

TITLE OF REPORT: Performance Management and Improvement Framework –
Year End Performance Report 2021/22

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SUMMARY

This report provides the Committee with the Council's new Performance Management and Improvement Framework, reporting performance on the delivery of Council priorities for the period April 2021 to March 2022. It also provides an overview of performance relevant to the role and remit of this committee.

Purpose of the Performance Management and Improvement Framework (PMIF)

1. The Performance Management and Improvement Framework (PMIF) enables the Council to know how it is delivering on its Thrive policy. It has a clear focus on priorities, delivery, measurement and analysis of impact. It is based on Thrive and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and incorporates an organisational 'health check' Balanced Scorecard.

Background

2. The Council's performance framework was reviewed and a new approach was agreed by Council on 27 May 2021. The draft measures were considered and agreed by Cabinet in October 2021. The reporting of 6-month performance which was considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committees at the end of January and agreed by Cabinet in March 2022, was the first time performance was reported using the new approach.
3. The PMIF aims to:
 - Enable the Council to know whether it is achieving its priorities. (Thrive Policy)
 - Ensure that the Council's resources are being deployed effectively
 - Make both short and long term effective decisions
 - A whole systems approach – embedded in our partnership working to deliver the Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Year End Performance Reporting

4. The analysis of performance for 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 against each of the 6 policy objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Balanced Scorecard is set out at Appendix 1. Areas of particular relevance to this Committee are highlighted in this report alone, however the full Performance Management and

Improvement Framework is provided to enable members to see the full picture of performance across all priority areas at Appendix 1.

5. The report outlines the challenges, achievements, actions and resources for each policy objective. It also contains performance data including strategic and operational measures and is informed by qualitative and quantitative assessment to inform policy and resource decisions.
6. Some data is not available at year end. This is due to a variety of reasons including some areas where data has not been published since the pandemic, or where there is a lag between year end and data being finalised. Where provisional data is available this has been provided and noted. The report set out the current performance for the strategic and operational measures where data is available at the year-end stage.
7. Key general emerging areas already being highlighted are:
 - The continuing impact of Covid 19 on performance
 - Widening inequalities, income and the longer term anticipated impact for the future on issues such as health
 - The demand pressures being faced by services such as in children's and adult social care
 - The impact of Brexit and the current conflict in Ukraine, rising costs facing local people as well as in the delivery of services
 - Staffing pressures including recruitment and retention across the Council
 - Progress in key areas such as climate change strategy and engagement
 - Increase in digital and online services
 - Levels of support being provided to local people and businesses such as through various grants e.g. Household Support Grant which was aimed to prevent people from going cold or hungry
 - Extremely effective response to vulnerable people throughout the pandemic including the support provided through local hubs, the public health response and work with businesses

Update Since the 6 Month Stage

8. Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Six Month Performance Report in its entirety in January 2022. The discussions at each committee identified some key themes. These along with activities to address these were agreed by Cabinet in March 2022. Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee identified two particular areas:
 - I. **Locality based working** – Ensuring that the right approach is taken with councillor and community involvement from the outset and recognising that different approaches may be needed in different areas of Gateshead
 - The approach to locality working is at an early stage, however this is developing with member and community involvement and is considering the different needs in local areas. A presentation on the approach will be given to members at the committee meeting.
 - II. **Employees and Workforce** – Improvements to employee morale and address recruitment and retention issues

- Further activities have been taking place, though the performance reports show that this continues to be a challenge, partly because of the Covid-19 pandemic impact as well as the buoyancy of the recruitment market
- Sickness absence has increased from 11.3 days per FTE to 12.3 days. Human Resources are working closely with managers to manage attendance in relation to short and long term absence with increased referrals to inhouse support such as Occupational Health and counselling
- Employee resignations increased from 3.04% to 5.69% (293 employees), potentially due to the current jobs market and increased choice that has resulted in some employees considering alternative options
- The Workforce Strategy is an important tool in supporting the employees including development, progression and succession planning. Employee morale is an area of focus and a framework for employees is being developed, including strengthening engagement mechanisms and health and wellbeing support. Proposals to address recruitment and retention are being developed for consideration.

9. An overview will be provided at the Committee meeting, however other key areas to highlight to members include:

Challenges

- The Pandemic continues to have an impact on the number of apprenticeships starts as services need to ensure that appropriate support can be given to apprentices which has been an issue for some due to service disruption and associated capacity issues during the pandemic. However, the upskilling of the current workforce has resulted in an increase in the Apprenticeship Levy spend.
- Employee morale, recruitment, and retention (2T93 resignations which is 5.69% of the workforce) and increase in sickness absence levels from 11.3 days to 12.3 days per FTE, as noted above
- Agency spend increased, though the increase is due to inclusion of The Gateshead Housing Company in the figures, a reduced need during the pandemic as services were scaled back, and difficulties in recruiting skilled staff resulting in more reliance on agencies this year
- Challenges of delivering the Medium Term Financial Strategy budget gap and delivering intervention to enable people in Gateshead to Thrive.

Areas of excellence and improvement include

- Average time to process Housing Benefit and Council Tax claims and changes has reduced over the year meaning local people are receiving support in a timelier manner
- Allocated £1,836,629 Household Support Grant including vouchers for children eligible for free school meals, food support through VCSE and energy payment support to help families with basic essentials.
- The number of complaints to the Council which were upheld has reduced while the number of compliments has increased.
- Business rates collected showing an improvement despite impacts of the pandemic
- The move to more digital customer experience continues to expand with more local people choosing to engage with the Council through these means

- The Regulatory Notice issued by the Regulator of Social Housing for Housing Compliance was withdrawn 8 December 2021.

Actions include

- Resources have been diverted to support the telephony contact centres under most pressure e.g. housing repairs. Work is ongoing to improve the uniformity of how call handling is managed across the Council
- Budget review work is underway across the Council to ensure Council resources are deployed in a prioritised way focusing on delivery of Thrive outcomes and impact
- GDPR training will be re-issued this month and wider Data Protection Project being progressed
- Refresh the LloN data at end of 2022 / early 2023 to understand Thrive changes post pandemic.

Further development

10. This is the first time Year End performance has been reported against the new framework. The 6 month stage outlined some limitations to the framework and some of these inevitably remain such as the availability of data following the pandemic disruption, however the position is improving with more data becoming available. While some data is still not yet available, these are areas that it is still felt to be important to measure as part of the framework, so they have continued to be included. A review of measures will be undertaken to understand where changes may be needed to ensure the PMIF remains robust.
11. Work is taking place to develop the framework further to ensure it is best placed to enable the Council to understand its performance against priorities. Following comments from members some changes were made following the 6 month reports. This included adding dates and tolerances, where possible, to the Balanced Scorecard to help understand the scale of change. In addition, the request from this Committee for environmental service measures is being taken forward as part of the overall budget approach for the relevant services. The inclusion of measures in the corporate level framework will follow as this will need to be informed by the outcome of the budget work to ensure they reflect this and will be useful in managing future performance.
12. The impact of the pandemic itself may influence and inform future priorities of the Council which would then inform the performance content of the framework. It is important the PMIF is flexible and able to evolve to ensure it remains relevant.
13. An online / digital format is also being considered and a pilot approach is being developed. This will aim to cluster measures around key priority areas and present a visual representation of the performance data to be used alongside the analysis. This is quite a complex task and will involve areas across the Council, link to existing data approaches such as LloN, but will provide performance data at different levels from strategic to operational in an accessible way.

Recommendations

14. Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- Comment on the Year End performance report at Appendix 1 and identify any areas for further scrutiny
- Recommend the performance report to Cabinet for consideration in July 2022.

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