

Council Performance & Budget Summary

January 2014

The monthly performance summary outlines trends in information the Council uses to monitor and manage service delivery. Where relevant, it includes performance against targets set for the relevant period.

Overview

G	Budget – 0.1% - projected underspend
G	Performance Indicators

Appendices

- A. Benefits Service
- B. Planning Update
- C. World War One Centenary Commemorations
- D. Economic Development Update
- E. Leisure and Culture Update
- F. Update on Assets including Oysterfields

Recommendation

That Cabinet notes the Council Performance and Budget Summary (January 2014) and its appendices.

Commentary

The table below is provided for indicators where there has been significant change in performance and provides more detailed explanation for the performance levels and any action the Council is taking to improve performance where it is off track.

	Measure	Comments
R	Average time to re let dwellings (excluding sheltered and temporary accommodation changes)	The high turnaround for void properties is seasonal due to there being 2 fewer bidding cycles on void properties over the Christmas and New Year period. This specifically delays the process of customers bidding on properties and them being let. We would expect this to fall as weekly bidding cycles resume.
R	Number of households in temporary accommodation	The number of households in temporary accommodation remains high. This reflects the ongoing demand for temporary accommodation, coupled with limited availability of properties to move households into for a permanent tenancy. We are looking for extra capacity either in the private sector or with Housing Association partners.

	Measure	Comments
R	Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks)	The length of time in temporary accommodation is also adversely affected by the limited number of properties becoming available for people to move on to. As above we are looking for extra capacity either in the private sector or with Housing Association partners.
R	Graffiti and Fly-tipping Calls	Although this is a 13 month high, it is not unusual for this time of year. The majority of the fly tipping has been builders' waste.
R	Museums Visits	The January 2014 figure is lower than the same period in 2013. This was due to the decrease in school visits. In part this is because term started later this year. In addition, a number of schools had bookings affected last year because of the snow and bad weather and have opted for Spring/Summer/Autumn bookings this year.
A	Number of Benefit Applications	Historically Housing Benefit Departments always experience a decrease in new claims in December. This is because companies don't generally make people unemployed just before Christmas if they can help it, plus people don't physically move over the festive period. In January, we witness people moving home (and therefore claiming benefit at the new address) plus we see applications from people who were employed in seasonal employment with companies such as Royal Mail, Amazon etc. over Christmas.
G	Days to process Council Tax/Housing Benefit new claims and changes	We have caught up with the outstanding work and are currently working on documents and claims between 1-7 days of receipt. Furthermore the historical backlog of claims from July and August 2013 have now (with perhaps one or two exceptions) been cleared, so these claims are no longer negatively impacting performance.

Key

The performance information is colour coded associated to the 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 best performance and Red the worst performance.

