

7 March 2008

Dear Councillor

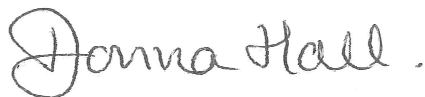
**CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL -
TUESDAY, 11TH MARCH 2008**

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the above meeting of the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No	Item
7.	<u>Business Plan Monitoring Statements - Third Quarter (Pages 29 - 50)</u>

The Business Plan and Performance Monitoring reports are enclosed for the third quarter period for Customer, Democratic and Legal Services, Human Resources and Financial Services.

Yours sincerely



Donna Hall
Chief Executive

Ruth Hawes
Assistant Democratic Services Officer
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Distribution

1. Agenda and reports to all Members of the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Councillor Geoffrey Russell (Chair) and Councillors Terry Brown, Henry Counce, Michael Davies, Mike Devaney, David Dickinson, Mrs Doreen Dickinson, Daniel Gee, Pat Haughton, Keith Iddon, Kevin Joyce, Hasina Khan, Thomas McGowan, June Molyneaux, Mick Muncaster, Joyce Snape and Mrs Stella Walsh for attendance.
2. Agenda and reports to Gary Hall (Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation)), Tim Murphy (Corporate Director of Information and Communication Technology), Lorraine Charlesworth (Corporate Director of Human Resources), James Douglas (Business Improvement Manager), Carol Russell (Head of Democratic and Licensing Services) and Ruth Hawes (Assistant Democratic Services Officer) for attendance.

3. Agenda and reports to Councillor Alan Cullens (Executive Member for Resources) for attendance.

This information can be made available to you in larger print or on audio tape, or translated into your own language. Please telephone 01257 515118 to access this service.

આ માહિતીનો અનુવાદ આપની પોતાની ભાષામાં કરી શકાય છે. આ સેવા સરળતાથી મેળવવા માટે કૃપા કરી, આ નંબર પર ફોન કરો: 01257 515822

ان معلومات کا ترجمہ آپ کی اپنی زبان میں بھی کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ یہ خدمت استعمال کرنے کیلئے براہ مہربانی اس نمبر پر ٹیلیفون

01257 515823

کیجئے:



Report of	Meeting	Date
Corporate Director of Governance	Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel	11 th March 2008

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT FOR THE CUSTOMER, DEMOCRATIC AND LEGAL SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To report progress against the key actions and performance indicators included in the Corporate Governance Business Improvement Plan for the third quarter of 2007/08.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. To note the report and actions included in it.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. Service developments are progressing in line with anticipations. The budget is on track and performance is on target with the exception of one indicator for which there is an adequate explanation.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

4. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the central Lancashire sub region		Improved access to public services	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chance		Develop the character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	
Involving People in their Communities		Ensure Chorley is a performing Organisation	√

BACKGROUND

5. The Business Plan monitoring statement reports progress against the key actions and performance indicators included in the 2007/08 Business Improvement Plan for the Directorate. The report covers the period of 1st October to 31 December 2007.



6. Budget Update

SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2007/2008**DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

DECEMBER 2007	£'000	£'000
ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET		2,092
Add Adjustments for In year cash movements		
Slippage from 2006/2007		
- Customer profiling esd toolkit		20
Virements to/from other Services:		
- Transfer Land Charges Staff to Development and Regeneration		(48)
- Transfer Land Charges to Development and Regeneration	140	
- Move Mayoral budgets to Civic Services	52	
- Transfer Christmas Lights budget to SNED.		(20)
- Transfer Bookings & Support Assistant from Chief Exec's	10	
- Contribution to Customer Services from Development & Regeneration	20	
- Chief Officer Lease Car changes	1	
- Corporate Restructure changes (Customer Services to People Directorate)		(745)
- Insurances 2007/08		(3)
- Transfer contribution from election reserve to the appropriations account	11	
ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET		1,530
Less Corporate Savings -		
- staffing		(62)
CURRENT CASH BUDGET		1,468
FORECAST		
EXPENDITURE		
Staffing		(11)
Elections	13	
Utilities	7	
Publications	8	
Members Allowances and other member expenses		(15)
Town Hall office moves	5	
Other	3	
Expenditure under(-) or over (+) current cash budget		10
INCOME		
Licence Fee Income		(27)
recharge to capital		(8)
Income under (+)/ over (-) achieved		(35)
FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2007/2008		1,443

