Council Performance & Budget Summary

August 2020

The performance summary outlines trends in information the Council uses to monitor service delivery. It shows performance against relevant targets.

Recommendation

That Cabinet notes the Council Performance and Budget Summary (August 2020).

Due to the circumstances surrounding the outbreak of **Covid-19** and the declaration of a 'major incident' by the Hertfordshire Local Resilience Forum in line with UK Government guidelines, the Council and its contractors/partners are not operating on a 'business as usual' basis. Changes to service delivery are reflected in this report.

Commentary

The table below provides commentary for indicators giving more detailed explanation, and any action the Council is taking to improve performance where appropriate.

	Measure	Comments
R	Forecast budget variance at the Year End (General Fund for year in question)	Income levels have been increasing though they remain at about 50% of budget for the service areas most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Without the Government income guarantee scheme, the forecast is for an overspend of £3.7m. After taking account of the scheme (which applies for 2020/21) the overspend is forecast to be approximately £1.5m. The final position will vary depending on how the Council's income levels stabilise over the remaining months of the year.
R	Average time to re-let dwellings (excluding temporary accommodation) (cumulative, April to March) (days)	During August, 25 properties were let. Of these, 12 were 'elderly designated' which the team were unable to let during the lockdown period. The void (empty property) turnaround figure is based on the average turnaround time for voids once they are actually let (the average 'key to key' time). As a result of the lockdown and applicants shielding, a significant number of properties could not be viewed or let between March and July. These properties have now been let but the increased turnaround time reflects how long they were empty over lockdown. There remain a number of properties which became void before or during lockdown and which are awaiting allocation or sign-up. The number of properties ready to let and awaiting allocation has reduced from 39 in July to 23 in August. This is because more applicants have been coming out of shielding and can sign their new tenancies. Of the 23 properties that were 'void' on 31 August: • 15 were 'general needs' properties;

	Measure	Comments
		• 6 were 'elderly designated' properties; • 2 properties had a 'local lettings' policy which restricts the 'pool' of available applicants.
A	Number of voids over 3 months	There has been a small reduction in the number of properties empty ('void') for over 3 months. All these properties are ready to let although some have required extensive works to be carried out and have only recently become ready to re-let. The impact of 'elderly designated' properties not being let because of the pandemic, and refusal of property offers, has resulted in properties being left empty for over 3 months.
G	Number of properties let	There was a 39% increase in the number of properties let between July and August. This is because the large number of properties which were advertised in early-to-mid-July are being allocated, verified and offered.
R	Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due	Throughout the lockdown period, rent arrears have been monitored daily. While the figures are, on average, now markedly higher than before the lockdown began in March, the peak in August (6.20%) was slightly lower than the peak in July (6.43%). It could be that the re-opening of courts and related publicity has encouraged some tenants to pay their rent arrears. Further information is appended to this report.
R	Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks)	The average length of stay in temporary accommodation has increased slightly as properties are now being let to both applicants on the housing register and homeless households. As the pool of properties available to households in temporary accommodation is reduced, the length of stay increases.
G	Percentage of planning applications not determined (within time limits or agreed timescale)	Improvements to the planning system have helped to increase the productivity of staff who are working remotely. As a result, the percentage of applications not determined in time has decreased to below the 25% target. Officers will continue to focus on determining applications in time to maintain performance at the target. Additional signoff and mentoring support is planned to support this.
G	Number of planning applications that have not been determined in time (at end of month)	As anticipated in last month's Performance Report, an experienced contractor has assisted in reducing the backlog of expired planning applications to 39. Managers will continue to focus on reducing the level of out of time cases further where possible through one-to-ones and redistribution of casework.
G	Parking Penalty Charge Notices issued	The number of Parking Penalty Charge Notices issued has returned to pre-pandemic levels. Enforcement has been fully operational since 1 July.
R	Fly-tipping incidents	There was an increase in the number of fly-tipping incidents in August. This is due to incidents that have included vehicle waste (i.e. tyres and oil cans) and household goods. The Council's contractor, Veolia, continues to operate the clean-up service as usual. Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) has noted a reduction in queuing times at the Household Waste Recycling Centres in or close to the District. However, long queues continue to form at

	Measure	Comments
		the St Albans site. In August, HCC introduced additional traffic control on the entry road. There were several fly-tipping 'hotspot' areas within the District during August: Lybury Lane Potters Crouch Lane Punch Bowl Lane Nashes Farm Lane Watery Lane Between M1 junctions 6a – 7 Blunts Lane Hogg End Lane The Slype Cory Wright Way CCTV is in operation on several of these sites and the Council will seek to prosecute offenders wherever possible.
	Recycling rate	The recycling rate for August 2020 was 62.4% - slightly lower than the reported figure for August 2019 (63.8%). This is attributable to a change in Hertfordshire County Council's monthly accounting period for August. The balance is likely to be redressed in September when the reported figure should be relatively higher.

Key

The performance information colour coding relates to the measure's target or trend.
For indicators with a target: Green is where a target is achieved, Amber is up to 10% worse than target and Red is worse than 10% from target. For indicators with trend analysis: Green highlights an improved performance; Red a worse performance.

Contact: Thomas Wrench, National Management Trainee
(Thomas.Wrench@stalbans.gov.uk)

Council Performance & Budget Summary
August 2020

St Albans City & District Council

		Bigger or Smaller is Better	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	TARGET
Finance	Forecast budget variance at the year end (General Fund for year in question)	Smaller	0.8%	2.7%	1.9%	1.3%	-0.1%	-0.5%	-0.5%	1.6%	23.0%	25.0%	25.0%	19.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Housing	Average time to re-let dwellings (excluding temporary accommodation) (cumulative, Apr-Mar) (days)	Smaller	65	77	67	61	74	69	69	63.5	60	71	81.2	78	80	26
	Number of voids over 26-day target (but below 90 days)	Smaller	29	26	24	19	13	21	29	21	18	27	16	20	10	Trend
	Number of voids over 3 months	Smaller	25	14	15	16	14	8	8	8	11	17	19	15	14	Trend
	Number of properties let	Bigger	15	27	20	29	17	17	13	23	12	15	23	18	25	Trend
	Void properties as a percentage of total stock	Smaller	1.60%	1.20%	1.30%	0.95%	1.01%	1.01%	1.00%	0.74%	0.93%	1.10%	1.04%	0.92%	0.71%	1%
	Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due	Smaller	4.1%	4.5%	4.0%	3.8%	3.6%	3.8%	4.1%	4.3%	4.5%	5.0%	5.1%	5.7%	5.6%	5%†
	Percentage of tenants in receipt of Universal Credit	Smaller	14.2%	14.9%	15.4%	15.8%	16.3%	16.6%	17.2%	17.7%	20.8%	22.5%	23.2%	23.9%	24.5%	
	Number of households in temporary accommodation	Smaller	132	132	130	129	129	125	131	129	133	124	116	116	104	Trend
	Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks)	Smaller	29.7	24	27	29	29.9	29	27.2	28	30.7	32.5	33.6	30.5	32	Trend
	Percentage of repairs completed within target	Bigger	97%	96%	97%	94%	94%	93%	94%	93%	95%	97%	92%	95%	93%	95%
	Percentage of repairs completed at first visit	Bigger	92%	88%	88%	89%	90%	88%	85%	89%	91%	95%	92%	94%	92%	80%
	Total number of households in receipt of Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax support		6,579	6,577	6,531	6,527	6,521	6,522	6,507	6,827	7,143	7,284	7,324	7,383	7,368	
	Days to process Housing Benefit new claims (12 month average)	Smaller	15.2	15.1	15.1	15.1	14.8	14.6	14.6	14.3	13.6	13.1	13.5	13.0	13.3	21
	Days to process Housing Benefit change in circumstances (12 month average)	Smaller	5.2	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.6	4.6	4.5	6
Planning & Building Control	Planning and Building Control applications received (including pre-app, trees and condition discharge)		383	371	478	393	340	445	418	391	327	304	451	456	402	
	Percentage of Council's planning decisions supported at appeal (cumulative 12 month)	Bigger	78%	81%	85%	86%	87%	88%	88%	92%	76%	78%	80%	78%	80%	66%
	Percentage of planning applications not determined (within time limits or agreed timescale)	Smaller	29%	26%	22%	19%	13%	29%	21%	30%	18%	35%	28%	31%	24%	25%
	Number of planning applications that have not been determined in time (at end of month)	Smaller	96	75	52	53	29	74	50	54	23	65	54	46	39	40
Community Services	Parking Penalty Charge Notices issued	Smaller	1,035	738	624	976	776	861	877	876	36	89	488	1,011	867	Trend
	Percentage of Parking Penalty Charge Notices paid three months previously	Bigger									81%	83%	75%	19%	64%	TBD
	Number of spoiled Parking Penalty Charge Notices	Smaller									0	3	1	11	3	TBD
	Percentage of spoiled Parking Penalty Charge Notices against the total number of Notices issued	Smaller									0.00%	3.37%	0.20%	1.09%	0.35%	Less than 1%
	Parking Enforcement Officer deployed hours	Bigger									1,175	1,158	996	1,086	1,045	TBD
	Fly-tipping incidents (latest month data provisional)	Smaller	62	56	69	70	43	43	41	48	58	81	95	52	74	Year-on-year trend
	Number of missed waste collections per 100,000 (latest month data provisional)	Smaller	33	28	26	26	26	29	29	19	20	18	30	23	32	32
External	Claimant count	Smaller	1,335	1,350	1,400	1,405	1,410	1,410	1,500	1,465	2,440	3,765	3,650	3,735	3,830	****

