

SUBJECT:	Self-assessment of Performance Management Arrangements
MEETING:	Governance and Audit Committee
DATE:	22nd February 2024
DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To ensure that members of the committee have an understanding of the council's performance framework.
- 1.2 To present an update on the current effectiveness of the authority's performance management arrangements.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That members use the update provided to inform their understanding of the effectiveness of the operation of the authority's performance management arrangements and identify any areas where they feel action needs to be taken or further information provided.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Performance management is about establishing a shared understanding of what needs to be achieved and making sure that it happens. The council currently has an established performance framework; this is the way in which we translate our purpose into action and ensure that everyone is pulling in the same direction to deliver real and tangible outcomes. These components of the framework are shown visually in appendix 2.
- 3.2 Our performance framework:
 - Translates our purpose into the council's own well-being objectives
 - Places an expectation on teams to translate these objectives into specific, measurable actions in their service business plans
 - Contains a broad range of data to monitor impact and measure the performance of services

Other key processes that are part of and/or facilitate aspects of the framework include the Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment and self-evaluation arrangements.

- 3.3 There have been considerable adjustments to the council's performance framework in the last few years due to the need to meet requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The Act requires each council in Wales to keep under review the extent to which it is meeting the 'performance requirements', that is the extent to which; it is exercising its functions effectively; it is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively; its governance is effective for securing these.

- 3.4 Appendix 1 provides an appraisal of the arrangements that make up the current performance framework to ensure that Governance and Audit Committee are able to take an overview of their effectiveness. This includes an assessment of how well we are doing, how we know this and planned actions for the future along with timescales.
- 3.5 A summary of the conclusion of the assessment for each arrangement is provided below:
- Well-being Objectives - The council has set six well-being Objectives in the Community and Corporate Plan. The has ensured that there is a clear direction for the council, that is fed through the performance management framework. There is a need to strengthen the alignment of strategic plans such as service business plans and enabling strategies with the objectives to ensure that the ambition of the plan is embedded through the council activities.
 - Service Business Plans - The Service Business plan process has principles, supporting templates and guidance in place that is regularly reviewed. A quality assurance process has been undertaken and has supported the improvement in quality of plans. Although many plans still require improvement in parts and completion rates within timescales need to increase.
 - Self-evaluation - The self-assessment process facilitated the completion of a self-assessment report of the Council's performance report for 2022/23 that was scrutinised and agreed. There is a need to strengthen self-evaluation through the council's performance management framework, particularly in services business plans.
 - Performance Data and Information – The use of performance data in the Council's performance management framework is being strengthened. There is a need to increase the focus on outcomes in measurement and evaluation and improve our data maturity, with data accuracy being an important part. Dashboards are being developed and updated further strengthening the use of performance data.
 - Strategic Risk Management - The strategic risk register is updated and reported regularly. The strategic risk register identifies high and medium level strategic risks and ensures risk levels are assessed and mitigating actions are identified. The strategic risk policy needs strengthening, including risk identification arrangements, risk appetite, responsibilities for managing risks and reporting arrangements.
- 3.6 This report on the continued effectiveness of the council's strategic planning framework is presented annually to Governance and Audit Committee and is important in ensuring the necessary checks and balances are in place around performance monitoring, evaluation, and policymaking. It will also inform the Council's annual self-assessment process and report, part of which includes an assessment of Corporate Planning, Performance and Risk Management arrangements.
- 3.7 The council also places reliance on regulatory assessments as a vital part of our framework. These are Audit Wales, who examine the authority's corporate arrangements; Estyn, in relation to education provision; and the Care Inspectorate Wales, in relation to social services. Where applicable, the most recent findings of regulatory work have been factored into the appraisal of arrangements.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 There are no additional resource implications as a result of this report. However, there may be resource implications in undertaking further actions as directed by Strategic Leadership Team or as recommended by Governance and Audit Committee.

