

Performance & Administration Committee

Tuesday, 3 June 2014

7.30pm

Present:

Cllr Narinder Singh Thandi (Chair)
Cllr Brian Sangha (Vice-Chair)

Cllrs: Gurdip Ram Bungar
Harold Craske
Leslie Hills
David Hurley
Makhan Singh

Note: Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox was also in attendance

Co-optee: Peter Price

Michelle Batstone	Performance & Policy Manager
Stuart Bobby	Assistant Director (Corporate Performance)
Mike Bytheway	Service Manager (Revenues & Benefits)
Ravy Sarin Busbridge	Committee & Scrutiny Assistant

NB: The Chair thanked the Performance & Policy Manager for her response to the items raised from the last meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Greta Goatley with Cllr Harold Craske as substitute.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 3 April 2014 were signed by the Chair.

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

4. Year-end Performance Report 2013/14

Members were provided with the Year End Performance outturns for the measures of accountability and the information only indicators collected for 2013/14 for consideration.

Members discussed the performance indicators, including the following:-

CBP 21 – Number of Households living in temporary accommodation

Members queried the significant increase. It was appreciated that the social economic climate is an upward trend, however actual reasons to the increased homeless figures is not

known. The Assistant Director (Corporate Performance) agreed to circulate to Members reasons of homelessness presentations to the Authority.

CBP 42 – Customer Service Satisfaction

The indicator shows a slight decrease in customer satisfaction from last year. The Performance & Policy Manager advised Members that this is quite a subjective indicator in that customers may be dissatisfied with the response to the query or question they have raised rather than the actual service they have received. Whilst the drop in performance is minor, the Performance & Policy Manager agreed to liaise with the relevant Service Manager to obtain further information regarding the performance and circulate this to Members outside of the meeting.

CBP 3 – Percentage of Household waste recycled and compost

It was noted that this indicator will significantly increase with the introduction of the new waste and recycling scheme in June 2014. The wheeled bin for recycling will allow a greater variety of materials to be recycled along with an increased capacity for residents and the food waste scheme will enable food waste to be recycled rather than disposed of in the black sacks.

CPB 33 – The percentage of council tax collected by the authority

The Co-optee queried as to whether staffing capacity has an impact on the collection of council tax. Service Manager (Revenues and Benefits) advised that they had recently reviewed and increased resources specifically with regards to collecting debt prior to April 2013. The team were on top of the incoming correspondence therefore the Service Manager (Revenues and Benefits) felt that there was sufficient staffing capacity within the team.

CBP 5 – Standard of cleanliness in the borough

Members were pleased with the improved performance of cleanliness. The Performance & Policy Manager advised Members that this indicator relates specifically to litter and rubbish. The Assistant Director (Corporate Performance) agreed to feedback the comments regarding the overgrown grass and weeds in parts of the Gravesham area back to the Assistant Director (Environment).

NB: Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox spoke with leave of the Chair on this item.

Members noted the year end performance outturns for the measures of accountability and the information only indicators collected in 2013/14.

5. Performance Update - Quarter Four 2013/14

The Assistant Director (Corporate Performance) presented to Members the Quarter Four Report 2013/14, on the progress made by the Council in delivering the Strategic Objectives and Measures of Accountability, relevant to the Committee, as set out within the Corporate Plan 2011/15 (Mid-term review).

The Assistant Director (Corporate Performance) highlighted to the Committee the following areas of improvement/good performance:-

CBP 31a-d – Self-help (pay-me, e-billing, direct debits and web forms)

Performance in respect of CBPs 31a-d was successful as each recorded outturns ahead of their respective 2013/14 quarter three targets.

CBP 33 – Collection of council tax

Despite the current economic climate, council tax collection at year-end for 2013/14 was 96.77 per cent. Although only slightly below 2012/13's equivalent outturn of 97.05 per cent, the figure for 2013/14 is particularly pleasing given that the Council Tax Reduction Scheme was introduced on 1 April 2013. In addition, council tax arrears prior to 1 April 2013 have also been reduced by just over £1.5million.

The Service Manager (Revenues and Benefits) advised that they are considering the extension of CTAX surgery times to reach shift-workers and 9-5 workers to assist with increasing collection rates.

CBP 35 – Benefits New Claims

At year-end, the average processing time taken for New Claims had fallen to 23 days, the lowest figure recorded through the year and ahead of the equivalent 2012/13 year-end figure of 24 days. The performance outturn has improved even though there was an increase in workload from 66,737 pieces of correspondence received as at 1 April 2013 compared with 68,148 received as at 1 April 2014.

CBP 36 - Benefits Change of Circumstances

The average processing time taken for Change of Circumstances of 5.3 days is better than the set target of 10 days and is a significant improvement on the 2012/13 performance of 7.4 days. It is also better than the Kent (9 days) and national (11 days) averages for quarter three.

The Service Manager (Revenues & Benefits) stated that due to the information received electronically and directly from the Department for Work and Pensions, the team are able to action notifications of changes of circumstances quicker than previously before.

A potential area for review was:-

CBP 34 – Collection of non-domestic rates

The annual outturn for Business Rates collection was recorded as 97.9 per cent. This figure fell below the set year-end target by only 0.1 per cent and is only 0.01 per cent below the figure achieved for 2012/13 (in addition, Business Rates arrears were reduced by £750,000).

Members requested details of the actual figure of outstanding non-domestic rates to date.

Service Manager (Revenues & Benefits) agreed to circulate to Members the actual figure to date of outstanding non-domestic rates.

NB: Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox spoke with leave of the Chair on this item.

The Chair and Committee agreed that this was an encouraging performance overall. Members noted the information contained within the report appendix.

Assistant Director (Corporate Performance) and the Chair agreed to meet outside the meeting to discuss future IT presentation.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm.