

## 6. PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2016/17

REPORT OF: HEAD OF CORPORATE RESOURCES  
Contact Officer: Tim Cusack Business Unit Lead Performance and Partnerships  
Email: tim.cusack@midsussex.gov.uk Tel: 01444 477421  
Wards Affected: All  
Key Decision: No  
Report to: Cabinet  
17 October 2016

---

### Purpose of Report

1. This report provides Cabinet with information about the Council's performance for the first Quarter from April to June 2016 using the bundle of performance indicators previously agreed by the Scrutiny Committee for Leader and Service Delivery.

### Summary

2. Performance in the first quarter of 2016/17 has been good overall, with most services performing at or close to target. In the small number of cases where service targets are not being fully met, the reasons for this are clearly understood and appropriate action is being taken

### Recommendations

3. **The Cabinet is recommended to note the Council's performance in the first Quarter of the year and identify any areas where further reporting or information is required.**
- 

### Introduction

4. This report has previously been considered by the Scrutiny Committee for Leader and Service Delivery on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2016. Issues raised by the Committee are set out in paragraphs 50-56.
5. One of the functions of the Scrutiny Committee for Leader and Service Delivery is to regularly monitor the performance of the Council's services, with a view to determining whether any additional scrutiny is required of services, particularly if performance is not of a satisfactory level. To do this, the Committee is provided with performance information on a quarterly basis.
6. Performance information is presented in a standard format across all services. Performance measures have been developed to capture the core areas of each service. Where possible a target is set for the year against which performance is measured. Some performance measures do not have targets as these measures are "health checks" and for monitoring purposes only.
7. Performance information for the first quarter is provided at Appendix A. This is set out in tabular form using a traffic light system as explained below:



red – 10 percent or more off target



amber – slightly off target (less than 10 percent)



green – on or exceeding target



health check - indicator for information only

### Overall Performance

8. Of the 49 indicators in the performance bundle in the first quarter of 2016/17:
  - 29 indicators were on or exceeded target (74% green)
  - 7 indicators were slightly off target (18% amber)
  - 3 indicators were significantly off target (8% red)
  - 10 indicators were for monitoring only.
9. This compares to the same quarter last year when there were 48 indicators, with 24 Green (64%), 7 Amber (18%), 7 Red (18%) and 10 indicators for monitoring only. The additional indicator for the first quarter 2016/17 is staff turnover, which has been reported by exception due to underperformance.
10. Not all aspects of the Council's work can be measured by formal indicators and in some cases the Council has little or no influence over performance. Therefore this work is measured using health check indicators which are outlined in Appendix A. These are intended to provide Members with a holistic view of the Council's work.

### **Performance meeting or exceeding targets (green)**

9. Of the 39 indicators with targets, 29 met or exceeded their target. This has been achieved despite increased volumes and the need for the Council to continue to make efficient use of resources. This section of the report provides more information about some of these performance achievements.

### Percentage of calls received and answered in the contact centre

10. Performance was at 96% against the target of 88% in the first quarter. This amounts to 26,824 calls answered out of 27,922 received. Please see the comments included in paragraphs 31 and 40-43 for more information regarding the performance of the service.

