

Bolton Council

Report to: Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee

Date: 3rd April 2018

Report of: Director of Place

Report No: ESSC/18/18

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Report Title: **Department of Place Performance Report (Environmental Services) – Quarter 3 2017/18**

Non Confidential: (***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 Scrutiny Committee with an update on Quarter 3 2017/18 departmental performance.

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	_____ Monitoring Officer
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Date: _____

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report summarises Quarter 3 2017/18 performance data for the Environmental Services' elements of the Department of Place.
- 1.2 Progress is reported against strategic priorities and the department's operational priorities as the provider of a number of large front line and support services.

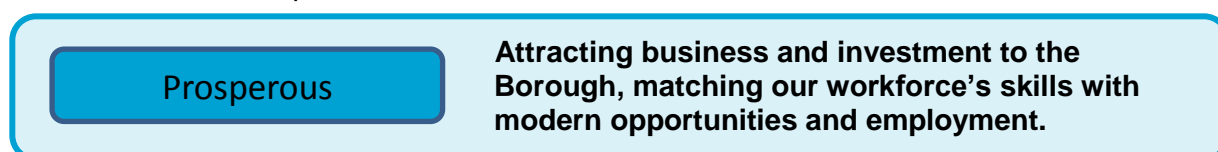
2.0 Supporting the Council to Deliver its Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 In January 2017, the Vision Partnership launched its new Community Strategy to help Bolton be a vibrant place, built on strong cohesive communities, successful businesses and healthy residents. This strategy is known as 'the Bolton 2030 Vision'. The strategy aims to make Bolton a welcome place where people choose to study, work and put down roots.
- 2.2 In relation to this report, at a strategic level, the department supports the priorities below as part of the delivery of the 2030 Bolton Vision.

Picture 1: Strategic Priorities



- 2.3 Key progress on these strategic priorities is highlighted below.
- 2.4 Picture 2: Prosperous



2.5 Delivery of Affordable Housing

To be able to meet our aim in the delivery of affordable housing as part of the Affordable Housing Programmes, the Council aims to support a further 304 affordable homes built across 12 sites (including 25 former right to buy backs).

- 2.6 This quarter, has seen the delivery of 25 homes in Little Lever and another site has secured planning permission which will see 21 units being developed consisting of 2 and 3 bed homes.
- 2.7 A high number of homeownership applications have been received this quarter at 72. The level of sales completed this quarter is 44, which combined with the number of applications received both this and last quarter suggest that the total number of completed sales this year is going to exceed last year's (130). Three of this quarter's sales were through Right to Acquire.

2.8 Private Sector Housing

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. During, this quarter:

- 36 customers have work ongoing or are waiting for work to begin, which is the same as the last Quarter.
- 10 cases have been completed, which is an increase of 6 from last quarter.
- 100% of works have been completed by Bolton contractors.

2.9 Tackling poor property conditions and management of the private rented sector is becoming increasingly important as the sector continues to expand and house more vulnerable people.

2.10 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.

2.11 During this quarter there have been 73 housing, health and safety inspections, the highest amount this year, resulting in 54 category 1 hazards and 345 category 2 hazards being identified. These 73 inspections resulted in 115 hazards being identified relating to excess cold and damp and mould growth. Works were requested to reduce the risk these issues pose and 84 hazards were reduced to acceptable levels following intervention by officers.

2.12 The following notices were issued to owners during this quarter;

- 74 owners were issued with a hazard awareness notices
- 3 improvement notices
- 3 suspended improvement notices
- 3 prohibition orders
- 4 smoke detector notices

2.13 The team were successful in a bid for £258k from the Controlling Migration Fund. This money will be used to tackle rogue landlords whose properties have a negative impact on the local community.

2.14 Picture 3: Clean & Green

Clean & Green

Protecting and improving our environment, so that more people enjoy it, care for it and are active in it.

2.15 Greenspace

Everyday contact with nature and the environment is important for people's well-being and quality of life and providing areas which help to increase awareness and enjoyment of our open spaces and wildlife offers people special opportunities to discover, learn about and enjoy their local environment.

2.16 This quarter, the Greenspace team has seen the installation of a new toddler play area at The Meadows, Middlebrook and work has commenced on the refurbishment

of the play area at Bradford Street Park, Kearsley. This has been made possible through the Equipped Play Area Programme.

- 2.17 In addition, a lease has been granted to a new operator for Queens Park Café & pavilion and the lease holders have refurbished the café which opened in November 2017 and Astley Bridge Park Bowling Club has been successful in a Community Empowerment Fund bid and has taken on the maintenance of the green.

