

REPORT TO THE Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report No.10

Date of Meeting	22/11/07
Title of Report	Poorly Performing Performance Indicators Update
Link to Corporate Priorities	
Public Report	YES

Summary of Report

This report provides information on performance indicators (PIs) that, when compared with all district councils, are or were recently amongst the worst 25% of performers. Progress updates are also given for PIs that were previously reported on in September's meeting.

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

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides information on performance indicators (PIs) that, when compared with all district councils, are or were recently amongst the worst 25% of performers. Progress updates are also given for PIs that were previously reported on in March's meeting.
- 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, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved that a report was brought to March's meeting detailing how long it will take for PIs in the bottom quartile to rise to the third quartile. The report also included information on PIs that were currently in the 3rd quartile that were in danger of falling into the bottom quartile.
- 3.2 This report follows up progress for PIs that were previously reported on in March and September's meetings and identifies any other PIs that are in the bottom quartile. The 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.
- 3.3 For the purpose of this report, bottom quartile refers to the worst 25% performers of all district councils and top quartile the best 25% performers of all district councils.

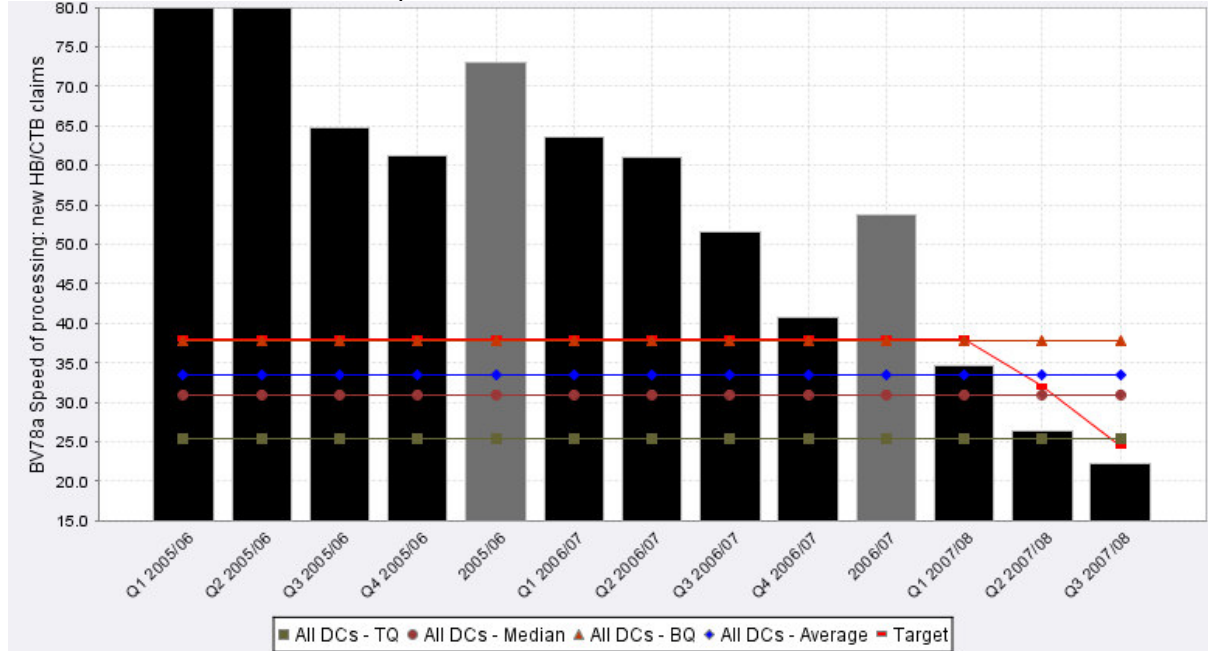
4. BVPI 78a,b and 79a – Speed and accuracy of processing benefits claims

- 4.1 Both BVPI 78a (time to process new benefit claims) and BVPI 78b (time to process new changes in circumstances) were in the bottom quartile for 2005/06 and 2006/07. Steady improvement in performance has, however, been demonstrated over the last 2 ½ years. Performance for accuracy of processing benefits claims dropped into the worst quartile in 2006/07. The Benefits service was highlighted as a priority area for improvement in the recently revised Transitional Corporate Plan.
- 4.2 Consistent and significant improvements in processing new claims and changes of circumstances have continued into the current year, which is illustrated in the analysis (overleaf).
- 4.3 For new benefits claims (BVPI78a) October figures suggest we are currently operating in the top quartile and are on target to be in the 2nd quartile for the 2007/08 annual figure.
- 4.4 For changes in circumstances (BVPI78b) October figures suggest we are currently operating in the 2nd quartile and are on target to be in the 2nd quartile for the 2007/08 annual figure.

