

To: City Executive Board

Date: 7 December 2011

Report of: Head of Business Improvement

Title of Report: Performance Improvement Framework 2011 - 2015

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To seek approval from the City Executive Board to agree the Council's Performance Improvement Framework 2011 to 2015.

Key decision: No

Executive lead member: Councillor Ed Turner

Policy Framework: Oxford City Council Corporate Plan; An efficient and effective Council

Recommendation(s):

- 1) That the City Executive Board approves the Performance Improvement Framework 2011 - 2015.

Appendix 1: Performance Improvement Framework (draft)

1. Background

- 1.1 Effective performance management is vital to delivery of the Council's priorities and vision and it is therefore essential that the Council's approach to performance management is robust, embedded and understood across the organisation. Until now the Council has not had a single document that encapsulates and communicates its approach to performance management.
- 1.2 Over the last three years the Council has achieved major savings as a result of reviewing and market testing some of its core services and undertaking restructuring to streamline the way in which they are delivered. Notable achievements include improvements to leisure services, refuse and recycling and the changes to our ICT infrastructure

delivery. We have come a long way in delivering our agreed performance targets. In 2008 the Council achieved 49% of its performance targets. At the end of 2010/11 this had increased to 84%, with 64% of the targets having been exceeded. With the abolition of the Audit Commission, Comprehensive Area Assessments and the national performance indicator framework there is a risk that the Council could lose this momentum of improvement due to the lack of a national framework to work within.

- 1.3 Despite successes to date there are further improvements we need to make. Our benchmarking activity has thus far been carried out on an ad hoc basis by individual services and not been captured in a co-ordinated or transparent way across all services to inform the organisation corporately. By developing a more structured and holistic approach to managing, recording performance and benchmarking data, both qualitative and quantitative, the Council will be better able to manage its resources, focus its improvement activity across all its services and develop an understanding of performance across sectors.

2. Structure of the Framework

- 2.1 Improving service delivery to our customers and demonstrating VFM in the design and delivery of our services is our guiding principle in improving service performance in the Council. To achieve this the Framework has the following aims:

- To provide a coherent methodology within which to manage delivery of the Council's vision and aspiration; and
- To enable a strategic focus on outcomes and the management of risk

- 2.2 The benefits of adopting a Performance Improvement Framework are that we can:

- Focus on delivery of our priorities – understanding what we plan to do, the benefits of doing it, and manage the resources required to deliver.
- Assess whether we are successfully achieving our objectives, identifying and rectifying poor performance at an early stage, learning from past performance and so improving for the future.
- Validate that we are providing value for money through comparing our performance within our own sector and beyond.
- Ensure we are listening to our customers and increasing satisfaction by putting our customers at the heart of service re-design and focusing on outcomes.

- Motivate staff by actively engaging them in service improvement planning, ensuring they know how they contribute to Council priorities and are supported to deliver them.
- Ensure that our improvement planning and delivery forms an integrated part of the whole of the Council's planning cycle.
- Enable accountability through transparent reporting of performance to our customers and the Executive.
- Demonstrate through the achievement of national external accreditations that we are committed to achieving performance standards that compare well with the "best in class".
- Ensure that our policies and strategies are developed to support performance improvement.
- Deliver real and sustained service improvements.

2.3 In order to achieve these benefits the Framework encompasses these main areas:

- Our approach to identifying and carrying out Fundamental Service Reviews as a mechanism to drive down service costs and improve performance
- Our service planning cycle and how national and corporate targets link to service/operational and individual targets
- The performance reporting mechanisms we have in place, their future development and our approach to transparency in reporting this
- Our commitment to securing and sharing comprehensive benchmarking for all service areas, and developing this to look beyond the local government sector
- How we will use customer feedback to develop our services
- How we will continue to promote innovation and efficiency in achieving our priorities, and gain recognition for our achievements

3. Future of the Strategy

3.1 Although this strategy is intended to cover the period 2011 – 2015, it will be necessary to review it in terms of performance and to take into account any new situations as they arise. However, it is proposed this takes place on a formal basis every two years.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 It is best practice for Councils to have in place a Performance Management Framework; however, there are no legal implications.

6. Risk

6.1 The risks associated with the implementation of this strategy are set out in the risk register. A failure to implement the Framework as planned could lead to savings targets not being achieved and a failure to significantly improve service performance.

**Name and contact details of author: Neil Lawrence 01865 252542,
nlawrence@oxford.gov.uk**

List of background papers:

Risk Register

Version number: 3