

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 21 September 2022

Report author: Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Service, Executive Head of Human Resources and Business Intelligence Manager

Title: Focusing on delivery:
Council Delivery Plan 2022-24 Quarter 1 Update
Organisational Development Strategy 20202-24 Quarter 1 Update
Council Performance 2022-23 Quarter 1 Update

Nature of Report: For noting

1.0 Summary

1.1 Following the Mayoral election in May 2022, Watford Borough Council launched its new Council Plan in July 2022 which sets out an ambitious agenda for the town and the council. The Council Plan forms part of the organisation's strategic framework, which aims to ensure that the council delivers on its commitments. Underpinning the Council Plan is a two year Delivery Plan and our Organisational Development Strategy, which are both supported by a suite of key performance indicators (KPIs). This allows the council to ensure that both projects and high quality services continue to be delivered, and for action to be taken if areas of concern are identified. A critical part of this approach is regular reporting of the key elements of the council's strategic framework and day to day performance. This report, therefore, contains updates comprising:

- the Council Plan 2022-26 and Delivery Plan 2022-24;
- the Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24; and
- key performance indicators.

1.2 The updates reflect the positive outcomes that have been achieved through strengthening the council's strategic framework and establishing a clear focus for the organisation, including aligning existing KPIs to our Council Plan themes. This has enabled services to concentrate on what is important to the town and council. The progress achieved since the last update to Cabinet is shown in the updates appended to this report (Appendices A, B and C).

1.3 The successful delivery of the commitments in the Council Plan 2022-26 is critical to ensuring we remain focused on what is important to Watford and we are seen by our community as an organisation that delivers on its promises. As such, the council has committed to reporting on progress against the Council Delivery Plan, Organisational Development Strategy and Key Performance Indicators on a quarterly basis. This

report forms the first of these updates since the approval of the new Council Plan. As such, it should be noted that individual service planning remains underway. Following this process, which will also review the key performance indicators used by the council, future reports will be updated to reflect any new measures which best reflect the performance of the organisation.

2.0 Risks

2.1

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
Slippage on delivery of the Council Plan	Failure to deliver our commitments resulting in poorer outcomes for our town and residents. Potential impact on the reputation of the Council.	Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Robust project and programme management	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6
Failure to recognise milestones / completion of commitments	Lost opportunity to celebrate success internally and externally	Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Robust project and programme management Clear communication of milestones / achievements	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6
Failure to promote and recognise the Council's strategic approach and culture that is focused on delivery and outcomes	Lost opportunity to embed a renewed strategic approach and culture that ensures Watford BC remains a high performing, innovative and agile organisation	Regular, robust and accurate reports for Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny that is owned across service areas Linking delivery to staff and team objectives	Treat	3 (severity) x 1 (likelihood) = 3
Slippage on delivery of the Organisational Development Strategy	Failure to deliver our commitments to staff potentially resulting in	Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6

	<p>failure to deliver our Council Plan.</p> <p>Potential impact on staff's health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Robust project and programme management.</p> <p>Regular checking in with staff through 1:1s, team meetings, surveys, Staff Ambassador Group</p>		
<p>Loss of skilled staff / difficulties in recruiting if Organisational Development Strategy is not delivered and the council is not perceived as a place where staff can develop and grow</p>	<p>Impact on delivery, potential cost implication if needed to recruit on short-term basis to fill posts</p>	<p>Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny</p> <p>Robust project and programme management.</p> <p>Regular checking in with staff through 1:1s, team meetings, surveys, Staff Ambassador Group</p> <p>Build into recruitment literature</p>	Treat	<p>3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6</p>
<p>Failure to scrutinise organisational performance</p>	<p>Potential for performance to slip with consequences for quality of service delivery</p>	<p>Robust scrutiny and challenge</p>	Treat	<p>3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6</p>
<p>Failure to respond to issues with organisational performance</p>	<p>Potential for issues with performance not to be addressed, and for poor performance to continue</p>	<p>Response to issues identified monitored by Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Leadership Board and Portfolio Holders.</p>	Treat	<p>3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6</p>
<p>Failure to provide transparency over organisational performance</p>	<p>Lack of understanding and trust related to organisational performance, particularly where performance is below the standard expected.</p>	<p>Ensure KPIs have sufficient commentary explaining the context around the quarterly results. Ensure portfolio holders have regular opportunities to review and discuss organisation performance.</p>	Treat	<p>3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6</p>

3.0 Recommendations

Overview and Scrutiny Committee are recommended to note:

3.1 The progress updates within this report relating to:

- the Council Plan 2022-26 and Delivery Plan 2022 -24 (Appendix A)
- the Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24 (Appendix B)
- the key performance indicator results for 2020/23 (Appendix C)

3.2 That the key performance indicators and measures will continue to be reviewed as part of the council-wide service planning process and the ongoing work on the Business Intelligence Strategy.

