

Departmental Quarterly Monitoring Report

Directorate: Policy and Resources

Department: Legal & Democratic Services

Period: Quarter 2 – 1st July 2011 to 30th September 2011

1.0 Introduction

This monitoring report covers Legal and Democratic Services second quarter period up to 30th September 2011. It describes key developments and progress against all objectives and performance indicators for the service.

The way in which the traffic light symbols and direction of travel indicators have been used to reflect progress is explained within the Appendix of the covering report.

2.0 Key Developments

The Council approved changes to the Procurement Standing Orders in July 2011, the revised changes should see an improvement in efficiency.

Work has continued on developing the Council's website. A major project between Communications and Marketing and I.T. Services is now underway with the first phase working on the content of the website.

The Creamfields 2011 event took place successfully on August Bank Holiday following extensive input from the Licensing Team.

3.0 Emerging Issues

The opening of the first phase of the Hive leisure development is due to take place early in Quarter 3, following extensive legal and marketing support.

The Elections team are making preparations for individual registration of electors, effective from the next canvass and the Police Commissioner elections in November 2012.

A conditional funding offer for the Mersey Gateway project is expected in Q3, which will lead to extensive legal & marketing work.

4.0 Service Objectives / milestones

4.1 Progress against 'key' objectives / milestones

Total	2		2		0		0
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Both key objectives/milestones are on track to achieve annual targets. Additional information can be found in Appendix 1.

4.2 Progress against 'other' objectives / milestones

Total	11		11		0		0
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All 'other' objectives for the service are presently on track and additional details are provided within Appendix 2.

5.0 Performance indicators

5.1 Progress Against 'key' performance indicators

Total	1		1		0		0
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On target with good progress this quarter. Details are in Appendix 3.

5.2 Progress Against 'other' performance indicators

Total	11		6		5		0
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Four indicators, relating to survey data and return of completed register of voter forms, cannot be reported at this time. Of the remaining indicators the majority remain on track, although at this stage there is some uncertainty regarding public engagement with the political process, conveyancing transactions and dealing with child care cases. Additional details are provided in Appendix 4.

6.0 Risk Control Measures

During the development of the 2011 -12 Service activity, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.

No 'high' risk, treatment measures were identified.

7.0 Progress against high priority equality actions

As a result of undertaking a departmental Equality Impact Assessment no high priority actions were identified for the service for the period 2011 – 2012.

8.0 Data quality statement

The author provides assurance that the information contained within this report is accurate and valid and that every effort has been made to avoid the omission of data. Where data has been estimated, has been sourced directly from partner or other agencies, or where there are any concerns regarding the limitations of its use this has been clearly annotated.

9.0 Appendices

- Appendix 1 Progress against 'key' objectives / milestones
- Appendix 2 Progress against 'other' objectives / milestones
- Appendix 3 Progress against 'key' performance indicators
- Appendix 4 Progress against 'other' performance indicators
- Appendix 5 Financial Statement

Appendix 1: Progress Against 'key' objectives / milestones

Ref	Objective
LD O1	To provide a high quality legal service to the Council and its departments to ensure that the Council is able to deliver its services effectively

Milestones	Progress Q 2	Supporting Commentary
Secure renewal of Lexcel & ISO Accreditation January 2012		On course to be achieved by target date as work on the ISO Internal Audits continues.

Ref	Objective
LD O2	To ensure that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information and are kept informed of changing legislation and responsibilities

Milestones	Progress Q 2	Supporting Commentary
Review Constitution May 2011		The Constitution was approved by full Council in April 2011. It was further amended as intended in July 2011.

Appendix 2: Progress Against 'other' objectives / milestones

Ref	Objective
LD O3	To provide efficient and effective Democratic Support Services that provides Elected Members, as key decision makers, with the necessary information, support and training opportunities to fulfil their individual potential and management and governance role effectively

Milestones	Progress Q 2	Supporting Commentary
To ensure that all members have been given the opportunity of a having a MAP meeting.		MAP meetings are continually taking place.
To induct all new members – by October 2011		All new Members have been offered a comprehensive Induction Programme. All four days of the Induction have now been held.

Appendix 2: Progress Against 'other' objectives / milestones

Ref	Objective
LD O4	Improve the quality and effectiveness of the Council's communications

Milestones	Progress Q 2	Supporting Commentary
Review implications of new Publicity Code April 2011		The Code was reviewed and possible implications highlighted in a report to Management Team
Review and retender press cutting service March 2012		Investigating other suppliers to compare services provided and costs
New Inside Halton contract to take effect April 2011		First edition under new contract was published in March 2011
Review and update print unit pricing policy April 2011		New print policy and pricing structure has been implemented and is being used
Review and update directorate work programmes April 2011		Meetings have taken place with directorates, plans and targets are being put together for agreement
Customer Satisfaction Survey March 2012		Discussions for a survey due for September 2011 are still taking place.
Review Design and Print Tender June 2011		This is underway. Led by procurement.
Internal Communications survey(as part of Staff Survey) October 2011		A staff survey was issued by the Corporate & Organisational Policy Team at the end of June 2011 so no requirement for another survey.
Retender of InTouch Nov 2011		Current contract has been extended until June 12 when In Touch will form part of the corporate Design and Print tender.

Appendix 3: Progress Against 'key' performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2010/11	Target 2011/12	Quarter 2	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
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Corporate Health							
<u>LDLI 01</u>	No. Of Members with Personal Development Plans (56 Total)	51 (91%)	56 (100%)	48 (80%)			Progress is good and the same as the corresponding stage last year.

Appendix 4: Progress Against 'other' performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2010/11	Target 2011/12	Quarter 2	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
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Corporate Health							
LDLI 02	% of Members attending at least one organised Training Event	87%	100	55%			On target although down on the same time last year. However, at the halfway point of the year, more than half of Members have been on training.

