

Update on Stirling Stat Hot Spots

Introduction

As requested by the Service Delivery and Performance Committee on 23rd February 2010 this paper provides an update on those performance indicators that were reported as hot spots during the 2008/09 Stirling Stat reporting cycle.

A hot spot is an indicator where performance has shown deterioration and is reported as below target and outwith tolerance¹. At the end of 2008/09 there were twelve indicators that met this criteria:

- a) Talkback Stage 2 & 3 Responses
- b) Attendance Management
- c) Child Protection
- d) Paid School Meals
- e) Delayed Discharges
- f) Community Care Assessments
- g) Assessments Pending Allocation
- h) Time to House Homeless Applicants
- i) Waste Collection
- j) Planning Applications
- k) Building Warrants
- l) Unemployment, UK Inflation and Housing Completions

An update for each of these indicators is provided below, along with reference to where these areas are reported in the new Stirling Performs framework. Recent Stirling Performs reports can be accessed on the performance pages of the Council website: <http://www.stirling.gov.uk/index/council/stirlingperforms.htm>

Updates

a) Talkback Stage 2 & 3 Responses

The percentage of Talkback Stage 2 and 3 responses made within the target of 15 working days was reported at 63% in March 2009. This was below the target of 75%.

This continues to be reported as part of the new Stirling Performs framework (indicator 3) but has shown improvement since last year and was green in December 2009 at 100%, slipping only slightly to amber in January 2010.

¹ An indicator's target is the level of performance that the service aims to achieve. Its tolerance is an agreed margin that performance is permitted to drop below that target. Performance is reported as amber when it is within this margin. This provides a warning that intervention may be necessary to prevent the indicator becoming a hot spot.

b) Attendance Management

The level of absence across the whole of the Council was reported as red throughout the 2008/09 financial year. The annual percentage of working days lost due to sickness absence was reported as 4.9% compared to a locally set target of 4%. However in some service areas the level of absence was as high as 6.7%.

Absence continues to be reported in Stirling Performs (indicator 5) but the method of reporting has been amended. This is in order to adhere to revised instructions issued by the Accounts Commission in 2008, which have been implemented by Stirling Council during the course of 2009.

Instead of reporting absence as a percentage of the working days available, it is now reported as the number of days lost *per full time equivalent* (FTE) per month. This is a national development that is now being used by all local authorities in Scotland and is part of the Accounts Commission annual statutory reporting framework.

This change in the reporting method means that absence can now be pro rated for part-time employees. Previously a day's absence was treated as a full day irrespective of the number of hours worked by the employee. It is now calculated in terms of the number of hours that employee is contracted to work that day.

The impact of this change is that Stirling's absence statistics have seen an improvement. Between October and December 2009 an average of 0.72 days were lost due to sickness absence per FTE employee per month. This is against an updated target of 0.74. This indicator is therefore currently no longer a hot spot, though this will continue to be an area of focus while the new reporting arrangements are fully imbedded.

c) Child Protection

This indicator looks at various activities carried out in relation to Child Protection: investigations; additions to the Child Protection Registry; removals from the Child Protection Registry; case conferences.

While this is still being monitored as part of Stirling Performs (indicator 9) it is recognised that this is essentially looking at levels of demand rather than performance and that a target should not be assigned to, for example, the number of investigations carried out, because this will rely on the number of referrals received and the context of each case.

d) Paid School Meals

In March 2009 it was recommended that this indicator should be removed as a hot spot as there had been steady improvement between August and March in the uptake of paid school meals from 23% to 31%. This indicator continues to be reported on a monthly basis as part of Stirling Performs (indicator number 6) and is currently below target but within tolerance and has shown recent improvement to 31%.

e) Delayed Discharges

In March 2009 it was recommended that this indicator should be removed as a hot spot as performance had recovered and the number of hospital patient discharges delayed for over six weeks had been zero for the previous three months, which is in line with the national target.

This indicator continues to be reported as part of the new Stirling Performs framework (indicator number 14). Its status in January 2010 was amber but stable at 3 discharges delayed over six weeks.

f) Community Care Assessments

This indicator reported the number of community care assessments that were allocated by the Care Management Team each month. It was reported as outwith target for the majority of 2008/09, though this was for standard assessments specifically as 52 assessments were allocated compared to a target of 85. The number of complex assessments allocated was actually above the target of 137 at 184.

