

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

REPORT OF: **Darren Collins, Strategic Director, Resources and Digital**

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. An overview of the Year End Performance will be provided at the Committee meeting along with a focused 'deep dive' on Children's Social Care and Early Help. The overall report at Appendix 1 identifies a number of performance challenges, areas of excellence and activities for improvement. Key highlights relevant for this committee include:

Challenges

- There continues to be increasing demand for children's social care support. At the end of March 2022, 485 children were looked after which is a 10.2% increase from the same point last year.
- This includes increases in:
 - Children becoming looked after for the first time.
 - Children being referred to social care.
 - Children who are the subject of a Child Protection Plan.
- An increase in pupils eligible for free school meals during the year highlights the income challenges being faced by families in Gateshead
- As highlighted above, the Employee recruitment and retention issues being seen across the Council are also an issue within social care.

- The pandemic has had a disruptive impact on children and young people in education, the full long-term impact is as yet not fully understood.

Areas of excellence include

- The Reducing the Number of Children in Care Strategy has been agreed by Cabinet since the last report, and is now being implemented to improve the outcomes for children in Gateshead
- There has been a reduction in the time between a child entering care and placed for adoption which indicates better outcomes for children who come into care
- The Council continues to meet the outcomes target set by the Government's Supporting Families Programme with 337 families supported during 2021/22. Gateshead has met all targets set since the programme's inception in 2012.
- The Domestic Abuse Team has increased direct work with children and provide support to young people who are/at risk of experiencing abuse or unhealthy relationships. 694 adults and children were supported during 2021/22.
- The rate of Early Help cases closed with an outcome of 'needs met' has increased further to 61.9% in 2022/23, showing direction of travel is improving already. However, the shorter term and longer term impacts of the pandemic and economic pressures facing residents will be monitored as this may impact of performance against outcomes.
- Increased take up of free school meals in primary schools is encouraging, particularly after the reduction when all children returned to school and follows introduction of actions highlighted to the Committee in the last performance report
- A successful range of engagement and play sessions for children and young people in Gateshead including:
 - holiday programmes engaging 758 young people aged 5-17 years including those referred by social care services and schools
 - Community outreach and activity clubs engaged 479 individual attendances including 36 children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities, offering respite, social opportunities physical activity and sensory play.
 - 887 children's centre sessions delivered over 15 Gateshead venues and attended by nearly 2,000 children under 5 years

Actions include

- Take forward the objectives and interventions in the Reducing the Number of Children in Care Strategy and evaluate impact.
- Deliver the work plan following review of the children's social care Quality Assurance Framework. This will see 20 audits being undertaken to identify strengths and areas for improvement
- Implement measures to improve recruitment and retention in children's social care to ensure sustainability and succession planning
- Implement the new electronic school meals system to offer a range of benefits, by streamlining the operation and offering time efficiencies and a quality service that better needs the needs of pupils
- Roll out development of Life Story project work tools and processes and deliver practice shorts to help improve quality of social care plans for families
- Gateshead will be one of 75 Local Authority areas to receive the first tranche of Family Hubs and Start for Life funding to develop seamless, joined-up support for

families with children. This will include extra funding for perinatal mental health, breastfeeding and parenting support.

Further development

9. 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.
10. 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.
11. This Committee made some comments relating to further development of the PMIF. This included consideration of a measure around children with SEND and specifically Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP). A new measure has been added to the framework to monitor the number of these and the issuing of them within a 20 week timescale.
12. A further area this Committee highlighted was around future presentation of the performance data. An online / digital format is 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 LIoN, but will provide performance data at different levels from strategic to operational in an accessible way.
13. 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.

Recommendations

14. Families 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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