

Questions raised by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at meeting held on 21 March 2017	
Questions raised by Overview and Scrutiny	Response from Officers
Performance Tracker:	
<p>General Comment:</p> <p>A Member raised concern that the report seemed quite negative and gave the impression that a significant number of actions were not being achieved against their timescales. He questioned how it might be addressed.</p>	<p>The Chief Executive indicated that the covering report extracted the actions where performance was not as anticipated – some were within the Council's control but others were not. He explained that the report did not highlight the majority of actions which were performing positively but in an organisation with a large agenda then there would inevitably be some negatives to address and it was important to draw Members' attention to them.</p>
<p>Priority: Finance and Resources</p> <p>A Member raised concern that there was no timeline to the action 'Undertake a review of the discretionary trade waste service to ensure it is operating on a viable commercial level'.</p>	<p>The Head of Community Services explained there were two reviews in relation to this – one was being commissioned by Ubico and one was being undertaken by the Council.</p> <p>It felt sensible to wait until Ubico had appointed consultants to start its work – and now that had been done, a scope would be put together for the Council's review. It was anticipated this would move forward quickly.</p>
<p>Priority: Economic Development</p> <p>A Member sought an update on how the action 'Produce a vision for the J9 area' was progressing.</p>	<p>The Chief Executive advised that the removal of the Ministry of Defence site at Ashchurch was not the Council's decision and it had been necessary to develop a way forward through the Joint Core Strategy.</p> <p>This had been discussed with Members of the J9 Area Member Reference Panel and a consultant had been engaged to help produce and deliver the vision.</p> <p>A successful bid for £234,000 of funding been made to the Homes and Communities Agency, with the potential for more following further discussions.</p> <p>A meeting of the J9 Area Member Reference Panel would be taking place very shortly to consider an action plan to take this forward. He stressed that this was a major piece of work and there would be no simple solution.</p>

Key Performance Indicators:	
Key Performance Indicators for Priority: Housing	
<p>KPI 15 – Percentage of ‘minor’ applications determined within eight weeks or alternative period agreed with the applicant.</p> <p>A Member felt that officers spent a lot of time on the finer details of planning applications and yet they were often still refused, which she found difficult to understand.</p> <p>A Member questioned whether it would be appropriate for an update to be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the second phase of the Planning Systems Review.</p>	<p>The Head of Development services advised that, whilst she could not comment on any particular application without knowing the details of the scheme, it was important to recognise that planning was a very complex matter and there were different issues to take into consideration, even with small householder applications. Officers worked hard to achieve the right solutions for as many parties as possible. If Members had queries about specific applications she would be more than happy to look at those on an individual basis.</p> <p>The Head of Development Services indicated that she was keen to look at performance and build upon the improvements that had already been made. She hoped to do this sooner rather than later and would add the update to the Committee’s work programme in the coming months.</p> <p>In response to a query regarding staffing, she advised that the department was almost at full capacity; some appointments had been made but the people were not yet in post.</p> <p>A Member questioned how performance had improved during quarter three without the new staff being in post and she explained that this had been down to a number of improvement projects and the use of temporary staff.</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Executive indicated that he was keen to improve efficiency within the Planning service. There had been a lot of discussions about whether the department had enough staff, however, it was important to also look at the approximate number of planning applications per officer and the efficiency of processing applications in order to establish whether productivity was being hampered and what could be done to address this.</p>

Key Performance Indicators for Priority: Corporate	
<p>KPI 20 – Number of reported enviro-crimes</p> <p>A Member noted that there had been a significant reduction in the number of reported fly-tipping incidents, however he understood from officers that it was not always possible to get hold of a camera and he sought clarification as to whether the necessary equipment was available.</p>	<p>The Head of Community Services undertook to find out how many cameras were available and report back to Members following the meeting.</p> <p>He advised that 89 fly-tipping incidents had been reported in the last quarter, which was a reduction; some would have been individual bags being put out early as opposed to huge fly-tips. He had signed off two fly-tipping prosecutions in the last week and was about to rejuvenate the conversation with Parish Councils in relation to the employment of an environmental warden.</p> <p>His team was looking at hotspots for dog fouling and once these were identified to start consultation on the introduction of public space protection orders which would allow fixed penalty notices to be issued in those areas.</p> <p>He undertook to look into the availability of cameras - he confirmed that they were currently all deployed but he did not know their exact locations - and indicated that he would report back to Members outside of the meeting.</p>
<p>KPI 29 – Average number of sick days per full time equivalent</p> <p>A Member noted from the report that there was an increasing trend in short term sickness and sought assurance that this was being monitored.</p>	<p>The Head of Corporate Services advised that there was often an increase in short term absences during quarter 3, which covers the winter period when colds and other viruses were more prevalent. He confirmed that this was something which was being monitored and he pointed out that a review of the Absence Management Policy was one of the pending items in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work Programme.</p> <p>The Internal Audit team had also been tasked with looking at absence management and ensuring that the policy was applied consistently. A new Human Resources system was currently being considered which would be more focused on self-service; at present absence management was very much a manual exercise and the new system would help to manage the process more effectively.</p>