

Appendix 4: Corporate Performance Summary Quarter 4 2021/22

- 1.1 Results for the full set of current corporate performance measures across all themes (FTFC programme and the Customer, Place and Transformation and Support themes) are attached at Appendix Five. The overview of these results for April 2021 to March 2022 are outlined below:

Number of Measures Reported	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (urgent improvement action required)	Missing Data
46	29	3	14	0

- 1.2 Further to this 9 baseline measures are being baselined in 2021/22 (Appendix One refers). These will be introduced into the corporate suite in 2022/23.
- 1.3 Three community safety partnership measures are also monitored through the Corporate Performance Suite. The data for these measures is provided by the Police and HCC.

Spotlights and Areas for Improvement

- 1.4 A summary of Council areas for improvement (April 2021 to March 2022) is set out in the following paragraphs across the three key delivery themes: Customer, Place and Transformation and Support.
- 1.5 Some key performance highlights for Quarter 4 include:
- There were 62 homelessness preventions against a target of 40
 - 36% of household waste was sent for reuse, recycling and composting
 - Garage Voids achieved its target
 - There were 11 new business start-ups in the Business Technology Centre against a target of 6
 - It took on average 2.86 days to process new housing benefit claims and change events against a target of 10 days
- 1.6 The areas of focus below were reported to be at red or amber status for Quarter 4. They have been split into four main areas of challenge – Temporary Accommodation, Voids, Garages and Customer Services.
- 1.7 For these four main areas officer Performance Clinics have been held over the last two quarters. Each performance clinic has included attendees from all relevant service areas. These sessions have considered performance data, related issues, actions planned and in place, and future forecasting. Each

service area has developed an improvement plan, the implementation of which will be monitored by the Strategic Leadership Team.

Temporary & Emergency Accommodation

NI156: Number of households in emergency/temporary accommodation at the end of the quarter

- March 2022 target 180 households
- March 2022 actual 203 households (red)

- 2.1 At the end of Quarter 4 there were 203 households in temporary/emergency accommodation, of which 38 were in Housing First (HF) provision. Consideration was given to remove HF from this KPI; however HF is still being managed by the Temporary Accommodation resource in relation to property management.
- 2.2 There has been an increase in numbers in temporary/emergency accommodation since the end of Quarter 3; however this is very much down to the initiation of SWEPP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol) which was still in place as Quarter 4 ended. Those picked up under SWEPP remained accommodated in Housing First provision thereafter in order to prevent them returning to rough sleeping. There are also 14 cases under offer pending completion of works to their 'move on' property; 3 of these are to housing association properties where lettings have been delayed due to roof damage caused by the strong winds earlier this year, the remaining 11 are caught in the void back log pending handover for letting.
- 2.3 A Housing First Business Plan is being presented at this Executive meeting.
- 2.4 *Improvement Actions in Place Since Last Quarter*
- £139k Health Protection Board funding secured to increase capacity in the team
 - 17 properties being procured through repurposing General Needs properties and work with Housing Development/ the WOC to increase Temporary Accommodation provision
 - Extension of 2x Temporary Accommodation Officers until 31st October to ensure sufficient capacity to meet demand – exploring possible growth bid going forward
 - One Temporary Accommodation Officer allocated to manage Housing First properties; whilst resource intensive, this has made the approach more consistent and more manageable across the board
 - Reviewed rota and duties to ensure Housing Options team are working efficiently
 - Temporary Accommodation procedure manual in draft - to ensure all TA staff working in the same way and have a point of reference
 - Following a number of recruitment rounds the Housing Options team have been able to successfully recruit to the two Senior Housing Options Caseworker posts and three Housing Options

Caseworker posts. All but one successful candidate have now started in their roles, with the last due to start in the team from 27 June 2022. This will increase the capacity and enable staff to dedicate more time on individual cases.

- A Housing Options case audit took place on 12 May 2022 whereby every member of the team was required to attend Daneshill House in order to complete a review of their case load. The purpose of the case audit was to identify any actions or documents that were missing from each case, to identify which cases were past the 56 day relief duty and outstanding decisions and to identify cases which could be closed in order to reduce their caseload. Following this audit the team have been working to address the outstanding actions identified.

2.5 *Improvement Actions Underway/Planned*

- A review of the Housing Options service is underway to help reduce time spent in Temporary Accommodation A temporary accommodation manual is in draft. This will ensure that all staff are working in the same way and have a point of reference
- Temporary Accommodation training needs have been identified with HR and sessions have been scheduled for July.
- The Housing Options management team have been spending time to complete an audit of all training in order to identify gaps and arrange training. In addition to this the members of the Housing Options Team have also been encouraged to attend a number of free webinars provided by the National Homelessness Advice Service (NHAS).
- IT system – efficiencies in the Housing Options team will be improved imminently, following the impending introduction of Jigsaw. The Jigsaw operating system was designed specifically for local authorities to help improve their data entry and navigate the complex homeless pathway from approach to discharge, in turn providing a simpler, yet significantly more thorough reporting solution for local authority returns to central government. The introduction of this system, once embedded, will reduce the administrative burden posed by the current system and subsequently officers will have more time for effective casework, leading to more timely decisions and earlier intervention during the homeless prevention stage. In addition, we should see a reduction in complaints and footfall into CSC as there is an online portal which allows for improved communications between officers and applicants; giving applicants the ability to upload documents and communicate directly with their Options Case Officer.

- 2.6 Whilst the Council do expect to see a reduction in the number of homeless approaches over the summer months, as is typical of most years, we are still planning for an increase in approaches following the rise in the cost of living and the ever increasing likelihood of a recession. We may not see the impact of fuel hikes leading to homelessness until spring 2023; however it is predicted

that local authorities could see an earlier increase in the number of refugees from Ukraine and Afghanistan approaching for housing via the homeless referral pathway which is currently being developed by government.

- 2.7 As such we are forecasting a steady increase in Quarters 3 & 4 2022/23, though our numbers in B&B should reduce owing to the procurement of new Temporary Accommodation provision through open market acquisitions and repurposing suitable general needs stock.

Void Loss, Voids Sheltered, Voids Sheltered Major Works, Voids General Needs & Voids General Needs Major Works

VoidLoss1: Void Loss in year (£)

- March 2022 target £319,245
- March 2022 actual £532,510.82 (red)

VoidsSheltered: The time taken to re-let standard sheltered voids

- March 2022 target 70 days
- March 2022 actual 181.67 days (red)

Voids Sheltered MW: The time taken to re-let major works sheltered voids

- March 2022 target 70 days
- March 2022 actual 134.7 days (red)

Voids GN: The time taken to relet general needs voids

- March 2022 target 32 days
- March 2022 actual 34.91 days (red)

Voids GNMW: The time taken to re-let major works general needs voids

- March 2022 target 65 days
- March 2022 actual 30.65 days (green)

- 3.1 The voids measures have two elements to them; the Repairs element ('keys received' to 'ready to let') and the Lettings element ('ready to let' to 'letting date'). During Quarter 4 the Repairs element achieved its targets; however the Lettings element did not on sheltered properties. This is mainly due to historic hard to let properties. Due to the nature of this measure being cumulative 3 of the 4 measures are red for the financial year. The below table demonstrates Q4 performance only.

Void Type	<u>TARGET</u> turnaround (Days)	<u>ACTUAL</u> (Total Days)	<u>REPAIRS</u> Actual (Repairs Days)	<u>LETTINGS</u> Actual (Lettings Days)
GN Standard	32	30	24	6
GN Major	65	61	56	5
SH Standard	70	203	22	181
SH Major	70	210	48	162

3.2 In January and March the Lettings team experienced some issues in meeting their target to let sheltered properties. January's figures included the letting of a hard to let property that had been void for a considerable amount of time which pushed up the average lettings timescale. January and March delays include: issues contacting applicants, refusals of properties/viewings resulting in new verifications and offers being made to 2nd and 3rd applicants. The Lettings figures for Independent Living (SH) remain high whilst long term void properties continue to be let.

