

PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR THE SECOND 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
28 November 2016

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides Cabinet with information about the Council's performance for the second Quarter from July to September 2016 using the bundle of performance indicators previously agreed by the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Resources and Economic Growth.

Summary

2. Performance in the second 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 second quarter of the year and identify any areas where further reporting or information is required.**
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Introduction

4. This report has previously been considered by the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Resources and Economic Growth on 9 November. Issues raised by the Committee are set out in paragraphs 46 to 52.
5. One of the functions of the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Resources and Economic Growth is to regularly monitor the performance of the Council's services, with a view to determining whether any additional scrutiny is required, 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 second 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 second quarter of 2016/17:
 - 31 indicators were on or exceeded target (79% green)
 - 6 indicators were slightly off target (15% amber)
 - 2 indicators were significantly off target (5% red)
 - 10 indicators were for monitoring only.
9. This compares to the same quarter last year when there were 48 indicators, with 27 Green (71%), 3 Amber (8%), 8 Red (21%) and 10 indicators for monitoring only. The additional indicator for the second 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, 31 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.

Speed of processing – new Housing and Council Tax Support claims

10. The average speed of processing new Housing Benefit claims in the second quarter was at 17 days against the target of 18 days with 378 claims processed. For new Council Tax Support claims, performance was at the target level of 20 days with 420 claims processed. Both of these indicators were at amber in the first quarter at 19 and 21 days respectively, a reflection of the increased workloads arising from claimants receiving notification of their state benefits in April and notifying the Council of these changes through April and May. Quarter 2 has brought less correspondence from customers and provided the opportunity to "catch up". The Benefits Team now has less than 200 claims outstanding, all of which are less than 5 days old.

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

11. Speed of processing of changes of circumstances for both Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims was 9 days in the second quarter of 2016/17 ahead of the 10 days targets. There were 4,244 changes in circumstances in respect of Housing Benefit claims and 3,656 for Council Tax Support processed in the second quarter. The Benefits Team are putting slightly more emphasis on processing change of circumstances rather than new claims. This will reduce any potential overpayments and local authority error, which will keep the Council below the lower error threshold set by the Department of Works and Pensions to avoid loss of subsidy.

Percentage of Council Tax collected

12. Council Tax collection was at 57.80% in the second quarter and above the target of 57.70%. The amount of Council Tax collected was £53,516,224, which compares to £50,977,228 collected in the same period last year.

Percentage of calls received and answered in the contact centre

13. Performance was at 96% against the target of 88% in the second quarter. This amounts to 24,025 calls answered out of 24,970 received. Please see the comments included in paragraphs 32 and 41-42 for more information regarding the performance of the service.

Percentage of complaints responded to within published deadlines

14. 100% of complaints were dealt with within the deadline. This relates to the 55 complaints received. Generally the deadline is to deal with complaints within 10 working days of sending an acknowledgement to the complainant.
15. Members will also be interested to note that 90 compliments were received in this period. The main services in receipt of compliments were
- Development Management 36
 - Customer Services and Communications 28
 - Waste and Outdoor Services 16
 - Landscapes 4
 - Legal, Member Services and Elections 3

Staff turnover

16. This is one of the indicators that are reported to the Committee 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 at red, with a particularly high number of 18 leavers and a staff turnover rate of 5.8% against the target of 3%. Quarter 2 has seen a considerable improvement, with 9 leavers and staff turnover of 2.86%. 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. For comparison, information has been obtained from three other Sussex councils and their turnover figures to the end of the second quarter were 5.21%, 6.55% and 7.68% respectively.

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

17. The number of visits to the Council's Leisure Centres and halls continues to exceed targets, with 458,288 visits in the second quarter compared to the target of 451,307. Leisure Centre membership now stands at 11,919, which is a reflection of the investment already made by the Council and Places for People in improvements to the facilities.
18. Work to implement the £3.1 million further investment in facilities at the leisure centres is proceeding to schedule. This includes the creation of a larger purpose built gym and new climbing wall facility at The Triangle and significant improvements to the changing room areas at all three centres. The new gym at The Triangle will be operational by the end of February 2017, with the other improvement works completed by the end of June 2017.

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

19. In the second quarter of 2016/17, 107.98 kgs of waste was sent to landfill compared to the target of 117 kgs. Information relevant to this indicator is included in paragraphs 34 to 35.

Parking Services performance

20. Parking Services indicators were on target at 100%. There were 861 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. All of the pay and display ticket machines have recently been upgraded to be compatible with the introduction of the new £1 coin next spring.

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

21. 97% of service requests were responded to within five working days in the second quarter, which was at the target level. This relates to 1,047 of the 1,078 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 health and wellbeing interventions

22. 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 385 interventions in the second quarter against the target of 249.
23. Of the people who responded to requests for feedback, 88% 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.
24. It was reported at the last meeting that the Wellbeing Team had all completed the examination elements of the level 4 Obesity and Diet Management Certificate. Since then, the Team have delivered six twelve week weight management courses, attended by 52 clients. Of these, 49 participants lost weight, with 63% losing 3% of their Body Mass Index (BMI) and 33% losing 5% or more of their BMI. A further six courses are being run, with 79 people already half way through the programme. The courses are delivered in two local GP practices, East Grinstead library, Warden Park Primary school, The Dolphin Leisure Centre and St John's Community Centre, Burgess Hill.

Number of households accepted as homeless

25. At ten, the number of households accepted as homeless by the Council is at the target level for the second quarter of the year. The focus of the Housing Needs Team continues to be the prevention of homelessness. Please see paragraphs 39 to 40 for more information on this service.

Processing of planning applications

26. The speed of determining planning applications remains good, with performance at or exceeding targets in the second quarter for majors, minors and other planning applications. This is despite an increase of 210 (18%) in applications in the year to date compared to the same period last year- 1,398 compared to 1,188 in 2015/16.

- 27. During the second quarter of the year, performance in processing major planning applications within 13 weeks (or with an agreed extension of time) was on target at 79%. This relates to 15 out of 19 processed within the 13 week target. 2 of the 6 decisions made in September were made beyond the target time due to matters outside of the Council's control. These involved the receipt of proposals to remove planning conditions from planning permissions already granted and delays in the applicants providing further information requested by West Sussex County Council.
- 28. For processing of minor applications, performance was at 91% compared to a target of 84%. This relates to 99 out of 109 minor applications processed within 8 weeks.
- 29. 321 out of 332 "other" applications were processed within 8 weeks, which represents performance of 97% compared to the target of 94%. "Other" planning applications mainly refers to residential development by householders.

