

Departmental Quarterly Monitoring Report

<u>Directorate:</u>	Resources
<u>Department:</u>	Legal & Democratic Services
<u>Period:</u>	Quarter 4 – 1 st January to 31 st March 2011

1.0 Introduction

This monitoring report covers Legal and Democratic Services fourth quarter period up to period end 31st March 2011. It describes key developments and progress against key objectives and performance indicators for the service.

The Department's Quarter 4 Financial Statement will be prepared once the Council's year-end accounts have been finalised and will then be made available via the intranet by 30th June

The way in which the traffic light symbols and direction of travel indicators have been used to reflect progress is explained within Appendix 5.

2.0 Key Developments

The Legal Section passed its Annual Lexcel Inspection in January 2011 with the comment from the assessors that the service is getting better and better year after year. The section also received an excellent customer satisfaction response for 2010.

The Risk & Emergency Planning team dealt extremely efficiently with an explosion caused by an escape of gas in Castlefields during March 2011. The emergency required the provision of temporary accommodation.

A revised version of the Constitution was approved by Executive Board on 31 March 2011 and referred to the full Council meeting on 20 April 2011.

An online legal library has been procured, which will result in significant financial savings.

3.0 Emerging Issues

The Communications & Marketing Team has become part of the Department on 01st April 2011.

Work continues in preparation for the Local Election & Referendum on 5th May. Preparations are well advanced for subsequent new member inductions, mentoring and training.

Work is proceeding on developing the standards regime following the forthcoming enactment of the Localism Bill.

4.0 Service Objectives / milestones

4.1 Progress against 'key' objectives / milestones

Total	2		2		0		0
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All of the key objectives/milestones have been achieved and additional details are provided within Appendix 1.

4.2 Progress against 'other' objectives / milestones

Total	2		2		0		0
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Both 'other' objectives/milestones have been achieved. Further detail is contained in Appendix 2.

5.0 Performance indicators

5.1 Progress Against 'key' performance indicators

Total	2		0		1		1
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The one indicator that can be reported at this time has narrowly missed its target and details are provided in Appendix 3.

5.2 Progress Against 'other' performance indicators

Total	12		3		0		7
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Seven targets were missed. 3 related to targets for time to take legal action, and can be explained by the volume & complexity of cases. It should be noted that the recent customer satisfaction survey revealed excellent results.

Although the 100% target for return of Form A's was narrowly missed, 96% is an excellent performance. There are 2 indicators which are now not reported on as they were the biennial place survey which is now non-existent, but has stayed in the indicators for this financial year. Further details are in Appendix 4.

6.0 Risk Control Measures

During the development of the 2010 -11 Service activity, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.

No 'high' risk, treatment measures were identified.

7.0 Progress against high priority equality actions

As a result of undertaking a departmental Equality Impact Assessment no high priority actions were identified for the service for the period 2010 – 2011

8.0 Data quality statement

The author provides assurance that the information contained within this report is accurate and valid and that every effort has been made to avoid the omission of data. Where data has been estimated, has been sourced directly from partner or other agencies, or where there are any concerns regarding the limitations of its use this has been clearly annotated.

9.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 Progress against 'key' objectives / milestones

Appendix 2 Progress against 'other' objectives / milestones

Appendix 3 Progress against 'key' performance indicators

Appendix 4 Progress against 'other' performance indicators


Appendix 5 Explanation of use of symbols

Appendix 1: Progress Against 'key' objectives / milestones

Ref	Objective
LDS O1	To provide a high quality legal service to the Council and its departments to ensure that the Council is able to deliver its services effectively



Milestones	Progress Q 4	Supporting Commentary
Secure renewal of Lexcel & ISO Accreditation January 2011		Accreditations secured as planned

Ref	Objective
LDS O2	To ensure that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information and are kept informed of changing legislation and responsibilities

Milestones	Progress Q 4	Supporting Commentary
Review Constitution May 2010		Constitution has been reviewed as planned.




