

Appendix A to Scrutiny Panel - Performance and Budget Report

Stour Valley Enforcement Agency (SVEA) Variance report

1. Variance

- 1.1 The operational budget for the service in 2019/20 was set at £426,000 with an overall income target of £175,000 above expenditure.
- 1.2 The SVEA operational costs for the 2019/20 year are projected as £378,034 (due to staff vacancies) and income received as end of quarter 3 (31st December 2019) is £388,892. If fee income continues at the same ratio the overall income received will be circa £520,000, making the service income above expenditure circa £141,000.
- 1.3 This represents a projected £34,000 lower income than target, with a variance just short of 20%.

2. Reason for SVEA reduced performance

- 2.1 We employ 2 full time enforcement agents. One has taken up our offer of personal development by studying for ILM3 under our apprenticeship scheme, which required 20% 'on the job' study.
- 2.2 Enforcement Agent re-certification is required every 2 years, requiring application, DBS checks, bonds and standing before a judge before a new certificate can be awarded. As both our agents started work with us at the same time, their re-certification falls at a similar time. Due to human error their applications were not submitted in due time, prior to their certificates expiring. This meant that for 1 week we had no certificated agents (meaning we were unable to issue Notices of Enforcement), and one agent was not certificated for approximately 5 weeks, meaning he was unable to visit.
- 2.3 As a result of a complaint one of our agents was suspended from visiting for a couple of months whilst investigations took place. The result being that we have only had 1 agent visiting since September and have had an enforcement agent vacancy since November 2019.

3. Actions and mitigation of future risk

- 3.1 Enforcement agents will now have their certificates due for renewal at different points in the year.
- 3.2 Applications will now be made ahead of when re-certification is required, accepting that may be certified less than 2 years but will mitigate risk of certificate expiring.
- 3.3 The SVEA manager will undertake Taking Control of Goods (TCOG) training and become a certificated enforcement agent. Ensuring has relevant training and refreshers so can undertake full enforcement agent role, including visits. This will ensure business resilience in the future.
- 3.4 Recruitment has been completed and a new enforcement agent starts with us on 2nd March, and the positive impact of this recruitment should be seen by the start of 2020/21 Quarter 1.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 There are clear circumstances resulting in this variance in performance and steps have been taken to mitigate any future risk.
- 4.2 Close monitoring of performance will continue to be undertaken and a review to consider areas for improvement will take place from Quarter 1 2020/21.
- 4.3 For 2019/20 it is expected the Budget will be 'below target' by an estimated £34,000.
- 4.4. The 'below target' SVEA outcome for 2019/20 can be taken in context with the SVPP projected underspend of £264,000 for the same period.
- 4.5 We are confident that with this in place 2020/21 targets will be achieved.

Di Milne

Collection Services Manager SVPP

17 February 2020