

Strategic Performance Framework

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Contents

Principles of the framework	3
Accountability and action tracking	3
Figure 1: Dorset Council Performance Framework – Information Flows & Governance	4
Strategic level reporting	5
Quarterly reporting on Dorset Council Plan	5
Balanced scorecard strategic reporting on service performance	5
Service level reporting	6
People – adults and housing monthly performance reporting (under development)	6
People – children’s monthly performance reporting (under development)	6
Place monthly performance reporting (under development)	6
Corporate services monthly performance reporting (under development)	6
Covid-19 Reporting	7
Covid-19 strategic level reporting	7
Covid-19 Service level reporting	7
The Future Framework: Business Intelligence	7
Appendix 1: The Performance Pyramid	8
Figure 2: The Performance Pyramid	8

Principles of the framework

Effective performance management relies on close monitoring and assessment of a variety of measures from across the council. These range from the highest-level strategic measures – the council's key performance indicators (KPIs), through to the multitude of lower level metrics and measures which support individual services and teams. The framework has four strands of reporting:

- **Strategic level** – outcomes associated with measuring the successful delivery of the council plan and oversight of the council's overall performance. The strategic reporting consists of:
 - Quarterly reporting on progress with the Dorset Council Plan to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) / Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Cabinet.
 - Balanced scorecard reporting on service performance: monthly to CLT/ SLT; monthly to performance leadership group (executive directors and portfolio holders); and quarterly to the Place and Resource Overview Committee and the People and Health Overview Committee.
 - Quarterly risk management and internal audit updates to Audit and Governance Committee. The Committee has an assurance role on this overarching framework and will refer any areas of high level concern to the appropriate overview committee.
- **Service level** – reporting required to make informed service level leadership and management decisions. The approach to service level reporting is in development but will provide monthly management information in a range of formats determined by the senior leadership teams of each of the council's directorates: People – adults and housing; People – children's; Place; and Corporate development.
- **Operational level** – reporting required to successfully oversee and manage the individual operations within services.
- **Statutory performance (including reporting to agencies & partners)** – returns/reporting which need to be returned to central government as part of the statutory reporting process - this type of information is useful for benchmarking against other authorities operating in statistically similar/comparable populations.

Figure 1 shows the elements that make up the council's performance framework. The next sections of this document provide more information about strategic and service level reporting. Service level reporting and operational level reporting is under development and once that work is complete, this document will be updated.

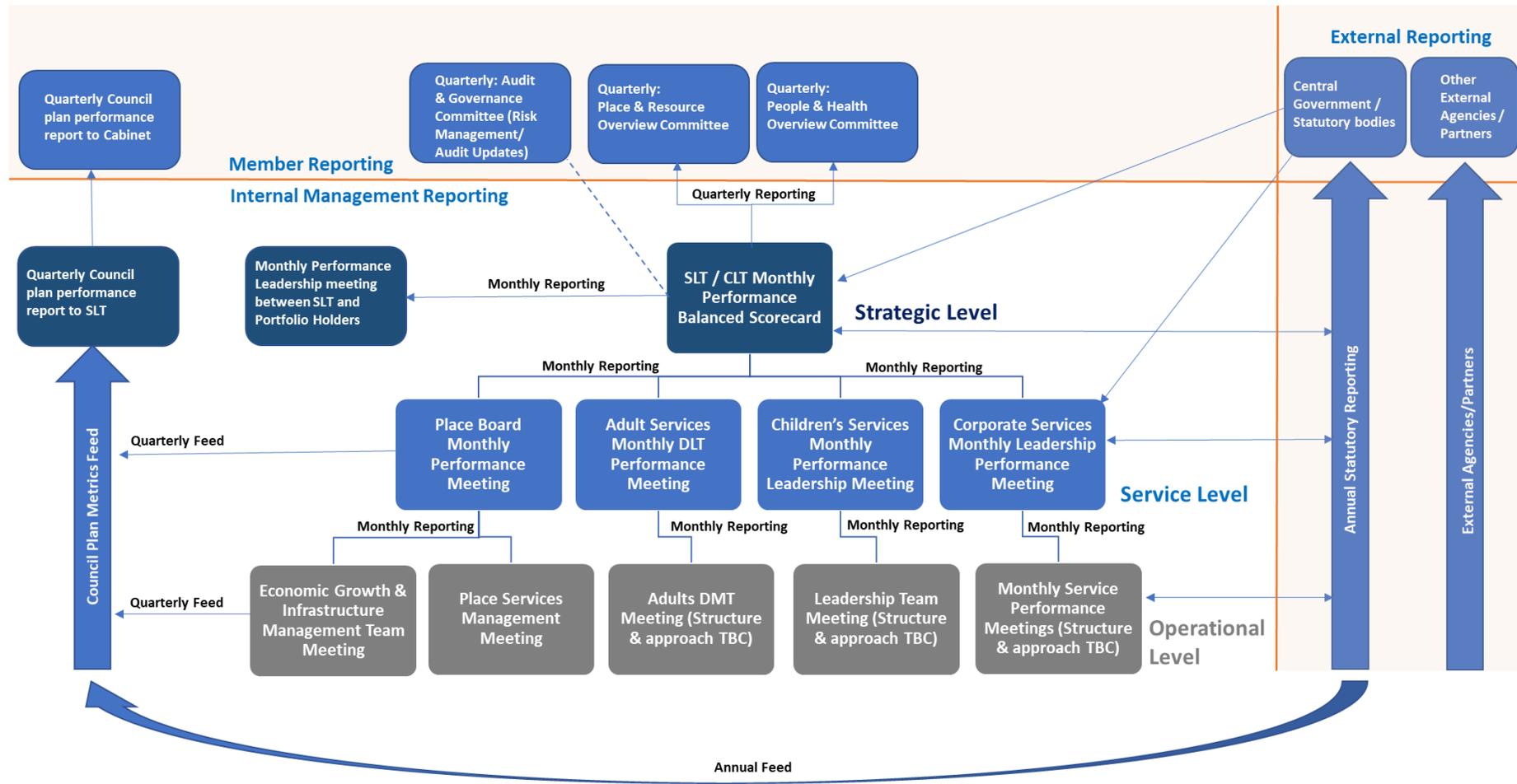
Accountability and action tracking

The framework makes use of a reporting by exception process whereby measures which are identified as off-track require detailed explanation from accountable managers. In particular this requires:

- an explanation of why a target is being missed/an item is off-track
- an action plan identifying how this will be rectified
- a timeline for returning to within tolerance (path to green)
- an accountable officer

These actions are tracked via a dedicated action tracking process with regular status updates at subsequent performance meetings. New actions identified as part of the performance management meeting are added into this action tracking process. Appendix 1 provides further details of the escalation process and governance underpinning the performance framework.

Figure 1: Dorset Council Performance Framework – Information Flows & Governance



Strategic level reporting

Strategic reporting involves councillors and senior leaders in the council. It provides councillors; senior colleagues; and the public with information about the council's progress against its council plan and direction of travel for key services.

Quarterly reporting on Dorset Council Plan

Cabinet and SLT receive a quarterly report of progress against the council plan priorities, including details of corrective actions where performance is off-track. This sits alongside the council's budget monitoring reporting. Although the reporting is quarterly, the agreed approach makes use of measures which are both quarterly and annual where some require longer timeframes.

This reporting is divided into performance outcomes against the 5 identified priorities:

- Economic growth
- Unique environment
- Suitable housing
- Strong, healthy communities
- Staying safe and well

Given its cross-cutting nature, it also includes a section on the council's commitment to the climate and ecological emergency.

In the first instance this reporting is shared with the senior leadership team during their regular monthly performance meeting, the reporting is then provided to Cabinet. The report is also shared with residents, all councillors, partners and employees via publication on the council website. Council plan performance can be called for scrutiny at any time.

Balanced scorecard strategic reporting on service performance

Strategic reporting on performance of the council's services uses the balanced scorecard model. This is a strategic-level approach which enables a performance overview of the council's key services. The scorecard contains a balance of both financial and non-financial targeted measures and provides a complete picture of performance across the council. The monthly balanced scorecard is made up of 4 reporting areas:

- Operational Metrics (an effective modern organisation)
- Customer Metrics (a customer focused organisation)
- HR Metrics (an employer of choice)
- Finance Metrics (a sustainable Organisation)

The balanced scorecard is discussed monthly at CLT / SLT. Each month, following the CLT / SLT performance meeting, a monthly performance leadership meeting takes place between directorate leaders and councillor portfolio holders to discuss performance and any required remedial actions. These actions are tracked to completion via this meeting. Each of the council's overview committees will receive a subset of the balanced scorecard that is relevant to their area of responsibility.

Service level reporting

Service level reporting is under development. This section of the document will be updated as the approach to service level reporting is finalised. The directorate leadership teams are working with business intelligence and performance business partners to define the detailed reporting requirements and mechanisms. The approach will be tailored to the needs of the individual directorates because the reporting requirements will be different for each. This section sets out a high level summary of the likely reporting.

People – adults and housing monthly performance reporting (under development)

A range of reports are currently produced for adults and housing and this is currently under review. These include:

- Monthly activity bulletins providing information on activity and trends relating to clients; carers; waiting lists; packages; safeguarding; delayed transfers of care; reablement etc.
- High level indicator reporting
- Client level detailed reports
- Performance dashboards / reports including: domiciliary care; delayed transfer of care; community safety; domestic abuse; residential and nursing facilities/placements

People – children’s monthly performance reporting (under development)

A wide range of information has been provided for children’s services historically and this is currently under review with the new management team. The intention is to provide management information from a range of sources including statutory returns; a range of key performance indicators (covering core services such as social care; education; and safeguarding); child level data used by Ofsted for inspections; and information about specialist services such as fostering; adoption, SEND; and youth offending.

Place monthly performance reporting (under development)

Information is being worked up around the following areas:

- Economic growth and regeneration
- Customer services, libraries and archives
- Planning and building control
- Roads, parking and travel
- Property
- Leisure services, coast, greenspace and harbours
- Regulatory services
- Waste

Corporate services monthly performance reporting (under development)

Information is being worked up around the following areas:

- Commercial and procurement
- Revenue and benefits
- Finance
- HR and organisation development
- ICT
- Digital, transformation and change
- Business intelligence and communications

Covid-19 Reporting

Additional reporting has been developed to monitor the council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. These reporting processes will continue for as long as required. The following sections summarise the Covid-19 reporting.

Covid-19 strategic level reporting

A daily report is provided for councillors and the multi-agency group working together to provide support to Dorset's vulnerable people including the shielded community. This provides information about the numbers of people we have contacted and what type of support we have provide them with. A set of interactive GIS maps are also available showing a range of information about the geography of shielded people as well as the location of support services available to them.

A range of information is provided on a weekly basis to CLT / SLT covering:

- Headline updates from public health
- Updates from the duty strategic and tactical emergency response leads
- Covid-19 related children's services metrics
- School attendance information
- Shielded population analysis and response including volunteering and food distribution
- Covid-19 related adults services & housing metrics
- Key place based service metrics
- Covid-19 related corporate services metrics
- Covid-19 related place services metrics
- Staff redeployment information
- Legal & democratic services information
- Timeline showing Covid-19 key events

Covid-19 Service level reporting

The following service level covid-19 reports are provided:

- Covid-19 vulnerable children tracker - tracking risk and attendance data from schools for vulnerable children.
- Covid-19 children's risk assessment - children identified as having a lead worker for social care or early help and shows whether they have a Covid-19 risk and contingency plan and when they were last contacted. Figures from here are reported to the Department for Education fortnightly.
- Covid-19 adults and housing report - key covid-19 reporting metrics relating to adult services and housing, covering a variety of daily measures and commentary.

The Future Framework: Business Intelligence

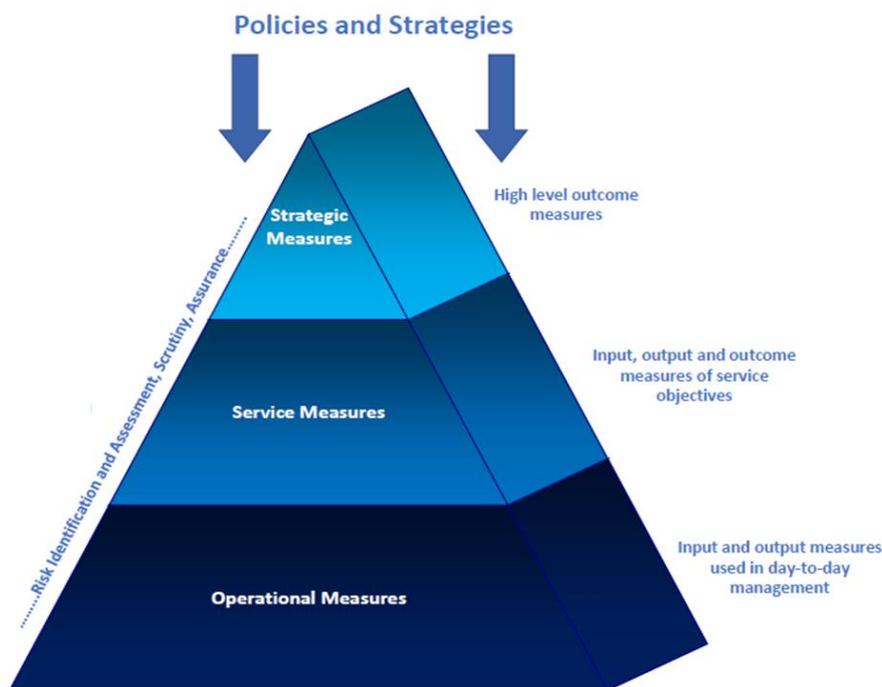
The performance framework is formulated to be flexible enough to allow for future enhancement and development. In particular the BI & Performance team are exploring options to develop the council's business intelligence capabilities. This will move away from backwards looking performance reporting towards predictive analytics and ultimately prescriptive analytics. This is currently subject to the formulation of the BI strategy and transformation programme.

Appendix 1: The Performance Pyramid

The Dorset Council framework uses an exceptions-based escalation approach and a set of core KPIs for each council service area. Items which are flagging as off-target or as a cause for concern are discussed at the relevant performance meeting, then escalated to higher level meetings for higher-level decisions as required. This also applies to items which are showing exceptionally good results or are flagged as significantly exceeding expectations. This process enables the hundreds of metrics and measures which are monitored on a day-to-day basis across the many and varied parts of the organisation to be considered and discussed in monthly governance forums at different and relevant levels of the organisation.

The reporting by exception and escalation approach ensures that the most important or relevant performance information is used for decision-making during monthly management meetings. Figure 2 shows the performance pyramid model used by Dorset Council, and illustrates the different types of measures used at the different levels of the organisational hierarchy.

Figure 2: The Performance Pyramid



The base of the performance pyramid is populated with the many hundreds of operational measures used on a daily basis to manage specific service activities. This is referred to here as low-level operational information.

When taken together these measures provide a picture for managers of how well various parts of the service are performing and represent the council's management information. This then informs the next level-up in the pyramid – the service measures. These are the higher-level metrics referred to as KPIs which are used to demonstrate how well the service is performing against its service objectives. It is from this level upwards that the centralised performance approach finds its focus.

The service level KPIs provide a decision-making basis for leaders to assess progress in delivering service plans. Where items are deemed as off-track or under-performing, a

combination of operational metrics can provide further information to show which areas of the service are moving the KPIs off-track.

The top of the pyramid is populated with strategic measures. These relate to the overall performance of the council as determined by its strategic objectives, desired outcomes and council/corporate plan. These high-level metrics allow strategic decision makers and the Senior Leadership Team to understand which functions or services within the organisation are moving the overall organisation off-track. These measures will also inform strategy and policy at the highest level and feed into an assessment of whether the council is meeting its policy objectives and outcomes as dictated by the council plan.