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# 2020/21 Performance Report Quarter Two

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<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	09 February 2021
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Jo Stewart
<b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>	19 November 2020
<b>Report Author:</b>	Jenny Legge/Catalin Bogos
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	EX3884

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## 1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide assurance that the core business and council priorities for improvement measures ([Council Strategy 2019-2023](#)) are being managed effectively.
- 1.2 To highlight successes, in particular maintained strong levels of performance for core business areas, supported by the actions taken by the Council, partner organisations and community groups to recover from Covid-19 crisis. In a few cases, where performance has fallen below the expected level, either as decisions of the Council to support the Covid-19 response or due to restrictions imposed due to the virus, details are provided, including any further actions.

## 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note strong progress and achievements despite challenges and constraints as a result of Covid-19.
- 2.2 To review the impact of the Council's conscious decision to provide additional support to residents and local businesses and any further actions planned, in particular for:
  - Council Tax collected as a percentage of Council Tax due
  - Non domestic rates collected as percentage non domestic rates due
- 2.3 To note that Executive has approved the inclusion of new measures emerging as a result of Strategic Goals being delivered (as recommended by the OSMC). The list of measures and further details are provided at Appendix D.

### 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary			
<b>Financial:</b>	To be highlighted and managed by individual services.			
<b>Human Resource:</b>	To be highlighted and managed by individual services.			
<b>Legal:</b>	To be highlighted and managed by individual services.			
<b>Risk Management:</b>	To be highlighted and managed by individual services.			
<b>Property:</b>	To be highlighted and managed by individual services.			
<b>Policy:</b>	To be highlighted and managed by individual services.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		

<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Health Impact:</b>		X		
<b>ICT or Digital Services Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Council Strategy Priorities or Business as Usual:</b>	x x			Supports all priorities and core business of the Council Strategy 2019-2023.
<b>Data Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	The information provided for this report, has been signed off by the relevant Head of Service / Service Director and Portfolio Holder.			

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The measures shown in this report, monitoring performance from July to September 2020, have been affected by the local response required to manage Covid-19. A prompt and committed response at local level ensured that the strong performance of the Council's services has been maintained.
- 4.2 This paper provides updates for each component of the Council Strategy Delivery Plan:
- The influencer (external context) measures,
  - Targeted measures for each core business area,

- Targeted measures for each priority for improvement and
  - Corporate health (internal context) measures.
- 4.3 The **influencer measures** indicate that the expected downturn in the economy, due to Covid-19, has begun to produce some effects locally. However, in West Berkshire, overall some of the key economic indicators (economic activity, employment rate, business rated properties number) maintained pre-Covid strong levels. The impact is more manifest for sub-groups of population evidenced by a significant increase of benefits claimant count. Some of the social measures are impacted too. There is a significant reduction of recorded crime but also lower levels of referrals to children social care and safeguarding adult social care.
- 4.4 We are reacting to the changing economic and social landscape, to ensure that the negative impact in the district is minimised and that, where there is an impact, residents and businesses are supported and the district recovers as quickly as possible. The Council will continue to support local businesses, for example, by distributing government grants and offering advice and support, to ensure any impact on the local economy is minimised. We recognise even more the importance of communication within our communities, in maintaining those lines of communication that have been built and strengthened, and in so doing, better support each other and the district.
- 4.5 The majority of performance measures reflecting the **core business areas** are on track to achieve the targets for this year. This is evidenced by strong performance in areas such as timeliness of financial assessments (100%) and of making decisions on benefit claims (exceeding target), maintained strong recycling levels, timely response to major and minor planning applications. The notable exceptions are in the following areas impacted by conscious actions taken to respond to Covid-19:
- Council Tax collected as a percentage of Council Tax due
  - Non domestic rates collected as percentage non domestic rates due
- 4.6 The Council Strategy Delivery Plan includes the outcomes for our **priorities for improvement**, that are being sought often over a four year period and therefore this is a more challenging area. The majority of measures are however on track and delivery of outcomes continued this quarter (e.g. approved a prevention concordat for better mental health, implemented a confidential Employee Assistance Wellbeing Programme). There are some measures not reported due to data availability impacted by Covid-19 (e.g. education attainment, average traffic time). There are no areas of particular concern this quarter.
- 4.7 As some of the Strategic Goals are delivered, following the recommendations from the OSMC, this paper recommends additional performance measures to replace/detail them in terms of further outcomes delivery.
- 4.8 The Council's **corporate health indicators** highlight an end of Q2 forecast underspend of £1.5m, (full details are available in the quarterly financial report), an improved position regarding sickness absence and a stable staff turnover.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Influencer measures

*Refer to Appendix A for more detail*

- 5.1 Non-targeted measures of volume are monitored to provide context to the work being carried out across council services.
- 5.2 In the area of economy, the medium and long term effects of Covid-19 are beginning to emerge, as are the impacts of the restrictions put in place to manage the situation and the local and regional recovery plans. At Q2 the influencer measures reflect a degree of stability at overall district level but would also suggest that the immediate impact of Covid-19 (from April to September 2020) is more significant for sub-groups of population. The Council has put in place prompt measures to support residents and the local economy and mitigate local impact wherever possible, and will continue to do so during the second lockdown.
- 5.3 The economic activity rate (chart 1) and unemployment rate (chart 2) appear to be maintaining the previously strong levels at Q1 2020/2 (nationally produced Q2 data not yet available).
- 5.4 The number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and Universal Credit (charts 5 & 6) has increased hugely, following the national trend. Although, September 2020 Office for National Statistics ([ONS statistics](#)) show that for the % of population in receipt of benefits where the principal reason is unemployment, West Berkshire (4%) performs better compared to the South East region (5.2%) or England average (6.3%). The number of people aged 18-24 claiming Universal Credit or Jobseeker's Allowance has [doubled in the UK in the last three months](#). The Council and the Newbury West Berkshire Economic Development Company launched a service to help local employers to [sign up to the Government's Kickstart Scheme on 2 September 2020](#), which provides funding to create new job placements for 16 to 24 year olds on Universal Credit who are at risk of long term unemployment. In addition, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) [statistics](#) show that in West Berkshire 28% (22,600) of the eligible employments have been furloughed by the end of July 2020. This places the district in the lowest quartile compared to the other counties and districts / unitary authorities in England.
- 5.5 As the number of claimants rise, to support children in poverty the government has provided [£400m for a winter grant scheme](#), which will be distributed by councils and provide financial support to those in need. The holiday food and activities programme will also be expanded and there is further funding for food banks, nationally.
- 5.6 The number of empty business rated premises continue to slightly rise (charts 7 and 8). As residents continue to work from home, rather than commute, it seems inevitable that the High Streets and businesses in West Berkshire will need to evolve, potentially with niche start-ups replacing large stores. This is echoed in the proposal to develop the Kennet Centre into homes, flexible shops, restaurants and co-working spaces, which in turn follows the development of the Iceland site into retirement homes. [The Local Data Company \(LDC\) and accountancy firm PwC](#) report that independent shops have been better able to survive during the lockdown, compared to chain stores. They have been

able to adapt and change their business models more quickly and have a smaller cost base to cover during periods of little or no trade.

