
**Wirral Working
Together
2023-2027**

**Council Plan
Performance
Management
Framework**

Version 1: January 2024

DRAFT

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1.0 Introduction

The Council Plan 2023-27 translates our vision “*Working together to promote fairness and opportunity for people and communities*” into deliverable organisational actions, providing clarity on what will be delivered and when.

The plan makes a commitment to work together to deliver significant measurable progress in improving the lives of the people of Wirral. To achieve this, we must ensure we have the right approach in place to check our progress regularly and act when we are not doing well.

This performance management framework is designed to provide a robust, consistent, and integrated approach to supporting and monitoring the successful delivery of the plan and its underpinning deliverables. The framework has been developed based on the following principles:

Outcome Driven

Outcomes are clear, tangible improvements in conditions of well-being for residents that can be measured so that by monitoring progress over time we can show the real difference delivering our plans is making.

Strong Leadership

Collectively, Wirral Council Members and officers champion the importance of performance management and actively encourage all staff in working to improve performance and deliver improved outcomes.

Accountability

We are accountable to Wirral residents, and we will regularly report on our progress towards the delivery of the Council Plan to allow our performance to be effectively scrutinised and decision-makers held to account.

Personal Responsibility

The responsibility for performance is embedded into the day job of all Council staff. Everyone understands the identified priorities and related outcomes and is empowered to take personal responsibility in helping the Council meet them. Good performance is the result of high performing organisations, teams, and individuals.

Transparency

Published performance reporting accurately reflects the true picture. Reports highlight under performance, identify areas for improvement as well as success. They are designed to be user friendly to improve understanding of performance by all stakeholders.

Timeliness

Performance information is available at the right time to support decision making and ensure that council services are responsive to the changing needs of the community.

The aim of this document is to communicate how performance management will operate in Wirral and to ensure there is comprehensive understanding of how everyone can contribute to enhancing the delivery of the Council Plan 2023-27.

2.0 Understanding Performance Management

Effective organisations strategically plan what they will do based on the outcomes they want to achieve and the budget available. The plans set out clearly what will be done, and we performance manage them by checking our progress regularly and act where we are not doing as well. Throughout the process we ensure that we communicate with all stakeholders to develop a shared understanding. Simply put performance management is:

“A process and set of behaviours to support the Council in delivering outcomes that improve the lives of Wirral residents”.

This framework is based on the classic ‘Plan-Do-Review-Revise’ cycle. This continuous cycle of activities takes place at all levels (partnership, programmes, teams, and individuals) and mirrors and supports the commissioning cycle. The cycle is constructed around four key concepts with effective communication embedded within all steps ensuring a clear line of sight between the role of the individual and the purpose and strategy.

