

Council Performance & Budget Summary

February 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 – 0.0%
G	Performance Indicators

Appendices

- A. Planning Update
- B. Update on Assets of Community Value
- C. Spend on Consultants
- D. First World War Centenary Update
- E. Christmas Market Feedback
- F. Housing Strategy

Recommendation

That Cabinet notes the Council Performance and Budget Summary (February 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	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. A temporary accommodation unit of two self contained flats which has been undergoing refurbishments will be available from the 7 th March. This will accommodate two families. In addition the office at 34 Grosvenor Road is being converted to provide another flat. This will be completed in May/June.
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. We are hoping to offer permanent accommodation to 5 families in the week beginning 10 March.

	Measure	Comments
R	Overall % of planning decisions within time	<p>This dip in performance is caused by two factors. Firstly a number of applications went to committee in February causing them to fall outside the statutory timelines. Secondly the planning department is 2 FTE members of staff down due to vacancies.</p> <p>Recruitment is currently taking place to fill the 2 permanent posts with closing date for applications of 21 March 2014. The Council has sought to bring in temporary cover to address this lack of resource and impact on service.</p> <p>A separate report is coming to Cabinet seeking agreement to the creation of 3 permanent FTE posts in lieu of using casual and agency staff.</p>
G	Days to process Council Tax/Housing Benefit new claims and changes	<p>This low has mainly occurred due to a decrease in the time taken to process change of circumstance claims, with these falling from 6.3 days in January to an average of 2.2 days in February. We have seen continued improvement in processing all Benefit claims, with the time taken to process new claims also falling in February. This is in line with continued improvement over the past 5 months.</p>

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.

Contact for further questions: Paul Howes, Policy and Performance Manager
(01727 819618 [/paul.howes@stalbans.gov.uk](mailto:paul.howes@stalbans.gov.uk))

Update on Harpenden Town Council's former Westfield Allotment site

At its meeting on July 2011, Cabinet agreed

"...to grant a right of way to Harpenden Town Council (HTC) over Beeching Close amenity land (subject to successful negotiations as set out in Appendix 4 in Part 2 of the report) and over Westfield Recreation Ground, via Willoughby Road for access to the former Westfield Allotment site to enable development of a scheme consisting of new facilities for Mencap and affordable residential dwellings, some of which are to be general needs rented."

A plan is attached showing the Recreation Ground edged in red, the former allotment site edged in blue and the access route hatched red.

Westfield Recreation Ground was transferred to the Town Council subject to restrictive covenants reflecting the decision. In essence this allows the Town Council to develop their former allotment site for 100% affordable dwellings, including a facility for Mencap and some general needs rented accommodation. It should be noted that not all of the

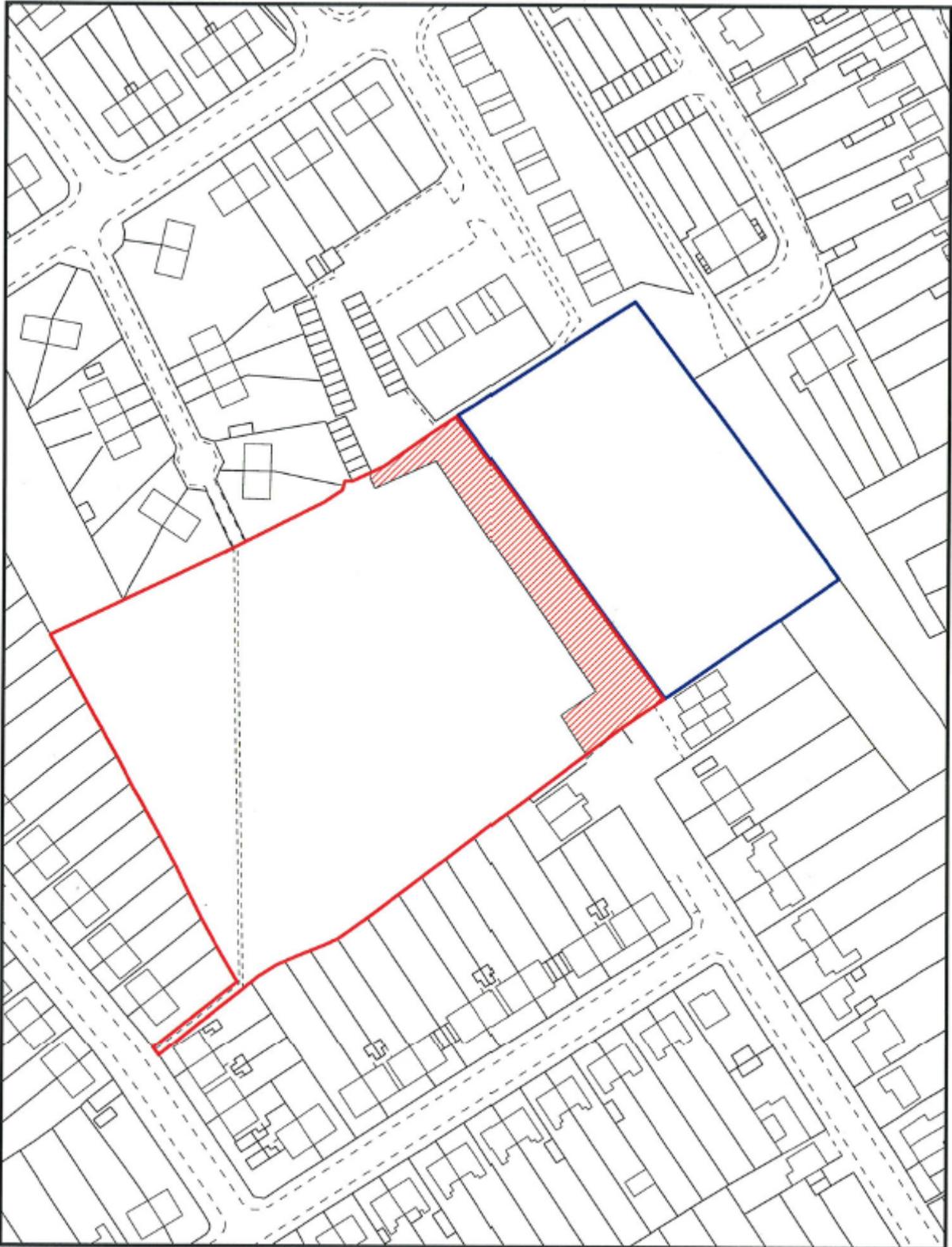
affordable houses were required to be general needs. The District Council however will have 100% nomination rights over those properties that are general needs rented.

