



# Performance and Administration Portfolio

## Performance Report Q3 2018/19

Gravesham  
Borough Council 

*Delivering for the Community*



### Policy Commitment

#### 1. Underpin all council activity with sound governance and internal control measures minimising the opportunities for fraud and corruption.

Members of the Finance & Audit Committee have been presented with two updates so far in 2018-19, detailing the work undertaken in relation to the Audit & Counter Fraud work plan. The third update, which covers the period up to 31.12.2018 is due to be presented at the February meeting of the Committee.

#### Audit

Progress is being made in relation to the 2018-19 Plan and as of 31.12.2018, plan delivery (audit fieldwork completed) was 48%, while a further 17% was underway.

At the end of Q2 it was reported that 12 recommendations remained outstanding. Of those, the following recommendations have now been implemented;

- Enhancements to the processes for monitoring planning conditions
- Enhancements to the processes for monitoring planning obligations,
- Implementation of an updated Homelessness Strategy
- Review of processes to monitor and encourage use of leased pool vehicles,
- Redesigning of the Business Continuity Planning template and identification of essential services

A cumulative total of 93 recommendations were due to be implemented by the end of Q3 and as of 31 December 2018, 11 of these remained outstanding.

Outstanding recommendations relate to:

- Enhancements to the Private Housing Enforcement policy
- The appointment of an Enforcement Agent to recover former tenant areas,
- A programme of learning for the implementation of Business continuity;
- A review of the Customer Services and Access Strategy,
- Completion of work required to ensure PSN compliance,
- Introduction of KPIs for Legal Services, and
- Review of arrangements for the use of petty cash,
- Void property management and re-let;
  - o A review of the re-let process to identify efficiencies and improve turnaround times,
  - o the introduction of a voids policy, and
  - o maintaining of records throughout the re-let process, and
- A review of the databases for recording business hereditaments

Progress made towards implementing outstanding recommendations is monitored on a quarterly basis, through reports to the council's Management Team. Details of all recommendations agreed, implemented and outstanding are provided to the council's Finance & Audit Committee as part of the quarterly and annual A&CF update reports. All recommendations that remain outstanding more than six months after their agreed implementation date are now specifically highlighted with updates from the relevant services provided.

#### Counter Fraud

The pro-active exercise looking at identifying false student certificates is now complete. The discrepancies identified led to additional council tax liability (for historic periods) of £11,857 and additional liability for future years of £5,010. Please note that this is the total specific to the exercise and a portion of these figures may be included in figures quoted as part of investigation activity for the quarter.

Investigation Activity during Q3 led to cashable savings of £5,476, relating to additional council tax, including a civil penalty of £70 and non-cashable savings of £18,000 linked to the recovery of a council property. In addition there was a prevented loss of 80,900 linked to a blocked right to buy application.

Counter Fraud reviews have been completed in relation to Housing Allocations and Residents Parking permits and recommendations for improved fraud prevention have been made.

#### PI 41 Percentage of internal audit recommendations implemented

	Q1 2017-18	Q2 2017-18	Q3 2017-18	Q4 2017-18	Q1 2018-19	Q2 2018-19	Q3 2018-19	Q4 2018-19
<b>Outturn</b>	64.3%	66.7%	79.8%	79.8%	72.2%	80.6%	88.2%	
<b>Direction of Travel</b>	↓	↑	↑	→	↓	↑	↑	

