

7. PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2017/18

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

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides the Cabinet with information about the Council's performance for the second quarter from July to September 2017. It uses the bundle of performance indicators previously agreed for monitoring in 2017/18. The report also updates on progress with the Council's flagship activities identified in the 2017/18 Corporate Plan.

Summary





2. Performance in the second 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 for this are clearly understood and appropriate action is being taken

Recommendations

3. **The Cabinet is recommended to note the Council's performance and progress with flagship activities in the second 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 8 November. Issues raised by the Committee are set out in paragraphs 59 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 by the Committee 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 checks" and for monitoring purposes only.
7. Performance information for the second 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 second quarter is reported at Appendix B.

Overall Performance

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

Quarter 2	 Green	 Amber	 Red	 Health check	Total
2017/18	31 (74%)	6 (14%)	5 (12%)	14	56
2016/17	31 (79%)	6 (15%)	2 (5%)	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.

Performance meeting or exceeding targets (green)

11. Of the 42 indicators with targets, 31 met or exceeded their target. This section of the report provides more information about some of these performance achievements.

Percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 10 days of receipt

12. Performance in the second quarter of 2017/18 was 98.56% compared to the target of 95%. This relates to 1,237 out of the 1,255 invoices received paid within 10 days or receipt. Performance in the same quarter of last year was 98.02% out of the 1,154 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.

Speed of processing change of circumstances for Council Tax Support claims

13. The average speed of processing Council Tax speed of processing in quarter 2 was 9 days. This is better than the target of 10 days and an improvement on the quarter 1 figure of 11 days. The number of changes of circumstances processed has increased on the same quarter last year by 4%- 3,656 to 3,798. Further information on the Benefits Service is included in paragraphs 50 to 53.

Percentage of Council Tax collected

14. Council Tax collection was at 57.70% in the second quarter and at the target level with £56,441.263 collected. This compares to the second quarter of 2016/17 when the collection rate was 57.80% and £53,516.224 collected. In cash terms the amount of Council Tax collected has increased by £2,925,039.

The percentage of rent due collected

15. In the second quarter of 2017/18 99% of the rent due was collected, which was above the target of 97%. The amount of rent collected was £595,643. This compares to a collection rate of 98% in quarter 2 of last year, with £372,642 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 indicator refers to the average waiting time in seconds to speak to a customer services officer for all services in the Customer Services Centre, including the switchboard. Calls are answered in the Centre for nine Council services direct lines, including Building Control, Electoral Services, Parking Services and Waste Management. Performance in the second quarter of 2017/18 was 22 seconds compared to the target level of an average of 30 seconds. There were 22,932 calls answered in the quarter, compared to 24,970 in the same period last year.

Percentage of enquiries resolved at first point of contact

17. 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 second quarter was 91% against the target of 75% and relates to analysis of forms only. Work is being undertaken 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.

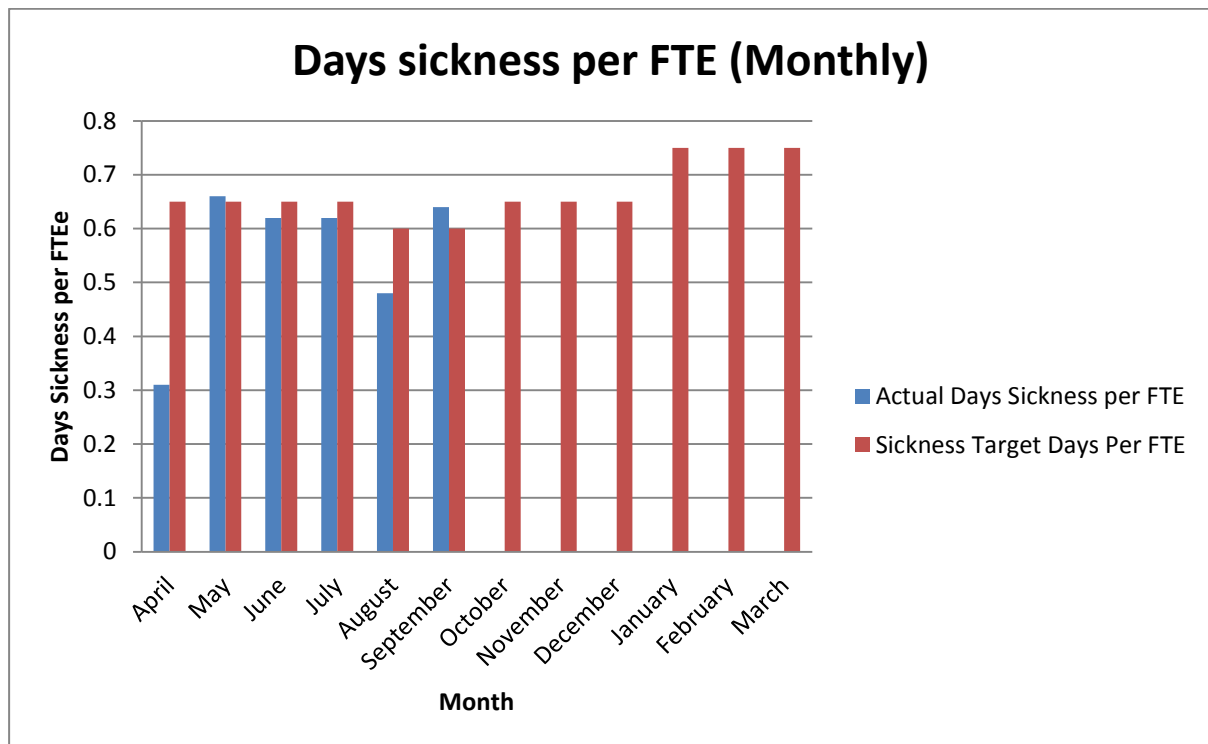
Monthly customer satisfaction scores and number of compliments received

