Performance Management Framework

June 2023

Performance Management Framework

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INTRODUCTION

The Performance Management Framework sets out how we manage the performance of the Council. The framework ensures that there is a consistent and joined up approach. It sets out:

- the purpose and scope of performance management

- how we measure whether we are on track to achieve our corporate priorities

- the roles of our Councillors and employees in performance management

Breckland Council is faced with a range of challenges and opportunities in continuing to provide statutory and frontline services alongside non statutory obligations whilst meeting the needs and expectations of our residents, customers and businesses.

Our aim is to be one of the highest performing councils by finding ways to improve local services and deliver them in a cost-effective way whilst considering the changing needs and demographics of residents across the district in order to provide better outcomes for residents and businesses.

Purpose of the framework

Performance Management is a tool that allows us to measure whether we are on track to achieve our corporate priorities which are set out in the Corporate Plan and is a vital element of forward planning, risk management and continuous improvement.

Performance information and performance management should help Councillors, residents, managers, and employees, understand how both individual teams and the organisation are performing.

Why is performance management important?

Performance should be managed at an organisational, service, team, and individual level, with each informing the other. To know when and what action to take, performance must be measured, monitored, and analysed against agreed aims, objectives, and targets.

If the Council is going to deliver the outcomes that people of Breckland want, there has to be a performance management framework that:

- Is based on key priorities and objectives (Corporate Plan).

- Is based on key performance metrics which measure the right things at the right time and frequency.

- Is used to continually improve how we work together.

- Is based on accurate, current and forecasted data which tells us how our services are performing.

- Meets the needs of all the people involved in delivering outcomes in the district, inside and outside the Council.

Effective Performance Management will help us to:

- Clearly articulate our priorities and desired outcomes.

- Prioritise what gets done within the resources available.

- Highlight where more resources (of any kind) may be needed.

- Provide and demonstrate value for money.

- Provide excellent services to our residents, customers, and businesses.

- Motivate and manage our employees.

- Identify local, regional, and national emerging patterns and trends.

- Respond effectively to existing and new challenges.

How we will manage performance

How we manage performance is set out in the diagram below.
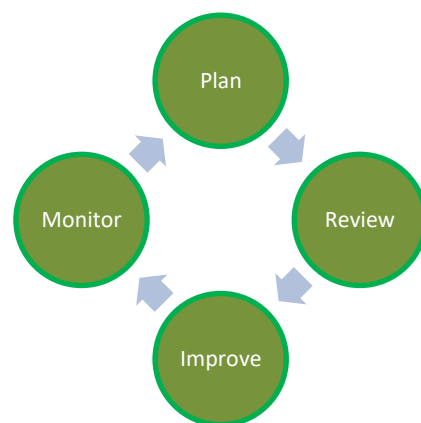
1. **Plan:** Plan, prioritise and set clear objectives, including how we intend to deliver services, through our Corporate Plan. We set Performance Indicators as a way to measure how well we perform against those objectives.

2. Review:

We collect and analyse data to help us identify current or future performance concerns which may impact on whether we can achieve our objectives. This is a key part of the process, as by undertaking a review of the data we ensure that we can make sense of it and use it to inform service delivery. We communicate regularly on our performance.

3. Improve:

Take effective, well-informed and timely decisions to ensure that we are continuously improving and that our objectives are being met in line with expectations.

4. Monitor:

Continue to monitor the performance measures to ensure that our decisions or interventions are working.

Breckland's Performance Management Framework is designed to allow us to take action in response to actual performance to deliver the best outcomes and services in relation to our priorities and statutory responsibilities.

1. PLAN

A number of elements make up the 'Plan' stage of the Performance Management cycle including.

➢   Objective Setting

Our Corporate Plan brings together our strategic priorities for the coming years and outlines what we'll do to make a difference in Breckland to make sure it is a place where people and businesses can thrive.

Each Service is responsible for monitoring achievement against the plan, identifying any areas of improvement, and enabling every employee in the organisation to have a clear line of sight between their individual objectives, and the Corporate Plan. This is supported in the form of an annual Service Plan.

