

TITLE OF REPORT: Performance Management and Improvement Framework – Year End Performance Report 2022/23

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

SUMMARY

This report provides the Committee with the Council's Performance Management and Improvement Framework, reporting performance on the delivery of Council priorities for the period April 2022 to March 2023. 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 internal 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 during December 2022 and agreed by Cabinet in January 2023.
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 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 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, however, the full Performance Management & 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 areas where data has not been published since the pandemic, or where there is a lag between year-end and the data being confirmed. Where provisional data is available, this has been provided and referenced as such.
7. Cross-cutting key areas already being highlighted are:
 - MTFS estimates a £55m financial gap over the medium term due to significant pressures manifesting over the last twelve months in inflation, pay, utilities and costs of living.
 - The continuing impacts of rising costs facing local people, families, and businesses, as well as in the delivery of services.
 - The demand pressures being faced by services such as in children's and adult social care continue to increase, as well as expanding demand for debt advice.
 - Staffing pressures are still impacting performance across the Council including recruitment, retention, and sickness.
 - Progress in key areas such as workforce strategy, climate change strategy and customer experience.
 - Inequalities continue to widen. Thrive data shows a shift (over 2 percentage points) compared with the previous year-end, towards more people being vulnerable, moving from the just coping and managing categories. There is minimal change in the proportion of people 'thriving'.
 - Additional support is still being sought and provided to local people and businesses through various grants, although this is affected additionally by burdens relating to central Government's initiatives. Household support grant is to continue for a further 12 months.
8. An overview will be provided at the Committee meeting, however, areas of particular relevance to this Committee are:

Challenges include

- The cost-of-living crisis is continuing to have an impact on the way in which residents contact the Council and the ability of residents and businesses to pay.
- Performance through 2022/23 has continued to be affected by additional burdens relating to central Government's initiatives.
- Sickness days lost per employee has increased but this includes Covid related absences. The days lost per employee reduces to 11.78 from 13.22 when excluding Covid, which was the third highest reason for sickness absence.

- Agency costs have also increased, although some of the agency spend will likely be a direct correlation between sickness absence and the need to cover days lost, with agency workers.
- There were 57 Chief Executive stage 3 complaint reviews completed; 35 were not upheld and 22 were upheld and compensation was offered. There were 12 final decisions made by the Ombudsman following the investigation of complaints against the Council; 5 were not upheld and 7 were upheld with the Council required to pay compensation.
- The number of data breaches has increased and whilst it may appear that this is a concern, a cautious approach is taken to reporting matters to ensure transparency. No action has been taken by the Information Commissioners Office where a data breach has been reported.

Areas of excellence and improvement include

- The continued roll-out and improvement of online services is assisting greatly in managing the volume of inbound telephone contacts allowing residents to contact the council at a time and location convenient to them.
- It is positive to see the numbers of near miss reports continuing to increase, we would expect to see this percentage increase further next year as we look to develop a positive Health & Safety Culture.
- Reduction from last year in the number of Fee for Interventions (FFI) issued. The HSE also randomly visited two schools with no enforcement action taken.
- New digital services have attracted high numbers of online uptake; 71% for Blue Badge applications and 98% for Household Waste & Recycling Centre bookings.
- A new improved system for taking payments over the phone, which went live in October 2022, has resulted in a comparative shift away from online payments following record levels of online payments during the pandemic.
- A large data protection project (Information Asset Register/ROPA) was undertaken by the DPO team including drafting guides, delivering Training, and reviewing hundreds of documents across every team in the Council.

Actions include

- The temporary cessation of debt recovery practices has been reviewed and therefore collection rates are expected to increase in future.
- An employee survey is targeted to be completed by end of 2023.
- The Council is currently assessing when and how to bring forward a 'borough-wide' survey. This would incorporate how we currently work in partnership with our key stakeholders and residents views.
- Continue to make significant areas of improvement through our housing improvement programme including Gateshead Home Choice system, development of Marketplace and Gateway, establishment of a Home Improvement Agency and the development of a single front door and investigation unit for all anti-social behaviour reports.
- Business Rates - new resource was recruited late in the year (Income & Avoidance Officer) which will help to generate additional income and reduced fraud and avoidance tactics.

Further development

9. A review of measures is being undertaken to understand where changes may be needed to ensure the PMIF remains robust, particularly where data is still not available for reporting.
10. Following a request in June 2022 for additional support in relation to the Performance Management and Improvement Framework, the Commercialisation and Improvement team are working with the Workforce Development team on a focussed training session for councillors. A training brief has been drafted and is being shared at the next meeting of the Councillor Support and Development Group (date TBA) for their contribution. It is intended that this training opportunity will be delivered in late-September.
11. Work is ongoing to improve the presentation of performance information and analysis, particularly as we gather a catalogue of data over time through the performance reporting phases.
12. It is important the PMIF is flexible and able to evolve to ensure it remains relevant.

Recommendations

13. 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 on 18 July 2023.

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