

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 28 November 2022

Report author: Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Service, EPMO
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Title: Focusing on delivery:
Council Delivery Plan 2022-24 Quarter 2 Update
Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24 Quarter 2 Update
Council Performance 2022-23 Quarter 2 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 over quarter 2 of 2022/23 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 second of these updates since the approval of the new Council Plan.

1.4 Service Planning, linked to the delivery of the Council Plan, has been completed and has initiated a process to review the key performance indicators across the organisation to align with the new management structure and ensure that the council continues to challenge itself to deliver excellent services to residents, businesses and the community.

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

	standard expected.			
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3.0 Recommendations

Cabinet 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 Quarter 2 of 2022/23 (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.

3.3 That the report will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2022.

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 2022-24;
- 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. 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, particularly at the senior level of the organisation;
- 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 Both plans are underpinned by a suite of key performance indicators, which are currently under review and which will be finalised for use in the next financial year.

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 2022-24.

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 benefit from the approach deployed during its Covid-19 response and remain 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:

- Following inspection and amendments, the Local Plan has now been adopted by the council and provides the council with the opportunity to influence local and sustainable development across the town.
- To provide our residents with an opportunity to determine the best locations to plant new trees and expand our green canopy, a Tree Nominations initiative commenced in the Summer. All sites nominated are under review and this builds on the summer tree giveaway by the council and the Autumn tree giveaway by Hertfordshire County Council, which the council has continued to promote to residents.
- Cycling and walking network plans are progressing, with project validation complete for the Green Loop East and Hempstead Road, and a number of some initial projects designed, including the Water Lane to Lower High Street link and the Ebury Way to Ascot Road link. A number of stand-alone sites have also been designed and are ready for implementation.
- Following the successful receipt of more than £3m of grant funding from central government, the work to decarbonise the Town Hall and Colosseum is well underway. All listed building consent conditions have been successfully discharged and windows across both buildings have started to be removed for

refurbishment and re-installment. Cavity wall insulation works were completed in August 2022 and asbestos removal completed in September 2022.

- We have also applied for the next round of funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to improve the energy efficiency of some of our other buildings within the operational and community estate.
- Alongside the decarbonisation works which are already underway, work continues to refurbish Watford Colosseum with the final design work due to be completed in January to create a modern and exciting venue in the heart of the town. The initial enabling works due to commence in November with final practical completion of the site scheduled for Autumn 2023.
- Following the sign off of our ambitious and exciting plans to develop Watford Business Park into a new and high quality business space, the main contract works have now commenced on site with an adequate financial contingency. Following the last report, the team have now agreed a phased consent process from the Environment Agency.
- The final site in the WBC / WCH Social Rented Housing Programme has now completed (Brightwell Court) with the new tenants moving in during September. The Social Rented Housing Programme has delivered 56 new social rented homes (2 & 3 beds) over the last two years. In terms of all new affordable housing completions expected this financial year, a total of 355 new units is expected.
- 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, with the most recent event held over Halloween.
- Work to the popular and well-loved Meriden Park will commence shortly. Planned works include improvement and extension of the footpath and work to the entrance of the Community Centre car park. Lea Farm Recreation replacement equipment has now been installed and the tree nomination initiative has now closed for 2022/23.
- The 'We are Watford' film was launched to celebrate Watford's diverse community and a further '100 people who made Watford' nominations were received.
- On Centenary Day successful flag flying with local schools and a specially designed flag was held, 100 year old residents visited and a community-led Centenary Service was held.
- The Community Safety Partnership strategic plan for the next 2 years was approved at One Watford and reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Priorities agreed are: Serious Youth Violence, Violence Against Women and Girls, Community Wellbeing and Reassurance and Inform. CSP training day taken place with wider frontline partners including CEOS, Housing Trust, CCV operatives.

- 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.
- Implementation of the Planning Enforcement and Building Control shared services with St Albans City and District Council was completed on 1 November 2022.
- Two Corporate Apprentices have joined the council 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.
- Our senior management restructure has now been completed and aligns our senior resources and services to the delivery of the Council Plan. A number of Strategic Initiatives Officer secondments have been offered to existing members of staff to drive forward specific initiatives, such as the local lottery and community engagement work. The Organisational Development Strategy (updated in Appendix B) continues to ensure that we continue to support staff to develop and grow.

