

Meeting:	Performance and Finance
Date:	29 April 2008
Subject:	Scrutiny scorecard
Key Decision: (Executive-side only)	No
Responsible Officer:	Ed Hammond, Scrutiny Unit
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Paul Osborn, Strategy and Business Support
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Scrutiny Scorecard

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report sets out scrutiny performance in the Quarter 4, and the end-of-year performance for 2007/08, as recorded in the scrutiny scorecard..

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is requested to:

- 1) Note the scorecard, attached at Appendix 1, and the commentary.
- 2) Discuss proposals for improvement and approve the proposed way forward set out in the report and in the scorecard commentary.
- 3) That the annual data, and Performance and Finance's discussion of it, be referred to Overview and Scrutiny for discussion at their next available meeting.

SECTION 2 - REPORT

Background

The Scrutiny Scorecard was agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 July 2007. It was agreed that it would be used to monitor scrutiny's performance on a quarterly basis. Some of the measures, recorded quarterly, would be reported regularly to Performance and Finance. Annually, the scorecard data would be reported to Overview and Scrutiny for a more general discussion.

Current situation

Members are being asked to note the scorecard for Quarter 3, which is attached.

Why a change is needed

Not applicable.

Main options

It is recommended that members note the scorecard. Further recommendations may be made relating to the "performance issues" outlined in the section below.

Other options considered

No other options are being presented.

Recommendation: - to note and endorse the contents of the report, and to identify any potential issues for P&F to investigate in the future.

Considerations

Resources, costs and risks: broad issues relating to risks and resources are referred to below, but there are no implications pertaining directly to this report.

Staffing/workforce: none

Equalities impact: none specific

Legal comments: none

Community safety: none

Financial Implications

None specific.

Performance Issues

Particular issues, and information on improvements either under way or planned, are identified below. More general analyses for many indicators are provided in the commentary section of the members' card attached to this report.

This scorecard is considered as a matter of course at every meeting of Performance and Finance, and is excluded from the ordinary "by exception" criteria for consideration at committee.

Issue / PI	Analysis of performance	Improvement proposals
General performance	<p>General performance in Q4 demonstrates stability – a gradual improvement in some indicators from Q3, but a fall in some others. There are some causes for concern, which are identified below, but improvement proposals are being made for each of these.</p> <p>Annual performance demonstrates that the scrutiny function is working well, insofar as the scorecard accurately represents performance – please see below.</p>	<p>Further enhancements to the scrutiny function are being delivered as a result of the recent scrutiny members' awayday, held at the beginning of April.</p>
General performance – target setting	<p>As mentioned at previous meetings, because no baseline data existed relating to performance before 07/08, target setting was difficult. Consequently the performance illustrated by the RAG status in the scorecard is not necessarily accurate, as the RAG variances and boundaries have been assigned on an essentially arbitrary basis.</p>	<p>Following members' discussion of the end-of-year performance, an entirely new set of targets will be established, based on performance this year, with the intention of improving the service (ie, providing "stretching" targets). These will be discussed and agreed in principle by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman in advance of being used for the Q1 data in 2008/09.</p>
General performance – data and data quality	<p>There remains an issue relating to the quality of the data being used to contribute to the performance indicators. In some instances,</p>	<p>The way around this problem might be to make some measures annual. However, this would constrain the ability of the scrutiny function to react in a timely manner to instances where performance is failing. It is a delicate</p>

	<p>because of the vagaries of the work programme, there might be no information in one quarter, or one quarter's data might be based on 3 or 4 items only – thus risking an unbalanced score.</p> <p>It has furthermore been advised that it will be impossible to measure under one indicator, as data cannot be collected (indicator C5) and it is recommended that this indicator be removed. Similarly, separate data under R2 will be difficult to collect following changes to the budget process and as such it is recommended that this indicator be removed.</p>	<p>balance.</p> <p>Another method to make the data more reliable might be changes to the methodology of certain indicators, to dampen the potential impact of a single aberrant piece of data on an indicator based on only 3 or 4 results. However, this in itself would present data quality issues. The technical ramifications of this will have to be examined in much closer detail.</p>
<p>% of issues considering data from the Forward Plan</p>	<p>Performance has been showing “red” since Q2 07/08.</p>	<p>Consideration of issues in the Forward Plan is still limited and expresses weakness in terms of the function's ability to carry out “pre-decision” scrutiny. Measures are being developed to enhance the ability of scrutiny to look at decisions before they are made. These were discussed at the scrutiny awayday, but are in their early stages. Consequently it is likely that this indicator will remain “red” into next year. This is obviously a cause for concern. In the interim, it may be that ad hoc consideration of the FP by the scrutiny leads may be sufficient to improve performance. But it is accepted that long-term solutions are required.</p>
<p>Review group agendas</p>	<p>Performance has been consistently low since</p>	<p>83.3% of agendas were distributed five days in advance, but there have</p>

made available five days in advance of meeting	Q3.	been some key exceptions this year. It is difficult to assess why, in some instances, this target cannot be met. Often it can be due to last-minute uncertainties relating to attendance, or the content of the agenda. Better planning and preparation in the future will hopefully ensure that all agendas are available five days in advance. In future, this should be an absolute deadline as it is with committee papers.
Number of reviews having significant positive impact on service reviewed	No data for year-end card	<p>This is a significant problem. Broadly speaking it derives from the issues experienced over 2006/07, when (in early 2007) the scrutiny work programme was put on hold. The consequence was that the amount of work completed in 2006/07 and early 2007/08 was lower than it would have otherwise been – consequently, the result has been that there have been no reviews to monitor this year.</p> <p>Even where reviews have been monitored, the “measures for success” are not sufficiently robust to allow for useful data, as the reviews were completed in 2006/07, well before the scrutiny scorecard was developed.</p> <p>This measure is crucial and is in fact one of the most significant of the PIs. Monitoring mechanisms are now in place and data will be recorded in full for 2008/09. Interim data can be made available to members on a review-by-review basis over the course of 2008/09.</p>

Legal and financial implications

There are no legal or financial implications to this report.

SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE

_____ on behalf of the

Name: ...Sheela Thakrar.



Chief Financial Officer

Date: 18 April 2008

Name: Stephen Dorrian



on behalf of the
Monitoring Officer

Date: 15 April 2008

SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact: Ed Hammond, Scrutiny Officer, Strategic and Performance
020 8420 9205: ed.hammond@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

None