



# Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Report for:</b>	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Title of report:</b>	Quarter 4 Performance Report – People Transformation Digital and ICT Communications
<b>Date:</b>	4 June 2024
<b>Report on behalf of:</b>	Councillor Ron Tindall (Portfolio Holder People and Transformation)
<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

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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>	To provide the Q4 performance information for monitoring and information
<b>Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):</b>	That Members note the report and identify any areas where they require additional information
<b>Period for post policy/project review:</b>	N/A

## Introduction

1. This paper will provide an update on service performance over Q4 2023/2024 for People, Performance, Digital and ICT and Communications, and highlight key achievements over this same period.

## Digital and ICT

2. The primary performance indicator (ICT01 - Percentage of incidents resolved in less than 2 days) was green this quarter at 93% against a target of 90%. This is the first time in the last six months that this target has been achieved. Recent recruitment has meant that the team is fully staffed for the first time in over 12 months.
3. The council purchased its digital platform in January 2024 and significant work has now been completed to onboard the new technology which is now live. Three members of staff have completed their certified professional programme which means that they are fully accredited to start building solutions using our new technology. We have just onboarded three new members of staff who are partway through their training programme.
4. New solutions including a complaint and freedom of information module are in build phase. A complex garages portal is also being built. These solutions are expected to not only realise efficiencies in administration but also enable the council to increase income by making it easier for customers to sign up for garage rentals.
5. In February 2024 the Digital team with support from the Resilience team completed a cyber-attack simulation exercise with CLT which was positively received. The learning from this event is now being implemented. Two mandatory cybersecurity courses have been released on Doris to support users to create stronger passwords and use emails safely.
6. A significant amount of work has been undertaken by the digital team identify and test a new modern Wi-Fi solution for the council. We anticipate new Wi-Fi to be installed across all our sites during July and August subject to supplier availability.

## Communications

7. In Q4 we delivered against our external communications programme supporting corporate projects and events across DBC services and partner organisations. This includes 525 social media campaigns on our corporate channels (Facebook, X formerly Twitter and LinkedIn), 18 news articles (website and press releases), and more than 170,000 emails (e-newsletters) sent via our digital publications portfolio.
8. In Q4 we delivered on our internal communications programme, including our Staff Magazine in March. In Q4, we issued 44 internal communication campaigns across internal channels, such as our intranet, covering general staff news, corporate information (projects and initiatives) and staff events.
9. We have delivered our programme of print and digital publications, including 12 issues of our weekly Dacorum Life digital newsletter (currently 14,041 subscribers – an increase of 1,015 from Q3 2023/24).
10. Q4 Social media statistics: Our social media channels continue to grow organically at a healthy rate compared to similar local authorities.
  - o Dacorum BC **Facebook**:
  - o Connections – 11,864
  - o Link clicks – 6,914
  - o Posts – 227
  
  - o Dacorum BC **X (formerly Twitter)**:
  - o Connections – 8,970
  - o Link clicks – 766
  - o Posts – 212
  
  - o Dacorum BC **LinkedIn**:
  - o Connections – 5,637
  - o Link clicks – 374
  - o Posts – 86

## People

11. The sickness outturn for quarter 4 (2605 days) is lower than quarter 3 (2619 days) and very similar to Q4 last year (2600 days). 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.
12. Work is underway in supporting the 5 highest sickness absence teams across the Council to explore what bespoke interventions can be put in place to help reduce absenteeism, for example if there is a high level of workplace injuries we may need to explore working practices with H&S.
13. 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. 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.

14. 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 last initiative was mental health awareness week, where we had a series of talks and activities for staff. The Council continues to promote our mental health first aider programme (MHFA), where we have a cohort of trained staff who can be the first port of call for our workforce should they need some assistance. A MHFA drop in session was arranged for staff in May during mental health awareness week. 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.
15. HR has been undertaking further interventions which have been approved by the strategic leadership team to help reduce sickness absence. One initiative is focussing on email management, to help reduce email traffic. We are running a series of workshops and devising good practice guides to support with the culture change required.
16. The annual staff turnover percentage is still below 15% (actual 10%) which is considered a healthy staff turnover rate in the UK (Q3 12%). 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.
17. The people strategy continues to be delivered, some of the key highlights include:
  - Devising a mandatory Leadership development programme for all managers
  - Launched the new menopause in the workplace policy with regular support groups for staff.
  - Revised the drug and alcohol policy to increase awareness and support for both staff and managers.
  - Launched a new 121 meeting template form to help with consistency and feedback.
  - Undertook a review of our approach to recruitment which has seen a number of actions to be implemented across this financial year from how we advertise and what we say to a revised approach in how test applicants.

## **Transformation**

18. Average call wait times increased slightly this quarter to an average of 406 seconds. A number of measures have been put in place to reduce call wait times and although this was slightly above target, this is almost half the average call wait times during the same period 12 months ago (755 seconds). January saw a peak in calls and coupled with high levels of sickness and annual leave resulted in higher call wait times during this month which has spiked the average call wait times for the quarter. February saw call wait times of 285 seconds, which was below target and March, which had significantly high demand due to annual council tax bills and launch of the green waste subscription service, was slightly over target at 378 seconds.
19. From an operational perspective, we continue to implement measures to improve customer experience and call wait times. Further work was undertaken to improve our integrated voice recognition service to allow customers to easily have weblinks sent to them to complete transactions online. Temporary additional resources were brought in to manage the increased demand for the green waste subscriptions and we completed further training for staff using the dedicated Training Officer to ensure staff were upskilled to manage the Green Waste subscriptions, Council Tax billing and Rent Increases, ensuring a quality and consistent service is provided to customers. As a result all Customer Service Advisors managed calls and subsequent processes really well, with average call duration and wrap up times delivered well below target for the quarter.
20. Work is continuing on our customer strategy programme, which focuses on simplifying and improving customer journeys whilst creating more efficient and effective ways to deliver services to our customers. During this quarter, the team worked collaboratively with Digital Team and Revenues and Benefits to develop self-service options for council tax transactions. This is the first step towards our digital transformation journey, providing more online self-serve options for our customers to help reduce the demand in our back offices by automating administrative tasks and allowing them to focus

on more beneficial tasks for our customers. This has already seen huge benefits for both our customers and back-office teams in terms of improved response times, simpler processes and removing manual administrative tasks.

21. The team led on the annual service planning process for the organisation, supporting all services across the Council to put in place robust service plans which sets out and prioritises their key activities for 2024/25 financial year.
22. A review of the Central Programme Management Office (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. All Projects across the PMO have now been identified and key information baselined, a new governance structure has been established to ensure all projects have the relevant oversight and accountability in place. Training was also delivered to all project executives and new reporting templates and reporting process put in place to support this oversight and accountability.

Appendix A – Quarterly Performance Q4 Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny, People and Transformation

Finance & Resources OSC  
People & Transformation Report


Performance Scorecard F&C OSC- Digital

Measure Code ↑	Measure	Date	Actual	Target	DoT	Performance Trend
ICT01(Q)	Percentage of incidents resolved in less than 2 days (Q)	Mar 2024	93.19	90.00	✓	

Performance Scorecard F&R OSC- People

Measure Code ↑	Measure	Date	Actual	Previous Quarter	DoT	Performance Trend
HR02a (Q)	Turnover of staff	Mar 2024	10.00	12.00	✓	
HR03 (Q)	Total days lost through sickness absence for the council (OSC)	Mar 2024	2,605.50	2,619.50	✓	
HR05	Average days lost due to sickness absence per FTE (OSC)	Mar 2024	1.18	1.21	n/a	

### Performance Scorecard F&C OSC- Transformation

Measure Code	Measure	Date	Actual	↓ Target	DoT	Performance Trend
CS02a (Q)	Percentage of stage 1 complaints due and resolved in the month within policy period (Q)	Mar 2024	64.98%		✓	
CS02b (Q)	Percentage of stage 2 complaints due and resolved in the month within policy period (Q)	Mar 2024	54.05		✓	
CSU10 (Q)	Call Handling: Average wait time (Q)	Mar 2024	406.67	300.00	✗	