

Agenda Item No: 6 **Report No:** 12/13
Report Title: Benchmarking – Environmental Health
Report To: Scrutiny Committee **Date:** 17 January 2013
Lead Councillor: Councillor Robbie Robertson
Wards Affected: All
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Purpose of Report:

To consider benchmarking data on activities on Environmental Health and make comparison with the data available from other local authorities.

Officer's Recommendations:

- 1 That Scrutiny Committee examines the benchmarking data and considers whether the Council Service is:
 - (a) Value for Money
 - (b) High Performing
- 2 That Scrutiny Committee identifies any areas for improvement or requiring further analysis for Environmental Health.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 1 Benchmarking and Value for Money Studies can help to identify areas of Council activity, or service delivery, that have the potential to yield additional income or reduce costs and/or improve services to the public.
- 2 **Introduction**
 - 2.1 Environmental Health was one of the very first functions of Local Government in its present form as we know it, arising from statutory duties set up under the Public Health Act of 1848. The early duties involved Sanitary Inspectors, under the direction of Medical Officers of Health, ensuring that basic sanitation measures were in place in some of the towns and cities which had grown very quickly during the industrial revolution. Today much of the early origins of the service are still recognisable, but the range of duties and services have expanded considerably over the last 160 or so years.

- 2.2** Much of today's function is providing statutory services and currently the Department enforces well over 120 different pieces of legislation covering the following areas:

- Pollution Control and Environmental Protection
- Infectious Disease control
- Licensing of premises selling Alcohol
- Licensing of entertainments (and Gambling)
- Miscellaneous licensing
- Health Improvement and Public Health
- Nuisance Control
- Food safety
- Health and Safety
- Pest Control
- Animal Control and Welfare
- Port Health
- Private Sector Housing (not covered by this review)

3 The Purpose of Environmental Health

- 3.1** The original function of the sanitary inspectors was to ensure living conditions were such that the population was protected from the many infectious diseases which were prevalent during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Whilst many of the diseases that were killers then have been largely conquered by a combination of improved living conditions and advances in medicine, we are still not entirely disease-free and Environmental Health Officers still perform the role of "Hygiene Policemen" to prevent disease outbreaks and a rapid response team in the event of an outbreak to prevent its spread. We continue to work closely with our colleagues in the Health Protection Agency and NHS in this role.
- 3.2** Much of the work, however, has changed in focus to ensure living standards are such that the health and wellbeing of the residents in an area is maintained. This work can be considered as **proactive** i.e. ensuring standards are maintained and improved to prevent problems occurring e.g. proactive inspection of food premises, or **reactive** responding to problems such as pollution issues or investigating accidents at work.

4 Financial Matters

- 4.1** The workforce engaged exclusively on Environmental Health in LDC is currently 31.9 FTE staff. (NB some of the Staff located in the Department will be costed to other service budgets e.g. Housing, Emergency planning). The Budget for 2012/2013 is £1,276,030. Comparative figures analysed to show actual costs and the current revenue budget compared with actuals for the previous two years are shown at Appendix 1.
- 4.2** This analysis differs marginally from that required in government and statistical returns which are subsequently used within this report to enable inter-authority comparison to be made.

