

Cabinet – 17 September 2008

Beacon Index Quarter 1 2008/09

Portfolio:	Councillor Arif, Procurement, transformation and performance mangement
Service:	Corporate Performance Management
Wards:	All
Key decision:	No
Forward plan:	No

1. Summary of report

This report sets out the quarter one position as at 30 June 2008 and identifies all measures that require action to ensure targets are fully delivered. These measures, their first quarter performance and annual targets are shown in **Appendix 1**.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet note the quarter one position of the Beacon Index as detailed in **Appendix 1**.

3. Background information

- 3.1 The Beacon Index was revised to incorporate the new service pledges for 2008/09 and was approved by cabinet on 16 April 2008. The Index closely monitors the council's delivery of its vision (level 1), pledges (level 2) and corporate health indicators (level 3).
- 3.2 This report sets out actual performance on all Beacon Index measures as at the quarter ending 30 June 2008. These measures, their first quarter performance and annual targets are shown in **Appendix 1**. Measures, which can only be reported annually, have been excluded from the analysis shown below. 59% of performance indicators (PIs) are on track (green), 31% need close monitoring to ensure performance remains on track (amber), and 10% require corrective action. This is summarised in table 1 below

Table 1 – Q1 2008/09 Performance Summary

	Red		Amber		Green		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Level 1	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Level 2	1	5%	6	32%	12	63%	19	100%
Level 3	2	20%	3	30%	5	50%	10	100%
Total	3	10%	9	31%	17	59%	29	100%

- 3.3 The level 1 measures are reported annually and will be included in future reports as they become available.
- 3.4 At level 2 performance is on track for most measures to meet their targets (63% green). However, there is one red measure (5%) at quarter 1, this being 2.2.1 (reduce the number of looked after children to the median or similar councils) Performance Action Plan (PAP) for this measure is attached at **Appendix 2**.
- 3.5 At level 3, 50% of PIs are on track with two measures being red, these being:
- 3.1.4 Number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence per FTE
 - 3.2.2(a) Payment of creditor invoices within 30 days of receipt to the authority.

The PAPs for measures 3.2.2(a) and 3.1.4 are attached at **Appendix 2**.

- 3.6 Table 2 shows all amber and red measures at Quarter 1. These must be monitored closely by the relevant performance boards alongside proactive corrective action to recover the position.

Table 2 – Quarter 1 2008/09 Red and Amber Beacon Index Measures

No.	Vision Priority	Measure Description	Lead Officer	Status
2.1.1	Citizens are healthy	We will adapt the homes of 200 people with a disability so they can live independently	Mark Wade	A
2.2.1	Citizens are safe and secure	We will improve support to families so that the number of looked after children is reduced to the median of similar councils	Pauline Pilkington	R
2.2.2	Citizens are safe and secure	We will take firm action against nuisance drinking in public places	Nozmul Hussain	A
2.4.2	Citizens are enjoying a high quality of life – clean, green and mobile	We will spend £2.5 million on regeneration and improving projects focusing on Walsall town centre, district and neighbourhood centres and strategic corridors	Paul Nicholson	A
2.6.2	Citizens are financially & materially secure – achieving economic well-being	We will implement 'Think Walsall' by December 2008 to generate more training and employment opportunities for Walsall people	Mark Lavender	A

2.9.2	Delivering quality services and meeting customer expectations	We will extend the range of services available through our contact centre PI - Delivery of Corporate Contact Centre Project (ref: C-TRAN-06-0002)	Jez Holding	A
2.10.2	Taking forward the transformation agenda	We will deliver £2m savings through a sharpened approach to procurement	Lawrence Brazier	A
3.1.2	People	% of top 5% of earners that are women	Paul Smith	A
3.1.3	People	% of top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities	Paul Smith	A
3.1.4	People	Number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence per FTE	Paul Smith	R
3.2.2 (a)	Money	Payment of creditor invoices within 30 days of receipt to the authority	Steve Phipps	R
3.2.3 (b)	Money	% of sundry debt collected relating to sundry debt over one month old	Steve Phipps	A

4. Resource considerations

The Beacon Index provides a focussed overview of the council's performance to enable continuous improvement and good service provision. It examines performance at three levels; level 1 – vision delivery; level 2 – pledge delivery and level 3 – corporate health. The information produced will assist in the council's budget process.

