



Corporate Performance Report
Executive Summary
Quarter 2 2024/25



Introduction

This report provides a summary of performance across the county council in quarter 2 of 2024/25 (Q2). It includes a high-level overview of the council's performance and summaries from each executive director.

The accompanying [Corporate Performance Dashboard](#) provides further details on all the key performance indicators including targets, trends over time and benchmarking information.

Overview of performance

There are 41 rated key performance indicators (KPIs), with one unrated KPI. The percentage of rated KPIs that are 'achieving or exceeding their target' for Q2 is 56.1%. The unrated KPI is 'The number of complaints upheld by the Ombudsman', where performance continues to be tracked and which will be rated following the introduction of the new Ombudsman Code. Out of the rated KPIs 23 are meeting or exceeding expectations, 13 are slightly below the desired level of performance and 5 are significantly below the target.

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

Mark Wynn, Interim Chief Executive.

We remain focused on delivering the best possible outcomes and opportunities for our residents. The county council continues to actively manage performance and it is positive that the majority of indicators are on track or are near to target. There are a number of indicators where we are seeing improvement such as clearing the road defect backlog and enhancing air quality which are to be recognised.

It is also positive that Lancashire has secured an historic devolution agreement with central government, enabling us to take more decisions closer to the people we serve. This agreement will help us drive forward our collective plans to develop our economy, benefitting local residents and businesses. We are committed to putting these arrangements in place at the earliest opportunity.

There are, however, several challenges that many councils are facing which we are also experiencing. These include pressures on adult social care and services related to special educational needs and disabilities. While national policy solutions are being explored, the county council is doing all in its power to redesign these services to ensure we can continue to deliver quality services which are financially sustainable. Our partners are also experiencing financial challenges, and it is vital that we work together to find joined up and local solutions where possible.

The Government has recently announced their budget. While further investment has been committed to local government, we await the detail on the implications for the county council. Against this backdrop, we will continue to enable our local economy to thrive while taking positive action to reform, redesign and refocus our services.

I would like to thank our staff, partners, service providers and everyone involved in delivering for the people of Lancashire and look forward to making further progress against our priorities.

Louise Taylor, Executive Director of Adult Services

The directorate was notified on 7th October of an inspection of its adult services by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). This is known as a Local Authority Assessment and comprises two phases. The first phase is to submit a range of evidence including our self-assessment and this was completed to deadline on 28th October. Phase two is a site visit for which we will get 6 weeks' notice, and this should occur within the next 6 months most probably February/March 2025 based on other authorities' experiences. A communication strategy providing information and briefings for staff, key stakeholders, partners, and elected members is in hand as is the selection of 50 cases for review by the Inspectorate. Preparation also



includes looking at the broader collection and submission of regional and national data sets which enhances the insight the County Council has in the way it delivers its Care Act duties in relation to Northwest and comparator local authorities. The data and intelligence demonstrate that we have good practice across a range of indicators which include how we support carers and how we enable choice and control to residents via direct payments.

The continued challenge and risk is the number of people still waiting for assessments, reassessment and reviews. Our investment in undertaking reviews of people waiting for longer than 12 months, over the last year, has demonstrated that there are no quantifiable risks for people who are in receipt of long-term services, as any concerns are swiftly raised by service providers and the reviews undertaken have proved just how well the needs of people who are receiving services are monitored and understood. Our biggest risk is for people who are awaiting an initial assessment, and this is the area that we continue to prioritise and reorient resource and slow down other work to ensure improvement gains traction.

The roll out of a new practice model – Living Better Lives – has been introduced to support more people to live independently and without formal support from the council, this requires the development of services in the community that people can access directly. This is what our Wellbeing and Early Support function has been introduced to help with and as part of this close work continues with district councils and the voluntary, faith and community sectors to build up that local knowledge and provision, with some modest investment from the adult services directorate. There have been some anticipated teething issues in relation to the implementation of the Wellbeing and Early Support function and we are undertaking an urgent review with a view to understanding the cause of the increase in people waiting for an initial assessment and addressing where possible the equalisation of resources across teams.

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

Children's Services have continued to maintain low rates of children becoming looked after, although we have seen a slight increase in the last quarter. Our preventative approaches such as family safeguarding, a stable workforce, and targeted interventions help to ensure that more children can safely remain at home with their families, and we will continue to work with our partners to help ensure that preventative approaches are impactful.

In early years education, we have maintained high take-up rates for free funded education, consistently performing above target figures. Our targeted awareness campaigns, which include regular publicity and engagement with families, have been instrumental in increasing participation, and we have continued our focus on areas with lower take-up rates.

Our library services have also seen success, particularly in the growth of electronic loans. Despite physical visitor numbers being impacted by necessary building repairs, the popularity of electronic loans has continued to rise, and are on track to meet new targets. The #Lancssummer campaign, and numerous events and activities have helped maintain community engagement and support.

However, we have faced challenges, particularly with children missing from education (CME). Whilst overall numbers have fallen as a result of sustained work over the summer to confirm pupils on roll, the start of the autumn term saw over 400 referrals, with Preston experiencing the highest pressure.

