

Council Performance & Budget Summary

April 2013

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% projected risk of an overspend
G	Performance Indicators

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	% of rent loss due to voids	<p>The number of void (empty) properties has increased recently – 17 in January, 12 in February, 22 in March and 23 in April.</p> <p>This has led to a 50% increase in the number of properties advertised (week commencing 13 May 2013), compared to the previous 13 weeks.</p>
R	Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks)	<p>We are pleased to note that the total number of households in temporary accommodation has decreased. However the average time in temporary accommodation is up.</p> <p>We currently have 9 households who have requested a review of their homeless decisions. These have been in temporary accommodation for an average of 26 weeks.</p> <p>In addition there are 4 households who are currently unable to move and have been in temporary accommodation for an average of 48 weeks. This is because they have been in arrears and have not yet agreed to repayment, are suffering from ill health, or require ground floor accommodation and there hasn't been a suitable vacancy available.</p> <p>We have 8 households in temporary accommodation who have either accepted a property or are under offer.</p>

	Measure	Comments
R	Days to process Council Tax/Housing Benefit new claims and changes	<p>The team are focussing on dealing with a backlog of cases which have slowly built. As the cases are processed, the average time to process claims/ changes has risen.</p> <p>There was also a sudden increase in the number of items sent to us via the DWP matching service (Atlas) from 22nd April when 512 items were received that week, followed by 562 the following week – the weekly average from the beginning of January 2013 until then was 188 items.</p> <p>The caseload of items over 30 days old has reduced from 794 items at its peak in week ending 14th April to 517 in week ending 12th May.</p> <p>An additional temporary member of staff will be starting work this week to assist in reducing the backlog further.</p> <p>The June Cabinet will receive a more detailed breakdown of the situation and flow of applications.</p>
R	Museums Visits	<p>There were 2,828 fewer museum visitors during April 2013 compared to April 2012 (16.7% fewer). During April 2013, there was an exhibition changeover in both ground floor galleries of the Museum of St Albans.</p> <p>There appears to be a gradual long-term decline in visitors to the permanent displays in both museums. This is thought to be as a result of the age of the permanent displays.</p> <p>However, the annual visits at Verulamium Museum were 14% higher during 2012-13 compared to 2011-12. There have been a higher number of events and activities in both museums and the visitor numbers reflect this at Verulamium Museum but not at the Museum of St Albans.</p>
A	Graffiti and Fly-tipping Calls	<p>There have been a total of 33 calls - 31 fly-tipping reports and 2 graffiti reports. In April 2012 there were 27 in total. The waste team are working closely with Regulatory Services to investigate and prosecute fly-tippers.</p>
G	Visits to Tourist Information Centre and www.enjoystalbans.com	<p>There was a 3,029 increase in the number of visitors to the Tourist Information Centre and website in April 2013, compared to April 2012 (25.7% increase). This was mainly a peak in visitors to the website around the Easter holiday.</p>
G	% of benefit customers seen within 15mins	<p>1,934 benefit customers were served in April 2013, compared to 1,308 in April 2012 (47.9% increase). This is equal to the best performance over the last 13 months and 18% points higher than April 2012 performance.</p>
G	% of customers seen within 15mins (excl Benefits)	<p>3,600 customer were served in April 2013, compared to 2,980 in April 2012 (20.9% increase). This is the second highest performance in the last 13 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.

