

Report to Cabinet

Report Title	Q3 Corporate Performance Report, 2024/25				
Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 19 March 2025				
Report Author	Sarah Brown, Head of Strategy, Policy & Performance				
Corporate Director	Alex Powell, Assistant Chief Executive				
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Lynn Worrall, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Change and Improvement				
Why is this a key decision?	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>1. Expenditure over £500K</td> <td>no</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Significant impact on 2 or more wards</td> <td>yes</td> </tr> </table>	1. Expenditure over £500K	no	2. Significant impact on 2 or more wards	yes
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2. Significant impact on 2 or more wards	yes				
Wards Affected	(All Wards);				
Identify exempt information and exemption category	Choose an item.				

Is report Urgent?	No
Appendices (if any)	1. Quarter 3, Corporate Plan Performance Management and Assurance Report

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Cabinet is presented with the second Corporate Performance Report which monitors the council's performance against the new Corporate Plan. This report contributes to rebuilding trust with our residents; it demonstrates our commitment to being transparent about our performance and accountable for delivering good value services. The report provides an opportunity to scrutinise and assess the council's performance, the allocation of resource, the accuracy of data and whether the targets and tolerances are right. Work will continue to refine the report, and the data captured. Importantly, the report stimulates opportunities to discuss and assess the council's direction of travel towards achieving its strategic objectives.
- 1.2 Appendix 1 presents quarter three activity (April to December 2024), and includes:

- 1.2.1 Performance against milestone activity, with commentary about progress. The updates in this quarter acknowledge the change in focus being presented by the devolution and local governance reorganisation agenda and how the council is considering the most appropriate course of action.
- 1.2.2 Performance against a suite of metrics which are aligned to the priorities in the Corporate Plan, with performance indicated against a target, tolerance, direction of travel or benchmark. Additional commentary is provided where a metric is not within tolerance. This quarter demonstrates the work services have undertaken to improve the reporting of data, with additional targets/tolerance information. Ongoing considerations about the appropriateness of further stretching targets will inform the development of the 2025/26 metrics.
- 1.3 This quarter sees the Corporate Performance Report presented to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee alongside the Improvement and Recovery Plan report. Together these reports provide a more rounded view of the overall direction and performance of the council.

2. Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, the Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the quarterly performance update report and progress made up to the end of the third quarter of 2024/25 in delivering the Year 1 priority milestones and metrics of the Corporate Plan.
- 2.2 Consider recommending any areas of concern within the remits of the Corporate, Place and People Overview and Scrutiny Committees to the chairs of those respective committees.

3. Commissioner's Comments

- 3.1 The Corporate plan performance management and assurance report provides a clear and transparent overview of performance. This represents a good step forward for Thurrock's improvement journey, both enabling appropriate scrutiny and oversight, and ensuring focus on key areas to ensure the strategic plan is delivered against. We are pleased to see the work to further improve the robustness of the data being reported. It is important that there is ongoing work to understand how the council is performing against comparator benchmarks. Commissioners wish to see clear plans to address those indicators falling into red, so that action can be targeted, and progress monitored.

