

REPORT TO THE Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report No.7

Date of Meeting	29/03/07
Title of Report	Bottom Quartile Performance Indicators Update
Link to Corporate Priorities	
Public Report	YES

Summary of Report

This report provides information on performance indicators that, when compared with all district councils, are amongst the worst 25% of performers.

Information is provided on any actions that are planned to improve performance and projections are given for future levels of performance.

Officer Recommendations

That the report is noted and used to inform members of the proposed actions to improve poorly performing performance Indicators.

That any areas of concern are the subject of future monitoring reports to assess progress against any proposed improvement initiatives.

Other than those implications agreed with the relevant Officers and referred to below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Financial Implications	Legal Implications	Community & Environmental Implications	Human Resources Implications	Equality & Diversity Implications
NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

Contact Officer	Graham Wilkie Performance Management Officer 01249 706614 gwilkie@northwilts.gov.uk
------------------------	--

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides information on performance indicators (PIs) that, when compared with all district councils, are amongst the worst 25% of performers.
- 1.2 Information is provided on any actions that are planned to improve performance and projections are given for future levels of performance.

2. Options and Options Appraisal

- 2.1 Option 1: The report is noted and used to inform members of the proposed actions to improve poorly performing performance Indicators.
- 2.2 Option 2: Any areas of concern are the subject of future monitoring reports to assess progress against any proposed improvement initiatives.

3. Background Information

- 3.1 After receiving the 3rd Quarter 2006/07 PI report in the previous Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it was resolved that a report is brought to this meeting detailing how long it will take for PIs in the bottom quartile to rise to the third quartile. The report was also to include information on PIs that were currently in the 3rd quartile that were in danger of falling into the 4th quartile.
- 3.2 For the purpose of this report, 4th quartile refers to the worst 25% performers of all district councils. This has been obtained from 2005/06 information provided by the Audit Commission and projections have been made for 2006/07 based on annual trends.
- 3.3 This report outlines the reasons for current performance for the identified PIs, predictions for future performance, and planned actions and timescales to achieve acceptable levels of performance. For some of the PIs, more detailed information and action plans are given as appendices to this report.

4. BVPI 8 – Invoices paid on time

- 4.1 Performance in paying invoices for goods and services has remained in the bottom quartile for the previous 3 years. Performance has deteriorated further over the year with a current value of 84% of invoices being paid on time. This dropped to 72% for January 2007. Recent trends suggest that we will need to achieve over 93% to move out of the bottom quartile.
- 4.2 Work is under way to reduce the number of invoices that are paid late. Initiatives include:
 - Exploring the possibility of introducing two creditor payment runs a week, replacing the Thursday run with payment runs on Tuesday and Friday.
 - Identifying officers who persistently pass invoices that are late for payment. The Corporate Management Board have recently been advised of areas of concern.
 - Authorised signatories will be reminded of payment deadlines and their responsibility to ensure invoices are passed in time to meet the terms of payment.

5. BVPI 78a,b and 79a – Speed and accuracy of processing benefits claims

- 5.1 Both BVPI78a (time to process new benefit claims) and BVPI 79b (time to process new changes in circumstances) were in the bottom quartile for 2005/06 and current

performance remains in the worst quartile. Current performance for accuracy of processing benefits claims has dropped into the worst quartile.

- 5.2 The performance development team from the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) has been working with the Benefits Team to reduce the processing time of benefit claims. An action plan is in place to deliver recommendations from the Benefits Fraud Inspectorate and is specifically geared to improving PIs. Progress against the action plan and latest performance is reviewed by the DWP on a monthly basis.
- 5.3 An analysis of performance and a projection for future performance is given at appendix 1. Projected performance is set to move out of the bottom quartile by the end of 2007/08, as new procedures are starting to take effect.

6. BVPI 82a and b – Recycling and composting of household waste

- 6.1 An analysis of performance and a projection for future performance is given at appendix 2. The overall recycling rate (BV82a+b) is currently better than DEFRA 2007/08 target of 20%.
- 6.2 Household waste sent for recycling (BV82a) has shown a steady improvement over the last 3 years moving from the bottom to 3rd quartile in 2005/06. The proportion of waste sent for recycling (currently 16.2%) has continued to improve in 2006/07. If national levels increase in line with previous year, however, our current performance will be in the bottom quartile.
- 6.3 Alternate Weekly Collection (AWC) is seen as the main method of improving the recycling rate to an estimated level of 30%. Due to the capacity of Hills Waste, Wiltshire County Council's contractor, it will not be possible to move to AWC and significantly improve the recycling rate until 2008/09.
- 6.4 The percentage of waste that is composted (BV82b) has shown a marked improvement from 2.86% in 2005/06 to a current rate of 4.71%. If national levels increase in line with previous year, however, our current performance will be in the borderline of bottom and 3rd quartile.
- 6.5 The introduction of an additional vehicle to collect garden waste from 1st April 2007, will enable an extra 3,300 customers to join the garden waste scheme and should increase the composting rate by 1.5 percentage points. This should ensure that performance is better than the bottom quartile.

7. BVPI 199a – Cleanliness of streets (from litter and detritus)

- 7.1 An analysis of performance and a projection for future performance is given at appendix 3. Current performance has shown an improvement on previous year, but figures suggest we are still in bottom quartile. If we show similar performance in final survey of 2006/07, we should meet our target of 20%. A similar improvement in 2007/08 is required to reach the LPSA2 target of 17.5%.
- 7.2 A review of the street cleansing service is planned for 2007/08, which will address the standards of cleanliness of streets. Recent trends suggest that we will need to achieve less than 16.5% to move out of the bottom quartile, and we are projected to reach around 19% for this year.

8. BVPI 183b – Length of stay of families on hostels

- 8.1 We currently have an average length of stay of around 29 days, which is in the bottom quartile. The low number of families (6) included in this PI, and the fact that the households that are placed in this type of accommodation are often those with the most difficult issues to resolve such as high debt problems or high support needs, inflate this figure and make us compare unfavourably with other councils.
- 8.2 The Council currently use Avonside, a family hostel in Chippenham with 21 units. Work is underway with Westlea Housing Association to replace the units at Avonside with newbuild self-contained units in Chippenham. These units are programmed to be completed through April and May 2007. As these replacement units are self-contained they are not classed as hostel accommodation and, therefore, from May/June families will no longer be placed into hostels.
- 8.3 As the statistics count any period spent in a hostel and the date this is counted from is when the family is permanently housed, there will still be some families who have previously spent some time in a hostel in 2008/09 and possibly also in 2009/10.
- 8.4 Taking this into account, the Council aim to reduce the number of weeks families spend in hostels to 22 in 2007/08 and 16 in 2009/10, moving performance out of the bottom quartile,

9. Implications

- 9.1 None under the given headings, see Risk Analysis (below).

10. Risk Analysis

- 10.1 If the Council and it's services continue to perform at current levels there is a risk that the Council will be re-categorised to a lower CPA rating if a further corporate assessment was undertaken.
- 10.2 There is a risk that there will be a DWP intervention of the benefits service if we do not reach an acceptable level of performance.

Appendices:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1. BV78a&b - Action sheet • 2. BV82a&b - Action sheet • 3. BV199a - Action sheet
Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3rd Quarter 2006/07 PI Report

Previous Decisions Connected with this Report

Report	Committee & Date	Minute Reference
3rd Quarter 2006/07 Performance Report	Overview and Scrutiny, 1/03/07	O126