

Executive 5th August 2021

Report Title	Performance Indicator Report 2021/22 (Quarter One)
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Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1974	

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Performance Indicators available for the Council at Quarter One

Appendix 2 – Diagram showing indicative Performance Management Framework

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the performance of the Council across a range of services as measured by performance indicators.
- 1.2 Set out the approach being taken for the development of the Council's performance monitoring and management arrangements.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Performance information relating to a range of Council services as measured by performance indicators has been provided as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The appended performance information aims to provide a transparent picture of the Council's performance at an early stage. The presentation and comparisons

used for various sets of performance data will naturally develop in the coming months as the breadth and depth of data available increases.

- 2.3 The comparative performance information for unitary councils in England included in the performance tables (at Appendix 1) do not yet reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on services. This is due to the fact that 2020/21 comparative data for comparator authorities is not yet available. Caution should therefore be taken when making comparisons with the performance information set out at Appendix 1.
- 2.4 The targets set by the legacy councils were not aligned and varied between organisations as a result. The Corporate Leadership Team will work with Executive Members to define a set of targets for the Council. In future, these can be used to determine a 'Red, Amber, Green' (RAG) status for the performance indicators for the Council.
- 2.5 The possession of timely, relevant and accurate performance data for key services for the new council at this early stage is important. The availability of performance data can help inform policy decision-making. It can assist the scrutiny function in their work and can strengthen the Council's corporate governance arrangements.
- 2.6 The Council's performance monitoring and management arrangements are undergoing development. The breadth, depth and presentation of performance data will continue to evolve and improve. A strong performance culture will be developed supported by a performance management framework. More information has been provided as Appendix 2.
- 2.7 The aim moving forwards is to reach a position where the Council uses data intelligently, not only to make decisions, but to predict future trends and take corrective action before issues arise. The Council is working to achieve a position where performance management is ingrained within the organisation, not bolted-on. These are healthy aspirations but will naturally take time to embed.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Executive:
 - a) Note the performance of the Council as measured by the available indicators as at Period 3 (Quarter 1) for the 2021/22 financial year.
 - b) Note the approach that is being taken to develop the Council's performance monitoring and management arrangements as set out in the report.
- 3.2 *Reason for Recommendations – to better understand the performance of the Council as measured by performance indicators as at Period 3, 2021/22.*

4. Background Information

The provision of performance information

- 4.1 Performance information relating to a range of council services as measured by key performance indicators has been provided as Appendix 1.
- 4.2 A fundamental task of performance reporting is the collection of accurate, timely and relevant data. This is essential to inform good quality decision-making.
- 4.3 Timely, accurate and relevant performance information, accompanied by a challenging set of targets, are features of most well-run organisations. Integrating performance measures into decision-making and informing scrutiny are both healthy goals for any council. North Northamptonshire Council has an opportunity to start afresh with its approach.

Developing a performance driven Council

- 4.4 North Northamptonshire Council is focussed on developing a strong performance-driven culture. Performance indicators are just one part of this picture. There are a number of cornerstones that can be considered important in developing a balanced approach to a performance culture. These are set out as Appendix 2 and are guiding the approach.

Performance Management Information - Current position

- 4.5 The performance data presented as Appendix 1 is the product of the approaches of five legacy councils that have been brought together. The indicators measured by the legacy councils were not totally consistent. Those that were have been consolidated and included within this report. Many of these indicators have come from the national indicator set introduced well over a decade ago and have been consistently measured across many councils. This will help when making comparisons in the future.
- 4.6 The targets set by the legacy councils differed, quite significantly in some cases. This, coupled with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on services has given rise to the need to set new targets for the Council's performance indicators.
- 4.7 North Northamptonshire Council is of course relatively new. The performance indicators that it is now measuring had not previously been calculated on the North Northamptonshire geographical boundary. It stands to reason therefore that there is not a lot of historic data at this time. As a result, a graphical presentation of the data would be of limited value. This will however change as more data becomes available. Members should be assured that there will be plenty of scope to add value to the way data is presented in the future.

Developing the Council's Performance Indicators

- 4.8 The Council is actively working to develop its performance data to provide better insights as to the performance of services and achievement of outcomes. For example, The Executive are in the process of developing a new Corporate Plan. Once the higher-level aspirations and strategic objectives of the Council have

been set out, the process of further developing the outcomes and indicators will progress.

- 4.9 It is envisaged that there will be a number of phases to the development of the Council's performance management arrangements. These phases are broadly categorised as:
- i. Consolidation (merging of five into one)
 - ii. Review and reassessing (a new indicator set for a new Corporate Plan)
 - iii. Mainstreaming of performance data (building ownership across services)
 - iv. Data intelligence (using data intelligently to drive decision-making)
- 4.10 The Council is currently transitioning from stage (i) to stage (ii). Stage (ii) will involve the development of a revised set of performance indicators and outcomes and setting targets. This will be informed by engagement with members and where appropriate, other key stakeholders.
- 4.11 As part of the next development phase of the Council's performance management approach, the Council will look to develop a more balanced set of performance information that provides a broader view of the Council's performance. For example, providing more information about the workforce, complaints and important areas such as the activity of the Council's website that will provide insights into the impact of transformation activity.

Developing meaningful targets

- 4.12 A new set of stretching targets will need to be set as part of the Corporate Plan process. Directors and Assistant Directors across service areas are currently working to develop options for the future suite of performance indicators. Indicators and their targets will be discussed with Executive members. Future targets could be included within the Corporate Plan ready for approval in draft by the Executive and formal adoption at Full Council.
- 4.13 Without a current set of targets, it is difficult to apply judgements as to levels of performance of the Council. This situation is complicated by the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic will likely have impacted on authority-wide performance. Councils responded well to adapt to new ways of working and to meet priority needs such as public health, supporting vulnerable people and the local economy. The performance of services nationally will however have been impacted and refreshed benchmarking activity will undoubtedly help provide context and inform the Council's future targets.

5 Implications (including financial implications)

5.1 Resources and Financial

- 5.1.1 This report should be considered alongside the Period-3 budget report. By looking at the two reports together, a broader view of the performance of the Council can be understood.

5.2 Legal

5.2.1 The Council is required to provide some of its monitoring data to the Government. The new Council is on course to comply with these requirements.

5.3 Risk

5.3.1 There are a number of risks relating to performance information:

- (a) Poor data quality – Inaccurate data will inevitably lead to less accurate decision making.
- (b) Lack of data – Failing to measure key service activities can leave the Council unaware of its performance. Given the importance of many of the services it provides, this would be an undesirable position.
- (c) Incorrect interpretations – caution should be applied to the interpretation of performance data, particularly given the adjustments that have been made by services to adopt to the COVID-19 pandemic. Misunderstanding the performance picture can lead to ineffective decision-making and potential reputational damage.

5.4 Consultation

5.4.1 Consultation will be carried out on the development of the Corporate Plan. This could lead to new indicators and targets being developed.

5.5 Climate Impact

5.5.1 The Council will likely wish to understand, as part of the process of developing a Corporate Plan, what outcomes and indicators it feels it needs to help it minimise its impact on climate change.

5.6 Community Impact

5.6.1 Effective policy decision-making and scrutiny, guided by good quality, timely and relevant performance data can make a massive difference to the delivery of public services. It can have an equally significant impact on local communities.

6 Issues and Choices

6.1.1 None at this stage

7 Background Papers

7.1.1 None