

Report by Councillor R Metcalfe, Portfolio Holder for ‘Our People and Resources’

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1. INTRODUCTION – a changing political landscape

The national political landscape continues to be uncertain, with consequences for the council's fortunes remaining unclear.

One imperative that can be taken as given, is the country's decision to withdraw from the European community and the potential economic threat this will pose if there is an economic downturn, with significant consequences for the council's income and our still hard pressed revenue budget.

However, there is no doubt that in Lincoln we are seeing an unprecedented period of public and private sector growth. Our two Universities continue to invest heavily, our visitor economy will receive a huge boost from the Heritage Lottery funding for the enhancements to our wonderful Cathedral, and our engineering/ manufacturing sector remains vibrant.

The challenge to align our expenditure with our income remains, with approaching £1 million savings still to find within the lifetime of the current MTFS.

The council will need to continue to be innovative and entrepreneurial if it is to achieve long term financial sustainability and continue to deliver high performing services.

2. THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

In early 2017 we launched Vision 2020 - a new 3-year strategic plan, covering the period 2017 to 2020. This vision identified four key strategic priorities:

- Let's drive economic growth
- Let's reduce inequality
- Let's deliver quality housing
- Let's enhance our remarkable place

These four priorities are underpinned by a final key element of Vision 2020 - professional high performing service delivery. We will ensure that the council is well run, builds a consensus with the communities we serve and with our partners around our vision and strategic priorities, and can demonstrate that we are capable of delivering these.

What follows is an update you on how we are progressing with each of these priorities.

The council has worked to ensure members, staff and partners are informed of progress and are engaged in the delivery of Vision 2020. This has included putting on staff and member roadshows to keep people informed of delivery; member briefing sessions on specific projects and partnership events such as the Lincoln Growth Conference.

Key achievements for ‘Let’s Drive Economic Growth’

- The £30m Transport Hub is open. This includes;
 - Lincoln Central Car Park – a 1,000 space multi-storey car park opened in November 2017 and has already been awarded a Park Mark Award for safety.
 - A state of the art bus station that includes 14 bus bays that enable up to 650 weekday departures.
 - The Transport Hub is a catalyst for the Co-op’s £70m Cornhill Redevelopment. Phase one is now complete; Phase Two is progressing; and Phase Three, which will include an Everyman Cinema, is being planned.
- Public consultation has taken place on the Western Growth Corridor, and discussions are ongoing with the county council on the outputs of their transport modelling exercise before moving onto a second phase of workshops with public and partners.
- Our Public Realm Strategy has been published which will co-ordinate public realm activities toward a single vision for public areas in the city centre
- Our Growth Conference showcased the progress made in the city since the launch of Vision 2020, and was attended by 150 delegates.

Key achievements for ‘Let’s Reduce Inequality’

- We have a Universal Credit Support Team, which has supported 228 customers with digital support, and 113 customers with budgeting support, since March 2018.
- Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee undertook a review of Inclusive Growth to identify how the economy can provide high quality employment opportunities. The committee’s recommendations have been to Executive and a work-plan will now be developed.
- Our Social Value Policy has been adopted which embeds the council’s commitment to social, environmental and economical sustainability through procurement processes.
- We are working with partners to deliver multi-agency support for rough sleepers. This project will support 120 individuals over the span of the project, and is delivered thanks to £1.3m of Social Impact Bond funding from Government.
- A new Community Lottery will be launched on 11th August, generating revenue to support local voluntary community organisations in the city and in nearby villages.
- The Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter was launched this year, which encourages organisations in the city to go the extra mile for their employees and also for communities in the city.

Key achievements for ‘Let’s Deliver Quality Housing’

- Partnerships with Waterloo Housing Group and Westleigh Developments Ltd. are enabling us to facilitate the delivery of 400 new homes by 2021. More than 200 of these have been, or are in the process of being, built and the council has the opportunity to purchase a number of these.
- We have been allocated £2.8m from the Housing Infrastructure Fund for a marginal viability study of the Spa Road development. This will unlock the potential development of 312 homes on this brownfield site.
- A Brownfield Sites Register has been published to provide information on suitable brownfield land for development.
- We have successfully bid for £3.2m from Homes England for specialist affordable housing. This will part fund the delivery of 70 Extra Care units.

- The Trusted Landlord Scheme continues to be promoted, and by March 2018, there were 482 properties covered by the scheme.
- Throughout 2017/18 the council completed £225,000 worth of environmental improvement works across housing sites in the city.

Key achievements for ‘Let’s Enhance Our Remarkable Place’

- The Sincil Bank Regeneration Scheme is progressing well, with the first phase delivering improvements to its look and feel. The Neighbourhood Team has secured a community office as an accessible and welcoming hub for advice and support.
- Restoration work in Boultham Park is complete. This saw key heritage features restored such as the bandstand, bridges and the footprint of Boultham Hall. An opening event took place in May 2018.
- A £400,000 investment has been made to upgrade the city’s CCTV network. The 130 new cameras were switched on in February 2018. City centre Wi-Fi will be made available via the CCTV network in the coming months.
- The £1.5m transformation of Birchwood Leisure Centre is complete which has seen a new children’s soft play area created, along with a larger fitness gym and a new café.
- The allotment capital development programme was launched, which includes plans to refurbish 17 allotment sites. The £600,000 Phase One work across 11 sites is now complete.

Key achievements for ‘High Performing Service Delivery’

- We have invested £13 million in a new, modern hotel building currently under construction on Tentercroft Street. This investment will support the city’s tourism industry, create jobs and provide a good level of return to support the delivery of services to our residents.
- A £6.6 million investment has also been made in purchasing two NCP car parks, which have been leased back to NCP to operate. This arrangement provides revenue for the authority, and further underpins a more commercial approach to securing council services well into the future.
- We have published a People Strategy to underpin the delivery of Vision 2020. This strategy recognises staff are key to delivering high performing services, and the implementation of this strategy will continue throughout Vision 2020.
- We have also adopted a Customer Experience Strategy which seeks to transform the way we engage and support our customers. This includes a move towards self-serve, where customers can better access the information they need at any time.

3. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2017/18 – Our people & Resources

3.1 Progress on reshaping local government

A number of discussions are taking place with other councils in Greater Lincolnshire with consultancy firm Local Partnerships which has funding to support the development of a potential Greater Lincolnshire growth deal. The city council is in regular discussions with Local Partnerships and neighbouring councils to identify infrastructure projects across the region that would support growth in the city, and that could form part of a possible future Greater Lincolnshire bid submission.