Appendix 2: Progress Against 'other' objectives / milestones

Ref	Objective
LDS O3	To provide efficient and effective Democratic Support Services that provides Elected Members, as key decision makers, with the necessary information, support and training opportunities to fulfil their individual potential and management and governance role effectively






Milestones	Progress Q 4	Supporting Commentary
To ensure that all members have been given the opportunity of a having a MAP meeting.		All members have been given the opportunity of a having a MAP meeting.
To induct all new members – by October 2010		The last induction fro new Members took place in October 2010

Appendix 3: Progress Against 'key' performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2009/10	Target 2010/11	Quarter 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
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Corporate Health							
<u>LDSLI 1</u>	Proportion of departmental working days lost to sickness absence (%)	4.5	4.0	TBC		N/A	No details of current progress, waiting for information from the Administration Divisional Manager.
<u>LDSLI 2</u>	No. Of Members with Personal Development Plans (56 Total)	52 (92%)	56 (100%)	51 (91%)			Just missed target, but all Members were given the opportunity of having a MAP meeting.

Appendix 4: Progress Against 'other' performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2009/10	Target 2010/11	Quarter 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
Corporate Health							
NI 1	% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area	74.5% (2008)					This information is sourced via the biennial Place Survey, which is scheduled for later this year. However the requirement for undertaking the survey is currently subject to review by the new government and further details will be provided as and when information becomes available.
	Civic participation - % of people who have been involved in decisions that affect the local area in the last 12 months	10.5% (2008)					
LDSL1 3	% of Members attending at least one organised Training Event	82%	100%	87%			Although the target was not been achieved participation has increased since this time last year.
LDSL1 4	% Of Departments with up to date Business Continuity Plans	100%	100%	100%		N/A	100% of departments have existing plans but additional work is now being done to review the process to simplify and ensure it meets the changing structure and demands.
LDSL1 5	% Of Departments with up to date Risk Registers	100%	100%	100%			Most of the reviews have now been completed.







Appendix 4: Progress Against 'other' performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2009/10	Target 2010/11	Quarter 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
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Fair Access							
LDSL1 6	Members of Public attending Council Meetings (Council, PPBs, Exec Board, Exec Board Sub, Area Forums)	188	600	211			Targets have not been met. Levels of public participation are of course largely determined by subject matter under discussion and not within the control of officers. Participation has increased since this time last year.
LDSL1 7	No. Of Questions asked by Members of the Public at Council Meetings (Council, PPBs, Exec Board, Exec Board Sub, Area Forums)	14	175	27			
LDSL1 8	% Of those eligible casting a vote.	25% (08-09)	50%	60%			The figure is slightly higher than the target but will not alter as there are no elections scheduled until May 2011. A baseline only was created at the end of last year so a comparison cannot be made against this years figure.
LDSL1 9	% Of completed form A's returned	96% (08-09)	100%	96%			Extremely demanding target slightly missed, but a very strong performance nevertheless.

Appendix 4: Progress Against 'other' performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2009/10	Target 2010/11	Quarter 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
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Service Delivery							
LDSL1 10	Average Time taken to issue prosecutions from receipt of instructions (working days)	12	10	17			Following an extremely busy year with a high number of prosecutions, the target has been missed, but work will continue to reduce days next year.
LDSL1 11	Average time taken to complete Conveyancing Transactions	360	325	488			Target missed due to a number of long and complex transactions.
LDSL1 12	Average time taken to complete Child Care Cases (calendar days)	224	250	336			Child care cases are very sensitive area of work and resultant time scales are not always within the control of the legal staff involved. The Department has noted that it has taken significantly longer for cases to go through the judicial process, and it is not the case that influence of officers can be brought to bear to shorten the process, and of course the priority remains the protection of children. Figures will be kept under review.

Symbols are used in the following manner:

Progress		<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
Green		Indicates that the <u>objective is on course to be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that the annual target <u>is on course to be achieved</u>.</i>
Amber		Indicates that it is <u>uncertain or too early to say at this stage</u> , whether the milestone/objective will be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that it is <u>uncertain or too early to say at this stage</u> whether the annual target is on course to be achieved.</i>
Red		Indicates that it is <u>highly likely or certain</u> that the objective will not be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that the target <u>will not be achieved</u> unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.</i>

Direction of Travel Indicator

Where possible performance measures will also identify a direction of travel using the following convention

Green		<i>Indicates that performance is better as compared to the same period last year.</i>
Amber		<i>Indicates that performance is the same as compared to the same period last year.</i>
Red		<i>Indicates that performance is worse as compared to the same period last year.</i>
N/A		<i>Indicates that the measure cannot be compared to the same period last year.</i>