

## **Quarter 1 progress - to end June 2014/15**

The following updates are given against targets in the Council's Corporate Plan 2014/15 – 2016/17.

Targets are listed under the service responsible for delivery. By achieving these targets, the Council will be delivering our overarching priorities for 2014/15 shown below. These are listed in no particular order:

### **Corporate Priorities**

The targets show how we will be working to deliver our 6 overarching priorities during 2014/15, as set out below.

### **Fairness and Equality**

To provide high quality services that meet the needs and improve the quality of life of all our citizens, promoting equality of opportunity through a culture of openness, fairness and transparency, enabling local people to hold us to account.

### **Economic & Physical Regeneration**

To secure economic & physical regeneration that produces high quality new developments while preserving the best of our heritage, promoting infrastructure improvements, economic growth and employment, particularly in tourism, creative industries, and high-tech manufacturing & research

### **Narrowing the Gap**

To 'narrow the gap' between the opportunities of our most deprived communities and those of the rest of the town, as well as between Hastings and the rest of the South East.

### **Facing Financial Challenges**

To meet the current financial challenges by maximising the resources available to us through efficiency improvements, income generation, attracting external funding and investigate sharing services, maintaining an organisation that values its staff and is good to work for.

### **Interventionist Council**

To keep the town clean, safe and attractive, using direct actions to tackle environmental crime, poor housing, eyesore properties, derelict land and improvements to the public realm.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

To tackle climate change and improve the borough's environment by reducing our own carbon footprint, maintaining high-quality green spaces, promoting sustainable transport, and encouraging 'green' industries.

## FINANCIAL SERVICES

### 1. Achieve an unqualified audit opinion for the annual statement of accounts.

Measure: Unqualified audit opinion gained by 30<sup>th</sup> September.

#### **Performance @ QTR 1 – On Target**

Progress – The external auditors are continuing to review the accounts. Audit Committee will consider these at a meeting on the 25 September 2014. An unqualified audit opinion is currently anticipated.

### 2. Maintain the high occupancy of industrial units against a background of an uncertain economic environment.

Measures: Percentage of void industrial units and actual income versus the budget.

#### **Performance @ QTR 1 – On Target**

Progress –

#### Void units

Factory units 3 out of 62 vacant = 4.8% void (Q4 0%)

1 of the vacant units (12/14 Theaklen Drive) is being partly refurbished, to include a new roof, under phase 2 of the ACE project. This work is due to be completed by the end of September 2014.

Castleham Business Centre East (new) 3 out of 17 vacant = 17.6% void (Q4 17.6%)

Castleham Business Centre West 2 out of 20 vacant = 10% void (Q4 25%)

#### Actual income versus the budget

No material variations identified at this stage

### 3. Monitor developments in the potential rollout of the Government's new 'Universal Credit' scheme and take appropriate preparatory action as necessary.

Measure: Submit updates to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees when further steps are clarified and detail the implications for the Council and the community.

#### **Performance @ QTR 1 – On Target**

Progress – No major developments to report. The rollout of Universal Credit is estimated to be in 2016/17.

### 4. Review the current Council Tax Support Scheme and consider implications for 2015/16 onwards.

Measure: Current Council Tax Support System reviewed.

#### **Performance @ QTR 1 – On Target**

Progress – A joint review by east sussex authorities has taken place and authorities will be recommended to make no fundamental changes for 2015/16. Work is being progressed over the next few months across East

Sussex to review the potential for changes in 2016/17 and beyond. Any recommendations for 2016/17 and beyond will need to be considered by Hastings Borough Council in the first quarter of 2015/16.

**5. Implement the outcomes of the Revenues and Benefits ‘Customer First and Efficiency’ Service Reviews.**

Measure: Both reviews to be completed in the early part of 2014 and subsequent actions implemented as timetabled.

**Performance @ QTR 1 – On Target**

Progress – The Revenues Service review has been completed and actions are being progressed. The first priority being to update the website and make the information more accessible. This first step has been actioned , and further enhancements will follow shortly as the website becomes more functional in late August and September 2014.

The Benefits review will be commenced after the summer break. Lessons learned from the revenues review are being actioned in the meantime.

**6. Give priority within the shared Fraud Investigation Service to more serious cases, working within the Single Fraud Investigation Service requirements.**

Measure: Number of serious cases investigated.

