

Report

Cabinet

Part 1

Date: 10 January 2024

Subject **Mid-Year Assessment Report 2023/24**

Purpose For Cabinet to agree the Mid-year Assessment Report of service area progress against their Service Plans 2023/24.

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Ward All

Summary In November 2022 Newport City Council agreed its Corporate Plan 2022-27 to deliver an ‘Ambitious, Fairer and Greener Newport for Everyone’. The Council’s 11 Service Areas have developed service area plans which set out how they will contribute towards the delivery of the Corporate Plan’s 4 Well-being Objectives. This report provides an overview of the progress that service areas have made in delivering against their objectives, projects and performance measures in the first 6 months of 2023/24 (1st April to 30th September 2023).

At the mid-year point, all the service areas reported positive progress in the delivery of their objectives and actions. Against service area performance measures, it was reported:

- 9 Red performance measures
- 14 Amber performance measures
- 61 Green performance measures

Each service area presented their Mid-year assessment to the Place and Corporate and People Scrutiny Committees. The feedback and comments raised by the scrutiny committees are included in the report and will be considered for future service plan development and the Council’s end of year assessment of service area performance.

Proposal To agree the Mid-year assessment report of service area performance.

Action by Executive Board
Corporate Management Team

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Executive Board
- Corporate Management Team
- Place & Corporate Scrutiny Committee
- People Scrutiny Committee

Signed

Background

In November 2022, the Council approved its 5-year Plan to deliver an ‘Ambitious, Fairer and Greener Newport for everyone’ with four Well-being Objectives focusing on the Economy, Education and Skills; Environment and Infrastructure; Quality Social Care and Community Services; and an Inclusive, Fair and Sustainable Council. To support the delivery of the Corporate Plan the Council’s 11 Service Areas developed their service plans outlining the programmes and projects, objectives and actions which will be supporting each Well-being objective(s) and its strategic priorities; and delivering continuous improvement.

This also contributes towards the Council’s compliance with the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act.

Service Plan Mid-year Assessment 2023/24

This report provides an overview of the progress the Council’s 11 Service Areas have made between 1st April 2023 and 30th September in the delivery of:

- Programmes and Projects.
- Service Area Objectives and Actions including workforce planning actions.
- Performance measures.

Each service area presented their mid-year assessment to the People Scrutiny Committee and Place & Corporate Scrutiny Committee in November / December 2023. The feedback and recommendations from the committees is outlined in the Scrutiny Committee section of the report. These will be considered as part of the preparation of the End of Year / Annual Review of performance as well as supporting the development of service area plans for 2024/25.

The table below provides a summary of the assessment against the progress of Service Area objectives and their actions. Based upon the actions reported, 6 out of 43 objectives reporting an ‘Amber’ status with the remaining 37 objectives reporting a ‘Green’ status at the end of Quarter 2.

Directorate	Service Area	Service Plan Objectives Mid-Year Assessment (Red / Amber / Green). <i>See definition in Appendix 1</i>				
		Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5
Chief Executive Directorate	Education Service	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Green
	Regeneration & Economic Development	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Grey
Environment & Sustainability Directorate	Environment & Public Protection	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
	Housing & Communities	Amber	Green	Amber	Grey	Grey
	Infrastructure	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Grey
Social Services	Adult Services	Green	Green	Green	Green	Grey
	Children Services	Green	Green	Green	Green	Grey
	Prevention & Inclusion	Green	Green	Green	Green	Grey
Transformation & Corporate	Finance	Green	Green	Green	Green	Grey
	Law & Standards	Green	Green	Green	Grey	Grey
	People, Policy & Transformation	Green	Green	Green	Green	Grey

*Note – Grey boxes denote no objective.

Each Service Area has also set performance measures to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of services. For the Mid-year assessment, service areas reported progress against monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly and half-yearly performance measures. Annual measures will be reported in the End of year reviews in 2024. The table below provides a summary on service area performance measures.