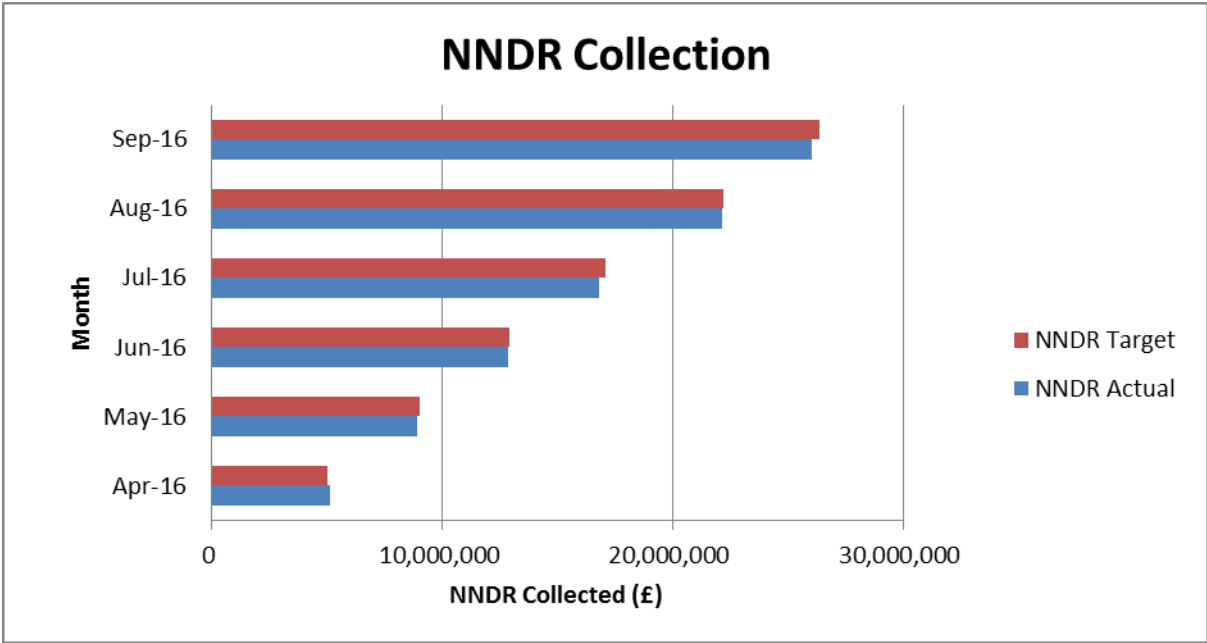
Performance slightly below target (amber)

- 30. 6 of the indicators fell only slightly below their targets (within 10%) in the first quarter of 2016/17. Information about these is set out in this section of the report.

Percentage of Non-Domestic Rates Collected

- 31. Collection of Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) at the end of the second quarter had reached 56.91% against the target of 57.65%. A comprehensive piece of work has now been completed to examine processes, systems and procedures. An analysis of the NDR caseload has been undertaken to compare and contrast the differences between now and two years ago, which also included payment patterns. The headline outcomes show there are no "black holes" or un-actioned recovery work outstanding in the system. In fact NDR collection is down across the whole of Sussex and large parts of the country. In monetary terms, £1.5 million more has been collected by the end of the second quarter of 2016/17 compared to the same period last year- £26,045,778 against £24,530,950, which is largely due to increased rateable values.

Figure 1 below shows monthly collection against targets for the year to date



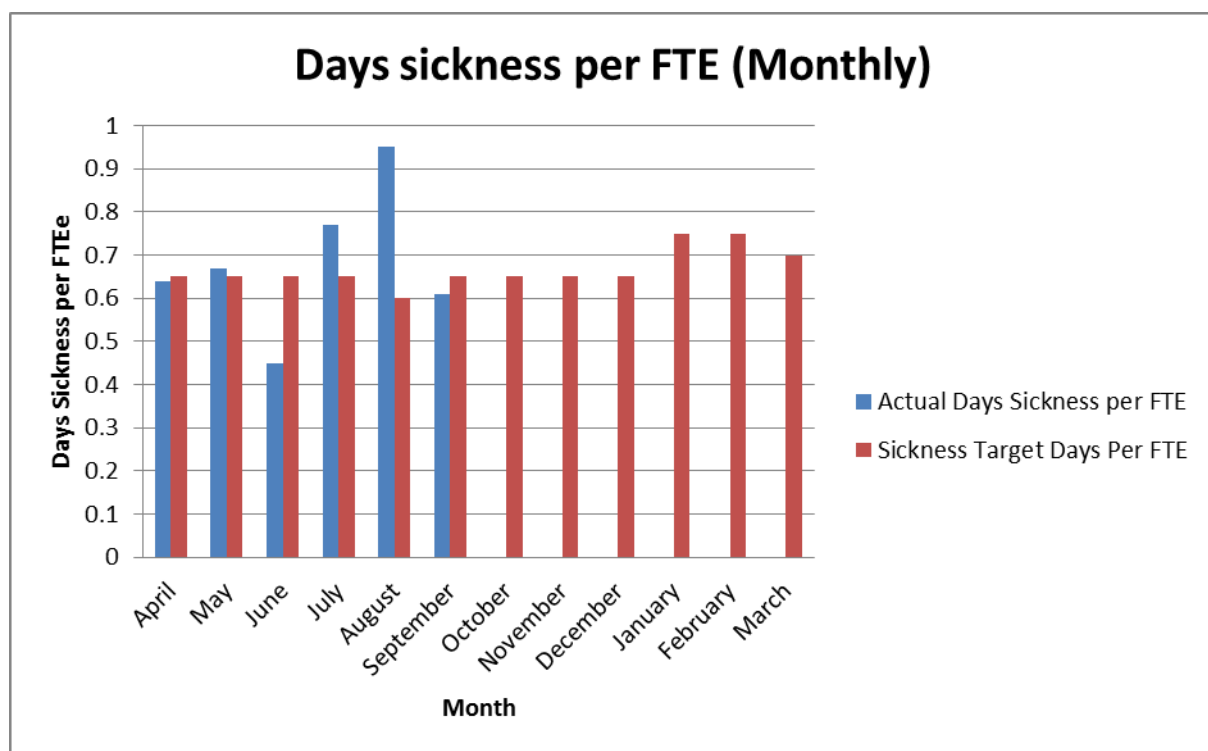
Percentage of calls to the switchboard answered in 40 seconds

