

**AGENDA NO:
REPORT TO EXECUTIVE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
4 March 2008
REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**Corporate and Social Inclusion: Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor
Laing**

**PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT QUARTER 3
OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2007**

1. Summary

This report outlines the Council's performance and financial position for the period Quarter 3, October to December 2007, providing details of performance against targets and improvement trends. This report includes the linkages between performance and corresponding risks, performance against the Corporate Basket of key performance indicators, Gershon Efficiency Savings, complaints and commendations, consultation and sharing of good practice, undertaken during Quarter 3.

2. Recommendation

That the report is noted.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision

This report highlights progress against our key Council performance measures and raises any related financial and risk issues.

4. Members Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;
- And must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.

AGENDA ITEM:

**REPORT TO
EXECUTIVE SCRUTINY**

4 March 2008

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

COUNCIL DECISION

**Corporate and Social Inclusion: Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor
Laing**

**PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT, QUARTER 3,
OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2007.**

SUMMARY

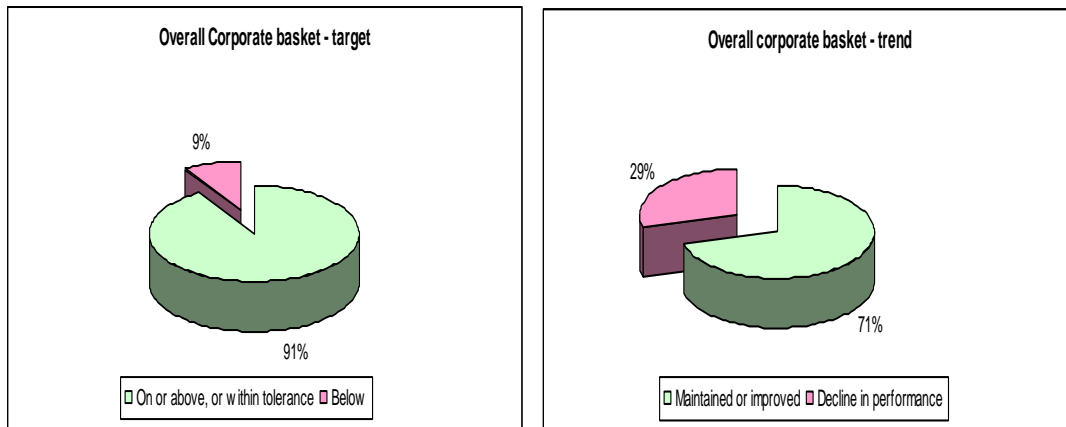
This report outlines the Council's performance and financial position for the period Quarter 3, October to December 2007, providing details of performance against targets and improvement trends. This report includes the linkages between performance and corresponding risks, performance against the Corporate Basket of key performance indicators, Gershon Efficiency Savings, complaints and commendations, consultation and sharing of good practice, undertaken during Quarter 3.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report is noted.

OVERALL CORPORATE BASKET POSITION

1. The Corporate Basket for 2007/08 holds 95 of the council's key measures including Best Value Performance indicators, Performance Assessment Framework measures (PAF) and local indicators. Performance against 60 of these indicators is due to be reported at Quarter 3. The results show continued good progress towards achievement of targets. Of the 60 measures reported at Quarter 3, 91% (52) of targets are predicted to be achieved with 71% (39) showing an improvement trend from the same period last year.
2. The charts below show the Council's performance against the targets set for 2007/08 and the improvement trend from Quarter 3 2006/07 to Quarter 3, 2007/08.



Full details of each performance measure in the basket are available at www.stockton.gov.uk/yourcouncil/performance/qtrperfmonitor.

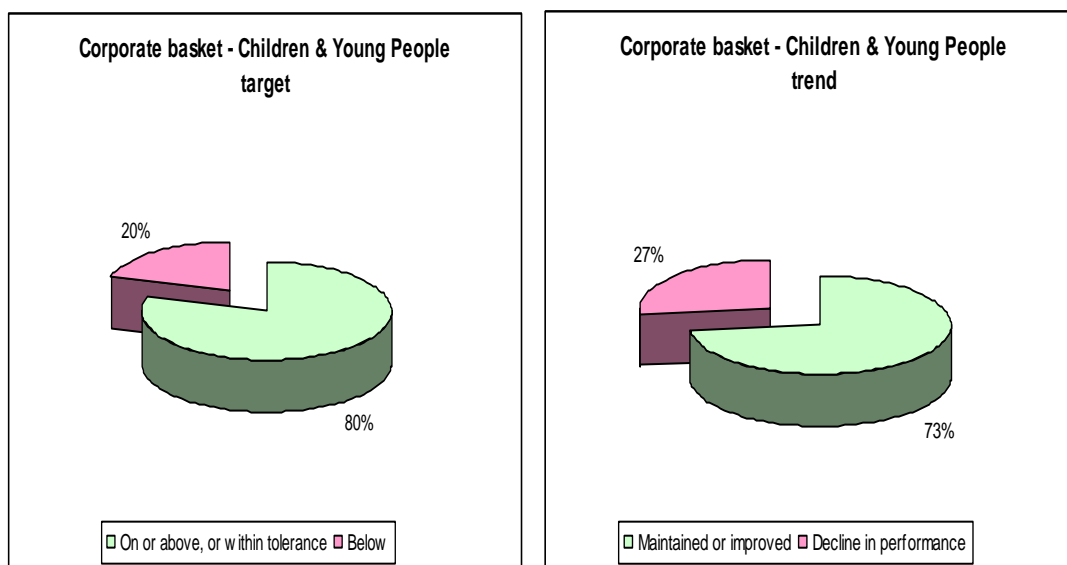
PROGRESS BY THEME

3. Key priorities for our community are detailed within the 5 themes of the Community Strategy. The Council Plan has an additional theme for organisational development, named Corporate Health. This report identifies performance, financial and risk related issues against each of the Community Strategy themes of:
 - Children and Young People
 - Healthier Communities and Adults
 - Safer Communities
 - Liveability
 - Economic Regeneration and Transport
 - Corporate Health

PROGRESS AGAINST THE CORPORATE BASKET BY THEME.

Children and Young People

4. Continued good progress has been made towards meeting the targets of the Corporate Basket within the Children and Young People's theme. There are 28 indicators which relate to Children and Young People, 15 of which are reported at Quarter 3. Of the 15 reported 12 (80%) are predicted to achieve the target set and 11 (73%) show a maintained or improved trend from the same Quarter last year.



Achievements

5. Of particular note in terms of achievement are:
- A final published performance of 60% for pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C or equivalent, a 4.9 percentage point increase which further narrows the gap to national average performance (which increased by 2.8% to 62%).
 - During Q3, the annual performance assessment (APA) report for Children's Services was finalised and published. Children's Services received an overall assessment of 4 with 3 out of 5 categories receiving a top score of 4 and the remaining 2 categories scores of 3. Areas for improvement have been highlighted as improving key stage 3 results and improving CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service) provision for children and young people with complex, persistent and severe behavioural and mental health needs.
 - The LPSA project to improve life chances of vulnerable young people was successfully completed with 73% of the cohort engaged in education, employment or training by the end of November 2007.

- Building Schools for the Future: A report on the public consultation and proposals for Strategy for change will be presented to Cabinet on the 11th February 2008. Legal advisors have been selected and approved with arrangement in hand for the selection of Technical and ICT advisors. Proposals to co-join programme 'waves' still under consideration by PFs. Results not expected until after Easter.

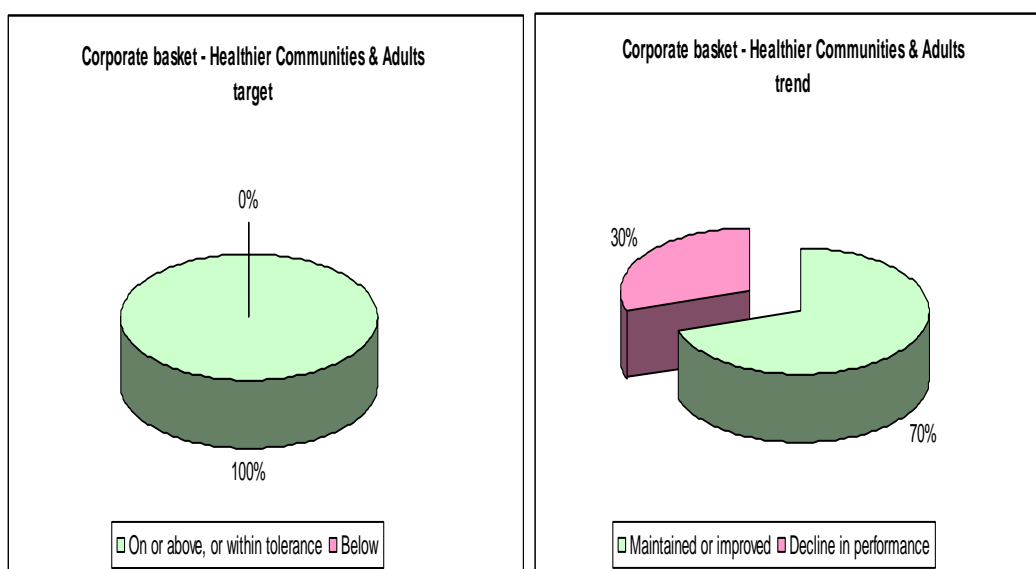
Emerging Issues

6. Emerging issues to note are:

- Two secondary schools, which were already identified as schools requiring additional support through the authority's agreed monitoring procedures, were placed in Ofsted designations following inspections during the latter part of the 2007 autumn term. The local authority's intervention plans, required as part of the post-inspection process, have been submitted and agreed by Ofsted.
- The proportion of looked after children receiving final warnings / reprimands or convictions continues to be an area of concern, with the most recent annual data showing that the proportion of such cases was 3.9 times the proportion for all children receiving final warnings / reprimands or convictions within the police force area.
- Performance regarding longer term placement stability for children in care (indicator ref CYP026) is still affected by the placement changes which arose from the Children's home closure in 2006. As a result, the ambitious target of 70% will not be achieved this year. However, 70% remains a target for 2008-09 in line with the national PSA target for 2009. The current year projection of 65% still represents significant improvement over the previous year outturn of 57.4%.
- Placements for complex needs cases are a pressure also in Children's Services, reflected in projected overspend on Agency placement and independent fostering budgets. Resourcing this type of provision is a factor in helping to maintain performance in placement stability for this vulnerable group of young people. Currently, these pressures can be managed within the overall Children's budget as a result of savings and underspends in other areas. There are potential risks to service delivery and performance arising from the increasing complexity of care needs and the unpredictability of demand on resources for high cost care packages, alongside the need to invest in development of preventative strategies and targeted services to enable more needs to be addressed through local community services in the longer term.

Healthier Communities and Adults

7. There has been good progress against the corporate basket for the Healthier Communities and Adults theme. There are 18 indicators which relate to the Healthier Communities and Adults theme, 13 of which are reported at Quarter 3. Of the 13 reported, 100% predict to achieve the target set and 70% also show a maintained or improved trend from the same Quarter last year.



Achievements

8. Of particular note in terms of achievement are:
- Integrated Services (Adults): interviews are arranged for the key Integrated Service Area Manager posts, prior to roll-out of the next stages of implementation.
 - A sustained high rate of museum visits / usage, with performance well above target because of a significant increase in Preston Hall visitors (already surpassing 2006/07 levels) and a threefold increase in the number of people attending presentations.
 - Continuing improvement in the proportion of adults and older people receiving direct payments, providing them with greater choice and control over their care arrangements.
 - During Q3, the annual performance assessment (APA) reports for Adults Services was finalised and published. This is the fifth consecutive year in which this performance rating has been sustained. The performance ratings of the Council are:

Delivering outcomes: Good
Capacity for improvement: Promising

Performance rating: 2 stars

Emerging issues

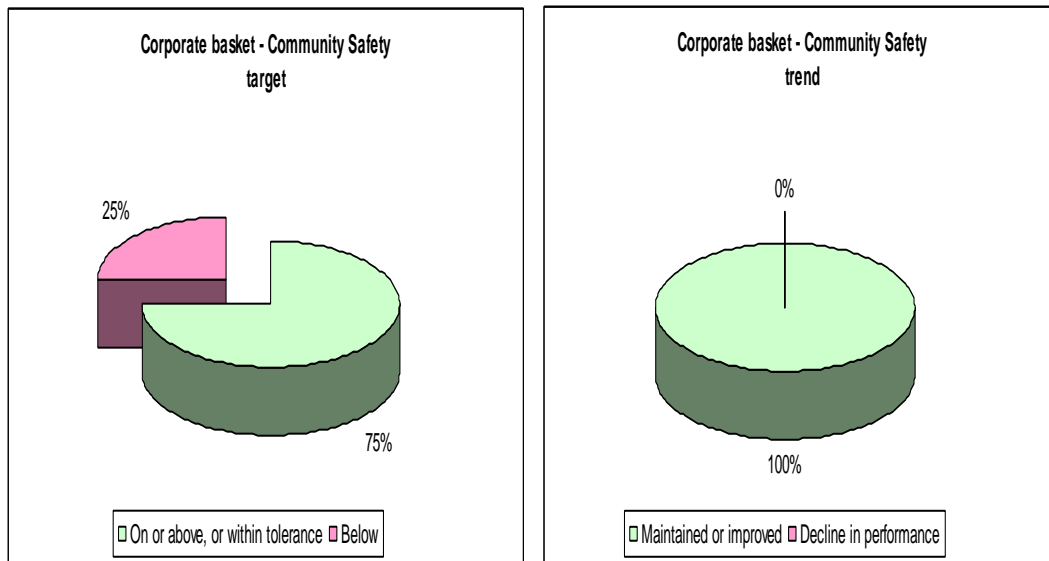
9. Emerging issues for Healthier Communities and Adults include:

- In Adult social care, the focus on supporting independent living for older people (as reflected in performance data showing reducing residential placements, and increasing proportion of adults and older people helped to live at home) continues to impact on management of resources. Increasing costs of more complex home care packages have been off-set to some extent by some underspend on residential care arising from new Continuing Health Care arrangements and criteria which have transferred some costs to the PCT. However, high cost specialist placements, out of the area, for complex needs cases continue to present an overall budget risk. Plans to commission more local, community based provision remain a service development priority.
- Improving the timeliness of assessments and provision of care packages is a key area for improvement. Current performance shows improvement on the previous year and is in line with our year end target for 2007-08; however, further improvement will be needed to achieve closer to the average performance for comparator groups. A factor impacting on our local performance is that Stockton continues to make services available across a broader range of the national FACS (Fair Access to Care Services) criteria (i.e. moderate; severe; and critical) than many other areas. This means that a wider range of needs are met than in the majority of other areas, with a corresponding greater level of referral and assessment activity for social work teams. The proportion of assessments that lead to provision of a service runs at approx 95% in Stockton; this is an issue that CSCI (the social care inspectorate) believe requires further investigation as it is significantly higher than the national average (72% in 06-07). A small project group is currently undertaking a review to evaluate the FACS arrangements in Stockton. The outcomes of this work will be reported to the appropriate management groups for further consideration and any recommendations.

Safer Communities

10. Good progress has been made against the corporate basket for the Safer Communities Theme. There are 10 indicators, 4 of which are reported at Quarter 3. Of the 4 reported, 75% predict to achieve the target set and

100% show a maintained or improved trend from the same Quarter last year.



Achievements

11. Of particular note in terms of achievement are:

- Acquisitive crimes – the number of reported acquisitive crimes in Stockton (domestic burglaries, vehicle crime and robberies) are now at the lowest ever recorded levels in Stockton, with Q3's results showing even further falls over the record low results reported in the same period last year.
- Domestic burglaries – 558 domestic burglaries have been reported in 2007-08 to date, a reduction of over 18% from the same period last year (684 reported crimes).
- Vehicle crimes – 947 vehicle crimes have been reported in 2007-08 to date, a reduction of over 27% from the same period last year (1,300 reported crimes).

Emerging issues

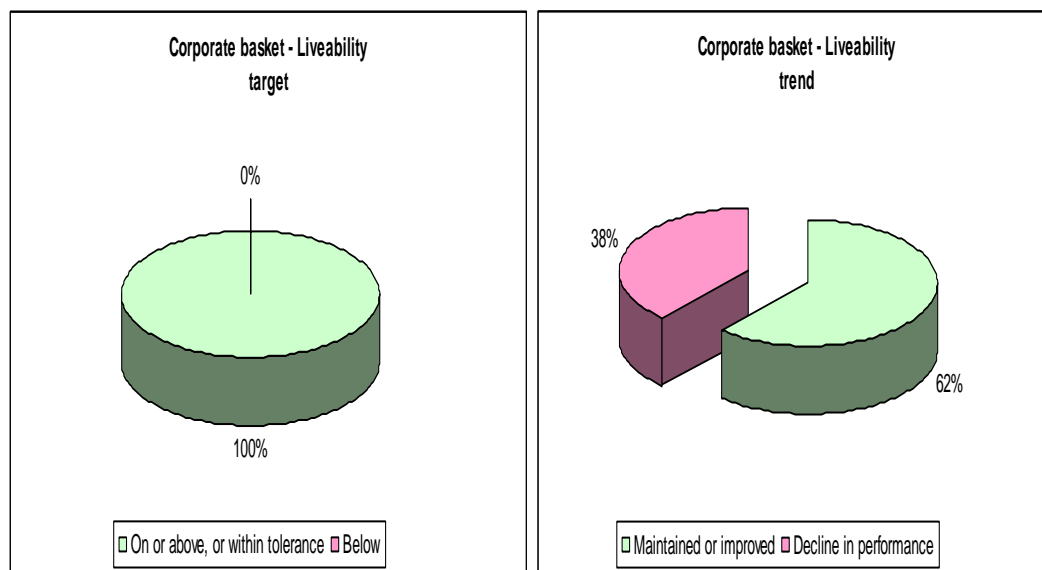
12. The main emerging issue for the Safer Communities theme is:

- Violent Crime - current performance is 15.1 violent crimes per 1,000 population, which is above the level required to achieve the annual target of 18.9. A total of 2,849 violent crimes have been reported for 2007-08 to date, a small increase over the same period last year.

Some very clear patterns of violent crime are apparent, with the Stockton Town Centre ward accounting for 25% of the incidents. There is also a very clear correlation between violent crime levels and deprivation, with the six most deprived wards in Stockton, according to the latest Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), all featuring within the top six of wards with the highest violent crime levels. This will be the focus for the next performance clinic.

Liveability

13. Continued excellent progress has been made against the measures in the Corporate Basket for the Liveability Theme. There are 22 indicators within the Corporate Basket, 15 of which are reported at Quarter 3. Of the 15 reported, 100% of measures predict to achieve the target set and 62% also show a maintained or improved trend from the same Quarter last year.



Achievements

14. Of particular note in terms of achievement are:

- Housing and Council Tax Benefits - the cumulative average time taken to process a new claim for Housing and Council Tax Benefit has reduced to 23.9 calendar days, the best result ever reported in Stockton and within the top quartile of returns to the Department of Work and Pensions (24 days in 2006/07).
There has also been a significant improvement in quality of processing claims, with 98.4% of sampled claims in 2007/08 accurately calculated. This is particularly pleasing as Stockton's results for 2005-06 and 2006-07 (95.4% and 95.8% respectively) had placed the authority in the All-England bottom quartile (below 97%).
- Care for your Area - all environmental indicators remain on schedule to achieve their annual targets, with strong performances noted for the recycling and composting of household waste (27.73%), the cleanliness of land and highways (only 2.5% of sampled areas below the acceptable standard) and the number of missed bin collections (2.34 per 100,000 collections).

