

Performance Monitoring Q3 Commentary by Councillor James Fry for Scrutiny Committee - Tuesday 3 March 2020

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(Additional comments in red by Tom Hudson)

On the Performance Summary before the Committee I should report that I have held meetings with Helen and we agreed that some that changes were desirable in the next Budget Year.

One important change is methodological and presentational. At present, we list targets, results and trends. It would be good to get some historical perspective, where possible, on the past annual results for these measures, as well as to know how who determines the targets (and how). Why do year-end targets, e.g., for CS004, fall below the result last year and the result so far for this year; and for this same measure, why is the trend period on period shown as a horizontal arrow? What do these performance measures mean?

Recommendation: In the first Scrutiny meeting next Budget Year, we should have a brief paper to explain how the targets are set and propose clearer ways of gauging performance against these targets.

In agenda item 10, the Scrutiny Work Plan, the Committee is asked to consider on p.147 possible reports for early in the next civic year. This includes an item 'Performance Monitoring report and choice of future indicators'. My suggestion is that this recommendation would involve a huge amount of work, a lot of it unnecessary; a better way to manage it would be once Scrutiny has agreed its chosen indicators to have Heads of Service explain the rationale behind the chosen targets for the next meeting.

In terms of the specific measures in the report, one point that occurs more than once is staffing.

Maybe we should add the following recommendation: Include a separate measure to reflect staffing vs. establishment, if such a variable can be devised.

BI001: Recommendation: We should distinguish between spending on services from Council companies and from other local businesses and devise separate targets.

This was agreed by Cabinet for next year (see p.139 rec 1). I do not think it is necessary to make this recommendation.

CH001 Recommendation: We should distinguish short term from long term absences.

ED002: The text is not clear. Also, the final sentence about billing errors must refer to something else.

Leisure services: I have discussed with Ian Brooke how we can have other sorts of information about Fusion's performance, such as in dealing promptly with maintenance issues. I hope these will be proposed for the next Budget Year.

Capital programmes: Currently the report only covers Communities and Leisure Services. Recommendation: Next year we should have performance targets and measures that reflect the work of the Project Management Office and the ability to keep capital spending in line with the Budget.

This was agreed by Cabinet for next year. The figure as of the Cabinet meeting on 12 February 2020 is included within the response to the Committee's previous recommendation 'The capital outturn report which went to CMT today for the second quarter ended 21-12-2019 showed a forecast outturn of £54.621m... The budget approved in February 2019 for 2019/20 was £101.5m. Taking this budget the outturn forecast is 53.8%.¹ If the information provided here is sufficient, I do not see the need to make this recommendation.

¹ The response on p.140 contains an error, which I have corrected in the above. It refers to the second quarter of 31-12-2020 and the budget for 2020/21.