



AGENDA ITEM:

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

15 DECEMBER 2009

COUNCIL PERFORMANCE: QUARTER TWO 2009/2010

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To provide an overview of the Council's performance at Quarter Two 2009/2010 and to identify potential issues and implications for the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

BACKGROUND

2. The 2009/2010 Strategic Plan sets out the Council's key performance targets (including the key improvement priorities for Middlesbrough identified in the Local Area Agreement 2008-2011) and the actions it plans to take during the year to contribute to the achievement of these targets.
3. This report summarises the Council's performance against its key targets and planned improvement actions at the end of Quarter Two 2009/2010. Full details of progress are supplied in the full Quarter Two 2009/2010 performance report (available in the Members' library) for further consideration where required, with the thematic summary sections below signposting to additional information on key issues provided in the full report.

OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE

Progress against Middlesbrough's Local Area Agreement 2008-2011

4. Middlesbrough's Local Area Agreement (LAA) 2008-2011 comprises 35 designated targets, ten statutory targets relating to attainment (from the National Indicator Set) and a number of locally-determined measures relating to priority areas. At Quarter Two 2009/2010, performance information was available for 85% of indicators. Targets are not set for 18% of indicators, where baselines or reliable trends are not currently available. Of those indicators where performance could be measured against target, 39% were on target at Quarter Two 2009/2010.

Table 1: Performance against the LAA at Quarter Two 2009/2010

Theme	Total	On target	Not on target	Not yet known	Target not set
Creating Stronger Communities	4	0	0	0	4
Creating Safer Communities	9	4	3	0	2
Supporting Children and Young People	20	2	15	3	0
Promoting Adult Health and Well-Being	11	4	3	2	2
Enhancing the Local Economy	11	1	5	3	2
Securing Environmental Sustainability	6	5	0	0	1
Overall total*	61	16 (26%)	26 (43%)	8 (13%)	11 (18%)
Total (performance against target)	41	16 (39%)	26 (61%)		

* Excludes MAA indicators for corporate reporting.

5. The main under-performing theme is 'Supporting Children and Young People', where the majority of indicators relating to educational attainment, whilst (in general) improving year-on-year, are not performing to target. Provisional data released for 2009 is subject to change pending appeals and validation. The increase in child protection and looked after children activity has had a marked effect upon the initial assessments indicator, but recent data demonstrates an improvement.
6. Many indicators within the LAA relate to economic issues. The current global financial situation continues to impact on related indicators and the overall performance of the LAA, and it is estimated that the recession will impact negatively on around one fifth of National Indicators. However, other measures (such as unemployment rates within disadvantaged areas) indicate that Middlesbrough has to date been affected less severely than Tees Valley neighbours.
7. Many of the Council's actions will contribute to the LAA targets, but in the longer term, so the impact is not yet reflected in current performance, particularly where there is a lag in the publication of recent data. Work continues to ensure that the actions taken by the Council to contribute to LAA targets are both plausible and specific about the time frame for impact.

Progress against the National Indicator Set and local targets

8. In terms of the Council's performance against all performance indicators, the position is more positive. At Quarter Two 2009/2010, performance information was available for 93% of indicators. Targets are not set for 35% of indicators, where baselines or reliable trends are not currently available. Of those indicators where performance could be measured against target, 56% were on target at Quarter Two 2009/2010.

Table 2: Performance against all indicators at Quarter Two 2009/2010

Theme	Total	On target	Not on target	Not yet known	Target not set
Creating Stronger Communities	11	0	0	0	11
Creating Safer Communities	25	7	5	2	11
Supporting Children and Young People	77	20	32	6	19
Promoting Adult Health and Well-Being	33	12	8	1	12
Enhancing the Local Economy	45	14	8	5	18
Securing Environmental Sustainability	19	10	1	0	8
Fit for Purpose	22	12	6	2	2
Overall total	232	75 (32%)	60 (26%)	16 (7%)	81 (35%)
Total (performance against target)	134	75 (56%)	60 (44%)		

Progress against planned actions Quarter Two 2009/2010

9. In the 2009/2010 Strategic Plan, the Council identifies 230 actions to progress its contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Community Strategy themes and strategic priorities.
10. A high level of performance was evident at Quarter Two, with 47 (20%) actions completed and 165 (72%) on target – 92% completed or on target in total. This compares with the overall achievement rate for actions in 2008/2009 of 86%. 18 actions were not on target, and these are covered in the thematic section below.

