



Chester-le-Street
District Council

Chester-le-Street District Council

Corporate Performance Report Summary April to December 2008

Report of Corporate Management Team

Data Quality

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of the information presented in this Report. The council is committed to improving its data quality management. As part of this it has developed a Self Assessment, a Data Quality Policy and a Data Quality Strategy was developed in September 2006. The Director of Corporate Services has officer responsibility for data quality and the Executive member for Community engagement and Partnerships is Data Quality Member Champion. The Audit Commission has concluded that there are at least adequate arrangements in place to endure good data quality across all their Key Lines of Enquiry.



Chester-le-Street

District Council

This report is a summary of the detailed document entitled **Corporate Performance Report April – December 2008**. This is available on request. It provides a summary of the council's progress on key areas of its performance, what learning is taking place and how any under achievement is being addressed. This is the last performance report of Chester-le-Street District Council.

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1. Corporate Plan & Transition Plan Progress

1.1 Summary

The last Corporate Plan was published at the end of June 2007. Progress against the plan was delayed because of the uncertainty around Local Government Review. At the meeting of the Executive in October 2007 Members agreed a revised approach to re-assessing priorities and proposals. Revisions were considered by the Executive in December.

As a result of Local Government re-organisation, a new unitary Council will come into being in April 2009 and Chester-le-Street District Council will cease to exist. In order to set out a framework as to how the Council will conduct its business during this final year a Transition Plan was adopted in March 2008.

The objectives of the Transition Plan were to:

- state the Council's aims, objectives and priorities during the transition period
- build on the council's learning and continue its improvement programme
- set out revised corporate activity and funding arrangements for transition period
- clarify corporate transition programme management arrangements
- identify how we will support and motivate staff through the process
- set out the values and principles by which the Council will operate during transition; and
- establish terms of engagement with 'County Durham Council' Change Programme

This plan is now the overarching plan for Chester-le-Street District Council during the transition period, and as such sets out how services and projects will be facilitated, delivered and resourced. It incorporates a review of the Corporate Plan 2007/2010 and sets out the Council's new priority of **'People and Place'**. Performance against People and Place priority has been reported to Executive on a Monthly basis. The final report was submitted to Executive in February 2009 where it was agreed that the single priority had been achieved. Performance against the revised Corporate Plan proposals identified in the Transition Plan are summarized here and detailed in the attached schedule.

1.2 Performance Summary

Outside the **'People and Place'** priority there were 82 action points within the Transition Plan relating to the previous Corporate Plan. Progress has been as follows;

- 80% achieved
- 18% on Target
- 2% behind Target

In February 2009 the Executive received a detailed report on the '**People and Place**' priority and it was agreed that what was set out to do was achieved.

1.3 Learning and Remediation

There remains significant achievement during the year as few actions were behind target.

The learning over the last few years will be taken into the new organisation through the Handing over the Baton report.

2. New National Performance Indicators

2.1 Summary

From April 2008 the set of Best Value Performance indicators were abolished and replaced with a new single set of National Indicators to measure the Government's national priorities. The Government's new performance framework is focused on outcomes and their delivery through stronger partnership working. This single set of indicators will be the only set of indicators that Government will use to monitor the performance of local authorities and local partnerships.

Some of the new national indicators are existing indicators (eg. former BVPI's). For these indicators there is historic data available which has been used to inform target setting. However, for the remaining new indicators for which there is no baseline data available, target setting will be reviewed at the annual stage.

To assist the transition to the new unitary council, it has been agreed that throughout this year, performance of the new National Indicators for the County Council and Durham District Authorities will collectively be reported on a quarterly basis to the new Authority's Cabinet for information.

The County Council and Durham District Authorities are also working closely to ensure consistency of approach when collecting and reporting performance figures.

There are 20 New National Indicators which the authority are required to collect and report in 2008/2009. These equate to 30 individual returns.

This is the first year we have collected and reported performance figures for the new national indicator set. The figures provided below do not represent performance against the full set of indicators as there are a small number which we can only report at the year end as this year is being used to calculate a baseline for future reporting.

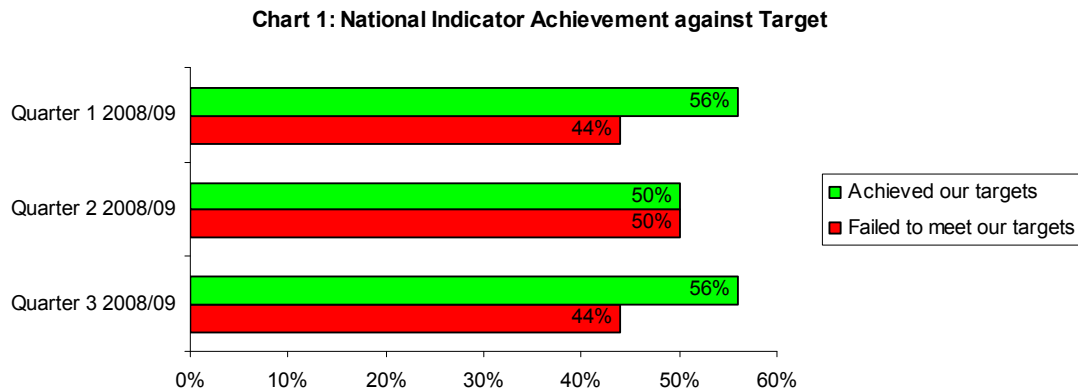
New National Performance Indicators

Performance for the new National Indicators this quarter is as follows:

56% of PI's for which data was available have achieved their target (comparisons with previous quarters this year are provided in Chart 1 below);

67% of PI's for which data was available have improved or remained stable this quarter;

94% of PI's for which data was available are predicted to meet their year end target.



From the results available, figures show encouraging performance in terms of achieved target this period and the potential that end of year targets can be met.

The 67% figure for PI's improving or stable shows 6 PI's where performance has worsened in December compared to September figures. However 4 of these are still projected to meet year end targets.

Corporate Performance Clinics

There was no Performance Clinic held over the last quarter and it is unlikely that any future Clinic will be held as we move towards the new organisation. Careful monitoring of measures is still in place as we continue to drive performance improvement.

2.2 Detailed performance Information

Detailed performance information to support the above figures is available in the attached spreadsheet, Table 1.

2.3 Learning and remedial action

We continue to drive performance improvement through ensuring that:

- people are clear as to what has to be achieved;
- an action plan to deliver is in place;
- procedures are changed to provide capacity to improve;
- careful monitoring of measures are in place; and
- efforts are made to provide accurate and timely data.

2.4 National Indicator progress across County Durham

Performance across County Durham against the National Indicator set is provided in the attached spreadsheet Table 2. Some gaps exist in data where authorities were unable to provide figures at the time of this report.

Performance against the National Indicator set across County Durham is jointly reported by County Council to the new Authority's Cabinet for information.

3. Local Performance Indicators

3.1 Summary

We continue to measure the local performance indicators which were developed for 2006/2007. These are not statutory indicators, but indicators that show our performance in other areas of service provision that are of local, rather than national, interest. The set has been amended slightly this year with a number of new local indicators added to reflect areas of priority.

We have also agreed to retain locally some Best Value Performance Indicators which have proved useful in measuring the corporate health of the authority.

Also, the County Council and Durham District Authorities have agreed to retain and monitor a set of Corporate Health Best Value Performance Indicators that will collectively be reported throughout this year on a quarterly basis to the new Authority's Cabinet for information. These indicators are as follows:

BVPI 11a	Percentage of top-paid 5% of staff who are women
BVPI 11b	The percentage of the top 5% of Local Authority staff who are from an ethnic minority
BVPI 11c	Percentage of the top paid 5% of staff who have a disability
BVPI 12	The number of working days/shifts lost to the Authority due to sickness absence
BVPI 16a	The percentage of Local Authority employees with a disability
BVPI 76d	The number of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit prosecutions and sanctions
BVPI 156	The percentage of Authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for, and accessible to, disabled people

Collectively there are now 41 local performance indicators which the authority collects and reports. These equate to 44 individual returns.

Local Performance Indicators

Performance for the local performance indicators is as follows:

58% of PI's for which data was available have achieved their target (comparisons against last year and previous quarters this year are provided in Chart 2 below);

67% of PI's for which data was available have shown an improvement trend from last year (comparisons against last year and previous quarters this year are provided in Chart 3 below);

64% of PI's for which data was available are predicted to meet their year end target.

Chart 2: Local Indicator Achievement against Target

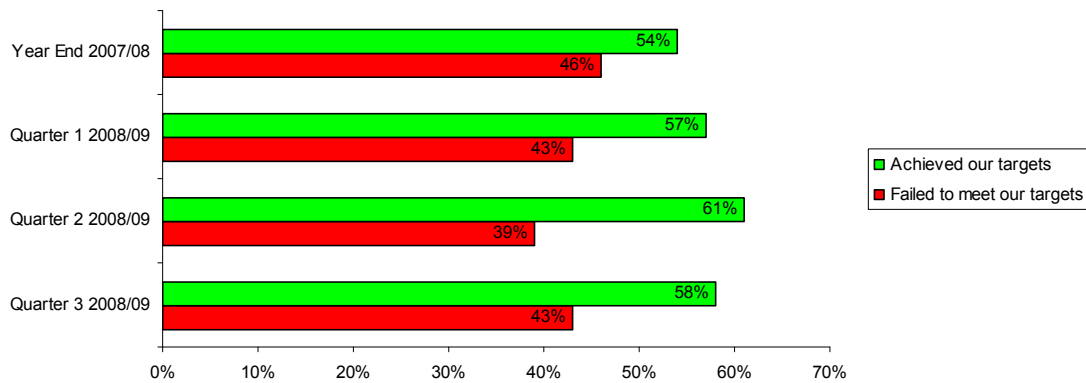
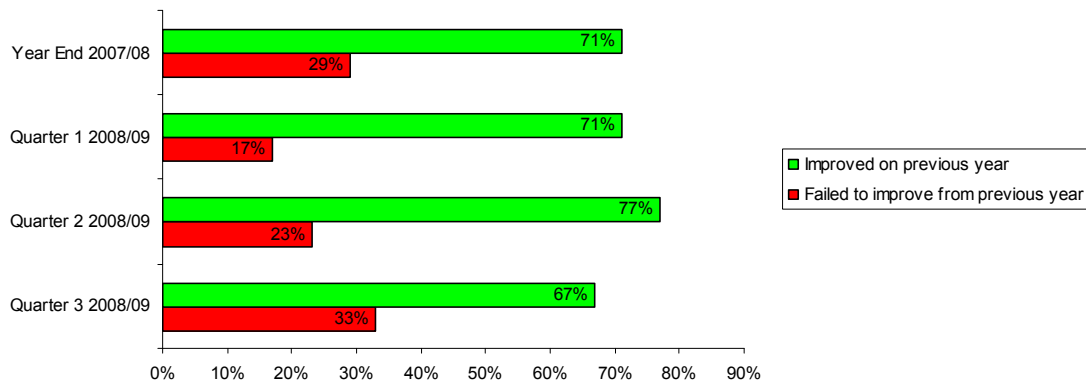


Chart 3: Local Indicator Improvement



From the results available, figures show a dip in performance from last quarter outturn figures in terms of achieved target and improvement trend. Careful monitoring of measures is still in place as we continue to drive performance improvement. There is the potential that end of year targets can be met in 64% of indicators.

3.2 Detailed Performance Information

Detailed performance information to support the above figures is available in the attached spreadsheet, Table 3.

3.3 Corporate Health BVPI progress across County Durham

Performance across County Durham against the retained Corporate Health Best Value performance indicator set is provided in the table below. Some gaps exist in data where authorities were unable to provide figures at the time of this report.

PI ref	PI description	Good Performance	Durham County	Chester-le-Street	Derwentside	Durham City	Easington	Sedgefield	Teesdale	Wear Valley
BV011a	% of top-paid 5% of staff who are women	High		16	22.22	25.71	15.91	7.32	50	
BV011b	% of top-paid 5% of staff who are from an ethnic minority	High		5.26	0	0	0	2.44	0	
BV011c	% of top-paid 5% of staff who have a disability (excluding those in maintained schools)	High		0	7.41	5.71	13.63	2.44	0	
BV012	Number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence	Low	8.5	12.1	11.9	10.65	8.47	12.91	5.54	
BV016a	% of employees with a disability	High		2.67	4.93	5.13	3.92	2.31	0	
BV076d	Number of housing benefit and council tax benefit (HB/CTB) prosecutions and sanctions, per year, per 1,000 caseload, in the Local Authority area	n/a	N/A	9.01	6.07	3.67	3.47	10.23	4.98	3.56
BV156	% of authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for, and accessible to, disabled people	High	67.33	20	78.95	78.95	53.13	100	100	42.11

The figures above are reported by County Council to the new Authority's Cabinet for information.

3.4 Learning and Remedial Action

We continue to drive performance improvement through ensuring that:

- people are clear as to what has to be achieved;
- an action plan to deliver is in place;
- procedures are changed to provide capacity to improve;
- careful monitoring of measures are in place; and
- efforts are made to provide accurate and timely data.

5. Risk Management

5.1. Summary

Following the Council's CPA inspection the inspectors report concluded: *'the Council has a thorough approach to risk management. The Council is aware of the risks to which it is exposed and is working to manage those risks.'*

The Implementation of the Corporate Risk Management Strategy for 2008-09, focuses on the key strategic risks identified through the corporate planning process, and in particular the transition to a new Unitary Authority for Durham County.

Following Council approval of the Transition Plan in March 2008, the strategic risk profile was subject to a further review which was undertaken by Corporate Management Team on 12 May 2008.

The management of these key risks is closely linked to the delivery of the Council's Transition Plan, and the strategic risk register shows allocated responsibility. To date these risks have been managed effectively.

The County Durham authorities have agreed to share their strategic risk profiles as part of the preparations for the New Unitary Council. A final consultation with managers will be undertaken regarding risks associated with the smooth handover to Durham County Council as part of the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement in the final quarter of 2008-09.

5.2 Learning and remedial action

The council has committed to re-assess its key strategic risks as a result of its review of priorities and the development of the transition plan for LGR.

The Strategic Risk Profile is monitored and reviewed quarterly, and no further remedial action is considered necessary at this time.

6. Human Resources

6.1 Summary

Due to capacity issues within the team as a direct result of Local Government Re-organisation it has not been possible to produce a report for April to December. This report is for the period April to September. At the end of the period up to the end of September the Council employed 334 staff. Staff turnover for the period was 6.7%, which includes Casual staff.

