

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ECONOMY 4 MARCH 2004

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATOR RESULTS 2002-2003 HOW EXETER'S RESULTS COMPARE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 A full analysis of Exeter's performance indicator results for 2002-03 has been sent to Members under a separate cover. This report provides an overview of the performance of those services covered by this committee. The other two Scrutiny Committees will get a similar report covering services within their remit.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Exeter's performance indicator results for 2002-03 were published in the Best Value Performance Plan. Comparative data were subsequently published by the Audit Commission / ODPM in January 2004.
- 2.2 The graphs contained within the detailed analysis compare Exeter's results against authorities in the Council's benchmarking group and therefore provide a comparison against other broadly similar councils.
- 2.3 The graphs have been arranged so that councils with comparatively good performance are shown on the left side of each graph. Those councils with comparatively poor performance are on the right side of each graph.
- 2.3 The Audit Commission uses national upper and lower quartile figures (also referred to as 75th and 25th percentiles) as benchmarks against which to judge service performance. The detailed analysis shows quartile figures for all English district councils against each graph. Services should generally be aiming to be in the upper quartile (i.e. the best performing 25% of councils in the country). The star rating shows at a glance how well the service is performing against the quartiles for each indicator. Five stars show that Exeter meets or exceeds the upper top quartile and one star that it is at or below the lower quartile. The star ratings used are as follows:

* * * * *	Top quartile performance (Excellent)
* * * *	Above average performance
* * *	Average performance
* *	Below average performance
*	Bottom quartile performance (Poor)

3 RESULTS OVERVIEW COUNCIL WIDE

- 3.1 Exeter is in the top quartile for 17 indicators out of a total of 54 where comparisons are possible. However, it is in the bottom quartile for 16 indicators.
- 3.2 Looking at trends, 2001-02 to 2002-03 is restricted somewhat by the fact that a large number of indicators are either new or substantially amended. However, where indicators have remained essentially unchanged some trend analysis is possible. This year has seen improvement in 19 indicators with five of these achieving a higher star rating than last year. However, 11 indicators show a lower performance than last year and three had lower star ratings.

Planning

- 3.3 As in previous years a number of the indicators for planning place Exeter amongst the best performing councils in the country. This has been confirmed by the recent CPA inspection which recognised the positive contribution that planning has made to the development of the city. Some of the strengths highlighted in the CPA report include:
- Development of affordable housing
 - Planning powers used to deliver local priorities
 - Secured high quality local environment
 - High proportion of new development on previously used brownfield sites
- 3.4 The cost of the planning service has increased slightly since the previous year from £11.01 to £11.69 per head of population but it is still less than the national average of £12.65.
- 3.5 The percentage of new homes built on brown field sites continued to be at a high level and was in the top quartile nationally.
- 3.6 The indicators relating to the processing of planning applications have been changed and three indicators are now measured. The proportion of minor and other planning applications processed in eight weeks were the second highest in the benchmarking group. This places the Council well above the upper quartile nationally. However, the proportion of major planning applications processed in 13 weeks was below average. A significantly increased workload over recent years has affected performance on the determination of major applications. Performance during 2003/04 has improved significantly.
- 3.7 Another new indicator introduced is the proportion of planning decisions delegated to officers. In Exeter this was 82% in 2002-03, which is slightly below the national average. A number of other authorities in our benchmarking group had higher levels of delegation. As Members are aware, however, the delegation scheme was amended last autumn, which will increase the level of delegation.

Land Charges

- 3.8 Due to staff sickness in one quarter, which was not covered, the performance on standard land searches carried out in 10 working days reduced from 100% in 2001-02

to 85% in 2002-03. This was below the national average. This issue has now been resolved by ensuring that cover is provided when staff sickness occurs in Planning.

4 RECOMMENDED

(1) That Members consider the report and indicate whether they wish to receive any further information on any particular issue(s).

**JOHN RIGBY
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ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling the report:

National Performance Indicator Results - January 2004