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**FINANCE AND RESOURCES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE AGENDA**

**TUESDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 7.30 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 2 - THE FORUM**

Membership

Councillor Rick Freedman (Chair)
Councillor Graeme Elliot (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Jonathan Gale
Councillor Paul Reynolds
Councillor Victoria Santamaria
Councillor Robert Stewart
Councillor Gbola Adeleke

Councillor Fiona Guest
Councillor Heather Pound
Councillor Pete Hannell
Councillor Sadie Hobson
Councillor Andrew Williams MBE
Councillor David Deacon
Councillor Garrick Stevens

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	WORK PROGRAMME	(Pages 7 - 9)
8	QUARTER 1 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT	(Pages 10 - 24)
9	QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT - CORPORATE & COMMERCIAL	(Pages 25 - 40)
10	QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT - PEOPLE AND TRANSFORMATION	(Pages 41 - 48)
11	CUSTOMER CHARTER UPDATE	(Pages 49 - 56)

MINUTES

FINANCE & RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 JULY 2024

Present:

Members:

Councillor Freedman (Chair)	Councillor Pound
Councillor Elliot (Vice-Chair)	Councillor A Williams
Councillor Guest	Councillor Hannell
Councillor Stevens	Councillor Stewart
Councillor Reynolds	

Officers:

Catherine Silva Donayre (Strategic Director, Corporate and Commercial) (Remotely)
Nigel Howcutt (Chief Finance Officer)
David Barrett (Assistant Director, Strategic Housing and Delivery)
Mark Pinnell (Assistant Director, Property) (Remotely)
Ben Hosier (Head of Commercial Development)
Trudi Angel (Democratic Support Officer)

Also in attendance:

Councillor Tindall (Portfolio Holder for People and Transformation)
Councillor Capozzi (Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Commercial)

The meeting started at 7:30 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, Gale, S Hobson and Santamaria.

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

N Howcutt provided a response to the following action point from the meeting in March:

Question: Cllr Weston asked N Howcutt to provide figures for any debts written off and the reasons.

Response: There was £112k of write off in 2023/24, of which 75% of that was related to five commercial tenants that gone bankrupt or had no means of repaying. Those debts had been accrued over several years.

The residual debt of circa 30,000 is across a turnover of approx. £50million across the council, so is small in terms of the level of write offs. In terms of the commercial rent, although we did write off £74,000 of debt which is from multiple years, that still only equates to 1.2% of the annual commercial rental income collected.

The write offs are incredibly small and they all follow due process which requires sign off, and any value over £50,000 requires Portfolio Holder sign off as well. So there is a thorough process there.

The action point from June had been completed and circulated to members.

7. STRATEGIC ASSET REVIEW UPDATE

C Silva Donayre introduced the report and advised it provided a progress update on the Strategic Asset Review (SAR) programme since Cabinet approved proposals in June 2023.

Please refer to the video minutes for full discussion.

Outcome

The committee noted the progress on the Council's Strategic Asset Review programme.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

There were no changes to the work programme.

9. PROVISIONAL FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT 2023/24

N Howcutt provided details of the 2023-24 provisional financial outturn for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and the Capital Programme.

Please refer to the video minutes for full discussion.

Outcome

1. The committee noted the provisional 2023-24 financial outturn position and associated reserve movements for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme.
2. The committee noted the proposed reserve movements, virements and supplementary budgets highlighted in the report.

Action

Cllr Elliot requested a breakdown of expenditure for the waste service. He also asked for a comparison of expenditure against the previous year. (N Howcutt)

The meeting ended at 8.56 pm.

Finance and Resources OSC Action Points – July

Date of meeting	Action point	Responsible officer	Date action completed	Response
15/07/24	<p><u>Item 9: Provisional Financial Outturn Report 2023/24</u> Cllr Elliot requested a breakdown of expenditure for the waste service. He also asked for a comparison of expenditure against the previous year.</p>	N Howcutt	Ongoing	

Clerk: Trudi Angel

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

Meeting Date	Report Deadline	Items	Contact Details	Background information
8 October 2024	27 September 2024	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Democratic Services Trudi.angel@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Commissioning & Procurement Standing Orders	Head of Commercial Development Ben.Hosier@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Review & Update (Procurement Act 2023)		
		Medium Term Financial Strategy	Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	
		2025/26 Fees and Charges Review	Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	
5 November 2024	25 October 2024	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Democratic Services Trudi.angel@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Q2 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	<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>

			Strategic Director, Housing & Property Services Darren.Welsh@dacorum.gov.uk	
		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	
		EDI Strategy	Organisational Development Manager Stacie.young@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	<i>To review and scrutinise the draft budget proposals for 25-26</i>

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	<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>
		Q3 Financial Monitoring Report	Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>
		Q3 People and Transformation Performance Report	Strategic Director, People and Transformation Aidan.wilkie@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>



Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Financial Performance Quarter 1 2024/25
Date:	3 rd September 2024
Report on behalf of:	Cllr Michela Capozzi, Portfolio Holder for Corporate & Commercial Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix A – General Fund Revenue Q1 2024/25 Appendix B – Housing Revenue Account Q1 2024/25 Appendix C – Capital Programme Q1 2024/25
Background papers:	None.
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	GF – General Fund HRA – Housing Revenue Account

Report Author and 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:	1. To provide details of the Quarter 1 position 2024-25 for the:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund • Housing Revenue Account • Capital Programme
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	To note the Quarter 1 2024-25 forecast financial outturn position for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme.
Period for post policy/project review:	The Council's financial position is reported to committee on an ongoing, quarterly basis.

1. Executive Summary and Key Forecast Outturn Figures

This report presents the forecast outturn position for the Council as at 30 June 2024, Q1 2024/25.

- 1.1 The General Fund is reporting a forecast surplus against budget of £0.402m. This surplus is driven by returns on the investment of the Council's cash balances. The position includes some pressures against service expenditure budgets and income targets. This includes agency and vehicle repair costs in Environmental Services and a shortfall against income targets from investment properties and parking.
- 1.2 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is the Council's housing landlord function and is accounted for separately to General Fund services. At Q1, the HRA is reporting a budget pressure of £0.159m. A surplus is forecast against income targets, the result of reduced void rates and higher than expected performance related to supported housing charges. There are forecast pressures against utilities, repairs and maintenance.
- 1.3 The Council operates a capital programme across its General Fund and Housing Revenue Account that represents investment in its assets. General Fund capital schemes are forecasting an overspend of £0.073m and slippage of £3.647m. The majority of the overspend relates to Hemel Hempstead Sports Centre astroturf renewal. The slippage relates in the main to the developer of the new community facility and foodbank going into administration, delayed work on the Customer Relationship Management system and slippage on the CCTV work programme.
- 1.4 HRA capital schemes are forecasting an overspend of £0.327m and slippage of £7.712m. This relates to work on new build developments and planned expenditure on existing Council homes.

2. Summary Narrative and Forward Look

- 2.1 The Council set a balanced budget for 2024/25 in February 2024. This budget addressed known variances arising during 2023/24. As part of the 2023/24 provisional outturn report, it was identified that risks remained within the Council's financial position for 2024/25. Included within this were costs relating to the Council's Waste Services. These pressures are included in the forecast outturn for 2024/25 as at Q1 of the current financial year. General Fund income pressures for 2024/25 have been identified against investment properties and parking.
- 2.2 The HRA position for 2023/24 benefitted from a one-off provision release and draw down from revenue reserves. Reserves are finite in nature and cannot be relied on up to sustain the HRA indefinitely.
- 2.3 Within the Housing Revenue Account, the demand for repairs and maintenance to Council homes represents the biggest ongoing risk for the financial sustainability of the Council's housing landlord function. This is reflected in the Q1 2024/25 forecast financial position for the HRA. The Housing and Property service will monitor this closely to try to reduce budget pressures where possible.

2.4 Staffing costs also represent a risk to the HRA, with agency appointments to posts being made and permanent recruitment on hold as the service awaits the outcome of the Housing Transformation Improvement Programme review.

2.5 All General Fund and HRA risks are being closely monitored by service leads with support from the Council's Finance team. Emerging variances to budget and associated mitigating actions will be communicated to Members as part of the Council's regular financial reporting arrangements.

3. General Fund Position – all Scrutiny Committee Areas

3.1 Appendix A provides an overview of the General Fund forecast outturn position. The table below provides an overview for by scrutiny area.

Table 1- General Fund Position by Scrutiny Area	Current Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Variance	
			£m	%
Finance & Resources	7.134	7.825	0.691	9.7%
Strategic Planning and Environment	13.213	13.919	0.706	5.3%
Housing & Community	2.252	2.265	0.013	0.6%
Operational Cost	22.599	24.009	1.410	6.2%
Core Funding	(22.600)	(24.412)	(1.812)	8.0%
Contribution (to)/ from General Fund Working Balance	(0.001)	(0.403)	(0.402)	

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

Table 2 – Finance and Resources	Current Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Variance	
			£m	%
Chief Executives	1.347	1.368	0.021	1.6%
Housing & Property	(2.128)	(1.658)	0.470	(22.1%)
Neighbourhood Operations	(0.635)	(0.584)	0.051	(8.0%)
Corporate and Commercial	3.404	3.447	0.043	1.3%
People and Transformation	5.051	5.072	0.021	0.4%
Place	0.095	0.180	0.085	89.5%
Total Operating Cost	7.134	7.825	0.691	9.7%
Core Funding	(22.600)	(24.412)	(1.812)	8.0%

4.1 Key variances for 2024/25 reported against Finance and Resources General Fund service areas are outlined below.

4.2 Housing and Property

A pressure of £0.105m is reported on Civic Halls in respect of income, utilities and repairs. Included in this are costs and income relating to Victoria Hall, Tring and Berkhamsted Civic Centre and the Council's Community Centres.

Agency costs for surveyors within the Property team represent a pressure of £0.095m. Market forces supplements are now in place to support ongoing recruitment and retention within the service.

The commercial and operational property portfolio is reporting a net pressure of circa £0.226m, including increased maintenance, service charges and utility costs. This includes an income pressure of £0.320m against current income targets.

4.3 Neighbourhood Operations

There is a forecast shortfall against parking income targets of £100k. The announcement of a General Election in the summer has brought a delay to the consultation process for proposed changes to car parking fees and an associated pressure of £100k.

