
Report of the Directors of Resources & Housing and Communities & Environment

Report to Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board

Date: 24 July 2017

Subject: Performance Report

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. This report provides a summary of performance against the strategic priorities for the council and city and other performance areas relevant to the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board.

Recommendations

2. Members are recommended to
 - Note the most recent performance information in this report and Appendices 1 – 3 and the issues which have been highlighted and consider if they wish to undertake further scrutiny work to support improvement over the coming year in any of these areas.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report presents a summary of the most recent performance data, and provides an update on progress in delivering the relevant priorities in the Best Council Plan 2015 – 20.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Members will note that the Best Council Plan (BCP) sets out the Council's key objectives and priorities. This report provides an overview of the relevant Environment, Housing and Communities performance relating to this plan, enabling the Scrutiny Board to consider and challenge the council's performance.
- 2.2 This report includes three Appendices showing a summary of the most recent performance information relevant to the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Appendix 1 shows the most recent performance data relating to Housing priorities. Members will see that some of the indicators are designed to track trends rather than report against specific targets, and for these reasons the trend indicators have not been rated. Appendix 2 relates to Community Safety and Appendix 3 relates to Waste and Environmental priorities. Members will note that there is no appendix in relation to Communities priorities and all information relating to these priorities is contained in the main body of this report. The main performance issues arising from these progress reports are given below:

3.2 *Housing (Appendix 1)*

- 3.2.1 Members' attention are drawn to the following performance areas:

- Empty Properties

The 5 year Net Reduction Target of 2,000 fewer long term empty homes at the end of March 2017 has been met. The target figure for the end of March 2017 was 3,777 private sector properties that have been empty for longer than 6 months. The actual March figure stood at 3,340.

The agreed revised "Net Reduction" target for the coming year is to maintain this figure of 3,777. At the end of May 2017 the figure was 3,256, representing a net reduction against target of 521.

This figure has a tendency to fluctuate throughout the year and can go up or down.

- Homeless Preventions

A homeless prevention is defined as being an intervention on the part of the Council to help a household who is threatened with homelessness to stay in their existing home or to make a planned move to alternative long-term housing before they become homeless. Maximising homeless prevention is the key performance measure for the Leeds Housing Options Service. In 2016/17 the service managed to prevent homelessness in 5,982 out of 7,169 cases – equating to 84% prevention rate. A target of a minimum of 6000 homeless preventions has been set for 2017/18.

In May 2017, 571 out of 713 cases closed at Leeds Housing Options resulted in a homeless prevention (80% prevention rate). This means there have been 1,157 homeless preventions since April 2017 with a straight line forecast of 6,942 preventions for 2017/18 and to maintain performance in the 80th percentile.

The Homelessness Reduction Act is due to come into force on 1st April 2018. This will include new duties to prevent homelessness (for people threatened with homelessness) and relieve homelessness (for people who are homeless) as a precursor to assessing whether a housing duty is owed. Authorities will be obliged to develop a personalised housing plan setting out the prevention / relief options. Authorities will be able to end a duty if an applicant is not engaging in the process. Housing Leeds is confident that the Act formalises in law practice that is already firmly embedded in Leeds.

- Homeless Acceptances

There were 42 homeless acceptances in April 2017 and 34 in May. A homeless acceptance is a decision whereby an applicant is found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need and a temporary accommodation is owed pending longer-term re-housing.

- Temporary Accommodation

There were 83 households in emergency temporary accommodation on 31 March 2017 with 64 of those being statutorily homeless. Figures for April and May are as follows:

- 30th April: 81 households (59 statutorily homeless).
- 31st May 60 households (41 statutorily homeless).

- Unauthorised Encampments

From December 2016 to May 2017 there have been 39 encampments (17 on LCC land and 22 on private land). A group of Travellers from the Blackpool area ranging in size from 5 to 23 caravans encamped on 13 occasions in Leeds in total with 9 of those being in LS14 (Seacroft). There have been 3 new encampments in June.

Section 61 has been not been used from December 2016 to May 2017 with existing orders on land used on 2 occasions (If registration numbers can be linked from a site that has an existing Court order on within a 3 month period with the Travellers moving back onto the land they can be moved quickly).

