Powys County Council

Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework

Powys

Contents

What is Performance Management and Quality Assurance, and why does it matter?

In order to know whether the council is achieving the priorities and objectives it has set out in its plans, it must have a robust and timely way of monitoring and measuring performance against them.

Performance management is about asking **how many or how much** we have done and quality assurance asks **how well** we have undertaken a task, or **how good** was a service that we delivered? Together, performance management and quality assurance show if something is for example on time, or to target, and how well we are doing it.

Key principles of effective performance management and quality assurance are:

Everyone in the council has a role to play in managing performance

Cabinet, Executive Management Team and Senior Leadership Team depend upon **good-quality performance information** to make well-informed decisions

Managing performance is essential for **good governance and accountability**

Performance measures must reflect the council's priorities to **ensure objectives are being met**

Self-evaluation and review of activity form an important part of **continuous improvement**

Performance information must be acted upon to **improve outcomes**

Performance management and quality assurance involve simple principles:

Plan

Do

Review

- **Plan** what needs to be done to achieve the desired outcomes
- **Do** it
- **Review** progress regularly and evaluate the effectiveness of our actions against intended outcomes, adjusting plans where necessary
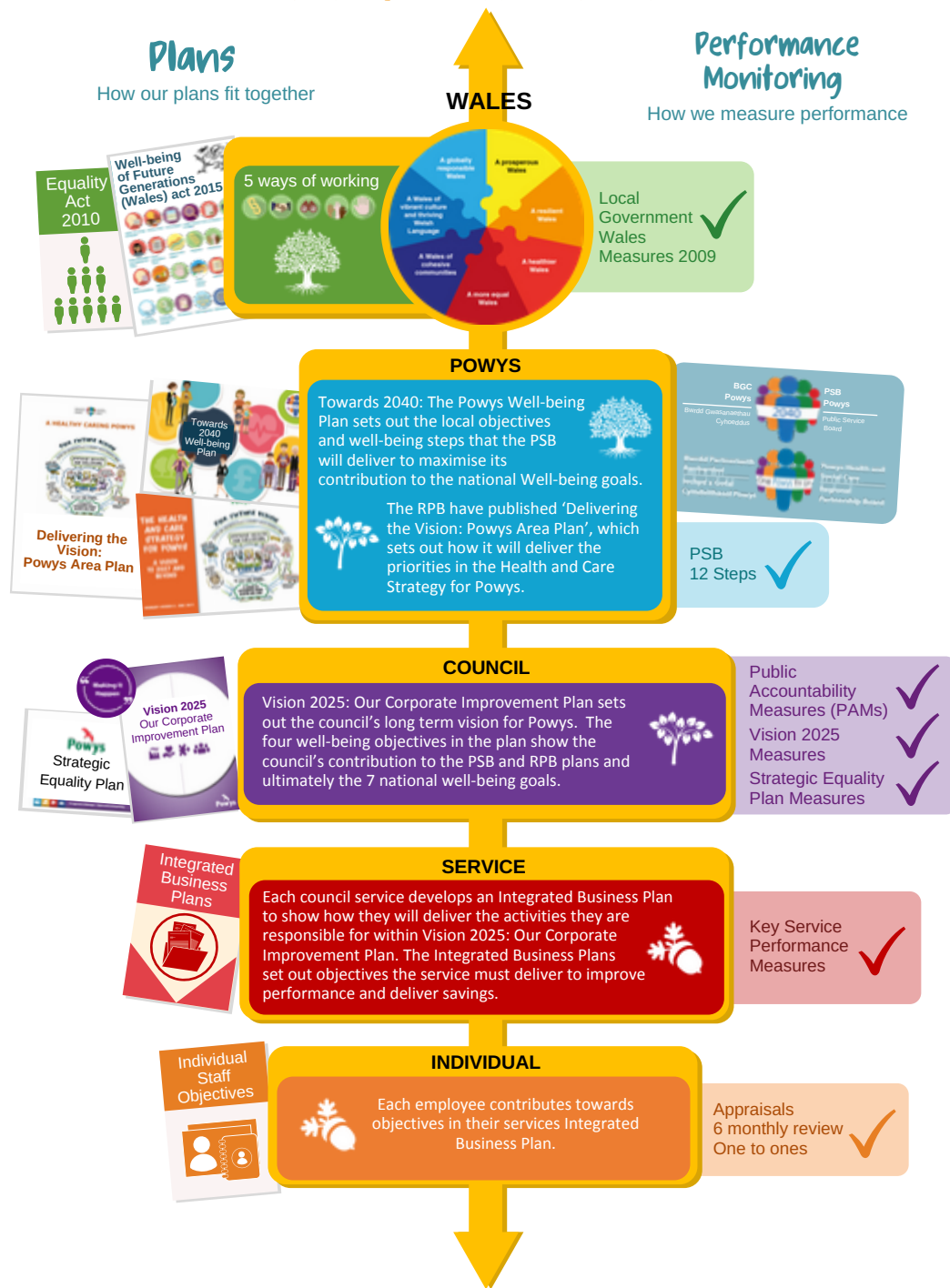
A robust performance management and quality assurance framework is essential for ensuring collective systems and methods are used throughout the council for managing performance. It also helps us work as one 'joined up' community, where everybody is clear about how they are helping to achieve the council's vision.

The framework also ensures that staff clearly understand their responsibilities regarding performance management and quality assurance, on which the council's governance arrangements will hold them to account.

Performance management is based on a cycle of continuous review and improvement, which this framework describes.

