



Performance management framework

Strategic framework

Transformation and performance

June 2024

Version 1

Editions

Version	Description / amendments	Creation date	Issue Date
1.0	Issued version	30/04/2024	-
1.1	Amended for review cycle	17/05/2024	12/06/2024

Acknowledgment - Performance management guide for local authority officers,
Local Government Association

Contents

Editions	2
Introduction	4
Background	4
Performance management	5
Corporate Plan 2024-28	6
Vision and values.....	6
Priorities	6
Delivering our framework	8
Our performance management framework.....	9
Key performance indicators.....	11
The corporate dashboard	11
SMART principals.....	11
Service plans.....	13
Reporting.....	14
RAG rating	14
Reporting schedules.....	15
Exception reporting.....	17
Accountability	18
Transparency	18
Roles and responsibilities	18
Values	20
Culture	20
Key performance standards.....	22

Introduction

Background

Our Corporate Plan 2024-28 lays out a vision for New Forest District Council. Our aim is to improve outcomes for residents, visitors, businesses, and our partners. We are working towards creating a modern, sustainable, and continuously improving organisation. As an employer, we want to continue to be a great place to work.

Our staff work together as one council, sharing knowledge and expertise across services, and always adopt our key values and in all aspects of their work. Our staff deliver excellent services, and we want them to lead our improvement journey, always performing at their best. Our staff will understand what is expected of them in terms of their performance, goals, and behaviour. They will also know how their role contributes to achieving the council's priority outcomes.

Performance management is a vital tool in understanding the way our organisation works and to identify the areas which are performing well and intervene with corrective actions where areas are not performing as expected. This framework has been developed to ensure everyone is working to deliver our Corporate Plan 2024-28 and other key strategies and shape the way we work by informing service plans as well as team and individual goals.

Overall better performance will be driven through focusing on clear, challenging, and relevant goals and measuring performance against these. This framework encourages regular and on-going feedback, to engender a culture of learning, and continuous improvement. Effective performance management relies on clear objectives, actions which deliver those objectives and measures of success.

At its heart, we will deliver the commitment made in our Corporate Plan by implementing a rigorous performance management process.

Performance management

Our Performance Management Framework clearly articulates the vision set out in our Corporate Plan. It will ensure this vision becomes our common purpose, binding all the services provided by the council.

We will use data and insight to highlight and build from our successes. This insight will also help us understand areas for improvement. We will identify the actions needed to deliver better outcomes. This approach has been adopted to encourage a culture of continuous improvement across the organisation.

Our Performance Management Framework is a structured approach that ensures appropriate measures are in place which align with our Corporate Plan priorities. These measures are clear, planned, and delivered with focus and dedication. Our activities are geared towards delivering the Corporate Plan while also considering broader service objectives. The framework ensures delivery at every level of our organisation.

Underpinning the delivery of the commitments of the Corporate Plan is the council's Transformation Programme – 'Future New Forest'. This ambitious programme stands alongside the council's existing service areas and has its own plans and measures of success designed to influence the way the council operates, supports strategic objectives, and focuses on the future of the organisation.

Corporate Plan 2024-28

Our Corporate Plan plays a principal role in the strategic framework for the council. It is the overarching document that sets out our vision, values, priorities, and commitments up to March 2028.

The plan focuses on the challenges we face, and all that we can do as an organisation to address them. It builds on the foundations already laid out, maintaining our commitment to financial sustainability and excellence in service delivery.

Vision and values

The Corporate Plan introduces a new vision for the council.

To secure a better future by supporting opportunities for the people and communities we serve, protecting our unique and special place, and securing a vibrant and prosperous New Forest.

The plan also introduces our new values, which underpin the council's vision and priorities by shaping our behaviours and the way we work (Fig.6).

Priorities



The council is dedicated to supporting vulnerable residents, addressing financial hardships, and ensuring access to affordable housing. Community engagement, homelessness prevention, and improving housing quality are central to this priority.

- Helping those in our community with the greatest need
- Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives
- Meeting housing needs



Recognising the significance of the district's natural environment, the council aims to balance growth with conservation efforts. Strategies include sustainable development, climate resilience, and enhancing community spaces.

- Shaping our place now and for future generations
- Protecting our climate, coast, and natural world
- Caring for our facilities, neighbourhoods, and open spaces in a modern and responsive way



The plan seeks to foster economic growth while ensuring inclusivity and sustainability. Initiatives include promoting the Solent Freeport, supporting local businesses, and championing skills development and employment opportunities.

