

Report to: Overview & Scrutiny Committee)

Date of meeting: 17 March 2022

Report author: Business Intelligence Manager

Title: Council Performance Report: Quarter 3 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 3 2021/22. The report, therefore, shows:
- The results for the end of Quarter 3 (unless highlighted otherwise)
 - The results for Quarter 2 – 2021/22 (where relevant).
 - The results for Quarter 3 – 2020/21 (shown where the comparison is deemed useful when taking in to account the Covid impact). For some indicators, a comparison has been made with Quarter 3 - 2019/20.
 - 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 3 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 KPI's, or the process for collecting, analysing or presenting KPI data.

Further information:

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Appendices

Appendix A – QUARTER 3 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2021/22

4.0 Quarter 3 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 by one day. However this is a cumulative result taking in to account performance for the whole year. Performance did improve in Q3, and if results are broken down by month, all months in Q3 were on or within target. Time to process change of circumstances remained outside of target, although Q3 showed a two day improvement when compared as Q2. Similar to Housing Benefit claims, results for individual months in Q3 were all within target, so if this performance continues it will bring the overall performance closer to target for the whole year. There are currently 4 staff members still working on Test and Trace, who will be returning to the service at the end of March. The service is also in the process of trying to recruit additional resource in advance of Q1 which is typically a busy time, however it was noted that recruitment in the current climate is a challenge due to high demand for candidates.
2. Delivery of channel shift from phone and face-to-face contact to digital self-service is progressing well. In Q2, there were 4,928 forms submitted online relating to 73 processes. 75% of these were self-served by customers.
3. Long wait calls to the CSC, and the percentage of all calls answered were both back within target for Q3, with the number of long wait calls dropping particularly low to only 8%, compared with 37% in Q2.

4. The result for Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days improved significantly in Q3, and at 92%, was the highest result recorded since Q2 2019. The service will continue to use new technology (Firmstep, Qlik Sense) to monitor responses and improve this result further.
5. The number of households in temporary accommodation has dropped slightly compared with Q2, and remains within target. The service have been expecting a significant increase for some time due to benefit changes, end of furlough and evictions however this is still not yet feeding through. The service remain prepared for this expected increase. The Temporary Accommodation Strategy has enabled a build-up of approximately 20% excess capacity in the Temporary Accommodation portfolio. There is currently a healthy development pipeline with new affordable rent and social rent homes coming on stream, helping the service to keep numbers down in temporary accommodation. The service are continuing to be successful in accessing private rented homes for people to move on. The new development pipeline will reduce in the next few months, which may feed into increased numbers in temporary accommodation.
6. Waste and recycling results were all slightly lower compared with Q2, however all well within target.
7. Annual street cleansing indicators related to detritus, fly-posting and litter are outside of the target for Q3, and all were slightly up when compared with the same quarter last year. A number of factors contributed to this, including increased footfall as a result of more people working from home, staff absence due to Covid and environmental conditions such as a later than normal leaf fall. More detail is included in Appendix A regarding these indicators. Levels of graffiti remained well within target, and graffiti hot spots will continue to be targeted to ensure this continues. The fly posting score has increased compared with Q3 last year. This is mainly due to estate agent boards attached to highway infrastructure within Main Road and Housing areas. Efforts to spot and remove these boards will be stepped up. Joint action with Planning Enforcement can help to deter agents from erecting boards on highway land, however prosecutions in the past haven't always resulted in a change in behaviour from Estate Agents.
8. Absences due to staff sickness have continued to rise since Q2, although the result is still exceptionally low when compared with the two years prior to the Covid pandemic. In Q3 32% of short term absences were Covid related. The number of return to work interviews carried out on time was below target. 50% of late completions were due to either the manager or employee being on leave

9. The new ICT support service with Littlefish has continued to perform very well, with all indicators now on or within target, and most indicators showing further improvement when compared to Q2 as the service beds in. There has been an increase in the number of users moving away from using the Service desk phone lines and towards Littlefish LIVE.
10. The collection rate for Council Tax is slightly below the result recorded for the same quarter last year, whereas the collection rate for NNDR is slightly higher than last year's result. Performance remains around 5% down on 2019/20 (pre-Covid). This is predominantly due to the extra reliefs awarded in 2021/22. The service have noticed a shift to more collection at the end of the year.
11. Leisure Centres fully reopened in April 2021 following lockdown, with all services restarted from July 2021. Usage has dropped during Q3 for all areas (throughput, membership and swimming lessons) when compared with Q2, however this is consistent with the trend usually seen in winter. Customers are also showing caution due to the new Omicron variant. Discussions are taking place with community/BME/working groups who are interested in swimming, with the hope that this will increase membership and offer new customers options to try the facilities.
12. Parking enforcement levels have dropped slightly in Q3 compared with Q2. Reduced enforcement hours over the Christmas period contributed to this result.