

**Body:** Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 18 September 2023

**Subject:** Corporate Performance Quarter 1 2023-24

**Report of:** Homira Javadi, Chief Finance Officer

**Cabinet member:** Councillor Stephen Holt, Leader of the Council (Community Strategy, Local Strategic Partnership, the Corporate Plan, Performance and Staff)

**Ward(s):** All

**Purpose of the report:** To consider the Council's progress and performance in respect of service areas for the First Quarter of the year (April-June 2023) as shown in Appendix 1.

**Decision type:** Non Key

**Recommendation:** For the Scrutiny Committee to note the progress and performance for Quarter 1 2023/24.

**Reasons for recommendations:** To enable Scrutiny Committee members to consider specific aspects of the Council's progress and performance.

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Council has an annual cycle for the preparation, implementation and monitoring of its business plans and budgets. This cycle enables us regularly to review the Council's work, and the targets it sets for performance, to ensure these continue to reflect customer needs and council aspirations.
- 1.2 It is important to monitor and assess progress and performance on a regular basis, to ensure the Council continues to deliver priority outcomes and excellent services to its customers and communities.
- 1.3 Appendix 1 of this report sets out details of the key performance indicators for 2023/34 which were agreed by Cabinet in July.

## **2. Stability and Growth Programme**

- 2.1 A report was considered at Cabinet in July regarding a change being made to the Recovery and Reset Programme. Going forward the improvement and efficiency programme will be called Stability and Growth, to give a fairer

reflection of the outlook and work involved. This programme will work alongside the ongoing performance management work of the Council to ensure continuous improvement.

2.2 A brief update on the progress of this programme will be included as part of the report on a regular basis:

- Services are systematically being reshaped to meet the changed needs of the Council and its customers, and opportunities to make the best use of technology to deliver efficiencies continue to be implemented:
- Colleagues are working to implement a number of new systems which will deliver improvements and efficiencies (e.g. financial, operational – for customers and staff – and contractual) for a range of service areas (e.g. Revenues and Benefits, Environmental Health and Licensing, Planning).
- The learning from the launch of ELLIS – a next generation chatbot – on the Council's website and on limited phone lines in 2022 has identified that this technology will be an effective solution to improve further on the Council's customer service offer. Plans are being finalised to implement ELLIS on more phone lines over the coming months.

2.3 With a focus on the way in which customers, businesses and residents access council services and information about council services, a project to design a new website for the Council commenced earlier this year. This project will enable an updated and refreshed offer for customers, making the best use of technology. Opportunities for staff, Members and customers to engage in the project will be confirmed shortly.

### **3. Solution Sprints**

3.1 Alongside Stability and Growth, the Council has established a programme to drive targeted efficiencies in specific service areas. This is called the Solution Sprints programme.

3.2 This quarter solution sprint and improvement activity continues, building on the success of last year where solution sprints were reintroduced last autumn following the pause brought about by Covid response. Many of these have given rise to broader ongoing pieces of continuous improvement activity and councillors may recall from the previous quarter and annual update examples including: the 'contact us' form on the website, helping to streamline and speed up customer emails getting to the appropriate service areas and freeing up Customer First colleagues to prioritise those customers with the greatest need; requirements gathering for the new Planning system; and, arrangements to update and refresh the Scheme of Delegations through member engagement.

3.3 Activity during quarter 1 has continued to focus on improvements to the Incident Liaison Officer (ILO) process and associated out of hours (OOH) provision. Several interim recommendations to improve existing arrangements have been identified. These followed a series of exploratory meetings with a cross section of staff involved in ILO and OOH. These interim recommendations have since been approved for progression by the Director of Service Delivery. The next phase of work will conclude delivery of the interim

recommendations and work with stakeholders towards an 'ideal' ILO and OOH process.

3.4 Other notable solution sprint outcomes this quarter are conclusion of associated work on EV charging and some waste processes with Neighbourhood First colleagues - as a result, an EV communications guide has been produced to support Customer First colleagues with inquiries. Process review and design work undertaken with colleagues in the Green Consultancy – resulting in the development of new project management tools to assist management of their many projects, improving visibility, and enhancing capacity for progress tracking. A 'tackling the crisis' housing/homelessness workshop was also delivered between housing colleagues from Lewes, Eastbourne and Hastings this quarter. Outcomes included building rapport, trust and confidence between frontline officers across the authorities, sharing good practice with regards to homelessness provision and establishing opportunities to share and collaborate on housing solutions.

3.5 Quarter two will see continued progression on ILO and OOH as described above, improvement work with the Green Consultancy to explore scope for Direct Debit payments for garden waste, work to refresh sustainability commitments through the LDC Climate action plan, and a potential review of some Finance processes to coincide with future HR and payroll arrangements, subject to capacity.

#### **4. Financial appraisal**

4.1 Project and performance monitoring and reporting arrangements are contained within existing estimates. Corporate performance information should also be considered alongside the Council's financial update as there is a clear link between performance and budgets/resources.

4.2 All the financial implications are contained within the body of the report.

#### **5. Legal implications**

5.1 Comment from the Legal Services Team is not necessary for this routine monitoring report.

#### **6. Equality analysis**

6.1 The equality implications of individual decisions relating to the projects/services covered in this report are addressed within other relevant Council reports or as part of programmed equality analysis.

#### **7. Conclusion**

7.1 This report provides an overview of performance against the authority's priority actions and indicators for 2023-24.

## **8. Appendices**

- Appendix 1- Portfolio Progress and Performance Report (Quarter 1 2023/24)

## **9. Background Papers**

The Background Paper used in compiling this report was as follows:

- Corporate Plan 2020/24 <https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/about-the-councils/corporate-plans/>