

CORPORATE AND POLICY DIRECTORATE

QUARTER 2 2008/09 – MONITORING REPORT

OVERALL SUMMARY

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of performance issues within the Directorate for the 2nd Quarter of 2008/09. It reports on each of the six Departments within the Directorate.

Exchequer and Customer Services

Council Tax collection rates are slightly up compared with the corresponding period last year. Whilst business rate collection is slightly down, primarily due to the introduction of the empty property rate change, Housing Benefit performance continues to be strong. However, the new inspection regime (now through the Audit Commission rather than the Benefit Fraud Agency) is proving much tougher and requires substantially more work to achieve the scores the Council has been used to.

Property Services

Whilst most targets are generally on schedule the two significant issues affecting the service relate to managing priorities, given the major projects with which the Council is involved, and in levels of income from the Council's estates. Income levels are a particular concern and every effort is being made to maximise them. The current economic climate is not helping.

Financial Services

The Council's external auditors completed the audit of the Council's 2007/08 year end accounts and provided an unqualified audit opinion.

All performance indicators are on target.

ICT Services

The two principal areas of concern are:

- 1 **Implementing the Government's Code of Connection**

The Council is required to comply with 94 criteria in order for it to work across the Government's secure network.

As well as being a major technical challenge it will also change the way people are used to doing business. Good progress is being made and a lot of the work required was already in hand.

- 2 The targets set in relation to the delivery of a new PC have not been met. However, work is in place to improve this performance with the introduction of the Microsoft Enterprise Contract. This is anticipated to improve performance over the next 6-12 months.

Legal and Member Services and Human Resources

There are no significant areas to highlight from the current quarter.

Policy and Performance

There are no significant areas to highlight from the current quarter.