

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ECONOMY

1 MARCH 2007

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATOR RESULTS 2005/2006 HOW EXETER'S RESULTS COMPARE

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 A full analysis of Exeter's performance indicator results for 2005/06 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 2005/06 were published in the Best Value Performance Plan. The Audit Commission subsequently published comparative data in January 2007.
- 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. Exeter's results are highlighted on each.
- 2.4 The Audit Commission uses national upper and lower quartile figures 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 top 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. Four stars show that Exeter meets or exceeds the top quartile and one star that it is at or below the lower quartile.

3 RESULTS OVERVIEW

- 3.1 Exeter is in the top quartile for 25 indicators out of a total of 67 where comparisons are possible (37%), compared to 20 out of 51 (39%) last year. It is in the bottom quartile for 11 indicators, compared with 11 last year.
- 3.2 This year has seen improvement in 24 indicators with 5 of these achieving a higher star rating than last year. However, 16 indicators show a lower performance than last

year, with 8 achieving a lower star rating. It is important to note that many indicators have been introduced or have had their definitions change from 2004/05. There is no comparative historical data for these indicators. Out of the 10 indicators that fall within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee, only 1 has poorer performance than last year and this is BVPI 109c (See below).

Planning

- 3.3 The percentage of new homes built on brown field sites (BVPI 106) increased significantly in 2005/06 to 87.5% compared with 55.4% in 2004/05. This resulted in the Council moving up into the second national quartile. This indicator will inevitably fluctuate dependent on the mix of developments in the pipeline in any particular year. Some authorities are achieving 100% on this PI, including Eastbourne, Oxford, Worcester and Worthing within our benchmarking group. Bedford is the lowest at 45%.
- 3.4 The percentage of major applications processed in 13 weeks (BVPI 109a) increased from 68% to 72.41%. Exeter is in the second national quartile for this indicator and is ninth in the benchmarking group. Worcester is at the top with 90% and Lancaster at the bottom with 49%.
- 3.5 The Council continues to perform well on minor applications processed in 8 weeks (BVPI 109b), achieving 80.46% compared with 76% in 2004/05. Exeter remains in the top national quartile. Of other applications, 83.19% are processed in 8 weeks (BVPI 109c), compared with 86% in 2004/05. Exeter falls from the second to the bottom national quartile. Exeter is 13th in the benchmarking group for this indicator.

Land Charges

- 3.6 The performance on standard land searches carried out in 10 working days (BVPI 179) remained at 100%, maintaining Exeter's position in the top national quartile and top of the benchmarking group. The worst performer was Canterbury with 8.10%

Appeals

- 3.7 A new indicator was introduced for the percentage of appeals allowed against the authority's decision to refuse planning applications (BVPI 204). Exeter had 27.9% of appeals allowed, compared with a range from 17-50% in the benchmarking group. It would be misleading to define 'top' and 'bottom' performance – a certain level of 'lost' appeals is appropriate showing that decisions to refuse are balanced between the two ends of the spectrum.

Conservation

- 3.8 The percentage of conservation areas in Exeter with an up to date character appraisal (BVPI 219b) is 52.94%. 41.18% have published management proposals (219c). Both these indicators place Exeter in the top national quartile.

Quality of Service

3.9 Exeter scored 94.4 on a quality of service checklist and is in the top national quartile. Six councils within the benchmarking group scored 100.

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 2007