



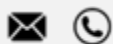
Finance & Resources

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Finance & Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Corporate and Commercial Quarter 3 2024/25
Date:	4 March 2025
Report on behalf of:	Cllr William Allen, 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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Corporate Priorities	Community engagement: Engage with residents and partners to have a real say on our services and the borough
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	<p>Service improvement and delivery: Running the Council efficiently and putting residents at the heart of everything we do</p> <p>Vibrant communities: Foster arts, culture, and leisure opportunities</p> <p>Sustainable future: Take action on the Climate and Ecological Emergency</p> <p>Clean, Safe and Green: Provide a clean, safe, and green-focussed environment</p> <p>Homes to be proud of: Enable well-maintained and affordable homes, where people want to live</p> <p>Proud and thriving borough: Realise our potential as a great place to live and work with a thriving business community</p>
Wards affected	All
Purpose of the report:	To provide Members with the performance report for Quarter 3 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 Q3 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 Q3 2024/25 of Commercial Development Services.

2.1 Key Performance Indicators

Not applicable.

2.2 Procurement Activity

The Procurement team is currently supporting the delivery of several commissioning and tendering activities in compliance with the Council's Commissioning & Procurement Standing Orders and continues to have oversight of the Council's commissioning and procurement activity to assure compliance and value for money. Work has continued updating and improving the Council's Procurement Forward Plan during Q3, to support assurance and improvement in compliance and value for money through all commissioning and procurement activity.

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 is now preparing for the significant changes the new regime will introduce, and a range of national learning and development material has been released to support this.

The Procurement Service has been updating procurement systems, process, and documentation, to provide a clear updated governance and compliance framework that officers will need to follow for the implementation of the new legislation at end of February 2025.

Work continued during Q3 to develop updated procurement governance arrangements, and the Commissioning & Procurement Standing Orders have been reviewed and updated to ensure compliance with the legislation and its implications on public sector procurement.

2.3 Procurement Compliance

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

Contract	Justification	Responsible Officer
N/A	There were no instances during Q3 where there was a request to set aside the Procurement Standing Orders to award a contract	N/A

Table 2 – Known non-compliant procurement expenditure during Q3

Contract	Annual Value	Reason	Responsible Officer	Mitigation
Supply of Sacks for Environmental Services	£40,000	Contract expired	John Mooteealoo	Work has progressed on drafting the invitation to tender documentation and a decision has been made to undertake a further competition via the ESPO framework agreement. It is projected that a contract will be awarded in Q2 2025/26
Supply of Bins & Caddies	£40,000	No contract in place	John Mooteealoo	Work is progressing on the contract documentation between the supplier and the Council. This is expected to be concluded during Q4 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	Work is progressing on drafting the invitation to tender documentation and it is planned for the tender to be live by Q4 2024/25 with a contract being awarded by Q2 2025/26
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 Development & 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:

- **Parking Services**

Changes to parking tariff and charging policy were approved by Cabinet to proceed to statutory consultation in February 2024. Following the conclusion of the consultation a PH decision was made to implement the changes; however, this decision was called in and was discussed at the Finance & Resource OSC meeting in November 2024. Following a vote at the meeting, it was decided to continue with the implementation of the changes to parking, work has progressed on the implementation and the changes are projected to be implemented in March 2025.

Work has also progressed on the renewal of the parking enforcement contract in time for a new contract start date in Oct 2025. Tender proposals were submitted in early November, with the bids being evaluated during Q3, a contract award decision is due in Q4.

Other commercial related projects underway, or that will commence in Q3 include:

- **Commercial Income Review programme** – Work continues on this multi-year programme of review of services generating commercial income for the Council, with the aim of identifying opportunities to improve efficiency and net income and support the ongoing financial sustainability of the MTFS. The first stage of this review concluded in Q4 2023-24, with analysis of corporate financial data and the income and expenditure of income generating services. This identified key areas of focus for further analysis.

Following the second stage that was undertaken during Q1 – Q2 2024-25 that resulted in the identification of increased opportunities for income generation around both Garage and Parking Pricing Strategies, work progressed to include these opportunities in the 2025/26 budget and will provide structure and clarity for ongoing fee and tariff setting in these areas in future years.

A third stage commenced in Q3 24-25, which focuses on the analysis and scoping of potential commercial opportunities in other income generating service areas. This work will be ongoing through 2025-26 and supports the wider Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

- **Garage Portfolio Review** - Forming part of the wider Strategic Asset Review programme, this project concludes during Q4 2024-25. Its objective was 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 portfolio assets. The findings of the assessments inform the development of a new Garage Business Plan and drive profitability of the portfolio going forwards. The new Garage Business Plan is due for reporting and approval in Q2-Q3 2025-26.

