

Council Performance & Budget Summary

2022-23 Quarter 2 (July to September)



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

Recommendation

That the Policy Committee notes the Council Performance and Budget Summary (Quarter 2 2022-2023).

Future Performance Reports

The Council is developing a new service-related Performance Management Framework. In the interim, we will begin presenting the data in this report in a more accessible format and discontinuing what is no longer needed. The Performance Report format will therefore be changing and will continue to evolve.

One change we have made to the report this time is the inclusion of performance summary information for those areas of Council business that fall uniquely within the scope of the Policy Committee. Links to Quarter 2 performance data presented to the Housing and Inclusion Committee, the Public Realm Committee and the Regeneration and Business Committee in recent weeks, are included in Appendix 2.

Budget Variance by Directorate Quarter 2 2022-23

Directorate	Variance %	£	Comments <i>(on variances +/-5% of budget)</i>
Customer, Business and Corporate Support	4%	£0.2m	
Community and Place Delivery (including Housing General Fund)	2%	£0.1m	
Strategy Policy and Transformation	42%	£1.1m	Reduced income compared to budget on contract renewals and increased utility costs
Non-Departmental - Covid & Contingencies	-27%	-£0.3m	At Quarter 2 contingencies held against utility cost inflation and reduced income have not been drawn on
Forecast budget variance at the Year End (General Fund for year in question)	7%	£1.2m	Increased cost (including utilities) and lower income on contract renewals

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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 2022) and is, by its nature, a look back at the position at the end of that quarter.

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.

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Committee	Directorate		Bigger or Smaller is Better	Quarter 2 2021-22	Quarter 3 2021-22	Quarter 4 2021-22	Quarter 1 2022-23	Quarter 2 2022-23	TARGET
Policy	Community and Place Delivery	Percentage of invalid planning applications received	Smaller	3.2%	1.1%	1.2%	1.0%	1.5%	Trend
		Percentage of all major planning applications determined within 13 weeks (measured over a 2-year period)	Bigger	83.3%	84.2%	86.3%	84.9%	81.7%	70%
		Planning obligations (Section 106/CIL) monetary contributions secured		£0	£550,029	£55,174	£559,022	£0	
		Planning and Building Control applications received (including pre-app, trees and condition discharge)		1,290	1,308	1,290	1,268	1,156	
		Percentage of Council's planning decisions supported at appeal (cumulative 12 month)	Bigger	68%	66%	66%	65%	68%	66%
		Percentage of planning applications not determined (within time limits or agreed timescale)	Smaller	27.5%	40.6%	32.0%	30.0%	32.0%	25%
		Number of planning applications that have not been determined in time (at end of month)	Smaller	112	192	171	177	242	40

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Committee	Directorate		Bigger or Smaller is Better	Quarter 2 2021-22	Quarter 3 2021-22	Quarter 4 2021-22	Quarter 1 2022-23	Quarter 2 2022-23	TARGET
Policy	Customer, Business and Corporate Support	Forecast budget variance at the year-end (General Fund for year in question)	Smaller	2.3%	0.6%	0.3%	3.0%	7.0%	0.00%
		Percentage of council tax collected of that collectable in the year*	Bigger	57.18%	85.06%	98.71%	29.84%	57.37%	59%^
		Percentage of business rates collected of that collectable in the year*	Bigger	50.74%	80.78%	99.16%	30.58%	55.16%	57%^
		www.stalbans.gov.uk visits	Bigger	329,293	257,078	168,217	194,865	251,941	Trend
		Total volume of calls to the Contact Centre across all queues	Smaller	27,124	21,238	23,946	26,537	24,832	Trend
		Number of Stage 1 complaints logged	Smaller	31	26	29	40	35	Trend
		Number of Stage 2 complaints logged	Smaller	18	16	14	14	7	Trend
		Establishment - actual FTE in post		351.3 (330.3 perm/21 fixed term)	346.9 (323.4 perm/23 fixed term)	334.2 (315.3 permanent/19.9 fixed term)	342.1 (323.4 permanent/18.7 fixed term)	341.9 (326 permanent/15.9 fixed term)	
		Agency and casual workers (FTE cover for vacancies or additional workloads)		21 agency / 9.35 casual	18.3 agency / 11.9 casual	15 agency / 14.14 casual	19 agency / 15.52 casual	20 agency / 17.77 casual	
		Temporary workers as a percentage of total staff (FTE)	Smaller	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	9.1%	9.9%	
		Employee Turnover (excluding retirements)	Smaller	2.97%	5.76%	4.35%	4.63%	4.34%	Trend
		Number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence per full time equivalent employee (days)	Smaller	1.83	2.11	2.21	1.39	1.48	Trend
		Average time to hire vacancies (days)	Smaller	54.50	49.64	40.90	48.00	58.00	Trend