The Golden Thread

Plans
How our plans fit together

Performance Monitoring
How we measure performance

WALES

- Equality Act 2010
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) act 2015
- 5 ways of working
- Local Government Wales Measures 2009 ✓

POWYS

- A HEALTHY CARING POWYS
- Delivering the Vision: Powys Area Plan
- Towards 2040 Well-being Plan

Towards 2040: The Powys Well-being Plan sets out the local objectives and well-being steps that the PSB will deliver to maximise its contribution to the national Well-being goals.

The RPB have published 'Delivering the Vision: Powys Area Plan', which sets out how it will deliver the priorities in the Health and Care Strategy for Powys.

- BGC Powys / Bwrdd Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
- PSB Powys / Public Service Board
- PSB 12 Steps ✓

COUNCIL

- Vision 2025 Our Corporate Improvement Plan
- Strategic Equality Plan

Vision 2025: Our Corporate Improvement Plan sets out the council's long term vision for Powys. The four well-being objectives in the plan show the council's contribution to the PSB and RPB plans and ultimately the 7 national well-being goals.

- Public Accountability Measures (PAMs) ✓
- Vision 2025 Measures ✓
- Strategic Equality Plan Measures ✓

SERVICE

- Integrated Business Plans

Each council service develops an Integrated Business Plan to show how they will deliver the activities they are responsible for within Vision 2025: Our Corporate Improvement Plan. The Integrated Business Plans set out objectives the service must deliver to improve performance and deliver savings.

- Key Service Performance Measures ✓

INDIVIDUAL

- Individual Staff Objectives

Each employee contributes towards objectives in their services Integrated Business Plan.

- Appraisals 6 monthly review One to ones ✓

To understand how performance management works in the council, it is important to understand what plans need to be monitored and how they all fit together.

The diagram shows the Golden Thread between our key plans, from the longer term strategic plan that we are working on with partners to our Corporate Improvement Plan and Integrated Business Plans, right down to individual staff plans.

- Short term <5 years
- Medium term 5-10 years
- Long term 10-25 years

Vision 2025: Our Corporate Improvement Plan outlines the strategic outcomes and priorities that the council is aiming to achieve. To ensure services are focussed on achieving these outcomes and priorities, each service area is required to produce an Integrated Business Plan.

As part of the Integrated Business Planning (IBP) process, the first step is a requirement for service's to evaluate their current performance and ask **"Where are we now?"**. This provides the basis of any future Integrated Business Plans. This evaluation will be undertaken with an analysis of their performance, a cost analysis, regulatory feedback, customer feedback/satisfaction alongside locality data and Well-Being and Population Assessments. This allows the service to identify the context of any future development areas and any areas for improvement within their current work.

The Integrated Business Plans form the foundation of the council's performance management process by explaining in detail the objectives, actions and targets developed to measure and report progress against desired outcomes.

Performance Measures

For the council to be able to fully understand how it is performing it is essential to have meaningful and achievable measures that clearly link inputs and activities to outputs and outcomes. Early visibility of key performance information can alert Cabinet, Executive Management Team and Senior Leadership Team to areas of concern through visualising trends and identifying areas where performance is in need of improvement against previously agreed targets, and what matters most to prioritise resources.

Performance measures allow for early risk identification and give all services the opportunity to potentially mitigate issues. They are also an opportunity for leadership teams to have internal controls in ensuring compliance with statutory requirements, and to monitor them to ensure the council is adhering to local or national guidelines. services can also reconsider resource alignment for areas where measures show overperformance.

On a day-to-day basis, performance measures also allow Heads of Service and Managers to monitor and review their service areas performance against plans, whilst also empowering employees to understand and measure their progress and contribution to the organisation's aims and objectives.

In order to ensure a balanced approach to performance management the council has agreed a suite of measures as outlined in the diagram:

Plan

Performance Measurement

Accountability

High Level Data
Indicative of overall performance health across council

- PAMs
- Key Service Performance Measures
- SEP Measures
- Strategic/ Programme Risk Report

- EMT
- SLT
- Cabinet
- Transformation Board

Supporting Data
Challenges or supports high level indicators & provides detailed context through analysis

- Top 5 Measures
- Service Risk Register Report

- Head of Service
- Improvement and Assurance Board

Detailed Service Data
Higher frequency, more dynamic, focussed on specific service areas/ projects

- Performance information reflecting in year service performance and directing action to maintain and improve

- SMTs
- OMTs
- Project Leads

Team & Individual Performance Data
High frequency, very focussed

- Individual and team targets
- Performance information managed through feedback and 121s

- Line Managers
- Teams
- Individuals

Vision 2025: Our Corporate Improvement Plan 2018-2023 (CIP)

These are high level measures that are used to monitor progress against outcomes identified as part of the Vision 2025 plan.

Top 20 Performance Measures

These are based on what is most important to Powys - informed by Vision 2025, regulatory reports, and a mix of Public Accountability Measures (PAMs) and local measures.

Public Accountability Measures (PAMs)

These are a set of national measures which Powys will use to measure its high level performance, in comparison to the other 21 councils in Wales.

Service's Top 5 Performance Measures

These are specific performance measures chosen by the services to show how they are performing at an operational level. They are based on what is most important to services and as a suite will give an overview of the operational health of the organisation.

Individual Staff Measures

There is a series of personal targets agreed between the line manager and employee to manage work effectively and understand how their work contributes to the service's improvement plan and ultimately the council's Strategic Vision.

What determines a good performance measure?

When determining which measures to monitor the following criteria should be taken into account:

S SPECIFIC

- What do you need to achieve?
- Are you clear on the parameters and outcomes?
- Have you provided enough detail that ensures clarity and common understanding of what is to be achieved?
- What is the expected result?

