

# REPORT BY CABINET MEMBER CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES – JULY 2009

## Introduction

This paper describes the performance highlights and planned actions for the portfolio of the cabinet member responsible for Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources. This comprises the areas covered by Directorate of the Deputy Chief Executive, with the exception of ICT and Information, (which falls to the Cabinet member for ICT, Education and Achievement) but with the addition of smallholdings.

## 1 – Budgets

The budget for the whole of the Deputy CX directorate in 2008-09 was overspent by £198k. The biggest area of overspend was in Legal and Democratic though this was offset by underspends in Corporate Programmes and Customer Services and in ICT.

The budgets for 2009-10 are as follows;

**Table 1**

<b>The Budget for each service area for 2009-2010 is:</b>	<b>(£,000)</b>
Central directorate costs	205
Communications	393
Partnership	199
Corporate programmes and customer services	67
Policy and Performance (inc Emergency Planning)	874
Legal and democratic	2,770
Human Resources and organisational development	1,503
Information services	367
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>6,378</b>
<b>ICT</b> [ <i>includes; ICT Services, INFO, Connects, Corporate ICT projects &amp; Community network</i> ]	8,721
<b>Overall total for whole directorate</b>	<b>15,099</b>
Smallholdings	(164)
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>14,395</b>

### Smallholdings

On 25<sup>th</sup> June, Cabinet agreed the policy framework for the new smallholdings strategy, following consultation with tenants, their representatives and Herefordshire Young Farmers. The policy contains some significant changes to the current approach and has given a local context to this important area of council service delivery. It is supported by the capital investment agreed by council in this year's budget.

## **2 – Performance against targets**

This portfolio is responsible for 19 performance indicators. At year-end 11 were rated as green, 7 were red and 1 was amber. A breakdown of all of the above indicators and their ratings can be found at appendix 2 and a list of indicators rated as 'red' can be found at appendix 3.

[Note; 'Green' indicates that the indicator has achieved target, 'Amber' indicates that outturn data is still not known, 'Red' indicates that indicator has failed to reach target].

It should be noted that a number of indicators within this portfolio are new and therefore have no historical data to benchmark against. Wherever possible, targets for these indicators are currently being set.

A baseline position has now been established for National Indicator 14 (avoidable contact) and the result of 27.18% appears to be consistent with other authorities in this regard. A detailed action plan has been developed to cover the broadening scope of this indicator, which will support the improvement of performance in this respect of all customer-facing services across the authority.

All of the seven indicators judged to be 'red' fell into the area of HR and OD. In general, much of this underperformance can be seen as either marginal or as a consequence of the very small numbers of employees within the measurement, which leads to disproportionate swings in performance when changes occur. The indicators in HR and OD will be largely revised for 2009-2010 so as to form a more effective set of organisational performance measures.

Of particular note however, was the non-achievement of the corporate sickness target (BVPI 12). To improve the performance of this indicator, each Directorate now has a specific target in relation to sickness absence and particular attention is being given to those areas where performance in this respect is most challenging. Revised guidance on the management of sickness absence has been issued to all managers along with a revised programme of management training and support.

## **3 - Feedback from surveys, customers & stakeholders and key points from self assessments, inspections etc**

### **Policy and performance**

- The Audit Commission Direction of Travel Assessment 2008 said that the council is, "Improving well. Performance has improved in most priority areas" and that "The Council contributes positively to community outcomes and works well in partnership to reduce crime and engage with diverse communities".
- The Council's Performance Improvement Framework is one of the Council's essential systems. The latest audit found all aspects of the framework to have been operated satisfactorily but makes a few recommendations for further improvement.
- The Audit Commission undertook its annual data quality audit during the year. The Council's rating remained 'adequate'.

### **Communications**

- Nearly one in two employees feel communication in the council is improving. The percentage of staff feeling informed about council plans, priorities and performance fell back slightly to 66 per cent compared with 69 per cent the previous year. The same percentage felt that they were kept informed about the development of Herefordshire Public Services. Those who say the council communicates with staff regularly when going through change is down slightly from 75 per cent to 73 per cent (but still compares well with local authority averages)

### **Partnership**

- The Government Office Review of the LAA reported that Herefordshire had made good progress in developing and embedding robust structures and mechanisms for delivery of LAA targets.

