
Meeting: Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 11 September 2012
Subject: Quarter 1 Performance Report
Report of: Cllr Maurice Jones, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources
Summary: The report highlights Quarter 1 performance 2012/13 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 a sickness absence indicator.

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 acknowledges 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. Building on the improved performance in 2011/12, overall performance for the Corporate Health indicators in the Council's Corporate Indicator Set has again seen further improvement during Quarter 1. The economic climate continues to place pressure on Council services, but once again careful management helped ensure encouraging performance this quarter. Take for example CH1 the percentage of Council Tax collected, here a change in Government policy to help the public by allowing them to pay their council tax over twelve months rather than the usual ten, has meant that the Council has had to re-profile its planned collection. Despite this it is currently on track to meet its end of year target.
2. Appendix A includes a table providing an overview of performance for each of the indicators in the corporate set considered by this Committee. This table shows that for Quarter 1 2012/13 four of the six indicators are scored as Green and the other two are Amber and improving.
3. The following paragraphs provide a brief summary highlighting key performance for Quarter 1 2012/13. The tables attached as Appendix A provide the details for each indicator.

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4. In response to the current economic conditions Government has relaxed the rules on the time period that residents can pay Council Tax over. In previous years it was restricted to ten months, but the Council now has to accommodate payment over twelve months where this is requested. As a result the Council has seen an increase in the number of direct debit customers choosing to pay over twelve months, which will result in a larger proportion of Council Tax being collected in Quarter 4 than in previous years. As a result the targets for the year have been re-profiled. With this in mind the difference between target and actual this quarter is less than the same quarter last year so this indicator has been scored as Amber and improving. (CH1)
5. The considerable effort that went into improving the processing times for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit in 2011/12 is underpinning a marked improvement in processing times in Quarter 1, which is down to 24.2 days compared to 31 days in the same quarter last year. This is a significant improvement bearing in mind that the volume of incoming work dealt with by this team increased by 29% in 2011/12. (CH2)

6. The Council continues to be a prompt payer of invoices with 93.35% of all undisputed invoices paid within 30 days, a rate that is higher than any quarterly rate achieved in 2011/12. Variation between the processing rates achieved by different directorates is now being looked at in more detail to see how best all can be brought up to the level of the best performing directorates. (CH3)
7. A new indicator has been introduced to monitor the amount of debt outstanding that is over one year old. Unlike previous versions of this indicator, this measure does not include debt that is already subject to a legal process or which can only be recovered through the sale of property. This will provide a more accurate picture of how well the Council is reducing this debt. The good news is that between the close of Quarter 4 2011/12 and the end of Quarter 1 2012/13, the Council was able to cut this type of debt by £0.398M down from £1.018M to £0.620. This has been achieved by focusing in on the largest individual debts. (CH4)

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8. The rate of staff sickness absence reduced in Quarter 1 to 2.10 days lost per full time equivalent employee down from 2.33 days in the same quarter last year. However it still exceeds the target of 2 days, hence the Amber score. The main increase is derived from short term absence rather than long term sickness. The operation of the Occupational Health team is being reviewed to see how it can better support individual cases. (CH5)
9. The percentage of first point resolutions by the Customer Service Contact Centre, remained unchanged at 86.25% in Quarter 1 exceeding its target of 80%. (CH6)

Appendices:

Appendix A – Quarter 1 2012/13 indicators for Corporate Services - People and Organisation and Corporate Services - Resources.

Background Papers: (open to public inspection) - None

Location of papers: Priory House