

Lancashire County Council

Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 22nd November, 2012 at 2.00 pm
in Cabinet Room 'B' - County Hall, Preston**

Present:

County Councillors

A Atkinson
Mrs S Charles

J Mein

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Geoff Driver, Tim Ashton and Mark Perks.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None disclosed.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 October 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2012 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Quarterly Corporate Performance Monitoring and Improvement - Corporate Scorecard Report and Recovery Plan

Michael Walder, Senior Policy and Performance Officer, presented the corporate performance monitoring report for quarter 2 2012/13 (July – September).

Michael reported that 97% of the indicators in the scorecard were currently forecast to meet their year-end targets with quarter 2 monitoring highlighting only 1 of the 35 indicators – sickness absence - in the scorecard projected to miss its end of March 2013 target and a recovery plan was provided for this indicator..

Russell Eaton, Head of Business Services, presented the sickness absence recovery plan. Russell explained that figures originally circulated had been updated and replaced by a new version, all noted the new version.

Russell explained that in recent years the County Council has made great strides in improving attendance. Absence levels in 2011/12 were 6.88 lost days per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employee.

During 2011/12 the North West Employers organisation collected sickness absence data from 20 upper tier authorities and 18 District Councils across the

region. This reveals that last year the County Council had the lowest number of days lost per FTE of all authorities who supplied data - which is clearly a significant achievement. The headline figures from the survey show that the average days lost per FTE were:

- All authority types = 8.26
- District Councils = 7.78
- County, Metropolitan and Unitary = 8.66

Russell highlighted the analysis of quarters 1 and 2 for 2012/13 as follows:

Analysis of quarters 1 and 2

Employees with no sickness absence:

- Q1 - 27,133 employees (77%)
- Q2 - 29,730 employees (85%)

An analysis of short term sickness absence compared to the previous year

Q1 increased by 10%, the top 3 reasons for short term absence being:

- Digestive System (18%)
- Musculo-Skeletal (13%)
- Respiratory System (13%)

Q2 reduced by 9%, the top 3 reasons for short term absence being:

- Mental Health (18%)
- Medical/Hospital* (14%)
- Digestive System (13%)

*NB Medical/Hospital includes post-operative recuperation.

An analysis of long term sickness absence compared to the previous year

Q1 increased by 18%, the top 3 reasons for long term absence being:

- Mental Health (30%)
- Medical/Hospital (15%)
- Musculo-Skeletal (14%)

Q2 increased by 16%, the top 3 reasons for long term absence being:

- Mental Health (28%)
- Musculo-Skeletal (15%)
- Medical/Hospital (14%)

The top 3 reasons for all sickness absence within the county council:

Quarter 1

- Mental Health (23%)
- Medical/Hospital (14%)
- Musculo-Skeletal (13%)

Quarter 2

- Mental Health (24%)
- Medical/Hospital (14%)
- Musculo-Skeletal (14%)

Outlook for remainder of 2012 / 13

Russell reported that if the combined total FTE days lost per person in quarters 3 and 4 exceeds 4.02, the year-end target is 7.12.

Russell also reported that a number of early intervention strategies have been put in place to reduce the levels of absence including:

- Workshops (including back care, eat, drink and be healthy, drugs, alcohol and smoking);
- Workplace counselling;
- Physiotherapy;
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT);
- Mediation; and,
- Trauma Support.

Through early intervention it is aimed to:

- Reduce sickness absence in the workplace;
- Support employees in a return to work; and,
- Prevent sickness absence occurring where possible.

Russell also highlighted a number of further interventions planned over a longer term, from April 2013 onwards, as detailed in the report.

The Committee welcomed the report, commented on the interventions put in place so far, and clarified how much take up there has been of the workshops by employees.

Resolved: The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement noted the report, and that updates would be provided to the Committee at the appropriate reporting times at future Committee meetings.

5. Highway Compensation Claims

Rick Hayton, Assistant Director, Strategic Highways and Procurement presented the report.

Rick explained that since the 1st June 2007, 6863 incidents have occurred leading to Lancashire County Council receiving public liability highway claims (as of 31st May 2012).

