

Title of meeting: Governance and Audit and Standards Committee

Date of meeting: 28th February 2024

Subject: Corporate Performance Report - Q3 2023/24

Report by: Kelly Nash, Corporate Performance Manager

Wards affected: n/a

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To report significant performance issues, arising from Q3 2023-24 performance monitoring, to Governance and Audit and Standards committee (GAS) and highlight areas for further action or analysis.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Governance and Audit and Standards Committee is asked to:
- 1) note the report in the revised format;
 - 2) agree if any further action is required in response to performance issues highlighted

3. Background

- 3.1 The quarterly performance reports are compiled from information across the authority relating to priority performance areas, set out in the Corporate Plan 2023-24, agreed at Cabinet in July 2023. This document refreshed the mission for the Council to work together with partners and communities to be a champion for our city and improve the lives of our residents, and to protect and enhance our environment, tackling the causes of climate change and creating a green city. In summary, the plan sets out that:

- **We will improve the lives of our residents - priorities:**
 - support individuals and families struggling to make ends meet
 - make sure people feel safe and supported in their homes and communities
 - ensure people have access to the health and care services they need
 - work with partners, including Portsmouth's schools, to improve educational attainment and opportunities for children and young people in the city

- create homes, jobs and economic opportunities in the city, including by regenerating major sites
- make sure our residents have the housing they need
- put culture at the heart of our city's success

- **We will protect and enhance our environment - priorities:**
 - reduce our own carbon emissions • help residents and business reduce their carbon emissions
 - prioritise sustainable travel and improve transport systems in the city to reduce the environmental impact and improve journey times
 - ensure that the city has a healthy and resilient natural environment
 - reduce the waste generated by the city, and make sure we dispose of our waste responsibly

- **We will be a champion for our city - priorities:**
 - ensure Portsmouth is a city equipped for the future and that residents have the skills they need
 - get the best possible deal for our residents by lobbying and leading at a regional and national level to make sure the city's voice is heard
 - be an innovative and efficient organisation that values its staff and is at the front of new developments so we are learning and delivering the best possible services.

3.4 The heart of the plan is about providing the services that residents value. The updated plan shows that our residents rely on us to:

- Ensure older people and vulnerable adults are looked after and supported to live independently
- Maintain our transport infrastructure, parks, open spaces and buildings
- Offer housing services
- Support education, early years and children with special educational needs
- Keep children safe and families together
- Improve the health and emotional wellbeing of residents
- Encourage economic development
- Provide planning services
- Support culture, museums and libraries
- Provide benefits and collect council tax and business rates
- Collect their bins and offer recycling opportunities
- Keep the city clean, tidy and safe
- Maintain support services and roles that enable the organisation to run efficiently and effectively and enable staff working on the frontline to focus on delivering services for our residents and communities.

3.5 The Corporate Plan brings all these elements together and shows how everything links up. The performance reports mirror the two key delivery-focused priorities and also include a section around corporate health, which looks at the organisation as an entity. Appendix 1 looks at issues relating to

improving people' lives, Appendix 2 considers our work on protecting and enhancing the environment and Appendix 3 looks at corporate health issues.

- 3.6 Reports provide a broad commentary on areas of interest around the priorities in respect of achievements, challenges and risks and upcoming priority activity. These commentaries are supported by a broad set of performance indicators which highlight performance and reports against key transformational priorities in support of the corporate priorities. Where possible, and to aid interpretation, performance and progress is given a RAG (red; amber; green) where:
- Green is improving; exceeding or on plan
 - Amber is no change or some degree of uncertainty about performance
 - Red is deterioration, failing to achieve plan or a high level of concern.
- 3.7 The graphs shown in the annexes all allow for a target or benchmark to be set, although in some cases this will not have been done as it may not be appropriate.
- 3.8 The report is presented in broadly the format which had been received favourably at previous meetings of GAS, but feedback on future reporting format is welcome. It should also be noted that at a previous discussion, it was noted that the indicators focus more on activity than high level outcome. In respect of quarterly monitoring, it is true that these tend to be more short-term, activity indicators to demonstrate that the organisation is undertaking the tasks that it believes needs to be done to achieve compliance with statutory responsibilities or to improve outcomes. However, at the end of the year, the annual narrative report presented alongside the statement of accounts provides a clear sense of how the activity has supported the achievement of longer term outcomes set out in the corporate plan and will consider how activity has influenced these measures to inform future planning.
4. **Key themes emerging**
- 4.1 Firstly, it is clear that in a number of demand-led services, the level of demand driven by need is remaining high. This is seen in indicators looking at children's services, adults services and housing in particular. In many cases, there are activities taking place to prevent need arising at an earlier stage or to find alternative means of support, but there will be many factors at play in driving the demand for service. All of these areas clearly present challenges around costs, impact on workforce, organisational risks and most importantly, outcomes to the residents affected, many of whom will be vulnerable.
- 4.2 It is notable that preventative practice continues strongly, and examples of these services will include safe at home visits, community connectors and independence and wellbeing services, work on neurodiversity assessments and relational practice. There are also some very positive messages emerging around practice, so in our children's services, there is positive reporting about the quality and effectiveness of plans, work around family safeguarding and return from care, support for care experienced young people; and work in our adults' services around safeguarding and risk.

4.3 The reports also highlight challenges across the organisation around workforce, in terms of recruiting and retaining the right skills to organisation, and the budget position, which continues to be challenging.

4.4 Most notably, what emerges from the report is the breadth of activity underway to deliver the vital services that our residents value, but also the work that is happening alongside this to keep on making our services more effective and more efficient. Reports also highlight the range of transformational change projects underway in the city.

5. Productivity plans

5.1 On 24th January, the Secretary of State for DLUCH announced further financial support for local government. The full announcement went on to say:

*"Looking ahead, we know that there is work to be done between national and local government to improve productivity in local government, as part of our efforts to return the sector to sustainability in the future. Whilst the new funding announced today is an important part of these efforts, alongside ongoing work in adults' and children's social care, we can go further. **That is why today, we are asking local authorities to produce productivity plans setting out how they will improve service performance and reduce wasteful expenditure to ensure every area is making best use of taxpayers' money.** I encourage local authorities to consider whether expenditure on discredited equality, diversity and inclusion programmes meets this objective."*

5.2 Further information was provided on February 6th, in a ministerial letter that set out that productivity plans should set out how local authorities will improve service performance and reduce wasteful expenditure.

5.3 The letter confirmed that Government will monitor these plans, and funding settlements in future will be informed by performance against these plans, although no information was provided about how this will work. The letter states that plans should be short and draw on work councils have already done, identifying ways to unlock productivity improvements and setting out the key implementation milestones. Plans should be published by July 2024 before the House rises for the summer recess, and they must be agreed by Council Leaders and members and published on local authority websites, together with updates on progress.

5.4 There is an expectation that they will cover 4 main areas:

- 1) transformation of services to make better use of resources;
- 2) opportunities to take advantage of advances in technology and make better use of data to inform decision making and service design;
- 3) ways to reduce wasteful spend within systems, including specific consideration of expenditure on consultants and discredited staff Equality, Diversity and Inclusion programmes – this does not include programmes designed to promote integration and civic pride, and counter extremism; and



4) barriers preventing activity that the Government can help to reduce or remove.

5.5 We have been informed that further guidance will be issued in due course.

6. Integrated impact assessment

6.1 This report does not recommend any changes to services or policies and therefore an impact assessment has not been required. Any matters arising through performance or value for money consideration will be considered as a discrete process, and separate IIAs will be completed for these areas of work.

7. Legal implications

7.1 The report has incorporated legal implications and accordingly there are no other immediate legal implications arising from this report.

8. Director of Finance's comments

8.1 There are no financial implications to bring to Member's attention at this stage. However, it should be noted that there could be financial implications following further exploration of any of the performance issues raised in this report, and related future reports could result in financial implications. These will be flagged to Members at the appropriate time.

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Signed by: Paddy May, Corporate Strategy Manager

Appendices:

- Appendix One - Performance Report - Improving People's Lives
- Appendix Two - Performance Report - Protecting and Enhancing our Environment
- Appendix Three - Performance Report - Corporate Health

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:



Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by: