

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

**Main issues**

- 1 Appendix 2 shows the Quarter 4 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 3 relates to Community Safety and Appendix 4 relates to Waste priorities. Members will note that there is no appendix in relation to Communities priorities and all information relating to these priorities is contained within this Appendix 1. The main performance issues arising from these progress reports are given below:

***Housing (Appendix 2)***

- 2 Housing's performance is monitored against three areas:
  - HRA Business Plan Indicators – measuring the health of the HRA Business Plan
  - Housing Strategy Indicators – measuring progress in delivering Housing Strategy priorities
  - Regulator of Social Housing - Regulatory Framework Indicators – measuring performance of Council Housing in meeting the 4 HCA Consumer Standards

Members' attention is drawn to the following performance areas:

**HRA Business Plan PIs:**

- 3 Rent Collection

Throughout the year the service has continued to undertake a range of actions to support tenants to pay their rent during the pandemic. In March 2020, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government announced a complete ban on eviction and new possession cases during the coronavirus. In response, enforcement of rent collection was suspended, and throughout the year regular contact was made with tenants who are in rent arrears, focussing on a supportive approach, using phone calls and e-mails to support tenants to maximise income and make affordable payments. Up to the end of March 2021 over 145,000 calls were made to tenants to discuss rent payments / arrears, and over 64,000 emails were sent. Limited mobilisation of the formal arrears process has taken place. No LCC arrears cases have been progressed through the courts and no evictions of LCC tenants for arrears have taken place during the pandemic.

There has been a slight fall in the number of people paying by Direct Debit from 41.86% (16,407) in March 2020 to 41.33% (16,357) in March 2021.

The service has continued to support tenants claiming Universal Credit, and those affected by the benefit cap and the under occupancy charge.

- The number of tenants claiming Universal Credit has increased to 15,075 at the end of March 2021, up from 10,920 in March 2020.
- 145 council tenants on Housing Benefit have been affected by the benefit cap.

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

- There have been 2,643 tenants on Housing Benefit affected by under occupation as recorded by the benefit service. The decrease in the numbers affected by the benefit cap and under occupation is mainly the result of tenants moving to Universal Credit.

4 Former Tenancy Arrears

Former Tenancy Arrears (FTA) were 1.97% at the end of March 2021 compared to 2.19% at the end of March 2020. The service has collected £628k in former tenancy arrears compared with £652k at the end of March 2020. The FTA enforcement process was suspended in March and the FTA cases were actively managed using a supportive phone call approach to mitigate the impact on arrears. Mobilisation of the FTA arrears process took place in July.

5 Void Properties

Both lettings and works in void properties are now remobilised, although timescales are still significantly impacted due to the need for maintaining Covid-safe practices. The number of voids has now stabilised and reduced from a peak of 892 to 730 at the end of March 2021, remaining behind target. There continue to be a number of factors impacting on reducing the number of voids:

- Social distancing measures put in place as part of contractor / Leeds Building Services (“LBS”) risk assessments limit the number of operatives who are able to work on each void, increasing the amount of time taken to complete void works.
- The number of repairs operatives available continues to be impacted due to self-isolation measures where an operative has tested positive, or come into contact with someone who has.
- Supply chains remain impacted by both Covid and Brexit, meaning some materials are either at a shortage or taking longer to procure, particularly fire doors.
- The lettings process was amended as part of the Covid-19 risk assessment, which meant that a viewing could not take place until the property was fully ready to let. This has recently been reviewed and viewing while in repair is to resume where possible.

Voids and Lettings teams continue to work closely to address the backlog and maximise collective outputs to reduce the number of void properties.

6 Right to Buy Sales

As previously indicated would likely be the case, RTB sales at year end are lower than in previous years as some tenants solicitors have been working at reduced capacity.

7 Disrepair

New disrepair cases continued to increase in Quarter 4, peaking with 100 new cases in March 2021. Equally, this period also saw record numbers of disrepair cases closed / resolved. Additional capacity to deliver the works associated with disrepair has been sourced and the Fast Track process continues to be met in 100% of cases.

Quarter 4 also saw a significant increase in the proportion of claims rejected and a reduction in legal costs / damages paid as a result of a disrepair claim.

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

The Disrepair Prevention Board continues to provide a multi-service approach in order to develop, implement and monitor the delivery of a 5 year disrepair prevention strategy.

**Housing Strategy PIs:**

8 Council Housing Growth – New Build Programme

Since the last report the Programme has continued to make good progress. There is currently (as at May 2021) one scheme on-site, but by the end of the summer, it is hoped to have around 268 units in construction.

The current programme includes 1,072 new homes, the position is shown in the table below:

	<b>May-21</b>
Homes handed over to tenants	59
Homes in construction	12
Homes with recent planning approval	80
Homes awaiting planning determination	204
Homes in Design stage	111
Homes in Feasibility stage	351
Homes in procurement/ pre-procurement	255
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1072</b>

This represents significant progress towards the target of 1,500 new homes by March 2025, and the service is continuing to proactively seek additional sites to bring into the programme. All Leeds City Council new build homes will be offered at rents that are genuinely affordable for its tenants, and well below market rates.

**Property Acquisitions**

The Council Housing Growth Programme also includes a property acquisitions work stream, which is currently focusing on re-acquiring former council houses bought by tenants under the right to buy regime, as well as “off the shelf” purchases from Strata Homes:

	<b>May-21</b>
Homes handed over to tenants	83
Homes acquired and being refurbished	30
Homes being acquired	38
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>151</b>

The total acquisitions programme has now grown to 151 homes, with 85 more potential acquisitions in the pipeline.

9 Empty Homes – all sectors

Returning empty homes to occupation remains a priority and continues to be linked to the Core Planning Strategy. Since April 2017 the target has been to maintain the

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

number of long term empty homes below 3,777 at the end of March each year. Over the last year the numbers of empty homes have been consistently higher than in recent years. However despite the Covid-19 pandemic, it was possible to reduce the number to 3,810 which is 34 above target. Work is ongoing to reduce this figure further and ensure we remain below the 3,777 target for the end of March 2022.

10 Private Sector Inspections

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, wherever possible, issues have been dealt with remotely in line with Government guidance with inspections being undertaken only when this has not been possible. During 2020/21 the service has undertaken a total of 1,425 inspections, removed 633 hazards and directly benefited 3,177 individuals as a result of the service's involvement.

Officers have supported homelessness prevention work throughout the pandemic by continuing to inspect properties put forward as part of the Landlords Letting Scheme. This work with colleagues in Leeds Housing Options has contributed to an additional 631 new homes during this period.

Throughout the year officers have continued to work in partnership with others to target known rogue landlords. There have been a number of joint operations based on intelligence with the Police to target certain landlords in Armley, Beeston and Harehills. This has been part of the work to target criminal landlords and activity.

The Council designated Beeston and Harehills as selective licensing areas as of 5 January 2020 and have so far received just under 5,500 applications. In March, to support the sector, the Council suspended the requests for all licence payments; putting the issuing of any licences on hold as payment is an essential part of the process. This was resumed in September. Over 95% of all initial payments for selective licensing applications received have now been paid, with just over 300 still outstanding. All landlords have been told that any application without payment will now be cancelled and that they may be operating without a licence and that appropriate legal action may follow. The Council has started to draft licences and final licences with the second part of the licence fee being requested. This will allow the service (subject to the easing of lockdown) to start proactive visits to ensure compliance and when crossing the threshold to address household needs.

