

Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

2 November 2023

ITEM NO.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS QTR 4 2022/23

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with performance data against key performance indicators for 2022/23 at Quarter 4.

Background

2. This report provides performance information in line with an indicator set and scrutiny committee distribution agreed by Monitoring and Coordination Group on 4 June 2018, and subsequently by scrutiny committee chairs.
3. The indicators included in this report are aligned with key priorities. Other indicators may be referenced when appropriate in narrative provided by the relevant assistant directors, when providing the committee with performance updates.
4. 22 indicators are reported to the committee, 18 of them on a six-monthly basis and four annually.

2022/23 comparison to 2021/22

5. The weekly average footfall in the town centre has decreased (274,444 to 251,691). The High Street Task Force report highlighted some areas to develop which are currently being addressed; overall feedback was positive. The Towns Fund programme continues to regenerate shop fronts.
6. The percentage of major planning applications decided within 13 weeks or within an agreed time decreased (100% to 85%). The investment in the development management team enabled 17 of the 20 applications to be decided within target time. This is an increase in number of applications with the previous year numbers being 7 of the 7.
7. The percentage of non-major planning developments decided within 8 weeks or within agreed time increased (88.5% to 92.7%). Over a 24-month period the percentage also increased for those non-major decisions made in 8 week (87.3% to 90.3%). The staffing investment increased the performance as 366 of the 395 applications were decided within target time. Last year's figures were 468 of the 529 applications.
8. The monthly unemployment claimant count percentage decreased (4.57% to 4.33%). The claimant count rate will be impacted by the current business environment, where rising costs and low business confidence mean that many businesses are generally

stagnating on growth plans, reviewing operating costs and suspending recruitment and taking on new staff.

9. The economically active percentage has decreased (81.1% to 80.2%). Working age economically inactive people have various reasons for not looking for and/or being able to start work. eg students, sickness, caring and family responsibilities and early retirement.
10. Darlington's resident average annual income has increased (£24,784 to £26,184). Resident's average wages have increased faster than employee average wages. Darlington resident and employee average incomes continue to be higher than the North-East averages.
11. Darlington's employee average annual income increased (£24,689 to £25,552). Reversing the post-covid trend of decline and stagnation and closing the gap on both the North-East and the English average.
12. The number of new homes delivered within the year decreased (511 to 495). Despite not granting any significant new housing permissions in the past financial year housing completions have still exceeded the annual local plan target.
13. The number of working days per full-time equivalent lost due to sickness by council employed staff increased (8.2 to 9.7). The largest increase in absence has been Coronavirus which accounts for over 56% of the increase in lost days. Managers at all levels continue to manage sickness absence within the sickness management policies with support provided by HR. The Wellbeing programme to promote health and wellbeing of staff continues to be a key priority.
14. The percentage of voluntary leavers decreased (10.5% to 10.0%). Although slightly lower than in 21/22, this level was expected as new employers have moved into Darlington and national recruitment issues have provided new opportunities. We continue to improve our employment package to make the council an employer of choice.
15. The number of reportable Darlington employee accidents / ill health increased (12 to 15). All accidents and ill health reports are investigated by management and the Health & Safety team to establish the causes, to identify issues or trends and make recommendations to prevent reoccurrence. Health and Safety is a key priority for the Council at all levels and is promoted through all working practices.
16. The number of complaints upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman/Housing Ombudsman decreased (7 to 6). Whereas the number of complaints upheld by the Information Commissioners Office increased (2 to 6).
17. The amount of Council Tax arrears collected for 2022-23 was £1.97 million, compared to £1.55 million for 2021-22, a 27.1% increase.

18. The amount of Housing Benefit overpayments collected in 2022-23 was £636k, compared to £568k collected for 2021-22, a 12.0% increase.
19. The percentage of Council Tax collected in-year in 2022-23 was 96.1%, compared to 94.9% in 2021-22. The overall amount collected in 2022-23 was £71.2 million, compared to £66.7 million in 2021-22, an increase of £4.5 million or 6.7%.
20. The percentage of Business Rates collected in-year in 2022-23 was 99.8%, compared to 98.1% in 2021-22. The overall amount collected in 2022-23 was £29.9 million, compared to £31.1 million in 2021-22. The reason for this difference is due to the amount of retail relief awarded in 2022-23.
21. The percentage of contracted spend as a percentage of total non-salary spend decreased (85.6% 83.9%). Increased communication and early engagement and a refreshed intranet page over the past year has helped officers to better understand the procurement rules.
22. The percentage of food premises which are inspected within the financial year in which they are due increased (43.5% to 65.7%). Officers are currently engaged in a Post Covid Recovery Plan which had resulted in a backlog of over 1000 inspections. All inspections were prioritised in terms of risk and only very low risk premises remain overdue.
23. The percentage of premises broadly compliant for food hygiene increased (98.5% to 99.0%). Officers have worked extremely hard to ensure that standards are maintained, which is illustrated by the continued high level of compliance of food premises within the Borough of Darlington
24. The percentage noise complaints investigated and completed within 6 weeks of the date of receipt increased (95.6% to 96.8%), even though there has been an increase in noise complaints particularly about barking dogs as a result of an increase in dog ownership during Covid and people continuing to work from home.

Performance Summary

25. All of the 22 indicators have Quarter (Qtr) 4 data to report.
26. When taking into consideration what is best performance for each indicator:
 - a) 14 of the 21 indicators have increased when compared to the previous year.
 - b) Eight of the 21 indicators have decreased when compared to the previous year.
27. A detailed performance scorecard is attached at Appendix 1.
28. Detailed performance and narratives for each indicator is attached at Appendix 2.

Recommendations

29. It is recommended that performance information provided in this report is reviewed and noted, and relevant queries raised with appropriate Assistant Directors.

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Mark Ladyman
Assistant Director – Economic Growth
Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director – Law and Governance
Anthony Sandys
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Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report supports the Councils Crime and Disorder responsibilities
Health and Wellbeing	This report supports performance improvement relating to improving the health and wellbeing of residents
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no specific carbon impact issues in this report.
Diversity	This report supports the promotion of diversity
Wards Affected	This report supports performance improvement across all Wards
Groups Affected	This report supports performance improvement which benefits all groups
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	This report contributes to the Council Plan by involving Members in the scrutiny of performance relating to the delivery of outcomes
Efficiency	Scrutiny of performance is integral to optimising outcomes.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers