

Report of: Strategy and Review Business Manager

Title: 2nd Quarter (July - September) Performance Report

Ward: All

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Key Decision: No

Lead Member: Alex Hollingsworth

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Note the performance that has been reported
2. Note where performance has declined and the actions identified to improve these indicators.

1.0 Summary

The second quarter is an opportunity to reflect on developments and focus on corrective actions for the next six months in areas of under performance. The explanations on performance and corrective actions that are taking place have been supplied by Business Managers.

This report highlights performance in the Key Performance Indicators for the second quarter 2005/06. There have been some significant improvements, in particular; creditor payments, HRA debt collection, land changes results and planning. However there are still some areas that are continuing to show decline, in particular benefits and sickness absence. There is concern that unless remedial action is taken on declining BVPI's, the year-end targets will not be met. This will not only impact on service delivery but also inspection reports. If National targets are not met there is a risk that the Council could face certain financial penalties. Corrective measures have been proposed by Business Managers and many are already in place.

2.0 Background and context

The Committee requested the performance monitoring to focus on the Key performance Indicators: **Corporate Health, Benefits, Environment and Customer satisfaction.**

3.0 BV 009 Council Tax Collection

Business Manager Paul Warters

The collection rate had moved on to 55.27% at the end of Sep - slightly down on the 55.37% that had been reached by the end of Sept 2004. Looking at previous periods arrears, cash of £1.2m has been received during 05/06

reducing the outstanding arrears by 22.4% from £6.3m as at 31/03/05 to £4.9m. The collectable debit for 05/06 is £3.4m higher than for 2004/05 - an increase of 6.83% Gross receipts for the 1st half year are 7.11% up on the same period in 2004/05. The workload continues to grow, there being 1,022 more dwellings at 30/09/05 compared with a year ago

Action –The Improvement plan recently considered by Finance Scrutiny Committee shows substantial improvements in the way we collect Council Tax, though this is not reflected in the PI. We have, for instance, recovered £1.4m in arrears since April, have tendered the bailiff service and are currently exploring private sector involvement in debt recovery and telephone services. We do not envisage action other than that in the improvement plan.

4.0 Benefits

4.1 BV78a Time for processing new claims

Business Manager Paul Warters

The result of 39.74 days for the second quarter was disappointing. The section has struggled due to a number of key reasons. There has been a steady rise in the caseload and incoming post levels have remained consistently high. In addition there has been an increase in the target for 'interventions' set by the DWP. Staff turnover has also not helped. Two experienced assessment officers have moved to the 'Quality' team, and a number of new assessment officers have been recruited. It is hoped that the benefit of these appointments will become apparent in quarter 3.

Action –As another 3 vacancies have arisen. We are recruiting to these posts as a matter of urgency. We are exploring alternative means of working as a result of a benchmarking exercise

4.2 BV78b Change of circumstances

Business Manager Paul Warters

The result of 25.21 days for the second quarter was disappointing, but the points regarding lack of staffing resources and increased workload that were made in relation to BVPI 78a apply equally to this indicator.

Action –See previous indicator

4.3 BV79b Recoverable overpayments

Business Manager Paul Warters

BV 79(i)

This amended indicator reports the value of HB overpayments that have been recovered during the period as a percentage of the value of overpayments identified during the period. The 2nd quarter result is 69.94%. In April 2005 the amount 'identified' included £352k relating to Renaissance Social Housing. It is likely that this sum will be accounted for eventually. If those amounts had not been raised, the current PI result would be 86.74%.

Action –Whilst the Renaissance figures blur the position we continue to perform well in Overpayment recovery. A training programme to reduce overpayments is in place. This also relates to staffing in 78a and 78b – if staff leave we have a delay and people are overpaid benefit

BV79(ii)

This section of BV 79b is the one closest to the old 79b, i.e. it measures the value of HB overpayments recovered against the total of the amount

outstanding at the start of the year plus the total identified during the current year. The Q1 result is 25.91%, last year the result for the old BV 79b was 29.81%. Had the Renaissance Social Housing overpayments of £352k not have been raised, this PI quarter result would stand at 27.91%.

Action – See previous indicator

BV79b (iii)

This measures the value of write-offs done during the period as a percentage of the debt outstanding at the start of the period plus the value identified during the period. With only some £45k written-off to date, this indicator result of 0.92% is currently very low.

Action – A write off report is due to Executive Board in the next couple of months.

