

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **13th April 2021**

Title: **Performance Management Report**

Portfolio Area: **Performance**
Portfolio holder: Cllr Chris Edmonds
Customer First
Portfolio holder: Cllr Jeffrey Moody

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **N**

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the performance figures shown in the Pentana report.**
- 2. That Members review the information provided in the dashboards and provide feedback to the portfolio holder on any additional measures required to scrutinise performance.**

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide a high level overview of performance across the Council. Reporting has not taken place over the previous twelve months due to increased workload due to the pandemic and staff resources have been redeployed to deal with fluctuating demands, in particular the business grants.
- 1.2** Performance measures are monitored throughout the year to spot trends or issues of concern.
- 1.3** Data will still be collected in Pentana (the Council's performance tool) for the time being, but as the FIT project progresses more data and more timely data will be available through live dashboards. Performance reporting at a high

level will transition into deep dive reports on specific services areas across the Council to enable Members to understand issues in more detail.

- 1.4 Despite substantial changes over the last year in how we have been delivering services, responding to customers, and managing staff resources, performance has been at least maintained in most areas and many have slightly improved compared to performance before lockdown.
- 1.5 The Contact Centre is one area where performance has dipped and there are other areas that we expect will experience issues in the coming months. This is due to increased demand, or lower priority work that has been postponed during the Pandemic which is now required to be completed.
- 1.6 Ongoing changes and improvements as part of the FIT project will deliver access to live information and reports that can be interrogated in order to understand what is happening both across a service area and multiple service areas. This will benefit managers as well as Members.

2. Background

- 1.1 The reporting of performance has varied over the years with changing systems and requirements on what should be reported. All previous performance reports have looked at the information in one way, often in isolation, and cannot tell the whole story. The measures detailed in the dashboard in Appendix A (using the current performance software Pentana), show the performance measures recorded consistently across the Council for a number of years which show broad levels of performance. All the data is captured in other systems and inputted into Pentana.
- 1.2 Performance is regularly monitored across the Council by the Business Development team and managers and for the whole of the Covid-19 crisis the performance of the Council has been maintained at a very high level. There have been many challenges during the crisis not limited to; responding to customers, managing staff, and significant new and unplanned for additional work. Despite that, services across the Council have responded flexibly to maintain delivery of a high level of service to the customer whilst still continuing on an ambitious program of IT improvements and implementation.
- 1.3 Alongside the obvious challenges during Covid-19 the Council has been responsible for delivering a number of Grant schemes to support local businesses. Over the last 10 months we have created over a dozen schemes and received and processed over 8000 grants, on which Members have been updated regularly. This has been achieved mainly by dynamic prioritisation of resources to provide support where it was needed to respond to each stage of the crisis. Whilst this prioritisation achieved its goal of maintaining service levels during the crisis, it has moved a large amount of less time-dependent work into the coming months and year. This will still require active and intelligent management to balance the capacity against the demands.

2 Outcomes/ outputs

Appendix A contains screen shots of Pentana dashboards showing monthly or quarterly performance levels over previous years.

- 2.1 Broadly speaking, performance is currently at the same level or slightly improved compared to previous years but there are a few points for consideration.
- 2.2 Contact centre performance has been struggling for around 6 months for a number of reasons:

- 2.2.1 Large increase in new and complex calls in response to the new business grant schemes.
- 2.2.2 Many of the experienced Contact centre team have been redeployed into areas of the Council that have received high demand as a result of the Pandemic. As a result recruiting and training replacement staff has been challenging due to the remote ways of working. In turn this has reduced the level of experience and knowledge in the Contact Centre Team and has resulted in increased call durations and subsequently increased call waiting times which tends to increase call times.
- 2.2.3 These factors all combined to increase call and wrap up length in the second half of the year from around 9 minutes to around 12 minutes, an increase of around 25%. The team has very little spare capacity and these huge changes are only partially offset by the continuing success in channel shift.
- 2.2.4 Increased on line contact removes the more straightforward calls and increases the relative percentage of complex calls.
- 2.3 Sickness across the Council has reduced throughout 2020. A 2019 peak was due to above average long-term sickness which has now been managed down to lower levels. The current average per full time equivalent (fte) posts is just above 1 compared to a public sector average of 2.5 days per fte per quarter.
- 2.4 Web transactions have continued to increase in parallel with a drop in phone calls. Due to the nature of a web transactions as opposed to a phone call that can cover more than one issue, web transactions rise at a faster rate than the corresponding drop in phone calls. The increase in web transactions has been as a result of improved processes as well as new types of processes going online.
- 2.5 Planning workload and processing speed has been maintained over the year. Over the last three months there has been an almost 50% increase in the number of applications registered above the long-term average, and will likely result in an increase in the time taken to process applications in the coming months. This will be compounded by the introduction of a new planning IT system which will involve significant training and system familiarity. The introduction of a new IT system will always have a one-off short-term negative effect on performance and, whilst all efforts will be made to reduce this, this fall in performance is likely to appear in the 2021 Q1 & Q2 results.

3 Options available and consideration of risk – future recommendations;

- 3.1 As more processes are moved into our new customer facing software (Liberty Create) and back office software (Northgate Assure) will both have the functionality to display easy-to-access dashboards with live data. For each process, or group of processes, live performance can be displayed with the ability for the data to be investigated. For example, with the new system it is possible to look at complaints within one service as opposed to the whole council, or drill down into results over 3 successive months rather than quarters.
- 3.2 The current proposal is to create a Member portal within the new system at the same time we create and go live with a customer portal, which will have live performance data linked to it automatically. This will be timed to coincide with other new services and tools for customers and (depending on workload) the coordination of other areas is being planned for the second half of the year.
- 3.3 Pending the new IT system, all data in Pentana is still available for Members to view but Members need to bear in mind that, due to the data being manually entered, there is always a delay between the capture of the

information and the timing of the update. There has historically been limited appetite and usage but access and training can be provided should Members require a refresher.

- 3.4** Due to the increase in data being available via the dashboards and portals the approach to performance reporting will change over the coming months. In discussion with Cllr Edmonds and SLT, performance reporting will refocus on providing deep dive reports on either specific service areas or linked to the Corporate Strategy. This will provide access to data for those that want it as well as the context to scrutinise whole areas.

6 Implications

Implications	Relevant proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for both an overview of performance and for scrutinising how the Council is performing as an organisation.
Financial	N	There are no direct financial implications to this report
Risk	N	
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	N	
Safeguarding	N	
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	
Other implications	N	

Supporting Information

Appendices:

Appendix A – Screenshots of latest data from Pentana