- Maximising the benefits of inclusive economic growth and investment
- Supporting out high-quality business base and economic centres to thrive and grow
- Championing skills and access to job opportunities

The Corporate Plan paves the way for the future. It makes our ambitions very clear and helps us to understand our focus for the future, the way we need to work and those parts of our work that will enable us to meet with our performance ambitions.

Delivering our framework

The adoption of the Corporate Plan 2024-28 gave an opportunity to look at our approach to performance management and service planning.

We have developed a Performance Management Framework (Fig.1) that takes the commitments outlined in the Corporate Plan, works with our 'Future New Forest' Transformation Programme, and builds continuous improvement opportunities and learning throughout everything we do.

The framework cuts through to all service areas, from the strategic Corporate Plan commitments, through to service plans, and team or individual plans, reflecting also statutory duties and regulatory frameworks. It is embedded through every level of the organisation.

We have developed key performance indicators (KPIs) that are focused, clear and align with the priorities of the Corporate Plan. The KPIs are owned and will be monitored within the relevant service area, and it is important that this framework is simple and does not add to the reporting burden of our services.

There are other important factors that shape our work such as those duties prescribed in law. We have a budget that we will work within, as stated in our Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). We have a Risk Management Strategy which will ensure all services have considered risk to their delivery priorities. Associated mitigation and controls will be in place alongside our KPIs as a mechanism to ensure our performance stays on track.

The framework will aid us in driving improvements at every level of the organisation and will help shape the work we do.

Our performance management framework

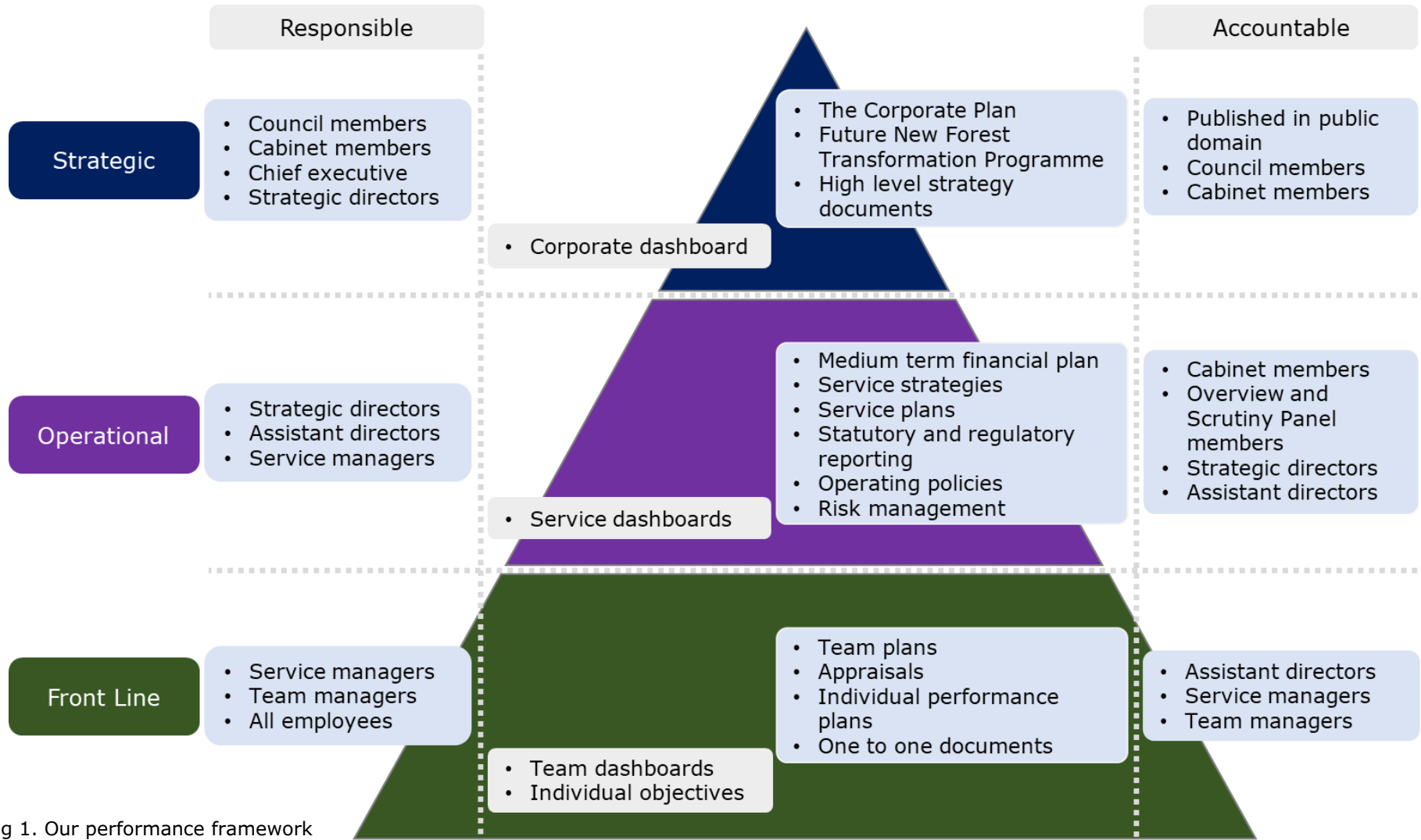


Fig 1. Our performance framework

	Strategic	Operational	Front Line
Description	<p>Large scale strategic drivers including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Corporate Plan • 'Future New Forest' Transformation Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating plans and policies. • Service plans, policies and procedures. • Budget plans, risk, statutory duties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service delivery
Monitors	<p>Corporate Dashboard, progress against KPIs, as agreed in the Corporate Plan.</p>	<p>Service dashboards, progress against KPIs, to include any relevant measures agreed in the Corporate Plan.</p> <p>Improvement plans, including any as directed by the 'Future New Forest' - Transformation Programme.</p>	<p>Our staff will benefit from regular 121s and appraisals, with suitable measures that will be shaped by the Strategic and Operational level planning.</p>
Impact	<p>Ensures delivery on our commitments and promotes effective scrutiny of progress towards delivery of key measures.</p> <p>Provides an opportunity to mitigate and intervene when things are not progressing as planned.</p>	<p>The documents described link the strategic and front-line tiers and will drive the change, governing how we do things and will describe the activity needed to achieve goals at an operational level.</p>	<p>Teams and individuals will work in prescribed ways, with appropriate discretion and changed behaviours, focus on excellent performance and delivering change.</p>

Fig 2. Monitors and impacts

Key performance indicators

The corporate dashboard

A corporate dashboard for the priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan will be produced on a quarterly basis. Within this dashboard, service performance against the Corporate Plan KPIs will be reported.

The dashboard focuses on these KPIs while drawing narrative from the services to provide context.

These KPIs will demonstrate the organisations successes and highlight areas for improvement, these measures are defined, unambiguous and clear in definition with agreed tolerance thresholds.

SMART principals

As part of the development of the Corporate Plan, we reached out to services to set KPI measures using SMART principles, that align closely to the commitments from the plan as well as being within the control of the council.

These measures should be:

- Specific – Clear in definition, unambiguous, standardised as far as possible and signed off by the service
- Measurable – We should be able to measure, develop or acquire the data needed to report the KPIs
- Achievable – the KPIs should provide sufficient motivation that it is within reach of the service
- Relevant - KPIs align and fit with the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan
- Time-bound - measures should have a clear time frame for delivery and set this expectation with the service

We also need our measures to be:

- Timely – data needs to be available. Ideally monthly, quarterly, and no longer than a quarter in arrears. Inevitably, we will have some annual measures.
- Balanced – have a combination of challenge, stretch but also highlight positive areas of focus. We should have a balanced spread across the priorities
- Comparable – definition should align with any national guidance such as Local Government Association (LGA) or the Office for Local Government (OFLOG) so that performance can be benchmarked and therefore appropriate targets can be set

Service plans

Service plans are developed by strategic directors and their service management teams. Service plans contain the work that is performed by each team and will be reviewed annually. This must include priorities that align with Corporate Plan objectives and any corresponding KPIs. It will also include any statutory requirements as part of the councils' obligations already set out in law.

These plans will capture key descriptions of each service, the work undertaken, development pathways, financial constraints, available resource, and a set of performance measures at the operational level.

All relevant performance measures, statutory, operational, and strategic for each service area will be structured to form a service dashboard. These dashboards will report agreed measures and will ensure that the services are performing well, provide an opportunity to deploy corrective action and remain on target to deliver the commitments made in the service plan.

