



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Performance Management Framework
Date:	23 May 2008
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Improvement Manager
Contact Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Improvement Manager Emer Husbands, Strategic Performance Manager

CONTEXT

At a special meeting in June 2008 Members will consider the Council's corporate plan 2008 – 2011. A number of key frameworks have been developed to support the implementation and management of the plan. The Financial Framework and HR Framework have already been presented to Committee, the Information Management and Assurance Frameworks are being presented at this meeting as separate reports. The purpose of this report is to present the organisation's Performance Management Framework which is another key process for aligning the organisation to deliver agreed council priorities.

The remainder of this paper outlines the Performance Framework and highlights the key pieces of work carried out within each element.

BACKGROUND

Performance management is one of the fundamental building blocks of any organisation. It matters to Belfast City Council as a whole, because it helps to ensure we are achieving what we set out to do, giving value for money to the ratepayer and making the lives of the people of Belfast better. Basically, it is about politicians making decisions on how to make things better based on information about how things are today; officers acting on these decisions and Members making sure that the desired outcomes are achieved. This is the essence of evidence based scrutiny in terms of Members making sure that their agreed priorities are delivered by officers.

The Council's adoption of the Value Creation Map planning process, which has now been rolled out across the organisation, was based on its commitment to place performance management at the heart of planning and to begin to develop capacity and processes to support an overall performance management framework. The recent planning process led by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee has built further on this process and has identified emerging priorities and activities for the organisation which need to be translated into specific actions, which are properly resourced, with clear accountability and measurable indicators. These will then be collated, analysed and reported on at regular intervals to Committee, Chief Officers and Senior Managers to ensure the organisation is on target to meet its objectives. The information will also be used to assist in future

planning, allocate resources and target areas for improvement. The mechanism for facilitating this is the Council's Performance Management Framework.

The Performance Management Framework

Step 1
Systematically deciding and communicating what needs to be done
Developing Objectives and Priorities



Step 2
Planning for Success
Developing Plans for Implementation



Step 3
Determining if performance is Being Achieved
Setting and Agreeing Performance Indicators and Targets



Step 4
Reporting Information to the right people at the right time
Performance Reporting and Monitoring



Step 5
Taking action for Improvement
Performance Reviews and Targeting Improvement

Step 1 – Systematically deciding and Communicating what needs to be done - Developing Objectives and Priorities

Members and officers have been engaged in the development of objectives and priorities for the Council through the development of the overall corporate strategy. This has been informed by

- What people in Belfast have said they think the Council's priorities should be;
- An analysis of how issues such as population changes and economic conditions are affecting the city;
- An analysis of how the plans of other bodies, such as the Assembly are likely to affect Belfast;
- The views of elected Members as to how they feel the Council can help Belfast achieve its potential and ensure people here have a good quality of life;
- The views of Belfast City Council employees

and has resulted in the agreement of the Council's overall purpose 'to improve quality of life for the in Belfast' through the implementation of a number of strategic themes supported by

operational service delivery. Work has been continuing on the further development and refinement of these themes which will be presented to Committee in June and will form the Basis of the Council's Corporate Plan 2008 – 2011.

Step 2 Planning for Success - Developing Plans for Implementation

In a large complex organisation such as Belfast City Council the delivery of the objectives and priorities is through the various plans of the organisation. The roll out of the VCM process across the Council has brought a co-ordinated approach to planning with all services demonstrating how they contribute to the overall purpose. Once agreed the themes emerging from the current strategy development process will be fed into the VCM process and cascaded to services to enable them to include them in their updated plans. Work will also commence on developing implementation plans for the cross cutting elements of the plan and this will be supported by a programme of work. A further report being presented to this Committee meeting outlines how the various plans will link to the financial strategy of the organisation and this will allow Members to make decisions on aligning resources with priorities.

Step 3 – Determining if performance is Being Achieved - Setting and Agreeing Performance Indicators and Targets

The Council's performance measurement framework is based on the VCM and is closely aligned to the strategic planning framework. It facilitates the collection and analysis of performance indicators at every level in the planning system recognising that different information is required by members, managers and directors. Outcomes and objectives can rarely be measured in terms of a single performance indicator so it is important to identify a group that collectively provides a picture of performance. Through the VCM process all plans have developed performance indicators against which the achievement of the plans can be assessed. At corporate level this has included approximately 150 PIs agreed by Members and Chief Officers. Much work has been undertaken to collect these indicators through various methods including a ratepayer, member and employee surveys. This information has now been used to set a baseline of performance and was reported to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in March 08. The results were also fed into the planning process and used to inform the emerging themes.

Revised indicators are now being developed to reflect the emerging themes and in particular the various services contribution to the achievement of these themes.

It will also be important to set meaningful targets where appropriate. At corporate level the work to date has concentrated on developing the right indicators and identifying baseline information however in order to drive performance in some areas it will be important to set challenging targets. This process will begin when the final indicators are agreed with targets being set for 2009/10.

Step 4 - Reporting Information to the right people at the right time – Performance Reporting and Monitoring

Intrinsic to the VCM process are the development of Key performance questions - the answers to which enable the organisation to assess if it is achieving its objectives. All the information on the progress of actions and indicators relating to questions and achievement of the priorities will be collated and reported to Members, Chief Officers and senior Managers to inform decision making. Clearly it is important that this information is reported at the right level and in a meaningful way. Recent reports on the performance of the improvement agenda used traffic lights colour coding to highlight good and poor performance and included details of both projects and indicators. The implementation of an automated performance management IT system will help to co-ordinate, improve and cascade performance reporting to all levels of the Council.

The Performance Management System will support a hierarchy of PIs and tasks that are

linked through the corporate and service level VCMs. Where necessary indicators and actions can be drilled down to individual services to ensure a clear line of accountability. These will eventually linked to individual chief officers/ heads of service / senior managers through an appraisal scheme which is currently under development. Phase 1 of implementation of the system will begin in June 2008.

Step 5 Taking action for Improvement – Performance Reviews and Targeting Improvement

Members and Chief Officers will be supported by CIT to ensure the performance reporting is meaningful and useful. An analysis of progress against both the programme of work, individual projects and relevant performance indicators will assist the decision making process and allow better alignment of resources to priorities. As the performance information develops this analysis will also enable the identification of areas that need to improve. These areas may require specific review to identify issues and solutions. Accountability in the form of the Chief Officer / Senior Manager appraisal system currently being developed by SOLACE will also feed into this aspect of the framework.

DECISIONS REQUIRED

Member are asked to agree the components of the Performance Management Framework