- 5.7 Smaller businesses have also been able to benefit from Government grants during the first lockdown. During the second lockdown, [two new government grants will be made available](#) to support those businesses who have been most affected: one for those who have been required to close and another for those who remain open but are suffering particular hardship. In addition, the furlough scheme has been extended until March 2021.
- 5.8 As measures giving an indication of the activity in our town centres, the footfall and the number of parking tickets sold in the Council's managed car parks had started to get back to a more normal level (charts 9 & 10). It is anticipated that the November 2020 lockdown will impact these measures in Q3, although not all shops will have to close.
- 5.9 The number of planning applications (chart 13) is recovering well from the dip in Q1 2020/21, however, this may be due to a backlog where uncertainty halted people's plans. When looked at in the context of house prices (chart 11) and residential sales (chart 12), however it appears that there may be a shift in this industry.
- 5.10 Following the [national trend](#), there was a significant reduction in crime, particularly domestic burglary and theft of personal property during the March- June lockdown, when the populace were confined to their homes (chart 15). Domestic abuse incidents have fallen below levels over the same period last year or the previous two quarters.
- 5.11 Referrals to Children and Family Services were reduced across the board, as these mainly come from schools, early years providers and Family Hubs none of whom were fully operational during April – June 2020. These are now nearing normal levels for Q2.
- 5.12 As for children and young people in need, the overall number of older, vulnerable people receiving a long term service (LTS) from Adult Social Care (chart 31) and the number of new adult safeguarding enquiries (chart 30) are lower than usual.
- 5.13 The number of households in temporary accommodation (chart 35) is stable. The number of households prevented from becoming homeless is much higher compared to Q2 2019/20 as lockdown had eased and the service was able to catch up with prevention and relief cases. As restrictions were lifted, officers were able to carry out more intensive work with private landlords and lettings agents, for example. During the spring lockdown the government funded a scheme called 'Everyone in' to help councils provide emergency shelter to homeless people (chart 36).
- 5.14 As venues began to open again, volunteering in libraries and the countryside had begun to recover (charts 38-49). The [West Berkshire Community Hub](#) and local help groups will again be on hand to help residents during the second lockdown.
- 5.15 The number of permanent carriage repairs completed has followed the usual seasonal trend reducing over the summer months. The main factors that contributed to a more significant reduction this summer are the reduction of journeys being made and less cases of damage to the road being reported to the Council, whilst the Council's programme of road safety inspections continues as usual (chart 43).

5.16 The number of highways related third party claims received (chart 44) is comparable to Q2 2019/20. Out of the 34 claims received, 26 have been successfully defended. The remaining 8 are pending resolution.

5.17 The number of flytips reported is higher than in the previous years (chart 46) and, as usual, relatively higher in Q2. This is consistent with the trend across most of the country and is linked to the Covid-19 pandemic. Available data shows that the majority of the incidents relate to 'small van load' fly-tip size. This would suggest that criminals and unlicensed waste carriers have been emboldened by the fact that there are not as many vehicles and people around to detect them. It is also feasible that more people have become used to the convenience of "doorstep" services being now more inclined to pay private collectors for picking up waste items (some of these collectors may then end up fly-tipping). Actions taken to discourage the activity include an intensive awareness campaign and an increase in enforcement activity.

## Core Business Activities

*Refer to Appendix B for Exception Reports*

Please note:

R (red): year-end target will not be met

A (amber): behind schedule, but expected to achieve year-end target

G (green): year-end target will be met.

DNA: Data not available

DNP: Data not provided

*Refer to Appendix C for technical conventions*

Category	Measure	2020/21			Notes
		RAG	Q2 (YTD) Outturn	Target	
Protecting our children	Ofsted rating of at least Good for our Children and Family Service	G	Good - pending outcome of next inspection	Good	Performance against this indicator cannot be reported until such time as WBC receive an OFSTED Inspection. OFSTED Inspections are currently on hold due to Covid-19.

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Category	Measure	RAG	2020/21		Notes
			Q2 (YTD) Outturn	Target	
	% of Children in Care where the child has been visited in the past 6 weeks (or 12 weeks if this is the agreed visiting schedule)	A	84.6%	≥95%	YTD: 132 / 156 We are only classing a visit as 'statutory' if it is carried out face to face. However, where we include visits in all formats, we are at 98%.
Supporting education	% of maintained schools judged good or better by Ofsted	G	95.7%	≥93%	YTD: 66 / 69 No inspections have taken place since March 2020 due to COVID 19.
	% of applications receiving one of their three preferences for West Berkshire children (Primary Admissions)	G	Complete in Q1	≥95%	
	% of applications receiving one of their three preferences for West Berkshire children (Secondary Admissions)	G	Complete in Q1	≥95%	
Ensuring the wellbeing of older people and vulnerable adults	% of WBC provider services inspected by Care Quality Commission (CQC) and rated as good or better	R	66.7%	100%	Birchwood was due to be inspected in November 2020 but Care Quality Commission's activities were impacted significantly by Covid-19. Action plans have been developed and implemented and practices have been improved across all homes. Positively, Willows Edge was inspected in February 2020 and achieved 'Good' in all five areas. A public consultation was launched during Q2 on the proposal to close Walnut Close in early 2021 and relocate/redeploy existing residents and staff to one of our other three care homes. A decision to close the care home will result in its removal

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Category	Measure	RAG	2020/21		Notes
			Q2 (YTD) Outturn	Target	
					from the RAG report in due course.
	% of financial assessments actioned within 3 weeks of referral to the Financial Assessment & Charging Team	G	100.0%	≥98%	YTD: 1,081 / 1,081
Maintaining our roads	% of the principal road network (A roads) in need of repair	Annual	Annual - Reports in Q4	Top 25% nationally	
Collecting your bins and keeping the streets clean	% of household waste recycled, composted and reused	G	51.0% (E)	≥49.5% (≥2018/19 outturn)	Q2: 9,398 / 18,650 YTD: 19,302 / 37,883 Q2 2020/21 data is an estimate & will be updated at Q3. All results are subject to change once validated by DEFRA after Q4
	Maintain an acceptable level of litter, detritus and graffiti (as outlined in the Keep Britain Tidy local environmental indicators)	Annual	Reports at Q3 and Q4	Good	Tranche 1 of the LEQs survey not carried out due to Covid related pressures - only 2 tranches to be completed this year.
Providing benefits	Average number of days taken to make a full decision on new Housing Benefit claims	G	Av. 18.28	≤20 days	
Collecting Council Tax and Business rates	Council Tax collected as a percentage of Council Tax due	A	54.7%	≥98.8%	For comparison, Q2 2019/20 = (67,198,506/118,547,105) 56.7% The effects of Covid-19 have reduced the amount of Council Tax being paid. Over 2000 individuals requested payment holidays

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Category	Measure	RAG	2020/21		Notes
			Q2 (YTD) Outturn	Target	
	Non domestic rates collected as a percentage of non domestic rates due	R	50.8%	≥99%	For comparison, Q2 2019/20 = (54,738,978/89,881,263) 60.9% Covid-19 has had a massive effect on collection. Many businesses were closed between March and July and some have remained so.
Planning and housing	% of planning appeals won	G	67.3%	≥65% (England average)	Q2: 13 / 17 YTD: 18 / 26
	% of 'major' planning applications determined within 13 weeks or the agreed extended time	G	100.0%	≥90% (England average)	
	% of 'minor' planning applications determined within 8 weeks or the agreed extended time	G	89.8%	≥86% (England average)	
Supporting local employers	Placeholder: measure relating to the Economic Development core business	TBC	TBC	TBC	Alternative measure being considered by the Development and Planning service.

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5.18 Performance for the majority of core business activities has been on target.

5.19 In areas of service where the number of statutory, face-to-face visits carried out in a set timescale are targeted, the outturn in Q2 has been impacted as this activity was not

possible under Covid-19 restrictions. To mitigate this, social care services have used video meetings or telephone calls and when this is taken into consideration, the percentage of contact increases, for example Children subject to a Child Protection Plan that have been visited rises to 95%, compared to 88.5% seen face-to-face.

