



**Chester-le-Street**  
District Council

**REPORT TO:** Executive

**DATE OF MEETING:** 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2009

**REPORT OF:** Director of Corporate Services

**SUBJECT:** Final Corporate Performance Report Summary  
April 2008 – December 2008

**ITEM NUMBER:**

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## **1 Purpose and Summary**

- 1.1 This is the final year of the council as an organisation in its own right. This is the council's final performance report. One of the key risks has been that performance could have dropped as it is distracted to its other commitment and duty to support Local Government Re-organisation. Ensuring the council retains a robust performance management structure has been to its direction of travel in its final year. The council has remained committed to improvement and this report is part of this commitment. The document attached in Appendix 1 is a summary of a more detailed document which is available as a background Paper. It includes full details of performance on the new National Indicator set for the quarter. It is considered that the council continues to make progress on corporate issues although overall performance on both national and local indicators still needs to improve.
- 1.2 The first nine months of 2008/2009 continue to show a positive direction of travel. The Transition Plan has effectively been achieved. While the majority of new National Indicators and Local Indicators are meeting targets or showing improvement some do not compare favourably with other county districts. Complaints have reduced and time taken to deal with complaints, MP enquiries and Freedom of Information requests have improved. Problems with Environmental services calls have been resolved and performance has improved. Audit reports received during the year reflect a positive direction of travel. Strategic Risks have been re-assessed and positive progress has been made in terms of Equality and Diversity, Corporate Governance, Data Quality and Health and Safety.

1.3 Members ought to be proud of the achievements made at Chester-le-Street over the last 5 years and that despite 2008/2009 being a difficult year a positive direction of travel has still been secured.

1.4 Members are recommended to consider and comment on the progress on improvements and the contents of the Performance Report in Appendix 1 of the Report, address the learning and remedial measures identified and identify any other areas where improvements are required to corporate performance.

## **2. Consultation**

2.1 The Chief Executive and Directors have been engaged in challenging the performance identified in the Corporate Performance Report and views have been accommodated in revised documents.

2.2 No other consultations were considered necessary at this stage including external consultations or engagement.

## **3. Transition Plan and People and Place Priority**

3.1 The Transition Plan will, in effect, replace the Corporate Plan 2007/2010. The Transition Plan includes a schedule of proposals from the previous seven priorities which ought to be and can be achieved in the remaining life of the council.

3.2 The council's choice to move towards a single priority of '**People and Place**' priority was considered as part of the budget setting process.

3.3 The performance management framework has been a principal part of the Council's Transition Plan. This framework includes the reporting of performance to Executive and subsequently to Scrutiny on a quarterly basis. This report has been part of the embedding of the framework.

3.4 The contents of this report not only includes progress on the plan but provides information on performance on corporate issues and all the priorities set out in the plan. Detailed reports on the progress of the '**People and Place**' priority have been made to the Executive on a monthly basis. At their meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2009 Members agreed that the aims of the single priority had been achieved.

## **4. Implications**

### **4.1 Financial implications and value for money statement**

There are no specific financial implications to this report. From a value for money point of view the report shows that performance across the organisation is generally good and there is evidence of continued

improvement in many areas. The Annual Audit and Inspection letter includes specific positive comments about value for money.

#### 4.2 Local Government Reorganisation Implications

There are no direct implications of the recommendations of this report to Local Government Review. There are no issues within the report which require us to consult with or secure the approval of the County Council. The new unitary will now be responsible for future performance reporting.

#### 4.3 Legal

There are considered to be no direct legal issues of significance arising out of this report.

#### 4.4 Personnel

There are no specific human resource implications to this report.

#### 4.5 Other Services

The corporate performance relates to all Services within the Council and has implications for improvement in Service Delivery.

#### 4.6 Diversity

Progress on Equality and Diversity is a key issue in respect of the report. The council has an excellent track record on equality and diversity issues. The report has no implications on excluding any customer from accessing services delivered by the council. This month's diagrams have been improved to provide greater accessibility when copied in black and white. In addition full details of Best Value Performance Indicators have been included to help better understanding of definitions.

#### 4.7 Risk

There are clear risks to the organisation in failing to measure performance and not taking remedial action to put things right if they go wrong or stray off target. The purpose of this report is to assist in addressing this risk. The council has progressed well in terms of improving risk management.

#### 4.8 Crime and Disorder

It is not felt there are any specific implications of the report on Crime and Disorder. However the report covers progress on agreed priorities and performance indicators relating to this area of the council's activities.

#### 4.9 Data Quality

Every care has been taken in the development of this report to ensure that the information and data used in its preparation and the appendices attached are accurate, valid, reliable, timely, relevant and complete. The council's Data Quality Policy has been complied with in producing this report. The report specifically addresses the council's progress in respect of Data Quality and it is considered that good progress has been made. There are no proposals for remedial measures in respect of any Data Quality issue.

