

Departmental Quarterly Monitoring Report

Directorate: Policy and Resources

Department: Legal & Democratic Services

Period: Quarter 3 – 1st October 2011 to 31st December 2011

1.0 Introduction

This monitoring report covers Legal and Democratic Services third quarter period up to 31st December 2011. It describes key developments and progress against key objectives and performance indicators for the service.

2.0 Key Developments

The first phase of The Hive Leisure Development opened during the quarter. Improvements continue to be made to the Council's website as part of the ongoing major project.

3.0 Emerging Issues

The Localism Act 2011 received Royal Assent towards the end of the quarter, and late changes were made affecting the Standards regime. Work is taking place to prepare a new draft code of conduct and arrangements for dealing with complaints, which will be brought to Members, initially at the Governance Group in February and then to Executive Board and Council, expected to be in March and April respectively.

The Legal team is preparing for its Lexcel and ISO assessment at the end of January.

Working Groups involving both Members and Officers have been meeting to develop governance arrangements within the Council and to ensure that the Constitution remains fit for purpose. Further information will be available following the Member Group in February.

Work continues on the procurement phase of Mersey Gateway.

4.0 Service Objectives / milestones

4.1 Progress against 'key' objectives / milestones

| | | | | | | | |
|-------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Total | 2 |  | 2 |  | 0 |  | 0 |
|-------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|

Both key objectives / milestones for the service are progressing as planned and additional information is provided within Appendix 1.

4.2 Progress against 'other' objectives / milestones

| | | | | | | | |
|-------|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Total | 11 |  | 11 |  | 0 |  | 0 |
|-------|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|

All other objectives / milestones for the service are progressing as planned and therefore are not being reported by exception at this time.

5.0 Performance indicators

5.1 Progress Against 'key' performance indicators

| | | | | | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Total | 1 |  | 1 |  | 0 |  | 0 |
|-------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|

The number of Members with Personal Development Plans is on track to achieve annual target and additional details are provided within Appendix 1.

5.2 Progress Against 'other' performance indicators

| | | | | | | | |
|-------|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Total | 12 |  | 8 |  | 0 |  | 4 |
|-------|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|

At present there are 4 'other' indicators for the service that are unlikely to achieve their annual target. These include the number of questions asked and public attendance at meetings, Conveyancing transactions and satisfaction with the Council's website. Additional details for these indicators are provided within 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 'key' performance indicators
- Appendix 3 Progress against 'other' performance indicators
- Appendix 4 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 3 | 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 3 | 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, to take account of changes to the Procurement Standing Orders. |



Appendix 2: Progress Against 'key' performance indicators





| Ref | Description | Actual 2010/11 | Target 2011/12 | Quarter 3 | Current Progress | Direction of Travel | Supporting Commentary |
|-----|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
|-----|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|

| Corporate Health | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>LDLI 01</u> | No. Of Members with Personal Development Plans (56 Total) | 51 (91%) | 56 (100%) | 51 (91%) |  |  | Progress is good and better than the corresponding stage last year. |


Appendix 3: Progress Against 'other' performance indicators

| Ref | Description | Actual 2010/11 | Target 2011/12 | Quarter 3 | Current Progress | Direction of Travel | Supporting Commentary |
|-----|-------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
|-----|-------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|

| Service Delivery | | | | | | | |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LDLI 06 | Average time taken to complete Conveyancing Transactions | 488 | 300 | 426 |  |  | The figure has been distorted by the completion of very complex, longstanding matters. Although, if comparison is to be looked at, progress is higher than Q3 last year. |

| Fair Access | | | | | | | |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LDLI 08 | Members of Public attending Council Meetings (Council, PPBs, Exec Board, Exec Board Sub, Area Forums) | 211 | 600 | 109 |  |  | Figures are being kept under review, although as always 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 | 7 |  |  | |

Appendix 3: Progress Against 'other' performance indicators

| Ref | Description | Actual 2010/11 | Target 2011/12 | Quarter 3 | Current Progress | Direction of Travel | Supporting Commentary |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Fair Access continued | | | | | | | |
| LDLI 15 | % of people satisfied or more than satisfied with visit to Council Website www.halton.gov.uk | 68 | 85 | 42 |  | | Work has been ongoing for several months to make improvements to the website, starting with an overhaul of the site content. This has meant that areas of content have been incomplete. Also, after the new website was launched, the old site was also still running for some time, which is also a likely cause of dissatisfaction. As the content is completed and the next stage of the website review gets underway we should see improved satisfaction. |

Appendix 4: Financial Statement

LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Revenue Budget as at 31st December 2011

| | Annual Budget | Budget To Date | Actual To Date | Variance To Date (overspend) |
|------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| <i>Expenditure</i> | | | | |
| Employees | 2,151 | 1,608 | 1,565 | 43 |
| Supplies & Services | 419 | 309 | 289 | 20 |
| Civic Catering & Functions | 59 | 35 | 15 | 20 |
| Legal Expenses | 258 | 185 | 158 | 27 |
| Capital Financing | 21 | 16 | 16 | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | 2,908 | 2,153 | 2,043 | 110 |
| <i>Income</i> | | | | |
| Land Charges | -61 | -46 | -36 | (10) |
| School SLA's | -46 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| License Income | -265 | -199 | -184 | (15) |
| Print Unit Fee Income | -173 | -130 | -123 | (7) |
| Government Grant | -34 | -34 | -34 | 0 |
| Other Income | -22 | -16 | -22 | 6 |
| Transfers from Reserves | -51 | -51 | -51 | 0 |
| Total Income | -652 | -476 | -450 | (26) |
| Net Operational Expenditure | 2,256 | 1,677 | 1,593 | 84 |
| <u>Recharges</u> | | | | |
| Premises Support | 305 | 229 | 226 | 3 |
| Transport Recharges | 39 | 29 | 28 | 1 |
| Asset Charges | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Central Support Recharges | 1,086 | 815 | 815 | 0 |
| Support Recharges Income | -2,402 | -1,801 | -1,801 | 0 |
| Net Total Recharges | -970 | -728 | -732 | 4 |
| Net Departmental Total | 1,286 | 949 | 861 | 88 |

Comments on the above figures:

In overall terms spending is below the budget profile at the end of the quarter 3.

Regarding expenditure, Employee costs are lower than the budget due to a number of vacant posts within the Marketing & Communications Division. These posts will contribute towards the Department's 2012/13 savings target.

Supplies and Services expenditure is lower than the budget profile due to a reduction in the amount of external training. Part of this budget will be used as a contribution towards the 2012/13 savings target.

Appendix 4: Financial Statement

Legal expenses are also lower than the budget profile due to the reduced use of Counsel's services. It is anticipated that spend will be below budget at the end of the year.

At this stage it is anticipated that overall net expenditure will be within budget by the end of the year