
Meeting: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 18 August 2016
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

Advising Officer: Marcel Coiffait, Director of Community Services
Jason Longhurst, Director of Regeneration and Business
Contact Officer: Heather Price – Head of Business Performance
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. The quarterly Five Year 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. None.

Community Safety:

8. The levels of Hate Crime and Domestic Abuse incidents 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, library usage 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 Five Year 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 Councils Five Year Plan.
12. The Directors' Summaries for Quarter 1 are set out below. Appendix A provides the detailed performance data.

Enhancing Central Bedfordshire

13. We will retain the character of Central Bedfordshire whilst continuing to improve the prosperity of residents by:
 - Investing in our core infrastructure
 - Supporting the creation of jobs
 - Providing the quantity and type of housing we need
 - Improving our town centres

It is also important that our residents feel safe and are happy living in their local areas. We will therefore monitor how satisfied our residents are with their local areas as places to live, and also that they feel safe, both during the day and after dark, through our annual Residents Survey.

14. The measure of new jobs created in central Bedfordshire is a statistic obtained from the British Register and Employment Survey (BRES), and indicates the level of increase in prosperity of our residents. The latest data reported **3,400 new jobs** were created during 2014, which is more than double the Councils target of 1,350 new jobs per annum, and represents a long term job growth rate of 1,700 new jobs each year (2009-14).

15. The increase in jobs and prosperity of our residents is reflected in the number of **working-age people in employment**, which was reported in December 2015 to have increased to 79.4% of the total working-age population (134,700). This is a higher level than the Council's target of maintaining the number of people in employment at 5% above the national average (currently 5.5% above average). In addition to this, the Council also monitors average earnings for workers, which is currently reported at £478.50 and have remained stable over the last two years.
16. A vital element of ensuring the enhancement of Central Bedfordshire is to facilitate the provision of quality homes. The number of **new homes** completed in Central Bedfordshire has consistently increased year-on-year, with 1,625 new homes completed in 2016/17. Numbers and quality of housing will continue to be monitored, and targets set to increase this further over the next five years.
17. A thriving town centre is vital for our communities, and the council is working hard to improve town centres across Central Bedfordshire, with many plans already being carried out to support this. **Town centre vacancy rates** are a good way of indicating their success and prosperity, and will be monitored closely so that we can be certain the work we are doing is effective. The vacancy rate in our town centres currently stands at 9.1%, with Dunstable currently showing the highest vacancy rate.
18. To support the council's commitment to enhancing Central Bedfordshire, we will actively work to encourage the growth of suitable businesses, influencing this through effective use of our assets, sector development and a package of support from Central Bedfordshire Council aligned to our key businesses, sectors and potential investors.

Delivering Great Resident Services

19. We will make sure that our universal services, such as rubbish collection and recycling, road maintenance, Libraries and Leisure are of great quality.

We'll do this by:

- Increasing access to our parks and open spaces
- Revamping our household waste recycling centres
- Improving the condition of our roads and pavements
- Transforming our leisure centres.

The council are currently making progress with all of these services, but to make sure we continue to improve we have developed a number of new measures that we will monitor closely.

18. The amount of **black bin waste per household** is a measure that has been developed to show how well we are doing with reducing waste to landfill and increasing the amount recycled. The latest data reported in December 2015 showed each household produced an average of 134.67 kg of black bin waste.

Work has been underway to improve Household Waste Recycling Centres across Central Bedfordshire to ensure they are easy to use and equipped to the meet future demands of a growing population. Biggleswade Household Waste Recycling Centre reopened to the public on Monday 15 February after a 6 month redevelopment to provide a modern split-level design, allowing residents to more easily dispose of their waste into containers from an elevated platform. Feedback from residents using the new site has been very positive.

Amphill, which was the second site to be redeveloped, reopened to residents on 18 July 2016, followed by the closure of Leighton Buzzard.

19. We will also monitor the condition of our roads. The National Highways and Transport survey reported its annual results in October 2015, showing **satisfaction with highways maintenance** at 54%, up from 48.3% in 2014.

Road condition statistics were most recently published by the Department of Transport in March 2016 (for the year 2014/15). This showed that principal and non-principal roads in Central Bedfordshire requiring maintenance were reported as 1% and 3% respectively, i.e.

- Only 1% of principal roads were requiring maintenance; **99% were not requiring maintenance**
- 3% of non-principal roads were requiring maintenance; **97% were not requiring maintenance**

20. **Libraries facility usage rates** in 2015/16 have remained stable, even with the introduction of more opportunities for residents to use remote access, for example through library and theatre apps or online bookings. Quarterly figures for **leisure facility usage rates** are not yet available, but the annual figures for 2015/16 topped 2.4m.

Improving Education and Skills

21. Learning new skills doesn't stop when we leave school, so the council will support adults to obtain the skills they need to succeed, and will also ensure we match the provision of skills with those that are needed by employers.

22. **Employer skills gaps** are being reported so that we can be sure people have the right skills, linked to employment sectors. Data reported in December 2015 showed an 8% decrease in employer skills gaps compared to the previous year, down from 37% to 29%.

Protecting the vulnerable and improving well-being

23. The council is working hard to tackle **domestic abuse** in Central Bedfordshire, and levels have remained fairly stable. An average of 282 incidents were reported during the first three months of 2016/17, up by 3% on the average number reported in 2015/16. The council encourages the reporting of domestic abuse and monitors numbers as part of its commitment to protecting the vulnerable.
24. A new performance indicator to measure **hate crimes** has also been developed and will be closely monitored to support the Five Year Plan priority of protecting the vulnerable and improving well-being. During the first quarter of 2016/17, a total of twenty-six hate crimes were reported, which is three more than the same period last year.

Hate crime is another case of historical under-reportage, and so the Community Safety Team regards an increase in reportage as a positive indicator.

Conclusion and next steps

26. Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider this report and make any recommendations to Executive.

Appendices:

Appendix A – (Quarter 1 Performance Indicators)

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