Around 100 properties have been identified as potentially operating without a licence. So far 120 cases against such landlords have / are being investigated with 70 civil penalties in the process of being issued. The remaining cases are currently in the process of being investigated to determine what if any action may be taken.

11 Homeless Preventions

The service continues to secure a positive outcome (accommodation secured for at least 6 months) for the vast majority of people who approach the service as threatened with homelessness. Of all prevention cases closed, over 80% result in a positive outcome and some benchmarking for 2020 can be seen below (please note that the latest available benchmarking is only up to quarter 3). For the 15-20% of those for whom a positive prevention is not achieved, the majority of these are because they have lost contact with the service and are assumed to have resolved their housing difficulty. The service standard for positive preventions is 80% and this has been achieved or exceeded month-on-month since last reported. This achievement has

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

been in the context of an increase in the demand for assessments by around 75% over the past two months.

City	Jan-Mar 2020	Apr-Jun 2020	July-Sep 2020	Oct-Dec 2020
Leeds	88%	90%	89%	87%
Sheffield	39%	22%	27%	35%
Birmingham	79%	74%	77%	77%
Manchester	56%	38%	37%	38%
<b>ENGLAND</b>	60%	59%	60%	60%

## 12 Temporary Accommodation

Temporary accommodation figures continue to reflect the successful work around prevention as well as continued efforts to move people quickly from emergency accommodation into longer term accommodation pathways.

Below is the most recent reported benchmarking data with the current return of 60 in Leeds not yet published (reported end of March as a snapshot):

City	Jan-Mar 2020	Apr-Jun 2020	Jul-Sep 2020	Oct-Dec 2020
Leeds	33	95	45	83
Sheffield	149	284	246	315
Birmingham	3,147	3,291	Didn't report	Didn't report
Manchester	2,173	1,313	2,379	2,482
<b>ENGLAND</b>	93,000	98,300	93,490	95,370

This data reflects families and single placements into emergency accommodation which currently consists of the hotels, St Georges Crypt, Seacole and the commissioned family accommodation. Currently only 7 families are in temporary accommodation.

TA staff are working to support move on plans within the hotels and achieving reduction at key sites. There are 9 current residents at Britannia which the service is due to pull out of within next couple of weeks as the newly commissioned services such as Kirkstall Lodge open.

Kirkstall lodge opened the week commencing 3<sup>rd</sup> May and initial residents moved in on 6<sup>th</sup>. This is a 9 bed accommodation with support from St Georges Crypt on site. The service is working with strategy and commissioning on funding proposals and implementation of a number of accommodation projects that will help to offset the reduction in availability based on the Covid restriction on communal settings. This should help to increase the variety on offer for individuals.

Initial properties through the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme have been earmarked to prospective tenants and support packages are being drawn up with partners in street support. These initial properties are likely to be online by end of May.

The Temporary accommodation team continues to work closely alongside Street Support partnership. Offers are being made for rough sleepers in a targeted joined up way to place an equal emphasis on support available to maintain any accommodation. The most recent rough sleeper headcount was 19 across the whole city which shows continued lower numbers. The most recent count happened following the restrictions on the city centre being lifted and numbers were not seen to rise sharply as a result.

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

(For further detail on the work of the Street Support team, please refer to paragraph 35) below.)

13 Unauthorised Encampments

2020/21 has seen an increase in the number of caravans on the roadside which has been noticeable over the autumn/winter months when normally a decrease would be expected. There are currently 4 main family groups of approximately 50-60 caravans in total. This is a considerable increase over previous years of approximately 35-40 caravans. During the pandemic there has been no decrease in numbers which may be due to certain factors: No traditional events have taken place such as Appleby Fair; and no travelling abroad. In terms of encampments by area this breaks down as: North (3%), South (37%), East (40%), West (20%).

14 Adaptations

Adaptations performance across both tenures has been significantly impacted by Covid-19 since April last year. During the first lockdown the team only had one private contractor able to take on Urgent cases, therefore the public sector work came to a halt. All other priorities were placed on hold until Government guidelines changed going into summer.

Following the restrictions lifting in June / July most contractors came back to work, however putting the required measures in place led to a much slower workflow. Since then work output has increased but not to the capacity seen in previous years.

Customers currently still have work placed on hold and this work is slowly getting back into the system again as customers start to feel more confident in letting contractors into their homes. There is still a lot of work to do with performance and although the team individual performance has started to improve, action plans and strategies are now needed from the Adaptations contractors to try and raise their performance to that we have demonstrated in the past.

It is anticipated that 2021/22 will still be challenging as the remaining backlog of work is dealt with, whilst trying to understand the delays and filter out any remaining Covid-19 issues. It is envisaged that performance will remain low until further on in the year due to the reasons above but the service is aiming to work closely with Social Care and Adaptations Contractors to improve this as soon as possible.

**Regulator of Social Housing - Regulatory Framework Performance Indicators:**

15 Decency

The government's Home Standard does not set out a specific target but refers to a requirement to "ensure that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in section five of the Government's Decent Homes Guidance 1 and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard". In practice, the service is aiming to keep the level of decent homes above 90%, although it is accepted that there will be fluctuations year-on-year.

The percentage of homes meeting the standard has increased back above this level in quarter 4 and is at 96.29% as of March 2021 (just slightly lower than the same point the previous year – 96.92%).

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

16 Responsive Repairs Completed Within Timescale

The backlog generated during the initial phase of the Covid-19 pandemic while the 'essential services only' offer was in place has now been fully cleared. This backlog equated to c.20,000 repairs. The repairs service continues to offer a full range of repairs with no restrictions on the type of repair being accepted. However, due to the need to deliver services in line with the agreed risk assessments, some services continue to take longer than pre-Covid. This is also impacted by pressures on supply chains and the availability of some specialist trades.

The figure for March 2021 stands at 68.68%.

During the period 2020/21 over 150,000 repairs were completed to council homes.

17 Responsive Repairs Completed Right First Time

City wide performance against this target has remained strong and above the 90.50% target and largely consistent with the same period last year, which, under the current circumstances is testament to the continued commitment and hard work of Mears and LBS.

18 Satisfaction with Responsive Repairs Completed

Performance remains above target and consistent with pre Covid-19 levels.

19 Capital Works – Satisfaction

The last reported satisfaction rate was for Quarter 2 2020/21 and this stood at 87.10%. No satisfaction surveys have been undertaken for quarters 3 and 4 due to the decreased volume of internal works such as kitchens, bathrooms, windows and doors.

20 Gas Services Completed on time

During the first 2 quarters of 2020/21 the number of gas services completed on time fell significantly. This was primarily a result of access restrictions and was in line with the national picture in this area. Since this period, continued improvement has been evident and the year-end position (99.78%) is within target and consistent with pre-Covid levels.

21 Average Relet Times

As mentioned at paragraph 5 above ("Void Properties") timescales are still significantly impacted due to the need for maintaining Covid-safe practices. As anticipated, relet times remained higher than 2019/20 but started to show a slight downward trend during quarter 4.

22 Mutual Exchanges

Mutual Exchanges in Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 have significantly increased following the temporary suspension of the service earlier in the year. The service is currently working closely with its external partner House Exchange, delivering training to staff and promoting the service via the Leeds Homes/LCC websites, social media etc. in order to maximise exchanges in an aid to alleviate demand from the housing register.

