

Public Document Pack
GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD
22/06/2023 at 6.00 pm



Present: Councillor McLaren (Chair)
Councillors Al-Hamdani, Hobin, J. Hussain, Jabbar, Moores,
Surjan and Woodvine

Also in Attendance:

Shelley Kipling	Assistant Chief Executive
Vikki Morris	Assistant Director of HR and OD
Paul Rogers	Constitutional Services
Mark Stenson	Assistant Director of Corporate Governance and Strategic Financial Management

1 **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

RESOLVED - That Councillor Moores be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

2 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 23 March 2023 be noted.

3 **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

4 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

5 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

6 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions for the Board to consider.

7 **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Resolved that the terms of reference be noted.

8 **A COUNCILLORS WORKBOOK ON SCRUTINY OF FINANCE**

Consideration was given to A Councillor's Workbook on Scrutiny of Finance produced by the Local Government Association (LGA). The Workbook has been designed as a learning aid for local Councillors. It is intended to provide Councillors with insight and assistance and to develop key skills which will help to be most effective in the role of a Councillor.

Resolved that the LGA Councillor's Workbook on Scrutiny of Finance be noted.

WORK BOOK ON SCRUTINY

Consideration was given A Councillor's Workbook on Scrutiny produced by the Local Government Association (LGA) which is designed as a learning aid for Councillors. The LGA consider that the Workbook serves as a useful tool for some of the key skills, approaches and tactics that make for an effective ward Councillor.

Resolved that the Councillor's Workbook on Scrutiny produced by the Local Government Association be noted.

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23 FOR QUARTER 4 - 1 JANUARY TO 31 MARCH 2023

The Committee Scrutinised a report which presented a review of the Council performance for the fourth quarter of 2022/23 (1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023). The Committee was invited to examine areas on under performance and where appropriate recommend remedial action. The Committee was asked to note the areas of good performance.

The overview and scrutiny of performance aims to provide assurance that:

- our business plan priorities are aligned to the needs of our residents
- our services are good or are on track to good
- any services that are not on track, or have identified risks, are being supported or challenged to rectify this
- demand indicators are being noted and service provision assessed accordingly.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of performance against business plan priorities for the period 1st January to 31st March 2023 (Quarter 4) and where applicable the End of Year targets.

The report refers throughout to the dashboards and infographics provided as Appendix A of the report.

Appendix B of the report comprises the response to a query raised at the March meeting of the Performance Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Annual business plans ran from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023; it is now year-end. The business plans included a range of actions and measures across all our services aimed at achieving the aspirations of the Corporate Plan and putting our residents first.

The [Corporate Plan](#) 2022/27 was approved by Cabinet in September 2022; going forward our business plans will be closely aligned to the priorities set out in the Plan and will run from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2027.

Business plans are kept under review by services and can be influenced by both internal and external factors including increased demand, reduction in resources, changes in legislation or policies.

Members were advised that it is important that our performance is viewed in the context of our borough, the demand for our services and the resources available to us.

The Council needs to monitor and plan for the impact of both internal influences (e.g., staff capacity) and external factors (e.g., increased demand due to increased cost of living) on all its services.

Members were informed that

- 89% (163/184) of actions are on track or completed
- 71% (103/145) of risks are low, very low or closed; less than 2% (2/145) are high
- 79% (41/52) of targeted measures are on or within target
- 69% (36/52) of measures with end of year targets are predicted to achieve them.
- The report sets out in a chart showing End of Year Actions, Risks and Measures. Members noted that 0 measures, 3 actions & 5 risks have not been updated by the service. These figures are as expected for the end of the reporting year.

The Board was informed that each business plan measure is aligned to one of the five corporate priorities or is designated as a service specific measure.

The infographic on page 3 of Appendix A of the report gives an overview of progress against each priority and shows we are on track in most areas; the quality homes targets met their end of year outputs in full.

Pages 4 to 14 of Appendix A of the report give an overview of progress against business plan measures within each service area (sorted alphabetically).

The report provides a performance measure breakdown that includes:

- trend or polarity (based on previous 3 years)
- quarterly RAG (red/ amber/ green) rating for current year
- End of Year (EOY) target & RAG rating (to reflect final EOY figures)
- benchmarking information & its source where available or applicable.

The summary set out in paragraph 5.2 and Appendix A of the report addresses issues raised when Corporate Performance was last reported to the Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2023. It aims to give the overall health of each service, the quality of services and timeliness of each service.

A Member referred to the disparity in the reporting system of street light information on the Council's website. It was emphasised that access to individual street lights on the website indicated that some lights were faulty whilst accessing those street lights via an area on the website indicated that those street lights had been repaired. The Member had reported this problem to the appropriate officers in March 2023 and no response was received on the issue.

Shelly Kipling advised that she would investigate the matter and formally respond to the Member.

Members made reference to some of the other performance measure percentages shown in Appendix A of the report which seemed to be contradictory or confusing.

In response to the reference by Members to the performance measures and the vagueness of the information shown in the Summary comments in paragraph 5.2 of the report, the Board was informed that the Council uses the CorVu system to generate the performance management reports. From October 2023 the system will be decommissioned by the Council. It is no longer supported by the provider. This will be the final report generated by the system. The Board was advised that Power BI would be the new model of reporting performance management and is in the process of replacing CorVu for this process. The new model will incorporate a more detailed Summary (shown in Paragraph 5.2 of the report) with explanations and reasoning associated with the red, amber and green indicators shown in Appendix A of the report which can be confusing in the current reporting format. Benchmarking where appropriate would also be included. The new system will be simpler and easier to understand from a Member viewpoint and for the public on the website.

The Chairman suggested that to enable more detailed scrutiny on the various sectors of the report, the report could be restructured in future so that the Board can consider fewer sectors of the report which will allow sectors to be considered in detail at scheduled meetings throughout the year. There was also the suggestion that officers responsible for those sectors could be requested attend those meetings.

The Board was informed that it would be useful and informative for Board Members to attend a training session for a short period prior to the next Board meeting with regard to the new Power BI system of reporting and how this will translate and report Corporate Performance. The Chairman requested Members to identify areas of performance measures shown in Appendix A to the report to enable specific focus on these areas at training.

Resolved that

(1) the progress made in implementing the 2022/23 business plan objectives be noted;

(2) the Board notes the comments on progress, in particular the narrative that relates to any red measures;

(3) for future meetings of the Board, the Corporate Performance report be restructured so that the Board can consider fewer sectors of the report which will allow those sectors to be considered in detail at scheduled meetings throughout the year with appropriate officers being requested to attend those meetings; and

(4) a training session be held for Board Members for a short period prior to the next Board meeting with regard to the new Power BI system of reporting and how this will translate and report Corporate Performance.

11

ABSENCE TRENDS ACROSS THE AUTHORITY

The Board received a presentation from Vikki Morris, Assistant Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development, giving details on Workforce Absence Trends across Oldham Council.

Members were informed that

- Sickness trends back to pre-pandemic levels
- Reasons for short term and long term remains similar as it has been previously
- We are seeing greater complexity with cases – requiring more specialised skills to support and manage cases
- Number of staff in the workplace with at least 1 long term condition is increasing

Members attention was drawn to the programme of support the Council provides to staff, known as Wellbeing Matters. This covers physical, mental and lifestyle wellbeing support. Employees have access to advice, support and counselling from an external provider, as well as a new wellbeing app which focuses on preventative and holistic wellbeing for staff. Members were made aware of digital assessments, educational guides and interactive health tools to motivate and inspire staff. The App is offered to Agency staff.

Members noted the following table for Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

EAP Usage 1st October to 31st December 2022

Service Usage	Oldham
Total Calls	52
Total Live Chats	58
Telephone Counselling/ Advice	52
Telephone 1 st Appointment	12
Telephone Additional Sessions	27
Face to Face 1 st Appointment	1
Face to Face Additional Sessions	0
Legal Advice	1
Web Pages Viewed	402
None EAP Calls	0

Members noted statistics relating to call topics and occupational health referrals during 2022; data on the latter was shown against other authorities in Greater Manchester.

In response to a query, Members were informed that initially there was a nervousness amongst staff coming back into the office post Covid. Hybrid working is, however, encouraged where work allows but staff are encouraged to work from the office at least 2 or 3 days a week.

Members were informed that staff can take up their health concerns with their manager, either through daily conversations or via appraisals.

Vikki Morris advised that comparative rates of sickness showing if the rates are increasing or decreasing are used. Also Oldham Council sickness rates can be measured against rates given by the Office of National Statistics.

The Board noted that the Council has trained 70 members of staff as mental health first aiders.

Resolved that

- (1) The Workforce Absence Trends presentation be received and noted; and
- (2) Vikki Morris be thanked for her very informative presentation.

12

GOVERNANCE STRATEGY AND RESOURCES WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

The Board considered the Governance Strategy and Resources Work Programme for 2023/24.

Members were informed that previously the work programme had been splintered over the various Scrutiny Committees so that there was a need refine a programme so that the programme aligns with the terms of reference for the Board.

The Chairman also emphasised that the programme needed to be reviewed and he and the Vice-Chairman would forward a refined version to Board Members prior to the next meeting.

The Chairman drew attention to the number of Board meetings for 2023/24 which restricted how work programme items can be properly scrutinised. It would be his intention to increase the number of meetings in the 2024/25 Calendar of Meetings when that Calendar is considered in December this year.

Resolved that a revised draft Work Programme for 2023/24 be circulated at the next scheduled Board meeting.

13

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT

Consideration was given to the Key Decision Document covering Decisions taken from 19 May 2023.

Resolved that the Key Decision Document covering decisions taken from 19 May 2023 be noted.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.45 pm

This page is intentionally left blank