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Finance and Resources

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Quarter 2 Performance Report – People Transformation Digital and ICT Communications
Date:	1 November 2022
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Graeme Elliot
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	N/A
Background papers:	
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	KPI – Key Performance Indicators

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Corporate Priorities	A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery Climate and ecological emergency
Wards affected	All wards
Purpose of the report:	1. To provide the Q2 performance information for monitoring and information
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	1. That Members note the report and identify any areas where they require additional information
Period for post policy/project review:	N/A

1. Introduction

1.1. This paper will provide an update on service performance over Q2 2022/2023 for People, Transformation (including CSU and Climate and Ecological Emergency), Digital and ICT, Communications, and also highlight key achievements over this same period.

2. People

2.1. The total days sickness absence for quarter 2 is less than the previous quarter and similar to quarter 2 last year.

2.2. Detailed analysis shows the main contributors to sickness absence were medical infection (CV-19 related), musculoskeletal, surgery and mental health issues. HR work with management to assess cases to understand the reasons for the absence so that a tailored approach can be 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, there are many support processes in place such as: occupational health; counselling; sign posting to external support; and our new mental health first aider programme.

2.3. The sickness scrutiny group continues to meet monthly to assess all sickness absence and looks to identify trends and areas of concern. Any such cases will be escalated to a more formal route as per the policy. This group also monitors return work interview compliance, as well as carrying out spot checks on whether managers are in regular contact with their staff while off sick.

2.4. 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.

- 2.5. HR also continue to send out a fortnightly wellness offer which includes courses, webinars, exercise classes and other support. These focus on a dedicated topic and also link into national themes around wellness (the latest one has focussed on world mental health day). The Council continues to promote 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. We also are continuing to run our staff engagement group which is focussing on health and wellbeing issues/solutions as well as how the return to the office is progressing.
- 2.6. HR has been undertaking further interventions which have been approved by the strategic leadership team to help reduce sickness absence, the key actions include: Implementing Mental Health First Aid awareness 'lite' course for all managers (training provider commissioned, to start in November 2022), having a physio on site for front line staff, working with H&S on musculoskeletal cases – to identify trends, appropriate PPE and training needs. We have also recently commissioned a clinical counselling service for front line staff who are dealing with traumatic/emotional caseloads, the pilot will be run in the homelessness team, and we will roll out to other teams if it is successful.
- 2.7. The staff turnover percentage of 12% is the same as the previous quarter. A healthy staff turnover rate in the UK is considered to be around 10% - 15%.

3. Transformation

- 3.1. The Programme Management Office resource proposal that was highlighted in last quarter's report has been approved at SLT, and work is underway to recruit to two project roles. These roles will allow us to provide direct project management resource to key strategic projects, as well as advice and guidance for project managers delivering smaller projects based within the services.
- 3.2. The PMO will be supporting delivery of the Transformation Programme. Additional work has been undertaken this quarter to map the key strands of the programme, and to identify interdependencies between key tenets of the Transformation Programme including the Customer Strategy, People Strategy and ICT Digital Strategy. This is developing into a clear programme plan, which will be monitored by the Transformation Board to ensure delivery is progressing.
- 3.3. The implementation of the Customer Strategy is well underway, with service improvement workshops held to review significant customer-facing high-volume processes (such as reporting a housing repair, applying for the Housing Register, applying for Council Tax discount / relief, applying to report overgrown vegetation) with individual services and their customers to break the process down step-by-step and ensure the processes are made more effective, efficient and customer-focused. In the next quarter, the project team will map out the actions necessary to deliver significant improvements, the benefits that will be released as a result, and develop these into a programme of work to be delivered in early 2023.
- 3.4. As mentioned in the previous quarter's report, a review of how we handle complaints was completed in the first phase of the Customer Strategy. In this quarter, the project team have redrafted DBC's Complaints Policy with the key changes being to move handling stage 1 complaints from Heads of Service to Team Leaders and stage 2 complaints from Assistant Directors to Heads of Service and above, and to bring our complaint response times in line with revised Ombudsman policy. These changes will ensure that initial complaint responses are handled by the officers directly delivering the service and provides a wider pool of officers to provide responses which should increase the speed with which complaint responses are provided. The draft Complaints Policy will be submitted for Cabinet approval in November. Subject to approval, new procedures, templates and training support is being developed ready for a December launch.

3.5. An overarching Performance Management Framework highlighting the key expectations of officers on how they collate, manage, and report performance data and the role of the Corporate Performance Management Lead Officer within the Transformation Service in providing detailed analysis, robust challenge, and developing evidence-led service improvement activities will be launched across the organisation. Linked to this, the Performance Team has completed their review of KPIs across the organisation, which will be coming forward for approval at the relevant Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet later this year.

4. Customer Services Unit (CSU)

4.1. Call handling times have continued to increase this quarter (549.67 seconds vs. 541.00 seconds in Q1). Two full-time Customer Services Representatives have been recently recruited, with an additional acting up opportunity provided to a member of the team to provide in-depth training for the new officers as well as officers still completing the intensive training programme.

5. Climate and Ecological Emergency

5.1. In this quarter, the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Programme Lead has worked with key stakeholders across the organisation to develop an Electric Vehicle Strategy in order to provide a high level overview as to the direct and indirect actions that we will be intending to take, or have already begun working on. The document explains the proposed approach and objectives to encourage and enable the transition to EVs locally. This document will help to clarify to staff, residents, Members and local organisations what actions Dacorum is taking on Electric Vehicles. In the next quarter, once the strategy is approved, this will be published, and a robust implementation plan linked to the wider CEE Strategy Delivery Tracker will be established.

6. Digital and ICT

6.1. IT Systems availability (99.7%) continued to be positive within the quarter demonstrating the fundamental reliability of the Council's technology infrastructure. There was one short outage on the morning of 25th July. This was caused by an issue within the core network of our supplier (Virgin Media). They rapidly identified the cause of the issue and services returned in little over an hour.

6.2. The primary performance indicator (ICT01 - Percentage of incidents resolved in less than 2 days) was red within the quarter at 85%. This was a significant improvement over the previous quarter at 77%, which was itself a considerable improvement over the previous quarter's 61%.

6.3. The staffing position on the Service Desk improved over the quarter, not least with the imminent arrival of a new Head of Digital (replacing Ben Trueman who left last month), who is due to start in early November. This improved staffing position has significantly contributed to improved performance. Officers have targeted older calls, which has affected the KPI, but as these are reduced and newer team members gain expertise, performance against target should continue to improve.

7. Communications

7.1. It has been a particularly busy time within the Communication team. We have delivered an external communications programme supporting corporate projects and events across DBC services and partner organisations. This includes 397 social media campaigns through our corporate channels (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), 24 news articles, 13 press releases and over 160,000 emails via our digital publications portfolio.

Campaign/project summary includes:

- Operation London Bridge – Death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
- Commonwealth Games Queen’s Baton Relay
- Wendover Canal Restoration
- Article 4 Directions
- SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan
- Bunkers Park Crematorium
- Berkhamsted Dinosaur Trail
- Parks and open spaces retain Green Flags
- Canal Fields, Berkhamsted play area refurbishment
- New Zero Waste Map
- Hemel Hempstead War Memorial restored
- Residents’ telephone survey

7.2 We have also delivered an events programme including the Commonwealth Games Queen’s Baton Relay and Covid-19 Memorial Garden opening. We also delivered a programme of events for Operation London Bridge, including the laying of floral tributes and the proclamation of the new King, His Majesty King Charles III.

7.3 Internal communications are also ramping up in line with our increasing change ambitions. We have delivered an internal communications programme, including Staff Update Session, with an attendance of 200+ staff. Over the same period, we issued 27 internal communications campaigns across internal channels, such as our intranet, covering staff news, corporate information (projects and initiatives) and staff events.

7.4 We have delivered our publication programme of print and digital publications, including 12 issues of our weekly Dacorum Life - digital (12,307 subscribers) and 12 issues of Members News.

7.5 Social media and website statistics: Our social media channels continue to grow organically at a healthy rate compared to similar local authorities. This quarter sees the biggest increase in LinkedIn connections, reflecting increased activity and engagement from the business and professional community.

Dacorum Facebook – July to September 2022

Connections – 12,038 (increase of 300 from Q1 2022/23)

Link clicks – 5,541 (decrease of 4,652 from Q1 2022/23)

Posts – 178 (decrease of 42 from Q1 2022/23)

Dacorum Twitter – July to September 2022

Connections – 8,894 (increase of 53 from Q1 2022/23)

Link clicks – 787 (decrease of 232 from Q1 2022/23)

Posts – 169 (decrease of 39 from Q1 2022/23)

Dacorum LinkedIn – July to September 2022

Connections – 4,349 (increase of 254 from Q1 2022/23)

Link clicks – 409 231 (increase of 178 from Q1 2022/23)

Posts – 50 (increase of 15 from Q1 2022/23)