### **Corporate programmes**

- The corporate programmes team achieves 80% satisfaction ratings through customer feedback

### **Customer services**

- Customer services exit surveys show an increase in the number of people using the service for the first time. Most customers were seen between 0-5 minutes.

### **Legal and democratic**

- The Ombudsman's annual letter July 2008 said that the council's complaints process works well. For the first time, it is now in the top quartile for unitary councils, responding within 23.1 days on average (Benchmark = 28 days)

### **The view of employees**

- Feedback from the Employee Opinion Survey shows that, on the one hand, staff in the directorate felt that they get fair and equal treatment:

[Q3.1c 'Fair and Equal Treatment (Gender)'. This question had a 79% positive response rate, compared with 71% for the council as a whole and 82% for the directorate in 2007-2008.]

whilst on the other they have less control when it comes to planning their work:

[Q2.19 'I have control over planning and doing my work, which saw an 80% positive response rate. This compared unfavourably to the council as a whole (84%) and to the previous survey in 2007-2008 (83%).]

A working group has recently been set up to address corporate issues identified by the Employee Opinion Survey.

### **Human resources and organisational development**

- See appendix 1

## **4 - Key Changes and Achievements April 2008–March 2009**

### **Communications**

- In 2008, communications were unified for the council and the primary care trust, and now work to a single service plan and integrated strategy, including one set of key communication channels, communication and advertising policies, protocols and brand guidelines.

- Press release production improved from 853 press releases during 2007 to 1076 in 2008 (fewer than 5 cent of local authorities issue more than 750 press releases a year). Press coverage affecting the council and the primary care trust reached 5,341 separate articles during 2008 with over 90 per cent positive or neutral. [Note; press release production includes releases for the PCT. These make up approximately 10% of the total press release output]

- Herefordshire Council has compared its media relations and communications services with around 40 other large local authorities. Herefordshire Council was the third most productive in terms of press releases and coverage (producing almost double the average) and spent less than half the average on staffing costs. At the same time the unit has held overall costs at the same level for three years.
- Herefordshire Matters – the residents’ publication - now covers PCT as well as council services. Evaluation shows 73 per cent of residents read all or most of it, 24 per cent read a few articles and 2 per cent do not read any at all. Over 90 per cent find articles interesting, useful and covering important issues. Readership levels now exceed those of mainstream local press.
- First Press is sent to council and PCT employees at least once a week (was once a month) and is the most accessed part of the council and PCT intranets. The re-branded team brief system – Team Talk – was launched in April 2008 and is the most favoured by council and PCT staff with 79% receiving it face-to-face from their managers.
- The chief executive has held quarterly road shows to discuss key issues with staff. Attendance at these events has been high particularly at Plough Lane and Brockington.
- The frequency of communication to elected members and PCT non-executive directors has increased. The previously monthly Members News has increased to fortnightly and is presented in electronic and hard copy format where preferred. Service Update, the quarterly summary of operational matters, has been extended to cover the PCT as well as the council.
- Communications with schools and Parish Councils have been strengthened. There is a new electronic weekly publication - Schools Online - and a new electronic channel, Parish Online, for parish councils.
- A new joint branding framework for the council and the primary care trust, was developed in house. The design unit, with one full time permanent employee, produces some 300 pieces of work a year including annual reports, major brochures and booklets, as well as leaflets and flyers.

### **Partnership**

- Development of the new Local Area Agreement (LAA), which was signed off by Central Government without qualification.
- Review and restructuring of Herefordshire Partnership Governance structure and processes.
- Introduction of the Area Based Grant and agreed arrangements for how it is distributed between the council, PCT and other partner organisations.

