



# **Performance Monitoring Report**

for

# **Corporate Service Department**

**3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2007/08**  
October - December 2007

Portfolio holder: Cllr Iain McCracken  
Director: Alison Sanders

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## Transport

The new home to school transport contracts commenced at the beginning of the autumn term. Whilst a number of issues arose around the implementation, these have been largely resolved and the contracts are now operating smoothly. This is reflected in the lower level of complaints that have been received during the quarter. In addition to this, meetings with parents have been arranged to continue the earlier dialogue and assist with the monitoring and continuing improvement of home to school transport services.

Other activities during the quarter include:

- Preparations for the closure of the existing workshop facility have continued. The workload will reduce in February with the transfer of approximately 70 vehicles to Bracknell Forest Homes. This coincides with the retirement of one of the fitters. It is anticipated that all servicing and maintenance will be outsourced in November when the workshop foreman retires. It is anticipated that this will contribute towards the savings included in the 'Balancing the Budget' programme.
- The in-house service transporting pupils from a number of schools to the John Nike centre has been running successfully for a number of months and a second service transporting pupils to Cable and Wireless for ICT training is due to commence shortly. Both services have resulted in savings in taxi fares paid by the department and produced a modest income stream for the Integrated Transport Unit (ITU).
- Discussions have continued with Social Services to identify a pilot project which, if successful, will lead to the integration of all social services transport within the ITU. Specifying requirements at a time when service provision is being reviewed is proving difficult and may result in some delays in implementation.
- The new routing and scheduling software is due to be installed shortly followed by a period of user acceptance testing. The go live date is expected to be during March.

## Section Three: Resources

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### Staffing

See Annex B for more detailed information

Importantly, during the quarter we have recruited to the posts of Assistant Borough Solicitor and the Head of Audit and Risk Management, who are due to start at the beginning of January. The appointment of these posts will be key to addressing those actions currently causing some concern. During the interim periods, these posts and others still waiting to be filled, including Senior Valuer and Chief Building Surveyor, have been covered by a mixture of internal and agency staff. The post of Chief Building Surveyor is being advertised in January. Where problems have been experienced we have worked closely with the Borough's Recruitment Strategy Manager to explore how this can be improved e.g. 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 budgets of £0.538M brought the approved cash budget to £16.487M in the last Quarterly Report. The current approved cash budget is £16.654M, an increase of £0.167M which is due to the following virements:

- £0.095M There is a risk that additional income from the sale of SmartConnect licenses will not be achieved. This is to be funded from Contingency Reserve.
- £0.045M The pay award was agreed and paid in November with the additional 0.475% over the estimated award funded from the Contingency Reserve.
- £0.025M Specialist consultancy agreed to be funded by CMT from the Contingency Reserve to support the PWC procurement initiatives within Finance - Procurement
- £0.007M Funding for a Seymour House Reception post moving under Customer Services, transferred from Education Children's Services & Libraries Department.
- -£0.005M The part year saving achieved from the November start of the newly awarded building cleaning contract, managed by Corporate Property – Facilities.

A net overspend of £0.194M is currently being reported. The variances are analysed as follows:

#### PMR1

- £0.017M Increase in printing costs of the annual billing for Council Tax and Business Rates.
- -£0.019M Saving arising from the new Occupational Health contract (-£0.010M), a reduction in staff membership at the Council's leisure centres (-£0.004M) and external income generated from providing training courses to outside organisations (-£0.005M).



The overall expenditure to date represents 43% of the 2007/08 cash budget with a further 12% committed.

According to financial regulations, departments are required to manage their budgets to ensure that the overall department's capital programme is not exceeded. The following significant variance is reported - £0.026m unallocated on Network refresh project has now been allocated to support the Telephony Pilot project for the purchase of phones, servers and development work. Therefore the Network refresh project is showing an underspend of £0.026m and the Telephony Pilot project is showing an overspend of £0.026m.

### **Invest to Save Bids**

On 21 November Corporate Management Team agreed that funding of £63,000 should be released from the Invest to Save budget for the refurbishment and re-launch of the Body Logic Fitness Suite at Edgbarrow Sports Centre. The investment will be in new equipment, building improvements and promotional costs. The expectation is that the investment will result in 50 new customers generating additional income of £14,100 p.a.

## Complaints

Stage	Number of complaints in the quarter	Specific commentary on complaints
1	14	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Council taxpayer sent a reminder notice, which was, in fact, correct.</li><li>2. Whistleblowers Policy &amp; Procedure – resident made comment that staff should be informed.</li><li>3. x5 complaints were about Home to School Transport – the majority related to the late arrival of taxis and this has been raised with the relevant contractors.</li><li>4. x4 complaints were about Council drivers and these have been referred to the appropriate managers within either Bracknell Forest Services or Landscape Services.</li><li>5. x2 complaints were from suppliers about the late payment of invoices and these are being followed up by the relevant departments.</li><li>6. Charging for agendas – procedure for agenda amended so that public hard copies are now available prior to meetings.</li></ol>
2	None	
3	None	
Ombudsman	None	

## 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
Member Services	<u>Member Expenses – Limited Assurance</u> Some expenses not fully reflected in the required statutory publication as they are not always paid directly to Members but paid from the Council to the service provider e.g. hotel/phone bills. Work is underway to review the information provided in the annual Member Payments Notice in order to give effect to the internal audit recommendation.

## **Section Four: Forward Look**

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

### Civic Hub & Town Centre

1. Continue to support the Town Centre Regeneration project, particularly with regard to Legal and Property matters.
2. Town Centre CPO. The public inquiry into objections will commence on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2008.
3. Progress 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/ furniture procurement and the development of plans for the Council Chamber.

### Transfer of Housing Stock

1. Complete all tasks required to transfer stock on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2008.
2. Lead the Council's work in the transfer of the housing stock to Bracknell Forest Homes, including the disaggregation of support services.
3. Complete all Service Level Agreements with Bracknell Forest Homes.
4. Full implementation of the Bracknell Forest Homes' staffing structures and assessment of residual staffing structures.
5. Continue with all property work for the transfer of housing stock.
6. Completion of technology issues associated with the transfer of Housing stock.

### Community Cohesion & Equalities

1. Finalise, approve and publish 'All of Us' Community Cohesion Strategy.
2. Finalise, approve and publish the reviewed race Equality Scheme.
3. Complete annual monitoring of the Disability Equality Scheme.
4. Publish and implement the Gender Equality Scheme.
5. Planning and beginning implementation of actions to progress the Council along the Equality Standard for Local Government.

### Customer Services

1. Complete business case and installation of self-service capability for FrontLine.
2. Complete the analysis of the tenders for the computer telephony integration (CTI)
3. Calculate the annual tax-base for council tax purposes, which includes a review of the discounts for "long-term" empty homes. The tax-base feeds into the budget cycle for 08/09, and the eventual setting of next year's council tax in February 08.
4. Annual billing of council tax and business rates.
5. Merger of management and staff from Social Services & Housing reception in Time Square with Customer Services.

### Democratic & Registration Services

1. Support and clerk the next round of Neighbourhood Action Groups in January 2008.
2. Present the Independent Remuneration Panel's report to Council.
3. Complete the process to transfer Registrars so that they become local authority employees.

4. Prepare effectively for, and deliver successfully, the Town Council by-election on 7 February 2008.
5. Prepare for the re-introduction of the RON (Register On-line) system for birth registrations.
6. Recruit to the vacant posts of Democratic Services Officer and Secretary to the Majority Group.
7. Maintain committee servicing standards pending the recruitment to the Democratic Services Officer post.
8. Prepare effectively for, and arrange, meetings with Members to develop their Personal Development Plans

#### Finance

1. Ensure that all work associated with the 2008/09 budget is completed so that the Council can agree its budget and Council Tax before the statutory deadline.
2. Prepare for the final accounts process.
3. Award and implement new banking and insurance contracts.
4. Finalise the new corporate risk register and make arrangements for the future training of officers and members.
5. Implement new routing and scheduling software within the Integrated Transport Unit.

#### Human Resources

1. Advise on strategic HR issues relating to the Council's restructuring.
2. Implement actions arising from the restructuring particularly in relation to recruitment to the senior management level
3. Assist with the disaggregation of support services for the new departments including HR, IT and finance.
4. Complete the Adult Workforce Strategy.
5. Manage the implementation of systematic longer term Workforce Planning.
6. Implement Travel Plan actions arising from the PWC report.
7. Manage the annual Flexible Benefits process.

