

5. PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2017/18

REPORT OF: HEAD OF CORPORATE RESOURCES
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Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: No
Report to: Cabinet
16 October 2017

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides the Cabinet with information about the Council's performance for the first quarter of 2017/18 from April to June 2017. It uses the new bundle of performance indicators previously agreed for monitoring in 2017/18. The report also provides a progress update on the Council's flagship activities, identified in the 2017/18 Corporate Plan.

Summary





2. Performance in the first quarter of 2017/18 has been good overall, with most services performing at or close to target. In the small number of cases where service targets are not being fully met, the reasons are clearly understood and appropriate action is being taken

Recommendations

3. **The Cabinet is recommended to note the Council's performance and progress on flagship activities in the first quarter of 2017/18 and identify any areas where further reporting or information is required.**
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Introduction





4. This report has previously been considered by the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Resources and Economic Growth at their meeting on 13th September. Issues raised by the Committee are set out in paragraphs 60 to 64.
5. One of the functions of the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Resources and Economic Growth is to regularly monitor the performance of the Council's services, with a view to determining whether any additional scrutiny is required of services, particularly if performance is not of a satisfactory level. To do this, the Committee is provided with performance information on a quarterly basis.
6. Performance information is presented in a standard format across all services using the new bundles of performance indicators agreed for 2017/18. Performance measures have been developed to capture the core areas of each service. Where possible a target is set for the year against which performance is measured. Some performance measures do not have targets as these measures are "health indicators" and for monitoring purposes only.
7. Performance information for the first quarter is provided at Appendix A. This is set out in tabular form using a traffic light system as explained below:

-  red – 10 percent or more off target
-  amber – slightly off target (less than 10 percent)
-  green – on or exceeding target
-  health check - indicator for information only

8. The Committee also has responsibility for monitoring progress with the flagship activities in the Corporate Plan for 2017/18. Progress in the first quarter is reported at Appendix B.

Overall Performance

9. Performance has continued to be good across the Council in the first quarter, with a small number of exceptions of which more details are provided later in the report. The first quarter position in comparison with the previous financial year is summarised below:

Quarter 1	 Green	 Amber	 Red	 Health check	Total
2017/18	32 (76%)	4 (10%)	6 (14%)	14	56
2016/17	29 (74%)	7 (18%)	3 (8%)	10	49

10. Not all aspects of the Council's work can be measured by formal indicators and in some cases the Council has little or no influence over performance. Therefore this work is measured using health check indicators which are outlined in Appendix A. These are intended to provide Members with a holistic view of the Council's work.
11. Appendix A shows the new bundle of performance indicators agreed by the Committee for 2017/18 and includes the following new indicators:
- Monthly customer satisfaction scores
 - Percentage of enquiries resolved at point of contact
 - Average time for answering all calls to the contact centre
 - Number of compliments received
 - Number of e-forms submitted directly by the public
 - Number of households assisted to access the private rented sector. This is a measure of the Council's homelessness prevention activity.
 - The average time that households are spending in temporary accommodation.
 - Cancellation rate of Penalty Charge Notices. This is a measure of Parking Services' performance for on-street parking in relation to the Service Level Agreement with West Sussex County Council.
 - Percentage of planning appeals allowed.
 - The number of subscriptions to the green waste service.

Performance meeting or exceeding targets (green)

12. Of the 42 indicators with targets, 32 met or exceeded their target. This has been achieved despite increased volumes of work in key areas. This section of the report provides more information about some of these performance achievements.

Percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 10 days of receipt

13. Performance in the first quarter of 2017/18 was 96.6% compared to the target of 95%. This relates to 1,281 out of the 1,326 invoices received paid within 10 days or receipt. Performance in the same quarter of last year was 98.4% out of the 1,369 invoices received paid within the target period. This indicator continues to be a high priority for the Council in supporting small businesses, where cash flow can be critical to their economic health.

Percentage of Council Tax collected

14. Council Tax collection was at 30% in the first quarter and above the target of 29.90%, with £29,331,816 collected. This compares to the first quarter of 2016/17 when the collection rate was 30.1% and £27,825,686 collected. In cash terms the amount of Council Tax collected has increased by £1,506,130.

The percentage of rent due collected

15. In the first quarter of 2017/18 99% of the rent due was collected, which was above the target of 97%. The amount of rent collected was £383,733. This compares to a collection rate of 99% in quarter 1 of last year, with £308,055 collected. Making best use of the Council's land and commercial property holdings is one of the Council's flagship activities and further information about this service is included at Appendix B.

Average waiting time to speak to customer services officer

16. This is one of the new indicators and refers to the average waiting time in seconds to speak to a customer services officer for all services in the Customer Contact Centre, including the switchboard. Calls are answered in the Contact Centre for nine Council services direct lines, including Building Control, Electoral Services, Parking Services and Waste Management. Performance in the first quarter of 2017/18 was at the target level of an average of 30 seconds. There were 24,187 calls answered in the quarter, compared to 26,824 in the same period last year.

Percentage of enquiries resolved at first point of contact

17. This is another new indicator for customer services. Accessing the service at first point of contact is measured through the proportion of the automatic forms available on our website successfully submitted and telephone enquiries resolved first time. Performance in the first quarter was 76% against the target of 75% and relates to analysis of forms only. Work is underway to establish data to monitor the telephone calls. Improving our customer service with more enquiries dealt with at the first point of contact is one of the Council's flagship activities and further information is included at Appendix B.

Monthly customer satisfaction scores and number of compliments received

18. A further new customer services indicator introduced this year is the monthly customer satisfaction score. This is being measured by calling back a sample of customers who had previously called the Contact Centre to gain their feedback on how they felt that the call had been dealt with. Feedback from those surveyed has been 100% positive. Further information is included at Appendix B.
19. In addition to surveys of customers, the number of compliments received is also an indicator of customer satisfaction. There were 78 compliments received in the first quarter. The main services in receipt of compliments were

- Development Control = 30
- Customer Services and Communications = 25
- Waste Management = 14
- Building Control = 2
- Landscapes = 2

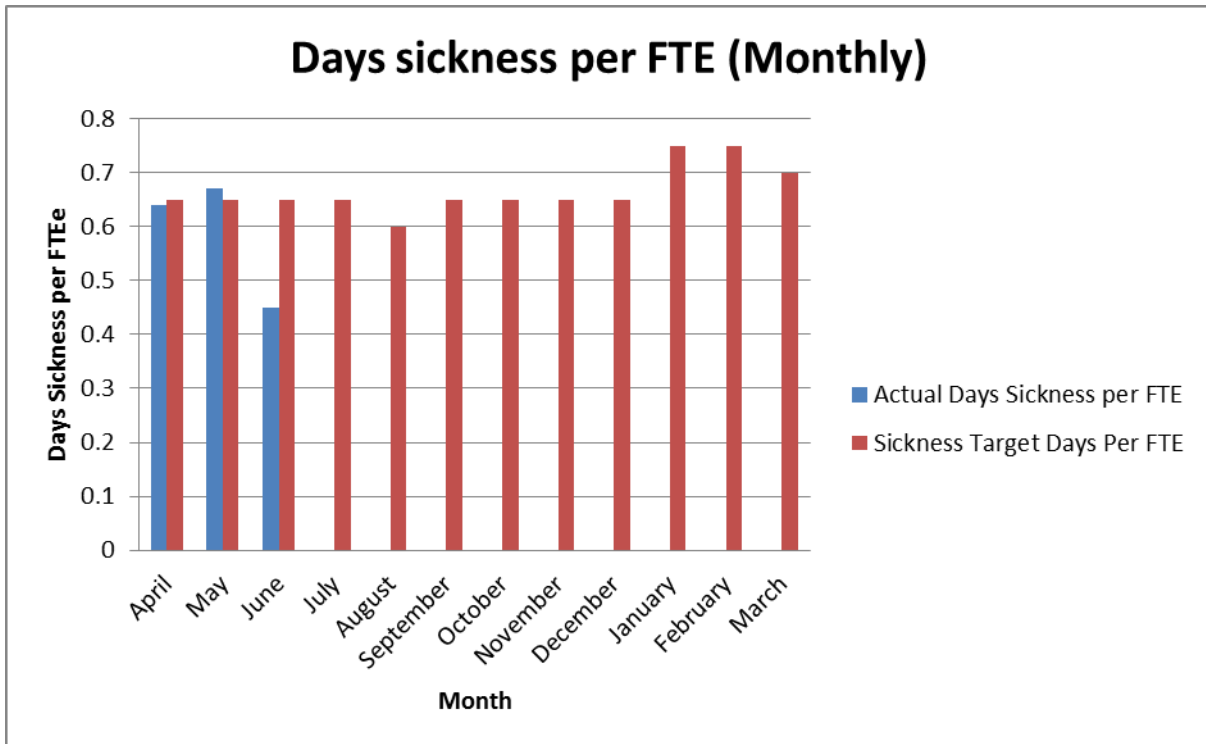
Number of e-forms submitted directly by the public

