

Council Performance & Budget Summary

February 2021



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

Recommendation

That Cabinet notes the Council Performance and Budget Summary (February 2021).

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

Commentary

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

	Measure	Comments
R	Forecast budget variance at the Year End (General Fund for year in question)	<p>The most significant financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Council remains pressure on income. The net overspend for the Council for the year is forecast at £4.8m, little changed from last month at c. 26% of the annual budget.</p> <p>This is before the calculation of Central Government's Income Guarantee Scheme grant and the general Covid grant. After taking the most recent forecast for this into account, the latest Forecast Outturn for the General Fund is a net spend of £1.1m over budget.</p>
R	Average time to re-let dwellings (excluding temporary accommodation) (cumulative, April to March) (days)	<p>The void (empty property) turnaround figure is based on the average time it takes to turn around empty properties for re-let (cumulative, April to March) (the average 'key to key' time). This fell again in February.</p> <p>The void turnaround figure for the month of February is 27 days, slightly above the target. The figure for the year has only shown a slight fall as it is impacted by the previous letting of long-term voids.</p> <p>There has been an improvement in performance following the introduction of 'virtual lettings' with an average reduction of 15 days per property let and a reduction in the turnaround of 5 days per property by our contractor.</p> <p>There were 34 outstanding re-let voids at the end of the month. Of these, 18 are with the contractor for works (12 having come in during the last week of the month), and 16 are with the lettings team for allocation. Of these 16, 13 are age restricted properties.</p>

	Measure	Comments
A	Number of voids over 3 months	There are 11 voids (empty properties) which have been empty for over 3 months. 10 of these are the elderly designated properties at Warner House and one is in a retirement scheme. Since the end of February, a further 3 properties have been let at Warner House. The remaining properties are being re-advertised.
R	Number of properties let	The number of properties let in February fell to 17. This is a reflection of both a shorter month and the reduction in empty properties.
R	Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks)	The length of stay in temporary accommodation has increased slightly. This is mostly due to the ban on evictions, highlighted in last month's report. This applies in all rented accommodation, not just temporary accommodation. We have households with rent arrears, notices due to anti-social behaviour, and households where the Council no longer has a statutory duty to house them.
R	Percentage of planning applications not determined (within time limits or agreed timescale)	<p>The backlog of applications awaiting validation continues to be monitored closely. At the end of February, the backlog had been reduced to 119 applications. The current time taken to validate a new application is 8 days, an improvement on the 25-day delay reported in previous Performance Reports. With new staff due to join the department in mid-March, further reductions to the time taken to validate applications are expected to continue.</p> <p>However, the efforts to reduce the backlog in applications awaiting validation is impacting the caseloads of the Development Management Officers who have been allocated a higher number of applications to complete each week, and therefore have a reduced period of time to review and consider each application. There is a recovery plan in place with a more experienced officer managing a small team of junior officers tasked with processing the more straightforward applications in a quicker and more streamlined fashion.</p>
R	Number of planning applications that have not been determined in time (at end of month)	As explained last month, the reduction in the backlog of applications awaiting validation (outlined above) is generating higher caseloads for staff elsewhere in the team. A dedicated householder team has been set up for a short period to enable the more straightforward applications to be progressed to a decision as quickly as possible in order that the number of live cases on hand begins to fall. This will also allow officers with high caseloads, time to clear existing work. It is anticipated that there will be an improvement to the key performance indicated within the next two months with these measures in place. However, it should also be noted that an increased number of householder applications has been received in the last 3 months (35% higher than during the same period last year). If this trend continues then staff resourcing levels will need to be reviewed in order to ensure that the improvement to performance can be sustained in the longer term.
	Parking Penalty Charge Notices issued	Since the latest lockdown began, we've taken a sensible and supportive approach towards parking within the residential zones, resulting in a lower number of penalties issued. The

	Measure	Comments
		RAG rating has been removed from the tracker to reflect this. We are still enforcing where necessary; this includes responding to hotline calls etc.
R	Fly-tipping incidents	<p>There were several fly-tipping hotspots during February, in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bedmond Lane • Coleman Green Lane • Punch Bowl • Ragged Hall Lane <p>Most of the waste was builder's waste, commercial and domestic furniture and fridges.</p> <p>All three Household Waste Recycling Centres have remained open and the bulky waste service is running to capacity. The Council offers a bulky waste collection service for large household items weighing less than 100kg. An average of 240 collections are made each month. Further information about the service is available at: https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/bulky-items-collections</p>
	Percentage Household Waste Recycled	The monthly figure is down compared to the corresponding figure for February 2020. This is attributed to a reduction in garden waste collected, due to the cold weather experienced for most of the month. Quarterly performance for January, February and March 2021 is expected to be better than the corresponding 2020 figure.

