

Meeting: EXECUTIVE

Agenda Item:

Portfolio Area: All

Date: 12 DECEMBER 2017

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE FOR QUARTER TWO 2017/18

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To highlight the Council's performance across key priorities and themes for quarter two 2017/18.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That the delivery of priorities which form the Future Town, Future Council Programme and performance of the Council across the key themes during quarter two 2017/18 together with latest achievements be noted.
- 2.2. That learning from phase one of the Repairs and Voids improvement programme be incorporated into the second phase of the programme to ensure the function operates successfully in the future (outlined in paragraphs 3.102 to 3.114 of the report).
- 2.3. That plans to increase the availability, skills and knowledge of Customer Service Advisers to improve performance in the Customer Service Centre be endorsed (outlined in paragraphs 3.116 to 3.123 of the report).

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. Members approved the new Cooperative Corporate Plan in December 2016. It reflects the Council's continuing focus on cooperative working and outlines the key outcomes and priorities for the town over the next five years through the Future Town, Future Council (FTFC) Programme as seen in Figure 1.



- 3.2. The FTFC Programme consists of nine programmes with five external programmes focussed on improving the quality of life for Stevenage residents through building houses, regenerating the town centre, improving housing services and how local people feel about their neighbourhoods. Four internal programmes aim to build strong foundations within the Council through improving processes and skills, and making sure the Council is fit for the future. This will aid delivery of the externally focused programmes.
- 3.3. During 2016/17, a senior management review was completed that will, at a strategic level, drive the development of a more sustainable, customer orientated and commercial operating model. The model is focussed upon delivering the right services, to the right standards, at the right time for the town's residents and businesses, using the most cost/resource effective delivery models.
- 3.4. The senior management review resulted in the reorganisation of Business Units across three key delivery themes; Customer, Place, and Transformation and Support.
- 3.5. In addition to monitoring progress on the delivery of the FTFC Programme, performance across these themes is monitored to highlight achievements and identify any areas for improvement. This recognises the critical role all Assistant Directors play in the delivery of the Future Town, Future Council Programme, either as a lead on one or more of the nine FTFC programmes or as an enabler, delivering services across the three themes in support.
- 3.6. A complete set of performance measures across all themes (FTFC programme, and the customer, place, and transformation and support themes) is attached as Appendix One and an overview of results is provided at paragraph 3.7.

Future Town, Future Council programme progress update

- 3.7. The FTFC Programme has been reviewed during the first half of 2017/18 to ensure governance arrangements remain effective as programmes move from planning to delivery during 2017/18. Completion of the review will also ensure that the focus and scope of programmes continues to deliver the Council's priorities. The focus and scope of the FTFC programmes is outlined in Appendix Two.
- 3.8. The FTFC programme continues to perform well and is on track against delivery of the agreed outcomes. This is reflected in performance measure results aligned to FTFC delivery. Eleven measures were reported on for April to September 2017 (quarter 2) with just two measures not achieving target:
 - HDD1b: New Build spend against budget for schemes in contract – paragraph 3.21 refers
 - FS4: Percentage of HRA savings identified to meet three year target – paragraph 3.60 refers

Stevenage Centre Town Centre Regeneration Programme

3.9. Programme Outcomes

- A new vibrant town centre delivered through a phased regeneration programme.
- Two major regeneration schemes to advance – one completed by 2020/21 and one to begin 2019/20.

3.10. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Securing a development partner for the first phase of the town centre regeneration.
- Beginning development and progressing more detailed plans for a public sector hub in the town.
- Completing public realm improvements within the town centre.

3.11. Programme Delivery Update

3.12. The competitive dialogue stage of procurement for the first phase of the Town Centre Regeneration Scheme took place during quarter two. The remaining dialogue sessions will continue and the invitation to submit final tenders will be issued. Final tenders are expected to be received in December 2017.

3.13. A positive reaction was received from external stakeholders to communication on the plans for the first phase of regeneration for the Town Centre.

3.14. Public realm improvements to The Forum and Littlewoods Square were completed in September. The development of the selected designs for planned public realm improvements to Market Place has continued. Engagement with local businesses is taking place to cover the timeframe, benefits and finished look of the planned enhancements.

3.15. Stevenage was represented at a large property event in London for the first time as an individual town. Both Members and officers attended the event to promote the town and its ambitions.

3.16. Plans for the relocation of Council teams currently based in Swingate House are progressing. Engagement with teams affected is taking place setting out the plans for the area and identifying accommodation requirements.

3.17. Residents are being kept informed through drop-in sessions, articles in the Stevenage Central magazine and information campaigns using the Stevenage Central branding.

Housing Development Programme

3.18. Programme Outcomes

- Increased number of affordable houses in Stevenage.
- Improve access to the housing market in Stevenage for greater number of residents.

3.19. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Delivering 43 homes across a range of planned schemes.
- Setting up a Council owned Housing Development Company to provide a variety of housing types across the town and consideration of a joint venture to bring further housing development forward.

