

Quarter 1 2024/2025 - Performance Exceptions and Risk Registers

Audit & Scrutiny Committee, Tuesday 24 September 2024

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: Putting residents at the heart of what we do.

Contact officer Giuseppina Valenza Head of Policy & Communications
gvalenza@tandridge.gov.uk

Recommendation to Committee:

To review and note the policy committees' performance exceptions for Quarter 1 2024-2025 and the policy committees 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 Key Performance Indicators report can be found on the [Community Services Committee](#) agenda.
5. The performance indicator for street cleaning was off target at 80% (the target is 95%). Sickness and annual leave have had a significant impact on service delivery.
6. Recycling and waste services continue to perform well. The Council is second in the county for recycling and third for collecting the least amount of rubbish.

Planning Policy

7. The most recent Key Performance Indicators report can be found on the [Planning Policy Committee](#) agenda.
8. There were no exceptions in the most recent report, with all targets for nationally set planning indicators met.

Housing

9. The most recent Key Performance Indicators can be found on the [Housing Committee](#) agenda. Two indicators were off target.
10. HO2a: Average time taken to re-let local authority housing was off target by 31.6 days with a target of 25 days. The performance was adversely affected by the length of time it took to let one bedsit, despite it being advertised on multiple occasions. Without including that bedsit in the statistics, performance was 25.1 days.
11. HO4: The number of households living in temporary accommodation was off target at 48. The target is 30 households. The ongoing high number of households in temporary accommodation reflects the current difficulties in successfully preventing and/or relieving homelessness and the lack of supply of affordable housing. While the figure remains above target, it's 23% lower than six months ago.

12. In addition to the main key performance indicators, Monitoring Indicators are now also collected. These are presented for information purposes only and are regularly reviewed by officers, as well as part of the Housing Committee's mid-cycle meetings.

Strategy and Resources

13. The most recent Key Performance Indicators report can be found on the [Strategy & Resources Committee](#) agenda.
14. SR3: Days taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims. This was just off target by 1 day at 31 days. The target is 30 days. Complex applications have impacted the target. These have included supported accommodation claims which need to meet certain criteria and take more time to assess.
15. To improve the service, the team is carrying out a review of companies providing supported accommodation, so those landlords are aware what information is needed before a claim can be processed. This should speed up the process and prevent delays in the required information being provided. The team is developing better relationships with these providers to ensure they are aware of how the rent process works.
16. The team is working more closely with other council teams to ensure any information provided by customers is passed on quickly to ensure claims can be assessed as soon as possible. The Benefits Team is also recruiting to a vacant post which will create more capacity.
17. SR5: The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence (long and short term, rolling 12-month figures) is just off target at 7.27 days. The target is 7.1 days. Long term absence is anything over 20 continuous working days (ie more than four weeks). Short term is any sickness less than 20 days. The number of staff on long term sick leave over the last year was 18, of which 2 have left the Council.
18. The annual [Health and wellbeing at work](#) report from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development highlights that sickness absence is at its highest level for over a decade, with an average rate of employee absence at 7.8 days per employee each year. Before the pandemic in November 2019 this figure was 5.8 days per employee. The Council's current sickness levels have decreased over the last two years.

Benchmarking

19. The Council is reviewing what benchmarking data is available to be able to better demonstrate how the Council is performing against its neighbouring or similar councils.

Risk headlines

20. Appendix A has details of all policy committee risks and Appendix B is the Corporate Risk Register. Both appendices detail the actions taken and being taken to mitigate against risk.
21. There are two red risks on the Housing Committee Risk Register and Corporate Risk Register. These are:
 - H6: Inability to procure compliance contracts due to lack of resource. Priority is being given to compliance related contracts including asbestos, legionella, electrical and fire.
 - H8: Regulatory judgement of non-health and safety compliance within housing stock. Officers are being allocated solely to compliance work, with a number of compliance contracts in place. A new asset management system is under development.

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

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.

The risks included in the Corporate Risk Register are those considered to pose a threat to meeting the Council's priorities. The risk management process including reviewing the committee risk registers is designed to identify, mitigate and monitor these risks to protect as far as is possible the risk materialising.

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

- Appendix A: Committee Risk Registers
- Appendix B: Corporate Risk Register

Background papers

None

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