

Council Performance & Budget Summary

September 2014

The monthly performance summary outlines trends in information the Council uses to monitor and manage service delivery. Where relevant, it includes performance against targets set for the relevant period.

Overview

A	Budget – 0.7% overspend
A	Performance Indicators
G	Progress against priorities

Appendices

- A. Planning Update
 - A.i Briefing Note to Cabinet on response on pressures within Planning, Landscape/Trees and IT
- B. Housing Update
- C. Recycling Update
- D. Market Review Update
- E. Asset Maintenance Quarterly Report
- F. Transfer of Assets to Town and Parish Councils
- G. Assets of Community Value Update
- H. Conveyancing Update
- I. Attendance Annual Update
- J. Increase to Establishment

Recommendations

- 1.1 That Cabinet notes the Council Performance and Budget Summary (September and Quarter 2 2014) and its appendices including the addition of the recycling graphic
- 1.2 That Cabinet agrees to increase the Council's establishment as proposed in Appendix A.i and Appendix J.

Commentary

The table below is provided for indicators where there has been significant change in performance. It gives more detailed explanation for the performance levels and any action the Council is taking to improve performance.

	Measure	Comments
A	Forecast budget variance at the year end (General fund for year in question)	An overspend of £120k is forecast. The main reasons are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an overspend in planning due to employing extra staff resources to deal with the volume of applications; • a reduction in recycling income as prices for materials have fallen; • the markets income budget was over optimistic and is not being achieved. The Market Review (see Appendix D) is considering options to improve the financial performance of the

	Measure	Comments
		market. Underspends elsewhere have partially offset the overspend.
R	Number of households in temporary accommodation and Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks)	<p>The high use of temporary accommodation continues. In September the housing options team dealt with 176 enquiries (938 since April 2014). This resulted in 17 formal homeless applications (94 since April 2014) and a further 16 homeless acceptances (76 since April 2014).</p> <p>We are working to increase the supply of temporary accommodation over the coming months. We have bought four properties through the street purchase scheme since April 2014 and expect to complete on a further three by the end of December 2014.</p> <p>The new development at Lea Springs will release up to 20 units of Council accommodation when completed in November.</p> <p>The Private Rented Sector Task and Finish Group has now met and a Landlords' Forum was held on 23 September. These will explore possible responses to sourcing additional housing in the private sector and fostering better relationships with landlords in the District.</p>
G	Overall percentage of planning decisions within time	The employment of temporary professional planning staff and the use of external contractors for minor and other applications has helped restore performance. Recruitment is taking place to fill vacant permanent posts over the next few months. Cabinet is reviewing whether the current staffing levels are adequate to deal with the volume of planning applications, the Strategic Local Plan and other major projects. Further detail is included in Appendix A.i.
R	Graffiti and fly-tipping calls	The combined total for the number of graffiti and fly-tipping incidents has increased slightly compared to August and has remained at a similar monthly level since April. The Council is continuing to investigate fly-tips for evidence to support prosecutions.
A	Percentage of households with missed waste collections	The number of missed collections has decreased for the second successive month and is now at 0.13%. The changes made to the recycling service mid-month have not increased the number of missed collections.
G	Museum visits	The number of visits to museums is higher than in the September 2013 for a number of reasons. In particular, a higher number of visitors than average visited the 70s exhibition at the Museum of St Albans due to increased advertisement. In addition to usual methods, the event was promoted through the pop-up shop in Christopher Place. This was part of community engagement and fundraising activity for the new museum and gallery project.
G	Percentage of invalid planning applications received	The technical support team has most of its permanent staff in place and is recruiting to fill an apprentice post. The department continues to encourage applicants to use the pre-application advice service, which helps them to understand what they need to do to submit a valid application.
G	Percentage of council tax collected of that collectable in the year	Council tax collection is on target. The team is now back on schedule for issuing payment reminders following the technical production and printing errors reported last quarter.

	Measure	Comments
A	Percentage of business rates collected of that collectable in the year	Due to changes to the rateable values of properties in September and the need to give 14 days' notice, not all tax due was collected in September. Historically such fluctuations are not unusual at this time of the financial year and are corrected in the remainder of the year.
G	Total number of visits to arts and entertainment venues	During the last period, both theatres had more sell out programmed shows and more bookings than the previous period. The new General Manager at Harpenden Public Halls has developed a busier programme of events which has drawn more visitors. The Alban Arena also hosted the St Albans Beer and Cider Festival, which attracted over 9,500 visitors.
R	Number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence per full time equivalent employee (days)	<p>The absence rate has increased by 0.61 days in comparison to the same quarter in 2013/14. This increase includes 6 cases of long term absence.</p> <p>Each employee was contacted by their line manager and in some cases by Human Resources and Occupational Health as well. The purpose of the contact is to agree a managed return to work where possible or to discuss options for continuing in the role.</p> <p>Two employees have since returned to work, one case is currently under review and three employees have left the organisation.</p> <p>The absence rate excluding the 6 long term absence cases is 1.12 days. A report on the overall trends in attendance is at Appendix I.</p>

Key

The performance information is colour coded associated to the 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 and Red a worse performance. On the priority project progress and appendices tables Blue is used to show that a project or action is completed.

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Council Performance & Budget Summary