M MEASURABLE

- Could this be measured and decided without argument that the result had been achieved?
- How will you know the objective has been achieved?
- What indicators will you look for to measure progress and success?
- What data is available?
- Do new measures need to be identified?
- Think about quantity and quality measures

A ACHIEVABLE

- How does this objective fit with your local strategic priorities in the context of your role?
- How does the achievement of this objective contribute to your service achieving its overall objectives?
- In what way is the objective significant?
- How does the objective fit within the context of your role?
- What would be the impact to your service if the objective was not achieved?

R RELEVANT

- Is the objective appropriate for your role?
- Will the objective stretch and challenge you?
- Can you achieve your objective with the available resources? If not, how can you address this?
- What help will you require from your line manager or are there others that you will require assistance from?
- Do you have all the relevant skills and knowledge to complete the objective to the defined specifics?
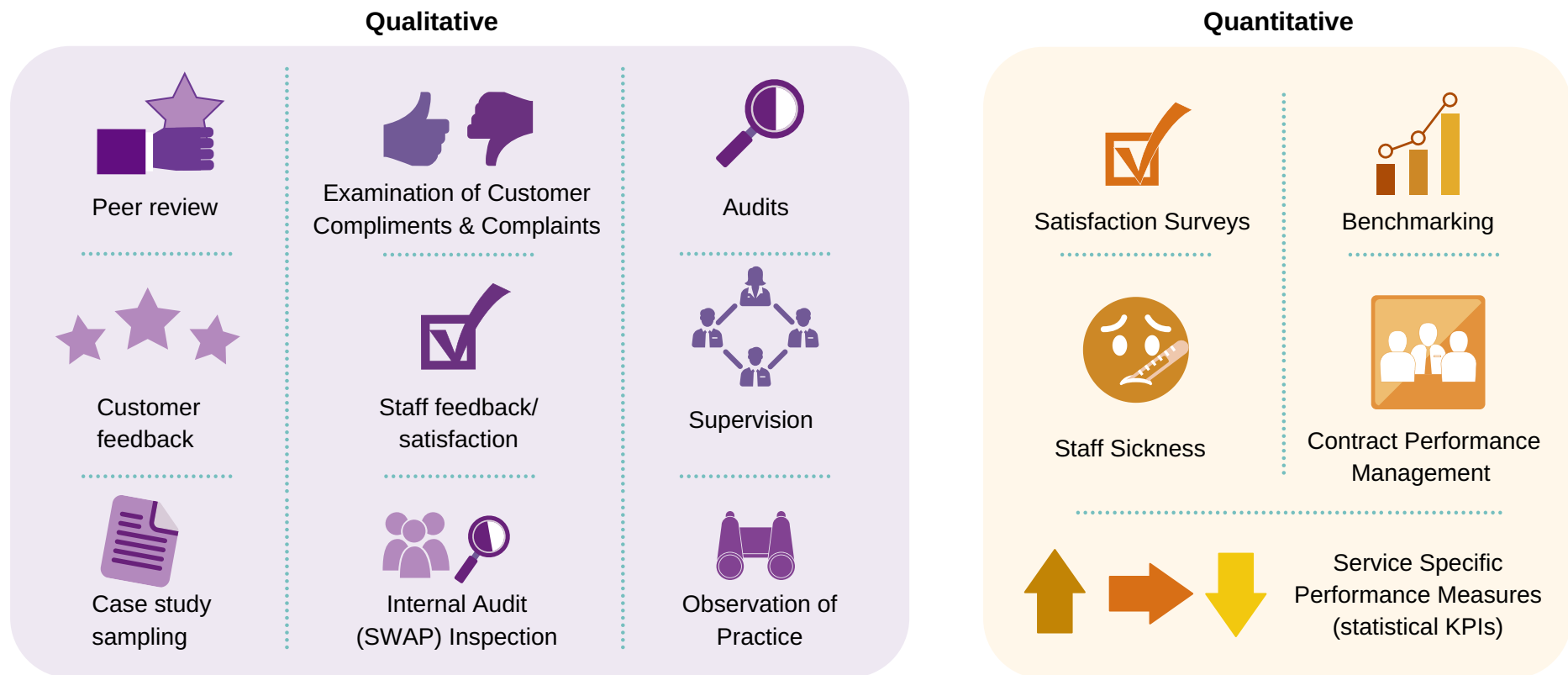
T TIME BOUND

- Are there clear time frames attached to the objective? (e.g. specific dates)
- If the objective goes beyond the review period, have you set milestone dates?
- Are there other objectives which will depend upon the completion of this one?
- What could impact or compromise the deadline?
- How can you mitigate these if they are of concern?
- Is the deadline realistic?

Why is it important to measure quality?
Having effective Quality Assurance measures ensures expected standards are being met including customer needs and value for money.

At the start of each financial year all Heads of Service are required to identify quality assurance information they will be using to monitor quality within their service. Heads of Service should use a selection of tools (examples listed below) alongside their respective service measures.

It is important to use a mixture of quantitative and qualitative measures as they are interdependent, and a balanced approach to using both allows for a fuller understanding of the quality of work being undertaken. Quantitative methods show the quantity of something, rather than its detail or quality, whilst qualitative measures are more descriptive and tell a more complete story, as they are often based on qualities or characteristics.