**Policy Commitment**

**2. Quality frontline services delivered on time and to the right people.**

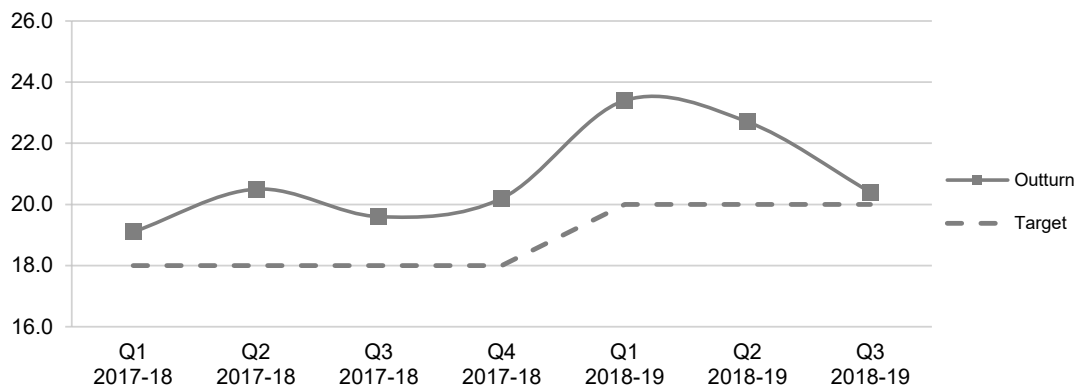
**Revenues and Benefits update**

As a cumulative measure (overall year to date), performance outturns reported earlier in the year have impacted on the Q3 position of 20.4 days for processing new claims and 5.9 days for those with change of circumstances.

With a number of newly recruited staff now having undergone relevant training and settled into the team, significant progress has been made over the autumn in improving outturns and bringing the team's overall performance much closer to the set annual target. Specifically in consideration of Q3, the team's performance saw new claims recorded at 14.6 days and change of circs at 4.3 days, both of which are ahead of target and the latest available respective national (22/8) and Kent (22/8) averages.

Officers will continue to closely monitor this area on a weekly basis to ensure that the progress made over the autumn continues.

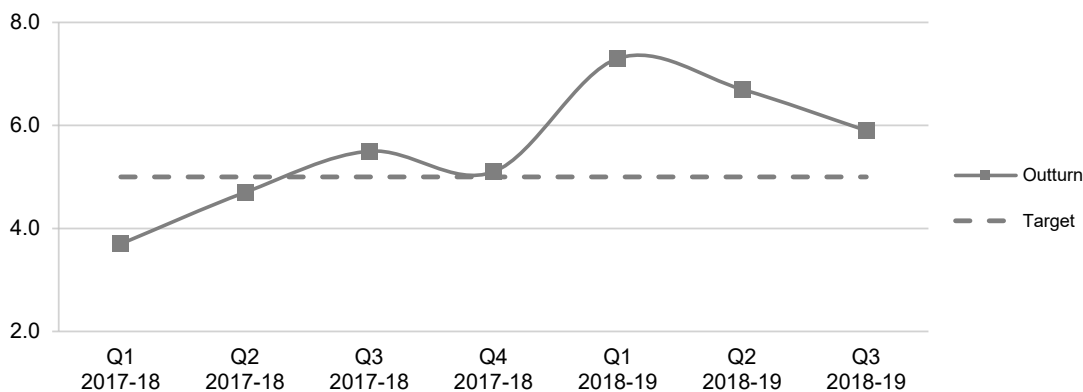
		(NB: Cumulative Outturn)							
PM 11	Average time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax new claims (days)								
	Q1 2017-18	Q2 2017-18	Q3 2017-18	Q4 2017-18	Q1 2018-19	Q2 2018-19	Q3 2018-19	Q4 2018-19	
<b>Outturn</b>	19.1	20.5	19.6	20.2	23.4	22.7	20.4		
<b>Target</b>	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0	20.0	20.0	20.0		
<b>Target Met</b>	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		
<b>Exception Notes</b>	With a number of newly recruited staff now having undergone relevant training and settled into the team, significant progress has been made over the autumn in improving outturns and bringing the team's overall performance much closer to the set annual target. Specifically in consideration of Q3, the team's performance saw new claims recorded at 14.6 days and change of circs at 4.3 days, both of which are ahead of target and the latest available respective national (23/8) and Kent (22/8) averages.								



(NB: Cumulative Outturn)

**PM 12** Average time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax change of circumstances (days)

	Q1 2017-18	Q2 2017-18	Q3 2017-18	Q4 2017-18	Q1 2018-19	Q2 2018-19	Q3 2018-19	Q4 2018-19
<b>Outturn</b>	3.7	4.7	5.5	5.1	7.3	6.7	5.9	
<b>Target</b>	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	
<b>Target Met</b>	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	
<b>Exception Notes</b>	See PM 11.							



