



Performance Monitoring Report

for

Corporate Services Department

1st quarter 2007/08

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Iain McCracken
Director: Alison Sanders

Section One: Executive Summary

This is the first Corporate Services' Performance Monitoring Report for 2007/08. The report focuses on the progress made by the Department during the first three months of this year from April to the end of June 2007 against the objectives, actions and performance targets set out in the Department's Service Plan 2007/08.

I would like to draw attention to the following highlights from the first quarter:

- Completion and costing of many of the workstreams and business cases required for the new Civic Centre. Consultation work was also undertaken on the new Council Chamber.
- Commencement of the consultation work on the Community Cohesion Strategy and the Gender Equality Scheme, including presentations at the Voluntary Sector Conference.
- Successful completion of the Borough and Parish Council elections in May 2007 involving staff from across the Council. Information was published on the Council's website very quickly.
- Go live of the Corporate Intranet site, BORIS, which was well received by staff.
- Completion of the final draft of the Corporate ICT Strategy.
- Completion of the tendering process for home-to-school transport contracts resulting in a significant saving.
- Continuing support for the Town Centre regeneration project, particularly in respect of Legal and Property Management.
- Continuing to implement the Customer Contact Strategy in particular developing the programme of work for the next three years. The current year's programme includes telephony, customer self-service and grounds maintenance.
- Commencement of the project to transfer the housing stock to Bracknell Forest Homes, following the positive ballot result. Corporate Services are co-ordinating this project across the Council.
- Finalisation of the Code of Conduct for Members and officers following changes to the statutory model code. Training delivered on this for Members.
- Completion of the Support Services Review with Council Departments which concluded with recommendations for savings and efficiency changes to processes. HR and IT support provided to Social Services & Housing to implement some of the recommendations. This is the initial review and a precursor to the more detailed review through the Balancing the Budget exercise.
- Completion of access audits in all Council buildings in order to inform a programme of improvements for disabled customers and staff. We have achieved 35.7% accessibility in our buildings and the audits have allowed us to plan to increase this to over 50% within a year.
- Implementation of Anonymous Registration.
- Completion of the Bullbrook Ward Town Council election.
- Delivery of an agreed Member Induction Programme and roll out of IT equipment to all Members
- Election and induction of new Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
- Support provided to the project for the replacement of Garth Hill School.
- Assessment of the legislation and development of an appropriate policy for staff to respond to the No Smoking legislation.
- Commencement of a review of partnership arrangements
- Closure of the 2006/07 Accounts, a significant task involving all departments. The Statement of Accounts was presented to the Final Accounts Committee at the end of June.

- Discussions have taken place with District Audit to progress the transfer of the external auditor function.
- Inability to recruit to the post of Head of Audit and Risk Management has resulted in some delays in implementing risk management initiatives. We are having discussions with West Berkshire and the Council's insurance brokers to discuss how we can cover this work on a temporary basis pending a further recruitment exercise.
- Improvements to on-line payment software. There were 7,599 on-line payments in this quarter, compared with 6,181 on-line payments last quarter. In total last year there were 26,251 on-line payment , value £3.6m.
- A new Occupational Health contractor has been appointed and the transfer of function from the previous supplier to the new one has taken place.

Section Three: Resources

Staffing

See Annex B for more detailed information.

Whilst the staffing levels in the Department are generally good, the freeze on recruitment last year is having an impact on delivery of service. This has been compounded by recruitment difficulties even when key posts have been released such as the Head of Audit & Risk Management, Head of Procurement, Senior Valuer. Where problems have been experienced we have worked closely with the Borough's Recruitment Strategy Manager to explore how this can be improved eg through wider advertising, emphasising different aspects of the post etc.

Budget

See Annex C for more detailed information.

Revenue

The original cash budget was £15.949M but a net increase in budget of £0.502M brings the current approved cash budget to £16.451M. The net increase in budget is mainly due to the following significant virements:

- £0.317M Transfers in from the Town Centre Redevelopment Reserve for preparation work planned in 2007/08
- £0.208M Transfer of the Community Safety service from Social Services and Housing in to Chief Executive's.
- -£0.055M Two transfers out from this department to Non Departmental to reflect the full year savings achieved from Human Resources through the training centralisation and Support Services Review.

A net overspend of £0.012M is currently being reported. The variances are analysed as follows:

- £0.017M Increase in printing costs of the annual billing for Council Tax and Business Rates.
- -£0.019M Saving from lower new Occupational Health contract (-£0.010M), lower staff memberships at leisure centres (-£0.004M) and external income from training course to outside organisations (-£0.005M).
- £0.014M Loss of rental income due to CMHT vacating Time Square area from 19 October.
- Increased costs of members allowances and Independent Review Panel (£0.012M) and early estimate of members training costs (£0.002M) offset by forecast extra income from marriages and ceremonies (-£0.014M).

Capital

Details of the Department's capital programme are reported in Appendix C. The 2007/08 programme for the year is £1.577M and adding £0.743M in carry forward budgets from 2006/07 makes an overall programme of £2.320M. Expenditure to date represents 7% of the budget with a further 1% committed.

Complaints

Stage	Number of complaints in the quarter	Specific commentary on complaints
1	1	Home to School Transport – suitability of drivers.
2		
3		
Ombudsman		

Internal audit assurances

(Where internal audit carried out with limited or no assurance)





Service area	Issues with limited or no assurance and remedial action to be taken
None	Not applicable

Section Four: Forward Look

The following summarises some of the key challenges facing the Department in the second quarter of 2007/08.

- Continuing to support the Town Centre regeneration project, particularly with regard to Legal and Property matters. Key areas of work include the Compulsory Purchase Order and any revisions required to the S106 following the further application for planning permission.
- Progressing the development of the Council's plans for the design of the new Civic Hub and operational requirements of the future Civic Centre. This includes the requirement for internal space planning.
- Taking forward the Council's Community Cohesion Strategy and Engagement agendas. The consultation on the Community Cohesion Strategy will need to inform the final strategy.
- The Neighbourhood Forums and Action Groups will restart in the autumn following review and agreement by the Executive to a revised approach.
- Continuing to implement the Customer Contact Strategy and agreeing the three year work programme for this.
- Leading the Council's work in the transfer of the housing stock to Bracknell Forest Homes, including the disaggregation of support services.
- Achieving revenue savings by delivering a series of procurement contracts.
- Commencing a programme for recovery of unpaid Council Tax and Business Rates plus a review of Council Tax single person discounts. The four yearly review of Business Rates discretionary tax relief is also about to begin.
- Convening the Independent Remuneration Panel to review the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme.
- Recruitment to a number of vacant posts with the Department.
- Preparation for the annual canvass and commencing the review of polling districts and polling places.
- Implementation of the new Home-to-School transport contract in September. The Integrated Transport Unit is facilitating and encouraging the movement of existing drivers and escorts to new contracts with a view to minimising change for SEN pupils. Where there is an unavoidable change of personnel, parents, carers and pupils will shortly be offered the opportunity to meet with new drivers and escorts so a relationship is started before the start of the new academic year.
- Organising support to take forward risk management initiatives including Member and officer training and a refresh of the Corporate Risk Register.
- Monitoring and managing the Council's budget in order to deliver the medium term financial strategy and identifying the risks and financial issues around major Council projects (e.g. Town Centre Redevelopment, Waste PFI and Your Homes project).
- Implementing the Council's Pay and Workforce Strategy through a number of key actions which will ensure that HR priorities link into departmental requirements. These actions will be ongoing over the quarter and will provide the basic work plan for the Corporate HR function.
- Agreeing on a three year Corporate ICT strategy.
- Continuing to support and develop the Council's Rebus (HR), Agresso (Finance), and Modern.Gov (Democratic and Support Services) systems in addition to researching and developing new systems in line with the emerging ICT strategy.
- Delivering the Council's risk based strategic audit plan.
- Managing all Maintenance and Construction programmes.

- Preparing land disposals as part of the Council's Disinvestment Strategy, provided the mitigation measures required to protect the Special Protection Areas are agreed by all parties.
- Continue to implement revised conditions of service for those on local contract arrangements.
- Prepare and develop plans for support service provision particularly in Social Services & Housing

Performance	Indicator Reference	Performance Indicator	Performance to date	Target for 2007/08	National quartile comparison	Comments
 or 	BVPI, PAF etc [A for annual or Q for quarterly]	[Brief description]			[indicate whether top, 3 rd , 2 nd or bottom quartile]	
	CC01	Percentage of people who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds can get on well together	54%			Three year assessment by Audit Commission
	CC02	Percentage of people who disagree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds can get on well together	12%			Three year assessment by Audit Commission

Update on Strategic risks identified from Service Plan

Risk identified <small>[indicate whether Service Plan or new]</small>	Update
Loss of key staff	Lead officer for Local Democracy Week has resigned and an alternative lead has not yet been identified.
Lack of community interest	
Breakdown in relationship with partners	
Local Democracy Week <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No current budget for project work • Lack of interest from Members, officers, schools or members of the public 	



Shows Key actions that are anticipated to be achieved within timetable, or already have been achieved



Shows Key actions that have not been or are not likely to be achieved on time

Update on Strategic risks identified from Service Plan

Risk identified <small>[indicate whether Service Plan or new]</small>	Update
Constraint on budget preventing the programme being implemented in full	
Loss of key staff	





Shows Key actions that are anticipated to be achieved within timetable, or already have been achieved





Shows Key actions that have not been or are not likely to be achieved on time

Corporate Theme 6: Improve outcomes for children and young people

Key Action/ Outcome: 6.5

Work with schools and other partners to ensure that 14 schools offer a full range of extended services and 6 children's centres are established within the Borough		
To provide a building service to the Department of Education, Children's Services & Libraries to meet their programme to develop schools and children's centres <i>HCP</i>		Programme determined by Education, Children's Services & Libraries Department being met. Support has been provided to Garth Hill College Project, Brakenhale School and others.

Key Action/ Outcome: 6.7

Improve environmental management in schools, in particular to improve energy management in schools		
Prepare and circulate School Energy and Environmental Plans and provide advice on these areas when required. <i>HCP</i>		Completed April 2007.

Update on Strategic risks identified from Service Plan

Risk identified <small>[indicate whether Service Plan or new]</small>	Update
Loss of key staff	



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