

Cabinet – 6 October 2005

Strategic Performance Report – Quarter 1, 2005/06

Performance summary

Changes in the Strategic Performance Report (SPR) for Quarter 1

The SPR has been refreshed to reflect priorities highlighted in the council's Corporate Plan and other key issues, whilst retaining a degree of continuity with the previous report. The performance management framework has continued to develop so that each of the measures in this report is now tracked within Executive Directorate scorecards.

Items that are new or significantly changed in this Quarter's report are marked "new" in Appendix 3. Because of the degree of change it is not possible to show trends in this report (normally shown by arrows in the blocks in Appendix 2) but trend information will be restored in the next report.

CPA

The methodology for Comprehensive Performance Assessments for 2005 onwards has changed and places increasing reliance on performance indicator information for services. Particular measures, called 'rule based' PIs, will have special significance in that poor performance against them will limit a council's grading within the respective service block.

The SPR therefore identifies measures that are either 'key threshold' (KT) for social care services, or 'rule based' performance indicators (various services).

Within the CPA Environment block, "Intervention by the Secretary of State under Traffic Management Act Powers" is one of two rule-based indicators. This is the subject of further work and an update will be given when available. The council is already one to which planning performance standards have been applied. This is the other rule-based indicator in the block. Poor findings on both would limit the block score and have implications for the council's overall rating. Meanwhile, the final details of the CPA methodology are still to be confirmed and further updates will be given.

Inspections

The results of inspections held in Quarter 4 have been confirmed as:

- Supporting People – good service (★ ★) with promising prospects for improvement
- Cultural Services – fair (★) with promising prospects
- Children's services – serving some people well (★), promising prospects

Additionally, the Benefits service has again been confirmed as Excellent.

Overall the conclusions of inspection strongly reinforce that the council is pursuing the right course through its change agenda. All inspections have given positive feedback on the council's performance management arrangements.

Partnership

The Harrow Strategic Partnership's application for a pilot Local Area Agreement (LAA) has been successful and detailed proposals are being developed. The Strategic Performance Report will track this during the year. This work will form the basis of the Local Area Agreement. A Harrow Strategic Partnership scorecard is being developed, led by the PCT, to monitor the performance of the HSP.

The LPSA section shows little change from the last quarter since many of the measures are annual and were updated last cycle. Under "Key Challenges" below, the comments on Adoptions (Children's services) and Robberies (Area Services) are relevant here.

Corporate Plan and Best Value Performance Plan

As agreed by Cabinet and council earlier, the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) for 2005/06 comprises the Corporate Plan and a separate Best Value performance supplement, read together. The supplement was published on 30 June and is undergoing audit.

Performance Summary – Key Improvers

Under **Decent homes and living environment for all**, the Number of households requiring bed & breakfast accommodation moves from red to green, the one individual who required this type of accommodation last quarter having moved on.

In **Adults and Older People**, 'Acceptable waiting times from referral to assessment' turns green from amber, reflecting management action to prioritise the completion of assessments.

Customer satisfaction improves from red to amber as overall satisfaction with the council increases in the 2005 MORI poll from 45% to 54%. The next refresh of this figure will be in 2006.

In **Financial Health** the percentage of Council Tax collected turns green from amber, reflecting good performance against the fresh for the first quarter of the new year.

Within **Improving the planning process**, the Percentage of major applications determined within 13 weeks climbs from red to amber with an improvement from 55% to 60% against a target of 62%.

Performance Summary – Key Challenges

Decent homes and living environment for all contains four red indicators.

Commencement of both the Private Sector Housing Stock Survey and the Housing Needs Survey were delayed due to work on the options appraisal. Now that this is complete, a plan is in place to achieve project targets.

The Average time to relet local authority housing at 44 days is significantly above target of 35 days. Given similar performance in 2004/05 this is a challenging target. Steps have been taken to speed the return of long term voids to letting, although this has a negative effect on average turnaround time as the time they were vacant is counted when they are finally let. Management action is in place but there will be a lag before the effect is seen in the performance indicators.

'Housing capital programme achieves quarterly spend' reflects a slow spend in the first quarter at £550K against a budget of £10m. This is due largely to the need to restructure expenditure following the decision not to proceed with the ALMO. A review at Quarter 2 will profile the spend for the year and revise the targets.

The Community Safety results under **Area Services** reflect higher figures against Violent crime and Robberies per 1,000 population. "Violent crime" includes robbery, which has increased due to displacement from neighbouring high crime boroughs. Proactive operations in Town Centres and schools have resulted in increased reporting by victims and neighbourhood teams have increased reporting.

In **Children's services**, Adoptions of Children Looked After remain red, low performance being due to external delays (court timetabling, lodging of applications) and internal delays caused by high staff turnover. This figure does not reflect our overall performance in permanence planning as it does not include those children under a residence order (which is widely acknowledged to be a valid legal solution for permanency), or those cases where the permanence plan is for a return to birth parents. We plan to gradually improve our performance on this indicator, bringing our performance into line with our comparator local authorities and national standards. A number of initiatives are in place to help achieve this including identifying and monitoring the 2004/5 and 2005/6 cohorts (there are currently eight pre-adoptive placements nearing conclusion, and a further 12 identified as target group for 05/6 who are currently in permanency planning process).

The Stability of placements of Children Looked After drops from amber to red: a new First Contact Manager is in place and actions are being taken to improve placement stability including changes to processes for care planning, placements, procurement and contracts.

In **Equalities**, the proportion of Women in Senior Management is around 35% against a target of 37.5% and so remains red although the variation is minor and contrary to the longer term trend. The Level Achieved in Equality Standard Assessment on red confirms that the council has not yet achieved level 3: work is in hand and reassessment will occur in September.

Under **Skills and Capacity**, three measures show red under Middle Management Review: % of role profiles produced (95%), % of posts filled (79%) and QA of selection process. The delay in agreeing the structure for Urban Living has in turn resulted in delays in producing

role profiles and in filling posts. However 5% of posts are currently being processed i.e. are at shortlisting or awaiting interview stage.

Single Status shows red as the progress of the job evaluation programme has fallen behind, partly as a result of capacity issues within Unison. Arrangements for additional resource have now been agreed.

In **Financial Health**, the Rent collected for council housing is 91.32% for the first quarter against a target of 94%. Performance has improved since the quarter end and the calculation of this indicator is being reviewed for quarter 2.

The Proportion of expenditure on emergency and urgent repairs to council dwellings compared with non-urgent is off target, with 79% of all orders placed by the call centre recorded as emergency or urgent. The industry norm is in the region of 15%. Management action is in place to scrutinise all orders before they are issued and call centre staff are being trained to confirm the position to tenants and resist inappropriate demands. The service standards outlined in the tenants' handbook may need revision.

The Percentage of the capital programme delivered to plan is below target as spend to date is 16% when compared with a target of 25% of the budget and allowing for overprogramming. Detailed budget profiling for 2005/06 is currently being finalised and will aid monitoring later in the year. A full review of the schemes is under way with a view to presenting a revised programme to Cabinet in October for consideration. This will pick up new projects and some revisions to existing projects.

Under **Efficiency**, the Number of businesses registered on the portal website is low as the publicity leaflets were delayed and went out in July.

Licensing is a new entry and flagged red as the number of initial applications from establishments has been low. This is a national trend. Additional staffing is now in place to campaign and knock on doors to encourage applications.

Other Notes and Changes

Measures that are only updated annually and therefore do not reflect change quarter on quarter are now marked as such.