

02 April 2019 at 7.00 pm

Conference Room, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks
Despatched: 25.03.19



Scrutiny Committee

Membership:

Chairman, Cllr. Brown; Vice-Chairman, Cllr. London
Cllrs. Ball, Clack, Hogg, Kitchener, Lindsay, McArthur, Purves, Reay and Searles

Agenda

There are no fire drills planned. If the fire alarm is activated, which is a continuous siren with a flashing red light, please leave the building immediately, following the fire exit signs.

	Pages	Contact
Apologies for Absence		
1. Minutes To approve the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 February 2019 as a correct record.	(Pages 1 - 6)	
2. Declarations of Interest Any declarations not already registered.		
3. Responses of the Cabinet to reports of the Scrutiny Committee (if any)		
4. Actions from the Previous Meeting	(Pages 7 - 8)	
5. Performance Report	(Pages 9 - 26)	Lee Banks Tel: 01732 227161
6. Questions to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health		Councillor Michelle Lowe
7. Questions to the Portfolio Holder for Planning	(Pages 27 - 28)	Councillor Robert Piper
8. Chairman's Annual Report to Council 2018/19	(Pages 29 - 32)	Councillor Cameron Brown
9. Work Plan	(Pages 33 - 34)	

EXEMPT INFORMATION

At the time of preparing this agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public.

If you wish to obtain further factual information on any of the agenda items listed above, please contact the named officer prior to the day of the meeting.

Should you need this agenda or any of the reports in a different format, or have any other queries concerning this agenda or the meeting please contact Democratic Services on 01732 227000 or democratic.services@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2019 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Brown (Chairman)

Cllr. London (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Ball, Clack, Kitchener, Lindsay, London, Purves and Searles

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Hogg, McArthur and Reay

Cllrs. Firth and Hogarth were also present.

20. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 13 November 2018 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

21. Declarations of Interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

22. Responses of the Cabinet to reports of the Scrutiny Committee (if any)

The Chief Officer Corporate Services informed Members that the findings of the In-Depth Working Group of Scrutiny on Staffing Levels had been reported to [Cabinet](#) on 10 January 2019. Cabinet had wished to thank the Scrutiny Working Group for carrying out this work and Cabinet had passed the recommendations on to officers to investigate further as appropriate.

23. Actions from the Previous Meeting

Members considered the planning figures relating to decisions, appeals and overturns. The outcome of appeals was discussed and Members noted that of the 64 appeals, only 63 were accounted for as being dismissed or allowed. Additional information was requested on the numbers of granted and refused applications.

Action 1: Chief Planning Officer to provide a breakdown of refusals and granted applications from the total number of applications determined. The status of the appeal not listed as dismissed or allowed be clarified.

Agenda Item 1

Scrutiny Committee - 5 February 2019

Members considered the reminders and rates of non-payment for Building Control services and questioned if costs could be charged to non-paying clients for administration and enforcement.

Action 2: Chief Officer Corporate Services to provide the Committee access to the legal advice relating to non-payment for building control services.

Members noted that the annual cost of Emergency Accommodation was increasing significantly. They were advised by Chief Officer Communities and Business that increased costs were correlated with greater Council's responsibility for homelessness following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. It was advised that these costs were mostly recovered from Housing Benefit and grants. Emphasis had been placed on Homelessness Prevention including the work carried out by the Council's HERO officers. Members noted that many people placed in emergency accommodation were placed outside of the district.

It was noted that there was an increased cost associated with the employment of an agency worker which was partially offset by the benefits received by full time staff. Additional information was requested on agency staff working at the Council.

Action 3: For Chief Officer Corporate Services to provide information on the number of agency staff employed by the Council per year.

The actions were noted.

24. West Kent Housing

The Chairman welcomed Frank Czarnowski, the Chief Executive of West Kent Housing who gave a [presentation](#) on affordable housing in the district. The presentation covered the organisations 6 key objectives relating to customers, homes, older people, growth, community and viability.

The Committee were then invited to ask questions. Members were advised that specialists teams were available to try and resolve issues related to antisocial behaviour. West Kent Housing's approach to their garage stock was discussed with some well used garages in prime locations being refurbished and maintained while garages while some empty garages were being demolished. The shortage of parking spaces in the district was noted however Members were advised that some garage units were not being used while others were being used for non-car parking activities.

Members queried the moving in process for West Kent tenants especially in relation to overlapping rent payments for former and new homes. If tenants were required to pay the deposit and rent for a new West Kent House when agreeing to take the property it was considered likely that they would also be paying rent on the property they would be moving from. Improvements would sometimes be carried out following the new tenant moving into the property and 'decoration vouchers' were available in some cases. Members were advised that there were often tensions between renovations and improvements taking place at the property, renting the property and tight timescales. It was also noted that Universal Credit

would cover overlapping rent payments in some cases however for those not on benefits paying multiple rents would be considerably difficult.

It was advised that the average turnaround for a property was over 4 weeks with an average of 7% of all properties being empty. The waiting time for a residential property was recognised to be different for different sizes of property with 2-bedroom houses being the most in demand. Independence at home for older residents was supported through psychical adjustments (rails, lifts ect.) and professional support. Members were informed that money raised through rents and loans funded an ongoing development plan which included the purchase of new stock and the refurbishment of existing properties.

The Chairman thanked Chief Executive Frank Czarnowski for his attendance.

(Councillor Brown left the meeting)

COUNCILLOR LONDON IN THE CHAIR

25. Performance Monitoring

Members considered the report which summarised performance across the Council to the end of December 2018. Members were asked to consider 8 performance indicators which were performing 10% or more below their target with a commentary from Officers explaining the reasons and detailing any plans to improve performance. The report also provided key performance indicators relating to the Portfolio Holders invited to the Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Members considered the average time taken to process a new claim for housing benefit. It was advised that 23 days was the target and additional information was requested on how long it was taking for other Councils to complete this process.

