

The Shropshire Plan

Performance Management Framework
DRAFT



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1. Introduction

Organisational performance management helps us ensure we achieve what we plan to do. It does so by setting out how we plan and organise our resources to achieve the things we want to do – our vision and priorities, as set out in the Shropshire Plan. Through aligning resources, actions and activities with the Council’s vision and priorities, we are better able to demonstrate how public money is turned into results for Shropshire residents and communities.

Shropshire’s Performance Management Framework (PMF) enables the Council to plan, do (implement), review and revise its actions and activities to ensure that the vision and priorities are kept in focus and delivered. The PMF is a chapter in the wider set of strategic documents that set the shape and direction of the Council, including the Target Operating Model (TOM) and the Shropshire Plan in its entirety (The Strategic Plan, Delivery Plans, PMF and Financial Strategy).

2. Shropshire’s approach to performance management

Effective performance management at Shropshire Council is enabled through a strong focus on the delivery of the priorities, and the recognition that services are already subject to a wide range of performance management arrangements including statutory returns, different legal, regulatory or policy frameworks, and partnership working arrangements.

The Performance Management Framework does not seek to add more layers of requirements, measures and targets on top of those already required. It aims to provide a joined-up view across the Council that demonstrates progress using project milestones for key deliverables, evidencing impact using performance indicators and targets that set the direction of travel for services, and uses qualitative case-studies and narratives to tell the full story.

Our approach takes views from the operational and organisational perspective and in doing so encompasses and informs the objectives and targets of each member of staff as they carry out their work. These are discussed and set out in their annual reviews and progress discussed in their meetings with their line managers throughout the year. Each member of staff understands what they do and how it contributes to the Council in delivering the priorities.

Having this approach to performance management in place supports the Council to deliver continuous improvement in realising its strategy, identifying opportunities to move things forward and where action may be required to bring things back on plan. This can be informed by learning from other similar high performing organisations about how they are delivering services and understanding whether and how this could be applied in Shropshire.

Performance management is underpinned by transparency with levels of service performance, direction of travel and achievement of targets being regularly reported to officers, Members and publicly. Performance data is also published on the Council’s website. Technology extends the level of transparency, increasingly enabling data to be made more visually accessible and more frequently available using dashboards, providing opportunities to drill down to understand what might be contributing to performance levels.

3. The purpose of the Performance Management Framework

Shropshire's Performance Management Framework (PMF) should direct the Council's performance to achieve its priorities by defining measures of progress and evidencing impact across all levels in the organisation.

To achieve this data should be accurate, timely, and aligned with delivering strategy. This includes driving activity and identifying corrective action needed to bring under or over performance back on target. This may also include stopping and refocusing activity to better deliver the outcomes required. In doing so performance management is informed learning from the Council's own experiences, from others, and the needs of partners.

Clear cross-cutting links across the Council structures are required to succeed in delivering the priorities. These should be visible through data, reporting and activity, from council-wide performance to individual performance (the Golden Thread). Where work is taking place with partners, these links should also exist in the PMF.

In summary, effective Performance Management will help to:

- Clearly articulate our priorities and evidence outcomes
- Prioritise what gets done with the resources available
- Provide evidence to support correct resourcing levels
- Demonstrate and evidence value for money
- Evidence good services and satisfaction for users and the local community
- Motivate and manage our staff with clear objectives
- Compare ourselves to local, regional and national patterns and trends
- Identify best practice to improve service delivery, customer experience, and performance
- Respond effectively and in a timely manner to existing and new challenges

4. What the Performance Management Framework includes

Following best practice, the Shropshire Performance Management Framework enables the Council to assess its performance across all aspects of its business. It does this by incorporating different perspectives, giving an integrated and comprehensive view of organisational performance. Performance Management is underpinned by setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound) measures and targets, the delivery of which is resourced.

To enable this approach the integration of performance information is essential and should include but not be limited to the following:

- Performance information – Measures of service activity and demand
- Getting it Right – Measures that show the council is doing things right and meeting statutory and policy requirements such as delivering statutory services and achieving set and published timescales including those in the Council's own policies.

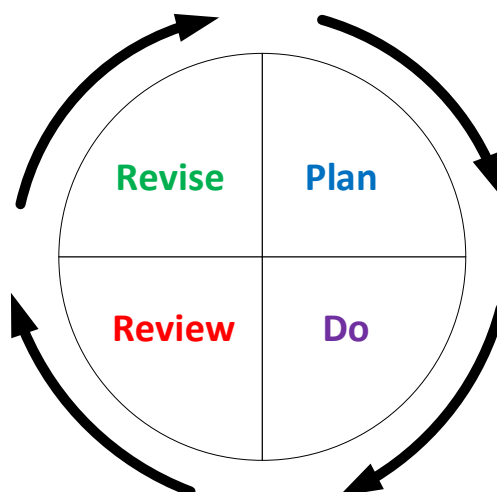
- Strategic Direction – Key strategic objectives (the Council’s Priorities and the strategic high-level actions being taken to deliver them, and the objectives set out in the key strategies of the Council).
- Organisational capability – the Council has a sustainable workforce strategy which sets out the development requirements to meet current and future skills requirements and these are being met.
- Human Resources information – monitoring and understanding absence data, turnover, and vacancies. Identifying and monitoring key measures such as length of time to recruit and commence a new starter.
- Voice of the employee - Staff engagement activity findings, trends in issues and feedback raised by staff, and evidence of staff having an influence.
- Voice of the customer (Quality information) – What the council’s service users/customers/residents are saying about their experience of services, evidence that their feedback has been acted on and their voice has been heard. The trends and messages are from compliments, comments and complaints. This may also take form of customer/service user stories or case studies.
- Commissioning information – compliance with commissioning policies and thresholds, including measures of the delivery of social value by providers.
- Transformation information – progress on agreed transformation projects including key milestones and evidence of outcomes and return on investment, and case studies that illustrate the changes and impacts achieved.
- Compliance information – feedback and direction from regulators (e.g. OFSTED), and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the Information Commissioners Office. This can also include recommendations from Peer Reviews. These may take the form of actions that need to be taken and the milestones for their delivery.

Data and insights arising from the PMF should be looked at alongside financial information and risk information to understand the bigger picture, for example:

- service areas that are overperforming, over delivering within budgets that may be higher than needed to deliver the agreed targets for the service,
- demand for services is outstripping the planned for capacity based on previous years trends, and the budget is coming under pressure, or
- areas that are underperforming and have identified operational risks or contribute to strategic risks that may need more intervention to mitigate or remove their impact on service performance.

5. Evaluating and updating Shropshire's Performance Management Framework

The PMF will apply "Deming's Wheel" as an approach to help manage performance in a large and complex organisation. This is applicable as performance is regularly reviewed throughout the year following analysis using dashboards and in reporting, and when the PMF is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it is current.



Plan

Think about where we are now and what we want to achieve. The Shropshire Plan Strategic Plan identifies the Council's vision and strategic direction. Identify and prioritise what needs to be done, agree actions, budgets and appropriate measures and targets. Performance management information allows us to recognise opportunities and plan for change.

Do

Deliver the actions laid out in the various plans. Performance information allows us to ensure resources are in the right place to achieve results. There are a range of methods and tools used to enable us to manage our performance. These include the Council's PowerBi dashboards, and benchmarking tools and data.

Review

Review and monitor how we are performing against targets, benchmarks and feedback so that we can continuously improve our services. Identify what worked well and what could be improved. A wide range of performance information is made available through reports to Committee and our website. We may need to revise plans and measures if they are no longer relevant

Revise

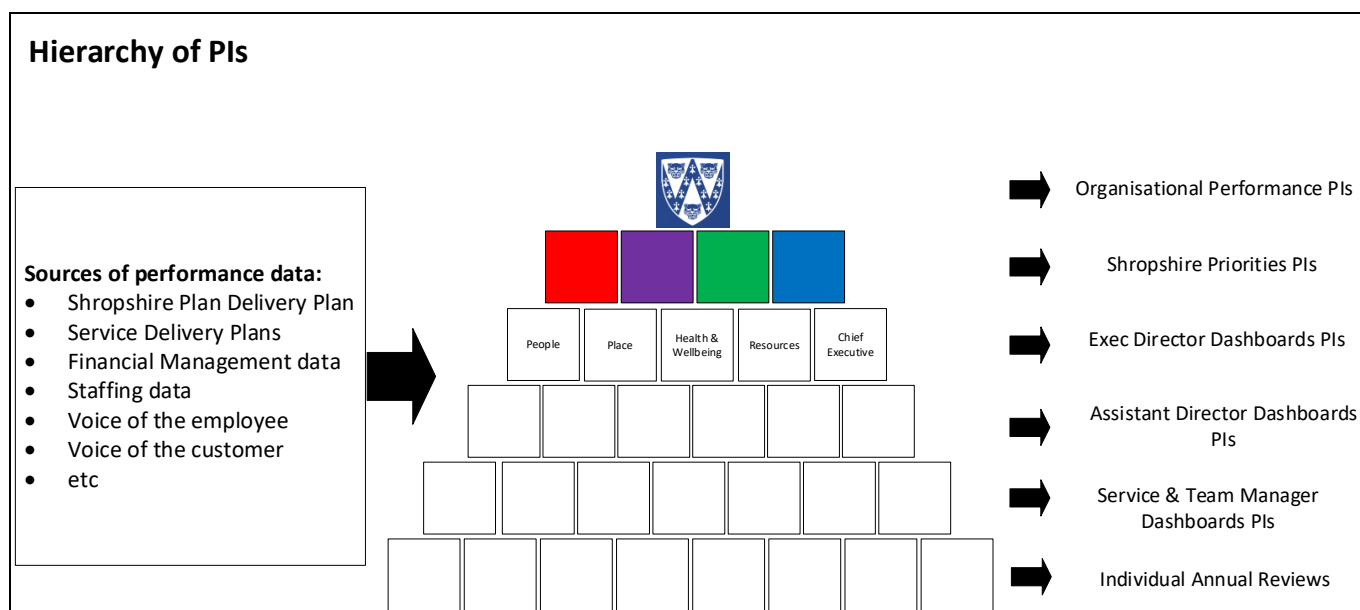
Having reviewed our performance we identify what is working and what needs to change. Our regular maintenance of the delivery plan and the service planning process enables us to revise and act on our areas for improvement and incorporate them into future planning and the PMF. This can be in year as opportunities to update plans occur, or as part of a wider annual planning cycle.

6. Annual planning cycle

The Council has an annual planning cycle which includes Medium Term Financial Planning and setting the Budget, Service Planning, and reviewing the PMF and the annual reviews for individual staff members. There are also regular reviews of the Strategic and Operational Risks to the Council. A timeline that sets out the wider annual planning cycle is set out in appendix 2.

7. The structure of the Performance Management Framework

Our PMF reflects the hierarchy of indicators and milestones that measure and demonstrate the impact and progress in delivering the priorities in the Shropshire Plan. It also includes key measures of organisational performance such as measures relating to staffing and to meeting statutory and local policy requirements such as response times to Freedom of Information requests, and complaints, or the timely payment of invoices. These follow the golden thread through the Council from the Shropshire Plan, through Service Delivery Plans in Directorates and Team Plans, and targets in individual staff member's annual reviews.



The measures and milestones in the PMF need to be owned by Directorates and the component service areas who will also be responsible for the accurate provision of the data to be included in dashboards/reporting and the quality of the data.

Directorate level PMFs will be based on their own service delivery plans. Together the documents would cover the following areas:

- Contextual environment
- Needs assessment / demand
- Actions, key deliverables, targets, standards and timeframes
- Responsible officers / Members
- KPIs and other PIs / measures (project milestones for key deliverables)

8. Performance reporting

Data for reporting will be accessed as it becomes available, and the accuracy (data quality) has been confirmed. (See [appendix 1](#) for more on the Data Quality Framework)

Some measures may be available daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually. How the data will be used by the Council, to a degree, will be determined by the frequency of the view and what it shows and what people need to see and when. However, in all cases the data and the reporting will contribute to evidence-based decision making and clear understanding of how the Council is performing as it delivers the priorities.

Public reporting will be through dashboards available on the Council's website and through reports to committee meetings held in public. These will primarily reflect the delivery of the priorities in the Shropshire Plan.