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5. Citizen impact

The Beacon Index, which is reported quarterly to cabinet and the Corporate Management Team (CMT), contains some of the most important performance indicators in terms of improving services to citizens. These reports are a public demonstration of how the council seeks to ensure continuous service improvement, in particular through the monitoring of progress towards the Council's "Pledges" for citizens of the borough, which are made at the start of each reporting year.

6. Community safety

Three measures relate to community safety issues and are reported under the 'Citizens are safe and secure' outcome. These are:

- 1.2.1 a) % of residents who feel fairly or very safe after dark
- 1.2.1 b) % of residents who feel fairly or very safe during daytime
- 2.2.2 Implementation of a borough wide Designated Public Place Order (DPPO)

7. Environmental impact

Several measures relate to key environmental issues affecting the community and council and are reported under the outcome 'Citizens are enjoying a high quality of life – clean, green, and mobile'. These are:

- 1.4.1 Overall/general satisfaction with the area (NI5)
- 2.4.2 Spend £2.5 million on regeneration and improvement projects focussed on Walsall town centre, district and neighbourhood centres and strategic corridors
- 2.4.3 Implementation of new recycling scheme
- 2.4.4 Complete the town centre transport package
- 2.8.2 Invest £0.5m capital budget in energy management

8. Performance and risk management issues

8.1 Risk:

Regular performance monitoring and reporting is used to proactively measure progress towards achieving targets throughout the year. The Beacon Index is monitored via the service plan review process, the corporate management team (CMT) and directorate performance boards. All appropriate action is taken to minimise the risk of services not achieving their targets or meeting Government performance standards within specified timeframes.

The implications of the above could have an onerous and far reaching effect on the council's ability to maintain its hard earned status of a 3★ organisation if the risks are not thoroughly managed. A majority of these issues are picked up in a number of risks adopted throughout the Strategic Risk Register (SRR) which are monitored via CMT and Directorate Performance Boards and performance action plans are developed for any targets that have a red (RAG) status.

8.2 Performance management:

The Index is reported quarterly to cabinet and CMT. This is the sixth year in which key indicators have been reported to provide a corporate overview of performance. For optimum success the focus must be on action not monitoring.

Regular performance monitoring is a key part of the CIPPF. This Index includes PIs counted for CAA purposes and improvement in these PIs contributes to positive evidence for inclusion in our CAA assessment which is scheduled to take place in 2009 and in the delivery of the wider excellence agenda.

All appropriate action must be taken to minimise the risk of services not achieving their annual service targets or meeting Government performance standards within specified timeframes. Regular performance monitoring and reporting minimises this risk and allows services to take corrective action where necessary.

9. Equality implications

Several measures monitor equality issues and are reported under the outcome 'Citizens are free from discrimination and harassment'. These are:

- 1.7.1 a) % of local people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area (NI001)
- 1.7.1 b) Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and consideration (NI023)
- 2.7.1 Hold community event in each Local Neighbourhood Partnership area to celebrate their cultural diversity
- 3.1.2 % of top 5% of earners that are women
- 3.1.1 % of top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities
- 3.1.5 % of council employees who are disabled
- 3.1.6 % of council employees from minority ethnic communities

10. Consultation

All directorates have been involved with agreeing the changes to the Beacon Index. Accountable officers have provided the data for targets detailed within the appendix to this report

Background papers

Walsall Council Corporate Plan 2008/09 – reported to Cabinet on 6 February 2008
<http://www2.walsall.gov.uk/CMISWebPublic/Binary.ashx?Document=5307>

Author

Katherine Morris
Performance & Information Assistant
☎ (01922) 652031
✉ morriskath@walsall.gov.uk



