

From: Derek Murphy, Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services
Simon Jones, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee – 26 September 2023

Subject: Performance Dashboard

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Performance Dashboard shows the performance of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and activity indicators for Quarter 1 of 2023/24.

16 of the 22 KPIs achieved target and are RAG rated Green. Four KPIs were below target but did achieve floor standard and are RAG rated Amber, and two KPIs were below floor standard and RAG rated Red.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the performance report for Quarter 1 of 2023/24.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Part of the role of Cabinet Committees is to review the performance of those functions of the Council that fall within its remit. To support this role, Performance Dashboards are regularly reported to each Cabinet Committee throughout the year, and this is the first report for the 2023/24 financial year.

2. Performance Dashboard

- 2.1. The current Growth, Economic Development and Communities Performance dashboard provides results up to the end of June 2023 and is attached in Appendix 1.
- 2.2. The Dashboard provides a progress report on performance for the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2023/24. The Dashboard also includes a range of activity indicators which help give context to the KPIs.
- 2.3. KPIs are presented with RAG (Red/Amber/Green) alerts to show performance in the Quarter. Details of how the alerts are generated are outlined in the Guidance Notes, included with the Dashboard in Appendix 1.

3. Growth & Communities - Economy

- 3.1. The number of properties brought back to use through No Use Empty (NUE) over the 12 months to March was 388, which is below the target of 400. Not all districts have dedicated Empty Property Officers and districts currently have vacancies in their Private Sector Housing teams. Whilst this is impacting on performance, NUE projects funded in the previous budget year will, on completion, contribute to achieving the annual target.
- 3.2. The target for the number of businesses assisted via the Kent and Medway Growth Hub was exceeded for those provided with both light/medium and intensive support.

4. Growth & Communities – Strategic Development and Place

- 4.1. The total amount secured for developer contributions in Quarter 4 was £13.3m (99.7% of the amount sought), meaning this KPI was above target. As for the contributions outstanding from last Quarter (where performance was at 81%), it is still too early to say whether these contributions will be forthcoming.

5. Growth & Communities - Libraries, Registration and Archives (LRA)

- 5.1. The highlight of Quarter 1 was the engagement across LRA with the Coronation of King Charles III in May 2023. All 99 libraries took part in the celebrations with book displays, artwork created by local communities, coronation themed activities such as rhyme times, craft sessions and adult social groups to name but a few examples, as well as live streaming of the Coronation itself at Kent History and Library Centre that over one hundred people attended on the day. Kent Archives displayed items from the collection from past coronations and hosted a talk by Dr James Lloyd on royal heraldry, while the Registration teams at Oakwood House in Maidstone and Danson House in Bexley held a special Citizenship Ceremony with flags and Coronation-themed cakes.
- 5.2. Further cause for celebration was the success of the team from HMP Swaleside's prison library at the National Libraries Connected Conference in June. The team won the Reading Award within the Universal Reading Offer category for their dedicated work to bring library services to prisoners who were unable to leave their cells to visit the library during and after lockdown. At the same conference, Kent Libraries' innovative Playground initiative was also recognised by being nominated for the national Children's Promise Award. These awards are open to every library service across the UK and each nomination has a panel of sector experts to judge, so Kent's performance is recognition of the team's drive to innovate and improve services for customers.
- 5.3. The engagement of Kent's Libraries with the Coronation, plus continued efforts to reinstate events and activities and launch new initiatives, resulted in just under 42,000 people attending events throughout Quarter 1, surpassing the target of 34,000. Total visitor numbers were over 735,000 which was up by over 20% on Quarter 1, 2022/23.

- 5.4. Library issues increased by 12% on the same period last year, and at over 1.3 million were at the upper end of expectations. We would expect to see library visits and issues increasing during Quarter 2, and positive initial take-up of the Summer Reading Challenge has already indicated that this is likely to be the case. The library survey, carried out in April 2023, yielded a customer satisfaction rating of 94% for Kent's library services.
- 5.5. The number of death registrations has fallen from the high levels experienced during the winter months, but are still higher by 4% compared to the same period last year, with just over 4,200 registration appointments delivered. Birth registration appointments remain fairly level, with just four fewer appointments than in Quarter 1 2022/23. There were 2,073 ceremonies during Quarter 1, which included the welcoming of 969 new citizens to the United Kingdom, 16 of whom attended the individual ceremonies newly implemented at Oakwood House, Maidstone. The promotional plan for Oakwood House, the new site for the County Register Office, included three open days which were held in May 2023 and were attended by 156 couples, resulting in 54 new bookings for ceremonies at the venue. Overall, Oakwood House has been very well received by couples and citizens attending ceremonies there.
- 5.6. The number of Archive enquiries has dropped slightly by 2% in comparison with Quarter 1, 2022/23, with numbers at the lower end of expectations. However, an analysis of the figures shows that while remote enquiries have fallen, physical visits to the Search Room have increased by 14%. The Archive Service launched their outreach programme for the year with a well-attended two-day conference held in May both at Kent History and Library Centre and the University of Kent. Entitled "Constables, Charters and Kent", the conference served to highlight new material acquired by Kent Archives, and this coupled with the fresh programme of lunchtime talks has served to attract more researchers to the Search Room. This is borne out by the increasing number of "Archive Enabled" cards that are being issued to customers visiting the facility which enable them to order documents and use the equipment for research.

5. Growth & Communities – Other Services

- 5.1 Most indicators for other services in Growth & Communities have met or exceeded target and are RAG rated Green. Four KPIs failed to meet target but did achieve floor standard, so are RAG rated Amber and two did not meet floor standard so are RAG rated red.
- 5.2 The percentage of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) faults reported online has declined and is below its new higher target. It is thought this was due to more people reporting for the first-time which tends to be by phone. The second PRoW KPI, which is the median number of days to resolve priority PRoW faults is below floor standard and so RAG rated red. This is due to a number of priority faults having been made safe, but then requiring a longer-term repair which has impacted on the median number of days figure.

- 5.3 The new KPI on the percentage of service users who report feeling safer due to warden support was Amber for Quarter 1, with 67% saying they felt safer against a target of 70%. For those who didn't say they felt safer, responders advised it was not applicable to their circumstances, or they reported no change, or that they didn't know. No respondents reported that they felt less safe.
- 5.4 The percentage of cases progressed for initial coronial decision within two working days of notification of a death remains Amber, with delays continuing to be due to the time taken to receive information from the NHS.
- 5.5 The second Red KPI is the percentage of schools with the highest numbers of children eligible for free school meals engaging with the Kent School Games. This was due to three Kent School Games events being cancelled due to bad weather and this negatively impacted the KPI.

7. Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the performance report for Quarter 1 of 2023/24.

Contact details:

Report Author: Matthew Wagner
Chief Analyst (interim)
Chief Executive's Department
03000 416559
Matthew.Wagner@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director: Simon Jones
Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport
03000 411683
Simon.Jones@kent.gov.uk