

This Report will be made public on 02 October 2023



Report Number: **C/23/40**

To: Cabinet
Date: 18th October 2023
Status: Non Key Decision
Director: Amandeep Khroud - Assistant Director - Governance, Law & Service Delivery
Cabinet Member: Councillor Tim Prater – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Governance

SUBJECT: QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023-24

SUMMARY: This report provides an update on the Council's performance for the first quarter of the year covering 1st April – 30th June 2023. The report enables the Council to assess progress against the approved key performance indicators arising from the Council's new Corporate Action Plan.

Key performance indicators will be monitored during 2023-24 and reported to Members quarterly.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS (*Cabinet only*):

- a) The Council is committed to monitoring performance across all of its corporate service ambitions to ensure progress and improvement is maintained.
- b) The Council needs to ensure that performance is measured, monitored and the results are used to identify where things are working well and where there are failings and appropriate action needs to be taken.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note report C/23/40.
2. To note the performance information for Quarter 1 2023-24 in Appendix 1.

1. QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023-24

- 1.1 The Council's corporate plan 'Creating Tomorrow Together' 2021-30 was adopted by Full Council on 24th February 2021 (Report ref: A/20/10).
- 1.2 The Corporate Plan is built on 4 key service ambitions and 6 guiding principles. Each service ambition has a number of priority areas identified within it, these priorities will be the focus of Council activity over the remaining period to 2024. The service ambitions are set out below:

Service Ambitions

- Positive Community Leadership
 - A Thriving Environment
 - A Vibrant Economy
 - Quality Homes and Infrastructure
- 1.3 The Plan also adopted 6 Guiding Principles, which will guide the Council in undertaking its duties. These are: Sustainable Recovery; Locally Distinctive; Greener Folkestone & Hythe; Transparent, Stable, Accountable & Accessible; Working Effectively with Partners; and Continuous Improvement.
 - 1.4 To support the council in delivering against its priorities documented in the corporate plan, a detailed action plan covering a three-year period to 2024 and supporting KPIs was adopted by Cabinet on 20th October 2021 (Report ref: C/21/40). The KPIs that support the action plan are reviewed on an annual basis and amendments to the suite covering the current financial year were presented to the Finance & Performance Sub Committee and Cabinet in July 2023 (Report ref: C/23/09).
 - 1.5 The Quarterly Performance Report (Appendix 1) has been produced to summarise the Council's performance for Quarter 1 (1st April to 30th June 2023).
 - 1.6 Quarterly Performance Reports enable Finance & Performance Scrutiny Subcommittee, Cabinet, other Members of the Council and the public to scrutinise the performance of the Council against strategic deliverables and key indicators in accordance with the approved Corporate Action Plan.
 - 1.7 Where a performance indicator is not being met, explanations have been given from the relevant Service leads and noted in the report.
 - 1.8 The main report in appendix 1 also now includes a performance column that compares current quarter performance data of KPIs to the same quarter period in the last financial year, where available. A key has been included in the main report to signify the changes in performance.
 - 1.9 The performance indicators which have fallen below target are monitored by the Council's Performance & Improvement Specialist who will work with the relevant Service Manager to identify appropriate action that can be taken to resolve the situation.

2. PERFORMANCE – EXCEPTION REPORTING

2.1. Service Ambition 1: Positive Community Leadership

2.1.1 The average number of days taken to process new claims for Housing Benefit has shown an improved position in Quarter 1 compared to the same period last year, achieving 12.9 days. This is continuing to help residents on low income understand more quickly what support is available to them for their housing costs.

2.1.2 The district offers a wide range of food business which includes restaurants, pubs, takeaways, the fishing industry, and food manufacturers, with 95% of premises being rated 3 stars or above in the quarter, the equivalent of satisfactory to very good.

2.1.3 A total of 63 households have been supported in the district via the Home Essential Fund during Quarter 1, a limited scheme (funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund) to support low-income households with energy efficient solutions to help reduce their costs and supply more efficient items to replace broken ones. Support has included: replacement of home white good items, beds, mattresses, boiler replacements and servicing.

