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Executive Summary

1.0 Overall Summary of Performance

Table one shows a summary of service performance for period four 2019/20 (Jan-Mar) which also includes the preceding three periods for comparison. [Table 2](#) (and the associated tables in [Appendix A](#)) identifies measures where performance is outside agreed tolerance (red or green) for two consecutive periods or more. Where remedial action has been identified to ensure underperformance is rectified, this has been included in the 'commentary' column.

In addition to the usual Progress and Delivery updates, this report contains a series of Service Updates for each of the Council's service areas in order to highlight the inevitable impact that the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have on business as usual and performance over the coming months.

On 23rd March 2020, the UK government announced a series of social restrictions as part of a package of measures designed to tackle the global COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of writing, these measures are set to remain in place until at least 7th May 2020; with varying forms of social distancing likely to remain until a vaccine has been developed for mass immunisation. [Appendix B](#) includes update reports from each service area highlighting how business as usual and performance are likely to be affected over the coming year (2020/2021). Rolling updates will continue to be provided in each P&D report as the situation develops. Whilst it is not possible to provide exact figures for how the Council is likely to be affected at this stage, these Service Updates are designed to provide Members with as much analysis as possible to aid decision making at this time.

RAG	2019/20			
	Period One	Period Two	Period Three	Period Four
Exceeding target	48%	35%	46.4%	35.1%
Meeting target	40.6%	56%	41.2%	43.3%
Below target	11.4%	7%	12.4%	11.3%
Missing information	0%	2%	0%	10.3%

Table 1: Overall summary of performance

Measures where performance is outside agreed tolerance levels for at least two consecutive periods

Service	Measure	Preceding three periods			Current period		
		P1 (2019/20)	P2 (2019/20)	P3 (2019/20)	Current Target	P4 (2019/20)	Commentary
Asset and Facilities Management	Rental income – car parks	£120,588	£180,984	£233,104	£190,700	£286,761	This represents the highest level of income since data began to be collected in 2013.
	Rental portfolio voids	7%	5%	3%	12%	10%	The acquisition of the Saxilby units has affected void rates whilst new tenants are sought, however, performance remains better than the national and regional average.
Benefits	End to end processing times	3.9 days	4.3 days	4.4 days	5 days	3.1 days	No performance issues noted.
	Number of claims older than 30 days	15.5	10	15	20	12	No performance issues noted.
Council Tax and NNDR	Cost of service delivery per property tax base	£10.15	£5.38	£10.08	£9.10	£9.90	Court costs and legal fees requiring virement have affected costs in this period. Costs will adjust in the next reporting period and performance is likely to be back on track.
Democratic Services	Member satisfaction with training & development events	100%	92%	100%	87%	100%	No issues noted. All member training and development events are on hold while social restriction measures are in place.
	% of Freedom of Information requests (Fols) turned around in the statutory time limit	100%	100%	100%	99%	100%	223 Fol requests were received during the period.
	Number of Fol challenges that are subsequently upheld	0	0	0	5	0	No issues noted.

Service	Measure	Preceding three periods			Current period		
		P1 (2019/20)	P2 (2019/20)	P3 (2019/20)	Current Target	P4 (2019/20)	Commentary
Development Management	% of major planning applications determined on time	100%	100%	100%	90%	100%	13 major applications were received during the period.
	% of non-major planning applications determined on time	99%	99%	99%	80%	100%	50 non-major applications were received during the period
	Planning appeals allowed as a % of all appeals	2%	1%	2%	9%	1%	Of the 11 appeals considered during the period, 9 of these were dismissed.
	Income received	£104,310	£388,172	£781,370	£1,019,200	£1,019,418	Whilst January saw the lowest planning app fee income of the year (£35.4k), March saw the 2 nd highest (£128.2k)
Enforcement and Community Safety	% of housing enforcement cases closed within 6 months	81%	78%	82%	75%	96%	No performance issues noted.
	Average number of days before a Community Safety case is closed	8	6.5	6	15	5	No performance issues noted.
Home Choices	Number of households in temporary accommodation	20	19	8	18	12	No issues noted.
	Number of cases prevented from becoming homeless within the statutory target	22	57	65	90	48	A significant increase in homeless relief cases in March has resulted in a decline in homeless prevention cases. Please see the Home Choices service update for a detailed explanation

		Preceding three periods			Current period		
Service	Measure	P1 (2019/20)	P2 (2019/20)	P3 (2019/20)	Current Target	P4 (2019/20)	Commentary
	Number of nights spent in B&B accommodation	59	58	52	0	28	Whilst performance remains below the statutory target, there has been a significant improvement of 81% compared to the same period last year. Partnership working with Market Rasen has been undertaken to provide cold weather provision for rough sleepers. This was funded by MHCLG and led to a significant reduction in B&B usage (0 nights in January and 4 nights in February).
Housing	Average cost of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)	£3,859	£5,172	£5,179	£7,500	£5,273	It is likely that the effects of COVID-19 will have a number of impacts in this work area. Officers in this work area have been redeployed and all existing cases will need to be reviewed. See the Housing service update for a more detailed explanation.
	Customer satisfaction with DFGs	100%	100%	100%	92%	100%	No issues noted.
Leisure Centre Contract	Customer satisfaction with West Lindsey leisure facilities	94%	96%	95%	80%	96%	This figure does not include March due to the closure of the Centre.
	Volume of people using the West Lindsey leisure centre	57,131	107,324	69,976	78,750	78,272	Only partial figures for March have been included due to the closure of the centre. Had the centre not been impacted by COVID-19, it is likely that usage figures would have exceeded the target.
Licensing	% of licensing applications processed in the target time	99%	100%	100%	96%	100%	No performance issues noted.
	Number of licensing applications received	178	338	268	195	198	No issues noted during the period though it is likely that the number of applications for licensed premises will go down, potentially to zero, as a result of COVID-19.
Street Cleansing	Volunteer litter picks	30	24	19	18	27	No issues noted for the period though it is likely that future volunteer litter picks will be affected by social distancing measures.

Service	Measure	Preceding three periods			Current period		Commentary
		P1 (2019/20)	P2 (2019/20)	P3 (2019/20)	Current Target	P4 (2019/20)	
Town Centre Management	Average number of paid for market stalls - Saturday	95	7	7	14	7	There has been a decline in market stall take up, coupled with a cancelled market on 11 th February due to high wind and cancelled markets in March due to the effects of COVID-19.
	Income received	£4,785	£15,667	£22,318	£36,300	£28,247	The issues noted above have impacted on income received. This will continue to be the case while social restriction measures are in place.
Trinity Arts Centre	Audience figures	3,136	7,023	5,965	3,600	4,245	Audience figures were exceptionally high during the period but will be significantly affected throughout 2020/2021 by the COVID-19 pandemic. Please see Trinity Arts Centre service update for a detailed explanation.
Waste Collection	Missed black and blue bin collections	211	310	233	285	230	No issues noted.

