

To: Cabinet
Date: 09 October 2019
Report of: Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report: Performance Monitoring – Quarter 1

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations concerning the Performance Monitoring 2019/20 Q1
Key decision:	No
Scrutiny Lead Member:	Councillor Andrew Gant, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Susan Brown, Leader, Economic Development and Partnerships
Corporate Priority:	An Efficient and Effective Council
Policy Framework:	None
Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.	

Appendices
None

Introduction and overview

1. At its meeting on 03 September 2019, the Scrutiny Committee considered the Performance Monitoring 2019/20 Q1 report. The report details Council performance against a set of indicators the Committee has chosen to track for the period 01 April 2019 to 30 June 2019.
2. The Committee would like to thank Rachel Heap, Corporate Governance Officer, for compiling the report.

Summary and recommendation

3. In considering the Performance Monitoring 2019/20 report the Committee have devised six recommendations as outlined below.
4. On an overall point, the Committee was appreciative of the efforts made by officers in responding to questions raised by Committee members prior to the meeting and with little notice. It was felt that notwithstanding the pressure on officers it was a valuable approach in providing more informed scrutiny. Whilst all efforts will be made to mitigate the short time-scales, the Committee wishes to flag the likelihood of repeating the approach in the future in order to enable planned accommodation by officers when it does.
5. Whilst clearly many of the indicators used to monitor performance relate to specific functions of the Council itself, a number of the indicators, such as BI001 (the percentage of spend with local business, CH001 (days lost to sickness), and CoS031 (effective delivery of the capital programme) are organisationally cross-cutting in nature. It was unclear to the Committee whether, and if so, how, these cross-cutting indicators included or did not include data from Oxford Direct Services or Oxford City Housing Limited. Determining this will help the Committee form a view on the sufficiency of current performance monitoring arrangements.

Recommendation 1: There should be clarification about which, if any, of the corporate performance indicators include data from Oxford Direct Services or Oxford City Housing Limited and the way in which these were used, particularly in reference to whether under measure BI001 (percentage of Council spend with local businesses) Oxford Direct Services is recorded as a recipient of Council spend, a contributor to Council spend or both?

6. The Committee queried ED002 (Implementation of measures to reduce the City Council's carbon footprint by 5% each year.) It was felt that the natural reading implied an absolute reduction, rather than a relative one. It was also felt that without information on the assumptions that lay behind the calculation of the notional carbon figure against which the Council's reduction target was to be measured against the usefulness of the measure was difficult to judge.

Recommendation 2: That the wording of measure ED002 (Implementation of measures to reduce the City Council's carbon footprint by 5% each year) should be reviewed and that information on the methodology for calculating the Council's anticipated carbon footprint be made available to members of the Scrutiny Committee.

7. In relation to the Council's monitoring of Fusion, measure LP220 (The number of people from the Council's target groups using its leisure facilities) was felt by the Committee to require additional monitoring. Whilst appreciating the impact of

concessions on the following measure, revenues is felt to be more a robust overall measure of performance. On the basis that cleanliness and maintenance are the biggest source of complaint, progress against maintenance targets is felt by the Committee to be the best indicator of customer satisfaction.

Recommendation 3: That indicator LP220 (The number of people from the Council's target groups using its leisure facilities) be supplemented with two further measures: i) revenue vs previous periods, and ii) progress against maintenance targets.

8. With regards to measure CoS031 (Effective delivery of the capital programme) the Committee commented on how it is currently unclear what the percentage measure actually refers to: milestones, total spend or projects.

Recommendation 4: That measure CoS031 (Effective delivery of the capital programme) be changed to either i) disbursements, or ii) contractual commitments as a percentage of budgetary targets.

9. In discussing the Council's performance against measure WR001 (Number of people moved into work by the Welfare Reform Programme) the Committee discussed feedback by the officers indicating the existence of seasonality within performance. Quarter 1 performance was considered in light of the challenges the Welfare Reform team were experiencing in regards to retention of staff. It is the feeling of the Committee that even with the positive season effects to come, the challenges faced by the team make it unlikely that they will achieve the target figure and that Council consider whether it wishes to maintain an unrealistic target.

Recommendation 5: That in light of the challenges facing the Welfare Reform team, WR001 (Number of people moved into work by the Welfare Reform Programme) is no longer realistic and that a revised target be agreed.

10. The Committee noted the comments made in the report in relation to indicator CS054 (Time taken to determine DHP applications) that 40% of applications were from Universal Credit claimants. Delays arising from the processing of Universal Credit, an externally performed function, made it impossible to meet the target. The fact that the Council is processing applications within the relevant timeframes when they are within its control is welcome, but it is felt by the Committee that the degree to which external factors distort the Council's own performance merits a reconsideration of the criterion.

Recommendation 6: That in light of the growth of Universal Credit and the increasing influence factors external to the Council have on the delivery of this criterion that Cabinet considers whether indicator CS054 (Time taken to determine DHP applications) remains fit for purpose.

11. The Committee also gave consideration to levels of long-term sickness amongst the service areas referenced as having a higher than target level of absence under measure CH001, the cost of enforcement action for Council Tax under indicator BV009, and the degree of the Council's liability following the breach of contract by the solar car port contractor at the Leys Pool under indicator ED002 but made no recommendation.

Further Consideration

12. Ongoing, regular scrutiny of the Council's performance forms a fundamental part of the Committee's function. The Committee affirms its commitment to continued quarterly consideration.

Report author	Tom Hudson
Job title	Scrutiny Officer
Service area or department	Law and Governance
Telephone	01865 252191
e-mail	thudson@oxford.gov.uk