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Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Quarter 4 Performance Report – People Transformation Digital and ICT Communications
Date:	6 June 2023
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Carole Weston
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	N/A
Background papers:	Nil
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	KPI – Key Performance Indicators

Report Author / Responsible Officer

Aidan Wilkie (Strategic Director – People & Transformation)

Matt Rawdon, Assistant Director (People)

Kelvin Soley, Head of Communications

Shaj Choudhury, Head of Transformation

Yvonne Salvin, Head of Digital



Matt.Rawdon@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228513 (ext. 2513)

Kelvin.Soley@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228504 (ext. 2504)

Shaj.choudhury@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228166 (ext. 2166)

Yvonne.salvin@dacorum.gov.uk / 07840426947

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 Q4 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 Q4 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 4 is more than the previous quarter (570 days) but less than quarter 4 last year (165 days less).

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 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 whilst off sick from work.

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 staff wellness offers 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.
- 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), 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 HR team has arranged Food nutrition classes delivered by CAD, created a new Cost of Living internal web page to offer support/guidance to staff. Alongside all this work, HR and H&S has recently conducted a review of DSE assessment compliance to ensure that both DSE assessments have been undertaken at both home and office locations. In the summer there is to be a leadership development course launched for all middle managers which will focus on many aspects of good leadership. We are currently in the planning stage of a leadership development programme, in which HR will be looking to ensure supporting staff through change and how we best manage anxious staff will be factored in to the programme.
- 2.8. The annual 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. A new Customer Charter was developed which set out a number of commitments the Council will adhere to improve our Customer Service across the organisation. The Customer Charter and new staff value of Customer Focus was launched to the whole organisation at the last All Staff Briefing and a implementation plan has been developed to help embed the charter commitments across all departments.
- 3.2. During the development of the Customer Strategy, we identified the need to improve the way we communicate information about services to our residents and customers and a number of webpages were identified that needed reviewing. We have developed a new webpage content guide, in line with Government Digital Services standards, that will help us develop web content in a more customer friendly way and help us reduce failure demand into the Council, which will have a positive impact on our call waiting times. We are now in the process of redeveloping the web content of a number of key webpages in line with the new guide.
- 3.3. The Transformation Service has led on the corporate service planning process. A comprehensive new template was developed and training sessions held with all Heads of Service and Assistant Directors to set out the information requirements. An initial draft was submitted which was analysed and assessed by enabling services such as Transformation, HR, Finance and ICT and feedback provided to services to help with review and revision before the final drafts were submitted in May.

- 3.4. The Transformation Service led on producing a central Policy Register which highlighted opportunities to streamline and amalgamate existing policies as well as introduce more rigour to the current policy-making process. A Policy Making Task and Finish Group was set up and has focused on developing a new policy making approach and new template to ensure all future policies are developed in a consistent way and takes a customer centric approach to its design and formatting.
- 3.5. A review of the Central PMO function was undertaken to identify how the current PMO reporting process can be improved and how the PMO can provide greater value to the leadership team to ensure greater accountability and assurance of project and programme delivery across Dacorum. Over the next quarter, the central PMO will focus on establishing key baseline information and ensuring all projects have the correct documentations in place to give the leadership team greater confidence of delivery.
- 3.6. A new Transformation Programme and Project Manager and new Transformation Project Management Lead joined the team this quarter, who will focus on 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, and this quarter saw a further increase in average call waiting-time to 755 seconds this quarter. This was primarily due to a surge in demand as a result of the Garden Waste Subscription service being rolled out and the Annual Housing Rent increase letters and Annual Council Tax bills being distributed to residents during this quarter. We have aimed to mitigate this by 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.
- 4.2. We undertook a review of the automated Integrated Voice Recognition (IVR), updating the call directory to ensure customers can be routed to the right teams effectively and we are undertaking a wider review of the current customer journeys for the IVR, with an aim to improve the journeys and reduce the number of voice-prompt interactions where possible.
- 4.3. Staff turnover of multi-skilled and experienced team members has also impacted call wait time and we have continued to use a dedicated Training Officer to support new starters, 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.
- 4.4. The work on implementing the Customer Strategy will also support our efforts to reduce avoidable contact and failure demand, resulting in shorter wait times.
- 4.5. A new Complaints Policy was launched in December 2022 and the focus within this quarter was to ensure organisational compliance to the new policy. Performance targets to respond within target timescales for this quarter were 73.44% for Stage 1 Complaints and 68% for Stage 2 complaints. Process guidance has been written for the handling of complaints, MP Enquiries, and Ombudsman Enquiries and the central team have focused on training staff on complaints management and have also taken responsibility to co-ordinate complex complaints which will help improve performance levels in the next quarter.

5. Climate and Ecological Emergency

- 5.1. The Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) programme recently delivered an initiative of giving away 20 water butts (aimed at both climate mitigation and adaptation) which had a great uptake of 1,266 entrant and resulted in over 230 individuals signing up to Dacorum Climate Action Network.

- 5.2. A climate adaptation and resilience project, as part of the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP), has recently commenced. Officers and service leads attended a training workshop focusing on climate adaptation as we begin the work on addressing climate risks and creating a climate risk register.
- 5.3. HCCSP facilitated a site visit to the HS2 construction project site. This site visit was intended for Councillors and officers to see first-hand the initiatives and steps being taken to ensure environmental factors were being considered in the construction of this section of HS2.

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. Our other primary performance indicator (ICT01 - Percentage of incidents resolved in less than 2 days) remained red within the quarter at 86% against a target of 90%. The Digital Team have been unable to achieve this KP target because we have an open vacancy in the team. Despite this performance over the quarter has improved from 83% in February. The team are currently looking at ways to automate simple processes so that we increase our capacity to focus on problem solving incidents more quickly. This is having a positive effect on overall resolution times
- 6.3. The pilot for considering all new digital initiatives has been well received by services and was approved formally by SLT on the 26 April. A number of services have submitted requirements documents through this process. In 8 cases the digital platform has been identified as the potential solution and a specification is being built so that we can light up these solutions as soon as possible after the digital platform is purchased. This is great news for the organisation as we make best use of our corporate investment rather than continuously buying in disparate solutions that cost money and often don't speak to each other. The digital platform procurement strategy will be presented to Commercial Board in June.
- 6.4. The council has signed up to GovWifi; a Government Digital Service (GDS) single Wi-Fi login which has been installed by the digital team over our existing infrastructure. Now anyone who registers with GovWifi will have access to Wi-Fi at any participating public sector location. It is now available to all of our workforce and guests across all main sites including the Forum, Cupid, Berko and Tring CC, Old Town Hall and Poppy Fields. Anyone who registers with GovWifi will also have auto access to Wi-Fi at any participating public sector location.

7. Communications

- 7.1 In Q4 we delivered against our external communications programme supporting corporate projects and events across DBC services and partner organisations. This includes 296 social media campaigns/posts on our corporate channels (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), 18 news articles (website), 20 press releases and more than 160,000 emails via our digital publications portfolio.
- 7.2 In Q4 we delivered on our events and awareness programme including recognition/celebration of Holocaust Memorial Day, International Womens Day, Commonwealth Day and the National Day of Reflection. We also planned and delivered the Mayors Civic Service.
- 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 an in-person/hybrid 'Staff Update Session', with more than 300 colleagues attending (in-person and online); and an 'informal Coffee Morning' event with SLT and staff. In Q4, we issued over 45 internal communication campaigns 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 12,821 subscribers – increase of 191 from Q3 2022/23).

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 a further significant increase in LinkedIn connections, reflecting increased place shaping and business-related activity including effective promotion of job vacancies.

