

Bolton Council

Report to: Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee

Date: 28th August 2018

Report of: Director of Place

Report No:
ECMES/304 and ESSC/304

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Report Title: **Department of Place Performance Report (Environmental Services) – Quarter 4 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 4 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

Date: _____

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report summarises Quarter 4 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.
- 1.3 The detailed financial aspect is separately reported (via the quarterly finance report) to the Executive Cabinet Member.

2.0 Supporting the Council to Deliver its Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 In January 2017, the Vison 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, services within the Environmental Services portfolio support the priorities below as part of the delivery of the 2030 Bolton Vision.
- 2.3 Diagram 1: Strategic Priorities



Key progress on these strategic priorities is highlighted below.

- 2.4 Diagram 2: Clean & Green



2.5 Greenspace

Everyday contact with nature and the environment is important for people's well-being and quality of life. 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.

- 2.5.1 This quarter, through the Equipped Play Area Programme, the Greenspace team has completed the refurbishment of the play area at Brentwood Drive, Farnworth, and the play area at Bradford Street Park, Kearsley. Significant structural repairs (to the value of c£95,000) on one of the bridges in Leverhulme Park have also been completed. During 2017/18, a total of 5 play areas have been constructed, refurbished or refreshed.
- 2.5.2 In addition, the 3G pitch at Old Station Park, Horwich is nearing completion which follows on from the completed 3G pitch project at Westhoughton High School/Sports Centre.

2.6 **Street Lighting**

At the end of Quarter 4, 28,091 lights in 4,378 streets had been upgraded since the LED Programme rollout and 94.00 tonnes of existing lanterns had been recycled. Customer satisfaction of the programme had also been well evidenced with just 401 customer complaints received since the start of the roll out, which equated to 1.3% of the 28,091 installations.

2.7 **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.

2.7.1 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 £4 million by the end of March 2018, which exceeds the original target of £1.25million per year. This makes the total recycling rate for April to March 47.02% an increase of 2.59% compared to the same period last year.

2.7.2 Table 1 shows the waste and recycling indicators for year end:

Table 1:	Apr 15 – Mar 16 TONNAGE	Apr 16 – Mar 17 TONNAGE	Apr 17– Mar 18 TONNAGE	Variance
Comingled	10,952	12,181	12,854	5.5% increase
Pulpables	10,203	10,821	10,941	1.1% increase
Food and Garden	17,518	19,872	19,836	0.1% decrease
Domestic	50,968	44,269	39,594	10.6% decrease
Fly Tip	1,042	962	1,001	4.0% increase
Street Cleansing	4,567	4,569	4,318	5.8% decrease

2.7.3 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.

2.8 **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. In quarter 4, the Environmental Enforcement Team completed the following positive actions:

- Dealt with 561 instances of back street waste (bags/furniture/white goods/rubble) – 13.19% moved by the public (estimated council cost to remove, £11,946.00)
- Carried out enforcement activity (344 cases)
- £2,756 generated in fines/costs as a result of cases taken to Court.
- 45 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) generating £1,520
- Inspected 202 businesses
- Served 39 Fixed Penalty Notices which will generate £10,200 (£1,500 pending)

- Following visits, 11 new commercial waste contracts have been taken out with the council at a value of £3,669.00

2.8.1 Over the course of 2017/18, the Environmental Enforcement Team completed the following positive actions:

- Dealt with 2,883 instances of back street waste (bags/furniture/white goods/rubble) – 17.86% moved by the public (estimated council cost to remove, £97,965.00)
- Carried out enforcement activity (1,990 cases)
- £18,750 generated in fines/costs as a result of cases taken to Court
- 200 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) generating £9,600
- Inspected 897 businesses
- Served 154 Fixed Penalty Notices which will generate £45,300 (£1,500 pending)
- Following visits, 79 new commercial waste contracts have been taken out with the council at a value of £22,192.00

