

## Slough Borough Council

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Date:</b>	15 January 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	Corporate Performance Report – October 2023
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Cllr Dexter Smith – Leader of the Council
<b>Chief Officer:</b>	Sarah Hayward Executive Director, Strategy & Transformation
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Dean Tyler Associate Director, Strategy
	Dave Hounsell Group Manager, Programmes, Performance & Strategy
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Decision Subject To Call In:</b>	No
<b>Appendices:</b>	A - Corporate Performance Report – October 2023

### 1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1. The Council was set a Direction to improve evidence-based decision-making. One mechanism to achieve evidence-based decision-making is to implement a robust, transparent, and regular corporate performance reporting cycle. This corporate performance reporting cycle is a key component of the council's Performance Management Approach and is underpinned by an emerging corporate Data Strategy.

#### Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended to:

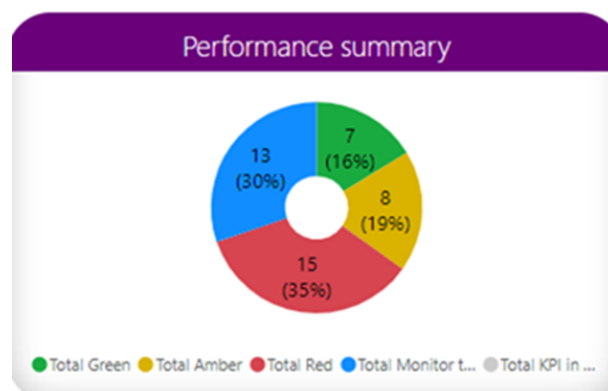
- Note and comment on the Council's current performance and mitigating actions as measured by the key performance indicators within the corporate management information report and scorecard.

#### Commissioner Review

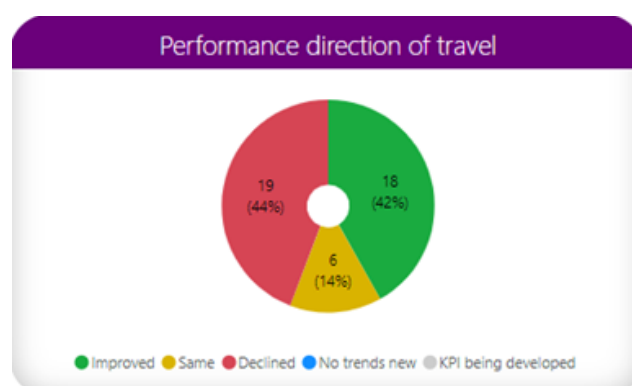
No specific comments from Commissioners.

## 2. Report

- 2.1. This is the second report to Cabinet on the key performance indicators from the 2023/24 corporate management information scorecard aligned to the strategic priorities in the new Corporate Plan.
- 2.2. During October a mid-year refresh of the current set of metrics in the corporate performance scorecard was carried out to include a more focussed set of metrics. The number of metrics in the revised corporate performance scorecard reduced from 59 to 43 with two new metrics added. Metrics removed from the scorecard will continue to be reviewed regularly at directorate level reporting.
- 2.3. The corporate performance scorecard will be kept under review and amended as appropriate to meet the corporate priorities of the Council. They will also be reviewed to take account of the role of the Office of Local Government (Oflog). At present there is a limited number of published performance metrics and some of these are historic. However, it is expected that over time this dataset will increase. In the meantime, the Council will make use of other performance datasets, including LG Inform and CIPFA benchmarking to ensure it has comparable performance data.
- 2.4. Overall, for Oct-23 the strategic performance picture remains variable. 16% (7) of the 43 key performance indicators (KPIs) are performing either at or better than target. 19% (8) indicators are performing marginally worse than target, and 35% (15) indicators are performing below the red KPI threshold. A further 30% (13) indicators are monitored for trends.



- 2.5. Compared to the previous month, performance has improved for 42% (18) of the 43 KPIs, remained the same for 14% (6) and declined for 44% (19).



- 2.6. Appendix A of the corporate performance report summarises progress against the Council's priorities as presented in October 2023. The report includes:
- Summary progress against the strategic outcomes in the Corporate Plan.
  - Areas that require a continued focus on improvement, the mitigating actions and owners assigned - trends that indicate the council is not on track for delivering its strategic objectives (refer to pages 8 to 9).
  - Areas of improvement – trends that indicate the council is improving although performance currently below agreed target (refer to pages 10 to 13).
  - Areas for recognition, where the council can learn from promising practice - trends that indicate the council is on track for delivering its objectives (refer to pages 13 to 14).
- 2.7. In Appendix A, pages 2 to 7 outline the performance trends against the 43 strategic KPIs, and the mitigating actions and action owners. Each action has an assigned Executive Director owner, who is accountable for the performance level, and who will assign responsibility for delivery to officers. Further, pages 17 to 24 include charts showing trends over time for each metric along with progress against target agreed.
- 2.8. Key areas of improvements:
- The average processing time for new housing benefit claims improving month on month to 28.67 days during Oct-23, a reduction of 1.41 days from the previous month however remains above the national average of 20 days. The year-to-date average processing time for new claims of 45.41 days improved by 2.42 days.
  - Continuous improvements in the average time taken to process change in circumstances to existing housing benefit claims. At 6.83 days during Oct-23, this remains below target of 9 days and a reduction of 1.23 days from the previous month. The year-to-date average processing time for changes of 15.42 days is a reduction of 1.31 days from the previous month. The Council has made a significant investment in automation, and a detailed improvement plan is in place to implement this which will remedy existing issues and help to improve processing times to an acceptable and sustainable level by the end of the financial year.
  - Improvement in call centre wait times during Oct-23 to 09 mins 01 seconds and calls answered at 71.1%, with a reduction in calls received (14.3k) although performance remains above target. The Customer Services Improvement project team have been working on service improvements including telephone interactive voice response messages and video development for our website and digital channels.
  - An improvement in adults aged between 40-74 offered a health check and higher than regional and national average. During 2023/24 Q1, 6.6% (2,565) eligible population offered an NHS health check in Slough, an improvement from Q4 of 2.7% (1,100) and above the national average of 5.6% and South-

East average of 4.3%. The service has been using data from performance dashboards to map health checks offered at GP practice level to contribute to improvements and share best practise using universal offer combined with a more targeted approach.