3.2 Financial Sustainability

In common with the rest of local government the Council has continued to face a large number of challenges during 2017/18 which have seen:

- the continuation of severe central government funding reductions, the distribution of which has not been uniform across the different types of authority with some being significantly more affected than others, this Council being one of those suffering a greater proportionate loss.
- an increased reliance on retained Business Rates and the levels of financial risk and uncertainty that this creates.
- the legacy of impacts from the last economic crisis that still persist, affecting jobs, housing and business growth, low returns on investments, these in turn create pressure on the generation of local income streams and increased demand for council services from customers who rely on the safety net provided by local government.

However in response to this environment the Council continues to deliver a track record of strong financial discipline. This means planning ahead, securing savings in advance, re-investing in more efficient ways of working, adopting a more commercial approach, prioritising resources for economic development measures, whilst making careful use of reserves to meet funding gaps and mitigate risks.

The Council's successful financial management to date has enabled the protection of core services, whilst at the same time ensured that resources are directed towards the priority areas in the Council's Vision 2020.

Despite the financial challenges the Council has already faced, and successfully managed, local government is still set to experience significant funding reform from 2020.

The Fair Funding Review will re-establish the baseline need of every local authority, and, at the same time, business rates baselines will be reset for the first time. The government also intends to redesign the business rates retention system, moving to 75% local retention, while restructuring the system of risk and rewards. All this is due to come into effect in April 2020.

Ahead of this the Council's General Fund continues to face a significant financial challenge if it is to continue to deliver its Vision 2020 priorities and to deliver services to the public within a reduced, and more variable funding envelope.

Whilst the three year programme of activity set out in the Vision 2020 is fully resourced within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Strategy also includes a savings target still to be achieved along with a number of significant financial risks which could affect the level of savings required.

Over the last 10 year period the Council has delivered savings in excess of £7.5m, a significant reduction in comparison to the overall net expenditure budget. However further savings of £0.102m are still to be delivered in order to achieve the current target by 2018/19.

The Towards Financial Sustainability (TFS) programme is and continues to be the vital element in ensuring that the Council maintains a sustainable financial position and delivers the required reductions in the net budget. In order to refocus and maintain momentum the TFS programme has been re-aligned and there are now three agreed strands to achieve savings. These are:

- Commercialisation – generation of new income streams, and commercial trading opportunities
- Asset Rationalisation – optimisation of usage and commercial returns of the City's property and land portfolio
- Shared Services/ savings – ensure the provision of professional, high performing services

Alongside this programme the Council will continue to seek ways to maximise its tax bases through economic development measures, through its Vision 2020, which enhance the economic prosperity of the City.

As part of the maximisation of tax bases the council, along with the other Lincolnshire District Councils, Lincolnshire County Council and North Lincolnshire Council applied to be a pilot for 100% Business Rates Retention in 2018/19 and was confirmed as one of the ten successful applications.

This means that for 2018/19 the council will receive 60% of business rates, with 40% going to Lincolnshire County Council (under 50% retention the funding splits were 50% Central Government, 40% Lincoln City Council and 10% Lincolnshire County Council).

Crucially the pilot scheme includes a 'no detriment' clause meaning that no authority shall receive less than if it was operating under the current 50% retention scheme.

Based on an assessment of the amount of Business Rates that are expected to be collected during 2018/19 the additional resources estimated to be achieved from being in the pilot is circa £1.5m. An element of this additional resource has been set aside to fund the forecast reduction in business rates when the system is reset in April 2020, with the balance going towards economic regeneration.

This approach by the council on both its TFS programme and maximisation of tax bases focuses its efforts on sustainability for the future

3.3 Revenues Shared Service

Our Revenues and Benefits shared service with North Kesteven District Council continues to go from strength to strength, highlighted by being successfully shortlisted as finalists for three high profile national awards – with the award winners to be announced in mid-October. This is recognition for a service which has been subject to a whole host of changes both locally and nationally in terms of customer demands, changes in national policy and legislation, welfare reforms and economic impacts. All of this alongside a backdrop of impressive performance and savings in excess of £0.5m per annum between City of Lincoln and North Kesteven. Government funding from DWP and MHLG continues to be a year-on-year challenge, however the team responds to such issues proactively and positively, with a real focus on outcomes for our customers.

Impacts of the economy and cumulative welfare reforms provide a challenging environment for Revenues colleagues to collect and recover monies due to the Council, such as; Council Tax, Business Rates, Former Tenant Arrears and Sundry Debtors – as well as collecting the levy for the Lincoln Business Improvement District. Despite these challenges, the team continues to perform well – proactively advertising customers to ‘Get in touch, not in debt’ through our Fair Collection Policy, as well as helping to signpost customers to vital budget and debt management services wherever appropriate.

In terms of performance:

- In-year Council Tax collection 2017/18 (97.17%) was 0.08% higher than for 2016/17 (97.09%) – this despite an increase of collectable debit of £1.98m, also 2017/18 was the first year our Localised Council Tax Support scheme was amended which reduced the level of support in some cases;
- Although Business Rates in-year collection 2017/18 (98.87%) reduced by 0.56% compared to 2016/17 (99.43%), the key reason was due to new rateable value schedules being received from the Valuation Office Agency in mid-March 2018, which left little time for officers to try and collect this backdated debit. An outturn position of 98.87% is still impressive and highly competitive on a national scale;
- The number of Council Tax customers awaiting their correspondence to be processed was 121 at 31st March 2018, compared to 296 at the end of March 2017 – and a significant reduction from 1,713 at the end of March 2012. Processes and resources have been reviewed and updated accordingly, and it is envisaged that this excellent position is now more sustainable into the future.

The Revenues Team has worked closely with our Business Development and IT Team to develop and introduce a number of integrated e-forms which enable customers to complete online forms which automatically populate back office systems, reducing resources needed to manually intervene in a number of cases – freeing up key resources to work on other vital areas of Revenues administration. Going forward, the aim is to introduce further such forms – this is vital as the team continues to administer more Council Tax accounts through housing growth of the City (as well as North Kesteven, due to being a shared service).

Our Team continues to deliver initiatives to try and reduce fraud in the system – through cross-departmental and national data-match exercises, and initiatives through the Lincolnshire Counter Fraud Partnership. Regular reviews of Council Tax Single Person Discounts, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support incomes, and Business Rates potential ‘avoidance’ are key activities for our shared service.

