

## Quarter 2 2014/15 Exception Report Summary

The following targets for this committee's area of responsibility in Part II of the Council's 2014/15 Corporate Plan have been identified as exceptions.

Please note, 'Exceptions' are defined as those targets not meeting expected performance and targets achieved. Full details of 'Target Status' are listed in the accompanying covering report.

Target no./Service	Target Status
1. Financial Services - Achieve an unqualified audit opinion for the annual statement of accounts.	Achieved
4. Financial Services - Council Tax Support Scheme	Achieved
5. Financial Services - Revenues and Benefits 'Customer First and Efficiency' Service Reviews.	Slippage Possible
6. Financial Services - Fraud Investigation Service serious cases	Achieved

## 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 2 – Achieved**

Progress – The Accounts were considered by the Audit Committee on the 25 September 2014. The Foreshore Trust Accounts also received an unqualified opinion – the Charity committee agreed the accounts on the 29 September 2014

### 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 2 – On Target**

Progress:

##### Void units

Factory units 3 out of 62 vacant = 4.8% void

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

Castleham Business Centre West 2 out of 20 vacant = 10% void

There have been various moves in and out but the void rates are all unchanged since last quarter.

##### Actual income versus the budget

Income is currently £50,000 above budget due to less voids than expected and unbudgeted rent increases.

### 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 2 – On Target**

Progress – The DWP have announced that there will be an earlier than planned roll out of Universal Credit in 2015. Indications have been received that this may be by April 2015 for a limited number of claimants. Once any information is actually received, this along with any implications for the Council will be reported.

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

Measure: Current Council Tax Support System reviewed.

#### **Performance @ QTR 2 – Achieved**

Progress – Council has agreed to keep the current scheme in place for 2015/16. Investigative work is underway for potential options to amend the scheme for 2016/17 onwards.

**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 2 – Slippage Possible**

Progress – The Revenues review has been undertaken and subsequent actions implemented. A report on the actions taken is to be produced.

The benefits review has not been undertaken in the early part of 2014. Discussions have taken place with Shelter to undertake the review and costed proposals to undertake this significant review are awaited.

**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 2 – Achieved**

Progress – Between 01/04/14 – 30/09/14 a total of 19 serious cases (over £2k) were sanctioned worth £213,400 compared to 8 serious cases worth £66,463 for the same period last year.

This is the last reporting period for the shared Fraud Investigation Service as they will be transferring to the Department for Work and Pensions Single Fraud Investigation Service (DWP SFIS) on 1 November 2014.

**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 2 – On target**

Progress – Completion of the annual Audit Plan is on profile.

**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 2 – On target**

Progress – The following procurement activity was undertaken during quarter 2 by the East Sussex Procurement Hub (ESPH).

<b>Contract Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
White Rock Baths – Lead Consultant	September 2014	Contract awarded in line with timescales and budget estimate.
CCTV Control Room Relocation of Hastings Control room to Aquila House	September 2014	Contract awarded through Sussex Police agreement with BT.
(* The tender for the upgrade of cameras is to follow)		
Council Tax Single Person Discount Review	September 2014	Full review of all discounts now underway and co-ordinated across East Sussex by the Hub
Advertising and Sponsorship Feasibility Study	August 2014	Contract awarded for countywide review of opportunities to provide revenue from advertising and sponsorship of assets and events.

**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 2 – On Target**

Progress – Lloyds Bank were the successful tenderer – this followed a joint procurement exercise by authorities in East Sussex plus Crawley. Work has been underway for the last few months to set up new accounts and change payment and income arrangements.

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

6.2 In year targets for NNDR collection have been adjusted to take account of increasing collection over 12 payments in the year, not 10. The yearend target of 97.5% remains the same as agreed in the Corporate Plan.

Name	Improvement Direction	Actual Sep 2013	Direction of Travel	Actual Sep 2014	Status Sep 2014	Target Sep 2014	Yearend Target Mar 2015
6.1 % Council Tax collected in year	Bigger is better	62.3%	Worse	61.8%	Not Met	63.1%	96.0%
6.2 % Non domestic rates collected in year	Bigger is better	62.2%	Worse	59.6%	Met	59.5%	97.5%
6.3 Average number of days to process new housing benefit claims	Smaller is better	13.6	Better	13.4	Met	15.0	15.0
6.4 Average number of days to process changes to housing benefit claims	Smaller is better	4.1	Worse	7.0	Not Met	5.0	5.0
6.5 Average number of days to process new Council Tax Reduction claims	Smaller is better	12.7	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	2.3	Worse	5.6	Not Met	5.0	5.0

## **CORPORATE SERVICES**

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

Measures:

- a) All statutory timetables and performance standards met in line with Electoral Commission requirements for:
  - 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 2 – On Target**

Progress:

- a) 2014 elections completed successfully; expenses claim for European Parliamentary election almost complete;
- b) No information to report at this stage.
- c) Initial preparations underway for the UK Parliamentary election in May 2015. Planning sessions taken place with other East Sussex authorities, in order to maintain a cohesive approach. More detailed discussions underway with Rother DC as to management planning for Hastings and Rye constituency.