5 Inter-Authority Comparison

- 5.1** Appendices 2 and 3 below have been produced from the Revenue Outturn Summary data (RO5) prepared by the Finance Department for submission to the Department of Communities & Local Government. Net spending in total is shown at Appendix 2 with the cost per head of population at Appendix 3.
- 5.2** The Table shows the comparative costs for Comparable authorities (the former Audit Commission family Group) by service type and total cost for the EH service. In this group Lewes DC ranks 4th highest in terms of the costs of the service and 2nd highest in terms of cost per head of population. The nature and volume of service delivered will differ according to the economic, residential and geographical nature of each district, and these differences will be reflected in comparative financial costs. Reasons for such differences are set out below.
- 5.3** Closer examination of the costs per head reveals some interesting differences. When looking at the overall cost of service Lewes is below average cost for Food Safety and Health & Safety, but the Department is about average for Environmental protection, Pest Control & Animal Control and Public Health. Licensing shows huge variations between authorities with some showing savings e.g. Arun and some showing high costs e.g. Rother. Only two Authorities operate a Port Health service, Purbeck and Lewes. These costs add to the overall comparative cost.
- 5.4** The huge variations in costs must be viewed with some suspicion in that it is likely that different Councils apportion different costs to service heads depending upon how the service is configured locally and what are deemed local priorities. It is important not only to determine what is being spent by each service, but to obtain some idea of what the service is delivering in terms of outputs in relation to other authorities. Here comparative data is far harder to obtain.
- 5.5** Until 2008/09 benchmarking data was produced by CIPFA and was widely used as the benchmarking guide in Environmental Health not only on cost comparisons, but also on level of service activity. Unfortunately, many authorities have stopped submitting returns and the most recent data is incomplete and therefore is not considered a useful form of comparator.
- 5.6** The Council does submit Food Safety data to the Food Standards Agency and Health & Safety data to the Health & Safety Executive. The Departments output is also included in Appendix 5, which shows some of the work activity recorded in the 2012 CIPFA return (to which Lewes still contributes). Further Service data is also available in the Departmental Service Plan. This provides data, not only on the scale of activity, but also on the range of activity.
- 5.7** The high costing elements in Environmental Health need to be looked at in detail to determine why Lewes DC spends proportionately more on these areas of activity than the “family group” of Authorities. Environmental protection has been traditionally one of Lewes’s priority areas as an Authority committed to protecting the Environment and the team is particularly strong in delivering Air Quality and Contaminated Land services. Lewes District has also been

particularly busy dealing with some very technically complex and high profile planning applications in recent years, including the Waste Water Treatment works in Peacehaven and the Energy from Waste Facility in Newhaven. More recently the drive for regeneration in Newhaven has required extensive input by Officers on issues such as the Rampion Wind farm Environmental Impact Assessment and the flooding and Environmental issues surrounding East Quay Planning applications amongst others.

- 5.8** Lewes Town also has an Air Quality Management area which continues to generate a lot of work and air quality is emerging as an important issue for Newhaven. Officers from this section are heavily involved in the Council's Flood and Water Management role, a function which is not usually undertaken within the Environmental Health remit.
- 5.9** The Pest Control service operated at Lewes has also been traditionally comparatively expensive. The team provides a hugely popular service with the public which, over the years, has recorded very high levels of customer satisfaction. The Council's current policy of subsidising treatments for people on benefits has meant that income generation has not been maximised in the past.
- 5.10** The Animal and Public Health costs are more difficult to compare. With the huge variation in costs in each Authority shown it is difficult to understand how services may be apportioned in a way that can be compared. South Lakeland for example appears to do no Environmental Protection and very little Animal and Public Health work. The combined cost of £42,000 is less than the cost of 1FTE Environmental Health Officer. It would be difficult to assess how that Authority is meeting its statutory duties, whereas Hastings seems very expensive on both counts. Recent (2009/10) comparisons of activity in this budget head with other Sussex Councils indicates that the level of service are largely comparable, however there are local variations on how Councils are providing statutory services around dealing with stray and dangerous dogs.
- 5.11** The Council's out-of-hours service is also contained within the Public Health budget which provides a 24/7/365 Environmental Health, Port Health, Bonfire out-of-hours and Emergency Planning response. Few other Environmental Health services in Sussex and the "family" group provide such a service.
- 5.12** Licensing Alcohol and Entertainment, as stated above, shows huge variations in costs and, in some cases, income. Areas such as Rother, with a small night-time economy, have high costs, whereas Arun, with a similar night-time economy shows a large income. Although the family grouping shows large variations it is interesting to note that in overall costs for alcohol and entertainment licensing the East Sussex Authorities with similar type of night-time economies (Hastings excepted) show similar overall budgets.

6 Level of Service Activity

- 6.1** Appendix 5 provides information obtained from the CIPFA Statistical Returns submitted for both 2010/2011 and 2011/2012. They provide a useful indication

as to the volumes of service provided and may provide a useful source of comparative information for future service review.

