

**Report of the Directors of Resources & Housing and Communities & Environment  
Report to Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board**

**Date: 13 June 2019**

**Subject: Performance Report**

|  |                              |  |
|--|------------------------------|--|
| Are specific electoral Wards affected?<br>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?<br>If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number:<br>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 Quarter 4 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 2018/19 Quarter 4 performance data (unless otherwise stated), and provides an update on progress in delivering the relevant priorities in the Best Council Plan 2018/19 to 2020/21.

## **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 Quarter 4 performance information (unless otherwise stated) relevant to the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 Appendix 1 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 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 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
- HCA Regulatory Framework – measuring performance of Council Housing in meeting the 4 HCA Consumer Standards

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

#### **HRA Business Plan PI's:**

##### a) Rent Collection

Rent collection is a key priority for Housing Leeds. Rent collection at the end of March 2019 increased to 97.27%, 0.38% higher than at the end of second quarter. This is lower than the 97.50% target, but is a positive position given the significant increase in the numbers of tenants moving to Universal Credit ("UC") since October 2018. The service has continued to undertake a range of actions to ensure a strong focus on rent collection and reducing rent arrears. These have

included intensive work undertaken by the Area Housing Teams across the city focussing on engaging with tenants in arrears who are having difficulties paying and linking to appropriate support services, and a pro-active staff campaign promoting rent collection during February and March. The service has continued to promote direct debit take up. This is reflected in direct debit increasing to 39.89% at the end of March 2019, up from 38.67% in March 2018.

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

- The number of tenants claiming UC has increased to 4,224 at the end of March 2019, up from 349 prior to the launch of UC Full Service in October 2018.
- 280 tenants have been affected by the benefit cap as recorded by the benefit service.
- There have been 3,526 tenants affected by under occupation as recorded by the benefit service.

In preparation for the launch of UC, the service has delivered an extensive programme of staff training, providing a wrap-around service, targeted tenant communications and extensive partnership working with other agencies, including DWP, to ensure tenants are able to be supported through the process of claiming UC. A service offer launched which allows for triage to focus support on those with the greatest needs, so that the benefit can be maximised with greater numbers of UC claimants. The service offer has been delivered despite higher than expected numbers of UC claimants through the mainstreaming of more general UC work such as rent verifications, allowing Enhanced Income officers to focus on supporting tenants' directly.

#### b) Former Tenancy Arrears

While Former Tenant Arrears at the end of March 2019 slightly increased to 2.22%, up from 2.16% in March 2018, this is mainly due to technical issues with the financial computer systems which meant that the periodic write-off of some bad debts could not be undertaken prior to year-end. During 2018/19, £486k of FTAs were collected, compared to £496k in 2017/18, and the amount of new former tenant debt created at tenancy termination during 2018/19 reduced by £354k to £1.25m.

Former tenant arrears are actively pursued wherever possible and the service has delivered a range of actions designed to minimise arrears at tenancy termination and to increase engagement with tenants during the notice period and after the tenancy has ended. These have included increased use of follow-up calls, contacts by text and e-mail and increased use of home visits to former tenants at their new address.

#### c) Void Properties

Overall the number of properties untenanted continue to remain low and under the 1% properties untenanted target (latest figures – as of 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019 – show 332 voids which equates to 0.60% of properties).

Tenancy turnover in the last 12 months has reduced by 1,000. The service will continue to monitor the number of empty properties to ensure they continue to remain under target.

d) Right to Buy Sales

Right to Buy applications are higher than this time last year and it is anticipated that 2019/20 sales will be at a similar level to 2018/19.

e) Disrepair

Over recent months there has been an increase in the number of disrepair claims received. This time last year on average 45 cases per month were received. Over the same 3 months this year there have been 68 claims per month received with no sign of this slowing down.

As reported previously there was a backlog of claims awaiting work and in October 2018 Mears was commissioned to commence a programme to deliver a backlog of 128 disrepair cases in the South and West area of the City. Mears have now completed this programme of work and all backlog cases have been completed.

In November 2018 Engie were commissioned to commence a similar programme for 138 backlog cases in the East area of the City. Engie have reduced the backlog by 104 cases and have a programme to complete the remaining 34 backlog disrepair cases by the end of June 2019.

Since the last report was presented to Scrutiny Board, a Disrepair Improvement Board has been set up to closely monitor activity and overall performance and also to ensure that this area of activity is prioritised and seen as a service priority for all teams involved in the overall process.

Ongoing activity is taking place to ensure that disrepair cases are being dealt with robustly with joint work taking place across Housing and Legal to further refine and improve internal processes to meet the Court Protocol, improve overall performance and reduce external costs. This robust approach is realising an average saving of 31% in compensation and 28% in costs payable against amounts claimed.

Whilst activity is focused on responding to the increased number of claims that are being received, the service has developed a series of initiatives as part of its prevention strategy and is working with colleagues in its communications team to develop a robust media and marketing strategy to proactively respond to the increase in activity across targeted areas.

The Disrepair Prevention Action Group, with lead officers from key service areas, continues to look at monitoring progress against a joint action plan that has been developed as part of the preventions strategy.

**Housing Strategy PI's:**

f) Council Housing Growth

As previously advised to Scrutiny Board, there have been challenges in delivering affordable housing schemes not least in relation to funding caps on the amount of borrowing available to the council to deliver new council homes. The changes to funding regulations announced in October 2018 enable the council to begin a more ambitious programme of housebuilding from 2019/20 onwards and plans are already being progressed to support the council's aspiration to deliver 300 new council homes per year over the next 5 years and beyond.