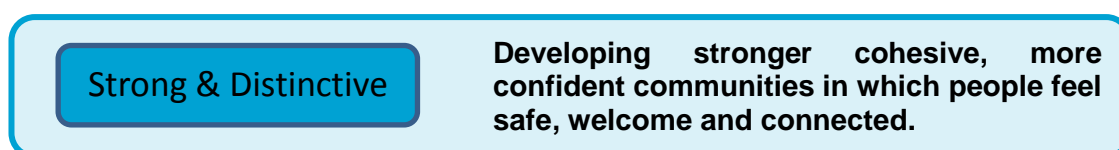
2.9 **CO₂ Emissions**

CO₂ emissions from the Council's vehicle fleet are monitored with the aim of reducing emissions and minimising pollution caused. There has been a reduction of 192.18 tonnes of CO₂ emissions from the Council's vehicle fleet between April 2017 and March 2018 compared to the same period in 2016/7.

2.9.1 Table 2: Emissions comparison

	2016/17 CO ₂ Emissions Tonnes	2017/18 CO ₂ Emissions Tonnes
Q1	626.58	591.11
Q2	613.73	484.38
Q3	613.74	590.66
Q4	592.48	588.20
Total	2,446.53	2,254.35

2.10 Diagram 3: Strong & Distinctive



2.11 **Private Sector Housing**

The Care and Repair service received 3,655 enquiries this year, which is an increase of 734 from last year. The service provides advice and assistance for older and vulnerable customers including the provision of grant schemes such as Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs); Safe, Warm and Dry; Better Behaving Boilers; minor home improvement grants, and the Handyperson service.

2.11.1 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:

- 40 customers have work ongoing or are waiting for work to begin, which is a slight increase from last quarter;
- Overall in 2017-18, 78 surveys were undertaken and 38 cases completed, with 14 cases have been completed, which is an increase of 4 from last quarter;
- 100% of works have been completed by Bolton contractors;
- The Handyperson service completed 1,457 jobs this year

2.11.2 In terms of DFGs, enquiries in the quarter were 135, which is a slight decrease when compared to Q3 at 138. Overall enquires received at the end of year were 580 for 2017/18 compared to 399 in 2016/17. Timescales for Q4 improved to 238 days. Overall timescale for the year improved to 268 days compared to 288 days in 2016/17. Waiting times for Priority 1 cases have reduced significantly, which is largely due to policy changes implemented half way through the year, and also the significantly increased budget, which has enabled extra capacity to be introduced within the team. It is anticipated that approximately £2.3m will have been spent this financial year.

2.11.3 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.

2.11.4 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. During 2017/18, 599 properties were brought back into use.

2.11.5 During this quarter there have been 65 housing, health and safety (HHSRS) inspections, resulting in 56 category 1 hazards and 219 category 2 hazards being identified. These 65 inspections resulted in 81 hazards being identified relating to excess cold and damp and mould growth. Works were requested to reduce the risk these issues posed. 82 hazards were reduced to acceptable levels during the quarter following intervention by officers. In 2017/18 248 HHSRS inspections were carried out resulting in 209 category 1 hazards and 978 category 2 hazards being identified, with 567 hazards being reduced to an acceptable level.

2.11.6 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. The team is now in place and will implement the action plan from April 2018.

2.12 **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:

2.12.1 Table 3:

	Quarter 4	Quarter 3	Direction of Travel
No. of applicants on the housing register	29,035	28,159	Increase
No. of new applications received	1,271	938	Increase
No. of properties advertised	433	384	Increase
No. of properties let this Quarter	382	414	Decrease
Expressions received	29,392	25,289	Increase
No. of customers expressing interest	3,995	4,062	Static

2.12.2 There has been an increase in new housing applications, number of applicants on register and number of properties advertised in quarter four in comparison to quarter 3. This is likely due to the Christmas period and the week's closure over the bank holidays in quarter 3 which will lead to a temporary drop in figures.

2.12.3 Property lets have decreased slightly from quarter 3 to quarter 4, this may be partly due to New Build Properties being advertised at the Oldhams estate which are still awaiting allocation on the system.

2.12.4 Properties let for end of year 17/18 total: 1,617 a decrease on the previous year end 16/17 total: 2169 of 25%. This would be in keeping with slight drop in advertised properties for end of year 17/18 total 1,699 compared to year end 16/17 total: 2,169.

