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**Meeting:** Customer and Central Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 25 July 2011  
**Subject:** Quarter 4 Performance Report  
**Report of:** Cllr Maurice Jones, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources  
**Summary:** The report highlights the Quarter 4 performance for Customer & Shared Services Directorate and Corporate Health Indicators for the Council.

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**Advising Officer:** Richard Carr, Chief Executive  
**Contact Officer:** Ian Porter, Assistant Director, Strategy and Performance  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Council

#### **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:**

None

**Sustainability:**

No direct implications.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1. that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the contents of the report, considering the Council's performance position and any associated actions that need to be take**

The following provides a brief summary highlighting key performance for Quarter 4. The tables attached as Appendix A provide the details for each indicator.

**Customer & Shared Services**

1. 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. The overall Council Tax debt has been reduced by £325,000 in 2010/11.
2. 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.

3. 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 Health**

4. 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). 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.

### **Conclusion and Next Steps**

9. The Committee considers any issue from this report that could form part of their work programme

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A – Customer & Shared Services and Corporate Health Quarter 4 indicators

**Background Papers:** (open to public inspection) - None

**Location of papers:** Priory House