As this was a demand indicator it has been replaced and is no longer reported as part of Stirling Performs. Instead the new reporting framework focuses on the number of community care assessments that are still pending allocation at the end of the month (indicator 15) and the length of time each one has been waiting (16 – see g) below). This is a measure of the team's performance rather than demand and is closely linked to issues reported to the Executive Committee via Social Care's Key Pressures reports.

g) Assessments Pending Allocation

This indicator was reported as red and deteriorating in 2008/09 with an average of 245 assessments pending per month. It continues to be reported in the new Stirling Performs framework (indicator 15) and has shown recent improvement to 185. A second indicator has also been newly introduced to look at the waiting time for those assessments pending allocation (indicator 16). This was noted as amber and deteriorating in the January 2010 report with over 40% of pending assessments having waited for over 12 weeks.

h) Time to House Homeless Applicants

It was recommended that this indicator should be removed as a hot spot in March 2009 as the performance for 2008/09 was within the agreed tolerance and had shown an improving trend over the second half of the year, from 329 days in September to 231 in March. It continues to be reported via Stirling Performs on a monthly basis (indicator number 36). Recent performance has been better than the target level 242 at 232 days.

i) Waste Collection

The percentage of waste collection routes completed on the correct day was reported as 96% for 2008/09, which was below the target of 98%. This continues to be monitored in Stirling Performs (indicator 43) and is still a hot spot as at January 2010, when 89% of routes were completed on the correct day. Full details have been provided in the January Hot Spot Report.

j) Planning Applications

The percentage of planning applications dealt with within the target timescale was reported as 67%, amber and improving, in March 2009. However this had previously been shown as red and was therefore retained as a hot spot.

In recent Stirling Performs reports (indicator 39) this area has again been noted as below target, again at 67% compared to a target of 80%. A full Hot Spot Report has been provided for both December 2009 and January 2010.

k) Building Warrants

It was recommended in March 2009 that this indicator, which measures the percentage of building warrants dealt with within the target timescale, should be removed as a hot spot as performance had shown significant improvement and had recovered to a level that was within target at 80%.

This indicator continues to be reported on a monthly basis in Stirling Performs (indicator 40). The second part of the indicator – the number of building warrant determinations made within 6 working days – has returned as a hot spot in January 2010 with only 69% of determinations made on time.

l) Unemployment, UK Inflation and Housing Completions

Unemployment

The percentage of Stirling's working age population claiming Job Seeker's Allowance was 3.4% in March 2009, having more than doubled from 1.6% in April 2008. This illustrated the effects of the wider economic downturn on Stirling's economy. This indicator is no longer reported as part of Stirling Performs as it is a high-level outcome indicator rather than one measuring monthly service outputs and performance. It will continue to be reported annually as part of the Single Outcome Agreement Progress Report and more regular updates are available from the Performance and Research Team (research@stirling.gov.uk) on request.

UK Inflation

The national level of inflation was reported as red at the end of 2008/09, at 2.9% compared to the Government's target of 2%, reflecting the worldwide economic downturn. As this is a national context indicator it was decided that it would no longer be included in the new Stirling Performs framework. However, inflation statistics are available from the Performance and Research Team (research@stirling.gov.uk) on request.

Housing Completions

For housing completions the levels reported in during 2008/09 had also dropped, again due to the economic situation, with 344 new homes during the financial year against a target of 464. This information continues to be reported in Stirling Performs (indicator 48) but the target has been amended to reflect the 2009 Housing Land Audit and the impact of the economic climate. The new target is 304 new homes for the whole year. During the quarter from October to December there were 100 housing completions, an improvement from 50 the quarter before. The current status of this indicator is on target against the lower revised target.

Further Information

Performance information is reported on a monthly basis in the performance section of the Council's website: <http://www.stirling.gov.uk/index/council/stirlingperforms.htm>. It is considered in each cycle by the Service Delivery and Performance Committee.

A compendium of background information for each of the 50 indicators reported through the Stirling Performs monthly reports is also available on the Council website. This includes details such as where the data comes from, what it measures, and how and when the targets were established.

The Performance and Research Team can provide information on all aspects of Council performance. Please contact: stirlingperforms@stirling.gov.uk