20. Increasingly digitising our services to make them more customer friendly by improving efficiency is another of the Council’s flagship activities and this is a measure of the Council’s progress with its digital communications. There were 7,912 e-forms submitted directly by the public in the first quarter against the target of 7,374. Further information is included at Appendix B.

Staff sickness absence rate

21. This was 1.59 days in the first quarter compared to a target of 1.95 days. The number of medium and long-term absences have reduced over the quarter, although there are four ongoing absences currently. This is an improvement on the sickness absence figure in Quarter 1 2016/17, which was 1.83 days per full-time equivalent member of staff. Improved performance is also the result of back to work interviews and promoting the availability of support to staff through measures such as the Employee Assistance Programme.

Figure 1 below shows the monthly figures for sickness rates against the target.



Staff turnover

22. Staff turnover in the first quarter of the year was 2.5% compared to the target of 3.7%. This is an improvement on the first quarter of 2016/17 when the turnover rate was 5.8%. Staff turnover can be affected by a number of factors, many of which are out of the control of the Council such as the state of the local economy and job market. The 2.5% turnover rate refers to eight voluntary leavers. Exit interviews continue to indicate a range of reasons for departure were as follows:
- Personal reason – three people left for roles in the private sector; one moved to another local authority; two did not disclose their next role; one employee departed following a period of maternity leave and one person retired.

The percentage of ICT help desk service requests completed within the target time agreed with the customer and % of ICT helpdesk calls outstanding

23. In the first quarter of 2017/18, 96% of the 1,309 service requests received were completed within the agreed time against the target of 87%. This is an improvement on the same quarter last year when performance was at 95% in relation to 1,675 service requests. The percentage of ICT calls outstanding in quarter 1 of 2017/18 was at 15% against the target of 20%, which is the same level of performance as the previous year.

The number of visits made to the Leisure Centres and Civic Halls

24. The number of visits to the Council's Leisure Centres and halls continues to exceed targets, with 480,201 visits in quarter one compared to the target of 436,471. This is a reflection of the improvements to the Leisure Centres arising from the investment made by the Council and Places for People since they became our leisure management partner in 2014. The Annual Report on the Leisure Management contract went to the Scrutiny Committee for Customer Services and Service Delivery Committee meeting on 5th July 2017. The delivery of improvements to the leisure centres is one of the Council's flagship activities and further information is included at Appendix B.

Amount of waste per household which is disposed of in landfill sites (kilos)

25. The amount of landfill waste per household was 108.24 kgs in the first quarter of 2017/18 and better than the target of 117 kgs. Waste minimisation is closely linked to the Council's efforts to increase the levels of recycling, which are referred to below.

Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting.

26. The first quarter performance was at 45% compared to the target of 43%. This is an improvement on the figure for the first quarter of 2016/17, which was 42.4%. Improved performance is partly due to the increase in the amount of green waste that has been composted. The number of subscriptions to the green waste service is now a separate performance indicator and flagship activity,- see Appendix B for more information. The Council's Recycling Quality project has also contributed to the increase in recycling through an educational programme aimed at encouraging residents to minimise their waste and recycle effectively.