#### Corporate Property Services

1. Continue preparing land disposals as part of the Council's disinvestment strategy.
2. Continue work to assess risk of fire, asbestos and legionella.
3. Support the development of a strategy for Bracknell Market.

#### ICT Services

1. Complete testing of e-mail archiving product and develop and deliver roll-out plan
2. Development of technology strategy to support agreed ICT strategy

#### Legal Services

1. Review and amend the Council's Constitution to give effect to the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
2. Provide legal and financial support in connection with the possible outsourcing of Leisure Services management.















## Strategic risks identified from Service Plan

<b>Risk identified</b> <small>[indicate whether Service Plan or new]</small>	<b>Update</b>
Bracknell Forest Homes (BFH) experiences delays in setting up or appointing key staff	Most key staff are now appointed with ongoing recruitment for the rest.
There are unknown legal, property or financial issues	These are closely monitored.
Stock Transfer does not proceed	Work is in place to progress transfer.
Dispute over plans	This will be resolved in the negotiations.
Negotiations on transfer value not completed in time	Plans are in place to try to achieve timely negotiations.

<b>Corporate Theme 3: Help create a safer, stronger community which is socially cohesive</b>		
Key Action/ Outcome 3.3:		
<b>Work with the Bracknell Forest Partnership to update the Council's Community Cohesion Strategy to cover the period 2007 - 2010</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult on the key areas of change to the Community Cohesion Strategy <i>DCS/ACE</i></li> </ul>		Consultation now complete – results are being analysed. Consultation carried out during summer 2007. 'All of Us' strategy to be reported to the Executive on 18 <sup>th</sup> March and due for publication subsequently.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish revised Community Cohesion Strategy <i>DCS/ACE</i></li> </ul>		Strategy due to be published in April 2008.



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







<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No current budget for project work</li> <li>• Lack of interest from Members, officers, schools or members of the public</li> </ul>	by the Council's focus on the JAR.
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<b>Corporate Theme 4:</b> Increase participation in and enjoyment of art, culture, sport and recreation		
Key Action/ Outcome: 4.4		
<b>Improve access to Leisure facilities and in particular to a) develop opportunities for vulnerable groups to access 'mainstream' facilities.</b>		
a) Detailed Accessibility survey to be carried out of all Council Buildings <i>HCP</i>		Access surveys complete. Work programme in progress.
b) Detailed programme of access work to be agreed by Community Cohesion Working Group and commented on by the Access Advisory Panel prior to programme commencement. <i>HCP</i>		Report has been agreed by respective groups. Work programme in progress.



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

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 <sup>rd</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> or bottom quartile]	
	(A)	The percentage of authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people	35.7%	50.6%		A constraint on delivery of improvement is the scale of budget provision. Individual improvements required may exceed the total budget provision.

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## Update on Strategic risks identified from Service Plan

### Risk identified [indicate whether Service Plan or new]

Constraint on budget preventing the programme being implemented in full  
Loss of key staff

### Update

Budget provision available for a phased programme.  
Chief Building Surveyor post not yet filled.



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



















Key Action/ Outcome: 11.4		
<b>Complete a review of the joint arrangements established between Berkshire Unitary Authorities established on Local Government Reorganisation</b>		
Joint Arrangements to be reviewed by BFBC in consultation with other Berkshire Unitary Authorities <i>BSol/BT</i>		A schedule of Joint Agreements and financial provisions have been prepared and discussed at the Berkshire Finance Officers Group. No changes to the existing financial arrangements have been agreed at this stage. <i>Hof</i>
		Pressure of work within the Legal Services Section has dictated that the review is unlikely to be completed in this Municipal Year, although most of the major joint arrangements have been reviewed and revised agreements are being put in place for some of the arrangements. <i>BSol</i>
Amendments to Joint Arrangement Agreements <i>BSol</i>		Amended Agreements for some of the Joint Arrangements have been put in place. Pressure of work within the Legal Services Section has meant that not all Agreements will be amended this Municipal Year.
Complete a review of the financial aspects of Berkshire joint arrangements/shared services <i>HoF/BSol</i>		A schedule of Joint Agreements and financial provisions have been prepared and discussed at the Berkshire Finance Officers Group. No changes to the existing financial arrangements have been agreed at this stage. <i>Hof</i>

Key Action/ Outcome: 11.5		
<b>Implement a programme for the disposal of any surplus</b>		



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

























