^ Seasonal Target

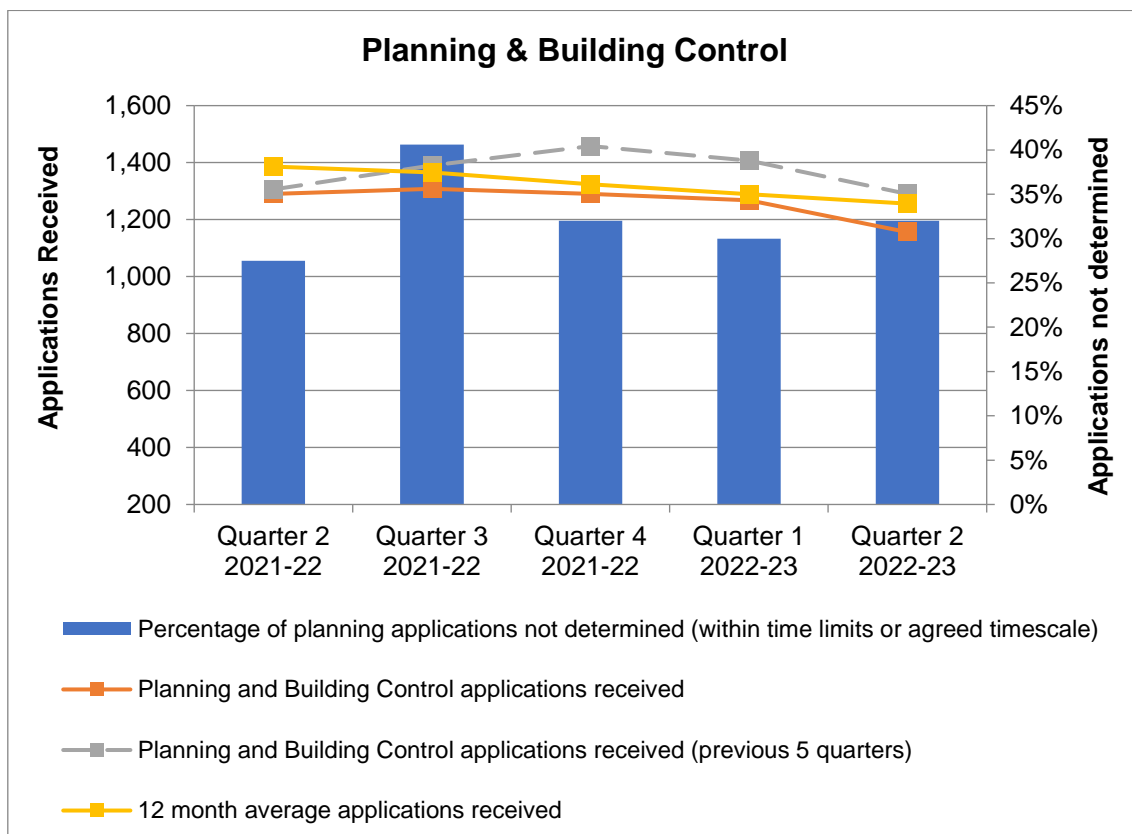
* Figures for Council Tax collections and Business rates collections from Quarters 1-4 are cumulative

Note: Trend based RAG rating calculated over 11 quarters to ensure correct colours in comparison to the whole time period – only the most recent 5 quarters are shown in this report

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Commentary

The table below provides commentary to explain the indicators in the Performance Summary table above and includes any action the Council is taking to improve performance where appropriate.