2.12.5 In addition, the total number of customers expressing interest has remained relatively static which indicates that whilst there has been an increase in new applications and advertised properties the same number of applicants are actively expressing interest via the Homes for Bolton CBL system.

2.13 **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).

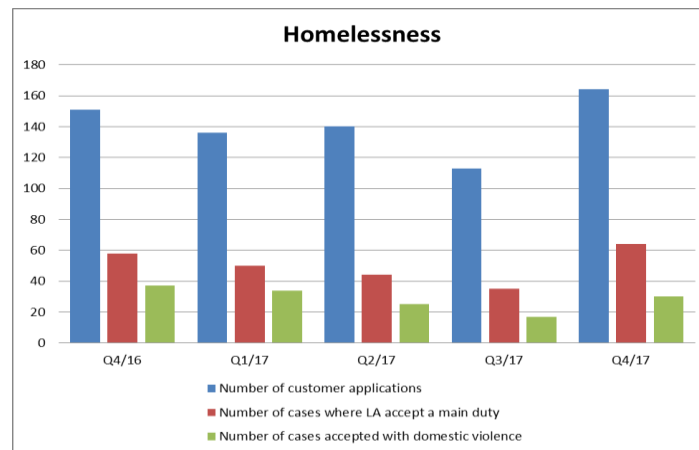
2.13.1 The Homes & Communities Agency Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016-21 (SOAHP) will deliver 146 affordable homes across 9 sites. Bolton Community Homes will continue to support developing partners to bring forward these schemes. This quarter, one scheme is due to complete which will deliver 30 homes in the Town Centre and two schemes have started on site which will see 46 units be developed consisting of 2 and 3 bed homes. 4 Right to Buy backs have been acquired in this quarter.

2.13.2 There were 56 completions this quarter, the highest amount of the year and resulting in a total of 174 an increase from last year's (130). Six of this quarter's sales were through Right to Acquire. There was a reduction however in the number of applications this quarter, more than likely due to seasonal factors.

2.14 **Homelessness**

The statutory homeless duty cases have risen from last quarter to this quarter from 113 cases to 164 cases. There was an increase in formal part VII of the Housing Act 1996 applications and acceptances this quarter. This reflects a similar rise in the same quarter last year. Of those accepted for a full main duty, domestic abuse and violence remains the most significant presenting circumstance being 47%. Reporting for the coming year will look very different due to the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act which commenced on 3rd April, 2018.

2.14.1 Chart 2 below shows the trends in homeless cases over the last 12 months and reflects the reduction mentioned above.



2.15 **Money Advice Service**

Money Advice staff have managed over £0.4 million (£419,356) of debts for customers this quarter. They have also helped customers obtain over £71k (£71,341) in financial gains. The debt managed in Quarter 4 has increased by 45.44% compared to Quarter 3. Similarly the financial gain has also increased by 74.52% for the same period. Total debt managed in 2017/18 is £1,624,765, with financial gains of £241,676 in the same period.

2.16 **Neighbourhood Management & Area Forums**

The Council organised 18 Area Forum meetings across 17/18, 4 of which were linked to community networking events, thus attracting higher attendances and received positive feedback from Members and residents. The total number of attendees for the year was 427 (20% increase on previous year) with 124 attending meetings for the first time (average attendance of 27). 103 questions were asked on a wide range of issues during the open forum question sessions (average per meeting of 7).

2.17 **Community Safety**

The BeSafe Strategic Partnership is comprised of statutory and non-statutory agencies coordinating plans to reduce crime and disorder, reduce re-offending, and improve community safety in Bolton. The following data is obtained from Greater Manchester Police and is included in the Partnership's Performance Dashboard. Evaluation of these crimes, and reasons for increases and decreases, is undertaken by GMP – any relevant issues can be reported in future performance reports once evaluation has taken place.