3.4 Procurement

As in previous years the current financial situation has meant that procurement continues to be one of the areas where there is potential to generate savings. However this is with the acknowledgement that this is subject to market forces and therefore is something which we cannot control.

Negotiations have recently concluded with Kier this year in respect of the Housing Planned Maintenance contract provision and the option to extend for a further 3 year period. These were very successful and it is anticipated that this will generate significant savings as well as service delivery improvements over the remainder of the contract.

The Procurement Manager as part of her duties continually reviews whether there are any other potential spend areas and/or contracts which could be renegotiated or procured in order to generate savings.

The Procurement Manager has recently developed a number of strategies/policies which it is hoped will enable the council to generate more added value to its procurement activity. The most significant one of these is the Social Value Policy which details the Council's aspirations to generate added value within its procurement exercises, where appropriate.

The notice period with Procurement Lincolnshire has ended and there has been a seamless transition to a in house provision.

In addition to the savings achieved, substantial procurement support has been provided within the last year to a number of the key strategic priorities including the Housing New Build Programme, the Boutham Park Restoration Project, and Western Growth Corridor as well as a number of the priorities of Vision 2020.

3.5 Asset Optimisation

As noted earlier three commercial investment properties have been purchased to generate new income streams for the council. The NCP car parks at St Rumbolds Street & Brayford Street and the Travelodge under construction at Tentercoft Street are subject to institutional leases to NCP and Travelodge and generate a significant income for the Council. Further purchases are being considered to generate additional income.

Supporting Housing - An agreement to purchase 18 acres of land at Queen Elizabeth Road Lincoln was completed on a subject to planning basis. This land will be combined with the Council's frontage site of 13 acres to generate a potential capacity of 326 houses. A residential property at 93 Rookery Lane was acquired to provide additional plots and an improved access for the Councils proposed residential site.

Protection of heritage assets/General maintenance schemes - Full external redecoration of 20/22 Steep Hill was undertaken and the project to repair Westgate Wall stone repairs was completed. A feasibility study for Greyfriars was undertaken working in partnership with Heritage Lincolnshire to look at potential uses for the building with a view to submitting a full bid to Heritage Lottery fund in 2019. Phase 1 work was funded by HLF and architectural heritage fund. Greyfriars is currently on the buildings at risk register. In addition to the usual planned maintenance projects, a large scheme to replace obsolete pipework at Yarborough Leisure Centre was carried out.

3.6 Emergency Planning

The Emergency Plan provides a framework for the control and co-ordination of a response to an emergency affecting the council and is refreshed annually. Over the past year we have continued to work with the County Council's Emergency Planning unit on:

- a review of the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum's (LRF) Command and Control structure and procedures

- a large multi-agency 'Move to Critical' workshop which we hosted at City Hall to develop protocols for what we do should the national threat level move from severe to critical;
- learning from the tragic Grenfell disaster;
- involvement in the recent Exercise Mercian King (the multi-agency and armed Police exercise at Lincoln College).

We now have a full out of hours rota for emergency planning strategic (gold) commanders which includes a combination of Chief Executive, Directors and Assistant Directors. The strategic commander level was previously CMT level only but has been expanded to Assistant Director level to increase resilience. A review is underway of the staff that make up our tactical (silver) commander group and the training and support they require to further increase resilience.

Assistant Directors have received strategic commander training and refresher training has been rolled out to staff currently at tactical and operational (bronze) levels.

Staff have continued to be trained on ACT – Action Counters Terrorism as required over the last year, including colleagues from the DWP. ACT is the new name and format for what was previously known as Project Griffin which is a national police initiative to protect our cities and communities from the threat of terrorism by familiarising staff of organisations such as ours on security, counter-terrorism and crime prevention issues.

3.7 Business Continuity

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is a framework that assists in the management of risks which might impact the smooth running of our organisation or the delivery of key services. These risks could be from the external environment (e.g. power outages, severe weather etc.) or from within an organisation (e.g. systems failure, loss of key staff etc.) Well organised Business Continuity plans will facilitate the recovery of key business systems within agreed timescales whilst maintaining the council's critical activities and the delivery of vital services to the public.

Business Continuity Management complements and interrelates with other corporate activities, notably risk management and emergency planning.

The council's overarching business continuity plan is reviewed each year. We have 21 service area plans all of which undertake an annual review, led by the service area and supported by the council's Emergency Planning Officer who is from the Joint Emergency Management Service at Lincolnshire County Council. All plans are scheduled to be completed by July of each year. Following significant investment a secondary ICT location has now been established and tested and is fully functional at Hamilton House. A draft ICT Disaster Recovery Plan has been prepared and is now being tested against Corporate Business Continuity Plans. This progress in relation IT Disaster Recovery has resulted in the issue being considered as significantly progressed enough to be removed from the Annual Governance Statement as an area of significant concern.

The councils Business Continuity Co-ordinator is the Chief Finance Officer and regularly meets with the council's Emergency Planning Officer, who sits on relevant internal meetings such as Safety Advisory Group and the Christmas Market Safety Advisory Group to provide necessary support and guidance.

3.8 Risk Management

The Council continues to develop and monitor of the key risks, those which could affect the Council's ability to achieve its priorities during the year. Elements of Risk Management are outsourced to Lincolnshire County Council's (LCC) Assurance Lincolnshire service in order to provide the level of expertise that we require. The development and monitoring of the Council's strategic, operational and project risk registers however remains a role that is undertaken by the Council through the Corporate Management Team and Directorate Management Teams.

The Strategic Risk Register for 2017-18 was initially formulated by the Corporate Management Team in May 2017 and as part of the reporting protocol within the current Risk Management Strategy both the Executive Committee and Performance Scrutiny Committee receive reports on the Strategic Risk Register to consider the status and movement of all strategic risks at that particular point in time.

Each Directorate identifies key risks within their service areas creating a Directorate Risk Register. These registers contain risks that are mainly of an operational nature.

An Internal Audit was undertaken during 2017/18, of the Council's risk management arrangements. The purpose of this review was to focus on the Strategic and Directorate risk registers ensuring that they are up to date, regularly reviewed and risks are actively managed. It was concluded that there was substantial assurance - that the Council had effective risk management arrangements in place.