7 Seeking Efficiencies

- 7.1** Appendix 4 below sets out the Net expenditure of the Department over the last three years from 2009-2012. The table shows that there has been a slight reduction in the Environmental Health budget which indicates that there have been some savings in the section and certain efficiencies made. It also shows the difficulties faced by the Council in ensuring frontline statutory services are delivered during a time of cuts. Most services are statutory, but the level to which they are delivered and how the service is balanced between the proactive service and the reactive service, is for Members ultimately to decide.
- 7.2** Certain services are discretionary, but these tend to be services which are popular with the public e.g. control of pests which are not of Public Health significance such as wasps or Health Promotion schemes such as safety equipment loans to vulnerable families.
- 7.3** Some efficiencies have already been made and savings of around £91,000 have been identified. These include a substantial reduction in the use of external contractors and consultants e.g. the authorisation of Industrial processes is now undertaken by in-house Officers rather than by external contractors. We work in close partnership with a number of neighbouring Councils on the delivery of projects across Sussex e.g. Sussex Air. We have also begun to limit summer-time noise patrol times of operation to save money. So far, however, discussions around shared services have not revealed the level of savings that would make this exercise worthwhile.
- 7.4** At a time when Council services are under pressure to deliver more with less it is interesting to note that under the Health & Social Care Act 2012 Public Health has been shifted from the NHS back to first tier Local Authorities. The role Districts and Borough Councils will be asked to play in enhancing and protecting the health and wellbeing of local communities will in all likelihood increase. Environmental Health will be in the forefront of the delivery of those services. Opportunities for the Council to become a service provider are potentially opening up.
- 7.5** As we continue to seek to ensure that the service delivers Value for Money opportunities to rationalise Licensing services are currently being investigated i.e. merge Alcohol and Hackney Carriage licensing into one section to achieve efficiencies. Changes to enable locally set fees for licensed premises are also awaited, which may bring about a more realistic charging framework to improve licensing income.
- 7.6** Opportunities to seek external funding to offset the Environmental Protection section's costs are also being explored through planning fees for large-scale applications.

7.7 Pest Control commercial contracts, to put the section on a more business like basis are currently being considered and opportunities to deliver services in other areas are being explored.

8 Environmental Implications

8.1 I have completed the Environmental Implications Questionnaire and there are no additional significant effects as a result of these recommendations.

9 Risk Management Implications

9.1 Risk – Service Managers may not deliver high performing, high satisfaction, and low cost services.

9.2 Mitigation – Chief Officers should benchmark their service areas; understand the market for their services and the provider market for delivering those services.

10 Equality Implications

10.1 There are no Equality Implications to this report. (Form AF24498 completed)

11 Background Papers

2011/12 Env Health Service Plan:

www.lewes.gov.uk/Files/env_service_performance_2010-11.pdf

12 Appendices

Appendix 1: Net Expenditure by Service & by Type of Expenditure/Income

Appendix 2: Comparative Cost and Cost per Head (RO5) Returns for “family Group”

Appendix 3: CIPFA Returns 2011 and 2012

Appendix 4: Net Expenditure 2009/10- 2011/12

Appendix 5: Service Volumes & Enforcement Information - 2010/2011 & 2011/2012

Appendix 1: Net Expenditure by Service & by Type of Expenditure/Income

Activity	2010/2011 Actual £'000	2011/2012 Actual £'000	2012/2013 Estimate £'000
Markets	(1)	(0)	-
Licences re Gambling Act 2005	4	0	3
Animal Wardens	65	128	132
Taxi Licencing	3	(9)	-
Animal Welfare Licencing	12	11	12
Miscellaneous Licencing	35	26	26
Environmental Health Licences	28	29	30
Licensing Act 2003	38	45	50
Public Health	283	252	265
Food Safety	192	175	185
Public Health Pollution Control	321	311	326
Health & Safety	111	128	128
Port Health	36	36	36
Pest Control	133	86	84
Total	1,259	1,217	1,276

Consortia/Jointly Funded/Grant Financed Schemes [for information]

East Sussex Air Monitoring Consortium	85	81	66
SAQSG - Air Alert	-	41	15
SAQSG - Eur Atmo FP & Project (Closed)	-	6	-
SAQSG - Low Emissions Project	27	0	32
EHO Joint Funding Initiatives	23	8	10
Sussex Air Quality Steering Group Projects	-	13	116
Total [Financed by Income]	134	149	239

As these projects/schemes are fully funded, they do not appear in the costed activity list above. For information, the total expenditure [funded by grants and contributions] is shown in the table above. This spending [and income] is included in the analysis below.

