

OPEN

Corporate Policy Committee

18 January 2024

Performance Report – Quarter 2 2023/24

Report of: Sarah Bullock, Director of Policy and Change

Report Reference No: CP/30/23-24

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 quarter 2 of 2023/24, 1 July 2023 – 30 September 2023.
- 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 Appendix 1 provides the detail of performance and progress against priorities.

Executive Summary

- 5 This report gives an update on performance against the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan. It describes performance in quarter 2 (July-September 2023) against the objectives within the Corporate Plan.
- 6 During quarter 2, there were continued national challenges such as continuing high inflation, continuing cost of living pressures, and recruitment and retention challenges.
- 7 Despite these challenges continuing, there were some positive areas of performance in quarter 2, including evidenced improvements in childrens services and progress in planning. As requirements have been implemented to tackle the councils financial challenges, such as tight management of recruitment, this has impacted on some areas of performance in respect of timeliness of responses.
- 8 The Council continues look at ways to manage the impact to its financial position. However, in doing so, it is anticipated that performance across the Council will require greater focus over the next period.
- 9 Anticipated future inspections in both Adults Health and Integration and Childrens Services will likely place additional pressure upon the Council, with a risk that recommendations from these inspections will lead to further demands being placed upon already pressured services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Confirm understanding of organisational performance in quarter 2 of 2023/24.
2. Consider any amendments in performance reporting, and/or additional data and intelligence that should be included within performance management reporting.

Background

- 10 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

- 11 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. The full quarter 2 performance report is at **Appendix 1**. This gives further details on progress made against delivery of the Corporate Plan during the first quarter of the 2023/24 municipal year.
- 12 Additional levels of risk are being borne across many parts of the organisation as the challenges of the current financial situation continue to develop. This is reflected in the sensitivity and complexity of decisions being taken across the organisation at strategic, operational and individual levels. For example, the tighter management of vacancies is having some impacts on our ability to deliver in a timely manner. There are increasing costs in relation to actions required to achieve our net zero target and the ongoing affordability of this target will require ongoing scrutiny.
- 13 Members will need further assurance in understanding how individual decision recommendations seek to manage risks, as well as using the quarterly risk and performance reports to receive assurance that effective and robust actions are being taken to manage risk and performance in the current climate.
- 14 Cheshire East Council delivers around 500 services to around 398,800 residents. There are 2,847 full time equivalent staff in quarter 2. After a dip last quarter, this figure is now similar to our average during 2022/23. The vacancy rate has increased this quarter, to 12%, reflecting the agreed action to support management of financial pressures, by

reviewing all vacancies and only recruiting to posts which are crucial to statutory service delivery.

- 15 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.

16 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

- 17 Although the vacancy rate has increased, the number of agency staff has reduced during Q2, reflecting the start of a focused piece of work to reduce the number of agency staff. There has been a reduction of around 90 FTE agency staff between quarter 1 and quarter 2 and we expect that this figure will continue to decrease in future quarters.
- 18 Quarter 2 was a period of continued financial challenge and during the period proposals were managed to implement the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and to manage demand. 98.1% of local taxation (council tax and business rates) were collected in quarter 2, a slight increase on the previous quarter.
- 19 There were some performance issues identified in relation to the timeliness of responses during quarter 2, with 31% of Stage complaints being resolved within timescales. Timeliness was also identified as an issue in relation to freedom of information act responses, with a slight decline to 88% this quarter, compared to 92% in the previous quarter of responses delivered within the timescales.

- 20 There has been a slight decrease in the performance given by corporate contact centres customers for “perceived effort” of resolving their queries. This score has increased to 4.6 in quarter 2 against a score of 4 in quarter 1 (lower is better). This is largely due to increased call volumes and queries around the introduction of charges for the collection of green waste.

21 **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
- 22 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. The rate of Education, Health and Care Plans completed within 20 weeks continues to exceed the national average and has increased by a further 9% this quarter. The percentage of childrens social care assessments completed within 45 days has increased to 80% (compared to 63% in quarter 1). This is seen as an early indicator that, when needed, individuals are receiving a support in a timely fashion. The rate of children in need remains steady. The rate (and numbers) of cared for children has reduced.
- 23 In terms of education the percentage of good and outstanding primary and secondary schools remain above the national average. The number of children missing from education has reduced. One of our poverty indicators is to monitor the numbers of pupil eligible for free school meals, and it is noted that an increase in this area has been evidenced this quarter.

- 24 In relation to adult social care the rate of residential admissions for over 65 years old people has increased this quarter. This is due to people being discharged from hospital into short term care, and then the placement becoming a permanent placement. Adult Social care are progressing initiatives to support people transitioning from hospital and predict performance in this area should become steadier going forward.

25 **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

- 26 There are 6 priorities under the “Green” aim for a thriving and sustainable place.
- 27 At the end of 2022/23, it was reported that the backlog of applications in hand with the planning service had started to reduce. There has continued to be progress in this area during quarter 2, as was evidenced in quarter 1, the backlog is steadily falling, with a reduction of around 50 this quarter. The number of applications in hand in quarter 2 was 350. A new process implemented as part of the detailed work into planning now means that each application is allocated a named contact officer on arrival into the service.
- 28 The number of affordable homes delivered has decreased this quarter. However it is reported that this target should be achieved by the end of the year.
- 29 The percentage of waste collected sent for recycling and reuse remains steady at 56%.
- 30 Progress towards the net zero target has reduced to 48% (from 56% in quarter 1). This is due to a reduction in the amount of carbon inset reducing by 4% since quarter 1. The installation of new electric charging

points remains on track, with 16 new charging points installed in quarter 2, totalling 20 so far this year against a target of 28.

- 31 No trees have been planted during the quarter, as the tree planting work is seasonal, so this was planned and expected. Work continues to be progressed to develop the action plan to support the wider borough target of net zero by 2045.

Consultation and Engagement

- 32 Not applicable.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 33 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.
- 34 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.
- 35 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

- 36 Not applicable.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

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

Section 151 Officer/Finance

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

Policy

- 39 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

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 40 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

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

Risk Management

- 42 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

- 43 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)

- 44 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

- 45 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

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

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Sarah Bullock, Director of Policy and Change Sarah.bullock@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Performance Report Q2
Background Papers:	Performance Report Q1 2023/24 CP/17/23-24 CEC Report Template (cheshireeast.gov.uk)