

OPEN

Corporate Policy Committee

13 June 2024

Performance Report – Q4 2023/24

Report of: David Brown – Director of Governance and Compliance

Report Reference No: CPC/03/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

- 1 To provide the Committee with an oversight of organisational performance against the priorities and vision set out within the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25.
- 2 This report covers Q4 of 2023/24, 1st January 2024 to 31st March 2024.
- 3 This report supports the responsibility of the Corporate Policy Committee to have a co ordinating role across all other committees and to exercise corporate oversight of outcomes, performance, budget monitoring and risk management.
- 4 To help the committee to consider any amendments in performance reporting, and/or additional data and intelligence that should be included within performance management reporting.
- 5 Appendix 1 provides the detail of performance and progress against priorities.

Executive Summary

- 6 This report gives an update on performance against the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan. It describes performance in Q4 (January 2024 to March 2024) against the objectives within the Corporate Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the organisational performance in Q4 of 2023/24.

Background

- 7 The Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25 outlines 20 priorities for the Council, 6 aligned with the "Open" aim, to be an open and enabling organisation, 8 priorities are aligned to the "Fair" aim, a Council which enables and cares about people and 6 priorities are aligned to the "Green" aim, a thriving and sustainable place. The 20 priorities are as follows:

An open and enabling organisation

- Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making
- Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation
- Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation
- Look at opportunities to bring more income into the borough
- Support and develop our workforce to be confident, motivated, innovative, resilient and empowered
- Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents

A council which empowers and cares about people

- Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient
- Reduce health inequalities across the borough
- Protect and support our communities and safeguard children, adults at risk and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Be the best Corporate Parents to our children in care
- Support all children to have the best start in life
- Increase opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs
- Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential
- Reduce the reliance on long term care by improving services closer to home and providing more extra care facilities, including dementia services

A thriving and sustainable place

- A great place for people to live, work and visit
- Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods
- Reduce impact on the environment
- A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel
- Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all
- Be a carbon neutral council by 2025

- 8 This report reviews performance against priorities in the Corporate Plan and focuses upon a "One Council" approach to performance management. This includes a balance of quantitative and qualitative data.
- 9 The full Q4 performance report is at **Appendix 1**. This gives further details on progress made against delivery of the Corporate Plan during Q4 of the 2023/24 municipal year.
- 10 The number of staff network groups has declined during the year, with only 5 now meeting on a regular basis. A corresponding decrease in the number of active participants over the year has been reported, with 185 officers now actively participating in staff network groups.

- 11 The number of apprenticeships has increased, as expected, over the year to 65. This gradual increase was expected, though it is lower than the number reported in 2022/2023. At which point there was an outturn position of 162 apprentices, against a target of 152.
- 12 There are 2,869 FTE staff in Cheshire East Council as at Q4, a slight increase of 3 FTE since Q3, and an increase of 152 FTE since Q1. The vacancy rate across the Council has increased from 10.84% in Q3 to 12.16% (348 officers) in Q4.
- 13 There are 594.51 FTE staff in the Corporate Directorate Q4, a slight decrease on 595.25 in Q3. The vacancy rate in the Corporate Directorate has decreased from 11.68% in Q3 to 11.34% (67 officers) in Q4.
- 14 There are 843.43 FTE staff in Adults Health and Integration directorate Q4, a slight decrease on 848.21 in Q3. The vacancy rate across the Adults Health and Integration directorate has reduced from 15.17% in Q3 to 14.78% (125 officers) in Q4.
- 15 There are 833.43 FTE staff in the Children's directorate Q4, a slight increase on 824.49 in Q3. The vacancy rate across the Children's directorate has reduced from 11.3% in Q3 to 9.81% (82 officers) in Q4.
- 16 There are 592.87 FTE staff in the Place directorate Q4, a slight decrease on 601 FTE in Q3. The vacancy rate across the Place directorate has increased from 11.18% in Q3 to 12.71% (75 officers) in Q4.
- 17 There has also been a further reduction in staff turnover, from 3.5% in Q3 to 3.2% in Q4.
- 18 There has been a continued decrease in the number of agency staff from 297 in Q3 to 237 in Q4.
- 19 There has been a reduction in the variance between the forecast outturn and total net budget, reducing from 3.7% in Q3 to 2.4% in Q4.
- 20 Service committees receive performance information on a regular basis through their subject matter expert officers, specific to the subject of the committee. This performance report offers an oversight of progress against the Corporate Plan and should complement the more detailed performance, service specific dashboards that are considered at service committees.
- 21 **Open – An open and enabling organisation.**

Priorities

- Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making
- Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation
- Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation
- Look at opportunities to bring more income into the borough
- Support and develop our workforce to be confident, motivated, innovative, resilient and empowered
- Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents

- 22 98.7% of local taxation (council tax and business rates) were collected in Q4, a continued, increase on the previous quarter and is now at the level of the annual target of 98.7%
- 23 68% of Stage 2 complaints have been resolved within timescales, which represents a continued increase on 56% in Q2.
- 24 The number of freedom of information act responses completed within timescale has remained at 91% in Q4, and continues to fall into the "Adequate" category of compliance as set out by the Information Commissioner (ICO). The ICO has a minimum expectation of 90% compliance.
- 25 There has been an increase in the number of apprenticeships being provided by the Council, with 65 reported in Q4. This is an anticipated increase and aligns with patterns experienced in previous years.
- 26 **Fair – A Council which empowers and cares about people.**

Priorities

- Work together with our residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient
- Reduce health inequalities across the borough
- Protect and support our communities and safeguard children, adults at risk and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Be the best Corporate Parents to our children in care
- Support all children to have the best start in life
- Increase the opportunities for children, young adults and adults with additional needs
- Ensure all children to have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential
- Reduce the reliance on long term care by improving services closer to home and providing more extra care facilities, including dementia services

- 27 Challenges of cost and demand remain in both Adults and Childrens social care. However, the qualitative performance measures have indicated some positive progress in relation to childrens social care this quarter.
- 28 The rate of Education, Health and Care Plans completed within 20 weeks has declined to 46% this period and is below the national average of 59%. There has been an increase in the number of Children with an EHCP, with 4,664 plans now being reported in Q4, an increase from 4,573 in Q3.
- 29 The percentage of childrens social care assessments completed within 45 days has increased again during Q4, to 95% (compared to 88% in Q3). And remains above the National percentage of 82%. This is seen as an early indicator that, when needed, individuals are receiving support in a timely fashion.
- 30 The rate (and numbers) of cared for children has increased during Q4 to 541 children, a rate of 69 per 10,000. This is still below the national rate of 71 per 10,000 children.
- 31 In terms of education, the percentage of good and outstanding primary and secondary schools remain above the national average and has increased during the period from Q3 96% to Q4 95% (Primary Schools) and from Q3 91% to Q4 96% (Secondary Schools). Both measures are above the national average for each setting.
- 32 The number of children missing from education has increased from Q3 156 to Q4 218, which is now higher than our Q1 position of 197 children.
- 33 One of our poverty indicators is to monitor the numbers of pupil eligible for free school meals, and it is reported that noted that an increase has been reported in Q4, from Q3 8,621 to 8,870 in Q4. This represents an increase of over 300 children since Q1 (8,525)
- 34 There has also been an increase in the number of Children in Need reported during Q4 to 1,969 giving a rate of 251 per 10,000 children, against a national rate of 343 children per 10,000.
- 35 Reported levels of Children with a Child Protection Plan in Q4 are 35.2 per 10,000 and remain below a national rate of 43 per 10,000. These figures represent an increase from Q3 where levels were 31.8 per 10,000.
- 36 **Green – A thriving and sustainable place.**

Priorities

- A great place for people to live, work and visit
- Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods
- To reduce the impact on our environment
- A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel
- Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all
- To be carbon neutral by 2025

- 37 There are 6 priorities under the “Green” aim for a thriving and sustainable place.
- 38 During the year, there has been a continued effort to reduce the number of planning applications in hand. Levels in Q4 are now at 200, which represents a significant reduction from Q1 levels of 400.
- 39 The number of affordable homes delivered has increased during Q4 to 569, from 232 in Q3. Year to date, 1000 affordable homes have now been delivered, exceeding the annual local target of 355 homes.
- 40 The percentage of waste collected sent for recycling and reuse remains reasonably steady, with 52% in Q4 and we have improved upon the annual target of over 50%
- 41 Progress made towards the net zero target has slightly reduced in Q4 to 48%.
- 42 The installation of new electric charging points has increased during Q4, with 28 installed during the period. The year total of 52 EV chargers installed exceeds the annual target of 28.
- 43 The percentage of major applications determined within 13 weeks or agreed time remains above both the national target of 87% and the local target of 90%, with 100% being determined in Q4.
- 44 The percentage of non-major applications determined within weeks or agreed time continues to remain above the national target of 86%, with 87% being determined in Q4.
- 45 Work continues to be progressed to develop the action plan to support the wider borough target of net zero by 2045.

Consultation and Engagement

- 46 Not applicable.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 47 The Corporate Policy Committee is responsible for reviewing and scrutinising performance against the strategic aims and objectives in the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25.
- 48 The performance management framework continues to be developed and seeks to provide a robust, customer focussed view of performance. Member input into this development is valued to ensure that performance management reports are of use.
- 49 Performance management is a tool to allow oversight of the Council's key activities and to enable transparency and understanding around where the Council is performing well, and what are the areas of challenge and improvement.

Other Options Considered

- 50 Not applicable.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 51 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 52 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any financial implications arising from performance matters will be covered in other reports to respective service committees, including separate financial reporting in-year, as well as in further development and reporting of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, as required.

Policy

- 53 This report demonstrates progress against all priorities within the Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2021-25.

An open and enabling organisation.	A council which empowers and cares about people.	A thriving and sustainable place.
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 54 The range of council activities covered in the Corporate Plan aim to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty and the obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Human Resources

- 55 There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

- 56 Performance and risk are intrinsically linked. Where risks are identified, performance data can evidence the likelihood of the risk and can also show if risks materialise. The performance report identifies areas where performance is strong and areas for development and improvement. This supports the risk management process by providing the opportunity to review progress and identify areas for improvement and any necessary mitigating actions.

Rural Communities

- 57 The Corporate Plan aims to support greater inclusion for rural communities. In 2022/23 a Rural Action Plan was approved by the Economy and Growth committee, which includes priorities around digital connectivity, access, housing, visitor economy and support for rural based businesses.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 58 Performance management of the priorities relating to children and young people and cared for children ensure that there is a focus on children receiving the best start in life and that we deliver on our commitments to children and young people in Cheshire East.

Public Health

- 59 This report supports our Public Health priorities using the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Tartan Rug to ensure that we work with partners to address issues of poor housing, poverty, employment and education across urban and rural communities.

Climate Change

- 60 Performance against the Corporate Plan contributes to overall achievement of the net zero targets for the council and for the borough.

Access to Information

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Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Performance Report Q4
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Background Papers:	Q3 2023 2024 Performance Report Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2021-2025
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