



Strategy and Resources Committee Performance and Budget Summary 2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)

Summary: The quarterly performance summary shows performance against key 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 Authors

Claire Wainwright, Strategy and Policy Manager (claire.wainwright@stalbans.gov.uk)
Jenny Swatton, Policy Officer (Economic Development & Projects)
(jenny.swatton@stalbans.gov.uk)

Appendix	Title
A	Performance Reports to the other Service & Scrutiny Committees
B	Additional Data Plan
C	Local Government Association Peer Challenge Review action plan update
D	Analysis of Budget Variances

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 4 2023-2024).

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)

Provisional Budget Outturn for 2023/24

General Fund

The General Fund provisional outturn against the budget is a overspend of £0.7m (reduced by taking account of some additional funding from council tax collection to £0.2m). The net figure of £0.2m will be funded from reducing the General Fund Reserves Balance. This compares to an overspend of £2m for 2022/23.

	2022/23 £m Q4	2023/24 £m			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Gross Expenditure Budget	39.6	40.0	40.0	40.0	40.0
Less Income from Fees, Charges and Government Grants	(23.5)	(22.9)	(22.9)	(22.9)	(22.9)
NET BUDGET	16.1	17.1	17.1	17.1	17.1
Provisional Outturn	18.1	17.7	18.0	17.8	17.8
Expenditure above Income * (Budget Variance)	2.0	0.6	0.9	0.7	0.7*

* this is mitigated by some additional funding by increased council tax collection as shown in Appendix D (Funding Table)

Housing Revenue Account

The Housing Revenue Account provisional outturn of a surplus of £0.8m is less than the budgeted surplus of £2.1m.

	2022/23 £m Q4	2023/24 £m			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Income from Rents and Charges	(39.4)	(42.9)	(42.9)	(42.9)	(42.9)
Housing Expenditure	37.2	40.9	40.9	40.9	40.9
Expected budget surplus	(2.1)	(2.1)	(2.1)	(2.1)	(2.1)
Provisional Outturn	(6.6)	(2.1)	(1.9)	(1.6)	(0.8)
Difference to budget (figures in bracket show more than expected surplus)	(4.5)	0.0	0.2	0.5	1.2

See Appendix D for analysis of budget variances.

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)

The Council's Borrowing Requirement (Capital Financing Requirement)

The Capital Financing Requirement is the amount of capital expenditure that has not yet been financed by capital receipts, capital grants or contributions from revenue)

Capital Finance Requirement	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Provisional Outturn £m	2024/25 Estimate* £m
General Fund	128.9	128.2	110.9
HRA	142.2	139.4	137.6
Total	271.1	267.6	248.5

*2024/25 estimate based on the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2024/25 approved by Council.

A Note on the Content in the Tables Below

The information presented in the tables below reflects the Quarter 4 2023-24 data (for the period January to March 2024) 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 B. 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 4 (January to March)



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	Q4 22-23 Q1 23-24 Q2 23-24 Q3 23-24 Q4 23-24	£1.4m £0.6m £0.9m £0.7m £0.7m (lower is better)	£0m £0m £0m £0m £0m	Amber	Continuation of budget pressure from commercial income in Q1 of 2024/25. A contingency budget of £0.4m is available to offset pressures in 2024/25. See Appendix D for analysis of budget variances.																				
<table border="1"> <caption>Forecast Budget Variance (£million)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Quarter</th> <th>2022-23</th> <th>2023-24</th> <th>Target</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Q1</td> <td>0.5</td> <td>0.6</td> <td>0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q2</td> <td>1.2</td> <td>0.9</td> <td>0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q3</td> <td>1.2</td> <td>0.7</td> <td>0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q4</td> <td>1.4</td> <td>0.7</td> <td>0.0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						Quarter	2022-23	2023-24	Target	Q1	0.5	0.6	0.0	Q2	1.2	0.9	0.0	Q3	1.2	0.7	0.0	Q4	1.4	0.7	0.0
Quarter	2022-23	2023-24	Target																						
Q1	0.5	0.6	0.0																						
Q2	1.2	0.9	0.0																						
Q3	1.2	0.7	0.0																						
Q4	1.4	0.7	0.0																						
Finance																									
Days to process Housing Benefit new claims (12-month average) Revenues & Benefits Manager	Q4 22-23 Q1 23-24 Q2 23-24 Q3 23-24 Q4 23-24	13.5 days 11.8 days 11.6 days 11.0 days 9.4 days (lower is better)	21 days 21 days 21 days 21 days 21 days	Green	Performance is within target. The target is based on the national average from Department for Work and Pensions data and is reviewed on an annual basis to reflect changes in the national average.																				
<table border="1"> <caption>Days to process Housing Benefit new claims (12-month average)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>St Albans</th> <th>East of England</th> <th>Target</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2020</td> <td>12</td> <td>15</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021</td> <td>12</td> <td>16</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022</td> <td>12</td> <td>17</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2023</td> <td>10</td> <td>17</td> <td>20</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						Year	St Albans	East of England	Target	2020	12	15	20	2021	12	16	20	2022	12	17	20	2023	10	17	20
Year	St Albans	East of England	Target																						
2020	12	15	20																						
2021	12	16	20																						
2022	12	17	20																						
2023	10	17	20																						
Days to process Housing Benefit change in circumstances (12-month average) Revenues & Benefits Manager	Q4 22-23 Q1 23-24 Q2 23-24 Q3 23-24 Q4 23-24	4.7 days 4.6 days 4.1 days 3.8 days 1.4 days (lower is better)	6 days 6 days 6 days 6 days 6 days	Green	Performance is within target. The target is based on the national average from Department for Work and Pensions data.																				
<table border="1"> <caption>Days to process Housing Benefit change in circumstances (12-month average)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>St Albans</th> <th>East of England</th> <th>Target</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2020</td> <td>4.5</td> <td>5.5</td> <td>6.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021</td> <td>4.5</td> <td>5.5</td> <td>6.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022</td> <td>4.5</td> <td>6.5</td> <td>6.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2023</td> <td>1.5</td> <td>6.5</td> <td>6.5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						Year	St Albans	East of England	Target	2020	4.5	5.5	6.5	2021	4.5	5.5	6.5	2022	4.5	6.5	6.5	2023	1.5	6.5	6.5
Year	St Albans	East of England	Target																						
2020	4.5	5.5	6.5																						
2021	4.5	5.5	6.5																						
2022	4.5	6.5	6.5																						
2023	1.5	6.5	6.5																						

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



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 markets (50% for the Sunday 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>In Quarter 4, Wednesday market occupancy averaged 54% (against 46% in Q4 of the previous year). Occupancy of the Saturday market averaged 93% (71% in Q4 22/23), and for the Sunday market 49% (40% Q4 22/23).</p> <p>The Sunday market has grown substantially following a broadening of the commodity mix and the addition of many of our regular weekly traders. Occupancy increased from 49% in October to 68% in November when the commodity mix was broadened. Occupancy averaged 49% in Q4 against 40% in the previous year's Q4.</p>
	Q2 23-24	81 pitches	66 pitches		
	Q3 23-24	79 pitches	75 pitches		
	Q4 23-24	74 pitches	71 pitches		
	Saturday Market				
	Q1 23-24	116 pitches	99 pitches		
	Q2 23-24	110 pitches	95 pitches		
	Q3 23-24	126 pitches	103 pitches		
	Q4 23-24	127 pitches	103 pitches		
	Second Sunday Market				
	Q1 23-24	51 pitches	52 pitches		
	Q2 23-24	49 pitches	45 pitches		
	Q3 23-24	73 pitches	53 pitches		
	Q4 23-24	67 pitches (higher is better)	55 pitches		

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



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	Q3 milestones 2023/2024 (Oct-Dec)	Q4 milestones 2023/2024 (Jan-Mar)	Progress	Q1 Outlook 2023/2024 (Apr-Jun)	Q1 milestones 2024/2025 (Apr-Jun)
Deliver more social housing	Deliver market rent apartments at Ridgeview, London Colney, to fund new social housing	P	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress has been made and we are discussing an agreement with a housing association. 	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress further with housing association.
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	R	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical Completion stage reached in January; final snagging and compliance works have since been taking place. For the development to meet occupational requirements we needed to secure a building warranty, discharge the remaining planning conditions, and obtain a Section 278 completion certificate. These are now in place, enabling the transfer of the residential properties to Watford Community Housing Trust (WCHT), a housing association partner which will manage the development on our behalf. WCHT will take responsibility for Jubilee Square from mid-June – the Council retains the nomination rights for 33 of the apartments which will go to people on our social housing register, including some tenants from Telford Court. 	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening ceremony. First tenants move in. Marketing of commercial space and negotiation with prospective tenants.

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



Council Priority	Priority Project	Q3 milestones 2023/2024 (Oct-Dec)	Q4 milestones 2023/2024 (Jan-Mar)	Progress	Q1 Outlook 2023/2024 (Apr-Jun)	Q1 milestones 2024/2025 (Apr-Jun)
				<p>The other 60 apartments are being marketed on a shared-ownership basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Housing team is working closely with WCHT on arrangements for tenants to move in over the coming weeks. The Built Environment team continues to work with our property advisors on the marketing of the commercial space and are in negotiations with several organisations who have made offers. 		
Support our local economy	Progress the sale of the Harpenden Public Halls site	A	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a good level of interest which resulted in a range of offers. Our agent provided advice and recommendations to the Council. An offer was accepted and the sale agreed (subject to contract). Heads of Terms have been drafted and agreed. Conveyancing has commenced, with the purchaser undertaking their due diligence enquiries and surveys. 	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress to exchange and complete sale.
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 the current tenant can be relocated. 	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further discussion with tenant.

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



Council Priority	Priority Project	Q3 milestones 2023/2024 (Oct-Dec)	Q4 milestones 2023/2024 (Jan-Mar)	Progress	Q1 Outlook 2023/2024 (Apr-Jun)	Q1 milestones 2024/2025 (Apr-Jun)
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council and tenant are in discussions about a potential alternative location, site visits took place in April and May. 		
Enhance the District's Cultural Offer	Progress the development of a cultural strategy for the District	G	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Strategy and Resources Committee in December approved recommendations to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ pause further investment on this pending clarification on the Council's financial circumstances. ○ approve the progression from the development of a culture strategy focused on the City Centre to proposals for enhancing a wider range of cultural opportunities and outcomes. ○ approve a revised vision, ambition and underpinning principles for enhancing our cultural offer. 	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is paused for the reasons outlined.
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"> The first batch of asset disposals were considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee in December and approval was granted to proceed. The capital receipts are expected in 2024/25 and a proportion of the capital receipt from disposals is to be earmarked to be invested back into future capital projects, including the planned maintenance of the Council's 	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. Take forward those projects which are approved at the Corporate Property Board. Recently approved disposals to be put on the market and/or taken forward.

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



Council Priority	Priority Project	Q3 milestones 2023/2024 (Oct-Dec)	Q4 milestones 2023/2024 (Jan-Mar)	Progress	Q1 Outlook 2023/2024 (Apr-Jun)	Q1 milestones 2024/2025 (Apr-Jun)
				retained assets. This aligns with the Council's new Capital Strategy.		
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 local elections went smoothly in May, with fewer electors unable to vote due to not having the required ID (59 compared to 87 in May 2023). Only one postal vote was rejected under the new postal vote handling rules. Preparations are now underway to deliver the snap UK Parliamentary election on 4 July 2024. Given the higher turnouts at general elections and consequently the potential for more electors to not be aware of the new ID requirement at polling stations, communication campaigns are being run locally. This will be supported by an extensive nationwide, multi-media campaign by the Electoral Commission. 	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of polls on 2 May. Implementation of changes to the EU franchise from 7 May. Preparation for and delivery of snap UK Parliamentary election, 4 July 2024.
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"> Phone line redesign is being implemented. This is a phased approach in line with website redesign and more service ownership. 111 garages have been offered out. This process is now paused pending a review of the current stock. 	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amendment in the opening hours for phone lines - Council Tax, Tenancy Services and General Enquiries will be reviewed. New parking webpages designed. Reception redesign in line with the new opening hours.

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



Council Priority	Priority Project	Q3 milestones 2023/2024 (Oct-Dec)	Q4 milestones 2023/2024 (Jan-Mar)	Progress	Q1 Outlook 2023/2024 (Apr-Jun)	Q1 milestones 2024/2025 (Apr-Jun)
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Registration, Housing Benefit and Parking phone line opening hours amended. We are closely monitoring performance to manage impact. A review of Council Tax email volumes and the reasoning for requests is underway. We aim to support our customers to use the self-service options. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch the new planning online enquiry form.

Key

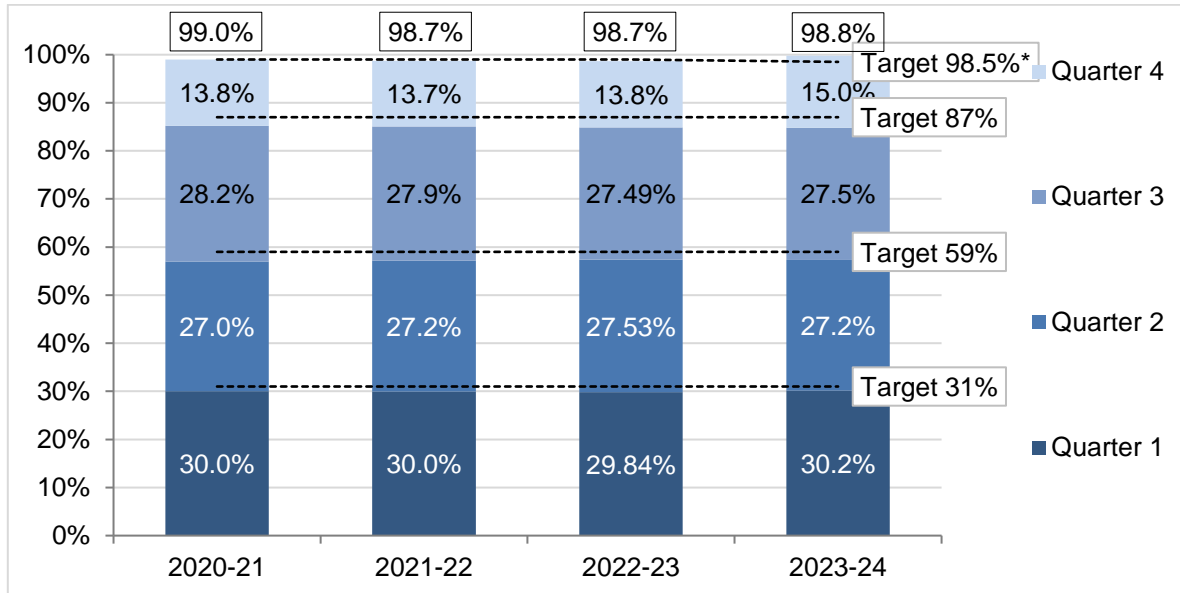
R(ed)	Progress is affected to the extent that the milestone completion date is significantly affected
A(mber)	Progress toward the milestone is slightly off track i.e., a minor hold up with the project
G(reen)	Progress toward the milestone is on track
B(lue)	The project has been completed or ended
P(aused)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