Sickness absence ending 30 September 2008:

Authority total: 10.7 days average
 5.7 days (long term)
 5.0 days (short term/occasional)

Directorates:

Resources 9.5 days average
 4.8 (long term)
 4.7 (short term/occasional)

Development 11.4 days average
 6.1 days (long term)
 5.3 (short term/occasional)

CE/Corporate Services 11.3 days average
 6.5 days (long term)
 4.8 days (short term/occasional)

- Staff sickness was an average of 10.7 days per employee for the period, compared to 11 days for the period 07/08.
- No employee suggestions were made through the employee scheme over the period.
- One Team Personal Profile Briefing sessions have been held for all employees, at a variety of Council sites. Further sessions will continue over the next quarter.
- Re launching of the Council's Employee Assistance Programme over the coming months, for employee support.
- The Council's Organisational Development Strategy is on target.
- The Employee survey 2007 was issued to staff in September 2007 and we have recently received the results.
- Evening of Celebration for employees took place in October 2008.
- Employee Forum on a bi-monthly basis.
- A total of 105 employees achieved 100% Attendance for 2007/08.

7. Equality and Diversity Position Statement

7.1 Summary

The Equality and Diversity Steering Group have not met for some time, largely due to capacity issues and the impact of Local Government Reorganisation. At their last meeting, a decision was taken by the Equality and Diversity Steering Group not to continue with the planned Equality Impact Assessments for the remainder of the year.

A number of actions contained within the Corporate Equality Plan action plans have been put on hold. These are primarily Level 4 actions, and therefore do not impact upon our declaration of Level 2.

Performance

A number of Corporate Equality Plan actions have been put on hold pending impact of LGR and new priority for the council for 2007/08. These are primarily at Level 4 of the Equality Standard for Local Government, and therefore do not impact on our declaration of Level 2. There is no longer a statutory requirement for us to report on the level to which we perform; this was previously reported through BVPI 2a. However, the indicator has been retained as a local indicator to ensure that we continue to meet Level 2. It will be monitored through the Equality and Diversity Working Group.

7.2 Learning and remedial action

Nothing to report.

10. Audit Feedback & Summary

10.1 Summary

There have been two relevant audit reports published in the first nine months of the year. These were the Ombudsman's Annual Report for 2007/2008 and the Audit Commission's Countywide Access to Services Inspection.

The Ombudsman's report was very positive:

- There were fewer complaints to the Commission than the previous year;
- The council's response performance was well below the Ombudsman's target;
- There were no formal reports on either maladministration or injustice;
- The Ombudsman has no issues with how the council handles complaints.

The Audit Commission inspection was about how well the councils made services accessible to people and how people were engaged in service delivery. The Audit Commission's report on Access to Services was not so positive but it was based on access to services across the county. In addition the recommendations are aimed at the new unitary rather than the District Council.

10.2 Learning and remedial action

There are no key learning issues or remedial issues necessary. The report again shows how seriously the council delivers services and assists the Ombudsman in complaint investigation. The Audit Commission's recommendations ought to be taken up by the new Unitary.

11. Compliments, comments and complaints Analysis

11.1 Summary

Although faced with the impending local government review the Council continues to focus upon embedding the culture of handling and responding to complaints in a timely and positive manner. To further embed the complaints culture into the organisation, a continual process improvement project was completed throughout December 2007 – March 2008 with specific aims to raise awareness of the importance of dealing with complaints, increase the number of trained officers (over 30 have completed this training) and also to evaluate and improve the process overall. The training and information sessions, detailed within the project, continue to be rolled out to new members of staff and have influenced the new complaints system for the unitary authority.

Total Complaints

The following statistics represent the information received for the period April to December 2008. Figures for the same period last year are indicated in brackets, however it should be noted that performance for the current period no longer contains information relating to housing / property services following the creation of Cestria Community Housing.

153 (209) formal complaints were received by the Council.
29% (25 %) were considered to be justified
71 % (75 %) were considered to be unjustified

5 (10) Ombudsman complaints were received during the period.
1 (No) complaints were upheld by the Ombudsman

88 (155) compliments/letters of thanks were registered during the period.

11.2 Formal Complaints April – December 2008

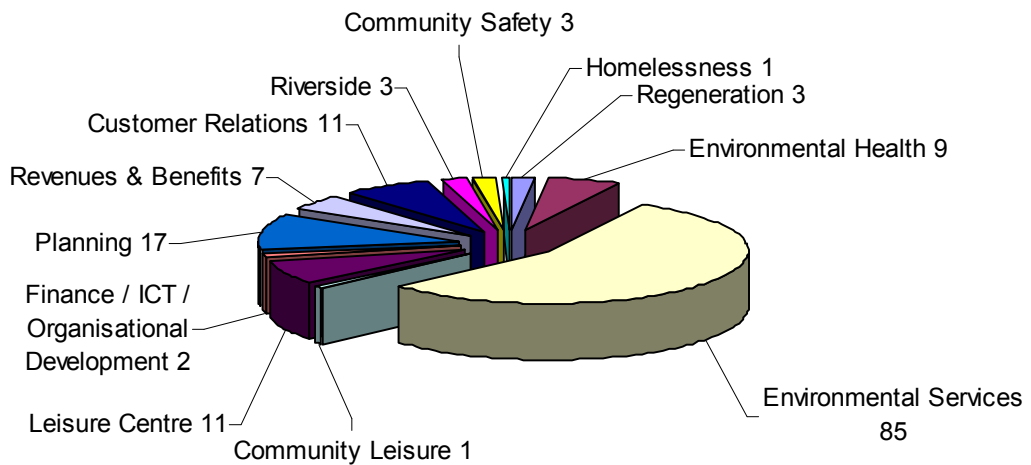
A total of 153 (209) formal complaints were submitted in the period

Nature of Complaints – Service Teams

7 (17) related to the Revenue and Benefits service
85 (17) related to the Environmental Services
15 (56) related to the Leisure Services
17 (31) related to Planning Services
6 (10) related to Regeneration (including community safety)

- 9 (8) related to Environmental Health Services
- 11 (8) related to Customer Relations
- 1 (0) related to Homelessness
- 2 (4) related to IT services

No of complaints April 2008 - December 2008



Regeneration	Environmental Health	Environmental Services
Community Leisure	Leisure Centre	Finance / ICT / Organisational Development
Planning	Revenues & Benefits	Customer Relations
Riverside	Community Safety	Homelessness