The Council's Risk Management Strategy has recently been reviewed and there is a comprehensive training programme for all officers who have roles and responsibility for risk management which is delivered every 2 years. Training commenced for both officers and members from April 2018 and an e-learning package for new starters or a refresh for existing officers will be made available in early autumn 2018.

The Council are part of the Greater Lincolnshire Risk Management Group (GLRMG) and will be shortly conducting their own annual benchmarking exercise between the districts within Lincolnshire. This will be a much simpler way of benchmarking and enables us to share best practice.

3.9 Corporate Health & Safety

A comprehensive two year rolling Health & Safety Development Plan is in place and is prioritised according to risk. It is fully resourced and is approved and monitored by Health & Safety Champions Group. The main focus last year was to ensure that occupational health measures were suitable and sufficient to protect our employees. In addition, during this year a new online Incident Reporting System was launched providing a platform to identify trends or hotspots to target improvement.

The Management of Asbestos Policy and associated procedures was under review and two new eLearning tools have been developed and launched by Corporate Health & Safety relating to a new starters health and safety induction and display screen equipment (DSE) training and risk assessment. Over 150 of our employees have already undertaken this training.

A robust and positive working relationship with our trade union Safety Representatives continues to flourish which is integral in maintaining and improving our organisations health and safety culture.

3.10 Human Resources

During 2017 the People Strategy and action plan was implemented across the Council. The purpose of the three year strategy is an enabling framework which supports the delivery of the Vision 2020.

The Strategy is divided into three key themes which support the Council's strategic objectives:-

- A focus on the promotion of health and wellbeing initiatives that support healthier lifestyles. A number of initiatives have been implemented including the Global Corporate Challenge, awarding of Mindful Employer status and the development of a health and wellbeing guide for all employees
- Ensuring the highest standards of leadership and management throughout the organisation to support a motivated and engaged workforce. A coaching programme was implemented where 24 members of staff had the opportunity to take part in four coaching sessions during 2017. A staff engagement strategy and action plan has been developed to further increase communication and feedback within the Council
- Delivery of professional high performing services and becoming high performing teams included a re-branding of the appraisal system to "Your Performance Matters". The completion rate following the implementation of the new appraisal system was 86% which was a notable achievement. A 20% quality audit was undertaken which has informed and shaped the refresher training for 2018 appraisals

The HR team continue to review the HR policies to ensure clarity, harmonisation and compliance with legislation. The reviews are incorporated within a timetable to ensure that all policies are checked at least every three years. The Trade Unions have been actively involved in these reviews. As part of each review, training continues to be provided for all staff who have supervisory duties.

The positive relationship with the Unions continues, largely as a result of the monthly joint HR and Union meeting, where Unions are updated on staffing issues and are given the opportunity to give their opinions and input.

A Staff Charter has been developed to provide a framework for staff and to set out the behaviours we want and expect to see in line with our core values. Following a formal staff consultation this will be launched and implemented across the Council.

The HR team continue to review and monitor all workforce data in accordance with the equality and diversity action plan.

3.11 Work Based Learning (WBL) - Apprenticeships

The apprenticeship levy was introduced in April 2017. The Council is a levy paying employer with a 2.3% target of the workforce expected to be apprentices. From May

2017 a digital account became accessible to the Council to support the training of apprenticeships.

The Council applied to the Skills Funding Agency to be placed as a supporting provider, on the register of apprenticeship training providers. Following a rigorous application process the Council was successful in becoming a sub-contractor to continue to deliver apprenticeships across the Council working with First College as the main provider.

The two partnerships with Lincolnshire County Council and First College continue however 2018 will see the demise of the contract with Lincolnshire County Council as they have chosen to take an alternative route under the new regulations.

As the national picture has begun to evolve we are reviewing delivery models to explore opportunities to enter in additional sub-contracting relationships, particularly with SME's.

Despite a decline in numbers on programme for the past academic year 100% of apprentices have achieved on time and 100% have moved into education, employment or training. The team continue to focus on quality and excellence – an achievement included being in the top 100 Employers for School Leavers Awards coming sixth out of the top ten Public Sector Employers category.

Over the coming year the WBL team will continue to support apprenticeships, provide career advice and interview support across the Council. WBL will also support the People Strategy by utilising existing skills and expertise within the team to deliver core training identified from the appraisal process.

Craft apprenticeship scheme

We currently have five apprenticeships in position at Hamilton House (two plasterers, a joiner, an electrician and a painter) and we are now in the recruitment stage to appoint three apprentices - a joiner, an electrician and a painter to start in September this year.

We continue to ensure every effort is made so that the vacancies are seen as widely as possible, with information available on our website, Lincoln College website, on social media and in HOME, the tenant's magazine. As a result we have seen an increase in the level of applications.

A commitment has been made to recruit at least two apprentices annually, the trade to be determined in consultation with the Housing Repairs Services workforce who provide the day to day supervision.

Housing Repairs continue to work closely with our partners and contractors to provide as much technical and workplace experience as possible. The apprentices are also going to be getting experience of new build on the new housing schemes.

As well as the long term apprenticeships we also provide opportunities for short-placements - we have contacts with Lincoln college and provide work experience for 8 full-time students on a minimum two week placement.

3.12 Communications

Our communications team continues working hard to ensure our reputation is protected and enhanced where possible. Staff are communicated with effectively and often, and the team continues to ensure that Vision 2020 and its priorities are embedded across the organisation and within the local community.

Our social media channels continue to go from strength to strength and we have had some fantastic outcomes using these tools.

- The opening of both the bus station and car park, which together form the Lincoln Transport Hub, received maximum publicity as they were being built, thanks to a well-planned communications campaign which ensured every milestone was celebrated and communicated to partners and the media. Their respective opening days both went incredibly well and each resulted in some great press coverage for the new facilities.
- The Boultham Park restoration project was a significant one locally and throughout the entirety of the work, the communications team worked closely with Linkage to ensure members, residents and partners were kept informed of each milestone reached. This culminated in the Park's opening ceremony, coinciding with the Royal Wedding and F.A.Cup Final, and a big screen being placed in the park. Turnout was fantastic due a concerted communications campaign.
- The early closure of Lincoln Christmas Market was a significant event and the work involved in communicating this successfully to all the day's potential visitors was successfully handled, utilising contacts within the local media and social media to ensure word got out swiftly to as wide an audience as possible.
- We have started to develop new skills in different aspects of media to try and modernise and move forward the way the council communicates with its residents and stakeholders - for example through the deployment of film (see Growth Conference film). These capabilities will be further enhanced by the team expanding its partnership with Lincoln University which see the Council offer placement to journalism and media students and the communications team having access to the cutting edge facilities and technology on the University site.
- Our social media followers have continued to increase. We now have almost 14,100 followers to our corporate twitter account - this continues to see us with the most number of twitter followers for district councils in the East Midlands and one of the five highest population to followers ratio in the UK
- On Facebook, our presence has increased significantly with more than 4,000 people following the council's page. We are also branching out and exploring other ways of communicating with the public on social media, launching an Instagram account and What's App too.
- We have launched a community lottery to provide support for local not-for-profit organisations in the city. The project is well underway for rollout this summer, with 23 good causes already accepted onto the scheme. In comparison to other authorities that have introduced the scheme, we have received more interest and

sign-ups at this stage alone. Thanks to a communications push using marketing materials produced in-house, we were able to exceed our goal of 40 good causes attending the launch event to 61 - resulting in 100 individual attendees and a very successful event.

3.13 Annual report

The 2017 Annual Report was presented aligned to Vision 2020, covering the key achievements and projects delivered for each strategic priority, including the strand of work - high performing services. The 2018 report is currently in development, and is due to go to Performance Scrutiny Committee in August 2018, followed by Executive and Council in September 2018.

3.14 Civic and International Partnerships

Guildhall: The City owns some of the oldest Charters in the country and the University of Lincoln has agreed to work with the council to restore and re-condition Lincoln's historic Charters. They will then be on display in the Guildhall, as opposed to being kept at the archives, therefore attracting more visitors.

The Guildhall was open to the public for two full days in March for the Lincoln Heritage Weekend and saw just under 900 visitors (both tourists and locals). Lincoln's Guildhall is still listed as the second most important place to visit in Lincoln, on Trip Advisor, with Visit England awarding it an accreditation for 2017/18

Mayorality: The Mayor and Civic party successfully attended over 300 events throughout their Mayoral Year. Councillor Chris Burke, selected the Lincoln Community Food Larder and Lincoln Food Banks as his chosen charities during his Year of Office. Fundraising events organised by Civic Office raised £6,720.84, to be shared between the two charities

Civic Events: The Lincoln Christmas Lights Switch-on event attracted over 6,000 people and was held for the first time on a Friday with a view to encouraging 'late-night shoppers'. The event was larger than previous years, now extending into City Square.

A successful joint RAF Freedom Parade (RAF Waddington and Scampton) took place in April 2018.

International Partnerships: A positive Civic visit to Neustadt and der Weinstrasse, Germany, took place in December 2017. The Mayor and Civic Manager met with the new Oberbürgermeister (now in office for eight years) to discuss twinning relations and future prospects; i.e. educational visits/exchanges/tourism and arts/Christmas Market.

4. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2017/18 – Moving to new Portfolios

4.1 Benefits Shared Service (moving to Reducing Inequality PH)

The demands on this team continue to shift and change, largely due to the ongoing rollout of national welfare reforms, but the team continues to deliver excellent standards of performance and service to our customers. In terms of performance:

- The average number of days to process a Housing Benefit new claim has reduced by 5.15 days from 2016/17 to 2017/18, with an outturn position of 24.29 days (29.44 days in 2016/17)
- The average number of days to process a Housing Benefit change of circumstance has reduced by 0.49 days from 2016/17 to 2017/18, with an outturn position of 4.00 days (4.49 days 2016/17);
- The outstanding number of customers awaiting their claim to be processed has reduced from 2,401 at the end of March 2012 (the first financial year of the shared service) to 696 at the end of March 2018 – a reduction in over 70%, - and this position is now in a much more stable and sustainable position (whilst recognising there are still peak periods of demand on the team);
- Discretionary Housing Payments totalling almost £206,000 awarded to Lincoln residents;
- Sample-checks of ‘accurate first time’ processing of benefit claims stood at 92% for 2017/18, an increase from 91% in 2016/17, and a significant improvement from 65% in 2011/12 (again, the year the shared service was formed);
- Customer satisfaction remains high – 98.98% for 2017/18.

Not only are these performance figures extremely positive, but the team has also faced an unprecedented scale of change through the national rollout of Universal Credit. Universal Credit ‘Full Service’ was introduced into Lincoln Jobcentre from 7th March 2018. Our shared service has been tremendously proactive in preparing for Universal Credit over the last 5 years. Our Benefits officers now operate a ‘flagship’ service of support to those claiming Universal Credit – based in our co-location with Jobcentre Plus and delivering holistic support to customers on a whole range of Universal Credit related matters, such as; Assisted Digital Support, Personal Budgeting Support, housing matters, benefit claims issues, Council Tax Support etc. This service has been highly commended internally and by JobcentrePlus themselves. The team is directly contributing towards our Reducing Inequality strategic aim by ensuring customers’ incomes are being maximised as well as ensuring opportunity of access to free digital facilities and to IT support. Our Welfare Team does a fantastic job of ensuring more complex budgeting support/ debt advice cases are addressed and our customers given the help and advice they need.

Other projects delivered through our Benefits Service are an ‘Assisting Low Income Households’ (ALIH) project in partnership with Lincoln College utilising Lincolnshire County Council’s Health and Wellbeing Fund, and ‘The Network’. The ALIH project funds educational courses to assist those otherwise unable to afford to pay for courses themselves nor entitled to receive funded courses from elsewhere, - this project runs from September 2015 to August 2019. In 2017/18, 141 people undertook an ICT or other employment-skills related course, of whom 104 passed, and 42 went on to find employment or secured an increased salary within six months of completing the course.

In terms of 'The Network' – our Council supports a project delivered out of City Hall providing holistic support, advice and signposting to the NEET group. In 2017/18, The Network supported 312 young people, and worked with over 60 partners through appointments and events. This includes the 'Launch Into...' series which focused on a particular employment sector or industry, inviting partners to promote their business and opportunities to young people. The Network held events based around construction, engineering, hospitality, and hair and beauty. Around 170 referrals to partner agencies have been made, reflecting The Network's aim to signpost young people to relevant organisations and promote a joined up working approach in Lincoln. Other activities include face-to-face appointments, in which around 130 young people have visited The Network's office to receive careers advice and guidance. As a result, 60% of the young people seen for appointments have progressed into education, employment, or training. The Network also proactively engages and communicates through its social media accounts, promoting support services and job vacancies.