Any relevant strategic measures as outlined by the Corporate Plan and Corporate Dashboard must be reflected in the service planning process and added to the services plan, asking the service to own and take responsibility for the performance of these measures.

This ensures accountability cascades through the organisation and the measures are owned by an accountable officer within the most appropriate service.

Reporting

As the strategic KPIs also appear in service plans and dashboards, services are able to regularly monitor performance before they feature in the corporate dashboard on a quarterly basis. This approach aims to avoid any surprises when measures are reported quarterly.

In order for service managers to meet their obligations, they will ask for this accountability from their service managers and teams.

Service managers will further break down the KPIs so they can be disseminated amongst their teams as areas of focus and built into the individual objectives for all staff.

RAG rating

All measures will be RAG rated (Red, Amber, Green) according to the performance against target.



Green – On target or above target



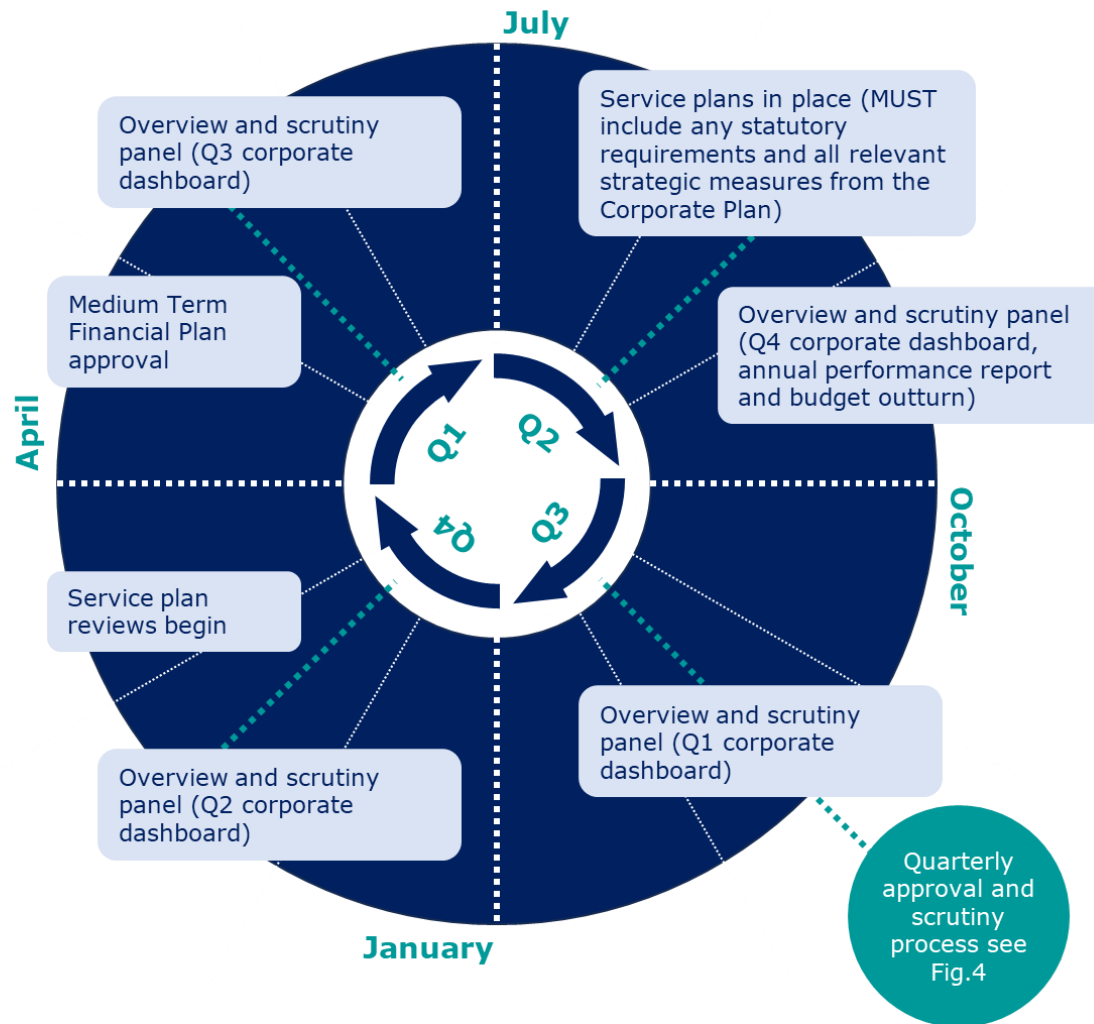
Amber – Below and up to 10% deviation from the lower threshold of the target



Red – Over 10% deviation from the lower threshold of the target

In some cases, the standard thresholds will not be appropriate. In such instances, services will provide the most appropriate threshold to apply.