3.20. Programme Delivery Update

- 3.21. The Vincent Court Scheme was completed with all properties made available for letting and the majority of tenants moved in. Outstanding payments at the end of quarter two relating to additional works on the Scheme meant that the anticipated budget profile was not achieved. Payment is anticipated in quarter three. (HDD1b: New Build spend against budget for schemes in contract, April to September 2017 target 95%, achieved 82.7%)
- 3.22. The Twin Foxes Scheme is progressing well. The contractor sponsored a competition with local schools to create artwork to decorate the hoarding. In September, two local schools took part in an unveiling of the children's artwork and were thrilled to see their work displayed on the hoarding.
- 3.23. A scheme with a registered housing provider to access units using Right to Buy 1:1 receipts agreed with Executive (July) is progressing with housing developers on site. Completion of this scheme will provide the Council with access to 38 properties for social rent.
- 3.24. The March Hare Scheme planning application has been submitted for consideration by the Planning and Development Committee (December).
- 3.25. Preliminary studies continue regarding the Kenilworth Road Scheme. A design workshop between architects and Council officers took place in July. Council officers have carried out meetings with the Ward Councillors and residents of Asquith Court and Walpole Court to answer queries and offer reassurance.

Excellent Council Homes for Life Programme (Housing – All Under One Roof).

3.26. Programme Outcomes

- Transforming the housing service (Housing – All under one roof).
- 3.27. The Council's aim is to provide high quality, efficient and effective housing services and it has committed through this programme to transform its housing services to better meet the needs of its customers. At a Housing Away Day in July, staff voted to name the housing transformation programme, 'Housing – All Under One Roof'. This will replace 'Excellent Council Homes for Life' as the title of the programme.

3.28. Programme Delivery Update

- 3.29. The Assistant Director for Housing and Investment has completed the consultation stage of the 4th Tier Management Team restructure. A Housing Operations Manager – Managing Homes has been appointed. Recruitment to the posts of the Housing

Operations Manager – Providing Homes and the Housing Operations Manager – Investing in Homes and Properties is in progress.

- 3.30. A Senior Systems Administrator was appointed. This role is crucial to ensuring that business requirements and the systems development required to deliver a housing service which is fit for the future also align to the Council's Connected to our Customers programme.
- 3.31. The current housing management IT system is being enhanced with the addition of a Housing Advice module. This will improve housing advice case management and the service customers receive.
- 3.32. Staff engagement is taking place with the first staff newsletter published October 2017.
- 3.33. Residents were provided with an opportunity to give feedback on the housing services currently provided by the Council and areas for improvement through the 'Big Knock'. The aim is to incorporate residents' feedback into future phases of the programme.

Co-operative and Neighbourhood Management Programme

3.34. Programme Outcomes

- Public spaces are more attractive, better cared for by the Council and residents, and help to give people pride in the place they live.
- Residents feel that they can work with the Council and other organisations to help meet the needs of the local area.
- The Community centres are efficiently run, well-managed and most importantly, meet local needs.
- Staff better understand the town's communities and through doing so are more able to deliver the change that is required.

3.35. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Delivery of £800k of investment (including Green Space signage, public realm work, nine play areas, litterbins and hardstanding) into Pin Green, Shephall, St Nicholas and Martins Wood.
- Encouraging partner agencies to work in partnership with the Council to help improve public spaces and other local assets and engage with communities.
- Undertaking a Resident Survey to determine future neighbourhood priorities.
- Reviewing the effectiveness and usage of Community Centres.
- Engaging with partners and communities on the next phase of the planned physical improvement works in the wards of St Nicholas and Martins Wood.

3.36. Programme Delivery Update

3.37. Neighbourhood improvements in Shephall and Pin Green are progressing well:

- All litterbins have been replaced in Shephall and replacement is progressing in Pin Green

- Improvements to four play areas have been completed in Pin Green and Shephall.
- Replacement of signage in both Pin Green and Shephall green spaces is expected to be completed by December 2017.
- Paving and Public realm enhancements are being completed in Pin Green.

3.38. The focus of the programme is now moving to St Nicholas and Martins Wood. This will involve partner, ward member and resident engagement, together with an assessment of the resource required and available to deliver improvements. The aim is to set out a range of cooperative, community-led projects in the two wards commencing April 2018.

3.39. Residents and staff are being kept informed following the launch of the 'Our Neighbourhood' webpage.

Connected to our Customers Programme

3.40. Programme Outcomes

- Use of self-service is encouraged, so more time can be spent with customers that need extra help.
- Increased customer satisfaction for residents interacting with key services.
- Online customer data will be protected, better used to provide useful insight, and the technology reliable.
- The Council uses technology to meet its ambitions and make its workforce more modern, efficient and responsive to customer needs.
- A simple and clearer website with more self-service choices.

3.41. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Delivering a Technology Improvement Plan to support a range of new digital applications and services.
- Recruiting digital specialists to drive the programme.
- Achieving quick wins to expand the customer self-serve offer through use of digital technologies, including new online Council Tax and Business rate services.
- A number of supporting projects relating to Public Sector Network and General Data Protection Regulation requirements to provide the Council with a resilient platform to establish a new range of digital applications and services.
- Completing the telephony upgrade across the Technology Shared Service to improve resilience and reduce costs.
- Working towards the development of a new website and intranet.

3.42. Programme Delivery Update

3.43. A Technology Shared Service Improvement Plan developed for the Council (and its shared service partner) was considered and approved by the Executive in November 2017. The plan seeks improvements across four broad themes: resilience, security,

best practice service management, and developing forward strategy to ensure that services are delivered that meet customer needs and are fit for the future including enabling the technology and system changes required by the Council's Business Unit Reviews (and their equivalent programmes at East Herts Council) and delivering the 'Connected to our Customers' programme, including a first rate website and online offer which is mobile enabled.