4.4 Place

There are forecast staffing pressures within the Place service. These are currently offset by additional income within the Place directorate that is reported against other OSC committee budgets.

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 higher than expected, generating an additional £1.908m. This is linked to slippage on the Council's capital programme leading to an increased level of cash balances for investment. Capital programme re-phasing (slippage and accelerated expenditure) is explained at section 8 of this report.

The forecast recharge for services provided from the General Fund to the HRA reflects an expected income reduction of £0.096m. This will be offset by cost underspends against services carrying out work for the HRA.

5. General Fund Position- Strategic Planning and Environment

Table 3 – Strategic Planning and Environment	Current	Forecast	Variance	
	Budget	Outturn	£m	%
	£m	£m		
Neighbourhood Operations	11.372	11.941	0.569	5.0%
Housing & Property	0.053	0.073	0.020	37.7%
People & Transformation	(0.114)	(0.040)	0.074	(64.9%)
Place	1.902	1.945	0.043	2.3%
Total Operating Cost	13.213	13.919	0.706	5.3%

5.1 Key variances for 2024/25 reported against Strategic Planning and Environment General Fund service areas are outlined below.

5.2 Neighbourhood Operations

Pressures on budgets within Environmental Services at Q1 total £0.502m. £0.267m relates to staffing costs across the service. These have been incurred in relation to sickness and to additional staff resources required to operate replacement vehicles when twin-pack waste vehicles are being repaired. There is a £0.200m pressure relating to repairs and maintenance on the Council's fleet vehicles. £0.035m relates to the hiring of vehicles during repairs and while new fleet is awaiting delivery. Further analysis is being undertaken to identify offsetting underspends and opportunities to reduce pressures.

A forecast pressure of £0.080m is reported on Trees and Woodlands works, a continuation of pressures reported in 2023/24. A review of tree works requirements and risks identified is being undertaken to assess the medium-term outlook for this service.

5.3 People & Transformation

A pressure of £0.070m is reported in relation to Filming budgets for 2024/25. Income has been lower than budget during the year. The income position continues to be closely monitored.

5.4 Place

There are pressures against Business Centre income and expenditure budgets. These are under ongoing review.

6. General Fund Position- Housing and Community

Table 4 – Housing and Community General Fund	Current Budget	Forecast	Variance	
	£m	Outturn £m	£m	%
Housing & Property	1.482	1.518	0.036	0.024
Neighbourhood Operations	(2.546)	(2.596)	(0.050)	0.020
Corporate and Commercial	(0.022)	0.044	0.066	(3.000)
People and Transformation	1.412	1.362	(0.050)	(0.035)
Place	1.926	1.937	0.011	0.006
Total Operating Cost	2.252	2.265	0.013	0.006

6.1 Variances for 2024/25 reported against Housing and Communities General Fund service areas are outlined below.

6.2 Housing and Property

Demand for Temporary Accommodation continues to grow, the net impact on revenue budgets is forecast at £0.290m. This assumes that demand continues at the current level. Increased demand has meant an increased level of repairs to maintain Temporary Accommodation assets and also the use of alternative provision in the form of hotel accommodation. It is expected that the service will make use of

grant funding to meet some of the costs in this area. The financial impact of this will be reflected in future reports.

There are underspends across other areas of the directorate partly offsetting the temporary accommodation pressure.

6.3 Neighbourhood Operations

Garage Income is forecast to exceed budget by £0.050m. The service has focused on increasing occupancy of the Council's garages.

6.4 Corporate and Commercial

Licensing income has a pressure of £0.060m for 2024/25, a shortfall that has continued from 2023/24. Licensing income will continue to be closely monitored.

6.5 People and Transformation

There is a forecast underspend against the Customer Services Unit, which is offsetting pressures elsewhere in the directorate.

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 forecast outturn position for the HRA is shown at Appendix B.

7.2 At Q1 2024/25, the HRA is forecasting a pressure of £0.159m. This is summarised below.

Table 5: Summary Housing Revenue Account Position

Housing Revenue Account	Current Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Variance £m
Income	(71.736)	(72.466)	(0.730)
Expenditure	69.927	70.816	0.889
Net Deficit / (Surplus)	(1.809)	(1.650)	0.159
Transfer (to)/from the HRA working balance and other reserves	1.809	1.650	(0.159)
Overall Total	0	0	0

7.3 Variances for 2024/25 reported against Housing Revenue Account service areas are outlined below.

7.4 Income

Surplus income of £0.730m is reported at Q1. £0.686m of this is dwelling rent relating. Reduced void rates and higher than expected income from supported housing charges are contributing to this overall surplus to HRA income targets.

7.5 Repairs & Maintenance

A pressure of £0.337m is reported for repairs and maintenance of Council homes. Works relating to damp and mould are giving rise to pressures of £0.750m. This pressure is partly offset by a reduction in expected work relating to Empty Homes and other anticipated underspends.

7.6 Supervision and Management

There is a net staffing pressure within the service of £0.258m relating to interim cover for vacant posts.

The HRA continues to experience a high level of utility costs, a forecast pressure of approximately £0.326m.

It is anticipated that legal cases involving disrepair will be a cost of £0.120m to the HRA in 2024/25. Work is ongoing to profile anticipated costs in current and future years. Additional legal support is required to assist in disrepair claims, forecast at £0.055m.

8. Capital Programme

8.1 Appendix C shows the projected capital 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 2024, plus approved amendments.

The 're-phasing' column refers to projects where expenditure is still expected to be incurred but will now be in 2025/26 rather than 2024/25 ('slippage'), or conversely, where expenditure planned initially for 2025/26 has been incurred in 2024/25 ('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.

All overspends will be monitored closely. Associated supplementary budget requests will be brought to Cabinet to recommend to Council later in the financial year as appropriate.

Table 6- Capital Outturn 2024/25	Current	Re-phasing	Revised	Forecast	Variance	
	Budget	(To)/from future years	Budget	Outturn	£m	%
	£m	£m	£0m	£m		
Finance and Resources	7.234	(3.152)	4.082	4.146	0.065	0.90%
Strategic Planning and Environment	3.089	(0.155)	2.934	2.934	0.000	0.00%
Housing & Community	2.376	(0.339)	2.036	2.044	0.008	0.32%
GF Total	12.698	(3.647)	9.052	9.124	0.073	0.57%
HRA Total	65.297	(7.712)	57.585	57.912	0.327	0.50%
Grand Total	77.995	(11.358)	66.637	67.036	0.399	0.51%

8.2 General Fund Capital Programme

General Fund capital budgets are forecasting an overspend of £0.072m. £0.065m of this relates to the cost of Hemel Hempstead Sports Centre AstroTurf works, where costs are expected to exceed the original programme budget.

General Fund budgets are reporting slippage of £3.647m. The slippage includes the following items over £100k:

- Future Vision of Customer Relationship Management £0.400m. The project is underway, with recruitment commencing in 2024/25.
- Multi-Functional Devices – work is continuing to identify the most appropriate set up for printing facilities at the Forum offices moving forwards, based on current organisation requirements.
- CCTV programmes total slippage £0.339m. A programme of equipment replacement will commence in 2024/25 and continue into 2025/26.
- Chipperfield Common car park resurfacing £0.109m. Progress of the works is pending Secretary of State approval.
- Creation of new Community Facility and Foodbank Hub £2.500m. The developer for the project has gone into administration. The project is on hold until a new developer is agreed. A revised project plan is still under development.

8.3 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme

Housing Revenue Account capital budgets are forecasting slippage of £7.712m. £6.729m relates to Paradise Depot where the project is on hold due to the contractor going into administration. Work is ongoing to identify a new contractor. The remaining slippage relates to Paradise Fields new build (£0.654m) and the buy- back of Council homes previously purchased under right to buy legislation (£0.530m). Both projects are currently delayed. There is accelerated expenditure of £1.066m (brought forward from 2025/26) relating to Marchmont Fields new build, which is progressing ahead of the budgeted timescales.

The HRA is reporting overspends on capital projects of £0.326m. £0.337m of this relates to new housing developments, which has seen significant inflationary increases and additional costs from employer's agents.

9. Financial implications

9.1 Contained within the body of this report.

10. Legal implications

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

11. Risk implications

11.1 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.

12. Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights

12.1 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.

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

13. Sustainability implications

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

14 Council infrastructure

14.1 The content of this report sets out the implications of the Council's activities for its financial resources for 2024/25.

15 Conclusions

15.1 The position for 2024/25 is a surplus of £0.402m against Council General Fund budgets. Housing Revenue Account budgets are reporting a pressure of £0.159m.

15.2 There is slippage against the Council's overall Capital Programme of £11.358m and a forecast overspend of £0.399m



Dacorum Borough Council

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for June 2024 (Cost of Services Analysis By Scrutiny Committee)

	<i>Month</i>			<i>Year-to-Date</i>			<i>Full Year</i>		
	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	482	248	(234)	1,394	1,374	(20)	7,134	7,825	691
Housing and Community	346	241	(105)	645	(652)	(1,297)	2,252	2,265	13
Strategic Planning and Environment	915	1,127	212	3,209	1,712	(1,497)	13,213	13,919	706
Net Cost of Services	1,743	1,616	(127)	5,248	2,434	(2,814)	22,599	24,009	1,410
Other Items									
Investment Income	(84)	(225)	(141)	(251)	(163)	88	(1,004)	(2,912)	(1,908)
Interest Payments and MRP	67	332	265	200	332	132	801	801	0
Parish Precept Payments	0	0	0	1,323	1,323	0	1,323	1,323	0
Government Grants	(183)	(557)	(374)	(550)	(1,998)	(1,448)	(2,200)	(2,200)	0
Taxation (Council Tax and Business Rates)	(1,450)	2,780	4,230	(4,350)	8,339	12,689	(17,401)	(17,401)	0
Surplus / Deficit on Provision of Services	(1,650)	2,330	3,980	(3,628)	7,833	11,461	(18,481)	(20,389)	(1,908)
Transfers between Reserves / Funds									
Net Recharge to the HRA	(473)	13	486	(1,420)	263	1,683	(5,679)	(5,583)	96
Contribution To / (From) Earmarked Reserves	2	0	(2)	6	0	(6)	1,560	1,560	0
Net Movement on General Fund Working Balance	(378)	3,959	4,337	206	10,530	10,324	(1)	(403)	(402)