Tim Johnson
Executive Director

28 August 2008



Councillor Mohammed Arif
Portfolio holder

8 September 2008

Beacon Index Ref.	Description	Accountable Officer	Q1 2008-09 Update	1st Quarter 2008/09 performance compared to		RAG	2008-09 Target
				1st Qtr 2007/08	4th Qtr 2007/08		
2.1 - Citizens are healthy		Mark Wade	34	n/a	n/a	A	200
2.1.1	We will adapt the homes of 200 people with a disability so they can live independently						
The service target for this measure has increased to 250 homes due to an increase in budget available for DFG.							
2.1.2	We will increase the number of people carrying out regular physical activity	Peter Jeffrey/ Ben Percival	26544	n/a	n/a	G	100,349
2.2 - Citizens are safe and secure		Pauline Pilkington	453	n/a	n/a	R	443
2.2.1	We will improve support to families so that the number of looked after children is reduced to the median of similar councils						
2.2.2	We will take firm action against nuisance drinking in public places						
	The proposed DPPO is currently at consultation stage. We are working with licensing in identifying premises as outlined in paragraph 23 of the Home Office Regs which states 'the local authority must identify each premise in the area for which there is in force at premises licence authorising the sale or supply of alcohol where either (i) the premises licence is held by the LA or (ii) the premises licence is held by another person but the premises are occupied by a LA or managed on behalf of a LA.						
2.2.3	We will ensure more parks staff are present and visible in public places	Graham Hood	see comment	n/a	n/a	G	31.03.09
	Informal meetings have been held with parks staff to seek views, suggestions and issues on restructure and change in roles. Verbal report presented to JNCC in June and draft JDs are presently be evaluated. Plan to take restructure report to JNCC in September.						
2.2.4	We will increase our action to tackle graffiti, anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping (PI - Undertake a pilot project to achieve a step change in one area of the borough)	Judith Sunley	Annual Measure				31.03.2009
2.3 - Citizens are aspiring and achieving		David Brown	Annual Measure				less than 5% gap
2.3.1	We will reduce the gap between Walsall and other similar councils to less than five percentage points for pupils achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (including English & Maths)						
2.3.2	We will increase the attainment of Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils at key stage 4: an increase of 12% for 5 GCSEs A*-C forPakistani pupils rising to 35%	David Brown	Annual Measure				12%

Beacon Index Ref.	Description	Accountable Officer	Q1 2008-09 Update	1st Quarter 2008/09 performance compared to		RAG	2008-09 Target
				1st Qtr 2007/08	4th Qtr 2007/08		
2.3.2	We will increase the attainment of Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils at key stage 4: an increase of 10% for 5 A*-C for Bangladeshi pupils rising to 38%	David Brown	Annual Measure				10%
2.4 - Citizens are enjoying a high quality of life - clean, green and mobile		Pauline Pilkington	236	n/a	n/a	G	339
2.4.1	We will improve services to children with a disability by increasing the number of respite fostercare breaks by 10%						
2.4.2	We will spend £2.5 million on regeneration and improving projects focusing on Walsall town centre, district and neighbourhood centres and strategic corridors	Paul Nicholson	£172,822.48	n/a	n/a	A	£2.5m
2.4.3	We will maintain weekly waste collections for all households and begin kerbside collection of plastic and cardboard - implementation of new recycling scheme	Mark Holden	see comment	n/a	n/a	G	31.03.09
	On schedule for implementation during quarter 4						
2.4.4	We will complete the town centre transport package to ease congestion and improve the environment in Walsall town centre	Steve Pretty	see comment	n/a	n/a	G	31.03.09
	On programme to complete by Christmas 2008						
2.5 - Citizens are active - contributing to their communities		Julie Ball	Annual Measure				31.03.08
2.5.1	We will actively promote opportunities for volunteering in Walsall, including opportunities within the council - Produce and publish a list of volunteering opportunities in the community and within the council via Walsall Pride						
2.5.2	We will support at least 60 community and voluntary groups through our community cash scheme	Carol Mason	Annual Measure				60
	The process for funding commences in September 2008 with a deadline for applications being 03/10/08.						
2.6 - Citizens are financially & materially secure - achieving economic well-being							