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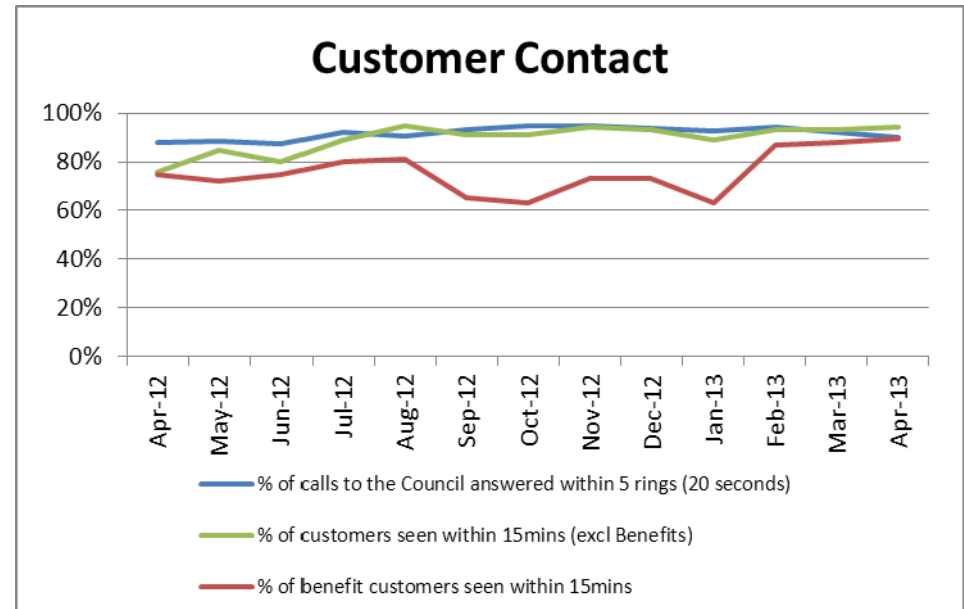
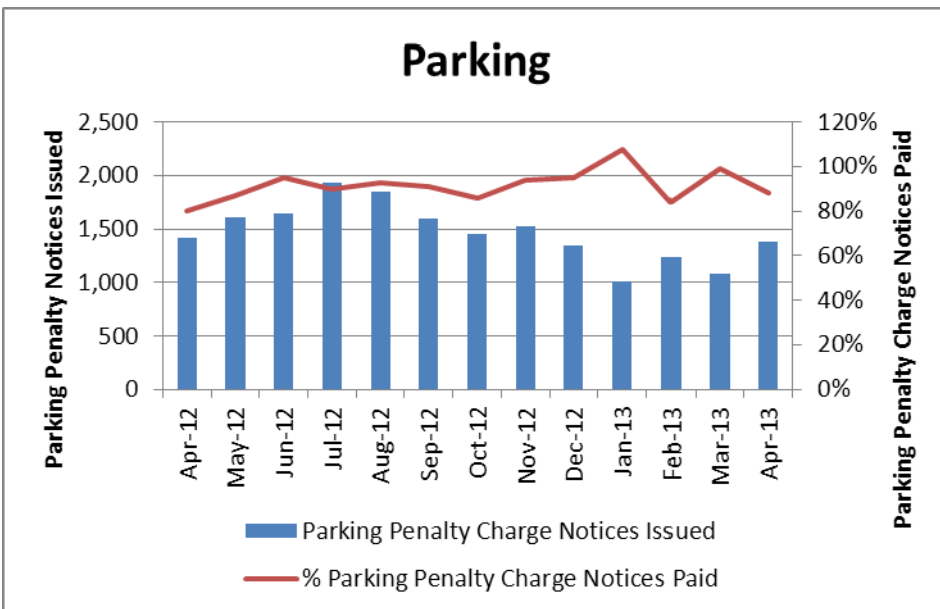
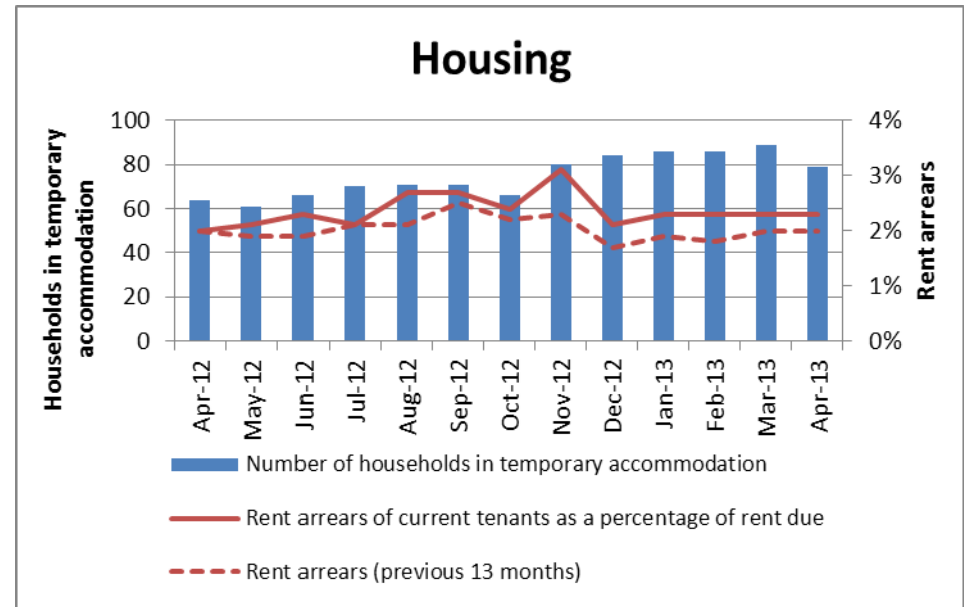
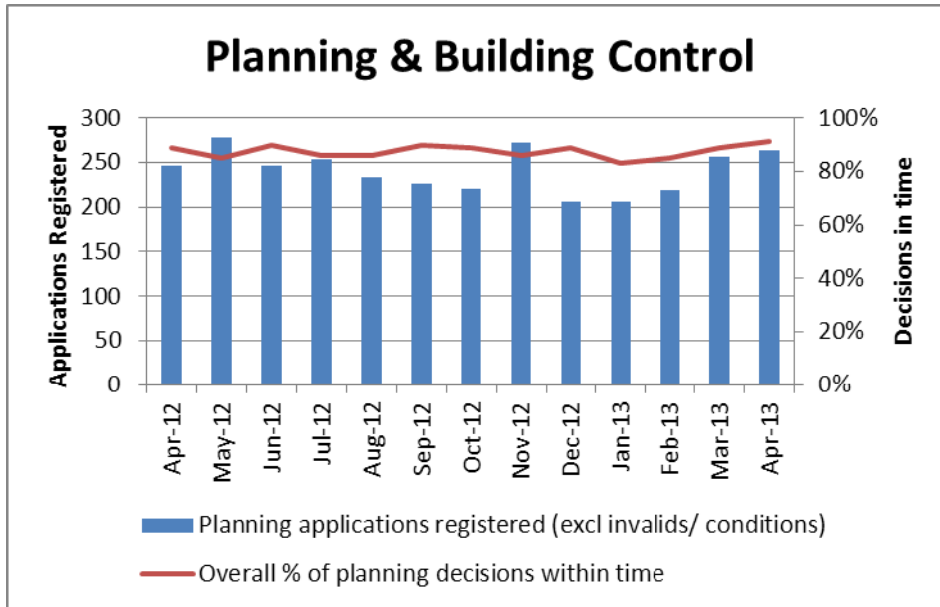
Council Performance & Budget Summary

April 2013



		Bigger or Smaller is Better	Apr-12	May-12	Jun-12	Jul-12	Aug-12	Sep-12	Oct-12	Nov-12	Dec-12	Jan-13	Feb-13	Mar-13	Apr-13	TARGET
Finance	Forecast budget variance at the year end (General fund for year in question)	Smaller	0%	0%	-0.2%	0.0%	-0.1%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.75%	0.0%	-1.0%	-2.5%	0.0%	0%
	Average time to re let dwellings (excluding sheltered and temporary accommodation changes) (Days)	Smaller	19	14.3	19	20	13.1	12.8	15.1	18	15	28	23	18	20	21
Housing	% of rent loss due to voids	Smaller	1.32%	1.22%	1.33%	1.36%	1.38%	1.38%	1.30%	1.38%	1.38%	1.44%	1.42%	1.39%	1.59%	Trend
	Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due (targets updated for 2013-14)	Smaller	2.0%	2.1%	2.3%	2.1%	2.7%	2.7%	2.4%	3.1%	2.1%	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%	2.5%
	Number of households in temporary accommodation	Smaller	64	61	66	70	71	71	66	80	84	86	86	89	79	Trend
	Average time in temporary accommodation (weeks)	Smaller	11.3	13.4	15.3	15.9	16.5	17.3	18	17.4	17	18.5	17.4	17.6	18.9	Trend
	% of repairs completed on time	Bigger	99%	98%	100%	100%	99.6%	99.5%	98.3%	98.6%	98%	99%	98%	98%	99%	98%
	Housing repairs satisfaction	Bigger	98%	98%	98%	97%	99.4%	99.7%	97.8%	99.3%	98%	98%	99%	99%	99.8%	90%
	Number of Benefit Applications	Smaller	247	148	202	274	311	255	312	269	357	251	326	293	263	Trend
	Days to process Council Tax/Housing Benefit new claims and changes	Smaller	19.24	22.61	18.57	12.94	11.9	18.32	15.81	27.51	25.42	20.47	19.87	24.2	34.57	14
	% of benefit customers seen within 15mins	Bigger	75%	72%	75%	80%	81%	65%	63%	73%	73%	63%	87%	88%	89%	70%
	Planning & Building Control	All planning applications received		258	337	268	293	263	249	254	303	250	236	272	272	330
Planning applications registered (excl invalids/ conditions)			246	278	247	253	233	226	220	272	206	206	219	257	263	
Overall % of planning decisions within time		Bigger	89%	85%	90%	86%	86%	90%	89%	86%	89%	83%	85%	89%	91%	75%
Regulatory	Parking Penalty Charge Notices Issued	Smaller	1,418	1,614	1,646	1,929	1,852	1,601	1,455	1,522	1,347	1,008	1,238	1,079	1,380	Trend
	% Parking Penalty Charge Notices Paid	Bigger	80%	87%	95%	90%	93%	91%	86%	94%	95%	108%	84%	99%	88%	70%
Community Services	Graffiti and Fly-tipping Calls	Smaller	27	31	26	18	28	42	32	28	25	27	27	31	33	Trend
	% of households with missed waste collections	Smaller	0.07%	0.07%	0.10%	0.11%	0.19%	0.09%	0.12%	0.09%	0.09%	0.03%	0.09%	0.12%	0.10%	Trend
	Visits to Tourist Information Centre and www.enjoystalbans.com	Bigger	11,775	17,105	21,857	11,807	11,958	12,964	12,560	13,281	8,857	12,012	11,457	14,128	14,804	Year-on-year Trend
	Museums Visits	Bigger	16,906	14,421	18,897	21,278	18,177	10,036	15,784	10,371	7,218	9,223	12,968	13,148	14,078	Year-on-year Trend
Customer Services	% of calls to the Council answered within 5 rings (20 seconds)	Bigger	87.8%	88.6%	87.5%	92.2%	90.5%	93.3%	94.6%	94.7%	93.6%	92.7%	94.5%	92.2%	90.2%	80%
	% of customers seen within 15mins (excl Benefits)	Bigger	76%	85%	80%	89%	95%	91%	91%	94%	93%	89%	93%	93%	94%	80%
External	Claimant Count (% Proportion of Population)	Smaller	1.8%	1.8%	1.7%	1.8%	1.7%	1.8%	1.7%	1.7%	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	1.7%	1.6%	Trend
	New Jobs (New and Unfilled Vacancies until Dec 2012)	Bigger	790	766	1,072	785	854	935	808	797	994	668	883	724	934	Trend
	All Crime (in month)	Smaller	414	409	418	439	440	430	479	441	383	435	411	380	To follow	Trend
	Anti Social Behaviour Incidents (in month)	Smaller	271	324	340	342	385	295	266	250	219	270	217	206	To follow	Trend

Performance Summary April 2013



Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix A: Benefit Service Report