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)

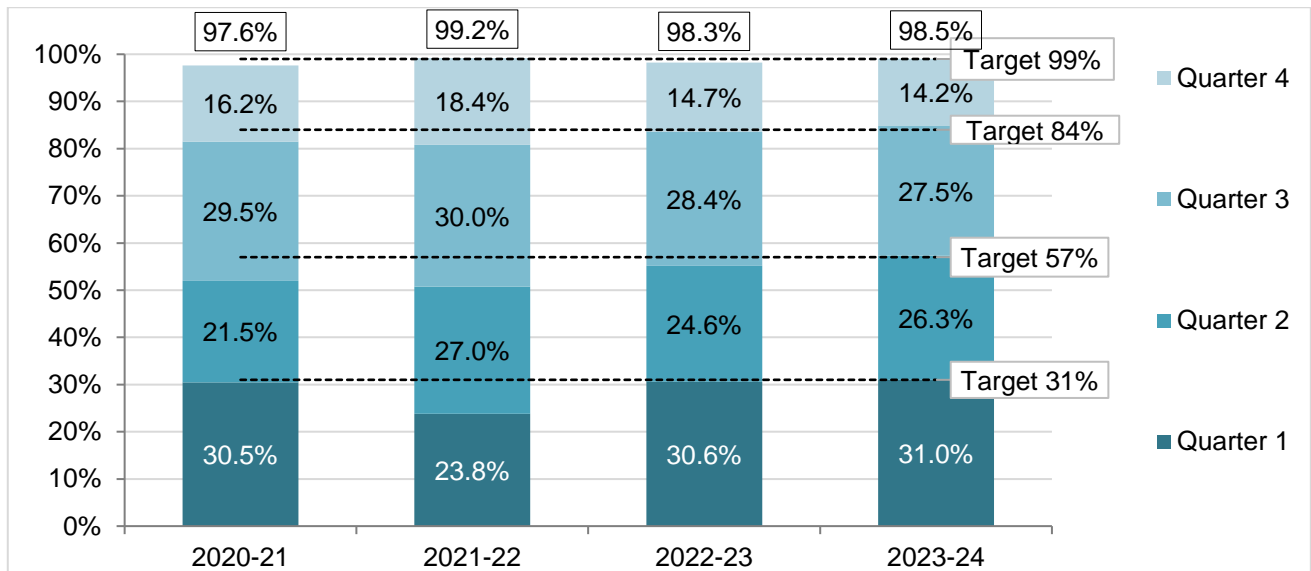
Section C – Informational reporting on aspects affecting the Committee’s areas of responsibility, or external factors affecting our community.

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.

Percentage of Business Rates collected (year to date)



Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)

Complaints by service

A new complaints system was implemented in December 2023, and this is the first reporting quarter for the new system. In future quarters, comparison data will be available, and detail types of resolution can be provided.

Service Area	Stage 1				Stage 2
	Number of complaints	Resolved formally	Resolved informally	Other*	Number of complaints
Benefits	1	1	0	0	0
Built Environment	1	1	0	0	0
Council Tax/Business Rates	7	0	4	3	0
Customer Delivery	1	0	1	0	0
Democratic Services/Elections	1	1	0	0	0
Housing	58	25	19	14	14
Legal Shared Service	1	0	0	1	0
Licensing/Environmental Health	3	1	2	0	1
Parking	15	5	10	0	0
Planning Applications	7	3	3	1	0
Planning & Building Control (Enforcement)	1	1	0	0	0
Public Realm	3	0	2	1	0
Waste & Recycling	25	1	22	2	0
Total	124	39	63	22	15

*Other refers to no action required, referred to Hertfordshire County Council or reallocated to service queue and is therefore not a complaint for this Council to address.

Therefore, for example although there were 58 stage 1 housing complaints raised (mainly related to repairs and maintenance than other service types, as expected), 19 were resolved informally, 14 were service requests or did not require action from this Council, and 25 were formal complaints, similar to numbers in the former system.

It is a new system which is customer-led, and which has been implemented with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code in mind which became statutory in April 2024. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman has also introduced a code which mirrors this although it is not mandatory.

We believe there has also been an increase in stage 2 complaints due to the heightened awareness of the Housing Ombudsman Service. If customers intend to take their complaint to the Ombudsman, it is likely that they will take it to stage 2 thus completing the Council's complaints process.

The new system is designed to streamline the complaints process for residents who are now able to self-serve online, while providing additional customer insight data to help us improve services. Longer term this will mean a change of approach to handling customer complaints across the

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

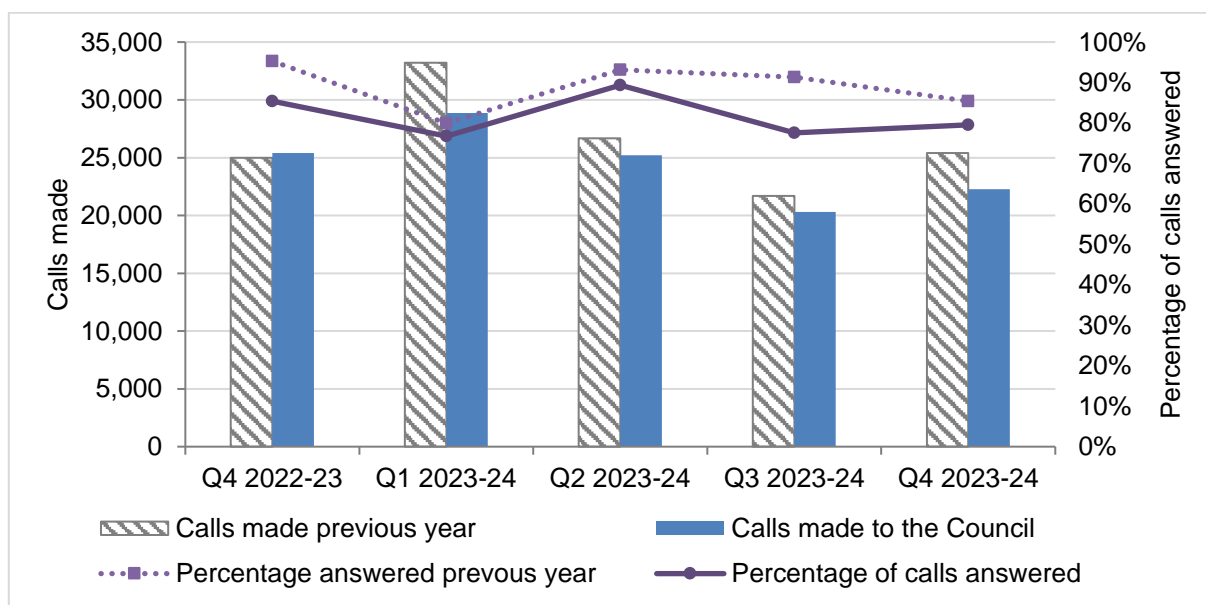
2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)

Council. The rise in Stage 1 complaints may be the result of customers choosing to log a 'complaint' rather than a 'service request'. We define a service request as: 'a request from a resident that we provide or improve a service, fix a problem or reconsider a decision'.

