

Resources  
7 Newington Barrow Way, N7 7EP

Report of: Dave Hodgkinson, Corporate Director of Resources

Meeting of: Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date: 18 January 2024

Ward(s): N/A

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## Corporate Performance update: Q2 2023/24 (July – September 2023)

### 1. Synopsis

- 1.1. This report brings to the Policy and Performance Scrutiny committee the Corporate Performance update for Q2 2023/24 for review and challenge, with a focus on 'organisational health' elements for which the committee is responsible.
- 1.2. The Q2 update comprises the following:
  - 1) Appendix 1: Q2 Organisational Health performance narrative
  - 2) Appendix 2: Q2 Organisational Health performance scorecards
  - 3) Appendix 3: Q2 Corporate overview of performance (for information)
- 1.3. The Committee is invited to note and review the Q2 2023/24 update (Appendix 1), drawing on the scorecards (Appendix 2) for more detail, for questions and challenge at the committee meeting.

### 1. Background

- 1.1. 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.

- 1.2. Performance is monitored internally, through Departmental Management Teams, Corporate Management Board, and externally through the relevant Scrutiny Committee for each directorate.
- 1.3. 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.
- 1.4. 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
- 1.5. Q2 2023/24 performance updates 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: 25 January 2024
  - Children's Service Scrutiny Committee: 15 January 2024
  - Health and Care Scrutiny Committee: 18 December 2023 (Public Health)
  - Health and Care Scrutiny Committee: 23 January 2024 (Adult Social Care)
  - Housing Scrutiny committee: 8 January 2024
- 1.6. 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.

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The following section outlines:
  - Key performance messages for areas of organisational health in Q2
  - Themes of challenge facing the council as a whole in Q2
- 2.2. Key performance messages for organisational health during Q2 (see Appendix 1 for more details):

- **Managing our budget:** Our finance measures show us to be in a deteriorating but safe position considering the current financial context. Financial pressures continue to accelerate across the sector and pose risk to our levels of reserves and therefore sustainability.
- **Harness digital technology:** In Q2, there were more incidents (typically affecting more than 100 staff or residents or significantly impairing applications or access) than in Q1, due to repeated problems with printing. However, we remain on track to perform better than the previous three years.
- **A diverse, skilled and highly motivated workforce:** All workforce measures performed well against target or better in Q2 than in Q1. Number of days lost in the last 12 months from sickness absence fell in Q2 from Q1 to be better than London Councils' average. The percentage of the FTE workforce who are agency staff also reduced slightly in Q2 from Q1 and remains lower than the London Councils' average.

Please note, this quarter, we propose to update the sickness absence and agency targets from legacy targets predating 2020 to "below London Council's average". This provides contextual targets and will ensure we aim to be better than average for London Councils.

- **Be open and accountable:** Performance for FOIs (Freedom of Information requests) and SARs (Subject Access requests) improved in Q2 on Q1 despite an increase in FOIs. FOI completion within target close to target and compliance for SARs increased, putting us on track for the best compliance rates in over two years. Improvement plans put in place over the past two quarters appear to be working and will continue.
- **Resident experience:** Complaints continued to be the main challenge in Q2. These were reported separately to Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee and are characterised by a significant growth in those received at all stages. Focus going forward is on learning from the outcomes of ombudsman determinations and a new case management system will centralise and enable this.

2.3. The following themes affected performance across the council in Q2 2023/24 (see appendix 3 for further details):

- **Ongoing growth in pressures on council resources** – seen particularly within finance, housing and the related area of complaints.
- **Challenge of growing complexity in need** – seen particularly in relations to children with persistent absence from schools.

- **Challenge in delivering at scale and engagement** – seen particularly in waste reduction, London Living Wage entry level jobs and roll out of the cultural programme 11 by 11.
- **Challenge of conflicting priorities and policies** – seen particularly with the uptake of the childcare bursary scheme due to changes in government payment of childcare support, reducing emissions of council fleet due to increases in the number of lease vehicles to cover repairs and managing the Sobell ice rink.
- **Staffing challenges** are seen in Q2 across a number of services relating to industrial action, leave, sickness, staff vacancies, difficulties recruiting and training staff while maintaining service provision.
- **Data quality challenges** – experienced in accurately collecting data for reporting ASB, safeguarding performance, a new adult social care statutory return, London Living Wage entry level jobs, apprenticeships starts, and missed refuse and recycling collections.

### 3. Recommendations

- 3.1. To monitor and challenge organisational health performance trends for Q2 2023/24.

### 4. Implications

#### 4.1. Financial Implications

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

#### 4.2. 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.

#### 4.3. 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.

#### 4.4. 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.

## 5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 5.1. The Q2 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: Q2 23\_24 Organisational Health performance narrative
- Appendix 2: Q2 Organisational Health scorecard 23\_24
- Appendix 3: Q2 Corporate Overview of performance 23\_24

### **Final report clearance:**

Authorised by:

**Dave Hodgkinson, Corporate Director of Resources**

Date: 22 December 2023

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