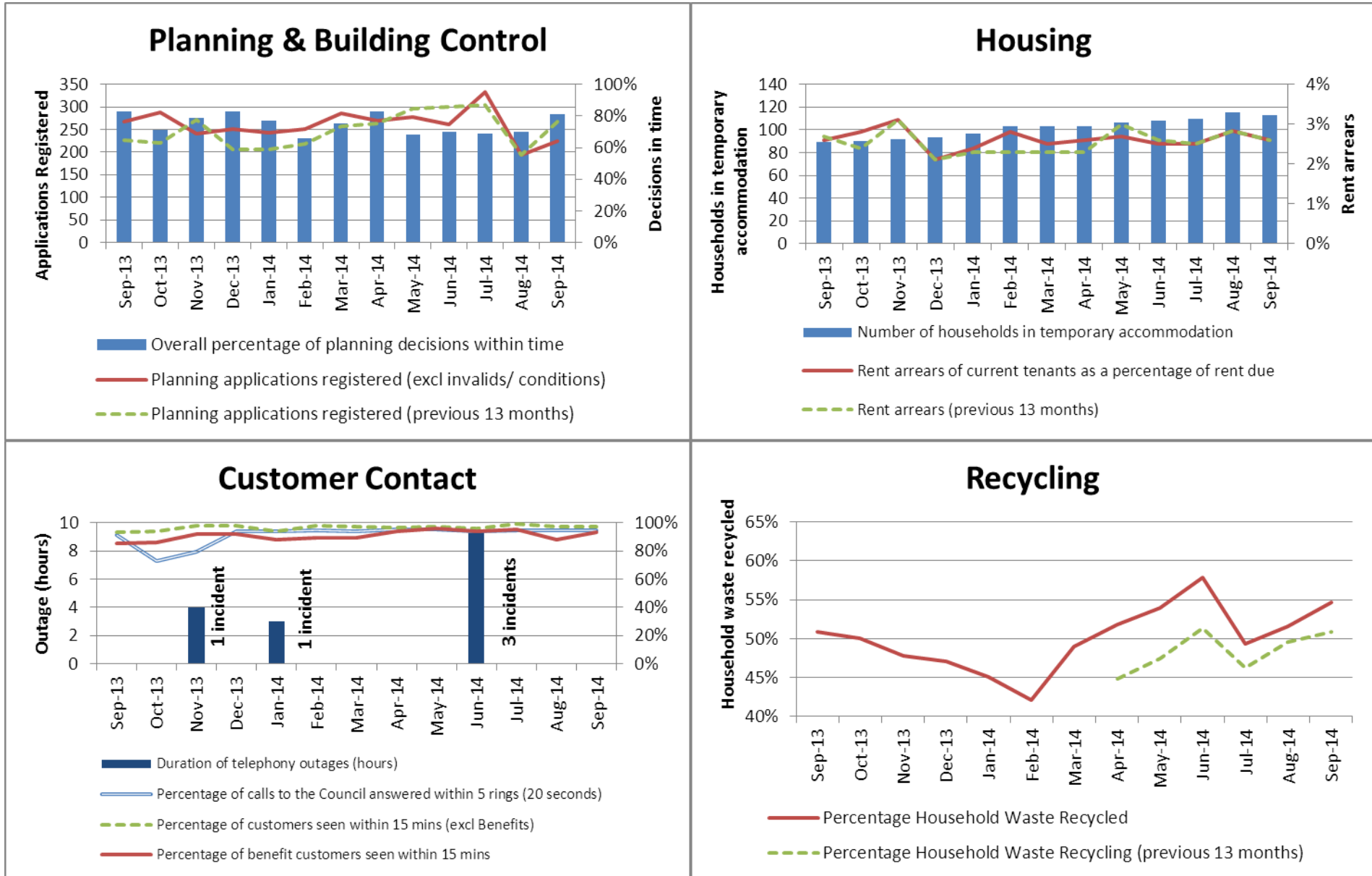
September 2014



		Bigger or Smaller is Better	Sep-13	Oct-13	Nov-13	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Apr-14	May-14	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14	TARGET	
Finance	Forecast budget variance at the year end (General fund for year in question)	Smaller	0.0%	0.2%	-0.1%	-0.9%	-0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-0.2%	-0.1%	0.0%	0.8%	0.7%	0.0%	
Housing	Average time to re let dwellings (excluding sheltered and temporary accommodation changes) (days)	Smaller	25	18	17	17	24	20	17	21	20	19	17	22	17	21	
	Percentage of rent loss due to voids	Smaller	1.55%	1.57%	1.56%	1.55%	1.56%	1.55%	1.28%	1.06%	1.05%	1.03%	1.05%	1.05%	1.08%	Trend	
	Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due (targets updated for 2014-15)	Smaller	2.6%	2.8%	3.1%	2.1%	2.4%	2.8%	2.5%	2.6%	2.7%	2.5%	2.5%	2.8%	2.6%	2.9%^	
	Number of households in temporary accommodation	Smaller	89	90	92	93	97	103	103	103	106	108	110	115	113	Trend	
	Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks)	Smaller	16	15	16.0	19	20	19	19	22	23	19	25	25	25	Trend	
	Percentage of repairs completed on time	Bigger	99%	98%	98%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	96%	100%	100%	100%	99%	98%	98%
	Housing repairs satisfaction	Bigger	98%	99%	99%	97%	98%	99%	99%	99%	100%	99%	100%	99%	99%	99%	90%
	Total number of households in receipt of Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax support	Smaller	New indicator	New indicator	New indicator	New indicator	New indicator	New indicator	New indicator	New indicator	7,550	7,490	7,517	7,536	7,509	7,490	
	Days to process Housing Benefit new claims	Smaller	41.7	54.3	39.1	33.1	27.6	26.2	33	25.9	29.7	18.3	23.5	19.3	21.6	24	
	Days to process Housing Benefit change in circumstances	Smaller	20.6	15.8	14.7	9.6	6.3	2.2	7.8	6.1	6.8	6.5	6.3	6.7	7.2	11	
Percentage of benefit customers seen within 15 mins	Bigger	85%	86%	92%	92%	88%	89%	89%	94%	96%	94%	95%	88%	93%	70%		
Planning & Building Control	All planning applications received		261	298	260	284	272	277	326	345	311	313	347	267	270		
	Planning applications registered (excl invalids/ conditions)		268	288	240	251	243	252	286	269	278	262	333	193	224*		
	Overall percentage of planning decisions within time	Bigger	83%	71%	79%	83%	77%	66%	75%	83%	68%	70%	69%	70%	81%	75%	
Regulatory	Parking Penalty Charge Notices issued	Smaller	1,507	1,886	1,784	1,454	1,425	1,323	1,448	1,236	1,387	1,206	1,298	1,291	1,520	Trend	
	Percentage of Parking Penalty Charge Notices paid	Bigger	91%	82%	87%	92%	88%	91%	92%	92%	89%	92%	84%	78%	82%	70%	
Community Services	Graffiti and fly-tipping calls	Smaller	26	33	23	27	36	27	40	54	51	45	51	52	55*	Trend	
	Percentage of households with missed waste collections	Smaller	0.15%	0.19%	0.17%	0.15%	0.12%	0.09%	0.19%	0.10%	0.13%	0.15%	0.17%	0.15%	0.13%*	Trend	
	Visits to Tourist Information Centre and www.enjoystalbans.com	Bigger	28,663	30,762	48,578	33,929	20,319	20,298	25,720	28,231	33,534	34,084	35,051	35,418	35,050	Year-on-year Trend	
	Museums visits	Bigger	13,417	17,007	16,453	11,133	7,878	13,099	15,194	11,457	12,504	13,528	13,225	13,277	15,599	Year-on-year Trend	
Customer Services	Percentage of calls to the Council answered within 5 rings (20 seconds)	Bigger	91.4%	72.5%	79.5%	93.9%	93.6%	94.7%	94.0%	94.9%	94.9%	94.1%	94.3%	94.3%	94.4%	80%	
	Percentage of customers seen within 15 mins (excl Benefits)	Bigger	93%	94%	98%	98%	94%	98%	97%	97%	97%	96%	99%	97%	97%	80%	
External	Claimant count (% proportion of population)	Smaller	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	Trend	
	New jobs	Bigger	1,346	1,440	1,298	970	1,439	1,364	1,181	991	1,196	1,128	1,421	1,421	1,541	Trend	
	All crime (in month)	Smaller	438	483	466	404	404	495	529	483	520	554	516	456	519	Trend	
	Anti social behaviour incidents (in month)	Smaller	203	212	189	140	146	137	212	226	221	251	273	220	228	Trend	

^ Seasonal Target
* draft figure subject to final adjustments

Performance Summary September 2014



Council Performance & Budget Summary

Quarter 2 2014-15 (July-September)



		Bigger or Smaller is Better	Quarter 2 2013-14	Quarter 3 2013-14	Quarter 4 2013-14	Quarter 1 2014-15	Quarter 2 2014-15	TARGET
Housing	Total affordable housing	Bigger	19	11	4	1	27	
Planning and BC	Percentage of invalid applications received	Smaller	5.80%	5.90%	5.00%	6.00%	3.80%	Trend
	Affordable housing through the planning process	Bigger	68	25	33	4	62	
Finance	Percentage of council tax collected of that collectable in the year	Bigger	58.5%	87.1%	98.8%	30.0%	60.2%	58.7%^
	Percentage of business rates collected of that collectable in the year	Bigger	61.0%	88.3%	99.1%	32.3%	59.6%	61.7%^
Community Services	Recycling rate	Bigger	48.75%	48.31%	45.56%	53.60%	51.90%*	53%
	Kg per household of residual waste	Smaller	94.48	94.88	100.66	95.66	95.39*	105.75
	Total number of visits to arts and entertainment venues	Bigger	32,852	83,146	57,719	30,648	38,476	Year-on-year Trend
	Total number of visits to sport and leisure centres	Bigger	323,577	356,367	381,097	259,126	384,646	Year-on-year Trend
Website	www.stalbans.gov.uk visits	Bigger	247,917	223,687	240,990	270,731	250,421	Trend
	www.enjoystalbans.com visits		New indicator	New indicator	New indicator	71,799	79,482	Trend
Human Resources	Headcount actuals Approved established permanent posts = 358.42 FTE		390 (378 permanent / 12 fixed term) 335 FTE	395 (379 permanent / 16 fixed term) 341 FTE	400 (381 permanent / 19 fixed term) 346 FTE	401 (379 permanent / 22 fixed term) 347 FTE	405 (382 permanent / 23 fixed term) 351 FTE	
	Agency and casual workers (covering vacancies or helping with added workloads)		39	40	36	37	38	
	Number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence per full time equivalent employee (days)	Smaller	1.71	1.29	1.45	1.36	2.32	Trend
External	Vacant units (St Albans City Centre)	Smaller	8.32%	7.56%	7.75%	7.93%	8.15%	Trend

^ Seasonal Target
* draft figure subject to final adjustments

Progress against priorities Quarter 2 2014-15

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Quarter 2 2014-15 (July-September)



Portfolio	Q1 2014/15 (Apr to Jun)	Priority Project	Q2 2014/15 (Jul to Sep)	Progress	Q3 milestones (2014/15) (October to December)
Housing	G	Develop affordable housing on garage sites	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor appointed by North Herts Homes for London Colney and Wheathampstead sites Work started on Offas Way garage site Planning applications for Batchwood garage sites submitted and validated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sites in Cotlandswick, Alexander Road and Telford Road transferred to North Hertfordshire Homes and works started Full project timetable for London Colney and Wheathampstead sites complete Planning applications for Batchwood garage sites determined
	G	Implement the sheltered housing redevelopment programme	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thomas Sparrow House refurbishment tenders received and validated. Contractor appointed Jasmine Court opened BPHA appointed as development partner on Betty Entwhistle House 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lea Springs completed Start on site to refurbish Thomas Sparrow House Start on site to redevelop Victor Smith Court by North Herts Homes
	G	Review localised Council Tax support	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report completed for Portfolio Holder recommending that the Council continues with the current scheme with minor amendments to reflect increases in rating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision made and reflected in Corporate Plan and Budget report

Progress against priorities Quarter 2 2014-15

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Quarter 2 2014-15 (July-September)



Portfolio	Q1 2014/15 (Apr to Jun)	Priority Project	Q2 2014/15 (Jul to Sep)	Progress	Q3 milestones (2014/15) (October to December)
	G	Procure and implement major housing improvement works and repairs contracts	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options set out in draft paper Meeting held to scope IT needs for joint repairs call centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruited Asset Manager Project scoping document completed with revised project plan and milestones Housing repairs project reviewed by Efficiency and Transformation Working Group
	G	Deliver First World War Centenary events (includes restoration of memorials)	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering group prepared and submitted bid to Heritage Lottery Fund for external funding St Peter's War Memorial and Memorial Gardens works completed (except wall repairs and VC memorial stone laying) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> St Peter's War Memorial and Memorial Gardens wall repairs complete
Community Engagement and Localism	G	Implement the visitor strategy	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor Partnership and branding launched 17 July Marketing strategy agreed Detailed action plan being developed by partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor Partnership action plan agreed by board
	G	Implement actions from market review	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Wednesday food market piloted for 4 weeks with 8 regular stalls Baseline analysis and benchmarking to compare St Albans to other UK markets complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with key stakeholders including traders, retailers, councillors and customers on key findings and future plans

Progress against priorities Quarter 2 2014-15

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Quarter 2 2014-15 (July-September)



Portfolio	Q1 2014/15 (Apr to Jun)	Priority Project	Q2 2014/15 (Jul to Sep)	Progress	Q3 milestones (2014/15) (October to December)
	G	Develop three year events' programme	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered St Albans Beer and Cider Festival which was attended by over 9,500 visitors. Delivered Summer Sounds music event in partnership with Youth Connexions. Young people were integral to organising and running the event and delivered high quality performances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered St Albans and Harpenden Food and Drink Festival, Christmas Lights Switch On and Christmas Market Promotion of future three year events programme to key stakeholders
	G	Implement new car parking strategy	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repainting of multi-storey car parks started Survey of car parking and brown tourist signs underway Report on Controlled Parking Zone permit options presented to Car Parking Working Party Car parks re-categorised to reflect main use and tariffs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for flexible products and mobile phone apps discussed with contractors Annual parking contractors meeting with Access Group to discuss issues Review report on car parking signs completed

Progress against priorities Quarter 2 2014-15

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Quarter 2 2014-15 (July-September)



Portfolio	Q1 2014/15 (Apr to Jun)	Priority Project	Q2 2014/15 (Jul to Sep)	Progress	Q3 milestones (2014/15) (October to December)
	G	Implement Individual Voter Registration	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation completed with no issues Electoral register matched with local data and Department for Works and Pensions Written to all electors to either invite them to register or to inform them they are registered Begun canvassing non-responding properties and individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canvassing of non-responders completed New electoral register published
	G	Develop the District's strengths - Green Triangle specialist green business	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-advertised and recruited Business Development Manager post – role will develop a business plan and drive progress Initiated direct contact between Maylands businesses and BRE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Triangle partnership formalised Business Development Director in post (start date to be confirmed)
	G	Develop the District's strengths - professional services	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14 firms committed to contribute £500 each Advertising concept designs developed and 3 shortlisted by steering group for further development Held meeting of major partners 15 July to update on state of economy and raise profile of the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertising campaign agreed PR campaign developed

Progress against priorities Quarter 2 2014-15

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Quarter 2 2014-15 (July-September)



Portfolio	Q1 2014/15 (Apr to Jun)	Priority Project	Q2 2014/15 (Jul to Sep)	Progress	Q3 milestones (2014/15) (October to December)
Environment	A	Implement specific proposals to accelerate recycling to and beyond 60%	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuller details on progress included in Appendix C: Recycling Update – highlights include: • Improved cardboard collection service introduced • Refuse and recycling calls transferred to the contractor, Amey • Contract for door step awareness campaign and survey awarded • In-cab performance system launched • Waste composition audit complete and feeding into development of recycling project • Food waste collection pilot in flats complete - suggests extending food collection not viable at the moment • Improvements to recycling performance at Agrivert site • Continued communication campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding flats provided with recycling services including combined paper and card collection • Door step campaign and survey complete and results reported • Assessment of opportunities for recycling waste from street cleaning • Continued monitoring of performance at Agrivert site

Progress against priorities Quarter 2 2014-15

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Quarter 2 2014-15 (July-September)



