



Corporate, Finance & Property Select Committee

Review Scoping Report - 2021/22

Working title: Performance Monitoring and Reporting in Hillingdon Council

1. OBJECTIVES

Aim of review

At the Corporate, Finance & Property Select Committee meeting on 3 June 2021, it was agreed that the Committee's next major review topic would focus on the Council's Business Performance Monitoring and Reporting.

Naveed Mohammed, Head of Business Performance and Insight, had presented a report to the previous Policy Overview Committee on 4 March 2021 and a number of possible improvements had been suggested by Members regarding apparent gaps in the current data and reporting processes. Key points highlighted by the Committee in relation to the proposed review topic included:

- Understanding the current regime for reporting to SMT including what reporting is provided to track where the Council is doing well / areas for improvement.
- Understanding how data/insight is used to shape strategic and operational decisions.
- Exploring how data quality is managed.
- Requirement to better understand how the data is used in ongoing service delivery.
- How the Council uses data, people and tech to drive performance management.

A central role of overview and scrutiny committees is to regularly monitor the performance of council services. Members may wish to incorporate into this review, improved ways of reporting and presenting key service and trends to the new Select Committees going forward, consistent with any other reporting to the Senior Management Team / Cabinet Members.

Officers were requested to prepare a scoping report setting out the guidelines and timelines to enable the Committee to conduct a thorough review of this topic. As the review progresses, Members will hear from key witnesses who will highlight current data and reporting processes and propose possible improvements for the consideration of the Committee.

Terms of Reference

The following Terms of Reference are suggested for this review, subject to any changes agreed by the Committee:

1. **Where are we now?** - To ensure Members receive a broad overview of existing arrangements in respect of data collection, use of data and performance reporting across all parts of the Council.
2. **What do we need to do better and how?** - To review the Council's current arrangements in the use of data to manage operational delivery and drive service improvements and seek to:
 - a. compare and contrast arrangements in Hillingdon with peer authorities and other public organisations and to understand areas of good practice and further improvement and developments required; and
 - b. Investigate short-medium term improvements in data reporting and presentation to decision-makers, e.g., Corporate Management Team / Cabinet Members / Select Committees.
3. **Where do we want to be?** - To provide Members with an insight into the future of data collection and reporting, along with associated technology and its practical application for decision-making. To encourage officers to buy into the process and produce honest and useful data.
4. To make practical, prudent recommendations to Cabinet, (and other bodies if applicable), based on the Committee's findings.

2. BACKGROUND

The Council delivers over 700 services to the 100,214 households that comprise the London Borough of Hillingdon and routinely gathers a wide spectrum of data across all directorates. This data set serves a number of purposes. First and foremost is the

need to ensure that services are being delivered in the most effective and efficient manner to meet resident need. Additionally, there is a need to plan for the future development of services – ensuring that, as the Borough changes, the Council's services are agile enough to respond. Finally, there is a requirement to satisfy statutory returns – the annual collection of Council data by central government.

Given the voluminous nature of the data gathered and the different purposes for which it is used, the Council has at its disposal a variety of mechanisms to gather, process and 'make sense of the data' from the use of basic spreadsheets through to more bespoke databases and data mining software.

Data is used for 'performance' (assessing the efficacy of the services we provide and its impact on outcomes) and insight (what the data tells us about our residents).

What is Tracked and Reported

The Council provides over 700 services to residents. The provision of these services relies on:

- the effective and efficient gathering of service data relating to demographics and understanding the make-up of clients;
- how efficiently functions are being delivered; and
- measuring outcomes achieved (what difference the services provided are making to Hillingdon residents).

Data is gathered by directorates and Business Performance and is sourced from both internal systems and data available through public and subscription-based services. This includes data from partners. Examples include:

- Community Safety - data on crime types and trends including benchmarking data is obtained from the Metropolitan Police in addition to accessing third-party data sites such as IQuanta.
- Public Health - data on local health profiles is available from Public Health England. Data on prevalence rates for specific conditions is available from the Department of Health or from local Clinical Commissioning Group partners.
- Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) - the Council does not collect data directly on local NEET numbers. Like other West London councils - a commissioned provider gathers and supplies this data including analysis.
- Office of National Statistics data - much of the data on Census statistics is housed on Office of National Statistics websites including 'Neighbourhood Statistics'. This includes all the figures on socio-economic profiles, population trends, sub-national projections etc.

Subject to the needs of the service and/or project the Council may from time to time utilise other data sources for the purposes of triangulation and to add greater depth to the intelligence being gathered.

The data collected is used to develop KPI reports and for insight analysis to commission services.

Some KPIs are nationally mandated. Where appropriate, national indicators are supplemented with local indicators reflecting local priorities. Examples of the latter include tracking the number of arson incidents (community safety) and the number of fly tipping incidents (Anti-Social Behaviour). Local indicators have been developed based on specific local issues/challenges.

The process used to produce performance reports including mutual roles/responsibilities between the Business Performance and Insight teams and Directorates and highlighting/tracking of underperformance

The Council utilises a corporate function for the production and development of data and insight. Whilst there is significant interface between the corporate team (Business Performance and Insight), this demarcation enables both a better use of finite resources (with members of the corporate team having expertise across multiple areas of the Council's business). It also enables improved transparency and an opportunity to 'challenge' services – something that might not be possible if services produced/processed their own data.

The process for developing the data is straightforward. Services are responsible for inputting data into case management systems. Business Performance is responsible for extracting the data and, in conjunction with Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Service, developing the suite of reports (operational and strategic) necessary for the services to carry out their business.

Performance reports are built to track performance, so key to this is the inclusion of targets and an associated 'traffic-light system'. This rates each metric against a threshold with indicators that are off target flagged as red. The relevant heads of service are given an opportunity to outline mitigating factors and plans for remedial action – the outcomes of which are reported in subsequent months.

How data is used to help Hillingdon Council discharge its responsibilities and shape service provision

Whilst Hillingdon is required to gather data for the purposes of statutory returns (including in Adult Social care, Children's Services and Housing) - the primary purpose of data collection is to ensure the Council is appropriately discharging its responsibilities and to aid future service development. An example of the latter is the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which is the overarching data store which helps shape and inform future commissioning plans.

Suggested areas identified for improvement.

- i) Use and sharing of data across the authority including Members

- ii) Use of up-to-date tools for managing data and performance
- iii) Utilisation of dashboard reporting
- iv) Presentation and data visualisation
- v) Use of predictive analytics to help shape strategic change.

Current data, best practice and research

The use of data and insight in local government has received increasing focus over the last few years. This is reflected in the number of national initiatives that are seeking to encourage better practice in this field to aid:

- The design of better services modelled around user needs
- Engaging and empowering citizens to build their communities
- Driving efficiencies and facilitating public service transformation
- Promoting economic and social growth through the innovative use of data
- Encouraging local transparency and making authorities publicly accountable.

To help authorities on this journey, the Cabinet Office, LGA and GLA have led projects to build capacity in the sector. Regarding the former, the National Data Strategy sets out the Government's ambition to improve data use in government so that it can be used to boost productivity, create new areas of economic growth, improve delivery of local services and position the UK as the forerunner in public service innovation. The GLA's work around LODA (London Office of Data Analytics) follows similar principles. Using its position as a city-wide resource, the GLA has sought to encourage cross border collaboration to address issues that transcend boundaries (e.g., climate change, SEND transport provision, supporting 'troubled families'). Finally, the LGA have run a series of programmes including 'becoming an intelligent council' - an initiative run in conjunction with LARIA (Local Authority Research and Intelligence Association) that explores how councils can better run research exercises (quantitative and qualitative) and use this to shape service delivery. Recognising the importance for Members of having the necessary skills in this area, other programmes also include data training for councillors.

Legislative / national context

The data protection legislation applicable to the Council and which governs this area is UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

In addition, for data management, the Council needs to have regard to the Human Rights Act 1998 (specifically Article 8 which protects an individual's right to respect of their private life, family life, home and correspondence such as letters, telephone calls, emails. The Council should also adhere to the Common Law of Confidentiality.

Looking to the future in terms of data collection, use and reporting

Whilst an understanding of the current position in LBH regarding the production, sharing and use of data is important – of greater import is the future direction for this area of work. At the forefront of this is the use of technology where there is an acceptance that LBH is now behind the curve both in relation to other local government and wider public sector peers. Initiatives being considered include the adoption of better tools such as Power BI that will facilitate key improvements including:

- Encouraging service ownership of data
- The production and development of more intuitive data products; moving away from the current practice of static PDF and excel documents thereby improving usability
- Providing more timely information including, in some areas, real-time data (so decisions are based on the most current available data set)
- Improve data quality
- Improving the capacity of the Council to overlay multiple datasets to understand patterns and co-dependencies (at present analysis is very much silo-based and any attempts to ‘mash’ data together a manual exercise)
- Whilst not an immediate improvement – tools such as Power BI can help the Council make its first steps towards using data for predictive analytics

Exploring this direction of travel and other areas of improvement would be an important opportunity as part of this review.

Connected work

None.

Executive Responsibilities

The portfolio Cabinet Member responsible is Councillor Douglas Mills – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Transformation. However, data reporting is important for all Cabinet portfolios.

3. EVIDENCE & ENQUIRY

Full lines of enquiry will be worked up in due course as per the proposed themed witness sessions, along with examples of performance monitoring and reporting. Potential witnesses, among others, could include:

- Testimony from LBH Officers; Mike Talbot and Naveed Mohammed
- Testimony from key service users – Alex Coman (Director – Safeguarding Partnerships and QA), Gavin Fernandez (Head of Service – Adult Social Care), Kate Kelly-Talbot (Director – Adult Social Work), Julie Kelly (Director – Children's Services) Mark Billings (Head of Housing Options and Homelessness)

- Testimony from James Wigley – MD Key Intelligence (external consultant)
- Testimony from neighbouring local authorities / private sector companies

Members may wish to suggest alternative /additional witnesses.

Initial Lines of Enquiry

These are possible areas Members may wish to focus their questioning on:

- How current provision of data/performance supports operational delivery
- Areas of improvement from a service perspective
- Best practice elsewhere (external witnesses)
- Data and intelligence reports Cabinet Members, Select Committee Members, CMT and senior managers currently receive and what they would like to see in the future and in what format
- Systems currently used / proposed
- Frequency of current reporting
- Performance culture within LBH - how performance data is used in appraisals
- Fusion of data across services - possible improvements
- Service data vs personal data
- Data for early warnings of possible service failure
- Handling of hard copy data
- How the review ties in with strategic plans
- How reporting reassures residents that the Council is doing a good job
- Performance monitoring (KPIs) vs intelligence data gathering
- Potential for collaboration across London boroughs
- Use of data to assist in highlighting corporate risks / risk register reporting

Surveys, site-visits or other fact-finding events

None proposed at present.

Future information that may be required

To be confirmed.

4. REVIEW PLANNING & TIMETABLE

It is proposed to structure this review into themed witness sessions aligned to the proposed Terms of Reference as set out below. This will add focus to the review's activity, information presented, lines of enquiry and questioning.

Proposed Witness Session Themes

- "**Where are we now?"**
- "**What do we need to do better and how?"**

- “Where do we want to be?”

The proposed timeframe & milestones for the review are:

Meeting Date	Review stage	Theme and purpose	Witnesses / officers attending
20 July 2021	Agreement of scoping report	To agree scoping report and any changes to initiate review	Naveed Mohammed
7 September 2021	Witness Session 1	Theme – where are we now?	Naveed Mohammed
21 October 2021	Witness Session 2	Theme – what do we need to do better and how? Theme – where do we want to be?	Naveed Mohammed Key Service Managers (Alex Coman, Gavin Fernandez, Mark Billings, Julie Kelly, Kate Kelly-Talbot) James Wigley – MD Key Intelligence (external consultatn) Witness from neighbouring local authority
24 November 2021	De-brief and emerging findings / recommendations	To discuss key findings and identify potential recommendations	Liz Penny
12 January 2021	Approval of draft final report	Proposals – agree recommendations and final draft report to Cabinet	Liz Penny
TARGET CABINET DATE –24 MARCH 2022			

Resource requirements

To be confirmed.

Equalities impact

To be confirmed.

Background Papers / further reading

None at this stage.