- 3.44. In September, the Council's Public Services Network accreditation was renewed for a further 12 months. This accreditation is required to be able to share data with Central Government computer systems for services such as Elections and Benefits.
- 3.45. In partnership with East Hertfordshire Council, work has started on a replacement staff Intranet, which is considered a high priority improvement action.
- 3.46. To strengthen arrangements to meet the General Data Protection Regulation, Information Asset Owners have been assigned in Business Units. Information Asset Owners will work with the Information and Records Governance Manager to embed best practice records management across the Council.

Partner of Choice Programme

3.47. Programme Outcomes

- Develop new and existing shared services with our preferred partners to improve resilience, create efficiencies and establish income opportunities.
- Develop reputation as a professional partner to work with.

3.48. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Finalising the legal shared services arrangements.
- Setting out further potential shared service options.

3.49. Programme Delivery Update

3.50. An approach to developing shared services opportunities was agreed by the Strategic Leadership Team in July. Informal engagement work has commenced at a senior management level with the Council's partner authorities, to understand whether there is a common view on further development opportunities. The outcome of these discussions will guide the future focus of the programme and associated resource requirements.

Performing at our Peak Programme

3.51. Programme Outcomes

- The provision of high quality performance management software tools.
- Streamlined governance structures that ensure effective and timely decision making.
- A strong performance culture is embedded across the organisation.

3.52. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Continuing to build dashboards at a business unit level and ensuring service managers have the right skills to use the tool robustly to analyse information and make informed decisions that result in improved services for our customers.
- The introduction of a new devolved governance and performance framework, including a new scheme of delegation, to help improve decision making and accountability at a business unit level.

3.53. Programme Delivery Update

- 3.54. The Council's Strategic Leadership Team now have access to the performance and governance system (InPhase). This system provides access to data and information that form strategic insight. InPhase is providing a clearer picture of performance to senior management to help inform faster action planning and decision making. In addition, access is provided across all of the Assistant Director briefing books to provide corporate wide transparency of performance and governance information.
- 3.55. Steps are being taken to capture service data that will provide more up-to-date information to inform decisions.
- 3.56. The Council has carried out a review of internal Council meetings and groups and begun a process to streamline and simplify governance arrangements.

Financial Security Programme

3.57. Programme Outcomes

- As set out in Figure 2: Financial Security Workstreams.

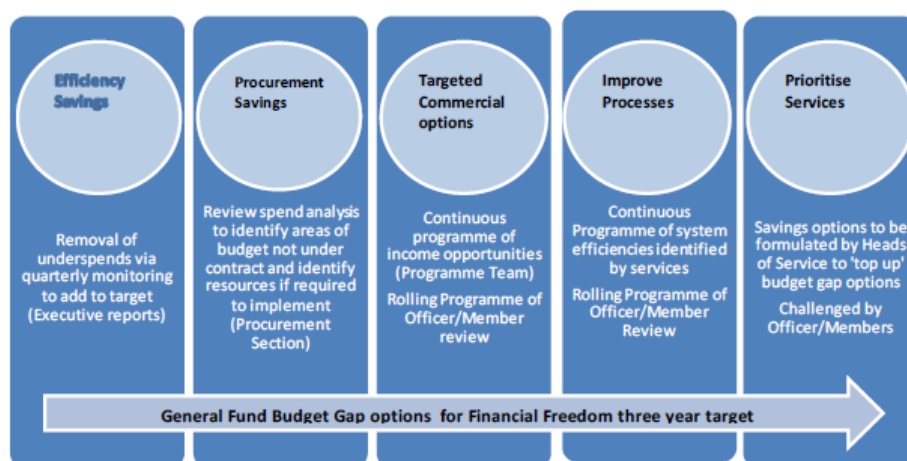


Figure 2: Financial Security Workstreams

3.58. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Generating significant savings from the leisure contract.
- Finalise savings of approximately £40k per annum through a move to digital post.
- Prioritise services to generate further savings and ensure a balanced budget.

3.59. Programme Delivery Update

- 3.60. The HRA savings target for 2018/19 was achieved and options just exceeding the target of £225,959 were included in the Financial Security report to the November Executive. There remains a further £577,750 of savings to find for the period 2019/20- 2020/21.
- FS4: Percentage of HRA savings identified to meet the three year target (April to September target 2017 54%, achieved 34.2%).
- 3.61. Current projects are aimed at improving efficiency and processes to deliver savings, rather than lowering the cost base by reducing services and are progressing well. Some of these projects apply to working in partnership with East Herts Council and are to the benefit of both Councils.

Employer of Choice Programme

3.62. Programme Outcomes

- Improved employee engagement.
 - Right person, right place, right time – recruiting/retaining staff to hard to fill posts.
 - Improved managerial competency.
 - Improved reputation as a place to work.
 - Evidence of staff progressing to higher grades and new roles.
- 3.63. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:
- Further rollout of online services for staff, including a new e-learning system and intranet.
 - Creation of new leadership and management development programmes.
 - Development and implementation of a competency framework for staff up to Grade 9 of the Council's pay structure.
 - Introduction of new performance management policies, tools and processes.

3.64. Programme Delivery Update

- 3.65. A bite-size manager training programme has been launched. The programme aims to develop management capability through shared knowledge and good practice.
- 3.66. Development opportunities were also offered across the Council through both the District Councils Network Staff Development programme and Local Authority Challenge East and were positively received by staff.
- 3.67. A new approach to Strategic Leadership Team induction has been introduced which was designed to build strong bonds within the leadership team. The off-site induction also provided an opportunity for Assistant Directors to present their initial business unit review plans and develop their negotiation skills.
- 3.68. The programme of training for Members (Modern Members Programme) has been relaunched. Training and advisory sessions are developed with input from Members and delivered with support from the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU).

