

Ward: All
Portfolio Holder: Cllr P Cumming

Executive Committee

27th May 2008

Report of Chief Executive

Quarterly Corporate Performance Report

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To report the review of the council's corporate performance for the fourth quarter of 2007/8 ending 31st March 2008.

Recommendations that –

- (i) the report be noted; and**
- (ii) the major achievements in performance be recorded and celebrated.**

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Performance Management Framework was modified in May 2006 to incorporate revised arrangements for the quarterly review of corporate performance at a strategic level by Portfolio Holders and senior managers.
- 2.2 The latest review was undertaken by the Quarterly Performance Forum, consisting of all portfolio holders and senior managers, on 20th May 2008. The review was informed by detailed reports from individual managers and portfolio holders, and was structured around the Council's objectives.

3. Review Findings

Service Performance

- 3.1 The review found that the strong performance reported during 2006/7 and earlier in 2007/8 had continued through the final quarter of 2007/8, while the Council had also achieved the targeted efficiency savings of £564,000.

Key achievements include:

- The improved performance of Planning Services has been maintained and is above average for all categories of applications.

BVPI	2006/7	2007/8	Latest average of district councils	% change on 06/07
109a major applications	63%	75%	74.2%	+ 19%
109b minor applications	64%	80%	77.2%	+25%
109c other applications	81%	92%	89.3%	+13%

- There has been a significant reduction in the proportion of planning appeals allowed. Over the year 32% of appeals had been allowed, compared to 42% last year. Nonetheless this performance is below average when compared to all other councils and improvement needs to be sustained.
- Cleanliness of public land at 4% continues to be amongst the best in the country.
- Recycling rates have increased to 25.8% for the year, just below the target of 26%,
- Missed refuse collections are 21% lower than last year.
- Crime rates have reduced by 25-35% from last year and are amongst the lowest in the country.
- The “Scores on the Doors” scheme website has received 15,000 hits from the public seeking assurance about food establishments, 86% of which are broadly compliant with food hygiene standards.
- At the end of March, 90% of flooded households had returned home following the floods of summer 2007. All have recently been visited by revenue officers to verify their status. The power to provide up to 12 months exemption from Council Tax comes to an end in July and the ongoing position will be reviewed at that point.
- Over the last quarter, some 60 projects have been completed using Advantage West Midlands funding in Upton and Tenbury aimed at refurbishing the local infrastructure following the floods of 2007
- The provision of access to affordable housing, through new units and a range of other access schemes, is ahead of target for the year. A total of 21 new units have become available during 2007/8, and 145 opportunities have been made available through Elgar Housing Homebuy, rent deposit guarantees and through prevention measures. In addition, the future supply of affordable housing continues to improve as evidenced by planning permissions granted over the last year totalling 121 new affordable homes.
- Over 93% of enquiries concerning District Council matters were resolved at the first point of contact via the Customer Contact Centre (telephone) compared to 70% a year ago. For the Customer Service Centre, the corresponding results are 92% and 80%. This is an excellent result in the face of the increasing range of services handled by Customer Service Advisors and the addition of two new hub offices in Tenbury and Upton over the past year.
- The Revenues and Benefits Shared Service has performed well in its first year of operation. Claims are being handled 5-7.5% faster than previously

while accuracy has been maintained, and Council Tax collection rates improved for the sixth year running. Most performance in this area is in the top quartile nationally

- Worcestershire Telecare was sold to a consortium of RSLs in order to achieve greater efficiencies and better use of resources. The formal transfer took place on 1st April.
- Council priorities for improvement over the next three years have been built into management plans for 2008/9 and a budget of £105,000 has been allocated specifically for additional activity in the four areas concerned.
- Plans have also been put in place to disinvest in the Council's non-priority areas, where expenditure will be progressively reduced over the next three years.
- The Vision 21 Strategic Board has reviewed the Partnership, its objectives and the way it works, and is preparing detailed plans to deliver value added projects designed to:
 - Reduce the District's carbon footprint through a "Transition Town" programme aimed at a "one planet" district.
 - Reduce rural access deprivation, piloted in one of our most access deprived wards.
 - Regenerate the estates of Pickersleigh, Brook Farm and Duke of Edinburgh to improve the vitality of their communities and economies.
- Sickness absence amongst employees has been reduced by 12% to 11 days per person per year, due largely to a continued focus on reducing long term sickness.

Financial Performance

3.2 The financial headlines at the end of the year show that:

- Management action throughout the year resulted in revenue expenditure being in line with the budget by the year end, despite the unavoidable additional spending pressures arising from the Concessionary Fares scheme and the summer 2007 floods.
- The increased efficiency and savings target of £564,000 was met.
- Capital expenditure for the year amounted to £1.921 million, against the approved budget of £2.733 million. £732,000 will be carried forward to meet ongoing commitments.
- The Use of Resources Assessment and the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter prepared by the Audit Commission were received in March. Our overall score has risen from 2 to 3 out of 4.
- Property sales progressed well, with a number of significant transactions completed by the year end.

