

Report to Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board

Corporate Performance Report 2024/25 for Q2 Corporate Performance Report (1st July to 30th September 2024)

Portfolio Holder (CPR):

Cllr Arooj Shah, Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham

Officer Contact (CPR):

Steve Hughes, Assistant Director Strategy & Performance

Report Author (CPR):

Gail M. Stott, Performance Improvement Lead, Strategy & Performance

CPR collated by: Performance Improvement Team, Strategy & Performance

Contact: StrategyandPerformance@oldham.gov.uk

Date: 4th December 2024

Reason for decision

Scrutiny of corporate performance aims to provide assurance that:

- services are aligned to corporate priorities and the needs of our residents (resident focus)
- our services are good, or are on track to good
- any services that are not on track, or have identified risks, are being supported or challenged to rectify this
- any demand indicators or resource pressures are being noted and service provision is being re-assessed accordingly
- the organisation has robust performance management processes in place.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of corporate performance against agreed service business plan measures for the 2024/25 Q2 period (July - September).

Recommendations

Scrutiny Board members are asked to:

- note the progress in implementing the business plan objectives
- celebrate areas of consistent good performance
- note the comments on progress
- consider areas for review (good or poor) that could produce learning for the organisation
- note the interconnection of these actions with ongoing activities in other portfolio and Scrutiny Board remits and key projects.

Appendix:

1. Resources CPR - Finance; Legal Services; Corporate Resources

Report to Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board

Corporate Performance Report 2024/25 for Quarter 2: 1st July to 30th September 2024

Portfolio Holder (CPR): Cllr Arooj Shah, Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham

Officer Contact (CPR): Steve Hughes, Assistant Director of Strategy & Performance

Report date: 4th December 2024

CPR collated by: Performance Improvement Team
StrategyandPerformance@oldham.gov.uk

Core Resources

Key Performance Indicators

RED

KPI underperforming by more than 5%

AMBER

KPI underperforming by less than 5%

GREEN

KPI meeting or outperforming target

Communications & Research

9 KPIs *(No Targets)*

Human Resources & Organisational Development

10 KPIs *(No Targets)*

Finance

2 KPIs
*(No targets)*1 KPI
*(Red)*1 KPI
*(Amber)*4 KPIs
(Green)

Customer Services

8 KPIs
*(No Targets)*1 KPI
*(Red)*1 KPI
*(Amber)*2 KPIs
(Green)

IT

1 KPI
*(Red)*0 KPI
*(Amber)*9 KPIs
(Green)

Corporate Resources:

Service areas include:

- Communications & Research (Strategy & Performance)
- Complaints; Customer Services (Customer & Digital)
- HR&OD
- IT (Operations)

Communications & Research

(part of Strategy & Performance)

Performance Measures & Business Plan Report

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Arooj Shah, Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham

Officer Contact: Smyth Harper (*Interim Head of Communications and Research*)

Service Summary:

The Communications and Research team strategically plans, manages and delivers all communications and research activity for Oldham Council, focused on achieving agreed corporate priorities. Communications and engagement activity is delivered across a range of digital and traditional channels, including through the press, social media, web content, face to face engagement, out of home collateral and more; all tailored to our diverse external and internal audiences and adapted for the channels they use.

Communications & Research Strategic priorities

We have four agreed strategic priorities for 2023/24

These will be fully evaluated as new metrics are available in 2024/25

Interim activity against each of the measurables is detailed on the following slides, followed by a quarterly snapshot of metrics on our key digital channels

Increase pride in the borough from the Resident Survey of 2022/23. In that survey, 74% of respondents said they were satisfied with their local area but only 35% said they would recommend it as a tourist destination. We'll increase these to at least 79% (LGA average) and 40% by the next Resident Survey.

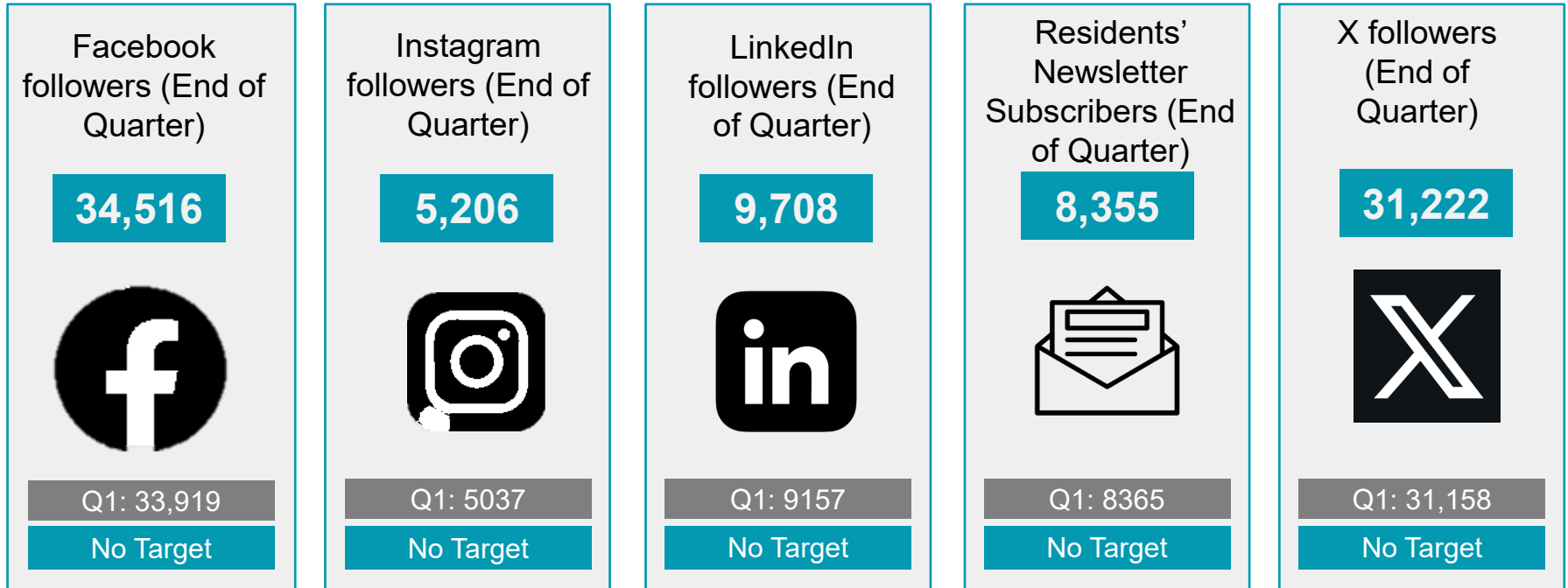
Increase resident satisfaction with Council communications - We'll measure this by aiming to reduce the number of people who say they don't receive any information from the Council (21% in the 2022/23 Resident Survey) to less than 20%.

