

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

Report to Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board

Date: 14th January 2021

Subject: Performance Report

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<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
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary

1. Main issues

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.

2. Best Council Plan Implications

This report provides an update on progress in delivering the council priorities in line with the Best Council Plan.

3. Resource Implications

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

Recommendations

Members are recommended to

- Note the Quarter 2 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 2020/21 Quarter 2 performance data (unless otherwise stated), and provides an update on progress in delivering the relevant priorities in the Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025.

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 2 performance information (unless otherwise stated) relevant to the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Appendix 1 shows the Quarter 2 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
- Regulator of Social Housing - Regulatory Framework Indicators – measuring performance of Council Housing in meeting the 4 HCA Consumer Standards

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

HRA Business Plan PIs:

a) Rent Collection

Rent collection at the end of September increased to 96.71%, compared to 96.37% in September 2019. The service has continued to undertake a range of actions to ensure a strong focus on supporting tenants to pay their rent during the pandemic.

In March, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government announced a complete ban on eviction and new possession cases during the coronavirus

emergency. In response, enforcement of rent collection was suspended, but recognising the importance of maintaining regular contact with tenants who are in rent arrears, the service focused 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 September over 81,000 calls were made to tenants to discuss rent payments / arrears, and 36,000 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.

The service has continued to promote direct debit take up. This is reflected in direct debit increasing to 43% at the end of September 2020, up from 42% in March 2020. 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 13,504 at the end of September 2020, up from 10,920 in March 2020.
- 136 council tenants on Housing Benefit have been affected by the benefit cap.
- There have been 2,784 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.

b) Former Tenancy Arrears

Former Tenancy Arrears (FTA) were 2.16% at the end of September 2020 compared to 2.22% at the end of September 2019, the service has collected £309k in former tenancy arrears compared with £342k at the same point in 2019 and £252k in 2018. 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.

c) Void Properties

Between 23 March and 24 June the Lettings Policy was suspended and new lettings were restricted to emergency lettings only, meaning that the number of voids increased from 510 to 897. Since June, it has been a priority to reduce the voids backlog. At the beginning of December 2020 the total number of void properties has now reduced to 675.

There have been a number of factors which have impacted on the reduction of the backlog:

- 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 has been impacted due to self isolation measures where an operative has tested positive, or come into contact with someone who has.
- Some issues with the supply of building materials, particularly fire doors.

- The lettings process has been amended as part of the Covid-19 risk assessment, which means that a viewing cannot take place until the property is fully ready to let.
- Resourcing issues within Lettings Teams to undertake additional viewings with additional measures in place which have extended the viewing and lettings process.

Voids and Lettings teams continue to work closely to address the backlog and it is projected that the 1% target will be met by the end of January 2021.

d) Right to Buy Sales

The number of Right to Buy sales reduced in the early part of 2020/21 as a result of lockdown. The number of new applications also reduced but have now begun to increase again. At the end of September there had been 214 sales compared to 282 in September 2019. It is projected that numbers of RTB sales at year end will be lower than previous years as some tenants solicitors continue to work at reduced capacity.

e) Disrepair

Following a reduction in new disrepair claims during Q1, there has been a significant increase in new claims received during Q2, with an average of 81 claims per month during this period. This is a result of a backlog of claims now being received. This volume is anticipated to reduce into Q3.

Activity to ensure works are completed as soon as possible is fully resumed and the fast-track process for completion of surveys in new cases was re-introduced in August 2020. The backlog of surveys accrued during Q1 has now been completed and pre-Covid timescales are now back in place.

Housing Strategy PIs:

f) Council Housing Growth – New Build Programme

The previous report to Scrutiny Board advised that a total programme of 766 new build homes was in progress. Since the last report there has been further significant progress and the current position with the programme is shown below with a total pipeline of just under 1,000 new homes. Despite the wider impact of Covid-19, the programme has been able to continue with the support of consultant and contractor partners and only small delays to a small number of schemes.

Scheme status	Number of homes
Homes completed	59
Homes with planning permission (on site)	12
Homes submitted and awaiting planning permission	71
Homes to be submitted for planning permission (next 3 months)	257
Homes out for procurement	226
Pre-procurement/feasibility stage	373
Total homes	998

(11 of the 59 “Homes completed” were handed over in Q4 2019/20, the remainder have been handed over in 2020/21.)

This represents significant progress towards the target of 1,500 new homes over the next 5 years, 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.

The above information relates specifically to new build council housing. The Council Housing Growth Programme also includes a smaller but growing property acquisitions workstream, which is currently focusing on re-acquiring former council houses bought by tenants under the right to buy regime. At the time of the last report 28 properties had been acquired. The total acquisitions has now grown to 67 homes, with 27 others currently in conveyancing. In addition the Team has also agreed terms with Strata Homes to acquire 21 new build homes off the shelf during 2019/2020 with all properties expected to be in Council ownership by June 2021.

g) 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 number of long term empty homes below 3,777 at the end of March each year. In March 2020 the figure was 3,545. At the end of September the figure was 4,178, representing an increase of 402 over the end of year target. This figure has a tendency to fluctuate throughout the year but this year there has been an impact post Covid-19. There is ongoing work to understand the increase and to target empty homes to try and ensure the number is maintained below the 3,777 level by the end of March 2021.

h) Private Sector Inspections

In the first quarter of 2020/21, due to Covid-19 restrictions, property inspections were limited only to urgent inspections where there was imminent risk to occupants. More inspections resumed during quarter 2; the service undertook 632 inspections up to the end of quarter 2, removing 319 hazards and improving 60 properties. 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 399 new homes during this period.