Action 4: Chief Finance Officer to provide figures on the average time taken to process a new claim for housing benefit in other Councils.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

26. Questions to the Portfolio Holder for Legal and Democratic Services

The Portfolio Holder for Legal and Democratic Services presented a report updating the Committee on recent achievements and challenges ahead.

The Portfolio Holder updated Members on the Licensing Partnership which had been approached by the London Borough of Bromley who were interested in joining the partnership. Bromley and the Partnership were also investigating the possibility of the Partnership carrying out enforcement and compliance in Bromley as part of an enhanced service. It was advised that although the Partnership was not currently a profit centre, expanding the Partnership would bring down the costs for the individual authorities to carry out the service. Members were informed that as per the terms of reference of the Partnership any dissolution would be subject to a 6 months break clause.

Questions were raised relating to managing liability across the Licensing Partnership, and Members were advised that that considerable effort was made before taking on a new partner to avoid issues and mistakes. Measures were taken to understand the Licensing processes at other partnership authorities and to align IT software.

Members were advised that finding suitable properties for trading company Quercus 7 had been difficult, however many deals had been considered, and the company were careful to select only the most viable. In response to Member questions, the Portfolio Holder advised that the property purchased by Quercus 7 in Westerham has been subject to a 13% reduced rate. Quercus Housing was restricted to a timeframe in relation to its Section 106 funds and schemes should commence shortly to avoid funds being returned to developers. Members were advised that property consultants had factored in the running cost and management of properties in Quercus Housing's financial plan. In the case of small investments, it was expected that the properties could be managed by the Council who would be paid for its services by Quercus Housing.

It was highlighted that all Legal Successes may have not been listed in the report as individual departments reported back on their successes through their own Portfolio Holders. Members requested more information on the work listed for 120 Chipstead Lane, Sevenoaks which was described as a complex landlord-tenant case where it was in the Council's interest to intervene as the site had required a significant amount of Council resources. In response to further enquiry, it was agreed that the Head of Legal Services would provide more information relating to this case to the relevant Ward Councillor.

Member training had been delivered as per the request of Members however uptake hadn't been as high as hoped, and training was hoped to be recommenced early in the next cycle. Members views on training were welcomed.

The Chairman thanked the Portfolio Holder for her attendance.

27. Questions to the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Community Development

The Portfolio Holder for Economic and Community Development presented a report updating the Committee on recent achievements and challenges ahead. Members were advised that the Sevenoaks Community Safety Unit was the only one in Kent which was not lead by a Police Officer. The developments at the Swanley Convent of Mercy site, which had recently been closed following anti-social behaviour, were noted. Some Members voiced concerns at the amount of time taken to close the site.

The Portfolio Holder advised that electric vehicles were now installed in all new developments and the Bradbourne and Buckhurst 2 carparks had been designed with the infrastructure to increase the number of electric spaces according to need. The success of the new Premier Inn in Sevenoaks was on target with occupancy levels of 86% in the first 3 months with current occupancy believed to be higher.

Members discussed developments on the former Tesco Sevenoaks High Street building, and were informed by the Portfolio Holder that the Council had been communicating with the land owner. A short-term use for the shop front was being considered while long term plans for the site were being finalised. Other businesses in the town centre had reported a decrease in footfall since Tesco's closure.

The Portfolio Holder reported that several businesses in Sevenoaks Town had seen their revenue shift to mainly online sales but were still keen to maintain their high-street presence. The Council owned 96 High Street, Sevenoaks was currently housing 20 artist studios as part of an experiment on potential alternative uses for town centre locations. It was reported that these studios were currently all in use.

Members discussed the planned improvements to Swanley Town Station, a development which had been granted CIL funding in 2018. It was noted that funding was now sufficient to start the project, but schemes were still being finalised with Southeastern Railway. The development was noted as being time sensitive and some funding may be recovered if there were significant delays to the schemes implementation.

Members questioned the Council's role in promoting businesses, tourist attractions and lodgings on its website. It was advised that there was currently a link to an external site and suggestions were made to provide links from the Council's website to the various Town Council's site for tourism information.

The Chairman thanked the Portfolio Holder for his attendance.

28. Work Plan

Members noted that Sencio and the Portfolio Holders for Planning and Housing and Health would be attending the meeting on 2 April 2019. The Chairman's Annual report to Council would also be presented at the April 2019 Scrutiny meeting.

It was agreed that the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Direct and Trading Services would be invited to attend the meeting on 16 July 2019 alongside the NHS Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Clinical Commissioning Group. The Chamber of Commerce, Kent County Council Highways Team and Kent Police were scheduled in for the subsequent 2019/20 meetings.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 9.20 PM

CHAIRMAN

ACTIONS FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 05.02.19			
Action	Description	Status and last updated	Contact Officer
ACTION 1	Chief Planning Officer to provide a breakdown of refusals and granted applications from the total number of applications determined. The status of the appeal not listed as dismissed or allowed be clarified (from Action 1 on 13.11.18).	Of the 2491 applications determined since 1 April 2018 2165 were granted and 326 were refused. The total number of appeals during this time was 63 (a correction from Action 1 - 13.11.19). There were 40 dismissed and 23 allowed (3 of which were committee overturns)	Richard Morris Ext. 7139
ACTION 2	Chief Officer Corporate Services to provide the Committee access to the legal advice relating to non-payment for building control services.	Email sent from the Chief Officer Corporate Services to Committee Members on 15/03/19.	Jim Carrington-West Ext. 7218
ACTION 3	For Chief Officer Corporate Services to provide information on the number of agency staff employed by the Council per year.	Email sent from the Democratic Services of behalf of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to Committee Members on 15/03/19.	Jim Carrington-West Ext. 7218
ACTION 4	Chief Finance Officer to provide figures on the average time taken to process a new claim for housing benefit in other Councils.	Email sent from Adrian Rowbotham to Committee Members on 12/03/19.	Adrian Rowbotham Ext. 7153

