

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

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

Purpose of the report

1. This report sets out the 6-Month 2023/24 assessment of performance against the Council's Performance Management and Improvement Framework (PMIF) along with the comments made by Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Cabinet is asked to approve the 2023/24 6-Month performance report at Appendix 2. And note the key discussions and from the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees at Appendix 3.

Background

2. The corporate approach to performance management and improvement was approved by Cabinet on 20th April and agreed by Council on 27th May 2021 with the draft measures and interventions agreed by Cabinet in October 2021. The PMIF has a clear focus on policy and priorities, delivery, measurement, and analysis of impact to support effective resource allocation and is based on Thrive and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

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3. Analysis of performance has been undertaken for 1 April to 30 September 2023, against each of the six policy objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Balanced Scorecard. High level analysis of performance highlighted several cross-cutting key issues which are set out in Appendix 1.
4. The 2023/24 6-Month performance report is at Appendix 2. 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. In line with approach agreed with CMT, these have been informed by services.
5. Services provide this information and use this evidence to compare and analyse trend and craft appropriate action and responses. Where performance is highlighting a deviation from expected position this is highlighted in the analysis section with defined mitigation provided by services.
6. Each of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees considered the 6-Month performance report in its entirety and received a presentation on the development work around digital access to future PMIF data. A summary of the discussions at each OSC is also set out in Appendix 1.
7. A copy of the draft minutes from each Committee is at Appendix 3.

Proposal

8. It is proposed that Cabinet consider and agree the performance report at Appendix 2 including the analysis, areas for improvement, and the key issues highlighted during discussions by Overview and Scrutiny Committees, which are summarised in Appendix 1.
9. These will be taken forward and the PMIF will be aligned to the Budget approach agreed by Cabinet. Further development will take place to address comments made by Overview and Scrutiny Committees, in preparation for the Year End performance cycle which will commence in April 2024.
10. The development of the PMIF is iterative and will be a tool used throughout the year to manage performance and improvement against priorities and see the impact of policy and resource decisions.

Recommendation

11. It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - (i) Approves the 2023/24 6-Month performance report at Appendix 2.
 - (ii) Notes the key discussions and from the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees at paragraph 8 of Appendix 1 and in the minutes at Appendix 3.
 - (iii) Notes the ongoing development work being undertaken at paragraphs 9-11 of Appendix 1.

For the following reason:

- To ensure performance supports the delivery and achievements of Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives.

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Policy Context

1. The proposal supports the Council's priorities for Thrive by setting out a framework to manage performance against its key priorities for thrive, tackle inequalities and the impact being made on delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Performance Management and Improvement Framework (PMIF) analysis in the report informs future policy decisions as well as resource allocation to ensure these are focused on Council priorities as part of a broader evidence-based approach.
2. The Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy sets out the financial context for the Council's resource allocation process and budget setting. The proposals support the aims within the Strategy by aligning performance with the overall approach to the budget to support the financial sustainability for the Council ensuring that resources are deployed on the outcomes for making Gateshead a place where everyone Thrives.

Background

3. Local authorities use performance management to identify how well they are delivering outcomes for local people. The Council's current performance framework has been in place for several years and has evolved over time.
4. The PMIF was agreed by Cabinet (20 April 2021) and Council (27 May 2021) that better reflects the priorities of the Council – the delivery of the Council's Thrive policy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
5. The engagement along with research into best practice was used to develop the PMIF and was agreed by Council in June 2021. The initial draft measures were considered and agreed by Cabinet in October 2021, with further updates to several measures agreed by Cabinet in July 2022. Since then, progress has been focused on the ongoing implementation and embedding of the framework and the reporting of performance to members, as well as working with services to ensure measures remain meaningful.

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6. The analysis of performance for the 6-Month stage against each of the six policy objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Balanced Scorecard is set out at Appendix 2. It outlines the challenges, achievements, actions, and resources for each policy objective. It also contains performance data including strategic and operational measures, resources, and risks.
7. Cross-cutting key areas highlighted by services 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. Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the 6-Month performance report in its entirety and received an update on the establishment of the Office for Local Government (Oflog) and development of an additional digital approach for the presentation of PMIF data. A summary of the discussions for each OSC is set out below:

Corporate Resources OSC

- Members raised several issues and discussion points including:
 - A query was raised on school exclusions, but it was agreed that this would be referred to Families OSC.
 - It was noted that the online dashboard was a very impressive, precise, and thorough piece of work, but needs to be user-friendly so more visuals and less wording would be helpful, to help interpret the themes.
 - Are there commonalities or un-commonalities between the Oflog data and the Councils PMIF, and how will this be managed.
 - The threat of cyber-attacks or a loss of IT access, and how the council would respond if we were victim to one.
 - Further detail required on the impact that the cost-of-living crisis is having on people's ability to -pay for care.
 - The government consultation on the standing charge applied to energy; residents attempting to save energy are still faced with high energy costs due to the standing charges.
 - Where the baselines are still yet to be determined by services, it was requested that this is resolved by the Year-End stage.

