

Appendix 3

Below are the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees which each considered the year-end Performance Management and Improvement Framework reports.

Corporate Resources OSC – 12th June 2023

The Committee received a report and presentation on the end of year Performance Management and Improvement Framework reporting on the delivery of Council priorities for the period April 2022 to March 2023. It also provided an overview of the performance relevant to the role and remit of this committee.

Cross-cutting key areas already being highlighted are:

- MTFFS 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.

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 had been drafted and is being shared at the next meeting of the Councillor Support and Development group.

The Committee received a presentation on the current position with regards to the Workforce Strategy.

Michelle Brown (Service Director for HR, Workforce Development and H & S) took OSC through an update of the Workforce Strategy which included an update on progress in the last 12 months, work in progress, and what's coming next for 2023. It was highlighted that some of the action plan for 2024 is underway also. Some of the work

completed so far included, but is not limited to; delivering the apprentice awards, organising the leadership keeping in touch sessions, creation and rollout of the Smart Working Framework, launch of the cost free employee benefits platform – VIVUP, the development of a policy review schedule to update current key people policies and develop new ones, a new modern approach to the layout of job descriptions, the launch of the new learning system Learning Hub, developing and negotiating the Construction Joint Local Agreement and skills gap/multi-skilling framework, the opening of the new learning venue – Kingsmeadow, changes to low pay, refreshing the corporate induction scheme, launching of the jobs fair at the Gateshead International Stadium and much more.

A detailed update was given on sickness absence which highlighted some interesting trends, for example, during Covid post operations sickness absence went down along with viral infections and post Covid when NHS appointments are now being facilitated and people are socialising as normal again, the Council has experienced an increase in post operation sickness absence and viral related absences also.

A query was raised in relation to stress being identified as personal or stress and how the Council can know that. It was advised that either the GP will confirm that on the employees sicknote or the employee themselves will advise if the reason for their stress is work or personal.

It was asked what happens if an employee is stressed and it was confirmed that each case may be different, and meetings are held with the employee to understand how the Council can help. Where stress is work related a stress risk assessment is undertaken.

A number of queries were raised in relation to sickness absence data, specifically:

- At the next update could the Committee have a breakdown of grades for stress related absence figures - Is it mostly lower paid employees?
- Can the data be split by service?
- Is it possible to understand if there is a correlation between sickness absence in hybrid areas v's non hybrid areas?

It was advised that absence by grades should be possible, data by service should be also and understand which absences are for staff who work in a hybrid way may not be as employees are not identified in the HR system as a hybrid worker or not.

The top four reasons for near miss reporting across the Council remains unchanged. Work has been underway to change the culture in relation to reporting near misses as reporting near misses prevents accidents longer term as learnings and actions can be taken from a reported near miss. There has been a 231% increase in near misses reports for the same period in 2022/2023. This is a positive trend in mitigating harm, learning from what could have happened and preventing

accidents. The increase in reporting demonstrates a shift in behaviour to one of trust in reporting.

Half of the near misses reported were cases of threatening behaviour with the majority occurring within Adult Social Care and Housing. Reference was made to repeat offenders and that H&S are working with the services to try and find ways to reduce the incidents and mitigate risk.

A number of queries were raised in relation to H & S which included:

- Can the number of accidents be included
- Can an update be provided in relation to risk assessments.
- Can an overview of how accident reporting is undertaken including the timeframe for reporting and completing an accident report form?
- Could the Council explore having a recorded message for callers to hear, when they ring the Council that to say that the Council do not tolerate any kind of aggressive or abusive behaviour towards our staff etc?
- Could we have a detailed overview of school near miss reporting figures for the previous 12 months and how schools report?

Employee turnover was covered and that the current leavers form only allows for people to provide a high-level reason for reason and no specifics. For example, an employee can confirm that the reason for leaving is resignation, but not specifically why the employee has resigned. A more detailed and modernised approach to capturing leaver information has been developed and will be rolled out in July 2023. The data captured will be stored electronically allowing the Council to analyse the feedback and consider changes to ways of working to improve recruitment and retention.

An update was provided on apprenticeships, outlining that there are currently 108 apprentices employed in an apprenticeship role and 123 who are completing additional apprentice qualifications for personal development. Reference was made to the apprentice awards and that there had been 109 nominations made and the standard of nominations was very good.

It was queried whether we have compared pay and conditions with other authorities if we are unable to recruit and retain staff. Reference was made to the fact that while pay is important it is not the only factor that influences an organisations ability to recruit and retain and that all elements of the employee life cycle play a significant role as a whole offer and package. It was noted that the Council have commissioned a piece of work to undertake a pay benchmarking exercise which is being undertaken by Campbell Tickell which will compare the Council's salary framework against the market, not just in the public sector but in the private sector also where there are comparable roles.

It was queried what the system was when someone handed in their notice in terms of completing an exit interview. It was noted that the exit interview process is not

mandatory, it is paper based, an interview held with a Service Director and that the new format will provide for an online form to be completed, a paper-based form, an interview if requested and the use of a QR code if needed. This provided various options for an employee to provide feedback, all of which is aimed at increasing the number of interviews completed and to make it easy for an employee to say how they feel.

A request for staff turnover data to be provided as a percentage figure as well as an absolute number be provided at the next update.

It was also queried when you look at meeting rooms and facilities compared to other authorities, we are not up to modern standards, the question was asked as to whether or not this was going to be looked at as part of the plan.

It was explained that the IT Strategy is looking at modernising our approach, and if someone has a particular need, we can talk to that person to help them.

A queried was raised in relation to the appraisal process, specifically, what action does an employee take if they disagree with what is being discussed and recorded at an Appraisal and if there was an appeals process. The members of OSC were advised that an employee does not have to sign the appraisal if they do not agree with the contents and that there was no appeals process. However, if an employee has concerns that their appraisal is not representative of them, their performance etc. then they can discuss this with HR, their trade union rep and where necessary and appropriate raise their concerns through a formal route.

It was queried whether a staff survey was going to be looked at in particular around employee wellbeing. We need to know why people are leaving in order to be able to put it right. It was noted that the new exit interview does include the detail related to exact reasons for leaving (a copy of which was handed to OSC members in the meeting), if we are going to do a staff survey the preference would be to use one which asks specific questions.

It was queried whether the fact that stress and anxiety going up could have something to do with the pandemic, peoples finances have had a pounding, could it be that lower paid members of staff are getting stressed. It was noted that a further examination of the figures could look at the grades to see whether this was linked.

It was queried whether it would be possible to have the sickness absence figures by service level again, it would hopefully help us to understand the picture.

It was queried whether there was an issue for front facing staff who have to come into a workplace and whether the sickness numbers were higher than those who were able to work from home as if they weren't feeling too good they could still work from home and not have to ring in sick. Training is given to all managers to make sure the absence procedure is applied consistently.

It was queried whether we spend the full apprenticeship levy. It was noted that we don't, we have a high spend compared to other LA's but that we do have the ability to transfer the funding to smaller organisations within the Borough, including voluntary organisations.

RESOLVED - (i) that the comments of the Committee be noted.
(ii) that the Performance Report be presented to Cabinet on
18 July 2023.

Care, Health, and Wellbeing OSC – 13TH June 2023

The Committee received the year end performance report for the period April 2022 to March 2023.

A deep dive look into waiting lists in terms of Adult Social Care was previously requested and the Committee received a presentation on this area of performance.

ADASS benchmarking survey information was provided which looks at comparators both locally and nationally and with statistical neighbours. ADASS is looking at waiting lists across Adult Social Care and it was noted that there has been a significant increase since Covid, with people coming forward earlier into care.

In terms of those on the waiting list for an assessment there has been a slight reduction on last year's figure, however it remains relatively static. It was noted that the bulk of the list, 58%, is for Occupational Therapy (OT) assessments. There is no DoLS waiting list. It was reported that there has been a 50% increase from last year of those waiting over 6 months for an assessment.

There has been a significant decrease in the numbers waiting for care and support, and it was acknowledged that now care can be accessed more easily the system will start moving.

The number of overdue reviews of care plans has reduced significantly following targeted work.

Waiting lists are a national concern and work has been ongoing in Gateshead to address this issue. There has been agreement for additional investment in OT trainees, which has worked well in terms of the Social Worker trainee model, with much higher levels of interest than for other posts. The additional capacity as a result of the trainees will be used to reduce waiting times.

