

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet 18 February 2008
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INTEGRATED BUSINESS MONITORING REPORT – APRIL TO DECEMBER 2007

Purpose

1. To provide Cabinet with an opportunity to review third quarter performance against budgets, performance targets and service first standards.
2. This integrated report brings together three key performance management elements:
 - a) Finance (**Appendices 1 and 2**)
 - b) Performance (**Appendix 3**)

Overall Position/Executive Summary

3. Performance is generally speaking on target but where it is not, it is not seen as being of critical importance to the achievement of our objectives and priorities.
4. The forecast underspend on the General Fund is now predicted as £555,700. This predicted underspend represents 2.96% of the original budget (target within 3%). The underspend is mainly due to higher interest on balances of £480,000.

Financial Position

5. **General Fund.** A summary position statement is provided at **Appendix 1**, with the more detailed position on departmental salary costs at **Appendix 2**.
6. At 8th January the General Fund projection is for an underspend of £555,700 on the working estimate. This represents a 2.96 % variation from the original budget which is within the 3% target. The underspend is mainly due to higher interest on balances of £480,000. Consideration has been given to the use of the underspend to improve performance or achieve milestones and this will be kept under review. It has been assumed that the balance of the CGI budget will be fully spent in this financial year.
7. Highlighted below are the significant movements from those previously reported to Cabinet in December.
 - a) An analysis of salary related costs for December, as compared to revised estimates, is attached in **Appendix 2**. If the level of savings for December are replicated for the remainder of the year then there is a potential net underspend of £18,400.
 - b) The Local Development Framework budgetary provision is expected to underspend by £166,600 due to a reduction in inspection fees, printing costs and the slippage of expenditure into 2008/09.

- c) The rent rebate subsidy from the DWP is expected to be £59,800 more than that originally budgeted for.
 - d) Discretionary NNDR relief is now expected to be £10,200 less than anticipated.
 - e) The Resources Portfolio Holder will be requested to meet the potential costs of £80,000 to restore contaminated land at the Chalk Pits Litlington from the £75,000 allowed for precautionary items of this nature.
8. **Capital.** The Capital budget now has a predicted underspend of £231,400 attributable to the re-allocation of departmental costs.
9. **Housing Revenue Account.** On the HRA, the only significant change is that recharges from the departmental accounts are £10,800 less than that previously reported due to a vacancy in the Rents Section which will not be filled for a further two months, giving a small overall underspending of £21,300

Priority 1 – To Improve Customer Service (Appendix 3 Tables 13 to 16 refer)

10. **Milestones.** Good progress is being made and there are no critical delays. In particular, progress is being made in projects to improve customer/public involvement, including -
- a) The third Development Control Agents Forum arranged for February 2008.
 - b) Scrutiny and Overview Committee meetings now start at 5.30 p.m. and local people are attending and participating in discussions at the evening meetings.
 - c) Building Control have arranged for the first Focus Group meeting in January.
11. **Performance Indicators.** Excellent progress is being made in achieving the PI targets which support this priority, with 11 of the 15 PIs being estimated to be on target (Appendix 3 Tables 14 and 16 refer).
12. Four PIs, which may not achieve their target, are subject to focused activity to improve performance:-

SE226 - % of EH customers satisfied with the overall service
SF731 - % Contact Centre calls abandoned
SX25 – Standard search response days, received by post
SX26 – Standard search response days, received electronically

13. **Contact Centre.** The Short Term Recovery Team are putting in place measures to improve Contact Centre performance. There has been a fall in performance on abandonment rates (10.9%) and average response times (1 min 19 seconds) while improvement measures (such as training) are put in place, but performance is expected to improve over the coming months as a result of action being taken. Overall satisfaction with how the Contact Centre dealt with queries remains high at 94% this quarter against a target of 92%.

