

Resources  
7 Newington Barrow Way, N7 7EP

Report of: Corporate Director of Resources

Meeting of: Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date: 2 November 2023

Ward(s): N/A

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## Corporate Performance update: Q1 2023/24 (April – June 2023)

### 1. Synopsis

- 1.1. This report brings to the Policy and Performance Scrutiny committee the Corporate Performance update for Q1 2023/24 for review and challenge, with a focus on 'organisational health' elements for which the committee is responsible.
- 1.2. The Q1 2023/24 update comprises the following:
  - 1) Appendix 1: Q1 Performance narrative for 'organisation health'
  - 2) Appendix 2: Q1 'organisational health' performance scorecards
  - 3) Appendix 3: Q1 Corporate overview for all of corporate performance, for information
- 1.1. Following questions at the Policy and Performance Scrutiny committee in July on the previous corporate performance update (Q4 / end of year 2022/23), a set of 'deeper insights' into the use of agency staff is included (appendix 1) for further information.
- 1.2. Additional insight into sickness absence was requested at the previous performance update in July. This has been prepared and submitted to Corporate Management Board where additional information was requested. This requires more time to prepare and will come to Policy and Performance Scrutiny committee on 11 December as a separate item.

- 1.3. In line with the corporate performance priorities for 2023/24 raised at the previous (Q4) performance update, a process is underway to review the full set of performance indicators to ensure a complete picture that connects:
- the emerging Wellbeing Index
  - the manifesto commitments
  - strategically significant measures for assurance in the delivery of our missions
  - a wider set measuring key service-level activity.

The aim of this work is to develop an 'impact framework' that is more coherent than the current 'performance framework'. The committee will be kept informed as this develops.

- 1.4. The Committee is invited to note and review the Q1 2023/24 update (Appendix 1), drawing on the scorecards (Appendix 2) for more detail, for questions and challenge at the committee meeting.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To monitor and challenge performance trends for Q1 2023/24 for Organisational Health.

## 3. Background

- 3.1. A suite of corporate performance indicators has been developed by each directorate to help track progress in delivering the five missions set out in the council's Strategic 2030 Plan. Indicators and targets are reviewed annually to ensure they remain relevant.
- 3.2. Performance is monitored internally, through Departmental Management Teams, Corporate Management Board, and externally through the relevant Scrutiny Committee for each directorate.
- 3.3. As with the previous quarter and in line with the request of the new Policy and Performance Scrutiny committee chair, this update focuses on those elements for which the Policy and Performance Scrutiny committee is directly responsible, leaving other scrutiny committees to focus on their respective parts of corporate performance.
- 3.4. While the Policy & Performance Scrutiny Committee has overall responsibility for performance across the council, it is specifically responsible for those elements that are broadly captured by 'organisational health' – that is, the effective and sustainable running of the council. This currently comprises measures from the Resources directorate and customer service areas from Community Engagement and Wellbeing Directorate in relation to:
- Managing our budget effectively and efficiently

- Harnessing digital technology for the benefit of residents and staff
  - Making sure our workforce is diverse, skilled and highly motivated
  - Being open and accountable
  - Resident experience
- 3.5. Q1 2023/24 performance data and narrative for those areas not principally reporting to the Policy and Performance Scrutiny committee will be shared at the respective Scrutiny committees on the following dates:
- Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee: 17 October 2023
  - Children’s Service Scrutiny Committee: 14th September 2023
  - Health and Care Scrutiny Committee: 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023 (Public Health)
  - Health and Care Scrutiny Committee: 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023 (Adult Social Care)
  - Housing Scrutiny committee: 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023
- 3.6. Corporate performance is one of a number of tools that enable us to ensure that we are making progress in delivering key priorities while maintaining good quality services. A collective and collaborative approach is welcomed for corporate performance as a combined effort between the directorates, leadership and the central corporate performance function.

## 4. Executive Summary

- 4.1. The following paragraphs outline:
- Key successes for organisational health in Q1
  - Themes of challenges facing the council as a whole in Q1
  - Specific areas of challenge for organisational health in Q1
  - Focus going forward for organisational health.
- 4.2. **Key successes** for organisational health during Q1 2023/24 include:
- **Managing our budget:** Collection of Council Tax and Business rates are on track and we exceeded our target for the percentage of invoices from local suppliers paid within 10 days.
  - **Harness digital technology:** There were significantly fewer priority 1 technology incidents in Q1 (which typically affect more than 100 staff or residents or significantly impairs applications or access) – lower than the average for the last three years.
  - **A diverse, skilled and highly motivated workforce:** The percentage of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff, and Disabled staff in the top 5% of earners both increased in Q1 compared to Q4.
  - **Be open and accountable:** To better manage Information Governance, a new centralised Access to Information team with a new operating model have been created and all areas will be fully centralised by the end of Q2.
  - **Resident experience:** Stage 2 complaints backlog was cleared in May 2023. The resident journey improved in Q1 as Access Islington received an IVR

(Interactive Voice Recognition) upgrade, individual and team performance was monitored, staff training was provided and staff sickness reduced. This all helped to reduce abandonment from 22% of calls in April to 5% in June.

