

Committee(s)	Dated:
Port Health and Environmental Services – For information	22 September 2020
Subject: Markets and Consumer Protection Business Plan 2020/2021: Progress Report (Period 1)	Public
Report of: The Director of Markets and Consumer Protection	For Information
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Summary

This report provides an update on progress made by the Port Health & Public Protection Division (PH&PP) during Period 1 (April-July) of 2020/21 against the Department of Markets and Consumer Protection's (M&CP) High-Level Business Plan 2020/21. The High-Level Plan was approved by your Committee in January 2020.

As previously reported, a new corporate performance management process is currently in development and work is taking place on reviewing the content and format of the supporting detail that will sit beneath high-level business plans. This will be a key element in the move towards business planning becoming a joined-up service planning process that links finance/budgets directly to Corporate Plan outcomes.

During this transitional period for the business planning and reporting process, the format of this report remains the same as in recent years. However, it is acknowledged that, as a result of the transitional arrangements, there is some discontinuity in the numbering of objectives between the High-Level Business Plan and Appendix B to this report.

This report includes updates on progress made against the top line objectives outlined in the Departmental High-Level Business Plan as well as key operational performance indicators, financial information and more detailed statistics and commentary on enforcement activity, achievements and other points that may be of interest to your Committee.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of this report and its appendices.

Main Report

Background

1. The Department of Markets and Consumer Protection's (M&CP) High-Level Business Plan 2020/21 sets out several top level service delivery objectives which the department will work towards during the coming years. In addition, each PH&PP service area measures its performance against local, team-level, operational objectives and performance indicators (PIs).

Current Position

2. To ensure that your Committee is kept informed of progress against the current High-Level Business Plan and local performance measures, progress against PIs (Appendix A) and key improvement objectives (Appendix B) is reported on a periodic (four-monthly) basis, along with a financial summary (Appendix D). This approach allows Members to ask questions and have a timely input to areas of particular importance to them. Members are also encouraged to ask the Director for information throughout the year.
3. Progress against the departmental and team business plans is regularly discussed by Senior Management Groups to ensure any issues are resolved at an early stage.
4. In order to provide further information on the work carried out by PH&PP, each periodic report includes a summary of the enforcement activity and achievements of each team (Appendix C).
5. The COVID-19 outbreak has affected the work of all service areas but teams have adapted quickly to the new and unprecedented demands placed on them. Officers have efficiently employed alternative and innovative ways of working to enable the continued provision of high-quality reactive and proactive services to their customers and other stakeholders.
6. While some activities, such as inspections and visits, have had to be postponed as a result of the pandemic, officers' workloads have increased significantly with other COVID-19 related tasks. These have included sharing expertise and skills to support businesses, other local authorities and government bodies in dealing with the impact of the pandemic.
7. Some examples of work undertaken during Period One are:
 - Senior Animal Health Inspectors worked with Defra and NGO's to produce updated COVID-19 guidance for animal related businesses during the lockdown period, including how to operate in a safe way. They also provided support and guidance to local authority officers across England.
 - After a quiet April, activity at the HARC slowly increased, with June back to normal trade. The workload has been exacerbated by the revised schedules of the airlines and more late flights.
 - Port Health Food Safety Inspections were suspended during the outbreak. The inspections which were completed were performed under specific risk assessment and were emergency cases approved by a senior manager.