14. **Telephones at Cambourne.** All services at Cambourne maintained strong performance, achieving call-answering rates in excess of 98% within 20 seconds. The average wait time at head office was 3 seconds, although maximum wait times in excess of 4 minutes were recorded by some services. Call abandonment performance showed improvement against last quarter with only 5.4% of incoming calls abandoned. **Planning and Development Control** showed particular improvement. Service First has asked **Housing** to investigate its high rates and to take action to improve performance.
15. **Correspondence.** All services recorded an improvement or maintenance of performance in letter responses with the exception of **Housing**, where response levels decreased. Service First has requested that Housing investigate the decrease and put measures in place for improvement. Limited data is available for emails, but available data shows strong performance against the 10 working day standard.
16. **Complaints** The overall number of complaints has decreased. Only one complaint passed to level two, and only one was passed to the Ombudsman. Further work is being undertaken to ensure that full information is being entered onto the complaints monitoring system by services.
17. **Customer Satisfaction.** Development Control has started measuring customer satisfaction with the processing of planning applications. It is too early to give any significant results. Satisfaction with **Housing Repairs** personal visits remained high. 98% of tenants were satisfied with the way work was carried out, 98% of appointments were kept, and the service was awarded an overall average rating of 9/10 for customer satisfaction.

Priority 2 – To achieve successful sustainable communities for Northstowe and other growth areas (Appendix 3 Table 17)

18. As commented in Appendix 3, work on parish boundary reviews is being held up until the Department for Communities and Local Government has issued regulations and guidance in relation to the new provisions in the 2007 Act.
19. Cabinet received a report at the December meeting to enable it to make a decision on the formation of a Northstowe Trust and decided:
 - a) to establish a Northstowe Trust, including an early Trust Board;
 - b) that the Trust Board initially should comprise one representative from each of the funding partners, the SCDC representative being an elected member;
 - c) that the Trust Board should appoint a Director for the Northstowe Trust who would produce a Business and Development Plan for the Trust within six months, which would help inform the s106 Agreement in relation to the Trust;
 - d) that the Council commit funding for the first 18-24 months of the Trust, subject to the funding being matched by the other three funding partners.
20. The Strategic Growth Area Project Team received a discussion paper in January, which identified objectives and monitoring measures for the growth areas.

Priority 3 – To increase the Supply of Affordable Housing

21. **Milestones.** Good progress is being made on most milestones. Some delay is expected on three milestones (see Appendix 3), but the issues are being addressed and the milestones will be achieved early in 2008/09.

22. **Performance Indicators.** There are two main PIs for this priority area.

SH311 – Total number of completed new affordable homes. The target (565) will be missed by 93 units because eight schemes (79 units) have been delayed and two others (14 units) are not progressing. Due to the current economic climate, developers are delaying completions, which is beyond our control.

SH320 - Affordable housing permissions as % of all residential permissions. Currently, we rely on figures provided by the County Council to report on this PI. Delays have been experienced and further discussions will be undertaken with the County Council and, if necessary, other options will be explored for the provision of the data (which originates with this Council).

Other Corporately Important PIs

23. The Performance Plan 2007 identifies 57 other PIs, which measure progress in corporately important areas such as Quality of service, Cleaner Villages and Environmental Quality. Officers report that 41 (i.e. 72 %) are on target and 16 (i.e. 28 %) are subject to a non-critical target miss (See Appendix 3 Table 'Corporately Important performance Indicator Summary').
24. No PI is the subject of a critical target miss. The PIs which are unlikely to achieve their end of year target are:-

BV66c - % of tenants in arrears who have had notices of seeking possession served
BV 76d – The number of prosecutions and sanctions per 1,000 caseload
BV79a - % cases for which the calculation of the amount of benefit was correct
BV82ai - % of household waste arisings sent for recycling
BV183a – Average length of stay in B&B
BV183b – Average weeks in hostel accommodation
BV199a – % relevant land and highways having deposits of litter and detritus
BV199b – % relevant land and highways where levels of graffiti are visible
BV199c - % relevant land and highways where levels of fly posting are visible.
BV204 - % planning appeals allowed
BV212 - Calendar days to re-let local authority dwellings let in the year.
BV214 - % Households accepted as homeless
BV218b - % abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours
SX17 – Income attracted from other funding agencies as a result of capital grants

25. None of these targets will be missed by a significant amount and officers will continue to work to achieve them. A few typical examples of the position for these PIs follow:

BV 76d - The number of prosecutions and sanctions per 1,000 caseload

Annual Target 10 sanctions. End of Year Estimate 9 sanctions

26. Investigative resources are very limited (i.e. just one officer) and the investigation of several serious and very complex fraud cases has reduced the capacity to investigate other cases. In addition the Government suspended the Housing Benefit Matching Service following the well-publicised loss of child benefit data and consequently no cases have been received from that source for the last two months.