Members and officers will be able to self-serve performance information on a more frequent basis as data becomes available and dashboards are updated, rather than waiting for reports to committees. This will enable areas of interest and emerging issues to be identified for more detailed investigation and consideration, possibly as standalone topics for Scrutiny Committee agenda or specific points of focus in quarterly performance reporting. In addition, this more frequently updated information will enable the Council to celebrate successes as they are identified.

Reporting to Cabinet will take place quarterly highlighting the actions that are being taken to maintain or improve performance and the progress being made. This will include identifying where performance is exceeding the agreed target. This will be alongside a thematic view looking in more detail at one of the 4 priorities in the Shropshire Plan (the timing of which quarter a priority will be reported will be linked to publication of national data to be used for benchmarking purposes alongside local information).

The Council's Organisational Performance Dashboard will provide a view of the key performance indicators for the Council, providing a clear and focused view on the progress that the Council is making. Members of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee would be core consumers of this dashboard.

An Annual Report will be published in September each year providing a view back over the previous year highlighting progress and achievement, what is happening in the current year, and what is being delivered in the future.

9. Continuous improvement through Shropshire's Performance Management Framework

Ongoing continuous change being informed by data and insights will lead to improvement:

- The available performance data will enable trends to be considered and projections and forecasting to be made that can be used to inform forward looking decisions on policy and target setting.
- Benchmarking using data from other similar organisations will support identifying best performers and highlight opportunities to learn how they are achieving their results and whether it can be applied in Shropshire.
- Feedback from regulators and external assessments such as peer reviews will provide further points to be considered in the identification of revised targets and the need for new measures to address gaps or to track performance in service areas that have been highlighted as risks or issues to be addressed.

10. The Performance Management System

Through the Council's Performance Management System (PMS) individual employees all receive an annual review. These set out objectives for an individual, linked to the overall priorities as set out in the Shropshire Plan. They also capture progress towards their objectives as well as how they undertake their role against set personal characteristics/behaviours. Responsibility for these reviews sit with individual employees and their manager. Each employee must have an annual review; with objectives and progress reviewed regularly through one-to-one meetings.

11. Governance of Shropshire's Performance Management Framework

Whilst there are specific roles and functions around how Shropshire Council manages performance, the starting point is one of collective responsibility. The following is set within this context.

Chief Executive	Accountable overall for the organisation including performance
Executive Director Resources	Executive Lead for Performance at Shropshire Council
Impact and Progress Performance Management Group	Chaired by the Executive Director Resources, this officer group meets frequently (monthly) to review progress and impact against the Council's KPIs and milestones. Are targets being achieved or exceeded? Action plans to bring back on track. Action logs will be maintained. Escalation to EMT with proposals to address performance. Outputs from these meetings will inform the quarterly performance reports to Scrutiny and Cabinet.
Information Research Insights Shropshire (IRIS)	Making sure the people involved in performance management in the Council can easily enter updates in the digital performance management system, information about performance data, actions and risks and get information out in digital performance dashboards/scorecards and reports that can be easily published.
Directorate Management Team (DMT) Members	Responsible for setting objectives, Key Performance Indicators and Targets in their service areas. Responsible for the delivery of the Service Delivery Plan, overseeing the performance of service areas within their remit and contributing to the Council's priorities, and contributing to the setting of the Council's priorities by Elected Members.
Executive Management Team (EMT)	Strategic responsibility for oversight of delivery of the Council's priorities. Review performance and agree management actions to address under performance in key corporate priorities.
Performance Management Function	Review key performance targets and performance with DMTs and decide on any adjustments. Highlight good performance and action on areas for improvement at Committees.
Members; Cabinet; Scrutiny Members	Responsible for setting the vision and direction of the Council, approving the Shropshire Plan and Service Delivery Plans, and reviewing and scrutinising performance information on plans and services.
Citizens and service users/customers	Take part in local elections, local community planning processes and Council surveys, look out for performance reports about the Council in the local press and sign up to the Council's social media for latest updates.

12. Supporting Members in the Performance Management roles

We will also ensure Members have the information and skills to carry out their role in monitoring and reviewing performance and we will encourage them to challenge officers robustly on performance. This will be achieved through having clear plans which set out our strategic priorities, well presented dashboards and reports in an easy-to-understand format with accurate and meaningful information focusing on the key performance issues, and the provision of briefings and training on performance management and scrutiny as part of our ongoing programme of development for councillors. We expect members to ask searching questions on performance and on improvement actions, and we commit to providing more detailed analysis where this is required.

