

How we manage our resources and monitor our performance

During 2006/2007 we reviewed our performance monitoring arrangements and all key areas were monitored monthly and reported on quarterly. Our aim is to continually review our performance monitoring arrangements to ensure that we focus on areas that are not meeting performance targets. By doing this we can improve performance.

There are often reasons why performance does not meet target. For example, within the Revenues Service, there was an implementation of a new ICT System, which included a period of time when the systems were unavailable. The impact on the performance within the service was high. The system has now been successfully installed and performance is back on track. Early indications show that implementation of the new system combined with other service improvements will ensure that performance improves in 2007/2008.

The Council Plan

The performance management framework (see Part 2 - Appendix) has been embedded across all areas and strengthened year on year to improve focus and clarity to ensure all new priorities and arrangements are included in the corporate framework.

The link between performance and budget monitoring has also been strengthened to provide greater clarity. From this year all key performance information will be available to all Officers, Members and stakeholders in a single document entitled 'The Council Plan'. This will provide a complete overview of performance and clearly identify underachieving areas so that early corrective actions or revisions to targets can be undertaken.

The Council Plan will consist of:

- Corporate Strategy
- Council Improvement Plan
- Best Value Performance Indicators
- Statement of Internal Control
- Corporate Service Standards
- Local Area Agreement framework (when agreed)

Reporting and Publishing Results

All performance will be monitored and reported monthly to Senior Management. The results will be published within 10 days of each month end.

Members will receive a quarterly information sheet detailing progress with the Council Plan, together with the high-level budget monitoring position across all service areas. By providing information on a quarterly basis all members will receive regular updated information in these two keys and Overview and Scrutiny Committees will have a regular opportunity to identify specific areas they wish to focus on for scrutiny purposes.

The Executive Committee will continue to receive formal monitoring reports at six months and at year-end, in addition to receiving the quarterly updates via the information sheets.

Performance information, which is of interest to our residents and partners will be updated and published each quarter on the Council's Website.

This approach will enable us to provide timely information which is easily accessible throughout the year and give the opportunity to get obtain regular feedback from all stakeholder groups.

Managing for Results

Areas of under performance will be specifically targeted and, where applicable, weekly monitoring will be undertaken to assess effectiveness of corrective actions being applied to bring the target back in line.

To facilitate this process, monthly profiling of all targets is being undertaken to clearly show performance against targets, compared to previous years and against 'best in class' Councils. This will enable us to strengthen our approach in the areas of data quality, trend analysis and regularly compare with high performing councils.

We continually strive to get the balance right between those services, which are 'statutory' (set by national government) and those, which are critical to particular resident groups and/or vulnerable groups.

We continually ask the following questions: -

- Is this service or activity important to our residents/taxpayers?
- Can we afford to provide this level of service in a non-priority area?
- Is there an opportunity to maintain or reduce the performance whilst still delivering an acceptable level of service to our residents?
- Are there alternative ways of delivering the service to reduce cost, but maintain the quality of service, i.e., through collaborative/shared working?

This, in turn, may then lead to an increased investment in a priority area that has performed less well and reduced investment in a non priority area. Our approach to continuous improvement is designed, not only to achieve 'Excellence', but also to sustain it.