



# Finance and Resources

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Report for:</b>	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Title of report:</b>	Quarter 3 Performance Report – People Transformation Digital and ICT Communications
<b>Date:</b>	7 March 2023
<b>Report on behalf of:</b>	Councillor Graeme Elliot
<b>Part:</b>	I
<b>If Part II, reason:</b>	N/A
<b>Appendices:</b>	N/A
<b>Background papers:</b>	
<b>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</b>	KPI – Key Performance Indicators

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<b>Corporate Priorities</b>	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
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards
<b>Purpose of the report:</b>	1. To provide the Q3 performance information for monitoring and information
<b>Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):</b>	1. That Members note the report and identify any areas where they require additional information
<b>Period for post policy/project review:</b>	N/A

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This paper will provide an update on service performance over Q3 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 3 is less than the previous quarter and less than quarter 3 last year.

2.2. Detailed analysis shows the main contributors to sickness absence were [musculoskeletal](#), [Cold/Flu](#) and [mental health](#). 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 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 managers where there is a high level of mental health issues in their teams, having a physio on site for front line staff (Pilot to commence at Cupid Green in March), 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 is still below 15% which is considered a healthy staff turnover rate in the UK.

### **3. Transformation**

- 3.1. We continue to work on implementing the Customer Strategy. During this quarter, the project team have worked with Revenue and Benefits, Strategic Housing, Environmental Protection, Legal and Democratic Services, Customer Services Unit and Development Management to identify opportunities to make the councils high-volume processes more effective, efficient and customer-focused. Analysis was undertaken with the service's to determine the benefits that will be released as a result of implementing these opportunities and have been documented within a benefit tracker. These opportunities have been prioritised and will be developed into a programme of work to be delivered in mid-2023.
- 3.2. The project team held 3 focus groups with residents of Dacorum Borough Council to develop a Customer Charter that included a set of customer commitments. An implementation plan will be developed in Q3 to set out how the customer commitments will be embedded into the organisation. Two software providers were also invited to Dacorum Borough Council to demonstrate to key stakeholders the capabilities of their digital platform, and we will now focus on developing a Business Case to procure an appropriate digital platform.
- 3.3. The new Complaints Policy was approved by Cabinet in November, and launched across the council on 01/12/22. The Complaints Team has been centralised, based in the Customer Services Unit, and a new Complaints Officer joined on 01/12/22. The team delivered 13 training sessions to case owners (Heads of Service and Team Leaders), as well as being on hand for one-to-one case support. The Complaints Policy has been recognised by Inside Government (Complaints Training Provider) as a excellent customer-friendly example for others to follow.
- 3.4. MP Enquiries has been moved to the Complaints Team to ensure corporate focus and to introduce more structure to the existing processes. An action plan has been enacted to reduce a small backlog of MP Enquiries from 2022, and to continue processing incoming enquiries. Process guidance has been written for the handling of complaints, MP Enquiries, and Ombudsman Enquiries. These will be available shortly on a dedicated Customer Services tab on the intranet, and communicated across the organisation.

- 3.5. The Transformation Service has collated a draft corporate in this quarter, which has highlighted some opportunities to streamline and amalgamate existing policies as well as introduce more rigour to the current policy-making process. The Policy Register will be reviewed with Heads of Service as part of the Service Planning process in the next quarter.
- 3.6. A review was undertaken of the Performance Management Framework and new approach developed which will prioritise understanding why performance is where it is, and what work is being undertaken to return performance to the defined standard or target. The new approach includes introducing a central resource which challenges and supports teams to work on these specific areas, Increasing functionality of (and access to) InPhase, our Performance Management System and enabling greater scrutiny and accountability at all levels. We will focus on agreeing the targets for both Key Performance Indicators and Service Performance indicators, taking an evidence led approach over the next quarter.
- 3.7. A new Head of Service, Shaj Choudhury joins in February, followed by a Transformation Programme and Project Manager in late February. The Transformation Programme and Project Manager will predominantly be delivering the implementation of the Customer Strategy. The service still holds two vacancies which have been hard to fill and are in conversation with HR to identify the best solution to address these vacancies.

#### **4. Customer Services Unit (CSU)**

- 4.1. Call handling times remain high, which has resulted in a further increase in average call waiting-time from 549.67 seconds to 685.67 seconds. This was primarily due to staff turnover of multi-skilled and experienced team members. To assist with the training of newer team members, we have created a dedicated Training Officer role, which is having a positive impact on the ability to deliver training in a structured and consistent manner and will, over time, assist with reducing wait times.
- 4.2. We expect average call waiting times to remain high next quarter due to surges in demand as a result of the Garden Waste Subscription service, Annual Housing Rent increase letters and Annual Council Tax bills going out during this quarter. We are working on putting mitigations in place including improved Integrated Voice recognition (IVR) scripts, encouraging self-service channels where appropriate and improved management oversight to manage long wait times to enable diverting of calls to other staff members and offering call back options.
- 4.3. The work on implementing the Customer Strategy will also support our efforts to reduce avoidable contact and failure demand, resulting in shorter wait times.