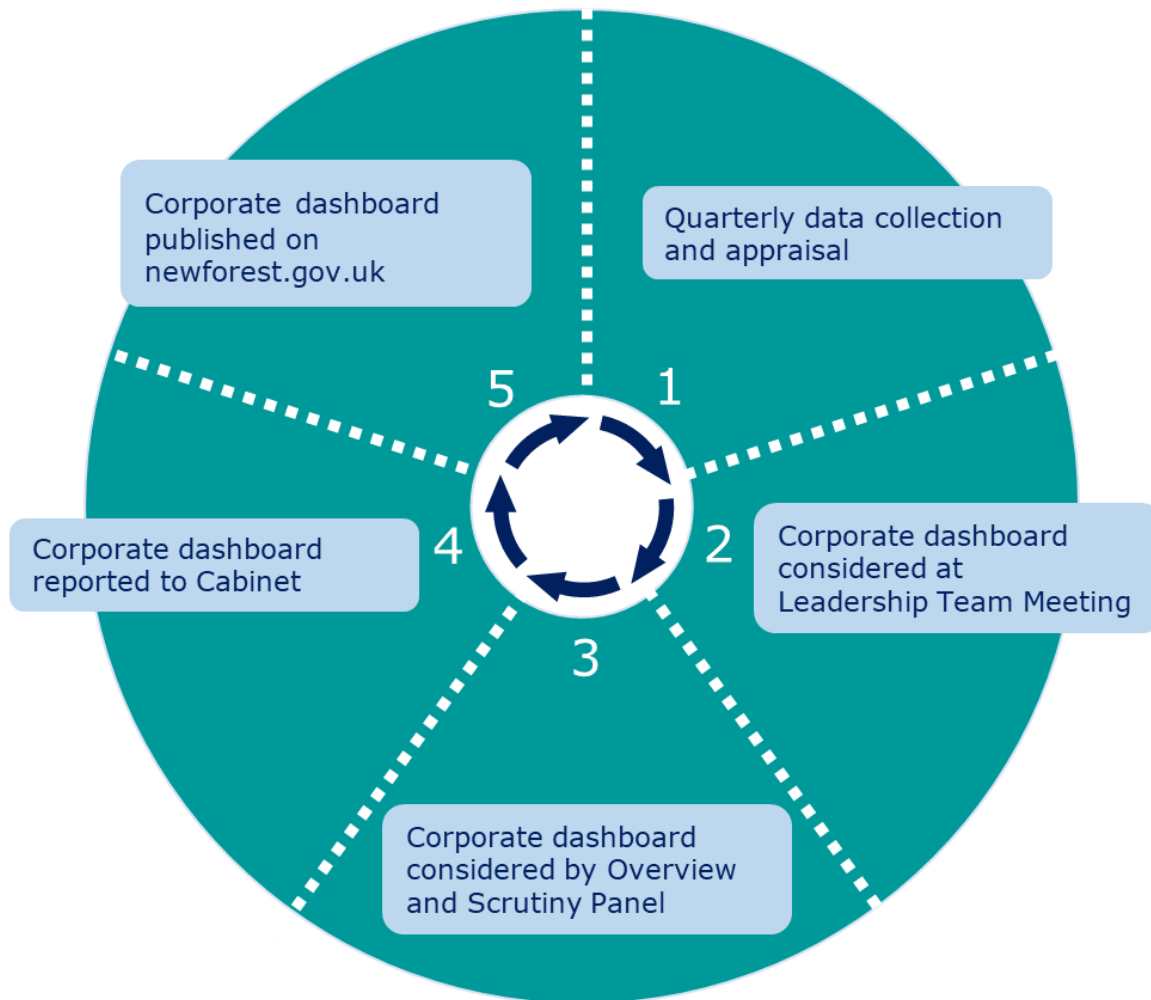
Reporting schedules



The corporate reporting cycle (Fig.3) covers a period of 12 months and encourages regular review of service plans to ensure they are effective and cover current operational level requirements reacting to current pressures.

