

Bolton Council

Report to: Executive Cabinet Member
Environmental Services

Date: 21st March 2016

Report of: Director of Place

Report No: ECMES/35/16

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Report Title: **Departmental Performance Update – Quarter 3 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 Executive Cabinet Member with an update on Quarter 3, 2015/16 performance for the Environmental Services Department.

The Environmental Services Department remains on track to deliver its strategic and operational priorities for the Council. Highlights of the report can be found below:

- Positive outputs as a direct result of additional behaviour change funding.
- Co-ordinated response to the unprecedented Boxing Day floods.
- Quarters 1 to 3: 353.31kg household waste collected per household. Recycling rate, 40.2%.
- 27.78% of bulky waste being recycled and re-used.
- 88% uptake of free school meals for key stage 1 pupils.
- Quarters 1 to 3: 8 play areas refurbished/refreshed.
- 94% litter pass rate in the second Local Environmental Quality borough survey.

Recommendations:

The Executive Cabinet Member is asked to comment upon the performance update set out in this report.

Decision:

Background Doc(s):

Signed:

Leader / Executive Cabinet
Member

Monitoring Officer

Date:

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report summarises the performance outturn for Quarter 3, 2015/16 for the Environmental Services Department. The report summarises delivery against both qualitative and quantitative indicators, recognising the balance between hard and soft outputs taking into account the current financial pressures facing the organisation.

1.2 Within this report, progress is reported against:

- major strategic priorities for which the Environmental Services Department is responsible within the Council;
- progress around our operational priorities as the provider of a number of large front line and support services and
- conclusions and key messages.

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 our 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 (a departmental strategic priority) 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.

Since the Quarter 2 report, the winter collection rounds for food and garden waste have been re-designed and reduced to accommodate the decrease in garden waste. Technical Officers, Recycling Officers and a temporary Contamination Officer have been appointed. Work has continued to ensure residents are aware of the introduction of slimmer grey bins and are prepared for the changes. Work and upgrades to in-cab technology to prepare for future improvements in customer service continued.

In the cumulative period Quarters 1 to 3:

- 353.31kg household waste collected per household - a 1.94kg per household increase when compared with Quarters 1 to 3, 2014/15.
- The recycling rate was 40.2% - a 0.1 percentage point decrease when compared with Quarters 1 to 3, 2014/15.

The reduction is a result of an increase in the tonnage of street cleaning waste collected as additional resources are put into keeping the borough clean (detailed in 2.3.3.). The service however remains on track to deliver against its savings and performance targets.

- There were 8,762 missed collections reported over the 9 month period – equating to 0.08% of all collections.

When compared with the cumulative period, Quarters 1 to 3, 2014/15, the service collected:

- 584 tonnes less domestic waste.
- 93 tonnes more food and garden waste.
- 429 tonnes more glass, cans and plastic bottles.
- 166 tonnes more pulpables.

In Quarter 3:

- 794 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 4,180.
- 38 households were approved to keep a 240 litre bin, and 14 additional bins (140 size) were approved against a request level of 242.
- 7,790 recycling bins delivered.
- 1,101 food waste containers delivered.
- Waste and Recycling calendars were delivered to all households in Bolton - incorporating educational information on the slim bin introduction, recycling and bulky waste collections.
- Waste and recycling pages of the website were updated.
- Information was placed in Bolton Scene's Winter edition
- 12 roadshows and events took place.
- 102 real Christmas trees recycled– in partnership with Bolton Community Transport Furniture Services.
- 639 bulky waste collections with 27.78% of waste collected recycled or re-used.
- The food waste recycling campaign in partnership with Greater Manchester Waste Authority continued in the vicinity of St Peter's Smithills Dean C of E Primary School – the golden bin ticket issued for food waste recycling will be transformed into a cash reward for the school to invest in environmental projects.

2.2.2 Fleet Management

In the cumulative period Quarters 1 to 3:

- 248 private MOTs, including 12 taxi tests were carried out – an increase of 21 when compared with Quarters 1 to 3, 2014/15.
- A reduction of 145.28 tonnes of CO2 was made in the Council's fleet when compared with Quarters 1 to 3, 2014/15.

In Quarter 3:

- A MOT bay for motor bikes was completed and will be operational from early 2016.
- A training initiative - with the aim of reducing vehicle reversing and manoeuvring damage and accidents to waste vehicles – was delivered to 130 waste drivers and loaders.

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 One Area Forums saw an increase from 345 attendees in the previous round to 421 attendees. Round Two Area Forums to take place between January and March 2016.
- 35% of Area Forums will 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.
- All seven UCANs across Bolton provide services to assist local residents including Job Search, CV writing, IT skills, debt advice, intensive employment and training advice, volunteering, fuel and food poverty and Community English Classes. The average number of residents accessing these services at UCANs is in excess of 3,000 residents a month.
- Halliwell UCAN held an open day with more than 200 residents attending.
- Workshop sessions are being developed in a number of neighbourhoods to help raise awareness of Hate Crime, how to report it and how to stop it.

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 1 of 2016/17. 8 **play areas** have been refurbished / refreshed 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 second LEQ Borough survey of 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 for this additional resource is to adopt a more balanced approach, with the aims of:

- Improving cleansing.
- Providing good quality education.
- Enforcing robustly.

Funding was subsequently allocated to:

- Form 5 new operational behaviour change teams consisting of operational staff trained to enforce environmental crime.
- Recruit a Volunteer Community Co-ordinator working with partners and groups to facilitate behaviour change in the communities.

- Make changes to the physical nature of some open spaces to improve the look of the environment and make safer.
- Appoint 2 new Trade Waste Officers to focus on business waste and recycling.
- Invest in technological solutions to support behaviour change work, including ANPR (Automated Number Plate Recognition) and CCTV surveillance in fly tipping hot-spots and new street cleaning equipment.

As a result of this strategy, the work of the operational behaviour change teams and enforcement officers in the period April 2015 to January 2016:

- The public have moved 40% of inappropriately disposed of waste identified by the teams – estimated cost for the Council to remove, £34,391¹.
- The public have dealt with 65% of fly tipped waste – estimated cost for the Council to remove, £34,391¹.
- Given a ‘fresh start’ to 497 residents with contaminated bins.
- Collected 554 abandoned/damaged bins.
- Leafleted 165 streets, with 941 people given educational leaflets.
- Carried out enforcement activity in 61% of jobs:
 - 9 cases went to Court - £4,726 of fines issued.
 - 150 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued.
 - £5,725 was paid, with 14 payments pending.

The Trade Waste Officers in the period May 2015 to January 2016 have:

- Issued 17 S34 FPNs - £4,500 paid against these with 2 payments pending.
- Established 41 trade waste contracts.

The Volunteer Community Co-ordinator has registered 54 new groups. There have been 563 volunteers engaged in litter picking, with 743 bags of waste collected. All activity is being promoted successfully via the Love Bolton, Hate Litter Facebook page.

2.3.4 Regulatory Services

In Quarter 3:

The Pet Shop Licence Conditions review was approved, incorporating a refresh of the licence conditions for pet shops based on the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health model conditions. A phased transitional period will allow businesses time to upgrade facilities.

Changes to the licence periods for private hire and hackney carriage drivers and private hire operators were introduced to reflect the change in national legislation (Deregulation Act 2015). 3 year drivers’ licences and 5 year operators’ licences were introduced. The aim of the new legislation is to reduce the burden on business. However, shorter licence periods will continue to be available in special circumstances.

A prosecution of a Major cooked meat manufacturer took place, November 2015 citing three offences under Food Safety & Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013:

- Non-compliance with Remedial Action Notice.

¹ based on figures provided by WasteDataFlow.

- Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) management system.
- Not providing information required in a timely manner.

The manufacturer lodged a guilty plea at Bolton Magistrates Court, 16 November 2015 and was. This led to fines and costs exceeding £7,800

2.4 Community Safety

In Quarter 3:

There was an overall increase in crime when compared with Quarter 3, 2014/15 with violent crime and sexual offences continuing to be the largest volume contributors to increases in the crime rate. Sustained rises in recorded incidents of these crime types mirrors national trends and reflects both changes in recording practices and a greater willingness of victims to report crime.

Increases in acquisitive crime compared to Quarter 3, 2014/15 should be considered alongside an acknowledgement of decreases in both burglary and robbery when looking over the past year as compared to 2014, and only small increases in shoplifting.

