

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CABINET – 5 DECEMBER 2017  
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURAL  
SERVICES)

**PERFORMANCE EXCEPTION REPORT – QUARTER 2 (2017-18)**

**1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report summarises our strategic performance data on an exception basis following the monitoring and review of performance reports by Executive Members, Directors and Heads of Service.
- 1.2 Performance Clinics are held quarterly to review our progress towards business plan targets, performance indicator targets, financial performance, service complaints and reports on our current strategic and operational risks. The most recent Clinic meeting was held on Thursday 2 November 2017.
- 1.3 Any targets reported at this meeting as ‘not completed’ or ‘not improved’, is exception reported in the appendices to this report. High rated risks are also reported here.

**2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the contents of this report and approve any proposed actions highlighted in the appendices.

**3. Explanation**

- 3.1 A performance exception report is presented to the Cabinet on a quarterly basis as part of our current performance management framework.
- 3.2 By working with Heads of Service in the production of the Clinic reports, we further embed accountability for performance and risk within our Officer structure. This allows for a flow of more detailed information to and from the Leadership.

**4. Legal Implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the contents of this report.

**5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with the production of Clinic reports. It is compiled by the Policy and Communications team which is resourced to do so.

## **6. Risk Management Implications**

6.1 A risk assessment of our performance management framework can be reviewed in April and October on the council's strategic Risk Register.

## **7. Security and Terrorism Implications**

7.1 There are no security and terrorism implications directly arising from the contents of this report.

## **8. Procurement Implications**

8.1 There are no procurement implications directly arising from the contents of this report.

## **9. Climate Change Implications**

9.1 There are no direct climate change implications arising from the contents of this report.

## **10. Link to Corporate Priorities**

10.1 This report is linked to all the council's current Corporate Priorities as it shows the status of all business, finance and performance targets associated within each priority.

## **11. Equality and Diversity**

11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was not completed because this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.

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Date: November 2017

### Background Papers:

Appendix One - Business Plan Targets  
Appendix Two - Performance Indicators  
Appendix Three - Strategic Risks  
Appendix Four - Operational Risks

**Business Plan Targets – Quarter 2**

All published Business Plan targets for 2017-18 are currently scheduled to be achieved by the end of March 2018.

Progress for all targets under each of our five Corporate Priorities is summarised here.

<b>Corporate Priority</b>	<b>Green (completed)</b>	<b>Amber (on schedule)</b>	<b>Red (not completed)</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1 – Maintain a safe and healthy community</b>	<b>2</b> (11%)	<b>16</b> (89%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>18</b> (100%)
<b>2 – Protect and enhance the environment</b>	<b>2</b> (14%)	<b>12</b> (86%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>14</b> (100%)
<b>3 – Meet the borough’s housing needs</b>	<b>1</b> (10%)	<b>9</b> (90%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>10</b> (100%)
<b>4 – Help build a strong local economy</b>	<b>3</b> (43%)	<b>4</b> (57%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>7</b> (100%)
<b>5 – Engage with our communities and provide value for money</b>	<b>3</b> (23%)	<b>10</b> (77%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>13</b> (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b> (18%)	<b>51</b> (82%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>62</b> (100%)

Performance Indicators – Quarter 2 (2016-17 & 2017-18)

A summary of our core Performance Indicators collected over a two year period is shown here.

Total Number of Performance Indicators	Number of PI's – improved	Number of PI's - not improved	Number of PI's - remained the same
35 (100%)	25 (71%)	7 (20%)	3 (9%)

Seven Performance Indicators did not report an improvement in Quarter 2.

They are exception reported below with service comments to explain their performance.

Brief Description of Indicator	Q2 2016-17 Performance		Q2 2017-18 Performance		Service Comments
	Target	Outturn	Target	Outturn	
<p><b>PI 5</b> - The number of employee working days lost due to sickness absence per full-time equivalent member of staff</p> <p><i>Head of Law &amp; Administration</i></p>	1.75 days	1.45 days	1.75 days	2.47 days	<p>Recorded sickness absence during this quarter is above the target.</p> <p>Long term absences (e.g. 20 plus days) have accounted for 54% of the total absences for reasons including surgery and cancer / tumours. There were a total of seven long term sickness absence cases across the council at the end of this quarter.</p> <p>Short term absences account for 46% of the total absences. The main reasons for these absences are gastro-intestinal, cold / flu and migraines. Flu vaccinations were offered to all staff for free at the end of October. A new sickness absence and work capability policy is also being introduced for all staff.</p>
<p><b>PI 27</b> - The percentage of planning application appeals allowed against the council's decision - as a percentage of the total number of appeals</p> <p><i>Head of Planning</i></p>	33.00%	14.00%	33.00%	50.00%	<p>18 appeals were determined by the Planning Inspectorate in this quarter, of which 9 were allowed.</p> <p>Of the 9 appeals that were allowed, 2 were decisions taken by the Development Management Committee which were contrary to the recommendation made by Officers.</p>

Brief Description of Indicator	Q2 2016-17 Performance		Q2 2017-18 Performance		Service Comments
	Target	Outturn	Target	Outturn	
<p><b>PI 29</b> - The maximum number of households living in temporary accommodation in the borough (where the council has a duty)</p> <p><i>Head of Community &amp; Housing Strategy</i></p>	55	73	55	81	<p>The past 3 months have seen an increase in households approaching the service, from 289 between April and June 2017 to 322 over July and August.</p> <p>There has also been a slight increase in the average length of time taken to make decisions from 26.7 days to 27.3 days. This is attributed to staff taking leave over the summer and an increase in the investigation time for more complex cases. But it is still within the stated target of 28 days.</p> <p>We do have a number of families waiting for 2 bed accommodation that is delaying move on, and in addition there are families in need of 4 bed properties that are in short supply at this time.</p>
<p><b>PI 30</b> - The number of Decent Homes assessments undertaken in properties in the private sector</p> <p><i>Head of Community &amp; Housing Strategy</i></p>	100	127	112	100	<p>Although only 89% of this quarter's target was achieved, the target is still being met pro-rata for the year. The number of assessments undertaken varies according to the amount of reactive and programmed inspections in comparison to the level of proactive work completed to identify and confirm suspected HMO's in the borough.</p>

Brief Description of Indicator	Q2 2016-17 Performance		Q2 2017-18 Performance		Service Comments
	Target	Outturn	Target	Outturn	
<p><b>PI 35</b> - Current council tenant arrears as a percentage of the annual rent debit</p> <p><i>Head of Housing Operations</i></p>	1.73%	2.13%	1.60%	2.31%	<p>Performance in this quarter has been impacted by several adverse factors, with the operating environment becoming increasingly more challenging. Delays in processing housing benefit claims has caused a backlog of cases and an increase in 'technical' arrears. In the interim, HB cases involved in court or eviction action are being prioritised whilst the HB team deals with the backlog of cases. This situation is steadily improving as our contractor, Steria, addresses the issues.</p> <p>Universal Credit (UC) is having an impact too as UC claimants receive no benefit for the first week of any claim. Typically, UC claims can take up to 6-8 weeks to process and are then paid in arrears directly to the claimant. Currently the numbers on UC in this borough are relatively low, but this is steadily increasing and it is expected that this will have a detrimental impact on arrears performance. This will be even more marked when UC is more widely rolled out in this borough in December this year. A programme of communications being developed which will improve information to council tenants about the changes, and what they need to do to manage them, in addition to the information already available on the council's website and via our support partner, CAB.</p> <p>The current level of outstanding arrears is a concern, with more detailed analysis required to identify specific causes and issues at neighbourhood level, with a clear strategy to be developed to address performance.</p>

Brief Description of Indicator	Q2 2016-17 Performance		Q2 2017-18 Performance		Service Comments
	Target	Outturn	Target	Outturn	
<p><b>PI 37</b> - The average void property re-let time for standard council homes in days</p> <p><i>Head of Housing Operations</i></p>	19.85 days	19.00 days	18.00 days	21.40 days	<p>Quarter 2 void property performance is outside the 20.00 day tolerance at 21.40 days. However the direction of travel is positive, with improvement seen on the 22.10 days reported at the end of Quarter 1 this year.</p> <p>Regular monitoring meetings are taking place involving housing managers and our contractors so close attention is given to this. Performance is reviewed at these meetings which has identified some improvements that should help to keep future performance within the target tolerance parameters.</p> <p>These include the pre-planning of gas works during the termination notice period, improvements to communication and decision making (following the recent appointment of a new Repairs Supervisor), and a review of the verification process which has led to some lost days in the past, to allow all necessary checks to be done before re-letting is completed.</p>



Brief Description of Indicator	Q2 2016-17 Performance		Q2 2017-18 Performance		Service Comments
	Target	Outturn	Target	Outturn	
<p><b>PI 39</b> - The percentage of customers within the last 12 months 'satisfied' with the way their housing complaint was handled (<u>Housing Operations</u>, <u>Housing Property Services</u>, <u>Community &amp; Housing Strategy</u>)</p> <p><i>Head of Housing Operations Head of Housing Property Services, and Head of Community &amp; Housing Strategy</i></p>	--	--	80.00%	57.50%	<p>Customer satisfaction performance in how complaints are handled within Housing and Communities has shown little change in the last quarter.</p> <p>We are seeing some improvement around the management of complaints, and positive feedback regarding members of staff. But the level of satisfaction is still below our expectation.</p> <p>The feedback from customers suggest the underlying concern affecting satisfaction is the time taken for complaint resolution to be concluded, and for being kept informed throughout the process.</p> <p>73% of the complaints received are in relation to Property Services. We are confident that once new manager posts in Property Services are filled, action plans will be put in place to target areas that require improvement.</p>

**Strategic Risks**

Our Risk Register enables the reporting of all strategic risks using a traffic light system to determine both their impact and likelihood of occurrence. Strategic risks are assessed by the responsible Executive Director and their Executive Member based on current circumstances and can be reviewed every six months in April and October.

All strategic risks are summarised here:

<b>Current Strategic Risks</b>		
<b>Red</b>	<b>Amber</b>	<b>Green</b>
<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>10 (62%)</b>	<b>6 (38%)</b>

Amber strategic risks were reported for: Local Plan, Staff / Workforce, ICT Failure, ICT (Data Protection), Finance, Management of Council owned property (housing and non-housing), Health & Safety, Corporate Resilience and the Prevent Agenda.

Mitigation plans and other risk controls are in place for all of our current strategic risks.

**Operational Risks**

Operational risks are assessed by each of our services on the Risk Register. This is done in the same way as strategic risks but they are unique to individual services. There are currently two operational risks reported as 'Red' across our services. These are in the following service:

Planning, Housing & Community

- Planning - Inadequate professional resource.
- Strategic Housing – Non delivery on Section 106 sites.

'Red' risks can be re-assessed by the Head of Service or Executive Director at any time, which may lead to them reducing to either 'Amber' or 'Green' or remaining at 'Red'. Risk owners are also prompted by the council's Risk and Resilience Manager to review them in April and October each year.