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

**23 Annual Home Visits**

No annual home visits were undertaken during 2020/21 due to restrictions. Instead Housing took a different approach to contacting customers during the year. During quarters 1 and 2 the service contacted 12,400 vulnerable and older tenants to undertake a wellbeing check and signpost to additional support and 4,000 tenants who were shielding to encourage them to register for the national helpline and to signpost to additional support where required.

Late in quarter 2 an Annual Tenancy Contact telephone conversation was introduced, including as many questions as possible from the Annual Home Visit. By the end of March 2021 there had been 13,397 telephone contacts undertaken. A change of approach is planned for 2021/22, with Annual Tenancy Contacts undertaken as a mixture of visits, telephone contacts and online. As part of this approach the service will be piloting an 'online check-in' for some tenants to verify their tenancy details, tenancy or property issues and any new support needs. Tenants will be identified for one of the 3 contact types based on information held, with tenants with a history of tenancy / property / support concerns prioritised for visit and lower risk tenants offered an online check in.

**24 Complaints**

During Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 2020/21, the Housing service received 1,205 stage 1 complaints; responding to 83% within 10 working days and 94% within the corporate target of 15 working days. 15% of complaints were escalated to stage 2. The total number of stage 1 complaints received during Q3 and Q4 this year is 10% less than the same period last year, with numbers of stage 1 complaints having increased by 87% from Q1 and Q2 with the reintroduction of services.

During March 2021, the service saw an increase in stage 1 complaints, the highest number received in any single month over the last 2 years. There was an increase in complaints across the service, with the highest volume increases in property management and responsive repairs, which impacted on the services ability to respond in timescales. During March a number of operational issues were identified within the service and they are putting in place corrective actions in response. Analysis shows that some of the increase in complaints is related to Covid-19 and the service's efforts to reduce any repairs delays and a return to normal service standards. Whilst the enhanced 10 working day response for March 21 was 65.1%, performance within the corporate target of 15 working days was 87%.

The service published its self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman 'Complaint Handling Code' in December 2020 and this will be reviewed annually in line with the expectations of the code.

As a result of the self-assessment, a number of actions have been identified that are currently being progressed. These include updating guidance and training support for investigating officers; implementing quality assurance checks on complaint responses; sharing learning from complaints case studies with staff on a regular basis for team discussions; and a regular complaints summary identifying wider trends and possible recommendations for improvement to be shared with SMT for review. Any resulting actions identified will then be included in team/service action plans to progress.

In addition to this, the Chair of the Tenant Scrutiny Board has been successful in becoming a member of the new Housing Ombudsman Resident Panel. The 600 panel



**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

members from across the country will have the opportunity to provide input and feedback as the Housing Ombudsman service develops and it's positive that Leeds has representation on the Resident Panel as a whole.

Housing are also working as part of a cross council task group to develop a Customer Care e-learning package to embed the Customer Care Standards. Responsive repairs are continuing to adopt an early intervention process when dealing with complaints. This allows simple complaints to be dealt with quickly in an informal manner leading to a positive outcome for the customer, negating the need for them to feel they have to access a formal complaints process to resolve problems. This also allows officers time to focus their efforts on more complex complaint cases and focus on developing learning outcomes into service improvements. As part of this approach, user research is currently being conducted with approximately 800 customers who have submitted a complaint over the last 18 months. Findings from this research will be used to develop a more accessible service for customers.

### ***Communities***

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

26 Customer Access

a) Face to Face

The Covid-19 pandemic saw the majority of the Community Hubs and Libraries close during the first lockdown, with the five sites that remained open offering support to those citizens impacted by the pandemic. Staff whose sites were closed were asked to provide support for other areas of Customer Access while working from home. This includes taking calls on the COVID line that was set up to provide an immediate response to people affected by all aspects of the pandemic, During quarter 2 of 2020/21, following lockdown measure being eased, the remaining Hubs began to open to customers in a phased approach. Customers were able to access PC's, use library services and drop off proofs for Benefit or Housing enquires. Appointments for booth enquires were offered on a telephone basis, where a member of staff would call the customer back at an agreed time. This approach was to help minimise the number of people in a site and maintain social distancing, while providing help and assistance to those in need. In order to open sites in a safe manner staff were placed into pools, which meant they would only work at that particular site and not move between sites, including the peripatetic team. During the subsequent lockdowns the Hubs have remained open, but with a limited service offering, which included Click and Collect book borrowing, public access PC usage and telephone appointments. Any staff not required to work in the Hubs continued to provide support to the Contact Centre.

Helping People into Work – Between April 2020 to March 2021, 821 new people were registered with the Jobshop, compared to 5316 in the previous year, with 1418 gaining successful employment in 2020-21 compared to 2516. Since

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

January work has begun on the new ESIF contract as funding has been secured for three years to provide this service.

Enquiries – Since the decommissioning of Seibel it had not been possible to provide data on the number of visit to Hubs or the number of service requests made. However, due to the introduction of a new recording system (CATS) we are now able to provide some of these details. Data began being recorded in Quarter 2 of 2019-20 and there were 892,541 visits recorded until end of March 2020. From April 2020 to March 2021 308,243 visits have been recorded and 46,834 service requests (we do not have service request data recorded for the previous year).

In addition, there have been 23,863 Qmatic telephone appointments carried out by face to face staff working from home since April 2020.

Further to this, the number of unique users of self-serve IT stations in Hubs was 154 in 2020/21 compared with 12413 the previous year.

Library Usage – There were 5053 visits to Libraries recorded in 2020-21, which is a significant reduction from the previous year with 1,828,609 visits, due to the closure of sites and the changes to the service offering once reopened due to the pandemic.

270,647 items were borrowed during 2020 - 21, down from 1,224,796 for the previous year, and used the library public PCs 37008 times, which represents a drop from 424,497 for the same period last year. These figures include all Library usage, not just those in community hubs.

b) Contact Centre

During the first lockdown all contact centre staff were asked to work from home and within 2 days of the restrictions being in place 98% of staff were all operational.

Staff from the Community Hubs and Libraries were provided to support the work of the Contact Centre, however as the Hubs began to open from July, the amount of support available decreased.

Emails - the Contact Centre received 149,971 emails in 2020/2019 which is an increase of 46,454 (103,517) from the year before. This increase is largely due to the impact of Covid-19. Support was provided by staff in face to face who were unable to work from one of the Community Hubs due to school closures and lack of child care, or due them shielding or isolating.

Telephone Performance - In 2020/21 the Contact Centre answered 91% of calls with an average wait time of 4 minutes 42 seconds. This compares to 88% of calls answered with an average wait time of 3 minutes 27 seconds for 2019/2020. There was a decrease in calls offered (1675) from 920953 calls in 2020/2021 compared to 922628 calls on 2019/2020.

During the first lockdown service provision changed, which resulted in reduced contact on certain lines, and increases on others

- Reduced contact for Registrar.
- Reduced contact for Refuse
- Large collection line closed.