The annual corporate reporting cycle guides this and outlines the governance in place prior to the publication of the Corporate Dashboard.

Fig 3. Annual corporate reporting cycle



A quarterly corporate reporting calendar (Fig. 4) will assist us in planning the publication schedule. There are a number of meetings where the dashboards will be presented and reviewed. Each plays an important role in ensuring there is appropriate scrutiny and accountability for performance.

Each quarterly dashboard will provide updated results, if available and present these alongside any targets and agreed tolerable thresholds.

All overview and scrutiny panels will be presented with the complete dashboard with each panel being responsible for an assigned subset of KPIs.

Fig 4. Quarterly reporting calendar

Exception reporting

All available data will be reported as per our quarterly schedule, and we follow the governance pattern described above.

We will apply the principals of exception reporting where there are areas of performance that are not within the agreed thresholds and are profiled to not meet targets. Accountable officers will be asked to provide additional information and this information will be added to the dashboard to enable panels and cabinet to consider any impact of poor performance.

This additional narrative will be vital and should cover the following:

- Any factors which could have contributed to the poor performance
- Remedial actions that will be undertaken to address poor performance
- When we expect these remedial actions to take effect.

When performance is within an agreed tolerance, accountable officers will also be asked to provide additional narrative context to aid understanding and to track activity which has had a positive impact on performance. Services will be encouraged to share areas of best practice.

Accountability

Transparency

Our elected members, residents, partners, and staff all contributed to the development of our Corporate Plan. Consultation focused on and shaped the priorities for the organisation between 2024 and 2028 and also prepared for challenges beyond.

Our services have considered the published Corporate Plan and have assisted in ensuring that the appropriate measures are in place that will enable us to meet our corporate priorities. We are therefore accountable to everyone who helped shape and continue to contribute to the success of our district.

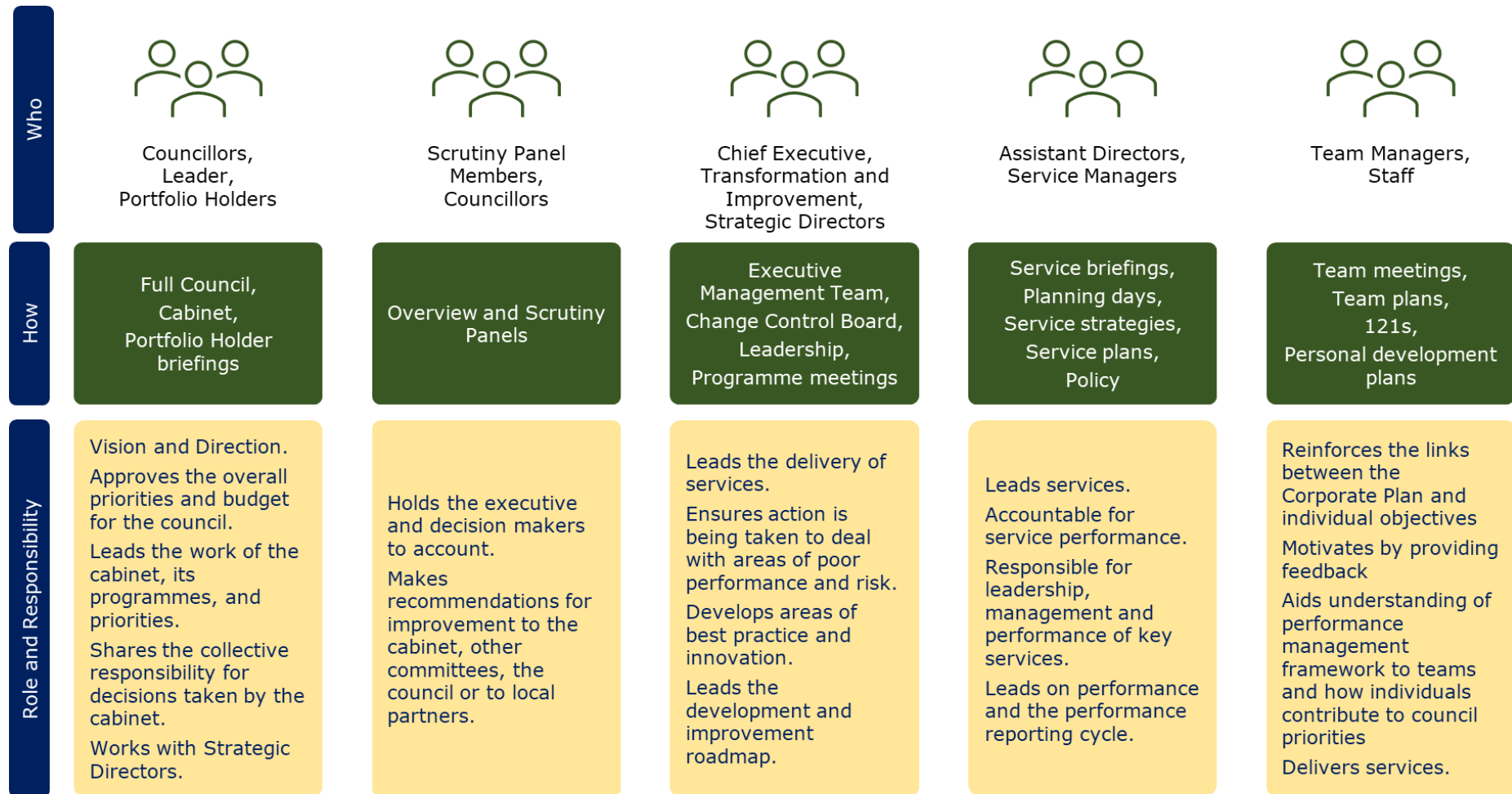
The reporting cycle as detailed above enables scrutiny at all stages, this enables the dashboard to be updated with further clarity and context. Once approved by Cabinet the corporate dashboard will be published on the New Forest District Council website so that it is accessible in the public domain.