18. Customer satisfaction is being measured by calling back a sample of customers who had previously called the Customer Services Centre to gain their feedback on how they felt that the call had been dealt with. Feedback from those surveyed was 96% positive. Callers surveyed had contacted the Council regarding a variety of services including refuse collection, parking, revenues, benefits and pest control. 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 71 compliments received in the second quarter. The main services in receipt of compliments were
- Customer Services and Communications = 24
 - Development Control = 22
 - Waste Management = 16
 - Environmental Health = 2
 - Landscapes = 2

Staff sickness absence rate

20. This was 3.33 days in the second quarter compared to a target of 3.80 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 2 2016/17, which was 4.09 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

21. Staff turnover to the second quarter of the year was 6.35% compared to the target of 7.5%. This is an improvement on the similar period in 2016/17 when the turnover rate was 8.66%. 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 6.35% turnover rate refers to 20 voluntary leavers. Exit interviews continue to indicate a range of reasons for departure as follows:

- Personal 5 (3 of these from CenSus left for roles at Adur District Council following that Council's departure from the partnership and another two left for unknown personal reasons)
- Career progression 3 (1 left for the Civil Service; another for freelance work; and another for a Council that was closer to home and a more senior position)
- Travel/location 2 (1 of these moved to France)
- University/College 1
- Retirement 1

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

22. In the second quarter of 2017/18, 95% of the 1,537 service requests received were completed within the agreed time against the target of 87%. This is the same level of performance as the second quarter of last year when there were 1,474 service requests. The percentage of ICT calls outstanding in quarter 2 of 2017/18 was at 7% against the target of 20%, which is better than the previous year performance of 18%.

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

23. The number of visits to the Council's Leisure Centres and halls continues to exceed targets, with 458,170 visits in quarter two compared to the target of 421,461. 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 the Council's management partner in 2014. The delivery of improvements to the leisure centres is one of the Council's flagship activities and further information on progress is included at Appendix B.

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

24. This was 109.09 kgs in the second quarter of 2017/18 compared to the target of 117 kg. This equates to an average of 36.36kg per household per month. Waste minimisation is closely linked to the Council's efforts to increase the levels of recycling, which are referred to in paragraph 46.

Parking Services performance

25. Performance in repairing car parking machines within the target time of 2 days was 100% against the target of 97%. All of our machines have been adapted to cease accepting the old £1 coins. The Car Parking Service has an Enforcement Service Level Agreement in place with West Sussex County Council, which sets a target of a 9% cancellation rate for Fixed Penalty Notices. This was at 8% in quarter two compared to the target of 9%. The Parking Services Annual Review 2016/17 was considered by the Scrutiny Committee for Customer Services and Service Delivery on 11th October. Please see paragraph 46 for more information on this service.