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

- CBL line closed until 24/06/2020 as letting paused.
- Reduced contact for Housing Repairs during April and May as only emergency repairs were completed, however volumes from June onwards have increased as the service returned to BAU and catches up with any non-urgent repairs.
- Increased contact on the ASBU line which saw a 65% increase in calls offered between April – September 2020 due to the stay at home order.
- LWSS Covid Crisis line live 09/04/2020 and included weekend working until 07/06/2020. Staff from across contact centre were utilised taking calls with the core LWSS team processing referrals. LWSS assessing time is still higher than pre-Covid, due to changes in the process and, although demand for support increased initially, the volume of calls received is now decreasing and is closer to pre-Covid volumes.

We also introduced two new phone lines in direct response to the pandemic, CEV Eligibility and Local Track and Trace.

Staff from face to face have been utilised to help provide support to Golden Number, Local Welfare Support Scheme, Council Tax and Benefits calls if they were not required at site to help manage the additional demand.

c) Digital - Web/Online Development

There were 15,492,699 unique web page views in the financial year 2020/21. This was a big increase of 37% compared to 2019/20 which had 11,414,157 views in comparison. The main contributor to this increase has been the pandemic which has seen many more customers coming onto our website to find support (businesses for much needed grants, key messages to the clinically extremely vulnerable etc.) and seek information on services affected. There has been 1,475,037 unique views for our dedicated coronavirus section on the website for the public and 85,583 unique views for our staff section.

As you would expect, this increase in web traffic has resulted in more customers self-serving. There were over 1.5 million more instances of self-service in 2020/21 compared to the previous financial year (citizens checking their bin day, submitting an eform, making an online payment, logging in to check rent balance, booking a slot at a recycling site etc.)

Our social media team dealt with 29,809 direct messages in 2020/21, almost doubling the previous year where 15,781 direct messages were received. On average, these enquiries took 7 minutes 30 seconds to respond to.

Outgoing Facebook posts reached over 10 million users, many of which highlighted key coronavirus related information. We now have 42,195 followers on Facebook and 26,544 on Twitter and are on average uploading 60 videos a month to YouTube (primarily internal and covering staff training), there were 245,000 total video views on our YouTube channel in this time.

d) Welfare Rights

The number of customers assisted between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021 was 23,416. This compares to 34,594 for the same period last year (1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020), a decrease of 32%. Due to Covid 19, DWP shifted the focus of work to process Universal Credit applications and this continues to be the case

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

due to the current economic climate. The Welfare Rights Unit do not assist with Universal Credit applications as the contract for this was awarded to CAB. Therefore, there has continued to be a significant reduction in other benefit applications that the Welfare Rights Unit do assist with. The migration from DLA to PIP and reviews of benefit awards continued to be on hold and decisions on benefit applications continue to be delayed. The total amount of benefit gains for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 was £14,031,752.18. This compares to £20,354,764.37 for the same period, 01.04.19 to 31.03.20 – decrease of 31%. As the focus of DWP is Universal Credit which the unit does not assist with this has reduced the other benefit applications clients have needed assistance with.

Welfare Rights Client Satisfaction - Despite not providing a face to face service at present due to Covid19, the number of responses received is 68. This is reduced as the team generally hand out feedback forms at the face to face appointments and no face to face appointments have been conducted. Out of 68 responses received, 99% of clients using the Welfare Rights Unit said the service was excellent and 1% felt the service was good.

Welfare Rights Unit stopped all face to face appointments due to Covid19 and are yet to resume. Face to face appointments continue to be replaced with dedicated telephone appointments and numbers have increased from a low of around 15 appointments per week in May up to 65 per week by October. We were averaging around receiving 90 calls a day before lockdown, the numbers dropped to a low of about 40 calls a day by the end of April as DWP activity slowed, but have been steadily increasing from May reaching 70 calls a day by October, before increasing significantly up to around 100 per day following the introduction of the self-isolation payment scheme. As the self-isolation payment scheme has levelled out we are now averaging around 70 calls per day.

Whilst the service has been less busy with benefit related enquiries, the Welfare Rights Team have assisted with other areas of work to assist citizens of Leeds including RUOK , Befriending, Foodbanks, Hub work once opened and now assisting with Self Isolation payments and Housing Annual Tenancy checks.

The Tribunal Service is still operating and we are still receiving a significant number of appeal cases, although at a much lower level than the previous year – for the period 01.04.20 to 31.03.21 we received 251 tribunal cases, compared to 698 for the same period the previous year. Of the decisions made so far we have achieved a gain of £686,526.53.

## 27 Welfare and Benefits

### a) Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support

Following the introduction of Universal Credit Full Service in Leeds, there continues to be an ongoing decline in the Housing Benefit Caseload for Working Age claims. This “natural migration” to UC, when an HB customer has a change in their circumstances that meets the DWP’s criteria to warrant a move to UC, will continue until “Managed Migration” which will see all the remaining Working Age HB claim move to UC en-mass.

This change remains scheduled for somewhere between 2019 and 2023. After this has happened, there will remain HB claims in respect of Pension Age customers and those Working Age customers who have been exempted from UC.

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

Natural Migration to Universal Credit has continued during the Covid-19 pandemic, however the average monthly decrease in 2020/21 was 434 claims compared to 678 per month over the period since October 2018.

In October 2018 the HB caseload was 59,259. In March 2021 this had reduced to 38,959 however, each change generates additional work to process the claim across to Universal Credit. Additionally whilst the HB claims ends, the majority of claims that have moved to UC have continued to receive Council Tax Support (CTS).

During 2020/21 there was a significant increase in HB claims for homeless people being housed in temporary accommodation. This was due to the government initiative of “everyone in” during the pandemic, by which people who were rough sleeping, or housed in unsuitable dormitory style hostels were moved to more Covid safe housing, by which hotels were used in Leeds.

The effect of Covid-19 on people’s income has meant that many have had to claim Universal Credit for the first time, and consequently many of these householders have become entitled to CTS as detailed in the figures below. This unprecedented increase in such a short timeframe of new claims for CTS only has placed significant additional demand on resources.

The total number of CTS cases has increased from 62,902 in April 2020 to 66,640 in March 2021. For the same period the number of CTS Only claims increased from 23,848 to 31,232.

HB Expenditure for 2019/20 was £207.5m and for 2020/21 is £189.6m. This decrease being primarily due to the decrease in caseload as people move to Universal Credit

CTS Expenditure for 2019/20 was £50m, and the total amount of CTS credited to Council Tax accounts at the end of Quarter 4 2020/21 is £55.5m with this increase primarily due to the increase in claims caused by Covid-19.

CTS Hardship Funding: The Council were awarded £8.9M by government to provide additional support to working age Council Tax Support recipients in Leeds during 2020/21. The full allocation of funding has been used to reduce the Council Tax bill for over 35,000 residents in Leeds.

b) Speed of Processing Housing Benefit

The most recent figures published by the DWP for the speed of processing are for the second quarter 2020/21.

These figures demonstrate that Leeds continues to process New Claims at a speed ahead of the average compared to both regional and national figures, and at around the average for the processing of Changes:

	<b>Speed of Processing Quarter 2 2020/21</b>	
	<b>New Claims</b>	<b>Changes</b>
<b>Great Britain</b>	17	6
<b>England</b>	17	6
<b>Yorkshire &amp; The Humber</b>	18	7
<b>West Yorkshire</b>	13	6
<b>Leeds</b>	12	6

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

c) Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

DHP can be awarded to customers in receipt of Housing Benefit, but whose HB doesn't cover their rent in full. Awards are primarily made to customers adversely affected by Welfare Reform. DHP can also be awarded to customers who have moved on to Universal Credit where the part of their UC Award in respect of Housing Costs is less than their rent.