Anti-Social Behaviour continued to fall compared to Quarter 3, 2014/15, whilst hate crime again increased - this quarter by 24% and by 31% for the year to date. This is seen as positive given the extent of under-reporting of hate crime. Although no causal link has been established there has recently been a great deal of on-going activity to promote awareness of hate crime and how to report it - including the launch of Be Safe's Hate Crime Ambassadors Scheme.

3.0 Departmental Strategic Priorities

3.1 Community Services

Social Needs Transport received approval to tender for the Home to School / College and School Swimming Transport contracts from September 2016.

A Social Needs Transport **Savings and Efficiencies Review** joint project with Adult and Children's Services and Environmental Services has commenced and will be formally reported, January 2016.

The occupancy rate at **Bolton Market** remained relatively static. However there is one available unit in the Lifestyle Hall as the Wellbeing Project is no longer based at the market - nevertheless the project will continue to present regular healthy eating demonstrations on a monthly basis. There are 7 vacant units in the Fruit and Vegetable Hall (89.5% occupancy), with an application for 3 stalls progressing and the trader anticipating to start in January. The Destination Bolton Market grant applicant is now successfully trading as 'BBQ' in the Lifestyle Hall.

In **Bolton's Best Awards**, the Head of Service was a finalist for Best Manager and the Market team were finalists in the Efficient and Business-like category.

Work with Development and Regeneration and traders at **Farnworth Market** to consider continued trading under a private market licence took place, but after a significant amount of discussion and evaluation it was agreed that this was not viable. One trader is exploring opportunities at Bolton Market and three casual traders have moved to Westhoughton Market. Farnworth Market is on schedule to close, 26 February 2016.

Heaton Fold Garden Centre held a two day pop up display at Bolton Market to promote the Artisan Market and the Garden Centre. This was very well received and contributed to the excellent Christmas trees sales which saw a 13.2% increase from last year. The Artisan Markets have been well attended and have driven up sales and footfall across the garden centre. The markets will re-start in February 2016.

Albert Halls' programme of refurbishment is scheduled for completion, end 2016 hence no pantomime. It is scheduled to re-open, early 2017 with a number of bookings from March 2017 onwards. In terms of staffing, the former Head of the Albert Halls retired, end December 2015. Three members of staff have temporary secondments. Work is on-going with Human Resources to find them substantive roles.

Security and Response engaged a new contracted partner – Profile - to provide cover for holidays, sickness and ad-hoc requirements. This contract will commence, 14 January 2016.

3.2 Services to Schools

The re-structure to merge administration and management of school meals and building cleaning was approved, November 2015 - new posts and post-holders were confirmed and Voluntary Early Retirement / Voluntary Severance requests were agreed for the two-phased merger (up to March 2017). Phase 2 of the merged new structure will start, April 2016.

3.2.1 School Meals

Quarter 3 in the school meals service saw the best three months of the school trading year, aligning directly with the academic calendar.

Overall the service provides:

- An average of 20,000 meals per day in primary schools - 3.44 million annual primary meals.
- <400,000 meals annually in the secondary sector - across 4.5 secondary schools.

Sharpley High School has tendered its school meals service from April 2016 - the Council was prevented from bidding. However, its contribution to the service as a whole was minimal.

Year-end performance is on track with a projected slight operating surplus - which is positive considering the significant budget saving for the service, 2015/16.

The autumn term saw a consolidation of Universal Infant Free School Meals ensuring a high overall uptake level across the primary sector of 75%. The last full year benchmarked figures for all meal types uptake was an average nationally of ~55%.

- An 88% uptake of meals in Key Stage 1 is a strong result - and above the national target of 87%.
- The average uptake for paid meals is 68% in Key Stage 2 - which is also very high compared to the national average.

Secondary school performance is consistent but reports a high spending level per pupil compared to the national average £1.15 per pupil with a national average of only 86p for the last full year.

3.2.2 Technology

Mobile technology (Cypad) in school kitchens is 98% embedded with the final paper systems to be removed, early 2016. Links to schools offices with sales data was completed as an e-mailed function and most suppliers are set to convert to on-line ordering in the near future.

3.2.3 Building Cleaning

Service Level Agreements (SLAs) in schools have seen some contraction in 2015 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 (B@H) cleaning has been received - to be tendered this summer 2016. The contract value is £220k and affects 37 cleaners.
- Work to provide a Relief Caretaking service is underway. A post to recruit a full time relief caretaker is currently being externally advertised.
- The revised Health and Safety focus has been completed in Building Cleaning and the new electronic Cypad monitoring should begin shortly. This will feature in future tendering for work as modernised professional monitoring systems.

The financial monitor reports a likely break-even performance at year end despite the mid-year loss of income from two large secondary schools in Quarter 2. This contract loss was not factored into the original budget-setting for the service. It should be noted that all staff liabilities transferred over to the new private sector providers with the loss of the three schools. Some mitigation of losses has been achieved by extending B@H SLAs notice period from autumn 2015 to July 2016. Pricing for 2016/17 and also management and administrative reductions from the restructure will assist in meeting efficiencies from the loss of overall contribution.

3.3 Highways, Engineering & Parking Division & Town Centre Public Realm

- 3.3.1 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** in preparation for the commencement of public realm and shop front improvement works. A preferred contractor to deliver the scheme was identified with the view to formally appoint in Quarter 4. A programme of works will be finalised once the main contractor has been appointed. The programme for delivery of the new lighting scheme for Corporation Street/Market Street is being developed ready for implementation in Quarter 4. Benches on Deansgate were replaced this quarter and Oxford Street benches will be installed in Quarter 4.

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 3, 2015/16 was 72,985 as compared with 71,724 for Quarter 3, 2014/15 - representing a 1.7% increase.

Town Centre Interchange

The land transfers at the interchange will conclude once all issues relating to Network Rail's land ownership have been resolved. Investigations continued to locate the optimum site for the new multi storey car park. The construction programme for the Interchange remains on target to complete by the end of 2016.

Robertsons appointed as the main contractor to deliver 30,000 square foot Grade A office block fronting Great Moor Street. A public realm scheme for the commercial development has been costed and amended to reflect the natural stone found in the retail core. Construction has commenced and remains on target for completion by the end of 2016.

Farnworth Town Centre Regeneration Programme continued with officers and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) aiming to secure the final design for the new bus station early in Quarter 4. A delivery timetable will also be confirmed in Quarter 4.

Officers continued to work with all parties at **Logistics North** to support the development of the site and associated initiatives. Demand Responsive Transport proposals have been finalised with TfGM, Wigan and Salford. Officers continued to support the timely production of travel plans. The inaugural meeting of the Transport Steering Group was held, November 2015.

- 3.3.2 Progress continues to be made with the **LED street-lighting programme** - the aim of which is to reduce electricity costs and the organisation's carbon footprint, whilst improving lighting which will have both a positive impact on the fear of crime and road safety. 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 8,000 units which is running to programme delivery. Whilst implementing the new LED scheme, Bolton Council has also adopted a challenging carbon reduction scheme and strict recycling targets and has recently been recognised at a national Street Lighting Awards ceremony.
- 3.3.3 The department has prepared for the current winter period and has reviewed its **Severe Weather Plan**, which provides a framework for the activation, allocation and deployment of council resources in the event of severe weather. The Service has 4,300 tonnes of salt ready to use and are routinely checking and filling the borough's 533 grit bins. There are 9 full size gritters available for use for this winter and snow ploughs will also be available. The 510 km (51% of the network) of gritting routes are continually assessed to ensure that major bus routes, certain school routes and strategic vehicle routes are treated. During the 13/14 season a recommendation was put forward to rationalise the existing gritting routes and move from being delivered by nine drivers on shift to eight drivers per shift. This allowed the service to dispose of a gritter and reduce standby payments. This resulted in a saving to the winter maintenance budget of £60k. In addition, for the season 14/15, the gritting fleet was hired in from an external provider rather than maintain the old fleet internally due to projected maintenance costs. This has proved successful seeing a reduction in vehicle down time in the garage, resulting in a saving to transport costs. In order to find further efficiencies for 15/16, the department put forward options relating to realising additional winter gritting savings which received member approval in August 2015. To date the service has carried out 49 full route grits using 2,200 tonnes of salt.
- 3.3.4 Boxing Day 2015 saw **unprecedented flooding** across northern England and a major incident in Bolton and across Greater Manchester. Civil Contingencies staff co-ordinated the Council's response, of which Highways staff played a key role. For further information on the response please see section 3.4 of this report.