### **Corporate programmes**

- ISO9001 in ICT and Corporate Programmes – three-year external revalidation audit passed with no non-conformances
- Successful completion of a number of projects and programmes including the new crematorium, the introduction of concessionary fares and the upgrade of the education network.

### **Customer services**

- Charter Mark Standard awarded for the third year in succession to Customer Services.

- A baseline position has now been established for National Indicator 14; “*Reducing avoidable contact: minimising the proportion of customer contact that is of low or no value to the customer*” data collection and submission of results.

### **Policy and performance**

- Completed the annual research programme, including user satisfaction, housing needs and employee opinion surveys, customer insight analysis, producing the annual State of Herefordshire report and demographic forecasts for the county
- Supported the Director of Public Health’s work on joint strategic needs assessment. This covers all matters affecting people’s life-chances, health and well-being and quality of life, not just health and social care as required by statute. A prioritised programme to fill the gaps in our knowledge is in place and being implemented; it includes the establishment of the *Herefordshire 100*, which is giving us a much better understanding of the needs and aspirations of minorities.
- The Council declared at level 3 of the equality standard for local government which was externally validated in February 2009
- A joint council and PCT strategic options consultation was carried out with the public in autumn 2008 to inform future plans and budgets. Together with the new national Place Survey, (known locally as the Herefordshire Quality of Life survey), this demonstrated public support for the council’s existing priorities.
- Assumed responsibility for the joint Council PCT emergency planning and business continuity unit on the retirement of the emergency planning manager. A review is currently underway to establish the appropriate structure and resources for the future.
- Cabinet approved the Council’s first data quality policy and an ambitious action plan to make this a reality. Although the majority of actions have been completed, progress has not been as rapid as was intended. However the recent management letter from the Audit Commission declares our position to be satisfactory and predicts further improvements when the actions that have been completed take effect.
- Led the council, PCT and partners’ preparation for the new system of Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), including a programme of multi-agency seminars and the preparation of comprehensive self-evaluations, which were presented to members.
- Have begun the development of a new, streamlined, approach to corporate performance reports, so that members and managers can focus on the most important issues and what is being done to tackle them.

### **Legal and democratic**

- Adopted local filtering system for dealing with complaints against Parish, Town and Herefordshire councillors in accordance the Local Government involvement in Public Health Act 2007
- Lexcel and RIPA accreditations renewed.
- ISO 9001 renewed for land charges and electoral registration
- Electoral registration was subject to Electoral Commission review and rated as “standard” or above in all areas.
- Registration Service unified to single district

### **Human resources and organisational development**

- See appendix 1

## **5 - Issues to address in 2009-10**

### **Across the directorate as a whole:**

- Supporting Comprehensive Area Assessment and World Class Commissioning.
- Driving the implementation of the new Performance Management and Risk System (PMR)
- Supporting the provider services review
- Devising the business case for shared services

### **Team specific issues;**

#### **Communications**

- To achieve improvement in the public's satisfaction with the council to 50 per cent (Sept 10). To improve how well informed local people feel about public services and how to access them to 50 per cent (Sept 10); and improve how well informed the public feel about how public services are performing to 50 per cent (Sept 2010).
- Ensure press release production at 1,000 per year (top quartile for local authorities and NHS trusts). Develop new performance measurement that link press release production and press coverage to national indicators that measure the public's perceptions of things such as Herefordshire as a place to live, satisfaction with the performance of the council, the value for money provided by the council and how well people from different backgrounds get along together.
- Brand audit to be undertaken in order to identify implement the new Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire branding by Sept 09. Objective to secure corporate branding for: libraries, youth services, strategic housing, info shops and info by phone, the council and PCT web sites and intranets, and PCT main premises.
- To increase from 50% the proportion of employees who feel communication is improving to 60% (2009) and 70% (2010) and reduce from 29% staff who do not speak highly of the council to others to 20% (2009) and 15% (2010)

#### **Partnership**

- Supporting the Herefordshire Partnership so as to achieve the Local Area Agreement and maximise Performance Reward Grant from Government.
- Refreshing the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy
- Developing a Community Engagement Strategy for the Partnership
- Putting in place an evaluation process which will assess the Partnership and its achievements

#### **Corporate programmes**

- Continued delivery of project and programmes including; shared service, waste management, new customer facilities at Ross and Ledbury, Herefordshire Connects, Butter and Livestock market proposals

#### **Customer services**

- Implement a revitalised Customer Service Strategy (this will incorporate Customer Engagement Strategy, alongside work from the partnership team).
- Design of new customer service centres at Ross and Ledbury
- Prepare for new Customer Service Excellence standard (assessment Jan 2010)
- Resolution of budget shortfall 2010/11 (500k)

**Policy and performance**

- Continuing CAA self-evaluation and leading the response to the CAA results in November 2009.
- Implement streamlined corporate management reports as a lever for improved performance across the council, Herefordshire Public Services and Herefordshire Partnership.
- The Emergency Planning Team will lead on resilience planning across the county particularly working with the Public Health Department in relation to the flu pandemic and in close co-operation with other public services.
- Making better use of current resources in research and intelligence and in public health to inform strategic decision-making.
- The development of a joint approach to Equality and Diversity issues across the Council and PCT.
- The development of shared statutory policies across the Council and PCT regarding Equality and Diversity
- Continuing to champion improvements in data quality across the Council and ensure the completion of the Data Quality Action Plan.

**Legal and Democratic**

- The implementation of the "Duty to Promote Democracy".
- Development of Empty Property Orders
- Translocation of Livestock Market
- Relocation of Butter Market
- Migration of Land Charges to new software Civica
- Review parish council election costs
- Implement new software for Register of Elections and Elections
- Review of Registration Service as single district
- Delivering the work programme for National Indicator 3; Civic Participation

## Appendix 1

### Human resources and organisational development

1. The HR teams are now working in an integrated fashion across both Council and PCT, although there are still dedicated operational leads to support managers in each organisation.
2. The central Recruitment team remit has been extended so that it is now carrying out all recruitment activities for Corporate and Commissioning functions in the PCT.
3. In November 2008, Anne Coutts commenced in post as Assistant Chief Executive, HR and OD. During 2009, two further key appointments have been made to the team: Anita Calverley has been appointed as Head of HR Services and Lucy Marder has been appointed as HR Manager, Learning, Training and Development.
4. In terms of HR developments over the last six months, the following are particularly important to note:
  - There have been concerted steps taken to improve the data quality levels on the Council HR databases, in preparation for the implementation of Agresso in 2010. This work has proved more onerous than expected, but has been completed in tandem with the development of a new performance indicator set and workforce reporting regime for both Council and PCT.
  - Particular attention has been paid to the indicators around sickness reporting and appraisal completion, and there are already signs that a dedicated programme around sickness management is beginning to pay dividends.
  - Within recruitment, a coherent apprenticeship policy has been developed in response to the national Skills Pledge. The central Recruitment team has continued to drive down the length of time taken to recruit to each post, and there has been a detailed audit of all recruitment processes across both Council and PCT in order to ensure consistency and efficiency of approach.
  - The new CRB team has been set up and has established a firm control on all CRB clearance processes; the team are now taking on a similar role in relation to registration.
  - A new induction half day was introduced for HPS, but this requires further review, which is being undertaken over the summer of 2009. A revised format will be in place from September 2009.
  - The HR teams have provided considerable input and support to the restructuring programmes taking place across Council and PCT, including the development of integrated teams in a number of services and directorates. There has also been the need for support in relation to a number of transfers, including TUPE transfers.



- In April 2009, the new Workforce Strategy for HPS for 2009 – 12 was approved by both Cabinet and PCT Board, and an action plan has been put in place to roll out the key workstreams within it.