Housing Revenue Account				
2024/25 Outturn Revenue Budget Monitoring Report				
	Budget £000	Outturn £000	Variance £000	%
Income:				
Dwelling Rents	(68,022)	(68,708)	(686)	1.0%
Non-Dwelling Rents	(103)	(103)	0	0.0%
Tenants Charges	(1,675)	(1,719)	(44)	2.6%
Leaseholder Charges	(684)	(684)	0	0.0%
Interest and Investment Income	(213)	(213)	0	0.0%
Contribution towards Expenditure	(1,039)	(1,039)	0	0.0%
Total Income	(71,736)	(72,466)	(730)	1.0%
Expenditure:				
Repairs & Maintenance	19,077	19,414	337	1.8%
Supervision & Management	20,521	21,073	552	2.7%
Rent, Rates, Taxes & Other Charges	187	187	0	0.0%
Interest Payable	11,670	11,670	0	0.0%
Provision for Bad Debts	500	500	0	0.0%
Depreciation	17,578	17,578	0	0.0%
HRA Democratic Recharges	394	394	0	0.0%
Revenue Contribution to Capital	0	0	0	0.0%
Total Expenditure	69,927	70,816	889	1.3%
HRA Deficit / (Surplus) Before Reserves	(1,809)	(1,650)	159	
Transfer to / (from) Housing Reserves (Working Balance)	506	506	0	0.0%
Transfer to / (from) Housing Reserves (Other)	1,303	1,303	0	0.0%
HRA Deficit / (Surplus)	0	159	159	0.0%
Housing Revenue Account Balance:				
Opening Balance at 1 April 2022	(3,057)	(3,057)	0	0.0%
Deficit / (Surplus) for year	(506)	(506)	0	0.0%
Proposed Contributions to Reserves	0	0	0	0.0%
Closing Balance at 31 March 2023	(3,563)	(3,563)	0	

CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR JUNE 2024

Appendix C

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										
Head of Digital										
50 Rolling Programme - Hardware	75,000	631,091	0	0	0	706,091	14,128	706,091	0	0
51 Software Licences - Right of Use	(10,124)	50,124	0	0	0	40,000	0	20,000	(20,000)	0
52 Future vision of CRM	(63,877)	685,597	0	0	0	621,720	18,786	221,720	(400,000)	0
53 Renewal of Data Centre Hardware	390,000	0	0	0	0	390,000	4,400	390,000	0	0
	390,999	1,366,812	0	0	0	1,757,811	37,314	1,337,811	(420,000)	0
Head of Environmental Protection										
57 Air Quality Monitoring	0	11,155	0	0	0	11,155	4,823	11,155	0	0
	0	11,155	0	0	0	11,155	4,823	11,155	0	0
Head of Property Services										
61 Public Conveniences Renovation Programme	0	12,260	0	0	0	12,260	0	12,260	0	0
62 Service Lease Domestic Properties	0	38,118	0	0	0	38,118	0	38,118	0	0
63 Community Buildings Fire Exits	30,000	0	0	0	0	30,000	26,786	30,000	0	0
64 Nash Mills Recreation Centre - Resurfacing and Drainage	50,000	0	0	0	0	50,000	41,638	50,000	0	0
65 Adeyfield Community Centre Structural Improvements	0	37,000	0	0	0	37,000	0	37,000	0	0
66 Boiler Replacement Programme	0	8,952	0	0	0	8,952	0	35,571	0	26,619
67 Rossgate Shopping Centre - Structural Works	55,000	315,281	0	0	0	370,281	0	370,281	0	0
68 Roof Replacement Programme - Individual Assets To Be Identified At A Late	0	200,000	0	0	0	200,000	0	200,000	0	0
69 100 High St (Old Town), Hemel - Window Replacement	0	14,000	0	0	0	14,000	0	0	(14,000)	0
70 Long Chaulden Roof	35,000	55,020	0	0	0	90,020	0	90,020	0	0
71 Bennettsgate - Window Renewal	0	161,548	0	0	0	161,548	103,054	161,548	0	0
72 Void Commercial Property Refurbishment	70,000	66,402	0	0	0	136,402	0	76,402	(60,000)	0
73 Broadwater Road Resurfacing	0	93,000	0	0	0	93,000	0	47,000	(46,000)	0
74 Damp proofing improvements to commercial properties	0	41,044	0	0	0	41,044	6,000	41,044	0	0
75 48-52 High Street - Fire Alarm System Renewal	0	8,862	0	0	0	8,862	0	8,862	0	0
76 Bellgate Canopy Renewal - Highfield	0	189,563	0	0	0	189,563	0	189,563	0	0
77 Rossgate Terrace Walkway Waterproofing	0	10,050	0	0	0	10,050	0	10,050	0	0
78 Fire Alarm Upgrades	20,000	(11,357)	0	0	0	8,643	0	8,643	0	0
79 Dacorum Heritage Trust Storage Building-	0	69,682	0	0	0	69,682	18,510	69,682	0	0
80 Silk Mill Shops - Concrete works	45,000	25,000	0	0	0	70,000	0	70,000	0	0
	305,000	1,334,425	0	0	0	1,639,425	195,988	1,546,044	(120,000)	26,619
Head of Commercial Development										
84 Multi Functional Devices	0	90,000	0	0	0	90,000	0	0	(90,000)	0
85 EVCP Programme	0	200,782	0	0	0	200,782	0	200,782	0	0
	0	290,782	0	0	0	290,782	0	200,782	(90,000)	0

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)
Head of Neighbourhood Management										
89 Car Park Refurbishment	0	135,000	0	0	0	135,000	0	135,000	0	0
90 Water Gardens North Car Park Drainage Improvements	0	35,000	0	0	0	35,000	0	35,000	0	0
91 Tring Cemetery Access Road	0	40,000	0	0	0	40,000	0	40,000	0	0
	0	210,000	0	0	0	210,000	0	210,000	0	0
Head of Investment and Delivery										
95 Creation of new Community Facility and Foodbank at The Hub (Dens)	0	2,500,000	0	0	0	2,500,000	0	0	(2,500,000)	0
96 Hemel Hempstead Sports Centre - Astro turf renewal	0	565,090	0	0	0	565,090	7,325	630,031	0	64,941
	0	3,065,090	0	0	0	3,065,090	7,325	630,031	(2,500,000)	64,941
Head of Communities and Leisure										
101 Berkhamsted Sports Centre - Building Management System	0	22,000	0	0	0	22,000	0	0	(22,000)	0
102 Berkhamsted Leisure Centre Improvements Works	0	70,000	0	0	0	70,000	0	35,000	0	(35,000)
103 Improvements to leisure courts	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,454	8,264	0	8,264
104 Jarman Park Improvements	0	51,312	0	0	0	51,312	48,305	51,312	0	0
	0	143,312	0	0	0	143,312	53,759	94,576	(22,000)	(26,736)
Head of Corporate Health, Safety and Resilience										
108 Health and Safety software system	0	40,000	0	0	0	40,000	0	40,000	0	0
	0	40,000	0	0	0	40,000	0	40,000	0	0
SD Place										
1 Nickey Line Improvements - HGC capital project	0	76,000	0	0	0	76,000	0	76,000	0	0
	0	76,000	0	0	0	76,000	0	76,000	0	0
Totals: Finance and Resources	695,999	6,537,576	0	0	0	7,233,575	299,209	4,146,399	(3,152,000)	64,824
Housing and Community										
Head of Asset Management										
120 Disabled Facilities Grants	741,000	235,772	0	0	0	976,772	200,286	976,772	0	0
	741,000	235,772	0	0	0	976,772	200,286	976,772	0	0
Head of Safe Communities										
124 Rolling Programme - CCTV Cameras	25,000	57,642	0	0	0	82,642	0	25,000	(57,642)	0
125 Alarm Receiving Centre	0	33,627	0	0	0	33,627	0	0	(33,627)	0
126 CCTV Equipment Refresh	455,000	43,098	0	0	0	498,098	22,935	250,000	(248,098)	0
127 CCTV A41 Bypass	30,000	0	0	0	0	30,000	0	30,000	0	0
	510,000	134,367	0	0	0	644,367	22,935	305,000	(339,367)	0
Head of Investment and Delivery										
131 Affordable Housing Development Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0	(622,959)	0	0	0
132 Temporary Accommodation - creation of new units	0	19,288	0	0	0	19,288	0	0	0	(19,288)
133 Verge Hardening Programme	250,000	455,293	0	0	0	705,293	0	705,293	0	0
	250,000	474,581	0	0	0	724,581	(622,959)	705,293	0	(19,288)

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)
Head of Communities and Leisure										
137 Adventure Playgrounds Improvement Programme	(902,476)	902,476	0	0	0	0	0	26,987	0	26,987
138 Capital Grants - Community Groups	20,000	10,000	0	0	0	30,000	0	30,000	0	0
	(882,476)	912,476	0	0	0	30,000	0	56,987	0	26,987
Totals: Housing and Community	618,524	1,757,196	0	0	0	2,375,720	(399,738)	2,044,052	(339,367)	7,699
Strategic Planning and Environment										
Assistant Director - Place, Communities and Enterprise										
146 Urban Park/Education Centre (Durrants Lakes)	0	121,615	0	0	0	121,615	0	121,615	0	0
	0	121,615	0	0	0	121,615	0	121,615	0	0
Head of Environmental Services										
151 Waste Services IT upgrade	0	35,042	0	0	0	35,042	0	35,042	0	0
152 Wheeled Bins & Boxes for New Properties	100,000	0	0	0	0	100,000	20,783	100,000	0	0
153 Resurfacing Works and Building Improvement to Depot	0	60,000	0	0	0	60,000	0	60,000	0	0
154 Waste Transfer Site Upgrade Works	0	252,591	0	0	0	252,591	1,925	252,591	0	0
155 Fleet Replacement Programme	546,989	1,128,379	0	0	0	1,675,368	365,160	1,675,368	0	0
	646,989	1,476,012	0	0	0	2,123,001	387,867	2,123,001	0	0
Head of Property Services										
159 Allotment Improvement Programme	0	47,970	0	0	0	47,970	0	37,970	(10,000)	0
160 Stone Works to Charter Tower	0	33,000	0	0	0	33,000	0	33,000	0	0
161 Nickey Line Bridge Refurbishment	0	48,574	0	0	0	48,574	125	28,574	(20,000)	0
162 Bennetts End Adventure playground - Cabin Roof	0	24,000	0	0	0	24,000	0	0	(24,000)	0
	0	153,544	0	0	0	153,544	125	99,544	(54,000)	0
Head of Neighbourhood Management										
166 Litter Bin Upgrade	0	85,000	0	0	0	85,000	0	85,000	0	0
167 Play Areas & Open Spaces - replace equipment	0	387,470	0	0	0	387,470	0	387,470	0	0
168 Gadebridge Park - Splash Park	75,000	32,618	0	0	0	107,618	104,807	107,618	0	0
169 Chipperfield Common Car Park Resurfacing	0	101,329	0	0	0	101,329	0	0	(101,329)	0
170 Water Gardens Fencing	0	9,327	0	0	0	9,327	0	9,327	0	0
	75,000	615,744	0	0	0	690,744	104,807	589,415	(101,329)	0
Totals: Strategic Planning and Environment	721,989	2,366,915	0	0	0	3,088,904	492,799	2,933,575	(155,329)	0
Totals - Fund: General Fund	2,036,512	10,661,687	0	0	0	12,698,199	392,271	9,124,026	(3,646,696)	72,523

