



Report of the Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement

Corporate and Central Functions Scrutiny Board

Date: 6th July 2009

Subject: Council Business Plan Performance Report for Quarter 4 2008/09

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In
(Details contained in the report)

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since April 2008 and the introduction of the Leeds Strategic Plan and Council Business Plan we have seen a significant change to the council's accountability processes, in particular, the identification of lead and contributory officers for each improvement priority and the introduction of a reporting process that provides a single source of performance information to be used by the full range of different stakeholders in the accountability process.

At the end of the first year of delivery of the Council Business Plan this report provides an overview by exception (i.e. red and amber) on the progress against the improvement priorities at Quarter 4 2008/09.

2.0 Purpose of this Report

- 2.1 This report provides a strategic overview of performance against those improvement priorities within the Council Business Plan 2008-11. The Action Tracker Summary Sheet (appendix 1) gives an overview of progress against each of the improvement priorities in the plan; a rating of Red, Amber or Green is applied by the lead officer to indicate the overall status of each improvement priority.
- 2.2 In appendix 2 to this report the full Action Trackers are provided on an exception basis for those areas of under performance and/or of concern in relation to the improvement priorities as at 31st March 2009. In addition, appendix 3 is a full performance indicator report with year end results for all Business Plan indicators, any relevant National Indicators together with any locally agreed indicators where appropriate. Through this process the Board receives the full set of performance indicator information.

3.0 Background Information

3.1 Executive Board approved a new corporate planning framework for the council in July 2007. The strategic element of this framework includes two high level plans which set the policy objectives for the organisation and our partnership working. These are:

- **Leeds Strategic Plan 2008 to 2011** - which sets out the customer/citizen (external) focused strategic outcomes being sought by the council and its partners for the city. This plan includes our requirements to produce a Local Area Agreement and is the main delivery mechanism for the Vision for Leeds 2004 to 2020.
- **Council Business Plan 2008 to 2011** - which sets out what the council needs to do internally to enable the organisation to achieve the Leeds Strategic Plan. That is outlining the business development, organisational change, process transformation and financial planning activities that we will be undertaking over the next three years.

3.2 Both these plans include a set of outcomes, improvement priorities and aligned performance indicators with three year targets. Through our performance reporting and accountability arrangements we track our progress against the improvement priorities as well as against the indicators in order to provide both a qualitative and quantitative picture of performance. This is because the scope of most of the improvement priorities is wider than that of the performance indicator and without some form of contextual reporting we would not be able to capture or monitor this progress.

3.3 Within this report the following information is provided:

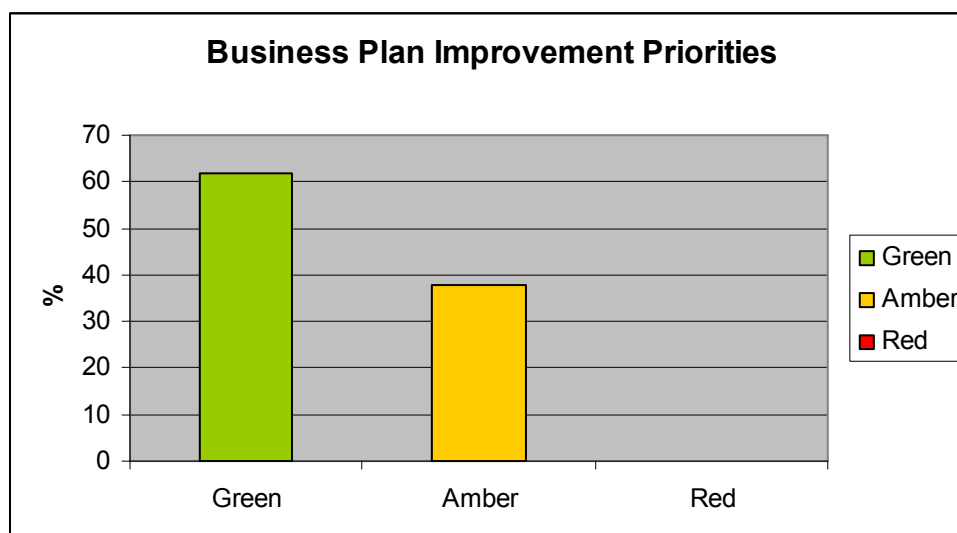
Appendix 1 Action Tracker Summary Sheet - this sheet sets out all the improvement priorities relevant to the Board and shows the full set of overall progress traffic lights.

Appendix 2 Action Trackers – this appendix includes the full action trackers for the improvement priorities that have been given an *amber* or *red* rating for overall progress. There is a guidance sheet to assist members in interpreting the information provided.