Throughout the first half of 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 over 5,000 applications with around 1,000 identified as potentially private rented and requiring to be licensed.

In March, to support the sector, the Council suspended the requests for all licence payments which put the issuing of any licences on hold as payment is an essential part of the process. This was resumed in September. Over 80% of all initial payments for selective licensing applications received have now been paid,

with just over 950 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 will be starting to issue draft licences towards the end of the year now that fees are being requested again. Currently a number of properties are subject to formal investigation for operating without a licence.

i) Housing Association Nominations

193 households were re-housed by way of a nomination to Leeds City Council from Registered Providers during the first two quarters of 2020/21 (taking in to account the national lettings restrictions in Q1).

The overall performance percentage is taken from the ratio of 'true lets' to Nominations. A 'True Let' is defined as a genuine new or re-let, discounting such lets as internal transfers, mutual exchanges and decants. Any Housing Association lettings made via the Council's Emergency Lettings Policy during the pandemic have counted as a nomination.

The service is still expecting some outstanding returns so the Quarter 2 total is likely to change.

j) Homeless Preventions

The service continues to secure a positive outcome (that is 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 which compares to 52% nationally. 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 the last report. The figure for September 2020 stood at 92%.

Leeds Housing Options has seen a significant rise in the number of calls and e-mails received into the service – now averaging 700 calls and 900 e-mails per week (up from around 400 calls and 200 e-mails per week pre Covid-19). The number of homelessness assessments done Jul-Sep 2019 was 1,585. In Jul-Sep 2020, this number rose to 1,800.

k) Temporary Accommodation

There were 34 households owed a housing duty as a homeless household in emergency temporary accommodation at the end of September 2020.

Following the Governments 'Everybody In' directive at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic the city saw an increase in temporary accommodation placements, 226 people accommodated at its peak across a number of locations in the city. (Please see paragraph 3.4.1 e) "Street Support", below for further detail around the use of hotels for temporary accommodation as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.) There are currently 71 people in temporary accommodation; an exit strategy is in place to provide a positive move on option for those accommodated as the service looks to return to its low temporary accommodation figures – the pre Covid-19 position.

The Council's application for 'Next Steps Accommodation Programme' funding has been successful and this will enable the city to deliver on an injection of additional accommodation units by March 2021.

l) Adaptations

In the first quarter of 2020/21, due to Covid-19 restrictions, only urgent adaptations were completed in the public and private sectors. This has inevitably meant that target timescales for the completion of adaptations have been negatively impacted.

During quarter 2, adaptations work resumed with Covid-19 risk assessments in place and officers have been working with customers and contractors to reduce the backlog of adaptations work.

LBS have taken on 4 private contractors to support them in reducing outstanding adaptations while contractors working in private homes have diverted more resources into adaptations to support the service. These combined efforts should see performance steadily rise and it is hoped that by the end of the year 20/21, adaptation completions should have recovered back to its position pre Covid-19 and formal reporting will resume once the backlog is cleared.

Regulator of Social Housing - 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 September 2019 stood at 87.64%. The current status of the Decent Homes is 95.64% (at 26th November 2020) meeting this criteria. A significant rise from previous reported figures. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the service has taken the opportunity to carry out a cleanse of asset management data with extra external stock condition surveys and has undertaken large contracts of roof replacement schemes. Roofing schemes can have a large impact in the Decent Homes standard but importantly can be carried out with a relatively low customer impact and within a Covid-safe environment.

n) Responsive Repairs Completed Within Timescale

During the initial phase of the Covid-19 pandemic, in line with government and industry guidance, Leeds City Council introduced an 'essential repairs only' offer to ensure compliance with Lockdown requirements. This offer included a triage process to ensure all repairs, including those deemed as 'non-essential' were recorded and assessed. As a result, all non-essential repairs were recorded but not attended, resulting in a backlog of c.16,000 non-essential repairs. This meant non-essential repairs exceeded timescales in the majority of cases. This backlog is anticipated to be fully cleared by the end of Q3 with Mears and LBS both working collaboratively to ensure this is achieved as efficiently and safely as possible. Some 71,000 repairs have been completed in the period April 2020 – September 2020.

o) 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 excellent work of Mears and LBS.

p) Satisfaction with Responsive Repairs Completed

Performance remains above target and consistent with pre Covid-19 levels. A new, digital initiative to measure customer satisfaction is being piloted in order to maximise returns and generate added value feedback.

q) Capital Works - Satisfaction

The satisfaction rate for Quarter 2 2020/21 was 87.10%; it has been below the target of 90% for the last two quarters.

