

Corporate Policy Committee

Date of Meeting:	23 March 2023
Report Title:	Performance Report – Quarter 3 2022/23
Report of:	Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services
Report Reference No:	CP/36/22-23
Ward(s) Affected:	All

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an oversight of organisational performance for the third quarter of 2022/23 against the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25.
- 1.2. This report supports the responsibility of the Corporate Policy Committee to have a co-ordinating role across all other committees and to exercise a corporate oversight of outcomes, performance, budget monitoring and risk management.
- 1.3. Appendix 1 provides further detail of performance and progress against priorities for the period 1 October 2022 – 31 December 2022.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report gives an update on performance against the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan. It describes performance in Quarter 3 (October – December 2022) against the objectives within the Corporate Plan 2022/23.
- 2.2 The period of Quarter 3 to date has followed the trend in 2022/23 of being a period of ongoing political uncertainty, continuing high inflation, continuing cost of living pressures, extreme "winter pressures" across health and social care and a period of employee relations disputes and strikes outside of local government.

- 2.3** Although it was anticipated that Quarter 3 may see an overall decline in progress and performance due to the ongoing challenging context, this has not materialised. At the end of Quarter 3 Cheshire East Council is continuing to make progress against the Corporate Plan, despite the difficult circumstances.
- 2.5** The final Performance Outturn report for 2022/23 will be received by the Committee post elections.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1.** That the Committee note performance against Quarter 3 of 2022/23 of delivery of the Corporate Plan.
- 3.2.** That the Committee consider any additional data and intelligence that could and should be included in future performance reports.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1.** 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.
- 4.2.** 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 the performance management reports are of value.
- 4.3.** 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.

5. Other Options Considered

- 5.1.** Not applicable.

6. Background

- 6.1.** 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

- 6.2** This report reviews performance against the priorities in the Corporate Plan and continues to focus upon the “One Council” approach to performance management. This includes a balance of quantitative and qualitative data. The Q3 performance report is at **Appendix A**. This gives further details on progress made against the Corporate Plan objectives during Q3 of 2022/23.
- 6.3** Cheshire East Council delivers around 500 services to around 398,800 residents. There are 2,966 full time equivalent staff in Quarter 3. This shows a relatively steady number of FTE over the year to date.
- 6.4** Service Committees receive performance information on a regular basis, specific to the subject of the committee. This performance report offers a strategic view of progress against the corporate plan and should complement the more detailed performance, service specific dashboards that are considered at service Committees.

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 and empowered
Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents

- 6.5** In terms of member activity, there has continued to be significant activity during quarter 3. During Quarter 3, there were 9 service committee meetings held and two meetings of Full Council.
- 6.6** Recruitment and retention nationally and locally remain challenging, particularly in specific services including social care, planning and ICT. The vacancy rate for the council is 10%, slightly higher than quarter 2. At the end of quarter 3 the number of agency staff working for the council was 323, which has shown a gradual increase quarter on quarter (242 in quarter 1 and 297 in quarter 2). We are also balancing the in-year overspend position through actions including restricting non-essential spending and not filling vacancies on a permanent basis where the impact can be managed. We continue to pursue a range of measure to promote Cheshire East Council as a good place to work, including through careers fairs and social media.
- 6.7** The council continue to undertake communications and engagement activities. In quarter 3 the council received the formal report from the Cheshire East People's Panel in relation to the cost of living. The council's initial response to the People's Panel recommendations will be presented in Quarter 4 (at March Corporate Policy Committee). In Quarter 3 there was also a consultation on the development of the All-Age Mental Health Strategy. This received 452 responses, with 57 people attending face to face engagement sessions. In Quarter 3 a consultation was conducted on the draft Communications Strategy for residents. This followed an initial survey (in May 2022) completed by 1,068 residents. The subsequent consultation received 151 responses. The Economic Development service ran a six-week public consultation from November 2022, sharing draft Town Centre Vitality Plans for the borough's nine Key Service Centres.
- 6.8** One of the most notable milestones for communications in quarter 3 was the agreement of the Communications Strategy for residents. The strategy reflected on communications activities during 2022/23, which included the council: publishing 287 media releases, responding to more than 700 media enquiries, being included in more than 6,600 media articles and news stories, having 31,000 followers for the corporate Twitter account and 22,000 followers for the corporate Facebook account, and having more than 34,000 subscribers to e-newsletters about our services. The Communications Strategy for residents has four overall aims; to build engaged audiences from Cheshire East's diverse communities, to promote council priorities through a coordinated programme of activity, to be an effective voice which promotes Cheshire East's priorities, challenges and achievements and to build resilience to respond to new circumstances and emergencies.