3.3 The ongoing impact of the covid pandemic and recovery, alongside further challenges including the war in Ukraine and the cost of living crisis, is still uncertain and may impact on voids performance in the coming year (2022/23). Officers will continue to track this closely and take appropriate action as required.

3.4 *Improvement In Place Since Last Quarter*

- All customers awaiting fencing repairs have been written to, to explain the approach being taken, including the additional funding that has been provided to help to tackle the backlog.
- The voids service has now been refocused with a dedicated manager. This will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the void works end to end process.
- New Project Operative roles identified as part of the Service Review are being implemented to help bring the void repairs element and the administration of the works together.
- A downsizing officer has been appointed in the lettings team making use of remaining downsizing incentive budget for 21/22. This will assist tenants to make the choice to move into properties that better suit their needs and free up much needed larger properties. Whilst this will create a higher volume of voids, the downsizing officer will assist the tenant during the notice period to prepare for the move which will result in more properties being re-let within target.

- A review of the staffing resource levels in the Lettings Team is underway to ensure targets can be met, and so that appropriate future resourcing levels are fed into the revised HRA business plan.

3.5 *Improvements Underway/Planned*

- A new materials supplier contract has been approved and this arrangement will commence in June 2022.
- The Service Review continues to be implemented, but there have been recruitment challenges for some roles. A plan on how to improve this is in development. Other roles have now been recruited to on a permanent basis.
- Workshops are ongoing to help improve performance longer term.
- External support is being sought to review the end to end Voids process, to ensure an optimised and holistic approach is in place that will be aligned to the emerging HRA Asset Management Strategy.
- A review of how voids are reported on is being undertaken for 2022/23, to capture the number of properties let within set timescales.

Garage Voids

CNM2g: Garage Voids as a Percentage of Stock

- March 2022 target 14%
- March 2022 actual 14.53% (red)

- 4.1 The garage void rate target for Quarter 4 has been achieved for the first time in two and a half years. Benchmarking against local authorities who also manage garage stock indicates that the Council has one of the lowest garage voids rates in Hertfordshire.
- 4.2 In Quarter 4 a total of 288 offers were made. This represents a 19% uplift compared to Quarter 3 (when 242 offers were made) and 25% uplift on Quarter 2 (when 182 offers were made).
- 4.3 Acceptance rates average 45% and Garage Services continue to make calls to applicants to offer garages and make weekly call backs to those applicants who haven't accepted their license, with the aim of increasing acceptance rates and minimising void times.
- 4.4 Residents continue to apply for garages; 305 garage applications were received during Quarter 4 taking the waiting list to 2,863.
- 4.5 Garage Services now have a full two years of Key Performance Indicator data. As anticipated and in line with seasonal trends year on year, following the issuing of the rent increase letter in there have been high levels of terminations in March; 61, compared to 48 in January 2022 and 26 in February 2022.
- 4.6 A Garages Business Plan is being presented at this Executive meeting.

4.7 Improvement Actions In Place Since Last Quarter

- 48% of the void stock are defined as 'avoidable voids', meaning that action can be taken to get them into a condition where they can be offered for rent. Estates and Garage Services are working together to address repairs backlogs and new repairs works more efficiently. This includes addressing resourcing / capacity challenges across both service areas. For example, Garage Services are recruiting for an additional Garage Lettings Officer to provide capacity to assist with reducing the avoidable voids.
- Any-day tenancies commenced on 1st April 2022; this will allow the flexibility of a license starting on the day the key is collected. 67% of garage license holders are now on the preferred payment method of direct debit and for new garage license holders from 1st April 2022 this will be the only possible method of payment.
- The first full year of the 52 week charging has been actual and refurbished sites returned during 21/22 have moved to a different rental category since April 2022, this will allow for a more accurate understanding of our voids.
- Asbestos remedial works are ongoing; 50% of the back log that were sent to the contractor have now been completed and the remainder are being progressed. The performance of the asbestos surveying contractor has improved and continues to be monitored.
- Beacon Partnerships have been appointed to undertake the strategic options analysis of the circa 430 sprayed asbestos units. Further investment in addressing asbestos in garages will be considered, if required to tackle the issues identified and against a clear business case.

4.8 Improvement Actions Underway/Planned

- The development of Digital Garage Lettings is in progress. By allowing residents to view available garage stock online and bid on garages of their choice it is anticipated that acceptance rates will increase and more demand can be met. This is expected to be in place in Summer 2022
- From 1st April 2022 garage terminations have moved to a 4 week notice period, an increase from 1 week. This will allow the following activity to take place during the 4 weeks and is expected to help the reduction of void loss (Arrangement of asbestos survey if required, programming of any repairs required to the garage, re-allocating the garage ready for the next applicant to occupy).

- 4.9 Garage void turnaround times will be monitored from April 2022 at an operational level to ensure actions in place are having the desired impact; this will be escalated if required.

Customer Services and Complaints

CSC12: Percentage of calls abandoned in the Customer Service Centre

- March 2022 target 15%

- March 2022 actual 35.5% (red)

CTOC1: Percentage of customer complaints responded to within deadline

- March 2022 target 95%
- March 2022 actual 63.5% (red)

Website Satisfaction

WebSat1: Customer Satisfaction with Council website. (This is calculated using three different options for customer to provide feedback, a red face, amber face, green face, which in turn relate to a score of -1 negative score, 0 neutral score, +1 positive score and is then drawn together into a total result)

- March 2022 target 0.2
- March 2022 actual -0.25 (red)

4.10 Customer Services aim to provide accessible and easy to use services which are available at a time and place which suits our customers. Increasingly, and in line with transformation principles agreed at Executive, in August 2021, this means increasingly providing service via our website. Furthermore, when residents were asked to rank five ways the Council could maximise their budget as part of the 'Making your Money Count' programme, the most commonly chosen option for 1st place was reducing time and money spent on paperwork by interacting with more residents online, with four in ten (41%) choosing this as first. The team are making steady progress in creating online services, with nearly a quarter of requests for service now made online.

4.11 The following shows the current services available online and the future priorities:

Available online	2022/23 priorities
Missed/ replacement bins Report it e.g. environmental nuisances such as fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and graffiti. Non urgent repairs reports (not appointment booking) Housing register applications Choice based lettings and mutual exchanges Housing –rent balances and payments Payments – anything with an account e.g. rent, council tax, business rates, garages Council Tax – view details, change of address, direct debit sign up. Benefits - new claims, change of circumstances, benefits calculator, view benefits Planning- applications, viewing planning documents and	Garage lettings online Repairs appointment booking Housing options and advice case tracking Tracking enquiries online including complaints (Digital platform “caseviewer”) One login for Housing Online and Digital Platform services One-off payments (e.g. for a license or permit)

<p>decisions</p> <p>Find a car park, Find my bin collection, find my polling station</p> <p>Play registration and booking A range of online enquiry forms</p> <p>Bulky waste requests</p>	
---	--

- 4.12 It remains a priority for the Council to be able to help those who don't have access to online services or who can't self-serve. In 2021/ 22 the team were not able to meet our targets for call abandonment. Customer Services were only able to answer 65% calls, with 35% callers hanging up before their call was answered.
- 4.13 We have also seen an increase in complaints, and timely resolution of complaints. The council received 4270 complaints and member enquiries in 2021/22, which is nearly a quarter more than in 2019/20 or 2020/21. Timely resolution of complaints has suffered with 63.5% closed on time in Q4. However, there has been considerable variability between services.
- 4.14 The key factors impacting on telephone and complaints performance are outlined below:
- As part of budget savings prepared during the Covid-19 pandemic (2021/22 budget), the Council reduced the number of CSC advisers from 25 to 20FTE. With greater demand for services after the pandemic, this has meant some delays in call answering with a particular impact in busier times.
 - In common with a number of customer service organisations, staff turnover has increased in Customer Services, mirroring some other Council and national trends. Turnover increased to 50% over the past year (typically at 20% before the pandemic). Adviser training takes 3 – 6 months due to the range of services dealt with within the CSC
 - We also recognise that greater pressure and demand for specific services has created additional demand for CSC services. Analysis of call volumes and lengths showed almost half of Customer Service adviser time is spent handling repairs.
 - The repairs service is dealing with a backlog of requests including fencing repairs (exacerbated by the storms in February) and also due to the temporary suspension of non-urgent repairs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff capacity and recruitment challenges are also a contributing factor. Housing and repairs teams continue to collaborate to address performance challenges, which in turn, will also help alleviate some of the demand currently being experienced in the CSC and some of the challenges in providing timely customer responses.
 - Critical online service options which will reduce pressure on the service are not yet live - in particular online repairs appointments is now planned for November 2022.
 - Housing Repairs (457 complaints in 2020/21, 845 complaints in 2021/22) and Housing Residents and Estates (299 complaints in 2020/21, 519 complaints in 2021/22) have continued to struggle with

