



Strategy and Resources Committee Performance and Budget Summary 2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)

Summary: The quarterly performance summary shows performance against key performance indicators on aspects affecting the Committee's various areas of responsibility, provides updates on actions related to the Council's priorities as set out in the Council Plan 2023 – 2028, and includes relevant data including on environmental factors affecting our community.

Report Author(s)

Claire Wainwright, Strategy and Policy Manager (Claire.Wainwright@stalbens.gov.uk)

Appendix	Title
1	Performance Reports to the other Service & Scrutiny Committees
2	Additional Data Plan
3	Summary of changes requested during the September Committee cycle

Council Key Priorities	Wards	Open / Exempt
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver more social housing, Support our local economy, Enhance the District's cultural offer, Promote equality, inclusion and fairness 	All	Open

Recommendations

That the Strategy and Resources Committee notes the Council Performance Summary (Quarter 2 2023-2024).

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)

Budget Variance Quarter 2 2023-24

Budget	£m				
	Q2 22-23	Q3 22-23	Q4* 22-23	Q1 23-24	Q2 23-24
Gross Expenditure Budget	39.6	39.6	39.6	40.0	40.0
Less Fees and Charges Budget and Government Grants	-23.5	-23.5	-23.5	-22.9	-22.9
Total Net General Fund budget	16.1	16.1	16.1	17.1	17.1
Total General Fund forecast	17.3	17.3	17.5	17.7	18.0
Forecast budget variance at the Year End (General Fund)	1.2	1.2	1.4	0.6	0.9
Housing Income (rents and charges)	-39.4	-39.4	-39.4	-42.9	-42.9
Housing Expenditure	37.2	37.2	37.2	40.9	40.9
Housing Revenue Account budget	-2.1	-2.1	-2.1	-2.1	-2.1
Housing Revenue Account forecast	-0.9	-1.0	-0.8	-2.1	-1.9
Forecast budget variance at the Year End (HRA)	1.2	1.2	1.4	0.0	0.2

* This is the position at the end of February 2023. The 2022/23 financial outturns have yet to be completed.

Note: The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) records expenditure and income associated with running the Council's housing stock and closely related services or facilities, which are provided primarily for the benefit of our housing tenants.

Q2 2023-24 Commentary: Principal reasons for variance to Budget by Directorate

Community and Place Delivery (Excluding Housing Revenue Account)	Lower leisure contract utility costs than budget (-£0.3m) offset by lower fee income (£0.3m)
Strategy Policy & Transformation	Commercial income shortfall (£1.2m) partly offset by utility and non-staff cost savings (-£0.3m)
Customer, Business and Corporate Support and Non-Departmental Contingencies	Customer Delivery savings not achieved, offset by release of contingency budget
Housing Revenue Account	Reduced income (0.1m) and increased disrepair claims (£0.1m)

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)

A Note on the Content in the Tables Below

The information presented in the tables below reflects the Quarter 2 data (for the period July to September 2023) and is a look back at the position at the end of that quarter.

This report also contains an 'Outlook RAG'. The purpose of this is to provide an indication of expected performance levels over the following quarter. This is based on estimates provided by service managers and helps to flag any risks to performance levels and prompt discussion about how these may be mitigated.

Section A shows performance against key performance indicators.

Section B shows the situation against the Council's priorities set out in the Council Plan 2023 - 2028

Section C shows informational reporting on aspects affecting the Committee's areas of responsibility, or environmental factors affecting our community.

An Additional Data Plan is provided at Appendix 2. This details other service areas where metrics are being considered for future reporting.

Performance Information

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;
- **Red** is worse than 10% from target.

For indicators with trend analysis: Green highlights an improved performance; Red a worse performance.

Contact: Jenny Swatton, Policy Officer (Economic Development & Projects)

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)



Section A – Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicator and Owner, organised by Service Area	Quarter	Actual	Target	Outlook RAG	Comments
Finance					
Forecast budget variance (overspend/underspend against budget) at the year-end for General Fund Assistant Director - Finance 	Q3 22-23 Q4 22-23 Q1 23-24 Q2 23-24	£1.2m £1.4m £0.6m £0.9m (lower is better)	£0m £0m £0m £0m	 Red	See above.
Finance					
Days to process Housing Benefit new claims (12-month average) Revenues & Benefits Manager 	Q3 22-23 Q4 22-23 Q1 23-24 Q2 23-24	14.7 days 13.5 days 11.8 days 11.6 days (lower is better)	21 days 21 days 21 days 21 days	 Green	Performance is within target. The target is based on the national average from DWP data at the time it was set and is reviewed on an annual basis to reflect changes in the national average.
Days to process Housing Benefit change in circumstances (12-month average) Revenues & Benefits Manager 	Q3 22-23 Q4 22-23 Q1 23-24 Q2 23-24	4.4 days 4.7 days 4.6 days 4.1 days (lower is better)	6 days 6 days 6 days 6 days	 Green	Performance is within target. Target is based on the national average from DWP data at the time it was set

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)