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)
Housing Revenue Account										
Housing and Community										
Head of Housing Operations										
182 Estate & Temporary Accommodation Improvements	150,000	0	0	0	0	150,000	0	150,000	0	0
183 CCTV Installation in 6 Communal Lounges	29,000	0	0	0	0	29,000	0	29,000	0	0
	179,000	0	0	0	0	179,000	0	179,000	0	0
Head of Safe Homes										
187 Communal Gas & Heating	0	0	0	0	0	0	22,344	3,010,029	0	3,010,029
188 Social Housing Development Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0	246,078	3,053,985	0	3,053,985
189 Twinned IT System Implementation	120,000	0	0	0	0	120,000	0	120,000	0	0
	120,000	0	0	0	0	120,000	268,422	6,184,014	0	6,064,014
Head of Asset Management										
193 Planned Fixed Expenditure	11,967,133	2,622,491	0	0	0	14,589,624	2,137,655	10,063,046	(862,000)	(3,664,578)
194 Pain/Gain Share (Planned Fixed Expenditure)	0	0	0	0	0	0	304,107	0	0	0
195 M&E Contracted Works	0	0	0	0	0	0	405,074	2,540,000	0	2,540,000
196 DBC Commissioned Capital Works	8,075,000	3,401,414	0	0	0	11,476,414	992,853	5,600,000	0	(5,876,414)
197 Special Projects	100,000	513,021	0	0	0	613,021	0	1,550,000	0	936,979
	20,142,133	6,536,926	0	0	0	26,679,059	3,839,689	19,753,046	(862,000)	(6,064,013)
Head of Commercial Housing Contracts										
200 Contract Management software	10,000	0	0	0	0	10,000	0	0	0	(10,000)
	10,000	0	0	0	0	10,000	0	0	0	(10,000)
Head of Investment and Delivery										
205 New Build - General Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0	29,920	0	0	0
206 Coniston Road	0	130,676	0	0	0	130,676	0	0	0	(130,676)
207 Eastwick Row	1,217,104	5,726,291	0	0	0	6,943,395	13,374	6,943,920	525	0
208 St Margaret's Way	8,216,487	331,367	0	0	0	8,547,854	1,956,415	8,639,233	0	91,379
209 Paradise Fields	737,455	6,107,950	0	0	0	6,845,405	1,321,638	6,191,333	(654,072)	0
210 Randalls Ride	(59,850)	988,836	0	0	0	928,986	63,012	1,168,418	0	239,432
211 Garage Sites - New Build Developments	(139,718)	1,357,040	0	0	0	1,217,322	56,815	1,461,589	0	244,267
212 Wilstone	(576,858)	740,670	0	0	0	163,812	(27,312)	46,013	0	(117,799)
213 Marchmont Fields	1,113,558	4,141,081	0	0	0	5,254,639	660,418	6,320,208	1,065,569	0
214 Paradise Depot	1,404,799	5,350,376	0	0	0	6,755,175	13,675	25,395	(6,729,780)	0
215 Cherry Bounce	9,836	0	0	0	0	9,836	0	0	0	(9,836)
217 Garage Sites B	(20,000)	0	0	0	0	(20,000)	0	0	0	20,000
219 RTB Buy-Backs	133,406	1,398,362	0	0	0	1,531,768	0	1,000,000	(531,768)	0
	12,036,219	26,272,649	0	0	0	38,308,868	4,087,956	31,796,109	(6,849,526)	336,767
Totals: Housing and Community	32,487,352	32,809,575	0	0	0	65,296,927	8,196,067	57,912,169	(7,711,526)	326,768
Totals - Fund: Housing Revenue Account	32,487,352	32,809,575	0	0	0	65,296,927	8,196,067	57,912,169	(7,711,526)	326,768
Totals	34,523,864	43,471,262	0	0	0	77,995,126	8,588,338	67,036,195	(11,358,222)	399,291

Finance and Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee 3 September 2024

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Quarter 1 Performance Report – Corporate and Commercial Services
Date:	3 September 2024
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Michela Capozzi, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Commercial Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix A – Key Performance Indicator report
Background papers:	None
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

Report Authors/ Responsible Officers

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 Ben Hosier – Head of Commercial Development
 Nigel Howcutt – Chief Finance Officer
 Mark Brookes – Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services



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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 1 2024-25 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 Q1 2024/2025 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 Q1 2024/25 of Commercial Development Services.

2.1 Key Performance Indicators

The key performance indicators for Commercial Development can be found at Appendix A.

2.2 Procurement Activity

The Procurement team are currently supporting the delivery of a number of commissioning and tendering activities in compliance with the Council's Commissioning & Procurement Standing Orders.

2.3 Procurement Compliance

Table 1 - Number of times the Procurement Standing Orders have been set aside during Q1

Contract	Justification	Responsible Officer
<p>Urgent critical work to repair 12 x Twin Back Geesink refuse vehicles</p>	<p>Coopers are currently subcontracted the retrofit works from Geesink but there have been payment and delayed delivery issues by going through Geesink. The Council also understands that Geesink may shortly be entering into administration. Accordingly, and in order to protect the continuity of the retrofit works required the Council is intending to contract directly with the Cooper Group. The work to the vehicles is urgent to ensure that the Council can continue to deliver its waste service. It is also anticipated that Coopers will have a significant level of new work instructions if Geesink do go into administration and therefore it is important to contract with them urgently to ensure that the Council can secure priority for the works.</p> <p>The Council's Procurement Standing Orders (section 12) allows for contracts to be awarded under a tendering exception; however, this exemption cannot be used if the contract value will be above the WTO financial threshold, which it will in this case.</p> <p>An option that would enable the Council to directly award a contract to Coopers, will be for the Council to publish a Voluntary Ex Ante Transparency Notice (VEAT Notice). This notifies the market that the Council intends to award a contract to Coopers and gives the market 10-day period to challenge this decision. The Council are unable to award this contract until a 10-day standstill period has concluded following the publication of the VEAT Notice.</p>	<p>Head of Neighbourhood Operations</p>

Table 2 – Known non-compliant procurement expenditure during Q1

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 Q2 2024/25
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 Q2 2024/25
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 Q3 2024/25
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 Q3 2024/25
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 Q3 2024/25

2.4 Commercial Strategy & Programme

There are many strands of work relating to the Commercial Strategy being undertaken across services, and commercial considerations are embedded in ongoing budget and service planning. 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 Business Cases undertaken in 2022-23, 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 23/24. It was advertised to the market in Q3 23/24, and evaluation took place during Q4 23/24. Following the evaluation of the tendered prices, it has become clear that the above inflation cost increases for construction means the cost to deliver the LIU exceeds the approved budget in 2023. Therefore, in Q1 it was agreed this project is commercially unviable for the Council to continue. The garage locations will now be moved into the Garage Portfolio Review.

- **Legal Services**

Following discussions during 2023-24 with neighbouring authorities about the potential for a shared service, the final assessment was undertaken in Q4 of 23-24, and in Q1 2024-25 the decision was made to discontinue this project. It became clear that the costs for joining a shared legal service have significantly increased and it has been agreed that this would no longer be a viable option for the Council to continue to progress.

- **Parking Services**

Opportunities for changes to parking tariff and charging policy, were reported to this Committee, and approved by Cabinet to proceed to statutory consultation in February 2024. The statutory consultation was due to start in Q1 but was postponed due to the General Election. The consultation will be undertaken in Q2, and a summary report presented to the Portfolio Holder in Q2. Work has also progressed on drafting of the tender documentation for the Parking Enforcement contract, and it is expected that this tender will be advertised in Q2.

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

- **Commercial Income Review** – The objective of this programme is to review ways to improve/increase the net position of the Council's General Fund and the ongoing financial sustainability of the MTFs. Sprint 1 of this review concluded in Q4 23/24, with analysis of corporate financial data and the income and expenditure of income generating services. Sprint 2 commenced in Q1 24/25 and conducted a deeper assessment for the following services, analysing costs, income, trends, identifying areas for improvement, growth and alternative delivery models if appropriate:

- Commercial Waste
- Garages Pricing Strategy
- Parking Pricing Strategy
- Facility Hire

A report on the commercial opportunities identified in Sprint 2 is due in Q2.

- **Garage Portfolio Review** - Forming part of the wider Strategic Asset Review programme, this project has continued through Q1 24/25. Its objective is to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the portfolio's performance, analysing financial and other commercial data to assess the performance of assets and analyse opportunities to drive income and profitability of garage assets. This will inform the development of a new Garage Business Plan being developed during 2024-25. In addition, the review will also identify sites that could be used for alternative purposes that could deliver alternative commercial income returns to the Council. The review is due to be completed during Q2 2024-25.
- **Strategic Asset Review** – This programme has several project workstreams underway to review performance and strategic opportunities relating to the Council's assets. An update report on the programme will be presented to the Committee in 2024-25.
- **Procurement Transformation** – The Government's new procurement regime is being introduced through the Procurement Act 2023 and the Procurement Regulations Bill 2024, which was laid in parliament in March 2024. The public sector has 6 months to prepare for the significant changes the new regime will introduce, and a range of national learning and development material has been released to support this transformation. The Procurement Service will need to update procurement systems, process and documentation, providing a clear updated governance and compliance framework that officers will need to follow. Proposals for changes from the current procurement regulations will be presented to this Committee and Cabinet before the implementation date of 28 October 2024.

