

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

REPORT OF: Dale Owens, Chief Executive

Purpose of the Report

1. 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)

2. The Performance Management and Improvement Framework (PMIF) enables the Council to know how it is delivering against its 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

3. 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.
4. 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

5. The analysis of performance for 1 April 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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 6-month stage.
9. 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.
10. An overview is provided in the analysis section by Services in Appendix 1, however, below are some of the key areas to highlight:

Challenges and actions include:

- Demand for council housing in Gateshead remains high. However, whilst there is high demand for houses and two-bedroom bungalows, and for one-bedroom flats that are not reserved for older persons; in contrast, there is low demand for flats and bedsits with an age restriction. This is under review as part of the wider voids improvement plan.

- Numbers on the housing register remain exceptionally high and there is a backlog in processing applications. A detailed improvement is in place and the backlog has begun to reduce.
- Significant overspend on the B&B budget. A B&B and temporary accommodation cost recovery plan is in place to address this overspend with a range of actions over a 3 - year period that aims to stop the use of B&B in Gateshead other than in an emergency, and to ensure no subsequent overspends.
- Out of time repairs. Whilst reducing, actions continue to be put in place to continue service improvement including works internalisation.
- The need to be compliant with Awaabs Law. Actions include current recruitment to a specialist damp and mould team and adoption of a new damp and mould policy.
- Highway repairs within 10 days – services report the fall in completion is due to weather and a subsequent backlog which is being worked through.

Areas of excellence and improvement include:

- The Rent and Income Team have delivered £3.2 million in financial gains for council tenants so far in 2024/25, already ahead of the £3m in the full year 2023/24.
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in place supported by an action plan, the Homelessness Charter and Gateshead Homeless Forum.
- Strong partnership arrangements with Oasis Community Housing supporting those at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping with multiple or complex needs resulting in low numbers of rough sleepers.
- Successful bids for Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI), Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP) and Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) funding and funding allocated to improve response for victims of domestic abuse.
- Improvements to two services in Gateshead were implemented by Go North East on Sunday 1 September 2024, funded by the North East Combined Authority's Bus Service Improvement Plan. These improvements see more frequent services on the Tyne Valley Ten 10/10A/10B and Angel 21 services.

Further Actions include:

- Implementation of actions outlined in Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which sets out our four key strategic aims with associated actions to tackle homelessness.
- The Housing Improvement and Self-Assessment Programme established including several workstreams and a focus on compliance with our regulatory standards. Improvement boards and task and finish subgroups in place for Homelessness, Voids and Housing Register, Building Safety and Compliance, Specialist and Supported Accommodation.
- Construction Services – approved a business case for the creation of a dedicated damp and mould delivery team. This will allow us to create dedicated workstreams and priority routes; Working with ICT to develop a predictive model for forecasting damp and mould cases and disrepair claims. This will aid in directing resources and developing standardised solutions to property types.
- Tree planting to continue at specific times during the year, but currently exceeds 21,000.

PMIF Review 2024-25

11. 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.
12. 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 (Oflog)

13. In July 2023, the previous 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

14. 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.
- Agree to engagement opportunities for a revised PMIF.
- Recommend the performance report to Cabinet for consideration in January 2025.