Key Performance Indicator and Owner, organised by Service Area	Quarter	Actual	Target	Outlook RAG	Comments
Market					
Market Occupancy rates – median number of pitches					
Assistant Director – Public Realm					
Weds Market	Q1 23-24	79 pitches	67 pitches		<p>Our key performance indicators are based on the median of the top three Wednesday and Saturday markets and top two Second Sunday markets from the same quarter of the preceding financial year. This means that we are setting a target for each market based on the median value of the best attended 25% of each market in each financial quarter.</p> <p>Targets are set per financial quarter to account for the fluctuations in attendance caused by season and weather.</p> <p>Due to the infrequency of the Second Sunday Market, the targets are harder to hit being based on a smaller number of events. However, we are broadening the commodities for the Sunday Market to be more like our Wednesday and Saturday Markets, and we have booked in a greater number of traders for the coming two markets than we have in the last two years.</p> <p>The Saturday Market is now at capacity on its best performing weeks, and we are looking at finding additional space to expand the number of pitches.</p> <p>Whilst Wednesdays have made solid progress, they are still underperforming the pre-pandemic market. Part of this is due to a change in demographics. Again, we are broadening the commodity mix for Wednesdays and using it as a proving ground for potential Saturday traders. Significant rainfall on Wednesdays in August 2023 resulted in much lower pitch sales on those days and affected the quarter figures.</p>
	Q2 23-24	81 pitches	66 pitches		
Saturday Market	Q1 23-24	116 pitches	99 pitches		
	Q2 23-24	110 pitches	95 pitches		
Second Sunday Market	Q1 23-24	51 pitches	52 pitches		
	Q2 23-24	49 pitches	45 pitches		
		(higher is better)			

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)



Section B – Updates on the Council’s priorities set out in the Council Plan 2023 – 2028

(<https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/St%20Albans%20City%20And%20District%20Council%20Plan%202023-2028%20FINAL.pdf>)

Council Priority	Priority Project	Q1 milestones 2023/2024 (Apr-Jun)	Q2 milestones 2023/2024 (Jul-Sep)	Progress	Q3 Outlook 2023/2024 (Oct-Dec)	Q3 milestones 2023/2024 (Oct-Dec)
Deliver more social housing	Deliver market rent apartments at Ridgeview, London Colney, to fund new social housing	P	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project remains on hold and is not currently in the Capital Programme 	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project remains on hold
Deliver more social housing Support our local economy	Complete development at Jubilee Square (including properties for social rent): 33 apartments for social rent; 60 shared ownership apartments; 5,088 sq metres of office space; 100 car parking spaces	A	R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are a small number of outstanding issues that officers are working to resolve with the building contractor. 	R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical Completion stage achieved. Sale of residential units to Watford Community Housing Trust completed (including social housing units for households on the St Albans District housing register).
Support our local economy	Progress the sale of the Harpenden Public Halls site	G	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property being marketed. Revised completion date to be advised once offers are received. 	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate offers received.
Support our local economy	Progress the sale of Spicer Street (Former Public toilets)	A	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The disposal is on hold until Centre 33 can be relocated. A valuation has been received and is being considered. 	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with Centre 33 scheduled to discuss options and timescales for their relocation to more suitable premises.
Enhance the District’s Cultural Offer	Progress the development of a cultural strategy for the District	A	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEP undertaking data analysis to inform development of the strategy. Steering Group membership confirmed. 	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to be provided to the Strategy and Resources Committee on 14/12/23.

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)



Council Priority	Priority Project	Q1 milestones 2023/2024 (Apr-Jun)	Q2 milestones 2023/2024 (Jul-Sep)	Progress	Q3 Outlook 2023/2024 (Oct-Dec)	Q3 milestones 2023/2024 (Oct-Dec)
Promote equality, inclusion, and fairness	Explore funding opportunities to develop community facilities including in the Fleetville area of St Albans	G	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic asset review continues with a view to identifying potential enabling schemes and disposals which could generate a capital receipt. 	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Built Environment team to continue the process of asset review and to present opportunities to the Corporate Property Board on a rolling basis as they emerge.
Promote equality, inclusion, and fairness	Implement the measures introduced by the Elections Act 2022, including voter ID	G	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The online absent vote service went live on 31 October 2023. The Electoral Services team has received both software and legislative training and we are currently working on our in-house processes. The by-elections in December present an opportunity to test these processes as the demand for postal and proxy votes may be higher than usual at this time of year. 	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the additional measure introduced by the Elections Act: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change to EU franchise, Change to overseas franchise, Online absent vote application process, New postal vote handling rules.
Promote equality, inclusion, and fairness	Continue the implementation of the Council's Customer Engagement Strategy (2021-2024)	G	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes and guidance are being designed in preparation for Green Spaces team calls being transferred to Customer Services team. Multi skilling training continues. New customer satisfaction survey is now live. Cross training of parking services into Customer Services team continues. Continuing to analyse reasons why customers phone the Council (rather than use other channels). 	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> December – Housing Benefit and Planning service phone line opening hours to change to 09:00-13:00. Trial of new webchat service. Transfer Greenspace and Garage calls into Customer services, with new opening hours. December – Webchat testing and demonstrations. New online benefits' forms to go live. Bespoke website training in late November to enable the Council to make bigger

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)



Council Priority	Priority Project	Q1 milestones 2023/2024 (Apr-Jun)	Q2 milestones 2023/2024 (Jul-Sep)	Progress	Q3 Outlook 2023/2024 (Oct-Dec)	Q3 milestones 2023/2024 (Oct-Dec)
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with the Housing service to reduce a backlog of outstanding applications for vacant Council-owned garages. 		changes to improve the website.

Key

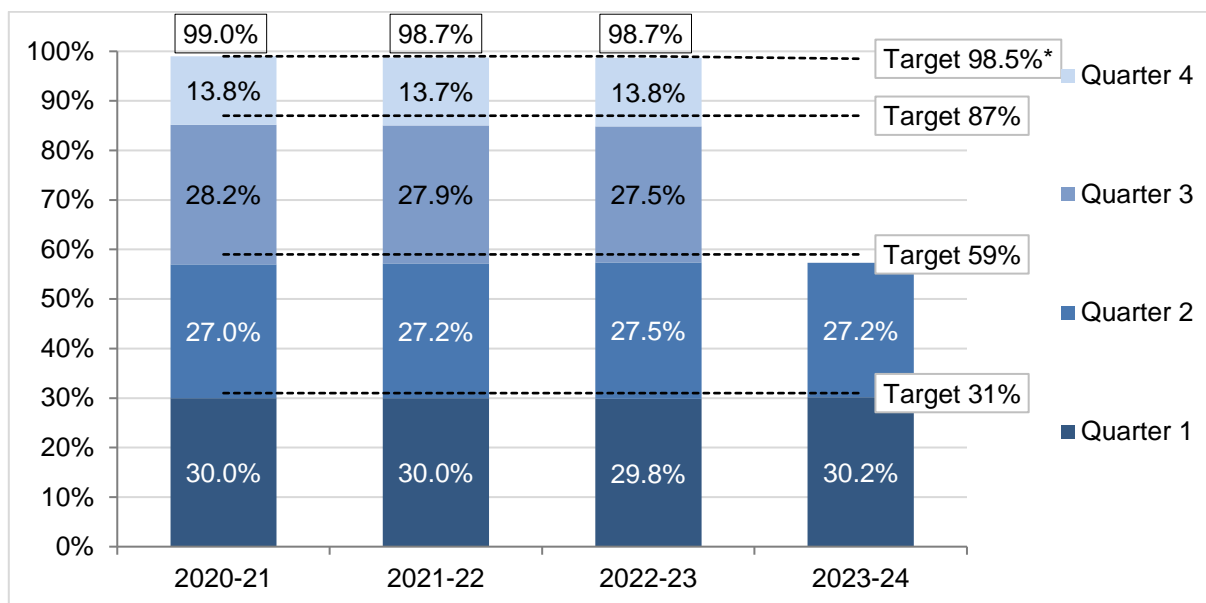
R(ed)	Progress is affected to the extent that the milestone completion date is significantly affected
A(mber)	Progress toward the milestone is slightly off track i.e., a minor hold up with the project
G(reen)	Progress toward the milestone is on track
B(lue)	The project has been completed or ended
P(aused)	The project has been paused

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)

Section C – Informational reporting on aspects affecting the Committee’s areas of responsibility, or external factors affecting our community.

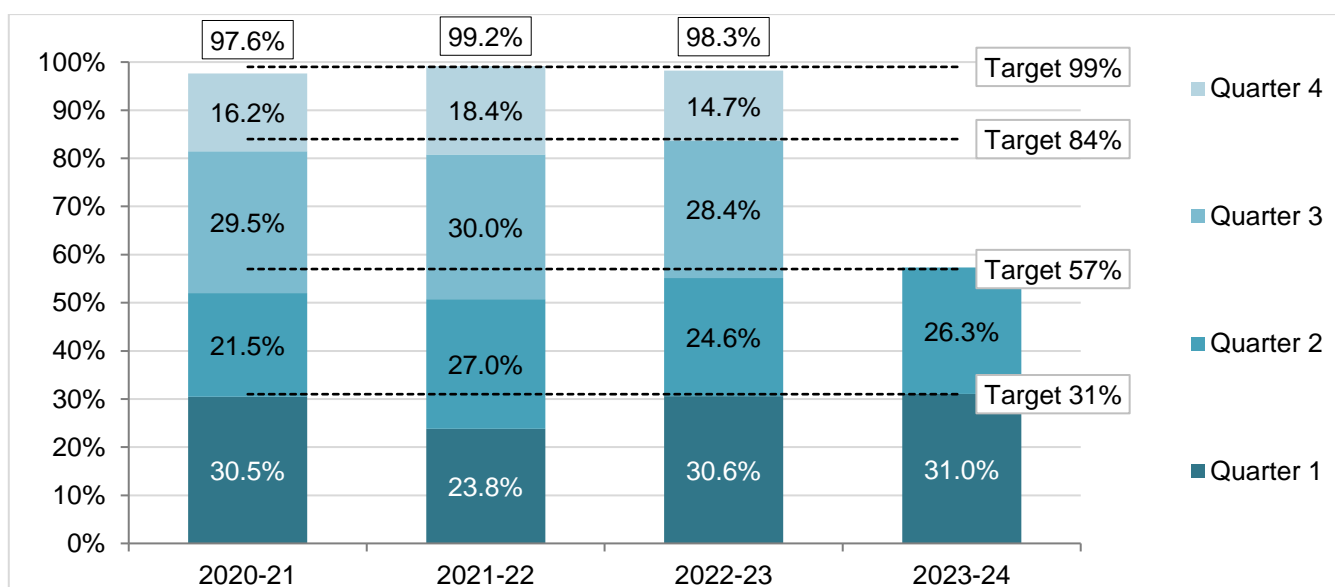
Percentage of Council Tax collected of that collectable in the year (cumulative)