Qualitative

Peer review

Examination of Customer Compliments & Complaints

Audits

Customer feedback

Staff feedback/ satisfaction

Supervision

Case study sampling

Internal Audit (SWAP) Inspection

Observation of Practice

Quantitative

Satisfaction Surveys

Benchmarking

Staff Sickness

Contract Performance Management

Service Specific Performance Measures (statistical KPIs)

For any projects, it is also important to use wider research alongside the qualitative and quantitative measures to gain a fuller understanding of the current service area's performance.

Cabinet Members, Executive Management Team and Senior Leadership Team need accurate and timely performance information in order to:

Highlight Key Achievements

Identify and address areas of concern

Provide assurance against planned outcomes

At the end of each financial period, performance from the previous quarter is collated, reported and reviewed by services to monitor whether targets are being met and identify any improvements and actions needed. This is completed on a quarterly basis, with a Performance Reporting Timetable published annually prior to the first quarter's collection, detailing the timelines for performance reporting to be completed by the service. The following documents will be circulated in a single document to services, and should be used to collate and report relevant performance information that will form part of the overall Quarterly Performance Report;

Achievements, Issues & Actions report (AIA)
This should outline progress against all activities/objectives and measures that services are responsible for in Vision 2025: CIP and their IBP.

Top 5 Service Measures and Quality Assurance Report (Top 5)
This should provide the most recent data against agreed measures and quality assurance methods.

Public Accountability Measures (PAMs)
This should provide the most recent data against agreed measures.

Strategic Equality Plan Report (SEP)
This should outline progress against all activities/objectives and measures that services are responsible for in the Strategic Equality Plan.

