



Corporate Performance Report
Executive Summary
Quarter 3 2023/24



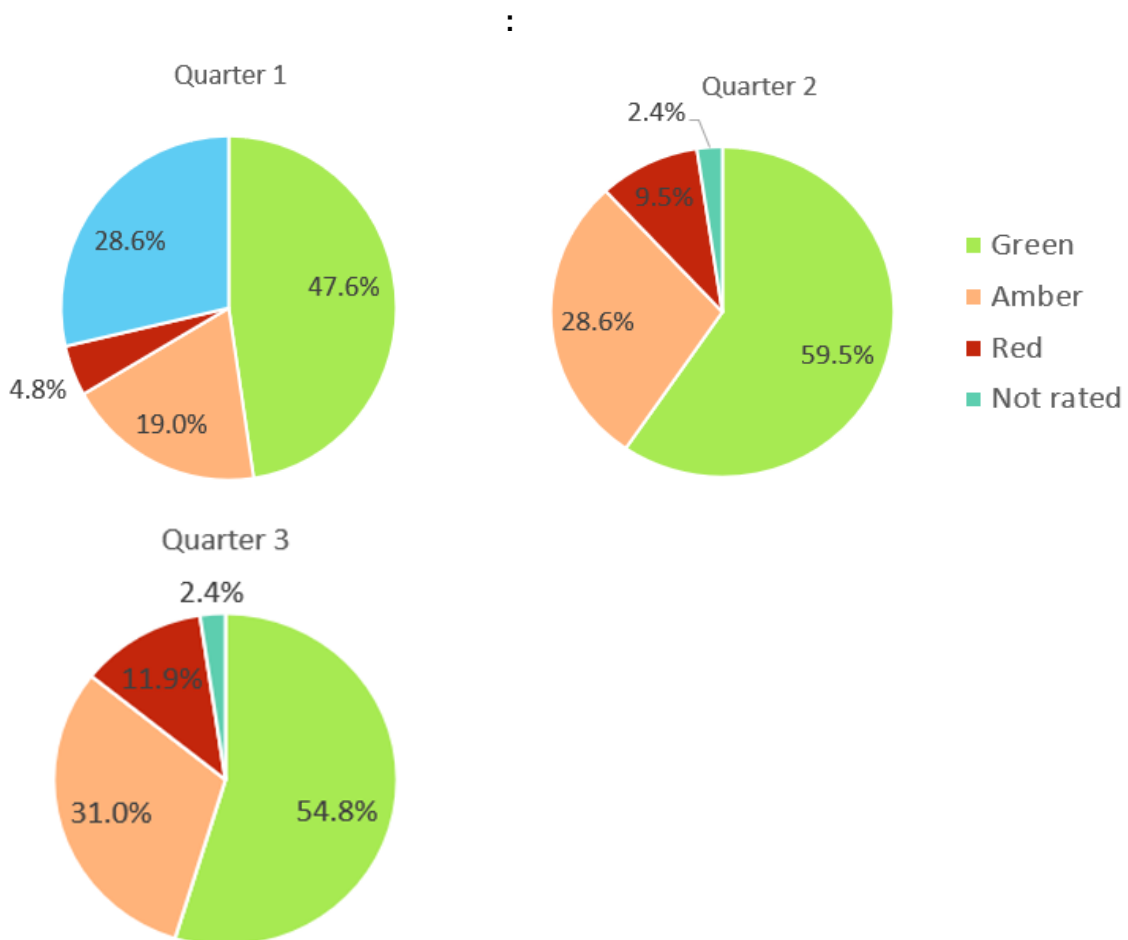
Introduction

At its meeting of 8 June 2023, Cabinet agreed the Council's performance dashboard for 2023/24 to monitor progress towards achieving our four priorities: delivering better services, protecting our environment, supporting economic growth, and caring for the vulnerable, as well as providing an overview of our corporate health. The dashboard includes 42 key performance indicators (KPIs) plus an overarching measure of the degree to which we are achieving or exceeding our targets.

Overview of performance

54.8% of rated KPIs were achieving or exceeding their target for quarter 3. There are 41 rated KPIs in Q3, with one, economic impact index, still in development and unrated. The charts below provide an overview of their ratings.

Comparisons of KPIs ratings in quarters 1, 2 and 3



The Chief Executive and each Executive Director has provided a summary of performance for their areas of responsibility in the following sections.

Angie Ridgwell, Chief Executive

The third quarter performance report has highlighted that some indicators are now being judged as potentially off track. In particular the number of children missing education and our sickness absence have now been flagged as red rated. We are also seeing challenges in a number of areas including community-based support for vulnerable people as well as our



correspondence times, reflecting the continuing rise in demand for education, health and care assessments. It is pleasing to see improved performance in other areas, including on standards in reading, writing and maths at key stage 2 and the timeliness of assessments and reassessments for adult social care.

Performance issues are reviewed on a regular basis by individual directorates as part of the performance management regime and addressed corporately through the Strategy, Policy and Performance Board. This Board provides a clear focus on performance with all service areas demonstrating a good understanding of any issues causing concern, undertaking deep dives when needed. In cases where performance is not on track, the board provides assurance that the issues causing the problem are understood by the service and that appropriate measures are put in place to ensure progress in achieving our targets. The Board will ensure that action plans are in place and actively monitor delivery of the activity and achievement of desired outcomes.

We remain committed to ensuring performance is improved while not compromising on setting ambitious targets. This requires innovative thinking and strong partnership working to meet the headwinds facing the public sector and our communities in general. Sharing intelligence, pooling our skill base with partners and keeping abreast of best practice is essential to achieving this. Partnership working therefore becomes increasingly important as does the use of artificial intelligence and digital capabilities to free up staff to focus on those all-important person centric services.

The financial settlement has landed largely as expected with gains in respect of some additional resources being offset by a lower tax base and collection rates across the county. Our financial position remains strong in relative terms, but we are no less immune from these challenges requiring strong prioritisation of our resources alongside our continuous drive for improved efficiency and productivity.

Our strengthening partnership with Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen Councils, as we continue to make positive strides in our devolution bid, is building a robust foundation to give Lancashire a stronger voice in the region and with Government. We continue to proactively work with other partners and will be supporting the Integrated Care Board in securing a new Chair and the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner as he appoints a new chief constable. We remain committed to working with Districts individually and collectively particularly on waste reforms, our emerging place-based partnerships, housing and asylum seekers/refugees.

Louise Taylor, Executive Director of Adult Services

The Adult Services Directorate has been preparing for a peer challenge by the Local Government Association at the end of February 2024 as part of the ongoing preparation for a statutory inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) expected this year. Performance concerns could trigger an earlier inspection with activity this quarter focused on improving our approach to carers, co-production and reducing the time people wait for an assessment. We closely monitor and prioritise people waiting for assessment or reassessment according to their risk and need, our ambition however is to eliminate delays and so temporary additional resource has been brought in to help us get on top of this, mirroring our effective approach in the area of waits for occupational therapy assessments, whilst the longer term practice changes embed.



In writing our CQC self-assessment, we are clear about areas of strength such as partnership arrangements supporting our offer around mental health, the acute hospitals and safeguarding board. We are also focused on areas of our performance that impact the residents we support such as the time people wait to be seen by social care when they first contact us and improving access to support that is available to help them stay as independent as possible in the community where they live. The CQC inspection ratings of care settings e.g. care homes and care services i.e. home care is just below the ambitious target we purposely set but above the north west and England averages but remains a priority. For carers, we are reviewing our advice, information and support offer so we can be more effective in improving the health and wellbeing of carers whilst making it easier for them to navigate a social care system that they tell us is complicated.

We have also drafted our service plans for 2024/25, which will see the creation of four strategic programmes which again focus on improving the service's performance. These are: 1. Workforce and Culture; 2. Digital; 3. Quality and Practice; and 4. Market shaping and Commissioning for Value for Money.

In this Quarter we have also been improving the tools that are available to our staff. Our case management system, LAS, is on schedule for reimplementation in June 2024. This will make recording more streamlined and proportionate for staff which also means they can spend more face-to-face time with residents. From a service perspective it means we can use business intelligence to track timeliness, better manage our caseloads and retain a focus on the support we offer to Lancashire residents. Updating our systems is also happening in our older people's Provider services where we have rolled out a new digital care management system which will see major improvements in case recording, it will reduce the amount of paper records that staff process on a daily basis and offer better oversight for managers in adhering to CQC regulations. We are also investigating the further use of the system across other in-house services to deliver consistency around quality assurance and the support we offer to residents.

Jacqui Old, Executive Director of Education and Children's Services

Children's Services continues to see strong performance in reducing demand, with continued reductions in the rates of new entrants in to care, and rates below northwest and national averages. Our preventative support to children and families through the Family Safeguarding approach and Family Hub Networks has been strengthened further, with the launch of our new multi-agency contextual safeguarding service, Empower, in January 2024. Through our Family Hubs we are maintaining a sharp focus on the take-up of funded early years education places, and take-up remains on target. Training has been delivered to our teams working in the East of the county, so they are able to undertake 2-year-old eligibility checks, rather than just signposting families to support. This is helping to improve performance in some of the areas of Lancashire where take-up has been lower. We continue to focus on areas of disadvantage, to help ensure that all children and young people are supported to fulfil their potential. The provisional average attainment 8 score for Lancashire pupils at Key Stage 4, although higher than regional comparators, is lower than target and below the latest national data. Our teams are working closely with schools to provide both support and challenge to ensure high standards in teaching and learning.