During 2018/19, 69 new council homes were built across three sites at Broadleas, Bramley; the Garnets, Beeston and at Red Kite Row, Whinmoor. The council currently has a further 430 new homes at various stages of development as shown in the table below.

Update on existing general needs programme:

| <b>Scheme status</b>                      | <b>Number of homes</b> |
|---|------------------------|
| Homes on site/in construction/in contract | 73                     |
| Homes in planning                         | 30                     |
| Homes in procurement                      | 134                    |
| Homes in pipeline                         | 193                    |
| <b>Total homes</b>                        | <b>430</b>             |

A further 6 sites which will deliver up to 184 further new homes are to be presented to Executive Board in June 2019 and will be added to this programme.

In addition to this general needs housing programme, the Council continues to make progress with its programme of extra care housing for older people and by the end of 2019, will have gone out to tender on three extra care schemes with the aim of delivering another 200 homes in addition to the above.

This will mean that the council has already identified a programme of over 800 new council homes and is making significant progress against the initial target of 1,500 new homes over the next 5 years.

g) Empty Homes – all sectors

The Core Planning Strategy set a target to reduce the number of empty homes by 2,000 between 2012 and 2017. This was achieved in March 2017 with a reduction by 2,437 homes. Since April 2017 the Empty Homes Strategy's target has been to maintain the number of empty homes below the 3,776 homes target as per the Core Planning Strategy.

At the end of March 2019 the number of empty homes was 3,647, representing a net decrease on target of 129 during 2018/19.

The service continues to have a robust strategy and wide range of options to try and address empty homes. The 2019/22 strategy will be going to Executive Board later this year and it will confirm funding for the Empty Homes Doctor again as well as a proposal for a new buyback programme of empty homes using the Housing Revenue Account to purchase empty homes and using them for affordable social homes. The additional borrowing will be self-funded as the rent will cover the actual costs.

h) Private Sector Inspections

The year-end performance figures for 2018/19 show that a total of 3,378 inspections were carried out by the service on private rented properties against a target of 2,500. They are as a result of either a complaint from the tenant (this forms the majority), referral from other agency (Police, West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service or social services etc.) or as a result of proactive enforcement actions such as the Leeds Neighbourhood Approach Team in Holbeck or the Rogue Landlord Unit. This compares with a figure of 2,304 for inspections for 2017/18.

For 2018/19 the total number of legal notices served against private rented properties amounted to 1,740. The Notices served are all part of formal enforcement activity – they cover a wide range of actions from Improvement or Prohibition Orders down to Power of Entry Notices and other building legislation. This compares with a figure of 861 for 2017/18. The increase is mainly due to an increased inspection target but also a more robust enforcement policy – the worst properties are targeted and moves to enforcement is being done in a more streamlined way. As a result of all interventions against private rented properties, the service has removed / reduced 1,666 formal hazards, thus improving the living conditions of the occupying tenants.

For the year 2018/19, a total of 20 prosecutions were successfully completed and a further 17 Property Redress Notices / Civil Penalties were also issued. This compares to 10 successful prosecutions in the year 2017/18 and is again a reflection of a more robust enforcement policy. Prosecution is undertaken where the landlord has failed to comply with a legal Notice requiring works to be undertaken to improve conditions. It can also be as a result of a landlord failing to licence a property when required to do so or failing to comply with licence conditions. This action is only taken when a landlord has failed to comply informally and we have sufficient evidence to prove an offence has been committed. Civil Penalties are equivalent to a prosecution – this is an alternative action that has been recently introduced.

i) Housing Association Nominations

926 households were re-housed as a nomination to Leeds City Council from Registered Providers from April 2018 to March 2019. The overall performance percentage is taken from the ratio of 'true lets' to Nomination. A 'True Let' is defined as a genuine new or re-let, discounting such lets as internal transfers, mutual exchanges and decants.

The service is still expecting some outstanding returns so the year-end total is likely to change. However from the current figures we can estimate a 7% rise in overall nominations to LCC.

j) Homeless Preventions

Following the first year of the Homelessness Reduction Act, Leeds has maintained high levels of prevention activity. As a result of changes in the way preventions are recorded following the implementation of the Act, the service moved from presenting a prevention figure to a more meaningful statistic – the percentage of cases where homelessness has been prevented or relieved. This percentage demonstrates the effectiveness of interventions and will be more independent of any changes to recording mechanisms.

The service standard for good performance is 80% and monthly performance has consistently remained above 80%, with the March 2019 figure reaching 87%.

k) Temporary Accommodation

There were 29 households owed a housing duty as a homeless household in emergency temporary accommodation at the end of March 2019. This compares to Birmingham at 2,058 placements and Manchester at 1,484 placements. No homeless households were placed in Bed & Breakfast accommodation. The low number is a result of effective prevention and move-on work.

l) Adaptations

The Government best practice guide on adaptations suggests that housing authorities should aim to achieve 95% completion within target timescales. The targets for urgent cases is 70 calendar days and for non-urgent cases it is 170 calendar days.

In March 2019, Housing Leeds completed adaptations at 91% for installations in the private sector and 82% for installations in the public sector.