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PERFORMANCE REPORT

Scrutiny Committee - 2 April 2019

Report of Chief Executive

Status: For Information

Key Decision: No

This report supports the Council Promise to provide value for money

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Peter Fleming

Contact Officer Lee Bank, Ext. 7161

Recommendation to Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Members note the contents of the report; and
 - b) If Members are dissatisfied by actions being taken to improve performance by either Officers, Advisory Committee or Cabinet, they consider areas of underperformance for scrutiny.
-

Reason for recommendation: To ensure that areas of under performance within services are considered and reviewed by Members.

Introduction and Background

- 1 Scrutiny Committee have requested a regular update at each of their meetings of any performance indicators which are not meeting their target level. Attached to this short introduction paper is an exceptions report with a commentary from officers explaining the reasons why performance is not within 10% of target and detailing any actions the service is planning to take to improve performance levels.

Performance Overview

- 2 The table on the following page summarises performance levels as at the end of January 2018.

Agenda Item 5

	Current Month	Year To Date
Red <i>10% or more below target</i>	6 (15.0%)	4 (10.0%)
Amber <i>Less than 10% below target</i>	9 (22.5%)	9 (22.5%)
Green <i>At or above target</i>	25 (62.5%)	27 (67.5%)

- 2 Provided as Appendix A to this report are details of the six indicators where performance is 'Red' and missing the target level by 10% or more.
- 3 Commentary is provided for each of the 'red' performance indicators explaining why target has not been met and the actions that are planned to improve performance.

Portfolio Holder Performance Reports

- 5 At the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 14 July 2015 it was resolved for 'Officers to provide key performance indicators relevant to the Portfolio Holders invited to the Scrutiny Committee at each meeting'. The following performance reports are provided as Appendices to this report:
 - Appendix B - Housing & Health Portfolio performance report
 - Appendix C - Planning Portfolio performance report
- 6 Where performance is 'red' and missing the target level by 10% or more Officers have provided a commentary for Members consideration.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

- 7 None.

Key Implications

Financial

- 8 Effective performance management monitoring arrangements will assist the Council in diverting resources to areas or services where it is considered to be a greater priority.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

- 9 Robust arrangements are in place to ensure that the risk of inaccurate data being reported to Members is minimised and assurance can be placed on the accuracy of data used to assess performance. By reporting to Members and

ensuring all Members are able to access the Council's performance management system the risk of poor performance not being identified or addressed is minimised.

Equality Impacts

- 10 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Conclusions

- 11 This report to Members summarises performance across the Council with data that was available at the end of January 2018. Members are asked to consider six performance indicators which are performing 10% or more below their target and if the actions being taken by officers are not deemed sufficient are recommended to refer those indicators to the Cabinet for further assessment.

Appendices

Appendix A - Exceptions Report

Appendix B - Housing & Health Portfolio performance report

Appendix C - Planning Services Portfolio performance report

Background Papers

None

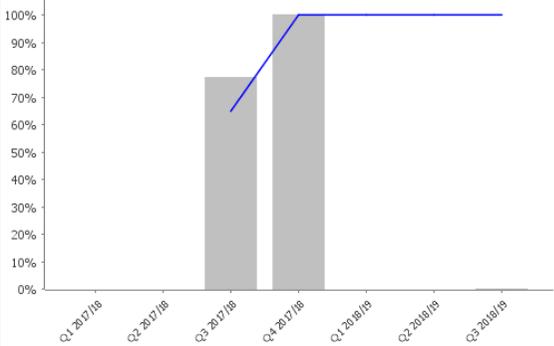
**Dr Pav Ramewal
Chief Executive**

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Scrutiny Committee – Exceptions Report

Key:

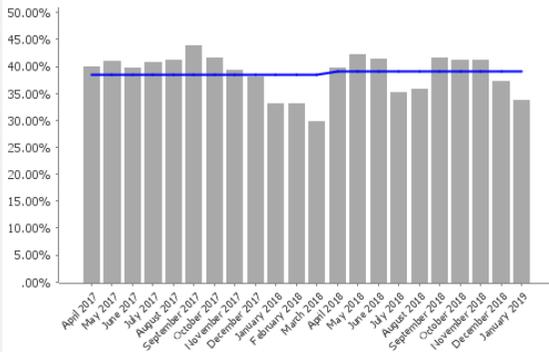
Status	Colour	Details
	Green	At or above target
	Amber	Less than 10% below target
	Red	10% or more below target

Code	Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Chart	Year to Date Performance			Latest Note
						2018/19			
						Value	Target	Status	
LPI_EH 006	Percentage of animal licences issued that were due	0%	100%	 Red		0%	100%	 Red	<p>As reported previously to Members new legislation came in to effect on 1 October 2018 which places a duty on the Council to carry out more detailed inspection work, the guidance necessary to inform how the work is to be carried out and how the licences were to be issued that was due from Government was delayed.</p> <p>However, newly designed licences are being finalised, which will enable the licenses to be issued and an improvement in performance to be delivered by year-end.</p>

