

SUBJECT: QUARTER 4 2024/25 OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

DIRECTORATE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK

REPORT AUTHOR: BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present to Executive an outturn summary of the Council's performance in quarter 4 of 2024/25.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 At the end of quarter 4 2024/25 of the **87** quarterly performance measures reported during the quarter across the Directorates of Chief Executive's, Communities & Environment, Housing & Investment and Major Developments:

- **13** measures (**14.9%**) were Red (below lower target boundary)
- **11** measures (**12.6%**) were Blue (within target boundaries – acceptable)
- **33** measures (**37.9%**) were Green (meeting or exceeding the higher target)
- **23** measures (**26.4%**) were recorded as volumetric
- **7** measures (**8.0%**) were recorded as data not being available for this quarter

Out of the **87** performance measures monitored during the quarter **64** had targets allocated to them. Of these targeted measures **44 (68.7%)** were within or exceeding the targets set.

- 2.2 It is important to note that the performance statuses of measures DMD 1–5 are determined by an external partner working alongside the Major Developments Team, rather than by comparing performance measure outturns against set high and low targets, and when determining the performance measure statuses, a range of factors impacting on programme delivery are taken into consideration such as milestone performance, financial performance and associated risks, amongst other factors.

3. Background

- 3.1 Regular monitoring of the Council's performance is a key component of the Local Performance Management Framework. This report covers the key strategic performance measures identified by members and Corporate Management Team (CMT) as of strategic importance.
- 3.2 Each targeted measure is monitored against a target boundary range.

If a performance measure outturn status is Blue (acceptable), the measure is seen as performing on track. If a performance measure outturn status is green, the measure is seen to be achieving or exceeding the aspirational target. If a performance measure

outturn status is red, the measure is seen to be performing below target and should be an area of focus.

- 3.3 Appendix A contains a wider range of performance information, including qualitative data in the form of case studies and service highlights. These are grouped into seven themes, namely the five Vision Priorities and the two inward looking portfolios 'Our People and Resources' and 'Customer Experience and Review.'
- 3.4 The more detailed performance data tables are grouped together in Appendix B, including the suite of corporate measures. Performance data is grouped by directorate, and a colour coding system is used to make it simpler to identify which portfolio each measure relates to. Appendix B also includes a quarterly Communications update.
- 3.5 When read together, Appendices A and B aim to enhance the range of performance information presented via the quarterly reporting process and make it easier to assess and scrutinise the performance of each priority/portfolio.

4. Performance Measure Outturns – Quarter 4 2024/25

- 4.1 As set out in section 3, Appendix A provides an overview of the Council's performance by Directorate and Vision 2025 theme. Highlight reports detailing some of the positive work of the Council during the quarter, and the impact of this, is also included in Appendix A.

Those key highlights include:

- 4.2 Within **Our People and Resources theme (PR)**, the Human Resources team are pleased to announce that the City of Lincoln Council was successful in assessment for renewal of our status as a Disability Confident Employer. The Council commits to undertaking several actions, including ensuring the recruitment process is inclusive and accessible, communicating and promoting vacancies, offering an interview to disabled people if they meet the minimum criteria for the post, and anticipating and providing reasonable adjustments as required.

Following extensive consultation with residents, businesses, elected officials and key stakeholders, the Council have approved Vision 2030, setting out a clear roadmap for the City's future and priorities for the next 5 years, particularly its action plan for the next 12-18 months.

- 4.3 Within the **Reducing Inequality Vision Priority (RI)**, throughout the quarter City of Lincoln Council's Assistant Director for Shared Revenue and Benefits has attended events aimed at bringing residents and local organisations together, to discuss poverty within the region. Lincoln against Poverty Assembly and the Lincolnshire Financial Inclusion Partnership conference both focus on a range of critical topics including financial inclusion, skills, attainment and opportunities, food issues, gambling support, welfare transformation, accessibility, and awareness. The well attended events are extremely important opportunities for connection, networking, and coordination, whilst promoting and supporting City of Lincoln's anti-poverty strategy work, in a positive and innovative way.

