

BODY:	SCRUTINY
DATE:	8 SEPTEMBER 2003
SUBJECT:	BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
REPORT OF:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Wards:	All
Purpose:	To respond to questions raised by Members on the performance of the Council as measured by Best Value and Local Performance Indicators
Contact:	Nick Ritson Strategic Development Officer, Telephone 01323 415418 or internally on extension 5418. E-mail address: nick.ritson@eastbourne.gov.uk
Recommendations:	1. That members of the committee note and consider the responses to questions raised

1.0	<u>Introduction</u>
1.1	In accordance with the agreed procedures all members of the Council were sent details of the 1 st quarter's performance as measured by Best Value and Local Performance Indicators Any questions on recorded performance are answered in Scrutiny Committee.
1.2	For the 1 st quarter three questions were received. This report details the specific performance information, the questions raised and responses given.

2.0	Questions and Responses
2.1	BV 183a The average stay in Bed and Breakfast Accommodation of homeless, priority need households with dependant children or pregnant women
2.1.1	<u>Performance</u> 2001-2002 – 7.9 weeks 2002-2003 – 6 weeks 1 st Quarter 2003-2004 - 10.7 weeks Target for 2003-2004 – 5 weeks

2.1.2	<u>Question: Why are we not on target or improving?</u>
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2.1.3	<u>Response:</u> The number of household placements in B&B has increased in the last 2 quarters. Limited temporary and permanent vacancies has made it difficult to find alternative housing. There have been 5 longstanding placements rehoused in this quarter averaging over 20 weeks residence in B&B. This significantly increases the average time shown in this BVPI. Currently (8 Aug.) there are no longer-term residents in B&B (longest stay currently being 10 weeks), therefore; performance should improve in future. The main issue, however, is the limited suitable alternative temporary accommodation available for homeless families. Currently, there is a range of initiatives being progressed to address homeless prevention and access accommodation. A number of activities will directly contribute including – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 new temporary accommodation properties available in August in partnership with EHALC - a private sector leasing scheme has been launched - a private rented sector database will be completed in September, and - negotiations are ongoing with Registered Social Landlords to provide more temporary accommodation. For further information on the issues members are referred to the Homelessness Review considered by this Committee (9 June 2003) and the Homelessness Strategy (17 July 2003)
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2.2	<u>BV 79a – The % of benefit claims which were calculated correctly based on a sample</u>
2.2.1	<u>Performance</u> 2001-2002 –96.4% 2002-2003 – 99.4% 1 st Quarter 2003-2004 - 94% Target for 2003-2004 – 98%
2.2.2	<u>Question: Why are we not on target or improving?</u>
2.2.3	<u>Response</u> This percentage is calculated on the basis of a small sample of just 125 cases. In this quarter 6 of the 125 cases sampled had errors. Any issues highlighted by the accuracy checking have been used to provide feedback to staff in order to reduce the probability of such errors occurring again. Most were related to work undertaken by agency staff during a period of exceptionally heavy workloads. Following the restructure of the Community Finance Systems and Support team last year, an officer in a newly created post is undertaking this specific benefits performance and quality assurance work. Over the coming months the intention is to increase the accuracy checking of claims. This will help to ensure that any procedural errors are identified and related training needs followed up promptly. This is particularly important, as there are a number of new and trainee staff in the team. Additionally, the work will provide checks that benefit payments and overpayments are correctly classified in order to maximise benefit subsidy payments to the Council.
2.3.	Lifeline Local PI 2 – The % of calls to LifeLine answered within 30 seconds

2.3.1	<p><u>Performance</u></p> <p>2001-2002 - 93.7%</p> <p>2002-2003 – 93.3%</p> <p>1st Quarter 2003-2004 – 92.76%</p> <p>Target for 2003-2004 – 96%</p>
2.3.2	<p><u>Question: Why are we not on target or improving?</u></p>
2.3.3	<p><u>Response</u></p> <p>Performance had dipped slightly over this quarter but the level of performance remains high. The Association of Alarm Providers standards is 80% of calls answered within 30 seconds. Members will be aware that in the 1st quarter the numbers of customers increased. The number of calls answered within this quarter was approximately 45,000 ! New staff were recruited in this quarter and It is expected that when new staff are recruited and they are shadowing experienced staff the time taken to close calls - and correspondingly be available to answer calls - is extended._</p>
3.0	<p><u>Consultations</u></p>
3.1	<p>The responses to the questions have all been formulated with the relevant Head of Service. (Adrian Alderton - Head of Housing Needs and Strategy, Martin Chilvers – Head of Community Finance, Jan Canny – Head of Housing Management)</p>
4.0	<p><u>Resource Implications</u></p>
4.1	<p>None specific to this report.</p>
5.0	<p>Other Implications</p>

5.1	None specific to this report.
6.0	<u>Conclusion</u>
6.1	For the 1 st quarter members of the Council raised three questions on performance via the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee. The performance details, questions and responses are provided within this report for members consideration.
Nick Ritson Strategic Development Officer	
Background Papers: The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows: Report on the Best Value Performance Indicators 1 st quarter 2003-4 sent to all members of the Council 15 August 2003.	
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