The table below shows the policy year in which the incidents occurred and the total amount that has been paid to date against these claims.

The Number of Incidents Occurring by Policy Year Resulting in Public Liability Highways Claims		
Policy Year (1 June to 31 May)	* Incidents Occurred	** Total Amount Paid to date on Settled Claims
2007/08	1532	£3,401,189
2008/09	1438	£3,412,607
2009/10	1508	£2,728,178
2010/11	1590	£1,449,235
2011/12	795	£100,398

** Note: The number of incidents stated above may rise as an adult has 6 years to submit a damages claim or 3 years to submit a personal injury claim following the date the incident took place. Additionally if a claimant was a minor when the incident took place and a claim was not submitted on their behalf before they turned 18, they have until their 21st birthday to submit a claim.*

*** Note: The amounts stated may increase if outstanding claims are settled with payment.*

Analysis of claims received between 2008 and 2011 highlights the following three main causes;

1. Personal injury accounts for an average of 49% of claims received. Of these an average of 67% have been settled with payment
2. Vehicle damage accounts for an average of 45% of claims received. Of these an average of 27% have been settled with payment
3. Property damage accounts for an average of 5% of claims received. Of these an average of 4% have been settled with payment

Approximately 26% of all public liability highway claims received are settled with payment.

Rick highlighted the actions that have been taken in recent months to minimise the risk of further claims including the 'one team' approach to highway works that has led to a consolidation of both highway maintenance management and operations within the Environment Directorate. The County Council has also

recently brought in house the highway safety inspection service. The integration of these services together along with continued collaborative working with Legal and Financial Services will be utilised to undertake further work to ensure we have the most robust performance management approach possible.

It was noted that from the 1st April 2013, the Government will be implementing changes whereby additional costs (disproportionate to the value of the claim) associated with defending highways claims, where the claimant is successful will be reduced. However compensation amounts will be increased by 10%. Overall the proposals are thought to be more favourable to defendants than to claimants but the picture remains uncertain. As these proposals will only relate to claims lodged after 1st April 2013 it should be noted that the impact of these reforms will not be evident for some time.

Resolved: The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement noted the report and progress made to minimise the risk of further claims.

6. Progress on the Proposal for a Carers Break Fund

Richard Jones, Executive Director for Adult and Community Services, presented the report.

A proposal to replace the current short break voucher scheme with a Carers Break Fund was presented to the Cabinet Committee for Performance Improvement on 12 October 2012. A further update on the timescales for the implementation of the IT system and more information on the proposed pilot was requested for the next meeting.

Richard explained that the proposal was discussed further at the Adult and Community Services (ACS) Directorate's Senior Management Team on 13 November 2012. Senior managers supported the proposal and a pilot to assess the implications of proposed changes to ensure that carers' needs are more appropriately met in a timely and effective way.

IT systems development was presented as one of the main issues to be addressed to facilitate effective delivery of the scheme, particularly as Adult Social Care is planning a whole scale replacement of the current IT system (ISSIS) in the future. The timescales for the replacement are not yet confirmed however it is estimated that it will take 12 to 18 months to complete.

ACS Senior Management Team considered the IT implications as, currently, the ISSIS suite of systems is unable to deal with the implementation of the Carer Break Fund so the amount of Carer Break Fund allocated and payments made would have to be manually recorded. While manual systems are not the most effective way to support operational and finance processes, it was considered that the development of a pilot would help to inform the future requirements for IT support to be planned into the replacement system. If interim changes within the current system are possible, they would also be explored.

It is recognised that there are several aspects to delivering such a significant change and that a robust, comprehensive pilot will be required over 12 months to ensure the successful implementation of an improved offer for carers.

Initially a small scale pilot in one geographical area was planned however, the pilot will now include as many people as possible receiving the variety of respite options in each area of the County. A minimum of 50 in each area should be included but if operated over a 12 month period there potentially could be no upper limit to the number included. Initially, those carers requesting renewal of their short break vouchers would be offered a "fund", extending to new customers where carer needs have been identified and other carer groups throughout the course of the pilot.

