

Appendix 1

Extract from the Prosperous Communities Committee Meeting held on 2 November 2021

41 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY QUARTER 2, 2021-22

The Committee heard from the Performance and Programmes Manager with the report containing Progress & Delivery performance information for Quarter 2 2021/22, which covered the months of July through to September. Where Covid-19 had impacted performance, this was identified and explained within the narrative of the report.

Members heard that as well as the discussion of performance information for Quarter 2, it was also recommended to delete the measure EN04 “percentage of licensed properties in the South West Ward” as the selective licensing scheme ended in July 2021 meaning it was no longer possible to collect data for this measure. It would, however, be replaced for the next financial year.

As an exception report, those measures that had performed above or below agreed tolerances for two consecutive periods would be discussed with a pause at the end of each portfolio to allow for any questions to be asked.

Within the quarter two report, 57% measures had exceeded their target, 19% were within tolerance and 24% were performing below agreed target. In addition, 69% of measures had exceeded their target for two quarters or more whilst the remaining 31% had been below target for two quarters or more.

Prior to commencing the read through of the report, a Member of the Committee commented that it was important for the impact of Covid-19 to be recognised, whilst also ensuring that it was not used as a ‘catch-all’ for any under-performance. This was agreed, with recognition given through the report for those areas where the impact had been greatest.

Corporate Health

There had been a slight decrease in customer satisfaction compared to the same period last year however performance was still within agreed tolerances. There had been a reduction in calls volume and the performance of answering calls within 21 seconds. A review was to be undertaken to establish the cause of this.

Finance & Property Services

Performance was returned as green as rental portfolio voids had performed better than target

Homes & Communities

There were five performance measures that had performed better than target for at least two consecutive periods. Conversely, four measures had performed worse than target for two consecutive periods; these measures related to Home Choices and Homes, Health & Wellbeing. For Home Choices the measures below tolerance

for two consecutive periods were regarding number of households and the number of nights in B&B accommodation. A plan had been introduced to reduce B&B stay and produce consistent exit plans for persons within temporary accommodation. It was anticipated that increased monitoring of cases should help to reduce B&B stay, and the team were also working with their partner Framework to reduce complex cases holding up spaces in the leased accommodation. It was expected to see the impact of this plan in next quarter's P&D report.

For Homes, Health & Wellbeing, two measures had performed worse than target for two consecutive periods and these measures included average number of days from DFG referral to completion and long-term empties brought back into use. The number of days taken to complete Disabled Facilities Grant applications was steadily decreasing. A report taken to Overview and Scrutiny committee in September highlighted the issues currently being faced when delivering DFG's which included the availability of both contractors and materials. It was agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny to undertake an internal review of the DFG processes to highlight any areas where timescales could be improved. This work was scheduled to be undertaken during November and December.

The overall number of long-term empty homes remained low and equated to just 1% of the district's housing stock. The focus for empty homes work remained the Viable Housing Solution, which was looking at a specific area within Gainsborough. Complaints in regards to the worst empty properties were still being dealt with reactively using the Council's existing powers. Compulsory Purchase Orders in regards to specific empty properties were in the process of being pursued. It was not believed that at this stage any further interventions are needed to address this.

A Member of the Committee enquired as to whether the target regarding long-term empty properties to be brought back into use was realistic or whether it was set too high. The Performance and Programme Manager did not have the information to hand but confirmed he would find out. Likewise, in response to a question as to whether the Council worked with ACIS in regards to DFGs, he confirmed he would clarify that information and share with Members after the meeting.

Operational and Commercial Services

There were six performance measures that had performed better than agreed targets for at least two consecutive quarters. On the flip side; there were four measures whose performance was below target for two consecutive quarters. The first of which was Leisure Facilities usages for the Gainsborough centre. Restrictions had now been lifted and both centres were fully open. SLM were working hard to build up the centres, increase the membership and develop more activities for all age groups. SLM were also working to develop a Social Wellbeing Programme to incorporate a range of suitable activities for the referral scheme.

In regards to Markets, quarter two saw traders being able to fully return to the market. Officers were currently working on a Market Traders Grant scheme to help support traders on the general market and farmers market following the impact of the pandemic.

There was significant discussion regarding the lack of outreach services within leisure facilities. It was described that the request for outreach work had been very clear and it was disappointing that this had not yet occurred. It was explained that the contract manager was working closely with SLM regarding this and it was very much a focus of the leisure facilities portfolio. The impact of the pandemic was recognised, however, it was felt that there had been sufficient time passed for plans to have been actioned and again, there was disappointment voiced that this was not yet happening.

There was support from Members regarding the number of litter picks supported by the Council, with several Members commenting the involvement in their communities. Additionally, the Operational Services response to fly-tipping was commended.

Democratic Services

There were no measures where performance was below or above target for two consecutive periods. Apologies were given as there was an error within this section of the report. The performance for attendance at member training events (KPI DS02) should have read as green and not red.

Planning & Regeneration

There were four measures which had performed better than target for at least two consecutive periods, all of which relate to the Council's Development Management service. There had been no measures that had performed below target for at least two consecutive periods.

Change Management and Regulatory Services

Nine measures had performed above their targets for two consecutive periods and there were four that had performed below their targets. Of these four; NNDR Collection rate had been below target for the first half of the year due to the award of Emergency Relief Payments as detailed in the quarter one P&D report. This was beginning to show signs of improvement as instalments become due and were either paid or recovery action was able to be taken to secure payment. The Council continued to work with businesses to ensure they received all the reliefs to which they were entitled.

The number of Planning Enforcement reports received continued to exceed the Council's ability to respond. Additional resources were in place and the number of cases opened this year did exceed the number closed, which had resulted in some of the time delays for closure of cases and time taken to provide an initial response. A review of longer-term cases had been undertaken. Temporary agency support had also been brought in to assist

The number of food hygiene inspections was gradually increasing as the volume of Covid-19 related complaints and responsibilities reduced. There was still a general resource challenge in relation to meeting the target number of inspections in the Food Standards Agency recovery plan and steps were being taken to ensure that additional resources were in place to achieve this. Staff vacancies within Environmental Protection and subsequent issues recruiting into these vacancies

had resulted in issues within the service. These vacancies were going out to advert shortly.

A Member of the Committee sought clarification on the details of the environmental protection requests, to what they were related. It was explained that they related to the statutory environmental protection powers and covered complaints such as noise, odour, pollution and water quality. The number of requests had increased significantly since pre-pandemic levels and continued on that trend. It was highlighted that it was not a service concern, however the volume of requests was highlighted as being significantly more than the Council would expect to receive.

Having reached the conclusion of the report, the Committee had the opportunity to ask any further questions. A Member of the Committee wished to highlight the outstanding performance of the Planning Department, especially given it was a service that could come against frequent criticism. The outcome of the appeals often went in the favour of the Council and was testament to the work undertaken by the team.

Having been moved and seconded, the Chairman took the vote and it was

RESOLVED that

- a) the performance of the Council's services had been assessed through agreed performance measures and areas where improvements should be made, having regard to the remedial measures set out in the report, be indicated; and
- b) the deletion of key performance indicator EN04 "% of licensed properties in the Gainsborough South-West Ward" be approved, as the cessation of the Selective Licensing Scheme in July 2021 means it is no longer possible to collect data for this performance measure. EN04 to be replaced with a new measure to monitor wider activity relating to Selective Licensing as part of the annual review of the Council's Progress and Delivery measures that is currently underway.