The Town Council has been working with Harpenden Mencap with a view to undertaking a joint development on the Town Council owned former allotment site. Unfortunately, Harpenden Mencap has now informed the Town Council that it will not be able to proceed with the new Mencap facilities on this site.

The Town Council is however keen to develop the former allotment site for affordable housing and has requested the District Council to relax the covenant regarding the Mencap facilities. The Town Council now propose that the whole of the site is developed for affordable residential dwellings, some of which will be general needs rented.

The principle behind the grant of the right of way has not changed since it will still serve an affordable residential development some of which will be general needs rented. As in the original agreement, the District Council will receive 100% nomination rights in respect of the general needs rented properties.

The relaxation of covenants is delegated to officers. In consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Resources, Community Engagement and Localism and Planning and Conservation, it has been decided that the Council will agree to the Town Council's request. The transfer will therefore be varied to permit the Town Council to develop the whole of the former allotment site for 100% affordable housing, including some general needs rented properties.



LOCATION:

Centred on TL1315NE (513881,215691)

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DATE: 29/03/2012

Council Performance & Budget Summary

February 2014

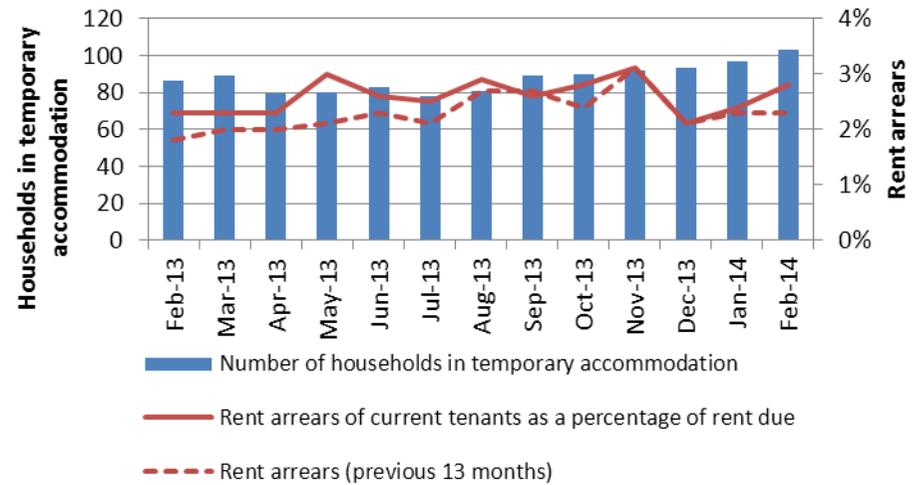


	Bigger or Smaller is Better	Feb-13	Mar-13	Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13	Oct-13	Nov-13	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	TARGET	
Finance	Forecast budget variance at the year end (General fund for year in question)	Smaller	-1.0%	-2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	-1.6%	-1.0%	-0.9%	0.0%	0.15%	-0.08%	-0.87%	-0.1%	0.0%	0%
Housing	Average time to re let dwellings (excluding sheltered and temporary accommodation changes) (Days)	Smaller	23	18	20	21.3	24.5	16.9	17.5	24.8	18	17.2	17	24	20	21
	% of rent loss due to voids	Smaller	1.42%	1.39%	1.59%	1.55%	1.53%	1.53%	1.53%	1.55%	1.57%	1.56%	1.55%	1.56%	1.55%	Trend
	Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due (targets updated for 2013-14)	Smaller	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%	3.0%	2.6%	2.5%	2.9%	2.6%	2.8%	3.1%	2.1%	2.4%	2.8%	3.3%^
	Number of households in temporary accommodation	Smaller	86	89	79	80	83	78	81	89	90	92	93	97	103	Trend
	Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks)	Smaller	17.4	17.6	18.9	16.0	17	17	17.1	15.6	14.7	16.0	18.8	19.5	19	Trend
	% of repairs completed on time	Bigger	98%	98%	99%	99.8%	99%	99.2%	99.2%	99%	98%	98.2%	98.7%	99.4%	99.3%	98%
	Housing repairs satisfaction	Bigger	99%	99%	99.8%	99.3%	99.5%	99.4%	97.8%	97.9%	98.9%	98.7%	97.1%	98.2%	98.8%	90%
	Number of Benefit Applications	Smaller	326	293	263	241	300	272	275	203	257	210	154	264	194	Trend
	Days to process Council Tax/Housing Benefit new claims and changes	Smaller	19.87	24.2	34.57	32.14	36.45	25.53	28.03	22.81	19.69	18.13	12.24	8.11	2.61	14
% of benefit customers seen within 15mins	Bigger	87%	88%	89%	94%	94%	88%	74%	85%	86%	92%	92%	88%	89%	70%	
Planning & Building Control	All planning applications received		272	272	330	240	360	317	259	261	298	260	284	272	277	
	Planning applications registered (excl invalids/conditions)		219	257	263	296	300	270	258	269	290	243	267	243	252	
	Overall % of planning decisions within time	Bigger	85%	89%	91%	88%	89%	84%	89%	83%	71%	79%	83%	77%	66%	75%
Regulatory	Parking Penalty Charge Notices Issued	Smaller	1,238	1,079	1,380	1,530	1,395	1,710	1,607	1,507	1,886	1,784	1,454	1,425	1,323	Trend
	% Parking Penalty Charge Notices Paid	Bigger	84%	99%	88%	82%	87%	82%	99%	91%	82%	87%	92%	88%	91%	70%
Community Services	Graffiti and Fly-tipping Calls	Smaller	27	31	33	20	23	22	26	26	33	23	27	36	27	Trend
	% of households with missed waste collections	Smaller	0.09%	0.12%	0.09%	0.09%	0.14%	0.15%	0.17%	0.15%	0.19%	0.17%	0.15%	0.12%	0.09%	Trend
	Visits to Tourist Information Centre and www.enjoystalbens.com	Bigger	11,457	14,128	14,804	16,617	21,032	25,546	35,212	28,663	30,762	48,578	33,929	20,319	20,298	Year-on-year
	Museums Visits	Bigger	10,849	10,105	12,317	12,494	18,798	15,779	16,600	16,645	17,007	16,453	11,133	7,878	13,099	Year-on-year
Customer Services	% of calls to the Council answered within 5 rings (20 seconds)	Bigger	94.5%	92.2%	90.2%	92.6%	91.2%	93.2%	91.2%	91.4%	72.5%	79.5%	93.9%	93.6%	94.7%	80%
	% of customers seen within 15mins (excl Benefits)	Bigger	93%	93%	94%	96%	97%	98%	96%	93%	94%	98%	98%	94%	98%	80%
External	Claimant Count (% Proportion of Population)	Smaller	1.8%	1.7%	1.6%	1.6%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	Trend
	New Jobs (New and Unfilled Vacancies until Dec 2012)	Bigger	883	724	934	1,213	1,654	1,688	1,429	1,346	1,440	1,298	970	1,439	1,364	Trend
	All Crime (in month)	Smaller	411	380	483	427	453	477	470	438	483	466	404	404	495	Trend
	Anti Social Behaviour Incidents (in month)	Smaller	217	206	231	219	227	296	260	203	212	189	140	146	137	Trend