**Performance @ QTR 1 – On target**

Progress – Investigations investigated and closed 7 serious cases in the first quarter, 2014/15, compared to 3 cases in the same period last year.

**7. Continue to deliver the annual Audit Plan and report outcomes to the Audit Committee.**

Measure: Comparison of audits completed against those on the published audit plan reported in the annual audit report.

**Performance @ QTR 1 – On target**

Progress – All assignments started and are on plan.

**8. Continue to maximise the benefits from the Council’s procurement arrangements, working in collaboration with other local authorities, the East Sussex Procurement Hub and other partners.**

Measures: Value for money contracts secured, savings achieved and procurement arrangements completed.

**Performance @ QTR 1 – On target**

Progress – The following procurement activity was concluded during quarter 1 by the East Sussex Procurement Hub (ESPH).

<b>Contract Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
Corporate Banking Services	Contract awarded June 2014	Included 5 other District and Borough Councils securing c.25% saving on

Merchant Services	Contract awarded June 2014	current costs. Included 3 other District and Borough Councils securing c.35% saving on current costs.
White Rock Sound System	Contract awarded May 2014	System spec exceeded pre-tender estimates and achieved within budget.
Empty Homes Review	Agreement negotiated April 2014	3 year agreement in place securing 50% reduction in previous years cost.
E-tendering and Supplier Portal	Contract awarded May 2014	Allows the ESPH to undertake electronic procurement and engage with Small Medium Enterprises and local businesses more effectively on behalf of Hastings and other members.

**9. Following the decision by the Cooperative Bank to terminate local authority banking services, identify a new bank for the Council's financial transactions.**

Measure: New banking arrangements established by March 2015.

**Performance @ QTR 1 – On Target**

Progress – Following a competitive tendering exercise in partnership with the other East Sussex Borough and District Councils and Crawley BC, Lloyds Bank have been appointed as the Councils bankers.

Hastings BC will be the first of the local authorities to transfer, and the work has already commenced.

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

**Notes**

6.2 Non domestic rates collected in year – collection rates during the year will be lower this year than last year due to many businesses taking up the opportunity to pay in 12 monthly instalments through the year, where previously they paid in 10 instalments. The targets for quarters 1 – 3 have been adjusted to take

account of lower collection rates during the year, but the overall target for the year or 97.5% is unchanged from the target agreed in the Corporate Plan. While the Q1 figure is currently below the revised target it is anticipated that the overall target will be achieved by the end of the year.

Name	Improvement Direction	Actual Jun 2013	Direction of Travel	Actual Jun 2014	Status Jun 2014	Target Jun 2014	Yearend Target Mar 2015
6.1 % Council Tax collected in year	Bigger is better	34.9%	Worse	34.5%	Not Met	35.4%	96.0%
6.2 % Non domestic rates collected in year	Bigger is better	36.1%	Worse	33.9%	Not Met	35.0%	97.5%
6.3 Average number of days to process new housing benefit claims	Smaller is better	14.7	Better	12.9	Met	15.0	15.0
6.4 Average number of days to process changes to housing benefit claims	Smaller is better	4.6	Worse	6.9	Not Met	5.0	5.0
6.5 Average number of days to process new Council Tax Reduction claims	Smaller is better	13.6	Worse	13.9	Met	15.0	15.0
6.6 Average number of days to process changes to Council Tax Reduction claims	Smaller is better	1.9	Worse	5.3	Not Met	5.0	5.0

## **CORPORATE SERVICES**

### **1. Continue to support local democracy by the effective delivery of electoral services activities.**

Measures:

- a) Successful management of the 2014 European Parliamentary and Borough Council elections.
- b) Successful completion of annual absent voter Personal Identifier refresh in spring 2015.
- c) Preparation for UK Parliamentary election in May 2015.

#### **Performance @ QTR 1 – On target**

Progress –

- a) The 2014 combined elections were successfully managed and achieved to timeframe. This involved staff working to new and complex statutory deadlines for both local and European elections.
- b) No information to report at this stage.
- c) Initial discussions already ongoing with neighbouring authority with regard to planning for the 2015 UK Parliamentary election.

### **2. Prepare for a successful transition to Individual Elector Registration during autumn 2014.**

Measures:

- a) Meet the performance standards and timescales as determined and prescribed by the Cabinet Office.