Improve two-way engagement with our workforce. In our most recent Staff Survey only 41% of staff said senior management "communicate effectively with me". We aim to improve that to at least 50% by the next Staff Survey via the implementation of a strategic Internal Communications Strategy. The strategy will also act as our 'golden thread' of engagement touchpoints we have with staff in 2023/24.

Manage key reputational issues in an honest, transparent and people-focused way. We will ensure our residents have access to factual and timely information and enable media to produce fair and balanced reports.

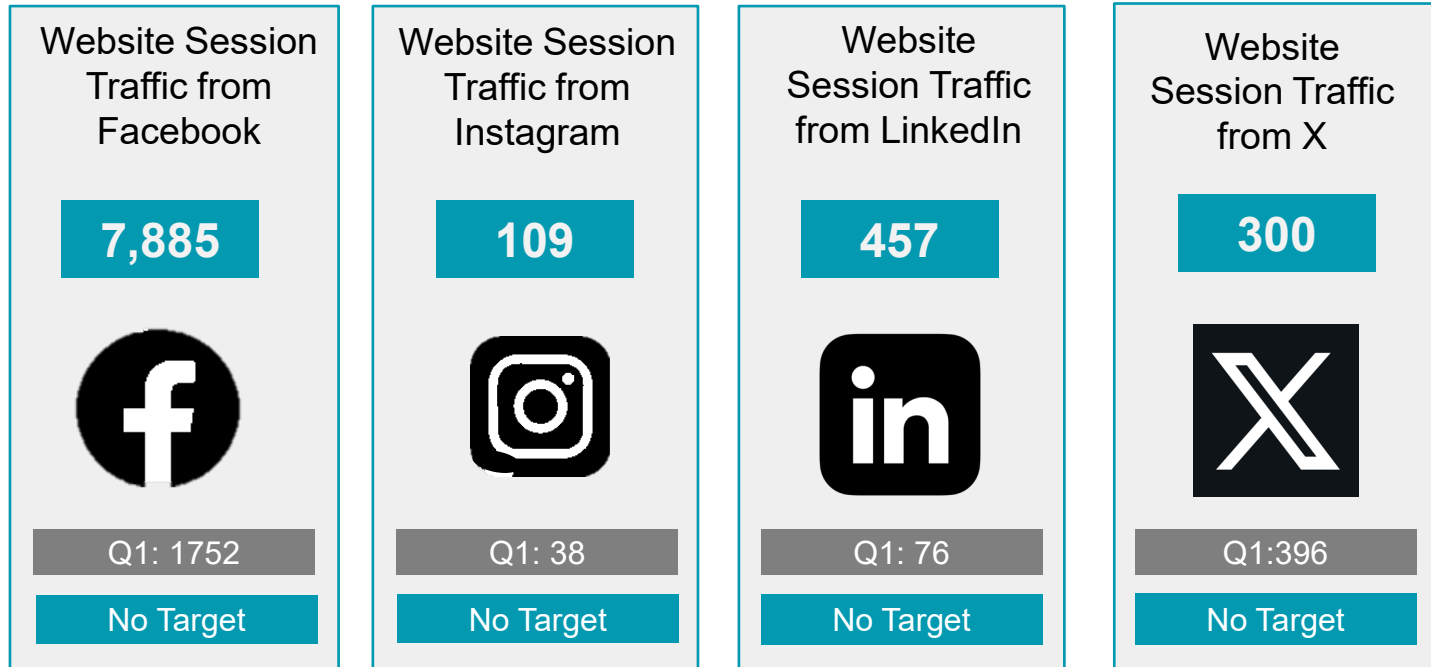
Communications & Research

Key Metrics (no targets) - Social Media



Communications & Research

Key Metrics (no targets) - Web Figures



* Figures are an average over 3-month period

Communications & Research

Progress Against Key Annual Priorities

Increase pride in the borough	Sharing inspirational stories of Oldhamers have performed well on social media throughout this quarter.
Increase resident satisfaction with Council Communications	Using more people-focused stories has improved positive contributions from Oldhamers on social media channels.

Communications & Research

Progress Against Key Annual Priorities

Improve two-way engagement with our workforce	<p>Continue to improve "open rates" of internal channels such as CEO update and Team Brief.</p> <p>Work is progressing on redeveloping the intranet to make it fit for the future.</p> <p>Work is progressing with HR and ICT to include organisational charts on Teams so that all colleagues can identify who each other are.</p>
Managing key reputational issues	<p>Secured key coverage in influential trade press about Muse partnership.</p> <p>Enhanced the town's retail offer with successful launch of Oldham Gift Card</p> <p>Demonstrated commitment to children and young people with very positive coverage around Family Hub opening</p> <p>Managed tragic story about babies being historically buried in unmarked graves in town by providing compassionate and dignified media statements, and carefully and discreetly providing guidance to media when they were given misinformation from other sources.</p>

Communications & Research

Comments

Q1: David Rose (Interim Head of Communications and Research)

Successful development and initial delivery of new corporate communications strategy with focus on coherent campaigns to better show Council activities and 'intervention' to improve the borough and people's lives
Two elections and surrounding issues managed smoothly.
Improved proactive media relations approach securing better quality and volume of coverage
Improved 'people-centred' approach to social media content
New, coherent corporate campaigns and themes underway to improve Council reputation
Successful one-off communications support to Council and political 'one off' activities

Q2: Smyth Harper (Interim Head of Communications and Research)

We have successfully embedded a more people-focused approach to social media with positive and inspirational stories about Oldham people.
A number of milestones were reached, including the opening of all of the Family Hubs and the successful launch of the Oldham Gift card.
Preparations underway for a service redesign for the communications service to deliver financial savings and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service which is fully aligned with Council strategic priorities.

