



**To/
Councillor Andrew Stevens
Cabinet Member for Business
Improvement and Performance**

BY EMAIL

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Overview & Scrutiny

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2 October 2020

Summary: This is a letter from the Service Improvement and Finance Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Business Improvement and Performance. The letter concerns the meeting on 21 September 2020 and the Corporate Performance Monitoring Annual Report 2019/20.

Dear Councillor Stevens,

On the 21 September, the Panel met to discuss the Performance Monitoring Annual Report 2019/20. The Panel are grateful to the Corporate Performance Manager and the Director of Resources for attending to discuss the report.

We heard that overall, the Corporate Performance indicators for 2019/20 show that 43 out of 78 (55%) Corporate Plan performance indicators (that had targets and where there was data) met their targets. With 41 out of 66 (62%) comparable Corporate Plan performance indicators also showing improvement or staying the same compared to 2018/19. Some of the individual indicators we discussed include:

Safeguarding

- *AS11 - Rate of adults aged 65+ receiving care and support to meet their well-being needs per 1,000 population.* We noted that more individuals are being supported through short-term reablement and other enabling interventions in keeping with the Council's strategic objectives.
- *AS13a –Number of carers (aged 18+) who received a carer's assessment in their own right during the financial year.* We noted that work is being undertaken with carers groups on a regional basis to try and better understand the above-expected number of carers declining an assessment.
- *Measure 19 (PAM025) The rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons per 1,000 population aged 75 or over.* We noted that we are continuing to work with NHS to reduce Delayed Transfers with the Rapid Discharge project commencing.
- *CFS2 – The number of Looked After Children (LAC) at end of the period.* We noted that the focus has been on reducing numbers of children cared for in

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residential settings. Next phase is focus on legal security, which is part of safe lac strategy and will reduce numbers to 475 by March 2021 - below 100 per 10,000.

- *Measure 24 - The percentage of assessments completed for children within statutory timescales.* We noted that improvement in this area has been challenging to achieve for a number of years. A focused piece of work has been completed and the monthly report is evidencing improvement in the 1st quarter of this new financial year.

Education and Skills

- *EDU15a - The percentage of final statements of Special Education Need (SEN) issued within 26 weeks including exceptions*
- *EDU15b - The percentage of final statements of Special Education Need (SEN) issued within 26 weeks excluding exceptions*

We noted that the decline on statements issued within 26 weeks has continued in 2019. Work has already taken place to address some of the issues contributing to this performance, including the introduction of new systems for statements.

This is a priority area for improvement within the Directorate - a new structure and improvement programme will commence in 2020 to address current improvement requirements.

Tackling Poverty

- *HMBCT01a - Housing Benefit Speed of Processing: Average time for processing new claims.* We noted that with reduced resources in place a reduction in performance was expected and 0.5 days is well within acceptable limits
- *POV10 - Number of people gaining employment through Employability Support.* We noted that as part of the employability commissioning review work which is being undertaken we will be better able to capture the results of all the employability activity across the Council

Transformation and Future Council

- *CHR002 (PAM001) - The number of working days/shifts per full time equivalent lost due to sickness absence.* We noted that data quality was under review. Sickness figures have been impacted by COVID-19. Consultation paused on new Management of Attendance Policy due to COVID. Support is continuing in service areas with high levels of sickness absence. We heard that data surrounding staff sickness indicates an increase of 1.85% highlighting a growing trend in sickness absence from 8% to 10% over the previous two periods. The Panel wish to look into this topic in further detail and the Deputy Chief Executive will provide further information in the future (when this is available) regarding the impact of home working and agile arrangements on the sickness absence data. He confirmed that early indicators show that working from home during the pandemic has helped to support a reduction in sickness absence.

Nature and Biodiversity

- In terms of Nature and Biodiversity, the Panel asked about progress the being made on development of quantitative indicators. The Corporate Performance Manager explained that work had been carried out with the Nature Conservation Team. However, it is proving difficult to find something to report in a robust

manner. Work is ongoing on this and the Panel agreed that the qualitative data given in the report was very useful.

Public Accountability Measures

- *PAM15 - The average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant.* We noted that decreased performance this year resulted from a number of extended staff sickness absences, an Occupational Therapist vacancy that took an extended period to fill and the Covid-19 outbreak caused supply chain delays in the last quarter. The Panel wished keep a watching brief on this item to see impact over next quarter.
- *PAM39 - Percentage of rent lost due to properties being empty.* The Panel were asked for further information on the number of empty council properties. The Panel would also like see this considered for inclusion in performance monitoring reporting data.
- *PAM45 – Number of additional dwellings created as a result of bringing empty properties back into use.* The Panel queried whether these were based upon the Empty Property Grant that had been introduced.

After the discussion at the Panel today we agreed to look into the Performance Monitoring progress in more detail. I will, in the first instance have a one-to-one discussion with the Performance manager.

We are interested in any thoughts you may have on the contents of this letter but can we please have your written response to the following questions by 23 October 2020

1. *AS13a – Number of carers (aged 18+) who received a carer's assessment in their own right during the financial year.* The Panel raised concerns over the quality of such services after the initial assessment. Can you please provide further information on this point?
2. *EDU15a and EDU15b - The percentage of final statements of Special Education Need (SEN) issued within 26 weeks including and excluding exceptions.* Can you provide more information on why these target times that are being missed?
3. *POV10 - Number of people gaining employment through Employability Support.* The Panel would like to explore this indicator data further and request further written information on this data set along with the indicator definition.
4. *CHR002 (PAM001) - The number of working days/shifts per full time equivalent lost due to sickness absence.* Can you please provide the Panel with a breakdown of sickness and type across the Council departments?
5. *PAM39 - Percentage of rent lost due to properties being empty.* Can you provide further information on the numbers of empty council properties? The Panel would also like your thoughts on introducing an indicator giving the number of empty council properties
6. *PAM45 – Number of additional dwellings created as a result of bringing empty properties back into use.* Have these properties been brought back to use by using the Empty Properties Grant?

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Chris Holley

Convener, Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel

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