*Target amended from 99% to 98.5% for 2023-24 - increases in the costs of living, energy bills, interest rates and mortgage payments are likely to impact some people's ability to pay their Council Tax.

More residents are electing to pay Council Tax over 12 months which impacts the percentage collected in Quarters 1, 2 and 3. Collection rates do not yet seem to have been impacted significantly by the cost-of-living crisis, although the Government Council Tax Support package for 2023 will be a factor in this. The percentage collected in the second quarter of this financial year (57.34%) is almost identical to that at the same point in 2022/23 (57.37%). Officers will continue to monitor collection rates to identify if there is a decrease emerging.

Percentage of Business Rates collected (year to date)



Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

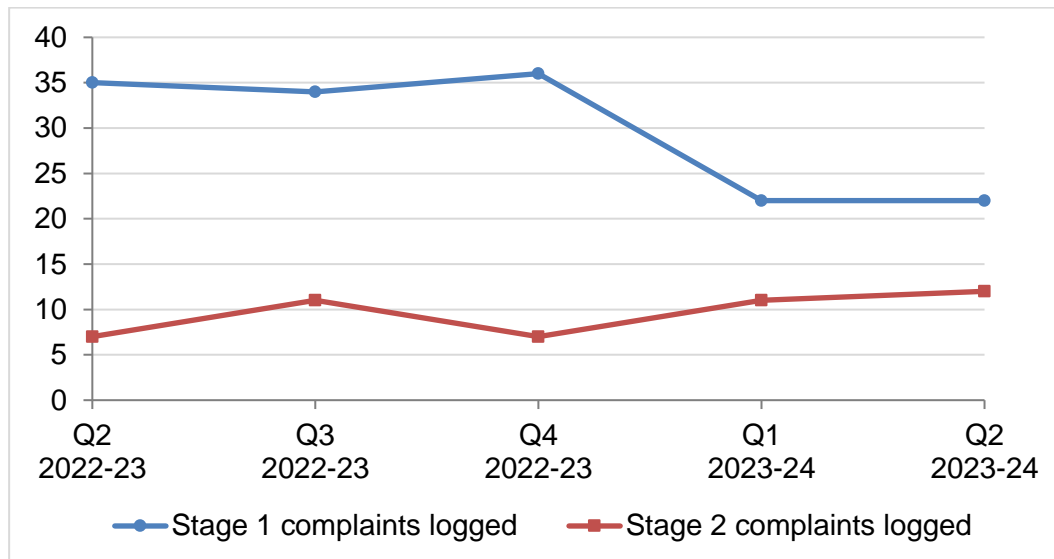
2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)

Complaints by service

Service	Stage 1		Stage 2	
	Q1 (2023/24)	Q2 (2023/24)	Q1 (2023/24)	Q2 (2023/24)
Housing	11	9	3	5
Planning	3	5	5	4
Public Realm	4	5	2	1
Council tax/Business Rates	2	2	1	1
Legal	1	0	0	0
Benefits	0	0	0	0
Customer Services	1*	1	0	1
Total	22	22	11	12

*There was 1 Customer Services complaint in Q1 which was accidentally omitted from the Q1 report