In 2020/21 the total budget available for DHP, which includes both a central government contribution and a contribution from Leeds HRA, was £2,677,251. The contribution from the HRA remained at the same level as in 2019/20 whilst the Government Contribution increased by £329,636

At the end of 2020/21 99% of the total budget had been spent

d) Local Welfare Support Scheme

LWSS can be awarded to customers in receipt of qualifying benefits who face crisis or are in need of essential household items which they cannot afford. Awards are primarily made to customers adversely affected by Welfare Reform. The 2020/21 budget for the scheme remained unchanged from the previous year at £600k. The spend as at year end was £567k

The effect of the closure of "non-essential" shops during the Covid-19 lockdowns meant that many of the suppliers of goods were forced temporarily close. In addition, demand for emergency assistance with food and fuel costs changed, as customers sought assistance through the provisions that were introduced to assist during the pandemic.

The additional funding due to Covid-19 came by way of the Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies from DEFRA.

This grant funding for Leeds totalled £1,051,565.15 all of which has been committed

e) Covid-19 Self-Isolation Support Payment

Benefits Assessment are involved in the processing of claims for this scheme, introduced by The Government at the end of September 2020, to provide qualifying customers with a £500 payment to cover their period of self-isolation, and thereby to avoid them suffering a decrease in income during this period.

As at the end of March 2021 a total of 2,802 payments have been made to qualifying customers.

f) Financial Inclusion

The Financial Inclusion team's activities in 2020/21 have been almost exclusively focussed on the work needed to mitigate the impact for people living in hardship as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since the last update (January 2021) the team have:

- Delivered the COVID-19 Winter Grants Scheme alongside cross council colleagues. The aim of the scheme was to enable Local Authorities to provide help and support to families and individuals with food, fuel and essential items. In Leeds the funding allocated to the city totalled £3.5 million, and has been used to ensure children entitled to free school meals and children in families in

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

need of support, received food parcels or vouchers over the school holidays at Christmas, February and Easter. Over 32,000 children have been supported over each holiday period. It has also been used to support over 46,000 working age households receiving Council Tax Support with additional payments for their fuel costs, and fund food aid and Childrens charities to support their clients.

- Leading the city's Healthy Holidays programmes – delivered in partnership with LCF, Children's services and third Sector. For 2021, the Department for Education allocated substantially increased funding of £3.5 million, directly to LCC which will be overseen by the Financial Inclusion Team. This significant increase will result in an extensive scale up on the current project with more children engaging in the activities across the district.
- Easter 2021 Healthy Holidays provisions were delivered across three settings: 31 third sector groups, 26 school partnerships (representing 43 schools) and 10 community hubs providing activities with food. Provisions ranged from some face to face activities to activities and food delivered to homes and/or online activities. All projects were delivered in line with Covid-19 safety requirements.
- Continued development of the ongoing emergency food provision work in response to COVID-19 pandemic, including regular meetings and partnership working with cross council colleagues, FareShare, third sector organisations, VAL and Community Care Hubs.
- Work is now ongoing to resource and develop the 27 Community Care Hubs, providing emergency support to residents across all 33 Leeds wards. This work includes regular partnership meetings with Community Care Hubs, VAL, cross council colleagues and Fareshare in order to adapt and improve processes and services to create sustainable support models as the pandemic situation evolves and recovery begins.
- Provided addition funding alongside LCF and Childrens services to Zero Waste Leeds to implement Stage 2 of the uniform exchange scheme – stage 2 of the initiative includes introduction of a purpose built Uniform Exchange website platform and establishment and coordination of 'The Big Leeds School Uniform Giveaway' events in August 2021 (originally planned for February/Easter but delayed due to COVID-19 National Lockdown). ZWL will also continue the earlier work to establish new schemes in the city and look to further developed the work to include other items in a 'backpack' which could include shoes, coats, IT equipment and more.
- Worked alongside colleagues in Adults Social Care, to assist with the development of 'Shielding flexible support' in the city - a financial support package for people on low income who need to shield.
- Review of [www.leedsmic.org.uk](http://www.leedsmic.org.uk) to ensure an up to date picture of the support offered by each FI partner is displayed. In addition, the team have continued to provide up to date leaflets detailing emergency support available, for use by partners and in food parcels delivered across the city. This has included 5000 leaflets distributed via Easter Healthy Holidays food parcels alone.
- Development to offer a financial inclusion training package to internal and external partners. This has included delivering digital webinars alongside

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

partner organisations to over 60 attendees from Early Help Hubs and Childrens Social Services in 2020/21.

- Worked with colleagues across the Council and external partners including Public Health and debt advice providers to monitor and respond to the implementation of national Breathing Space regulations.
- Continued to support Leeds Credit Union (LCU) to aid their membership rates/numbers and ensure 4 sites have remained open and delivering services to members throughout the pandemic.
- Continued collaboration with partners across the city via monthly ‘bronze’ financial inclusion and food meetings.
- Worked alongside Children’s Services, Public Health, Leeds Community Gambling Service and the Young Gamblers and Gamers Trust to develop a communications campaign and a training programme to raise awareness of Child Gambling and related harm.
- Continued work in relation to the funeral poverty agenda – working in partnership with Leeds Credit Union and advice partners including Welfare Rights to offer residents impacted by funeral poverty access to accessible, affordable funeral loans, as well as one to one information and advice. The work has also included creating advice leaflets and signposting contact cards which are provided (where appropriate) by Leeds Registrars directly to residents in need.

28 Communities Team

a) Priority Neighbourhoods Programme

A comprehensive report on the work in priority neighbourhoods throughout 2019 and 2020 – including Covid-19 related activity - was provided to the Executive Board meeting in October 2020 and the EHC Scrutiny Board for its meeting in November 2020. The hard work to embed locality working over the years, made a real difference throughout the pandemic in the way the whole council and external partners were able to respond in our communities. A Locality Working Covid-19 Recovery and Resilience Plan, for the next twelve months, was submitted and approved for implementation at the March 2020 Neighbourhood Improvement Board meeting.

b) Migration and Strengthening Communities

- The Covid-19 Community Champions Project is led by the council, delivered in partnership with Voluntary Action Leeds, Forum Central and Hamara, and works closely with Public Health and Leeds CCG. Funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government until July 2021, the project aims to build upon the work that is already taking place in Leeds, and responds to local feedback that people need more information about Covid-19, and in particular vaccinations, to be able to share accurate information with communities. Recruitment of 75 people who live and work in Leeds to support their friends, family, neighbours and community to have the information about Covid-19 and the vaccine which will help them feel supported, make informed



**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

choices and stay safe. Champions will be provided with training, regular Q&A's with health professionals, ongoing support, and opportunities to feedback local issues and concerns, to ensure champions have access to up to date information and feel confident having conversations about Covid-19 and the vaccine and signposting people toward support. The Covid-19 community champions micro grants of up to £1,000 aims to support the capacity of grassroots level groups and organisations to create materials and/or spaces for sharing key health messages around Covid-19, vaccinations, government guidance and restrictions in ways that are accessible and appropriate for their communities. The community champions project increases outreach, engagement and communication with all communities living in Leeds, and identified priority groups who have been disproportionately impacted by Covid-19, including but not limited to; older people, younger people, disabled people and Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. Working with trusted local voices we want to build confidence in Covid-19 messaging, testing and the vaccine programme and better understand how to address the barriers faced to accessing accurate health information.

