

Report to Scrutiny

The Quarter 1 Performance Report was presented to Scrutiny Committee on Thursday 22 October 2015.

Scrutiny Committee resolved

- (i) That the Quarter 1 Performance Report be received.
- (ii) That the Director of Customer Services bring an update report regarding performance indicator CM34 to the next Scrutiny Committee.
- (iii) That the Cabinet Portfolio Holder give an update report on the position of the 21 deteriorating performance indicators highlighted at this meeting at the next Scrutiny Committee.

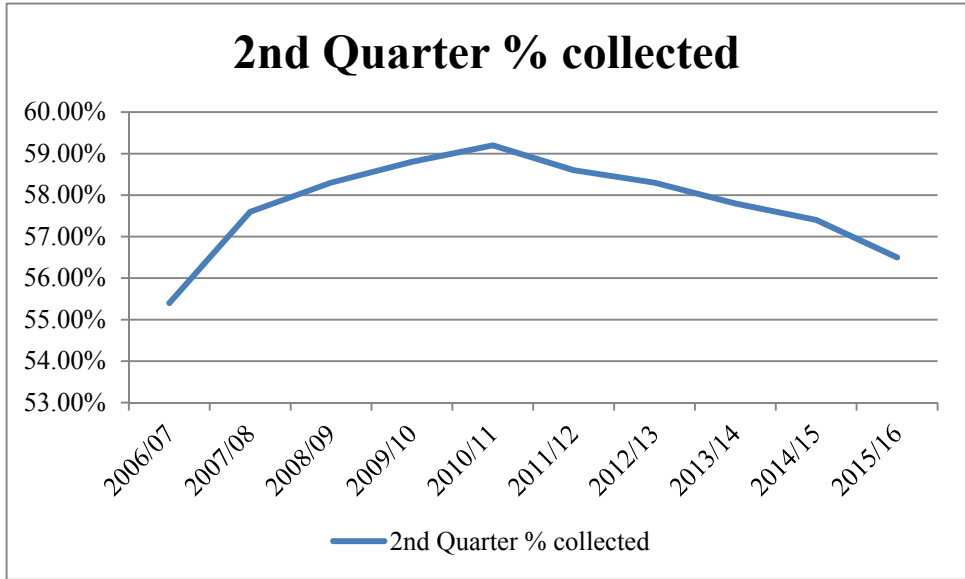
Below is an update on the 11 deteriorating performance indicators highlighted at the Scrutiny meeting on 22 October 2015. The 21 indicators referred to in the minutes are due to the indicators in the summary report and the main report being counted twice.

The update on CM34 is included in the report below.

Measure	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Commentary
CM09B: Average time to assess Housing & Council Tax: Change in circumstances	23 days	19 days	Performance had steadily been improving over the last couple of years and was down to an average of 11 days at the end of the financial year 2014/15. However, during the first quarter of 2015/16 the service experienced problems with the daily download of ATLAS records which are DWP and HMRC unreported changes of circumstances. Once the problem was resolved the service then had a backlog of work to catch up with which has had a serious impact on performance. Quarter 2 has already seen an improvement in performance for this measure of 4 days and future quarters are expected to show further reductions.
CM11: No of evictions from GYCH properties for: a) Rent b) ASB c) Other	4 0 1	6 0 1	Evictions remain low and this is as a last resort for the Council, however, enforcement is a necessary action where tenants will not engage with us and other agencies. Any eviction has to go through the court process and the judge will often advise the tenant to work with the Council officers to resolve the issues. The Council can often take a case to court several times before the judge will grant an eviction because the tenant has not engaged with the Council, in all cases the Council is committed to supporting tenants and deems eviction as a

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			<p>final action.</p> <p>Of the seven evictions in the first half of 2015/16, six have been for rent arrears, with tenants owing between £1,000 and £2,000. The other eviction was due to 'condition of property' where the tenant was doing up stock cars in the garden and after several letters and visits enforcement action was taken finally leading to eviction.</p> <p>The seven evictions in the first half of 2015/16 compare to three in 2014/15 and nine in 2013/14 for the same periods.</p>
CM18: No. of empty homes brought back into use	81	167	<p>Quarterly figures do fluctuate and are reliant on owners notifying the Council Tax service that the empty properties have been brought back into use. It is often the case that there is a long delay of several months in owners notifying the Council, so the quarterly figures quoted are indicative as some changes may have occurred during previous quarters. The main aim of this measure is to show that the Council is working with property owners to bring empty properties back into use.</p> <p>The Council has a programme for delivering empty homes, the HCA Grant empty homes project was completed recently where nine long term properties were purchased and brought back into use as accommodation for homeless families. Another part of the programme was the Council's Empty Homes Project with an aim of reducing the number of empty homes by a minimum of 10% per annum which would improve the impact of empty properties on the community.</p> <p>Also during 2014/15 the Council engaged Capacity Grid to carry out an 'empty properties review' for the Council. The result of the work undertaken saw a number of properties that were classed as empty moved to occupied which increased Council Tax revenue and new homes bonus funding for the Council.</p> <p>During 2013/14 354 properties were brought back into use, this increased to 438 in 2014/15. So far in 2015/16 (half year) a total of 248 properties have been brought back into use, this figure is greater than the 169 properties brought back into use in the first half year of 2013/14 and 238 for the same period in 2014/15.</p>

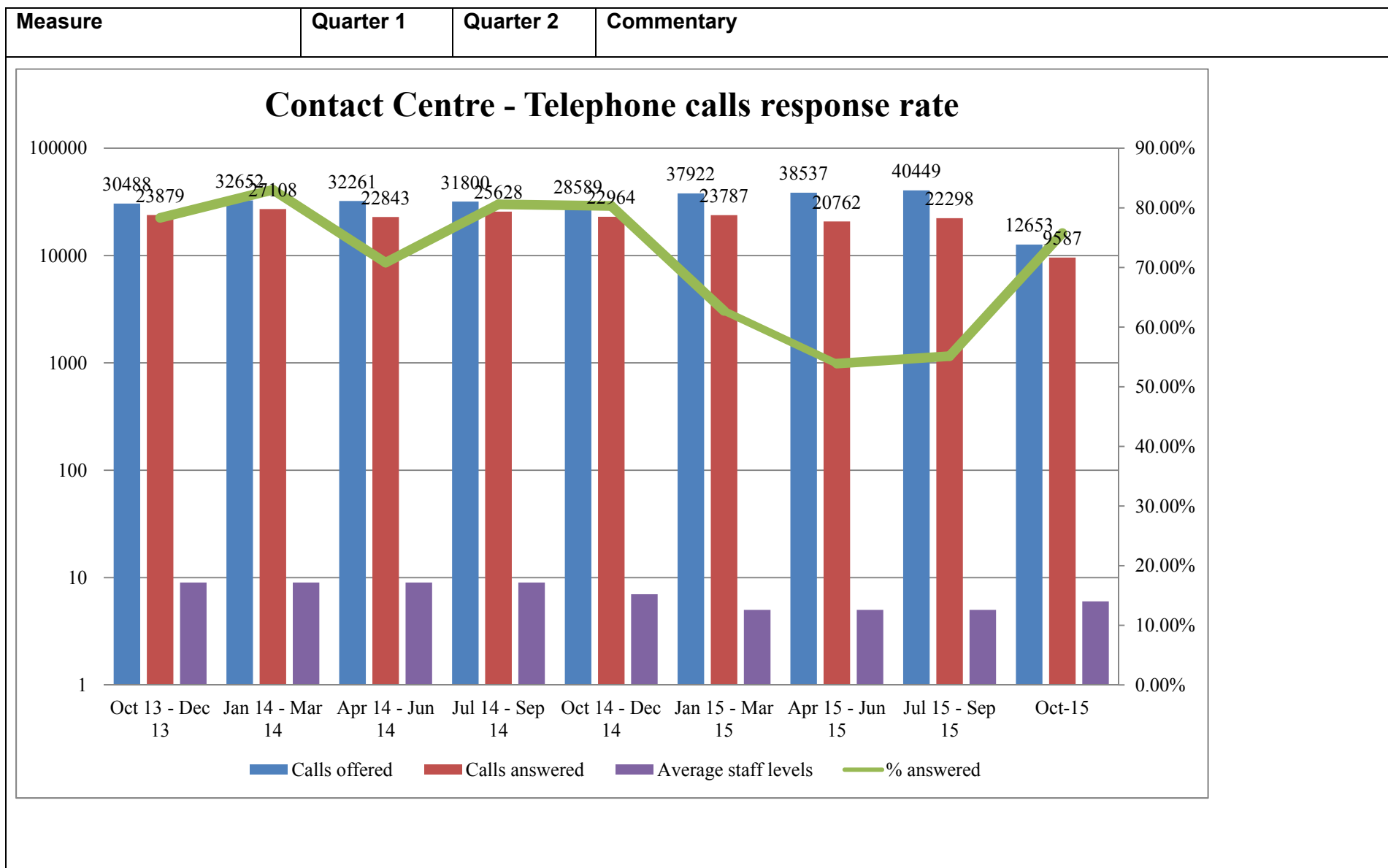
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CM23: Collection rates Council Tax	29.8%	56.5%	<p>In 2013 Council Tax payers were given the option of paying their Council Tax over 12 months rather than the 10 months in previous years. Over the last two years the number of Council Tax payers paying over 12 months has increased. Currently, the switching to 12 instalments is an increasing trend and every quarter there is an increase. More stable profiling will be available once the increasing trend settles down.</p> <p>Previously the Revenues Manager could monitor payments as he had trend data that profiled payments over many years and he could see from this profiling how the measure was performing. The Revenues Manager is currently measuring current performance against the old profiling as he does not have enough data to profile on a 12 month instalment payment plan.</p> <p>Some initial work has been done on re-profiling and initial figures indicate that in Quarter 2 of 2015/16 of the 0.9% collection rate down from the same quarter in 2014/15, 0.6% is due to Council Tax payers who have opted to pay over 12 months.</p> <p>Following a team restructure and staff resource issues, the processing of liability orders to set up arrangements to pay, deduct from earnings or benefits, or send to the bailiff to collect has taken longer than previous years, which would also account for the some of the reduction.</p> <p>Although collection has dropped “in year” the Council continues to collect any outstanding Council Tax. Historically, overall collection rates for each financial year are over 99% albeit it takes a couple of years to collect it.</p>

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			<p>The chart below shows collection rates since 2006 for the 2nd Quarter of the financial year.</p> <div><p>2nd Quarter % collected</p><table><caption>2nd Quarter % collected Data</caption><thead><tr><th>Financial Year</th><th>2nd Quarter % collected</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>2006/07</td><td>55.5%</td></tr><tr><td>2007/08</td><td>57.5%</td></tr><tr><td>2008/09</td><td>58.2%</td></tr><tr><td>2009/10</td><td>58.8%</td></tr><tr><td>2010/11</td><td>59.2%</td></tr><tr><td>2011/12</td><td>58.5%</td></tr><tr><td>2012/13</td><td>58.2%</td></tr><tr><td>2013/14</td><td>57.8%</td></tr><tr><td>2014/15</td><td>57.2%</td></tr><tr><td>2015/16</td><td>56.5%</td></tr></tbody></table></div>	Financial Year	2nd Quarter % collected	2006/07	55.5%	2007/08	57.5%	2008/09	58.2%	2009/10	58.8%	2010/11	59.2%	2011/12	58.5%	2012/13	58.2%	2013/14	57.8%	2014/15	57.2%	2015/16	56.5%
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CM24: Sickness absence rates: The percentage of working hours lost due to sickness absence.	4.65%	4.76%	<p>Sickness rates are significantly higher than the first half year of 2014/15. This is largely due to long term absence rather than increased short term sickness.</p> <p>Long term sickness between Oct 2013 - Sep 2015</p> <table><thead><tr><th>Period</th><th>Staff with 30+ days sickness</th><th>Staff with 60+ days sickness</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Oct 13 - Mar 14</td><td>4</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Apr 14 - Sep 14</td><td>8</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>Oct 14 - Mar 15</td><td>7</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>Apr 15 - Sep 15</td><td>9</td><td>3</td></tr></tbody></table>	Period	Staff with 30+ days sickness	Staff with 60+ days sickness	Oct 13 - Mar 14	4	2	Apr 14 - Sep 14	8	6	Oct 14 - Mar 15	7	4	Apr 15 - Sep 15	9	3							
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			<p>For the two year period quoted above, when this data was recorded electronically, there have been 28 staff who have had 30 or more working days off with an average sickness of 74.32 days.</p> <p>HR Officers continue to work with Group Managers to discuss sickness management within their groups. A report went to EMT in October 2015 with proposed changes to the Attendance & Health Policy and recommendations to better manage and reduce sickness absence.</p> <p>The HR team are working on producing future sickness absence as 'The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence' and will be measured as per Full Time Equivalent (FTE). For the second quarter of 2015/16 this has been calculated as 6.33 days per FTE.</p>
CM25: Great Yarmouth Community Housing: a) GYCH rent collection rate b) Arrears as a % of rent roll c) Arrears £ value	a) 95.21% b) 1.4% c) £333,849	a) 98.23% b) 1.25% c) £325,620	<p>Rent collection and arrears are being maintained in challenging circumstances. Performance of these measures does fluctuate slightly from quarter to quarter, although trend data shows that performance is within acceptable variances, for example Rent collection rates have been between 98% and 98.39% during the second quarter for the four years 2012/13 to 2015/16 inclusive. For the same period arrears as a percentage of the rent roll has been between 1.23% and 1.48%.</p> <p>Further work is being carried out to assess the potential impact of further welfare benefit reforms, including potential households who will be affected by the reduced benefit cap from April 2016. The aim is to support households with early intervention to enable them to maintain their rent payments.</p>
CM30: Percentage of appeals allowed against the decision to refuse planning applications.	66.6%	50%	<p>The number of appeals is low, between April 2006 and September 2015 out of 183 appeals submitted and determined 19.7% of appeals were allowed, this compares with a national average of 33%.</p> <p>The first half year of 2015/16 10 appeal decisions have been received with 50% being approved subject to conditions. Of those three were recommended for</p>