BV78a – Speed of Processing New Claims

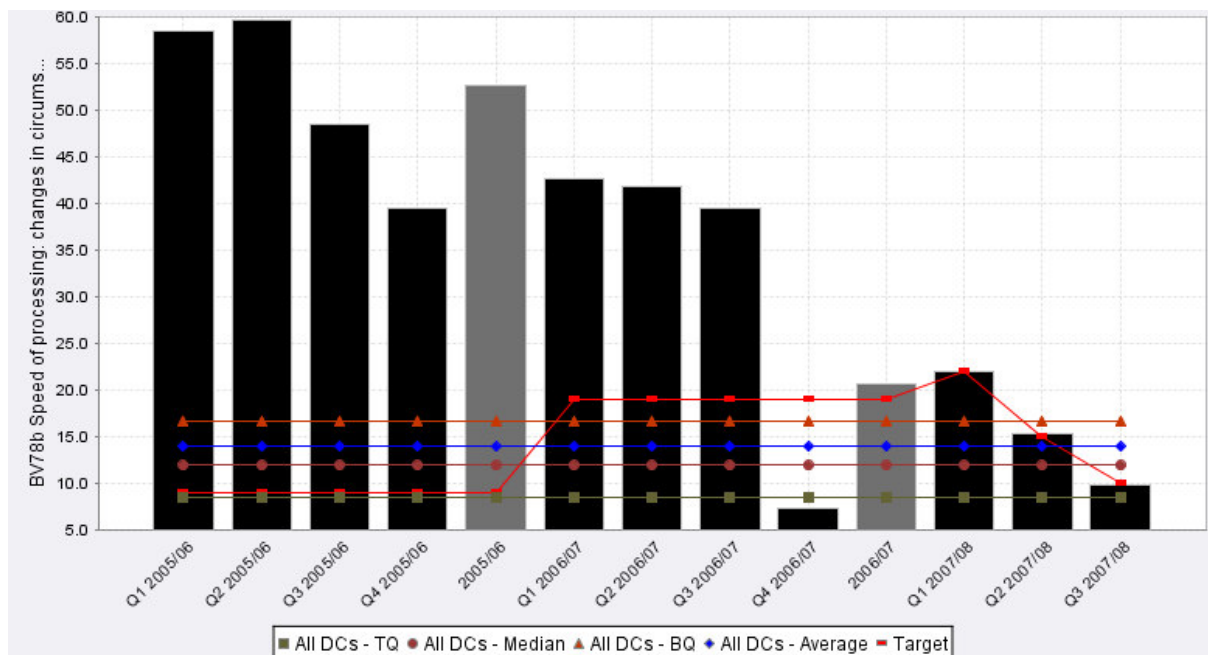
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2006/07	63.65	60.97	51.48	40.85	53.8
2007/08	34.68	26.48	22.17*		
Target	38	32	24.5	24.5	29

*October 2007 performance



BV78b – Speed of Processing Change in Circumstances

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2006/07	42.65	41.81	39.37	7.29	20.6
2007/08	21.89	15.3	9.87*		
Target		15	10	3.5	9.5



- 4.5 Accuracy of processing benefits claims (BV79b) has also shown a marked improvement, with current performance suggesting top quartile performance.

BV79a – Accuracy of processing					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2006/07	93.6	95.2	93.6	96	94.60
2007/08	99.2	99.2			
Target		98	99	99	99

- 4.6 Over the last 12 months, the Benefit Service has been working closely with the Performance Development Team (PDT) of the Department for Works and Pensions to identify barriers to performance improvement, streamline processes and improve the customer experience. The PDT have recently congratulated the Council for its improvements in this area and are satisfied the right building blocks are in place to achieve further sustainable improvements. This was outlined in a report to Executive on 1 November 2007, which further expands on improvements to the service and financial benefits.