The team has also recently signed-up to a three-year arrangement with West Lindsey District Council to support completion of the Housing Benefit subsidy claim.

4.2 Complaints against the council (moving to Customer Experience and Review PH)

For the full year 2017-18 we received 361 corporate complaints, which was 7 less than the previous year's total of 368. The number of complaints made by the public against the council is decreasing slightly year on year, and by learning from complaints we hope to see this trend to continue. This year 127 (35%) of complaints were upheld. In these cases the circumstances and outcomes are discussed at department management meetings and relevant steps are then taken to improve our procedures or prevent recurrence.

Complaints were answered in an average of 6.2 days, which is well within the recommendations of the Local Government Ombudsman.

The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) and the Housing Ombudsman Service reported on 3 complaints which were escalated for independent jurisdiction, neither of the Ombudsman services found evidence of maladministration or bad practice in any of the complaints that they investigated, therefore our total of upheld Ombudsman cases for the year was nil.

	Number of formal complaints received	percentage of complaints upheld	Average time to respond to formal complaints	Number of LGO complaints upheld	Number of LHO complaints upheld
CX	53	26%	7.1	0	
DCE	85	19%	5.3	0	
DMD	19	42%	0	0	
DHR	204	11%	7.8	0	0
Total	361	35%	6.2	0	0

4.3 Customer Services (moving to Customer Experience and Review PH)

Our Customer Service team continues to resolve a large number of enquiries from the public, either face to face in City Hall, over the telephone or increasingly by email or through our website enquiry forms.

Last year's telephone response performance was reasonable throughout the year, with the average time to answer a call standing at 56.9 seconds. Quarter 4 performance was badly affected by the adverse weather that we experienced at the beginning of March and the performance that we saw in Quarter 3 – 48.7 seconds on average, was followed by an average of 104.6 seconds during January, February and March. Performance has also been affected by ongoing issues with the existing telephone system. The team are currently undertaking final user acceptance testing on an upgraded system that should bring us much more reliability. Demand on the telephones remains high – the team answered 137,871 enquiries in the contact centre, answering 93.7% of all calls offered.

We are making progress in encouraging customers who can to contact us online. New Housing Benefit claimants are using an online claim form. Customers can report a wide range of environmental services issues on line and our website repair reporting and tracking tool is proving popular with tenants. Our email reminders for garden waste subscriptions contain an easy link to the payment portal and this, coupled with ad hoc visits to our website, meant that 88% of our registrations and payments this year were made entirely self-serve.

The Customer Experience Strategy 2017-2020 has seen staff from across the council working together to deliver the outcomes which we developed as part of the Vision 2020 programme. The aim is to provide high performing services that achieve value for money, while ensuring our residents are placed at the heart of service delivery.

There are 17 themes which will help us achieve the strategic outcomes. These include:

- Accessible staff: Making ourselves easy to contact and continuing to offer local sessions and home visits for the most vulnerable residents. We now share City Hall with other public sector and voluntary sector bodies who provide services to the same individuals. This improves convenience and accessibility for customers and is a source of income for the council.
- Value for money. We have reduced expenditure on postage over the year by nearly £30,000 by a combination of moving transactions on-line and outsourcing our post to make the most of bulk discounts and efficiencies. Payment transaction costs have been reduced by making City Hall cashless and promoting payment by Direct Debit where possible.
- On-line requests and claims: We are working across the council, developing on-line forms that integrate with our other systems and reduce unnecessary staff intervention. This is supplemented by our My Info service giving customers direct access to their account balances and benefit payments.
- Call quality monitoring, using our Contact Centre system to listen in to live and recorded calls, to improve transactions and ensure that our training is effective.
- Commercialisation - Innovation is a key principle in Vision 2020 and is one of our new core values, we will continue to explore all avenues for the commercialisation of our existing services

4.4 Business Development & Information Technology (BDIT) (moving to Customer Experience and Review PH)

The team have been developing the services the Council offers, and the infrastructure to support officers in serving customers more efficiently.

Over the last year the team has:

- Implemented new self-service offerings for Council Tax customers
- Supported the implementation of the new Choice-Based lettings solution
- Implemented solutions to help with compliance with the new General Data Protection Regulations
- Provided infrastructure for the new Transport Hub
- Work towards implementation of the new Telephony system
- Deployed new wireless solutions in council buildings
- Enabled self-service of land charges information online
- Improved web services to make information more accessible

Over the next 12 months, key focus will be

- Delivering improvements to the ICT infrastructure
- Developing an upgraded web presence
- Delivering efficiencies and improved customer service in support of the Customer Experience Strategy
- Develop a new ICT Strategy
- Complete rollout of new desktop technology

4.5 Audit arrangements (moving to Customer Experience and Review PH)

Internal Audit continues to operate effectively, working as part of the Assurance Lincolnshire Partnership, and the team continues to work with, and provide Audit services to other councils.

Internal Audit have provided assurance in some key areas during 2017/18 including financial systems, projects and other service areas. The team has continued to use its 'Combined Assurance' model to provide a broader level of assurance to management and members.

I am very pleased to report that the latest annual Internal Audit report (2017/18) provided substantial (green) assurance across areas of governance, risk and internal control.

External Audit is undertaken by KPMG and they are currently (June 2018) commencing the audit of the 2017/18 statement of accounts. Their most recent annual governance report/Annual audit letter provided an unqualified opinion on the statement of accounts 2016/17 including a positive Value for Money conclusion. KPMG's contract came to an end, and following a national procurement process Mazars were allocated as our new External Auditors from 2018

4.6 Electoral activity (moving to Customer Experience and Review PH)

The new Democratic Team Leader and Elections Manager is now well established, having managed four electoral events since commencing his role in December 2016.

Alongside the annual canvass in 2017 it was necessary to hold a by-election in Carholme Ward which took place on 19 October 2017, with a turnout of 27.33%.

The 2017 canvass was successful and resulted in publication of the Electoral Register on 1 December 2017, consisting of 61,642 electors.

The City Council elections on 3 May 2018 were very successfully run. The electorate at the time of the election was 61,790 with a turnout of 30.33%.

The latest electorate figure (June 2018) is 62,043 for the City of Lincoln, with the next update scheduled for publication on 2 July 2018. It is worth noting that maintenance of the electoral register is ongoing day-to-day. Between 1 December 2017 and 1 June 2018, the team has created 2646 entries on the register, deleted 2245 entries from the register and amended 452 entries on the register.