Signed Off: 24/10/24

Communications & Research

Portfolio Holder Comment

Q1: Cllr Arooj Shah (Leader & Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham)

Two instances of PERP have limited the Council's opportunities to communicate to our residents, but the time has allowed the team to focus on planning ahead for the year and to alter the way they deliver communications campaigns. I am hopeful this change in approach can have a positive impact on the Council's reputation and look forward to seeing the Comms team highlighting the good work that this organisation does every day of the week to support our residents, improve their lives and the Borough.

Q2: Cllr Arooj Shah (Leader & Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham)

The people focused comms approach is welcomed, and the Communications team have played vital roles in a number of key milestones for the Council over Q2, including continuing to support our Family Hubs programme and increasing awareness of the services on offer and the launch of the Oldham gift card, increasing the money spent in Oldham.

Signed Off: 11/11/2024

Customer Services

(part of Customer & Digital)

Performance Measures & Business Plan Report

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Peter Dean, Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities & Culture

Officer Contact: Pam Siddall (Head of Customer Services)

Service Summary: Customer Services provides the following services:

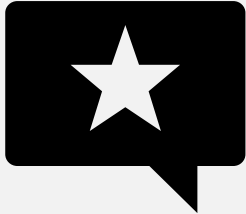
- Customer Support Centre
- Access Oldham & Helpline
- Support & Inclusion
- Welfare Rights
- Blue Badge
- Local Welfare Provision
- Service Development, Systems & Quality

Customer Services

Key Metrics (against target where set)

Post Call Customer
Satisfaction
Surveys

91.39%



Q1: 90.45%

Target: 90%

[Green]

Call Quality
Evaluation

94.4%

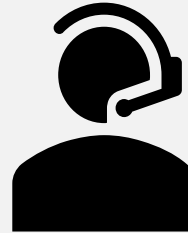


Q1: 95.24%

No target

% Calls
Answered

86.43%



Q1: 88.26%

Target: 89%

[Amber]

Average Call Wait
time (All Queues)

00:06:39



Q1: 00:06:08

Target: <00:12:00

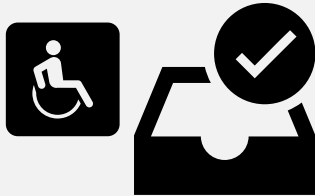
[Green]

Customer Services

Key Metrics (no targets)

Blue Badge: Average number of days taken from Application to decision

33 days



Q1: 32 days

No target

Blue Badge: Average number of days taken from Referral for IMA to decision

15 days



Q1: 19 days

No target

Customer Service Centre - Average wait time (combined services)

