

Directors Briefing



Subject: **Q3 Performance Review – Operational Services**
Submitted to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Services
Date: 9 February 2016
Prepared by: **Simon Hubbard, Director of Operational Services**

Introduction

1. The report for Quarter 3 is pleasingly positive given the difficult circumstances faced by the Council.

Development Management

2. The Council now has a new Development Manager, Ele Evans whose last employer was East Hampshire and whose previous experience includes planning in the private sector perspective. She will need time to more fully understand how the service is currently operating and what positive changes to working practices might be developed. I anticipate that a more structured discussion around this will be possible in around 3 months time.
3. However in the meantime it is pleasing to report that the support package put in place for the Planning Service has seen a recovery of performance in the 3rd quarter.

	<u>Q1</u>	<u>Q2</u>	<u>Q3</u>	<u>Target</u>
Major applications	66.7%	50%	89%	90%
Minor residential/commercial	83.3%	60.2%	83%	85%
Householder applications	26%	31%	69%	65%

Given the backlog of old applications (often beyond HBCs control) and the continuing pressure of controversial applications this is good progress. Clearly the yearly targets cannot be achieved and the service remains vulnerable to staff changes/shortages. However, the service is working towards regularly achieving its targets by the end of the second quarter of next year.

4. Staff have worked in a very committed way to achieve this improvement, supported by temporary use of the private sector and additional temporary staff. The team will need the support of the organisation in the period of transition ahead.

Community Safety

5. Members may be aware that our long standing (and widely respected and liked) Community Safety Manager Mike Fagan will be leaving us on 24th March. We have been fortunate to be able to recruit his replacement John Whittington who has worked in community safety in Wadsworth as well as having experience in Thanet and elsewhere. We have a period of overlap while both are present and will use this to begin development of the new Public Space Protection Orders to address public open space issues of drinking and behaviour going forward.
6. The Home Office has published its report on gang culture which was discussed at your previous meeting. This identifies that the social issues and deprivation facing Hastings (and Eastbourne) mean that people here are vulnerable to exploitation and use by organised criminals operating out of London and other big cities. The Safer Hastings Partnership will need to properly reviewed the Home office report and conclude how this work can be taken forward. Nine new areas for this work joining 43 in existence. The new areas are Basildon, Grimsby, Harrow, Hastings, High Wycombe, Medway, Sefton, Southampton and Swindon, the priorities are:-
 - County lines – exploiting people to sell drugs.
 - Protect vulnerable locations – including pupil referral units and care homes
 - Reduce violence and knife crimes
 - Safeguard gang-associated women and girls
 - Promote early intervention
 - Promote meaningful alternatives to gangs

Waste Contract

7. Members will be aware that the operation of the joint contract by Kier has presented some issues in Hastings and elsewhere. It is therefore pleasing to report that the performance of the contract in terms of missed bins and recycling continues to improve. The target for street cleanliness has been exceeded. Mike Hepworth and his colleagues should be congratulated for the consistent effort they have put into improving standards both through “carrot and stick” approaches. However, the collapse in recycle prices means the contract will continue to pose a challenge as the company’s income is dramatically reduced.
8. There are outstanding issues in relation to the IT based reporting system for dog waste removal and this has been taken up at the highest level within Kier.

Housing

9. The number of homelessness acceptances continues to increase with the figure being 62 in the quarter (total 185) which is a 44% increase. A number of people have been helped around homelessness and the total year target has already been exceeded.
10. The number of neglected buildings improved has exceeded the target for the year and the Council continues to set a trail for others to follow in this respect.

Regeneration

11. It would be remiss of me not to congratulate colleagues across the Council for the success in bringing forward the White Rock Baths in partnership with The Source, ESCC and Foreshore Trust. Although led through Regeneration this has involved Finance, Estates, Surveyors, Leisure and others. The legal arrangements with The Source have been completed and it is anticipated to open next month.