

# Bolton Council

**Report to:** Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> August 2016

**Report of:** Director of Place

**Report No:** ESSC/07/16a

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**Report Title:** **Departmental Performance Update – Quarter 4 2015/16**

**Confidential / Non Confidential:**  
(delete as approp)

(**Non-Confidential**) This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

**Purpose:**

This report provides the Environmental Services Executive Cabinet Member with an update on Quarter 4, 2015/16 performance and the outturn position as appropriate for the Environmental Services' elements of the Place Department. Additionally, it incorporates the inaugural inclusion of Housing Services as part of the portfolio. It also includes the internal departmental position – please note that internal departmental statistics for Housing Services will be reported in this report from Quarter 1. The services included in this report remain on track to deliver their strategic and operational priorities for the Council. Highlights of the report are:

- 2015/16: 468.69kg household waste collected per household. Recycling rate, 39.11%.
- 5,655 slim bins being used in Bolton in advance of change-over.
- 94% litter pass rate in the annual borough results for the Local Environmental Quality survey.
- Positive outputs as a direct result of additional behaviour change funding.
- 12,000 units installed as part of the LED street-lighting programme.
- 88.5% uptake of free school meals for key stage 1 pupils.
- Demand for affordable housing continues to be high and is being managed well.
- Empty properties have reduced this quarter as a result of joint action between Council Tax services and Housing Standards.

**Recommendations:** The Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the performance update set out in this report.

**Decision:**

**Background Doc(s):**

**Signed:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Leader / Executive Cabinet Member

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Monitoring Officer

**Date:**

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report summarises Quarter 4, 2015/16 performance and the outturn position as appropriate for the Environmental Services' elements of the Place Department. Additionally, it incorporates the inaugural inclusion of Housing Services as part of the portfolio.
- 1.2 Progress is reported against:
- Major strategic priorities.
  - The Department's operational priorities as the provider of a number of large front line and support services - please note that internal departmental statistics for Housing Services will be reported in this report from Quarter 1.

## 2.0 Supporting the Council to deliver its strategic priorities

- 2.1 At a strategic level, the Department supports the Cleaner and Greener Partnership, the BSafe Partnership and the Town Centre Regeneration Programme, as part of the delivery of the Community Strategy. Key progress on strategic priorities is highlighted below.

### 2.2 Waste, Recycling & Fleet Management

#### 2.2.1 Waste, Recycling

The cost of waste disposal in Bolton is expected to rise significantly over the next few years. The introduction of managed weekly waste collections in 2013 was part of a strategic waste diversion programme where the primary aim was to divert waste away from the residual waste stream in addition to increasing recycling rates. Further diversion was required to avoid increasing waste disposal costs and in July 2015 the proposal was approved to **exchange all grey 240 litre wheeled bins for 140 litre wheeled bins**, with the continuation of the same frequency of collections. The exchange will take place between June 2016 and November 2016 and is supported by a behaviour change strategy to prepare residents - including communication, door to door engagement, Slim Your Bin, food waste and recycling campaigns and reducing contamination. Bolton has some of the lowest contamination rates in Greater Manchester but aims to reduce contamination in the burgundy bin and so has appointed a Contamination Officer to work with crews and residents. A new leaflet on **plastic bottle recycling** has been produced to include:

- What plastic bottles can be recycled.
- The types of plastics that Bolton can't recycle.
- Why Bolton can't recycle other plastics.
- What else can go in the burgundy bin.

In the performance year 2015/16:

- 468.69kg **household waste collected per household** - a 4.76kg per household increase when compared with 2014/15.
- The **recycling rate** was 39.11% - a slight increase when compared with 2014/15 (38.9%)

Tonnages collected have been impacted by the increase in street cleaning waste collected as additional resources are put into keeping the borough clean (detailed in 2.3.3.) and a growth in overall waste arisings of 1.6% - however the recycling rate across 2015/16 remained slightly improved when compared with 2014/15. The service remains on track to deliver against its savings and performance targets.

When compared with 2014/15, the service collected:

- 515 tonnes less domestic waste.
- 572 tonnes more food and garden waste.
- 583 tonnes more glass, cans and plastic bottles.
- 359 tonnes more pulpables.

In Quarter 4, 2015/16:

- 354 households swapped to a 140 litre bin - as part of the Slim your Bin campaign – which brought the total of slim bins in Bolton to 5,655.
- 28 roadshows and events took place.
- The spring edition of Bolton Scene promoted why only plastic bottles can be recycled, a new [recycling animation](#), the slim bin being on its way, and the free offer for a water butt converter kit.
- The recycling animation has also been shown at 10 Area Forums, had 1,015 views on YouTube and is being used with schools, community groups and for staff training.
- The Contamination Officer visited 371 properties where crews have reported contaminated bins and spoke with 133 residents, provided information to 179 residents, gave 11 fresh starts and removed 48 abandoned bins.
- The service spent 2 days in the Oxford Grove area in partnership with the Behavioural Change Team (see section 2.3.3.) engaging with residents, providing recycling advice, removing 66 abandoned bins, providing 9 fresh starts and cleaning back streets.

