

Corporate Performance Refresh 2021-24

Overview & Scrutiny Panel 17 March 2021

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Portfolio Holder	Cllr Rick Everitt, Leader of the Council
Status	For Information
Classification:	Unrestricted
Key Decision	No
Ward:	All

Executive Summary:

The council is refreshing its approach to how it both monitors and reports on corporate performance. New performance indicators are set out within this report and are intended to demonstrate progress against the council's Corporate Objectives; Environment, Communities and Growth. This approach aims to provide the public with clear and easy to access information on how key services are performing and supports residents' feedback that they would like the council to be efficient, transparent and responsive.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to comment on the proposed new Corporate Performance approach and measures.

Recommendation(s):

That the Overview and Scrutiny Panel note the proposed new approach and provide any comments for consideration by the Cabinet.

Corporate Implications

Financial and Value for Money

There are no direct financial implications within this report. All activities listed in future performance reports will have been planned within the Council's agreed budget. Remedial actions will usually be carried out within existing budgets, where this is not possible funding proposals will be taken through the appropriate channels in keeping with the Council's established financial controls.

Legal

There are no legal implications directly arising from this report

Corporate

This is the proposed new approach to how the council monitors and reports on progress against the Corporate Objectives as agreed at Council. Future reports will provide details of performance against the new indicators.

Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.

This report relates to the following aim of the equality duty: -
(Delete as appropriate)

- *To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it*

The report looks to monitor the performance of the Council across all the residents within the District. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and there is no reason to state at this time that the content of the Corporate Objectives will negatively impact on any groups with protected characteristics. The priorities focus on improving the quality of life in Thanet for all. Opportunities to further the aims of the Duty will be investigated during equality impact analysis of individual projects, plans and strategies arising from the priorities.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- *Growth*
- *Environment*
- *Communities*

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 The council's corporate objectives set out in the Corporate Statement, determine the strategic direction for the council. They influence annual operational service plans and employee's annual appraisals, so the organisation is working collectively towards the same goal. Performance management is a key part of the corporate governance process and adds value by helping to ensure accountability of the performance of the council's services against the corporate objectives. This helps to encourage enhanced accountability and continuous improvement.

- 1.2 The council has been monitoring progress against the former Corporate Plan 2015-2019 with quarterly reports going to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet. The reports were a backwards look at the previous quarter. They highlighted progress over time; celebrating highlights and identifying necessary improvements and actions. Performance targets were set and progress reported each quarter on a red, amber, green system. The reports included key performance indicators which were identified to demonstrate progress with the three corporate priorities for the council. Contextual indicators were also provided which were not assigned targets and were broadly areas of work which the council was either not directly responsible for, or where data was not recorded in a way which meant that meaningful targets could be set.
- 1.3 In 2019 a new Corporate Statement (2019-2023) was adopted by the Council. It sets out new corporate objectives for the Council to focus on; Environment, Communities and Growth.
- 1.4 To support this new Corporate Statement, new performance measures were due to be implemented from 1 April 2020. This business as usual activity was delayed however due to the redeployment of council resources to support the response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. As an interim measure for April 2020 - March 2021, corporate performance continued to be monitored against the previous corporate priorities.
- 1.5 We now need to agree and implement new performance indicators to reflect the new Corporate Statement.
- 1.6 As part of this approach, recognition should also be given to the feedback the council receives each year from local people as part of its annual residents' survey. Consistently residents tell the council that feeling safe, clean streets and thriving towns are the things that matter most and they want the council to be efficient, trusted, transparent and responsive.

2.0 The Current Situation

- 2.1 New performance measures need to be identified to monitor progress against the new corporate objectives - Environment, Communities and Growth.
- 2.2 In addition to introducing new performance measures, it is also proposed to use this opportunity to undertake a wider refresh of the way performance management is coordinated more generally by the council. This is to create a more effective tool for services internally and also crucially to improve the information we share with our residents externally, so we provide insight into the things that matter most to local people and to do so in a clear and transparent way. By changing our approach the aim is to move the focus away from simply reporting on the numbers which show how much we do as a council and understand more about the impact and whether our residents and the customers of our services are better off as a result.
- 2.3 **Proposed changes to the corporate performance management approach**
 - 2.3.1 Reduce the number of measures.