Portfolio	Q1 2014/15 (Apr to Jun)	Priority Project	Q2 2014/15 (Jul to Sep)	Progress	Q3 milestones (2014/15) (October to December)
Resources	G	Work Environment Programme (includes office productivity, Government IT compliance and police co-location projects)	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-location agreement and lease finalised and agreed with the police Windows 7 upgrade being designed and staff information sessions held 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works to fit out for police co-location started Alternative car parking arrangements confirmed Windows 7 upgrade complete Wireless and firewall upgrades complete
	G	Develop revised financial strategy	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial modelling developed and shaping budget planning for 2015/16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare budget proposals in line with strategy Begin scrutiny of budget proposals and strategy
	G	Develop customer service culture	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff focus groups on customer service and communications completed and will help shape staff development programme Review of how the Council uses customer feedback underway Dates set for best practice idea gathering meetings with external organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gathered innovative best practice ideas internally and externally to feed into the Customer Service Transformation programme Payment kiosks installed in reception area Feedback from staff focus groups compiled to feed into organisational development plan Review of how customer feedback is collected and opportunities to develop this further reported to Portfolio Holder Project plan for e-benefits, landlords' portal and citizens' access project finalised

Progress against priorities Quarter 2 2014-15

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Quarter 2 2014-15 (July-September)



Portfolio	Q1 2014/15 (Apr to Jun)	Priority Project	Q2 2014/15 (Jul to Sep)	Progress	Q3 milestones (2014/15) (October to December)
	G	Input into clinical strategy and future decisions on hospital provision in St Albans	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Wellbeing Partnership discussed strategic review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Wellbeing Partnership input into strategic review
Sports, Leisure and Heritage	A	Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met with Willmott Dixon Construction and Everyone Active to progress remaining snagging works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of defects and snagging
	G	Completion of Batchwood Sports Centre	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officially opened 8 July Lawn Tennis Association funding received Arranged for works on paving defect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soil removed from site Formal inspection for snagging issues completed
	G	New museum and gallery	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fundraising action plan implemented and on-going Partnership meeting held with Roman Theatre Interim project manager appointed Draft business plan reported to programme board Charette facilitator and solicitor for Museum of St Albans appointed Initial proposals for sale of Museum of St Albans sent to Charity Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement of key enabling services including design team, quantity surveyor/cost consultant, collections care officer and archaeology expertise Comprehensive business plan developed Partnership meeting held with Cathedral Charette for Museum of St Albans site completed

Progress against priorities Quarter 2 2014-15

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Quarter 2 2014-15 (July-September)



Portfolio	Q1 2014/15 (Apr to Jun)	Priority Project	Q2 2014/15 (Jul to Sep)	Progress	Q3 milestones (2014/15) (October to December)
	G	Cotlandswick leisure facility	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract with Willmott Dixon completed Meetings held with local councillors and residents Works commenced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main car park completed and work on overspill car park commenced Work on substructure progressing Work on ground slabs, cladding and windows commenced during November
	G	Procure grounds maintenance contract	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received comments on Service Level Agreements from Harpenden Town Council and Sandridge Parish Council Written to contractor, John O'Conner, to discuss transfer of golf course to ground maintenance contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Level Agreements with Harpenden Town Council and Sandridge Parish Council completed Confirmed termination of Highway Verge Agreement Golf course maintenance transferred to ground maintenance contract
Planning and Conservation	G	Progress the Strategic Local Plan ('SLP')	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Output from Green Belt strategic sub areas and development options work reported to Planning Policy Committee Consultation draft SLP prepared and approved by Cabinet Met with stakeholders and parish/town councils on Detailed Local Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLP Consultation completed SLP public exhibitions held across district

Progress against priorities Quarter 2 2014-15

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Quarter 2 2014-15 (July-September)



Portfolio	Q1 2014/15 (Apr to Jun)	Priority Project	Q2 2014/15 (Jul to Sep)	Progress	Q3 milestones (2014/15) (October to December)
	A	City centre regeneration (City Centre Opportunity Site – ‘CCOS’)	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings held with RBS and Police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to October Cabinet and December Council
	A	Implement further enhancements to the planning service	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delayed to prioritise recruitment for Deputy Development Management Team Leader, Grade 6 Planner, Team Leader, 2 Enforcement Officers, Enforcement Team Leader and Apprentice Recruited Grade 6 Planner, Building Control Officer, 2 Technical Support Technicians, Grade 5 Planning Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validation checklist review started Recruited Deputy Development Management Team Leader, Grade 6 Planner, Team Leader, 2 Enforcement Officers, Enforcement Team Leader and Apprentice

Progress against priorities Quarter 2 2014-15

Strategic Local Plan (SLP)

At its meeting of 18 September, Cabinet agreed a consultation draft SLP to go out to the public this autumn. The Planning Policy Committee (PPC) met on 24 September to agree the contents of a summary document that explains the draft SLP consultation to a general audience. The consultation started on 10 October 2014 for a period of six weeks.

Detailed Local Plan (DLP)

The DLP will contain the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies for the District, to support the strategic vision and objectives set out in the SLP. Engagement workshops were held on 7, 8 and 9 July 2014. These facilitate early discussions with Town and Parish Councils, Residents' Associations and other relevant local interest groups.

Feedback from the DLP engagement workshops was reported to the PPC at its meeting of 10 September.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) update

Following consideration by the PPC a consultation on the updated SCI is running alongside the SLP consultation.

New Barnfield Incinerator

Communities secretary Eric Pickles refused planning permission for an incinerator in the Borough of Welwyn Hatfield, ruling that 'very special circumstances' necessary to justify the Green Belt development do not exist.

The application, from energy firm Veolia Environmental Services, for the construction and operation of a recycling and energy facility at New Barnfield, Hatfield, was called in for determination in January 2013 because the proposal involved matters 'giving rise to substantial cross boundary or national controversy'.

In his decision note on 8 July 2014, the Secretary of State agrees with the conclusions of planning inspector David Richards, who held an inquiry into the plan in 2013 and recommended that the application should be refused.

Veolia has launched a legal challenge to the Secretary of State's decision to refuse to grant planning permission.

Ridgeview, London Colney

Planning application (5/2014/1710) for retail development was considered by Planning Referrals Committee on 8 September 2014. The Committee resolved to grant planning permission subject to the application first being referred to the Secretary of State for a decision as to whether he wishes to call-in the application. The Secretary of State has advised the Council that he will not call-in the application and planning permission has been granted.

Oaklands - Smallford planning application (5/2013/2589)

The applicant has submitted additional information and amended plans to address outstanding issues in relation to issues of ecology, arboriculture, agricultural land constraints and highways. A consultation exercise is under way to allow residents and statutory consultees to comment on the additional / amended information. The responses received will need thorough consideration by the case officer and internal consultees. The application will be reported to the Planning Referrals Committee once these matters have been resolved.

Rail Freight

On 14 July 2014, the Secretary of State issued his decision allowing the appeal. The Council has challenged the decision in the High Court. The case is scheduled to be heard on 3rd and 4th February 2015.

Sewell Park

Appeals against earlier refusals 5/2013/2713 for 85 dwellings and 5/2011/2857 for 116 houses and 72 bed care home were heard at a public inquiry commencing on 21 July 2014. Both appeals have been 'called-in' by the Secretary of State for his determination. The Council has been advised that a decision should be made on or before 2 February 2015.

Ariston Site

Discussions with Hertfordshire County Council continue and are currently focussing on Heads of Terms for a S106 Planning Obligations Agreement that would be submitted with any planning application. A planning application is expected in October 2014.

BRE, Bricket Wood

Planning application 5/2013/0406 for the demolition of existing buildings and construction of up to 100 new dwellings, associated access and facilities was refused on 10/05/2013. An appeal was submitted and heard by Public Inquiry between 1-3 April 2014. On 10 June 2014, the appeal was recovered for determination by the Secretary of State as it involved significant development in the Green Belt. The Secretary of State granted outline planning permission on 13th October.

Staffing

Cabinet discussed the issue of Planning & Building Control staffing at its meetings on February, March, June and July 2014. A briefing note is attached (Appendix A.i) outlining a proposal to address the issues.

The Audit Committee at its meeting on 24 September 2014 reviewed the recommendations of an audit of the Council's ilap IT software programme. The Audit Committee expressed their concerns in relation to the delays in implementing the recommendations (as a result of other IT upgrades and lack of staff to progress the work) and the anticipated timescale for delivery of a feasibility study of ilap.

Briefing Note to Cabinet on response to staffing pressures within Planning, Landscape/Trees and IT

Cabinet is asked to:

- To agree a permanent increase in complement of four FTE in the Planning Service comprising three posts in Development Management and one Landscape/Arboricultural Assistant.
- To agree a permanent increase in complement of one FTE in Corporate Services as the Planning System Support Officer in the Systems Support team.

The slides that follow outline the pressures within planning and explain the need for the request for additional resources.

PBC Key Objectives from the Corporate Plan

- Using the action plan from the review and peer challenge, implement further enhancements to the planning service.
- Progress the Strategic Local Plan and other related Planning Policy documents, including the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- Progress the development of the Civic Centre Opportunity Site (CCOS).
- Work in partnership with our neighbouring authorities to ensure a complementary and coordinated approach to economic development and spatial planning.

