

# WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

## Report by Executive Director of Corporate Services

Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee: 27<sup>th</sup> January 2010

**Subject: Department Plan - Mid Year Performance Report**

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 To present the Corporate Services Department mid year performance report to the Elected Members. The report highlights the Department's performance across all the services.

### 2 Background

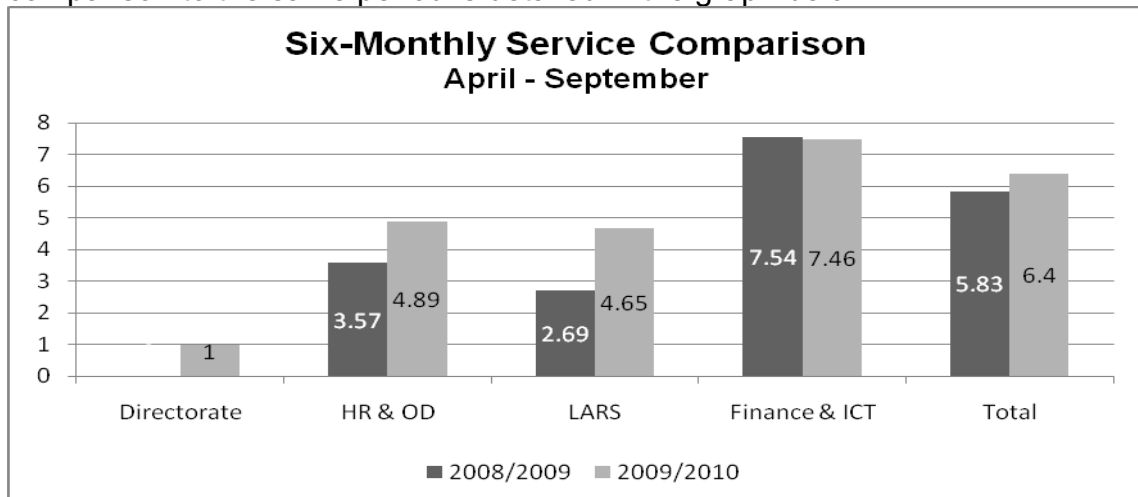
- 2.1 The Corporate Services Department held its Mid Year Performance Review meeting in November 2009. The meeting provided the Directorate with an opportunity to review performance across all service areas operating within the Department – Finance & ICT, Human Resources & Organisational Development and Legal, Administrative & Regulatory Services.

### 3 Main Issues

- 3.1 The structure of the report has changed from previous years as reports are now generated from the Council's new covalent performance management system. The report analyses performance against the following areas.

|                                  |              |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Statutory Performance Indicators | (Appendix 1) |
| Corporate Services Action Plan   | (Appendix 2) |
| Department Risks                 | (Appendix 3) |
| Complaints                       | (Appendix 4) |

- 3.2 Absence management, in the first 6 months of 2009/2010 (April – September) the average FTE days lost per FTE employee was 6.4. A service breakdown and comparison to the same period is detailed in the graph below.



Finance and ICT have shown a decrease in the days lost from the previous year.

Analysis of the absence durations identified that in Corporate Services nearly 53% of days lost was attributable to long-term absences (those over 20 days in duration) and just over 24% of absences were attributed to absences of between 6 days and 4 weeks. The increase in the reported days lost for 2009/2010 can be attributed to long term sickness absence. If this trend continues the figure for the year 2009/2010 could potentially be around 12.8 FTE days lost per FTE employee. This estimate does not take into account the higher levels of sickness absence during winter months or the anticipated impact of swine flu on attendance levels. In 2008/9 Corporate Services averaged 12.77 days lost per full-time employee and have set a targeted reduction of .5 days in line with the reduction established for the Council. Overall the Council absence target for Local Government Employees for 2009/10 is 13 days lost per FTE

The top 3 reasons for sickness absence within Corporate Services are Minor Illness, Stress and Recurring Medical Conditions.

Work undertaken to reduce sickness absence in Corporate Services:

- Long Term Sick Surgeries have been conducted with Line Managers in Corporate Services to encourage them to re-focus on long term sickness absence cases and to produce a clear action plan for how these cases would be concluded (e.g. return to work/redeployment/termination).
- Continued promotion of Occupational Health as a tool for managing absence.
- Coaching managers in Conflict Management to help resolve work-related stress issues, where conflict was a contributing factor for sickness absence.
- Critical case conferences conducted with Line Managers who have employees with high numbers of short term intermittent absence and advice given to managers to assist them in progressing these through the Maximising Attendance policy.

