

**SCRUTINY**  
**8 OCTOBER 2018**

**Review of the Performance Indicators given to Elected Members**

**Cabinet Member(s):** Clive Eginton  
**Responsible Officer:** Catherine Yandle Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security

**Reason for Report:** At Scrutiny Committee on 1 August a member of the public asked the Committee 'please consider adding, to the list at Agenda item 7 a review of the performance indicators given to Elected Members'. In response the Chairman confirmed that this would be added to the list of items identified for future meetings.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the contents of this report are noted.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** The use of effective performance indicators allows members to track corporate performance at a strategic level, and allows for scrutiny and challenge of operational effectiveness through the relevant Policy Development Groups (PDGs), the Council's Scrutiny Committee and its Audit functions (both internal and external). Importantly, it provides an evaluative feedback loop to ensure continual improvement by assessing whether decisions made by the Council are having the desired impact on service delivery or strategic outcomes for the residents, visitors and businesses of Mid Devon.

**Financial Implications:** None identified

**Legal Implications:** None identified

**Risk Assessment:** None identified

**Equality Impact Assessment:** None identified

## 1.0 Background

- 1.1. Performance monitoring across the Council has a varied history, with service-level data not always being brought to the attention of elected members to inform policy decisions. It was noted in the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan for 2011/12 that committees were no longer receiving regular performance and risk reports. As a result of this regular reporting was reinstated, at first twice and later being increased to 5-6 times a year.
- 1.2. In 2013 it was clear that many Members felt that the reports had become unhelpful, or of little benefit; they were too long and the measures included in them were not felt to be meaningful in many cases.
- 1.3. So a Scrutiny working group was set up which first met on 6 February 2014 and made their final report back to Scrutiny on 15 September 2014.

1.4. As a result of the Working Group's recommendations a revised selection was proposed to and agreed in time for the new Council and change to 4 PDGs in May 2015.

## 2.0 **Development**

2.1 The Corporate Plan is reviewed regularly, but specifically after each election to ensure that the Corporate Plan reflects the aspirations of the newly formed Council. The PIs reported on are also reviewed at this stage to ensure alignment with the council's aims and objectives.

2.2 More PIs are monitored by services than are reported corporately to Members, which means we usually have a variety of measures available and attempt, at the review stage, to match identified Corporate Plan Priorities with an appropriate measure.

2.3 Complete synergy is not always possible because, for example, suitable data may not have been collected yet or may be publically available but too out of date. Sometimes a decision is made to start collecting new data; in this instance there may be the statement no target or "for information only".

2.4 Performance management across local government utilises a number of nationally-agreed datasets and performance metrics, and these are supplemented by monitoring and management of data at the local level. Hence, the Council's performance indicators are a mixture of core service level information that allows us to be compared across the local government family (or subsets thereof), combined with metrics that have, at one time or another, been of significant importance to members in tracking performance.

## 3.0 **Response to specific issues referred to in the public question submitted**

3.1 The request to the Scrutiny committee arose in relation to one specific performance indicator for FOI request responses. This was introduced in 2011/12, and has been reported the same way ever since. That year the cumulative % for the whole year was 95%.

3.2 The results each year thereafter are as follows: 86%, 97%, 95%, 84%, 94%, 72%. The current year 2018/19 so far, from 1 April to 31 August, is 98% i.e. the highest recorded since this indicator was introduced.

3.3 The regular Performance and risk report for 2017/18 at Scrutiny on 18 June said:

"The Response to FOI requests is still well below target. However 89% have been on time in the 3 months since the new Information Management Officer started. For April this figure was 97%."

3.4 The Leader's Annual review against the Corporate Plan for 2017/18 said

"FOI: Recruitment for a replacement member of staff took place and the new member of staff started on 4 January performance has improved steadily 89%

have been on time in the 3 months since the new Information Management Officer started. This reached 99% by May 2018.”

3.5 From the minutes the reply given was:

“The Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security provided the following answers to questions posed in public question time: the figures on the performance appendix were cumulative for the year to date; the cumulative percentage for the first 9 months to December 2017 was 67%. In the covering report and Leaders Report (agenda Item 10), the quoted figure of 89% was for the first 3 months of 2018 hence the different figures.

Discussion took place regarding the volume of FOI enquiries and the reasons why 100% of responses could not always be provided within the timescales allowed in statute.”

3.6 From the debate at Scrutiny Committee on 1 August 2018, it seemed the issue was whether this indicator (and presumably others besides) should be reported as individual monthly ‘actuals’, or whether cumulative figures were appropriate. At this point it is sufficient to reflect that the corollary of the observation of monthly actuals being more useful to members, would be to suggest that members would then be unsighted on what each month’s data did for performance overall (across the year). There are advantages and disadvantages to both – this is why members are involved in reviewing Performance Indicators as part of any Corporate Plan review and on an ongoing basis through PDGs, Scrutiny and Audit.

3.7 Due to the reaction at the meeting in June 2018 to having achieved 99% for May the decision was taken to report month by month so the consistently good performance can be seen and the PI has been reported to this Committee on this basis since August.

#### 4.0 **Conclusion**

4.1 When each Performance and Risk report goes to committee feedback is asked for and actioned in time for the next reporting cycle, where applicable, or the next year if that is more suitable e.g. changes to targets.

4.2 In that way the active involvement of elected Members is sought on a regular basis. More involvement would be welcomed by the author in order to ensure that the Council is well-placed to manage performance rather than simply monitoring it.

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**Circulation of the Report: Scrutiny Committee and Clive Eginton**

**List of Background Papers: None**