

**To:** City Executive Board

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> July 2011

**Report of:** The Head of Business Improvement and Technology

**Title of Report:** CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT – Q4 REPORT

## **Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report:** To provide the City Executive Board with a final report of the Council's progress against the twenty Corporate Plan targets for the year 2011/12 and a wider perspective on performance achievements as set out in the Council's Performance Improvement Framework.

**Key decision?** No

**Executive lead member:** Cllr Bob Price

**Policy Framework:** Corporate Plan 2011-15: Corporate Priority - An efficient and effective Council.

**Recommendation(s):** The City Executive Board is asked to note:

The progress made against the Corporate Plan targets for 2011/12 and performance improvements made as a result the Council's commitment to deliver efficient and effective services.

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report provides the City Executive Board with the performance outturn for the Corporate Plan performance targets for 2011/12 along with a wider perspective on performance achievements in the year within the context of the Council's Performance Improvement Framework.
- 1.2 Seventeen of the twenty Corporate Plan targets were achieved or exceeded in 2011/12, with one target yet to report. This represents a 90% achievement rate. Five of the targets (28%) were exceeded by more than 10%. Of the eleven targets that were also tracked during 2010/11, six (55%) showed an improvement in performance. This is set against a backdrop of achieving the savings target of £3.3m for the year.
- 1.3 Of the 101 service-level targets monitored through 2011/12, 69 (68%) were achieved; with 32 of these (45%) exceeding their targets by more than 10% and 21 (21%) missing their targets by more than 10%. A further two measures have no data reported and six measures are not targeted and therefore not included in

this count. Of the 38 indicators that were also tracked through 2010/11, 21 (55%) showed an improvement in performance.

## 2. Corporate Target Performance

2.1 For 2011/12 the Council had twenty Corporate Plan targets, four targets for each of the five corporate priorities. The outturn summary position against each of the corporate priorities is as follows:

Priority	Not Achieved	Achieved
A vibrant and sustainable economy	1	3
Meeting housing need	0	3
Strong and active communities	1	3
Cleaner, greener Oxford	0	4
An efficient and effective Council	0	4

2.2 The performance targets that were not achieved were;

- **Strong and active communities: Satisfaction with our neighbourhoods (PC018)** – The public satisfaction return of 86% was just below the target of 88%. Satisfaction appears to show a negative trend since 2010/11 when the return was 87%. This is within the indicative confidence limits of  $\pm 3.4\%$  for a survey of this type and size. This indicator has been retained for 2012/13
- **A vibrant and sustainable economy: The % of top 20 employers who agree that the Council is business friendly (CD002)** – A response rate of 75% was achieved for this survey, with 8 businesses stating they considered the Council as 'helpful', 4 that didn't know and 3 stated 'neither helpful or unhelpful'. Removing the 'don't know' responses results in a positive score of 73% overall, narrowly missing the target of 75%. This indicator has been discontinued for 2012/13

2.3 The performance target for which there is currently no data is as follows;

- **Meeting housing need: The % of Council tenants satisfied with landlord services (HC001)** – the STAR (Survey of Tenants and Residents) has recently been tendered and put out for responses. While the intention was originally to run this survey before the end of the financial year, this has been put back into 2012/13 to align with other councils running this survey and to ensure the whole financial year was covered in responses. It is anticipated that performance against this indicator can be reported verbally at City Executive Board.

2.4 The five performance indicators that exceeded their targets by more than 10% were;

- **Strong and active communities: The % of the population of Oxford volunteering (PC001)** – performance in this area had previously been measured by the Place Survey, which was abolished in 2009. Although the 41% figure reported appears significantly above the target of 27% it should be

remembered that different survey methods have been used. This indicator has been discontinued for 2012/13

- **The number of young people attending our Holiday Activity Programme (HC002)**– this year there has been greater involvement from young people across all areas of Oxford as a result of proactive outreach work, identifying young people who had nothing to do and encouraging them into the programmes. This resulted in attendance levels of 1,377, nearly 38% above target. This indicator has been retained for 2012/13
- **A vibrant and sustainable economy: The number of apprenticeships, training places and jobs created through Council investment (BI002)**– although slippage in large construction projects impacted on the number of jobs that could be created from investment, the target of 47 was exceeded by nearly 13% largely as a result of over-performance on the number of apprentices created. For 2012/13 this indicator has been split between jobs and apprenticeships created to better enable tracking of performance.
- **Cleaner, greener Oxford: The Kg of waste sent to landfill per household (NI 191)**– The amount of residual waste per household has performed better than the target due to the changes introduced to co-mingled recycling and the food waste collection across the city. This, along with education on recycling, especially within the student population, has helped reduced the residual waste per household. The final outturn of 412.96 kg of waste per household was 11% under the target of 464 kg. This indicator has been retained for 2012/13 and will be complemented by inclusion of a further target on recycling and composting performance.
- **The number of enforcements carried out as a result of environmental offences (ED003)** – Strong performance principally reflects enforcement work in East Oxford, and more recently in Jericho under the Cleaner Greener Oxford campaign, resulting in 1,154 enforcements (75% above target). This indicator has been discontinued for 2012/13.