Parking Services performance

27. Performance in repairing car parking machines within the target time of 2 days was at 99% against the target of 97%. No faults were reported following the introduction of

the new £1 coin. One of the new indicators for this year is the cancellation rate of penalty charge notices. There is an Enforcement Service Level Agreement in place with West Sussex County Council that sets a target of a 9% cancellation rate, which was achieved in the first quarter. Please see paragraph 54 for more information on this service.

Environmental Health service requests that are responded to within five working days

28. Service requests responded to within 5 working days was on the target at 97% in the first quarter of 2017/18, relating to 1,076 out of 1,106. This compares to performance of 98% in the first quarter of last year when 1,044 service requests were received- an increase of 6%. This is a challenging target, especially in busy periods. Requests for service cover the range of Environmental Health activities, including licensing, housing standards, environmental protection and food hygiene. Please see paragraph 48 for more information on this service.

Number of health and wellbeing interventions

29. The wellbeing service supports and advises people who wish to make improvement to their lifestyle, such as losing weight, taking more exercise, improving their diet, reducing alcohol consumption or stopping smoking. The service delivered 505 interventions in the first quarter of 2017/18 against the target of 350. Providing an effective Wellbeing Service that helps residents to make healthy lifestyle choices is one of the Council's flagship activities for 2017/18 and further information is included in appendix B.
30. Of the people who responded to requests for feedback in quarter one, 93% of those assisted by the Wellbeing service reported a health improvement against a target of 75%. These calls are made 3 months after the intervention to monitor whether the intervention has led to a sustained improvement.

Number of households accepted as homeless

31. At seven, the number accepted as homeless by the Council is better than the target of 15 for the first quarter of the year. The long term expectation is that the numbers approaching the Council for advice and assistance will increase due to demand for affordable housing and the implications of welfare reforms.
32. The Housing Needs Team are preparing for the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act, which comes into effect from April 2018. Preparations include the introduction of an improved Choice-Based Letting system with an integrated Homelessness and Advice Management system, compliant with the requirements of the Act.

Number of households living in temporary accommodation

33. The numbers in temporary accommodation stood at 47 at the end of June. This compares to 51 at the end of the first quarter of 2016/17. Overall, we are anticipating an increased need for the Council to make use of temporary accommodation. This is a reflection of factors previously reported including the difficulties in accessing properties in the private rented sector and a lack of available Housing Association properties. This will be closely monitored throughout the year.
34. Where the Council does make use of temporary accommodation, the aim is to ensure that households so placed are supported in their efforts to secure longer term housing to minimise the time they spend in temporary accommodation. The Housing Needs

Team are using Homelessness Grant funding to employ a Temporary Accommodation and Homelessness Prevention Officer to assist with this aim. One of the new indicators monitored by the Scrutiny Committee is the average time that households are spending in temporary accommodation. At the end of quarter one, this was 38 weeks, compared with 27 weeks in quarter one of the previous year.

Number of households assisted to access the private rented sector

35. This was at 28 compared to the target of 21 for the first quarter of 2017/18. The Housing Needs Team provides assistance to access private rented sector accommodation through initiatives such as the Council's Rent in Advance and Deposit Guarantee Scheme, which helps those without sufficient funds to rent privately.

Building Control site inspections carried out within 24 hours of the date requested

36. The Building Control Team achieved the target of 98% of site inspections carried out within 24 hours of the date requested in quarter one of 2017/18. This related to 1,711 site inspections. Performance was at the same level in quarter one of last year, when the number of site inspection was 1,604. The number of inspections has increased by 7%. Please see paragraph 54 for further information about this service.

Processing of planning applications

37. The speed of determining planning applications remains good, with targets exceeded for majors, minors and other planning applications. The number of applications processed in quarter 1 was 668, compared to 701 in the same period of 2016/17.
38. During the first quarter of the year, all sixteen major planning applications were processed within the target of 13 weeks (or within an agreed extension of time), so the target of 79% was exceeded. This compares to quarter one of 2016/17, when there were 7 major applications processed.
39. For processing of minor applications, performance was at 96% compared to the target of 84%. This relates to 98 out of 102 minor applications processed within 8 weeks. This compares to quarter one of 2016/17, when there were 96 minor applications processed.
40. 327 out of 329 "other" applications were processed within 8 weeks, which represents performance of 99% against the target of 94%. "Other" planning applications refers mainly to residential development by householders. This compares to quarter 1 of 2016/17, when there were 312 minor applications processed.
41. One of the new indicators reported for 2017/18 is the level of appeals allowed against the refusal of planning permission. Performance in the first quarter was 29% against the target of 33%.

Validation of planning applications within 5 working days

42. In order to support Development Management in meeting their targets for processing planning applications, the Council aims to validate planning applications within 5 working days of submission in 98% of cases. Performance in the first quarter of 2017/18 was at the target level of 98% and relates to 829 applications. This compares to 2016/17 when performance was at 95%, with 784 applications received. Performance has improved despite a 6% increase in the volume of applications.

The percentage of Local Authority Searches replied to within 5 working days

43. Performance in the first quarter of 2017/18 was at 97% compared to the target of 96%. This relates to 663 searches. Performance in the first quarter of 2016/17 was also 97%, with 710 searches received. The reduction in searches is a reflection of the housing market. The Council’s share of the searches market compared with the private sector companies has remained constant.

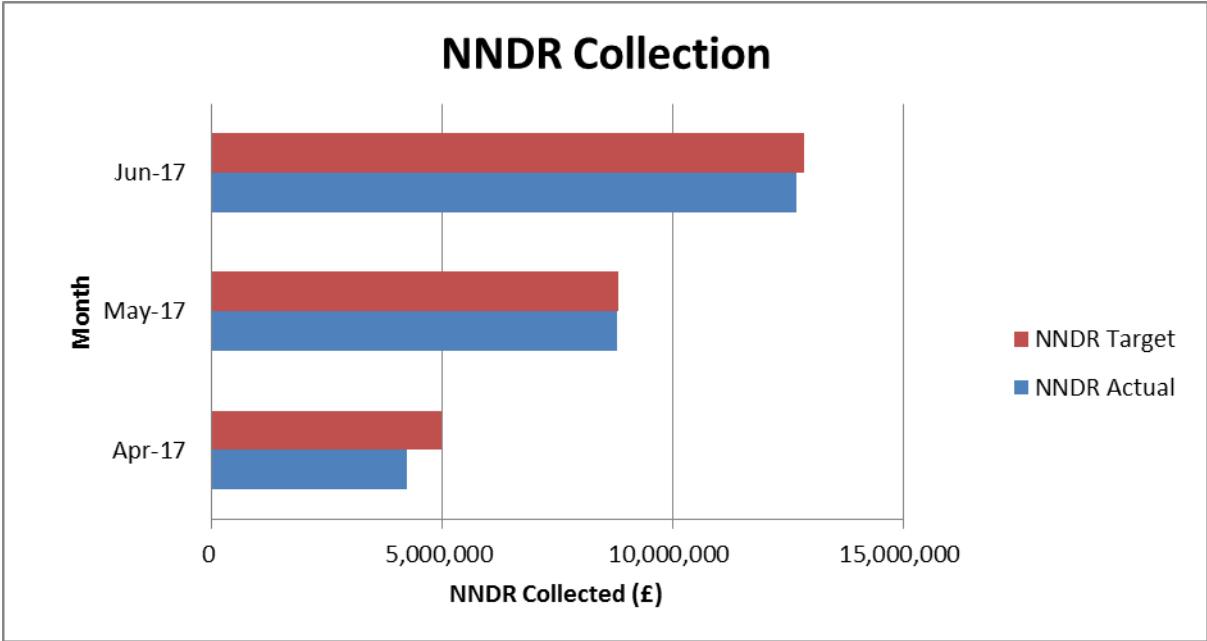
Performance slightly below target (amber)

44. Four of the indicators fell only slightly below (within 10%) their targets in the first quarter of 2017/18. Information about these is set out in this section of the report.

