

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 22 September 2011

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Policy and Resources

SUBJECT: Revision of the Performance Management Framework

WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Board concerning progress in the review of the Council's existing performance management and monitoring arrangements and provide the opportunity for the consideration of a future preferred approach.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

That Executive Board approves the revised performance management framework as follows:

- (1) the development and use of a priority based performance report (as shown in the example) for each of the Council's six corporate priorities in 2012/13 for each Policy & Performance Board,**
- (2) the presentation of Directorate Overview Reports on a quarterly basis and progress against the Corporate Plan on a six monthly basis for 2012/13; and**
- (3) existing departmentally focused performance reports, developed for operational management purposes, continue to be made available to Members via the Council intranet, as advertised in the Members bulletin.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background and Context

- 3.1 On 6th September 2011 Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board received and endorsed a recommendation to Executive Board concerning the revision to existing performance reporting arrangements in light of emerging national and local circumstances as detailed below.
- 3.2 Changes to the National Performance Frameworks, such as the abolition of the National Indicator Set, the Local Area Agreement and Comprehensive Area Assessments, have afforded the Council some

degree of flexibility concerning the development of its future performance management arrangements.

- 3.3 Such changes reflect a transition away from authorities being performance managed by central government and toward being held to account at a local level through the transparent provision of accessible performance data.
- 3.4 Whilst such changes allow the development of a performance framework based upon local priorities it has to be remembered that national inspection framework for Children's Services and Adults Social Care by OFSTED and CQC respectively remain in place and therefore will need to be supported. Similarly, performance data will continue to be submitted as prescribed in the national single data set.
- 3.5 In light of such changes this Board endorsed a review of existing arrangements in order that in that the Council maintains a planning and performance framework that allows the identification and ongoing monitoring of key activities and performance measures that meet organisational needs. Performance management also continues to be important in our demonstration of value for money and outward accountability.

Progress to date

- 3.6 The consideration of future performance management and monitoring arrangements has run in tandem with the development of the revised Sustainable Community Strategy and Delivery Plan and Corporate Plan for the period 2011 – 2016.
- 3.7 These plans identify local priorities at a partnership and organisational level respectively and work to identify key performance measures and targets for each of the priority areas is now at an advanced stage. An update presentation will be delivered to Members on key objectives and key outcomes for the SCS and Corporate Plan on 6th September.
- 3.8 Also to aid the future target setting process a corporate template has been developed for all measures contained within the SCS Delivery Plan and Corporate Plan, for the period to 2016, to provide evidence based rationale. The process of identifying measures and targets to enable us to see progress in delivering the SCS and Corporate plan is an ongoing process over the term of this plan and will need fine tuning and refining as we go.
- 3.9 At the last meeting of this Board it was agreed that a review should be undertaken based upon an agreed set of principles based around the better management of performance information in terms of both strategic focus and volume.

3.10 As a result of this agreement a review of existing arrangements was undertaken which involved:-

- Capturing the views of Lead and Senior Officers and Elected Members in a number of forums.
- A review of adopted practice elsewhere e.g. in other neighbouring Councils, Primary Care trusts and best practice in Local Government and the Private sector.
- Consideration of the potential requirements and expectations of local authority self-regulation.
- The ongoing need to ensure that available resources are being deployed to best effective in addressing strategic priorities of the Council.

3.11 The primary findings of this review were that:-

- The adoption of a single departmentally based report was unlikely to meet the needs of the various audiences who receive, or may wish to receive, information reacting to Council performance e.g. Elected Members, Management Team, the local community.
- The amount of data contained within existing monitoring reports is extensive, with the inherent danger of information overload, and the relationships between strategic priorities, key actions and key impact and output measures are not readily apparent.
- The Directorate Overview Report as presented at Children and Young People PPB, at the request of the Chair of the PPB from quarter 2 of 2010/11, has been well received by Members to date. This report provides a more strategic summary of the key issues arising from performance in Quarter for the Directorate and aligned priority. At the same time access to the full departmental quarterly reports is available on the Members Information Bulletin via a link to an intranet page, to reduce the amount of paperwork sent out with the agendas and to allow Members access to the reports as soon as they have become available. This also has provided Members with an opportunity to give advance notice of any questions, points or requests for further information that will be raised to ensure the appropriate Officers are available at the PPB meeting. An example of the Directorate Overview Report for Quarter 4 of 2010/11 is attached for information – Appendix 1.
- Whilst the existing report format provides Elected Members with oversight as to what individual departments are doing / achieving the extent to which the Council is collectively making progress towards the corporate priority area is less clear.