### 3. Corporate Achievements

3.1 Highlights of achievements and initiatives during 2011/12 are set out below;

#### Corporate initiatives and achievements

- The council's Performance Improvement Framework was launched during 2011/12 to provide the Council with a structured toolkit of activities to enable it to compare its performance across all sectors and put in place improvement plans to increase performance standards.
- A two-year agreement was made with unions to protect jobs by replacing annual salary increments with a performance related Partnership Payment on condition of achieving council-wide efficiencies, low sickness rates and good appraisal ratings. The initial £300 element of the payment has been confirmed for applicable staff, with a further payment for additional efficiencies still under determination at the time of writing.

- The Council's staff suggestion scheme was strengthened through the introduction of Employee Voice, an online participative forum to share ideas on improvement. Since its launch in February it has attracted 150 participants. A total of 97 ideas have been generated, with 35 taken forward for implementation which look likely to save the Council around £13,000 during 2012/13
- 2011/12 has seen the development of CorVu as the council's corporate reporting tool for performance and risk, giving immediate access to performance for officers and members.

#### Awards and Accreditations

- The Council achieved Investor in People accreditation in November 2011
- The innovative Old Fire Station project was shortlisted in the Community Benefit category in the South East regional RICS Awards 2012, the Best Pathfinder Project category in the LG Partnership Awards and the Community Investor of the Year category in the MJ Awards
- Oxford was the first UK local authority to be awarded the new British Standards Kite mark for Energy Reduction Verification. It also achieved a Highly Commended placing in the LGC Low Carbon Council award for 2012
- Oxford won the silver (runner-up) award in the Council of the Year category of the Improvement and Efficiency South East annual awards
- The City retained its Purple Flag status, which recognises excellence in the management of town and city centres at night
- Our Payroll Team achieved Payroll Quality Partnership (PQP) accreditation
- Our Dog Warden Service has received the RSPCA's Gold Footprint Award 2011 for its work on stray dog collection
- The Street Sports programme was awarded StreetMark accreditation, which quality assures the provision of street sport activities by embedding minimum standards for community sport.

#### Process Improvements

- A Fundamental Service Review of Housing Benefits was completed which will introduce online claims and self service, a risk-based system for determining customer evidence requirements, enable more claims to be paid within 24 hours and realise savings of around £110,000.
- Six Business Process Improvement (BPI) reviews have been completed within the Customers First programme including: Council Tax web forms introduced to increase transactions online; MOTs web interface for booking MOTs online and increasing customer self-service options; and an online customer satisfaction survey introduced for Direct Services Repairs to eliminate the manual survey and improve management information.
- A BPI review of HMO licensing cut customer waiting time from 18 weeks to 13 weeks, processing time for applications from 4.5 hours to 2 hours, introduced an electronic delivery system with 95% of applications now online and is 100% self funding. It also enabled the service to cope with a 5-10 fold increase in HMO applications.

### Benchmarking

- 71% of service areas were judged to have benchmarking in place by the year end, with active involvement in 17 benchmarking clubs. Work is in hand to increase this coverage during 2012/13, and a benchmark model is under development to provide a strategic overview of all data to direct future service improvement.

3.3 Other initiatives developed during 2011/12 will build on the part year's successes and look to greater achievement;

- The new Organisational Development strategy 'Good to Great' was launched in May to ensure the City Council has a flexible, fit for purpose workforce able to best meet future priorities, challenges and aspirations.
- A new programme structure has been introduced to further the council's priorities with more focused work programmes and smaller board membership.