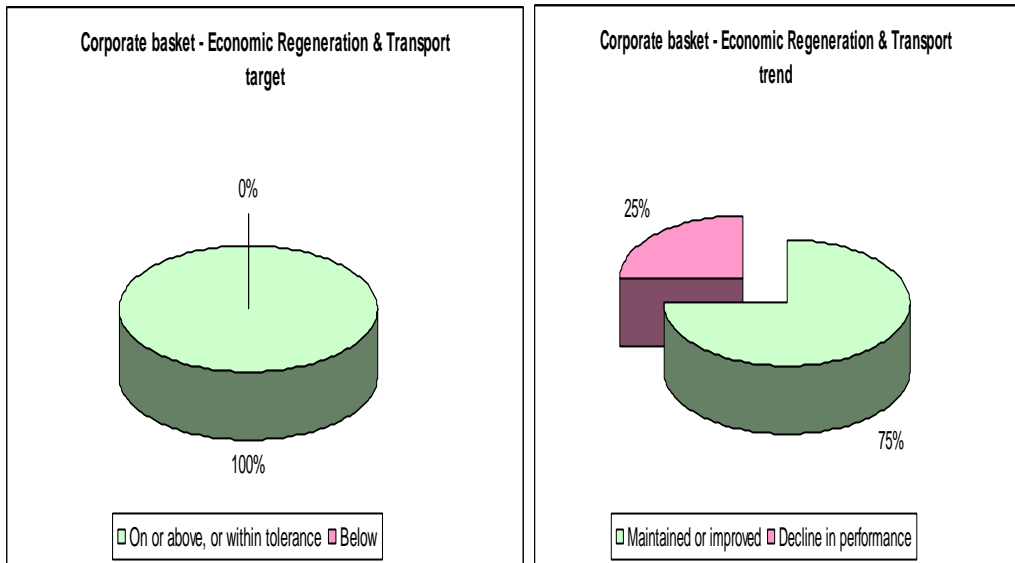
Emerging issues

15. Emerging issues within the Liveability Theme are:

- There is an estimated deficit of £85,000 within the Housing Benefit Service due to a net increase in the number of claimants.
- There has been a reduction in the risk score for Housing Regeneration Schemes since the last quarter due to reduced risk on Parkfield Development.

Economic Regeneration and Transport

16. Excellent progress has been made against the measures contributing to the Economic Regeneration and Transport theme. Within the Corporate Basket there are 8 indicators all of which are reported at Quarter 3. All indicators (100%) predict to achieve the target set and 75% also show a maintained or improved trend from the same Quarter last year.



Achievements

17. Of particular note in terms of achievements are:

- Street Lighting (ERT 005) - the average time taken to repair a street lighting fault by the non- Distribution Network Operator is 2.27 days at the end of Q3, well on schedule to achieve the 2.5 days annual target. This is less than half of the average repair time of 4.5 days reported in 2005-06.
- Planning (ERT 006/07/08) - all categories of planning applications are ahead of their individual national targets for the percentage determined within timescale, with 91.04% of major applications (60% national target) and 83.99% of minor applications (65% national target) showing particularly strong performance.

