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Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Quarter 1 Performance Report: People Transformation Digital and ICT Communications
Date:	5 September 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 CSU – Customer Services Unit CEE – Climate and Ecological Emergency

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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:	To provide the Q1 performance information for monitoring and information
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	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 Q1 2023/24 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 1 is lower than the previous quarter.

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 to 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, with the next initiative, financial wellbeing workshops, being launched. 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. The recent initiative coming out of this group is hosting a staff picnic.
- 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.
- 2.7. The HR team has arranged Food Nutrition classes delivered by Community Action Dacorum and we have created a new Cost of Living internal web page to offer support/guidance to staff. Alongside all this work, HR and H&S are conducting 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 launching our leadership development programme for team managers, in which managing staff through change and how we best manage anxious staff is factored into the programme.
- 2.8. The annual staff turnover percentage is still below 15% (actual 7%) which is considered a healthy staff turnover rate in the UK. Work continues within the people strategy to ensure we are creating an engaging culture and ensuring staff have effective leaders guiding them within the workplace.
- 2.9. The people strategy continues to be delivered, some of the key developments include:
- Leadership programme delivered for the Leadership team
 - Launch of our new values and behaviours
 - Windrush event delivered and held various equalities staff workshops
 - Supporting various staff restructures
 - Job career fairs attended
 - Market forces policy implemented and being applied to roles across the Council
 - Utilising LinkedIn Recruiter license to contact possible applicants for vacancies
 - Implemented new recruitment agency framework
 - Increased graduate intake through the national graduate development programme (increase from 1 to 3 graduates per year).
 - Delivered the Annual Staff Recognition Awards.
 - Held a leadership conference to share strategic vision and launch new management training programme.
 - Consultation stage to launch a new menopause policy.
 - Implemented a new sickness management system to reduce costs (circa. £25k)

3. Transformation

- 3.1. We continue to work on implementing the Customer Strategy. A new Customer Charter has been developed, which set out a number of commitments the Council will adhere to improve our Customer Service across the organisation. An implementation plan has been developed to help embed the charter commitments across all departments. Some of the actions include:
 - 3.1.1. Improving some of our webpages so that we can make it easier for our customers and residents to access the information they need easily without having to call or contact us.
 - 3.1.2. We established a Values Delivery Group with colleagues from across the organisation to help us focus on embedding the culture of our Customer Charter. Our Champions will also be working with us to review our methods of communication with our customers to help improve this.
 - 3.1.3. We have recognised issues with our Integrated Voice Recognition System which is adding to the call wait-times and have undertaken a review to identify improvements to the customer journeys. To ensure we design the most customer friendly journeys, we will be reaching out to residents and customers to help us design and test the future automated scripts.
- 3.2. 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 on project and programme delivery across Dacorum.
- 3.3. Over the next few months, we will be working with colleagues across the council to define projects and ensure robust plans are in place, develop new and efficient reporting mechanisms and work to establish improved governance arrangements to ensure we have effective oversight and assurance of critical projects being delivered across Dacorum.
- 3.4. Following the adoption of a new Key Performance Framework by Cabinet in February 2022, we have been working with services to establish appropriate targets for Key performance indicators.
- 3.5. To ensure a greater focus on improving performance across Dacorum, we have worked with services to establish key actions that need to be undertaken to help improve performance and give leadership greater assurance on how teams are performing across the Council.
- 3.6. Over the next few months we will be undertaking further work to review all performance metrics and ensure we have relevant KPIs set for all teams as well as reviewing our reporting approach.

4. Customer Services Unit (CSU)

- 4.1. Call handle times remain high and consistent with the previous quarter. The first quarter of the year will always see high call volumes due to the start of the financial year and the increase in Council Tax and Rent calls. To mitigate this we ensure staff are trained in these services as a priority to ensure wait times are maintained at a manageable level. As well as encouraging customers to use online facilities, they are given the option to request a call back to avoid them experiencing lengthy wait times.
- 4.2. The Integrated Voice Recognition (IVR) dialogues continue to be reviewed with service areas to ensure the customer's journey is a seamless route to obtaining the answers they require. Forthcoming feedback sessions with customer focus groups will allow us to improve the customer journey further.

- 4.3. Three new starters have filled the vacant posts, the dedicated Training Officers has focused on training them in the high volume call areas, and over time this will assist with reducing call wait times as more staff are available to answer calls.
- 4.4. Complaint volumes remain consistent and the Complaints team continue to work closely with Service Managers and Heads of Service to monitor performance, review data and provide data on trends to ensure service improvements can be implemented and in turn reduce down the volume of complaints received. New Service Managers and Heads of Service have received training from the Complaints team in how to manage complaints.

5. Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE)

- 5.1. We have recently employed a new Project Manager and Project Officer as part of the CEE programme team. The team have focused on reviewing all of the actions we have listed across the organisation to help deliver against our CEE strategy and have developed a robust programme with subsequent projects prioritised to help us achieve our ambitions. Over the next few months, the team will focus on establishing detailed project plans and ensure projects have the right resources in place.
- 5.2. A Clothes swap event was held in June, with a total of 115 people who attended to refresh their wardrobes for free. A total of 1,063 items of clothing was brought in, 89 per cent of which were swapped. This saved 5.6 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent from being emitted, had these clothes ended up in landfill.
- 5.3. Let's clear the air campaign – Hertfordshire County Council has led this in person initiative, aimed at promoting air quality discussions. They toured the county week commencing 15th May. They visited Hemel Hempstead, supported by 3 DBC Officers and Members on the rainbow stage on Thursday 18th May.
- 5.4. Works are complete in decarbonising 24 homes using the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 1. Closing out reports will be completed next quarter and post completion monitoring will continue after this. We have been successful with SHDF-Wave 2 and will develop an initial implementation plan for this next quarter.
- 5.5. Solar Together Phase 1 has seen over 2,000 solar panels installed on over 350 residents' rooves. Phase 2 will open for registration in autumn this year.
- 5.6. The team continue to record and report on organisation and borough wide emission data.

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) remained red within the quarter at 85% against a target of 90%. In May 2023, there was a performance dip because laptops were not connecting to applications. Investigations identified an issue with the deployment of the latest Endpoint Protection update and was therefore treated as a potential virus. Whilst the issue was fixed in under 48hrs the team decided to leave calls open to ensure the fix applied was tested fully and signed off by users.

- 6.3. In June our target performance was achieved despite the fact that there continues to be a vacancy in the team, affecting our ability to meet our targets. This is because we have provided additional management oversight in this area to ensure tickets are managed effectively and closed on time.
- 6.4. Negotiations are underway with Housing to extend an existing secondment which would enable us to attempt to recruit a 12 month fixed term post which will have a positive impact on the team's overall performance.
- 6.5. Work to improve our ability to self-serve across IT is continuing. The new starter process is under review with new automation helping to drive down the time it takes to get a new starter set up on our network.
- 6.6. During this quarter SLT approved an upgrade to Teams which will enable all users to make and receive external calls from customers directly from their Teams dashboard. This will make Council officers more productive and efficient when responding to customer needs. All users will have access to this new functionality by the end of the year.
- 6.7. The Digital Team is currently testing an application that will allow users to use Teams securely on their own mobile phones. Besides allowing us to reduce the numbers of expensive mobile devices on our estate, this initiative will enable users to work even more flexibly; allowing us all to see our diaries, take calls, send messages and chat on the go.

