

TITLE OF REPORT: Performance Management and Improvement Framework 6-Month Performance Report 2023/24

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

SUMMARY

This report provides the Committee with the Council's Performance Management & Improvement Framework, reporting performance on the delivery of Council priorities for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 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 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, with further updates to several measures agreed by Cabinet in subsequent reporting cycles. The reporting of 2022/23 performance was considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committees in June and agreed by Cabinet in July 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, and the Council's approach to resource allocation and budget setting.
 - A whole systems approach – embedded in our partnership working to deliver the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

6-month reports

4. The analysis of performance for 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023, against each of the six policy objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Balanced Scorecard is set out at Appendix 1. Areas of relevance to this Committee are highlighted in this report, however, the entire Performance Management & Improvement Framework is provided to enable members to see the full picture of performance across all priority areas at Appendix 1. Please note that the current version attached at Appendix 1 is a draft, as the performance data and analysis is regularly being updated due to the iterative nature of the framework.

5. The performance reports outline 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 6-month stage. Indicators are released throughout the year, some annually which do not coincide with this reporting cycle. Where provisional data is available this has been provided. The report sets out the current performance for the strategic and operational measures, where data is available, at the 6-month stage.
7. Cross-cutting key emerging areas already being highlighted are:
 - Budget pressures continue to provide a significant challenge.
 - Continuing demand pressures being faced by services, which are compounded by the ongoing recruitment and retention issues.
 - The cost-of-living and high interest rates are impacting the financial challenges facing many residents.
 - The economic climate continues to make things difficult for many businesses in the borough.
8. An overview will be provided at the Committee meeting, however, other key areas to highlight include:

Challenges include:

- There has been an increase in the numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals to 28.6% from 27% in the previous year, indicating that more children are living in poverty.
- 21.2% of pupils have missed 10% or more of school sessions during the Autumn and Spring terms in 2022/23.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of children permanently excluded from school in the last year with persistent disruptive behaviour cited as the reason for 43% of these.
- There has been a reduction in the number of children who need to be taken into care in last 12 months, however, the overall rate per 10,000 remains higher than regional comparators and statistical neighbours. There continues to be a challenge in ensuring sufficient placements locally for children in care.

Areas of excellence and improvement include:

- The overall rate of children in care is falling as edge of care strategies including the work of the pre-birth; FDAC and family group conferencing teams are being seen to have impact. Less children are entering care and more children are leaving care which is bringing the overall rate back in line with comparators.
- September saw the launch of the regional fostering hub which will bring combined marketing and initial on-boarding of proposed foster carers across all 12 North East Local Authorities to support increased sufficiency.
- Gateshead has been chosen as one of four local authorities to pilot the new Family Network Project announced by DFE in July 23. This comes with significant new investment to help to build on the edge of care strategies and work to support families

to care for children within their own networks and reduce the risk of children coming into the care of the Local Authority.

- The number of schools graded as Good or Outstanding exceeds 90%.

Actions include:

- Work on the Sufficiency Strategy is progressing to target, and an updated strategy will be completed in December 2023.
- An Alternative Provision Strategy is being developed to reduce the number of Permanent Exclusions. The Working Together to Improve Attendance Strategy document will be launched with schools / parents to support school attendance.
- Family Hubs launched across the council earlier in 2023 which will increase opportunities for early identification of needs and reduce the number of families escalating into statutory services for support.
- The service is currently in the process of registering an additional solo residential children's home and one three bedded children's home to support sufficiency of local homes for children in care.

Further development

9. Measures are being continuously reviewed to understand where changes may be needed to ensure the PMIF remains robust and relevant. The development of the Corporate Plan 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. Work continues to develop the framework further to ensure it is best placed to enable the Council to understand its performance against priorities.

Office of Local Government

10. In July 2023, the Government announced the establishment of a new government function, Office for Local Government (Oflog). The aim of this is to improve transparency and accountability. Oflog will be a new performance body for local government. Its aim is to provide authoritative and accessible data and analysis about the performance of local government and support its improvement.
11. There is a new online tool called Local Authority Data Explorer which brings together a selection of existing metrics across a subset of service areas for data that is available at different levels of local government. Oflog plan to add further service areas and expand existing areas, as the metrics are developed.
12. The initial metrics in July 2023 looked at by Oflog are in the areas of:
 - Adult Social Care;
 - Adult Skills;
 - Finance; and
 - Waste Management.
13. Future areas identified in November 2023. include:
 - Mayoral Combined Authorities (covering Business and Economic Growth, and Roads)

- Waste Management (Fly-tipping);
- Corporate & Finance;
- Children's Social Care;
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping;
- Public Health;
- Youth Justice & Accommodation; and
- Planning.

14. The Commercialisation and Improvement Team are continuing to monitor and discuss the development and expansion of metrics, as further information is released, and this will be incorporated into the ongoing development and evolution of the PMIF.

Digital

15. An online/digital format is currently in development. This will aim to cluster measures around key priority areas and allow users to filter performance information dependent on their area of interest, as well as presenting a visual representation of the performance data to be used alongside the analysis. This is a complex task and involves the Council's Digital Team but will aim to provide performance data at various levels from strategic to operational in an easily accessible way.

Recommendations

16. Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:
- Comment on the 6-month report at Appendix 1 and identify any areas for further scrutiny.
 - Recommend the performance report to Cabinet for consideration in January 2024.

Contact: Lindsay Murray

Ext: 2794