



Public Document Pack

FINANCE AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AGENDA

Scrutiny making a positive difference: Member led and independent, Overview & Scrutiny Committees promote service improvements, influence policy development & hold Executive to account for the benefit of the Community of Dacorum.

TUESDAY 5 MARCH 2024 AT 7.30 PM

CONFERENCE ROOM 2 - THE FORUM

The Councillors listed below are requested to attend the above meeting, on the day and at the time and place stated, to consider the business set out in this agenda.

Membership

Councillor Freedman (Chair)
Councillor Capozzi
Councillor Gale
Councillor Reynolds
Councillor Santamaria
Councillor Stewart
Councillor Adeleke

Councillor Elliot (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Guest
Councillor Pound
Councillor Hannell
Councillor S Hobson
Councillor A Williams
Councillor Cox

For further information, please contact Corporate and Democratic Support on 01442 228209 or email member.support@dacorum.gov.uk

AGENDA

1. **MINUTES** (Pages 3 - 5)

To confirm the minutes from the previous meeting

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive any apologies for absence

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive any declarations of interest

A member with a disclosable pecuniary interest or a personal interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is considered -

- (i) must disclose the interest at the start of the meeting or when the interest becomes apparent

and, if the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest, or a personal interest which is also prejudicial

- (ii) may not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter (and must withdraw to the public seating area) unless they have been granted a dispensation.

A member who discloses at a meeting a disclosable pecuniary interest which is not registered in the Members' Register of Interests, or is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the disclosure.

Disclosable pecuniary interests, personal and prejudicial interests are defined in Part 2 of the Code of Conduct For Members

[If a member is in any doubt as to whether they have an interest which should be declared they should seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer before the start of the meeting]

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

An opportunity for members of the public to make statements or ask questions in accordance with the rules as to public participation

5. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO CALL-IN

6. ACTION POINTS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Page 6)

7. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE QUARTER 3 2023-24 (Pages 7 - 21)

8. QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT - CORPORATE & COMMERCIAL (Pages 22 - 56)

9. QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT - PEOPLE AND TRANSFORMATION (Pages 57 - 59)

10. PEOPLE SERVICE UPDATE (Pages 60 - 63)

11. CUSTOMER SERVICES UPDATE (Pages 64 - 68)

12. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 69 - 72)

MINUTES

FINANCE & RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7 FEBRUARY 2024

Members:

Councillor Elliot (Vice-Chair)	Councillor A Williams
Councillor Capozzi	Councillor Hannell
Councillor Gale	Councillor Stewart
Councillor Reynolds	Councillor Freedman (Chair)
Councillor Santamaria	Councillor Guest
Councillor Douris	

Officers:

Aidan Wilkie (Strategic Director, People and Transformation)
Nigel Howcutt (Chief Finance Officer)
Mark Brookes (Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services)
Ben Hosier (Head of Commercial Development)
Fiona Jump (Head of Financial Services)
Clare Dempsey (Financial Planning and Analysis Manager)
Trudi Angel (Democratic Support Officer)

Also in attendance:

Councillor Tindall (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Commercial)
Councillor England (Portfolio Holder for Climate Change)
Councillor Anderson
Councillor Johnson
Councillor Stevens
Councillor Birnie

Following a joint meeting of the OSC's where a presentation on the draft budget proposals for 2024/2025 were given, the Finance & Resources OSC meeting began at 8.11 pm.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adeleke, S Hobson and Cox.

Councillor Douris substituted for Councillor Adeleke.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

5. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO CALL-IN

None.

6. ACTION POINTS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

All action points from the previous meeting had been completed and circulated.

7. DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS 2024/2025

Please refer to the video minutes for full discussion.

Outcome

The Committee reviewed and scrutinised the draft budget proposals for 2024/25 and provided feedback to be considered by Cabinet.

8. UPDATE ON NEW PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK AND PROPOSED REVISIONS TO KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

Please refer to the video minutes for full discussion.

Actions

1. A Wilkie to circulate the previous KPI's so members can make comparison between the old and new targets.
2. N Howcutt to confirm what non-complaint gold contracts were.

9. PARKING SERVICE TARIFF & BUSINESS CASE PROPOSALS

Please refer to the video minutes for full discussion.

Outcome

1. That the committee noted the review and update of the 'Parking Tariff' proposals.

2. That the committee noted the proposal to commence the statutory consultation on the proposed changes to parking policy as set out in the report.

10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY PROGRAMME UPDATE

Please refer to the video minutes for full discussion.

Outcome

That the committee noted the report.

Actions

Councillor England to advise if the EV (Electric Vehicle) Operators feel the usage is where they expected it to be.

11. WORK PROGRAMME

There were no changes to the work programme.

The meeting ended at 9.44 pm.

Finance and Resources OSC Action Points - February

Date of meeting	Action point	Responsible officer	Date action completed	Response
07/02/24	Item 8: Cllr A Williams requested that the previous KPI targets were circulated so members can make comparison between the old and new targets.	A Wilkie	27/02/24	We are considering the suite of KPIs in light of comments received at scrutiny. We will circulate an updated suite, compared against the previous set of KPIs and including current performance to give members a full view.
07/02/24	Item 8: Cllr Gale asked what non-complaint gold contracts were.	N Howcutt	Ongoing	
07/02/24	Item 10: Cllr A Williams queried if the Electric Vehicle Operators felt the usage was where they expected it to be.	Cllr England / B Hosier	Ongoing	



Finance and Resources

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Financial Performance Quarter 3 2023-24
Date:	5th March 2024
Report on behalf of:	Cllr Ron Tindall, Portfolio Holder for Corporate & Commercial Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix A – General Fund Forecast Outturn Position Q3 2023-24 Appendix B – HRA Forecast Outturn Position Q3 2023-24 Appendix C – Projected Capital Outturn Q3 2023-24
Background papers:	None.
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	GF – General Fund HRA – Housing Revenue Account

Report Author

Clare Dempsey, Financial Planning and Analysis Manager



Clare.Dempsey@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228264 (ext. 2264)

Responsible Officer

Fiona Jump, Head of Financial Services



Fiona.Jump@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228162 (ext. 2162)

Corporate Priorities

A clean, safe and enjoyable environment
Building strong and vibrant communities
Ensuring economic growth and prosperity
Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need
Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery

	Climate and ecological emergency
Wards affected	All
Purpose of the report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To provide details of the projected outturn 2023-24 as at quarter 3 for the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Fund Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> That Committee note the financial position for 2023-24 as at Quarter 3.
Period for post policy/project review:	The Council's financial position is reported to committee on an ongoing, quarterly basis.

1. Exec Summary:

1.1 The quarter 3 2023-24 financial position of the General Fund is reporting a surplus against budget of £0.236m. This represents a reduction of £0.300m on the surplus reported at quarter 2 (£0.536m). The quarter on quarter change is accounted for by the additional cost pressures being reported since the quarter 2 financial position was presented to Cabinet in November 2023. Key additional costs include:

- additional employee costs within Neighbourhood Operations £0.175m
- additional expenditure on works to trees in the borough £0.080m
- a reduction in income received in relation to services provided to the HRA (HRA recharge) £0.459m

These additional pressure are partly offset by:

- increased investment income £0.203m
- further government grants £0.170m
- reduction in staffing pressures within the Place directorate £0.115m.

1.2 The Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA) is the Council's housing landlord function and is accounted for separately to General Fund service. At quarter 3 the HRA is reporting a budget pressure of £0.620m. This represents an increase in reported pressures of £0.250m from the position reported at quarter 3 (£370k). The quarter on quarter increase includes:

- pressures of £0.280m on utility costs at sheltered housing schemes
- additional supervision and management costs £0.145m.

These are partly offset by additional forecast income from tenants £0.108m.

2. Introduction:

2.1 This report presents the Council's forecast outturn for 2023-24 as at quarter 3, 31st December 2023, with a focus on changes to the forecast since quarter 2. The report covers the following budgets with associated appendices:

- General Fund revenue position – Appendix A. A surplus against budget of £0.236m is forecast.
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue position – Appendix B. A pressure of £0.620m is forecast.

- Capital Programme – Appendix C. General Fund Budgets are forecasting an underspend of £0.050m and re-phasing (programme slippage) to future years of £1.404m. The HRA capital programme is forecast and re-phasing to future years of £6.804m.

3. General Fund Position – all Scrutiny Committee Areas

3.1 Appendix A provides an overview of the General Fund forecast outturn position.

3.2 The table below provides an overview by Scrutiny area of the provisional outturn for controllable budgets within the General Fund.

Table 1 Scrutiny Committee	Current Budget £m	Forecast Outturn Quarter 3 £m	Variance		Forecast Outturn at Quarter 2	Movement from quarter 2 to Quarter 3
			£m	%	£m	£m
Finance & Resources	10.701	11.850	1.149	10.7%	12.689	(0.839)
Strategic Planning and Environment	12.049	13.576	1.527	12.7%	13.033	0.543
Housing and Community	1.953	2.066	0.113	5.8%	1.953	0.113
Total Operating Cost	24.703	27.492	2.789	11.3%	27.817	(0.325)
Core Funding	(24.703)	(27.728)	(3.025)	12.2%	(28.353)	0.625
(Surplus)/ Deficit	0.000	(0.236)	(0.236)		(0.536)	0.300

3.3 Sections 4-7 below provide further information on the material changes to the Council's General Fund and HRA financial position between quarter 2 and quarter 3.

4. General Fund Position- Finance and Resources and Core Funding

Table 2 – Finance and Resources Quarter 3	Current	Forecast	Variance	
	Budget	Outturn		
	£m	£m	£m	%
Chief Executives	0.999	0.942	(0.057)	(5.7%)
Housing & Property	(6.083)	(5.896)	0.187	(3.1%)
Neighbourhood Delivery	(0.387)	(0.230)	0.157	(40.6%)
Corporate and Commercial	6.880	7.465	0.585	8.5%
People and Transformation	4.055	4.321	0.266	6.6%
Place	5.237	5.248	0.011	0.2%
Total Operating Cost	10.701	11.850	1.149	10.7%
Core Funding	(24.703)	(27.728)	(3.025)	12.2%

4.1 Changes to the variances between quarter 2 and quarter 3 reported against Finance and Resources General Fund service areas are outlined below.

4.2 Corporate and Commercial

The Legal services income is reporting a surplus of £0.045m. This income is in relation to recovery of legal costs incurred following action being undertaken.

Staffing underspends across the service have increased from £0.053m in quarter 2 to £0.093m in quarter 3. This includes an underspend relating to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which is currently vacant.

4.3 People & Transformation

There are additional staffing costs, including interim costs, across the directorate of £0.206m. This is an increase of £72k from equivalent costs reported at quarter 2. Included in this are costs relating to work carried out for the Housing Revenue Account which are recovered as part of a recharge made to the Housing Revenue Account for services provided to it by the General Fund.

4.5 Core Funding

Core Funding covers key corporate funding income and expenditure and includes General Fund investment income, government grants and income from Council Tax and Business rates.

Cash balances and interest rates remain high generating an additional £0.200m on the quarter 2 forecast. This is linked to further slippage on the Council's capital programme leading to an increased level of cash balances for investment. Capital programme rephasing (slippage and accelerated expenditure) is explained at section 8 of this report.

Further government grants are now forecast to those originally budgeted, creating an overall surplus of £0.200m against government grants. This represents a further £0.170m of government grants from

those reported at quarter 2. The additional grant funding includes New Burdens funding to administer the energy rebate scheme and Welfare Reform obligations.

The forecast recharge for services provided from the General Fund to the HRA has reduced to £5.219m. A number of posts previously paid for from General Fund budgets and recharged to the HRA are now paid directly for through the HRA. Following analysis of recharges and service pressures a reduction in the forecast income for the General Fund is reported.

5. General Fund Position- Strategic Planning and Environment

Table 3 – Strategic Planning and Environment Quarter 3	Current	Forecast	Variance	
	Budget	Outturn	£m	%
	£m	£m		
Neighbourhood Operations	11.310	12.123	0.813	7.2%
Housing & Property	0.053	0.083	0.030	56.6%
People & Transformation	(0.167)	(0.187)	(0.020)	12.0%
Place	0.853	1.557	0.704	82.5%
Total Operating Cost	12.049	13.576	1.527	12.7%

5.1 Neighbourhood Operations

The pressure reported on works relating to trees has increased by £0.080m at quarter 3. The service are working on a backlog of safety works required to trees around the borough. A significant amount of works will be undertaken in quarter 4 2023-24 as the service seeks to maximise contractor capacity during a time of the year that is optimum for undertaking tree maintenance.

Fleet services have seen an increase in works to the Council's fleet which has led to a forecast pressure on fleet repairs and maintenance of £0.052m at quarter 3.

Waste Agency pressures have increased by £0.175m from the reported position at quarter 2. This is due to agency usage being higher over the initial winter period than previously forecast. The service are working closely with Financial Services to monitor their staffing requirements and the associated financial impact. They are looking to significantly reduce the number of agency per day from the end of January and throughout February.

5.2 Place

At quarter 3 forecast planning income has increased by £0.050m from the position reported in quarter 2, reducing the overall pressure reported against planning income and land charges to £0.400m. Planning fees, which are determined by statute, were increased in January as notified by the government. This appears to have led to more applications being made for smaller planning applications in the period to the end of December.

Place directorate forecast interim cost pressures has reduced by £0.115m in quarter 3 from that forecast at quarter 2. This is associated with delays in recruitment within Place, Communities and Enterprise. The total pressure within the Place directorate relating to interim and restructure costs is £0.139m

6. General Fund Position- Housing and Community

Table 4 – Housing and Community General Fund Quarter 3	Current	Forecast	Variance	
	Budget £m	Outturn £m	£m	%
Housing & Property	1.228	1.275	0.047	0.038
Neighbourhood Delivery	(2.369)	(2.280)	0.089	(0.038)
Corporate and Commercial	(0.043)	(0.063)	(0.020)	0.465
People and Transformation	1.239	1.424	0.185	0.149
Place	1.898	1.710	(0.188)	(0.099)
Total Operating Cost	1.953	2.066	0.113	0.058

- 6.1** Community grants are forecasting a new underspend of £0.080m at quarter 3 as a result of a reduction in applicants compared to previous financial years. The service are looking at how to increase engagement in the process and will work with the voluntary sector as part of this. This is the only significant change in budget variance within Housing and Community General Fund service areas reported since presentation of the quarter 2 position.

