

---

**Corporate and Scrutiny Management Policy and  
Scrutiny Committee**

14<sup>th</sup> September 2015

**Report of the Director for Customer & Business Support Services**

**2015/16 Monitor 1**

**Purpose**

1. This report forecasts the 2015/16 outturn position for the services falling under the responsibility of the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Policy and Scrutiny Committee.

**Financial Analysis**

2. The council's net General Fund budget for 2015/16 is £119,760k and the net budget for the areas covered by this report is £16,121k.
3. Following on from previous years, the challenge of delivering savings continues with £12m to be achieved in order to reach a balanced budget. £3,985k of these savings fall within the services covered by this report. The forecasts outlined in this report reflect a prudent view of how that challenge is currently being met.
4. All budgets are reviewed on a quarterly basis and some are monitored monthly. Those that are monitored monthly are high value or high risk areas. The latest review has not identified any major variations that require action or mitigation and all savings proposals are progressing. Overall the areas covered by this report are forecasting a small underspend of £160k.

**Performance Analysis – 2015/16 Monitor 1**

**Customer & Business Support Services**

5. The first quarter call volumes in customer services are the heaviest of the year following annual council tax billing. The numbers were 66,218 for general enquiries and 8,114 for Benefits with 81.6% and 82.5% of the calls being answered respectively. The target answer time is 20 seconds and the first quarter performance was 45% (general enquiries) and 59.1% (Benefits). The overall performance continues to rise into the second quarter 2015/16. The number of residents visiting the customer centre in the first quarter was 17,504 with 65% being seen within 10 minutes. Customer satisfaction from those customers who have responded is 69%

face to face and 98% where they have phoned. Work is being undertaken to improve customer response rates to the satisfaction survey.

6. The collection rate for Council Tax at the end of quarter 1 was 29.81%, an increase of 0.3% on quarter 1 in 2014/15 (each 0.1% equates to £93k). Business Rate collection was 32.27%, an increase of 2.69% above quarter 1 in 2014/15 (each 0.1% equates to 106k).
7. Housing Benefit performance remained consistently on target for the second consecutive quarter at the end of June 2015. The average time for new claims being 15 days, change of circumstances 10 days and the combined average 11 days. This places York as the second best performing authority within our benchmarking group of local unitary councils.
8. Total Council sickness absence (excluding Schools) averaged 2.2 days per FTE in Q1, slightly lower than 2.7 days during the same period in 2014/15. Stress absence was also slightly lower in Q1 2015/16 than in Q1 2014/15 (0.6 and 0.7 days per FTE respectively).

#### Office of the Chief Executive

9. The York Open Data website launched in March 2015 with 285 data sets, attracting over 650 individual users to the site in the month. Between April and June 2015 this increased to 3,107 users visiting the site, with 1,382 downloads of the available data sets.
10. Much of the data on economic performance is released on an annual basis and numbers on Gross Value Added and average wages in the City, an area of concern in recent years, will be published in December.
11. Employment continues to be strong in the City as the number of Job Seekers Allowance claimants continue to fall. However, whilst the city centre has low vacancy rates compared to many other places, there has been a slight increase in the number of vacant city centre shops in Quarter One.

#### **Update on progress on Workforce Equality Scheme**

12. Further statistical information, as previously requested by members, is attached at Annex 1.

## Consultation

13. There has been consultation with Trade Union groups on the ongoing implications of the council's financial situation and performance improvement issues.

## Corporate Priorities

14. The information and issues included in this report demonstrate progress on achieving the priorities set out in the Council Plan.

## Implications

15. The financial implications are covered within the body of the report. There are no significant human resources, equalities, legal, crime and disorder, information technology, property or other implications arising from this report.

## Risk Management

16. The risk management processes embedded across the council continue to contribute to managing the risk issues associated with major projects and key areas of service delivery.

## Recommendations

17. As this report is for information only there are no specific recommendations.

*Reason: To update the Committee on the forecast position for 2015/16.*

<b>Authors:</b>	<b>Chief Officer Responsible for the report:</b>			
Debbie Mitchell Corporate Finance Manager Ext 4161	Ian Floyd Director for Customer & Business Support Services			
Ian Cunningham	<b>Report Approved</b>	√	<b>Date</b>	4 September 2015
Kay Crabtree				
<b>Wards Affected: All</b>				
<b><i>For further information please contact the authors of the report</i></b>				