

## Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

### 19 DECEMBER 2019

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### PERFORMANCE INDICATORS QTR 2 2019/20

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#### Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with performance data against key performance indicators for 2019/20 at Quarter 2.

#### Report

#### Performance Summary

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. Following agreement at Council on 5 December 2019 to align Scrutiny Committees to the updated Cabinet Portfolios, the indicator set has been re-aligned accordingly.
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. Twenty-two indicators are reported to the committee, seventeen of them on a six-monthly basis and five annually.
5. Performance of the seventeen indicators reported at 6 months:
  - (a) Of the seventeen indicators reported quarterly six have a target to be compared against.
  - (b) Four of six indicators show performance is better than target.

ECI 401	New homes delivered against annual target
HBS 003	Amount in £s of Housing Benefit overpayments recovered
HBS 009	% of Council Tax collected in year
HBS 010	% of Business Rates collected in-year

- (c) Two of six indicators are showing performance below target.

HBS 002	Amount in £s of Council Tax arrears collected
LGP 008	Contracted spend as a % of total non-salary spend

(d) Of the seventeen indicators reported quarterly all can be compared against their data at Quarter 2 2018/19.

(e) Eight indicators are showing performance better than at this time last year.

ECI 105	% of non-major planning development decisions within 8 weeks or within agreed time Extension of time (EoT)
ECI 106	24 months to date % of non-major planning development decisions within 8 weeks or within agreed time (EoT)
FHR 003	Number of reportable employee accidents / ill health
FHR 008	Number of complaints upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman/Housing Ombudsman
HBS 009	% of Council Tax collected in year
HBS 010	% of Business Rates collected in-year
LGP 008	Contracted spend as a % of total non-salary spend
REG 312a	% of noise complaints investigated and completed within 6 weeks of the date of receipt (except where diary sheet returned)

(f) Nine indicators are showing performance lower than this time last year:

CUL 080	Town centre footfall trend from previous year
ECI 104	% of major planning applications decided within 13 weeks or within agreed time (EoT)
ECI 321	Monthly unemployed claimant count
ECI 401	New homes delivered against annual target
FHR 001	Number of FTE working days lost due to sickness (excluding schools)
FHR 009	Number of complaints upheld by the Information Commissioners Office
FHR 019	Staff turnover - Voluntary Leavers
HBS 002	Amount in £s of Council Tax arrears collected

HBS 003	Amount in £s of Housing Benefit overpayments recovered
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(g) Of the seventeen indicators reported quarterly seven can be compared against their previous quarter data.

(h) Five of the seven indicators show performance better than at Qtr 1.

CUL 080	Town centre footfall trend from previous year
ECI 104	% of major planning applications decided within 13 weeks or within agreed time (EoT)
ECI 106	24 months to date % of non-major planning development decisions within 8 weeks or within agreed time (EoT)
LGP 008	Contracted spend as a % of total non-salary spend
REG 312a	% of noise complaints investigated and completed within 6 weeks of the date of receipt (except where diary sheet returned)

(i) Two of the indicators are showing performance lower than at Qtr 1.

ECI 105	% of non-major planning development decisions within 8 weeks or within agreed time (EoT)
ECI 321	Monthly unemployed claimant count

6. A detailed performance scorecard is attached at **Appendix 1**.

### Recommendations

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

**Paul Wildsmith**  
**Managing Director**

### Background Papers

Background papers were not used in the preparation of this report.

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report supports the Councils Crime and Disorder responsibilities
Health and Well Being	This report supports performance improvement relating to improving the health and wellbeing of residents

Carbon Impact and Climate Change	This report supports the Council's sustainability responsibilities
Diversity	This report supports the promotion of diversity
Wards Affected	This reports 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
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report contributes to the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) by involving Members in the scrutiny of performance relating to the delivery of key 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

## **Main Report**

8. Twenty-two performance indicators are reported to this committee, seventeen of them on a six-monthly basis and five annually. The indicators can be summarised in three distinct areas, economy and environmental health, governance and revenue collection. The half year position for each category is noted below.

### **Economy**

9. CUL 080 - The footfall trend appears to be lower than last year however there are currently issues with the Town Centre footfall counters and confidence in the accuracy. Car parking tickets would suggest there are more people visiting Darlington in comparison to last year hence the concern. Officers are currently investigating an alternative system that will enable more accurate comparisons year on year.
10. ECI 401 – Up to the end of the second quarter there have been 349 new dwellings completed against a target of 211 which represents delivery 65% above target. This achievement confirms there is demand and confidence in Darlington with developers willing to invest in the area. The new dwellings assist with the Council's revenue position delivering both Council Tax and New Homes Bonus.
11. Whilst it is noted the performance percentage of major planning applications decided within 13 weeks is lower than last year (ECI 104), it is still high at 85.71% and the position is on an upward trajectory having improved since quarter one. In recent months the Development Management team has introduced a new and streamlined validation process, which enables planning applications to move towards consideration by officers at an earlier stage. The anticipated outcome is the speeding up of the decision making process. Conversely the performance in regard to non major planning application decision made within eight weeks has improved hitting the 89% mark (ECI105 and ECI 106). Both if these figures are above Nationally set Government benchmark figures
12. It is pleasing to note the percentage of noise complaints investigated and completed within six weeks (REG 312a) is at 95.59% which is a further improvement on 2018/19.

### **Governance**

13. Sickness absence (FHR 001) is 0.03 days per full time equivalent higher than last year when we had a positive outturn position greatly improved from the previous year. Managers are continuing to focus on absence to ensure there isn't an upward trend, however unfortunately the recent norovirus has hit a number of services in the last month.

14. Stress remains the highest absence reason equating to 32% of all absences. Officers are increasing efforts in terms of stress risk assessment awareness and absence management relating to stress, and we are continuing to raise awareness of mental health via the Mental Health for Managers programme and the recently launched programme for employees. The introduction of 14 Mental Health first aiders alongside the Mental Health Mentors, and the “you can talk to me about Mental Health” campaign to be launched in the new year, will provide employees with a good level of support at an early stage and hopefully prevent and reduce absence cases in this area.
15. It is pleasing to note reportable accidents (FHR 003) are lower than last year at two. Both have been investigated and any learning has been put into place.
16. Complaints upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman (FHR 008) have reduced from seven in 2018/19 to four in 2019/2020. All of the decisions in 2018/19 related to the provision of Adult Services, including Financial Assessments. Three of the four decisions in 2019/20 related to the provision of Adult Services, including Financial Assessments and Contracted Services which shows a 57% reduction in cases in this area. Each case is reviewed and actions put into place to prevent future occurrences where possible.
17. Staff Turnover (FHR 019) is slightly higher than last year at 4.13% however this is within industry norms and there is no cause for concern.
18. Whilst contracted spend (LGP 008) is lower than target it is improved from 2018/19 and slightly improved from quarter 1. Officer are continuing to monitor non-contracted spend and where there is a need frameworks are identified and tendered.

## **Revenue Collection**

### **Council Tax and Business Rates.**

19. Performance in amount in £s of Council Tax arrears collected (HBS 002) is lower than this time last year, although it is still on course to meet the target for 2019/20 of £1.5 million. Darlington Borough Council is one of the top performers in terms of Council Tax arrears collection. The total arrears collected as a percentage of arrears outstanding was 31.6% for 2018-19, compared to 20.6% nationally and we anticipate this top quartile performance continuing for 2019-20.
20. In addition, as the in-year collection of Council Tax continues to improve (HBS 009), the amount of Council Tax arrears available to collect will reduce.
21. It is also pleasing to note a year on year increase in business rate collection.

## **Housing Benefits**

22. Performance in the amount in £s of Housing Benefit overpayments recovered (HBS 003) is lower than this time last year, although it is still on course to exceed the target for 2019/20 of £950k.
23. The amount of outstanding Housing Benefits overpayments has reduced from £2.6 million in 2018/19 to £2.4 million in 2019-20 and therefore this has impacted on the amount available to recover. However, the £516k recovered in Q2 represents 93.4% of all overpayments identified since April 2019, compared to 87.4% for the same period in 2018.