#### **Performance @ QTR 1 – On target**

Progress –

IER went live on 10 June 2014, with staff well prepared for the initial transition over the summer. Software issues have meant slight delays in initial write out process, although the first stage is now complete, with the two remaining reminder stages due in the coming weeks.

As expected, there has been many queries coming through the Community Contact Centre, but intensive training has meant that the majority of calls are being dealt with at this stage, with only more complex queries needing to be diverted to elections staff.

Councillors were given a comprehensive briefing session on IER on 17 July, which appeared to be well received.

### **3. Continue to facilitate the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to act as the principal strategic forum for collaboration between service providers, community representatives, the voluntary and private sectors.**

Measures:

- a) LSP Board supported to work effectively; work in partnership with key stakeholders to deliver services which respond to locally identified need, and act as a collective voice with a shared vision for shaping the town.

#### **Performance @ QTR 1 – On Target**

Progress –

The Chair of the LSP rotates every 2 years and the Board thanked Clive Galbraith from the Chamber of Commerce for chairing the Board on behalf of the business sector. The chair is now held by Marie Casey, Chief Executive of SEAP (South East advice and advocacy providers) on behalf of the Community and Voluntary Sector.

The July 2014 meeting focussed on the community development work ongoing in East Hastings under the Big Local project. The Board accepted an invitation to hold a future meeting in East Hastings at Ore Downs Farm. The LSP also received a presentation from ESCC on strategic transport including the link road, high speed rail proposals and the dualing of the A21.

#### **4. Support the Council's transformation to a leaner, more resilient organisation which remains focussed on delivering outcomes for local people as well as supporting and valuing its staff.**

Measures:

- a) Support managers and staff to ensure the Council's workforce is equipped to meet new challenges and ways of working.
- b) Assist teams to undertake service process re-design and identify opportunities for efficiency, maintaining service quality and improving customer service.
- c) Support staff throughout the change process, work with the Staff Commission and solicit regular staff feedback to inform strategic planning.

#### **Performance @ QTR 1 – On Target**

Progress –

- a) An annual training programme has been designed and is being delivered to assist in changing the Council's way of working. The focus is on creating a workforce that is flexible and adaptable to on-going change with competence and confidence to deliver business priorities. For example, after the Customer Care Training, 92% of participants reported that they found the course extremely useful as they had learnt things they could use in their current roles. Additional courses are being rolled out in October, 2014.  
Work is also continuing to review HR policies and procedures with the aim of revising them to reflect a modern and robust organisation, aligned to the Council's 'One Team' vision to build a modern and efficient organisation that is responsive to customer needs.
- b) Work with services to undertake process and service re-design is continuing. Examples include input to the Housing Services Review and developing a new staff rota system for the Contact Centre to increase efficiency and enhance resource management.
- c) The Staff Commission continues to meet and the main focus is the accommodation refurbishment project and the impact on the teams. A communication strategy has been agreed and staff receive regular updates from the project manager. An 'aquila-accommodation' email address is being used for all queries to ensure consistency of response and consideration of proposals put forward by members of staff.

## **5. Support and equip Members to effectively undertake their roles and responsibilities.**

Measures:

- a) Annual work programme of Scrutiny Reviews completed to time, cost and specification.
- b) Progress against Corporate Plan targets reviewed quarterly by Overview and Scrutiny Committees to aid transparency about Council performance.
- c) Comprehensive programme of Member training and briefings delivered according to priorities set by the Training and Development Group.
- d) Following the conclusions of the i-pad trial and the roll out of the new Mod Gov committee administration system, support Members to contribute to the achievement of modern and paper-light working arrangements.

### **Performance @ QTR 1 – On target**

Progress –

- a) Services and Resources scrutiny committees met jointly in June to agree an ambitious work programme for the municipal year. Reviews on 'outsourced contracts' and 'engaging with academies' commence in August and late September (the latter is subject to involvement of key partners).
- b) The Scrutiny Steering Group met in July to take forward their priorities, this involved refining timescales for reviews, scheduling updates for quarterly meetings and performance management against outstanding actions from the previous quarter.
- c) Members' induction and associated schedule of training was completed following the May elections. The Members Training and Development Group will review the associated post training evaluation as part of their autumn meeting schedule.
- d) The Mod Gov committee system went live to the public in July and will be used for internal meetings following the summer break. A further plan of work is scheduled to enable full implementation of the Mod Gov system. The vast majority of Members use iPad type tablet devices. 20 iPads are provided directly by HBC. Other Members have elected to use their own or County Council devices.

