

**EXETER CITY COUNCIL**  
**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - RESOURCES**  
**25 MARCH 2009**

**NATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATOR RESULTS 2007/2008**  
**HOW EXETER'S RESULTS COMPARE**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 A full analysis of Exeter's performance indicator results for 2007/08 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 receive a similar report covering services within their remit.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Exeter's performance indicator results for 2007/08 were published in the Corporate Plan. The Audit Commission subsequently published audited comparative data in December 2008.
- 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. (Audit Commission family grouping)
- 2.3 The graphs have been arranged in ascending order. Exeter's results are highlighted on each.
- 2.4 For all local authorities, results for BVPI 78a (Average time to process new benefit claims) and BVPI 78b (Average time taken to process change in circumstances) are still being verified by the Audit Commission and as a result, have not yet been published.
- 2.5 The Audit Commission uses national upper and lower quartile figures as benchmarks against which to judge service performance. The detailed analysis also 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).

**3. RESULTS OVERVIEW**

- 3.1 Exeter is in the top quartile for 19 indicators out of a total of 59 where comparisons are possible (32%), compared to 20 out of 65 (30%) last year. It is in the bottom quartile for 10 indicators, compared with 9 last year.
- 3.2 This year has seen improvement in 25 indicators with 6 of these achieving a higher quartile rating than last year. The 6 indicators which have achieved a higher quartile rating are within the Community and Environment Directorate. However, 25 indicators show a lower performance than last year, with 12 achieving a lower quartile rating than last year.

- 3.3 Out of the 18 comparable indicators that fall within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee, 2 have yet to be reported (as explained above), 1 has improved since last year, 4 have stayed the same and 11 have poorer performance. These are BVPIs 8, 10, 11a, 12, 14, 15, 16a, 17a, 79a, 79b(i) and 79b(ii).

### **Council Tax and NNDR**

- 3.1 The percentage of Non Domestic Rates collected (BVPI 10) dropped slightly from 99% in 2006/07 to 98.75% in 2007/08, maintaining Exeter's position in the third quartile and placing Exeter second from bottom in its benchmarking group. However, there is less than 1% separating the upper and lower quartiles. This slight decrease in performance is due to the late notification from the Valuation Office in respect of the Princesshay redevelopment. This meant that some bills could not be sent until towards the end of the financial year, resulting in a delay in payment from some businesses.

### **Staffing**

- 3.2 The percentage of top 5% earners that are women (BVPI 11a) has dropped from 21.57% in 2006/07 to 18.00% in 2007/08 causing Exeter to drop from the third to the bottom quartile. This reduction equates to one senior female employee leaving and being replaced by a male applicant. The national top quartile figure is 35.3%.
- 3.3 The percentage of employees retiring early, excluding ill-health retirements (BVPI 14) has risen from 0% in 2006/07 to 0.96% in 2007/08. This has resulted in Exeter dropping from the top to the bottom quartile. The percentage of employees retiring on the grounds of ill health (BVPI 15) has also risen from 0% in 2005/06 to 0.12% in 2006/07. These rises can be attributed to a number of efficiency and early retirements that were agreed through the management of change and reorganisation.
- 3.4 The percentage of local authority employees with a disability (BVPI 16a) dropped slightly from 3.73% to 3.34%. Worcester is the best performing authority in the benchmarking group reporting a figure of 8.8%. The percentage of local authority employees from minority ethnic communities (BVPI 17a) also dropped slightly from 1.1% in 2006/07 to 1.0% in 2007/08.
- 3.5 It should be noted that these BVPIs have been deleted by the Government because they no longer provide useful information but they will be retained by the Council as contextual information.

### **Sickness**

- 3.6 The number of days lost due to sickness absence (BVPI 12) rose very slightly from 9.15 days in 2006/07 to 9.16 days in 2007/08. However, Exeter remains in the second quartile and is fifth from top in its benchmarking group. Shrewsbury and Atcham report the best performance with only 5.6 days being lost.

### **Invoices**

- 3.7 The percentage of undisputed invoices paid on time (BVPI 8) has dropped very slightly from 95.73% in 2006/07 to 95.58% in 2007/08.

## **Benefits**

- 3.8 The proportion of benefit claims processed correctly (BVPI 79a) dropped from 97.6% in 2006/07 to 97.0% in 2007/08 causing Exeter to fall from the third to the fourth quartile. The Benefits section underwent significant changes in 2007/08 such as the introduction of homeworking and the move into the Customer Service Centre. This is likely to have had an impact on performance. This indicator will no longer be collected after 2007/08
- 3.9 The amount of Housing Benefit overpayments recovered as a percentage of all Housing Benefit overpayments (BVPI 79bi) has fallen from 76.64% in 2006/07 to 75.72% in 2007/08. Shrewsbury and Atcham report the highest recovery rate with 97.94%. The Council's overpayment recovery process has been reviewed and improvements have been introduced. This is reflected in the figures to date for this current financial year.
- 3.10 The Housing Benefit overpayments recovered as a percentage of the total amount of overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the year, plus the amount of overpayments identified during the year (BVPI 79b (ii)) fell from 36.31% to 35.95% in 2007/08 but Exeter remains in the second national quartile.

## **4. RECOMMENDATION**

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

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CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE

## **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) Background papers used in compiling the report:**

1. National Performance Indicator Results - December 2008