#### 4.10 Other Implications

The report does not relate to a key decision. It is considered that the information can be communicated to the community by inclusion on the web – site. While the report has no specific impact on e-government proposals the work of the Modernisation team was a key area of performance reported. The report raises no key issues in respect of procurement, service planning, sustainability, human rights or social inclusion outside the consideration of relevant performance indicators and corporate plan progress.

### **5. BACKGROUND, POSITION STATEMENT AND OPTION APPRAISAL**

5.1 The report is the result of improvements the council continues to make in embedding its performance management framework. The Corporate Performance Summary Report attached as Appendix 1 is a summary of a more detailed document which has been made available as a background paper. Members may wish to refer to that document to understand how summarised conclusions have been drawn. This format is as agreed at the CMT/Executive Away Day on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2005. It now includes performance against:

- The corporate plan, where appropriate;
- Best Value Performance Indicators;
- Local Performance Indicators where available;
- Financial monitoring when appropriate;
- Risk management;
- Human resources;
- Equality and Diversity;
- The Improvement and Recovery Plan;
- The Modernisation Team;
- Audit Reports;
- Partnerships;
- Data Quality;
- Health and Safety
- Contribution to Local Government Re-organisation;
- Corporate Governance; and
- Compliments, Comments and Complaints.

- 5.2 The Summary sets out achievements and non-achievements while identifying learning and remedial action where appropriate.
- 5.3 This is the council's final performance report. As a result it is not possible to provide a final report on the whole year. While there is room for improvement in terms of national and local indicators in general terms the council has continued with its positive direction of travel. This is considered to be a significant achievement taking into account:
- The 'distractions' of local government review and impact on morale;
  - The loss of capacity within the organisation as a result of key people moving to roles elsewhere;
  - The significant workload imposed by work to ensure a smooth transition and the frustrations that have been associated with it;
  - The significant workload imposed by the transition plan and the single priority of **'People and Place'** ;
  - The pressure of expectations to contribute positively to local government re-organisation while continuing to achieve continuous improvement.
- 5.4 Members and officers ought to be proud of overall achievements of this council and progress during its final year. The key issues in summary are as follows:
- The Transition Plan has effectively been achieved as only 2% of actions were behind target at the end of December and 80% had already been achieved. The report and presentation to the Executive on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2009 had shown that the single priority of **'People and Place'** had also been achieved;
  - In terms of the first nine months of recording the national indicators there is an increasing trend of target achievement. 56% are so far on target and it is predicted that 94% will be on target by the end of March 2009;
  - The Council compares well against the county in national indicators generally in planning and environmental health but less favourably in terms of environmental services;
  - 58% of local indicators have achieved targets and 67% have shown improvements since last year although corporate local indicators do not compare very well with other County Districts;
  - There are no identified risk issues and work is ongoing on risk identification in respect of local government re-organisation;
  - Significant Equality and Diversity achievements have been made although the Equality and Diversity Working Group has met for the last time and the council's equality work this year has focused on the single priority of **'People and Place'** including successful cultural programmes for the market place, the Community Cohesion project, a Paralympics event and a final District Council 'It's a knock out' to be held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2009;
  - Audit reports received have reflected the council's positive direction of travel;
  - There has been a significant reduction in complaints received although the number of complaints justified has increased;

- Fewer compliments were received although there remains one compliment received for one complaint received;
- Time taken to respond to complaints has improved during this year, significantly as a result of the work of the Action Learning Set and the council's response to it;
- Fewer Ombudsman complaints have been received;
- Abandoned telephone calls have shown an improving trend from the last quarter and the early problems experienced in Environmental Services has significantly improved by 16% and there has also been a 20% improvement in response times;
- Data Quality has continued to show a positive direction of travel and there are no issues to report during the year;
- The council has made a significant contribution to Local Government Reorganisation and has taken lead roles in important areas;
- The council has continued to improve corporate governance and Health and Safety.

5.5 Members are advised that the report includes summaries of audit reports that have been received during the year. Action Plans have been agreed by officers to address recommendations made by the Audit Commission. This is considered to be the best way to bring these to the attention of the Executive.

## 6. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 Members are recommended to consider and comment on the progress on improvements and the contents of the Performance Report in Appendix 1 of the Report, address the learning and remedial measures identified and identify any other areas where improvements are required to corporate performance.

## 7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS / DOCUMENTS REFERRED**

- 7.1 Corporate Performance Report April 2006 – March 2007
- 7.2 Corporate Performance Report April 2007 – March 2008
- 7.3 Corporate Performance Report April 2007 - December 2007
- 7.4 Corporate Performance Report April 2008 – September 2008
- 7.5 Transition Plan 2008/2009 March 2008
- 7.6 Corporate Plan 2006/2009 and 2007/2010

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**11<sup>th</sup> February 2009**  
**Version 1.0**

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