

Council Performance & Budget Summary

October 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

A	Budget – 0.8% overspend
A	Performance Indicators

Appendices

- A. Planning Update
- B. Sports, Leisure and Heritage Update
- C. Business Friendly Procurement and Services Action Plan Update
- D. Staff Awards Update
- E. City Centre Opportunity Site Update

Recommendations

- 1.1 That Cabinet notes the Council Performance and Budget Summary (October 2014) and its appendices.

Commentary

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

	Measure	Comments
A	Forecast budget variance at the year end (General fund for year in question)	An overspend of £150k is forecast. As reported last month, the main reasons are due to employing extra staff to deal with planning applications; a reduction in recycling income as prices for materials have fallen; and an over optimistic markets' income budget.
R	Average time to re-let dwellings (excluding sheltered and temporary accommodation changes) (days)	There are several reasons for the increase in time to re-let dwellings this month. There were delays in receiving Energy Performance Certificates, which are provided by an external consultancy, due to staff shortages. These took up to 23 days compared to the expected turnaround of 5 working days. The contractor now has a backup system in place and staffing levels are expected to return to normal for November. Also from the end of September to early October there was only one member of staff covering three posts in housing options letting. This was due to a vacancy, annual leave and unexpected sickness absences. Consequently properties which could have been let in early October were delayed by 7 - 10 days. The team has also had some difficulties moving tenants into particular properties due to late refusals.

	Measure	Comments
R	Number of households in temporary accommodation & Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks)	<p>The historically high use of temporary accommodation continues. In October the housing options team dealt with 206 enquiries (1,144 since April 2014). There were 15 formal homeless applications (109 since April 2014) and a further 9 homeless acceptances (85 since April 2014).</p> <p>The first residents will begin moving into Lea Springs on 1 December 2014, at a rate of two a week, freeing up existing council accommodation.</p> <p>We are continuing with our street purchase scheme and have money in the budget to buy one more property before the end of December.</p> <p>We are collecting expressions of interest for potential residents of Parkside View in Marshalswick (formerly Caroline Sharpe House) which is due to complete in March 2015. This will free up further existing council accommodation.</p>
R	Overall percentage of planning decisions within time	<p>For the calendar year so far (1 January to 31 October), there were 160 more planning applications received (5.55% more), and 177 more decisions made (8.78% more), than last year. During October the team reduced the number of out of time applications by 40 (24.7% down from the total at the end of September). This focus on older applications had an impact on the percentage of applications determined on time.</p> <p>Progress has been made in recruiting to fill job vacancies. Additional posts agreed by Cabinet in Spring 2014 have been filled and two further appointments were made and started in September. In October 2014, Cabinet agreed to increase the permanent resource in planning and building control. This included three full time equivalent development management posts and we are currently interviewing for these.</p>
A	Parking Penalty Charge Notices issued	<p>The increase in the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued is due to a higher number of drivers breaking parking restrictions. The Council has a statutory duty to issue parking tickets to vehicles parked illegally.</p>
R	Graffiti and fly-tipping calls	<p>October shows an increase of 1 incident compared to the previous month with 4 incidents of graffiti and 52 fly tips cleared. The overall number remains broadly level and no noticeable patterns have been observed in the type or location of fly tips or graffiti. The Council is continuing to investigate fly-tips for evidence to support prosecutions.</p>
R	Percentage of households with missed waste collections	<p>The total percentage of missed collections reported for October is higher than in previous months. All missed collections are now included in the total figure. Previously where a reported missed collection had been resolved by the end of the day it was not counted in the total figure.</p> <p>Also, the introduction of the additional cardboard collection service has resulted in an increase in the overall number of collections. The number of missed collections has increased proportionally, but this is expected to decrease as the new rounds bed in.</p> <p>We are undertaking a review of the missed collection performance compared to other Hertfordshire authorities. This work is part of a comprehensive review of missed collections to address issues raised at recent scrutiny committees. Progress is being monitored by the Recycling Task & Finish Group.</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 an improved performance and Red a worse performance.