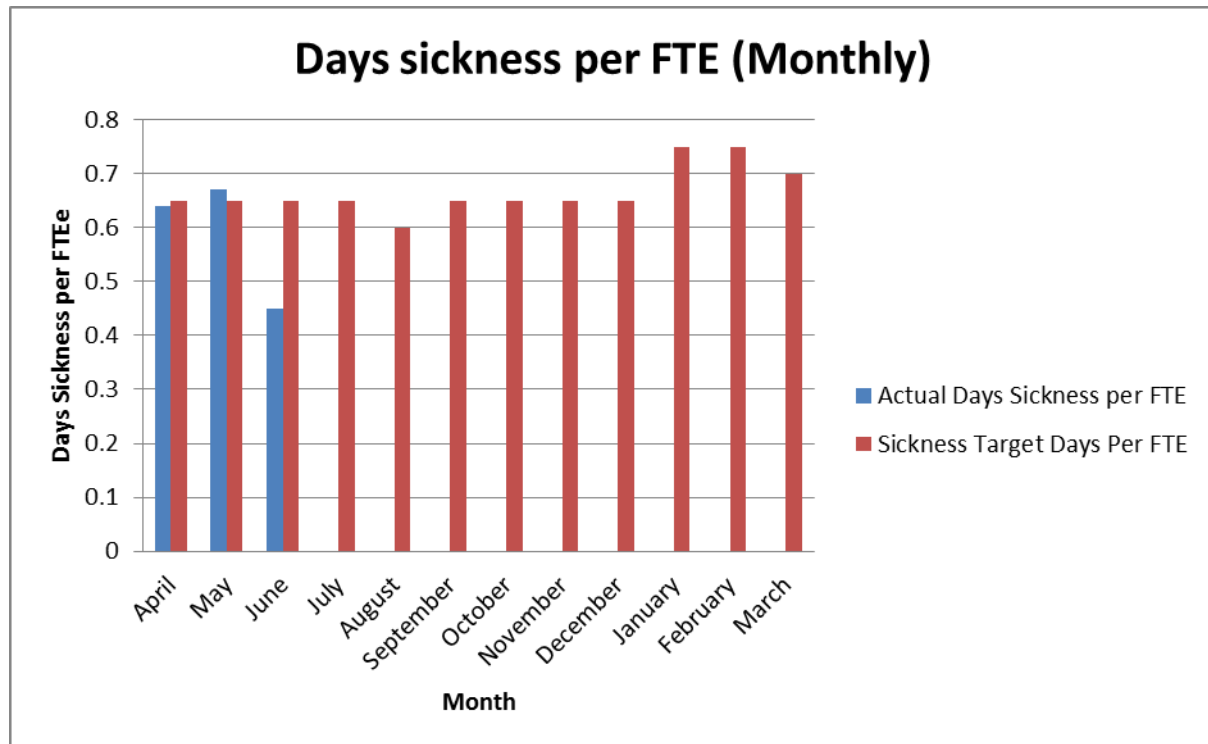
### Percentage of complaints responded to within published deadlines

11. 100% of complaints were dealt with within the published deadline. This relates to the 43 complaints received. Generally the deadline is to deal with complaints within 10 working days of sending an acknowledgement to the complainant.
12. Members will also be interested to note that 79 compliments were received in this period. The main services in receipt of compliments were
  - Development Management 31
  - Customer Services and Communications 26
  - Waste and Outdoor Services 9
  - Parking 8

### Staff sickness absence rate

13. This was 1.83 days in the first quarter against the target of 2 days per Full Time Equivalent. This is due to there being a little less long-term sickness absence and is an improvement on the Quarter 1 figure in 2015/16 which was 2.37 days. Information has been obtained from four other Sussex councils for the first quarter, which shows sickness rates at 4.21, 2.33, 2.32 and 1.55 respectively.

Figure 1 below shows the monthly figures for sickness rates against the target.



### Speed of processing – change of circumstances for Housing Benefit claims and Council Tax Support claims

14. Speed of processing of changes of circumstances for both Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims was at the target level of 10 days in the first quarter of 2016/17. There were 5,499 changes in circumstances in respect of Housing Benefit claims and 4,169 for Council Tax Support. Please see paragraph 33 for more information regarding Benefits performance.

### Percentage of Council Tax collected

15. Council Tax collection was at 30.15% in the first quarter and above the target of 29.90%. The amount of Council Tax collected was £27,825,686, which compares to £26,443,451 collected in the same period last year.

### Environmental Health service requests that are responded to within five working days

16. 98% of service requests were responded to within five working days against the target of 97%. This relates to 1,018 of the 1,044 requests for service being responded to within 5 working days. Requests for service cover the range of Environmental Health activities, including licensing, housing standards, environmental protection and food hygiene.

#### Number of households accepted as homeless

17. At ten, the number accepted as homeless by the Council is on target for the first quarter of the year. The focus of the Housing Needs Team continues to be the prevention of homelessness. Notification has been received from the Department of Works and Pensions of those in Mid Sussex who will be affected by the reduction in the Benefits Cap, introduced in 2013, from £26,000 to £20,000 per annum, which will take place in the Autumn. This will affect 123 households in the District. The reduction of the Cap is likely to impinge on a household's ability to pay their rent and could therefore lead to more homelessness. The Housing Needs Team has contacted those affected to offer advice.