Level 2 - Pledge Delivery

Appendix 1

Beacon Index Ref.	Description	Accountable Officer	Q1 2008-09 Update	1st Quarter 2008/09 performance compared to		RAG	2008-09 Target
				1st Qtr 2007/08	4th Qtr 2007/08		
2.6.1	We will reduce the impact of child poverty by increasing the take-up of free school meals - Increase overall takeup of free school meals by eligible pupils (in schools with a catering contract 2% (Baseline 79.4%))	Kathryn Waite	Annual Measure				81.4%
2.6.2	We will implement 'Think Walsall' by December 2008 to generate more training and employment opportunities for Walsall people	Mark Lavender	see comment	n/a	n/a	A	31.12.2008
	Tracked via Project No. R-ECON-06-0002 - Rag'd as amber as project has been halted whilst waiting for legal input and due to difficulties in rolling the programme out.						
2.6.3	We will reduce the average time it takes to process benefit claims to 28 days	Lynn Hall	28.35	↓	↓	G	28 days
2.7 - Citizens are free from discrimination or harassment		Julie Ball	3	n/a	n/a	G	9 (1 in each LNP)
2.7.1	We will hold a community event in each Local Neighbourhood Partnership area to celebrate the cultural diversity						
	Events have already taken place in Brownhills Canal Festival, Celebrate Willenhall event, Be safe, Play safe event in Pelsall and Rushall LNP and with events currently planned for August in Pheasey and Paddock, Blakenall and Bloxwich and Darlaston						
2.8 - Effective use of resources		Sharon Tait	28.37%	↑	↑	G	97.3%
2.8.1	We will increase the in year collection of Council tax to 97.3%						
2.8.2	We will promote reduction of energy consumption across the borough and reduce energy use in council buildings through investment in improved energy management and better housekeeping - Invest £0.5m capital budget in energy management PI - 2.5% reduction in energy consumption	Kevin Kendall	Annual Measure				2.5% reduction
2.9 - Delivering quality services and meeting customer expectations		David Elsworth	25%	n/a	n/a	G	25% above baseline
	a) We will increase by 25% the number of letters sent out to citizens informing them of planning applications for neighbouring properties						

Level 2 - Pledge Delivery

Appendix 1

Beacon Index Ref.	Description	Accountable Officer	Q1 2008-09 Update	1st Quarter 2008/09 performance compared to		RAG	2008-09 Target
				1st Qtr 2007/08	4th Qtr 2007/08		
2.9.1	b) Introduce a new tailored service of building inspections for domestic extensions	Mark Skidmore	Annual Measure				30.09.08
	Assessment forms have been finalised and are currently being piloted. New tailored service is on schedule to be rolled out in September.						
2.9.2	We will extend the range of services available through our contact centre PI - Delivery of Corporate Contact Centre Project (ref: C-TRAN-06-0002)	Jez Holding	see comment	n/a	n/a	A	31.03.08
	Tracked via Project No. C-TRAN-06-0002 on project register						
2.9.3	We will increase the number of places in Walsall where civil ceremonies take place - Number of packs issued to promote additional premises for civil ceremonies	Steve Billings	2	n/a	n/a	G	8
2.10 - Taking forward the transformation agenda		Sue Grainger	see comment	n/a	n/a	G	31.12.2008
2.10.1	a) Commence refurbishment of Bloxwich Library						
	Notification has now been received from the Big Lottery that they have accepted the three required plans and are now prepared to release the grant of £1.2m. The interior of the building is being designed and local communities will be consulted. Building work will be in November/December						
	b) Complete refurbishment of Pleck, Streetly, South Walsall, Pheasey, Beechdale and Darlaston Libraries	Sue Grainger	see comment	n/a	n/a	G	31.03.2008
	Planning approval has been given for Pleck, Streetly and South Walsall and an invitation to tender has been issued for the building work. This is due to start in September. The extent of decoration to Pheasey, Beechdale and Darlaston will depend on the cost of this package.						
2.10.2	We will deliver £2m savings through a sharpened approach to procurement	Lawrence Brazier	£1,323,595	n/a	n/a	A	£2.6 million
	Savings to be achieved target increased to £2,666,000						

Beacon Index Ref.	Description	Accountable Officer	Q1 2008-09 Update	1st Quarter 2008/09 performance compared to		RAG	2008-09 annual Target
				1st Qtr 2007/08	4th Qtr 2007/08		
3.1 - People		Paul Smith	Annual Measure				Level 3
3.1.1	Equality Standard overall level achieved						
3.1.2	% of top 5% of earners that are women		40.87%	↑	↑	A	43%
3.1.3	% of top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities		11.01%	↑	↓	A	11.75%
3.1.4	Number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence per FTE		12.80	↑	↓	R	11.01%
	This equates to 3.30 days/shifts lost due to sickness absence per FTE at quarter one.						
3.1.5	% of council employees declaring they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition	Paul Smith	4.34%	↑	↑	G	3.25%
3.1.6	% of council employees from minority ethnic communities		12.91%	↑	↑	G	10.50%
3.2 - Money		Vicky Crowshaw	Annual Measure				2.25 - 4%
3.2.1	The council will outturn within budget and with general reserves intact, in line with the levels provided for in the budget and medium term financial strategy						
3.2.2	a) Payment of creditor invoices within 30 days of receipt to the authority	Steve Phipps	87.3	↓	↑	R	95%
	b) % of sundry debt collected relating to sundry debt over one month old	Steve Phipps	83.67	n/a	n/a	A	85%
3.2.3	% of non-domestic rates collected by the authority in the year (LPI10)	James Walsh	34.37%	↑	↑	G	97.8%
3.2.4	Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events (NI181)	Lynn Hall	24.4	n/a	n/a	G	18
3.3 - Buildings		Keith Stone	Annual Measure				100%
3.3.1	Buildings accessible to people with a disability		100%	↑	↑	G	100%
3.4 - Service Delivery			Measure not identified yet				0
3.4.1	measure to be advised						