In performance year 2015/16:

- All properties in the borough were door knocked to promote recycling and the introduction of slimmer grey bins. A contact rate of 40% was achieved.
- 21,824 recycling bins delivered.
- 3,590 food waste containers delivered.
- 12,305 missed collections reported – equating to 0.09% of all collections.
- 1,242 waste audits carried out:
  - 1 extra 240 litre grey bin was approved.
  - 195 extra 140 litre grey bins was approved.
  - 243 households were approved to keep the 240 litre grey bin.
  - 118 households were awaiting a second visit.
  - 685 households were given recycling advice.
- 62 roadshows and events took place.
- 2,565 bulky waste collections with 32.31% of waste collected recycled or re-used.

### **2.2.2 Fleet Management**

In 2015/16 a reduction of 132.57 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> was made in the Council's fleet when compared with 2014/15. A reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions helps to minimise pollution and reduces the impact of transport on the environment.

Fleet Management has led on the management and organisation of the latest module of the Drivers' Certificate in Professional Competence (CPC) training which commenced in Quarter 4. The CPC is a nationally delivered driving training qualification which has to be completed by all drivers of vehicles over 3.5 tonnes. It is designed to increase driving competence and professionalism and the

current module on Vehicle Reversing and Manoeuvring was chosen to reduce accidents and insurance claims caused by vehicle manoeuvres.

## 2.3 Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services

### 2.3.1 Neighbourhood Management and Area Working

The service supports the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives of narrowing the gap between the most and least well off in Bolton and ensuring economic prosperity. The service also supports, where possible, other strategic priorities of the Council such as reducing litter and waste and improving recycling rates through the commissioning and delivery of local projects:

- Round Two **Area Forums** took place in Quarter 4 with 419 attendees – a very slight decrease from Round One (421).
- 55% of Area Forums have received the presentation about the introduction of slim bins. Encouraging better **recycling and reducing litter** has been supported by undertaking activities such as door knocking, litter pick events and clean ups. Recycling information and educational resources have been circulated to community venues such as Urban Care and Neighbourhood Centres (UCANs) and to local community groups.
- Halliwell Neighbourhood Management organised a **community walkabout** on 12 March with the 3 Ward Councillors, Environmental Enforcement Officers, the Police, a new voluntary organisation (ABCD) and approximately 80 residents to identify environmental issues in the neighbourhood. As a result of the community walkabout volunteers have signed up to undertake a regular litter pick once a month around Morrisons/Gilnow area starting from July 2016. Morrisons have offered to provide meeting point/refreshments for these volunteers.
- Working in partnership with Bolton Council of Mosques (BCoM) and Faiths for Change, a **clean-up** in Gilnow area was undertaken on 19 March where 50 volunteers helped to clean up the area.
- **Great Lever Connected** (GLC), funded by Great Lever Neighbourhood Management is a group of representatives from different action and community groups in the Great Lever neighbourhood. The GLC centre has now embedded itself in the local community and has developed its own identity. During Quarter 4, approximately 700 local residents have accessed the GLC centre for Job club/drop-in sessions, ESOL classes, Women's groups, BAND, Kashmiri Women's group, community café/drop-in and police information sessions.

### 2.3.2 Greener Bolton

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has agreed the final pieces of work to refurbish the footbridge, footpaths and formal gardens in **Queens Park**. All works will be completed by June 2016. A bid for a Green Flag Award for the park will be progressed for 2016/17.

The **Greenspace Investment Programme** continues with work to complete the pitches at Hulton Lane, changing rooms will follow in Quarter 2 of 2016/17. 11 **play areas** have been refurbished / refreshed/ upgraded this year against a target of 4 per year. Planning permission has been granted for a **Multi-Use Games Area** for Haslam Park and this is scheduled to be commenced by March 2016.

### 2.3.3 Cleaner Bolton and Behaviour Change

The council and partners took the decision in 2010 to fundamentally shift away from just cleaning up after communities to introducing a behaviour change approach aimed at tackling the root cause of environmental issues.

Cleanliness across the borough is measured by **Local Environmental Quality** surveys (LEQs), completed three times a year over different geographical areas of Bolton. The annual borough results for the LEQ surveys, 2015/16 returned a 94% pass rate for litter. This exceeds the target of maintaining a 90% pass rate.

**Additional resources** of £1.3million revenue were allocated from April 2015 over 2 years (2015/16 and 2016/17), in addition to £200,000 capital for environmental improvements. The overall strategy, aims and funding allocation were reported in Quarter 3. As a result of the strategy, the work of the operational behaviour change teams and enforcement officers in performance year 2015/16:

- Dealt with 2,366 fly tips - 60% of fly tips moved by residents.
- Dealt with 2,086 littering issues.
- Dealt with 1,096 waste receptacle issues.
- Carried out enforcement activity with:
  - 21 cases taken to Court generating £7,971.
  - 314 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued with £12,950 paid – 40 fines pending payment.

In 2015/16, the Trade Waste Officers:

- Made 441 business visits.
- Served 89 S34 notices with £12,300 paid – 48 fines pending payment.

Additionally, 60 new commercial waste contracts taken out by companies with Bolton Council following visits – raising £14,624 annually - estimated savings due to commercial waste not going into the domestic cycle (based on these companies), £9,894 annually.

There have been 138 litter picks with 1,723 bags of waste collected, 99 of which were recycled. All activity continued to be being promoted successfully via the Love Bolton, Hate Litter Facebook page with a daily average of 96 'hits'.

#### 2.3.4 Regulatory Services

In Quarter 4:

- The Statement of Licensing Policy for 2016-2021 was consulted upon and published.
- The service moved to 12 month licences and livery refresh.
- Unmet demand survey for limiting hackney carriage vehicles was completed.
- Two licences revoked and successful appeals against driver licence revocations.
- Payment plans for 3 years licences (giving option of paying for 3 year licence by direct debit) were rolled out.
- James Button training for operators provided.
- Completion of 2015 / 2016 food hygiene inspection programme.
- EC approval of an establishment to produce fishery products and meat products.
- Bolton Council representative took on role of Secretary to Greater Manchester Food Liaison Group for 2016.
- 238 food service requests received for investigation as appropriate.
- Implementation of new ways of working in respect of the enforcement of Health and Safety at Work.
- 3 operations with the tobacco dog whereby seizures of large quantities of illicit cigarettes and hand rolling tobacco took place - resulting in 5 pending prosecutions from these operations.
- Completion of the DEFRA funded Animal Feeds visited.

### 2.3.5 Community Safety

Quarter 4 saw a decrease in overall crime when compared with Quarters 1, 2 and 3 of 2015/16.

Increases in violence, robbery and burglary (in a building other than a dwelling) were above the Greater Manchester Police (GMP) figure. Bolton has also experienced decreases above the GMP figure in sexual offences, anti-social behaviour and household burglary. Evaluation of these crimes and reasons for increases and decreases are undertaken by GMP – any relevant issues can be reported in future performance reports once evaluation has taken place.

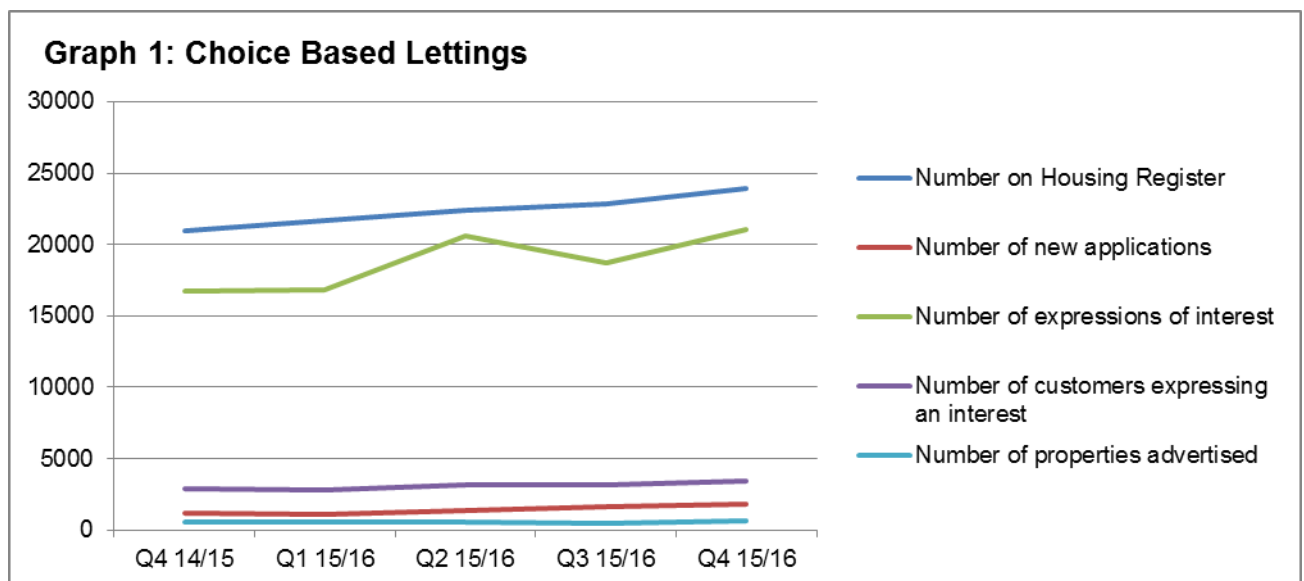
## 2.4 Housing Services

### 2.4.1 To provide housing that is affordable and offers choice whilst meeting the needs and demands of the future.

#### Need and Demand for Housing

Affordable housing continues to be in high demand. In Quarter 4:

- There was a large increase in the number of properties advertised through Choice Based Lettings this quarter from 499, Quarter 3 to 678.
- Expressions of interest rose from 3,153, Quarter 3 to 3,449. This may be due to the large number of properties and New Build development being advertised. Only one property failed to receive any expressions of interest.



Graph 1 shows the trends in activity for choice based lettings from January 2015:

- Applications received rose from 1,620, Quarter 3 to 1,791, Quarter 4.
- On-line applications accounted for 97% of all applications received. Paper applications increased slightly from 54, Quarter 3 to 58, Quarter 4 – but remains at 3% of all applications received.

