

Report to: Scrutiny Committee for Audit and Best Value
Date: 22 March 2007
Report by: Director of Policy and Communications
Title: Council Plan 2006/07 Monitoring Report – 3rd Quarter.
Purpose: To provide an update on performance against the Council Plan for the 3rd quarter of 2006/07.

RECOMMENDATION: The committee is recommended to note and comment on:

- ♦ appendix 1 including recommendations proposed for amber performance measures;
 - ♦ the selection of successes and achievements; and
 - ♦ the Peer Review action plan update (appendix 2).
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1. Financial Implications

1.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

2. Performance overview

2.1 For corporate resources and strategic management and economic development Council Plan indicators at the end of quarter three:

- 55 out of 60 performance measures are either on track to achieve or exceed their target
- Of the remaining five, two measures have not achieved their target and are scored red
- There are three amber performance measures.

2.2 Details of the performance measures newly reported red and amber are at appendix 1.

3. Successes and Achievements

3.1 The Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee will wish to note a selection of some of the successes made during this quarter:

Whole Cabinet:

- East Sussex County Council has been shortlisted for a Local Government Chronicle (LGC) award for Reconciling Policy and Resources.

Corporate Resources and Strategic Management & Economic Development:

- The consultation toolkit and advice for staff has been launched to enable improved consultation practice with residents and service users.
- East Sussex is a runner-up in two categories of the *National Personnel Today* awards – Graduate Recruitment and Employee Well Being.
- A score of three out of four for *use of resources* has been confirmed including an overall three out of four for *internal control* and an individual score of four for the key line of enquiry covering risk management.
- The Council has been shortlisted for an LGC award for its work on carbon management.

- Achieved *Investors in People* re-accreditation.
- Runners up in two categories of the Institute of *IT Trainers* awards and also in the county council category of the *Young Local Authority Team of the Year* (4th and 6th place overall out of 44 teams).
- Launched the e-induction programme for new staff.
- Achieved a further decrease of 6.4% in sickness absence over the same period last year, in line with the target and continuing the downward trend.
- Successfully rolled out a more robust pre employment checking regime for schools across the authority, strengthening the safeguarding provision for our children and equipping schools for the revised Ofsted inspection criteria.

4. Peer Review

- 4.1 The action plan arising from the peer review agreed in December 2006 has now been updated (appendix 2).

BECKY SHAW
Director of Policy and Communications

Contact Officer: Tracey Houston, Performance Manager (x 1932)

Local Member: All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

COUNCIL PLAN QUARTER 3 MONITORING: EXCEPTION REPORT

		KEY TO QUARTERLY RAG SCORES:	PERFORMANCE MEASURE HAS FAILED TO MEET 2006/07 TARGET	R	
			PERFORMANCE MEASURE NOT ON TRACK TO MEET 2006/07 TARGET	A	
Key objective	Key Service Target	Performance measure	Q3 Commentary	Q2 RAG	Q3 RAG
CORPORATE RESOURCES PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT					
1.Maintain and improve the high standards of policy and finance	1.1 Achieve excellence in financial and resource management across East Sussex County Council	1.1c Increase the proportion of invoices paid promptly by the Council (BV 8)	Performance to date is 93.09%, which is still a significant improvement on the outturn for this time last year of 87.12%. However, the target of 95% will not be achieved, as in order to achieve 94.75%, 100% of invoices would have to be paid promptly from now until the end of the year. Recommendation: continue to monitor but note will not be achieved by year end.	A	R
2. Maximise the efficiency of the property portfolio on behalf of the Council	2.2 Ensure effective county-wide capital planning and delivery of capital projects	2.2a Increase the percentage of capital building projects completed within +/- 5% of the agreed timetable	Data is incoming all the time as projects draw to a close and therefore the final result will not be available until the end of year, but work continues to progress this target. Recommendation: no further action necessary.	G	A
STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
2. Create sustainable communities by providing strategic leadership, empowering people and delivering locally	2.1 Create sustainable communities by providing strategic leadership, empowering people and delivering locally	2.1e Ensure that the Council complies with national guidance for all Best Value Performance Indicators at the national audit	Our published PI results are subject to an external audit during the summer to check our systems for data quality. The systems check categorised the Council as low risk and eight performance indicators were audited in depth. Seven of the eight indicators selected have been judged as 'fairly stated' and have successfully passed the audit. BV165, pedestrian crossings with disabled facilities, has been judged as 'unfairly stated'. Significant effort was made to meet with auditor expectations including a second day spent checking a second sample of pedestrian crossings. Recommendations from the auditor are likely to include the suggestion of a rolling programme of checks to each of the crossings throughout the year, however this would be a very costly solution.	R	R
2.Create sustainable communities by providing strategic leadership, empowering people and delivering locally	2.2 Improve access to information and raise awareness of the democratic process	2.2d Increase the percentage of responses to formal Freedom of Information (FOI) enquiries within the statutory period of 20 working days or within agreed extension from 96.6% in 2005/06 to 97% in 2006/07	96.67% of FOI cases were closed within the deadline. Although this was a slight drop from the previous quarter (outturn 98.5%), there was a considerably higher number of cases closed (90 total, 3 outside the deadline). Of the three cases that missed the deadline, two were late by only one day. Recommendation: progress through Project Board.	A	A
3. Develop the County Council as an excellent employer which supports and assists staff to develop to their full potential	3.2 Continue to improve equity and equality of opportunity for all through our service delivery and as an employer	3.2d No less than 5.1% of the workforce with a declared disability (BV 16)	During 2006/07, staff with disabilities leaving the authority have outnumbered recruits with disabilities by 67 (by Q3). During the period from April 2005 to date, the number of staff included in the calculation (ie the number for whom information on disability is known) has increased by about 1000, which could also have helped decrease the proportion in the workforce. Whether or not this trend will continue is difficult to say. Another survey is due Autumn 2007 which no doubt will have the effect of raising the percentage, as information about an increasing number of employees becomes available. Recommendation: continue to monitor.	G	A