3 Legal and Democratic Services Q1 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:

April 2024

Mr Paul Coulter - SJP (littering of cigarette butt)

Sentenced as follows:

- Fine - £101
- Victim Surcharge - £40
- Costs in full - £309.85

Total to pay: £450.85 to be paid in full by 28 day Collection Order.

May 2024

Ms Marie Mamtora - Fly-tipping

Sentenced as follows:

- Compensation Order - £148
- Contribution to our costs - £400

Total: £548

June 2024

Ms Sharon Smith - Injunction to gain access to the property to carry out gas safety inspection Injunction to access premises – GRANTED

3.2 Corporate and Democratic Support

Democratic Services

During Quarter 1, Democratic Services carried out the following activities:

- Supported 14 Committee meetings, including agenda and video minutes
- Supported 1 Full Council meeting including agenda and Video Minutes
- Supported Annual Council Including Agenda and video minutes
- Processed 7 New Portfolio Holder decisions and published 10 completed decisions
- Processed 12 Officer Decisions
- Delivered the following member training/briefing sessions
6th June, Code of Conduct Training

The team provided support to colleagues in Elections in relation to the PCC election in May, the Bovington Planning referendum election held on the 13th June and running the postal votes during June for the July 2024 General Election. This involved providing direct support to election processes, including working at Polling Stations for the referendum, ensuring committee meetings dates could be moved to accommodate room availability and ensuring items going to committee were not in breach of the pre-election period.

The team managed the postal vote opening processes for the PCC and General elections, working with the following returned ballot pack volumes:

- May 2024 Police Crime Commissioner election had a postal vote electorate of 17,182 registered postal voters, of which we received a 57.86% return, so a total of 9,942 postal ballot packs were received and processed through the 2 stage verification process. This included a total of 213 postal votes that were accepted by hand at either The Forum or a Polling Station.
- July 2024 General Election postal vote opening took place during June 2024 in the lead up to the election. There was a postal vote electorate of 11,567 and a return rate of 83.81%, so a total of 9,694 postal ballot packs were received and processed. This included a total of 490 postal votes that were accepted by hand with their accompanying form.

Electoral Services

Electoral Register

During Quarter 1, the following 8481 changes were made to the Electoral Register: -

Additions 2490

Deletions 1549

Changes 4130

Movers 312

EU ECR - Eligibility Confirmation Review

As part of the ongoing implementation of the Elections Act, all authorities are required to conduct a one-off review of the eligibility of all EU citizens on the electoral register.

Eligible electors must be a citizen of a country with which the UK has bilateral Voting and Candidacy Rights (VCR) treaty, (Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Denmark & Spain); resident in the UK with any form of leave to remain; or do not require such leave.

Alternatively, they must be an EU citizen with retained rights if they are a citizen of a country with which the UK does not have bilateral Voting and Candidacy Rights (VCR) treaty but have been legally resident in the UK since before the UK left the EU on 31/12/2020.

DBC's review:

- 20th of May - identified 3869 of the current 5714 EU electors on the register qualified as eligible electors and had their eligibility confirmed in writing to them.
- Remaining 1845 electors were sent the first review letter advising of the changes, and the requirement to respond either yes or no to the prescribed question: *Have you been legally resident in the UK since before the UK left the EU on 31/12/2020?*
 - Electors who answer YES: would receive a letter advising their continued registration
 - Electors who answered NO: would receive a letter advising that due to their response they were no longer eligible to remain registered
- 498 responses were received to the first communication, most responded online
- It was at this point that the snap General Election was called, and the review had to be put on hold until after 4 July 2024.

Electoral Review

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) have begun the electoral review for Dacorum.

Having completed phase 1, consultation begun on warding arrangements. This consultation period began on the 7th May and originally ran until 15 July. However, due to the snap General election being called, the consultation period was extended until the 9th of September.

Work amongst the political parties has been ongoing in order to submit proposals for the warding arrangements.

Bovingdon Neighbourhood Planning Referendum

A Neighbourhood Planning Referendum (NPR) was held in the Bovingdon area on the 13th June 2024. The team set up the staffing for the required number of polling stations and arranged the relevant notifications and social media posts. The verification and count were held after close of poll and saw a 20.43% turnout.

Police & Crime Commission election 2024

The PCC election was successfully completed on the 2nd May 2024. The verification was held on the 3rd May and the count on the 4th May.

This was the first election which saw all employed staff and all polling station contacts use the Mobile Election App (MEA) account, which is an online process for recruitment and bookings. This successfully allowed all those involved to efficiently liaise with the elections team.

The Dacorum area received a total of 23,468 votes across the four candidates, which was a 20.66% turnout.

Parliamentary election

The Parliamentary election was called on the 22nd May 2024, for it to take place on the 4th July.

This was an immense task for the elections team, who were still processing payments, audits and statistical data returns for the May PCC election. The task set was to successfully deliver the General election in 6 weeks (a task which usually requires 6 months).

Below are a few key statistics involved in the successful delivery:

- In the first 4 weeks of the election being called:
 - o Over 6200 new people applied to be on the electoral register
 - o A further 300 overseas electors applied to be registered.
 - o A further 4000 electors requested a postal vote
 - o A further 700 electors requested a proxy vote.
 - o Over 100 people applied for a Voter Authority Certificate.
- 84 polling stations booked across 63 sites (we booked the sites for the Hemel Hempstead constituency and also those for the Harpenden & Berkhamsted constituency, run by St Albans District Council)
- Over 400 staff were appointed to the various election jobs required
- 5 candidate nominations and deposits were processed
- 9219 postal votes processed
- 44,277 ballot papers verified and counted

3.3 Licensing

Applications

During the period the Licensing Team dealt with:

456 applications broken down as follows:

- 220 Licensing Act 2003 applications
- 124 Hackney and Private Hire applications
- 64 lottery registrations/returns/annual fee payments
- 11 Skin piercing registrations, both operator and premises
- 13 Street and House to house collections
- 6 street trading consents
- pavement licence applications
- 2 Animal Activity Licence applications (plus 3 further interim inspections)
- 1 Hypnosis authorisation
- 12 Miscellaneous applications

Complaints/Investigations:

20 Complaints investigated:

- 9 Licensing Act
- 7 Taxi complaints
- 2 Animal welfare Licensing
- 2 Street trading
- 1 driver interviewed under PACE – submitted to Committee.
- 1 Revocation of Animal Activity Licence for breaches of the Licence conditions. The Licence holder has appealed.

Committees:

2 Licensing of Alcohol and Gambling Sub Committees:

April 1 premises licence application with objections – Granted with amendments

May

1 Review of Premises Licence for Immigration Offences, initiated by the Home Office – granted following removal of the Designated premises Supervisor and addition of conditions.

3.4 Freedom of Information and Data Protection

FOI & DPA Stats for Q4 as follows:

Cat	Total Number Received	on Target	Missed	% On Target
FOI	201	186	15	92.54
DPA	22	21	1	95.45

4 Finance & Resources Q1 24/25 Performance Report

4.1 Quarter 1 Finance and Resources performance report:

4.2 This report outlines the 2024/25 Quarter 1 (April to June) 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.

4.3 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 are two red rated KPI's where performance requires improvement:

- FIN04 Housing Revenue Account Budget Variance against forecast,
- FIN06 Capital Variances

These 2 performance indicators are reported in detail in the Q1 financial report presented as part of agenda item X on the OSC agenda.

4.4 There is 1 indicator that is reported as amber but performance is very close to expected levels.

- RBF06 Average days taken to resolve a council tax related contact from a resident.

This target is always very challenging during the first quarter of the year due to the annual council tax billing process. During Q1 the service had the additional pressure of the staff restructure and consultation process and hence performance was below expected levels. This performance is expected to improve in Q2.

The service has implemented additional functionality in the citizen access portal in 2024 that have allowed residents to deal with more changes to their Council Tax accounts online which will hopefully expand in the near future and improve the service delivered to residents.

4.5 The finance and Revenues and Benefits service has 6 other KPIs reported in the appendix where service delivery is good/green and above targeted performance levels indicating a strong start to the financial year.

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 Summary

Measure Code ↑	Measure	Date	Actual	Target	Last Year Actual	DoT	Performance Trend
FIN01 (Q)	Percentage of creditor trade invoices paid within 30 days (Q)	Jun 2024	98.80%	96.00%	99.30%	✓	
FIN02a (Q)	Time taken for debtors to pay (Q)	Jun 2024	53.90	55.00		✓	
<p>The target for debtor days have been reviewed and reset to more appropriate levels as part of the recent corporate review of performance indicators. This is to reflect the very real impact of recent economic conditions on Council debtors and they ability to pay. Q1 2024/25 is the first reporting period against this updated target. The previous target was 40 days. The time taken for all debtors to pay continues to be challenging, in particular for areas such are commercial rent and leaseholders. With a high number of both businesses and residents requesting re-payment plans which has the effect of increasing debtor days. Increasing debtor days means that Council debtors are taking longer to pay. Housing leaseholder related debt is the single biggest contributing factor to the performance of this indicator with leaseholders taking 216 debtors days with 65% of the total debt on re-payment plans. This is a direct reflection of the cost of living crisis. Commercial rent debtors are taking 57 days, with 44% of total debt on re-payment plans. Excluding commercial rent and leaseholder debt from the indicator gives a performance of 23 days. Performance against target has declined from the previous month. Performance remains below target. Where a debtor is finding it difficult to pay, the service works with them to get payment plan in place, to maximise income collected by the Council. These payment plans often mean that amounts due are collected after originally due. Payments plans being put in place currently are often longer in duration than those implemented in prior years. This adversely impacts debtor days but over time can help ensure that as much as possible of that debt is collected. Performance against this debtor days indicator can be considered alongside a further indicator of the level of debt collected as a percentage of amounts invoiced in year. This latter indicator performs consistently well against a target of 90%, showing that although debtors are taking longer to pay, they are paying.</p>							
FIN03 (Q)	General Fund Budget Variance against forecast (Q)	Jun 2024	-402,000.00	0.00	-766,000.00	✓	
<p>The position reported is that as at period 3 (30 June 2024), the latest approved position. The Q1 position will be reported to members via the quarterly financial monitoring report. At this early stage in the financial year, pressures are being reported against car parking income, staffing and other costs within Environmental Services, and temporary accommodation costs. These are being offset by additional expected income generated from investment of the Council's cash balances.</p>							
FIN04 (Q)	Housing Revenue Account Budget Variance against forecast (Q)	Jun 2024	159,000.00	0.00	390,000.00	✓	
<p>The position reported is that as at period 3 (30 June 2024), the latest approved position. The Q1 position will be reported to members via the quarterly financial monitoring report. Pressures within the HRA relate to the repair and maintenance of the Council's housing stock including works relating to damp and mould. This is being partially offset by additional income arising from a reduction in void rates and income from supported housing charges exceeding budget expectations.</p>							
FIN06 (Q)	Capital variance against forecast (Q)	Jun 2024	399,000.00	0.00	70,000.00	✗	