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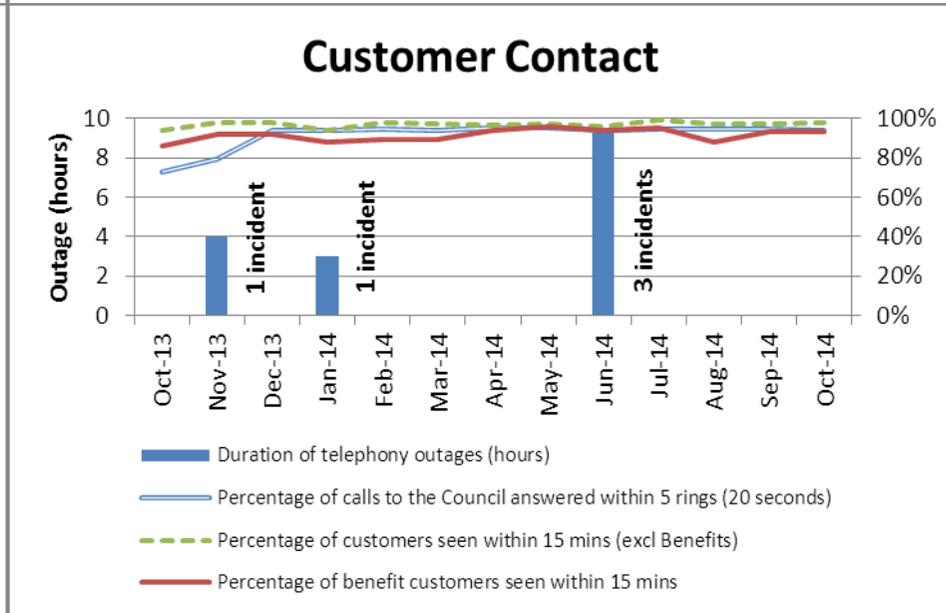
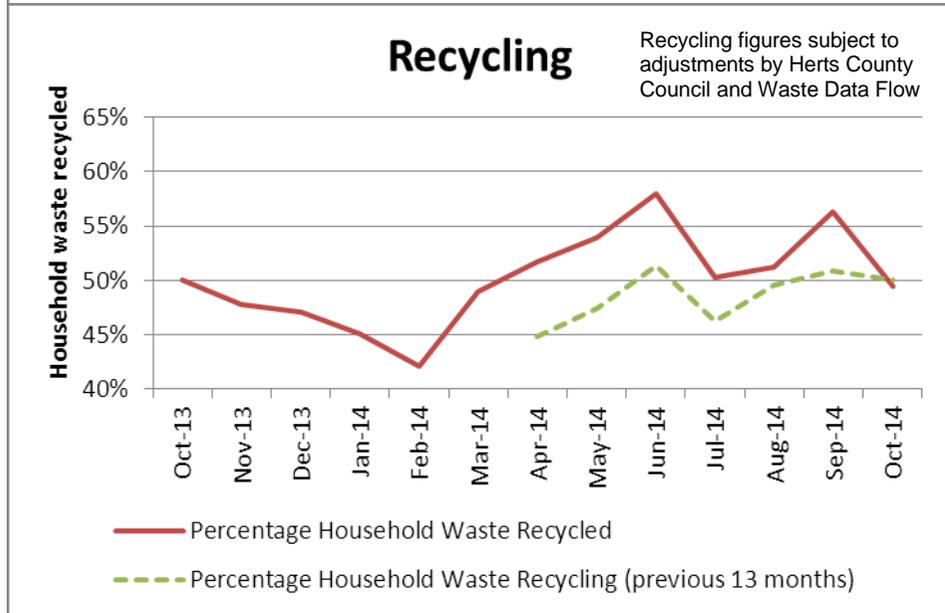