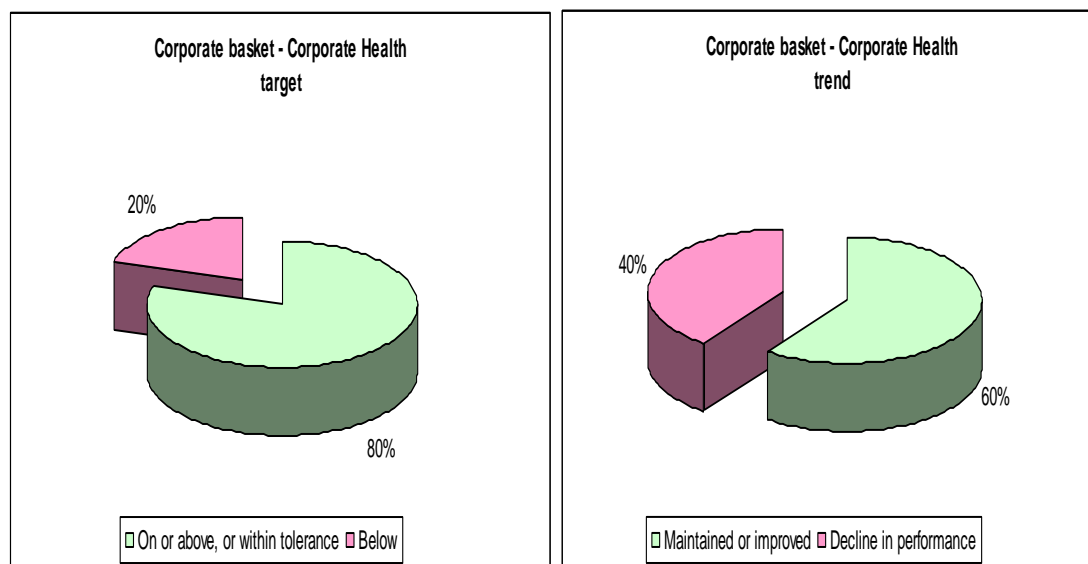
Emerging Issues

18. The potential emerging issues within this theme are:

- Planning appeals (ERT 004) Performance is slightly behind target at Q3 with performance currently at 33% (13 out of the 39 appeals upheld). We are projecting that a year end performance of 30.4% will be achieved. It is worth noting that 13 appeals equates to only 0.97% of all planning applications determined to date (13 out of 1342).
- The risk score on Town Centre re - development is assessed at being 20 at the end of December 2007, bringing this project into the High risk category, due to the uncertainties around funding of the Forum project.
- An emerging financial issue has arisen in building control (which is a ring fenced area) currently projecting a deficit of £ 54,000. This is being closely monitored and plans are in place to re-dress the situation in the next financial year.

Corporate Health

19. Progress is being made against the measures within the Corporate Basket. There are 9 indicators, 5 of which are reported at Quarter 3. Of the 5 reported 80% predict to achieve the target set and 60% show a maintained or improved trend from the same Quarter last year.



Achievements

20. Of particular note in terms of achievements are:

- Internal Performance Indicator for completion of local land charges searches has been maintained at 100% with 100% of searches completed within 5 working days.
- Conclusion of the LPSA. Following the Viewpoint Survey in November 07 the final measure regarding Healthy lifestyles has now been concluded. This means that 16 of the 20 target areas within the LPSA have achieved 60%+ of the target set.
- A refreshed Compact between the third sector and Stockton Renaissance has been agreed and launch at the January 2008 Renaissance event.
- The annual canvass for the Register of Electors improved upon last years response rate of 91% by achieving an excellent 94% response rate.
- The strategy to improve registration of electors amongst our 16 and 17 year olds was a success raising the registration figure to 73% from 57% last year.

- The Access to Services project has recruited its Customer Services team and undertaken a range of training sessions to enable the team to deal with customers questions relating to Taxation, Benefits and Care for Your Area services. Preparations are underway for the launch of a Customer Service Access Point in Ingleby Barwick on 11 January 2008 and a Customer Contact Centre in Stockton at the end of January 2008.
- Customer First stage 2 was publicised further, during National Customer Service week, through a series of road shows in October. A number of Customer First Assessors have been trained from across the larger service groups and pre-assessments commenced during December, with a programme of further assessments arranged into 2008.
- The Job Evaluation/Single status progressed significantly, with a collective agreement being reached with the Trade Unions on all evaluations and changes to conditions of service. Approximately 7,000 Employees were notified of their new grades under the revised pay and grading structure and a series of road shows were held, to communicate the changes and give employees an opportunity to raise questions and concerns.
- A report was presented to Stockton and Darlington Councils on the establishment of a Shared Services Partnership. Each authority gave approval to the new arrangements. A Shared Services Partnership Manager has been appointed and the recruitment to the approved structures has commenced.
- The Comprehensive Spending Review was announced in this quarter along with the Provisional Settlement and the MTFP reviewed.
- Official confirmation of the Use of Resources Score has been published. All 5 categories received a top score of 4, putting Stockton as 1 of 2 authorities out of 388 to receive top marks.

Emerging Issues

21. Emerging Issues within the Corporate Health Theme are:

- Performance on payment of invoices was included in the Q2 report and since then, the measures introduced to address the poor performance have had a positive impact. However it was understood that these measures would have a limited impact on overall performance in the short term. Whilst payment of invoices within 30 days did improve by approximately 20 percentage points in November and a further 8 in December, projected outturn is predicted at 66% for the year. It is anticipated that performance levels of 85% will be achieved in the next financial year.

- Sickness absence performance, although showing an improvement in comparison to 2006/7 at this quarter, is projected as not achieving the targeted half day reduction per FTE. Projected outturn is currently 11.31 days per FTE, against a target of 10.94 days.
- The consultation and engagement process is still underway with regard to the final framework for CAA and the transition period leading up to the 2009 introduction. Final details are expected before the end of the financial year.
- New National Indicator set (198 PIs) has been published with a consultation on the technical definitions ending in December 07. Final guidance expected out in Jan/ Feb 08. Work is in progress to assess the implications for the whole of the council's performance framework including the new integrated service areas for children and adults.
- The Government has initiated a new focus on Working Neighbourhoods to support local authorities and communities in their efforts to tackle worklessness and encourage enterprise. This initiative will replace Communities and Local Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and incorporates the Department for Work and Pension's Deprived Areas fund.
- A Local Assessment Framework consultation paper has been issued by CLG regarding the enhanced role of Standards Committees. Reports will be presented to MAP and the Standards Committee to determine the authority's response and to develop a local framework designed to fulfil the Committee's new duties and responsibilities

Gershon Efficiency Savings

22. The authority is expected to make efficiency savings of 2.5% annually. There are two elements within the Gershon Efficiency Savings, financial efficiency gains and performance measures that are required to maintain or improve performance levels.
23. For 2007/08 the authority put forward an overall efficiency saving of £8,288,000. The current position after Quarter 3 is a projected efficiency saving of £ 8,417,000 which is £ 129,000 greater than planned. However, these efficiency savings can only be claimed if performance measures show improved or maintained rolling direction of performance travel since the 2004/05 baseline position.

Financial Variances

24. Of the 13 categories detailed within the annual efficiency statement, 3 areas predict a cumulative excess of £192,000 and 3 areas predict a cumulative shortfall of £61,000 in savings. The main area of increased efficiency savings is due to an increase in numbers of Direct Payments.

Performance Variances

25. One of the performance measures highlights an area for concern. This is re-registrations per 10,000 on the child protection register. Performance has improved from last year but current performance is still higher than performance in the baseline year. Performance will continue to be closely monitored.

LEARNING

Consultation Activity

Consultation Activity during October to December 2007

26. A number of high profile consultation exercises took place during this period including the Building Schools for the Future and the Crime and Disorder Audit. Some key areas covered are detailed below:
- **Vibes Review**
The Library Service consulted young people in a number of ways about future provision of the service for young people. A questionnaire was promoted with young people through ARC and the Youth Prevention team. Workshop sessions were held with the Cornerhouse Youth Project and the "Says Who" Drama Group which were organised in partnership with the Partnership Development Team. A further two more workshop sessions were held with a group of young people with disabilities at Bishopgarth School, again in partnership with Children & Young Peoples Strategy Team and the final session in partnership with Youth Viewpoint Focus Group.
Stockton Borough Libraries are currently undergoing a Review process. All comments received are in the process of being analysed to determine some short term and long term improvements.
 - **Are you Being Served Event**
The annual CESC adults event was held in September co-ordinated by the Adult Strategy team with representatives from all Council Services present to offer support and advice to older people to find out if we are serving them well.
The event was a success and over 250 people attended, the feedback from the event is currently being analysed and will be included in the spring newsletter.
 - **Extended Schools-BSF**
A borough wide survey and public meetings were held to consult on the future provision of secondary schools within the Borough. Over 4000 surveys were returned and the feedback from these along with

guidance from government agencies, including the Office of the Schools Commissioner will be used to draft a 'Strategy for Change'. The final strategy is scheduled to be developed for June or July of 2008 when further consultation will be conducted.

- A booklet and survey was issued to every household in the Borough as part of the Crime and Disorder Survey. 4021 responses were received. The top two priorities for adults were Anti Social Behaviour and drugs and for the under 16s drugs then Anti Social Behaviour. The results of this exercise will determine the key objectives for the next three years of the Community Safety Plan which will be published in April 2008.

- **Climate Change Action Plan**
Market research on the Climate Change Action Plan took place at events, including the Tell us what you think event for people from BME communities and a total of 92 questionnaires were completed. Questions covered people's views on climate change and what would encourage them to change their lifestyles. Analysis is pending.

- **Local Democracy Week**
An interactive, fun survey was used to promote Local Democracy Week, of which 61 people took part, as well as an open day at the Town Hall, voter registration and an opportunity to attend and ask questions at meetings of the Council and its committees. Feedback was given to participants at the time of doing the survey. The main finding was that people didn't realise that they have to register every year. Democratic services will ensure that more publicity is held around this fact.

- **Viewpoint 22**
The 22nd questionnaire to the Adult panel went out just prior to Christmas. Topics included, Building Schools for the Future, How we spend our money, Trees, LPSA measure on Health and Exercise amongst other issues. The Youth survey covered; River Tees Consultation, Building Schools for the Future and how we spend our money.

Update from Quarter Two:

27. Consultation is a key contributor to all scrutiny reviews. The results of the Cardboard and Plastics recycling trial are being fed into the Scrutiny Review of Waste. A report is going to the Environment Select Committee in March 2008 to consider general waste issues including whether or not the scheme should go ahead. Other considerations include the carbon footprint of more vehicles on the road collecting the recycling.

Complaints and Commendations

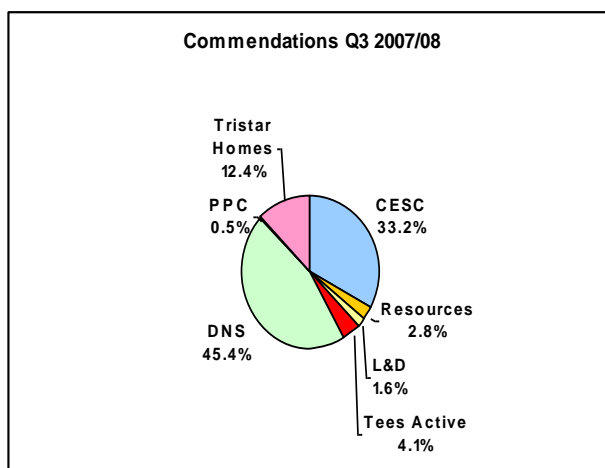
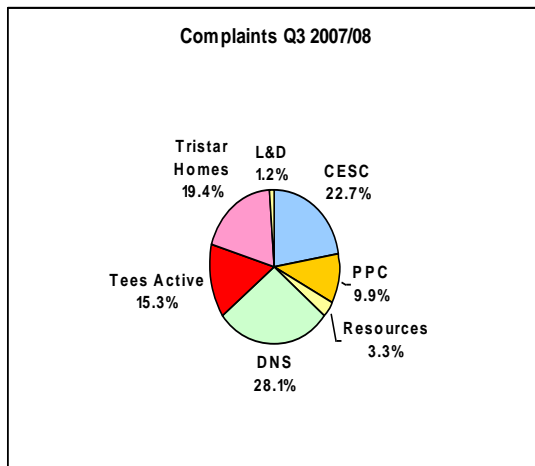
Complaints

