

This Report will be made public on 5 December 2023



Report Number **C/23/60**

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> December 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 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023-24**

**SUMMARY:** This report provides an update on the Council's performance for the second quarter of the year covering 1<sup>st</sup> July-30<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The report enables the Council to assess progress against the approved key performance indicators arising from the Council's Corporate Action Plan.

Key performance indicators are being monitored during 2023-24 and are reported to Members quarterly.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 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/23/60.
- 2. To note the performance information for Quarter 2 2023-24 in Appendix 1.

## **1. QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023-24**

- 1.1 The Council's corporate plan 'Creating Tomorrow Together' 2021-30 was adopted by Full Council on 24<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 2 (1<sup>st</sup> April – 30<sup>th</sup> September 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 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 continued to show an improved position in Quarter 2 compared

to the same period last year, achieving 11.4 days. This is continuing to help residents on low incomes 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 97% of premises being rated 3 stars or above in the quarter, the equivalent of satisfactory to very good.

2.1.3 A total of 44 households have been supported in the district via the Home Essential Fund during Quarter 2, 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 15 community safety events/projects were delivered during the quarter which included:

- **Violence Against Women and Girls Event (July 2023):** The Community Safety and Licensing teams worked with Kent Police for the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls' event outside the Leas Cliff Hall in Folkestone. Representatives from the Kent County Council youth service, Home Start Shepway and Cheriton Baptist Church engaged with more than 100 people. Kent Police asked the public to complete a survey on how safe they feel in and around the district. A broad range of information was covered, and advice was given regarding ensuring a taxi is licenced. The officers highlighted the 'Ask for Angela' scheme which enables anyone feeling unsafe and vulnerable to seek help by approaching local business.
- **Tall Ships Event (July 2023):** The Community Safety Team supported young people from Folkestone, Hythe and twin town Boulogne-sur-Mer set sail for France in July as the 2023 Tall Ships project reached a triumphant conclusion. Thalassa – a three-masted barquentine – left the Folkestone Harbour Arm on the afternoon of Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> July, waved off by proud relatives, council representatives and nautical enthusiasts. The teenagers from England and France crewed the ship, took it in turns to cover the four-hourly watch shifts and undertake tasks such as putting up sails, adjusting rigging and duties in the mess. They arrived in Boulogne-sur-Mer on Thursday 13 July in time for the famous La Côte D'Opale fête la Mer – a gathering of tall ships and traditional boats attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors.
- **5x The Community Partnership Roadshows (September 2023):** The Community Safety Lead Specialist along with multi-agency partners including Kent Police, The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), KCC Youth Services, and Prevent hosted five roadshow events that visited eight schools within the district, including The Marsh Academy, Brockhill, The Folkestone Academy and the Harvey Grammar School to provide students with information on substance use, online safety, the work of the VRU and the 'Ask Angela' campaign with local retailers for people who

felt vulnerable. KCC Youth Services shared a young person's safe video, including a survey and Prevent highlighted their aim to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism and ways they are tackling extremism.

- **Anti Knife Campaign (July-September 2023):** The Community Safety Partnership worked with the Kent & Medway Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) to display an anti-knife campaign at Bouverie Place Bus station in Folkestone. During the school summer holidays the team worked with VRU to also display artwork from local schools, and a positive campaign to tackle knives being carried. This was on display at the Bouverie's Business Centre, adjacent to the Bus station throughout the School Summer Holidays.

## **2.2. Service Ambition 2: A Thriving Environment**

- 2.2.1 A total of 12 enforcement notices were issued by Environmental Protection including Community Protection Notices (CPNs) served for allowing waste to accumulate on private land, wild camping and a BBQ held in the Lower Leas Coastal Park, and a notice relating to trade waste duty of care under Section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act.
- 2.2.2 92 fixed penalty notices were issued for low level environmental crime, including littering, fly-posting, dog fouling, failure to display smoke-free signs on vehicles and smoking within designated smoke-free vehicles.
- 2.2.3 The Local Area Officer Team have supported a total of 14 community volunteer environmental events working with local community groups including Go Folkestone, Hythe Environmental Group, and Hawkinge Residents Group. The volunteers attending these events have collected 276 bags of litter to help keep local areas around the district clean and tidy.
- 2.2.4 A total of 1,155 '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 the removal of fly posting and graffiti across the district, notably a number of reports of racist graffiti that were reported to the police and cleared within hours of the initial report.
- 2.2.5 97.2% 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 514 inspection surveys of streets were carried out in locations including: Central Folkestone, Cheriton, Outer Folkestone, Hawkinge, Lympne, Hythe and Saltwood.
- 2.2.6 A further 279 streetlights were converted to LED within the district by the end of the quarter, bringing the cumulative conversion total to 86%. This will improve energy efficiency as part of Council's wider ongoing work to increase its resilience against climate change. The remaining 14% of street lighting to be converted has had to be re-programmed due to UK Power Networks connection issues, delay in getting parts, the need to clear vegetation around the assets, road closures to install new assets and

increased costs The timescale for full completion is therefore expected to be by the end of March 2024.

### **2.3 Service Ambition 3: A Vibrant Economy**

2.3.1 A total of 17 businesses have been engaged with in the district by the Economic Development team to help support business growth and retention of local jobs. The businesses engaged with include: East Kent College, Screen South, Sleeping Giant Media, Basepoint Business Centre, The Workshop, Locate in Kent, Martello Building Consultancy, NIC Instruments, Duo Tech, Collier Stevens, Motis Estates, Stroud Wealth Management, Oak Creative, Holiday Extras, Burlington Hotel, Romney Tweed, Church & Dwight.

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 each receiving 40% of their total project costs:

- Willow Cottage, Dymchurch was awarded £2,430 towards the cost of installing secondary glazing to guest rooms in a grade 2 listed guest house.
- Tradex Home Improvements, Folkestone were awarded £7,208 towards the cost to installing a solar power system and heat pump-based heating/cooling system for their showroom.
- Bigjigs Toys, Folkestone were awarded £15,226 towards the cost to install Sensor-based LED lighting systems in their warehouse areas.

### **2.4 Service Ambition 4: Quality Homes and Infrastructure**

2.4.1 A further 63 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. A total of 188 private sector homes were improved through Council intervention for the year-to-date and the council is currently projected to meet the annual target for the year.

2.4.2 The number of affordable homes delivered by the Council and its partners has shown improvement compared with the previous quarter, with a total of 30 delivered in Quarter 2 in the following areas of the district: Folkestone, Lydd, and New Romney.

2.4.3 The number of long-term empty homes brought back into use has shown improvement compared with the previous quarter, with a total of 29 being delivered. The delivery on empty homes is dependent on developers progressing improvement projects and continues to be affected by rising costs. The Private Sector Housing Team are continuing to work closely with partners to maximise the completions achieved in the 2023/24 year.

2.4.4 In terms of statutory health and safety compliance, we are fully compliant (100%) on the 'big 6' areas of Fire, Legionella, Electrical, Gas, Asbestos and Lifts (FLEGAL).

2.4.5 As a result of conducting Fire Risk Assessments on our communal housing blocks, 192 identified actions remained outstanding at the end of the period including 13 high risk actions that the compliance team will work through in order of priority.

#### To monitor

2.4.6 The number of homelessness approaches to the Council has continued to remain high with 597 approaches recorded in the Quarter. On average the council has received 150 approaches per month, with approximately 30% of these closed at the assessment stage as requiring 'advice only'. However, it should be noted that the figures have been impacted by the implementation of the new Huume system, resulting in some data input being delayed, the Quarter 2 figure may therefore include some approaches made at the end of Quarter 1 which were not reported at the time.

2.4.7 The average number of people sleeping rough in the district rose from 13 at the beginning of July, to 21 at the end of September (an average of 19 over the whole quarter). The increase in the numbers sleeping rough continues to have a direct impact on the number of those housed in bed and breakfast accommodation, with an average of 12 recorded across the quarter compared with the same period last year where an average 3 was recorded.

2.4.8 92.35% 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, a further 25 properties were made 'decent' reducing this to 250 by the end of September. Decent Homes improvements form part of the capital programme of works for the year ahead and a new Asset Data Specialist employed within the Housing team will be specifically looking at Decent Homes failures for this year and proactively for next year with anticipation of an improvement in overall position by Quarter 3.

## **2.5 Transparent, Stable, Accountable & Accessible**

2.5.1 In Quarter 2, a further 675 new customers registered for the My Account service, equating to an additional 1.26% take up when compared to residential properties. Since the launch of the service in August 2020, over 37,292 customers have registered, equating to 71.80% take up so far, helping residents to access a range of council information and services online.

2.5.2 The number of subject access requests (SARs) responded to within the statutory timeframe has shown improvement during Quarter 2 when compared to the previous quarter, as a result of case officers now independently compiling and processing requests without the need for every request to be checked by the Information Governance specialist prior to being released to a requestor, with an exception for more complex cases.

## To monitor

- 2.5.3 The number of Freedom of Information (FOI)/ Environmental Information Requests (EIR) responded to within the statutory timeframe remains under target. A total of 4 of the 28 overdue cases were marked as 'overdue due to service area', meaning that the service area did not provide the required information in time for the Information Governance team to compile and return the information to the requestor. The service areas in question and their respective service leads have been notified of overdue cases along with the importance of responding in a timely manner to these requests. The Case Management team currently have one full-time and one part-time case officer for Information Governance, along with one full-time specialist. Both case officers had periods of annual leave in July and September which affected the output of work.
- 2.5.4 The percentage of data breaches assessed to decide if they are reportable to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has continued to remain under target during Quarter 2. The awareness of data protection is growing within the Council and there has been a steady increase in the number of breaches being identified and reported; however this quarter saw 27 breach reports in total, with the majority being either very minor or classed as a 'near miss'. A total of seven cases were not assessed in time, with all of these being 'overdue due to service area'. This appears to be due to a lack of resource within service areas which have a backlog of emails within their queues/inboxes resulting in breach reports being received by the Information Governance team after the 72-hour assessment deadline. The management are aware of this issue and are ensuring that targeted training is being undertaken and that in the service areas in which backlogs have been identified, the service leads will prioritise the approach to this issue.
- 2.5.5 No data breaches were submitted within the statutory time period to the ICO during Quarter 2. A total of one data breach met the threshold for reporting to the ICO for this quarter. The Council was notified of the breach by a resident at the end of June, but this wasn't picked up by the service area responsible for monitoring the inbox until the end of July; by which point the statutory 72 hours had already elapsed. The ICO were satisfied by the way that the breach was mitigated but did flag that resource should be put into service areas monitoring their inboxes regularly. The management acknowledge this is concerning and concerns have been raised with the relevant service lead and director.

## **3. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

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

<b>Perceived risk</b>	<b>Seriousness</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Preventative action</b>
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.

#### 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 1<sup>st</sup> July-30<sup>th</sup> September 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.

*Gavin Edwards – Performance and Improvement Specialist*

*Tel: 01303 85 3436*

*Email: [gavin.edwards@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](mailto:gavin.edwards@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk)*

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

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Quarter 2 2023/24 Key Performance Indicators Report