



Overview and Scrutiny Commission

3 February 2025

Report Title	Quarter 2 Performance Report 2024-25
Cabinet Portfolio	Corporate Services
Cabinet Member	Councillor Martin Bond
Exempt Report	No
Reason for Exemption	N/A
Key Decision	No
Public Notice issued	N/A
Wards Affected	All
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Borough Priorities	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life.	
	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities.	
	Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all.	
	Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy.	
	Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture.	
	Be a responsible Council.	X

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Quarter 2 Performance Report 2024-25 (Appendix 1) provides an analysis of progress and performance over the period April to the end of September 2024 against the Council's priority 6 "Be a responsible Council".
- 1.2 The report reflects the new performance framework and targets aligned to the priorities and outcomes of the Borough Strategy as agreed by Cabinet on 22 May 2024. This framework provides the basis for quarterly performance reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny over the course of 2024-25.
- 1.3 The Council acknowledges that effective performance management arrangements are critical to supporting decision making and work continues to ensure the development of the performance framework and performance management processes across the Council.

2. Recommendation for Decision

Commission is recommended to:

- i) Note the performance position at Quarter 2 2024-25;**
- ii) Note the actions planned by the Corporate Directorate to address specific areas for performance improvement in relation to Priority 6; and**
- iii) Consider whether there are any potential items for further scrutiny as part of the Committee's work programme based on performance information received.**

3. Purpose of this report

- 3.1 The Council remains committed to the regular monitoring and reporting of performance information to ensure the delivery of efficient, effective and value for money services that meet the needs and expectations of the customers and communities it serves. The purpose of the report is to present a summary of progress against the priorities and outcomes of the Borough Strategy 2021-2030 through an overview of performance in relation to key indicators.
- 3.2 The format of the report is split into 2 distinct parts:
 - Part 1 of the report is a statistical analysis of the performance position at Quarter 2 2024-25.
 - Part 2 of the report is a commentary on performance against delivery of the 6 Borough Strategy priorities and their respective outcomes, summarising performance and action being taken to improve performance where required. Scorecards for each priority outcome area are included to provide further information on individual performance measures, split between indicators achieving targets and indicators not achieving targets.

4. Background / Reason for the recommendations

4.1 The Quarter 2 Performance Report 2024-25 reflects performance over the period April 2024 to the end of September 2024. The indicators reported are split between Tier 1 and Tier 2:

- **Tier 1:** Key strategic performance measures linked to the outcomes of the Borough Strategy, subject to target setting and reporting to Cabinet.
- **Tier 2:** A set of further performance measures necessary for the effective monitoring of performance at Directorate / Portfolio level, both outcome and output measures also linked to the Borough Strategy and subject to target setting / reporting to Cabinet.

4.2 The annual targets were set, where possible, within the context of national, North West, and local authority comparator group data. Targets aspire to be challenging to reflect the ambition for our borough. The targets also took account of performance during 2023-24 and issues including the cost-of-living crisis, rising service demand and a challenging financial position for local government.

4.3 There are 94 performance indicators, where Quarter 2 performance against target is available to be reported. Of these:

- **73%** of indicator targets have been either exceeded, met fully, or met within 95% of target. This compares to 74% of indicators at Quarter 2 2023-24.
- **27%** of indicator targets were not met. This compares to 26% of indicators at Quarter 2 2023-24.
- The trend measure indicates over the course of the last 12 months **59%** of indicators showed improvement, **4%** of indicators maintained the same performance and **37%** of indicators showed a downward trajectory. The position in Quarter 2 2023-24 was that **47%** of indicators showed improvement, **15%** of indicators maintained the same performance and **38%** of indicators showed a downward trajectory.
- **16%** of all indicators where comparison is possible are in the top quartile, compared to 18% at Quarter 2 2023-24, whilst **35%** are in the bottom quartile, compared to 29% at Quarter 2 2023-24. 16% and 33% of indicators are in the 2nd and 3rd quartile respectively, compared to 23% and 29% in Quarter 2 2023-24 (NB percentages rounded to nearest whole number in 2023-24).