There is additional investment in hospital discharge capacity and reablement capacity, with the new Promoting Independence Centre opening in the Autumn, which will increase bed capacity and avoid hospital admissions. Community reablement has been strengthened through the OT team, thus diverting people from assessments and long-term care packages. Consequently, this will relieve the bottle neck in referrals for assessments and free up Social Worker capacity.

Work is ongoing to address sickness levels. In addition, caseload monitoring and tracking is underway. A pilot is also underway using assistive technology to inform assessments and therefore improve timescales.

It was reported that annually an NHS Digital Social Care survey is required. In terms of Gateshead, there has been an improvement across the board for all but one of the survey indicators; the proportion of people who use services who say that those services have made them feel safe and secure. Positively the indicator which measures the proportion of people who use services who feel safe has improved, therefore the indication is that it is other factors which make them feel safe, rather than the service specifically. Work is underway with Healthwatch and partners to improve the offer around health and advice. Overall satisfaction of people who use the service in Gateshead is at its highest level since 2017/18.

The Committee was provided with the PMIF Plan on a page which is a quarterly publication from the performance team outlining the indicators in relation to; people, prevention, practice, provision, pounds and partnership. This provides a balanced look at performance of Adult Social Care across the whole service.

It was reported that in terms of DoLS (liberty protection safeguards), this is the first time there has been a decrease in the number of applications received. It was noted that section 42 enquiries have increased since last year and are at the highest level in the past five years. In addition, the percentage of concerns which progressed to an enquiry has increased and is now at the highest level since 2018/19. In terms of safeguarding concerns, this figure has reduced therefore this shows there are less inappropriate referrals.

It was questioned as to why the number of people waiting over six months has increased. It was noted that for some this is due to waits of OTs or Social Worker assessments. It was confirmed that prioritisation tools are used and there will be a number of people waiting for assessment who will be receiving temporary services. People are also triaged to ensure they understand when and who to contact.

The point was made that some authorities are looking at home care providers in respect of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). It was noted that there has also been an indefinite hold on the Liberty Protection Safeguards which were due to come in to replace DoLS because it was recognised some time ago by Government that the DoLS process is not fit for purpose. Therefore, work is ongoing locally (and in conjunction with regional and national partners) to understand the implications of the Liberty Protection Safeguards delay.

It was questioned whether there are separate community services for different communities. It was confirmed that there is a specific ISL within the Jewish community in order to be culturally appropriate.

RESOLVED - That the Committee noted the Year End performance and recommended the report to Cabinet for consideration on 18 July 2023.

Families OSC – 15th June 2023

The Committee received a report and presentation on 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 provided an overview of performance relevant to the role and remit of this committee.

The Committee were advised that 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 was set out and attached to the main report at Appendix 1. Areas of particular relevance to this Committee were highlighted in the 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.

The Committee were advised that 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.

The Committee were advised that 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 focused 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.

Work is ongoing to improve the presentation of performance information and analysis, particularly as a catalogue of data is gathered over time through performance reporting phases and it is important the PMIF is flexible and able to evolve to ensure it remains relevant.

- RESOLVED -
- i) That the information be noted
 - ii) The Committee welcomed the year end performance report attached to the main report at Appendix 1.
 - iii) The Committee recommended the performance report to Cabinet for consideration on 18 July 2023.

Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities – 19th June 2023

The Committee received a report which provided them with the Council's Performance and Improvement Framework, reporting performance on the delivery of Council priorities for the period April 2022 to March 2023. It also provided an overview of performance relevant to the role and remit of this Committee.

The analysis of performance for 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 against each of the 6 policy objectives of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy and the Balanced Scorecard was set out at Appendix 1. Areas of particular relevance to this Committee were highlighted in the 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.

The report outlined 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.

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.

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 consideration. It is intended that this training opportunity will be delivered in late September.

In addition to the report the Committee received a presentation on the Deep Dive area: Update on Apprenticeships. The Committee were advised on the national picture and the current position in the Council with regard to apprenticeships.

Details were also outlined on recent trends in number of apprentices and levy spend, the barriers to apprenticeships and entry requirements as well as actions to increase apprenticeship numbers and the apprenticeships delivered by colleagues from Learning and Skills.

- RESOLVED
- i) That the information be noted
 - ii) The Committee welcomed the year end performance report attached to the main report at Appendix 1 and deep dive presentation: Update on Apprenticeships
 - iii) The Committee recommended the performance report to Cabinet for consideration on 18 July 2023