The new system will enable reporting of those complaints that started out as formal, but that were resolved informally. Since the new system was implemented in mid-December, 62% of complaints received have been handled informally by service teams which shows how teams are proactively resolving residents' issues.

This change in process will help support the Housing Ombudsman complaint handling changes which became effective in April 2024. With the target time for responses reducing to 10 working days, we are working to tackle issues earlier before the need to raise an official complaint arises.

Contact Centre calls



Some contributing factors in the decreased Percentage of Calls Answered (PCA):

- The team has changed the way it operates, working to resolve more queries at the first point of call without the need to transfer residents' calls elsewhere. This is helpful to callers. Whilst this has increased the average handling time by 30 seconds compared to Quarter 4 2022-23, this extra time is spent supporting residents in using our online services, to help decrease future call volumes.
- Call volumes have reduced compared to Quarter 4 2022-23. This will be impacted by the adjusted opening hours and the improved online options for residents. We continue to develop and improve our website and digital forms to help residents to self-serve.
- Staffing levels have decreased since Quarter 4 last year and overtime/additional hours are no longer offered. As call volumes decrease, the right staff/service balance will be reached.

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)

Based on the team's new ways of working, and further additional services coming into the contact centre, there is likely to be a decrease in the percentage of calls answered when compared with the previous year, and inconsistent data as the team work to improve its practices and online services, encouraging customers to self-serve and further reducing call volumes.

Detailed Contact Centre Data

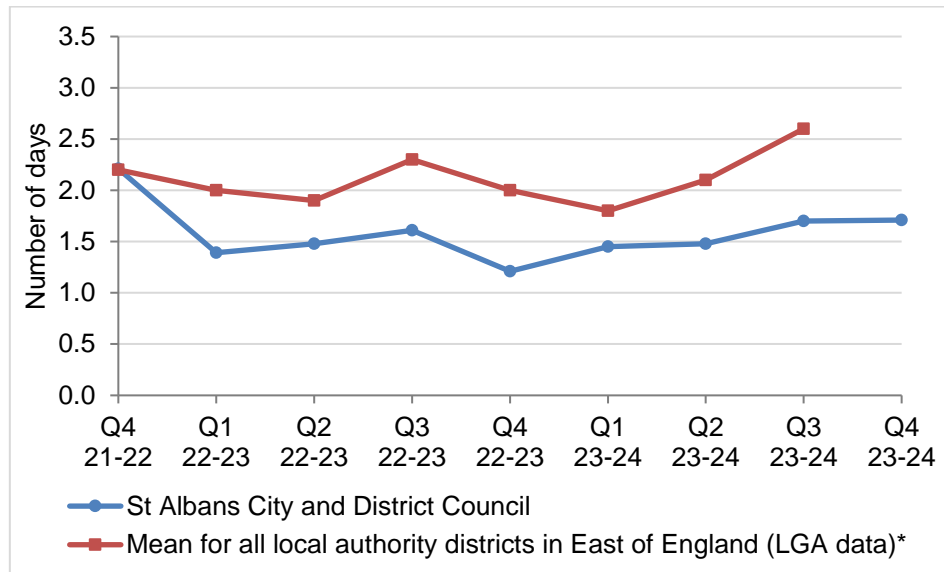
Month	Calls made to the Council	Call answered	Percentage of calls answered	Average processing time	Average wait time
Jan-24	7,945	6,061	76.29%	00:04:21	00:03:48
Feb-24	6,719	5,335	79.40%	00:03:51	00:03:28
Mar-24	7,622	6,333	83.09%	00:04:01	00:02:52
Total Q4 2023-24	22,286	17,729	79.55%	00:04:05	00:03:23

Month	Calls made to the Council	Call answered	Percentage of calls answered	Average processing time	Average wait time
Jan-23	8,537	7,365	86.27%	00:03:26	00:03:24
Feb-23	7,099	6,179	87.04%	00:03:24	00:02:51
Mar-23	9,763	8,154	83.52%	00:03:46	00:03:47
Total Q4 2022-23	25,399	21,698	85.43%	00:03:33	00:03:24

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)

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



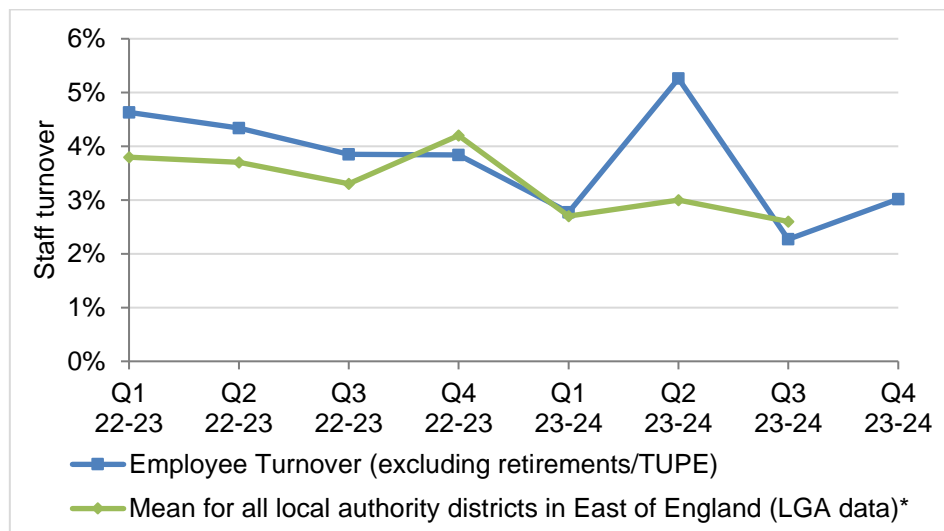
*Latest available [LGA data](#) is for Q3 2023/24

Average days lost per full time equivalent employee is almost the same as Quarter 3 (up 0.1).

In Quarter 4, 0.75 days (down on 0.87 in Q3) were attributed to short term absence including seasonal viruses such as cough, cold, flu symptoms and coronavirus. 0.96 days were attributed to long term absence (up on 0.83 in Q3) including a variety of long-term conditions.

Of the 11 long term absences in Quarter 4, 4 were still open at the end of the quarter.

Employee turnover

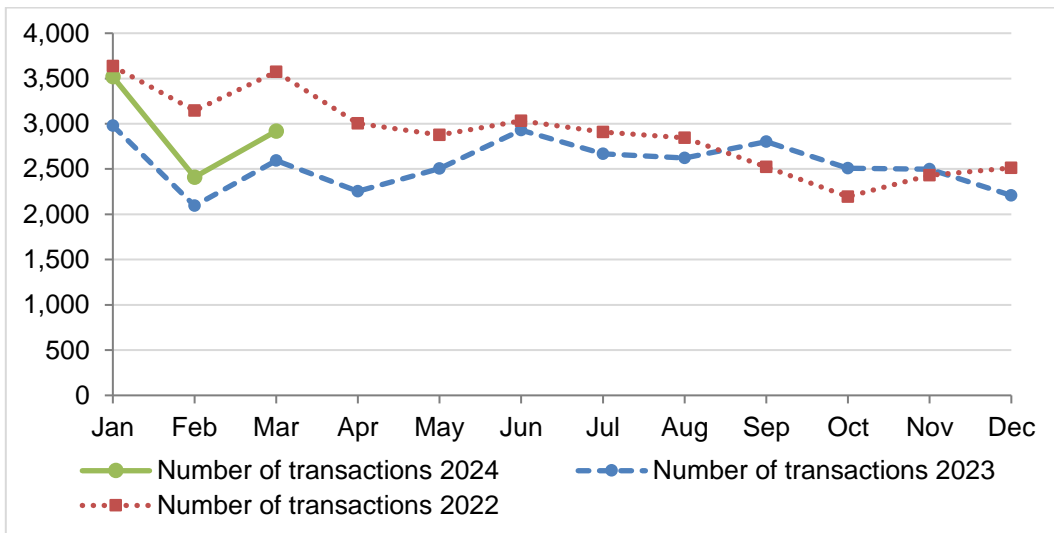


*Labour turnover rate: calculated including employees who left the authority either voluntarily or involuntarily (including retirements, resignations, dismissals or redundancies) per employee. Excludes all casual/seasonal employees and employees who have been transferred in or out of employment under the Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Regulations. [Latest published data](#) is for Q3 2023-24.

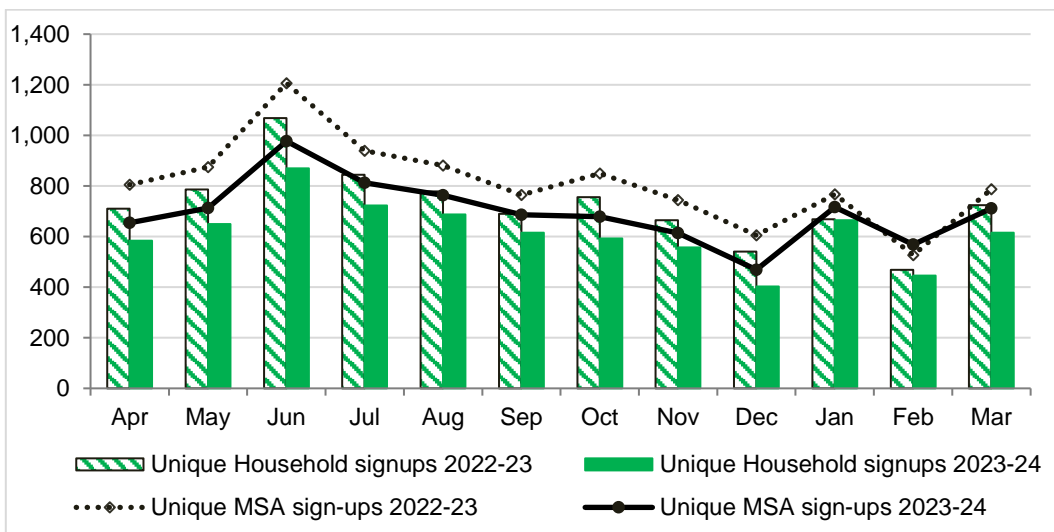
Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)

Number of transactions going through the online MyStAlbans district system



MyStAlbans Account sign-ups



Total figures: as of 31 March 2024, at 11:59pm.

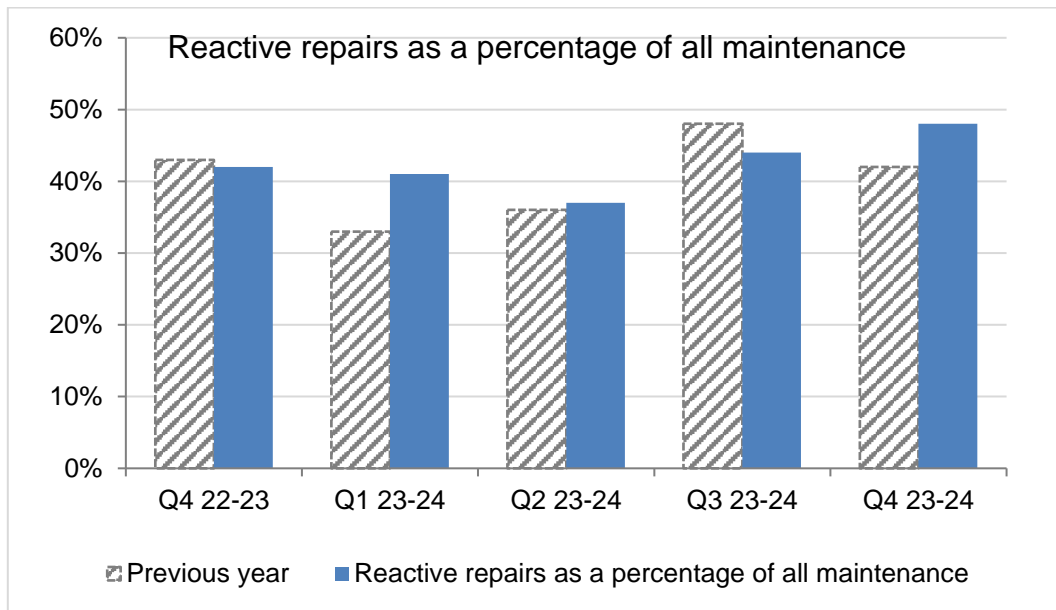
- Unique MSA signups: 86,007
- Unique household signups: 51,977 (82.8% of 62,790 households in the District – based on Council Tax figures)

As the number of people signing up to use the MyStAlbans district system grows, the rate is expected to slow as there will be a diminishing number of people who have yet to sign up.

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)

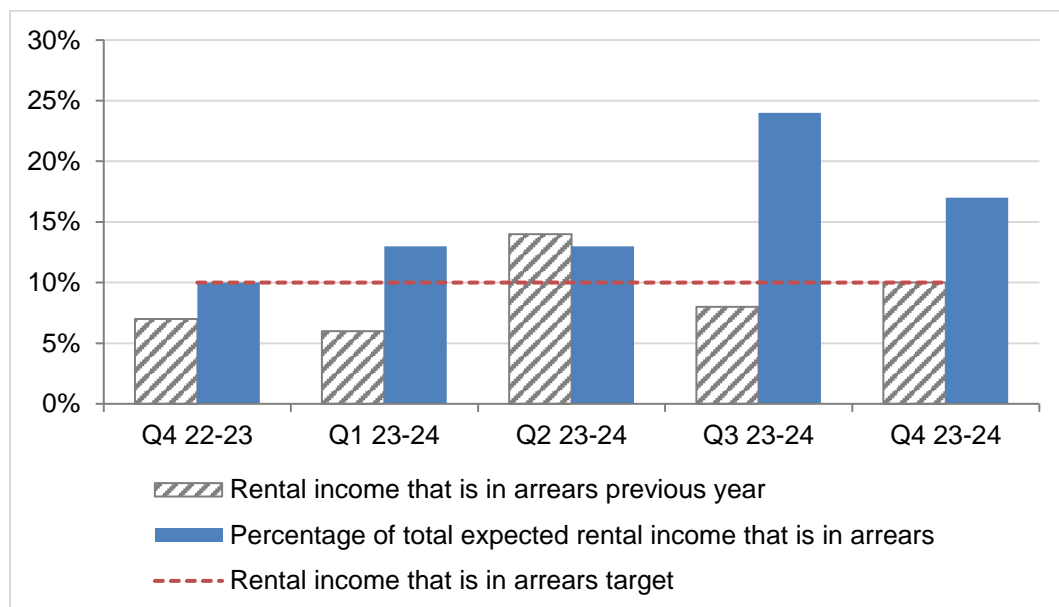
Reactive repairs as a percentage of all maintenance



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.

There was a slight uplift in Quarter 4, which is anticipated during the more inclement months of the year.

Percentage of total expected commercial rental income in arrears



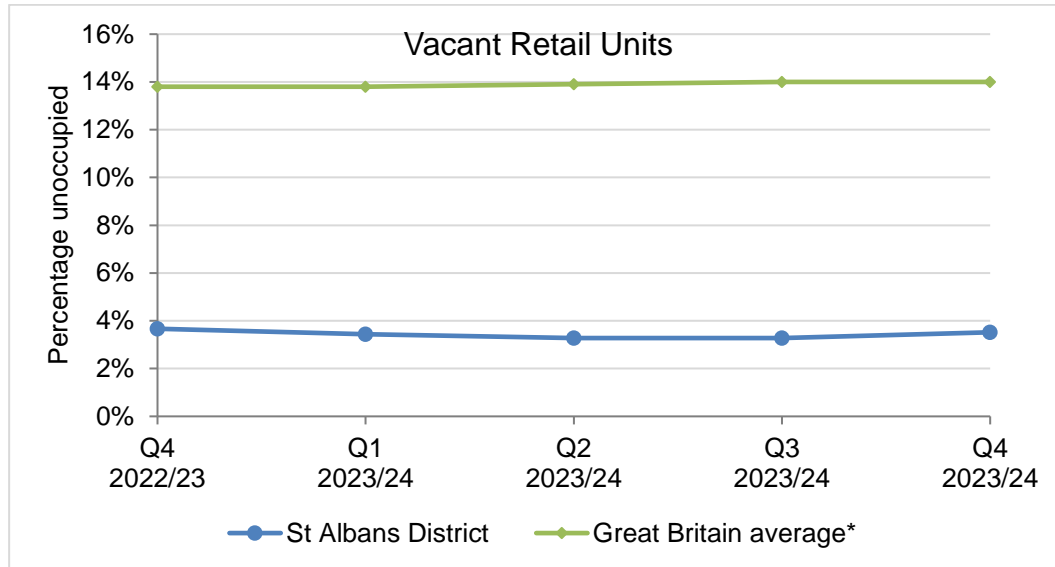
The Council's Estates and Finance Teams have worked with tenants to reduce this figure from the previous quarter. This work continues with the aim of making further improvements.

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)

Vacant Retail Units (City and District)

There has been a slight increase in the number of vacant retail units locally in Quarter 4. St Albans District continues to have a much lower vacancy rate than the average, showing the relative resilience of the retail sector locally, when compared with other areas. The vacancy rate for East of England was 13.3%* in Quarter 4.



*Source: Data from the [Local Data Company](#)

The table below shows the proportion of vacant retail properties as of 31 March 2024 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 unoccupied units	% Unoccupied				
			Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24
Unparished City	761 (down 1)	31 (up 7)	3.88%	3.53%	3.54%	3.15%	3.94%
Colney Heath	14	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Harpenden Rural*	5	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
London Colney	52	5	5.77%	5.77%	5.77%	9.62%	9.62%
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	3.64%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%
Sandridge	59	1	3.39%	3.39%	0.00%	1.69%	1.69%
Wheathampstead	41	1	0.00%	4.88%	2.44%	2.44%	2.44%
Harpenden	252	7 (down 3)	4.08%	3.59%	3.94%	3.97%	2.78%
Overall percentage	1,278 (down 1)	46	3.67%	3.44%	3.28%	3.28%	3.52%

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



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

Housing and Inclusion Committee Performance Summary 2023-24 Quarter 4

This report was considered by the Housing and Inclusion Committee at its meeting on Tuesday 11th June 2024.

Performance Report: <https://stalbans.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s50068576/HIC%20Performance%20Summary%20Q4%202023-24.pdf>

Appendix A – Additional Data Plan: <https://stalbans.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s50068577/Appendix%20A%20-%20Additional%20Data%20Plan.pdf>

Appendix B – Morgan Sindall Property Services 2023/24 Performance Summary (Q4):
<https://stalbans.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s50068578/Appendix%20B%20-%20Morgan%20Sindall%20Property%20Services%202023-24%20Performance%20Summary%20Q4.pdf>

Appendix C: Tenant Satisfaction Measures: <https://stalbans.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s50068579/Appendix%20C%20-%20TSMs.pdf>

Public Realm Committee Performance Summary 2023-24 Quarter 4

This report was considered by the Public Realm Committee at its meeting on Wednesday 19th June 2024.

<https://stalbans.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s50068643/Public%20Realm%20Q4%202023-24%20Performance%20Report.pdf>

Planning Policy & Climate Committee Performance Summary 2023-24 Quarter 4

This report was considered by the Planning Policy & Climate Committee at its meeting on Tuesday 25th June 2024.

Performance Report and Section 106 update:
<https://stalbans.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s50068688/Planning%20Policy%20Climate%20Q4%202023-24%20Performance%20Report.pdf>

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



Appendix B: Additional Data Plan

The following data will be reported to the Strategy and Resources Committee at future meetings.

Information	Summary	Format	Progress
Quarterly complaints information	The Housing Ombudsman and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman implemented a revised complaint handling code with effect from April 2024. This sets out how complaints should be managed including response times. Within this code there is a requirement to report back to Committees on learning from complaints. Currently there is no performance information on complaints presented to this Committee. From September 2024 the quarterly performance summary report 2024/25 will include some information on complaints.	TBC	A report will be provided to the Committee from Autumn 2024 onwards, starting with the Q1 2024-25 report which will go to the September meeting.

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



Appendix C: Local Government Association Peer Challenge Review action plan update

2023 Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan (updated June 2024)

Recommendations by Peer Team	St Albans City and District Council Actions	Timescales (as envisaged in June 2023)	Update September 2023	RAG rating	Update June 2024
<p>Recommendation 1 Make closing the budget gap for 24/25 everyone's top priority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop the plan and communicate sweat your assets resource your priorities – do less, better look for opportunities with partners and stakeholders deliver transformation – with council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring forward the budget planning cycle to provide more time in 2023/24 to consider the budget and develop options to close the gap. Set out a clear timetable and communicate to councillors and staff. Involve the whole Council in identifying opportunities for budget savings and income growth. Make resource decisions aligned to the priorities set out in the Council Plan; bring forward development of the Council Plan 2024-29 to enable this 	<p>Throughout 2023/24, with an intense period of activity during June to December.</p> <p>Report approach to Strategy and Resources Committee on 29 June 2023.</p> <p>Throughout 2023/24</p>	<p>The budget planning cycle has been brought forward and all four Service and Scrutiny Committees are considering budget matters earlier in the municipal year. All are considering papers at their meetings from September 2023.</p> <p>Similarly, the drafting of the Corporate Plan has been brought forward so that budget decisions can be appropriately aligned.</p> <p>Work continues. Updates are reported to the Strategy and Resources Committee through the Performance Report.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>The budget gap for 2024/25 was closed.</p> <p>The Council is now working on its budget proposals for 2025/26.</p>

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)

Recommendations by Peer Team	St Albans City and District Council Actions	Timescales (as envisaged in June 2023)	Update September 2023	RAG rating	Update June 2024
<p>wide ownership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the next phase of the transformation programme to strengthen delivery of financial savings, visioning and staff engagement. <p>Lead Officer(s): Strategic Leadership Team</p>				
<p>Recommendation 2 Clarify the operation of the committee system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> roles and responsibilities of officers and councillors rationalise service committees do scrutiny, finance and performance 	<p>Clarify the roles and responsibilities of officers and councillors at the post-election Councillor Induction sessions.</p> <p>Invite Council to consider changes to the Committee System of Governance at its meeting in May 2023 to address the suite of governance recommendations made by the CPC:</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>	<p>All actions have been completed - Council agreed the <u>Changes to the Committee System of Governance</u> on 24 May 2023.</p>	Green	<p>All actions have been completed.</p>

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



Recommendations by Peer Team	St Albans City and District Council Actions	Timescales (as envisaged in June 2023)	Update September 2023	RAG rating	Update June 2024
<p>(at a strategic level) in service committees</p> <p>investigate and adopt best practice for committee system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To decommission the Regeneration & Business Committee to reduce duplication with other Service Committees To rename the Policy Committee as the Strategy & Resources Committee to better reflect its function and focus on strategy, with some responsibilities transferring (notably, to the Planning Policy & Climate Committee, as outlined below) To formalise the Local Plan Advisory Group to operate as a Service Committee entitled "Planning Policy & Climate Committee" with an associated Chair and Vice Chair, who are 				

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



Recommendations by Peer Team	St Albans City and District Council Actions	Timescales (as envisaged in June 2023)	Update September 2023	RAG rating	Update June 2024
	<p>both Lead Councillors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To transfer the scrutiny functions directly to Service Committees, now to be referred to by the umbrella term “Service and Scrutiny Committees”. Create scrutiny mechanisms for these committees and enshrine in the Constitution including Questions to Lead Councillors, and Councillors’ Items. Decommission the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. To establish a Constitution Committee. 	<p>First meeting of the Constitution Committee scheduled for 19 July 2023.</p>	<p>The Constitution Committee has now had its first meeting. The agenda is available on the Council’s website.</p>		

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



Recommendations by Peer Team	St Albans City and District Council Actions	Timescales (as envisaged in June 2023)	Update September 2023	RAG rating	Update June 2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To undertake a review of the system's operation and effectiveness after 6 months. <p>Lead Officer(s): Strategic Director – Customer, Business and Corporate Support.</p>	December 2023/January 2024	The review will be undertaken in January 2024 as planned.		
<p>Recommendation 3 Co-develop and communicate a long-term vision for the district</p> <p>Recommendation 4 Clarify what type of growth you want to achieve in advance of the local plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation. Distil the type of growth we want to achieve from the draft Local Plan as the basis for developing a long-term vision for the District. 	<p>Summer/Autumn 2023</p> <p>2023</p>	<p>The Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation concludes on 25 September.</p> <p>This will develop from the Local Plan as it is finalised.</p>	Green	<p>The Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation was completed on 25 September 2023.</p> <p>The Regulation 19 consultation is scheduled to begin in October 2024.</p>

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



Recommendations by Peer Team	St Albans City and District Council Actions	Timescales (as envisaged in June 2023)	Update September 2023	RAG rating	Update June 2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align the work to develop the Local Plan with co-development of a long-term vision for the District. This work also to align with the development of the Cultural Strategy, the Economic Development Strategy, our resident survey work, and the Council Plan, all of which are interlinked. Involve partners throughout. <p>Lead Officer(s): Strategic Leadership Team</p>	2023 - 2024	This alignment work will be a feature of the development and finalisation of strategies, plans and surveys (which relate to our externally and independently conducted surveys with residents, the next of which is expected to take place in 2024) as appropriate.		
<p>Recommendation 5 Develop and build staff confidence to take decisions at the right level at the right time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a review of the scheme of delegation with the objective of streamlining decision-making processes. Assistant Directors 	Summer/Autumn 2023 (underway)	Work on reviewing the scheme of delegation, and partnership connections continues.	Amber	<p>An initial review of the Scheme of Delegation has been undertaken and completed. Further work is needed to complete a more in-depth review.</p>

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



Recommendations by Peer Team	St Albans City and District Council Actions	Timescales (as envisaged in June 2023)	Update September 2023	RAG rating	Update June 2024
<p>Recommendation 6 Streamline decision making processes – review delegations</p>	<p>and service managers to be given the autonomy to make decisions within their services, with the appropriate checks and balances in place to assure effective leadership. (Links to Recommendation 2 above).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and empower staff to take responsibility for some of the partnership connections currently supported by the Leader and Chief Executive to create resilience and mitigate risks to partner relationships. • As part of the development of the new People Strategy, undertake a staff survey to understand the extent to which 	<p>2023/24</p> <p>Autumn 2023</p>	<p>The results of the planned staff survey are expected to be available by the end of October 23. This will be followed by the development of the</p>	<p style="background-color: yellow;">RAG rating</p>	<p>Work on the People Strategy is underway and will be informed by previous and future Staff survey results. The planned survey has moved into 2024</p>

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



Recommendations by Peer Team	St Albans City and District Council Actions	Timescales (as envisaged in June 2023)	Update September 2023	RAG rating	Update June 2024
	<p>they feel confident to take decisions and identify any barriers they face. Develop a plan to address barriers identified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse annual learning and development requirements alongside staff survey results to build a two-year Learning and Development Plan which supports confidence building of staff and coaching skills development for managers. <p>Lead Officer(s): Strategic Director – Customer, Business and Corporate Support.</p>	Autumn 2023	learning and development plan.		<p>to better align with other research needed to inform the People Strategy and to incorporate some questions which can be benchmarked with other authorities (Local Govt. Association pilot).</p> <p>A 2-year Learning and Development Plan has been implemented and is being updated with requirements for 2024/25.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7 Develop councillors (skills and knowledge) –</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree cross-party nominations to the Councillor 	Nominations to be made by Strategy & Resources	Nominations have been made by the Strategy & Resources Committee. The Councillor	Green	All actions have been completed.

