
Meeting: Executive
Date: 12 July 2011
Subject: Quarter 4 Performance Report
Report of: Cllr Maurice Jones, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources
Summary: To report on Quarter 4 performance and, therefore, the 2010/11 outturn position for Central Bedfordshire Council's key performance indicator set.

Advising Officer: Richard Carr, Chief Executive
Contact Officer: Ian Porter, Assistant Director, Strategy and Performance
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Executive
Key Decision No
**Reason for urgency/
exemption from call-in
(if appropriate)** N/A

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The quarterly performance report underpins the delivery of all Council priorities.

Financial:

None directly but there are a number of performance indicators within the corporate suite that have a strong financial link, including:

- Council Tax collected;
- amount of debt outstanding;
- invoices paid within 30 days; and
- time taken to process benefits and change events.

Legal:

None

Risk Management:

Areas of ongoing underperformance are a risk to both service delivery and the reputation of the Council.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

The corporate performance suite includes indicators on sickness absence within the Council and the number of Carlisle Management Solutions agency staff.

Equalities/Human Rights:

This report highlights performance against performance indicators which seek to measure how the Council and its services impact across all communities within Central Bedfordshire, so that specific areas of underperformance can be highlighted for further analysis/drilling down as necessary.

Community Safety:

The corporate performance suite includes an indicator on Serious Acquisitive Crime.

Sustainability:

No direct implications.

Summary of Overview and Scrutiny Comments:

- In the first instance, the corporate performance report is presented directly to the Executive.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **that the Executive notes and considers this report; and**
2. **that the Executive considers any issues from this report that could be investigated further, including any referrals to Overview & Scrutiny.**

Reason for Recommendations: To ensure a rigorous approach to performance management across Central Bedfordshire Council.

Introduction

1. The framework for performance management supports the delivery of the Council's priorities.
2. Directorate summaries for Quarter 4 are set out below.
3. The following provides an overview of the performance position for Quarter 4 and the 2010/11 outturn position.

Overview

4. The provisional outturn results for 2010/11 are:
 - 10 indicators are Green;
 - 4 indicators are rated as Amber; and
 - 10 indicators are Red.

Supporting people to live independently

5. The action previously taken to ensure the recording of only those receiving 'regular support to live independently' is continuing to show significant improvements in the percentage of clients receiving self directed support and the percentage of carers supported. There has been an increase of over 300 people in receipt of a personal budget since December 2010.

Temporary accommodation

6. There has been an increase in demand for temporary accommodation during quarter 4 from households with dependants or where there is a pregnancy, up from 26 households in quarter 3 to 32 in quarter 4.

Housing stock

7. The Council has maintained its high performance regarding the percentage of its housing stock that meets the decent homes standard, with 100% being classed as decent at the close of the year.

Protecting children

8. The Council's performance in caring for and protecting children remains high, with 95.7% of all initial assessments being carried out within 7 working days of referral.

Reducing crime

9. The target to reduce the number of most serious acquisitive crimes, (which includes robbery, domestic burglary and vehicle crime), has been achieved.

Planning

10. The percentage of planning applicants satisfied with the service received from the planning department was up from 81% in 2009/10 to 93% in 2010/11.

Invoices paid within 30 days

11. There was a marked improvement during February and March 2011 in the percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days, building on the improvement already achieved in quarter 3. This improvement has resulted from careful management and sustained education of staff to the importance of processing invoices quickly. Further improvements are anticipated as the enforcement of the 'No PO, No Pay' rule brought into force in March 2010 will help reinforce this message.

Debt outstanding

12. The level of debt outstanding has reduced from £4.6 million in quarter 3 to less than £2.9 million in quarter 4: a significant achievement in the current economic climate. This has been achieved through sustained management action, which will be further enhanced when the fully automated debt reminder letter issuing system has been implemented at the end of June 2011.

Sickness absence

13. In the context of the challenges currently facing the Council, sickness absence for 2010/11 was better than in the previous year. It is important to note that in quarter 4, half of the sickness absence days lost, were accounted for by staff on long term sick leave. This is being managed through the Council's sickness absence policy.

Collecting council tax

14. The percentage of council tax collected during 2010/11 increased compared to 2009/10, which is a significant achievement in the current economic climate. The overall Council Tax debt has been reduced by £325,000 in 2010/11.

Customer contact centre

15. The Council's Customer Service Contact Centre has achieved its target of resolving 80% of calls at first point of contact, with a figure of 89.23% for the year.

Processing claims

16. There has been a steady improvement in the number of days taken to assess claims and changes in circumstance during the year.

DIRECTORATE SUMMARIES

Adult Social Care, Health & Housing

17. The Council continues to enhance its support to vulnerable adults through the provision of decent housing, temporary accommodation, advice to carers and greater uptake of personalised budgets.
18. The planned review of the definition of community based services has been completed, with only those receiving regular support being recorded and, as previously reported, has had a positive impact on the percentage of clients receiving self directed support (NI 130) and Carers' Assessments (NI 135). As anticipated, this has resulted in the target for the number of people being supported by the Council to live independently (NI 136) not being achieved, but provides a more accurate picture of the number of people receiving support to live independently.
19. Whilst at present only provisional data is available, both the targets for NI 130 and 135 have been met. There continues to be an increase in the number of people receiving a personal budget (an increase of over 300 since December 2010), which has helped achieve the national target and a review of the decline in carers' assessment identified a recording issue, which has since been rectified, resulting in the correct reporting of performance.