## **6. Continue the rolling programme of reviewing the Council's Constitution with elected members, to make our decision making processes as transparent and accessible as possible.**

Measures:

- a) Working Arrangements Group (WAG) convened and recommendations made to Council for appropriate changes to the Constitution arising from practical experience, feedback, legislative requirements, and to make it more user friendly.

### **Performance @ QTR 1 – N/A**

Progress – WAG has not met in quarter 1, the next meeting is being scheduled for a date in September.



**7. Facilitate and promote 'Switched On Hastings' to encourage local people to take part in collective energy switching, whereby bulk buying power at an energy auction may result in individuals saving money on their energy bills.**

Measure:

- a) Participate in at least two further energy auctions.

**Performance @ QTR 1 – On Target**

Progress – Preparations are underway to take part in the October 2014 auction, promotion will begin in early September.

**8. Project manage the European-funded 'Future Cities' project to support climate change adaptation activities.**

Measures:

- a) Build upon the successful development of the 'Adaptation Compass' tool for developing climate-proof cities, by engaging with other local authority areas to assist them to understand and use the tools to visualise the social, economic and business benefits of adapting our towns and cities.
- b) Work with European partners to build upon project delivery experience and excellent networks to develop environmental and low carbon project proposals for the Interreg V 2014 – 2020 regional development funding stream.

**Performance @ QTR 1 – On Target**

Progress –

- a) The Adaptation Compass has been promoted with the Coastal Futures User Group, and as a result a workshop has been planned to support the development of the Lewes and Newhaven Neighbourhood Plans and regeneration plans for Seaford.
  
- b) Discussions are underway with our Future Cities, Ecofab, Ace & Safe Ice partners about future project ideas in preparation for the next round of EU funding.

**9. Contribute to the Council's Customer First priority by delivering a high quality, effective and efficient Community Contact Centre and Tourist Information Centre.**

Measures:

- a) Continue to improve the quality and timeliness of personal and telephone caller's experience of using our service, with a focus on 'right first time'.
  
- b) Work with colleagues to continually refine and improve the whole customer journey, from first point of contact to resolution, based on intelligence gained from monitoring customer enquiries and feedback.

**Performance @ QTR 1 – On Target**

Progress –

- a) The quality and timeliness of personal and telephone experience continues to improve, the information below compares performance in qtr 1 last year and qtr1 this year.

**Phones**

- 21% more calls answered
- 15 second shorter talk time
- 40 second shorter wait time

Date	No of Calls	% Calls Answered	Average talk time	Average wait time
Quarter 1 2013	42762	59.2%	00:04:09	00:07:03
Quarter 1 2014	31,585	80.0%	00:03:54	00:06:22

#### Face to Face

- 3:31 shorter assistance time
- 2:59 shorter wait time

Date	Customers	Avg assistance time	Avg wait time
Q1 2013/14	8692	00:13:34	00:20:57
Q1 2014/15	6724	00:10:05	00:17:59

b) The Contact Centre staff are integral to the service reviews being undertaken. Improvement planning and activity is already underway even where reviews are not yet complete. Activity following the Revenues Review includes:

- Work with team to redesign customer web pages to be more user friendly and use simpler language (assessed by the 'SMOG' test – will explain at the meeting)
- Joined up Revenues/CCC team meetings, visits and Buddy system implemented Contact centre meetings and contact centre staff to revenues meetings.
- Use of social media to highlight Council Tax reminders being issued
- Analysing phone/face to face and web contact to improve costs and efficiencies
- Recovery timetable change to allow longer for residents to pay their council tax before reminders are sent therefore reducing unnecessary contact
- Further work is planned to streamline the Council Tax recovery process, improvements already include giving the CCC more authority to deal with revenue queries, instigate payment plans, and Team Leaders can suspend Bailiff action in agreed circumstances.

#### 10. Promote a culture of transparency in everything the Council does.

Measures:

a) Details of Council assets, pay policy, senior management salaries, resources, decision making, contracts and spending published to aid transparency.

- b) Freedom of Information and other data requests responded to within legislative timescales.
- c) Implement a refreshed corporate complaints process following a detailed review in 2013/14.