Effective cross directorate collaboration is showcased in the safeguarding highlight, where customer services were able to raise concerns to a safeguarding lead, tenancy

services and homelessness officers, who were able to provide support and encouragement to an individual with significant ill health, using vital links with agencies, to develop a safety plan to protect the individual from harm.

- 4.4 Within **Customer Experience and Review** theme (**CE**), the Council has successfully completed a complete rewrite of the Councils contract Procedure rules, following the most notable overhaul of procurement since 2006, with the Procurement Act 2023 coming into effect in February. A detailed training programme of the new Act, contract procedure rules, and relevant teams' requirements has been devised, and is currently being delivered to those relevant officers and teams across the Council.

The 2023/24 yearly Statement of Accounts has been produced by the Councils Finance team, receiving an 'unqualified audit opinion' by the external auditors. An unqualified audit opinion is the best type of report that can be received, concluding that accounts are accurately prepared following required accounting standards, there are no material errors or misstatements, and the Councils financial reporting is transparent and reliable. This signals to the public, government bodies and stakeholders that the Council is managing public funds properly and maintaining solid financial governance.

- 4.5 Within the **Remarkable Place Vision Priority (RP)**, the teams have been invited to submit a full application for funding for Nature Towns and Cities, following a successful Expressions of Interest bid in January 2025. The proposal is to use the funding to employ a Nature Towns and Cities Project Engagement Manager and Nature Towns and Cities Project Assistant, who will enable research and testing of new models of governance, management, funding and partnering across a range of assets.

- 4.6 Within the **Quality Housing Vision Priority (QH)**, City of Lincoln Tenants were sent the first Winter edition of the Home Digital Newsletter. Through the newsletter, Housing teams are pleased to be able to provide tenants with the latest news, upcoming events, and important updates to keep them informed about their homes and community.

The newsletter contains helpful and informative articles that include information about scheduled repairs and a calendar of works, how to reduce, prevent or report damp and mould within properties, Tenant Satisfaction Measures and how happy tenants are with how City of Lincoln Council (CoLC) maintains homes and delivers key services, fire, electrical and gas safety checks, information and responsibilities, anti-social behaviour updates including a new online reporting form, 'you said/we did' feedback and some of the changes made in response to input received, resident involvement opportunities through various groups and online surveys, Lincoln Tenants Panel and their role in ensuring residents views are represented and considered when decisions are being made, monitoring and reviewing the Council's service delivery and performance, as well as current vacancies within specialised working groups, and much more.

- 4.7 Within the Inclusive **Economic Growth Vision Priority (EG)**, the Events Tourism and Culture team received multiple awards and nominations recognising their hard work and contribution to Lincolns tourism. At the Destination Lincolnshire Excellence Awards the teams achieved shortlisting for the 'Going places' and 'Events/Festival of the Year' awards, 'Outstanding contribution to tourism' and winning 'Award for Excellence' by the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology.

Throughout the summer the tourism team supported Zest, a key advocate of local creative initiatives, to deliver 'The Zone' an inclusive pop-up youth arts space, held at City Square, Moorland Community Centre, and Pelham Bridge. Zest won 'Best Product Design of the Year' for 'The Zone' and were finalists for 'Best Theatre Company of the Year' at the We Are Creative awards, celebrating the Midlands most innovative organisations and projects.

A key milestone has been reached in the construction of Charterholme's vehicular and multi-user bridge over the railway, with successful installation of bridge beams completed without any issues. Network Rail praised the professionalism of the delivery team and commended the management of the site.

- 4.8 Within the Addressing **Climate Change Vision Priority (CC)**, working alongside ClimateEQ, the Council has delivered fully accredited Carbon Literacy training courses to businesses across the city, supported by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Training has been held throughout the quarter at several sites to enable individuals and organisation to attend the free 8-hour course, empowering them to implement effective carbon reduction strategies in their workplace and communities.

5. Areas to Monitor

To support Appendix A, a full list of all performance measure outturns and supporting service area commentary are provided at Appendix B.