32. This was at 86% against the target of 90% and relates to 9,700 out of 11,288 answered within 40 seconds. Please see the comments in paragraph 41-42 of the report for more information on this service.

Staff sickness absence rate

33. The cumulative staff sickness rate at the end of quarter 2 was 4.09 days per full-time equivalent (FTE), which is above the target of 3.85 days. This is due to there being a little more long-term sickness absence in quarter 2. This is an improvement on the quarter 2 figure for 2015/16 which was 4.52 days. Information has been obtained from three other Sussex councils to the end of the second quarter, which shows sickness rates at 4.15, 4.25 and 4.54 days per FTE respectively.

Figure 2 below shows the monthly figures for sickness rates against the target.



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

34. The second quarter performance was 42.5% against the target of 44%. There has been further expansion of the garden waste service this year at the rate of approximately 50 new customers per week following the introduction of the new rounds. The existing waiting list for the service will be eliminated by early November to bring forward growth of 500 new customers. The overall programme is to add 4,000 subscribers over two years to reach 18,200 by March 2018.
35. As previously reported to Cabinet, a strategic waste review is taking place to consider long term options for improving recycling and waste reduction in the context of the mid- point review of the Council's waste management contract with Serco. This will consider possible changes to collection methods, materials collected and collection vehicles. A Review 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.

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

36. Performance in the second quarter was 95% against the target of 96%. This represents 655 out of 687 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.

Validation of planning applications within 5 working days

37. 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 second quarter of 2016/17 was just below target at 97.3%, yet a 14.5% increase in the number of applications compared to the second quarter last year - 784 applications received compared to 685 in 2015/16.

Performance not achieving targets (red)

38. There were 2 performance indicators in the second quarter of 2016/17 that were 10% or more off target.

Number of households living in temporary accommodation

39. The number of households in temporary accommodation was 51 at the end of September. This is a reflection of factors previously reported to Cabinet including the difficulties in accessing properties in the private rented sector and a lack of available Housing Association properties.
40. Discussions are taking place with Affinity Sutton to improve the time taken to turnaround voids in both their temporary and general needs housing in order to reduce the time households spend in temporary accommodation. A Homelessness Strategy for the Council was considered at the Scrutiny Committee for Leisure and Community at the meeting on 6 July 2016 and was agreed at Council on 20 July 2016. The Strategy included measures to improve access to the private rented sector and reduce the use of temporary accommodation.