Type of Income/Expenditure

Employee Related Costs	955	998	1,031
Premises	60	1	-
Transport	77	76	71
Supplies and Services	351	265	374
Overheads	168	199	199
Transfer Payments	1	2	15
Support Services	146	126	127
Income - Other Grants & Contributions	(104)	(215)	(271)
Income - Fees and Charges	(396)	(234)	(272)
Total	1,259	1,217	1,276

Capital financing costs and technical accounting adjustments made in 2010/2011 [required by Financial Reporting Standard 17 'Accounting for Retirement Benefits'] have been disregarded to enable comparison between years.

Source: Published accounts 2010/2011 & 2011/12, Revenue Estimates 2012/2013

Appendix 2: Comparative Cost and Cost per Head (RO5) Returns for “family Group”

Local Authority	Water Safety £'000	Food Safety £'000	Environmental Protection £'000	Health and Safety £'000	Port Health £'000	Pest Control £'000	Animal and public Health £'000	Licensing Alcohol and entertainment £'000	Total £'000
Purbeck	-	84	113	-	5	10	170	-2	380
Adur	-	127	447	-	-	63	14	75	726
South Hams	78	255	174	161	-	17	121	-54	752
South Lakeland	-	306	-	427	-	-	42	-10	765
East Devon	-	189	417	187	-	7	58	-44	814
Rother	-	147	259	105	-	63	88	174	836
North Devon	-	269	-	-	-	-	582	40	891
West Dorset	-	277	265	101	-	66	165	18	892
Teignbridge	-	454	443	49	-	12	59	-58	959
Arun	-	263	450	280	-	89	56	-110	1,028
Eastbourne	-	251	363	146	-	49	150	140	1,099
Chichester	5	279	307	111	-	70	343	53	1,168
Lewes	-	175	352	128	36	86	417	100	1,294
Hastings	-	200	494	-	-	-	663	42	1,399
New Forest	-	384	406	188	-	65	421	-22	1,442
Wealden	-	486	469	310	-	82	92	98	1,537
<i>Number</i>	2	16	14	13	2	13	16	16	16
<i>Average Cost**</i>	42	259	354	169	21	52	215	28	999

Appendix 3: CIPFA Returns 2011 and 2012

Local Authority	Population	Water Safety £'000	Food Safety £'000	Environmental Protection £'000	Health and Safety £'000	Port Health £'000	Pest Control £'000	Animal and public Health £'000	Licensing Alcohol and entertainment £'000	Total £'000
Purbeck	45,200	-	1.86	2.50	-	0.11	0.22	3.76	(0.04)	8.41
Adur	61,600	-	2.06	7.26	-	-	1.02	0.23	1.22	11.79
South Hams	83,700	1.00	3.05	2.08	1.92	-	0.20	1.45	(0.65)	8.98
South Lakeland	103,700	-	2.95	-	4.12	-	-	0.41	(0.10)	7.38
East Devon	132,900	-	1.42	3.14	1.41	-	0.05	0.44	(0.33)	6.12
Rother	89,800	-	1.64	2.88	1.17	-	0.70	0.98	1.94	9.31
North Devon	91,500	-	2.94	-	-	-	-	6.36	0.44	9.74
West Dorset	96,700	-	2.86	2.74	1.04	-	0.68	1.71	0.19	9.22
Teignbridge	127,300	-	3.57	3.48	0.38	-	0.09	0.46	(0.46)	7.53
Arun	150,600	-	1.75	2.99	1.86	-	0.59	0.37	(0.73)	6.83
Eastbourne	97,000	-	2.59	3.74	1.51	-	0.51	1.55	1.44	11.33
Chichester	113,500	-	2.46	2.70	0.98	-	0.62	3.02	0.47	10.29
Lewes	97,500	-	1.79	3.61	1.31	0.37	0.88	4.28	1.03	13.27
Hastings	87,200	-	2.29	5.67	-	-	-	7.60	0.48	16.04
New Forest	177,000	-	2.17	2.29	1.06	-	0.37	2.38	(0.12)	8.15
Wealden	144,100	-	3.37	3.25	2.15	-	0.57	0.64	0.68	10.67
<i>Av per head</i>			2.42	3.02	1.35		0.41	2.23		9.69