Directorate	Service Area	Service Plan Performance Measures Mid-Year Assessment (Red / Amber / Green). See definition in Appendix 1			
		Red	Amber	Green	For Information*
Chief Executive Directorate	Education Service* ²	0	0	0	0
	Regeneration & Economic Development	0	2	3	0
Environment & Sustainability Directorate	Environment & Public Protection	1	2	9	0
	Housing & Communities	4	1	2	0
	Infrastructure	0	0	5	0
Social Services	Adult Services	0	0	0	13
	Children Services	2	1	4	14
	Prevention & Inclusion	1	1	12	3
Transformation & Corporate	Finance	1	6	14	0
	Law & Standards	0	0	4	1
	People, Policy & Transformation	0	1	8	0
Total (115 measures)		9 (8%)	14 (12%)	61 (53%)	31 (27%)

*1 Performance measures provided for information and context to support service delivery.

*2 Education performance measures reported annually.

At the end of Quarter 2, 61 (53%) of the 115 measures reported as 'Green' on target status. 9 (8%) of the 115 measures were reporting as 'Red' status with 4 of the 9 measures specific to the Housing & Communities service area. 14 (12%) measures reported an 'Amber' status with 6 of the 14 measures specific to the Finance service area. Where 'Red' and 'Amber' measures have been reported further detail is provided in Appendix 1 with commentary provided by the service areas to explain the reason for the underperformance and any further actions being taken to improve performance.

Case Studies and Notable Areas of delivery.

Each service area (where applicable) also provided an overview of the impact which their service has had within the community, on service users and continuous improvement across the Council. Below are some notable areas of delivery in the first 6 months of the year and some examples of the work which the Council and its partners have delivered.

- **Regeneration & Economic Development** received 2 awards in the annual Local Authority Building Control Building Excellence Regional Awards. The first award was for "Best Purpose-Built Accommodation" for Treberth Crescent, Newport in collaboration with JG Hale Construction Ltd, Ainsley Gammon Architects and Pobl Group. The second award was for "Best Non-Residential Extension, alteration or Conversion" for Newport Provisions Market (LoftCo, Amser Building Services and Ellis Williams Architects). Both awards will progress to the LABC Finals in London in January 2024.
- **Housing and Communities** – A 6 flat supported housing scheme opened in May 2023 for people recovering from mental health issues. The scheme was developed in partnership with Melin Homes and Newport MIND. The scheme was developed as transitional or move-on accommodation to free up bedspaces in existing supported housing and homelessness temporary accommodation.
- **Housing and Communities** – In July 2023 a new service for people sleeping rough with a street-based lifestyle commenced with the Salvation Army. The service pulled together assertive outreach and dedicated floating support into a more cohesive scheme.
- **Environment & Public Protection** – Since 1st April 2023, the Council's Trading Standards team seized 150,270 illegal cigarettes and 49.65kg of illegal hand rolling tobacco with a combined value of £42.9k. 3822 illegal disposable vapes worth £38k was seized preventing potential harm to children and young people.
- **Environment & Public Protection** – Newport City Dogs home won gold in 2 categories at the 2023 RSPCA Cymru PawPrint awards for their work with stray dogs. This is the twelfth year that the team has been recognised by the RSPCA.
- **People, Policy & Transformation** – The Council held its annual staff conference in a hybrid format using Microsoft Teams and offering in person events for front-line staff. Over 600 officers attended the event enabling more officers to engage and be involved in the Council's activities.
- **People, Policy & Transformation** – Following the Council's fourth Participatory Budgeting programme the Council shared over £750k of funding to local community organisations since its

inception. This has enabled groups to deliver vital schemes and projects to residents throughout Newport. Videos on some of the work delivered by the groups is below:

- [Forget Me Not Choir](#)
- [Gypsy Stars Choir](#)
- [New Life in the Park Reality Theatre CIC](#)
- [Newport Veterans Hub CIC](#)
- [IQRA Youth Club](#)

- **Prevention & Inclusion** highlighted several case studies across a range of services including Preventions and Resilient Communities, Newport Connector Service supporting residents including carers, people cost of living, and hospital discharge. Other case studies presented also included the Community Garden Project in St Julian’s, Prevention & Family Support, and the Youth Service programme.