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

26. Service requests responded to within 5 working days was 99% in the second quarter and above the target of 97%, with 1,153 requests received. This compares to performance of 97 % in the second quarter of last year when 1,078 service requests were received- an increase of 7%. 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

27. 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 433 interventions in the second 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 regarding recent activity is included in appendix B.
28. Of the people who responded to requests for feedback in quarter two, 89% 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

29. At seven, the number accepted as homeless by the Council is better than the target for the second quarter of the year of 15. The long term expectation is that the numbers approaching the Council for advice and assistance will increase due to demand for affordable housing, the implications of welfare reforms such as Universal Credit and the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act from April 2018. This and the need for temporary accommodation are being kept under close review and was the subject of a report to the Scrutiny Committee for Community, Housing and Planning on 14 November.

Number of households living in temporary accommodation

30. The number of households in temporary accommodation was 53 at the end of September. This compares to 51 at the end of the second 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 to the Committee including the difficulties in accessing properties in the private rented sector and a lack of available Housing Association properties.
31. Where the Council does make use of temporary accommodation, the aim is to ensure that households are supported to secure longer term housing to minimise the time they spend in temporary accommodation. The Housing Needs Team have recruited a Temporary Accommodation and Homelessness Prevention Officer to assist with this aim using Homelessness Grant funding. At the end of quarter two, the average time that households are spending in temporary accommodation was 33 weeks, down from 38 weeks in quarter one.

Number of households assisted to access the private rented sector

32. This was at the target level of 21 in the second 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

33. The Building Control Team achieved the target of 98% of site inspections carried out within 24 hours of the date requested in quarter two of 2017/18. This related to 1,988 site inspections. Performance was at the same level in quarter two of last year, when the number of site inspection was 2,089. Please see paragraph 55 for further information about this service.

Processing of planning applications

34. 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 2 was 680, compared to 697 in the same period of 2016/17.
35. During the second quarter of the year, major planning applications processed within the target of 13 weeks (or within an agreed extension of time) was 92%, compared to the target of 79%. This relates to 12 out of 13 applications. This compares to quarter two of 2016/17, when there were 19 major applications processed.

36. For processing minor applications, performance was at 99% compared to the target of 84%. This relates to 134 out of 136 minor applications processed within 8 weeks. This compares to quarter two of 2016/17, when there were 109 minor applications processed.
37. 285 out of 290 “other” applications were processed within 8 weeks, which represents performance of 98% against the target of 94%. “Other” planning applications refers mainly to residential development by householders. This compares to quarter two of 2016/17, when there were 332 other applications processed.
38. A measure of the quality of planning decisions made is the level of appeals allowed against the refusal of planning permission. Performance in the second quarter was 25% against the target of 33%. The Government has recently carried out consultation on the 2018/19 Local Government Finance Settlement, suggesting that the level of New Homes Bonus received by local authorities could be linked to the quality of planning decisions as measured by the level of appeals.

Validation of planning applications within 5 working days

39. 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 second quarter of 2017/18 was above the target at 99% and relates to 761 applications. This compares to the second quarter of 2016/17 when performance was at 97%, with 784 applications received.

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

40. Performance in the second quarter of 2017/18 was at 99% compared to the target of 96%. This relates to 585 searches. Performance in the second quarter of 2016/17 was 98%, with 649 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.

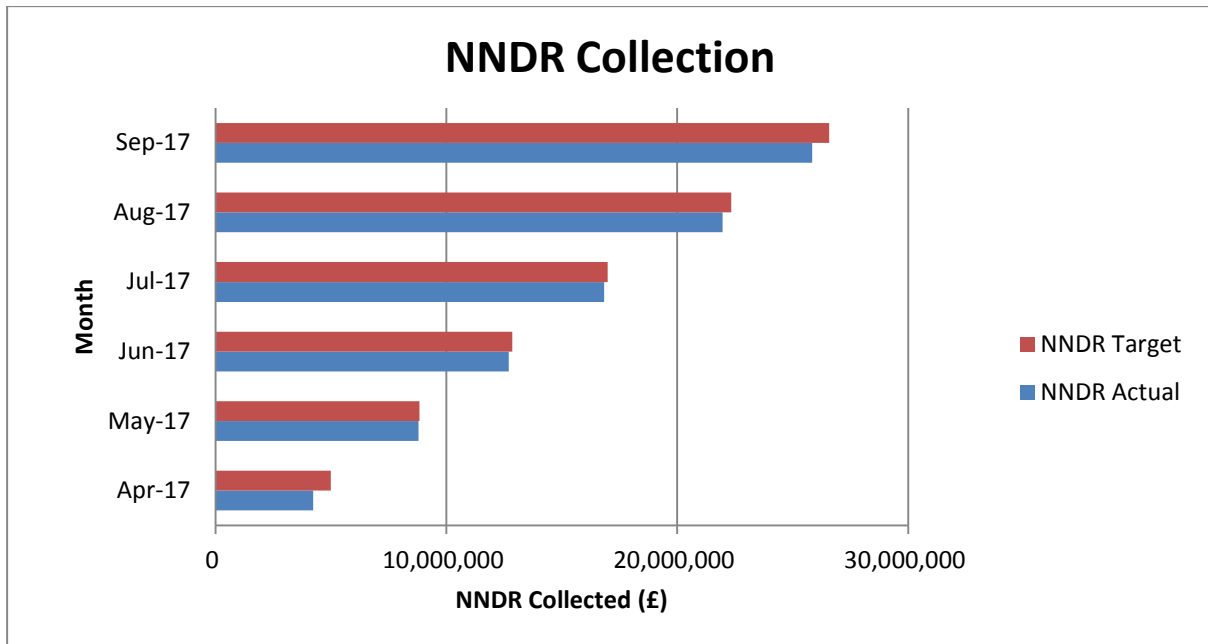
Performance slightly below target (amber)

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

Percentage of Non-Domestic Rates Collected

42. Collection of Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) at the end of the second quarter had reached 56.06% against the target of 57.65%. As reported previously, analysis of our collection procedures shows no obvious reasons for this and NDR collection is down across Sussex and large parts of the country. The amount collected in the second quarter is broadly comparable to the same period last year- £25,847,413 compared to £26,045,778 in the second 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. The Council has also introduced its own Local Discretionary Relief Scheme targeted at small and medium sized independent businesses. Further details are included at Appendix B.

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



Number of e-forms submitted directly by the public

43. 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 6,999 e-forms submitted directly by the public in the second quarter against the target of 7,374. Further information is included at Appendix B.

Percentage of complaints responded to within published deadlines

44. 98% 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. One complaint was dealt with outside of the deadline in August. There were 67 complaints received in the second quarter, compared to 58 in the same period of the previous year. A breakdown of the main services in receipt of complaints in quarter 2 is as follows:

- CenSus Revenues 16
- Waste and Outdoor Services 15
- Landscapes 15
- Benefits 5
- Development Management 4
- Corporate Facilities Management 4
- Legal, Member Services and Elections 2
- Environmental Health 2
- Parking 2

45. The 2016/17 Overview of Complaints Report is being considered by the Scrutiny Committee for Customer Service and Service Delivery at their meeting on 22 November. This provides information about the complaints received by the Council, including those referred to the Local Government Ombudsman.

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

46. The combined dry recycling and green waste figure for quarter 2 was 42.7%, slightly down on the target of 43%. A decrease in the collected tonnage of dry recycling occurred in the quarter and green waste also saw a decrease of 40 tonnes. However, the number of green waste subscribers is still increasing and stands at 17,548. Ongoing work continues to improve the quality and quantity of recycling collected, with a specific focus on communal bins.

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

47. This was at 99% for the second quarter compared to the target of 100%, relating to 825 items of correspondence out of 832. There has been an improvement since the first quarter, when performance was at 65% caused by a period of staff vacancies. The number of enquiries dealt with was 832 compared to 861 in the same quarter last year.

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

48. Performance in the second quarter of 2017/18 was 93% compared to the target of 96%. This represents 600 out of 644 service requests. Performance in the second quarter of last year was 95%, with 655 out of 687 service requests resolved within 3 months. Additional staff resources have been allocated to environmental health in 2017/18 and there has been an emphasis on ensuring that service requests are responded to within 5 working days referred to in paragraph 25.

Performance not achieving targets (red)

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

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

50. For new Housing Benefit Claims the average speed of processing in quarter two was 21 days compared to the target of 18 days. For Council Tax Support claims the average was 24 days compared to the target of 20 days. The number of claims processed is broadly comparable to the same quarter last year 383 in quarter 2 this year compared to 378 in 2016/17 for new Housing Benefit claims and 406 compared to 420 in quarter 2 last year for new Council Tax Support claims.
51. For Housing Benefit changes of circumstances the average speed of processing was 10 days compared to the target of 7 days. The number of Housing Benefit changes of circumstances processed has increased on the same quarter last year by 5%- 4,244 to 4,465.
52. There are a number of reasons for the Benefits Team missing some of their targets in the second quarter of the year. These are:
- A temporary dip in staff morale following the announcement of the impending end of the Census Partnership, the potential loss of a number of posts and a number of key senior staff changes.
 - Time taken by staff to attend meetings and discuss key changes to prepare for how Mid Sussex District Council takes its Benefits Service forward.
 - The greater emphasis on accuracy of processing rather than throughput to protect Housing Benefit subsidy for the Council.

53. It should be noted that whilst the target for processing Housing Benefit claims has not been met, the Council is still within the latest available national average figure of 22 days for 2016/17. A number of steps are being looked at to improve performance and team morale, including working with the Department of Work and Pensions Performance Development Team, as well as preparing for the roll out in our district of the full service of Universal Credit on 14 March 2018.

Ethnic Minority representation in the workforce

54. The percentage of employees from ethnic minorities was 4.1% at the end of quarter two 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.

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

55. Performance was at 64% for quarter two of 2017/18 compared to the target of 87%. This relates to 337 plans checked. In the second quarter of 2016/17, performance was 89% with 312 plans checked- an increase of 8%. The higher volume of applications, both full plans and building notices, has contributed to the target not being met and performance in July was affected by staff sickness and leave. There has been a continued emphasis on ensuring that site visits are carried out swiftly to meet customer expectations. Building Control income is 20% up on budgets.

Progress to Flagship Activities for 2017/18

56. Progress with the flagship activities in the second quarter is reported in Appendix B. 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. The speed of delivery of affordable housing is determined by the developer and the market. We expect the shortfall units to be delivered in 2018/19. Please see Appendix B for further information.
57. So far this year, 61 new affordable homes have been delivered, with 41 for rent and the remainder shared ownership. Two of the new units are wheelchair accessible. 49 are in rural parishes with 20 in Lindfield Rural, 15 at Crawley Down, 5 at Pease Pottage, 5 in Hurstpierpoint, 2 in Pyecombe and 2 in Ansty. The remaining 12 are in Burgess Hill. We estimate that a further 44 new affordable homes will be completed in 2017/18.

Conclusions

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

Consideration of the Performance Report by the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Resources and Economic Growth on 8 November 2017

59. The Committee discussed the performance of the Benefits Service in the speed of processing of new applications and changes of circumstances. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Growth set out progress with the disaggregation of the Census partnership and the work being undertaken to set up the Council's own Revenues and Benefits service. This offered the opportunity to provide a more resilient service, with a greater emphasis on the accuracy of processing. Improvements to the speed and accuracy of processing would also come from more self-service and digital service delivery. The Head of Corporate Services mentioned new management arrangements for the service including a Revenues and Benefits Transition Manager from Wealden District Council.
60. The Committee commented on the value of the work of the Wellbeing Team to public health and the uncertainty about the future funding of the service from West Sussex County Council. The Cabinet Member for Community agreed that it would be preferable to have a longer term funding agreement with the County Council. He emphasised the value of the preventative work of the service in delivering savings to the NHS from improved physical and mental health.
61. Improvements to the leisure centres were commended and the record numbers of attendances and membership. The Leader highlighted that the District had three quality leisure centres and acknowledged the challenges faced by the Council in delivering leisure services to a growing population. Further investment is planned with proposals for additional improvements to the Dolphin and Triangle centres being considered at the next meeting of Scrutiny Committee for Customer Services.
62. It was confirmed to the Committee that the increased levels of rent collected in the quarter reflected income from the Orchards Shopping Centre. The Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Growth acknowledged the importance of the Council sustaining a good level of return on its investment. He reported a healthy position with the Centre's current lettings and mentioned plans to review its management arrangements.
63. Progress with the redevelopment of East Grinstead town centre was discussed. It was noted that development was likely to be wider than the former Martell's site in Queens Walk referred to in the report. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Growth emphasised that the Council role in the town centre's redevelopment was not as the primary landowner, but in granting appropriate planning applications and providing co-ordination.
64. The Committee was concerned by the references in the report to the recent Government consultation on proposals to link the level of New Homes Bonus to the performance of local authorities in planning appeals. It was confirmed that the Council's response to the consultation had strongly opposed these proposals.

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.