#### **Performance @ QTR 1 – On Target**

Progress –

- a) The council is fully complying with transparency legislation and guidance, e.g. we publish annually our pay policy and senior management salaries and we are putting in place processes to comply with the new transparency regulations which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2014.
- b) FOI requests are continually increasing but we are meeting the majority of deadlines despite the additional pressure this puts on services.
- c) Officers have identified a system that will assist with monitoring and keeping track of all complaints – a business case is being developed and further information may be available by the date of the O&S Committee meeting.

#### **11. Deliver an effective Legal Service that plays a key role in delivery of Council priorities.**

Measures:

- a) Provision of strategic legal advice for key projects, policies and procedures (including standards, Freedom of Information, Data Protection etc).
- b) Activity to support enforcement and secure prosecutions; robustly defend the Council against actions brought against it.
- c) Activity to ensure the Council is appropriately protected in terms of contracts and property transactions and planning and is effective at collection of debts and charges against property.
- d) Ensure effective Corporate Governance – appropriate legal advice given to all to support decision making, including quasi-judicial committees and boards.

#### **Performance @ QTR 1 – On Target**

Progress –

- a) Legal Services continue to provide advice for high profile matters such as Rocklands. They are currently working with Environmental Health to inform a policy in regard to litter and waste enforcement. Legal Services have drafted byelaws in regard to the Promenade, Seashore, Pleasure Parks and Nature Reserves. These will go out for informal consultation with a view to becoming effective in Spring 2015.
- b) Legal Services have taken eleven successful prosecutions to court, administered six formal cautions and won two further court cases where the defendant pleaded not guilty. These cases cover most areas of the Council's enforcement functions. Legal Services have met the demands of serving all papers in regard to the Pier arbitration. The Council are awaiting the decision from the Supreme Court as to whether we will be given leave to appeal.

- c) Legal Services have secured £20,000 Council tax debt by the application to Court for eight charging orders. They have also secured five attachment of earnings and four payment arrangements in respect of Housing Benefit debt. They have collected over £10,000 in other sundry debts. Five leases have been completed and eleven contracts.
- d) Legal Services have given training on induction to members on the Code of Conduct, Constitution, Planning, Licensing, Museums and Environment and Safety  
Legal Services also contributed to the successful production of Annual Council.

### PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Name	Improvement Direction	Actual Jun 2013	Direction of Travel	Actual Jun 2014	Status Jun 2014	Target Jun 2014	Yearend Target Mar 2015
7.1 The proportion of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence	Smaller is better	1.46	Worse	1.55	Met	1.55	6.25

Sickness absence for QTR 1 is up on last year due to an increase in short term absence due to a variety of 24 hour bugs such as D & V, chest complaints etc.

## Cross Cutting Targets

### 1. DELIVERING SERVICES INTO THE FUTURE

**Brief:** Prepare for further significant reductions in Council spending in the future whilst prioritising the activities and projects the Council has capacity to deliver.

**Director:** Neil Dart

**Contributions:** Strategic Leadership Board and all HBC staff

**Lead Member:** Cllr Birch

**O & S:** Resources

**2014/15 Targets**

- a) Undertake a programme of Customer First and Efficiency reviews, prioritising those with the potential for biggest gains in efficiency, cost savings, and/or resilience.
- b) Seek out and explore opportunities for new service delivery models, including shared services where this will provide efficiencies or resilience.
- c) Deliver a programme of consultation to test local priorities with local people and staff.
- d) Complete a Priority Income Efficiency Review process to inform the 2015/16 budget.
- e) Produce and publish a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- f) Agree a significantly revised Corporate Plan and a Budget for 2015/16 onwards in February 2015.

#### **Performance @ QTR 1 – On Target**

Progress –

- a) The Revenues Review has been completed and a Service Improvement Group has been established to co-ordinate the implementation of the recommendations and priorities improvements over the next few quarters. The Housing Options Review has almost completed and the Benefits review will commence in the early autumn.
- b) Shared service discussions are explored wherever opportunities arise – there is no significant progress to report this quarter.
- c) Consultation on the draft budget and corporate plan will be planned in the early autumn.
- d) The Corporate PIER process commenced significantly earlier this year as proposals for addressing the significant funding gap facing the council are explored.
- e) The draft MTFS will be presented to Cabinet in November
- f) Work is underway to revise the format and process of preparing the Council's Corporate Plan, this will engage Heads of Service and Lead Members in early autumn and a draft Corporate Plan will be available from mid January 2015.

### 2. CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT

**Brief:** To maintain an environment where risk management is an integral part of planning and performance management processes and the general culture of the Authority.