**Policy Commitment**

**3. Work to maximise income collection through the robust management and recovery of debts owed to the council.**

The council's Management Team continues to receive monthly updates from council services regarding the levels of outstanding debt across the authority. The Corporate Debt Working Group continues to focus on addressing the overall debt levels across the council and looking at corporate debt solutions, with a current work stream considering the methods of payment utilised by the council.

The project to implement software to provide a single view of debt continues. The project is intended to enable greater focus of the recovery resources of the council and to better support customers who have multiple debts with the council.

**Council Tax** The collection rate of 84.3% is better than what we achieved in Q3 of 2017-18 of 84.1% and is above target to achieve a collection rate of 97%

**Business Rates** The collection rate of 84.3% is better than what we achieved in Q3 of 2017-18 of 83.6% and is slightly above our target to achieve the collection rate of 99%.

I believe we are in a good position to achieve our targets for both Council Tax and Business Rates.

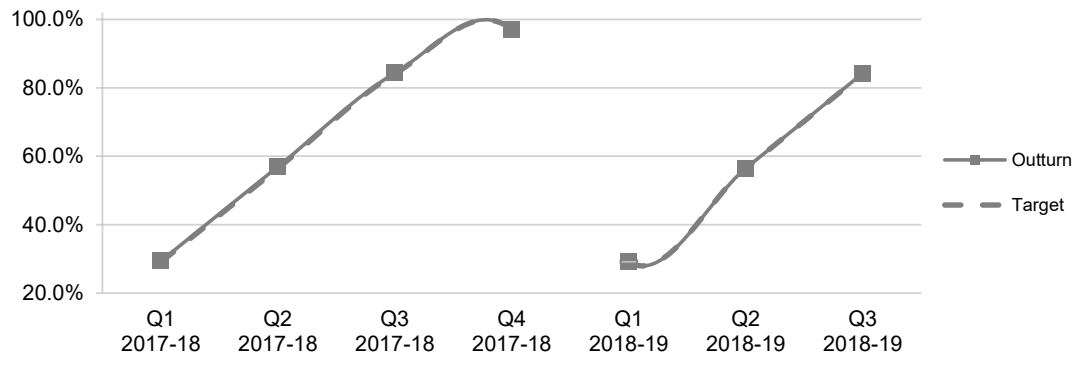
**Housing Benefit Overpayment**

We raised £396,314 of overpayments in this quarter, more than in Q2.

However we recovered £333,630 in overpayments in the quarter less than in Q2.

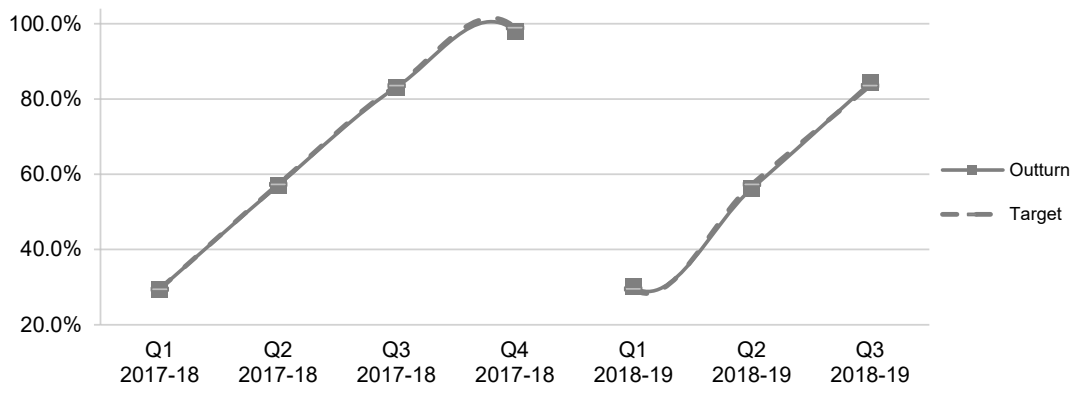
**PM 9** *Percentage of council tax collected* (NB: Cumulative Outturn)

