

POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE
26 NOVEMBER 2020

QUARTER 2 (Q2) 2020/21 PERFORMANCE REPORT

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present Members with an overview of Quarter 2 (Q2) performance against the objectives and actions within the Council's Community Plan (2019-2023) and a range of other performance information.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The Council's four year Community Plan 2019-2023 was first approved by Full Council on 7 March 2019. The Community Plan was refreshed to include reference to the transfer of housing management and was subsequently approved by this Committee on 20 February 2020. A more recent refresh of the Community Plan was approved by Full Council on 13 October 2020 to reflect the re-focus of the Council's priorities in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.2 The Community Plan sets out what the Council intends to achieve and how, for the period up to the end of March 2023.

2.3 Members are asked to note that as Q2 Performance 2020/21 (highlighted in paragraph 3.0) relates to the period July - September 2020, this performance report corresponds with the previous Community Plan (though a good deal of the objectives and actions remain the same). As performance reporting relates to the previous quarter, Members will receive Q3 2020/21 performance reports, in February/March's committee cycle. These reports will be measured against the refreshed Community Plan that was approved in October 2020.

2.4 During Q2, the Government introduced a series of measures easing the lockdown restrictions experienced in Q1 in England.

July

- **National Context**
- Businesses & organisations must collect contact details of their customers
- Local pubs and restaurants re-open
- Travel corridor exemptions come into effect in England
- Outdoor performances with social distances allowed to resume
- Beauty salons, nail bars and tattoo studios allowed to re-open
- Face covering mandatory in shops from 24 July
- Self-isolation period is extended to 10 days with symptoms or positive test
- **NSDC Context**
- 2 hours free parking in all NSDC car parks
- NSDC playgrounds re-open
- National Civil War Centre re-opens with free entry for residents
- Second round of Discretionary Grant Fund distributed
- Active4Today Leisure Centres reopen
- Castle House open for customer enquiries via appointment only

August

- **National Context**
- Guidance on going to work changes to give employers 'discretion' about how staff can work safely
- Eat out to Help out Scheme begins
- Requirement to wear a face mask extended to more indoor settings
- New Test and Trace app begins trial phase
- Government announces stronger enforcement measures as easements resume, with a number of culture, sport, leisure and business establishments permitted to reopen from 15 August
- Government publishes new guidance on the use of face coverings for schools and other education institutions
- **NSDC Context**
- Newark and Sherwood go on governments 'watch list'

September

- **National Context**
- Advised by government to work from home if you can
- Students return to schools and universities
- 'Hands. Face. Space' public information campaign launched
- New social distancing measures come into place, including the 'rule of 6'
- 10pm closing time for pubs and restaurants
- NHS Test and Trace launches the NHS COVID-19 App to help identify contacts of people who test positive for COVID-19
- New restrictions come in: legal duty to self-isolate, fines of £10,000 for businesses subject to COVID-19 Secure requirements in law
- Increased restrictions on weddings and civil partnership ceremonies
- **NSDC context**
- Newark and Sherwood taken off governments 'watch list'
- NSDC extends 2 hours free car parking until 20 September
- NSDC host free online Business Support Event

3.0 Q2 2020/21 Progress against objectives and actions within the Community Plan

3.1 *Table 1: Q2 2020/21 Progress against objectives and actions within Community Plan*

<p>Objective 1: Improve the cleanliness and appearance of the local environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have recruited 3 new Street Scene Officers who will work on a 7 day rota basis to cover the area's litter hotspots.• There has been an increase in fly tipping and neighbourhood offences due to waste disposal restrictions associated with Covid-19. The team are focused on reducing this and as such continue to negotiate with the County Council to progress extended access to Household waste sites for trade vehicles, which will provide a viable route for small businesses to legally dispose of small amounts of waste without being charged the usual 1 tonne minimum fee. This should significantly reduce fly tipping within the area as it is developed.• The visibility of the environmental offer has increased through promotion and advertising and previous days of action and activities to address illegal waste carriers. There have been installations of CCTV cameras and signage in fly tipping hot spots throughout the district, demonstrating that the actions assigned are showing good progress towards achieving the expected outcome in 2023.• Under-performance against the 24 hour target to remove racist or offensive graffiti is attributed to an individual case which included a lengthy police investigation into graffiti tags. Therefore the time to remove racist or offensive graffiti for Q2 was 205.4 hours. This specific incident was a prolific graffiti artist, who was caught and then was compelled to undertake volunteer works with the council as part of reparation. This had excellent local media coverage and this type of high profile conviction can serve as a deterrent to others.
<p>Objective 2 : Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, and increase feelings of safety in our communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training of community groups resumed in Q2 to enable community groups to undertake speed watch days. Council equipment including signs and speed guns are loaned to the community groups for the speed watch days. This scheme provides a proactive solution to improve the safety and quality of life for our communities.• Balderton and Farndon have seen an increase in anti-social behaviour amongst the younger age groups during the school holiday period in Q2. The activity ranged from groups gathering in bus stops, intimidating people, wildlife cruelty, vandalism and off road biking. Therefore there has been an increase in ASB in Q2 by 75% against a target of 0%. Additional patrols from both Council staff and Police are now in place as a visible presence to reduce anti-social behaviour. This has decreased as schools have reopened.
<p>Objective 3 : Improve Transport Infrastructure to Reduce Congestion and Facilitate Growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work on the A46 Newark Northern Bypass has progressed with Highways England progressing options for public consultation November/December 2020. This scheme will improve road infrastructure to support opportunities for growth in the district.• The Newark Town Investment Plan was submitted to government on 31st July and included within proposals for enhancements to improvements to digital and physical connectivity.• Technical Documents for the design of the A1 overbridge are being progressed in consultation with Highways England to support transport infrastructure and facilitate growth opportunities.• Dialogue has continued with funding partners regarding the delivery of the Newark Southern Link Road, with Homes England being expected to progress with a formal financial package to the developer late this year which will support transport infrastructure in the district.

- Negotiations between the master developer of Thoresby Vale, Edwinstowe, Nottinghamshire County Council and Newark and Sherwood District Council have progressed with a view to securing early release of S106 contributions towards Ollerton Hall and the A614 corridor, to aid Nottinghamshire County Council in concluding the Outline Business Case for the Department for Transport as part of the £18m Major Roads Network grant.

Objective 4: Build more homes and provide an excellent housing management service

- The Five Year Land Supply Statement published in Q2 details that in 19/20 552 homes were completed against a target of 454 dwellings per year. This supports the Council's strategic housing requirements.
- The Local Development Framework evidence base has progressed in Q2 with the Housing Needs Survey and work required (delayed due to furlough for consultancy support) to conclude the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Needs Assessment. This will assist with planning for our communities housing needs.
- The continued successful delivery of the Council's HRA development programme means that the Council are the largest supplier of affordable (social housing being one element of affordable) new build housing within the district.
- Arkwood Developments continue to bring forward development opportunities to support a pipeline for the target of 300 homes by 2026/27. Arkwood Developments commenced works on the site at Bowbridge Road on the 26th of October (Q3), hoarding is in the process of being erected and the site access formed, completion of the show home is programmed for April 2021 and the overall site being built out over 24 months with completion in October 2022.
- Work continues on delivering year 3 of the HRA development programme including the 40 unit extra care scheme at Boughton.
- The average number of days to re-let council properties has returned a red status in Q2 with average of 39.9 days against a target of 16 days due to a moratorium on lettings for three months due to Covid-19. Monthly performance is doing well.
- Projects have commenced around reviewing the Grounds Maintenance Service, reviewing our Empty Homes Standard and aligning customer feedback across the Council.
- A new Tenant Engagement Officer has been appointed to take forward the review of tenant participation and engagement.
- Our careline service has continued through lockdown to provide essential support to lifeline users and an essential repairs service has also continued through this quarter.
- Progress has also been made with the regeneration scheme at Yorke Drive with site investigations commencing and continued communications with residents to ensure current needs and progress is understood.
- The income team in Housing management have been providing support to tenants in financial difficulties as a result of Covid-19, making every effort to minimise the level of rent arrears incurred.
- Housing management have continued to provide our compliance services through Q2 to ensure our tenants are safe whilst adhering to safe systems of work.
- Housing management have also contacted our non-working age tenants who the service have not heard from for three months to complete a safe and well check during Q2 whilst visiting was restricted.

Objective 5: Increase visits to Newark and Sherwood and the use of visitor attractions by local residents

- The restrictions during Q2 have impacted on the number of visitors to all local attractions.
- As approved at Policy & Finance's June Committee, the National Civil War Centre (NCWC) offered free entry to residents during part of Q2 (July – August). The initiative was to support the rebuilding of our local community, increase footfall to the town in a controlled manner to support the local economy and to offer cultural services which are

proven to be of benefit in supporting residents' mental health and well-being. On a number of days through the Q2 period when the NCWC was operating free admission for residents, the NCWC reached capacity in line with covid secure measures. This demonstrates that this initiative proved popular with residents.

- Whilst NCWC was open in Q2, many of these resources developed in Q1 remained available online on the NCWC website, and are continuing to support both residents and those living further afield to explore our service online, with the aim of converting this into future footfall as visitor confidence grows.
- The Newark Castle Gardens reopened to the public on 6 July, enabling residents and visitors to enjoy a local heritage site, and to provide an open space which supports mental and physical wellbeing for residents and visitors.
- An application to the Culture Recovery Fund for £95k was submitted, which would support development of pilot events and activities to re-engage with audiences and test audience resilience. The Palace Theatre and NCWC were awarded the full £95k in Q3.
- In August, an Art Fund grant of £40,000 was received. Objectives of this funding are to develop a new blended learning programme for schools. Schools are less able to visit the museum in the current circumstances, and this will support access and outreach for both local school visits and the national schools programme.
- The Newark Town Investment Plan has been submitted to Government for consideration which promotes a range of interventions to seek to improve and enhance local offers and resident access. An example is the Castle Gatehouse project.

Objective 6: Protect, promote and enhance the district's natural environment

- The updating of the play parks and wildflower areas of both Sconce and Devon Park and Vicar Water is almost nearing completion, these will provide a natural addition to the facilities celebrating wildflowers and the insects they attract. Access to open spaces throughout the pandemic has remained important and valued.
- The refurbishment of the former toilet block at Sherwood Forest Arts and Craft Centre was completed during Q2 and has now been offered on a lease arrangement to the consortium that is delivering the 5G Connected Forest project. The focus of the 5G connected Forest will be to explore the potential for 5G applications in the preservation of forests and their environment, and in enhancing the experience of visitors to the forest and surrounding area.
- During Q2, the Council conducted a stakeholder and public consultation exercise, for the Forest Corner Masterplan to gather the views, ideas and contributions of stakeholders, residents and visitors. The masterplan is an exciting opportunity to connect people with the natural landscape and wildlife of Sherwood Forest; regain the connection between the forest and the legend of Robin Hood; and improve user facilities.
- Q2 progress for the Minor to Major (M2M) Landscape Partnership has varied. The Celebrate Sherwood workstream has been significantly impacted due to the cancellation of festivals and limitations on organising community events. Other work has been able to progress in Q2 such as the sowing of the acid grassland nurse sward at Rainworth Heath. The M2M project focusses on increasing the commitment of local people to appreciate and safeguard the heritage of Sherwood Forest and attract new and wider audiences to engage with a wider range of heritage through a programme of targeted activities.

