

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services

Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee: 26th May 2010

Subject: Corporate Services Department Plan – Annual Performance Report 2009/2010

1. Purpose

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

2. Background

- 2.1** The Performance Management Framework introduced to the Council in April 2009 requires all directorates to monitor, review and report their performance on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. There is formal reporting to the relevant committees on a six monthly basis.
- 2.2** Corporate Services Department held performance review meetings on a monthly basis throughout 2009/10 and this was a very productive way of tracking results and building knowledge and relationships across the Corporate Services Team. The performance meetings provided the Directorate with an opportunity to monitor performance across all service areas: Finance & ICT; Human Resources & Organisational Development; and Legal, Administrative & Regulatory Services over this reporting period.

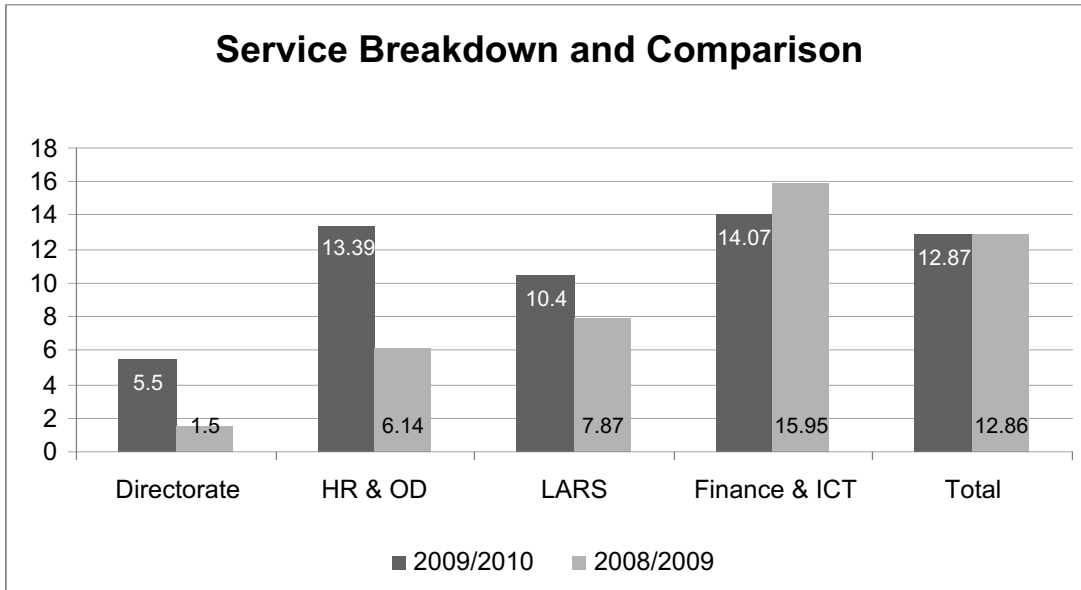
3. Main Issues

- 3.1** This report analyses performance against the following areas:

Statutory Performance Indicators	(Appendix 1)
Corporate Services Action Plan	(Appendix 2)
Achievements	(Appendix 3)
Complaints	(Appendix 4)

Absence Management

- 3.2** For the year 2009/2010 the FTE days lost per FTE employee due to sickness absence was 12.87. A service breakdown and comparison to the reported figures for 2008/2009 is detailed in the graph below.



Finance and ICT have shown a decrease of 1.88 FTE days per FTE employee from the previous year. Due to the high proportion of Corporate Services employee working in Finance and ICT (65% of employees) this has reduced the total FTE days lost per FTE employee for Corporate Services.

The overall figure for Corporate Services of 12.87 FTE days per FTE employee did not meet the target of 12.27. This continues to be a key focus area for the Management Team and is measured monthly, with actions progressed to assist employees in returning to work and receiving Occupational Health Support.

Analysis of the absence durations identified that in Corporate Services nearly 50% of days lost was attributable to long-term absences (those over 20 days in duration) and 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.

In 2009/2010 there was 5308 days lost; this is the equivalent of 23 employees (5.5%) being absent for the full year. Of this number 12 employees can be attributed to long term sickness absence. Based on an average salary of £24,000 in Corporate Services (Payroll records) for 23 employees this equates to approximately £414,000 in direct costs for sick pay. Indirect costs, such as impact on morale or increased workloads of colleague, are unquantifiable.

The top 3 reasons for sickness absence within Corporate Services are Minor Illness, Mental Health Conditions and Recurring Medical Conditions. Stress is currently the 5th top reason for sickness absence.

Work undertaken to reduce sickness absence in Corporate Services includes:

- Weekly exercise commenced to identify and monitor employees on long term sick. Support to managers with long term sick employees to develop action plans to facilitate early resolution (e.g. return to work / redeployment / termination).