Longer Term Actions:

- HR Connect Pilot to centralise the way of reporting and recording absences using the Workforce Management System (to commence on 1 December 2009). The main focus of the pilot is to reduce the number of days lost/instances of absence.
- Implement the revised Maximising Attendance Policy
- Roll out in-house Conflict Management Training following the training sessions ran by the Employee Counselling Service.
- Review/implement policies and procedures on Redeployment, Special Leave, Ill health Retirement and Stress in the Workplace Policy.

- 3.3** Corporate Services has two of the Council's top five poorly performing statutory performance indicators - Cost of collecting Council Tax per dwelling and the proportion of those tenants giving up their tenancy during the year. These are being closely monitored and reported on a regular basis to the audit and performance committee. Both performance indicators have robust action plans linked to support improvement.

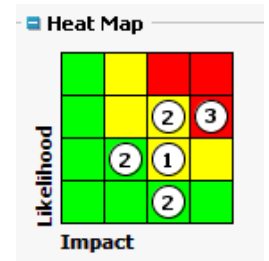
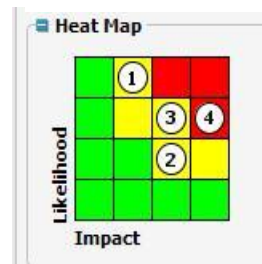
**3.4** There were a total of 28 formal complaints received in Corporate Services in the first six months of 2009/2010. All of these complaints were acknowledged within 5 working days and replied to within 20 working days. The outcome of the complaints: 3 justified and an apology issued, 10 unjustified with an explanation issued, 4 part justified with an explanation issued to the customer. The nature and outcome on each of these complaints is detailed in appendix 5.

**3.5** By mid year there were a total of 155 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests were received, actioned and replied to by Corporate Services Department, 22 of which were cross departmental requests co-ordinated by LARS on behalf of the Council. All of these were acknowledged on receipt and replied to within the limit of 20 working days specified by legislation.

**3.6** There are 10 department risks identified by the Service Management Team. The initial carried out the by the risk management section head in April identified the current department risks as 4 risks scoring a “critical” impact and “high probability” likelihood and the remaining 6 risks as “significant” and “very likely”. Each risk has a range of actions with milestones to mitigate the impact. The risks have been re-assessed and there has been positive progression. Four risks are now scoring “green” on likelihood and impact and the “critical” and “high” impact risks have also been reduced.

Quarter 1 Position  
2009/10

Corporate  
Mid Year Position  
assessment  
2009/10



The risks are reviewed on a monthly basis and have positively progressed due to the achievement of linked department actions (appendix 4).

**3.7** Corporate Services Department Achievements (April – September)

#### Finance and ICT

- Revenues - After a series of consultation exercises, the Rent Arrears Policy was approved by C&EG Committee in April. The Revenues and Benefits Service Plan was approved by C&EG Committee in September
- Council Tax - We have introduced the 12 month instalment plan for council tax. Approximately 1,200 households have opted to pay by this method.
- Non Domestic Rates - We have introduced the rates deferment scheme whereby business can apply to reduce their 2009/10 rates bill and spread over future years. We have assisted over 100 businesses spread £650,000 of rates payments over future years through this scheme. We have continued with the small business bonus scheme during 2009/10 whereby a total of £1,275,000 small business rates relief has been awarded across over 700 businesses.
- Procurement - 75 purchasing cards added to the existing 18. The purchase to pay cycle is also drastically reduced which results in efficiencies for the Council and quicker payment times for suppliers. The preparation & reporting of local procurement strategy achieved
- E procurement - £1.2m paid by electronic means

- Financial Strategy - preparation, reporting & approval of financial strategy – longer term financial plan covering capital, revenue, balances for both HRA and general services
- VAT - one-off VAT re-imburement claim (due to a positive conclusion from a recent court case against HMRC) which will guarantee the Council a refund of VAT (covering from present back to 1976) between £180k and £1m
- Contact centre - new services - debt recovery, creditors, election call handling, and appeals call handling.
- Development of telephone Call Logger Statistical reporting – these stats provide call volumes data, both handled calls and abandoned which are essential for moving forward with contact centre development.
- Following virus Incident and subsequent lessons learnt, successful implementation of E-Policy Orchestrator which is a tool to manage antivirus updates electronically rather than manually.
- E-Planning was launched on 29<sup>th</sup> April which was first of a 4-phase project and part of national project
- Blackberry service introduced providing greater flexibility for managers and elected members plus start of flexible working pilot in ICT.
- PPP Schools Technology infrastructure – contribute to technology design and implementation for new PPP schools.
- New MOB contract, Voice Recording Technology & Data Archive – the above projects will now proceed to implementation stage.
- Major Upgrade to social work system complete
- Migration of data from Rembrandt system new to Workforce management system in addition to ICT services required to ensure go live in October 09
- Expansion of ICT role in relation to purchases of it ICT services and equipment through Webuy to incorporate purchases for schools, renewal of maintenance agreements and new ICT capital purchases

#### Human Resources & Organisational Development:

- Developed appeals stage of pay modernisation:
  - Registration and submission of Job Evaluation Appeals;
  - Selection and training of Appeals Panel Members;
  - Establishment of Appeals Administration Team; and
  - Completion of WDC Terms & Conditions Handbook.
- Development of a Workforce Management System:
  - Procurement of new Workforce Management System – finalised contract;
  - Completed comprehensive WMS 'Requirements Exercise' with external consultants;
  - Completed Pilot Workforce Planning Project within Social Work; and
  - Commenced development of Workforce Plans with HEEDS, Education & Corporate Services.
- Delivered Occupational Health Service, Wellbeing and Attendance responsibilities:
  - Completed year 1 of the 3 year Stress Action Plan and developed:
    - Draft Exit Interview Policy;
    - Draft Stress Management Policy; and
  - Conducted manager and trades unions surveys on absence and on current Maximising Attendance Policy to support development of new policy.

- Development of Dignity at Work:
  - Set up 'allocation system' for mediators and investigators for Dignity at Work complaints;
  - Increased the visibility of Equality and Diversity in general within WDC; and
  - Developed training programme for Dignity at Work and Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policies.
- Introduced and developed new policies:
  - Developed and implemented new Casual Workers Policy and supporting Managers Guidance;
  - Developed Internal Pension Disputes Resolution Procedure (IRDP) in line with updated SPFO regulations;
  - Developed new Performance Management, Discipline, Grievance and Dignity at Work Policies to ensure compliance with new ACAS Code of Practice; and
  - Developed draft Trade Union Recognition and Facilities Agreement;
- Recruitment and selection achievements:
  - Achieved a successful Disclosure Scotland Compliance Audit;
  - Advertised 217 jobs (over 325 posts) and received 5727 applications (5567 online – 97.2% and 160 paper – 2.8%);
  - Signed Local Employment Partnership Agreement;
  - Contributed to national evaluation (Panel membership) for Recruitment Advertising Tender;
  - Successfully piloted Assessment Centre approach for 2 senior post recruitments; and
  - All Departmental HR staff trained on the Recruitment Portal and all are now using the Recruitment Portal to communicate with candidates.
- Organisational Development:
  - Completion of OD restructure and matching to new roles;
  - Successful completion of 3 pilot accredited management development programmes (involving 42 managers);
  - Launch of phase 2 management development programmes (4 programmes involving 50 managers);
  - Completion of organisational culture diagnostics and development of change approach;
  - Completion of 2009 employee survey;
  - Improved approach to service planning through developed performance management involving managers and staff;
  - Launch of departmental forum engaging and communicating with staff on department vision and plan; and
  - Implementation of individual performance management framework for the Corporate Management Team.
- Legal and Administrative:
  - Successful handling of European Election involving new procedures and new software;
  - Successful implementation of the new Liquor Licensing System with praise of West Dunbartonshire's performance from licensing practitioners, the Licensing Forum and the Scottish Government Minister, who described the Sections performance as exemplary at the National Licensing Conference;