Planning & Building Control



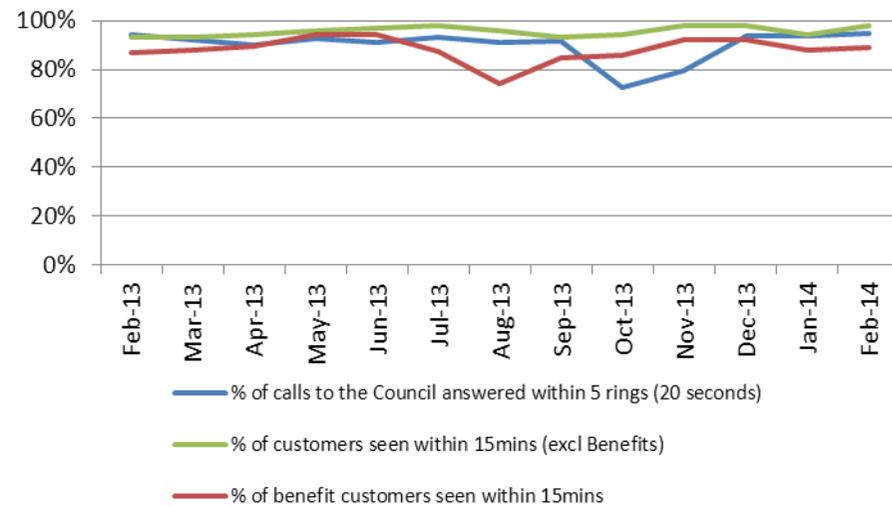
Housing



Parking



Customer Contact



Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix A: Planning Update

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published the final National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) web-based resource on 6 March 2014. The NPPG was accompanied by a Ministerial Statement from Nick Boles. The practice guidance and the Ministerial Statement are now material planning considerations in determining planning applications. They will also potentially be factors to consider in making progress with the Strategic Local Plan. The ministerial statement and the NPPG itself can be found at <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>.

DCLG will update the NPPG on an ongoing 'live' basis.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Following a report to the Planning Policy Committee (PCC) on 29 November 2013, an informal consultation on the preliminary draft charging schedule commenced on the 28 February. The consultation will run until 11 April 2014.

Strategic Local Plan

At the 4 March PPC meeting a number of reports were brought before the Committee to help inform the next stages of the Strategic Local Plan. Reports entitled "Independent Green Belt Review - Part 2 (Final Report)" and "Sustainability Appraisal Background & Update" were noted.

A report entitled "SLP Green Belt Strategic Sub Area Development Options – Evaluation Methodology" was considered by the Committee. The Committee resolved:

That the methodology set out in section 5 and Appendices 1 and 2 is endorsed.

That officers carry out work on the assessment of sites and packages of sites using this methodology and report back to this Committee on the results

That the targets for reporting be agreed as; initial progress report on evaluation process, with opportunity for feedback to 1 May meeting and final evaluation results report to 3 July meeting.

A report entitled "Recommendations to amend and improve the Planning Committee Process" was considered by the Committee. The Committee resolved:

That the remaining recommendations from the DM Review that need approval through Council be referred to Council on 2nd April 2014 to take affect from the start of the 2014/15 municipal year.

Neighbourhood Plan Area Designations

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.

Cherry Hill, Chiswell Green, St Albans – Application 5/13/2188

Barratt Homes (North London)'s appeal regarding residential development for 14 dwellings in a Green Belt green field has been dismissed. The Inspector concluded in his balancing exercise:

In my judgement, the weight I have accorded to the other considerations in favour of the proposal would not individually, or when taken together, be sufficient to clearly outweigh the substantial harm to the Green Belt in respect of inappropriate development and loss of openness and the significant weight accorded to the other harm relating to character and appearance. Therefore the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposed development do not exist in this particular case.

New Barnfield Energy from Waste Facility

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

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

The appeals have now been conjoined into a single joint public inquiry, likely to be held in late June and early July.

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.

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Appendix A: Planning Update

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

On 19 February the Council received an invitation from the Secretary of State to comment on the Section 106 Obligation from Hertfordshire County Council dated 19 December 2013. The Council responded on 6 March 2014. A copy of the Council's response has been published on the Railfreight page of the website.

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.

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

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

Ridgeview, London Colney

Planning application (5/2013/0011) for retail development will be reported to Planning Referrals Committee on 24 March. There have been 2 rounds of additional consultation as a result of firstly amended plans and secondly submission of a more detailed retail sequential assessment.

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).

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Appendix A: Planning Update



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. The Council and HCC are in discussions to agree heads of terms for a Section 106 Agreement. It is expected that a planning application will be submitted shortly after the heads of terms have been agreed.

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 on 1 April 2014.

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

A planning application for redevelopment for 14 flats and ground floor restaurant (5/2013/3035) was approved on 19 February 2014.

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Appendix B: Assets of Community Value



Background

The Community Right to Bid was introduced as part of the Localism Act 2011. This gives various organisations the right to nominate local land or buildings to be included in a List of Assets of Community Value. The list is held by the Council. If the asset is listed and comes up for sale, community groups will have six weeks to submit an expression of interest. They then have six months to prepare a bid to acquire the asset.

Who can nominate/bid?

Eligible groups/organisations* are:-

- A local voluntary or community group that is not incorporated that has at least 21 members and who are currently registered to vote in the local authority area
- A parish or town council
- A neighbouring parish council that shares a boundary or boundaries with another parish or an unparished local authority
- A neighbourhood forum designated for planning purposes under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- A company or industrial or provident society which does not distribute its surplus to its members
- A community interest group.

*from **The Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012** which can be found at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/2421/regulation/5/made>

Eligible groups can nominate both privately and publicly owned assets if they meet the criteria of assets of community value. A building or land in the local authority's area will be listed as an asset of community value if in the opinion of the local authority:-

- Current primary use of the building or land or use of the building or land in the recent past furthers or has furthered the social wellbeing or social interest of the local community.
- It is realistic to think that now or in the next five years there could continue to be primary use of the building or land to further social wellbeing or social interests of the local community (whether or not in the same way).

What happens when an asset is listed?

Owners of the listed assets cannot dispose of them without:-

- Letting the local authority know they intend to sell or grant a lease of over 25 years
- Waiting until the end of the six week interim moratorium period if the local authority does not receive a request from a community interest group to be treated as a potential bidder
- Waiting until the end of the six month full moratorium period if a community group requests that they are treated as a potential bidder.

The owner is under no obligation to sell the listed asset to the community group.

There is a protected period for the owner of 18 months from the time the owner notified the local authority of their intention to sell where no further moratorium can be imposed. Owners are entitled to apply for compensation from the local authority if the listing of an asset results in the owner incurring a loss (see below).

Request for a review of our decision

Once notified, owners have an opportunity to request a review of our decision to list the property as an asset of community value. A request for a review of our decision must be received in writing before the end of the period of **eight weeks** beginning with the day on which written notice was

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix B: Assets of Community Value



given. An application for review will be carried out by the Head of Legal Democratic and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

If the owner is dissatisfied with the review decision, the owner may then appeal to a First-Tier Tribunal.

Compensation

The local authority is liable under the Regulations for paying compensation claimed by private owners for any loss or expense incurred as a result of their property being listed or previously listed. It is presumed most claims will arise as a result of a moratorium period having been applied. The Regulations also allow for claims for loss or expense arising simply as a result of the property being listed. The time limit for an owner to make a compensation claim will be 13 weeks from the end of the interim or full moratorium period (as appropriate) or from the date when the property ceases to be listed.

On the issue of compensation and local authority liability the DCLG note states:

As with other costs incurred by local authorities in meeting the requirements placed on them, we have reflected the estimated costs of compensation within the new burdens funding. The compensation elements of new burdens funding are estimated on the basis of 40 successful claims for compensation across all administering local authorities over a year. In addition to the amount included within the new burdens assessment, the Government will meet costs of compensation payments of over £20k of compensations costs in a financial year. This could occur through a local authority paying out over £20k in one financial year either on one large claim or as a combined total on a number of smaller claims.

Full details of the legislation can be found here -

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/2421/contents/made>

Guidance on the nomination process and successful/unsuccessful lists is published here -

<http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/community-and-living/communitygroups/CommunityRights/assets.aspx>

Progress to date

Following awareness raising in summer 2013 the Council received 23 initial nominations for listing of community assets from across the District. A further four nominations were received in late Autumn/Winter making a total of 27 currently at various stages of the process. This has required significant follow up with nominees for additional detail regarding the land/property concerned (e.g. inadequate description and/or plans initially submitted) and site visits to check the detail provided.

There are 9 nominations which the Property & Asset Manager has considered and made a determination on, in consultation with Cllr Read as Portfolio Holder (see Table 1). The remaining 16 nominations will be determined in small batches over the next 4 – 6 weeks as missing information and access for site visits (where necessary) is received.

Next steps

Successful and unsuccessful listings will be published on the website as decisions are confirmed and will be reported to Cabinet through the monthly performance report. Listing will be for a period of 5 years from the decision date.

Jane Pearce

Partnership & Inclusion Manager

[Type text]

Table 1 **Community Right to Bid - Nominated Assets of Community Value**
Schedule of Decisions (March 2014)

Ref	Asset name	Nominated by	PH Approval & Date of Final Decision	Reasons for decision
13-01	Napsbury Fields - (Registered as land on the East side of Napsbury Lane, St Albans)	Whitecroft and Meadowcroft Residents Association	Unsuccessful Do not add to list 06.03.14	The land is fenced with access points only at the public footpath intersections. There are notices at all of the access points advising the public that the land is private and that they should keep to the footpaths. There is no evidence that this land has been legitimately used to further the social wellbeing or interests of the community, save for the use of the public footpaths. The recent village green application failed – see inspectors report summary VG application Inspectors Report.pdf Rialto Homes are opposed to public use of the site so there is no realistic expectation that any public use will be granted over and above that which exists along the public footpaths.
13-05	Keith Clegg Garden	Whitecroft and Meadowcroft Residents Association	Successful Add to List 06.03.14	The land is landscaped as a memorial garden for former Mayor Keith Clegg. It contains benches for public use and a memorial plaque attached to a wall. The asset appears to fulfil a community/ social benefit and there is no reason to think that this will not continue.
13-10	Jessamine Garage	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Unsuccessful Do not add to list 06.03.14	The property is a business offering a service which is not a community business – not everyone in the community needing to use or being able to afford the services of a vehicle workshop or vehicle sales forecourt. This property is not considered to currently further community purposes or to have any realistic prospect of furthering community purposes in the future as the property is subject to a business tenancy and has been used for similar business purposes for many years.
13-11	Aggregate site (former station sidings)	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Unsuccessful Do not add to list 06.03.14	The land belonging to the County Council is gated with the only access being through a small gap which is over grown. There is no evidence of community use. The other parcel of land is fenced off and used by a tenant for grazing sheep and goats. The community at large cannot access the land or benefit from it. It is difficult therefore to see how it can further social interests or social wellbeing.
13-12	Butterfield Playing Fields & Nature	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Successful Add to List	The land is open space and open to the public for a variety of social and community uses. It therefore fulfils the criteria. There is no reason to assume this use will not continue.

