



Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Planning Quarter 4 Performance Report 2023-24
Date:	10 June
Report on behalf of:	Cllr Sheron Wilkie, Portfolio Holder for Place
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Performance Report
Background papers:	
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	None

Report Author / Responsible Officer

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Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 set out the performance outturn for the service for Quarter 4 of 2023-24.
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	1. That the report is noted.
Period for post policy/project review:	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the performance outturn for the Planning service for the fourth quarter (Jan – March) the business year 2023-24. The full performance report is at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The performance report at Appendix 1 shows a total of 5 indicators. Of the revised Key Performance Indicators, two are departmental performance measures and three are measures that reflect local construction activity. Of the two departmental performance measures, one is green and one is red.

Planning Applications Determined Within Target

- 1.3 The percentage of all planning applications determined within target (DMP01) sits at 86%, against a target of 70%. The percentage is up from 82% compared to Q3. This represents sustained overall good performance from the team, particularly given the ongoing restrictions relating to the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC and the number of vacancies within the Development Management team. However, some caution must be added as this figure includes applications that were granted within an agreed extension of time.
- 1.4 Major planning application performance remains at 100%.
- 1.5 As for Minors and Others, they performed in Q2 as follows, against a 70% target:

MONTH	MINORS (%)	OTHERS (%)
Jan 2024	66.7	80.9
Feb 2024	73.1	82.5
March 2024	75	90.5
TOTAL Q2	71.3	84.3

- 1.6 Minors took a dip in January, but recovered well in February and March, so that for Q2 overall the performance exceeded the 70% target. In respect of Others (i.e. householders) the performance was well above target, and equally had an upward trend as the quarter progressed. From April 1st Officers have been informed that no Extensions of Time can be sought for householders. This is an internal measure introduced to ensure the completion of these applications within the statutory 8-weeks without relying on additional time agreed by the applicant / agent. It will be important to monitor the impact of this approach on performance in the next Quarterly Report.

Enforcement Site Visits

- 1.7 The percentage of all planning enforcement priority site visits (PE04) has gone up to 72% up from 32% the previous quarter, against a target of 100%. This upturn was forecast in the previous quarter's report as the work of the additional resources (temporary Agency Enforcement Officer as part of the Reserves funding for this service) continued to come through. It is further anticipated that this performance will increase above 90% in the next quarter.
- 1.8 Furthermore, the Enforcement service remain focused on dealing with the most harmful breaches of planning control. A total of 6 formal Notices were served in the quarter (all Enforcement Notices).

Affordable Housing

- 1.9 Indicator DO1 and DO2 – the number of affordable housing starts and the number of completions in the period has been changed to an annual rather than quarterly indicator, as a Local Authority we receive the figures annually. These are currently being ratified by Hertfordshire County Council and will be reported in Q1 report.

Retail Properties

- 1.10 For indicator CPE01 – the number of retail properties (vacancy rate) for the period – there is no data on this for the period as we are reliant on external parties. This will be reported at the earliest opportunity.

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace

- 1.11 Box Moor Trust continue to work with DBC and both respective legal advisors on an agreement which can be used between Boxmoor Trust, applicants and DBC to allow Box Moor Trust to provide SANG credits for development sites within their catchment area. This is good news for future supply of SANG in the borough.
- 1.12 The Council has a limited supply of SANG, which has been allocated to development sites in line with our Chilterns Beechwoods SAC Mitigation Strategy since November 2022. The Council is concerned that the supply of SANG at Chipperfield Common and Bunkers Park is reaching its capacity and are issuing an early warning notification in line with paragraph 7.1.13 of the Mitigation Strategy. This is to advise that capacity issues may arise and that we are reconsidering our SANG allocations protocol to be clear on the Councils priority for allocating SANG to small sites of 9 units or less as well as Council own schemes. This would remove any expectation of larger sites seeking DBC SANG.
- 1.13 The Council is continuing to work on future SANG opportunities at Bunkers Park extension, Margret Lloyd Park, Howe Grove and Gadebridge park. However, these sites are not currently available to allocate SANG credits against.
- 1.14 The Council is also reviewing our charge for SANG. This is currently set at £4,251.71 per new home. We will review this figure on agreement of the future Management Plans. There is an expectation that the cost per dwellings will increase. [Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation \(SAC\) - Mitigation Strategy \(dacorum.gov.uk\)](https://www.dacorum.gov.uk)
- 1.15 Ian Ross, Head of Neighbourhood Management is progressing all issues related to Secretary of State Applications for works on the Common (these types of works may include car parks, installation of signage and information boards, bollards and fencing). Trees and Woodlands are also meeting with specialist contractors to discuss works to Apostles Pond. Ian Ross is continuing to liaise with Chipperfield Parish Council.
- 1.16 Following recent interviews, an appointment has been made to the SANG Delivery Officer, in the Clean Safe and Green service. This role is key in delivering the commitments that have been made under SANG to support future housebuilding in the borough. We are awaiting confirmation of a start date but their initial focus of work will be to commence delivery of SANG obligations at Bunkers Park and seek the necessary permissions to commence works at Chipperfield Common.
- 1.17 Two planning applications have been received for SANG and are currently pending decision;
- 23/02972/MFA Planning application for the change of use from agricultural land to Suitable Accessible Natural Green Space (SANG), together with a vehicular access, car park, paths, fencing and landscaping at Castle Hill Berkhamsted Hertfordshire – will be presented to DMC in summer 2024
 - 23/02508/MFA Planning application for the change of use from agricultural land to a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) together with provision of a new car

park at Haresfoot Farm (Commercial) Chesham Road Berkhamsted Hertfordshire HP4 2SU – was recommended to grant planning permission and DMC resolved to grant planning permission at DMC in April 2024. This decision is now pending a Section 106 legal agreement

- 1.18 The Planning Inspector has granted planning permission for 135 new homes at Rectory Farm, Kings Langley. The Inspector dismissed the Council's arguments that the scheme did not comply with the Habitats Regulations and allowed the appeal on the basis that the imposition of a Grampian condition would secure the necessary SANG mitigation. The Inspector considered a Grampian condition was acceptable in this circumstance as it was within the catchment area of the Box Moor Trust and the Councils SANG sites. The onus is on the applicant to secure a SANG solution by a S106 Legal Agreement (as required by the Grampian condition) in order for the planning permission to be implemented.

2. Options and alternatives considered

- 2.1 Not applicable.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 James Doe – Strategic Director (Place)
- 3.2 Diane Southam – Assistant Director, Place Communities and Enterprise
- 3.3 Philip Stanley - Interim Head of Development Management
- 3.4 Ian Ross – head of Neighbourhood Delivery
- 3.5 Ronan Leydon – Team Manager, Strategic Planning

4. Financial and value for money implications:

Financial

- 4.1 None arising from decisions on this report though the financial indicators for Planning fees report an under recovery of income against target levels.

Value for Money

- 4.2 None arising from this report.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 None arising from this report.

6. Risk implications:

- 6.1 None arising from this report. Risks addressed through service level risk register.

7. Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

- 7.1 Community Impact Assessment - Not applicable for this report.
- 7.2 Human Rights – There are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

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

8.1 None arising from this report.

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

9.1 None arising from this report.

10. Conclusions:

10.1 Not applicable

Appendix 1 - Performance Report (attached separately)

