

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 6 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.

5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. An overview will be provided at the Committee meeting, however, other key areas to highlight include:

Challenges include:

 - The Repairs and Maintenance Improvement Plan Progress is updated regularly to HEHC. The purpose of the review was to improve productivity and performance, challenge convention and ensure that the form of the service is fit for purpose.
 - With changes to staff designation in the Joint Local Agreement all trade operatives can move between the different areas of work as needed. New processes for each area have addressed this. Reports on progress will continue to be presented to HEHC OSC.
 - The percentage of Stage 3 complaints to the Chief Executive has increased significantly over the period from April 2021. This coincides with the incorporation of The Gateshead Housing Company figures into reported council data.
 - More demand for housing from applicants with a high level of priority, including those with a homeless priority. Reduced availability of suitable single persons properties has led to increased use of temporary accommodation. Properties for larger households also rarely become available.
 - There are more incidences of private sector tenants being served eviction notices, and then requesting a council house in the same area (as the family have support networks, or schooling considerations).
 - There has been a 6% increase in the number of crimes recorded in Q1 of 2023/24 in Gateshead, and an increase of 7% across the Northumbria Police Force area.

Areas of excellence and improvement include:

- The number of housing properties vacant for 6 months or longer was 0.66% of housing stock at the end of Quarter 2. Due to the need to reduce numbers in temporary accommodation (mostly single persons) the focus has been on letting suitable single persons properties rather than on the oldest vacant properties. To be on target, the number would have needed to be thirty fewer. Over fifty of the vacant properties were in the process of being advertised, offered and let.
- Thirty-two properties are held in connection with major work, including structural work and work to ensure compliance and health and safety. This includes fifteen flats at Angel Court that are hoped to be let in the second half of 2023/24, and seven flats at Melbourne Court where roofing work is required.
- Rent collection of 97.31% at the half-year stage is very close to target of 97.50%. This is before the non-debit weeks in second half of the year when collection rate usually increases.
- Feedback from some of the sheltered schemes about their neighbourhood and estates has led to an estate tour to be undertaken by the Highways service to understand the issues and impact they are having, directly on the customers.

Actions include:

- Review new allocations policy now that it has gone live and some of the impacts can be evidenced.
- Prepare for managed migration of tenants on legacy benefits to Universal Credit from Jan 2024
- Data for Council Tax support has gradually increased over a period of time due to the knock-on effect of resources being used to deal with SIP and Energy Rebate Scheme. The resultant backlog of CTS claims is now being impacted on and performance has started to improve assisted by the service returning to a full staffing establishment for processing.

Further development

10. 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

11. 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.
12. 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.

13. The initial metrics in July 2023 looked at by Oflog are in the areas of:

- Adult Social Care;
- Adult Skills;
- Finance; and
- Waste Management.

14. 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.

15. 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

16. 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 different levels from strategic to operational in an easily accessible way.

Recommendations

17. Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities 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.

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