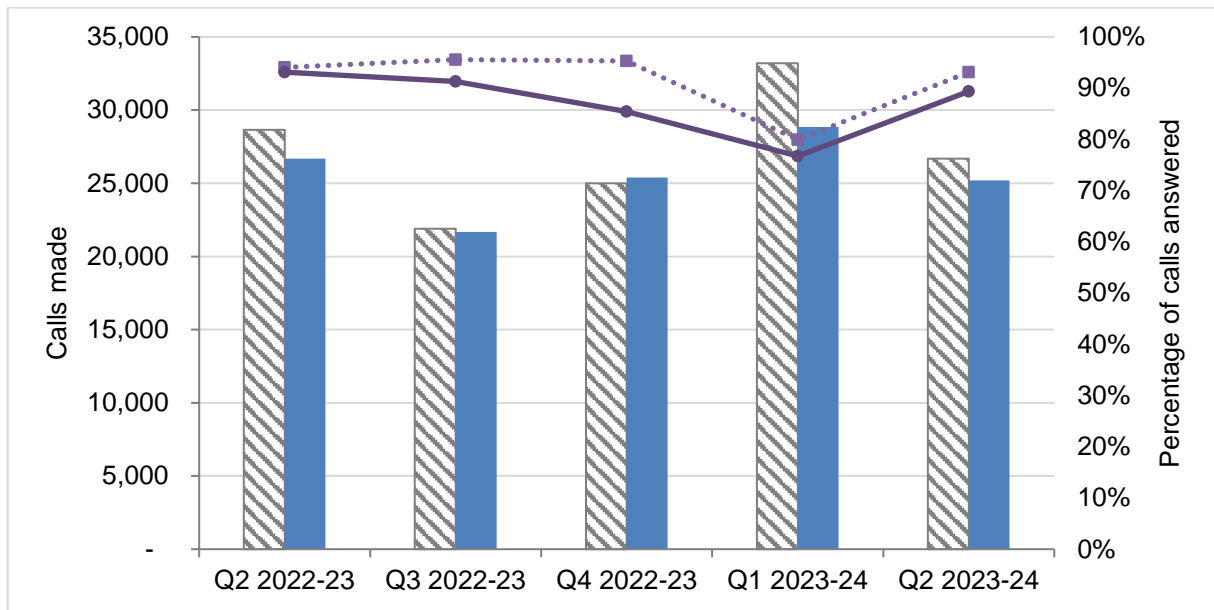
Complaints (trend)



Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)

Contact Centre calls



When compared with Q2 2022-23, calls reduced in July and August, which is what we expect. However, we saw an increase in calls for September; this can partially be attributed to the tenancy calls going live (calls migrated from the Housing Tenancy team to Customer Services) in September.

The Customer Service Team is undergoing a period of major transformation. The team is taking on calls and service contact from back-office functions and working to support customers using the online services being developed. In the short term this is affecting call performance, and this will continue over the coming months as customers switch to online services. The factors influencing the service at the moment include:

- Working to solve customer matters at the first point of contact and reducing the number of switchboard calls to back-office functions, so freeing up officer time to run the services more efficiently. This has led to a slightly longer average handling time - up from 03:21 to 03:47.
- Taking on Housing Tenancy Calls into the customer services team in September. This has involved additional training which has impacted the percentage of calls answered/offered.
- The parking service implemented changes over the summer that resulted in higher calls than usual at this time of year.

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

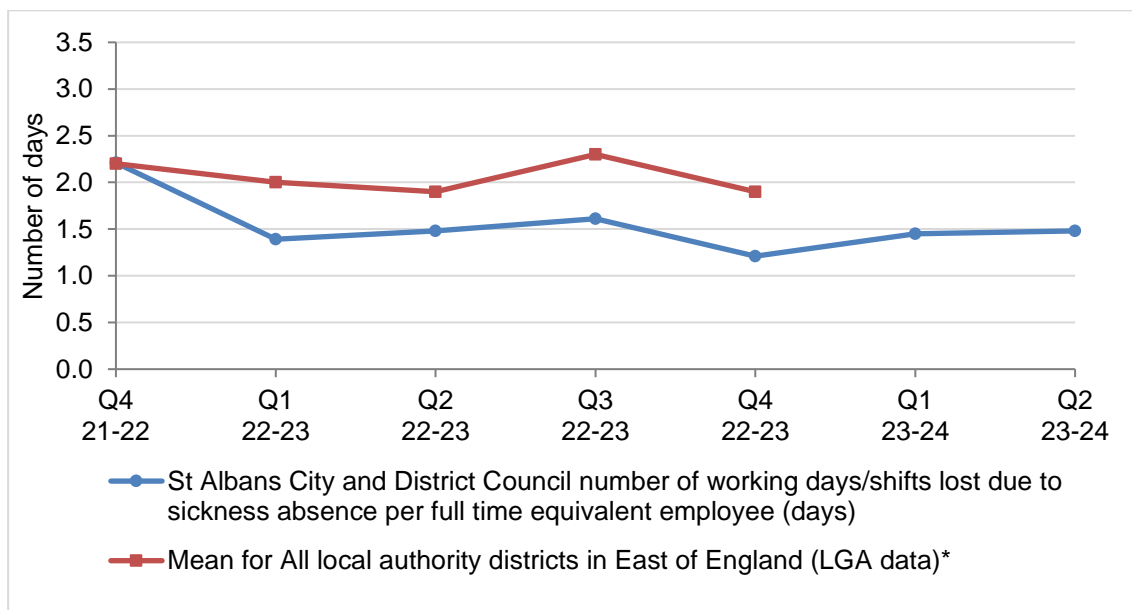
2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)

Detailed Contact Centre data

Month	Calls made to the Council	Call answered	Percentage of calls answered	Average processing time	Average wait time
Jul 23	8,579	7,837	91.35%	00:03:46	00:01:50
Aug 23	8,072	7,442	92.20%	00:03:45	00:01:12
Sep 23	8,546	7,238	84.69%	00:03:51	00:02:24
Total Q2 2023-24	25,197	22,517	89.36%	00:03:47	00:01:49