4. Proposals – the rationale and evidence for the recommendations

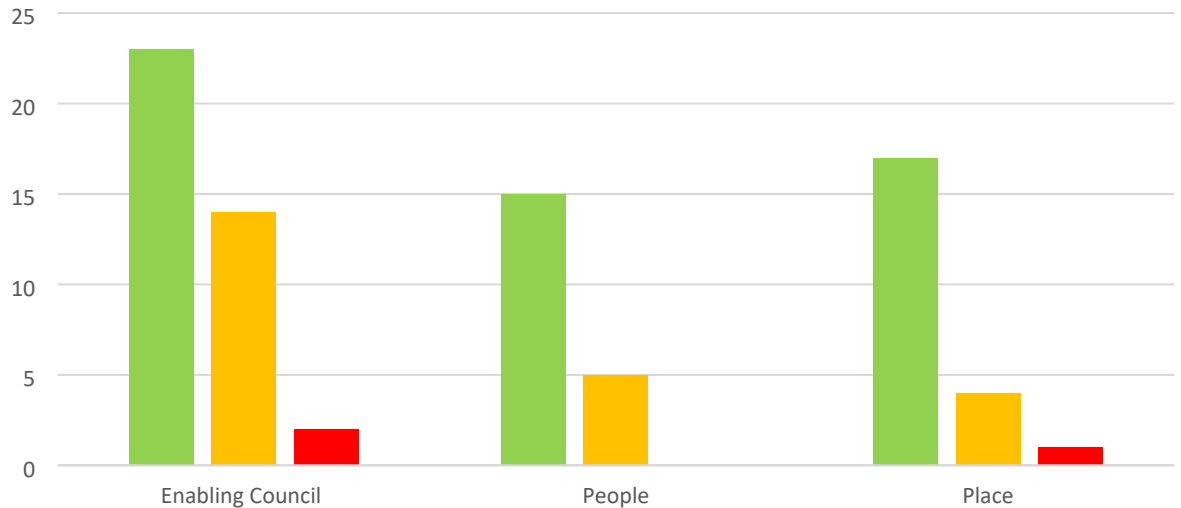
- 4.1 Full Council unanimously ratified a new Corporate Plan in July 2024 which articulates the council's priorities, how they will be delivered and what this will mean for our residents, businesses and communities.
- 4.2 In November 2024, Cabinet adopted the new Performance Management and Assurance Framework. The Corporate Performance report has been developed in line with the framework's principles, and reports performance against the Corporate Plan priorities of 'Enabling Council', 'People' and 'Place'. It is a crucial step in rebuilding trust with residents through a

transparent approach and instilling increased accountability for the actions the council takes.

- 4.3 As a result, the quarterly performance report (Appendix 1) provides:
- commentary against tangible milestones that the council has committed to deliver for Year 1 (up to end of March 2025), and
 - data which helps to assess performance against a list of metrics which monitor progress of the Corporate Plan's priorities.
- 4.4 Together, these milestones and metrics provide the primary monitoring and reporting mechanism to show progress against the council's new corporate priorities, objectives and intended outcomes.
- 4.5 To support members and residents to better understand and scrutinise the council's performance metrics, a definitions section has been added to the end of Appendix 1.
- 4.6 The timings of the municipal calendar have not allowed this quarter's report to follow the pre-Cabinet scrutiny process. Cabinet is therefore asked to consider any points that they may wish scrutiny to focus upon.

Summary of Corporate Plan Year 1 Milestones up to 31 December 2024

- 4.7 The below chart summarises the position overall in respect of milestone progress.
- 4.8 The updates in this quarter acknowledge the change in focus being presented by the devolution and local governance reorganisation agenda and how the council is considering the most appropriate course of action. As a result, some activity described in the milestones may need to refocus. The narrative has been updated to recognise this.
- 4.9 Since the last quarter, other delays in activity are due to factors including the impact of staffing and available capacity, and the requirement to consider additional information within the project.



4.10

4.11 Overall, 68% of the Corporate Plan Key Milestones are on track (GREEN), 28% are within an acceptable tolerance (AMBER) of the plan. 4% of the Corporate Plan's key milestones are currently off track (RED). Commentary is provided for all milestones in Appendix 1.

