

Title:	Performance monitoring 2005-06 Quarter One – April to June 2005
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Hames – Policy Co-ordination
Reporting Member:	Cllr Roy While
Key Decision:	No

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Scrutiny Committee with recommendations on how best to scrutinise performance indicators and an update on selected performance as at the end of June 2005.

Background

On 16 August 2005 the Performance Monitoring Group held its inaugural meeting to monitor performance for quarter one of 2005-06. The group is chaired by Councillor Roy While and consists of Councillors Julian Bower, Michael Mounde and Eli Manasseh.

A new reporting format for monitoring performance is in place for 2005-06. A total of 73 national and local performance indicators are measured together with a number of critical tasks, all of which align with the spotlight areas and principles for getting the job done in the Corporate Plan. All performance indicators and critical tasks are rated as either:

- Red – indicators which are unlikely to hit the target or actions which have missed the deadline date
- Amber – indicators which are currently missing but are likely to hit the target by the year end or where uncertainty exists, or actions which have missed the deadline but where substantial progress has been made and a revised deadline has been set
- Green – indicators which are likely to hit or exceed the target by the year end or actions which have been completed or are likely to be completed by the deadline date

Of the 73 indicators, 8 have nationally set performance standards or targets. None of these indicators are currently showing red.

The format of the report presented to the performance monitoring group is still being developed and in consultation with the performance group changes will be made to include information on trends and providing a context to performance. The group has already identified target setting as an area requiring further information and is concerned at the large number of performance indicators (40%) for which the information is not yet available. Further work will be carried out in these areas by the group. Concerns raised by the group will feed into the review of the Corporate Plan which is expected to take place during 2006.


A full copy of the monitoring report is available on request. Copies can be obtained from Marie Laws.

The performance report is first considered by Corporate Management Team (CMT) before it goes on to be considered by the performance monitoring group and the Scrutiny Committee. Issues picked up by the Scrutiny Committee are then reported to Cabinet. CMT considered quarter one performance on 3 August 2005 and consulted with service managers on those indicators showing red. As a result a few minor amendments were made to the data.

Main issues

At its meeting on 16 August the group agreed that it should focus on a limited range of performance indicators at each meeting and seek to make recommendations as well as report to the Scrutiny Committee. It agreed to start by considering those performance indicators which are showing red and are not expected to reach their target by the year end. Future work will include highlighting those indicators which are showing green and which have demonstrated good or very good performance. Work will also be carried out to identify performance indicators for those getting the job done principles such as a focus on priorities and a well planned approach for which no targets currently exist. Those indicators which are red and the questions raised by the group are detailed below.

Improving development control


Key performance indicator	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Explanatory notes
PD01/6 % of officer recommendations to refuse which are overturned by members (Cllr Osborn, DH)	5%	17%					Planned officer and member training will hopefully improve performance against this target.

The group requested details of the actual numbers referred to by the percentages and further details of the training planned for officers and members.

The 17% equates to 12 out of a total of 72 applications which were referred to the Planning Committee.

Training for officers is ongoing. All members of the Royal Town Planning Institute are required to undertake a minimum of 50 hours of training in every two year period and four of the more junior professional members of staff are enrolled on courses leading to a planning qualification. A programme of joint member and officer training has been discussed with SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) although this is currently on hold until 2006. A programme of planning topic based training including such issues as the historic built environment, countryside planning designations and probity in planning is being discussed with a planning consultant. This training is primarily for members but will also be available to officers. Plans are underway to hopefully set up the training sessions for the autumn.


Meeting housing need

Key performance indicator	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Explanatory notes
BV183(ii) average length of stay in hostels (weeks) (Cllr James, GH)	16	39.76					The increase is due to having four long term residents leave in June.

A further explanation was required concerning the reference to four long term residents leaving in June.

The average length of stay in hostels is based on the number of days each family is resident at the hostel, from the day they begin their stay to the day they leave. Four families who were resident during quarter one had been there for over 380 days (54 weeks), pushing up the average length of stay. Now that these families have left the hostel the figures for the remainder of the year are expected to improve.


This performance indicator is typed in red because it is of particular importance having been highlighted by the Audit Commission for use in the next round of CPA.

