

This Report will be made public on 4 March 2024

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Report Number **C/23/92**

To: Cabinet
Date: 20th March 2024
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 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023-24

SUMMARY: This report provides an update on the Council's performance for the third quarter of the year covering 1st October – 31st December 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:

- 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/23/92.
2. To note the performance information for Quarter 3 2023-24 in Appendix 1.

1. QUARTER 3 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 3 (1st October – 31st December 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 A total of 1 priority play area was improved by the council during the quarter. The improvement work was the renewal of the play bark safety surface at the Princes Parade play area. Further improvement works are intended to be carried out to the Coastal Park Play Area later this year for the accessible play area, however this project may be delayed until Quarter 1 2024/25 depending on contractor availability.
- 2.1.2 The average number of days taken to process new claims for Housing Benefit from the date completed evidence is received has shown an improved position in Quarter 3 compared to the same period last year, achieving 2.6 days. This is continuing to help residents on low income understand more quickly what support is available to them for their housing costs.
- 2.1.3 The district offers a wide range of food business which includes restaurants, pubs, takeaways, the fishing industry, and food manufacturers, with 98.9% of premises being rated 3 stars or above in the quarter, the equivalent of satisfactory to very good. A total of 112 premises were inspected in during the quarter.
- 2.1.4 A further 72 households have been supported in the district via the Home Essential Fund during Quarter 3, 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. The total number of households supported by the scheme during the year to end of Quarter 3 is 179.
- 2.1.5 A total of 6 community safety events/projects were delivered during the quarter which included:
- **Violence Against Women and Girls Event (October 2023):** The Community Safety and Licensing teams worked with Kent Police for the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls' event at Folkestone Central railway station. Representatives from the Folkestone Area Partnership Against Crime (FAPAC), RSPCA, Rising Sun and Home Start Shepway engaged with over 25 commuters and the public from the local area who would be using the train network. The emphasis was about keeping safe and proved a great engagement about awareness.
 - **CSP Stand in Bouverie Place (October 2023):** On 18 October 2023, the Community Safety team, Urban Pastors, Sgt Sarah Williams from Kent Police and KCC Warden Neil Staveley along with Lucy Smith from the RSPCA who has worked with the officers regarding animal related matters had a stand at Bouverie Place in Folkestone. The officers provided advice to over 30 people about scams and keeping safe including listening to views on issues in the local area. This coincided with Business Crime Reduction Safety Week.
 - **Operation Sceptre (November 2023):** Operation Sceptre is a week-long campaign held from 13 November to 19 November 2023 that highlighted

the commitment of the police working with the public and partners to prevent young people becoming involved in serious violence. Members of the Community Safety Team worked alongside the KCC warden and Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) hosting a stand in Bouverie Place on 17 November engaging with about 45 members of the public.

- **National Safeguarding Adults Week (November 2023):** As part of the annual Safeguarding Adults Weeks from 20 to 24 November 2023, the Community Safety Team Lead, along with HomeStart Shepway/, KCC wardens and staff from KCC Children's Social Services hosted a stand in Bouverie Place, Folkestone on 24 November 2023. The officers gave safeguarding advice and signposted to relevant partner agencies.
- **CSP Networking Event (November 2023):** A Community Safety Partnership networking event was held at the Civic Centre on 21 November 2023. Around 55 partner agencies attended along with the council leader Cllr Jim Martin, Cllr Mike Blakemore, Cllr Polly Blakemore, Cllr Nicola Keen, Cllr Jackie Mead, Cllr Alan Martin, Cllr James Butcher and Cllr Anita Jones. Representatives from the council's housing team and the licensing team attended with those from the Diocese Canterbury & South International Community Church, Change Grow Live, Sanctuary, Town & County, Housing, Victim Support, Environment Agency, Serveco, Porchlight, Kent Police, Border Force, Cheriton Baptist Church Urban Pastors, KCC Wardens, KCC Adult Social Care, Rainbow Centre, Future Skills, KCC Early Help, RSPCA, HomeStart Shepway, Rising Sun, Active Community Development including Probation and Southeastern Railway.
- **Violence Against Women and Girls Event (December 2023):** The Community Safety team was joined by Kent Police, Urban Pastors and FAPAC (Folkestone Area Partnership Against Crime), at Folkestone West railway station from 4pm on 8 December 2023. The officers engaged with around 30 people promoting how violence was going to be tackled against women and girls in our district.

2.2. Service Ambition 2: A Thriving Environment

- 2.2.1 A total of 6 enforcement notices were issued by Environmental Enforcement Officers for offences including breaches of Community Protection Notices (CPNs) served for the following: unauthorised occupation of council land, a dog being a public nuisance, loud music from an Air BnB and waste accumulation on private land.
- 2.2.2 133 fixed penalty notices were issued for low level environmental crime, including littering, fly-posting, dog fouling, 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 10 community volunteer environmental events working with local community groups including Go Folkestone, Hythe Environmental Group and the Residents of Hawkinge. The volunteers attending these events have collected 223 bags of litter to help keep local areas around the district clean and tidy.

- 2.2.4 A total of 1,280 '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 removal, needle collections, removal of flyposting while patrolling the district.
- 2.2.5 97.09% 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 378 inspection surveys of streets were carried out in locations including: Folkestone, Paddlesworth, New Romney, Peene, Elham, Lydd and Hythe.
- 2.2.6 The number of missed bins per 100,000 has continued to show excellent performance during the year so far falling to 28.86 in Quarter 3. The overall industry standard for missed bins is 60 per 100,000 and results achieved during the quarter demonstrate a sustained level of excellent performance in delivery of weekly household collections by our contractor Veolia.
- 2.2.7 A further 8 streetlights were converted to LED within the district by the end of the quarter bring the cumulative conversion total to 92% to improve energy efficiency as part of Council's wider ongoing work to increase its resilience against climate change. The remaining 8% of street lighting to be converted has had to be re-programmed due to increased costs for UK Power Networks overhead connections. Officers are investigating whether some of the outstanding 56 assets could be removed from the programme to reduce the final cost, which is currently more than the remaining budget. The timescale for full completion is therefore expected to be by the end of April 2024.

2.3 Service Ambition 3: A Vibrant Economy

- 2.3.1 A further two applications for the Romney Marsh Business Grant Support Scheme were approved during the Quarter for businesses that have moved into the Romney Marsh Business Hub. The business that received funding were: JK Senior Holdings Ltd and Financial Resolutions Mortgage Brokers Ltd.
- 2.3.2 There were no new approvals for Green Business Grant Scheme applications during Quarter 3 due to awaiting further information from applicants to be able to complete evaluations, however, there has been renewed interest in this scheme, and as a result a total of 9 applications are now being assessed in order to present these decision panels. In addition, the Rural England Prosperity Fund grant scheme launched during Quarter 3 has seen a total of 21 Expressions of interest, resulting in 13 invitations to make a full application, and 7 full applications received at the end of Quarter 3 to bring forward to decision panels.

- 2.3.3 A total of 15 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, Stagecoach Southeast, Burlington Hotel, Sleeping Giant Media, The Workshop, Disruptive Urbanism, Martello Building Consultancy, Alliance Livingstone Homes, Profile Architects, Screen South, Stroud Wealth Management, Leas Lift Company, Radio Waves Media.
- 2.3.4 The funding awarded to the council through the Levelling Up Fund is continuing to support progress with projects to transform Folkestone Town Centre, notably with the initial design phase. Phase 1 designs for transforming the route from Folkestone Central Station through to Cheriton Road have now been completed. A positive public consultation was also undertaken in November 2023 regarding the outline design for Middleburg Square with this consultation using Virtual Reality technology to bring the proposed outline design to life which was very well received by the public. The cost of the project remains on target. The key issue is the impact of the initial 6-month delay in project approval from Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and the impact that has had on the project schedule. The Regeneration team are seeking advice from DLUHC in terms of securing an extension of time beyond March 2025 deadline for funding to be spent.
- 2.3.5 Work with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) continues to progress well regarding this fund, which focuses on the cost of living, energy efficiency and skills. The Three projects are:

1. Home Essential Fund (HEF)

The HEF has a strict qualifying criteria to ensure those that benefit are those in need. Year to date performance is included below:

- Boiler servicing to ensure boilers are as efficient as possible. Year to date = 8
- Boiler replacement for items that are no longer suitable for use. Year to date = 15
- Oil heating tune ups and support for residents that use oil for fueling their home. Year to date = 19
- White goods provision. To supply replacement or new energy efficient items to households including cookers, fridges/freezers, washing machines/dryers, microwaves and other items as appropriate. Year to date = 70
- Beds and mattresses to homes that do not have suitable bed provision. Year to date = 87

2. Mobile Pantry Project

During Quarter 3 the mobile food bank and mobile food Pantry service was launched. Press releases, publicity and comms including invitations to DLUHC for the launch events were organised and delivered.

Other key activity included:

1. The volunteer drivers were trained as well as volunteers from the Rainbow centre to deliver the on-board service from the various initial locations.

2. Lydd, Hawkinge Community Centre, Harbour Church (on Canterbury Rd East Folkestone) and Folkestone Academy School locations were visited on a weekly basis and preparation work began for a fifth location. The wrap around service of a money advisor was also bought into the programme and additional work to extend this role has begun.