**Director:** Richard Homewood  
**Contributions:** All Heads of Service  
**Lead Member:** Cllr Birch  
**O & S:** Resources  
**2013/14 Targets**  
a) To maintain an overview of Corporate and Operational risks to the Council.  
b) To formally review the Corporate Risk Register and report to Audit Committee during 2014/15.  
c) To formally review the Operational Risk Register and report to Audit Committee during 2014/15.  
d) To maintain an overview of the Council's Health and Safety Risk Management Policy and procedures.

### **Performance @ QTR 1 – On Target**

- a) The Corporate Risk Management Group meets quarterly and reviews the Corporate and Operational risk registers, monitors insurance claims and procedures for mitigating risk.
- b) The Corporate Risk Register is reviewed quarterly and was reported to Audit Committee on 26 June 2014.
- c) The Operational Risk Register is reviewed quarterly and was reported to Audit Committee on 26 June 2014.
- d) The Health and Safety and Risk Management Policy and procedures are routinely reviewed throughout the year. The Fire risk management and Alert Scheme were reviewed during the year.

### **3. ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

**Brief:** To provide strategic coordination and advice to the Council's policy and forward planning processes, ensuring the Council is maximizing opportunities to tackle climate change and make Hastings more environmentally sustainable.

**Director:** Richard Homewood  
**Contributions:** All Heads of Service  
**Lead Member:** Cllr Birch  
**O & S:** Resources  
**2013/14 Target(s)**

- a) Oversee and coordinate the implementation of the 2014/15 actions in the HBC Environmental Policy and Climate Change Action Plan.**
- b) Review opportunities for exploiting external funding to support corporate environmental objectives.**
- c) Deliver our 2014/15 Climate Local Commitments.**

#### **Performance @ QTR 1 – On Target**

a, b & c ) Progress – the final year of the Future Cities project is underway - a meeting has been held with another EU project to promote the Adaptation Compass to a wider audience. Workshops are being planned for the summer.

Planning is underway to promote the next 'Switch on Hastings' collective energy campaign – the auction will take place in mid-October

Discussions are underway with our European partners to develop projects for future rounds of EU funding.

We continue to take every opportunity to improve the Council's use of natural resources, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and energy efficiency. The conversion of decorative and car park lighting installations to LED is producing significant cost savings as well as increased efficiency. Voltage and boiler regulators have now been installed throughout Council properties; water conservation measures are now installed and usage monitored in all public conveniences. Energy efficiency measures are incorporated into every industrial estate and office refurbishment project.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Per capita reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the Local Authority area and  
Percentage CO<sub>2</sub> reductions from local authority operations

## 4. CORPORATE EQUALITIES

**Brief:** Put the needs of service users at the heart of delivery so that we are responsive to the needs of people with protected characteristics.

NB Under the Equality Act 2010 the Council has a duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people in our town.
- Foster good relations.
- Identify priority actions for each year.

**Director:** Neil Dart  
**Contributions:** All Heads of Service  
**Lead Member:** Cllr Chowney  
**O & S:** Resources

**2014/15 Target(s)** Our equality objective is to: *"To provide high quality services that meet the needs and improve the quality of life of all our citizens, promoting equality of opportunity through a culture of openness, fairness and transparency, enabling local people to hold us to account"*

Specific 2014/15 actions include:

- a) The Corporate Equalities Steering Group to oversee how well services are meeting the needs of our communities.
- b) Carry out Equality Impact Assessments on major new Council policies to make sure that where possible, policies and services do not disadvantage any one part of the community more than the rest.
- c) To comply with the specific duties of the Equality Act 2010, and produce an annual equality statistical report which includes statistical information on our workforce including recruitment, promotions and staff turnover (by 31<sup>st</sup> January each year).
- d) Ensure our workforce profile reflects best practice in recruitment, and that through open and honest dialogue with staff we develop a culture of inclusion and openness.

- e) Ensure HBC continues to be an employer that pays a 'Living Wage' and work with our contractors to enable them to achieve this accreditation over appropriate time periods.
- f) Promote communications which celebrate diversity and showcase residents' contributions to their community and to cohesion on an ongoing basis.