- Adaptations

% of housing adaptations completed within target timescale by month		
	Private	Council
March 2017	96%	87%
April 2017	97%	97%
May 2017	93%	93%

The performance targets are a maximum of 70 days for urgent adaptation cases and 182 days for non-urgent cases. The measure is from date of case receipt from social care to date of practical completion with sub-targets set for Health and Housing to design the scheme and LBS / external contractors to deliver the work. Performance has significantly improved since September 2016 when the assessment / design

service was fully transferred to Health and Housing. Prior to September performance was in the 50th percentile. The aim is now to get consistently within the 95-100% bracket. Performance relates to standard jobs and exceptional works, such as extensions, are not included because there are many variables, such as planning applications that are outside the control of the Health and Housing service. However, the service intends to introduce individualised performance targets for such schemes.

- % Capital Programme Spend

Housing Leeds actual spend and commitments to period 3 is £17.9m, representing 26% of the revised available £70m resources.

The planned works programme is projected to outturn at an estimated £52.3m with spend and commitments to period 3 of £11.1m representing 21.2% of the available resources. The responsive works programme is projected to outturn at £15.5 with spend and commitments at period 3 of £6m representing 39% of the available resources. The environmental improvement programme spend to period 3 is £0.8m of the available resources in year of £2.2m representing 36% of the available resources.

The HRA Capital resources statement for the 10 year financial plan has been updated taking into account the 2016/17 outturn. The latest funding estimates on the future 10 year's programmes 2017/18 - 2026/27 are circa £784m which will be subject to yearly updates to the HRA business plan.

- Rent Collection

Housing Leeds achieved a year end rent collection performance figure of 97.43%. This was an improvement on the previous year's figure of 97.24%. This represents a really positive out turn when taking into account a number of factors;

- Increasing numbers of tenants moving onto Universal Credit – 981 tenants have claimed Universal Credit since February 2016.
- Numbers of families affected by the Benefit Cap increased in January from 74 to 381.
- Numbers of tenants claiming Housing Benefit has reduced meaning Housing Leeds had to physically collect an additional £2.8m in rent last year.

Rent arrears have reduced over the last financial year from £6.13m in March 2016 to £5.58m in March 2017. This was the lowest amount of arrears at year end for the last 2 years. Rent arrears have increased slightly between year-end and May which is due in part to the monthly direct debit cycle. Monthly Direct Debit payers had a slight credit on their accounts at year end but have a small arrears balance on them at the end of May. It is worth noting that in May 2016 the amount of rent arrears stood at £6.19m so they are significantly lower this year.

The improvement in rent collection and reduction in arrears is due to a number of factors including;

- A successful year end arrears campaign including dedicated themed weeks of activity for staff to follow.
- Regular Arrears Challenge events taking place with the Chief Officer reviewing teams' performance and improvement plans.
- Housing office teams have implemented a robust performance management framework down to patch level, with recovery plans in place for any patches with lower levels of performance.

- Further promotion and publicising of Direct Debit to move more tenants onto the most convenient and cost effective payment method. The number of tenants paying by Direct Debit has increased over the year by 4% and now 36.6% of tenants with a charge to pay, pay by Direct Debit.
- The Enhanced Income Service contacting and providing support to all tenants newly affected by Welfare Reform changes including contacting all families affected by the revised Benefit Cap.

Housing Leeds will continue to utilise the good practice used in 2016/17 to improve rent collection throughout 2017/18. The Chief Officer has held the first Arrears Challenge events in April 2017 and new challenging targets are being set for offices this year. The robust performance management frameworks used last year will continue throughout this year. The Income Service has produced a revised Service Improvement Plan for 2017/18 and key themed campaigns have been planned up until March 2018. This includes undertaking increased levels of financial inclusion work and activity against Loan Sharks.

Arrears due to Under Occupation continue to decrease. The number of tenants affected by Under Occupation has been gradually reducing and over the last 12 months from 4,974 in March 16 to 4,655 in March 17. There continues to be approx. 300 tenants per month who are newly affected by Under Occupation as household compositions change. Housing Leeds are contacting those tenants and arranging a home visit if required and a range of support measures are offered including;

- Assistance with downsizing through the Leeds Homes Register or via a mutual exchange
- Budgeting Support and Debt Advice through partner agencies in house and through partner agencies.
- Benefit advice and applying for Discretionary Housing Payment
- Fuel switch and utility grants
- Help finding employment and voluntary work

Housing Leeds are continuing to provide an enhanced level of support to all tenants affected by Welfare Reform including Universal Credit and the revised Benefit Cap.