2.17.1 When comparing Q4 2017/18 with Q4 2016/17:

- There was an increase in all victim-based crime of 15%. Greater Manchester (GM) as a whole saw an increase of 3%.
- There was an increase in violent crime recorded in Bolton to a greater extent experienced across GM as a whole (an increase of 31% and 14% respectively). Contributing to the violence position is Domestic Abuse (DA) and a rise in Public Order offending. There are real positives around crime recording integrity and around the confidence of victims in terms of DA reporting, and because of the changes to crime recording, it's now pretty common for an old 'Youths Causing Annoyance' incident log to now result in the recording of a public order related crime, rather than anti-social behaviour.
- There were increases in recorded instances of robbery and theft offences in Bolton, but a decrease in burglary offences.
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) has shown a decrease in Bolton continuing the downward movement seen in Quarter 3. Bolton exceeded Greater Manchester's overall fall in ASB during Q4. As described above the contributing factor to this is down to crime recording and previous incidents that would have been logged as anti-social behaviour are now largely recorded as public order related crime.
- Hate crime increased in Bolton (17%), to broadly the same proportion as experienced across GM as a whole. This increase is seen as positive due to hate crime being historically under-reported.

2.17.2 When comparing 2017/18 with 2016/17:

- Increases in victim-based crime are greater in Bolton compared to Greater Manchester as a whole (29% and 18% respectively). Acquisitive crime (burglary, theft, robbery) increased in both GM and Bolton in 2017/18. Violent offences increased to a greater extent in Bolton than GM (51% and 41%) respectively, but the opposite was evident for sexual offences (41% increase in GM but a 32% increase in Bolton).
- Anti-social behaviour decreased in both GM and Bolton to a similar extent in 2017/18.
- Recorded instances of domestic abuse saw a greater increase within Bolton than across Greater Manchester as a whole.
- Hate crime in Bolton over the course of 2017/18 saw a similar increase to that seen across Greater Manchester, around 50%.

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 travel under the care of Bolton Council is a priority for the Social Needs transport Service. The service currently transports 848 pupils per day to schools across Bolton and the North West, which is an increase from 800 in September 2017 due to the opening of a new nursery at the Orchards and -year admissions to schools within the borough.

3.3 Albert Halls

Event and room bookings in the Albert Halls continue to grow.

3.3.1 17/18:
 Total number of room bookings = 393 internal / 32 external
 Total number of theatre bookings = 7 productions (starting with the pantomime on 1 December 2017)

3.3.2 18/19 in the diary:
 Total number of room bookings = 125 internal / 4 external
 Total number of theatre bookings = 54 productions

3.3.3 The Registrars have completed their move into the ground floor accommodation and wedding ceremonies/receptions present significant growth potential for the Albert Halls. There are currently 4 ceremonies and 2 receptions booked in for 18/19.

3.4 **Heaton Fold**
 End of year income was up 34% on the previous year and continues to increase due to stronger financial management including improvements on profit margins, supplier prices and quality of stock.

3.5 **Bolton Market**
 The occupancy rate across Bolton Market at the end of March (indoor and outdoor combined) is 91% (up from 90% last quarter) compared with 94% at the end of last year. 2017/18 highlights:

- A variety of popular activities were held in the Lifestyle Hall for families during the Easter period;
- There were a number of vacant units in the Lifestyle Hall, which have been filled in the New Year.

3.6 **School Meals**
 The school meals service endeavours to provide affordable, healthy and high quality school meals to primary and secondary schools across Bolton, while ensuring it is sourced from local, sustainable food sources. Quarter 4 is generally a high trading period, with good meal uptake levels aligned to cold weather; however, there has already been a reported drop in intake owing to the 12% increase in the primary discounted paid meal and a fall in roll across the local primary sector from September 2017.

3.6.1 Table 4:

Meal Type	16/17 Total (%)	17/18 Total (%)	Variance (%)
Universal Infant Free School Meals – KS1 Pupils	86.1	85.4	- 0.7
Statutory Free Meal	77.0	84.0	7.0
Paid/Discounted – KS2 Pupils	63.9	60.4 (*)	- 3.5

(*) The value is the national benchmarked highest in class (2017) APSE

3.6.2 Free school meals are made up of statutory free meals and universal infant free meals. In Q4, the uptake for statutory free meals is 7.0% higher when compared with the same period in 2016/17. Conversely, uptake of universal infant free meals and paid/discounted meals has reduced by 0.7% and 3.5% respectively for reasons outlined in 3.8 above.