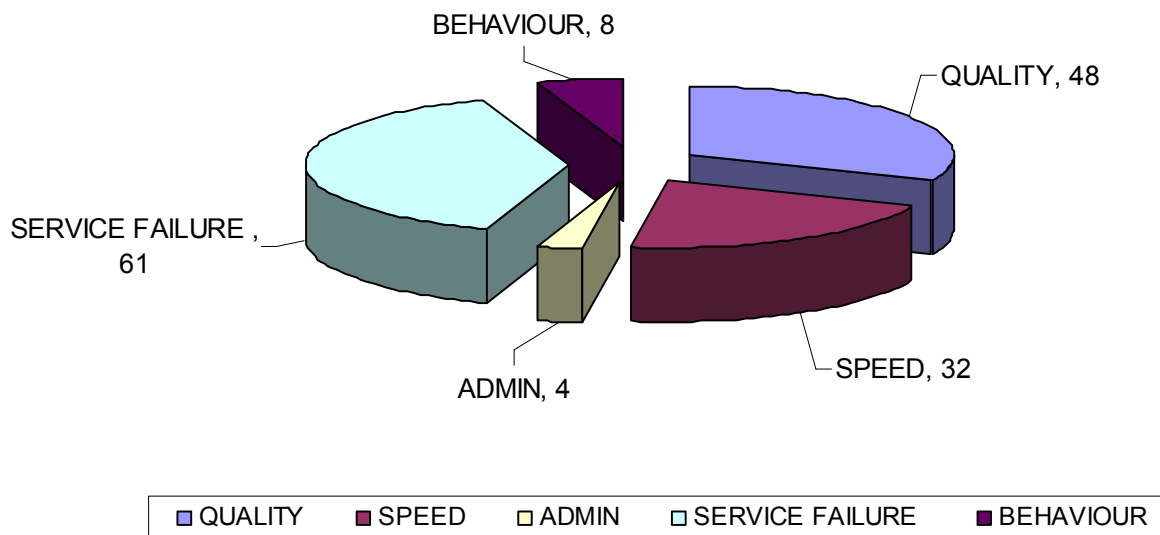
Breakdown of Complaints Received April – December 2008

Service Team	Number and Nature of Complaints
Revenues and Benefits	2 related to receipt of Overpayment of C/Tax letter 4 related to wording of benefits entitlement letter 1 related to fraud investigation process
Environmental Services	48 related to the recycling service 7 related to problems with litter in area 4 related to dog fouling 22 related to refuse collection services 3 related to grass cutting 1 related to public toilets
Leisure Services	4 related to cleanliness in leisure centre 6 related to car parking 2 related to timing of activity sessions 3 related to lack of facilities
Planning	13 related to the planning application process 2 related to delay in providing information 2 related to planning committee meeting
Regeneration	3 related to the market area 3 related to community safety
Environmental Health	3 related to noise nuisance 2 related to enforcement of waste removal 2 related to air pollution 2 related to enforcement action
Customer Relations	7 related to the new concessionary fares scheme 2 related to closure of cash desk 2 related to telephone service
Homelessness	1 related to homeless application process
IT Services	1 related to on-line service application via web-site 1 related to internal office move

Nature of Complaints – Complaint Types

- 48 (94) were in respect of *quality of service*
- 8 (4) were in respect of *behaviour of staff*
- 61 (52) were in respect of service failure
- 32 (52) were in respect of the *speed of service provided*
- 4 (5) were in respect of *administrative problems*

Types of complaint received
April - December 2008

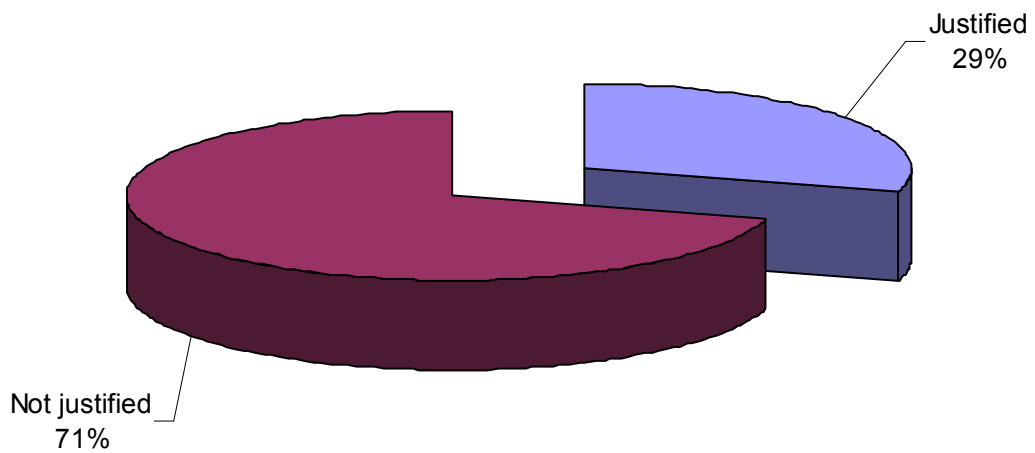


Outcome

29 % (25%) were considered to be justified

71 % (75%) were considered to be unjustified

**Proportion justified / unjustified complaints
April - December 2008**



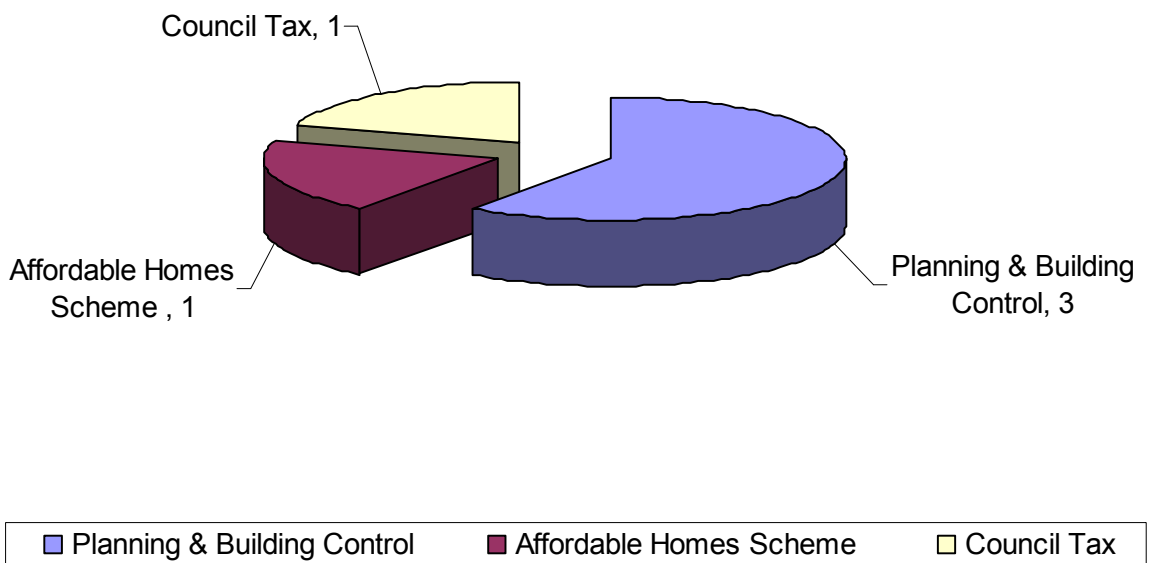
11.3 Ombudsman Complaints April – December 2008

- 5 (9) Ombudsman complaints were received during the period.
- 1 (No) complaint was upheld by the Ombudsman
- All complaints were responded to within the Ombudsman’s target time (29 days) – with an average response time of 22 days

Nature of Complaints

3 related to planning & building control services
1 related to housing - affordable housing scheme
1 related to council tax charges