Percentage of all calls answered in 40 seconds

41. The percentage of all calls answered within 40 seconds in the second quarter of 2016/17 was 81% against the target of 90%. This relates to 19,378 calls out of 24,025 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 for the 10 services they handle directly as well as those to the switchboard.
42. 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 second quarter was 31 seconds. In addition to telephone calls, the Customer Services Team dealt with 8,513 visitors to reception during the second quarter.

Proposed new Customer Services Performance Indicators

43. It had previously been agreed with the Scrutiny Committee that a new set of performance indicators for customer services would be presented for consideration at their meeting on 9 November. These indicators are designed to provide a more holistic picture of the customer service provided introducing measures of quality, rather than just the quantitative information currently monitored such as such as speed of call answering. An indicative list of these indicators is provided below:
- Percentage of enquiries resolved at point of contact
 - Monthly customer satisfaction scores
 - Percentage of calls answered within 40 seconds
 - Percentage of compliments against complaints across customer services
 - Percentage of complaints responded to within published deadlines.
 - The number of e-forms submitted directly by the public.

Other performance information

44. It has been previously agreed at the Scrutiny Committee 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 paragraph 16) these are:
- The number of affordable homes delivered;
 - The number of Disabled Facilities Grants completed.
45. No concerns have been raised regarding these two performance measures in Quarter 2.

Consideration of the Performance Report by the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Resources and Economic Growth at its meeting on 9th November 2016

46. The Committee expressed continuing concern about increases in the numbers of households in temporary accommodation as a result of homelessness. The cost to the Council of putting people into temporary accommodation was discussed and the benefits of work to prevent homelessness, such as assisting with access to private sector tenancies. There were challenges arising from the changes to the benefits system which are impacting on this. The Council's role in facilitating more housing overall and to enable affordable housing was also emphasised.
47. The Committee were complimentary about the performance of the Benefits Team in hitting their targets for processing benefit applications and change of circumstances. Assurances were provided that the proposal to put slightly more emphasis on processing change of circumstances in order to avoid loss of subsidy would not be at the expense of performance in processing new claims. It was not that targets are set by the Census Joint Committee.
48. The age and condition of the Council's car park machines were discussed. Recent improvement to the Council's car parks were identified and the contribution of car parking to future town centre development and the local economy. The updating of the car parking machines and extending methods of payment would be integral to this. Reduced levels of theft from car park machines and vandalism were also discussed, thanks in part to additional CCTV cameras.

49. The Committee received further information on progress with expansion of the garden waste service and clearing of those on the waiting list. Improvements to the on-line system for subscribing to the scheme were planned and measures are in place to ensure capacity to deliver to new customers. The Committee were encouraged by the level of take up and popularity of the garden waste service.
50. The percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting was discussed. Expansion of the green waste service will assist in improving performance and the Committee was informed of other initiatives also aimed at improving the level of recycling. These included measures to counter the increase in non-recyclable items being put in recycling bins through publicity campaigns and use of recycling information packs. Initiatives were also in place to improve the levels of recycling from communal bins.
51. The Committee discussed performance in the collection of Non-Domestic Rates and received more information on the review that had been undertaken to examine the reasons for reduced levels of collection. No obvious reasons had been identified and there was a national trend of Non-Domestic Rates becoming harder to collect. A small number of large businesses in the District paying late could have a significant impact on the in-month collection performance. It was acknowledged that a balance needed to be struck between rigorous recovery and supporting local business. Following the review the Revenues Team were making more personal contact with smaller businesses to discuss payment plans and avoid arrears.
52. The Committee agreed to hold a Performance Indicator Review Working Group meeting to consider new customer service indicators and other changes to the bundle of indicators for 2017/18. Recommendations will come to the Scrutiny Committee meeting of 28 February 2017 and will be reported to the Cabinet meeting on 27 March 2017.

Conclusions

53. The Council's services continued to perform well in the second Quarter of 2016/17 despite increases in workload in many services areas. Where performance is below target, corrective action aimed at improvement has been planned and is being delivered.

Policy Context

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

Risk Management Implications

55. 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

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

Financial Implications

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

Background papers

None.