Quarter 3 Update of the IDeA Corporate Peer Review (September 2006) Action Plan					
Ref	Areas to check	Areas where action is needed	Lead	What action is already in hand to tackle this, if any?	Quarter 3 Update on progress
1. AMBITION					
1.1	Delivery of Adult Social Care Improvements (para 22)		Keith Hinkley	3 year plan	<p>The Three Year Plan Implementation Plan has been published. Annual Service Plans for 2007/08 will serve as the annual delivery plans for the Three Year Plan Commitments.</p> <p>An annual cycle of stakeholder involvement in strategic planning has been agreed by the Departmental Management Team and stakeholders, including annual updates of the Three Year Plan aligned with Reconciling Policy and Resources.</p> <p>Commissioning Strategies are a key delivery mechanism for the Three Year Plan. The final draft of the Carers Commissioning Strategy is out for consultation and will be implemented from April. Other commissioning strategies are in development and will be delivered in accordance with the plan.</p>
1.2	Longer term vision to be developed with others and checked against finance and infrastructure (para 22)		Becky Shaw	The Community Strategy will be revised in early 2007 and will provide the vehicle to deliver this action.	Investigating joint working across the County with District and Borough Councils. Together with the delayed Department of Communities and Local Government guidance this may delay the process, however, this will be achieved by April 2008.

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2. PRIORITISATION					
2.1	Need for continued political resolve to deliver ambitions (para 28)		Councillor Jones		Ongoing
3. DECISION MAKING AND SCRUTINY					
3.1	Suggestions for development of scrutiny e.g. Scrutiny of the Leader (para 31)		Andrew Ogden	Under discussion with Scrutiny Committees. Includes action to increase public involvement and scrutinise the Leader.	Proposals considered by Scrutiny Committees. No wish for additional scrutiny of the Leader
CP SMD 2.1b	Need to come to a view on the Neighbourhood agenda (para 33)	Members to be better apprised of local issues (para 33)	Cheryl Miller	Chief Officers Management Team (COMT) is working on a service based approach to enhanced locality working. It includes web based information for local members.	Confirmation of existing guidance about working with local members to be issued. Review of guidance to be undertaken early in 2007/08 Discussion about local working to be held with District and Borough Councils.

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4. CUSTOMER FOCUS					
4.1 CP SMD 4.1		Greater consistency (para 35)	Becky Shaw/ Sean Nolan	Work to define excellence in customer focus and link to productivity being developed. Proposals to be made following annual staff conference feedback review	Review of complaints procedures underway. Broader strategic review and proposals underway.
4.2 CP Com Ser 3.1		Contact Centres – need for more management information (para 37)	Sean Nolan	Position being reviewed.	Terms of Reference of the Project Board have been revised to ensure more targeted focus on the consistency of design parameters and quality of output. Review of Adult Social Care centre underway. Review of Children's Services proposals underway.

