

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting17th July 2014

1. Title of Item/Report

Quarter 4 Performance Report 2013-14

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that provided details of the Council's performance in 2013/14, highlighting key achievements, areas for improvement and proposed actions. It also included information relating to Freedom of Information requests and complaints and commendations. Whilst it aimed to give a perspective on the overall performance of the Council, its primary focus was on the achievement of the basket of measures and associated targets agreed as part of the Council Plan 2013-16.

Council Plan performance was reported by theme against a basket of performance indicators agreed as part of the Council Plan 2013-16. At year end, 66.7% of the indicators had achieved the targets set, with the remaining measures indicating slippage against targets. This was equivalent to the performance achieved in the previous year (67%). Areas of good performance under each theme, together with key achievements, were highlighted within the report; details of those areas that missed the targets were also provided along with proposed actions to improve performance and / or an explanation. A number of these areas were also the subject of regular reports to Cabinet, scrutiny reviews or incorporated into big ticket reviews.

There were a wide range of achievements and activities delivered in support of the key council plan themes that were not captured within the agreed basket of key indicators. These were reported throughout the year in various reports to Cabinet, captured through press releases, Stockton News articles and various accolades awarded to the Council throughout the year. Further details were included in thematic summary reports attached to the report for information.

A record of Freedom of Information (FOI), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and Data Subject Access (DSAR) requests was maintained across Council departments. A dedicated email account exists for receipt of all FOI requests into the authority and a central log of

requests was maintained to enable intelligence to be gathered and to reduce risks to the authority.

During 2013/14 there had been 1,122 responses to FOI requests, this was an increase of 42% on the previous year. These requests were often complex with multiple questions and could lead to additional correspondence with requesters who submit subsequent questions. During 2013/14 there had been 69 requests dealt with under EIR, which was slightly more than the previous year (63).

During 2013/14 there had been 353 responses to DSARs, this was consistent with the number responded to in the previous year (351).

During 2013/14, 88% of the FOI requests were responded to within timescale; this was lower than the response rate in the previous year (93%). The reduction could be attributed to the large increase in the numbers received and the complexity of a significant number of the requests. Given that capacity had remained the same and workload had increased, this response rate was still a positive achievement.

Of the FOI requests responded to in 2013/14: 25% were from businesses, 16% from media, 5% from political organisations and 55% from other sources (including students, residents and people who don't state their background). Compared with the previous year, there had been an increase in the proportion of requesters who did not state their background and decreases in the proportions from businesses and political organisations.

During the year some of the topics, for which multiple requests were received include compensation claims, business rates, use of bailiffs, council tax arrears and council tax support schemes, welfare reform, fostering, potholes, public health funerals, Spark of Genius joint venture and spend on events.

Attached to the report were further details of the numbers of information requests the Council had dealt with.

Members felt that the topic of FOI requests should be included in the development of the scrutiny programme for 2015/16.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The strong levels of performance in line with previous years be noted, and it be acknowledged this level of performance has been achieved within a context of reduced financial resource, increased

demand on services and reductions in staffing capacity.

2. The explanations and actions being taken in relation to those areas where target performance has not been achieved be noted.

3. Consideration be given to the possibility of including areas not reaching their targets and the topic of FOI requests in the development of the scrutiny programme for 2015/16, taking into account any areas covered within the 14/15 programme.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To inform Members of the Council's performance 2013/14

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on Friday, 25th July 2014

Proper Officer
21 July 2014