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Appendix 1: Self-Assessment of Performance Management Arrangements

Well-being Objectives			
<p>The Council has a responsibility under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to set well-being objectives. To achieve this, we must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set and publish well-being objectives • Take all reasonable steps to meet those objectives • Publish a statement about well-being objectives • Detail arrangements to publish an annual report of progress <p>The Council publishes a Corporate Plan every five years. This plan contains the wellbeing objectives of the Council and sets out the actions it will take to achieve them over the following five years. Alongside these actions are measures and targets that the Council will use to track progress. An evaluation of the Council’s performance and progress in meeting these targets is published in our annual Self-Assessment Report.</p>			
	How well are we doing?	How do we know?	Action & timescale
<p>Are there defined council well-being objectives that are communicated and understood?</p>	<p>The Community and Corporate Plan was approved in April 2023. This plan sets out the council’s six well-being objectives which include the aims we want to achieve, the actions we will take and how performance will be measured. The community and corporate plan has been promoted and published on the website for residents and internally for staff.</p> <p>An Audit Wales examination of the Council’s well-being objective setting found ‘The Council has set its well-being objectives in accordance with the sustainable development principle and is aligning its key strategies and business plans to support their delivery, but it could further strengthen its approach by increasing the diversity of citizen involvement in future’.</p> <p>The approval of the community and corporate plan has ensured that there is a clear direction for the council, which has fed through our performance management framework. There is a</p>	<p>Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28</p> <p>Audit Wales examination of the Council’s well-being objectives</p>	<p>Work with managers to ensure alignment of service business plans with the Community and Corporate Plan – May 2024</p>

	<p>need to strengthen the alignment of strategic plans such as service business plans and enabling strategies with the objectives set out in the community and corporate plan and ensure that the ambition of the plan can be seen throughout all council activities.</p>		
<p>Are the well-being objectives embedded in the performance management framework?</p>	<p>Supporting and Enabling strategies, including on the priorities set in the well-being objectives are being developed. The enabling strategies are being reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose and support the new policy aims and objectives set out in the Community and Corporate Plan. These will be important to strengthen the delivery of the ambitions of the plans.</p> <p>The actions to deliver the community and corporate plan objectives are mostly embedded, and progress updated, within service business plans. Quality assurance of service business plans undertaken in Q3 of 2023/24 found that some commitments from the community and corporate plan were not included within relevant service business plans, or that plans that should contain key updates were not updated regularly or completed to a sufficient standard. Feedback and support has been provided to managers on the importance of aligning their plans with the community and corporate plan and this will be regularly monitored.</p>	<p>Service business plans quality assurance</p>	<p>Work with managers to ensure alignment of service business plans with the community and corporate plan – May 2024</p>
<p>Is progress and performance in delivering the well-being objectives monitored and held to account?</p>	<p>The actions to deliver the community and corporate plan objectives are updated quarterly within service business plans.</p> <p>A six-month community and corporate plan progress update is produced and scrutinised. This was presented to Cabinet in January as part of their continuous monitoring of how effectively the council is delivering its objectives and to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee who scrutinised</p>	<p>Community and corporate plan 2023/24 six-month progress update</p>	<p>Develop and agree the self-assessment process for 2023/24 – March 2024</p> <p>Produce a self-assessment report for</p>

	<p>the council's performance and used the report to inform their work plan. Assessing progress within the year has allowed officers and members to identify where services are not on track to meet the targets and identify any remedial actions that may be required.</p> <p>An annual self-assessment of our progress in meeting our well-being objectives will be undertaken at the end of the financial year in the form of a self-assessment report. This will clearly identify how well are we doing, how do we know (the evidence we have used) and what and how can we do better.</p>		<p>2023/24 – September 2024</p>
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Service Business Plans			
<p>A Service Business Plan is a planning tool which all service areas are required to complete. It allows services to set a plan for the next three years, assess what went well, learn from what didn't and measure the impact the service has made on people and places of Monmouthshire. Service business plans ensure clear alignment between the council's priorities and objectives, and detail the actions the service will be undertaking, performance measures to assess progress and risks facing the service and mitigating actions. Service business planning and regular evaluation of our performance is fundamental to how we operate.</p>			
	How well are we doing?	How do we know?	Action & timescale
<p>Is the service business plan process robust, communicated and understood?</p>	<p>Service Business plan principles, supporting templates and guidance are in place and regularly reviewed. Guidance on completing service business plans is available on the intranet, the Hub, for all officers to use. This includes service planning principles which sets out what every service plan should include, a guide on completing each section of the provided template and further supporting information/guides. Though these</p>	<p>Service business plan principles, supporting information and guides.</p> <p>Services Business plan Quality Assurance.</p>	<p>To review and update, where necessary, the service business plan principles and guidance – April 2024</p> <p>To trial using pre-recorded training videos</p>