Roles and responsibilities

We recognise the success of the performance management framework is dependent upon everyone in our organisation working towards a set of agreed goals. All staff will therefore contribute to its success, and each have a role to play in delivering the Corporate Plan and applying our performance management framework (roles and responsibilities in detail at Fig.5).

Poor performance management can create a defensive position, prompting staff to focus on hitting the targets only and not think about the broader service. We will embed a culture of honesty and transparency that looks to learn from and turn around any poor performance. It is important that we deliver the right services and achieve the right outcomes for our residents.

Effective performance management is rooted in continuous improvement, which will help drive change and help us to deliver our 'Future New Forest' Transformation Programme.



These are supported by cross-cutting roles such as Finance, Risk, Democratic Services and Communications. All will have a role across the breadth of the organisation.

Fig 5. Roles and responsibilities

Values

The behaviours we exhibit when performing our duties will demonstrate our core values.

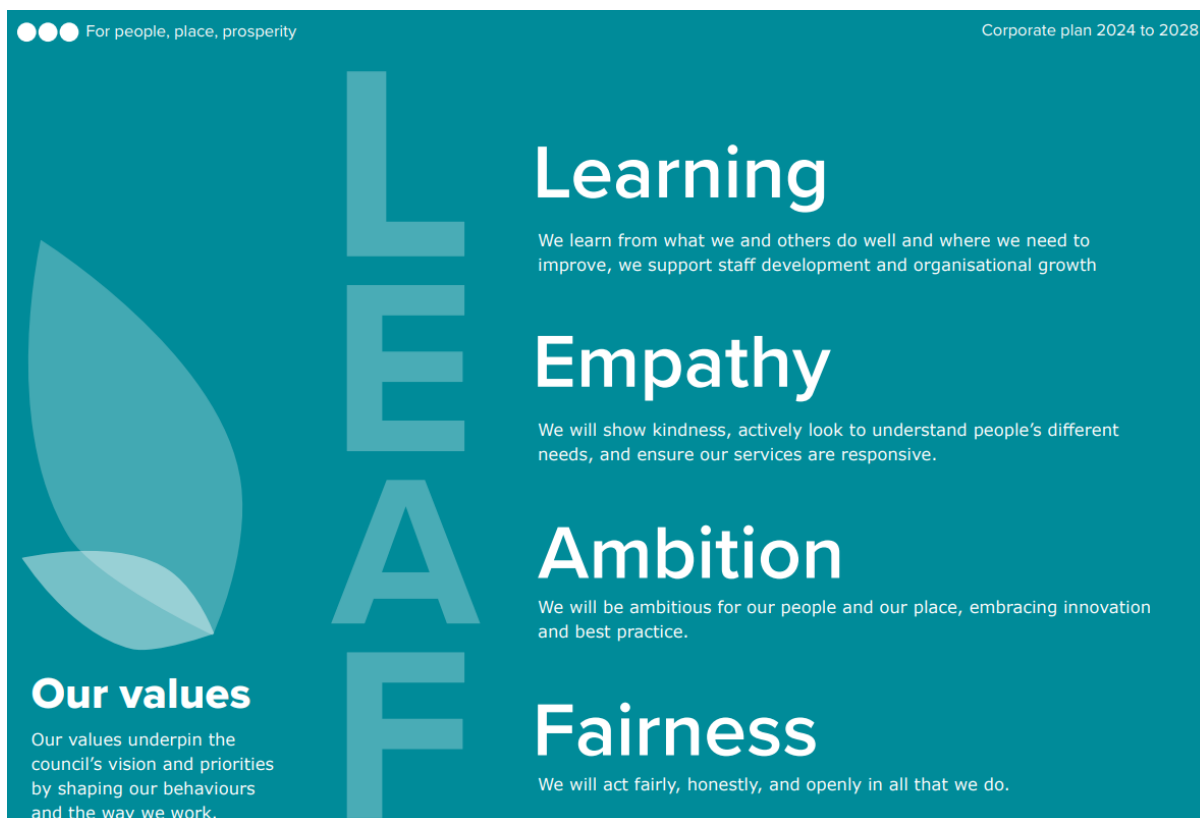


Fig 6. Our Values page taken from The Corporate Plan 2024 to 2028

Culture

Our leadership team will direct and steer the development that helps us to grow. They will seek approval for any investment needed to build any necessary infrastructure, following our governance arrangements. They will lead by example and exhibit our values and expected behaviours at all times. They will also direct staff to adopt these values and expected behaviours while undertaking their duties.

Similarly, staff will be required to demonstrate commitment to these values and behaviours, recognise their contribution to and support the delivery of the priorities in the Corporate Plan.

Our culture is one where we embrace new ways of working, welcoming our 'Future New Forest' Transformation Programme. We will be bold in changing our behaviours and the way we work.

We have demonstrated that we will listen to our residents and staff to encourage a culture of continuous improvement, willing to try new things, raise suggestions for improvement and actively reflect on things that are not as effective as they could be.

As an organisation, we will learn from and identify corrective actions to address areas of poor performance. We will be transparent, reporting these in our dashboards so all stakeholders have an accurate and honest appraisal of current position. We will remain positive about failure prevention, avoid blame culture and will learn from previous performance.

Equally when things go well, we will share successes and best practices and communicate these to our teams and the public. This will embed the effectiveness of the performance management framework.

It is essential to demonstrate our values and expected behaviours at all times so we can always deliver the best services to our residents. These behaviours should be reflected in every interaction with customers and colleagues. Our culture will lead us to focus on achieving positive outcomes and continually improve the services provided.

We will understand how we work with our elected Members, including the Overview and Scrutiny panels in a collaborative work environment. As ambassadors for the council, it is vital to represent the organisation in the best possible light.

Being financially aware will help in making informed decisions and optimising resources effectively. Our staff will actively engage in the performance management process to identify areas of improvement, receive feedback for excellent performance and share best practice.

Key performance standards

The following standards are applied to embed our performance management culture.

- Leadership - The leadership team play a pivotal role in the success of our performance management framework and embedding the framework into the way we work. Our leadership will encourage and enable learning and development by providing sufficient time, resource, and experience.
- Staff - A real commitment from all staff is needed to embed the framework into our behaviours and way we work. Staff must adopt a culture of continuous improvement throughout all levels of the organisation.
- Transparency - Staff are encouraged to flag risks and concerns to help prevent failure.
- Improvements - Reflection upon areas of failure or poor performance to identify change to help avoid future pitfalls is also to be encouraged.
- Communication - Performance management is to be approached in a positive manner, promoting good practice, communicating success, avoiding blame culture at all times, and learning from what we do well and where we need to improve.
- Support - Staff should be able to access support and advice whenever they need it to encourage learning and growth.
- Reinforcement - Demonstration of the benefits of performance management and celebrating successes, sharing best practices will be pivotal to the success of the performance management framework.