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

- 5.1 The overall recycling rate (BV82a+b) for 2006/07 was 21.06% which is in the bottom quartile for our waste group (other councils with the same responsibility for collection and disposal of waste). The current recycling rate suggests our performance will remain in the bottom quartile. Executive have requested that a Scrutiny Task Group is set up to appraise methods to increase recycling, including alternate weekly collection.
- 5.2 Household waste sent for recycling (BV82a) has shown a slow improvement over the last 3 years, performing in the bottom quartile for 2006/07. The rate has improved by 1 percentage point in the 2nd quarter, although this cannot be attributed to any direct campaign.

BVPI 82a - % of household waste sent for recycling						
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual	Target
2005/06					15.49	
2006/07	15.75	16.11	16.52	17.52	16.41	15.80
200708	16.51	17.50				16.50

- 5.3 The percentage of waste that is composted (BV82b) showed a marked improvement from 2.86% in 2005/06 to 4.65% in 2006/07. The proportion of waste composted in the first two quarters of 2007/08 has improved further to over 6 %, which is in the 3rd quartile.

BVPI 82b - % of household waste composted						
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual	Target
2005/06					2.86	
2006/07	4.44	4.60	5.15	4.44	4.65	3.20
2007/08	6.07	6.29				6.00

- 5.4 This improvement is due to the introduction of an additional vehicle to collect garden waste from 1st April 2007, which enabled an extra 3,300 customers to join the garden

waste scheme and, as predicted, increase the composting rate by 1.5 percentage points.

6. BVPI 12 – Average number of working days lost to sickness per employee

- 6.1 The average number of days sickness per employee (BV12) increased from 9.44 days in 2005/06 to 13.27 days in 2006/07, moving performance from the 2nd to the bottom quartile. This was attributed to an increase in long-term sickness absences, with all areas of the council seeing an increase in sickness.
- 6.2 A number of actions to reduce sickness levels were outlined in the 2006/07 Annual Monitoring Report that went to PLA on 3 September 2007 and the previous PI report to this Committee. Managers will now receive monthly absence reports for the new structure, which provide detail of the amount and type of sickness absence in their service areas.
- 6.3 In September's meeting, members asked for an updated comparison for sickness absence for this year and the similar period last year. This is given in the table below.

	April – Sep 2006	April – Sep 2007
Total days Sickness Absence	2,206	1,673
Annual days sick per FTE (BVPI 12)	12.77	9.69

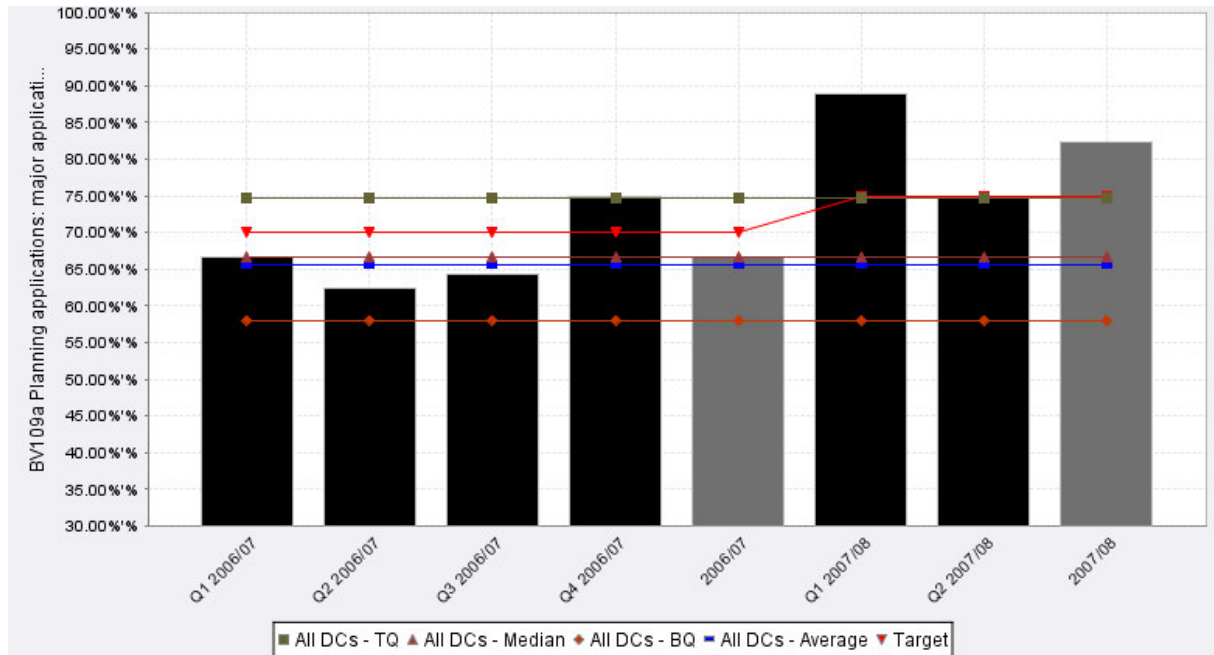
- 6.4 For the period April to September 2007, there has been a decrease of 533 days sickness compared to the same period in the previous year. If this was repeated for the remainder of the year, the average number of days sickness would be around 9.7 days for 2007/08, which would move performance out of the bottom quartile to mid quartile performance.
- 6.5 The target of 10 days for 2007/08, which would move performance out of the bottom quartile is still regarded as being achievable.