- 5.20 Action plans have been developed and implemented for Walnut Close and Birchwood Nursing Home. The service is now waiting for further inspections. In addition, during Q2, the Council launched a public consultation on a proposal to close Walnut Close in early 2021, and relocate/redeploy existing residents and staff to one of our other three care homes. Progressing with the decision to close the care home, following the outcome of the consultation, means that this care home will be removed from the RAG report in due course.
- 5.21 The amount of Council Tax collected has been affected by Covid-19 as over 2000 residents requested payment holidays and therefore these customers did not start paying until June or July. During this time 'soft' reminder letters have been issued, however arrangements were being coordinated with the Gold Command Group for restarting the 'normal' debt recovery action when appropriate, but also considering the announcement of a second national lockdown. [Nationally more than 2.5 million working age people across England claimed a council tax discount](#) between April and June 2020. [Data published](#) by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government shows that between Q1 this year and Q1 2019/20, in West Berkshire the total number of claimants (Pensioner and Working-Age) in receipt of a reduced council tax bill has increased by 0.09% compared with 4% nationally, placing the Council in the second best quartile.
- 5.22 The amount of non-domestic rates or "Business Tax" collected has also been reduced (50.8% collected by end of September compared to 60.9% for the same period last year) as businesses closed between March and July 2020, due to Covid-19. The Council took the decision not to collect Direct Debit payments in April and May and were therefore rescheduled to start in June or July. Additional relief has subsequently been awarded to those eligible retail businesses but other assistance for non-retail businesses is limited. Arrangements were being coordinated with the Gold Command Group for restarting the 'normal' debt recovery action when appropriate, but also considering the announcement of a second national lockdown.

### **National Benchmarking (April 2017- March 2019)**

- 5.23 The latest available benchmarking data was reported at Quarter 4.

Please note for RAG outturn for the quarter:

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**2020/21 Performance Report Quarter Two**

					2020/21	
Category	Measure	2017/18 National Qtile/Rank	2018/19 National Qtile/Rank	2020/21 Target	RAG	Q2 RAG Outturn
Supporting education	% of maintained schools judged good or better by Ofsted	2nd Qtile Rank 46/152 (August) (YE: 94.4%)	2nd Qtile Rank 38/152 (August) (YE: 95.7%)	≥93%	-	95.7%
	% of applications receiving one of their three preferences for West Berkshire children (Primary Admissions)	2nd Qtile Rank 62/152 (YE: 97.8%)	2nd Qtile Rank 51/152 (YE: 98.4%)	≥95%	G	98%
	% of applications receiving one of their three preferences for West Berkshire children (Secondary Admissions)	1st Qtile Rank 33/152 (YE: 97.9%)	1st Qtile Rank 27/152 (YE: 97.9%)	≥95%	G	98%
Maintaining our roads	% of the principal road network (A roads) in need of repair	2nd Qtile Rank 55/145 (YE: 3%)	1st Qtile Rank 17/146 (YE: 2%)	Top 25% nationally	Annual	Annual - reports at Q4
Collecting your bins and keeping the streets clean	% of household waste recycled, composted and reused	1st Qtile Rank 24/150 (YE: 51.5%)	1st Qtile Rank 31/148 (YE: 50.7%)	≥49.5% (≥ 2018/19 outturn)	G	51% (E)
Providing benefits	Average number of days taken to make a full decision on new Housing Benefit claims	3rd Qtile Rank 77/122 (YE: 19.54)	2nd Qtile Rank 54/122 (YE: 19.54)	≤20 days	G	18.28
Collecting Council Tax and Business rates	Council Tax collected as a percentage of Council Tax due	1st Qtile Rank 6/149 (YE: 98.8%)	1st Qtile Rank 6/123 (YE: 98.5%)	≥98.8%	A	54.7%
	Non domestic rates collected as percentage non domestic rates due	2nd Qtile Rank 55/151 (YE: 99.3%)	3rd Qtile Rank 82/151 (YE: 98.4%)	≥99%	R	50.8%

Category	Measure	2017/18 National Qtile/Rank	2018/19 National Qtile/Rank	2020/21 Target	2020/21	
					RAG	Q2 RAG Outturn
Ensuring the wellbeing of older people and vulnerable adults	% of WBC provider services inspected by Care Quality Commission (CQC) and rated as good or better		England overall = 84%	100%	R	66.7%
Planning and housing	% of 'major' planning applications determined within 13 weeks or the agreed extended time	4th Qtile Rank 102/122 (YE: 78.6%)	4th Qtile Rank 108/122 (YE: 78.1%)	≥90% (England average)	G	100.0%
	% of 'minor' planning applications determined within 8 weeks or the agreed extended time	4th Qtile Rank 108/124 (YE: 74.6%)	4th Qtile Rank 102/123 (YE: 77.5%)	≥86% (England average)	G	89.8%

Please note for RAG outturn for the quarter:

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5.24 In the majority of areas, we compare favourably with our peers in 2018/19, and in others we have improved our position on 2017/18.