The Health & Housing Service will continue to work closely with Leeds Building Services (LBS) to improve the completion rate in public properties. From some internal changes at LBS, initial reports for April have shown an improvement that will hopefully improve performance in public significantly in 2019/20.

**HCA Regulatory Framework Performance Indicators:**

m) 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 level of homes meeting the standard in March 2019 stands at 93.19%.

n) Responsive Repairs Completed Within Timescale

Members are kindly requested to note that due to difficulties reconciling Mears data, performance data against this indicator for February is not currently available. Citywide performance against this indicator has stayed below the target of 99.00% over the reporting period. Performance for January (93.99%) and March (96.35%) has been recorded with March's performance at the highest level since July 2017. The recent positive direction of travel for this indicator corresponds with the high citywide customer satisfaction levels reported over the same period. Mears performance against this indicator remains just below target with cumulative South performance of 97.08% achieved at the end of the reporting period and 98.37% in West.

Leeds Building Services has also demonstrated a positive increase with this indicator. Over the last three months, there has been a percentage increase of 3%, (Jan 89.97%, Feb 93.04%, Mar 92.97%) which has improved the overall cumulative figure to 89.93%. Although, this percentage is under the target of 99%, ongoing improvements at Leeds Building Services, such as the introduction of the new Total repairs module (Optimise) have contributed to more efficient and effective planning of work and resources. Furthermore, the recent recruitment of additional trade operatives is also proactively reducing the number of outstanding repairs, most notably with Brickwork and Plastering.

o) Responsive Repairs Completed Right First Time

Citywide performance against this indicator remains high although it should be noted that due to difficulties reconciling Mears data, performance data against this indicator for February is not currently available. Performance of 94.71% in January and 93.77% in March is reported and Members are requested to note

that both Leeds Building Services and Mears have exceeded the 90.50% target each month within the quarter. Work is ongoing to resolve the data reconciliation issue with Mears as a high priority.

p) Satisfaction with Responsive Repairs Completed

Citywide satisfaction with completed repairs performance has exceeded the target of 90.00% with levels of 93.86% achieved in January, 93.72% in February and 96.83% in March. March's performance represents the highest level of performance in 2 years and this is also the first quarter where both Leeds Building Services (94.2%, 93.6% & 96.83%) and Mears (93.7%, 93.8% & 96.8%) performance has exceeded the target for three consecutive months.

q) Capital Works - Satisfaction

The satisfaction rate for Quarter 4 2018/19 is 93.09% and has been above the target of 90% for the last two quarters. This is also an increase on the figures for the same periods in 2017/18.

r) Gas Services Completed on time

Performance on domestic gas servicing remains strong and within target. In all cases where dwellings do not have a valid gas safety certificate, the external contractors have followed the agreed process and carried out multiple attempts to gain access and legal proceedings are in process. These proceedings cannot commence until after expiry of the Landlords Gas Safety Record. At end of Q4 there were zero cases of properties exceeding 45 days overdue.

s) Average Relet Times

Housing Leeds have continuously seen a reduction in the time taken to relet a property over the last few months. In July 2018 Housing Leeds were at 38.2 days and by the end of the financial year 2018/19 this was reduced to 34.43 days which shows significant improvement. In April 2019 Housing Leeds were at 32.29 days and are continuing to work collectively with contractors to identify where improvements can be made. Regular partner and operational meetings take place to monitor and manage performance and this is embedded across the services.

t) Mutual Exchanges

There has been a drop in mutual exchanges compared with last year. The higher figures in previous years can partly be attributed to work done through the Incentive Scheme (which began running in April 2015), which encouraged moves of under-occupying and overcrowded tenants. Publicity for the scheme and mutual exchanges in general may not have matched previous years' efforts due to the team's high concentration on the rollout of the Abrisas CBL and Housing Register modules. Opportunities for more focused promotion in 2019/20 should be greater including resurrection of the Mutual Exchange Swap Shop Event in the Civic Hall and collaboration with the MX website host.

u) Annual Home Visits

Housing Management exceeded its target of 95%, completing 96.49% of AHVs during 2018/19. A particular focus has been placed on gaining access to the small number of properties which have not had a visit for the last 2 financial years

– this reduced from 324 tenants at the start of the year to 50 at the end of March. More intensive action and support is now taking place for each of the individual tenancies where the service has had no access. The AHVs continue to provide vital information to enable Housing Management to respond to particular tenant issues, or to understand tenancy trends. 34% of tenants are reporting that they are not confident that they could make a benefit claim online, a slight reduction from last year. This information along with feedback on whether the tenant could manage benefits on a monthly basis is helping to identify which tenants need additional support when moving onto Universal Credit. 22% of tenants are reporting that they do not have access to the internet, a reduction from 28% last year. More detailed questions have been asked this year to help the service to support tenants to get online as much as possible. 3,657 tenants told the service that they had an outstanding repair, enabling arrangements for such repairs to be undertaken or a surveyor's appointment made. AHVs helped to identify 38 safeguarding cases, 284 hoarding cases and 933 cases where a new support referral was required.

v) Complaints

The percentage of complaints responded to within timescales remains an area for improvement but positive progress has been made during Q4. Current performance should be put into the context of the enhanced service standard within Housing, working on a 10 working day target as opposed to the corporate 15 working day. Performance based on a 15 working day target is much more favourable - at 98.37% for March 2019, exceeding the 95% target.