- 6.9** During quarter 3 it was reported to the council's Corporate Policy Committee that there was a forecast adverse Net Revenue financial pressure of £11.6m against a revised budget of £328.4m (3.5%). This is driven by rising inflation and increased demand pressures. Mitigations to the financial challenges were endorsed in quarter 3, which included:
- Managed restrictions of in-year spending
 - Reviewing the level of spending on key contracts and reviewing the need for contract renewals
 - Pricing and grant reviews to ensure that income is being fully recovered
 - Enhanced vacancy forecasting and management
 - Re-alignment of, and appropriate use of balances, such as earmarked reserves, General Reserves, and capital receipts
 - Review and reprofile the Capital Programme to prevent any impact of related inflation on the revenue budget.

A separate report elsewhere on the agenda sets out the financial forecast in detail.

Fair – a Council which empowers and cares about people

Priorities
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 service

- 6.10** In quarter 3, Cheshire East Council jointly funded 7 projects following the latest round of crowdfunding. The council has contributed £15,627 with an additional £11,901 raised in the community so far. This is the third round of crowdfunding since July 2021. The previous 2 rounds funded 17 projects, where the council contributed £61,692 and the community raised £100,000 of additional monies. Crowdfunding projects supported in quarter 3 include a mental health art exhibit, a wheelchair coach for a miniature railway, support for stroke survivors and a four-day music and arts festival.
- 6.11** Around 200 members of staff from the council, NHS and support services came together in two workshops in October 2022 to network and pledge their support to the development of family hubs across Cheshire East. Cheshire East is one of only 12 areas to receive the initial wave of government funding from the Family Hubs Transformation Fund. We have up to £1 million to develop family hubs across the borough by March 2024. Family hubs support children and young people from birth until they reach the age of 19 (or up to 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities). They bring council, health and community services together so that families can access the right support at the right time.
- 6.12** We are working to minimise the impact the cost-of-living crisis has on our residents and businesses. Support for residents is available online at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/costofliving which has had over 5000 views, face to face in over 70 Warm PlaCEs which over 1000 people have attended, through winter wellbeing visits carried out by our Stay Well Squad, and through a dedicated helpline which has been contacted by nearly 400 people.
- 6.13** In addition to response to rising demand and complexity, and in line with statutory responsibilities across social care, communities and public health, flexible service responses have been developed and continue to deliver innovative approaches to the challenges of covid and covid scarring, mounting hospital pressures and rapidly changing external pressures. These include

stabilising the provider market, developing the Live Well for Longer Strategy (approved in quarter 2) and redesigning the Communities team to support emergent challenges such as the Afghan and Ukraine schemes and food poverty.

- 6.14** Consultation on a refreshed Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Five-Year Plan took place during quarter 3. A Five-Year Delivery Plan is also being written. High level progress against these plans will be monitored by a Joint Outcomes Framework; the indicators for the first phase of this have been agreed. The Live Well in Crewe report has been completed and endorsed by the Health and Wellbeing Board and now forms a long-term blueprint for reducing inequalities in the town. A review of the Health and Wellbeing Board has been initiated, facilitated by the Local Government Association, to ensure the Board is fit for purpose in the context of Integrated Care Systems.
- 6.15** Working in partnership with the Integrated Care Board and Cheshire and Wirral Partnership, the council have released a jointly funded grants programme with a total of £382,860 for physical health and mental wellbeing. These grants were available for the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector to apply for from the beginning of quarter 4 (January 2023).
- 6.16** The council has contributed to the drafting of the new Cheshire and Merseyside Suicide Prevention Plan which was launched in quarter 3 (November 2022). Training and workshops are being delivered to develop our local plan.
- 6.17** The Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF), funded by the DfE, has provided holiday activity clubs for young people eligible for free school meals, including food provision during Easter, summer and Christmas holidays. During Q3, 943 young people attended holiday activities over the Christmas period, a total of 11,618 hours of support with 3,169 meals provided across 35 locations in Cheshire East.
- 6.18** The Safeguarding Adults Board arranged a range of activities and training during national Safeguarding Adults Week in November 2022 to raise awareness and understanding of different safeguarding areas. Cheshire East mirrored the national safeguarding themes, including a focus on exploitation, self-neglect, creating safe cultures, working with faith organisations, and issues facing older people. During the week there were over 200 attendees from a range of organisations.
- 6.19** Significant future challenges are still foreseen in relation to Adults, Health and Integration, there are no immediate indications that the rising demand trajectory for services will reduce, and past evidence indicates that, given the known cost of living pressures on residents, it is more likely that demand will increase further and at a faster pace. In this context a number of risks need to be

