

# Stronger Together Strategic Performance Framework

## Introduction

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The Stronger Together Strategic Performance Framework ensures that the Council's vision and priorities are translated into clear plans and measurable outcomes which are delivered by officers. It sets out corporate expectations for managing performance, which are complemented by related processes within individual Directorates and services. In some areas, particularly in Children's Services and Adult Social Care, there are additional national performance reporting requirements with defined collection and reporting methods through statutory returns.

By enabling effective performance management, the Framework is intended to support Members and officers to:

- Prioritise what gets done and ensure there are sufficient resources to do it
- Ensure value for money and optimal use of resources
- Motivate and manage staff
- Enable identification and action to address issues and concerns swiftly
- Learn from past performance and inform future performance
- Increase customer satisfaction

## Vision, priorities and objectives

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The Stronger Together Strategic Plan provides a clear vision for Stoke-on-Trent, to create a city we can all be proud of. This vision is underpinned by five priorities which guide everything the Council does:

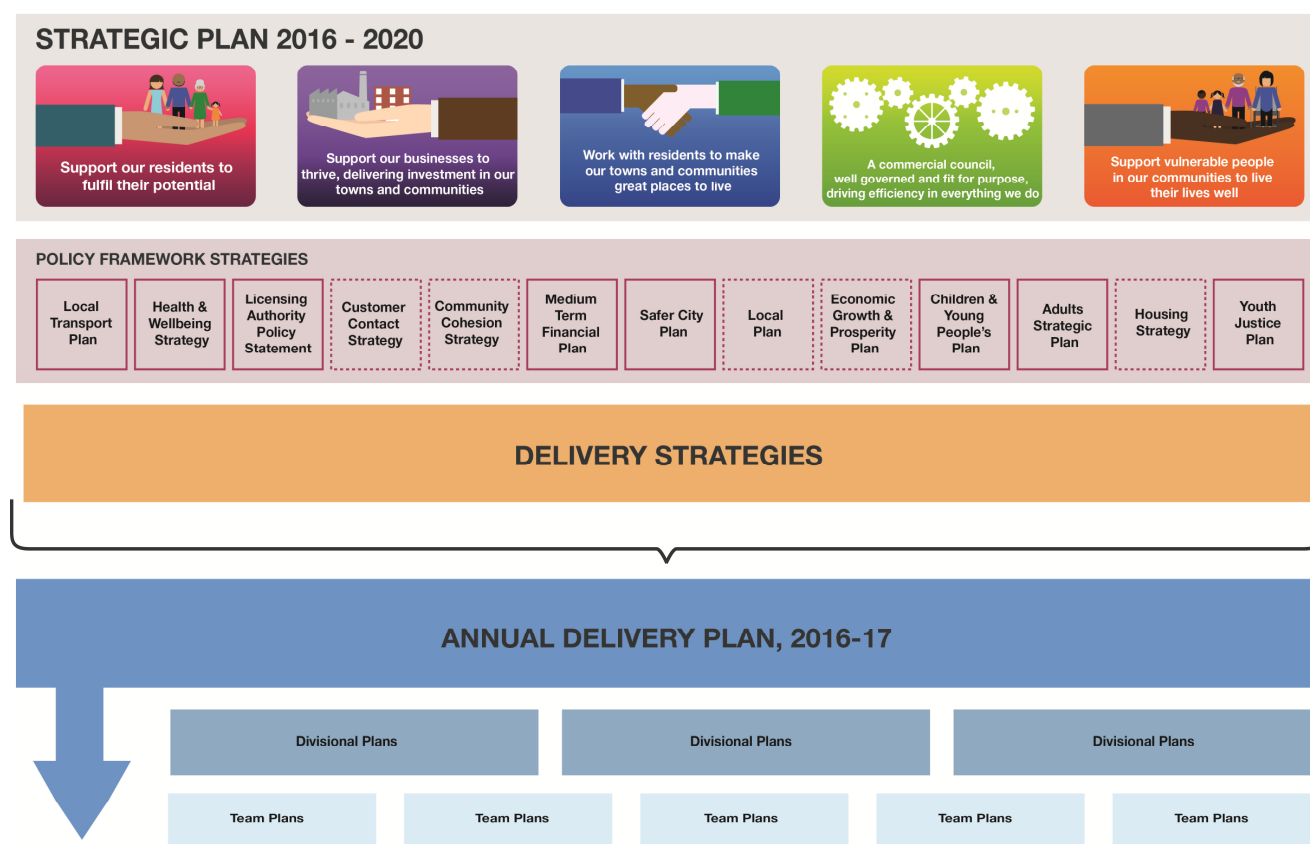
- Support our residents to fulfil their potential;
- Support our businesses to thrive, delivering investment in our towns and communities;
- Work with residents to make our towns and communities great places to live;
- A commercial council, well governed and fit for purpose, driving efficiency in everything we do;
- Support vulnerable people in our communities to live their lives well.