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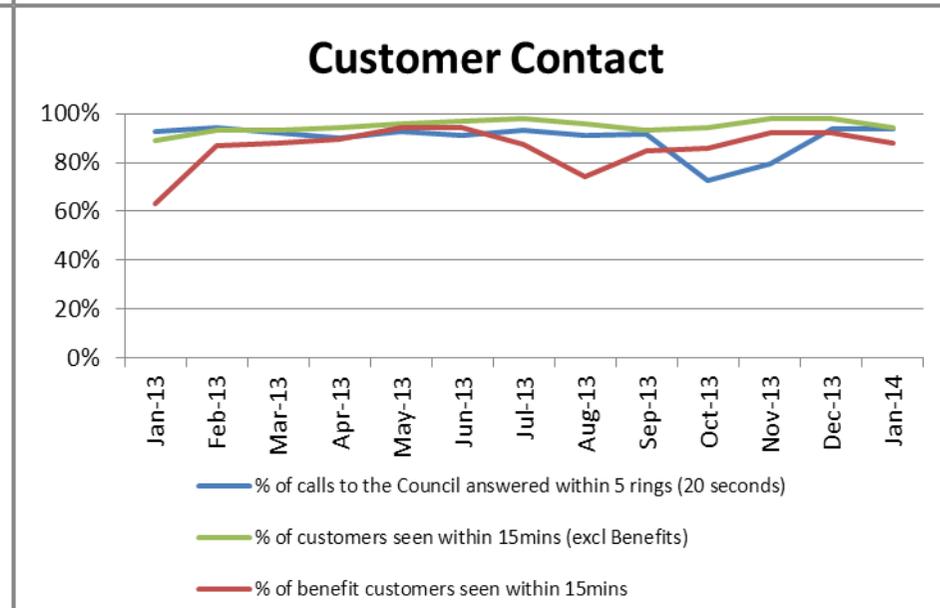
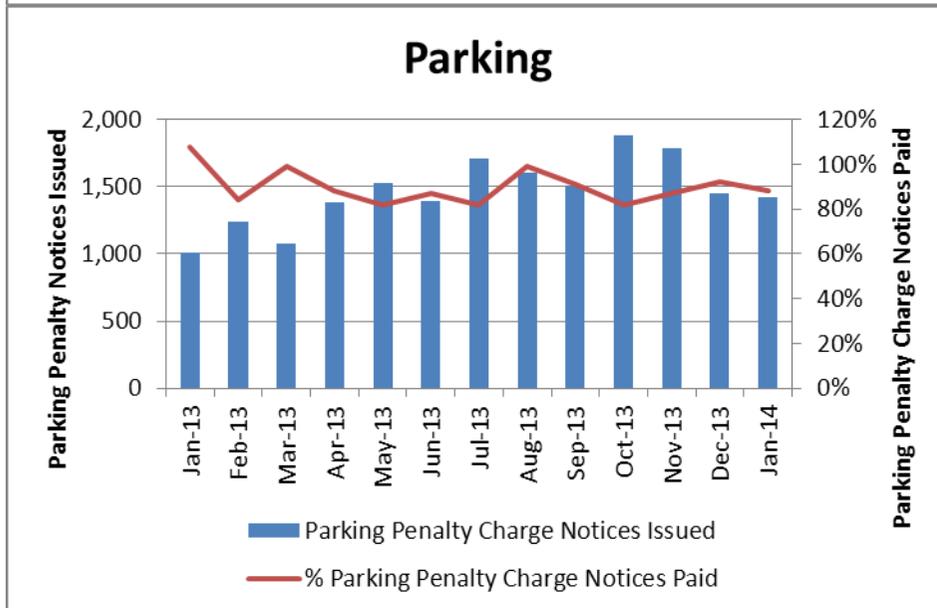
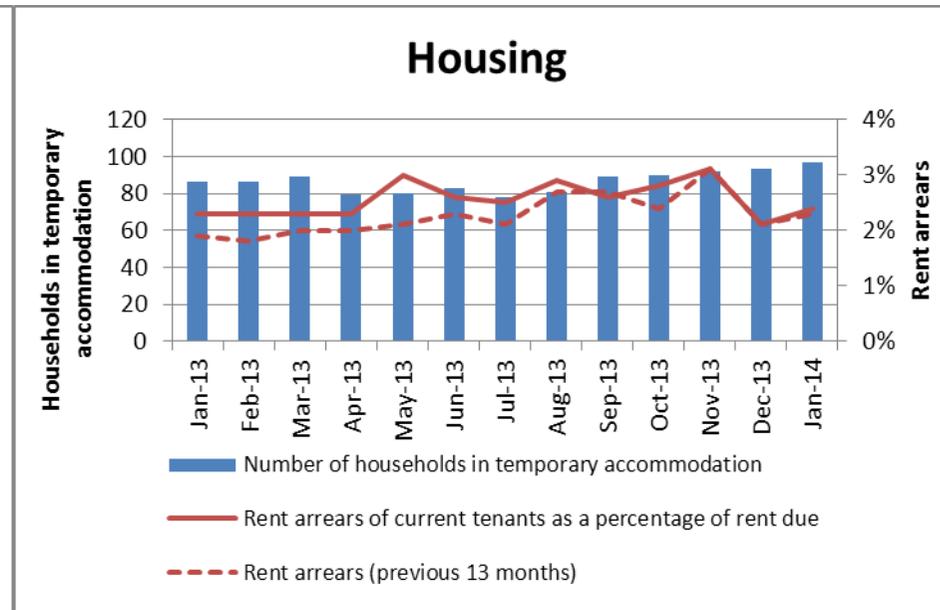
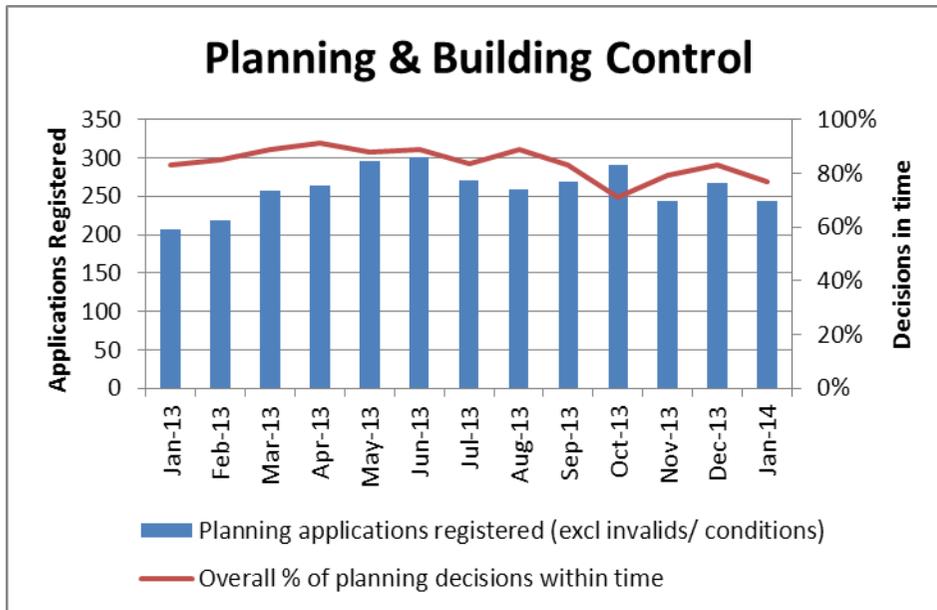
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		Bigger or Smaller is Better	Jan-13	Feb-13	Mar-13	Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13	Oct-13	Nov-13	Dec-13	Jan-14	TARGET
Finance	Forecast budget variance at the year end (General fund for year in question)	Smaller	0.0%	-1.0%	-2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	-1.6%	-1.0%	-0.9%	0.0%	0.15%	-0.08%	-0.87%	-0.1%	0%
	Average time to re let dwellings (excluding sheltered and temporary accommodation changes) (Days)	Smaller	28	23	18	20	21.3	24.5	16.9	17.5	24.8	18	17.2	17	24	21
Housing	% of rent loss due to voids	Smaller	1.44%	1.42%	1.39%	1.59%	1.55%	1.53%	1.53%	1.53%	1.55%	1.57%	1.56%	1.55%	1.56%	Trend
	Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due (targets updated for 2013-14)	Smaller	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%	3.0%	2.6%	2.5%	2.9%	2.6%	2.8%	3.1%	2.1%	2.4%	3.3%
	Number of households in temporary accommodation	Smaller	86	86	89	79	80	83	78	81	89	90	92	93	97	Trend
	Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks)	Smaller	18.5	17.4	17.6	18.9	16.0	17	17	17.1	15.6	14.7	16.0	18.8	19.5	Trend
	% of repairs completed on time	Bigger	99%	98%	98%	99%	99.8%	99%	99.2%	99.2%	99%	98%	98.2%	98.7%	99.4%	98%
	Housing repairs satisfaction	Bigger	98%	99%	99%	99.8%	99.3%	99.5%	99.4%	97.8%	97.9%	98.9%	98.7%	97.1%	98.2%	90%
	Number of Benefit Applications	Smaller	251	326	293	263	241	300	272	275	203	257	210	154	264	Trend
	Days to process Council Tax/Housing Benefit new claims and changes	Smaller	20.47	19.87	24.2	34.57	32.14	36.45	25.53	28.03	22.81	19.69	18.13	12.24	8.11	14
	% of benefit customers seen within 15mins	Bigger	63%	87%	88%	89%	94%	94%	88%	74%	85%	86%	92%	92%	88%	70%
	Planning & Building Control	All planning applications received		236	272	272	330	240	360	317	259	261	298	260	284	272
Planning applications registered (excl invalids/ conditions)			206	219	257	263	296	300	270	258	269	290	243	267	243	
Overall % of planning decisions within time		Bigger	83%	85%	89%	91%	88%	89%	84%	89%	83%	71%	79%	83%	77%	75%
Regulatory	Parking Penalty Charge Notices Issued	Smaller	1,008	1,238	1,079	1,380	1,530	1,395	1,710	1,607	1,507	1,886	1,784	1,454	1,425	Trend
	% Parking Penalty Charge Notices Paid	Bigger	108%	84%	99%	88%	82%	87%	82%	99%	91%	82%	87%	92%	88%	70%
Community Services	Graffiti and Fly-tipping Calls	Smaller	27	27	31	33	20	23	22	26	26	33	23	27	36	Trend
	% of households with missed waste collections	Smaller	0.03%	0.09%	0.12%	0.09%	0.09%	0.14%	0.15%	0.17%	0.15%	0.19%	0.17%	0.15%	0.12%	Trend
	Visits to Tourist Information Centre and www.enjoystalbens.com	Bigger	12,012	11,457	14,128	14,804	16,617	21,032	25,546	35,212	28,663	30,762	48,578	33,929	20,319	Year-on-year Trend
	Museums Visits	Bigger	8,624	10,849	10,105	12,317	12,494	18,798	15,779	16,600	16,645	17,007	16,453	11,133	7,878	Year-on-year Trend
Customer Services	% of calls to the Council answered within 5 rings (20 seconds)	Bigger	92.7%	94.5%	92.2%	90.2%	92.6%	91.2%	93.2%	91.2%	91.4%	72.5%	79.5%	93.9%	93.6%	80%
	% of customers seen within 15mins (excl Benefits)	Bigger	89%	93%	93%	94%	96%	97%	98%	96%	93%	94%	98%	98%	94%	80%
External	Claimant Count (% Proportion of Population)	Smaller	1.7%	1.8%	1.7%	1.6%	1.6%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	Trend
	New Jobs	Bigger	668	883	724	934	1,213	1,654	1,688	1,429	1,346	1,440	1,298	970	1,439	Trend
	All Crime (in month)	Smaller	435	411	380	483	427	453	477	470	438	483	466	404	404	Trend
	Anti Social Behaviour Incidents (in month)	Smaller	270	217	206	231	219	227	296	260	203	212	189	140	146	Trend

