
Meeting: Customer and Central Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 16 January 2012
Subject: Quarter 2 Performance Report
Report of: Cllr Maurice Jones, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources
Summary: The report highlights Quarter 2 performance 2011/12 for the Corporate Health indicators recorded by Corporate Services - Resources and Corporate Services - People and Organisation.

Advising Officer: Deb Clarke, Assistant Chief Executive. Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer.
Contact Officer: Elaine Malarky, Head of Programme 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; Undisputed 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 agency staff being used.

Equalities/Human Rights:

This report highlights performance in respect of 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 overall improvement made against this set of indicators and considers any issues from this report that could form part of their work programme.

1. Overall performance against the corporate data set demonstrates that Council services continue to be supported by strong management decisions and that appropriate actions are being taken to remedy challenging performance issues.
2. Appendix A has a cover sheet providing an overview of performance for each of the indicators in the corporate set considered by this Committee. During quarter 2 2011/12, it has been possible to RAG score five of the seven Corporate Services indicators. Two are green, two are amber and improving and one is red and improving. The remaining two 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 and appropriate, the cover sheet also shows the direction of travel for the indicator.
3. The following provides a brief summary highlighting key performance for Quarter 2. The tables attached as Appendix A provide the details for each indicator.

Corporate Services - Resources

4. 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%.
5. 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.

6. 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.
7. 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

8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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 2011/12 indicators for Corporate Services - People and Organisation and Corporate Services - Resources.

Background Papers: (open to public inspection) - None

Location of papers: Priory House