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN (CCA 10) Q1 July 2008/09)

PI INFORMATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY			
CCA10 Beacon Index Measure 2.2.1		LAC Reduction Project Beacon Index Indicator "We will improve support to families so that the number of looked after children is reduced to the median of similar councils"	
SERVICE	Children's Services	DIRECTORATE	Children's Services
OFFICER	Karen Adderley/David Bovell	CABINET MEMBER	Zahid Ali

PERFORMANCE DATA									
LAST YEAR 2007/08			THIS YEAR 2008/09						2010
Target	Outturn	Quartile	Target	1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Est'd outturn	Target
420 Revised	443	NA	443	453					440

WHY IS CURRENT/PROJECTED PERFORMANCE NOT ON TARGET?

Briefly explain the reasons. List the most significant reasons first. Be clear and up-front. Mention targets, resources, environment, change, other issues.

Actual figures between 1/1/08 and 30/6/08 show 62 discharges (10.3 per month – average) and 90 admissions (15 per month – average). The cumulative effect is a net increase of 28 to 453 (total number at 31/12/07 was 425).

Since 1st April

	April	May	Jun	Total	
Admissions	18	15	10	43	balance of +10
Discharges	7	13	13	33	

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE / ENSURE THAT THE TARGET IS MET?

What has already been done? To what extent has it worked? What else is planned? What else needs to happen? Exactly how and why will these actions make a positive difference? When will we see a difference and by how much?

To achieve net reductions overall in line with the target of 443 by admissions for the remainder of year must fall below that of discharges by 10 during a 9 month period.

Corrective Action

- A review of all Looked After Children cases have helped determine additional discharges where new opportunities have arisen or there had been a change in case circumstances, particularly children placed with relatives.
- A review of the reduction target has been completed showing optimum discharge figure and safe admission rates managed through effective gate keeping.
- Securing/maintaining additional resources for Adoption, revocation and possibly Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) discharges to meet stretched and new targets.
- Reduction monitoring meetings to monitor discharges and admissions towards a net reduction of 10 over a 9 month period.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES?

What issues/factors may adversely impact on performance and stop you achieving your targets? What are you doing to reduce this risk? What else needs to happen e.g. a change in council policy? Why? When? By whom?




- Reducing the admissions rate (below benchmark) creates a safeguarding risk which will be managed by the senior management team so no child is left at serious risk.
- Hitting stretched discharge rates dependant on maintaining optimum staffing levels to progress adoption/revocation work and improved support for foster carers or relatives securing special guardianship status.

Detailed Action Plan

In here you should set out what actions have been taken and/or are planned for 2005/6, why these actions are expected to bring about an improvement, when the action is expected to be completed, what will be the expected outcome of the action and what effect this is expected to have on performance. If you are unlikely to reach your 2005/6 target it is important you include details on how the service will set realistic but challenging targets for 2006/7 onwards.

Corrective / Improvement Action	Tasks Required	Responsible Officer	By When
Establishment of Looked After Children Placement Panel	Clarify terms of reference and focus Development of multi-agency approach Refocused Heads of Service on financial impact of LAC numbers Review of Adoption planning Focus on specific cases on admission Focus on specific cases on discharge to accelerate process Cross-service challenge on admissions and discharges	Heads of Service	Ongoing
Up to date management information in order to make strategic decisions	Development of LAC financial database with information on costs and placement details Ability to focus on specific cohort of children	Kay Child	Mid August 2008
Rationalisation of processes and meetings	Fresh look at all the meetings and processes involved in the Admissions and Discharge processes	Heads of Service	Mid August 2008
Strategic approach to impact of deprivation	Decision from Pauline Pilkington on way forward Link to Think Family	Kay Child	Mid August 2008

