

Report of Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Report to Scrutiny Board (Housing and Regeneration)

Date: 20th July 2012

Subject: Queries Raised Under Quarter 3 Performance Report March 2012

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. At the last Scrutiny meeting Members expressed concern that issues raised by the former (Regeneration) Scrutiny Board on 27th March 2012 under the Quarter 3 performance report had not been reported back to Members. The Board's Principal Scrutiny Adviser was asked to confirm the position and report back any outstanding issues to this Board in July 2012.
2. The Board in March referred to the following matters
 - (i) The Core Strategy which was approved by Executive Board on 10th February 2012 and recognised the need to identify around 30% of new housing to be built on "Protected Area of Search" (PAS) and greenbelt sites. Members asked how this figure of 30% had been calculated and how many hectares were involved. Members also wanted an indication of the percentage of PAS sites included in the 30% figure.

Response

The attached document marked as Appendix 1 details the information requested which had been submitted to a meeting of the Board's Working Group on 24th April 2012 which was completing its inquiry on affordable housing by private developers.

- (ii) The amber rating in the Red/Amber/Green system was challenged and whether there were alternative options available. Members suggested that it

would be helpful in future reports if changes were made to include the definitions for the ratings (previously agreed with Members)

Response

Red Amber Green (or RAG) ratings have been a key part of the Council's performance management framework for a number of years. The ratings are broadly given the following definitions:

- Green - Progress is as planned/expected over the last 3 months.
- Amber - Positive progress is being made but not as much as planned/expected.
- Red - progress is not being made as planned/expected.

They are designed to provide a consistent assessment of progress that provide a clear visual indication and can be applied across a range of types of priorities. Guidance (see appendix 2) has been developed by the Corporate Performance Team in conjunction with performance colleagues across the council and key partners to assist officers in making this assessment and to try to ensure that this is made in a consistent way by the range of council officers and partners that are involved. This guidance is flexible and enables the responsible managers to take into account a range of different factors and come up with an overall assessment of progress.

One of the potential issues with any overall rating system including RAG rating is the tendency for cluttering in the amber category. Some directorates and partnerships may choose a cautious amber when progress is broadly on track with others also choosing amber when progress is not really on track. There are also other scenarios where RAG rating is difficult to apply e.g. where there is a long delay in turning around outcomes e.g. health inequalities plans. Programmes and activities may all be on track but there is a significantly delay in seeing an impact on mortality rates. The current system does try to allow some flexibility to account for the wide range of outcomes and priorities. An area which does require further work is in making sure that the narrative of the performance report makes it clear why a particular RAG rating has been given. The Corporate Performance Team and Performance Board continue to work with report authors to ensure this is included.

In response to concerns raised by a two Scrutiny Boards including the former Regeneration Scrutiny Board the Performance Board is currently reviewing the RAG rating system and guidance to see if this can be improved. The views of the Board are welcomed to inform this on-going work.

(iii) That consideration be given to establishing an additional indicator to monitor the impact of the reduction in Section 106 Affordable Housing targets

Response

Officers in the City Development Directorate are working to develop an additional indicator in accordance with the former Scrutiny Board's request.

(iv) How many apprenticeships were converted into real jobs?

Response

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods advises that this information is not available.

Recommendation

3. The Board is asked to comment on and note the report.

Background documents¹

4. No documents were referred to

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.