

CORPORATE HEALTH PERFORMANCE

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

CABINET

23RD SEPTEMBER, 2004

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To receive an update on the Council's corporate performance in relation to our National and Local Best Value Performance Indicators from 1st April, 2004 to 31st July, 2004.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendation

THAT performance in relation to the Council's National and Local Corporate Best Value Indicators, from 1st April to 31st July, 2004, 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 2004/2005 corporate performance is being reported to Cabinet at 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 monthly intervals, in line with the Council's Performance Management Framework.
2. Corporate performance for the 4 month period 1st April 2004 to 31st July, 2004 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.

Above target performance

3. **BV 76b Housing benefit security – number of fraud investigators employed per 1,000 caseload.** Performance has improved to 0.39 fraud investigators per 1,000 caseload against a target of 0.33. Additional resources have been recruited since the target was set based on the fact that the post is self-financing.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Kevin Lloyd, Policy Assistant, on (01432) 383401

4. **BV 76c Housing benefit security – the number of fraud investigations per 1,000 caseload.** Performance has improved to 63 fraud investigations per 1,000 caseload against a target of 38. The Benefit Investigation Unit has increased its resources by moving 2 benefit assessment officers into the unit to deal with initial fraud referrals, including those that have been identified through the new interventions regime.
5. **BV 76d Housing benefit security – the number of prosecutions and sanctions per 1,000 caseload.** Performance has improved to 9 prosecutions and sanctions per 1,000 caseload against a target of 7 and performance of 5.64 in 2003/04. The relocation of 2 benefit assessment officers has resulted in investigating officers being able to put more resources into prosecutions and sanctions.

Areas for Improvement

6. **BV 11b The percentage of top 5% of earners that are from black and minority ethnic communities.** Performance has remained consistent with that in 2003-04 at 2.4%, although below the target of 2.75%.
7. **BV 76a Housing benefit security – number of claimants visited per 1,000 caseload.** A change to the visiting function with interventions has resulted in visits taking longer than previously. Coupled with high periods of absence and a Visitor Officer vacancy, current performance of 87 is significantly below last year's outturn of 174.25 and the target of 255 cases per 1,000 caseload.
8. **BV 78a Speed of processing – average time for processing new claims.** Although performance has improved to 49.6 days, this is still below the target of 32 days. The definition of a new claim has changed from April 2004. Previously, claims received following a change of address within a local authority's area, or where certain people had moved into work, were counted as new claims for BVPI purposes. Generally, these claims were processed quicker than people claiming benefit for the first time as a majority of the information required to process the claim was already held. These claims are now counted as changes in circumstances, so this indicator only measures brand new claims or claims from people who have been off benefit for some time, and therefore the average processing time is likely to be longer. The target was set based on the previous definition and is currently being monitored, with a possible review later in the year when national information about the impact of the new procedures for dealing with changes in circumstance is available.
9. **BV 78b Speed of processing – average time for processing notifications of changes of circumstance.** Performance has deteriorated to 11.2 days, below the target of 8 days. Again, the definition of a change of circumstance has changed from April 2004. Previously, claims received following a change of address within a local authority area, or where certain people had moved into work, were counted as new claims for BVPI purposes. These are now counted as changes in circumstances. The target was based on the previous definition and is currently being monitored, with a possible review later in the year when national information about the impact of the new procedures for dealing with new claims is available.
10. **Number of recorded complaints, both formal and informal.** The total number of recorded complaints for the period April-July was 85, against an annual target of 440.
11. **Number of recorded formal complaints.** Against an annual target of 250, the number of recorded formal complaints for the period April-July 2004 was 58.
12. **Percentage of Staff Review and Development (SRD) interviews completed in**

previous 12 months and **Percentage of agreed training plans arising from SRD interviews (LOCAL INDICATORS)**. SRDs are tracked on a rolling 12-month basis, so reporting of this indicator is for the period 1st August 2003 to 31st July, 2004. Performance for the last 12 months is currently at 61% against a target of 80%. However, this target was set against an annual outturn in 2003-04 of 71%, a figure that did not include Social Care and Strategic Housing. If the current figures for SC&SH are excluded to show a direct comparison with those figures for 2003-04, the overall figure shows a 3% improvement of 74%. Social Care and Strategic Housing will be using the "remote groups" process to improve the reporting of performance on SRDs in the future.

Risk Management

Failure to review 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 Indicators 2003/2004