2.18 Street Lighting

The implementation of the LED Street Lighting Programme was introduced in April 2015 and involves approximately 26,000 street lamps on residential streets and main roads in Bolton being replaced with lower carbon LED lanterns. The programme aims to save the Council £14m over 20 years and reduce energy use by around 50%.

- 2.19 At the end of Quarter 3, 27,215 lights in 4,323 streets had been upgraded since the rollout and 90.20 tonnes of existing lanterns had been recycled. Customer satisfaction of the programme had also been well evidenced with just 377 customer complaints received since the start of the roll out, which equated to 1.3% of the 27,215 installations.

2.20 Waste Management

Since the introduction of managed weekly collections as part of the strategic waste diversion programme, the Waste Service has successfully delivered its purpose in diverting waste away from the residual waste stream and to increase recycling rates.

The use of slim bins, together with customer engagement and education and enforcement, has reduced the amount of domestic waste significantly and recycling has increased. This has resulted in avoided waste disposal costs of over £3.8 million by the end of December 2017 which exceeds the original target of £1.25million per year. This makes the total recycling rate for April to December 48.35% an increase of 3.59% compared to the same period last year.

- 2.21 The table below shows the waste and recycling indicators for quarter 3:

Table 1:

	April December 15	- April December 16	- April December 17	
Comingled	8,097	8,904	9,531	18% increase
Pulpables	7,472	7,929	8,133	9% increase
Food and Garden	14,784	16,452	16,856	14% increase
Domestic	38,340	34,246	29,779	22% decrease
Fly Tip	775	689	719	7% decrease
Street Cleansing	3,438	3,352	3,290	4% decrease

- 2.22 The difference between the decrease in domestic waste tonnages and the increase in recycling is attributed to changes in customer behaviours and buying habits, more active approach to waste minimisation and greater diversion of waste to the Household Waste Recycling Centres. Education, awareness raising, information, support and guidance continue to play a key role in achieving waste minimisation targets across the Borough. Waste audits are another method the Council uses to help measure current waste management systems and customer behaviour.

2.23 Education & Enforcement

Neighbourhood Services are continuing with the strategy they adopted in 2010, to move away from primarily cleaning up after the public to changing the behaviour of communities and the Environmental Enforcement Team has completed the following positive actions;

- Dealt with instances of back street waste (bags/furniture/white goods/rubble) with 16.39% of these removed by the public. This has saved the Council an estimated £17,106.00 in clean-up costs.
- Carried out enforcement activity (314 cases) with:
- £8,698 generated in fines/costs as a result of cases taken to Court.
- 30 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) generating £1,840.
- Inspected 100 businesses.
- Served 45 Fixed Penalty Notices which has generated £9,600 (£3,600 pending).
- Following visits, 13 new commercial waste contracts have been taken out with the council at a value of £3,338.

2.24 CO₂ Emissions

CO₂ emissions from the Council's vehicle fleet are monitored with the aim of reducing emissions and minimising pollution caused. We have seen a reduction of 187.6 tonnes of CO₂ emissions from the councils vehicle fleet between April and December 2017/18 compared to the same period in 2016/7.

Table 2: Emissions comparison.

	2016/17 CO ₂ Emissions Tonnes	2017/18 CO ₂ Emissions Tonnes
Q1	626.58	591.11
Q2	613.43	484.38
Q3	613.74	590.66
Total	1,853.75	1,666.15

2.25 Picture 4: Strong & Distinctive

Strong & Distinctive

Developing stronger cohesive, more confident communities in which people feel safe, welcome and connected.

2.26 Day of Action

In order to improve the town centre to create a world class destination for people to live, work, study and invest in Bolton, the department organised a 'Day of Action' where services across the department joined forces for two days in December to address areas where the department has received negative criticism.

- 2.27 The Licensing Team carried out spot checks on vehicles, visited Gambling Act premises, undertook joint visits with UK Border Agency and visited second hand retailers. The Food, Health & Safety and Trading Standards teams, conducted checks on product safety, weights and measures, trade-marks, checks on pedlars and food safety inspections. Officers from the Trading Standards Service seized over 300 unsafe & counterfeit toys and 60 counterfeit hand bags from traders.

2.28 Neighbourhood Management & Area Forums

With the aim to developing stronger, cohesive and more confident communities where people feel welcome and connected, Neighbourhood Management in Halliwell and Rumworth have been working with communities via employment advice, social groups, money skills referrals, training, career advice, work club, education and supported into employment.

