

Council Performance & Budget Summary

July 2020



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

Recommendation

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

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

Commentary

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

	Measure	Comments
R	Forecast budget variance at the Year End (General Fund for year in question)	<p>The predominant financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Council remains pressure on income. The Council lost about £150k a week during lockdown.</p> <p>As expected, the Government's first and second steps towards easing lockdown have resulted in an income increase, though it is not clear yet where levels will stabilise. The forecast remains for an overspend of £3.4m – 20% of budget this financial year, before taking account of the recently announced Government income guarantee support scheme. The details of this scheme have yet to be confirmed, but at the time of writing (5 August), it is estimated that the Government support will reduce the overspend to approximately £1m-£1.5m. This will vary depending on the details of the scheme and how the Council's income levels stabilise over the remaining months of the year.</p>
R	Average time to re-let dwellings (excluding temporary accommodation) (cumulative, April to March) (days)	<p>The average time to re-let voids (empty properties) has two elements: the time taken by the contractor to complete works; and the time taken to let the property.</p> <p>The previously reported utilities issues have now been addressed largely; a contract with British Gas commenced at the beginning of July. It will take some time for this to be reflected in the turnaround figures as many of the properties where utility issues have been resolved are now awaiting allocation and letting.</p> <p>The contractor is currently working on 8 void properties and there are a further 39 with the Lettings team awaiting allocation and letting.</p>

	Measure	Comments
		<p>The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on lettings. A number of properties were offered to people who were shielding or self-isolating and therefore couldn't move. Advertising was suspended between 23 March and 3 July. This resulted in a backlog of properties needing to be advertised, shortlisted and allocated.</p> <p>Of the 39 voids with the Lettings team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 properties are set aside for temporary accommodation • 2 properties have a local lettings policy • 14 properties are designated for elderly persons • 20 properties are awaiting general needs allocation.
A	Number of voids over 3 months	There is a small reduction in the number of properties empty for over 3 months. These are mainly elderly-designated properties and those where there is a local lettings policy. Others have had longstanding utility issues which have now been addressed. These properties are ready to let.
R	Number of properties let	There was a decrease in the number of properties let in July from 23 to 18. This was due to a return to a situation where properties are advertised, and bids prioritised. This process, including verification, takes longer than a direct let to a homeless household (which most of the lettings in recent months have been). Socially distanced viewings also need to be arranged.
G	Void properties as a percentage of total stock	The number of empty properties has decreased since last month.
R	Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due	<p>The outstanding arrears at the end of the month were £1.5m – equivalent to 5.7% of rent due. There were 2,106 tenants in arrears.</p> <p>The increase in rent arrears since April is for two main reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The impact of Covid-19 and the increase in the number of tenants in receipt of Universal Credit (UC) from 17% to 24% since the beginning of April. While 624 tenants were in receipt of Universal Credit four months ago, the figure has increased to 1,147. Of current rent arrears, the arrears balance for tenants in receipt of UC is £955,943.92. 2. The inability to recover rent using legal action as a result of Covid-19 legal action restrictions. <p>Legal action was suspended during the lockdown period, and this has been extended by the Government to 23 August. Officers are following Government guidance and are contacting tenants by telephone, text and e-mail. Officers are encouraging tenants to pay rent and are offering advice and support in relation to benefits, discretionary housing payments, debt advice (through Citizens Advice) and referrals for additional support. Tenants have been advised on what they should do regarding a sudden change in income. Where tenants have been furloughed, we have agreed that they can to pay less rent now - once they are back at work, we will</p>

	Measure	Comments
A		<p>expect them to clear the built-up arrears. Officers are writing to tenants where it has been difficult to make contact despite telephone messages, text and e-mail.</p> <p>Housing officers recently met with staff from the County Court to discuss their protocols for re-opening. They have made it clear that while legal recovery can recommence in August, they may not be able to re-open the County Courts by then. Court officers are currently seeking information from all landlords about their anticipated demand on court services before they establish a plan for re-opening.</p> <p>Further information will be appended to the August Performance Report for September Cabinet.</p>
A	Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks)	The average length of stay in temporary accommodation has reduced due to the number of accepted homeless households who have moved into permanent housing and the reduced number of households in temporary accommodation.
R	Percentage of planning applications not determined (within time limits or agreed timescale)	The planning system uses legacy technology that does not easily support remote working for sustained periods and is affecting staff productivity. However, some improvements have been made which are expected to increase productivity, for example, the resolution of an issue with merging documents. In addition, summer is a period when staff annual leave is taken, meaning we have fewer staff on duty.
R	Number of planning applications that have not been determined in time (at end of month)	A downward trend continues in July. This is due to officers being asked to prioritise out of time casework. A contractor previously employed to tackle the backlog of out of time applications in April is currently providing additional cover over the holiday period. This will help to ensure a continued improvement in this figure in August.
A	Parking Penalty Charge Notices issued	The temporary suspension of most parking restrictions during the lockdown period ended on 1 July. Enforcement has been fully operational since then.
	Percentage of Parking Penalty Charge Notices paid three months previously	<p>Of the 1,011 Parking Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in July, 68.74% were paid.</p> <p>Only 36 PCNs were issued in April during the lockdown period when parking enforcement was relaxed. However, the usual number of customer enquiries were received in April. This suggests that a considerable number of people challenged the issuing of a ticket. This is reflected in the percentage of PCNs paid.</p>
	Number of spoiled Penalty Charge Notices	<p>There has been an increase in the number of spoiled PCNs this month. The number of spoiled PCNs can be attributed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles driven away-before a PCN could be served or attached to the windscreen; • The issuing of warning notices to vehicles in contravention of parking restrictions; • PCNs issued in error by a Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO).

