

Corporate Policy Committee

Date of Meeting:	1 December 2022
Report Title:	Performance Report – Quarter 2 2022/23
Report of:	Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services
Report Reference No:	CP/26/22-23
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 second 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 July 2022 – 30 September 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 2 (July – September 2022) against the objectives within the Corporate Plan 2022/23.
- 2.2 The period of Quarter 2 to date has been a turbulent period of uncertainty in terms of policy direction, continued changes in national government and a further new Prime Minister, whilst the impact of increases to the cost of living worsen. Both Adults and Children's services continue to see demand challenges arising not just from volume, but also from increased complexity of presenting cases. There are increasing pressures from hospital settings, and these are anticipated to worsen we move into winter. There are increased risks due to a fragile care market and budget pressures, particularly in relation

to SEND and adult social care. Increases to costs and supply of materials challenges are also starting to impact on projects and initiatives across the Council. This is partly due to the ongoing situation in Ukraine. Within Cheshire East Council, as being experienced nationally, there are continued workforce challenges. Delivery of the Corporate Plan to date has been within the most challenging of circumstances, at the same time of progressing delivery, the Council has also been responding to the coronavirus pandemic, supporting refugees and, more recently, responding to a range of impacts from increases in costs of living. These areas cumulatively provide the most sustained and difficult challenging context to delivery of public services and achievement of our corporate plan by 2025. Therefore, the performance monitoring and oversight of our Corporate Plan is more important and supports early identification of areas where mitigations are required.

- 2.3** At the end of Quarter 2 Cheshire East Council is continuing to make steady progress against the Corporate Plan, despite the ongoing challenges it is facing.
- 2.4** At the end of 2021/22, it was stated that the performance management framework will continue to be developed during 2022/23. This has resulted in a basket of key performance measures from across the Council being developed, and national benchmarking data added to the report. National benchmarks are included in the report where they are available. Whilst benchmarks are useful to provide a comparison, these are often only published annually therefore some may reflect activity that has subsequently been affected due to the pandemic.
- 2.5** The Committee is scheduled to receive the Quarter 3 report for 2022/23 in March 2023.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1.** That the Committee note performance against Q2 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 Councils 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 Q2 performance report is at Appendix A. This details progress made against the Corporate Plan during Q1 of 2022/23.
- 6.3 Cheshire East Council delivers around 500 services to around 398,800 residents. There are 2,860 full time equivalent staff in Quarter 2 (with over 3,500 actual staff) and just over 3,000 staff in Cheshire East maintained schools. This is an overall reduction of 54.5 FTE staff since quarter 1.
- 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 2. Historically, member meetings have declined during quarter 2, and particularly the month of August, has been a period of recess. However, that has not been the case during quarter 2 of 22/23 and there has been a significant level of member activity and a service committee meeting held in August (Environment and Community). During Quarter 2, there were 14 service committee meetings held and a Full Council meeting in July 2022. The committees approved 10 key strategies and plans over the quarter. In addition to the service committees, there were 30 chair and vice chair briefings, 16 committee briefings and 23 panels and working groups.

6.6 There has been evidence of improved governance over quarter 2. This is evident in relation to improvement activity in response to the joint targeted area inspection (JTAI), alternative service delivery vehicle governance arrangements, LPA modernisation and agreement of the Terms of Reference and membership in relation to the Integrated Care System. Activity has also progressed in relation to the Annual Governance statement and preparation for the statement of accounts.

6.7 There are continuing and growing challenges in relation to the workforce. Performance challenges are evident and are reflective of national trends in relation to the nature of the post covid workforce, recruitment and retention, staff turnover, the use of agency staff and increasing numbers of vacancies. At the end of quarter 2, staffing levels continue to show a decreasing trend. This trend has continued from 21/22 into the current year. At the end of Quarter 2 there are 2,860 full time equivalent staff and the Council have a vacancy rate of 9.11% (just over 260 FTE posts). During quarter 2 the numbers of agency staff working for the Council has increased by 50, to 297, and staff turnover has increased from 4.9% in quarter 1 to 6.6% in quarter 2.

There has, however, been an increase in the number of new Apprentices, more than double the number of the previous quarter have started at the Council, with 41 starting between July and September 2022. Workforce challenges continue to be mitigated through implementation of the agreed Workforce Strategy and the ongoing work of the officer Recruitment and Retention group.