Key performance indicator	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Explanatory notes
BV62 % of unfit private sector dwellings made fit or demolished as a direct result of council action (Cllr James, GH)	2.5%	0.23%					Additional staff will be employed from September. New legislation will identify new opportunities.

The group asked for clarification as to the definition of unfit, the numbers involved, how many additional staff will be employed and details of the new legislation and proposed new opportunities. They also queried whether the target was realistic.

This indicator has been deleted from the list of national performance indicators for 2005-06. The fitness standard is set out in Section 604 of the Housing Act 1985 and defines 11 criteria, such as repair, lighting, heating, against which a property is to be judged. The target is expressed as a percentage of all unfit housing in the district which currently stands at 860 and the 2.5% equates to 22 properties. The target is considered to be realistic providing the financial and staffing resources are available. Two and a half additional FTE posts have been recruited to.


However, the fitness standard described above is due to be repealed by the provisions in the Housing Act 2004, probably in November this year. The new rating system is similar to the fitness standard but not directly comparable as it does not produce a simple pass or fail and will require a different way of establishing a performance indicator. It also introduces mandatory licensing for certain types of Housing in Multiple Occupation, a completely new system of enforcement and regulation of housing standards and new powers to bring homes back into use. With the additional staffing resources the housing service will be able to be proactive in its approach rather than simply responding to complaints from private tenants.

Key performance indicator	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Explanatory notes
BV64 Number of private sector dwellings returned to occupation or demolished as a result of direct action by the council (Cllr James, GH)	35	0					Doubts about the private sector leasing scheme finance should be resolved shortly which will impact on performance. Also, additional staff will be employed from 1 Sept 2005.

Of the 2.5 additional FTE posts referred to above, one of these will have specific responsibility for implementing the Empty Homes Policy which is due to go to Cabinet in September. It is unlikely that the target will be met this year as it was set with the expectation that the Empty Homes Officer would be recruited before the beginning of the

year. In 2003-04 we achieved a total in excess of 30, largely through the use of the Private Sector Leasing (PSL) Scheme. We have recently been unable to use the PSL Scheme whilst we review its working and long-term financial implications are reviewed. It is likely that the longer term targets for this indicator will be reviewed and revised down. The target for 2006-07 onwards is currently set at 50 dwellings per annum.


Better access to recreation

Key performance indicator	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Explanatory notes
CL2 Number of swims and other visits at the Council's 8 leisure centres per 1,000 (Cllr Chivers, RR)	10,810	2,537					Measured annually. The estimated figure for the year end based on quarter one performance is 10,148.

Reference was made at the performance group meeting to the fact that this indicator is going to be changed by removing the reference to 'per 1,000 population'. This will bring it into line with the indicator in the Corporate Plan. Additionally, it is the view of officers that this will represent a more meaningful figure for the Council to understand and interpret.

There also needs to be a more transparent relationship between this performance indicator and the objective in the Corporate plan under which it is detailed and which refers to 'the numbers of people who are regularly physically active' thereby being people orientated.

Putting customers first


Key performance indicator	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Explanatory notes
BV157 % of services that can be obtained via our website (Cllr Carbin, JR)	95%	86%					Target missed due to changes in the method of calculation and development work focussing on Obtree.

Questions were asked as to the definition of 'services' and 'obtained' and what changes had occurred to the method of calculation.

The actual definition of this indicator is the 'number of types of interactions that are enabled for electronic delivery as a percentage of the types of interactions that are legally permissible for electronic delivery'. Types of interactions means any contact between the citizen and the council including; providing information, collecting revenue, providing benefits and grants, consultation, regulation (such as issuing licences), applications for services and paying for goods and services.

The ODPM introduced a new method of calculating performance based on standard descriptions of local government services. Adopting the new method caused a downward change of approximately 7 or 8%. Officers are confident that the target will be met by the year end therefore this indicator should be showing amber. Work is ongoing on a weekly basis to improve the information on the website and the introduction of Obtree in September will ensure that ownership of the information is clearer with individual service managers have responsibility for the information relating to their own service areas. This indicator is part of a six monthly return to the ODPM upon which e-Government funding is based. In order to receive the funding we have to satisfy the ODPM that the Council has an acceptable development programme in place.

