

Title: Performance monitoring 2005-06
Quarter Two – July to September 2005

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Hames – Policy Co-ordination

Reporting Officer: Marie Lindsay, Policy and Scrutiny Officer

Key Decision: No

Purpose

This report summarises the Council's performance in the second quarter of 2005-06.

Background

The performance indicators and actions are grouped under the Corporate Plan spotlight areas and getting the job done principles. A revised total of 73 performance indicators are monitored (down from 113) together with 46 critical tasks in the Corporate Plan. A traffic light system is used as a quick way of summarising the position against the performance indicators and actions.

Future reports will include information about the number and nature of complaints received across the Council.

A total of four performance indicators for 2004-05 were reserved by the Audit Commission. Work is ongoing to address and investigate these indicators and discussions are being held with the Audit Commission and the internal auditor, KPMG.

Corporate management team (CMT) considered quarter two performance on 26 October 2005 and consulted with service managers on those indicators showing red. A number of indicators, particularly those which are important for CPA monitoring, are being followed up with further investigations. CMT did note that good progress was being made in respect of the critical tasks.

The Scrutiny Committee considered a report from the performance monitoring group on the 30 November 2005. The concerns and issues raised by the group are attached at Appendix A. The Committee has made recommendations to Cabinet and these are detailed below.




Overall Summary

The number of indicators reported green has dropped during quarter two from 29 to 20. Additionally the number of indicators expected to miss the target at the year end has increased from 9 to 13. Of these, six are national indicators and seven are local.

There are an unacceptably high number of indicators which cannot be reported at present due to a variety of reasons. It is expected that this number will reduce during the year.

The majority of the critical tasks are either on target (26) or are showing a slight delay but work is being progressed (16). None of the critical tasks are categorised as red. The remaining four tasks are not due for completion until spring 2006 at the earliest.

Table of performance indicator ratings

Performance indicators rating	Q1 Apr-Jun 2005	Q2 Jul-Sep 2005	Q3 Oct-Dec 2005	2005-06 year end
 RED	9 (12%)	13 (18%)		
 AMBER	6 (8%)	10 (13%)		
 GREEN	29 (40%)	20 (27%)		
Unable to categorise	29 (40%)	30 (42%)		
Total	73	73		

Note: This table summaries performance indicators only and does not include critical tasks

Performance indicators

Good performance highlighted

Under the improving development control spotlight area, the number of officer recommendations to Committee which are subsequently overturned by members has made a significant improvement bringing this indicator well into target.

Against the sound financial management principle council tax and NNDR collection rates are continuing to be exceeded. We are also exceeding the target on the return on capital employed on commercial investment properties.

All four performance indicators within the valued and supported staff principle are being met. Staff satisfaction is high and although the number of days lost to sickness has increased we are still well within target.

Poor performance highlighted

The indicators which are unlikely to meet the targets set unless action is taken are as follows:

Improving development control

- Appeals allowed against the authority's decision to refuse planning applications (national indicator)

Recycling more waste

- Amount of household waste collected per head (national indicator)

Meeting housing need

- Unfit private housing made fit by council action (national indicator)
- Number of private dwellings returned to occupation by council action (national indicator)

Better access to recreation

- Number of swims and other visits to leisure centres (local indicator)
- Numbers involved in sports development (local indicator)

Putting customers first

- Calls to switchboard answered in 20 seconds (local indicator)
- Equality standard (national indicator)

Sound financial management

- Invoices paid in 30 days (national indicator)

Accessible decision making

- Draft minutes issued within 5 working days (local indicator)

Efficient and effective service delivery

- Performance indicators in top quartile (local indicator)

High quality communications

- Number of website hits (local indicator)
- Press releases issued that get used (local indicator)

In respect of many of these indicators action is being taken to remedy the problem of under performance. In a few cases targets may have been unrealistically set and these will be reviewed.

Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- Review this summary performance report and raise any issues for follow up or further action
- Consider the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee asking Cabinet to:
 - note the general deterioration in performance
 - keep under close review the following indicators –
 1. BV109a - % of major applications processed within 13 weeks. This indicator is important for CPA and has planning standards authority implications.
 2. BV183(I) and BV183(ii)– average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation and hostels. This indicator is important for CPA and has been reserved for 2004-05.
 3. Number of dwellings empty for six months or more. Important for CPA and whilst not a national indicator, a corresponding statutory return has been reserved by the Audit Commission.
 4. AS02/4 - calls to switchboard answered in 20 seconds. This indicator was highlighted by the Customer Focus Inspection as being an area of concern
 - report back to the Scrutiny Committee through the portfolio holder on the progress being made, following the publication of the quarter three statistics.

Human Rights

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

Background papers

Report of the performance monitoring group to Scrutiny Committee 30 November 2005

Detailed performance monitoring report, quarter 2 July -September 2005. This is available separately from Marie Lindsay.

Performance Monitoring Group of the Scrutiny Committee
Notes of the group's meeting on 31 October 2005 to discuss quarter two performance

The group were particularly concerned about the deterioration in performance in quarter two. A larger proportion of indicators are missing the target compared with quarter one, details of which are below:

Improving development control

- % of major applications processed within 13 weeks (national indicator)
- Appeals allowed against the authority's decision to refuse planning applications (national indicator)

Recycling more waste

- Amount of household waste collected per head (national indicator)

Meeting housing need

- Unfit private housing made fit by council action (national indicator)
- Number of private dwellings returned to occupation by council action (national indicator)

Better access to recreation

- Number of swims and other visits to leisure centres (local indicator)
- Numbers involved in sports development (local indicator)

Putting customers first

- Calls to switchboard answered in 20 seconds (local indicator)

Sound financial management

- Invoices paid in 30 days (national indicator)

Accessible decision making

- Draft minutes issued within 5 working days (local indicator)

Efficient and effective service delivery

- Performance indicators in top quartile (local indicator)

High quality communications

- Number of website hits (local indicator)
- Press releases issued that get used (local indicator)

A number of indicators have been highlighted as being important for CPA. Concern was expressed that some indicators had been reserved by the Audit Commission in 2004-05 and the group sought assurances that steps are being taken to prevent similar reservations for 2005-06.

The performance group suggested that some of the targets in place for 2005-06 may not be realistic, especially when viewed in conjunction with performance in previous years. These have been highlighted by the group for further consideration and are detailed below.

Future work of the group 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. Trends will be established for a number of key performance indicators using up to date benchmarking data from the ODPM, which is expected in early 2006. Performance data from our nearest neighbours will also be used for comparison purposes.

As mentioned above, the group are concerned about the downturn in performance since quarter one, the large number of indicators which, for a variety of reasons, are not able to be measured at present, and those indicators which are important for CPA.


Those specific indicators highlighted by the Performance Monitoring Group are detailed below.

The details

The performance indicators and targets are grouped by spotlight area and getting the job done principle. The performance information contained within the tables was presented to the group. The group's concerns, and the research undertaken by the Policy and Scrutiny Officer in response to those concerns are detailed below the table.

Improving Development Control

Major applications processed

Key performance indicator	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Service Manager Comments
BV109a % of major applications processed within 13 weeks (Cllr Osborn, DH) (CPA indicator)	60%	64%	22%				Cumulative total is 48%. Performance has reduced during Q2 due to a lot of work being carried out on the backlog of applications. Uncertain whether the target will be hit or just missed at the year end.

This performance indicator was showing green in Q1 and is important for CPA. There are also implications in terms of becoming a Standards Authority.

A letter has been received from the ODPM suggesting that there are difficulties with BV109 and that we are likely to be identified as a planning standards authority for 2006-07. There is a backlog of old applications and reducing the backlog has an adverse affect on the figures. Additionally resources have been spread to address the issues around planning appeal performance and planning enforcement. There are three main areas of difficulty:

- Applications delayed by Section 106 agreements
- Applications called in by the Government Officer South West
- Applications which cannot be permitted until the construction of the Hilperton relief road is assured by the granting of permission for the relief road.

Specific actions being taken include:

- Setting up a meeting with the ODPM on 20 December 2005
- Obtaining updated position on all Section 106 agreements
- Pressing for an early resolution to the Hilperton relief road Section 106
- Team leaders will provide a detailed review of the position of all major applications and will provide updates on a fortnightly basis
- Continue to press the ODPM's office for early answers on all applications referred there.

Breaches of planning control

Key performance indicator	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Service Manager Comments
PD018/a number of alleged breaches of planning control identified, % of which result in enforcement notices (Cllr Osborn, DH)	New	4% (1 of 25 cases)	0% (0 of 20 cases)			N/A	New target – difficult to assess at present. Available in Q3. In Q2, 20 alleged breaches were identified and the case completed.