Within the first quarter of the year, mobilisation has been impacted, particularly work within people's homes. To mitigate against spending commitments, the service has concentrated on works that have either been external works or within communal areas. Therefore, customer satisfaction surveys have been relatively small in number and not a representative sample. However, full mobilisation is underway and it is anticipated that full figures can be reported at the next quarter.

r) Gas Services Completed on time

Gas servicing has remained active during the entirety of the Covid-19 period. However the number of gas services completed on time has been put under significant pressure, primarily as a result of tenants shielding and closure of the courts. The service continues to see week-on-week improvements on gas compliance, however performance is not anticipated to return to pre Covid-19 levels until the end of the financial year.

s) Average Relet Times

As lettings were suspended during quarter 1 properties were held in void until lettings were resumed on 24 June, therefore distorting average relet time performance. Whilst the lettings backlog is reducing, work to let additional properties along with changes in business process meaning that the void and lettings process is taking longer continues to have a negative impact on relet times. It is expected that relet times will remain higher than 2019/20 for the remainder of the financial year. (In September 2019 the average relet time stood at 31.89 days. The figure for September 2020 stands at 58.53.)

t) Mutual Exchanges

Mutual exchanges dropped in both Q1 and Q2 due to the Covid-19 restrictions. The quarter 2 figure this year stands at 15, compared with 80 in the same period last year. Mutual Exchanges did started picking up again in September when restrictions were lifted but the service is not anticipating a large increase due to the withdrawal of the £500 incentive scheme for LCC tenants as part of cost saving measures. The scheme had been running since April 2015 but success on increasing numbers had waned in the last 2 years. Every effort will now be made to promote exchanges between tenants using social media, email contact and the LCC/Leeds Homes websites as an alternative to a transfer via the housing register.

u) Annual Home Visits

Annual Home Visits were suspended during March and a different approach has been undertaken to managing contact during 2020/21. During the first quarter, tenants over 60 and other vulnerable tenants were prioritised for a wellbeing contact – checking that the tenant had support in place. 12,400 contacts were made with vulnerable tenants and tenants over 60. In addition to this 4,000 tenants who were shielding were contacted to encourage them to register for the national helpline and to signpost for additional support where needed.

During quarter 2, an adapted Annual Tenancy Contact telephone conversation was put in place for tenants who were identified as being low risk – no vulnerabilities, arrears or previous issues identified at AHV. At the end of September, 4800 tenants had received an annual tenancy telephone contact.

For the remainder of the year the service will adjust its focus on tenant contact depending on Covid-19 restrictions in place and priorities identified for supporting particular customer groups.

v) Complaints

During Quarter 4 2019/20, the Housing service responded to 79% of complaints within 10 working days and 88% within the corporate target of 15 working days - an improvement of 4% on the previous quarter. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, updated guidance on how to best manage complaints was circulated to investigating officers ensuring telephone contact with customers and regular telephone updates. A small number of complaints (40 out of 512 for Q1 and Q2) were put on hold with the customers agreement, due to a home visit being required to resolve the complaint, until the service was able to recommence activity. These have all now been fully responded to. The total number of stage 1 complaints received during Q1 and Q2 this year is 45% less than the same period last year.

In July the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) shared a new 'Complaint Handling Code' outlining the requirements upon all social landlords, including local authorities managing council housing, in how they manage complaints. In particular, ensuring that complaints processes are accessible, are customer focussed and that landlords learn effectively from complaints. The new code is supported by a self-assessment which the service is required to submit by the end of December 2020. 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 and fresh guidance for officers responding to complaints.

Responsive repairs are trialling 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. This also allows officers time to focus their efforts on more complex complaint cases.

3.3 **Communities**

3.3.1 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:

3.3.2 **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 PCs, 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.

Helping People into Work – In the second quarter of 2019/20 there were 1,369 new customers registered at a Jobshop. In the second quarter of 2020/21, 201 new customer were registered. In terms of job gains, 629 gained successful employment in quarter 2 of 2019/20 compared to 322 who gained employment in quarter 2 of 2020/21.

Enquiries – Since the decommissioning of Seibel it was 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) the service is now able to provide some of these details. In Quarter 2 of last year (the first full quarter of recorded data) there were 130,985 visits (footfall) recorded on CATS. The same period this year saw 49,016 visits recorded. This reduction is due to the closure and phased reopening of the Hubs during the lockdown period. While the service request data for quarter 2 of last year is not available, in the current year 15,518 service requests were recorded in CATS by face to face staff, with 5,359 relating directly to Covid-19.

Further to this, the number of unique users of self-serve IT stations in Hubs was 101 in the second quarter of 2020/21 compared with 2957 the previous year.

Library Usage – There were 1,501 visits to Libraries recorded in quarter 2 of 2020/21, which is a significant reduction of 506,925 from the same period last year with 508,426 visits. Visitor data is based upon libraries staff submitting these figures manually, which could account for some anomalies due to changes in how the Hubs were staffed following the phased reopening.

Through these visits, customers borrowed 103,143 items during the first 2 quarters of 2019/20, down from 579,752 for the same period last year, and used the library public PCs 9,146 times, which represents a drop from 116,600 for the

same period last year. These figures include all Library usage, not just those in community hubs.

The library service is continuing to work on a 5 year strategy which will seek to deliver modern, flexible and responsive services which drive engagement with libraries.

b) Contact Centre

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

During this time there was an increase in calls regarding Local Welfare Support and Council Tax as the financial impact of the pandemic was felt, as well as being asked to call members of the public who had been advised to shield by the NHS, following lockdown measures being eased, to ensure they had a support network in place and to signpost to additional help that may be available.

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 answered 42,325 emails in the second quarters of this year which is an increase of 13,109 (29,216) from the same period last year. More emails were received in the period due to the response to Covid-19 and 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 the second quarter of 2020/21 the Contact Centre answered 92% of calls with an average wait time of 4 minutes 16 seconds. This compares to 84% of calls answered with an average wait time of 6 minutes 45 seconds for the second quarter last year. The closure of the Community Hubs, plus the additional pressure of dealing with the pandemic saw an increase in the number of calls being offered from 286,519 in quarter 2 of 2019/20 to 364,566 in the same period this year. An increase of 78,047.

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

There are ongoing delays with the implementation of systems for housing and Registrars which will help reduce telephone contact by allowing customer to self-serve enquires through online forms.

c) Digital - Web/Online Development

There were 3,955,616 unique web page views in Quarter 2 of 2020/21, this was a big increase of 50% compared to the same period last year which saw 2,635,047 unique views. The ongoing pandemic is the main contributor to this; the service has created a coronavirus section that has had over 1.1 million views since going live and have had over 400,000 unique users booking a slot at a recycling site.

The service's social media presence also continues to grow. The service can assist with most enquiries and received a total of 7,957 direct messages in Quarter 2 whilst also reaching 189,018 people with outgoing posts, most of which

highlighted key coronavirus information. There are an ever increasing 39,609 followers on Facebook and 25,905 on Twitter.

d) Welfare Rights

The number of customers assisted between 1st April 2020 and 31st October 2020 was 12,226. This compares to 21,203 in the same period last year; a decrease of 43%. Due to Covid-19, DWP have shifted focus of work to process Universal Credit applications. The Welfare Rights Unit do not assist with Universal Credit applications as the contract for this was awarded to CAB. Therefore, there has been 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 were placed on hold and decisions on benefit applications were also delayed. The total amount of benefit gains for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st October 2020 was £7,563,633.41. This compares to £11,892,060.37 for the same period last year; a decrease of 37%. 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 Covid-19, 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 the service has started posting forms out for customers to complete and return. 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.

The service continues to assist as many people as it can and is also referring council tenant form filling to the Housing Income Team to maximise the number of clients being assisted to claim benefits.

Welfare Rights Unit stopped all face to face appointments due to Covid-19 and are yet to resume. Face to face appointments have been 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. The service was receiving on average around 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. Figures 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.

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.

The Tribunal Service is still operating and the service is still receiving a significant number of appeal cases, although at a much lower level than the previous year – for the 6 months commencing April 2020, 123 tribunal cases were received, compared to 344 for the same period the previous year.

3.3.3 **Welfare and Benefits:**

a) Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support

Following the introduction of Universal Credit (“UC”) 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 now 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.

Since the introduction of Natural Migration in October 2018 there has been an average monthly decrease of 751 HB Claims, but in the second quarter of 2020/21 this has decreased to an average of 386 each month.

In October 2018 the HB caseload was 59,259. In September 2020 this had reduced to 41,259 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).

Additionally, during the first quarter of 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; hotels being 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 67,029 in September 2020. For the same period the number of CTS Only claims increased from 23,848 to 29,559.

HB Expenditure for 2019/20 was £207.5m. The Mid Year estimate for HB spend for 2020/21 is £188m. 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 2 2020/21 is £55.5m with this increase primarily due to the increase in claims caused by Covid-19.

b) Speed of Processing Housing Benefit

The DWP have recently published the second quarter 2020/21 statistics, as detailed below, of the Speed of Processing Housing Benefit (average no. of days).

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.

	Speed of Processing Quarter 1 2020/21	
	New Claims	Changes
Great Britain	18	5
England	18	6
Yorkshire & The Humber	18	5
West Yorkshire	16	4
Leeds	13	5

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, is £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 the second quarter 2020/21 it is noted that the number and value of DHP awards made are at a lower level than at the same point last year. This decrease can be attributed to a knock on effect of Covid-19, during which, due to restrictions of lockdown, landlords not been able to undertake some of their housing management activities, including a ban on their pursuing action towards tenant eviction. It is anticipated that once these restrictions are lifted that the demand for DHP will increase. The value of spend is kept under review and the scheme can be amended to ensure there is no underspend of the grant.

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 mid-September 2020 was £267k

The effect of the closure of "non-essential" shops during the Covid-19 lockdowns meant that many of the suppliers of goods were forced to 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

The provisional allocation of the funding is as detailed below:

Description	Value Allocated
Voluntary Organisations	£165,000.00
Families First	£50,000.00
Third Sector Organisations	£25,000.00
Cultural Food	£50,000.00
Rough Sleepers	£50,000.00
Food Depot	£20,000.00
FareShare	£20,000.00
School Uniforms	£15,000.00
Digital Access	£30,000.00
Local Welfare Support Scheme	£600,000.00

These allocations leave £25k in reserve, and the allocation for Local Welfare Support can be used for funding a variety of initiatives, with £50k placed on account for FareShare to purchase food during Lockdown 2 if required, and £50k allocated to the Healthy Holidays Programme in 2021/22.

Should any allocations be considered as not meeting the criteria as set out by DEFRA, these will be funded from within the main budget for Local Welfare Support.

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 mid November 2020, in excess of 400 payments have been made to qualifying customers.

f) Financial Inclusion

The Financial Inclusion team's activities 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 April 2019 the team have:

- Grant funded Leeds Credit Union (LCU) to increase their usual marketing activity to aid their membership rates/numbers (the 2nd instalment of the grant was rescinded due to financial position outlined above).
- Been significantly involved in the development of the emergency food provision work during the pandemic, playing pivotal roles in the establishment and running of the Logik Park food warehouse, set up of the referral process and ensuring food supply via existing relationships and food donations from businesses.
- During the pandemic have run weekly 'bronze' financial inclusion and food meetings – bringing together partners from across the city to ensure a collaborative approach to support has been taken.
- Redeveloped the MIC website to ensure a current picture of the support still offered during the pandemic by each FI partner is displayed. In addition the

team have developed a leaflet with the same information that was included in food parcels delivered across the city.

- Have secured funding to progress an ethical debt collections pilot from the LGA – now on hold until 2021.
- Continued to offer school savings clubs via primary schools working in partnership with LCU.
- Continued to offer a financial Inclusion training package to internal and external partners.
- Run the financial inclusion steering group – this meeting brings together all financial inclusion partners across the city and acts as governance for any work/emerging work.
- Continued to support the Northern Gambling Clinic – funding accommodation costs and helping to connect both the NHS and Gamcare to Community Hubs, and to ensure marketing is in place.
- Developed the 'Beat the Odds' gambling campaign for 2020 ensuring marketing is in place across the city.
- Worked closely with Fareshare and Food Aid Network to ensure grant funding is in place for both partners. In addition, Fareshare has played a key role during the Covid-19 pandemic – having been set up as the main supply of food into the 'community care hubs' established to support residents. Additional funding has been sourced to support their securing temporary and new premises.
- Have continued to play a key role in the city's healthy holidays work, contributing £100k to the effort – delivered in partnership with LCF, Children's services and 3rd sector.
- Co funded Zero Waste Leeds to develop a uniform exchange scheme – this initiative established many new schemes in the city and created a set up guide that orgs could follow if they decided to deliver a scheme. During the pandemic over £40k worth of uniform was sourced, sorted and given out to families in need. The scheme will now be further developed into 2021 and will seek to include other items in a 'backpack' which could include shoes, coats, IT equipment and more.
- Worked with JC Decaux to source up to 6 new advertising billboards, free of charge, which will be used to advertise FI initiatives. This will be established in 2021.
- Raised funds, in partnership with Employment and Skills and Children's Services colleagues for 240 tablet devices, with sim cards for data and embedded security. 90 of these were loaned out as part of the Healthy holidays summer provision and 150 will be loaned to ESIF/Job shop customers to help find employment.
- Developed a Leeds funeral poverty scheme – working in partnership with Leeds Credit Union to offer residents impacted by funeral poverty fast track loans, allowing them to afford a dignified send off for their loved ones. The scheme has brought together information on low cost funeral directors in the city, advice on access to DWP bereavement grants and also offers one to one advice via welfare rights.

3.3.4 **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 EHC scrutiny board for its meeting in November 2020.