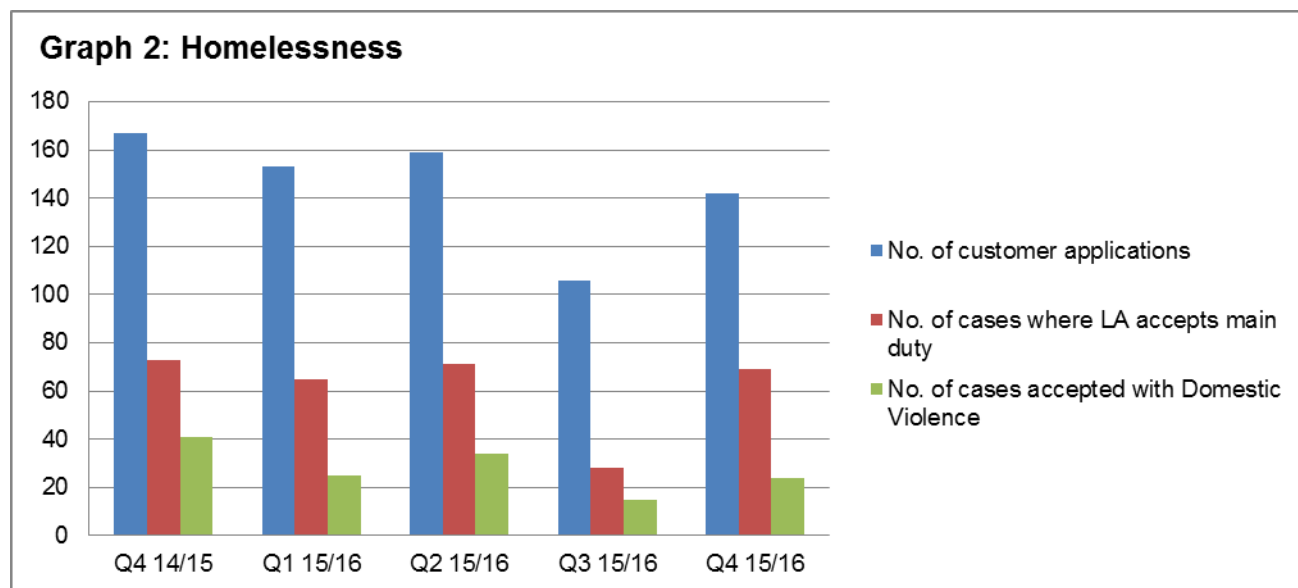
#### Supply of affordable housing

Pipeline figures for 2013/17 & 2015/18 **Affordable Housing Grant** and **Affordable Housing Programme** funding streams will see a further 304 affordable homes built across 12 sites (including 25 former right to buy backs). So far, 3 schemes have been completed, 6 have secured planning approval (and are expected to start on site soon) and 2 are waiting for a planning decision.

Completed **Right to Buys** remain at a consistent level – with a slight increase of 3 in Quarter 4. There has been a significant increase in Right to Acquire enquires – potentially due to the potential legislation changes which would allow Housing Association tenants the Right to Buy rather than the Right to Acquire.

#### 2.4.2 To create and promote communities that are sustainable and inclusive

Following a service review of all Housing Services around September 2015, two services have joined together, Homeless Welfare and Housing Advice. The new more generic roles are aimed at trying to prevent homelessness and sustain tenancies. Quarter 4 has seen a marked increase in reported figures. The reasons for this are primarily two fold; notably changes to recording and reporting mechanisms and secondly due to prevention processes providing a more consistent filter across a wider range of presentations.



Graph 2 shows the trends in homeless cases over the last 12 months and reflects the increase mentioned above. In Quarter 4:

The **Help for Single Homelessness** programme now has a dedicated staff resource and the project worker is continuing to develop the role and pick up 'new' cases. The programme is envisaged to work very closely alongside the Complex Lifestyles project recently commissioned by the Council - to assist, support and encourage single people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to access services that will assist them to change and improve their lifestyles. The aim is to reduce the short to longer term need for health services, presentations to Accident and Emergency and other corporate and voluntary support services.

Customers are assessed using the NHS (National Health Service) Chaos Index and NHS WEMWBS. The project works with a range of agencies including the Police, Town Centre team, Community Safety, RSLs (Residential Social Landlords) and the voluntary sector. The application of personalised approaches to deliver interventions with the more chaotic single homeless has achieved positive results in a number of cases. This, in addition, is helping to outline the needs of a broader cohort of single homeless people and feed into a wider strategic approach. This also assists in the identification of the number of genuine rough sleepers that need assistance in comparison to the number of people claiming to be street homeless in order to justify begging.

Quarter 4 saw the seasonal increase in **homeless presentations** to the service at Benjamin Court. Property void rates in January and February remained quite high, averaging 24.5%; however there was a significant drop to 12% in March to 2% at the quarter end.

33 'out of hours' presentations were taken by Benjamin Court in Quarter 4 via the emergency social work team and Police. As always accommodation at Benjamin Court is used alongside local Bed and Breakfast and Hotel accommodation on an emergency basis. Accommodation outside the borough was used on one occasion due to no local availability.

### 2.4.3 To improve the quality of private sector housing

The **Safe, Warm and Dry** approach was introduced in June 2013, and it involves targeting private sector properties that have been identified by the BRE stock condition model as at risk of failing decency standards. The approach is also targeted at those properties that are lived in by a vulnerable person. In Quarter 4:

- 12 surveys were carried out - the same amount as Quarter 3, but expected as customers from previous mail outs move through the process.
- 37 customers are waiting for work to begin - an increase from Quarter 3 (33).
- 11 cases were completed - a decrease of 2 from Quarter 3.
- 73% of works were completed by Bolton contractors and 27% from other Greater Manchester contractors.
- £1,200,000 has been spent and committed against the capital programme this year.

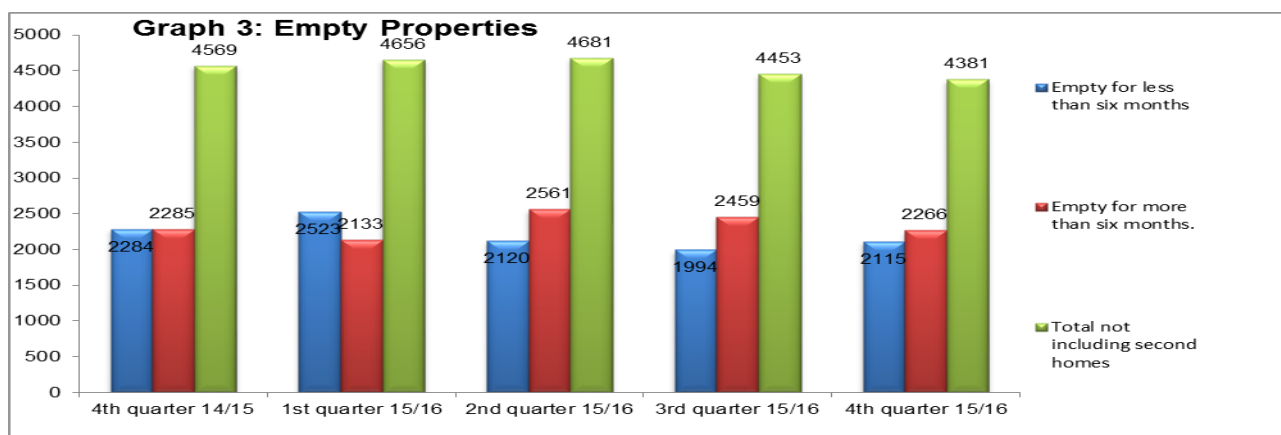
Tackling poor property conditions and management of the private rented sector is becoming increasingly important as the sector continues to expand. The following work has been undertaken by Housing Standards in Quarter 4:

- 93 housing, health and safety inspections were completed – an increase of 24 from Quarter 3. The inspections resulted in 22 category 1 hazards and 65 category 2 hazards being identified:
  - 37 owners were made aware of hazards in their properties via a hazard awareness notice.
  - Formal housing action was taken on 9 owners who had notices served on them. This consisted of 5 improvement notices and 4 prohibition orders prohibiting the property or parts of the property for living accommodation due to the severity of the hazards identified in them.
  - 87 re-visits to properties to check progress of works and discuss issues with landlords.
  - There were two successful prosecutions in relation to a non-compliance of an Improvement Notice and breaches of the HMO (House in Multiple Occupation) management regulations. Fines totalling £2,300 were given with costs of £2,113 awarded to the council.

In performance year 2015/16, 170 housing, health and safety inspections were completed, which is slightly lower than previous years. Throughout the year 291 owners have been made aware of improvements required in their properties and 35 owners had formal notices served on them. Although this year represented the lowest in Health and Housing Safety Rating System Inspections, it saw the highest number of Housing Act notices served on owners.

Bringing **empty properties** back into use remains a priority for the Council as it not only increases the number of available homes in the Borough but also provides revenue through Council Tax and New Homes Bonus. Since Quarter 3, Legal Services have concluded that Council Tax will not be able to issue charging orders on empty properties for unpaid council tax (with the aim to enforce sale of the property). Graph 3 shows the trends in empty homes in Bolton since 2014/15.





#### 2.4.4 To promote health, well-being and quality of life

The **Care and Repair** service assisted 307 customers to remain in their own home in Quarter 4. The service continues to be in consistently high demand with 528 enquiries in the quarter - a slight decrease on Quarter 3.

There has been an increase in referrals from partner organisations in particular Age UK, which is largely due to a new basic gardening service being introduced later in the quarter. The number of customers being referred to the Fire Service for fire safety checks has almost doubled this quarter.

Demand for **Disabled Facilities Grants** (DFGs) has reduced in Quarter 4 - 102 enquiries compared to 141, Quarter 3. Overall waiting times have reduced when compared with 2014/15 - from 329 days at Quarter 4, 2014/15 to 281 days, Quarter 4 2015/16 - a number of service improvements have been made to assist with this. Additional funding for DFGs was made available in Quarter 4 as a result of the original budget being fully committed by the end of December. This has allowed for new cases to be processed and as at end of March, £1.8m had been spent with an additional £640k committed.

### 2.5 Residential Growth Programme (RGP)

2.5.1 The Residential Growth work continues to progress with the mapping of available sites across the Borough alongside Housing Market Information and the results of the Housing Needs Assessment. This will provide detailed information about type of housing is needed where and affordability levels to inform any future development of sites.

2.5.2 Work has also been taking place with the Homes and Communities Agency to ensure that Bolton is able to maximise growth and funding opportunities through the release of the new prospectus. The prospectus was released this quarter and has a new focus on providing greater opportunities for home ownership and a move away from the provision of affordable housing. Consideration is being given to Starter Homes, and a collective bid for Greater Manchester has been submitted, of which Bolton is part of. Further consideration is being given to specialist accommodation, in particular older persons and shared ownership provision. These bids are being worked up with Housing Association partners.

## 3.0 Departmental Strategic Priorities

### 3.1 Community Services

In **Social Needs Transport** (SNT) the service specification was prepared for Special Educational Needs transport and school swimming transport in partnership with Procurement and Legal, in preparation for submission onto the chest, early May 2016. SNT commenced a savings and

efficiency review and consultation with staff to achieve savings within the department and to coincide with start of the new school year in September 2016.

The occupancy rate at **Bolton Market** was 98% at the end of March. There are currently 4 units vacant in the Fruit and Vegetable Hall (94% occupancy) but all other indoor areas and cabins are at 100%. 3 units in the Fruit and Vegetable Hall were taken by a new trader selling Oriental and Asian food. A new Trader Handbook detailing market rules and regulations has been provided to all traders. Applications have been invited for the **Food and Drink Festival 2016**. The closing date was Friday 8 April.

**Farnworth Market** closed, 26 February. Most traders re-located to Farnworth Indoor Market, 4 traders re-located to Westhoughton Market and 1 trader initially re-located to Bolton Market but after a short time he moved to Farnworth Indoor Market.

All staff at **Heaton Fold Garden Centre** are now Dementia Friends. A new service for customers is the provision of a laptop for staff to access gardening information which also displays a promotional slideshow with details of offers, new stock and upcoming events etc. There is also free Wi-Fi available. The successful **Artisan Market** re-started, 21 February and will continue monthly until December. Annual income for 2015/16 saw an increase of 19% when compared with 2014/15, which indicates a successful trading year.

The two **park cafés** previously under Albert Halls have been handed over to the Head of Service (Schools Meals / Building Cleaning). Facebook sites have been set up for the parks to promote the cafés and other activities within the park, with Twitter to follow soon.

The **Security and Response** service maintained NQA quality assurance accreditation for Building Support, Couriers and Civic Building Cleaning. Following a tender process the new security partner tender was awarded to Profile which commenced, 14 January.

An updated **Bereavement Services** brochure has been produced and 2,000 copies printed - Bolton Hospice received 500 copies. APSE (Association for Public Excellence) benchmarking data was completed and submitted for the first time. The total number of burials and cremations in 2015/16 remained stable with burials up 2% compared with last year and cremations down 1.5%. The Municipal Funeral tender has been completed and 1 application has been forwarded for evaluation.

## 3.2 Services to Schools

### School Meals

End of year was a challenging period for school meals as the weather determined high meal uptake. The new restructured team transferred under the TUPE regulations from Sharples School to the private sector - this impacted 9 members of staff.

Overall the service provides:

- an average of 18,400 meals per day over the year including low trading in summer for primaries.
- 3.34 million meals were served in 2015/16. When comparing data with the 2014/15 trading year there were the equivalent of approximately 500,000 more meals served - when taking into account that there were 4.2% less feeding /trading days in 2015/16.

Quarter 4 in the school meals service:

- Saw a high performance level for the primary sector and a good overall average sustained. The spring term saw a consolidation of Universal Infant Free School Meals at 88.5% - 1.5 percentage points above the national target.

- Uptake over the whole primary sector was 72% - an improvement when compared with 2014/15 (70%) by 2.8 percentage points.
- The average uptake for paid meals was 66% in spring but 63% overall in Key Stage 2 - which is also very high compared to the national average.

## Technology

It is intended to report early savings as a result of Cypad (mobile technology in school kitchens) installation being completed from April. Further Menu Selector trials are planned with Cypad to offer a pre-ordering system to primary schools.

## Building Cleaning

Service Level Agreements in schools have seen some contraction in 2015/16 with 2 secondary schools and 1 primary school transferring cleaning services to the private sector in Quarter 3:

- Six months' notice for all Bolton at Home cleaning has been received - to be tendered this summer 2016. The contract value is £320k and affects 40 cleaners.
- Work to provide a Relief Caretaking service is underway. A post to recruit a full time relief caretaker has been completed and school trials underway.

### 3.3 Highways, Engineering and Parking Division and Town Centre Public Realm

The **Town Centre Strategy** outlines interventions to stimulate and support the Bolton Vision ambition to 'sustain existing and further develop key employment sites (primarily Bolton town centre and district centres)'. Its action plan encompasses a wide-ranging host of activity grouped under six interventions, including:

- Public Realm Improvement Programme

Enabling works continued on Newport Street including setting up the site compound, completion of street lighting ducting and the excavation of a large number of tree pits. Paving works will commence, summer 2016 upon completion of the third phase of shop front improvement works. A contractor for the scheme was formally appointed. Work on the first 2 phases commenced with a further phase due to commence in May 2016. The programme for delivery of the new lighting scheme for Corporation Street/Market Street was completed with the new lighting to be installed, April 2016. The programme to replace benches in the town centre was completed with the installation of 12 new stainless steel benches on Oxford Street.

- Town Centre Parking Initiative

As part of Bolton's successful Town Centre Parking Initiative thousands of spaces at Deane Road, the Octagon and Topp Way multi-storey car parks continued to be free all day Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays. This was extended for the Christmas 2015 period to 'free after 3pm', as it was for Christmas 2014. The total number of transactions (vehicle entries) for Quarter 4, 2015/16 was 52,486 as compared with 45,530 for Quarter 4, 2014/15 - representing a 15.3% increase.

