

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Overview and Scrutiny
DATE: 16 September 2021
CONTACT OFFICER: Associate Director, Strategy & Improvement
WARD(S): All

PART I **FOR COMMENT**

PERFORMANCE & PROJECTS REPORT: QUARTER 1 2021/22

Purpose of Report

To provide Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the latest performance information for the 2021/22 financial year as measured by:

- The corporate balanced scorecard indicators during 2021/22.
- An update on the progress of the 15 projects on the portfolio, which are graded according to project magnitude as gold (8) and silver (7).

Recommendation:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to note the Council's current performance as measured by the performance indicators within the balanced scorecard and the progress status of the gold projects.

1 Background

- 1.1 This is the quarter 1 report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee reporting on the 2021/22 financial year in respect of the performance position of the Council.
- 1.2 Please refer to the attached corporate performance report, which summarises progress against the Council's priorities in quarter 1 of the financial year 2021/22.

Corporate Balanced Scorecard

- 1.3 This is the first reporting on the key performance indicators from the 2021/22 corporate balanced scorecard. Following an end of year review, the following five indicators were removed from the corporate balanced scorecard as reviewed at the Q4 Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in June 2021:
 - Attainment gap between disadvantaged children and all others at Key Stage 4
 - Young people's happiness
 - Percentage of reception aged children classified as overweight including obese
 - Total crime rate per 1,000 population
 - SBC staff survey: percentage of staff rate working for the council as either good or excellent

- 1.4 2021/22 target ranges have been assigned for the majority of indicators with the exception of four indicators. These have been agreed by the lead Group Managers and included in this report.
- 1.5 Due to uncertainty caused by Covid-19 the following four indicators do not include year-end targets:
- Number of adults managing their care and support via a direct payment
 - Number of homeless households accommodated by SBC in temporary accommodation
 - Business Rates in-year collection rate
 - Council Tax in-year collection rate
- 1.6 Due to the pandemic a number of underlying data sources have not been updated for a considerable time. This means that in two cases the indicator on the scorecard is not accurately capturing recent performance. The indicators impacted by a delay in external data source updates are:
- Percentage attainment gap between all children and bottom 20% at Early Years Foundation Stage
 - Percentage attainment gap between all children and bottom 20% at Key Stage 2
- 1.7 Overall, for Q1 the strategic performance picture remains variable, which is consistent with the position as reported at the end of Q4. There are some indicator-specific movements, which are detailed within this report.
- 1.8 Overall, 47% (7) of the 15 key performance indicators (KPIs) with agreed targets are performing either at or better than target. 33% (5) indicators are performing marginally worse than target, and 20% (3) indicators are performing below the red KPI threshold.
- 1.9 In relation to overall trend, performance has improved since last quarter for 58% (11) of the 19 KPIs, remained the same for 5% (1) and declined for 37% (7).
- 1.10 Key changes this quarter:
- 1.10.□.1 We saw a reduction in the percentage of children protection plans started in the past quarter that were repeat plans within 2 years from 10.7% (9 children) to 9.9% (7 children), this relates to 3 families.
- 1.10.□.2 Referrals for adults managing their care and support via a direct payment reduced dramatically during 2020/21 due to pressure to the pandemic resource, with only 80 being received into the Purchasing Personal Budget Team (PPBT) compared to 145 the previous year. Direct Payment Officers often assisted their colleagues in the Purchasing function taking them away from their direct payment duties. They were also unable to carry out face to face visits which gives service users more confidence in asking questions, exploring DPs and taking up the DP offer when able to meet someone from the team rather than through telephone communications. We've started to see improvements in Q1, with 588 adults managing their care and support via a direct payment compared to 583 in Q4. This includes 52 new referrals in Q1.

- 1.10.□.3 The NHS targeted health check programme was paused nationally as per directive from the Department of Health due to the pandemic. As a result, during the first three quarters of 2020/21, rates were low both locally and nationally. However, during Q4, Slough used an innovative approach to incorporate NHS health checks with the vaccination programme which has worked well, hence the Slough rate for Q4 at 1.6% is well above the national rate of 0.4% and South East rate of 0.3%. We continue to work with our primary care and community provider to keep the focus on NHS Health Checks as a priority to support COVID recovery.
- 1.10.□.4 During quarter 1 we saw an improvement in the average inspection score of 3.00 resulting in the average grade improving from a grade B to a grade A. A reduction in staff COVID absences enabled a full service to be deployed across the board. As a result, we had the manpower to keep on top of litter within the Borough.
- 1.10.□.5 We saw a small improvement this quarter with households in TA marginally reduce from 414 households at the end of Q4 to 410 households at the end of Q1. However, this is well above the 370 households from Q1 2020/21. Although there had been a freeze on evictions through the courts during the pandemic, there has been a significant number of referrals of single homeless households in response to the government's 'everyone in' campaign. There is now a lift on evictions and therefore expected to be a rise in homeless households presenting due to the previous ban which lasted for 14 months. These restrictions ended on 31st May 2021.
- 1.10.□.6 The number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) licences shows a steady increase from previous quarter from 267 to 281 properties. The enforcement of the requirement for all HMOs to be licensed requires proactive, unannounced visits to properties with unknown occupants so naturally the housing regulation team's activity in this area has been severely restricted by the Covid lockdown which began in early January. None the less we have managed to steadily increase the number of mandatory licensed HMOs by writing to landlords and reminding them of the requirement to licence. We have initiated prosecution proceedings against one landlord that failed to licence their property, though those proceedings are yet to be concluded. We have also issued financial penalties to another two landlords for failing to licence their properties. As restrictions are now being eased and officers that are currently shielding move closer to returning to work it is anticipated that there will be a significant increase in the number of licence applications in 2021/22 as the officers begin to accelerate their enforcement activity.

1.11 Key areas for review this quarter:

- 1.11.□.1 The percentage of young people not in education, training or employment (NEET) & Not Known rate for 2020/21 increased to 4.4% from 4.2% the previous year but remains below the national average of 5.5% and South East average of 6.4%. Slough placed in the 2nd quartile nationally, ranked 57th out of 152 LA's. One of the most significant factors influencing the increase was the complexity across the NEET cohort, with young people needing longer term support to move into a positive education, employment or training destination. The pandemic has also impacted the availability of apprenticeships and jobs. As part of the 'Our Futures' transformation programme the team supporting NEETs

and those at risk of becoming NEET in Slough moved to the Early Help hub in Apr-2021. The focus remains on supporting young people of Slough.

- 1.11.□.2 The pandemic led to unprecedented decreases in activity levels and as a result, over one in three residents locally (35.5%) compared to one in four nationally (27.1%) were reported as not participating in at least 30 mins of sport at moderate intensity at least once a week. 2020/21 was obviously impacted heavily by the COVID-19 pandemic. Notwithstanding this, however, we launched Chalvey Can to support and engage with families in Chalvey with high levels of physical inactivity and other health and socio-economic issues. Currently we are working with over 40 families plus a number of individual residents. We were also able to move the Active Slough programme online and featured our local instructors providing guided sessions throughout the day, reaching over 8,500 people through this programme. Unfortunately, although we tried to use virtual engagement to maintain the Breaking Boundaries project this proved very difficult therefore the project was suspended and re-opened in June 2021.
- 1.11.□.3 We saw a 1.7% reduction in the overall recycling rate from 24.6% in Q4 2019/2020 to 22.9% Q4 2020/21 and is well below the national average rate of 37.1%. As expected during the winter period, there was a decrease in garden waste. In comparison to last year, we have collected around 1,000 tonnes more residual waste, with only an increase of around 200 tonnes in recycling, leading to an overall reduced rate for Q4. However, zero waste was sent to landfill as we incinerate all non-recyclable waste.
- 1.11.□.4 As part of the 'Our Futures' programme the structure of the neighbourhood enforcement changed, creating a new team with a borough wide focus on neighbourhood enforcement. The Resilience and Enforcement team (REA) work closely with our Housing team to drive forward changes that focus on tackling the most complex, difficult and long-standing issues of crime, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and enviro-crime across the Borough. During Q1, we received over 1,100 service requests of which 206 (18.7%) took more than 90 days to close. This is an improvement from Q4 of 301 taking more than 90 days to close. The top 3 requests received were for vehicles, noise and fly tipping. A large proportion of the cases taking longer to close transferred across through the restructure. These have either been actioned but not closed on the system or due to the level of complexity of the request, require more time to resolve. The team are working to resolve these requests and expect the numbers to level out as we move through the year.
- 1.11.□.5 Despite its past strong economic performance, Slough is one of the top 10 places hardest hit economically by Covid. Although the overall rate is improving, it remains above the national and South East of England average and is the 7th highest rate for 16-64 out of the 63 largest cities and towns. Since the start of the pandemic, the borough has seen a large increase in unemployment with 4,225 more people in Slough claiming benefits due to unemployment which includes an additional 685 young people (16-24) and 1,070 older people (50+). By the end of May, 8,400 claims were made for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ('furlough') and 6,900 claims totalling £17.5m were made for Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS 5).
- 1.11.□.6 At the end of quarter 1 we achieved a business collection rate of 25.0% of the expected in-year total, collecting £20.6m. The collection rate is 1.9% below the same time last year however once the payments for SBC properties have been

applied the rate would be 29.6%. The majority of the SBC accounts were paid in July which will reflect in Q2 collection rate. Retail businesses were given 100% relief for the first three months of the financial year which will reduce to 66% from July onwards, however the payments will not start until August 2021 due to the notice period needed. In addition, other business have not made payments as they see this as unfair. Recovery action has also been slowed by the conditions imposed by the Courts, reducing the number of summonses that can be issued. There will be a much clearer picture of business rates collection at the end of Q2.

- 1.11.□.7 At the end of quarter 1 we achieved a council tax collection rate of 29.3% of the expected in-year total, collecting £22.4m. Although the collection rate is 0.9% (£1.7m) above the same time last year which was impacted by the pandemic as many were furloughed or lost work during this time, the rate is 1.3% below the Q1 rate for 2019/20. Many families remain impacted by loss of income, the furlough scheme drawing to a close and this will impact on current year collection along with resource issues both in SBC and the court. Recovery activity restarted in November 2020, taking into consideration the circumstances of our residents, many of the debts have extended payment arrangements to support our residents and it may take some time for many of residents to be able to clear these arrears. We will continue to collect this debt while being firm but fair in our collection methods and identifying vulnerabilities as necessary.

Project Portfolio

- 1.12 In April 2021 the Executive Board reviewed the Major Projects Portfolio and amended the process. Bronze projects, which were previously reported to Executive Board, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee, will now be managed at a Directorate level as they are lower value and risk.
- 1.13 A set of major projects rates as Gold or Silver were closed because they were completed or merged to strengthen project governance. The refreshed 2021/22 Major Projects portfolio is outlined in Appendix A to this report.
- 1.14 Progress continues on all major schemes and projects. Across the 15 projects on the Major Projects Portfolio, 27% were rated overall as Green (4 projects), 53% were rated overall as Amber (8 projects) and 20% were rated overall as Red (3 projects).
- 1.15 Projects completed or merged with other projects were:
- Central Hotels Project
 - Building Compliance
 - Major Highways Schemes
 - Akzo Nobel
 - Grove Academy
 - Cemetery Extension
 - Census 2021

Options considered

There were no proposed options to consider.

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

3.1.1 There are no financial implications of proposed action.

3.2 Legal implications

3.2.1 There is no statutory duty to report regularly to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Council's performance, however, as a best value authority under the Local Government Act 1999, the Council has a statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Regular reporting of performance can assist the Council to demonstrate best value.

3.3 Risk management implications

3.3.1 There are no risk management implications of proposed action.

3.4 Environmental implications

3.4.1 There are no environmental implications of proposed action.

3.5 Equality implications

3.5.1 The Equality Act 2010 sets out duties for local authorities in relation to equalities, including the public sector equality duty, which requires the Council to have due regard to equality issues when reviewing and changing services. Councils should also collect and review data on service provision to identify gaps in service and whether these impact on certain protected groups to a greater extent than others.

4. Comments of Other Committees

The report will be reviewed by Cabinet on 20 September 2021. Any substantial comments will be included in a verbal presentation to Cabinet.

5 Appendices

'A': Corporate Performance Report Q1 2021/22

6. Background Papers

None