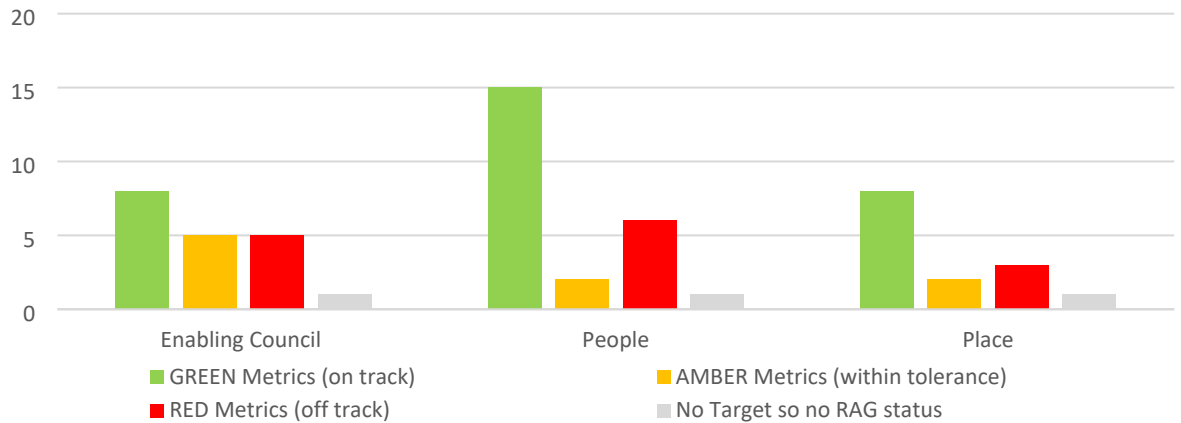
Summary of Corporate Plan Year 1 Metrics up to 31 December 2024

4.12 Since quarter two services have been working to improve the data reported. As a result, 17 additional metrics now have a target or tolerance. These additions help to provide the context required to assess performance.

4.13 Two metrics remain with no target or tolerance. One metric is new this year and does not have a target as it requires a sustained period of reporting before determining a baseline. The other is reviewing the most appropriate target and will be available for Q4. In cases where activity is demand led, a tolerance, direction of travel, or a benchmark helps to provide context about the council's ability to deliver.

4.14 Following discussions about the appropriateness and stretch of targets and tolerance, a number of metrics are being reviewed. The outcome of which will inform the development of metrics for the new financial year.

4.15 A review into the metric target concerning recycling rates has been explained in more detail via a briefing paper to Overview & Scrutiny and it available on February agenda.



4.16

4.1 Overall, 57% metric are on target (GREEN), 9% being within tolerance (AMBER) while 26% being currently off target (RED).

4.2 With respect to all indicators which are off target, the service area has detailed the actions which are being taken to address areas where performance is “RED” in Appendix 1.

4.3 Where a direction of travel is recorded in Appendix 1, this notes the trend in performance compared to the last year’s outturn.

4.4 Further information about each of the metrics is provided in a definitions table at the end of the Appendix 1. This table provides more explanation about the activity being monitored and if a benchmark is used, including where the source of comparison data is derived from.

How this report continues to be improved

4.5 In line with original plans and the emphasis placed by both Cabinet and the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee, services are reviewing targets and assessing whether they are sufficiently challenging. This work is ongoing. It is already evident how the data being reported is generating opportunities to challenge the accuracy of the council’s data as well performance. Services will continue to work to ensure each appropriate metric has a target or tolerance and that they are appropriately stretching performance. The learning is being captured and will inform the development of metrics for 2025/26.

4.6 In February the Insight and Performance Board was established. The Board provides a regular opportunity to challenge assumptions about targets set ensuring they suitably stretch performance, reflecting contextual factors and utilising all improvement opportunities available. These conversations will feed into the review and development of metrics for 2025/26.

4.7 To support residents and Members to better assess the impact the council is making, reporting of Corporate Performance has been aligned with the Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) report. The IRP has shifted from

reporting on the activity carried out to assessing the impact the improvement plan is having. To bring this same principle to Corporate Performance, an Annual Report will be produced alongside the outturn report, this will provide an opportunity for more narrative about how the council's activity has made an impact.