Appendix 4: Net Expenditure 2009/10- 2011/12

	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000	%
Table 1: Subjective Analysis						
Employees	946	54.4	1,022	56.7	1,014	59.1
Running Expenses	794	45.6	780	43.3	701	40.9
Expenditure	1,740	100.0	1,802	100.0	1,715	100.0
Sales, Fees & Charges	226	53.6	227	45.4	294	69.8
Other Income	196	46.4	273	54.6	127	30.2
Total Income	422	100.0	500	100.0	421	100.0
Net Current Expenditure	1,318		1,302		1,294	

Table 2: Objective Analysis

221 Food safety	160	12.1	192	14.7	175	13.5
222 Environmental protection	334	25.3	321	24.7	352	27.2
224 Health and safety	118	9.0	111	8.5	128	9.9
225 Port health	33	2.5	37	2.8	36	2.8
226 Pest control	134	10.2	133	10.2	86	6.6
228 Animal and public health; infectious disease control	418	31.7	391	30.0	417	32.2
229 Licensing - Alcohol and entertainment licensing; taxi licensing	121	9.2	117	9.0	100	7.7
Net Current Expenditure	1,318	100	1,302	100	1,294	100

Table 3: Relative Service Spending to Net Service Expenditure

	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000	%
Total Net Current Expenditure						
This Service	1,318	8.7	1,302	9.0	1,294	10.6
All Other Services	13,862	91.3	13,143	91.0	10,925	89.4
All Services	15,180	100.0	14,445	100.0	12,219	100.0

Table 4: Specific vs General Net Current Expenditure Reductions

	£'000	%	£'000	%
Reduction Attributable to This Service	(16)	2.2	(8)	0.4
Reduction Attributable to Other Service Changes	(719)	97.8	(2,218)	99.6
All Services	(735)	100.0	(2,226)	100.0

Service Volumes & Enforcement Information - 2010/2011 & 2011/2012

Activity	Analysis	2010/2011	2011/2012
Service Volumes			
Requests for Pest Control Service [including advice]			
	Rodents	1,405	1,176
	Insects	957	774
	Other	95	104
	Filthy Verminuous & Allied Services	2	2
	Inspections/Investigations	4,405	3,552
Taxi Licensing			
Number of:			
	licensed hackney carriages	244	236
	private hire vehicles	52	58
	licensed hackney carriages - drivers	299	285
	private hire vehicles - drivers	62	72
	licensed private hire operators	9	6
Premises Subject to Inspection			
	Licensing Act 2003 Premises	327	331
	Special Treatments	35	114
	Temporary Accommodation Sites	6	3
	EPA 1990 Authorised/Permitted Processes	20	22
Enforcement Information			
Noise Control			
	incidents	772	772
	statutory notices served	7	4
Public Health, Drainage & Pest Control			
	complaints/service requests requiring a response	3,504	3,343
	statutory notices served	34	14
	notices complied with	14	14
Animal Welfare [including Dog Warden Service]			
	complaints/service requests requiring a response	790	846
	inspections performed	21	46
	stray animals impounded	82	96
Health, Safety & Welfare			
	complaints/service requests requiring a response	38	48
Taxi Licensing			
	complaints/service requests requiring a response	3	8
	summonses served	-	2
	simple cautions given	5	5
Pollution Control			
	complaints/service requests requiring a response	234	285
	statutory notices served	13	5
Source: CIPFA Regulatory Services Statistics Returns			
Food Safety			
	Number of premises inspected	564	564
Source: LAEMs			
Health & Safety			
	Number of premises inspected	71	84
Source: LAE 1			