

**CABINET
18 MARCH 2025**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2024-25 (QUARTER 3 UPDATE)

REPORT OF: REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - RESOURCES

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: FINANCE AND IT

COUNCIL PRIORITY: THRIVING COMMUNITIES / ACCESSIBLE SERVICES / RESPONSIBLE GROWTH / SUSTAINABILITY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents progress on delivering the Council Delivery Plan for 2024-25. This is a Quarter 3 update, but generally reflects progress up to the point that this report was prepared (mid-February). The report includes:

- For the projects identified by Cabinet in March 2024, it details milestones and progress against them.
- The risks in relation to the delivery of those projects, as well as the corporate risks that could impact the delivery of all our projects and services. This includes a proposal for a new corporate risk related to Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution.
- Latest data for the performance indicators identified by Cabinet in June 2024.

There are 8 projects with delayed milestones, 4 projects with new milestones and 2 projects with deleted milestones.

There are two red performance indicators relating to calls answered within 45 seconds and percentage of NNDR (Business Rates) collected in-year. The actions to correct this are set out in paragraph 8.4.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the progress against Council projects as set out in the Council Delivery Plan, and approves the changes to the milestones (Appendix A)
- 2.2 That Cabinet notes the performance against the performance indicators and confirms the actions detailed in paragraph 8.4.
- 2.3 That Cabinet approves the addition of a new Corporate Risk for Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Council Delivery Plan (CDP) monitoring reports provide Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and Cabinet, with an opportunity to monitor progress against the key Council projects, and understand any new issues, risks, or opportunities. Overview and Scrutiny are trialling having a focus on a specific Executive Member area of responsibility at each meeting. For their March meeting it is Planning and Transport. An extract of the Council Delivery Plan has therefore been provided for their meeting (i.e. focused on Planning and Transport projects, KPIs and risks), but the overall Council Delivery Plan will be publicised to all Members via the Members Information Service.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 In developing the CDP, it was agreed that Cabinet would receive quarterly updates. The updates are made available to Overview and Scrutiny Committee so that they can provide additional oversight and support to Cabinet.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1 Directors and Service Managers have provided updates on progress and will have made Executive Members aware of progress made.
- 5.2 A draft of the Quarter 3 update was provided to Risk and Performance Management Group (RPMG) in February. The Group has a standing invite to the Executive Member for Finance and IT (has responsibility for performance monitoring), the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) and the Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (FAR). Other members of O&S and FAR are also encouraged to attend when they can. RPMG were asked to comment on the Q3 update. There were no specific issues raised by the group.
- 5.3 The CDP is able to be reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and they can make comments and recommendations to Cabinet. Although their change of approach is detailed in paragraph 3.1 above.


6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key Executive decision first notified on the Forward Plan on the 13 December 2024.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 The CDP brings together projects, risks, and performance indicators together in one document. The projects to be included in the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan were agreed by Cabinet in March 2024, following a project prioritisation exercise. The performance indicators that are included were determined by Cabinet in June 2024.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Appendix A provides an update on the progress made in delivering the Council Delivery Plan 2024-25. Whilst it is labelled as a Quarter 3 update, it generally reflects the latest position at the time that the report was written (mid February). Milestones are set as far ahead as possible, but are not included where there is too much uncertainty over the scope or timing of the milestone.
- 8.2 In previous years the report included a percentage completed. This has now been removed as it over-simplified the position. As there are now fewer projects on the Council Delivery Plan, the focus is on providing a description of the progress made. Projects are still rated on overall progress, i.e. shown as completed, on track, some delays, significant delays. Where there are delays, Cabinet will be asked to consider revisions to milestones. For this report:
- Two projects (Engaging the Community on our Finances and Oughtonhead Common Weir) have milestones proposed for deletion. These are highlighted in green in Appendix A.
 - Eight projects have proposed changes to dates of milestones. These are highlighted in yellow in Appendix A.
 - Four projects (Town Centre Strategies, Waste and Street Cleansing Contract, Churchgate and Pay on Exit parking) have new milestones. These are highlighted in blue in Appendix A.
 - Overall 6 projects are rated as amber and 5 are rated as green. King George V Skate Park has moved from green to amber since the Q2 report.
- 8.3 Our performance indicators now reflect the overall performance of the Council. Performance levels are rated as either green (achieving or exceeding the target), amber (not achieving the target level and need to look at actions to get back on track) and red (urgent action needed to get back to the target performance). For this report:
- 10 indicators are rated green.
 - 2 indicators are rated amber.
 - 8 indicators do not have a target.
 - 2 indicators are rated red.
- 8.4 For the indicators that are rated red or amber, the following actions are being taken:
-  Percentage of NNDR collected in year (85.68% against a target of 88%). We have a number of payments still in suspense accounts, waiting to be posted, which has resulted in all recovery action being suspended until this is cleared. The Revenues and Accounts Teams are working together to get these payments cleared from suspense. The number of NNDR payments still in suspense is reducing and is being monitored. As we will not be recommencing recovery of NNDR debt until after 1 April 2025, in-year collection against profiled target may not improve by the end of 2024/25. We would still expect to ultimately collect the same amount of NNDR income.