Percentage of Non-Domestic Rates Collected

45. Collection of Non-Domestic Rates at the end of the first quarter had reached 27.8% against the target of 28.1%. The amount collected in the first quarter is broadly comparable to the same period last year- £12,700,366 compared to £12,892,479 in the first quarter of 2016/17. There has been a revaluation of business properties for 2017/18 and there is a transitional relief scheme in place to limit the increases in rates that businesses will face.

Figure 2 below shows monthly collection against targets for the first quarter



Percentage of complaints responded to within published deadlines

46. 96% of complaints were dealt with within the deadline, compared to the target of 100%. Generally the deadline is to acknowledge complaints within 5 working days and deal with them within a further 10 working days. Two complaints were acknowledged outside of the 5 working days in May due to a particularly busy period for the Contact Centre. There were 65 complaints received in the first quarter, compared to 50 in the first quarter of the previous year. The breakdown of the main services in receipt of complaints is as follows:

- CenSus Revenues 21
- Waste and Outdoor Services 15
- Landscapes 7
- Benefits 5
- Parking 4
- Development Management 3
- Legal, Member Services and Elections 3

Ethnic Minority representation in the workforce

47. The percentage of employees from ethnic minorities was 4.9% at the end of quarter one compared to the target of 5.0%. Performance against this indicator can vary quite substantially on the basis of one or two staff joining or leaving the Council's employment.

Proportion of Environmental Health service requests which are actioned and resolved within 3 months of receipt

48. Performance in the first quarter of 2017/18 was 91% compared to the target of 96%. This represents 576 out of 633 service requests. Performance in the first quarter of last year was 94%, with 584 out of 621 service requests resolved within 3 months. Additional staff resources have been allocated to environmental health in 2017/18 in recognition of their increased work demands. There has also been an emphasis on ensuring that service requests are responded to within 5 working days referred to in paragraph 28.

Performance not achieving targets (red)

49. There were six performance indicators in the first quarter of 2017/18 that were 10% or more below target.

Speed of processing new claims and change of circumstances for Housing and Council Tax Support Claims

50. For new Housing Benefit Claims the average speed of processing in quarter one was 21 days compared to the target of 18 days. For Council Tax Support claims the average was 23 days compared to the target of 20 days. The number of claims processed has increased on the same quarter last year by 12% (381 to 426) for new Housing Benefit claims and 13% (405 to 457) for new Council Tax Support claims.
51. For Housing Benefit changes of circumstances the average speed of processing was 12 days compared to the target of 7 days. For Council Tax Support change of circumstances, performance was 11 days compared to the target of 10 days. The number of changes of circumstances processed has increased on the same quarter last year by 5% (5,499 to 5,791) for Housing Benefit and by 17% (4,169 to 4,895) for Council Tax Support.
52. There are a number of reasons the Benefits Team are missing their targets in the first quarter of the year in addition to the increases in work volumes. These are
- The continued emphasis on dealing with changes of circumstances over new claims in order to avoid potential loss of subsidy from benefit overpayments. There has also been a change in procedure, with the requirement for a mandatory action sheet being completed in all cases.

- A serious failure by the Royal Mail to deliver post sent to a new PO Box number (we are awaiting the outcome of an official complaint). This involved delays with the delivery of some 3,000 items of post, which has taken some time to deal with.
- A temporary dip in staff morale following the announcement of Horsham's intention to leave the Census Partnership.
- There are normally greater volumes of correspondence and changes of circumstances received at the start of the financial year, which takes some time to catch up.

53. Performance has shown some improvement since the end of the quarter, with the average speed of processing change of circumstances in July for both Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support at 9 days. The average speed of processing new Housing Benefit claims has improved to 19 days in July and for Council Tax Support remains at 23 days.

The percentage of enquiries relating to enforcements within Parking Services which are dealt with within 10 days.

54. This was at 65% for the first quarter compared to the target of 100%. The number of enquiries dealt with was 901 compared to 818 in the same quarter last year, an increase of 10%. The reduced level of performance has been caused by staff vacancies and the training of new staff, together with this increase in the number of enquiries. These staffing issues were overcome at the end of June and it is expected that performance will return to the target level for the remainder of the year. Performance in July was at 99%.