7 Housing Revenue Account Position

- 7.1** The HRA is a ring-fenced account relating to the Council's landlord functions. It is accounted for separately from General Fund services. A guiding principle of the HRA is that revenue raised from rents and service charges must be sufficient to fund expenditure incurred. The provisional outturn position for the HRA is shown at Appendix B.
- 7.2** The projected HRA balance at the end of 2023-24 is a pressure of £0.620m. This position is being carefully monitored. Should there be a deficit on the HRA at the end of the financial year, a request will be brought to Members to apply funds held in reserve to balance the financial position for the HRA as a one-off measure.
- 7.3** Further information is provided below at 7.4 and 7.5 on changes to the forecast position since quarter 3.
- 7.4 Supervision and Management**

Additional pressures of £0.340 are being forecast at quarter 3 from the position reported at quarter 2.

Included within this is a pressure at quarter 3 relating to forecast utility costs for sheltered housing £0.280m.

The pressure of £0.340m also includes additional costs from the General Fund for services provided to the HRA. General Fund recharges to the HRA have been reviewed at quarter 3 to identify the impact of the restructures across the organisation and forecast spend following the pay award. The recharge to the HRA is forecast at £5.219m for the year 2023-24, previously £4.999m at Q2, an increase of £0.220m.

There are other reductions in forecast expenditure within Supervision and Management, which individually are under £50k. These make up the balance of the £0.340m.

7.5 Repairs & Maintenance

There is a small overall movement in the reported position for repairs and maintenance.

The forecasts for repairs and maintenance have increased by £0.290m between quarter 2 and quarter 3.

Offsetting this increased pressure is a gain share from the main housing repairs contract. This is forecast at quarter 3 at £0.283m. The gain share is not budgeted within the HRA budgets. The gains share has the effect of reducing the pressures on HRA repairs and maintenance costs.

Table 5: Breakdown of HRA Revenue Repairs and Maintenance Financial Forecast

	Budget £m	Year to Date Actual	Forecast Outturn	Variance
Main Contract Overheads	2.183	2.048	2.748	0.565
Contract Pain and Gain	0.000	(0.026)	(0.283)	(0.283)
Cyclical Planned Maintenance	0.933	0.404	0.545	(0.388)
Compliance Planned Maintenance	3.301	2.559	3.424	0.123
Responsive Repairs	4.469	5.808	7.881	3.412
Empty Homes	3.745	4.043	5.422	1.677
Recharge to GF	(0.037)	0.000	(0.037)	0.000
Total	14.594	14.835	19.700	5.106

7.6 Income

Dwelling rent is forecasting a surplus at quarter 3. This is based on current occupancy and voids rates £0.812m, an increase of £0.091m from quarter 2

8. General Fund reserve transfer requests

8.1 At their March meeting, Cabinet agreed to recommend to Council to approve the following reserve transfer requests:

- £0.100m Funding for Luton Airport Legal costs - £0.050m from the Dacorum Development reserve and £0.050m from the Local Development Framework reserve.
- £0.025m drawdown to fund additional Customer Support Unit (CSU) support for Garden waste renewals from the Management of Change reserve.

9. Capital Programme

9.1 Appendix C shows the projected capital provisional outturn in detail by scheme.

The table below summarises the overall capital outturn position by Scrutiny committee area.

The current budget is the original budget approved by Cabinet in February 2023, plus approved amendments.

The 'rephasing' column refers to projects where expenditure is still expected to be incurred but will now be in 2024-25 rather than 2023-24 ('slippage'), or conversely, where expenditure planned initially for 2024-25 has been incurred in 2023-24 ('accelerated spend').

The 'Variance' column refers to projects which are expected to come in under or over budget and projects which are no longer required.

Table 6- Capital Outturn 2023-24	Current Budget	Re-phasing (To)/from future years	Revised Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	
	£m	£m	£0m	£m	£m	%
Finance and Resources	4.492	(0.866)	3.626	3.598	(0.029)	(0.64%)
Strategic Planning and Environment	2.323	(0.895)	1.428	1.528	0.100	4.31%
Housing & Community	3.843	0.357	4.200	4.081	(0.119)	(3.10%)
GF Total	10.658	(1.404)	9.255	9.207	(0.048)	(0.45%)
HRA Total	65.784	(6.804)	58.980	58.982	0.002	0.00%
Grand Total	76.442	(8.208)	68.235	68.188	(0.046)	(0.06%)

9.2 General Fund Capital Programme Major Variances

General Fund capital budgets are reporting slippage of £1.404m. The slippage includes the following items over £0.100m:

- Future vision of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system £0.149m. – The project is progressing with expenditure being reviewed. Additional temporary resource is being recruited to deliver this project.
- Rossgate Shopping Centre £0.250m - Building Services have confirmed they anticipate the works starting before the end of the financial year. Payments will be staged monthly in arrears and the majority of cost will fall into the new financial year.
- Roof Replacement Programme £0.200m - The works are being slipped is to allow time to undertake an open tender process for the works specification and seek approval to tender and award the works via the Council's Commercial Board.
- Long Chaulden Roof £0.055m - Recent repairs to persistent leaks seem to have been successful. The worst of the winter weather is not yet over and funds may be required to undertake further improvements early in the new financial year.
- Disabled Facilities Grant (0.343m) - the budget was slipped in quarter 2. Following a review of applications this budget is now expected to be spent in 2023/24.
- Waste Transfer Site Upgrade works £0.162m - Improvements to the lighting is expected to commence March 2024 with future works being undertaken during 2025/26.
- Fleet Replacement Programme £0.529m - Due to vacancies within the service and a review of requirements further budget is being slipped – a review of the programme is being undertaken in quarter 4 to ensure the programme is on track for 2024/25.
- Chipperfield Common carpark £0.100m - Awaiting approval from secretary of State to allow resurfacing works to commence.

9.3 Housing Revenue Account

Following a review of the forecasts and project progression for HRA capital budgets further slippage of £6.804m is reported at quarter 3.

9.4 Supplementary Capital Budget Requests

At their March meeting, Cabinet agreed to recommend to Council to approve the following supplementary capital budget requests:

- £2.265m relating to a payment to Hightown Housing Association for the provision for affordable housing in the borough at 66 Books, Wood End Lane. This expenditure was approved by Cabinet in February 2023. As payments to Hightown are finalised, Full Council approval is now required to increase the capital programme budget accordingly. This will be funded using our retained 141 receipts from the sale of Council housing.
- £0.415m relating to the provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) in the borough, funded entirely by government grant £0.415m.

10. Financial implications

10.1 Contained within the body of this report.

11. Legal implications

11.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

12. Risk implications

12.1 Regular monitoring and reporting on the Council's financial position is one of the key ways in which the organisation manages the potential risk of the weakening of its financial resilience.

13 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights

13.1 Community Impact Assessments on Council activities are carried out by relevant services with responsibility for those activities. A separate Community Impact Assessment has not been carried out in respect of this report.

13.2 There are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

14 Sustainability implications

14.1 There are no specific sustainability implications arising from this report.

15 Council infrastructure

15.1 The content of this report sets out the implications of the Council's activities for its financial resources for 2023-24.

16 Conclusions

16.1 The forecast position for 2023-24 at quarter 3 is a surplus of £0.236m against Council General Fund budgets. Housing Revenue Account budgets are reporting a pressure of £0.620m.


16.2 A forecast position for 2023-24 at quarter 3 is slippage of £1.404m for General Fund capital schemes and £6.804m for the Housing Revenue Account capital schemes.



Dacorum Borough Council

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for December 2023 (Cost of Services Analysis By Scrutiny Committee)

	Month			Year-to-Date			Full Year		
	Budget £000	Actuals £000	Variance £000	Budget £000	Actuals £000	Variance £000	Budget £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Variance £000
Cost of Services									
Finance and Resources	390	720	330	2,414	5,467	3,053	10,701	11,850	1,149
Housing and Community	195	541	346	891	(133)	(1,024)	1,953	2,066	113
Strategic Planning and Environment	980	1,363	383	7,971	8,346	375	12,049	13,576	1,527
Net Cost of Services	1,565	2,624	1,059	11,276	13,680	2,404	24,703	27,492	2,789
Other Items									
Investment Income	(63)	(475)	(412)	(566)	(3,268)	(2,702)	(755)	(3,807)	(3,052)
Interest Payments and MRP	62	0	(62)	556	429	(127)	741	509	(232)
Parish Precept Payments	0	0	0	1,234	1,234	0	1,234	1,234	0
Government Grants	(141)	(729)	(588)	(1,270)	(6,904)	(5,634)	(1,693)	(1,893)	(200)
Taxation (Council Tax and Business Rates)	(1,563)	1,959	3,522	(14,064)	(24,208)	(10,144)	(18,552)	(18,552)	0
Surplus / Deficit on Provision of Services	(1,705)	755	2,460	(14,110)	(32,717)	(18,607)	(19,025)	(22,509)	(3,484)
Transfers between Reserves / Funds									
Net Recharge to the HRA	(473)	0	473	(4,258)	(242)	4,016	(5,678)	(5,219)	459
Net Movement on General Fund Working Balance	(613)	3,379	3,992	(7,092)	(19,279)	(12,187)	0	(236)	(236)

<div>  <div> Housing Revenue Account 2023/24 Outturn Revenue Budget Monitoring Report </div> </div>				
	Budget £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Variance £000	%
Income:				
Dwelling Rents	(60,868)	(61,680)	(812)	1.3%
Non-Dwelling Rents	(104)	(98)	6	-5.8%
Tenants Charges	(1,504)	(1,605)	(101)	6.7%
Leaseholder Charges	(606)	(651)	(45)	7.4%
Interest and Investment Income	(210)	(2,007)	(1,797)	855.7%
Contribution towards Expenditure	(647)	(997)	(350)	54.1%
Total Income	(63,939)	(67,038)	(3,099)	4.8%
Expenditure:				
Repairs & Maintenance	14,594	19,702	5,108	35.0%
Supervision & Management	18,421	19,820	1,399	7.6%
Rent, Rates, Taxes & Other Charges	178	178	0	0.0%
Interest Payable	11,267	11,267	0	0.0%
Provision for Bad Debts	750	500	(250)	-33.3%
Depreciation	15,620	15,620	0	0.0%
HRA Democratic Recharges	406	406	0	0.0%
Revenue Contribution to Capital	2,538	0	(2,538)	-100.0%
Total Expenditure	63,774	67,493	3,719	5.8%
Transfer to / (from) Housing Reserves	165	165	0	0.0%
HRA Deficit / (Surplus)	0	620	620	0.0%
Housing Revenue Account Balance:				
Opening Balance at 1 April 2022	(2,892)	(2,892)	0	0.0%
Deficit / (Surplus) for year	0	620	620	0.0%
Proposed Contributions to Reserves	0	0	0	
Closing Balance at 31 March 2023	(2,892)	(2,272)	620	

CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR DECEMBER 2023

Scheme		Original Budget	Prior Year Slippage	Adj's, Supps, Virements	Adjustments (Slip. C/F)	In-Year Adjustments	Current Budget	YTD Spend	Projected Outturn	Forecast Slippage	Projected Over / (Under)
General Fund											
Finance and Resources											
Chief Finance Officer (S151)											
51	Commercially Sensitive Projects	4,002,000	0	0	(4,002,000)	(4,002,000)	0	0	0	0	0
		4,002,000	0	0	(4,002,000)	(4,002,000)	0	0	0	0	0
Head of Digital											
56	Automation Programme	85,000	85,000	0	(170,000)	(170,000)	0	0	0	0	0
57	Civica Customer Experience Software (Flare replacement)	50,000	100,000	0	(150,000)	(150,000)	0	0	0	0	0
58	Rolling Programme - Hardware	675,000	30,101	0	(82,101)	(82,101)	623,000	40,350	623,000	0	0
59	Software Licences - Right of Use	40,000	33,417	0	(50,124)	(50,124)	23,293	23,293	23,293	(0)	(0)
60	Future vision of CRM	590,000	193,375	0	(404,775)	(404,775)	378,600	2,775	229,498	(149,102)	0
		1,440,000	441,893	0	(857,000)	(857,000)	1,024,893	66,418	875,791	(149,102)	(0)
Head of Environmental Protection											
64	Health and Safety software system	0	40,000	0	(40,000)	(40,000)	0	0	0	0	0
65	Air Quality Monitoring	40,000	0	0	0	0	40,000	8,300	40,000	0	0
		40,000	40,000	0	(40,000)	(40,000)	40,000	8,300	40,000	0	0
Head of Property Services											
66	Public Conveniences Renovation Programme	20,000	0	0	0	0	20,000	0	20,000	0	0
67	Service Lease Domestic Properties	30,000	8,118	0	0	0	38,118	0	13,118	(25,000)	0
68	Old Town Hall - Cafe Roof and stonework renewal	0	60,000	0	0	0	60,000	24,420	24,420	0	(35,580)
71	Piccotts End Retaining Wall Rebuild	0	35,000	0	0	0	35,000	6,500	35,000	0	0
72	Victoria Hall Lift replacement	45,000	0	0	0	0	45,000	0	45,000	0	0
74	Community Buildings Fire Exits	30,000	0	0	0	0	30,000	31,259	31,259	0	1,259
75	Adeyfield Community Centre Structural Improvements	0	37,000	0	0	0	37,000	0	37,000	0	0
76	Boiler Replacement Programme	22,000	0	0	0	0	22,000	0	22,000	0	0
77	External Refurb - Woodhall Farm Community Centre	0	12,980	0	0	0	12,980	12,980	12,980	0	0
78	Tring Community Centre - Gutters and Facias	20,000	0	0	0	0	20,000	18,852	20,000	0	0
79	Rossgate Shopping Centre - Structural Works	0	315,281	0	0	0	315,281	0	65,281	(250,000)	0
80	Bennettsgate Shopping Centre - External Render	15,000	0	0	0	0	15,000	0	15,000	0	0
81	Roof Replacement Programme - Individual Assets To Be Identified At A Late	200,000	0	0	0	0	200,000	0	0	(200,000)	0
82	Commercial Properties - Renew Obsolete Door Entry Controls	20,000	1,723	0	0	0	21,723	1,902	21,723	0	0
83	100 High St (Old Town), Hemel - Window Replacement	0	14,000	0	0	0	14,000	0	0	(14,000)	0
84	Long Chaulden Roof	0	55,020	0	0	0	55,020	0	0	(55,020)	0
85	Bellgate - Walkway Renovation	0	12,100	0	0	0	12,100	0	12,100	0	0
86	Bennettsgate - Window Renewal	210,000	74,780	0	0	0	284,780	43,561	284,780	0	0
87	Queens Square Canopy Renewal	0	40,072	0	0	0	40,072	72	40,072	0	0
88	Void Commercial Property Refurbishment	70,000	22,508	0	0	0	92,508	26,106	62,508	(30,000)	0
89	Bennettsgate - Structural Concrete Improvements & Façade Renewal	0	51,712	0	0	0	51,712	0	51,712	0	0
90	Bellgate - Concrete Renewal & Refurbishment	0	14,300	0	0	0	14,300	13,856	14,300	0	0
91	Village Centre - Soffits & Facias	0	3,950	0	0	0	3,950	0	3,950	0	0
92	9 High Street Tring, Electrical Works	0	4,293	0	0	0	4,293	0	4,293	0	0
93	Broadwater Road Resurfacing	0	93,000	0	(93,000)	(93,000)	0	0	0	0	0
94	Damp proofing improvements to commercial properties	30,000	30,000	0	0	0	60,000	15,706	20,000	(40,000)	0
95	Kings Langley Charter Court - Separate Meter Supply	0	20,000	0	0	0	20,000	3,598	20,000	0	0
96	48-52 High Street - Fire Alarm System Renewal	15,000	0	0	0	0	15,000	0	7,500	(7,500)	0
97	Bellgate Canopy Renewal - Highfield	0	200,000	0	(50,000)	(50,000)	150,000	0	120,000	(30,000)	0
98	Rossgate Terrace Walkway Waterproofing	0	30,000	0	0	0	30,000	0	30,000	0	0
99	Fire Alarm Upgrades	20,000	0	0	14,295	14,295	34,295	17,062	34,295	0	0
100	Dacorum Heritage Trust Storage Building-	80,000	0	0	0	0	80,000	0	40,000	(40,000)	0
101	Hyde Meadow Commercial Unit structural works	35,000	0	0	0	0	35,000	33,516	35,000	0	0