5. Alternative options considered

- 5.1 The council has considered different approaches for reporting performance. A review of good practice across local government has been undertaken and key elements adopted.
- 5.2 The publication of this report contributes to the council's ambitions to be open and honest about its progress.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The milestones and metrics which make up Year 1 Corporate Plan Performance Management and Assurance Framework (PMAF) as reported in Appendix 1 were developed in discussions with service leads, SLT and Cabinet Members.
- 6.2 The report follows the principles in the PMAF Core Policy and is based on the conversations and agreement with Commissioners and the Improvement and Recovery Board during 2023, subsequent engagement with Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2024 and approval by Cabinet in November 2024.
- 6.3 This quarter three report will be presented to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further independent evaluation and consideration in March 2025. Comments and feedback from Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny will be reviewed and addressed by the officer Insight and Performance Board to ensure that learning opportunities are continually improved upon.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 The Corporate Plan emphasises our commitment to “deliver good value for the public purse”, “realise the financial, service and efficiency savings and improvements” and to “Manage Thurrock Council’s resources to ensure maximum value to the public and deliver efficiency and accountability”.
- 7.2 The PMAF Core Policy not only enables officers and members to identify emerging financial risk, pressures and opportunities, but articulates how financial management is integral and aligned to other related performance management disciplines. Whilst resources are not the sole factor in delivering objectives, there is a clear relationship between where resources are allocated, how they are used, and the delivery of outcomes and performance targets.

- 7.3 The Year 1 Corporate Plan PMAF includes individual milestones and metrics which monitors progress related to the Corporate Plan financial priorities.
- 7.4 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report, however some of the milestones and/or performance recovery related to metrics within the attached appendix, may arise to financial implications in the drive to ensure delivery. Any costs associated with delivery of the PMAF will be determined separately by the individual service responsible for the delivery of assigned milestones and metrics as part of their action planning and built into monthly financial budget monitoring and reporting.

Implications verified by: Sima Khuroya, Assistant Director Financial Management & Procurement

Date: 3rd February 2025

8. Risk Implications

- 8.1 The RED, AMBER and GREEN ratings for individual milestones and metrics alongside Direction of Travel (DOT) for metrics is an indicator of the risk to individual areas of service delivery. Services review this information closely to monitor any changes in trends to ensure the appropriate mitigating action is taken at the earliest opportunity.
- 8.2 The overall RAG status of milestones and metrics stated in Section 4 illustrates the risk of overall non-delivery of Year 1 Corporate Plan deliverables.

Implications Verified by:

Kelly McMillan

Date: 13th February 2025

9. Legal and Governance Implications

- 9.1 Whilst there is no statutory duty for a council to produce a corporate plan, or to have metrics and measures measuring against the corporate plan, it is crucial to the council in establishing its priorities and is good governance to implement the plan and measure performance against it. It also assists the council in demonstrating adherence with best practice and guidance and in meeting other wider statutory duties as set out below.
- 9.2 The CIPFA / Solace Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 guidance underlines that councils should set out their purpose and intended outcomes. The council can then measure itself against the outcomes to ensure that its resources are being managed in accordance with its priorities for its residents.
- 9.3 Additionally, the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 oblige the council to produce an Annual Governance Statement for each accounting

year evidencing how the council has performed: the PMAF is therefore an important part of the overall governance framework of the council.

- 9.4 Councils are also under a general best value duty (Local Government Act 1999 s.3 (1)) to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”. Measuring objectives quarterly as demonstrated in this report will assist in demonstrating continuous improvement and also allow for any areas in which performance is falling below markers to be identified and addressed.

Implications Verified by Helen Nicol, Assistant Director Legal and Governance
Date 11 February 2025

10. Equality and Diversity Implications (including the public sector equality duty)

- 10.1 The Corporate Plan emphasises our commitment to diversity and equality objectives and services and as such this report includes individual milestones and metrics which will be used to monitor progress in this area.
- 10.2 There are no specific equality and/or diversity implications arising from the recommendations in this report, however some of the milestones and/or performance recovery related to metrics within Appendix 1 may have equality and/or diversity implications. Where this is the case, these will be determined separately by the individual service responsible for the delivery as part of their action planning.

Implications Verified by: Rebecca Lee Date: 5th February 2025

11. Other Relevant Implications

- 11.1 The Corporate Plan Year 1 Performance Management and Assurance Framework incorporates milestones and metrics in Appendix 1 which affect a wide variety of issues, including workforce, HR, ICT and procurement activities. Where this is the case, these implications will be determined separately by the individual service responsible for the delivery as part of their action planning.

12. Background Documents

- *n/a*