Sitting underneath the five priorities are 29 strategic objectives which describe the areas where the organisation will drive change over the next four years. To guide the delivery of our priorities and objectives there are five cross cutting values. They describe how we will work and how we would like to work with others, across organisational and geographical boundaries:

- Ownership and accountability
- Ambition
- Respect
- Involvement
- Working with others

## Planning Framework

The diagram below describes the Council's draft strategic and business planning framework:



### Strategic Plan, 2016-20

The Stronger Together Strategic Plan sets out the Council's vision and strategic priorities for 2016-20 and the objectives that it will endeavour to achieve during that time.

### Annual Delivery Plan

The Annual Delivery Plan details key new initiatives and activities that the Council plans to deliver over the coming year – these developments are crucial to driving continuous improvement in performance but takes place alongside day to day delivery of the full range of functions performed by the Council.

### Policy Framework strategies

Supporting the delivery of the Strategic Plan are the Council's key policy framework strategies. Agreed by Council, these sit beneath the Strategic Plan and help set the context in which all other policy and strategy is developed.

A number of these strategies are partnership – rather than solely Council – responsibilities. The Health & Wellbeing Strategy for example is a statutory requirement for the Health & Wellbeing Board.

### Delivery strategies and plans

Sitting underneath the Strategic Plan and policy framework strategies are a series of delivery strategies and plans that support the delivery of key objectives. Examples of such plans are the Educational Improvement Plan, Tackling Obesity Strategy and Asset Management Plans. Whilst lead responsibility may sit within one service area, activities may be delivered by other areas of the Council and partner organisations.

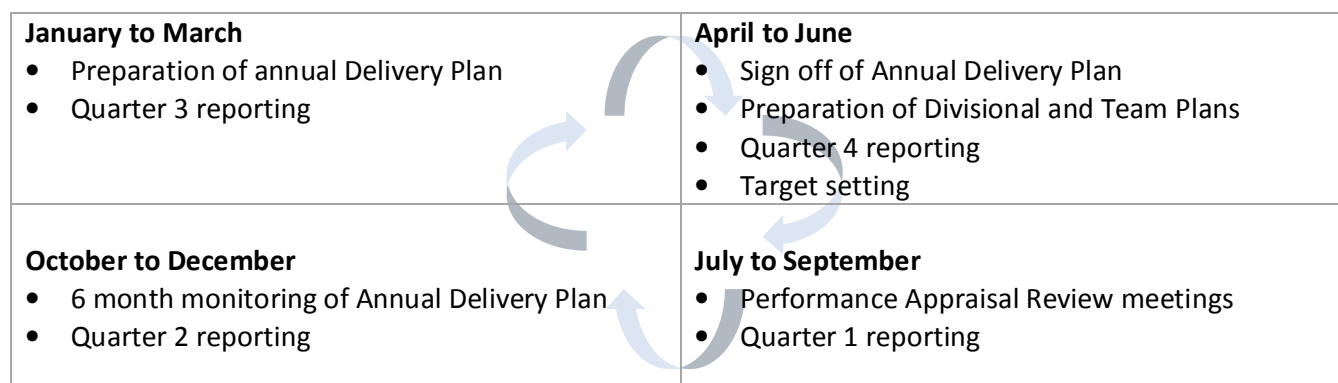
## Divisional Plans

Each Assistant Director has a divisional plan for their area. These specify the outcomes to be achieved by each Council division, how they relate to strategic priorities and the objectives, activities, milestones and resources needed to deliver them. Divisional plans set out how the relevant budget will be spent and may include actions to achieve greater efficiencies and longer-term savings plans.

## Personal Development Plans

A golden thread runs from the Stronger Together Strategic Plan to the objectives and targets recorded in each individual staff members' Performance Development Plan. These Development Plans contain personal objectives, agreed between the staff member and line-manager, which set out how they contribute to their team plan and the council's strategic priorities and objectives.