## 4. Service Performance

4.1 At a service level, a total of 103 targets were tracked during 2011/12. A summary of overall performance is set out in the table below;

Service Area	Achieved		Not Achieved		No Data
Law and Governance	2	100%	0	0%	0
People and Equalities	6	86%	1	14%	0
Policy, Culture and Communications	8	73%	3	27%	0
City Development	2	67%	1	33%	0
Corporate Assets	7	70%	3	30%	1
Housing and Communities	4	50%	4	50%	0
Customer Services	3	50%	3	50%	0
Direct Services	14	93%	1	7%	0
Environmental Development	4	100%	0	0%	0
Leisure and Parks	10	71%	4	29%	1
Business Improvement	1	25%	3	75%	0
Finance	5	38%	8	62%	0
ICT Strategy	3	75%	1	25%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>2</b>

4.2 Individual reports for services are set out below;

- **Housing and Communities** – Despite missing one homelessness target by a small margin (Homelessness Acceptances) the figure of 129 households in temporary accommodation represents exceptional performance by the Housing Needs Team in the face of very difficult developments in welfare benefit reform which have severely limited the supply of private rented accommodation available to benefit claimants in the city. Levels of homelessness nationwide have increased

dramatically, and in limiting acceptances to only six more than target (a target set in more optimistic times) the Housing Needs team have shown themselves to be one of the most effective in the country. Increases in the number of rough sleepers are being addressed through redesign of services and procurement of robust outreach and assessment services.

Performance on Empty Homes is also good, bearing in mind that this function is limited to one officer working half-time. The fall in delivery of Affordable Homes reflects the downturn in the economy and the limitations of the new arrangements for grant funding of affordable housing schemes, as well as the successful completion of the major Rose Hill Redevelopment scheme. Figures for Tenant Satisfaction are not yet available, and the Service has needed time to adapt to the new working arrangements following restructure, but it is evident that the work carried out by the strengthened CANAcT team is becoming increasingly effective. The Positive Futures team continue to deliver excellent work in relation to Holiday Activities, and will be expanding their operations to take in more generally targeted youth work whilst retaining their focus on those young people most at risk of falling into crime and associated behaviours.

- **Finance** - Overall the Finance service had a satisfactory performance last year with a number of successes, but was hindered by a number of instances of staff long term absence and legacy problems with the Financial Management System.

The Service for the second year running achieved an unqualified set of accounts despite the first year adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) where a number of authorities struggled. In budget management substantial improvements were made in financial reporting in the clarity of the information provided in written reports and the use of the council's on-line performance management system, CorVu. In debt collection the section implemented the direct debit functionality for the collection of debts such as trade waste and commercial property although take up has however been slow and original targets may have proved optimistic. The implementation of electronic procurement and invoice scanning was deferred pending a Health check review of the Financial Management System in order to improve processing and procedures in a state of readiness for the new Purchase to Pay (P2P) module. This will now be implemented in 2012/13. This delay led to reduced take up in electronic ordering although suppliers are now being strongly encouraged to accept emailed orders and electronic payment as the method of doing business with the council. The Investigations service suffered from a number of long term staff absences In spite of this the team only just missed their target for sanctions but exceeded the number of investigations undertaken. They made a number of improvements to the FIMS system to increase efficiency and achieved savings in overpaid housing benefit of over £200,000.

On the finances of the service, proactive and creative management of the council's investment portfolio improved the return on investments to 1.03% exceeding its target by 0.03% and improving the overall budgeted return by £53k or 16%. The HRA Self Financing in terms of Business Plan preparation and the take on of around £200 million resulted in a saving of over £1million per annum in interest compared to the plan. The Council overall achieved its entire efficiency savings of around £3.7 million and is set to come within its overall net budget. From the

Service viewpoint against a gross budget of £3million the service was £9k underspent (0.3%)

- **Environmental Development** - The year saw a very strong performance by ED with 100% of corporate targets achieved, often in unfavourable circumstances. Challenges included embedding new programmes, such as a national first in HMO work, whilst developing established programmes such as internal carbon reduction and the Low Carbon Oxford partnership. Enforcement was stepped up in the year and as a result the City Council is now a leading authority with examples of best practise. Whilst staffing gaps including in the management team provided further challenge, a strong performance culture together with high productivity and management by objectives enabled the Service to accomplish all key objectives.
- **People and Equalities** - 2011/12 was a good year in terms of performance against the P&E service plan targets. We improved the way we manage staff and the Council benefited from better performance. The November 2011 employee survey showed an increase in staff satisfaction. As usual we took the feedback seriously and all Heads of Service put in place plans to address the issues relating to their specific areas.

Improved Council performance was also assisted by an improvement in staff attendance – less sickness means more productivity and more opportunity to deliver Council objectives. The days lost to sickness improved by 7% on last year's performance.

We made progress in our commitment to equality and diversity. In January 2012 we reached 'achieving' level in the Equality Framework for Local Government – which demonstrated the progress we've made. Whilst part of this was about ensuring a good process around equality impact assessments (with these being completed rigorously for new policies, and in particular the budget) we were also able to demonstrate some real achievements in the community (such as opening the Old Fire Station) and for the Council as an employer. But we know we need to do more about increasing the diversity of the workforce and this work has started in 2012/13 by us trying to understand what some of the barriers might be to working for the Council.

- **Corporate Assets** - Rental income from the Council's commercial portfolio exceeded budget by some £345,000 outturning at £6.645 million. A number of good quality lettings have been achieved, including 33-35 George Street (the unit opposite Jamie's) to Byron Burgers and 20-24 St Michael's Street to Sojourn Hotel, which are both being fitted out/refurbished and anticipated to open in July 2012 and March 2013 respectively. Capital receipts from the disposal of both general fund and HRA properties have considerably exceeded targets, and have included the sale of the Council's former office building in Blue Boar Street, and the former sheltered unit at Grantham House, Jericho.

The refurbishment works at St Aldate's Chambers were completed on time and to budget, and all staff have now moved in. Final additional works to the entrance canopy and car park are nearing completion. This resulted in the Council achieving its target of reducing the overall office footprint by some 43% (from a 2009 base)

and achieving associated revenue running costs savings of circa £0.5 million. The refurbishment of the Old Fire Station was completed in October.

There has been very good progress in relation to the Council's Barton project. The Barton Oxford LLP (the Council's joint venture with Grosvenor Developments) was incorporated in October 2011, and the sale of the Council's land to the LLP completed in March 2012. Planning and master planning are progressing well and the project remains on track to start delivering a start on house building early in 2014. The construction of 91 new build council dwellings, supported by HCA funding was completed in June 2011, and the Council has now been successful in securing funding from the Homes and Communities agency from their affordable homes programme, and is now moving forward with plans to develop a further 112 new Council dwellings.

**Direct Services** - The building maintenance service met all of its targets and managed to reduce the void re-let time by 0.9 days against the 2010/11 year through continued improved working practices. Once again the gas team achieved 100% of gas servicing at year end with no legal action required to gain access to the properties. This is the third year running that this target has been achieved. Performance for gas and responsive repairs completed within timescale was high, reflecting in high satisfaction results for this area.

The streetscene service continued to keep the streets of Oxford at a high standard of cleanliness, reinforced by an independent review by APSE which highlighted that the results are one of the highest in the country. Despite the economic climate, car park income exceeded budget.

The only target not met during 2011/12 was 'Household Waste Recycled and Composted' (National Indicator 192). This target was a challenge as it is a high target for an urban area. District councils with high recycling rates are rural areas with large gardens and therefore send a higher rate of (heavy) garden waste for recycling. Increasing the recycling rate in Oxford is also hindered by the large and transient student population from the two universities in the City. Oxford's recycling rate compares well to urban authorities, for example, Southampton City Council where the recycling rate for 2011/12 was 25.07%. Even though the recycling rate did not reach the ambitious target of 48%; performance improved by 1.7% against the 2010/11 year which for an urban area is a high percentage increase and reflects year on year improvements. Oxford has a high recycling rate for dry recycling. More importantly alongside the recycling rate increasing, the amount of waste sent to landfill per household reduced by 24.66kg against the 2010/11 year, resulting in cost savings to dispose of waste and demonstrating that the waste hierarchy of reduce, reuse and recycle is being implemented across the city. Reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill is a key indicator.

Initiatives planned for the 2012/13 year to further increase the recycling rate include; rolling out of food waste recycling to flats; targeting low recycling areas to educate households on recycling; continuing to work with the student population to ensure recycling takes place in houses of multiple occupation. Increasing the recycling rate further to 50% will continue to be a challenging target based on the demographics and infrastructure of the city.



- **Law & Governance** - Law and Governance achieved all of their service objectives for 2011/12 year and exceeded their targets in respect of electoral registration and client satisfaction for the provision of legal services. The Service continues to make solid progress against the project plan for the registration of the Council's title to land and the electronic scanning and indexing of its title deeds and exceeded its income target for external legal work. The service successfully administered the national referendum on voting reform and responded to consultations on electoral reform of the County Council and parliamentary boundaries. It also facilitated the effective political governance of the Authority which included the delivery of the scrutiny work programme.
- **City Development** - Development Control performance has been excellent again this year, with both good speed of determination of 'minor' and 'other' planning applications listed in the schedule and with good quality of those decisions. The first full year of operation of Visit Oxfordshire, the tourism partnership created by the City Council, has got off to a flying start. Number of tourists visiting the TIC is only a proxy measure but indicates how busy Visit Oxfordshire has been.

This is the first time the City Council has tried to measure satisfaction by local businesses with the work it does on economic development. The outcome of the survey indicated a 73% level of satisfaction, just 2% below the somewhat 'stab in the dark' target of 75% we set ourselves.

The housing market remains doggedly in the doldrums, so our estimate set in the autumn 2010 that things would begin to pick up in 2011/12, after two years of the recession, proved woefully optimistic. Only 150 net additional homes were built, 200 below the estimated 350.

- **Business Improvement** - 2011/12 has been a busy first year for this newly formed service, which took some time to become fully staffed. Both corporate targets within the Service (% spend in the local economy and jobs & apprenticeships created) – were achieved successfully.

During the year the Business Improvement Unit took over responsibility for managing and facilitating BPI reviews within the Customer First programme and the Corporate Services Modernisation programme. It also updated the project methodology and managed the roll out of more streamlined documentation that is scaleable to fit the size of the project.

The Performance Team re-implemented CorVu as the Council's corporate performance system, with all targets and risks now managed through CorVu, which also saw significant development through the year in moving to integrate finance and projects. Re-phasing of development work meant that our original ambition to connect up other IT systems to CorVu and allow automatic updating was put on hold, and so a service target was missed. Work on ensuring 80% of council services have reliable benchmarking data fell slightly short at 71%, but this will be built on during 2012/13.

The Procurement Team managed over 80 Tenders and quotes including the development of several new corporate contracts for new spend categories delivering ongoing savings of over £90K a year. In addition several major

construction contracts have been awarded. The monthly supplier training sessions have continued with over 30 new suppliers trained. The team has also implemented Due North, an E-tendering solution which provides complete transparency of all our competitive processes and ensured that 60% of all quotes and contracts were web enabled. Despite achieving around £50,000 of new savings from procurement activities the ambitious target of £80,000 was missed.

- **Leisure and Parks** - Direction of travel for the service has been positive with significant improvement achieved in performance. Customer satisfaction and quality has increased with more people (including targeted groups) visiting our parks, leisure facilities and taking part in sport. Quality of service has been nationally recognised with four of the City's parks retaining Green Flag status, five leisure centres and the sports development team achieving the UK quality awards scheme for sport & leisure and Ferry Leisure Centre receiving recognition for improved finance and efficiency. Financial savings have been achieved without affecting quality of provision and the service has continued to invest in leisure and parks. The potential from the 2012 Olympics has been maximised with four annual events taking place across the city; the 2012 legacy plan will take this forward.

Annual participation in Streetsports was affected by inclement weather conditions and vandalism to one of the Multi Use Games Area. We are confident that target would otherwise have been met, if not exceeded. External factors such as Town Green applications and a judicial review affected the play programme and commencement of work on the new competition pool. Costs of Park Service data suggests that the target has not been met, however the annual data for 2011/12 has not yet been validated and the figure reported is that for 2010/11.

- **Policy Culture and Communication** – Overall, this was a positive year for Policy, Culture and Communications. Particular highlights relate to data management and museum outreach work.

The social research officer has produced regular high-profile publications - chart of the month and the Oxford Profile leaflet - as well as supporting strategy development with ad-hoc analyses and responding to around 100 individual data enquiries from officers, members, businesses and residents. The Oxford Profile leaflet has been widely distributed to partner organisations, and two of this year's charts featured in the local media including the lead article in the Oxford Times. The biggest challenge has been the County Council's decision to restructure the staffing of Oxfordshire Data Observatory. As a result of this, the four District Councils have switched their funding from the County Council to the City Council. We are now providing a 'District Data Analysis Service' to them which follows our successful model

Over the past year the Museum of Oxford community engagement team has successfully engaged with over 2500 vulnerable and hard to reach people. This has resulted in research, art work, film and animation displayed in exhibitions in the Town Hall Gallery, The Oxfordshire Museum and the Ashmolean. Evaluation shows groups have developed confidence and pride in themselves and their work. Projects from the service were used as case studies to support the successful Oxford ASPIRE partnership bid to Arts Council England to secure funding for the next three years.

Performance against the Town Hall income target was disappointing. This is because activities relating to income achievement were not sufficiently aligned at the beginning of the year with Offices for the Future (OFTF) and other projects being undertaken by Corporate Assets. However, the impediments to progress experienced over the last year have now largely been removed e.g. OFTF has been completed, the work on the fire escapes has been finished, and redecoration in most of the meeting rooms has been completed. With the new museum galleries and the licensed café opening in late June, along with the availability of wi-fi in all lettable rooms, income targets in the coming year should be easier to achieve.

**ICT Strategy** – The partnership with County ICT proved valuable in 2011/12 as the partnership targets were surpassed each month, consistently yielding 100% of KPIs achieved each month. All but thirty desktop and laptop computers across the Council have been replaced since the start of the County partnership agreement. Whilst the contact centre had two occasions of telephone disruption, our core telephony system had 100 per cent availability during working hours across the year. 100% percent of Data Protection requests that were submitted to City ICT were responded to within the required timescale. Additionally 98% of 9,557 changes, requests and incidents to County ICT by City Council staff were completed within the SLA targets. In our first year of operation City ICT have successfully completed a further 6,500 changes, requests and incidents.

2011/12 was a busy year for business system application and infrastructure upgrades. A generator has been installed for the ICT Data Centre at the Clarendon centre, and a new ICT Disaster Recovery Centre has been commissioned at Kidlington, holding copies of our major business systems. We have implemented electronic document management systems with revenues and benefits. New modules to our Uniform and IDOX systems mean our entire planning application process can now be accomplished entirely on-line. We have upgraded Servitor and Optitime housing maintenance systems and we have tripled the number of hand-held devices in use by Direct Services to 170.

- **Customer Service** – Performance in Customer Services has improved significantly from the previous year. There were some performance indicators not met, but these were mainly in areas where the target was particularly stretching – for example in Benefits and Customer Contact. The need to improve has meant a considerable amount of change to business as usual to help us meet our targets. The financial climate has made Revenues and Rent collection challenging.

The Customer Contact team achieved 89% of telephone calls answered first time against the target of 90%. A lot of service improvements were made in the second half year to achieve this out turn. Considering the low performance earlier in the year when only approximately 65% of calls were being answered first time, this represents a significant achievement. The biggest challenge has been to multi skill all staff to enable them to deal with all enquiries offered to the Contact Centre. This has involved taking staff away from the work place in order to provide them with the training, whilst ensuring service performance remains on target. Most of the training has been completed and has resulted in nearly 90% of calls being resolved by the team without hand off to the back office. This demonstrates clearly that the concept of the multi - skilled Customer Service Officer at the front end of

our business is a successful model, which we will work to continually improve over the next 12 months.

Benefits performance was over target for both processing new claims and handling changes in circumstances. The targets were quite rightly stretching, and proved to be particularly challenging for two reasons. Firstly, the introduction of the Department of Work and Pension's ATLAS (Automated Transfer to Local Authority Systems) project which resulted in a significant increase in the number of notifications received by the Benefits Service in relation to changes in customer benefits. Secondly, through undertaking the Fundamental Service Review that was carried out in the Benefits Service. However, despite these challenges, we finished the year up to date. Statistical releases by the DWP for Q2 and Q3 2011/12, show a worsening level of performance nationally compared with the same period in 2010/11, which mirrors our experience. The Fundamental Service Review successfully involved the team in reforming the service offering, and matching that to customer need. The review has delivered the savings required, and will introduce automated benefit applications and risk based verification this year to further improve performance.

The Revenues team collected 97.75% of Business Rates, exceeding their collection target of 97%. This was an improvement on last year's result. The overall arrears brought into the financial year at 1st April had dropped by nearly 59% by 31st March 2012. The team collected 96.80% of Council Tax by the end of the financial year, just 0.2% short of the target. The arrears carried forward on 01/04/11 had decreased by 40% by 31st March 2012. Various improvements have been made to data quality including a County-wide approach to a full single person discount review; a new inspection process which has reduced the number of inspection visits required and the implementation of a rolling exemption and discount review.

Rent arrears at the end of 2011/12 were £643k; this is an increase of £107.5k from the start of the year (an increase of 0.3% of the rent roll). We enter 2012/13 with a debt of under 1.7% of the rent roll, which in comparison to other Local Authorities and Social Landlords is a good result.

## **5. Financial implications**

5.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

## **6. Legal Implications**

6.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

<b>Name and contact details of author:-</b>
---

Name: Neil Lawrence
---------------------

Job title: Performance Improvement Manager
--

Service Area/Department: Business Improvement & Technology
--

Tel: 01865 252542
-------------------



This page is intentionally left blank