

DECISION RECORD ¹

Officer Key Decisions are subject to the Council's Call-In Procedure (Part 4 of the Council's Constitution [Part 4e - Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules](#))

Subject: Allocation of Towns Funding to appoint contractor to install pedestrian crossing of St Georges Way.	
Staff Contact: Ross Hughes Email: ross.hughes@stevenage.gov.uk	Cabinet Member: Councillor Richard Henry Portfolio: Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Transforming Stevenage, Communications, Strategic Partnerships, and Devolution.

1. **Decision**

To deliver the pedestrian crossing along St George's Way via Towns Fund allocation, linking the Town Centre to the new Leisure Centre, by directly contracting with Ringway through Hertfordshire County Council's Agency Framework, instead of through the land deal with Reef/UBS on the sale of Forum car park.

2. **Reasons for the decision**

The proposed Puffin Crossing on St George's Way has been a longstanding ambition to provide a safe, accessible and direct pedestrian link between the town centre and the new Stevenage Leisure Centre when it opens in 2028. It was included in Reef/UBS's proposals and planning consent for the Assembly Life Science proposals as part of the S278 works. It was anticipated that the crossing would be completed by Reef/UBS in time for the closure of the existing parking facilities at the Swimming Pool. Recognising its importance in linking the town centre with the new Leisure Facilities, the Council committed as part of the sale of the Forum car park to contribute a total of £350,000 towards the cost of the crossing from Towns Fund allocations.

However, due to significant fluctuations in the Life Science investment market, Reef/UBS have been unable to secure their first tenant which would have kickstarted construction.

The delivery of the crossing has become increasingly important due to the temporary closure of the Swimming Centre car park, the closure serving as a construction compound while works are underway for the new Leisure Centre.

The crossing will provide a vital and safe route for users of the Swimming Centre travelling from alternative town centre car parks, including those parking at The Forum. This is especially critical for Blue Badge holders, families, and users with reduced mobility, ensuring that accessible routes are available within a short and logical walking distance.

The crossing will:

- Improve pedestrian and cycle safety along a busy distributor route.
- Strengthen connectivity between the town centre and key community infrastructure.
- Support inclusive access in accordance with equalities and accessibility objectives.
- Enhance overall town centre permeability and legibility.
- Encourage sustainable travel choices by making walking and cycling safer and more attractive.

As the crossing is critical for the above and Reef/UBS are not in a position to deliver immediately, Officers wish to utilise Hertfordshire County Council's Agency Framework to appoint Ringway as an approved highways contractor with established experience in delivering works on the county highway network. This ensures:

- Compliance with Hertfordshire County Council highway standards.
- Reduced procurement risk and programme certainty.
- Value for money through an existing framework arrangement.
- Clear allocation of design and construction responsibility under a Design & Build approach.

The approach provides confidence that the crossing can be delivered within the early stages of the construction programme while the Swimming Centre parking facilities are closed, and supports the future opening and ongoing operation of the new Leisure Centre, while maintaining appropriate quality and safety standards.

The scheme will continue to be funded through Towns Fund; the only change is Officers are directly delivering rather than through Reef/UBS. Reef/UBS have provided a letter of comfort which releases the Council of the obligations to contribute £350,000 as the crossing will have been delivered.

3. **Alternative options considered and rejected** ²

Option 1 – Wait for Reef/UBS's scheme, and do not award the contract directly

This option is not recommended.

The Forum scheme is unlikely to start on site in the next year, yet the start of the construction of the Leisure Centre and closure of parking is to begin imminently prior to the crossing in place, if at all. Failure to deliver the crossing would:

- Disproportionately affect Blue Badge holders and those with mobility impairments.
- Reduce safe and convenient access between the town centre and the current Swimming Pool.
- Increase the likelihood of informal or unsafe crossing movements along St George's Way.
- Undermine the Council's wider town centre regeneration and infrastructure objectives.

Without the crossing, pedestrian connectivity would be significantly weaker to the current Swimming Pool and in the future the Leisure Centre is intended to act as a major anchor destination within the town centre.

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4. **Consultation**

N/A

5. **Following consultation with, and the concurrence of the Cabinet Member, I am proceeding with the proposed decision.**

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. M.', written over a horizontal line.

Title: Director of Regeneration Date: 17th March 2026

6. **PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED/SIGNED FORM TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES FOR PUBLICATION**

¹ for guidance see Borough Solicitor's note "Taking Decisions"

² details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the officer at the time the decision was made