- 5.1 Those areas to note within **Chief Executive's Directorate** are:

CS 3 - Average time taken to answer a call to customer services –The average wait for a call into the contact centre has increased since the previous quarter, and 6,238 customers requested a call back during the quarter. It is understood that good performance is within the quality of the response and for the caller's issues to be resolved wherever possible, by the customer service advisor. These calls can be complex and can take some time to resolve. However, taking appropriate action and resolving a customer's request at point of call reduces, wherever possible, the need for follow up calls. A review into call data is underway to help identify any changes that could be made to improve call wait times and understand in more detail the areas of highest demand.

BE 3 - Number of Housing Benefits / Council Tax support customers awaiting assessment - Extremely high volumes of demand are experienced in Quarter 4, alongside resourcing pressures, and other areas of vital work (such as cost of living support), this has led to outstanding work levels increasing. Of the 2,567 reported, 2,228 customers are awaiting a first contact, officers are working hard to reduce these levels through Quarter 1, by allocating resources accordingly. The impact of Universal Credit is also increasing the team's workload, as well as higher volumes or pensioner Housing Benefit claims being expected due to increased take-up of Pension Credit, - these matters are being factored into performance targets moving forward.

- 5.2 Those areas to note within **Housing and Investment Directorate**:

HM1b - Percentage of reactive repairs completed within target time (urgent 3-day repairs only) - This area has seen a slight decrease in performance when compared to the previous quarter, and remains slightly below low target. The service area reports

a number of long-term sicknesses within the area team, additional to some operatives currently working on restricted duties within the plumbing trade, which has a large number of priority and urgent repairs, however the area are pleased to have recently recruited to a vacant plumber position that will help to support this team in the coming months.

HV1 – Percentage of rent lost through dwelling being vacant - Rent lost through vacant dwellings has increased on the previous quarter, due in part to some of the service challenges experienced in the re-letting process, 120 voids were held in the process during this quarter, all impacting rent loss. The number of properties entering the void process does not show any signs of slowing down with an estimated 47 sets of keys expected in by the end of April. It is worth noting that properties awaiting decisions on disposal orders remain within this outturn figure which are out of control of the void team.

HV 3 - Average re-let time calendar days for all dwellings (including major works) - Performance for the measure has seen a deterioration during quarter 4 and is impacted along with the above measure HV1 by the significant number of voids within the system during the period, with a further 47 expected into the voids process by the end of April.

February and March saw the highest number of void properties in the system since July 2022, a significant number require cleansing prior to repairs being undertaken, impacting the repair team's capacity and increasing the overall timeframes.

There were a number of longer-term voids over 100 days signed up over this period that impact this average, whilst the Housing Repair Service try to limit the amount of properties going to sub-contractors due to contractual cost increases, inevitably this is going to further increase void timeframes. In addition, the amount of time taken to re-let properties between tenants is complex and strongly influenced by external factors.

5.3 Those areas to note within **Director of Communities and Environment**:

AH1 - Number of affordable homes delivered (cumulative) - 0 affordable homes were completed this quarter. From Q1 2025/26 this measure will be reported as volumetric, as there is limited control from the service area as to the number of affordable homes delivered. As Affordable Housing can only be required on major sites (more than 10 dwellings) and the majority of housing sites we deal with in the city are smaller than this, the trigger for AH provision is often not met.

PH2 Average time from date of inspection of accommodation to removing a severe hazard to an acceptable level – The performance for this measure has seen a slight improvement since the previous quarter, additionally, the service area is introducing a stop clock action for the new year to allow the time period for removal of a hazard to be paused when tenants vacate dwellings during the investigation, whereby action of the service must cease until reoccupation. The team anticipate a reduction in the number of HMO licence applications in the new year compared to 2024/25, which will increase officer capacity to carry out inspections and take appropriate action.

SC 1 - Contractor points recorded against target standards specified in contract - Street Cleansing - 470 points were awarded against the contractor in Q4, increasing from 95 points in the previous quarter. A new rectifications system is in place which

means that staff can easily process rectifications whilst visiting sites, which automatically gives the contractor a set amount of time to respond and rectify the issue. The large increase in points is due to proactive checks taking place. The contractor is responding positively and constructively, and a reduction is anticipated in the future.

