

Organisational Improvement and Greater Efficiency

	No. of indicators	On course to achieve target (or establish baseline)	Some progress, but data not available to determine whether the target will be achieved	Not on target / no activity reported
Corporate Plan (including LAA and HCS)	16	6 (7)	4 (5)	6 (4)
of which				
Local Area Agreement (LAA)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Herefordshire Community Strategy (HCS)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
All reported indicators	27 (27)	13 (15)	6 (7)	8 (5)

Direction of Travel		
	July	September
Improving	8	5
No real change	0	0
Deteriorating	6	9
Total	14	14

Headlines

- An increase in the number of reds, particularly within the area of Human Resources. Small numbers within indicators such as BVPI 11b 'the percentage of the top-paid 5% of Local Authority staff who are from an ethnic minority' mean that any change will have a disproportionate affect on the percentage outturn.
- Continued improvements in a number of Revenues and Benefits indicators, especially in relation to processing times.
- The Deputy Chief Executive's Office is currently forecasting an overspend of £220, 000, although savings have been identified that should balance the budget.

Interim Deputy Chief Executive Commentary

'Performance Indicators:

Overall, the performance shown by the Directorate's Corporate Performance Indicators show little change from the previous return and performance is broadly to expectation. However, there are some issues of note:

NIS 14 'Avoidable contact: the average number of customer contacts per resolve request': This indicator has been rated 'red' from the previous 'amber' due to the lack of progress according to the expectation set out in the Corporate Plan. Robust action is now underway across the whole of the Customer Services function, which will improve this situation, including:

- 1) A plan to ascertain the current performance benchmark is now in development. This will enable the reporting timetable to the national Data Interchange Hub to be achieved.*
- 2) A focused service improvement plan has been developed for the Customer Service functions. This has already significantly reduced the level of missed calls into the Authority.*
- 3) The CRM system upgrade is currently in the planning stages*
- 4) A revised and updated Customer Service Strategy is to shortly be considered by Joint Management Team*

A number of indicators are still to be benchmarked through the results ascertained from the 'Place Survey'. This is currently being undertaken according to the prescribed methodology. It is expected that the results of the survey (for which we are dependent on government releasing the results) will not now be available until late March 2009 – slightly later than originally envisaged

Connects:

The evaluation processes have now been completed for the 'Back Office' and 'Performance and Risk' systems. Recommendations will be made to Cabinet in November 2008.

CIVICA has been chosen as the IT system for the Environment Directorate. Implementation plans are currently being finalised.

The CORELOGIC project is expected to be completed to schedule. The system is expected to 'go-live' on the 10th November 2008. To date, over 450 users have been trained.

Other Matters:

An agreement has been signed with British Telecom regarding the provision of broadband service to schools within the county.

The external review process for compliance with the Equality Standard is now expected to take place in February 2009.

An internal review of the governance arrangements of the Herefordshire Partnership is underway - the results of which are expected to be available and implemented in the early part of 2009.'

Interim Head of Human Resources commentary

'The preponderance of HR performance indicators rated as red continues to be mainly due to the small target figures. Although these reflect historical benchmarking

within the authority and are therefore appropriate, the margin for error is very small. Often the traditional measure using percentages, equates to less than one full time equivalent, which can skew performance negatively at times.

To mitigate the inherent risks in this respect, an evaluation process is underway to assess a basket of more meaningful and appropriate performance measures, which will be introduced, for 2009/10 and this work will continue.

The primary exception to this, at present, is the average number of days taken off sick per employee. This has shown deterioration since the end of March 2008. HR is working closely with directorate managers to help correct this position as quickly as possible and remedial actions will be implemented to bring this area back on line. To this end the Managing Attendance policy has been updated and published, and following on from this we will be working to embed this and foster good practice across the whole of the Council.'

Resources Director Commentary

The Resources directorate has developed a set of five service plans that comply with the corporate standard. Our plans set out what we will do to focus our activity on supporting council priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan 2008 – 2011. The Resources directorate contributes most to the council's corporate priority on 'organisational improvement and efficiency'. We have reflected this in our service plans under the themes of 'our customers', 'our staff' and 'improving value for money'. Performance management arrangements have been established across the directorate at a team, head of service and directorate management team level. We have introduced a 'traffic light' system similar to that used in the ICPR to assess whether we are on track. Performance is reviewed at each level on a monthly basis and we monitor progress with implementation of action plans and provide feedback to staff in the directorate each month via Team Talk. We also review our financial position and risk register on a monthly basis. The Cabinet Member (Resources) is also provided with a monthly report on directorate performance.

Outturn performance at the end of September for the indicator basket relating to the Resources directorate is in line with expectations at this point in the year with the exception of the indicator for business rate collection. By 30 September 2007, 63.27% of business rates had been collected whereas this year we have collected 61.57%, a drop of 1.7%. There are indications that the change in legislation from 1 April 2008 that requires the council to collect full business rates for empty business premises is a contributory factor, but the service is receiving more requests for additional time to pay and more businesses are closing down.

The Financial Services team has contributed £400k to an improved corporate position by exceeding this year's treasury management income targets but we do not expect to make further gains given the impact of the credit crunch. Identified budget pressures within the directorate are being managed within the approved cash limit in line with the council's financial policies.

Informal feedback from the external auditor on our Use of Resources assessment for this year has been very positive and we are now quietly confident of an improved assessment for the 2007/08 period although this will not be announced until December 2008 at the earliest.

Overall, the direction of travel for the Resources directorate remains positive.