding of organisational direction and the desired culture, behaviours and ways of working • Continue to implement the restructure of services through Future Council Business Reviews • Recruit to a number of key posts across the Council to enhance capacity and key skill requirements 	<p>June 2020</p> <p>June 2020</p> <p>June 2020</p>
8	<p>To enhance IT infrastructure, cyber security, governance arrangements, policy framework and resilience the Shared IT service to continue to develop and implement a strategy and programme of activity as follows: (AD Digital and Transformation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizon VDI Upgrade to be carried out to improve resilience resulting in 100% of desktops being available at each data centre, allowing the ability to resolve issues without down time. • Update the ICT Disaster Recovery Plan to reflect new infrastructure and arrangements • Install a secondary microwave link between the Council's two data centres to almost eliminate chances of link breakage and therefore ICT interruption. • Replacement of the Council's firewalls • Implementation of controls and management tools to monitor and control the ICT network • Replace Windows 2008 to Windows 2019 	<p>June 2020</p> <p>September 2020</p> <p>September 2020</p> <p>September 2020</p> <p>September 2020</p> <p>September 2020</p>
9	<p>To continue to enhance and embed information and records governance to ensure that best practice records management across the Council continues to be applied and customer data is stored securely and appropriately managed the following activity is planned: (AD Digital and Transformation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of data discovery tool to identify all relevant personal data and allow decisions to be made regarding the processes and procedures for teams handling this data. • Continue the review of data sharing arrangements with local authority partners and public agencies to reflect GDPR requirements on information sharing obligations • Update supplier agreement which involve the processing of personal data in line with GDP requirement 	<p>Currently on hold</p> <p>June 2020</p> <p>June 2020</p>
10	<p>To continue to ensure health and safety compliance and performance across the Council the following activity is planned: (AC Corporate Services and Transformation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A monitor of all corporate high health and safety risks to be produced for review by the Strategic Health and Safety Group and monthly HR meetings • The Council's Senior Leadership Team to receive Institution of Occupational Safety and Health training • Implement revised health and safety arrangements in line with 	<p>March 2021</p> <p>November 2020</p>

Action Ref	Action	Target Date
	COVID-19 Government guidelines and restrictions for staff, Members and customers	June 2020

Approval of Statement:

Approval of Statement by Chief Executive and Leader of the Council

We have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by the Strategic Leadership Team, relevant officers and the Audit Committee, and that the arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework. Areas to enhance the governance framework already addressed are summarised in this Annual Governance Statement. Areas to be addressed and ensure continuous improvement are set out in the table above on pages 31-34.

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters, to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed
Date
Cllr Sharon Taylor
Leader of Stevenage Borough Council

Signed
Date
Matthew Partridge
Chief Executive of Stevenage Borough Council