In comparison to the same period last year (Q4), Housing Leeds has received an additional 130 stage 1 complaints. Q3 comparison with the previous year showed an increase of over 180. This is mainly due to a change in process, introduced in summer 2018, which has seen many more general repair enquiries being logged and tracked through to completion through the formal complaints process. The change has enabled the service to better align process and outcomes to the Housing Ombudsman's principles of effective complaint handling, resulting in fairer outcomes for tenants and improved efficiency of the service. This has resulted in a more thorough, better quality response being sent to customers and the delivery of service improvements through the implementation of lessons learnt. Although the change led to an initial decline in response times overall last year, since December 2018, a number of processes have been put in place to improve response times and the quality of responses to customers. Weekly spread sheets are provided to teams to show numbers of complaints that are open and whether or not they are within timescale. Ongoing joint work between Housing Leeds and the Customer Relations Team continues to implement better communication channels and provide support and assistance to Investigating Officers. January 2019 performance for Housing Leeds stands at 74.04% of stage 1 complaints responded to within timescales. February 2019 performance has improved across Housing Leeds with the percentage of stage 1 complaints responded to in timescales increasing to 89.05%, with March 2019 increasing slightly again to 89.67%. Average response rates have improved by 16% overall from Q3 to Q4.

Broadly, the most common themes within complaints relate to issues around communication, missed appointments and the quality of repair works. In response to tenant concerns over communication, examples of how the service is responding include the current review of the Housing Leeds web pages alongside

a number of Digital Inclusion and Engagement projects. The service continues to explore better use of communication channels such as email, texting and Social Media.

In response to missed appointments and the quality of works, improvements have been made to the way the service allocates repairs, meaning that the communication is improving between tenants and operatives as support teams are able to schedule further visits to resolve outstanding issues. Additionally, further training is being developed for Investigating Officers to ensure that they have the right skills and experience to provide a high quality, customer-focused response.

Housing Leeds Matters, a weekly internal bulletin to all staff, continues to highlight examples of where staff and teams have adopted a 'can do' approach to their role in supporting customers and is also used to share staff compliments.

The Government's recent Green Paper on social housing has prompted a national conversation about the quality of social landlords' complaints handling. Housing Leeds are keen to participate in this debate and welcome what is likely to be forthcoming national good practice guidance in complaints management.

### **3.3 Communities**

3.3.1 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 Members find additional information useful. Members' attention are drawn to the following performance areas:

#### **3.3.2 Customer Access**

##### **a) Face to Face**

Helping People into Work – In Quarter 4 2018/19 there were 1,615 new customers registered at a Jobshop, which is a 23% increase from Quarter 3 (1,236). 855 gained successful employment in Quarter 4 which an increase of 51% from Quarter 3 (564) and 2,547 customers in total gained successful employment in 2018/19. This is a decrease from the previous year overall (2,835 – 2017/18) and is a continuing downward trend due to the improving economic environment which has seen improvements in the job market generally. The number of PWSP customers who gained successful employment was 44, which is a decrease on Quarter 3 (66). The total for the year was 283.

Enquiries – Due to the decommissioning of Seibel it is not possible to provide data on the number of visit to Hubs at this time. Work is ongoing with DIS to develop a replacement for Seibel that is fit for purpose and will provide this information moving forward. The number of unique users of self-serve IT stations in Hubs has increased significantly again each quarter from 1,548 in Quarter 1, 2,553 in Quarter 2, 2,569 in Quarter 3 to 3,571 in Quarter 4. This is an annual increase of 1,615 due to more self-serve options becoming available. This upward trend should continue as further online options are developed.

Library Usage – There were 1,065,808 visits to Libraries recorded in 2018/19, which is a reduction from 1,229,549 in 2017/18; however a number of the automatic people counters are no longer operable, so this result will be artificially low. A review of the recording mechanism is underway to identify a suitable replacement.

Customers also borrowed 2,054,300 items from libraries during the year (2,257,359 in 17/18), and used the library public PCs 430,980 times (488,694 in 17/18). These figures include all Library usage, not just those collocated within a community hub.

The reduction in library usage follows a national pattern and is also additionally impacted on by temporary closures and relocations of some sites for major refurbishment works as part of the community hub development programme. In line with this programme the library service is working on a 5 year strategy which will seek to deliver modern, flexible and responsive services which drive engagement with libraries.

b) Contact Centre

In Quarter 4 the Contact Centre has answered 29,788 emails, which is an increase of 3,360 from Quarter 3, however there has been a decrease overall in the number of emails answered by the Contact Centre in 2018/19 (111,895) compared to 2017/18 (123,017).

This is due to the creation of on-line forms that integrate to back office systems and negate the need for e-mail or the development of form to mail solutions which ensure that correct information is captured, reducing the number of repeat emails regarding the same enquiry.

Telephone performance in Quarter 4 finished at 84% of calls answered with an average wait time of 7 minutes 11 seconds, against a target of 90% in 5 minutes. The performance for the year was 85% of calls answered with an average wait time of 6 minutes 37 seconds. Staffing figures have continued to decrease in line with a reduced budget, with the average FTE falling from 150 in 2017/8 to an average of 139.03 for the current year. Increased funding has been agreed to increase staffing numbers on a temporary basis in recognition that some of the initiatives that should help deliver savings are not in place yet.

c) Customer Satisfaction in Customer Service

Customer satisfaction is on target with 95% of customers rating the service provided as good or excellent.

d) Digital - Web/Online Development

Unique visits to the top ten pages of the LCC Public websites was 3,068,968 in Quarter 4. Unique visits for 2018/19 was 12,221,320 compared to 11,807,507 in 2017/18.