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

Measure: Meet the performance standards and timescales as determined and prescribed by the Cabinet Office.

#### **Performance @ QTR 2 – On Target**

Progress – The transitional canvass has now reached its final stage, the personal door to door canvass. Canvassers will be attempting to retrieve household details using the Household Enquiry Forms (HEF) and to encourage registration with individuals through the Invitation to Register forms (ITR).

There are still significant software issues; these have been escalated to Cabinet Office, who is aware of the challenges IER has caused and are working with the software suppliers in an attempt to resolve. The issues we are facing are shared with other local authorities nationally.

The workload for the team has increased significantly as the interaction with electors in terms of communication and correspondence is much greater than previously. The number of complaints has increased quite significantly with the introduction of IER, it is a complex system to understand and administer. A significant number of electors are not automatically matching through DWP records (name, date of birth, national insurance number), and in these cases, we have to adopt the 'exceptions process', asking for evidence of identity to be produced, or an attestation. This has caused distress to a number of electors, particularly those who are elderly, as they simply do not have the means of verifying their identity,

coupled with a lack of understanding of the system. Cabinet Office is aware that IER is complex and involves too much interaction with an elector. They are looking at ways in which they can simplify.

**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 2 – On Target**

The October 2014 Board meeting focussed on education. Stuart Gallimore, Director of Children's Services, ESCC gave a presentation on the latest KS4 results for 2014 (unvalidated data) and outlined ESCC's response to the Ofsted inspection of the local authority's arrangements for supporting school improvement. He also talked about the evolving role for ESCC as an education authority, in view of schools converting to academies.

The Board also heard from the Principal of Ark William Parker - Paul Griffiths, Dean at the University of Brighton, who is representing the university as lead sponsor of the Hastings Academy Trust.

Also on the agenda was an update on seawater bathing quality jointly presented by Virginia Gilbert and Southern Water. The Board accepted the invitation to hold the October meeting in East Hastings at Downs Farm Community Centre, in Ore.

**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 2 – On Target**

Progress:

- a) A key feature of this year's corporate training programme is customer care training. This has now been rolled out to the majority of customer facing staff. The work to review HR policies and procedures continues – e.g. the Work Life Balance Policy has been reviewed to comply with new legislation and has been amended to reflect changing working practices. Significant support has been given to staff to support them in introducing

new working practices arising from the accommodation project. Guidance has been prepared for managers new to or adjusting to managing staff working away from the office, i.e. managing by output.

- b) A project plan to implement a Digital by Design approach to service delivery using new software has been developed and is in final stages of approval and procurement. This project will be a key arm of the Council's transformation programme and will assist with identification of efficiencies, improvement of a 'one team' working style and a strengthened customer first approach to service design and delivery. (A detailed briefing will be given to Members shortly).
- c) The Staff Commission continues to meet and the main focus is the accommodation refurbishment project and the impact on the teams. The three-yearly re-accreditation review for our Investors in People status was completed by 20<sup>th</sup> October - the result will be advised shortly.

## **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 2 – On Target**

Progress:

- a) The scrutiny review of outsourced contracts is well underway and the review on engaging academies will commence in mid-October as scheduled. A working group made up of a cross section of scrutiny members also met with the leader and deputy leader this quarter to seek their views on organisational transformation.
- b) Scrutiny Steering Group met to agree agendas for quarter two scrutiny meetings and to follow up on any outstanding performance related issues from quarter one, including the presentation on the joint waste contract by senior Kier representatives.
- c) The Members Training and Development Group met during this quarter to monitor progress against the member training schedule and to receive feedback on the induction and regulatory training sessions - both have been well received. The group also sought views from

colleagues on associated training issues. These have been prioritised and progressed accordingly e.g. a session is being scheduled with the Pier Trust to give members a site visit and update on pier progress.

- d) A survey has been issued during this quarter seeking member views on use of IT equipment and the new Mod Gov app. The views received will be used to inform next steps in the full roll out of tablet devices for members and the subsequent reduction in quantity of printed paper.

**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 2 – On Target**

Progress – Future meetings of the WAG group are scheduled for November and December, the agendas include a review of members attendance on outside bodies.