Month	Calls made to the Council	Call answered	Percentage of calls answered	Average processing time	Average wait time
Jul 22	9,750	9,079	93.12%	00:03:20	00:01:40
Aug 22	9,174	8,547	93.17%	00:03:20	00:01:45
Sep 22	7,760	7,223	93.08%	00:03:22	00:01:46
Total Q2 2022-23	26,684	24,849	93.12%	00:03:21	00:01:43

Number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence per full time equivalent employee (days)



*Latest available data is for 2022/23 Q4

Note: The ONS comparison data presented in the Q1 Strategy and Resource Committee Performance Report was cumulative annual data, rather than quarterly data – this was an error. For Q2 we have added a quarterly comparison from the Local Government Workforce Survey.

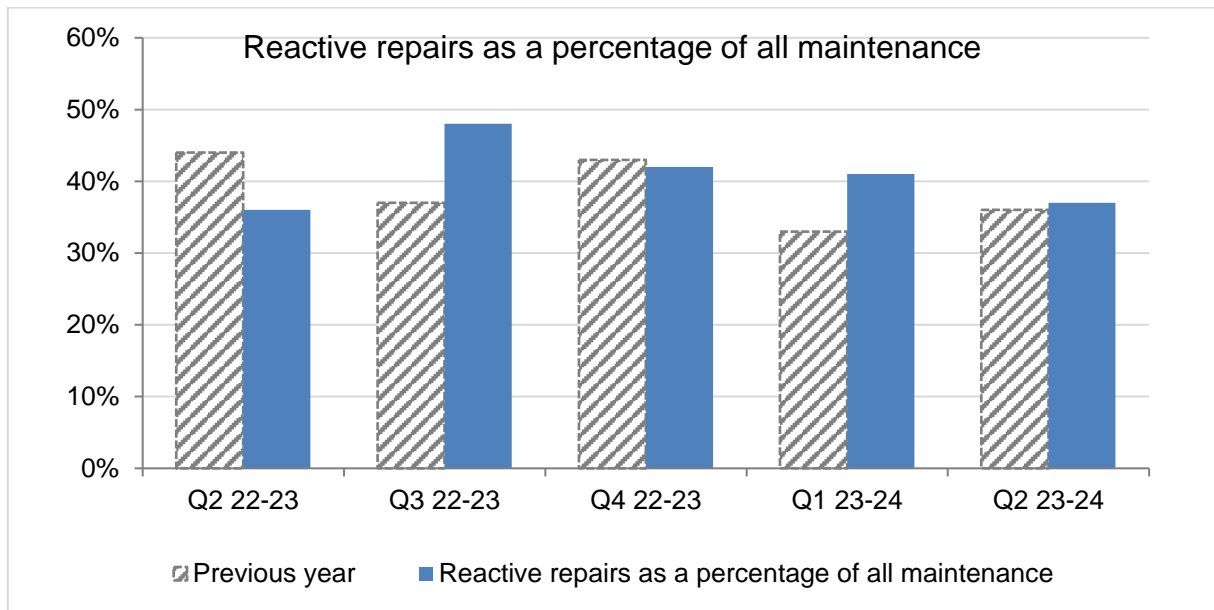
Average days lost per FTE is up on last quarter, from 1.45 in Q1 to 1.48 in Q2.

Short term absence is up from 0.5 to 0.62 in Q2, with a small decrease in long term absence from 0.95 in Q1 to 0.86 in Q2.

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

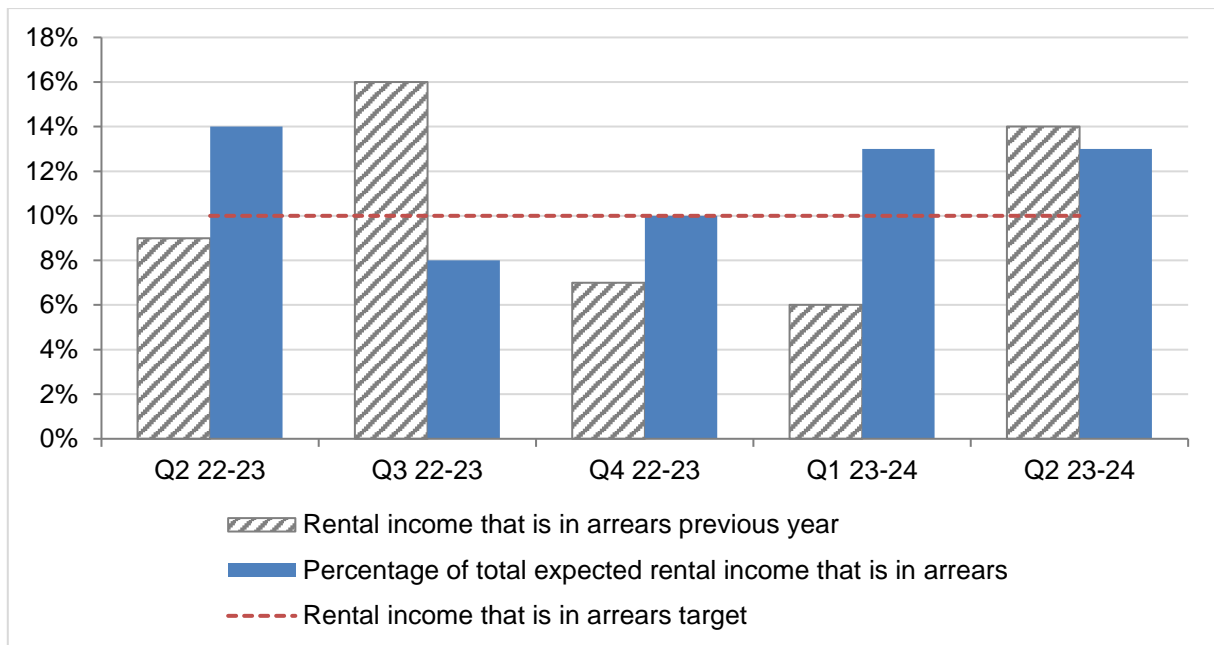
2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)