3.3.3 ***Welfare Rights:***

a) Welfare Advice

The total number of customers assisted between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019 was 36,622. This compares to 36,673 in the same period in 2017/18, a decrease of just over 1%.

b) Benefits Gains

The total amount of benefit gains for the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 was £19,884,373.77. This compares to £22,012,672.02 for the same period in 2017/18, a decrease of £2,128,298.25.

c) Welfare Rights Satisfaction Rating – Client Satisfaction

Client Satisfaction - Despite not being able to offer a full service to everyone in relation to appeals, 91% of clients using the Welfare Rights Team said the service was excellent whilst 7% felt the service was good.

d) Key Issues

The team continue to assist as many people as they can. Disability benefit appeals continues to be the main area of concern and the service is having to turn some people away; customers are currently having to wait a minimum of 3 months for an appointment. As at 10/05/2019 the team have 617 open cases with a further 18 still to allocate.

The team has been restructured to accommodate additional appeal surgeries.

The University of Leeds Law students continue to provide assistance with PIP form completion which is much appreciated and a good development opportunity for them. The service continues to work with Benefit Buddies at Ebor Gardens as the need arises.

The case management system and appointment system continue to cause a variety of issues and the introduction of UC has added a new level of complexity to benefit calculations. A quick benefit calculator has been purchased to assist staff with benefit calculations comparisons and to help better advise clients.

It is estimated that the number of appeals will remain high due to the ongoing migration of DLA to PIP but also due to the continuous volume of clients on PIP and ESA being reviewed on a very regular basis.

3.3.4 ***Financial Inclusion:***

a) Universal Credit

The full digital service was introduced in Leeds in October 2018 meaning that all new benefit claims from any new claimant will be for Universal Credit. The national migration of existing Housing Benefit claims is expected to start from summer 2019 but there is no date yet for Leeds. Up to March 2019 there are approximately 15,400 people claiming universal credit in Leeds. Approximately 32% of claimants are in work (4,900).

b) Leeds Credit Union

Membership for the quarter ending March 2019 in Leeds stands at 31,343 (36,195 total members). Cash withdrawals total £4,860,781 and the value of “financially excluded loans” total £492,705. The total gross loan book for Leeds Credit Union has increased from £8m in 2012 to £9.7m this year.

c) Gambling Related Harm

The Council is co-ordinating work to support those suffering from or at risk of gambling related harm. Work to raise awareness of the issue continues through

the 'Beat the Odds' marketing campaign and by undertaking training sessions to frontline staff in council services and partner agencies.

The new NHS Northern Gambling Clinic and Problem Gambling Support team led by Gamcare will begin their services in the summer and will be based at Merrion House. Training, support and treatment will be delivered with the intention that people with gambling problems will get help earlier and in greater numbers.

### 3.3.5 **Welfare Benefits:**

#### a) Housing Benefit & Local Council Tax Support

With the roll-out of full service UC, there are now no “new” claims for Housing Benefit (HB) in Leeds from those who meet the criteria for Universal Credit; these being Working Age customers.

However some specific groups are excluded from UC; these being customers in Temporary Accommodation and those in Supported Exempt Accommodation. There are also instances where a change in a customer’s circumstances will mean that they move from HB to UC.

The introduction of UC means that the Working Age part of the HB Caseload is now gradually declining through “natural migration” to UC. Claims that do not move to UC through this process will be moved to UC en-mass somewhere between 2019 and 2023 as part of the managed migration programme. After this has happened, there will remain HB claims in respect of Pension Age customers and those of Working Age customers who have been exempted from UC.

HB Caseload peaked mid recession at 71,038 in March 2013. At the time of UC Rollout in October 2018 the caseload was 59,259 and in March 2019 it was 54,132

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Caseload peaked mid recession at 86,982 and in March 2019 is 64,236

HB Expenditure for 2018/19 was £246m. With the ongoing HB caseload reduction primarily due to cases moving to Universal Credit, the estimated HB spend for 2019/20 is £212m, a 14% reduction

LCTS expenditure for 2018/19 was £49m, the estimated expenditure for 2019/20 is approximately £50m.

#### b) Speed of Processing Housing Benefit

Speed of Processing Housing Benefit in the third quarter 2018/19 has recently been published by the DWP. The details are:

|                                   | <b>Speed of Processing Quarter 3 2018/19</b> |                |
|-----------------------------------|--|----------------|
|                                   | <b>New Claims</b>                            | <b>Changes</b> |
| <b>Great Britain</b>              | 20   | 8              |
| <b>England</b>                    | 21   | 9              |
| <b>Yorkshire &amp; The Humber</b> | 22   | 9              |
| <b>West Yorkshire</b>             | 19   | 10             |
| <b>Leeds</b>                      | 17   | 10             |

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.

In 2018/19 the total budget available for DHP, which includes both a central government contribution and a contribution from Leeds HRA, is £2,686,047.00.

At year end 100% of the government contribution has been spent, and 85% of the internal allocation was spent.

