

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 & Improvement Framework 6-month report for the period 1 April to 30 September 2024. 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 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 2024 and agreed by Cabinet in July 2024.
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 system 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 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 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 strategic and operational measures, where data is available, at the six-month stage.
7. Cross-cutting key areas 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 continuing effects of recent 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:

- A total of 53 Chief Executive reviews were completed across all services with 26 being upheld. Compensation of £10,950 was awarded over 18 cases.
- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman: There were 2 final decisions made following the investigation of 17 complaints made against the council complaints, with £300 compensation awarded over the 2 cases.
- The percentage of overall Council spend with local suppliers has decreased by 0.74% since year end 23/24. Further investigation is required to determine if there is a specific reason for this.
- Lower completion rates of employee engagement survey by those who we cannot email the survey link direct to as they don't have a Gateshead email address. Paper surveys were issued to this cohort of employees (1793 in total) and only 294 were completed. Of the 294, 128 employees used the QR code on the paper survey to complete the survey online using their own mobile phones or IT equipment.

Areas of excellence and improvement include:

- Employee survey completion rates in some services were excellent. The overall completion rate for a first attempt was 47.02%. This is a good result particularly when a high proportionate of the organisation consists of front-line services.
- Best Companies have analysed the employee survey results and accredited the Council as a "One to Watch" organisation which shows the Council has 'good' levels of engagement as an employer, and our workplace engagement shows promising signs for the future.

- Over the last 12 months we have seen an overall increase of digital uptake reaching an average of 89% across the basket of activities reported on. Typically, we see a range between 72-91% of customers choosing to self-serve online.
- Satisfaction with digital services remains high with an average rate of over 80% of customers being either satisfied or very satisfied.
- A new pipeline management tool has been implemented within Corporate Commissioning & Procurement which will aid the requirement of the new Procurement Act to publish an 18-month pipeline of Council procurements each year so businesses, especially those local to Gateshead, can better prepare to participate in tender exercises.

Actions include:

- Employees will be invited to take part of a series of action/idea generating planning sessions where they will be taken through the employee survey results in more detail. A comprehensive action plan for the whole Council will then be collated and monitored to ensure that we follow up on all actions identified and can report back to our employees on progress in a “you said, we did” approach.
- A review of the Corporate Complaints Policy is underway and will require a redesign of the Council’s complaints-handling processes and systems.
- Investigate if there are any specific reasons for the decrease in percentage of overall Council spend with local suppliers.
- Work with NEPO and Economic Development to ensure Gateshead suppliers are ready for the new Procurement Act, register on the Government’s Central Digital Platform and get registered and receive training and support on the use of NEPO’s new eProcurement platform Open which is to be adopted by the Council starting in October / November 2024.

PMIF Review 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 PMIF. 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 (Oflog)

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. <https://oflog.data.gov.uk/home?area=NE8+1HH>

Recommendations

11. 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.
 - Agree to engagement opportunities for a revised PMIF.
 - Recommend the performance report to Cabinet for consideration in January 2025.

Contact: Iain Burns

Ext: 2184