† Quarterly target to reflect seasonal variation.

^ Data subject to ONS revisions.

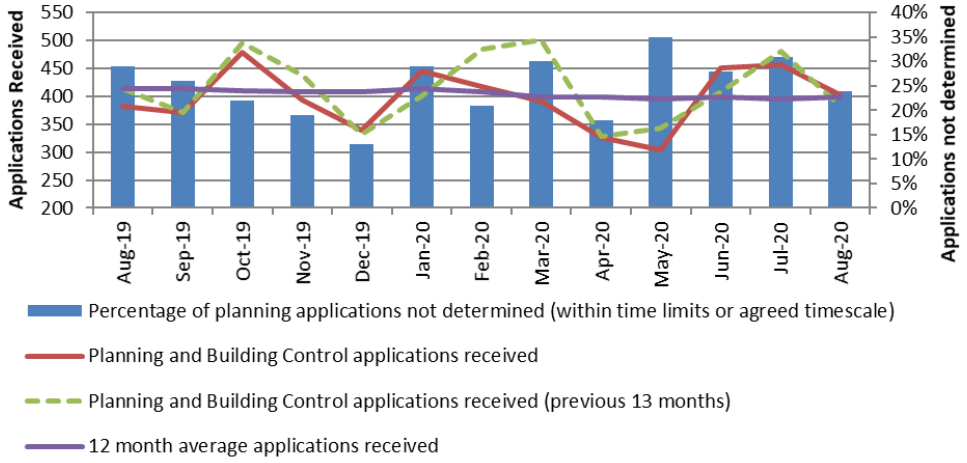
****ONS Experimental Indicator – may not accurately reflect labour market.

TBD: Indicator static target or trend to be determined.

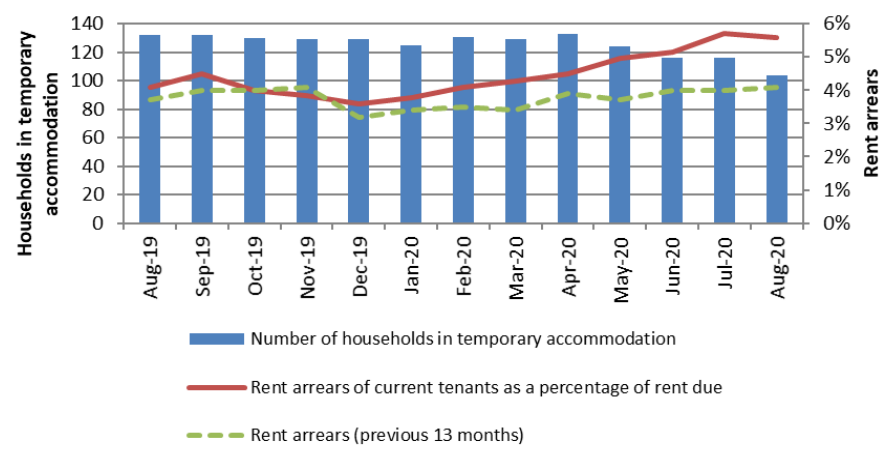
Council Performance & Budget Summary
August 2020