[Type text]

Ref	Asset name	Nominated by	PH Approval & Date of Final Decision	Reasons for decision
	Reserve		06.03.14	
13-14	Hitchin allotments	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Successful Add to List 06.03.14	The availability of land for a community to grow its own food is important in the furtherance of social wellbeing and sustainability. Although only allotment holders can access the land (i.e. it is not an asset that can be enjoyed by the public at large) it is considered to meet the criteria. It is also expected that this use will continue.
13-20	Wadley Hut	Verulam Residents Association	Successful Add to List 06.03.14	This property is used by the Scouts but let out for a number of other community purposes. It is currently used for social/ community benefit and since the existing lease is for 125 years there is a realistic prospect that it will continue to be used for social/ community purposes.
13-23	Bedmond Lane Field	Verulam Residents Association	Successful Add to List 06.03.14	The land is open with no apparent barriers to public access. It is open space with a public footpath running through it. It appears to fulfil a community benefit and there is no reason to assume this will not continue.
13-24	Mitchell Hall Royal British Legion	Verulam Road Residents Association	Successful Add to List 06.03.14	The property is a members club but it welcomes others as guests and it is hired out for parties, meetings etc. for the community. It therefore meets the criteria as furthering social interests. We are not aware that there are any sufficiently well formed proposals to lead to an assumption that the current use will not continue. There is for example no planning application for change of use; the property is not for sale etc.

Spend on Consultants

<u>Description</u>	2013/14	2013/14	2013/14	General Fund Revenue £k	General Fund Capital £k	Externally Funded and HRA £k
	Actuals to date £k	Further anticipated work £k	Total Forecast £k			
Design work on Green Ring project	4		4	4		
Economic Development - Professional Services project	4		4	4		
Loudbird Communications - visitor strategy implementation	6	3	9	9		
British Museum for Verulamium Shop	12		12	12		
New Museum and Gallery Project UCS Consultancy – fundraising consultancy	2	3	5	5		
New Museum and Gallery Project - Jura	4		4	4		
New Museum and Gallery Project - AECOM	6		6	6		
Christmas Market - Stephanie Swann	1		1	1		
Christmas Market - Shire Consulting – Planning Consultancy	1		1	1		
Portfolio Total - CEL	40	6	46			
Independent Green Belt Reviews and Housing Need report	86		86	86		
Independent Specialist Retail Advice	5	7	12	12		
Civic Centre Opportunity Site - advice to the Council on progressing this project - Specialist Commercial Evaluation & Advice	7		7	7		
Portfolio Total - P&C	98	7	105			
Internal Audit - Computer auditors	2		2	2		
Training on Cipfa Cash Flow model for closing of accounts	7		7	7		
Civic Centre Working Environment Consultant - project management including storage reduction, space planning, new layouts and building works (*see note)	77		77			77
Portfolio Total - R	86	0	86			
Batchwood - project management of capital projects	38	61	99		99	
Westminster Lodge - project management of capital project	64		64		64	
Portfolio Total - CSH	102	61	163			
Housing Management - Tenancy Strategy	1		1			1
Portfolio Total - H	1	0	1			
Total	327	74	401	160	163	78
Total for 2013/14					323	78
Total for 2012/13					474	418
Total for 2011/12					480	77
Total for 2010/11					953	14

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix D: First World War Centenary - update



Background

As part of the February performance report we outlined some of the planned projects that are being delivered to mark 100 years since the start of the First World War. To assist our planning we wanted to understand what other partners were doing to commemorate the centenary. In order to capture this information we hosted a workshop on Tuesday 4 March which brought together local partner organisations.

This update highlights the outcomes from the workshop. If you want further details or if you are a community group that want to get involved in the First World War projects below, please contact Jo Askham on jo.askham@leisureconnection.co.uk or by phone on 01727 819303.

The workshop was well attended with the following organisations taking part:

- St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society (Arc and Arc/SAAHAAS)
- Colney Heath Parish Council
- Harpenden Town Council
- London Colney Parish Council
- Redbourn Parish Council
- St Albans Cathedral
- St Albans Civic Society
- St Albans City Tour Guides
- St Michael's Church
- Sandridge Parish Council
- University of Hertfordshire Heritage Hub
- Flamstead/Ver Valley Research Group

The workshop was split into two parts. During the first part, partners focused on sharing their planned projects and identifying cross cutting themes. The second part of the workshop looked specifically at a project that will explore heritage through the arts.

Partner plans for the First World War centenary

It was clear from this session that there are a huge number of projects that will be delivered. These projects broadly fall under the following categories:

- Exhibitions
- Research
- Books/publications
- Other activities

Some examples from each category are set out below:

Exhibitions

- Museum of St Albans - focus on family and community life, war effort and the economy
- Harpenden Town Council – exhibition planned for 2014 Armed Forces Day
- St Albans Cathedral – static exhibition exploring what the parish was like in 1914

Research

- Colney Heath Parish Council – local researcher looking at the history of 50 men
- Arc and Arc - identifying names missing from war memorials

Books/Publications

- St Michael's Church – memorial book development continuing
- Arc & Arc – republication of Abbey Street Memorials' leaflet

Other activities

- City of St Albans Tour Guides – new walks for 2014 – taking place in June, August and November – commemorating battle, start of war and Armistice
- Colney Heath Parish Council – planting poppies at entry points to village
- Civic Society – interest in highlighting the Verdun Tree which is sited on the small Green just inside the Waxhouse Gate. This is a horse chestnut grown from a conker collected from the only tree to survive the 1916 battle at Verdun (HMS Verdun brought back Unknown Soldier)
- London Colney Parish Council – parade and Tea Dance in November
- St Albans Cathedral – Prayer trail, workshops and lecture series
- University of Hertfordshire Heritage Hub - Chosen as 1 of 5 national centres focussing on First World War – theme to be everyday life at home, impact on next generation
<http://heritagehub.herts.ac.uk/projects/remembering-the-first-world-war.htm>

It was agreed that from the meeting a full summary document will be produced which will give an outline of each project and contact details for further information. This summary will be circulated to all Councillors for their information.