Performance Summary January 2014



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Appendix A: Benefits Service

Date From	Date To	Caseload (Including new claims)				Active/ awaiting			New claims					Backlog [^]		
		Brought forward	Incoming including new claims	Completed	Carried forward	Active claimant caseload	Active DWP Matching Workload (Atlas)	Awaiting customer response	Brought forward	New claims received	New claims processed	New claims (Sent for customer action)	Carried forward	Tray Active	Awaiting response from customer	Comments
21-Oct-13	27-Oct-13	2,029	959	1,048	1,940	1,228	12	700	247	20	49	60	218	285	380	
28-Oct-13	03-Nov-13	1,940	597	840	1,697	1,056	14	627	218	22	35	58	205	206	336	
04-Nov-13	10-Nov-13	1,697	1,224	1,220	1,701	986	68	647	205	37	57	53	185	77	290	
11-Nov-13	17-Nov-13	1,701	708	842	1,567	885	54	628	185	41	56	55	170	73	250	
18-Nov-13	24-Nov-13	1,567	854	889	1,532	674	216	642	170	44	39	60	175	95	268	
25-Nov-13	01-Dec-13	1,532	554	657	1,429	756	81	592	175	27	31	72	171	108	270	
02-Dec-13	08-Dec-13	1,429	734	806	1,357	673	48	637	171	42	39	81	174	64	271	
09-Dec-13	15-Dec-13	1,357	589	611	1,335	715	13	607	174	37	49	93	162	83	245	
16-Dec-13	05-Jan-14	1,335	1,740	1,630	1,445	850	134	461	162	52	64	56	150	169	255	
06-Jan-14	12-Jan-14	1,445	938	1,149	1,234	642	42	550	150	34	30	55	154	86	241	
13-Jan-14	19-Jan-14	1,234	758	852	1,140	501	22	617	154	39	29	64	164	64	211	
20-Jan-14	26-Jan-14	1,140	881	752	1,269	498	135	636	164	34	40	68	158	66	172	
27-Jan-14	02-Feb-14	1,269	645	697	1,217	520	52	645	158	29	42	66	145	56	150	

[^] The backlog contains cases which are at least 30 days old and have not yet been processed

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Appendix A: Benefits Service

Housing Benefit

The team are continuing to work well and the latest figures reflect this with outstanding work showing a slight decrease. The combined turnaround time for new claims and change of circumstances was just over 8 days in January.