- Rent Payment Methods

May 2017 (YTD):

Payment Method	Number	%	Value	%
Cash	66,251	37.60%	4,915,894.41	27.94%
Direct Debit	65,689	37.28%	7,152,782.93	40.66%
Internet / Automated	29,361	16.66%	3,467,416.11	19.71%
Telephone	9,144	5.19%	1,501,412.45	8.53%
Other	5,753	3.27%	554,880.36	3.15%

The above table details the total amount of rent payment transactions made by tenants via the different payment methods. There has been a slight reduction in cash transactions over the last 6 months with more payments being received by Direct Debit. (The table does not show the number of tenants paying by Direct Debit). Housing Leeds have continued to promote and encourage payment by Direct Debit to tenants both when signing up a new tenancy and during communications regarding rent arrears. The amount of tenants paying by Direct Debit has continued to increase over the last 12 months with over 36.6% of tenants with a charge to pay now paying

by Direct Debit. Specific targeted Direct Debit take up campaigns will be undertaken throughout the year to further promote the most convenient and cost effective rent payment method.

- Annual Home Visits (AHV)

% of Annual Home Visits completed (Up to year-end 2016/17):

	Jan	Feb	Mar
2015/16	91.05%	95.26%	97.84%
2016/17	92.95%	94.60%	95.92%
16/17 Target	100%	100%	100%

During 2016/17, almost 96% of council tenants received an Annual Home Visit. Based on the visits completed, some of the key outcomes are as follows:

- 9% of tenants don't have a bank account that allows direct debits (a reduction of 2% on last year due to work to support tenants access affordable banking via Leeds City Credit Union). We are using this information to undertake some more analysis, to understand the reasons for this and help us to do some focused work with tenants to understand the reasons for this and how we can promote
- 33% of tenants don't have access to the internet at home (a reduction of 5% on last year).
- 32% of tenants are not confident that they could manage a benefit claim on-line (a reduction of 6% on last year).
- 1,558 tenants identified that they needed help with budgeting. For these tenants we make a referral to Leeds City Credit Union for additional budgeting support.
- We have discussed waste and recycling with 28,568 tenants during the AHV.
- 6% of tenants identified outstanding repairs during the AHV. These repairs are picked up by housing staff to ensure that repairs are completed. These "outstanding repairs" will include repairs which have yet to be completed but are not actually outstanding in terms of agreed timescales.
- Over 99% of properties are identified as being in fair or good internal condition.
- We made 2,441 referrals to West Yorkshire Fire Service for smoke detection equipment to be installed.
- We made 76 referrals for suspected tenancy fraud.
- We made 556 referrals for additional support for tenants.

As part of the 2016 STAR Survey, 69% of tenants reported that they found the AHV Visit useful. We have now reviewed the AHV content and process for 2017/18 and made some improvements to the form, including the introduction of some additional questions for general needs tenants over 75 to identify issues with social isolation and support needs around managing household tasks, personal care and access to services. Staff also received further training, focusing on improving the quality of conversations held with tenants. We will continue to evaluate AHV outcomes during 2017/18.

- Repairs Completed Within Target

The RR2 target measures the percentage of jobs that are completed within timescale. The citywide result for May 2017 is 95.47% of jobs completed against a 99% target. Mears performance in the South and West contract areas has exceeded target with results of 99.06% and 99.23% respectively and 100% for BITMO. Leeds Building

Services (LBS) performance stands at 90.39% of repairs completed within target which is below target.

Following the introduction of new ways of working to the former Construction Services side of LBS in 2016/17, which had a significant impact on performance, a plan is in place to roll out these ways of working across the full housing repairs service within LBS as part of their transformational change programme. It is anticipated that these new ways of working will have a marked improvement on the overall performance of LBS. In addition to these new ways of working, it is anticipated that the implementation of the Total Mobile system will deal with delays in the LBS timesheet entry process which is a key area of underperformance, rather than actual service delivery.

RR2 - Completed Within Target	Total Number of Jobs	Total Number of Jobs Met Target	%
City	15337	14642	95.47%
BITMO	468	468	100.00%
East (Leeds Building Services)	6504	5879	90.39%
South (Mears)	3284	3253	99.06%
West (Mears)	5081	5042	99.23%
Mears South and West Combined	8365	8295	99.16%

Please see below breakdown according to the priority of repair:

Priority Breakdown Information - City	Total Number of Jobs	Total Number of Jobs Met Target	%
Emergency - 24 Hours	3318	3169	95.51%
Priority - 3 working days	2105	1956	92.92%
General - 20 working days	9410	9096	96.66%
60 Working Days	1021	906	88.74%

Members may also wish to note performance against the 'Repairs Right First Time' indicator which measures jobs completed on the first visit. The citywide result for May 2017 has exceeded the 90.50% target with a result of 93.83% (10,941 repairs out of 11,660) being completed the same day. Each contract area BITMO (98.21%), East (98.60%), South (91.49%) and West (91.78%) has exceeded the target within the overall citywide performance.

