



Report of the Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement

Meeting: Environment and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board

Date: 14th 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 Environment and Neighbourhoods 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

3.1 Environment and Neighbourhoods Performance Issues

Serious Acquisitive Crime

Although performance is still a cause for concern, early indications from the week on week analysis of burglary offences is that there has been an overall improvement in performance following a peak at Quarter 3 2008/09 when around 230 offences were being reported. The LAA target for Leeds in 2009/10 equates to 165 offences per week and the latest weekly performance (week 17) is showing 158 reported offences. In overall terms, serious acquisitive crime has reduced by 1% compared to the previous quarter (5262 offences Quarter 1 09/10 compared to 5336). This is evidence that the priority being placed on acquisitive crime by the Police and Leeds Community Safety and their co-ordinated programme of activity is starting to have a positive effect. However, this performance needs to be sustained against the background of recession which generally correlates with increases in acquisitive crime.

Reducing Homelessness

The situation in relation to reducing homelessness is more positive.

It is reasonable to assume that a rise in homeless applications and temporary accommodation placements could have been a consequence of the economic recession. The Leeds Housing Options Service has seen a rise in the number of people requiring assistance because they are homeless, threatened with homelessness or in some form of housing need. There were 24,696 enquiries at Leeds Housing Options in 2008/09; the equivalent figure for Q1 2009/10 was 6640, which suggests that there will be approximately 26,560 enquiries in the whole year. However, the effectiveness of the Leeds Housing Options Service has meant that there has been reduction in homeless applications and temporary accommodation placements.

In common with all other local authorities, the council has been set a target to halve the number of households who are in temporary accommodation by the end of March 2010. The target is based upon the number of households who were placed in temporary accommodation at the end of December 2004 – 521 – and therefore the target was to reduce placements to no more 261 by the end of March 2010. At the end of June 2009, there were 227 households placed in temporary accommodation, meaning that the target has been met nine months ahead of schedule.

The target has been met because the council has become increasingly effective at preventing homelessness. 2008/09 was the first year when homeless prevention outcomes (1296) exceeded homeless acceptances of 1099. This trend has continued in Q1 with 350

homeless prevention outcomes compared to 153 homeless acceptances. Prevention outcome performance in 2008/09 was equivalent to 118 preventions against 100 acceptances. Prevention outcome performance in Q1 2009/10 was equivalent to 228 preventions for 100 acceptances. The council has a range of homeless prevention initiatives in place including:

Sanctuary Scheme – installation of security measures that enable a person who has experienced domestic violence or hate crime to remain ‘safely’ in their home.

Youth Mediation Service – help young people to reconcile differences with their parents so that they can return to the family home.

Private Sector Lettings Scheme – guarantee to quality landlords to cover the cost of rent arrears, damage to property or fixtures or fittings (up to the equivalent of four weeks rent) as an alternative to an up front bond payment. This helps people to access private rented accommodation as an alternative to a temporary accommodation placement.

Homelessness is a service area that can be expensive for the council, especially in relation to temporary accommodation placements. The Leeds Housing Options Service has established a homeless prevention fund, which can be used to facilitate a homeless prevention outcome, where the alternative was a temporary accommodation placement. This offers a more cost effective solution for the council and the Leeds Housing Options Service is committed to maximising such ‘invest to save’ opportunities.

3.2 Data Quality

- 3.2.1 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.
- 3.2.2 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.

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 issues in relation to Environment and Neighbourhoods performance and data quality. Although serious acquisitive crime performance is still a cause for concern, early indications from the week on week analysis of burglary offences is that there has been an overall improvement; evidence that the priority

being placed on acquisitive crime by the Police and Leeds Community Safety and their co-ordinated programme of activity is starting to have a positive effect.

On a positive note in terms of homelessness, although there has been a rise in the number of people requiring assistance because they are homeless, threatened with homelessness or in some form of housing need, the effectiveness of the Leeds Housing Options Service has meant that there has been reduction in homeless applications and temporary accommodation placements. The establishment of the homeless prevention fund offers a more cost effective solution for the council, and the Leeds Housing Options Service is committed to maximising such 'invest to save' opportunities.

7.0 Recommendations

That the Environment and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board note the Quarter 1 performance information and highlight any areas for further scrutiny.

Background papers

None