

HARROW COUNCIL

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| Meeting: | Overview and Scrutiny Committee |
| Date: | 2 March 2004 |
| Subject: | Improvement Progress Report and Best Value Performance Indicators - Quarterly Monitoring Report |
| Key decision: | No |
| Responsible Chief Officer: | Executive Director (Organisational Development) |
| Relevant Portfolio Holder: | Finance, Human Resources and Performance Management |
| Status: | Part I |
| Ward: | N/A |
| Enclosures: | Appendix A – CPA/IDeA Improvement Plan – Progress Report Proforma Appendix B – Quarterly Performance Monitoring Statement |

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides a progress report on the action taken to implement the Council's Improvement Plan in response to the Improvement & Development Agency's (IDeA) and Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) reviews of last year. It also presents the quarterly monitoring report of the Best Value Performance Indicators for 2003-4.

2. **Recommendations (for decision by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee)**

- 2.1 That the Committee note the progress report proforma attached as appendix A.
- 2.2 That a further report be made to the July Committee detailing progress over the year together with an amended Improvement Plan for the coming year.
- 2.3 That the BVPI Monitoring report be noted.

REASON: To assess progress against the CPA/IDeA Improvement Plan and to enable progress against the Council's performance targets to be assessed and action taken where necessary to improve performance.

3. **Consultation with Ward Councillors**

Not Applicable

4. Policy Context (including Relevant Previous Decisions)

- 4.1 The Improvement Plan is closely related to the decisions involved in setting up the New Harrow Project, as agreed by Cabinet in July 2002. Cabinet at its meeting on 17th December 2002 agreed (Minute 35) the plan as a working draft and that progress be reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. Cabinet on 18th March 2003 (Minute 215) agreed an updated version of the plan. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Improvement Plan on 10 July 2003, and considered quarterly progress against the Plan on 23 September and 25 November 2003.
- 4.2 The council is required to report annually on a series of Best Value Performance Indicators that are determined by the Audit Commission. Progress is reported annually through the council's Best Value Performance Plan.
- 4.3 Quarterly monitoring of the indicators enables the council to assess progress against the targets set and take corrective action when performance is not on track.

5. Relevance to Corporate Priorities

- 5.1 This report is relevant to all of the vision and the strategic corporate priorities as agreed by Cabinet in May 2002.

6. Background Information and options considered

Improvement Plan

- 6.1 During 2002, the Council underwent two external assessments – the IDeA Peer Review and Comprehensive Performance Assessment. Both reports reached similar conclusions, that Harrow had both strengths and weaknesses and that there was room for improvement, particularly in some areas of delivering services to customers. CPA assessed the Council as 'weak' overall. This has now been revised to 'fair'.
- 6.2 Attached as appendix A is a proforma which details the action taken to date against the nine priority areas contained within the Improvement Plan. The proforma identifies the priority area, the Chief Officer and Designated Portfolio Holder responsible for that priority area, the task to be completed, the officer responsible for the task and, in the final column, progress to date and an additional column to earlier report progress against target dates.
- 6.3 Significant action has been taken on all priority areas although further work is required to complete the following:
- Corporate Plan
 - Recruitment to Senior Management Structure
 - Performance Management Systems
 - Review of Financial Regulations
 - Community Strategy for Harrow




Best Value Performance Indicators

- 6.4 The Council is required each year to report progress against the Best Value Performance Indicators and our local targets in its Best Value Performance Plan. We must set that information in context by reporting their out-turn performance against the targets set for each indicator at the start of the year, and explain significant differences between targets and actual performance.
- 6.5 The council has instituted quarterly monitoring to enable progress to be established and where necessary corrective action taken.
- 6.6 This report presents the quarterly monitor of Best Value Performance Indicators for the first nine months of the year.
- 6.7 The detailed information is contained in appendix B which provides data for Quarter 3, 2003/04 (September - December) and, where available separately, Quarters 1 (April - June) and 2 (July - September).

The appendix provides information on the: -

- 2002/3 out turn
- the council's' quartile position in London (NB this has been updated to reflect the 2002/3 data now available)
- the target for 2003/4
- out turn performance for the quarter

The symbols in the Target and Trend columns have the following meanings:

| Symbol | <i>In the Target Column</i> | In the Trend Column |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Performance in the quarter has surpassed the target plus tolerance* | Performance in the quarter is better than that in the previous quarter |
|  | Performance is on target or within tolerance* | No change in performance from previous quarter/no clear trend |
|  | Performance is below target and tolerance* | Performance is worse than in previous quarter. NB there is no arrow in the trend column – where there is no data in the previous quarter |

*'Tolerance' has initially been set at $\pm 5\%$ from target.

- 6.8 Managers have been asked to provide an exception report where variance from target exceeds tolerance and these commentaries appear in the rightmost column of the spreadsheet. In some cases the word "Exception" appears on its own: this is generated by a formula, which compares Q2 performance with target, and indicates that an exception report is due but has yet to be received.
- 6.9 A considerable number of BV indicators are not (or not currently) capable of quarterly reporting. For completeness, they have been included in appendix 3.

6.10 It is proposed that the next (Quarter 4) will be provided to Cabinet in May 2004 and to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7. **Consultation**

7.1 Within the process for the IDeA review and the Corporate Assessment element of the CPA, a wide range of partner organisations were consulted by those carrying out the assessment. For the reviews and inspections contributing to the core services, which were included in the CPA, consultation was a key part of Best Value Review and was incorporated by inspectors within their new agreed frameworks.

8. **Finance Observations**

8.1 None

9. **Legal Observations**

9.1 None

10. **Conclusion**

10.1 All services have set targets for improvement for 2003/04 to 2005/06 in the Best Value Performance Plan. Quarterly reporting of performance on the Best Value Performance Indicators enables the Authority to monitor progress on achieving targets in a more effective way and will highlight potential problem areas in advance.

11. **Background Documents**

Improvement and Development Agency Review (May 2002)

Comprehensive Performance Assessment (July 2002)

Improvement Plan for the IDeA Review and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment

12. **Author**

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