7. Communications

- 7.1 In Q1 we delivered against our external communications programme supporting corporate projects and events across DBC services and partner organisations. This includes 418 social media campaigns/posts on our corporate channels (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), 12 news articles (website), 12 press releases and more than 160,000 emails via our digital publications portfolio.
 - 7.2 In Q1 we delivered on our events and awareness programme including the planning and delivery of the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III, with free events and screenings in Gadebridge Park. We also delivered the Annual Armed Forces Day celebrations and Windrush 75th anniversary in June, with free events and entertainment.
 - 7.3 In Q1 we delivered against our internal communications programme supporting corporate projects and staff initiatives. We have delivered the quarterly 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. We also delivered other staff engagement events including the Annual Staff Recognition Awards. In Q1, we issued 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 12,881 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. This quarter sees a further significant increase in Facebook and LinkedIn connections, reflecting increased engagement, place shaping and business-related activity, including effective promotion of job vacancies.
- Dacorum BC **Facebook** – April to June 2023:
 - o Connections – 12,753 (increase of 253 from Q4 2022/23)
 - o Link clicks – 4,627
 - o Posts – 176

- Dacorum BC **Twitter** – April to June 2023:
 - o Connections – 8,993 (increase of 78 from Q4 2022/23)
 - o Link clicks – 2,817
 - o Posts – 208
- Dacorum BC **LinkedIn** – April to June 2023:
 - o Connections – 5,076 (increase of 187 from Q4 2022/23)
 - o Link clicks – 331
 - o Posts – 34

Website statistics Q1 2023/24

Page Title	Pageviews ↓	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Bounce Rate
	848,345 % of Total: 100.00% (848,345)	610,844 % of Total: 100.00% (610,844)	00:01:03 Avg for View: 00:01:03 (0.00%)	47.64% Avg for View: 47.64% (0.00%)
1. My Bin Collections	108,109 (12.74%)	47,570 (7.79%)	00:00:31	9.03%
2. Dacorum Borough Council Home Page	92,374 (10.89%)	77,023 (12.61%)	00:00:30	22.64%
3. Garden Waste Subscription Service	59,058 (6.96%)	23,133 (3.79%)	00:00:39	50.40%
4. Council Services - Payment Portal	43,903 (5.18%)	21,399 (3.50%)	00:00:27	14.17%
5. Transaction complete - Payment Portal	34,445 (4.06%)	32,607 (5.34%)	00:01:56	89.81%
6. When are my bins collected	34,095 (4.02%)	32,690 (5.35%)	00:01:07	89.21%
7. Elections 2023	32,757 (3.86%)	20,201 (3.31%)	00:03:39	67.95%
8. Search Dacorum Borough Council	27,814 (3.28%)	25,218 (4.13%)	00:01:00	62.54%
9. Search planning applications	22,523 (2.65%)	18,610 (3.05%)	00:04:00	78.08%
10. Rent	18,198 (2.15%)	16,864 (2.76%)	00:01:16	77.29%
11. Complete your shopping - Payment Portal	17,873 (2.11%)	14,135 (2.31%)	00:02:01	25.54%
12. Payment summary - Payment Portal	17,832 (2.10%)	14,334 (2.35%)	00:00:11	17.99%
13. Paying your Council Tax bill	14,226 (1.68%)	12,710 (2.08%)	00:01:06	62.70%
14. Apply for housing	8,528 (1.01%)	7,164 (1.17%)	00:04:55	78.63%

15. Contact us	8,381 (0.99%)	7,195 (1.18%)	00:02:47	63.89%
16. Waste services extra questions	8,306 (0.98%)	2,989 (0.49%)	00:00:41	10.55%
17. Your Councillors	8,178 (0.96%)	6,277 (1.03%)	00:01:10	30.84%
18. Do it online	7,585 (0.89%)	6,437 (1.05%)	00:00:16	14.82%
19. Council Tax	6,714 (0.79%)	5,723 (0.94%)	00:00:32	21.36%
20. Payment	6,111 (0.72%)	4,127 (0.68%)	00:01:15	67.02%
21. Decision Notice search	6,030 (0.71%)	3,680 (0.60%)	00:00:33	48.73%
22. Make a payment	5,811 (0.68%)	5,191 (0.85%)	00:01:15	64.85%
23. Recycling refuse and waste	5,706 (0.67%)	5,060 (0.83%)	00:00:27	17.21%
24. Back end page	5,107 (0.60%)	4,572 (0.75%)	00:01:06	87.11%
25. Dacorum Borough Council - Payment Portal	4,449 (0.52%)	3,743 (0.61%)	00:00:08	3.59%