#### **5. Climate and Ecological Emergency**

The EV strategy was published in November and a draft implementation plan established, with delivery timescales dependant on confirmed funding status. It has very recently been confirmed that Dacorum has been awarded a total of £415,360 by the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV), with support of the Energy Saving Trust. This covers 60 per cent of the project cost for providing 104 charging points across 18 car parks, with the remaining 40 per cent being provided by Connected Kerb and Osprey Charging Network. Once the new chargepoints are in place, Dacorum will have the highest number of chargepoints out of all districts/borough in Hertfordshire, and will also move into the top 20 per cent nationally. Officers will focus on phase 1 of the implementation of the plan in Quarter 4.

- 5.1. The Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) programme has also seen the successful delivery of Green Community Grants, whereby 10 local community groups were awarded a combined total of £20,040. These grants helped fund projects such as cavity wall insulation for a town hall, two thermal camera loan schemes and the greening of wall at a primary school.

5.2. A climate adaptation and resilience project, as part of the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership, has recently commenced and a more robust update will be provided next quarter as the project progresses.

## 6. Digital and ICT

6.1. IT Systems availability (100%) continued to be positive within the quarter demonstrating the fundamental reliability of the Council's technology infrastructure.

6.2. The primary performance indicator (ICT01 - Percentage of incidents resolved in less than 2 days) was red within the quarter at 84% against a target of 90%.

6.3. There is one vacancy on the Service Desk which has been difficult to recruit to. Our latest recruitment drive has resulted in a successful appointment with a new starter joining the team in the next 4 weeks. However, the team has recently had another leaver who has successfully applied for a role in Housing. This has and will continue to impact on our ability to resolve more incidents within our 2 day target.

6.4. The digital team has introduced a new process for considering all new digital initiatives; A forum 'to make timely technology decisions that take a balanced account of the needs of the overall business and individual services whilst encouraging experimentation and learning.' Services have submitted 11 requests through this pilot in the last 4 weeks.

6.5. Work to develop a business case for a new digital platform is progressing well. The aim is to provide services with new corporate functionality, embedding the principles of the digital strategy and enabling us all to become more efficient and productive.

## 7. Communications

7.1 Similarly to Q2, it has continued to be an extremely busy time within the Communications team. We have delivered an external communications programme supporting corporate projects and events across DBC services and partner organisations. This includes 408 social media posts on our corporate channels (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), 16 news articles, 9 press releases and more than 160,000 emails via our digital publications portfolio.

Campaigns/projects summary includes:

- Garden Waste Subscription Service
- Cold weather affecting heating and hot water of council tenants
- Joint bid submitted for home energy-efficiency improvements
- Hemel Garden Communities vision survey
- Second Climate Action Network event
- Measures extended to protect key employment areas
- Mitigation Strategy agreed to protect Ashridge Commons and Woods
- Draft Employment and Skills Supplementary Planning Document consultation
- DBC teams again achieve gold standard in RSPCA awards
- Autumn Sustainable Clothes Swaps
- *Love Food, Hate Waste* Challenge
- Snowdogs in Hemel Hempstead for Christmas

7.2 We have also delivered an events programme including our Hemel Old Town Halloween Party, in partnership with Community Action Dacorum and Hemel Old Town Market, and the Christmas Lights switch-on event in Hemel Hempstead.

7.3 In terms of Internal Communications output, it has continued to be a very busy time for the team. We have delivered an internal communications programme, including the first ‘in-person’ (hybrid) Staff Update Session since 2020, with more than 300 colleagues attending (in-person and online); and the first informal Coffee Morning with SLT event. Also in Q3, we issued over 40 internal communications news items across internal channels, such as our intranet, covering general staff news, corporate information (projects and initiatives) and staff events.

7.4 We have delivered our programme of print and digital publications, including 12 issues of our weekly *Dacorum Life* digital newsletter (currently 12,630 subscribers).

7.5 Social media and website statistics: Our social media channels continue to grow organically at a healthy rate compared to similar local authorities. Once again, this quarter sees a further significant increase in LinkedIn connections, reflecting increased activity including effective promotion of job vacancies.

- Dacorum BC **Facebook** - October to December 2022:
  - o Connections – 12,222 (increase of 184 from Q2 2022/23)
  - o Link clicks – 4,942 (decrease of 599 from Q2 2022/23)
  - o Posts – 186 (increase of 8 from Q2 2022/23)
- Dacorum BC **Twitter** - October to December 2022:
  - o Connections – 8,880 (decrease of 14 from Q2 2022/23)
  - o Link clicks – 1,196 (increase of 409 from Q2 2022/23)
  - o Posts – 176 (increase of 7 from Q2 2022/23)
- Dacorum BC **LinkedIn** - October to December 2022:
  - o Connections – 4,609 (increase of 260 from Q2 2022/23)
  - o Link clicks – 390 (decrease of 19 from Q2 2022/23)
  - o Posts – 46 (decrease of 4 from Q2 2022/23)