ACTION PLAN START / REVIEW DATES	
Date action plan commences	July 2008
Date to review action plan	Quarter 2

SIGN OFF			
LEAD OFFICERS	David Bovell/Karen Adderley	YOUR 	658355 DB 652003 KD
YOUR JOB TITLE & SERVICE AREA	Head of Corporate Parenting/Project Lead	DATE	31.7. 08
OUTCOME LEADS SIGNATURE	Yours sincerely  Pauline Pilkington		
NAME OF OUTCOME LEAD	Pauline Pilkington	DATE	July 08
ED's SIGNATURE			
NAME OF ED	David Brown	DATE	July 08

PLEASE EMAIL THIS FORM TO: Katherine Morris: morriskath@walsall.gov.uk

PERFORMANCE ACTION PLAN

PI INFORMATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY			
PI NUMBER & TITLE Identify type of PI – BV, CPA, PAF, Local, etc.		PI Number BVPI 12 Beacon Index 3.1.4 Title Number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness	
SERVICE	Human Resources & Development	DIRECTORATE	Regeneration
OFFICER	Sarah Homer, AD	CABINET MEMBER	Cllr Griffiths

PERFORMANCE DATA									
LAST YEAR			THIS YEAR						NEXT YR
Target	Outturn	Quartile	Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Est'd outturn	Target
12.5	11.22	Not known at	11.05	3.30				12.80	11.01

WHY IS CURRENT/PROJECTED PERFORMANCE NOT ON TARGET?

Briefly explain the reasons. List the most significant reasons first. Be clear and up-front. Mention targets, resources, environment, change, other issues.

It is a matter of concern that sickness absence has risen against targets. However this is a prevalent trend in local government. Walsall's absence levels of 11.22 days compare favourably with comparator councils in the West Midlands (Coventry 12.04 days, Dudley 11.5 days for example). It is too early in the year to make any definitive analysis of sickness absence. However, long term sickness absence remains a cause for concern. From the analysis of long term sickness cases across the Council many were unresolved often due to delays in obtaining external medical advice and also a reluctance to deal with DDA cases. This has led to higher than satisfactory level of cases.

The key challenge facing the council relates to the management of these long term sickness absence which can account for as much as 75% of lost days. These are now being actively managed and will reduce as cases are resolved.

PLEASE COMPLETE PAGE 2

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE?

What has already been done? To what extent has it worked? What else is planned? What else needs to happen? Exactly how and why will these actions make a positive difference? When will we see a difference and by how much?

Amendments have been made to the Managing Sickness Absence Policy:

Reintroduction of the triggers for management action in relation to frequent short spells at 3 spells in a 12 month period

The insertion of a new paragraph in the policy after 2.1, as follows: "The Council recognises its responsibility to provide healthy and safe workplaces, including working practices, and will provide more opportunities for training, awareness raising and other active measures to improve the general health of the workforce by targeting the major causes of sickness."

Review of Long Term Absence Cases

Approximately 30% of sickness absences in Walsall are long term (20 days or more). However they account for around 75% of all employee absence. Therefore Human Resources & Development staff have been reviewing long term cases with a view to unblocking any difficulties that may exist preventing the case from being resolved. A task group led by 2 Executive Directors with the Head of Human Resources & Development, Assistant Director Legal & Constitutional Services plus other key HRD staff has been in place since May 08 and is successfully accelerating this work. To date most of the longer term sickness cases are close to resolution via ill health retirement, successful redeployment or arranged consideration of dismissal hearings. Work will then be accelerated on absences of a shorter duration to resolve those where there is little prospect of the employee returning to their substantive job. It is likely that as a result of this work, some appeals against dismissal will be received and these will be heard by the council's appeals committees.

Online Sickness Absence Reporting

On 9 May 2008, the online Human Resources & Development sickness absence portal went live. The portal has been being rolled out across all Departments and will go live in schools in September. The system enables managers to record absence on line as well as enabling managers to have up to date monitoring information to enable them to take appropriate action under the sickness absence policy. The system also has a number of triggers which remind managers to take certain actions when an employee returns to work (for example conduct a return to work interview). If the manager ignores this then the system notifies the manager's manager that this has not been done.

Training on the use of this portal has been taking place within Human Resources & Development and as at 18 June, 138 managers have attended. Further courses are planned for the remainder of June.