- The Prevent Team continues to engage with communities to raise awareness of the threat from extremism and radicalisation. As part of these efforts, a virtual Prevent Community Roundtable was organised in partnership with colleagues at the Home Office which brought together third sector organisations, faith establishments and other partners to discuss and consider issues related to Prevent. The event attracted 50 people from a variety of backgrounds and sectors to hear some really useful presentations on topics including conspiracy theories, Right Wing Terrorism, and anti-Semitism. In addition, and in response to a request from the local Syrian community, the Prevent Team developed and delivered an online safety training package focusing on radicalisation to parents who have expressed concern about the emerging risks that are appearing online.
- The Migrant Access Programme mobilised a virtual service for vulnerable EU nationals struggling to register to the EU Settlement Scheme. This service proved vital to engage with vulnerable people during the pandemic where many services had halted provision, and which created added anxiety. Through partnership with EU Consulates, Kirklees Citizen's Advice and Law Centre, St Vincent's, Seraphus Solicitors, the council's Customer Access and Welfare Rights, over 850 EU nationals have so far been reached to raise awareness; supported to apply to the scheme through a number of different stages, such as applying for ID documentation which is a first step to applying to the scheme; language support; legal support and information.
- The Communities Team have been active in supporting both the recent enhanced testing in Harehills (and surrounding areas of LS8 & LS9) as well as supporting the launch of the roving vaccine bus that started its journey around the city in Beeston. This support can be split into three main categories. Firstly, leading local communication and engagement with key stakeholders (including third & faith sector partners, residents & Elected Members) in advance of both the enhanced testing in Harehills and the deployment of the vaccine bus in Beeston. Secondly, operational support at both the enhanced testing venue and at the vaccine bus, which has involved aiding site management and co-ordination of volunteers. Lastly, the Communities Team have helped with door

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

knocking to deliver targeted communications in order to galvanise local residents to action as well as increase understanding of both initiatives. With the enhanced testing, approximately 1500 PCR tests were delivered across 10 LSOAs by numerous volunteers over the course of the 7 days with a return rate of around 75%. The launch of the vaccination bus in Beeston saw 171 local residents receiving their first dose of the vaccination. Door knocking took place in the surrounding 4 LSOAs where volunteers provided information on the vaccination bus and encouraging uptake. A total of 18 volunteers took part, including support from 6 Migrant Community Networkers with language support and community knowledge.

**Community Safety (More detail is provided at Appendix 3)**

29 Members' attention is drawn to the following performance areas:

30 People in Leeds are safe and feel safe in their homes, in the streets, and the places they go

Safer Leeds strategic focuses is on: Keeping people safe from harm (Victim); Preventing & reducing offending (Offender); and Creating Safer, stronger communities (Location).

The West Yorkshire Police & Crime Commissioner 'Your View' survey responses to March 2020 reported that 84% of Leeds respondents felt 'safe' or 'very safe' in their local area, (5,618 Leeds respondents). Leeds feedback was the second most positive within West Yorkshire Police force (West Yorkshire Police district level responses ranged from 77% to 86%).

Recent / Emerging Activity:

- Work during this period has primarily focussed on operational response to the pandemic. At a strategic level a group has been established to both co-ordinate the response to drivers of serious violence and youth violence, to influence positive change across the city and at a neighbourhood level.
- The Safer Leeds: City Centre Partnership Board has worked collectively during this period on managing the local response to changing local and national restrictions.
- Infrastructure supporting the delivery of the paper based Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) 'Your View' survey was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The OPCC Executive team has approved a proposal to run a trial online only 'Your View' survey. There is an aspiration that an online 'Your View' survey will increase participation from historically underrepresented groups.

31 Domestic Violence and Abuse

The response to Domestic Violence and Abuse is a priority for the city, focusing upon: Supporting victims (adult, children and families); Changing attitudes and perceptions (individuals and communities), Challenging behaviours (working with perpetrators), and Enabling effective change (workforce and organisational responses).

The victim self-reporting rate is a Safer Leeds indication of victim confidence to report Domestic Violence and Abuse. 29% of 21,789 domestic incidents were victim self-reported; this is stable as a proportion of all domestic incidents.

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

Domestic Violence and Abuse has been significantly affected by Covid-19. Leeds moved quickly to mobilise business continuity plans for Domestic Violence and Abuse Services and the arrangements have continued.

Recent / Emerging Activity:

- Safer Leeds has worked with the commissioned service Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS) to ensure business continuity during the Covid-19 period. The services includes – additional helpline capacity, web-chat facilities, as well as the normal emailing arrangements, and continued refuge accommodation. Arrangements are in place for individuals to be directed/supported towards the current housing options arrangements for temporary and emergency accommodation when refuge space is not available. LDVS has seen the number of calls to the helpline significantly increase. Safer Leeds have worked with Women Aid to access Government funding to provide 7 additional units into the city until January 2021. All units are currently full.
- The Council moved its daily DVA MARAC arrangements to a virtual meeting the first week of lockdown. Numbers fluctuate between 55-81 cases per week.
- All refuge places are in the Third Sector with a proportion commissioned by the Council. Already demand for refuge outstrips supply. Safer Leeds, Housing Leeds and LDVS are working closely to support victims and to explore alternative Sanctuary arrangements and ensure safety plans are in place.
- Strategically, Safer Leeds is introducing a Domestic Violence and Abuse Local Partnership Board in line with the Domestic Abuse Bill legislation going through parliament. This new statutory Board will run in shadow arrangements until the legislation comes into place in April 2021. The new multi-agency Board had its first meeting in October 2020. The focus of the Board will be to deliver a needs analysis in relation accommodation DVA support requirements, develop a strategy for DVA and commission DVA accommodation support services. The Government is currently working with local authorities to confirm a funding formula for the new statutory duties.

### 32 Anti-social Behaviour

The Leeds Anti-social Behaviour team (LASBT) delivers a multi-tenure service operating across Leeds in partnership with a much broader range of agencies and support services. LASBT will typically deal with behaviour that cannot be reasonably resolved through tenancy management, or mediation. The Leeds ASB Strategy redefines the way in which LASBT operates, complements the Council's inclusive growth strategy, and works with children's services, and adult social care, to support vulnerable families.

19,177 incidents of ASB were recorded by Police in Leeds; this has increased by 20%. Youth nuisance continued to represent a high proportion of incidents, (5,951 youth nuisance incidents reported, increasing by 9%).

Recent / Emerging Activity:

- In 2020/21 the volume of anti-social behaviour service demand connected to the student population was unprecedented. LASBT rapidly implemented the North West Leeds Public Space Protection Order (PSPO), and established an operational group focusing upon community cohesion and communication. Membership includes the

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

universities, the Student Union, West Yorkshire Police, Leeds City Council, and elected ward members.

- In October 2020, as a result of external funding pledges from Universities in Leeds, LASBT implemented an “Enhanced Service” of multi-agency patrols. Targeted patrols of inner North West Leeds prevent and deter anti-social behaviour, with capability to utilise enforcement powers. Since January 2021, the Enhanced Service has also been flexibly deployed to engage with security staff at a number of Leeds halls of residence.
- In March/April 2021, a number of noise abatement notice breaches resulted in 8 warrants at properties in inner North West Leeds. A number of items including DJ decks and high powered speakers have been seized.