#### Number of health and wellbeing interventions

18. The wellbeing service supports and advises people who wish to make improvement to their lifestyle, such as losing weight, taking more exercise, improving their diet, reducing alcohol consumption or stopping smoking. The service delivered 451 interventions in the first quarter against the target of 249. The Team have all successfully completed the examination elements of the Level 4 Obesity and Diet Management Certificate. This qualification will assist with the development of the in-house weight management programmes, to improve outcomes for those who enrol on weight management courses and receive one to one support.
19. Of the people who responded to requests for feedback, 95% of those assisted by the Wellbeing service reported a health improvement against a target of 66%. These calls are made 3 months after the intervention to monitor whether the intervention has led to a sustained improvement.

#### The number of visits made to the Leisure Centres and Civic Halls

20. The number of visits to the Council's Leisure Centres and halls continues to exceed targets. Leisure Centre membership now stands at 11,600, which is a reflection of the investment already made by the Council and Places for People in improvements to the facilities, since they became our leisure management partner in 2014. A further investment of £3.1 million was agreed at Cabinet on 11 July 2016 in new facilities at The Dolphin, King's Centre and Triangle Leisure Centre. This is comprised of £1.2 million from the Council and £1.9 million provided by Places for People Leisure. The biggest investment will be at the Triangle, with the creation of a larger purpose built gym and new climbing wall facility. There will also be significant improvements to the changing room areas at all three centres. Work on the new gym at The Triangle has commenced and the majority of the improvement works are scheduled to be completed by early 2017.

#### Amount of waste per household which is disposed of in landfill sites (kilos)

21. This was 108.72 kgs in the first quarter of 2016/17 compared with the target of 117 kgs. Information relevant to this indicator is also included in paragraphs 36 to 37 regarding the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting.

#### Parking Services performance

22. Both of the Parking Services indicators were on target at 100%. There were 818 enforcement enquiries dealt with within 10 days over the three month period. The target for car park machines repaired within 2 days was also met.

23. As part of the Enforcement Service Level Agreement with West Sussex County Council, the Parking Team has a performance measure which relates to the cancellation rate of Penalty Charge Notices. These are notices that are cancelled in the Parking Office due to mitigating circumstances. The steer from the County Council is that the Council should be aiming for 12%, with a view to achieving 7% by 2020. Through the efforts of the Parking Team to improve training and enforcement practices, we are currently achieving 8.9%. This has received very positive feedback from the County Council.

#### The percentage of property not in rent arrears

24. The rent due on the Council's property portfolio was £308,055 for the first quarter. 99% was collected, which was above the target of 97%.

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

25. The Building Control Team achieved 93% of plans checked within 15 days against the target of 87%, with 324 plans received in the first quarter. This represents an improvement on performance in the comparable period last year, which was 83%.

#### Processing of planning applications

26. The speed of determining planning applications remains good, with targets exceeded for majors, minors and other planning applications, despite an overall 17% increase in applications compared to the first quarter of 2015/16, from 599 to 701.
27. During the first quarter of the year, all seven major planning applications were processed within the target of 13 weeks (or within an agreed extension of time), and the target of 79% was exceeded.
28. Performance for processing minor applications exceeded the target of 84% compared with a target of 97%. This relates to 93 out of 96 minor applications processed within 8 weeks.
29. 305 out of 312 "other" applications were processed within 8 weeks, which represents performance of 98% against the target of 94%. "Other" planning applications mainly refers to residential development by householders.

#### **Performance slightly below target (amber)**

30. Seven of the indicators fell only slightly below (within 10%) their targets in the first quarter of 2016/17. Information about these is set out in this section of the report.

#### Percentage of calls to the switchboard answered in 40 seconds

31. This was at 84% against the target of 90% and relates to 10,143 out of 12,100 answered within 40 seconds. Please see the comments in paragraph 40-43 of the report for more information on this service.