RR1 - Right First Time	Total Number of Jobs	Total Number of Jobs Met Target	%
City	11660	10941	93.83%
BITMO	448	440	98.21%
East (Leeds Building Services)	3221	3176	98.60%
South (Mears)	3149	2881	91.49%
West (Mears)	4842	4444	91.78%
Mears South and West Combined	7991	7325	91.67%

- Housing Tenants (STAR) Survey 2016:

In winter 2016, a survey to understand tenants' priorities and perceptions of the services they receive was sent by post and by email/web to a representative sample of around 15,000 tenants.

In general the survey results showed a mixed picture, with many key indicators maintaining levels of satisfaction from the previous survey which took place in 2014. The key question - overall satisfaction with services – remained constant at 76%.

Areas of increased satisfaction included:

- That your landlord treats you fairly (+4%, 72%);
- Heating and insulation is good at keeping your home warm in winter (+7%, 63%);
- Advice and support on managing finances and paying rent / service charges (+3%, 66%).

Areas showing decreased satisfaction included:

- Neighbourhood as a place to live (-4%, 72%);
- Landlord has a good reputation (-3%, 57%);
- Some indicators from the East of the city, for example: overall satisfaction, repairs and maintenance, and dealing with enquiries.

- Re-let Days

The EP1 Key to key target covers the period inclusive of tenancy termination, repairs, lettings and tenancy sign up. The target is 30 days and covers the South and West areas (through Mears) and the East area (through Leeds Building Services (LBS)). At the end of May 2017, Citywide re-let days stand at 36.81 compared to the 2016/17 year-end figure of 28.1 days.

This dip in performance is attributed to two main factors:

- The time taken to complete repairs in void properties in the East area is not currently commensurate with that in the South and West areas of the city. In response to this, the voids team have commenced a piece of work to roll out a city wide approach to managing voids. This has focussed on working collaboratively with LBS to introduce a series of processes and monitoring systems currently utilised by Mears which enables them to successfully meet performance targets in the South and West areas of the city. It is anticipated that once embedded, performance in the East area will improve. This additional activity with the voids service is currently being delivered within existing staffing resources, it will remain closely monitored to ensure there is no adverse impact on the quality of service delivery in the South and West areas.
- There have been some teething problems with a utility switching initiative between LCC and White Rose Energy (WRE). This was initially piloted in some post code areas and has been extended to cover all areas of the city since January 2017. The level of staffing resource required to undertake this activity was underestimated at the point that the pilot became city wide by all parties. Whilst the contract management responsibility sits with PPPU it relies on the voids team to undertake the front facing activity necessary to enable new tenants to switch to WRE and thereby benefit from competitive tariffs. Under previous arrangements, contact with energy companies was limited to resolving debt issues, it has now been extended to include meter swapping which has elongated the process including availability of appointments by WRE and their sub-contractors. Alongside WRE underestimating the level of sub-contractor

resource required there have been some issues with information exchange between the various parties. There is a plan in place to rectify these issues which is closely monitored through PPPU. In order to mitigate risks to the City Council and to our tenants it is also recognised that additional front facing support is required within the voids team and as such a report has been submitted to request an additional administration resource.

- Lettable Void Properties

Overall the number of lettable voids and the number of voids in works at the end of May 2017 stands at 438 voids (+ 41 new build, buy backs and major refurbishments which will be discounted once re-let). Voids (excluding new build, buy backs and major refurbishments) account for 0.78% of the total LCC stock and the percentage rent loss from voids is 0.80%.

- Under Occupation

A count of all under occupation cases stands at 4,582 at April 2017. This is 73 cases lower than the March 2017 figure. The number of these cases owing arrears stands at 2,230 (48.7% - slightly above the March figure of 46.3%).

3.3 **Community Safety (Appendix 2)**

3.3.1 Members' attention are drawn to the following performance areas (please note further detail is provided in Appendix 2):

- Serious Acquisitive Crime

The 12 month Serious Acquisitive Crime population rate is 21.4%, an increase from 19.4% in the previous period. 16,081 offences grouped as Serious Acquisitive Crime were recorded in Leeds in the 12 months to May 2017.