Table 3: Performance against the planned actions at Quarter Two 2009/2010

Theme	Total	Completed	On target	Not on target	Not yet due to start
Creating Stronger Communities	13	0	13	0	0
Creating Safer Communities	25	3	17	5	0
Supporting Children and Young People	49	11	36	2	0
Promoting Adult Health and Well-Being	43	8	30	5	0
Enhancing the Local Economy	50	5	39	6	0
Securing Environmental Sustainability	17	6	11	0	0
Fit for Purpose	33	14	19	0	0
Overall total	230	47 (20%)	165 (72%)	18 (8%)	0 (0%)

KEY PERFORMANCE ISSUES BY THEME

11. The following sections set out key performance issues at the end of Quarter Two 2009/2010 by theme.

Theme:	Creating stronger communities
Relevant Scrutiny Panel(s):	Community Safety and Leisure; Adult Social Care

Quarter Two evaluation

12. The Council's contribution to this theme is through major regeneration activity (with a specific focus on culture), neighbourhood renewal, neighbourhood engagement and community cohesion initiatives, and supporting the Voluntary and Community Sector.

13. Whilst no further data for NIs has become available since quarter one, progress has been made in the development of strategies for both NI 6 (participation in regular volunteering) and NI 7 (environment for a thriving voluntary and community sector) The strategies will be finalised when national reports for both the Place Survey and Third Sector surveys are available.
14. Performance against planned actions at Quarter Two was excellent overall, with 100% of actions all on target.

Key points of progress

15. Initial annual targets around the numbers of local people involved in decision-making and community cohesion activities (RG01-04) were completed at Quarter One, but have since been substantially re-profiled and remain on target.
16. A notable achievement under this theme in the last quarter includes action RG10: visits to libraries, which succeeded the quarter two milestone by 18,181 visits despite being 6,457 visits behind the first quarter milestone of 164,000. This success is partly due to the implementation of the Libraries Action Plan with schemes to encourage community participation such as the Summer Reading Scheme and a series of multi-sensory story sessions for children with disabilities.
17. Actions under this theme relating to culture have, in general, been successfully delivered with attendance levels and external funding secured significantly exceeding targets.

Key areas for improvement

18. No slippage or failures were reported for this priority at Quarter Two. It has been reported previously that performance against the cohesion measure of people from different backgrounds getting on well together (NI 5) is below national and regional average and has declined from the 2006/07 baseline, yet Middlesbrough has seen significant improvement (18%) in people treating one another with respect and consideration (NI 23), and indications are that this measure is strongly linked to cohesion. Work to strengthen community cohesion continues.

For further information, see pages 3-4 and 40-41 of the Quarter Two 2009/2010 performance report (Members' library).

Theme:	Creating safer communities
Relevant Scrutiny Panel(s):	Community Safety and Leisure

Quarter Two evaluation

19. The Council's contribution to this theme is through CCTV, licensing, environmental management, neighbourhood working and working with young people to divert and protect them from crime and anti-social behaviour. This work is undertaken as part of the overall approach determined by the Safer Middlesbrough Partnership.
20. Good progress was made during Quarter Two with 20 (80%) of planned actions under this theme completed or on target to be achieved, and 60% of National

Indicators on or around targeted levels. Four LAA indicators with targets agreed are on target.

21. Progress against the majority of planned actions that fall within this theme continues to demonstrate effective partnership working between the Council and its partners, although responsibility for certain initiatives will be clarified.

Key points of progress

22. During Quarter Two there were continued significant improvements in relation to serious acquisitive crime and arson related incidents in Middlesbrough.
23. The new Safer Neighbourhood Steering Group has made significant progress particularly in relation to the Neighbourhood Crime and Justice Agenda. The Community Crime Fighter scheme and the Police Pledge awareness have been developed and campaigns locally have ensured local communities have improved access to Neighbourhood Police Teams. The Integrated Offender Management Programme is now operational and has established a suite of local indicators to track progress.