- 6.8** The Council have continued to show action against our priority to be more open and transparent, sharing challenging communications in the public domain in relation to the joint targeted area inspection, the Best4Business Lessons Learnt report, and the ongoing review of the planning service.
- 6.9** Key communications activities have also been delivered in relation to a new Communications Strategy for residents, town centre vitality plans and HS2. The outcome of the public consultation on the new Communications Strategy for residents will be reported separately to Corporate Policy Committee. In quarter 2 the Council began consultation on plans to revitalise the centres of 9 towns across the Borough. Following on from the Crewe town centre regeneration delivery framework for growth and the Macclesfield town centre strategic regeneration framework, the council is now developing town centre plans for the Cheshire East towns of Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow. The council is working with each of the nine towns to help to establish an agreed set of priority actions for each town centre. Any actions would be taken forward as and when opportunities arise, and resources allow. The consultation closed in quarter 3 (November 2022). In August, the Council submitted a petition against Phase 2B of the hybrid bill for HS2. This is around how Phase 2b is delivered and mitigated against to get the best possible outcomes for Cheshire East residents. These areas of work are referenced here in relation to the “Open” priority but obviously delivery against these key work areas lie within other areas of the Corporate plan, particularly the “Green” priority.
- 6.10** During quarter 2 there was also significant communications and engagement activity in relation to Crewe’s bid to become the home of the Great British Railways headquarters. The local #HeartOfRail campaign included a publicity campaign with videography and the hosting of a ministerial visit. However, early in quarter 3 the government announced that it was not going to progress the Transport Bill during the current Parliamentary session and delaying the planned 2024 relocation date for Railway headquarters. This was a piece of fast and abortive work and reflects some of the pressures experienced by the whole organisation. More recently, rapid action has had to be taken further to the announcement of “investment zones” and rapid work has once again had to be undertaken.

- 6.11** Partnerships remain under improvement, with the Cheshire and Warrington sub-regional Leaders' Board, the Cheshire East Leaders Board, agreement to implement a new Town and Parish Councils network and new governance arrangements agreed in relation to Integrated Health and Social Care. A key partnership success in quarter 2 has been in relation to the Cheshire and Warrington Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission. The Sustainable and Inclusive Growth commission was set up in Nov 2020 and has been working on four themes: Inclusive Economy, Sustainable Transport, Sustainable Land Use and Net Zero. The commission has developed an evidence base for the current position across Cheshire and Warrington, a vision and a set of recommended actions to achieve the vision.
- 6.12** A draft consultation and engagement toolkit has been completed. A regular engagement network between Cheshire East Council and Town and Parish Councils has been agreed and will be introduced during, Quarter 3 in November 2022.
- 6.13** The financial picture for the Council is challenging at quarter 2, and full details are provided in the separate Financial Review report.

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

- 6.14** In relation to Adults, Health and Integration, performance in quarter 2 continues to deliver against key targets. There has been success in implementing some key corporate plan priorities, including working with key partners to keep people well, including novel approaches to social prescribing and the use of green spaces. Public health statutory services including sexual health, substance misuse services and 0-19 services have been reviewed and supported accordingly to ensure they are meeting the changes in activity required.
- 6.15** 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.
- 6.16** In relation to Adults, Health and Integration, significant future challenges are foreseen for quarter 3, there is 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.
- 6.17** Childrens 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. 70% of completed assessments in quarter 2 were completed within 50 days.

- 6.18** In quarter 2, there were 20% of children with a second or subsequent child protection plan in a rolling twelve-month period. This is a slight increase on 16% reported in quarter 1. 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 average and our statistical neighbours.
- 6.19** The percentages of schools which are judged good or outstanding has improved since Q1 (primary now at 94% and secondary at 90%). 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.
- 6.20** It is important to note that the number of children missing from education at the end of September is always higher. Reasons for this include schools and the local authority are not always advised when individuals move away from the local authority during the summer break or families choose the private schooling rather than state education when entering primary or secondary school. There are a range of national data sharing agreements that enable the local authority team to investigate where individuals who were expected to start at a school have presented and the number will be much reduced by October half term and triangulated with the Autumn School Census data.
- 6.21** Although timeliness of EHCP completion continues to be a challenge, due to increased demand on services, the average number of weeks a plan is taking is showing a positive trend by reducing from 24.3 to 23.5 weeks. 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 summer holiday period was over quarter 2. The numbers of plans that are significantly overdue (i.e., ongoing for 24 weeks or more) is also steadily reducing month on month with only 13 outstanding at the end of September. Once these have all been addressed, it is envisaged that a bigger impact on reducing the average time frame will be evidenced. The average number of plans being issued per month has increased from 60 in quarter 1 to 80 in quarter 2.
- 6.22** Cheshire East overall numbers and rates of yr. 12-13 young people NEET continues to be significantly lower than the national picture evidencing that positive outcomes continue to be achieved for the vast majority of young people in the borough. Although the % is extremely positive at the end of quarter 2 this will fluctuate throughout quarter 3 as young people change decisions with regards to 6th form and college courses and quarter 3 outturn will likely be slightly higher.