The volume of Serious Acquisitive Crime has increased by 10% within 12 months. This is linked to changes to national coding for Burglary offences and to increases in reporting of Motor Vehicle offences.

The following performance figures are classed as provisional and do not represent official data, provided by the Home Office – the changes to national coding for burglary offences means this data may be subject to change:

- Residential Burglary (7,514 offences)
- Theft from a Motor Vehicle (5,496 offences)
- Theft of Motor Vehicle (1,931 offences)

- Anti-Social Behaviour

Nuisance incidents reported to Police in Leeds have increased by 15% in the 12 months to May 2017; 18,327 incidents were reported in the period.

Anti-social behaviour reported to Police in Leeds is predominantly youth nuisance, and this typically increases in warmer months or during school holidays, (36.8% of all nuisance in 12 months). The proportion of motorcycle nuisance remains low, but has increased to 14.1% of all nuisance incidents.

Safer Leeds have established an ASB Early Intervention Team (May 2017) which sees police officers working alongside council officers, triaging and addressing all

instances of anti-social behaviour reported to the police and the council, on a daily basis. This new team assesses each call for vulnerability and seeks to make direct contact with callers (assessed as 'high' 'medium' or 'standard' risk) to gain a deeper understanding of the issues being raised before creating a problem-solving occurrence, where appropriate. The team then task out actions to the appropriate services, which could be the local Neighbourhood Policing Team, ASB Link Officer, or Housing Leeds for example to respond accordingly.

- Domestic Violence

The volume of domestic incidents reported to Police in Leeds increased by 11% in the 12 months to May 2017; 19,063 domestic incidents were reported with repeat victim rate was 43.0%.

The 12 month victim self-reporting rate was 27.2%, and this is as an indication of victim confidence to report domestic abuse.

The Safer Leeds DV team received British Medical Journal nomination (May 2017) for an award in respect of a pilot scheme with GP practices (routine enquiry) where patients are routinely asked if they have ever suffered domestic abuse. This new approach has been well received by both doctors and patients alike and plans are in place to roll this out across Leeds.

A drive to engage private businesses in the domestic violence agenda has resulted in two large private companies attaining the Leeds Domestic Violence Quality Mark ~ this is used to quality assure and attain minimum standards in responses to domestic violence.

Leeds led on a bid to the DCLG (secured funding of £463k) to deliver a West Yorkshire wide programme of work to improve responses to victims of domestic violence where complex issues and multiple disadvantages restrict access to help. A team of specialist staff is being established to embed specialist support as well as developing better referral pathways and protocols to improve joint working.

3.4 **Waste and Environment (Appendix 3)**

3.4.1 Members' attention are drawn to the following performance areas (please note further detail is provided in Appendix 2):

- Missed Bins

Overall missed bins (per 100,000) stands at 53.68 at Period 2 (ending 21st May 2017) which compares with 58.88 for period 2 in 2016/17.

- Recycling (Draft figures – subject to final verification)

The Council recycled 38.5% of household waste in 2016/17 which is a small increase over the previous year but still 4.9% less than target.

The kerbside recycling tonnes (recycling collected through the green, brown and food waste collection services) continues to increase, being 2.5% higher than last year and 0.6% above target. Garden waste is a significant contributor to this increase although the level of garden waste produced each year can be significantly affected by the weather conditions.

All Kerbside residual waste is now delivered to the RERF, with a contractual commitment that 10% of incoming waste will be recycled at the front end of the

process each year. This material should be extracted by the mechanical pre-treatment (MPT) facility which removed paper and card, plastics, ferrous and non-ferrous metals. The MPT has suffered a series of mechanical problems and issues with securing markets for materials which Veolia have been working with the Council to resolve. This has contributed significantly to the overall reduction in the recycling rate when compared to target, representing 4.1% of the 4.9% reduction.

- Landfill (*Draft figures – subject to final verification*)

The total household waste figure includes waste arising from various sources including kerbside black bins, Household Waste Sites, Bulky Household collections, street cleansing and non-recyclable green bin waste removed at the MRF.

Total household waste was 314,602 tonnes, which is 5,439 (1.8%) higher than last year and 5,859 (1.9%) above target. 178,601 tonnes were incinerated, 121,215 recycled and 14,787 landfilled which equates to only 4.7% of domestic waste being landfilled.