3.7 **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. In Quarter 4, the number of reported staff related incidents within the department is the same as Q3 (**43**). 42% of these were in Community Services and 29% in Waste and Fleet Services.

3.8 Staff absence within the whole Place Department, Quarter 4 2017/18 is 4.0 days per FTE and is detailed in Table 1. Cumulative staff absence at Q4 2017/18 is 14.2 days per FTE, an increase compared to cumulative absence at Q4 2016/17 (12.5 days)

3.8.1 Table 5:

Average Days Sickness Per FTE in 2017/18 – Department of Place					
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	3.9 days per FTE	4.0 days per FTE	12.5 days per FTE	14.2 days per FTE

3.8.2 At present there are 49 on-going long term absence cases in the Department, the principal causes of which are stress-related, musculoskeletal / neck or back problems and post-operative recovery. There were 581 occasions of short term absence in the Place Department during Q4 (accounting for 38.8% of the total days lost), the principal causes of which are viral infections and chest / respiratory conditions.

3.8.3 The Department has undertaken significant management action on attendance during Quarter 4:

- 112 informal counselling meetings
- 55 OH referrals
- 5 warnings were issued

3.8.4 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 4.2 days per FTE in Quarter 4 2017/18. Cumulative average absence for the 4 divisions has increased when comparing with 2016/17 – 14.8 days, 2017/18 compared with 13.2 days, 2016/17 – a 1.6 day per FTE increase.

3.8.5 Table 6:

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	3.9	3.7	12.1	13.0
Highways and Engineering	2.7	2.8	4.5	4.3	13.8	14.3
Neighbourhood and Reg Services	4.0	4.2	4.0	3.7	13.2	15.9

Waste and Fleet Management	2.6	4.1	4.0	5.3	13.6	16.0
Average for 4 Divisions	3.0	3.5	4.1	4.2	13.2	14.8

3.8.6 All 4 Divisions have all seen an increase in sickness levels compared to last year. 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 a significant improvement in the Cleansing & Grounds section compared to last year, absence levels in this area remain above the average for the 4 Divisions.

3.9 **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.

3.9.1 During quarter 4, 142 requests for information under either The Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 or the Data Protection Act 1998 were received by the department. Of these requests, 128 were for the department alone and 14 were cross cutting across the Council. 92% of these were answered on time.

3.9.2 Table 7 below shows the profile of requests for information for 2017/18:

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%
4	142	128	14	92%

3.10 **Managing Customer Care**

The department always aims to provide the highest possible quality of service to communities but recognises that there are times when things go wrong and fail to meet the expectations of our customers. These indicators provide a useful tool that the department can use to judge objectively how well complaints are being handled.

3.10.1 In Q4, the department received 95 stage one complaints. The department reviews all complaints and each customer is contacted to explain whether their complaint has been upheld (complaint found in the customer's favour), partially upheld or not upheld and why. Table 8 below shows the percentage of complaints which were upheld, partially upheld or not upheld recorded at stage one.

Table 8: Complaint Outcome				
	Q1 17/18	Q2 17/18	Q3 17/18	Q4 17/18
Number of complaints upheld at stage one as % of all complaints per quarter. (Decrease shows improvement)	6%	5%	1%	2%
Number of complaints not upheld at stage one as % of all complaints (Increase shows improvement)	80%	84%	95%	93%
Number of complaints partially upheld at stage one as % of all complaints. (Decrease shows improvement)	10%	11%	4%	5%
Number of complaints deferred (requesting more information) at stage one as % of all complaints.	4%	0%	0%	0%

3.10.2 Recording of compliments is also an important indicator within customer care. 91 compliments were logged in Quarter 4; 1 for Waste, 2 for Parking Services and 88 for Highways and Engineering.

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 This report summarises Quarter 4, 2017/18 performance for the Executive Cabinet Member's Environmental Services 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.