significant performance issues throughout the year. Two thirds of all late complaint resolutions in the council have been in these two services.

- A quarter of complaints from a sample of 280 related to fencing or guttering issues. Other significant factors included chasing of follow-on works (17%), appointments not being kept (14%), and repairs not being to required standard (12%).

4.15 Q4 also saw some particular pressures:

- The storms in February caused an uplift of around 800 repairs enquiries. Avoidable contact is increasing as residents chase fence and gutter repairs that have not yet been completed.
- Q4 is typically a challenging period with high seasonal demand and the presentation of complex issues. In January we received a high volume of enquiries deferred by customers because of Christmas and weather related incidents. A high volume of enquiries related to end of year processes and billing enquiries came through in March.

4.16 The transformation programme discovery phase has also reviewed SBC's current service offer for high priority / volume services across the Council and identified some key system-wide challenges to be addressed through the transformation programme:

- There is scope to create bigger teams who deal with a broader range of issues in order to ensure services are better able to help customers and cope with fluctuations in demand.
- Customer facing staff need to have access to up to date contact, process and policy information to ensure it is fit for purpose and consistent across services
- There is scope to further improve and promote our website offer for many services to help people to obtain information, advice and guidance and to access services.
- There is scope to improve tracking of cases online, and reduce the need for emails and paper based systems.

4.17 *Improvement In Place Since Last Quarter*

- A rolling recruitment campaign has been re-launched for advisers to ensure that there are candidates available when staff leave. A new HR recruitment system is working well and making it much quicker to shortlist and arrange interviews.
- Coaching of Customer Service Advisers has focussed on improving call handling, to unlock capacity and improve availability of advisers. This area has been prioritised because of the high staff turnover this year and the increase in recruitment.
- Revised opening hours for the CSC came into effect on 4th April which will allow for more consistency of resource available due to more overlapping shifts.
- An online bulky waste service was launched in May 2022.
- Phone and website messages have been updated to signpost the range of options available online.

4.18 Improvements Underway/Planned

- The Housing asset management strategy is being reviewed, which will reconsider the investment needs for the Housing stock, in terms of major works, planned maintenance and repairs. This in turn will inform the 30 year Housing business plan refresh. Additional funding of £250k has been provided in 2022/23 to help reduce the fencing backlog.
- Marketing and communications activity is increasing in order to further encourage customers to utilise and take advantage of our website services.
- A new set of service choices for callers to Customer Services will be rolled out in Q1 to help provide better resourcing and priority for answering priority enquires such as emergency repairs, SADA, or becoming homeless that day. At the same time a “digital first” approach for enquiries for services that have good online functionality will ask people to hang up and go online unless the phone is their only option.
- Digital improvements are planned for 2022/23 as Phase 1 of the transformation programme. This includes online garage lettings and key collection self-service, self-service scanning, and online repairs bookings.
- Phase 2 of the transformation programme will include improved Information Advice and Guidance, enhanced case management and a re-designed customer model for the Council to address system wide challenges as described above. This will also ensure that an appropriate telephone-based service will be retained to ensure everyone can continue to access the services they need. A proposal will be presented to Executive in September.

