

Environment and Attractive Scrutiny Committee

Monday 12th December 2011

Performance Report Quarters 1 & 2 (April – September 2011)

Report of the Chief Executive

1.0 Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to provide Environment and Attractive Scrutiny Committee with a performance update for the period April to September 2011.

2.0 Background

Performance reports provided to Scrutiny Committee throughout 2010/11 as part of quarterly performance monitoring arrangements were linked to performance indicators from the previous government's national indicator list, with a particular focus on those prioritised within the Local Area Agreement.

In October 2010 the Coalition Government announced the deletion of the National Indicator set and also announced that from April 2011 there would no longer be a requirement for council's to produce an LAA. Both announcements signalled a move towards self regulation and improvement with more flexibility to report against local priorities using a set of locally determined measures for 2011/12.

For 2011/12 the Council's aim is that, in future, performance reporting should be focused on the key priorities for the people, place and economy of Sunderland and should continue to be a robust appraisal of the situation resulting in actions. It should cover the main strengths, areas for improvement, outstanding risks and how these are being addressed. This is a move away from simply reporting all performance indicators with no weighting to reflect their relative importance to the Council. Instead, the aim is to draw attention to the areas that matter most and maximise improvement to deliver Value for Money.

It is envisaged that in 2011/12 Scrutiny will continue to have an important role to play in the authority's revised performance management framework. This will include regular challenging of heads of service and senior officers on ongoing performance issues focussing on particular areas of concern.

The following criteria have been taken into consideration by Heads of Service and service managers in establishing performance indicators for 2011/12

- **Council priorities** (including a City that is Prosperous; a Learning City; Healthy; Safe; and Attractive & Inclusive)
- **Service priorities**
- **Service/operational needs**

- **Internal management information** (including corporate health measures)
- **Value for money** – economy efficiency effectiveness
- **Customer expectations**
- **Ability to benchmark** against our peers (e.g. other local authorities). For some services, sector led consultation has been carried out through various benchmark groups to establish an agreed set of indicators which could be shared.
- **Sector led approaches**- where national frameworks have been developed by particular sectors or professional bodies

Attached at Appendix 1 is an extract (produced by *Performance Plus*, the council's corporate performance management software system) from the full set of indicators that the Council has identified so far as appropriate for local self-regulation and which would fall within the remit of this committee. It also includes any performance indicators from national frameworks relevant to this committee.

These indicators are a mixture of former national indicators (NI's) where these are thought still to be appropriate, and locally determined indicators. Members should note that some of the indicators against which the services are now measured are new or emerging and as a result baseline and benchmarking data is not available. For this reason also, at this stage for some measures targets have not been set. Also for some measures the data has not been collected at this point in the year as the information is not due for collection until quarter 3 or quarter 4.

Target setting will be revised once more data is available to inform our position. For 2012/13 performance reporting a formal target setting process is due to be undertaken later in the year as part of the service planning process.

3.0 Performance

- 3.1 Street and environmental cleanliness** – Previously this data was collected three times a year and reported to DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs) against a set of national indicators which we were required to do so. We are no longer required to report against these and have therefore taken the opportunity to review these and report during 2011/12 based on what is important at a local level.

Following a review Fly-posting was identified as traditionally having very low levels in Sunderland and it was therefore decided not to collect data on this for 2011/12. Instead, it was decided that we would start measuring levels of dog fouling across the city – the results of which could help the enforcement team who are responsible for responding to dog fouling.

The frequency of data collection has been reviewed to provide more accurate information and is now ongoing and is carried out by the contract and

compliance team with results being produced every quarter and reported to the Tidy Britain group. .

A combined average of these surveys to the end of quarter 2 shows that:

- 2.33% were deemed to have unacceptable levels of litter
- 3.17% were deemed to have unacceptable levels of detritus
- 0.67% were deemed to have unacceptable levels of graffiti
- 2% were deemed to have unacceptable levels of dog fouling

3.2 Recycling – The amount of household waste collected and not recycled continues to improve and is above target for quarter 2. This is due to residual household waste growth being static and ongoing efforts to divert more waste for recycling in the blue bin collection service.

The percentage of residual household waste recycled and composted is higher than results from this time last year. This is due to most properties now being on the blue bin recycling scheme than compared to the same period last year and the seasonal affects of the garden waste (composting) collection service means performance peaks in the first two quarters as expected.

The proportion of municipal waste (including all waste collected from schools and council buildings plus household waste) landfilled is lower than results from this time last year. This reflects the percentage sent for recycling or composting.