Within the former performance report there were 47 indicators. The proposal is to reduce this to 31 indicators which provide more insight into the areas we know matter most to residents. Over time, the level of data provided behind each individual measure can be increased. This will provide greater context and a more meaningful overall picture, thereby not diminishing the amount of information being provided to residents.

2.3.2 Align the measures to the new corporate objectives.

Performance data is proposed to be presented based on the corporate objectives: Environment, Communities and Growth. A new 'efficiency' category will also be introduced which will capture some of the previous statistical data to highlight that the council is working as efficiently as possible for local people.

2.3.3 Publish live performance data on the website.

The previous performance report was published at the end of each quarter and presented a backwards look on key service performance. Presenting the data live on the website will provide a more accurate picture of council performance at any given time and will mean residents will be able to access key information 24/7. It will also mean that when members are considering the data, they will have access to more up to date information at the time of committee meetings, aiding a more meaningful discussion.

2.3.4 Create interactive data on the website.

On the website, care will be taken to ensure the data is presented in a clear and engaging way. Interactive graphs will be provided within a new section of the website dedicated to council performance. It will be presented in the three key corporate objectives and new efficiency category. Over time, the ambition is to provide a greater level of data behind each individual measure. This will allow residents the opportunity to select which data they review and in how much detail, on the basis of the services that interest them the most.

2.3.5 Remove targets

Within the previous corporate performance process, targets were set based on the most challenging of either, the last 12 months of activity, the current year target and/or the average benchmark (CIPFA, APSE etc) for the latest available period of time. It is becoming more widely accepted that the setting of targets is a little outdated and often means that discussions around performance focus on the numbers and often very little on the actual impact upon people. By providing live data on council performance, the council will still mean people can hold the council to account. As the new performance approach evolves, the proposal is to develop an acceptable standard for each measure or baseline, which is the level of service that the council is committed to delivering for any given indicator.

2.3.6 More emphasis on customer satisfaction

To assist with the proposal in 2.3.5, the proposal is to supplement the removal of targets, with an increased emphasis placed upon customer satisfaction. This is to ensure that customers are actively asked for feedback on their experience of the services they have directly accessed. This information can then be used to directly help improve the services the council provides.

2.3.7 Reduce the frequency of reporting.

Currently, corporate performance reports are presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and subsequently Cabinet every quarter. This level of frequency doesn't allow a significant time for key trends in performance to change and often members are presented with a very similar picture each quarter. Presenting data live on the website will reduce the reliance on providing performance data to Councillors and the public in the previous reporting format, as the information will be available all of the time. The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel reviewing the performance of key council areas is still important however and with more regular access to performance data, the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel could be enhanced to use meetings for a deeper dive into specific service performance. The proposal is therefore to consider reducing the corporate performance item to every six months.

2.4 **Proposed performance indicators**

2.4.1 The specific proposed performance indicators are attached at [Appendix 1](#).

Within the Overview and Scrutiny meeting, the panel will be presented with a breakdown of all proposed new performance indicators by corporate objective, the rationale as to why the indicator is being measured, and what 'good' performance looks like.

3.0 **Options**

3.1 To consider the proposed approach to corporate performance and provide comments for consideration by the Cabinet.

3.2 To consider the proposed performance indicators (Appendix 1) and provide comments for consideration by the Cabinet.

4.0 **Next Steps**

4.1 Cabinet will review the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel when they meet on 29 April 2021.

4.2 The council's Corporate Performance Management Framework will be updated to reflect the new approach.

4.3 The new corporate performance approach will be implemented from 1 April and will run concurrently alongside the life of the Corporate Statement. The new approach will be subject to continual review to ensure it is effective and is likely to evolve and improve over time.

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Reporting to: Tim Willis, Deputy Chief Executive

Annex List

Annex 1: Proposed corporate performance indicators

Background Papers

None

Corporate Consultation

Finance: Chris Bundell Director of Finance

Legal: Estelle Culligan Director of Law and Democracy