

Milton Keynes Council
Performance Management Framework
April 2010 Agreed CLT Final



The ultimate purpose of good performance management is to help us work smarter, avoid waste and achieve our goals

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Introduction:

As a Council we want to deliver the best value we can offer for the people of Milton Keynes and to create attractive, vibrant, safe and friendly places in which they live.

A new performance framework for the Council is essential to continue to meet the needs of performance reporting and to enable us to focus on the priorities of local people and work with our partners to deliver against them.

What does Performance Management mean?

Performance management is a process and behaviour for everyone in the Council to maintain standards and enable local people to access high quality services that improve their quality of life.

Managing performance is not something that should be seen as 'on top of the day job.' It is something that forms part of the everyday effective management and working practice in every area of the Council. In a nutshell, performance management is being clear about setting priorities, establishing proper measures, agreeing specific actions, implementing them and then reviewing the outcome. This involves being able to answer a number of questions:

- What do we want to do? - Having the right ambitions and the right targets.
- How do we intend to do it? - Having the right processes/people and talents to assure delivery of our ambition and targets.
- How well we are doing? - Having the right measurement set.
- What will we do next? - Knowing the right way forward.
- Are we being efficient? - Using our resources in the best way.

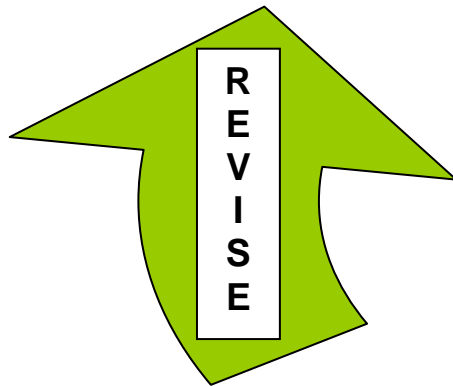
Milton Keynes Council and Performance Management

Performance management is a process, not an event. It operates as a continuous cycle. Milton Keynes Council has adopted an 8 step principle to performance management where these questions can be answered through the Plan, Do, Review and Revise model.

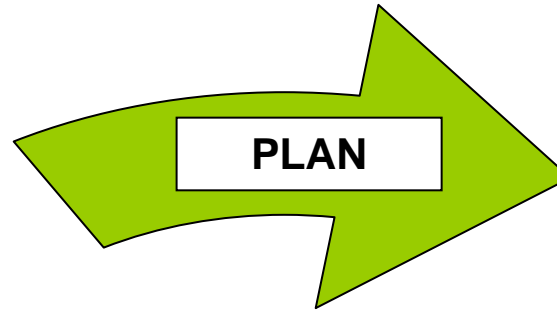
This framework emphasises that performance management should be embedded in everything that we do and that it is a continuous process. The plan-do-review-revise cycle takes place at many levels, that is, at team and individual, service, corporate and community strategy levels.

8 step principle to performance management cycle:

7. **Feedback and Learning** – CAA/Audit inspections, Place survey and other consultations and areas raised through inspections and other challenges to performance.
8. **Revise Strategy** – Revise strategy – change what we do so that objectives are achieved.



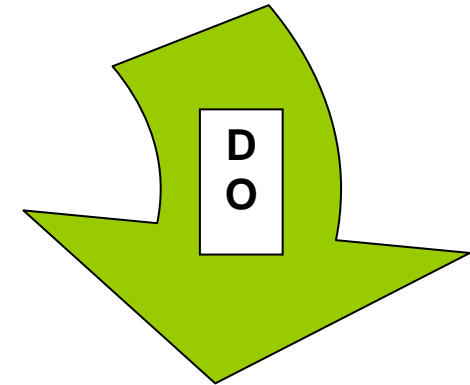
5. **Report** – Regular monitoring of Performance Indicators' and other objectives in to Performance plus.
6. **Performance Review** – Question performance and data such as: Is it quality data, has it been checked against the data quality protocol? Has performance been achieved? What can be done differently?