**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 2 – on target**

Progress - 'Switch on Hastings' went live on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September for 6 weeks, with the auction taking place on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2014. Local residents that signed up received their offers by 24<sup>th</sup> October 2014. The scheme was promoted via social media (Facebook & twitter), local press including Fri-Ad and the Observer, the Councils & partners websites, posters in local community buildings and along the seafront and postcards. Sign-up has been a lot slower than previous campaigns though out the UK and this is thought to be due to the very mild weather conditions throughout September. In Hastings, 217 people registered and although this is lower than expected, it is better than a number of our nearest neighbours e.g. Adur 52, Maidstone 82, Barking & Dagenham 34 and Colchester BC 80. Northern towns have got higher registrations but still not hugely high when compared to the auction we took part in October 2013.

**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 2 – On Target**

Progress:

- a) The Adaptation Compass is being used to inform the development of a number of partner policies including the National Park Authority annual adaptation report to Government and the Lewes, Newhaven & Seafood Neighbourhood Plans. Two workshops were delivered for partners including the Coastal Users Group, local community representatives, the Environment Agency, Natural England and the South Downs National Park.
- b) Discussions continue with our existing European partners about future project ideas in preparation for the launch of 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 2 – On Target**

Progress:

- a) The workload in August was impacted by the influx of callers on the telephone and face to face with questions about the electoral registration changes. Whilst these calls were managed with resources re-directed and were relatively easy to answer, impacts like these do impact on performance statistics. September statistics continue to show improvement.
- b) The Contact Centre staff will be key to delivering the Digital by Design project (from quarter 3 onwards) they have been briefed and are inputting ideas and suggestions for prioritising the process re-design of key customer facing services.

## **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 2 – 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 and we are meeting the majority of deadlines despite the additional pressure this puts on services. Wherever possible information which is regularly requested is posted on our website, but bespoke responses are more often than not required.
- c) The Council is preparing to procure new software which will deliver as part of the Phase 1 implementation (i.e. by spring 2015) a new complaints management system. There is also a module for management of FOI requests and this will also be prioritised for spring.

## **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 2 – On Target**

Progress – The team continue to be involved in high profile matters, and as well as advising regulatory and council committees, the outputs for quarter 2 include:

- Prosecutions – 2 for dog fouling and 2 noise nuisance - one with a forfeiture order depriving the defendant of the offending equipment, 1 Section 215 prosecution – detrimental to the amenity resulting in a £1000 fine, 1 Housing Ben prosecution resulting in a £1200 fine, 1

Planning Contravention notice (non compliance) resulting in a £1000 fine.

- Formal Cautions – 3 for Housing Benefit fraud and 2 noise nuisance
- Debt - 11 Final charging orders protecting £22,500 of council tax debt against property were issued whilst other work is underway on arranging payment by instalments with some debtors and encouraging others to pay in full.
- Property – Legal assisted with the sale of Redgeland Rise, Bridge Cafe and Little Warren cottage, these brought funds in excess of £900,000. Other property work included the Consent to Assignment of Priory Meadow, lease to ESCC re. Playing Field at Robsack School and an Easement at Rock-a-Nore to Southern Water
- Contracts – work has been undertaken on the White Rock Sound System, Pier underground carpark repairs, SMIC emergency lighting and Intelligent data systems

## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### 7.1 Overall proportion of days lost to sickness

7.1a and 7.1b - At request of O&S additional information is now shown setting out the proportion of days lost to sickness due to both short term and long term sickness. (No targets have been set for these indicators, they are simply provided for additional information and context.)

Name	Improvement Direction	Actual Sep 2013	Direction of Travel	Actual Sep 2014	Status Sep 2014	Target Sep 2014	Yearend Target Mar 2015
7.1 The proportion of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence	Smaller is better	3.23	Worse	3.27	Not Met	3.15	6.25
7.1a The proportion of working days/shifts lost due to short term sickness absence	Smaller is better			1.93			
7.1b The proportion of working days/shifts lost due to long term sickness absence	Smaller is better			1.34			

## 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.

<b>Director:</b>	Neil Dart
<b>Contributions:</b>	Strategic Leadership Board and all HBC staff
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Cllr Birch
<b>O &amp; S:</b>	Resources
<b>2014/15 Targets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>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.</li><li>c) Seek out and explore opportunities for new service delivery models, including shared services where this will provide efficiencies or resilience.</li><li>b) Deliver a programme of consultation to test local priorities with local people and staff.</li><li>d) Complete a Priority Income Efficiency Review process to inform the 2015/16 budget.</li><li>e) Produce and publish a Medium Term Financial Strategy.</li><li>f) Agree a significantly revised Corporate Plan and a Budget for 2015/16 onwards in February 2015.</li></ul>

#### **Performance @ QTR 2 – 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 been completed and an action plan formulated. The Benefits Review will commence shortly.
- 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 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 was presented to Cabinet on 3 November and a seminar for all members arranged for shortly after.
- 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 the 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 2 – 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 2 – On Target**

a) During July held 2 workshops with other East Sussex authorities and community organisations, the Environment Agency, South Downs National Park to apply the Adaptation Compass which considers an areas vulnerability to climate change impacts and potential solutions.