Families OSC

- Members comments and discussions focussed around:
 - The online dashboard would be more helpful if there were less wording, and better visuals; important to remember it will be mostly used on iPads so needs to be set up for that. Members are keen to have input into the ongoing development of the dashboard.
 - The increase in the number of children eligible for free schools meals, and the decrease in the % of take up of school meals. Committee would like further detail on how we can improve this and ensure that pupils who are entitled are registered, and pupils who are receiving FSM take them up.
 - The number of pupils missing school sessions seems quite high – a breakdown showing individual schools required.
 - School exclusions has increased significantly, and it seems to be mainly due to academies – consideration needed around what can be done about this.

- Sought confirmation that the Council's still seeks to ensure that no looked after children are ever excluded from school.

Housing, Environment & Healthier Communities OSC

- Members asked for further information or clarity on:
 - A glossary of terms would be helpful within the online dashboard.
 - Oflog and homelessness / rough sleeping – would the online dashboard give us information on how many rough sleepers are in Gateshead and where they are.
 - The ongoing review of allocations policy by the strategic housing board – members were informed that there would be an update within the next few days.

Care, Health & Wellbeing OSC

- Members discussions focussed on:
 - The impact that the recent shift in government policy relating to the skill-level and salary required for migrants will have on Gateshead, and how this might affect our ability to perform.
 - Whether we are on track to meet our target in relation to the proportion of adults with a learning disability living in their own home or with their family, and how we are performing in comparison to geographical and statistical neighbours / national levels.
 - Safeguarding concerns that are raised but do not meet the criteria measure – how do we determine that they don't meet the criteria, and what happens with those reports.
 - Rough sleeping seems to be growing by the day nationally – although numbers in Gateshead are relatively low, it is still a big concern. Very challenging to help people given the current house prices.
 - Oflog seems to be yet another interference in local government which will produce no appreciable benefit.

Further development and review

9. The approach will be continually reviewed to ensure it is effective in enabling performance management and improvement towards better outcomes. The flexible, iterative approach that has been adopted to develop the PMIF, reflects the changing circumstances that the Council works within and aims to ensure that performance against priorities can be managed in the most efficient and pragmatic way being responsive to changing needs to ensure it will remain fit for purpose.
10. A review of the presentation of performance reports was undertaken with a reduction in narrative and an expansion in the number of data sets to improve trend analysis, so it meets the request of the Corporate Resources OSC for data to include as a minimum the baseline, previous, and latest data sets.
11. An online/digital format is in its development phase. This will aim to cluster measures around key priority areas and present a visual representation of the performance data

to be used alongside the analysis. This is a complex task and will involve areas across the Council, link to existing data approaches such as Local Index of Need (LloN) but will provide performance data at various levels from strategic to operational in an accessible way. It is proposed that this will be accessible via the intranet initially, and internet eventually.

Alternative Options

12. An alternative option would be to identify alternative actions to address performance, however the activities recommended in the report are based on analysis of performance data and would support delivery of the Council's Thrive policy.

Consultation

13. All Overview and Scrutiny Committees have considered the 6-Month performance reports. A copy of the minutes of each Committee is attached at Appendix 3. The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council have also been consulted on the proposal.

Implications of Recommended Option

14. Resources

- a. **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Resources and Digital confirms that the proposal will have no direct financial implications as a result of this report. The proposal aims to align performance with resources and enable better informed decision making.
- b. **Human Resource Implications** – There are no Human Resource implications arising directly from this report, although there are areas relating to employees highlighted in the report.
- c. **Property Implications** – There are no property implications arising directly from this report.

15. **Risk Management Implication** - The proposals will reduce the risk of the Council not achieving its priorities by enabling effective performance management across strategy corporate priorities.

16. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – There are no direct equalities and diversity implications arising from this report, however the framework has a focus on addressing inequalities.

17. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report.

18. **Health Implications** – While there are no direct health implications arising from this report, the PMIF is based on the six policy objectives within the Health and Well-being Strategy so will help to manage performance at a strategic level across a range of wider determinants of health.

19. **Climate Change and Sustainability Implications** – There are no climate change implications arising directly from this report, though the PMIF will seek to manage performance across a range of strategic priorities including climate change. There are no sustainability implications arising directly from this report.
20. **Human Rights Implications** – There are no human rights implications arising directly from this report.
21. **Ward Implications** – There are no implications for a specific ward arising directly from this report, though the framework will include a geographical focus on performance where appropriate.