4.3. The following themes of factors affected performance across the council in Q1 2023/24 (see appendix 3 for further details):

- **Ongoing growth in demand** – seen in particular within housing and on budgets more broadly.
- **Challenge of understanding and responding to complexity** – in particular in persistent absence from schools, completion of drug treatment, household recycling rates and our own rates of sickness absence and agency usage.
- **Challenges in delivering at scale** – in particular in the take-up of childcare bursaries, electric vehicle charging points, London Living Wage accreditation and Shine referrals.
- **Challenge of joined-up working across the council** – seen in particular with care experienced young people not in Education, Employment or Training; carbon emissions from council repairs fleet; and increasing tree canopy cover.
- **IT / Tech / Data issues** – ongoing impacts of cyber-attack in the Mental Health Trust and severe outages affecting reporting of the substance misuse service. There is a challenge of collecting data quality from partners in a couple of Community Wealth Building areas.

4.4. **Specific areas of challenge** for organisational health in Q1 (see Appendix 1 for more detail):

- **Managing our budget:** The General Fund Forecast Outturn Variance from Balanced Budget for Q1 shows significant gross overspend of £12.2m with a net overspend of £7.2m. Two new finance measures introduced for 2023/24 will monitor the impact of debt and debt servicing. At the end of Q1, total debt outstanding is £257.6m with £3.383m of interest paid and accrued on this debt. It is expected that both these figures will rise in line with the approved capital programme and in light of funding challenges and rising interest rates.
- **A diverse, skilled and highly motivated workforce:** In Q1, we lost an average of 9.79 days per employee due to sickness (London Councils' average in 2022/23: 9.77 days), with the main causes remaining as mental health and musculoskeletal. Further analysis of sickness absence will be presented to PPS in December. Agency usage in Q1 increased slightly, continuing the ongoing trend of rising rates through 2022/23 although it remains lower than the London average. Additional insights are provided in Appendix 1.
- **Be open and accountable:** The council did not achieve the ICO target of 90% in Q1 for either Freedom of Information (FOI) requests or Subject Access Requests (SARs). FOIs achieved an overall compliance of 82%, impacted by an increase in requests in Q1, several of which were complex, key staff on annual leave and the focus on stage 1 complaints. SARs achieved an overall

compliance of 67%, impacted by an increase in requests (62 more were received in Q1 than Q4). Continued failure to meet target puts the council at risk of further monitoring which could result in a public reprimand from the ICO or an enforcement notice being issued.

- **Resident experience:** In Q1, Housing developed a backlog of stage 1 complaints, increasing demand at stage 2 of the process, a trend expected to continue until the end of Q2. However, all stage 2s remain within Service Level Agreement. Complaints continue to be experience challenge. A report on maladministration is due to be presented to committee shortly and more details will be provided in performance updates going forward.

4.5. **Strategic areas for improvement** for 2023/24 and beyond for Organisational Health include:

- **Harness digital technology:** A particular focus for Digital projects will be to strengthen 'User Acceptance testing' to prevent unfavourable outcomes.
- **A diverse, skilled and highly motivated workforce:** Workforce plan and Talent Attraction plan to address skills shortages and hard to fill roles. Work is in development to expand the number of new start apprenticeships.
- **Be open and accountable:** The focus will be on a range of measures from training for all members of the new team; addressing backlogs; investigating software solutions; and identifying frequently asked FOI questions to publish.

## 5. Implications

### 5.1. Financial Implications

The cost of providing resources to monitor performance is met within each service's core budget.

### 5.2. Legal Implications

There are no legal duties upon local authorities to set targets or monitor performance. However, these enable us to strive for continuous improvement.

### 5.3. Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030

There are no environmental impacts arising from monitoring performance. Corporate performance helps the Council to monitor its progress in delivering its environmental objectives.

### 5.4. Equalities Impact Assessment

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or

minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required in relation to this report. Corporate Performance aims to support these duties by monitoring inequalities to enable the Council to improve performance.

## 6. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

6.1. The Q1 2023/24 Corporate Performance update sets out progress against the council's strategic priorities as measured by a suite of corporate objectives and indicators. The Committee is asked to review the update and note and challenge specific performance of the Resources directorate.

### Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Summary narrative organisational Health update Q1 23\_24 PPS
- Appendix 2: Organisational Health scorecards Q1 23\_24 PPS
- Appendix 3: Corporate Performance Overview Q1 23\_24 PPS

### Final report clearance:

Authorised by: **Dave Hodgkinson, Corporate Director of Resources**

Date: 11 October 2023

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