

Council Performance & Budget Summary

January 2021



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 (January 2021).

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 currently operating on a 'business as usual' basis.

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)	<p>The most significant financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Council remains pressure on income. The net overspend for the Council for the year is £4.8m. This is worse than last month by £1.1m and represents c. 26% of the annual budget. The main reasons for the change are reductions to forecast Parking income since Lockdown 3 was implemented, along with the discontinuation of the Harpenden Estate acquisition.</p> <p>This is before the calculation of Central Government's Income Guarantee and Covid-19 general grant. After taking these grants into account, the latest Forecast Outturn for the General Fund is a net spend of £1.1m over budget.</p>
R	Average time to re-let dwellings (excluding temporary accommodation) (cumulative, April to March) (days)	<p>The void (empty property) turnaround figure is based on the average time it takes to turn around empty properties for re-let (cumulative, April to March) (the average 'key to key' time). This fell again in January and will reset in April.</p> <p>This improvement is reflected in the void turnaround figure for the month which was 40 days. This takes into account the 11-day period between 24 December and 4 January when there were no new lettings with tenants, understandably, preferring to move after the Christmas period.</p> <p>There were 28 outstanding re-let voids at the end of the month. Of these, 11 were with the contractor for works (8 having come in during the last week of the month), and 17 were with the lettings team for allocation. Of the 17, 13 were age restricted, (12 being the elderly designated flats at the new development at Warner House) and 4 general needs properties.</p>

	Measure	Comments
		There were 21 lettings in January.
A	Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks)	The number of households in temporary accommodation remains steady. Due to the Covid housing legislation there are complex cases with 'move on pathways' that have yet to be finalised. This has led to some lack of movement and some cases which are pending legal action. It is not currently possible to evict anyone from temporary accommodation due to the ban on evictions from all rented properties (not just temporary accommodation). This could be individuals who have rent arrears or who have caused anti-social behaviour, or it may be that the Council no longer has a duty to accommodate them.
R	Percentage of planning applications not determined (within time limits or agreed timescale)	The focus on reducing the backlog of applications awaiting validation is being closely monitored. Additional support is being provided by staff from other Planning and Building Control and Customer Services teams, to allow the Planning Technical Support Team to concentrate on validation. At the time of writing, the backlog has been further reduced to 142 applications which represents a delay of 12 days on 08 February 2021. This shows the improvement in the backlog is continuing. New staff have been appointed and the on-boarding process is underway with pre-employment checks in progress. It is hoped that the improvement trend will continue over the next two months and will show a betterment t in this indicator.
R	Number of planning applications that have not been determined in time (at end of month)	The reduction in the backlog of applications awaiting validation (outlined above) is generating higher caseloads for staff elsewhere in the team. As a result, at the current time, some applications still have consultation periods which expire after the 8-week statutory date has passed. Nevertheless, officers continue to ask for extensions of time from agents and applicants as a way of improving the percentage of planning applications being determined in time and reducing the number of applications that are undetermined and out of time. It is anticipated that this indicator will improve as the backlog of applications awaiting validation continues to decrease.
	Parking Penalty Charge Notices issued	Since the latest lockdown began, we've taken a sensible and supportive approach towards parking within the residential zones, resulting in a lower number of penalties issued. The RAG rating has been removed from the tracker to reflect this. We are still enforcing where necessary; this includes responding to hotline calls etc.
R	Percentage of spoiled Parking Penalty Charge Notices against the total number of Notices issued	The relatively high proportion of ruined notices is related to the low number of tickets issued. We also have new staff on the team which tends to lead to an increase in errors while they are learning the job.
R	Fly-tipping incidents	There were several fly-tipping hotspots during January, in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cherry Tree Lane; • Furze Bushes Lane; • Kennel Lane;

Measure	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kinsbourne Green Lane. <p>Most of the waste was builders/vehicle parts/white goods and household items.</p> <p>All three Household Waste Recycling Centres have remained open and the bulky waste service is running to capacity. The Council offers a bulky waste collection service for large household items weighing less than 100kg. An average of 240 collections are made each month. Further information about the service is available at: https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/bulky-items-collections</p>
Percentage Household Waste Recycled	The figure is down compared to the corresponding figure for January 2020 due to change in the way HCC accounts for the monthly tonnage of collected household waste. This is likely to be reversed in the recycling performance for the remainder of the final quarter.

Parking Services Civil Enforcement Officer Recruitment Update

Milestone	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Overall	Commentary
Job descriptions written	B					G	The Parking Services restructure has been completed. Existing (transferred) Civil Enforcement Officers are in post. The remaining six posts were advertised externally. Interviews were held during w/c 7 December. 9 FTE CEOs are now in post, with a further 1 under offer. 4 CEO supervisors are now in post.
Staff and Unison consultation	G	B					
Posts advertised internally		B					
Existing (transferred) CEOs in post		B					
Remaining posts advertised externally			B				
Closing date for applications				B			
Interviews and offers made				B			
Appointment of permanent CEOs				G	B		

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. In the table above, Blue indicates the completion of a project milestone.

Contact: George Sellers, National Management Trainee
george.sellers@stalbands.gov.uk

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	Bigger or Smaller is Better	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	TARGET	
Finance	Forecast budget variance at the year end (General Fund for year in question)	Smaller	-0.1%	-0.5%	-0.5%	1.6%	23.0%	25.0%	25.0%	19.0%	20.0%	17.0%	21.0%	21.0%	19.1%	26.0%	0.0%
Housing	Average time to re-let dwellings (excluding temporary accommodation) (cumulative, Apr-Mar) (days)	Smaller	74	69	69	63.5	60	71	81.2	78	80	88.75	87.8	84.6	78.9	70.2	26
	Number of voids over 26-day target (but below 90 days)	Smaller	13	21	29	21	18	27	16	20	10	5	12	12	24	14	Trend
	Number of voids over 3 months	Smaller	14	8	8	8	11	17	19	15	14	3	1	0	1	0	Trend
	Number of properties let	Bigger	17	17	13	23	12	15	23	18	25	19	29	24	26	21	Trend
	Void properties as a percentage of total stock	Smaller	1.01%	1.01%	1.00%	0.74%	0.93%	1.10%	1.04%	0.92%	0.71%	0.81%	0.67%	0.60%	0.69%	0.58%	1%
	Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due	Smaller	3.6%	3.8%	4.1%	4.3%	4.5%	5.0%	5.1%	5.7%	5.6%	5.6%	5.3%	5.4%	4.4%	4.6%	4.75%†
	Percentage of tenants in receipt of Universal Credit	Smaller	16.3%	16.6%	17.2%	17.7%	20.8%	22.5%	23.2%	23.9%	24.5%	24.8%	25.3%	25.8%	26.2%	26.8%	
	Number of households in temporary accommodation	Smaller	129	125	131	129	133	124	116	116	104	109	108	111	119	114	Trend
	Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks)	Smaller	29.9	29	27.2	28	30.7	32.5	33.6	30.5	32	31.4	30.5	28.8	30.2	31	Trend
	Percentage of repairs completed within target	Bigger	94%	93%	94%	93%	95%	97%	92%	95%	93%	92%	100%	99%	98.9%	99.0%	95%
	Percentage of repairs completed at first visit	Bigger	90%	88%	85%	89%	91%	95%	92%	94%	92%	89%	90%	90%	90.4%	88.5%	80%
	Total number of households in receipt of Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax support		6,521	6,522	6,507	6,827	7,143	7,284	7,324	7,383	7,368	7,360	7,357	7,387	7,369	7,383	
	Days to process Housing Benefit new claims (12 month average)	Smaller	14.8	14.6	14.6	14.3	13.6	13.1	13.5	13.0	13.3	13.3	13.2	13.1	13.1	13.3	21
	Days to process Housing Benefit change in circumstances (12 month average)	Smaller	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.2	4.6	5.0	6
Planning & Building Control	Planning and Building Control applications received (including pre-app, trees and condition discharge)		340	445	418	391	327	304	451	456	402	448	446	494	450	393	
	Percentage of Council's planning decisions supported at appeal (cumulative 12 month)	Bigger	87%	88%	88%	92%	76%	78%	80%	78%	80%	76%	73%	75%	74%	72%	66%
	Percentage of planning applications not determined (within time limits or agreed timescale)	Smaller	13%	29%	21%	30%	18%	35%	28%	31%	24%	42%	40%	38%	43%	42%	25%
	Number of planning applications that have not been determined in time (at end of month)	Smaller	29	74	50	54	23	65	54	46	39	67	67	70	92	115	40
Community Services	Parking Penalty Charge Notices issued	Smaller	776	861	877	876	36	89	488	1,011	867	1,066	894	853	1,011	451	Trend
	Percentage of Parking Penalty Charge Notices paid three months previously	Bigger					81%	83%	75%	19%	64%	75%	81%	81%	82%	82%	TBD
	Number of spoiled Parking Penalty Charge Notices	Smaller					0	3	1	11	3	1	4	5	4	5	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%	0.79%	0.45%	0.59%	0.40%	1.11%	Less than 1%
	Parking Enforcement Officer deployed hours	Bigger					1,175	1,158	996	1,086	1,045	1,280	1,240	1,394	1,391	1,072	TBD
	Fly-tipping incidents	Smaller	43	43	41	48	58	81	95	52	74	85	90	73	64	81	Year-on-year trend
	Number of missed waste collections per 100,000	Smaller	26	29	29	19	20	18	30	23	32	23	16	20	20	29	32
External	Claimant count	Smaller	1,410	1,410	1,500	1,465	2,440	3,765	3,650	3,735	3,830	3,780	3,635	3,575	3,495	3,385	****

† Quarterly target to reflect seasonal variation.

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

TBD: Indicator static target or trend to be determined. (RAG rating removed from Parking trackers due to changing national restrictions).

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