Strategic/Service Risks (Risk)
All service risks should be updated on the JCAD system including risk score and controls.
For all the listed reports, if performance is given a BRAG status of RED and AMBER (see page 10), explanatory commentary, remedial action, responsible officer and timeframe for delivery should be given.
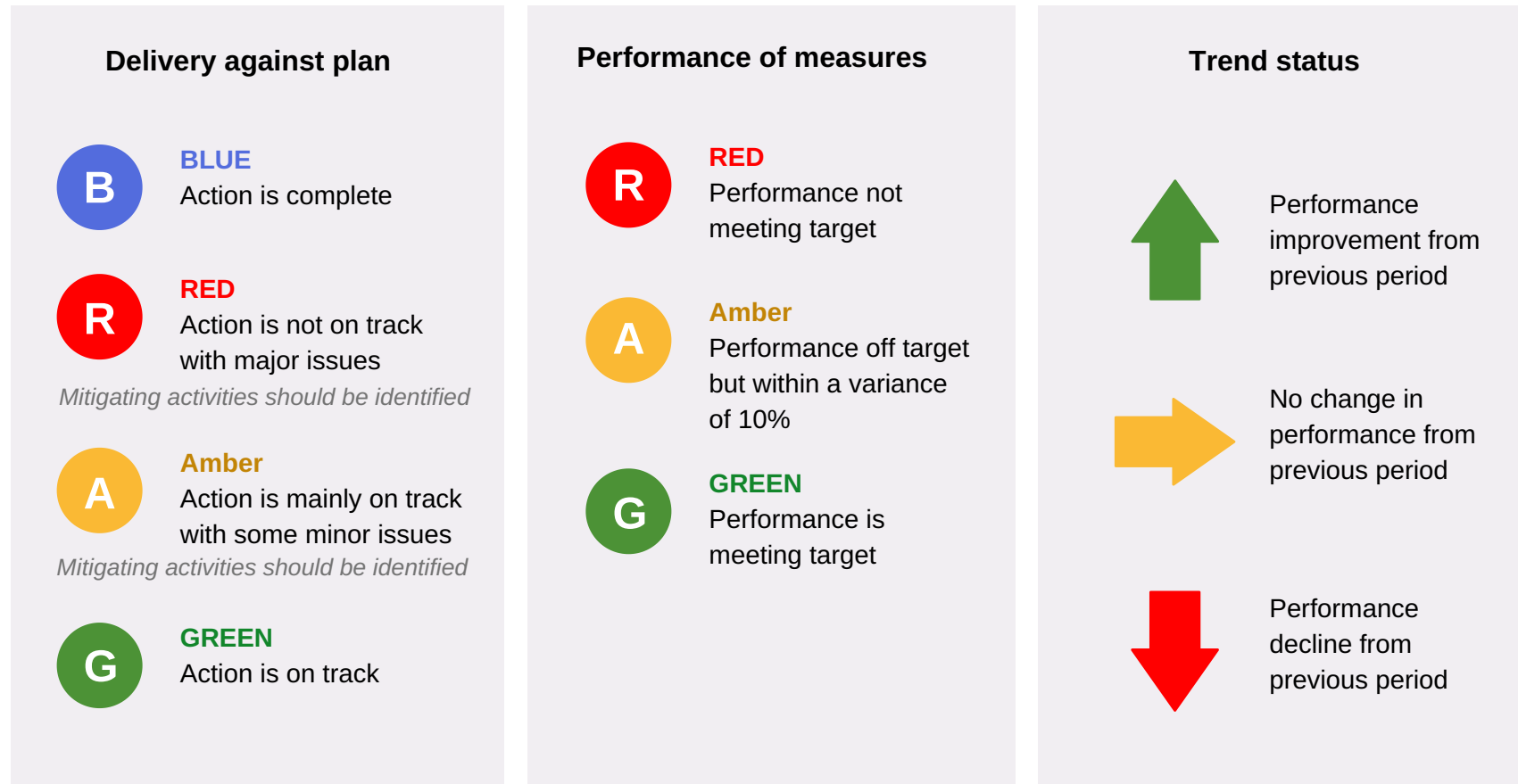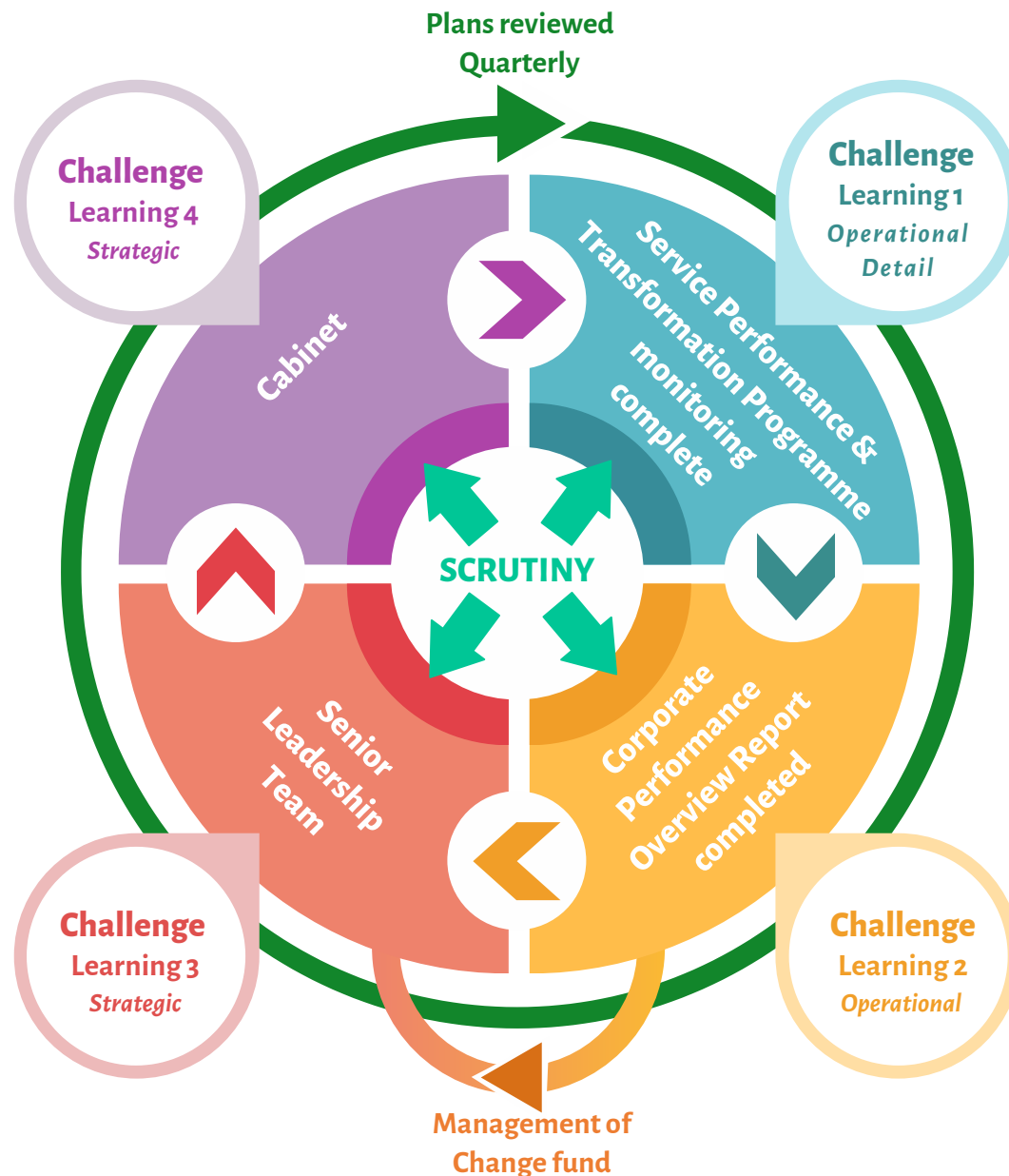
Service Challenge process
To ensure that Integrated Business Plans are not static documents, and regularly reviewed to ensure that they are working towards achieving their strategic aims, the council has a Service Challenge process. This is conducted twice per year across all services. The Service Challenge process focuses on a particular service's performance, financial position and any proposals to make service changes including potential impact on the public or users. The council's Service Challenge Panel (SCP) administers the service challenge process and consists of the Cabinet, Executive Management Team and the Head of Transformation and Communications. The Service Challenge process challenges heads of service on service provision including asking three key questions;

What the service will continue to do?

What the service will stop doing?

What the service will change to make efficiencies?

BRAG and RAG and Trend status definitions

The performance of all measures and activities should be reviewed against their agreed milestones and targets for the period and awarded a status using the Blue Red Amber Green (BRAG) traffic light system shown below;

Delivery against plan

B

BLUE
Action is complete

R

RED
Action is not on track
with major issues

Mitigating activities should be identified

A

Amber
Action is mainly on track
with some minor issues

Mitigating activities should be identified

G

GREEN
Action is on track

Performance of measures

R

RED
Performance not
meeting target

A

Amber
Performance off target
but within a variance
of 10%

G

GREEN
Performance is
meeting target

Trend status

Performance
improvement from
previous period

No change in
performance from
previous period

Performance
decline from
previous period

Plans reviewed Quarterly

Challenge Learning 4 *Strategic*

Cabinet

Challenge Learning 1 *Operational Detail*

Service Performance & Transformation Programme monitoring complete

SCRUTINY

Senior Leadership Team

Corporate Performance Overview Report completed

Challenge Learning 3 *Strategic*

Challenge Learning 2 *Operational*

Management of Change fund

Quarterly Reporting Cycle

The documents outlined above (AIA, Top5 & QA, PAMs, SEP and Risk) will be used to inform the following reporting cycle which is key to managing performance and enabling continuous review and improvement.

