
2024/25 Performance Report Quarter One

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	19 September 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Jeff Brooks
Report Author:	Jenny Legge/Melanie Best
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4540

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide assurance that the priority areas in the [Council Strategy 2023-2027](#) are being managed effectively, and where performance has fallen below the expected level, present information on the remedial action taken and the impact of that action. To ensure effective oversight to Councillors, staff and residents regarding progress made towards the achievement of the outcomes detailed in the Council Strategy Delivery Plan.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the progress made in delivering the Council Strategy Delivery Plan 2023-2027, maintaining a strong outcome for many of the measures, and remedial actions taken where performance is below target.
- 2.2 To note the remedial actions.

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 Impact:		X		
Digital Services Impact:		X		
Council Strategy Priorities:	x			Supports all priorities areas of the Council Strategy 2023-27.
Core Business:	x			
Data Impact:		X		
Consultation and Engagement:	The information provided for this report, has been signed off by the relevant Heads of Service/Service Directors, Executive Directors and Portfolio Holders.			

4 Executive Summary

4.1 This paper provides updates for each component of the [Council Strategy Delivery Plan 2023-2027](#):

- Non-targeted influencer measures for context.
 - Targeted measures for each priority area.
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- Corporate health measures for internal context.
- 4.2 This report highlights the key updates on performance for the quarter rather than duplicating analysis and progress already reported as part of previous quarterly reports. However, full details for all the results to date (including for previous quarters are available for each performance measure from Appendix C and the [Performance Portal online](#). An amended report will be in place for future updates to the Executive.
- 4.3 The **Influencer measures** indicated that the district's economy continued to be robust overall. However, the average house price had decreased, and the number of planning applications received continued on a downward trend. The demand on our adult social care services remained high but decreased for Children's services. Pressure increased in the areas of new requests for ASC support, long term adult social care cases, and anti-social behaviour incidents. Fly-tipping has been increasing gradually over the last four quarters.
- 4.4 The delivery of the outcomes grouped under each Council Strategy Priority Area continued to progress well.
- 4.5 Overall, one priority area target had been achieved and/or exceeded and was rated as Green: (ii) A Fairer West Berkshire with Opportunities for All
- 4.6 Two areas were 5% within target or behind schedule and were rated as Amber: (iv) The Prosperous and resilient West Berkshire and (v) Thriving Communities with a Strong Local Voice
- 4.7 The remaining two areas were more than 5% below target or had not been achieved and were rated as Red: (i) Services We Are Proud of, and (iii) Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency.
- 4.8 Areas of achievement to highlight include:
- number of services/functions digitised.
 - review of the Community Infrastructure Levy customer journey completed.
 - launch of the Berkshire Prosperity Board.
 - reliance on agency staff reduced.
 - plans for an Employee Value Proposition, and recognition of existing staff are on track.
 - recruitment of Shared Lives carers, and foster households continued successfully.
 - over 56% of households recycling their waste.
 - more EV charging points were installed in council owned car parks.
 - the Faraday Road football ground project continued to progress well.
 - a pilot 20mph zone in Theale was consulted on and a report has been prepared for consideration by elected Members.
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- refurbishments of Hungerford, Kennet and Northcroft were on schedule to be delivered on time.

4.9 Of the measures rated Amber or Red, areas to note include:

- delay of the West Point House project for displaced persons.
- number of days taken to make a decision on new Housing Benefit claims was affected by an influx of new claims following the annual bills being sent out to residents.
- time taken to process Emotional Health Academy assessments was impacted by an increase in demand and staffing pressures.
- a delay in phasing out the garden waste subscription service due to options being considered.
- % of total staff turnover remained high at 15.8%.
- staffing issues affected our contractor's ability to complete pothole repairs in a timely manner.

4.10 The council's **corporate health indicators** highlight focus on resource management and a controlled financial approach to manage service demand. This quarter the budget manager forecast overspend is a £2m overspend.

4.11 Staff turnover was as high as at the end of 2023 (15.8%), which is well above the target of 13% (an average of WBC historic data).

4.12 Sickness absence was relatively high for the season and compared to this quarter in 2023/24 (9.0 v 8.3 working days lost (Annualised)).

5 Supporting Information

Influencer measures

Detailed information on the measures in this report can be found online in the Performance Portal via this link: <https://westberks.gov.uk/strategy-performance>

5.2 Non-targeted measures of influence were monitored to provide context to the work being carried out across council services.

