

## **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Thursday 29 July 2021

**10:00**

Council Chamber, County Buildings, Stafford

**NB.** The meeting will be webcast live which can be viewed here -  
<https://staffordshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

John Tradewell  
Director of Corporate Services  
21 July 2021

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## **A G E N D A**

### **PART ONE**

1. **Apologies**
  2. **Declarations of Interest**
  3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2021** (Pages 1 - 4)
  4. **Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2021/22** (Pages 5 - 36)
  5. **Proposals for Scrutiny of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Annual Budget and Council Tax** (Pages 37 - 42)
- Report of the Chair – Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
6. **Work Programme** (Pages 43 - 48)
  7. **Exclusion of the Public**

The Chairman to move:-

“That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of Local Government Act 1972 indicated below”.

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### **PART TWO**

(All reports in this section are exempt)

<b>Membership</b>
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Charlotte Atkins	Bernard Peters
Tina Clements	James Salisbury
Mike Davies	Bob Spencer
Colin Greatorex (Chairman)	Thompson
Gill Heath (Vice-Chairman (Scrutiny))	Conor Wileman (Vice-Chairman (Overview))
Jeremy Oates	Mike Worthington
Jeremy Pert	

## **Note for Members of the Press and Public**

### **Filming of Meetings**

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### **Recording by Press and Public**

Recording (including by the use of social media) by the Press and Public is permitted from the public seating area provided it does not, in the opinion of the chairman, disrupt the meeting.

**Scrutiny and Support Manager:** Nicholas Pountney Tel: (01785) 276153

**Minutes of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 10 June 2021**

Present: Colin Greatorex (Chairman)

**Attendance**

Charlotte Atkins	James Salisbury
Tina Clements	Bob Spencer
Mike Davies	Thompson
Gill Heath (Vice-Chairman (Scrutiny))	Conor Wileman (Vice-Chairman (Overview))
Jeremy Oates	Mike Worthington
Jeremy Pert	

**Also in attendance:**

**Apologies:** Bernard Peters

**PART ONE**

**1. Declarations of Interest**

There were none on this occasion.

**2. Minutes of the meetings held on 21 January and 5 February 2021**

That the minutes of the meetings held on the 21 January and 5 February 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**3. SEND Working Group - Final Report**

Councillor Spencer presented the report on behalf of the Working Group. He outlined that the joint scrutiny working group had been set up following an OFSED review and findings in November 2018 which had required a written statement of action and outlined significant areas of weakness. It was acknowledged that improvements had been made and that the group had now concluded as a further review was now pending. He asked the committee for views on further reporting going forward.

**RESOLVED** : That if the outcomes from further review were positive then the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee continue to maintain oversight, however if the review was negative then Corporate Overview and Scrutiny would investigate.

**4. Work Programme Planning 2021/22**

The Scrutiny and Support Manager outlined the detail and purpose of the Work Planning Report as this was the initial meeting of the committee.

The Leader of the Council outlined his views on the role of overview and scrutiny and the committee, and the change in the title of the committee. He felt that overview would look forward and scrutiny would look at current decisions. He emphasised the importance of the role of overview and scrutiny and impact it can have and his previous experience. Also, with such a large majority he felt scrutiny was more important in holding the authority to account. The importance of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee being the lead committee was emphasised and the need for Cabinet Members to be available when required for both committee meetings and triangulation meetings. The key areas he felt should be looked at included scrutiny of the Local Enterprise Partnership, Finance and working with our District/Borough Councils. In response to a question the Leader outlined how he felt overview should operate in particular looking at the ambitions of the authority and what others organisations are doing. The use of the High Street and the financing of health care was also raised as areas that should be investigated.

The Director of Corporate Services outlined his areas of responsibility. He advised the Committee of his key issues/challenges which were:-

- Development of new Strategic Plan and MTFS
- New Council
- Cyber Security
- Roll out of Office 365 & Teams
- Care Director Replacement
- Entrust – break point approaching
- Staffordshire Place Brand
- People Strategy
- Recruitment
- Smart Working/Future Office

The County Treasurer introduced himself and his role. He emphasised the importance of the role of the committee in relation to the budget and the setting of the budget. He highlighted that contained within the report the setting of a good and balanced budget and scrutiny's role was fundamental and his support for the appointment of the MTFS Working Group.

**RESOLVED:** That the reports and views be noted and taken into account when Work Programme Planning.

The Committee considered their Work Programme for 2021/22.

**RESOLVED:** That the following items be included for development in the the Work Programme

- Performance quarterly reports
- SEND Working Group Follow up
- Scrutiny of the LEP
  - Review and Outcomes
- Outcomes of Scrutiny
- Data Sharing

- Partnership Working
- Shared Services
- Governance and control of Arm's length companies/partners. E.g. Nexus / Entrust / AMEY.
- Digital Strategy
- Climate Change
- Development of new Strategic Plan and MTFS
- New Council
- Cyber Security
- Roll out of Office 365 & Teams
- Care Director Replacement
- Entrust – break point approaching
- Staffordshire Place Brand
- People Strategy
- Recruitment
- Smart Working/Future Office

**Chairman**



<b>Local Members Interest</b>
n/a

## **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Thursday 29 July 2021**

### **Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2021/22**

#### **Recommendation**

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. Note and challenge performance and advise of any further information and/or action required.

#### **Report of the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance**

#### **Summary**

##### **What is the Overview and Scrutiny Committee being asked to do and why?**

1. This quarterly Integrated Performance Report provides an overview of Staffordshire County Council's progress, performance and financial position in delivering against our Strategic Plan and Delivery Plan.
2. We recommend that Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes and challenges performance and advises of any further information and/or action required.

#### **Report**

##### **Background**

3. The Integrated Performance report is considered by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis

## Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 21 July 2021

### Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2021/22



**Alan White, Leader of Staffordshire County Council said,**

“Our focus remains firmly on tackling Covid-19 and doing what is needed to control the spread of the virus and protect the most vulnerable. Work to manage outbreaks is ongoing as is work dealing with the immediate economic and social consequences of the last eighteen months.

“Throughout the pandemic we have supported those who need us most, including the care sector, vulnerable families and local businesses. Our COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan continues to help manage local outbreaks. The emergence of the Delta variant remains a concern and recent outbreaks show just how quickly the virus can spread through our communities. Teams have also delivered targeted testing facilities across the county and continue to provide support to the NHS vaccination programme.

“In other council business, we continue to provide support for vulnerable adults and children and with this, we still need longer-term help from the Government for funding adult social care and children’s and family services. We continue to lobby Government for a long-term sustainable solution to this as well as more clarity on future settlement grants and funding opportunities.

“The government have also confirmed an additional £5.7m funding increase for the upkeep of Staffordshire County Council maintained schools which is welcome news. A new source of funding to provide more specialist places and improve provision for SEND pupils has also been confirmed.

“We continue to provide advice and support for businesses, as we work to get our economy back on track. We have plans in place to ensure we bounce back stronger and generate new opportunities for better jobs, improved lives, and a greener county for everyone.”



**Ian Parry, Cabinet Member for Finance said,**

“Coping with the Covid-19 pandemic continues to put extra pressures on our finances, but we continue to manage them effectively and are doing what is needed and spending what is required.

“We have had additional funds and grants from Government which have been used to help support the additional pressures of continuing to provide vital services while protecting our residents. All council departments continue to deliver against their recovery priorities, whilst progressing with activities in the organisation’s Delivery Plan. The latest revenue forecast outturn shows a forecast saving of £8.119m (1.5%).

“We will continue to keep our finances in as strong a position as possible and to ensure that we provide good value for money for local tax-payers. Well managed finances also mean we can invest in our future and grow our economy post pandemic.”



**Report Summary:**

This quarterly Integrated Performance Report provides an overview of Staffordshire County Council's progress, performance and financial position in delivering against our Strategic Plan and Delivery Plan.

**Recommendation(s)**

We recommend that:

- b. Cabinet notes and challenges performance and advises of any further information and/or action required.

<b>Local Members Interest</b>
N/A

# Cabinet – Wednesday 21 July 2021

## Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2021/22

### Recommendations of the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance

We recommend that:

- a. Cabinet notes and challenges performance and advises of any further information and/or action required.

### Report of the Director of Corporate Services

#### 1. Background

2. All parts of Staffordshire County Council continue to deliver against their recovery priorities, whilst also progressing with the activities outlined in the organisation's Delivery Plan. This report provides an update on Quarter 1 key activities for each directorate area.

#### 3. Summary



4. At the end of Quarter 1, the overall assessment on the council's performance is amber. There continue to be areas of risk in Adult Social Care and Families and Communities. Further details are included within this report and its appendices. The latest revenue forecast outturn shows a forecast saving of £8.119m (1.5%).

#### 5. Health and Care

6. Significant work has continued across Health and Care, both leading the council's response to COVID-19 and exiting lockdown plans, as well as the recovery of key adult social care services.



7. Ongoing COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control activity has included:

- Management of COVID-19 incidents and outbreaks in settings; with a particular focus on COVID-19 outbreaks in Leek, Newcastle and Tamworth.
- Flexible and targeted testing facilities to support rollout of asymptomatic testing model and continuing support to NHS vaccination programme; excellent COVID vaccination rate with figures as at 30<sup>th</sup> June showing two-thirds of Staffordshire residents aged 20+ have received 2 doses.
- Ongoing support to care providers in vaccinating eligible frontline care workers; as at 1<sup>st</sup> June, 100% of care home staff & residents had their 1<sup>st</sup> dose and 92% had received their second dose.

