



Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Quarter 1 2024/2025 Performance Report – People Transformation Digital and ICT Communications
Date:	3 September 2024
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Adrian England (Portfolio Holder for People and Transformation)
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

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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

Introduction

1. This paper will provide an update on service performance over Q1 2024/2025 for People, Performance, Digital and ICT and Communications, and highlight key achievements over this same period.
2. As previously seen by this committee, our Key Performance Indicators were reviewed and updated and subsequently agreed by Cabinet in June 2024. The corporate performance team have worked across the Council to embed this new framework and have collected the relevant data so that Q1 performance data below reports against these updated KPIs.

Digital and ICT

3. The primary performance indicator (ICT01 - Percentage of priority 1 & priority 2 incidents resolved in less than 2 days) was green this quarter at 97% against a target of 90%. Information at work, a system used by Housing and Revenues and Benefits, was down for a short period in April and there were issues with Outlook in June. Both issues have now been fully resolved.
4. The work on the digital platform is now moving at pace with several new modules in the build phase. It is anticipated that services will start to test these new solutions in the next quarter. Some new digital forms are already live internally. For example, the digital team has introduced a new form making it easier for staff to purchase additional annual leave and for managers to approve the purchase digitally with just one click.
5. The Digital Team has purchased 760 new laptops and new starters are already being issued with new kit when they join Dacorum. Users with the oldest kit will be renewed first with the roll out planned for completion by the end of March 2025.
6. New docking stations were ordered in the first quarter of this year and have now been installed on all desks at the Forum. This new kit means that users only need one cable to dock and charge a laptop on all desks.

7. Our existing WiFi hardware is also in the process of being replaced. New WiFi Access Points are currently being installed across the Forum to ensure better coverage. Once connected to the new WiFi, neighbouring access points will become readily available to switch to. This means there will be no need to rescan the network and reconnect when docking at different desks or attending meetings. The new laptops being rolled out support WiFi 6 which will provide better coverage and faster speeds so, in combination with the new WiFi, users will experience greater mobility whilst working in the office.
8. All our main sites will have the WiFi upgraded and new docks installed by the end of the year including Cupid Green Depot, Old Town Hall, Tring Victoria Hall, Woodwells Cemetery, Poppy Fields Cemetery, Berkhamsted Civic Offices.

Communications

9. In Q1 (2024/25) we delivered against our external communications programme supporting corporate projects and events across DBC services and partner organisations. This includes 612 social media campaigns on our corporate channels (Facebook, X formerly Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn), and more than 185,000 email campaigns (e-newsletters) sent via our digital publications portfolio.
10. In Q1 we delivered on our internal communications programme, including Town Hall (Staff Conference) in April. 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.
11. We have delivered our programme of digital publications, including 12 issues of our weekly Dacorum Life digital newsletter (13,925 subscribers), three issues of our monthly Housing Matters newsletter (5,616 subscribers) and three issues of our monthly Business Matters newsletter (2,268 subscribers).
12. Q1 Social media statistics:
 - o Dacorum BC **Facebook**:
 - o Connections – 13,180
 - o Link clicks – 3,748
 - o Posts – 225
 - o Dacorum BC **X (formerly Twitter)**:
 - o Connections – 8,976
 - o Link clicks – 702
 - o Posts – 198
 - o Dacorum BC **LinkedIn**:
 - o Connections – 5,830
 - o Link clicks – 312
 - o Posts – 56

People

13. The sickness outturn for quarter 1 (2088 days) is lower than quarter 4 (2605 days) and lower to Q1 last year (2164 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.

14. Work is underway in supporting the highest sickness absence teams across the Council to explore what bespoke interventions can be put in place to help reduce absenteeism. The first area identified was Waste Services, where there is now an action plan to address the areas of concern. Work is underway to ensure safe practices are in place and all risks are being identified, which should help with reducing musculoskeletal absences. The Council's Health and Safety team is leading in this review.
15. 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.
16. 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 (MHFA) and we are in the process of increasing this cohort to 20 staff members as opposed to only having 6 staff members trained currently. 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, with the next focus being offering 'lunch and learn' sessions on trying something new.
17. 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. In addition to this the Council is consulting staff and managers on a new email approach for when staff are away from the office. There is also currently a review on our currently leave approach, we want to ensure what is offered is competitive so that we can have a package that supports staff with life challenges and creates an effective work life balance.
18. The annual staff turnover percentage is still below 15% (actual 9%) which is considered a healthy staff turnover rate in the UK (Q4 10%). 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.
19. The people strategy continues to be delivered, some of the key highlights include:
 - Devising a mandatory Leadership development programme for all managers – this is due to be launched in the autumn.
 - Launched new menopause staff groups
 - Revised the drug and alcohol policy and now implemented staff training
 - Consulting with managers and TUs on three new workplace schemes - Mentoring, Volunteering and Staff Recognition.
 - Delivered the staff recognition event – over 150 staff nominated.
 - Consulted managers and TUs on a new approach to Equality Impact Assessments and new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for 2025.
 - Project Initiation Document approved to redesign recruitment process to ensure on-boarding is as efficient as possible.

Transformation

20. Average call wait times has been reduced from 406 seconds last quarter to 367 seconds. April presents exceptionally high call volumes due to factors such as annual council tax bills, housing rent increases

and green waste subscriptions; despite this, performance levels for this quarter was well within target. The trend continues to see improvements in performance month-on-month and is 87% lower than Q1 last year. This is largely due to several operational efficiency measures put in place to manage calls and reduce demand more effectively. Operational performance measures are also in place with agents to manage call durations to under 300 seconds and follow up tasks completed within 180 seconds and we have managed to perform exceptionally well against these operational targets too, enabling us to drive call wait times down.

21. We will monitor performance levels against the target of 420 seconds over the next twelve months and if we continue to achieve this, the target will be reviewed and a new ambitious stretch target will be set to push call wait times even further.

Complaints

22. Performance of responding to stage 1 and stage 2 complaints within policy timescales have seen improvement since last month but is still below target. 71.5% of stage 1 complaints were responded to within policy timescales compared to 31% the same time last year and 64% of Stage 2 complaints (which are usually more complex to manage) were responded to within policy timescales compared to 36% in Q1 last year.
23. The corporate complaints team are responsible for co-ordinating and allocating complaints to the relevant teams to respond to complaints whilst keeping oversight of performance at team level. We continue to report to the Senior Leadership team on performance levels monthly to ensure scrutiny and oversight.
24. A large proportion of complaints are in relation to Housing repairs. Complaints has been a particular area of focus for the new Head of Asset Management and has already implemented a number of new procedures to ensure the quality of complaints are improved and processes are in place to quickly obtain the data to establish why the complaint has occurred. With the continued focus from the Housing team, particularly the Asset Management team their improved results will positively impact on the overall results.
25. Completing cases on time continues to be a challenge due to the volumes of complaints and resources available internally to manage them. Where complaints are more complex, we have been encouraging services to communicate with the customer and agree an extension of time to enable a satisfactory outcome.
26. CS01b (percentage of stage 1 complaints escalated to stage 2) was a new measure introduced in May 2022, as this will be an indicator of how well we are dealing with complaints at Stage 1 and stopping it from being escalated. Performance for this quarter was 12% against a target of 10% and escalation levels are lower compared to Q1 last year. Over 60% of the stage 2 escalations were Housing cases but we are seeing a trend of more complaints being resolved at the stage 1. Officers are recognising where appropriate compensation should be offered, and customers are accepting their proposals. This will also positively impact on the tenant satisfaction scores.

Future Dacorum Transformation Programme

27. We continue to implement measures to improve customer experience and call wait times. Further work was undertaken to improve our integrated voice recognition (IVR) service, improving access to Benefits and Business Rates via our IVR. We are continuing to monitor the effectiveness of this project with our customers, and we have already found that more calls are going through to the relevant service or operator more quickly and effectively. We have also seen a significant increase in text requests so customers can be sent a weblink directly to the online form they need to complete rather than sitting in a call queue. Between April and July, 1,483 text messages have been sent out to customers to allow them to self-serve.
28. 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. Significant progress has been made on our Year 1 road map relating to the transformation of services and our Digital Platform. We have now commenced projects to improve service delivery in relation to Garage rentals, Complaints and Freedom of Information requests, Waste Services, Revenue & Benefits, Housing Repairs and Clean Safe and Green. These projects will aim to enable customers to interact with the council more easily and effectively whilst streamlining and create efficiencies within the back-office processes. We are also ensuring that work on self-service capabilities is linked to our IVR so that customers can have a consistent experience regardless of the entry point into the Council.

Corporate PMO

29. We continue to work on improving our corporate Programme Management Office (PMO) and overall approach to managing projects. All Projects across the PMO have now been identified and key information baselined and is now being reported against. All directorates have programme boards in place to ensure critical oversight of all our key projects and new reporting templates and reporting process put in place to support this oversight and accountability. Further work is planned to ensure we are all working with a single project management methodology and developments of tools and templates to make it easier for staff to manage projects whilst ensuring consistency across the Council.

Corporate Performance Management

30. A new suite of KPIs, including a clear approval process for making edits to these KPIs, was presented and approved at Cabinet in June 2024. These new KPIs are more appropriate and better reflect service delivery which will enhance performance reporting and allow more strategic data driven decision making to occur. The focus in July was to embed these new KPIs which included a development of a performance management handbook and refresher training sessions available to all officers across the organisation. Officers across the Council now have a deeper understanding of performance management which will lead to greater accuracy when updating these measures, hence providing greater assurance to SLT and Members.
31. The team have also been working on developing a list of requirements for a performance management system as part of the second phase of the Performance Improvement Project. In the last quarter, feedback sessions have been held with users of the current system (InPhase) to understand what the user requirements are. These have now been fed into the final draft list of requirements for a performance management system. By spending time developing requirements from a user and management point of view, this is ensuring that any future system will be user friendly, efficient and enhancing performance reporting.