3.3 Planning applications – Planning Performance remains at a high level with 84.21% of major planning applications dealt with in a timely manor which is above the local target level of 80%. The percentage of minor and other applications dealt with in a timely manor are 91.20% and 96.21% respectively. Although performance has dropped slightly below the local targets of 93.5% for Minor applications and 98% for 'Other' applications they both still remain well above the national target levels. These percentages are volatile however, due to the economic climate and the reduced number of applications being received. Recently more applications have been of a controversial or complex nature, and this, along with the government's agenda to promote sustainable development has resulted in more than usual amount of applications being allowed to exceed the target date in order to encourage and work with developers to promote development within the city. Within the minor and other category 11 of the applications went over target in quarter two, 7 of which were called to committee by council members because of their controversial and complex nature and therefore to be determined by the development control sub committee, this resulted in the applications exceeding the 8 week target date for decision. All applications are continually monitored by management and are discussed at a

weekly management meeting to ensure the best performance possible is achieved.

In relation to housing supply the overarching priority for Sunderland is to develop and deliver new homes that meet aspirations and needs of existing and potential residents in line with the Economic Masterplan and the developing Local Development Framework and Core Strategy.

The number of net additional homes was 323 as at September 2010 and increased to 376 at the end of March 2011 when this indicator was last reported to this scrutiny committee. In the first quarter of the year, this saw a significant reduction to 74 homes and at the end of quarter 2 (September 2011) the number of additional homes had reduced to 31.

The reduction in the number of net additional homes provided in 2011/12 is due to two main reasons:-

Firstly, the number of new build completions across the city has declined significantly from 375 units in the first half of 2010/11 to 149 units the first half of 2011/12.

The rate of new build in Sunderland has been artificially sustained primarily due to the previous Government's affordable housing policies, such as the Kickstart scheme. In 2010/11 407 out of 641 (63.5%) new build properties were developed by the social housing sector. This contrasts with only 178 in 2009/10, which only accounted for 39.9% of all new build completions. In addition, the extra care housing programme in Sunderland has created sites in Hetton, Houghton, Silksworth and Washington which has delivered additional affordable housing schemes over the last several years.

Private developers during this period however have not been able to develop and deliver private schemes. The principle factor being the lack of mortgage availability as opposed to the lack of available sites that are ready to develop for housing.

Secondly, the number of demolitions in the first half of 2010/11 was 90 and this has increased by 92% to 173 in 2011. This is due to several large regeneration sites across the city being demolished, particularly in the Doxford Park (50 demolitions), Broom Hill (38 demolitions), Castletown (34 demolitions) and Downhill (40 demolitions) parts of the city.

- 3.4 Children travelling to school** – Whilst there is no further information available as yet for 2011/12 members will be aware that the proportion of 5-10 year olds travelling to school by car has increased slightly year on year from 30.9% in 2008/9, to 31.2% in 2009/10 to 32.4% in 2010/11. This is considerably higher than the projected target to reduce the figure to 13%. The proportion sharing a lift and walking to school has decreased and is lower than the projected target to increase to 10% and 59% respectively.

Amongst children aged between 11 and 16, the proportion travelling to school by car has decreased, 2009/10 into 2010/11, although is still significantly higher than the projected target to reduce this figure down to 13%. The proportion sharing a lift and using public transport has decreased year on year, with the proportion sharing a lift also lower than the projected target of 10%. The proportion walking to school has increased from 2009/10 into 2010/11

3.5 Transport and Road Safety – The number of people killed or seriously injured or slightly injured on our roads remains low with fewer casualties in the first 6 months of 2011/12 when compared with the first 6 months of 2010/11. The Council continues to work hard to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured through education, promotion and the implementation of traffic engineering measures where appropriate. A prioritisation mechanism has been developed which gives priority to sites with a significant accident history and has been used to assist in formulating a programme of future works

For the average number of days taken to repair a street lighting fault, Performance has improved year on year and remains on target against 7 days. As part of our PFI contract with Aurora, residential street lamps have been replaced every 3-4 years and highway lamps replaced every 2 years. This early intervention has helped reduce incidents of lamp failure.

Bus punctuality for non-frequent services has improved year on year which reflects well on the work of the LTP partners in implementing bus priorities and other highway improvement measures. An 85% target (the percentage of non-frequent buses (fewer than 6 buses per hour) on time according to scheduled bus departure times) is set nationally by the Traffic Commissioners and by its nature does not reflect local circumstances. It can best be seen as very much an aspirational target. The local aspiration should be for a year on year improvement trend

There has been a slight increase in excess waiting time for frequent bus services year on year, although while this trend is a matter for concern, we are still within our target of 1 minute and 5 seconds. We are in discussion with operators regarding punctuality of services which has an effect on customer satisfaction

4.0 Recommendation

The Committee considers the findings within this report, including areas of good progress made and those areas that need further improvement highlighted in the report.

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