Code	Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Chart	Year to Date Performance			Latest Note
						2018/19			
						Value	Target	Status	
LPI_HS A004	Number of households living in B & B	37	10	Red		37	10	Red	<p>The number of homelessness approaches have continued to increase since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018.</p> <p>The Act has had further implications as there is a duty to accommodate all applicants requesting homelessness support for a period of 56 days, which means more people are required to be placed in B&B and for much longer periods of time.</p> <p>The Team is working to source additional private sector accommodation to move customers into temporary accommodation and private sector landlord properties as soon as possible.</p>
LPI_HR 001	The average number of working days lost to sickness absence per FTE	8.70	7.50	Red		8.70	7.50	Red	<p>The average number of working days lost to sickness is over the expected level due to a number of individuals with long-term medical conditions. Colleagues are being supported and managed under the Council's sickness absence policy with the active involvement of their line managers and the HR team. A number of the long term sicknesses have now returned to work.</p>

Code	Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Chart	Year to Date Performance			Latest Note																																														
						2018/19																																																	
						Value	Target	Status																																															
LPI_HB	Average time taken to process a change in circumstances for Housing Benefit (monthly)	14	9	Red	<table border="1"> <caption>Performance Chart Data (Estimated)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th> <th>Value</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Apr 2017</td><td>13.5</td></tr> <tr><td>May 2017</td><td>13.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Jun 2017</td><td>13.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Jul 2017</td><td>13.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Aug 2017</td><td>13.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Sep 2017</td><td>13.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Oct 2017</td><td>13.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov 2017</td><td>16.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Dec 2017</td><td>14.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Jan 2018</td><td>15.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Feb 2018</td><td>14.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Mar 2018</td><td>2.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Apr 2018</td><td>15.5</td></tr> <tr><td>May 2018</td><td>12.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Jun 2018</td><td>10.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Jul 2018</td><td>16.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Aug 2018</td><td>14.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Sep 2018</td><td>12.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Oct 2018</td><td>12.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov 2018</td><td>15.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Dec 2018</td><td>12.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Jan 2019</td><td>14.5</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Month	Value	Apr 2017	13.5	May 2017	13.5	Jun 2017	13.5	Jul 2017	13.5	Aug 2017	13.5	Sep 2017	13.5	Oct 2017	13.5	Nov 2017	16.5	Dec 2017	14.5	Jan 2018	15.5	Feb 2018	14.5	Mar 2018	2.5	Apr 2018	15.5	May 2018	12.5	Jun 2018	10.5	Jul 2018	16.5	Aug 2018	14.5	Sep 2018	12.5	Oct 2018	12.5	Nov 2018	15.5	Dec 2018	12.5	Jan 2019	14.5	13	9	Red	<p>The benefits processing indicators are measured in calendar days. During December, this resulted in an increase in processing days following improvements in previous months, which continued with the early Bank Holiday in January.</p> <p>Members may recall that as part of the 2018/19 budget process, a £50,000 saving in Revenues & Benefits was approved and a staff consultation took place before a new structure was agreed to deliver the required savings.</p> <p>This caused a period of disruption to the service. The new structure commenced on 1 November and vacant Benefit Officers posts are now recruited to which will further assist with improving performance.</p>
Month	Value																																																						
Apr 2017	13.5																																																						
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Code	Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Chart	Year to Date Performance			Latest Note
						2018/19			
						Value	Target	Status	
Waste 4	Number of missed green waste collections	15	4	Red		103	95	Amber	<p>The number of wheeled bins to be emptied has increased compared with last year. The random nature of new customer applications has resulted in an imbalance in the rounds on certain days, which has on rare occasions resulted in daily rounds not being completed, particularly if crews are not prepared to work on and claim overtime. Although arrangements have been in place to collect such misses the following day these impact greatly on the missed collection performance indicators.</p> <p>Changes in crews and use of agency employees who are unfamiliar with some of the remote or hidden properties we serve has also resulted in missed collections.</p> <p>We propose to undertake a garden waste collection round review in the coming months in order to improve route efficiency and rectify the imbalance in workload caused by the random geographical nature of permit applicants.</p>

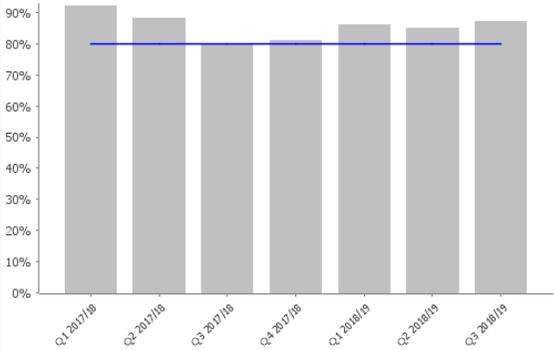
Code	Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Chart	Year to Date Performance			Latest Note
						2018/19			
						Value	Target	Status	
LPI_DS Waste 001	National indicator - Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	33.8%	39%	 Red		39%	39%	 Green	<p>The lower current overall recycling percentage figure reflects the seasonal drop in garden waste each December & January. The earlier months of July and August were particularly dry and impacted garden waste's contribution to the overall recycling figure.</p> <p>However, recent relatively warm and wet weather has encouraged strong garden activity and combined with expected dry recycling tonnages we anticipate the overall annual percentage target will be exceeded by year-end.</p>

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Scrutiny Committee – Housing & Health Portfolio performance report