Next Steps

For the remainder of 2023/24, service areas will continue to monitor and report their performance in Quarters 3 and 4. Regular updates will be provided by service areas to their respective Cabinet Member(s) on performance as well as quarterly Executive Board Challenge reviews. 2023/24 End of year reports will be presented in June / July 2024 (dates to be confirmed) and will also contribute towards the Council’s overall Self-Assessment of performance against the Council’s Corporate Plan.

Appendix 1 – Newport City Council ‘Red’ / ‘Amber’ Performance Measures

Financial Summary

There are no direct costs associated with this report.

Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
The Council cannot achieve the objectives and outcomes of the Corporate Plan.	M	L	The Council has quarterly reviews of performance and Executive Board challenge reviews to assess performance. Mid-year and end of year performance reviews of performance.	Corporate Management Team.

*Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Corporate Plan 2022-27

Service Plans 2022-24

Options Available and considered.

1. To note the contents of this report, and continue to monitor service area performance in 2023/24.
2. To reject this report or ask for further information.

Preferred Option and Why

1. Option 1 is the preferred option to recommend the Annual Report to be presented to full Council for approval.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

This mid-year review report forms part of the ongoing monitoring of service plan delivery and enables Cabinet Members and Scrutiny to monitor the Council’s performance for the first six months of this

financial year. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan is informed by the service and corporate risk registers as appropriate.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The Council's current Corporate Plan (2022-27) sets out the Council's strategic priorities and puts in place mechanisms for monitoring the Council's performance with regard to the objectives set out in the document. This in turn contributes towards the fulfilment of the Council's duties to keep its performance under review under the Well-Being of Future Generations Act 2015 and the Local Government and

Elections Wales Act 2021. When considering the report, members should satisfy themselves that the Council is making satisfactory progress towards achieving the objectives set out in the Corporate Plan and the Service Plans.

Comments of Head of People, Policy and Transformation

This mid-year review report forms part of the ongoing monitoring of service plan delivery and enables Cabinet Members and Scrutiny to monitor the Council's performance for the first six months of this financial year. The report shows that the Council's service areas are continuing to make good progress against their objectives which support the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-27. The Council has governance processes in place to monitor and report progress against service plans through quarterly updates and Executive Board Challenge reviews. It also notes that, as part of their responsibilities for monitoring performance within their portfolio(s) and, in collaboration with their Heads of Service, Cabinet Members ensure appropriate action is taken to improve performance.

There are no direct staffing implications falling out of the report.

Performance Scrutiny Committee

Mid-year reports were presented to the Council's performance scrutiny committees in November and December 2023. The committee's comments and recommendations are provided below. All of the feedback and recommendations have been considered by the Council's Cabinet and senior officers for further action as appropriate and in future service plan reports.

People Scrutiny Committee (28th November 2023 and 12th December 2023)

28th November 2023 (Education)

- The Committee congratulated Officers for their work and the successes within the report.
- The Committee welcomed the universal roll-out of free school meals to all primary schools and acknowledged the positive impact of changing the terminology from "Free School Meals" to "Universal Free School Meals".
- The Committee requested the figure for the 1.2% of Education employees actively engaged in learning Welsh.
- The Committee requested information on how many Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued and evidence of Fixed Penalty Notices' effectiveness.
- The Committee requested to be updated on the figures related to school non-attendance.
- The Committee requested an update on the demolition of Millbrook Primary School closer to the time of demolition.
- The Committee requested further information on Welsh Language in schools and the work being done to encourage Welsh Language in early years settings and English medium schools.

12 December 2023 (Adult Services / Children Services / Prevention & Inclusion)

- The Committee thanked and congratulated staff for their hard work.
- The Committee requested an information report regarding the work being done for care leavers, including housing.
- The Committee highlighted the importance of funding for the VAWDASV service.
- The Committee recommended looking at alternative internal provision for the Newport Dementia Hwb.