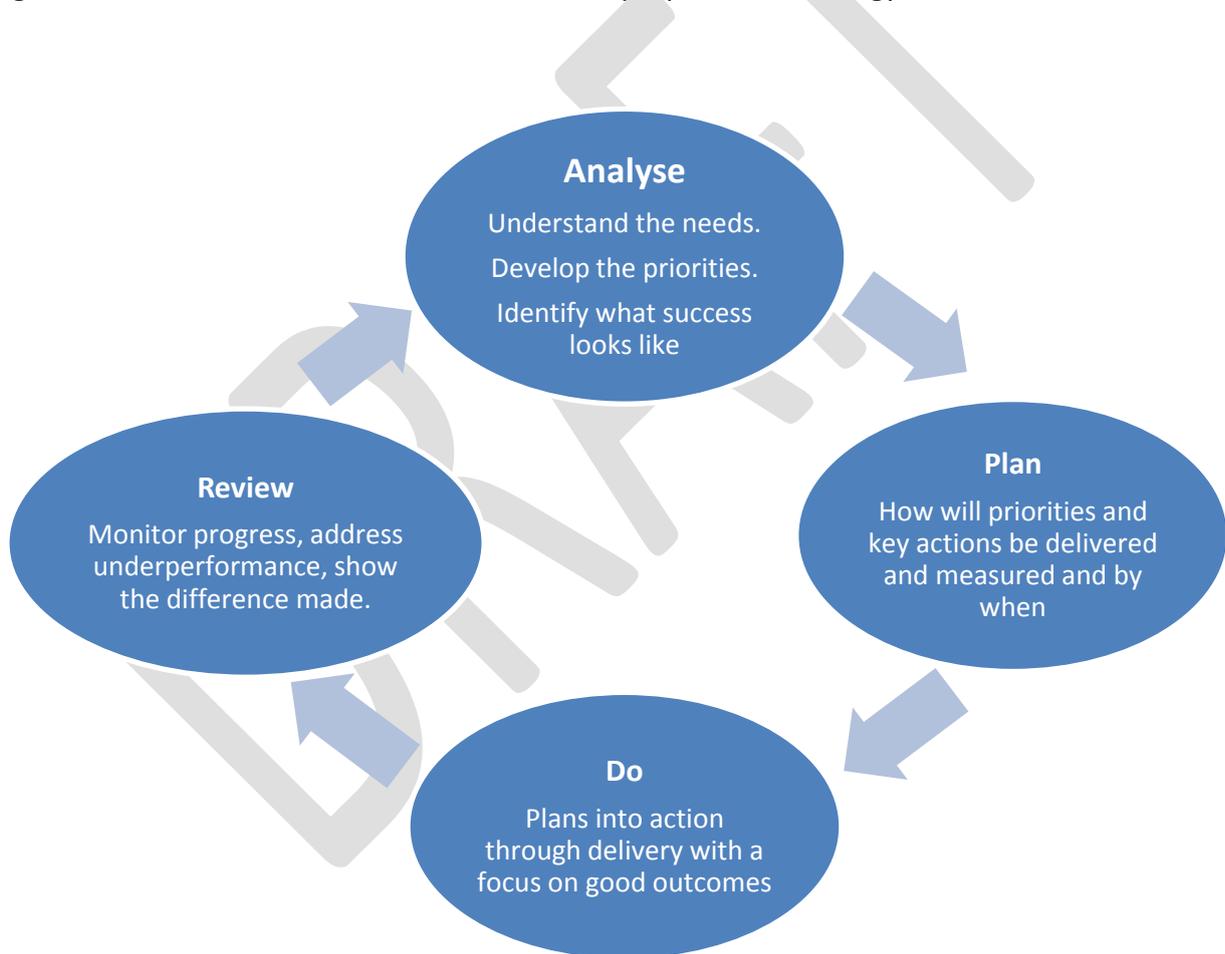


Figure 1: The Plan-Do-Review Cycle

Stage 1 – Analyse

Effective planning utilises available insight and understands the needs of local people and communities to enable evidence-based decision-making concerning priorities and best value resource allocation. Other key information to be considered includes reviews of good practice in other areas, audit and inspections and peer reviews.

Stage 2 – Planning

The starting point of the planning process is to clearly articulate the outcomes for residents that the plan will enable. Underpinning the Council Plan are strategies with action plans, programme and project plans and team and individual plans. The plans have clarity of actions needed and plans at all levels will feed upwards back to the Council Plan; a 'Golden Thread'.

Stage 2 – Doing

We put the plans into action with a clear focus on the priorities. The delivery of defined activities, managing risk, and supporting and coaching staff to achieve better performance.

Stage 3 – Reviewing

Performance reporting and review will drive a systematic assessment of delivery and opportunity to challenge performance at all levels. If improvement is not being made the review stage provides the opportunity to put in place new activities in areas of underperformance. The review stage drives the continuous development of an organisational culture of performance and improvement.

3.0 The Performance Framework

The Council performance framework will provide a clear approach to monitoring oversight of the delivery of the Council Plan and underpinning deliverables. These are summarised in this section.

3.1 The Council Plan

The Council Plan is built around 6 themes which align with the Council's governance and committee system. Each theme will be reported to the appropriate committee:

1. Early help for children and families – aligns with Children's, Family & Education Committee.
2. Promoting independence and healthier lives – aligns with Adult Care and Public Health Committee.
3. People-focussed regeneration – aligns with Economy, Regeneration & Housing Committee
4. Protecting our environment – aligns with Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport Committee.
5. Safe and resilient communities – aligns with Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee.
6. An efficient and effective Council – aligns with Policy & Resources Committee.