Appendix 3 Performance Indicator Report – this appendix provides a full performance indicator report including the year end results for all strategic, national and local indicators organised by Director/Assistant Chief Executive portfolios.

4.0 Main Issues - Progress Towards Improvement Priorities

The Council Business Plan contains 39 improvement priorities and 24 of these are making good progress overall and have been traffic lighted as *green*, 15 *amber* and 0 *red* – as illustrated in the graph below .



Areas where significant progress has been made include:

- VP-5a Reduce the carbon emissions from buildings, vehicles and operations – where a robust baseline figure and reporting mechanisms have been established, a target agreed with Government and the development of a number of initiatives enable us to meet this target.
- VfM-1a-c Delivery of Financial Strategy and improvements to resource management processes – in particular continued re-alignment of resources through our budget processes in line with our strategic priorities.
- VP-1a Ensure we have the right staff, in the right place with the right skills and the right time – as evidenced by the re-accreditation of Investors in People, roll out of new appraisal frameworks and development of our workforce development approach.
- VP-5c Support the achievement of our strategic outcomes through our corporate social responsibility programme – with the launch of our staff volunteering programme, and the roll out of the Community Benefits Charter with 29 responsible suppliers signed up to deliver community benefits through our procurement processes.
- VP-5b Increase the proportion of socially responsible goods and services – roll out and embedding of the socially responsible toolkit which was used on 36 procurements
- VfM-6 Improve quality and efficiency of Support Services – with in excess of £4m cashable efficiencies delivered over the last 2 years.
- VfM 4a Ensure strategic business transformation/improvement activity is prioritised and co-ordinated – the scope of the business transformation programme was agreed by Executive Board and capital funding for significant aspects of the enabling infrastructure were secured.
- IO 1b/c Use of information/intelligence to shape service provision, improve decision making and inform strategic planning – we published our first Joint Strategic Needs Assessment with Health and rolled out new performance management arrangements to track progress against the Leeds Strategic Plan.

In line with the agreed process the rest of this report focuses on the areas which have been given an overall progress rating of amber or red and for these areas the headline issues are set out below with more detailed information within the action trackers:

VfM-2a - Improve the efficiency of our services including maximising savings delivered through procurement, ICT and asset management.

VfM-2b - Embed value for money at all levels.

Good progress had been made in establishing a value for money programme (VFM) which has clearly defined projects and VFM activities aimed at delivering efficiencies. The corporate approach introduced this year, provides a consistent way of determining our priorities and clear links to service plans and budgets.

During 2007/8 we have identified and achieved efficiencies through the delivery of a range of initiatives including;

- The Support Services Review - £4m efficiencies have been achieved to date and we expect to achieve £7m by the end of 2009/10;
- Adult Social Care - £2.6m efficiencies were made within the Support and Enablement Service;
- Children Services - £2m efficiencies delivered through the review of commissioning arrangements for externally provided placements and Independent Sector Fostering Agencies;
- Environments and Neighbourhoods - £200k efficiencies relating to refuse collection;
- City Development - £100k (per annum) efficiencies resulting from under utilised bar and café facilities in some leisure facilities.

The approach to VfM which was developed during 2007/8 will continue to support us with the identification and realisation of further efficiencies for 2009/10 and beyond.

VP-4a - Ensure colleagues reflect the diversity of our communities.

Good progress has been made against this improvement priority. We have either met or exceeded three of our five performance indicators and during 2008 have started to deliver against this priority outcome through the Equality Board. We are continuing to develop our

work plans to reflect the range of activities which need to take place to improve the representation of BME staff and women (who are in the top 5% of earners) in particular. The employee data capture exercise undertaken during 2008 (with around 20,000 returns) has provided a more accurate picture of the make up of our workforce, which has resulted in more accurate reporting against the Business Plan performance indicators.

The Employment Equality Board was established earlier this year and will be a key driver in addressing areas where our colleagues do not currently reflect our communities and also in terms of ensuring that we have fair employment practices in place across the council. The work that we are doing to better engage our staff groups, once finalised in 2009/10, will help us to ensure that we are taking into account the needs of our diverse workforce throughout all of our activities.

During 2008/09 the council (including Education Leeds and ALMOS) achieved Level 4 of the Equality Standard. The standard recognises the importance of fair equal treatment in local government services and employment. We have started to use the standard to help us fully embed equality (in particular age disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation) into all of our council policies and practices.

VP-2c - Strengthen communication (skills and mechanisms) at all levels.