- Dacorum BC **Facebook** - January to March 2023:
 - o Connections – 12,500 (increase of 278 from Q3 2022/23)
 - o Link clicks – 6,536 (increase of 1,594 from Q3 2022/23)
 - o Posts – 133 (decrease of 53 from Q3 2022/23)

- Dacorum BC **Twitter** – January to March 2023:
 - o Connections – 8,915 (increase of 35 from Q3 2022/23)
 - o Link clicks – 1,003 (decrease of 193 from Q3 2022/23)
 - o Posts – 128 (decrease of 48 from Q3 2022/23)

- Dacorum BC **LinkedIn** - January to March 2023:
 - o Connections – 4,889 (increase of 280 from Q3 2022/23)
 - o Link clicks – 810 (increase of 420 from Q3 2022/23)
 - o Posts – 35 (decrease of 11 from Q3 2022/23)

Website - Page Title	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Bounce Rate
	1,161,923	778,123	00:00:54	42.41%
	% of Total: 100.00% (1,161,923)	% of Total: 100.00% (778,123)	Avg for View: 00:00:54 (0.00%)	Avg for View: 42.41% (0.00%)
1. Garden Waste Subscription Service	204,710 (17.62%)	72,682 (9.34%)	00:00:37	42.57%
2. My Bin Collections	110,915 (9.55%)	48,887 (6.28%)	00:00:31	9.11%
3. Dacorum Borough Council Home Page	107,048 (9.21%)	88,526 (11.38%)	00:00:30	21.59%
4. Council Services - Payment Portal	88,787 (7.64%)	42,542 (5.47%)	00:00:27	16.17%
5. Transaction complete - Payment Portal	48,048 (4.14%)	45,100 (5.80%)	00:00:57	89.02%
6. Complete your shopping - Payment Portal	44,882 (3.86%)	34,213 (4.40%)	00:02:11	23.66%
7. Payment summary - Payment Portal	41,755 (3.59%)	34,577 (4.44%)	00:00:11	17.62%
8. Search Dacorum Borough Council	34,880	31,877	00:01:06	63.23%

	(3.00%)	(4.10%)		
9. When are my bins collected	31,181	29,040	00:00:43	84.80%
	(2.68%)	(3.73%)		
10. Search planning applications	28,199	22,580	00:03:51	77.43%
	(2.43%)	(2.90%)		
11. Rent	23,236	20,612	00:00:51	67.26%
	(2.00%)	(2.65%)		
12. Paying your Council Tax bill	18,679	16,186	00:00:49	55.07%
	(1.61%)	(2.08%)		
13. Waste services extra questions	16,345	5,859	00:00:40	10.45%
	(1.41%)	(0.75%)		
14. Council Tax	11,213	9,191	00:00:47	23.18%
	(0.97%)	(1.18%)		
15. Contact us	10,856	9,335	00:02:49	63.49%
	(0.93%)	(1.20%)		
16. (not set)	10,380	7,546	00:01:17	66.23%
	(0.89%)	(0.97%)		
17. Apply for housing	10,358	8,572	00:04:51	79.51%
	(0.89%)	(1.10%)		
18. Do it online	9,250	7,825	00:00:17	14.89%
	(0.80%)	(1.01%)		
19. Dacorum Borough Council - Payment Portal	8,624	7,083	00:00:11	5.49%
	(0.74%)	(0.91%)		
20. Green-lidded bin	8,471	6,335	00:00:54	19.45%
	(0.73%)	(0.81%)		
21. Recycling refuse and waste	7,426	6,521	00:00:25	15.20%
	(0.64%)	(0.84%)		
22. Your details	6,861	3,952	00:01:02	18.07%
	(0.59%)	(0.51%)		
23. Decision Notice search	6,607	3,604	00:00:36	45.22%
	(0.57%)	(0.46%)		
24. Make a payment	6,600	5,783	00:00:53	57.96%
	(0.57%)	(0.74%)		
25. Waste eforms	6,324	4,939	00:00:26	31.59%
	(0.54%)	(0.63%)		