5.3 Overall, the local **economy remained strong**. Empty business rated industrial properties remained at a consistent level and the number of empty non-industrial units dropped. The sale of parking tickets in WBC managed car parks has been at a consistent level for the past 6 quarters, and this quarter was 4% higher than the same period last year. The average house price was lower than the previous three quarters. The number of planning applications has been trending downwards for the last year. Overall, the number of crimes and domestic abuse incidents reported to Thames Valley Police have been reducing. However, an increase in anti-social behaviour incidents was present in West Berkshire figures, in common with the national picture.

5.4 Within the local **social care indicators**, children's social care referral and enquiry numbers were generally fewer than in previous quarters, although numbers of children

in need, and children subject to a child protection plan were higher this quarter. Pressure on Adult Social Care services continued to increase.

5.5 Within the **Environment** indicators, the number reported fly-tipping incidents has been increasing for the last four quarters.

5.6 **Priority Area Measures Performance**

Detailed information on the measures in this report can be found online in the Performance Portal via this link: <https://westberks.gov.uk/strategy-performance>

Note:

- Red, Amber, Green ratings are based on a 5% tolerance (variance) from target
- Green star - either complete, on or ahead of schedule
- Red triangle - complete later than scheduled or more than 5% outside of the target
- ? - no actual value for the current period has been recorded
- ?! - no target and actual value for the current period has been recorded
- n/r - no data is expected for the current period e.g. annual measure reporting in Q4
- >> - data is not due to be reported e.g. activity commences in the next year

5.7 **Council Strategy Priority Areas** - Results at the end of this quarter showed that one of the five priority areas were RAG rated as Green (on schedule or delivered), and two as Red (ceased/delayed or more than 5% below target), and two Amber (behind schedule, within 5 % of target).



Chart 1. Overall RAG Rating of Priorities (inner circle) and associated Goals (outer circle)

5.8 **Priority Area 1: Services we are proud of**

5.9 Overall, this priority area was rated as Red, as out of the four goals one was rated as red, two as green and one as amber. The overall rating was impacted by three

measures missing their targets: no of people subscribed to WBC e-newsletters, % of Executive Committee decisions made in private and % of total turnover.

5.10 Following the closure of our accounts for 2023/24, the general fund has been reduced to £4m for that financial year.

5.11 A report was submitted to elected Members at the Executive meeting held on Thursday, 23 May 2024, where Members resolved to adopt the CIL Enforcement Policy and approved the Discretionary CIL Householder Review Scheme.

5.12 The Berkshire Prosperity Board, a Berkshire wide collaboration of all six unitary authorities intended to help the county attract business and investment, was set up and held its first meeting on Monday, 17 June 2024.

5.13 Our reliance on agency staff has reduced and our plans to develop and introduce an Employee Value Proposition and recognition of staff performance were on schedule.

5.14 Our Adult Social Care service was rated 'Good' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) for its performance in ensuring people have access to adult social care and support following a recent assessment.

5.15 There has been a slight decrease in the number of people subscribed to our e-newsletter database, due to the removal of dormant accounts.

5.16 **Priority Area 2: A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all**

5.17 Overall, this priority area was rated as green. The three goals were rated as: one Green, and one each of Red and Amber. There were eight measures reported as Red, and four reported as Amber. The overall rating was impacted by eight measures missing their targets: WBC care-homes not rated as good or better, adoption of the care-home provision strategy, repeat child protection plans, Children in Care with more than three placements, number of rough sleepers, relief duty ending with secure accommodation for at least 6 months, processing time for EHA assessments, and completion of West Point House conversion.

5.18 There were also four measures below target/behind schedule: % of desired outcomes from s42 enquiries, repeat referrals in Children's Social care, being expressed as "fully achieved", and days taken to process new Housing Benefit claims.

5.19 Achievements to note in the quarter were that:

- the recruitment of Shared Lives carers, and foster households continued successfully.
 - the percentage of safeguarding enquiries where the risk was identified and reduced was above target at 98.8%, as was the percentage of adults helped at the preventative level of support.
 - our Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy was considered at the Executive Committee on 25 July 2024.
 - a new development of 119 affordable homes located at the former Sterling Cables site in Newbury was completed. 27 of which have been designated for social rent, 62 for
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affordable rent (available those on West Berkshire Council's Housing Register), and 30 are shared ownership properties which will be managed by a housing association.

- we were successful in a bid for £90,000 in government funding to help clear a backlog of planning applications. The funding will be used to clear around 150 applications.

5.20 Challenging areas of work were around our housing for displaced persons, which was delayed due to a requirement for fireproofing the car park, the number of days taken to make a decision on new Housing Benefit claims due to an influx of new claims, and the time taken to process Emotional Health Academy assessments was impacted by an increase in demand and staffing pressures.