Key areas for improvement

24. Diverting young people away from crime and anti-social behaviour continues to be a high priority, with actions to achieve this target primarily being delivered through the Youth Crime Action Plan (YCAP). Work in this area has been slow as a result of delays in recruiting new posts, such as those within the Triage Project and 'Think Family' approach. Appointments are now expected to be made in Quarter Three and actions to be achieved by the end of year.
25. The referral rate for domestic violence remains high. Several actions have been put in place to address this including a new MARAC Steering Group and the appointment of an officer to review all Cleveland MARACS.
26. Due to a single fatality, which occurred in April, the zero target set for NI 49(ii) fatalities due to primary fires, is now unachievable. However, the Fire Brigade continues to focus activities on reducing accidental dwelling fires which impact on this indicator.

For further information, see pages 5-11 and 42-47 of the Quarter Two 2009/2010 performance report (Members' library).

Theme:	Supporting children and young people
Relevant Scrutiny Panel(s):	Children and Young People

Quarter Two evaluation

27. A number of national indicators and associated actions have been moved between priorities since Quarter One in order to improve the alignment with the Local Area Agreement structure and national strategy groupings. NI 112 - under 18 conceptions and NI 113 - Chlamydia screening have been moved from *Be Healthy* to *Make a Positive Contribution*, and NI 114 – permanent exclusions has been moved from *Enjoy and Achieve* to *Make a Positive Contribution*.

28. Significant increases in demand in safeguarding are putting pressure on both performance and budgets. Whilst activity levels remain very high, a number of actions are now in place to address performance issues. There has been some success in achieving efficiency savings and in improving recruitment and retention. Further improvement work is underway, including independent research on the safeguarding approach. Work towards establishing a Middlesbrough Local Safeguarding Children Board is progressing well.

Key points of progress

29. Early Years performance has improved, with the number of children achieving a good level of achievement improving by 8% to 44%. This reflects the authority's robust action planning and implementation of quality improvement programmes. In addition, Key Stage 1 performance has matched national improvement rates, with good performance in reading in particular. At Key Stage 2, there have been overall improvements in English since 2006 and the authority has kept pace with national improvement.
30. The Making a Positive Contribution priority is performing well, with work continuing on the development of an integrated youth support service through changing the organisational arrangements for the youth Service and Connexions. National Indicators are moving in the right direction although still slightly behind target, but continued work with the agencies, including the promotion of the Young People's substance misuse agenda and engagement with the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, will continue to improve performance.
31. The Healthy Town projects targeting families and young people are showing signs of the positive impact they can have in engaging people in activities that will help develop and sustain healthier lifestyle choices.

Key areas for improvement

32. Secondary standards have improved over the last three years but remain short of targets and the performance of National Challenge schools was disappointing. Although gaps between children in vulnerable groups and their peers are better than the national average, these are still a priority and the gender gap in 5+ A*-C GCSEs with English and Maths is widening. There has also been an increase in persistent absence levels, making the 2011 target very challenging.
33. School meal take up (NI 52) shows a significant decline in the number of meals served April-July 2009 against the same period for 2008 – primary schools are down 11% and secondary schools 21%. This follows price increases and some cost reduction measures. The reduction in actual meals served is concentrated in the paid for meals in both primary and secondary schools. Further cost increases were introduced at the start of the autumn term, which may have further impact on the year-end figures. Discussions continue with the Schools Management Forum on future school catering arrangements. The forum has allocated funding to the service for this financial year and is considering options for next year. These discussions are progressing in the context of maintaining nutritional standards to support healthy eating and to tackle childhood obesity.

34. The increase in child protection and looked after children activity has had a marked effect on performance against key indicators. Initial Assessments have not always been completed within timescales, although recent data demonstrates an improvement at 81.4%. This will reflect the high level of activity within the Enquiry & Assessment Team. Completion of core assessments within timescales has improved significantly.
35. Measures have been put in place to address NI64 and NI65 and service managers will be monitoring both systems to ensure timely plans are in place. Child protection conferences and looked after children reviews, NI66 and NI67, have improved as the Review & Development unit is now fully staffed.
36. Performance has slipped against NI68 although it remains well above target and may reflect more robust screening within the Enquiry & Assessment team. A further unannounced mock inspection has recently taken place. The inspection findings were positive, and reflect a change in personnel within the team. Feedback is overdue from Ofsted on three Serious Case Reviews.

For further information, see pages 12-24 and 48-55 of the Quarter Two 2009/2010 performance report (Members' library).

