
Meeting: Executive
Date: 10 January 2012
Subject: Quarter 2 Performance Report
Report of: Cllr Maurice Jones, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources
Summary: To report on Quarter 2 2011/12 performance for Central Bedfordshire Council's key performance indicator set.

Advising Officer: Richard Carr, Chief Executive.
Contact Officer: Elaine Malarky, Head of Programme 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:

1. None directly but there are a number of performance indicators within the corporate suite that have a strong financial link, including:
 - i. Council Tax collected;
 - ii. Amount of debt outstanding;
 - iii. Invoices paid within 30 days; and
 - iv. Time taken to process benefits and change events.

Legal:

2. None.

Risk Management:

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

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

4. The corporate performance suite includes indicators on sickness absence within the Council and the number of agency staff used.

Equalities/Human Rights:

5. This report highlights performance against a range of indicators which seek to measure how the Council and its services impact across all communities in Central Bedfordshire, so that specific areas of underperformance can be highlighted for further analysis.
6. As such it does not include detailed performance information relating to the Council's stated intention to tackle inequalities and deliver services so that people whose circumstances make them vulnerable are not disadvantaged. The interrogation of performance data across vulnerable groups is a legal requirement and is an integral part of the Council's equalities and performance culture which seeks to ensure that, through a programme of ongoing impact assessments, underlying patterns and trends for different sections of the community identify areas where further action is required to improve outcomes for vulnerable groups.

Community Safety:

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

Sustainability:

8. Included in the indicator set are a broad range of indicators relating to sustainability including those covering employment, benefits claimants, affordable housing and waste.

Procurement:

9. Not applicable.

Overview and Scrutiny:

10. This report will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny committees during the January / February cycle of meetings.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Executive is asked to:

1. **note the strong overall performance made against this set of indicators; and**
2. **recommend Officers to further investigate and resolve underperforming indicators.**

<i>Reason for Recommendations:</i>	To ensure a rigorous approach to performance management across Central Bedfordshire Council
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Executive Summary

11. Management of the corporate indicators supports the delivery of Council priorities. An overview of performance in Quarter 2 2011/12 and Directors' summaries are set out below supported in Appendix A by the detailed performance data.
12. Overall performance against the corporate indicators demonstrates that the Council's services continue to be supported by strong management decisions and appropriate actions are being taken to remedy challenging performance issues.

Appendix A – Overview

13. Appendix A has a cover sheet providing an overview of performance for each of the indicators in the corporate set. Since Quarter 1, this set has been updated and there have been amendments to some indicator definitions. The most noticeable change relates to Sustainable Communities where three indicators relating to road safety and satisfaction with the Planning Services have been removed from this quarterly report. Two new indicators have been added, one covering the creation of affordable homes and the other monitoring employment levels.
14. In Quarter 2, it has been possible to RAG score 23 of the 30 corporate indicators. The remainder have not been scored, either because no target has been set or the nature of the indicator means it is not suitable to score in this way. Wherever possible the cover sheet also shows the direction of travel for the indicator. Of the 23 indicators RAG scored, twelve (52%) are Green, six (26%) are Amber and five (22%) are Red. This is a slight change from Quarter 1, mainly due to the fact that four more indicators are being RAG scored this Quarter. Data for Quarter 1 for comparison showed that there were eleven (58%) Green, five (26%) Amber and three (16%) Red.
14. Looking first at the Green indicators. The Council continues to perform well across a wide range of services including:
 - i. The provision of temporary accommodation.
 - ii. The quality of the Council's housing stock.
 - iii. The percentage of referrals of children in need that led to initial assessments.
 - iv. Supporting a reduction in serious acquisitive crime.
 - v. Length of road resurfaced.
 - vi. Maintaining recycling rates and controlling the level of waste going to landfill.
 - vii. Paying undisputed invoices within 30 days.
 - viii. Resolving customer enquiries at the first point of contact.
 - ix.
15. There has been a continued fall in the number of households living in temporary accommodation, down from 35 in Quarter 1 to 33 in Quarter 2. Its second successive fall despite the difficult economic position.

16. The proportion of referrals of children in need leading to initial assessments increased from 60.2 to 67% which is good progress. Given there has been a 30% increase in assessments compared to last year this provides a useful measure of the appropriateness of the referrals coming into Children's Social Care.
17. There was a reduction of 90 serious acquisitive crimes in Quarter 2 compared to the same quarter in 2010/11, including a reduction of 79 burglaries. The latest Resident's Survey confirms that community safety continues to be of high importance in the public's assessment of whether or not they are satisfied with their local area so this improvement is particularly pleasing.
18. The percentage of undisputed invoices paid by the Council within 30 days continues to meet the 90% target and is up 5.75% compared to Quarter 2 in 2010/11.
19. The level of first point resolution by the Customer Service Contact Centre at 88.85% during this quarter is consistent with Quarter 1 and is well ahead of the annual target of 80%.
20. Of the six indicators which are Amber, three are showing declining performance and three improving. Of the three indicators scored as Amber and improving two are in Corporate Services and one in Sustainable Communities:
 - The percentage of Council Tax due collected at 56.67% at the end of Quarter 2 is slightly up on last year. This is marginally (0.23%) behind target.
 - The rate of staff sickness absence has improved since last quarter down from 2.33 days lost per employee to 2.2 days. Ongoing management action has resulted in this improved direction of travel towards the 2 day target.
 - By the close of Quarter 2, 59 affordable homes (20%) had been completed. Anticipated completions in the second half of the year still indicate that the year end target of 300 will be met.

