

## **Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Subject:** Gedling Plan Quarter 1

**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020

**Author:** Director of Organisational Development and Democratic Services

### **Purpose**

To inform the Overview and Scrutiny of the position against Improvement Actions and Performance Indicators in the 2020/2021 Gedling Plan at the end of quarter 1 and year end.

### **Recommendation**

**That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

- **Consider, ask questions and identify any actions or indicators that require additional information; and**
- **Note the progress against Actions and Performance Indicators in the 2020/2021 Gedling Plan.**

## **1 Background**

- 1.1 As usual, comprehensive details about the Gedling Plan can be assessed through the following link on the Council's website:-

<https://www.gedling.gov.uk/council/aboutus/prioritiesplansandperformance/gedlingplan/>

Members are recommended to view this document which reviews actions, indicators and outcomes for quarter 1. They contain explanations of variances from expected performance together with trend arrows for all the performance indicators within the Gedling Plan (note that an upward arrow indicates improved performance, irrespective of whether improvement is represented by a higher or lower value) and progress bars for all Gedling Plan actions showing progress made against project milestones.

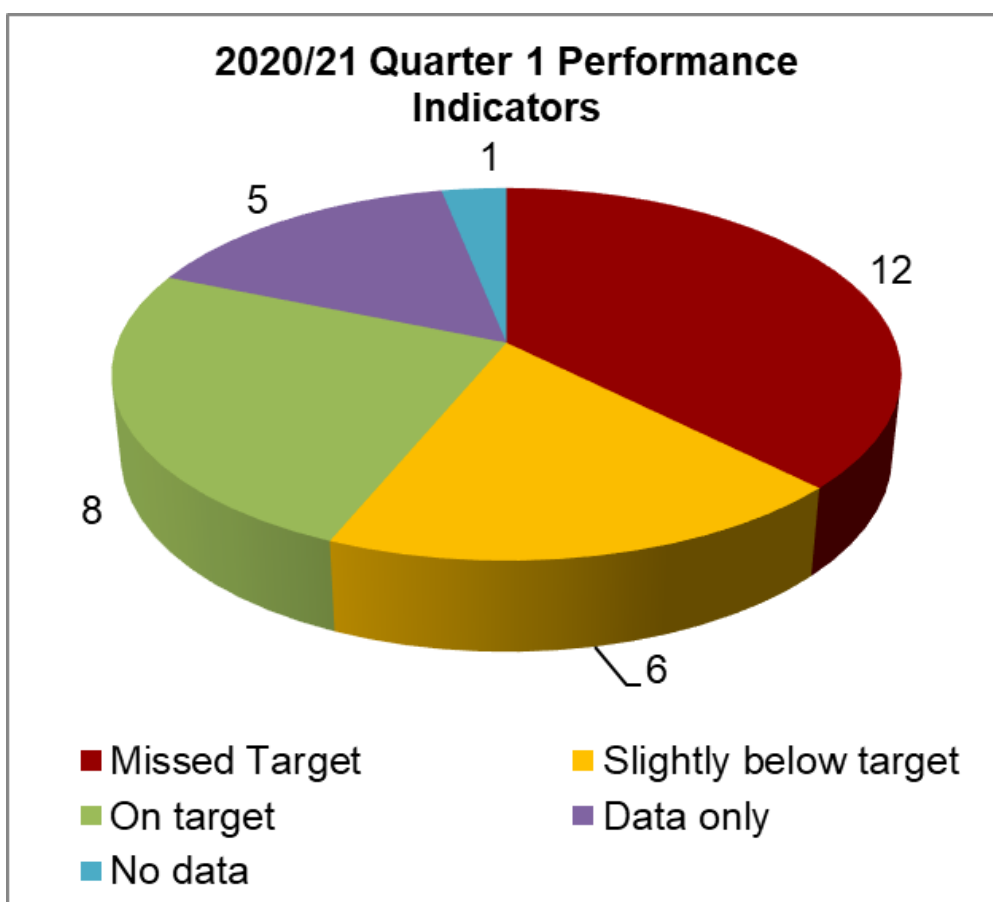
- 1.2 The assessment criteria used for actions and indicators is based on red, amber and green traffic light symbols. To be assessed as green performance indicators must be in line with their expected performance at this stage of the year, whilst actions must be on target against the “completed” or “in progress” milestones determined within the performance management system, Pentenna.