It is important to challenge the learnings from each phase as failure to challenge in an early stage where the issue could be resolved at an operational level could have a significant impact further along the cycle towards the strategic stages, and similarly, if not challenged at a Strategic level, this could impact on desired outcomes.

As part of this reporting cycle the council's scrutiny function can interrogate and challenge any documents at any point.

Challenge
Learning 1
Operational Detail

Quarterly Transformation Delivery Board
Evaluate and challenge delivery of objectives and key milestones as agreed in the Transformation Programme Plan, and at the same time evaluate learning and development.

Quarterly Service Performance Reviews
Evaluate and challenge Heads of Service and Portfolio Holders on performance and quality assurance against agreed standards and objectives, and at the same time evaluate learning and development.

Quality Assurance of Service Data
Evaluate Quality Assurance submissions from Heads of Service.

Improvement and Assurance Board (Quarterly)
Evaluate and challenge agreed owners on performance against activities in key improvement plans for Children's Services and Adult Social Care in line with regulatory recommendations. Learn and develop from the advice and challenge provided to the council by External Advisers.

Challenge
Learning 2
Operational

Corporate Performance Overview Report
Provide assurance to Cabinet and Senior Leadership Team of delivery of Vision 2025, Strategic Equality Plan and service improvement objectives.

Challenge
Learning 3
Strategic

Senior Leadership Team
Evaluate and challenge performance against delivery of strategic outcomes. On exceptions, prepare remedial actions for Cabinet approval, and at the same time evaluate learning and development.

Challenge
Learning 4
Strategic

Cabinet
To provide challenge and seek assurance that strategic outcomes are being met. Through exception reporting, be assured:
- Issues leading to consistent poor performance are understood
- Impact on strategic outcomes including savings is understood
- Remedial actions are put in place to bring performance back on track
- of continuous improvement as a result of quality assurance
- of continual learning and development opportunities.

Everyone has a role to play in managing performance in order to ensure objectives and intended outcomes are achieved.

Chief Executive
- Lead Executive Management Team on strategic or operational matters of significance
- Agree a programme to meet the outcomes and set expectations for delivery
- Own the vision, providing clear leadership and direction throughout its life
- Secure the investment required to deliver Vision 2025 so that the agreed outcomes are achieved
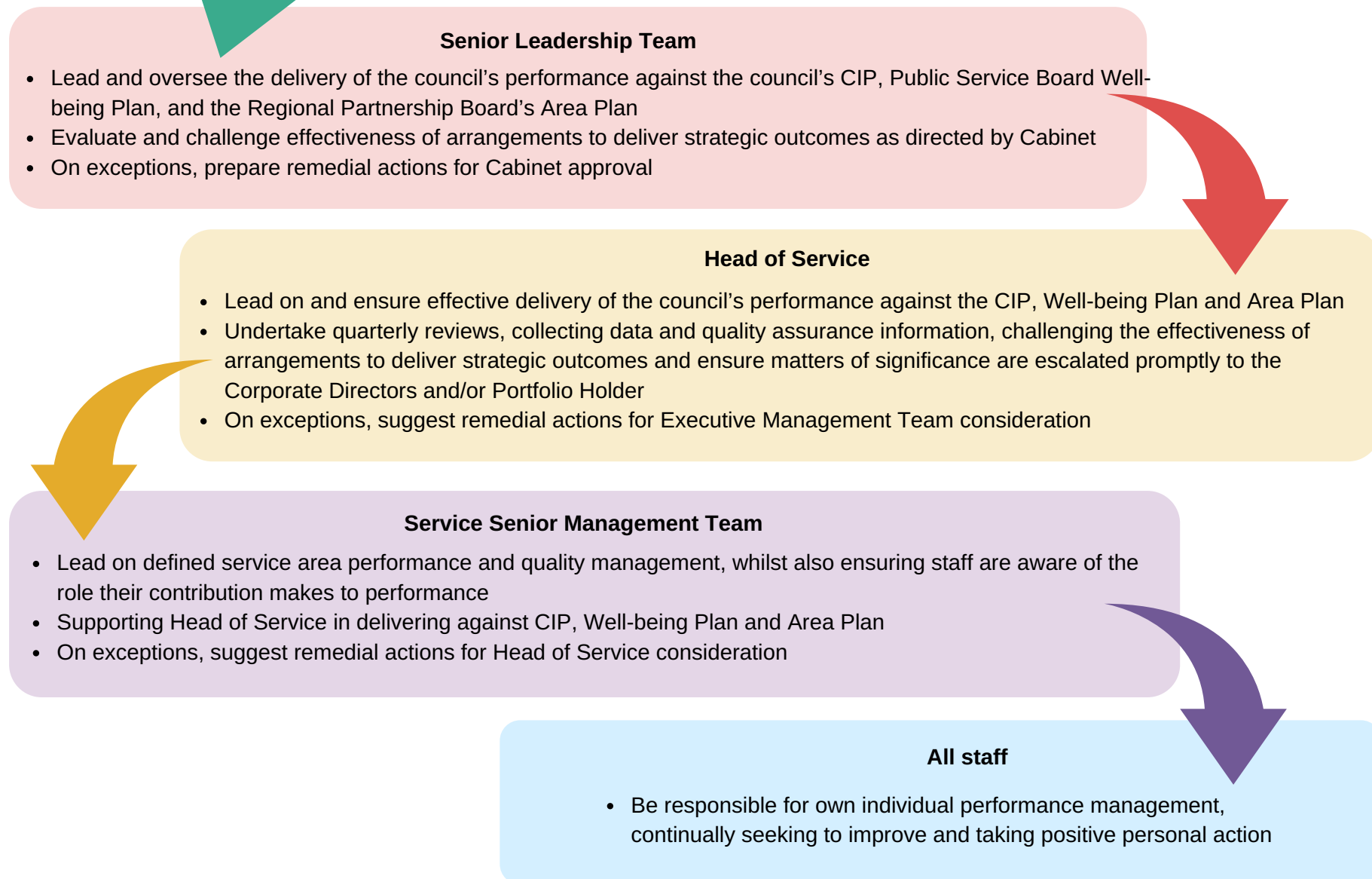- Hold Corporate Directors to account