### 33 Hate Crime

Hate crimes and incidents can have devastating consequences for victims and their families, and can frighten and divide communities. The priorities and response in Leeds reflect national guidance in focusing upon: Preventing hate crime; responding to hate crime; increasing the reporting of hate crime; improving support to victims; and building an understanding of hate crime.

There has been an overall reduction in Police reported Hate incidents. The majority of reported Hate Incidents refer to harassment, verbal or written abuse.

Recent / Emerging Activity:

- Targeted work has taken place with Safer Leeds to raise awareness for Asylum Seekers currently living in hotel accommodation due to the restrictions imposed by Covid-19. Joint working with Migration Access Project and West Yorkshire Police has helped inform people what a hate crime is and how they can report it.

### 34 Street Support

Since the government issued all local authorities with the ‘Everyone In’ directive in March 2020, Leeds moved at pace and offered all people on the streets and those at risk, safe temporary emergency accommodation. Over the last year, this includes c944 people going through temporary accommodation, of which c200 of those have been known to rough sleep in the past. At its peak several commercial hotels were being used, with wrap around support being given at each site. There are now only two main hotels, one of which is female only provision and the service is working towards a full exit plan. Currently there are 48 people in emergency accommodation (34 people in the hotels and 14 at the Crypt, commissioned service) and all 48 have a housing/ move-on plan.

Every month a city wide rough sleeping count is carried out. Figures as follows: November 2020 = 35 (national return, previous year Nov 2019 =40), Dec 2020=26, Jan 2021=18, Feb 2021=25, March 2021=16 and April 2021=19. The trajectory is downwards.

During the last 12 months the service has also worked on increasing the accommodation offer, a blended approach to meet the needs of people and at the same time ensuring where needed, people are assigned a named navigator as part of a planned wrap around support package, to aid move-on and reduce attrition rates. This strategy has included both the Council’s provision and new offers through external funding.

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

Recent / Emerging Activity:

- Funding from the MHCLG Next Steps Accommodation Programme has enabled the service to pursue the purchase of up to 20 x 1 bed properties, off the open market.
- As part of the Rough Sleepers Initiative, the Somewhere Safe to Stay Hub (previously at St Anne’s Resource Centre) has been remodelled. This is a female only emergency accommodation provision and the new premise at Ladybeck Lane is on track for an end of June completion.
- For the cohort of people with No Recourse to Public Funds, the service has been able to flexibly utilise funding as part of the Tier 3 allocation to Leeds City Council, via Public Health.
- Funding from the MHCLG has enabled the remodelling of Kirkstall Lodge – a large property of 9 x 1 bedroom flats owned by Homegroup in Kirkstall. This will be recommissioned and be managed by the Crypt for 1 year. This will re house 8 people from the cohort in the hotels as part of the exit planning.
- Recruitment for the Drug and Alcohol Street Based Lifestyle Team is underway. The team will provide specialist drug and alcohol support to those rough sleeping or former rough sleepers accommodated through E/A.
- Moving forward, the service is now exploring options to bid for funding to the MHCLG as part of the second round of Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme. Currently this includes ongoing conversations around ‘Leeds Asks’ including the potential for:
  - Collaborating with a known housing developer to establish between 6/9 modular accommodation units.
  - Working with Registered Providers to develop a number of Move-On accommodations for people with substance use issues and will include appropriate support and move-on plans.
- In addition, a ‘City Conversation on Rough Sleeping’ is being planned (end of May) with a focus on 2 of the big ‘Leeds Asks’: Additional Accommodation Provision; and Health and Wellbeing Provision. This will aid and shape the local improvement plan ‘Move-On: Transition and Recovery Framework’.

***Waste and Environment (More detail is provided at Appendix 4)***

35 Members’ attention is drawn to the following performance areas:

36 Bin Collection Rate

Despite the unprecedented pressures on service and increase in waste presented since the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, Leeds City Council continued to successfully pick up 99.9% of all planned collections (cumulatively) by period 13 of 2020/21. The service also introduced all new collection routes and collections days on the restart of the garden waste collections in May (end of period 2).

In excess of 99.9% of all planned collections have been successful from period 1 to 9 (the exception to this is period 3, which included the resumption of the garden collections which shows a 99.86% collection rate compared to 99.91% last year). Periods 10 and 11 included the end of the garden waste collection season, Christmas, and the severe winter weather that forced services to be disrupted in the latter half of period 11. Periods 12 and 13 showed marginally higher missed collections than the

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

same periods in 19/20, this period included lockdown 3 and further severe winter weather that disrupted collections.

(Please refer to the table in Appendix 4 for a breakdown of type of missed bin per period.)

**37 Recycling and Landfill**

Recycling rates (Year to Date) have reduced substantially due to the effects of Covid-19 on service provision and the large and sustained increase in residents' residual waste since the pandemic began. Consequently, Leeds City Council was c.8% lower in its overall recycling rate at the end of Q1 compared to last year, which improved to c.5% lower at the end of Q2 compared to last year, and further improved at the end of Q3, to just over 3% lower compared to last year. The main factors are the enforced HWRC closures from end of March to mid-May and their reduced usage as safe distancing is managed on sites, the operational need to suspend garden waste kerbside collections from end of March to end of May and a disproportionately large and sustained increase in residual (black bin) waste since the first lockdown in March 2020, which negatively affects the overall recycling calculation.

Landfill continues to reduce and is well below target, as well as a reduction when compared to landfill tonnages in 19/20. Although the usage of landfill continues to reduce, the reduction is higher than usual due to Covid-19 and the enforced HWRC closures from end of March to mid-May. As at the end of January 2021, there has been approximately 850 tonnes less to landfill than the same time last year.

**38 Street Cleanliness**

It is only recently that the remainder of staff within the service that were affected by Covid (i.e. those that were categorised CEV,) have returned to work. The service is therefore still very much in a catch up phase. As mentioned in the last update, throughout the Pandemic the service has been operating with significantly reduced resources and has had to prioritise service delivery. The areas of work that suffered the most were mechanical sweeping and manual litter picking. As such some areas have had a reduced offer for nearly a year and these areas will take some time to recover.

To aid this recovery, team leaders and charge hands have been asked to identify the worst affected areas in their zones and to target resources to bring them up to standard as soon as possible. There are still risk assessments and safe systems of work in place to safeguard staff against Covid which can sometimes impact on productivity and this is likely to continue for a while longer. For example, there are still limits on the number of staff that can be transported in a vehicle at any one time.

An area that has grown significantly during the Pandemic is community litter picking. There has been a surge in demand for litter picking equipment including bags, gloves and tongs as well as requests for assistance from the service to remove filled bags. Litter Free Leeds have been a key part of this helping to co-ordinate the activities of these groups. Unfortunately such initiatives aren't evenly spread across Leeds so some outlying areas of Leeds have large numbers of active groups whilst inner City areas are less represented. This is something the service is keen to address.

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

***Elections and Regulatory***

39 Members' attention is drawn to the following performance area:

40 Parking Functions

The service has 3 main areas of responsibility:

- Parking administration including permit schemes;
- Enforcement of parking and bus lane restrictions; and
- Managing the council's on and off street parking operation.

41 Parking administration including Permit schemes

- In Leeds there are currently 133 Resident Permit areas. Each resident in a zone is entitled to a permit for each vehicle registered to the address plus a transferable permit for visitors. Residents' permits are free. They are issued for 3 years and renewed on a cycle so the administration work is evened out throughout the year.
- The Council runs a permit scheme for ULEV (ultra-low emission vehicles) which gives free parking in all our spaces. There are currently 1321 permits. There are also 12 charging points at Woodhouse Lane Car Park which are free to use.
- The service also runs chargeable permit schemes for businesses who need to access residents' zones and for essential workers such as health visitors. These are £80 a year reduced to £60 for charities. There are 3723 of these permits.
- The service has been offering free parking for front line staff dealing with COVID in partnership with the local NHS. At present 530 permits have been supplied, mainly for use at Woodhouse Lane Car Park. The face value of these permits is £130 each, £68,900 per month.
- The volume of telephone calls and correspondence is closely related to the issue of penalties. Due to lockdown the numbers have reduced significantly as below :

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	20/21 Total	19/20 Total
Telephone	4,494	7,017	7,982	8,696	28,189	47,130
Correspondence	1,620	5,926	6,414	5,576	19,536	34,880

42 Enforcement of parking and bus lane restrictions

- Parking enforcement was stopped altogether on 22 March. Following complaints regarding unsafe parking patrols were resumed in the City centre from 1<sup>st</sup> May. Bus Lane enforcement did not restart until 24 June. The number of offences has dropped significantly as a result.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2020/21 Total	2019/20 Total	Difference
Parking	1,670	14,288	14,233	10,154	40,345	96,240	58%
Bus Lane	403	6,599	3,460	1,514	11,976	41,893	72%

- The number of operational bus lanes was reduced significantly throughout the year due to the extensive remodelling of the bus lane network under the Leeds Passenger Transport Improvement Project. When the works are complete the bus

**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

routes and the camera network will be different and the effect on the number of bus lane offences is not known.

- The first red route in Leeds has been introduced outside Leeds Bradford Airport and is being enforced with fixed cameras. A red route is a “no stopping” offence meaning that drop off, loading etc. is not allowed. Enforcement began in September 2019. The number of offences was 2029 which compares with 3427 in the six months that the cameras were operational in 2019/20.
- The team has had an unprecedented rise in the number of complaints regarding parking at schools since pupils returned. More pupils are being driven to school, perhaps due to parental concerns about Covid, and there are more people at home during the day than previously, meaning that their cars are still in situ and therefore there is less capacity for parking. Additional resources have been allocated and several officers are deployed every school day but we do not have the capacity to cover the number of requests.

**43 Managing the council’s on and off street parking operation**

- The Council controls 2407 on street pay parking spaces and 2373 spaces in car parks with budgeted revenue of £8.8m. This is split between cash payment in parking machines and card payment through the mobile phone payment system. The phone system is increasingly popular and now accounts for 62% of revenue, up from 51% in 2018/19.
- During lockdown parking was completely free up to 4 July. From 4 July – 1 September a reduced rate was offered on the cashless parking system whilst the machines continued to charge the standard price. A review of the reduced rates showed that many customers preferred to continue using the machine even when it was much more expensive, £2.90 per hour rather than £1. Therefore we decided to end the promotional rate from 1 September. Free weekend parking was offered for the first 3 weekends of the re-opening of retail in April 2021.
- There has been a temporary loss of capacity in the City Centre due to extensive roadworks which have affected pay and display spaces. There will also be a permanent loss of capacity due to the sale of car parks for building development and the changes required for the City Centre park.
- The cumulative effect is a very significant shortfall in revenue:

	Budget	Actual	Shortfall	Shortfall
Woodhouse Lane	£2,438,270	£500,920	£1,937,350	79%
Other Car parks	£1,849,580	£813,570	£1,036,010	56%
On Street	£4,762,100	£1,568,050	£3,194,050	67%
Total	£9,049,950	£2,882,540	£6,167,410	68%

- Together with the revenue from parking and bus lane penalties the overall position for parking services is a shortfall of £8,143,000. This has been partly mitigated by cost savings to give a total of £7,466,000. As these losses are Covid related a claim will be made to the Government compensation scheme which should reduce the sum to £2,156,000.
- It is expected that the Government compensation scheme will end on 21<sup>st</sup> June to coincide with the end of lockdown restrictions. This means that the service is likely to continue to face very significant budget pressures into 2021/22.



**APPENDIX 1 – PERFORMANCE SUMMARY FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD  
(QUARTER 4 2020/21 OR LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

***Parks and Countryside***

44 Members' attention is drawn to the following performance areas:

45 Parks and Green Spaces

During the pandemic period there has been a significant increase in the usage of parks and open spaces as people were restricted to taking exercise and recreation locally. This led to an increase in maintenance pressures, particularly around litter management at the same time as resource pressures were experienced. A campaign is underway to encourage visitors to take home any waste they have to support the provision of a cleaner parks estate across the city. As government restrictions are eased or amended, phased reopening of facilities is underway although some impacts remain. Given the increased numbers of visitors in parks and staffing pressures as a result of Covid-19, Parks and Countryside are having to continue to prioritise services. The service will continue to honour any commitments for floral decorations where they are purchased by community committees, ward members or community groups, which will include maintenance as applicable. However, the service will not be supplying and maintaining floral decorations to the city centre and surrounding areas this spring/summer.

46 Woodland Creation

The woodland planting over winter has been very successful with around 200,000 trees planted, as part of the plan to plant 50 hectares each year on council land. This will help mitigate the effects of climate change, as well as benefit pollinators, wildlife and enable people to connect with nature with enhanced recreation value. The Arrium continues with a sapling growing programme using seeds collected by volunteers and members of the public last autumn with a total of over a million germinated seedlings planned to grow on this year for future planting. All ward members are being contacted to update them on trees planted in their area over winter and to discuss proposals and ideas for woodland creation so that suitable sites can be identified to begin planting in winter later this year.

47 Street scene Grounds Maintenance

In common with the whole council workforce, there have been reduced resources due to staff being required to isolate, shield or restrict mixing, which has impacted on operations. Priority will remain focussed on larger areas of grass situated within residential areas in order that these areas can be used for exercise and recreation thereby reducing pressure on formal parks and open spaces.

Strimming work suspended during 2020 has been picked up during the mowing closedown period to restore sites to expected standards. For the mowing season 2021 changes to arrangements for the cutting of grass adjacent to the highway have been introduced. The largest element is to the mowing frequency of primary network roads which typically have a speed limit above 40mph and therefore by law require extensive traffic management each time operatives work adjacent to the carriageway. Grass cutting will become an annual visit in late summer timed to reflect seasonal growth patterns aiming to encourage the formation of native wildflower species seed stock within the verge. In addition the service will cease the mowing of rough grass

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areas adjacent to country roads whilst ensuring that safety sight lines are sustained. Finally the service will be reducing mowing on a small number of severe slopes and banked areas that may support the planting of trees as part of the council's approach to meeting the climate emergency and improving air quality. All of these measures will improve the sustainability of the mowing operation, moving closer to alignment with the national Plantlife campaign whilst providing improved habitats for urban pollinator insects and small mammals.