Table 2: Measures performing outside agreed tolerance levels for at least two consecutive periods

Corporate Health

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
Time taken to pay invoices	9.5 days	14 days	11 days		No issues noted.	Continue to monitor.
Average Customer satisfaction rating out of 5 stars	N/A	3.5 stars	4 stars	N/A	In percentage terms, satisfaction for the period stands at 82.4%. A total of 198 compliments were received, an increase on the same period last year, with a particular increase in March. The Council is now able to capture compliments received through sites such as Trip Advisor, social media and Google Review. Officers are also being more proactive in logging all types of customer feedback.	Continue to monitor and communicate with staff to ensure that all feedback continues to be recorded.

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
Complaints received	40	NTS	42	↓	A total of 187 complaints were received for the year as a whole compared to 146 for the previous year. Promotion of the Customer First Programme has led to officers becoming more proactive in recording complaints with the Customer Experience Officer.	Customer Services, Waste Services and Planning received the highest number of complaints. Improvements to service delivery continue to be made through implementation of the Customer First Programme.
% of complaints where the Council is at fault	23%	45%	29%	↓	There has been a 9% decrease in upheld complaints for the year as a whole, down to 37% compared to 46% for the previous year. This is despite an increase in the overall number of complaints.	Learning and improvement actions have been implemented where necessary; including changes to policies and procedures, improving the customer's experience of the Council's website and improvements in the way that information is provided to the customer.
Average number of days to resolve a complaint	6.7 days	21 days	7 days	↓	Improved engagement with officers through the Customer First Programme has led to efficiencies in resolving complaints. Response times have improved by one whole day for the year as a whole compared to the previous year. Performance for period 4 is down compared to last year due to initial disruption caused by changes to working practice as a result of social distancing measures.	Continue to monitor. The target for 2020/21 has been amended to account for high performance levels.
Digital demand	40%	NTS	47%	↑	The ongoing programme of service re-designs is placing greater emphasis on digital services which has led to an increase in demand.	Customers will continue to be offered a choice in how they access Council services.
% of calls answered within 21 seconds	86%	80%	85%	↓	Performance remains comparable with last year. This is despite an increase of 15,000 phone calls received by the Council during 2019/20.	Telephone demand continues to be analysed to understand if and where this can be reduced. For example, by placing more information on the Council's website.
Average number of staff sickness absence days per FTE	0.77 days	0.6 days	0.57 days	↑	No issues noted	Continue to monitor, particularly the impact of COVID-19 on staff sickness absence.

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
Server and system availability	100%	98%	100%	→	No issues noted.	Continue to monitor.
Number of data breaches resulting in action by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)	N/A	0	0	N/A	No issues noted.	Continue to monitor.

Table 3: Corporate Health performance

Appendix A: Service Performance Exceptions

Asset and Facilities Management

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
Rental income – car parks	£231,340	£190,700	£286,761	↑	This represents the highest level of income since data began to be collected in 2013.	Continue to monitor.
Rental portfolio voids	8%	12%	10%	↓	The acquisition of the Saxilby units has affected void rates whilst new tenants are sought, however, performance remains better than the national and regional average.	Continue to seek new tenants for the vacant Saxilby units.
Planned and responsive maintenance	64%	70%	77%	↑	Proactive maintenance has resulted in a reduction in maintenance costs for Council property of £100k over the last three years. Responsive maintenance for the period stands at 23%	Continue to monitor.

Table 4: Asset and Facilities Management performance exceptions

Benefits

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
End to end processing times	3.7 days	5 days	3.1 days	↑	No issues noted.	Continue to monitor.
Number of claims older than 30 days	9	20	12	↓	No issues noted.	Continue to monitor.

Table 5: Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support performance exceptions

Building Control

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
Income received	£220,253	£235,700	£241,877	↑	No issues noted	Continue to monitor

Table 6: Building Control performance exceptions

Contracts Management and Procurement

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
% of contracts awarded to local suppliers	20%	20%	56%	↑	Five out of a possible nine contracts were awarded to local suppliers. The lifetime value of these contracts is in excess of £100k.	Continue to monitor.

Table 7: Contracts Management and Procurement performance exceptions

Council Tax and NNDR

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
Cost of service per property tax base	£5.58	£9.10	£9.90	↓	Court costs and legal fees requiring virement have affected costs in this period.	Court costs were finalised and legal fees vired at the end of March Costs will therefore adjust in the next reporting period.
NNDR in year collection rate	98.6%	98.6%	98.9%	↑	A total of £948,602 was collected during the period, an increase of £61,214 on the same period last year.	Continue to monitor.
Number of properties on the Council Tax base per FTE	5,737	5,000	5,493	↓	A staff retirement has affected performance in this area, though it remains above target.	Another member of staff is receiving training to assist in this area.

Table 8: Council Tax and NNDR performance exceptions

Democratic Services

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
Member satisfaction with training and development events	100%	87%	100%	→	No issues noted.	All member training and development events are currently suspended until further notice.
% of Freedom of Information requests (Fol) turned around in the statutory time limit	100%	99%	100%	→	A total of 223 Fol requests were received during the period, down by 12 on the same period as last year.	Continue to monitor
Number of FOI challenges that are subsequently upheld	0	5	0	→	No issues noted.	Continue to monitor.

Table 9: Democratic Services performance exceptions

Development Management

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
Received planning applications	372	345	410	↑	During the period, 410 new applications (a 10% increase on the same period last year). March alone saw 177 applications, the highest monthly total in more than two years.	The overall number of applications received for the year is 1,526, only 3 applications fewer than the previous year. This varies from the rest of England which has been reporting a 4% decline in the number of applications by the end of 2019, compared to the previous year.
% of major planning applications determined on time	100%	90%	100%	→	A total of 13 major planning applications were received during the period.	Continue to monitor.
% of non-major applications determined on time	99%	80%	100%	↑	A total of 50 non-major planning applications were received during the period.	Continue to monitor.
Appeals allowed as a % of all decisions	1%	9%	1%	→	Of the 11 appeals considered during the period, 9 of these were dismissed.	

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
Received income	£955,102	£1,019,200	£1,019,418	↑	Income is reported on a cumulative basis. Whilst January saw the lowest planning app fee income of the year (£35.4k), March saw the 2 nd highest (£128.2k)	Continue to monitor.