The review also identified sites that could be used for alternative purposes that could deliver alternative commercial income returns to the Council. Further feasibility work will take place during 2025-26 on opportunities that may be taken forward; aligning with other work streams within the Council's Strategic Asset Review – for example the HRA Housing Estate Review, the wider Strategic asset review project, and plans to seek an Investment Partner to work with the Council on future place development, regeneration and housing growth.

- **Strategic Asset Review programme** – This programme has several project workstreams underway to review performance and strategic opportunities relating to the Council's assets. A separate report is to be presented to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the outcome of the high level strategic review of the Council's overall asset portfolio, with recommendations as to next steps. A separate report was submitted in October 2024 in relation to plans to seek an Investment Partner, and a further report will come to this Committee on conclusion of the current selection process in Q2 2025-26.

3. Legal and Democratic Services Q3 Performance Report

3.1 The Legal Team

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

OCTOBER

Shannon Madigan - Littering - Found Guilty. Sentenced as follows:
£220 fine
£88 V/S
£313.85 costs.
Total to pay: £621.85

NOVEMBER

DBV v Bevis and Bevin
On 27/11/24 DBC successfully obtained an undertaking prohibiting defendant from parking and storing vehicles on access way and garages

Mr Terry Carder v Dacorum Borough Council
Successfully settled disrepair case

DECEMBER

Katie Barber -v- Dacorum Borough Council
Successfully settled disrepair claim 05/12/24

Faye Burkfield - v - Dacorum Borough Council - Claim No. K01LU671
Successfully settled disrepair claim 09/12/24

Mr C Waring - 73 Eight Acres Tring v DBC
Successfully settled disrepair claim 02/12/2024

DBC v D King - Illegal eviction case – Defendant pleaded guilty at Crown Court now awaiting sentencing hearing

DBC v Charlotte Massey Animal Welfare (JE)

Successfully obtained order under s.20 Animal Welfare Act for ownership of cat to be transferred to DBC so that we could re-home the seized cat 04/12/2024

Quarter 3 was also a very busy quarter for the Property and Planning Team and they received over 60 new instructions, including new leases, right to buy applications and planning agreements.

3.2 Corporate and Democratic Support

Democratic Services

- During Quarter 3 the team supported and hosted 23 committee meetings (including an Extraordinary Council meeting and Joint Budget); administering public participation, producing and publishing the agendas, actions, decisions and video minutes for public access.
- The team managed the decision-making processes, which included 13 Cabinet decisions (with 6 resolutions to recommend for Council approval), 3 Portfolio Holder decisions and 8 Officer Decisions. There were no decisions called-in during this period.
- The team also facilitated the delivery of 3 Member Briefings and 3 Member Development Training sessions as below, which included;

DMC Briefing
Mandatory GDPR & FOI Training
Mandatory Budget Setting Training
Community Safety & Enforcement Briefing
East Hemel Member Engagement (DMC) Briefing
Chair Training

- In addition to the above, the team supported the work of the scrutiny review and produced the draft 2025/26 Committee Timetable to support the proposed changes to committee cycles. Work was undertaken to publicise the government consultation on remote attendance and proxy voting at council meetings, including engaging with our own elected members to seek their views and feedback to SLT to construct the organisations agreed response which was submitted as part of the consultation.

Digital Print & Post Room (Central Administration)

- The Team printed, prepared and franked 62,641 post items for outgoing mail.
- During October the team began preparation for the move of new MHCLG tenants into The Forum; uploading staff ID photos, creating a new group on PAC system, issuing of staff ID badges, setting up in coming & outgoing post. Support was given to the Strategic Planning team with printing and distribution of Local Plan, and the team supported colleagues in Housing by printing & manually preparing (approx 1000) Home Contents Insurance packs for distribution to tenants.
- During November the team supported the RBL Poppy Appeal during 12 – 22 November by creating a space for them within the secure scanning room for a team of their volunteers to safely count cash taken from their poppy appeal and ensure it was safely collected for banking. The courier supported SPAE team with the delivery of Dacorum Local Plan documents to various locations around the Borough
- During December the team supported work relating to the Dacorum Local Plan by scanning & emailing returned forms. To support the move of new partners into The Forum, 61 x ID Badges programmed & printed for CLCH NHS Trust. The team was

also able to support a short notice request for printing, posters, & ID Badges for the Supported Housing opening event held on 13/12/2024

Mayoralty

- The Democratic Service Manager provided civic oversight and support to the political PAs who deliver the day to day support to the Mayoralty and delivered a Christmas Card competition for local schools, sponsored by a local printing firm who donated packs of the winning design to be sold to raise funds for the Mayor's chosen charity Community Action Dacorum. There were 2 age categories and a winner was chosen by the Mayor for each; a small party was then hosted for the class of each winner where they enjoyed festive treats and fun and had the opportunity to meet the Mayor and try on the robes. The Mayor also held a staff Christmas Raffle to raise further funds

Electoral Services

Electoral Register

- During Quarter 3, the following 8075 changes were made to the Electoral Register:-

Additions: 3029

Deletions: 3826

Changes: 360

Movers: 860

Bennetts End & Hemel Hempstead Town by election

By elections took place on the 21st of November 2024 to fill vacancies in the Bennetts End ward and the Hemel Hempstead Town Ward. Both elections went well, and the verification and counts were held the following day at The Forum.

