

# Council Performance & Budget Summary

April 2020



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

## Recommendation

That Cabinet notes the Council Performance and Budget Summary (April 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.

New performance indicators have been added to the Performance Report.

	Measure	Comments
R	Forecast budget variance at the year end (General Fund for year in question)	The Council has incurred some additional costs due to the Covid-19 pandemic but the predominant financial effect is on income. The Council loses about £150k a week during lockdown. As lockdown is eased, this loss will reduce but it is not yet clear what level income will stabilise at. If there is a second lockdown in the 2020-2021 financial year, and outside of lockdown periods income stabilises at 80% of budget, the overall position even after the £1.5m of Government grant recently given is an overspend of £3.3m, 23% of the net budget. For comparison, if there is only one lockdown, income stabilises at 90% and the Council receives an additional £300k grant, the overall position will be an overspend of £1.1m.
R	Average time to re-let dwellings (excluding temporary accommodation) (days)	<p>There has been another decrease in the void (empty property) turnaround time despite the current Covid-19 restrictions.</p> <p>Figures for the void indicators include both the time taken by the contractor to complete works and the time taken to let the property.</p> <p>An increasing number of properties are ready to let but some tenants have been unable to move because of the pandemic. The Council continues to make allocations to accepted homeless households or urgent management-related cases only. Despite this, there have been a number of refusals on some hard to let properties. There were 12 lettings completed in April.</p> <p>There are 32 properties with the Lettings Team which are ready to let. Of these:            3 have been set aside for temporary accommodation;            6 are elderly designated (so will remain unoccupied);            3 are covered by a Local Lettings Policy;            19 are for general needs awaiting allocation;</p>

		<p>1 will be returned to contractors for some additional works.</p> <p>23 re-let void properties and a further 9 buyback properties acquired in the latter part of March are currently with the contractor for works. This includes 17 new voids in April.</p> <p>Of these, there are five voids which have some utility issues. Three require a gas meter change and two properties have considerable debts. The contractor is working to resolve this.</p> <p>A delay in changing meters was caused by the utility provider which had stopped undertaking this work in empty properties. A similar issue was experienced with National Grid, which deals with supply.</p> <p>We have noticed an increase in the number of tenant deaths which could lead to a higher than usual number of voids in the coming months. The current restrictions on movement have prevented relatives clearing out properties quickly.</p> <p>The contractor has reported difficulties in obtaining materials – particularly plasterboard and glass – so works on some void properties will be delayed. This will improve once the lock-down eases, and the supply chain is re-established.</p>
G	Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due	<p>Rent arrears have increased again this month due to the impact of Covid-19. Several tenants have made Universal Credit claims and the Council is awaiting payment. The number of tenants in receipt of Universal Credit is 1,032 – an increase of 156 since last month. Claimants who are self-employed will not receive any payment until June.</p> <p>At the end of April, the outstanding arrears amounted to £1.4m. The amount attributable to Universal Credit is £769,158. The number of cases has stabilised between 2,400 and 2,600. The Housing Income team is contacting tenants to offer support and enquire about their payment plans, but some tenants are not responding to calls. A special letter is being sent to those tenants urging them to contact us. The Council is now using a texting service which has helped to improve communication with tenants.</p> <p>It is expected that the rent arrears figure will continue to increase over the coming months. Consequently, the Council's new quarterly target will be adjusted accordingly.</p>

A	Number of households in temporary accommodation	There has been a slight increase in the figure reported since March. This is due to the demands placed on temporary accommodation during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. This includes the placement of some rough sleepers.
R	Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks)	An increase in this figure is related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Allocations and viewing of properties were suspended for a short period. These were resumed on a managed basis for homeless households in accordance with Government guidance.
G	Percentage of repairs completed within target	<p>Earlier this year, the Council's first annual review of Morgan Sindall's performance and targets took place. It was agreed that the indicator target should be adjusted. The strategic core group agreed a target of 95% (previously 99%). This is more appropriate for the customer time frame. Repairs can be completed outside the target time if it is more convenient for the customer.</p> <p>Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Morgan Sindall has been undertaking emergency repairs only. This has reduced the overall number of orders raised. The contractor has been proactive in completing these work orders.</p>
G	Percentage of planning applications not determined (within time limits or agreed timescale)	The decrease in application numbers and work undertaken to redistribute applications across the team has resulted in an improvement to the percentage of applications determined within time this month. Senior officers continue to monitor caseloads and individual officer performance in order to maintain this trend.
G	Number of planning applications that have not been determined in time (at end of month)	Along with a reduction in numbers, officers have worked hard to reduce the number of out of time applications. This is reflected in April's performance. Two secondments to Planning Officer level have been offered to Graduate Planning Officers. This increase in the number of officers who can handle more complex applications has built team resilience and facilitated a reduction in out of time applications.
	Parking Penalty Charge Notices issued	<p>Since late March 2020, on-street parking restrictions were eased throughout St Albans District to help key workers and residents during the Covid-19 crisis. To reflect this change in circumstances, a RAG rating has not been assigned to the figure for this indicator.</p> <p>Civil enforcement officers have been instructed only to take action against unsafe or inconsiderate parking. Their focus has been on protecting disabled bays, stopping driveways from being blocked and preventing dangerous parking near junctions. In addition, civil enforcement officers have ensured that roads remain clear enough for refuse trucks and emergency vehicles to get through. Maintaining access to loading bays and carparks has also been prioritised.</p>