b) Migration and Strengthening Communities

- Cllr Debra Coupar has signed a pledge of intention (08/10/2020) on behalf of the Leeds Hate Crime Strategic Board to do all that can be done to protect young people and adults from Islamophobia and increase understanding of the negative attitudes many Muslims face. Launching during Islamophobia Awareness Month, the pledge has also been signed by other major organisations in the city, including: West Yorkshire Police; The Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner West Yorkshire; Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust; Leeds Clinical Commissioning Groups Partnership; Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and Leeds & York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.
- Leeds City Council in partnership with Luton City Council and the Local Government Agency have secured funding to continue the work of the Special Interest Group for Counter Extremism (SIGCE) and the Knowledge Hub until the end of March 2021. This has enabled the service to continue its national work together with LA's across England and Wales to share challenges, learning and expertise in countering extremism whilst awaiting the direction of the new strategy. The threats from extremism continue to change, presenting new and evolving challenges. Recent months have seen the emergence of a number of extremism and cohesion issues, with influencers adapting long-standing narratives to exploit widespread fear and anxiety and extend their reach and support; for instance, blaming certain communities for the origins or spread of Covid-19 or continued lockdown measures.
- A risk assessment with regards to the Council's statutory obligations on Prevent has been developed and, alongside a situational analysis, submitted to the Home Office as part of the prioritisation process to inform their annual decision making process for Prevent priority areas. Virtual training sessions for schools continue to be delivered to assist them with complying with DfE and Ofsted requirements.
- The 10 Community Committees have continued to meet to support a wide range of community led projects, including local relief efforts related to Covid-19. To date, over 155 grants have been awarded to support local groups, in addition, the committees have continued to support new requests for funding through their Wellbeing and Youth Activity Funds. From November, formal Community Committee meetings will resume over the Council's YouTube channel. Members of the public will be able to observe the meeting and the committee will make formal decisions.
- Work has also taken place in the wards with the highest infection rates, to raise awareness and remind local people of the need to observe government guidance and stop the spread of the virus. Ward based work has so far covered the Headingley and Hyde Park, Little London and Woodhouse, and Garforth areas with others coming on line based on public health data.

- In November the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board received a further update on the Locality working programme.
- Initiatives such as the Community Connectors project have resolved ongoing challenges for 250 households in priority neighbourhoods and exceeded the target of working with 100 households. Intervention through multi-agency and triage support has protected the most vulnerable, and benefitted the Council's services. This has resulted in households accessing welfare support, successful domestic violence concession applications, education, employment and independence.
- Work has been taking place on understanding the disproportionate or differential impact on inequality of the Covid-19 pandemic on the city's Communities of Interest. This work is a collaboration between Leeds City Council's Communities Team, Voluntary Action Leeds, Forum Central, Healthwatch and a range of other partners who provide specialist support to the city's diverse communities. It neatly mirrors work that is being undertaken by Public Health colleagues on the direct and wider health inequalities of Covid-19.
- The council have set up an anti-racism steering group with black leaders within the community, elected members and partners to look at the inequalities faced by the city's black citizens as well as other ethnic minorities. This is looking to bridge the gap and create a fairer and more equitable society for all.
- Extensive work has been undertaken to develop and strengthen the partnership with the faith sector to assist with the Covid-19 response and more generally including: expanding the membership of the Strategic Faith Leaders group which now meets monthly to advise on Covid-19 impacts on faith communities and service delivery; relaunching the Religion or Belief Hub online whilst physical meetings are not possible; working on reviewing the Faith Covenant with the sector; and assisting Leeds Faith Forum with the development of their strategic plan.

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

3.4.1 Members' attention is 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 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 new 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.

b) 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. 31% of 22,061 domestic incidents were victim self-reported; this is stable as a proportion of all domestic incidents.

Recent / Emerging Activity:

Domestic Violence and Abuse has been significantly affected by Covid-19. The volume of DVA crime incidents in the city has increased during the extended Covid-19 period, mirroring the national trend. Leeds moved quickly to mobilise business continuity plans for Domestic Violence and Abuse Services and the arrangements have continued over the last 7-8 months. Key features of this work are outlined below:

- At the start of lockdown the Council moved swiftly to launch a DVA social media campaign to promote the support available for people experiencing domestic violence and abuse and linked to the “You are not Alone” Government campaign. Further work is being done to develop the 16 Days of Action DVA awareness campaign (beginning 25th November 2020) and support White Ribbon Day.
- 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. Demand is increasing with a 25% increase since the introduction of lockdown. Numbers fluctuate between 55-75 cases. The number of cases has reduced slightly to the upper end of normal levels with an initial increase in the first week of the second lockdown. Work is ongoing with partners to manage the pressures of the daily MARAC as the number of cases remains high.
- There is a risk of surge request for refuge places and an inability of the city to meet demand. 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. Emergency temporary accommodation is available through the Hotel arrangements.

- 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.

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.

17,684 incidents of ASB were recorded by Police in Leeds; this has increased by 12%. Youth nuisance continued to represent a high proportion of incidents, (5,495 youth nuisance incidents reported, reducing by 27%).

Recent / Emerging Activity:

- 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. A key aspect of the ASB Strategy is the introduction of a triage system to identify and assess risk from the first point of contact. The Triage team became operational in 2020.
- Leeds City Council works with partners in Leeds, including West Yorkshire Police, to resolve anti-social behaviour at the earliest opportunity. The Safer Leeds partnership has successfully implemented enforcement powers as part of the wider response to nuisance motorcycles, and nuisance fireworks in Leeds. There is a suggestion that legislation introduced in response to the pandemic has heightened an awareness of / willingness to report anti-social behaviour issues in communities.
- There has been a large increase in Youth Nuisance across all areas and the partnership are working together to work on an action plan to tackle the issues. Work with Communities will take place to look at diversionary activities in the hotspot areas. The Youth Service secured violence reduction funding and will target interventions in areas where youth crime is a concern. Team Leodis is also doing some intensive Case Management in the hotspot areas
- Due to the increase in Covid-19 transmission linking in with the increase in complaints around the areas highly populated with students there has been successful implementation of an enhanced service and whilst starting to see a reduction in complaints there is the concern post-Christmas this may start to increase.

- Leeds Safer Roads Partnership and the SPARC (Supporting Partnership Action to Reduce Casualties) funding has been secured to provide a further 54 “officer days” of off road bike patrols to be targeted at key hotspot location/days/times and linked to persons of interest.

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 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:

- Leeds City Council supported the ‘We say NO to Islamophobia Campaign’, pledging to: increase public awareness; increase confidence to report; influence social change; develop a co-ordinated city wide response; and embed work into Equality Improvement Priorities. This includes promotion of the ‘Untold Stories’ project delivered by Shantona Women’s Centre. Leeds City Council has committed to legal duties and responsibilities to protect young people and adults from Islamophobia.
- The Safer Leeds Hate Crime Strategic Board has highlighted issues and challenges faced by BAME communities in the city, in relation to racism and tackling inequalities. The Black Lives Matters Movement calls for an end to systemic and institutional racism. Leeds Civic Hall, Leeds Town Hall and the city's museum building were all illuminated on Tuesday 2 June, in memory of George Floyd and in solidarity with all those across the world who are struggling against racism or any other forms of prejudice.
- 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 is a hate crime and how they can report it.
- An interdisciplinary team, led by academics at Leeds Beckett University, submitted an application for research funding to the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) under the Research Grants: Open Call fund.
- Cyber-Racism: Understanding the Motivations, Assessing the Impact, and Offering Solutions.
- The research bid aims to a) analyse online communication and behaviour across social media platforms (Twitter and Instagram), b) understand the motivational factors for posting racist and hateful comments online, c) assess the impact of online racism and hate has on its victims.
- This project is committed to achieving real world change and impact as a result of this research. The research outputs include: developing educational toolkits and curriculum content to help online users reflect on their behaviours, promote coping strategies, and locate support services; creating participatory workshops showcasing the research and bringing together social media users

to discuss their experiences related to online spaces; creating a policy report aimed at key stakeholders with recommendations for identifying and challenging trolling behaviour and supporting victims of online racism, etc.

e) Street Support

Leeds City Council is obliged by the government to carry out full city rough sleeper headcounts every two months. During the Covid-19 lockdown and social restrictions, this requirement has been relaxed for recent periods; however, within regulations and guidance frameworks, local monthly headcount assessments have been undertaken in Leeds; the latest figures for these are: August 30, September 26, and October 28. These are reduced numbers compared to 2019 headcounts (that averaged approx. 40 with a maximum count of 54)

The cohort of rough sleepers in Leeds are by nature and degree of their personal and social circumstances, a very fluid and difficult group of individuals to support and engage. Common features of this client group include mental health, drug and alcohol abuse and personality disorder, as well as people affected by trauma associated to life events. These features often impact on their ability to sustain meaningful working relationships or sustain accommodation, so incidences of eviction or restriction from homeless accommodation is also common.

At the of October 2020, there now less than 50 people currently in hotels, 17 of which are confirmed rough sleepers; this is from a peak of 226 as part of the Everyone in Directive)

Recent / Emerging Activity:

- During the initial 'lockdown' period, a cohort of Leeds homeless people were accommodated in the city's hotels. Trends in on-street begging correlated with city centre foot fall.
- Risk management is effective in achieving positive outcomes. This focuses upon both accommodation, and support (through a named key worker who acts as a co-coordinator of services). Work is focused to identify and align rough sleepers with lead professionals in terms of risk management and accountability to better meet complex individual needs.
- Funding received through the MHCLG, Next Steps Accommodation Programme and Rough Sleepers Initiative, will support the delivery of the Leeds Asks as part of the local Move-On: Transitional and Recovery Framework; in essence this will enable:
 - Continued offer of hotel accommodation and wrap around support
 - Specialist move on support for those leaving temporary accommodation
 - Development of dedicated accommodation and support for women
 - Purchase of additional one bed properties – with dedicated team of specialist support
 - Targeted outreach and support for those with complex circumstances

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

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

a) Bin Collection Rate

Despite the unprecedented pressures on service and increase in waste presented since the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, Leeds City Council continues to successfully pick up in excess of 99.9% of all planned collections, and has marginally improved overall YTD compared to last year. 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. The service introduced all new collection routes and collections days on the restart of the garden waste collections in May.

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

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

Recycling rates have reduced substantially in Q1 due to the effects of Covid-19 on service provision and the huge increase in residents' residual waste during the lockdown period. Consequently, Leeds City Council is 8% lower in its overall recycling rate at the end of Q1 compared to last year. The main factors are the enforced HWRC closures from end of March to mid-May, 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 lockdown, which affects the overall recycling calculation.