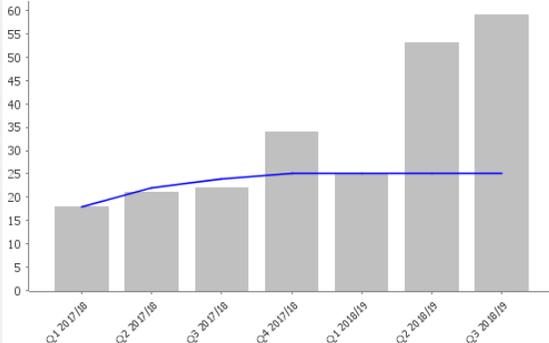
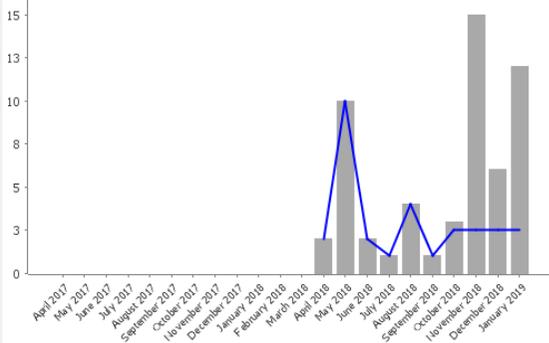
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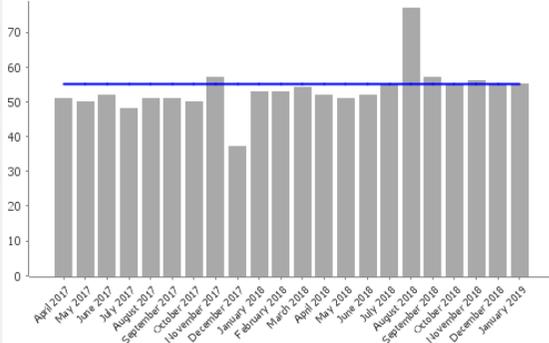
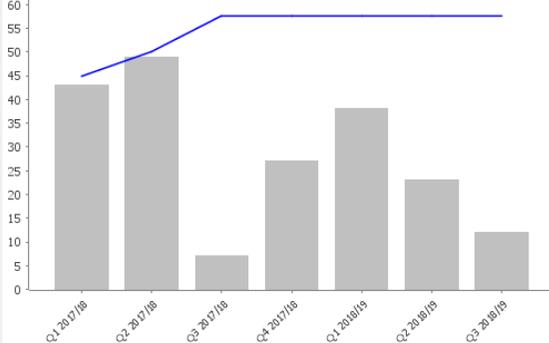
Status	Colour	Details
	Green	At or above target
	Amber	Less than 10% below target
	Red	10% or more below target

Code	Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Chart	Cumulative (Year to Date) Performance			Latest Note
						2018/19			
						Value	Target	Status	
LPI_C D017	Percentage of Health Action Plan on target	87%	80%	 Green		87%	80%	 Green	Commentary is only provided for 'red' indicators

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Code	Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Chart	Cumulative (Year to Date) Performance			Latest Note
						2018/19			
						Value	Target	Status	
LPI_P SH 001	Number of Disabled Facilities Grants approved	59	25	 Green		137	75	 Green	Commentary is only provided for 'red' indicators
LPI_H SA 003	Number of customers housed in PSL property	12	3	 Green		56	30	 Green	Commentary is only provided for 'red' indicators

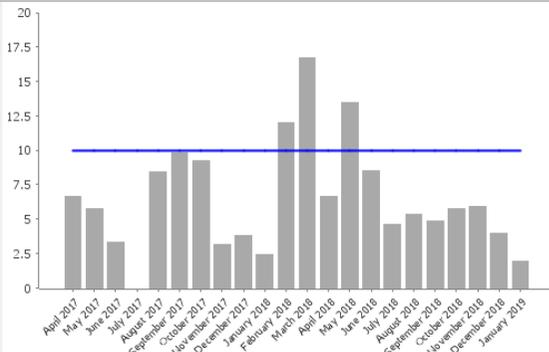
Code	Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Chart	Cumulative (Year to Date) Performance			Latest Note
						2018/19			
						Value	Target	Status	
LPI_H SA 005	Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation	55	55	 Green		55	55	 Green	Commentary is only provided for 'red' indicators
Page 21 SA 006	Number of households where housing advice casework has had a positive action in preventing homelessness	12	58	 Green		73	173	 Green	Commentary is only provided for 'red' indicators

Code	Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Chart	Cumulative (Year to Date) Performance			Latest Note
						2018/19			
						Value	Target	Status	
LPI_H SA 004	Number of households living in B & B	37	10	Red		37	10	Red	<p>The number of homelessness approaches have continued to increase since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018.</p> <p>The Act has had further implications as there is a duty to accommodate all applicants requesting homelessness support for a period of 56 days, which means more people are required to be placed in B&B and for much longer periods of time.</p> <p>The Team is working to source additional private sector accommodation to move customers into temporary accommodation and private sector landlord properties as soon as possible.</p>

Scrutiny Committee – Planning Portfolio performance report

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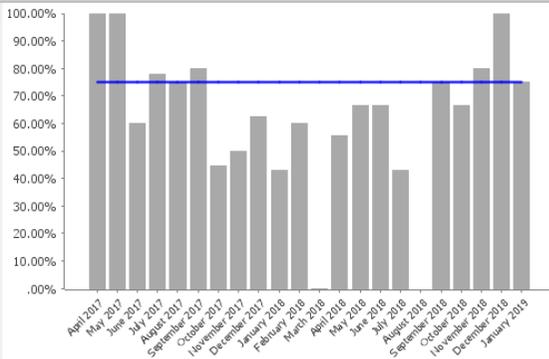
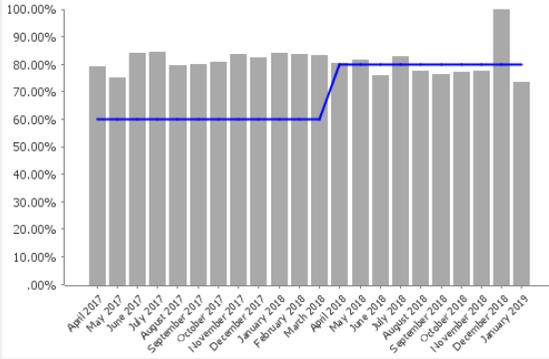
Status	Colour	Details
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Code	Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Chart	Year to Date Performance			Latest Note
						2018/19			
						Value	Target	Status	
LPI_BC LC 001	Average number of days to process a land charge search	1.9	10	 Green		6.1	10	 Green	Commentary is only provided for 'red' indicators

