

Council Performance & Budget Summary

April 2016

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

Performance measures 2016/17

As part of business planning for 2016/17 we have reviewed our performance measures to make sure that we continue to focus on the most important areas. Where indicators have been revised, this is explained in the table below. Where necessary, historical data has been re-presented to reflect the new targets.

| Service | Measure | Change | Target |
|--------------------|---|---------|---------------------|
| Housing | Days to process Housing Benefit new claims – target updated to the national average | Revised | 23 (smaller better) |
| | Days to process Housing Benefit change in circumstances – target updated to the national average | Revised | 7 (smaller better) |
| Community Services | Visits to Visitor Information Centre and www.enjoystalbans.com – name changed from Tourist Information Centre | Revised | Year-on-year trend |

Commentary

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

| | Measure | Comments |
|----------|---|--|
| R | Percentage of rent loss due to voids | The projected rent loss due to voids (empty properties) is 1.5% of the annual rent due. This rise reflects the increase in the void turnaround time over the last month. At present there are 62 properties being kept empty across 3 sheltered schemes prior to redevelopment. There are a further 3 properties which are currently being kept vacant pending sale. Excluding these properties, the rent loss due to voids is 0.5%. |
| A | Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due | <p>Rent arrears have decreased from £746,825 in March to £735,437 in April. Despite this, rent arrears as a percentage of total debit remains at 2.8%.</p> <p>The overall rent due has decreased due to a statutory 1% rent decrease for social housing. This results in rent arrears making up a larger percentage of the rent due. Another factor pushing up this figure has been the sale of 27 properties under the Right to Buy scheme. Most of the tenants buying have no rent arrears. This further reduces the 'rent due', and increases the number of tenants with arrears as a proportion of the overall number of tenants.</p> <p>A breakdown of the figures reveals the following:</p> |

| | Measure | Comments |
|---|---|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,115 tenants owe sums from £0.01 - £500 totalling £192,083. • 365 tenants owe sums from £500.01 - £1,500 totalling £304,644. • 103 tenants owe more than £1,500 totalling £238,709. <p>Staffing pressure on the team should ease towards the end of May as new staff are trained to provide cover. The Income Team Leader should be in post by late July.</p> |
| A | Number of households in temporary accommodation and average time in temporary accommodation | <p>In April 2016 we received 161 general housing advice enquiries and 25 homelessness approaches.</p> <p>The Council continues to use its own general needs stock to accommodate homeless households due to the demands on the service.</p> <p>35 new rented properties will be made available for letting (18 in Bricket Wood, 15 in Harpenden and 2 in London Colney) in the next 3 months. This should ease some of the pressures experienced by households in temporary accommodation.</p> |
| A | Percentage of repairs completed on time | <p>Though performance has significantly improved this month it is still below target. This is mainly due to a shortage of contractor staff who manually log the completion date of repairs on our Orchard management system. They continue to have major issues with staffing as detailed in the commentary last month.</p> <p>The contractor has assured the Head of Housing that these continuing performance issues will be rectified. A new Contract Manager has been brought in and there have been staff changes in order to manage the performance of sub-contractors more efficiently. They have also brought in personnel from their head office to assist in the short term with contract administration. Further recruitment is underway.</p> |
| R | Days to process Housing Benefit new claims | <p>New claim performance continues to be affected by the vacancy in the Benefit team. The recruitment process started in January and two offers of employment have been rejected. A candidate has now accepted and we expect this role to be filled in June. Another member of staff was absent for 2 weeks due to an on-going medical issue. In the meantime, the work of these posts was shared across the team.</p> |
| R | Percentage of Council's planning decisions supported at appeal (cumulative 12 month) | <p>In April, nineteen appeal decisions were received. Of these, eleven were allowed and eight dismissed. This equates to 42% of Council decisions supported for the month, and 58% supported over the last 12 months.</p> <p>Appeals dismissed included residential extensions, new dwellings and change of use from a dwelling to a medical centre.</p> <p>Most of the appeals allowed were for residential extensions. This is further evidence of the Planning Inspectorate taking a more flexible approach towards extensions in dwellings.</p> <p>The team is briefed regularly on such decisions to help inform future decision making. The trend aligns with the</p> |

| | Measure | Comments |
|---|---|--|
| | | Government's approach for simplifying minor planning matters. |
| R | Fly-tipping incidents | Fly tipping continues to be at a high level compared to the previous year. Fly tipping across the County has been highlighted as an issue and an officer group meets to share information and look for joint working opportunities. The group is working to produce a Fly Tipping Enforcement Strategy to provide a consistent approach across the County. Locally the team are working on an environment enforcement action plan as previously requested by Cabinet. The Council's enforcement team receives weekly updates from the contractors on hot spots for fly tipping to guide decision making on where to target resources. |
| R | Visits to Visitor Information Centre and www.enjoystalbans.com | <p>The number of visits to the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) and www.enjoystalbans.com is 13% higher than last month and 30% lower than April 2015. Visits to the VIC dropped from 7,517 to 784 (90%) year on year. Visits to www.enjoystalbans.com dropped from 31,155 to 26,230 (16%) year on year.</p> <p>Easter 2015 fell in April which helped boost visits to the website and the Tourist Information Centre above usual levels.</p> <p>On www.enjoystalbans.com, we continue to see fewer visits to the 'where to stay' and 'eating and drinking' pages. People may be using alternative websites, such as Trip Advisor or Airbnb, which offer bookings or reviews with their listings.</p> <p>The Tourist Information Centre closed on Thursday 24 March 2016 to enable conversion of the Town Hall into the new Museum Gallery. The new VIC opened at the Alban Arena on Monday 4 April. As anticipated, the change in location and reduction in services offered have impacted on visitor numbers. We are awaiting planning permission before installing permanent signage.</p> |
| R | All crime (in month) and Anti-social behaviour incidents (in month) | <p>The all crime figure for April 2016 is 22% higher than in April 2015. Anti-social behaviour has also risen 16% year on year.</p> <p>The rise in crime reflects a broader trend in Hertfordshire which has seen a significant increase in the number of burglaries. This includes homes, vehicles (building vans and also thefts of items from cars) and distraction techniques. 'Burglary other' and 'Vehicle crime' have risen by 113% and 108% respectively compared to April last year. The police are focusing their resources on this area and have made a number of arrests. They have also been running a public campaign on the issue. Tackling and preventing theft of all types is the top priority of the Community Safety Partnership in 2016/17. The Partnership is meeting to discuss the latest trends and how to respond on 19th May 2017.</p> <p>The rise in anti-social behaviour reflects a sharp year on year increase in 'environmental' ASB such as fly tipping and graffiti. These incidents have only started to be recorded by</p> |

| Measure | Comments |
|---------|---|
| | the police as ASB in the course of the last year. The police and Council continue to work together to review how best to investigate and tackle fly-tipping cases. ASB (nuisance) cases reported to the Council's Community Protection team have fallen in the past year, down from 47 in April 2015 to 37 in 2016. |

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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| | | Bigger or Smaller is Better | Apr-15 | May-15 | Jun-15 | Jul-15 | Aug-15 | Sep-15 | Oct-15 | Nov-15 | Dec-15 | Jan-16 | Feb-16 | Mar-16 | Apr-16 | TARGET | |
|---|--|-----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------------------|-----|
| Finance | Forecast budget variance at the year end (General fund for year in question) | Smaller | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | -0.2% | 0.0% | 0.7% | 1.0% | 1.3% | 0.5% | 0.1% | -1.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | |
| Housing | Average time to re-let dwellings (excluding temporary accommodation) (days) | Smaller | 29 | 22 | 22 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 24 | 26 | 26 | |
| | Percentage of rent loss due to voids | Smaller | 1.5% | 1.6% | 1.5% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.3% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.5% | Trend | |
| | Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due | Smaller | 2.6% | 2.6% | 2.6% | 2.6% | 2.7% | 2.8% | 2.7% | 2.8% | 2.8% | 2.5% | 2.7% | 2.8% | 2.8% | 2.6% | |
| | Number of households in temporary accommodation | Smaller | 107 | 112 | 110 | 112 | 121 | 126 | 127 | 125 | 114 | 112 | 110 | 113 | 115 | Trend | |
| | Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks) | Smaller | 24 | 22 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 28 | 25 | 28 | Trend | |
| | Percentage of repairs completed on time | Bigger | 100% | 99% | 100% | 100% | 94% | 99% | 99% | 99% | 99% | 81% | 92% | 91% | 69% | 93% | 98% |
| | Housing repairs' satisfaction | Bigger | 98% | 99% | 99% | 97% | 86% | 98% | 99% | 100% | 98% | 99% | 99% | 100% | 97% | 90% | |
| | Total number of households in receipt of Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax support | Smaller | 7,211 | 7,244 | 7,222 | 7,219 | 7,198 | 7,156 | 7,157 | 7,139 | 7,104 | 7,035 | 7,044 | 7,038 | 7,211 | | |
| | Days to process Housing Benefit new claims | Smaller | 28.7 | 23.9 | 23.7 | 27.7 | 33.7 | 42.5 | 20.9 | 22.0 | 34.5 | 30.2 | 27.9 | 32.8 | 26.5 | 23 | |
| Days to process Housing Benefit change in circumstances | Smaller | 5.5 | 7.9 | 9.4 | 7.3 | 5.8 | 7.8 | 8.0 | 10.0 | 7.6 | 6.1 | 2.4 | 5.5 | 5.4 | 7 | | |
| Planning & Building Control | Planning and Building Control applications received (including pre-app, trees and condition discharge) | | 512 | 459 | 506 | 514 | 478 | 446 | 494 | 459 | 385 | 435 | 546 | 494 | 513 | | |
| | Percentage of Council's planning decisions supported at appeal (cumulative 12 month) | Bigger | 61% | 62% | 61% | 63% | 61% | 62% | 63% | 61% | 63% | 62% | 62% | 61% | 58% | 66% | |
| | Percentage of planning applications not determined (within time limits or agreed timescale) | Smaller | 26% | 30% | 28% | 24% | 26% | 24% | 17% | 19% | 23% | 20% | 29% | 15% | 18% | 25% | |
| | Number of planning applications at end of month that have not been determined in time | Smaller | 157 | 202 | 231 | 214 | 249 | 261 | 236 | 214 | 233 | 200 | 184 | 146 | 162 | 150 | |
| Regulatory | Parking Penalty Charge Notices issued | Smaller | 1,511 | 1,549 | 1,319 | 1,716 | 1,630 | 1,585 | 1,787 | 1,601 | 1,511 | 1,581 | 1,396 | 1,282 | 1,630 | Trend | |
| | Percentage of Parking Penalty Charge Notices paid | Bigger | 89% | 86% | 91% | 84% | 82% | 89% | 86% | 86% | 88% | 86% | 99% | 87% | 84% | 70% | |
| Community Services | Fly-tipping incidents | Smaller | 68 | 73 | 124 | 103 | 100 | 102 | 99 | 90 | 87 | 110 | 116 | 130 | 130 | Year-on-year Trend | |
| | Number of missed waste collections per 100,000 | Smaller | 33 | 34 | 37 | 30 | 10 | 16 | 19 | 12 | 9 | 11 | 16 | 11 | 12 | 40 | |
| | Visits to Visitor Information Centre and www.enjoystalbens.com | Bigger | 38,672 | 40,556 | 47,105 | 42,521 | 43,131 | 41,467 | 50,463 | 78,135 | 54,613 | 32,961 | 27,932 | 31,181 | 27,014 | Year-on-year Trend | |
| | Museum visits | Bigger | 15,521 | 13,248 | 14,781 | 14,628 | 14,343 | 14,164 | 17,826 | 14,996 | 12,403 | 14,090 | 16,573 | 24,416 | 15,101 | Year-on-year Trend | |
| Customer Services | Percentage of calls to the Council answered within 5 rings (20 seconds) | Bigger | 94.2% | 95.5% | 95.2% | 95.1% | 95.7% | 95.8% | 95.6% | 95.0% | 95.7% | 94.9% | 95.6% | 96.0% | 96.0% | 80% | |
| | Percentage of all customers seen within 10 mins | Bigger | 87% | 90% | 91% | 91% | 94% | 88% | 87% | 85% | 91% | 76% | 79% | 81% | 84% | 80% | |
| External | Claimant count (% proportion of population) | Smaller | 0.8% | 0.8% | 0.7% | 0.7% | 0.7% | 0.7% | 0.7% | 0.7% | 0.6% | 0.7% | 0.7% | 0.7% | 0.7% | Trend | |
| | New jobs | Bigger | 6,081 | 6,955 | 2,234 | 2,527 | 2,522 | 3,080 | 4,402 | 4,569 | 4,349 | 5,548 | 5,452 | 6,864 | 5,746 | Trend | |
| | All crime (in month) | Smaller | 519 | 519 | 559 | 562 | 506 | 531 | 564 | 530 | 536 | 586 | 562 | 637 | 634* | Trend | |
| | Anti-social behaviour incidents (in month) | Smaller | 254 | 224 | 211 | 313 | 314 | 263 | 232 | 200 | 177 | 211 | 190 | 221 | 259* | Trend | |

* Draft figure subject to final adjustments

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