2.29 In addition, there have been schemes to bring communities together such as the planning of a new community hub in the former Great Lever Library and the development of 5 new walks under the 'Crompton Heritage Walk' and in order to make them feel safe, social issues impacting on residents in New Bury, Farnworth are being tackled through 'Raise the Youth' and led by Youth Interventions.

2.30 Communities were also connected via the six Area Forum meetings which took place during the 3rd quarter with 179 residents attending across the Borough. Topics covered included updates on crime and policing, early year's childcare provision and an update on local planning applications.

2.31 Community Safety

The BeSafe Strategic Partnership is made up of statutory and non-statutory agencies; co-ordinating plans to reduce crime and disorder, reduce re-offending and improve community safety in Bolton.

2.32 When comparing Quarter 3: 2017/18 with Quarter 3: 2016/17:

- There was an increase in all victim-based crime of 20%. Greater Manchester (GM) as a whole saw an increase of 10%.
- There was an increase in violent crime recorded in Bolton which was greater than that experienced across GM as a whole (increases of 40% and 28% respectively).
- Quarter 3 saw decreases in recorded instances of burglary in Bolton of -5%, compared to -9% across GM; theft offences have increased in Bolton (5%) but decreased across GM (-2%); and robbery offences have increased both in Bolton and GM (58% and 42% respectively).
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) has shown a decrease in Bolton in Quarter 3 continuing the downward movement seen in previous quarters. This trend is mirrored across GM as a whole.
- Hate crime rose by 63% in Quarter 3 in Bolton, and to a greater extent experienced across the rest of GM, where it rose by 37%. Increased recorded incidents of hate crime are seen as a positive indicator as this crime is recognised as being severely under-reported. Similarly, recorded instances of domestic abuse in Bolton exceeded the increases seen across GM in Quarter 3.

2.33 Largely, more crimes are currently being recorded by GMP than previously following the 2016 HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) rating of GMP's crime recording as inadequate. New crime recording processes and a new IT system introduced since the inspection can be seen as the cause of the rise in recorded incidents of crime.

2.34 Need and demand for Housing

To provide housing that is affordable for the people and offers choice whilst meeting the needs and demands of the future need and demand for housing the following data has been gathered and compared to the previous quarter:

2.35 Table 3:

	Quarter 3	Quarter 2	Direction of Travel
No. of applicants on the housing register	28,159	28,214	Decrease
No. of new applications received	938	1,199	Decrease
No. of properties advertised	384	432	Decrease
No. of properties let this Quarter	414	365	Increase
Expressions received	25,289	28,300	Decrease
No. of customers expressing interest	4,062	4,099	Static

2.36 The slight decrease in the total number of applicants on the housing register can be explained in part due to ongoing work on reviewing the register via NFI (National fraud data) which has allowed us to cleanse out of date applications. In addition to this, due to the Christmas period and the week's closure over the bank holidays, there has been a slight dip in the number of new applications received, the number of properties advertised and the expressions received. However, the total number of properties let this Quarter has increased which may be due to increased training of partner landlords and further recording / monitoring of outstanding shortlists to ensure they are being updated.

2.37 In addition, the total number of customers expressing interest has remained relatively static which indicates that whilst there may have been less properties to express interest in this quarter the same number of applicants are actively expressing interest.

2.38 Delivery of Affordable Housing

To be able to meet our aim in the delivery of affordable housing as part of the 2013-17 & 2015-18 Affordable Housing Grant & Affordable Housing Programmes, we will see a further 304 affordable homes built across 12 sites (including 25 former right to buy backs).

2.39 The Homes & Communities Agency Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016-21 (SOAHP) will deliver 136 affordable homes across 9 sites. The SOAHP 16-21 marks a decisive shift towards support for home ownership. Bolton Community Homes will continue to support developing partners to bring forward these schemes. This quarter, one scheme has started on site which will deliver 25 homes in Little Lever and one site secured planning permission which will see 21 units be developed consisting of 2 and 3 bed homes.

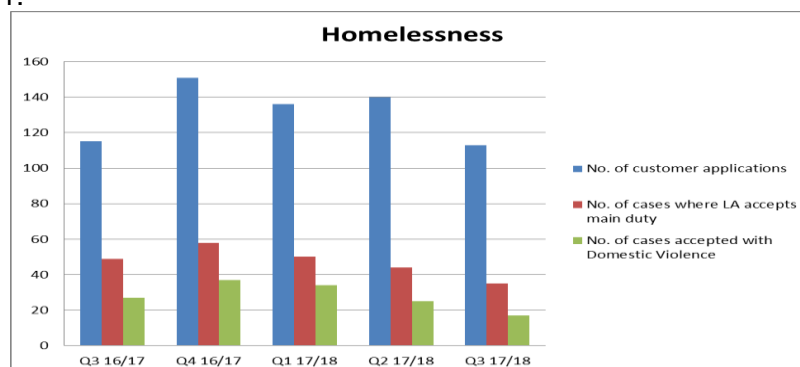
2.40 A high number of homeownership applications have been received this quarter at 72. The level of sales completed this quarter is 44, which combined with the number of applications received both this and last quarter suggest that the total number of completed sales this year is going to exceed last year's (130). Three of this quarter's sales were through Right to Acquire.

