

2021/22 Performance Report Quarter One

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	2 September 2021
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Howard Woollaston
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	12 August 2021
Report Author:	Jenny Legge/Catalin Bogos
Forward Plan Ref:	Ex.4000

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide assurance that the core business and council priorities for improvement measures in the [Council Strategy 2019-2023](#) are being managed effectively. During Q1, strategic management and members of the Executive have identified additional outcomes to be included in the Council Strategy Delivery Plan and arrangements are being made to include them in the Q2 performance report.
- 1.2 To highlight successes and where performance has fallen below the expected level, present information on the remedial action taken, and the impact of that action.

2 Recommendation

To note the progress made in delivering the Council Strategy Delivery Plan 2019-2023, a maintained strong performance for the core business areas, good results for the majority of the measures relating to the council's priorities for improvement, and remedial actions taken where performance is below target.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	To be highlighted and managed by individual services.
Human Resource:	To be highlighted and managed by individual services.
Legal:	To be highlighted and managed by individual services.
Risk Management:	To be highlighted and managed by individual services.
Property:	To be highlighted and managed by individual services.
Policy:	To be highlighted and managed by individual services.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		
Environmental Impact:		x		
Health Impact:		x		
ICT or Digital Services Impact:		x		
Council Strategy Priorities or Business as Usual:	x x			Supports all priorities and core business of the Council Strategy 2019-2023.
Data Impact:		x		
Consultation and Engagement:	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 This paper provides updates for each component of the Council Strategy Delivery Plan 2019-2023:

- Non-targeted influencer measures for context.
- Targeted measures for each core business area.
- Targeted measures for each priority for improvement.
- Corporate health measures for internal context.

4.2 The **Influencer measures** indicate that the district continued to cope better, compared with other parts of the country, in response to Covid-19 challenges. The Covid-19

infections peaked in quarter 3 2020/21, but the cumulative rate remained in the lowest (best) benchmarking quartile in England. In addition, the District had a high number of adults who have received their 1st and 2nd Covid-19 vaccinations (chart 3).

- 4.3 The economic indicators (economic activity, business rated properties, planning applications) continued to show strong resilience and good recovery. The car parking tickets sales and the weekly average footfall in Newbury have risen sharply from Q4 2020/21. An increase in unemployment locally in December 2020, followed the regional and national trends, but more recent national data shows that the rate subsequently reduced which is expected to be reflected at local level too.
- 4.4 Work with our communities to support local residents has continued. Social Care measures show that the adult social care cases managed through interim, short-term solutions due to Covid-19, are moving to long term support services. In addition, demand that was suppressed during the pandemic has increased during this quarter. This increase is replicated in Children's Social Care. Nevertheless, services are carefully monitoring the situation and adapting service delivery to ensure vulnerable residents are supported. The number of rough sleepers has been maintained very low.
- 4.5 The Council continues to ensure **core business** service delivery. This area achieved strong performance during quarter one, in particular with regards to the percentage of adult social care providers rated Good or better by the Care Quality Commission, timeliness of financial assessments and the timeliness of major and minor planning applications' determinations. Some of the areas impacted by Covid-19 are showing signs of recovery and further improvements have been achieved (e.g. face to face visits to children in care, and Council Tax and Business Rates collection). Three measures reported Amber are only marginally below expected levels.
- 4.6 Improvement activity through the Council Strategy **priorities for improvement** continued to progress. The majority of measures remained on track and delivery of outcomes continued this quarter. Areas of achievement to note include: accommodation offered to all rough sleepers, the approval of the refreshed Economic Development Strategy and a higher proportion of care leavers in employment, education or training (see Appendix C). There are some measures not reporting due to data availability impacted by Covid-19 (e.g. educational attainment and average traffic time).
- 4.7 The council's **corporate health indicators** highlight sound resource management, a budget underspend and stable workforce.
- 4.8 The improvement work taking place in the District is recognised nationally. The Council's innovative Community Municipal Investment bond, enabling residents to invest in greener solutions for the District, has been shortlisted for two prestigious national awards (Public Finance Awards and Room 151 Impact Awards). The Council and partner organisations won a Digital Innovation and Technology award for innovative projects addressing issues such as fall prevention or availability of a chatbot voice assistant available around the clock to support residents to log issues or receive answers about Council services.
- 4.9 In conclusion, the influencer measures evidence the socio-economic resilience of the district. The Council contributed to this by focusing resources to support the Covid-19

response and recovery activity, and to maintain strong core business delivery. The activities relating to the priorities for improvement are progressed too.