District Wide First World War Project - 2015

The group used the second part of the meeting to discuss a specific district wide project. The project will use the arts to explore our First World War heritage. The development of the project will start in 2014 and be completed in 2015. The exact details are still to be confirmed however it will likely include:

- Interactive district map (linked to Museum website) showing addresses of all those who died across the district (visual impact of groupings particularly for young people) and key relevant sites
- Site specific community theatre in partnership with Trestle
- Workshops in schools/community groups
- Social history – talking to those who live/work in buildings carrying wall plaques
- Celebration of the different communities involved in the war effort

The project was unanimously supported by partners and a small steering group will be set up to help drive it forward and to develop a funding bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

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Appendix E: Christmas Market

Introduction

The first St Albans Christmas Market ran from 28 November to 21 December 2013. It was one of the key actions of the St Albans Visitor Economy Strategy.

The purpose of the market was to:

- raise the profile of St Albans City with visitors who may not normally visit;
- increase vitality and footfall across the city centre;
- attract significant numbers of high spending visitors;
- offer the opportunity over time to generate an income stream.

Local Services Scrutiny Committee (LSSC) set up a task and finish group under the Chairmanship of Cllr Mills in January 2014 to review the operation and learning from the first year of the Christmas Market. Their report and recommendations were considered by LSSC on 6 March 2014.

Background information

Advertising and promotion

The Council employed the services of local company Loudbird PR to assist with the PR campaign. The coverage generated for the Christmas Market through the promotional campaign achieved an audience reach of 42.6 million and an equivalent advertisement value of £261,000. Articles were secured in national, regional and local papers and magazines.

In addition to the work of Loudbird, the Christmas market was also promoted on the website, www.enjoystalbans.com. This website averages at 750 visitors a day. However during the last two weeks of November visits rose to an average of 2,000 visitors each day.

An extensive media and promotions campaign included advertisements at St Pancras, on Thameslink trains, bus shelters and buses across the district. The leaflet was also distributed across the district and there was a leaflet drop in the outer North London catchments. Further activity included AA road signs, banners around the district and in the city centre, and signs on roundabouts at periphery of the city.

Chalet occupancy and product range

Forty-two retail chalets were available to hire including some smaller chalets at reduced rates for local organisations. 87% of available chalet days were sold. To fill the voids, partners of the Council were offered the opportunity to take chalets during the market on a complimentary basis. Amongst others, this was taken up by the Alban Arena, Verulamium Spa, St Albans Cathedral and the museum service. In addition to the retail space there was a chalet for local charities' promotion, an information chalet and a Father Christmas grotto.

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Visitor numbers and stakeholder feedback

An estimated 45,000 people visited the market. In the first four days, 28th November to 1st December, the market attracted 10,000 visitors. Footfall was lower during the week and over the remaining weekends averaged 4,000 per day. This is in line with other 'first year' Christmas Markets. Established markets generate footfall during the week from group travel organisers who may be reluctant to visit a new market. The St Albans Christmas Market welcomed six coach parties through group travel organisers.

St Albans Cathedral was a key partner in the planning and operation of the market. They benefited from increased visitor numbers which in turn significantly supported both their shop and café.

Stakeholder feedback was sought during and after the market. Customer feedback was sought in a number of ways including from visitors to the market, stall holders, residents and staff. Feedback will be used to improve the market in future years.

Many City retailers reported increased footfall and trade and there was positive feedback from the majority of exhibitors, most saying they would return this year.

Scrutiny Task and Finish Group

The Christmas Market Task and Finish Group met on 10 February 2013. They also held a site visit on 1 March 2013, to consider where an ice rink and more chalets might be sited for the market in 2014.

The final report of the Task and Finish Group is attached. At LSSC on 6 March, members commended the work of officers in staging the first Christmas Market in 2013, but commented that the timescale for preparing for that event had been too short.

The following recommendations of the Task and Finish Group were endorsed by LSSC and referred to Cabinet:

- (i) The Christmas Market should continue in 2014 with an increased number of chalets.
- (ii) The opening hours should be 11.00am – 6.00pm Sunday to Wednesday and 11.00am to 9.00pm Thursday – Saturday.
- (iii) The decoration of the Market and chalets needs to be improved and the exterior of the chalets should be stained – possibly with different colour wood stain.
- (iv) The lighting needs to be improved.
- (v) There should be more entertainment and more live, amplified music, people need to feel that there is a real 'Christmas' atmosphere and enjoy themselves. Local schools could be involved in this.
- (vi) Weekday visits to Father Christmas could be promoted to playgroups, nurseries and infant schools.

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Appendix E: Christmas Market



- (vii) The food stalls should be mixed in with the other stalls and not grouped together.
- (viii) A communication/marketing strategy needs to be agreed and put into operation as soon as possible.
- (ix) The seven coach companies which arranged visits to the Market need to be contacted and links developed with them.
- (x) Good parking signage is needed.
- (xi) Officers should explore the potential for an ice-rink, rides in the park etc.

The Portfolio Holder has confirmed that he is happy to consider these recommendations and they will now be included in planning for the 2014 market. The Task and Finish Group have agreed to continue to operate as a critical friend to the Christmas Market.

Report of the Christmas Market Task and Finish Group

Group Membership	Councillors Gill Clarke, Fred Wartenberg, Roma Mills (Chair), Simon Grover and Sue Featherstone.
Officer Support	Lesli Good, Richard Shwe, Tom Dawson.
Dates of Meetings	23 rd August 2013 10 th February 2014

Group Discussion and Recommendations	
1	Meeting held on 23 rd August 2013
1.1	The Group considered the report attached as appendix A and members confirmed their support for a St Albans Christmas Market led by the District Council.
1.2	Members welcomed the partnership with the Cathedral and noted the decision to locate approximately 50/70 chalets in the Vintry Gardens, Waxhouse Gate and Sumpter Yard.
1.3	Members felt that the Christmas Market needed to have a clear link to the city centre to encourage visitors to St Albans to explore the shops, the Charter Market, the cafes, restaurants and public houses etc. and suggested that some chalets/supporting activities be located in the vicinity of the Clock Tower.
1.4	Members stressed the need for appropriate lighting, decoration and security.
1.5	Members asked for a pictorial example of the chalets which had been selected, this was not available as these are being made up. Members noted the potential for using the chalets at other events during the year.
1.6	Members expressed concern at the short timescale – in relation to both obtaining the necessary planning consents and to advertising the market, linking in with coach companies etc.
1.7	Members asked to be provided with a copy of the Marketing/ Communications Strategy.
1.8	Members recommended that approaches be made to coach companies to encourage them to include day trips to the St Albans Christmas Market in their programme. SF confirmed that an advertisement had already appeared in the relevant trade journal.
2	Meeting held on 10th February 2014
2.1	The Group considered the report attached as appendix B and the feedback attached at appendix C and members commended the work and commitment of the officers in delivering the Christmas Market in an extremely challenging timeframe. It was noted that there had been a lot of positive feedback about the market.