2.41 Homelessness

In order to create and promote communities that are sustainable and inclusive, the statutory homeless duty cases have reduced slightly from last quarter to this quarter from 140 cases to 113 cases. There was a reduction in formal part VII of the Housing Act 1996 applications and acceptances this quarter. This reflects a similar reduction in the same quarter each year. Of those accepted for a full main duty, domestic abuse and violence remains the most significant presenting circumstance.

2.42 The chart below shows the trends in homeless cases over the last 12 months and reflects the reduction mentioned above.

2.43 Chart 1:



2.44 Money Advice Service

Money Advice staff have managed over £0.29 million (£288,324) of debts for customers this quarter. They have also helped customers obtain over £40k (£40,878) in financial gains. The debt managed in Quarter 3 has reduced by 18.23% compared to Quarter 2. Similarly the financial gain has also reduced by 28.95% for the same period.

3.0 Departmental Operational Priorities

3.1 In relation to this report, at an operational level, key progress has been made in the areas highlighted below;

3.2 Social Need Transport

The wellbeing of passengers who travelling in the care of Bolton Council is a priority for the Social Needs transport Service and since the start of the school year in September 2017 there have been an additional 21 children requiring transport from the Council taking the number of children transported to 821. This reflects an increase of 2.5% in four months. This has been at the request of the Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) Co-Ordinator and partly due to new children moving into the area and some schools widening the age range of the children they submit.

3.3 Trading Standards

As part of the multi-agency operation known as 'Operation Treacle', to tackle crime and disorder around the Bonfire Night period, officers from the Trading Standards Service conducted advice visits to all 55 premises registered to sell fireworks in Bolton. Test purchase visits were conducted at 14 premises using an underage

volunteer with one property which sold fireworks to the volunteer having a prosecution report prepared.

3.4 Albert Halls

Following the recent transformation of the Albert Halls, event and room bookings are growing rapidly, with more external use from organisations including Robinsons Holidays (based at the Isle of Wight), Jobs Fair, the Handmade Market Co, Comedy Club and Bolton University.

- 3.5 Theatre bookings are continuing for 2018 and now into 2019 with repeat bookings from The Roy Orbison Story and Showaddywaddy for 2019. The pantomime exceeded 17,200 tickets which was a real achievement for the first production following the refurbishment. Wedding bookings continue to grow with the registrars and full wedding packages. The registrars are now to move into their office suite early February. The catering, restaurant and bar provision lots are to be retendered as one lot (dates to be finalised) and an interim bar provider is in place to cover all theatre and events that require a bar.

3.6 Heaton Fold

The garden centre continues to maximise on its potential and show improvement with good Christmas trees sales and income from wreath sales exceeded last year by £1,000. The new marquee is proving to be a fantastic sales space and next year a series of events are being planned to coincide with the Artisan Market and further increase the profitability for the centre and the traders. The market will be run in-house from 2018 due to the disappointing and dwindling number of stalls from the current provider.

3.7 Bolton Market

The market continues to have a growing reputation as the premier food market in the North West with an occupancy rate across Bolton Market at the end of December 2017 (indoor and outdoor combined) at 90%. A variety of popular activities were held in the Lifestyle Hall for families during the December period.

3.8 School Meals

The school meals service endeavours to provide affordable, healthy and high quality school meals to primary and secondary schools across Bolton whilst ensuring that it is sourced from local, sustainable food sources. In terms of paid meals which applies to Key Stage 2 children, this quarter does report a drop in uptake by 5% at 69.3% uptake compared to 73.3% uptake in 2016/17. Quarter 3 is generally a high trading period for the school meals service at the start of the new academic year but there were two factors which have likely influenced uptake levels of primary school meals;

- The 12% increase in the price to the paying parent for the discounted paid meals for KS 2 pupils from £1.25 to £1.40. This was applied in September and reflected a reduced subsidy to deliver on savings options.
- The timing of Ramadan which was early September and affects paid meals levels (KS 2) when pupils are fasting.