A target has not yet been set and performance cannot be measured. The target will be available in Q3. Actual numbers, in addition to the percentages, have been added to the table. Actions being taken to improve performance include:

- changes in staffing at the end of November will enable a new work programme to be developed

- this will link in with a new CAPS computer system which is being introduced in the new year.
- the enforcement team is still being developed and it is anticipated that enforcement targets will be amended and refined for 2006-07.

In Q3 an additional planning enforcement performance indicator will be included for monitoring. This is PD018/b - % of breaches of planning control resolved by negotiation or action instigated.

Appeals allowed against decision to refuse

Key performance indicator	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Service Manager Comments
BV204% of appeals allowed against the authority's decision to refuse planning applications (Cllr Osborn, DH)	33%	31%	42%				Cumulative total is 37%. During Q2 changes were made to the method of calculation, following discussions with the Planning Inspector. Due to the time lag of 6-9 months we are not seeing the benefits of work currently being done.

The group noted the explanation concerning the time lag concerning improvements in performance and decided to keep a close watch on this performance indicator.

Affordable housing units secured

Key performance indicators	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Service Manager Comments
PD01/7 number of affordable housing units secured annually through the planning process (excluding PFI) (Cllr Osborn, DH)	282	N/A				N/A	Annual figure. Difficult to measure quarterly.


Whilst this indicator is not showing red, concern was expressed about the target. In 2004-05 we failed to meet the target of 177 and secured only 101 units.

The manager responsible for the service is confident that the overall target in the Corporate Plan of 852 units by 2010 will be met. Performance between now and 2010 will improve as there is a time lag between initiatives being implemented now and houses being built. For clarity, 'secured' means with planning permission.

It was noted that performance had improved in respect of two indicators; PD01/5 (% of officer recommendations to committee which are overturned by members) and PD01/6 (% of officer recommendations to refuse which are overturned by members, largely as a result of officer and member training. Performance for BV205 (Quality of Service Checklist) has also improved in Q2.

Recycling More Waste

Household waste collected

Key performance indicator	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Service Manager Comments
BV84a amount of household waste collected per head (Cllr Brown, KG)	430kg	114kg	222kg				Cumulative figure. Profiled target is 216. Ways are being sought to reduce the amount of waste. Green bins are picking up items of waste that may not have previously been in the waste stream. Target may need to be revised

A number of questions were raised about this indicator, including;



- the appropriateness of the target
- how the target is set
- the effects of recycling on performance.

Officers agree that the fact that the Council is now collecting waste that was previously home composed, taken to the household recycling centres or burnt, causes doubt as to whether the target is still realistic. Compared with 2004-05, grey waste has reduced so far this year but green waste and black box waste has increased. Total waste has also increased. The key is to reduce grey waste and that is what the council is currently achieving. Officers have considered revising the target and after reviewing all the data have proposed an amended target for 2005-06 of 456kg. This would mean that performance, at quarter 2, is on track to meet the target at year end.

Meeting Housing Need

Unfit dwellings

Dwellings returned to occupation

Key performance indicator	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Service Manager Comments
BV62 % of unfit private sector dwellings made fit or demolished as a direct result of council action (Cllr James, NS)	2.5%	0.23%	0.35%				Additional staff have been recruited. Performance is expected to improve although the target is likely to be missed.
BV64 Number of private sector dwellings returned to occupation or demolished as a result of direct action by the council (Cllr James, NS)	35	0	1				Not expecting to hit target although actions are being taken to improve performance. Additional staff have been employed and the Empty Homes Strategy is going to Cabinet at the end of October.

It was noted that CMT has also highlighted these two performance indicators as requiring follow up action and questions were asked as to what action was being taken.

BV62 - it is only eight weeks since the part-time posts were filled and all new staff require induction and training. The new Housing Renewal Strategy and Empty Homes Strategy will give us the policy tools to target resources to meet out corporate priorities. Financial resources are under severe pressure due to overspend on the Disabled Facilities Grant, limiting the amount of assistance we can give via grants, so the main way we make sure houses are fit has been via enforcement. The enforcement team has been busy undertaking inspections to identify houses in multiple occupation in preparation for the mandatory licensing scheme which was originally expected to commence in October/November, but has now been postponed until April.

BV64 - the original targets were set anticipating that we would have a budget of £175k for grants to deal with housing conditions. This was reduced to £100k, and we have had to vire money from this budget to meet our legal commitments for mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant. We also expected that we would be able to recruit staff earlier in the year. The targets were challenging but realistic at the time they were set. Performance will be reviewed by the Housing Services Manager at the end of quarter 3 (December) to assess the impact of the additional staff and to agree a way forward.



Dwellings empty for six months, length of stay in bed and breakfast, length of stay in hostels

Key performance indicators	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Service Manager Comments
Number of dwellings empty for six months or more (Cllr James, NS) (CPA indicator)	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	Re-assessing the baseline data from the council tax register. Figure available in Q3.
BV183(i) average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (wks) (Cllr James, NS) (CPA indicator)	3	0	0			N/A	Reservation placed on this indicator for 2004-05. Method of calculation incorrect. Q3 will have amended calculations and new local indicator will be established using current methodology, for continuity purposes.
BV183(ii) average length of stay in hostels (weeks) (Cllr James, NS) (CPA indicator)	16	5.7	10.6			N/A	Reservation placed on this indicator for 2004-05. Method of calculation incorrect. Q3 will have amended calculations and new local indicator will be established using current methodology, for continuity purposes.

The performance group will be keeping these indicators under close review. All these indicators are important for CPA two of them were reserved in 2004-05. For each, we are not able to determine whether the target is being met.

Better Access to Recreation

Number of swims and leisure visits

Key performance indicators	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Service Manager Comments
Number involved in sports development							
CL2 Number of swims and other visits at the Council's leisure facilities (Cllr Chivers, RR)	1,318,820	302,164	298,016				Usage is declining in line with the national trend. Work is being undertaken to establish the reasons why. DC Leisure are checking their figures and further action will be taken depending on the outcome.
CL3 Number involved in sports development – target increase of 1,000 annually (Cllr Chivers, RR)	5,886	1,239	1,237				Actions are being taken to improve activity. A Wiltshire and Swindon Sports Activity Action Plan has been developed.

It was noted that CMT are investigating these two indicators and that a lot of steps are being taken to improve performance. With regard to CL2 a query was raised as to how realistic it is to expect the number of swims and other visits to leisure centres to increase. Officers have stated that the increase is unlikely to be realistic. National trends show a decrease in the numbers swimming however this is the first time that we have experienced a downturn in all eight leisure sites. Performance during quarter three will be monitored on a monthly basis.


Performance for CL2 was previously presented per 1000 population however this has been changed in Q2 to remove the reference to the population. The change was made for the following reasons:

- To calculate the figure per 1000 requires some work being carried out by finance to apply a formula
- The end result is not easy to digest

- It depends upon what we are trying to monitor. For example, although the number of swims may increase, the number/1000 may decrease as there are changes in population. We only have a finite number of pools therefore we need to use the information to look at future trends and what facilities should be supplied.


The group is considering whether to stipulate that information per 1000 population should be provided.

Develop a strategy and resource plan

Critical task	Deadline		Service Manager Comments
Develop a strategy and resource plan to meet need (concerning the recreational needs assessment) (Cllr Chivers, RR)	November 2005		Project board in the process of being set up to address outcome of needs assessment. Board to include members and officers. Draft project management structure, work plan and key tasks currently being discussed.


It is unclear whether this task is actually on target. To clarify, the reference to developing a strategy means developing an action plan of the issues picked up by the earlier analysis. This has been achieved and an action plan with milestones has been drawn up. A resource plan is underway and service bids have been submitted. The task has been completed although this will be a constantly evolving process.

Future of Southwick Country Park

Critical task	Deadline		Service Manager Comments
Decide the long term future of Southwick Country Park (Cllr Chivers, RR)	April 2005		Consultants have been appointed and work is underway to look into the options identified by Cabinet in May. Awaiting outcomes.

To update, the consultants have now completed their work and a report was considered by CMT on 9 November. The recommendations in the report were accepted by CMT and will be considered by Cabinet in January 2006.


Investment programme

Critical task	Deadline		Service Manager Comments
Develop an investment programme for Council-owned facilities to maintain and improve standards (Cllr Carbin, PW)	March 2006		A condition survey has been completed and a planned maintenance programme is underway.

Mechanical, electrical and structural surveys of all eight leisure facilities have been updated in 2005. Members can obtain copies from Trevor Savage, Leisure Manager.

Improving Market Towns

Street cleanliness


Key performance indicators	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Service Manager Comments
BV199a % of land and highways assessed as having deposits of litter and detritus that fall below an acceptable level (Cllr Brown, KG) (CPA indicator)	40%	N/A	41%				Q2 data is for the period April to July 2005 and is based on 120 inspections rather than 300. More accurate data will be available in Q3. (Reserved 04-05)

BV199b % of land and highways from which unacceptable levels of graffiti are visible (Cllr Brown, KG) (CPA indicator)	New	N/A	0%			N/A	Q2 data is for the period April to July 2005 and is based on 120 inspections rather than 300. More accurate data will be available in Q3. Establishing baseline for target during 2005/06. (Reserved 04-05)
BV199c % of land and highways from which unacceptable levels of fly posting are visible (Cllr Brown, KG) (CPA indicator)	New	N/A	3%			N/A	Q2 data is for the period April to July 2005 and is based on 120 inspections rather than 300. More accurate data will be available in Q3. Establishing baseline for target during 2005/06. (Reserved 04-05)

Concern was expressed about BV199 as it is an important indicator for CPA and has had a reservation placed on it by the Audit Commission for 2004-05. The reservation was placed on it due to insufficient inspections being carried out and the lack of an adequate audit trail. It was noted that this indicator has been picked up by CMT for further investigation and that it will also be addressed by the task and finish group looking at street cleansing and grounds maintenance.

Putting Customers First


Calls to switchboard

Key performance indicators	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Service Manager Comments
AS02/4 % of calls to switchboard answered within 20 seconds (Cllr Content, SL)	85%	74%	74%				With the level of resources allocated to the switchboard the target is unrealistic. Later phases of the Customer First project will impact positively but not this year. Performance is still below the 04/05 target.

The group acknowledged the importance of this indicator in terms of Customers First. The recent Customer Focus Inspection reported that in some services calls are not being answered promptly and expressed concern about the large volume of lost calls. This performance indicator will be closely monitored by the group.

Sound Financial Management

Payment of invoices

Key performance indicator	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Service Manager Comments
BV8 % of invoices paid within 30 days (Cllr Carbin, IJ)	100%	94%	95%				Target is a government guideline. Targeted action is being taken to improve performance.

The target for BV8 is a government guideline and is unlikely to be met. The aim is to reach 97% by the year end. Specific targeted action is being taken to improve performance including:

- Identifying invoices that are received in advance and therefore distort calculations
- Excluding invoices from non-commercial suppliers
- Ensuring that the calculation each quarter takes account of the various terms applicable to each supplier
- Excluding disputed invoices from the calculations.

All these measures comply with the methods of calculation stipulated by the ODPM.

Accessible Decision Making

Issuing draft minutes

Key performance indicator	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Service Manager Comments
DS00/1 Draft minutes issued within 5 working days of the meeting (Cllr Content, GC)	95%	95.45%	78%				In Q2 the number of meetings rose from 19 to 37. If this continues the target will not be met without extra staffing.

It is clear that this target will not be met unless additional staff are employed, the target is changed or the number of meetings are reduced. It is not envisaged that the number of meetings will decrease in the short term and officers are reluctant to move the target too far as to make it meaningless. With existing staffing levels it is doubtful whether a revised target of, say, 10 days would be met given that the number of meetings is not static and may increase further. A mixture of increased staffing levels and a slight moving of the target, to say 7 days, would be the most appropriate solution. This indicator will require closer inspection.

High Quality Communications

Indicators in top quartile

Key performance indicator	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Service Manager Comments
PC8 % of Performance indicators in top quartile (Cllr Hames, PM)	40%	42.3%	36%				Estimate based on the top quartile figures from 2003-04.

There are difficulties measuring this indicator quarterly as the top quartile information is published annually. There is a time lag between the year end and the Audit Commission publishing the data and the current top quartile data available is that for 2003-04. The 2004-05 data will be available in Spring 2006. When this data is published further consideration will be made about revising the target to make it more realistic.

Website hits

Key performance indicator	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Service Manager Comments
PC5b Number of website hits (unique users) (Cllr John Syme, PM)	216000	35485	33796				The number of website visitors has increased substantially since 2002. Work is ongoing to further enhance the website. The baseline target for this performance indicator may need to be revised.


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.

The work to improve the website may result in an increase in the number of website hits received.

Work is being undertaken to establish how the target was set and to review whether it should be revised.

Press releases

Key performance indicator	2005-06 Target	Q1 Apr-Jun 05	Q2 Jul-Sep 05	Q3 Oct-Dec 05	2005-06 year end	Rating	Service Manager Comments
PC6b % of press releases issued that get used in half or more of relevant publications (Cllr John Syme, PM)	85%	72.30%	68.2%				Significantly more press releases are being issued therefore the pick-up rate inevitably goes down. In Q2 63 were issued compared with 46 in same period last year. Perhaps the target is too ambitious.

As above, this target will be kept under review.