Further information

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4.0 Detailed proposal

4.1 A refreshed strategic framework

4.2 The council has an ambitious agenda for Watford and recognises that a focused, and aligned, strategic framework is fundamental to the successful delivery of its plans for the town.

4.3 Following the Mayoral election in May 2022, the council reviewed and refreshed its strategic framework to better reflect these ambitions as well as the Mayor's Manifesto, local intelligence, community feedback and best practice. The renewed framework, comprising the council's key strategies and plans, confirms our focus on what is important to the town and its residents and that resources are allocated to its priority commitments.

4.4 A critical part of the successful delivery of the renewed framework is robust, and regular, monitoring and reporting of the associated plans including:

- the Council Plan 2022-26 and Delivery Plan 2022-25;
- the Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24 and Delivery Plan; and
- key performance indicators.

This report presents a progress update of the plans outlined in 4.4 and in associated Appendices (A, B and C).

4.5 A significant amount of progress has been achieved across all delivery areas. In line with the new senior management structure, all services are currently using the Council Plan to finalise their service plans for the next period. The direction set by the strategic framework has ensured services have clarity on where they need to concentrate, focus their energies and support the council's reputation as a council that gets things done and that delivers on what is important to the town.

4.6 Running throughout the council's progress is the strengthening of our organisational approach, governance and structure. This means the council has the essential building blocks in place to support all of our activities and commitments not just across these plans but also across all of our corporate work and effort. This has particularly focused on:

- making sure we have the right capacity to deliver;
- a renewed emphasis on integrating how we work strategically;
- making sure the way we make our decisions is transparent, timely and supported by the relevant information; and
- our organisational culture is directed to our 'one team' approach, shared ownership of our corporate priorities and commitment to deliver

4.7 All three plans are underpinned by a suite of key performance indicators, which are currently under review and which will be finalised over the next period, as part of the service planning process.

5.0 Council Plan 2020-24 and Delivery Plan 2020-22

5.1 The new Council Plan 2022-26 was approved by Council in June 2022 as was the associated Delivery Plan 2024-26.

5.2 The Council Plan is designed to be strategic, high level and outward-facing, with an emphasis on outcome focused commitments based around four key themes:

- A greener, brighter future
- An inspiring, thriving and creative town
- A diverse happy and healthy town
- A council working for our community and serving our residents

Each theme has a number of areas of commitment under which specific projects and areas of work have been identified and articulated through the Delivery Plan 2022-24.

5.3 Whilst the Council Plan has a four year perspective, the Delivery Plan has been developed to focus on key priorities to 2024. The 18 month perspective means that the Council can be flexible and agile to respond to emerging and future challenges and opportunities over the life of the Council Plan.

5.4 By reporting regularly to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress made by the organisation against the Council Plan and, particularly the Delivery Plan, we can ensure we are continuing to focus our resources on what is important to our town and community. It also provides transparency and clear accountability to our community.

5.5 The full report can be seen in Appendix A but some key highlights are included below:

- The waste and recycling service changes introduced in 2020 has resulted in a significant increase in recycling rates across the town. The council and its contractor will strive to deliver the new target for recycling rates over the next four years. A proposal for the introduction of food waste from flats and high rise building is being developed to make it as easy and simple as possible for all residents to recycle as much as they can.
- In line with the council's commitment to support proposals for a sustainable transport across the town, we have been working closely with Hertfordshire County Council. A tender has subsequently been issued to consultants to undertake an Options and Feasibility study into potential alternatives for the former MLX corridor. Tenders have now been returned and are under evaluation.
- Following the successful receipt of more than £3m of grant funding from central government, the work to decarbonise the Town Hall is now underway. All listed building consent conditions have been successfully discharged and windows across both buildings have started to be removed for refurbishment with cavity wall insulation being installed. Internally, light fitting removals are underway with the scheme expected to be completed in spring 2023.
- An investment plan has been submitted to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities setting out a programme of projects to be funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The council has also made a bid to the Levelling Up Fund to support the delivery of our ambitious Town Hall Quarter, including the Colosseum and Innovation and Incubation Hub.

- Designs on the future Colosseum have continued to be developed with feedback and engagement with key stakeholders, theatre professionals and operators. Morgan Sindall have been appointed to finalise the designs with the council and commence the refurbishment works in November 2022, with completion expected in Autumn 2023, providing a refreshed and first class entertainment venue for the whole town to enjoy.
- The works to refresh and revitalise Clarendon Road is now largely completed with just some minor issues left to be completed. Market Street works are also progressing. Work is underway to design the next phase of public realm improvement works in the High Street, between the junction of Market Street and King Street.
- Development activity has continued at Riverwell with the completion of the MSCP in the spring (mostly for Watford General Hospital use), and construction of phase one of Avenues. Sales are progressing on this residential development with completions from the end of the year into the spring of 2023. Bellway and Audley Group are completing their schemes to the south of Thomas Sawyer Way and will be welcoming residents this autumn.
- Market Lates have continued to bring more visitors to our vibrant and refreshed market, following the significant investment made in the space over the last 12 months. The Market Late events have provided a great opportunity for local traders to showcase their diverse food and drink offer and further events are planned. A number of specialist markets have also been held with an event specifically for new businesses, starts up and young, local traders and plans for vegan and green and continental specialist markets in the pipeline.
- The successful award of 17 green flags across the borough demonstrates our ongoing commitment to our parks as a place for all residents and visitors to enjoy. In terms of specific activities, priority footpath improvement works have been undertaken in Cassiobury Park with an additional trial Beryl Bike bay installed close to the Hub building. To ensure that all visitors can continue to use the park safely, our cycling code of conduct was launched in April 2022 providing guidance on how the space can be shared.
- Cabinet approved the plans to relocate Watford Museum to our historic Town Hall in December 2021. Work on the design of the Museum in this space has continued with a bid to the National Heritage Lottery Fund being prepared to support the final vision. Works to the Town Hall itself are currently expected to commence in 2023 and complete in 2024, at which point fit-out works to the Museum can commence.
- Our Big Centenary celebration was successfully held on 4 June 2022, with residents and visitors from across the town joining a parade down the High Street

and festivities around the bandstand in Cassiobury Park. Our '100 people who made Watford' scheme has launched, celebrating the achievements of key residents over the year. An accompanying 'We are Watford' film has been produced for launch in Quarter 2.

- Works on Cheslyn House and St Marys are now complete with further maintenance work underway at the Chapel at Vicarage Road Cemetery subject to determining the best solution for the stonework. Planning for Phase 2 currently underway with an application for the third round of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme in progress.
- The council has continued to deliver its popular Big Events programme over the last period, providing a diverse range of free activities for local residents and families. The Big Beach and Big Screen have been in place over the summer holidays.
- In order to support local employment and, particularly, our younger residents, we are currently recruiting for five Corporate Apprentices to join us on a two year programme, working with services from across the organisation to provide them with the skills, knowledge and experience to help start their careers, whilst providing valuable public services to our customers.
- The council is refreshing its Customer Experience Strategy, aimed at ensuring we engage with, and provide the best service for, our customers whether they be residents, businesses, community groups or partners. Following engagement with service areas across the council, a draft Customer Experience Strategy will be reviewed by members prior to finalisation and publication.
- Senior management restructure has been completed and came into effect on 1 August 2022, aligning the internal resource of the organisation to the delivery of the Council Plan. Any savings as a result of the changes will be prioritised to support the delivery of the Council Plan and to provide the best front line services to our residents, businesses and community.
- Business Cases for Planning Enforcement, Building Control and Legal shared services with St Albans City and District Council have been approved by Council and work is now underway to implement the new services.
- The council's new collaborative and focused working space opened in July 2022, providing a modern and fit for purpose space for teams to deliver the very best services to residents, businesses and the community. Work is still underway to align this space to new council values and behaviours, for implementation over the next period.

6.0 Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24 and associated Delivery Plan

- 6.1 The Council Plan identifies the Organisational Development Strategy as a priority area of work under the theme 'A council working for our community and serving our residents'.
- 6.2 The council recognises our staff are critical to our success and to building our reputation as a council that delivers. At the same time, we know that the commitment of our staff and their passion for public service ensures we keep our residents, our businesses and community at the heart of everything we do. The importance of effectively matching our resources (both financial and staff) to the ambitions of our Council Plan and Delivery Plan was recognised when the plans were presented to Cabinet in June 2022 with a newly approved senior management structure.
- 6.3 The Organisational Development Strategy is also supported by a Delivery Plan, which translates the high level, strategic approach to how we develop our staff into practical and timely actions.
- 6.4 The full report can be seen in Appendix B but some key highlights are included below:
- Successful pilot session of Health and Wellbeing training to increase resilience completed with the rollout of further sessions planned for September/ October
 - Training delivered to various staff groups on the following topics: Mental Wellbeing in the Workplace, Menopause and Mental Health First Aider
 - 38 Agile Charters, detailing how teams will work in the future, completed for all teams by Jan 2022, supported by our agile pathfinders team
 - Common values and behaviours themes determined in workshop on 17 Feb 2022 with Reimagining Watford Team, pathfinders and Unison.
 - The Reimagining Watford team supported the opening of the new office space (which was launched on 20 July) with agile guidance so that the benefits of the new space are maximised.
 - Corporate guidance on use of unified communications, Outlook and meeting etiquette has been provided to all employees. Our volunteer Agile Pathfinders will champion agile ways of working and with managers and role model these new ways of working to reflect our agreed Values and Behaviours
 - iTrent (our new performance management tool, has been tested and gone live, supporting regular line manager check-ins and annual appraisals

7.0 Key Performance Indicators

7.1 Our key performance indicators underpin our Council Plan by ensuring that the organisation continues to perform against a range of measures. The measures highlighted within this report have supported the delivery of good quality services (both internal and external) by highlighting areas of good performance and, more importantly, under performance. This allows the council to ensure that services continue to offer a high quality service to our residents and businesses, and for action to be taken if areas of concern are identified.

7.2 The attached report (Appendix C), therefore, shows the results for the current set of key performance indicators at the end of Q1 for 2022/23. However, some key highlights are included below:

- Average time to process housing benefit claims was on target at 7 days. Average time to process a change of circumstance was better than target at 5 days (target is 6 days). These results are showing significant improvement when compared with Q1, Q2 and Q3 last year.
- Planning recorded excellent performance in Q1, with all planning key performance indicators exceeded targets.
- Channel shift results have exceeded targets in Q1. There were 5,121 online forms submitted during the quarter, relating to 82 different processes. The most used form was the General Enquiry form (914 submissions) followed by the Garden Waste Renewal form (724 submissions) and the Report a Street Cleansing or Parks Issue form (696 submissions). The service has recently developed reports to analyse General Enquiries in more detail, to enable better insight in to how, and why, customers are contacting WBC, areas of the website that could potentially be improved as part of our continuous improvement approach, and better monitoring of responses to ensure they are within agreed timescales. The top 3 service areas general enquiries related to in Q1 were Council Tax (287 enquires), Parking (156 enquiries) and Environmental Health (110 enquiries).
- Long wait calls to the CSC were on target for Q1. The percentage of all calls answered was slightly below target at 94% (target 95%). An increase in Green Bin renewals in June was one of the factors that impacted this figure.

- Freedom of Information (FOI) requests responded to within 20 working days was below target. Meeting timescales for FOI responses can be challenging. Some FOIs need input from multiple departments, which can take time to coordinate. FOI responses can sometimes generate a significant amount of work (depending on the type of request), requiring significant information to be brought together, which needs to be fitted in alongside existing workloads. To give an indication of numbers, 130 FOIs were received in Q1. The service is investigating additional reports that may improve visibility of FOIs that are not moving through the process quickly enough in order to improve this score.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation (TA) has remained under 100 since the beginning April. There have been a number of new development handovers, including social rent homes, which has helped both reduce numbers in temporary accommodation (as there were over 100 in March 2022) and keep them at a steady rate. This is despite an increase in the number of households approaching the council who are already homeless rather than being threatened with (impending) homelessness.
- In the parking service, general Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) issue has remained consistent at around 2,500 PCNs per month. The bus gate enforcement went live at the end of May and this generated 1,200 bus gate related PCNs in June. Compliance is rising and this level of bus gate PCNs is not expected to be maintained as motorists observe the camera restriction to help keep our high street accessible and pedestrian friendly.
- Household waste and recycling indicators have new targets as of Q1 this year. Both indicators were well within target for Q1. When compared with Q1 2021/22 levels of household waste, recycling, food and garden waste collected were significantly lower this year, reflecting a national trend.
- Indicators relating to environmental cleanliness showed mixed results. The litter score was within target and has decreased slightly (which is positive) when compared with Q1 last year. The detritus score was not within target, however it had improved significantly when compared with this time last year, and a general improvement was noted across most land use areas. The graffiti score has risen from 2.18% this time last year to 3.77% this year and reflects a noticeable increase in graffiti incidents. Efforts will be directed towards the worst affected areas accordingly. The fly posting score was just outside of the target, however the results show a clear improvement when compared with last year.

