



# Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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| <b>Report for:</b>                                                           | Finances and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Title of report:</b>                                                      | Performance and Risk report Quarter 3 2021/22 – Performance, People & Innovation                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Date:</b>                                                                 | 8 March 2022                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Report on behalf of:</b>                                                  | Councillor Andrew Williams, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder Corporate & Contracted Services                                                                                            |
| <b>Part:</b>                                                                 | I                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>If Part II, reason:</b>                                                   | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Appendices:</b>                                                           | Quarter 3 Operational Risk and Performance reports                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Background papers:</b>                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT – Information Technology team</li> <li>• FirstCare – The Council’s sickness management system</li> <li>• KPIs – Key performance indicators</li> </ul> |

### Report Author / Responsible Officer

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| <b>Corporate Priorities</b> | <p>A clean, safe and enjoyable environment</p> <p>Building strong and vibrant communities</p> <p>Ensuring economic growth and prosperity</p> <p>Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need</p> <p>Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery</p> <p>Climate and ecological emergency</p> |
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| <b>Wards affected</b>                                | All                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Purpose of the report:</b>                        | 1. To provide the Committee with analysis of performance and risk management for the services and functions provided by the Performance, People & Innovation Service. |
| <b>Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):</b> | 1. That the Committee notes the contents of the report and the performance of the service for Quarter 3 2021/22.                                                      |
| <b>Period for post policy/project review:</b>        |                                                                                                                                                                       |

## 1 Introduction

This is a regular report to the committee detailing the performance of the relevant services for this committee over the last quarter.

The review also considers operational risks and highlights any additional controls and assurances needed to address the issues raised.

Performance reports are produced on a quarterly basis with information collated in the Council's performance management system (Rocket).

The performance report for the division is attached and it examines progress in relation to two key themes: Human Resources; and IT and Digital Services.

## 2 Key Issues

### Monitoring Performance

#### 2.1 Human Resources

2.1.1 The total sickness absence outturn for Q3 is similar to the last quarter but higher than Q3 last year. Both short and long term absence has increased.

2.1.2 The sickness scrutiny group continues to meet regularly to assess all sickness absence and will look to identify trends and any areas of concern, in these cases they will be escalated to a more formal route via the policy. This group also monitors compliance to return work interviews to ensure staff members returning have a session with their manager to discuss their absence, as well as carrying out spot checks on whether managers are in regular contact with their staff.

2.1.3 The HR team has analysed the statistics and there appears to be an increase in stress/anxiety related absence (both home and work) as well as increased absence related to Covid-19. HR work with management to assess cases to understand what the reasons for the sickness absence so that a tailored approach to managing the absence is devised. For cases of work related sickness, mechanisms are in place to identify the 'possible cause', so that managers can find solutions to alleviate these pressures whilst still setting expectations of work delivery. Alternatively, for cases including home life stressors, in these situations there are many support processes in place such as, occupational health, counselling, sign posting to external support, our new mental health first aider programme.

2.1.4 We also continue to send out a fortnightly wellness offer which includes courses, webinars, exercise classes, other support. These focus on a dedicated topic which also link into national themes around wellness. The Council has now launched our mental health first aider programme, where we have a cohort of trained staff who can be the first port of call for our workforce should they need some assistance. We also offer free confidential helpline to staff where they can seek professional advice and counselling in certain cases.

2.1.5 The Cabinet Office warned UK Public Sector employers to brace themselves for higher sickness absence due to Covid-19 and Dacorum is experiencing this along with other colleagues across Hertfordshire local authorities. The Council's Incident Management Team is being kept abreast of Covid-19 related absences across the council teams so pressures can be mapped and identified. Proactive action can then be taken to keep our essential services running. The Council has provided clear guidance to staff and management through IMT on how to manage CV- 19 sickness absence and what people need to do if they are infected, along with guidance on how best to reduce risks of infection. Linked to this we have a corporate risk assessment fully endorsed by our Health and Safety team.

2.1.6 Long term sickness has decreased this quarter. The sickness scrutiny group continues to assess all long term sickness cases each month to ensure the Council is doing all it can to support staff back to work, by ensuring we have the latest medical information from our Occupational Health team, looking at what adjustments we can make to roles and where cases need to be escalated to a formal process in line with the policy. We work closely with managers to ensure regular contact is made with staff who are absent from work as this is a critical aspect to help staff back to the workplace.

2.1.7 The staff turnover percentage is lower than the previous quarter. An average staff turnover in the UK is around 15%, so the council this quarter is in line with the typical staff turnover rate.

## 2.2 *IT and Digital Services*

2.2.1 IT Systems availability (99.83%) was positive within the quarter demonstrating the fundamental reliability of the Council's technology infrastructure. Access to the internet for a limited set of users was interrupted in November. However, most users were unaffected and the issue was resolved the following day.

2.2.2 The primary performance indicator (ICT01 - Percentage of incidents resolved in less than 2 days) was red within the quarter at 49.31%. Through a combination of sickness absence and vacancies, the Service Desk have been very short staffed through the quarter. One vacancy was filled in December. In January, the Service Desk's apprentice was appointed to a permanent role. A new Lead Officer for the Service will start in March. However, another member of team has since resigned and recruitment is in train for a permanent replacement to take staff levels back up to full capacity of 5. Figures early in Q4 suggest the position is improving but with a backlog of calls to resolve and new team members requiring training, it will take some time for this positively to affect KPI figures.

2.2.3 In Q3 the Council's primary data centre was migrated from a Buckinghamshire County Council facility (which was closing) to shared space within the Council's CCTV centre at Cupid. At the same time the Council's Wide Area Network provision migrated to a new provider. Both projects were completed with very limited impact on users.

2.2.4 Q3 saw the annual Public Sector Network (PSN) accreditation process completed. This includes the undertaking of rigorous third-party health checks by Cabinet Office approved ethical hackers, both from outside and within the Council's network. DBC ICT then prepares and implements a Remedial Action Plan in response to these health checks, which is submitted directly to the Cabinet Office as part of our re-accreditation application. (NB: On 21st January, the Cabinet Office confirmed that they were satisfied with Council's approach and our accreditation was renewed for a further year.)

2.2.5 Numbers of Website Users (149,804), is a drop from the previous quarter's figure of 175,776 and may be a sign that some customers are returning to pre-pandemic forms of interaction with the Council as well as a reduction in guidance and application sought for COVID purposes. The number of registered MyDacorum users, however, continued to rise, standing at 8222, an increase of 5.4% over the previous quarter.