Table 10: Development Management performance exceptions

Enforcement and Community Safety

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
% of planning enforcement cases given an initial response within 20 working days	N/A	90%	97%	N/A	No issues noted.	Continue to monitor.
Average time before a community safety case is closed	7.6 days	15 days	5 days	↑	No issues noted.	Continue to monitor.
% of housing enforcement cases closed within 6 months	N/A	75%	96%	↑	No issues noted.	Continue to monitor.
Number of private sector properties where conditions have been improved	N/A	21	58	N/A	No issues noted.	Continue to monitor.

Table 11: Enforcement performance exceptions

Garden Waste Collection

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
Subscription take up	48.4%	58%	48.2%	↓	Subscription take-up is down by 0.2% compared to the same period last year. This equates to 30 fewer subscriptions. The usual third reminder and communication campaign were suspended as a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic.	Continue to monitor subscription rates as the current situation progresses.

Table 12: Garden Waste performance exceptions

Home Choices

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
The number of cases prevented from becoming homeless within the statutory target (56 days)	58	90	48	↓	A significant increase in homeless relief cases in March has resulted in a decline in homeless prevention cases.	See Home Choices service update above for a more detailed explanation.
Number of nights spent in B&B accommodation	148	0	28	↑	24 of these nights occurred in March as a result of a complex case involving domestic abuse for which temporary accommodation was not deemed suitable. The target set is a statutory one.	There has been an improvement of 81% compared to the same period last year. Partnership working funded by MHCLG to provide cold weather provision for rough sleepers led to a significant reduction in B&B usage (0 nights in Jan and 4 nights in Feb).
The average number of days spent in temporary accommodation	20	56	49	↓	The increase in temporary accommodation usage compared to the same period last year is a result of two complex cases where it was difficult to move tenants from the accommodation; requiring police and hospital involvement.	Procedures have been amended to prevent a repeat of this in a similar situation.
Number of households using temporary accommodation	34	18	12	↑	As above	As above

Table 13: Home Choices performance exceptions

Housing

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
Average cost of DFGs	£6,214	£7,500	£5,273	↑	It is likely that the effects of COVID-19 will have a number of impacts in this work area. Officers in this work area have been redeployed and all existing cases will need to be reviewed.	The Council is liaising with Lincolnshire County Council. See 'Disabled Facilities Grants' above for more information.
The total number of long-term empty homes in the District	571	540	673	↓	This represents an increase of 102 empty homes compared to the same period last year.	Further work is being undertaken to understand why the numbers have risen in this way. However, performance for the year as a whole is within agreed parameters.

Table 14: Housing performance exceptions

ICT

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
Number of helpdesk requests received	N/A	N/A	361	N/A	Despite the numbers of Officers working from home, there hasn't been a noticeable increase in calls to the helpdesk.	Continue to monitor
Average time taken to action helpdesk requests	N/A	N/A	2 hrs, 26 mins	N/A	The nature of some of the helpdesk calls have been more complex which take longer to action.	Continue to monitor
Number of change management requests received during the period	N/A	N/A	335	N/A	There was a noticeable increase in the number of change requests due to the increase in staff working from home.	Continue to monitor
Number of change requests completed during the period	N/A	N/A	325	N/A	As above	Continue to monitor

Table 15: ICT performance exceptions

Leisure Contract

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
Customer satisfaction with West Lindsey leisure facilities	95%	75%	96%	↑	This figure does not include March due to the closure of the Centre.	This will continue to be monitored once the centre re-opens.
Volume of people using the West Lindsey leisure centre	92,303	78,750	78,272	↓	Only partial figures for March have been included due to the closure of the centre. Had the centre not been impacted by COVID-19, it is likely that usage figures would have exceeded the target.	As above.

Table 16: Leisure Contract performance exceptions

Licensing

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
Income received	£10,426	N/A	£6,788	↓	Income is down by £3,638 (or 34.9%) compared to the same period last year.	It is likely that income will continue to be affected as a result of COVID-19 though the extent of this is unclear at this stage.
Number of applications received	232	195	198	↓	No issues noted during the period though it is likely that the number of applications for licensed premises will go down, potentially to zero, as a result of COVID-19.	Continue to monitor.
% of applications processed within the target time	86%	96%	100%	↑	No issues noted.	Continue to monitor.

Table 17: Licensing performance exceptions

Local Land Charges

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
Income received	£103,439	N/A	£92,973	↓	Awaiting commentary	Awaiting commentary

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
Market Share	62%	65%	60%	↓	Awaiting commentary	Awaiting commentary
Average number of days to process a search	7.55 days	10 days	6.7 days	↑	Complex cases and staff absence led to an increased turnaround time in January	This issue was quickly resolved with February and March returning an average turnaround time of 5 days.

Table 18: Local Land Charges performance exceptions

Regulatory Services

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
% of food premises rated at 3* or above	97%	95%	97%	→	No issues noted	Continue to monitor
Number of Environmental Protection requests received	N/A	125	185	N/A	Requests of this nature have increased due to the social restriction measures in place. Typical requests relate to noise nuisance and burning of bonfires.	The approach during this period has been to educate rather than enforce and this will be kept under regular review.
% of Environmental Protection cases closed within 6 months	N/A	75%	100%	N/A	No issues noted.	Continue to monitor

Table 19: Regulatory Services performance exceptions

Street Cleansing

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
The number of volunteer litter picks	21	18	27	↑	It is likely that litter picks will reduce whilst social distancing measure remain in place.	Continue to monitor

Table 22: Street cleansing performance exceptions

Systems Development

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
Website availability	100%	98%	100%	→	No issues noted.	Continue to monitor.
LLPG Standard	Gold	National Standard	Gold	→	West Lindsey is the only Council in Lincolnshire to be awarded 'gold' status for data accuracy	Continue to monitor.

Table 20: Systems Development performance exceptions

Town Centre Management

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
Average number of paid for market stalls – Tuesday	34	37	23	↓	There has been a decline in market stall take up, coupled with a cancelled market on 11 th February due to high wind and cancelled markets in March due to the effects of COVID-19. Overall, stall take-up is down 34.5% compared to the same period last year.	The ongoing effects of COVID-19 are likely to have a significant impact on the market's performance (including the Farmer's Market) whilst social restrictions remain in place.
Average number of paid for market stalls – Saturday	13	14	7	↓	There has been a decline in market stall take up as well as cancelled markets in March due to the effects of COVID-19.	As above
Income received	£35,086	£36,300	£28,247	↓	As above	As above

Table 21: Town Centre Management performance exceptions

Waste Collection

Measure	Baseline Perf (P4 2018/19)	Target	Current Perf (P4 2019/20)	DOT	What is affecting performance?	What do we need to do to improve and by when?
% of household waste sent for recycling	30%	50%	30%	→	High contamination rates (45%) have led to a decline in recycling	WLDC is working with the Lincs Waste Partnership and Lincolnshire County Council to reduce the amount of contamination in the recycling stream. A new county wide mixed dry recycling mix has been agreed with all of the district council websites having been updated to show the same message.
Number of missed black and blue bin collections	198	285	230	↓	Performance continues to exceed target.	Continue to monitor.
% of missed bins collected within the Service Level Agreement	100%	95%	100%	→	No issues noted.	Continue to monitor.

Table 22: Waste Collection performance exceptions

Appendix B: COVID-19 Service Updates

Asset and Facilities Management

Since social restriction measures came in to effect, the Property and Assets Team have maintained a skeleton staff presence in the Guildhall on a rota basis as there are still some staff and tenants occupying and working in the building. In addition, there is still a requirement to maintain compliance at our operational buildings (for example, fire alarm testing, legionella monitoring and checking critical plant) along with observing the security of Council properties. There was an initial increase in communications between our tenants and the service but as the lockdown has progressed and Government support has been provided, this has reduced. The requirement for the management of day to day maintenance has eased a little with some of our properties being closed and contractors furloughing staff. Servicing of premises was initially steady but has slowly increased as contractors determine means of working whilst observing social distancing. Some of the facilities management work, such as managing meeting rooms, has completely stopped however, the officer who manages this is instead involved in service plan project work such as implementation of the compliance and asset management policies; as well as assisting the team with other tasks. The following additional work streams have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **Car Parking** - The decision to temporarily suspend public car parking charges for three months has meant no income from day tickets as well as cancellations or parking permits. While income should recover once social restriction measures are eased, it is anticipated that the car parking income target will not be met for 2020/2021.
- **Rent** - Following the wavering of some low value rent, Management Team instructed that WLDC would only offer temporary reviewable deferred rent to tenants requesting assistance on the understanding that it would be fully repaid by financial year end. Providing there is no increase in property voids, the loss of income in this area should be minimal.
- **Capital Works Project** - The lockdown has coincided with what would be the busiest period of the Market Rasen Leisure Centre works. Although the main contractor has endeavoured there have been difficulties as a result of sub-contractors, utilities contractors and material suppliers being furloughed. This has resulted in unforeseeable delay which will ultimately result in additional costs to the Council. Other proposed works that have, or may be, delayed include Caenby Corner Operational Service Depot, 5-7 Market Place and the Guildhall Reception. At present, it is not known what impact the current situation will have on these projects but it is anticipated that managing social distancing may extend project delivery times and subsequently increase costs.
- **Revenue Budget Lines** – Some budget lines will experience pressure such as cleaning, cleaning materials and maintenance but this may be countered by three months of low activity that may create surplus in other budget lines such as utilities.

The team has been able to press on with implementing some policy action plans, mainly around compliance and asset management which has led to greater control and transparency on a number of compliance matters. Furthermore the service normally struggles around financial closedown with placing annual servicing and utility orders for our property assets. These along with preparing the Actual Service Charge report have been completed a little earlier this year.

Benefits

The last two weeks of March saw an erratic change in the number of live claims being handled. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic led to an increase in applications for Universal Credit, followed by Council Tax Support and the effects of this will show in performance figures for the first quarter of the new financial year. The Team have also processed over 2,000 changes to Housing Benefit claims in order to grant additional Housing Benefit as a result of the pandemic.

Prior to this the year-end procedure had been completed smoothly generating little contact from customers. Another Benefits Assessment Officer post became vacant on 31st December 2019 which has created resourcing issues within the Team with the loss of resource totalling 25% since April 2019.

Building Control

Application rates have dropped as expected during winter, however, income has remained above target. Of the applications received during the period, 108 were building notices, 47 were full plan applications, one was a partnership applications and 23 were partnership applications from other authorities. The Team is still carrying a vacancy for a Surveyor and the temporary staffing costs are impacting the Team's costs.

Contracts Management and Procurement

Procurement exercises continue to be run well and in accordance with all required protocols. Staff training scheduled for March has had to be postponed and will be rearranged once social restriction measures have been eased. In the last period five of nine contracts (56%) were awarded to local suppliers. The life-time value of these contracts is in excess of £100k. The procurement of the ERP software system has been paused due to the implications of COVID-19 and this decision is due to be reviewed within six months.

Council Tax and NNDR

Almost all of the Revenues team are new to home working. The Council wide systems issues experienced during the first week led to a number of the Team coming in to the Guildhall; demonstrating dedication to each other as the Council Tax annual bills had just been issued and the team were inundated with phone calls. The resolution of systems issues helped to ease the anxiety some of the Team felt about working from home.

The cessation of face to face enquiries has impacted on the volume of calls received by the Revenues Service, particularly during the first three weeks of restrictions which coincided with the issuing of annual Council Tax bills. The Team has attempted to provide a full service via telephone to all customers with 2,282 telephone enquiries being dealt with during the first three weeks of the restriction period alone. The majority of customer contact relates to concerns about payments during the current period of financial uncertainty. In response, the Council has allowed payments to be deferred until either 1st June or 1st July.

The recovery of Council Tax has been severely impacted by COVID-19 with Magistrates Liability Court Hearings scheduled in May and June having been cancelled. It is currently uncertain whether court hearings scheduled for July 2020 will proceed as planned. These cancellations may impact cash-flow as court costs incurred by the debtor usually exceed £70k for these dates alone. These impacts will be mitigated once business resumes as normal. Normal reminder notices and summonses have been suspended for April and May although a reminder will be issued on 24th April to encourage customers who owe arrears for the last financial year to contact the Council to discuss their personal circumstances and to come to an arrangement regarding resumption of payments.

Demand for the service continues to be received via the Council's website, email or via post. The current external mail house has been exemplary in providing the amended reminder notice and providing other bulk mail at very short notice. Some other letters issued by the team are now being considered for mailing by the mail house which will help officers attending the office twice per week to deal with incoming post; and to print and envelope external post that needs to be mailed. The Council Tax collection rate is being closely monitored on a daily basis and, at the time of writing, looks set to be on target with a similar collection percentage to that of April 2019. The number of customers paying by direct debit has increased, as has the number of people requesting to pay over 12 monthly instalments. Efforts are being made to encourage more customers to switch to electronic billing rather than paper bills.

The government has introduced a hardship relief fund for working age Council Tax payers in receipt of Council Tax support which will pay up to £150 to each claimant and see a reduction in a claimant's Council Tax bill for 2020/21 by £150 or less to reduce their bill to nil. Software to enable this scheme is due to be tested imminently with a view to implementing as soon as it is deemed to be accurate. This will assist at least 3,700 claimants who currently match the criteria and will result in another bulk mailing of new Council Tax bills for those affected. Finally, despite initial challenges, the Team are now getting used to using Microsoft Teams which has now become part of business as usual. Everybody is working hard and working well as a team to ensure the continued delivery of the best service possible during this uncertain time.

Customer Services

As the government social restriction measures came into effect, the Customer Services Team worked exceptionally hard to adapt to the new and constantly changing work environment that followed. This included meeting the demands of a large number of, often distressed, customers who were contacting the Council for assistance or information; undertaking regular and thorough cleaning of the reception area to limit the risk of infection and managing expectations of customers, staff and Guildhall tenants about the realities of working in a socially restricted environment. In March alone, the Customer Services Team dealt with 1,367 face to face customers and the reception area has been restructured to ensure that social distancing can be enforced once the Guildhall reception area is re-opened. This includes two metre distancing tape placed on the floor of the reception area; the installation of an intercom system to the main entrance of the Guildhall so that visitors can be screened and the main door remaining locked to ensure only a safe number of customers can enter the reception at any one time. For March and April, a total of 82 customers presented to the Guildhall, of which only 10 needed to physically enter the building for assistance.

In the back office; alterations have been made to ensure post can be handled in a safe manner; and to accommodate changes made by Royal Mail themselves. Scanning and emailing of post for other services; as well as providing a printing service for teams that do not have staff located in the office has placed a strain on the Customer Service team's resources

Arrangements have been made for Customer Services staff to work from home, including issuing appropriate IT equipment and software applications and receiving training on how to use Microsoft Teams. There continues to be issues with IT and the telephones that impact on the quality of the service we are able to offer, however, these are managed as and when they arise. One of the biggest pieces of work undertaken during the lockdown so far is to contact all customers of Trinity Arts Centre to rearrange or cancel bookings.

Whilst none of the Customer Services staff have been redeployed, one member of the team has received training for the CCTV office to support in the case of staff absence. There will be pressure on team resources when annual leave is taken into account due to a long-term absence within the team and temporary recruitment may be needed in order to cover this.

While telephone demand has decreased; there has been an increase in email demand (an average of 40 additional emails per day) which typically take longer to resolve; turning a 1 FTE all day job into a 2 FTE all day job meaning more resource is required at the start of the week to deal with demand received over the weekend. Consideration has been given to allowing staff to work weekends to pick up demand but has been discounted at this stage. It is currently unclear whether telephone demand will increase as lockdown continues and this will continue to be monitored.

Once the current restriction measures are lifted or eased, this may impact on resources if the Council is required to operate a restricted, face to face operation. A comprehensive plan will be drawn up that considers the full implications of re-opening the reception area to the public whilst adhering to social distancing measures in a way that does not risk the health and safety of our staff or customers. This plan will include intelligence from other teams on what their requirements

will be in terms of service delivery. Expected challenges are maintaining social distancing; implementing a cleaning regime after each customer leaves; and potentially turning customers away for non-essential services that can be accessed by phone or digitally. These challenges will all need to be met in a framework of a reduced number of staff in the reception area with the remainder of the team based at home. It will also require full consultation with our tenants such as Job Centre Plus.

In terms of handling payments, it is expected that there will be an increase in credit/debit card transactions and the Customer Services Manager has already paid an additional £3k to Civica to increase the Council's limit from 50k transactions per year to 75k transactions. Increased card payments will also incur additional bank charges which may lead to a budget overspend. This is being monitored regularly.

With regards to the impact on performance; the team is exceeding its target of answering phone calls, up to 98% on average compared to 92% in the previous year; although fewer calls were received in April which may account for this. The number of complaints decreased in March / April whilst the number of compliments increased significantly in comparison to last year. This is particularly true for Waste Services where compliments increased by 36.5% in April compared to the same month last year. Customer satisfaction surveys have currently been put on hold and will resume once services get back to normal.

The refurbishment of the Guildhall reception area has been put on hold and will be revisited once restriction measures have been lifted.

Democratic Services

Business as usual has been suspended as a result of the effects of COVID-19. During the initial period of lockdown (and in the absence of required regulations), many of the Council's decisions were taken under urgent delegation, a process that was previously rarely used. The team's focus was ensuring the organisation and members were clear on this process, and that decisions were been published in a transparent and timely manner. As of 4th April 2020, temporary regulation was introduced permitting virtual meetings, subject to certain criteria. Since then, the majority of the team's resources have been committed to investigating, testing and implementing an IT solution to meet the new regulations which included training Councillors' to use the new, virtual platform, developing meeting procedures and rewriting Standing Orders. The first virtual meeting (Planning Committee) was held on 29th April 2020 and was very successful. There is one virtual meeting planned for May with additional meetings scheduled throughout June and July with the exception of Annual Council and Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This is subject to government guidance on social restriction measures and will be kept under review. To ensure these meetings are a success, all Members of Council will need to undertake a training and practice programme in the coming weeks. All other Member training has been suspended.

The Civic Office has seen all events suspended; both those being hosted by the Council and those that the Council are invited to. Annual Council is currently delayed until September and this will impact on the timetable of the Civic Office for the remainder of 2020/2021. The 2019/2020 Community Awards are currently re-scheduled for October 2020. Work has been undertaken to review significant protocols of national impact in light of the pandemic. The Civic Officer has been re-deployed to assist at the Crematorium. The Team's dedicated Support Officer is also ready to be re-deployed if required. The remaining team members can perform their job functions from home. Hosting virtual meetings has proven resource intensive both in the run up to, and during a meeting. It may be feasible to streamline this as confidence grows.

Development Management

In accordance with the advice issued by the Government's Chief Planner in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, local authority planning services are expected to continue to determine and process planning applications using innovative approaches and seeking extensions of time where required.

Planning Applications and Fee Income

The department received its highest number of applications over a two year period in March 2020 and is working at full capacity with all Officers working with full caseloads and some members of Management Team taking a small caseload to ease the pressure on the service. This is being closely monitored with a view to bringing in additional resource if new planning applications continue to come in at the same rate (currently 20 per week on average). As of 1st May 2020, there are 267 live planning applications under consideration, however, as lockdown continues, it is anticipated that the number of new applications may reduce (along with the resultant planning fee income). Safeguarding measures are in place with case officers using virtual tools and only undertaking site visits if necessary.

Planning Applications Determined

It is expected that some delay in the time taken to determine planning applications will occur and all applicants are being warned of this in advance. At present, the service is still determining between 20-30 applications per week; a similar rate to pre-lockdown figures. The service appears to be moving to a more balanced position between issuing decisions and the number of new applications received.

Week commencing	No. of planning decisions	No. of planning applications
20/04/2020	23	20
13/04/2020	26	23
06/04/2020	19	18
30/03/2020	23	26
23/03/2020	26	35
16/03/2020	23	45
09/03/2020	28	50
02/03/2020	24	39

Planning Applications Determined

The first virtual planning committee was successfully held on 29th April and now sets the template to be able to continue committees to the usual monthly timetable.

Planning Appeals

The Government's Planning Inspectorate (PINS) has currently suspended all planning inquiries, hearings and site visits. We are therefore likely to see a reduction in the number of appeal decision received with two Public Hearings currently postponed. PINS are piloting a digital hearing on 11th May with "a view to scaling up digital events further over June/July." The Council may therefore need to adapt to host a Public Hearing in a virtual environment.

Neighbourhood Planning

The Coronavirus Act has postponed all neighbourhood planning referenda until 6th May 2021. Planning Practice Guidance has been amended to now give 'significant weight' to draft Neighbourhood Plans in decision making, where a decision statement has been issued to send a Neighbourhood Plan to referendum. Further guidance on this can be found [here](#)

Enforcement and Community Safety

Across all enforcement and regulatory work areas the formal enforcement process is impacted by the court's ability to progress cases and the Council's ability to effectively investigate (carrying out face to face interviews under caution, for example). This will reduce legal costs, however negatively impacts upon our ability to ensure regulations are adhered to.

Selective Licensing Scheme - The Selective Licensing scheme remains consistent in terms of performance and the main focus within this work area is on unlicensed properties.

Housing and Planning Enforcement - Both Housing and Planning Enforcement have been impacted in a similar manner during the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of reports received have been minimal, which has enabled officers to progress existing cases as far as possible. Officers from both work areas have been redeployed to assist with Business Grants. It is expected that most of the planning enforcement powers are able to be exercised with social distancing applied, however, for Housing Enforcement the situation will be more difficult. The focus is solely on emergency cases to date and guidance has been issued advising Council's as to how this function should operate during this period. The ability to enforce effectively has been impacted, which in turn will impact on the Council's ability to issue notices, carry out prosecutions and issue civil penalties.

Community Safety - Community Safety Officers have been mainly redeployed to focus on assisting with business restrictions and associated patrols, alongside liaison with the Police in relation to anti-social behaviour. There has not been an increase in general ASB, however additional cases of fly-tipping and environmental type issues have been noted.

Enterprising Communities

During period four, the service has continued to deliver grant funding activity supporting a wide range of projects across all areas of the district. The grants awarded have directly contributed to securing match funding into the district and enabling funds from local groups to achieve positive results. Hemswell Cliff Managed Estate work continues and we continue to see further improvements in the housing market as a result of direct intervention and support. The Local Access bid was successful with over £2m being allocated to Gainsborough as mixed grant/loan finance. Work is now progressing on further social economy engagement to develop delivery and spending plans for this funding. Made in Gainsborough continues to support education, training and employment outcomes with a grant of £60k awarded to Lincoln College to upgrade and expand facilities at the Gainsborough College campus. Rural Community broadband work continues and more villages have been supported to access funding schemes to create better internet connections and speeds.

Finance and Business Support

Throughout the quarter, the team have been working on finalising the Medium Term Financial Plan and the 2020/21 Budget and Council Tax; all of which were approved at the March meeting of Full Council. The team has also been preparing for the closure of accounts and the interim audit of these in February went well with no issues raised. The procurement of a Finance and Performance ERP system has unfortunately been put on hold due to the implications of COVID-19, the heightened risk of resourcing the contract and the unknown financial impact on the Council. This system is, however, key to achieving efficiencies and improvements for both the Finance team and other services and so the situation will be reviewed within six months.

Garden Waste Collection

Garden waste subscriptions were opened to online customers on 6th January 2020, supported by a communications campaign in local media and on social media sites. Whilst the first two reminders were issued either on time or early, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have meant that the third reminder has not been issued and there has been no further promotion of the scheme on social media. Despite this, subscription requests are still being received on a daily basis and, at the time of writing, there are 30 fewer subscriptions than at the same time last year. Anecdotal feedback suggests that some residents do not consider garden waste subscriptions to be a priority at this time; whilst others are waiting to see how the current situation develops before committing to a subscription.

Home Choices

The effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic are expected to bring significant challenges to the Home Choices service, as follows:

Temporary Accommodation and B&B use

It is anticipated that there will be a rise in the number of domestic abuse cases. In turn, this may result in increased usage of Bed and Breakfast or other temporary accommodation over the next two quarters (up to September 2020). One week before the current social restriction measures came into force, one of the Council's available temporary accommodation units was severely damaged by a tenant, however, the repairs team for the provider has been unable to attend due to restrictions with supplies of goods and the availability of the workforce. The consequence of this is a reduced unit availability of 20% until the unit can be repaired.

Rehousing from the Housing Register

Since social restriction measures have been in place, there has been a decline in move-on accommodation as a result of housing providers no longer repairing empty properties and prioritising repairs for those who are already in accommodation. There has also been a reduction in people moving out which means that properties aren't becoming available as much as they previously did. As a result, the Housing Register has been suspended until 6th May (subject to review) which means that people cannot currently bid for properties. The Council has asked housing providers to focus on properties for those in most urgent need.

Prevention and Relief Cases

It is anticipated that there will be an increase in homeless relief cases (those classed as having no secure accommodation) rather than prevention cases (those who are threatened with homelessness) as landlords who served a notice to evict prior to the current pandemic begin to take action as soon as they are able to. At present, landlords are unable to serve notice to evict, however, in several months' time, landlords may instead serve a Section 8 Notice which gives a tenant two weeks' notice of eviction as opposed to two months. These are enforceable by the Court and shortens the time the Council has available to prevent homelessness in these cases. It is expected that there will be a simultaneous influx of cases for those people served notice of eviction prior to the current social restriction measures which will lead to much greater demand on the Home Choices service than previously and contribute to the expected rise in homeless relief cases.

Other

Some letting agents have increased their demands for renting their properties and asking in excess of three months of rent in advance where previously they have only asked for one month's rent in advance. This is a national issue and, whilst the Council is trying not to use these agents at present, this has considerably restricted the amount of move-on accommodation that is available. This will have an impact on the Council's re-housing figures for quarter one of 2020/2021.

Whilst the Council has access to funding it has been a struggle to access the basic essentials that enable people to move in to a house securely. Following enquiries, the Home Choices Team have received offers of basic furniture which are being housed in a rented storage unit. This should allow for quicker move-on times going forward.

Growth and Regeneration

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to affect the activities of the Growth Team in the following ways:

Gainsborough Townscape Heritage Scheme - The take up of building grants will almost certainly be affected by Covid-19, though the long-term impact is unknown at this time. The 'activity' element of this scheme will commence once social restriction measures have been eased and recruitment for the Activity Co-ordinator post is currently on hold.

Mayflower 400 - The event planned for May has been postponed and the Team is awaiting guidance from the Arts Council regarding alterations to the planned events programme. Planned events will be rescheduled and held in compliance with government guidance.

Shopfront Grants / Living over the Shop – Applications to this grant scheme have stopped until further notice. The long-term impact is unknown at this time and depends on how long social restriction measures remain in place.

5-7 Market Place – This is currently in the pre- construction phase and it is likely that completion of this phase will be delayed by approximately two months as a result of the current restrictions in place.

Cinema Development - Lincolnshire Co-op has agreed an amount to lift the restrictive covenant, however, further progress is currently on hold while the impact of COVID-19 on the leisure industry is analysed. The timescales for this project will be delayed but it is not possible to say by how long at this stage.

Bowling Green Road - The original timeline to start on site in April has been delayed until late May 2020 at the earliest. There will potentially be an impact on the build programme as social distancing is put into practice on site. The Council will be using this opportunity to progress the Riverside Walk section between former Lidl and Riverside Approach

Corringham Road – Lincolnshire County Council have advised that this is currently still in their programme and is likely to remain on track as County is committed to assisting with economic recovery through their own projects.

Southern SUE – While Keepmoat have closed all their sites nationally, they are still keen to ensure they have a pipeline of sites. Progress has been slow due to the furloughing of Keepmoat staff who are integral to this project.

Housing

Affordable Housing

Affordable Housing has seen a high level of completions during 2019/20. This element of our strategic housing function is to increase the supply of affordable housing to meet the diverse housing needs of those who cannot access the housing market. As much of the delivery is driven by the private housing sector and the business plans of our registered provider partners, we work in an enabling capacity with developers and registered providers. Developers are required to make a percentage of their larger developments available for affordable housing so our role is through negotiation at an early stage on housing type and tenure through to liaison with development management and registered providers all the way through to occupation. The aim is to maximise delivery and to ensure those in housing need have access to appropriate housing to meet that need. This year's completions are the culmination of work over a period of four or five years. A large number of dwellings specifically for over 55's have been completed to meet the needs of our ageing population along with general needs accommodation to meet the needs of single people and families.

Disabled Facilities Grants

The Countywide Framework for contractors is now embedded and over the course of the year the average timescales for delivering the grants have reduced to an average of 137 days in period four. This timescale includes elements of the process that are out of the Council's control and includes all aspects of work undertaken. A total of 125 grants were approved in year, compared to 71 in 2018/19. The Council continues to spend and commit all of its funding allocation in relation to DFGs. COVID-19 has resulted in these referrals ceasing, with the exception of works required to discharge someone from hospital. Officers in this work area have been redeployed to work on business grants initially and when available, will progress any relevant casework. The pandemic will have a number of impacts in this work area. There will be a backlog of existing cases, along with some new referrals. All existing cases will need to be reviewed (for example, many customers may be shielding or in a vulnerable group and will not want the work to be undertaken, nor will it be able to). Availability of contractors will impact upon timescales for delivery and financial profiling will need to be considered to ensure that the budget can meet the backlogged demand (some of which may be unknown). Liaison with Lincolnshire County Council is underway in relation to this.

Empty Homes

During period four, the number of long-term empty properties has increased significantly, up by 17.9% compared to the same period last year. Historically, they have increased at the end of period three, then reduced down, however it is unclear this year as to why there is a significant increase. Further work will be undertaken to understand this. As a result of the pandemic, there has been limited proactive general work undertaken, other than promoting the Empty Properties grant available, which may have had some impact. The number itself is not at a level which is of concern, however understanding the increase may help to inform a future approach to providing assistance.

COVID-19 will result in only the priority cases being dealt with from this work area, however, subject to enforcement action being necessary, there should not be any barriers to undertaking this work when needed as the properties are unoccupied and in some cases access will not be required.

ICT

There were a number of requests in late March for Jabber Softphone set up and equipment for working from home due to COVID-19. There wasn't a noticeable change in the number of calls to the helpdesk, despite the majority of Council officers working from home.

Leisure Contract

As a result of government guidance on social restriction measures, the Leisure Centre closed its doors on 19th March 2020. Therefore, only partial performance information for period 4 is available. At the time of writing, it is unclear when the Leisure Centre will be allowed to re-open and all staff have been furloughed with the exception of the Centre Manager and one Duty Manager who are currently being paid out of the SLM reserves, although the Council have agreed to provide initial financial support if needed on an Open Book Accounting basis, subject to agreement with Legal Services Lincolnshire. This will also apply to the Management Fee due to the Council. The March, April and May quarterly invoice has been put on hold at this time. Regular communication is being kept up with SLM to ensure processes are in place to enable users to return to the facility and still maintain social distancing once restrictions have been lifted. The Market Rasen Leisure Centre is also nearing completion, with an estimated handover of 9th June 2020, after which SLM will complete the internal fit out, ready for opening.

Licensing

The Licensing work area continues to meet its targets in relation to income and has continued to perform well during a period of staffing changes. The number of applications remains consistent, as does the level of income associated with these. The level of impact COVID-19 is likely to have on this work area is unclear at present. There is expected to be further guidance issued in relation to licensed premises, however it is unlikely that any new licensed premises will come forward, which will impact upon the level of income received. There has been a consistent demand from Licence Holders (of all forms) with queries about their related fees and this is expected to continue. It is expected that other Licensed Premises (such as Zoos) will have their inspections rescheduled accordingly. It is likely that the volume and income measures will be impacted negatively during 2020/2021, though the full extent of this is not yet clear.

People and Organisational Development

COVID-19 has not adversely affected this service area and we continue to complete work as planned during this time. However, there has been increased pressure for the Communications team to provide regular and updated information to support the council and wider network as part of the Warn and Inform Cell of the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum. The Health and Safety service continues to run and provide advice and guidance to staff and managers, although staff in this area have supported other services such as CCTV to provide much needed cover.

Human Resources is continuing with all business as usual work and has adapted to the virtual technology really well to support managers and staff during this time. The team are affected personally by the pandemic with the majority of staff now having to accommodate home schooling of their children into their working week but everyone has shown a real commitment to continue providing an excellent service.

Performance and Programmes

The Team have been redeployed to set up and run the West Lindsey Community Hub as part of the support being provided to West Lindsey residents who are shielding, or in self-isolation. At the time of writing, 118 referrals for support have been completed, with requests ranging from food shopping, prescription collections, dog walking, telephone befriending and help with general household tasks. In addition, the Team have been undertaking scaled back business as usual activities. Arrangements have been made to ensure ongoing monitoring and management of the Council's performance and work has been undertaken to identify which of the Council's projects can continue and which need to be paused. Some areas of the Team's work, such as the implementation of a Performance Management element of the ERP software system, may be delayed or paused as a result of COVID-19 though this is being kept under regular review. The Senior Project Support Officer has been seconded to the Growth Team to support their project work whilst a member of that team is on maternity leave. A recent audit of Programme and Project Management returned a verdict of 'substantial assurance' in the quality of the Council's delivery in this area of work with all areas showing improvement since the previous audit was conducted.

Regulatory Services

Over 90% of scheduled Food Standards Agency (FSA) inspections of food premises have been completed during the year with 426 visits undertaken compared to 315 in 2018/19. This is an excellent achievement and justifies the additional resources allocated to the team from July 2019. Full details of the performance will be included within the Food, Health and Safety Work Plan due at Regulatory Committee in June 2020. There continues to be a high percentage of premises that are broadly compliant at 3* or above, which has remained consistent during the increased inspection regime.

Food Safety

The implications of Covid-19 on food hygiene inspections will be significant. In line with guidance, no inspections have been undertaken during the lockdown period and this is likely to remain the case until social restriction measures have been lifted. As a result, the FSA scheduled target is unlikely to be met for 2020/2021 and the local performance measures will also demonstrate this. It is expected that the FSA will provide advice as to how local authorities should resume these inspections and at what level, with the assumption being that the programme will be rolled back for a period of months. This will in turn impact upon income targets. Officers working in this area have been redeployed to deal with the business restriction regulations and as part of this they are providing advice and guidance to businesses that are continuing to trade as well as addressing concerns relating to social distancing in businesses. It is expected that there will be a requirement for this to continue for some time. These officers will also provide support to the developing COVID-19 Tracing programme of work, however the capacity in which they will do this has not yet been agreed.

Environmental Protection

Environmental Protection requests continue to be dealt with in line with the targets and there has been an increased demand for this area of work during lockdown as a result of issues such as bonfires and noise nuisance. The approach during this period has been to educate and engage rather than enforce. It is unclear whether there will be an increase in reports when normal activity resumes, however there is likely to be a return to the usual reporting levels when businesses reopen fully.

Street Cleansing

Whilst Street Cleansing has been operating as usual, it is likely that resource issues may arise if operatives are required to self-isolate. This would be resolved with the use of agency staff which would result in increased costs. The depot is being managed on a rota basis to minimise the risk of infection whilst office based staff are working from home. Fly-tipping is a concern as local Household Waste Recycling Centres are closed. Whilst current figures at the time of writing do not suggest any significant rise in fly-tipping, this will continue to be monitored. It is likely that there will be a decrease in volunteer litter picks; with a complete cessation for the time-being. The Great British Spring-Clean has been postponed and there are no volunteer or community groups litter picking at this time.

Systems Development

The Team has been able to continue with business as usual and arrangements have been made for meetings to continue in the normal way on a virtual basis. Work to support the Council with arrangements to respond to COVID-19 has amounted to 462 hours over the last six weeks, including hours that officers worked whilst on annual leave. Arrangements are being put in place to manage these extra hours whilst still undertaking business as usual. Performance is not expected to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Recently, West Lindsey was the only Council in Lincolnshire, and one of only 61 local authorities in England to be awarded 'gold' status for the data accuracy in the Local Land and Property Gazetteer. This is the fifth year that West Lindsey has been awarded 'gold' status.

Town Centre Management

Following the government's announcement regarding social restriction measures; all markets were closed down on 23rd March 2020. In line with subsequent government guidelines, only essential stalls selling food and pet food have been allowed to operate (whilst adhering to social distancing). To minimise the risk of infection, stall holders are required to erect and dismantle their own stalls; no Council staff are carrying out this task at this time. No market rent payments have been taken since 23rd March 2020 and it is unclear when payments will resume. It is likely that market operations and income will be severely impacted by the current situation and the severity of this will depend on how long the market remains closed and whether traders are in a position to return to the markets once they are re-opened.

Trinity Arts Centre

BBC Radio Lincolnshire presenter, Carla Greene recently announced on her programme that the changes at Trinity Arts Centre (TAC) had not gone unnoticed, both as a resident of Gainsborough and as a broadcaster who has been interviewing the artists appearing on TAC's stage. Audience figures for the year as a whole stand at 20,369 against a target of 14,400 with more sold-out performances during the period than has ever been achieved before. TAC studios have been busy with workshops, classes, mental health support groups and birthday parties on a weekly basis. The stage has been occupied by some of the world's most prestigious artists, such as Seth Lakeman who performed his new album as part of the Mayflower 400 anniversary year.

The impact of COVID-19 on TAC has been severe. The government's announcement about social restrictions meant that the Centre had to close with immediate effect on 17th March 2020. All activity at TAC has ceased and it is unlikely that the Centre will be able to open until autumn at the earliest. This will have a significant impact on income and audience figures which will remain at zero during the period of closure. Industry research suggests that post-lockdown audience figures may be as much as 30% lower than previously until public confidence has been restored and mass vaccination has been implemented. New measures will need to be implemented once TAC is allowed to re-open which will likely mean additional resources for less return. The Team are using the period of closure

to put together a comprehensive re-opening plan that considers efficient and economical ways of working whilst maintaining the high standards customers are used to experiencing when they visit TAC.

The Team have also been busy contacting customers to rearrange bookings and process refunds where requested. This has exposed significant problems with the ProVenue box office system to the extent that the ICT Programme Board have approved the procurement of a new system to resolve these issues. One member of the Team has been redeployed to assist with the Council's ongoing business support scheme.

Waste Collection

Trials of both food waste and separate paper/card have begun in several districts as a fact-finding mission (the paper and card trials have been a success in the areas that they have been trialled in). The Lincolnshire Waste Partnership Working Group are in talks with the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs regarding food waste roll out before the 2023 deadline.