Date From	Date To	Caseload (Including new claims)				Active/ awaiting			New claims					Backlog [^]		
		Brought forward	Incoming including new claims	Completed	Carried forward	Active claimant caseload	Active DWP Matching Workload (Atlas)	Awaiting customer response	Brought forward	New claims received	New claims processed	New claims (Sent for customer action)	Carried forward	Tray Active	Awaiting response from customer	Comments
11 Feb 13	17 Feb 13	1,617	874	599	1,892	1,034	227	631	253	65	82	57	236	161	196	
18 Feb 13	24 Feb 13	1,892	736	1,021	1,607	1,020	34	553	236	63	30	46	269	204	163	
25 Feb 13	03 Mar 13	1,607	934	432	2,109	1,294	242	573	269	60	42	92	287	352	214	
04 Mar 13	10 Mar 13	2,109	912	709	2,312	1,460	378	473	287	55	50	76	292	392	210	
11 Mar 13	17 Mar 13	2,312	830	322	2,820	1,927	574	319	292	59	40	27	311	437	200	
18 Mar 13	24 Mar 13	2,820	652	817	2,655	1,798	563	294	311	61	61	21	311	470	149	
25 Mar 13	31 Mar 13	2,655	624	959	2,320	1,328	508	484	311	55	37	38	329	495	212	
01 Apr 13	07 Apr 13	2,320	698	555	2,463	1,455	576	432	329	56	40	35	345	549	166	
08 Apr 13	14 Apr 13	2,463	767	1,130	2,100	1,588	80	432	345	60	95	59	310	589	205	
15 Apr 13	21 Apr 13	2,100	640	510	2,230	1,650	149	431	310	59	73	72	296	535	197	
22 Apr 13	28 Apr 13	2,230	1,086	784	2,532	1,544	565	423	296	62	76	51	282	463	172	
29 Apr 13	05 May 13	2,532	1,199	736	2,995	1,558	1,037	400	282	56	48	42	290	316	177	
06 May 13	12 May 13	2,995	674	719	2,950	1,468	1,095	387	290	41	64	39	267	325	192	

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

Benefit Service Report April 2013

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix B: Significant Planning Issues



Strategic Local Plan

Consultants for the independent studies have now been appointed as follows:

- Housing needs / strategic housing market assessment - Housing Vision
- Green Belt review - Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM)

The Green Belt review study is being conducted jointly with Dacorum Borough Council and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, with St Albans City and District Council as lead client for contractual purposes.

Work is progressing to timetable with the Consultants' formal reports expected in September.

New Barnfield

The Council's Planning Referrals Committee on 8 February resolved to make a holding objection. In October 2012, Hertfordshire County Council resolved that they were minded to grant planning permission, but the application has been called in for decision by the Secretary of State.

A Public Inquiry is to be held commencing on 10 September 2013.

Planning Referrals Committee resolved on 4 March 2013:

- i. That the Council makes a written statement to the Planning Inspectorate, to be taken into account in the Secretary of State's determination of the application;
- ii. That the Council makes an appropriate financial contribution to the costs which will be incurred by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council through their full involvement as a party to the Public Inquiry. The amount of the contribution is to be agreed at a future meeting of the Planning Referrals Committee.

A written statement has now been prepared by this Council and submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.

A meeting has been held between officers from this Council and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, with follow up discussions on areas of common ground.

Welwyn and Hatfield Borough Council's Cabinet has agreed to make appropriate resources available to pursue their case. A figure of £125,000 was cited as the projected total cost of Welwyn and Hatfield Borough Council's involvement in the inquiry.

Based on the agreed areas of common ground, a figure for this Council's financial contribution to Welwyn and Hatfield Borough Council's costs will need to be agreed by the Portfolio Holder.

Building Research Establishment (BRE)

The BRE planning application (reference: 5/2013/0406) for the demolition of existing buildings and replacing with up to 100 new dwellings, was referred to Planning Referrals Committee on the 9 May 2013. The committee resolved to refuse permission.

The location of the site was considered unsustainable, particularly as it would be heavily car dependent. The proposal would also have an impact on existing infrastructure and place pressure on existing schools and health services in the locality.

