

Resources
222 Upper Street, N1 1XR

Report of: Dave Hodgkinson, Corporate Director of Resources

Meeting of: Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25 April 2024

Ward(s): N/A

Corporate Performance update: Q3 2023/24 (Oct – Dec 2023)

1. Synopsis

- 1.1. The council has in place a suite of corporate performance indicators to help track progress in delivering the five missions set out in the council's Strategic 2030 Plan. Progress on 'Organisational Health' performance measures, for which the committee is responsible, is reported to the Policy & Performance Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis. As the committee has an overall remit for performance, an overview of performance across the council is also appended for information. Performance for service areas is reported to the separate relevant scrutiny committees.
- 1.2. The performance update for Q3 2023/24 comprises:
 - 1) Appendix 1: Q3 Organisational Health performance narrative
 - 2) Appendix 2: Q3 Organisational Health performance scorecards
 - 3) Appendix 3: Q3 Corporate overview of performance (for information)
- 1.3. The Committee is invited to note and review the Q3 2023/24 update (Appendix 1), drawing on the scorecards (Appendix 2) for more detail, for question and challenge at the committee meeting.

2. Background

- 2.1. Performance is monitored internally, through Departmental Management Teams, Corporate Management Board, and externally through the relevant Scrutiny

Committee for each directorate. Indicators and targets are reviewed annually to ensure they remain relevant.

2.2. 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

2.3. 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:

- Children's Service Scrutiny Committee: 10 June 2024 (Q3)
- Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee: June 2024 (end of year/Q4)
- Health and Care Scrutiny Committee: 4 March 2024 (Q2 Public Health)
- Health and Care Scrutiny Committee: 15 April 2024 (Q3 Adult Social Care)
- Housing Scrutiny committee: 18 April 2024 (Q3)

2.4. 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, central corporate performance function, leadership and members.

3. Executive Summary

3.1. The following section outlines:

- Key performance messages for areas of organisational health in Q3
- Themes of challenge facing the council as a whole in Q3

3.2. Key performance messages for organisational health during Q3 (see Appendix 1 for more details):

- **Managing our budget:** General Fund Forecast Outturn Variance from Balanced Budget reduced to £0.4m in Q3. While stable, significant financial challenges exist. Improvements within corporate items were masked by a gross directorate problem which worsened since Q2 to £19.7m. While we are on track to exceed our year-end target for the collection of business rates, collection of council tax has fallen slightly

making it unlikely that we'll hit our end of year target, but we are likely to achieve similar rates to the end of last year and the level for which is budgeted.

- **A diverse, skilled and highly motivated workforce:** Sickness absence dropped for the third consecutive quarter to an average of 8.4 days per employee in Q3 and is on track to be lower than last year. However, the use of agency staff increased in Q3, after reducing in Q2, to be higher than Q1 and is now higher than London Councils' average for the first time. The challenge panels were completed in Q3, actions arising are being implemented and should have an impact for the start of the new financial year. This remains an area of focus.
- **Harness digital technology:** We continue to use digital technology to support improvements to services, such as in Adult Social care and finance. In Q3, there were more downtime incidents (typically affecting more than 100 staff or residents or significantly impairing applications or access) than in previous quarters this year, but only one breached SLA. So, although the number increased, the impact on residents and staff was relatively low as they were dealt with in a timely manner.
- **Be open and accountable:** Performance for FOIs (Freedom of Information requests) and SARs (Subject Access requests) improved in Q3 and the targets for completing both within target time were hit for the first time. This represents a dramatic improvement in performance for SARs in particular (from a low of 65% in 2021/22). It follows steady improvements in performance throughout the year for both areas as the services were fully centralised.
- **Resident experience:** Complaints continued to be the main challenge in Q3, with a sustained growth in those received at all stages. Big improvements have been seen throughout the year in the percentage of complaints completed within deadline.

3.3. The following themes of challenge affected performance across the council in Q3 2023/24 (see Appendix 3 for further details):

- **Ongoing pressure on council resources** – seen particularly within finance, housing and the related area of complaints.
- **Multiple need among resident** – seen particularly in child-friendly mission, eg with respect of persistent absence from schools.
- **Engagement and delivering with partners** – the most common challenge across the board.
- **Staffing** – mainly related to use of agency staff.
- **Data quality challenges** – a growing issue across services.

4. Recommendations

4.1. To review and challenge organisational health performance trends for Q3 2023/24.

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 Q3 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: Q3 23_24 Organisational Health performance narrative
- Appendix 2: Q3 Organisational Health scorecard 23_24
- Appendix 3: Q3 Corporate Overview of performance 23_24

Final report clearance:

Signed by:

Dave Hodgkinson, Corporate Director of Resources

Date: 9 April 2024

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