

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY – 22 SEPTEMBER 2015

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK – APRIL 2015  
TO JULY 2015

WARD (S) AFFECTED: All

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Purpose/Summary of Report:

- To report on the performance of the key indicators that relate to Community Scrutiny for the period April 2015 to July 2015.
- Community Scrutiny has 22 indicators in its performance monitoring basket. Three of these are either on target or exceeding their targets and two performance indicators are off target. The remaining 17 performance indicators are trend only.

**RECOMMENDATION FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY:**

**That the Executive be advised that Community Scrutiny Committee has considered:**

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| <b>(A)</b> | <b>the reported performance for the period April 2015 to July 2015 be noted.</b> |
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| <b>(B)</b> | <b>and supports the approval of (A).</b> |
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1.0 Background

1.1 The council uses performance indicators and targets to help monitor progress against key objectives, understand how it is impacting upon the lives of residents and help inform decisions about directing resources to areas of need. East Herts Council's performance management framework was reviewed by Members in 2013 to make it more streamlined and more closely aligned with the objectives and priorities set out in the Corporate Plan. In 2015/16 there are 73 performance indicators, of which 22 are monitored within the year by Community Scrutiny Committee.

1.2 The report contains a breakdown of the following information by each service area:

- An overview of performance, in particular where there have been issues and remedial actions taken during the period.
- The indicators where data is collected monthly, with performance for July 2015 presented in detail (the most up to date available) with previous months summarised in a trend chart.
- The indicators where data is collected quarterly, with performance for Quarter 1 presented in detail (the most up to date available) with previous quarters summarised in a trend chart.

1.3 All councillors have access to Covalent (the council's performance management system), should they wish to interrogate the full range of performance indicators. The Performance Team are able to provide support and training on using the Covalent system if required.

1.4 **Essential Reference Paper 'B'** Shows the full set of performance indicators that are reported on a monthly or quarterly basis to this committee.

**Essential Reference Paper 'C'** Provides guidance notes and definitions for the performance indicators relating to Community Scrutiny Committee.

## 2.0 Performance analysis

### Performance against targets

2.1 Table one shows current performance for measures where there is a target together with movement since the last reported period. Two indicators are showing an improvement/increase. Two indicators have maintained the same level of performance and one indicator shows a decline. Please note some of these measures are reported quarterly and therefore are compared to the last quarter of 2014/15.

**Table One:**

| <b>Performance Indicator Short Name</b>   | <b>Performance Status (RAG)</b> | <b>Movement since last reported</b> |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>EHPI 11.2</b> – Number of producers at Hertford farmers market                     | <b>Green</b>                    | <b>Improved</b>                     |
| <b>EHPI 129</b> – Response time to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) complaints made to EHC | <b>Green</b>                    | <b>Stayed the same</b>              |
| <b>EHPI 11.1</b> – Rental income from market traders.                                 | <b>Green</b>                    | <b>Declined</b>                     |
| <b>EHPI 2.12</b> – Service requests: environmental health                             | <b>Amber</b>                    | <b>Stayed the same</b>              |
| <b>EHPI 181</b> – Time taken to process Housing Benefit new claims and change events. | <b>Red</b>                      | <b>Improved</b>                     |

### **ONLY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

2.2 Table two contains a summary of movement since each measure was last reported. Again, please note some of these measures are reported quarterly and therefore are compared to the last quarter of 2014/15.

**Table Two:**

| <b>Indicator (Trend only)</b>   |
|---|
| There has been a gradual decrease in <b>EHPI 10.1</b> (Council tax support caseload) between April to July.   |
| There has been a gradual decrease in <b>EHPI 10.3</b> (Housing benefit caseload) between May to July.   |
| There has been a slight increase in <b>EHPI 151</b> (Number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation) at the end of Quarter 1.              |
| There has been an increase in <b>EHPI 152</b> (The number of applicants accepted as owed the main homelessness duty to secure accommodation) for Quarter 1. |

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| There has been an increase in <b>EHPI 153</b> (Number of applicants that presented to the council as homeless) for Quarter 1.  |
| There have been no formal warnings issued to drivers and operators by the Licensing team between April to July for <b>EHPI 3.1</b> . This includes matters like - failure to produce documents, parking issues and driver conduct. |
| There has been no taxi licensing matters taken forward to the Licensing Sub Committee between April to July for <b>EHPI 3.2</b> .  |
| There has been a gradual increase in <b>EHPI 3.3</b> (Number of events notified to the Safety Advisory Group by event organisers) between May to July.   |
| There has been a gradual increase in <b>EHPI 3.4</b> (The number of visits by Licensing Enforcement officers to Licensed premises) between April to July.  |
| There has been a decrease in <b>EHPI 3.5</b> (The number of applications received by the Licensing team in respect of Licensed premises) in July compared to the previous period June.   |
| There has been a decrease in <b>EHPI 3.6</b> (The number of these applications that have received representations against them) in July compared to the previous period June.  |
| There have been no licensing applications taken forward to Licensing Sub Committee for <b>EHPI 3.7</b> .   |
| There has been a slight decrease in <b>EHPI 3a</b> (Usage: number of swims (under 16)) for Quarter 1.  |
| There has been an increase in <b>EHPI 3b</b> (Usage: number of swims (16 – under 60 year olds)) for Quarter 1.   |
| There has been a decrease in <b>EHPI 3c</b> (Usage: number of swims (60 year old +)) for Quarter 1.  |
| There has been a decrease in <b>EHPI 4a</b> (Usage: Gym (16 – under 60 year olds)) for Quarter 1.  |
| There has been a decrease in <b>EHPI 4b</b> (Usage: Gym (60 + year olds)) for Quarter 1.   |

2.3 Long term trend analysis (current value compared to the average performance for the last 12 months or last 4 quarters)

**Table three:**

| <b>Service and Indicator</b>                          | <b>Commentary</b>   |
|---|---|
| <b>Business Development</b>                           |   |
| <b>EHPI 11.1</b> – Rental income from market traders. | Performance for the quarter is exceeding target however both the short and long term trend show a decline. There has been a general trend of income from market traders decreasing nationally and East Herts is consistent with that pattern.   |
| <b>Environment Services</b>                           |   |
| <b>EHPI 3a</b> – Usage: number of swims (under 16)    | Swim usage is following normal trend patterns and is in line with service expectations. The drop of 209 users between the two quarters is a significant improvement on the difference between quarter 4 and quarter 1 last year. Most throughput in quarter one tends to show around 12,000 – 12,500 users, so performance is in line with service expectations. The long term trend compares current performance against the average over the last four quarters and therefore takes account of the good performance that occurred in that period. The long term trend should improve during the coming quarters, particularly if performance continues to remain in line with service expectations. |
| <b>EHPI 4a</b> – Usage: Gym (16 – under 60 year olds) | Gym usage tends to be better in the last quarter of the financial year (due to new year resolutions to increase fitness) and drops off in quarter one at the start of the new financial year. Performance in May 2015 did drop slightly but throughput in June 2015 has increased (the second best June performance over the contract period). 2014/15 was a particularly good year which explains why the long term trend (which compares current performance against the average over the last four quarters) shows a decline. However throughput performs well against the 6 year average. SLMs membership   |

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|  | <p>sales are performing well currently so it is expected that this will have a positive effect on throughput over the next quarter.</p>   |
| <p><b>EHPI 4b</b> – Usage: Gym (60 + year olds)</p>  | <p>Gym usage tends to be better in the last quarter of the financial year (due to new year resolutions to increase fitness) and drops off in quarter one at the start of the new financial year. Quarter one performance is lower than the same period last year but 2014/15 was a particularly good year which explains why the long term trend (which compares current performance against the average over the last four quarters) shows a decline. However throughput performs well against the 6 year average.</p>   |
| <p><b>Shared Revenue and Benefits Services</b></p>   |   |
| <p><b>EHPI 10.1</b> – Council Tax Support caseload and<br/><b>EHPI 10.3</b> – Housing benefit caseload</p> | <p>When compared to the average number of cases for the last 12 months both indicators show a decreasing long term trend i.e. cases have reduced. However, the complexity of individual cases has also increased and therefore the overall workload for the service has not diminished.</p> <p>A review was undertaken in late 2014/15 looking at caseload volume with a view to see if caseload trend could be projected. Overall the review concluded that a number of factors affect housing benefits and council tax support caseloads which are difficult to predict e.g. fluctuations in the local employment economy, variations in peoples working patterns and availability of temporary employment, as well as improvements in peoples financial circumstances removing them from eligibility for Benefit etc. Looking at the national trend and aligning that to East Herts caseload the review observed that there would be a decrease in both Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support caseloads from April 2013 and thereafter the council should expect very little change each year. This is a change from the rising caseloads observed up to 2013.</p> |

## Potential issues in future

2.4 Five new indicators for 2015/16 show a decline in July/Quarter One when compared to the average performance for the past period where data is available. Although it is too early to draw conclusions further analysis will be undertaken in the coming months to understand what patterns and trends exist and the reasons behind them. The indicators are:

- EHPI 3.3 – Number of events notified to the Safety Advisory Group by event organisers.
- EHPI 3.5 – Number of applications received by the licensing team in respect of licensed premises.
- EHPI 151 – Number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation at the end of the quarter
- EHPI 152 – The number of applicants accepted as owed the main homelessness duty to secure accommodation
- EHPI 153 – Number of applicants that presented to the council as homeless

## Changes to Performance Indicators

2.5 Consideration will be given as part of the financial and business planning process, to the relevancy of the following performance indicators based on the small detail they have provided to date:

- EHPI 3.4 – The number of visits by Licensing Enforcement officers to licensed premises’.
- EHPI 3.6 – The number of these applications that have received representations against them.
- EHPI 3.7 – Number of these applications that are taken forward to Licensing Sub Committee.

Further work will be undertaken in the coming months to look at possible options.

2.6 The monthly targets for ‘**EHPI 181** – Time taken to process Housing Benefit new claims and change events’ have been changed (see table four). The profiled targets recognises the heaviest workload in the quarter one period (generated by the changes in benefits, rents and council tax etc. in April) and then for the rest of the year reflects how the service pulls the cumulative figure back down allowing for any unforeseen changes or unexpected increase in service demand. The

target for March accounts for the huge volumes of assessments being undertaken in very short 'days' as the service prepares accounts for the annual uprating. The target for March also reflects the **annual** cumulative target of 10 days.

**Table Four:**

| <b>Reporting period</b> | <b>Original Target</b> | <b>Revised target<br/>(based on<br/>profiling the<br/>peaks in service<br/>demand)</b> |
|-------------------------|------------------------|--|
| April                   | 10 days                | 13 days  |
| May                     | 10 days                | 13 days  |
| June                    | 10 days                | 13 days  |
| July                    | 10 days                | 13 days  |
| August                  | 10 days                | 12 days  |
| September               | 10 days                | 12 days  |
| October                 | 10 days                | 12 days  |
| November                | 10 days                | 12 days  |
| December                | 10 days                | 12 days  |
| January                 | 10 days                | 12 days  |
| February                | 10 days                | 12 days  |
| March                   | 10 days                | 10 days  |

Please refer to **Essential Reference Paper 'B'** for the full performance indicator analysis.

### 3.0 Implications/Consultation

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

### Background Papers:



2014/15 Performance Indicators Estimates and Future Targets Report –  
Executive 3 March 2015

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