Measure Code ↑	Measure	Date	Actual	Target	Last Year Actual	DoT	Performance Trend
The position reported is that as at period 3 (30 June 2024), the latest approved position. The Q1 position will be reported to members via the quarterly financial monitoring report.							
Pressures within the HRA relate to the repair and maintenance of the Council's housing stock including works relating to damp and mould. This is being partially offset by additional income arising from a reduction in void rates and income from supported housing charges exceeding budget expectations.							
FIN08 (Q)	Investment income: outturn forecast against budget Q	Jun 2024	3,125,000.00	1,217,000.00		✘	
Investment income is forecast surplus to target due to slippage on the capital programme resulting in larger than expected cash balances available for investment.							
IR01 (Q)	Percentage of internal audit recommendations implemented in line with the due date	Jun 2024	100.00%	100.00%		?	
This indicator measures the percentage of internal audit recommendations issued as part of the planned 2024/25 internal audit programme that are implemented in line with the original due date agreed by the responsible officer. As at Q1 no recommendations have yet been formally issued and presented to Audit Committee as part of the 2024/25 internal audit programme. Internal audit reviews have progressed in Q1 and associated recommendations will be presented to Audit Committee during 2024/25. Audit Committee formally review progress against the internal audit plan for the year at each of their meetings, including a review of internal audit recommendations not yet implemented.							

Page 39

Legal and Democratic Services Performance Summary

Measure Code ↑	Measure	Date	Actual	Target	Last Year Actual	DoT	Performance Trend
DPA01 (Q)	Percentage of Data Protection Act requests met in 31 days	Jun 2024	95.45%	100.00%	100.00%	✘	
FOI01 (Q)	Percentage of FOI requests satisfied in 20 days	Jun 2024	92.54%	90.00%	83.10%	✘	

Revenues and Benefits Performance Summary

Measure Code ↑	Measure	Date	Actual	Target	Last Year Actual	DoT	Performance Trend
RBF01 (Q)	Average days taken to resolve to a benefit-related contact from a resident. (Q)	Jun 2024	12.00	14.00	10.51	✘	

Measure Code ↑	Measure	Date	Actual	Target	Last Year Actual	DoT	Performance Trend
<p>The service has received a significant increase in workload compared to the same period last year. The increase was not anticipated and we have not found any specific reasons behind the spike - it may just be due to cost of living pressures.</p> <p>Overtime has been offered to staff to help reduce the work outstanding, however the volume of work outstanding is expected to continue into the next quarter.</p> <p>We are currently working with the transformation team to review benefits processes, and within the next few months we hope to have automated more of these, which will help to reduce the time taken.</p>							
RBF06 (Q)	Average days taken to resolve to a council tax related contact from a resident (Q)	Jun 2024	18.42	16.00	17.55	✓	
<p>We have ended this month having cleared the various items of correspondence which came following the issue of the annual bills. To achieve this we have used resilience resources, but will now be reducing the amount of capacity we take from them as the work is more up to date.</p> <p>There was a reduced amount of transactions made through Citizen Access this month, down to about 900 from 1k. This is to be expected, as the number includes new direct debit setups, which peak during March, April, May each year. Without CA, performance this month would have been 21 days.</p>							



Finance and Resources

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Quarter 1 2024/2025 Performance Report – People Transformation Digital and ICT Communications
Date:	3 September 2024
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Adrian England (Portfolio Holder for People and Transformation)
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

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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:	To provide the Q1 performance information for monitoring and information
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	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 Q1 2024/2025 for People, Performance, Digital and ICT and Communications, and highlight key achievements over this same period.
2. As previously seen by this committee, our Key Performance Indicators were reviewed and updated and subsequently agreed by Cabinet in June 2024. The corporate performance team have worked across the Council to embed this new framework and have collected the relevant data so that Q1 performance data below reports against these updated KPIs.

Digital and ICT

3. The primary performance indicator (ICT01 - Percentage of priority 1 & priority 2 incidents resolved in less than 2 days) was green this quarter at 97% against a target of 90%. Information at work, a system used by Housing and Revenues and Benefits, was down for a short period in April and there were issues with Outlook in June. Both issues have now been fully resolved.
4. The work on the digital platform is now moving at pace with several new modules in the build phase. It is anticipated that services will start to test these new solutions in the next quarter. Some new digital forms are already live internally. For example, the digital team has introduced a new form making it easier for staff to purchase additional annual leave and for managers to approve the purchase digitally with just one click.
5. The Digital Team has purchased 760 new laptops and new starters are already being issued with new kit when they join Dacorum. Users with the oldest kit will be renewed first with the roll out planned for completion by the end of March 2025.
6. New docking stations were ordered in the first quarter of this year and have now been installed on all desks at the Forum. This new kit means that users only need one cable to dock and charge a laptop on all desks.

7. Our existing WiFi hardware is also in the process of being replaced. New WiFi Access Points are currently being installed across the Forum to ensure better coverage. Once connected to the new WiFi, neighbouring access points will become readily available to switch to. This means there will be no need to rescan the network and reconnect when docking at different desks or attending meetings. The new laptops being rolled out support WiFi 6 which will provide better coverage and faster speeds so, in combination with the new WiFi, users will experience greater mobility whilst working in the office.
8. All our main sites will have the WiFi upgraded and new docks installed by the end of the year including Cupid Green Depot, Old Town Hall, Tring Victoria Hall, Woodwells Cemetery, Poppy Fields Cemetery, Berkhamsted Civic Offices.

Communications

9. In Q1 (2024/25) we delivered against our external communications programme supporting corporate projects and events across DBC services and partner organisations. This includes 612 social media campaigns on our corporate channels (Facebook, X formerly Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn), and more than 185,000 email campaigns (e-newsletters) sent via our digital publications portfolio.
10. In Q1 we delivered on our internal communications programme, including Town Hall (Staff Conference) in April. In Q1, we issued 45 internal communication campaigns across internal channels, such as our intranet, covering general staff news, corporate information (projects and initiatives) and staff events.
11. We have delivered our programme of digital publications, including 12 issues of our weekly Dacorum Life digital newsletter (13,925 subscribers), three issues of our monthly Housing Matters newsletter (5,616 subscribers) and three issues of our monthly Business Matters newsletter (2,268 subscribers).
12. Q1 Social media statistics:
 - o Dacorum BC **Facebook**:
 - o Connections – 13,180
 - o Link clicks – 3,748
 - o Posts – 225

 - o Dacorum BC **X (formerly Twitter)**:
 - o Connections – 8,976
 - o Link clicks – 702
 - o Posts – 198

 - o Dacorum BC **LinkedIn**:
 - o Connections – 5,830
 - o Link clicks – 312
 - o Posts – 56

People

13. The sickness outturn for quarter 1 (2088 days) is lower than quarter 4 (2605 days) and lower to Q1 last year (2164 days). Detailed analysis shows the main contributors to sickness absence were musculoskeletal, Cold/Flu and mental health. HR work with management to assess cases to understand the reasons for the absence so that a tailored approach can be devised. For cases of work-related sickness, mechanisms are in place to identify the 'possible cause', so that managers can find solutions to alleviate these pressures whilst still setting expectations of work delivery. Alternatively, for cases including home life stressors, there are many support processes in place such as: occupational health; counselling; sign posting to external support; and our mental health first aider programme.

14. Work is underway in supporting the highest sickness absence teams across the Council to explore what bespoke interventions can be put in place to help reduce absenteeism. The first area identified was Waste Services, where there is now an action plan to address the areas of concern. Work is underway to ensure safe practices are in place and all risks are being identified, which should help with reducing musculoskeletal absences. The Council's Health and Safety team is leading in this review.
15. The sickness scrutiny group continues to meet monthly to assess all sickness absence and looks to identify trends and areas of concern. Any such cases will be escalated to a more formal route as per the policy. This group also monitors return work interview compliance, as well as carrying out spot checks on whether managers are in regular contact with their staff whilst off sick from work. 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.
16. HR also continue to send out staff wellness offers which includes courses, webinars, exercise classes and other support. These focus on a dedicated topic and also link into national themes around wellness. The Council continues to promote our mental health first aider programme (MHFA) and we are in the process of increasing this cohort to 20 staff members as opposed to only having 6 staff members trained currently. We also offer free confidential helpline to staff where they can seek professional advice and counselling in certain cases. We also are continuing to run our staff engagement group which is focussing on health and wellbeing issues/solutions, with the next focus being offering 'lunch and learn' sessions on trying something new.
17. HR has been undertaking further interventions which have been approved by the strategic leadership team to help reduce sickness absence. One initiative is focussing on email management, to help reduce email traffic. We are running a series of workshops and devising good practice guides to support with the culture change required. In addition to this the Council is consulting staff and managers on a new email approach for when staff are away from the office. There is also currently a review on our currently leave approach, we want to ensure what is offered is competitive so that we can have a package that supports staff with life challenges and creates an effective work life balance.
18. The annual staff turnover percentage is still below 15% (actual 9%) which is considered a healthy staff turnover rate in the UK (Q4 10%). Work continues within the people strategy to ensure we are creating an engaging culture and ensuring staff have effective leaders guiding them within the workplace.
19. The people strategy continues to be delivered, some of the key highlights include:
 - Devising a mandatory Leadership development programme for all managers – this is due to be launched in the autumn.
 - Launched new menopause staff groups
 - Revised the drug and alcohol policy and now implemented staff training
 - Consulting with managers and TUs on three new workplace schemes - Mentoring, Volunteering and Staff Recognition.
 - Delivered the staff recognition event – over 150 staff nominated.
 - Consulted managers and TUs on a new approach to Equality Impact Assessments and new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for 2025.
 - Project Initiation Document approved to redesign recruitment process to ensure on-boarding is as efficient as possible.

