

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FINANCE, INFRASTRUCTURE & IMPROVEMENT

COMMUNITIES PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR QUARTER 3 PLACE CORE DATA SET

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide the Committee with an update of performance for Communities Committee for quarter 3 2021/22 (1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021).

Background

2. The Council's Planning and Performance Framework establishes the approach that the Council takes to planning and managing its performance to deliver effective and responsive services.
3. The Council has agreed that the key measures of its performance will be defined through a number of core data sets which are detailed in its Council Plan and each of its Departmental Strategies. Performance against these core data sets is reported to committee every three months (quarterly) to support the performance management of the delivery of services.
4. Key measures from the existing Council Plan (2017-2021) will continue to be reported until a new Council Plan can be established, and the subsequent core data set agreed upon.
5. At Full Council on November 25th, 2021, the Nottinghamshire Plan 2021-2031 was unanimously agreed. The Nottinghamshire Plan is a new, ambitious plan for the County Council, which sets out the strategic vision for the future of Nottinghamshire and the local authority. The Place Leadership team will begin working on revising performance indicators to support the plan and its ambitions over the coming weeks.

Information and Advice

6. The full Core Data Set is included in Appendix A, and when considering the appendix it should be noted that:
 - The previous figures are for the preceding quarter or financial year (2020/21), although in some cases this is highlighted as not applicable where the data is unavailable for the previous quarter/annual.
 - The appendix also indicates whether the measure is
 - a cumulative measure (C) which shows performance from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022,
 - a measure which is reported annually (A),

- or a measure which only includes the value for the individual quarter
7. The report highlights those core data set measures which have been identified as a risk in the appendix based on the latest performance figures.
 8. The report also acknowledges Inspire, who commenced provision of a range of cultural and learning services from April 2016, including the Council's library services. Supported by the Council, Inspire has implemented a programme of investment to modernise public libraries and develop a range of cultural and learning services on behalf of the Council.

Core Data Set

Libraries

9. The previous performance indicator of number of library visits has been changed to library service engagement and visits as this better reflects the performance of the service and how users engage with it following the introduction of Covid19 restrictions and wider cultural shifts in user habits. The indicator still includes physical library visits, however, now also takes into account website visits, online library catalogue visits, attendance to virtual events, participants to outreach visits, contacts with ASK Inspire and home delivery.
10. For Q3 21/22, the total number of engagement and library visits was 819,700 against a quarterly target of 937,500 (annual target of 3,750,000). These targets have been agreed between Inspire and the Council and reflect a typical year, unaffected by Covid19 restrictions.
11. As to be expected physical visits are still down, which reflects limited customer confidence in utilising public spaces and the slow return to town centres and the high street, whilst virtual interactions continue to be very high. Evidence from across the country suggests that library services in many areas are not yet fully open, whereas in Nottinghamshire all sites are now open in a Covid secure way and largely at pre pandemic opening hours. A breakdown of engagement has been provided:

Engagement with service	Quarterly Target	
283,682 physical visits	575,000	
124,200 website visits	100,000	
392,614 library catalogue visits	250,000	
753 attendance at virtual events	250	
4,885 participants to outreach visits	250	
13,244 contacts with Ask Inspire	11,750	
322 visits for home delivery	250	

Registration Services

12. The General Register Office (GRO) sets a national target of 90% for deaths registered within five days. Internal authority target has not been set for this year due to the pandemic and severe issues experienced with the RON system (registration online). The GRO compliance officer will no doubt look at this again in the coming months, however they have made it clear this is not a priority at the moment.

13. The percentage of deaths registered within five days during the months of October, November and December were 69%, 71% and 74%, respectively, which resulted in quarter 3 outcome of 60% which is a significant increase from quarter 2 figures. The Covid Act is still in place, therefore all deaths are being register over the telephone, however, the service is hugely reliant on hospitals and GP surgeries to send the MCCD (medical certificate cause of death) in a timely manner.
14. The service regularly write to all concerned and asks for their cooperation in this matter but, whilst the Covid act is in place, the service has no control over when MCCD's are received. The Covid Act 2020 will cease at sunset on the 24th March, therefore all death registrations will return to face to face appointments. Amendments to the 1987 regulations enables information to be taken remotely over the telephone for births and deaths, however the informant will still need to attend to 'sign the register in the presence of the registrar'