**Ombudsman Investigation by Service Team
April - December 2008**

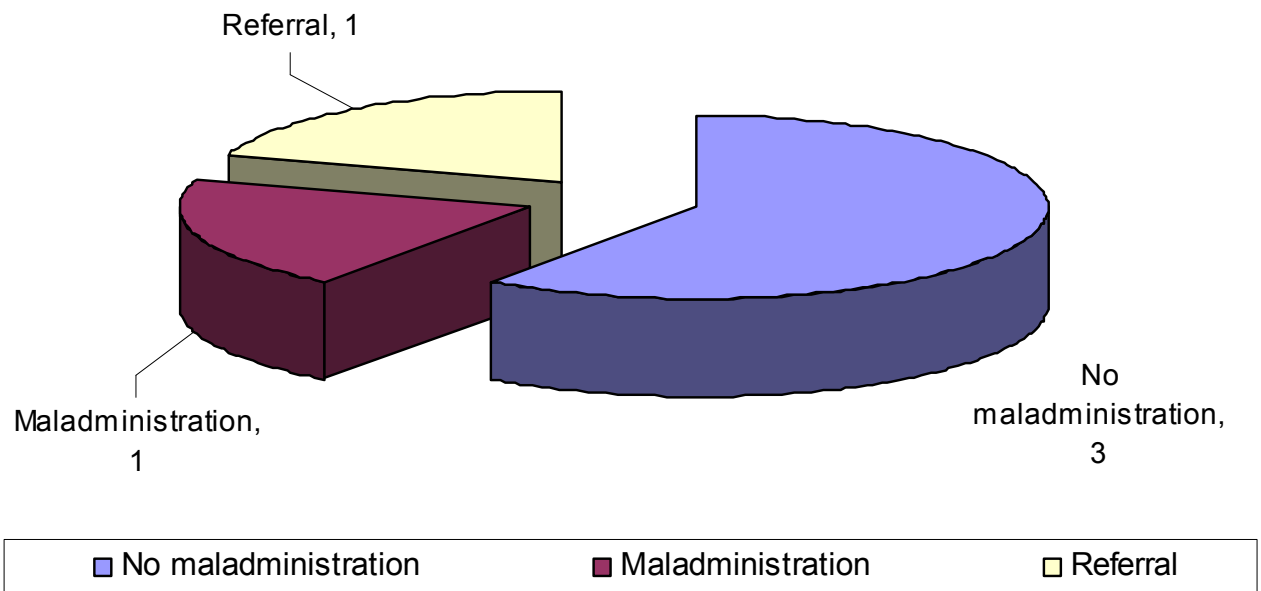


Outcome

The Ombudsman issued 4 decision letters and 1 referral in the period. 1 complaint was upheld against the Council:

No evidence of maladministration	3
Maladministration with injustice	1

Ombudsman Decisions April - December 2008



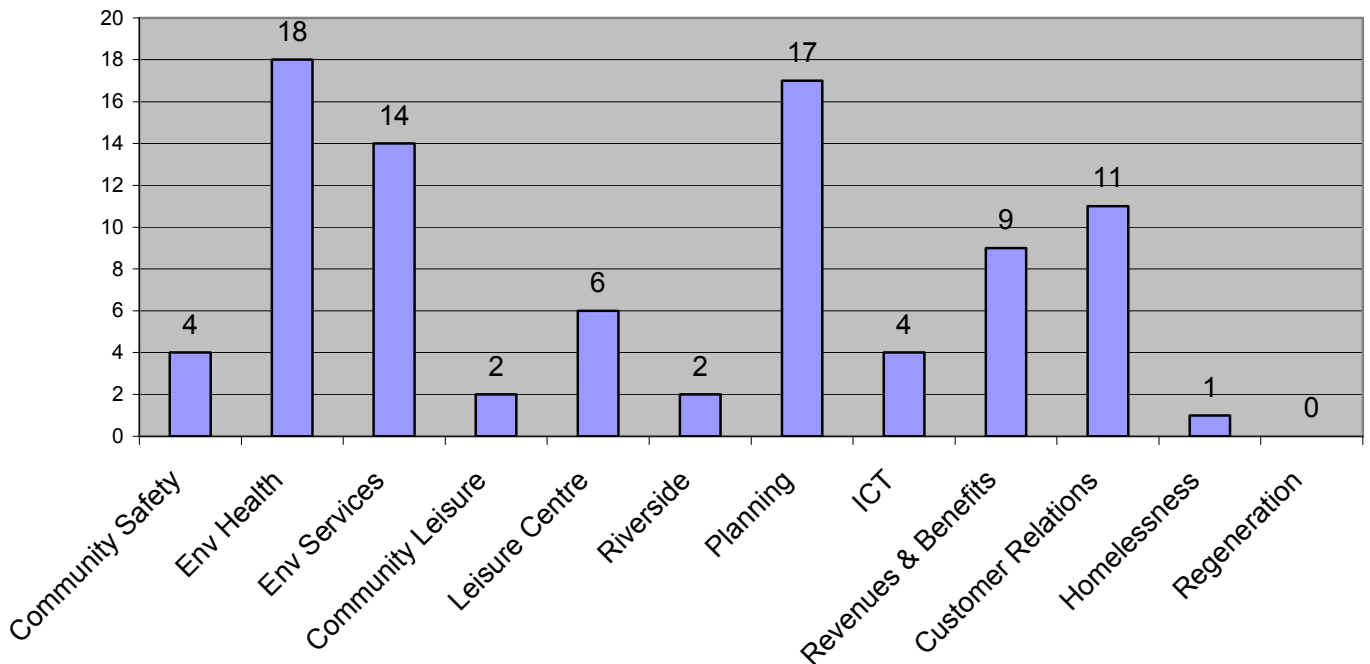
11.4 Compliments April – December 2008

88 compliments/letters of thanks were registered during the period.

Nature of Compliments

- 9 related to the revenue & benefits service
- 14 related to the environmental services
- 17 related to planning services
- 18 related to environmental health services
- 11 related to customer relations
- 10 related to leisure services
- 4 related to ICT
- 4 related to community safety
- 1 related to homeless service

Compliments Received by Teams April - December 2008



11.5 Telephone Response Performance April – December 2008

In response to specific requests from members, data extracted from the Council's telephone system is supplied for the first time in the body of this report. This is the first year the data has been available and as such comparisons with past year performance is unavailable for comparison at this time. The report focuses on the key telephone numbers used by customers to access the services in question.

<i>Service Team</i>	<i>Calls Received</i>	<i>Calls Abandoned *</i>	<i>% of Calls Abandoned</i>	<i>Calls Answered</i>	<i>% of Calls Answered</i>	<i>Calls Answered within Target Time *</i>	<i>% Calls Answered within Target Time</i>
<i>Switchboard</i>	62691	5455	8.7	57236	91.3	55774	97.4
<i>Benefits Service</i>	11866	1101	9.3	10765	90.7	9409	87.4
<i>Council Tax / NNDR Team</i>	17365	2229	12.8	15136	87.2	13466	89.0
<i>Environmental Services</i>	38009	13133	34.6	24876	65.4	12971	52.1
<i>Environmental Health / Planning Services</i>	4590	378	8.2	4212	91.8	4169	99.0
<i>Regeneration / Homelessness</i>	2115	262	12.4	1853	87.6	1846	99.6
Totals	136636	22558	16.5	114078	83.5	97635	85.6

- ***Abandoned calls** – refers to those calls in which the caller has hung up before an operator was available to receive the call.
- ***Calls answered within target time** – refers to the time taken for the operator to pick up the call once they are available to receive the calls. Therefore the time taken does not take into account any of the time the caller was waiting in a queue. The Council's target is 90% of calls answered within 15 seconds and 100% of calls answered within 25 seconds.

11.5.1 Issues arising from the Data

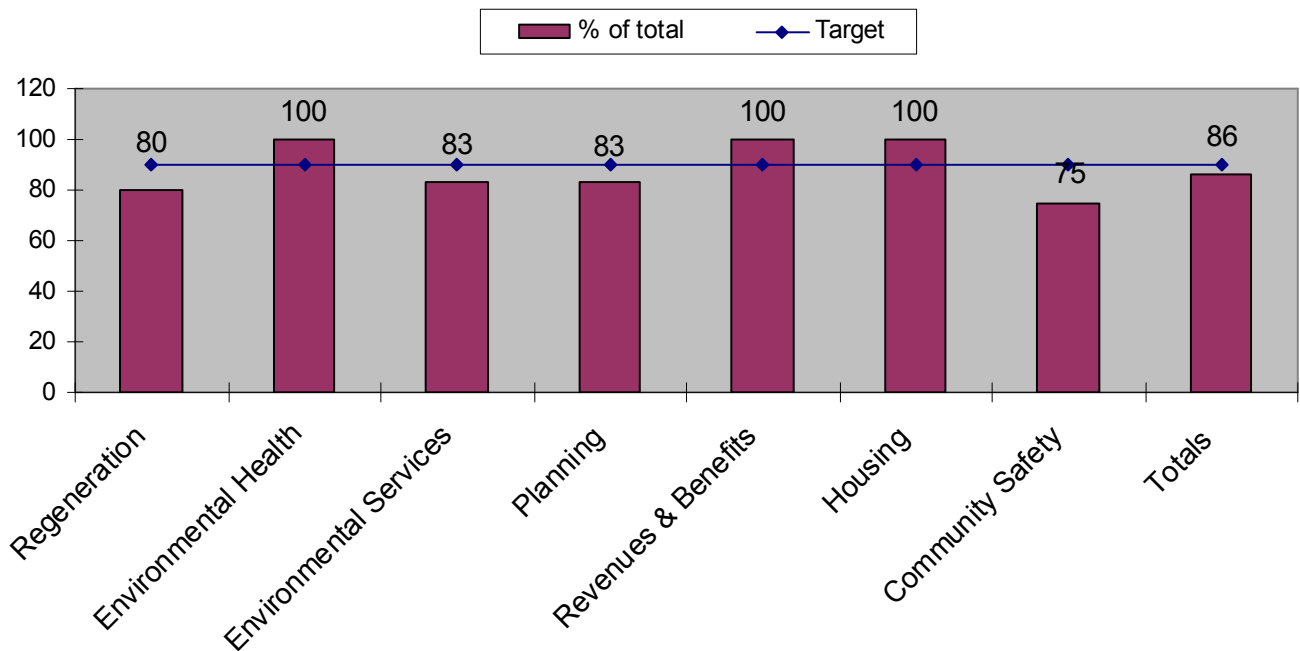
- a) The main issue of concern during this period relates to the number of calls abandoned via Environmental Services main contact number. A number of elected members raised concerns based upon their own and their constituents' inability to contact officers. This was primarily the case during April and early May when almost 50% of all calls were abandoned by customers attempting to contact the team. It should be noted that rate of abandoned calls has reduced significantly over the 2nd and 3rd quarters of the financial year. Officers within the Environmental Services Team will receive monthly telephone reports to ensure that they constantly monitor the situation and are able to continue to improve.

It is also pleasing to note that measures put in place to improve call handling within the Environmental services team have had a positive impact. Not only have the number of abandoned calls fallen by 16%, call response performance has improved by 20%. This will be closely monitored throughout the remainder of the year.

11.6 Response to MP Enquiries within 10 Working Days

The graph below shows the performance by each service team in dealing with MP enquiries within the agreed service standard performance of 10 working days.

MP Enquiries % response within 10 days April - December 2008



Performance has improved by 7% compared to the same period in 2007 / 2008, a welcoming trend which we hope to continue throughout 2008 – 2009.

Breakdown of MP enquiries / complaints

<i>Total Number of Enquiries Received from MP</i>	
Total Number of MP enquiries / complaints received April – Dec 2008	51
Total Number which were MP enquiries	39
Total Number which were MP complaints about the Council	12

11.7 Other Performance Information

New monitoring processes were put in place last year and the following results can be identified:

- 91 % of complaints were responded to in 10 days (target 90%)
- 86 % MP queries were responded to in 10 days (target 90%)
- 94 % Freedom of information enquiries were responded to in 20 working days (target 100%)

11.8 Learning and remedial action

It has become clear over the year that the analysis of complaints at service level is necessary in order that individual services can learn from complaints and share this learning across the organisation. In addition the impact of the continual process improvement project and ongoing training plan has led to improved performance in dealing with complaints, MP enquiries and FOI service requests.

A further analysis of results shows that:

- The 90% target for handling complaints within 10 working days has been achieved throughout the first 9 months of the financial year and the council is on course for its best ever performance.
- The number of complaints logged compared to the same period last year has reduced by 27% – 153 compared with 209.
- Most complaints related to Environmental services (predominantly related to the recycling scheme), which equated to 56% of all complaints received.
- 40% of complaints related to the failure to deliver services - this mainly relates to the early stages of the recycling scheme.
- The % of justified complaints has increased from 25% to 29% when compared to the same period in 2007 / 2008.
- Performance in respect of responding to MP enquiries and complaints has increased by 7% when compared to the same period in 2007 – 2008.
- A number of concerns have been highlighted in relation to telephone call handling performance. However, performance has improved compared to the 1st quarter of the year, particularly in relation to the number of calls abandoned which has reduced significantly. In addition, the environmental services team has improved call handling performance by 20% over the 3rd quarter.

12. Partnerships Progress

12.1 Summary

As part of the council's Improvement and Recovery Plan there were clear actions to consider and improve the effectiveness of existing partnerships.

The council has responded by approving a Partnership Strategy in November 2006 with a detailed Action Plan. The council has commissioned an electronic Partnership 'toolkit' through the North East Centre of Excellence and provided training to Corporate Support Team. The Chief Executive has been selected as the council's Partnership Champion and the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and Partnerships is the Member Champion.

It is clear that partnership working is fundamental to what we can achieve in the District. Many of the achievements set out in the Corporate Plan could only have happened by working with others. 'Working in Partnership' is a firm priority and we have developed a Partnership Strategy to help us achieve our vision. The key components of the strategy are:

- understanding what partnerships we are in;
- understanding how effective they are;
- understanding how healthy they are; and
- ensuring that we improve those which need to be.

Programme Management Board is monitoring implementation of this toolkit.

The review of our partnerships has a significant impact on the development of a single priority of '**People and Place**'. An assessment of the potential gaps in performance of partnerships and what we can do in the council's remaining lifetime to secure sustainable change is part of ongoing work to develop the new priority. Progress will be reported here in due course.

The Transition Plan has addressed what needs to be done and a significant part of the '**People and Place**' priority is to develop the partnerships as part of the 'Strengthening Partnerships' Action Learning Set. A delivery plan for '**People and Place**' was agreed by the Executive in April and is now subject to monthly monitoring through the Executive. There is a series of proposals within the delivery plan relating to partnerships and in particular there has been a focus on the Voluntary Sector. The council is influencing how partnerships are supported in the new unitary.