Transformation

20. Average call wait times has been reduced from 406 seconds last quarter to 367 seconds. April presents exceptionally high call volumes due to factors such as annual council tax bills, housing rent increases

and green waste subscriptions; despite this, performance levels for this quarter was well within target. The trend continues to see improvements in performance month-on-month and is 87% lower than Q1 last year. This is largely due to several operational efficiency measures put in place to manage calls and reduce demand more effectively. Operational performance measures are also in place with agents to manage call durations to under 300 seconds and follow up tasks completed within 180 seconds and we have managed to perform exceptionally well against these operational targets too, enabling us to drive call wait times down.

21. We will monitor performance levels against the target of 420 seconds over the next twelve months and if we continue to achieve this, the target will be reviewed and a new ambitious stretch target will be set to push call wait times even further.

Complaints

22. Performance of responding to stage 1 and stage 2 complaints within policy timescales have seen improvement since last month but is still below target. 71.5% of stage 1 complaints were responded to within policy timescales compared to 31% the same time last year and 64% of Stage 2 complaints (which are usually more complex to manage) were responded to within policy timescales compared to 36% in Q1 last year.
23. The corporate complaints team are responsible for co-ordinating and allocating complaints to the relevant teams to respond to complaints whilst keeping oversight of performance at team level. We continue to report to the Senior Leadership team on performance levels monthly to ensure scrutiny and oversight.
24. A large proportion of complaints are in relation to Housing repairs. Complaints has been a particular area of focus for the new Head of Asset Management and has already implemented a number of new procedures to ensure the quality of complaints are improved and processes are in place to quickly obtain the data to establish why the complaint has occurred. With the continued focus from the Housing team, particularly the Asset Management team their improved results will positively impact on the overall results.
25. Completing cases on time continues to be a challenge due to the volumes of complaints and resources available internally to manage them. Where complaints are more complex, we have been encouraging services to communicate with the customer and agree an extension of time to enable a satisfactory outcome.
26. CS01b (percentage of stage 1 complaints escalated to stage 2) was a new measure introduced in May 2022, as this will be an indicator of how well we are dealing with complaints at Stage 1 and stopping it from being escalated. Performance for this quarter was 12% against a target of 10% and escalation levels are lower compared to Q1 last year. Over 60% of the stage 2 escalations were Housing cases but we are seeing a trend of more complaints being resolved at the stage 1. Officers are recognising where appropriate compensation should be offered, and customers are accepting their proposals. This will also positively impact on the tenant satisfaction scores.

Future Dacorum Transformation Programme

27. We continue to implement measures to improve customer experience and call wait times. Further work was undertaken to improve our integrated voice recognition (IVR) service, improving access to Benefits and Business Rates via our IVR. We are continuing to monitor the effectiveness of this project with our customers, and we have already found that more calls are going through to the relevant service or operator more quickly and effectively. We have also seen a significant increase in text requests so customers can be sent a weblink directly to the online form they need to complete rather than sitting in a call queue. Between April and July, 1,483 text messages have been sent out to customers to allow them to self-serve.
28. Work is continuing on our customer strategy programme, which focuses on simplifying and improving customer journeys whilst creating more efficient and effective ways to deliver services to our

customers. Significant progress has been made on our Year 1 road map relating to the transformation of services and our Digital Platform. We have now commenced projects to improve service delivery in relation to Garage rentals, Complaints and Freedom of Information requests, Waste Services, Revenue & Benefits, Housing Repairs and Clean Safe and Green. These projects will aim to enable customers to interact with the council more easily and effectively whilst streamlining and create efficiencies within the back-office processes. We are also ensuring that work on self-service capabilities is linked to our IVR so that customers can have a consistent experience regardless of the entry point into the Council.

Corporate PMO

29. We continue to work on improving our corporate Programme Management Office (PMO) and overall approach to managing projects. All Projects across the PMO have now been identified and key information baselined and is now being reported against. All directorates have programme boards in place to ensure critical oversight of all our key projects and new reporting templates and reporting process put in place to support this oversight and accountability. Further work is planned to ensure we are all working with a single project management methodology and developments of tools and templates to make it easier for staff to manage projects whilst ensuring consistency across the Council.

Corporate Performance Management

30. A new suite of KPIs, including a clear approval process for making edits to these KPIs, was presented and approved at Cabinet in June 2024. These new KPIs are more appropriate and better reflect service delivery which will enhance performance reporting and allow more strategic data driven decision making to occur. The focus in July was to embed these new KPIs which included a development of a performance management handbook and refresher training sessions available to all officers across the organisation. Officers across the Council now have a deeper understanding of performance management which will lead to greater accuracy when updating these measures, hence providing greater assurance to SLT and Members.
31. The team have also been working on developing a list of requirements for a performance management system as part of the second phase of the Performance Improvement Project. In the last quarter, feedback sessions have been held with users of the current system (InPhase) to understand what the user requirements are. These have now been fed into the final draft list of requirements for a performance management system. By spending time developing requirements from a user and management point of view, this is ensuring that any future system will be user friendly, efficient and enhancing performance reporting.

Finance & Resources OSC
People & Transformation Report

Digital Performance Summary


Measure Code ↑	Measure	Date	Actual	Target	Last Year Actual	DoT	Performance Trend
ICT01 (Q)	Percentage of priority 1 & priority 2 incidents resolved in less than 2 days (Q)	Jun 2024	97.40%	90.00%		?	.

The primary performance indicator (ICT01 - Percentage of priority 1 & priority 2 incidents resolved in less than 2 days) was green this quarter at 97% against a target of 90%. Information at work, a system used by Housing and Revenues and Benefits, was down for a short period in April and there were issues with Outlook in June. Both issues have now been fully resolved.

People Performance Summary


Measure Code ↑	Measure	Date	Actual	Last Quarter's Actual	Last Year Actual	DoT	Performance Trend
HR02a (Q)	Turnover of staff	Jun 2024	9.00	10.00	7.00	✔	

Similar to last quarter, and again in line with industry standard healthy staff turnover rate.


HR03 (Q)	Total days lost through sickness absence for the council (Q)	Jun 2024	2,088.50	2,605.50	2,146.50	✔	
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Significantly lower than the last quarter and lower than Q1 the previous year.

Working continues with the sickness scrutiny group - identifying how we support staff back to work and escalating cases to a formal route when there is a cause for concern. There is also an action plan to help reduce sickness absence in waste services, this will be focusing in on how we ensure safer working practices for our staff in an attempt to reduce the number of absences relating to musculoskeletal, as this is the highest absence reason in this service area.

HR05 (Q)	Average days lost due to sickness absence per FTE - profiled target (Q)	Jun 2024	0.93	0.99	0.94	✔	
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Transformation Performance Summary

Measure Code ↑	Measure	Date	Actual	Target	Last Year Actual	DoT	Performance Trend
CS01b (Q)	Percentage of stage 1 complaints escalated to stage 2 within the period (Q)	Jun 2024	12.11%	10.00%	17.82%	✔	

Measure Code ↑	Measure	Date	Actual	Target	Last Year Actual	DoT	Performance Trend
CS02a (Q)	Percentage of stage 1 complaints due and resolved in the month within policy period (Q)	Jun 2024	71.53%	90.00%	31.76%	✓	
CS02b (Q)	Percentage of stage 2 complaints due and resolved in the month within policy period (Q)	Jun 2024	63.89	90.00	36.36	✓	
CSU10 (Q)	Call Handling: Average wait time (Q)	Jun 2024	367.00	420.00	788.67	✓	



Report for:	Overview Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Customer Charter Update
Date:	3rd September 2024
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Adrian England, Portfolio Holder for Transformation and People
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Customer Charter (powerpoint slide)
Background papers:	N/A
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	IVR – Interactive Voice Recognition CSU – Customer Service Unit SLA – Service Level Agreements DBC – Dacorum Borough Council FOI – Freedom of Information

Report Author / Responsible Officer

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Corporate Priorities	Ensuring efficient, effective, and modern service delivery
Wards affected	ALL
Purpose of the report:	1. To provide OSC with an update on the work delivered to date to help embed our Customer Charter internally and preparations to launch this

	externally in line with National Customer Service Week in October 2024.
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	1. Comments on the proposal to launch the Customer Charter externally with customers in line with National Customer Service Week in October 2024.
Period for post policy/project review:	

1 Introduction/Background:

- 1.1 The global coronavirus pandemic has forced us to change how we deliver services to our residents, businesses, and visitors and how we transact with them. It triggered an inevitable change in customer demand, behaviours, and expectations where they had to access services in different ways.
- 1.2 Last year, we launched our Customer Strategy which sets out our customer vision “to put the customer at the centre of our services in order to provide a positive and effective customer experience, and to empower our staff so they can deliver consistent and quality Council services.”
- 1.3 Our strategy clearly sets out our vision, principles and approach to customer engagement which will enable us to consistently design and deliver our services with the customer at the heart of everything we do, whilst managing the ongoing financial pressures that Dacorum faces. Our principles are: -
- 1.3.1 To ensure we are improving our digital offering
 - 1.3.2 Provide a consistent and improved customer experience
 - 1.3.3 Redesign and deliver our services with the customer at the heart of this
 - 1.3.4 A single front door into the organisation for our customers
 - 1.3.5 Remove duplication and manual intervention
- 1.4 Dacorum’s Customer Strategy is not a ‘digital only’ strategy. The council wants to improve services by providing customers with the option of transacting digitally with us. However, we want to redirect the capacity that this creates to provide a more tailored service to vulnerable customers who need more targeted support.
- 1.5 To support the embedding of our Customer Strategy and our vision, we developed a Customer Charter, consisting of a series of commitments to help us get the basics right and improve our level of customer service.
- 1.6 Our Customer Charter clearly outlines what we as an organisation aim to deliver for our customers and what service they can expect from us. It also sets out what we need from our customers to be able to deliver our services effectively. Detailed work has been underway to support the embedding of our Customer Charter across the organisation, the details of this can be found later in the report. This is the first step in the wider transformation we are undertaking to ensure we get the basics right and support the behavioural change with our staff.

1.7 We are now developing a plan to launch this externally with our residents and aim to deliver this by October 2024 in line with National Customer Service Week.