Cabinet
- Ensure effective governance arrangements to support performance management are in place, robust and effective
- Evaluate and challenge Cabinet Portfolio Holders, EMT and SLT on performance against agreed priorities and objectives
- On exceptions, be satisfied that remedial actions will effectively improve performance in line with outcomes set out in Vision 2025

Transformation Delivery Board
- Define and agree the Programme Brief, and provide for the investment decisions for the Transformation Delivery Programme
- Create an environment in which the projects can thrive, with adequate resources to deliver on time and within agreed quality standards
- Assess and challenge the progress of the Programme against milestones
- Visible leadership and commitment to the Programme at communication events
- Confirm successful delivery, and ensure that the intended benefits and outcomes of the Programme are realised
- Sign-off at the closure of the Programme

Improvement and Assurance Board
- Provide advice and constructive challenge to the council's corporate transformation and improvement activity
- Oversee and ensure co-ordination of all external support for corporate and service specific change in the council
- Oversee the actions of the Corporate Director (Children and Adults) and provide constructive challenge and strategic oversight of the Director's actions as regards all Social Services functions, including implementation of the respective Improvement Plan for Children and Adults
- Advise the Cabinet Secretary and Welsh Government officials regularly on progress and make, if necessary, recommendations for further support or modification to the existing support package

Senior Leadership Team

- Lead and oversee the delivery of the council's performance against the council's CIP, Public Service Board Well-being Plan, and the Regional Partnership Board's Area Plan
- Evaluate and challenge effectiveness of arrangements to deliver strategic outcomes as directed by Cabinet
- On exceptions, prepare remedial actions for Cabinet approval

Head of Service

- Lead on and ensure effective delivery of the council's performance against the CIP, Well-being Plan and Area Plan
- Undertake quarterly reviews, collecting data and quality assurance information, challenging the effectiveness of arrangements to deliver strategic outcomes and ensure matters of significance are escalated promptly to the Corporate Directors and/or Portfolio Holder
- On exceptions, suggest remedial actions for Executive Management Team consideration

Service Senior Management Team

- Lead on defined service area performance and quality management, whilst also ensuring staff are aware of the role their contribution makes to performance
- Supporting Head of Service in delivering against CIP, Well-being Plan and Area Plan
- On exceptions, suggest remedial actions for Head of Service consideration

All staff

- Be responsible for own individual performance management, continually seeking to improve and taking positive personal action
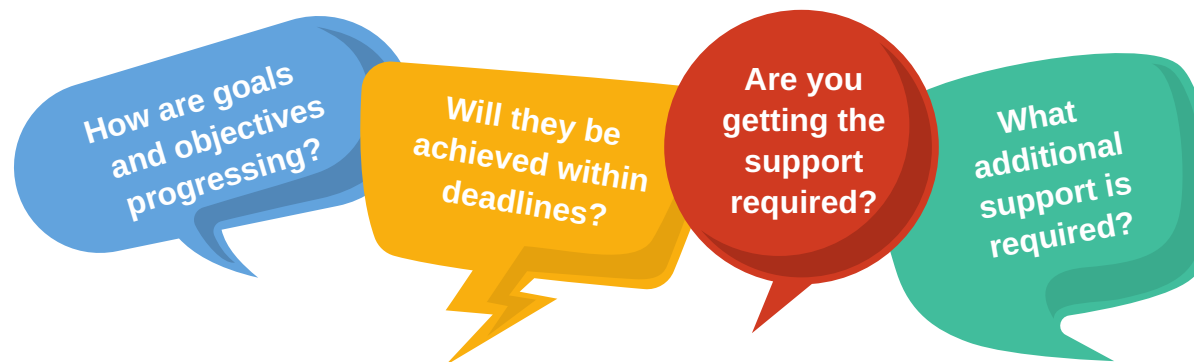
Performance information should be reviewed on a quarterly basis by Cabinet Members, Executive Management Team and Senior Leadership Team to enable early identification of emerging issues, and remedial action implemented to ensure performance is brought back on track.

An example of the type of questions these management figures should be asking include:

Will the agreed deadline be met?

Will this be achieved within budget?

What impact will this have on service area and wider customers?

Does other work need to be re-prioritised in order to meet this objective?

What additional resource and support is required to meet the objective?

Regular performance monitoring also ensures resources that are available can be directed where they are most needed in order to maximise achievement of priorities and outcomes. This can be discussed between employees and line managers during their monthly one-to-one meetings, and allow for an active dialogue in discussing their objectives.

Examples of questions to be asked when managing performance include:

How are goals and objectives progressing?

Will they be achieved within deadlines?

Are you getting the support required?

What additional support is required?

The regularity of these performance related conversations ensures that all individuals are able to address any challenges and track their performance, whilst also preparing both employee and line manager for their Appraisals.