- Participation in the Blitz Monument at Dalnottar Cemetery and preparations for the Memorial Wall (for unveiling on Armistice Sunday);
  - Revised Freedom of Information Publication Scheme approved by Council;
  - Revised draft Gambling Policy produced for Licensing Board;
  - Revised integrated Equalities Policy introduced for Licensing Board;
  - Introduction of Automated Registration of Title (electronic recording of title deeds in Register House) in Legal Section;
  - Boundary Commission's agreement to LARS prepared proposals regarding constituency boundaries;
  - Re-negotiated Renewal, Council Main Contract, saving £36,500 in liability contract;
  - Renewed Brokering Contract on existing term, but have successfully negotiate/secured additional risk management support valued at approximately £4,000 for free;
  - Ran two sessions of Courtroom Witness Training at no cost to the Authority;
- Risk:
    - Ran Risk Awareness day for CMT & Risk Management Working Group
    - Ran two Managing Risk & Uncertainty Training sessions, 2 day course for eight employees (IRM recognised), at no cost to the authority;
    - Risk Management secured a positive outcome in Best Value Report;
    - Continued to show improvement in Claims SP and Claims history across the Council;
    - Risk developed Elected Members leaflet and information leaflet and booklets for local businesses and in-house services;
    - Risk completed Chief Officers Training, carried out 2 COMAH exercises and the Risk Team prepared 5 event plans;
    - Completed Fire Task Force re refurbishment of Elderly Care Premises; and
    - Successful implementation of Council's Pandemic Plan.
- Trading Standards:
    - Carried out 31 covert test purchases of tobacco compared to nil in the first six months of last year, this is a direct result of increased funding.
    - All businesses surveyed at random said they were satisfied with the way Trading Standards inspected them and investigated complaints about them;
    - Recent prosecution of 'Poundland' for selling Halloween masks containing chemicals which were well above the legal limit resulted in a £3000 fine.
- Environmental Health:
    - Nomination of Pat Hoey, Senior Environmental Health Officer, to represent the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland at the National Public Health Association conference;
    - Set up link with Ciboodle CRM system with EH Flare system to negate double input by administrative staff for pest control calls received from the Contact Centre;
    - Contributed to the success of West Dunbartonshire Councils Green Dream, a month of eco events and promotions including vehicle emission testing, 'Idling Gets You Nowhere' campaign and Noise awareness sessions;
    - Issued the first statutory enforcement notice in the country in terms of the Water Services etc (Scotland) Act 2005 in relation to Sewerage Nuisance;
    - Worked in conjunction with the Clydebank Community in relation to aircraft noise;

- Produced a Land Contamination and Development Management Summary Guidance and Checklist for Developers in conjunction with 10 other Scottish LAs and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency;
- Joint national advertising campaign with South Lanarkshire Council, North Lanarkshire Council, East Dunbartonshire Council, Glasgow City Council to raise awareness of air quality;
- Noise Action Week 18-22 May 2009 raising awareness at Schools and Clydebank College of the potential for hearing damage caused by listening to ipods/MP3 players at excessive volume levels;
- Air Quality Update & Screening Assessment 2008 Report approved by Scottish Ministers in June 2009;
- Successful implementation of the Food Standards Agencies new national Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System in relation to food safety enforcement;
- Delivery of the REHIS Elementary Food Hygiene Course for 230 Facilities Management catering staff;
- Local radio interview and newspaper coverage highlighting Dog Warden service and revised working arrangements with SSPCA in respect of stray dogs;
- Expansion of pest control services by securing internal pest control work for WDC operational establishments;
- Achieved approval for the introduction of the FSA's Food Hygiene Information Scheme;
- Formal Approval of a new Meat Product and Meat Preparation Manufacturers;
- Participation in National Food Safety Week;
- Participation in European Health and Safety Week;
- Identification of a product safety issue during an accident investigation which has resulted in the manufacturer/importer of the product issuing safety guards retrospectively to all purchasers of the equipment throughout the UK;
- Fifth top council in Scotland for approval rates for private landlord registrations;
- Production of a bi-monthly e-newsletter for private landlords; and
- Licensing Enforcement Strategy prepared and approved by Licensing Board.

### **3.8 Quality Accreditations and Awards**

Legal, Administration and Regulatory Service achieved Bronze recognition and ICT achieved Gold recognition for Investor in People. Customer Service Excellence was successfully maintained by Registration Services and Trading Standards.

## **4 Personnel Implications**

**4.1** There are no personnel implications.

## **5 Financial Implications**

**5.1** The Council's budgeted spend in Corporate Services was £11.578m and the spend against budget at year to date (budgetary control report 7) is favourable £480k. The probable outcome will be favourable compared to budget.

## **6 Risk Analysis**

- 6.1 There are no immediate risks associated with this report. However, there would be risks to the reputation of the Department and the Council and to the quality of service delivery if performance targets were not to be met. Robust scrutiny of the Department's performance mitigates any such risk.

## 7 Conclusions and Officers' recommendation

- 7.1 During the period from April 2009 until September 2009 key performance indicators and supporting actions continue to be closely monitored and, where necessary, the appropriate corrective action taken.
- 7.2 The Elected Members are asked to note the contents of this report and the attached appendices.

---

Joyce White  
Executive Director of Corporate Services

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> December 2009

---

**Person to Contact:** Linda Butler, Strategy and Change Management,  
HR & Organisational Development, Council Offices,  
Garshake Road, Dumbarton G82 3PU.  
Telephone (01389) 737106.  
Email: [Linda.butler@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:Linda.butler@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

**Appendices:** Performance Indicators (Appendix 1)  
Progress of Department Plan Actions & Milestones (Appendix 2)  
Department Risk Register (Appendix 3)  
Complaints – six month review (Appendix 4)

**Background Papers:** None.

**Wards Affected:** None.