

5. PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2015/16

REPORT OF: ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE
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Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: No
Report to: Cabinet
14 March 2016

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides Cabinet with information about the Council's performance for the third Quarter from October to December 2015 using the bundle of performance indicators scrutinised by the Scrutiny Committee for Leader and Service Delivery at its meeting on 10 February 2016.

Recommendations




2. **Cabinet is recommended to:**
 - (i) **Note the Council's performance in the third Quarter of the year; and**
 - (ii) **identify any areas where further reporting or information is required;**
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Background

3. The Scrutiny Committee for Leader and Service Delivery monitors and scrutinises performance across Council services using a bundle of performance indicators agreed by the Committee. Detailed data is provided at Appendix A and the body of the report sets out further information about areas of service where the target was not met or further detailed information is required.
4. At the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Leader and Service Delivery in November 2015 the issue was raised of year end targets for Council Tax and NDR collection. These are now shown in Appendix A.
5. It was also agreed at the November meeting that the Chairman, Vice Chairman and the Chairman of the Performance Indicator Review Working Group would meet with officers to discuss the presentation of data sets within this report. Following these discussions Figures 1 and 2 have been included which show the monthly sickness levels and NDR collection performance compared to targets.
6. The Scrutiny Committee on 10 February 2016 carefully scrutinised the report. A summary of this discussion can be found at paragraphs 29 – 34. The Committee recommended that Officers provide further information regarding housing related concerns raised by Members at the meeting to Cabinet at its meeting on 14 March 2016 this information has also been included in this report at paragraph 34.

Performance report for 2015/16

7. Of the 48 indicators in the performance bundle in the third quarter of 2015/16;
 - 24 indicators were on or exceeded target (63% Green)
 - 6 indicators were slightly off target (16% Amber)
 - 8 indicators were significantly off target (21% Red)
8. 10 indicators are presented for information only (with no target set) and have not been included in the above figures.

9. Set out below is a guide to the meaning of the symbols used in Appendix A.
-  red – alert – more than 10 per cent off target
 -  amber – warning - slightly off target (0.1 – 9.9%)
 -  green – ok - on or exceeding target

Performance significantly off target (Red)

Percentage of all calls/calls to the switchboard answered in 40 seconds

10. Meeting the targets for calls answered in 40 seconds, and the percentage of calls to the switchboard answered in 40 seconds continues to be challenging to achieve. The introduction of a new CRM starting in February 2016 will bring about changes to the way of working that will see processes streamlined and efficiency increase. This combined with computer telephony integration, designed to call up customer details as soon as the call is received, will reduce the administrative times of calls.
11. An additional member of staff was recruited in December 2015 to cover the busiest time of the day (lunchtime) in an effort to reduce the waiting times across this period.

Staff sickness

12. The cumulative staff sickness rate at the end of Quarter 3 was 6.67 days per full-time equivalent (FTE) although above target it is exactly the same figure as this time last year. The main reasons for failing to meet the target is due to a number of long-term (more than 10 days in the month) cases. This is illustrated by the fact that the short-term figure at the end of Quarter 3 was just 3.12 days per FTE.
13. There are no natural data sets to enable comparison although when compared to 3 other Councils locally this Council is higher than the average (their figures are 4.30, 4.98 and 6 days respectively). Managers continue to be encouraged to carry out return to work interviews to determine any underlying reason for sickness. The Council's Occupational Health, Employee Assistance Programme and counselling services continue to be highlighted. The philosophy of early intervention is promoted extensively to all managers.
14. Although the cumulative figures are kept for operational and comparative purposes following discussion at the Scrutiny Committee for Leader and Service Delivery in November the chart below shows the monthly figures of sickness rates per FTE and how they compare to targets.

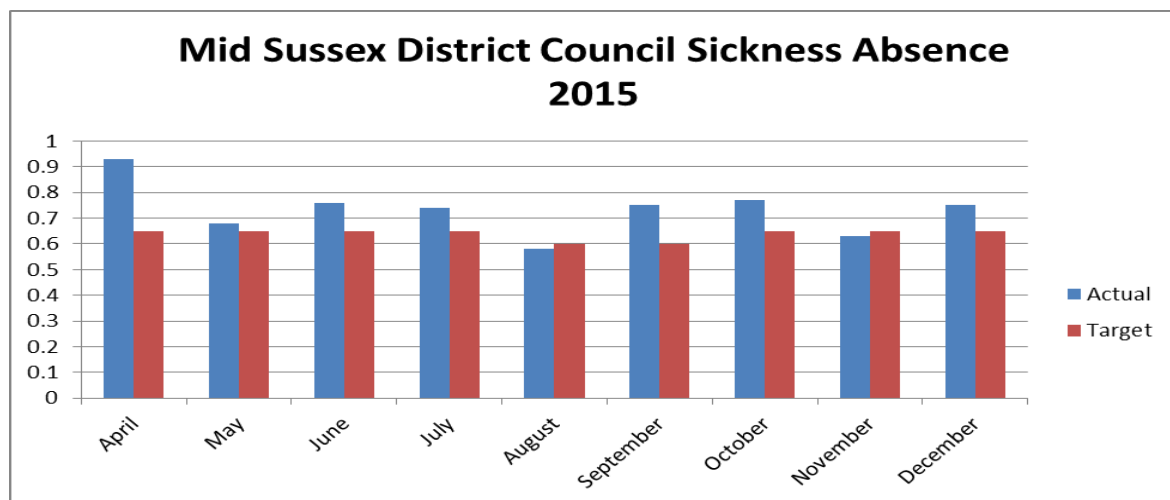


Figure 1

Percentage of employees with a disability

15. The figures for employees with a disability continue to vary substantially on the basis of one or two staff joining/leaving the Council's employment.

Speed of processing changes of circumstances for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support (CTS) claims

16. At the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Leader and Service Delivery in November it was reported that the Census Joint Committee had agreed changes to the targets with effect from 1 October 2015. Although the target has been missed changes to the way in which change of circumstances are processed has improved performance from 13 days in October to 12 days in December. It is expected that the target will be met by year end.

Number of households living in temporary accommodation at the end of each quarter

17. We are seeing a gradual rise in the number of households in temporary accommodation, despite the number of households accepted as homeless remaining low. This is largely due to fewer lettings becoming available in affordable housing than in previous years. It is also due to a reduction in the number of homeless households helped into the private sector as an alternative to social housing. We are finding it increasingly difficult to find landlords who are willing to take tenants on low incomes who are in receipt of benefits and at rents that are affordable with the help of housing benefit. This is likely to become more of a problem as rents rise with time because the level of housing benefit tenants can receive has been frozen until the end of March of 2020. In an attempt to increase the tenancies available to our clients in the private sector the Council has employed an experienced private sector tenancy negotiator on a part-time basis to develop links with private landlords. The Council's website also carries an advertisement directing potential landlords to this member of staff who also writes regular articles in Mid Sussex Matters.

Percentage of household waste sent for reuse recycling and composting

18. As discussed at the November meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Leader and Service Delivery the new waste reporting methodology has extended the period of validation. The Qtr. 1 figure has now been validated as 41.4%. The Qtr. 2 remains indicative at 40.93%. The provisional figure for Quarter 3 is 39.28%, although this fails to meet the 44% target this is to be expected. Historically the collected tonnage of garden waste collected in the 3rd and 4th Qtr. will drop considerably, as gardeners significantly reduce grass cutting and pruning activities in the late autumn and winter months. In 2014/15 there was a 4% drop in the percentage of household waste sent for reuse recycling and composting.
19. Going forward there has been demonstrable improvements in the recycling quality. A reduction in the waste rejected will increase tonnage collected and hence the percentage of household waste sent for reuse recycling and composting.

The percentage of enquiries relating to enforcements within parking services which are dealt with within 10 days

20. There were 666 parking enforcement enquiries received in quarter 3 of which 466 (70%) were dealt within the 10 day target. During Quarter 3 the team have worked hard to overcome the previously reported I.T. issues and staff shortages. The Parking Office is now fully resourced and although the overall target for the quarter was missed the target has been met since the beginning of December and this is expected to continue.

Performance slightly off target (Amber)

Speed of processing – new Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims

21. For both these indicators performance is below target by slightly less than a day. Although a thorough review of 200 disallowed new claims was undertaken, no pattern or common reason for disallowance could be established. It is expected that the introduction of on-line claim form completion and the taking of claims by telephone (to be introduced incrementally during 2016/17) will give claimants more clarity about potential entitlement and evidence required in making a claim; this should reduce the incidence of claims being disallowed. Some minor IT teething issues experienced during the introduction of the risk based verification process since November has led to delays in processing some claims which has had a small impact on performance. It is expected that targets will be achieved by the year end.