The land transfers at the **town centre interchange** will take place in summer 2016. Detailed design work continued for the S278 and S38 highway works.

The construction of the 30,000 square foot Grade A office block fronting Great Moor Street continued and remains on programme.

**Farnworth Town Centre Regeneration Programme** continued with officers and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM). TfGM is finalising the design for the new bus station and a planning application is anticipated to be submitted, summer 2016

Officers continued to work with all parties at **Logistics North** to support the development of the site and associated initiatives. Section 106 was drawn down, March 2016 in line with the revised Section 106 agreement. Officers continued to support the timely production of travel plans.

Progress continued to be made with the **LED street-lighting programme**. Across Bolton, approximately 26,000 street lamps on residential streets and main roads are being replaced with lower carbon LED lanterns over the next three years. Work is on target to finish in 2018. The street lighting programme, which is costing £10m, should save the council £14m over 20 years and reduce energy use by around 50%. The service to date has installed just over 12,000 units which is running in line with the delivery programme. The scheme won the recycling award at the national Lux Awards. The Lux Awards has established itself as the best recognised street lighting awards scheme over its six years.

### 3.4 **Civil Contingencies**

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the council has a statutory duty to have contingency plans in place to ensure the borough is equipped to deal with a crisis situation effectively, while continuing to provide the usual day-to-day services of the Council. Response and intervention relies on effective **partnership working**. In Quarter 4, officers:

- Delivered a series of civil contingencies' refresher training sessions for Security and Response and training for 2 new Tactical Officers and a new Strategic Officer.
- Presented to Bury Council's Senior Leadership Team on the response to the United Utilities water outage, July 2015.
- Reviewed the Critical Services Fuel Requirements for the NEP-F (National Emergency Plan – Fuel) for the Department for Communities and Local Government.
- Took part in an exercise, assisted with a week of action and started preparations for a further exercise.

The physical recovery following the **Boxing Day floods** continued, including the clean-up, the administration of the Property Level Resilience Grant and an Environment Agency drop-in session for residents of Riverside Drive. Following the floods, people approached the service to offer their services voluntarily in future incidents. A series of training has been delivered to 30 people who can now act as Emergency Welfare Volunteers in the event of a major incident.

## 4.0 **Supporting the Council to deliver its operational priorities**

This section gives an update on some of the major operational priorities. Please note that internal departmental statistics for Housing Services will be reported in this report from Quarter 1.

### 4.1 **Managing the Department's Budget**

The Department was tasked with finding savings of £1.7m within Environmental Services and £0.446m within Housing Services in 2015/16 - 100% of these targets have been achieved. Revenue expenditure achieved an underspend against the budget of £115,000 after planned reserve movements within Environmental Services and £31,000 underspend within Housing Services. There is one main revenue variance which was the Albert Halls which closed in February for refurbishment works - the revenue impact of this closure has been planned for. However, within the Albert Halls service area the Moss Bank Park and Queens Park Pavilions, both within their first year of operation showed an adverse variance. Additional staffing costs partially as a result of extended opening hours together with a flat level of income resulted in an overspend against budget. Capital

expenditure for 2015/16 was £24.122m against a revised projection at Quarter 3 of £25.279m. The Department has a general reserve of £25,491 for the end of the year.

## 4.2 Health & Safety

Good Health and Safety practices are not just about being socially responsible but they are also important in the wider financial sense. This is particularly true regarding the services provided by Environmental Services, which by their very nature are front line, operational services. The department is continuing to deliver a programme of training and site assessments to ensure that all services operate in a safe environment.

In Quarter 4 the number of staff related incidents (excluding Housing Services) was 44 – 1 less than Quarter 3. Management will continue to monitor the number of incidents within the department and deliver important health and safety training to all staff.

## 4.3 Managing Sickness

Staff absence within the services (excluding Housing Services) during Quarter 4 is 3.1 days per FTE - compared to 3.2 days, Quarter 4, 2014/15. Final cumulative days per FTE for performance year 2015/16 is 13.2 days - compared to 13.7 days in 2014/15.

Average Days Sickness Per FTE in 2015/16				
Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Cumulative 2015/16
3.6 days per FTE	3.3 days per FTE	3.3 days per FTE	3.1 days per FTE	13.2 days per FTE

The main area of increase has been in Waste Management with a number of staff absent due to musculoskeletal / neck or back problems, hospital treatments / post-operative recovery and chest / respiratory disorders.

Cleansing and Grounds Operational has also maintained a high level of absence similar to last year, with significant increases in stress and stomach conditions. However attendance is being monitored closely by the management teams.

The services continue to experience issues with long term absence, the principal causes of which are stress related and musculoskeletal / neck or back problems. There are 46 on-going long term absence cases, 41 of which are from front line operational roles mostly within the Community Services Division. The Department has undertaken significant management action on attendance during the quarter:

- 93 informal counselling meetings held.
- 45 Occupational Health referrals made.
- 4 first warnings and 1 final warning issued.
- 2 medical incapacity dismissals made

All current cases, both long and short term are being managed in line with HR frameworks.

#### 4.4 Requests for Information

**Information requests** are answered under the **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000**, the **Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) 2004** or the **Data Protection Act 1998**. The Council is required to respond to requests within 20 working days and Subject Access Requests within 40 days.

- 121 requests were received for Quarter 4 (excluding Housing Services) - 107 of these were for the department alone and 14 were cross cutting across the council. The largest proportion of requests received by the department was for Regulatory Services who received 40 requests.
- 98% of requests were answered on time.

Working on an average of 4.3 officer hours per request, the department allocated 520 hours of officer time on information requests during Quarter 4.

#### 4.5 Managing Customer Care

4.5.1 Complaints are answered within twenty working days (standard) – a timescale set locally to Bolton. The number of **complaints** received by the services is monitored. 88 complaints were received for Quarter 4, 2015/16 (excluding Housing Services), 1 of which was cross-cutting across 2 services:

- The number of complaints received was the same as for Quarter 4, 2014/15.
- 80 (91%) complaints were answered in 'standard', 8 were answered out of 'standard' - 1 of which was part of an on-going investigation; 2 which required extra time to fully investigate the issues raised; 2 that were answered up to three days out of standard and 3 which were escalated to appeals stage.
- The cross-cutting complaint was one of those requiring additional time for investigation of issues raised.

Further analysis of the 88 complaints received shows that:

- The main reason that complainants identified for making their complaints was 'unsatisfactory/sub-standard level of service', of which there were 50 (57%).
- 1 complaint was upheld (i.e. the Department found in the customer's favour); 8 were partially upheld (i.e. the Department found partially in the customer's favour); 4 were deferred, 1 was part of an on-going investigation and 74 (84%) were not upheld.

Community Services Division received 2 complaints, 1 of which was partially upheld and the other which was part of an on-going investigation. The partially upheld complaint related to fire doors not being kept closed at Westhoughton Market. A reminder was issued that fire doors should be kept closed and a request made for a new Fire Risk Assessment to be completed by Corporate Property Services. Highways and Engineering Division received 24 complaints, 21 of which were not upheld, 2 which were escalated to appeals stage and 1 which was partially upheld. The partially upheld complaint related to a gate impeding access for mobility scooters – the gate was removed. Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services Division received 25 complaints, 18 of which were not upheld, 1 which was escalated to appeals stage and 6 which were upheld either fully (1) or partially (5). The fully upheld complaint related to the missing of cleaning a back street on the regular cleaning cycle. Measures were put in place to help ensure that the street wasn't missed again and the behaviour change teams informed to include the street when in the area.

The partially upheld complaints related to:

- Litter on a car park – partially upheld as there was litter, however cleaning contract standards had been maintained and will continue to be maintained.
- Reporting of a flytip – partially upheld as a fridge was not removed within service standard. These standards were reiterated to staff.

- A customer trying to gain public access to Mayor Street – partially upheld to review the signage relating to the phone used by staff to gain access.
- A delay in sending out new livery stickers to a taxi driver and impacting business.
- Temporary licensing for taxi drivers – a complaint about losing business, the ‘short’ licence was subsequently issued.

Waste and Fleet Management Division received 36 complaints; 34 of which were not upheld, 1 which was escalated to appeals stage and 1 which was upheld partially. The partially upheld complaint related to a wagon’s tap being open which was releasing some waste material onto the street. The crew were reminded that the tap needed to be kept closed and given a written copy to remind them.

4.5.2 Recording of **compliments** is also an important indicator within customer care. Services are being encouraged to log compliments to internal systems. 23 compliments were logged in Quarter 4 (excluding Housing Services):

- 7 for staff who worked on the unprecedented boxing day floods from the people dealing with the immediate response to the people remaining on duty and co-ordinating activity to post incident recovery including the clean-up operation on the ground.
- 5 for Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services – 1 relating to the hard work and contributory effort in producing Community Safety GM Profiles ; 1 acknowledging the co-ordinating support of a neighbourhood management member of staff; 2 praising the street cleaning service and 1 thanking staff’s response to a tree issue.
- 9 for Waste and Fleet Management – 2 relating to the efficient bin receptacle delivery service, 6 complimenting the helpful and friendly manner of bin crews and 1 praising a crew’s traffic awareness.
- 2 for Highways and Engineering – 1 thanking staff for the work carried out on Middlebrook Cycle Trail and the second complimenting road workers for their professionalism at Christchurch Lane.

## 5. Conclusions

5.1 This report summarises Quarter 4, 2015/16 performance and the outturn position as appropriate for the Environmental Services’ elements of the Place Department. Additionally, it incorporates the inaugural inclusion of Housing Services as part of the portfolio. The services remain on track to deliver their strategic and operational priorities for the council. Highlights of the report are:

- 2015/16: 468.69kg household waste collected per household. Recycling rate, 39.11%.
- 5,655 slim bins being used in Bolton in advance of change-over.
- 94% litter pass rate in the annual borough results for the Local Environmental Quality survey.
- Positive outputs as a direct result of additional behaviour change funding.
- 12,000 units installed as part of the LED street-lighting programme.
- 88.5% uptake of free school meals for key stage 1 pupils.
- Demand for affordable housing continues to be high and is being managed well.
- Empty properties have reduced this quarter as a result of joint action between Council Tax services and Housing Standards.

## 6. Recommendations

6.1 The Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the performance update set out in this report.