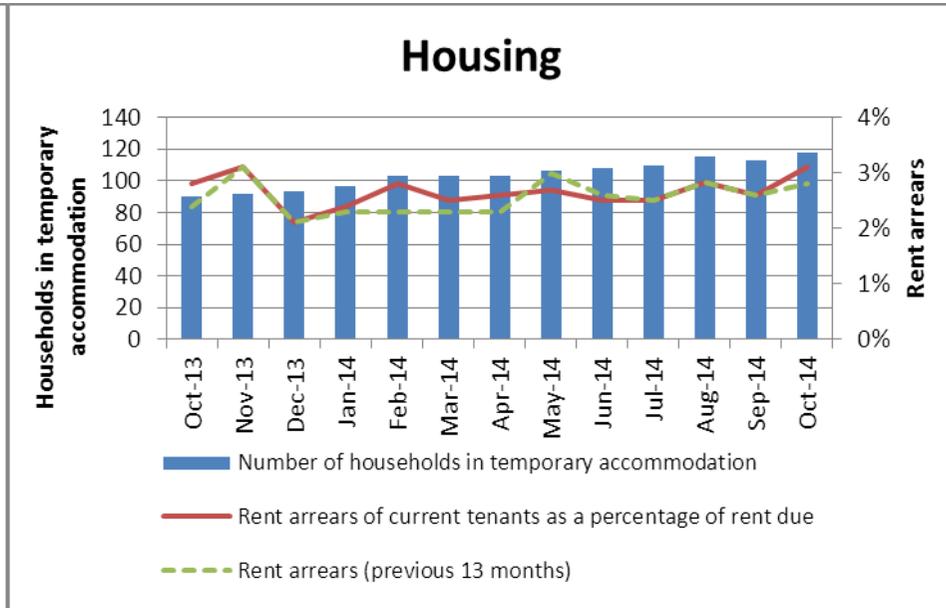
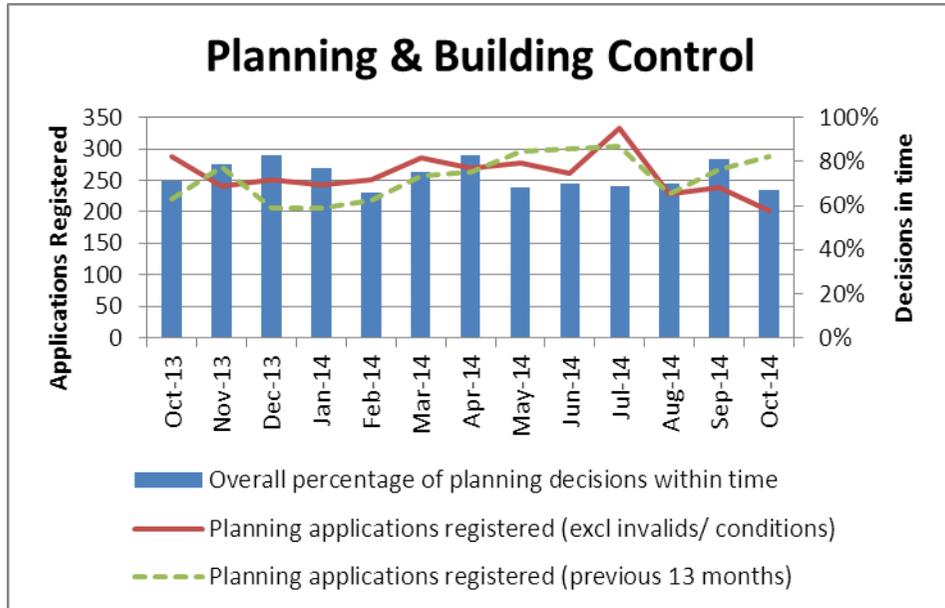
October 2014



	Bigger or Smaller is Better	Oct-13	Nov-13	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Apr-14	May-14	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14	Oct-14	TARGET	
Finance	Forecast budget variance at the year end (General fund for year in question)	Smaller	0.2%	-0.1%	-0.9%	-0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-0.2%	-0.1%	0.0%	0.8%	0.7%	0.8%	0.0%
Housing	Average time to re-let dwellings (excluding sheltered and temporary accommodation changes) (days)	Smaller	18	17	17	24	20	17	21	20	19	17	22	17	29.5	21
	Percentage of rent loss due to voids	Smaller	1.57%	1.56%	1.55%	1.56%	1.55%	1.28%	1.06%	1.05%	1.03%	1.05%	1.05%	1.08%	1.09%	Trend
	Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due (targets updated for 2014-15)	Smaller	2.8%	3.1%	2.1%	2.4%	2.8%	2.5%	2.6%	2.7%	2.5%	2.5%	2.8%	2.6%	3.1%	3.1%^
	Number of households in temporary accommodation	Smaller	90	92	93	97	103	103	103	106	108	110	115	113	118	Trend
	Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks)	Smaller	15	16.0	19	20	19	19	22	23	19	25	25	25	23.9	Trend
	Percentage of repairs completed on time	Bigger	98%	98%	99%	99%	99%	99%	96%	100%	100%	100%	99%	98%	100%	98%
	Housing repairs satisfaction	Bigger	99%	99%	97%	98%	99%	99%	100%	99%	100%	99%	99%	99%	100%	90%
	Total number of households in receipt of Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax support	Smaller	New indicator	7,550	7,490	7,517	7,536	7,509	7,490	7,445						
	Days to process Housing Benefit new claims	Smaller	54.3	39.1	33.1	27.6	26.2	33	25.9	29.7	18.3	23.5	19.3	21.6	19.4	24
	Days to process Housing Benefit change in circumstances	Smaller	15.8	14.7	9.6	6.3	2.2	7.8	6.1	6.8	6.5	6.3	6.7	7.2	6.2	11
	Percentage of benefit customers seen within 15 minutes	Bigger	86%	92%	92%	88%	89%	89%	94%	96%	94%	95%	88%	93%	93%	70%
Planning & Building Control	All planning applications received		298	260	284	272	277	326	345	311	313	347	267	270	308	
	Planning applications registered (excl invalids/conditions)		288	240	251	243	252	286	269	278	262	333	229	238	201	
	Overall percentage of planning decisions within time	Bigger	71%	79%	83%	77%	66%	75%	83%	68%	70%	69%	70%	81%	67%	75%
Regulatory	Parking Penalty Charge Notices issued	Smaller	1,886	1,784	1,454	1,425	1,323	1,448	1,236	1,387	1,206	1,298	1,291	1,520	1,671	Trend
	Percentage of Parking Penalty Charge Notices paid	Bigger	82%	87%	92%	88%	91%	92%	92%	89%	92%	84%	78%	82%	84%	70%
Community Services	Graffiti and fly-tipping calls	Smaller	33	23	27	36	27	40	54	51	45	51	52	55	56	Trend
	Percentage of households with missed waste collections	Smaller	0.19%	0.17%	0.15%	0.12%	0.09%	0.19%	0.10%	0.13%	0.15%	0.17%	0.15%	0.13%	0.41%	Trend
	Visits to Tourist Information Centre and www.enjoystalbens.com	Bigger	30,762	48,578	33,929	20,319	20,298	25,720	28,231	33,534	34,084	35,051	35,418	35,050	39,752	Year-on-year Trend
	Museums visits	Bigger	17,007	16,453	11,133	7,878	13,099	15,194	11,457	12,504	13,528	13,225	13,277	15,599	18,312	Year-on-year Trend
Customer Services	Percentage of calls to the Council answered within 5 rings (20 seconds)	Bigger	72.5%	79.5%	93.9%	93.6%	94.7%	94.0%	94.9%	94.9%	94.1%	94.3%	94.3%	94.4%	94.0%	80%
	Percentage of customers seen within 15 minutes (excl Benefits)	Bigger	94%	98%	98%	94%	98%	97%	97%	97%	96%	99%	97%	97%	98%	80%
External	Claimant count (% proportion of population)	Smaller	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%	Trend
	New jobs	Bigger	1,440	1,298	970	1,439	1,364	1,181	991	1,196	1,128	1,421	1,312	1,541	1,541	Trend
	All crime (in month)	Smaller	483	466	404	404	495	529	483	520	554	516	456	519	496	Trend
	Anti-social behaviour incidents (in month)	Smaller	212	189	140	146	137	212	226	221	251	273	220	228	237	Trend

