Lancashire County Council

Corporate Performance Report

Executive Summary

2022/23 Quarter 2

1. Introduction

The 2022/23 Q2 corporate performance report provides an update on performance across the 77 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which monitor progress towards achieving our four priorities: delivering better services, protecting the environment, supporting economic growth, and caring for the vulnerable.

Since the 2022/23 Q1 corporate performance report was presented to Cabinet on 8th September, a corporate performance dashboard has been developed. The KPIs for each priority are listed in an overview screen with access to a detailed screen for each KPI via a link. Instructions on the use of the dashboard are included within the dashboard.

Of the 77 KPIs in the dashboard 70 were 'RAG' rated: 41 (59%) as Green, 15 (21%) as Amber and 14 (20%) as Red. The development of the corporate performance dashboard provided the opportunity to review the thresholds for 'RAG' ratings, which has impacted on some KPI ratings between Q1 and Q2, meaning that direct comparison is not possible for this report.

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

Capacity remains a significant challenge for us, with national shortages in social workers, health practitioners and care workers as reported in the last quarter. We also have challenges recruiting to technical professions such as engineering, property and legal. However, while this is a challenge it also creates an opportunity to address some of the financial issues facing the sector. Work is ongoing to review every vacancy to establish if it is essential to fill. Equally where we have recruitment challenges, we are looking to see how our workforce can be appropriately trained to support business critical services.

Our work on reducing sickness continues to bear fruit. The average sickness absence per full time equivalent (FTE) has reduced by 9% to 3.05 days per FTE this quarter compared to 3.35 days in the same quarter last year, and long term sickness absence has reduced by almost 18% when comparing this quarter to the same quarter last year (from 2.45 days per FTE to 2.02). There have been some bumps along the way with increased covid absence, but this too is showing a decline.

Financial challenges remain and the in year trajectory overspend has reduced by over 50% during the current quarter to just under £8m, which is 0.84% of our net revenue budget. The biggest single pressure relates to Children's Services which continues to forecast an overspend reflecting the complexity of cases and increasing costs in the provider market. Officers remain committed to ensuring that overall, the organisation lives within its means and will continue to focus on driving down high cost agency staff and removing non business critical vacancies.

Significant progress has also been made to target the medium term financial position. This remains volatile where a number of factors that affect our forecast are outside of our control, such as interest rates, inflation and fuel costs. While challenging, the council remains in a relatively strong position financially and continues to navigate this space sensitively, recognising that our funding is supported by taxpayers who are all feeling the pinch.

We continue to see challenges to performance in early years provision of NHS and health visitor checks for young children and expectant mothers. Capacity is an underlying issue, and we are working with GPs and the wider NHS to build resilience and skills within the existing workforce, alongside recruitment. Cost of living is impacting the number of young people not in education, employment, or training with concerns about travel and other costs. Equally the fragility in the business sector is limiting the returns from the Boost and Rosebud programmes. Changes to the way we deliver adult social care, and personalising our services are seeing an increase in ambition which we are not yet quite meeting but we do expect the new models of delivery to yield positive returns early next year.

As always, there remain some exceptional performances. Highways' performance remains strong across all indicators and libraries continue to see increases in visits and book withdrawals – both physical and electronic. Care Quality Commission (CQC) ratings of our community based facilities is performing well, and we have a good record of adults with learning disabilities staying at home. Aligned to the reducing number of children being looked after driven by the family safeguarding model and a strong performance in the issuance of NoWcards, we are really helping people and families to maintain independence.

Louise Taylor, Executive Director of Adult Services and Health and Wellbeing

We have further refined the set of KPIs, which now directly align to the directorate's Service Plan. They continue to provide good insight into performance, support the preparation for inspection and care reform, and assist in the maintenance of budgetary control.

The measures have been developed with regard to the CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) nearest neighbours and national and regional performance benchmarking indicators. This allows for more context driven comparisons of the performance, and further support with setting realistic and challenging targets for the directorate.

Five of our fifteen indicators are rated green, so are at or above target. Five are red and therefore improvement is required. Three are amber, meaning they are slightly below target. In two of our indicators, we are working to develop the data and benchmarking comparators, so they remain unpopulated for this quarter. Of our green indicators, there are some particularly high performers including, 'Proportion of

Registered Carers receiving formal support', which directly supports our key social care objective of 'Promoting independence and choice'.

In relation to the indicators ‘requiring improvement', they have increased from three in Q1 to five in Q2, this is due to setting ambitious targets. Assessment timeliness, safeguarding outcomes, number of people in receipt of long-term support and two indicators for permanent admissions to residential care, all have improvement plans in place. Particularly close attention is being paid to the number of people waiting five days or more for an assessment with focussed activity and weekly reporting to bring the performance in line with our target.

Overall, we are on track to recover public health service delivery across a number of areas. Our health protection service is now fully established to prevent and control infections across the health and care system. Our winter plans include staff flu vaccination and supporting our residents with increasing cost of living. We are meeting all the national requirements in managing chemical, radiological and environmental hazards. The satisfaction levels of clients working with the trading standards service ranges from 94% to 100%. We are achieving the expected trajectory in supporting our residents to stop smoking, recovering from substance misuse and promoting contraception. We continue to move in the positive direction of travel with the number of NHS health checks being offered in the community venues across Lancashire, which will help identify and manage risk factors like smoking, obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure.

The performance of mandated visits by health visitors within 14 days of birth has declined to 925 (31%) in this quarter compared to 1481 (52.4%) in previous quarter due to vacancies and sickness absence. A range of mitigating actions, including prioritising vulnerable families and incentive schemes to recruit staff are being implemented and monitored. In addition, we are actively monitoring the recovery plan on a weekly basis and reviewing the service delivery to inform the design of the service model as part of our recommissioning programme scheduled during 2023/24. Victims of domestic abuse are taking longer to recover, and we are in the process of sourcing additional capacity to assist with the resettlement and prevention programme. We continue to support the white ribbon campaign to end violence against women across Lancashire.

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

Overall, the Education and Children's Services directorate continues to perform well in many areas but there are significant in-year budget pressures driven largely by the costs of homes for children in our care and pressures on staffing. The directorate is taking action to reduce costs through a range of activity including robust decision making and challenge when high cost homes are sought, ensuring that the opportunities for children and young people to be placed in in-house foster care and residential homes are maximised and working with private fostering and residential agencies to help ensure that a good range of offers are made in response to requests for homes made to the independent market. There is ongoing work to improve recruitment and retention and reduce dependency on agency social work staffing.

Headline annual figures for the percentage of parents getting one of their preferred school places, reported in Q1, are good, but mask the challenges relating to sufficiency of school places in some parts of the county, driven in part by unexpected levels of migration into Lancashire, particularly in Burnley and Pendle. Alongside the School Place Planning delivery programme agreed by Cabinet in October 2022, officers continue to work closely with schools to secure access to appropriate places and 50 additional places have now been confirmed as available for in year admissions at Unity College, Burnley.

Work has continued to ensure a high level of uptake of early years free funded education, and we are working proactively to ensure that funded places take up is a priority for all internal and external organisational partners and stakeholders. Key indicators for the library service continue to demonstrate good recovery following the removal of Covid restrictions with footfall continuing to grow, alongside increases in e-downloads.

Provisional data for Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 for 2021/22 indicates that results are not as good as we would wish, particularly at Key Stage 2. The school improvement team is working closely with schools to support improvement, using local data to offer targeted support.

There has been a small decrease in the percentage of young people in education, employment and training. However, young people have told us that they have experienced increased challenges in recent months due to the impact of cost of living and challenges in accessing affordable housing. Work continues with individual young people, and with partners, to secure options for them and to help ensure that performance continues to improve.

Our Early Help and Children's Social Care Services are continuing to perform well in the context of increases in demand and challenges in securing the right homes for children in Lancashire. Good practice is being shared across teams to help ensure that engagement from families is maintained and increased, new commissioning arrangements are helping to secure appropriate homes for young people in Lancashire, and there is continued close monitoring of the number of children who start to become looked after by the council through the Family Safeguarding approach.

Phil Green, Executive Director of Growth, Environment, Transport and Community Services

In addition to the corporate KPIs, the directorate is now utilising additional qualitative and quantitative insight to inform performance analysis by service area illustrated using a 'RAG' rated 'speed dial' dashboard. This indicates that Growth, Environment and Transport is performing at 'good' across the majority of indicators as well as highlighting some key areas at average or below. Assessment of indicators categorised as 'under-performing' are included in the main report such as with regard to job creation measures.

This dashboard approach is also delivering a new performance assessment of the multi-£billion strategic development and infrastructure programme which analyses projects by budget, risk and progress towards agreed outcomes. The current assessment is a 64% overall performance rate which is 'amber' reflecting some excellent progress as well as challenges facing key projects including inflationary impacts in particular. The threshold for 'green' overall is set high at 80%. This is subject to further testing prior to being added to the corporate KPI suite potentially from Q3. Project assurance and spend is good to excellent. Planning and Environment indicators are good to excellent. The Government's launch of 'Investment Zones' has created additional pressure on service performance this quarter following work on the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 bids.