Historic Town Forum

On Monday the 20 May 2013, a Historic Town Forum meeting took place in the Town Hall, St Albans, to discuss community led planning and Look! St Albans. The Chief Executive, Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and Localism and Interim Head of Planning and Building Control gave presentations to the meeting.

Permitted Development changes

The Department for Communities and Local Government ('DCLG') has published details of new permitted development rights due to come into force on 30 May, as follows:

- Offices B1(a) can change to homes (C3), subject to prior approval covering flooding, highways and transport issues and contamination.
 - The Council applied for exemption from this right for a number of locations but, along with the majority of Councils, was unsuccessful.
- Buildings that are classed for use as retail, financial services, restaurants, pubs and hot food takeaways, offices, leisure and assembly uses can temporarily change to another use class. They can be used for retail, financial services, restaurants and cafes and offices for a single period of up to 2 years.
- Existing agricultural buildings under 500m² can change to a number of other business uses. For buildings between 150m² and 500m², prior approval is required, to ensure that the change of use does not create unacceptable impacts (such as noise or transport problems).
- The thresholds for business change of use, are increasing from 235m² to 500m² for change of use from offices and general industrial use to storage and distribution, and from general industrial and storage or distribution to offices.
- Premises that are offices, hotels and assembly or leisure use classes are able to change use permanently to a state-funded school (subject to prior approval covering highways and transport impacts and noise). A temporary permitted development right is being introduced which allows a building in any use class to be used as a state-funded school for 1 academic year to help deliver new schools and allow for minor associated physical development.
- The requirement for prior approval of siting and appearance of fixed broadband infrastructure has been relaxed for 5 years to encourage operators to invest in this key provision in rural areas.
- Homes and business owners will also be able to extend their properties for a 3-year period as part of new permitted development rights. Mindful of adjoining residential neighbours' amenity, a light-touch neighbours' consultation is being introduced.

A meeting of Hertfordshire planning officers is taking place in the week commencing 20 May 2013. This is to discuss a common approach, across the County, to these changes.

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix B: Significant Planning Issues



Sewell Park (Hunston)

A section 288 appeal (which is directly akin to a Judicial Review) has been submitted against the recent public inquiry decision (where the inspector upheld the refusal of the application by the Council). The Secretary of State and the Council are named parties. The Council is taking legal advice before responding.

A Judicial Review of the costs award has also been submitted. Again the Council are taking legal advice before responding.

Oaklands (Smallford site – residential and college development)

The Applicant is undertaking a second round of public consultation.

Officers have given separate advice as part of the pre-application process. The Council awaits an application.

Batchwood (minor changes)

Planning Referrals Committee met on the 23 May 2013 and approved an amendment to the planning permission for Batchwood Indoor Tennis Centre. This amendment will be a reduction to the footprint and volume of the Centre, comprising of the reduction of the single storey café/ reception area and a reduction in the depth of the two storey area adjacent to the indoor tennis court halls.

The amended application has been referred to the Secretary of State as the development is in the Green Belt.

Railfreight

The Council was served with High Court Judicial Review proceedings, on Tuesday 21 May 2013, by Helioslough. The Council is taking legal advice before responding.

Hanstead Park (Former HSBC site) – Bricket Wood

Preliminary discussions have taken place around the redevelopment of the site to provide circa 175 residential units (largely new-build, but also including the conversion of Hanstead House) and the demolition of redundant buildings on a site to the east of the settlement of Bricket Wood.

Harperbury Free School

The Secretary of State approved the application to open a new secondary school on the former Harperbury Hospital site (Harper Lane, near Radlett) on the 22 May 2013.

The Council await a planning application for the site.

Harpenden Free School, Vaughan Road

Plans North Committee on the 3 June 2013 will determine the applications. The officer recommendation is to refuse the application on the grounds of over-development of the site (not enough open space), traffic and ecological issues.

Ridgeview

There are ongoing discussions over highway and design issues.

Council Performance & Budget Summary

Appendix B: Significant Planning Issues



Hotels

St Peter's Street Premier Inn - awaiting discharge of conditions relating to planning permission.

Chiswell Green hotel - awaiting the agreement of section106 funding for local amenities.