

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee 07 September 2023 Advance Questions**

### **Agenda Item 5 – Quarter 1 2023/24 performance report**

#### **Question 1**

KPI 5 - Please can you explain the reason for the sudden increase in the number of households in emergency accommodation in the last quarter and the cost and location of those placed out of the borough.

#### **Written Answer**

Please note that this measure is contextual and as such has no target score.

The published agenda papers included an error on the legend of the graph on page 31. The blue column on the graph titled 'average number of households in temporary emergency accommodation' should read 'total placements' rather than 'Average Placements'. This measure considers those in emergency accommodation placements as of the last night of the quarter (30 June 2023 in this case). To confirm, the average number of households in emergency accommodation at the end of Q1 was 47.

The report notes an increase in out of borough placements. However, this stems from a change in methodology for 'out-of-borough' placements. The previous methodology counted placements in a facility in our neighbouring borough of Crawley, due to its very close proximity, in the In-Borough figures.

Under the new methodology this is now reported separately with Out-Of-Borough placements now including Crawley placements in the total. Of the 28 out of borough placements, 17 of these were in Crawley.

The bulk of our out-of-borough placements have been in Crawley where applicants can hopefully continue to access their support networks and local schools, however we do have to place in other areas further afield when local options dry up. Nightly paid accommodation costs the Council between £45 and £120 per night (gross) depending on the size and needs of the household, whether in or outside the borough.

Each Local Authority in the Southeast are 'chasing' vacant emergency accommodation, so the Housing team have to use what is available at the time they need it. It is a priority for the housing team where they have to make out-of-area placements, to move households back into the borough or neighbouring borough as soon as possible. Our current schemes to purchase more emergency accommodation and temporary accommodation will mitigate out of borough placements to some extent.

## **Question 2**

(Annex 1 KPI 5) Given the increase in households in temporary accommodation outside the Borough, what is being done to secure more in Borough accommodation?

### **Written Answer**

As noted in the response to question 1, the reason behind the increase for this contextual indicator changed, stems from a changing in the wording from 'the number of households in emergency accommodation out of borough (not including Crawley)' to now being: 'the number of households in emergency accommodation out of borough'.

The bulk of our out of borough placements have been in Crawley where applicants can hopefully continue to access their support networks and local schools, however we do have to place in other areas further afield when local options dry up.

As a priority the housing team will try to move those households in out-of-area emergency accommodation placements back into the borough or neighbouring borough as soon as possible. Our current schemes to purchase more emergency accommodation and temporary accommodation will mitigate out of borough placements to some extent.

The Housing service has commenced securing additional council owned and operated emergency accommodation units in Q1, with some offers already completed and accepted on a number of local properties. These properties will allow the housing team to offer more homeless households temporary and emergency accommodation in the borough near support networks.

## **Question 3**

(Annex 1 KPI 10) Given the resourcing challenges in the cleansing team what is the plan to engage with LEQs when resources are restored to normal levels?

### **Written Answer**

The cleansing team was in recruitment phase during the Q1 reporting period which led to the inability to report on this KPI this quarter. The team is hoping to be back to full complement of staff soon and the LEQ surveys will recommence when able.

## **Question 4**

(Page 6 Annex 2) What has become of warm hubs as there is no budget allocation for them this year?

### **Written Answer**

Funding for operating warm hubs is not included in the Council's approved base budget. As for 2022/23, if the need arises, consideration will be given to how they are to be funded, including whether any Government funding is being made available to support the costs.

### Question 5

(Annex 2) Can an explanation be given for the slippage across so many projects especially regeneration projects?

### Written Answer

The answer to this question is attached as a separate document.

### Agenda Item 6 - Environmental Sustainability Strategy: annual Report

### Question 6

(Page 81 Public agenda pack) Please provide the data in figure 3 in table form.

### Written Answer

<b>Scope 1 &amp; 2 Carbon Emissions (tCO2e)</b>	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Scope 1 - vehicle fuel	1,258	1,136	972	1078
Scope 1 - buildings fuel	386	279	315	438
Scope 2 - electricity	393	300	288	297
Community Centre gas		95	95	104
Community Centre electricity		45	45	45

### Question 7

(Page 83 Public agenda pack) Figure 4. Please provide the data in this set of four figures in a table.