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Appendix E: Christmas Market

2.2	Members noted that 42 chalets were purchased and not the 50/70 originally proposed. This obviously impacted upon the income and members asked if a financial report was available – officers did not have figures at the meeting but subsequently advised as follows:	
	Capital expenditure	£66,400
	Revenue expenditure	£132,925
	Income (chalet hire + Father Christmas)	£78,000
	Revenue expenditure included the security and Market staff employed over the period.	
	Officers advised that the Christmas Market would be in a position to generate net income in 3-4 years time depending upon how fast the Council could move to the optimum 70-80 chalets.	
2.3	During discussion, the following issues were identified:	
	a	It would be useful for members to see the full list of traders who had hired a chalet together with a list of those who had indicated that they would wish to do so again in 2014.
	b	Members felt that some of the traders had not seemed suitable for a Christmas Market.
	c	Access to the market had not been well signposted and proved challenging – it had not been obvious where all the chalets were.
	d	Decoration of the site was poor.
	e	The atmosphere in the Vintry Gardens had seemed flat.
	f	Amplified music is important to create atmosphere.
	g	There needs to be better linkage between the Market and the city centre. The Clock Tower environs might provide the ‘glue’ to make this work better. George Street might be better involved.
	h	It would have been useful to have had a pictorial map of the site displayed, showing the different chalets/traders.
	i	Entertainment/rides in the park might be a useful attraction.
	j	The Charity chalet worked well.
	k	The opening hours needed to be changed with a later start and finish time.
2.4	Members agreed the following recommendations:	
	a	The Christmas Market should continue in 2014 with an increased number of chalets
	b	The opening hours should be 11.00am – 6.00pm Sunday to Wednesday and 11.00am to 9.00pm Thursday – Saturday.
	c	The Decoration of the Market and chalets needs to be improved and the exterior of the chalets should be stained – possibly with different colour wood stain.

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	d	The lighting needs to be improved.
	e	There should be more entertainment and more live, amplified music, people need to feel that there is a real 'Christmas' atmosphere and enjoy themselves. Local schools could be involved in this.
	f	Weekday visits to Father Christmas could be promoted to playgroups Nurseries and Infant Schools.
	g	The food stalls should be mixed in with the other stalls and not grouped together.
	h	A communication/marketing strategy needs to be agreed and put into operation as soon as possible.
	i	The seven coach companies which arranged visits to the Market need to be contacted and links developed with them.
	j	Good parking signage is needed.
	k	Officers should explore the potential for an ice-rink, rides in the park etc.
2.5		Members of the Group agreed to meet for a site visit on 1 March to consider the locations for more chalets and for an ice-rink.
2.6		Members agreed that the Group – which is due to meet under a short scrutiny of the Charter and other markets – should continue to act as a <i>Critical Friend</i> to the Christmas Market project.

St Albans City and District Housing Strategy

2014 -2017

The Housing Vision

Our vision is to provide a range of good quality homes to meet the needs of our current and future residents.

To do this we will work effectively with partners to improve the supply, choice and quality of homes across the district.

There are a number of issues facing residents and the Council:

- The impact of welfare reform.
- The needs of an ageing population and other vulnerable groups.
- The high costs of the private rented and home ownership market.
- Demand for affordable housing far outstrips supply, and
- The increase in the number of homeless households.

What will the Strategy do?

- The Housing Strategy is one of the Council's key strategic documents.
- The purpose of this strategy is to influence the future supply of housing and associated services in the district by making best use of the available resources to meet housing need. It has been developed in consultation with our partners and sets out our priorities for action. The priorities are based on evidence and research.
- The Housing Strategy complements and supports other key policies and plans. In particular the planning strategy emerging in the Local Plan in relation to the delivery of new homes and the effective use of available land.
- The following Action Plan sets out how the strategy will be delivered

PRIORITY 1

MAKING BEST USE OF EXISTING
STOCK IN ALL TENURES INCLUDING
IMPROVING ENERGY EFFICENCY IN
HOMES AND REDUCING FUEL
POVERTY

Aim	How	Outcome	Resources	Lead Officer
To make best use of affordable housing	Work with other registered providers to adopt an active approach to mutual exchanges	Increase in the number of mutual exchanges	Staff time Promotional budget (HRA)	Housing Options Co-ordinator (Special Projects)
To make best use of Council stock through downsizing	Explore options to offer a complete 'Home Mover package'	Increase in the number of family houses available	Staff time HRA budget	Housing Options Co-ordinator (Special Projects)
Maximising availability of housing stock across all tenures	Explore the scope for developing a private rented sector letting scheme	Discharge homelessness duty and improve housing options	Staff time General Fund	Private Sector Housing Officer
Bring empty homes back into use	Investigate a loan scheme to enable owners of empty homes to bring them back into use	Decrease in number of empty homes	General Fund New Homes Bonus	Empty Homes Officer

Aim	How	Outcome	Resources	Lead Officer
<p>Ensure affordable housing in the social and private sector achieve maximum energy efficiency and implement energy efficiency measures (linked to the Corporate Home Energy Conservation Act)</p>	<p>In Council stock maintain Decent Homes Standard- Council Housing Stock Condition Survey to be undertaken January –April 2014-results to be used to target energy inefficient homes</p> <p>In the private rented sector, work with partner agencies, landlords and tenants to advise and enforce, where necessary, to improve energy efficiency</p>	<p>Reduction in fuel poverty</p> <p>Reduction in district wide carbon dioxide emissions and domestic energy emissions</p> <p>Reduction in need to move from properties that are cold and damp</p> <p>Resource savings as a result of more energy efficient properties-less repairs, less need to visit tenants- and reduced energy bills</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	<p>Asset Management Team Leader</p> <p>Principal Policy and Development Officer</p>