	Measure	Comments
G	Percentage of Council's planning decisions supported at appeal (cumulative 12 month)	<p>During the last quarter, 15 appeals were decided.</p> <p>In 12 appeals the Council's decision was upheld.</p> <p>In 2 appeals the Council's decision was not supported.</p> <p>The remaining appeal was withdrawn and was not decided.</p> <p>In addition, there were two applications for costs. One of these applications was partially allowed. The relates to a decision to refuse planning permission contrary to the recommendation where lack of amenity space provision was included as a reason for refusal.</p>

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	Measure	Comments
R	Percentage of planning applications not determined (within time limits or agreed timescale)	<p>The percentage of applications not determined in time has increased.</p> <p>The Development Management Team continues to have a significant number of staff vacancies which is impacting the time taken to determine planning applications. There have also been difficulties in recruiting suitable temporary staff. This reflects the national shortage of professional planners.</p> <p>However, three additional contractors have now been secured, with start dates in Quarter 3.</p>
R	Number of planning applications that have not been determined in time (at end of month)	<p>The number and percentage of out of time applications remains high for the reason mentioned above. The remaining Planning Officers are dealing with high caseloads. At the end of September there were 681 live applications in the system.</p> <p>The three new contractors mentioned above will help the Development Management Team to start reducing the number and percentage of out-of-date applications.</p> <p>Of the 242 applications not determined in time, 30 were due a decision in August 22, 104 in September 2022 and 6 in October; the remaining 102 are older and include some applications which are awaiting S106 agreements, are under negotiation, cannot be decided because of the Chiltern Beechwoods situation or need to be reallocated to a new planning officer following the departure of the original planning officer. The team will reallocate older applications as quickly as possible.</p>
A	Forecast budget variance at the year-end (General Fund for year in question)	<p>There are a number of economic factors adversely affecting the Council's financial position particularly increased utilities costs and lower income on contract renewals. Officers are actively seeking ways to mitigate these.</p>
A	Percentage of council tax collected of that collectable in the year	<p>More residents are electing to pay Council Tax over 12 months affecting the percentage collected in Quarters 1 and 2. Collection rates do not yet seem to have been impacted by the cost-of-living crisis and are broadly similar to the figures at the same point last year. Officers will continue to monitor this. A recent Single Person Discount review would have had a small impact on the amount of Council Tax still to collect.</p>
A	Percentage of business rates collected of that collectable in the year	<p>More businesses are electing to pay Business Rates over 12 months affecting the percentage collected in Quarters 1 and 2. Figures are broadly similar to the figures at the same point last year.</p>
A	www.stalbans.gov.uk visits	<p>Top ten most visited pages - Quarter 2:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Homepage 14.86% 2. Planning (view and track applications) 9.57%

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	Measure	Comments
		<p>3. Waste/rubbish collections 3.66%</p> <p>4. Car parks/pay and display 3.51%</p> <p>5. Parking permits, suspensions and season tickets 3.16%</p> <p>6. Council Tax 2.82%</p> <p>7. Recycling and rubbish 2.81%</p> <p>8. Planning and building control 2.51%</p> <p>9. Do it online 2.44%</p> <p>10. Pay online 1.89%</p> <p>Pages that left the top 10 most visited in Quarter 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections • Energy rebate <p>Website visits in Quarter 2 2022-23 (251,941) are up 30% on Q1 2022-23 (194,865) and were lower than Quarter 2 2021-22 (329,293). The reasons for this change since 2021 are not clear but our research indicates that one possible reason could be changes that Google has made to its algorithm over the past year. We are currently looking into this.</p>
G	Total volume of calls to the Contact Centre across all queues	<p>Compared with Quarter 2 last year, call volumes are within normal parameters, and in fact have reduced slightly.</p> <p>While Council Tax call volumes increased when compared to Q2 last year (due to the £150 energy rebate), calls in most other queues have decreased, causing an overall decrease in call volumes.</p>
A	Number of Stage 1 complaints logged	<p>There was a slight reduction in complaints concerning court summons issues. Public Realm complaints concern pest control, noise and fireworks. There is a small reduction across various areas, although numbers were small anyway.</p>
G	Number of Stage 2 complaints logged	<p>The decrease in Stage 2 escalation relates to housing complaints. Although the Stage 1 figure was on par with last quarter, matters raised were resolved to the satisfaction of the tenants which led to this decrease.</p>
A	Employee Turnover (excluding retirements)	<p>This quarter's employee turnover comprises 3.32% unplanned and 1.02% planned leavers. The ongoing challenge around turnover reflects the local and national picture of a lively employment market, strong pay growth in other sectors and individual choices post pandemic about location and/or type of work. The employment market and pay growth are expected to slow down over the winter.</p>

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Priority Project Tracker Updates