Website Satisfaction

- 4.19 Q4 performance was slightly lower than Q3; however, because of the small amount of feedback received, it's difficult to draw strong conclusions. We receive a feedback comment in only around 1 in 13,000 times a customer visits a page. We are planning to review our customer feedback mechanisms in 2022/23, to increase the amount of feedback we get and to make it more actionable.
- 4.20 Key themes of customer feedback that could be drawn in Q4 were: disappointment over how and when council tax rebate will be paid, difficulty paying and appealing car parking fines, and both positive and negative feedback about waste and recycling services.

Human Resources

Apprentices

EoC4a: Percentage of apprentices in post as a percentage of the workforce

- March 2022 target 2.5%
- March 2022 actual 1.07% (red)

-
- 5.1 During this quarter a number of apprentices have gone on to secure more senior roles within the Council or have completed their qualifications.
- 5.2 The Learning & Development team is working with service managers to identify new apprenticeship opportunities.

Sickness Absence

Pe4a: Sickness Absence Rate for the Current Workforce (FTE)

- March 2022 target 8 days
 - March 2022 actual 10.63 days (red)
- 5.3 Sickness absence rates have increased during Q4 of 2021/22 to 10.63 days per FTE, of which 5.09 days per FTE were short term absence and 5.54 days per FTE were long term absences (absence lasting over 21 days).
 - 5.4 Of the short term absence, 15% of this can be attributed to COVID-19 related absence which increased significantly in January 2022 with the spread of the Omicron variant across the UK. The increase in long term sickness absence compared to Q4 2020/21 can be attributed to an increase in the number of employees with complex medical conditions, including cancer, endocrine related condition and an increase psychological illness, such as depression.
 - 5.5 We continue to provide support to employee who are absent due to sickness – the range of support includes – occupational health, Employee Assistance Programme, counselling/mental health action plans, physio and a range of reasonable adjustments based on individual needs. We also support and advise managers on applying the short term and long term sickness absence policies – including ill health retirement where eligible.

Finance

Savings

FS4: Percentage of HRA savings identified to meet one year target

- March 2022 target 95%
 - March 2022 actual 25.45% (red)
- 6.1 A number of pressures have arisen for the HRA which have been included in the 2022/23 budget pending the HRA BP review to be reported to the Executive during 2022, this will address the future savings target required and the level of growth the HRA can afford.

Council Tax

BV9: % council tax collected

- March 2022 target 96.8%
- March 2022 actual 94.5% (red)

- 6.2 Council Tax continues to be below what was collected pre-COVID, but the taxbase is higher and negates some of the potential loss. This is borne out by the projected surplus due on the Collection Fund for 2021/22 of which £50K is applicable to Stevenage.

Rent Collection Rate

BV66a: Rent Collection Rate

- March 2022 target 97.81%,
- March 2022 actual 97.23% (amber)

- 6.3 This is slightly under target for the year. The biggest reason is the cost of living crisis impacting low income households especially.
- 6.4 Increasing costs of living including soaring energy prices, rising inflation and an increase in national insurance will require balancing successful income collection with the flexibility, understanding and support for those struggling to pay.
- 6.5 The Income services team's collective and individual effort will be focused on sustaining income collection to expected levels and tenancy sustainment, whilst supporting those tenants experiencing financial challenges. This will be closely monitored to ensure continuous improvements and collection of all HRA income streams is maximised.

Jobs Created through the Business Technology Centre

BTC1a: New jobs created through the BTC (ytd)

- March 2022 target 60
- March 2022 actual 35 (red)

- 6.6 The lockdown and the Omicron Variant had a significant impact on the BTC and those accessing one to one advice and webinars support. However, it is on target in terms of achieving its financial performance targets.
- 6.7 WENTA are reporting high levels of occupancy and a bounce back in business advice services. They are also seeing pre-starts and early stage businesses at the BTC.
- 6.8 It should be noted that although this measure did not achieve its target this year, for the quarter it achieved the target of creating 15 jobs, the highest level all financial year.

Affordable Homes Delivered (Current Quarter)

HDD1e: Number of affordable homes delivered by the Council (current quarter)

- March 2022 target 29 homes
- March 2022 actual 5 homes (red)

- 6.9 This measure has not achieved target, due to the Symonds Green scheme not completing this quarter. The scheme is now due to be completed Quarter 1 2022/23.