carefully managed, including the impact on staff, greater complexity of individuals requiring services, widening inequalities and the consequential impacts on the performance and costs of commissioned services.

- 6.20** Children's social care assessments completed within 45 days continue to be a focus for improvement as any delays can be an indicator of families not receiving timely intervention and support. Timeliness however needs to be balanced to ensure that assessments receive sufficient management oversight and are of high quality. 49% of completed assessments in quarter 3 were completed within 45 days, showing a downwards trend over the year.
- 6.21** In quarter 3, there were 18% of children with a second or subsequent child protection plan in a rolling twelve-month period. This is a slight decrease on 20% reported in quarter 2 and the average for the year to date is 18%. It is important to understand the reasons for repeat plans to reflect on whether there are different presenting reasons or whether previous plans had not resulted in sustainable changes being evidenced in a family. Regular auditing activity enables reflective learning which can influence practice. Although a small increase as an authority we still compare favourably with the England (22%).
- 6.22** The percentages of schools which are judged good or outstanding has improved since Q1 and is a continually high performing area for the council (primary now at 94% and secondary at 91%). This positive change reflects the detailed work undertaken with schools to ensure that the quality of education judgement is robust, and schools have the strong evidence that the curriculum is well embedded and shows effective progression.
- 6.23** Timeliness of EHCP completion continues to be a challenge, due to increased demand on services, the quarterly data shows that the percentage of plans completed within 20 weeks is 40%, compared to the national figure of 58%. The rate of 0-25 year olds with a EHCP in Cheshire East is high, at 4% (4,011 children), which is higher than the national rate of 3.7%. A key element in many plans is observing the individual in a classroom setting to enable the most effective interventions to be put in place, enabling this can be delayed during holiday periods, and the school Christmas holiday period was over quarter 3.
- 6.24** Cheshire East overall numbers and rates of years 12-13 young people NEET continues to be lower than the national picture evidencing that positive outcomes continue to be achieved for the vast majority of young people in the borough. It was anticipated that the figure would increase slightly during quarter 3 as young people change decisions with regards to 6th form and college courses and quarter 3 outturn has evidenced this, with the figure increasing to 2.5% from 1.5% last quarter.
- 6.25** Cheshire East Council has led the development of the Social Value Award (quality mark) across Cheshire and Merseyside. 69 organisations have achieved the award to date (including the council), an increase of 11 on the previous reporting period.

- 6.26** Quarter 3 has seen an increase in residential admissions for all adults and shown an increasing trend over 2022/23. For adults 18-65 the numbers are relatively low and relate to 14 individuals who have moved into residential and nursing care. Cheshire East council seek to provide packages of care that support individuals in the community as long as possible, wherever it is possible to do so. The increase in residential admissions for people aged over 65 is primarily due to pressures in the market in terms of packages of care in the community. This need to discharge people from hospital is resulting in more individuals entering short term residential care on discharge from hospital, which are converting into long term placements.

