

**REPORT TO COUNCIL – PORTFOLIO AREA OF  
PERFORMANCE AND EFFICIENCY**

**Agenda No: 11c**

**Banking arrangements**

Following the Co-operative bank's autumn announcement that they would be withdrawing from the local authority market, the Council obtained agreement to terminate its contract two-years early, without penalty. Lloyds Bank have been appointed to provide banking services to the Council, and following transfer arrangements, including BACS details, the Council's bank accounts at Lloyds are now fully operational. The Council has advised tax payers on the changeover arrangements.

**Meeting with Council's Financial Advisors**

We met with our financial advisers, Arlingclose, at the end of March to review the changing risk horizon and impact and opportunities to revise our treasury management investments options.

**Customer Service Excellence Standard**

All BDC key frontline services have now been assessed and awarded for the Customer Service Excellence Standard, the most recent services assessed being Finance and Sustainable Development. With recognition from an impartial third party it is further reassurance that we are delivering very high standards of service to our customers.

**Third Quarter Performance Review**

**Projects**

Of 35 projects, eight projects are now complete and three have an amber status

**Performance Indicators**

Of 14 Performance indicators, seven have exceeded target and six have missed their target by less than 5% (one indicator does not have a target set). Any under-performing performance indicators need to continue to be monitored.

Examples of achievements include:

- A total of 69 affordable homes have been delivered
- A total of 171 customers have signed up to the new trade waste recycling service which is more than triple the number of existing customers
- Call answering times in the Customer Service Centre are exceeding our corporate target of 15 seconds to answer calls by averaging a call answering time of 7seconds for the third quarter of the year.
- Sickness continues to be good with 73% of staff not having any days off due to sickness in the third quarter. Performance continues to be under the two days target with the third quarter averaging 1.66 working days lost to sickness per employee.
- The number of complaints received by the Authority has fallen for the third

consecutive quarter (a total of 315 complaints have been received between April and December 2013 compared to 640 for the same period in 2012)

## **Financial Performance**

We are forecasting an overall underspend for the year of £99,000 (<1%) against the budget of £15.841 million. This is an improvement of £39,000 over the position reported at the second quarter mainly due to an overall improvement in expected external income. The service area that has improved the most is Development Control where the projection of income for the year has increased by £43,000 since Q2. In December three planning applications were received contributing over £81,000 of income towards the total for the month of £123,000, which is the highest recorded monthly total for over three years.

## **Business Rates – New Discretionary Relief**

With Government full reimbursement, a business rates discretionary relief scheme is being introduced offering three new types of rate relief:

***Retail Relief*** - Properties that will benefit from the relief are those with a rateable value of £50,000 or less that are wholly or mainly being used as shops, restaurants, cafes and drinking establishments. The relief is available in the years: 2014/15 and 2015/16. The maximum amount of relief under this scheme is £1,000. It is estimated that 747 premises are likely to be in scope for this relief.

***Re-occupation Relief*** - A discount of 50% for new occupants of previously empty retail premises. The discount will last for 18 months. The relief will be available to businesses moving in to properties between 1st April 2014 and 31st March 2016. It is estimated that 75 premises are likely to be in scope for this relief.

***New Build Empty Property Relief*** - Properties that will benefit from the relief will be all unoccupied non domestic properties completed after 1 October 2013 and before 30 September 2016. It is estimated that 10 premises are likely to be in scope for this relief.

Businesses identified as potentially being entitled to Retail Rate Relief are being contacted and invited to apply for the relief by completing an application form.

## **District Council Network**

As the BDC representative, I attended the Council at the Spring DCN Assembly, which was focused upon housing development, and included an address from Kris Hopkins, the Housing Minister.

Cllr David Bebb  
Cabinet Member – Performance and Efficiency

Further information on the contents of this report can be obtained by contacting:

Cllr (insert name and contact details)

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