Theme:	Promoting adult health and wellbeing, tackling exclusion and promoting equality
Relevant Scrutiny Panel(s):	Health; Adult Social Care

Quarter Two evaluation

37. The Council's contribution to this theme is through the work of the Social Care Department, along with health and probation partners. Overall, performance in Quarter Two is strong, with the majority of targets on course to be achieved.
38. It must be noted, however, that greater evidence has emerged during Quarter Two on the impact of the recession on some targets, notably in securing employment for people with drug and alcohol problems, and people with disabilities. Inevitably, fewer jobs are available, and competition for those jobs is fierce. Nevertheless work continues to explore all options to support and enable people whose circumstances make them vulnerable into employment.
39. Although the impact of the flu pandemic has been minimal so far, evidence is emerging that, although fewer people are affected, more people are being admitted to acute hospitals because of complications with the illness. If this trend continues, the NHS will want to relieve pressure on acute hospitals by more rigorous avoidance of hospital admissions, and more speedy discharges. This will, in turn, place pressure on social care services, and services may need to be prioritised to those with the highest level of need.

Key points of progress

40. Performance on self-directed support and independent living (including the provision of major adaptations and equipment) remains excellent. Following a review the action relating to the uptake of Telecare is now on target at the end of Quarter Two. The

challenge for Social Care and the Primary Care Trust is to develop more preventative and early intervention services in line with Government direction.

41. The department of Social Care's performance in 2008/2009 has been rated as Excellent in the Care Quality Commission's annual assessment.

Key areas for improvement

42. Addressing health inequalities remains a significant challenge for the PCT and Council, and evidence of positive outcomes from the wide range of actions and initiatives currently taking place will take some time to achieve. The Healthy Towns Initiative is leading a raft of actions to address physical health needs, in addition the Alcohol Treatment Plan and Smoking Cessation Strategy will have direct impact on improving health in the long term.
43. Supporting vulnerable adults with substance misuse problems, mental illness and learning disabilities to improve their quality of life remains a challenge in Middlesbrough. Satisfactory progress to meet the agreed targets is demonstrated, and initiatives to ensure the targets are met in relation to supported accommodation and employment will be monitored closely to ensure improvement.

For further information, see pages 25-30 and 56-66 of the Quarter Two 2009/2010 performance report (Members' library).

Theme:	Enhancing the local economy
Relevant Scrutiny Panel(s):	Economic Regeneration and Transport

Quarter Two evaluation

44. The Council's contribution to this theme is through spatial planning, economic development and worklessness initiatives, cultural activity and the Housing and Transport Plans.
45. Progress against enhancing the local economy has been mixed. Actions that aim to assist, establish and attract current and new businesses (RG25 and RG26) and create new jobs (RG27) remain on target despite the continuation of the recession. In addition, data relating to the unemployment rate gap between Middlesbrough and the Tees Valley reveals that Middlesbrough has the lowest rate of increase in unemployment of all Tees Valley authorities (RG28).
46. Work is continuing to mitigate the impact of the recession through a number of actions that were outlined in the May 2009 report to Executive, including working closely with the University of Teesside and Business Link to help businesses access the support they need, working with businesses experiencing difficulties to help them manage and providing support for individuals facing redundancy or looking for work.
47. Intensive work is ongoing to assist the housing market, providing incentives to encourage investment in house building and maintaining the commitment to deliver major development projects such as Middlehaven and Trinity Crescent.

Key points of progress

48. Progress at Quarter Two has been positive. Progress against planned actions that will improve the physical environment and direct business support measures remains strong. Notable successes include the engagement of 403 (cumulative) businesses against a milestone target of 275 (RG24) despite the deepening economic recession.
49. In response to the recession and its impact on build rates, intensive work has been undertaken with house builders to maintain development momentum, including bids to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Kickstart Housing Delivery Programme. Similarly, engagement with RSL partners has focused on developing and supporting bids to the latest round of the HCA's National Affordable Housing Programme (NI 154 and 155). These activities seek to maximise funding opportunities in order to enhance the town's housing offer.