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 3, officers delivered:

- The Multi Agency **Introduction to Civil Contingencies** course with delegates from voluntary agencies – Bolton Council of Mosques and British Red Cross and 25 partner agency delegates – Greater Manchester Police (GMP), Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS), North West Ambulance Service and Bolton National Health Service Foundation Trust (NHS FT)

- The successful **Get Ready for Winter** multi-agency event which was held on Victoria Square for the fourth consecutive year. 12 organisations participated, including GMP, GMFRS, United Utilities, Environment Agency, Bolton Mountain Rescue Team, Salvation Army, North West 4x4 Response, Highways England, Age UK, Bolton NHS FT, Bolton Council Voluntary Service, NHS Clinical Commissioning Group.

Staff attended:

- A training session 'The Media and Emergencies' for emergency responders facilitated by Matt O'Donoghue from ITV Granada Reports.
- Airwave Radio System training for Forward Incident Officers from Bolton and Wigan Councils provided by GMP.

Boxing Day saw **unprecedented flooding** across northern England and a major incident for Bolton and Greater Manchester. This incident promoted emergency and follow up responses from many Council services some of which are still on-going:

Three major sites in Bolton were affected and a number of other isolated locations were involved. Staff dealt with the immediate response at Riverside Drive – a Forward Incident Officer was on site within an hour of the flood warning being received. Forward Incident Officers and Tactical Officers remained on duty for a week following the incident to co-ordinate activity on the ground. The Emergency Control Centre was opened, 27 December and civil contingencies staff worked throughout to co-ordinate post incident recovery and the emergency response. Highways, Neighbourhood Services and Waste Management played key roles in both making safe infrastructure damage and dealing with the clean-up operation on the ground. Full recovery however is still on-going.

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

This section gives an update on some of the major operational priorities.

4.1 **Managing the Department's Budget**

The Department was tasked with finding £1.7m of savings in 2015/16 - 100% of this target is anticipated to be achieved. Revenue expenditure is projected to underspend against the budget by £107,000 after planned reserve movements. There are two main revenue variances: the Albert Halls which closed in February for refurbishment works - the revenue impact of this closure has been planned for; and reduced income from the Markets resulting from the staggered implementation of the agreed business plan - which has been identified to be met from reserves. Capital expenditure for Quarter 3 was £13.640m against a revised programme of £20.439m. The highways capital programme at Quarter 3 has an available budget of £15.163m whilst the non-highways capital programme for 2015/16 has an available budget of £5.276m. The Department has a projected general reserve of £211,536 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 which carry with them a high risk threshold. 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 3 the number of staff related incidents was 45 - remaining static when compared with Quarter 2. 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

In Quarter 3:

Staff absence within the Department is 3.3 days per FTE - compared to 3.6 days per FTE at Quarter 3, 2014/15.

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

Staff absence has remained static this quarter – as reported at Quarter 2, Waste Management have a number of staff absent with musculoskeletal / neck or back problems, stomach conditions and chest / respiratory disorders. Cleansing and Grounds Operational sections have 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 Department continues to experience issues with long term absence, the principle causes of which are stress-related and musculoskeletal / neck or back problems. There are 45 on-going long term absence cases - 41 of which are front line operational roles mostly within the Community Services Division. The Department has undertaken significant management action on attendance during the quarter:

- 91 informal counselling meetings have been held.
- 54 Occupational Health referrals have been made.
- 9 warnings were issued - 2 of which were final warnings.
- 1 Medical Incapacity dismissal has been made.

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

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.

- 81 requests were received for Quarter 3 - 64 of these were for the department alone and 17 were cross cutting across the council. The largest proportion of requests received by the department was for Regulatory Services who received 27 requests.
- 98% of requests were answered on time – 2 requests were delayed by 2 and 3 days.

Working on an average of 4.3 officer hours per request, the department allocated 348 hours of officer time on information requests during Quarter 3.

