

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 with a revised approach 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 some 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, but some key areas to highlight are set out below :

Challenges include:

 - Following Chief Executive review, a number of Stage 3 complaints were upheld, with compensation agreed for twenty people. The value was determined by the Services in accordance with the circumstances of the complaints and the Local Government and Social Care and Housing Ombudsman's guidance.
 - In the latest 6-month period, the Ombudsman informed the Council that it had received twelve complaints, eleven of which they had decided not to investigate.
 - The percentage of Stage 3 complaints has increased significantly over the period from April 2021. This coincides with the incorporation of The Gateshead Housing Company back into the council and accordingly Housing figures added into the reported Council data.
 - Data Protection – there has been increase in breaches reported to DPO team (66 at this point last year, 123 this year), linked to the increased profile of the Data Protection team and better awareness of staff.
 - Average call duration is longer than in the same period in 2022: calls to Repairs, Benefits, Revenues and Customer Services are typically 30 to 90 seconds longer. The team received an additional 2,500 telephone calls in the first 6 months of this year in comparison to last year.
 - Historically most payment enquiries were from residents living in properties in the lowest Council Tax Band A, whereas now, we regularly receive contact from residents

living in Bands B, C, D and E who are reporting that they are finding it hard to maintain their Council Tax instalments.

- The cost-of-living crisis is also limiting the ability for people to pay for care. In terms of priority debts, a service user is more likely to pay for a service which can be cut off (energy) than a service the Council has a duty to provide.

Areas of excellence and improvement include:

- For most residents contacting the Council for transactional services, online has become the channel of choice. Typically, it is now the norm for well-designed online services to achieve a 70-90% uptake in comparison to the telephone. There are now over one hundred processes that have a consistent customer experience via self-service which are also supported via the contact centre.
- There has been a 13% increase in the volume of online payments compared to the previous period last year. The strategy continues to be to make online payments available for all payment processes. New online payment processes have been added for Planning, building control and licensing over the last 12 months which has aided the increase of take up.
- Telephony answer rate has seen improvement within Adult Social Care Direct.
- Health and Safety - a higher proportion of near misses is positive and a sign of a safety culture for work related incidents. Data also now includes schools.

Actions include:

- Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities OSC receives regular reports detailing housing performance, compliance and tenant satisfaction. Committee also receives reports specifying progress on the Repairs and Maintenance Improvement Plan.
- 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.
- Proposal to undertake an employee survey between Jan and March 2024, subject to approval.
- Standard Debt recovery procedures due to restart this year after having been paused during 2020/21-2022/23.

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, providing

authoritative and accessible data and analysis about the performance of local government, and supporting 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 distinct 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. Corporate Resources 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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