### Speed of processing – new Housing Benefit claims

32. Performance in the first quarter was at 19 days against the target of 18 days. 381 new claims were processed in the first quarter of the financial year. There is a pattern each year of claimants generally receiving notification of their state benefits and pensions in April and notifying the Council of these changes through April and May. This increases the overall workload for dealing with change of circumstances and the resources required for processing of new claims. CenSus Revenues and Benefits have taken on five new members of staff who are undergoing a period of training. Although their throughput can be expected to increase over time, it is currently less than their more experienced colleagues. The amount of correspondence from customers tends to decrease in quarter 2, which provides the opportunity to catch up and reduce processing times.

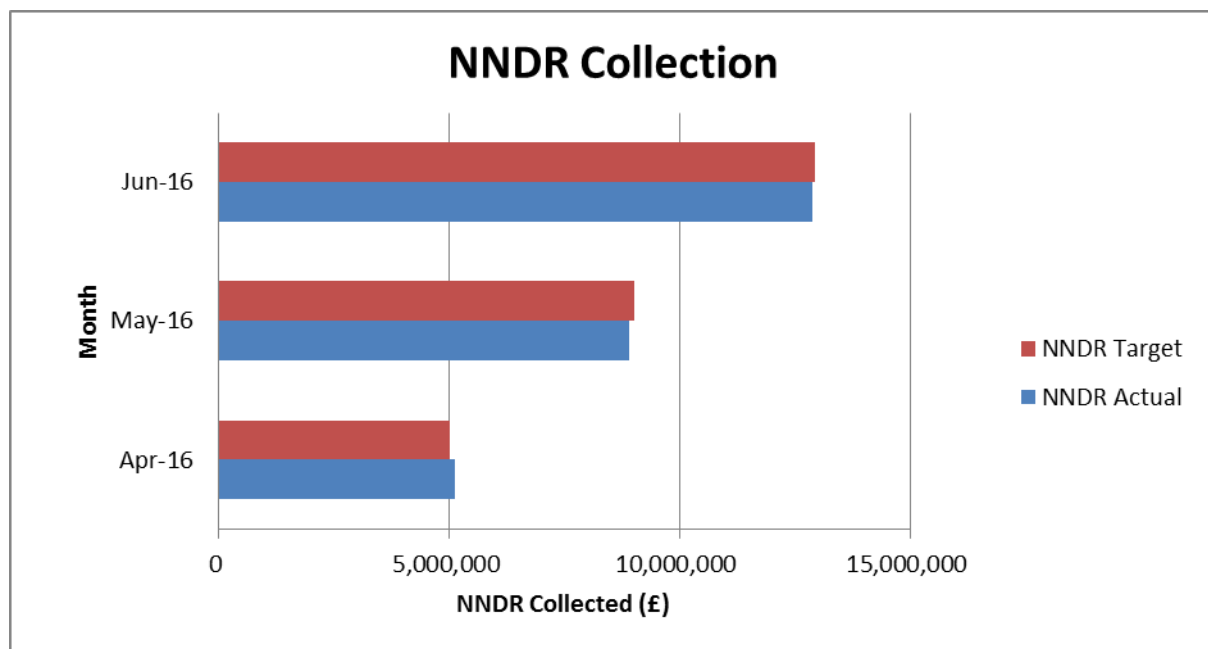
### Speed of processing – new Council Tax Support claims.

33. Performance in the first quarter was 21 days against the target of 20 days. 405 new claims were processed in the first quarter. Information provided above in respect of processing of new Housing Benefit claims, is also relevant for this indicator.

### Percentage of Non-Domestic Rates Collected

34. Collection of Non-Domestic Rates at the end of the first quarter had reached 28.01% against the target of 28.14%. Robust processes are in place for the recovery of the rates that are due. These will be reviewed in the Autumn to ensure that the Revenues Team are intervening as early as possible to address non-payment. There is a new service available that flags up businesses in financial difficulties at an early stage, which is also being investigated. Nevertheless, the amount collected in the first quarter is over £1 million more compared to the same period last year- £12,892,479 against £11,811,478 in the first quarter of 2015/16.