St Albans City & District Council

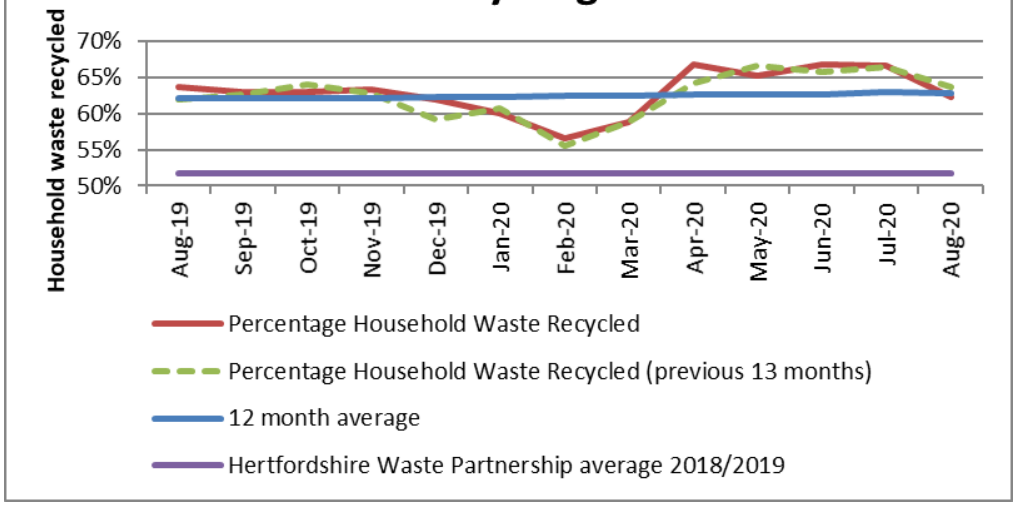
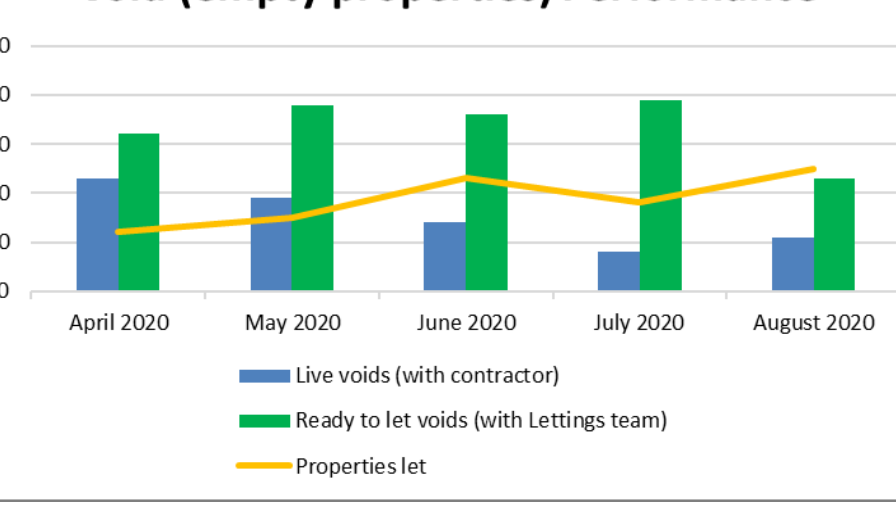
Planning & Building Control



Housing



Recycling



Void (empty properties) Performance