- Major and non-major planning applications decisions made within timescale during 2023/24 Q1 remain consistently high. Performance trends actively monitored at management meetings focussing on identifying service improvements actions to issue decisions within timescale including regularly reviewing applications with officers, timely site visits to assess planning applications and where necessary seek amendments to developments early in the process.

## 2.9. Key areas that require a continued focus on improvement:

- An increase in the number of standard housing voids and in the average number of days to re-let voids. 151 standard housing voids reported at the end of Oct-23, with an average of 200 days taken to re-let 6 properties. The number of voids and the re-let time will increase before improved performance occurs. Performance regularly reviewed at housing management meetings to address issues and risks. A minimum level of lettings agreed with allocations staff until fully automated lettings process is in place. This will enable the return to normal levels of operation and void processes by the end of Dec-23.
- There is a relative low level of take-up of free early years education or childcare for eligible 2-year-olds. Slough's summer 2023 take-up rate was 54.5%, which is below the target of 65%, and below the national average of 74%. An Early Years strategy in development with partners and stakeholders to create a clear vision and how we intend to achieve our objectives.
- The number of anti-social behaviour and environmental related service requests open for more than 90 days increased from 49 during Sept-23 to 79 during Oct-23. All cases reviewed each month and appropriate action taken. Teams continue to work with Communications and Direct Services Operations (DSO) team to target hotspots for household fly-tipping and are building legal cases for enforcement. Noise nuisance cases can take 4 or 5 months to resolve. Complex cases require investigation and officers to take formal legal action, cases closed at the completion of formal action. This is not necessarily a negative as it's about reaching the right outcome and as our enforcement teams take a more robust stance, we may see an increase in the number of cases taking longer than 90 days.
- Compared to similar period last year, a decrease in the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting and remains well below the 40% target. Recycling rates cyclically decline during the winter months due to a reduction in green waste, however the rate in Slough remains low in all seasons. Slough recently increased the types of plastic that are recyclable. Residents can now recycle loose plastic in their red recycling bins. This should reduce the number of bins rejected due to contamination resulting in an increase in recyclables.

### **3. Implications of the Recommendation**

#### **3.1. *Financial implications***

- The key performance indicators from the corporate management information scorecard are aligned to the priorities in the Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan articulates a commitment to delivering financial prudence and demonstrating Best Value for residents, any monies needed to achieve improved performance must be funded within the council revenue budgets.
- A separate finance report is presented to Cabinet quarterly that shows the financial performance of Slough Borough Council but clearly links with information in this report

#### **3.2. *Legal implications***

- Whilst there is no statutory duty to report regularly to Cabinet on the Council's performance, as a best value authority under the Local Government Act 1999, the Council has a statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. Regular reporting of performance can assist the Council to demonstrate best value.
- The Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 was approved by Audit and Corporate Governance Committee in July 2023. This included a number of actions, including an action to improve the systems in place for managing performance. This stated that the Council must ensure basic systems and controls are in place to ensure that performance is managed, and risk appropriately identified, reported and monitored. Performance data should measure the quality of services for users, use of resources and value for money. Performance indicators should be set drawing on sector wide data sets from various organisations including the Local Government Association and CIPFA.
- The Government has published draft best value guidance which identifies seven best value themes. Under the theme of Service Delivery, local authority data is one of the means to identify whether services are being delivered efficiently and effectively and services should be benchmarked against comparable authorities. Performance should be regularly reported to the public to ensure that citizens are informed of the quality of services being delivered. Under the theme of Continuous Improvement, frequent monitoring, performance reporting and updating of improvement plans is identified as a characteristic of a well-functioning authority. Under the theme of Governance, it is recommended that performance management information measures actual outcomes effectively and is frequently interrogated to allow under performance to be addressed.

#### **3.3. *Risk management implications***

- Mitigating actions are in place for strategic performance indicators where key performance trends require action. These actions are proposed by the responsible manager, and updates are monitored at the monthly CLT Assurance forum.

- The monthly CLT Assurance forum considers finance, risk, and performance to ensure that the leadership team receive a rounded picture on the health of the organisation, to inform improvement actions.

#### 3.4. *Environmental implications*

- Strategic performance indicators aligned to priority 3 of the corporate plan retains and expands upon environmental commitments under the following strategic objective '*reducing Slough's carbon footprint, promoting active travel and sustainable forms of transport, and taking action to prevent or minimise the impact of climate change*'.

#### 3.5. *Equality implications*

- The Equality Act 2010 sets out duties for local authorities in relation to equalities, including the public sector equality duty, which requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. In relation to equality of opportunity, the legislation requires the Council to consider the need to remove or reduce disadvantage, meet the needs of people with protected characteristics and encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life and other activities. Performance data can assist the Council to identify gaps in service and consider what action is required to address this.

## 4. **Background Papers**

None