

2002/2003 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE OUTTURNS

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

CABINET

10TH JULY, 2003

Wards Affected

Countywide

Purpose

To advise Cabinet of the outturn figures for the 2002/2003 national corporate health and local corporate performance indicators, and to highlight areas for improvement on an exception basis.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendation

THAT Cabinet note the corporate performance outturns for 2002/2003 and the improvement activity planned for 2003/2004.

Reasons

1. The Council has developed revised performance monitoring arrangements as outlined in the Comprehensive Performance Self-assessment document submitted to the Audit Commission. The revised arrangements ensure that the Chief Executive's Management Team, the Strategic Monitoring Committee and Cabinet are all involved in the performance monitoring process. This work has been taken forward and developed, as part of the revised performance management framework approved by Cabinet on 13 March 2003.

Considerations

1. Attached to this report at Appendix 1 are the outturn figures relating to the 2002/2003 national corporate health and local corporate performance indicators. These indicators have been reported in the Council's Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP), which was published on 30 June 2003, and will be subject to audit, by the District Auditor in the usual way.
2. Summary performance is illustrated on the attached table, in accordance with the method adopted in the BVPP, by way of 'faces' as follows:
 - ☺ = Performance on or above target and better than previous years
 - ☹ = Data not monitored or performance below target and/or performance has deteriorated compared to previous years

☹ = Improved performance compared with previous years but target not achieved

3. Performance has been highlighted on an exception basis where data has not been monitored in relation to targets or there is a variation on target of minus 10% and performance has deteriorated compared to previous years. Information has also been provided on actions and activity designed to improve performance during 2003/2004.
4. **National Corporate Health Performance Indicators** – Performance against the 19 corporate health indicators measured during 2002/2003 has generally been on target and shown improvement over 2001/2002, with the exception of the following:
 - **BV14 (Early Retirements)** - The Audit Commission changed the method of calculation of this performance indicator in February 2003 and therefore it is difficult to compare the outturn for 2002/2003 with the target set under the old regulations. One of the six strategic aims in the Human Resources Strategy is to '*ensure a safe and supportive working environment*'. Specific actions include risk assessments, preventative action, health monitoring programmes, well-person studies, alternative work policies, and the introduction of flexible working to support work life balance. These measures will assist staff to continue their employment with the Council for longer than would otherwise have been the case.
 - **BV16a/b (Disability)** - These indicators measure the percentage of staff meeting the Disability Discrimination Act disability definition in comparison to the percentage of economically active disabled people in Herefordshire. Again there are statistical factors that complicate the comparability of the data for these indicators. However, the Human Resources Strategy recognises that more needs to be done on this issue and a new Diversity Group has been established to drive forward improvement. Specific actions to date have included gaining the Disability Symbol User status in 2002 and a review of recruitment guidance. The Council also operates a 'guaranteed interview' for applicants declaring disability, who meet the essential requirements of a post.
 - **BV179 (Land Searches)** - During 2002/03 only 53% of land charge search requests were completed within 10 working days compared to the target of 100%. The number of searches received during this period was double the total for the previous year and there was also a large increase in personal searches during 2002/03. Staffing sickness issues and information technology difficulties also resulted in delays. Extra staff have been brought in to deal with the backlog and cover long- term staff sickness. Additional investment into IT systems is also planned together with more effective use of existing investment. Progress on searches is monitored on a weekly basis to give advance warning of any future problems.
5. **Local corporate performance indicators** – Performance against the authority-wide local performance indicators, which were introduced for the first time during 2001/2002, has been inconsistent. There has also been some confusion over the definitions of the indicators and delays in putting in place accurate systems to collect the data. The number of local corporate indicators for 2003/2004 has been reduced, in line with advice from District Audit, from 48 to 35. The issues highlighted in relation to the local indicators are:
 - **People** – It has not been possible to develop an accurate data collection system for the percentage of training plans implemented. A new system will be introduced during 2003/2004 to collect baseline information so that a realistic target can be established for 2004/2005. A survey to monitor the penetration of

Core News was not undertaken due to staff shortages, as a result of staff turnover, in the Public Relations and Research Teams. These vacancies have now been filled and a survey will be undertaken during 2003/2004.

- **Communications** – The percentage of complaints resulting in a change of practice during 2002/2003 was only 3% compared to a target of 15% and actual performance for 2001/2002 of 9%. Complaints Officers have been asked to review procedures within their Directorates and Departments in order to identify areas of improvement for 2003/2004. A detailed report will also be submitted to the Strategic Monitoring Committee on 7 July 2003, analysing complaints performance during 2002/2003 and outlining improvement activity for 2003/2004.
- **Access/Equalities** – Information on the percentage of new employees receiving Directorate induction within 4 weeks of commencing employment has not been collected due to the different approaches adopted across the authority and differing perceptions of what 'Directorate Induction' comprises. The situation will be reviewed during 2003/4 and in the meantime this indicator will not be used as a measure of local performance.
- **Customers** – Data on the overall percentage of local people who feel that the Council does enough to give them the opportunity to influence important decisions was not collected during 2002/2003. However, as part of the Council's Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA), a survey of the Herefordshire Voice, Citizens Panel, was undertaken asking: "*Do you feel that the Council does enough to give local people the opportunity to influence important decisions?*" The survey resulted in a positive response of 24% compared with a target for 2004/2005 of 20%. For future years attention will be focussed on the achievement of the LPSA target using data collected from the Citizens Panel.
- **Legal Services** – The percentage of the electorate from Wards affected by content attending Council/Committee meetings during 2002/2003 was recorded as 1.65% compared to a target of 2%. The Secretary and Solicitors Department are seeking to improve public access to Council decision making by putting agendas, reports and decision notices on the Council web site in an easy to use format and to improve information about public transport to encourage public attendance at meetings and knowledge of Council matters.
- **Excellent Services – County Secretary and Solicitor's Department** –The Department have been working with the European Foundation for Quality Management Standard as part of its commitment to service improvement. An assessment was undertaken in October 2002 when performance was shown to have been increased by 12%. An improvement plan arising from the assessment forms part of the Service Plan for the Department for 2003/4. No survey was undertaken by the New Unitaries Benchmarking Group in relation to the percentage of service indicators in the top quartile of National BVPI's. Other measures to compare the quality of the service against national performance are being investigated. Additionally, the Department recently successfully passed its LEXCEL audit. This is a national Law Society standard used across legal practices primarily in the private sector.
- **Research** – Data was not collected during 2002/2003 on the percentage of customers who were satisfied or very satisfied with the service provided and the percentage of project outputs completed to deadline, due to staff shortages, as a result of staff turnover. No targets have been set for these indicators during 2003/2004, but systems will be developed to collect the data so that baselines can be established and targets set for 2004/2005.

Risk Management

Failure to review corporate performance and improvement activity would undermine the implementation of the Council's Performance Management Framework.

Background Papers

- Herefordshire Council's Performance Management Framework
- Best Value Performance Plan 2003/2004