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 department are monitored and compared with 2014/15 data:

94 complaints were received for Quarter 3, 2015/16:

- There were 25 more complaints than in Quarter 3, 2015/16. (69)

- 85 (90%) complaints were answered in 'standard', 9 were answered out of 'standard' - 1 of which was part of an on-going investigation and 2 that were answered one day out of standard. 2 complaints were escalated to appeals stage.

Further analysis of the 94 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 48 (50%).
- 7 complaints were upheld (i.e. the Department found in the customer's favour); 7 were partially upheld (i.e. the Department found partially in the customer's favour); 3 were deferred, 1 was part of an on-going investigation and 76 (84%) were not upheld.

Community Services Division received 3 complaints which were all partially upheld. The complaints were from traders regarding the positioning of stalls in a new area at Bolton Food and Drink Festival and subsequent loss of earnings due to lack of footfall. It was acknowledged that this area had a lower footfall than the other areas of the festival and also that additional signage may have had a beneficial effect – learning which will be taken forward when planning the 2016 event. The traders involved were offered a discount from stall costs for the 2016 event as a goodwill gesture.

Highways and Engineering Division received 30 complaints, 4 of which were upheld fully (3) or partially (1). The fully upheld complaints related to:

- Parking and subsequent visibility for motorists on Chorley New Road – fully upheld as issue has been flagged previously and inspected. As a result, a proposal is currently being developed which allows waiting restrictions to be introduced in an attempt to improve visibility.
- A Penalty Charge Notice issued in an area with missing signage. As a result, enforcement will not take place at this location until the signage has been replaced.
- The behaviour of a Civil Enforcement Officer – this has been acknowledged. Appropriate action will be taken in line with NSL's policies and procedures.

The partially upheld complaint related to a report of blocked gullies. It was partially upheld because the gullies did need cleaning but this hadn't been reported. Gully cleaning takes place on a scheduled basis and then the service responds when specific issues are reported through service requests.

Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services Division received 28 complaints, 5 of which were upheld either fully (1) or partially (4). The fully upheld complaint related to the service provided to a customer:

- The issue was heard at the LERC (Licensing Enforcement Regulatory Committee). Following the hearing, the licence was granted and the complainant confirmed that he was happy with the actions taken.

The partially upheld complaints related to:

- A customer request not being responded to – this was subsequently resolved by meeting the customer on-site.
- A customer given an indication of the outcome of their food hygiene inspection in advance – the customer subsequently received a lower rating and thus complained.
- The use of employees' personal social media accounts - this has been resolved through the provision of clear guidance to staff

Waste and Fleet Management Division received 34 complaints this quarter; 3 of which were upheld fully and 1 upheld partially. The 3 fully upheld complaints relate to a green waste bin not collected on two consecutive occasions, a missed assisted collection and the inappropriate behaviour of a

member of staff. Remedial actions include letters of apology and customer care refresher training for members of staff.

The partially upheld complaint related to an unemptied bin which was not collected a second time due to contamination. The complaint was partially upheld in recognition that the crew didn't report the contamination in first instance.

4.5.2 Recording of **compliments** is also an important indicator within customer care. Services are being encouraged to log compliments to internal systems. They can then be summarised within this, and future, departmental performance reports. Five compliments were logged by the department in Quarter 3:

- 1 for Highways and Engineering - complimenting the roll-out and workmanship of the LED lighting programme in Heaton.
- 1 for Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services - complimenting the cleaning up of a path by a resident's house.
- 3 for Waste and Fleet Management - 2 of which complimented the helpful and friendly manner of bin crews and the third thanking the service for sorting out a missed collection.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The Environmental Services Department remains on track to deliver its strategic and operational priorities for the Council. Highlights of the report can be found below:

- Positive outputs as a direct result of additional behaviour change funding.
- Co-ordinated response to the unprecedented Boxing Day floods.
- Quarters 1 to 3: 353.31kg of household waste collected per household. Recycling rate, 40.2%.
- 27.78% of bulky waste being recycled and re-used.
- 88% uptake of free school meals for key stage 1 pupils.
- Quarters 1 to 3: 8 play areas refurbished/refreshed.
- 94% litter pass rate in the second Local Environmental Quality borough survey.

6. Recommendations

6.1 The Executive Cabinet Member is asked to comment upon the performance update set out in this report.