102	Silk Mill Shops - Concrete works	25,000	0	0	0	0	25,000	0	0	(25,000)	0
103	Public Conveniences - Improvement Programme	0	15,502	0	0	0	15,502	23,242	15,502	0	0
		887,000	1,151,339	0	(128,705)	(128,705)	1,909,634	272,632	1,158,793	(716,520)	(34,321)
	Head of Commercial Development										
107	Multi Functional Devices	0	90,000	0	(90,000)	(90,000)	0	0	0	0	0
	Off Street Residential Point Scheme	0		415,000	0	415,000	415,000	0	415,000	0	0
		0	90,000	415,000	(90,000)	325,000	415,000	0	415,000	0	0
	Head of Neighbourhood Management										
115	Car Park Refurbishment	0	135,000	0	(135,000)	(135,000)	0	0	0	0	0
116	Water Gardens North Car Park Drainage Improvements	0	35,000	0	(35,000)	(35,000)	0	0	0	0	0
117	Tring Cemetery Access Road	40,000	0	0	0	0	40,000	0	40,000	0	0
		40,000	170,000	0	(170,000)	(170,000)	40,000	0	40,000	0	0
	Head of Investment and Delivery										
121	Creation of new Community Facility and Foodbank at The Hub (Dens)	1,875,000	625,000	0	(2,500,000)	(2,500,000)	0	0	0	0	0
122	Hemel Hempstead Sports Centre - Astroturf renewal	300,000	280,000	0	(530,000)	(530,000)	50,000	14,110	50,000	0	0
123	Berkhamsted Leisure Centre Redevelopment	0	13,850,356	0	(13,850,356)	(13,850,356)	0	0	0	0	0
		2,175,000	14,755,356	0	(16,880,356)	(16,880,356)	50,000	14,110	50,000	0	0
	Head of Communities and Leisure										
127	Berkhamsted Leisure Centre Upgrade Works	15,000	0	0	0	0	15,000	17,960	17,960	0	2,960
128	Hemel Hempstead Sports Centre - Plant Room Upgrade	147,000	0	0	0	0	147,000	0	147,000	0	0
129	Hemel Hempstead Sports Centre - Basketball Hoop Replacement	26,000	(21,274)	0	0	0	4,726	4,914	7,226	0	2,500
130	Improvements to leisure courts *	0	0	134,000	0	134,000	134,000	63,215	134,000	0	0
	Improvements to Leisure Centres **	0	0	195,000	0	195,000	195,000	0	195,000	0	0
		188,000	(21,274)	329,000	0	329,000	495,726	86,089	501,186	0	5,460
	SD Place										
131	Buncefield lane North Quiet Way (phase 3) - HGC capital project	0	0	190,000	0	190,000	190,000	190,000	190,000	0	0
132	Grand Union Canal Improvements - HGC capital project	0	0	64,000	0	64,000	64,000	64,064	64,000	0	0
136	Nickey Line Improvements - HGC capital project	0	552,754	(254,000)	(35,936)	(289,936)	262,818	(117,246)	262,754	0	(64)
		0	552,754	0	(35,936)	(35,936)	516,818	136,818	516,754	0	(64)
	Totals: Finance and Resources	8,772,000	17,180,068	744,000	(22,203,997)	(21,459,997)	4,492,071	584,367	3,597,524	(865,622)	(28,925)
	Housing and Community										
	Head of Asset Management										
144	Disabled Facilities Grants	741,000	343,873	0	(343,873)	(343,873)	741,000	595,828	1,084,873	343,873	0
		741,000	343,873	0	(343,873)	(343,873)	741,000	595,828	1,084,873	343,873	0
	Head of Safe Communities										
148	Rolling Programme - CCTV Cameras	25,000	36,290	0	(36,290)	(36,290)	25,000	0	25,000	0	0
149	Alarm Receiving Centre	0	33,627	0	(33,627)	(33,627)	0	0	0	0	0
150	CCTV Equipment Refresh	110,000	29,782	0	(29,782)	(29,782)	110,000	79,228	110,000	0	0
		135,000	99,699	0	(99,699)	(99,699)	135,000	79,228	135,000	0	0
	Head of Investment and Delivery										
154	Affordable Housing Development Fund	0	458,837	2,264,854	0	2,264,854	2,723,691	1,779,062	2,723,691	0	0
155	Temporary Accommodation - creation of new units	0	71,665	0	0	0	71,665	261	71,665	0	0
156	Aragon Close - Creation of Affordable Housing Move-on Units	0	118,983	0	0	0	118,983	0	0	0	(118,983)
157	Verge Hardening Programme	250,000	205,293	0	(455,293)	(455,293)	0	0	0	0	0
		250,000	854,778	2,264,854	(455,293)	1,809,561	2,914,339	1,779,323	2,795,356	0	(118,983)
	Head of Communities and Leisure										
161	Adventure Playgrounds Improvement Programme	500,000	435,535	0	(902,476)	(902,476)	33,059	45,866	45,866	12,807	0

162	Capital Grants - Community Groups	20,000	0	0	0	0	20,000	10,000	20,000	0	0
		520,000	435,535	0	(902,476)	(902,476)	53,059	55,866	65,866	12,807	0
	Totals: Housing and Community	1,646,000	1,733,885	2,264,854	(1,801,341)	463,513	3,843,398	2,510,245	4,081,095	356,680	(118,983)
	Strategic Planning and Environment										
	Assistant Director - Place, Communities and Enterprise										
170	Urban Park/Education Centre (Durrants Lakes)	0	134,015	0	(103,915)	(103,915)	30,100	8,625	30,100	0	0
171	The Bury - Conversion into Museum and Gallery	2,570,000	53,150	0	(2,623,150)	(2,623,150)	0	0	0	0	0
		2,570,000	187,165	0	(2,727,065)	(2,727,065)	30,100	8,625	30,100	0	0
	Head of Environmental Services										
175	Waste Services IT upgrade	0	80,000	0	0	0	80,000	0	80,000	0	0
176	Wheeled Bins & Boxes for New Properties	100,000	0	0	0	0	100,000	157,612	200,000	0	100,000
177	Resurfacing Works and Building Improvement to Depot	0	60,000	0	0	0	60,000	0	60,000	0	0
178	Waste Transfer Site Upgrade Works	0	262,461	0	0	0	262,461	3,015	100,000	(162,461)	0
179	Fleet Replacement Programme	(312,221)	2,341,332	0	(750,000)	(750,000)	1,279,111	695,027	750,000	(529,111)	0
		(212,221)	2,743,793	0	(750,000)	(750,000)	1,781,572	855,654	1,190,000	(691,572)	100,000
	Head of Property Services										
183	Allotment Improvement Programme	0	47,970	0	0	0	47,970	0	17,970	(30,000)	0
184	Stone Works to Charter Tower	15,000	18,000	0	0	0	33,000	0	0	(33,000)	0
185	Nickey Line Bridge Refurbishment	0	50,000	0	0	0	50,000	0	10,000	(40,000)	0
186	Bennetts End Adventure playground - Cabin Roof	24,000	0	0	(24,000)	(24,000)	0	0	0	0	0
		39,000	115,970	0	(24,000)	(24,000)	130,970	0	27,970	(103,000)	0
	Head of Neighbourhood Management										
188	Litter Bin Upgrade	85,000	0	0	0	0	85,000	0	85,000	0	0
189	Play Areas & Open Spaces - replace equipment	250,000	137,470	0	(387,470)	(387,470)	0	0	0	0	0
192	Gadebridge Park - Splash Park	70,000	0	0	0	0	70,000	37,382	70,000	0	0
193	Chipperfield Common Car Park Resurfacing	0	200,000	0	0	0	200,000	98,671	100,000	(100,000)	0
194	Water Gardens Fencing	25,000	0	0	0	0	25,000	6,890	25,000	0	0
		430,000	337,470	0	(387,470)	(387,470)	380,000	142,943	280,000	(100,000)	0
	Totals: Strategic Planning and Environment	2,826,779	3,384,398	0	(3,888,535)	(3,888,535)	2,322,642	1,007,222	1,528,070	(894,572)	100,000
	Totals - Fund: General Fund	13,244,779	22,298,351	3,008,854	(27,893,873)	(24,885,019)	10,658,111	4,101,834	9,206,690	(1,403,514)	(47,908)
	Housing Revenue Account										
	Housing and Community										
	Head of Safe Homes										
206	Communal Gas & Heating	0	391,720	0	0	0	391,720	1,147,796	3,125,000	0	2,733,280
207	Social Housing Development Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0	990,470	1,430,000	(939,000)	2,369,000
		0	391,720	0	0	0	391,720	2,138,266	4,555,000	(939,000)	5,102,280
	Head of Asset Management										
211	Planned Fixed Expenditure	16,650,000	612,295	0	0	0	17,262,295	6,460,984	11,919,940	0	(5,342,355)
212	Pain/Gain Share (Planned Fixed Expenditure)	0	0	0	0	0	0	80,606	0	0	0
213	M&E Contracted Works	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,659,106	2,400,000	0	2,400,000
214	DBC Commissioned Capital Works	5,975,000	5,024,882	0	0	0	10,999,882	2,429,509	5,670,080	0	(5,329,802)
215	Special Projects	0	513,021	0	0	0	513,021	0	3,682,898	0	3,169,877
		22,625,000	6,150,198	0	0	0	28,775,198	10,630,205	23,672,918	0	(5,102,280)
	Head of Investment and Delivery										
219	Bulbourne	(2,210,742)	2,209,142	0	0	0	(1,600)	9,111	0	0	1,600
220	Coniston Road	0	220,145	0	0	0	220,145	100,218	90,006	(130,139)	0

221	Eastwick Row	1,569,000	4,166,856	0	(5,444,271)	(5,444,271)	291,585	7,645	121,040	(170,545)	0
222	St Margaret's Way	6,330,903	9,687	0	1,325,094	1,325,094	7,665,684	3,296,525	6,086,691	(1,578,993)	0
223	Paradise Fields	3,765,365	9,374,973	0	(3,782,338)	(3,782,338)	9,358,000	5,252,791	6,899,021	(2,458,979)	0
224	Randalls Ride	2,103,000	2,921,684	0	(176,596)	(176,596)	4,848,088	2,185,724	4,188,330	(659,758)	0
225	Garage Sites - New Build Developments	4,779,000	1,102,139	0	(1,230,836)	(1,230,836)	4,650,303	3,262,167	4,627,242	(23,061)	0
226	Wilstone	857,000	266,257	0	(630,371)	(630,371)	492,886	355,275	323,845	(169,041)	0
227	Marchmont Fields	2,775,835	6,698,893	0	(5,187,178)	(5,187,178)	4,287,550	3,270,075	4,266,620	(20,930)	0
228	Paradise Depot	8,640,000	79,924	0	(5,915,201)	(5,915,201)	2,804,723	1,246,531	3,018,636	213,913	0
229	Cherry Bounce	(232,816)	222,980	0	9,836	9,836	0	0	0	0	0
230	Stoneycroft and Great Sturgess	789,236	(91,651)	0	(697,585)	(697,585)	0	0	0	0	0
231	Garage Sites B	59,064	(39,064)	0	(20,000)	(20,000)	0	0	0	0	0
232	Great Sturgess Road	500,000	(43,323)	0	(456,677)	(456,677)	0	0	0	0	0
233	RTB Buy-Backs	1,000,000	998,910	0	1,090	1,090	2,000,000	1,163,192	1,132,316	(867,684)	0
		30,724,845	28,097,552	0	(22,205,033)	(22,205,033)	36,617,364	20,149,254	30,753,747	(5,865,217)	1,600
	Totals: Housing and Community	53,349,845	34,639,470	0	(22,205,033)	(22,205,033)	65,784,282	32,917,725	58,981,665	(6,804,217)	1,600
	Totals - Fund: Housing Revenue Account	53,349,845	34,639,470	0	(22,205,033)	(22,205,033)	65,784,282	32,917,725	58,981,665	(6,804,217)	1,600
	Totals	66,594,624	56,937,821	3,008,854	(50,098,906)	(47,090,052)	76,442,393	37,019,559	68,188,355	(8,207,731)	(46,308)



www.dacorum.gov.uk

Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Quarter 3 Performance Report – Corporate and Commercial Services
Date:	5 th March 2024
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Ron Tindall, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Commercial Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix A – Key Performance Indicator report Appendix B – Financial Services Operational Risk report
Background papers:	None
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	TRO – Traffic Regulation Orders

Report Authors/ Responsible Officers

Catherine Silva Donayre – Strategic Director, Corporate & Commercial
Ben Hosier – Head of Commercial Development
Nigel Howcutt – Chief Finance Officer
Mark Brookes – Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services



Catherine.SilvaDonayre@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228332 (ext.2332)

Ben.hosier@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228215 (ext. 2215)

Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228662 (ext. 2662)

Mark.brookes@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228236 (ext. 2236)

Corporate Priorities	A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery Climate and ecological emergency
Wards affected	All
Purpose of the report:	To provide Members with the performance report for Quarter three 2023-24 in relation to

	the Corporate and Commercial directorate.
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	That Members note the performance of the service as set out in the report.
Period for post policy/project review:	Quarterly

1 Introduction

This paper will provide an update on service performance over Q3 2023/2024 for the Corporate & Commercial Directorate; including Commercial Development, Finance & Resources and Legal & Democratic Services. It will also highlight key service achievements over this same period.

2 Commercial Development

This section of the report provides an update on the performance during Q3 2023-24 of Commercial Development Services.

2.1 Procurement Compliance

A Procurement Assurance internal audit report recommends updating this Committee with any non-compliance procurement activities.

Table 1 - Number of times the Procurement Standing Orders have been set aside during Q3

Contract	Justification	Responsible Officer
To purchase two small specialist refuse collection vehicles	The majority of wheeled bins are serviced using a 26 tonne RCV, which is the maximum permissible weigh for a three-axle rigid goods vehicle and the industry standard. There are however, a limit number of roads which present 'difficult' access' where a smaller sized RCV is required be able to safely manoeuvre and access the bins awaiting collection. Due to another customers cancelled order, the Council can obtain these vehicles within a 2-3 month period, compared to a 12-18 month lead time if ordering afresh.	Head of Environmental Services
Repairs to 185 garages that will bring them back up to a rentable standard	The Council have recently reached agreement with OPSL on a price increase for 2023 this would make the OPSL prices slightly higher than the Goodchild prices. The costs submitted by Goodchild demonstrate value for money and the service has sufficient budget to cover this expenditure. It was therefore recommended that this package of work is directly awarded to Goodchild so that the Service can get the void properties back out to rental as quickly as possible.	Head of Commercial Development
Directly appoint The Building Control (Hertfordshire) Company (BCC) for Aids and Adaptations Work to Void Properties	High volumes of work caused by a post pandemic backlog of major adaptations have resulted in the in-house Council adaptations team, our partnering contractors and their supply chain unable to achieve reasonable turnaround times for adaptive voids. This delay is directly impacting on our applicants, in our own housing stock and temporary accommodation. To alleviate these issues, authority was provided by SLT in December 22 for a proof of concept scheme with BCC to carry out both pre work and adaptations work for direct offer void properties that have been identified as suitable properties for adaptations. To date, the pilot has worked well for the pre-construction work, which includes surveying properties to identify if they are suitable for adaptations. However due to the Council's £75k tender threshold, BCC have only been able to deliver adaptations work to one void property which was finished to a high standard and within the agreed timeframe. The Planned Works and Adaptions team are keen to extend the agreement with BCC, which will improve void turnaround times, reduce rental income loss, reduce the Direct Offer list, provide quality adapted homes for some of our most vulnerable tenants and reduce pressure on the Council adaptations team. The Council are in the process of re-procuring the next Housing Repairs and Maintenance contract, which should be in place by July 2025. With the adaptations work in scope for the next contract, the BCC contract will be co-terminus with the current Total Asset Management contract.	Interim Assistant Director Property Services
6-month extension of an existing contract with Carrington West to be directly awarded	Development Management continues to have a considerable number of vacancies within the Service, currently this consists of 1 Lead Planning Officer and 4 Planning Officers. The Agency worker is currently working on a number of Pre-Planning Applications that bring income into the Council and also has a full workload of other cases. There is a need to ensure that there is a consistent level of resource to deliver the Planning Service and for this reason it was proposed to extend this contract.	Head of Development Management

Table 2 – Known non-compliant procurement expenditure during Q3

Contract	Annual Value	Reason	Responsible Officer	Mitigation
Supply of Sacks for Environmental Services	£40,000	Contract expired	John Mooteealoo	Current demand on Environmental Service resource has resulted in this contract remaining as non-compliant, plans in place to have new contracts awarded in Mar 2024
Supply of Bins & Caddies	£40,000	No contract in place	John Mooteealoo	Current demand on Environmental Service resource has resulted in this contract remaining as non-compliant, plans in place to have new contracts awarded in Mar 2024
Haulage of Waste from Cupid Green	£45,000	No contract in place	John Mooteealoo	Current demand on Environmental Service resource has resulted in this contract remaining as non-compliant, plans in place to have new contracts awarded in May 2024
Supply & Fitting of Tyres to Commercial Fleet	£75,000	No contract in place	John Mooteealoo	Current demand on Environmental Service resource has resulted in this contract remaining as non-compliant, plans in place to have new contracts awarded in May 2024
Supply of Grounds Maintenance Equipment	£110,000	No contract in place	John Mooteealoo	Current demand on Environmental Service resource has resulted in this contract remaining as non-compliant, plans in place to have new contracts awarded in Apr 2024

2.2 Commercial Strategy & Programme

There are many strands of work relating to the Commercial Strategy, being undertaken throughout services, and commercial considerations are embedded in ongoing budget and service planning. A separate report on this activity will be presented to the Committee early in 2024-25. The activity includes detailed reviews of fees & charges and of commercial income streams, as well as longer term planning to leverage best value from the Council's assets through current work on Strategic Asset Reviews. It also includes progression of certain proposals developed through the Business Cases, including:

- Light Industrial Units.
 - Following agreement to take forward Business Case proposals to construct new light industrial/ small business units on former garage sites, a tender for the construction of these units was developed during Q2. It was advertised to the market in Q3.
- Legal Services
 - Discussions have been ongoing during Q3 with neighbouring authorities, and it is expected that potential proposals will be developed during Q4 23-24 / Q1 2024-25, for decisions to be taken as to whether there is a viable proposal to proceed with a shared service.
- Planning Service
 - Discussions remain open with neighbouring authorities about potential opportunities for future shared services. These discussions will continue and further updates will be provided, taking into consideration resource and timing constraints relating to requirements for progression of the Local Plan.
- Parking Services
 - Following an initial Business Case that considered opportunities relating to parking, proposals for changes to parking tariff and charging policy, and for considering 'smart parking' technology, were considered by Cabinet in September 2023. Informal consultation on the proposals for tariff and charging changes was carried out in Q2. These were considered again following the consultation and an updated set of proposals were reported to this Committee and approved by Cabinet to proceed to statutory consultation in February 2024. Work is also progressing on the renewal of the parking enforcement contract in time for a new contract start date of April 2025, and how 'smart' technology might supplement this service to make it more effective and efficient.
- CCTV - Work is progressing on implementing service improvements to enable the service to be better positioned to focus on determining feasibility of undertaking commercial activity in 2024-25. As of February 2024, all Backhaul Radios (x6) have been refreshed and their Ofcom

licenses have been issued. This will enable the CCTV service to add additional CCTV cameras, intruder alarms and intercoms. The service has also now appointed a permanent CCTV Control Centre Manager, which is a post that has been vacant for approximately 3 years.

Other commercial related projects underway, or that will commence in 2024 include:

- Commercial Income Review – Analysis of expenditure and income to enable development of plans for efficiencies and/ or income generation
- Garage Portfolio Review (part of the wider Strategic Asset Review programme) – Review of garage assets to identify opportunities for service improvements and increased income generation
- Strategic Asset Review – other workstreams underway to review performance and strategic opportunities relating to the Council’s assets (to be reported to a separate Committee meeting in 2024-25)
- EVCP Installation Programme – Roll out of the EVCP equipment in support of the climate emergency, with income generation for the Council
- Garage Pricing Strategy – Analysis of current charges and development of pricing strategy

3 Legal and Democratic Services Q3 Performance Report

3.1 The Legal Team

The Legal team frequently represent the Council in the courts and tribunals, leading on injunctions, prosecutions and defending employment tribunal cases and judicial review proceedings. In the last quarter the Legal team presented the following cases in court:-

Environmental Health - Prosecutions				
	NAME OF CASE	FACTS	DATE OF HEARING	COURT OUTCOME
1.	Lemon Place LTD - Environmental Health	On 25 October 2023, at St Albans Magistrates' Court, Mr Thangarajah Nesarajah the food business operator of the Lemon	Hearing 17/10/23	The Magistrates fined the defendant £5000, and ordered him to pay Prosecution Costs of

		<p>Plaice at 10 Bellgate Hemel Hempstead was successfully prosecuted following a case presented by the Environmental Health Officers (Food Safety Team) of Dacorum Borough Council (DBC).</p> <p>Mr Nararajah pleaded guilty to 11 charges relating to various breaches of the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations. The main charge related to the failure to ensure adequate procedures were in place to control pests. The remaining charges related to the failure to comply with Hygiene Improvement Notice served and failure to put in place, implement and maintain a permanent procedure or procedures based on the HACCP principles.</p>		<p>£5000 and a Victim Surcharge of £2000. The total to pay came to £12,000.</p>
2.	Salmicass Flats Ltd - Environmental Health	<p>This case is in relation to breach of Community Protection Notice for failure to keep communal bins maintained.</p>	<p>St Albans Mags Court on 22 November 2023 at 2pm.</p>	<p>The Defendants pleaded guilty to a breach of a CPN and were sentenced as follows:</p> <p>Fine £3,609.00 Costs £3,227.55 VS £1,444.00</p>

				Total to pay £8,280.55
3.	Hank Haywood – Environmental Health	This case concerned the dropping of litter	Hearing 08/11/23	Ordered to Pay costs of £54 and VS of £26.00 total to pay £80.00
4.	Nichola Smith – Environmental Health –	This case concerned the dropping of litter. On the 22nd November 2023, Miss Nicola Smith was prosecuted at St Albans Magistrates Court On 26th July 2022, Miss Smith had been witnessed by a District Enforcement Enviro-Crime Officer to drop and leave a cigarette butt in London Road, Hemel Hempstead. Miss Smith was issued with an on the spot fixed penalty notice of £80 for the offence but no payment was made. The Defendant failed to attend the hearing and the Prosecution proved the matter in absence.	Hearing 25/10/23	Miss Smith was sentenced as follows: Fine £440.00 Costs £250.00 VS £176.00 Total to pay £866.00
5.	Connolly – animal welfare case – Environmental Health	This case concerns the prolonged cruelty of a cat.	Case listed at the St Albans Mags court on 21.12.23.	Court banned Defendant from having or keeping animals for a period

				of 5 years and fined her £40. No VS or costs were awarded.

3.2 Corporate and Democratic Support

Democratic Services

During Quarter 3, Democratic Support carried out the following activities:-

Finalised the process and roll out plan to migrate to video minutes, going live with initial pilots for each committee in November 2023.

All pilots delivered successfully; on publication, the minutes for each agenda item on the Council's website is supported by a link that takes you to a YouTube video, launching at the point in the meeting where that item is being discussed.

Committee Meetings

- Delivered 2 Full Council meetings, live streamed via YouTube
- Delivered 1 Extraordinary Council meeting, live streamed via YouTube
- Supported 20 committees (including agendas & minutes)

Member Development

Delivered the following Member training sessions and Briefing sessions;

- Mandatory Finance training (05/10/23)
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan Workshop (12/10/23)
- EELGA delivered Scrutiny Training (09/11/23)
- Mandatory Health & Safety Training (23/11/23)

Decision making

- Processed and administered 8 new Portfolio Holder Decisions, published 7 completed decisions
- Processed 13 Officer Decisions

Digital Print & Post Room:

In addition to the day to day workload and ad hoc requests for support and reprographics, during Quarter 3 the team;

- Processed and franked a total of 39,232 outgoing mail items, at a total cost of £43,067.10 (includes HVCCG & CAB which is recharged)
- Processed and banked 471 cheques with a total income of £116,447.10
- Received and banked 5 emergency cash transactions with a total value of £1,515.06
- Delivered the 'local plan consultation' to all town and parish councils for the Strategic Planning team.
- Identified an error with Business Rates barcoded letters and highlighted this error avoiding incorrect mailing being sent.

Electoral Services

i. Electoral Register

During Quarter 3, the following 8137 changes were made to the Electoral Register:-

Additions 3508

Deletions 4356

Changes 273

ii. Staff Training

Throughout Q3, the team attended:

- Elections Act Tranche 2 training: Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA)
 - online absent vote applications (OAVA) and postal and proxy voting requirements (PPVR)
 - overseas electors (OE)
- Express Elections Act training
- Returning Officer webinar
- AEA Eastern branch meeting
- Herts country group meeting
- DLUHC ERO Portal Demo

iii. Annual Canvass 2023

Following the successful completion of annual canvass 2023, and the completion of the door knocking, personal canvass phase, the outcome was a 93% response rate.

The team published the revised Electoral Register on the 1st of December as legally required. All statutory distribution was completed.

The amended Parliamentary boundary changes, following their review, were included in the revised register and published.

iv. Election Act implementation

The next phase of the Elections Act saw the introduction of 'Online Absent Vote Applications (OAVA)' on 31 October 2023. This now allows electors to apply for an absent vote online. The team undertook training from DLUHC on the use of the online portal and the very different way of processing new applications.

The team worked hard on the forthcoming implementation of the remaining aspects of the Elections Act: Overseas electors & EU National changes. Further updates will be reported in Q4.

v. Polling District & Polling Place Order

Following the completion of the Polling District & Polling Place review, and combined with the Parliamentary boundary changes, the update Polling Place Order was approved by Full Council.

vi. Electoral Review

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) have begun the electoral review for Dacorum. Officers are currently collating information in order to submit projected forecasts required.

The first phase looks at Councillor numbers. The Electoral Review Committee discussed this at its meeting in October. Final suggestions will be recommended to Full Council in February 2024.

vii. Police & Crime Commission election 2023

The next PCC election will be held on the 2nd of May 2024. The team are currently working with all Polling Places and all staff on the database, in order to set them all up with an online account. This uses a system called a Mobile Election Application (MEA).

This will enable the ability to quickly communicate with staff and location booking agents through a secure portal. This also saves on resources as there is no need to print and send letters, and as MEA is fully integrated with Xpress Management, any responses or changes made by users in MEA will update the system once a sync process has been run from within Management.

viii. Next Parliamentary election

The team are mindful that the next Parliamentary election must take place before January 2025. Therefore considerations amongst the team are being made at every opportunity to try to mitigate any issues.

3.3 Licensing

The team have been very busy during quarter three and have determined 211 Licensing Act applications, 8 animal activity licences, and 100 taxi driver or operator based licenses.

4 Finance & Resources Q4 Performance & Operational Risk Report

4.1 Introduction:

Operational Risk and Performance reports are presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committees on a quarterly basis. They provide Members with an opportunity to scrutinise performance against a range of key indicators.

4.2 Quarter 3 Finance and Resources performance report:

This report outlines the 2023/24 Quarter 3 (September– December) performance of the Finance and Revenues and Benefits services, the details of the quarterly KPI's are included in the enclosed Appendix A Corporate and Commercial Performance report.

The Performance appendix details the current performance against a range of agreed Key Performance Indicators and previous performance trends. These highlight that at present there three red rated KPI's where performance requires improvement:

- FIN02a Time taken for debtors to pay
- FIN03 Housing Revenue Account Budget Variance against forecast
- FIN06a Capital Variance against forecast.

FIN02a Time taken for debtors to pay

Performance against this indicator has been adversely impacted in the last two years by several government Covid policies around debt collection and in particular around enforcement of the collection of commercial rent. These policies have either limited or prevented the standard debt collection processes.

This has resulted in the Council holding more historic commercial property debt resulting from the pandemic, where either businesses have chosen to repay debt through payment plans which take longer to pay back and delay payment, or have not been paying their debt as previously expected. The commercial property and finance team are working in combination with commercial property tenants to improve this performance.

In addition, other types of Council debtors also taking longer to pay, a consequence of rising costs and the associated pressures on household budgets. The main example of this are Council housing leaseholders, a significant proportion of whom have payment plans in place to pay off debt owed to the Council.

The Council has a bad debt provision that could fund unpayable debts and the impact on the council's cashflow of this reduced performance is minimal. This KPI target has been reviewed and reassessed with revised KPI's expected in 2024 to take into consideration the high level of payment plans currently in place.

FIN04 Housing Revenue Account Revenue Variance against Forecast

Pressures relating to repairs and maintenance costs are contributing to a reported overall pressure for the Housing Revenue Account. Appendix A reflects the reported position as at November 2023, a pressure of £370k. At quarter 3 this pressure has increased to £620k.

FIN06 Capital Variance against Forecast

At quarter 2 the capital financial projections reflected in Appendix A showed a net overspend of circa £8k on the capital programme of circa £81m. This variance is less than 0.01% of the overall capital budget and is well within budget tolerances. This position includes additional spend on waste bins procured this year to support the garden and household waste collection service. At quarter 3 the capital financial performance is reporting a net underspend of £46k across the Council's capital programme, which will move performance against this indicator to green at the next quarterly report.

There are three amber KPIs where performance is being monitored:

- RBF04 Business Rates in-year collection rate.
- RBF05 Council Tax Collection rate
- RBF06 Average days taken to respond to a council tax related contact from a resident.

RBF04 Business rates in-year collection rate / RBF05 Council Tax Collection Rate

The collection rates for business rates and council tax are targets that have been heavily impacted in recent years by wider economic circumstance and government policy; related to the pandemic, energy grants in 22/23, varying business rate reliefs, the 2023 business rates revaluation and the current ongoing cost of living pressures.

Current forecasts suggest that the year-end collection levels for both of these local taxes will be similar to last year, which means that there will be a small shortfall on in-year council tax collection rates. In previous years this has not had a significant impact on the council's funding sources as a combination of funding smoothing policies and increased collection of historic arrears have made up the in-year cash shortfall. However, as this trend has continued for a number of years the service has reviewed the collection rate and remodelled what is achievable in the medium term. In consequence the 2023 Medium Term Financial Strategy has reduced the expected collection rates for future years, to prevent future budget funding shortfalls.

RBF06 Average days taken to respond to a council tax related contact from a resident

This measure is continuing to under-perform, and is likely to remain at a similar level for the remainder of this year. There are two major factors for this: firstly, the ongoing impact of the financial pressures on residents over the last few years means that conversations with those who are having difficulty paying are longer and more complex than in previous years; secondly, a lot of officer time is taken up with data entry – re-keying information provided to us by residents by email or form.

In order to address these, the service is continuing to work with the transformation team in order to introduce more automation, which will avoid the need for this repetitive data entry and speed up the process of registering information for residents who move. This in turn should release resources to assist with the more complex queries.

Currently we expect to see this work provide some benefit towards the end of quarter 4.

4.3 Finance and Resources Quarter 4 Operational Risk Report

The quarter 3 Finance & Resources operational risk register is attached in Appendix B.

There is one change to the scoring at quarter 3 from quarter 2. This is in RM000013 (Delays and errors in the processing of benefit claims) where the score has reduced from 6 to 4. This is due to the improvement in the time taken to process changes to benefit awards during the years to date.

At present there is one red rated operational risk (RM000010) in relation to the council tax and business rates collection. The collection rates finished slightly behind the targeted levels in 2022/23 but both rates are an improvement on year on year, but not yet achieving pre covid performance levels.

The forecast collection rates for both of these are to reach similar levels to 2022/23 at year-end, and combined with collection of previous year arrears we expect to achieve the actual budgeted cash collection levels.

As these reduced in-year collection levels appear to be ongoing, the expected collection levels for future years have been reduced in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

5 Financial and value for money implications:

Poor performance or increased risk would indicate areas of concern and potential lack of best value, and these services and processes are reviewed as part of the ongoing corporate financial monitoring framework and reflected in the budget monitoring reports presented to Scrutiny and Cabinet.

6 Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

7 Risk implications:

The process of reviewing and reporting performance and operational risks is part of the wider risk management processes undertaken by the council, to ensure risk management and mitigation is undertaken where required and follows the strategic risk strategy outlined by the council.

8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

No Community or equalities assessment has been undertaken specifically as part of this report. The services and the service delivery processes are assessed periodically to ensure these services reflect the Council's policies on service delivery.

9 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

N/A

10 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

N/A

11 Conclusions: Performance and risk are outlined in the appendices and summarised in the report, and the Committee are asked to note the report.


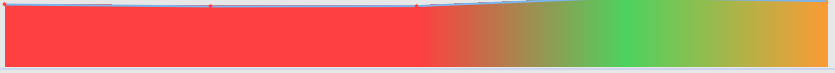

Finance & Resources OSC

Corporate & Commercial Services Report

Financial Services - Performance Scorecard

Measure Code ↑	Measure	Date	Actual	Target	DoT	Performance Trend
FIN01 (Q)	Percentage of creditor trade invoices paid within 30 days (Q)	Dec 2023	99.30%	96.00%	✓	
FIN02a (Q)	Time taken for debtors to pay (Q)	Dec 2023	67.04	40.00	✗	
FIN03 (Q)	General Fund Budget Variance against forecast (Q)	Dec 2023	-518,000.00	0.00	✗	
The position reported is that as at the end of November the latest approved position. The GF is reporting a surplus as at period 8 (November 2023) driven by increased investment income arising from high interest rates.						
FIN04 (Q)	Housing Revenue Account Budget Variance against forecast (Q)	Dec 2023	370,000.00	0.00	✓	
The position reported is that as at the end of November the latest approved position. The HRA is reporting a pressure of £370k at month 8 (November 2023). This relates to staffing and repairs and maintenance forecast costs, partly offset by increased investment income arising from high interest rates.						
FIN06 (Q)	Capital variance against forecast (Q)	Dec 2023	8,436.00	0.00	✓	
FIN08 (Q)	Investment income: outturn forecast against budget Q	Dec 2023	5,611,000.00	965,000.00	✓	
The position reported is the forecast as at the end of November 2023, the latest approved forecast. Forecast income from investments is significantly in excess of target due to the extent of recent interest rate increases						

Legal & Democratic Services - Performance Scorecard

Measure Code ↑	Measure	Date	Actual	Target	DoT	Performance Trend
DPA01	Percentage of Data Protection Act requests met in 31 days	Dec 2023	100.00%	100.00%	✓	
FOI01	Percentage of FOI requests satisfied in 20 days	Dec 2023	89.89%	90.00%	✗	
LG03	Number of audit recommendations completed within agreed timescales	Dec 2023				

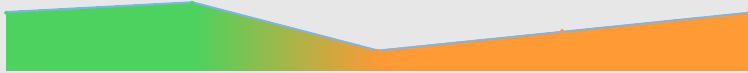
Revenues and Benefits - Performance Scorecard

Measure Code	Measure	Date	Actual	Target	DoT	Performance Trend ↓
RBF06 (Q)	Average days taken to respond to a council tax related contact from a resident (Q)	Dec 2023	18.49	17.00	✗	

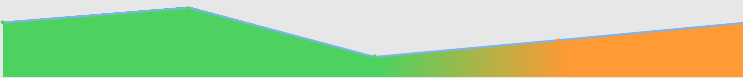
Performance has slowed during the quarter - conversations with residents who are having difficulty in paying remain longer and more complex than previously. The service is continuing to work with the transformation team to introduce more automation, which should reduce the amount of data re-entry and enable officer time to be spent on more useful tasks. We currently expect that this will start to provide some benefit during the next quarter.

RBF01 (Q)	Average days taken to respond to a benefit-related contact from a resident. (Q)	Dec 2023	4.94	14.00	✓	
-----------	---	----------	------	-------	---	---

Performance has been exceptionally good during this quarter, and a backlog of work has been eliminated. During quarter 4 we expect that performance levels will head back towards the target level

Measure Code	Measure	Date	Actual	Target	Last Year's Actual	Performance Trend ↓
RBF05 (Q)	Council Tax collection rate (Q)	Dec 2023	82.60	83.20	83.50	

As more residents choose to pay over 12 rather than 10 instalments, we expect that there will be a lower collection level than last year. However, even having modelled for that, it appears that collection is perhaps 0.1%/0.2% lower than previously. We expect that this is due to the pressures on household budgets more generally.

Measure Code	Measure	Date	Actual	Target	Last Year's Actual	Performance Trend ↓
RBF04 (Q)	NNDR (Business Rates) in-year collection rate (Q)	Dec 2023	74.80	75.10	75.10	
The collection level is currently broadly similar to the same point last year, and we expect that this will continue for the remainder of the year.						

Risk Name	Risk Owner	31 Dec 2023
		Status
		Update
#RM00000010	Nigel Howcutt	The collection of Business Rates is broadly in line with expectations at Quarter 3, although the 2023/24 business rates revaluation and the projected increase in challenges to these rates brings additional uncertainty to the service. The Council Tax collection rate is behind the 23/24 target, but in line with recent financial years when you consider the changing variables, as outlined in the quarterly performance report. A review of Council Tax collection rates is currently underway given the performance being lower than expected

during 2020 - 2023, albeit impacted by the pandemic. Although in year collection rates are behind target, the service is achieving greater collection rates on previous years arrears with the expectation that to achieve actual cash collection budgeted levels. This performance is closely monitored and reported. The 2023 MTFS reduced future years collection rates

Risk Name	Risk Owner	31 Dec 2023
		Status
		Update
#RM00000013	Nigel Howcutt	<p>The time taken for the benefits team to respond to queries is now at circa 12 days. The performance has been improved year on year with a slight downs turn in Qtr 2 this performance is expected to improve in the remainder of 23/24. The sector average is believed to be around 14 days, but few authorities report on this KPI. The service are implementing more digital functionality across revs and bens in quarter 3 such as citizen access that will improve the effectiveness of these teams in the medium term</p>

Risk Name	Risk Owner	31 Dec 2023
		Status
		Update
#RM00000014	Nigel Howcutt	<p>The capital programme has suffered significant delays in recent years due to a combination of the impact of the pandemic, planning moratorium, supply chain delivery and recently cost pressures. As a result the current capital programme is the largest the Council has had for many years, which increases the likelihood of delays occurring to one or more of a large number of projects. In addition there are several legacy projects that the new administration need to be briefed on and hence at present these projects are pending further approval before being undertaken.</p>

Risk Name	Risk Owner	31 Dec 2023
		Status
		Update
#RM00000059	Nigel Howcutt	Year to date financial performance of the commercial property portfolio and car parking is tracking ahead of budget. Garages income is tracking around 2% behind target. These assets make up the majority of the Council's commercial assets.

Risk Name	Risk Owner	31 Dec 2023
		Status
		Update
#RM00000095	Nigel Howcutt	The quarter 3 financial performance report, presented at Scrutiny, details the outturn projection. The General Fund is expected to deliver an underspend in 2023/24, predominantly due to strong performance of the treasury management service, due to both higher cash balances and interest rates than previously projected at budget setting.