Place & Corporate Scrutiny Committee (27th November 2023 and 11th December 2023)

27th November 2023 (Housing & Communities / Environment & Public Protection / Infrastructure)

Housing and Communities

- The Committee requested to be informed of the specific figure regarding the number of individuals on the temporary accommodation list.
- The Committee sought clarification on the council tax premium and whether the Council has the authority to impose it on registered social landlords.
- The Committee requested a map showing the locations of Council-owned public toilets within Newport.
- The Committee requested details about the Homelessness Outreach Service, which has been retendered to the Salvation Army, to be sent to Members. They also requested an all-Member briefing on the service.
- The Committee would like to be kept up to date with arrangements for the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol provision.

Environment and Public Protection

- The Committee sought information on whether there has been a rise in anti-social behaviour since the streetlights have been switched off at midnight. Members request the available data from the Police to provide more precise insights on this matter.
- The Committee took note of the revenue forecast mentioned on page 43 of the report but observed that there is no accompanying capital forecast. Members of the committee are seeking clarity on this to better understand the current position.
- Referring to reference 5 on page 48, it states, "*Undertake Community Asset Transfers (CAT) of sports pitches where clubs and organizations can demonstrate suitability for managing the transferred land or facility, following the adopted CAT policy.*" The expected completion date for this measure is March 2024. The Committee would like to determine whether this measure should be categorised as green or amber.
- Members of the committee have expressed their interest in receiving data on whether fly tipping has increased with the implementation of 3 weekly refuse collections. Additionally, they have highlighted the importance of seeking to understand if people are choosing to pay private firms to dispose of their waste in order to provide a picture of any available data.

Infrastructure

- The Committee requested that updates on the work on Bassaleg Bridge be included in the End of Year report.
- The Committee wished to be kept up to date about the recommended improvements suggested by the Burns Delivery Board, alongside the timeline for the proposed works.
- The Committee wished to note their disappointment in the removal of bus shelters in certain areas, due to antisocial behaviour. They wished to receive clarity on the decision taken as it did not appear to be a city-wide policy, with some areas retaining shelters.

11th December 2023 (Finance / Law & Standards / People, Policy & Transformation / Regeneration & Economic Development)

Finance

- The Committee have asked to receive data on the number of individuals accessing online services.
- The Committee expressed concern regarding the current call wait times at the City Contact Centre and emphasised the need for improvement.
- The Committee were pleased to see the level of assistance and engagement provided by the service area to support individuals facing difficulties in paying their Council Tax.
- The Committee suggested increasing awareness among residents about the option to pay Council Tax on a 12-month basis, particularly targeting existing Direct Debit customers. They recommended either including an additional information flyer in the annual paper bill or highlighting this information prominently within the paper bill itself.

Law and Standards

- The Committee expressed satisfaction upon learning that the service area had established apprenticeship roles within the Legal team, acknowledging the challenges associated with recruitment in this particular field.

- The Committee requested a timeline outlining the proposed actions by the service area to raise awareness of electoral reform. They specifically enquired about the communication campaign and the timing of its distribution.

People, Policy and Transformation

- The Committee requested an update on the sickness policy review that was reported in the end of year reports in July 2023. Officers confirmed that the review is ongoing with some amendments to the policy likely to be proposed around changes in terminology and sickness triggers, following which discussions will take place with the unions. The Committee welcomed these proposed changes and requested that these changes are included in the service area's work plan for the End of Year reviews.
- The Committee enquired about whether diversity was taken into consideration during the testing of the new corporate website. They also requested information on which communities faced the most challenges during the testing process.
- The Committee requested information for the participatory budgeting to be sent.
- The Committee requested if the duplicate answer shown on page 69 Reference 1, and page 71 Reference 4 could be amended.

Regeneration and Economic Development

- The Committee expressed interest in knowing the completion date for the Transporter Bridge Visitor Centre. Additionally, they raised a concern about the safety perspective of the ongoing works, particularly in the event of a safety alert triggering a temporary halt in work near the Transporter Bridge and the Bridge itself. The Committee enquired about the measures taken to ensure the safety of other buildings and vehicles in the area during such situations.
- The Committee requested that the Council engage with larger hotels and facilities in the area to encourage them to showcase Newport attractions on their websites, with the aim to provide residents of Newport and visitors with easy access to information about what is happening in Newport and the surrounding areas.
- The Committee wished to extend their best wishes to the Building Control Team as they head to London for an award.
- The Committee raised concern regarding the IAC project and the potential for the building to remain unoccupied. The Committee would like to seek assurances that the Council is engaging with the developer to ensure tenants are found for the site. Concern was also raised about the growth of knotweed on the site.

