

***PART A**

Report to: Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel
Date of meeting: 23 September 2014
Report of: Partnerships and Performance Section Head
Title: Outsourced services performance data and information –
Quarter 1 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 1 2014/15.
- 1.4 There are a number of new measures included within the report, which means that for quarter 1 it has not been possible to undertake trend analysis in every case. This will, however, be addressed in future reports 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 1 (April - June) 2014/15 - Appendix A.
- 2.2 Panel to consider any improvements or changes to the report that would support its understanding of performance for 2014/15.

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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:

- 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 1 2014/15 that relates to the areas outlined in 3.1.2 is included in this report to Panel at Appendix A.

3.2 Review of performance at end of Quarter 1

3.2.1 Over the last year, work has been undertaken to refine how, and what, performance information is presented to Panel for consideration and comment. This is to ensure Panel has the information and data it needs to support its role in monitoring and scrutinising service delivery for the council's outsourced service areas. This continues to evolve and Panel's comments on how this could be improved are welcomed.

3.2.2 Overall, the council's outsourced services shows steady improvement and sustained levels of performance in most areas during Q1 2014/15.

3.2.3 The performance achieved by Veolia in the first quarter has built on the improvements made in 2013/14. Recycling performance is strong and residual waste reducing in line with the targets set out in the Veolia contract. Whilst street cleansing shows very strong performance in Q1, this is being assessed for consistency given that the results are achieved through staff monitoring and, therefore, open to a level of subjectivity. Watford BC's Environmental Services client team will be conducting joint surveys to ensure confidence in future results.

3.2.4 SLM's visitor numbers remain strong and membership has increased during the first quarter. The Leisure and Community client team has been working with SLM to refine the performance information presented, particularly around the different categories of customers and complaints / compliments. The team has extended this approach to HQ Theatres and additional information is presented for 2014/15.

3.2.5 Capita performance reflects some of the issues experienced with ICT and both Watford BC, as the lead authority, is undertaking discussions with Capita on how performance can be improved both in the short and long term.

3.2.6 Revenues and Benefits performance is included in this report to Panel for the first time following the introduction of the 'lead authority' model. The two measures includes relate to the speed of processing benefit applications – both new claims and change of circumstances. The service's performance on new claims continues to show improvement, building on the achievements of 2013/14 and, whilst, change of circumstances has not met target its performance trend also shows considerable improvement on last year.

3.2.7 Sickness absence is now performing within the council's 'stretch' target. The council set itself a relatively ambitious target for sickness – 5 days – and put in place a series of measures to support the achievement of the target (such as

health and wellbeing advice for staff). Q1 2014/15 saw continued improvement and, whilst the target was not achieved in Q1, the indications are that it will be for Q2. The definition for the indicator has changed for 2014/15, which is why no trend data is available. The indicator is now measured on a 'rolling' basis rather than cumulatively.

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 1 (April - June) 2014/15