Objective 7: Enhance and Sustain Town Centres

- Developed the High Street Diversification Fund in Q2 to support local, independent high-street based retail/hospitality businesses with a grant of £250 (to be match funded) towards investment in e-commerce. This activity supports retailers with an online presence during periods when footfall had reduced due to Covid secure measures and government restrictions. In Q3, this fund has supported 100 businesses.
- Progressed the development of the Robin Hood Hotel. This development will provide a 66 bed hotel and 3 commercial units in a central Town Centre location and will support the visitor economy. Expected completion is in Q4.
- Archaeological assessment and other surveys were commissioned in Q2 for Stodman

<p>Street, Newark to support the offer in the Town Centre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitted the Towns Fund bid on the 31 July which provides a comprehensive range of transformational projects to drive footfall in Newark Town Centre. Supported local businesses across the district with guidance and advice during the opening of the High Streets in July & August. Progressed with the redevelopment of Ollerton Town Centre to enhance and support the offer in the Town Centre.
<p>Objective 8 : Reduce Levels of Deprivation in Target Areas and Remove Barriers to Social Mobility Across the District</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During Q2, 3 rough sleepers were supported into safe housing as part of the national ‘Everyone In’ campaign, which aimed to support rough sleepers into accommodation. This initiative has provided shelter for a vulnerable group during the pandemic. The time taken to process Housing Benefit change in circumstances has risen to 7 days against a target of 5 days. This is due to an increase in the volume of cases within Q2 which is a direct result of the impact of Covid-19. The “Call B4 you serve” initiative launched during Q2 which aims to prevent and support the reduction of homelessness. The scheme offers advice and assistance to landlords in dealing with tenancy issues before it becomes necessary for a notice to be issued. Council tax bills for some residents have been reduced by up to £150 per claimant utilising a Government award of £810,000 to help support residents who are experiencing hardship. The Temporary Accommodation Project has reached the detailed design stage.
<p>Objective 9: Improve the Health and Wellbeing of Local Residents, with a Particular Focus on Narrowing the Gap in Healthy Life Expectancy and Other Health Outcomes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were 346 contact centre requests for Covid-19 related support during Q2. HART responded to this with 111 direct deliveries (food/medicines), their work also included referrals to other organisations and ad hoc additional direct tasks e.g. food drops at food bank. Leisure Centres re-opened in July and received a total of 106,378 visits in Q2 compared to a target of 318,750. This is understandable given the Covid-19 restrictions. Active4Today supported members back to the leisure centres with a free month membership. The number of energy efficient installations to support living in warm and healthy home returned a red status with only 10 installations in Q2 against a target of 30 due mostly only emergency installations cases being carried out.
<p>Objective 10 : Increase Participation with the Council and Within Local Communities</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council’s communications team have been proactive throughout, communicating often complex and difficult information in relation to the Covid response. All media platforms have been utilised, in addition to social media, website information and press releases, radio adverts, banners in high profile locations and direct video messaging have been utilised. 3 information videos were produced, where the leader of the Council provided additional explanation around the rapidly changing and complex Covid-19 restrictions. These had a combined total of 13,321 views across YouTube and social media. Comments were overwhelmingly positive. 14 Council Committee meetings were live streamed and broadcasted via Social Media, with a combined total of 1,170 views on YouTube. In Q2 the council developed and prepared for the first ever virtual Parish Conference (this was successfully held in Q3).
<p>Objective 11 : Generate More Income, Improve Value for Money and Increase Resident’s Satisfaction with the Council</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During this period there has been an understandable significant reduction in council income.

- Improving access to services is progressing well with the installation of a new telephony system which is expected to be in operation by the end of Q3 with multiple channels of communication to provide easier access to services for all residents.
- A customer insight project has launched to develop a greater understanding of the needs of our residents, this will also identify areas of pressure on the organisation and enable managers to direct resources to where they are most needed. The principle aim of this project is to improve services for customers.

4.0 Customer Contacts and Customer Feedback

- 4.1 During Q2, there was understandably a significant shift in the way Customers contacted the Council. This was to be expected, given our offices were closed with an appointment only service for face to face enquiries, in line with Covid-19 government guidance.
- 4.2 The volume of telephone enquiries to the Customer Contact Centre increased compared to the same period last year, whilst only marginally increased to the Customer Access Team (housing services) during this period. The nature of the Customer contact in Q2 2020/21 related to Council tax recovery recommencing following a suspension due to the uncertainty regarding Covid and changes to waste services.
- 4.3 Digital transactions made on the Council’s automated payment lines have marginally increased compared to the same period last year and relate to rent and council tax payments.
- 4.4 There was an increase in the Council’s interactions and engagement on social media for Q2 2020/21 which is to be expected given that the government advice relating to various aspects of Covid-19 restrictions was rapidly changing during this period and the Council were viewed as a trusted source of information. As customers are familiar with and use social media as way of accessing Council information, this has been a valuable tool for customer engagement. Table 2 provides Customer contacts by method and includes a description of the types of customer engagement with comparison for the same period last year.

