

Council issues its own report card

by Noa Hoffman Local Democracy Reporter

More than 40 per cent of reviewed services and activities in the Capital run by The City of Edinburgh Council underperformed in 2019/2020, according to a report just published.

The council's annual performance review for the period April 2019 to March 2020 measures 84 services and activities against set targets and compares year-on-year progress and decline.

In the past year 41 per cent of reviewed council activities failed to meet set targets.

Underperforming areas include social care, recycling rates, family and household support and homelessness services.

A majority of council services recorded year-on-year improvements, with 49 service activities achieving stronger results than in 2018/2019.

However, in 27 areas performance on last year has declined.

In particular, the council's homelessness service only managed to hit two of its seven performance targets.

The average number of days the council takes to manage a homelessness case now exceeds one year – well over the local authority's target of 340 days.

As at late March this year, bed & breakfast accommodation was still being used by the council to temporarily accommodate homeless people, despite the local authority having said it would stop using this “unsuitable” form of housing.

Adult social care services also underperformed this past year, with five out of nine areas failing to hit their targets.

The news comes just after the council approved more than £8 million of cuts to health and social care services last month.

In late March 2020 the average waiting time for a care management assessment was 43 days, up from 37 last year.

More than 500 people in Edinburgh are waiting for social care assistance, up from 440 last year.

Only 80.4 per cent of people suffering from substance misuse received treatment in 2019/2020 within the time limits set, a five per cent decline on last year and 10 per cent under the council’s yearly target.

One of the most significantly underperforming areas is the council’s management of antisocial behaviour.

Despite aiming to close almost three quarters of antisocial behaviour enquiries within 30 calendar days, the council only managed to achieve this in just over half of the cases, a drop of 6% on last year.

One area where the report says the council has been consistently performing well is in schools and education.

Targets were met or exceeded in areas including the percentage of all leavers achieving literacy and numeracy level five, and the percentage of all leavers from deprived areas achieving five or more awards at SCQF level five or higher.

However, the council failed to meet its school attendance targets, with eight per cent of primary pupils, and 15 per

cent of secondary pupils recording low attendance rates.

Commenting on the council's performance this past year, Liberal Democrat councillor Kevin Lang said: "Despite nauseating levels of self-congratulation from the SNP-Labour administration, the latest figures show the council is failing in a whole range of areas.

"Recycling rates are going down and satisfaction with roads and pavements has been in decline. The list goes on and on.

"Rather than trying to pat themselves on the back, the administration should be apologising to residents in Edinburgh for such a poor performance in delivering basic council services."

Council Leader Adam McVey said: "We've made a huge amount of progress over the last 12 months and the results of many of the changes we've introduced are clear to see.

"Thousands of new homes are being built, our road condition is getting better and educational attainment across our communities is improving. We've seen another significant drop in waste complaints and carbon emissions showing we can continue to improve our basic services while working towards our long term ambitions for Edinburgh.

"These figures show we're recording better performance in many areas we know are important to residents.

"We'll continue to work hard for our citizens and prioritise the issues that matter to them. We face a number of challenges which weren't foreseen and our plans on how the city adapts to Covid will help us sustain progress, prioritise investment to drive down carbon emissions further and support those residents most in need."

You can read the report [here](#), but it will be considered the full council at their virtual [meeting](#) on 25 August 2020.

Noa Hoffman is The Local Democracy Reporter covering Edinburgh. The Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS) is a public service news agency : funded by the BBC, provided by the local news sector, and used by qualifying partners. Local Democracy Reporters cover top-tier local authorities and other public service organisations.