Performance Improvement

- The latest comparative statistics available from the Audit Commission shows that Malvern Hills District Council is now ranked in the top 10% of all district councils for the extent of performance improvement since 2002/3.
- They also show that 57% of those Performance Indicators used for CPA re-categorisation are performing in the best quartile, a result which is better than the average for councils rated as Excellent.
- Provisional analysis of year end results shows that 86% of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) are equal to or better than the equivalent results in 2006/7. This is further evidence of the continuing improvement trend experienced over the last four years.
- Comparison with the latest available national data (2006/7) also shows that 44% of all Malvern Hills' BVPIs are in the top quartile nationally and a further 32% are above average.

4. Strategic Issues

4.1 Looking ahead, there are a number of challenges which will need to be addressed if our good performance is to be maintained:

- The exploration of joint/shared working opportunities with Worcester City Council, Worcestershire County Council and other councils and organisations will continue to be important in the context of efficiency savings and improved service delivery for the future, and will continue to require the support and commitment of members and officers.
- The South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy will continue to test the three authorities' abilities and determination to meet deadlines in the face of higher housing growth options and their implications.
- The Malvern Hills Partnership's three priority action programmes will undoubtedly place demands and expectations upon the Council and which are not currently contained within existing plans and budgets.
- The new national concessionary fares scheme is already proving popular with local residents and the take up is likely to further increase, with consequential costs pressures upon the Council.
- The Council's plans for 2008-9 and beyond will require significant changes to the organisation itself. They will include the implementation of:
 - the Local Pay & Grading Review,
 - a range of joint working initiatives,
 - a detailed efficiencies programme requiring changes to working practices,
 - a number of significant ICT projects,

- the stretch targets currently being developed and agreed for the new Local Area Agreement for Worcestershire,
- the Local Government and Public Health Act (e.g. empowering communities, Community Calls for Action, wider scrutiny roles),
- managing expectations in relation to service reductions

All such changes will need to be managed effectively, sensitively and with clarity of purpose if they are to be successful, and will represent a major part of the management and executive agenda for the next few months.

4.2 The important agenda for change outlined above will need the total support and commitment from leading members and senior managers over the coming months. It will, however, place the Council in a strong position to improve its performance and build a better future for the District.

5 Corporate Considerations

5.1 Executive Committee need to consider the case for continuing to provide exemptions from Council Tax for approximately 70 households who continue to occupy temporary accommodation following the floods of 2007. The current arrangements cease after one year, at the end of June and end of July). A separate report will be submitted to the June meeting of Executive Committee.

Resource Implications: (Identify Financial, Legal, Property and Personnel issues)	None
Policy Implications: (Identify how proposals link to Council priorities and the current policy framework, and if they do not, identify implications)	The review is a fundamental element of the Performance Management Framework, and the performance monitored is focused on the objectives and priorities of the Council.
Equalities Issues: (Identify potential human rights issues and any impact on grounds of race, gender, disabilities, age, sexual orientation and religious belief)	

6. Risk Management

Risk Identified	Inherent Risk Evaluation		Proposed measures	Residual Risk Evaluation	
	Risk Score			Risk Score	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Failure to recognise and address strategic issues within a reasonable time scale could result in loss of credibility and of performance 	Risk Score	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategic issues addressed to clear time scales and adequately resourced. 	Risk Score	3

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Failure to continue to manage performance could result in lower ratings from external inspections 	Risk Score	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Management of poor performance and/or performance issues through regular and senior level review processes as per the Performance Management Framework 	Risk Score	3
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7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The demands placed on the Council as a result of flooding and severe financial constraints have presented enormous challenges over the last year. Nonetheless, service delivery and performance have continued to improve (demonstrating the resilience and capacity of the organisation) and the Council can confidently look forward to making a significant contribution to improving the lives of the people it serves.
- 7.2 Corporate performance over 2007/8 continued to be strong and improved over the previous year. The major and sustained improvements in planning performance are a cause for particular celebration.
- 7.3 There are no new performance issues of significance arising in this quarter.
- 7.4 The key strategic issues for the Council over the next few months are:
- The development of action programmes by the Malvern Hills Partnership and the Council’s role in them,
 - The continued progress towards a South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy and the implications of significant growth,
 - the development of joint working opportunities,
 - implementation of plans to meet the stretch LAA targets,
 - the management of organisational change,
- 7.5 The Executive Committee is encouraged to celebrate the achievements and congratulate staff on the outcomes of their efforts.

Chris Bocock

Chief Executive

Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	Reports from Heads of Service and Portfolio Holders
Related Information:	Performance Management Framework
References: (To or from other Committees)	None
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