Estates' performance is good albeit with particular pressures this period linked to education property operations and the volume of compensation agreements for high profile schemes. Disposals are forecast to achieve the March 2023 capital receipts target. Aligned to the work of the council's company, Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL), commercial business parks are performing well and continue to deliver development opportunities, attract business and increase the portfolio asset value.

High energy costs, inflation and on-going supply chain problems continue to impact the business community affecting start-ups recruitment and investment appetite. Job creation and business formation that is attributable to the Growth Hub (Boost), are improving however new jobs (11.4) remain below target for this point in the year to date and interventions are being actioned including contract reviews as described in the main body of the report.

Confidence in some sectors is seeing levels of interest in Rosebud loans recovering (45.6% of annual target) compared to Q1 and the pipeline forecast is strengthening, however investment appetite remains below anticipated, informing a review of the scope of the loans.

Design and construction performance including capital projects and contractor performance is at good to excellent. Highways' inspections and repairs are performing at excellent levels (in excess of 90% targets) however transport authority planning application response times are falling, impacted by hard-to-fill specialist workforce vacancies in this area. This has potential to impact on wider economic development projects in district areas if unresolved. Framework consultants are providing additional support and management are reviewing overall capacity and targeted recruitment with the corporate talent acquisition team.

Following pressures at the start of the school year, home to school transport provision has been managed with minimal delivery problems. Fleet service deliveries of new vehicles are delayed by national shortages which is also slowing acquisition of ultra-low emission vehicles. Supply chain delays for parts has also impacted on repair and maintenance targets. Despite the positive confirmation with regard to the Bus Service Improvement Plan award, delays to the Government's grant allocations may impact on our delivery programme.

Customer Access measures are at good to excellent for customer satisfaction (92.6% vs 90% target), automated interactions and other response times. A customer experience workstream is underway with expanded satisfaction surveys to continue the focus in this area. Calls answered at 85.4% is improving and above benchmarking but remains below our target reflecting current staffing turnover. Business process changes such as self-service and automation should improve performance in the longer term. Wait times and sickness remain areas where performance is average and therefore under review.

43% of skills pledge sign ups have already been achieved and the apprenticeship grants programme is underway following appointment of a project officer. Recruitment to support delivery of Skills Bootcamps has also been challenging impacting on September's profile but the forecast remains for performance to recover later in the year. Average benchmark achievement exceeds the annual target and national average. Contracts for the new 'Multiply' programme to improve adult numeracy skills are being put in place to enable delivery to commence on Year 1.

In waste, financial performance has been excellent, however fuel and energy prices are continuing to threaten the outlook. Operational performance of Lancashire Renewables remains strong and performance at Household Waste Recycling Centres is good with an improving outlook. Recruitment challenges and sickness performance remain at or below average and under review. Targeted intervention has recently resolved some absences to the overall benefit of forecast sickness performance.

Lesley Ottery – Interim Executive Director of Resources

The current position for revenue monitoring shows a forecast overspend of £7.989m, which is 0.84% of the county council's net budget. This is a significant improvement compared to the position reported in September where a £17.740m overspend was predicted. The overspend position in Education and Children's Social Care is due to increasing prices for care and the anticipated pay award. There remain other minor overspend variations on Highways and Transport, partly attributable to additional concessionary travel costs in Public and Integrated Transport, and Strategy and Performance. The overspend position is partially offset by underspends in Adult Social Care, Digital Services and Corporate Budgets relating to pension contributions. The improved position in Adult Social Care is due to additional income from Health.

Actions taken to improve sickness levels include weekly reviews of our absence data, targeting those services with trends and peaks early and providing support to prevent short term absence becoming long term. This is having an immediate impact. We have set clear performance targets at a service level, providing clear data dashboards and analytical support for services to help identify emerging problems. We are setting robust expectations for managers through the development of competency frameworks and providing targeted training and support to develop our capability and capacity to manage our teams well and support their wellbeing.

The change and improvement service has developed a draft integrated framework which links strategy and priorities, business planning, financial planning and performance reporting for discussion at the Strategic Improvement Board in November. A corporate change plan which supports prioritisation, resourcing, benefits planning and realisation, and governance is under development. All current change initiatives are being reviewed and prioritised for delivery.