00:07:35

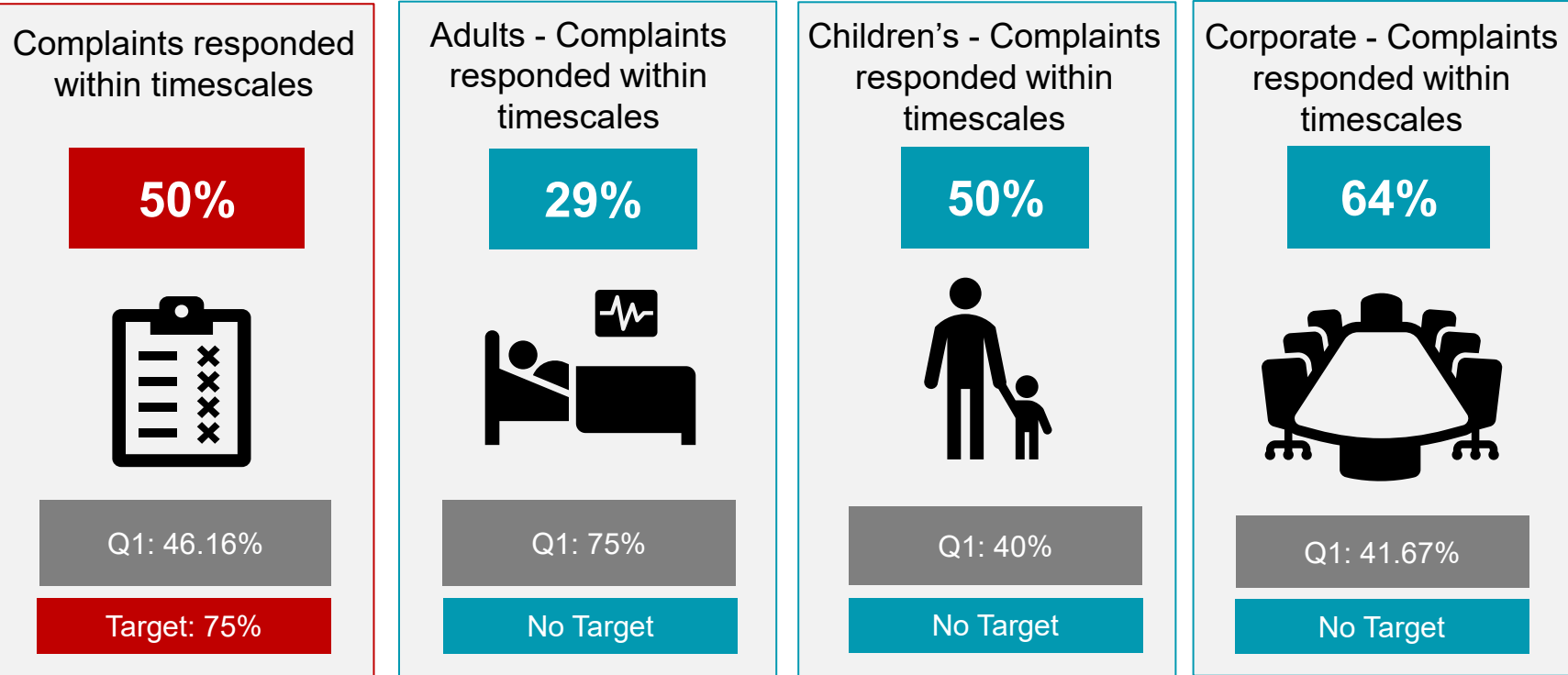


New Measure

No target

Complaints

Key Metrics (against target where set)



Customer Services

Successes

Customer Service Centre	The new Customer Service Centre opened in Spindles in July. Replace the offer in Access Oldham, the new offer including more partner service available across the week. The new space was developed with input from Oldham Poverty Action Network. We have received fantastic feedback from residents and partners about the new location.
Customer Support Centre	The team have undertaken some outbound calls over the summer to support specific campaigns including supporting school attendance and targeted Pension Credit Uptake.
Blue Badge	Due to improved ways of working the team have been able to free up additional time for the occupational therapist to undertake their work.
Local Welfare Provision	LWP spend is monitored on a regular basis to identify any areas where costs can be saved to offer support to other residents in need.
Call Wait Times	The average wait time remains well under target. There is significant variation across services which will be addressed once new starters have been trained.

Customer Services

Areas for Development (across all metrics)

Complaints	<p>The Complaints Team has recently undertaken a service review to help ensure it can support services to work with a resident focus. A number of steps have already been taken to improve performance, with a number of additional proposals in the process of being discussed at relevant DMTs. An update is due to be presented to Management Board in October, once all relevant DMTs have been attended. In addition, the Complaints Team has increased the frequency of progress reports to each directorate area in order to ensure services are fully aware of the status of open complaints and what is required.</p>
Calls Answered	<p>The team are understaffed but currently undergoing a recruitment process for more staff. Once the candidates are taken on and fully trained, we should see an improvement.</p>

Customer Services

Comments

Q1 Comments: Pam Siddall (Head of Customer Service)

Performance has been steady and, in some areas, improved. There are some areas for development and work continues to implement digital solutions to remove non-added value activity. Pressures remain until recruitment can be carried out, which is imminent. Further loss of established staff has provided challenge specifically on the Benefits line; the team are working with the back-office service to enable training for our team as soon as practicable. Implementation of the automated switchboard went very well, and we are close to optimum levels of automated transfers on that line.

Q2 Comments: Fran Lautman (Head of Customer and Digital Experience)

The Customer Service Centre based at Spindles opened in July. As the central 'Working for You' site the location includes access to a range of partner services. We have received really positive feedback about the new location. This period has seen some changes to service alignment. Welfare Rights and Support and Inclusion have moved to Revenues and Benefits due to the synergy with the service area around financial support. Complaints became part of the service in June and Registrars joins Customer Service from 1st October. A service review of Complaints has taken place over the summer. Several areas for improvement have been identified and the Service Manager is working closely with each directorate to support and embed the changes as part of our commitment to work with a resident focus and improvement the quality and timeliness of Complaints. Moving forward, all teams within Customer Services are preparing for the launch of the council's Winter communications campaign. This includes delivery of Household Support Fund 6 and supporting residents with Pension Credit uptake.

Signed Off: 10/10/2024

Customer Services

Portfolio Holder Comments

Q1 Comments: Cllr Peter Dean, Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities & Culture

I am pleased that since an automated switchboard was launched in May, over 80% of calls received via the switchboard are now handled by the self-service solution with staff on hand to support residents who prefer or need to speak to a member of the team. This change is crucial to supporting capacity to be diverted to other service lines. And I am particularly happy that satisfaction remains above 90% with this switch in place.

Q2 Comments: Cllr Peter Dean, Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities & Culture

There is considerable work to do to ensure compliance to our targets in regards to complaints, this has been raised with Cabinet colleagues and Management Board to ensure we continue to uphold high-standards for the service our residents receive from the Council across portfolios and service areas.

The opening of the central 'Working for You' site in Spindles is important as it gives residents a place to come and resolve seek support/advice in person, which is vital and cannot be underestimated.

Signed Off: 12/11/24

Glossary:

- CSC: Customer Support Centre
- LWP: Local Welfare Provision
- IMA: Independent Mobility Assessment
- PERP: Pre-Election Restriction Period

Human Resources & Organisational Development

Performance Measures & Business Plan Report

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Abdul Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Value for Money & Sustainability