Table 2: Customer Contacts by method and types

Contact	2019/20 Q2	2020/21 Q2
Face to Face enquiries - Castle House	3,513 Enquiries during this period include planning, microfiche, searches, council tax, housing benefit, homeless.	127 Face to Face enquires reduced as Castle House operated on an appointment only basis. Enquiries during this period primarily related to council tax, housing benefit, homeless
Face to Face enquiries – Ollerton	297 Enquiries during this period include planning, microfiche, searches etc, council tax, housing benefit,	0 Local Office closed during Q2 due to the Covid–19 pandemic

Contact	2019/20 Q2	2020/21 Q2
	homeless and housing management services in the Local Office	
Face to Face enquires – Southwell	58 Enquiries during this period include planning, microfiche, searches etc, council tax, housing benefit, homeless and housing management services in the Local Office	0 Local Office closed during Q2 due to the covid – 19 pandemic
Telephone enquiries to Customer Services	23,351 Enquiries during this period relate to general enquires on council tax, housing benefit	28,485 Enquiries during this period related to Council tax recovery which recommenced in Q2 following a suspension and changes to waste services e.g. crews assigned to different areas resulting in an increase in missed bin collections
Telephone enquiries to Customer Access Service	17,812 Calls to Customer Access Service relate to general enquiries on housing management service, responsive repairs	17,854 Calls to Customer Access Service have marginally increased compared to same period as last year. Enquiries relate to service provision during covid-19.
Automated payment lines	6361	6562
Engagement on Council's Twitter and Facebook	Twitter: Tweets: 245 Reach: 286,400 Facebook Posts: 179 Reach: 820,682 Engagement: 54,632	Twitter: Tweets: 290 Reach: 383,000 Facebook: Posts: 292 Reach: 1,228,032 Engagement: 85,533 Increase in Social media interactions during this period compared to last year relating to volume of Covid-19 messages on the Council's social media feeds.

NB: Reach is the total number of social media accounts who view the Council content in their social media feed.

Customer Feedback

- 4.5 In line with the Council’s Customer Feedback Policy, complaints operate a staged process. Stage 1 complaints are reviewed and responded to by the Business Manager and Stage 2 complaints are reviewed and responded to by the relevant Senior Manager/Director for that service area. If the complaint relates to the housing management service, then an additional stage is introduced where the complaint is referred to the Tenant Panel. If the customer is not satisfied with the response then the customer has the right to refer the complaint onto the relevant Ombudsman for review. This policy is being refreshed to reflect the integration of housing management and a separate report is being brought to this Committee for consideration.
- 4.6 Performance monitoring of customer feedback is being included as part of the customer insight project which is being led by Transformation Team. This work will put in processes to identify trends relating to customer feedback received and develop insight to create service improvement.

Stage 1 Complaints

- 4.7 The number of stage 1 complaints received for Q2 2020/21 was 69, compared with 38 for the same period of the previous year as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Complaints received in Q2 reporting period

	Complaints Q2 2019/20	Complaints Q2 2020/21
Stage 1	38	69

- 4.8 Whilst the direction of travel shows an increase in complaints, it is worth noting that 25 of complaints related to the housing management service and were not included in 2019/20 Q2 figures.
- 4.9 58 (79%) of complaints during Q2 related to service provision or standard and quality of service. The highest number of complaints related to housing management and waste management. It is not unusual for the highest number of complaints to be generated from front line service areas, and out of thousands of interactions and transactions that these service areas have with customers the number of complaints received represents a very small amount.
- 4.10 It is important to use customer comments to drive improvement, this can be demonstrated in improvements resulting from stage 1 complaints in Q2; for example written instructions and maps have been distributed to environmental services colleagues for hard to find properties to reduce the number of missed bins. The Council are now paying greater attention to detail in relation to customers reporting a change in circumstances and work is underway to improve the key to key process with voids and lettings which will improve the customer experience. Additional training in relation to a variety of issues is being picked up during toolbox talks with staff.