7. Service Developments

The table below shows progress against key actions planned for this period:

Actions	Progress
Complete Departmental restructure	The Head of Democratic and Licensing Services, the Licensing Manager and the Emergency Planning Assistant all started work. Advertisements for three vacant posts in legal services were prepared for publication in the New Year.
To manage and deliver effective legal support to the Market Walk phase 2 project	Although considerable work was undertaken this project has not progressed due to the developer deciding not to proceed.
To review the Directorate's Equality Impact Assessments and prepare revised action plans	This is ongoing and will be completed within the next quarter.
To promote participation in local democracy	New petitions process developed and agreed by Council.
Review current hire charges for Lancastrian	New hire charges have been implemented. Expert advice has been sought in relation to sound and audio requirements.
Review the Constitution	Report presented to Council. Consultation on further changes will take place in the next quarter.
Implement a CRM solution for Chorley shared with neighbouring Councils	Implementation is well underway with a revised go-live date of 26th March.
Produce delivery plan for moving customers to more effective channels for accessing Council services/reduce abandon rate of calls to contact centre.	Improvements in the abandon call rate have been maintained.
Review polling stations for accessibility	Review completed and outcome reported to Council
Improve levels of electoral registration through targeted action and promotion	Overall levels of registration fell by approximately 2.5%. In the targeted area registration rose by 5%.

8. Performance Indicators

Indicator Description	Target at 31st December 2007	Performance 31st December 2007	Comments
Satisfaction – Contact Centre	95%	98.55%	Blue Circle
% decision notices published within 2 days	90%	66%	Red Triangle
% of Customer seen within 10 Minutes in the One Stop Shop	80%	81.57%	Blue Circle
Average Number of days to process personal license applications	12	1.32	Green Star
Average number of days to process premises/club licences	17	2.9	Green Star

Customer, Democratic and Legal % Invoices Processed within 30 Working Days	96.71	94.16	Blue Circle
Customer, Democratic and Legal Services Sickness Absence Days	6.93	6.38	Green Star

Equality and Diversity Update

9. The Directorate is in the process of reviewing its equality action plans.

Risk Management Update

10. The key Directorate risks remain as set out in the business improvement plan.

Value for Money/ Efficiencies Update

11. The key role in relation to the services covered by this business plan centres on the Customer Access Strategy and on the CRM system. Updates on these projects appear earlier in the report.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

12. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Corporate Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	√
Legal		No significant implications in this area	

COMMENTS OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (POLICY AND PERFORMANCE)

13. The actions outlined above will support the delivery of the Council's Equality Scheme approved by Cabinet in December 2006.

ANDREW DOCHERTY
CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Andrew Docherty	5102	06 March 2008	AD/REP/0603JA

CHORLEY B.C. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT
ACTION PLAN

FINANCIAL YEAR 2007 / 2008

Indicator Number: % decision notices published within 2 days

Indicator Short Name:

Q3		End of Year Target
Performance	Target	
66%	90%	90%

Please explain the reasons why progress has not reached expectations:

A problem has just been identified within the team. In effect this relates to the decision notices of seven meetings during this period, the majority of which were scrutiny meetings. Whilst the decision notices for those meetings weren't issued on time, the minutes were produced shortly after the meeting.

Please detail corrective action to be undertaken:

More close monitoring by the head of the section is now taking place to ensure decision notices are produced and issued in future.

Action planned through financial year:

Please give an objective assessment as to whether the year end target will be met:

With corrective action, the target is likely to be met for this year.

Action Plan Owner: Carol Russell
Unit: Democratic Services
Contact Number: 515196
Date: 7 March 2008

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Corporate Director (Human Resources and Organisational Development)	Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel	11 March 2008

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT – HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

12. To report progress against the key actions and performance indicators included in the Human Resources Business Improvement Plan for the third quarter of 2007/08.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

13. To note the report and actions included in it.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

14. The Human Resources Directorate continues to make good progress against the actions outlined in the business improvement plan.

Specific progress has been made in the following areas:

- Job Evaluation
- Promoting a healthy workforce
- Completion of Directorate restructure

The workforce plan was due to commence in September with a completion date of March 2008. Due to the Directorate restructure and the Job Evaluation process, which has taken a considerable amount of the Directorates resources, the workforce plan project did not commence until January 2008. This is still scheduled for completion at the end of March with additional resources being committed to the project.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

15. To ensure members of the Corporate and Customer Scrutiny Panel are updated on the performance of the Human Resources Directorate.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

16. None.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

17. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the central Lancashire sub region		Improved access to public services	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chance		Develop the character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	
Involving People in their Communities		Ensure Chorley is a performing Organisation	✓

BACKGROUND

18. The Business Plan monitoring reports progress against the key actions and performance indicators included in the 2007/08 Business Improvement Plan for the Human Resources Directorate. The report covers the period of 1 October 2007 to the 31 December 2007.

BUDGET UPDATE

SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2007/2008

HUMAN RESOURCES

JUNE 2007

£'000 £'000

ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET

483

Add Adjustments for In year cash movements

Transfer from Earmarked Reserve

17

Slippage from 2006/2007

36

Virements for other Services

- Transfer of Health & Safety from H.R. to Finance

(34)

ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET

502

Less Corporate Savings:

CURRENT CASH BUDGET

502

FORECAST

EXPENDITURE

- Young Persons Development costs

(2)

- Consultants fees

3

- Agency staff

(4)

- Legal fees

3

Expenditure under (-) or over (+) current cash budget

-

INCOME

- Staff secondment

(8)

Income under (+)/ over (-) achieved

(8)

FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2007/2008

494

Key Assumptions

- Young Persons Development 1.5 FTE, £5K costs per person per year
- Job Evaluation pay modelling additional costs to be funded from a combination of savings already achieved (JE Reserve £17,477) and virement to be identified from within Human Resources.

Key Issues/Variables

The income from staff secondment has risen to match agreed increased salary costs. A 6 months contract extension for temporary/agency staff has been included, to maintain current levels of service, pending the restructuring of the Human Resources Directorate.

Key Actions

Closely monitor activity against JE and Training budgets.

SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS

19. During the third quarter the following key actions were due to be completed, progress against these actions is summarised in the table below:

Milestone	Progress
Job Evaluation – Adopt the new pay policy Undertake employee appeals	Actions Completed
Introduce a Middle Managers Development Programme	This action has now been incorporated within the current review of the Councils Competency framework, which will influence the development programme.
Establish a policy framework timetable and action plan	A number of policies following consultation with the Trade Unions have been equality impact assessed and adopted.
Promote a healthy workforce Review the Councils Occupational health contract Achieve Health Works Award	Introduced health and wellbeing area on the loop Completed – new provider with effect from 1 st April 08 Achieved Bronze and Silver Awards

Include equality monitoring questions in customer satisfaction surveys and audit responses	Actions adopted
To provide a fit for purpose Directorate structure aligned to the needs of the service	Restructure Completed

The workforce plan was due to commence in September with a completion date of March 2008. Due to the Directorate restructure and the Job Evaluation process, which has taken a considerable amount of the Directorates resources, the workforce plan project did not commence until January 2008. This is still scheduled for completion at the end of March with additional resources being committed to the project.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

20. Set out in the table below is a summary of the key performance indicator data for the first quarter

Indicator Description	Target at 31 Dec 07	Performance at 31 Dec 07	Comments
BVPI 11a % Of Women in Top % of Earners	35	37.5 Green Star	
BVPI 11b Black and Ethnic Minority Employees in top 5% of earners	0.5	6.25 Green Star	
BVPI11c Disabled employees in top 5% of earners	9.57	6.25 Red Triangle	
BV012 Days/ Shifts Lost to sickness (Corporate)	6.93	5.53 Green Star	
BV14 Early Retirements	0.43	2.16 Red Triangle	
BV15 Ill Health Retirements	0	0 Blue Circle	
16a % Disabled employees	4.02	3.56 Red Triangle	

BV17a % Ethnic Minority Employees	1.95	2.74 Green Star	
Human Resources- Sickness Absence	6.93	1 Green Star	
Human Resources - Invoices Processed within 30 working days	96.7	93.15 Blue Circle	

In summary the position is as follows:

Status	Number
Green Star	5
Blue Circle	2
Red Triangle	3

Overall performance is positive, but the following indicators have not reached their targets in the third quarter:

- % of disabled employees in the top 5% of earners
- % of disabled employees

The % of employees in the top 5% of earners who consider they have a disability has reduced in the third quarter as a result of a senior management restructure. A refresh of workforce data is currently being undertaken, which may identify employees who consider him/herself to have a disability since personal details were previously updated almost 3 years ago. Positive action will continue to encourage applicants from all sections of the community to apply for vacant posts within the Council. although the best possible applicant will always be appointed regardless of gender, age, disability, race, religion and belief or sexual orientation.

- % of early retirements

As a result of Directorate restructures significant staffing savings have been achieved as a number of people left the Authority. Due to statutory notice periods and the requirements of the service 3 employees whose employment had been due to terminate before the 1st April 2007 did not retire until after this date. Their early retirement was therefore moved forward into the 2007/08 monitoring period. A senior management restructure which achieved substantial staffing savings in the last quarter resulted in an increase in the percentage.

RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

21. A major risk to the performance and achievement of not only the Human Resources Business Improvement Plan has been the introduction of Job Evaluation. Examples from other Councils have included severe disruption to services, a drop in staff morale and a breakdown in industrial relations. Management and Trade Unions officials have worked together on the job evaluation project, with constructive and meaningful negotiations taking place between the two sides therefore reducing the risk. All employee appeals have now been completed, however employees are still entitled to submit equal pay claims if they believe they have been treated unfairly.
22. Prior to the effective date of the Directorate restructure, service has been maintained by extending temporary contracts to cover maternity leave and a secondment. The restructure was on target to be completed by the end of December, which would see a fit for purpose structure aligned to the needs of the service.

VALUE FOR MONEY AND EFFICIENCIES UPDATE

12. Set out in the table below is a summary of the progress against the expected efficiency gains for 2007/08.

	ESTIMATED VALUE OF GAIN £	VALUE OF GAIN ACHIEVED IN THIRD QUARTER £
Procurement of Occupational Health Service	5,000	0
Restructure of the HR Directorate	67,940	0
Total	72,940	0

The Directorate restructure has been completed and efficiency gains will be materialised in the fourth quarter, however, due to the extension of temporary contracts to cover maternity leave and secondments the efficiencies estimated will not be fully achieved in this financial year.

Tighter monitoring of the current Occupational Health Contract has seen significant efficiency savings. Following a review of the contract the provider will change with effect from the 1st April 2008 when we will see an improvement in the service provided although the savings will still be maintained.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY UPDATE

13. As outlined in the key actions earlier, a number of HR policies have been introduced in the last quarter that have been equality impact assessed in accordance with the Councils Equality Scheme.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

14. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	✓
Legal			

COMMENTS OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (POLICY AND PERFORMANCE)

15. The actions outlined above will support the delivery of the Council's Equality Scheme approved by Cabinet in December 2006.

LORRAINE CHARLESWORTH
CORPORATE DIRECTOR (HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Lorraine Charlesworth	5159	05/03/08	

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation and Improvement) (Introduced by the Executive Member for Resource)	Corporate and Customer Panel	11 March 2008

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT – FINANCE DIRECTORATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To report progress against the key actions and performance indicators included in the Finance Business Improvement Plan for the 3rd quarter of 2007/08.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. To note the report and actions included in it.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. Overall good progress is being made, with one to two minor issues to resolve in relation to improvements in Accountancy and two BVPI's. The budget continues to be on track as does the delivery of efficiency targets. Overall I am therefore satisfied with progress being made.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

4. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the central Lancashire sub region		Improved access to public services	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chance		Develop the character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	
Involving People in their Communities		Ensure Chorley is a performing Organisation	✓

BACKGROUND

5. The Business Plan monitoring reports progress against the key actions and performance indicators included in the 2007/08 Business Improvement Plan for the Finance Directorate. The report covers the period of 1 April to 30 September 2007.