The percentage of plans received by Building Control which are checked within 15 working days

55. Performance was at 75% for quarter one of 2017/18 compared to the target of 87%. This relates to 353 plans checked. In the first quarter of 2016/17, performance was 93% with 324 plans checked- an increase of 9%. The higher volume of applications, both full plans and building notices, has contributed to the target not being met. There has also been an emphasis on ensuring that site visits are carried swiftly to meet customer expectations. Building Control income is 15% up on budgets.

Progress to Flagship Activities for 2017/18

56. Proposals for monitoring and reporting progress with the flagship activities associated with the Corporate Plan for 2017/18 have previously been agreed. The first quarter progress report is included at Appendix B.
57. All of the flagship activities are progressing, although current projections for the number of new affordable homes enabled suggest that the target to enable the provision of 200 new affordable homes will not be achieved by the end of the financial year. This is due to a delay to start on site on a number of the schemes. It is the developer and the market that determines the speed of affordable housing delivery. Please see Appendix B for further information on projections.
58. So far this year, 39 new affordable homes have been delivered, with 20 for rent and the remainder shared ownership. Two of the new units are wheelchair accessible. 34 are in rural parishes with 10 in Lindfield Rural, 5 at Pease Pottage, 5 in Hurstpierpoint, 2 in Pyecombe and 2 in Ansty. The remaining 5 are in Burgess Hill.

Conclusions

59. The Council's services continued to perform well in the first Quarter of 2017/18 despite increases in workload in many services areas. Where performance is below target, corrective action aimed at improvement has been planned and is being delivered. Good progress has also been made with the flagship activities for 2017/18.

Consideration of the Performance Report by the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Resources and Economic Growth on 13th September 2017

60. The Committee discussed Council Tax collection and the implications for the Council's resources of the increased housing numbers in the District Plan. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Growth confirmed that this would increase the tax base, but there would be additional costs involved for the Council for example in providing services to an expanded number of households. Managing this housing growth will not be cost free and there will be difficulties in influencing the pace of delivery.
61. The Committee asked about performance in dealing with benefits applications and the action plan for disaggregation of the Census partnership. The Head of Digital and Customer Services set out the work being undertaken to set up the Council's own Revenues and Benefits service, which offers the opportunity to provide a more resilient service. First quarter Benefit's performance had been especially affected by the delay in post from the new PO Box number. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Growth echoed these points and highlighted the recent improvement in performance.
62. The reduced projection for the number of affordable homes likely to be delivered in the District in 2017/18 was discussed. The Assistant Chief Executive stated that there are a large number of affordable housing units with planning permission, but the exact timing of delivery is out of the Council's control. The Council is looking at the possibility of using its own land for enabling the provision of new affordable housing. The Leader confirmed that the delivery of more affordable homes remains one of the Council's priorities.
63. The Assistant Chief Executive responded to a question from the Committee about the reasons for homelessness acceptances and numbers in temporary accommodation currently being on target. She explained that this was a consequence of both improved handling of cases and the level of housing need in the first quarter, which had a seasonal aspect. The Assistant Chief Executive stated that dealing with housing need in the District is likely to become more challenging, given the expected implication of welfare reform and the Homelessness Reduction Act. This will be the subject of a report to the November meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Community, Housing and Planning.
64. The rate of collection of Non-Domestic Rates was discussed and whether this reflected the state of the local economy. It was confirmed that this was not a reflection of the local economy. It was noted that there was a national trend of reduced collection rates caused by such factors as the option for businesses to pay over 12 instalments, which delays the recovery of debts. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Members for Resources and Economic Growth emphasised that the indicator measures in year collection and that over 13 months virtually all of the rates due are collected. He mentioned that the Council is using its grants programmes to assist local businesses, for example through the micro business grant scheme and new Local Discretionary Relief Scheme for those adversely affected by the revaluation.

Risk Management Implications

65. There are no risk management implications. Performance across the Council was seen as a strategic risk in the past but the Council has a proven track record in performance management and it is no longer seen as a risk.

Equalities Implications

66. There are no direct equality implications contained within this report. Equality impact assessments are undertaken within each individual service.

Financial Implications

67. There are no direct financial implications contained within this report.

Background papers

None.