- 6.23** Training was provided for elected members in July 2022 to improve their understanding of the needs of cared for children and care leavers to enable them to be a good corporate parent. This is delivered annually.
- 6.24** In July 2022, the council's Adults and Health Committee agreed to launch a trial smoking cessation incentive scheme to support pregnant women and others in their household to quit smoking. Smoking is the leading cause of preventable illness and premature death in England, with about half of all lifelong smokers dying prematurely, losing on average around 10 years of life.
- 6.25** Cheshire East Council has led the development of the Social Value Award (quality mark) across Cheshire and Merseyside. 58 organisations have achieved the award to date (including the council), an increase of 12 on the previous reporting period.
- 6.26** Cheshire East Council agreed to support individuals brought to the UK under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). Wrap around support was provided by Cheshire East Council and partner agencies for 390 individuals from 12 August 2021 to 30 August 2022. 5 families were resettled into permanent accommodation in Cheshire East.
- 6.27** Since 18 March 2022, Cheshire East Council have also supported Ukrainian refugees under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. The council have undertaken safeguarding checks on 302 sponsors and made over 500 'thank you' payments, with 550 Ukrainians arriving in Cheshire East and all receiving welcome payments, along with over 150 school/ early years placements offered. 35 Ukrainians have arrived in quarter 2.
- 6.28** The co-produced Live Well for Longer plan was received by the Adults and Health Committee in September 2022, which includes addressing loneliness and isolation.
- 6.29** Cheshire East Council was successful in its bid for up to £1 million of the government's Family Hubs Transformation Fund to join up services locally, improve the connections between families, professionals, services, and providers, and put relationships at the heart of family help. Family hubs will 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). The council has until March 2024 to implement the new way of working.
- 6.30** A new technology enabled care service aiming to help keep people safe and independent in their own homes commenced in July 2022. The new service will enable residents to access support from a greater range of technology such as Alexa, tablets and digital lifeline devices. This service includes support for early discharge from hospital through a free four-week offer for patients.

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

6.31 There are 6 priorities under the “Green” aim for a thriving and sustainable place.

6.32 The first priority is in relation to well designed, affordable and safe homes. In Quarter 2 140 new affordable homes have been delivered against an annual target of 355. This totals 274 affordable homes have now been delivered to date, and performance against this target is on track.

6.33 There have been 279,897 visitors in libraries during Q2, an increase of 53,015 compared to quarter 1. This indicates continuing increased access compared to last year, where the average quarterly visitor number was 171,144.

6.34 There have been 620,625 visitors to leisure centres in 2, an increase of 37,164 compared to quarter 1. This has also significantly increased compared to the average quarterly figure of 520,553 during 2021/22. The redevelopment of Congleton Leisure Centre has continued with re-opening due in 2023. The Learn to swim scheme has grown in quarter 2, and now has 9,700 swimmers in weekly sessions.

6.35 Planning continues to be a challenge during Quarter 2 of 2022/23. Planning application performance against statutory performance measures (including agreed extensions to time) is above target for major applications (95%) but below (83%) for minors. However, a backlog of planning applications remains with staff retention and recruitment difficulties across all aspects of the Planning service including Building Control. The number of applications in hand has reduced slightly but the majority of applications are still taking 4-6 months to determine. The service are determining around 100 planning applications every week.

6.36 A total of £63,900 was saved of detriment for residents from rogue trading and scams interventions during quarter 2, a slight decrease of £13,350 compared to quarter 1.

6.37 In September 2022, the following strategies were approved by the Highways and Transport Committee: Speed Management, Vehicle Restraint Systems: Installation, Inspection and Maintenance Strategy and the Skid Resistance Strategy.

- 6.38** A Rural Action Plan was approved by the Economy and Growth Committee in September 2022. This provides a rural focus on the authority's existing strategies and plans. Priorities addressed in the plan include digital connectivity, access, housing, visitor economy and support for rural based businesses.
- 6.39** In August 2022, two bids for Levelling Up funding were submitted in relation to the Crewe strategic regeneration programme. An expression of interest for an Investment Zone was delivered against a challenging deadline.
- 6.40** In September 2022, the Government launched a new Rural England Prosperity Fund. To access the fund, an addendum to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan has to be submitted by 30 November 2022. It is expected that first payments are expected to local authorities in April 2023. Cheshire East Council is eligible to receive funding of £827,000
- 6.41** Progress against the net zero targets for the Council (by 2025) and for the Borough (by 2045) has been made. 11% of carbon has been reduced from the baseline and 30% of carbon has been inset. Overall, the Council is at 41% 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. Although there continues to be progress towards the net zero target, there are increased risks in relation to delivery of the net zero ambition by 2025. These risks are associated with the fleet and decarbonisation of heat projects, largely because of global electric vehicle costs and supply problems. Additionally, increased ventilation of buildings due to covid is raising the council's gas use above the base line. The programme is working to reduce risk and supply, and is also developing alternative options, if required, to support achievement of the 2025 target.

Conclusion

- 6.42** In conclusion, Cheshire East Council continues to progress implementation of the Corporate Plan during Q2 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 were identified at quarter 1 have not yet materialised and progress has continued, despite the challenging context in which the Council is operating. The cumulative impact of emerging risks will continue to be monitored closely during quarter 3.

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 – Q2 Performance report 2022/23
Background Papers:	Q1 Performance Report 2022/23 Decision report template (cheshireeast.gov.uk)