5.25 However, in two areas we remain in the lowest quartile. The first is in the CQC rating of our provider services which was slightly below (83.3% in 2018/19) the national average of 84%. In practice, this showed that in 2018/19 one out of six settings was not rated as highly as desired. At the end of Q2 2020/21, the % of our provider services rated good or better was 66.7%. An improvement plan has been implemented and it is expected that our position will improve. Public consultation started in Q2 on the proposal to close one of the care homes in order to ensure that residents are receiving a better quality of service and also improve performance (and – see above – the care home will be removed from the RAG report in due course).

5.26 In terms of planning applications, the target in 2017/18 was set at 60% for major and 65% for minor applications. As part of the New Ways of Working review in 2018/19, it was noted that targets had been set below similar planning authorities, and they were increased to match the national averages of 88% and 85% respectively at Q2 2018/19. By Q4 2018/19 the service was achieving 93.3% and 96.3%, but this was not enough

to bring up the year-end figure and move us into the third quartile. For comparison, 23 authorities were reporting 100%, and the margins between the first and third quartile were slim. As at Q2 2020/21, performance improved to 100% for major planning applications and 89.8% for minor planning applications.

### Council Strategy Priorities for Improvement:

*Refer to Appendix B for Exception Reports*

Table 1. Number of measures by priority of improvement and performance status

Priority for Improvement	RAG Status			
	Red	Amber	Green	Other
Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes	0	0	6	2
Support everyone to reach their full potential	0	1	4	5
Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire	0	0	4	0
Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy	0	0	5	7
Maintain a green district	0	0	7	0
Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships	0	1	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>15</b>

Note:

Red: year-end target will not be met

Amber: behind schedule, but expected to achieve year-end target

Green: year-end target will be met.

Other: includes Annual (reported once a year), data not available, data not provided and targets to be confirmed

### Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes

5.27 The % of vulnerable adults who approach Adult Social Care from the community and are supported through the Three Conversations Model at the preventative level (Tier 1), thus not progressing to need more complex services before concluding the intervention has increased in the East and Central Teams, but not in the West of the district. The service is investigating the matter, but it is thought that Covid-19 impacted the number of enquiries.

5.28 % of older people (65+) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services is less than expected, however this is a small cohort and is prone to fluctuation. The service is working with health colleagues to help people to return to their homes safely and in a timely manner, however this is also dependent on the demands placed on the partners by Covid-19.

### **Support everyone to reach their full potential**

- 5.29 The Strategic Goal 'Develop and adopt a prevention concordat for better mental health action plan with partners' was achieved during quarter 2. Approval to sign up to the Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health was signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board on Thursday 24 September 2020. An action plan has been produced and the Mental Health Action Group are overseeing the delivery of the plan, linking in with other relevant partners.
- 5.30 Following the adoption of the Develop and adopt a Community Wellbeing Model (Strategic Goal), actions have been developed and require approval for inclusion in the Council Strategy Delivery Plan:
- a) Number of active Befrienders supporting residents in West Berkshire – target  $\geq 40$
  - b) Number of West Berkshire residents being actively supported by a Befriender – target  $\geq 40$
- 5.31 The development and adoption of a community resilience index (based on proxy indicators) (Strategic Goal) has been delayed, as during quarter one the officer responsible was abstracted from normal duties to work in The Community Support Hub as part of West Berkshire Council's Covid-19 response, and from then on the post has been vacant.
- 5.32 The Community Engagement Strategy (Strategic Goal) has been developed and was approved by the Executive Committee on 15 October 2020. A delivery plan will be submitted to the Customer First Programme Board for approval by the end of November 2020.
- 5.33 Attainment outturns for the academic year 2019/20 are not available due to Covid-19.

