

NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

CORPORATE SERVICES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

25 JANUARY 2018

CURRENT PERFORMANCE

Report of Alison Elsdon, Director of Finance

Cabinet Member: Councillor Nicholas Oliver, Executive Member for Corporate Services

Purpose of report

To consider current performance for services within the Committee's terms of reference.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee receives the report.

Link to Corporate Plan

The performance management information covers all services of the Council and is available via the Council's website according to each theme of the Corporate Plan. The Council's performance management arrangements overall are particularly relevant to 'Developing the Organisation'.

Key issues

This report is for information.

Background

1. The Council approved its current Corporate Plan in November 2013. Each year, Service Directors prepare a Service Statement which sets out priorities for their service in delivering the Corporate Plan over the coming twelve months together with a performance framework covering past performance levels and future targets. The performance measures are captured on a web-enabled system and current performance is updated regularly so that the most recent information is available to

Members, officers and the public. All performance information is available via the Council's website to promote openness and accountability.

2. Members will be aware that a new Corporate Plan for the period up to 2021 has been drafted and is currently subject to consultation. It is expected that the final Plan will be approved by the County Council at its meeting on 21 February 2018 together with the Medium Term Financial Plan and the Budget for 2018-19. These key documents will enable Service Directors in conjunction with Portfolio Holders to prepare Service Statements for the period up until 2021 for publication to the Council's website. Updates on progress in delivering against these targets will be brought to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee twice a year.
3. The Appendix to this report shows the current performance information for services within the Committee's terms of reference and is summarised briefly below.
4. **Corporate Resources:** Performance in revenues and benefits continues to be broadly on target in relation to processing housing benefit and council tax support, collecting council tax and business rates, retrieving arrears and detecting fraud. Payment of supplier invoices within 30 days continues to exceed the 97.5% target.
5. **Human Resources:** Sickness levels across the Council have improved but are still higher than target. Regular focus and support to continue to tackle sickness levels is provided through the (officer) Workforce Committee and through support to managers from HR officers. Statutory and mandatory training has improved significantly during the current financial year and is now achieving targets; although, appraisal completion is still not reaching target levels. Timescales for appointment to the new occupational health provision are not being reported regularly.
6. **Economy:** Economic policy measures are under represented in the Council's performance framework due to the difficulty in measuring immediate cause and effect in this area. Available measures provide information on employment rate and pay but members will appreciate the time lag between Council action and impact.
7. **Property Services:** current targets are being achieved in relation to statutory testing regimes, achievement of capital receipts and delivery of revenue and capital maintenance and building programmes.
8. As well as the specific services covered by its terms of reference, the Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for the Council's performance management arrangements. As outlined above, current arrangements are built around a performance management framework embodied in Service Statements which provide details of the delivery of the Corporate Plan and are refreshed annually. This year, a new set of Service Statements will be published reflecting the new management structure and providing more detail of the emerging

Corporate Plan, Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget for 2018-19. Portfolio Holders will be involved in the development of the plans, including the setting of priorities and measures of success, which will cover the period up to 2021 and be refreshed annually.

9. In recent years, a Corporate Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitored performance across the Council but with the change in political management arrangements, each of the four Overview and Scrutiny committees is responsible for monitoring the performance of services within its terms of reference. To support this Committee's wider terms of reference with regard to performance management arrangements, Portfolio Holders have established three corporate scorecards covering Customers; Regulatory and Statutory measures; and focused improvement areas. These are also included in Appendix 1 and are summarised below.
10. **Customers:** Most customer-focused measures are meeting current targets, including the timely processing of housing benefit and council tax support and payment of supplier invoices (as referred to above under Corporate Resources); Local Services activities such as dealing with hazardous potholes, dealing with fly-tips, a reduction in the numbers of missed bin collections, bulky waste collections and responding to street lighting faults; processing planning applications; and carrying out housing repairs. Customer areas below target are responding to complaints and answering telephone calls in the Customer Contact Centre where action is being taken and performance is being reported to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
11. **Regulatory and Statutory:** This scorecard covers areas of interest to external inspectorates such as Ofsted, Care Quality Commission, and the Food Standards Agency and Planning and Fire inspectorates. There are many challenging targets in this scorecard and performance is good in relation to planning applications; levels of permanent admissions to care homes; delayed transfer of care from hospital; fire deaths and injuries; and delivery of the food premises inspection programme. The key areas where performance is below target include percentage of pupils in primary schools and in secondary schools where the school has been judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding; the numbers of cases per Children's Social Worker; and the number of cases per Children's independent reviewing officer.
12. **Focused improvement areas:** By their nature, this scorecard comprises measures which were not reaching targets. There is also some repetition with commentary above on areas below target including complaints handling, telephone answering and Children's Social Worker caseloads together with additional areas of concern such as former tenant arrears.

Appendix 1 - Scorecards for services within the Committee's terms of reference:

- A. Corporate Resources
- B. Human Resources
- C. Economy
- D. Property Services
- E. Corporate Scorecard - Customers
- F. Corporate Scorecard - Regulatory and Statutory
- G. Corporate Scorecard - Focused improvement areas

Implications

Policy	n/a
Finance and value for money	Many of the measures included in the framework have a value for money component
Legal	n/a
Procurement	n/a
Human Resources	There a number of human Resources measures including sickness absence levels, statutory and mandatory training and appraisal completion
Property	There is a performance scorecard on Property Services
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Risk Assessment	n/a
Crime & Disorder	The performance framework includes measures on hate crimes, and deliberate fires
Customer Consideration	A specific scorecard focuses on Customers
Carbon reduction	n/a
Wards	All

Background papers:

Details of the County Council's performance management arrangements including access to Service Statements and the Northumberland web-enabled performance system can be accessed at:

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Policy/Performance.aspx#corporateperformancemanagementarrangements>

Report sign off.

Finance Officer	Alison Elsdon
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Liam Henry
Human Resources	n/a
Procurement	n/a
I.T.	n/a
Executive Director	Daljit Lally
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Nick Oliver

Author and Contact Details

This report has been prepared on behalf of Alison Elsdon, Director of Finance.
For further information, contact Stuart Lawson on 01670 623872 or at
Stuart.Lawson@northumberland.gov.uk