Bristol City Council - 2024/25 Performance Framework

Background

The coming year will bring significant changes to the way the Council operates. With the new Committee System of governance there will need to be fundamental changes to the Council's Performance Framework. These changes take place in a continuing environment of financial pressures and the need to generate savings, which will remain a parallel focus throughout the year as reflected in the Business Plan 2024/25.

The Bristol City Council (BCC) Corporate Strategy 2022-27, published in early 2022, still provides the framework for our annual Business Plan*; this document sets out what we (BCC) are planning to achieve in the related municipal year. There are 7 Themes within the Corporate Strategy framework, each with 3 to 6 Priorities (32 Priorities in total). [*see **Business Plan 2024/25** on Corporate Strategy (bristol.gov.uk)]

During 2023/24 we developed a Power BI performance dashboard to provide an interactive tool for managers and members to get a clear understanding of performance data. This supports discussions at Divisional/Directorate level as well as via Theme Clinics, and in 2024/25 will also reflect Policy Committees.

This document will summarise how BCC will track and report how it is performing against the Themes and Priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy 2022-27, and includes:

A. An overview of the governance and performance management arrangements for 2024/25

B. Corporate performance reporting plans, including for Policy Committees

C. Performance metrics for the annual Business Plan

A. Overview of performance management arrangements 2024/25

Business Plan

This is the engine room of delivery around the Corporate Strategy and is largely drawn from a combination of Service Plans, Director Summaries and the Portfolios, Programmes and Projects pipeline.

The Business Plan comprises a specific range of activity and actions that BCC intend to carry out over the coming 12 months in order to progress each of the Corporate Strategy priorities. Each priority contains approximately three actions to keep ambition manageable and focused. Many priorities do not lend themselves to numerical metrics so a combination of actions *and/or* metrics is used to show our performance throughout the year.

The primary focus remains on tracking the Business Plan measures, with actions alongside performance metrics to demonstrate that BCC is delivering the things it has said it will. These actions and metrics were agreed by our Corporate Leadership Board (CLB) as part of the Business Plan 2024/25.

This performance framework focuses on three component parts:

* **Business Plan Actions** – Corporate Strategy *Priority* level for BCC to deliver

* **Business Plan Performance Metrics** - Corporate Strategy *Priority* level for BCC to deliver

* **City Outcomes Measures** – Corporate Strategy *Theme* level; 'health of the city' not BCC performance

1. **Business Plan actions** – Priority level; tracked quarterly

Each Corporate Strategy Theme contains a number of related Priorities which flow through to the annual Business Plan. Each Business Plan Priority contains approximately three actions that the Council intends to deliver over the coming 12 months.

Progress updates for each action are reported quarterly (noting that some actions may be completed before year-end). This will provide consistent reporting on all Priorities, including those without specific quantitative metrics, to offer a more rounded view of the Council's performance.

2. **Business Plan performance metrics –** Priority level; updated quarterly (where available)

As noted, each Theme contains related Priorities which flow through to the annual Business Plan. Most Priorities contain performance metrics in addition to actions (though not all as several Priorities do not readily lend themselves to metrics).

Business Plan performance metrics are primarily quarterly measures (though some are annual) centred on our Corporate Strategy Priorities. These are metrics the Council has direct responsibility for, and so reflect Council performance.

All Business Plan performance metrics will have associated targets, which will be shown in our Targets 2024/25 document (to be published July 2024).

NB A combination of tracking actions and/or performance metrics will be used to show progress throughout the year against each Theme/Priority. This blended approach includes quarterly management updates on progress against stated actions, alongside the more data-driven updates against our key performance metrics. *Please note performance metrics are not in place to measure actions, which have their own reporting criteria; performance metrics and actions together cover a wider range of BCC Priorities.*

3. **City Outcomes** – Theme level; updated annually (or quarterly where available)

These are centred on the seven Corporate Strategy Themes and are primarily outcome-focused measures. They are longer term in nature and slower moving, mainly reporting annually (often in arrears) and look to assess the overall 'health of the city' as opposed to specific Council performance.