Service Delivery							
LDLI 05	Average Time taken to issue prosecutions from receipt of instructions (working days)	17	10	8			On target. Performance has improved and is better than this time last year.
LDLI 06	Average time taken to complete Conveyancing Transactions	488	300	431			The figure is continually distorted by very complex, long standing matters although the figures are considerably better than last year and last quarter.
LDLI 07	Average time taken to complete Child Care Cases (calendar days)	336	225	265			Child care cases are complex and lengthy and resultant timescales are not always within the control of the legal staff involved. As such, the indicator is a very difficult one to deal with, and can be quickly affected by the volume of cases and the time taken to progress matters through the court process as the profile of safeguarding has been raised. The Legal team work well with colleagues in the Children & Enterprise Directorate.

Appendix 4: Progress Against 'other' performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2010/11	Target 2011/12	Quarter 2	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
Fair Access							
LDLI 08	Members of Public attending Council Meetings (Council, PPBs, Exec Board, Exec Board Sub, Area Forums)	211	600	247	?		Figures are better than this time last year, but they are governed by a great extent to the subject matter under discussion.
LDLI 09	No. Of Questions asked by Members of the Public at Council Meetings (Council, PPBs, Exec Board, Exec Board Sub, Area Forums)	27	200	26	?		LDL1 08 is presently showing an uncertain target, as uncertainty exists over whether this target will be met. LDL1 09 is presently showing an uncertain target, though it is up on the same time last year. It should also be noted that the target has increased from 175 last year.
LDLI 10	% of Executive Board, Executive Board Sub-Committee and Mersey Gateway Executive Board minutes published within 5 working days after the meeting.	N/A	100	100%		N/A	This is a new indicator this year, so there is no comparable data for 2010/11. Quarter 2 performance is on target.
LDLI 11	% Of those eligible casting a vote in local elections.	60%	30%	34%		N/A	The figure is slightly higher than the target but lower than the same period last year, due to the General Election. Thus, a comparison cannot be made against this years figure.

Appendix 4: Progress Against 'other' performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2010/11	Target 2011/12	Quarter 2	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
Fair Access continued							
LDLI 12	% Of completed form A's (register of voters) returned	96%	90	N/A	Refer to comment	N/A	Registration forms will be sent out during August/September 2011. Information should be available in Q3.
LDLI 13	% satisfied that Council keeps residents well informed about its services.	N/A	67	N/A	Refer to comment	N/A	In the absence of a nationally prescribed survey, work is now being progressed to establish a more locally focussed survey to capture community perceptions and satisfaction levels. It is anticipated that such a survey would be undertaken during the autumn of the current financial year.
LDLI 14	% who believe internal communications has improved	64.9	5	NA	Refer to comment	N/A	This is reported annually via the internal communications survey in November 2011.
LDLI 15	% of people satisfied or more than satisfied with visit to Council Website www.halton.gov.uk	68	85	65	?		Satisfaction is likely to be affected while there are two websites up and running, and content of the new site is incomplete. IT Services and Communications & Marketing have begun a major project to review the website. The scope of this project covers branding, usability, site structure, content, features and functionality The first phase is to work on the content of the site.

Appendix 4: Progress Against 'other' performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2010/11	Target 2011/12	Quarter 2	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
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Fair Access continued							
LDLI 16	% of customers satisfied or very satisfied with the service of the internal print service	N/A	70	97		N/A	This indicator is new for 2011-12 and shows a positive level is being achieved.
LDLI 17	% take up of press releases	N/A	81	81		N/A	This indicator is new for 2011-12 and shows a positive level is being achieved.
LDLI 18	% satisfaction with Inside Halton	98%	85	NA	Refer to comment	N/A	This is reported annually via the Readers Survey which will take place in December 2011.

Appendix 5: Financial Statement

LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Revenue Budget as at 30th September 2011

	Annual Budget	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date
	£'000	£'000	£'000	(overspend) £'000
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Employees	2,151	1,093	1,084	9
Supplies & Services	440	247	228	19
Civic Catering & Functions	59	20	14	6
Legal Expenses	246	142	135	7
Total Expenditure	2,896	1,502	1,461	41
<u>Income</u>				
Land Charges	-96	-51	-51	0
School SLA's	-24	0	0	0
License Income	-315	-139	-111	(28)
Print Unit Fee Income	-303	-151	-80	(71)
Government Grant	-34	-34	-34	0
Other Income	-73	-36	-10	(26)
Transfers from Reserves	-38	-38	-38	0
Total Income	-883	-449	-324	(125)
Net Operational Expenditure	2,013	1,053	1,137	(84)
<u>Recharges</u>				
Premises Support	485	213	211	2
Transport Recharges	39	20	19	1
Asset Charges	2	0	0	0
Central Support Recharges	708	354	354	0
Support Recharges Income	-2,239	-1,119	-1,119	0
Net Total Recharges	-1,005	-532	-535	3
Net Departmental Total	1,008	521	602	(81)

Comments on the above figures:

In overall terms spending is above the budget profile at the end of the quarter 2.

Licenses income is currently below the budget, which is a result of reduced uptake in new licenses due to the economic downturn. It is anticipated that this income target will not be achieved by the end of the financial year.

Print Unit Fee income is also below the budget. This is the result of saving pressures within the Council, which has had a knock-on effect in the volume of printing being undertaken by Directorates. It is anticipated that this income target will not be achieved by the end of the financial year.

Regarding Other Income, this too is below budget, which is due to the decline in reimbursed court costs. It is anticipated that this income target will not be achieved by the end of the financial year.

At this stage it is anticipated that overall net expenditure will be in the order of £200,000 above budget by the end of the year, primarily as a result of shortfalls in income.