8. COVID-19 cases in Staffordshire were falling at the start of Quarter 1, but have started to increase again since May, following national and regional trends. In the seven days to 27<sup>th</sup> June, 1,287 cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in Staffordshire,

a rate of 146.3 per 100,000 population. This was lower than both the regional rate (156.1) and the national rate (171.6). Residents can keep up to date with the latest case figures in Staffordshire, including a district breakdown by clicking [here](#).

9. Residents affected by odours from Walleys Quarry in Newcastle are being asked by the council to complete a daily survey detailing any health problems. The daily symptom tracker launched in May, with residents asked to report levels of smell and key symptoms. Headaches, nausea, and sleeplessness were the main problems recorded in the first week. It is hoped responses will provide a deeper understanding of the scale and nature of the health problems and build evidence to support future regulation of the landfill site. The survey can be found [here](#).
10. Staffordshire Together for Carers Service, the council's new carers service and pathway, commenced on the 6th April 2021 providing a single point of contact for carers of all ages and the cared for. The service delivered by n-compass offers support to prevent, reduce and delay dependency on health and care services, developing carer friendly communities which support carers to maintain their caring role safely, in line with the council's Carers Strategy.
11. In June, the Supportive Communities Programme Board approved the delivery plan for 2021/22 which will be used to embed the supportive communities approach across the organisation and support individuals to remain independent for longer. The programme is wide ranging and includes the recently launched #DoingOurBit COVID-19 Self Isolators Grants Scheme, which will provide small grants to help Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) groups working with vulnerable self-isolators. The scheme closes on 30th September 2021.
12. Work also continues to refresh the council's Public Health & Prevention Strategy, with a focus on mitigating the ongoing public health risks from COVID-19. Recent activity includes the Staffordshire's Chamber of Commerce Mental Health Awareness webinar, restart of the healthy walks programme in line with COVID-19 guidance, #TalkSuicide and 'Let's Beat Loneliness' campaigns with work already ongoing to extend these.
13. The 'Do It to Feel Good' email campaign was launched in June and is being delivered by the council in conjunction with Everyone Health Staffordshire. It aims to remind people of the importance of looking after their mental health and the positive impact that making small changes can have on a person's wellbeing. This includes a weekly motivational email with practical tips based on 'The Five Ways to Wellbeing' - a series of actions proven to improve wellbeing in everyday life. They will also receive details about services and local organisations across Staffordshire that offer support. People can sign up to the 'Do It to Feel Good' campaign [here](#).
14. Families in Staffordshire are being encouraged to apply for funding to help make their homes greener and more energy efficient. The additional £4.2 million funding from the Government's Warmer Homes initiative follows the successful delivery of the Staffordshire Warmer Homes scheme. To date the scheme has helped install green homes measures in 240 Staffordshire homes. Building on funding already

secured, the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme will be delivered by the council and it is expected to benefit a further 445 households.

15. The successful 'Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential supplies' scheme was also extended to cover all of Quarter 1; the council pledged a further £57,500, which has been match funded by the Energy Saving Trust. The funding was available to support residents struggling to pay their energy bills.
16. From a Finance perspective, the Health and Care forecast outturn at Quarter 1 is a saving of £5m. There remains a range of high risk Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) savings within this area, with the directorate seeking alternative savings where necessary. In addition, the level of client debt is above target and work is ongoing to recover this. The forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £4.149m. The longer-term financial impact of COVID-19 is not yet clear but will undoubtedly affect the MTFS in future years.

## 17. Families and Communities



18. Work to progress recovery plans, transformation and wider service delivery continue to take place across the Families and Communities area, with a particular focus on the Children's and Families System Transformation Programme.

19. Progress is being made on the Children's and Families System Transformation, with the property now purchased for a new in-house residential unit to support some of the county's most vulnerable young people. The council is waiting for the planning application before work commences to adapt the property for purpose.

20. As at 4th June 2021, there were 1,245 children in care, which represents a slight increase over the previous 6 weeks. This remains in line with the children & families revised business case forecast. The current rate is 73 per 10,000; higher than the national benchmark (67 per 10,000 in 2020) but lower than regional (85.6 per 10,000 at end of March 2020).
21. As at 7<sup>th</sup> June, the number of children subject of a Child Protection Plan was 576 and has been slowly reducing over the previous 12 months, with a current rate of 34 per 10,000. This is below both the most recent national benchmark (43 per 10,000 at the end of December 2020) and regional rate (43.5 per 10,000 at the end of March 2020).
22. From the 5<sup>th</sup> July, parents of eligible children in Staffordshire can register for a space on the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF). The programme offers inclusive activities and hot meals over the school summer holidays for children aged 5-16 years. It is free to those who receive benefit related free school meals or who are at risk of financial exclusion.
23. Foster carers from across Staffordshire are leading a new campaign to help highlight the urgent need to find more foster families, with Staffordshire needing 60 more foster families to be found this year. #WhyWeCare is the latest campaign by

the Fostering Network as part of this year's Foster Care Fortnight which was launched in May. The council's Fostering Service has supported the campaign with a series of online events and videos to help find families for some of the county's most vulnerable children.