3. Skills

The Skills programme planning is on track to launch in Spring 2024 focusing on 3 key areas:

1. Supporting: Supporting post-16 to 19-year-old students (through apprenticeships and vocational courses) by allocating a portion of the funding to courses facilitated by local colleges (East Kent College, Mid Kent College, North Kent College) that will help support our local construction needs and green sectors.
2. Expanding access to upskilling and reskilling programs (via short-courses offered by local colleges and training providers) to enable career progression and re-skilling for existing staff. Additionally, a potential provision to support with Higher National Certificate and Higher National Diploma costs as a possible pilot is also being considered where requested.
3. A bespoke grant scheme that is dedicated to supporting industry-specific, bespoke training programs. This will allow both new and existing employees to progress & widen their skill set where needed, tailored to personalised needs.

2.4 Service Ambition 4: Quality Homes and Infrastructure

- 2.4.1 A further 84 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 272 private sector homes improved through Council intervention for the year-to-date with the annual target for the year being met.
- 2.4.2 A further 12 councils homes have been purchased in the quarter as part of the Local Authority Housing Fund bringing the total number to 14 to date during the year, an improved position compared to the previous year. The new homes were purchased in Folkestone, Hythe, New Romney and Lydd.
- 2.4.3 A further 29 Affordable homes were delivered by the Council and its partners in the quarter bringing the year to date total to 62. The new homes were delivered in the following areas of the district: Folkestone, New Romney and Sellindge.
- 2.4.4 A further 7 long-term empty homes were brought back into use in the quarter bringing the year to date total to 37. The delivery on empty homes is continually 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 2023/24 year.

2.4.5 100% of blocks had a valid FRA in place at the end of the period. As a result of conducting Fire Risk Assessments on our communal housing blocks, there were a 129 outstanding actions from completed Fire Risk Assessments, including 20 overdue med/low-risk actions and one overdue high-risk action in relation to fire-doors (which is on programme for delivery).

To monitor

2.4.6 The number of homelessness approaches to the Council has continued to remain high with 483 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'. The number of approaches is continuing to be monitored by the housing team.

2.4.7 The average number of people sleeping rough in the district rose peaking at 23 the end of October 2023 (an average of 17 over the whole quarter). The housing team are continuing to undertake out-reach work to offer support solutions and advice to those sleeping rough.

2.4.8 The average number of households bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation has halved over the past quarter to 6 but remains under target. Work is ongoing by the housing team to provide accommodation and support solutions for this complex client group.

2.4.9 94.35% 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 68 properties were made 'decent' reducing this to 182 by the end of December. Decent Homes improvements form part of the capital programme of works for the year ahead and the Asset Data Specialist now employed within the Housing team is continuing to specifically look at Decent Homes failures for this year and proactively for next year with anticipation of continued improvement in overall position.

2.5 Transparent, Stable, Accountable & Accessible

2.5.1 In Quarter 3, a further 615 new customers registered for the My Account service equating to an additional 1.15% take up when compared to residential properties. Since the launch of the service in August 2020, over 37,882 customers have registered equating to 72.94% take up so far, helping residents to access a range of council information and services online.

To monitor

2.5.2 The number of Freedom of Information (FOI)/ Environmental Information Requests (EIR) responded to within the statutory timeframe remains under target. A total of 7 of the 37 overdue cases 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. Quarter 3 was a busier period for these requests than the previous quarter. During this quarter, there was a period of absence in the specialist team which impacted on the workload due to only having one full time and one part time case officer working on all cases. Mitigation of this impact has been addressed in the proposed organisational restructure due to be implemented at the beginning of April 2024.

- 2.5.3 The number of subject access requests (SARs) responded within the statutory timeframe continues to remain under target due to a period of absence in the specialist team which impacted on the workload due to only having one full time and one part time case officer working on all cases. Both case officers can now compile and respond to all SARs, having only complex cases checked. Mitigation of this impact has been addressed in the proposed organisational restructure due to be implemented at the beginning of April 2024.
- 2.5.4 The percentage of data breaches assessed to decide if they are reportable to the ICO has continued to remain under target during Quarter 3. The awareness of data protection has grown within the Council, the number of reported data breaches received has remained around the same as the previous quarter. This quarter there were a total of 25 breach reports with the majority being either very minor or classed as a 'near miss'. A total of nine cases were not assessed in time, with all of these being 'overdue due to service area'. The managers of each service area responsible are aware of all instances and are ensuring that targeted training is being undertaken on the importance of timeliness in data breach reporting.
- 2.5.5 A total of two breaches were submitted within the statutory time period to the ICO during Quarter 3. One of these breaches was overdue by the time it arrived with the Information Governance Team. The data breach report form was filled out by the officer, who failed to click the 'submit' button at the end. The IT Systems Team found the unfinished form and submitted it to us a week later, by which point the statutory 72 hours had already passed. The Information Governance Team have now removed the feature where the form can be saved and submitted later. If someone tries to navigate away from an unfinished form they will be prompted to finish it. The ICO were satisfied with the way in which both breaches were dealt with and mitigated.

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 October-31st December 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 3 2023/24 Key Performance Indicators Report

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