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



Recommendations by Peer Team	St Albans City and District Council Actions	Timescales (as envisaged in June 2023)	Update September 2023	RAG rating	Update June 2024
<p>implement succession planning to grow leadership capacity</p>	<p>Development Steering Group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steering Group to review Councillor Development Plan. • Group Leaders to be asked to consider their group succession planning and leadership capacity. <p>Lead Officer(s): Democratic Services Manager</p>	<p>Committee in Summer 2023</p> <p>June/July 2023</p> <p>2023/24</p>	<p>Development Steering Group membership for the municipal year 2023-24 is as follows: Councillors: De Kort, Mitchell, and Howland.</p> <p>The Councillor Development Steering Group will be meeting on 26 September 2023 and an item entitled “Review of the Councillor Development Plan” is scheduled for inclusion on the agenda.</p> <p>All Group Leaders have been contacted in respect of this action. This action is for Group Leaders to take forward within their own political groups. The Democratic Services Manager has offered assistance to for research, signposting, advice and course bookings.</p>		

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



Recommendations by Peer Team	St Albans City and District Council Actions	Timescales (as envisaged in June 2023)	Update September 2023	RAG rating	Update June 2024
<p>Recommendation 8 Review and develop your strategy for communications – celebrate your success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an LGA Communications Health Check to support development of a corporate communications strategy. Consider recommendations and implement as appropriate. <p>Lead Officer(s): Strategy and Policy Manager</p>	<p>20 June 2023</p> <p>2023/24</p>	<p>An LGA Communications Health Check was undertaken in June 2023. Recommendations from that are currently being considered and an action plan developed.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Action Plan developed and new Communications Strategy being developed with involvement of a group of Lead Councillors.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9 Agree your approach to shared services - continue to build on the progress to increase service resilience and promote efficiency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to identify services where shared approaches would benefit the organisations concerned through increasing resilience and promoting efficiency. Review the current incremental approach to shared service, 	<p>Throughout 2023/24</p>	<p>Work continues to identify services where shared approaches would be beneficial. A further meeting with neighbouring councils is scheduled to take place in October 2023.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>We are actively seeking opportunities to work in partnership and collaborate with our neighbouring authorities to achieve resilience and efficiency. In the last 2 years the following sharing arrangements have been established or entered into:</p>

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



Recommendations by Peer Team	St Albans City and District Council Actions	Timescales (as envisaged in June 2023)	Update September 2023	RAG rating	Update June 2024
	<p>garner political appetite for further integration and consider agreeing a corporate approach with strategic principles to develop a longer-term programme.</p> <p>Lead Officer(s): Strategic Leadership Team</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shared Legal Services (St Albans District Council is the lead authority) - shared with Watford. ○ Shared Internal Audit Service (Broxbourne Borough Council is the lead authority) - shared with multiple councils. ○ Shared Planning Enforcement and Building Control (Watford Borough Council is the Lead Authority). ○ Hertfordshire Shared Anti-Fraud Service (housing tenancy fraud). ○ Herts Home Improvement Agency - shared service for disabled facilities grants (private

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



Recommendations by Peer Team	St Albans City and District Council Actions	Timescales (as envisaged in June 2023)	Update September 2023	RAG rating	Update June 2024
					<p>residents/housing associations).</p> <p>We are currently developing the business case for a shared service arrangement for Human Resources/Organisational Development.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10 Complete work to establish an effective performance management framework which focuses on delivery of outcomes and creates a ‘golden thread’ of connection between the new Council Plan and individual performance management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete work to develop a new performance framework for the Council which focuses on the delivery of outcomes. Centre the approach on the Council’s corporate priorities set out in the Council Plan, with scrutiny at a strategic level by service committees for oversight and governance. Undertake this work within the context of 	<p>Summer and Autumn 2023 (and in line with the OFLOG timescales)</p>	<p>A report on the Council’s intended approach will be considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 28 September 2023. All four Service and Scrutiny Committees are considering reports based on the new framework at their meetings in September 2023.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>This action is complete - the new Performance Framework was agreed by the Strategy and Resources Committee in September 2023, and has been fully implemented.</p>

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)



Recommendations by Peer Team	St Albans City and District Council Actions	Timescales (as envisaged in June 2023)	Update September 2023	RAG rating	Update June 2024
	<p>emerging performance monitoring requirements being developed by the Office for Local Government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new approach to service planning across service delivery teams. Service plans to align with Council Plan priorities. • Targets for staff members to align with service plans such that everyone understands how their work supports the delivery of the Council Plan. <p>Lead Officer(s): Strategy and Policy Manager</p>	<p>Autumn/Winter 2023</p> <p>March 24 onwards in line with appraisal timescales.</p>	<p>This work will start in the late Autumn 2023 after the Performance Framework is in place.</p>		<p>The Council's new approach to service planning and target setting has been implemented across all service teams to fulfil these objectives.</p>

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)

Appendix D: Analysis of Budget Variances

General Fund

The overall budget variance is a combination of factors relating to expected costs and income over the year, the most significant being set out in the table below.

	Benefit £m	Pressure £m
a. Increased interest received on cash balances than budgeted for as a result of higher interest rates.	1.7	
b. Lower utility cost for leisure and museums facilities because utility prices fell from the very high levels and the Council entered new contracts for electricity and gas supply.	0.6	
c. Cost saving across directorates.	0.5	
d. Reducing the Minimum Revenue Provision (similar to depreciation charge).	0.3	
e. Costs from capital projects no longer going ahead.		1.6
f. Commercial income (largest element being Jubilee Square).		1.2
g. Planning Fees, especially from large and medium sized applications.		0.5
h. Rent Allowances – higher than anticipated cost of supporting people in private rented accommodation.		0.4
	3.1	3.8

In terms of the additional funding of £0.5m, this was due to better-than-expected collection of Council Tax and Business Rates.

	£m
Budgeted income from Council Tax, Business Rates, and non-Specific Government Grants	17.1
Funding Provisional Outturn	17.6
Provisional outturn funding variance (figure in brackets means greater than expected)	(0.5)
Net cost to be met from General Reserve (budget variance less funding variance)	0.2

Strategy & Resources Committee Performance Summary

2023-24 Quarter 4 (January to March)

Housing Revenue Account

The provisional outturn for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a net surplus of £0.8m which is an adverse variance of £1.2m to the budgeted surplus of £2.1m. The main reasons for this variance are:

	Benefit £m	Pressure £m
a. Reduced rental income due to the delays in completion of new builds and the decommissioning of Telford Court		0.4
b. Increased disrepair cost claims		0.3
c. Increased boiler repair costs		0.3
d. Other variances including insurance costs		0.2
		1.2

This pressure reduces the amount that was added to the HRA reserves from £2.1m to £0.8m.