In total £2,601,868 was 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 2018/19 budget allocation for LWSS was £600k.

e) Care Leavers

The service assists Care Leavers up to the age of 25 who experience repayment difficulties with their Council Tax

This assistance has been in place in its present design since 2017/18 and has seen the level of awards increase from 16 in 2017/18 to 33 in 2018/19, with the associated reduction in Council Tax increasing from £3,264 to £10,517.

3.3.6 **Communities Team:**

a) Priority Neighbourhoods Programme

The Priority Neighbourhoods Programme provided a detailed annual update to the Scrutiny Board in November 2018. In recent months the Neighbourhood Improvement Board has held two Board meetings in the priority neighbourhoods of the Beverley's in Riverside and Hunslet ward and Boggart Hill in Killingback and Seacroft ward. Both meetings have identified local activities that senior leaders have agreed to explore in order to increase the pace of change in these neighbourhoods. Particular areas of focus are reviewing aspects of waste and environmental services, and pocket park improvement in the Beverley's area. A more recent Board discussion in Boggart Hill explored development opportunities around problematic areas of land. Housing Services are also exploring training staff to build aspects of the Asset Based Community Development approach into frontline tenant engagement staff across both Boggart Hill and the other Housing Leeds priority neighbourhood estates. Previously the Board has visited Lincoln Green and discussed the development of an employment programme with Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust, Employment and Skills and the Communities Team to support a targeted employment programme in Lincoln Green and the surrounding area. Working with all local partners, including Housing Leeds and local schools, the Core Team partners helped 124 people to attend the information and assessment sessions for the employability programme. This is one of the most successful community programmes that LTHT has experienced. Of this group 61 people have been invited to attend the employability programme, which if successful leads to entry level jobs at LTHT. A further 13 people are on the

waiting list, 18 have been offered further support due their circumstances and 22 people have been referred to ESOL provisions locally because language was a significant barrier.

The Communities and Corporate Performance colleagues have been exploring the development of a performance index for the priority neighbourhoods to help the Council track progress. The Third Sector developed the Thriving Neighbourhood Index which provides a helpful framework to inform the development of the priority neighbourhood performance index. This development areas was identified by the Scrutiny Board as an area for development and was developed into a key recommendation in the Executive Board report. Work has been completed to gather a picture of the data available at this lower spatial level and its frequency, and discussions have started with data leads to commence work on developing and populating the index, establishing a historic baseline and developing a current position.

b) Migration

To support delivery of our migration programme the Communities Migration team have been successful in bids for national MHCLG funding attracting over £1m in the last 2 years. This funding has been used to support a number of activities that focus on building community capacity.

The Migrant Access project plus (MAP +) builds on the success of our existing MAP project aimed at improving access to services in key target wards with higher levels of new migrant communities and alleviating pressures on settled communities. Over the last year there have been 700 contacts with local migrant community networkers that come from a diverse range of backgrounds including Romania, Roma, Sudan, Uganda, Lebanon, Guinea, Nigeria, China, Kenya, Iran, Slovakia, Ethiopia, Italy, Iran and Kurdistan to name a few. Through our commissioned work, we have had a further 91 participants attend training to become migrant community networkers. 20 have gone to become migrant community health educators with 11 working in GP practices in inner city areas. We have also had 30 residents sign up as buddies in 6 local neighbourhoods to support newcomers.

To support new and existing communities the communities' team launched a language hub grant scheme which aims to build language skills through activity bringing. The funding is being targeted to areas with higher concentrations of new migrant communities, with 77% of projects funded to date being located in areas that fall within the lowest decile on the index of multiple deprivation.

### **3.4 *Community Safety (More detail is provided at Appendix 2)***

3.4.1 Members' attention are drawn to the following performance areas:

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

Safer Leeds works to deliver the strategic objective that "People in Leeds are safe and feel safe in their homes, in the streets, and the places they go" with an approach which focuses upon: Keeping people safe from harm (Victim);

Preventing & reducing offending (Offender); and Creating Safer, stronger communities (Location).

Performance Indicator:

The West Yorkshire Police & Crime Commissioner 'Your View' survey responses to December 2018 reported that 83% of Leeds respondents felt 'safe' or 'very safe' in their local area (4,489 of 5,422 question respondents). Leeds feedback was the most positive within West Yorkshire Police force (West Yorkshire Police district level responses ranged from 72% to 83%).

Recent / Emerging Activity:

- Reducing offending is an emerging priority for the Safer Leeds Strategy. A new Reducing Offending Board will be established, with work underway to clarify governance, delivery plans, and service delivery connections / gaps.
- The recently established Street Support team works with a cohort of approximately 300 people. The daily briefing process with partners has been improved and going forward, on-street healthcare will be a feature.
- Funding from the Early Intervention Youth Fund has been made available to Leeds to deliver work which will initially focus on the East of the city. This will build on some existing work to involve communities and young people at a grass roots level and will be delivered with statutory partners and third sector organisations.

#### b) Domestic Violence and Abuse

Domestic Violence and Abuse is one of the highest priorities for the city. Priorities for the Domestic Violence and Abuse Programme Board are: 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).

Performance Indicator:

The victim self-reporting rate is a Safer Leeds indication of victim confidence to report Domestic Violence and Abuse. 31.6% of 22,176 domestic incidents were victim self-reported. There has been a positive increase of 17% in the volume of domestic incidents reported by the victim; this is stable as a proportion of all domestic incidents.

