
2020/21 Performance Report Quarter One

Committee considering report:	Executive on 3 September 2020
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Jo Stewart
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	24 August 2020
Report Author:	Jenny Legge/Catalin Bogos
Forward Plan Ref:	EX3883

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 and where performance has fallen below the expected level, present information on the remedial action taken, and the impact of that action.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note progress and achievements.
- 2.2 To review the appropriateness of any remedial actions taken to improve performance, in particular for:
 - Non domestic rates collected as percentage of non domestic rates due

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			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 The measures shown in this report, monitoring performance from April to June 2020, have been greatly affected by the restrictions introduced by the government to manage Covid-19, starting with the national lockdown on 23 March 2020. However, prompt 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 Economic activity and employment **influencer measures** data, produced at national level, is not yet available for Q1. National news about companies and stores closures would suggest that there will be an increase in unemployment going forward. However, the Council has been working hard to support local businesses, for example in distributing government grants and offering advice and support on how to re-open safely to ensure any impact on local economy is minimised.
- 4.4 Inevitably, retail businesses have been greatly affected, even those with an online presence. A large institution, John Lewis, that was considering performance challenges at local level even before Covid-19, has announced that it will be closing the Newbury Store. Contractual arrangements are being progressed with a new tenant.
- 4.5 The majority of performance measures reflecting the **core business areas** are however on track to achieve the targets for this year. As an exception, the following area has been impacted by the Council's conscious measures put in place to support local businesses:
- Non domestic rates collected as percentage of non domestic rates due

- 4.6 The Council's strong performance position is further confirmed when performance is compared with other local authorities. The majority of the Council's measures rank in the first and second quartiles. It is also clear that this already positive relative position will continue to improve in many areas, as performance improves in activities such as the speed with which decisions are made on Housing Benefit Claims and determinations made on planning applications.
- 4.7 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 is a more challenging area and performance is mixed. The majority of measures are however on track.
- 4.8 The Council's **corporate health indicators** highlight an end of Q1 forecast under spend of £590k, (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 yet to emerge and depend on the restrictions put in place to manage the situation and the local and regional recovery plans. At Q1 the influencer measures reflect the immediate impact of Covid-19 (from April to June 2020). However, the Council has put in place prompt measures to support local economy and mitigate local impact.
- 5.3 The economic activity rate (chart 1) and unemployment rate (chart 2) appear to be marginally increased at Q4 2019/20 (Q1 data is not yet available). The number of empty business rated premises continue to rise but at a lower rate compared to previous quarters or the average increase of last year (charts 7 and 8). However, it is probable that due to travel restrictions, online retail sales will increase, and if this translates into a change in consumers' behaviour, this will in turn affect the need for a physical presence for some businesses.
- 5.4 As all benefits become subsumed by Universal Credit, the number of claimants will rise (charts 5 & 6). In addition, a broader span of people are required to look for work in comparison to Jobseeker's Allowance. Therefore, this measure can't be used to monitor unemployment, but may possibly give an indication of low income.
- 5.5 As expected, footfall has greatly reduced (chart 9), as residents were told to stay at home and working from home was encouraged, where possible. Parking charges (chart 10) were suspended to help support key workers, and only reinstated from 1 June 2020. This loss of income will hopefully be recovered from central government.

- 5.6 The number of planning applications (chart 13) has dropped significantly by 31.3% when compared to Q1 2019/20. However, this may level off as the building industry restarts in earnest.
- 5.7 The measures to limit the spread of Covid-19, for example through schools and retail business closures and asking the population to 'stay at home, where possible', have also affected the areas of crime and social care as described in the following points:
- 5.8 Following the national trend, reported crime has reduced by 24.3% compared to Q1 2019/20 (chart 15), this is likely to be due in part to the closure of bars and clubs, lack of large public events, and protection of homes due to more people staying at home.
- 5.9 Unfortunately, our district is also following the national trend with a rise in reported cases of domestic abuse of 38.6%, compared to Q1 2019/20. In response to this increase, we as a Local Authority together with partner organisations have made sure that communications to our residents and anyone who is affected by this situation have been clear on what actions they can take and where to go to find help and support.
- 5.10 Referrals to Children and Family Services were reduced across the board, as these mainly come from schools, early year's providers and Family Hubs none of whom were fully operational during April – June 2020.
- 5.11 The overall number of people receiving a long term service (LTS) from Adult Social Care (chart 31) dropped significantly by 2.7%, compared to Q1 2019/20. This was due to a high number of deaths and over 50 cases being in interim solutions due to Covid-19 i.e. not yet receiving LTS.
- 5.12 There is a reduction in the number of new adult safeguarding enquiries (chart 30) by 24.8%. The safeguarding team has been able to focus on ensuring a thorough triage process because of increased staffing resource (2 additional social workers) in the team.
- 5.13 The number of households in temporary accommodation (chart 35) is stable. The figure does not include the Covid-19 emergency cohort of 60 individuals as per statutory reporting methodology to Central Government. The methodology requires that this cohort is recorded separately as a result of Covid-19 displacement emergency cases.
- 5.14 The expected increase in the number of households on the Common Housing Register (chart 33) has occurred with a rise of 30.1% on Q1 2019/20. There is still an expectation of a further rise in demand, if residents are affected by possible job losses due to Covid-19 and therefore have asked to join and access the Housing Register. In anticipation of the rise in demand, we've streamlined the process for applying for financial assistance e.g. accessing discretionary housing payments. We have held meetings with a broad range of stakeholders and partners to make them aware of the available assistance, for example, housing and voluntary sector partners. Internally, we are continually auditing new and existing cases to assess if there is a requirement for additional support as part of extensive prevention work. For example, early discussions with landlords, support with seeking employment opportunities, financial management and the use of other resources in the voluntarily sector such as, CAP (Christians Against Poverty) and upskilling staff.