5.0 BV12 Sickness Absence

Business Manager Anne Marie Scott

Results for quarter 2 are disappointing. Based on performance trends over the last 2 years it is likely that the annual figure will come out at between 10.5 and 11.5 days per FTE, which is above the target set of 8.93 and an increase on last year's performance of 10.16. The reasons for the increase are not clear – it runs across all categories and lengths of absence.

Actions to improve the position include involvement of Strategic Directors in analysing performance with Business Managers and HR to identify potential solutions; refresher training for all business units on effective sickness absence management; and targeted full-time HR support for City Works for the final quarter of the year. As much Occupational Health Specialist time as possible will be diverted to dealing with longer-term absence. Discussions are underway with external providers of absence management solutions, though resources are not available to support this within the current financial year. The sickness absence policy has been prioritised for review and this is now underway.

6.0 BV008 Invoices paid on time

Business Manager Mike Baish/Penny Gardner. This is a corporate indicator and all Business Units contribute to the result.

The cumulative second quarter result is 94% this is an improvement from 87% for the same period last year. Most business units are near or over their annual target which is encouraging, but we need a concerted effort to get back over to 95% and maintain a good annual average. The pilot use of purchase cards has to date been successful. If approval is given to purchase Decal then the pilot will be extend to the rest of the Council early in the New Year. The Christmas closure is always a problem for us as we cannot process payments when the offices are closed, however systems are in place and if we maintain 95% will still be able to meet our year-end target.

7.0 BV66a Rent Collection

Business Manager Graham Stratford

Rent collection continues to improve. The amount collected is at £14,168,588.75, which is 95.97% of a total amount collectable. We are confident that this will exceed the year-end target of 98.20%.

Action – Continuing good practice. Further detail is in the Housing Scrutiny performance report

8.0 BV109 Planning applications

Business Manager Michael Crofton Briggs

Last year the aim had been to improve the annual figure for BV109a so that the Council was no longer labelled a 'Standards Authority'. This was achieved. Now it is important that performance is sustained in the low 70s so that appropriate time is given to consultation and negotiation on the largest application to achieve quality development in the City. It is pleasing to see that this is being achieved.

Last year the focus on Major applications (BV109b and c) was achieved without an impact on these categories of applications. Good performance in BV 109b has been sustained. However in the first six months of this year performance in BVPI 109c has dipped as a backlog in Conservation and Listed Building Applications has been cleared. It is anticipated that performance will achieve the Government target by the end of the year.

Action: - Continue good practice.

9.0 BV179 Land Charges

Business Manager Jeremy Thomas

The work carried out to build both increased speed and resilience into the inter-departmental land charges data collection process has begun to see results, with all land charge searches carried out during the quarter showing improved speed and efficiency. This result reflects not only the high level of hard work and expertise of the land charges staff themselves, but also the commitment to the success of the service displayed by all other parts of the Council which contribute to the information supply.

Action - Continuing good practice. The move to NLIS Level 3 is due to take place by the end of 2005, with the new system now undergoing practical testing. When introduced, this will provide the ability to both dispatch and receive searches electronically

10.0 BV204 Percentage of appeals allowed

Business Manager Michael Crofton Briggs

This was a new measure last year. The Council performed badly against the national average with 42% of appeals allowed against an average of 33%. As a result the Government clawed-back £50,000 of the Planning Delivery Grant. Unfortunately in the first 6 months of this year the Council's performance is again at 42% of appeals allowed. This is not good news and the Council risks losing further PDG next financial year. An analysis of the data indicates that the Council is performing very poorly when Members refuse permission against the officer recommendation. There have been 6 such appeal decisions this year and the Inspector has overturned all. This has caused the Council's performance to drop from an average performance of 30% to a poor 42%. It indicates that the Council is unable to provide sufficient evidence to persuade the planning inspectorate to support its decisions.

Action – The Portfolio Holder for the Environment made a statement to Council on 5th October about residential intensification in which he gave

strong advice to his fellow Councillors. A special report is being presented to every Area Committee in the November cycle to highlight this performance and explain its implications.

There is a time lag for appeals to work their way through the system. There is a backlog of 5 for September alone where members have gone against Officers recommendations. It is therefore unlikely that this indicator will significantly improve its performance in the next 6 months

11.0 BV82a Recycling

Business Manager Interim Manager Philip Dunsdon

The result of 14.69% for BV82a plus 3.08% BV82b year to date equates to a total of 17.77%. This is higher than for the same period last year. The figure for composting tonnage will fall due to seasonal factors in the winter months. There is concern that the target of 18% may not be met. The target of 18% should reflect the combined total of BV82a and BV82b i.e. 16% and 2% respectively. On this basis we would hope to meet the latter target

We are concerned that the national target will not be met. Additional funding of £144,000 was allocated for the green waste pilot. Whilst this has made a significant improvement on these figures, recycling rates are going up but not fast enough and there is likely to be a shortfall. We are supporting the County Council to meet a PSA combined target of 33%. If the County Council meets this target the Government will invest £400,000 across the County. There is some concern that this will not be met as we are predicated to be 0.7% short of the target across the County, the next six months all districts will be focused on improvement. Should the combined recycling figure of 33% not be met the value to the partnership will be proportionately reduced.

The green waste pilot enabled us to collect garden waste from high participating areas of the city. In September we supplemented the scheme with a further collection of garden waste in free plastic sacks from an additional 6000 households. Due to seasonal variations it is not anticipated that expanding the green waste scheme further at this time would contribute greatly in meeting the year-end target.

Action –

- In order to increase our performance we are now recycling heavy white goods particularly washing machines.
- In order to increase participation in certain wards we have embarked on door-to-door canvassing. Work has already taken place within in Barton and Sandhills.
- Continue training of all operatives to ensure awareness of their responsibilities with regards to improving the service provision, participation and customer satisfaction.
- Continue visits to schools to increase their awareness of the need to recycle.
- Maintain the public awareness through local publicity campaigns
- Continue partnership working with local non-profit organisations, neighbouring district councils, the county and other stakeholders in order to encourage a more co-ordinated approach to waste management.

12.0 Customer Satisfaction

There have been several significant developments in this area throughout the quarter:

12.1 The Opinionmeter

The Consultation and Communication Officers group organised a months trial of a product called 'The Opinionmeter' It is a simple, flexible method for on-site collection and analysis of customer feedback without having paper forms, comment cards or expensive surveys. As it is a web-based software it creates surveys then analyses the results. The results of the trial have been encouraging and it is felt that the Opinionmeter a cost effective exciting new way of consulting. It has proven especially popular with younger people who are often under represented in consultation exercises. A meeting is being held in November to consider the product further and funding possibilities.

12.2 Customer Satisfaction Index

Work on the Customer Satisfaction Index has developed. The Index begins to create a measure of customer satisfaction that can be monitored over time. Focus groups have been organised to find out our customers' requirements and their relative importance. These requirements will help form a questionnaire, which will be sent to 5,000 residents. The results of this survey will create priorities for improvements. The results of this consultation should be available in February so they can be fed into the business planning process.

12.3 Tracker

The Council has been working in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, Cherwell, South and West District Councils (Vale have not yet signed up) to have an on-line web based system that monitors all the past and present consultation activities that are happening in these areas. The web pages (linked from the Council's website) will enable anyone to view consultation, with clear explanation of why the consultation is happening and contact details. Consultation can be sorted via ward, area, postcode, subject and business unit. This will be a particularly useful tool for Officers, as it will avoid unnecessary and costly duplication. Tracker is currently being tested and is expected to go live in January.

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN SEEN AND APPROVED BY:

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Alex Hollingsworth

Chief Executive: Caroline Bull

Head of Legal and Democratic Services: Jeremy Thomas

Background papers: None

Appendix A: Performance Indicators

* = Key BVPI

Green = Above target, getting better **Amber = Not on target but getting better** **Red = Not on target and getting worse**

BVPI	Polarity	Result	2005/06 Year end Target	Year end predications on Target?	20004/05 Quartile position	Current Performance
Corporate						
* BV008 % invoices paid within 30 days	High	94.01	93.08%	✓	Worst	Green
* BV012 Sickness absence	Low	5.64 days	8.93 Days	✗	Second	Red
Chief Executive						
* BV002a Equality Standard for Local Government	High	Level 1	Level 3	✓	N/a	Green
BV002b The duty to promote race equality checklist score	High	20%	60%	✓	N/a	Green
BV11a Top 5% earners that are women	High	26.8%	29.89%	✗	Best	Red
BV11b Top 5% earners from BME communities	High	0	1.48%	✗	Second	Amber
BV11c Top 5% earners with a disability	High	0	New N/a	New N/a	New N/a	New N/a
BV14 Early retirements / staff	Low	0.14%	0.14%	✗	Third	Amber
BV15 Ill health retirements / staff	Low	0%	0.00%	✗	Second	Amber
* BV016a % employees declaring DDA	High	1.42%	3.00%	✗	Worst	Amber
* BV017a % employees from BME Communities	High	6.5%	7.0%	✗	Best	Amber
BV174 Racial incidents involving the local authority	Low	8	24.58	✓	N/a	Green
BV175 Racial incidents resulting in further action	High	100%	100%	✓	Best	Green
Finance and Corporate Services						
* BV009 collection rates for Council Tax	High	55.27%	98.50%	✗	Worst	Amber
* BV010 collection rates for NNDR	High	61.91%	99.12%	✓	Second	Green
* BV078a average time for processing claims	Low	39.74Days	30.0 Days	✗	Second	Red
* BV078b process change of circumstances	Low	25.21Days	12.0 Days	✗	Worst	Red
* BV079a % cases calculation of benefit correct	High	93.6%	95.00%	✗	Worst	Amber
* BV079b (i) % recoverable overpayments	High	69.94%	98.50%	✓	N/a	Green

BVPI	Polarity	Result	2005/06 Year end Target	Year end predications on Target?	20004/05 Quartile position	Current Performance
* BV079b (ii)	High	25.91%	45.00%	✗	N/a	Red
* BV079 (iii)	Low	0.92%	4.00%	✗	N/a	Red
* BV157 % interactions delivered electronically	High	85%	100%	✗	Best	Amber
* BV179 % standard searches in 10 working days	High	99.4%	90.00%	✓	Worst	Green
Housing Health and Community						
BV063 Energy efficiency: average SAP rating for dwellings	High	67.70	68	✓	Best	Green
* BV066a % housing rent collected	High	95.97%	98.20%	✓	Second	Green
BV066b Tenants with more than seven weeks of rent arrears as % of the total number of council tenants.	Low	8.36%	New N/a	✓	New N/a	New N/a
BV066c % of tenants who have Notices Seeking Possession	Low	3.03%	New N/a	✓	New N/a	New N/a
BV066d % of tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears.	Low	0.16%	New N/a	✓	New N/a	New N/a
* BV184a % Non-decent homes at April 2005	Low	33.8%	30%	✓	Third	Green
* BV202 - Number of rough sleepers.	Low	13	8	✗	New N/a	New N/a
* BV203 - % change families temp accommodation	High	-1.48%	-8.00%	✗	New N/a	New N/a
* BV211a Proportion of planned repairs & maintenance expenditure on HRA dwellings compared to responsive maintenance expenditure	High		New N/a	New N/a	New N/a	New N/a
* BV211b Proportion of expenditure on emergency and urgent repairs to HRA dwellings compared to non-urgent repairs	Low		New N/a	New N/a	New N/a	New N/a
* BV212 Average time taken to re-let local authority housing.	Low	51 days	Not applicable	No target given	Not applicable	
Physical Environment						
* BV82 a % household waste recycled	High	14.69%	18.00%**	✗	Second	Amber
BV82b % Household waste composted	High	3.08%	4.00%**	✗	Third	Amber
BV84 Household waste collected	Low	168.11kg	340 kg	✓	Best	Green
BV91 % population served by collection of recyclables	High	100%	100%	✓	Second	Green
* BV109a % major planning applications determined in 13 wks	High	73%	57%	✓	Third	Green
BV109b % minor planning applications determined in 8 weeks	High	77%	70%	✓	Best	Green
BV109c % all planning applications determined in 8 weeks	High	77%	82%	✗	Second	Red

BVPI	Polarity	Result	2005/06 Year end Target	Year end predications on Target?	20004/05 Quartile position	Current Performance
BV156 % council buildings with facilities for people with disabilities	High	75%	91%	✓	Best	Green
BV170b Visits / usage in person	High	61	160	✓	Second	Green
BV170c School pupil visits to museum	High	1054	2146	✓	Second	Green
* BV204 Percentage pf appeals allowed	Low	42%	33.0%	✗	N/a	New N/a

** Officers responsible for the BVPI feel the target should have been set as BV82a 16% and BV82b 2%. If this was the case we would still not be on target and BV82a. We would be green and on target for BV82b.

Please note due to Members request the column 'Polarity' has been added to the table to demonstrate if the desired direction is for a high or a low score