Reactive repairs as a percentage of all maintenance



Reactive repairs can be more expensive than planned maintenance. While faults and repairs are not totally unavoidable, the lower the proportion of reactive repairs, the better.

Percentage of total expected commercial rental income in arrears



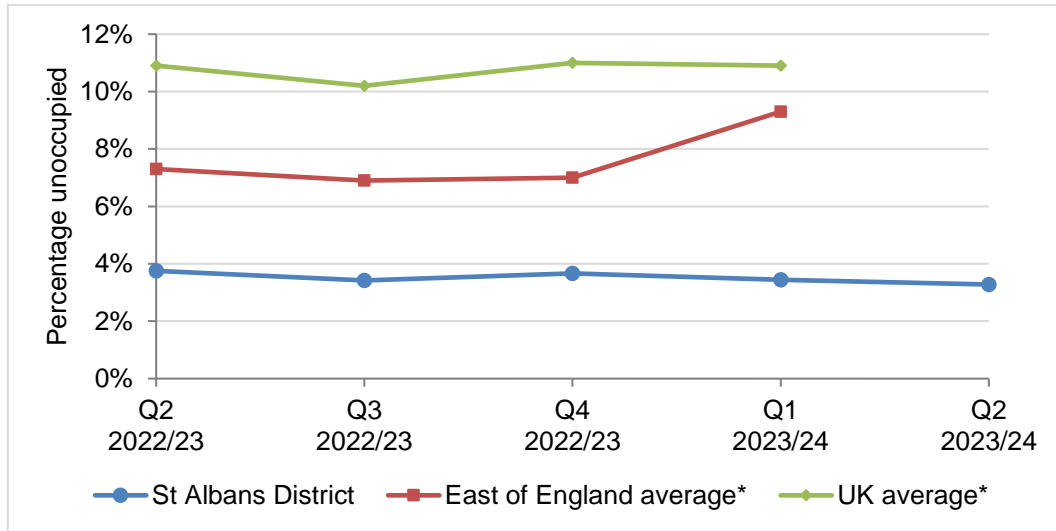
The number of commercial tenants in rent arrears is small – two tenants. Tenant engagement is continuing to resolve the issue and recover the rent due.

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)

Vacant Retail Units (City and District)

There has been a slight reduction in the number of vacant retail units locally in Quarter 2 and St Albans District continues to have a much lower vacancy rate than both the national and regional average, showing the relative resilience of the retail sector locally, when compared with other areas.



Source: East of England and UK data supplied by Springboard Research Ltd

*Q2 data not available before publication

The table below shows the proportion of vacant retail properties as of 30 September 2023 by parish and the non-parished area (City). The properties are retail only. The information is extracted from the Council's business rates database and includes both Council-owned and privately-owned units.

Parish	Total no. of retail units	No. of units Unoccupied	% Unoccupied				
			Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23	Q2 23/24
Unparished City	762 (down 2)	27	3.99%	3.70%	3.88%	3.53%	3.54%
Colney Heath	14	0	3.13%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Harpenden Rural*	5 (up 1)	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
London Colney	52	3	3.85%	7.69%	5.77%	5.77%	5.77%
Redbourn	34	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
St Michael	3	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
St Stephen	57	1	0.00%	0.00%	3.64%	1.75%	1.75%
Sandridge	59	0 (down 2)	1.72%	1.69%	3.39%	3.39%	0.00%
Wheathampstead	41	1 (down 1)	2.44%	0.00%	0.00%	4.88%	2.44%
Harpenden	254 (up 3)	10 (up 1)	5.31%	4.47%	4.08%	3.59%	3.94%
Overall percentage	1,281 (up 2)	42 (down 2)	3.75%	3.42%	3.67%	3.44%	3.28%

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)



Appendix 1: Performance Reports to the other Service & Scrutiny Committees

Housing and Inclusion Committee Performance Summary 2023-24 Quarter 2

This report was considered by the Housing and Inclusion Committee at its meeting on Thursday 2nd November 2023.