We have gathered pace in addressing the backlog of complaints in SEND and we continue to work closely with schools to manage the challenges in relation to inclusion. After a positive upward trend, there has been a small reduction in the percentage of care leavers in education employment and training, as a result of young people withdrawing from college places or



losing employment. We continue to focus on this group of young people, through themed audits and reviews of all our young people not in education, employment or training to ensure relevant support and plans are in place for them. The Library visitor footfall figures have remained fairly consistent at around 75% of pre-pandemic levels, but the Q3 figure included a rise in footfall up to an equivalent of 82% of pre-pandemic footfall levels. The library service has been proactive in organising a number of in – library events within the last quarter which will have impacted on this increase in visitors.

Moving forward, we will continue work to ensure all children and young people are able to access school places, with a focus on children with special educational needs and disabilities. We are also excited to be launching our next phase of Family Hubs in March 2024, providing even more help, with partners, to children and families across Lancashire.

Phil Green, Executive Director of Growth, Environment, Transport and Health

Performance dashboards for the directorate continue to indicate strong performance overall in Q3 with the majority of indicators at good or excellent. Highlight of the quarter saw the significant milestone of a devolution deal proposal agreed with Government and subject to public consultation which has now concluded. Q4 will report on the outcomes and next steps. Other highlights included a number of awards for individuals and teams together with the successful integration of Public Health, Wellbeing and Communities into the renamed Directorate.

In Public Health, the focus remains on NHS Health Checks, Health Visiting and substance misuse. Health Checks are in a strong position and Q4 will see further mobilisation of the new provider for ages 0-19. High volumes of complex caseloads, combined with staff recruitment and training are continuing to drive negative performance trends for substance misuse and alcohol services, however a planned focus on targeted support to complex cases is expected to improve performance through Q4 into 2024/25.

In previous quarters we have reported the impact of ongoing global factors on economic headwinds, real estate investment and financial performance. In Q3, UK inflation has continued a downward trend to 4.0% whilst the UK interest rate has remained at 5.25%. Whilst inflation is still high (particularly relating to construction costs), investor markets are now 'guardedly optimistic' with improved confidence as we head into Q4.

This is matched by improvements in performance seen across our major development programme whilst receipts and income from disposals and business parks are above target. Strategic Development is trending upwards with the potential to achieve the high bar 80% target for the first time in Q4, helped by a number of significant milestones being achieved in Q3 including planning permission at Lancashire Central, the start on site at Farington and progress with infrastructure investment at Samlesbury Enterprise Zone.

Q3 has seen further improvement in outcomes from the use of targeted funding for skills, employment and engagement with businesses. More young people are gaining sustainable employment as a result of apprenticeship grants, whilst almost 100 people in the workforce having gone on to either upskill on the job or secure a new role as a result of Skills Bootcamps, exceeding Department for Education targets.

Elsewhere in the Directorate, good progress continues on Lancashire's £50m Levelling Up Fund against very challenging national timescales alongside additional funding secured both for strategic transport projects and the operational highway. Additional resources are being

used to address highway repairs where performance indicators have dipped as the relevant services are at capacity dealing with high seasonal workloads which will continue, with the cold weather, into Q4.

Customer Access achieved further improvements to calls answered. Wait times are also starting to improve towards target with the completion of a busy period of staff training. Work on the next wave of automation improvements will ultimately result in further performance improvement into 2024/25.

Q3 has seen a particular focus on survey work for new KPIs around Biological Heritage Sites which will enable each to develop a management plan. Only 17% have such management plans in place however the survey write ups will progress into Q4 and 2024/25 will see the first full year of delivery which is projected to be on track.

Mark Wynn, Executive Director of Resources

Good progress is being made on developing a clear role and identity for the Resources Directorate, enabling us to support the whole council to deliver better services. We are moving into the second year of Business and Service Planning, focusing on the delivery of the council's priorities and ensuring we get the right resources in place, at the right time.

As reported to Cabinet in February the projected revenue overspend has continued to improve from the £7.6m forecast at Q1 and £5.9m at Q2 to the current £5.8m now being forecast. It is encouraging that earlier in the year a number of areas of overspend and savings delivery pressures were noted, and mitigation plans have been implemented to reduce the financial impact both in-year and within the medium-term financial strategy. It is equally pleasing to note that the delivery of the capital programme is on target.

We are continuing to make good progress on the delivery of our property strategy, aimed at delivering savings, providing suitable locations for service delivery, and managing our carbon impact. We are already moving forwards with options that will help deliver, and possibly exceed the target for the next financial year.

We are supporting the Council to robustly manage sickness levels, so it is disappointing to note the increase in absence levels in this quarter. Causes included a spike in respiratory conditions due to a severe strain of influenza, which saw a dramatic national increase in hospital admissions. The situation did however start to improve in December. This continues to be a key priority including more targeted work that differentiates clearly between approaches to short term and long-term absence management.