5. In terms of organisational development and learning and development initiatives over the last six months, the following are particularly important:

- Within the wider organisational development programme, the production of the World Class Commissioning OD plan. The plan was commended by the Strategic Health Authority.
- The Leadership Academy has been set up and launched for HPS, and the first meetings have taken place. A very enthusiastic steering group will be guiding the development of the Academy over the coming year.
- There has been continued development activity with the senior management team, and approval has been given for the commencement of a master class series for second in line managers.
- With the appointment of the new HR Manager for Learning, Training and Development, a comprehensive audit of all training and development activities is being undertaken, and the leadership and management 'offer' significantly improved.
- The Adult Social Care and Corporate training teams combined to achieve Institute of Leadership and Management accreditation for delivering Team Leading (level 2) and First-line Management (level 3) programmes.
- Herefordshire Council's involvement in the West Midlands Coaching Pool and Management Board has continued.

## Appendix 2 – Performance Indicators 2008-09 performance at year-end

### Key

<b>RAG</b>	
Green	Indicator has met agreed target
Amber	Outturn is not yet known
Red	Target had failed to reach agreed target
<b>DOT</b>	Direction of Travel. Arrow indicates the trend compared with the previous year's performance, where available. (i.e; 2008-09 compared to 2007-08)

Number	Indicator	RAG	DOT
NI 14	Avoidable contact: The average number of customer contacts per resolved request	<b>G</b>	
BVPI 11b	The percentage of the top-paid 5% of Local Authority staff who are from an ethnic minority	<b>R</b>	▼
BVPI 11c	The percentage of the top-paid 5% of staff who have a disability (excluding those in maintained schools)	<b>R</b>	▼
BVPI 14	The percentage of employees retiring early (excluding ill-health retirements) as a percentage of the total work force	<b>R</b>	▼
BVPI 15	The percentage of Local Authority employees retiring on grounds of ill health as a percentage of the total workforce	<b>G</b>	▲
Local indicator	Direction of Travel assessment based on the rate of improvement	<b>G</b>	▲
Local indicator	Investors in people accreditation	<b>A</b>	
Local indicator	Average days per full-time employee per year invested in learning and development	<b>G</b>	
BVPI 12	Average working days per employee (full time equivalent) per year lost through sickness absence	<b>R</b>	▼
BVPI 11a	Percentage of leadership posts occupied by women	<b>R</b>	▲
BVPI 16	Percentage of employees who consider themselves to have a disability	<b>R</b>	▼
BVPI 17	Percentage of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) employees in the workforce	<b>R</b>	▼
Local indicator	Data quality measured in terms of the Audit Commission's four-point scale	<b>G</b>	◀ ▶
NI 1	% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area	<b>G</b>	▲
NI 2	% of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood	<b>G</b>	
NI 3	Civic participation in the local area	<b>G</b>	
BVPI 2a	The level of the Equality Standard for local government to which the Local Authority conforms in respect of gender, race and disability	<b>G</b>	▲
BVPI 2b	The quality of an Authority's Race Equality Scheme (RES) and the improvements resulting from its application	<b>G</b>	▲
BVPI 175	The percentage of racial incidents reported to the Local Authority that resulted in further action	<b>G</b>	▲

**Appendix 3** – End of year outturn figures for indicators judged as being 'red' – (missing their target)

<b>Number</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Lead Directorate</b>	<b>2008-09 Target</b>	<b>Outturn Mar-09</b>
BVPI 11b	The percentage of the top-paid 5% of Local Authority staff who are from an ethnic minority	Deputy Chief Executive	3%	2.33%
BVPI 11c	The percentage of the top-paid 5% of staff who have a disability (excluding those in maintained schools)	Deputy Chief Executive	1.40%	0.00%
BVPI 14	The percentage of employees retiring early (excluding ill-health retirements) as a percentage of the total work force	Deputy Chief Executive	<0.28%	0.38%
BVPI 12	Average working days per employee (full time equivalent) per year lost through sickness absence	Deputy Chief Executive	8 days	8.97 days
BVPI 11a	Percentage of leadership posts occupied by women	Deputy Chief Executive	42%	41.10%
BVPI 16	Percentage of employees who consider themselves to have a disability	Deputy Chief Executive	>0.86%	0.84%
BVPI 17	Percentage of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) employees in the workforce	Deputy Chief Executive	>0.73%	0.63%