Trading Standards

15. Trading Standards continues to support those who have lost money to fraud and suggest interventions to reduce any further financial loss. The pandemic continues to have an impact on the way the services functions, with routine home visits not currently taking place, however consumers visits are still going ahead if felt necessary to do so.
16. Yammer, a collaboration tool that helps users of the same organisation connect and engage with one another has been used to create a Yammer group to share Trading Standards public information and resources with other NCC colleagues, this will be followed shortly with some Sharepoint pages.
17. During Q3, 4,632 products were removed from sale, with a total estimated value of £49,690. Not all of the products were withdrawn or recalled due to the services intervention, but the service assisted in all matters. 3,797 of these products were 2 separate types of toys, which have been recalled and could have caused asphyxiation due to choking, strangulation or internal injuries caused by ingestion of button cell batteries.

Communities Service

18. The Communities service's hard work continued via the Community Support Hub, which brought together partners and volunteers to ensure that the vulnerable did not suffer unnecessary hardship due to Covid, from the delivery of essential medicines and food, to supporting mental health through books. This work is continuing and evolving with the demands from communities as they continue to live with the ever present covid risks.
19. A significant number of Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) revenue projects have been adversely impacted by the pandemic (i.e. many projects suspended, cancelled or adapted their activity in response to the COVID-19 restrictions). Consequently, it has been difficult for groups to provide monitoring information for Q3 due to other emergency response priorities & challenges. Therefore, the figure provided is an estimate based on the year 1 monitoring information and makes some assumptions taking into account the information provided by groups regarding suspension/cancellation of their LIS project activity.

Finance Performance

20. The 2021/22 revenue budget for the Communities Committee is £19.894 million. At the end of December 2021, the forecast outturn against this budget is £20.381 million resulting in a forecast overspend of £487,000. A summary of the Communities financial performance is included as Appendix B. The main reasons for forecast under and over-spending are set out below.
21. Culture and Enrichment is forecasting an overspend of £200,000 due to reduced income at Holme Pierrepont Water Sports Centre arising from cancelled/delayed events and reductions in people staying in accommodation, with consequent reduced income from food and beverage sales, resulting from COVID.
22. Registration services are forecasting an underspend of £310,000 due to ceremonies that had to be cancelled due to the pandemic being rescheduled for the current financial year.
23. The Coroner's service is forecasting an overspend of £173,000 due to additional costs largely relating to a backlog of jury inquests which are due to restart in January 2022.
24. Work to confirm the details and costs for the body capacity storage work is concluding and the County Council's share of these costs is estimated to be £179,000..
25. Trading Standards are forecasting an overspend of £77,000 due to expected commercial income being lower than budgeted due to COVID.
26. The Communities team is forecasting an underspend of £737,000 due to reduced spending on the Local Improvement Scheme as there has been no capital bidding round in 2021/22.
27. Catering services are forecasting an overspend of £823,000 reflecting the impact of COVID-19 on the financial performance of the Schools Catering service. The Schools Catering service is forecasting an overspend due to reduced sales of meals, which are about 89% of pre-pandemic levels, and increasing costs due to staffing shortages, and food and fuel prices increases.

Other Options Considered

28. This report is provided as part of the Committee's constitutional requirement to consider performance of all areas within its terms of reference on a quarterly basis. The departmental strategy was agreed on 24 January 2018 and the format and frequency of performance reporting were agreed by Improvement and Change Sub Committee on 12 March 2018. Due to the nature of the report no other options were considered appropriate.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

29. This report is provided as part of the Committee's constitutional requirement to consider performance of areas within its terms of reference on a quarterly basis.

Statutory and Policy Implications

30. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION

31. That Committee endorses the performance and financial outcomes in respect of the Council's services for Communities Committee for the period 1 October to 31 December 2021.

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Constitutional Comments (EP 11/02/2022)

32. The Communities Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of the report. If Committee resolves that any actions are required, it must be satisfied that such actions are within the Committee's terms of reference.

Financial Comments (RWK 27/01/2022)

33. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from the report. The financial performance of the Communities Committee up to the end of Q3 is set out in paragraphs 20 to 27 of the report and in Appendix B.

Background Papers and Published Documents

The performance measures included within appendix A are measures which have previously been included within the performance section of committee reports. These committees are as follows; transport and environment committee, economic development and asset management committee, personnel committee, planning and rights of way committee and finance committee.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All