

Subject: Annual Performance Report 2012/13 – Questions Raised

Report to: Scrutiny Committee – 22nd August 2013

Report by: Corporate Policy & Performance Officer

SUBJECT MATTER/RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to note the response to the questions raised at the last meeting.

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

At Scrutiny Committee on 18th July 2013 the Committee considered the Council's Annual Performance Report for 2012/13. Members raised a number of questions, four of which the Corporate Policy & Performance Officer could not give a clear response, but he said he would go back to the relevant officers and report back at the next meeting.

The Corporate Policy & Performance Officer has spoken to colleagues and can now give a response to the unanswered questions raised at the Scrutiny meeting.

2. Planning Applications

PM001a-c – The Committee queried the timescales for 'Major' and 'Other' applications. Members also sought clarification over the English average figures being quoted.

The Government still publishes performance data on the three types of planning applications, see below, which we can measure our performance against other English authorities:

Type:	'Major'	'Minor'	'Other'
Timescale:	13 weeks	8 weeks	8 weeks
GYBC 2012/13:	65%	83%	88.64%
English average:	58%	68%	81%

3. New Claims for Housing & Council Tax Benefit

PM005b – It was reported that the average time taken to process new claims for Housing and or Council tax benefit was down due to an increase in the workloads due to the current economic situation and the Committee asked what action was being taken to address this.

The yearend outturn performance was impacted by the first quarter (Apr 2012 – Jun 2012) of 32 days, this was due to the increase in caseload which continued through 2012/13. In order to improve this performance and manage the workload the staff work regular overtime where peaks of workload build. This has proven to be an effective method of workload management and over the remaining 9 months of 2012/13 has reduced the average by 6 days. The team has also done some work around changing working practices to be more efficient and this work is continuing with the exploration of more automated processes which will help to free resource.

4. Council Tax Collection

PM006a – The percentage of Council Tax collection was down by 0.2% and the Committee asked if this was due to staff sickness in this department and what the reduction was in cash terms.

The tables below show how we compared with other Norfolk and Suffolk authorities with regard to comparisons between 2012/13 and 2011/12 collection rates. It can be seen that the trend for most authorities is down or stayed the same. Our nearest comparator for like for like authorities within Norfolk and Suffolk is probably Waveney.

Norfolk	% increase/decrease
Breckland	0.0
Broadland	0.0
Great Yarmouth	- 0.2
Kings Lynn and West Norfolk	- 0.6
North Norfolk	- 0.7
Norwich	0.6
South Norfolk	- 0.1

4 out of 7 dropped including GYBC
2 out of 7 stayed the same
1 out 7 went up

Suffolk	% increase/decrease
Babergh	- 0.3
Forest Heath	- 0.1
Ipswich	- 0.2
Mid Suffolk	0.0
St Edmundsbury	0.1
Suffolk Coastal	- 0.1
Waveney	- 0.7

5 out of 7 dropped
1 out of 7 stayed the same
1 out 7 went up

In the latest in-year collection figures that have been released by the DCLG for 2012/13 the average council tax collected by Local Authorities is 97.4% and at Great Yarmouth we collected 97.5%.

For us the drop in collection rates, as well as being the current economic climate, could be attributed to factors such as;

- We had a number of vacancies that took a longer time to fill during the councils restructuring and budget setting exercise
- We issued 1800 more reminder notices and 80 more summonses in 2012/13 compared with 2011/12

There is no evidence that sickness within the service had an impact on the collection rate.

In money terms the 0.2% is in total around £75,000, of which the County's element would be about £60,000, £7,500 for the Police and £7,500 for GYBC. These figures are of course in-year collection and it does not mean the amount is lost, as we continue to collect the money and use enforcement processes to do so in future financial years.

5. Sickness Absence

PM010 – Sickness absence had increased from the previous year. The Committee asked how this compared with other authorities. The Corporate Policy & Performance Officer stated that there was no longer national data on this, but Norfolk authorities still share this information, although Councils do measure sickness in different ways. Comparable data for Norfolk authorities will be presented to the next Committee.

Authority	2010/11 FTE	2011/12 FTE	2012/13 FTE
Breckland	8.54	not provided	7.09
Broadland	5.90	7.30	5.50
Great Yarmouth	10.28	8.48	10.34
King's Lynn	8.79	6.99	8.62
North Norfolk	8.87	5.17	6.80
Norwich City	11.17	8.98	10.84
South Norfolk	8.32	7.84	9.58

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS: None

EXECUTIVE BOARD OR DIRECTOR CONSULTATION: Director Of resources, Governance & Growth

RECOMMENDATIONS

Does this report raise any legal, financial, sustainability, equality, Crime and Disorder or Human Rights issues and, if so, have they been considered?	Issues	No
	Legal	No
	Financial	No
	Risk	No
	Sustainability	No
	Crime and Disorder	No
	Human Rights	No
	Every Child Matters	No
	Equality	No
	EqlA Form completed	No