8 Step: plan, do, review, revise process to performance management



1. **Involve stakeholders** – Community engagement, Service users, LSP and Member involvement
2. **Develop Team plans by linking to objectives** – Develop Corporate, Service and team plans, and link them to the Golden Thread to individual appraisals. Identify resources, budget and workforce restrictions



3. **Correct Systems and Processes** – Ensure the correct systems and processes are in place for staff to achieve team aims including relevant training and regular communication
4. **Deliver planned actions and record** - Carryout plans and regularly record actions and progress

Milton Keynes Council believes that there are six essential elements to successful performance management that involves all managers, staff and stakeholders:

1. Culture – The right organisational culture is critical to improving the effectiveness of performance management. Milton Keynes Council has a desire to deliver a motivated, high performing organisation that is willing to learn from itself and others to improve.

2. Learning – Learning is crucial to developing an organisational culture of performance. Learning is about gathering and understanding information about what has and has not worked and using this information to change what is done – and there needs to be a willingness to challenge and be challenged.

3. Leadership and Direction – Everyone in Milton Keynes Council has the responsibility for performance management. However Members and Managers will set the tone for everything that happens within the Council. Priorities should be agreed and clearly communicated throughout the Council at all levels.

4. Systems and Processes – The Council has adopted a number of performance related reporting systems that will work along side Performance Plus to support its business processes and to aid its delivery to the collection, analysis and presentation of information in a meaningful way to management, partners and the public.

5. People – Improving overall performance means improving individual performance. Managers and staff need to work together to design personal performance plans that outline how each person's work links to team action plans, service plans and corporate and community priorities through the appraisal system.

6. Organisation – The Council has recently adopted a new organisational structure including Member Committees that will develop the Council with how its managed, governed, how strategy is set and cascaded throughout the Council and how it is perceived by its stakeholders and the people of Milton Keynes.

Plan

Prioritise what needs to be done, identify actions that need to be taken and plan for improvement using appropriate measures and targets

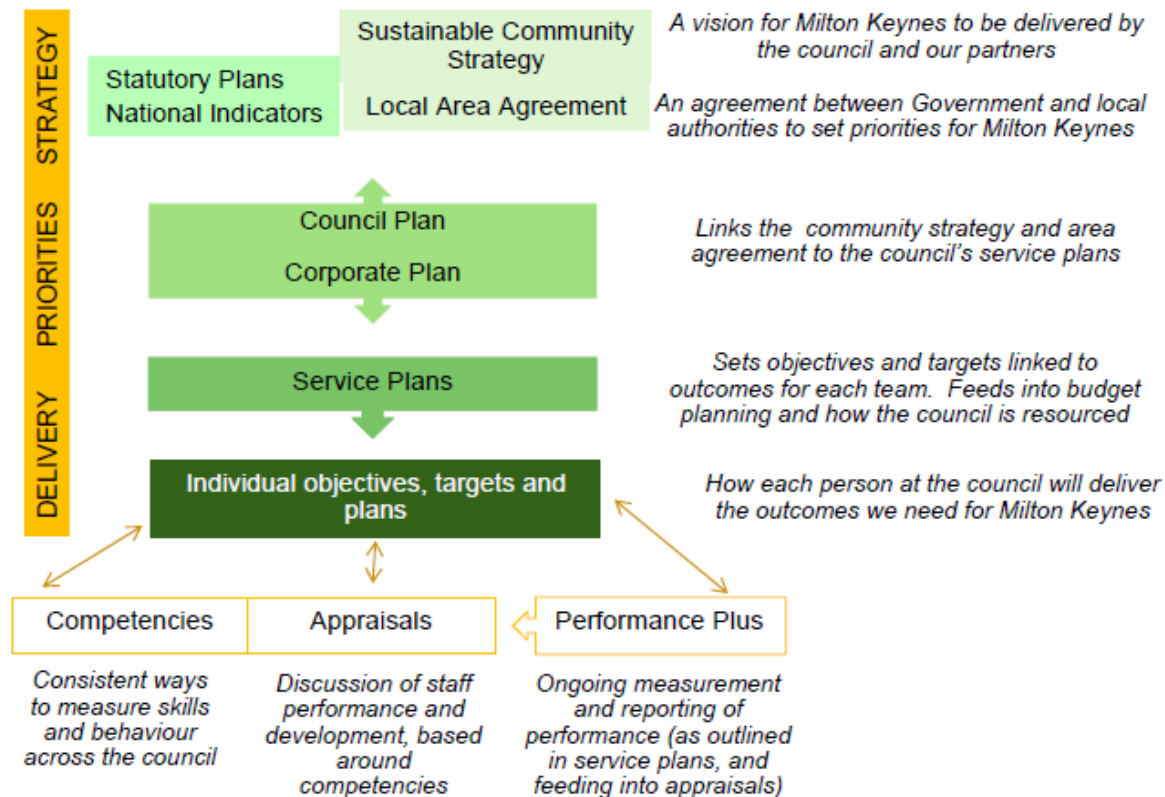
The planning phase involves translating the vision into actions and outcomes combining performance indicators and targets to track delivery. Involving staff, partners and public and other stakeholders is imperative to deliver and improve performance and the services we provide. The vision and aim of Milton Keynes can be found in a number of plans and agreements:

- **Milton Keynes Sustainable Community Strategy:** The Milton Keynes Sustainable Community Strategy is the Borough's 30 year vision which outlines the work the Council has to do together with its partners in order to give the people of Milton Keynes the future they want.
- **Local Area Agreement:** The Local Area Agreement is part of the delivery plan for the Community Strategy and sets out the priorities for Milton Keynes agreed between central government, the local authority and the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and other key partners. Its success is measured by a chosen number of National Indicators and local indicators that measure the agreements over 3 years. It forms part of the delivery arrangements for the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- **The Core Strategy:** The Milton Keynes Core Strategy is a key part of the Local Development Framework that will replace the existing Milton Keynes Local Plan (adopted 2005). The Core Strategy sets out the vision for the Borough to the year 2026. It provides the objectives and strategy for the future development in the Borough and identifies the major areas where growth and change will take place. All future planning policies and documents within the Local Development Framework will be in accordance with the Core Strategy and help deliver its vision and principles.
- **Council Plan:** The Council Plan 2009-2011 sets out the overall political priorities and sets out the objectives we aim to deliver over 2 years. The Council has agreed six priorities which receive special focus over the two-year span of the plans to improve outcomes for the community.
- **Corporate Plan:** The Corporate Plan sets out how Council Services will achieve as outcomes for the people of Milton Keynes. Approved by the Corporate Leadership Team, it gives staff an understanding of our strategic direction and what we will be doing to improve the services we provide to make Milton Keynes a place where people choose to live, work, learn and visit and where businesses choose to invest. The plan measures how successful it has been in delivering its key strategic aims by aligning and monitoring team objectives, performance indicators and projects to each of the 26 outcomes.
- **Improvement Programme:** The Improvement Board was set up in March 2009 to remedy areas of identified weakness in the Council's capacity to deliver excellent outcomes for Milton Keynes residents. The Improvement Programmes purpose is to provide strong community leadership, good quality services and excellent value for money and to increase resident satisfaction with the services provided by Milton Keynes Council.

Milton Keynes Planning Framework (The Golden Thread Approach)

The 'golden thread' takes account of the need to establish clear links between the individual contributions of employees through to the high level strategic aspirations of the borough's Community Strategy.

This framework shows how council and corporate aims and outcomes link to directorate and service objectives, and then straight into our day to day work, so we all have a good feel for how we shape and contribute to the people of Milton Keynes.



The Council's Strategic Aims and Outcomes within the Council and Corporate plan provide the starting point for Directorates and team actions, leading to the drawing up of plans of both teams and between individuals and managers, with continuous monitoring and feedback supported by formal reviews.

Service Delivery Plans: Service plans are an essential part of the performance management framework and act as a tool for making decisions about resource allocation through clear links to financial and workforce planning.

Service plans should be a living document that highlight all the key improvement activities that will be undertaken by a service area in the short to medium term in order to achieve the Council's Strategic Aims. These plans are a key link showing how service activities contribute towards achieving corporate/community priorities and the contribution of individual employees towards the achievement of these objectives (the golden thread).

Service plans should complement rather than duplicate other documents and should set out clearly how objectives have been translated into meaningful and measurable actions at all levels.

Milton Keynes Council Service planning guidance and protocols can be found on the staff portal under Council performance.

Individual Plans: Performance reviews can be regarded as learning events, in which individuals can be encouraged to think about how and in which ways they want to develop. Performance appraisals also review past actions in order to provide an opportunity to reflect on performance. These reviews can also be used as a basis for making development and improvement plans and reaching agreement about what could be done in the future.

Milton Keynes Council appraisal staff portal page: [Appraisal link](#)

Key considerations to planning:

Managers and staff at all levels in the organisation will need to develop clear "performance indicators" that can be regularly monitored to see where we're doing well or less well as we go through the year, so that we can reallocate resources or focus attention on a problem and do what it takes to hit our targets at the end of the year and improve our services we provide for Milton Keynes.

Target setting:

"A performance target represents the level of performance that the organisation aims to achieve from a particular activity. ... Such targets should be consistent with the 'SMART' criteria"

Source: Choosing the Right Fabric (Government and Audit Commission)

Targets set should be challenging but within the SMART criteria and clearly link back to the Council Strategic Aims or Outcomes.

Targets should meet the Audit Commission's 'good target' test:

- Relate to a service or a corporate outcome

- Be achievable but also stretch the organisation
- Have a clear, stable definition so that achievement can be compared over time
- Be easily understood
- Have the commitment of the authority Members and staff
- Be readily measurable
- Have an accountable officer
- Be honest and unambiguous

More information on target setting and external links can be found on the staff portal.

Do

Ensuring the proper systems and processes are in place to support improvement, take appropriate action, manage risk and help people to achieve better performance

The doing phase is about the delivery of the planned actions, and involves the communication of what has been done following the correct system and processes.

Correct System and processes:

We all have a responsibility for the delivery of activities included in Service Delivery Plans and the wider Milton Keynes Council agenda. As a council we all need to ensure that we have the right systems and processes in place to implement our Service Delivery Plans and achieve our outcomes for the people of Milton Keynes.

Therefore it is important that written processes and instructions are in place which are followed by all. Examples of systems and processes that should be documented include:

- Data collection processes (real time not months later)
- Programme and project management processes
- Financial systems and controls
- Customer complaints and returns
- Risk management

Communication:

Communication is important during the doing phase for a number of reasons. Firstly it is important to record relevant actions and progress towards the outcomes and secondly, communication with staff, Members and other stakeholders will help everyone understand what is expected of them and whether they are on target.

Staff Development:

The training and development opportunities offered by Milton Keynes Council can contribute to good performance, strengthen job-related skills and competencies, and helps keep up with changes in the workplace.

Training link:

[Staff Training Portal](#)

Review

Understand the impact of our actions, review performance, speak to users and stakeholders about their experience of performance and be open to these to challenge performance.

Reviewing our delivery and how we communicate the actions needs to be robust and requires regular monitoring and analysis including the reporting of progress against intended objectives and aims if performance information is to impact on decision making and ensure that actions are making a beneficial impact.

Understanding the impact of our actions, reviewing performance, speaking to users and stakeholders about their experience of services is important for the Council to meet its Strategic Aims.

Reviewing performance is an important step when formulating the direction of team activities. It is important to know where the strengths and weaknesses of the team lie, and as part of the plan, do, review, revise cycle, measurement plays a key role in quality and productivity of the services we provide.

The main reason for reviewing our performance is to:

- Instigate corrective action if we are off track before it impacts residents.
- Ensure customer requirements have been met
- Be able to set sensible objectives and comply with them
- Provide standards for establishing comparisons (benchmarking)
- Provide visibility and a “scoreboard” for people to monitor their own performance level
- Highlight quality problems and determine areas for priority attention
- Provide feedback for driving the improvement effort

To review our performance it is imperative that the recording of the progress/data is completed to the best standard possible to do this the council have adopted some simple guidelines and invested in a performance management system; performance plus.

- **Performance Plus:** To improve the way we manage the Council’s performance we have invested in a performance management system called Performance Plus. This application allows us to measure and improve performance across the whole authority.
- **Risk management:** Similarly to performance management, risk management should be seen as part of the normal management process. Activities designed to meet performance measures should be risk assessed.
- **Data Quality:** Data quality is the responsibility of every employee who enters or analyses data/information for the council whether it is externally or internally provided. Staff should be aware of the Councils Data Quality protocol ‘Right First Time Every Time’.

The purpose of regular reporting:

- **Annual Reporting:** to demonstrate progress to key stakeholders, national bodies and residents.
- **Quarterly reporting:** Annual reporting split into quarterly reports in order for progress to be monitored.
- **In year monitoring:** by Members, CLT, services and teams can periodically ask for performance material to ensure progress is being made and take action if necessary.
- **Timetable of Performance:** It is imperative that performance management is a continuous cycle, but there are some required deadlines.

For performance to improve it is the responsibility of everyone to challenge it. The Council has a number of internal ways to challenge performance.

- **CLT:** CLT offers strategic direction to ensure the council meets the expectations of councillors and the public, This involves ensuring policies and practices are in place to provide the best possible services
- **Directorate Dashboards:** Dashboards are in the process of being developed for 2010. These will be reviewed by Directorate Management Teams.
- **Select Committees:** Select Committees are not decision-making bodies, but they have the power to review decisions made or actions taken and to review and develop Council policies. They exert influence by producing recommendations and reports which executive members, the executive board or full Council can consider.

The aims of select committees for performance are:

- Ensure that the council meets the needs of local people
- Improve performance and achieve best value
- Check whether desired results are being achieved
- Enable action to be taken when things are not meeting target
- Maximise value for money
- **Benchmarking:** Benchmarking is the process of measuring and comparing the performance of your organisation against other organisations.
- **Partnerships:** Arrangements need to be in place to ensure that relevant partnerships including the LSP receive performance information on a regular basis to not only monitor progress but also to help the partnership make the right decisions and to play an active part in ensuring that outcomes are being achieved.
- **External Inspection and Assessment:** Usually undertaken by statutory inspectorates (Audit Commission/Ofsted/Care Quality Commission) who are required by law to review aspects of the council's services. The overarching assessment for the council is the Comprehensive Area Assessment which is undertaken by the Audit Commission.

Audit Commission website: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/Pages/default.aspx>
CAA website Milton Keynes:
<http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/infobyarea/region/area/pages/areaoverview.aspx?region=57&area=382>
Care Quality Commission: <http://www.cqc.org.uk/>
Ofsted: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/>

Revise

Use the lessons learned from the review to change what we do so that objectives are achieved

Revising should follow a rigorous performance review and challenge process so views can be listened to and lessons and feedback can be used to improve the outcomes and performance for the people of Milton Keynes.

The revise section can easily be overlooked, yet it is an essential part of performance management. To make performance more effective requires realising something is wrong and changing or doing something different in order to get back on track. Looking at best practice and lessons learned from the review stage to change your plans or what you do so that future actions are more efficient, effective and appropriate for the people of Milton Keynes.

Change is a natural progression, and should not be something we avoid, if something is going wrong we need to be able to change it before it affects the performance of individual teams and ultimately the council. Change is an essential part of performance management if Milton Keynes Council is to help provide the best outcomes for residents, revising how we operate as a council should be flexible in order to get the best for the people of Milton Keynes.

The action might be:

- To respond to change in external circumstances or demand
- To find ways around obstacles
- Find ways of keeping within budget
- Try a different approach if the original plan is not working
- Appeal for more resources to meet unexpected contingencies
- Find compensating savings if running over budget

The use of the Right First Time Every Time Data Quality should ensure that the information you are using is good data and should allow for an indication of what is going wrong and therefore what needs to be changed.

Revision tools and external links can be found on the staff portal.