In 2024/25 we are no longer measuring City Outcomes against targets; this is to highlight that City Outcomes are not issues the Council can directly control (so targets are aspirational only). Instead, City Outcomes will be monitored against past results but will retain the inclusion of a narrative from the relevant senior officer to reflect the Council's contribution to each specific indicator.

B. **Corporate performance reporting**

1. **Business Plan thematic focus**

There is a strong focus on the seven Corporate Strategy Themes which flow into the Business Plan, with each Theme being led by a BCC Director. Each of these Thematic Leads will work with a Performance Advisor through quarterly Performance Clinics to review the overall theme performance, identify specific issues of note and address those which are impacting negatively on achieving our goals. The Theme Clinics are therefore one of the key mechanisms through which BCC scrutinises corporate performance and progresses performance improvement, alongside existing performance management structures. Clinics also provide a more general framework within which direction and accountability in meeting the aims of the Corporate Strategy are established.

2. **Corporate performance reporting process**

   a. **Data collection and narrative reporting**

   Every three months (quarterly) managers responsible for individual Business Plan actions and performance metrics provide data updates and narrative (where data is available). City Outcomes are reported quarterly or annually with narrative from the relevant lead.

   b. **Theme Clinic reports**

   Performance Advisors review the overall theme performance and work with the Director lead for each of the Corporate Strategy Themes to identify specific issues of note / concern each quarter.

   The Director lead, working with the relevant Performance Advisor, hosts a quarterly Performance Clinic at which progress against selected actions and data for that theme is reviewed. Directors and relevant managers sit down with advisors as 'critical friends' to consider key performance issues, positive developments and identify performance improvement opportunities. Where appropriate, plans can draw on resource from across BCC as the Clinics take a One Council approach.

   Each Thematic Clinic will produce a formal Theme Summary report to show key points including a summary by the respective Director lead. These are sent to CLB and published for Policy Committees.

   c. **Performance reporting pathway**

   In parallel with the Thematic Performance Clinics (above), initial reporting by BCC Division is via Divisional Management Team (DMT) meetings which focus on relevant actions and performance data for that Division. This is followed by reporting to Executive Director Meetings (EDMs) which focus on the measures relevant to that Directorate. These now happen independently of the Theme Clinics.

   Once DMTs, EDMs and Thematic Clinics have concluded, headline issues and points of note are brought together at Corporate Leadership Board (CLB) for an overview of corporate performance, with Theme Summary reports as an appendix to the performance report, to agree any recommendations.

   Once confirmed by Directors, reporting will move to the relevant Policy Committee Chairs Briefing. Policy Committees will get reports based on their individual remits (see section 4 below), and the Strategy & Resources Committee (SRC) will receive all 7 Themes (as do CLB) to provide member oversight of performance.

   d. **Corporate Performance Dashboard**

   Alongside the above reporting pathway, the corporate performance dashboard is the tool that contains all the required actions and performance data updates, pulling these in from the action tracker and SPAR.net performance management software to provide better visualisation.

   After the 3-week data collection period the performance dashboard is uploaded to the internal Power BI App and shared with Directors and Heads of Service. After the formal reports to DMTs, EDMs and CLB, the performance dashboard will then be shared with Chairs and vice-Chairs of Policy Committees, and a week later will be published for all BCC staff and shared with all Members.

   In addition to Theme & Division views, there will be a bespoke view for each Policy Committee. There will also be a separate public link to the performance dashboard created each quarter – this will have restricted views that focus on the Business Plan actions and performance metrics for that quarter in order to link to the Themes reported to Policy Committees (with a trend view also included).

   See Fig 1 for illustration of the Performance reporting process:

Corporate Performance Reporting Quarterly Cycle

Timeline after Quarter end (each Quarter is 3 months, e.g. 1 April - 30 June):

Week 1	Data collection & processing by data owners
Week 2	
Week 3	Data & commentary submission deadlines 🟧 🔺 Directors receive dashboard
Week 4	🟧 DMTs 🔺 Thematic agenda setting mtgs
Week 5	🔺 Thematic Clinics
Week 6	🟧 EDMs
Week 7	🔺 Finalise Theme reports 🟧 🔺 Write summary report for CLB & SRC
Week 8	🟧 🔺 CLB 🔺 🔵 Strategy & Resources Committee (SRC) Chair's briefing 🟧 🔺 🔵 Chairs & vice-Chairs sent full performance dashboard
Week 9 onwards	🟧 🔺 🔵 All Members receive full performance dashboard 🔺 🔵 SRC and all Policy Committee Chair briefings and Policy Committee meetings from now onwards 🔺 🔵 Abridged public version of dashboard published

Reporting focus of each stage - by:
🟧 Division   🔺 Theme   🔵 Policy Committee (Members)

Abbreviations used:
DMT = Divisional Management Team / EDM = Executive Director Meeting
CLB = Corporate Leadership Board / SRC = Strategy & Resources Committee

Fig 1: Performance reporting process timeline

3. Policy Committees

The new BCC Policy Committees will be a key relationship in this process. Due to the close alignment of the Policy Committees to the Corporate Strategy Themes and our strong performance focus on these, each Theme Summary report will be presented as the key performance report to the relevant Policy Committee, alongside the performance dashboard, with a public view for each Policy Committee.

In some cases, the Policy Committee remit does not align to a single Theme, so if needed two Theme reports will be submitted with a cover report to clarify (and/or a Theme report shared with two Committees). In all cases the performance dashboard will have a bespoke view matched to the remit for each Policy Committee.

Furthermore, all seven Theme reports will go to the Strategy & Resources Committee, SRC (as well as the specific Theme relevant to SRC) to provide Member oversight of corporate performance. There will be an initial briefing with the SRC Chair prior to the dissemination of the performance dashboard to other members.

4. **Divisional 'Business as Usual' performance**

In addition to the above, it should be noted that there is a broad range of business as usual performance management carried out across the Council's divisions and services that is not directly related to the Business Plan. This provides more operational and granular data for managers and Directors to manage Divisional activity, providing governance and quality assurance via Divisional Management Team (DMT) meetings.

A number of metrics around such activity are also contained within the internal Power BI performance dashboard, which will be made available to all Members (as noted above). This provides an overview of Divisional performance information to support more cohesive and joined-up insights into Divisional activity.

Day-to-day performance is managed by Directors and their Heads of Service, supported where possible by a Performance Advisor who will act as a business partner and critical friend, providing challenge, insight and assurance.

C. Suite of performance measures 2024/25

The proposed suite of Business Plan measures is drawn from existing metrics, new metrics or new actions designed to monitor progress against the Corporate Strategy Themes and Priorities.

Compilation of the measures was led by the BCC Insight, Performance and Intelligence (IPI) service based on the Corporate Strategy Themes and Priorities, as well as drawing from Service Plans and Director Summaries for the coming year. These have been reviewed and updated through discussions with Managers, Directors, former Cabinet leads and Scrutiny members.

Priority-level actions and performance metrics, plus City Outcomes, are listed under each Theme and Priority in the Business Plan 2024/25.

Targets

Business Plan performance metrics (set at Priority level) are BCC performance measures and are monitored against performance targets. These are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-specific) and based on agreed principles of target setting such as: improvement on previous results, political ambition, cost impacts, benchmarked against other areas, national instruction.

Note – Business Plan actions and City Outcomes are not monitored against numerical targets.

2024/25 targets are informed by the 2023/24 year-end results and are agreed by Directors and CLB, and in future will be ratified by the Leader & Policy Committee Chairs' Briefing and Strategy & Resources Committee. Targets for 2024/25 will be published in July 2024 on our Performance page.