

Division(s): N/A

CABINET – 15 OCTOBER 2013

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 1 2013-14

Report by Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer, Sue Scane

Introduction

1. This paper provides details of performance for quarter one for Cabinet to consider. Performance dashboards are included at **Annex 1** for information and discussion.
2. Cabinet is able to explore the performance of all Council services, including commissioned services. To distinguish indicators that pertain to a commissioned service, they are presented in italics.

Performance Scrutiny Committee

3. The information contained within this report was considered by the Performance Scrutiny Committee on 26th September 2013. Discussions between the committee and Deputy Directors were focused on exploring the escalated issues.
4. The committee recognised that improving delayed transfers of care required a multi-agency response and that the Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) were undertaking a detailed review in December, which would be reported back to the Performance Scrutiny Committee in January.
5. The Performance Scrutiny Committee also asked to consider the Annual Adult Safeguarding Board Report, which provides assurance around the quality of service provision across adult social services.
6. In their examination of the performance of Children, Education and Families Directorate, the committee agreed to use a future meeting to examine the pathway through children's social care in more detail, in order to more closely review the relationship between social care and early help services particularly with reference to the escalated issue of referrals that lead to no further action.

Summary of Performance

7. Overall, Oxfordshire County Council is achieving well against the full suite of performance measures. Performance rated green indicates that the target is being achieved or exceeded. A target is rated red if the level of performance is not achieved it and significantly below that expected and amber if performance is within an acceptable range. There are a number of indicators

where performance is rated red or amber, but the direction of travel is an improving trend. This offers an encouraging sign that performance can be expected to move into the green rating over subsequent quarters.

8. Whilst we acknowledge performance achievements, it is important to focus effort to improve those areas where performance does not meet expectations. To this end, several issues are escalated for consideration. These issues reflect areas of performance that are below the expected level or significantly worsening and are of most significance to effective service delivery.

Exploring Escalated Issues

Social and Community Services

9. *Reablement Service*
The number of people in receipt of the reablement service continues to increase month on month, but remains 17% below target for this quarter. A range of actions have been implemented to bring performance in line with target. These include: improvements to transfer of cases between hospitals and the reablement service; social workers making more appropriate referrals to reablement; increasing the profile of the service with GP's and measures to improve demand prediction and scheduling.
10. *Delayed Transfers of Care and Care Home Placements*
There continue to be substantial delays of the transfer of care of individuals waiting to leave hospitals. Across the quarter there has been a 25% reduction in the delays, but we remain in the bottom quartile nationally. Additionally a large proportion of people affected are placed in short term assessment beds in care homes, which has led to an increase in permanent care home placements. This quarter, 14% more people were placed in care homes than were placed, on average, in each quarter last year. Actions to address this are managed by the multi-agency Chief Operating Officers Group and include the improvements to case transfers to the reablement service; decommissioning of assessment beds, re-commissioning of intermediate care beds (in community hospitals); re-commissioning of the home care service. However the risks associated with these areas should be acknowledged and expectations of a short-term improvement in performance managed.

Children, Education & Families

11. *Keeping Children Safe*
A current performance issue is around the referral process where 36.7% of all referrals result in no further action at the point of referral and 83.8% of all referrals result in no further action when the initial assessment is carried out. This means that out of 1399 children referred to Children's Social Care this quarter only 226 are now in receipt of any service. These levels are congruent, even when the reporting origin is a professional partner e.g. police, education, health services and other local authority colleagues. Our current data does not reveal how many of these become re-referrals or how many of the no further action decisions are referred onto Early Intervention Hubs for preventative action. However, it is safe to assume that the high level of no further action decisions reveals a high level of wasted effort by our staff and

partners and creates a risk that opportunities to reduce the likelihood of children requiring social care are missed. Work to address this issue has already started with the development of an integrated pathway, where cases can be stepped up and down between Early Intervention and Social Care. Additionally officers are looking at ways to improve the understanding of the thresholds applied to referrals with our various partners.

12. *Raising Attainment*

An important factor influencing the overall educational attainment of children is whether they are taught in schools judged as inadequate. Although there are still 11 schools judged inadequate in Oxfordshire, which is the same number as last year, there has been a significant improvement in numbers of children taught in schools which are judged to be good or outstanding: 6300 more children in primary schools, and almost 3000 in secondary schools compared with last year.

13. *Narrowing the Gap*

The data reported at quarter one in relation to persistent absence remains provisional due to technical problems experienced during the recent migration of school information management systems. Overall, absence in secondary schools remains high and above target. Absence in primary schools has improved but is still over target. An attendance strategy is being launched in the autumn term, which is expected to address this continuing issue. All absence of looked after children is now reported daily to both the virtual school and the child's social worker. This allows the reason for absence to be verified and action taken to ensure a swift return to school. This initiative is expected to further improve our performance in relation to managing absence.

Economy and Environment

14. *Highways Defects*

The current rate for reported faults requiring repair is around double expected for this quarter. This is mainly due to adverse weather conditions over the 2012/13 winter period, which has caused deterioration of the road surface. Specialist suppliers are being used to clear the repairs and budgets are being adjusted in response to this unpredicted demand. The backlog in reported defect repairs should be cleared by quarter two. The results of the NHT Public Satisfaction Survey will be available in quarter 2. Last year we achieved a 48.59% satisfaction rate for Highways Maintenance, placing the Council in the second quartile nationally. The 2013 results will allow the Council to assess the public perception of our recent performance in relation to highway defects more accurately.

15. *Customer Service Centre*

The majority of indicators show good performance across the Customer Service Centre. However, only 52% of blue badge applications are processed within 20 working days. The process has now been redesigned and improvement is expected to be realised in the second quarter. Increased demands on staff within the Customer Service Centre have also led to only 72% of concessionary fare applications being processed within 10 working

days. An action plan is in place to reduce the number of applications waiting and to generally improve the efficiency of the service.

RECOMMENDATION

16. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note and discuss the performance reported in the dashboards and to make any comments necessary for performance improvements to be made.**

SUE SCANE

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