Of the 100 new claims not processed on 2nd February- 66 were waiting for a customer response. It is a similar picture for the outstanding caseload over 30 days old, the number of cases is decreasing with 150 out of 206 awaiting a response from the customer.

In light of this improved performance, it is proposed that this will be the last regular appendix relating to benefits. From next month performance, apart from the indicators in the main report, will be reported on an exception basis.

New Barnfield Energy from Waste Facility

The Council has paid a £5,000 contribution towards Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's Public Inquiry costs.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

An informal consultation on the preliminary draft charging schedule is due to commence by the end of February, for a period of six weeks. This is following a report to the Planning Policy Committee (PCC) on 29 November to advise on the current approach to implementation of CIL in the District and to present the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (PDCS). The Committee supported the recommendation to publish the PDCS for informal consultation.

Strategic Local Plan

At the 31 January PPC meeting a number of reports were brought before the Committee to help inform the next stages of the Strategic Local Plan. A report entitled "Strategic Local Plan - Housing And Other Development Needs" was considered by the Committee. The Committee resolved:

- (i). *That the Committee recommends to Cabinet:*

 - a.) *that the report prepared by Housing Vision entitled 'Independent Assessment of Housing Needs and Strategic Housing Market Assessment' be endorsed as providing an appropriate assessment of local housing need in line with the requirements of the NPPF;*
 - b.) *an appropriate local housing need number is to be based on the migration led (10 year) figure set out in the independent assessment;*

- (ii). *That the Committee notes that employment, community and infrastructure development needs should be judged to primarily arise from the overall housing and economic development strategy eventually proposed in the SLP.*

Another report entitled "Strategic Local Plan - Development Strategy Options" was considered by the Committee. The Committee resolved:

- (i). *To request officers to work up an evaluation methodology for weighing up the environmental, social and economic factors relevant to potential residential development in the Green Belt sites identified in the SKM reports. The indicative draft as set out at Appendix 3 should form the basis of this work, for consideration at the 4 March PPC meeting;*
- (ii). *that the Council should initiate discussions with Dacorum Borough Council, the Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Planning Partnership (HIPP) and the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) about co-operation and infrastructure funding/project support for potential major cross boundary housing and employment development at East Hemel Hempstead.*

Neighbourhood Plan Area Designations

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Appendix B: Significant Planning Matters



Consultation on the designation of Sandridge Parish commenced on 31 January for a six week period. It is anticipated that a report considering designation will be brought before Cabinet at its meeting on 24 April.

The Council has applied, following the designation of Redbourn Neighbourhood Area, for a £5,000 grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

Sewell Park (Hunston) - applications: i) 5/11/2857 ii) 5/2014/0093 iii) 5/2012/2713

On 12 February the Secretary of State 'recovered' the Appeal by Hunston Properties Ltd (Hunston) on housing development in the Green Belt to the rear of 112 -156B Harpenden Road, St Albans. The application is for 116 dwellings, a 72 bed care home, a new road access, two tennis courts and open space (5/11/2857).

The Secretary of State set out that:

...in exercise of his powers under section 79 and paragraph 3 of Schedule 6 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the Secretary of State hereby directs that he shall determine this appeal instead of an Inspector. This means that instead of writing a decision, the Inspector will prepare a report and recommendation, which will be forwarded to the Secretary of State.

The reason for this direction is that the appeal involves proposals for significant development in the Green Belt. This direction is being served on the Inspector (if appointed), the appellant (or their representative) and the local planning authority.

The Secretary of State had already previously 'recovered' the Appeal for a smaller scale of proposed development on the same site and it is likely that there will be a conjoined Public Inquiry to consider both Appeals.

On 30 January a resubmitted outline application was registered for 85 Dwellings, Formation of New Accesses to Harpenden Road, Two Tennis Courts and Public Open Space (5/2014/0093). This is a resubmission following refusal of (5/2012/2713).

Railfreight

The Council have received a signed Section 106 Planning Obligation from Hertfordshire County Council binding the County's land ownership interest in the Railfreight Appeal site. The Obligation is dated 19 December 2013.

The Appeal is now with the Secretary of State to make a final decision following his minded to decision letter dated 20 December 2012.

Councillors will be informed when the final decision is received.

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Appendix B: Significant Planning Matters



Oaklands College, Smallford

A planning application from Oaklands College for additional education facilities and residential development (348 dwellings) is under consideration (5/2013/2589). Two public exhibitions of proposals were previously held by the Applicant.

Former HSBC Centre, Bricket Wood

A planning application for residential development comprising 175 dwellings is under consideration (5/2013/2119).

Lea Industrial Estate, Batford, Harpenden

A new planning application for redevelopment to provide a mix of business floor space (approx. 2,000m²) and residential development (67 dwellings) has been submitted (5/2013/3078).

Ridgeview, London Colney

Planning application (5/2013/0011) for retail development is still under consideration and will be reported to Planning Referrals Committee.

Harpenden Station Car Park

Letter received from Network Rail on 7 February 2014 advising that they believe they have insufficient funding to deliver the project. However they are still working closely with the Department for Transport and the Office of Rail Regulation and are hopeful that an arrangement can be established to enable the car park to be constructed.

Harpenden Secondary School

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Cabinet recently authorised acquisition of up to 15.04 hectares (37.16 acres) of land at Lower Luton Road, Harpenden, for enabling the future provision of an additional 6 to 8 forms of entry secondary school (or alternatively an all through school).

Inter council meetings have taken place and a County public consultation is underway.

Former Ariston Site, Harpenden Road, St Albans

Discussions with HCC as landowner about a new outline planning application for residential redevelopment and retention of key community uses (including the Pioneer Club and the Judo Club) are well advanced. The application is expected to mirror closely that considered in 2002. HCC conducted pre application consultation with local members and interest groups starting with councillor and stakeholder meetings in December. One public meeting has been held on 17 December and another took place on 14 January. Following this, a planning application is expected to be submitted shortly.

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Appendix B: Significant Planning Matters



BRE, Bricket Wood

Planning application 5/2013/0406 for the demolition of existing buildings and construction of up to 100 new dwellings, associated access and facilities was refused on 10/05/2013.

An appeal has been submitted and will be heard by Public Inquiry scheduled to commence 1 April 2014.

Butler's Yard (r/o 67 St Peters Street, St Albans)

A new planning application has been submitted for redevelopment for 14 flats and ground floor restaurant (5/2013/3053).

Luton Airport

In December 2013, Luton Borough Council resolved they are minded to grant planning permission for proposals which would increase capacity and passenger throughput.

On 28 January 2014, the Interim Head of Planning and Building Control wrote to the Secretary of State on behalf of this Council requesting the application is called in for decision by the Secretary of State. The Council's Planning Referrals Committee resolved to object to the proposals at their meeting 25 March 2013

A copy of the Council's letter can be found at:

http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/Images/Luton%20Airport%20Call%20In%20Letter%20to%20SoS%2028%2001%202014_tcm15-40392.pdf

Background

2014 will mark 100 years since the start of the First World War. The centenary provides us with the opportunity to celebrate the heritage of our local community through a series of projects and initiatives.

The key aims of our commemorative projects are to:

- Increase the awareness of St Albans during the Great War
- Celebrate our heritage assets
- Give local communities the opportunity to share their perception of the Great War and begin to examine its relevance for their own lives
- Increase the awareness of and engagement with St Albans' German twinning town, Worms

The sections below give an overview of the initiatives that we are directly leading and those that we are supporting partners to deliver.

In addition to these initiatives, we are keen to understand what other partners are doing as part of the World War One Centenary. In order to capture this information we are hosting a workshop on Tuesday 4 March from 2 – 4pm at Verulamium Museum.

For more information on the workshop contact Jo Askham on 01727 819303 or by email Jo.Askham@leisureconnection.co.uk.

St Albans Museums service

To commemorate the centenary of the beginning of the First World War, St Albans Museums Service will collaborate with its twinning town of Worms, Germany.

The project will include:

- An exhibition on the impact of the Great War on St Albans and Worms will be on show at the Museum of St Albans from 12 February 2014 to 24 August 2014.
- A Community Engagement project with residents of the 2 cities to capture modern perceptions of the Great War.
- Exchange of speakers during the exhibition (subject to funding)
- Creation of a guided walk of buildings in St Albans relating to the history of the Great War in the town. This will be offered for the duration of the exhibition and start from the Museum of St Albans.
- Production of a self-guided trail leaflet of sites associated with the Great War across the city of St Albans.

The project is enabled by a research project undertaken by local residents who volunteered for the Museums Service. One of these volunteers is already working with a German historian on contemporary coverage in local newspapers. Our German partner will also produce an anthology to accompany their side of the exhibition, and they have asked us to contribute a chapter. This will be done in collaboration with our research volunteers.

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Appendix C: World War One Centenary Commemorations



It is anticipated that the exhibition will cost c£5k which will be covered through the Museum budget. The exchange of the speakers is likely to cost between £5k -£10k. The museum has applied for EU funding for this part of the project as part of an application led by East Herts Council. The East Herts Council application brings together partners from St Albans, East Herts and Europe on commemorating the First World War. If this application is unsuccessful, we will be approaching the twinning association to see if they can support the exchange.

For more information on this project contact kate.warren@stalbans.gov.uk

War memorials and street plaques

The Council is responsible for the main City war memorial in St Peter's Street and for 10 memorial street plaques all within in the unparished wards. Oversight is the responsibility of the City Neighbourhoods Committee.

Condition surveys of the City war memorial and street plaques are carried out annually by the Council and repairs/cleaning is commissioned as required, subject to any necessary listed building consents.

The City war memorial was cleaned in summer 2013 when the WW2 stones (set in the walls around the base) were re-carved to restore them to full legibility following the effects of weathering.

To enable Councils to commemorate First World War Victoria Cross recipients, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is funding the production of commemorative paving stones. These will be presented from August 2014 to Councils in areas where Victoria Cross winners were born. The St Peter's Street memorial bears the names of 2 VC winners, although only one of these may have been born in St Albans.

For more information contact Paul.Gallagher@stalbans.gov.uk

Partner initiatives

Hertfordshire - A County at War

The Lord Lieutenant's Office, with the University of Hertfordshire, are producing a DVD, *Hertfordshire – A County at War*. It aims to show the impact of World War One in Hertfordshire and will be given to schools, libraries, museums and archives. St Albans Museums Service has been approached to provide footage and materials for this, which are expected to be selected and offered by mid March. The Council has promoted this project to local history groups and will also do so at the 4 March workshop mentioned above.

St Albans & Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society

Members of St Albans & Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society have formed a research group considering the effect of the Great War on St Albans. Three of these members are professional historians who intend to publish their findings in summer 2016. Other members have transcribed and analysed the 1911 census for St Albans, and the society has highlighted the many war memorials in the city centre area.

The Society is organising a Home Front conference to be held on Saturday, 20th September, 2014, at the Dagnall Street Baptist Church. The keynote speaker will be Dr John Bourne, founder of the Centre for First World War Studies at the University of Birmingham.

Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) and Libraries

HALS and Libraries across the county are organising a programme of events, activities and exhibitions. Events are planned throughout the 4 year commemoration period and will include a range of opportunities for individuals, groups and organisations to participate in and contribute to First World War commemoration activities. HALS and the Libraries are also supporting community groups with their own commemoration plans, signposting, promoting and providing access to archive and local history resources. We are encouraging local community groups to feed into this programme.

Hertfordshire Making Memories Community Archives Network

Online community archives are helping to record Hertfordshire's First World War experience and history, with the ability to browse and contribute articles, photographs and comments. Volunteers are researching, editing and collecting information relating to life on the home front - to be published starting August 2014. Herts Memories provides an accessible place to gather together First World War related research and the site can easily be linked to other projects. www.hertsmemories.org.uk

For any general enquiries on the above, please contact Carl.Cheevers@stalbans.gov.uk

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Appendix D: Economic Development Update



Background statistics

Vacant Unit Survey: The retail vacancy rate is 7.56% (Dec 2013). The latest national retail vacancy rate from Local Data Company is 13.9% (Dec 2013).

Unemployment Rate: The number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance in St Albans City and District is 1,038 people or 1.2%. The England Jobseeker rate is 3.6% (Dec 2013).

Business News: <http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/business/businessnews/default.aspx>

The Council has prioritised four areas for economic development:

- **Retail and Public Realm**
- **Developing the District's strengths - Green Triangle and Professional Services**
- **Visitor Economy**
- **Business Friendly**

The following are the highlights of what we have achieved so far in each of these areas.

Retail and Public Realm

This work is focused on supporting St Albans to maintain its vibrant and thriving City Centre. In turn this will attract more visitors to spend money in our local shops, restaurants and hotels. Achievements so far include:

- **Establishing a City Centre Partnership (CCP).** An Interim CCP Board has been set up and members include the two shopping centres, St Albans Civic Society, independent retailers and the Council. A company is in the process of being set up to run the CCP as a Community Interest Company (CIC). The Council through the portfolio holder will be one of six directors on the company board. To date over 30 local retailers have committed pledges to the CCP. The CCP will appoint a City Centre Manager to progress and develop schemes prioritised by the retailers. This could include attracting sponsorship for hanging baskets, Christmas lights and other projects. In addition, a key role of the CCP will be to investigate the possibility of establishing a Business Improvement District (BID) for the area. It is envisaged that this will take up to 3 years.
- The **Car parking strategy** has been developed which includes the re-classification of the City car parks from short/medium/long stay into leisure/shopper car parks and commuter/worker car parks. It also includes the re-structure of car parking tariffs from a "one size fits all" to tariffs aimed to encourage drivers to use the most appropriate car park. A smarter approach to car parking has been implemented. Pay by phone has now been implemented on all on-street pay and display parking and council managed car parks. It is intended that this will also be implemented in all NCP managed car parks in the District.
- Two **monolith signs** have been installed (one at the city station, the other near the Town Hall); with plans for four more at city centre locations.
- **Continued support** of Retailer of Year, including Festive Pub and Festive Shop Window.
- **City Centre events** include Magna Carta, Albantide, Christmas light switch on, Launch of the first Christmas Market in Nov 2013, which attracted c45,000 visitors.

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Appendix D: Economic Development Update



- **Regular liaison with the business community.** This includes city centre restaurateurs, landlords, shopping centre owners, major firms and others (Whitbread, Tesco).
- **University of Hertfordshire (UH) Graduation display** in Arena. We are investigating plans to “showcase” St Albans in 2015 when UH move the month of their Awards ceremony from November to September
- **Advancing the plans to develop the Town Hall** into a state of the art museum and gallery with the success of Heritage Lottery Fund development grant

Developing the District’s strengths - The Green Triangle and Professional Services

The Council, working with partners, aims to help raise the profile of key sectors to help the local economy grow and prosper.

- **The Green Triangle** aims to deliver economic growth built on the District’s cluster of world leading environmental research, engineering and green technology businesses. The three partners are the Building Research Establishment, Rothamsted Research and the University of Hertfordshire. To date the Green Triangle has developed a website. <http://thegreentriangle.org>, twitter account (@_GreenTriangle) and logo. Meetings have also been held with relevant ministers within Central Government to raise awareness. We have also been working closely with the Herts Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to have the project included in their priorities. Further work will continue to raise the profile of this sector, to create a legal structure for the partnership, develop a business plan, attract external funds and to develop a hub to assist growing business.
- **Professional Services** - St Albans is home to over 80 chartered accountancy firms and 50 law firms. We have been working closely with local businesses to develop the best way to “market” the area as key location for the professional services sector. This work will be presented to senior partners in early March. Future work includes raising the profile within and outside the District and developing a St Albans “professional services CV”.
- **The Hertfordshire County Council (Filming on Highways) Bill** received Royal Assent on 30 January 2014. It is now the Hertfordshire County Council (Filming on Highways) Act 2014 <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2013-14/hertfordshirecountycouncilfilmingonhighways.html>. The District is a very favourable location for filming and this Bill will have positive knock on effects in the local economy.
- **Super-Fast Broadband.** The Council is working with BT and others to help identify gaps in provision, un-block local problems and raise issues <http://www.superfastforherts.org/>.
- The **Council is sponsoring** the 2014 Hertfordshire Federation of Small Business (FSB) Awards, <http://www.fsb.org.uk/stalbans> having also sponsored the awards in previous years. This enables the Council to recognise entrepreneurial achievements in the District.

Visitor Economy

A visitor strategy for 2013-2018 has been developed to improve the management and promotion of the District’s offer. The visitor economy is an important and significant contributor to the local economy. Highlights and achievements so far include:

- Visitor website www.enjoystalbans.com

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix D: Economic Development Update

- Visitor Economy Advisory Board established April 2013 with representatives from businesses in this sector and a chair from the private sector
- The Board is working towards developing a new brand for St Albans. This project is due to be completed in March 2014
- Events & Festivals include Christmas Light switch on, Magna Carta, Albantide, and Christmas Market. We are working towards fewer, higher quality events
- Raising profile with media, plus joint ticketing and promotions
- Investigating Purple Flag award which relates to the evening economy
- Investigating Visitor pass schemes
- Investigating Welcome Host Skill development courses
- The Council, working with Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), is giving support to Butterfly World in seeking pump priming Government funds to secure private sector investment. If successful, this could help enable the dome to be built, enabling it to become an all season visitor attraction.

Business Friendly Procurement and Services

The Council launched its plan to make it easier for businesses to compete for our business and to use our services in October 2013. The actions were identified by exploring good practice in other councils, by sharing our own successes across departments and from making links with county level work. Initial ideas were shared with St Albans District Chamber of Commerce and their feedback shaped the final plan.

A full progress report on the plan is available in the background papers to this report. The following are the highlights of what we have achieved so far.

- Improved our business webpages and the letters and forms for business facing services e.g. building control, parking
- Launched a regular business e-newsletter. This is circulated via the Chamber of Commerce and is on our website
- Rolled out an electronic document management system to make it easier for agents and architects to submit and complete planning applications online
- Organised a 'meet the business' session for our regulatory team to hear from a local restaurant owner about his experiences of their service
- Introduced a newsletter for taxi drivers to keep them up to date on legislation
- Changed our cab and private hire regulations so that chauffeurs and others can license insurance cover vehicles, to keep their business running
- Delivered a business friendly parking strategy by engaging businesses in shaping the strategy to make sure the parking service meet their needs
- Recruiting a Procurement Projects Manager to provide expertise to explore and implement initiatives to help support local business through our purchasing

Developing the District's workforce

- **Jobs Fair.** The Council is sponsoring Oaklands College's Your Future Fair at the Alban Arena. Last March this event was attended by 800 people. The event this year is on Monday 3rd March 2014.
<http://www.oaklands.ac.uk/about/media-centre/events/137/Your-Future-Fair/>
- **Dragons' Apprentice Challenge 2013/14.** The Council is a key steering group member with St Albans CVS www.cvsstalbands.org.uk/cvsstalbands-dragon/DisplayArticle.asp?ID=9906

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix D: Economic Development Update



- **Executive Forum** - job club to help redundant executives back into work. The local project has a job outcome rate of nearly 60%
- **Apprenticeship Incentive Scheme.** The Council is funding a local incentive scheme undertaken by Oaklands College to enable up to 40 local SMEs to take on young people on apprentice programmes in the Visitor economy sector. To date 6 local employers have signed up taking on apprentices for a minimum of a year.

Update on the New Museum and Gallery (NMG) Project

Following the successful HLF announcement in November work has focused on project planning for the next stage.

The 'permission to start' documents that are required by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) have been submitted for approval. Feedback from the HLF is likely to be received in the week beginning 17th February. The HLF will then issue a Permission to Start letter which is the trigger for committing the development funding of £419,850.

The Project Board met in January 2014 to consider the project plan and to agree the scope of the Round 1 development works. They will continue to meet monthly to monitor progress. The deadline for submission of the application to HLF for Round 2 funding is September 2015.

Working with Councillor Wakely, officers are preparing briefs to procure external services including a Project Manager, Design Team, Exhibition and Interpretation team and a freelance Collections Care Officer who will be employed as a member of the museum team on a fixed term contract.

The Design Team procurement will be subject to an OJEU process. The advertisement will be sent to architects' practices with a track record of renovation of heritage buildings for modern museum and gallery space. The list will be developed with the input of the Advisory Group representative. The procurement process will involve a presentation to a stakeholder group before the final selection interview. The selection panel will be agreed with the Portfolio Holder in the week of 17th February 2014.

A meeting has been held with Planning and work has been initiated to market the site of the MoSTA in Hatfield Road. Preparation of a planning brief is the first step in this process. The deadline for completion of this is June/July 2014.

A visioning workshop was held with staff from the museum and tourist information centre on 4th February to secure their engagement with the project development.

The Fundraising Stakeholder Engagement Group, led by the St Albans Museum Trust are meeting every two weeks and are in the process of developing a "look and feel" for the project based on the title "Renaissance St Albans – Your New Museum and Gallery at the Heart of the City". A range of printed material to support the fund-raising will be commissioned in the next two weeks. A number of applications to Trusts and Charities are in preparation and the group are planning the Community Campaign.

Batchwood Sports Centre

The heavy wet weather has caused a one week delay to the programme, however Willmott Dixon Construction (WDC) has introduced weekend working to claw back time and return to programme. There has not been any change to the operational opening date of the 10th May.

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix E: Leisure and Culture update



Roof works are now 80% complete and windows are now being installed to the main building, ground and first floors.

Leisure Connection (LC) is working with the Council and WDC to create a mobilisation plan. The mobilisation plan will allow for furniture and equipment to be installed in each area post handover from WDC. The mobilisation will detail how each part of the sports centre will operate and be made operational by LC and the Council.

Cotlandswick Leisure Centre

Stage D design approval will take place at the end of the month with the Council and design team. Design changes and updates have been finalised, including value engineering to keep the project within the budget approved by Cabinet. A minor material amendments planning application has now been sent to planning and the process of approval should take 8 weeks.

The Geotechnical survey was carried out in January and the results will be returned by the end of February. The surveyors have been liaising with the design team to inform the foundation design. The Environment Agency has agreed in principle the water attenuation scheme and this will then need approval from our planners.

Following on from our stakeholder consultation we are now taking the updated design to the Ward and Parish councillors as part of on-going community engagement.