7. BVPI 9 and 10 – Percentage of Council Tax and NNDR collected in the year

- 7.1 For 2006/07 collection of Council Tax (BVPI 9) and NNDR were in the bottom quartile. Based on this data and cost considerations the Revenues service was highlighted as a priority area for improvement in the recently revised Transitional Corporate Plan.
- 7.2 Current year performance show an improvement of 1 percentage point for both indicators, which suggests we are on target to achieve mid-quartile performance for 2007/08. This improvement is due the service beginning from a better starting point in April, with old arrears cleared and regular reminders and summons being issued to debtors.
- 7.3 A spend to save initiative to further improve the Revenues service was approved by Executive on 1 November 2007. This will involve a Lean systems approach to review and improve processes, which will improve performance and the Council's revenue position.

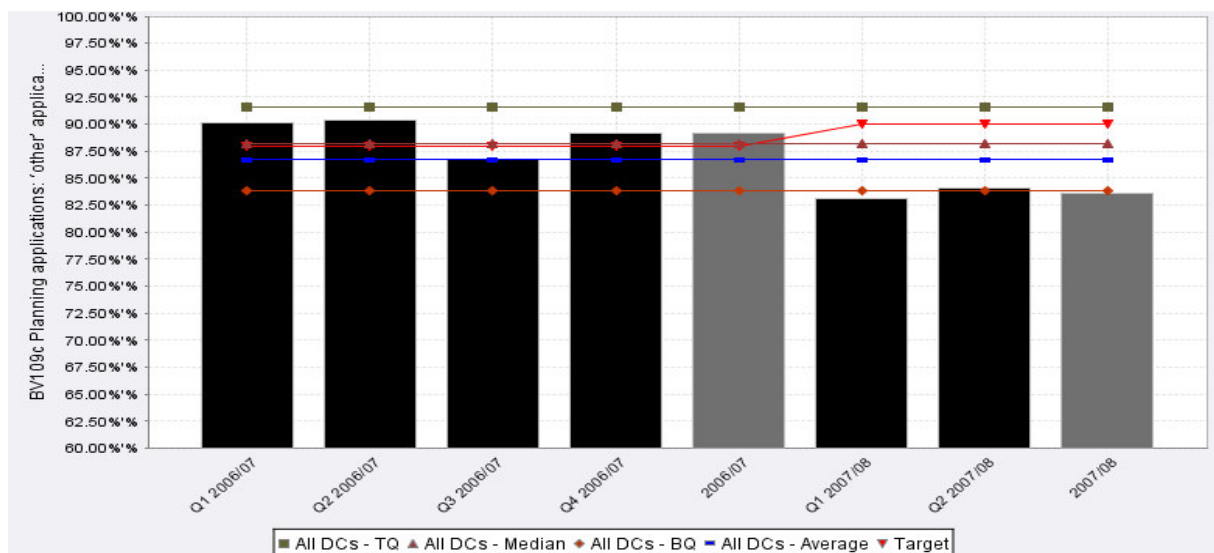
8. BVPI 109a,b&c and 204 – Speed of processing Planning Applications and Appeals allowed

- 8.1 Speed of determining major planning applications (BVPI 109a) was close to bottom quartile performance in 2006/07. The new major planning applications protocol, introduced as a result of an Overview and Scrutiny review, is now taking effect with significantly improved performance over the last 3 quarters (see chart below). For the current year, 82.35% of major applications are determined within 13 weeks, which is top quartile performance.

