

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**22 JANUARY 2008**

**NOVEMBER (PERIOD 8) PERFORMANCE REPORTING**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr Roger Hollingworth
Responsible Head of Service	Hugh Bennett, Assistant Chief Executive

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To report to The Board on the Council's performance at 30 November 2007 (period 8).

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That The Board notes that 78% of indicators are improving or stable at the period end, compared to 56% in period 7.
- 2.2 That The Board notes that 81% of indicators are achieving their targets at the period end, compared to 71% in period 7.
- 2.3 That The Board notes and celebrates the successes as outlined in section 3.5.
- 2.4 That The Board notes the potential areas for concern set out in section 3.6, considers the corrective action being taken and makes recommendations to Cabinet as is deemed appropriate.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The summary of performance is shown at **Appendix 1**. The full list of performance indicators due to be reported monthly is set out in **Appendix 2** where:-

	<b>On Target</b>
	<b>Less than 10% from target</b>
	<b>More than 10% from target</b>
	<b>No target set</b>

<b>I</b>	<b>Performance is Improving</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>Performance is Stable</b>
<b>W</b>	<b>Performance is Worsening</b>
<b>N/a</b>	<b>No target set</b>

- 3.3 From the summary of performance it can be seen that 78% of PI's have improving or stable performance in November, back up to a similar level as September, following a dip in October. Five PI's (all in Streetscene & Waste Management) have Improved estimated outturn projections, but two PI's have a worsening estimated outturn ( % of press articles which enhance our reputation and sickness absence). Seven PI's are projected to miss target, the same as in October.

3.4 Seven of the PI's have continued to improve in November having already improved in October. In addition eight PI's have moved from a worsening position to an improving position.

3.5 Examples of considerable or continued improvement over the period include:-

- BV109 a, b and c – very high levels of performance continue to be achieved for the seventh month in succession.
- BV8 – Invoices paid on time – 99.87% of invoices paid on time in November.
- BV78a - Average days to process new Housing Benefit claims – performance improved slightly in November, performance in the month was considerably better than target for the 5<sup>th</sup> month running.
- Call centre performance has seen significant improvement in the resolution at first point of contact, up from 86.4% to 95% in November (target is 85%).
- Continued 100% performance levels for removal of abandoned vehicles, animal debris and fly tips.
- Reduced number of missed waste collections

3.6 There are two indicators which are of potential concern as follows :-

- BV12 Sickness absence – There was a slight increase in sickness in November, following the significant increase in October. It is now highly unlikely that the target will be met, the projected outturn based on average performance to date is projected at 9.27 days per employee (target is 9 days), however if sickness absence remains at the high levels experienced in October and November then the outturn is likely to be nearer to 10 days. Implementation of Job Evaluation the measures to balance the budget are likely to put pressure on sickness absence figures. Nonetheless it is anticipated that performance will be better than last year. The detail breakdown of sickness figures is shown at Appendix 4 of this report. A performance clinic was held on the sickness figures and looked at SSWM, Finance and overall sickness policy. Short term absence in SSWM remains a problem and the view of both the Head of Service and unions is that some staff are abusing the system. The Head of Service would like to introduce spot checks on staff suspected of abusing the system – those present at the clinic supported this approach. The Finance Department's sickness issues were looked at on a case by case basis. The nature of the cases were serious and genuine and no further action was considered appropriate beyond supporting those staff concerned. In terms of the overall sickness policy, the current policy is relatively new and is having an impact. Sickness levels are expected to miss the corporate target of 9 days; however, the predicted outturn is 9.27 days per FTE, which is much better than the 10.66 days per FTE for 2006/07. The local government average is 8.5 days and the private sector 7.2 days. The officer group at the clinic felt the best course of action was to maintain the pressure for improvement through the current application of the policy along with the proposed spot checks and the requirement of doctor's sick notes for all persistent offenders.

- Sickness absence was also discussed at the Performance Management Board. The Board requested that CMT consider some form of incentive system for reducing sickness absence. The main one proposed was a scheme that would make a payment to staff for zero sickness up to 5 days. This would probably have a positive impact. There are two issues to consider. Morally, should we pay people more to simply come to work? We are talking about taxpayer's money and this is likely to be a media sensitive issue. The Council could consider more negative incentives e.g. not paying people for short term sickness (some councils have done this and some private sector firms also operate this approach) or we could reduce the length of long term sickness paid until the average level of sickness reduces to a particular target level (this is not recommended, but has been used in an authority in the West Midlands). Another approach would be to introduce a stronger set of support mechanisms for staff e.g. recommended health insurance, better information on counselling e.g. debt counselling, diet etc. CMT considered this at their meeting of 8 January 2008 and determined that they do not support incentivisation schemes for this purpose.
- The percentage of press articles which enhance our reputation fell again for the 3<sup>rd</sup> month in succession. This is partly due to unavoidable negative stories from the council e.g. job losses and cessation of green waste collection and subsequent letters to the media.