Percentage of Non-Domestic Rates collected

22. No specific reason has been identified for missing this target although it is worth noting that Horsham had a similar shortfall. The Council continues to monitor collection closely, chasing missed instalments whenever possible. The figure 2 shows the amounts collected against targets for the first nine months of the year 2015/16.

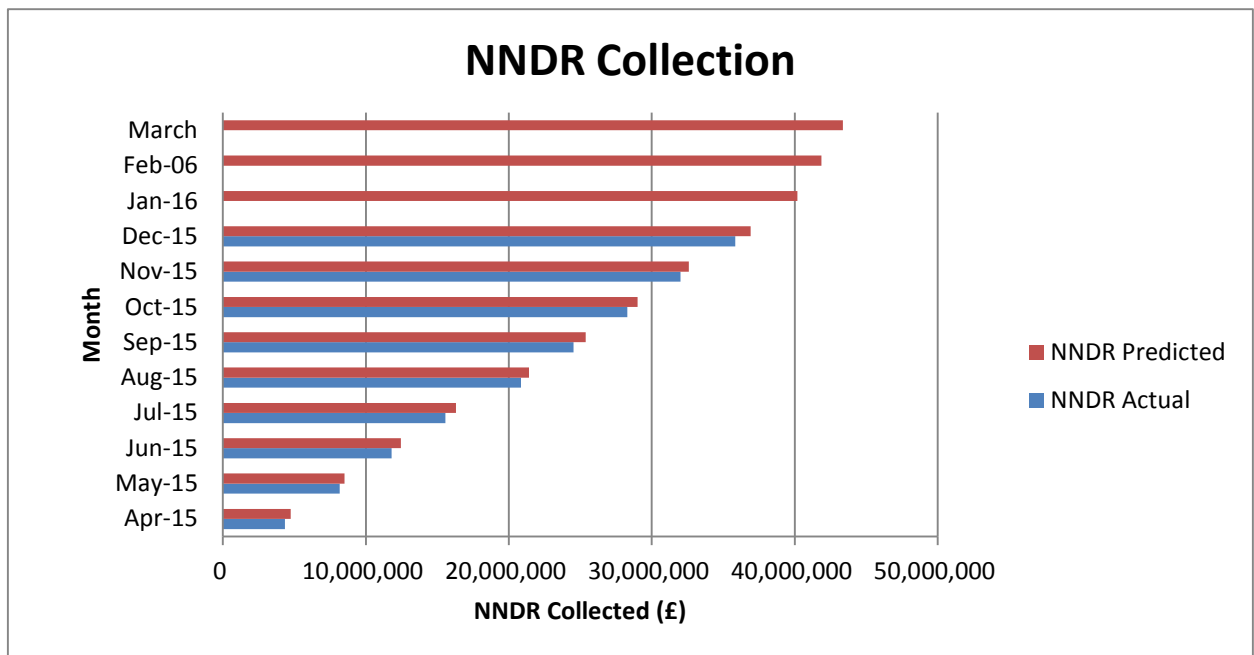


Figure 2

Number of households accepted as homeless

23. Although performance against this indicator is slightly above target, at 28 the cumulative figure for the first 3 quarters is well within the target for the full year of 45 households. Numbers each month/quarter fluctuate and are best considered cumulatively for the year to date to get a more accurate picture.

The percentage of plans received by Building Control which are checked within 15 working days

24. During Quarter 3 the team received 140 full plans, 79% of the plans were checked against the target of 87%. Whilst 30 applications were vetted outside the 15 day target, 21 were within 22 working days. A further 9 complex applications required

specific technical expertise and the customers were kept up to date on the progress of their application at all times.

25. Recruitment continues to be a problem in Building Control due to the national shortage of officers and competition from private companies. The Council are reviewing how it delivers the service both now and in the future. Despite this during Quarter 3, 115 Building Notices were received requiring next day assessment, 98% of these were carried out within 24 hours, thereby meeting the target.

Other performance information

The percentage of property not in rent arrears

26. Following the resolution of a longstanding dispute this indicator is now exceeding its 97% target. The Council is in discussion with the tenant to review the rental agreement with a view to simplifying arrangements and thereby minimising the likelihood of disputed payments in the future.