12.2 Learning and Remedial Action

There is no specific remedial action required at this stage.

13. Data Quality Progress

13.1 Summary

The following progress has been made in respect of the implementation of the Data Quality Policy since April 2007:

- The adoption of the Strategy and action plan;
- Data quality risks, commitment and proposals built into Corporate plan;
- Data Quality Policy and Strategy communicated to customers through the Internet;
- Data Quality Policy and Strategy communicated to staff and members through the Intranet;
- Data Quality built into Performance Management Handbook and communicated to staff;
- Data Quality considered as part of the Performance Management Review;
- Data quality commitment incorporated as a feature of Corporate Performance Reports and within performance clinics;
- Decisions made not to publish information because data quality was not proved e.g. a decision not to publish BV 166 quarterly statistics because the information as to performance was not dependable, and now resolved;
- Data Quality included in Corporate Training Plan as part of Performance Management training;
- Intranet site developed;
- Corporate Guidelines developed and implemented;
- Corporate Audit devised and built into intranet, will identify gaps to assist strategy development;
- Further awareness undertaken as a result and data quality is communicated more clearly now. Communications plan developed and on intranet;
- Data Quality Responsibility Register developed and significantly completed;
- Programme Management Board taking stronger role on monitoring of data Quality;
- Improved sign off with LPI's following same process as BVPI's;
- Data quality incorporated into all corporate reports and built into Report Writing Protocol;
- Developed revised Service Plan Guidance;
- Staff and Managers Audit undertaken;
- Training presentation provided to all staff;
- Data Quality Training provided as part of Members Induction programme;
- Data quality built into Performance Clinics;
- A review of the Data Quality Strategy Action Plan and the Data Quality Policy has been completed;

- A Revised Policy and Strategy Action Plan was agreed at the end of March and has been communicated;
- The Data Quality web site and intranet have been updated with new guidance and the on line training tool updated;
- Data Quality Champions for each service has been agreed;
- The first Revised Data Quality Strategy action Plan Monitoring Report has been published on the web site and shows continued progress;
- An Effective Internal Audit Report has been received for 2007/2008 BVPIs showing continued improvement;
- The council's Annual Report and Best Value Performance Plan was published within national timescales;
- The District Council is taking a lead role in the development of Data Quality practice for the new unitary council;
- The council fully supported and assisted the Audit Commission's Data Quality Audit and their report on findings is due later on in the year.

There are no issues of Data Quality failures or exceptions to be reported during the first half of the year.

13.2 Learning and remedial action

Significant progress has been made in respect of the implementation of the Data Quality Strategy largely around corporate awareness.

As a result of the audit we now have a good understanding of where there are potential weaknesses in the Authority and will be able to address these in the future.

No remedial action is required as part of any Data Quality failures or exceptions during the current quarter.

14. Local Government Reorganisation Progress

14.1 Summary

In September 2007 a project team was set up to help manage the council's contributions potential transition to a new single unitary authority. The team is led by the Director of Corporate Services and based around the council's Performance and Improvement Team. It also includes key Human Resources, communications, a representative for the trade unions and support staff. So far it has:

- Developed and agreed terms of reference and principles;
- Developed an Intranet site to allow access to key documents and information for staff and members;
- Developed an Information Request Register and responded to initial data requests where appropriate;
- Developed a communications plan;
- Published three newsletters to staff and Members; and
- Engaged in transitional arrangements.

The council has re-organised its senior management to assist it in developing the capacity within the organisation to deliver business as usual while contributing to the transition to the new organisation. At the same time the council has agreed and is implementing a transitional plan which will help it focus on a single priority of **'People and place'** through to March 2009.

The council has been significantly engaged in assisting the transition to the new authority. It has key officers who are leading and engaging in the workstreams and taking best practice into the new council. During the quarter Officers engaged in the process have developed both baseline information and high level options for consideration by the shadow authority which was elected in May 2008. Workstream Leads are working on the fourth and fifth tier management proposals.

The council is encountering capacity issues as a result of staff turnover undoubtedly caused by uncertainty over the future of individuals although the vast majority of staff will transfer to the new unitary under TUPE rights.

14.2 Learning and remedial action

Significant progress has been made in establishing a team to assist the council positively contributing to the smooth transition to a new unitary authority. The

capacity issues within the council are being monitored and managed pragmatically. The closer we move to vesting day the more difficult it is being to fill vacancies that occur. As a result the council is doing things differently and reflecting on its priorities.

15. Corporate Governance Progress

15.1 Summary

The council has taken corporate governance seriously as part of its Improvement Programme. During the first six months of the year the corporate working group which drives corporate Governance improvement – the Corporate Governance Group (CGG) lost two key members of the team as a result of them moving to other appointments outside the authority. The team has regrouped and is now chaired by the Director of Corporate Services providing a key steer from the corporate centre. Members of the group have ensured progress and the CGG has:

- Developed and secured council approval of the Local Code of Governance;
- Implemented the associated action Plan;
- Commenced work on this year's Annual Governance Statement;
- Commenced work on this year's Use of Resources submission;
- Contributed to the development and review of the Data Quality Policy and Strategy action plan, agreed by the Council in March 2008;
- Developed an Intranet site to allow access to key documents and information for staff and members;
- Considered reports on the effectiveness of Internal Audit and the Annual Internal Audit report which both show positive achievement of internal audit at a time of change;
- Set out Strategic risk assessments for the Transition Plan and agreed key strategic corporate risks with Corporate Management Team;
- Commented on the Audit Commission's Annual Audit and Inspection letter;
- Raised awareness of corporate governance through a range of LGR workstreams; and
- Agreed an Annual Governance Statement.
- Discussed draft Use of Resources and Data Quality reports with the Audit commission and influenced their final Audit and Inspection Letter.

Significant progress has therefore been made and it is considered that the council is strong in terms of its commitment and delivery to corporate governance. It is considered that the very positive Annual Audit and Inspection letter from the Audit Commission reflects this point of view.

15.2 Learning and remedial action

Significant progress has been made in maintaining a team to assist the council in ensuring high standards of effectiveness of corporate governance.

16. Corporate Health and Safety Progress

16.1 Summary

Further progress has been made to date in respect of addressing corporate health and safety issues. Work remains to be done to improve communication, understanding and practice and becomes an even more pressing issue with the approach of vesting day.

16.2 Progress

Following adoption by Council, March 2008, of the new Corporate Statement of Health and Safety Policy and the subsequent incorporation of the Health and Safety Team into the Directorate of Corporate, reporting within The Corporate Performance Structure continues.

The following progress has been made in respect of Corporate Health and Safety:

- Significant, regarding Local Government Review and formation of Work Streams to address areas of operation considered important.
- A health and Safety sub work stream was subsequently formed to represent County and Districts, effective from 24th April 2008.
- The effect of this on Corporate Health and Safety Plan has been significant resulting in:
 - Re scheduling the frequency of the HSMG within Chester le Street to bi monthly meetings.
 - Cessation of further development of Corporate Standards.
 - Concerted effort to make those Corporate Standards, already adopted within Chester le Street, work effectively.
 - Review of Draft Codes of Practice proposed by the Health and Safety sub work stream, currently 26 have been prepared.
 - Distribution to all members of staff the Corporate Statement of Health and Safety Policy agreed by the CEO of the new unitary.