Alongside this the opportunity will be taken to revisit and refresh Member Job Descriptions including for Portfolio Holders and for Scrutiny Chairs and Scrutiny Members.

13. Improving the PMF foundations

Ongoing opportunities to strengthen the PMF exist. These include, but are not limited to the below:

- **Strategies** – new/updated/reviewed built into PMF so that key strategies are always in place and strategic delivery milestones and direction of travel are clear. Consistency of branding, consistency of content, delivery plans with clear measures and milestones. Requires commitment from the Executive Team to reinforce standards and requirements as each strategy is developed and published.
- **Commission a Citizen Panel** – Support evidence-based decision making and reviews of delivery plans etc and the PMF through representative and consistent citizen feedback of strategic priority issues, and temperature check of issues that are important to Shropshire People. It also offers the opportunity to triangulate with other feedback and issues raised. This requires an investment, however there is the possible option to share cost with partners. A feature of this approach can be a limited numbers of additional questions in each round of surveying which may be a disincentive.
- Responding to changing customer expectations driven by customer experience with other (hidden) competitors e.g. large online businesses. **Establish a Continuous Improvement function** that can support the Council to identify and deliver small changes that improve services e.g. carrying out customer facing mystery shopping reviews of access to Council Services such as user testing online forms for ease of use, and evaluating response timescales and quality.
- **Benchmarking** – Using opportunities to compare to other councils/similar organisations to identify whether Shropshire Council is performing towards top middle or bottom nationally/comparator groups, whether there are opportunities to approach other high performing organisations to learn how they are delivering and whether it would work in Shropshire, looking at year on year performance, plus looking at activity and quality information against financial information. Requires officer time and probable fee for membership of bigger schemes.
- **Use of segmentation software** – to support identifying and focusing on specific communities or areas where greatest impact on improving performance and benefits for service users/customers and communities could be achieved.

Data Quality Framework

All performance information is underpinned by good data quality. The Council aims to ensure that across all service areas, there is a consistently high standard of data production and use.

All staff involved in the collection, collation and reporting of performance data have a responsibility to ensure it can be relied upon. Services need to ensure they have sound procedures in place and provide adequate training and guidance for staff.

What is good Data Quality?

The Council recognises the importance of data quality as we need reliable, accurate and timely performance information with which to manage services, inform users and account for our performance. We are committed to ensuring that we maintain the highest standards of data quality and as a result get our performance information “right first time”. This will enable us to have the right information at the right time at the right cost.


There are six key characteristics that can be used to describe how the quality of data can be determined. These can help the Council and its partners to assess the calibre of information it handles and, where necessary, take action to address weaknesses in the data.

1. **Accurate** Data should be of a level of accuracy suitable for its intended purposes. Data should ideally only be captured once. Where compromises have to be made on accuracy, the resulting limitations of the data should be made clear to users.
2. **Valid** Data should be recorded and used in compliance with all relevant requirements, including the correct application of any rules or definitions. This will ensure consistency.
3. **Reliable** All data should be the product of stable and consistent data collection processes whether using manual or computer-based systems. Data should represent current positions.
4. **Timely** Data capture should take place as quickly as possible following an event or activity and made available for the intended use promptly. Data must be made available frequently enough to support information needs and influence the service/management decisions.
5. **Relevant** Data should be relevant to the purposes for which it is intended to be used. This necessitates periodic review of requirements to ensure information reflects changing needs.
6. **Complete** Data requirements should be clearly specified based on the information needs of the organisation and data collection processes.

Why is Data Quality important in performance monitoring?

Information Security – British Standard (ISO 27001) states that information should be suitable for purpose, kept confidential, have high integrity and be suitably available.

The quality of our data is crucial for assessments of the Council's effectiveness, as are the policies and strategies for ensuring data quality



The Council recognises the need to achieve a balance between the resources required to set and meet data quality standards and the relative benefits that follow. We will take this into account in developing our approach to monitoring and review. It will be necessary to focus resources on data that the Council regards as critical to its overall objectives.