Recent / Emerging Activity:

- The Front Door Safeguarding Hub (FDSH) leads a daily multi-agency meeting to share information, co-ordinate and plan responses in high risk cases of domestic violence. This includes the school, and GP, notification processes. A review of FDSH arrangements has been completed. A business case has been formulated to look at immediate resourcing pressures and to further develop the FDSH's response to Domestic Abuse.
- LCC DV Team and Leeds CCG safeguarding team are working in partnership to support the implementation of Routine Enquiry training in GP practices across Leeds. NHS England has provided funding for a full time IDVA for six months to support this work. The IDVA works across eight Leeds practices, (where there are a significant number of MARAC notifications), to provide a 1:1 support and advice service for victims.

- A cross West Yorkshire bid to the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) resulted in £499,223 to 2020, and will be used to deliver the government's Violence against Women and Girls Strategy. In Leeds, the money will be used to build on existing provision and improve the response to victims experiencing DVA with complex needs, particularly those with: mental health difficulties; substance misuse issues; or from minority groups (BME victims, older victims, disabled victims, young women and LGBT+ victims).

c) 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.

Performance Indicator:

17,684 incidents of ASB were recorded by Police in Leeds; this has reduced by 10.4%. Youth nuisance represented a high but reducing proportion of incidents, (5,714 youth nuisance incidents reported, reducing from 7,568 in the previous period).

Recent / Emerging Activity:

- The Anti-social delivery board has been established following a service review, and will initially focus on embedding links with 'Child Friendly' Leeds and mental health agendas.
- A 'task and action' process has been developed, and will be implemented in response to chaotic events.
- Emerging priorities include the development of a triage referral process to look at the most complex issues; Access to mediation; and Noise Nuisance.

d) 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 our understanding of hate crime.

Performance Indicator:

There has been a 25% increase in Police reported Hate incidents, in part this is a reflection of a focus upon increased reporting. The majority of reported hate incidents refer to harassment, verbal or written abuse. Hate incidents may be identified with multiple hate strands (for example one incident may encompass both race and faith hate).

Recent / Emerging Activity:

- The Hate Crime Outcome Based Accountability workshop in January 2019 was well attended, and has informed the development of the refreshed Hate Crime Action Plan.
- Reporting has been developed to build a shared understanding of hate crime within Leeds communities.

- The Hate Crime Strategic Board leads the multi-agency response to hate in Leeds, with a recent focus upon awareness / consequences of online hate. An asset mapping exercise, to look at where resources are being invested from the Home Office in the city, and to identify where there are gaps, has been planned (with a focus upon early intervention in localities where there are early signs of tensions).

#### e) Street Users

The service is aware that many 'street users' (which includes people who rough sleep and / or those who beg) have experienced some form of 'trauma' in their lives (be this as a child and / or as an adult) before ending up on the streets. There is also a high proportion of 'street users' who suffer from mental ill-health, physical ill-health, and addiction issues, and this brings challenges for this cohort in accessing mainstream health services. In addition, when people obtain a home, for many, it can also be difficult / problematic in sustaining their tenancy, where regular / timely support is not available, often compounded by a sense of isolation, hence why many feel a sense of 'pull back' to their on street community.

Leeds City Council is obliged by the government to carry out full city rough sleeper headcounts in September, November, January and March in 2018/19. The latest figures are: January 2019 = 25, March 2019 = 32

The head count figures for March are within the anticipated range of tolerance. Of the 32 only 5 were not known to the service (new presentations), 6 have accommodation available to them, 4 LCC tenancies & 2 supported accommodation. 10 were band 'A' priority awaiting allocation and temporary housing offered to them but not taken up.

The multi-agency Leeds Street Support Team has now been operational for just over 6 months and a number of positives steps have been achieved; for example 61 of the cohort have been rehoused (27 LCC, 31 assisted supported tenancy, 3 registered social landlord).

Through funding from the MHCLG Rough Sleepers Initiative, Leeds has been able to recruit two 'navigators' (employed through WY\_FI Project) they have been appointed to work with people in the cohort to help them sustain their tenancies. They will carry a case load assigned by Leeds Street Support Team and it is anticipated that will start early June 2019.

The November headcount was carried out between 3am and 5am on the morning of 20 November and was verified by representatives from the MHCLG and Homeless Link: independent charity commissioned by government to carry out the count verifications.

The definition of a rough sleeper is that a person is 'bedded down' or 'about to bed down' in the open air, doorway or building / structure that is not designed for sleeping accommodation. A person with a tenancy who is sleeping out will therefore be counted whereas a person who is known to be of no fixed abode but is found walking the streets would not be counted. A headcount is a snapshot of rough sleeping on a particular night and does not constitute a comprehensive identification of the rough sleeping population. We assume that a headcount equates to around a quarter of the people who might sleep rough over a couple of months.

### **3.5 Waste and Environment (More detail is provided at Appendix 3)**

#### **3.5.1 Members' attention are drawn to the following performance areas:**

##### **a) Missed Bins**

Figures for the latest period show an improvement since the last performance report, and over the same period as last year.

(Please refer to the table in Appendix 3 for a breakdown of type of missed bin per period.)

The current collection rate is 99.77%.

##### **b) Recycling and Landfill (Unverified figures – Verification by the Environment Agency to follow after year end.)**

Performance remains below target and that achieved last year. As reported previously, this is primarily due to the shortfall in garden waste tonnages in early summer as a result of the heatwave, and also the shortfall in recycling from the RERF due to underperformance. However, this reduction has in part been offset by small increases in tonnages captured across a range of different recycled materials (e.g. items for re-use, glass, timber, scrap metal, recycling from household waste site general waste, etc.), and the fact that waste arisings overall are lower than for last year.