Landfill continues to reduce and is well below target as well as a reduction compared to landfill tonnage in Q1 19/20. Although it 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.

c) Street Cleanliness

Programmed mechanical street sweeping was suspended at the start of the pandemic as part of the Cleaner Neighbourhoods Team service prioritisation plan to deal with high numbers of staff having to shield during lockdown 1 and to enable the service to focus and prioritise effort on street cleansing functions related to public health and safety which included litter bin emptying, removal of side waste from domestic properties, removal of fly-tipping and some litter picking. This did result in some build-up of litter and detritus over the summer so there has been a focus on catching-up with mechanical sweeping and litter-picking since shielding staff returned in August 2020 (although staffing levels have and continue to be unpredictable due to the impact of Covid-19 and isolating staff).

As the second lockdown was entered, the service has been prioritising mechanical sweeping in order to manage and remove autumn leaf-fall. Normal levels of litter picking and mechanical sweeping have not yet fully resumed, but the service is able to respond to problem areas quickly and effectively. One of the strengths of zonal working is that team leaders and charge hands know the hot spots in their area and also carry out their own subjective assessments of street cleanliness and task resources accordingly. This has been supported by

enforcement officers undertaking local environmental audits as well as regular contact with members via e-mail and Skype.

3.6 ***Elections and Regulatory***

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

a) 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 the Council's spaces. There are currently 1239 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 3,782 of these permits.
- The service has been offering free parking for front line staff dealing with Covid-19 in partnership with the local NHS. At present 530 permits have been supplied, mainly for use at Woodhouse Lane Car Park. The government has offered partial funding for these permits.
- 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	As % of 19/20	Q2	As % of 19/20
Telephone	4494	30%	7017	61%
Correspondence	1620	19%	5926	64%

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 1st May. Bus Lane enforcement did not restart until 24 June. The number of offences has dropped significantly as a result :

	Q1	As % of 19/20	Q2	As % of 19/20
Parking	1670	7%	14288	63%
Bus Lane	403	3%	6599	65%

- Widespread roadworks in the City Centre during this period have meant that a number of bus lane cameras are not operational as the road network is changed to improve bus journey times. When the works are complete the bus 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. The number of offences in Q1 & 2 is 1,464 which compares with 3,427 last year.
- 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-19, 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. Officers are deployed every school day but do not have the capacity to cover the number of requests.
- The cumulative financial effect is estimated at £1.1 m for parking and £330,000 for bus lane enforcement. The Council have applied to the government scheme for Covid-19 related losses which offers a rebate of just over 70% so the expected shortfall is about £500,000 for enforcement revenue in 2020/21.

Managing the council's on and off street parking operation:

- The Council controls 2,407 on street pay parking spaces and 2,373 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 57% 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 it was decided to end the promotional rate from 1 September.
- 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 shortfall in revenue at Q2 is £3.4 m and the estimate for the whole year is £5.8m. If the claim to the government Covid-19 scheme is agreed the shortfall will be £1.7m. Together with enforcement revenue this gives a likely budget pressure of £2.2m for parking as a whole.

3.7 *Parks and Countryside*

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

a) Grounds Maintenance

The main focus of this work has been to prioritise larger areas of grass situated within residential areas in order that, during the pandemic, these areas can be used for exercise and recreation. Limits have been applied on staff numbers in vehicles alongside reduced resources due to staff being required to isolate or shield to largely suspend strimming operations. Strimming work is being picked up during the mowing closedown period to restore sites to expected standards.

b) Parks and Green Spaces

During the pandemic period there has been a significant increase in usage as people were taking exercise and recreation locally. This has led to an increase in maintenance pressures, particularly around litter management at the same time as resource pressures were experienced. During this reporting period government restrictions on playgrounds and related recreational facilities were eased or amended resulting in a phased reopening following the introduction of suitable sanitisation approaches. A safer spaces audit has been undertaken and signage introduced in line with government guidance.

4 Business Continuity Plans

4.1 There are 13 business continuity plans falling within the remit of the Board, of which 5 are currently awaiting their annual update; these are:

- Forestry
- Estates
- Waste Management
- Leeds Housing Options Service
- Housing Leeds

For further details of any of these plans, you can contact Emma Kamillo-Price in the Intelligence & Policy service – emma.kamillo@leeds.gov.uk.

5 Corporate Considerations

5.1 Consultation and Engagement

5.1.1 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.

5.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

5.2.1 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.

5.3 Council Priorities and the Best Council Plan

5.3.1 This report provides an update on progress in delivering the council priorities in line with the Best Council Plan.

5.3.2 Climate Emergency

The council declared a climate emergency in March 2019 with the stated ambition of working to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030 for the city. Parts of the above performance information are linked to actions taking place to address climate emergency and will feed into an assessment of how on track the council is in achieving the target. Services will provide updates to the Board on specific work they are carrying out with regard to this priority.

5.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

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

5.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

5.5.1 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.

5.6 Risk Management

5.6.1 There is a comprehensive risk management process in the council to monitor and manage key risks. The council's most significant risks are available and can be accessed via the council's website.

6 Conclusions

6.1 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.

7 Recommendations

7.1 Members are recommended to:

- Note the Quarter 2 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.

8 Background documents¹

8.1 Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025

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