20. The performance in the number of SOVA cases completed within 35 days has decreased, but as reported previously, the completion of a number of complex SOVA investigations continues to have an effect on this measure. Long standing investigations continue to be reviewed on a regular basis, to ensure that the necessary actions are being taken and, where appropriate, cases are closed.
21. There has been some improvement from last quarter in the percentage of reviews being undertaken, performance is still below target. During the year, the resources available within the Review Team were redirected to other parts of the service, including developing support plans for service users and activity relating to serious concern cases, which has had an adverse affect on performance. Following the ASC Workforce Review, the reviewing capacity within the community teams will be strengthened, which will result in improvements in performance.
22. Performance in the number of households in temporary accommodation has been maintained due to the continuing successful homelessness prevention; however, there has been an increase in the number of households with children. There is an increasing demand on the Housing Options service as the number of properties available continues to decrease, coupled with tough economic conditions, more households have been inevitably forced into a situation of homelessness.

Children's Services

23. The Council's performance in protecting vulnerable children and young people is good. Key indicators measuring assessment timeliness, stability and review have remained on target to year end 2011. Despite additional numbers of social workers, increased pressures on Children's Social Care frontline social work teams have impacted on our ability to achieve our target for the ratio of referrals to initial assessments (NI68). 30% more initial assessments have been completed this year, totalling 1574. The planned replacement of the Integrated Children's System client database, with improved recording practices should help to resolve these issues in future.
24. Regular monitoring enables Children's Services to ensure that current performance reflects consistent application of thresholds for access to services and assessment for children in need and those in need of protection. This demonstrates continuing availability of the service for those most vulnerable, rather than solely pursuing targets.
25. During the year 11 schools have been judged to be outstanding, bringing the total number of Outstanding inspections to 63 - an increase of seven from last year. Schools judged outstanding are not now routinely inspected; instead, Ofsted carries out an interim assessment based on a desk top analysis.
26. Mill Vale Middle School is in an Ofsted "Notice to Improve" category. The latest monitoring data shows some improvement in teaching and learning.

27. Ashton Middle School was given a Notice to Improve on 9th February 2011. In consultation with the Church of England Diocese, a Local Authority Statement of Action and a school action plan have been drawn up identifying support from an Outstanding Church of England school and an additional community school.

Sustainable Communities

28. Across the board, Sustainable Communities continue to deliver high performance across a range of indicators. The Economic Growth indicators continue to show the impact of the economic downturn and show that Central Bedfordshire appeared to fair well and maintain above average performance in comparison to our neighbouring authorities. Success areas from the services include the launch of the ESF Prospectus offering a £1.9 million programme to support access to work, training and skills development and the adoption of the Dunstable Master Plan by Executive during March.
29. Highways and Transport indicators continue to perform well across the service. The winter maintenance plan was completed without any stock problems and 100% of planned gritting routes were made despite the winter weather experienced and over £750k has been secured from the DfT for winter maintenance repairs to the road network.
30. Planning also continues to perform well across the service with high levels of customer satisfaction being reported.
31. Performance in Public Protection, Community Safety, Waste and Leisure continue to show solid performance in each area. Areas of success from the service include work undertaken by the Financial Investigation Unit on behalf of the Environment Agency for a confiscation case.

Customer & Shared Services

32. Council tax collection is a vital indicator for the Council and needs to be closely monitored given the likely impact of the challenging economic environment on many of our local residents. The outturn for 2010/11 of 97.60% is a 0.4% improvement on 2009/10 which is significant given the back logs of billing amendments that needed to be dealt with and demonstrates, how good management decisions and actions are delivering improvement.
33. The Council's Customer Service Contact Centre had a target of resolving 80% of calls at first point of contact. The figures have been refreshed from those originally supplied, as analysis has revealed that the original figures included a significant number of switchboard type calls where the caller was merely asking to be transferred to a named individual within the council (hence no possibility of first point resolution). The Customer Contact Centre received just over 575,000 calls in 2010/11, of these 48% came through on the 'General Enquiries' line. Analysis of these 'General Enquiry' line calls revealed that 22% of these calls were where the caller was merely asking to be directed to a named member of staff. The refreshed figures show that 89.23% of calls were resolved at the first point of contact, demonstrating good performance by the Customer Contact Centre.

32. There has been a steady improvement during the year in the number of days taken to assess claims and changes in circumstance from 54 days in the first two quarters of the year to 26 days at the end of Quarter 4.

Corporate

33. Sickness absence across CBC has seen a decrease in Q4 (at 2.42 days per employee). This remains slightly lower than the same period last year (2.44 days per employee). This indicator is heavily influenced by long term absences.
34. Throughout the performance year, much attention was paid to the performance of this indicator and management action was focussed on reducing the levels of absence across the Council. The year to date sickness absence level was 9.07 days which was a slight decrease on the 2009/10 figure of 9.9 days.
35. Carlisle Managed Solutions provides temporary agency staff to the Council. This is being carefully monitored to understand where we may be able to reduce the requirements for this type of staff, given that they are generally more expensive than permanently employed staff. It is worth noting however, that the largest group of agency workers in the Council continue to be care workers, who fulfil a vital role in covering sickness absence in this service.
36. Undisputed invoices paid within 30 days (86.73%), has seen slightly improved performance against Quarters 2 - 3 but remains below the 90% target set for 2010/11. However, performance is up compared to 2009/10 (82.60%), and a concerted and proactive effort to clear these invoices is being pursued. The enforcement of 'No PO, No pay' is expected to see an increase in this performance for 2011/12.
37. We are continuing to monitor the levels of debt outstanding. The Council will be seeking to re-instate the issue of County Court Judgements on those accounts applicable and will continue to identify best practise in the management of outstanding debts.

Conclusion and Next Steps

40. That the Executive notes and considers this report.
41. That the Executive considers any issues from this report that could be investigated further including any referrals to Overview & Scrutiny.

Appendices:

None

Background Papers: (open to public inspection) - None

Location of papers: Priory House