



Report of the Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement

Meeting: Central and Corporate Functions Scrutiny Board

Date: 7th September 2009

Subject: Quarter 1 Performance Report 2009-10

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

1. This report discusses the key performance issues considered to be of corporate significance identified for specific services related to Central and Corporate Functions as at 30th June 2009. The issues discussed in this report have been identified because performance in these areas impacts upon one of the following, the delivery of our corporate priorities, performance against the National Indicator set which will be reflected in our CAA judgement or the lack of assurance relating to data quality.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the key areas of under performance at the end of Quarter 1 (1st April – 30th June 2009).

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 This 'highlight report' has been prepared in readiness for the Accountability process, which included the CLT meeting on 18th August, Leader Management Team on 20th August 2009 and the Scrutiny Boards in the September cycle.
- 2.2 The issues discussed in this report have been identified because performance in these areas impacts upon one of the following, the delivery of our corporate priorities, performance against the National Indicator set which will be reflected in our CAA judgement or the lack of assurance relating to data quality.

3.0 Main Issues

Central and Corporate Functions Performance Issues

- 3.1 Overall performance this quarter against most indicators is good, with the improvements shown last year continuing this quarter. In particular improvements have been made in sickness and equality (top 5% women and BME), and also in the payment of invoices within 30 days, which has significantly improved this quarter where the issues arising from the introduction of a new creditors system last year were resolved.
- 3.2 The impact of the economic downturn continues to affect the council's financial position. A projected overspend of £10.9m relates mainly to the confirmed decline in income, low staff turnover (affecting vacancies and staffing budgets) and an increase in demand for services.
- 3.3 In the Resources Directorate specifically, Revenues and Benefits are seeing a significant increase in new benefit claims and although income received from council tax and non-domestic rates is down on 2008/9, the projections for this year are to maintain last year's position.

Data Quality

- 3.4 We are currently undertaking a review of the criteria used to inform the data quality judgements that are included in Accountability reports for each performance indicator. The process that we are using to drive these changes is the one that has been successfully adopted by our core city benchmarking partner, Sheffield City Council.
- 3.5 Our objective is to work closely with directorates and partners in order to adopt a more robust, consistent and over-arching approach that provides a wider based data quality judgement. This will be an improvement on our current process which is mainly focused on completion of the data quality checklists alone.

Targets

- 3.6 As part of the year end processes performance indicator owners were asked to review the targets for all indicators to ensure that these remain challenging, reflect 2008/09 performance and also pick up any changes in circumstance which are relevant eg the changing economic climate. However, these changes are subject to approval by Full Council and therefore remain interim until this has occurred. These targets are clearly marked within the attached performance report with an asterisk.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 4.1 Effective performance management enables elected members and senior officers to be assured that the council is making adequate progress and provides a mechanism for them to challenge performance where appropriate. Effective performance management also forms a key element of the organisational assessment under the Comprehensive Area Assessment introduced in April 2009. The CAA examines and challenges the robustness and effectiveness of our corporate performance management arrangements.
- 4.2 Our approach to performance management could improve policy making and decision making by making better use of the existing information in relation to the services the council provides either on its own or in partnership.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

- 5.1 There are no specific legal or resource implications of this report.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 This report and the attached appendix highlights the key concerns in relation to Central and Corporate Functions performance and data quality. As set out above many of these issues are arising from the economic climate and the services across Central and Corporate Function are continuing to monitor the situation and develop actions plans to address these issues as appropriate.

7.0 Recommendations

That the Central and Corporate Functions Scrutiny Board note the Quarter 1 performance information and highlight any areas for further scrutiny.