Aim	How	Outcome	Resources	Lead Officer
Remodel existing stock to make best use according to housing needs of the district	Identify opportunities included in updated Asset Management Strategy to remodel existing stock based on the current condition and resources available	Develop profile of existing stock to best suit the needs of the district	Staff time Housing Investment Programme	Asset Management Team Leader Principal Policy and Development Officer
To continue to improve the condition of Council housing stock (linked to the Corporate Home Energy Conservation Act)	To identify properties included in the stock condition survey that require works to continue to maintain and exceed the decent homes standard	A high standard of Council housing stock	Staff time Housing Investment Programme	Asset Management Team Leader

PRIORITY 2
INCREASING THE
SUPPLY OF
AFFORDABLE HOMES

Aim	How	Outcome	Resources	Lead Officer
Make best use of housing land and assets to deliver new housing	Continue with the redevelopment of garage sites and sheltered housing Sopwell regeneration project	Increased housing supply	Staff time RTB receipts Registered Provider funding	Principal Policy and Development Officer
Improve partnership working with registered providers	Consider introducing a preferred partnership arrangement	Increase provision of affordable housing	Staff time Registered Providers	Principal Policy and Development Officer
Plan for an appropriate mix of houses to meet future housing needs	Local Plan Core Strategy Local Plan Sites and Boundaries	Appropriate mix of properties developed to meet community needs	General fund Staff time	Spatial Planning Manager

Aim	How	Outcome	Resources	Lead Officer
Work with Planning to ensure the delivery of affordable housing through Section 106 agreements where viable	<p>Local Plan Policy on minimum levels of Affordable Housing on sites across the district introduced</p> <p>Viability assessments of applications for housing sites across district carried out</p> <p>Affordable and intermediate housing delivered</p>	Increased access to affordable and intermediate housing to meet community needs	<p>General Fund</p> <p>Developers</p> <p>Registered Providers</p>	<p>Principal Policy and Development Officer</p> <p>Spatial Planning Officer</p>

PRIORITY 3

MEETING THE NEEDS

OF PEOPLE WHO

REQUIRE SUPPORT

Aim	How	Outcome	Resources	Lead Officer
Ensure the needs of vulnerable groups are considered in development of new build	Ensure planning policy reflects needs of vulnerable groups	Improved accessibility and adaptability of new homes developed	Staff time General Fund	Principal Policy and Development Officer Spatial Planning Officer
To make best use of existing stock ensuring the needs of vulnerable groups are met	Work with Hertfordshire County Council and Asset Management to identify opportunities to remodel existing stock to provide a range of housing to meet the needs of residents. These include flexi care, (by specialist registered providers), bungalows, and other supported housing schemes	Develop profile of existing stock to best suit the needs of the district.	Staff time Housing Investment Programme	Asset Management Team Leader Principal Policy and Development Officer

Aim	How	Outcome	Resources	Lead Officer
Coordinate and steer the delivery of appropriate advice and support to households impacted by the welfare reform agenda	Work with partners to develop services to help those affected by welfare reform	Local Support Framework developed	Staff time Partners' input General Fund Housing Revenue Account	Strategy and Enabling Manager
Assess housing needs of Gypsy and Travellers	Undertake specialist survey	Housing need identified and used to inform local plan policies	Staff time General fund	Spatial Planning Officer Principal Policy and Development Officer
Provision of advice and support for vulnerable groups	Work with partners including CAB, Hertfordshire County Council and Registered Providers	Vulnerable groups have access to appropriate advice and support	Staff time Partners' input General Fund	Strategy and Enabling Manager Tenancy Services and Performance Manager

Monitoring the strategy

Group/ Individual	Frequency	Monitoring purpose
Local Services Scrutiny Committee	Annually	To monitor the delivery of the Strategy
Portfolio Holder and Head of Housing	Quarterly	Review progress
Strategy and Enabling Manager and Strategic Housing Team Managers	Quarterly	Review progress and resolve any barriers stopping delivery, update aims
Team	Quarterly	Meetings with the Strategic Housing team to review progress and resolve any issues which may arise. Can escalate upwards if appropriate- suggest revised and aims updated
Individuals	Annual appraisals and 1-2-1's	Targets to be set in appraisals and monitored

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Appendix F: Housing Strategy



The Housing Strategy has now expired and a new three year strategy has been prepared.

A stakeholder event was held in September 2013 to confirm the priorities.

Following this, three priorities for the strategy were identified:

- Making best use of existing stock in all tenures, including improving energy efficiency in homes and reducing fuel poverty;
- Increasing the supply of affordable homes; and
- Meeting the needs of people who require support.

For consultation purposes, the draft Strategy was placed on the website, emailed to attendees of the Stakeholder event for comment and presented to the Tenants Forum on 29th January 2014. Members of the Youth Council have also been consulted and the strategy was taken to a meeting of the Older People's Forum in Redbourn in December 2013.

The draft Strategy was referred to Local Services Scrutiny Committee in February 2014 for comment. The Local Services Scrutiny Committee commented on the draft Strategy and resolved the following:

(i) a further two strategic priorities being added to the existing priorities within the Strategy, as follows:

(a) Improving the condition of current Council housing stock generally; and

(b) Implementing energy efficiency measures and making resource savings (these have been done by amending the first priority)

(ii) a statement on the Council's definition of 'viability' in relation to housing schemes be included in the Strategic Local Plan to guide developers and that it be referred to within the Housing Strategy (the strategy now includes a reference to the National Planning Policy Framework with an explanation in the glossary)

(iii) statistics on the proportion of affordable housing that is actually built within new developments, compared to the numbers that were agreed when planning permissions were granted (information has been added to the strategy)

(iv) clearer definitions of the types of housing and care support to be available to people as they become more vulnerable through age (the action plan has been clarified to include the range of housing required)

The attached slides were used to present the Housing Strategy to the Chief Executive's Board. Changes made as a result of the scrutiny resolutions are highlighted in red.

The draft Housing Strategy is available as a background document to this agenda item. Subject to any comments at Cabinet the final version of the Housing Strategy will be approved by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and published on the Council's website.