**The Council's business planning cycle is set out below:**



## Measures

### ***Strategic Measures***

In order to monitor progress against the priorities and objectives in the Strategic Plan a set of strategic measures will be monitored by Members quarterly. These measures (numbering between 50-60) provide an indicative assessment of performance and are reviewed annually alongside the Annual Delivery Plan.

### ***Operational measures***

Sitting underneath this strategic set are a broader range of measures which are monitored by Directorates and services to understand delivery against service purpose.

### **Timeliness of reporting**

In order for decision makers to make swift, informed decisions it is important that information is made available in a timely manner. The majority of operational measures are collected on a monthly basis and updates are provided a maximum of 5 working days after the end of each month. For some strategic measure data is provided by partners or national bodies and the lead in times are longer but ten working days is the target for providing quarterly updates, enabling reports to be produced swiftly for decision making.

## Target setting

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Target setting can play an important role in strategic planning and improvement, enabling prioritisation of resources, monitoring of progress, recognition of improvement and identification of underperformance. However, inappropriate target setting can lead to unintended consequences – for example, distortion of priorities or neglect of other non-targeted activities. Where appropriate for specific measures corporate target setting takes place during quarter one, once the Annual Delivery Plan and strategic measures have been agreed.

## Data quality

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Good quality data is crucial to informing decision making and shaping optimal service delivery. To ensure that the data and information used for decision making is robust and of good quality is paramount to ensuring that we are making the right decisions and using our ever limiting resources in the correct place. With confidence in the accuracy and reliability of our data Members and officers will be able to take innovative approaches to service delivery through taking managed risks. The Council's data quality policy sets out how we ensure that our performance information is robust.

## Performance monitoring

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The Council has in place a range of mechanisms for reporting and monitoring its performance to track and challenge progress against its priorities and objectives. These include reporting tools for strategic and management information.

The frequency and level of reporting of strategic measures is outlined in the table below:

	<b>Corporate Directors Boards</b>	<b>Portfolio Briefings</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committees</b>
<b>Strategic Measures and Finance Quarterly Report</b> Up to 60 measures (majority of which are updated quarterly) plus quarterly finance report	Quarterly	Quarterly	Quarterly	Quarterly
<b>Annual Delivery Plan</b> Action plan setting out 4-5 key strategic activities per Stronger Together objective to be delivered in year	Six monthly	Six monthly	Six monthly	Six monthly

## Strategic Plan and Measures monitoring

The Council's Strategic Measures are monitored quarterly to Corporate Directors Board, Portfolio Briefings, Overview & Scrutiny and Cabinet. This monitoring is undertaken through a joint Strategic Performance and Financial Monitoring Report which also sets out the Council's financial performance. Progress in delivering the Annual Delivery Plan is carried out at 6 monthly intervals and forms part of the Quarter 2 and Quarter 4 reports.

## Performance Improvement

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The quarterly **Strategic Measures report**, outlined above, plays a central role in enabling Members to monitor progress, challenge services on their performance as a 'critical friend', and make decisions about where to focus improvement work.

### ***Overview & Scrutiny Committees***

The four Overview and Scrutiny committees and their elected Members also have a role to play in holding the Executive and officers to account and supporting policy development.

The Committees receive regular monitoring of performance against strategic measures via the quarterly Strategic Performance and Financial Monitoring Report which is presented by the relevant Cabinet member in conjunction with the Policy and Performance Service. Any questions that cannot be answered at the meeting are responded to in writing following the meeting.

Information gleaned from the quarterly monitoring reports can act as a trigger for more detailed scrutiny of specific topics via Task and Finish groups or Spotlight sessions. The Committee can invite the relevant Cabinet member and senior officer to attend these sessions, to challenge and understand policy and practice. At the conclusion of all Task and Finish groups and Spotlight sessions a report and action plan is produced.

Recommendations are submitted to Corporate Directors Board and Cabinet for their consideration and response.

### ***Public Reporting***

Reporting to the public so that they can hold the Council and its services to account is a key element of the Performance Management Framework.

All key plans and strategies are made available on the Council's website and where appropriate summary versions are produced.

The Council also reports to residents on performance against its key priorities – within the annual Council Tax communication which goes to all households and through an annual performance report. In addition, all quarterly monitoring reports are made available publicly on the Council's website.