Issues

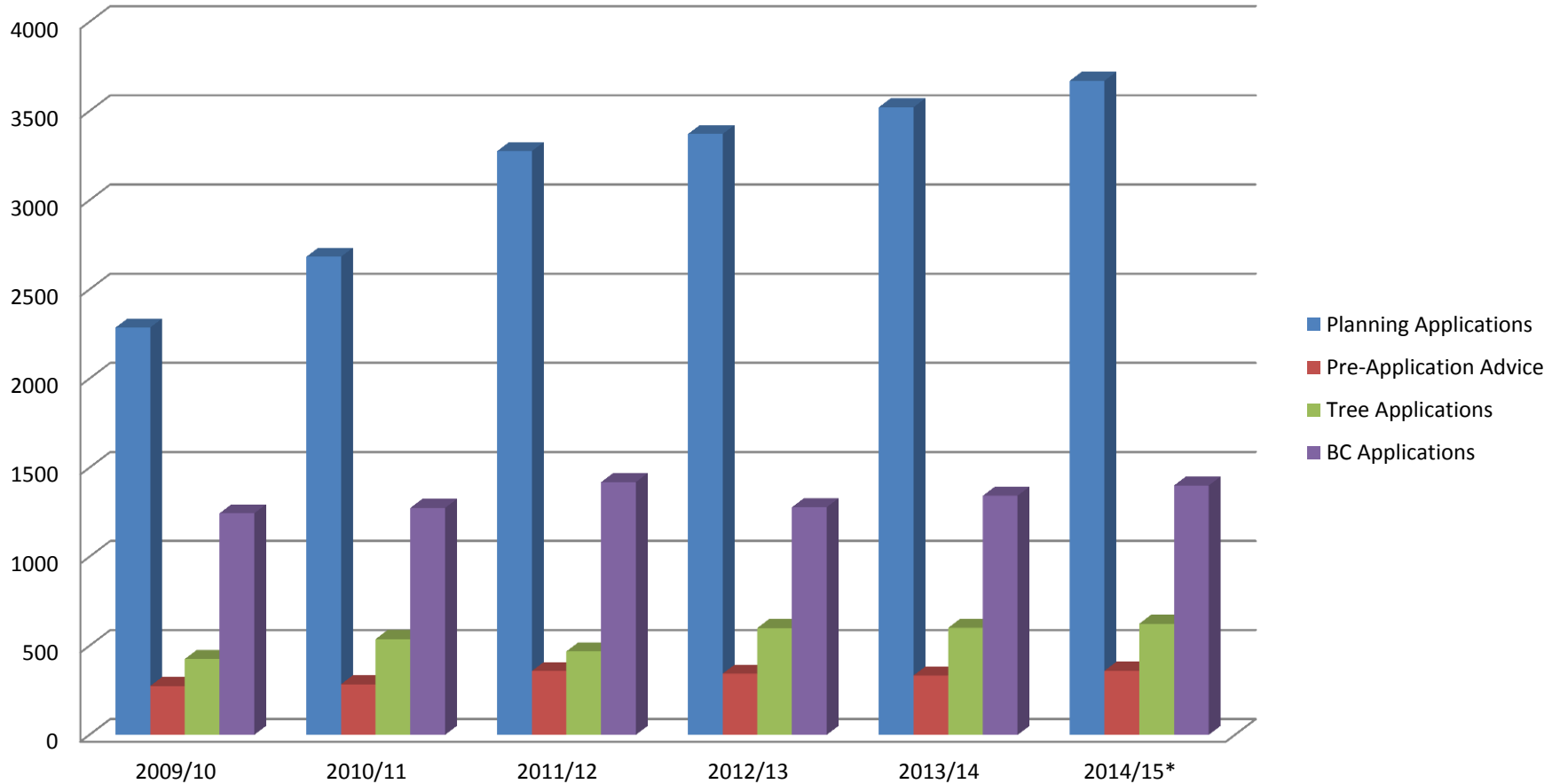
- Big increase in number of applications received.
- Difficulties in recruiting staff to professional posts.
- No dedicated IT resource in IT to implement system improvements.

In addition:-

- Strategy to reduce numbers of casual/agency planners and build core team.
- Difficulties in recruiting to short term / maternity cover posts.

Development Pressures

Future Overall Application Trends



*Estimated Projection based on current trend

Recruitment Pressures

- Increase in staff turnover in planning as the job market starts to pick up and peoples' life plans change.
- 16 posts have been filled since April 2014.
- There are 8 vacancies (including 2 maternity cover posts) within PBC.
- Difficulties attracting suitable candidates for the more technical roles has resulted in delays in filling vacancies; a number of posts only being filled after the second advert/recruitment process.
- We have been unable to fill interim maternity cover roles to date: Deputy Area Team Leader (on 4th advert) and Area Team Leader (on 2nd advert).

Impacts

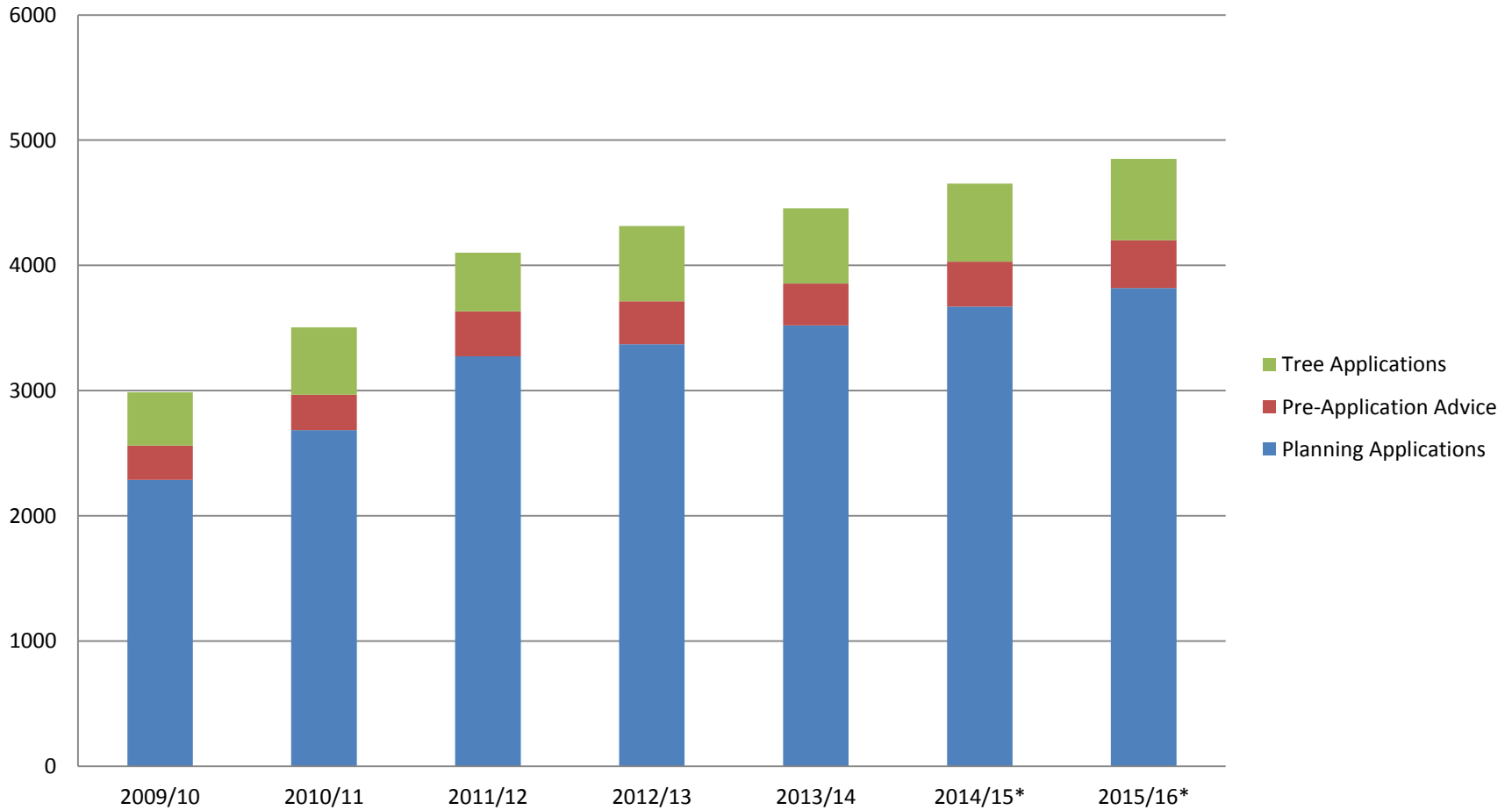
- High number of applications in the system and large number of applications out of time.
- Ability to progress improvements identified in Interim Head of Planning and Building Control's reviews of the service (incorporating consideration of the Peer Review).
- Ability of progress implementation of recommendations from other bodies such as Internal Audit Committee.
- Progress on much needed improvements to the online services for planning applications and the upgrades of the planning systems used by staff.

Current Position

- 'Out of time' backlog has been reduced by 25% since May 2014.
- Percentage of applications determined within time, ranges from 66% in February 2014 to 89% in August 2013.
- Quality of decisions has improved with 65% of appeals being dismissed in Sept 2014 compared with less than 50% at the start of the year.
- Technical Support Team now validating applications within 4 days of receipt.

Future Challenges (1)

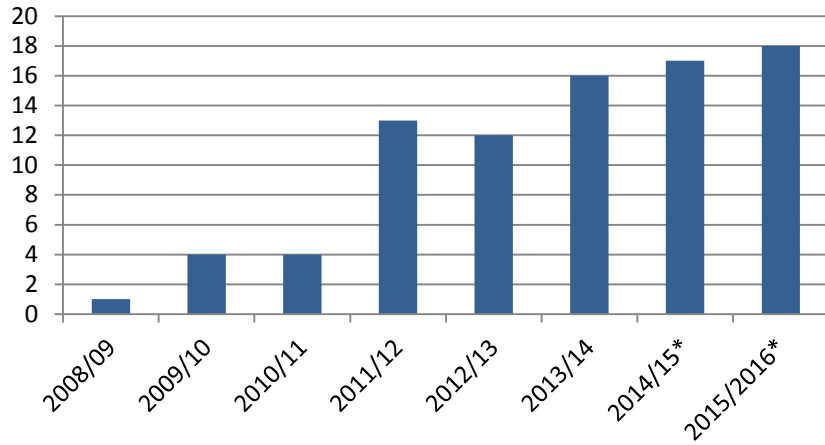
Overall Future Application Trends



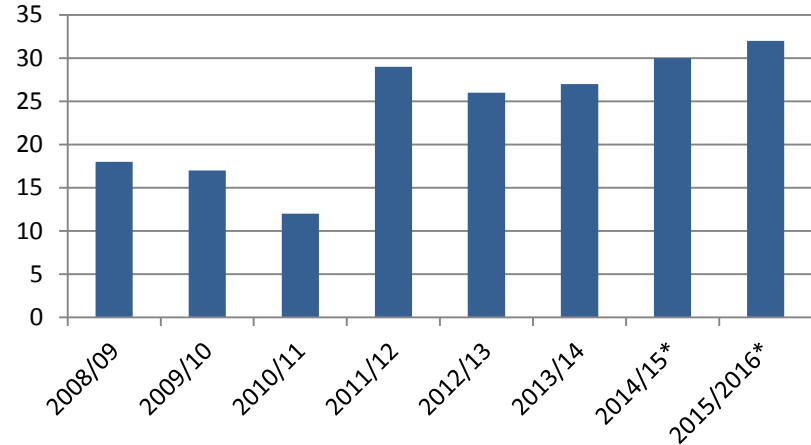
*Estimated Projection based on current trend

Future Challenges (2)