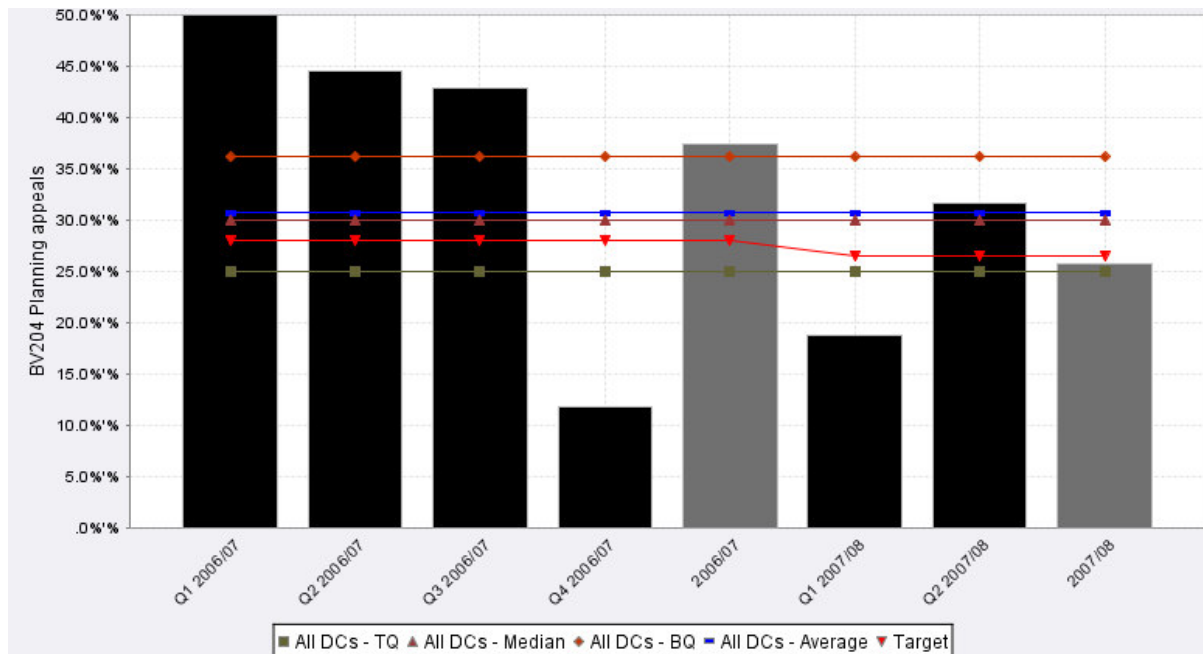


- 8.2 Minor applications determined in 8 weeks (BVPI 109b) was in the 3rd quartile for 2006/07. Performance has improved over the first 2 quarters of 2007/0887 moving into the 2nd quartile

- 8.3 “Other” planning applications determined in 8 weeks (BVI109c) has dropped significantly from 2nd quartile performance in 2006/07, to bottom quartile for the current year (see chart below). This is due, in part, to staff sickness. The Planning Management Team are currently running reports to investigate the drop in performance.



8.4 The number of planning appeals allowed against the Council's decision as a percentage of all appeals (BVPI204) has greatly improved (reduced) over the last 3 quarters. Performance has moved from bottom quartile performance in 2006/07 to close to top quartile for the current year (see chart below). Similar numbers of refusals and appeals over the period indicates that this improvement is due to improved decision making.



9. Implications

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

10. Risk Analysis

10.1 If the Council and its services perform poorly there is a risk that the Council will be re-categorised to a lower CPA rating if a further corporate assessment was undertaken by the Audit Commission. Direction of Travel and Corporate Assessments will also so be adversely affected.

10.2 Services that are regarded as performing poorly may be negatively affected in the transition to the unitary council.

Appendices:	None
Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Executive 1 Nov 2007 – 12. Spend to Save - Improving the Revenue Service 2. Executive 1 Nov 2007 – 13. Improvements achieved within the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Service 3. Executive 1 Nov 2007 – 14. Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Local Scheme

Previous Decisions Connected with this Report

Report	Committee & Date	Minute Reference
Poorly Performing Performance Indicators	Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 13 th September 2007	O48.1