



Buckinghamshire County Council

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Adult Services

Title: Performance Monitoring 2005-2006

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Contact Officer: Clare Capjon, Policy Officer, 01296 387969

Relevant Portfolios: Adult Social Care, Community

Background Documents: Corporate Plan 2005- 2009,
14 November 2005 Cabinet Reports on Corporate
Performance and Budget Monitoring

Summary

This report proposes that the Committee adopt a suite of performance indicators, which covers the Council's priorities and enables members to consider in more detail issues of local concern. In line with the work programme agreed by members in November the full Committee will consider these indicators on a quarterly basis. This timescale mirrors the production of reports to Cabinet covering corporate performance and budget monitoring. The Committee's role is to selectively monitor performance and to ask the executive and senior management to account for persistent poor performance. Where corrective action – including an increase in resources – does not raise performance then the Committee may wish to scrutinise this and make recommendations to Cabinet.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to consider, amend as appropriate and adopt the suite of performance indicators at Appendix 1 in the light of the factors discussed in the report.

Background information

- 1 The Committee agreed its work programme in November. A central part of the Committee's work is to monitor the performance of the Council. This role is distinct from but complementary to the performance management responsibilities of Cabinet and Cabinet Members, which they undertake with their Planning Advisory Group (PAG).
- 2 The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) in its Guide for 2005 Councillors comments that scrutiny makes a difference because it has a role in assessing the performance and delivery of public services from the perspective of

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customers to ensure that services are responsive to their needs. The Guide goes onto to comment that:

“It (scrutiny) is what representation really means – to hold the executive to account for decisions taken on behalf of the public and in the public interest. “

3. As with other aspects of the Committee's work the primary focus is not on generating new Council work but on the impact of decisions that the Cabinet and partner organisations, have on our community. The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's priorities and the resources allocated to achieve them and so should be the Committee's starting point for monitoring performance.

The Corporate Plan

4. Where possible, reviews undertaken by the Committee or Working Groups will be informed by the achievement of outcomes against measures set out in Chapter 4 of the Corporate Plan. All the targets within the remit of the Committee are set out in *Appendix 1*. The other plan objectives and targets have been assigned to either the Community and Environment or Children's O&S Committee.
5. It is the Cabinet Member's responsibility to performance manage the delivery of their objectives set out in the Corporate Plan. Working with their PAG and officers they will be taking action to continuously improve services and achieve their targets. Where performance is below that expected then the Cabinet Member will direct officers to take corrective action. This includes moving resources within the service from over performing to poorer performing areas. When action does not rectify problems then Cabinet may consider this as part of the quarterly Corporate Performance report.
6. With the limited time available to Committee it is not feasible for members to look in detail at how each of the Portfolios is performance managed. Instead the Committee's role is to have an overview of performance in priority areas including cross-cutting work and then to scrutinise in more detail services or programmes that have continued poor performance. Members can then make recommendations to the Cabinet or Cabinet Member on corrective action to bring performance back on track. This is the Committee's performance monitoring role.
7. If we look at the traffic light column in *Appendix 1* it can be seen that poor performance was not the issue in the latest quarterly report to Cabinet. Instead the issue at that time was the failure to identify measures for 3 of the 16 plan objectives. For example, there is no measure agreed to assess the success of the Council in supporting parents in later life (Corporate Plan Aim 5c). In addition, a further target had no information with which to assess on going performance because data is measured only on an annual basis.

Use of Resources

8. The Corporate Plan also identifies in Chapter 6, Services or Areas for Investment and Protection in the next three years (the medium term plan).. Where the decision to invest or protect in a service or area will direct resources to the achievement of one of the 16 objectives then this is shown in the MTP* column in the table at *Appendix 1*. From the table it can be seen that there are four of these areas of direct relevance to the Adult Services Committee. By definition other services or areas not identified for investment or protection are of lower priority.
9. Guidance in the IDeA Councillors Guide suggests that the resource overview role of scrutiny is to check that the agreed priorities of the Council are aligned with the Council's budget. In performance monitoring terms the Committee's role is to:
 - a. Have an overview of how resources have been allocated to achieve priorities.
 - b. To scrutinise priority areas where resources appear not to have been effectively used to improve areas or services that are under performing.
 - c. To comment upon areas or services which have significant under or over spends particularly where this also relates to under performance against targets.
10. Cabinet receives a Financial Monitoring report at the same meeting as the quarterly Corporate Performance report. It is the information in that report which will enable the Committee to assess whether resources are being effectively used to achieve the targets in the Corporate Plan.

Inspections

11. The performance of services in the Committee's remit will also be the subject of inspections by the Audit Commission. The results of inspections and in particular any less than favourable comments about the Council's achievement of specific performance levels should guide members on which officers or Cabinet Members the Committee would wish to invite to set out what action they are taking to improve performance.

Other Strategic Plans

12. The Committee also has a role in monitoring performance of the Council and its partners in achieving shared priorities. The targets for these objectives will be set out in second Public Service Agreement and the prospective Local Area Agreement. The Committee may wish to consider performance against these objectives at future meetings.

Committee Priority Issues and Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)

13. In addition to targets and measures in the Corporate Plan, there are many performance indicators which services are required to report on nationally. For example for Adult Social Care there are over 30 performance indicators, of which 7 are best value indicators. The BVPIs are not being presented to Cabinet in the quarterly report and as time is limited, it is proposed that the Committee look at these indicators as appropriate during specific reviews. If Members become aware

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that a particular target and its objective are not being achieved and this is having a significant detrimental impact on services to adults, then this can be considered as a new review topic.

Detailed scrutiny of performance

14. Quarterly monitoring of portfolio and service performance is likely to flag up areas where performance is unacceptable and shows no prospect of improving. In order for the Committee to present fully considered findings and recommendations to Cabinet more detailed work on assessing the reasons for poor performance will need to be undertaken. It is for members to decide whether this should be undertaken by the full Committee - and to revise the work programme to accommodate this work – or whether to assign this work to a smaller Working Group of the Committee.

Questions and Views Sought

15. The view of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Adult Services is sought on whether the above proposals and the attached appendices identify an acceptable approach to performance monitoring.