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4.3 CP SMD 3.2		Community cohesion and equalities in service delivery – guidance for staff, good practice and corporate expertise needed. (para 41)	Keith Hinkley	<p>Audit Commission looking at equalities and diversity issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the development of an E-learning package on equalities – mandatory from January 2007; ➤ revised and improved corporate equalities training package; ➤ the work the Council's Disability and Diversity Officer, is doing on the Disability Action Plan 	Audit Commission Review completed and discussed at COMT on 24 January. Agreed to appoint a Project Manager to progress key issues of developing a corporate equalities plan and governance/ performance management arrangements to ensure delivery. Aim is to complete work before CA/ JAR.
			Becky Shaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work on traveller issues 	Work on traveller issues ongoing

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4.4	Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) satisfaction survey results – need to manage fallout from drop in satisfaction (para 40)		Becky Shaw	A communications plan to address the inevitable drop in satisfaction levels measured by BVPI result is in train and includes current local survey results.	Completed.
5. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT					
5.1 CP SMD 4.1	Priorities to be communicated with financial pressures (para 45)		Becky Shaw/ Sean Nolan	Reconciling Policy and Resources (RP&R) Communication/consultation plan in place.	Ongoing. Revised vision approved and specific linkages with policy and resources emphasised.

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5.2	Earlier engagement with public and partners over decisions (para 48)		All Chief Officers	Has been raised as an issue as part of the 2007/8 budget and priorities consultation with partners.	<p>This will be considered when the communication plan for 2008/09 budget and priorities consultation is developed.</p> <p>Cabinet Plan contains details, by portfolio, of approach.</p> <p>Adult Social Care: Three Year Plan stakeholder & consultation events; Older Peoples Forum representatives included in Home Care re-tendering process; Reference groups & consultation with partners, service users and the public in developing Commissioning Strategies and Housing & Support Services strategies.</p>

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5.3	More joined up consultation (para 48)		Becky Shaw All Chief Officers	Strengthened arrangements agreed including regular reports to Cabinet on findings and responses.	<p>An in house computer package is being developed to help co-ordinate communication internally, this will include the details and results of all consultation. The public will also be able to access the information from the website.</p> <p>A separate consultation strategy is being developed. The membership and remit of the Consultation and Research Group is being strengthened.</p> <p>Mori will present the findings of our BVPI satisfaction survey to Cabinet Briefing.</p> <p>Adult Social Care: Older Peoples Services Interdepartmental Working Group. All ESCC departments are represented on the group. A series of workshops are planned with Older People to address priorities raised by Older People at the Open Space Conference. The workshops will cover topics ranging from Transport to Adult Learning.</p> <p>Joint project with ASC, PCT's and Children's Services to commission a voluntary sector organisation to facilitate a reference group of disabled people to inform action planning of Disability Equality Schemes and other related initiatives.</p> <p>Significant consultation exercise underway as part of work in relation to new Record Office</p>

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6. DELIVERING THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS					
6.1	Appropriate role to be played in partnerships (para 50)		All Chief Officers / Cabinet Members		Partnership Guidelines are currently being finalised.
6.2 CP SMD 2.2 Cor Res 1.2	Increase capacity through use of contractors and VCS (para 51)	Enhance procurement (para 65)	Becky Shaw Sean Nolan	Voluntary and Community Services Co-ordinator in place since June 2006. Productivity Board reviewing action to improve Contract and market management.	The priorities for Community Partnership Finance have been changed to ensure the sustainability of those VCS organisations who provide services. Contract and market management work underway. Informal Peer Review of Procurement completed. Action plan in place.

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7. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT					
7.1 CP SMD 2.1f		Focus on driving performance across all indicators (para 57)	All Chief Officers	Strengthening arrangements being developed (including advice to Members and focus on target setting).	Clear articulation of performance in all service areas, including key indicators, are being identified by Chief Officers. COMT has commissioned work aimed at improving our ability to compare performance over time and with others and improving target setting.
7.2 CP SMD KO3	Build on valued initiatives to celebrate success (para 58)		Andrew Ogden/All Chief Officers	Significant work in hand on both internal and external awards.	Reviewing excellence awards process. Continuing to win external awards. Very successful internal competition for Young Local Authority of the Year nominees.
7.3		More information on areas/specific groups (para 59)	Becky Shaw	East Sussex in Figures (ESIF) Improved consultation (see above).	To be developed once work at 7.1 complete

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8. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT					
8.1	Establish robust plan for efficiencies (para 64)		Sean Nolan	RP&R will provide.	Draft 3 year savings plans now in place.
CP SMD 1.2	Further opportunities for charging/bidding /income generation? (para 64 - 65)		Sean Nolan Becky Shaw All Chief Officers	RP&R will explore income generation board established to review.	Grant Net has been purchased by the Council and is available on our website to facilitate access to funding for VCS, businesses etc. Liaison with Audit Commission underway.
8.3	Service Level Agreements (SLAs) deliver benefits proportionate to the efforts to negotiate them? (para 65)		Sean Nolan	Simplifying SLAs on a service by service basis.	Individual service SLA process guidance is being produced.