21. Of the three indicators scored as Amber and showing declining performance, one is within Social Care, Health and Housing and two are in Children's Services:
- The slight dip in performance from 72.8% to 72.2% in terms of Social Care clients receiving a review, relates to a combination of staffing capacity, restructuring and an increase in SOVA cases. This is being addressed through management action and re-profiling of monthly targets.
 - The percentage of initial assessments in Children's Services undertaken within ten working days of referral has fallen slightly this quarter to 81.3% but is good compared to statistical neighbours and it is anticipated that the target of 85% will be achieved by year end. Sometimes there is a delay to ensure quality of assessment.
 - Performance in respect of the indicator measuring 'the percentage of children looked after at the 31 March with three or more placements during the year' is off track. This indicates that the end of year target may be missed. However, performance is good when compared to the outturn data for statistical neighbours and if a placement is required to meet the child's needs this will be made for quality reasons.
22. Of the five indicators scored as Red three are showing improving performance and two are deteriorating. Looking first at the three that are improving, two are within Social Care, Health and Housing and one is in Corporate Services:
- There has been an increase in the percentage clients receiving self directed support in this quarter. The 35.3% currently benefiting from this arrangement is below where we need to be, partly due to staffing capacity which should be resolved by mid November.
 - Improvement in the percentage of SOVA investigations completed within 35 days continues and at the close of Quarter 2, performance was at 69%, which is 10% up on the end of 2010/11 position.
 - Performance in relation to the time taken to process housing and council tax benefits has improved significantly compared to 2010/11. However there has been a temporary deterioration this quarter as work continues to clear the backlog of claims and the calculation is affected by the measurement of those older claims. It is still anticipated that processing times will be brought into line with monthly targets by the end of the year.

23. Of the two indicators scored as Red with declining performance, one is in Social Care Health and Housing and the other is in Children's Services:
- Whilst performance in respect of the percentage of carers receiving a needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service or advice, is up 11.5% on the same quarter in 2010/11, it is down by 1% when compared to Quarter 1 2011/12. Management action aimed at increasing reviewing activity has been agreed and is anticipated that performance will improve.
 - The target of 83% achievement at Level 4 in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2 has been missed with an outturn of 70% a fall of three percent compared to 2010. This now places performance in Central Bedfordshire below that of its statistical neighbours and the national average. The reasons for the drop in standards vary from school to school. Actions to improve performance in 2012 are in progress: a conference for middle schools focused on improvement was hosted by the Council recently; and targeted support for individual schools is ongoing.

DIRECTORS SUMMARIES

Social Care, Health & Housing

24. Performance in relation to Adult Social Care continues to be challenging. The planned changes to the skill mix of the workforce, as previously mentioned, continues to have impacted on the performance of self-directed support (SCHH 2), carers' assessments (SCHH 3) and reviews (SCHH 6), as recruitment to the support planner posts has been slower than anticipated. The role of the support planner is vital in achieving the challenging target of 60% for self-directed support, as existing customers need to be converted from traditional packages to self-directed support through the review process. Management action has been agreed to re-profile the target for teams and individuals and proactively manage the performance and productivity of staff. This action should also deliver an improvement in the review and carers' assessments measures.
25. Whilst still below the target, the direction of travel for the safeguarding measure still continues to be positive. As previously reported, long standing cases which usually involve the Police and other partners are regularly monitored to ensure that the individual is safeguarded and when appropriate the case is closed.
26. Performance in Housing continues to be strong with the number of households in temporary accommodation continuing to fall, despite the current pressures on the service. The works to the small number of non-decent homes, identified through the recent Stock Condition Survey has been scheduled and will be completed in this financial year.

Children's Services

27. The Council's performance in protecting vulnerable children and young people has remained good this quarter. Key indicators measuring social care assessment, timeliness and review remain on target to year end 2012. The demand on frontline teams continues to increase with high numbers of children subject to child protection plans. This multi-agency work is resource intensive but regular monitoring ensures that access to services and assessments for children in need and those in need of protection, is maintained, rather than solely pursuing targets.
28. Ofsted inspections show that 79% of schools are either good or outstanding. During this quarter there were two inspections. One school improved from satisfactory to become good and the second declined from good to satisfactory, so there is no net change from Quarter 1. More recent published inspections will be reported in the Quarter in which they took place i.e. next quarter.
29. Key Stage 2 standards have fallen this year and targets have not been met. Actions to improve performance for 2012 have included a conference for middle schools to focus on good practice and improvement in raising achievement, and a programme of support targeted at those pupils at risk of not achieving Level 4 in English and / or mathematics is ongoing in selected schools.
30. Ashton Middle School was given a Notice to Improve on the 9 February 2011. The school received a monitoring visit on the 23 September 2011 and was judged to be making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising pupils' achievement.

Sustainable Communities

31. Central Bedfordshire continues to perform above regional and national averages for economic growth, although this is against a backdrop of real world economic challenges that are affecting the whole country. The service continues to perform well in its response to these challenges. The first CBC Economic Development Plan was agreed by Executive in November. The Plan seeks to affirm the Council's commitment to support sustainable economic growth in Central Bedfordshire and will be presented to full Council on the 24 November as part of the Council Policy Framework.
32. Planning continues to perform well throughout all service areas and the October Executive resolved to support the preparation of the Development Strategy, Gypsy and Traveller Plan and Site Allocations Plan / Neighbourhood Plans.
33. The Council continues to deliver value for money on its highways services as recently reported to the November Executive by the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The target for the length of road resurfaced is forecast to be achieved by the end of Quarter 3.

34. Quarter 2 has seen significant reductions in domestic burglaries and theft of motor vehicles, a slight reduction in robberies but an increase in theft from motor vehicles. The Community Safety Partnership is working closely with a number of key partners to tackle the increase in theft from motor vehicles.
35. Final confirmation has now been received that we have increased recycling to over 51% in 2010/11 through continued improvement of the service, such as offering reuse and plasterboard recycling at HWRCs and continued promotion of waste minimisation and recycling including targeted work in areas where there has historically been low levels of recycling.

Corporate Services - Resources

36. Performance in respect of the amount of Council Tax due collected continues to remain higher than the same point in 2010/11. The interventions used to chase outstanding payments, including reminder letters and the issuing of summonses has ensured that the percentage of Council Tax collected remains very close to target. By the close of Quarter 2, 56.87 per cent had been collected. This is slightly up on last year, but still sees the Council 0.23% behind target, hence the amber rating. The 0.23% equates to £326K. The Council will continue to chase non payment and remains confident that it will achieve its end of year target of 98%.
37. The time taken to process Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, new claims and change events, continues to show significant improvement when compared to the same period in 2010/11, with a processing time of 35.43 days this quarter compared to the 54 days in Quarter 2, 2010/11. The level of council Tax change requests is now the lowest since the Council came into being in April 2009. As anticipated clearing the backlog of claims and amendments to existing benefits has resulted in an increase in the number of older claims being processed which has seen overall processing times deteriorate this quarter. This is only a temporary situation as the backlog will be cleared by the end of October. From then processing times will significantly reduced and will be brought into line with monthly targets by the year end. However, achieving an average rate of 25 days for the entire year remains a challenging target due to the impact of dealing with the backlog.
38. The Council continues to meet its target of paying 90% of all its undisputed invoices within 30 days with performance up 5.75% this quarter compared to Quarter 2 in 2010/11.
39. The overall amount of debt (over 61 days old) owed to the Council increased by £1.46M during quarter 2 to £5.05M. Whilst there was a fall in the amount of debt outstanding (61 to 90 days) down from £0.732M to £0.292M, the majority of the increase was for debt owed for between 91 days and a year. In this category debt outstanding has increased by £1.697M to £3.612M this quarter, of this £1.9M relates to two agreements with other public sector organisations that are in the process of being resolved. The supporting data in Appendix A (CH4) also shows that £0.99M of this debt is secured against house sales and therefore is not immediately recoverable.

Corporate Services - People and Organisation

40. The Council continues to carefully manage the level of agency staff that it uses, ensuring that ongoing use is regularly monitored. As the optimum number of agency staff required fluctuates from quarter to quarter due to changing need, it is not possible to performance score this indicator. It is worth noting that the number of agency staff (FTE) fell by 5.28 in Quarter 2 2011/12 when compared to Quarter 1 2011/12 and is down 16.5% compared to the close of 2010/11.
41. The figures show that sickness absence is improving, with quarter 2 2011/12 showing the third successive quarterly fall. However the indicator has been scored as AMBER as the Quarter 2 figure, of 2.2 days lost per employee (FTE) remains above the quarterly target of 2 days. Further improvement will be supported by additional sickness absence training sessions for managers planned over the coming months. In addition, Human Resources continue to work closely with Occupational Health to provide support to those identified as having higher levels of sickness absence.
42. The Customer Service Contact Centre continues to surpass its target of resolving 80% of calls that it receives at the first point of contact (FPOC). This is a considerable achievement bearing in mind the high volume of calls received during the quarter (153,549) and the fact that 45% of these came through on the 'General Enquiries' line.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Quarter 2 Performance Indicators

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