4.4 The report at Appendix 1 takes the format of an executive summary of performance, followed by a more detailed breakdown for each priority and their respective outcomes. Scorecards have been included to highlight performance against each outcome area, along with a summary of actions that are being taken to improve performance.

4.5 Performance should be viewed within the context of what has continued to be a challenging operational period for the Council. The impact of the cost-of-living crisis, rising demand for services and the requirement to deliver significant budget savings has impacted on the Council's ability to meet targets and

demonstrate improvements in performance trends. Equally in many areas the impact of these challenges on performance is yet to be fully realised and understood. However, given the effect on St Helens to date there is the strong likelihood that existing inequalities may be widened. This presents risks for future performance, but particularly in areas such as public health, education and schools and children's services where comparative performance is already challenging.

- 4.6 In summary, at Quarter 2 2024-25 there are a number of outcome areas which demonstrate strong and / or improving performance. Equally there are areas where performance against outcomes is either some distance from target or an outlier in terms of St Helens' performance relative to the England average or our statistical neighbours.
- 4.7 Improvement action to address underperformance is set out within the scorecards under the respective outcomes' sections of the report. For each priority. Areas of both improvement and challenge include:

Priority 6

The communication and engagement outcome:

The timeliness of the council's response to complaints remains strong. The number of upheld Ombudsman complaints has however increased and the timeliness of FOI responses a challenge given the volume received.

The staff and member development outcome

Performance within the outcome remains generally on track. However, the percentage of staff completing mandatory core E-learning training is performing marginally below target and with the closure of St Helens Chamber and another training provider, the number of apprenticeships that commenced in the year to date is currently below target.

The innovative ways of working outcome

All 3 customer related indicators exceeded the targets in Quarter 2. The percentage of transformation programmes with delivery confidence stated as 'on track' performed marginally below target at the end of Quarter 2.

The value for money and financial resilience outcome

Both the council tax and non-domestic rate collection indicators performed marginally below target in Quarter 2. The Council continues to face severe financial pressures as a result of increased service demand (particularly within children's and adult social care) and delays in the delivery of some of the approved budget savings which have resulted in a predicted net budget overspend of £5.5m forecast for the current year.

5 Consideration of Alternatives

- 5.1 None.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 The Quarter 2 Performance Report 2024-25 at Appendix 1 provides an assessment of the Council's performance over the period April to September 2024.
- 6.2 The continued impact of the cost-of-living crisis, rising service demand and a challenging financial position for local government. continue to pose significant challenges for the Council and St Helens Borough.
- 6.3 Robust and appropriate performance management arrangements continue to be critical to support effective decision making and enable the delivery of the Council's desired outcomes across the borough and its communities.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 Performance data and effective performance management contribute to the Council's governance position.

8 Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications of the report. However, the council's performance management framework and processes are critical to ensuring the organisation provides value for money.

9 Equality Impact Assessment

- 9.1 None.

10 Social Value

- 10.1 There are no specific implications noted.

11 Net Zero and Environment

- 11.1 Indicators within the performance framework include measures relating to net zero and the environment.

12 Health and Wellbeing

- 12.1 Indicators within the performance framework include measures relating to health and wellbeing.

13 Customer and Resident

- 13.1 Indicators within the performance framework include measures relating to customers and residents' perceptions.

14 Asset and Property

- 14.1 There are no specific implications noted.

15 Staffing and People Management

15.1 There are no specific implications noted.

16 Risks

16.1 There is a risk that performance may decline in some areas. Where this occurs action will be taken to seek to address the address performance issues and these will be outlined in action plans, with the impact of these being reported to both Cabinet and to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

17 Policy Framework Implications

17.1 The recommendations within this report are in line with existing council policies. The performance framework links to the priorities and outcomes of the Our Borough Strategy and other key council strategies.

18 Impact and Opportunities on Localities

18.1 There are no specific implications noted.

19 Background Documents

19.1 None.

20 Appendices

20.1 Appendix 1 – Corporate Services Quarter 2 Performance Report 2024-25