### Written Answer

<b>Operational Buildings Energy Use MWh</b>	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Town Hall Gas	618	559	590	414
Town Hall Electricity	509	385	360	407
Depot Gas	309	313	256	277
Depot Electricity	195	223	208	226

Harlequin Gas	1,123	617	848	1,551
Harlequin Electricity	347	268	314	331
Other Sites Gas	45	28	23	11
Other Sites Electricity	485	370	455	571
Community Centres Gas		520	520	568
Community Centres Electricity		232	232	232

### **Question 8**

(Page 117 Public agenda pack) External Reviews. Please can the external reviews set out in this Annex be shared before the meeting.

### **Written Answer**

These documents have been circulated separately to committee members, as they contain information not in the public domain.

### **Question 9**

(Page 83 public pack) Given that the Town Hall has reduced energy consumption, perhaps due to more people working from home, has the overall staff energy consumption been calculated including home energy when working from home?

### **Written Answer**

Overall staff energy consumption has not been calculated yet as working from home and commuting emissions are classified as Scope 3, for which the Council target is to reduce these as soon as possible after 2030. Despite this, the Sustainability team aim to develop a plan for collecting and analysing Scope 3 emissions this year so that a baseline can be developed and activities with the highest emissions can be prioritised.

In terms of energy consumption generally, there is an element of estimation due to missing data (mainly because of the collapse of the energy supplier) and estimated meter readings. For the Town Hall, it must also be recognised that the third floor of the Middle Block is currently vacant which will reduce overall energy consumption, but there is currently no way of quantifying the impact of this.

### **Question 10**

(Page 85 public pack) Great to hear about the positive impact on CO2 emissions of switching to HVO for refuse trucks. Could you provide an estimate of how much more HVO is going to cost than diesel?

### **Written Answer**

A business case is still being developed by the Transport team. As such, it is not possible to share detailed figures in advance of this as they do fluctuate. However, we would expect (for those vehicles using HVO) an uplift in fuel cost of between 25 and 40%.

### **Question 11**

Ten businesses have undertaken our low carbon action plan training resulting in business changes. Will this be rolled out again and if so, can local charities and community groups be offered this training?

### **Written Answer**

We have funding available via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to offer more training specifically for SMEs. We are currently reviewing what we offer as we want to make sure that any training we offer complements and does not duplicate or compete with other training available in the local area, for example that provided by Surrey County Council/the Low Carbon South East (LoCASE) programme. Any proposal to broaden the audience for the training offer to community groups/charities would be subject to securing agreement from the funding body (the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities).

It is also worth noting that SCC has just launched a new offer of a free energy assessment for community-owned buildings. Groups can email [sustainability@reigate-banstead.gov.uk](mailto:sustainability@reigate-banstead.gov.uk) and we'll link them up.

### **Question 12**

(Page 115 public pack) Why are there no actions in the Action for Future years?

### **Written Answer**

The actions reported on in the Annex are those that were set in the Environmental Sustainability Strategy in 2020. If no future action is recorded in the Annex, that is because none were set. However, many of the actions are 'ongoing' so do extend into future years.

The covering report (page 88) provides more information about the Strategy review process which will set actions for future years, including measurable actions for the short term, some less specific actions for the medium term and any necessary longer-term actions that may develop in the light of legislation or technological improvements.

### **Question 13**

(Page 112/114) Is it possible to share where the locations for tree planting are and how many trees are likely to be planted? What is now being done to find further locations since the tree officer is now in post?

### **Written Answer**

The Greenspaces Team plans to develop a greenspaces / tree strategy now that vacancies in that service have been filled which will provide more information about how and where new trees will be planted.

### **Question 14**

Marketfield Way Air quality measurement stopped in 2022. Can you explain this and what has been done to rectify this going forwards?

### **Written Answer**

Measurement stopped temporarily due to the development of the site however the monitoring equipment was re-installed at the start of August this year.

### **Question 15**

Has the survey of residents in 2021/22 that is mentioned here, been shared anywhere for members to read?

### **Written Answer**

A summary of the findings is available on our website here: [Environmental Sustainability Survey 2022 | Our approach to environmental sustainability | Reigate and Banstead \(reigate-banstead.gov.uk\)](https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/Environmental-Sustainability-Survey-2022-Our-approach-to-environmental-sustainability)

Note: the graphs accompanying the text are being added to this page over time. It is quite resource intensive to provide these in an accessible way so the work is being phased.