- Critical Case Conferences conducted with line managers within Corporate Services who have cases with a high number of short term intermittent absence. Advice given to managers on how to progress these cases through the Maximising Attendance procedure.
- Accompaniment at Maximising Attendance meetings and continued support for line managers to ensure a fair and consistent approach to managing absence.
- Continued promotion of Occupational Health as tool for managing absence. Management Referrals have been heavily promoted to line managers as a tool to assist moving cases forward to conclusion.
- Continued promotion of Employee Counselling Service to support those with Stress and Mental Health Conditions.
- Local provision for Employee Counselling Service in Dumbarton.
- Ongoing coaching managers in identifying and managing conflict to help resolve work-related stress issues, where conflict was a contributing factor for sickness absence
- Ongoing training in managing absence e.g. Return to Work Interviews.

Longer Term Actions to reduce sickness absence within Corporate Services:

- HR Connect Pilot commenced on 1 December 2009. The pilot is centralising the procedures for reporting and recording absences using the Workforce Management Systems Absence Module with the aim of reducing the number of days lost/instances of absence. The pilot was due to end in February 2010, but will now continue until the new procedures can be rolled out across the council.
- Implement the reviewed and revised Maximising Attendance Policy.
- Implement the reviewed and revised Stress Management Policy.
- Roll out in-house Conflict Management Training following the training sessions delivered by the Employee Counselling Service.
- Review/implement policies and procedures on Redeployment, Special Leave and Ill health Retirement.
- Undertaking health promotion activities to promote employee wellbeing and engagement.
- The Workforce Management System continues to be developed in order to identify trends and hotspots in sickness absence and to allow targeted support given to managers.

Poorly Performing Statutory Indicators

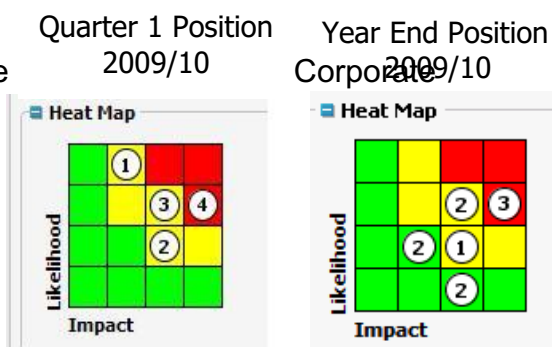
- 3.3** Corporate Services has two of the Council's top five poorly performing statutory performance indicators - Cost of collecting Council Tax per dwelling and the proportion of those tenants giving up their tenancy during the year. These are being closely monitored and reported on a regular basis to the audit and performance committee. Both performance indicators have robust action plans linked to support improvement. Appendix 1 shows all performance indicators, both quarterly and annually reported.

Complaints

- 3.4** There were a total of 42 formal complaints received in Corporate Services in 2009/2010. All of these complaints were acknowledged within 5 working days and replied to within 20 working days. The nature and outcome on each of these complaints is detailed in Appendix 4.

Risk Register

- 3.5** There are 10 department risks identified by the Service Management Team. The initial assessment carried out 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.



The risks are reviewed on a monthly basis and have positively progressed due to the achievement of linked department actions (appendix 2).

Freedom of Information

- 3.5** From 1 April 2009 - 31 March 2010, a total of 578 Freedom of Information requests were received, actioned and replied to by the Corporate Services Department, 259 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.

Department Achievements

- 3.6** A full listing of department achievements is in Appendix 3. Some key achievements are:
- Corporate Services Department achieved Bronze Investor in People Status in March 2010
 - Financial Strategy - preparation, reporting & approval of financial strategy – longer term financial plan covering capital, revenue, balances for both HRA and general services. There was positive recognition of the progress in this area in the Best Value Review – Follow up.
 - 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
 - The implementation of a New Workforce Management System and the migration of data from Rembrandt system.

- Significant progress on Pay Modernisation and the establishment of the Appeals process.
- Development of customer centric services, improving service and automated processes through better use of technology including developing the contact centre which is a launch pad for a 'one stop shop' for the customer – focusing on Customer First
- Development of numerous policies and procedures to minimise risk to the Council.
- Launch and development of various Leadership and Management Development programmes to improve capacity in the Council.
- Successful handling of a European Election and development of processes and performance standards for the UK Elections.
- Implementation of the new liquor licensing systems.

4. People Implications

4.1 There are no specific personnel implications in providing this update.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 The Councils budgeted spend in Corporate Services was originally £11.578M subsequently reduced to £11.450M due to imposed spending restrictions and the spend against budget at year to date (budgetary control report 10) is favourable 0.686M. (+6%). The expected outcome is favourable compared to budget.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 No formal risk assessment is associated with this report. However, assessing and addressing risk both at a corporate (strategic risk register) and departmental level is integral to our planning processes.

7. Equalities Impact

7.1 No significant issues were identified in a screening for potential equality impact of this report.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 During the period from April 2009 - March 2010 key performance indicators and supporting actions have been closely monitored and, where necessary, the appropriate corrective action taken.

8.2 Members are asked to note the contents of this report and the attached appendices.

Joyce White
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Appendices: Appendix 1 Corporate Services Performance Indicators 9/13
Appendix 2 Corporate Services Actions 9/13
Appendix 3 Corporate Services Achievements 9/13
Appendix 4 Corporate Services Complaints 9/13

Background Papers: Corporate Services Department Plan 2009 - 2013

Wards Affected: All.