

Report to: Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 23 September 2021

Report author: Business Intelligence Manager

Title: Council Performance Report: Quarter 1 2021/22

1.0 Summary

- 1.1. Watford Borough Council's Council Plan sets out the council's ambitions and commitments from 2020 to 2024. Underpinning the Council Plan is an 18 month Delivery Plan, which is supported by a suite of key performance indicators. These measures support the delivery of good quality services (both internal and external) by highlighting areas of good performance and, more importantly, under performance.
- 1.2. The attached report (Appendix A) shows the results for the current set of key performance indicators for Quarter 1 2021/22. The report, therefore, shows:
 - The results for the end of Quarter 1 (unless highlighted otherwise)
 - The results for Quarter 1 last year – 2020/21 (shown in the graphs for the majority of the indicators).
 - The results for Quarter 4 last year or the outturn figure where this is more relevant.
 - The target that has been set for 2021/22
 - Whether the indicator result is above, below or on target, shown by the green (above target), red (below target) or orange arrows (on target).

2.0 Risks

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
Failure to scrutinise organisational performance	Potential for performance to slip with consequences for quality of service delivery	Robust scrutiny and challenge	Treat	6

3.0 Recommendations

3.1. It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. Note the key performance indicator results for Quarter 1 2021/22, appended at Appendix A.
2. Note that the KPIs will continue to be reviewed as part of the Business Intelligence Strategy, and Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be kept up to date with any changes to the KPIs, or the process for collecting, analysing or presenting KPI data.

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4.0 Quarter 1 KPI Review

4.1. Key indicators to particularly highlight for the Committee's attention are:

1. Average time to process housing benefit claims remained outside of target, however additional resource is being brought in during August to help with the continued high volume of work coming in to the service. By June processing time was reduced to 8 days. Performance also continues to be affected by the redeployment of Housing Benefit staff to work in the Test and Trace scheme, which is due to close on 30.09.21. The average time to process change of circumstances was significantly outside of the target. The service remains very busy, as many claimants are still furloughed, and resource levels are also affected by the Test and Trace redeployment. The service have now caught up with the work outstanding by doing overtime, and additional temporary resource has been secured to help ensure the elevated workload can be managed whilst officers take annual leave. Figures for July are back within the target of 6 days.
2. Planning continues to achieve excellent performance, with all indicators above target for quarter 1.
3. Delivery of channel shift from phone and face-to-face contact to digital self-service has been a key component of the council's strategy over recent years. Development of a reporting dashboard to monitor channel shift is progressing well, however a complete picture of customer channel shift is not yet available. The CSC are currently testing and refining reports analysing customer complaints, FOI requests, online form submissions and detailed analysis of street cleansing and parks issues, including hotspot mapping. There were some encouraging figures reported in quarter 1 that indicate a growing use of self-service channels. Examples of this are:

- The most used online service was ‘Report a Street Cleansing and Parks issue’. 2,318 reports were submitted in Q1, with 73.4% of customers self-serving with no support from the CSC.
 - 521 forms related to bin collections were submitted online, with 86.9% of customers self-serving.
 - 680 forms related to the Restart Grant were also submitted online in Q1, with 100% of customers self-serving.
4. Long wait calls to the CSC, and the percentage of all calls answered were slightly below target. These indicators were within target during April and May, however approximately 40,000 customers were contacted in June regarding green waste service renewal, which resulted in a significant increase in calls to the CSC.
 5. The number of statutory homeless has dropped compared with Q4 last year, and is almost half the level it was at the end of Q1 2020/21. Family no longer willing to accommodate continues to be the most frequent reason for loss of the last settled home.
 6. The number of households in temporary accommodations remains reasonably steady, with a slight rise in households without children needing to be housed. Families with children are now placed in either self-contained temporary accommodation or family hostels within Watford. Families and single people no longer share hostel accommodation.
 7. Parking enforcement re-started at the beginning of Q1, which is reflected in the number of penalty charge notices issued. Enforcement of restrictions recommenced 29 March 2021. Warning notices were issued in controlled parking zones for one week in advance of enforcement starting, and from 29 March, only match day enforcement remained suspended. Fans had not returned to the stadium so the additional enforcement could not be justified. Match day enforcement was resumed from 24 August 2021 in line with the start of the new season, and as a result all aspects of the service, both front line and back office, are now back to full operation.
 8. Figures on waste and recycling continue to show very positive results, and are reflective of the successful waste service changes implemented in September 2020. All indicators related to residual waste, recycled waste and composted waste show improvement. Compared with Q1 last year, the service collected 537 tonnes extra food, garden and recycling waste, and 462 tonnes less residual waste.
 9. Annual street cleansing indicators were well within target for litter and graffiti, both showing an improvement compared with Q1 last year. Levels of detritus and fly-posting were not within target. The majority of fly-posting issues can be attributed to one event for which posters were displayed in a way that was not in line with agreements made with WBC.

10. Watford Leisure Centres reopened in April following the end of lockdown. Although numbers are rising, usage, membership and swimming lesson take up is still roughly 50 – 75% of pre-Covid levels.
11. Collection rates of council tax and NNDR are similar to Q1 2020/21, with council tax slightly above last years' result and NNDR slightly below. Reminders and final notices for NNDR have been issued.
12. ICT indicators demonstrate on target performance against network and system stability indicators. Indicators associated with the performance of the Service Desk contractor were all below target, as the end of Q1 marked the end of the contract with Amicus. The transition from Amicus to Littlefish was made on 1 July and service levels are expected to improve in Q2.
13. Staff indicators included another very good result for staff sickness, improving on the Q4 result from last year to again achieve the lowest figure on record. Return to work interview rates and the completion of Annual Performance Reviews were not within target, as they were affected by additional workload arising from the pandemic. One of the challenges with monitoring Annual Performance Reivews has been identifying where the reviews are in the process. Although completion rates are low we know many reviews have been started and are awaiting formal sign off by either the line manager or next line manager. The result published in this report only shows those that have been through the entire process and are fully signed off. As of 7 July, it is now possible to report on the different stages of the review and remind people accordingly. Managers and HR will continue to work together to review and monitor compliance rates.

Appendices

Appendix A – QUARTER 1 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2021/22