2 Key Issues/proposals/main body of the report:

2.1 We undertook customer engagement when developing our Customer Strategy and feedback from customers tells us that our customers lack confidence that enquiries will be dealt with effectively and often phone to chase for updates. This leads to increasing levels of failure demand as we are not being clear of our processes, response times or providing proactive updates to our customers. Our customers also told us that our telephone systems do not work all the time and that their experiences of customer service are not meeting their expectations.

2.2 Our Customer Charter is the foundation of achieving our principles set out in our Customer Strategy and addressing the feedback we received from our customers as part of the Ignite findings. The importance of this can be summarised into the four key benefits below:

2.3 Improves customer satisfaction:

- 2.3.1 helps customers to understand what to expect,
- 2.3.2 reduces misunderstandings and frustrations,
- 2.3.3 encourages a customer centric approach, and
- 2.3.4 reduces failure demand.

2.4 Builds trust and confidence:

- 2.4.1 demonstrates our reliability as an organisation i.e. we will do what we say we will, and
- 2.4.2 demonstrates our commitment to high quality standards.

2.5 Engages and empowers our customers:

- 2.5.1 creates a collaborative relationship with our customers and us as an organisation.

2.6 Enhances transparency and accountability:

- 2.6.1 clearly communicates the standard we are committed to, and
- 2.6.2 ensures we meet our timescales / look for opportunities to improve.

2.7 Below are our commitments as outlined in our Customer Charter, along with what this means for our customers and how these will help us improve our customer service.

2.8 **We will communicate with you in a way that is clear, respectful, and accessible –**

- 2.8.1 We will ensure that all information we communicate to our customers is in plain English and in a format that is accessible to all.
- 2.8.2 This will enable customers to understand what we need from them much easier and reduce any confusion.

2.9 **We will strive to understand and take ownership of your enquiry and will direct you to the right organisation if we cannot help directly –**

- 2.9.1 We will personally deal with our customers and ensure that if we are not the right organisation, we pass their enquiry to the right person so they can get it resolved.
- 2.9.2 This will make customers feel that they are looked after and that they can trust us.

- 2.10 **We will explain, in an easy-to-understand way, what we need from you, advise you of our timescales and inform you of any delays**
- 2.10.1 We will be transparent with our customers; from the moment they enter our organisation to when their request has been completed.
- 2.10.2 When customers receive clear, concise, and relevant information, their needs and expectations are more likely to be met. This leads to a more positive experience and higher satisfaction levels.
- 2.11 **We will improve access to our services by making more of these available online –**
- 2.11.1 We will provide as much self-serve capabilities for our customers so they can interact with us any time that is convenient for them, on any device, anywhere.
- 2.11.2 This leads to shorter wait times for those who do need direct assistance and allows us to focus more resources on those customers that need more support
- 2.12 **We will be responsive to your needs and adapt our communication style and actions accordingly –**
- 2.12.1 We recognise the importance of not treating all our customers the same and adapting where we need to consider the individual’s needs.
- 2.12.2 We must treat our customers with respect and ensure that they can still have their issue resolved. This leads to customers feeling respected, supported and builds a level of trust.
- 2.13 Significant work has been underway over the last 12 months to ensure that we have embedded our commitments and ensure that our customers can begin to feel the benefits of our Customer Charter once this is launched.
- 2.14 **Updating our IVR telephone system** – we worked with different services to review all of our scripts, ensuring that the information we provided was up to date, removed unnecessary steps to make it quicker for the customer to get to the information they needed and also introduced text links for customers who want to self-serve and complete what they need online. We have also updated internal procedures to ensure these will be kept up to date moving forward.
- 2.15 **Mapping our timescales for key transactions across DBC** – we worked with different services to understand where our highest demand transactions are, our timescales for completing key transactions, and how we communicate this to customers upfront. This will ensure they are clear regarding our timescales and are not chasing for updates. We have included this information as part of our IVR and website improvement projects, so that we are clearly communicating our timescales to our customers up front.
- 2.16 **Developing templates** – after the mapping of our timescales, we identified an opportunity to create a template for services to use with their customers to communicate any delays in processing their request/task. This is an interim measure whilst we redesign services and this becomes automated in the future, however, it is important to recognise that this causes significant failure demand in our system with customers continuously chasing for updates where we have not communicated delays with them or kept them informed of progress.
- 2.17 **Updating our website** – we worked with services who have the highest website visits to ensure our information was up to date, clear, structured, and easy to understand and follows our Web Content Guidance. Here are some examples - [Council Tax \(dacorum.gov.uk\)](https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/council-tax) and [Pest control \(dacorum.gov.uk\)](https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/pest-control) and [Grass, hedge and shrub cutting \(dacorum.gov.uk\)](https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/grass-hedge-and-shrub-cutting).

- 2.18 **Customer Service Training** – we are progressing customer service training for all staff across the Council to help them understand the importance each of us plays in our roles in delivering good customer service, both to internal and external customers.
- 2.19 **Delivering the wider Future Dacorum Transformation programme** – we have recently purchased a new digital platform and are in delivery phase of our transformation programme to help improve online access to our services and provide customers with better self-serve capabilities. Our transformation programme is now making considerable progress and have already started projects involving redesign of Complaints/FOI, Garages, Waste, Revenues & Benefits and Health & Safety services.
- 2.20 Whilst the introduction of our Customer Charter will benefit our customers, it is also important to consider the internal benefits that this will achieve, some of which are listed below
- 2.21 **Reduction in failure demand / avoidable contact** – we have identified significant levels of failure demand across the organisation which is having an impact on resources to respond to this demand.
- 2.21.1 Our customers are continuously chasing us for progress updates where they have not heard from us after submitting a request or due to a delay where we promised to do something by a certain date and have not achieved this.
- 2.21.2 Being pro-active and communicating potential delays with customers and being clear on our processes will help reduce this level of failure demand and avoidable contact.
- 2.22 **More time to deal with the work** – our Customer Services Unit and back-office teams will have more time to be able to support those customers who need it most, as they will be spending less time chasing for progress updates from back-office services on behalf of customers.
- 2.23 **Eventually lead to quicker responses** – our longer-term goal is to see a reduction in our timescales to process requests, as our time and resources will be better focused.
- 2.24 **Reduction in complaints** – we sometimes get complaints due to lack of progress updates or not completing something by the date that we agreed. Being proactive, keeping our customers informed and being clear from the outset will help to reduce such complaints.
- 2.25 **Reputational benefits** - we want our customers to see Dacorum Borough Council as a Council that really supports, delivers, and listens to their residents to help them live the best way that they can in their individual circumstances.
- 2.26 **Future Dacorum** - Our transformation programme is the mechanism for us delivering the implementation of our Digital Platform. We will be working with teams across the council who deliver services to our customers over our 3-year programme to redesign our processes, delivering them more effectively and efficiently with the support of digitalisation.
- 2.27 **Corporate Plan** – Our revised corporate plan is being launched in Autumn 2024, setting out our vision and priorities. The launch of our Customer Charter will be an early deliverable on the back of this launch

3 **Options and alternatives considered:**

3.1 We are planning to launch our Customer Charter in line with National Customer Service Week which takes place in the first week of October. This is a fantastic opportunity to launch this with our customers, showing how we are committed to improving service delivery. We already have a project team in place with communications team support and will ensure communications are ready in preparation for the launch if approved by Cabinet.

4 Consultation:

4.1 Work has been undertaken with our customers in the initial design stages of this charter to listen to their thoughts/ideas and ensure that this was designed collaboratively.

4.2 We have also consulted with staff internally, ensuring that they support this being embedded across all teams and the understand the importance of this as part of our Customer Strategy.

4.3 Members of CLT and SLT have also been consulted throughout and support our recommendation to launch this externally in October 2024.

5 Financial and value for money implications:

5.1 None.

6 Legal Implications:

6.1 None.

7 Risk implications:

7.1 Whilst there are several benefits our Customer Charter will bring to the Council; it is also important to consider the risks and how these can be mitigated.

7.2 **Staff not adhering to our commitments** – our staff are pivotal to ensuring that our commitments are adhered to, helping us improve our service delivery. Failure to support our staff to understand their role in this can lead to them not adhering to our commitments. To mitigate this risk, we will provide regular training for staff to understand and implement the charter effectively. We will also regularly report to CLT and SLT as we will monitor and evaluate our performance against the charter to identify and address any gaps or issues. We will also analyse complaints and level of failure demand to help us identify any further gaps or issues that we need to address.

7.3 **Reputational risk** - Failure to adhere to our customer charter can erode public trust and confidence in the council's ability to manage and serve the community effectively. Negative experiences shared by our customers can lead to bad publicity, impacting the council's reputation. To mitigate this risk, we will establish mechanisms for ongoing feedback from our customers to continually improve and ensure that we are adhering to our commitments.

7.4 **Inconsistent service delivery** - Without a well-embedded customer charter, different departments may deliver services inconsistently, leading to confusion and dissatisfaction among our customers.

Our transformation programme and the roll out of the Digital Platform will mitigate this risk, as our services will be designed consistently and customer centric.

8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

8.1 Community Impact Assessments on Council activities are carried out by relevant services with responsibility for those activities. A separate Community Impact Assessment has been carried out in respect of this report.

8.2 There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

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

9.1 There will be no negative impact to sustainability.

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

10.1 There will be no impact to council infrastructure.

11 Conclusions:

11.1 In conclusion, the above paper has outlined the work undertaken to date to ensure that our Customer Charter commitments are embedded internally in preparation for launching externally with our residents.

11.2 If approved by Cabinet, we will continue to work with our Communications Team to ensure that we are prepared to launch this in National Customer Service Week in October 2024 to ensure that it is positively received by our residents.

Our Customer Charter

We will...

We will communicate clearly and respectfully, showing our commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Strive to understand and take ownership of your enquiry and will direct you to the right organisation if we can't help directly

Explain, in an easy-to-understand way, what we need from you, advise you of our timescales and inform you of any delays

Improve access to our services by making more of these available online

Be responsive to your needs and adapt our communication style and actions accordingly

We need you (customers) to...

Provide us with the relevant information we need to help you

Understand that we may not always be the responsible organisation to resolve your issues

Please wait for the timescale we have communicated with you before requesting an update

Use the information and services available online if you can before contacting the Council

Be respectful towards our staff