Preparatory work is now underway for the 2018 canvass, which will commence towards the end of July 2018. The Democratic Team Leader and Elections Manager has commissioned the placing on an advertisement in Lincoln City Football Club's community magazine to encourage/remind people to register to vote which it is anticipated will hit 20,000 households in the city, as well as being circulated to schools and colleges. Further work will also take place with the Student Union and communications colleagues at the University of Lincoln to encourage registration by students, with wider publicity via the Council's social media accounts also continuing – all promotional activity will be complemented by national campaigns by the Electoral Commission.

The Ethics and Engagement Chair and Vice-Chair have expressed an interest in considering an item on electoral engagement, with a view to improving turnout at elections rather than focussing on registration.

Preparatory work on the Polling Station review will commence in October 2018, with completion of the review required by January 2020. The location and use of polling stations is something that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Ethics and Engagement Committee have highlighted as a potential contributing factor to electoral engagement so it would seem sensible to liaise with the Committee as part of the Polling Station review.

Planning will commence for the 2019 City Council elections in December/January.

4.7 Allotments (moving to Remarkable Place PH)

The Allotment Capital Improvement Programme, investing a significant sum of money into the refurbishment of our allotment sites has now completed all works in Phase 1. This phase has seen a complete clearance and redesign of the Burton Ridge site, seen new security gates and fencing at Boultham Park, Greenbank Drive and Tritton Road sites, a new water main has been installed at Boultham Park and improvements to on site security and drainage at Canwick Hill and Long Leys Road has also been undertaken.

Phase 2 works are scheduled to commence in September 2018 with works to improve security and drainage at Boutham Glebe and Hykeham Road, works to further improve drainage at Long Leys Road, address access difficulties at Wragby Road and complete a number of smaller improvements to South Common, St. Botolph's Crescent and Sincil Bank sites. Finally a brand new site situated at Melbourne Road in Birchwood will see this area enjoy an allotment site for the first time. As the capital programme is being funded by the sale of the old Ermine allotment site, the scale and timing of these works could be affected by the capital receipt for the sale of that site.

Following completion of the capital programme works, and as previously reported, a revised allotment agreement coupled with a revised fees and charges structure will come into place in 2019. Alongside this, a new strategy and development plan will be produced to guide the allotments service over the next five years.

4.8 Equality and Diversity (moving to Reducing Inequality PH)

The council is required under the Public Sector Equality Duty to set at least one equality objective every four years, as well as to publish equality information. The Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (previously Equality and Diversity Group) oversees this work, and the Chair of the group provides a separate report to Council on its work.

Currently we have five objectives which were agreed by Council in April 2016 for a period of four years to March 2020. The objectives are to ensure:

1. Our services are more accessible and do not discriminate on any unjustifiable grounds.
2. Local communities and stakeholders are empowered to influence the way our services are provided to them.
3. Equality and diversity is at the heart of decision making at all levels within the city council.
4. Our workforce at all levels reflects the makeup of the local community.
5. Equalities, Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion have all improved within our communities

These objectives are underpinned by an equality action plan monitored by the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel. In 2017/18 there were 20 actions, all of which were either completed by the end of the year or planned to be ongoing into 2018/19. In addition it is now a council requirement that an equality and diversity comment is included in all reports for new policies and changes to services submitted to Executive, with equality analyses undertaken and included where appropriate.

Our equality and diversity work is spread across three service areas; HR, legal and corporate equality and diversity and a summary of all work undertaken on equality and diversity actions is provided in the 2017 Equality Journal (in effect the council's Equality and Diversity Annual Report), together with equality information required to be published under the Public Sector Equality Duty. The 2018 Equality Journal is due to be published in September 2018.

5. KEY PH PERFORMANCE RESULTS up to Quarter 4 2017/18

(Some elements will be moving to other Portfolios as indicated above)

The summary table in Appendix 1 shows overall performance for the year is very good

From our Customer Services team - it is pleasing to report that the number of users who logged into our self-service system MyInfo increased again from 6,980 in Q4 last year to 9,865 in Q4 this year, matching almost exactly the drop we have seen in face to face enquiries. We continue to actively push e billing wherever possible and whilst poor weather conditions in February may have encouraged customers to have a go on-line, it suggests they are now more aware of and active in using the system.

The Garden Waste service has been a significant area of on-line success. Looking at 2016-2017, Customer Service staff answered 8,500 calls to assist people signing up or renewing their subscription. In 2017-2018 that figure has reduced to 4,700 phone calls with the remainder being completed on-line. Customer Services and the Business Development team are now assessing this success to see what lessons can be learned and replicated in other service areas to encourage more automated transactions.

However as I said earlier, although we saw an increase in time taken to answer a call in Customer Services in the last quarter of the year (with average times in Q4 reaching 104 seconds), this is not reflective of the rest of the year where we were within target times. As the causes were very short lived we are expecting performance to recuperate in Q1.

Whilst the in-year collection rate for Lincoln Council Tax outturned at 97.17%, just above its target of 97.11%, Lincoln Business Rates unfortunately saw a lower annual outturn compared to that of last year, achieving 98.87%, a 0.56% decrease compared to 2017/18. This is due to a number of high value rateable values being brought in during March 2018, resulting in the debt being raised with little or no time to collect it. Despite this, the additional rateable values brought into the Valuation List totalled £750,950 which is positive in terms of the overall base.

I do need to once again bring your attention to the average level of sickness days taken by staff over the year, which has increased again on last year (see table below). The overall year to date (YTD) sickness data as at the end of March is 13.62 days per FTE (excl. apprentices). This is 2.1 days more per FTE compared to the same point last year.

As a result CMT continues to place a keen focus on this rise and has recently conducted a Sickness Performance Clinic on Stress related sickness from which a number of actions have been identified and are being followed up through HR. In addition HR are pushing Global Challenge, with 196 staff taking part from 24th May in a 100 day virtual journey towards a healthier lifestyle. This involves trying to complete 10,000 steps a day and also monitors sleep and nutrition for each individual.

Cumulative sickness trends - CoLC (Excl. apprentices figures)

Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2013/14	2.68	5.18	7.69	10.78
2014/15	2.99	6.68	9.93	13.43
2015/16	3.01	5.7	8.6	11.63
2016/17	2.43	5.10	8.27	11.52
2017/18	3.11	6.34	9.84	13.62

6. FUTURE CHALLENGES

As I observed in my last report it was Charles Darwin who said that it is not the strong or even the cleverest who will succeed, but the most adaptable. So the key to the council's success will I believe depend on its ability to understand and respond to the changes it faces.