3.2 Key Council Strategies

The key set of strategies underpin the delivery of the Council Plan will also be reported to appropriate Policy Committees. Directors with oversight of the strategies take ownership of their reporting to committee, with reporting timing dependent on committee requirements.

3.3 Existing Committee Performance Reporting

Policy committee members have worked with officers to outline key performance measures for oversight by their committee to ensure performance in key areas is effectively scrutinised. Performance reporting for committees is in place for these requested sets of measures. There is opportunity to align this reporting with the Council plan reporting to ensure streamlined, concise, and proportionate reporting.

Each Policy Committee also has a dedicated work programme which enables committees to identify areas that would benefit from a deep-dive review of performance for inclusion.

3.4 Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is a key document in the Council's financial planning cycle. It sets the strategic financial approach that the Council will adopt in supporting delivery of the Council Plan and the matrix of other strategies and plans that support its delivery. To deliver the Council Plan, the Council will need to operate within the Council's budget framework and the forecast financial affordability envelope.

Policy and Resources Committee will be responsible for ensuring that the entire budget will be in balance, including providing mitigating actions to bring the budget back in line from any adverse variance position that may be forecast. This may take the form of providing direction to other Service Committees. Policy and Resources Committee are responsible for advising Full Council on organisation-wide financial activity. To enable the Committees to manage and monitor budgets effectively in-year, a suite of detailed information will be provided on a quarterly basis.

3.5 Directorate Plans

Each Directorate has a Directorate Plan which outlines in detail key areas of work which underpin the delivery of the Council Plan. These are updated annually and regularly monitored by Directorate Management Teams with quarterly reporting on delivery performance.

3.6 Governance and Assurance

To ensure effective governance and assurance, there are a number of levels to Council Plan delivery with oversight being carried out as part of the performance management process.

Plan	Oversight
Council Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report to Policy and Resources Committee • Theme reports to Policy Committees (quarterly) • Oversight by Strategic Leadership Team
Medium Term Financial Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to Policy and Resources Committee (quarterly) • Reports to Policy and Service Committees (quarterly)
Supporting Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to Policy Committees (as determined by committees as part of work programme)
Directorate Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular monitoring at Directorate Management Teams and Strategic Leadership Team
Operational Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular monitoring at Directorate Management Teams and Strategic Leadership Team

Table 1. The Council Plan and its underpinning deliverables oversight summary

4.0 Performance Reporting

To ensure effective oversight of the Council Plan, performance reporting has been designed based on a set of key principles:

- Reporting aligned to council priorities and services.
- Clear accountability.
- Action on underperformance and driving improvement.
- Visible, accessible, and streamlined reporting.

The reporting provides a visual interactive web-based performance dashboard designed to provide a more accessible approach, and more effective analysis of performance including trends and where available benchmarks over time. The dashboard visuals can be copied into a static appendix used in committee reporting as required.

For the Council Plan the performance management framework provides the ability to measure progress against the plan over the next four years, for each theme, reporting will focus on:

- A set of outcomes which articulate the benefits the Council is seeking to achieve.
- A series of deliverables i.e., what the Council is planning to do to meet those outcomes.
- A set of outcome indicators and performance measures that will be used to monitor progress.

Outcome Indicators

Outcome indicators are measurable statistics that quantify the achievement of results and indicate if a change has happened. For example, Life Expectancy at Birth provides a measure over time of the average age at population level in years and months. Outcome indicators are usually measures at whole population level for measuring long term changes to quantify the achievement towards a stated outcome i.e. people live longer.

Performance Measures

Performance measures evaluate how well a programme, service or provider is performing (as opposed to the impact on whole populations). They concentrate on:

- How much did we do? (e.g. amount provided).
- How well did we do it? (e.g. % timely service).
- Is anyone better off? (e.g. % showing improvement).

Delivery of the plan at a population level focuses on the use of outcomes and indicators. Performance measures relate to outputs rather than impact on populations. They are often easily understood measures and are mainly used for evaluating service or provider level activity including some types of commissioned activity. There will also be occasions when they usefully provide context to illustrate outcome achievement particularly in complex areas where a 'basket' of measures will provide a more complete picture of performance.

5.0 Continuous Development of a Performance Culture

The Council Plan articulates a four year aim to bring about real change and deliver improved outcomes for residents. Through the application of this framework, we will be able to evidence that this is being achieved.

The Council Plan is a live document with underpinning annually reviewed action planning to ensure that stakeholders, residents, and new insight can continue to influence future activity. The performance arrangements will be regularly reviewed and any required changes made on an annual basis.

Successfully embedding the approach outlined in this framework will lead to development of a high-performance culture and continuous improvement with these characteristics:

- Strong corporate governance by Members supported by officers determining effective use of resources through strategic planning.
- Decision making underpinned by a strong evidence base.
- Robust business planning – a ‘Golden Thread’ of strategic planning flowing from the Council Plan to all lower programme, team, and individual objectives.
- Clarity of ownership of identified actions and personal responsibility attached to delivery.
- A performance improvement culture inspired by strong leadership, led by Members.
- Early warning and rectification of risks to delivery and poor performance.
- The evaluation of under-performance to enable improvement and shared learning.
- Actively seeking best practice to review and further develop current arrangements.
- Good management practice including effective communication and regular organisational staff check-ins and communication.
- Targeted training and development to build appropriate organisational and individual skills and abilities.
- The celebration and communication of success.
- Effective community engagement to drive positive developments.

To ensure the Performance Management Framework remains relevant, proportionate and delivers the insight required for effective oversight an annual review process will be completed.

6.0 Managing Performance, Roles, and Responsibilities

6.1 Across the Organisation

Elected Members

- Committees Receive Council Plan monitoring reports.
- Elected Members proactively and constructively monitor and challenge performance.
- Elected Members monitor the delivery of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Strategic Leadership Team

- Deliver the Council Plan and the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy
- Model the behaviours required for effective performance management.
- Adopt one shared approach to performance challenge, delivery, and improvement.
- Ensure all plans are set at the right level of ambition, are fit for purpose and consistent with the priorities and vision of the Council Plan.
- Accountable for the delivery and monitoring of their Strategies and Directorate Business Plans.
- Brief Councillors on key performance issues and plans.
- Verify and sign off performance reports relating to their projects.

Service Managers

- Model the behaviours required for effective performance management.
- Responsible for the production and delivery of plans and strategies.
- Ensure that any underpinning plans at team and service level are fit for purpose and contribute towards the delivery of the Council Plan and associated strategies.
- Contribute to the development of outcome measures and indicators.
- Manage individual and team performance through effective leadership and coaching and take appropriate action in the event of poor performance.
- Provide progress reports back to senior managers to ensure the management of service performance through this strategy.

Individual Employees

- Have a good understanding of the Council Plan and take responsibility for how they can optimise their contribution to its delivery.
- Through direct contact with service users, they have first-hand experience of what is working and what isn't and routinely feed this back for incorporation.
- Ensure knowledge of local communities within Wirral is effectively utilised.
- Deliver individual objectives.

6.2 Corporate Accountability

Corporate Office

- Oversee the development of the Council Plan.
- Ensure effective communication.
- Ensure the right structures and activity are in place to enable plan delivery.

Wirral Intelligence Service

- Coordinate and manage performance related reporting.
- Develop, maintain, and communicate performance related guidance.
- Provide leadership in the development and utilisation of intelligence resources and expertise to support evidence-based decision making.
- Facilitate the development of an integrated approach to performance management in-conjunction with colleagues including finance, risk management and HR.

Finance

- Develop and oversee delivery of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Council Internal Audit

- Audit the Council's performance management arrangements to drive continuous improvement.

Council Risk Management

- Ensures that the risk management strategy links and contributes to the development and on-going delivery of the Council Plan and performance management framework.
- Ensures full oversight of the Council's risk approach at all levels with appropriate training.
- Links with partner organisations to collate Wirral risks linked to the Council Plan.

Human Resources

- Develop and oversee the roll out of Council staff check-ins with a focus on performance.
- Oversee the delivery of the People Strategy and Member Learning and Development Strategy to develop appropriate skills to enable effective plan delivery.

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