The Project Manager for this project will be employed by the Council on a fixed 18 month contract, being a shared resource with the New Museum and Gallery project.

Preliminary works to remove trees and create a site entrance will begin in March/April with the WDC site compound erected in late April. The full construction programme will then begin in late June of this year.

The first Project Order is being finalised and is expected to be placed by the end of February. This is a pre-order of £251,000, part of the £4.5 million total cost of the new facility. The purpose of this is to confirm the order with WDC and it is anticipated that ground works will begin in spring 2014.

Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre

The final defects meeting with Sports and Leisure Management Limited (SLM) is planned for the week commencing the 17th Feb.

WDC are making good latent defects, for example, roof leaks and will continue to do so until all are rectified.

Update on 3 year events programme

Over the past 3 months we have been working to develop a three year event programme for 2014-2016. The focus of this programme will be to deliver fewer large scale events whilst ensuring the ones we do deliver are bigger and better than before, with greater focus on marketing. The programme has been informed by discussions and comments at Local Services Scrutiny and with local arts and culture groups. A core programme of events will be delivered in each financial year which will then be enhanced by special/one off events such as the Magna Carta in 2015.

In putting together the 2014 - 2016 programme, we have the opportunity to set out clear strategic outcomes for our programme. Any event that we deliver or support should be explicitly linked to these outcomes. The suggested strategic outcomes for our events are below:

- Increasing the Visitor economy
- Promoting local businesses
- Building vibrant, cohesive communities
- Promoting local heritage
- Providing new cultural experiences

The majority of the events programme is currently delivered by council officers. In future, we expect to facilitate more local community groups and partnerships to deliver the events programme. A good example of this was the 2013 Film Festival. There are examples of where this works well in other local authorities. We expect to give greater focus to this way of working in 2014 with a view to having a 2015 and 2016 programme delivered primarily through local partnerships.

The Council's 3 year event programme is set out in the table below.

Event/Project	2014 date	2015 date	2016 date
Residents First Weekend/Heritage Open Days (merged event)		24 – 25 January	23 – 24 January
Magna Carta (One off special event)		TBC (dependent on national initiatives)	
Alban Weekend	21 - 22 June	20 - 21 June	18 - 19 June
Music Festival (IOF and local groups)		9-18 July	
Summer Sounds – music event for young people (One off special event)	End of July (exact date tbc)		
Food and Drink Festival	2 - 6 October	8 – 12 October	6 – 10 October

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix E: Leisure and Culture update



Christmas Lights Switch On & Christmas Market launch	23 November-21 December (TBC)	15 November-22 December (TBC)	20 November-27 December (TBC)
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In addition to developing the 3 year events programme, we have established an arts and culture network which brings together organisations from this sector. The network will aim to help organisations to share resources and avoid duplication of delivery. The network will be further developed over the coming months.

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix F: Update on Assets

Oysterfields

Terms have been agreed with the Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust for the grant of a lease of land at Oysterfields. The Trust will use the land to increase staff parking provision to reduce pressure on the streets in the neighbourhood.

Work Environment Programme

The Work Environment has now been completed on time and under budget.

The Council agreed to borrow up to £600,000 for the WEP programme, with the condition that the payback had to be within 5 years.

The actual spend for the WEP was £ 546,111, an under spend of £53,889 and a payback period of 3 years and 3 months.

The programme achieved considerable space saving in the Civic Offices for example:

- The archive area on the Lower Ground Floor has seen a reduction of 128 Linear Metres of storage which is equivalent to 63 Cupboards, a 32% reduction.
- Service areas reduced their floor storage by 40% which is 7% more than the target rate.
- The number of desks has been reduced from 359 to 267, in line with the target of providing 7 desk for every 10 staff
- Space created for the Police on the ground floor equates to 6,267 square feet or 585 square metres.

The furniture that was no longer required was made available to local organisations, schools and charities and approximately 9.5 Tonnes of furniture was diverted from landfill by offering for re-use.

The following organisations benefitted:

- Wheathampstead Parish Council,
- St Stephens Parish Council,
- Ziggurat Building,
- Age UK Herts.,
- Citizens Advice,
- St Albans West Local Partnership (a partnership of 27 local schools),
- Herts Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (HACRO),
- Oaklands College,
- Redbourn Recreation Centre,
- Homestart,
- Youth Café,
- CAFE charity,
- St Albans Cycle Campaign (STACC),
- St Albans Day Services,
- Fleetville Community Playgroup,
- Welwyn St Mary's Church,
- Loreto College,
- Harpenden Rural Parish Council,
- British Heart Foundation,

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix F: Update on Assets

- Aboyne Lodge School,
- Harpenden Town Council,
- Home Start,
- The Living Room,
- London Colney Parish Council and
- 22 staff also benefited from the project

The rest of the furniture that was no longer required was taken by Senator (the new furniture supplier) and recycled. This equated to 39,793 KG/CO2.

Spend on Asset Maintenance

In addition to the carpet replacement work (done alongside the Work Environment Programme) and corporate IT investment the following are some of the larger items of investment in the condition of our assets:

- Harpenden Sports Centre - replacement of air conditioning units for improved cooling and comfort within the building
- Council Offices – replacement of air conditioning refrigerant in the Contact Centre and Reception to improve efficiency and comply with current legislation
- Clarence Park – repairs to the ramp, footpath, fencing and provision of cables to the kiosks
- Long Acres Recreation Ground – resurfacing of footpath to alleviate flooding
- Corn Exchange – external stone repairs to improve safety and appearance
- Verulamium Park – repairs to wall and pavement alongside River Ver
- 33 Market Place – works to drainage, sump pump and basement damp problems to facilitate letting.