



# Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Report for:</b>	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Title of report:</b>	Quarter 2 Performance Report: People Transformation Digital and ICT Communications
<b>Date:</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> November 2023
<b>Report on behalf of:</b>	Councillor Carole Weston
<b>Part:</b>	I
<b>If Part II, reason:</b>	N/A
<b>Appendices:</b>	N/A
<b>Background papers:</b>	Nil
<b>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</b>	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 / 01442 228454 (ext.2454)

<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 Q2 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 Q2 2023/2024 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 sickness outturn for quarter 2 is similar to the quarter 1 and lower than the same quarter 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 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, with the next initiative being launching financial wellbeing workshops which are currently being held. 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 was hosting a staff picnic where over 200 staff attended. The next event is a Christmas themed staff bake off competition, hosted by the staff engagement group.
- 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 commenced at Cupid Green), working with H&S on musculoskeletal cases – to identify trends, appropriate PPE and training needs.
- 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. In the summer we launched the leadership development course for all middle managers which will focus on many aspects of good leadership. One particular module is how we effectively manage staff through change and how we best manage anxious staff.
- 2.8. The flu vaccination programme has commenced, where staff can received their free flu vaccination. We are implementing a new process at Cupid Green Depot with a nurse on site to administer vaccinations to increase take up numbers
- 2.9. The annual staff turnover percentage is still below 15% (actual 10%) 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.
- 2.10. The people strategy continues to be delivered, some of the key developments include:
- Leadership development programme launched for middle managers
  - Launch of our new values and behaviours and work continues to embed these across the Council. A new staff working group has been set up to deliver initiatives to support the change in culture.
  - Supporting various staff restructures – Place, Corporate Support.
  - Job career fairs attended – Schools event at Shendish Manor and Wilkinsons (for staff at risk). We are exploring opportunities to work with the Mount Prison on work placements.
  - Utilising LinkedIn Recruiter license to contact possible applicants for vacancies who having matching profiles.
  - Increased graduate intake through the national graduate development programme (3 graduates per year no rather than 1 per year). All three new graduates have been inducted and have started in their roles.
  - Strategic Leadership Team has approved a new menopause in the workplace policy.
  - Strategic Leadership Team structure finalised and all post now appointed to.

## Transformation

- 2.11. Dacorum is developing a new Customer Charter which sets out a series of commitments by the Council which aims to improve customer service across the Council. This quarter saw a focus on embedding the customer charter commitments across teams that have high number of customer interactions.
- 2.12. To ensure we are starting to make our customer experience more consistent, we have developed guidance and templates to define how service's communicate with customers. This includes defining the corporate language/terminology that we should use consistently, understanding what our service response timescales are across different services so we can communicate this better to customers to avoid chasing calls and emails and understanding what we need from our customers to complete transactions so we can be upfront about this request.
- 2.13. We recognise the Council Website as being a key customer service channel for our customers and residents and have focused on making this more effective. 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 have started improving web pages for high demand areas and will continue to focus on this area in coming months.
- 2.14. We also created a new Customer Champion Working Group to help us improve our Customer Service culture across the Council and a new mandatory Customer Service Training module was designed to ensure all staff across Dacorum can understand how to deliver good customer service in their roles on a daily basis.
- 2.15. Following the development of the new Customer Strategy by Dacorum, we have been focusing on building a programme that will help bring the strategy to life. A new target operating model was designed which focuses on simplifying and improving customer journeys whilst creating more efficient and effective ways to deliver services to our customers. The programme will involve redesigning services across Dacorum to align with the future operating model and we are in the process of identifying which services we will be working with over the next 12 months.
- 2.16. 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. We have now finalised what the key projects and programmes are across Dacorum and have established a new governance structure with relevant terms of reference for all boards, new reporting templates and methodology to help with oversight and are in the process of establishing the baseline for all projects upon which projects will be monitored going forward.
- 2.17. We have launched a new project which will look to review what and how we manage performance across the council, including reviewing and establishing our Key performance and Service performance indicators and associated targets, our process for reviewing and reporting performance and establishing the appropriate governance structures to ensure we have oversight and assurance to improve performance where required and the ability to use performance data for intelligence and strategic decision making.

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

- 3.1. Average call wait times has seen a reduction since last quarter, but remains above the target of 300 seconds. Customer Service Representatives have been provided with target call duration and wrap up targets to help manage call wait times and we have been focusing on establishing operational efficiencies to help improve the achievement of these targets.
- 3.2. One of the key factors for high call wait times is increasing number of calls being received by the Customer Service Centre (CSU). The work being undertaken as part of the customer strategy and customer charter should help reduce the number of avoidable calls being received or number of calls from customers looking for status updates regarding their transaction, which will have a positive impact on call wait times.
- 3.3. 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 and link to our improved webpages more effectively so customers can complete their transaction via self-service methods more quickly.
- 3.4. 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.
- 3.5. A new Complaints Policy was launched in December 2022. This quarter saw a significant increase in the number of complaints received and we also introduced a new process whereby Heads of Service were required to review and sign off all stage 1 responses in an attempt to improve the quality of our complaint responses. This has resulted in a decrease in performance levels to respond within target timescales. We will be focusing on supporting services with high number of complaints to address performance levels next quarter.
- 3.6. 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 also help improve performance levels in the next quarter.

### **4. Digital and ICT**

- 4.1. IT Systems availability (99%) continue to be positive within the quarter demonstrating the fundamental reliability of the Council's technology infrastructure. There were two critical issues in the quarter when the council's broadband and main phone line went down. The issue was rectified within 3.5 hours and is now fully operational.
- 4.2. The primary performance indicator (ICT01 - Percentage of incidents resolved in less than 2 days) was amber within the quarter at 89% against a target of 90%. This is an improvement on previous quarters resulting in an actual year to date performance of 91%. The Digital Team still have an open vacancy in the team. However, we now have now resolved this as the member of staff has decided to remain in Housing. Therefore, recruitment will commence immediately with an expectation that the post will be filled in the New Year.

4.3. During the quarter the digital team was given approval to improve functionality on teams to enable direct calling. This will enable all users to call customers and partners directly from their laptops. Calls from customers will land directly on laptops enabling the workforce to communicate with customers wherever they work. The workforce will be increasingly able to do their job where this delivers the greatest benefit to customers. The project is now in implementation with over half of our workforce already benefiting from this new functionality.

## 5. Communications

5.1 In Q2 we delivered against our external communications programme supporting corporate projects and events across DBC services and partner organisations. This includes 371 social media campaigns on our corporate channels (Facebook, X formerly Twitter and LinkedIn), 14 news articles (website), 14 press releases and more than 160,000 e-newsletters via our digital publications portfolio.

5.2 In Q2 we delivered on our events and awareness programme including the all-encompassing 'Summer of Fun' programme, which brought together all the free and low cost events and activities (from the Council and partners) across the borough for the July and August holiday period.

5.3 In Q2 we have delivered on our internal communications programme, including our new quarterly Staff Magazine, an in-person/hybrid 'Staff Update Session', with more than 300 colleagues attending (in-person and online); an 'informal Coffee Morning' event with SLT and staff (at the Forum and Cupid Green), Staff Picnic at Grovehill Adventure Playground with more than 100 staff in attendance. In Q2, we issued over 42 internal communication campaigns across internal channels, such as our intranet, covering general staff news, corporate information (projects and initiatives) and staff events. During this period we also conducted our annual staff survey across the organisation, which was completed by 57% of staff.

5.4 We have delivered our programme of print and digital publications, including 12 issues of our weekly *Dacorum Life* digital newsletter (currently 12,915 subscribers – increase of 94 from Q1 2023/24).

5.5 Social media and website statistics: Our social media channels continue to grow organically at a healthy rate compared to similar local authorities.

- o Dacorum BC **Facebook** – July to September 2023:

- o Connections – 12,990 (increase of 237 from Q1 2023/24)

- o Link clicks – 3,224

- o Posts – 178

- o Dacorum BC **X (formerly Twitter)** – July to September 2023:

- o Connections – 8,968 (decrease of 25 from Q1 2023/24)

- o Link clicks – 691

- o Posts – 165

- o Dacorum BC **LinkedIn** – July to September 2023:

- o Connections – 5,268 (increase of 192 from Q1 2023/24)

- o Link clicks – 242

- o Posts – 28

	Page title and screen class <span>▼</span>	<span>+</span>	↓ Views .....	Users .....
			753,206 100% of total	104,614 100% of total
1	Council Services - Payment Portal		90,191	13,549
2	Dacorum Borough Council Home Page		86,843	35,385
3	My Bin Collections		45,190	15,892
4	Payment summary - Payment Portal		30,344	13,036
5	Transaction complete - Payment Portal		27,599	12,420
6	Complete your shopping - Payment Portal		26,939	12,768
7	Search planning applications		26,451	9,932
8	When are my bins collected		24,502	15,509
9	Rent		19,618	6,982
10	Garden Waste Subscription Service		19,145	3,145
11	Waste services extra questions		16,591	4,881
12	Paying your Council Tax bill		16,021	8,856
13	Search   Dacorum Borough Council		14,618	5,179
14	(not set)		11,431	4,909
15	Contact us		9,236	5,755
16	Dacorum Borough Council - Payment Portal		9,047	3,382
17	Do it online		7,966	5,524
18	Council Tax		7,847	4,773
19	Council tax change of circumstance		7,700	1,629
20	Your details		7,365	3,589
21	Waste eforms		6,731	3,055
22	Make a payment		5,926	3,040
23	error		5,085	2,778
24	Apply for social housing		4,671	1,971
25	Recycling refuse and waste		4,328	3,167