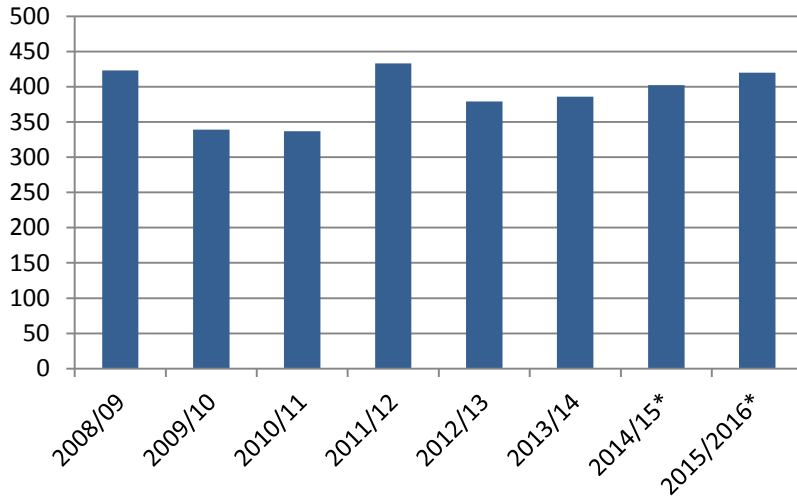
Large scale majors



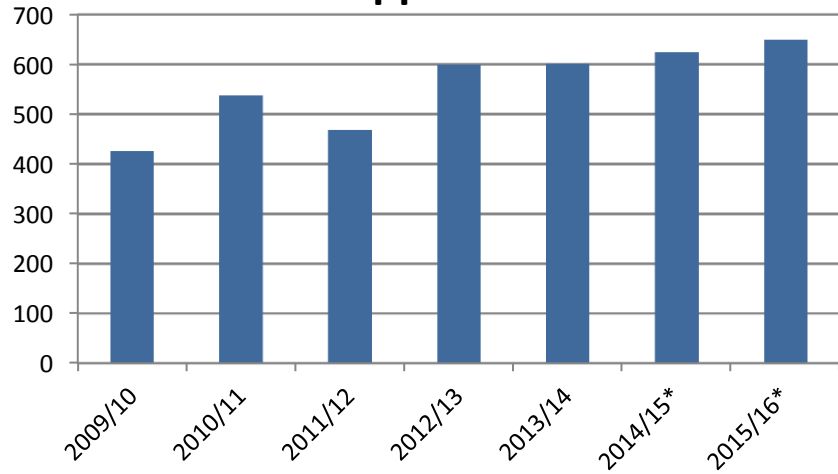
Small scale majors



Minors



Tree Applications



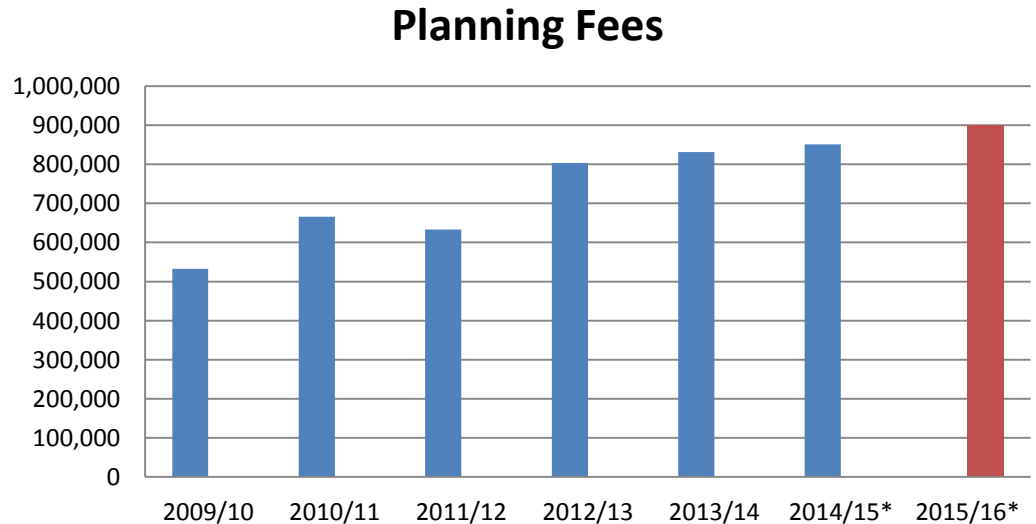
* Estimated Projection based on current trend

Related income

- New Homes Bonus

£0.6million will be generated through the delivery of 436 new homes per annum.

- Fee Income



*Estimated Projection based on current trend

Proposed Solution

- Additional resource to match recent increase in volume of applications.
- Restructure to increase number of experienced officers within Development Management and Landscape/Trees, to deal with major projects and major planning applications.
- Additional resource in the systems support team to focus on specific applications: iLap and MSP.

How much extra resource?

Currently employ 16 FTE planning case officers in Development Management

Future requirement 19 case officers

Applications received	Decisions per FTE	FTE needed	FTE required (adjusted for time out of office)
70 per week (current situation)	5	14	16.1
80 per week *	5	16	18.4

Currently employ 3 FTE specialist officers in Landscape/Trees

Current and future requirement 4 specialist officers

Applications, Pre-App and consultations received	Decisions per FTE	FTE needed	FTE required (adjusted for time out of office)
28 per week (current situation)	7	4	4.5
29 per week *	7	4.1	4.5

Implications

5 additional posts

▪ Team Leader (PO 3) (including on-costs)	£56,325
▪ Deputy Team Leader (PO 2) (including on-costs)	£51,387
▪ Lead Planning Officer (PO 1) (including on-costs)	£46,491
▪ Landscape/Arboricultural Assistant (Grade 6) (including on-costs)	£40,687
▪ System Support Officer (Grade 6) (including on-costs)	£40,687
TOTAL (full year costs for 15/16):	£235,577
(Total for remainder of 14/15):	£60,000

Funded from Reserves in 2014/15, and in 2015/16 from New Homes Bonus and £50,000 from PBC Fees.

Note: needs to be built into base budget for 2015/16.

Garage Sites Update

North Hertfordshire Homes has started to develop the Offas Way garage site in Wheathampstead as the first phase of the garage site redevelopment programme begins. The redevelopment of the sites in London Colney will commence later this year. This is part of a phased programme of works by North Hertfordshire Homes to deliver 31 additional affordable housing units in the District. The delays in starting on site have been as a result of the complexity of the legal transfers of each site.

There are currently 3 planning applications under consideration for the redevelopment of garage sites in Batchwood. The Garage Working Party will be meeting later in the year to discuss the next phase of the garage sites programme. This includes 2 sites in Sandridge.

Sheltered Housing Update

Jasmine Court in Colney Heath was completed in August by Hightown Praetorian and Churches Housing Association. A local lettings policy was in place that gave additional priority to the residents of Colney Heath to some of the 16 flats within the building.

The first residents will be moving into Lea Springs in November. This is the first affordable flexi care scheme in the District. The development is a mix of thirty eight 1 and 2 bedroom flats available for rental and shared ownership. Officers are making arrangements with Housing&Care 21 regarding open days to show Councillors, staff and our key partners the scheme. An invitation and further information about the development will be sent out to all Councillors once the dates have been finalised.

A second flexi-care scheme, Parkside View in St Albans, is being redeveloped by North Herts Homes and is on schedule for completion in March 2015. This will provide thirty five 1 and 2 bed flats.

Works will commence shortly on the site at Victor Smith Court, Bricket Wood. North Hertfordshire Homes are developing 18 brand new 1 and 2 bedroom flats, all for social rent. North Hertfordshire Homes have experienced supply chain problems with their contractors which have delayed the project. A new contractor has been appointed and work is expected to start with site surveys in November 2014 and an expected completion date of February 2016.

A Housing Association, BPHA, has been appointed to redevelop the site at Betty Entwistle House, Holyrood Crescent, into a mixed age flexi care scheme. There are 6 residents remaining who the Council is assisting in seeking alternative accommodation. In the meantime BPHA is preparing a planning application to develop the site once the building is empty.

The Council has planning permission to refurbish Thomas Sparrow House, Wheathampstead into thirteen self-contained 1 and 2 bedroom flats that will be allocated to elderly persons. A contractor has been appointed and work will start on site in November 2014 with completion in May 2015.

Street Purchase

The Council is continuing its street purchase programme having completed the purchase of four properties in 2014/15. Three properties were also purchased in 2013/14. The purchase of a further three properties is expected to be completed by the end of 2014. These units have been used to increase the supply of temporary accommodation. They will be funded, in part, by the disposal of three high value, city centre, 'one-off' properties. These properties were not considered suitable for redevelopment and were costly to maintain.

Private Rented Sector Housing

The Private Rented Sector Task and Finish Group held their first meeting in September. A presentation was given to Councillors giving a general overview to the private rented sector in St Albans and the possibilities of introducing licensing and accreditation schemes. A further meeting will be arranged to discuss some of the issues raised in more depth.

Housing Benefits

In the Housing Benefits team, a number of Northgate IT modules are being implemented. The first of these is the Landlords' Portal. This will allow landlords to access a portal via the internet 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to obtain details of their tenants' benefit entitlement.

Secondly, the introduction of Ebenefits software will allow customers to complete new claims and update changes in circumstances online. The online application will also check to ensure the application is complete and all the required information has been submitted. Information from the online application will be transferred automatically to the back office processing system, thereby eliminating the need to re-key information. In addition, a self-serve benefits' calculator will filter out some customers who are ineligible, thereby reducing the number of unsuccessful applications.

Finally, The Citizens Access Module will allow customers to view Council Tax and Council Tax Reduction information online and claim discounts and exemptions, plus set up and change direct debit details.

All of these modules will be in place and in operation by the end of December 2014.

Community Alarms Update

Community alarms are individual pendant alarms linked to a control centre via an individual's telephone line. Sheltered housing schemes have hardwired alarms. Individuals in the community (regardless of tenure) have an alarm linked through their phone line to Broxbourne Control Centre.

The alarms are paid for either through the Supporting People Grant directly to the Council, or by an individual who appreciates the reassurance of assistance being available should they fall or get into difficulty.

For many years the alarms in St Albans have been monitored by a control centre operated by Broxbourne Council. In late 2013 Hertfordshire County Council decided that

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix B: Housing Update



all their Supporting People funding for the alarm service would be paid directly to North Herts District Council.

As a result of this decision, Broxbourne control centre will be closing in early 2015. We have decided to transfer existing monitoring arrangements to North Herts District Council and are working with them to manage this.

The process involves communicating with alarm service users and making arrangements to transfer their information and re-programme their alarms to North Herts District Council. There are approximately 800 individual alarm users within the District as well as 6 sheltered housing schemes which will need transferring. Letters were sent out to alarm users in early September (and copied to Councillors) notifying them that there will be changes to the service. A 24 hour monitoring service will still be provided.

A further meeting was held with North Herts District Council on 3rd October to agree the next steps and timetable. The process of transfer will take place during December/January. Before this we will be visiting all service users to collate the information for their transfer prior to the reprogramming of their alarm units. We will shortly be writing to all alarm users and ward Councillors to explain the process and to set out the timeline.

Stock Condition Survey Update

A stock condition survey covering 19% (929 properties) of the Council's housing stock was carried out during February and March 2014. The results of the survey are cloned against the rest of the housing stock. The survey was carried out by an external supplier. A final report was completed in July 2014 and presented to the Housing Revenue Account Portfolio Holder Task and Finish Group. The survey also included garages, mobile homes and some invasive and visual surveys to the non traditional stock.

The stock was found to be in a reasonably good state of repair and there was clear evidence at the time of the survey that investment has been made in the stock over recent years. 5% of the properties (263) failed the Decent Homes Standard. When these cases were examined some related to refusals to have work carried out, and the rest were already included in this year's capital programme to be completed by March 2015.

Internal surveys were carried out and 66% were found to be in good condition, 31% average and 3% in poor condition. This assessment covered property decoration, floor coverings, doors and any damage to internal walls.

The energy profile and performance rating is 68.3 which is considered respectable given the range of our property types. The average reported rating to Housemark by social landlords is 66.9 so our figure is above average.

The highest areas of investment for the future cover kitchen replacements, windows and boiler replacements. Roofing, electrical works, and bathrooms require more minimal investment. The overall thirty year investment is lower than previously identified in the Business Plan. The Council has over the last few years brought works forward to take advantage of the competitively priced tenders being received. Officers have reviewed the data and completed a thirty year investment plan for the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and revisited the 3 year Housing Investment Programme for the budget process.

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix B: Housing Update



Some further surveys will be carried out in the coming months which will supplement the data collected to date. This will also focus on some further surveys covering the non traditional housing stock.

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix C: Recycling Update



This update provides a summary of progress on the Council's priority project to move to 60% recycling and beyond.

Key performance highlights over period October 2013 to September 2014 (Figures shown in table 1 overleaf)

This period represents the first full year of operation, following the introduction of the new soft mix, mixed plastic and cardboard collection arrangements in the middle of last year.

Key highlights include:

- Recycling performance improved to 50.1% (from 45% for the previous corresponding 12 month period). This increase is in line with the business plan projection of a 5% increase in the first year although from a lower baseline than expected.
- Dry recycling tonnages increased from 10,723 to 11,758 tonnes (9.7%).
- Green waste composting improved from 11,087 to 14,484 tonnes (30.6%).
- Residual waste to landfill reduced by 520 tonnes.

Key performance highlights over period April 2014 to September 2014 (Figures shown in table 2 overleaf)¹

- Recycling performance reached 58% in June 2014 (compared to 51.3% for June 2013).
- The overall recycling performance for first six months is 53.1% (compared with 48.3% for the corresponding period last year).
- Current 2014 -15 end of year projection is around 51 to 52%
- The dry recycling totals for the first six months are 5,807 tonnes (compared with 5,355 tonnes for the corresponding period last year).
- Green waste composted totals for the first six months are 8,571 tonnes (compared with 7,481 tonnes for the corresponding period last year).
- Contamination levels have been significantly reduced, see section below on Agrivert.

Summary progress on key initiatives

- Waste Audit – on site analysis and detailed report completed. The results are now being used to inform initiatives for future service development.
- Root and branch review completed of waste data recording systems. New fully integrated system now developed. Staff training completed and new system is now live.
- New budget monitoring system developed and in place.
- New project business model developed.
- In cab installation of real time monitoring units/system for refuse/recycling has been completed.
- Customer service – transfer of frontline customer services functions to Amey (at no cost to Council).
- Conclusion of negotiations on contract with Pearce Recycling, new contract now in place until February 2016.

¹ Results are draft based on figures available to date. Final figures will be subject to verification by Waste Data Flow.

- Continuing communications campaign including road shows, recycling presentations, waste aware initiatives and regular features in Community News newsletter for residents.
- Improved composting performance at Agrivert site.
- Improved cardboard collection service introduced.

Improvements to Cardboard Collection Service

The regular collection of bulky cardboard was introduced to all households and flats from 15th September 2014. Early indications are that the new service has been well received by residents. Tonnages collected are being closely monitored and initial figures for the first two weeks indicate a 6% increase in the amount of material being recovered for recycling compared to the previous two weeks. If maintained this equates to around 364 tonnes per annum. This would result in an estimated saving in landfill costs of £36,400 and an increased income, from the sale of materials, of £13,104. The cost of this improved service is covered by the current agreed contract sum.

Latest financial position of project

The latest budget monitoring information indicates that expenditure is generally in line with the budget, but that recycling income is estimated to be £194,000 less than budget. This is primarily due to the significant drop in market rates for recyclable materials over the past 12 months. Additionally, while recycling volumes are up overall, the amount of dry recyclable materials being collected (especially glass) is less than the projections contained within the original business case.

Agrivert Composting Site

The Council's Interim Waste Project Manager visited the site in September to meet with Agrivert's Commercial Director. Agrivert reported that all but one of the districts, led by St Albans, have now achieved a marked improvement in the level of non-compostable contaminants being delivered to the site.

Pressure is being put on the remaining district, via the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership, to come up to standard. Furthermore, there is a proposal to divert the waste coming from that district to an alternative composting site later this year, or early in the new year.

The improvements in the organic material have resulted in a significant improvement in the overall composting process and the resulting end product. St Albans, in the first quarter, collected green waste totals of 4,931t including 161t rejects (compared with 4,574t total including 659t rejects for the corresponding quarter last year). We are currently awaiting figures from Hertfordshire County Council for the second quarter rejects.

Additionally, Agrivert reports that the level of odour complaints arising from the operation of the site, has also reduced significantly. Complaints reduced from a peak of 107 in June this year, to one single complaint for the period August to September. The figures are based on complaints reported to the Environment Agency.

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix C: Recycling Update



If required, Agrivert has offered to meet with key stakeholders to discuss the operation of the site. Officers will continue to monitor progress on these issues.

Recycling Door Step Campaign

20,000 residents in the lower performing areas are being directly targeted with a survey aimed at improving recycling performance. All residents in the District are being given an opportunity to participate via an online survey. The survey commenced at the start of October and will be completed by the middle of November. The results will also be used to inform future service development options, as part of the re-tendering of the Council's waste management contract.

Re-tendering of the Councils Waste Management Contract

The Portfolio holders working group has now been established and held its inaugural meeting on 23rd September 2014.

An early task for the new group will be to agree the principal terms for the new contract and contract specifications. This will allow the detailed documents to be developed in good time for when tenders are invited in the spring of next year.

To this end a soft market testing exercise will be undertaken during October, to gain some specific views from potential suppliers on a range of key issues. This will include views on the need for any substantial service changes, to further improve recycling performance, for example separate weekly food waste collections.

The group is next due to meet on 18th November 2014.

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix X: Recycling update



Table 1 - 60% Recycling Project - 12 month's figures for October 2013 to September 2014

	Oct-13	Nov-13	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Apr-14	May-14	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14	Oct 13 to Sept 14 Total	Oct 12 to Sept 13 Total
Material Recycled/Composted (tonnes)														
Glass	263	210	246	599	248	344	227	395	298	219	282	351	3,683	3,961
Soft Mix (paper and cardboard)	518	485	466	624	490	493	514	509	458	500	443	510	6,011	4,893
Plastics & Cans	142	124	128	179	131	146	155	150	154	166	139	154	1,768	1,537
Others - textiles, WEE, Batteries, Third Party.	0	0	77	0	0	37	3	6	76	5	4	88	296	331
Total Dry Recycling (tonnes)	922	820	917	1,402	869	1,020	899	1,060	985	891	869	1,103	11,758	10,723
Total Green Waste (tonnes)	1,575	1,165	766	910	589	908	1,246	1,912	1,612	1,500	1,059	1,242	14,484	11,087
Total household waste recycled and composted (tonnes)	2,498	1,986	1,682	2,312	1,458	1,928	2,145	2,972	2,597	2,391	1,928	2,345	26,242	21,810
Total residual waste (tonnes)	2,501	2,170	1,890	2,814	2,005	2,008	2,005	2,538	1,884	2,437	1,890	1,948	26,092	26,612
Total Household Waste (tonnes)	4,999	4,156	3,573	5,126	3,463	3,935	4,150	5,511	4,481	4,828	3,818	4,293	52,334	48,422
% Dry Recycling	18.4%	19.7%	25.7%	27.4%	25.1%	25.9%	21.7%	19.2%	22.0%	18.5%	22.8%	25.7%	22.5%	22.1%
% Green Waste Composted	31.5%	28.0%	21.4%	17.7%	17.0%	23.1%	30.0%	34.7%	36.0%	31.1%	27.7%	28.9%	27.7%	22.9%
% TOTAL HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLED	50.0%	47.8%	47.1%	45.1%	42.1%	49.0%	51.7%	53.9%	58.0%	49.5%	50.5%	54.6%	50.1%	45.0%

Table 2 - 60% Recycling Project - Comparison between 6 months figures for April 2013 to September 2013 and April 2014 to September 2014

	Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13	Apr 13 to Sept 13 Total	Apr-14	May-14	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14	Apr 14 to Sept 14 Total
Material Recycled/Composted (tonnes)														
Glass	289	420	281	315	284	310	1,898	227	395	298	219	282	351	1,772
Soft Mix (paper and cardboard)	426	400	371	405	405	472	2,478	514	509	458	500	443	510	2,935
Plastics & Cans	117	122	183	125	126	153	826	155	150	154	166	139	154	918
Others - textiles, WEE, Batteries, Third Party.	0	0	72	0	0	80	152	3	6	76	5	4	88	182
Total Dry Recycling (tonnes)	831	942	907	844	815	1,016	5,355	899	1,060	985	891	869	1,103	5,807
Total Green Waste (tonnes)	882	1,639	1,394	1,417	1,117	1,032	7,481	1,246	1,912	1,612	1,500	1,059	1,242	8,571
Total household waste recycled and composted (tonnes)	1,713	2,581	2,300	2,261	1,932	2,048	12,836	2,145	2,972	2,597	2,391	1,928	2,345	14,378
Total residual waste (tonnes)	2,112	2,859	2,186	2,635	1,961	1,979	13,731	2,005	2,538	1,884	2,437	1,890	1,948	12,703
Total Household Waste (tonnes)	3,825	5,440	4,486	4,896	3,893	4,027	26,567	4,150	5,511	4,481	4,828	3,818	4,293	27,082
% Dry Recycling	21.7%	17.3%	20.2%	17.2%	20.9%	25.2%	20.2%	21.7%	19.2%	22.0%	18.5%	22.8%	25.7%	21.4%
% Green Waste Composted	23.1%	30.1%	31.1%	28.9%	28.7%	25.6%	28.2%	30.0%	34.7%	36.0%	31.1%	27.7%	28.9%	31.6%
% TOTAL HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLED	44.8%	47.4%	51.3%	46.2%	49.6%	50.9%	48.3%	51.7%	53.9%	58.0%	49.5%	50.5%	54.6%	53.1%

Introduction

In view of the importance of markets to the City centre, the Council has identified a review of the markets as a priority project in the 2014/15 Corporate Plan. The aim of the review is to prepare a 5 Year Development Plan for St Albans markets that is shared, understood and supported by a wide range of stakeholders.

Discussions at the Markets Task and Finish Group, Local Services Scrutiny Committee and City Neighbourhoods Committee have helped to develop the plans for the market service over the last few months. This has involved reviewing the data from a baseline analysis of the Charter and Farmer Markets.

St Albans City and District Council holds a Charter Market franchise through which we have the ability to run Charter Markets throughout the year. The current market pattern in St Albans is a Charter Market on Wednesday and Saturday, a Farmers Market every second Sunday in the month, and extra markets running up to Christmas. In addition various market type activities are run as part of other events such as the Food and Drink Festival Finale and the Christmas Lights switch on.

Food Pilot

As well as the baseline analysis of the market, a pilot food market on Wednesdays (located at the southern end of the market) was implemented from 13th August 2014. The pilot aimed to make better use of unsold stall capacity. Officers approached traders on the perishables waiting list together with local hospitality businesses. The initiative has been welcomed by existing market traders and by market customers.

The initial pilot has proven to be successful with the majority of the new traders wishing to continue on the market. This experience tells us that St Albans markets are seen as a desirable place to trade. It also provides a level of support for plans to develop our overall market offer. Recruitment of more food traders will continue with a view to growing the food focussed element of the Wednesday market.

Other Operational Developments

During the period of the review we have re-structured the markets' management team, bringing the two roles in line with the Council's grades and structures. We have created new roles which the two existing markets' management employees did not apply for. One of the markets' officers has now left the Council and the other will be leaving at the end of November. We have offered the new roles as secondment opportunities to our staff and we are reviewing the applications received. We will continue to operate the markets normally and we will recruit suitable people to the new roles.

We have also been working to implement the findings of a recent internal audit report in relation to improving health and safety at the market. This will include auditing all stalls and establishing improvement plans, where required, to ensure compliance with current rules.

Markets Review

The findings of the baseline review and the food extension to the Wednesday have informed a Draft 5 year Market Development Plan containing two strategic goals:

1. To operate markets to form an integral part of the current and future development of St Albans City centre;
2. To operate financially viable and sustainable markets.

The key objectives proposed are to:

1. Improve financial performance.

Options being considered include:

- Increasing utilisation through reviewing traders licences
 - Removing cash and paper based payments and replacing them with electronic payments systems
 - Increasing the number of stalls on all markets
 - Reviewing rental charges, potentially to reflect differing values in specific zones
 - Stricter application of rules around management of market waste
 - Segregation of card for sale or recycling
 - Use of pop up style stalls to increase flexibility and/or reduce the costs to erect
 - Adopting a demand based approach to filling vacancies.
2. Improve markets' contribution to and integration into the City centre now and in the future.

Options being considered include:

- New policies and methods to give the Council ability to reconfigure, relocate, flex or move the markets to work around and support future City centre developments and events
 - Joining up marketing and advertising that links the markets with other events and key developments in the City centre
 - Creating opportunities to grow start-ups and new enterprises
3. Improve the markets' performance as a visitor destination.

Options being considered include:

- Implementing improved marketing and publicity based on developing a collaborative approach with traders and other functions in the Council
- Promoting markets actively to tour operators
- Using social media to publicise markets
- Creating new zones for 'pop up' markets to allow for small dedicated niche markets to be created
- Developing a 'joined up' markets calendar
- Linking planning of all markets in the marketing and publicity activities e.g. Christmas market and charter market
- Identifying new markets that might attract visitors to the City centre

4. Improve how the markets support the needs and demands of the traders and their customers.

Options being considered include:

- Creating an extended and joined up list of new and potential traders
- Actively managing the commodity list to recruit suitable traders and recruit them to pilot pop up markets
- Actively recruiting entrepreneurs who are piloting new market models elsewhere e.g., night markets, vintage markets
- Implementing robust policies relating to how the markets operate to improve trader and customer service and environmental, health and safety compliance
- Implementing a Tenant Mix Policy (the range of different types of traders) that is based on the needs of the markets (and wider stakeholders) that allows the Council to promote the best interests of the market as a whole
- Undertaking research into customer and non-customer needs and demands

Next Steps

The next step is to consult traders on the possibilities. The outcome of this consultation will be available by the end of October. The intention is to take a draft plan, along with the consultation findings, to the Markets Task and Finish Group to seek their help in shaping the development of the final plan.

Subject to these further views, we expect to complete some preparatory work for the draft plan by early 2015 including:

- Improving refuse and recycling management
- Implementing electronic payment facilities
- Formal collection of up to date detailed personal and business data for all traders
- Addressing 'poor attendance' by permanent traders
- Developing new systems to plan and administer the markets
- Increasing the level of performance monitoring and reporting.

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix E: Asset Maintenance Quarterly Report



Work	Due Date	Date Completed	RAG
Harpenden Public Halls - Flat Roof repairs & pre-lims	July 2014	July 2014	B
Clarence Park Fencing (CNC) - Hatfield Rd stretch	July 2014	July 2014	B
Harpenden Sports Centre Sports Hall - Air Conditioning	July 2014	July 2014	B
Ver Park - Tennis Court/ Crazy Golf Fencing	March 2015	July 2014	B
Bridge on Alban Way - replacement of timbers and strengthening rods	July 2014	July 2014	B
Batchwood – Road lining/ marking	June/ July 2014	August 2014	B
Park St Pavilion - water supply	August 2014	August 2014	B
Council Chamber - replacement of air handling unit	August 2014	August 2014	B
Alban Arena - health and safety works in the roof void	August 2014	August 2014	B
War Memorial St Peter's St (CNC) - Extend paved area and works to grounds	Sep/ Oct 2014	September 2014	B
Batchwood Golf and Bowls Club - fencing	June/ July 2014	September 2014	B
Clarence Lodge (CNC) - stonework	Aug/ Sept 2014	September 2014	B

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix E: Asset Maintenance Quarterly Report



Status of Key Projects

Property/ Asset	Issue	Progress/ Comments
35 Market Place St Albans	Defect to front elevation.	<p>Specification prepared and sent out to prospective contractors.</p> <p>Works to commence after Christmas and will last approximately 4 months, subject to weather and conditions once the wall is removed.</p> <p>We will be arranging a further meeting with the tenants in late October/ early November to discuss the works.</p>
Crabtree Fields	Park and Stride – in conjunction with Hertfordshire County Council	<p>The County Council has carried out works to extend the existing car park to allow parents of the nearby High Beeches School to use it as a 'park and stride' facility. These works completed on 18 September. They have also provided additional parking for the Indoor Bowls Club adjacent to their building.</p>
Crabtree Fields	Community Engagement – in conjunction with the Scouts and Harpenden Town Council	<p>District officers have been working with the Scouts and Harpenden Town Council to improve Crabtree Fields. The Fields are now designated as a Field in Trust and a stone has been erected, which will bear the plaque designating it as such.</p> <p>The Scouts have undertaken activity days where they have cleared areas of the wooded area. The Town Council has provided advice via its relationship with Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust. We are aiming to have an official opening of the 'Field in Trust' in the near future.</p>
Changing Places Changing Facilities, Civic Centre St Albans	Construction of a new changing facility in the Civic Centre for severely disabled people	<p>Planning permission was obtained to change the use of the existing bicycle store to create the new facility. We have now awarded the contract and we anticipate works will start in December/ January following a 6-8 week lead in time for the equipment. The bicycle store will be housed elsewhere.</p>

Council Performance & Budget Summary



Appendix F: Transfer of Assets to Town and Parish Councils

The Council has received applications for the transfer of assets to Harpenden Town Council and Sandridge Parish Council. None of the assets has a value exceeding £100,000 (with the exception of 91 Lower Luton Road, which was approved by Cabinet in June 2014) and therefore in accordance with the Council's policy, ward councillors and Scrutiny Chairs were invited to comment on the proposed transfers. Following consultation, terms have been agreed in accordance with the standard Heads of Terms, including an overage provision against any future development proposals. Legal documents are being prepared and completion is expected by the end of the year.

Asset	Town/Parish Council
Heath Close Allotments, Harpenden	Harpenden Town Council
Oakley Road Allotments, Harpenden	Harpenden Town Council
91 Lower Luton Road, Harpenden	Harpenden Town Council
Harness Way Playing Fields, St Albans	Sandridge Parish Council
Marshalswick Community Centre, Ridgeway, St Albans	Sandridge Parish Council
Car Park Ridgeway, St Albans (excluding public toilets)	Sandridge Parish Council
William Bell Playing Fields, Furse Avenue, St Albans	Sandridge Parish Council
Sherwood Avenue Recreation Ground, St Albans	Sandridge Parish Council

Community Right to Bid – Schedule of Decisions

Asset name	Owner	Nominated by and date	Recommended Decision & Date	Reasons	PH Approved/ Date of Final Decision
SPEC Retreat Centre, All Saints Pastoral Centre, Shenley Lane, St Albans	Comer Homes	London Colney Parish Council 02.06.14	Do Not Add to List 15.09.14	<p>The facility has been closed since May 2014. The main use of the building was a religious education centre providing residential courses to catholic schools at both primary and secondary level. It was used by schools that came within the boundary of the Diocese of Westminster – Hertfordshire, Middlesex and London Boroughs. In part of the building there was a self contained flat used by the family of the staff member that ran the facility plus residential accommodation for other staff members. Since the closure this use is now provided from a property at Pinner and therefore this use is still available.</p> <p>We are advised that the facility was not available to be used by the local community but may have been used by schools in Hertfordshire to provide educational courses as part of the school curriculum.</p> <p>We consider that the building was used for purposes specific to its use as a residential educational facility rather than community purposes. In addition the use is no longer continuing in this property, but is now available at an alternative venue. In any event, we do not believe it is realistic to consider the use will become available again in this property for the next 5 years. Consequently we do not believe it fits the Community Right to Bid criteria.</p>	23.09.14 Agreed

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix H: Conveyancing Update



The purpose of this report is to provide visibility on the progress of key property transactions. It is not intended to report the more routine conveyancing matters.

Completed transactions during period 01/07/14 - 30/09/14

Date Completed	Property	Transaction
29/08/14	Football Ground, Clarence Park, St Albans (CNC)	Licence to St Albans City Football and Athletic Club Limited
17/9/14	Park Hall, Leyton Road, Harpenden	Transfer to Harpenden Town Council
25/9/14	Ground and Basement Floor Offices at the Civic Centre, St Peter's Street, St Albans	Lease to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire
26/9/14	Offa's Way Garage Site, Wheathampstead	Sale to North Hertfordshire Homes Limited with Nominations Agreement
30/9/14	41 Hart Road, St Albans	Sale to Hightown Praetorian & Churches Housing Association Limited with Capital Subsidy Agreement and Nominations Agreement

Status of key transactions as at 30/09/14

Property	Transaction	Status
Garage Sites at London Colney and Wheathampstead	Sale to North Hertfordshire Homes Housing Association Limited	Buyer proposes to complete and start on site at four sites at two week intervals beginning with Offa's Way, Wheathampstead on 29 September 2014. Buyer will complete on remaining two sites when title issues resolved and on 141-162 Cotlandswick when the new Community Centre has been built.