The successfully elected candidate for the Bennetts End ward was: Lin Greenfield, Labour Party.

The successfully elected candidate for the Hemel Hempstead Town ward was: Neil Harden, The Conservative Party Candidate.

HCC elections

The Hertfordshire County Council elections will take place on Thursday the 1st of May 2025. The verification and count will be held on Friday the 2nd of May at Hemel Hempstead sports centre.

The Elections Team have begun making all necessary arrangements and are currently in the process of booking all polling stations and appointing all staff. The count venue is booked, and all plans have been set with them. The key dates and arrangements have been agreed with the election printers and the project board meet with the Deputy Returning Officer regularly to ensure everything is on track.

There will be continued close liaison with the Returning Officer at HCC and the rest of the Hertfordshire authorities to ensure a consistent approach.

Tring Town Council – Bunstrux Ward by election

A by election will take place on Thursday the 27th of February 2025 to fill a vacancy on Tring Town Council in the Bunstrux Ward. Again, the Elections team are making all necessary arrangements, and all polling stations have been booked and all staff appointed.

The verification and count will be held straight after the close of poll at 10pm at Tring Community Centre.

Polling District & Polling Place Order

Following the elections in 2024 some issues were identified with three polling stations in the borough. Therefore, a review of those polling stations was carried out and alternatives were identified.

Following a site visit and an assessment of the building and facilities available, each alternative site was deemed appropriate as a polling station and were recommended to use. Consultation then followed with the relevant ward councillors and the Electoral Review Committee. They were each then recommended to Full Council for approval in the updated Polling Place Order.

The new polling Places will therefore be used at the HCC elections in May 2025.

Electoral Review

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) are currently conducting the electoral review for Dacorum.

The first phase was completed in 2024 and the Boundary Commission advised that their preliminary recommendation was to remain with 51 councillors, however this was amended to 52 councillors when they published their draft warding recommendations (Phase 2 of the review) in December 2024.

Consultation on the draft recommendations closed on the 10th of February 2025. The council now waits for the LGBCE to publish their final recommendations in June 2025 ready for implementation at the local elections in May 2027. They have confirmed that this review will still be completed within the original set timeframe, regardless of the devolution discussions.

Annual Canvass

The annual canvass was completed on the 1st of December when the revised electoral register was published.

- In total, 67,956 properties were canvassed.
 - ♣ 93% overall response
 - ♣ All recipients on the distribution list were provided with the register as required.

Licensing

Applications

During this three month period the Licensing Team dealt with the following:

604 applications in total broken down as follows:

282 Licensing Act applications

133 Taxi Licensing applications

62 Gambling Act applications/transactions (lotteries and machine permits)

32 Charity collections

8 Animal Activity licence applications + 1 Dangerous Wild Animals application

And a further 87 of other various miscellaneous licensing applications and registrations

Freedom of Information and Data Protection

FOI & DPA Stats for Q3 as follows:

Cat	Total Number Received	on Target	Missed	% On Target
FOI	167	148	19	88.62
DPA	7	7	0	100

4 Finance & Resources Q3 24/25 Performance Report

- 4.1 This report outlines the 2024/25 Quarter 3 (October – December) performance of the Finance and Revenues & Benefits services, the details of the quarterly KPI's are included in the enclosed Appendix A Corporate and Commercial Performance report.
- 4.2 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 seven green KPI's and two red KPIs. The red rated KPIs where performance requires improvement are:
- FIN02a Average time taken for debtors to pay,
 - IR01Q Percentage of internal audit recommendations implemented in line with the due date
- 4.3 The FIN02a has been reported as red or amber for the last 12 months, with performance reported at 60.6 days compared to a target of 51.7 days. This is considerably lower than quarter 3 of 2023/24 showing significant performance improvements by the service in challenging times for customers. A substantial number of Leaseholder invoices fell due in Quarter 3. 76% of these have been agreed at a payment plan to help support households manage their costs. This has meant that the target was not met in quarter 3.
- 4.4 The IR01Q results from 5 open cases. Following dialogue with the services, 3 cases have since been closed and the other cases have had new deadlines agreed with the auditors to allow more detailed work to be completed.
- 4.5 Within the quarter, in addition to the core transactional work, the teams have:
- focussed on supporting the budget setting process;
 - worked to close the 2023/24 accounts, achieving an unqualified opinion from the Council's external auditors;
 - continued to work with the transformation team with the development of more options for residents to transact with us online. This work should lead to new processes being made available by the summer.

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.