	Q1 2017-18	Q2 2017-18	Q3 2017-18	Q4 2017-18	Q1 2018-19	Q2 2018-19	Q3 2018-19	Q4 2018-19
<b>Outturn</b>	29.4%	57.0%	84.4%	97.0%	29.1%	56.5%	84.3%	
<b>Target</b>	29.1%	56.5%	84.1%	97.0%	29.1%	56.5%	84.1%	
<b>Target Met</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	
<b>Exception Notes</b>								



**PM 10** *Percentage of NNDR collected* (NB: Cumulative Outturn)

	Q1 2017-18	Q2 2017-18	Q3 2017-18	Q4 2017-18	Q1 2018-19	Q2 2018-19	Q3 2018-19	Q4 2018-19
<b>Outturn</b>	29.5%	57.1%	83.2%	98.1%	30.1%	56.2%	84.3%	
<b>Target</b>	29.5%	57.3%	83.6%	99.0%	29.5%	57.3%	83.6%	
<b>Target Met</b>	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	
<b>Exception Notes</b>								



**PI 42** *Total amount of housing benefit overpayments raised*

	Q1 2017-18	Q2 2017-18	Q3 2017-18	Q4 2017-18	Q1 2018-19	Q2 2018-19	Q3 2018-19	Q4 2018-19
<b>Outturn</b>	£299,856	£571,557	£699,855	£347,480	£430,384	£386,855	£396,314	
<b>Direction of Travel</b>	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	

**PI 43** *Total amount of housing benefit overpayments recovered*

	Q1 2017-18	Q2 2017-18	Q3 2017-18	Q4 2017-18	Q1 2018-19	Q2 2018-19	Q3 2018-19	Q4 2018-19
<b>Outturn</b>	£341,154	£328,234	£341,350	£338,698	£418,850	£354,419	£333,630	
<b>Direction of Travel</b>	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	

**Policy Commitment**

**4. Deliver on opportunities for the sharing and selling of council services.**

As previously reported to Members, the Regulatory Services Manager has been providing managerial support to Medway Council, whilst the arrangements for the full Licensing Shared Service were put in place. This arrangement ended on 31.12.2018 as the Licensing Shared Service became operational on 01.01.2019, with officers previously employed by Medway Council transferring to the employment of Gravesham Borough Council.

**Actions for Improvement**

At this stage, there are no further shared service or shared working arrangements being explored. As has previously been agreed across the council, shared working arrangements will be explored as and when opportunities arise and as such, this is an area of activity that will be monitored closely moving forward.

**PI 45** *% of posts involved in shared services arrangements*

	Q1 2017-18	Q2 2017-18	Q3 2017-18	Q4 2017-18	Q1 2018-19	Q2 2018-19	Q3 2018-19	Q4 2018-19
<b>Outturn</b>	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	
<b>Direction of Travel</b>	↑	→	→	→	→	→	→	

### Policy Commitment

5. Continuously review and adapt how we deliver our services to achieve financial efficiencies and improved performance.

Over recent years, officers have been working to deliver the savings required against each of the activities identified in the 'Bridging the Gap' Active and have made significant progress; approx. £800k is still required in order to meet the full £2.9m required and work is continuing to deliver these initiatives. Over the course of the past two years, however, there have been a number of further changes which have culminated in the need to identify additional savings/income generation initiatives to deliver at least, a further £1 million in order to balance the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

In November 2018, both the Cabinet and the Overview Scrutiny Committee considered a report which set out a number of proposals for the council, in order to address the additional budget gap identified. The proposals set out in the report amounted to a total of £1.3m in budget savings, more than the £1m identified. Members felt that it would be prudent to consider options that deliver more than the identified budget gap at this time, due to the number of potential 'unknowns' in the future of local government financing.