Sound financial management

Key performance indicator	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Explanatory notes
BV8 % of invoices paid within 30 days (Cllr Carbin, IJ)	100%	94%					Target is a government guideline. Targeted action is being taken to improve performance.

The explanatory notes refer to targeted action being taken to improve performance. The following specific actions are being taken:


- Attempts to identify invoices that are received in advance and which therefore distort our calculation. Using the date the goods or services are received rather than the date of the invoice should improve the percentage.
- Only invoices from commercial suppliers should be included. In future quarters any non-commercial suppliers will be excluded.
- At the end of each quarter steps will be taken to ensure that the calculation takes account of the various supplier terms applicable to each supplier.
- Disputed invoices will be excluded from the calculations.

The aim is to reach 97% by the year end.

In response to concerns over the exclusion of 'non-commercial' suppliers, officers have confirmed that an estimated 90% of the Council's invoices are from commercial suppliers. Non-commercial refers to non-profit making organisations such as the Audit Commission, other local authorities and charities. An invoice received from a member of the public would be treated as a commercial invoice.

Payments such as housing benefits are not included in this performance indicator as they are not paid upon receipt of an invoice.

Efficient and effective service delivery

Key performance indicators	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Explanatory notes
PC8 % of Performance indicators in top quartile (Cllr Hames, PM)	40%	7% revised to 42.3%					Estimate based on the top quartile figures from 2003-04.


This is a new local performance indicator and has been set to measure the overall progress of the Council in achieving high levels of performance. It only relates to national performance indicators. When the Council was compiling its Corporate Plan provision was made to achieve upper quartile performance in 2010 for all the Corporate Plan indicators.

The top quartile figure is the performance achieved by the top 25% of all district councils in England and Wales and is calculated each year by the Audit Commission. Due to the time taken to collate this data, we have to compare our performance with latest top quartile figures available at the time. At present the data is only available for 2003-04.

Performance was originally estimated at 7%. However further more detailed analysis has now been carried out using the information at the end of quarter one for those indicators for which the data is currently available and the revised figure is 42.3%. It should be noted, however, that only 26 of the 94 national performance indicators were used in the calculation of the revised figure. This is because some indicators do not easily lend

themselves to quarterly monitoring, some are new and some are still awaiting data for quarter one.

High quality communications

Key performance indicator	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Explanatory notes
PC5b Number of website hits (unique users) (Cllr John Syme, PM)	216000	35485					The number of website visitors has increased substantially since 2002. Comparing this quarter with the same quarter last year shows a significant increase of 50%. Work is ongoing to further enhance the website. The baseline target for this performance indicator may need to be revised.

The group felt that it would be useful to have a definition of 'hits' and 'unique users'.

Unique users is defined as the number of different individuals who visit a site within a specific time period.

Web page "hits" is a term used to describe the volume of traffic a web site is receiving. Each time a Web server sends a file to a browser, it is recorded in the server log file as a "hit." Hits are generated for every element of a requested page (including graphics, text etc). If a page containing two graphics is viewed by a user, three hits will be recorded - one for the page itself and one for each graphic. Webmasters use hits to measure their server's work load.

Concerns were also expressed that this is a very crude performance indicator and it would be beneficial to look deeper into the analyses of the usage of the site in order to arrive at more meaningful indicators and targets.

Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Recommendation

Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

Development of the performance monitoring group

- confirm that it is happy with the approach being adopted by the performance monitoring group
- note and support the future work of the group in reviewing targets, in collaboration with service managers
- note that the group will be closely monitoring the 40% of indicators for which the information is not yet available

- support the need to focus on those indicators which are doing well in addition to keeping under review, and paying close attention to, those indicators which are missing the target
- note that the group will be establishing trends and putting performance indicators into context
- support the group's work in the revision of indicators where necessary, for example carrying out work on the usage of the website and reviewing leisure activities as indicated in this report

Looking at performance

- support the group's intention to keep a close review of BV183ii (length of stay in hostels) to see whether performance improves. This indicator is important for CPA
- support the group's intention to keep PC8 (top quartile performance) under close review. This indicator is important for the Council's overall ambition

Other issues

- identify whether there are any other areas of concern that would benefit from further investigation by the performance group
- identify recommendations that the Committee would like to make to Cabinet.

Human Rights

The Human Rights implications of the actions recommended in this report have been considered.