Key areas for improvement

50. Creating a partnership for the delivery of travel awareness campaigns (EN42) and adopting a workplace travel plan (EN44) were behind schedule at Quarter Two but will be completed by the end of the year.
51. The Urban Safety Management Strategy is behind schedule and is currently being developed in-house, with certain elements of the work outsourced. A draft strategy will be prepared by the end of December and will be implemented after March 2010

For further information, see pages 31-35 and 67-76 of the Quarter Two 2009/2010 performance report (Members' library).

Theme:	Securing environmental sustainability
Relevant Scrutiny Panel(s):	Environment

Quarter Two evaluation

52. The Council's contribution to this theme is through street cleanliness, public open space, waste management and recycling, the reduction of carbon emissions and the promotion of sustainable development all of which are high on the government agenda. This theme continues to demonstrate strong progress overall, with high levels of achievement against key indicators and planned actions.

Key points of progress

53. The Council's Area Care service continues to review and examine service delivery and deploy resources effectively, in order to target specific problem areas. This has resulted in clearly measurable and noticeable improvements in standards of cleanliness throughout all areas of the Town, which have continued at Quarter Two.
54. Performance against waste and recycling indicators are on target at this stage, but it should be noted that a recent fire at the EFW plant is currently impacting on both performance and cost, due to diversions of waste to landfill.

Key areas for improvement

55. The Council is committed to reducing carbon emissions, and all planned actions are on target. However, new data released by AEA on behalf of the government show a

7.8% increase in industry and commercial emissions in Middlesbrough between 2005 and 2007, leading to an overall increase of 1.5% (NI 186). This data is currently being queried with the AEA and a more detailed breakdown of data has been requested.

56. Although performance in recycling and composting and street cleanliness has shown significant improvement and resident perceptions of the service have also improved, achieving further improvements using current systems may be difficult. Work is ongoing within the Environment department to develop processes to ensure continuous improvement in these areas.

For further information, see pages 36-38 and 77-80 of the Quarter Two 2009/2010 performance report (Members' library).

Theme:	Fit for purpose
Relevant Scrutiny Panel(s):	Overview and Scrutiny Board

57. The Fit for Purpose theme aims to further strengthen the Council's strategic framework in respect of value for money, information, workforce planning, policy development and performance management. Performance at Quarter Two was at the maximum level, with 100% of actions either completed or on target.

Key points of progress

58. All five National Indicators under this priority are performing strongly. The benefits NIs remain on target, and the NI 179 (Value for Money) forecast is substantially above target with an estimated figure of £16.963m against a target of £10.904m. Comparison data suggests that performance in the remaining two NIs (avoidable contact and fair treatment by local services) is strong, with a second measurement for these indicators to be reported in due course.
59. Council Tax and NNDR collection rates remain on target at Quarter Two, with improvement on the same period in 2008/2009. However, arrears collection rates have fallen by 20% on last year. Further work including analysis of data is currently ongoing to improve recovery rates.
60. The first Comprehensive Area Assessment for Middlesbrough and Middlesbrough Council is now complete, with no red flags identified in the Area Assessment, and a score of 3(Good) awarded for the Organisational Assessment.

Key areas for improvement

61. Performance against local indicators overall has improved from Quarter One, but remains variable, with 35% of PIs off target. The majority of these relate to the diversity of the overall and top-paid workforce and are volatile due to the relatively small numbers of employees involved. It is expected that these will improve in the longer-term due to work around Positive Steps, but the fact that the PATH trainee posts are on hold due to the Council's financial position is likely to negatively affect performance in the short-term.
62. As might be anticipated, the rate of sickness absence has risen slightly compared with Quarter Two 2008/09. Year-end figures are projected slightly above target with

the anticipated increase taking into account the potential impact of the swine flu pandemic, which has already affected figures.

For further information, see pages 39 and 81-85 of the Quarter Two 2009/2010 performance report (Members' library).

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

63. The LAA is fundamentally linked to the delivery of the vision for Middlesbrough, so off-target performance in this area is concerning. Work has been undertaken during the preparation of the 2009/2010 Strategic Plan to prioritise actions impacting on LAA targets in the short to medium term. A Reward Grant of circa £1m is attached to the LAA. Failure to deliver the targets will impact on the receipt accrued.
64. LAA targets likely to be affected by the current economic recession will be the subject of re-negotiation at the next LAA Refresh.

RECOMMENDATIONS

65. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board notes the content of the report and identifies any issues for further investigation and/or for inclusion on the work programme.

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