

Report of:

Meeting of:	Date:	Ward(s):
Policy & Performance Scrutiny Committee	29 July 2021	All

Delete as appropriate	Exempt	Non-exempt

SUBJECT: Quarter 4 Performance Report: Well Run Council
1. Synopsis

- 1.1 Corporate performance indicators help monitor progress against outcomes in the council's Corporate Plan. Progress on key performance measures are reported to Scrutiny Committees on a quarterly basis. This ensures accountability to residents and enables challenge where necessary.
- 1.2 The Policy & Performance Scrutiny Committee has responsibility for the Well Run Council outcome area. This report sets out Quarter 4 (Jan – Mar '21) progress against this.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note performance against Quarter 4 (Jan – Mar '21) indicators for Well Run Council.

3. Background

- 3.1 Performance indicators track progress against seven outcome areas in the council's Corporate Plan. Performance is monitored internally through Department Management Teams and Corporate Management Board and externally through Scrutiny Committees.
- 3.2 The Policy & Performance Scrutiny Committee is responsible for monitoring and challenging performance for the Well Run Council outcome area. This ensures effective council management through core services including Finance, Digital Services, Human Resources and Customer Services.

4. Outstanding issues and queries from Q3 update, presented on 25 March 2021

4.1 There are no outstanding issues from the Q3 update.

5. Quarter 4 performance update – Managing our budget effectively and efficiently

5.1 Key performance indicators relating to objective:

PI No.	Indicator	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Target	Q4 2020/21	On target?	Better than Q4 last year?
WR1	Percentage of council tax collected in a year	96.1%	95.3%	95.3%	93.7%	No	No
WR2	Percentage of business rates collected in a year	96.6%	96.7%	96.7%	93%	No	No

WR1: Percentage of council tax collected in a year

WR2: Percentage of business rates collected in a year

5.2 In line with the other London Boroughs we have experienced lower collection rates since the pandemic, particularly for business rates. Our 2020/21 collection was 1.7% less for council tax and 3.7% less for business rates against (pre-Covid19) targets.

5.3 Both residents (through lost jobs or reduced income) and businesses (because of closures, reduced demand and/or reduced capacity) have struggled to keep up with instalments and this explains the shortfalls against our targets. Under normal circumstances, the Revenues Service uses the Courts to support the pursuit and enforcement of debts. But the Courts were closed, for business rates for the entire year, for Council Tax only reopened in February 2021 (which was too late to have a material impact on our collection rates.)

5.4 With respect to Council Tax there was a difference in the collection rates between Council Tax Support (CTS) recipients and charge-payers (who were not eligible for support). The collection rate for CTS recipients was 95.5% but for non-CTS recipients was 93.6%

5.5 Usually, the Revenues Service is only responsible for billing and collecting monies, but in response to the pandemic, significant resources were reassigned to paying out monies. In 2020/21, the Service assessed & paid over 16,000 Covid-19 business support grants, providing critical financial support to local businesses worth in excess of £104 million.

6. Quarter 4 performance update – Harness digital technology for the benefit of residents and staff

6.1 Key performance indicators relating to objective:

PI No.	Indicator	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Target	Q4 2020/21	On target?	Better than Q4 last year?
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WR3	Number of visits in person at Customer Contact Centre	131,500	107,440	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
WR4	Number of telephone calls through Contact Islington Call Centre	396,211	344,707	320,931	312,571	Yes	Yes
WR5	Number of online transactions	170,156	152,883	160,527	190,940	Yes	Yes
WR6	Percentage of calls into Contact Islington handled appropriately	98%	97%	98%	98%	Yes	Yes

WR3: Number of visits in person at Customer Contact Centre

- 6.2 The Customer Centre has operated as an 'emergency only' service since March 2020. Numbers are minimal and there are no direct comparisons between this and previous years.

WR4: Number of telephone calls through to Contact Islington Call Centre

- 6.3 There has been no significant change to call numbers and they have remained on target. Note that We Are Islington calls are not reflected in these figures.

WR5: Number of online transactions

- 6.4 The number of online transactions have exceeded the target by over 30,000.
- 6.5 The volume of transactions through our external provider RingGo is not reflected in these figures as this service is outsourced. However, RingGo numbers continue to increase, with 27,328 eVoucher transactions in March 2021 and 1,702 permission to park transactions in March 2021. These transactions remain consistently high month on month and have significantly reduced manual intervention.

WR6: Percentage of calls into Contact Islington handled appropriately

- 6.6 Performance remains acceptable.
- 6.7 This indicator is currently based on manager assessment of call handling. Team managers listen to a random sample of calls for each person they line manage, which is measured against a set criteria to assess both technical and soft customer service skills. Going forward, we are looking to introduce a system that allows residents themselves to provide feedback on the quality of their experience.