28. In total the Council received 242 complaints in Quarter 3, this compares to 205 complaints received in the same quarter last year. The number of complaints received for the first nine months of 2007/8 is 643. This compares to 599 for the same period last year. Of the 242 complaints, 6 are at Stage 3 and of the Stage 1 and 2 complaints 86% (203) were responded to within timescales, an improvement over quarter 2, where 80% of the Stage 1 and 2 complaints were responded to within timescales.

Commendations

29. A total of 434 commendations were received in Quarter 3, this compares to 452 commendations in the same quarter last year.

30. The pie charts below show a breakdown of complaints and commendations by service group.



31. New procedures have been introduced recently through Customer Services to collect information about the age, gender, disability, ethnicity and faith of those who make complaints. Further analysis of this data is required to provide services with quality information to inform any future

service improvements. As part of ongoing development in this area, further training and awareness sessions are being provided to complaints officers.

32. This report highlights some of the main messages from the analysis.

- The main trend from Quarters 1 to 3 identifies that on average almost 75% of the complaints are in relation to the 3 service areas Children, Education, and Social Care (CESC), Development and Neighbourhood Services (DANS) and Tristar (Housing). Each receiving approximately a quarter of the total complaints
- Of the total commendations almost 79% are received for 2 service areas CESC and DANS, approximately 45% of these are compliments for DANS.
- Of the 14% of complaints which are not responded to on time the main areas are DANS and CESC with an approximate failure to respond rate of 20% and 26% respectively. Most of those within CESC are in Health and Social Care.
- Within CESC the majority of the complaints are within the children and young people service and the majority of the compliments are within adults services
- Within DANS the complaints are evenly spread across Direct Services, Community Protection and Housing and the commendations are within the Direct Services area (e.g. street cleansing, refuse, highways).
- For Tristar the main areas of complaints are repairs procedure, modernisation works not delivered on time and some in relation to staff approach. Commendations are thanks to teams and to individuals.

Examples of Good Practice

- Three of the four Council Children's Homes have received 'outstanding' judgements for overall quality following Ofsted unannounced inspections during the Q3 period. Amongst many features of good practice highlighted were:
- Young people's health needs are assessed, planned for, monitored and met. Health is actively supported and promoted by providing educative material in the home (Rochester Road).
- Socially acceptable behaviour is encouraged through a system designed for children with disabilities that enables their understanding (Hartburn Lodge).
- Consultation takes pace with young people, parents and placing social workers on all aspects of the running of the home and the care provided (Routledge Road).
- A best practice model for commissioning adult social care provision has been adopted, with support from CSIP (the Care Services

Improvement Partnership). The 'Fair Price' tool is being used to enable a more effective identification of service user care needs and matching these with the recommended type of provision so that needs can be addressed in the most appropriate way and in the most cost effective manner.

- The Council's Learning & Development Strategy for Members has now been independently assessed by the North East Improvement Partnership as having met the requirements to be awarded Charter Status. Particular recognition was made of the high take up of Personal Support Plan Sessions by elected members to discuss their own personal support requirements; with 52 of the 56 elected members having now completed sessions. Taxation have achieved another successful inspection outcome, in respect of Charter Mark. Particular positive references were made to the Customer First Programme, Consultation Plan and quality of team meetings, in addition to feedback mechanisms for customers. In addition, several areas of best practice were cited in relation the handling complaints and commendations, both formal and informal.
- We continue to be well placed in the 'Sitemorse' league tables which give authorities a comparative, nationally recognised rating for accessibility and usability of their websites. Over the last six months our mean position has been 6th in the league tables with a peak at 2nd. This excellent placing is all the more remarkable as it has been achieved with a comparatively small Web team and with a fully devolved content management system.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

LEGAL

N/A

RISK ASSESSMENT

33. The Quarterly Monitoring Report of the Corporate Basket is categorised as low risk. Existing management systems and routine performance management arrangements are in place to control and reduce risk on performance.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

34. The performance data detailed within this report is set out under each of the five

priority improvement themes details In the Community Strategy and the Council Plan, demonstrating how progress is being made towards the achievement of each theme.

- Safer Communities
- Healthier Communities and Adults
- Economic Regeneration and Transport
- Children and Young People
- Liveability

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

35. This report is for information only. Consultation is not necessary.

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