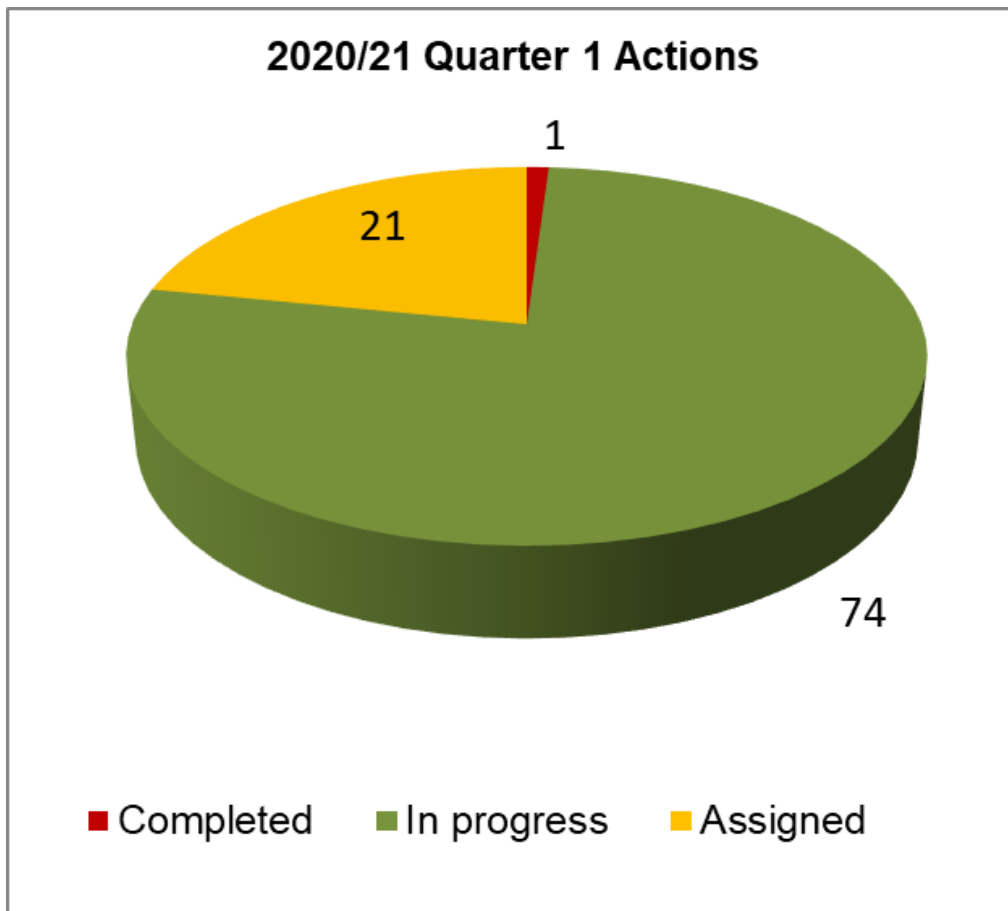
## 2 Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the performance information for the Gedling Plan 2020-23 at the end of 2020/21 quarter 1 as set out below, and identify any actions or indicators where they require additional information.

### 2.2 Overall Performance

Overall performance at quarter 1 of 2020/21 against the Gedling Plan actions and indicators shows the following:





### **Actions**

- 2.3 At this stage the 96 actions included in the Gedling Plan 2020-23, one is complete, the rest are either in progress or assigned to an Officer. Members will be aware that a number of actions are due to be delivered across the 3 years of the Plan, some are expected to be started and completed in year 1, whereas other actions are not due to commence until years 2 and 3. It must be noted that the data in this report refers to quarter 1 of 2020/21 and it is expected that the majority of the actions identified for the year will be met. However, following review of the Gedling Plan in light of Covid-19 it is clear that 2 actions which were due to be started and completed in year 1 will not be achieved and there will be slippage into year 2.

### **Indicators**

- 2.4 Overall indicator performance at the end of quarter 1 shows that out of a total of 32 indicators, 8 were on or above target, 6 were slightly below target and 12 indicators missed their target. Five indicators are for tracking purposes only. In view of the fact that the civic centre has been closed during quarter 1 other than for emergency appointments and no such appointments have been requested, there is no data available for the indicator: LI057 Percentage of customers seen within 15 minutes.
- 2.5 Examples of particularly positive performance for quarter 1 include:

- 98.6% of calls to the contact centre answered (or call back made) against the target of 94.0%
- The number of Keep Me Posted email newsletter subscribers has increased to 32934 from 30145.
- 100% of Major planning applications processed within 13 weeks against a target of 90%.
- 96.3% of Minor planning applications processed within 8 weeks against a target of 91%.
- 92% of other planning applications processed within 8 weeks against a target of 85%
- We now have over 17,500 garden waste customers, up from 16,500.
- 97% of food premises scoring 4 or 5 in the national food hygiene rating scheme against a target of 90%

2.6 Whilst the following performance indicators have missed target, their overall performance is very positive given the additional caseload received during the Covid-19 pandemic:

Average time to process new Housing Benefit claims (in calendar days) – In spite of receiving significantly more benefit claims the performance of 13.3 days is only slightly behind the target of 13 days. During lockdown, the department has received an 82% increase in claims (420) from the same period last year making it difficult to process these within target. By June the department were able to catch up and reduced the monthly processing time to 10 days compared to 18 days for May when the claims were peaking.

Average time to process Housing Benefit change in circumstances (in calendar days) - In spite of additional demand the performance of 4.3 days is only slightly behind the target of 4 days. During lockdown the department has received an additional 2800 (36% increase) change in circumstances compared to the same period in 2019 and we have also implemented several Government incentives to aid those directly affected by Covid-19. This put a strain on the team but by June they were back on target.

2.7 The following performance indicators missed their target at the end quarter 1 and are worthy of note. However from a Senior Leadership Team perspective there are no specific performance concerns to raise.

A number of indicators are showing zero at the end of quarter 1 as a direct result of the Council's compliance with the Covid-19 restrictions imposed by government:

- LI027f Number of attendances - Bonington Theatre
- ECOI2 Delivery of school based employability events
- LI363 Number of school-age work experience placements hosted in Gedling Borough Council in partnership with YouNG (and Economic Development)
- LI027 Number of visits to leisure centres

### Waste

Unfortunately the domestic waste collection weights have increased by 1506 tonnes in quarter 1 2020 compared to quarter 1 in 2019. The residual household waste per household at the end of quarter 1 was 178 kg against a target of 140 kg. An increase in the amount of waste collected is not unexpected given the fact that more residents have been at home during the Covid-19 lock down.

On a positive note, the target for percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting has improved during quarter 1 and was narrowly missed (35.6% against a target of 36.0%). Recycling collection weights increased by 264 tonnes, glass collection weights by 384 (despite no glass collections in April 2020) and garden waste collection weights by 568.5 tonnes in Q1 2020 compared to Q1 2019.

Work has commenced to analyse data relating to contamination which has historically been high. The results of this data analysis will inform an action plan to increase recycling and reduce residual waste.

### Housing

Whilst target has not been met for quarter 1 (97 Net additional homes provided against a target of 120) it is noted that completions for June have been high, in part due to the construction of apartments and conversion of Carlton Police Station (totalling 66 dwellings). Construction during this period has been affected by lockdown restrictions which resulted in development pausing on many large and small sites within the Borough.

No affordable homes were delivered against a target of 5, which is due to the ramifications of the Covid-19 pandemic on the construction industry. Building sites have re-opened and construction has recommenced, but at a slower rate due to both the impact of social distancing in the work place and wider supply chain issues.

## Homelessness and Welfare Support

The average length of time spent in temporary accommodation (in weeks) was 17.9 weeks against a target of 15 weeks at the end of quarter 1. Due to Covid-19 and the lock down, all registered social landlords ceased all non-essential activities including offering permanent tenancies. As no properties were being offered and the public were advised to self-isolate and remain where they were currently residing there has been little if any movement out of temporary accommodation provided by the Council. We also have some large families that have been placed for long period of time which are enhancing the figures for this indicator.

## Sickness absence

The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on this indicator, which was 9.85 days against a target of 9 days at the end of quarter 1. Sickness absence continues to be higher than target. Although not the whole picture, absence due to Covid-19 has been a material factor in the increase in absence when compared against levels last year. Having said that, the rate of absence due to Covid-19 has continued to drop month by month and it is reasonable to expect (subject to there being no second spike) that absence by late summer should not be materially affected by Covid-19 and at that time it may be more relevant to consider rates of absence and how they compare with last year. Looking at working days lost due to Covid-19 the following data shows the diminishing impact of Covid-19 but also shows that certainly for three out of the last four months the impact has been material at over 10% of all sickness in each month. The month by month working days lost % day lost to Covid-19 is as follows (Total year to date to June for Covid-19 absence is 6.4%):

March - 21.3%

April - 19.3%

May - 12.5%

June - 7.1%

The highest proportion of Covid-19 absence appears to have been with front-line services.

## **Achievements**

- 2.8 A separate report has been produced highlighting additional key achievements delivered during quarter 1, focusing on areas where the Council has made a real difference to people's lives. This is attached as Appendix 1 and is available on the Council's website and in hard copy in the Members' Room. The following outcomes are identified for particular attention:

**Support and advice to vulnerable people** - The leisure team working in the Contact Centre at Carlton Forum LC have been telephoning vulnerable people across the borough during Covid to offer support and advice, often resulting in the arrangement of food parcel delivery from the humanitarian centre at Richard Herrod. In addition, referrals have been made to befriending services and some people have continued to receive calls on a weekly basis. These telephone calls have been really well received by members of the public.

**Council Tax Hardship Fund** - The Council has used government grant funding to establish a Council Tax Hardship Fund to assist residents who need support with their finances as a result of the Coronavirus outbreak. The Fund helps working age families who are in receipt of Council Tax support, meaning they could receive a reduction of up to £300 in their Council Tax. Qualifying households automatically receive the reduction and do not need to contact the council in order to get the discount. By the beginning of June, awards totalling £346,042.11 had been made to 1462 individual households.

An additional discretionary hardship scheme was also made available to anyone in receipt of council tax support who are experiencing financial difficulties. This is not an automatic award and an application form needs to be submitted. There is no automatic entitlement guarantee and awards are allocated depending on the individual circumstances of each claim received.

**Humanitarian response** - Officers from the public protection service responded to 643 requests for help as part of the council's humanitarian response to the covid 19 pandemic. Requests were received for a wide variety of support needs including requests help with collecting prescriptions and shopping from those who were self-isolating or shielding.

**Sanctuary Installations project** - The Community Safety Officer re-worked the Sanctuary installations project in response to anticipated and recorded increases in high-risk domestic abuse cases as a result of the lockdown. The response reduced the usual wait for security measures from 12 weeks average to 2 weeks acting on referrals from Police, MARAC and JUNO Women's Aid service. This has been very positively received by Nottinghamshire Police as such a response has not been seen anywhere else in Nottinghamshire.

**Business Grants** – The revenues team (with help from other service areas) have successfully managed the full administration and payment of over 1300 Small Business Grants / Retail and Hospitality and Leisure Grants as well as providing continued support for business facing financial difficulty during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Transport and Waste** - Transport and Waste teams have managed to continue operationally with adjustments to working methods to maintain vehicle servicing,

repairs and pre MOT checks, continue with taxi inspections, maintain refuse, recycling, garden waste collections and reintroduce glass and bulky waste collections with the additional help from leisure staff/management, agency workers/ drivers, PASC operatives/ drivers to back fill for staff self-isolating. The office and management staff in Transport, Waste especially the temporary waste supervisor (now permanent), PASC and the Health Safety and Emergency Planning Officer have worked tirelessly and additional hours above and beyond normal expectations of their role with reduced experienced staff to maintain services. Additional help from customer services, organisational development and the director has also helped with high volumes of workload placed on the teams. In addition the refuse, recycling, garden waste and glass collections crews have been collecting increased tonnages in quarter 1.

**Gedling Country Park** – Viewing Platforms Following the successful £138,000 funding bid, work on the viewing platforms at Gedling Country Park began in February and has continued throughout quarter 1. The Beacon View platform is now complete and in lockdown is being enjoyed by visitors to the park taking daily exercise. Work to complete the Lincoln View platform commenced in May and this along with the new geographic point of interest interpretation panels is now complete.

**Reset Strategy** - Cabinet approved the Reset Strategy on 18 June 2020. The Strategy will be delivered through five work streams which have been grouped into three overarching aspects: Business, Residents & Communities and Council (Frontline services, Support Services and Finance). In quarter 1 a number of previously suspended services were reinstated as soon as government guidance and/or staffing capacity allowed. Glass collection was reinstated with effect from 11 May and bulky waste service reinstated with effect from 20 May, initially one day a week prioritising the previously suspended bookings but returning to full service in June. Car parks associated with the Council's parks and open spaces were re-opened to members of the public with effect from 13 May. Restrictions on the operation of stalls at Arnold Market was lifted to enable normal market trading to resume from week commencing 1 June 2020. Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings were reinstated with effect from 1 June 2020 and have been successfully held remotely using the Teams platform since then. In addition, commercial tree services to domestic households recommenced from 1 June 2020. Approval was given by the Leader and plans have been put in place and screens fitted to the booths to enable re-opening of the main reception for pre-booked appointments with effect from 6 July 2020.

### **3 Alternative Options**

- 3.1 Not to present an update on quarterly performance, in which case Overview and Scrutiny Committee members will not be aware of performance against the Gedling Plan 2020-23.



## **4 Financial Implications**

4.1 There are no financial implications arising out of this report.

## **5 Legal Implications**

5.1 There are no legal implications arising out of this report.

## **6 Equalities Implications**

6.1 There are no equalities implications arising out of this report.

## **7 Carbon Reduction/Sustainability Implications**

7.1 There are no carbon reduction/sustainability implications arising out of this report.

## **8 Appendices**

8.1 Appendix 1 – Examples of Outcomes achieved during Quarter 1 2020/21.

## **9 Background Papers**

9.1 None identified.