The Team has continued the development of the Corporate Health and Safety Intranet site so that all employees with access to a computer can access and view the development of Health and Safety policy, procedures and progress across the Council including:

- Health and Safety Management Group meetings, minutes and Representatives
- Appropriate and useful Web Links

- Practice updates such as the 'Myth of the Month'
- Corporate Standards including:
 - ✚ Constitution
 - ✚ Risk Assessment
 - ✚ Emergency Response
 - ✚ Adverse Event/Accident Reporting
 - ✚ Display Screen Equipment
 - ✚ Manual Handling
 - ✚ Working at Height
 - ✚ Asbestos
 - ✚ New and Expectant Mothers
 - ✚ Noise at Work
 - ✚ Vibration at Work
 - ✚ Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems
- Accident Statistics

16.3 Accident Statistics

The charts below show a comparison of adverse event statistics relating to corporate premises, year end 2008 and year end 2007.

The charts show a split between accidents to staff and public, in summary the charts show:

- There were significantly more adverse events reported, 193, involving members of public this year 2008, in comparison to 149 in 2007.
- There has been an encouraging reduction in the number of adverse events reported involving members of staff to year end 2008 totaling 14, in comparison with 38 to year end 2007.

Adverse Event Reports 2008

2 0 0 8	Development Services		Corporate Services		Resources		* Regeneration *		* Riddor Reportable		
	Employee	Public	Employee	Public	Employee	Public	Employee	Public	Employee	Public	
	Jan	2	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Feb	1	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Mar	1	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Apr	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	May	1	15	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
	Jun	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Jul	2	17	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Aug	2	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sep	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Oct	1	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Nov	1	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Dec	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Year to date	12	192	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	5	
										Total for Year	
										Employee	Public
										14	193

2008	Leisure Centre	Riverside	Park Side	Roseberry Grange	Selby Cottage	Community Leisure	Development Services			Resources				Corporate Services						
							Leisure Services	Env Health & Plannin	Env Services	Finance & Accounts	Information technolog	Rev & Bens	Internal Audit	OD	Legal & Democratic	Customer Relations	Strategy & Scrutiny	Regeneration		
																			Emp	Pub
Jan		10	2	3			2	13												
Feb	1	18		2			1	20												
Mar		17		4			0	21	1											
Apr		15		1			0	16												
May		11		4			0	15		1										1
Jun		5		4			0	9	1											
Jul	1	13	1	4			2	17												1
Aug		22	1	4			2	26												
Sep		10		3			0	13												
Oct	1	16		3			1	19												
Nov	1	13		2			1	15												
Dec		8					0	8												

Improvement team = Strategy and Scrutiny

Adverse Event Reports 2007

2007	Development Services		Community Services		Corporate Services		Resources		* Regeneration *	
	Employee	Public	Employee	Public	Employee	Public	Employee	Public	Employee	Public
	Jan	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feb	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mar	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Apr	1	21	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
May	2	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jun	1	14	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jul	3	19	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aug	3	19	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Sep	1	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oct	0	21	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nov	2	16	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dec	2	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Year to date	23	148	12	1	1	0	2	0	0	0
	Total for Year									
	Employee									
	Public									
	Riddor Reportable									
	5									

	Leisure Centre		Riverside		Park Side		Roseberry Grange		Selby Cottage		Community Leisure		Development Service			Resources					Corporate Services				Community		Regeneration						
	Emp	Pub	Emp	Pub	Emp	Pub	Emp	Pub	Emp	Pub	Emp	Pub	Leisure Services	Env Health & Plannin	Env Services	Finance & Accounts	Information technolog	Rev & Bens	Internal Audit	OD	Legal & Democratic	Customer Relations	Strategy & Scrutiny	Housing Services	Property Services	Emp	Pub	Emp	Pub				
Jan	0								1	1			2	0	1																		
Feb	0								2				2	0	2																		
Mar	0												0	0	1																		
Apr	0	14		8									1	21																			
May	1	15	1	4									2	19																			
Jun	1	13		1									1	14																			
Jul	1	19		1									2	19				1															
Aug	2	12		5		2							2	19				1															
Sep	0	6		4					1				1	10																			
Oct	0	18		3									0	21															1	1			
Nov	2	12		4									2	16																			
Dec	1	8		1			1						2	9																			

Improvement team = Strategy and Scrutiny

16.4 Learning and Remedial Action

Significant progress has therefore been made continuing the development of the required elements of the Health and Safety Management Plan that incorporated the Corporate Statement of Health and Safety Policy, Corporate Standards and subsequent Directorate Health and Safety Policy.

Communication and understanding difficulties have been addressed at Directorate level, these difficulties remain, despite Directorate representation on the HSMG, the aligned Health and Safety Training Programme and development of the Corporate Health and Safety Intranet Site which makes all of the information available to those with access to computers.

Further work is required to improve communication of the Directorate Health and Safety Policy and to ensure that Directorates fully embrace the approved Corporate Standards that currently apply, this will change following vesting day and will require continued vigilance from officers in post to support a smooth transition.

Upon reflection, it has been determined, in light of Local Government Review (LGR), that there was little purpose in continuing developing Corporate Standards in line with the HSMG workplan and that Corporate Health and Safety, in conjunction with HSMG, could better use the remaining time of the District Council to ensure that what has been approved by CMT so far is functioning effectively.

The HSMG will continue to monitor accidents and consider recommendations for action where necessary.

Remedial measures proposed to address the concerns above include:

- Continue to raise awareness of the corporate policy, the HSMG and the roles of Directorate representatives on it;
- Collect information through HSMG Directorate Representatives relating to Corporate Standards.
- Analyse information received.
- Inform CMT of way forward including action plan for service areas or Directorates as necessary in relation to respective Corporate Standard being monitored.
- Work jointly with other members of the Health and Safety sub work stream to support the formation of the new unitary Council

16.5 Further Action and Remedial Measures

With regard to the remedial measures above the following action has been taken:

- Seek appointment of additional employee representatives with a view of expanding knowledge and understanding of Corporate Policy, Health and Safety Management Group and roles and responsibilities of Directorate representatives. Progress has been made with the appointment of another representative from the General, Municipal and Boilermakers Trades Union (GMB).
- Communication on a direct basis with the newly appointed employee representative is much simpler and so far very effective.
- Information is being requested through Directorate Health and Safety Representatives, although this has not been as forthcoming as hoped the matter has been further addressed at Extended Corporate Management Team.
- Information that has been provided, as requested, and as a means of checking compliance with approved Corporate Standards, has been beneficial.
- Corporate management team has been informed of the measures being implemented above with a view to raising awareness and understanding of all areas of Health and Safety.

In light of Local Government Review it has been determined, and agreed, by the representatives of the Health and Safety Management Group, that future meetings of the group will be bi monthly.

Accident statistical data as previously agreed by the Health and Safety Management Group will continue to be reported six monthly to the Group and to Corporate Management Team. This report includes relevant end of year 2008, accident data compared with end of year 2007 data.

Adverse Event/Accident Reporting will continue in compliance with Corporate Standard CS:004 and any event/accident of note will be raised and discussed with representatives of the Health and Safety Management Group at their scheduled meetings.

17. Overall Performance

17.1 Summary of Overall Performance

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.

Members and officers ought to be proud of overall achievements. 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 2nd 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 14th 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.

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