- Percentage of Customer Service Centre calls answered within 45 seconds (62% against a target of 80%, and a decline in performance from 68% at Quarter 2). As previously referenced in the Q2 2024/25 update, the CSC has faced ongoing staff shortages due to annual leave, sickness and leavers. An action plan is in place, with ongoing recruitment, fast track training, and allocating temporary members of staff to manage enquiries in reception. With annual billing and the garden waste subscription period coming up, the CSC is due to face another busy period, but we will continue working towards an improvement in service level in line with the action plan. Importantly, although the percentage of calls answered with 45 seconds is below the target level, a high percentage of calls were answered - 93% between April and December 2024
- ▲ Working days lost due to short-term absence per FTE (4.26 days against a target 4, broadly in line with performance of 4.22 days at Q2). We will continue to develop ways to support employee health and wellbeing as part of our response to the staff survey. We have offered flu vaccines to help reduce winter absences. It should also be noted that there is a national trend for increasing levels of employee absence.
- ▲ Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (58.45% against a target of 58.5%). This is a profiled target and varies over the year to reflect differing volumes of garden waste over the year. This continues to be a very small shortfall so we will continue to keep it under review, especially as this is a provisional total and it might improve. Actions and initiatives to encourage more recycling by residents will continue.

8.5 Appendix B details a new risk in relation to Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution. The Risk and Performance Management Group recommended to Cabinet that they should approve this as a corporate risk due to the range of potential impacts on project delivery.

8.6 The Council Delivery Plan is intended to be a live document. Councillors and Officers can access Ideagen for the latest position. New projects can be added to the Plan, if they are a strategic priority and there are resources available to deliver them. Projects will be removed when they are completed, or if they are no longer a priority.

8.7 Overview and Scrutiny can ask for more detail on any of the Council Delivery Plan projects. That can either be provided as a written update or can be included as part of the next quarterly update, to support discussion in the meeting.

Access to Ideagen (previously known as Pentana)

8.8 All the detail behind the projects, risks and performance indicators is available to view in Ideagen, the Councils performance and risk software. A guest login is provided on the intranet for any member to use, along with a procedure note and short video on how to view the data.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The constitution determines the role of Cabinet as including: “To take decisions on resources and priorities, together with other stakeholders and partners in the local community, to deliver and implement the budget and policies decided by the Full Council. To monitor performance and risk in respect of the delivery of those policies and priorities” (Section 5, paragraph 5.7.3). Cabinet’s consideration of this report therefore falls within its constitutional remit.
- 9.2 There are no specific legal implications arising from the CDP. However, there may be individual legal implications for some of the projects outlined (e.g. in relation to contracts for procurements). Any commissioning of work on new and existing projects will follow the standard legal requirements and those required by the Council’s internal standing orders, contained within the Constitution.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Where projects are linked to efficiencies or investments then these are included in the budget proposals and monitored through the quarterly finance reports.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Good Risk Management supports and enhances the decision-making process, increasing the likelihood of the Council meeting its objectives and enabling it to respond quickly and effectively to change. When taking decisions, risks and opportunities must be considered.
- 11.2 The Council Delivery Plan aims to support the risk management process by directly linking the risks to projects being undertaken. The aim of these proposals is to strengthen the link between performance and risk and make risks more current. This should provide an improved perspective of the risks that the Council faces.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report. Equalities analysis will have been completed for relevant projects referred to in this report.
- 12.3 As the Customer Service Centre are not meeting the target standard for call answering, there is a concern that this could have a negative impact on those who share a protected characteristic. The report sets out measures to address the current performance.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The Social Value Act and “go local” requirements do not apply to this report.

14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

14.1 There will continue to be a need to align Council and Service objectives with available people resources to be able to achieve them. The Council Delivery Plan will help to make that link clearer.

14.2 The actions in relation to the CSC are being supported by HR.

15. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report. However, a number of the projects to be monitored throughout the year are related to key environmental issues.

16. APPENDICES

16.1 Appendix A – Council Delivery Plan 24-25 Q3 Monitoring Report

16.2 Appendix B- Risk- Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

18.1 Council Delivery Plan projects for 2024-25 agreed by Cabinet (March 2024):
<https://democracy.north-herts.gov.uk/documents/s24602/Council%20Delivery%20Plan%20Q3%20update%20and%20projects%20for%202425.pdf>

18.2 Performance Indicators for 2024-25 agreed by Cabinet (June 2024):

<https://democracy.north-herts.gov.uk/documents/s25289/KEY%20PERFORMANCE%20INDICATORS%20202425.pdf>

18.3 Council Plan 2024-28 <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/council-plan>