Parking Services Civil Enforcement Officer Recruitment Update

Milestone	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Overall	Commentary
Job descriptions written	B						G	<p>The Parking Services restructure has been completed. Existing (transferred) Civil Enforcement Officers are in post. The remaining six posts were advertised externally. Interviews were held during w/c 7 December. 9 FTE CEOs are now in post, with a further 1 under offer. 4 CEO supervisors are now in post.</p> <p>5 permanent CEO posts remained vacant at the end of the recruitment process. Those posts are being covered by temporary staff. A second recruitment round for CEOs is under consideration. Recruitment activity for the remaining permanent CEO posts will start in April 2021 at the earliest.</p>
Staff and Unison consultation	G	B						
Posts advertised internally		B						
Existing (transferred) CEOs in post		B						
Remaining posts advertised externally			B					
Closing date for applications				B				
Interviews and offers made				B				
Appointment of permanent CEOs				G	B			

Key

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

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

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	Bigger or Smaller is Better	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	TARGET	
Finance	Forecast budget variance at the year end (General Fund for year in question)	Smaller	-0.1%	-0.5%	-0.5%	1.6%	23.0%	25.0%	25.0%	19.0%	20.0%	17.0%	21.0%	21.0%	19.1%	26.0%	26.0%	0.0%
Housing	Average time to re-let dwellings (excluding temporary accommodation) (cumulative, Apr-Mar) (days)	Smaller	74	69	69	63.5	60	71	81.2	78	80	88.75	87.8	84.6	78.9	70.2	68	26
	Number of voids over 26-day target (but below 90 days)	Smaller	13	21	29	21	18	27	16	20	10	5	12	12	24	14	2	Trend
	Number of voids over 3 months	Smaller	14	8	8	8	11	17	19	15	14	3	1	0	1	0	11	Trend
	Number of properties let	Bigger	17	17	13	23	12	15	23	18	25	19	29	24	26	21	17	Trend
	Void properties as a percentage of total stock	Smaller	1.01%	1.01%	1.00%	0.74%	0.93%	1.10%	1.04%	0.92%	0.71%	0.81%	0.67%	0.60%	0.69%	0.58%	0.70%	1%
	Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due	Smaller	3.6%	3.8%	4.1%	4.3%	4.5%	5.0%	5.1%	5.7%	5.6%	5.6%	5.3%	5.4%	4.4%	4.6%	4.6%	4.75%†
	Percentage of tenants in receipt of Universal Credit	Smaller	16.3%	16.6%	17.2%	17.7%	20.8%	22.5%	23.2%	23.9%	24.5%	24.8%	25.3%	25.8%	26.2%	26.8%	27.1%	
	Number of households in temporary accommodation	Smaller	129	125	131	129	133	124	116	116	104	109	108	111	119	114	106	Trend
	Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks)	Smaller	29.9	29	27.2	28	30.7	32.5	33.6	30.5	32	31.4	30.5	28.8	30.2	31	32.3	Trend
	Percentage of repairs completed within target	Bigger	94%	93%	94%	93%	95%	97%	92%	95%	93%	92%	100%	99%	98.9%	99.0%	98.5%	95%
	Percentage of repairs completed at first visit	Bigger	90%	88%	85%	89%	91%	95%	92%	94%	92%	89%	90%	90%	90.4%	88.5%	87.0%	80%
	Total number of households in receipt of Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax support		6,521	6,522	6,507	6,827	7,143	7,284	7,324	7,383	7,368	7,360	7,357	7,387	7,369	7,383	7,405	
	Days to process Housing Benefit new claims (12 month average)	Smaller	14.8	14.6	14.6	14.3	13.6	13.1	13.5	13.0	13.3	13.3	13.2	13.1	13.1	13.3	12.9	21
	Days to process Housing Benefit change in circumstances (12 month average)	Smaller	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.2	4.6	5.0	5.0	6
Planning & Building Control	Planning and Building Control applications received (including pre-app, trees and condition discharge)		340	445	418	391	327	304	451	456	402	448	446	494	450	393	466	
	Percentage of Council's planning decisions supported at appeal (cumulative 12 month)	Bigger	87%	88%	88%	92%	76%	78%	80%	78%	80%	76%	73%	75%	74%	72%	69%	66%
	Percentage of planning applications not determined (within time limits or agreed timescale)	Smaller	13%	29%	21%	30%	18%	35%	28%	31%	24%	42%	40%	38%	43%	42%	48%	25%
	Number of planning applications that have not been determined in time (at end of month)	Smaller	29	74	50	54	23	65	54	46	39	67	67	70	92	115	164	40
Community Services	Parking Penalty Charge Notices issued	Smaller	776	861	877	876	36	89	488	1,011	867	1,066	894	853	1,011	451	453	Trend
	Percentage of Parking Penalty Charge Notices paid three months previously	Bigger					81%	83%	75%	19%	64%	75%	81%	81%	82%	82%	78%	TBD
	Number of spoiled Parking Penalty Charge Notices	Smaller					0	3	1	11	3	1	4	5	4	5	4	TBD
	Percentage of spoiled Parking Penalty Charge Notices against the total number of Notices issued	Smaller					0.00%	3.37%	0.20%	1.09%	0.35%	0.79%	0.45%	0.59%	0.40%	1.11%	0.88%	Less than 1%
	Parking Enforcement Officer deployed hours	Bigger					1,175	1,158	996	1,086	1,045	1,280	1,240	1,394	1,391	1,072	1,215	TBD
	Fly-tipping incidents	Smaller	43	43	41	48	58	81	95	52	74	85	90	73	64	81	63	Year-on-year trend
Number of missed waste collections per 100,000	Smaller	26	29	29	19	20	18	30	23	32	23	16	20	20	29	25	32	
External	Claimant count	Smaller	1,410	1,410	1,500	1,465	2,440	3,765	3,650	3,735	3,830	3,780	3,635	3,575	3,495	3,385		****

† Quarterly target to reflect seasonal variation.

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

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

Claimant count data is to be released later this month. It will be included in the next report.

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