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			<p>approval and refused against recommendation by the Development Control Committee. Over the same period one application was recommended for approval, refused and dismissed on appeal.</p> <p>Of the 10 appeals decisions four applications involved change of use of guest houses in the secondary holiday area and three were allowed. The policies in the Great Yarmouth Local Plan 2001 were conceived some 20 years ago and gave protection to the guest houses/hotels and the evidence suggests that the policies are becoming increasingly dated and should be reviewed as part of the local plan review.</p>
CM31: Percentage of Land Charges search returns sent within 10 working days.	79.76%	72.90%	<p>There have been teething problems with the new IT system, along with staff shortages and sickness this has had an impact on performance for this small team. During the Summer temporary staff were brought into the team to support the service.</p> <p>Along with dealing with land charge searches the small team also provides administration support to other areas of the Planning section.</p> <p>The team are now at full strength and the IT problems have been resolved so performance is expected to improve in future quarters.</p>
CM34: Contact centre telephone calls: Percentage of Contact Centre calls answered as a % of all calls offered	54%	55%	<p>The Customer Service team has been extremely stretched as resource have significantly reduced this year where vacancies have impacted due to planned changes increasing online services for our customers, especially around the annual billing period, the services busiest time of the year.</p> <p>The service has had a number of vacancies where permission to fill was submitted and granted by EMT. Two additional temporary members of staff have now joined the team to help with the current demands, although there is a long learning curve for them to reach the standards of experienced staff.</p> <p>Between October 2013 and October 2015 the contact centre had received</p>

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			<p>285,351 telephone calls (average 11,414 per month) alongside 50,511 face to face customers at the reception point in Greyfriars House (average 2,020 per month). During this period the response rate average is 70%.</p> <p>Page 8 shows a chart with a breakdown of calls offered and answered, with average staff numbers in the contact centre:</p> <p>For 2014/15 the response rate was 73% compared to 57% for the first seven months of 2015/16. Between March 2015 and May 2015) there was an average of four advisors at a time of the services busiest period of the year, with 16,796 telephone calls in March 2015 and 14,001 in April 2015.</p> <p>April 2014 – September 2014 – 75,825 calls received April 2015 – September 2015 – 91,639 calls received First seven months of 2015/16 has seen an increase of calls of nearly 21% compared to same period in 2014/15. Throughout this period staff have strived to maintain the service of dealing with customers at the first point of contact where possible. The service has also taking on new ways for the customer to contact us.</p> <p>Through the digital by Design programme the Council continues to bring more services online, enabling customers to self-serve therefore increasing the channel shift reducing demand on telephony and face to face enquiries.</p>



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CM36: Food safety - % of food businesses moved down a risk rating band after assessment (Band A high risk – Band E low risk)	44%	24%	<p>This measure looks at the number of food premises that are inspected during the period. The inspection will risk rate the premises and then place the premises in one of five bands, Band A is high risk going down to Band E being low risk. The rating is then compared to the last inspection the premises had and fits into one of three categories, either moved up or down a band or stayed the same.</p> <p>The first half year of 2015/16 has seen the number of inspections increase to 356 compared to 140 in the same period in 2014/15. The increased number of inspections has allowed the Council to concentrate on dealing with poorly performing businesses as well as businesses that only open during the Summer season.</p> <p>There has been a significant increase in businesses staying at the same rating, this is due to inherent risks in a business, meaning they will always be a specific rating, but the service will work with any business to identify ways of helping them improve.</p>
CM37: Food safety - % of food businesses moved up a risk rating band after assessment (Band A high risk – Band E low risk)	13%	25%	<p>This measure looks at the number of food premises that are inspected during the period. The inspection will risk rate the premises and then place the premises in one of five bands, Band A is high risk going down to Band E being low risk. The rating is then compared to the last inspection the premises had and fits into one of three categories, either moved up or down a band or stayed the same.</p> <p>During the first half of the year 2015/16 the service has increased the number of inspections by over 150%, this has enabled the service to inspect higher risk businesses and a number of businesses that have not been picked up on previous inspection periods due to resources.</p> <p>The service has taken enforcement action against a number of businesses to improve standards, this has led to an increase in the number of notices being served, a higher number of prosecutions and 4 closures. We are also working with a number of businesses to identify ways of helping them to improve.</p> <p>However, we are now seeing a significant increase in businesses staying at the same rating, this is due to inherent risks in a business, meaning they will always be a specific rating.</p>