3.69. A new staff Performance Improvement Policy and manager toolkit has been developed, along with a review of the associated policies (absence management, disciplinary and grievance) as well as proposals to streamline recruitment and job evaluation processes. The toolkit has been designed to reduce bureaucracy, strengthen staff performance management practice, contribute to a reduction in sickness absence and improve the recruitment process for candidates and recruiting managers. Feedback from the Senior Leadership Team, a cross-council manager group and the Trade Unions has been positive. The new policies are expected to go live in December 2017.

3.70. Corporate Performance highlights and areas for improvement

3.71. Results for the full set of current corporate performance measures across all themes (FTFC programme, and the Customer, Place, and Transformation and Support themes) are attached as Appendix One. Overall performance status has remained static since quarter one reporting. The overview of results for April to September 2017 (quarter 2 2017/18) is outlined below:

Number of Measures Reported	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (urgent improvement action required)
47	30	4	13

3.72. The Strategic Leadership Team has requested that Assistant Directors identify improvement activity for performance measures that did not meet the target set. The improvement activity identified will require a period of embedding before the impact on performance results is evident and as a result the shift in the status of measures (outlined in paragraph 3.71) may be minimal for the current year.

3.73. A summary of highlights and areas for improvement is set out in the following paragraphs across the three key delivery themes; Customer, Place, and Transformation and Support (FTFC theme measures are referred to in paragraphs 3.21 and 3.60).

3.74. Key Business Unit Themes Update

3.75. Thirty-six measures were reported on for April to September 2017 (quarter 2) aligned to the three business unit themes of Customer, Place, and Transformation and Support.

Customer Theme

3.76. The Customer Theme incorporates the following Business Units:

- Housing and Investment
- Communities and Neighbourhood

Housing and Investment

- 3.77. Between April and September 2017 Tenancy Support Advisers helped their customers access £20,056 of income and also recovered £8,921 for Council rent accounts as a result of support provided to those experiencing difficulties.
- 3.78. The Housing Annual Report, 'Housing Matters 2016/17' was published to meet the statutory timeframe. Officers worked with tenants and leaseholders to develop the report.
- 3.79. Following development, 28 properties were made available for letting at Archer Road in July 2017 and all were let to residents within one week. This generated positive news stories and publicity for the Council.
- 3.80. The 'Housing - All Under One Roof' brand was launched in July and the first staff newsletter was published in October.

Homelessness preventions (BV213)

- 3.81. 136 cases were being actively managed by the Housing Service at the end of September which will contribute to prevention outcomes for April to December (quarter three).
- 3.82. As advised to the Executive in September, historically, the Housing Service was supported by two key partnership organisations with the delivery of homelessness preventions. During quarter one, both of these organisations experienced resourcing issues that have impacted on performance. The Housing Service discussed performance with both organisations. Following discussion, the Council has ceased working with one of these agencies and funding is being used to provide additional support from Council officers.
- 3.83. Ongoing Housing Service staff resourcing issues have impacted on quarter two performance as anticipated and advised to the Executive in September.
- BV213: Homelessness preventions, April to September 2017 target 180, achieved 85.
- 3.84. The following plans have been put in place to improve future performance:
- Interim arrangements have been agreed to use agency workers to improve capacity in the team.
 - A service is being introduced in the Customer Service Centre from 6 November 2017 that will enable initial prompt assessments to take place when a customer requests assistance in relation to homelessness. This will allow the team to intervene in cases at an earlier stage and increase the potential for a homeless prevention outcome.
 - the Housing Advice and Homeless Manager has introduced weekly meetings to monitor and manage target delivery with the team and is carrying out a random audit of cases to ensure all prevention outcomes have been recorded.

Communities and Neighbourhood

- 3.85. Children's play areas have been enhanced - At St Nicholas Play Centre outdoor play equipment has been improved and at Pin Green Play Centre improvements have included a new turret, a climbing wall and a renamed 'Ninja Warrior Bridge'.

- 3.86. The Sport England funded SO Active project finished in September. Over three years, 3,656 residents have taken part in a range of sport and exercise activities. The project was deemed highly successful by Sport England and continues to demonstrate the strength of the sports partnerships within the town.
- 3.87. Council tenant, Jacqueline Hacker, won the Association of Retained Council Housing community champion award (ARCH) beating other finalists from Lincoln City Council and Ipswich Borough Council. This award recognises the dedication, willingness, inspiration and devotion that Council tenants freely give to others.
- 3.88. New Homes Bonus funding allocated to address Child Poverty led to a contract being started with the Herts Money Advice Unit. This provides targeted advice and support to ensure that Stevenage families with disabled children receive the correct benefits. As of October 2017, more than 40 families had received advice.
- 3.89. A Service Level Agreement between the Council, CAB and Stevenage Children's Centres to provide financial advice and budgeting guidance to vulnerable families with children under the age of five in 2017 has already delivered positive financial outcomes for local families. The predicted financial gains over a year for the families that have received advice between January and September are expected to total £172,392.
- 3.90. The 'No More' Service was shortlisted for a Howard League Award for community safety. Though the team was not the final winner, this demonstrates the positive contribution the service is making to local communities.

