

TITLE OF REPORT: Performance Management and Improvement Framework 6-Month Performance Report 2024/25

REPORT OF: Dale Owens, Chief Executive

SUMMARY

To report to the committee the Council's Performance Management and Improvement Framework (PMIF) 6-month report for the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024. The report also provides an overview of performance relevant to the role and remit of this committee.

Purpose of the PMIF

1. The PMIF enables the Council to know how it is delivering against the Thrive agenda. 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 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 2023/24 performance was considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committees in June and agreed by Cabinet in July 2024.
3. The PMIF aims to:
 - Enable the Council to know whether it is achieving its priorities (Thrive agenda).
 - 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 2024 to 30 September 2024, 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 PMIF 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 this 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 measures, where data is available, at this stage.

7. Cross-cutting key emerging areas already being highlighted are:

- Budget pressures continue to provide a significant challenge across the Council.
- Continuing demand pressures being faced by services with increased complexity and conflicting priorities in many areas.
- There are ongoing issues with recruitment and retention across all areas.
- Many services across the Council are working closely with key partners and local communities to deliver support to residents in need.
- The cost-of-living and high interest rates are continuing to impact the financial challenges already facing some residents.
- The economic climate continues to make things difficult for many businesses in the borough, as well as the global economic and political uncertainty impacting level of business investment.
- Many services are actively engaging with customers to improve their offer and/or customer experience.

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

Challenges include:

- The permanent exclusion rate continues to be of concern and although this is difficult to predict, it may stabilise but not reduce. The number of permanent exclusions from our maintained schools is significantly less than from our academies (10 / 24).
- The number of children who are Persistently Absent (90% or less attendance) has decreased slightly at this six month point however the concern is that this is because their attendance has further reduced, and they now count in our Severely Absent (50% or less attendance) which has increased slightly.
- Over the last six months, the number of children and young people with EHCP's have increased by 137 (11.1%) This is due to an increased number of referrals, particularly from parents over this period.
- The proportion of Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCP) not completed within the 20 weeks (excluding exceptions) has increased by 8%. In part, this is due to some staffing issues in relation to Business Support arrangements for the SEND process but also due to an increased number of Tribunal appeals, which means that it has not been possible to achieve the 20-week completion period.

Areas of excellence and improvement include:

- We continue to see a decrease in the numbers of 16 to 18 year olds, who are not in education, employment or training (3.9% compared to 4.7% last year).
- The number of both maintained and academy schools with a Good or Outstanding OFSTED grade has risen by 4% to 96% which is excellent.
- The number of maintained schools, supported by our School Improvement Service, with a Good or Outstanding OFSTED grade has risen by an impressive 7% and is clear evidence of the effectiveness of this team.

Actions include:

- Further strengthen practice and ensure that the voice of the child is considered and influencing children and young people's plans.
- Further embed the approach to restorative and relational practice across the service through a bespoke training offer with an external provider over the next two years.
- The SEND Thresholds were launched in January 2024, with the aim of improving the quality and consistency of Quality First Teaching, identification of need and the provision of resources across schools.
- Gateshead Alternative Provision Strategy developed in partnership with SEND to reduce the number of Permanent Exclusion and to provide appropriate early intervention to vulnerable CYP with attendance and behaviour concerns.
- Working Together to Improve Attendance Strategy has been launched with schools in order to develop a contextualised Gateshead Attendance Strategy, and to share good practice in order to increase attendance for children who are persistently absent.

Review PMIF 2024-25

9. The development of the new Corporate Plan sets out the strategic approach and priorities for the period 2023-2028 to enable employees, councillors, residents, partners and other stakeholders understand:
- a. the strategic priorities of the council – so that resources, delivery plans, strategies and operational activity can be aligned to them; and
 - b. how the council will continue to transform and drive improvement in services to deliver our priorities and operate in the most effective, productive, and impactful way.

In line with this new plan, it is necessary to review the current Performance Management and Improvement Framework. Initial activity commenced in October 2024, with officers across services reflecting at an in-person workshop on our current framework and shaping areas where improvement and advancements could be realised. Further work will continue during the year, which will include engagement with councillors on their views on what will assist them in their role.

Office for Local Government

10. In July 2023, the Government announced the establishment of a new government function, Office for Local Government (Oflog). 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. A link has now been added to the Performance Management pages of the intranet to allow access for members and officers. [Home - Local Authority Data Explorer - GOV.UK](#)

Recommendations

11. Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- Comment on the 6-month report at Appendix 1 and identify any areas for further scrutiny.
- Agree to engagement opportunities for a revised PMIF.
- Recommend the performance report to Cabinet for consideration in January 2025.

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