5.21 **Priority Area 3: Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency**

5.22 Overall, this priority area was rated as Red. Two out of the three goals were rated as Amber, and one as Red. The overall rating was impacted by four measures missing their targets: council fleet being ULEVs, electric car club vehicles, finalise the green waste plans, and standard for energy rating of council's properties.

5.23 Achievements to note in the quarter were that:

- Our work towards net zero greenhouse gas emissions progressed, with more EV charging spaces delivered in council owned car parks, over 56% of households recycling their waste, and the delivery of the cycle route improvements in Thatcham being on schedule.
- We extended the Service 32 (The Link) from Newbury to Basingstoke to operate on Sundays/bank holidays for the first time, with extended evening hours Monday to Saturday, and additional peak time options on weekdays. Combined with new on-demand bus services like West Berkshire Community Connect and Wiltshire Connect, local bus routes continue to evolve to provide a better service.

5.24 Challenging areas of work were around the delay in the installation of on-street EV points for various technical issues. A delay in phasing out the garden waste subscription service was due to options being considered.

5.25 **Priority Area 4: A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire**

5.26 Overall, this priority area was rated as Amber. Out of the four goals, one was rated as Green, two as Amber and one as Red. The overall rating was impacted by three measures missing their targets: review of the Adverse Weather Plan delayed, % of permanent pothole/road edge repairs completed to time and the adoption of the Local Plan.

5.27 There was also one measure below target/behind schedule: the adoption of the Local Plan is behind schedule.

5.28 Achievements to note in the quarter were that:

- The Faraday Road football ground project continued to progress, with regular meetings taking place with Newbury Community Football Group. A contract was issued for the design of an astro-turf 3G pitch.
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- Modifications have been made to the Local Plan, as requested by the Inspectorate, although slightly behind schedule, it is expected that the process will be completed by the end of June 2025.
- Challenging areas of work were around the delayed review of the Adverse Weather plan, due to the floods over winter. Staffing issues affecting our contractor's ability to complete pothole repairs in a timely manner.

5.29 **Priority Area 5: Thriving communities with a strong local voice**

5.30 Overall, this priority area was rated as Amber. Out of the four goals, two reported Green and two reported Red. The overall rating was impacted by nine measures missing their targets: the number of community forums held, Activity for Health programme class capacity, adoption of a plan to tackle social isolation, adoption of a renewal plan for council-owned leisure facilities, library figures have not been reported due to a vacant post and so are showing as below target, number of visits to sports and leisure centres, delay in setting up the mental health support initiative with Greenham Common Trust, adoption of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, and the adoption of the Parking Strategy.

5.31 Achievements to note in the quarter were that:

- a pilot 20mph zone in Theale was consulted on and a report has been prepared for consideration by elected Members at the Executive Meeting on [Friday 2 August 2024](#).
- the refurbishments of Hungerford, Kennet and Northcroft were on schedule to be delivered on time. Following an investment of £4.6 million in upgrading Northcroft, works are due to start in September 2024, with completion estimated for June 2025.

5.32 The Challenging areas of work were around the adoption of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, and which was delayed by election protocols.

Corporate Health

5.33 This quarter the budget manager forecast overspend is £2m as included in the revenue reporting paper to the Executive on the 19th September.

5.34 Staff turnover was similarly as high as at the end of 2023 (15.8%), which is above the target of 13% (an average of WBC historic data). The Department with the highest level of turnover was Children's Social Care with (20%).

5.35 Sickness absence was relatively high for the season and compared to this quarter in 2023/24 (9.0 v 8.3 working days lost (Annualised)). ASC was the Directorate with the highest level of absence (14.4 w/d lost).

Proposals

5.36 To note the progress made in delivering the [Council Strategy Delivery Plan 2023-2027](#), maintaining a strong outcome for the majority of the measures, and remedial actions taken where performance is below target.

6 Other options considered

None considered.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 This quarter's results show that good progress had been made towards the delivery of the majority of measures under all five Council Strategy Priority Areas. Strong performance levels have been achieved as some of the initiatives listed in the Delivery Plan completed and key services delivered to our district.
- 7.2 Action plans are in place to address performance for a small number of measures rated "Amber" and "Red". Councillors are asked to note these actions, and note the overall performance reported (refer to Appendix C for more detail).

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A: Performance in pictures.
- 8.2 Appendix C: Detailed year to date performance tables.
- 8.3 Appendix D: Influencer measures dashboard.
- 8.4 Appendix E: Purpose and background.

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

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

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