G	Fly-tipping incidents	<p>While fly-tipping is down from the same period last year, the number of incidents has increased over the last month.</p> <p>Hertfordshire County Council's waste and recycling centres were closed throughout April due to Covid-19 restrictions which may have had a bearing.</p> <p>It was agreed at the April Cabinet meeting that Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) of up to £300 will be issued for an extended range of fly-tipping offences in St Albans District. Issuing FPNs rather than prosecuting offenders avoids lengthy and costly court proceedings, potentially saving the Council both time and money.</p> <p>In a further move to combat fly-tipping, Cabinet agreed to the purchase of three mobile smart cameras that can be deployed at hotspots.</p>
G	Number of missed waste collections per 100,000 (latest month data provisional)	<p>During the Covid-19 crisis, the Council's waste contractor, Veolia, has maintained a fully operational waste collection service throughout the District.</p>
	Recycling Rate	<p>The Covid-19 'lockdown', combined with the closure of the local household waste recycling centres managed by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), has resulted in a significant increase in the total monthly household waste collected within the St Albans District during April. Household waste, across all collections, increased by around 21% compared to April last year. The Council's contractor, Veolia, has maintained a full collection service during this period. Crews have worked hard to collect the significant increase in household material intended for recycling and disposal. Despite an overall increase in waste, recycling levels have increased, with a 2.2% improvement in recycling performance compared to April 2019.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> From 11 May, HCC reopened some of the household waste recycling centres in the District on a phased basis.</p>

### 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

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	Bigger or Smaller is Better	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	TARGET	
Finance	Forecast budget variance at the year end (General Fund for year in question)	Smaller	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	-0.5%	0.8%	2.7%	1.9%	1.3%	-0.1%	-0.5%	-0.5%	1.6%	23.0%	0.0%
Housing	Average time to re-let dwellings (excluding temporary accommodation) (days)	Smaller	27	28	35	54	65	77	67	61	74	69	63.5	60	26	
	Number of voids over target	Smaller	47	51	22	19	29	26	24	19	13	21	29	21	18	26
	Number of voids over 3 months	Smaller	20	24	25	33	25	14	15	16	14	8	8	8	11	Trend
	Number of properties let	Bigger													12	Trend
	Void properties as a percentage of total stock	Smaller													0.90%	1%
	Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due	Smaller	3.9%	3.7%	4.0%	4.0%	4.1%	4.5%	4.0%	3.8%	3.6%	3.8%	4.1%	4.3%	4.5%	5%+
	Percentage of tenants in receipt of Universal Credit	Smaller	12.5%	12.9%	13.3%	13.9%	14.2%	14.9%	15.4%	15.8%	16.3%	16.6%	17.2%	17.7%	20.8%	
	Number of households in temporary accommodation	Smaller	127	130	130	140	132	132	130	129	129	125	131	129	133	Trend
	Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks)	Smaller	30	32	31.3	28	29.7	24	27	29	29.9	29	27.2	28	30.7	Trend
	Percentage of repairs completed within target	Bigger	94%	93%	89%	95%	97%	96%	97%	94%	94%	93%	94%	93%	95%	95%
	Percentage of repairs completed at first visit	Bigger	93%	87%	91%	92%	92%	88%	88%	89%	90%	88%	85%	89%	91%	80%
	Total number of households in receipt of Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax support		6,580	6,605	6,614	6,588	6,579	6,577	6,531	6,527	6,521	6,522	6,507	6,827	7,143	
	Days to process Housing Benefit new claims (12 month average)	Smaller	14.6	15.0	14.9	15.3	15.2	15.1	15.1	15.1	14.8	14.6	14.6	14.3	13.6	21
	Days to process Housing Benefit change in circumstances (12 month average)	Smaller	6.0	5.6	5.6	4.2	5.2	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	6
Planning & Building Control	Planning and Building Control applications received (including pre-app, trees and condition discharge)		328	344	409	480	383	371	478	393	340	445	418	391	327	
	Percentage of Council's planning decisions supported at appeal (cumulative 12 month)	Bigger	69%	72%	72%	76%	78%	81%	85%	86%	87%	88%	88%	92%	76%	66%
	Percentage of planning applications not determined (within time limits or agreed timescale)	Smaller	14%	29%	30%	29%	29%	26%	22%	19%	13%	29%	21%	30%	18%	25%
	Number of planning applications that have not been determined in time (at end of month)	Smaller	55	70	73	70	96	75	52	53	29	74	50	54	23	40
Community Services	Parking Penalty Charge Notices issued	Smaller	1,320	1,177	961	894	1,035	738	624	976	776	861	877	876	36	Trend
	Percentage of Parking Penalty Charge Notices paid three months previously	Bigger													81%	TBD
	Number of spoiled Parking Penalty Charge Notices	Smaller													0	TBD
	Percentage of spoiled Parking Penalty Charge Notices against the total number of Notices issued	Smaller													0.00%	Less than 1%
	Parking Enforcement Officer deployed hours	Bigger													1,175	TBD
	Fly-tipping incidents (latest month data provisional)	Smaller	80	69	68	103	62	56	69	70	43	43	41	48	58	Year-on-year trend
Number of missed waste collections per 100,000 (latest month data provisional)	Smaller	32	29	34	27	33	28	26	26	26	29	29	19	20	32	
External	Claimant count	Smaller	1,215	1,225	1,275	1,320	1,335	1,350	1,400	1,405	1,410	1,410	1,500	1,465	2,440 <sup>^</sup>	****

\*\*\*\*ONS Experimental Indicator – may not accurately reflect labour market.  
 † Data subject to adjustment.  
<sup>^</sup> Data subject to ONS revisions.  
 + Quarterly target to reflect seasonal variation.

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