Community Safety

- 3.91. Partner organisations have worked together through the SoSafe partnership on joint activity to improve community safety across the town, and the delivery of enforcement action and events. This includes working with partners to identify community safety priorities for the town, working together on prosecution activity, carrying out street meets and the development of a poster campaign to reassure residents that Stevenage remains a safe town. Residents have been encouraged to report incidents of anti-social behaviour and/or criminal damage and advised of the various reporting methods available.
- 3.92. Reflecting a national trend, crime rates have increased slightly on 2016/17 results:
- CS8: Anti-social behaviour per 1,000 population, April to September 2016: 20.8 incidents per 1,000 population, April to September 2017: 23.27 incidents per 1,000 population against threshold of 19.10
 - CS9: Criminal damage per 1,000 population, April to September 2016: 6.63 incidents per 1,000 population, April to September 2017: 6.80 incidents per 1,000 population against a threshold of 6.13.
 - Incidents of violent crime have increased on 2016/17 levels. However, the scope of crimes now classified as 'violent' has been expanded (NI15b: the rate of violence against the person (victim based crime) per 1,000 population, April to September 2016: 16.30 incidents per 1,000 population, April to September 2017: 17.02 incidents per 1,000 population against a threshold of 15.93).

Place Theme

3.93. The Place Theme incorporates the following Business Units:

- Planning and Regulation
- Stevenage Direct Services
- Regeneration
- Housing Development

(The Regeneration and Housing Development Business Units are primarily focused on delivery of the Stevenage Town Centre Regeneration and Housing Development Programmes of FTFC. Delivery updates for these programmes are summarised in paragraphs 3.9 to 3.17 and 3.18 to 3.25 respectively.)

Planning and Regulation

3.94. Planning is dealing with a record number of planning applications and continues to do so within corporate and statutory targets.

3.95. As of September 2017, 99% of known Houses of Multiple Occupation are free from category 1 hazards (as set in the Housing Act 2004, Housing Health and Safety Rating System).

3.96. In addition, 96.3% of food establishments in the area are assessed as broadly compliant with food hygiene law. This means that, as a minimum, they are considered 'generally satisfactory' in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme that assesses the hygiene, structure and confidence in management of the premises.

3.97. To encourage residents of Stevenage and neighbouring towns to visit Stevenage town centre, a number of events (15) have been organised between April and October 2017, to include speciality markets, music focused events and community events. Plans for Christmas events include the Christmas lights switch-on, a Christmas market and an ice rink, all anticipated to make Stevenage town centre a destination of choice.

Stevenage Direct Services

3.98. The Council successfully retained Green Flag Awards for Fairlands Valley Park, Town Centre Gardens and Hampson Park. Judges feedback included: "The feeling of the judging team was that the community involvement with this park was outstanding and something that everyone should be proud of. The community not only were hands on in terms of practical tasks but also organised events and helped with wider management decisions for the park... A well-managed park. Passionate and knowledgeable people both on the Friends and the Council help."

3.99. To support improved play areas for toddlers through to teenagers, Executive approved £1.5 million of capital over the next five years, together with £37k annually to support improved maintenance. Officers consulted with over 200 children and young people over the spring/summer to help inform significant play area improvements to six sites. Work on two play areas was completed in July, contracts have been awarded for the other four and completion is expected in December.

3.100. Council officers carried out a competition through the Eco-Schools network to invite artwork to support the litter campaign in 2017/18. The three winning posters were made into large banners which are now displayed on three of the Council's refuse

vehicles. The pupils were invited to Cavendish Road last week to see their artwork in all its glory, and to have a ride in one of the refuse vehicles.

3.101. The Council's Green Space Volunteers contributed around 1,000 hours in the first six months of 2017/18. They were involved in range of activities including butterfly surveys, maintenance to Town Centre Gardens, assisting with events, and stabilisation of the Millennium Lake banks at Fairlands Valley Park.

Repairs and Voids

3.102. The completion of repairs by the Council's team continues to meet targets as advised to the Executive at quarter one (September). The performance of external contractors has also improved. The overall time taken to complete a repair from time of reporting was 11.4 days for April to September 2017 compared to 14.7 days to June 2017 (April to September 2017 target 9.75 days).

3.103. To improve the rate of repairs fixed first time, the Council has introduced revised service delivery arrangements to ensure that the materials that will be required are available at the time of repair. (ECH-Rep4: Percentage repairs fixed first time, April to September 2017 target 87.5%, achieved 84%).

3.104. Repairs satisfaction surveys are currently recorded using e-forms and feedback cards. The Service has put additional arrangements in place for telephone surveys to encourage customer feedback and capture customers' views on their experience of the repairs service delivered. Customers advised a 90.6% satisfaction level.

3.105. Voids Sheltered: The time taken to re-let standard sheltered voids - As reported to Executive (July, September), performance continues to be affected by low demand for some Sheltered Units.

3.106. On a positive note, an increased focus on the advertisement of particular void properties resulted in some improved demand and increased income. However, once properties are let that have been void for a significant period, the performance figures are negatively affected.

- Voids sheltered: the time taken to re-let standard sheltered voids, April to September 2017 target 70 days, achieved 106.15 days.
- Additional information measure - Voids-Shelt-a: Time taken from tenancy termination to ready to let for standard sheltered voids, April to June 2017 achieved 16.66 days, April to September 2017 achieved 23.56 days.

3.107. Void properties continue to be assessed to determine where there is potential to redesign property layout to improve future demand, whether a property needs to be removed from management and to identify those properties that will continue to be advertised.

3.108. To enhance awareness of properties available, the service continues to assess methods of communication to ensure they remain effective, liaise with other registered service providers and carry out property open days.

3.109. A review of the Allocations Policy is being carried out that will consider elements that could expand the customer base. The review will reflect the opportunities already being explored to improve demand (as outlined in paragraph 3.109/3.110) and will

also set out arrangements to identify current tenants that may have a preference for a move to sheltered housing.

3.110. VoidsGN: The time taken to re-let standard general needs voids, April to September 2017 target 29 days, achieved 33.84 days.

3.111. Average re-let time performance, has in the main, improved month on month since April 2017. However, performance dipped in May and September. This was due in part to a delay in recruiting to a vacant project officer position and communication issues in relation to completed voids and the subsequent availability of new tenants to accept/sign new tenancies.

	Monthly	Cumulative
April 2017	38.38	38.38
May 2017	43.67	40.94
June 2017	34.56	38.59
July 2017	24.29	35.41
Aug 2017	25.76	33.36
Sept 2017	36.77	33.84

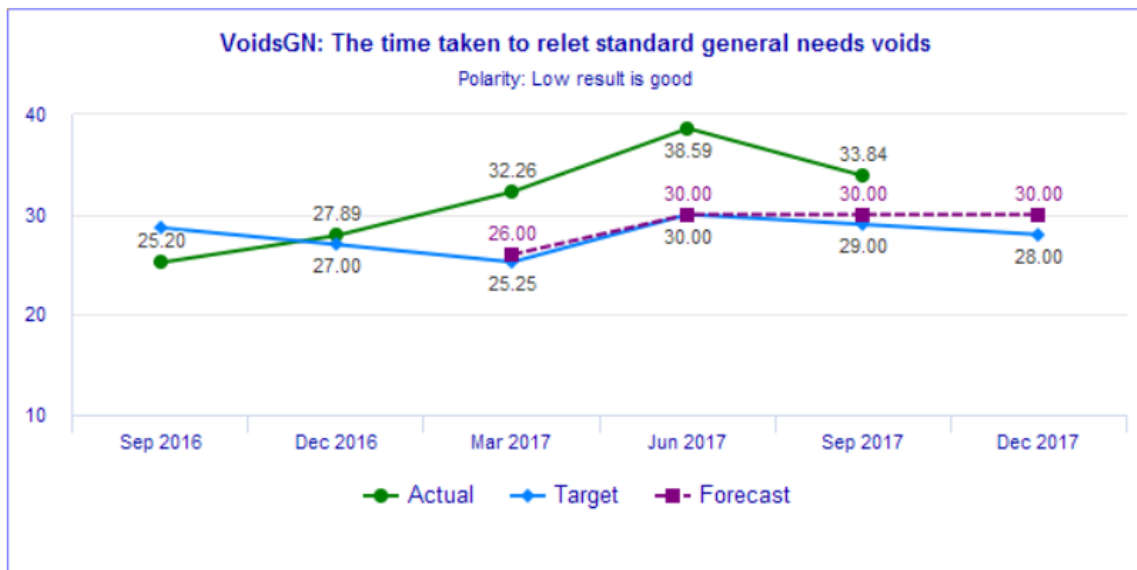


Figure 3: VoidsGn – The time taken to re-let standard general needs voids

3.112. The new Assistant Director for Stevenage Direct Services and the Service Delivery Manager for Repairs and Voids (R&V) are now in post. A review of the first phase of the R&V improvement programme that was approved by the Council's Executive in January 2016 has been commissioned in order to inform the next phase of the project and to ensure that the new business unit management team have complete and informed ownership and accountability for its delivery.

3.113. The second phase of the R&V improvement programme will address any outstanding elements from the first phase, include a review of unit costs for repairs and voids and incorporate any new projects that are deemed necessary. The ultimate aim of the improvement programme is to ensure that the R&V function is

operating successfully and serving its customers well which will help enable it to take on further work when deemed appropriate in due course.

Transformation and Support Theme

3.114. The Transformation and Support Theme incorporates the following Business Units:

- Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology
- Corporate Services and Transformation
- Finance and Estates

Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology

Customer Services

3.115. A number of challenges were faced by the Customer Services Centre (CSC) during Q2 which impacted on service performance, that particularly related to staff recruitment, longer- term sickness absence (non-work related), and vacancy management.

- CSC4: Percentage of telephone calls to the Customer Service Centre answered within 20 seconds, April to September 2017 target 55%, achieved 51.9%.
- CSC12: Percentage of calls abandoned in the Customer Service Centre, April to September 2017 target 4%, achieved 8.9%.
- CSC5: Percentage of walk-in customers to the Customer Service Centre served within 20 minutes, April to September 2017 target 85%, achieved 77.2%.