- 5.15 As venues were closed across the district and residents had to stay at home, the opportunities for volunteering in library and countryside activities were curtailed (charts 38-40). It is hoped that the level of community involvement in these services will recover as restrictions are eased. Where possible, the services have come up with innovative solutions, such as click and collect library books, online book clubs and story-time. However, the Residents Survey results show that one quarter of respondents have volunteered during Covid-19 and that 78% of them intend to continue volunteering. This would suggest that West Berkshire communities, with coordination from the Council's Community Hub, have mobilised and contributed hugely to the efforts to respond to the coronavirus crisis.
- 5.16 The number of permanent carriage repairs completed has dropped by 10.6%. As less drivers have been using the road, there have been fewer cases of damage to the road being reported to the council.
- 5.17 The number of highways related third party claims received (chart 44) has dropped dramatically compared to last quarter, as there have been far fewer vehicles on the road. Of the 35 claims made, 23 have been successfully defended. The remaining 12 are pending resolution.
- 5.18 As predicted last quarter, the number of flytips reported has risen sharply by 35.2% (chart 46), most likely due to the closure of the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC), the perceived lack of monitoring of sites and despite the fact that the council's contractor was able to maintain the full kerbside collection services throughout the crisis period. The HWRC has now re-opened using a booking system, which has received great feedback in both the booking system and the services provided by the staff at the recycling centre. An awareness campaign has been launched to make residents aware that they are responsible, and could be fined, if a removal service flytips their waste. It is likely therefore that the number will reduce over future quarters.

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

2020/21 Performance Report Quarter One

Category	Measure	RAG	2020/21		
			Q1 RAG Outturn	Target	Notes
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.
	% 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	42.0%	≥95%	Q1: 63 / 150 Result based on statutory visits which have to be face-to-face. When including visits carried out via video or telephone call (due to Covid-19), performance rises to 96%.
Supporting education	% of applications receiving one of their three preferences for West Berkshire children (Primary Admissions)	G	98%	≥95%	
	% of applications receiving one of their three preferences for West Berkshire children (Secondary Admissions)	G	98%	≥95%	
Collecting your bins and keeping the streets clean	% of household waste recycled, composted and reused	G	51.5% (P)	≥49.5% (≥ 2018/19 outturn)	Q1 2020/21 data is provisional. All results are subject to change once validated by DEFRA after Q4
Providing benefits	Average number of days taken to make a full decision on new Housing Benefit claims	G	18.88	≤20 days	
Collecting Council Tax and	Council Tax collected as a percentage of Council Tax due	G	27.9%	≥98.8%	For comparison, Q1 2019/20 = (33,415,463/118,304,645) 28.3%

2020/21 Performance Report Quarter One

Category	Measure	2020/21			
		RAG	Q1 RAG Outturn	Target	Notes
Business rates	Non domestic rates collected as a percentage of non domestic rates due	R	27.3%	≥99%	For comparison, Q1 2019/20 = (30,558,961/89,903,445) 34.0%
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%	Q1: 4/6.
	% of financial assessments actioned within 3 weeks of referral to the Financial Assessment & Charging Team	G	100.0%	≥98%	Q1: 441 / 441
Planning and housing	% of planning appeals won	A	55.6%	≥65% (England average)	Q1: 5 / 9
	% of 'major' planning applications determined within 13 weeks or the agreed extended time	G	100.0%	≥90% (England average)	Q1: 18 / 18
	% of 'minor' planning applications determined within 8 weeks or the agreed extended time	G	94.0%	≥86% (England average)	Q1: 78 / 83
Supporting local employers	Number of top 10 business sector employers in 2018/19 retained in the district	G	10	≥10	

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2020/21 Performance Report Quarter One

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

5.20 In areas of service where the number of statutory, face-to-face visits carried out in a set timescale are targeted, for example in Children and Family Services, the outturn in Q1 has been impacted, as this activity has not been possible under Covid-19 restrictions. However, the service is monitoring mitigating measures, such as contact by telephone and video calls, which show the percentage of Children in Care who have been contacted in the last six weeks rises to 96%, for example, compared to 42% seen face-to-face.

5.21 The amount of non-domestic rates or “Business Tax” collected has been greatly reduced as many businesses have closed since March 2020, due to Covid-19. This resulted in Direct Debit payments stopping in April and May. The council has distributed government relief to eligible businesses, however the pandemic has taken a toll.

5.22 For provider services in care homes, Covid-19 remains their focus. Action plans developed and implemented for Walnut Close and Birchwood Nursing Home have also benefited the other homes. Birchwood is scheduled for its next inspection in November 2020. The Care Quality Commission’s virtual assurance checks resulted in no concerns being raised.

5.23 The percentage of planning appeals won may have been affected by the delay Covid-19 has wrought on the timeliness of decisions being made by the Planning Inspector. The number of appeals is relatively small and therefore a quarterly total would be more volatile than a yearly figure.

National Benchmarking (April 2017- March 2019)

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 One

Category	Measure	2017/18 National Qtile/Rank	2018/19 National Qtile/Rank	2020/21 Target	2020/21	
					RAG	Q1 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%)	TBC	-	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	51.5% (P)
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	18.88
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%	G	27.9%
	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	27.3%

2020/21 Performance Report Quarter One

Category	Measure	2017/18 National Qtile/Rank	2018/19 National Qtile/Rank	2020/21 Target	2020/21	
					RAG	Q1 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	94.0%

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 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 2019/20, 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.

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. Performance at Q1 2020/21 is much improved and it is expected that this will positively affect our relative position.

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			
	Green	Amber	Red	Annual
Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes	5	0	1	1
Support everyone to reach their full potential	3	0	0	0
Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire	1*	0	0	0
Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy	5	0	0	4
Maintain a green district	7	0	0	0
Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships	2	0	0	0

* Additional measures being agreed by the Economic Development Board for reporting starting with Q2 2020/21.

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), Annual (data reported only once this year and expected in other quarters)

Note: At Q4 a number of new performance measures were added as part of the development of the Council Delivery Plan.

Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes

5.27 The Strategic Goal of developing and adopting a new Early Help Strategy for Children's Social Care Early was approved in Q4 2019/20.

5.28 The Strategic Goal of agreeing and publishing a strategic framework to improve the employment opportunities of vulnerable people has been delayed due to competing priorities and the challenge of engaging with partners during Covid-19, and will be delivered by December 2020 instead of the initial target date of September 2020.

5.29 A funding bid to support the provision of apprenticeships within the council, who are disadvantaged and aged 16-25, which is funded through the apprenticeship levy was agreed in Q4 2019/20. The initiative has been delayed by Covid-19 however we are working with local businesses and partners to identify and explore opportunities through levy transfer as well as for suitable roles within the council teams. It is very important that the opportunities are suitable and offer a useful and challenging route into employment for this group of young people in our community. We are working to start enrolling apprentices in quarter 4 2020/21.

Support everyone to reach their full potential

- 5.30 Work has been delayed on the Strategic Goal of developing and adopting a prevention concordat for better mental health action plan with partners. It is expected, however that this will progress during the year and be achieved by the end of March 2021.
- 5.31 The Strategic Goal of develop and adopting a community wellbeing strategy was completed in Q4 2019/20.
- 5.32 The task of developing and adopting a community resilience index (Strategic Goal) has begun and is on track to be achieved by the end of 2020/21
- 5.33 The Strategic Goal of developing and adopting a community engagement strategy is in progress. A draft version has been drawn up and is progressing through the Executive timetable of meetings, where it will be considered by the Executive.
- 5.34 Attainment outturns for the academic year 2019/20 are not available as no assessments have taken place as schools were closed due to Covid-19.

Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire

- 5.35 The Economic Development Strategy (Strategic Goal) was adopted on 30 April 2020. Following the impact of Covid-19 on businesses and employment, the recovery phase for the district over the next eighteen months, will mean that central government funding, innovative local approaches and close working with partners will be needed to aid businesses and residents. The Economic Development Board is working to agree performance measures and associated targets, which will be included in future reports. The Economic Development Strategy and delivery plan will be revised to reflect the actions required in light of Covid-19 impacts.
- 5.36 In addition to advice for businesses on how to re-open safely as restrictions lessened, the council distributed over £24.6m, from the Small Business Grants Fund (SBGF) and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF), to almost 2000 local businesses, placing it in the top 10% of local authorities in the country by percentage of eligible businesses paid.
- 5.37 There is now a new Local Authority Discretionary Fund available, which will close when the council has distributed its allocation of £1.225m, on a first come first served basis. £43,000 in funding is also available (£1000 for each district councillor) to support local projects in towns and parishes.