Risk Register Details Table

Risk Name	Detail	31 Dec 2023
		Status
#RM00000010	Risk Owner	Nigel Howcutt
	Portfolio	Housing and Property Services
	Risk Description	Council Tax & Business Rates collections rates drop below budget.
	Reference to Strategic Objectives / Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance & Resources Operational Risk Register #RM00000068
	Inherent Score	12 ▲
	Mitigated Score	
	Risk Appetite	
	Comments	The collection of Business Rates is broadly in line with expectations at Quarter 3, although the 2023/24 business rates revaluation and the projected increase in challenges to these rates brings additional uncertainty to the service. The Council Tax collection rate is behind the 23/24 target, but in line with recent financial years when you consider the changing variables, as outlined in the quarterly performance report. A review of Council Tax collection rates is currently underway given the performance being lower than expected during 2020 - 2023, albeit impacted by the pandemic. Although in year collection rates are behind target, the service is achieving greater collection rates on previous years arrears with the expectation that to achieve actual cash collection budgeted levels. This performance is closely monitored and reported. The 2023 MTFS reduced future years collection rates
	Controls & Assurances	<p>The following controls aim to identify as quickly as possible if the Council is falling behind on its collection rates target for the year. If a problem is identified, the Council is then able to invoke a range of options to minimise the ongoing negative impact on collection.</p> <p>Profiled monthly collection rates are monitored monthly - see KPIs RBF04 and RBF05. Reasons for variances are then investigated in order to address problems quickly as possible.</p> <p>Direct debit payment is recommended for all customers – a pre-filled instruction is sent to all non-DD payers with their annual bill or a first bill for a new taxpayer. The direct debit method reduce the risk of under-collection because it eliminates the risk of a payer forgetting to make a monthly payment.</p> <p>The service always promotes the payment of council tax by direct debit and this supports the consistency and reliability with which residents pay their council tax.</p> <p>Following the cessation of the governments Covid protection policies the council has reinstated an active programme for taking formal recovery action against non payers and this is monitored monthly and overseen through quarterly performance reporting.</p>

	Detail	31 Dec 2023
		Status
	Evidence Risk is being managed	<p>The processes for collection of council tax and business rates have been consistent over time and the budgeted collection rate levels have been achieved over the medium term.</p> <p>The collection rates achieved are above national averages and specifically business rates collection was in the upper quartile of national performances. The average national council tax collection in 2022/23 was 98% with Dacorum targetting 99.4% collection rate.</p> <p>The service has been able to increase the volume of CT payers that are received through Direct Debits and has also developed 10 and 12 monthly payment processes in the last few years.</p>
	Consequences / Impacts	<p>Distribution of collection fund to other preceptors is based on the budgeted collection level, if collection falls short this could lead to a cashflow issue within the Council's finances. The fund distribution is balanced after the end of the financial year.</p> <p>Reputational risk if collection rate falls significantly – this could also impact on future years' council tax base leading to increased budget pressures.</p> <p>Financial risk in relation to business rate retention scheme if rates collection falls below government set baseline.</p>
#RM00000013	Risk Owner	Nigel Howcutt
	Portfolio	Housing and Property Services
	Risk Description	Delays and errors in the processing of Benefits claims
	Reference to Strategic Objectives / Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance & Resources Operational Risk Register #RM00000068
	Inherent Score	4 ▲
	Mitigated Score	
	Risk Appetite	
	Comments	The time taken for the benefits team to respond to queries is now at circa 12 days. The performance has been improved year on year with a slight downs turn in Qtr 2 this performance is expected to improve in the remainder of 23/24. The sector average is believed to be around 14 days, but few authorities report on this KPI. The service are implementing more digital functionality across revs and bens in quarter 3 such as citizen access that will improve the effectiveness of these teams in the medium term

	Detail	31 Dec 2023
		Status
	Controls & Assurances	<p>The controls in place aim to mitigate this risk by closely monitoring performance to assist with effective decision-making around resource allocation. This is a heavily process driven service area and close monitoring also helps to identify bottle necks in the process which need to be improved to optimise performance. By subjecting the process to this regular in-depth scrutiny the Service is able to reduce the probability of the risk crystallising, hence the reduction between the Inherent Risk score (4) and the Residual Risk score (2) after the controls have been taken into account.</p> <p>Quality checking and individual performance management is in place. These mean that each officer has targets for their personal productivity and accuracy, and information from quality checks is fed back in order to sustain improvement.</p> <p>Average time taken for processing new claims and changes in circumstances forms part of monthly monitoring which is deemed good practice.</p> <p>Processes are in place to expedite cases where the customer is vulnerable or facing eviction. These processes start when a case is identified within benefits, or by customer services, homelessness, housing etc. The service work in partnership with other council services and external bodies to achieve good outcomes for the residents.</p> <p>Monthly meetings are held between senior officers within Finance & Resources to monitor detailed performance levels at each stage of the claims process, and quarterly performance meetings with the S151 are undertaken.</p> <p>This enables intermediary targets to be set for discrete elements of the process, which in turn enables the more effective monitoring which has resulted in significantly improved performance over the last 6 months.</p> <p>The service is experiencing more requests for benefits and more complex queries from residents, likely linked to the current cost of living pressures being experienced, and additional energy reliefs being processed by Dacorum. The performance has stabilised to around 14 days which is very much in line with sector averages.</p>
	Evidence Risk is being managed	<p>Prior to pandemic the KPI's for the housing benefit service in 2019/20 were all achieved with new performance records set along the way.</p> <p>The 20/21 and 21/22 financial years saw a surge in new cases and changes to existing claimants. The service have had to introduce new ways of working to deal with the new cases pre and post covid. The performance on changes to existing housing benefit cases has remained strong with performance in the second half of 22/23 being the strongest achieved in the last 2 years.</p> <p>The annual housing benefits audit and audit returns have all being approved by auditors and the processes have received substantial assurance.</p>
	Consequences / Impacts	<p>This risk links to the corporate objective of delivering modern and efficient council services.</p> <p>Customers could suffer personal hardship resulting from delays or errors in the processing of claims.</p> <p>Significant reputational risk associated with high-profile errors.</p> <p>Staff time spent on addressing unnecessary errors leads to duplication of effort and is an inefficient use of resources.</p> <p>Government subsidy for housing benefit expenditure is based on external audit certification of the claim made. There is financial risk if errors on cases are identified during their testing.</p> <p>Communications with claimants needs to be well written and jargon-free in order to reduce the risk of repeat queries which puts pressure on limited staff resources.</p>

Risk Name	Detail	31 Dec 2023
		Status
#RM00000014	Risk Owner	Nigel Howcutt
	Portfolio	Housing and Property Services
	Risk Description	Delays to Capital programme
	Reference to Strategic Objectives / Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance & Resources Operational Risk Register #RM00000068
	Inherent Score	8 ▲
	Mitigated Score	
	Risk Appetite	
	Comments	The capital programme has suffered significant delays in recent years due to a combination of the impact of the pandemic, planning moratorium, supply chain delivery and recently cost pressures. As a result the current capital programme is the largest the Council has had for many years, which increases the likelihood of delays occurring to one or more of a large number of projects. In addition there are several legacy projects that the new administration need to be briefed on and hence at present these projects are pending further approval before being undertaken.

	Detail	31 Dec 2023
		Status
	Controls & Assurances	<p>The controls that have been implemented to mitigate this risk target the robustness of capital bids both at the time they are submitted and throughout the delivery phase of the projects.</p> <p>In particular, scrutiny is focused on those elements of the capital bid that experience indicates are the primary cause of delays to capital projects. These include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How robust are the assumptions on the estimated duration of the procurement exercise? • How realistic is the estimated time taken for contractors to deliver the works? • How realistic are the assumptions on officer availability to manage the project on time? <p>The rationale behind this approach is that an increased culture of challenge will lead to more realistic programming of future capital projects, and therefore a reduced likelihood of slippage.</p> <p>The following controls are in place with a view to developing a culture of scrutiny and challenge for officers to improve the accuracy of future bids:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly meetings take place between accountants and budget holders to monitor progress against original timeframes and costs; • Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) receive a quarterly report on the progress of capital projects against anticipated timeframes; • Performance Group comprising Chief Officers and cabinet Members receive a monthly report on the progress of current projects; • Reports go to Cabinet and all Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSC) every quarter. These reports have been redesigned to focus on the more immediate risk of in-year delivery, highlighting higher risk areas to invite closer scrutiny from Members. <p>The quarter 3 financial report in February outlined additional slippage on the capital programme for 22/23, With slippage of £2m on the general fund and £10.6m on the HRA for 22/23. The main reasons for this slippage is a combination of the planning moratorium preventing new planning approvals and supply chain of providers in delivering materials and goods such as the fleet replacement programme. It is likely that further slippage will happen in the 4th quarter, due to the ongoing impact of the moratorium and also because of one supplier failure in quarter 4, but these reports are still being finalised at present</p> <p>The overall risk score reduced in quarter 3 but has remained static in quarter 4. The likelihood of delayed spending has increased whilst the impact of delays reduced as finance have taken mitigating actions to reduce the impact of this delay.</p>
	Evidence Risk is being managed	<p>The General Fund and New House Building capital programmes have been maintained throughout the pandemic and covid recovery period. The timeframes have extended as a result of covid, and the capital programme has been adjusted accordingly. There has been no significant financial pressures realised to date as a result of the capital programme being delayed.</p> <p>The recent increase in capital project costs has been maintained within existing contingency budgets, it is expected that future procurement of construction partners will exceed historic cost expectations.</p>

	Detail	31 Dec 2023
		Status
	Consequences / Impacts	<p>Many of the major projects within the Capital Programme are fundamental to delivery of the Council's corporate objectives. Therefore significant delays can impact on the achievement of the corporate plan.</p> <p>Financial decision-making is negatively affected if the timing of projects in the Capital Programme is wrong. This can result in lost investment income or increased interest costs as the Council moves closer to the point where it will need to borrow.</p> <p>The estimated delivery date is considered as part of the decision to allocate capital funds to one project over another. If estimated timings are not accurate, there is a risk that the allocation of funds is not being decided on appropriately.</p> <p>If inaccurate project management is tolerated, there is a risk that the culture of financial management across the Council will be negatively affected which will have consequences for wider financial decision-making.</p> <p>Not delivering major projects within the timeframe to which it has committed itself exposes the Council to reputational risk.</p>
#RM00000059	Risk Owner	Nigel Howcutt
	Portfolio	Housing and Property Services
	Risk Description	Failure to optimise income generated by commercial assets
	Reference to Strategic Objectives / Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance & Resources Operational Risk Register #RM00000068
	Inherent Score	4 ▲
	Mitigated Score	
	Risk Appetite	
	Comments	Year to date financial performance of the commercial property portfolio and car parking is tracking ahead of budget. Garages income is tracking around 2% behind target. These assets make up the majority of the Council's commercial assets.

	Detail	31 Dec 2023
		Status
	Controls & Assurances	<p>The following controls aim to mitigate the risk of under-performance of the Council's commercial assets by maintaining good communication links between relevant Council services, and by regularly monitoring performance against targets (see KPIs CP01 and CP02) to ensure that underperformance is identified and addressed as quickly as possible. The existence of these controls has led to the 'Inherent Probability' of this risk occurring reducing.</p> <p>Estates officers responsible for negotiating rent reviews hold monthly meetings with the Debtors team to track current bad debtors. This increases their understanding of the economic pressures businesses are facing, and how it can impact on council income.</p> <p>There are currently InPhase performance targets to maintain the number of voids (empty properties) below 5%, and to keep the rent arrears below 10%. Failure to meet either of these targets would prompt further investigation.</p> <p>The post covid period has resulted in larger levels of debt from the period of the pandemic and as such increased levels of payment plans that result in slower payment of rental.</p> <p>The financial performance is reviewed monthly and reported as part of the corporate financial performance framework, resulting in quarterly reports to scrutiny and cabinet.</p>
	Evidence Risk is being managed	<p>In 2019/20 the commercial property service achieved occupancy of 96.2% with rent arrears of only 7%. This performance is above the targeted KPI levels and well ahead of commercial expectations.</p> <p>In 20/21 when Covid impacted the occupancy level remained strong at 95% with arrears increasing to 15% in 20/21, and up to 20% in 21/22 in reaction to the pandemic and in particular government covid restriction policies in relation to rent arrears and evictions. Arrears in 2022/23 have been on average about circa 20% which is ahead of the market average for the retail sector of circa 60%, but behind pre covid levels.</p> <p>The service have increased the number of payment plans and alternative methods for debt collection in this period and this has meant debt levels are higher than previous levels but have remained below sector averages. In a post covid scenario and with the release of government covid policies the commercial property team and debt collection service are working proactively to assess and collect outstanding debt.</p>
	Consequences / Impacts	<p>The council has a significant portfolio of commercially let properties, which provides one of the council's largest sources of income.</p> <p>Council officers must attempt to maximize income from these assets whilst avoiding the risk of vacant properties and increasing bad debts, which could arise if rents are set too high, and would jeopardise the council's achievement of its corporate objectives of Regeneration and Economic Development.</p> <p>The continuing decline in the economic environment and the difficulties it brings for local businesses increases the likelihood of this risk crystallising.</p>
#RM00000095	Risk Owner	Nigel Howcutt
	Portfolio	Housing and Property Services
	Risk Description	Variances in General Fund revenue budget
	Reference to Strategic Objectives / Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance & Resources Operational Risk Register #RM00000068

	Detail	31 Dec 2023
		Status
	Inherent Score	4 ▲
	Mitigated Score	
	Risk Appetite	
	Comments	The quarter 3 financial performance report, presented at Scrutiny, details the outturn projection. The General Fund is expected to deliver an underspend in 2023/24, predominantly due to strong performance of the treasury management service, due to both higher cash balances and interest rates than previously projected at budget setting.
	Controls & Assurances	<p>The following controls aim to reduce the probability of there being a variance in the General Fund Revenue Budget by ensuring that there is strong challenge put to Budget Holders on the robustness of their assumptions, from a range of audiences.</p> <p>It is intended that these controls will increase the opportunity for flawed assumptions to be exposed as soon as possible, as well as incorporating a stronger culture of financial management across the Council leading to continuous improvement in the setting of accurate budgets.</p> <p>The annual budget-setting process consists of an ongoing scrutiny process in which senior officers from across the Council, together with the Financial Services team, challenge the following year's budget bids from Group Managers.</p> <p>This scrutiny process is augmented by the Budget Review Group (BRG), consisting of officers and the Portfolio Holder and Leader, provides early Member-level challenge.</p> <p>There are two opportunities for OSCs to scrutinise the budget proposals and directly question the relevant officers before the budget report is finalised and considered by Cabinet and Council.</p> <p>Once approved, in-year budget performance is managed through monthly reporting to the SLT which underpin quarterly reports to Cabinet and OSCs.</p> <p>The Council's Financial Regulations provide a guide to all budget-holders and are subject to annual review.</p>
	Evidence Risk is being managed	<p>The Financial Performance for 2022/23 was in line with budgeted expectations, and the reserves support provided from the economic recovery reserve was in line with budgeted expectations.</p> <p>The budget required additional in year draw downs from reserves to support the inflationary pressures leading to an increased pay award and increased cost in utilities as well as to support new one off corporate initiatives.</p>
	Consequences / Impacts	<p>Accurate, well-controlled budgeting relates directly to the corporate Objective creating a modern and efficient council. Indirectly, through the financial decision-making process, this links to the achievement of all of the Council's corporate objectives.</p> <p>Inaccurate budgeting negatively affects the Council's ability to make evidence-based decisions. A significant underspend at year-end could indicate that funds have been needlessly diverted from a competing priority. A significant overspend at year-end could result in reserves being used to support lower priority objectives. Both of these could result in reputational damage for the Council.</p> <p>Failure to address the causes of inaccurate budgeting could negatively impact the Council's culture of financial management, which in turn increases the risk of poor financial decision-making.</p>



Finance and Resources

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Quarter 3 Performance Report – People Transformation Digital and ICT Communications
Date:	5 March 2024
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Carole Weston
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	N/A
Background papers:	Nil
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	KPI – Key Performance Indicators

Report Author / Responsible Officer

Aidan Wilkie (Strategic Director – People & Transformation)

Matt Rawdon, Assistant Director (People)

Kelvin Soley, Head of Communications

Shaj Choudhury, Head of Transformation

Yvonne Salvin, Head of Digital



Matt.Rawdon@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228513 (ext. 2513)

Kelvin.Soley@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228504 (ext. 2504)

Shaj.choudhury@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228166 (ext. 2166)

Yvonne.salvin@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228454 (ext.2454)

Corporate Priorities	A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery Climate and ecological emergency
Wards affected	All wards
Purpose of the report:	1. To provide the Q3 performance information for monitoring and information
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	1. That Members note the report and identify any areas where they require additional information
Period for post policy/project review:	N/A

Introduction

1. This paper will provide an update on service performance over Q3 2023/2024 for Digital and ICT and Communications, and highlight key achievements over this same period. Performance for People and Transformation are included in separate reports.