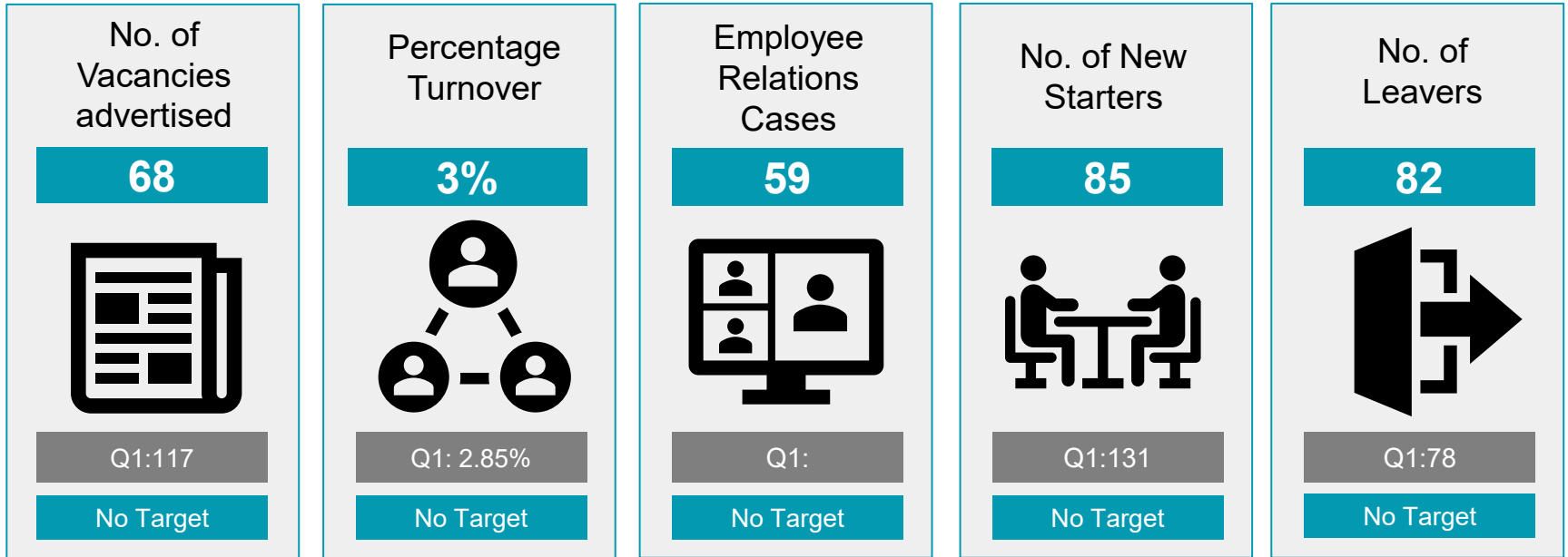
Officer Contact: Wendy Jackson, Interim Assistant Director of Human Resources

Service Summary: The service provides a range of workforce related functions that support good employment practice and workforce engagement for the Council and external paying customers

- HR advisory, policy & employee relations
- Job Evaluation
- Recruitment
- Workforce systems, workforce data & statutory workforce reporting
- Payroll, pensions & HR transactional
- Learning & Development
- Apprenticeships
- Workforce Wellbeing
- Organisational development & design
- Employee engagement
- Workforce planning

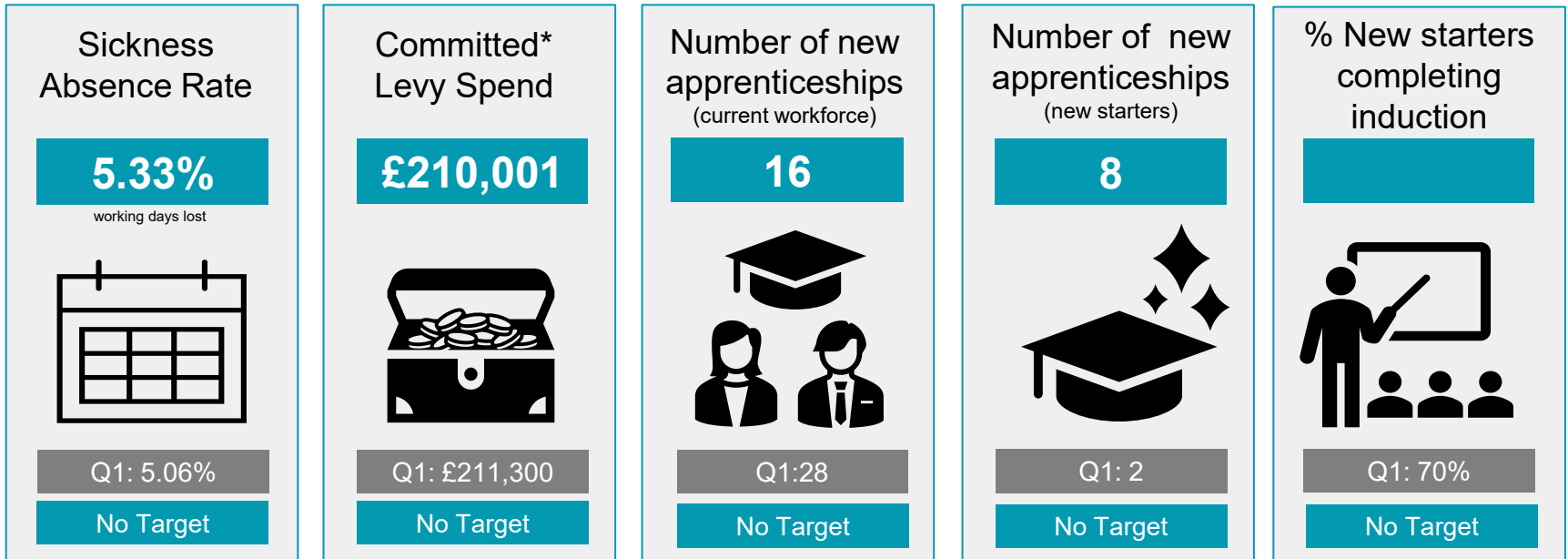
HR & OD

Key Metrics (no targets)



HR & OD

Key Metrics (no targets)



*Spend over the duration of the apprenticeships learning programme

HR & OD

Successes/Areas of Development

No of vacancies advertised	Please note that this shows the number of Oldham Council adverts that have been live in July, August and September 2024. The number of vacancies is an approximate figure from information we have been able to record. However, this is not always known at the point of advertising, especially for rolling adverts (e.g. Children's Social Care). Additional steps in the approval process were put in place in July, which has shown to decrease advert numbers from the Council.
New Starters	This is the number of Oldham Council new starters sent to be onboarded from July to September 2024. Some of these may be awaiting pre-employment checks and do not have start dates confirmed. School's new starters and declined/withdrawn offers are not included.
Employee Relations Case	59 cases live; however, this is not a true reflection of where we are up to due to cases being handled in services with no HR support which we are trying to intervene with as we speak. There is a larger piece of work in progress to make sure that these cases are a true reflection.

HR & OD

Comments

Q1: Vikki Morris (Assistant Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development)

Recruiting to key roles in the service remains a significant pressure. Learning at Work week in May evidences a positive workforce intervention which supports individual, team and service development.

Q2: Wendy Jackson (Interim Assistant Director of Human Resources)

Work is underway to address sickness and absence reporting across teams. Although figures indicate sickness at 5% this is likely to be higher.

Signed Off: 22/10/24

IT (Operations)

Performance Measures & Business Plan Report

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Abdul Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Value for Money & Sustainability

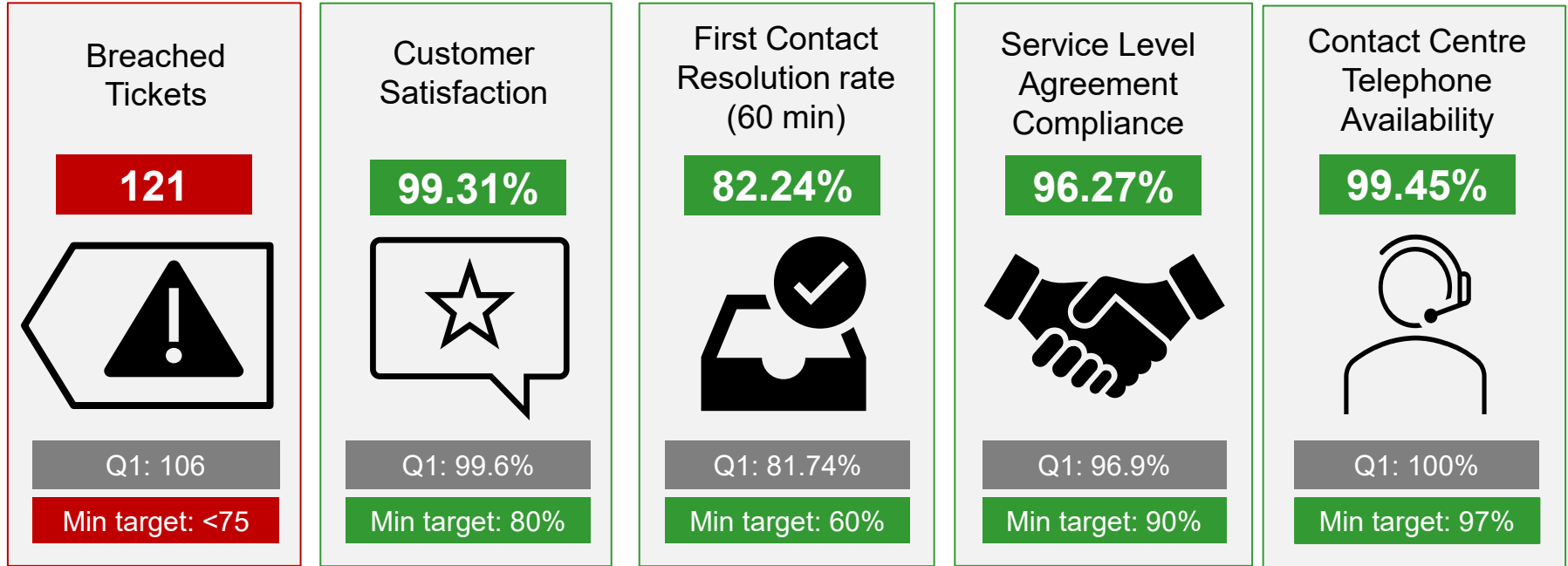
Officer Contact: Mark Edgar (Head of IT Operations and Cyber Security)

Service Summary:

The role of the IT team is to deliver seamless and reliable IT services and projects that drive the success of Oldham Council. IT are committed to enhancing operational efficiency, supporting all departments, and embracing innovation to meet the evolving needs of our organisation.

IT (Operations)

Key Metrics (against target where set)



[Red]

[Green]

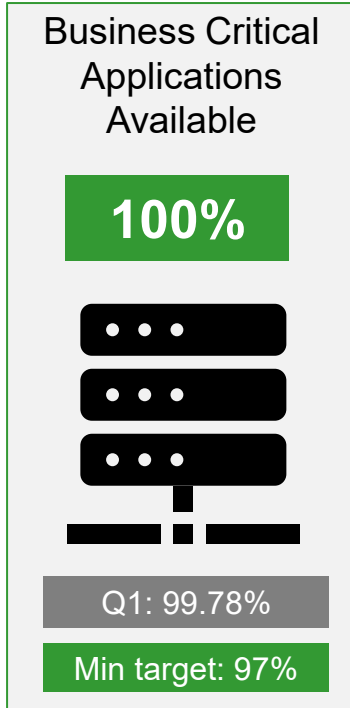
[Green]

[Green]

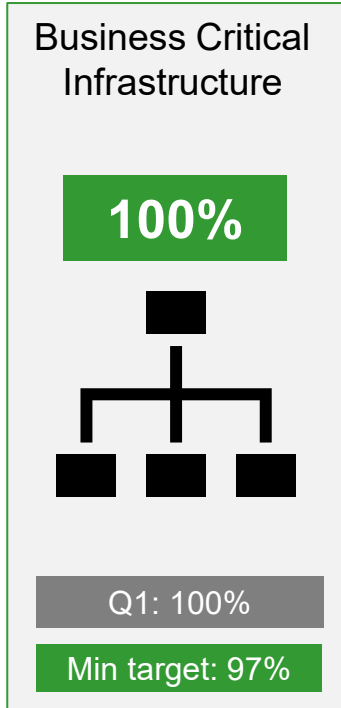
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IT (Operations)