Green – A thriving and sustainable place

Priorities
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

- 6.27** There are 6 priorities under the “Green” aim for a thriving and sustainable place.
- 6.28** The first priority is in relation to well designed, affordable and safe homes. In Quarter 3 a further 46 new affordable homes have been delivered against an annual target of 355. This totals 320 affordable homes have now been delivered to date, and performance against this target is on track.
- 6.29** There have been 668,323 visitors to libraries this year to date. This evidences increasing visitors since the pandemic, but remains behind the target of 1,000,000 visitors per year.
- 6.30** The redevelopment of Congleton Leisure Centre has continued with re-opening due in spring 2023. The Learn to Swim scheme has continued to grow this year, and now has 19,803 swimmers participating in weekly lessons, an increase of over 100 since last quarter.
- 6.31** Planning continues to be a challenge during Quarter 3 of 2022/23, however recent improvement work is starting to show an impact, with a continued reduction of applications in hand. At the end of quarter 3 the service had 2,257 applications in hand, a reduction of 100 since quarter 2 and a reduction of over 400 compared to quarter 1. Planning application performance against statutory performance measures (including agreed extensions to time) remains above target for major application but below for minors. The national average percentage of major applications determined within 13 weeks or agreed time is

87%, in Cheshire East 96% has been achieved. For minor applications agreed within 8 weeks or the agreed time, the national average percentage is 86% and Cheshire East have determined 77% of applications within this period.

6.32 The Regeneration Team, Business Rates Team, and Legal Teams supported the Wilmslow Town Centre BID proposers to complete necessary legal requirements and enable the commencement of the boroughs first Business Improvement District on 1 November 2022. A £4.5m contribution to the Archives project (History Centre – Crewe) was approved by National Lottery Heritage Fund in November 2022.

6.33 The Council is on track to deliver carbon neutrality by 2025, however, there remain risks of time to deliver our second solar insetting scheme together with ongoing risk due to external factors of increase gas usage from covid ventilation measures and lack of availability of affordable electric vehicles. Work to decarbonise buildings under the Carbon Action Plan has continued during quarter 3. Seventeen solar installations have been completed to date, providing approximately 1GWh per year. The Council has also put in place a programme of replacing gas boilers with air source heat pumps with to date three air source heat pump installations completed, a further twelve pumps underway. We continue to replace petrol and diesel vehicles with electric across our services with a key milestone being the launch of our Car club running three electric pool cars for staff use.

6.34 Progress against the net zero targets for the Council (by 2025) and for the Borough (by 2045) has been made. 10% of carbon has been reduced from the baseline and 33% of carbon has been inset. Overall, the Council is at 40% progress against the net zero by 2025 target. Performance measures are under development in relation to the commitment to a net zero Cheshire East borough by 2045.

Conclusion

6.35 In conclusion, Cheshire East Council continues to progress implementation of the Corporate Plan during quarter 3 2022/2023, progress has been made in all three areas towards achieving our vision of an Open, Fair and Green Cheshire East. The risks that have been identified this year have not yet impacted on delivery of the Corporate Plan and progress has continued, despite the challenging context in which the Council is operating.

7 Consultation and Engagement

Not applicable.

8 Implications

Legal

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Finance

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Financial implications arising from performance requirements are detailed within the separate financial review report aligned with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Policy

The report demonstrates progress against the achievement of the Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2021-25.

Equality

The range of Council activities covered in the Corporate Plan aims to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty and the obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Human Resources

An officer working group is in operation to review recruitment, retention, reward and recognition to address current staffing challenges.

Risk Management

Performance and risk are intrinsically linked. Where risks are identified, performance data can evidence the likelihood of the risk and can also show if a risk materialises. 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

The Corporate Plan aims to support greater inclusion for rural communities. Implementation of the Corporate Plan will support improved access for rural communities. In September 2022 a Rural Action Plan has been approved by the Economy and Growth Committee, which provides a rural focus on the Council's strategies and plans. Priorities addressed in the plan include digital connectivity, access, housing, visitor economy and support for rural based businesses.

Children and Young People/Cared for Children

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

This report supports our Public Health priorities utilising 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

Performance against the Corporate Plan contributes to several of the strategic goals set out in the Council's Environment Strategy, including:

- Cheshire East Council will be carbon neutral by 2025
- Reduce waste
- Improve Air Quality
- Ensure that new development is sustainable
- Protect and enhance our natural environment

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Sarah Bullock, Director of Policy and Change Sarah.bullock@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Q3 Performance report 2022/23
Background Papers:	N/A