	Measure	Comments
		The percentage of spoiled PCNs against the total number of PCNs issued in July is just above the 1% industry standard target. The year to date average is 0.88%.
G	Fly-tipping incidents	<p>There was a notable reduction in the number of fly-tipping incidents in July. Although there is evidence of some 'clear-out' waste, the majority includes garden waste and construction waste (i.e. brick, rubble and fencing). The Council's contractor, Veolia, continues to operate the clean-up service as usual and has recently experienced an increase in requests for bulky waste collections.</p> <p>Although most of the Hertfordshire Waste Recycling Centres across the County have now reopened, restrictions have been placed on the materials that can be disposed of at the centres. This may still be a contributing factor to the number of recent fly-tipping incidents.</p>

Key

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

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		Bigger or Smaller is Better	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	TARGET
Finance	Forecast budget variance at the year end (General Fund for year in question)	Smaller	-0.5%	0.8%	2.7%	1.9%	1.3%	-0.1%	-0.5%	-0.5%	1.6%	23.0%	25.0%	25.0%	19.0%	0.0%
Housing	Average time to re-let dwellings (excluding temporary accommodation) (cumulative, Apr-Mar) (days)	Smaller	54	65	77	67	61	74	69	69	63.5	60	71	81.2	78	26
	Number of voids over 26-day target (but below 90 days)	Smaller	19	29	26	24	19	13	21	29	21	18	27	16	20	Trend
	Number of voids over 3 months	Smaller	33	25	14	15	16	14	8	8	8	11	17	19	15	Trend
	Number of properties let	Bigger	20	15	27	20	29	17	17	13	23	12	15	23	18	Trend
	Void properties as a percentage of total stock	Smaller	1.70%	1.60%	1.20%	1.30%	0.95%	1.01%	1.01%	1.00%	0.74%	0.93%	1.10%	1.04%	0.92%	1%
	Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due	Smaller	4.0%	4.1%	4.5%	4.0%	3.8%	3.6%	3.8%	4.1%	4.3%	4.5%	5.0%	5.1%	5.7%	5%†
	Percentage of tenants in receipt of Universal Credit	Smaller	13.9%	14.2%	14.9%	15.4%	15.8%	16.3%	16.6%	17.2%	17.7%	20.8%	22.5%	23.2%	23.9%	
	Number of households in temporary accommodation	Smaller	140	132	132	130	129	129	125	131	129	133	124	116	116	Trend
	Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks)	Smaller	28	29.7	24	27	29	29.9	29	27.2	28	30.7	32.5	33.6	30.5	Trend
	Percentage of repairs completed within target	Bigger	95%	97%	96%	97%	94%	94%	93%	94%	93%	95%	97%	92%	95%	95%
	Percentage of repairs completed at first visit	Bigger	92%	92%	88%	88%	89%	90%	88%	85%	89%	91%	95%	92%	94%	80%
	Total number of households in receipt of Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax support		6,588	6,579	6,577	6,531	6,527	6,521	6,522	6,507	6,827	7,143	7,284	7,324	7,383	
	Days to process Housing Benefit new claims (12 month average)	Smaller	15.3	15.2	15.1	15.1	15.1	14.8	14.6	14.6	14.3	13.6	13.1	13.5	13.0	21
	Days to process Housing Benefit change in circumstances (12 month average)	Smaller	4.2	5.2	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.6	4.6	6
	Planning & Building Control	Planning and Building Control applications received (including pre-app, trees and condition discharge)		480	383	371	478	393	340	445	418	391	327	304	451	456
Percentage of Council's planning decisions supported at appeal (cumulative 12 month)		Bigger	76%	78%	81%	85%	86%	87%	88%	88%	92%	76%	78%	80%	78%	66%
Percentage of planning applications not determined (within time limits or agreed timescale)		Smaller	29%	29%	26%	22%	19%	13%	29%	21%	30%	18%	35%	28%	31%	25%
Number of planning applications that have not been determined in time (at end of month)		Smaller	70	96	75	52	53	29	74	50	54	23	65	54	46	40
Community Services	Parking Penalty Charge Notices issued	Smaller	894	1,035	738	624	976	776	861	877	876	36	89	488	1,011	Trend
	Percentage of Parking Penalty Charge Notices paid three months previously	Bigger										81%	83%	75%	19%	TBD
	Number of spoiled Parking Penalty Charge Notices	Smaller										0	3	1	11	TBD
	Percentage of spoiled Parking Penalty Charge Notices against the total number of Notices issued	Smaller										0.00%	3.37%	0.20%	1.09%	Less than 1%
	Parking Enforcement Officer deployed hours	Bigger										1,175	1,158	996	1,086	TBD
	Fly-tipping incidents (latest month data provisional)	Smaller	103	62	56	69	70	43	43	41	48	58	81	95	52	Year-on-year trend
	Number of missed waste collections per 100,000 (latest month data provisional)	Smaller	27	33	28	26	26	26	29	29	19	20	18	30	23	32
External	Claimant count	Smaller	1,320	1,335	1,350	1,400	1,405	1,410	1,410	1,500	1,465	2,440	3,765	3,650	3,735^	****

† Quarterly target to reflect seasonal variation.

^ Data subject to ONS revisions.

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

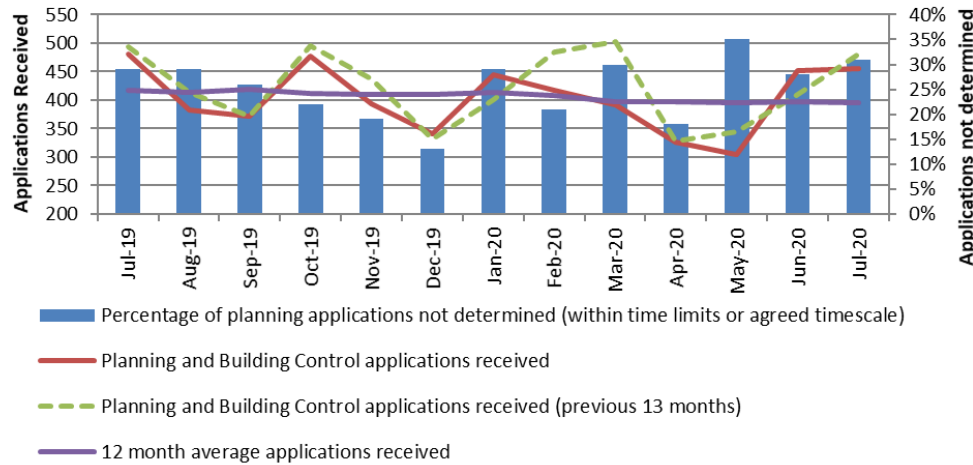
TBD: Indicator static target or trend to be determined.

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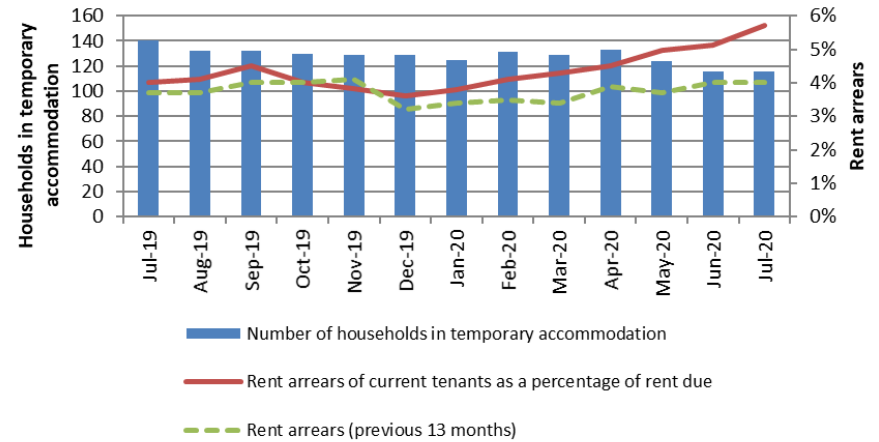
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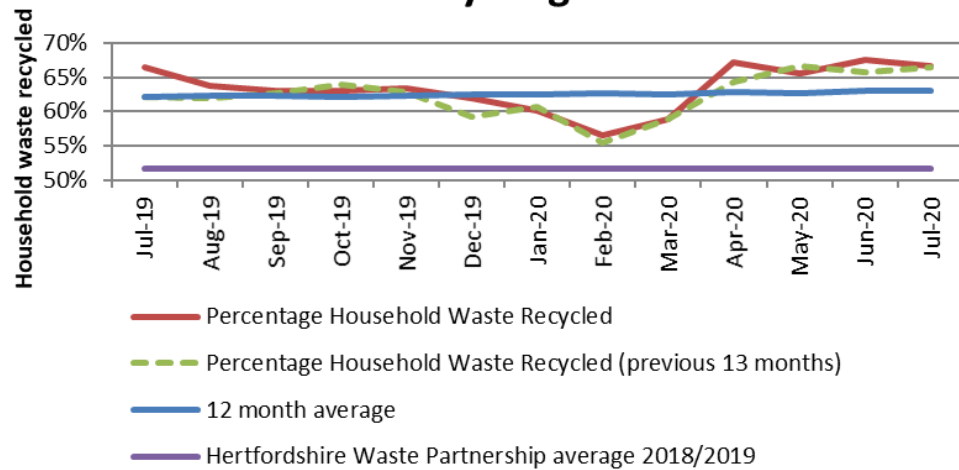
Planning & Building Control



Housing



Recycling



Void (empty properties) Performance