^Seasonal Target
*Provisional figure

Performance Summary October 2014



Strategic Local Plan (SLP)

The draft SLP consultation began on Friday 10 October and will continue for a period of six weeks. Public exhibitions are being held during the consultation period at various locations in the District. Attendance at the public exhibitions has been high (as expected) and the venue arrangements with partners in the Parishes have worked very well. Large numbers of consultation responses have already been received online. Processing of responses, and making them available to view by all online, is up to date.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

A report was brought before the Planning Policy Committee (PPC) on 19 June to inform the Committee of the responses received to the informal consultation on the CIL Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (PDCS). The PPC agreed that the responses are to be taken into account in developing the PDCS for formal consultation at a later date. A report will be brought before the PPC at its December meeting to agree a way forward with CIL.

Staffing

Cabinet discussed the issue of Planning and Building Control staffing at its meetings on February, March, June, July 2014 and October 2014.

On 23 October, Cabinet agreed to increase the Council's establishment (overall number of staff employed) to include four new full time equivalent posts in the Planning Service. This comprises three posts in Development Management (Team Leader, Deputy Team Leader and Lead Development Planner), and one Landscape/Arboricultural Assistant in the Spatial Planning team.

Interviews are taking place in November to recruit to the following posts: Team Leader, Deputy Team Leader, Lead Development Management Planner, Development Management Planner and Major Projects Officer.

The following posts are being advertised: Enforcement Team Leader, Enforcement Officers, Apprentices and Landscape & Arboricultural Assistant.

It is likely that the contracting out of work on planning applications for an interim period will continue until permanent posts are filled and the workload of the department is stable.

Dangerous Structures

The Building Control department is instructing contractors to deal with properties at 37 Upper Culver Road (DS/2014/0660) and 64 Seymour Road (DS/2014/0157). Both properties have dangerous roof coverings and necessary repairs will be undertaken to maintain the health and safety of the public. The works will be carried out under the provisions of the Building Act as a necessity or with the support of a Magistrates Court Order.

Works have commenced at 37 Upper Culver Road following damage sustained during a house fire in May. The Building Control department has taken necessary steps to make the roof carcass safe and a contractor has removed the burnt timbers from site. A new roof and covering will be constructed during November making the property secure prior to the winter weather setting in.

Cabinet Report - Ash Dieback Disease in the City and District of St. Albans

Ash dieback is a new disease caused by a fungus and previously unknown in Europe. The disease causes leaf loss and crown dieback in affected trees, and it can lead to tree death.

The fungus is extremely aggressive and symptoms become obvious in younger trees within months rather than years. Trees cannot recover from infection, but larger trees can survive infection for a considerable time and some may have genetic resistance and not die.

Ash Dieback is a disease management issue. In line with national guidance, the Trees and Woodlands team are preparing a detailed strategy to manage the decline, while monitoring resistance and adapting to change. This will ensure that the District's trees and woodlands are adequately protected, maintained and supported by new planting. The objective is to sustain the extent, quality, and biological diversity of our trees and woodlands. They contribute greatly to the character and appearance of our historical City and District.

Oaklands - Smallford planning application (5/2013/2589)

The application remains under consideration. We currently expect that it will be reported to Planning Referrals Committee on 1 December 2014.

Rail Freight

On 14 July 2014, the Secretary of State issued his decision allowing the appeal. The Council has challenged the decision in the High Court. The High Court has now confirmed that the will be heard on 3 and 4 February 2015.

Ariston Site

Discussions with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) continue in relation to highways aspects of the application. We have raised the lengthy delays with senior officers at HCC. The County Council has advised that they plan to submit a planning application before Christmas.

Cunningham Avenue Article 4 Direction

On 3 November an Article 4 Direction at Cunningham Conservation Area was confirmed, subject to call-in. The aim of the Article 4 Direction is to control permitted development rights in order to protect the special character of the conservation area, which was designated on 28 January this year. Letters to residents were delivered on 7 November and the necessary press adverts are due to be published later in November.

Potters Crouch Conservation Area Character Statement

A draft review of the Conservation Area Character Statement for Potters Crouch is currently under consultation with residents, the local Parish Council and other stakeholders. The consultation period ends on 28 November. The statement sets out the reasons for conservation area designation, describes the character that needs to be preserved and enhanced and, where appropriate, suggests improvements. The draft document is available at:

<http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/planning/conservation/conservation-areas.aspx>

New Museum and Gallery (NMG) Project

The Governance structure for the project was reviewed and updated in July. This led to the appointment of a Programme Manager, Tom Hallam, for three days per week. The project consists of a number of individual project streams each led by a nominated project lead and project manager. The project streams report progress on a monthly basis to the NMG Programme Board.

- **Building Design Development**

The procurement of professional services related to the project has progressed well with the following appointments:

- Design Team Lead Architects - John McAslan
- Interpretation and Exhibition Designers - Urban Salon
- Cost Consultants - Interviews held on Monday 27 October and Wednesday 29 October. Confirmation of the appointment awaiting the approval of the Heritage Lottery Fund
- Archaeologists - KDK Archaeology

- **Fundraising**

Bids have been submitted to Clore Duffield and Paul Hamlyn Foundation. The Paul Hamlyn bid is for a volunteer co-ordinator who would assist the St Albans Museums' team in delivery of activity in the development phase.

A new volunteer has been recruited by the Trust to assist with PR/marketing and bid writing, and is researching smaller Trusts and Livery Companies.

- **Sale of the Museum of St Albans building:**

Valuers, Rumball Sedgwick, have been appointed.

A design charette took place between the 24 and 27 October. It was well attended and the workshop part of the process produced four design ideas. The most popular of these, selected by the community at the feedback session on 27 October, will be considered in more detail by the Council's Architect team. The selected idea will be worked up into a planning application.

Concern was expressed at the charette regarding the Council's ability to ensure the proposed design is actually built. One way to achieve this would be for the Council to purchase the site and build the scheme itself. Such a route would also enable any developer profit element to be reinvested into the New Museum and Galleries Programme. Council officers are investigating this option and will report back to Cabinet in due course.

Archaeological evaluation in the grounds of the Hatfield Road site has commenced.

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Appendix B: Sports, Leisure and Heritage Update



Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre

The contract with Sport and Leisure Management (SLM) is performing well compared to their business plan and tender submission. The business is performing ahead of plan on all income lines with the exception of the Spa and Youth Gym. The main high performing area compared to their business plan is Fitness & Health, with the total membership being over 5,000 members.

Other income lines ahead of plan are Swimming (+22%), Sports Hall (+116%), Casual Income (+26%), Crèche (+216%), and Café Bistro (+24%).

SLM is confident that the spa is moving in the right direction with income figures improving month on month. SLM has recently launched a new family membership which has seen an increase in youth gym usage. Nonetheless the company is looking at alternative business opportunities to improve the income generation of the facility.

Income overall is performing at 17% above the business plan projections.

SLM has reported that expenditure is currently higher than the business plan projections, primarily linked to leisure centre usage being ahead of plan.

The main areas of overspend are staff costs (+28%) and cleaning costs. SLM report that overall their expenditure is 18% above their business plan projections.

Willmott Dixon Construction (WDC) was given until 14 November to complete all outstanding defects. An oral update can be provided at the meeting. With the exception of the roof, any work required to rectify outstanding defects after this date, will be charged against contract retention money. This does not include works awaiting the delivery of goods, for which orders have been placed.

Roof works involve the need to fix a number of leaks and will continue to be monitored until the roof is deemed to be water tight.

Batchwood Sports Centre

Batchwood Sports Centre opened to the public on time and to budget on 26 May with the Mayor hosting the opening day, organised by the leisure centre operator 1Life.

The official launch event took place on 8 July at which tennis celebrity guest Judy Murray presided. The event was attended by over 500 members of the local community with many trying the range of free activities including squash, tennis, bowls and group exercises.

Since the Centre re-opened on 26 May 2014 1Life has:-

- Welcomed over 22,000 visitors through the doors
- Signed up 1,500 1Life Card holders
- Collected new data for over 2,100 visitors (over 90% with an email and mobile number)
- Signed up 45 people to tennis memberships and had over 2,500 pay and play court bookings
- Signed up over 400 new fitness members and had over 250 pay and play

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Appendix B: Sports, Leisure and Heritage Update



gym visits

- Booked over 300 onto the tennis programme for September 14
- Had over 120 attendees on the 'Great British Tennis Weekend'
- Had 45 young people attend 1Life Activity Camps (provided in partnership with Fit For Sport)
- Had 76 young people attend Summer Tennis Crash Courses

The building is currently in its twelve month defects liability period where Willmott Dixon Construction is responsible for rectifying any defects/latent defects. When all defects are completed by the contractor to the Council's satisfaction, the contractor's retention money will be paid.

The issue related to the retention of spoil on site has been resolved with Willmott Dixon resulting in the removal of 350m³ of spoil from site.

Members of the Batchwood Bowls and Golf Clubs attended a Batchwood Forum meeting on Thursday 16 October 2014. They were generally pleased with the way the site was being managed and improved.

Snagging issues related to the Bowls Club are being progressed and a number of works have recently been completed.

Cotlandswick Leisure Centre

Willmott Dixon Construction commenced on site on 11 August and has made good progress having: -

- established the site with welfare, hoardings and Heras fencing around the perimeter
- progressed the ground works with the stripping of the topsoil to the majority of the site
- completed the car park works
- commenced the drainage works
- completed work on the foundations
- completed the steel work structure

They are currently on programme to complete the centre in summer 2015.

On commencement of the on-site works, a number of public consultation events were held. These primarily related to the over flow car park area and the concerns of local residents. As a result of these meetings, various works were undertaken. This included the removal of scrubland by a specialist ecology company to ensure the works had the least impact possible on local wildlife. In addition temporary fencing has been provided on the boundary of the overflow car park pending the completion of the landscaping of the area. The landscaping plan for the site has also been amended to take account of the comments and concerns raised during the consultation. Amendments have been agreed by the Planning Department as part of the discharge of the conditions related to the landscaping of the site.

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix B: Sports, Leisure and Heritage Update



Discussions have commenced with 1Life related to transfer of the service from London Colney Recreation Centre to Cotlandswick. As part of those discussions 1Life has been invited to the Project Meetings with Willmott Dixon. They are also a signatory to the agreement and signing off of the Room Data Sheets for Cotlandswick.

Notice has been given to Hertfordshire County Council related to the Council's wish to vacate the London Colney Recreation Centre.

Clarence Park Lodge

Works have started on the refurbishment of Clarence Park Lodge, which was the former Park Keeper's residence. We are redecorating (inside and out), re-carpeting, replacing the kitchen, bathroom and boiler and overhauling the windows. The works should be completed in late November and we will then be letting the property on an assured short-hold tenancy. Income from the letting will be paid to the City Neighbourhoods' Committee, which is responsible for Clarence Park.

Verulamium Park Signage

In 2011/12, St Albans City and District Council produced a 5-year Management Plan for Verulamium Park. This plan, developed in consultation with key stakeholders and the general public, identified a need for improved entrance, orientation and interpretation signage throughout the site.

As well as meeting the targets set out in the Management Plan, this project aims to make the cultural and natural heritage of Verulamium Park more accessible to the many thousands of annual visitors to the Park. Through this project, we will seek to ensure that all visitors to Verulamium Park will be able to: (a) discover all of the features of interest and facilities that the Park has to offer; (b) easily navigate the 66.9ha site and beyond; (c) feel welcome and safe within the Park; and (d) be encouraged to learn about the Park's heritage and enthused to discover more.

The overall project budget £71,800 has been funded by St Albans City & District Council (£53.8k), Hertfordshire County Council (£10k) and English Heritage (£8k).

We have obtained scheduled monument consent from English Heritage in respect of both phases of the project. Planning permission was also required for phase one, but will not be needed for phase two.

Phase one of the project is complete. This addressed the need for welcoming and orientation signage to ensure that visitors can locate features of interest. Phase two will provide interpretation of the Park's heritage, wildlife and other significant features.

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Appendix C: Business Friendly Procurement and Services

Action Plan Update



The Council has developed a plan to make it easier for businesses to compete for Council business and to use our services. This was the result of two corporate priority projects for 2013/14. These were:

- Develop a more business friendly Council; and
- Explore ways to give more opportunities for local business in Council procurement.

The plan was originally shaped by feedback from a survey to Chamber of Commerce members. This helped to prioritise which actions were most important to business and identify further ideas to explore. The intention is to go back and survey Chamber members when the plan has been completed. This will help to assess how effective it has been in addressing these original concerns/suggestions.

Actions are spread across various departments in the Council including Planning, Regulatory Services and Building Control with the majority falling under the remit of the Procurement Team.

Development of the action plan was originally restricted due to the Procurement Manager role being vacant. This role was filled in June 2014, enabling the project to move forward. Following this appointment, the action plan has been reviewed to assess what actions have already been completed and which actions should be prioritised over the next 6 months.

This review has identified that 7 of the original 44 actions have been completed.

Completed actions:

- Making our procurement webpages simpler and easier to use
- Publishing a list of forthcoming contracts on our website
- Providing written or face-to-face feedback to unsuccessful bidders
- Enforcing standard payment terms, but with a flexible approach e.g. prompt payments to small suppliers, offering prompt payment discounts
- Taking a flexible approach on financial checking e.g. not automatically excluding small businesses on the basis of a credit reference, allowing bidders without a long financial track record to use alternative evidence
- Increasing transparency on our spending. This includes publishing on our website: all Council expenditure over £500; purchase orders over £5,000, all procurement card expenditure; and a register of major contracts over £5,000.
- Annual external quality check of service to make sure it is meeting the needs of customers

Of the remaining actions, 30 are due to be completed before the end of March 2015. The majority of these will be delivered as part of a comprehensive refresh of the Procurement Strategy and guidance notes. For example:

- Encouraging bidders for major contracts to sub-contract packages to local firms
- Reviewing insurance requirements in contracts and reducing them where possible
- Researching the market extensively before tendering contracts to small and medium sized businesses