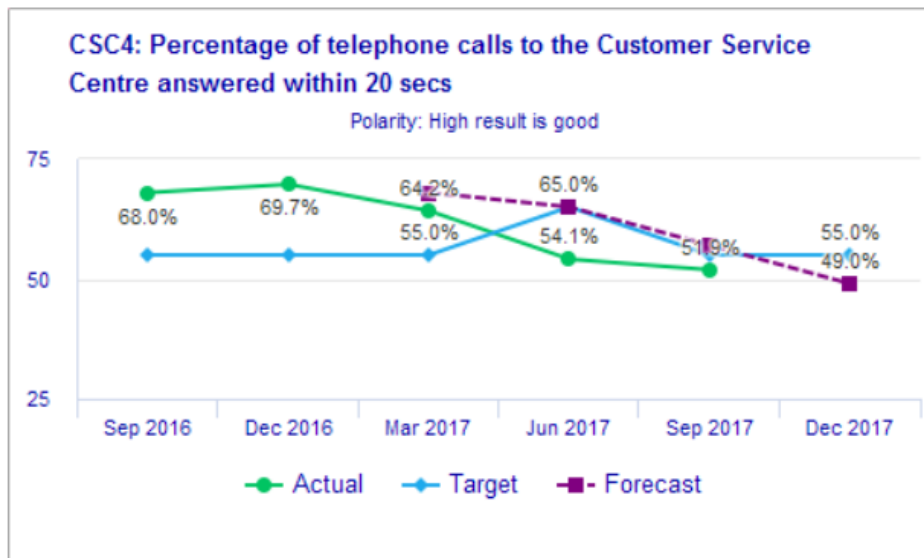


Figure 4: CSC4 – Percentage of telephone calls to the CSC answered within 20 seconds

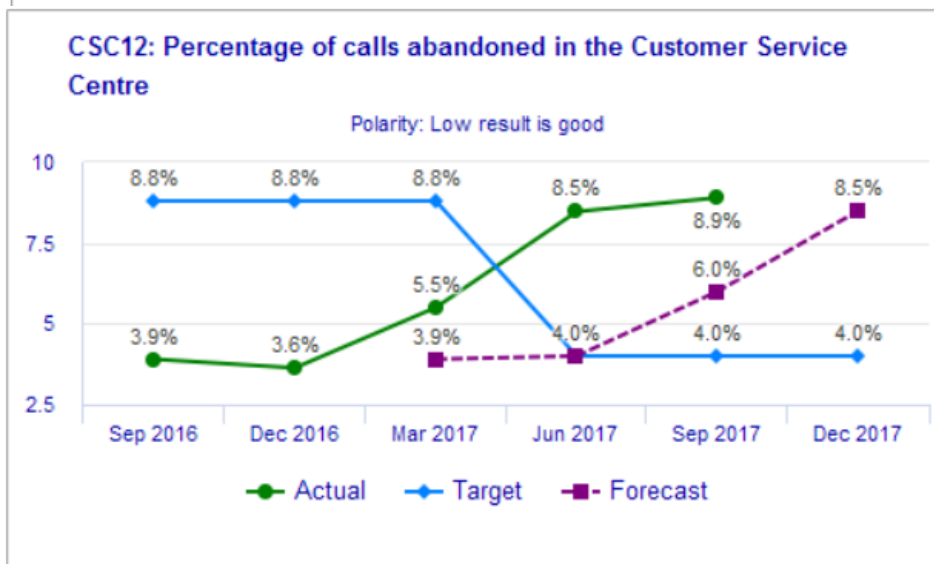


Figure 5: CSC12 – Percentage of calls abandoned in the Customer Service Centre.

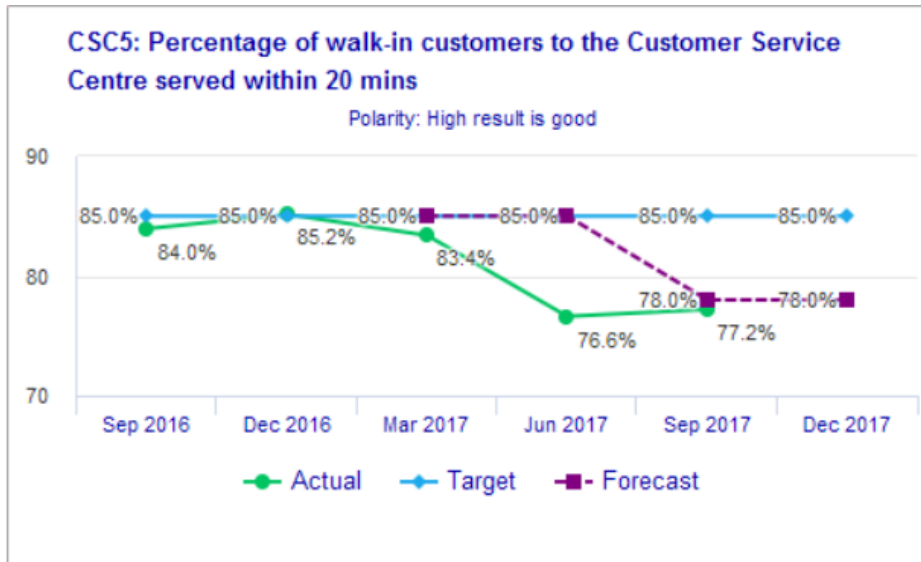


Figure 6: CSC5: Percentage of walk-in customers to the CSC served within 20 minutes

- 3.116. In response to CSC performance interim agency staff were recruited in October to provide short-term capacity and recruitment to permanent roles has also commenced, but as yet has been unable to yield enough quality candidates to maintain sufficient capacity to meet service performance levels. Adviser training is also being fast tracked to increase the availability of skills on all telephone lines and walk-in services with the target of 3 additional multi-skilled advisors by the end of December.
- 3.117. Satisfaction in CSC however remains high, specifically with our telephone services. Customers like how they are treated by advisers and appreciate the time given to them during a call.
- 3.118. Additionally the percentage of complaints progressing to stage two and three that are upheld (Cust1) has also risen:
- The percentage of complaints that progressed to stage 2 or 3 and were upheld (April to September 2017 target 40%, achieved 52.8%, (April to September 2016 achieved 43.4%).
- 3.119. To enhance the handling of complaints and quality of complaint responses, the Customer Feedback team routinely offers training to officers with responsibilities for administrating complaints. In addition, services must capture learning on upheld complaints and then record implemented or planned service improvements to improve the service offer and encourage a reduction in customer complaints.
- 3.120. Senior management have reminded service managers of the importance of considering all the evidence available when a complaint is received, to enhance the quality of response and act upon information to enhance future service delivery.