Equalities Impact Assessment

As this is an information only report there is no requirements to complete an Equalities Impact Assessment.

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This report demonstrates and supports how the Council's service areas are progressing in the delivery of its Well-being Objectives as part of the Corporate Plan 22-27. The development and delivery of the service plans consider the sustainable development principle and 5 ways of working of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Consultation

See above, the Mid-Year reviews were considered by the Council's People and Place & Corporate Scrutiny Committees.

Background Papers

[Corporate Plan 2022-27](#)

[Well-being of Future Generations Act](#)

Dated: 2 January 2024

Appendix 1 – NCC Red / Amber Performance Measures

Regeneration & Economic Development (Chief Executive Directorate)

Performance Measure / Description	Mid-Year Performance 23/24		Commentary
	Actual Q2 2023/24	Target 2023/24	
Percentage of all planning decisions successfully defended at appeal.	57.14% (12 / 21)	66%*	Planning is often subjective in respect of matters such as design. We aim to make good quality decisions in the interests of our residents and seek to learn from decisions.
(New) Number of events supported or led by the Council	14	30 (Q2 Target – 15)	A number of events have been delivered including the D Day memorial service, Armed Forces Flag raising ceremony, Fly the Red Ensign for the Merchant Navy, 999 Emergency Day and Wales National Armed Forces Day. Support has also been provided for the Newport Marathon and Pride in the Port.

Environment & Public Protection (Environment & Sustainability Directorate)

Performance Measure / Description	Mid-Year Performance 23/24		Commentary
	Actual Q2 2023/24	Target 2023/24	
Value of the impact service actions have on returning and protecting funds to residents	£43,560	£200k	Scam Prevention work is planned in the final half of the year that is very likely to deliver a £250,000 saving. There are also cases moving through court process that may result in as much as £60,000 savings to residents.
Percentage of Bi-monthly cleanliness inspections of highways and relevant land	95.8% (115 / 120)	97%	Actuals in Quarter 2 show as slightly under target, however cleanliness standards across Newport are good and it is expected the year end result will be on target.
Percentage of businesses that were either compliant or brought into compliance during the period	89% (474 / 533)	97%	This PI will not show true performance when results are analysed soon after the close of the reporting period. Officers will need as much as 2 months to establish if a non-compliant business has rectified the problem. It is expected that the compliance rate would be higher if results are based on data from 'reporting period plus 10 weeks' rather than 'reporting period plus 2 weeks'.

Housing & Infrastructure (Environment & Sustainability Directorate)

Performance Measure / Description	Mid-Year Performance 23/24		Commentary
	Actual Q2 2023/24	Target 2023/24	
The percentage of households for whom homelessness was prevented increases.	34.13% (157 / 460)	50%	Whilst the Council exceeded 50% in September there is still significant work and change required to improve performance. A key area of focus within the housing restructure will be homelessness prevention.
Percentage of people seeking housing assistance who are determined as statutorily homeless decreases.	35.5% (354 / 998)	30%	This figure represents average performance to date. The figure for end September is 16.35% (26/159) which correlates with the positive performance in relation to homeless prevention.
Percentage of households for whom homelessness was relieved.	17% (118 / 694)	35%	Performance in this area requires significant focus and performance over the coming months. The figure for end of September is 22.6% (19/84), showing a positive increase in the number of households for whom homelessness has been successfully relieved.
The number of Households in temporary accommodation under homelessness duties.	482	360	Due to the pressures described earlier in this document, there has been an increase in the number of households requiring temporary accommodation.
The percentage of empty private residential properties brought back into use meets targets	0.7% (8 / 1,157)	1.52%	In previous years we have seen the number of properties brought back into use increase in greater numbers in the latter part of the year. It is therefore anticipated that the target will be achieved, especially now that we are able to offer a longer-term leasing option under Leasing Scheme Wales.