	<p>documents are available on the Hub, there is a need to promote their use and awareness.</p> <p>Regular service business plan communication is circulated including reminder and quality assurance emails. Quality assurance of service business has identified the principles are sometimes not adhered to. There is a need develop further training and support on the process. The use of training videos for managers to aid the completion of service business plans and to make the process more accessible is being trailed. Additional quality assurance and support is also offered and available from the policy and performance team.</p>	<p>Feedback from service managers.</p>	<p>for managers on completing service business plans – April 2024</p>
<p>Are service business plans complete, up to date and of good quality?</p>	<p>Service business plans completion rates within timescales remains varied, however there has been some improvement following the quality assurance process. For the most recent quarter, Q3, half of the plans were updated in the timescale. Consistent reminders to update plans are needed to continue the increasing trend of timely updates.</p> <p>A quality assurance process has been developed to assess whether plans are meeting the planning principles, the quality of updates and whether they are aligned with wider council commitments. This facilitates officers to easily identify which areas of their plan need improvement, helping them to focus on key aspects.</p> <p>The most recent quality assurance was completed during Q3 of 2023/24. This has found that a significant number have improved since the previous quality assurance completed in Q2 of 2022/23, though many plans still require improvement in parts of their completion.</p>	<p>Service business plans completion rates.</p> <p>Services Business plan Quality Assurance.</p> <p>Feedback from service managers.</p>	<p>To continue to remind managers of deadlines and process for service business plan updates – quarterly</p> <p>To complete quality assurance of service business plans – October 2024</p>

	<p>The quality assurance reports were shared with all chief officers, managers and officers completing service plans in November 2023. Engagement during this time has been positive, with managers conveying a want to improve their plans. Completing quality assurance has allowed us to identify common areas for development between plans and to offer targeted support. This process is also vital in assessing alignment with both the actions and measures contained within the community and corporate plan. Some common areas for development are the completion of risk registers, use of performance indicators and specificity of actions and assessment of progress and impact.</p>		
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Self-evaluation			
<p>Self-evaluation is a way of evaluating, critically and honestly, the current position to make decisions on how to secure improvement for the future. It needs to be embedded across the organisation to help the council continually learn and achieve sustainable improvement and better outcomes for citizens, service users and its own workforce. Self-evaluation allows us to assess our actions openly and honestly, and to consider whether the actions taken helped to reach our desired goals and objectives. This process helps us to learn what went well and what didn't, informing our future actions.</p> <p>The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires each local authority in Wales to keep under review the extent to which it is meeting the 'performance requirements'. Under the Act, the mechanism for a council to keep its performance under review is self-assessment, with a duty to publish a report setting out the conclusions of the self-assessment once in respect of every financial year.</p>			
	How well are we doing?	How do we know?	Action & timescale
<p>Is the self-assessment process robust, communicated and understood?</p>	<p>A process for completing self-assessment was developed and adhered to. The self-assessment process for 2021/22, the council's first self-assessment, was reviewed and informed the 2022/23 process. This included directorate workshops, which provided the opportunity for heads of service to reflect on their service area and assess activity against the Corporate Plan priority goals. The self-assessment report was informed by a</p>	<p>Self-assessment report 2021/22</p> <p>Self-assessment report 2022/23</p>	<p>Develop and agree the self-assessment process for 2023/24 – March 2024</p> <p>Produce a self-assessment report for</p>

