

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
6 DECEMBER 2011**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

**TITLE OF REPORT: PERFORMANCE INDICATOR MONITORING REPORT – POSITION
AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2011**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

1. SUMMARY

1.1 To report progress against performance indicators, for the period up to 30 September 2011. The full list of performance indicators are presented at Appendix A.

2. FORWARD PLAN

2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The “targets” for the required level of performance against the Council’s indicators, were agreed at a Member workshop held on 10th March 2011. This report, by the use of “traffic light status”, enables the Committee to monitor performance against these targets. The definition of each of the symbols and terms used can be found on the first page of Appendix A.

3.2 Where performance is below target, responsible officers for individual performance indicators (PIs) provide reasons for the under performance and details of any remedial action to be taken. These responses are shown against the relevant PI in Appendix A and in Section 5 of this report.

4. SECOND QUARTER 2011/12 MONTHLY/QUARTERLY PERFORMANACE INDICATORS

4.1 Traffic Light Status

The Committee receives reports on 17 monthly and quarterly PIs. Two of these, BV174 and BV175, racial incidents and resulting actions, are provided for information only and do not have targets set for them. The new indicator LI032, relating to planning appeals, has no target for 2011/12 as this is a “baseline” year.

Of the remaining 14 indicators

- 7 met or exceeded the target - “green”
- 2 did not achieve target, but performed within the tolerance range – “amber”
- 5 did not achieve target and performed outside of the tolerance range – “red”

4.2 When considering performance against the target only, this is an improvement on the previous quarter’s performance, as there is an additional indicator that has exceeded its target (“green”) and one less indicator that is below the set target (“red”).

4.3 Number of swims and other visits (MI LI015)

This indicator, which is collected on a monthly basis, exceeded the target in the months July to September. This indicator is therefore now “green” rather than “amber” for the first time since at least April 2009. The target for this indicator has been set according to the actual usage in 2010/11 so the use of these facilities has increased in 2011/12.

4.4 Percentage of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks (NI157c)

Following the implementation of the improvements to the handling of planning applications as reported to the Committee in September, performance has improved from 84.17% to 85.12%. The indicator is now “amber” rather than “red” (the target is 89.5%).

4.5 Direction of Travel

For 15 out of the 17 indicators it is possible to compare performance against the actual performance levels for the same period in the previous year to give a “direction of travel”. For the second quarter, performance improved for 7 of the indicators and 8 saw a deterioration from 2010/11.

4.6 Performance that has Exceeded Target Levels

The following areas of good performance are commendable, as not only has the target been exceeded but the performance is better than for the same period in 2010/11.

Indicator	Definition	Comments
BV9	% of Council Tax collected in the year	The Council Tax recovery rates continue to improve despite the current economic climate. The recovery rate was 57.86% as at the end of Sept 2010 and had improved to 58.22% at the end of Sept 2011.
BV213	No. of households where homelessness was prevented, per 1,000 households	We have assisted 138 households in the year to prevent homelessness compared with 135 in the same period last year.
MI LI015	Number of swims and other visits	As mentioned in 4.3, the numbers have increased from 639,341 to 639,538.
NI191	Kg residual waste per household	In comparison with the data for September 2010, we have reduced the amount of waste collected per household by 3kg.

4.7 Performance that is Below Target

Out of the 5 performance indicators reported with a red status in this report, 4 are also showing a decline compared with the same period last year. The table below shows these indicators, why the performance has fallen and what is being done to rectify the situation.

Indicator	Definition	Comments
BV12	Working days lost due to sickness absence	Short-term absence is at a very low rate at 1.33 days; this is an improved direction of travel compared with September 2010 when it was at a rate of 1.73 days. In one month of 2011/12 it reached an exceedingly low level of 0.06 days per employee. It is long-term absence (defined as a period of over 21 calendar days) that is performing less well in 2011/12. Long-term cases continue to be carefully managed and it is pleasing to say that we expect to see a downward trend since we currently (November 2011) have just two cases of long-term sick leave.
LI026	% of H&PPS programmed inspections completed on time	This indicator has been unable to recover in the second quarter but there is a slight improvement over the first quarter (59.1% compared with 55.1%). This local indicator covers a variety of inspections in this service area from food hygiene to licensing and houses in multiple occupation.
NI157a & b	% of major (a) and minor (b) planning applications determined within specified timescales	As mentioned in paragraph 4.4, there has been an improvement in NI157c, which is no longer red for this quarter. Performance against NI157a (major applications) has not shown an improvement over the past quarter. In the period April to the end of September, 23 major applications were determined, of which 11 were determined beyond 13 weeks. Four were delayed following negotiations, one awaited amended plans, one was referred back to committee and five were subject to lengthy Section 106 legal negotiations. NI157b (minor applications) has shown an improvement since the last quarter, with an increase from 56.52% to 64.24%.

5. IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS BEING UNDERTAKEN

5.1 Sickness Absence

As previously advised, the cause for the deterioration in the sickness absence indicator has been due to an increase in long-term absence rather than short-term absence which has actually fallen. To reduce long-term sickness absence each individual case is considered on a regular basis with HR and Occupational Health involvement. As at the beginning of September there were 7 members of staff on long-term sickness absence. This has now reduced to 2 cases.

5.2 **Programmed Housing & Public Protection Service Inspections**

Since, statistically, the most significant inspection programme (i.e. that of registered food hygiene premises) is below target a reprioritisation of officer workloads has been undertaken in order to increase short term inspection capacity. Additionally, managers have been allocated a modest number of inspections to undertake themselves in order to boost productivity until normal officer capacity returns.

5.3 The long term sickness of an officer working in the Licensing & Enforcement Team has had a marked impact on inspections in this area. However, a review of processes and procedures in connection with high volume licensing work has identified an opportunity to decouple the administration duties associated with new licenses from the inspection of existing premises. This disaggregation of work will enable Licensing and Enforcement Officers to concentrate on delivering their inspection programmes without unduly harming the Authority's response to new applications. Whilst not captured by this indicator, the inspection of taxis as regards their mechanical safety continues on an annual basis via the North Herts Homes depot, thereby ensuring that members of the public are not placed at undue risk. Random, ad hoc, inspections of the vehicle fleet will resume once the officer in question is able to take up their duties – this is anticipated shortly.

5.4 **Planning Applications**

The Committee will note that planning performance as measured by NI157 is starting to improve. This has followed on from the review of the validation procedure for applications. The time taken is monitored and intervention measures put in place if required. The distribution of the applications is monitored on a weekly basis in respect of individual Officer's workloads and the geographical location of the applications. The Service Manager is dealing with applications that have corporate implications. Delegated decisions are completed, where possible, 3 days before the expiry of the statutory period to allow for the determination of the application within the statutory period and the decision notices are issued on a daily basis.

5.5 The evidence from Covalent (see Appendix A) for 157a indicates that 39% less applications have been submitted and determined when compared with the same six-month period last year. For completeness, 157b decisions have increased by 79% and 157c by 4% when compared to the previous years six-month period.

5.6 A good health indicator is the percentage of applications that are allowed at appeal, the Committee will remember this as BV204. For the last 9 months of 2010/11 this indicator was red, for the first two quarters of 2011/12 this indicator has been green with the same target value.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this monitoring report.

7. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Failure to perform against those indicators which pose significant financial or reputation risk to the Council, such as increasing recycling rates versus the higher cost implications of sending waste to landfill, are further managed through the Council's risk management framework. The risks are recorded on Covalent and linked to the relevant performance indicator.

8. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no additional HR implications.
- 8.2 The Equality Act 2010 came into force on the 1st October 2010, a major piece of legislation which created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5th April 2011.
- 8.3 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give **due regard** to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (this can mean removing or minimising disadvantage; meeting people's needs; taking account of disabilities; encouraging participation in public life).
 - Foster good relations between those people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (such as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding).
- 8.4 Performance reporting provides a means to monitor whether the Council is meeting the stated outcomes of the district priorities, its targets or delivering accessible and appropriate services to the community to meet different people's needs. Although data is collected for BVPI 174/175 (racial incidents and resulting actions), this is only one aspect of ensuring that NHDC is offering equality of opportunity in its service provision. The Council's Risk Management Strategy is holistic, taking account of both enterprise and physical risks. It also considers the risks of not delivering a service in an equitable, accessible manner. This then fulfils the Council's obligations arising from the Public Sector Equality Duty.

9. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 9.1 Not applicable.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes and comments as necessary on the progress of performance indicators, for the period from April 2011 to September 2011.

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 To enable the Committee to fulfil its Terms of Reference to review the performance of the Council in relation to its performance targets.

12. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

12.1 None applicable.

13. APPENDICES

13.1 **Appendix A** – Performance Indicators Management Report from April 2011 to September 2011.

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15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

. Information recorded on Covalent the Council's performance and risk management software.