
Meeting: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 10 October 2013
Subject: Quarter 1 Performance Report
Report of: Cllr Nigel Young , Executive Member for Sustainable Communities – Strategic Planning and Economic Development and
Cllr Brian Spurr, Executive Member for Sustainable Communities – Services
Summary: The report highlights the Quarter 1 performance from Community Services and Regeneration and Business Support

Advising Officer: Marcel Coffait, Director of Community Services
Contact Officer: Iain Melville, Acting Head of Service Development
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. The quarterly Medium Term Plan performance report underpins the delivery of all Council priorities.

Financial:

2. The indicator set monitors a wide range of indicators, which help to provide an understanding of the Council's effective use of resources.

Legal:

3. None.

Risk Management:

4. Any areas of ongoing underperformance would be a risk to both service delivery and the reputation of the Council.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

5. None.

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. This report highlights performance in respect of how the Council and its services impact across all communities within Central Bedfordshire, so the specific areas of underperformance can be highlighted for further analysis/drilling down as necessary.

Public Health:

7. Active recreation is included in the indicator set.

Community Safety:

8. The levels of Serious Acquisitive Crime and anti-social behaviour are included in the indicator set.

Sustainability:

9. Included in the indicator set are a broad range of indicators relating to sustainability including those covering employment, access to broadband, library usage, active recreation and waste.

Procurement:

10. None.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Committee is asked to acknowledge the continuing overall strong performance in Quarter 1 for the indicators being used to help support monitoring of progress against the Medium Term Plan priorities and to recommend officers to further investigate and resolve underperforming indicators as appropriate.:-

Background

11. This report focuses on a set of indicators that support the monitoring of progress against the priorities in the Medium Term Plan (MTP).
12. The Directors' Summaries for Quarter 1 are set out below. Appendix A provides the detailed performance data. This is the first performance report for the new Directorates of Community Services and Regeneration and Business Support.

Director's Summary

13. The Community Safety Partnership is developing the strategic assessment for 2013/14 and will be assessing key community safety risks for the area, including Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC). The assessment will identify the emerging priorities for Central Bedfordshire.
14. The Integrated Offender Management (IOM) accommodation project has been commissioned and work is now underway to secure 10 additional accommodation units for offenders in Central Bedfordshire. Bedfordshire wide protocols for IOM accommodation have been drafted and are now with partner local authorities for a sign-off process.
15. The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the Council on a monthly basis reviews police response plans to address SAC so as to identify support and resources that they can provide to reduce levels of SAC. The CSP also organises 'Pride In events' that take a proactive approach to addressing crime prevention, and advising the public.
16. CCTV continues to support specific police operations to reduce SAC. The CCTV Team is working on the improvements to Dog Kennel Walk in Dunstable to include additional CCTV provision supporting reductions in robbery. The CSP is also working in partnership with Bedfordshire Police to introduce additional ANPR cameras in Central Bedfordshire to support the detection and prevention of crime.

17. The Library Service undertook the Adult Plus Survey in Quarter 1 and found that satisfaction has improved in all areas between 2009 and 2013. Following the refurbishment of all the libraries additional services are now also available. Residents can now access over 50 different e-magazines as part of a new library service. As well as modernising the library buildings, the council has also considered ways in which we can extend the reach of libraries. The popularity of mobile devices, convince staff that a 'virtual library' service, such as e-magazines, would be well received and demonstrates how we are meeting the evolving needs of library users.
18. The provisional 2012/13 outturn for the percentage of household waste sent for recycling has seen a small decrease from the previous year. This is as a result of lower green waste from both kerbside and Household Waste Recycling Centres. However, as a result of the new waste treatment and disposal contract for the north, there has been significant improvements in the percentage of municipal waste that is land filled
19. **Regeneration**

The First Quarter 2013 Economic Monitoring Report shows that Central Bedfordshire continues to perform above national averages for number of working age residents in employment. Although the reported rate is dropping (3.3% above) and is getting closer to the national level as the number of working age people in our area continued to grow and more people are deciding to stay at home or retire before 65. The global economic conditions are challenging, but the Council is working hard to ensure that the number of people in employment returns to 5% above the national average by creating the conditions for more people to work and live locally.
20. This is being achieved through engaging with existing employers to stay here and grow, recruiting appropriately skilled local people to ensure their business thrives. Just as important is to ensure the area continues to attract new businesses and investors into the area, this is a vital part of our growth plans to increase local job opportunities. Last year approximately 700 net new job opportunities were created across Central Bedfordshire at a time when other parts of the country witnessed significant decline.
21. The Adult Skills Service is being refocused on helping more adults into employment. The service provides a range of activities to support people into work, through Enterprise and Work Clubs, Business Support and start up advice to providing skills and training development opportunities to ensure people are able to access the opportunities in the local labour market. From April 2012-April 2013, 1,610 people were supported via our Work Clubs.
22. The Council also provides 'Let's Talk Business' which is a targeted newsfeed for local businesses. Businesses who sign up to the service will hear about financing and funding opportunities; contracts and tenders; networking events; business clinics; seminars and workshops and awards and competitions. The Business Timebank service also provides up to 2 hours free 1:1 business advice sessions by utilising the local professional services available across the area to help support businesses to grow and survive. The Council will also continue the programme of high level visits to some of our leading key strategic businesses to ensure that we keep in touch with the things that matter to them.

23. The Planning Division continues to provide Planning Performance Agreements and Pre-Application advice to help ensure positive and timely resolution of development schemes. Residential schemes continue to achieve the CABE target for excellent design under the Building for Life criteria.
24. There has been a drop in the number of affordable housing completions in Quarter 1. If that were to continue 'on trend' for the remainder of the year, the Council would see a lower outturn of affordable homes than the 300 homes Medium Term Plan target which has been achieved in previous years. The Quarter 1 performance reflects viability constraints on some development schemes more recently permitted by the Council, which is restricting the level of affordable homes currently being planned into some new schemes.
25. The Department of Transport has awarded a funding contribution of £5m towards the delivery of the Woodside Link road to help ease traffic congestion. The Woodside Link will connect Houghton Regis and the industrial estates in Dunstable to the planned new M1 junction (11a), north of the town. The scheme is one of 62 to receive support from the government's Local Pinch Point Fund, which aims to remove bottlenecks on the local highway network that impede growth.
26. Three building projects supported by the council were winners at the Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Building Excellent Awards (Central Region). The awards showcase innovative and creative build solutions and judge entries on their construction and building control excellence. The winning entries were in the categories of Best Domestic Extension of Alteration (12 Glebe Way, Houghton Conquest); Best Large Housing Development – over 10 units (1-15 Taylor Close, Barton le Clay) and Best Education Development (Cranfield University Teaching and Learning Centre).
27. Cranfield is set to benefit from a new safer cycle route after the Transport Minister, Norman Baker, announced that £125k has been allocated to a scheme proposed by the Council. The Council will be making a £66k contribution from the Local Area Transport Plan (towards the total cost of £191k). This will enable the Cranfield residents to better connect to the University and Technology Park.

Conclusion and Next Steps

23. Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes and considers this report.

Appendices:

Appendix A – (Quarter 1 Performance Indicators)

Background papers and their location: (open to public inspection)

Executive 24 September 2013