	<p>range of evidence including the output from the workshops along with other elements of the performance framework, such as Chief Officer reports, scrutiny, external regulation and the Annual Governance Statement.</p> <p>The 2022/23 self-assessment focussed on how well the council had addressed the areas for development that were identified in the 2021/22 report, as the community and corporate was not agreed until April 2023. These areas for development were structured under the headings of the draft community and corporate plan well-being objectives. This allowed the council to produce a self-assessment report for 2022/23 that also facilitated learning to inform the delivery of the community and corporate plan.</p> <p>The experience of the previous two years will be used to develop our self-assessment process for 2023/24, assessing progress made in achieving the well-being objectives set out in the community and corporate plan.</p>		2023/24 – September 2024
Is self-assessment embedded through the performance framework?	Self-assessment and evaluation have been embedded in the council’s performance management framework. Service business plans require plan holders to continue to update on progress quarterly and includes an annual ‘self-assessment’ section. By the end of each financial year, all service plans should contain a section evaluating their performance. The completion of these aids the collation of evidence for the Council’s self-assessment report. It also helps services to assess what worked well and what did not and should play a vital role in forward planning.	Service business plans, Service business plans quality assurance.	Ensure that managers apply a self-evaluative mindset when updating and completing service business plans – April 2024

	<p>Quality assurance on service business plans has shown that managers do not always consistently apply a self-evaluative mindset when updating service business plans. This was identified and fed back to managers through quality assurance forms. A self-assessment guide has also been developed and is available to officers to aid them in completing both quarterly updates and year-end self-evaluations within their service business plans. Strengthening self-evaluation within plans will be vital to information gathering to inform the self-assessment report.</p>		
<p>Is the outcome of self-assessment monitored and performance held to account?</p>	<p>Following the workshops, the evidence has been reviewed, further challenged, and collated into a corporate level evaluative self-assessment. The draft self-assessment report is presented to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee, with Governance and Audit Committee having approval of the final draft, as per legislation. Both committees scrutinised the 2022/23 report and found that overall, it was a fair and balanced assessment of performance during the year. The report was subsequently approved by Council.</p> <p>The self-assessment report includes an action plan that focuses specifically on what and how the council can do better for the significant conclusions of the assessment. These actions integrate with further actions identified in the council's Annual Governance Statement 2022/23. The actions are monitored through the year in service business plans and the next self-assessment report will include an assessment of the progress made on these actions.</p>	<p>Self-assessment report 2022/23</p>	<p>Develop and agree the self-assessment process for 2023/24 – March 2024</p> <p>Produce a self-assessment report for 2023/24 – September 2024</p>

Performance Data and Information

Data and information are essential to our performance framework. This comprises of nationally and locally set indicators that services have developed to measure the impact of their service. As well as maximising the use of data we hold to inform how we plan, manage, and deliver services. All staff and members need to regularly access and use performance data and analysis of performance to evaluate the progress and impact of services.

	How well are we doing?	How do we know?	Action & timescale
Is performance data used to monitor and evaluate the council's performance?	<p>Performance data is embedded in the Council's performance management framework. The Community and Corporate Plan has an agreed measurement framework that sets a mix of input, process, output and outcome measures. Targets for 2023/24 have been set and approved by Cabinet as part of the community and corporate plan progress report. The measures are updated quarterly in the community and corporate plan dashboard. This allows officers and members to regularly assess performance and take action accordingly.</p> <p>Performance dashboards are also currently being built for each directorate displaying their key performance indicators. Directorate dashboards have been built for MonLife & Social Care & Health, with the remaining to be completed by April 2024. These dashboards are supporting performance data to be further embedded in decision making at a senior level.</p> <p>Service business plans principles require services to use appropriate performance data and measures to monitor and evaluate performance. Quality assurance of service business plans shows there remains variability in the use of performance indicators within services to assess performance. This can limit the ability of services to robustly assess their performance. Feedback and assistance are being provided to services, where required, to strengthen their planning.</p>	<p>Community and corporate plan measurement framework & dashboard</p> <p>Directorate performance dashboards</p> <p>Service Business Plans</p>	<p>Set out revised measures alongside targets for performance up to 2026/27 for the community and corporate plan – May 2024</p> <p>Complete the development of directorate performance dashboards – April 2024</p>

<p>Is the council's performance data on its services/ processes/outcomes relevant, accurate and up to date?</p>	<p>The community and corporate plan 'measurement framework' identifies measure we can have a direct and measurable effect on and measures we will track for longer term changes that our contribution is only one part of. This allows us to track service, process and outcome level progress and performance.</p> <p>Our self-assessment concludes there is a need to further develop self-assessment arrangements to focus on outcomes and embed an evaluative mindset. This includes developing, where possible, the use of outcome measures in the community and corporate plan. This has also been identified through the Audit Wales use of performance information review, the report is currently in draft.</p> <p>Quality assurance of service business plans shows there remains variability in the overall quality and timeliness of completion of performance indicators within services to assess performance. Feedback and assistance are being provided to services, where required, to strengthen their planning.</p> <p>Performance measures and target setting guidance is in place and embedded in service business plan principles. Performance measure definitions and proformas are used for collating performance measures in the community and corporate plan. Also, Internal audit reviews will look to ensure that performance information is reviewed when it is appropriate to do so. While arrangements are in place to support the production of accurate performance data, our assessments show we need to focus on improving our data maturity, with data accuracy being an important part. Data quality was also identified as an area for improvement through the Audit Wales use of performance</p>	<p>Community and corporate plan measurement framework.</p> <p>Self-Assessment report 2022/23.</p> <p>Service business plans quality assurance.</p>	<p>Set out revised measures alongside targets for performance up to 2026/27 for the community and corporate plan – May 2024</p> <p>Undertake targeted action to improve the council's data maturity – December 2024</p>
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	information review. We will focus on improving our data accuracy as part of our wider work on developing the council's data maturity.		
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Strategic Risk Management			
<p>The strategic risk register captures the high and medium level strategic risks that face the council in line with the council's risk management policy. This ensures that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic risks are identified and monitored by the authority • Risk controls are appropriate and proportionate • Senior managers and elected members systematically review the strategic risks facing the authority 			
	How well are we doing?	How do we know?	Action & timescale
Is there a collective view of the council's strategic risk management arrangements and risk appetite that is communicated and understood?	<p>The Council has an established strategic risk management policy and guidance that is available on The Hub for members and officers to view. This defines the approach, process and responsibility for managing strategic risk in the council. This also defines risk tolerance and a broad risk appetite for the council.</p> <p>It has been identified that areas of the policy including risk identification arrangements, risk appetite, responsibilities for managing risks and reporting arrangements can be strengthened. This will need to be supported by subsequent communication of the amendments.</p> <p>The content and structure of the strategic risk register is in line with the current policy and guidance. The policy should also be used by service managers when completing service business plans. The latest quality assurance of service business plans demonstrates that the completion of risk registers in the plans</p>	<p>Strategic risk management policy and guidance</p> <p>Strategic risk register</p> <p>Service business plans risk register</p>	<p>Review the strategic risk management policy and guidance – April 2024</p> <p>Complete further strategic risk training and guidance – May 2024</p>

	needs strengthening and has identified a need for further strategic risk management training in the organisation.		
Is strategic risk management embedded in the council?	<p>The strategic risk register is updated regularly and available to all members and officers to view at any time. There are arrangements to formally review the whole strategic risk register six monthly. These are facilitated by the performance and data insight team in coordination with risk owners and include review reports to Strategic Leadership Team and cabinet. The latest strategic risk register is formally reported to Governance & Audit Committee, Performance & Overview scrutiny committee and Cabinet. This facilitates and demonstrates that risk management is embedded with these groups and officers who have specific responsibilities.</p> <p>The update of the strategic risk register is informed by a wide range of evidence as set by the policy. There is a need to strengthen the alignment with other risk management procedures and processes as part of the strategic risk management policy review.</p> <p>The starting point for identifying risks are often service business plans, where heads of service and service managers identify the risks their service faces or will face over the next three years in line with the risk management policy. The most recent quality assurance of service business plan (October 2023) identified that the completion of service-based risk registers was often not robust enough or fully completed. This shows strategic risk management isn't consistently embedded at a service level and has identified a need for further strategic risk management training in the organisation.</p>	<p>Strategic risk management policy and guidance</p> <p>Strategic risk register</p> <p>Service business plans risk register</p>	<p>Review the strategic risk management policy and guidance – April 2024</p> <p>Complete further strategic risk training and guidance – May 2024</p>

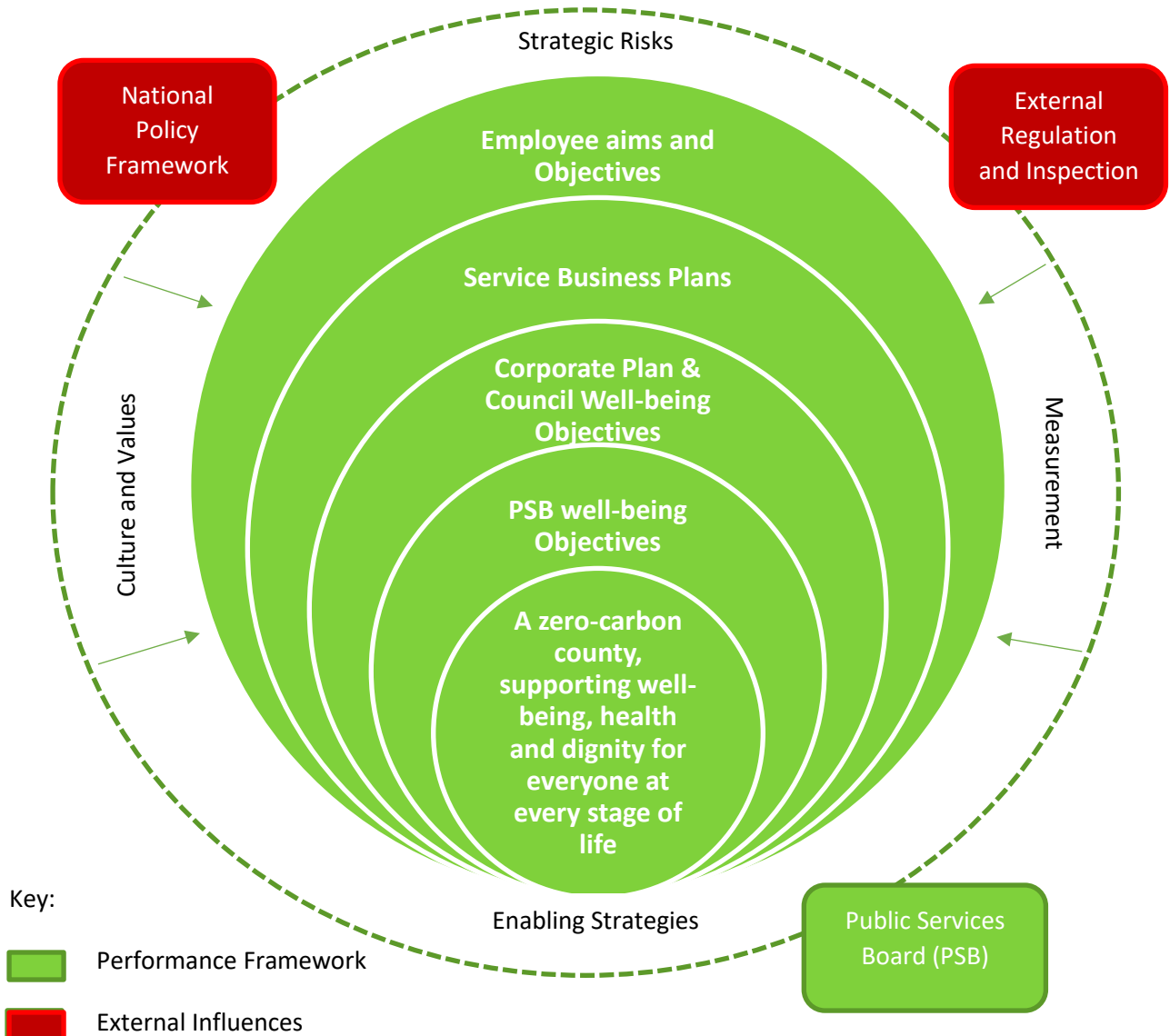
<p>Is there a shared understanding of the most significant corporate risks?</p>	<p>The strategic risk register identifies high and medium level strategic risks and ensures risk levels are assessed and mitigating actions are identified. The register is updated regularly, which ensures it remains focussed on the most significant strategic risks facing the council. It is available to all members and officers to view at any time and has regular reporting arrangements in place. This ensures there is a shared understanding of strategic risks facing the council.</p> <p>The findings from the most recent quality assurance of service business plans (October 2023) have shown that strategic risk management isn't consistently embedded at a service level, which could impact the effectiveness of service risk identification and management. This may subsequently be having an impact on the effective identification and management of strategic risks, although other arrangements are in place, as set out, will limit this.</p> <p>The latest six-monthly review of the strategic risk register has identified for some risks there is no forecast change in risk level or score post mitigation. A review of mitigation actions will be undertaken with risk owners to seek assurance these remain appropriate to manage the type/nature of the strategic risk identified.</p>	<p>Strategic risk register</p> <p>Service business plans risk register</p> <p>Strategic risk management reports</p>	<p>Complete further strategic risk training and guidance – May 2024</p> <p>Review of mitigating actions in strategic risk register - March 2024</p>
<p>Is there a robust risk management assurance framework in place?</p>	<p>There are arrangements to formally review the whole strategic risk register six monthly. These are facilitated by the performance and data insight team in liaison with risk owners and include review reports to Strategic Leadership Team and cabinet. The latest strategic risk register is then formally reported to Governance & Audit Committee, Performance &</p>	<p>Strategic risk register</p> <p>Service business plans quality assurance</p>	<p>Review the strategic risk management policy and guidance –April 2024</p>

	<p>Overview scrutiny committee and Cabinet. This provides assurance on the robustness of risk management framework in place.</p> <p>A review of strategic risk management arrangements is now reported to Governance and Audit Committee six monthly. The content of this report is being developed to support the committee to consider assurance of the risk framework in place. Risk management arrangements also form part of the Council's annual self-assessment report. These arrangements are providing assurance of the framework in place and informed areas for development identified in this report.</p> <p>To further strengthen internal risk assurance, the council's recently formed governance working group will have a key role in reviewing the risk management policy and guidance. Also, the findings from the internal audit of strategic risk management will further inform strengths and areas for development in the Council's risk management.</p>	Strategic risk management reports	
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Appendix 2

Our Performance Framework

Our performance management framework illustrates the interdependencies and how the policies, plans and programmes it contains, should be mutually reinforcing. In simple terms, our performance management makes sure that everyone is pulling in the same direction to deliver real and tangible outcomes, to improve the quality of life of people and communities.



Building a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life is the unifying purpose of the diverse range of services for which we are responsible. We are a partner in the Public Service Board, which is responsible for setting well-being objectives for the county. The Council's own well-being objectives are set by Council through the Community and Corporate Plan, based on the same well-being assessment as the PSB objectives. Each of our teams has a service business plan that aligns to these objectives. We have a range of performance measures that we use to keep track of our progress. Our risk management policy enables us to manage strategic risks to our delivery. Our employee aims and objectives show how the contributions that individual colleagues make to these objectives and delivering our vision in accordance with our values. Our 'enabling strategies' support the delivery of our objectives. Our work is informed and guided by national policy and external regulation and inspection.