Performance reported by exception

27. As recommended by the Performance Indicator Review Working Group and agreed by Scrutiny Committee for Leader and Service Delivery on 18 February 2015, the following performance measures are reported on a quarterly basis where there are concerns:
- Number of affordable homes delivered;
 - Staff turnover;
 - Proportion of major disabled facilities grant works completed within 64 weeks; and
 - Proportion of minor disabled facilities grant works completed within 27 weeks.
28. *Affordable homes delivered* - Our latest information indicates that the target will not be met. As a consequence we are anticipating a shortfall in meeting our target of 160 units and based on the latest information we now expect to deliver 112 affordable housing units in 2015-16. The cause of the shortfall is a delay in the delivery of units on Section 106 sites where the developer determines the speed of the delivery of the units. In addition a 100% affordable housing scheme has been delayed due to on site issues. This is not a loss of affordable housing but a delay in the completion of the units which will be completed in 2016-2017
29. *Staff Turnover* - At 12.62% (39 voluntary leavers) this figure was higher than the 9% (22 voluntary leavers) target at the end of Quarter 3. This is also slightly more than the 33 leavers (10.17%) at the same point last year. As previously predicted the year-end figure of 12% has already been exceeded, but exit interviews do not indicate any concerning trends. The main reasons for departures continue to be due to relocation, career change and promotion opportunities there have also been six retirements.

Consideration of the Performance Report by the Scrutiny Committee for Leader and Service Delivery

30. At its meeting on 10 February 2016, the Scrutiny Committee for Leader and Service Delivery considered this report.

31. A concern was raised about staff turnover and the difficulties in recruiting staff for some Council services. The Committee was assured that problems with the recruitment of civil enforcement officers had now been resolved although problems continue in building and planning related professions where the Council is in direct competition with the private sector. To address this the Council is reviewing its advertising, to improve how we promote the Council for example, reminding potential applicants of our location between London and Brighton and the use of reduced costs for leisure facilities. It was pointed out that despite the increase in staff turnover there had not been a sustained reduction in performance.
32. On a related note the Committee were informed that a trainee has been taken on in Building Control and the Council is also considering proposing two apprenticeship positions.
33. The Committee were particularly concerned about the increased use of temporary accommodation and the impact of proposed changes to delivery of affordable housing. The Scrutiny Committee recommended that Officers provide information to the Cabinet at the next meeting on the 14th of March. . This information is provided in the following paragraph.
34. Whilst the number of households for whom the Council has accepted a homelessness duty remains within target, the number of households in temporary accommodation continues to exceed the target. There are a number of reasons for this:
- There has been a reduction in the number of lettings of affordable rented homes delivered. This pressure is likely to continue as changes to welfare benefits, the rent regime within which Registered Providers work and the Government's focus on home ownership make it increasingly difficult to deliver affordable rented housing. In this context it is important that homeless households get a fair priority for the lettings that do occur. Changes to the housing allocation scheme were considered by the Scrutiny Committee for Leisure and Community on 2 March, and these should improve the prospects of those in temporary accommodation being housed within a reasonable period.
 - We are finding it increasingly difficult to access privately rented housing, despite employing a part-time tenancy negotiator and providing rent in advance and deposit guarantees where required. This is largely due to welfare reforms making most privately rented housing unaffordable for those in receipt of benefits, and the risk that this trend will continue with the freezing of the Local Housing Allowance for four years from April 2016.
 - Sometimes it is taking longer than we would like for empty properties in the registered housing sector to be made ready to let, which means that households may have to wait longer in temporary accommodation, or in a guest house awaiting more appropriate temporary accommodation. This is an issue we continue to work on with our Registered Provider partners

Conclusion

35. The Council's services continued to perform well in the third Quarter 2015/16 despite increases in workload in many service areas. Where performance is below target, corrective action aimed at improvement has been planned and is being delivered.

Risk Management Implications

36. There are no risk management implications. Performance across the Council was seen as a strategic risk in the past but the Council has a proven track record in performance management and it is no longer seen as a risk.

Equalities Implications

37. There are no direct equality implications contained within this report. Equality impact assessments are undertaken within each individual service.

Financial Implications

38. There are no direct financial implications contained within this report.

Background papers

[Leader and Service Delivery - Performance monitoring report for the second quarter of 2015/16](#)

[Leader and Service Delivery - Performance monitoring report for the third quarter of 2014/15](#)