Committee	Q1 milestones (2022/2023) (Apr-Jun)	Priority Project	Q2 milestones (2022/2023) (Jul-Sep)	Progress	Q3 milestones (2022/2023) (Oct-Dec)
Policy	G	Implement a new operating model for the Council which supports the delivery of a more sustainable organisation, using digital technologies to support a more flexible and mobile workforce; reduced and better use of Council office space; and the continuing development of online services for residents (includes implementation of the Council's 'Digital and ICT Strategy' and 'Customer Engagement Strategy')	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation completed for redesign of Tier 3 roles reporting to Strategic Directors to ensure right capacity and skills in place for delivery. • New desk booking system implementation to support hybrid working arrangements deferred to Quarter 3. • Staff engagement supporting Customer Delivery remodelling and digital investment projects to improve access to online services and information. • Shared Service programme governance in place and agreements drafted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointments into new tier 3 leadership roles completed. • Desk booking system testing completed and bugs fixed – mobilisation during October/launch November to optimise use of office space and support hybrid working. • Prioritised transition plans for Customer Delivery remodelling – implementation in phases to ensure delivery of customer engagement priorities. • Three initial shared service arrangements to go live in November providing greater resilience.
Policy	G	Progress the new Local Plan	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Plan Advisory Group (LPAG) meeting on 13 September agreed new Local Plan timetable showing Regulation 18 formal public consultation taking place in July-September 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LPAG to consider updated Statement of Community Involvement.
Policy	A	Publication of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) is the lead authority (SADC is supporting the LCWIP work). • Officers and consultants are responding to comments received and have identified an updated set of contextual information. An initial draft list of prioritised areas is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated contextual information and the initial draft list of prioritised areas are expected to be finalised during autumn 2022.

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Committee	Q1 milestones (2022/2023) (Apr-Jun)	Priority Project	Q2 milestones (2022/2023) (Jul-Sep)	Progress	Q3 milestones (2022/2023) (Oct-Dec)
				<p>currently expected to be finalised during autumn 2022. It will then be published online for a circa 6-week public consultation this winter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HCC is following the Department for Transport's (DfT) model for consultation as required. The DfT methodology, which prioritises urban areas where there is the highest volume/density of trips, is most likely to be in central St Albans and central Harpenden. Councillors will have the opportunity to input directly during the public consultation and any changes needed will be made. The results of that public consultation will be reported to Councillors with the proposed final LCWIP for consideration in spring 2023. 	
Policy	G	Take forward the Sustainability and Climate Crisis Strategy and Action Plan. Themes: governance and leadership; energy use; transport and air quality; waste; nature and food; water and climate change adaptation	Green to indicate that the Strategy and Action Plan are being taken forward. For status of specific work streams see website .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers are reporting their progress against specific work streams on the Sustainability Tracker each month. Updates are published on the Council website at: https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/060122%20Sustsinability%20Tracker.pdf. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress for each of the c.100 actions can be found in the Sustainability Action Tracker at the link opposite.

Key (table above)

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 milestone has been completed or ended

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Appendix 1: Section 106 Report

Section 106 report: <https://stalbans.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s50062686/Appendix%201.1%20-%20s106%20Update.pdf>

Section 106 FAQ information sheet <https://stalbans.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s50062687/Appendix%201.2%20-%20Section%20106%20FAQ%20infomation%20sheet.pdf>

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Appendix 2: Performance Reports to the other Service Committees

Housing and Inclusion Committee Performance Summary 2022-23 Quarter 2 (Jul to Sept)

This report was considered by the Housing and Inclusion Committee at its meeting on Thursday 3rd November 2022.

Link to the report: <https://stalbans.moderngov.co.uk/documents/b50016305/Item%209%20-%20Performance%20Summary%20Q2%202022-23%2003rd-Nov-2022%2019.00%20Housing%20Inclusion%20Committee.pdf?T=9>.

Public Realm Committee Performance Summary 2022-23 Quarter 2 (Jul to Sept)

This report was considered by the Public Realm Committee at its meeting on Thursday 10th November 2022.

Link to the report: <https://stalbans.moderngov.co.uk/documents/b50016311/Item%207%20-%20Council%20Performance%20and%20Budget%20Summary%2010th-Nov-2022%2019.00%20Public%20Realm%20Committee.pdf?T=9>.

Regeneration and Business Committee Performance Summary 2022-23 Quarter 2 (Jul to Sept)

This report was considered by the Regeneration and Business Committee at its meeting on Thursday 17th November 2022.

Link to the report: <https://stalbans.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s50062636/Final%20-%20Regeneration%20and%20Business%20Q2%202022-23%20Performance%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>.