BUDGET UPDATE

6. Set out in the table below is a summary of the Directorates first quarter performance in relation to its budget.

SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2007/2008		
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT		
DECEMBER 2007	£'000	£'000
ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET		1,616
Add Adjustments for In year cash movements		
Virements to/from other Services		
- Transfer Office Support Officer post to Finance		20
- Transfer of Health & Safety from H.R. to Finance		40
- Chief Officer Car Lease Scheme		(1)
- Communications		(1)
- Insurances 2007/08		60
ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET		1,734
Less Corporate Savings:		
- Staffing		(5)
CURRENT CASH BUDGET		1,729
FORECAST		
EXPENDITURE		
Senior Management Review	4	
Staffing Costs	(44)	
Pay in Lieu/Severance Pay	5	
Insurances	(2)	
Treasury Management	5	
Documents On Line Service	(4)	
Consultants Fees (VFM)	6	
Business Improvement & Efficiency Projects (matched by grant income)	60	
Computer Equip - Purchase	5	
Computer Equipment/Maintenance	11	
Roses Marketplace Licence	(5)	
Bailiffs Commission	31	
Local Housing Allowance	100	
Other	3	
Expenditure under (-) or over (+) current cash budget		175
INCOME		
NWCE - Shared Services Funding	(8)	
Local Housing Allowance Grant	(100)	
Business Improvement & Efficiency Grants	(63)	
Summons / Committal Costs	(4)	
Other	(3)	
Income under (+)/ over (-) achieved		(178)
FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2007/2008		1,726
Key Assumptions		
- Benefits Officer post remains vacant to end of March		

The budget updates shows that the Directorate is on tract to achieve its cash target for 2007/08.

SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS

7. During the first quarter the following key actions were due to be completed, progress against these actions is summarised in the table below:

Milestone	Progress
Procedures set up to monitor take up in relation to equal access to services.	Draft equality impact assessment completed, monitoring arrangements/ procedures reviewed and amended.
Improve the portal service for CIVICA Exchange module.	This is a self service module for the Council's creditors to show the status of their payments. A Business Case has been produced and will be subject to funding approval later in the year.
Undertake equality impact assessments for all services in Finance.	Completed.
Review financial performance of processes in accordance with the Council's purchase framework.	Completed.
Provide updates on efficiency gains to review.	Completed (see quarterly performance reports).
Improve financial report and create a set of financial health measures.	Not achieved. Staffing/restructure arrangements not yet completed.
Develop and adopt a local Code of Governance.	New Code produced and signed for consultation by Audit Committee.
Complete and update the Council's medium term financial strategy.	Completed as part of budget process February 2008.
Update the Council's Treasury Management Strategy	Completed as part of budget process February 2008.
Ensure corporate ownership in the preparation of the Council's Governance Statement.	Directorate Assurance Statement produced which formed part of the Council's annual Governance Statement – action complete.
Implement the Civica Portal Module to enable self service for user of exchequer system.	Delayed until 2008 following approval of funding in 2008/09 budget.
Review Financial Performance of key partnerships in accordance with the Council's partnership framework.	1/2 yearly report completed and presented to Executive Cabinet.
Develop a programme of VFM work.	Programme agreed and first review in neighbourhoods well advanced.

The table shows that in terms of the key project contained in the directorates Business Improvement Plan good progress has been made in most cases apart from those expected in Accountancy.

Unfortunately due in the main to staff sickness absence it has not been possible to progress as quickly as planned. Arrangements within the section has recently been changed so that efforts can be refocused on making the necessary planned changes, with a view to making the proposed improvements required for early in the new financial year.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

8. Set out in the table below is a summary of the key performance indicator data for the first quarter

Indicator Description	Target as at 31 December 2007	Performance as at 31 December 2007	Comments
% Invoices processed on time	97.61%	95.45	Blue Circle
Ave time to process new benefit claims	18.5 Days	16.64	Green Star
Ave time for benefit changes	6.3 Days	7.42	Red Triangle
% benefit calculations correct	99.50%	98.4	Blue Circle
% C Tax collected	74.07	87.33%	Green Star
% NNDR collected	74.3%	88.21	Green Star
Finance Sickness Absence	6.93 Days	2.34	Green Star
Finance % of invoices processed within 30 days	97.61%	96.62	Blue Circle
Number of fraud investigations	57.54	52.1	Red Triangle
Number of prosecutions/sanctions	9.75	13.85	Green Star
Budget Spend	100%	100%	Green Star

In summary the position is as follows:

Status	Quarter 2	Quarter 3
Green Star	4	6
Blue Circle	6	3
Red Triangle	1	2

9. Overall performance is positive, but off track for the third quarter in succession for the change of circumstances indicator. An explanation of the actions taken and planned to try and improve performance is attached. In addition the indicator for the number of fraud investigation undertaken has also not achieved target. The main reason for this is the moratorium on data exchange between the Council and the DWP as a result of the recent loss of data incident. This means not as much data matching is taking place so the number of incidents for investigation has reduced. In addition there is currently an investigator post vacant.

10. ACTION PLANS

Indicator Number: 78b

Indicator Short Name: Change of circumstances processing

Q3		End of Year Target
Performance	Target	
7.42	<6.3	<6.3

Please explain the reasons why progress has not reached expectations:

This ambitious target was set, based on previous years performance. This target is increasingly difficult to achieve due to changes in benefit regulations over the past two years. This is mainly due to 'Change of address' being classed as a 'Change of Circumstance' rather than a 'New Claim' as had previously been the case. As a lot of information is needed to process a change of address, delays are sometimes inevitable. It is also heavily reliant on customers providing information timeously.

The Department for Work and Pensions has recognised the increasing difficulties with this performance indicator and has amended the number of days for an 'excellent' score in the Performance Standards from 9 last year to 10 this.

Performance in the third quarter has deteriorated slightly as a result of the impact of the Christmas period whereby working days lost are not accounted for and evidence takes longer to collect. The most recent performance information available indicates that changes in circumstances are being processed in five days which will have an impacts on performance in the fourth quarter.

However, our current performance is still top quartile, in addition, is almost 2 days faster than the governments 'excellent' standard.

Please detail corrective action to be undertaken:

- Daily monitoring of processing times, a change of focus from processing new claims to changes of circumstances,
- More use of visiting staff to collect missing information,
- Earlier chasing of customers who do not provide information and
- Better use of customer services staff to remind customers of the need to provide evidence.

Action planned through financial year:

As above. In addition, a recent change in DWP guidance and an improvement in our processes for applying rent increases (counted as a 'Change of Circumstance') should mean that we will 'score' a count of 1 day for over 2000 rent increases when applied in late February (for April 2008 onwards). This will improve our overall average in Q4.

Please give an objective assessment as to whether the year end target will be met:

We will make strenuous efforts to hit the target and continue our very close monitoring. I do, however, believe that the target may not be achievable.

Action Plan Owner: Dave Price
Unit: Finance
Contact Number: 5426

RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

11. The major risk to performance and achievement of the Business Improvement Plan were the impact of the numerous restructurings to achieve the 2007/2008 efficiencies and the possible effect of Job Evaluation on morale. In addition there was a significant risk regarding the Liberata contract for Property Services as this would be the first year of operation. Therefore robust management processes would be required.
12. To date all the key risks are being managed effectively. All of the restructurings are complete and to date performance, as measured by BVPI's and expected outputs ie Statement of Accounts has been achieved and in many areas cases exceeded.
13. The Liberata contract commenced on the 1st July. The initial period of the contract up to the end of December 2007 has been spent bedding in the change of provider. The focus in the first 6 months has been on correcting a number of pieces of outstanding work in relation to health and safety, particularly around legionella and asbestos management. Under the terms of the contract Liberata are not required to produce performance information until the last quarter of this financial year. That said their performance to date has been satisfactory.

VALUE FOR MONEY AND EFFICIENCIES UPDATE

14. Set out in the table below is a summary of the progress against the expected efficiency gains for 2007/08.

	ESTIMATED VALUE OF GAIN £	VALUE OF GAIN ACHIEVED IN FIRST QUARTER £
Shared Services Contact Centre	43,000	43,000
Saving from better procurement negotiation	30,000	10,000
Invoice consolidation	3,000	3,000
Property Services Outsourcing	65,570	65,570
Directorate Restructuring	102,429	102,429
Total	243,819	213,819

15. The table shows that the Directorate is on track to make its efficiency savings included in the 2007/08 budget. Further work is required on corporate procurement savings, but these are expected to materialise later in the year as more procurement activity is undertaken and completed, for example the telephony contract.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY UPDATE

- 16. The aim for 2007/08 was to complete the actions included in the Council’s Equality and Diversity Policy. The key task being the completion of Equality Impact Assessments on all of the services in Finance. During the first three quarters good progress was made with impact assessments being produced for all the services. These have been quality assessed. Some actions have already been completed pending the completion of the assessment, mainly in the area of recording activity to monitor the usage of our services by the equality strands to gauge if we are reaching those groups, but we are now in a position to implement improvements and some of these are being undertaken in the last quarter of this financial year.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

- 17. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors’ comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	✓
Legal			

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND PERFORMANCE

- 18. The actions outlined above will support the delivery of the Council’s Equality Scheme approved by Cabinet in December 2006.

GARY HALL
 ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE
 (BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION)

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Gary Hall	5480	7 March 08	ACE(BT)/Reports/2008/Corporate & Customer/Business Improvement Monitoring Statement