

Quarter 1 2023-2024 Performance Exceptions Report

Audit & Scrutiny Committee Tuesday 26 September 2023

Report of: Head of Policy & Communications

Purpose: For information

Publication status: Open

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

This is an exception report about the Council's four policy committees' performance and risk management. The aim is to support the Audit & Scrutiny Committee to monitor the Council's performance and delivery of services.

This report supports the Council's priority of: Building a better Council

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Recommendation to Committee:

To review and note the policy committees' performance exceptions for Quarter 1 2022-2023 and the committee and corporate risks.

Reason for recommendation:

To help the committee monitor performance and risk.

Introduction and background

1. Part of the committee's role is to review and scrutinise the decisions and performance of the Council.
2. The committee receives a performance and risk exception update for each policy committee: Community Services, Planning Policy, Housing and Strategy and Resources.
3. The following performance information has been included on the basis the indicator targets have not been met.

Community Services

4. The most recent performance data for the [Community Services Committee](#) can be found in the Key Performance Indicators report on the agenda.
5. The performance indicator for the percentage of roads, footpaths and public open spaces which are the Council's responsibility to maintain, which meet the environment cleanliness standard, is just off target by 3% at 92%. The target is 95%.
6. This is a challenging target to meet, as the number of street cleansing operatives has decreased since the target was set. Sickness has impacted service delivery and there are issues with the reliability of the mechanical sweeper.
7. This service area is being reviewed as part of the Future Tandridge Programme and work is underway to remodel the street cleaning services against current standards and resources.

Planning Policy

8. The most recent performance data for the [Planning Policy Committee](#) can be found in the Key Performance Indicators report on the agenda.
9. All targets for the nationally set planning indicators have been met and exceeded, demonstrating the continued improved performance of the planning service.

Housing

10. The most recent performance data for the [Housing Committee](#) can be found in the Key Performance Indicators report on the agenda.
11. HO2b: Average time taken to re-let local authority sheltered housing. This is off target by 0.57 days at 30.57 days. The target is 30 days. This is 31.43 days lower than Q4 2022-2023, which was 62 days. While still off target, improvements have been achieved following the implementation of the new Housing Services structure and review of processes to encourage faster re-let times.

12. H04: Number of households living in temporary accommodation. This is off target by 24 days at 54 days. The target is 30 days. The increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation reflects the current difficulties being experienced in successfully preventing / relieving homelessness and the lack of supply of affordable housing. Q1 performance has declined by two households compared to the 52 households living in temporary accommodation in Q4 2022-2023.
13. HO5: People in Urgent Need (Bands A & B) on the Housing Register. This is off target by 188 people at 463 people. The target is 275 people. Q1 has seen a small reduction of 4 households when compared to Q4 2022-2023, which totalled 467 households in urgent need. This figure remains high due to high demand and a limited supply of affordable housing. The Housing Team continues to work with colleagues in strategy and development to ensure a continued supply of affordable housing is provided throughout the district, as well as pursuing other initiatives, including the Tenants' Incentive Scheme, Assisted Purchase Scheme and relocation strategies within the housing stock.

Strategy and Resources

14. The most recent performance data for the [Strategy and Resources Committee](#) can be found in the Key Performance Indicators report on the agenda. While three KPIs did not meet their target for the quarter, SR5 and SR7 are likely to have the most impact on the Council's income and performance.
15. SR5: The number of working days / shifts lost due to sickness absence (long and short-term) is off target by 2.46 days at 9.56 days. This is an improvement since the last quarter, which was off target by 3.57 days at 10.67. The target is 7.1 days. The overall trend is down, in the same quarter last year the number of days was 11.36. In this quarter 35% of absences are attributed to musculoskeletal conditions, 17% to mental health concerns and 7% for Covid related absences.
16. SR7: Staff turnover is just off target at 15.9%, compared to 14.5% in the last quarter. The target is 15%. The overall trend is down, for the same quarter last year turnover was 17.9%. Reasons given by staff for leaving include new opportunities, personal reasons, retirement. Staff are facing challenging times and uncertainty over the future of their job. Informal benchmarking with other Surrey districts and boroughs indicates similar or higher levels of staff turnover.
17. These indicators need to be considered in the context of the long term impact of the pandemic, people making different choices about how and where they work, as well as the challenges and uncertainty for staff during the implementation of the Future Tandridge Programme.

Risk headlines

18. The policy committees and corporate risk registers have the following red risks.

- P1: Local Plan is found unsound.
- H1: Council fails to deliver the target number of properties in the Council House Building Programme, due to poor performance of the contractor, planning delays, unplanned costs, availability of materials and utility providers.
- CR3: Delays in monitoring council owned trees and impact of Ash dieback creates greater risk of tree falls.

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The risks identified in the corporate risk registers reported to individual policy committees and their mitigating actions may lead to additional resources and cost implications for the Council if they materialise

Once identified, the financial impact of any additional cost pressures to reduce risk and / or improve performance will be shown in the monthly budget monitoring reports. Budget monitoring reports will also identify and quantify where possible financial risks to delivering the budget, along with mitigating actions. Ensuring the Council has adequate reserves and contingencies to respond to these risks is a key element of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

A performance exception report is presented to the committee on a quarterly basis as part of the Council's performance management framework. By working with officers from different service areas in the production of this report the Council embeds accountability for performance within the senior management structure. This allows for a flow of detailed information to and from the Council's leadership.

There is no statutory duty to report regularly to councillors on the Council's performance, but as a best value authority under the Local Government Act 1999, the Council has a statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Regular reporting of performance can assist the Council to demonstrate best value. Analysis is also needed to understand the trend, the history and probable future direction of performance of the Council.

Equality

This report contains no proposals that would disadvantage any particular minority groups.

Climate change

This report contains no proposals that would impact on the Council's commitment to climate change.

Appendices

None

Background papers

None

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