

*PART A

Report to: Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel
Date of meeting: 6 July 2015
Report of: Partnerships and Performance Section Head
Title: Outsourced services performance data and information –
Quarter 4 2014/15

1.0 **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Watford BC's Corporate Plan 2014-18 sets out the council's priority areas for delivery over the next four years. These are supported by a suite of performance measures. These measures support the delivery of good quality services by ensuring they are performing at an acceptable standard, highlighting areas of strong performance and, more importantly, which areas might require some additional focus to improve performance. In these latter cases, consideration needs to be given to the reasons for under-performance and to steps that might support improvement.
- 1.2 A significant number of key performance measures are now collected for services that have been outsourced to external providers. These measures play a critical role in ensuring that the contracts governing the relationship between the council and the external contractor are well managed and delivering the quality of service expected.
- 1.3 This report focuses specifically on the performance information obtained from the providers of the council's externalised service as of quarter 4 2014/15 (end of year).
- 1.4 There are a number of measures included within that were new for 2014/15, which means that during the year it was not possible to undertake trend analysis in every case, particularly from last year. This will, however, be addressed in future reports (i.e. from 2015/16) as trend data is established.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Panel to note and comment on the performance of the identified outsourced service indicators at the end of quarter 4 (January to March) 2014/15 - Appendix A.
- 2.2 Panel to note that the indicators within this report from the suite of measures that will be presented to Panel during 2015/16.

- 2.3 Panel to advise if there are any amendments or additions to the suite of measures that would help support its role in scrutinising performance during 2015/16.

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3.0 **Background information**

Watford BC regularly collects and monitors performance data for a wide range of its service areas. This is to ensure that services are performing at an acceptable standard. It helps highlight areas of good performance as well as those areas which might require some additional focus to improve performance. This performance data and information is reported to the council's Leadership Team on a regular basis and to Cabinet and either Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel on a quarterly basis.

3.1 **Current outsourced services**

3.1.1 Over the last few years, Watford BC has outsourced a range of its services. Within the contracts associated with these services is a requirement to collect and report performance information to the council to support its role as 'client' or 'commissioner'. The range and scope of this information is defined within each contract and would be relevant to the area of service delivery.

3.1.2 Whilst Overview and Scrutiny Committee continues to scrutinise performance relating to services retained 'in-house', Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel established that performance information relating to the following outsourced contracts was to be reported to the Panel in 2014/15 and in future years:

- Veolia
 - Street cleansing
 - Waste and recycling
 - Parks and open spaces

- SLM
 - Watford Leisure Centre – Woodside
 - Watford Leisure Centre - Central

- HQ Theatres
 - Watford Colosseum

- Vinci
 - Parking

- Capita
 - ICT

- Three Rivers District Council (lead authority)
 - Revenues and Benefits

- Watford Borough Council (lead authority)
 - Human Resources

3.1.3 Performance information available at Quarter 4 2014/15 that relates to the areas outlined in 3.1.2 is included in this report to Panel at Appendix A.

3.1.4 Those performance measures that are not performing against target are indicated either by a 😞 (under-performing by up to 10%) or by a ! (under-performing by over 10%). Where a measure is performing well (on or above target) it is highlighted with a 😊 even if this is over 10%.

For some indicators a lower result indicates improved performance (such as household waste, street cleansing, sickness absence, time taken to process benefits) and for some a higher results shows improvement (recycling rates, SLM memberships, collection of council tax and NNDR).

Targets have not been set for all indicators and so variances are not shown in every case.

3.1.5 In addition, the report provides trend information. Where possible current performance has been compared with the performance for the same quarter last year (Q4 2013/14) and with the previous quarter (Q3 2014/15). This information can help provide context on the relative performance of an indicator and help assess whether there are any trends emerging. Trend analysis shows whether performance has:

- Improved since the previous period – shown by a ‘↑’ and with the relevant previous period result as an indication of the extent of improvement
- Declined since the previous period – shown by a ‘↓’ and with the relevant previous period result as an indication of the extent of decline.
- Stayed the same since the previous period – shown by a ‘↔’

In the report the periods shown are, as detailed above, the previous year or previous quarter.

The actual result for the previous period is also shown (in square brackets [XX]) so the extent of the trend can be assessed.

Trend data is not available for all indicators.

Performance overview

3.2.1 Overall, the council's outsourced services show good performance and, in some important areas of delivery, steady improvement during the final quarter of 2014/15.

3.2.2 End of year Benefits performance confirms the significant improvements made during the year for the time taken to process benefit claims. This is extremely good news and reflects substantial work done by the service to improve the customer experience. Work is ongoing to continue the improvement. Collection of council tax and NNDR is also showing upward trajectories – meaning that the council is ensuring that expected revenues to the authority are achieved.

3.2.3 Recycling performance and residual waste collected met their annual targets overall, although performance in quarter 4 was not as strong as quarter 3. This is not unexpected. The national definition for the waste indicators has changed and, from 2015/16, the revised definition will be reported. This revised definition does

not include certain waste arisings – in particular street sweepings. Also reported to Panel is household recycling rate – this is the rate without street sweepings or bring banks so identifies only that domestic waste generated by households. Street cleansing litter performance was good in quarter 4 whilst there is scope for improvement in tackling detritus (grit, mud, decaying leaves etc), graffiti and fly positing. This has been addressed by Veolia in quarter 1 2015/16.

- 3.2.4 SLM's performance has been strong through 2014/15 and membership at both centres is up for the year, as is throughput. Watford Colosseum has increased the number of performances and hires in 2014/15 and the client team are working closely with both SLM and Watford Colosseum to improve reporting of complaints and compliments.
- 3.2.5 Capita performance reflects the ongoing issues experienced with ICT and this is being addressed as a priority.
- 3.2.6 Sickness absence is now consistently performing within the council's 'stretch' target of 5 days

4.0 **IMPLICATIONS.**

4.1 **Financial**

4.1.1 There are no financial implications within this report.

4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

4.2.1 There are no legal implications within this report.

Appendices

Appendix A

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL – MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE -
Outsourced Services Quarter 4 (January – March) 2014/15