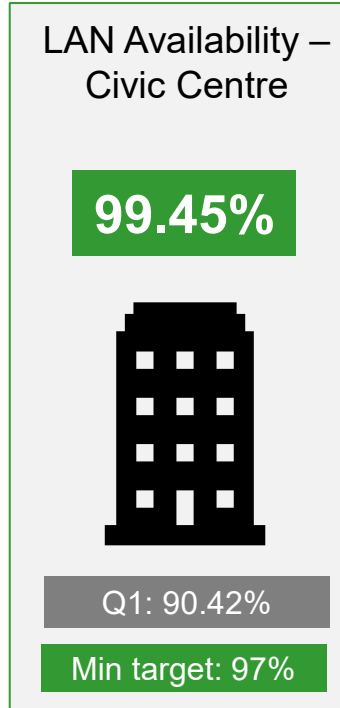
Key Metrics (against target where set)



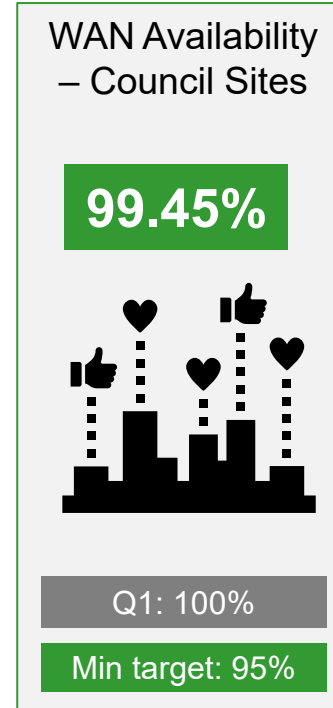
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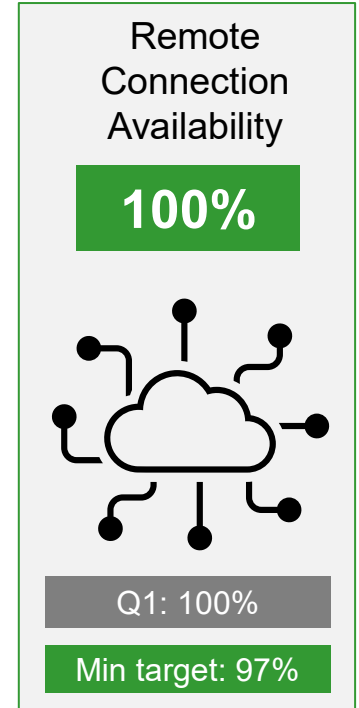
[Green]



[Green]



[Green]



[Green]

IT (Operations)

Successes/Areas of Development

Breached Tickets

Although still high, there is a downward trend that is seeing us move towards our targets, with the averages across the last three months being 167, 117, and 78.

IT (Operations)

Comments

Q1: Mark Edgar (Service Assurance and Compliance Manager, Head of IT Operations and Cyber Security)

In April, our Local Area Network (LAN) availability was significantly impacted by issues experienced with the new Spindles WiFi solution. These issues persisted for over a week, leading to a substantial reduction in network performance and stability at that site. The rollout of the Spindles WiFi solution faced unforeseen technical difficulties, including compatibility issues with existing infrastructure and hardware, causing frequent outages and degraded performance. The complexity of these problems led to extended downtime, directly reducing network availability. Users experienced intermittent connectivity, impacting their efficiency and increasing support requests, further straining IT resources and delaying resolution. However, as we cannot measure intermittency, we have just considered for the KPI that it was 'Down.'

Q2: Mark Edgar (Service Assurance and Compliance Manager, Head of IT Operations and Cyber Security)

The Spindles site has now settled into normal operation, with the issues encountered during the early stages of occupation fully resolved. The technical difficulties that affected network performance, including intermittent outages and compatibility challenges with existing infrastructure, have been addressed. As a result, we've seen a significant improvement in network stability and availability, particularly at the Spindles location, bringing performance back to expected levels.

We are about to deploy new council laptops across the organisation. This rollout is expected to reduce the number of hardware-based support calls in the coming years, as the new devices will provide enhanced reliability and performance, alleviating some of the strain on IT support resources. With a fresh fleet of laptops, we anticipate fewer device failures, which should positively impact our service metrics and user satisfaction. In summary, Q2 has demonstrated continued improvement across most KPIs, with breached tickets on a downward trend, moving us closer to our optimal targets. The team's efforts to resolve technical issues and proactive initiatives like the laptop rollout place us in a strong position as we enter the next quarter.

Signed Off: 11/10/24

Finance:

Service areas include:

- Finance
- Procurement

Finance

Performance Measures & Business Plan Report

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Abdul Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Value for Money & Sustainability

Officer Contact: Julie Smethurst (*Assistant Director Revenues & Benefits*)

Service Summary:

The Finance Service provides a wide range of functions primarily focussed on the delivery of financial management information, advice and support to Council officers and Members, but also members of the public, Central Government and other partner organisations.

Finance

Key Metrics (against target where set)

Average time taken to process *New Claims - Housing Benefits*

20 days



Q1: 26 days

Target: 27 days

[Green]

Average time taken to process *Change in Circumstances - Housing Benefit*

6 days



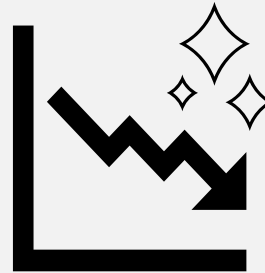
Q1: 9 days

Target: 27 days

[Green]

Average time taken to process *New Claims - Council Tax Reduction*

30 days



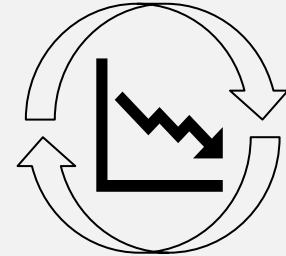
Q1: 27 days

Target: 20 days

[Red]

Average time taken to process *Change in Circumstances - Council Tax Reduction*

8 days



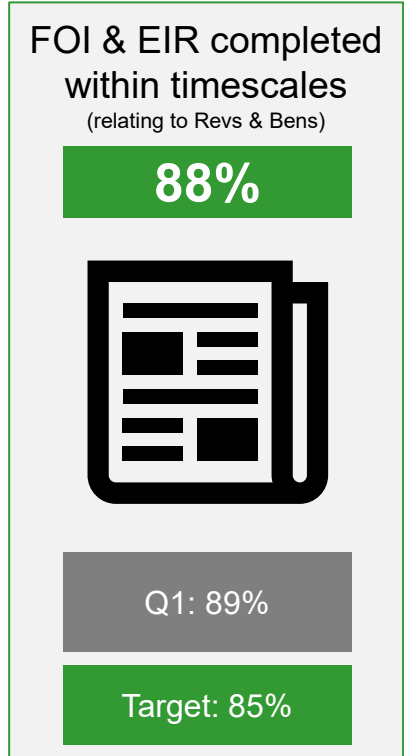
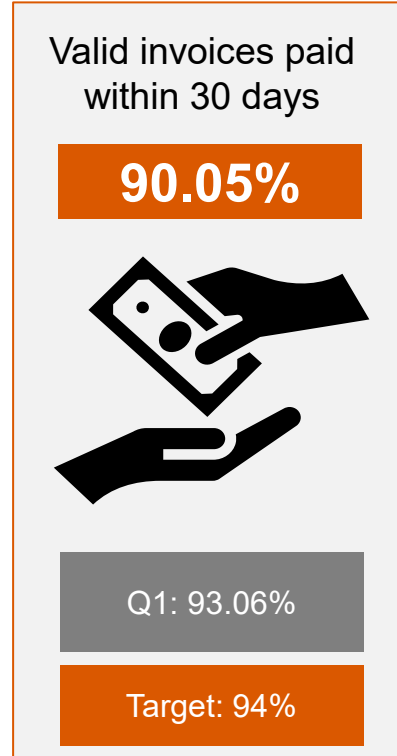
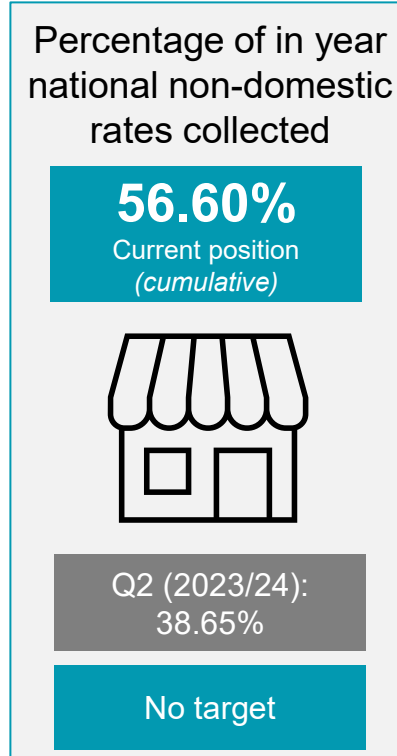
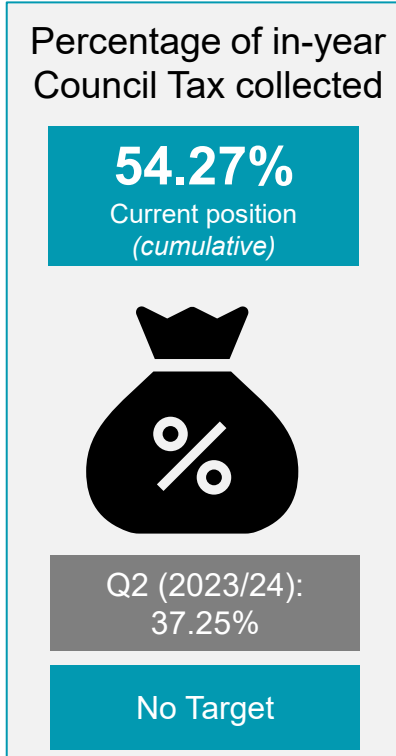
Q1: 10 Days

Target: 20 Days

[Green]

Finance

Key Metrics (against target where set)



[Amber]

[Green]

Finance

Successes

Housing Benefit Claims	These are being prioritised within workloads to avoid claimants amassing rent arrears and to keep within DWP performance targets.
Back Office automation	The back-office automation project within council tax remains on track to bring more transactional processes online before the end of the financial year.

Finance

Areas for Development (across all metrics)

Automation and digital processing

There is still improvement needed in this area to enable the service to focus more effectively on income maximisation.

Finance

Comments

Q1: Julie Smethurst (Assistant Director Revenues & Benefits)

Overall performance is encouraging at the end of the first quarter despite the challenges presented to staff with sickness, vacancies and the ongoing transformation project placing additional pressures.

Q2: Julie Smethurst (Assistant Director Revenues & Benefits)

The withdrawal of the e-invoicing module by our suppliers at the beginning of August has adversely impacted on the accounts payable team. Invoices that were previously paid automatically now need to be processed manually. The benefits team have had a couple of processing staff off on long perm sick, which has impacted on processing times for new CTRS claims.

Signed Off: 14/10/2024

Finance Glossary:

- FOI: Freedom of Information
- EIR: Environmental Information Regulations
- CTR: Council Tax Reduction
- SPD: Single Person Discount

Finance / Procurement / HR & OD / IT

Portfolio Holder Comments

Q1: Cllr Abdul Jabbar (Cabinet Member for Value for Money & Sustainability)

Like Council's across the country, we still face significant challenges, funding pressures and increased demand. I am grateful to the work that teams in Finance, HR&OD, IT and Procurement and putting in to attempt to mitigate these challenges.

Q2: Cllr Abdul Jabbar (Cabinet Member for Value for Money & Sustainability)

Significant work has been undertaken to manage in year budget pressures which has resulted in good progress. The imminent rollout of new laptops and the associated decrease in hardware issues should enable our staff to maximise their productivity and better serve residents across the Borough.

Signed Off: 11/11/2024