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

- 5.38 The Strategic Goal of submitting a new Local Plan for examination is on track to be delivered by December 2022 and subsequent to that, so too is the infrastructure delivery plan.
- 5.39 The methodology and baseline data to produce a traffic model for an average journey time has not been possible during the lockdown. The Officers who would work with consultants on this area of work have been heavily involved in the response and recovery to Covid-19 for example by installing social distancing and active travel

2020/21 Performance Report Quarter One

measures. However, work is now in progress and the service is certain it will be in place for the Q2 reporting period.

5.40 The timetables for the Strategic Goals of developing and adopting new strategies for housing, leisure and culture have been delayed due to Covid-19, but are now back on track with re-profiled target dates.

5.41 Refurbishment of leisure centres in Hungerford, Newbury and Thatcham to offer a wider range of services will commence in 2022/23 (Strategic Goal).

Maintain a green district

5.42 The Strategic Goal of studying the feasibility and the cost and journey time benefits of installing infrastructure in Thatcham, has begun with discussions with suppliers of real-time sensors.

5.43 The Environment strategy has been approved and the service is on track to produce the delivery plan (Strategic Goal) as scheduled (December 2020).

5.44 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.

Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships

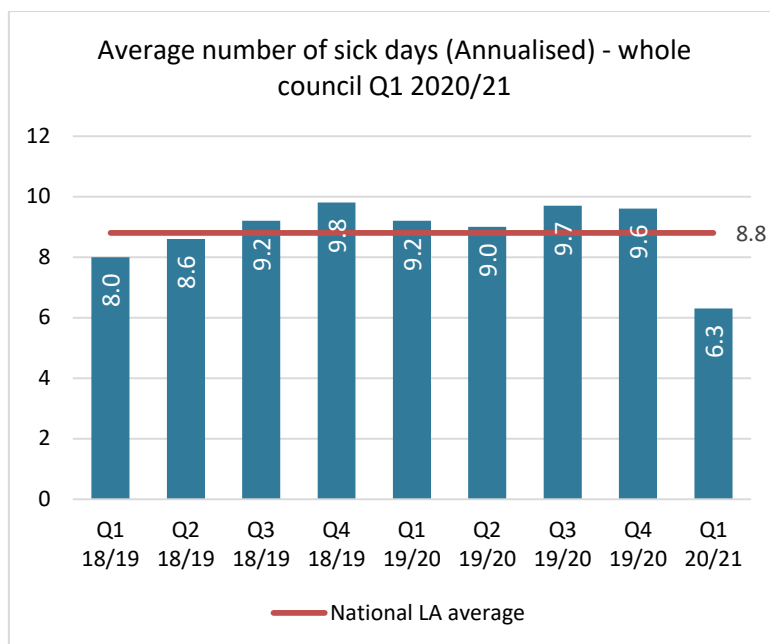
5.45 A primary care networks plan was agreed with the Clinical Directors of the (CCG) during Q4 2019/20 (Strategic Goal).

5.46 In recognition of the impact of Covid-19 on mental health and wellbeing, the Employee Assistance Programme scheduled to be commissioned later in the year was brought forward and made available to employees starting on the 1st July 2020.

Corporate Health

5.47 The Q1 financial position shows a strong budget management reporting a forecast under spend of £590k.

5.48 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 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.



5.49 Prior to Q1, sickness levels had been slightly elevated, however perhaps due to lockdown, meaning children were away from school and with less interaction with colleagues and clients, the usual transmission of stomach bugs and common colds has not taken place. It may also be that staff have not reported mild sickness, as they were already working from home or off work.

5.50 The council has completed a staff survey to look at how staff have worked during Covid-19, the impact on services and team working and opportunities for the future. These are being considered as part of the Council’s review of its office accommodation as highlighted in its recovery strategy.

Proposals

Refer to Appendix B for Exception Reports

5.51 To note key achievements and success as detailed above.

5.52 To review the actions taken to address performance below expected levels with a focus on:

- Non domestic rates collected as percentage of non domestic rates due

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 Some of the improvement work that was underway for achieving the Priorities for Improvement was paused as a result of the need to respond quickly to Covid-19. Staff

reacted with innovation and commitment. As restrictions have eased, and focus has shifted to the recovery phase, for now, services have been able to recommence their work to deliver the council strategy.

7.3 Action plans are in place to address performance of the measures rated 'red' and the Executive is 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

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

Officer details:

Name: Catalin Bogos
Job Title: Performance, Research and Risk Manager
Tel No: (01635) 519102
E-mail: Catalin.Bogos@westberks.gov.uk

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