5.0 Staffing

- 5.1 The Council has an annual target of an average of 6 days per FTE for sickness absence (the target being 3 days at end of Q2). The outturn for sickness absence at Q2 2020/21 was 2.15 days for Q2 compared to the same period last year which averaged 3.71 days.

Despite the additional strain on staff workload in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been good progress in demonstrating a decrease in sickness absence.

- 5.2 There have been a number of contributing factors which have seen a decrease in staff absence including staff wellbeing initiatives launched during Q2 and increased home working allowing staff to work from home when they may have reported in sick had they needed to attend the office. A reduced commute to the office has also seen many staff report a positive wellbeing impact, the work to assist the wellbeing of staff throughout this challenging time is extensive and continues.
- 5.3 The covid-19 pandemic cannot be ignored in relation to sickness absence and during Q2 2020/21 the staffing numbers relating to those testing positive/self-isolating are shown in Table 4. The current situation did not adversely affect service delivery during this period.

Table 4: Staffing Absence in Q2 reporting period

Staffing Absence	Q2 2020/21
Number of staff tested positive for Covid-19 and could continue to work from home	1
Number of staff tested positive for Covid-19 and could not work from home	0
Number of staff self-isolating and could continue to work from home	8
Number of staff self-isolating and could not work from home	8

6.0 Authorisations made under Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act

- 6.1 The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) governs the use of covert surveillance by public authorities. Local authorities are only permitted to carry out covert surveillance for the purposes of preventing or detecting crime, or preventing disorder and only where such action is necessary, proportionate, justified and compatible with human rights. Since 1 November 2012 local authorities have been required to obtain judicial approval prior to using covert surveillance. Additionally, since this date local authority use of directed surveillance under RIPA has been limited to the investigation of crimes which attract a six month or more custodial sentence, with the exception of offences relating to the underage sale of alcohol and tobacco.
- 6.2 Under the legislation it is the responsibility of the designated Senior Responsible Officer, which for the Council is the Director of Governance & Organisational Development, to ensure regular reports to Members on the Council's use of RIPA powers. The Council's usage of covert surveillance has always been low and it should be noted that there have been NO authorisations of covert surveillance by the Council for several years.
- 6.3 The last inspection of the Council's use of RIPA took place on 20 April 2016 by the Office of Surveillance Commissioner. We anticipated a "desktop"/ virtual inspection during October rather than a visit from a member of the inspectorate, and whilst a "desktop" inspection is not possible, a virtual inspection will take place on 30 November. The delay has been caused by Covid-19 pressures and restrictions.

7.0 Equalities Implications

7.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

8.0 Digital Implications

8.1 There are no direct digital implications relating to this report, however it is noted that the ICT and Digital services Business Unit has supported the delivery of the progress of activities against the Community Plan; provided telephony support for the operation of the customer contact centre; provided the technological ability for staff to work from home and supported the facility to live stream Council Committee meetings which are all elements covered in this report.

9.0 Financial Implications (FIN20-21/9972)

9.1 Revenue Current Year/Future Year

A separate report relating to budgetary performance will be submitted by Financial Services to this Committee.

9.2 Capital Implications

There are no separate financial implications arising from the information presented in this report. Financial implications for individual activities under each objective will be the subject of separate reports.

10.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

10.1 This report provides an overview of progress against activities within Community Plan and includes reference to all of the objectives in this document.

11.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the report content be noted and considered by the Committee.

Reason for Recommendation

To enable the Committee to proactively monitor and manage achievement of the Council's objectives as set out in the Community Plan.

Background Papers

Community Plan (2019 -2023) (updated February 2020)

For further information, please contact Natalie Cook, Transformation Manager on ext 5275.

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