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9. CHANGE AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT					
9.1	Organisational capacity stretched (para 70)		Andrew Ogden All Chief Officers	RP&R ensures focus on priorities. Management Capacity Reserve and Invest to Save Fund provide vital additional capacity. Leadership and management development and workforce strategy in place. Continue to target priorities as part of performance management arrangements. Successfully retained Investors in People Corporate Accreditation for another 3 years.	Additional management capacity funds provided in the budget for 2007/08. Second round of Invest to Save launched.

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10. MANAGING PEOPLE					
10.1 CP SMD 3.1		Personnel services has suffered as a result of cost savings (para 65)	Andrew Ogden	SLA regime in place. Client Monitoring Group (HRMB), Performance Indicators agreed, and quality assurance arrangements introduced. Improved training for new staff.	Reduction in error rate accomplished. Bid for e-recruitment about to be submitted. Customer focus training given to all staff.
10.2		No corporate induction programme (para 79)	Andrew Ogden	e-learning induction programme being developed.	About to launch e-induction programme.
10.3 CP SMD KO3		More support for managers to stop inconsistencies in approach (para 79 - 80)	Andrew Ogden/ All Chief Officers	Operation of Personnel Policies. Refreshed Personnel and Training (PAT) internet site. New training programme in place e.g. lunchtime sessions. PAT Client Support Manager for advice/guidance.	Training initiatives continuing to assist and support managers.

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10.4	Staff feel that communications /improvement aimed at County Hall rather than outlying centres (para 75)		All Chief Officers	To be considered by departments and as part of following action.	Adult Social Care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Plan 2006-2008. Electronic & hard copy circulation of monthly 'Brief Encounter' publication
10.5		Better internal communication (para 81)	Becky Shaw	New internal Communications Manager being recruited.	Internal Communications Manager in place January 2007
10.6		Greater visibility of the political and managerial leadership (para 81)	All Chief Officers	Opportunities being explored.	Ongoing
10.7 CP SMD KO3	Managers are uncomfortable with sickness absence policy (para 82)		Andrew Ogden	Recommend continuing strategy which is paying dividends.	<p>Reviewing standard letters to ensure managers have sufficient discretion when dealing with sensitive cases.</p> <p>Further discussions with Trade Unions to be held to understand and tackle concerns</p>

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10.8	Staff see new working practices as solely financially motivated (para 83)		Sean Nolan	Maintain internal communication efforts on RP&R.	The reality of linking customer focus, productivity, resources available with revised service offers was a major theme at the recent Managers Conference. The new internal communications strategy will include customer focus as a key project.
10.9	Understanding of managers re terms and conditions when staff transferred to joint teams. (para 78)		Keith Hinkley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establish SLA for mental health services Review joint learning disability teams and re-specify services.	<p>Mental Health: Joint Management Agreement (November 2006) between Adult Social Care and the Sussex Partnership Trust for the provision of services for people with mental health or substance misuse problems. Staffing arrangements and staff development issues are covered within the agreement.</p> <p>Learning Disability: A scoping project for the review and re-specification has been completed. Services will be re-specified through the Learning Disability Commissioning Strategy.</p>

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10.10	Staff generally feel very pressurised, with the reduction in posts and consequent absorption of work by others bringing things close to the tipping point (para 75)		All Chief Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Business planning, RP&R – involves a focus on core activities ➤ Management Capacity Reserve in place ➤ Work of personnel e.g. well-being initiatives, clarity of appraisal and target setting. Improved training opportunities. 	<p>Increased resources to occupational health. Well-being initiatives continue to be popular. Specific stress counsellors recruited as part of our welfare service. Staff feedback about training opportunities etc. is very positive.</p> <p>Further discussions with Trade Unions to be held to understand and tackle concerns.</p> <p>Chief Officers reviewing departmental position and local solutions. Potential for solution across departments will be considered.</p>