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Appendix H: Conveyancing Update



Harpenden Town Football Ground, Amenbury Lane, Harpenden	Lease to Harpenden Town Football Club	Completion expected by 31 October 2014
25 Market Place & 2 Upper Dagnall Street, St Albans	Lease renewal for W H Smith	Completion expected by 30 November 2014
Marshalswick Community Centre, The Ridgeway, St Albans	Transfer to Sandridge Parish Council	Legal documents being prepared. Completion expected by 31 December 2014
The Ridgeway Car Park, St Albans	Transfer to Sandridge Parish Council	Legal documents being prepared. Completion expected by 31 December 2014
Harness Way Playing Fields, St Albans	Transfer to Sandridge Parish Council	Legal documents being prepared. Completion expected by 31 December 2014
Sherwood Avenue Recreation Ground, St Albans	Transfer to Sandridge Parish Council	Legal documents being prepared. Completion expected by 31 December 2014
William Bell Recreation Ground, Furse Avenue, St Albans	Transfer to Sandridge Parish Council	Legal documents being prepared. Completion expected by 31 December 2014
Oakley Road Allotments, Harpenden	Transfer to Harpenden Town Council	Legal documents being prepared. Completion expected by 31 December 2014
Heath Close Allotments, Harpenden	Transfer to Harpenden Town Council	Legal documents being prepared. Completion expected by 31 December 2014
91 Lower Luton Road, Harpenden	Transfer to Harpenden Town Council	Legal documents being prepared. Completion expected by 31 December 2014

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix I: Attendance Annual Update



Attendance Management – Analysis and Trends April 2013 – March 2014

Overview

1. The number of working days lost due to sickness absence per employee fell from 7.7 days in 2012/13 to 5.9 days in 2013/14, a reduction of 23%.
2. This is below the national average across all sectors of 6.6 days and well below the local government average of 8.2 days (CIPD Absence Survey 2014).
3. The highest number of days were lost due to Stress/Mental Health issues, accounting for 29% of all absences within the Council.
4. The Council is committed to managing absence promptly and in a fair but firm way to minimise the effect of absences on colleagues, customers and public funds.
5. All employees have a contractual duty to attend work 100% of the time unless they are unable to do so through genuine sickness, injury or where absence has been approved (e.g. annual leave).
6. The Council introduced a new Attendance Management policy in April 2014 to aid in managing absences more effectively. Prompt and consistent action by managers will give employees a fair chance to meet the required standard of attendance.
7. Advice and support on how to improve attendance as well as general health and wellbeing including counselling is available to staff and managers through the Employee Assistance Programme helpline and website.
8. Occupational Health provide advice to line managers on case management, reasonable adjustments and other measures to aid an employee's early return to work where possible or with capability action where needed.
9. Formal capability action was taken for unsatisfactory attendance in a number of cases, leading to 2 ill-health retirements, 6 formal warnings and 1 dismissal.

National Trends

10. The full CIPD annual survey 2014 data published in October 2014 indicates an overall fall in absence levels this year with the national average falling by a day per employee, from 7.6 days in 2013 to 6.6 days in 2014.
11. Public sector absence has fallen by almost a day, although at 7.9 days per employee, this figure is still markedly high. Local Government absence has also fallen to 8.2 days but this is still substantially higher than the private sector (5.5 days).
12. Over a quarter of absence in the public sector is due to long-term absences of four weeks or longer, twice as much as in the private sector.
13. A positive trend which could have contributed to the fall of absence levels includes an increased focus on attendance strategies and a 22% rise in the number of organisations developing their line managers' capability.

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix I: Attendance Annual Update



14. Two-fifths of respondents report that stress-related absence has increased over the past year for the workforce as a whole, while a quarter report it has increased for managers and one in seven that it has increased for senior managers. Just one in ten report that stress-related absence has decreased.
15. Workload is ranked the most common cause of stress followed by non-work relationships/family, management style and relationships at work.
16. 43% of all organisations have noticed a rise in mental health problems including anxiety and depression. The report also reveals that 50% of these businesses have noted an increase in the number of people coming to work ill, but are not taking steps to address it.
17. Counselling (56%), flexible working (52%) and employee assistance programme (46%) are the most common tools employers use to support staff with mental health problems according to the survey.
18. Socio-economic factors are now featured in the report. The ageing population brings with it important considerations for employers. One that has particularly stood out is the impact of caring responsibilities on absence. Nearly a third highlighted the impact of this absence, and 14% report caring responsibilities have had a moderate or considerable impact.
19. The East of England regional survey of absence data is expected later in the year.

Council Trends

20. The average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per employee decreased by 23% from 7.7 days in 2012/13 to 5.9 days in 2013/14. This rate falls to 4.3 days if you exclude long term absence data.
21. This is well below the local government average of 8.2 days but this figure is still slightly higher than in the private sector (5.5 days). (CIPD Absence Survey 2014).
22. During the last year 42% of absences were short term (0-6 days), 27% of absences were medium term (7-27 days) and 31% were long term (28 days or more) in duration **(Appendix 1)**.
23. Housing and Community Services had absence levels over the Council average of 5.9 days.
24. Housing is our largest department (employing 24% of our workforce) and accounted for 42% of all absences, equivalent to 10.1 days lost per employee **(Appendix 1)**.
25. Community Services is our second largest department (employing 20% of our total workforce) and accounted for 21% of all absences, equivalent to 6.2 days lost per employee.
26. During the period covered by this report we had 12 long term cases under review. 6 of these individuals have since left the Council. This included 2 ill health retirements in Housing, 3 redundancies including 2 in Housing and 1 in Finance. There was also 1 voluntary resignation. The breakdown of the remaining long term cases shows that 1 case is still actively under review and the other 5 have since returned to work.

Appendix I: Attendance Annual Update

27. 29% of all absences were due to stress and mental health issues, which also accounted for 50% of all long term absences within the Council.
28. In line with our Attendance Management Policy line managers refer employees to Occupational Health at an early stage when cases related to Stress/Mental Health are identified. This ensures support is provided by managers in consultation with Occupational Health as soon as possible to reduce the chance of any long term absences occurring.
29. Staff are also encouraged to use the Council's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) service which provides support including advice and counselling. Reasonable adjustments are also considered at an early stage to encourage employees to stay in work or return to work as soon as possible, e.g. flexible working including home working and changes in working pattern or a phased return to work.
30. Active management of long term absence cases has resulted in 50% of the employees returning to work with support from the line manager and Occupational Health. The remainder of the cases eventually resulted in the employees leaving the Council for various reasons.

Next steps:

31. Attendance Management workshops will be held over the next few months to ensure that managers have the required competence to fully implement the Attendance Management policy, procedures and best practice. These workshops will cover case management including progressing employees through the formal review process and stress risk assessment and management.
32. We are considering whether the appraisals of all line managers should include a review of how they have managed attendance in their own teams.

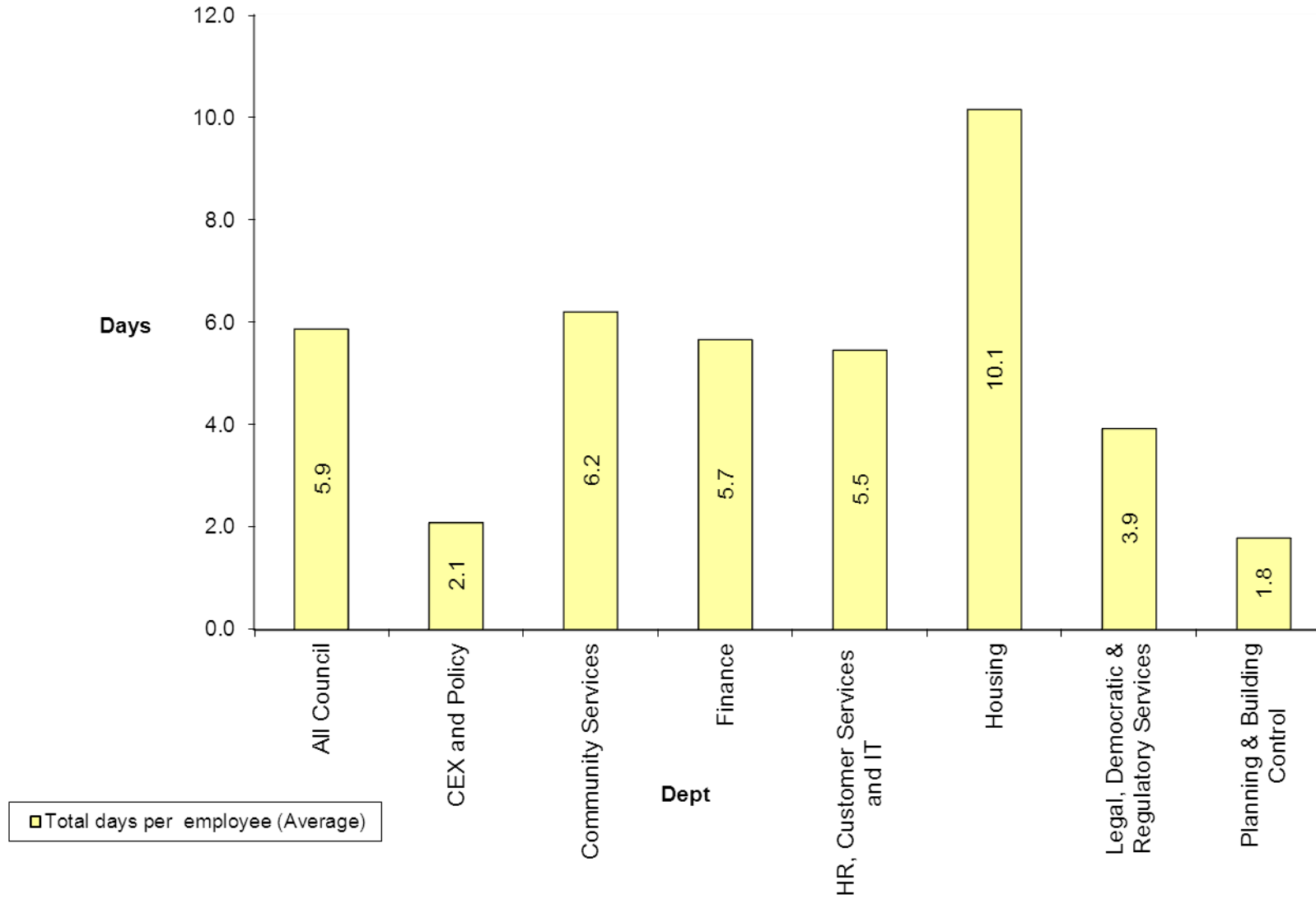
Our aim is to achieve a further slight reduction from 5.9 days absence in 2013/14 to match the private sector figure of 5.5 days by the next review in 2015, if practicable.

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix I: Attendance Annual Update

APPENDIX 1

Average days lost per employee



Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix I: Attendance Annual Update