- Additionally it is unlikely that the present format of performance reports would be suitable for the purposes of outward accountability and in informing public perceptions concerning the Council's achievements.

Future reporting arrangements

- 3.12 As a result of these findings it is suggested that the authority develops an approach to the future use of performance information that is, as far as possible, focussed primarily upon the needs of the receiving audience as opposed to being determined by the existing organisational structure.
- 3.13 This would mean constructing a priority based performance report that would allow Elected Members to monitor the activities that are being undertaken and the progress being made in achieving targets for each of the measures for each priority area contained within the Corporate Plan. This would continue to have a narrative element to detail key developments and emerging issues and actions taken to date against key objectives and performance measures and indicators. The report would be shorter and a more analytical document drawing out the key messages regarding performance across the priorities.
- 3.14 It is hoped that it will be possible to provide trend charts for the majority of the information within reports but this will be dependant upon the nature and availability of data. An example is shown for Children & Young peoples Services in Appendix 2. Relevant benchmark information will be provided where available for example CIPFA / Ofsted / APSE family groups.
- 3.15 It is therefore proposed that as an element of the business planning cycle for the coming financial year each of the PPB's would be supported in identifying those key business objectives and performance measures and targets from across departments that would support the delivery of their specific priority area, given that the PPB structure reflects the Council's six priorities.
- 3.16 In addition and where the availability of data permits, additional measures may be identified to provide some local context. Such information would provide the basis of a priority based report to be provided to Members through PPB agendas or separate Performance Sub Groups.
- 3.17 A worked example of this style of report, relating to the area of Employment, Learning and Skills Performance Sub Group is included as Appendix 3. It has to be remembered that this approach has been developed within the context of one priority area and some fine tuning may be required as individual priority based reports are developed.
- 3.18 It is proposed that the frequency of priority based reports for 2012/13 follows the existing quarterly timeframe although it should be remembered that for some impact measures the rate of change may only occur over longer timeframes.

- 3.19 Additionally information may be constrained by the frequency at which data becomes available. This is particularly relevant in relation to nationally sourced data with details emerging from various Government Department business plans and allied national benchmarking information.
- 3.20 Directorate Overview Reports could also be presented on a quarterly basis, and with progress against the Corporate Plan reported on a six monthly basis for 2012/13, to ensure that there are appropriate actions planned or in place to secure their achievement.
- 3.21 Existing departmentally focussed performance reports would still be constructed for operational management purposes and these would continue to be made available to Members via the Council's intranet site.
- 3.22 These reports and other operational reports on a ward basis e.g. to support "the Team around the family agenda" for example, would also be available to support future scrutiny arrangements of services by Members and Inspection regimes for Ofsted and Adult Social Care. It is also relevant to note that for the last announced inspection of Safeguarding and Looked after Children Services, which was assessed as "performing well", that under the inspection schedule for Performance Management and Quality assurance; the authority was judged by inspectors as 'Outstanding'.
- 3.23 Further consideration of content of local annual performance reports as and its presentation to public in an accessible format will be required, to ensure that the Council is effectively carrying out its commitment and meeting local needs in line with the 'transparency agenda' and further Government guidance and expectations.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Council's Performance Management Framework will continue to form a key part of the Council's policy framework.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct costs associated with this approach.

In the present climate of severe financial constraints the ongoing monitoring of performance is critical to ensuring appropriate action is undertaken to enable the delivery of our priorities.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 6.1 Existing and future performance frameworks at both local and national level are linked to the delivery of the Councils' priorities.

- 6.2 Departmental service objectives and performance measures, both local and national are linked to the delivery of the Council's priorities. The introduction of a Directorate Overview report and the identification of business critical objectives/ milestones and performance indicators will further support organisational improvement.
- 6.3 Although some objectives link specifically to one priority area, the nature of the cross - cutting activities being reported, means that to a greater or lesser extent a contribution is made to one or more of the Council priorities.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The proposed approach to the development of themed reports will allow the authority to both align its activities to the delivery of organisation and partnership priorities and provide appropriate information to all relevant stakeholders in accordance with the "transparency agenda".
- 7.2 A more strategic focus and evidence based approach to target setting would further support the tracking of progress over time and support effective decision making and the resources allocation process.
- 7.3 Performance Indicators are used by external agencies and the public at large in informing any judgement they make as to how the authority is currently performing.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

Minority and disadvantaged groups and geographic areas are involved with and taken into account in all stages of performance management, including planning, data collection and analysis, service delivery, policy and service development and the impact of policies.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place	Contact Officer
National Inspection Framework documents for Children's Services and Adult Social care	2 nd Floor Municipal Buildings, Kingsway, Widnes	Hazel Coen DM Performance & Improvement