



Executive
13th September 2006

**Report from the Director of
Policy and Regeneration**

For information

Wards Affected:
ALL

**Vital Signs Performance Digest Quarter One
April – June 2006**

Forward Plan Ref: PRU-06/07-003

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report introduces the Vital Signs for the period April to June 2006 (quarter one). The Vital Signs monitors the council's performance against key indicators.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Executive are recommended to note the council's performance against key performance indicators.

3.0 Detail

3.1 The Vital Signs document provides quarterly information on key performance indicators across the council. In particular, it:

- provides an at a glance summary of good and bad performance highlighting areas where performance has fluctuated
- provides details of any remedial action to be taken
- allows both councillors and officers an opportunity to comment and assess performance progress
- encourages regular performance monitoring by service managers and thereby signals that such monitoring should not just be seen as a one-

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off end of year exercise but an essential part of good management practice throughout the year

- provides an essential overview of key performance indicators for both the Executive and Performance & Finance Select Committee

3.2 Each year, the performance indicators measured as part of the Vital Signs are reviewed to reflect changing council priorities, areas critical for CPA and anything which is high risk to the council. For 2006/07, all of the stretch targets negotiated as part of the councils Local Area Agreement are included as well as those critical for Corporate Performance Assessment ratings. We have also included all of the Vital Signs that did not perform to target at some point over the last year.

3.3 Quarterly targets are set for each of the Vital Signs indicators based on incrementally moving towards achieving agreed annual targets. Annual targets are set in the following ways:

- For CPA indicators, the Audit Commission sets upper and lower thresholds. The council is scored on how many indicators fall below, within and above these thresholds. The council determines which threshold it needs to achieve and sets an annual target to reflect this.
- For LAA stretch targets, the council has agreed with the Government to achieve specific targets over the three years of the agreement. Annual targets are set to ensure the council's performance increases at the necessary rate over the three years to achieve the performance at the end of the LAA period in order to receive the highest possible Performance Reward Grant.
- Other indicators have targets set nationally. For example, for those in the Adults Social Care service area, the Commission for Social Care Inspection sets thresholds for each indicator and the council's star rating is dependent on how well the council performs against these thresholds (often referred to as blobs). Others, such as the council's waste recycling rates, are set by the Government.
- Targets for the local performance indicators are set to reflect good practice or corporate priorities. For example, the targets set for the complaints indicators reflect agreed corporate standards.

3.4 The Vital Signs report forms part of the council's overall performance management framework. The role of the Executive is to keep a focus on what's important to the council and to provide a healthy challenge for officers. A report by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) called 'A councillors' guide to performance management' highlights the following key elements Member's bring to performance management:

- Maintaining a focus on key priorities, sometimes for a considerable while, until delivery comes right
- Offering firm and appropriate leadership in pursuing these issues

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- Asking the right questions

If the Executive are particularly concerned about performance against any of the Vital Signs indicators, they can refer the matter for further in-depth investigation to the Performance and Finance Select Committee.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 None, directly arising from the report

6.0 Diversity Implications

6.1 This report monitors the gender and ethnic background of the top 5% of earners. Targets are set and plans are made for ensuring women and people from ethnic minorities are properly represented in this group of council employees.

7.0 Background Information

Further information can be obtained from Ann Kenny (Policy & Regeneration Unit) on 020 8937 1033.

Phil Newby
Director of Policy and Regeneration

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