

2003/2004 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE OUTTURNS

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

CABINET

25TH SEPTEMBER, 2003

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To note details of the Council's reporting and scrutiny arrangements in relation to the National Best Value Performance Indicators, and an update on corporate performance from 1 April to 31 July 2003.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendation

THAT the Council's monitoring arrangements for the National Best Value Performance Indicators, and corporate performance from 1 April to 31 July 2003 be noted.

Reasons

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, Scrutiny Committees, and Cabinet are all involved in the performance monitoring process.

Considerations

1. During 2003/2004 corporate performance will be reported to Cabinet at 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12-monthly intervals in line with the Council's Performance Management Framework. However, due to different data collection arrangements, some performance indicators are monitored less frequently than others. Appendix 1 provides details of the frequency of collection for national and local corporate performance indicators reported to Cabinet.
2. Performance against the National Best Value Indicators is analysed by the Audit Commission and used as part of the Council's overall Comprehensive Performance Assessment. Appendix 2 provides details of the National Best Value Performance Indicators in terms of the frequency of collection and scrutiny arrangements.
3. Corporate performance for the period 1 April 2003 – 31 July 2003 has been reported on an exception basis and only those indicators where there is a variation on the target of at least + or – 10% are highlighted.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Tony Michael, Policy Officer, on (01432) 261823

Above target performance

4. **Housing benefit security – the number of fraud investigations, per 1,000 caseload (National Indicator – BVPI 76c):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 38 per 1000, whilst performance for the 4 months up to 31 July was 43 per 1000. The monitoring and prompt closure of not proven fraud cases has resulted in an increased number of investigations being undertaken.
5. **Housing benefit security – the number of prosecutions and sanctions, per 1,000 caseload (National Indicator – BVPI 76d):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 6 per 1000, whilst performance for the 4 months up to 31 July was 7 per 1000. The “scoring” system applied to referrals received ensures that priority is given to quality referrals resulting in more sanctions being administered.
6. **Number of recorded complaints, both formal and informal (Local Indicator):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 285, whilst the number of complaints recorded for the first four months of this year is already up to 205. The high level of recorded complaints reflects improved collection arrangements and a greater focus on customer service issues across the authority.
7. **Use of public transport (Local Indicator):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is to increase expenditure on the use of public transport by 5%. Performance for the 4 months up to 31 July 2003 showed a 39% increase, compared to the same period during 2002/2003.

Areas for Improvement

8. **Average time for processing new housing benefit claims (National Indicator – BVPI 78a):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 33 days, whilst performance for the 4 months up to 31 July was 50 days. A significant amount of downtime in software systems, the implementation of tax credits and shortages in staffing resources, have all lead to a down turn in performance in this area. The assessment team is now at full compliment and the majority of system issues have been resolved. Additional staff will also be recruited to deal with the implementation of Pension Credits in October. As a result, it is anticipated that performance will improve over the remaining 8 months of 2003/2004.
9. **Average time for processing notifications of changes of circumstance for housing benefit claims (National Indicator – BVPI 78b):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 9 days, whilst performance for the 4 months up to 31 July was 13.5 days. The late notification by the Inland Revenue of working tax and child tax credits entitlements in April resulted in a significant amount of additional changes in circumstances to be dealt with by the Benefits Team. Compared with the same 4 month period last year, the team have had to deal with 1,333 more changes in circumstances. These have now been cleared and an improvement in this area is expected during the next monitoring period.
10. **Percentage of housing benefit renewal claims processed on time (National Indicator – BVPI 78c):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 83%, whilst performance for the 4 months up to 31 July was 33%. Due to system problems the number of renewal claims processed was down during April. These problems have now been resolved and performance during July was up to 56%. From October 2003, there is no longer a requirement to issue renewal claims to pensioners and this will have a further positive impact on performance.

11. **The percentage of standard searches carried out in 10 working days (National Indicator – BVPI 179):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 100%, whilst performance for the 4 months up to 31 July was 74%. However, this compares with an outturn performance of 58% for 2002/2003, demonstrating a significant improvement in the percentage of searches undertaken for the current year. Provisional figures for August 2003, show that a 100% turnaround of searches has been achieved during the month, suggesting that the upward trend in performance is continuing.
12. **Percentage of complaints resolved at Complaints Officer level (Local Indicator):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 70%. Performance for the 4 months up to 31 July was 15%. Directors and Heads of Department are currently reviewing arrangements for resolving complaints at Complaints Officer level.
13. **Percentage of complaints resulting in change of practice (Local Indicator):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 6%. Performance for the 4 months up to 31 July was 3%. Directors and Heads of Department are currently reviewing arrangements for introducing changes as a result of customer complaints.
14. **Staff mileage (Local Indicator):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is to reduce mileage by 1%. Performance for the 4 months up to 31 July 2003, compared to the same period during 2002, showed a 0.5% reduction. Directors and Heads of Department are monitoring staff mileage within their areas to ensure that the corporate target is achieved over the course of 2003/2004.
15. **First Stop INFO customer enquiries resolved within agreed timescales (Local Indicator):** The target for this indicator during 2003/2004 is 80%, however performance for the 4 months up to 31 July was 53%. Service level agreements and the procedures for dealing with first stop customer enquiries are currently being reviewed in order to improve response rates.

Risk Management

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

Background Papers

None identified.