Figure 2 below shows monthly collection against targets for the first quarter



Proportion of Environmental Health service requests which are actioned and resolved within 3 months of receipt

35. Performance in the first quarter was 94% against the target of 96%. This represents 584 out of 621 service requests resolved within 3 months. There have been a number of service requests over the last quarter involving Environmental Protection, some of which have been particularly complex and required more time to deal with.

Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting.

36. The first quarter performance was at 42.4% compared with a target of 42.6%. There has been some expansion of the green waste service this year, with a further 1,013 green bins issued to those on the waiting list since April. As reported previously, a strategic waste review is being overseen by the Scrutiny Committee for Leisure and Community, to consider long term options for improving recycling and waste reduction. This work is in the context of the mid-point review of the Council's waste management contract with Serco and options for possible changes to collection methods, materials collected and collection vehicles.
37. A Review of Waste Management Update Report was considered by the Scrutiny Committee for Leisure and Community on 6 July 2016, including the timetable for the review. A number of Member Working Groups will look at specific aspects of this work, namely Food Waste, Contract Review and a review of the Waste Strategy. Final recommendations are to be considered by Cabinet in February 2017.

Validation of planning applications within 5 working days

38. In order to support Development Management in meeting their targets for processing planning applications, the Council aims to validate planning applications within 5 working days of submission in 98% of cases. Performance in the first quarter of 2016/17 was at 95% and relates to 784 applications received. This compares to 745 in the same period last year- an increase of 5.2%. Performance has also been affected by staff changes, including two new starters in the Service Support Team.

**Performance not achieving targets (red)**

39. There were three performance indicators in the first quarter of 2016/17 that were 10% or more off target.

Percentage of all calls answered in 40 seconds

40. The percentage of all calls answered within 40 seconds in the first quarter of 2016/17 was 79% against the target of 90%. This relates to 21,145 calls out of 26,824 answered within 40 seconds and is an improvement on the same quarter last year. All calls refer to those calls received by the Customer Services Team for the 10 services they handle directly as well as those to the switchboard.
41. The focus for the further ongoing implementation of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system continues to be resolving more enquiries at the first point of contact. Customer Service staff are able to deal with customers who need advice across a range of Council services. The average time taken to answer calls in the first quarter was 32 seconds, and the longest wait 11 minutes, both an improvement on the same quarter last year. In addition to telephone calls, the Customer Services Team dealt with 8,929 visitors to reception during the first quarter.

42. Management information shows that the longest waiting times are at lunch times, where callers have more combined queries which therefore take longer to resolve. A number of approaches are being taken to deliver further improvements. For example, the Contact Centre is trialling proactive work for the Wellbeing Team. This work is scheduled outside busy times across the whole team and then any additional resources as a result can then be used in peak times. This allows us to more appropriately match resources to demand. We also receive a significant volume of calls relating to the work of West Sussex County Council, for example highway queries. We are improving the visibility information available on our website to divert these calls which will also improve customer experience.
43. As reported to the Cabinet previously, opportunities are being explored to expand the ways in which customers can engage with the Council and a new set of performance indicators for Customer Services will be brought forward for consideration to the Scrutiny Committee for Leader and Service Delivery later in the year .

#### Staff turnover

44. This is one of the indicators that are reported to the Scrutiny Committee for Leader and Service Delivery quarterly by exception, recognising that staff turnover can be affected by a number of factors, many of which are out of the control of the Council. Staff turnover in the first quarter of the year was 5.8% (18 voluntary leavers), which was above the target of 3% (10 voluntary leavers). Staff turnover is largely a reflection of the state of the local economy and job market. Exit interviews continue to indicate that there is not a high level of unhappiness with being employed by Mid Sussex District Council. Reasons for departure were as follows:
- Personal Reasons – 8. Five of these left in their probationary period, discovering their role was not for them. The other three staff left due to family circumstances, being on a temporary contract and through finding a more senior, specialist role.
  - Retirement – 4.
  - Career – 3. Two left for more senior roles and were unlikely to progress at the Council. The other was a temporary member of staff who was offered a large salary way beyond what the Council could offer.
  - Job Content – 1. This member of staff left in the probationary period saying that the role was not for them.
  - End of temporary appointment – 1. This staff member was covering for a maternity leave and needed to find a more secure role.
  - Travelling – 1. This member of staff left in their probationary period due to an opportunity to travel.
45. For comparison, information has been obtained from four other Sussex councils and their turnover figures for the first quarter were 3.70%, 3.23%, 2.75% and 2.6% respectively.

#### Number of households living in temporary accommodation

46. There were 51 households in temporary accommodation at the end of June compared to a target of 45. This is a reflection of factors previously reported including the difficulties in accessing properties in the private rented sector and a reduction in Housing Association properties.
47. A Homelessness Strategy for the Council was considered at the Scrutiny Committee for Leisure and Community at the meeting on 6 July and was agreed at Council on 20 July. The Strategy included measures to try and improve access to the private rented sector and reduce the use of temporary accommodation.



## **Other performance information**

48. It has been previously agreed at the Scrutiny Committee for Leader and Service Delivery that some performance indicators should have an annual target and only be reported on a quarterly basis by exception, where there are concerns about performance. These are generally indicators that the Council has little control over. In addition to staff turnover (which is reported in paragraphs 44 to 45 above) these are:
- The number of affordable homes delivered;
  - The number of Disabled Facilities Grants completed.
49. No concerns have been raised regarding these two performance measures in Quarter 1

## **Consideration of the Performance Report by the Scrutiny Committee for Leader and Service Delivery at its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

50. The Committee commented on improvements in performance in answering telephone calls within 40 seconds and noted that although this was not at target levels, more enquiries were being dealt with at the first point of contact. Customer service had also been enhanced by the ability of staff to deal with customers who need advice across a range of services. It was confirmed that a new set of more qualitative performance indicators was being developed that would also include measures of customer satisfaction.
51. Arrangements for reducing calls received in respect of West Sussex County Council services were discussed, especially in relation to highways enquiries. It was confirmed that the Council is referring those wishing to report highways issues to the County Council's direct reporting app called "Love West Sussex".
52. The Committee expressed continuing concern over homelessness in the District and the numbers in temporary accommodation. The proactive approach of the Housing Needs Team in contacting those affected by the reduction in the Benefit Cap to offer housing advice was welcomed. The Committee was informed that discussions were taking place with Affinity Sutton to improve access to their housing in order to reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation. The Council's planning role to facilitate more housing overall and to enable affordable housing was also emphasised.
53. On staff matters, the Committee commented on staff turnover and welcomed the provision of more information regarding the reasons that staff are leaving the Council. The percentage of employees with a disability was also discussed. It was confirmed that the Council's focus was on recruiting the best person to do the job, regardless of any disability. The indicator was useful in ensuring that as an employer the Council was providing the necessary working conditions for disabled staff.
54. The Committee commented on the importance of the Wellbeing Service and expressed concern about its future funding from West Sussex County Council. It was agreed that this needed to be closely monitored and the appropriate representations made to the County Council.
55. The roll out of the green waste service was discussed and the waiting time for new customers. Expansion of the service would involve an additional 4,000 subscribers over two years and contribute to an increase in the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting.

56. The possibility of profiling the benefits processing performance indicators targets to take account of the larger caseload at the start of the year was discussed by the Committee. It was confirmed that this was a matter for the Census Partnership Board, who had decided that there should be a consistent target throughout the year. This recognised the importance of ensuring that benefits are always paid swiftly, particularly for those who need assistance with their rent.

### **Conclusions**

57. Performance in the first quarter of 2016/17 has been good overall, with most services performing at or close to target. In the small numbers of cases where service targets are not being met, the reasons for this are clearly understood and appropriate action is being taken.

### **Policy Context**

58. This report sets out how the Council is performing against the targets set out in its Service Plan and Corporate Plan for 2016/17.

### **Financial Implications**

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

### **Risk Management Implications**

60. 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.

### **Equality and Customer Service Implications**

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

### **Other Material Implications**

62. There are no other material implications arising from this report.

### **Background papers**

None.