

## Performance Reports – how to read and interpret them

This is a brief guide to reading Bristol City Council (BCC) performance reports, explaining the reporting process and terms used for the 2021/22 financial year.

It accompanies the [2021/22 Performance Framework](#) and the [Business Plan 2021/22](#).

This is for use by members of the public and of BCC Scrutiny Commissions. Each Commission receives a suite of measures to show progress of activities related to the [role of the commission](#).

Heading on the report	Explanation
<b>Corp Plan KC ref</b>	“Corporate Plan Key Commitment reference”. The current <a href="#">Corporate Strategy 2018-23</a> sets out our priorities and vision for Bristol. It has 4 themes (and a 5 <sup>th</sup> section on Organisational Support) that help us to achieve this, and each has 4 “key commitments” within them. The themes and key commitments structure the framework for the Business Plan.
<b>Code</b>	Measures of success have been identified for each key commitment, and each is given an individual reference code.  We differentiate between Business Plan measures wholly owned by BCC which are direct measures of <i>our</i> performance – given the prefix “ <b>BPB</b> ” - and “City-wide” measures where we are a key player, but performance may be dependent on other partners or external factors – given the prefix “ <b>BPC</b> ”.  Scrutiny Commissions may also see Directorate performance indicators prefixed DRE, DGR or DPE, providing additional context for Business Plan measures.
<b>Title</b>	A concise, short title is shown which often gives the headline intention of the measure e.g. “ <i>Increase</i> the percentage of xx”, “ <i>Reduce</i> the number of yy”.
<b>+/-</b>	This indicates the ‘Polarity’ of an indicator, to show whether a <i>higher</i> or <i>lower</i> figure is preferred for this specific measure; i.e. are we trying to get an increasing or a reducing figure? The title may also express this e.g. “Increase the number of affordable homes” will have a positive (+) polarity whilst “Reduce the number of people sleeping rough” will have a negative (-) polarity.
<b>Previous year’s Outturn</b>	The end-of-year result for the previous year is shown where available. For measures where reporting is delayed the most recent year available is shown.
<b>Current year’s Target</b>	There are annual discussions with managers when measures of success are reviewed, and targets set for the forthcoming year (done once the outturns for the previous year are known). Determining factors for target setting include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- delivering ongoing improvements i.e. the new year target will exceed the previous year’s outturn.</li> <li>- ensuring that legislative requirements are met e.g. payment of invoices.</li> <li>- incremental steps working towards long-term targets in strategies i.e. the new year target will be somewhere on the trajectory to the long-term goal. [NB The long-term target may not to be split into equal parts each year, as delivery may be weighted to the latter years]</li> <li>- maintaining activity levels in the context of changes in resource available or re-prioritisation of activity i.e. the new year target may be the same or even lower than the previous year’s outturn, but with reduced funding</li> </ul> <p>Some new measures may not have a target; this is because we are establishing a baseline of activity for a new area of work.</p>

<p><b>Quarterly Progress</b></p>	<p>As the year progresses additional “quarter progress” columns are added to the report. Quarterly / in-year targets are determined in various ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a straight four-way split across the year.</li> <li>- quarterly target is the same as the annual target; this is often the default for transactional measures e.g. % complaints responded to on time.</li> <li>- target is profiled across the year to reflect known activity levels e.g. bus passenger numbers have a greater % of the annual target due at Q3 (Oct to Dec), reflecting the rise in passengers after the summer holidays.</li> <li>- some measures may not have an in-year target as activity levels are dynamic or don’t follow a regular enough pattern to inform meaningful quarterly targets. These should be by exception only.</li> </ul> <p>The latest quarter column will be colour coded (RAG rating: red, amber, green) to show current performance against the target for that quarter (plus blue to show “On target” – see <b>Progress Key</b> below).</p> <p>NB green indicates “better” not “higher”, so if lower is better then green is used to show a figure lower than target (and red or amber for a higher figure where the polarity is negative). Each target has a tolerance level set which provides the threshold for <i>significantly</i> worse / better (default is over 10% of target).</p>
<p><b>Comparison over last 12 months</b></p>	<p>This column compares the current performance to the <i>same period</i> in the previous year i.e. it compares progress to 12 months ago, not to last quarter.</p> <p>Icons used are: <b>better</b> (↑), <b>worse</b> (↓) or <b>unchanged</b> (=).</p> <p>NB the green arrow indicates “better” not “higher”, so if lower is better then ↑ is still used to show a reducing figure (and ↓ used to show a higher figure if the polarity is negative) - see <b>Improvement Key</b> below.</p>
<p><b>Management Notes</b></p>	<p>This section shows commentary from the manager responsible for the measure and may include any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What factors have contributed to the reported performance be that positive or negative?</li> <li>- When performance is below target and/or worse than last year, what is planned to get performance back on track to hit target?</li> <li>- As the year progresses managers will be in a better position to comment on whether annual performance targets are likely to be met.</li> </ul>

All reports have a key to Progress and Improvement after the main appendix which are shown here:

Progress Key
Significantly better than target
Better than target
On Target
Worse than target
Significantly worse than target

Improvement Key	
↑	Direction of travel <b>IMPROVED</b> compared to same period in the previous year
=	<b>SAME</b> as previous same period in the previous year
↓	Direction of travel <b>WORSENE</b> D compared to same period in the previous year