3.7 October's report identified the indicators in 3.6 as an issue for referral to the performance clinics along with violent crime/robberies and usage of the Dolphin Centre. Both were referred to performance clinics. In the latter case, the closure of part of the Dolphin Centre for refurbishment is bound to impact further on the usage figures and no clinic was held on this basis. For violent crimes and robberies, the Assistant Chief Executive and the Acting Head of Culture and Communities met with Chief Inspector Tony Love. The following points were identified:-

- The number of violent crimes in the District is comparatively low and there were only 3 recorded violent crimes in the town centre over the Christmas period with the changes to the provision of taxis after closing time proving very successful.
- The definition of what is a violent crime is very wide and includes verbal abuse (for example an abusive phone call), a dog bite, children fighting, through to serious assault and domestic violence. The Police estimate that for every 100 "violent" crimes (what we are averaging every month) approximately 15 are of a more serious nature (including all domestic violence).
- Improvements to domestic violence reporting mean that the number of such incidents are increasing. The Police treat every instance of domestic violence very seriously, on the basis that a phone call is probably the first call after 15 previous incidents. Currently the Police make an arrest in 89% of cases.
- The detection rates for violent crimes is high (55%) compared to the

target of 32%. 85% of racial hate crimes are detected i.e. someone is charged.

- On the basis of this information, no further action is recommended.

The performance clinic also looked at robberies. The actual numbers are very low (between 5 and 8 a month against a target of 3). The target is based on last year's very good outturn and is thought to be too low by both the Police and Culture and Communities staff. Again, the definition is very wide and only a small proportion of the small number of robberies are serious in nature. No further action is recommended.

The clinic also took the opportunity to look at anti-social behaviour and criminal damage. These are the main issues that come up at PACT meetings and help drive a perception of high crime when the District is generally a very safe place to live and work. That said, the issues are real and frustrating to individuals in our community e.g. loud music, boy racing, car scratching, breaking of wing mirrors etc:-

- The clinic identified that the media helps drive a fear of crime and the CDRP are running a communications campaign to provide people with the facts. A suggestion from the clinic is to invite members of the media to the CDRP tasking meetings. This was supported by all present.
- Another suggestion is to investigate the ability for our Neighbourhood Wardens and other Council staff to issue fixed penalty notices or other forms of sanction. In the example given, if someone playing loud and anti-social music is given a warning in the first instance, on the second occasion their car can be impounded. Giving our staff the power to take such action would also enable the Police's Community Support Officers to use the same process. The approach would appear to have the ability to dramatically increase our ability to clamp down on anti-social behaviour. The clinic identified that legal and administrative capacity to support this work would be a problem. This may have to come forward as a budget bid for 2009/2010, but it was agreed that this approach be explored further to determine the costs and benefits of the approach. The Community Safety manager will produce a report on this.
- Visible presence was also identified as a key factor in reducing crime. The Chief Inspector asked whether the Council could look at this under any future proposals for decriminalised parking enforcement, but also existing inspection/enforcement activity. This will be considered once the report referred to in the previous paragraph is completed.

Finally, the CDRP should be commended for the reduction in BCS Comparator crime, with crime levels predicted to be down in the District by 32% over the last 3 years (period ending 31 March 2008), compared to the target of 17.5%.

3.8 Following a recommendation from a recent review of the Data Quality Strategy by Internal Audit this report will now include a regular section to report on data quality issues.

- Six Data Quality Awareness courses were run in November; all those involved in the gathering of data and/or calculation of performance figures were due to attend. A small number of those people did not attend, for a variety of reasons, these will be booked onto a future occurrence of the course.
- Data quality checks were applied to the source data calculations for BV109 a, b and c (Planning applications), all of which were found to be satisfactory.
- There continues to be some errors in reporting of performance in Departmental submissions as follows :-
  - Planning & Environment – 4 errors in reporting
  - E-Government & Customer Services – 4 errors in reporting.
  - Finance – 1 error in reporting.

These errors were in the coding of the target/trend information – i.e. incorrect traffic lighting and/or incorrect reporting as to whether performance is improving, stable or declining or simply transposition of numbers. There were no indications that the underlying performance figures were incorrect. The relevant Departmental Performance Champions have been notified and advised.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no financial implications

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no legal implications.

#### **6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

6.1 Performance reporting & management links to the Improvement objective

#### **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

7.1 The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:

- Data quality problems
- Poor performance

7.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

- Implementation of the Data Quality Strategy
- Robust follow up on performance issues, including performance clinics

#### **8 CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Performance Improvement is a Council Objective

**9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no implications for the Council's Equalities and Diversity Policies.

**10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 ▪ There are no VFM implications

**11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Procurement Issues None
Personnel Issues None
Governance/Performance Management – Production of the performance report supports the aim of improving performance & performance management
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act 1988 None
Policy None
Environmental None

**12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Please include the following table and indicate 'Yes' or 'No' as appropriate. Delete the words in italics.

Portfolio Holder	Yes(At Leader's Group)
Chief Executive	Yes (at CMT)
Executive Director (Partnerships & Projects)	Yes (at CMT)
Executive Director (Services)	Yes (at CMT)
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	Yes (at CMT)
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes (at CMT)
Head of Organisational Development & HR	Yes (at CMT)
Corporate Procurement Team	Yes (at CMT)

**13. WARDS AFFECTED**

All Wards'.

**14. APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1 Performance Summary for November 2007
- Appendix 2 Detail Performance report for November 2007
- Appendix 3 Detailed figures to support the performance report
- Appendix 4 Detail breakdown of sickness figures

**15. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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