3.121. The Assistant Director (Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology) is currently carrying out a review of her Business Unit and will outline proposals by early February 2018. The review will address underlying resilience and capacity that includes proposals to:

- Create a CSC workforce management function
- Change the current recruitment approach for CSC apprentices and advisers
- Review working practices within the CSC (considering options such as home working, appointments in the walk-in, and a review of opening hours)
- Implement digital self-service options for customers as part of the Connected to Our Customers programme to drive down transactional and avoidable contact, leaving capacity to provide in-depth services for those in need.

3.122. Additionally the review will set out proposals for developing a more consistent customer services culture and performance standard across the whole organisation.

Technology

3.123. The availability of core IT systems has been maintained at 99% since April 2016.

3.124. IT resilience and availability was tested over the August Bank Holiday due to a fibre break (ICT1: Percentage availability of core systems during supported hours, April to September 2017 target 99.5% achieved 96.7%)

3.125. A Technology Shared Service Improvement Plan developed for the Council (and its shared service partner) was considered by Executive (November). The plan outlines options for improving the service across four broad themes: resilience, security, best practice service management, and developing forward strategy to ensure that services are delivered that meet customer needs and are fit for the future.

3.126. Delivery of the improvement programme will ensure the Technology Shared Service has the skills, capacity and reliable foundation to support the delivery of the Council's 'Connected to Our Customers' programme and enable the technology and system changes required by the Council's Business Unit Reviews (and their equivalent programmes at East Herts Council).

Corporate Services and Transformation

Our staff

3.127. The rate of completion for staff appraisals at 98.7% has significantly improved during quarter two. The Council's Human Resources team continue to work with service managers and are aiming to increase this to 100%.

3.128. Active management of sickness absence is continuing across all Business Units and the Absence Management Policy has been revised to enable managers to take supportive but robust action more quickly. HR Business partners are working with relevant Assistant Directors and service managers to implement and embed the new policies.

3.129. The primary reason for long-term sickness relates to mental health issues and the primary reason for short-term sickness absence relates to coughs, colds and influenza. HR have taken action to reduce absence relating to both these areas; by

committing to Mind's Mental Health Pledge (to help tackle stress and mental health issues) and with providing staff with an offer to access free vaccination against influenza. (Pe4: Sickness Absence rate target for twelve months to September 2017 per fte 8 days, achieved 9.34 days)

- 3.130. The Strategic Leadership Team are currently considering alternative reporting methods for sickness absence to more accurately reflect the workforce profile at the point of reporting.

Finance and Estates

- 3.131. Housing Benefit Claims and changes are now being processed in just 8.03 days, a significant improvement on quarter one (13.94 days).

Senior Leadership Team perspective

- 3.132. The new approach to performance management and monitoring is allowing the organisation to proactively identify issues and challenges and ensure earlier management intervention. The fluid nature of the new performance framework enables the Senior Leadership Team to amend targets in year to drive forward additional improvement in services and processes. Although there is no guarantee services will meet these increased targets, it is important for the Council to aspire to improve performance levels and standards for the benefit of internal and external customers.
- 3.133. The Senior Leadership Team requested that the Assistant Directors responsible for the two main areas of improvement focus; void re-let times and Customer Service Centre performance assess the factors impacting on performance and outline robust improvement plans.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1. The information presented in this report is collated from the information provided to monitor delivery of the Future Town Future Council and corporate performance for the quarter. It aims to give Executive an overview of the achievements the Council has made for the year to date, with a focus on the current quarter and identifies plans for continued improvements in some areas to ensure the Council is fit for the future.
- 4.2. The Senior Leadership Team and Service Managers have been consulted to determine the appropriate content and to identify the key achievements.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Financial Implications

- 5.1.1. There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations contained in this report. However, officers responsible for improvement activity identified will need to identify and consider any resulting financial implications.

5.2. Legal Implications

5.2.1. There are no direct legal implications from the recommendations contained in this report. However, officers responsible for improvement activity identified will need to identify and consider any resulting legal implications.

5.3. Risk Implications

5.3.1. There are no direct significant risks to the Council in agreeing the recommendation(s). Officers responsible for developing performance improvement plans will need to consider any risk implications from the improvement activity identified.

5.3.2. The Council has an embedded approach to risk management that mitigates any adverse effect on delivery of the Council's objectives and internal control processes and also provides good governance assurance.

5.4. Equalities and Diversity Implications

5.4.1. The report outlines performance against key priorities that form the Future Town, Future Council Programme and performance of the Council across key business unit themes. Where necessary, Equality Impact Assessments will be completed for improvement activity identified.

5.5. Other Corporate Implications

5.5.1. Improvement activity outlined may impact on the development of future policy or procedure.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

BD1 - Executive Report 19 September 2017

http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/content/committees/182083/182087/182091/Executive-19-September_2107-Item10.pdf

APPENDICES

Appendix One: Compendium of performance results

Appendix Two: Future Town, Future Council Programme Scope/Focus