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Code	Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Chart	Year to Date Performance			Latest Note
						2018/19			
						Value	Target	Status	
LPI_D M 001a	Average number of days taken to validate a planning application	3.1	5	Green		3	5	Green	Commentary is only provided for 'red' indicators
LPI_D M 007a	Processing of planning applications: Major applications in 13 weeks	100%	80%	Green		82.6%	80%	Green	Commentary is only provided for 'red' indicators

Code	Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Chart	Year to Date Performance			Latest Note
						2018/19			
						Value	Target	Status	
LPI_D M 009	Percentage of appeals against planning application refusal dismissed	75%	75%	 Green		68.5%	75.00%	 Amber	Commentary is only provided for 'red' indicators
Page 25 LPI_D M 005	Percentage of planning applications submitted and received electronically	73.6%	80%	 Amber		80.2%	80%	 Green	Commentary is only provided for 'red' indicators

Code	Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Chart	Year to Date Performance			Latest Note
						2018/19			
						Value	Target	Status	
LPI_DM 007b	Processing of planning applications: Minor applications in 8 weeks	79.3%	80%	Amber		82.1%	80%	Green	Commentary is only provided for 'red' indicators
LPI_DM 007c	Processing of planning applications: Other applications in 8 weeks	87%	90%	Amber		91.9%	90%	Green	Commentary is only provided for 'red' indicators

Planning Update - February 2019

As we look forward hopefully to finalising the Local Plan it seems timely to take a look back at 2018.

As we all know staffing remains difficult due to the proximity to London and the lure of the Private Sector but performance of the Development Management team remains strong. The year-end County figures will be published in April time, but it is highly likely that the team still determine more applications than any other in Kent. In the calendar year SDC received 2,213 applications - not counting all the details and notifications that also have to be considered - with 85% of those being granted. Applications were generally dealt with quickly with all performance targets being met, and over 92% of householder applications were determined within 8 weeks, which is good for our residents.

It continues to be the case that the vast majority of applications are determined under delegated powers, where either the Case Officer recommendation is in line with the view of the Town or Parish Council, or Local Members are happy with the proposal. Less than 2% of all applications were determined by the Development Control Committee, and indeed on a couple of occasions in the past year the meeting was cancelled due to the lack of any items to consider.

SDC received 78 appeal decisions during the year - which is only 3.5% of the total number of applications that are dealt with - and 71% of those were dismissed. Our target is 75%, but this performance is largely the product of small numbers.

SDC pre-application service continues to be popular, with 504 enquiries received last year. With an ever increasing focus on early discussions it remains the best opportunity to provide help and certainty to potential applicants, and to advise on developments before their formal consideration.

There has been real progress in Planning Enforcement recently and whilst still with its challenges, has seen a marked increase in action being taken against those who breach planning regulations and do not wish to remedy what they have done. A total of 50 separate notices were served last year, including 25 Enforcement Notices, 15 Planning Contravention Notices, and four S215 Notices. In addition, five Injunctions were secured in the Courts which amongst other things prevented unlawful mobile homes being placed on land, prevented caravans moving on to sites, and prevented buildings from being constructed without permission. That early intervention can easily go unnoticed, but SDC's success has prevented significant distress to our residents, and the need to spend additional time and money to rectify unlawful actions had they been completed, and as we know and have seen elsewhere, that can sometimes take years.

Additional resource has also been allocated to the enforcement team in the past month, with Rebecca McDonald working as a compliance assistant, and Steve Whitehead who has joined initially on a years' contract from a senior enforcement position at Dartford.

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Last year also saw the second meeting of the CIL Spending Board, where a further £2,031,500 was allocated to 6 projects across the District. That brings the total amount allocated to £3,291,824.00. In addition, we have now provided Town and Parish Councils with over £1.8m to date to spend on infrastructure projects to benefit their local communities, with similar amounts likely to be generated in the year ahead. The next CIL Spending Board is likely to be in early Summer, which will follow a review of the Governance and Operating arrangements that were considered by the Planning Advisory Committee last week.

And so on to the Local Plan. SDC completed the third and final consultation on 3 February. Overall we received approximately 3000 responses, to add to the 15,000 from the previous Issues and Options consultation and 8,500 from the consultation last summer, which is a significant level of engagement in the plan. The evidence base that has been compiled over the past few years has now been applied to over 500 promoted sites, and we have distilled the allocations down to a number that meets our housing need in full for at least the next 12 years, delivers our employment and retail needs in full for the duration of the plan period, and also enables infrastructure providers to deliver the infrastructure needed now, and that needed to support future growth. Housing numbers in the Plan are though below the District's full need calculated by Government to be 698 new homes per year. There is a risk that an examiner will expect us to find sites that meet that in full, but we think the plan is sound and strikes the right balance between delivering growth and protecting the Green Belt, and that is the argument we will be advancing.

Once we have submitted the Plan following an extraordinary meeting of Council in March we are in the hands of the Planning Inspectorate, but all Members will have the opportunity to come along to the examination in public, and speak if they wish to. We will provide more details on the timetable for that as it becomes clear.

Planning will always be difficult. We know there is more to do and Richard and the team are always happy to hear your suggestions and listen to your feedback, so please get in touch.