- 3.9 Free school meals are made up of statutory free meals and universal infant free meals. For statutory meals the uptake is higher in quarter 3 than the same period the previous year by 1.5 %. Universal infant free meals have seen a reduction of 5% uptake compared to 2016/17. The reason for this is currently being investigated.

3.10 Finance

Ahead of the current financial year, the department was tasked with finding savings of £2.146M within Environmental Services and Housing Services functions throughout 2017/18 and it is expected that 100% of these targets are to be achieved.

3.11 Revenue expenditure is projected to overspend against the budget by £7,000 after planned reserve movements and capital expenditure for 2017/18 at Quarter 3 is £10.885M against a revised projection at Quarter 3 of £17.435M. The services have a projected general reserve of £15,063 for the end of the year.

3.12 Health and Safety at Work

The department is continuing to deliver a programme of training and site assessments to ensure that all services operate in a safe environment. Health and safety performance in Quarter 3 has seen the number of reported staff related incidents within the department increase from 40 in quarter 2 to 48. 52% of these were in Community Services and 27% in Neighbourhood Services. The Health & Safety team continue to targeted staff training, carry out physical improvements within both depots, annual staff campaigns and the establishment of a health and safety working group.

3.13 Managing Sickness

Staff absence within the department during Quarter 3 2017/18 is 3.8 days per FTE and is detailed in Table 1. Cumulative staff absence at Q3 2017/18 is 10.1 days per FTE, an increase compared to cumulative absence at Q3 2016/17 (9.1 days)

3.14 Table 4:

Average Days Sickness Per FTE in 2017/18 – Place Department					
Quarter 1 2017/18	Quarter 2 2017/18	Quarter 3 2017/18	Quarter 4 2017/18	Total 2016/17	Total 2017/18
3.0 days per FTE	3.3 days per FTE	3.8 days per FTE		9.1 days per FTE	10.1 days per FTE

3.15 At present there are 52 on-going long term absence cases in the Place Department, the principal causes of which are stress-related, musculoskeletal / neck or back problems and post-operative recovery. There were 491 occasions of short term absence in the Place Department during Q3 (accounting for 32.3% of the total days lost), the principal causes of which are viral infections and chest / respiratory conditions.

3.16 The Department has undertaken significant management action on attendance during Quarter 3:

- 87 informal counselling meetings
- 81 OH referrals
- 4 warnings were issued
- 1 Ill Health Retirement
- 1 Medical Incapacity dismissal

3.17 All current cases, both long and short term are managed in accordance with the Managing Sickness Absence Framework. Staff absence for the 4 divisions included in this report averaged at 4.0 days per FTE in Quarter 3 2017/18. Cumulative average absence for the 4 divisions has increased when comparing with 2016/17 – 10.5 days, 2017/18 compared with 9.6 days, 2016/17 – a 0.9 day per FTE increase.

3.18 Table 5:

Average Days Sickness Per FTE in 2017/18 – By Division						
Division	Quarter 1 2017/18	Quarter 2 2017/18	Quarter 3 2017/18	Quarter 4 2017/18	Total 2016/17	Total 2017/18
Community Services	2.7	2.7	3.7		8.9	9.1
Highways and Engineering	2.8	2.8	4.4		10.0	10.0
Neighbourhood and Reg Services	4.0	4.2	3.9		9.3	12.1
Waste and Fleet Management	2.6	4.2	4.2		10.2	11.0
Average for 4 Divisions	3.0	3.5	4.0		9.6	10.5

3.19 While Highways & Engineering has maintained the same level of absence compared to last year, the other 3 Divisions have all seen an increase in sickness levels. Neighbourhood & Regulatory Services has seen the most significant increase which is, in the main, due to long term absence in the Regulatory Services and Libraries & Museums sections. In addition, although there has been an improvement in the Cleansing & Grounds section compared to last year, absence levels remain above the average for the 4 Divisions.

3.20 Requests for Information

Requests for information are made under either The Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 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. Information for quarters 1 & 2 has previously been unavailable due to a system change therefore the information for all three quarters is as follows:

3.21 Table 6:

Quarter	Number of Requests for Information Received	No. Place Dept. Requests	No. Cross Cutting Requests	Percentage Answered on Time
1	110	102	8	90%
2	128	124	4	94%
3	117	108	9	92%

3.22 During all three quarters largest proportion of requests received by the department were for Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services who received 47 during quarter1, 69 during quarter 2 and 57 for quarter 3.

4.0 Conclusions

4.1 This report summarises Quarter 3, 2017/18 performance for the Environmental Services' Executive Member's portfolio. The services remain on track to deliver their strategic and operational priorities for the Council.

5.0 Recommendation

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