- There has been a significant increase in usage figures for Watford Leisure Centre: Central, compared with quarter 1 last year, and compared with the previous quarter. The throughput has almost doubled (116,597) when compared with the same time last year (64,717) and membership is now up to 3,297, compared with Q1 last year which was 2,180. This is understandable as people's confidence regarding Covid-19 has improved. Most other KPIs are showing steady progress. There has also been a range of improvements across both centres, including upgraded wet-side showers, new body pump weights and gym lighting at Watford Central. Woodside has had a new food menu introduced at the café and improvements to stadium/gym lighting.
- The financial indicators (including Revenues and Benefits) are generally looking positive, with most within target or on track to meet targets by the end of the year. The Council Tax collection rate was similar to result recorded in Q1 last year, which is positive but the cost of living crisis may well impact later in the year. The value of outstanding invoices under 12 months old was well within target, and the best result the service have achieved in the last 12 months. The value of invoices outstanding over 12 months old was slightly outside of the target, and the service are currently reviewing old debt to assess what needs to be considered for write-off.
- Numbers of staff on long term sickness have remained relatively low (if compared with other local authorities) and steady. There has been a reduction in short term sickness levels when compared with Q4 last year. The 2022/23 Personal Development review cycle was launched at the end of June with a target completion date of 31 August, therefore we expect to report results related to PDR completion, staff satisfaction and motivation in Q2.
- ICT continue to report strong results, with all KPIs in Q1 on target or exceeding targets. There was a total of 5 priority 1 incidents recorded, related to 8x8, Eros (the WBC elections application) and Firmstep, however the root cause was identified for all incidents. Missed calls to the helpdesk have continued to be reduced, and were down to 1% in Q1.

8.0 Implications

8.1. Financial

- 8.1.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy is aligned with the Council Plan to ensure that the commitments within the Plan are resourced. The Council's budget underpins the whole of the Council Plan and Delivery Plan. The importance of the budget is recognised under the theme 'A Council working for our community and serving our residents' with the related commitment being 'Focus and challenge how we manage our budget so it is concentrated on delivering our commitments and securing greater investment for Watford'.

8.1.2 The Shared Director of Finance comments that there are no further financial implications arising from the contents of this report.

8.2 **Legal issues**

8.2.1 The Council Plan is one of the policy framework documents listed in the constitution that has to be approved by Council. The plan was approved by Council on 13 June 2022.

8.3 **Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection**

8.3.1 An Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) was developed for the Council Plan 2022-2026. This is consistently reviewed based on up to date information and data the council receives to ensure the council meets its public sector equalities under the s149 (1) of the Equality Act 2010.

EIAs were also developed for the Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24 during its development. These will also this will be monitored through the life of the respective strategies.

8.4 **Staffing**

8.4.1 The Council Plan sets the Council's strategic direction, and is, therefore, a key document for staff, enabling them to understand our commitments and priorities and allowing them to contribute fully to our success and achievements. As the overarching plan for the Council, it provides the framework for all our strategies and policies and links, through the Delivery Plan, to service business plans and individual staff objectives and outcomes. The principles demonstrate how we go about our work and are an important guide for staff on the Council's expectations recognising it is not just what we deliver but how we deliver that is a measure of our organisational culture. As a result, the recent senior management restructure has been undertaken to ensure an ongoing focus on the delivery of the Council Plan.

The Organisational Development Strategy supports the Council Plan and Delivery Plan to equip all staff to deliver the very best service for residents.

8.5 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

8.5.1 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the Council to give due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of its functions on crime and disorder in its area and to do all it reasonably can to prevent these. Our theme: A diverse, happy and healthy town, underpins our commitment to 'promote our welcoming and respectful town' and the associated action to 'ensure everyone feels welcome, included and safe in Watford' and to 'stablish our commitment to the wellbeing of

women and girls' by working with partners and using our statutory powers.

8.6 Sustainability

8.6.1 The council's commitment to sustainability runs through the Council Plan and a range of actions to deliver our climate change commitments are identified within the Delivery Plan. These range from pushing forward with delivering greener ways to travel in Watford to promoting Watford's transition to a low-carbon economy. Indeed, an entire theme is devoted to delivering 'a brighter, greener future' with a whole range of activities planned to meet our sustainability commitments.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Council Plan 2022-26 / Delivery Plan 2022-24 progress update
- Appendix B – Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24 progress update
- Appendix C – Key Performance Indicators update 2022-23