Performance Report: <https://stalbans.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s50065772/Housing%20and%20Inclusion%20Q2%202023-24%20Performance%20Report.pdf>

Appendix 1 – Morgan Sindall Property Services 2023/24 Performance Summary (Q2):

<https://stalbans.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s50065773/Appendix%202%20-%20Morgan%20Sindall%20Property%20Services%202023-24%20Performance%20Summary%20Q2.pdf>

Public Realm Committee Performance Summary 2023-24 Quarter 2

This report was considered by the Public Realm Committee at its meeting on Thursday 9th November 2023.

<https://stalbans.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s50065799/Q2%20Performance%20Report%20-%20PRC%20-%20November%202023%20-%20pdf%20copy.pdf>

Planning Policy & Climate Committee Performance Summary 2023-24 Quarter 2

This report was considered by the Planning Policy & Climate Committee at its meeting on Tuesday 14th November 2023.

Performance Report: <https://stalbans.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s50065839/Planning%20Policy%20Climate%20Q2%202023-24%20Performance%20Report.pdf>

Appendix: Section 106 Update Quarter 2 2023-24:

<https://stalbans.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s50065829/Section%20106%20Update.pdf>

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)



Appendix 2: Additional Data Plan

The following data will be reported to the Strategy and Resources Committee later in the municipal year.

Information	Summary	Format	Progress
Debt position – level and trend broken down between General Fund and Housing Revenue Account	Data broken down between General Fund and Housing Revenue Account	Section A: KPIs	Data will be provided quarterly from January 2024.
MyStAlbans (MSA) sign up data	Unique MSA sign-ups and Number of transactions every month going through MSA	TBC	Data will be provided quarterly from January 2024.
Glossary	Glossary of Performance Indicators for the Strategy and Resources Committee	Section C: Narrative	This will be provided for the January committee in order to include new performance measures.
Median number of traders and pitches (Wednesday, Saturday and second Sunday markets)	The Council will be setting a target for each market based on the median value of the best attended 25% of each market in the same financial quarter of the previous year. Targets are set per financial quarter to account for the fluctuations in attendance caused by season and weather.	Section A: KPIs	Data included in Q2 performance report.
HR data – staff turnover		Section C: Graph	Data will be provided quarterly to the Strategy and Resources Committee from January 2024 onwards.

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)



Appendix 3: Summary of changes requested during September Committee cycle

Below is a summary of changes requested during the September meetings of the four Service and Scrutiny Committees.

Housing and Inclusion Committee

Information	Summary	Format	Progress
Meeting No. 2 – 7 September 2023			
Major adaptations	<p>The average number of calendar days taken from receipt of 'Occupational Therapist Referral' to 'Practical Completion'. For completions within the Quarter and Year to Date</p> <p>The current average time (days) for 'live jobs' that have not yet reached 'Practical Completion'. This data aims to give the Committee a quarterly snapshot of the number of jobs on the current waiting list and the average time that they have been listed on it.</p>	Section C: Narrative	Deferred to enable a more detailed update to January 2024 Housing and Inclusion Committee
Cohort analysis and reconciling table	Additional narrative or tables to explain the underlying story behind the data.	Section A and Section C as appropriate.	Tables added under Housing Repairs in Section A and Rent Arrears in Section C, and others will be added as appropriate.
Rent Arrears	That officers circulate a breakdown of data on the numbers of tenants in rent arrears, and how many weeks they have been in arrears for.	Section C: Table	Included in Q2 report and will be included in future reports.

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)



Public Realm Committee

Information	Summary	Format	Progress
Meeting No. 2 – 14 September 2023			
General request	Request for numbers as well as percentages to put percentages into context	Various	Numbers added for missed waste collections in Q2 report and will be added for fly-tipping in future reports.

Planning Policy and Climate Committee

Information	Summary	Format	Progress
Meeting No. 2 – 12 September 2023			
General request	Report to provide the origin of targets to confirm whether they are statutory or set by the Council.	Section A: KPIs	All targets in Section A are now marked as either statutory or SADC targets
Clarification of Residual Waste and Contamination figures	Reviewing data in response to queries at September meeting of the PP&C Committee	Section C: Narrative	Officers are reviewing the data published by Oflog and will provide an update to January PR Committee.

Strategy and Resources Committee

Information	Summary	Format	Progress
Meeting No. 2 – 28 September 2023			
General request	Reorder the KPI table columns to put previous quarter and current quarter RAG next to each other	Section A – KPIs for all committees	Implemented in all four of the Q2 performance reports.
Reactive repairs as a percentage of all maintenance	Target requested to assess the performance	Section A: KPIs	There is no industry or national target for this work. Item moved to Informational section in light of this.

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)



Information	Summary	Format	Progress
Clarification on which Council Priorities are applicable to the Ridgeview and Jubilee Square projects.	Ridgeview listed under Deliver more social housing, but development contains no social housing. Jubilee Square listed under Support our local economy but does provide units for social rent.	Section B: Priority Projects	Changes made.

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 2 (July to September)