The pilot would test out benefits for carers both in terms of being able to access a wider range of carer support options and the process to access the "fund" to ensure a streamlined service. It would also achieve an improvement in performance for carer's reviews by managing review activity across the year. An evaluation of the pilot will be reported back to the ACS Senior Management Team prior to recommendations for the future being presented to the Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services.

Resolved: The Cabinet Committee for Performance Improvement:

- i. Noted the report,
- ii. Supported the proposal for a pilot which would include addressing IT issues and identifying future IT requirements, and;
- iii. Recommended that the Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services approve the detailed proposals for a pilot when they are available.

7. Help Direct - Quarter 2 Performance

Richard Jones, Executive Director for Adult and Community Services, presented the report.

Richard highlighted the performance of Help Direct so far, as detailed in the table below which shows the figures at the end of Quarter two 2012/13:

Description	Annual Target	Q1			Q2		
		target	Actual	% Variance	Target	actual	% Variance
The number of contacts to Help Direct	38000	9500	8017	-16%	19000	17135	-10%
The number of issues dealt with by Help Direct as a consequence of contacts	52000	13000	10641	-18%	26000	23652	-9%

The figures show performance at the end of Q2 is still below target, but there is significant improvement compared to performance reported at the end of Q1.

Recovery Measures

Richard explained that a number of previously reported plans have now been implemented as follows:

- Under performance has been robustly addressed with the four Help Direct providers, in line with contracts. Each provider has met with Commissioning Leads and analysed the reasons for their performance results and identified ways in which improvements can be made.
- The revised Help Direct leaflets and promotional materials have been agreed and distributed to all areas. All Help Direct providers now have the newly branded leaflets, template response letters, Powerpoint presentations, posters, newsletters and compliments slips to ensure consistent marketing is supporting the promotional work and outreach of the teams.
- Follow up calls have also been made to all adults who were no longer eligible for social care services after Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) reviews to ensure they were offered support from Help Direct.

Three further other options have been considered as follows.

- An article about Help Direct will be drafted and will appear in the next County Council edition of 'Vision' in March 2013.
- Work is taking place with Parish Councils to publicise the service.
- Consideration was given to the inclusion of a leaflet about Help Direct in Council Tax letters in early 2013. However, District Councils are taking a different approach this year due to legislative changes and they have resolved that no additional information will be sent out with their council tax statements.

In order to ensure this improvement in performance is sustained, Help Direct providers will take some further steps over the coming weeks as follows:

- They will target five key target groups (health partners, neighbourhoods/specific communities, social care service users, key partners/networks and Older People) with further promotional activity. They will work with the Communications team to finalise and implement a county-wide radio campaign around the key groups and other, related marketing opportunities.
- They will also widen the range of key referral partners, to include agencies such as the police, prison service and Job Centre Plus, supported by targeted promotional and awareness-raising materials.
- In addition, the transfer of the access elements of Help Direct to Care Connect is going ahead, as scheduled, in late November 2012. This will

increase the capacity of the Help Direct teams on the ground to concentrate on outreach and partnership development.

Richard also reported that General Practitioners (GPs) and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are starting to invest in Help Direct which should also see an increase in the number of contacts. It is also envisaged that as the Help Direct service develops Children's Services advice and information could be provided. However this potential development needed further analysis and discussion.

Richard concluded that it is notable that at the start of Q3 there were 3,580 contacts in October. There were 5,736 issues dealt with in October. These performance figures show that the deficit against each target has reduced again (to 7% for contacts and 3% for issues), which indicates that both annual performance targets should be met over the full year.

Resolved: The Cabinet Committee for Performance Improvement noted the report and endorsed the continued implementation of the Recovery Plan.

8. Impact of Partnership Working on School Improvement

It was noted that this item was withdrawn from the agenda.

9. Urgent Business

None.

10. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement will be held on Thursday 17 January 2013 at 2.00pm in Cabinet Room 'B', County Hall, Preston.

I M Fisher
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston