

REVIEW BY THE CORPORATE, FINANCE AND PROPERTY SELECT COMMITTEE: *PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REPORTING IN HILLINGDON COUNCIL*

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Douglas Mills
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Corporate Services and Transformation
Officer Contact(s)	Liz Penny, Democratic Services
Papers with report	Final review report

HEADLINES

Summary	To receive the final report detailing the review by the Corporate, Finance and Property Select Committee, which considered Performance Monitoring and Reporting within Hillingdon Council. The review makes recommendations for Cabinet to consider.
Putting our Residents First	This report supports the following Council objectives of: Our People.
Financial Cost	There are no direct financial costs arising from the initial recommendations with potential future investment subject to development of an appropriate business case and funding strategy.
Relevant Select Committee	Corporate, Finance and Property Select Committee
Relevant Ward(s)	All

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet welcomes the Committee's findings further to its review of Performance Monitoring and Reporting in Hillingdon, and the recommendations outlined below, noting that their implementation will be taken forward by officers and the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Transformation:

SELECT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

1) Performance Reporting

That the Business Performance Team and Service areas take into account the varying target audiences and organisational hierarchy for their performance reporting, thereby ensuring that performance outputs and information are presented in a relevant, user-friendly visual format for:

- a. Cabinet – That service heads / directors, in conjunction with respective Cabinet Members i) be requested to review the current use of data within their areas during 2022 – either for reporting purposes or to identify performance issues; and ii) consider regular monthly or quarterly performance updates to Cabinet Members;**
- b. Select Committees – That from May 2022, subsequent to recommendation 1a. above, Select Committees also be presented with high-level quarterly performance updates regarding services within their remit / terms of reference, and that this be added to their multi-year work programmes;**
- c. Corporate Management Team (CMT) – That Cabinet Members have input into the metrics presented to CMT through the quarterly Balanced Scorecard performance reporting to ensure they are able to measure overall Council performance and drive strategic decisions. Weekly and monthly dashboards should continue for Operational Heads but should be visible and reviewed in conjunction with the Leader/relevant Cabinet Members.**

2) Performance Culture

That awareness and understanding of the importance of data quality and of the services provided by the Business Performance Team be communicated comprehensively across Council departments during 2022, including the use of manager briefings, toolkits or other online internal information.

3) Performance Innovation

That Corporate Procurement explore appropriate external software / systems during 2022, in conjunction with the Business Performance Team, that could be implemented or integrated to deliver tangible and cost-effective benefits. Particular focus should be placed on looking to assist the move away from traditional manual data manipulation to greater data automation, along with the availability of live data to decision-makers.

Reasons for the recommendations

Whilst noting the positive work by officers undertaking performance monitoring and reporting in the Council, on completion of its review the Committee recommended a number of potential improvements relating to data reporting processes, data culture and data innovation.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The Cabinet could decide to reject some, or all, of the Committee's recommendations or pursue alternative routes by which to progress the objectives of the review.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Overview of the committee's review

In 2021, Members of the Corporate, Finance and Property Select Committee had received a background report detailing the arrangements for tracking the Council's performance and the provision of insight and other data to shape operational delivery and the strategic development of services.

Having recognised the essential nature of data in facilitating effective decision-making, identifying and rectifying problems, along with meeting political objectives, Members unanimously elected to conduct a major review of Performance Monitoring and Reporting within Hillingdon Council.

The following Terms of Reference were agreed by the Committee for the review:

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.

As part of its evidence gathering sessions, the Committee received testimony from the following witnesses:

- Naveed Mohammed, Head of Business Performance and Insight
- Alex Coman, Director – Safeguarding, Partnerships and QA
- Kate Kelly-Talbot, Director of Service Delivery - Adult Social Work
- Rod Smith, Head of Housing and Tenancy Management
- Cathy Knubley, Head of Waste

- Richard Dawson, Interim Head of Community Safety and Enforcement
- James Wigley – MD Key Intelligence (external consultant)

Through the Committee's intelligence gathering sessions, Members sought to gain a comprehensive understanding of current performance monitoring and reporting processes within the Council and how these could be improved and considering best practice. The Committee concluded that there were opportunities to further strengthen performance reporting to decision-makers, along with development of the Council's performance culture and use of technology.

The Committee was mindful of the need to find cost-effective, workable solutions, and the recommendations in this report are seen as prudent, effective actions to improve performance monitoring and reporting going forward.

At its meeting on 12 January 2022, the Committee concluded its review which incorporates three key recommendations for submission to Cabinet. The detailed review report is attached as an appendix.

Summary of the Committee's recommendation

In terms of performance reporting, it was noted that it would be helpful if performance reports and information were consistently presented in a user-friendly visual format for Cabinet, Select Committees and the Corporate Management Team. Furthermore, the Committee felt a thorough review of current data use by service heads / directors, in conjunction with respective Cabinet Members, would assist in ensuring the relevance of future reporting. Additionally, it was noted that Select Committees would welcome new high-level quarterly performance reports regarding services within their remit, which had only been occasional or ad hoc over recent years. The Committee also suggested that it would be helpful if Cabinet Members were given an opportunity to have input into the metrics presented to CMT through the quarterly Balanced Scorecard.

In respect of performance culture and innovation, Members found that across the Council, awareness of the importance of data quality and of the services provided by the Business Performance & Insight Team was somewhat inconsistent and could be further improved. Furthermore, as the review progressed, it became apparent that the Council was behind the curve in performance innovation and data tools, hence it is recommended that officers explore appropriate external software / systems during 2022.

Implementation: Officer comments on the Committee's recommendations

The three recommendations put forward by the Select Committee, if agreed by Cabinet, would each require separate strands of activity from the Business Performance and Insight Team. How each could be taken forward and be implemented is suggested below:

1) Performance Reporting

Reporting to CMT and Cabinet members is already established and will continue on a regular basis and to a quarterly cycle. Formal reporting to Select Committees is new. Discussions will need to begin with Committee Chairmen and Democratic Services to determine the best suite of indicators that will be reported, taking into account work plans and the committees' remits.

2) Performance Culture

At present, work on raising awareness of data quality and assisting service colleagues with improving data quality is scheduled for between January and March – in anticipation of the annual statutory returns cycle. This could be supplemented with work throughout the year, including data quality audits, drop-in sessions for service leads and specific workshops where Government guidance has changed. These would be promoted through service management teams, the weekly all-staff email and where appropriate, Team Hillingdon.

3) Performance Innovation

Work to review and eventually replace the Council's existing corporate performance management system is already underway. Tools such as Power BI are being used to pilot new ways of reporting service data. Subject to the outcome of these pilots, a business case will be developed with a full cost-benefit evaluation of bringing in a new system. An important part of this will be the need to initiate wider changes in culture. Therefore, in addition to the importance of data quality detailed above, there will be a need to review what is collected and reported and a need to upskill service officers on how to use the new tools (and data in general) as a key component in managing both ongoing service delivery and strategic change.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial costs arising from the initial recommendations; however, any changes arising, such as the procurement of a new performance tool will be subject to development of a business case and appropriate funding strategy.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities

Effective monitoring and reporting of performance within a local authority is essential to establish practical ways that a council can improve what it does and, more importantly, what it delivers, in terms of good quality services that meet the needs of local people.

Consultation carried out or required

The Committee sought a wide range of internal witness testimony, as set out in the report.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial implications set out above, noting that there are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations within this report.

Legal

The Borough Solicitor confirms that there are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.