Good progress has been made with all of our strategic issues although the initial findings of the communications in service audit shows there are significant gaps in communications skills and experience across the authority which means much more work needs to be done to develop the required infrastructure and resources which properly meets the needs of the organisation.

VfM-4c - Embed a consistent approach to service planning which clearly links workforce and asset management planning, risk, financial and performance management.

The introduction of the council-wide service planning guidance, Challenge Events and a more rigorous and comprehensive quality assurance (QA) exercise with detailed written feedback for the 2008-09 plans means that there are now more robust processes in place for developing and tracking the quality of service planning across the authority than for the 2007-08 set of plans. This process also means that resources and capacity can be better concentrated in areas that need the most support to complete their plans and to embed a stronger culture of service planning. However, there are still some key service areas which need to significantly improve the quality of their service planning or where plans have not yet been finalised for this financial year, hence the amber rating for this priority. Steps are being undertaken to improve this situation and put firmer timetables in place for 2010-11, but this has not been delivered yet. The QA exercise for 2009-10 plans is to be completed by the end of June 2009, so the impact of the new process has yet to be assessed.

IO-3a – Increase involvement, engagement and participation of all communities especially hard to reach groups.

IO-3b – Build trust with local communities to encourage greater engagement.

The council continues to carry out a huge amount of consultation and engagement work aimed at increasing the involvement of local people in decision making e.g. consultations on specific projects, Place Survey, Tell Us survey, Citizen Panels etc. The results of these consultations inform the way in which we plan and deliver services and are an important source of strategic intelligence. However, we still continue to strive to coordinate this work in a more effective way both within the council and across the partnership but this work is still in its early stages. There have been some delays in progressing the Equality Assembly - these delays have been addressed and progress is in a forward direction. However, specific outcomes are currently limited, hence the amber rating for this priority outcome.

VP-4b – Ensure fair access to all our services.

VP-4c – Embed equality and diversity throughout the organisation.

There has been considerable progress made to embed equality and diversity and to ensure fair access to all our services. An indication of this is the NI140 result of 70%, the achievement of Level 4 of the Equality Standard, and the increased numbers of impact assessments which are being published on the internet. There is ongoing work with partners and the establishment of the Leeds Equality Network, although very much in its formative stage could have an impact on furthering the agenda in the city.

IO-2a – Improve our understanding of our customers.

IO-2d – Manage customer expectation and deliver on our promises.

The high level PI results are overwhelmingly positive, and indicate significant progress both in core performance and in developing a more consistent or 'One Council' approach to the six priority themes 2a – 2f for putting customers first. Commentary on high level progress, next steps and significant risks/challenges is provided below.

The council has achieved continued improvements in all indicators reporting a result in 2009/10, with four out of five meeting or exceeding their year-end target. The council now has a high-level baseline for levels of recorded avoidable contact, from which we will develop council-wide action plans.

The council has significantly increased (doubled) its original target for the volume of self-service transactions, and has strong expectations of new self-service options being well-used by citizens in 2009/10. The council has also improved its overall performance on complaints handling within the stated service standard, rising from 69% to 72%, although the improvement has fallen slightly short of the 76% target. Directorates under-performing are developing action plans to improve their performance.

In addition, the council has improved its performance in responding to letter and email correspondence within stated times, to 85% and 93% respectively. The council has also improved its overall call answer rate on publicly advertised telephone lines, and performance will further improve when under performing lines are transferred to the corporate contact centre during 2009/10.

VP-1c – Improve understanding and transparency of our decision-making and accountability processes.

VP-3a – Strengthen our democratic processes to improve governance and policy making.

VP-3b – Maximise member involvement in policy development, decision making and accountability.

Whilst good progress has been made in a number of areas, in particular the profile of Scrutiny Inquiries and in the delivery of the Ethical Action Plan, significant compliance issues have been identified with the council's decision making under delegated and sub-delegated powers. This not only put the council at risk of decisions being taken *ultra vires*, ie where a decision has been reached outside the powers conferred on the decision taker or where the prescribed procedures have not been properly complied with, it also undermines the democratic processes through which elected members can call in or scrutinise these decisions.

VfM-5 - Develop sustainable and effective partnership governance framework.

Good progress has been made in establishing the minimum requirements for governance arrangements for our significant partnerships within our revised Governance framework and to develop the register of what are our significant partnerships. This next steps over the coming year are to establish the extent of compliance with these minimum standards and to ensure any gaps identified through the monitoring processes are addressed. However, more work is also required to launch and embed the toolkit and the monitoring processes.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 That members of Scrutiny Board note the content of the report and comment on any particular performance issues of concern.