7. Quarter 3 performance update – Make sure our workforce is diverse, highly skilled and highly motivated

- 7.1 Key performance indicators relating to objective:

PI No.	Indicator	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Target	Q4 2020/21	On target?	Better than Q4 last year?
WR7	Average number of days lost per year through sickness absence per employee (in previous 12-month rolling period)	8.6	8.3	7.5	7.4	Yes	Yes
WR8	Percentage of workforce who are agency staff (by headcount)	11.5%	11.5%	10.0%	12.8%	No	No
WR9	Percentage of BAME staff within the top 5% of earners	20.1%	20.9%	21.7%	21.9%	Yes	Yes
WR10	Percentage of disabled staff within the top 5% of earners	6.0%	5.8%	6.3%	7.5%	Yes	Yes

WR7: Average number of days lost per year through sickness absence per employee (in previous 12-month rolling period)

- 7.2 Sickness absence has reduced marginally over each quarter and is on track. This is common across London boroughs, with sickness absence decreasing to reflect the higher incidences of staff working from home and able to manage minor ailments. Planning for staff moving to a hybrid working model in the autumn will include a review of Workplace Adjustments, Homeworking and other hybrid working support.
- 7.3 Removing Covid-19 related sickness reduces this to 6.74 days per employee. A review of long covid absences is taking place which will result in new guidance for managers and changes to the MyHR sickness absence reporting codes. A deep dive analysis into sickness absences for 2020/21 is included on the agenda for this PPS meeting.
- 7.4 Long-term sickness remains the main driver of sickness absence figures, with mental health (anxiety, stress, depression) and musculo-skeletal conditions being the most common causes. We continue to support staff with access to wellbeing support (e.g. Employee Assistance Programme and the government-sponsored Able Futures counselling support and themed webinars) and homeworking equipment.

WR8: Percentage of workforce who are agency staff (by headcount)

- 7.5 Agency workers comprise 12.8% of the workforce by headcount, placing Islington in the first quartile for London boroughs. The increase since Q2 has been the result of the rapid testing set-up via agency staffing of the Lateral Flow Testing sites as part of the council's Covid-19 response.

7.6 The median for London is 13% of FTE, which is the formula used for benchmarking in place of headcount.

WR9: Percentage of BAME staff within the top 5% of earners

7.6 The Black Asian and Minority Ethnic staff that are in the top 5% of earners is 21.9%, which is above the latest London Councils Median. The last reported median for London was 17%. Due to the small number of staff in the top 5%, it only requires a few Black Asian Minority Ethnic staff to leave and not be directly replaced with other Black Asian Minority Ethnic staff to lower this percentage rate.

7.7 As part of the Challenging Inequality programme various initiatives are being introduced to focus on this target, including:

- diverse panels;
- improvements to our recruitment processes;
- a modernised approach to learning and careers;
- the creation of leadership and management programmes; and
- new mentoring schemes.

WR10: Percentage of disabled staff within the top 5% of earners

7.8 The target has been achieved in this quarter.

8. Quarter 4 performance update – Be open and accountable

8.1 Key performance indicators relating to objective:

PI No.	Indicator	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Target	Q4 2020/21	On target?	Better than Q4 last year?
WR11	Percentage of new voter registrations processed	New indicator	New indicator	98%	100%	Yes	N/A

WR11: Percentage of new voter registrations processed

8.2 The target of 100% has been achieved in this quarter. All applications received to register to vote were processed successfully.

9. Implications

Financial implications:

9.1 The cost of providing resources to monitor performance is met within each service’s core budget.

Legal Implications:

9.2 In relation to the Best Value duty (1) the Council must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, (2) functions are the sum total of the authority’s activities, and (3) regard must be had to the 3Es, economy, efficiency and effectiveness (Local Government Act 1999).

Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030:

9.3 There are no environmental impact arising from monitoring performance.

Resident Impact Assessment:

- 9.4 The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010).
- 9.5 The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 The council's Corporate Plan sets out clear priorities, underpinned by firm commitments and actions that we will take to work towards our Fairer Islington vision. The corporate performance indicators are one of many tools that enable us to ensure progress in delivering key priorities whilst maintaining good quality services.

Signed by:

Dave Hodgkinson (Corporate Director Resources) Date: 29 July 2021
and Cllr. Satnam Gill (Executive Member Finance
& Performance)

Report Author: Ayesha Hakim Rahman
Tel: Ex. 2340
Email: ayesha.hakimrahman@islington.gov.uk