In summary, sickness levels are now showing at a comparative level with other metropolitan councils and the continuing work should maintain or even improve this position.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES?

What issues/factors may adversely impact on performance and stop you achieving your targets? What are you doing to reduce this risk? What else needs to happen e.g. a change in council policy? Why? When? By whom?

The recent changes to the sickness absence policy replaced the trigger point for short term absences at 3 spells in 12 months.



The engagement of managers in bringing down absence rates in their own services by following procedures is vital – clear and sustained focus on the issue from senior management, supported by HRD will help to achieve this.

Work continues with managers to amend and confirm team data on Trent so that sickness is accurately recorded against up-to-date structures. Pilot activity is being carried out on working patterns to identify how shifts affect the BPVI calculation.

HRD also continues to promote the use of the HRD Direct portal so that managers can access current information, to assist their proactive management of this issue.

A task group is also in place to look at the wider prevention of employee sickness absence management as well as how absence can be better managed. The councils approach to absence management is also being scrutinised by a barrister in order to assess what further action can lawfully be taken.

SIGN OFF

YOUR NAME	Paul Smith	YOUR 	X 5601
AD's SIGNATURE		DATE	

- **PLEASE EMAIL THIS FORM TO: Andy Field or Angela Walker**

PERFORMANCE ACTION PLAN

PI INFORMATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

PI NUMBER & TITLE Identify type of PI – Beacon Index measure		Pledge Number: Beacon Index 3.2.2(a) (Formally BVPI8) Title: Prompt Payment of Invoices	
SERVICE	Business Support	DIRECTORATE	Regeneration & Performance
OFFICER	Mark Blackburn / Iain Horan	CABINET MEMBER	Cllr M. Arif

PERFORMANCE DATA

LAST YEAR (if applicable)			THIS YEAR						Next Year
Target	Outturn	Quartile	Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Est'd outturn	Target
100%	89.2%		95%	87.3%				93%	96%

WHY IS CURRENT/PROJECTED PERFORMANCE NOT ON TARGET?

Briefly explain the reasons. List the most significant reasons first. Be clear and up-front. Mention targets, resources, environment, change, other issues.

The month of June 2008 saw a reduction in performance by the majority of service areas. Education Services saw a significant reduction in performance of 13%, this was due in part to some resourcing issues which are currently being addressed. However the previous 2 months of this quarter has seen an average performance of 90.16% for this area.

The overall outturn for the month of June was only 84.34%, but the previous overall average for the months of April and May for the Council was 88.6%. It is difficult to find an underlying reason for this “blip” in what tends to be an average month on month performance, based on the current processes of 87-89%, this is supported by the fact that the performance for July 2008 is 88.4%.

This indicator is reliant upon invoices being received and duly authorised by the service areas in a timely manner which allows the 30 day payment terms to be achieved, historically there are delays in this process and this is being addressed as part of an action plan within Business Support.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE?

What has already been done? To what extent has it worked? What else is planned? What else needs to happen? Exactly how and why will these actions make a positive difference? When will we see a difference and by how much?




- An exercise to standardise working practices is currently being developed and will then be implemented.
- Monitoring mechanisms are in place to identify services which consistently submit invoices late, further exploratory work will then be undertaken to work with these services to refine their processes and procedures to enable invoices to meet payment terms.
- A recent decision to ensure compliance in the use of I-Proc at front line services will both speed up the overall ordering process, but in turn will mean that invoices are matched to orders raised at the point of delivery, which should in turn improve the processing time for invoice payments.
- A new process is currently being developed to improve the methodology for agency staff payments, this will involve all invoices being processed and validated centrally, thus mitigating the need for invoices to be returned to the commissioner in the majority of cases, again minimising the time between receipt of invoice by the authority and payment.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES?

What issues/factors may adversely impact on performance and stop you achieving your targets? What are you doing to reduce this risk? What else needs to happen e.g. a change in council policy? Why? When? By whom?

- Service areas not complying with the directive to use I-Proc, non compliance will be reported via the management hierarchy.
- Service areas not submitting invoices in a timely manner, this is being monitored and corrective action will be targeted to those services who consistently submit invoices late.

SIGN OFF

YOUR NAME	Mark Blackburn / Iain Horan	YOUR 	Ext. 8215 / 2707
ED's SIGNATURE		DATE	06.08.08 

PLEASE EMAIL THIS FORM TO: Katherine Morris: morriskath@walsall.gov.uk