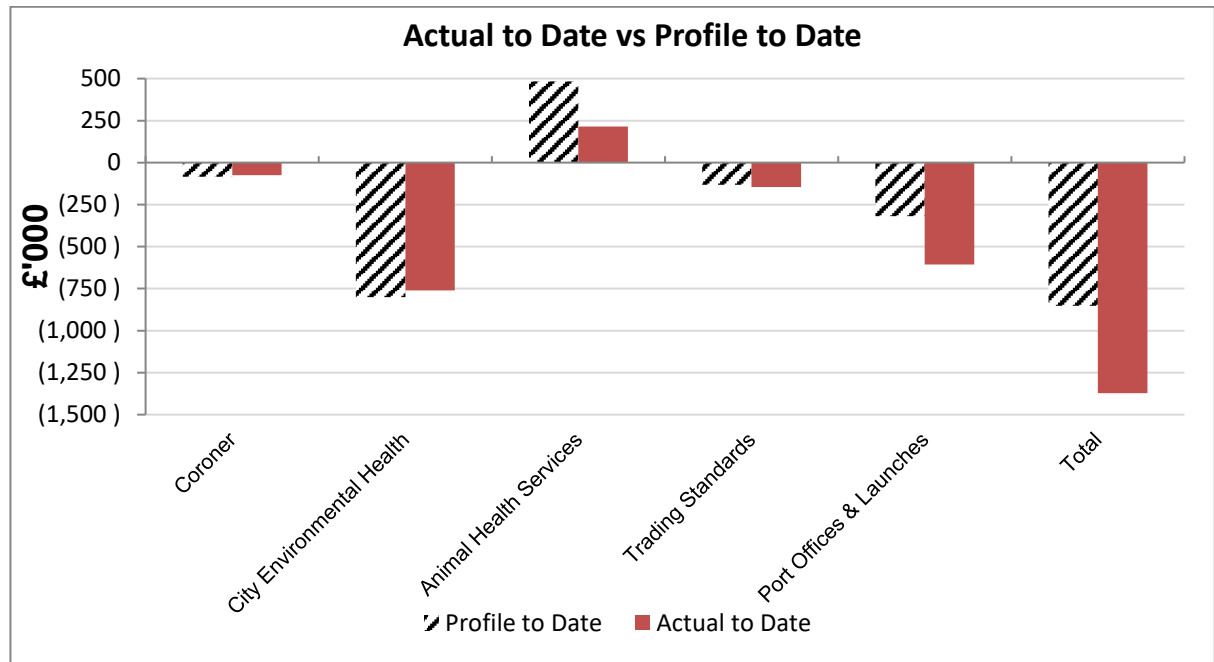
- The Commercial Team has led and contributed to the co-ordination of the London enforcement response to COVID-19 where health & safety legislation has been the vehicle for such work.
- The Commercial Team has focussed on providing advice and guidance to City businesses and, most recently, since many food and retail businesses were allowed to re-open in early July, advice on undertaking and implementing COVID-Secure Risk Assessments and controls.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, Trading Standards Officers have dealt with an increased number of consumer complaints about financial fraud. Although the team has been unable to stage any field deployments to disrupt rogue traders, illegal and fraudulent websites have been “taken down”.
- The Pollution Team received funding from the TfL Lane Rental Board for a Streetworks and Liaison Officer for two years. This will further enhance the controls on TfL street works in the City.
- The Air Quality Team delivered an online best practice webinar for city businesses as part of the CityAir business engagement programme.
- The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in no illegal trading on or near City Bridges from April to July.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

8. The monitoring of PIs and key improvement objectives across the Division links to the achievement of the aims and outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan 2018-23.

Financial Implications

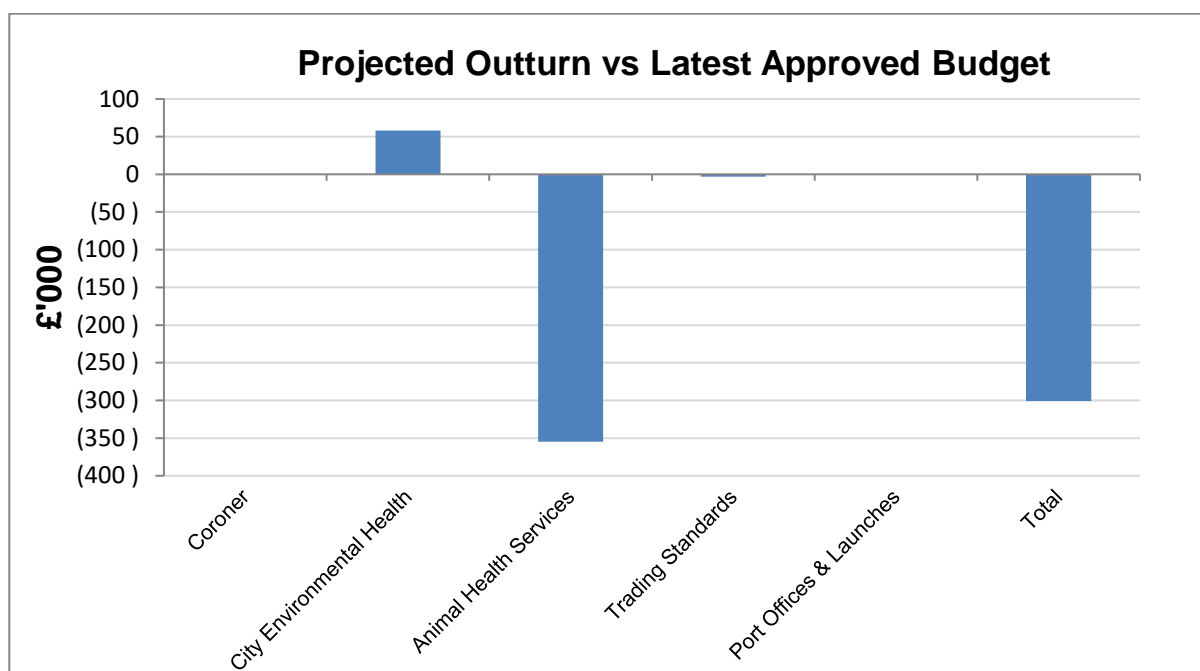
9. The end of July 2020 monitoring position for M&CP services covered by the Port Health & Environmental Services Committee is provided at Appendix D. This shows a net overspend to date for PH&PP of £520k (61%) against the overall local risk budget to date of £853k for 2020/21.



Notes:

1. Graph shows the actual local risk net position against the profiled budget to date for each Division.
2. A position above the baseline shows overall net income.
3. A position below the baseline shows overall net expenditure.
4. MCP total actual to date net exp of £1.373m is £520k over the profiled budget to date of £853k.

10. Overall, the Director is currently forecasting a year end overspend position of £301k (13.9%) for the PH&PP City Fund services.



Notes:

1. Zero is the baseline latest approved budget for each Division of Service.
 2. Graph shows projected outturn position against the latest approved budget.
 3. A variance above the baseline is favourable i.e. either additional income or reduced expenditure.
 4. A variance below the baseline is unfavourable i.e. additional expenditure or reduced income.
 5. Overall the Department is forecasting an overspend of £301k at year end.
11. The reasons for the significant budget variations are detailed in Appendix D, which sets out a detailed financial analysis of each PH&PP service relating to this Committee.
12. The worse than budget position at the end of July 2020 is mainly due to reduced income at HARC and the Ports as a result of COVID-19, together with additional staffing costs for Brexit preparations at the Ports. These overspends are partly offset by reduced use of casual staff and overtime at the HARC, and delays in filling vacancies across the department, together with reduced sampling costs at the Ports as a result of the temporary decrease in physical checks being carried out.
13. The Director anticipates this current worse than budget position will continue to year end, due mainly to the reduction in income at HARC. Whilst the monthly income has now returned to target levels, the loss incurred in Q1 is not expected to be recovered by year end. Although currently overspending, the Ports are expected to return to a break-even position by year end mainly through use of newly awarded grant funding for Brexit preparations (which will partly offset the related additional staffing costs) together with a transfer from the Products of Animal Origin Reserve to meet any remaining shortfall. The overall overspend will also be offset by reduced staffing costs due to vacancies.

Consultees

14. The Town Clerk and the Chamberlain have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Progress against operational performance indicators, Period 1 2020-21
- Appendix B – Progress against key improvement objectives, Period 1 2020-21
- Appendix C – Enforcement activity, Period 1 2020-21
- Appendix D – Financial information, Period 1 2020-21

Background Papers

Revenue and Capital Budgets and High-Level Summary Business Plans 2020/21
(PH&ES Committee, 14 January 2020)

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