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 The major influential factor during quarter one remained the work to mitigate the **impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, but with more focus on recovery and renewal**. The Government progressed the measures on the road map for lifting the restrictions and the Council coordinated the implications at local level for the way services are delivered. The cumulative rates of infections remained in the best (lowest) quartile nationally, helped by a strong local social and economic context and the local response to Covid-19. In addition, work to promote vaccinations, resulted in reaching top quartile vaccination rates compared to other districts in England.
- 5.3 Overall, the local **economy maintained the strong pre-Covid-19 levels**. Key indicators such as the economic activity rate (chart 5), business rated properties (chart 11) remained relatively stable and planning applications (chart 17) increased.
- 5.4 Latest available data (December 2020) shows a slight increase in the unemployment rate (chart 7), but at 3% remains better than South East (3.9) and England (4.6) rates. This increase followed regional and national trends. National data is available for Q1 and shows that, since December, the unemployment reduced, with the relaxation of many coronavirus restrictions, the labour market is continuing to recover. This is expected to be replicated at local level.
- 5.5 Enhancements to Universal Credit as part of the UK government's response to Covid-19 mean that an increasing number of people (charts 9 and 10) became eligible for unemployment-related benefit support, although still employed. However, as recovery is progressing, the latest data shows the total claimant count and the one for 16-24 year olds reducing to lowest level over the last 5 quarters, but still above pre-pandemic level.
- 5.6 In addition, footfall and the number of parking tickets sold have started to pick up as restrictions are eased, and we move into spring/summer (charts 13 and 14).
- 5.7 Since the start of the pandemic less properties have been sold and the house prices increased. The latest data shows that the pressure on the housing market seems to start to ease (charts 15 and 16).
- 5.8 Our Community [Municipal Investment](#), the UK's first ever local government green bond, has been shortlisted for two prestigious awards after offering residents and community groups a unique way to invest directly in a greener future for the district and reaching its £1 million target five days early in October 2020.

- 5.9 Firstly, the [Public Finance Awards](#) which places a premium on exceptional and original achievements by public finance, governance teams and individuals. Winners will be announced on 28 September 2021.
- 5.10 Secondly, the [Room 151 Impact Awards](#) which focusses on how local government finance makes a difference across society, to the environment, to the health and wellbeing of residents, to housing and regeneration, to our children's education, to the NHS, to fighting climate change and to our economic prosperity.
- 5.11 West Berkshire Council has outperformed other local authorities from across the country to win an award for Digital Innovation and Technology at the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Places and Transport (ADEPT) President's Awards. The award, received at a ceremony on 27 May, was given to the authority and its partners in recognition of the success of the [Thames Valley Berkshire Smart Cities Cluster project](#).
- 5.12 The local **social indicators** are following the national trends. The number of crimes and recorded domestic abuse have risen (chart 19-21), however incidents of anti-social behaviour are lower than usual (chart 22). Through coproduction work with voluntary sector organisations, and the Housing Strategy Group, the extensive work carried out by the Rough Sleeping and Housing Operations Teams resulted in maintaining a low number of two rough sleepers at the end of quarter four (chart 40).
- 5.13 As part of the response to pandemic, arrangements have been made to ensure that vulnerable children, young people and adults continued to be identified and to receive support. Such arrangements included enhanced screening, closer joint working between different services, face to face visits for all child protection and high level child in need referrals. Following a few quarters with lower referrals to children's services, Q1 has seen an increase to record levels compared to the last two years. Relating to this there is also an increase in S47 (Child Protection enquiries) and the number of child protection plans which would suggest that some of the cases are identified at a stage requiring more critical intervention, rather than more early help type of support. However, the number of children in care remains stable which means that cases are supported in their families.
- 5.14 In adult social care, the number of long term service cases (chart 35), and the number of new adult safeguarding enquiries (chart 34) have increased during quarter one, after being lower than normal due to Covid-19 in the previous quarters, as those clients in interim Short Term solutions transitioned to long term support. The service has also noted increased demand from people who were reluctant to access help during the pandemic who are now coming forward.
- 5.15 Volunteers are returning to support culture, library and countryside activities (charts 42 and 43).
- 5.16 [Our refreshed Recovery and Renewal Strategy](#) was approved by the Executive in June 2021, with the aim to strengthen the council's focus on addressing inequalities, establish seven new priorities, and set out in greater detail the actions to minimise the negative effects of Covid-19 and to benefit of the opportunities emerging from the collective response to the pandemic.

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

Category	Measure	RAG	Q1 RAG Outturn	2021/22	
				Target	Notes Q1
Protecting our children	Ofsted rating of at least Good for our Children and Family Service	G	Good	Good	Latest available inspection result. OFSTED Inspections are currently on hold due to Covid-19.
	% 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	78.1%	≥95%	This measure records face-to-face visits only. Due to Covid-19 visits were made virtually. As restrictions ease, it is believed that usual levels will be achieved.
Supporting education	% of maintained schools judged good or better by Ofsted	R	93.7%	≥95%	Performance status impacted by one maintained school, who were inspected in September 2019 and received requires improvement judgement. See exception report for details.
	% of applications receiving one of their three preferences for West Berkshire children (Primary Admissions)	G	99%	≥98%	Updated - target has been increased from 95% to 98%

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Category	Measure	2021/22			
		RAG	Q1 RAG Outturn	Target	Notes Q1
	% of applications receiving one of their three preferences for West Berkshire children (Secondary Admissions)	Annual	Reports in Q4	≥95%	
	% of 16-17 year olds participating in education and training	dnp	Data not provided	Top 20%	
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	G	100%	=100%	
	% of financial assessments actioned within 3 weeks of referral to the Financial Assessment & Charging Team	G	99.6%	≥98%	Q1: 489 / 491
Maintaining our roads	% of the principal road network (A roads) in need of repair	Annual	Reports Q4	≤2%	
Collecting your bins and keeping the streets clean	% of household waste recycled, composted and reused	G	50.5% (E)	≥49.5% (≥ 2018/19 outturn)	Q1 data is an estimate. 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 from Q2	Good	

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Category	Measure	2021/22			
		RAG	Q1 RAG Outturn	Target	Notes Q1
Providing benefits	Average number of days taken to make a full decision on new Housing Benefit claims	A	20	≤19 days	Increased demand due to Covid-19. See exception report for details.
Collecting Council Tax and Business rates	Council Tax collected as a percentage of Council Tax due	G	27.9%	≥98.8%	For comparison, Q1 2020/21 = (34,483,678/123,527,421) 27.9%
	Non domestic rates collected as a percentage of non domestic rates due	G	27.3%	≥99%	For comparison, Q1 2020/21 = (15,038,824/55,154,964) 27.3%
Planning and housing	% of planning appeals won	A	62.5%	≥65% (England average)	YTD: 10 / 16 Impacted by low numbers. It is expected that appeal decisions will balance out over the Year. See exception report for details.
	% of 'major' planning applications determined within 13 weeks or the agreed extended time	G	94.7%	≥90% (England average)	YTD: 18 / 19
	% of 'minor' planning applications determined within 8 weeks or the agreed extended time	G	95.4%	≥86% (England average)	YTD: 62 / 65
	% of 'other' planning applications determined within 8 weeks or the agreed extended time	A	89.9%	≥90% (England average)	YTD: 286 / 318 See exception report for details.
Economic development	Number of webinars and events held to engage with businesses to promote awareness and understanding of council activities	G	1	≥4	Welcome Back Business Grants webinar held on 9 June 2021

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 E for technical conventions

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

5.18 Where Covid-19 restrictions have hindered statutory, face-to-face visits teams have offered the service in a different way e.g. closer partnership and interdisciplinary team working, video meetings or telephone calls, to ensure the safety of clients and staff. As restrictions are lifted, and people become more confident it is hoped that face-to-face visits will return. Q1 shows already an increase in face to face visits taking place.