##### **c) Street Cleanliness**

The cleaner streets survey results for winter 2018/19 show that 89.7% of streets surveyed had acceptable levels of litter. Combined with the summer score of 95.1% this gives a full year score of 92.5%. This is an improvement of 0.5% on the 2017/18 full year score. This is a good achievement when you consider that 2 of the 5 wards surveyed this winter are 2 of our most challenging inner city wards which have historically been low scoring.

##### **d) 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

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 604 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 3,942 of these permits.
- The service received 34,620 items of correspondence in 2018/19, 95% of which related to penalties. The service also received 66,440 telephone calls. Reducing this contact is a key objective of the service and a number of initiatives are in place to automate processes and encourage self-service through improved ICT.

#### Enforcement of parking and bus lane restrictions:

- The number of penalty charge notices issued by traditional foot patrol was 94,178 which is almost exactly the same as the previous year's total of 94,369. The CCTV enforcement vehicle is projected to issue an additional 3,411 tickets this year which represents a 63% reduction in offences from 2017/18, indicating a significant improvement in driver behaviour. The revenue from parking PCNs is £2.5m.
- Camera Operated Bus Lanes - The Council currently enforces 29 bus lanes using cameras. The reduction in offences is a continuing trend and the offence levels are 14% down on estimate. Again this represents a significant improvement in the observance of traffic regulations by the motorist. The revenue from Bus Lane penalties is £1.1m.
- The team have been operating a zero tolerance policy on blue badge abuse for the past three years. Leeds City Council carries out more prosecutions than any other local authority and has been commended by the Department for Transport for its approach. In 2018/19, 78 cases have been sent for prosecution which is a slight reduction on last year's total of 85. The service also successfully prosecuted 2 people for forging pay and display tickets.

#### Managing the Council's on and off street parking operation:

- The Council controls about 2,400 on street pay parking spaces with a revenue of £4.5m. This is split almost exactly between cash payment in parking machines and card payment through the mobile phone payment system. Due to the theft of over half of the parking machines in 2017/18 a number of outer areas no longer have payment machines. Although a working machine has been retained in each tariff area, in some streets the only available method is mobile phone payment. There is also a continuing problem with petty theft from the machines by blocking the coin chutes. There are no plans to withdraw cash payment in the central area where the intention is to buy new machines that have better security features.
- The service runs 11 pay and display car parks in the city centre with 2,421 spaces, and also manages Quarry Hill Car Park on behalf of the owners. The revenue for car parks is £4.2 m; 57% of this comes from Woodhouse Lane multi storey. The service also provides a further 3,000 spaces in 39 district car parks which are free except for 3 sites in Otley.

### **3.6 *Parks and Countryside***

#### **3.6.1 Members' attention are drawn to the following performance areas:**

##### **a) Grounds Maintenance**

The grass cutting season on 2018 demonstrated the significant effect that weather can play on performance and quality of finish. Typically grass growth rates peak in May and early June and the wet weather experienced during these months in 2018 presented challenges for both the contracted verge and internal Parks and Countryside teams. This was followed by an extended dry period with significantly reduced rates of grass growth allowing mowing activity to be relaxed and resources were instead deployed to address works that would normally have been undertaken during the winter period. Typically these were undertaking hedge and shrub bed height reductions, recovery of mowing margins and restoration of sites along with individual issues raised from elected member casework and by housing officers. Following discussion at the Community Committee Environmental Champions meeting on the 26th November 2018, it was agreed that all members should receive an update on the details of the Grounds Maintenance and Footpath Weed Control contracts ahead of mowing for 2019 and this was circulated on the 1st March 2019. The council webpage for grass cutting has similar information for the public to download (suitable for mobile devices) however the document circulated to elected members has significantly more detail and was drafted in a format that is suitable to inform responses to residents should this be helpful for casework.

##### **b) Parks and Green Spaces**

With regards to parks and green spaces the service has continued working with the University of Leeds to examine the issues around philanthropic giving to support provision building on previous research that looked at public usage and perceptions of parks in Leeds. The council secured grant funding of £171k from lottery funded NESTA Rethinking Parks programme to undertake this research and in early May 2019 held a seminar bringing together parks and open space professionals, third sector representatives and the businesses community to consider the initial findings. The final report will be formally published by the University at the end of May and will inform work that will shortly commence on developing a revised Parks and Green Space strategy for Leeds. The current strategy runs to 2020 with a primary focus of achieving all Community Parks in Leeds being at a standard equivalent to the national Green Flag Award. This is measured using the Leeds Quality Park (LQP) standard with a performance indicator "to increase the percentage of Parks and Countryside community parks which meet Leeds Quality Parks standards". In 2018/19, 44 of 63 Community Parks met the LQP standard giving a performance score of 70% against a target of 87%. Overall for all green spaces assessed, 52% of sites passed LQP against a target of 45.4%.

## **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.

## **4.7 Conclusions**

4.7.1 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.

## **5 Recommendations**

5.1 Members are recommended to:

- Note the Quarter 4 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.

## **6 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

6.1 Best Council Plan 2018/19 to 2020/21

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<sup>1</sup> 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.