

Summary of Quarter 4 2021/22 Overview and Scrutiny performance discussions

1. Framework

- 1.1 Quarter 4 2021/22 performance was discussed at the following Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) meetings.

Children and Young People O&S: 08 June 2022

Regeneration, Culture and Environment O&S: 09 June 2022

Health and Adult Social Care O&S: 14 June 2022

2. Items referred to Business Support O&S

No items were referred to Business Support O&S by the chairs of the other O&S Committees.

3. O&S Performance Discussions

- 3.1 This section provides a summary of the discussions at the Children and Young People O&S Committee, the Health and Adult Social Care O&S Committee and the Regeneration, Culture and Environment O&S Committee.

3.1.1 Children and Young People O&S Committee discussion summary.

Background:

The Director of People – Children and Adult Services introduced the report and with the support of other members of the Directorate Management Team, gave updates relating to the indicators flagged as red within the report.

Members then raised a number of questions and comments, which included:

- **Staffing levels** – in response to a question about how much performance results were impacted by staffing levels, officers confirmed that staffing remained a challenge in some parts of the system and was inevitably impacting on some of the data. In addition, some of the issues were impacted by family availability or a measured decision to see a child in the right environment. In addition, it was reported that the service had recently recruited newly qualified social workers as part of the focus on growing our own qualified workforce in Medway.
- **ILACS7** – concern was raised about the distance from achieving this target. Officers confirmed that when the authority started hitting this target, Members would be confident in knowing that practice was good. At this time the organisation was still on its improvement journey
- **Breastfeeding** – in response to a question about peer support, officers confirmed that this had declined as a result of the pandemic and that the service was currently being reviewed which would hopefully see an increase in numbers.

- **Holiday Activity Fund** – it was requested that the information on this be circulated when available. Officers confirmed that the procurement of providers had recently been completed and that information on sessions would be circulated once available.
- **Free school build** – it was asked if these projects should be on the risk register. It was confirmed by officers that the cost of free schools were met by the Department for Education and therefore the only risk to the Council was regarding issues such as school transport budgetary impacts and place planning risks where projects were delayed.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

3.1.2 Regeneration, Culture and Environment O&S Committee discussion summary.

Discussion:

Members considered a report on performance in Quarter 4 2021/22 on the delivery of the two priorities in the Council Plan relevant for this Committee: Place and Growth.

The following issues were discussed:

- **Measure W6CP, Satisfaction with refuse collection – Citizen Panel result** – concern was expressed that this was at amber, particularly as the recycling rate was now under 50%. The Deputy Chief Executive commented that performance stood at 84.8% against a target of 85%. Although recycling rates were not as high as he would like, the Council was committed to increasing them.
- **Climate change and the Local Plan** – in response to whether the lack of a new local plan would affect progress on climate change, the Deputy Chief Executive assured Members that this would not be the case.
- **Measure NI 154, net additional homes provided** – how confident the Council was that this target could be met was questioned, and the Deputy Chief Executive commented that the target last year had been 1,000 but this year was around 1,500/1,600, which would be a significant challenge.
- **Cultural Strategy** – the importance of this having tangible benefits was emphasised. The Deputy Chief Executive agreed with this point and noted the strategy had been developed in consultation with the public, with high levels of engagement and support.
- **Measure NI 195a, Improved street and environmental cleanliness: Litter** – given the litter problems caused by some fast food outlets, some surprise was expressed that during Quarter 4, 97% of streets surveyed had been free from litter at the time of the inspections. Members were advised that any concerns about litter hotspots would be responded to. The Council carried out regular surveys to arrive at the 97% figure. A briefing note on the surveys, including how regular they were and where they took place was agreed.

A point was made that the level of service received differed according to where a person lived and priority areas should be tackled first.

- **St John Church improvements** – details of this were requested.
- **Citizens Panel** – whether this represented a cross section of Medway’s population and whether sample sizes could be increased were queried. It was agreed that a briefing note on the Citizens Panel would be produced.
- **Parks and open spaces** – a point was made that the reasons for the drop in user satisfaction should be examined and Member requests for repairs or interventions should be included in the statistics. The Deputy Chief Executive commented that satisfaction rates were over 80%, but he would reflect on this and acknowledged the important links to public health. While not complacent, there were eight green flag accredited sites in Medway.
- **Street parties** – a suggestion was made that the Council should encourage residents to hold street parties in a specific week of the year.
- **City Status** – a point was made that the Council should talk to residents before making another bid as there were mixed feelings about achieving city status. The Deputy Chief Executive commented that any decision on a new bid would be a Member decision.
- **GVA per job** – in response to a question officers agreed to look at whether inflation could be included in the figures.
- **Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF)** - in response to a question about confidence in delivering the programme, officers responded work was taking place on detailed designs and work was underway to deliver the programme.
- **Litter picking event** – the Environmental Health team were congratulated on a recent successful litter picking event.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to:

- a) Note the Q4 2021/22 performance against the measures used to monitor progress against the Council’s priorities.
- b) Note that details of the St John’s Church improvements would be shared.
- c) Request briefing notes on litter surveys, including how regular they were and where they took place and also on the Citizen’s Panel.
- d) Note that officers would examine whether inflation could be included in the GVA per job figures.

- e) request that Members' requests for repairs to greenspaces infrastructure be added to the action plan and consideration given how this could be incorporated into the satisfaction figures.

3.1.3 Health and Adult Social Care O&S Committee discussion summary.

Discussion:

Members considered a report on performance in Quarter 4 2021/22 on the delivery of the Council Plan priority relevant for this committee: People.

A point was made that the Directorate was performing well in spite of the pressures it was facing. The rise in fuel prices could have a significant impact on domiciliary workers.

Members queried why the strategic risk SR52 (A new severe pandemic, e.g., flu, Covid-xx, MERS or other, more serious than Covid-19) had been removed from the register and it was suggested this should remain on the register.

The Director of Public Health commented the Council recognised there may be another pandemic. There had been a change in emphasis to reflect the fact the Council was more likely to be prepared having learned from the Covid pandemic. In response, a point was made that this rationale could be applied to many of the other strategic risks.

The Director of Public Health assured Members he had the tools and the ability to direct resources in the event of another pandemic. The Council was still responding to Covid but it was not sustainable to maintain the same state of readiness as before.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to note the Quarter 4 2021/22 performance against the measures used to monitor progress against the Council's priorities.