Digital and ICT

2. IT Systems availability (99%) continue to be positive within the quarter demonstrating the fundamental reliability of the Council's technology infrastructure.
3. The primary performance indicator (ICT01 - Percentage of incidents resolved in less than 2 days) was amber within the quarter at 83% against a target of 90%. The Digital Team has had a vacancy in the team for over 12 months affecting performance. Recent recruitment has been successful with the candidate expected to join the team within the next few weeks. In January 2024 performance improved significantly with 93% of tickets closed within 2 days against the target of 90%. With the new member of the team in place we anticipate this performance continuing to improve.
4. Significant work was completed within the quarter to enable the council to purchase a new digital platform. Commercial board approved our procurement approach in December 2023. In January, after receiving approval from our Portfolio Holder Carole Weston, we signed a contract with Netcall Technologies. This is a significant milestone for the council and our ambition to deliver the digital strategy & customer service strategy. Recruitment has commenced in line with the agreed business case and training is now underway.
5. To further enhance Dacorum's cyber security position, it is good practice to protect access to our cloud applications with Multi Factor Authentication (MFA). In October 2023 the Digital team got approval from SLT to roll out MFA across all users. We successfully completed the roll out in January 2024 further strengthening our cybersecurity posture.
6. Public Sector Network (PSN) compliance and certification gives Dacorum confidence that the services we use over our network are compliant and that our data is protected. Government requirements are designed to ensure that we are defended against common threats such as opportunistic hackers and abuses of business processes, whilst being proportionate and aligned to our corporate objectives. The

PSN certificate is issued annually, and the Digital team is required to go through a robust audit process to maintain compliance. The audit process was completed in Quarter three and the 2024 certification was awarded to Dacorum in early January 2024.

- .7. A significant amount of work was completed during quarter three to upgrade systems across our network. These include upgrades to our external website Sitefinity, our planning system, Uniform and our Geospatial software, CadCorp.

Communications

- 7.1 In Q3 we delivered against our external communications programme supporting corporate projects and events across DBC services and partner organisations. This includes 757 social media campaigns on our corporate channels (Facebook, X formerly Twitter and LinkedIn), 29 news articles (website and press releases), and more than 170,000 emails (e-newsletters) sent via our digital publications portfolio.
- 7.2 In Q3 we delivered on our events and awareness programme including the highly popular Halloween and Fireworks display (Old Town), attended by thousands of residents. We also delivered the Remembrance events, including the Parade, with key partners and agencies, voluntary and community sector groups.
- 7.3 In Q3 we delivered on our internal communications programme, including our Staff Magazine, a 'Staff Town Hall', with 300 colleagues attending and staff engagement event (Bring and Share), bring our staff together and building a positive workforce. In Q3, we issued 47 internal communication campaigns across internal channels, such as our intranet, covering general staff news, corporate information (projects and initiatives) and staff events. During this period we also finalised our annual staff survey action plan.
- 7.4 We have delivered our programme of print and digital publications, including 12 issues of our weekly *Dacorum Life* digital newsletter (currently 13,026 subscribers – increase of 111 from Q2 2023/24).
- 7.5 Social media statistics: Our social media channels continue to grow organically at a healthy rate compared to similar local authorities.
- o Dacorum BC **Facebook** – October to December 2023:
 - o Connections – 13,276 (increase of 286 from Q2 2023/24)
 - o Link clicks – 5,059
 - o Posts – 324
 - o Dacorum BC **X (formerly Twitter)** – October to December 2023:
 - o Connections – 8,987 8,968 (increase of 19 from Q2 2023/24)
 - o Link clicks – 1,155
 - o Posts – 271
 - o Dacorum BC **LinkedIn** – October to December 2023:
 - o Connections – 5,413 5,268 (increase of 145 from Q2 2023/24)
 - o Link clicks – 662
 - o Posts – 162



Finance and Resources

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	People Service - Update
Date:	5 th March 2024
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Carole Weston, Portfolio Holder for People and Transformation
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	n/a
Appendices:	Nil
Background papers:	Nil
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	<p>EDI – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>HR – Human Resources</p> <p>RAG – RED, Amber, Green</p> <p>FTE – Full Time Equivalent</p> <p>CLT – Corporate Leadership Team</p> <p>SLT – Strategic Leadership Team</p>

Report Authors / Responsible Officers

Aidan Wilkie – Strategic Director (People and Transformation)

Aidan.wilkie@dacorum.gov.uk

Matt Rawdon – Assistant Director (People)

Matthew.rawdon@dacorum.gov.uk

Corporate Priorities	Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery
Wards affected	N/A
Purpose of the report:	1. To provide the committee with a corporate staffing update and to highlight the associated the work programme.
Recommendation:	1. For the committee to review and provide feedback.
Period for post policy/project review:	The work programme forms part of the Transformation

People Service Update

Introduction

The Chair of the Finance and Resource Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested a separate paper updating the committee on 3 specific areas:

- Recruitment;
- Staff turnover;
- Sickness;

Recruitment

The Council's existing vacancy rate is circa. 15%. A rate of 5-10% is generally seen as optimal. Our current rate is impacted by a number of vacant posts which are on hold pending restructures, principally relating to Housing and Legal services. If we exclude these 'on hold' vacancies the rate is approximately 11%.

The Council is keen that managers proactively progress our job vacancies so that no time is lost in replacing staff members. Performance is managed on this rigorously including a new monthly vacancy tracker at SLT where Chief Officers can gain assurance over recruitment progress.

We are also working to improve our recruitment advertising approach. This work will focus on our branding and streamlining the process so that people can easily find and apply for our roles. LinkedIn is proving our principle advertising media focusing on the 'Dacorum offer' highlighting advantages such as work/life balance and supportive benefits. Further work will also explore the brand of Dacorum and how this is presented, so potential applicants understand our purpose and values as an organisation.

The recruitment market is clearly competitive in many areas, especially for 'professional' roles. In these pockets across Dacorum, we need to think creatively around pay and structures. Our market forces policy is already having an impact in those areas (e.g. planners) and we are considering whether different structures and pay bands maybe required for specialist roles.

With the market challenges and an aging workforce (approximately 70% of staff are over 40 years old), we need to think differently and innovatively about how we can generate interest about working for Dacorum. In recent months we have done the following to help this:

- We have attended a job career fair event with various schools at Shendish Manor;
- We also attended a session with Wilkinsons (for staff at risk of redundancy due to its closure in Hemel Hempstead).
- We are also exploring opportunities to work with the Mount Prison on work placements.
- We have a meeting in Q4 with the local college to see we can work together for job placements or paid employment.
- We have set up a project group to improve our school summer work experience programme. The corporate management team is currently establishing how their services can support this programme. It is likely that we could offer up to 10 placements this year.

- We have recently increased graduate intake through the national graduate development programme (3 graduates per year now rather than 1 per year). All three new graduates have been inducted and have started in their roles.
- We have trained 16 members of staff via the apprenticeship levy over the past 2 years. The Council is reviewing a further increased offering of apprentices and graduates as part of the service planning process for 2024/2025. This would enable us to 'grow our own' in these challenging service areas.

Staff Turnover

The annual staff turnover percentage is currently 13% which is considered a healthy staff turnover rate in the UK. The Council's annual staff turnover rate has been between 10%-15% for many years.

There is a clear correlation between areas of higher than average staff turnover (Property, Planning, Homelessness, and Legal) and specific recruitment challenges. This is likely linked to market-related issues such as skills shortages and market pay inflation. Initiatives to combat this are set out in the recruitment section within this paper.

While the Council's staff turnover is healthy, we continue to strive to be the 'employer of choice'. Our people strategy 2022 to 2025 recognises the importance of strong leadership, management and career development to make the Council a workplace where staff wish to stay.

The people strategy programme plan is currently in delivery. Please see below some of the key developments in this area:

- **Leadership development programme launched for middle managers.** Over 50 managers are soon to complete this programme. It included training on coaching skills, change management and empowering teams to take initiative and ownership. The learnings from this programme will help shape our mandatory manager programme.
- **Mandatory Management Programme.** This will focus on what skills/competencies does a great manager need to possess to drive our Council forward. We aim to implement this in the summer/autumn.
- **Embedding our new values and behaviours** A new set of values and behaviours were developed by staff. These set out our desired workplace culture. These were launched to the workforce last year and are now being embedded e.g. in performance management, recruitment. This work is being led by a cross-council staff group.
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.** We have an EDI action plan overseen by an EDI working group from across the Council. The next key projects are establishing a celebration/recognition events calendar for 2024, reviewing the community impact assessment process to ensure it is robust and meaningful and exploring how we can improve EDI data on our staff and community.
- **Revised PDR (appraisal) and talent management plan.** We will be reviewing our performance development review process to ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to thrive and develop.
- **Future Talent Programme.** We will also be developing a future talent programme which will focus on providing those with an interest to progress their career with the opportunity to develop their skills and broaden their experience.
- **Enhancing our new starter and manager Induction programmes.** This will ensure that each new starter and manager has a positive start to their Dacorum experience and feels supported and included from day 1.
- **Coaching and Mentoring Scheme** In Q3 the Council launched a workplace coaching scheme for staff to become a trained workplace coach. We currently have three qualified training coaches

with 5 further employees interested in the next round of training. A mentor scheme is currently being explored to further support staff who wish to progress their careers.

Sickness Absence

The sickness outturn for this quarter (Q3) is more than the last quarter (Q2) with an average of between 11 and 12 sick days per FTE. The main reasons for this increase are increased absences in the following areas: Flu/colds, Stress and Musculoskeletal.

These make up a large proportion of sickness absence. The area of the highest sickness absence falls within the Neighbourhood Operations service area, which consists of mainly front line services (Waste and Clean, Safe and Green) and where the nature of the work (outdoors and physical) is more likely to result in an absence.

Higher levels of sickness is consistent across all sectors including the public sector so our figures are not unusual. However the data does show that the Council's long term sickness absence is causing a significant impact on our overall sickness outturn: long term sickness absence has increased by a third over the past four years.

Indeed, over the past year there have been some very serious medical cases that have resulted in staff being absent from work for a significant period of time. These cases are very sensitive and will often result in a staff member being away from work for up to 12 months. For context, 10 cases of serious long term sickness has resulted in over 1,500 working days lost, this equates to adding over 2 days sickness per FTE on the Council total.

The sickness scrutiny group continues to assess all long-term sickness cases each month to ensure the Council is doing all it can to support staff back to work, by ensuring we have the latest medical information from our Occupational Health team, looking at what adjustments we can make to roles and where cases need to be escalated to a formal process in line with the policy. We work closely with managers to ensure regular contact is made with staff who are absent from work as this is a critical aspect to help staff back to the workplace. For example, weekly sickness management and HR meetings recently set at Cupid green to proactively manage sickness absence across the depot.

The Council continue to arrange staff wellness offers which includes courses, webinars, exercise classes and other support. We run wellness clinics across the Council so that staff can have wellness checks through a qualified nurse. We also have a mental health first aider programme, with a cohort of trained staff who can be the first port of call for our workforce should they need some assistance. We also offer a free confidential helpline to staff where they can seek professional advice and counselling. Our leadership development course for all middle managers contains a module on how we effectively manage staff through change and how we best manage anxious staff.

We continue to trial an onsite physio treatment and a clinic at Cupid Green depot. This encourages safer working practices to try and prevent injuries and bad working habits with frontline staff. We will be assessing the effectiveness of this and will be discussing future options with the cupid green management team.

We have also recently completed a flu vaccination programme across the Council, are about to launch our menopause policy and will be reviewing the approach to 'special leave'. All of these should impact positively on our sickness rate.