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:

- Six Health and Wellbeing workshops have been delivered to employees across September and October with more planned for early 2023
- Fully booked Mental Wellbeing in the Workplace and Menopause Awareness workshops were delivered
- The newly proposed values and behaviours were reviewed by the Pathfinders and Staff Ambassadors Group, following input from across the organisation and will be launched shortly.
- The Reimagining Watford team supported the opening of the new office space with agile guidance and regular reviews so that the benefits of the new space are maximised.
- Corporate guidance on use of our unified communications systems, Outlook and meeting etiquette approved by Project Board and provided to all employees. Agile Charters for staff were encouraged to be constantly reviewed as an evolving document. Our pathfinders continue to champion agile ways of working and, with managers, role model these new ways of working reflecting the Values and Behaviour work stream
- Management Development training has been launched and received positive feedback so far
- iTrent (Performance and Learning& Development) has been launched and is currently being used by all staff as part of the Performance and Development Review process

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 Q2 for 2022/23. However, some key highlights are included below:

- Average time to process housing benefit claims was better than target at 6 days, showing improvement since the last quarter. Average time to process a change of circumstance was also better than target at 5 days. These results are showing significant improvement when compared with Q1, Q2 and Q3 last year.

- The financial indicators are almost all within quarterly targets, and on track to meet targets by the end of the year. The only exception to this is the value of outstanding invoices over 12 months, which was just outside of the target of 10% or less, at 10.81%. Collections rates of Council Tax was well within target, largely due to the ERG payments being paid on to accounts. Collection rates of NNDR was 0.8% up on last year, which was mainly due to no additional retail relief in 2022/23 compared with 2021/22.
- Numbers of staff on long term sickness have reduced slightly since quarter 1, however there has been a larger reduction in the number of short term absences. Although sickness rates are higher when compared with quarter 2 last year, it is still within target. One factor is the increase in confirmed cases of Covid recorded this year, which made up approximately 30% of all sickness recorded during the quarter, compared with approximately 9% of sickness in Q2 last year.
- Return to work interviews are still below the target of 100% completion within timescale, with the primary reason for late completion being the employee or manager on annual leave. This was also the period where some staff changed line manager as part of the senior management restructure and this is likely to have impacted this indicator. There were 73 instances of sickness in Q1 and Q2 combined. At the end of October, there were 2 RTW interviews from this period still outstanding (2.7%). While speaking to services about RTW interviews it was noted that sometimes interviews are completed but the system is not updated. Additional training and support have been offered to ensure staff have the required skills and knowledge to update systems as required.
- The 2022/23 Personal Development review cycle was launched at the end of June with a target completion date of 31 August. As a result, it was last reported that the results related to PDR completion, staff satisfaction and motivation would be reported in Q2. In light of the senior management restructure that changed reporting lines for a number of staff, the deadline was extended to quarter 3 to allow for new reporting arrangements to embed and will, therefore, now be reported in the Q3 report.
- ICT continue to report strong results, with all KPI's in Q2 on target or exceeding targets. Customer satisfaction is high with 96% of users filling out the customer satisfaction survey rating the service as meeting or exceeding expectations.
- Q2 proved to be a busy quarter for the Customer Service Centre. The volume of work, not unexpectedly, impacted on service performance the service. Energy rebate refunds increased calls to the CSC by 217% when compared with the same quarter last year. Q2 is also a busy time for the garden waste service, with renewals happening over this period, which resulted in an increase in phone calls to the CSC from customers with garden waste related queries. The service has recruited 3.5 contracted FTE to cover current vacancies within the CSC and have implemented a pool of other staff trained within the CSC who can be drafted in to maintain service levels in the future. They are currently being trained and will be ready for duties by the end of November.

- Household waste and recycling indicators were well within target for Q2. The hot, dry summer has meant that less garden waste has been produced and has impacted the recycling rate. 477 tonnes less garden waste has been collected when compared to Q2 2021-22. Additionally 96 tonnes less food waste has been collected when compared to Q2 2021-22. This could be as a result of the current financial climate, i.e. residents buying less and therefore throwing away less.
- Planning major applications was below target, with 1 processed outside of the timescales. However as there were only 2 major applications processed in Q2 this has a large impact on the result. Processing of minor applications was below target, with 5 applications agreed outside of agreed timescales, out of a total of 44 received in Q2. Processing of other applications not categorised as major or minor was within target, with 96% processed with the timescale or with an agreed extension of time.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation (TA) has reduced slightly in Q2, but on the whole remains steady. Significant numbers of handovers of new homes from housing associations continues. This is an important source of housing to enable households in temporary accommodation to move into settled accommodation.
- In the parking service, overall Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) figures increased due to the return of match day enforcement. The figures are now inclusive of bus gate PCNs.
- There has been improvement shown for all indicators related to usage of both of the branches of Watford Leisure Centre. Q1 showed a reduction in the throughput at Woodside, however this has now bounced back and has showed a significant increase in Q2. There has been a number of actions taken to increase throughput, including increased marketing for all sessions, Personal Training Taster day, Fortis Challenges, and a £1 joining fee campaign. There was a feature in the My News Watford, and a promotion to sign up to Fortis and pay nothing until the first direct debit, plus no joining fee. Free guest passes were also advertised on social media.

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 Q2 progress update
- Appendix B – Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24 Q2 progress update
- Appendix C – Key Performance Indicators update Q2 2022-23