27. The latest end-of year projection of 9 sanctions per 1,000 benefit cases still represents an improvement on the 06/07 performance of 8.2 sanctions and is expected to remain in the top quartile of district councils. To achieve the target set, additional investigative resource would be required for the final three months of the year. The estimated cost of employing an experienced investigator through an employment agency for two months would be £10,000. Given the excellent performance with the available resource additional funding is not considered appropriate.

BV183a – Average length of stay in B&B

Annual Target 2 weeks. End of Year Estimate 2.7 weeks

28. The PI is calculated on the basis of households to whom we have fully discharged our homelessness duty in the last quarter. Where B&B has been used, this may reflect time spent in B&B some 3-4 years ago. Therefore this is historic information and does not reflect the current picture of not having used any B&B this year.

BV183b – Average weeks in hostel accommodation

Annual Target 24 weeks. End of Year Estimate 26 weeks

29. Changes in processes and procedures during the year are resulting in significant improvements in performance. Interim changes to the current lettings policy were introduced. A new lettings policy will accompany the introduction of the Choice Based Lettings Policy in February. Due to the reducing number of households in temporary accommodation overall, one hostel will also be closed and the staff redeployed to provide further support to residents through the choice based lettings process. It is hoped that these changes will bring about even more significant improvement in performance in 2008/09.
30. The improvement in the 07/08 performance can clearly be seen through the following statistics:

2007/2008	Actual Cumulative Performance
April to June	44 weeks
April to September	37 weeks
April to December	31 weeks
April 07 to March 08	Estimate 26 weeks

31. The end-of year estimate is based on the knowledge that the actual performance for the period October to December 2007 was 21 weeks.

Homelessness – General Comment

32. The actual number of households in all types of temporary accommodation continues to reduce significantly, due to increased homelessness prevention and changes in working practices. In 2005 the government set all local authorities the target of reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation by half by 2010. In 2005 we had 147 households in temporary accommodation and therefore our target figure was 74 households by 2010. This was reached last quarter (72 Households) and there has been a further reduction to 64 households in temporary accommodation at the end of Dec 2007.

New Performance Management Software System

33. The County Council and Cambridge City have selected a system named CORVU, which is also our preferred solution. This is a highly satisfactory outcome as it will more readily facilitate joint working on all partnership issues e.g. LAA/LSP and the new National Indicators (NIs).
34. Consultations are taking place, with the County Council, to enable us to decide whether the best value for money option is to enter into our own contract for the product or to enter into a joint framework contract with the County Council.
35. Working closely with the County Council, it is expected the new system will replace PIMMS from April 1 onwards. Key elements of the new system could be in place by the end of May 2008, ready for the 2008/09 financial year. Other elements would then be rolled out during the first half of 2008/09.
36. Policy Development Committee received a presentation on the use of the new performance management system in January. There will be workshop events about the use and benefits of the new system commencing in March 2008.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

Affordable Homes	The effect of any under or overspending on the achievement of corporate objectives, annual priorities and performance indicators and the linking of budgets with service performance would be an outstanding issue which would need to be addressed.
Customer Service	
Northstowe and other growth areas	

Executive Management Team (EMT)

37. EMT has identified the following actions to address issues raised by the report:
 - a) To request the Contact Centre Recovery Team to pursue vigorously the programme to improve Contact Centre performance (para 13).
 - b) To confirm the Service First request for the Housing service to investigate its telephone abandonment high rates and its response to correspondence (paras 14 and 15)
 - c) To ensure the updating of complaints monitoring records in all service areas to meet agreed standards and processes (para 16).
 - d) To request the Planning service to expedite improvements in the gathering of information for PI SH320 (Affordable Housing Permissions) given the importance of this PI in measuring progress on a Council priority (para 22).
 - e) For all Corporate Managers to continue to seek to improve end-of-year performance for PIs and to identify opportunities where they can still remedy the areas of PI weakness (para 24).
 - f) To note that the new Performance Management system will be implemented from February onwards and that it will replace PIMMS (para 33 to 36).

Recommendations

38. Cabinet is recommended to:
- a) Confirm the actions of EMT (para: 37).
 - b) Continue to address performance issues at portfolio holder meetings – focusing particularly on PIs where end-of-year targets are not expected to be met (para 24).
 - c) Recognise the improvement in performance of the Housing Options team in reducing the use of B&B and hostels (para 32).
 - d) Note the imminent launch of the new Performance Management system, which will provide an essential tool to enable the Cabinet to improve performance management at the Council. (paras 33 to 36).

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: The Performance Plan 2007

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