Finance and Resources

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Customer Service Update
Date:	5 th March 2024
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Carole Weston, Portfolio Holder for People and Transformation
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	n/a
Appendices:	Nil
Background papers:	Nil
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	<p>RAG – RED, Amber, Green</p> <p>CSU – Customer Service Unit</p> <p>IVR - Integrated Voice Recognition Service</p> <p>KPI – Key Performance Indicator</p> <p>CLT – Corporate Leadership Team</p> <p>SLT – Strategic Leadership Team</p>

Report Authors / Responsible Officers

Aidan Wilkie – Strategic Director (People and Transformation)

Aidan.wilkie@dacorum.gov.uk

Shaj Choudhury – Head of Transformation

Shaj.choudhury@dacorum.gov.uk

Corporate Priorities	Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery
Wards affected	N/A
Purpose of the report:	1. To provide the committee with an update on work being undertaken to improve performance within the Customer Services Unit.
Recommendation:	1. For the committee to review and provide feedback.
Period for post policy/project review:	

Customer Service Update

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. This service update paper of the people section was requested by the Chair of the Finance and Resource Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The brief was to provide the committee with a status on efforts being undertaken to reduce call wait times for customers and residents telephoning Dacorum Council's customer services number.

2.0 Background

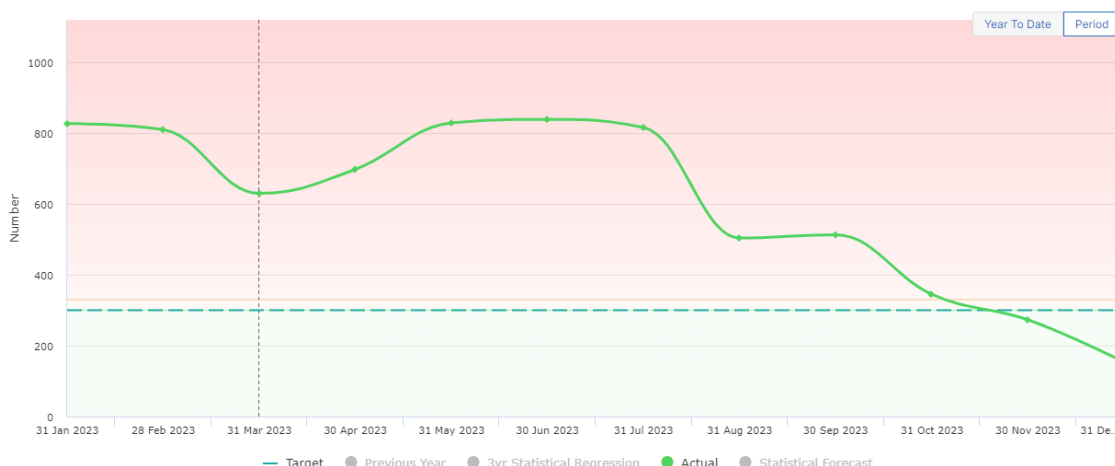
- 2.1. The Customer Service Unit (CSU) was created following the consolidation of public facing telephone numbers and call handlers that were previously sitting within services across the Council into one central function which would act as the front office for most service. This led to a single switchboard number (01442 228000) being created which would route through to the CSU to answer and resolve queries in the first instance.
- 2.2. In 2013, the service was outsourced to Northgate to deliver savings/efficiencies and a target of 5-minute call wait time (300 seconds) was set as a performance measure as part of the contract. Northgate undertook a review of the resourcing levels and management structure and a number of roles were deleted to deliver savings.
- 2.3. The outsourced contract was reviewed, and the service was brought back in house in 2017 and the same staffing levels were retained. Service level agreements are now in place between CSU and the different services across the Council to answer calls, resolve queries and process some front office transactions on behalf of services (e.g. processing payments, booking appointments etc.)
- 2.4. Calls in relation to housing repairs are not currently processed by the CSU as this service forms part of the Housing Repairs contract currently provided by Osbornes Property Services Limited. Any calls in relation to Housing repairs that come in to the CSU are transferred back to Osbornes.
- 2.5. The CSU is currently resourced with 16.8 full time equivalent (FTE) CSU representatives, two FTE supervisors, 0.7 FTE training officer and a CSU Team Manager.
- 2.6. Each CSU representative will need to be trained with the relevant skillset to take calls on behalf of a particular service and act as the front of house for that service. This also means being trained on subject matter expertise as well as trained on multiple back-office systems. As a result, different CSU representatives have different skills profiles based on their level of experience.
- 2.7. When a call is made to the main switchboard, the call is routed through the Integrated Voice Recognition Service (IVR) which seeks to determine what the callers query is in relation to. It then routes the call through to the CSU representative with the correct skills profile for the call. The CSU representative will then answer the call and process the query by logging on to the relevant back-office system.
- 2.8. Supervisors monitor the quality of the calls and oversee the CSU advisors via a dashboard which highlights how many callers are on the phone and call duration, how many callers are waiting, and call wait times etc.

- 2.9. In addition to answering calls that come through the main switchboard, the CSU also operate the reception desk at the Forum, offer face-face appointments to customers where required and respond to and resolve queries that come in via email and social media channels.

3.0 Performance

Performance levels

- 3.1. The CSU currently have a target of 300 seconds for call wait time as a Key Performance Indicator reported to SLT monthly and to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis.
- 3.2. Performance against this target has been a challenge for several reasons, namely due to the mismatch between increasing demand levels and the resourcing levels in CSU. Given demand also fluctuates throughout the year, call wait times vary month on month. The target of 300 seconds has been difficult to achieve in Q1 and Q2.
- 3.3. Average call wait times for Q1 was 788.67 seconds, well above the target. we have been undertaking several actions to improve performance and reduce call wait times. In Q2, we saw a slight reduction to 611 seconds. Further efforts have allowed us to bring performance levels in Q3 to below target, **with an average call wait time of 257.33 seconds**. The table below shows the average call wait times across 2023 and indicated that the actions we have been implementing are having an impact on call wait times.



Key Performance Indicator

- 3.4. A target of 300 seconds call wait times was set when the service was outsourced to monitor performance of the contractor. Northgate made several staffing reductions when the service was outsourced, and the reduced staffing levels have remained in place when the service was brought back in house.
- 3.5. Due to external issues such as cost of living crisis, increased homelessness and central government pushing more responsibilities onto local Government, there has been an increased level of demand on CSU. Due to the lack of self-service options at present, this has resulted in more calls and more customers turning up to the forum with queries and for support.
- 3.6. As part of the corporate review of KPIs, we have modelled the call wait times against the maximum staffing profile to understand what is achievable in terms of maximum call wait times with the resourcing profile we currently have against this increasing levels of demand. The outcome from the modelling exercise determined that an average call wait time of 300 seconds was unlikely to be met across the year. We also found that using an average wait time did not

provide a full picture of how long most callers were waiting on the telephone before their call was answered and virtual wait times for those requesting a call back was skewing the average wait times. Using the modelling data, we have therefore suggested a new KPI which will measure our ability to answer 90% of calls within target.

4.0 Actions to improve performance.

Improved service performance

- 4.1. In addition to the KPI measuring average call wait times, we have specific operational performance indicators in place to measure performance of each Customer Service representative. This measures average call duration time, with a target of 300 seconds and average wrap up time of 210 seconds (time taken to complete the query or process on the relevant system once the caller hangs up). This means that the quicker we can complete the call and undertake the wrap up activity, the sooner we can answer the next call.
- 4.2. Individual performance against these two measures have hugely improved over the last few months, and we have managed to bring the average call duration down to an average of 277 seconds in Q3 and average wrap up time of 89 seconds in Q3, well below target.
- 4.3. We have also increased oversight and management of the dashboard to ensure we increase the amount of skills profile for certain services when demand for those subject increases at a particular point in the day. Using the data, we monitor which subject areas have higher call numbers and higher average call duration and we divert skills from subjects with lower demand/lower call durations so we can balance out call wait times. Supervisors are also making themselves available to answer calls if call wait times become too high.
- 4.4. There have been instances in the past where call durations are lengthened whilst the CSU representative tries to get hold of back-office teams to respond to queries. This has a knock-on impact on call wait times. To address this, we have established new protocols with back-office services where a 'duty officer' is allocated in the service for CSU staff to seek support for customers and avoid any delays in responding to enquiries.
- 4.5. We have also introduced a monthly report to the corporate leadership team (CLT) which includes data on call volumes and call durations. This allows us to flag with services around increased demand in relation to their service and discuss things that can be done in collaboration to reduce the demand levels or how best to ensure call duration is managed. This process also allows us to take a co-ordinated approach to mass communication to residents and customers that could lead to a surge in calls into the CSU, phasing communication so any potential surge is balanced out over a few weeks.

Callback facility

- 4.6. We have a call back facility which allows customers to leave their number and their call will be held in a virtual call, once it reaches the top of the queue the system dials the customer and calls them back. This was previously offered up to 2pm to ensure the customer could be called back by the end of the day. Adjustments have made this available to customers over longer periods of the day, allowing call wait times to be reduced and allow customers to continue with their day until their call is returned.

Improvements to the Integrated Voice Recognition System

- 4.7. Working with the Transformation team, the IVR system has been reviewed, taking on board customer feedback to improve the customer journey. We have made several changes to the

steps and scripts to allow customers to get through to the relevant service or CSU agent dealing with that service area more quickly and easily. More automation has also been added allowing customers to self-serve and make use of the digital options available to them and avoiding the need to speak with a CSR.

- 4.8. In parallel to the IVR work, improvements have also been made to some of the Web pages to direct customers to self-serve easier, again removing the need for them to phone for information they can easily find on the website, and they can then transact at a time that is convenient to them without having to wait on the phone.

Staffing

- 4.9. Staffing is a huge challenge in the CSU. Given the CSU representative roles are entry level roles, there is a high level of turnover. A number of CSU staff end up applying for internal roles as they already have subject matter and back-office system experience gained whilst working within the CCU. From October 2022 to October 2023, CSU experienced the equivalent of 32.5% staff turnover, nearly three times as much as the DBC average.
- 4.10. To try and mitigate the impact on call wait times, we have looked at recruiting to vacant posts in more creative ways. We have looked at the resourcing profile against customer demand and where appropriate have recruited to different shift patterns e.g. when recent vacancies arose, rather than recruiting to a full-time post, we used these hours to recruit 2 part time Customer Service Representatives to cover the lunchtime periods when calls were busier.
- 4.11. We have also created a dedicated training officer role so we can ensure we can increase the skills profile for each CSU representative so they can resolve queries for a wider range of services. This now gives a consistent, planned, and timely training programme for new starters and existing team members to ensure staff can be trained quicker. As a result, calls can be spread more widely across the team. In addition, the training officer is in constant contact with back-office services to understand changes to service processes and systems so that CSU representatives can be brought up to speed quickly which ensures calls are managed more effectively.

Customer Strategy

- 4.12. We have been developing our customer strategy programme which seeks to improve overall customer experience, reduce failure demand and avoidable contact, and increase self-service options for customers. This will have a huge impact on call wait times as more customers will either not need to call us or be able to do more without having to call us.
- 4.13. As part of this programme, we have been redesigning processes in Revenues and Benefits and launching self-service channels which will make the process more efficient and must faster for customers to process moving in/out of an address and issue refunds where required. This will also help reduce the volume of call into CSU and back office.

Clerk: Trudi Angel

Finance and Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024/2025

Meeting Date	Report Deadline	Items	Contact Details	Background information
4 June 2024	24 May 2024	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Democratic Services Trudi.angel@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Q4 Corporate & Commercial Performance Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance and Resources Legal and Democratic Services Commercial Development Services GF Property Service 	Strategic Director, Corporate and Commercial Catherine.silvadoonayre@dacorum.gov.uk Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic Services Mark.brookes@dacorum.gov.uk Head of Commercial Development Ben.Hosier@dacorum.gov.uk Strategic Director, Housing & Property Services Darren.Welsh@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>
		Q4 Financial Monitoring Report	Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>
		Q4 People and Transformation Performance Report	Strategic Director, People and Transformation Aidan.wilkie@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>
2 July 2024	21 June 2024	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Democratic Services Trudi.angel@dacorum.gov.uk	

3 September 2024	22 August 2024	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Democratic Services Trudi.angel@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Q1 Corporate & Commercial Performance Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance and Resources Legal and Democratic Services Commercial Development Services GF Property Service 	Strategic Director, Corporate and Commercial Catherine.silvadoonayre@dacorum.gov.uk Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic Services Mark.brookes@dacorum.gov.uk Head of Commercial Development Ben.Hosier@dacorum.gov.uk Strategic Director, Housing & Property Services Darren.Welsh@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>
		Q1 Financial Monitoring Report	Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>
		Q1 People and Transformation Performance Report	Strategic Director, People and Transformation Aidan.wilkie@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>
8 October 2024	27 September 2024	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Democratic Services Trudi.angel@dacorum.gov.uk	
5 November 2024	25 October 2024	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Democratic Services Trudi.angel@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Q2 Corporate & Commercial	Strategic Director, Corporate	<i>To review and scrutinise</i>

		Performance Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance and Resources Legal and Democratic Services Commercial Development Services GF Property Service 	and Commercial Catherine.silvadoonayre@dacorum.gov.uk Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic Services Mark.brookes@dacorum.gov.uk Head of Commercial Development Ben.Hosier@dacorum.gov.uk Strategic Director, Housing & Property Services Darren.Welsh@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>quarterly performance</i>
		Q2 Financial Monitoring Report	Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>
		Q2 People and Transformation Performance Report	Strategic Director, People and Transformation Aidan.wilkie@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>
4 December 2024	25 November 2024	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Democratic Services Trudi.angel@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Joint Budget	Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>To review and scrutinise the draft budget proposals for 25-26</i>
14 January 2025	3 January 2025	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Democratic Services Trudi.angel@dacorum.gov.uk	

5 February 2025	27 January 2025	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Democratic Services Trudi.angel@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Joint Budget	Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	To review and scrutinise the draft budget proposals for 25-26
4 March 2025	21 February 2025	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Democratic Services Trudi.angel@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Q3 Corporate & Commercial Performance Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance and Resources Legal and Democratic Services Commercial Development Services GF Property Service 	Strategic Director, Corporate and Commercial Catherine.silvadonayre@dacorum.gov.uk Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic Services Mark.brookes@dacorum.gov.uk Head of Commercial Development Ben.Hosier@dacorum.gov.uk Strategic Director, Housing & Property Services Darren.Welsh@dacorum.gov.uk	To review and scrutinise quarterly performance
		Q3 Financial Monitoring Report	Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	To review and scrutinise quarterly performance
		Q3 People and Transformation Performance Report	Strategic Director, People and Transformation Aidan.wilkie@dacorum.gov.uk	To review and scrutinise quarterly performance