The council continues to make significant progress in improving the quality and standard of its services.

The council continues to provide effective community leadership for the City and enjoys high levels of public support and a good reputation with its stakeholders.

Considerable challenges remain. We will need to make the strongest possible case to retain autonomous governance of the City, to maintain the progress we are making in our crucial service provider role, and to secure long term financial sustainability.

We are however extremely well equipped to meet most challenges with highly committed elected members and very many able and dedicated professional officers.

Following the completion of Phase One of Vision 2020, attention is now focusing on planning the second phase of projects. Key projects are:

- Continuing to lead on the Western Growth Corridor site to unlock 3,200 homes and 20ha of commercial employment land.
- Working with partners such as Visit Lincoln to launch the 'Invest Lincoln' scheme.
- Developing a local strategic response to the UK Industrial Strategy
- Undertaking a retail assessment to explore the requirements of a flagship retail offer.
- Implementing a Market Strategy and action plan to transform City Square
- Delivering the approved recommendations from the citywide review into Inclusive Growth in Lincoln.
- Supporting the increasing numbers of residents transitioning onto Universal Credit, particularly in regard to provision of digital and budgeting support
- Proactively encouraging businesses in the city to embrace corporate social responsibility, including payment of the Living Wage.
- Delivering the Empty Homes Strategy to bring increasing numbers of empty homes back into use.
- Undertaking site works to De Wint Court which will see it transformed into an Extra Care Facility.
- Working with Waterloo Housing Group and Westleigh Developments Ltd. to see the completion of housing sites across the city.
- Delivery of the Spa Road development site for up to 312 new homes.
- Building on the successes of the first phase of the Sincil Bank Regeneration Scheme, to achieve long-term, physical transformation in this part of the city
- Refreshing the City Centre Masterplan to ensure an ambitious and co-ordinated plan for the city centre.
- Undertaking an outdoor play facilities project, and develop a longer-term view of leisure facilities in the city through the creation of a new strategy.
- Undertaking a multi-agency response to challenges involving legal highs and city centre vagrancy.

I would like to express my appreciation to the really excellent range of officers who support me with the work of the Portfolio and to specifically say thank you to the following officers for their assistance in the preparation of this report:

Sara Boothright, Claire Burroughs, Heather Carmichael, Simon Colburn, Jo Crookes, Kate Fenn, Jaclyn Gibson, Heather Grover, Frances Jelly, Pat Jukes, Bruce Kelsey, Becky Scott, John Scott, Matt Smith, Lara Trickett, Daren Turner, Martin Walmsley, Steve Welsby, Mark Wheeler and James Wilkinson.

Councillor Ric Metcalfe (Leader of the Council)
Portfolio Holder for People and Resources

6. Appendix 1 KEY PERFORMANCE RESULTS up to Q4 2017/18

We have a set of around 70 strategic measures that ensure the performance of our key services is monitored and reported regularly through committee. In addition to this, the IMPS system still holds all other performance data accessible to all Members through a series of dashboards in which further detail can be obtained whenever required. Those that feature in the quarterly reports from my portfolio are shown below, plus others that are available through the IMPS performance system

Key annual measures

	Measure description	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Status
DCT 6	Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days	95.38%	97.03%	95.17%	Maintaining
DEM 8	The number of individuals registered on the electoral register	62,552	66,862	61635	Maintaining
PRO 4	Percentage spend on contracts that have been awarded to local contractors	41.1%	37.4%	Available Q3	Maintaining

For all measures the key is: Green = Improving performance; Amber = Maintaining Performance within expected boundaries; Red = Performance deteriorating (needs a closer look)

We have no 'red' performance areas in the annual measures this year

Key quarterly measures for the period 2017/18

	Measure description	Q4 2016/17	Q1 2017/18	Q2 2017/18	Q3 2017/18	Q4 2017/18	Status
WBL5	Percentage of apprentices completing on time	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Maintaining
WBL6	Number of new starters on apprenticeships	9	6	18	17	5	Maintaining
WBL7	% Apprentices moving onto education, employment or training	100%	100%	100%	100%	75%	Deteriorating
WBL8	Number of early leavers	5	4	1	0	1	Maintaining
WBL9	Employers/supervisors rating the WBL team as good/very good	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Maintaining
CS4	Number of face to face enquiries	12768	12886	12123	10388	9826	Improving
CS5	Number of telephone enquiries answered	36019	38188	36317	32102	33254	Maintaining
CS6	Number of users logged into the self-serve system My-info this quarter	6980	6516	6059	6409	9865	Improving
CS8	Average time taken to answer a call to customer services	28	57	62	49	104	Deteriorating
HU5	Number of grievances	1	0	1	1	0	Maintaining
HU6	Number of disciplinaries	7	0	4	2	0	Maintaining
ACC8	Average return on investment portfolio	0.62%	0.31%	0.31%	0.53%	0.67%	Maintaining
ACC9	Average interest rate on external borrowing	4.07%	4.07%	4.07%	4.07%	3.9%	Maintaining
REV4	Council tax – in year collection rate for Lincoln	97.09%	27.00%	53.17%	79.77	97.17%	Maintaining
REV5	Business tax – in year collection rate for Lincoln	99.43%	35.83%	61.13%	86.43%	98.87%	Deteriorating
REV6	Level of outstanding customer changes in the revenues team	296	503	624	80	121	Improving
BE4	Average (YTD) days to process new housing benefit claims from date received	29.44	23.06	23.24	23.73	24.29	Maintaining
BE5	Average (YTD) days to process housing benefit claims change of circumstances from date received	4.49	5.38	7.62	7.93	4.00	Maintaining
BE6	Number of Housing Benefit/Council Tax support customers awaiting assessment	646	577	810	556	696	Maintaining
BE7	Percentage of risk based quality checks made where Benefit entitlement is correct	91%	91%	91%	91%	92%	Maintaining
BE8	The number of new benefit claims YTD (Housing benefit/CT support) (Year on year)	7138	1813	3731	5513	7296	Maintaining
AM 8	Percentage occupancy of allotment plots	82.3%	82.2%	82.87%	82.5%	80.1%	Maintaining

For all measures the key is: Green = Improving performance; Amber = Maintaining performance within expected boundaries; Red = Performance deteriorating (needs a closer look)