There are also tools and resources that can be used to review these measures outside of the corporate reporting process. These include:

Powys Insight Centre

Appraisal Templates
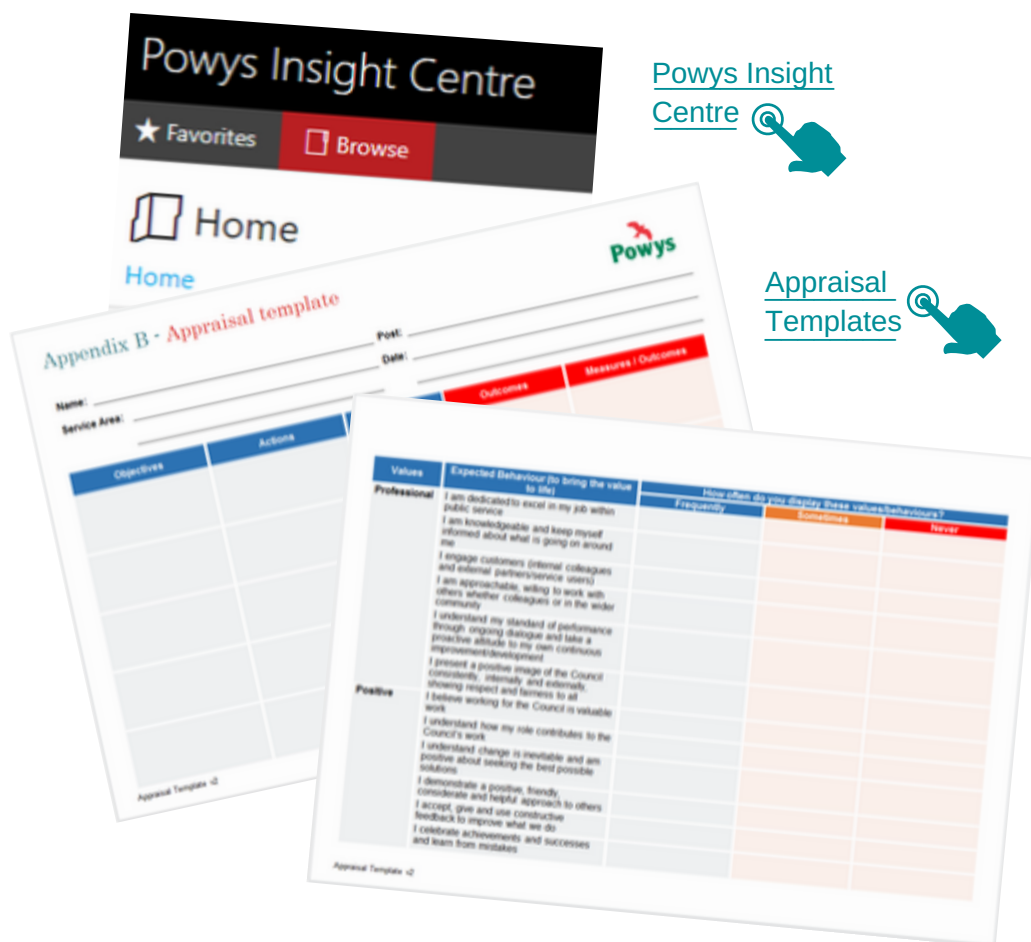
Benchmarking data regionally or nationally using performance information such as other neighbouring Authorities,

The above websites allow tracking of council measures against regional and national measures to understand how their areas performance compares to the comparative landscape. Areas that are above the comparative information could be used as a means to support other Authorities or organisations by highlighting good practice and organisational improvement. Benchmarking allows those that are not aligned to comparative data to reach out to other Authorities or organisations to help identify potential actions. Both actions impact upon a service's plan in driving continuous improvement within their service area.

The performance information gathered and remedial actions identified through the review stage should help to inform and strengthen future plans, informing the provisional base-line data aspect (Step 1) of the Integrated Business Planning of future plans and supporting services in understanding their area's further.

Glossary

CIP	Corporate Improvement Plan	This is one of the council's key plans, which sets out the long term vision and objectives for improving well-being for Powys residents, communities and businesses
EMT	Executive Management Team	Comprising of the Chief Executive, Corporate Directors, Head of Finance (also Section 151 officer) and the Head of Legal and Democratic services (also the Monitoring Officer)
HOS	Head of Service	Each of the council's service areas has an overall responsible lead officer, known as a Head of Service
IA	Impact Assessments	This is a tool for assessing the potential impact of a council decision or change in service on Powys residents and communities.
IBP	Integrated Business Plan	Each council service has an IBP to set out the improvement objectives it is working towards, how it plans to deliver them and the resources required to implement the plan effectively
OMT	Operational Management Team	Operational Management Teams for a service consisting of Senior Managers and Operational Managers
PAMs	Public Accountability Measures	These are a set of national measures which Powys will use to measure its high level performance, in comparison to the other 21 councils in Wales
PSB	Public Service Board	The statutory partnership body required under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015; responsible for developing Towards 2040: The Powys Well-being Plan in response to the Powys Well-being Assessment
QA	Quality Assurance	The quality checking of information to ensure it is meeting the desired standards
SEP	Strategic Equality Plan	We have a Strategic Equality Plan to make sure that we meet everybody's needs and to help us tackle disadvantages. The plan was adopted in 2016 and is reviewed annually
SLT	Senior Leadership Team	This leadership team consists of Heads of Service's and Corporate Directors
SMT	Senior Management Team	Senior Management Teams for a service