5.19 Against a more ambitious target, the latest available data (reported previously) about the proportion of maintained schools judged good or better by Ofsted is now below target. There are five schools rated below Good and only one of these inspected under the new Ofsted inspections regime changed in 2019. A comprehensive programme of support for all schools has been undertaken since May 2019 resulting in 11 out of 12 schools inspected under this new framework securing a good judgement. It is therefore expected that performance will improve when the schools are inspected again.

5.20 Notable improvements have been achieved regarding all our care homes being rated good or better by the Care Quality Commission, the timelines of financial assessment, timeliness of face to face visits to children in care and determination of 'minor' planning applications.

National Benchmarking for Core Business Measures (April 2018- March 2020)

5.21 Benchmarking data for 2019/20 has been published and reported last quarter. In the majority of services, we compare favourably with our peers and continue to maintain our position.

Category	Measure	2018/19 National Qtile/Rank	2019/20 National Qtile/Rank	2021/22 Target	2021/22	
					RAG	Q1 Outturn
Supporting education	% of maintained schools judged good or better by Ofsted	1st Qtile Rank 17/152 (August) (YE: 95.7%)	1st Qtile Rank 22/152 (YE: 95.7%)	≥95%	A	93.7%

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					2021/22	
Category	Measure	2018/19 National Qtile/Rank	2019/20 National Qtile/Rank	2021/22 Target	RAG	Q1 Outturn
	% of applications receiving one of their three preferences for West Berkshire children (Primary Admissions)	2nd Qtile Rank 51/152 (YE: 98.4%)	1st Qtile Rank 12/152 (YE: 99.1%)	≥98%	G	99%
	% of applications receiving one of their three preferences for West Berkshire children (Secondary Admissions)	1st Qtile Rank 27/152 (YE: 97.9%)	1st Qtile Rank 36/152 (YE: 96.6%)	≥95%	dnp	Data not provided
	% of 16-17 year olds participating in education and training	2nd Qtile Rank 47/151 (YE: 93.8%)	2nd Qtile Rank 47/151 (YE: 93.8%)	Top 20%	dnp	Data not provided
Maintaining our roads	% of the principal road network (A roads) in need of repair	1st Qtile Rank 17/146 (YE: 2%)	Data not available	≤2%	Annual	Reports Q4
Collecting your bins and keeping the streets clean	% of household waste recycled, composted and reused	1st Qtile Rank 31/148 (YE: 50.7%)	1st Qtile Rank 32/149 (YE: 50.2%)	≥49.5% (≥2018/19 outturn)	dnp	Data not provided
Providing benefits	Average number of days taken to make a full decision on new Housing Benefit claims	3rd Qtile Rank 66/122 (YE Av 20.27)	3rd Qtile Rank 85/124 (YE Av 19.04)	≤19 days	A	Av. 20
Council Tax and Business rates	Council Tax collected as a percentage of Council Tax due	1st Qtile Rank 8/151 (YE: 98.5%)	1st Qtile Rank 8/151 (YE: 98.5%)	≥98.8%	G	27.9%
	Non domestic rates collected as a percentage of non domestic rates due	3rd Qtile Rank 82/151 (YE: 98.4%)	1st Qtile Rank 20/151 (YE: 98.9%)	≥99%	G	27.3%

Category	Measure	2018/19 National Qtile/Rank	2019/20 National Qtile/Rank	2021/22 Target	2021/22	
					RAG	Q1 Outturn
	% of 'major' planning applications determined within 13 weeks or the agreed extended time	4th Qtile Rank 108/122 (YE: 78.1%)	2nd Qtile Rank 36/125 (YE: 98.8%)	≥90% (England average)	G	94.7%
	% of 'minor' planning applications determined within 8 weeks or the agreed extended time	4th Qtile Rank 102/123 (YE: 77.5%)	2nd Qtile Rank 49/125 (YE: 90.4%)	≥86% (England average)	G	95.4%
	% of 'other' planning applications determined within 8 weeks or the agreed extended time	2nd Qtile Rank 46/123 (YE: 93%)	2nd Qtile Rank 37/125 (YE: 94.8%)	≥90% (England average)	A	89.9%

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	1	4	1
Support everyone to reach their full potential	0	1	3	6
Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire	0	0	5	0
Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy	0	0	2	4
Maintain a green district	0	0	5	2
Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships	0	0	5	0
	0	2	24	13

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

- 5.22 Overall good results have continued to be achieved for this priority for improvement. Further improvements to note this quarter refer to 100% of rough sleepers receiving an accommodation offer when first identified and the increased proportion of care leavers in employment, education and training.
- 5.23 As lockdown restrictions started to ease, an increase of referral to children's services is reflected in a higher than expected increase of repeat referrals.
- 5.24 The recommendation to work from home where possible, impacted on the number of young people involved in work experience placements, but this is expected to achieve the end of year target.

Support everyone to reach their full potential

- 5.25 Data availability is the key issues to report relating to this priority for improvement. Education attainment outturns for the academic year 2019/20 are not available, as exams have not taken place due to Covid-19. Support is being provided to pupils and schools to minimise the impact of the pandemic.
- 5.26 Work has started to develop an approach to measure community wellbeing. The number of residents supported by a Befriender continues to be better than the target.

Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire

- 5.27 During this quarter, the Executive has approved the refreshed Economic Development Strategy and a delivery plan, reflecting the Covid-19 impact. This will inform a review of the measures and targets included in the Council Strategy Delivery Plan.
- 5.28 Activities are on track to deliver the Newbury Town Centre Masterplan study by December 2021. The work continued with a public consultation on the draft Vision.

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

- 5.29 The Regulation 19 consultation to inform the submission of a New Local Plan for examination (Strategic Goal) in November 2022 is on track and in line with the Local Development Scheme agreed in April 2020.
- 5.30 Results for 2020/21 for the number of residential units granted planning permission, the number of additional residential units completed, the number of affordable homes granted planning permission and the number of additional affordable homes completed are expected in Q3.
- 5.31 Work has started and is reported on track for connecting West Berkshire premises to Full Fibre. At the end of Q1 the percentage of premises connected reached 26.3%.

Maintain a green district

- 5.32 Progress has been made towards ensuring that West Berkshire Council's public car parks have electric vehicle charging points.

5.33 Designs are being progressed to extend the cycle routes in the District, but even if no physical construction work took place this quarter, the target for the end of year is expected to be achieved.

5.34 Activities to complete feasibility studies for large scale afforestation and urban tree planting are reported on track against the revised targets of March 2022.

Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships

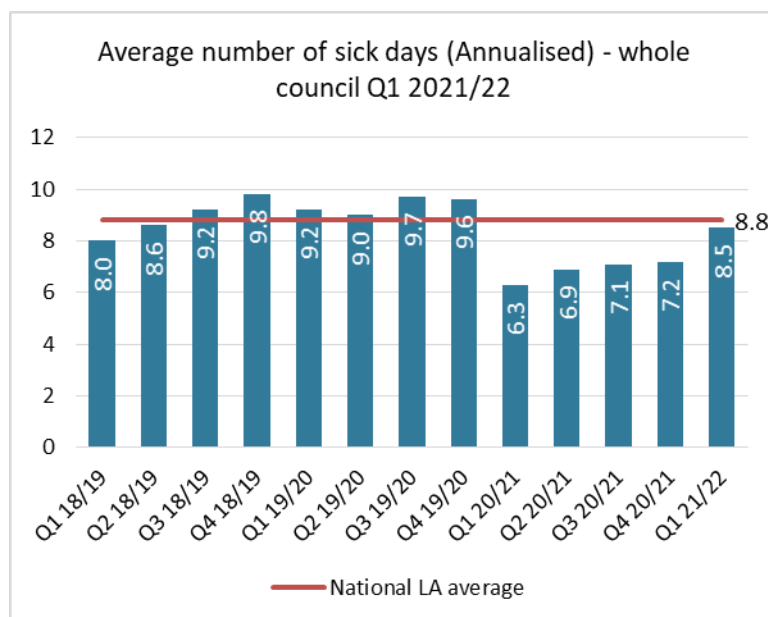
5.35 Work is progressing to support and enhance partnership working. A draft Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, produced following extensive engagement with partner organisations and residents, has reached the final stages of development and is out for public consultation over the summer.