2.1.4 A total of 11 community safety events/projects were delivered during the quarter which included:

- **Folkestone Talks Sessions x2 (April 2023)** – The Community Safety and Environmental Enforcement officers attended the Turner Free School, Morehall Primary School and Folkestone Primary School giving talks and handing out leaflets and safety advice.
- **Operation Sceptre** – Community Safety Officers worked with other partner agencies on Operation Sceptre a national knife campaign led by the Kent Police Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) to raise awareness of knife crime and to detect and prevent knife crime in our district. The officers started from Folkestone Town Bus Station and divided into two groups of three, visiting retailers and giving staff posters to display. The outlets included Choice, TK Maxx, Poundland, ASDA, Savers, McDonald's, a charity shop, Taco Bell, Sainsburys and a military supply store. Knife wand sweeps were also conducted in St Eanswythe's churchyard, the Harbour area, and Payers Park.
- **Operation Chinnock (May 2023)** – Community Safety Officers, KCC Community Wardens and Southern Housing Group Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) held a community engagement event with residents from Moore Close in Brenzett following a 'Community Trigger' raised. A Community Trigger allows residents in a community to ask the CSP (Community Safety Partnership) to review responses to complaints of ASB (anti-social behaviour). Residents and young people came together and planted various plants in wooden containers funded by Southern Housing. Partners conducted door knocking, wellbeing visits including home checks. Early Help conducted youth engagement.
- **Youth Council (June 2023)** – The Community Safety Team, Violence Reduction Unit and others attended the Kent County Council Youth Council to provide 15 young people with the opportunity to ask about the district and safety. We took on board concerns young people faced with new technology, the impact of media and social media, and perception of safety from a young persons perspective. We shared best practice, advice and guidance, signposting to specialist services and projects the Community Safety Partnership is running.

2.2. Service Ambition 2: A Thriving Environment

- 2.2.1 A total of 5 enforcement notices were issued by Environmental Enforcement Officers for offences relating to rubbish accumulations on private land, disposing of trade waste and failure to provide documentation in relation to a fly-tipping investigation.
- 2.2.2 105 fixed penalty notices were issued for low level environmental crime, including littering, fly-posting, failure to display smoke-free signs at premises and on vehicles and smoking within designated smoke-free premises and vehicles.
- 2.2.3 The Local Area Officer Team have supported a total of 12 community volunteer environmental events working with local community groups and schools including Hythe Environmental Group, Hawkinge residents and Litter Picking Watch Romney Marsh. The volunteers attending these events have collected 263 bags of litter to help keep local areas around the district clean and tidy.
- 2.2.4 A total of 1,377 'See it, Own it, Do it' interventions have been actioned by the Local Area Officer Team to help ensure the district remains a welcoming and attractive place to live, work and visit. The team have undertaken a variety of work in the quarter, including graffiti clearance, removal of fly posting and supporting the community on a number of their ongoing projects including: the renovation of the Romney Marsh Community Hub courtyard, helping Folkestone Harbour residents convert a small local area that was attracting anti-social behaviour into a community garden and general tidying up of Foord Road South in Folkestone.
- 2.2.5 98.52% of streets surveyed were clear of litter during the quarter following inspection of various locations across the district undertaken by members of the Waste Services team. A total of 609 inspection surveys of streets were carried out in locations including: Folkestone, Hawkinge, Elham, Lyminge, Densole and Stelling Minnis.
- 2.2.6 A further 178 street lights were converted to LED within the district by the end of the quarter bring the cumulative conversion total to 74% to improve energy efficiency as part of Council's wider ongoing work to increase its resilience against climate change. The remaining 26% of street lighting to be converted has had to be re-programmed due to UK Power Networks connection issues, delay in getting parts or the need to clear vegetation around the assets. The timescale for full completion is therefore expected to be by the end of October 2023.

To monitor:

- 2.2.7 The provisional figure for the percentage of household waste recycled shows improvement compared with the same period last year achieving 49.2%. The final figure for the quarter is subject to verification by DEFRA. Overall waste collected during the quarter has increased by 150 tonnes and the increase is largely in favour of recycling. The increase could be

indirectly attributed to raised awareness through a couple of communication campaigns undertaken that were designed to target the contamination of recycling.