The actual landfilled tonnage is 14,787, compared to the target of 16,983. This is primarily due to a higher proportion of residual waste being sent for energy recovery than forecast.

- Grounds Maintenance

Continental commenced mowing on March 6th 2017 following a significant investment in mowing machinery that has seen around £0.5m of new equipment deployed in Leeds. The equipment includes cutting head attachments that produce a finer cut and reduce the amount of overspill of grass to adjacent hard surfaces as well as four wheel drive mowers that provides greater access and reduces damage to surfaces. Monitoring activity by the grounds maintenance team during the early part of the mowing season focused on quality of cut and addressing problems, rather than cut interval, to allow Continental to take an appropriate amount of time to cut the assets given the circumstances. These preventative measures have meant that assets have been managed well with minimal damage caused.

During the winter of 2016/17 a three year programme of shrub bed mulching was completed thus improve the visual appearance of beds and reducing the use of herbicides to control weed growth. The mulch was generated using recycling green waste mostly from forestry operations across the city.

In line with a reduction of £90k in the budget agreed at full council in February 2017, high speed arterial routes which require traffic management arrangements each time a cut is made have been generally reduced from 6 cuts each year to 3 cuts. Traffic management is costly as it involves putting out traffic cones and closing lanes to meet legislation and enable safe access to horticultural maintenance equipment. There's also added benefit to wildlife by allowing more naturalistic habitats in these areas as well as reducing the impact on motorists that lane closures inevitably cause.

3.5 **Communities**

3.5.1 Broad high level information is included in relation to Customer Access, Council Tax and Welfare, and Stronger Communities. This is supported by further detailed observations which can be made available should Member's find additional information useful. Members' attention are drawn to the following performance areas:

3.5.2 **Customer Access:**

- **Face to Face**

Performance within the Face to Face service (including the Library and Information service) is good with high performance for increasing job outcomes (up 30%) for those engaged on the Personal Work Support Package and increased footfall in Community Hubs. Challenges remain around Book issues within Libraries and Community Hubs which continue to decline although this is in line with national trends and is more a symptom of the changing nature of library use.

Particular challenges for the service are around helping customers self-serve for those transactions that are easily done on-line. This is an increasing issue for the face to face service where the focus on 'channel shift' is needed to allow front-line staff to spend the right amount of time with customers on more complex needs and issues.

- **Contact Centre**

Performance within the telephone service at the contact centre has been disappointing and is down significantly from the same period last year. Whilst Q1 of the new financial year is always challenging for customer services given the amount of customer contact generated as a result of the new financial year (annual billing, annual rent statements etc. etc.), turnover, poor recruitment levels and the need to deliver agreed budget reductions has meant that staffing levels within the contact centre have been reduced such that average staffing in Qtr 1 2017 is 134.30 FTE across the Contact Centre, compared to 156.35 FTE in Qtr 1 2016. We have carried out further recruitment and staffing numbers will be up to 147.27 FTE from July 2017.

Recruitment and retention remains a significant challenge for the contact centre (and customer services more generally). Not only is it becoming increasingly difficult to recruit to entry level roles within the contact centre given the better opportunities that exist elsewhere in the city, it is also increasingly difficult to retain staff as they move on to high paid roles either within the Council or elsewhere. Recent organisational decisions around the restriction on external recruitment have exacerbated this issue as front-line staff from customer services are seen as highly employable within the organisation given their knowledge and expertise around council services.

Discussions are ongoing with HR to look at ways to address the recruitment issue, given it isn't restricted solely to entry level roles within customer services, but is being more widely felt across all services within the organisation where entry level roles exist.

- **Digital - Web/Online Development**

Performance on digital access continues to improve as we introduce more online services and improve content of the website. A good example of this is the indicator for unique visits to web pages which has shown a 15% reduction in Q1. Whilst on the face of it, this would seem disappointing, in reality it demonstrates a more likely trend of customers finding what they need more easily and not having to go backwards and forwards to the same page during their site visit.

A key challenge for digital access remains putting service on-line and enabling self-service. This is a key challenge for a number of reasons; technically given the size and complexity of the ICT infrastructure within the organisation and the limited availability of ICT skills and expertise, process wise given the need to fundamentally redesign services around the customer and delivery wise given the difficulty faced in getting customers to self-serve when other channels are available.

Despite this we continue to develop and deliver more on-line services with strong evidence to suggest that it is the preferred channel for simple transactions for a significant proportion of customers.

3.5.3 **Council Tax:**

- **Quarter 1 (Period ending 30th June 2017) Performance on work received**
The average speed of processing incoming council tax work has improved year on year over the last 3 years with an improvement on respective quarter 1 periods of 12.99 days (2014/15), 9.14 days (2015/16) and 6.99 days (2016/17).

Quarter 1 period ending for this year, 2017/18, is 7.12 days, a slight worsening against the 6.99 days average for the same quarter last year.

Not discounting a small reduction in staff numbers undertaking Council Tax work, there has been persistent system performance issues such that the matter has been placed into formal ICT "Incident Management" where it has remained throughout the whole of quarter 1.

- **Council Tax Recovery**
As at period ending 31st May 2017, recovery of council tax is 19.35% against net debit raised. This is 0.01% up against the corresponding period last year.

3.5.4 **Welfare Benefits:**

- **Housing Benefit**
The Housing Benefit caseload continues to decrease from a height of 86,765 (as at February 2013) to its current position of 75,923, a reduction of 358 from the beginning of quarter 1.

Speed of processing new & change in circumstance benefit cases as at 31st May 2017 was 15.86 days and 8.72 days respectively against 17.6 days and 10.6 days in 2016/17.

- **Local Welfare Support Scheme**
As the end of May, 468 customers have sought assistance through the "gateway". Of these 77% (362) were successful in receiving an award from the scheme. For the corresponding period last year, 540 customers sought assistance from the scheme with 79% (424) receiving a successful award.

Early projections suggest that the scheme will operate within its £800k budget allocation.

- **Welfare Rights**
The team is now fully staffed and the number of requests for assistance with form completion has reduced – this may be due to either a slowdown in the migration from DLA to PIP or that more workers across the city are now able to complete these forms

due to the training we have provided for them. It has therefore been possible to allocate appeal cases to some of the more experienced Welfare Rights Workers to deal with as opposed to only allocating appeal cases to Senior Welfare Rights Workers.

- Welfare Advice

The total number of customers seen from 1st April 2017 to 31st May 2017 was 5,877. This compares to 5,900 seen in the same period in 2016/17, a reduction of 23. This may be due to the fact that Easter fell in April this year.

- Welfare Appeals

The total number of appeals received during the period 1st April 2017 to 31st May 2017 was 206, this compares to 122 received in the same period in 2016/17, an increase of 84 (69%). This is largely due to clients being moved from Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payments and those that have been turned down or put in the wrong group for ESA.

There is continual pressure due to the increased number of appeals being received. The team are struggling to meet demand. Clients requesting an appeal appointment now are having to wait until September to be seen. Issues are also being encountered due to the short time frame between the papers being issued and the appeal date. This has resulted in the team being unable to provide a full service to several clients recently as we simply did not have an available appointment prior to the appeal hearing.

- Benefits Gains

The total amount of benefit gains during the period 1st April 2017 to 31st May 2017 is £3,422,222.00. This compares to £3,819,183.00 for the same period in 2016/17, a decrease of £376,961.00 (10%). This may be a combination of seeing slightly less clients coupled with the fact that more clients are being turned down for benefits.

- Welfare Rights Satisfaction Rating – Client Satisfaction

Despite not being able to offer a full service to everyone in relation to appeals, 100% of clients of clients using the Welfare Rights Service said the service was good or excellent during April and May 2017.

- Financial Inclusion

Leeds Credit Union membership for the quarter ending March 2017 stands at 31,049 (35,895 total members), cash withdrawals total £ 5,743,932 and the value of “financially excluded loans” total £896,476. The total gross loan book for Leeds Credit Union has increased from £8m in 2012 to £10.8m this year

Universal Credit – the government have stated that full roll out will occur nationally by 2022. Leeds has received confirmation that we will go live June 2018 with the “full digital service” meaning all new claims. Migration of existing Housing Benefit claims starts 2019 but there is no date yet for Leeds. Up to April 2017 9,415 people had made a claim for UC and as at May 2017 5,100 people were in receipt of UC (from single, fit for work, jobseekers). Approximately 1,500 will have a rental liability.

Gambling Related Harm – the Council is co-ordinating work to support those suffering from or at risk of gambling related harm. A project group of council officers, local and national partners is working on three broad actions to mitigate problem gambling. Firstly to implement a marketing campaign to raise awareness of support services,

and to reduce the stigma associated with the issue. Secondly to improve referral links between the general advice network and the specialist problem gambling counselling service through frontline training. And thirdly to increase the provision of support services to assist those experiencing gambling related harm.

3.5.5 **Stronger Communities Benefitting from a Strong Economy Breakthrough Programme:**

- **Funding Leeds Website – Small Charities Celebration Event**
The Funding Leeds Website was launched at the Small Charities Event on 27th June, which was chaired by the Lord Mayor and attended by over 215 people representing 115 groups. All the groups received certificates of recognition and thanks were provided for the contribution they make to the city's success.
- **The Great Get Together**
Leeds communities hosted more than 50 Great Get together events over the weekend of the 17th & 18th June. Events took place on streets, in Council Community Hubs, places of worship and in parks and on greenspace. Feedback from the get togethers have been overwhelmingly positive, with many requesting that more of this type of activity takes place throughout the year.
- **Controlling Migration – Migrant Access Project Plus**
Leeds has been successful in securing funding through the governments Controlling Migration Programme. The funding will build on the existing award-winning Leeds MAP and provide for additional satellite MAP models in West and South Leeds to address issues and concerns in relation to:

Standards and expectations that we expect of all residents in Leeds to assist in minimising low level tensions in communities and aiding integration;

Ensuring migrants access services in the most efficient and effective way with a view to reducing costs and pressures on services. Thereby, also addressing the concerns of some settled communities, with a specific focus on access to GP surgeries and the role of private sector housing landlords.

- **The Refugee Transition Guide**
The DCLG funding will also support progress on the Council's development of a 'Refugee Transition Guide', produced in partnership with a range of service providers and intended for use by refugees transitioning from asylum support to mainstream services and for their advisors.
- **Compassionate City Awards**
The Compassionate City Awards will recognise and celebrate the work of the City's many unsung heroes. This important work helps to improve the lives of the people of Leeds and supports the vision for the City 'for Leeds to be the best city in the UK: one that is compassionate with a strong economy, which tackles poverty and reduces the inequalities that still exist. We want Leeds to be a city that is fair and sustainable, ambitious, fun and creative for all with a council that its residents can be proud of: the best council in the country.' Nominations will be collated across a number of categories, with the 10 Community Committees playing a pivotal role in identifying worthy groups and individuals. The ceremony will take place in the Civic Hall Banqueting Suite on the 7th December 2017.

- Counter Extremism Programme
Good progress continues to be made to develop the Leeds Counter Extremism programme. The Community Coordinator has now contacted approx. 40 3rd Sector organisations, many of whom have expressed an interest in becoming more involved in the programmes delivery. A session with 3rd Sector Leeds took place on 28th June to consider their role in relation to cohesion and resilience.
- National Day of Memory Victims of Forced Marriage – Karma Nirvana
Leeds will host the National Day of Memory for the victims of Forced Marriage (FM) and Honour Based Abuse (HBA) on 14th July 2017 in Leeds Civic Hall. This signifies this city agreeing to become a Beacon city for tackling HBA & FM, and will be formalised by the signing of a ‘Pledge of Intent’ by the Executive Member for Communities at the event. Around 200 invited guests will attend the event including the Sarah Newton MP, Minister for Safeguarding, Vulnerability and Counter Extremism.
- Prevent
The 2017/18 Prevent programme of activity has now been finalised and includes a comprehensive package of support for teaching professionals, frontline staff, young people and those considered most vulnerable to radicalisation.

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1. This is an information report and as such does not need to be consulted on with the public. However all performance information is published on the council’s website and is available to the public.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 This is an information report and not a decision so it is not necessary to conduct an equality impact assessment. However, some of the data provided will link to wider issues of equality and diversity and cohesion and integration, and there may be occasions when Scrutiny Board members will want to look more closely at these issues, and may request further information to inform their investigations.

4.3 Council Priorities

- 4.3.1 This report provides an update on progress in delivering the council priorities in line with the council’s performance management framework.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 There are no specific resource implications from this report, although some performance indicators relate to financial and other value for money aspects.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 All performance information is publicly available and is published on the council website. This report is an information update providing Scrutiny with a summary of performance for the strategic priorities within its remit and as such is not subject to call in.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 There is a comprehensive risk management process in the Council to monitor and manage key risks. This links closely with performance management.

5 Conclusions

5.1 This report provides a summary of performance against the strategic priorities for the council and city related to the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Members are recommended to:

- Note the most recent performance information in this report and Appendices 1 – 3 and the issues which have been highlighted and consider if they wish to undertake further scrutiny work to support improvement over the coming year in any of these areas.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 Best Council Plan 2015 - 20

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.