➢   Service Plans

The Service Plans are designed to provide a process for deciding what to aim for, how to do it, with the resources available and helps monitor performance and progress against the delivery of the Corporate Plan. These plans are based around corporate plan themes, with progress updates recorded on a quarterly basis. Annually, the results of progress against this plan is published as part of the Council's Achievement document.

Service Plans are reviewed annually and are agreed towards the start of the new financial year.

Service Plans should contain actions that:

- Contribute to the achievement of the Council's Priorities.

- Are driven by the need to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

- Relate to projects to be delivered.

- Have agreed performance or project success metrics against them, which ideally have measure of quality.
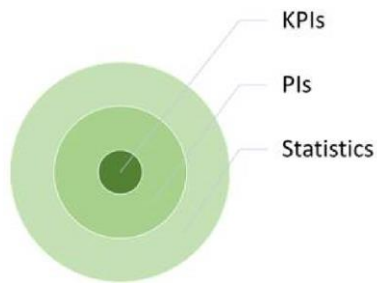
➢   Performance Indicators

A performance indicator is a performance measurement tool that enables organisations to measure success, achievements and progress towards the goals and objectives.

There are three main types;
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- Performance Indicators (PIs)
- Statistics (Data intelligence)

STATISTICS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are those performance indicators most important to Senior Managers and Councillors. They will indicate the health, standard of service and direction of the Council, whether progress is being made towards strategic goals and if statutory regulations are being met.

They reflect the most important goals across the organisation, so they will only be a small proportion of all the indicators measured.

Performance Indicator (PIs) are those which are used predominately by the service to measure performance and help make decisions based on the information it tells us.

The key difference between a *statistic* and a PI is that of control. If whoever is being monitored cannot control or strongly influence the statistic, then it should not be used to measure their performance.

For example, the number of calls received by the Customer Contact Centre would help managers with resourcing decisions, but it does not say much about performance. Someone answering calls cannot determine how many people will call that day, but they do have some control over how quickly they answer and resolve the customer query.

Average wait times and the number of calls answered per hour would be more revealing data and could be used to measure performance.

Focusing on the wrong metrics or too many metrics can be detrimental to understanding the Council's performance. A good set of performance metrics should be a balance between a comprehensive picture of the organisation whilst also being concise.

A good performance metric should:

- Help us identify where we need to do different to improve a service or meet an objective.

- Tell a story or give a different perspective.

- Be SMART; Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely.

- Allow for nuance, improvement and analysis of trends.

- Be realistic but ambitious.

- Link to the Council's overall aims and outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan.

2. REVIEW

Once the metrics have been set of how we will measure performance by way of KPI's, PI's, or Statistics, Services are responsible for collecting the data at the agreed frequency in a way which ensures there is an appropriate measurement methodology for precision and accuracy.

Services with the support of the Organisational Development and Performance Team, analyse the data, concluding what it tells us and where any intervention might be needed.

Performance reporting is a crucial aspect of organisational performance management. Reporting and governance allow for the identification of gaps and opportunities for the organisation. Breckland Council uses a variety of formal and informal settings for performance reporting.

➢ Performance Board

The Corporate Management Team receive performance data on a monthly basis, with additional scrutiny and challenge through internal Governance arrangements of a 'Performance Board'. The Performance Board is a key part of the Breckland Council Operational Governance model. It is an officer-led governance group that feeds into Corporate Management Team, Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny. The Performance Board has the following responsibilities:

a) To manage organisational performance in respect of performance against KPIs, PIs, Corporate Projects, Service Projects, Internal Audit, Risk and Finance.

b) Provides constructive challenge, holding services to account for operational performance. Where there are blockers contributing to periods of challenging performance, corporate and collective support is provided to improve.

c) Where performance has been successful, celebrate success and share learning.

d) To prepare recommendations or escalate issues to Corporate Management Team as appropriate.

e) To consider and identify risks and agree any necessary actions

f) Encouraging forward thinking and forecasting for future planning.

The Performance Board also consider risk, audit or management recommendations concerning performance. Interlinking these elements allow for a greater joining up of these three crucial elements.

Formal Member (Councillor) scrutiny then follows through reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees on a Quarterly basis.

➢ Member Scrutiny

These reports use consistent KPI's and template, to allow for an overview of how the Council has performed in the preceding quarter.

The Key Performance indicators reported on are agreed annually to ensure that they remain appropriate and the best practice for giving a reflection of the performance of the services.

Whilst the Quarterly Performance Report is governed by the need to be presented quarterly, other more infrequent forms of performance reporting exist such as those which relate to specific strategies and plans.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee have a constitutional role that allows them to scrutinise the Quarterly Performance Report and the power to 'Call-In' Managers and Directors if they believe that indicators are not performing to an appropriate standard. In instances where the Committee feel the Council is not performing in relation to its KPI's, the Committee may call in Managers to explain how they intend to improve performance.

3. IMPROVE

As a result of analysing the data, effective, well-informed and timely decisions are taken to ensure that we are continuously improving and that our objectives are being met in line with expectations. This may be through interventions and collaborative support across services to improve, acknowledging where there has also been success this is celebrated and shared for others learning.

Successful performance reporting must be driven through good people and good culture from the top-down, ensuring that both individual and collective accountability exist within the Council. The most effective performance systems are those where the measures themselves are owned by employees who feel a sense of responsibility for ensuring the performance information is valid, timely and if applicable on target.

Managers and staff must ensure that they:

• Know and understand what is expected of them.
• Have the skills and ability to deliver on what is expected of them.
• Are empowered and delegated freedom to succeed.
• Are supported by the organisation to meet their expectations.
• Are provided with opportunities to think and contribute to both individual and service level objectives.

4. MONITOR

Continual monitoring of the performance measures takes place to ensure that our decisions or interventions are working and where they are not, intervention continues.

Risk management

Corporate Performance Management must be tied in with Corporate Risk Management. Performance Management, Risk Management and Audit Management complement and inform each other. If we are monitoring something that warrants a KPI, then it is important enough to be monitored for risks. Performance Indicators signaling deteriorating performance are possible signs of underlying risks becoming realised. Using existing PIs to monitor corporate risks can be very useful, but if nothing suitable exists, then new P.I.'s should be created. This process will be integrated through the Corporate Risk Management Policy.

Data Quality Standards

As a minimum, services both within and external to the Council will need to demonstrate the following principles with respect to data quality:

Accuracy

Data should be sufficiently accurate for its intended purposes, representing clearly and in sufficient detail the interaction provided at the point of activity. Data should be captured once only, although it may have multiple uses. Accuracy is most likely to be secured if data is captured as close to the point of activity as possible. The need for accuracy must be balanced with the importance of the uses for the data, and the costs and effort of collection, although data limitations should always be clear to its users.

Validity

Data should be recorded and used in compliance with relevant requirements, including the correct application of any rules or definitions. This will ensure consistency between periods and with similar organisations. Where proxy data is used to compensate for an absence of actual data, consideration must be given to how well this data is able to satisfy the intended purpose.

Reliability

Data should reflect stable and consistent data collection processes across collection points and over time, whether using manual or computer based systems, or a combination. Managers and stakeholders should be confident that progress toward performance targets reflects real changes rather than variations in data collection approaches or methods

Timeliness

Data should be captured as quickly as possible after the event or activity and must be available quickly and frequently enough to support information needs and to influence the appropriate level of service or management decisions

Relevance

Data capture should be relevant to the purpose for which it is used. This entails periodic review of requirements to reflect changing needs

Completeness

Data requirements should be clearly specified based on the information needs of the council and data collection processes matched to these requirements. Monitoring missing, incomplete, or invalid records can provide an indication of data quality and can also point to problems in the recording of certain data items.

National Framework and Statutory Returns

Whilst there is no national performance management framework there remains a significant duty placed on local councils to provide central government with 'data' Examples of this include:

- Local Authority Housing returns
- Finance and Service user returns
- Workforce Returns

The Council will work to ensure that data is monitored and returned to central government on a regular basis, as well as LGA "good practice" requirements to provide open and transparent data to its residents on a variety of datasets.

Reviewing the framework

The Council should seek the review this framework every 18 months to ensure that best practice is being adhered to.

If you have any comments or feedback about this Framework, please contact:

Organisational Development and Performance Team, Breckland Council