

Performance Improvement Policy	20th March 2018
Corporate Policy and Resources Committee For Decision	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Innovation and Transformation
Outcome	Structured approach to Performance Improvement across the Council
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 ask Elected Members to approve a Performance Improvement Policy in line with the recommendation made by the Local Government Auditor as part of the annual Performance Improvement audit assessment.

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.

2.2 Accordingly such a policy has been developed for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and is attached as Appendix 1.

2.3 The proposed Performance Improvement Policy seeks to establish a more formal approach to developing and reporting on the annual Corporate Performance Improvement Plan. It also sets out a process to bring together the various sources of performance information providing an effective means of monitoring the Council's performance over time. This includes Departmental Business Plans, the annual Performance Improvement Plan, budget reports and the Performance Dashboard.

- 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.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council approve the Performance Improvement Policy as detailed within Appendix 1 of this report.

Appendix 1.



Performance Improvement Policy

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.

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 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".

3.2 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".

3.3 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.

3.4 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:

- Performance Improvement will be a standing item on the agenda of the Council’s Strategic Leadership Team and wider Management Team.
- The Council’s Strategy, Departmental Business Plans and the wider Community Plan will form an integral part of the performance improvement process
- The Council’s resources will be aligned, focusing on priority areas to maximise the delivery of improvements for citizens
- The Corporate Policy and Resources Committee will assume a monitoring role for performance improvement and will be presented with regular performance updates and information normally in June, October, January and April.

- The Council's Audit Committee will assume a scrutiny role in relation to performance improvement
- 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

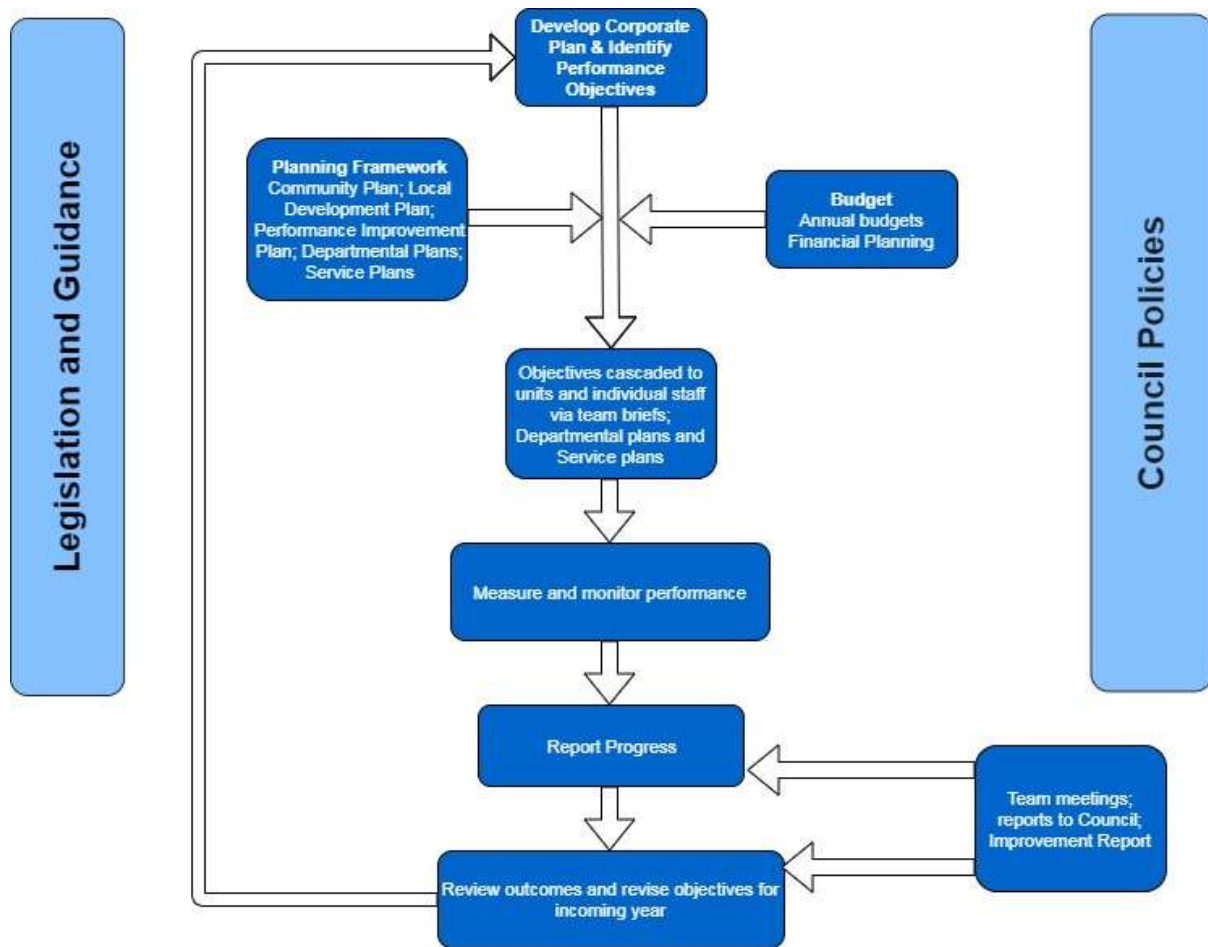
The above governance structures will ensure that:

- 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 an 8-12 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 The Performance Improvement Policy will be agreed by the Senior Management Team, and 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 has been screened using Section 75 guidelines and will not be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment as the screening process indicated no negative impact to the Section 75 categories.