



Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

Performance Improvement Policy	20 August 2019
Corporate Policy and Resources Committee For Decision	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Innovation and Transformation
Outcome	Performance Improvement and meeting the Performance Duty as prescribed in the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.
Lead Officer	Head of Performance
Cost: (If applicable)	Costs allowed for within the annual budget

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Elected Members on the updated version of the Council's Performance Improvement Policy.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Local Government Auditor has recommended that all Council's in Northern Ireland have in place a Performance Improvement Policy to underpin the Performance Duty within the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. As such, Causeway Coast and Glens agreed its first Performance Improvement Policy in March 2018.

2.2 As the Council's arrangements for meeting its responsibilities under the Performance Duty have matured it has been deemed necessary to update the Performance Improvement Policy. Accordingly such a policy has been developed for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and is attached as Appendix 1.

- 2.3 The main area of the Policy that has been updated is Section 5.0 Policy Execution, and has been amended in line with good practise and on the recommendation of the NI Audit Office.
- 2.4 The Performance Improvement Policy will be subject to review and update as the Council further develops its various performance improvement mechanisms.
- 2.5 The Performance Improvement Policy has been subjected to an Equality Impact Assessment Screening Process and no issues have been identified.

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 **It is recommended** that Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council approve the Performance Improvement Policy (Version 2, August 2019), as detailed within Appendix 1 of this report.

Appendix 1



Performance Improvement Policy

Version 2 – August 2019

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Performance Improvement Policy sets out the Council's approach to performance improvement in accordance with the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, and the requirements set out by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO). The Council recognises that its structures, processes and systems are not fully matured given that the four legacy Councils and the Planning Service transitioned into the new Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council in April 2015. The approach to performance improvement is iterative in line with the development of the new Council.
- 1.2 Version 2 of this Policy is updated for August 2019.

2.0 Aim of the Policy

- 2.1 The aim of the policy is to describe how the Council will implement its responsibilities under the Performance Duty as set out in Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 (The Act) and how performance management will be embedded across the Council.

3.0 Improvement Defined

- 3.1 "Improvement" in the context of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 means more than just quantifiable gains in service output or efficiency, or the internal effectiveness of the Council. Improvement for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council focusses on the issues that are important to our citizens and customers and means doing things that will enhance the sustainable quality of life and environment for our citizens thereby helping us to create a better future for all. At Causeway Coast and Glens Council we continue to define 'improvement' in the broadest, most strategic sense with a focus on providing

leadership for the Borough while continuing to deliver best value and quality services to our ratepayers and other stakeholders.

- 3.2 Section 84 of the Act states that “Councils are under a general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions”. Part 6 of the guidance in Local Government Circular 21/2016 defines improvement as “More than just quantifiable gains in service output or efficiency, or the internal effectiveness of an organisation. Improvement for Councils should mean activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities”.
- 3.3 Local Government Circular 21/2016 Part 7 under the heading “Making arrangements to improve”, states that “there is no absolute duty to improve” and also refers to “Continuous improvement” in terms of “Council`s should seek continuously to ensure that their improvement objectives remain relevant, that the best arrangements for delivering them are in place, and that they are able to understand and demonstrate the impact on the outcomes for citizens”.
- 3.4 Section 85 of the Act requires a Council, for each financial year to set itself improvement objectives for improving the exercise of its functions and these must be framed in terms of one of the following: Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Service Availability, Fairness, Sustainability, Efficiency and Innovation.
- 3.5 The Act further states that “There is a clear link between the Community Planning process and a Council`s performance improvement regime” and that all improvement objectives should be “legitimate, clear, robust, deliverable and demonstrable”.

4.0 Policy Statement

- 4.1 Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council aims to have a transparent performance management process and structure where Elected Members, Staff, Ratepayers and those interested in the Council will be made aware of and can be involved in performance improvement and the performance improvement process. The Council is committed to continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions and will undertake a range of actions to:
 - Clearly identify priority areas for improvement
 - Align improvement objectives with the Community Plan
 - Identify wider performance indicators across Council services and where relevant implement benchmarking exercises

- Consult with Elected Members, Staff, Ratepayers and those interested in the area in relation to the improvement objectives and the associated projects
- Develop an annual performance improvement plan in line with the Performance Duty within the Act
- Measure performance against targets and review progress
- Present performance information to the Council to ensure monitoring and scrutiny over time
- Present and publicise an assessment of the performance and impacts associated with the performance improvement plan
- Assess the levels of improvement achieved and develop new actions and projects with a view to continuous improvement over time.

5.0 Policy Execution

5.1 The Council aims to ensure that performance is formally identified, assessed and managed in accordance with the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 (Part 12). To this end the following will be in place:

- The process for monitoring, tracking and reporting on the Council's Performance Improvement activities will be managed on a day-to-day basis by the Council's Performance Team.
- The Council's Corporate Policy and Resources Committee will assume a scrutiny role for performance improvement and will be presented with performance updates and performance information on at least a quarterly basis.
- The Corporate Policy and Resources Committee will be responsible for agreeing and recommending both the annual Performance Improvement Plan and the annual Council Performance Self-Assessment Report.
- The Council's Audit Committee will assume a monitoring role in relation to the Council's Performance Improvement Plan and will receive update reports at each quarterly Audit Committee.
- The Council's appointed in-house Auditors will undertake a six month audit in relation to progress of work being undertaken in relation to the annual performance improvement plan and report performance to the Audit Committee.
- When any concerns are raised by Committee with regards progress against the Performance Improvement Plan, then this will be reviewed as soon as possible by the Council's Strategic Leadership Team and wider Management Team.

- Performance Dashboard reporting will take place on a quarterly basis to the Council's Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.
- From April 2020 onwards, each Service within Council will be required to include a section within their relevant Service Business Plans that makes explicit reference to at least one area of their work where improvement is required and indeed where improvement activity will be carried out.
- The Causeway Coast and Glen's Community Plan, The Council's Corporate Strategy and Departmental Business Plans form an integral part of the performance improvement process. Within these Plans Council's resources will be aligned, focusing on priority areas to maximise the delivery of improvements for citizens.

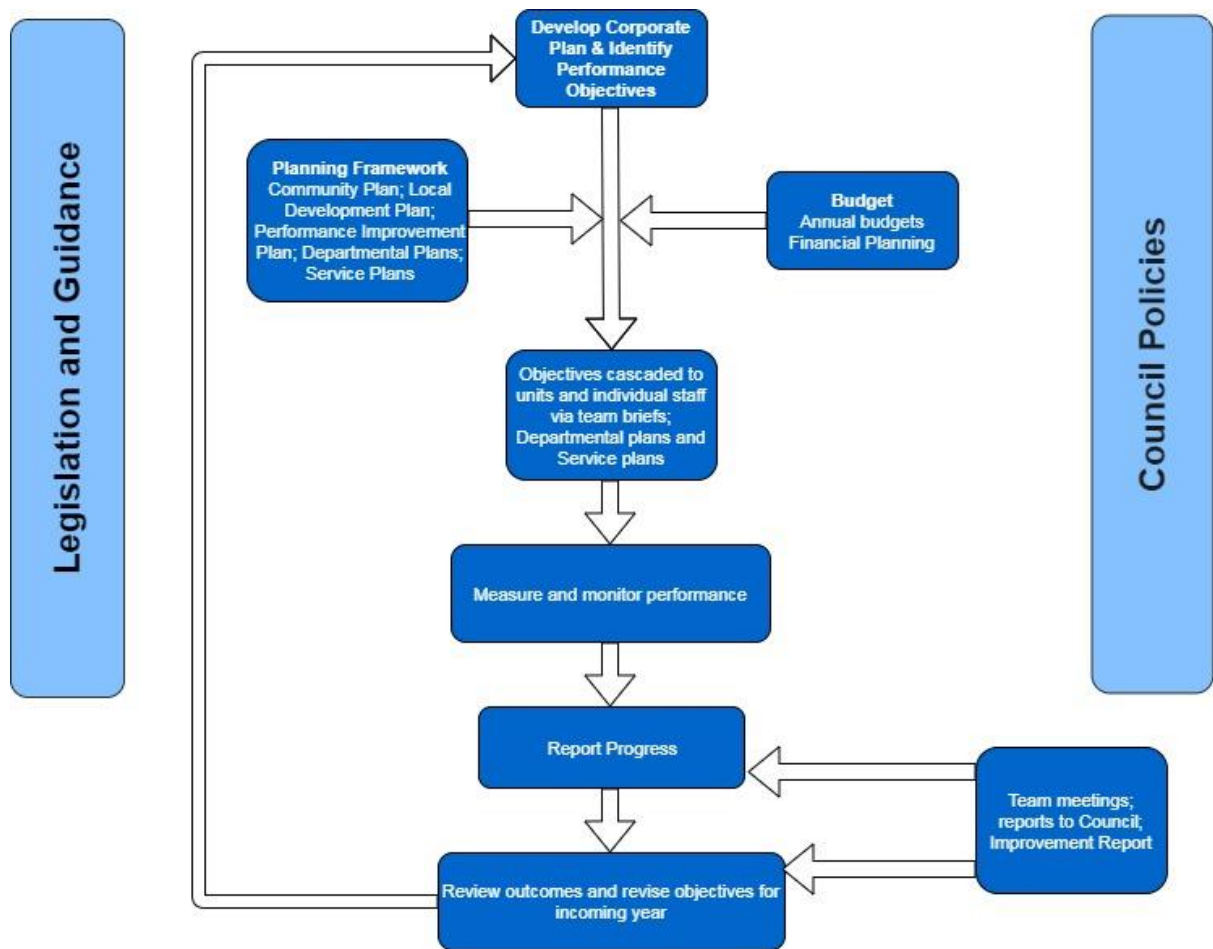
The above governance structures will ensure that:

- Performance Improvement is managed across Council functions
- The performance improvement process and performance management is an integral part of Council operations and key drivers in the development and improvement of functions and services
- There will be transparency in relation to how the Council prioritises its improvement approach
- Elected Members, Staff, Ratepayers and those interested in the area will have the opportunity to input to and influence how Council prioritises its areas for improvement
- A Performance management culture will become embedded in the daily operation of Council services which will assist in the delivery of continuous improvement and the realisation of opportunities for the Council going forward.

6.0 Performance Management Framework for developing the Performance Improvement Plan

6.1 The Council's performance management framework is set out in Figure 1 below. The framework is iterative and will develop over time and is in the form of a process cycle. This arrangement will support the development of the annual performance improvement plan and the various related processes such as monitoring, scrutiny and review. The framework cycle thus encourages a continuous improvement approach in which performance can be measured over time.

Figure 1 Performance Management Process



7.0 Consulting on Improvement

- 7.1 The Act requires that a Council “Consult with ratepayers, services users and anyone who appears to have an interest in the district when deciding how to discharge its duty under section 84 and 85 of the Act”. It further states that “There is no statutory duty to consult on the improvement plan, however as the plan includes the improvement objectives this would be a valid approach for the duty to consult under section 87”. As such the Council will annually conduct a minimum 8 week maximum 12 week consultation period on our Performance Improvement Plan and Improvement Objectives.
- 7.2 It is recognised that the Council has a wide range of internal and external stakeholders that will require consultation with regard to performance improvement objectives. To address this annually, a consultation plan will be formulated to include a range of consultative techniques in an attempt to capture as many views as reasonably practicable.

8.0 Approval, Implementation and Review

- 8.1 This Performance Improvement Policy will be approved by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and Council. The Policy will be reviewed by the Head of Performance annually and any proposed changes subjected to the governance processes of the Council.

9.0 Section 75 Equality and Good Relations

- 9.1 Causeway Coast and Glens Council is fully committed to meeting its obligations in relation to Equality and Good Relations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act. In this regard this policy will be screened using Section 75 guidelines and will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment if found necessary as a result of the screening process.