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Appendix C: Business Friendly Procurement and Services Action Plan Update



Of the actions not falling under the Procurement Team, the following areas will be delivered by March 2015:

- Developing a code of practice on A Boards and banners to better balance the needs of business and a tidy environment
- Extending the range of services which can be paid for online e.g. to planning, licensing (including taxi drivers), permits
- Introducing e-service so that businesses can view their business rates, opt for paperless billing payment and report changes online
- Introducing one point of contact for building control and development management (progress has already been made with this action)

Following the action plan review a number of the remaining actions have been reassessed as “business as usual”. These include:

- Working in partnership to share procurement expertise and giving firms more public sector opportunities
- Listening to suggestions made by suppliers and potential suppliers about what would encourage them to bid for a contract or put them off bidding
- Making sure tenders do not have a big business bias or ask for inappropriately specific experience

If you require further details regarding the Business Friendly Action Plan, please contact Charles Baker, charles.baker@stalbans.gov.uk, 01727 819275.

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix D: Staff Awards Update



The annual Staff Awards ceremony was held on Friday 7 November. These recognise the achievements of Council officers in improving customer service, working together effectively for the good of the community, leading their teams and supporting colleagues. This year we had a record number of nominations.

The awards were presented by Cllr Julian Daly, Leader of the Council and James Blake, Chief Executive, at an event in the Council Chamber. The award winners were:

Customer Service Improvement Award

Winner: Ann Collings, Cemeteries Manager

This award is presented to a team or an individual that has really improved the service for internal or external customers by using new and/or creative ways to improve service delivery, efficiency, effectiveness, financial savings or good public relations.

Ann won the award for her determination in finding a way to meet a request from the Muslim Community for burials at weekends. She came up with the creative idea of approaching representatives from the “Gardens of Peace”, a dedicated Muslim cemetery in Ilford. They agreed to provide a weekend burial service in our cemeteries paid for directly by the Muslim Community.

Ann has also set up a new Cemeteries Liaison Group where representatives of all faiths, and cemetery services meet to discuss service improvements for customers.

Working Together Award

Winner: the Community Protection Team (Carol Almond, Caroline Davies, Ian Shields, Narinder Brar, Neil Kieran)

This award is given to a team whose members have overcome a particular issue that could only be resolved by working together (including with our partners) to improve the delivery of their service.

The Community Protection Team won the award for pulling together to exceed their already very high levels of service whilst coping with staff changes.

They dealt with a very demanding area with professionalism and good humour.

The team is committed to providing the best service possible, dealing with everyone with fairness and integrity to endure the best outcomes for all parties.

They exhibit excellent partnership working both internally and with agencies such as the Police, Housing Associations and Videcom CCTV.

Leader of the Year Award

Winner: Winner Helen Bristow, Accountancy Team Leader (Housing)

This award recognises an individual whose leadership stands out as demonstrating: trust, honesty, respect for others, cooperation, transparency and a commitment to improvement.

Appendix D: Staff Awards Update

Helen won the award for going the extra mile in leading her team, supporting her colleagues and taking on additional responsibilities whilst studying for and passing her accountancy exams.

She made it possible for the Final Accounts team to perform excellently, which was recognised by Councillors and external auditors.

She has developed talent in her team by looking after new starters and interns.

Colleague of the Year Award

Winner: Judith Adamson, Regulatory Solicitor

This award is given to an individual whose commitment to, and support of, his or her colleagues across the Council is outstanding.

Judith won the award because as well as ably performing her duties as the Regulatory Solicitor she leads the Information Management Group, responsible for Freedom of Information requests, which have increased significantly recently.

Judith is always helpful and supportive to colleagues and customers e.g. by clarifying questions but also directing them to the right sources of information.

PART 1 Appendix E: Civic Centre Opportunity Site (CCOS)

1. At its meeting on 23 October, Cabinet resolved to pursue next steps in relation to the CCOS project. This project relates to the potential redevelopment of a key site in the City centre.
2. The steps relating to the purchase of property within the CCOS boundaries are not being taken forward.
3. The remainder of the tasks relate to the wider project and these are progressing on target. These include discussions with partners such as the Police and Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust, with regard to the potential of a Joint Venture (JV). We are also seeking advice from other local authorities, such as Watford Borough Council as to their recent experiences of JVs.