### **Performance @ QTR 1 – On Target**

Progress –

- a) The Equalities Steering Group is developing its work programme priorities by reviewing the perceptions and issues highlighted by Lead Members for each of their portfolio areas of responsibility.
- b) The identification of necessary Equality Impact Assessments is monitored by the ESG – to date the timetable for 2014/15 includes Budget and Corporate Plan, this will be enhanced as other appropriate work-streams are progressed.
- c) No information to report, deadline is qtr 3
- d) We have an establishment of 360 actual heads. The gender split is 54% female and 46% male. There has been an increase in requests for reduced hours, secondary employment as staff are preparing themselves for future changes within the workplace e.g they are seeking other opportunities outside the Council to enhance their skills or make a career change through further education.
- e) The living wage has been adopted by the Council and all staff directly contracted to work for the Council receive a living wage hourly rate or higher. The responses from contractors who employ staff to work on HBC awarded contracts has been poor. The project will be protracted as there are a number of milestones to cover e.g review of procurement arrangements to identify opportunities to pay living wage on new contracts at the point of re-letting or tendering for new contracts, this will include discussions with contractors to identify possible variations to existing contracts and agree a timeframe, cost implications for Council contractors to bring pay in line., EU procurement rules as any Living Wage uplift has the potential to vary an existing contract.
- f) Our communications team ensure that our marketing and promotional literature reflects the diversity of our residents and visitors, and one of the team is attending a meeting of the BME practitioners group in September to discuss how our material might be improved.

## **5. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

**Brief:** To oversee the transformation of HBC to a 'Customer First' Council that operates as 'One Team'

**Director:** Neil Dart

**Contributions:** All Heads of Service and HBC Staff

**Lead Member:** Cllr Birch

**O & S:** Resources

**2014/15 Target(s)** a) Develop a Customer First Strategy for HBC setting out our vision and approach to customer service across HBC, and



publish a Customer Charter clarifying the level of service our service users should expect.

b) Develop and manage a programme of culture change and improvement activity (including the incubation of new ideas and innovations).

c) Maximise opportunities for the efficient use of office floor space in parallel with smarter working including flexible, mobile and home working, where possible release space for sub-letting to third parties

d) Maximise use of electronic communications and technology to assist smooth service delivery and customer care.

e) Receive and respond to feedback from staff engagement including the Staff Commission.

f) Oversee complaints and compliments trends and ensure learning points are shared.

### **Performance @ QTR 1 – On Target**

Progress –

- a) The draft Customer First Strategy will be submitted to the ODG in early autumn as part of a wider Transformation Strategy for HBC covering 2014 – 2016, the working title is ‘Doing it Differently’. This will encompass all aspects of change including working practices (assisted by the accommodation project), Digital By Default, and service re-design for efficiency and customer service.
- b) The culture change programme will be reflected in the strategy outlined in a) above.
- c) Good progress is being made with changing the organisations approach to smarter working including office layout and work styles. The refurbishment works to Aquila House have been a catalyst for change which staff have embraced. The roll out of supporting IT equipment has assisted this acceptance of the need for change – most officers will be using the new soft phones on their laptops thereby enabling ‘location independent’ working.
- d) Proposals are being developed and a business case created for investment in a new software package that will assist in meeting the Council’s aspirations for better customer care and self service.
- e) The next Staff Commission meeting is scheduled for 18<sup>th</sup> September – a verbal update will be given at the meeting.

### **6. ANTI POVERTY AND WELFARE REFORM**

Continue to monitor and co-ordinate HBC and partnership activity in response to the impact of welfare reform on our local residents

**Director:** Simon Hubbard

**Contributions:** All Heads of Service

**Lead Member:** Cllr Forward

**O & S:** Resources

#### **2014/15 Targets**

a) Take forward with statutory and voluntary sector partners the implementation of the Hastings & St Leonards Anti Poverty Strategy Action Plan.

b) Continue to assess and monitor the impact of welfare benefit changes upon inward migration and proactively work

with partners to develop adequate responses to emerging trends.

c) Review progress and adjust the action plan accordingly by September 2014

### **Performance @ QTR 1 – On Target**

#### Progress

- a) Anti poverty steering group operational and bringing together key statutory and voluntary agencies across the town.
- b) Approaches being made to academic institutions regarding how best to monitor the wider long term impact of welfare reforms on Hastings. Invitation also extended to London homelessness officers group to visit Hasting to better understand the potential impact of inward migration from capital to coast.
- c) Anti poverty coordinator in post and review of key activity and targets within the action plan being reviewed ahead of next anti poverty group meeting in September.