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To: Environment, Highways & Waste Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee
14th September 2010

Subject: Core Monitoring Report

Classification: Unrestricted

SUMMARY: This report presents, for the first time, core monitoring information that identifies performance and trends in a number of key areas of the Directorate's activity.

1. Introduction

1.1. The Environment, Highways & Waste elements of the first Core Monitoring Report that was reported to Cabinet on 13th September 2010 is appended to this report. This report covered the period up to June 2010.

1.2. The Core Monitoring report includes a number of graphs and data on a range of measures and indicators that relate to some of the core services delivered by the Directorate. The Core Monitoring does not include, or comment on, every component of the performance management frameworks that are in place within the Directorate but picks out a number of key activity areas.

2. Core Monitoring

2.1. The indicators within the Core Monitoring report are presented with historic trends shown graphically, a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) rating, a Direction of Travel (DoT) rating and a brief comments section that provides some relevant background information. A summary of RAG ratings is provided in the initial pages of the Core Monitoring report, together with a section setting out how the Rag and DoT ratings are arrived at.

2.2. The RAG and DoT ratings are always based on quarterly data except where the indicator is one which uses only annually collected data. In the case of this Directorate the ratings all use quarterly comparisons. The most recent quarter's data is for the period April to June 2010 and in order to show how the position has changed compared to what the previous quarter's (March 2010) report would have shown both RAG and DoT ratings for that period, which compare January to March 2010 with October to December 2009, are included.

2.3. Where the data is available on a monthly basis it is presented in this form, but it is important to recognise that the RAG and DoT ratings are based on quarterly assessments. An example of this can be seen in the graph showing the *percentage of routine highway repairs completed within 28 days*. While the data is on a monthly basis

the RAG and DoT ratings are based on a comparison of the average for the months of January, February and March 2010 with the average for the months of April, May and June 2010.

2.4. In some cases a rolling 12 month analysis of the data is used in presentation in order to take account of external effects such as seasonality which would make quarterly comparisons inappropriate or misleading. An example of this can be seen in the graph showing *tonnage of municipal waste collected*, in which the figure shown for June 2010 is the total for the period July 2009 to June 2010, while the figure shown for March 2010 is the total for the period April 2009 to March 2010.

2.5. There are also areas where we recognise further refinement of the analysis would be beneficial in order to improve reporting. An example is *average AM peak travel time per mile in minutes - Maidstone* where whilst the RAG and DoT ratings currently use the quarterly approach there are other facts (in this case seasonality) that should be taken into account.

2.6. For most indicators the data presented in the Core Monitoring shows two graphs, these being:

2.6.1. performance trends on a quarterly basis, with up to three year's historic data being included

2.6.2. annual performance, with a comparison to national benchmarks and up to five year's historic data being shown.

3. Data Quality and Interpretation

3.1. The bulk of the data included in the Core Monitoring forms part of the management information that is used, in a variety of forms, by managers and leadership teams within the Directorate. While this information has been used within the Directorate previously this is the first time it has been presented in this format in the public domain.

3.2. In some cases the data used is provisional and it may be subject to revision at a future date. While the desire would always be to present information in which we have complete confidence in many cases this is not possible if there is also a need to use reasonable, up-to-date intelligence in managing services. The most recent data is therefore used which has sufficient quality, coverage and accuracy in order to give a reliable indication of the current level of, and trends in, performance.

3.3. Where annual data is shown alongside a benchmark, for example *percentage of household waste recycled*, the national level information is extracted from published information that is already in the public domain. Sources of this information include government departments, national indicators and the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

3.4. Information produced or assured by the ONS meet high professional standards as set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are subject to regular quality assurance and review in order to ensure that they meet customer needs and are not influenced by political considerations.

4. Future Reporting

4.1. It is intended that further Core Monitoring reports will be produced on a quarterly basis. The presentation of this information is part of our overall transparency agenda and it is important that it is clear and comprehensible. We would therefore welcome any suggestions that would make it more useful and informative.

4.2. In future reports it is our intention to develop more meaningful comparative information where appropriate, for example other SE counties. We will also include more of the base data from which the graphs are derived where this aids understanding and clarity without turning the report into a collection of extensive data tables.

4.3. The information set out in the Core Monitoring will change over time – for example the priorities that will flow from the ‘Bold Steps for Kent’ consultation which will commence later this month will need to be incorporated into future iterations of the report.

5. Recommendation

5.1. Members are asked to NOTE and DISCUSS the first Core Monitoring report for Environment, Highways & Waste and make any suggestions, amendments or recommendations they feel appropriate.

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