Prepared for and launched the next round of 'Switch on Hastings' in September, registration closed on the 13<sup>th</sup> October. 217 people registered, lower than expected but better than when we compared to our nearest neighbours ( Adur 52, Maidstone 82 and others Barking & Dagenham 34, Colchester borough council 80 ).

b) Continued discussions with our European partners to develop project ideas for future rounds of EU funding.

Progress continues with the projects under the Fisheries Local Action Group programme with work on an environmental clean-up of the Fishing beach , replacement of old fuel tanks , the Eco Stade project and receiving NSC accreditation again for Herring and Dover sole.

c) We continue to progress with energy saving initiatives.

We have recently installed devices to reduce our gas consumption on the pair of gas boilers at St Johns Place Museum.

Sabien Technology Ltd. boiler optimisation controllers went in during the Spring of 2014. Using a notional reduction in annual gas consumption at the Museum of 10%. If they're successful there is scope to add them in future years to the gas boilers in the Town Hall and possibly Aquila House.

We have also installed the following which will further reduce energy consumption

LED lighting scheme - Pier Car Park

'Powerperfector' Voltage regulator - Pelham Place PC

'Powerperfector' Voltage regulator - PC Harold Place PC

Boiler control optimisers - St Johns Place Museum

We are investigating further initiatives such as introducing LED lighting in the Carlisle Parade underground car park and possibly in Priory Street car park.

#### **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 31st 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 2 – On Target**

Progress –

- a) The July Equalities Steering received a list of equality considerations raised by Lead Members regarding the services they are responsible for. These are being addressed by services and will be feedback to Lead Members.
- b) A robust Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) process is in place and senior managers advise of additional EIAs as work develops. These represent scrutiny of significant changes or new policies/developments such as changes to the seafront byelaws and the refreshed seafront strategy.
- 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. O & S have previously been advised that responses from contractors who employ staff to work on HBC awarded contracts has been poor. The Council has recently identified case law which impact on what the Council is legally able to consider in regards to the living wage in our procurement processes.

- f) The review of our accreditation to display the Two Ticks positive about disability logo will be completed by the end of October and the DisabledGo updates to information regarding accessibility in the town's venues will be completed by end of November 2014.

## **5. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

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

<b>Director:</b>	Neil Dart
<b>Contributions:</b>	All Heads of Service and HBC Staff
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Cllr Birch
<b>O &amp; S:</b>	Resources
<b>2014/15 Target(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>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.</li><li>b) Develop and manage a programme of culture change and improvement activity (including the incubation of new ideas and innovations).</li><li>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</li><li>d) Maximise use of electronic communications and technology to assist smooth service delivery and customer care.</li><li>e) Receive and respond to feedback from staff engagement including the Staff Commission.</li><li>f) Oversee complaints and compliments trends and ensure learning points are shared.</li></ul>

### **Performance @ QTR 2 – On target**

Progress:

- a) The Council's approach to Customer First will be set out in the draft Corporate Plan for 2015/16 – this will be consulted on in January/February 2015. This approach will guide the implementation of the Customer First - Digital by Design project from late 2014 and into 2015/16. This project will necessitate customer journey mapping, process mapping and re-design and a move to automation of processes so they can be undertaken on-line. (A fuller briefing will be given to Members shortly)

- b) The culture change towards a one team approach is being assisted by the range of transformation projects which include Digital by Design and Accommodation and Smarter Working practices.
- c) The Council has rolled out soft phones for all members of staff who need to work flexibly – this enables them to be contactable at home in the same way as if they were in the office.
- d) The potential designs for the new furniture and layouts in a refurbished Aquila House were shared with staff as part of the procurement process – there were many helpful and positive comments and we are learning lessons all the way through the implementation of the new working arrangements by maintaining a visible presence of the Project Manager and good communication channels.
- e) The staff commission continues to meet and are focussed on issues arising from the accommodation and smarter working changes and improving communications between colleagues and teams.
- f) The implementation of the complaints module by the end of 2014/15 will revolutionise the reporting and oversight we are able to have for complaint and compliments and will assist with our learning to improve service delivery.

## **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 2 – On target**

- a) Anti-poverty steering group terms of reference agreed.

- b) An overview and scrutiny review has recommended additional actions to monitor the impact of welfare reforms. These will also be incorporated into the revised action plan.

Work is ongoing with London Councils to raise awareness of the issues coastal towns face as a result of inward migration. A visit to Hastings for London Councils to continue the dialogue is planned for 18<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

- c) The action plan adopted by Cabinet in January 2014 is currently on target. A new action plan is being drafted to remove actions already met, and include additional actions to address emerging issues relating to poverty e.g. increased use of benefit sanctions. Work has started to redraft this document although it needs a substantial change in format which was agreed at the last meeting in September 14.