It has proved difficult to achieve a sustained increase in the percentage of care leavers aged 16 and 17 in education, employment and training. A small decrease in September was due to young people not attending their expected destinations in the new academic year for reasons including not getting their expected grades, enrolling late onto their courses, or another change in their circumstances.

Demand pressures within the Special Educational Needs (SEND) system remains another area of challenge, with high numbers of requests for assessment and a continued rise in the number of children with Education, Health and Care Plans. This continues to present a



challenge in ensuring that assessments and annual reviews are timely and in terms of pressures on the funding for high needs as more children attend independent non maintained special schools.

In response to the challenges in the SEND system we have continued to increase capacity within the SEND and educational psychology teams, alongside improvements in our arrangements for commissioning special school places. We have already made significant investment and continued increases to workforce capacity and more streamlined processes will help to secure improvements over time, but the shortage of Educational Psychologists nationally and the difficulty in recruiting to these posts means we do not expect that there will be a rapid improvement in performance. A business case for further investment is currently being worked on.

To address the issue of children missing from education, we have established support systems for new-to-country families in hotspot areas, providing assistance with school applications and other services. Our network of Family Hubs is also helping families who may need additional support. Additionally, we have negotiated additional places for in-year admissions in secondary schools to help ensure that children can more quickly access a school place.

To support more care leavers into education, training, and employment, we have established weekly hubs in Lancaster, Preston, and Burnley, offering clinics for volunteering, online courses, and job applications. We have strengthened capacity to work directly with young people, helping them re-engage with education and employment opportunities. Additionally, we are collaborating with partner employment agencies and supported living providers to create tailored opportunities and support for care leavers.

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

Performance dashboards for the directorate continue to indicate strong performance overall in Q2 with 90% of indicators at good or excellent.

Q2 saw the new Government confirm its commitment to Lancashire's devolution deal. This has enabled workstreams to progress at pace including to enable necessary legislation to be drafted for the Combined County Authority and Level Two deal into Q3/Q4.

In Q2, UK inflation continued to fall to 1.7% below the Bank of England 2% target. With the easing of inflationary pressures, the UK interest rate has also been subsequently reduced to 4.75% at time of writing. The ongoing easing of some global factors and inflationary pressures continues to benefit economic development through investment and real estate confidence. Whilst some initial improvements in market conditions that directly affect aspects of local government performance and finances continue, waste recycling remains volatile with market forces reducing overall income levels well below previous financial performance. Whilst the levels of recycling at household waste recycling centres are above target in Q2, overall levels of residual waste collected across Lancashire remain high.

Continued improvements across our major development and infrastructure programme as well as targeted investments see strategic development performing above target as blockages are overcome and delivery of major projects continues. Economic index is also achieving target albeit the volume of business engagements has dropped in Q2. Overall estate performance is good albeit we remain vigilant on the office market which remains a challenge nationally outside of major core cities.

The backlog of highway defects from the original Q4 winter weather impacts has now been cleared and operating at 'business as usual' status although with higher overall defect numbers compared to Q2 last year. The longer-term impacts of consecutive wet winters, affecting the country as a whole, are captured in the annual measurements of road condition, where further investment is being targeted to address worsening trends in red ratings as we also prepare for the winter ahead.



In Public Health, challenges remain in the treatment of increasing demand for substance and alcohol misuse in Lancashire. The levels of unmet need are improving but remain high. Whilst successful alcohol treatment is improving, opiate treatment has again dipped below the national average impacting on the quarterly rating. Mitigations and action plans are in place.

Elsewhere in the Directorate, Q2 saw the latest Air Quality Management Area data published with an improving trend in the percentage within compliance limits such that air quality is improving overall. Business skills pledges remain strong with 84 new pledges in Q2. Skills performance overall concluded the academic year with Lancashire exceeding targets and in the top performing areas across the country as measured by the Gatsby benchmark.

Mark Wynn, Executive Director of Resources

Our performance position provides an encouraging picture across the directorate, although we recognise a range of challenges across Resources and the wider council.

Delivering sustainable financial management remains a core priority for the organisation. Across the sector, many local authorities continue to face unprecedented demand and cost pressures, particularly in relation to adult social care, children's social care and special educational needs. Lancashire is no different and a projected full year pressure of £17.1m has been estimated at quarter 2. Action to improve this position is underway and substantial transformation is required to be remain financially stable over the medium term. Capital expenditure is broadly on track against budget at this point of the year. There is some slippage and programme managers are working to complete schemes against the agreed plan.

The wellbeing of our remarkable workforce also remains a priority. People Services continue to support departments across the council to manage absence and changes such as referring people with mental health related absence to occupational health on day one of the absence, increasing the use of our Employee Assistance Programme and providing targeted training to managers. They also continue to embed our leadership framework across the council, supporting our senior colleagues to thrive.

Modernising how the council operates is also a key focus. Digital services continue to be at the forefront of this agenda and have recently agreed a compelling and comprehensive digital strategy. Our newly created Strategy and Innovation function has also made good progress developing a programme to support the transformation of council services, aligned to the delivery of our priorities and medium-term financial strategy.

We must also recognise the critical work carried out by governance colleagues to support the development and imminent implementation of Lancashire's devolution agreement.