Scrutiny Committee Annual Report to Council - 2018/19

Remit of the Scrutiny Committee

1. As per Appendix C of the Council's constitution, "Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules":

1.1 The Council is required by Law to discharge certain overview and scrutiny functions. These functions are an essential component of local democracy. The Scrutiny Committee contribute to the Council's Performance and also hold the Cabinet to account for its decisions.

1.2 The Scrutiny Committee allows a wider involvement in Council business by involving non-councillors from the wider public section, voluntary groups and community groups to help them in their work. They may make reports and recommendations to the Cabinet and the Council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery.

1.3 The Scrutiny Committee also monitors the decisions of the Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee can "call-in" a decision of the Cabinet which has been made but not yet implemented. They may recommend that the Cabinet reconsider their decision. They may also be consulted by the Cabinet or the Council on forthcoming decisions.

1.4 Scrutiny should be carried out in a constructive way and should aim to contribute to the delivery of efficient and effective services that meet the needs and aspirations of local inhabitants. The Scrutiny Committee should not shy away from the need to challenge and question decisions and make constructive criticism.

"The Scrutiny Committee will comprise a permanent Chairman and Vice Chairman, and 9 other elected Members that follow the political proportionality of the Council. No Members of the Committee may be members of the Cabinet, their deputies or members of any of the Cabinet Advisory Committees."

Approach

2. Throughout the course of 2018/19, the Scrutiny Committee has drawn up and followed a work plan that has focussed on four key areas. These are:

- **Inviting Cabinet Portfolio Holders** to each meeting of the Scrutiny Committee where possible to discuss particular areas of focus/challenge and concerns members may have;
- **Inviting a number of external representatives** to attend Scrutiny Committee to discuss particular areas of concern and their activities within the district;
- **Setting up In-Depth Scrutiny working groups** as task and finish groups to investigate particular areas in detail, reporting back to the Committee so that recommendations can be agreed and reported to Cabinet.

Agenda Item 8

- **Reviewing performance of services** in relation to agreed performance indicators, in particular focusing on red flag indicators. These are discussed at meetings, with explanations being provided by Officers. Matters of serious concern are referred to the Portfolio Holder/ Cabinet as appropriate.

This approach has ensured that the Committee has scrutinised both the work of SDC and other public bodies across the district, per the Committee's above terms of reference.

Work Covered

3. Based on the above approach, the following is a summary of work carried out during 2018/19 by the Scrutiny Committee.

Portfolio Holders

4. Portfolio Holders were asked to provide an update on recent work and future challenges to the relevant meeting, and were subsequently asked a number of questions by Members of the Committee regarding specific challenges and their approach and views. Portfolio holders attended as follows:

Scrutiny Committee	Portfolio Holder	Area of Committee Focus
July 2018	Cllr Michelle Lowe Housing and Health	Quercus Housing Health and Wellbeing West Kent Housing
July 2018	Cllr Peter Fleming Policy and Performance	Swanley Sites Corporate Plan
November 2018	Cllr John Scholey Finance	Property Investment Asset Maintenance Programme
February 2019	Cllr Anna Firth Legal and Democratic Services	Licensing Partnership Legal Successes Member Training
February 2019	Cllr Roddy Hogarth Economic and Community Development	Sevenoaks High Street Swanley Town Station Sevenoaks Community Safety Unit
April 2019	Cllr Robert Piper Planning	TBC
April 2019	Cllr Michelle Lowe Housing and Health	TBC

External Invitees

July 2018

5. Representatives from Citizens Advice in North and West Kent and Edenbridge and Westerham in attendance.

6. Representatives from Edenbridge and Westerham and North and West Kent Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) gave a presentation on the work of Citizens Advice within the district.

7. Members of the Committee then asked a number of questions relating to areas including:

- Budget allocations
- Criteria for clients accessing CAB services
- Impacts of Universal Credit
- Volumes of website users
- Staffing resources

November 2018

8. Chief Inspector Tony Dyer, Sevenoaks District Commander of Kent Police in attendance.

9. Chief Inspector Dyer gave an overview of crime levels within the Sevenoaks District area. The Chief Inspector explained that Sevenoaks District has **the first or second lowest recordings for most if not all crime categories in the County**. The Sevenoaks District had also seen a reduction in Anti-Social Behaviour and had the **slowest increase in recorded crime in the County**.

10. Members were reassured that the perceived increases crime were a result of the Crime Data Integrity Inspection, affecting the way crime was reported and recorded. The roll out of Crime Data Integrity Inspections also made comparisons with other Councils outside of Kent difficult, however the Police would commence comparisons in 2019.

11. Members of the Committee then asked a number of questions relating to areas including:

- Strategy relating to visible policing
- Current focus of resources and priority areas
- The 101 service
- Use of PCSOs

February 2019

12. Frank Czarnowski, Chief Executive of West Kent Housing in attendance.

13. A presentation was given covering the organisations 6 key objectives relating to customers, homes, older people, growth, community and viability.

14. Members of the Committee then asked a number of questions relating to areas including:

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- Anti social behaviour
- Plans for West Kent Housing garages
- The process for tenants moving including overlapping rent payments
- Property turn around times and waiting times

In-Depth Scrutiny Working Group

15. At its November 2018 meeting, the in-depth scrutiny working group presented its final report which looked at matters relating to staff recruitment and retention.

16. Councillor Brown presented the final report as Chairman of the In-Depth Scrutiny Working Group. The working group had been investigating a range of areas including staff turnover, sickness absence, approach to recruitment and staff benefits. Meetings had been held with a number of Officers and an external recruitment agency.

17. The Chairman noted that salaries were given as the primary reason by staff for leaving the Council, with competition from London and the private sector. Certain areas were identified as more problematic to recruit for, and Market Related Payments (MRPs) were offered in some circumstances.

18. The working group made a number of recommendations to improve staff recruitment and retention, set out in full in the report, which were further discussed by the Committee.

19. A copy of the report of the working group, considered by the Scrutiny Committee can be found at:

<https://cds.sevenoaks.gov.uk/documents/s35915/In%20Depth%20Scrutiny%20-%20Staffing%20Report.pdf?J=5>

20. Members agreed that the report should be referred to Cabinet following the inclusion of feedback from Committee Members.

21. Cabinet then considered the report from the Scrutiny Committee at a subsequent meeting. Cabinet thanked the Committee for the work that had been put in and referred the recommendations to officers to look at further and take forward as appropriate.

Other

22. The Chairman would like to thank his Vice Chairman, other committee Members and Officers for the work they have put in over the year.

Councillor Cameron Brown
Chairman - Scrutiny Committee
2nd April 2019

Scrutiny Committee Work plan

Committee Date	24 April 2018	17 July 2018	13 November 2018	5 February 2019
External Invitees	Roger Gough - Kent County Council Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education	Citizens Advice - North West Kent and Edenbridge and Westerham	Kent Police	West Kent Housing
Scrutiny Committee	Performance Monitoring Matthew Dickins - Portfolio Holder for Direct & Trading Services Chairman's annual report to Council	Performance Monitoring Michelle Lowe - Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health Peter Fleming - Leader and Portfolio Holder for Policy & Performance	Performance Monitoring John Scholey - Portfolio Holder for Finance	Performance Monitoring Anna Firth - Portfolio Holder for Legal and Democratic Services Roddy Hogarth - Portfolio Holder for Economic and Community Development
In-Depth Scrutiny	Working Group Staffing Levels -Stage One ¹	Working Group Staffing Levels - Stage Two/Three ¹	Working Group Staffing Levels - Final report stages Three/Four ¹	

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Committee Date	2 April 2019	16 July 2019	12 November 2019	30 January 2020
External Invitees		NHS Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Clinical Commissioning Group (TBC)	Kent County Council Highways (TBC)	Chamber of Commerce (TBC)
Scrutiny Committee	Performance Monitoring Robert Piper - Portfolio Holder for Planning Michelle Lowe - Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health Chairman's annual report to Council	Performance Monitoring Leader and Portfolio Holder for Policy & Performance Portfolio Holder for Direct & Trading Services	Performance Monitoring	Performance Monitoring
In-Depth Scrutiny				

¹ For detailed information on stages refer to "A Guide to In-Depth Scrutiny"

Past In-Depth Scrutiny Working Groups

2013/14	
Parking	Cllrs Clark, Cooke, Edwards-Winsor, Eyre, Mrs Purves, Raikes (Chairman)
Budget	Cllrs Abraham, Mrs Bracken (Chairman), Butler, Gaywood, Maskell
2014/15	
Leisure	Cllrs. Gaywood, Grint, Mrs. Morris, and Pett (Chairman)
Investment in Property (put on hold)	Cllrs. Brookbank, Davison (Chairman) and Underwood
2015/16	
Leisure	Cllrs. Ball, Brown (Chairman), Clack and Kitchener
2016/17	
Property Investment	Cllrs. Clack (Chairman), Hogg, Kitchener and Purves

Current In-Depth Scrutiny Working Groups

Staffing Levels	Cllrs. Brown (Chairman) Ball, Hogg and Purves
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Possible future areas for In-Depth Scrutiny

Housing - accommodation for vulnerable people

Past External Invitees

2013/14	
21/11/13	Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS (Jayne Black, Director of Operations)
04/02/14	KCC Highways & Transportation (David Brazier, KCC Cabinet Member Transportation & Environment)
02/04/14	Kent Police (Area Commander Chief Superintendent Steve Corbishly and District Commander Chief Inspector Tim Cook)
2014/15	
15/07/14	Citizens Advice Bureaux (Martin Wells and Angela Newey, Chairman and Manager at Sevenoaks & Swanley Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), and Mike Musgrove and Jill Eyre, Director and Manager at Edenbridge & Westerham CAB)
02/10/14	Sencio Community Leisure (Jane Parish, Chief Executive)
20/11/14	KCC Secondary Schools (Roger Gough, KCC Cabinet Member for Education & Health Reform)
03/02/15	West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group (Ian Ayres, Chief Officer and Accountable Officer)
2015/16	
14/07/15	KCC Primary Schools and Apprenticeships (Margaret Crabtree, KCC Deputy Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform)
24/11/15	Kent Police (Chief Inspector Roscoe Walford)
23/02/16	KCC Highways (Matthew Balfour, KCC Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport) (Did not attend)
03/05/16	KCC Commercial & Traded Services (Paul Carter CBE, KCC Leader and Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Audit and Transformation and Commercial and Traded Services)

2016/17	
05/07/16	Moat Housing (Elizabeth Austerberry, Chief Executive) West Kent Housing (Deborah White, Housing and Communities Director)
08/11/16	Kent Police (Chief Inspector Roscoe Walford)
07/02/17	Kent County Council Library Provision (County Councillor Mike Hill; Cabinet Member for Community Services and James Pearson; Service Improvement Manager of the Libraries, Registration and Archives Service)
30/03/17	Pembury Hospital (Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust) (Angela Gallagher, Chief operating Officer and Jim Lusby, Deputy Chief Executive) (Did not attend)
31/10/17	Pembury Hospital (Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust) (Angela Gallagher, Chief operating Officer and Jim Lusby, Acting Chief Executive)
24/04/18	Roger Gough - Kent County Council Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education
17/07/18	Citizens Advice - North West Kent and Edenbridge and Westerham
13/11/18	Kent Police (Chief Inspector Tony Dyer)
05/02/19	West Kent Housing (Frank Czarnowski)

Possible External Invitees

Position	Name	Topic
KCC Adult Social Care	TBC	TBC