2.3 Service Ambition 3: A Vibrant Economy

- 2.3.1 A total of 18 businesses have been engaged with in the district by the Economic Development team to help support business growth and retention of local jobs. The business engaged with include: NIC Instruments, EDF, Clifton Hotel/ Leaf Hotels, LVB Creative, The Workshop, Profile Architects, Sleeping Giant Media, Motis Estates, Collier Stevens, Beresfords Accountants, Duo Technology, The Looker, Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway, Martello Building Consultancy, Screen South, Burlington Hotel, Disruptive Urbanism and Stroud Wealth Management.
- 2.3.2 The number of businesses accessing business support and grants from public sector programmes totaled 3 during the quarter. The following three businesses applied to the Green Business Grant Scheme – The Burlington Hotel, Hythe Bay financial Ltd and Creative Folkestone for part funding towards installation of energy efficient measures including: heat pumps heating/cooling systems for hotel rooms, energy efficient radiators and solar panels.

2.4 Service Ambition 4: Quality Homes and Infrastructure

- 2.4.1 125 private sector homes were improved during the quarter as a result of intervention by the Council helping to continually improve the standards and compliance of properties within the sector.
- 2.4.2 100% of blocks within the council's housing stock had valid fire risk and legionella assessments in place during the quarter.
- 2.4.3 100% of blocks within the council's housing stock had a valid electrical safety certificate in place (EICR) at the end of the quarter.
- 2.4.4 The percentage of properties within the council's housing stock with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) grade C rating or above is 55.7% at the end of Quarter 1. Of the 3,000 properties with a known EPC rating, 1,671 are grade C or above.

To monitor

- 2.4.5 The number of homelessness approaches to the Council is lower than Quarter 1 of last year but continues to remain high with 315 approaches recorded in the Quarter. However, it should be noted this figure is recorded up to 15th June 2023 only and not to the end of the month due to a move to a new computer system that records homelessness figures. The general long-term trend shows approaches are currently decreasing, but with the current economic outlook associated with the ongoing cost of living crisis, numbers of approaches will be kept under close review as this year progresses.

- 2.4.6 The average number of people sleeping rough in the district rose from 6 at the beginning of April, to 15 at the end of June (an average of 10 over the whole quarter). The increase in the numbers sleeping rough is also having a direct impact on the number of those housed in bed and breakfast accommodation to help bring the number of rough sleepers down, with an average of 13 recorded across the quarter compared with the same period last year where an average 2 was recorded.
- 2.4.7 91.9% of properties met the decent homes standard at the end of the quarter. At the start of the financial year 184 additional properties became non-decent, (where parts of a building reach the end of their shelf-life and 'expire') bringing the total amount of non-decent homes to 285. In the past quarter, 10 properties were made 'decent' reducing this to 275 by the end of June. Decent Homes improvements form part of the capital programme of works for the year ahead, so performance is expected to improve as the year progresses.
- 2.4.8 The number of long-term empty homes brought back into use in the district was lower than in the same period last year, the ability to bring empty homes back into use is dependent on developer commitments and rising costs. In the current financial climate, the current trend indicates that we are unlikely to achieve our target of 70 for the year. However, the Private Sector Housing Team are continuing to work closely with our partners to maximise the number of completions achieved in 2023/24.

2.5 Transparent, Stable, Accountable & Accessible

- 2.5.1 In Quarter 1, a further 724 new customers registered for the My Account service equating to an additional 1.39% take up when compared to residential properties. Since the launch of the service in August 2020, over 36,618 customers have registered equating to 70.50% take up so far, helping residents to access a range of council information and services online.
- 2.5.2 No Data breaches were submitted to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) within a 72-hour period during the quarter. A total 10 breaches were assessed by the Information Governance team firsthand during the quarter, that were as a result of errors in working processes and controls, and none were deemed severe enough to require further escalation to the ICO in line with their guidance. 7 of these were assessed within the statutory 72-hour period, with 3 being assessed after the statutory deadline had already passed. All 3 of these late cases were overdue due to the service area not reporting the breach to the Information Governance Team until after the statutory period had already passed. Individual mitigation measures were swiftly put in place in relation to these incidents in order to address weaknesses.

To monitor

- 2.5.3 The number of Freedom of Information (FOI)/ Environmental Information Requests (EIR) responded to within statutory timeframes has shown improvement compared with the same period last year, but remains under target. A total of 4 of the 20 overdue cases were marked as 'overdue due to service area', meaning that the service area did not get the required information over to the team in time for us to compile and return to the requestor. The Case Management team currently have one full time and one part time case officer for Information Governance, along with one full time specialist. Due to the large number of cases still coming in, training of an additional case office has started from another service area to provide assistance with logging new cases as and when required. This should provide additional resilience to the current team in busier times, as well as times of absence.
- 2.5.4 The number of subject access requests (SARs) responded to was under target during the quarter due to 11 overdue cases, 3 of which are marked as 'overdue due to service area', meaning that the service area did not get the required information over to the team in time for us to compile and return to the requestor. There have also been delays due to a new Case Officer starting at the end of November 2022 who is still currently having SARs checked by either the specialist or the other case officer to ensure that they are correct before being sent to the requestor, which in turn has led to longer processing times. There is confidence that performance will improve to the required standard during the year once these cases are no longer being checked.
- 2.5.5 The percentage of data breaches assessed to decide if they are reportable to the ICO was under target during Quarter 1 as a result of three cases not being assessed in time, which were 'overdue due to service area'. The common theme, upon investigation, appears to be a lack of resource within other teams who have a backlog of emails within their queues/inboxes. Most service areas investigated are working around a month behind. This means that by the time the Information Governance Team receive the breach report, the Council has already missed the 72-hour deadline to assess and act. This has been raised as a resourcing issue with the managers of each service area, and the importance of swiftness reiterated.

3. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 3.1 The following perceived risks are set out in the table below:

Perceived risk	Seriousness	Likelihood	Preventative action
The Council's strategic objectives are not met.	High	Medium	Monitor progress against performance indicators and take remedial action for those areas where targets and actions are unlikely to be achieved.

The key performance indicators (KPIs) do not link to the objectives of the Council's Corporate Action Plan.	High	Medium	Monitor progress against key performance indicators and take remedial action for those areas where targets and actions are unlikely to be achieved.
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4. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

- 4.1 **Legal Officer's Comments (NM)** - There are no legal implications or risks arising directly out of this report. The Key Performance Indicators must continue to take account of both existing and new statutory duties and responsibilities that are imposed on the Council by the Government. Failure to do so will put the Council at risk of legal challenge by affected residents and/or businesses. Whilst reporting on performance is not a statutory requirement, it is considered best practice to review the Council's progress against the Corporate Plan and Service Plans on a regular basis.
- 4.2 **Human Resources Comments (RB)** - There are no direct Human Resource implications emanating from this report. The council's People Strategy has been created to support the corporate plan and achievement of associated KPIs.
- 4.3 **Finance Officer's Comments (DL)** - There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.
- 4.4 **Climate Change (AT)** – No direct implications arising from this report. The report provides an update on the Council's performance covering 1st April 2023 – 30th June 2023. The report does not propose new projects, policies or strategies but provides an update on actions that are already in progress. Some of the environmental projects that the council is currently undertaking are summarised in the report in Section 2.2 'A Thriving Environment' and in Appendix 1, Section 02 'A Thriving Environment'.
- 4.5 **Diversities and Equalities Implications (GE)** - Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are systematically carried out for any services, projects or other schemes that have the potential to impact on communities and / or staff on the grounds of particular protected characteristics or socio-economic disadvantage. Over the course of the year, performance against some indicators might potentially have equality and social inclusion implications, if performance is not at an acceptable level. These will be highlighted as necessary in the corporate performance reporting, along with details of the steps that will be taken to address these.
- 4.6 **Communications Comments (DK)** - The communications team will use these KPIs as appropriate in their promotion of council services.

5. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting.

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The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Quarter 1 2023/24 Key Performance Indicators Report

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