

Agenda Item	18
Report No	EDI/80/19

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Environment, Development and Infrastructure

Date: 7 November 2019

Report Title: Community Services Performance Report
1 April 2019 to 30 September 2019

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Customer and Communities

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides information on how Community Services performed in relation to performance indicators for the period 1 April 2019 to 30 September 2019. Where data for the quarter is not yet available, the most up to date information is provided, covering Q1, 2019/20.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are invited to scrutinise the information provided on performance for the period 1 April 2019 to 30 September 2019.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource - There are no financial implications arising from this report. Budget savings are reported separately to Committee. Issues relating to improving wellbeing in the workforce are currently being explored with further reports to be prepared for Members.

3.2 Legal - There are no new legal implications arising from this report.

3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) - Many of the services provided are universal services, affecting all households in Highland. Geographic analysis of performance across all indicators is not currently available but will be explored as the Council develops its place-based strategy. This work can learn from the local reporting of housing performance to local committees. Equalities impacts are highlighted in relation to the age of the workforce.

3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever - Performance regarding household waste management is included in the report. This shows that during the past 12 months we have diverted nearly 6000 tonnes of household residual waste away from landfill due to our energy from waste agreements with other bodies. This reduces the amount of

harmful gas emissions, contributing to our climate change mitigation.

3.5 Risk - Risk is managed through regular review and reporting to allow corrective action to be taken if necessary.

3.6 Gaelic - There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

4. Workforce Context

4.1 Service performance needs to be considered in the context of the Council's resources. The most important resource for the Service is its workforce. As reported in the revenue monitoring budget report, a projected underspend of around £1m arises from not filling vacant posts. This has an impact on service performance.

4.2 The workforce continues to reduce: comparing Q2 last year with Q2 this year there has been a 4% reduction in staff. Vacancies continue to be held, although a number of driver vacancies are now being filled.

4.3 Further work is underway to understand the workforce issues in the Service better and compared to other Services in the Council. This is helping identify the support and actions required to enable staff to be well and to perform well at work. To date this has included understanding patterns of grievance and disciplinary cases, considering how to support our relatively older and manual workforce with additional health surveillance and taking steps to support teams reporting high levels of stress.

4.4 A briefing on the Service is planned for the proposed Member seminar on 13th November. This will include analysis of workforce issues.

5. Compliments and Complaints

5.1 Compliments

In Q2 the Service received 43 compliments covering the full range of services we deliver. Compliments are passed to the relevant manager to share with their team.

5.2 Complaints

In Q2 the Service received 162 complaints categorised for front line resolution and 78 complaints requiring investigation. Because of changes to the way the complaints are categorised it is not accurate to compare last year with this year by category, however the overall number of complaints received has reduced from Q2 last year when 271 were logged, compared to 240 in Q2 this year. The complaints are broken down by function; 106 relating to housing and repairs, 85 relating to amenities, 75 relating to roads and 5 associated with performance and resources.

5.2.1 The time taken to respond to complaints is shown below.

Table 1

	Target	2019/20				2018/19				2017/18			
		Q4	Q3	Q2	Q1	Q4	Q3	Q2	Q1	Q4	Q3	Q2	Q1
Frontline Resolution (5 days)	70%			47.4	40.6	41.9	36.1	41.6	42.0	48.6	42.0	42.0	40.6
Requiring Investigation (20 days)	70%			67.5	63.3	50	62.5	66.7	68.4	75.0	68.8	62.5	77.3

5.2.2 In the last quarter staff working in the customer services team have been working with

officers with a backlog of complaints to try and reduce overdue responses. The data in the table above does show some improvement in reaching the target response times but further improvement is required so this practice will continue and be rolled out further.

5.3

Feedback from the Citizens' Panel on the annual survey of performance and attitudes is reported to Council in October 2019. Feedback on public perception of community services will be considered by the service management team and will be included in future reports to Committee.

6. Staff Absence

6.1 Table 2 records performance against the absence target for the Service.

Table 2

Average days lost/employee	2019/20				2018/19				2017/18			
	Q4	Q3	Q2	Q1	Q4	Q3	Q2	Q1	Q4	Q3	Q2	Q1
Days				3.61	4.3	3.3	3.2	2.9	3.9	3.5	3.8	3.1

6.2 The number of short-term absences has reduced slightly from 44 in Q4 to 42 in Q1. Long term absences have reduced from 180 in Q4 to 167 in Q1.

6.3 The profile of staff across the Service shows a relatively older workforce as well as a higher proportion of manual workers. These present particular challenges to reducing long term absences, however new ways to support staff are being explored. The Service attempts to keep absences as low as possible and focuses on the importance of return to work interviews. The use of the Occupational Health Service facilitates keeping staff at work if an early intervention is possible, as well as advising on return to work following a period of longer-term absence.

7. Waste Management

7.1

Table 3

	Target	2019/20		2018/19				2017/18			
		Qtr 2	Qtr 1	Qtr 4	Qtr 3	Qtr 2	Qtr 1	Qtr 4	Qtr 3	Qtr 2	Qtr 1
Household Waste – Collected (Tonnes)	36500	33937	33228	28382	29653	34819	35751	27439	28832	34993	36778
Household Waste – Composted %	15%	18.3	15.6	6.9	10.0	13.6	14.3	5.5	10.1	13.7	15.6
Household Waste – Recycled %	35%	27.4	30.1	32.5	31.2	31.2	30.5	31.2	29.2	31.6	32.6
Total Composted and Recycled %	50%	45.7	45.7	39.4	41.2	44.8	44.8	36.6	39.3	45.3	48.2

7.2 The tonnage of household waste collected in Q2 has seen a 2.5% decrease compared to the same period last year. This comprises a decrease of residual waste of around 850t and 65t decrease in total recycled including composting for the same period last year.

7.3 There has been a decrease of around 1320 tonnes of residual household waste for the 12 month period to September 2019. The annual tonnage recycled has increased by 2.4% with 1250t more collected compared to the period to September 2019.

7.4 The twelve month household recycling rate is now 43.2% (1.4% more than this time last year). Highland Council's rate dropped from 44.5% in 2016 to 43.6% in 2017 and 42.7% in 2018. However, during the past 12 months we have diverted nearly 6000

	Qtr 4	Qtr 4	Qtr 3	Qtr 3	Qtr 2	Qtr 2	Qtr 1	Qtr 1
Grounds					86%	434	84%	427
Public Conveniences					91%	120	72%	89

10. Road defects (potholes)

10.1 The table below states the response times used for road defects recorded in the asset management system.

Table 6

Category	Description	Response
1	Immediate / imminent hazard or risk of short term structural deterioration.	Immediate action to protect public if necessary. At least temporary repair within 24 hours ⁽¹⁾ .
2H	High level of hazard or risk.	7 days
2M	Medium level of hazard or risk.	21 days
2L	Low level of hazard or risk.	42 days
3	Negligible impact	Annual planned work as resources permit.

Note (1): 24 hours will be interpreted as the end of the following day.

10.3 The risk matrix in the table below is derived from the national guidance 'Well-maintained Highways: Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management', which is used to determine the level of risk for category 2 defects. Inspectors use their training and experience to determine which category a defect should be given.

10.4 Impact: the extent of damage likely to be caused should the risk become an incident. Probability: the likelihood of users encountering the risk.

Table 7

Probability	Low	Medium	High
Negligible	2L	2L	2L
Low	2L	2M	2M
Noticeable	2M	2H	2H
High	2M	2H	1

10.5 The following table shows the number of pothole instructions per defect response category for Qtr 2.

Table 8

	2019/20 – Qtr 2					
	Defect Response Category					
	Total	1	2H	2M	2L	3
Number of pothole instructions created	788	8	72	395	304	9

10.6 The following table shows the total number of instructions for each Quarter.

Table 9

	2019/20		2018/19				2017/18			
	Qtr 2	Qtr 1	Qtr 4	Qtr 3	Qtr 2	Qtr 1	Qtr 4	Qtr 3	Qtr 2	Qtr 1
Number of pothole instructions created	788	1048	1028	667	491	992	1318	552	286	294
Number of pothole instructions completed	326	206	397	552	305	426	544	204	194	265

- 10.7 As to be expected, the number of instructions raised has fallen since Q1. However, there is an increase in those raised in the same quarter in previous years. As explained in 10.1, the number of repairs undertaken is likely to be higher than the number of instructions closed.
- 10.8 The Service has invested in spray injection technology by purchasing a specialised vehicle to effect a more durable pothole repair. The repairs undertaken by this vehicle are not recorded electronically in the asset management database but using its own tracking software. Currently, we are unable to electronically match the repairs undertaken by the machine to defects recorded in the database due to the accuracy of GPS. Closing works instructions will continue to be a manual process. The Service will continue to investigate methods as emerging technology becomes available.

11. Sample Inspection Figures

- 11.1 Under Section 131 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991, road works authorities are empowered to carry out inspections to check whether or not undertakers have complied with the duties placed on them in respect of working on and reinstating the road. A number of different categories of inspections can be carried out and Sample Inspections allow the road authority to establish the overall performance of each undertaker operating in its area. The process involves inspection of a structured random sample of works at various stages during the works and reinstatement guarantee period. The number of works to be sampled is calculated using an agreed formula and is based on the average number of works carried out by each undertaker over the previous 3 years. The undertakers, who are charged for each inspection carried out, have to agree the sample figure at the start of each financial year. The target is to inspect 100% of the total allowable Sample Inspections agreed annually.
- 11.2 The table below shows the number of sample inspections carried out per Quarter. In Qtr 2 the target has been exceeded.

Table 10

	2019/20			
	Qtr 4	Qtr 3	Qtr 2	Qtr 1
Number of sample inspections undertaken			214	185
Target number of inspections	194	194	188	178
% of total target completed to date			53	26

12. Works Notices Issued on the Scottish Road Works Register

- 12.1 The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991, as amended by the Transport (Scotland)

Act 2005, provides a legislative framework for all works on roads in Scotland. The Act places a duty on roads authorities to co-ordinate all works in the road. In order to discharge this duty, it is necessary for roads authorities and undertakers to notify their works on the road by registering them on the Scottish Road Works Register, the keeper of which is the Scottish Road Works Commissioner. The Commissioner also takes an interest in the volume of noticing carried out on the Register by both the roads authorities and the undertakers. All works which involve occupation of the road for more than 20 minutes, or excavation of the road, require to be entered onto the register. Although there is no specific target for the number of notices issued, the Commissioner will benchmark Highland against other rural authorities.

- 12.2 The table below shows the notices issued per Quarter (for Works Phases Commenced) for road works by Highland Council. Qtr 1 shows a slight increase from the same period in 2018/19 but is lower than Qtr 4. This is because the number of notices issued will vary from quarter to quarter depending on scale of works, one off programmes e.g. installation of bus stop signs, weather and environmental factors such as flooding, holiday periods and other influences.

Table 11

	2019/20				2018/19			
	Qtr 4	Qtr 3	Qtr 2	Qtr 1	Qtr 4	Qtr 3	Qtr 2	Qtr 1
Number of notices issued			268	262	299	224	264	258

13. Fleet, Hire and Travel Desk Performance

- 13.1 Table 12 shows that if the corporate data for Qtr 2 is sustained throughout the year we can expect a considerable reduction in travel requests this year. Reinforcing the Travel Hierarchy will reduce the need to travel in many cases.

Table 12

	2019/20 (to date)	2018/19	2017/18
Number of requests	1821	6,299	7,700
% of requests approved by manager within 5 days of receipt from the traveller	99%	98%	98%
% of requests processed by the Travel Desk within 2 days of approval of the manager	95%	84%	90%
% of requests processed by the Travel Desk in time for travel	100%	99%	100%

- 13.2 The new plant hire process went live in August. The aim of the new process is to reduce spend and ensure compliance across a range of requirements. The new system means that staff on the ground can quickly request to hire items, obtain quick budget holder approval and receive an automated response from the hire portal at the various stages of their request. From a budget holder perspective, they are able to see the various items their team have on hire, their locations, the duration of the hires and the expected total spend. A future phase will be to develop 'real time' visibility of plant hire spend trend against managers allocated plant hire budget, so they are able to see at a glance whether or not they are expected to go overbudget – creating an opportunity for them to change their plant hire habits before this happens.

13.3 To date, the process has received positive feedback from management and service staff. In 2018/19 the over-spend on plant hire was £894k, spread across different teams and budgets; however the over-spend at Q2 has fallen to £224k. There will be some winter related hire costs to be accounted for in Q3 but the introduction of the new process and monthly monitoring will support improved compliance and continue the reduction in the overspend.

14.1 **Operator Compliance Risk Score (OCRS)**

14.2 The Council requires an Operator Licence to operate its heavy goods vehicles. The licence is issued by the Road Traffic Commissioner.

14.3 The OCRS system is based on information collected by the Driver and Vehicles Standard Agency (DVSA) over a 3-year rolling period and uses information taken from annual tests, roadside inspections and inspections at operators' premises. It measures operators in 2 areas of compliance:

14.4 Roadworthiness - Vehicle tests (first tests, subsequent annual tests); 'vehicle encounters' (fleet check inspections at operator premises, roadside inspections)

14.5 Traffic - Roadside inspections and prosecutions (for example, for drivers' hours and tachograph offences, weighing checks)

14.6 Operators are banded according to risk. Green is for operators considered low risk, amber for operators considered medium risk, and red for operators considered high risk.

14.7 **Table 13**

	2019/20			
Period	Q4	Q3	Q2	Q1
OCRS				

14.8 We will continue to ensure that:

- the right vehicles appear on our licence and are maintained on time;
- our vehicles are always maintained to a high standard;
- we follow all relevant laws, regulations and rules; and
- ensure that any failures at test and prohibitions issued are investigated.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Customer and Communities

Date: 29 October 2019

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