6. Corporate Measures

6.1 Those corporate performance measures detailed in Appendix B include the areas of resources, health & wellbeing, sickness, communications, complaints, and compliments.

6.2 During quarter 4 2024/25 there were 14 leavers, which equated to a turnover figure of 2.2% (based upon employee headcount at the end of March 2025 excluding apprentices). This figure is the same when compared to the previous quarter 3 2024/25 figure of 2.2%. The vacancy figure as at the end of quarter 4 2024/25 stood at 60.8 FTE. Please note that any posts with less than 37 hours per week vacant have been removed when calculating this figure.

6.3 42 appraisals were recorded as being completed within the ITrent system, with 251 appraisals completed over the last 12 months.

Following a review of the appraisal processes, changes will be made whereby appraisals will now be carried out between April and June (quarter 1) every year with effect from 1st April 2025. This is to ensure that a cascade approach to objectives can be facilitated in line with the Councils Vision and Service Plans.

6.4 The Council has continued its proactive approach to staff wellbeing, promoting and raising awareness of campaigns such as **Dry January** for Drink Awareness and **Time To Talk Day** for MIND which is about ending mental health stigma and having supportive conversations with family, friends, or colleagues.

The Council continued to promote and run physio appointments carried out by a MSK Physio. These took place at Hamilton House, with the option to attend offered out to all Council staff who may benefit. Further sessions have been scheduled for April 2025.

6.5 Total sickness levels for the Council stood at 2.38 days lost per FTE at quarter 4. When compared to the previous quarter, sickness levels have decreased (quarter 3 2024/25 figure stood at 2.61 days lost per FTE). Additionally, when compared to the same quarter last year sickness levels have decreased (quarter 4 2023/24 figure was 2.44 days lost per FTE).

6.6 In quarter 4 2024/25 there were **146** complaints dealt with across the Council. In quarter 4 2024/25, there were 0 Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) complaints decided, and 1 Local Housing Ombudsman (LHO) complaints decided. The percentage of complaints responded to within the service standard has maintained this quarter and is 95% overall. Only 8 complaints of the 146 responded to were outside of the target times. This boosts the year-to-date response rate to 93%. Alongside complaints monitoring we also monitor compliments that come into the Council, with 35 during this quarter across all services.

- 6.7 Throughout quarter 4 2024/25 the Communications Team have provided support across the Council and city to capture and broadcast the latest news, events and updates in Lincoln providing a detailed overview of social media highlights, key stats and performance, interviews, key events and campaigns, press releases, internal communications, Hub and website statistics on usage.

7. Strategic Priorities

- 7.1 The City of Lincoln Council's Vision 2025 priorities are:

- Let's drive inclusive economic growth.
- Let's reduce all kinds of inequality.
- Let's deliver quality housing.
- Let's enhance our remarkable place.
- Let's address the challenge of climate change.

The performance measures under each directorate link across a range of Vision 2025 strategic priorities and portfolios as set out in Appendices A and B.

8. Organisational Impacts

8.1 Finance

There are no direct financial implications because of this report. Further details on the Council's financial position can be found in the quarterly financial performance report.

8.2 Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report.

8.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

This report has no direct effect on equality in itself, but through measurement of service performance we are constantly able to review the quality of services for all recipients.

9. Risk Implications

9.1 (i) Options Explored

N/A.

9.2 (ii) Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach

N/A.

10. Recommendations

10.1 Executive is asked to review and comment on the contents of the Quarter 4 2024/25 Operational Performance Report found at Appendices A and B.

10.2 Executive is asked to confirm that the format of the performance report continues to meet their requirements.

Is this a key decision?

No

Do the exempt information categories apply?

No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?

No

How many appendices does the report contain?

Two (A and B)

List of Background Papers:

None

Lead Officers:

Business Intelligence Officer
Policy & Performance Officer(s)