5.36 The development of a community engagement framework, with our statutory partners and community and voluntary organisations, has started and an initial scoping activity has taken place. In addition, the review of how the Council engages with Town and Parish Councils has started with a survey due to close in Q2. In addition, community conversations are planned to take place during Q2 to continue these engagement activities.

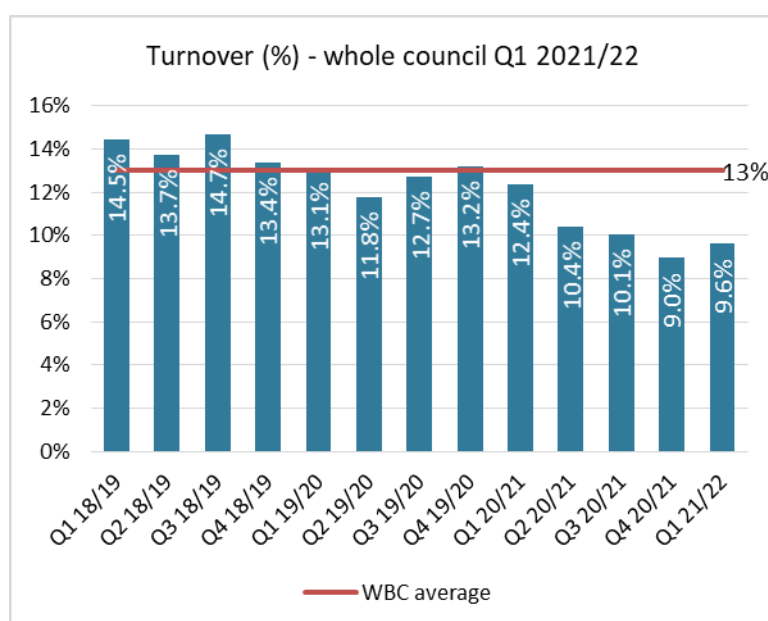
Corporate Health

5.37 The year-end forecast is a £0.3m under spend, after taking account of provision that was made in reserves for specific risks at the time of budget setting. Without this provision, the forecast would be an over spend of £0.5m. If the over spend remains at year end and if the reserves were utilised, the resulting £0.3m under spend would be returned to reserves. Further details are available from the quarterly financial monitoring reports.

5.38 Absence levels have been below the norm since quarter one 2020/21, however this quarter they have risen to return a more usual level. This is not due to Covid-19 self-isolation days lost as they are not included in the sickness figures. These are days where staff are not working due to self-isolation and can not 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.



5.39 Staff turnover is stable at around 10%.



Proposals

5.40 To note the progress made in delivering the Council Strategy Delivery Plan, a maintained strong performance for the core business areas, good results for the majority of the measures relating to the Council's priorities for improvement and remedial actions taken where performance is below target, which is mostly due to Covid-19.

6 Other options considered

None considered.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 Quarter one 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.
- 7.2 The District continued to cope better than other areas with the Covid-19 challenges. As the restrictions are eased, there are strong signs of recovery for the local, resilient economy. However, as expected, pressure increased this quarter regarding demand for children and adult social care services.
- 7.3 The Council is focusing more on recovery and renewal, and approved a strategy to address pandemic challenges and benefit of emerging opportunities. In this context, improvement work and key outcomes continue to be delivered, e.g. accommodation offered to all rough sleepers, approval of a new Economic Development Strategy, more care leavers in employment, education and training etc. Only a few measures, mainly impacted by Covid-19, have been delayed or are below targets.
- 7.4 Action plans are in place to address performance measures rated “Amber” and the Executive is asked to note these actions and the overall performance reported.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Influencer Measures
- 8.2 Appendix B – Exception Reports
- 8.3 Appendix C – Infographics
- 8.4 Appendix D – Technical Conventions
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Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☒ No: ☐

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Item is Urgent Key Decision | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report is to note only | <input type="checkbox"/> |
-

Wards affected: All

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Document Control

Document Ref:		Date Created:	
Version:		Date Modified:	
Author:			
Owning Service			

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1			
2			