### **Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire**

- 5.34 Following the adoption of the West Berkshire Economic Development Strategy (Strategic Goal) on 30 April 2020, it was decided that it should be refreshed due to the impact of Covid-19 on businesses and employment and to take into account central government funding, innovative local approaches and close working with partners to aid businesses and residents.
- 5.35 The following activities require approval for inclusion in the Council Strategy Delivery Plan:
- c) Deliver the Economic Development Strategy refresh to reflect Covid-19 impact – target December 2020
  - d) Deliver the Inward Investment Brochure – target December 2020
  - e) Deliver the Newbury Town Centre Study – target December 2021

### **Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy**

- 5.36 The Regulation 18 consultation to inform the submission of a New Local Plan for examination (Strategic Goal) is on track and in line with the Local Development Scheme agreed in April 2020. The infrastructure delivery plan (Strategic Goal), which is aligned

with the schedule for the submission of the Local Plan for examination, is also underway.

- 5.37 The methodology and baseline data to produce a traffic model for an average journey time has not yet been determined. The Officers who would work with consultants on this area of work were heavily involved in the response and recovery relating to Covid-19, for example by installing social distancing and active travel measures and will be so again in the second lockdown. It is considered that no meaningful monitoring can take place when traffic is disrupted by changing restrictions and working patterns.
- 5.38 The consultation on the West Berkshire Housing Strategy (Strategic Goal) took place between 18 September and 1 November 2020 and a report will be submitted to the Executive meeting on 11 February 2021 for consideration.
- 5.39 The West Berkshire Superfast Broadband project for premises to be able to receive services at 24Mb/s has been closed as planned at the end of September 2020 as the properties in the scope of the project have been reached.
- 5.40 The consultation on the West Berkshire Leisure Strategy (Strategic Goal) is open between 8 October and 19 November 2020 and a report will be submitted to the Executive meeting on 14 January 2021 for consideration.
- 5.41 The consultation on the West Berkshire Cultural Heritage Strategy (Strategic Goal) took place between 7 September and 18 October 2020 and a report will be submitted to the Executive meeting on 11 February 2021 for consideration.
- 5.42 To enable correct reporting and monitoring, the service has requested that the measure 'Complete phase 1 (feasibility study and options appraisal) of the review of culture and library services' be split into two parts, as follows:
- f) Complete phase 1 (feasibility study and options appraisal) of the review of library services
  - g) Complete phase 1 (feasibility study and options appraisal) of the review of culture services

### **Maintain a green district**

- 5.43 The Strategic Goal of studying the feasibility and the cost and journey time benefits of installing infrastructure in Thatcham is on track with ongoing discussions with suppliers of real-time sensors.
- 5.44 The first draft of the Environment strategy delivery plan (Strategic Goal) has been taken to Environment Advisory Group. Further work is underway to improve the first draft, prior to wider circulation and comment.
- 5.45 The adoption of the Local Transport Plan (Strategic Goal) is on track, subject to funding being made available.
- 5.46 The Strategic Goals of studying the feasibility of and carrying out cost benefit analysis for large scale afforestation and natural regeneration in the rural area and urban tree planting, are on track to be achieved by the end of March 2021. Recruitment is

scheduled for quarter three to add capacity to the team in order to help deliver this project.

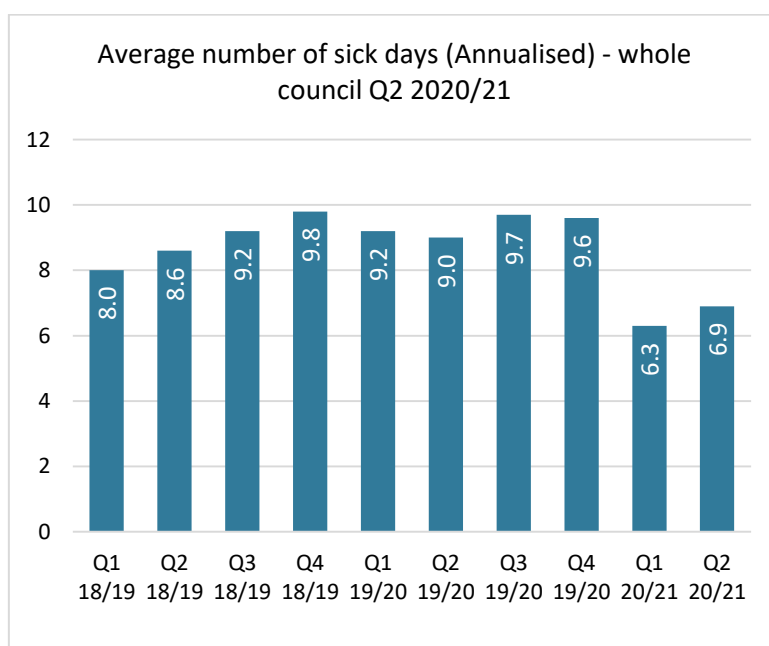
- 5.47 The start of feasibility study to review the municipal waste collection regime in the district, including a feasibility for separate food waste collection (Strategic Goal) was impacted by the Covid-19 emergency response, however is in progress and on track to be delivered on target. External advisors are being procured and the feasibility study will start during quarter three.

### Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships

- 5.48 The development and adoption of a corporate approach to capture and respond to customer feedback, led by the Customer First Project Board, has commenced as the engagement strategy has been approved.

### Corporate Health

- 5.49 The Q2 financial position shows a forecast under spend of £1.5m. Further details are provided in the Financial Monitoring Report.
- 5.50 As for Q2 2020/21, sickness levels are much lower than usual, but slightly higher than Q1. The rise may be due to children being back in school, however as many staff are working from home there is less opportunity to infect other colleagues, and staff may be inclined to work through incidents of mild sickness. We are continuing to monitor this and support our teams wherever we can.
- 5.51 Covid-19 self-isolation days lost are not included in the sickness figures. These are days where staff are not working due to self-isolation and cannot be recorded as sickness as this would trigger sick pay entitlements, which is not permissible under the Green Book and National Joint Council (NJC) for local government services guidance during Covid-19.



## Proposals

- 5.52 To note key achievements and success as detailed above, in particular as a result of a strong recovery response to the Covid-19 crisis.
- 5.53 To review the actions taken to new areas of performance impacted by the Council's conscious decision to support residents and local businesses (refer to Appendix B for Exception Reports) with a focus on:
- Council Tax collected as a percentage of Council Tax due
  - Non domestic rates collected as percentage non domestic rates due
- 5.54 To note that the Executive has approved the inclusion of new measures emerging as a result of Strategic Goals being delivered (as recommended by the OSMC). The list of measures and further details are provided at Appendix D.

*Actions from the Community Wellbeing Model (Strategic Goal) for approval for inclusion in the CSDP)*

- a) Number of active Befrienders supporting residents in West Berkshire
- b) Number of West Berkshire residents being actively supported by a Befriender

*Actions from the Economic Development Strategy (Strategic Goal) for approval for inclusion in the CSDP*

- c) Deliver the Economic Development Strategy refresh to reflect Covid-19 impact
- d) Deliver the Inward Investment Brochure
- e) Deliver the Newbury Town Centre Study

## 6 Other options considered

None considered.

## 7 Conclusion

- 7.1 Quarter two results show that strong performance levels have been maintained and key services delivered to residents as part of the activities in the Core Business category. Services have put in place mitigation actions where Covid impacted the normal service delivery (e.g. ensured telephone and video contacts in cases where face to face statutory visits were not possible etc.).
- 7.2 Some of the improvement work that was delayed by the need to respond quickly to Covid-19, has regained momentum. Key outcomes continued to be delivered (e.g. approved a prevention concordat for better mental health, implemented a confidential Employee Assistance Wellbeing Programme). Focus had turned towards recovery, however there is again uncertainty, as the country heads in to a second lockdown, as to what the impact will be.

- 7.3 Action plans are in place to address performance of the measures rated Amber and Red and the Executive was asked to review and approve these actions and to note the overall performance reported.

## 8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Influencer Measures Dashboard

8.2 Appendix B – Exception Reports

8.3 Appendix C – Technical Conventions

8.5 Appendix D – Requests for Approval of Measures for the Council Strategy Delivery Plan for reporting to Executive

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### Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☒ No: ☐

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