

Appendix C



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An unqualified
opinion in the
Annual Audit
Letter

Target - 1

Theme – Outcomes

Action – O2.1 An unqualified opinion in the Annual Audit Letter.

Performance – As reported to Full Council on September 20, the Auditor gave a qualified, 'except for' conclusion on the Council's Value for Money arrangements for 2017/18.

Background – To assist public accountability, local authorities are required to make arrangements to publish their Annual Audit Letter and make it readily available to residents of the District and other interested parties.

The Auditor acknowledged that the Council had made significant progress in implementing the recommendations from the Audit Report in 2016/17, noting some of the corresponding actions were still being embedded in processes as at March 31, 2018.

Key actions underway – All recommendations have now been fully implemented and the Council is focused on ensuring an Unqualified Opinion for 2018/19.

Opportunities/risks - The Annual Audit Letter is an important tool for the Council to show how it has used public money and how it can demonstrate its financial management and financial health.

The Council works to ensure the proper arrangements are in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Key risks identified as part of this approach are outlined in the Annual Audit Letter.



3.07 days

The average
working days
lost per
employee

Target - 2

Theme – Outcomes

Action – O4.2 The average working days lost per employee.

Target: Less than two days per quarter.

Performance – 3.07 days (578 days long term, 322 days short term)

Trend – The number of working days lost to sickness absence for the year 2017/18 was 3,408 days or, on average, 11.63 days per person. This is an increase from 2,613 days (or 30%) and 9.91 days (or 17%) from the previous year.

Key actions underway – An internal working group of employer and employee representatives, led by the Strategic Director (Service Delivery), is meeting to consider a range of measures to address the current levels of absence.

The focus for the group has been stated as 'improving attendance' (through different initiatives such as reviewing employment policies) rather than managing absence to ensure that a rounded view of actions is taken.

An action plan has been developed and contact made with different partners to identify potential initiatives to be progressed. This includes training staff as Mental Health First Aiders and the provision of additional support for employees with mental health issues.

Opportunities/risks - Sickness absence can lead to a potential loss of productivity. Whilst employees are still paid during a period of absence (although this can reduce in periods of longer absence) an extra cost can be incurred to cover the duties of absent colleagues.

Having effective practices and processes in place to manage the health and well-being of the workforce promotes better working methods and early, preventative action to improve levels of performance and attendance at work.



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Full consultation completed with staff and trade unions.

Target - 1

Theme – Outcomes

Action – O4.2 Use the decision making methodology identified by the Local Government Association review.

Target – Full consultation completed with staff and trade unions.

Performance – Report not approved by Council.

Background – The Local Government Association (LGA) has been employed to conduct an independent review of the Council's existing management structure and arrangements.

Representatives from the LGA completed interviews and submitted initial proposals to the Chief Executive in quarter one. These are under consideration and it is now planned that a report will be considered by Council by the end of quarter three.

Key actions underway – The Chief Executive has discussed the proposals from the LGA with the Council's Strategic Directors. After feedback, the Chief Executive is finalising a report for consideration by the Council.

A number of supporting documents that will be used during the formal consultation process are being developed to clarify job roles and accountabilities.

Opportunities/risks – The Decision Making Accountability process is designed to further improve the services we deliver to our residents and communities and to develop a Council which is fit for the future.

The aim is to ensure the Council continues to have organisational structures which are effective and provide clear roles that are efficient in their use of management resources. This includes strengthening management accountabilities, processes and ways of working so the Council is best placed up to meet future challenges.



71.6%

% of telephone calls answered within 20 seconds

Target - 80%

Theme – Outcomes

Action – O5.1 % of telephone calls answered within 20 seconds

Target – 80%

Performance – 71.6%

Trend - Performance stood at 80.8% in quarter one

Background – High call volumes, coupled with summer holidays and one member of staff being away on long term sick, meant that we did not meet this target.

Key actions underway – The member of staff who was on long term sick has now rejoined the team on a phased return.

The Council also continues to consider new, innovative ways for members of the public to transact and interact with us.

Our aim is to offer greater options to residents and businesses as well as a more personalised experience.

Opportunities/risks – The Council's aim is to provide high quality customer care for residents to access services in the most convenient way.

Ensuring there is a clear and consistent focus across the Council will deliver an inclusive and outstanding customer experience.



10.30%

Council call abandonment rate

Target - <8%

Theme – Outcomes

Action – O5.2 Call abandonment rate

Target – Less than 8%

Performance – 10.30%

Trend - Performance stood at 3.7% in quarter one

Background – High call volumes, coupled with summer holidays and one member of staff being away on long term sick, meant that we did not meet this target for the first time since the Corporate Plan began three years ago.

Key actions underway – The member of staff who was on long term sick has now rejoined the team on a phased return.

The Council also continues to consider new, innovative ways for members of the public to transact and interact with us.

Our aim is to offer greater options to residents and businesses as well as a more personalised experience.

Opportunities/risks – The Council's aim is to provide high quality customer care for residents to access services in the most convenient way.

Ensuring there is a clear and consistent focus across the Council will deliver an inclusive and outstanding customer experience.



18.7 & 8.7

Average time for processing new Benefit claims and changes in circumstances

Target - <8 & <18

Theme – People

Action – PE2.3 and PE2.4 Average time for processing new Benefit claims and notifications of changes in circumstances

Target – New Benefit claims - <18 days. Changes in circumstances - <8 days.

Performance – New Benefit claims - 18.7 days. Changes in circumstances - 8.7 days.

Trend - New Benefit claims were processed in an average of 17.6 days in quarter one, with changes of circumstances processed in an average of 7.2 days.

Background – The Council is currently working on an initiative with the Department of Work and Pensions to help further prevent fraud and error in Benefit claims. This has required extra resource which has taken time away from processing work.

It should be noted that the Council has only narrowly missed the two targets and remains in the upper quartile for Benefits performance. The national benchmark is 22 days for new claims and nine days for changes in circumstances.

Key actions underway – Additional resource has been brought in to help manage the increase in workload and we would anticipate this indicator being back on track in future quarters.

Opportunities/risks – An opportunity exists to further cement our position as one of the best performing Benefit processing authorities in the country.

The risk of delayed processing is that residents entitled to Benefits (especially new claimants) are not receiving payments in a timely manner.



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Hold
Community
Partnership
Scheme
Grants Panel.

Target - 1

Theme – Progress

Action – Deliver the Community Partnership Scheme and award capital funding totalling £250k to meet local need.

Target: Hold first grants panel and further workshop. Successful applications to be reported to committee.

Performance: Grants panel has not been held due to an issue with membership.

Background – A member of the grants panel has changed committees. The panel is recognised as a sub group of the Housing and Community Services Committee, meaning only its members are eligible.

Key actions underway – A replacement Councillor needs to be appointed onto the panel at Full Council in November.

Opportunities - The applicants have been spoken to and have been offered the chance to amend their applications if applicable.

Risks – All applicants have been contacted to ensure the delay will not have a detrimental impact on their projects.

There are eight actions for the Finance and Management Committee