Children Services (Social Services Directorate)

Performance Measure / Description	Mid-Year Performance 23/24		Commentary
	Actual Q2 2023/24	Target 2023/24	
% of cases open to the Youth Justice Service (YJS) on a statutory order. (Less is better)	14.9% (21/145)	11%	Less is better, YJS would want to see a reduction in the numbers of entrants into the criminal justice system
% of cases open to the Youth Justice Service (YJS) on remand. (Less is better)	2.76% (4/145)	1%	Less is better, as YJS would want to have no Remands Cases where possible. In this period there were three Young People who were remanded, one Young Person was remanded on two separate occasions. The offence committed: Robbery x 2 Breach of Bail x 2 Target will be reviewed as part of the service area 23/24 review
% of cases open to the Youth Justice Service (YJS) on a prevention basis. (More is better)	53.1% (77/145)	60%	More is better – YJS are working to a new referral Prevention Panel. All new referrals are to be reviewed before acceptance. Referrals made to YJS incorrectly are being signposted to correct referral routes.

Prevention and Inclusion (Social Services Directorate)

Performance Measure / Description	Mid-Year Performance 23/24		Commentary
	Actual Q2 2023/24	Target 2023/24	
Early Years / Flying Start – Percentage of Welsh medium Flying Start childcare sessions attended.	45.1% (575 / 1,275)	60%	Flying Start monitors attendance closely and engages with parents and Health Visitors to maximise sessions being attended. Take up of this childcare offer is by parental choice.
Substance Misuse - Quality of life for substance users is improved or unchanged between start & most recent review/exit.	72.1%	75%	The review point reflects the current position an individual is reporting on, not necessarily on the whole treatment and support programme. It is important therefore to consider the complexity and multi-faceted nature of individual lives against this measure. Key workers focus on ensuring people are receiving the treatment they need to make improved outcomes to the quality of their lives.

Finance (Transformation & Corporate)

Performance Measure / Description	Mid-Year Performance 23/24		Commentary
	Actual Q2 2023/24	Target 2023/24	
Customer Contact Centre average wait time- main enquiry line.	13mins, 4 second	5 minutes or less	We've seen increased attrition in customer services resulting in need to recruit and train new staff members. We have also had to back-fill 4 posts due to maternity leave. Nearly back to full complement of staff so should start to see this decrease.
Percentage Council Tax Collection	51.72%	96.3% (Q2 Target – 55%)	Collection of council tax remains challenging due to the cost of living and household budgets being squeezed, but the team continue to offer flexible solutions and encourage customers to engage at every stage.
Percentage Non-Domestic Rates Collected.	59%	96.8% (Q2 Target - 60%)	Collection is on track and the target should be achieved.
Percentage total Council Tax Collected as a percentage of annual budgeted amount.	54.53%	100% (Q2 Target – 55%)	Collection is marginally ahead of 2022-23 and target should be achieved.
Percentage of Council Tax arrears collected.	16.91%	35% (Q2 Target – 18%)	Collection of previous years arrears is also affected by the cost of living crisis. Priority is given to helping council taxpayers meet their current years payments to avoid falling further behind which can result in arrears taking longer to clear.
Budget monitoring – Budget Manager submissions Percentage of monthly forecasts submitted by budget managers.	76%	80%	The new approach to budget monitoring places an emphasis upon supporting managers to provide forecasts on a monthly basis, via additional training and support, as required. The increase in performance compared to last year suggests that the intended benefit is being realised.
Grant claims Percentage of grant claims submitted in line with awarding body deadlines.	82%	95%	The cumulative position for the first two quarters of the year reflects a total of 107 grant claims submitted, with 88 of those submitted on time (82%).

People, Policy & Transformation (Transformation & Corporate)

Performance Measure / Description	Mid-Year Performance 23/24		Commentary
	Actual Q2 2023/24	Target 2023/24	
Percentage Freedom of information Responses completed on time	86.6%	88%	Just under target at Q2 and continues to be monitored.