24. The council and key partners have begun work on an Action Plan to deliver key outcomes set out within Staffordshire's five-year Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) strategy. This will be developed over the coming weeks.
25. Work is ongoing to develop and implement the council's Children's Commissioning Strategy focussing on physical and mental health related priorities. This strategy will define the core priorities and ensure that the commissioning approach within Families and Communities supports the Children's and Families System Transformation. A draft strategy has been prepared and the first engagement sessions held. The final strategy will reflect feedback from parents, practitioners, and partners.
26. A key priority for the council is the provision of domestic abuse services (the council contributes to a jointly commissioned service). On the 29<sup>th</sup> April the Domestic Abuse Bill was signed into law. Provisions in the Bill put responsibility on councils to implement the Safe Accommodation Duty for domestic abuse victims and their families. Funding has been received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and work has begun to distribute funds to relevant districts for 2021/22 provision.
27. The Trading Standards team continues to support businesses and the council through safeguarding and compliance advice. During April and May the team has dealt with over 2,500 engagements and interventions with businesses; with over £130,000 prevented from being lost to scams and fraud through the council's intervention.
28. Staffordshire County Council and its partner, the William Salt Library Trust, have received a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of nearly £4m towards the Staffordshire History Centre Project. The project will include an extension to the existing Staffordshire Record Office on Eastgate Street in Stafford, incorporating the William Salt library. The library will be restored and will retell the story of the building, as well as William Salt and his collection. In addition to modern reading areas and activity spaces, the centre will also allow people to discover more about their family or local history by visiting exhibitions, taking part in events and family activities and deliver a learning programme for schools and colleges. The centre will be supported by a series of touring exhibitions and targeted projects, to reach all communities across the county.
29. In terms of the financial position at Quarter 1, for Families & Communities there is a forecast saving of £1.139m. This is largely due to staffing vacancies and additional grant incomes. The forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £8.505m which is additional exceptional costs and lost income. Positively, central government recently confirmed a £5.7m funding increase for the upkeep of Staffordshire County Council maintained schools. This increase will be brought into the capital programme in due course and will give the council

opportunity to further address condition priorities in schools. A new source of funding to provide more specialist places and improve provision for SEND pupils has also been confirmed. Further details of these announcements can be found in Appendix 2.

### 30. Economy, Infrastructure and Skills



31. The council continues to support local businesses to survive, adapt and continue to operate as part of delivering its 5-year Staffordshire Means Back to Business Strategy.
32. A key part of this strategy is the extensions to the Enterprise Centres at Cannock Chase and Silverdale with both opening for business during summer 2021. The extensions have been funded by the council, the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the Pye Green Investment Fund jointly held with Cannock Chase District Council. All units at the Cannock Chase Centre extension are pre-let and Silverdale will be promoted, with interest already shown.
33. Businesses across Staffordshire have continued to be supported by the council and its partners through a range of targeted initiatives, to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19. Some specific examples are included below.
34. The Countywide Redundancy Task Group, in partnership with the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP) and 26 partner agencies, continues to meet fortnightly providing support to businesses and residents impacted in relation to redundancies, as well as implementing the wider Plan for Jobs programmes such as Kickstart, Restart, Jobs Entry Targeted Support (JETS) and UK Community Renewal Fund (UKCRF).
35. The new Staffordshire Start-Up course has 219 individuals participating, with nearly half (48%) of the new businesses now in a position to start trading.
36. The £5m [Staffordshire Means Back to Business Support Scheme](#) is active across the county and is providing fully funded apprenticeships and workforce training. Grants of up to £5,000 are being allocated to businesses with ambitions to grow and to date £55,025 has been spent across the 8 districts.
37. As part of the Staffordshire Means Back to Business Support Scheme, the council's Ignite Programme was launched earlier in the year; it is a new programme of free advice, workshops, mentoring and support for post-16 further education students looking to set up their own business in Staffordshire. It is intended that the lesson plan will be delivered to 7,000 students, 293 students have registered for the online learning platform and 257 have registered to undertake the 5-day course.
38. Work continues to deliver the council's apprenticeship programme. The Staffordshire Apprenticeship 500 initiative began on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and as at the end of May had received 179 expressions of interest and 64 applications, resulting in a possible 107 apprenticeship starts.

39. Positively, the latest out-of-work claimant figures have decreased to 4.4% of the working age population in May 2021, totalling 23,400 claimants. Whilst Staffordshire has previously been experiencing a rise in claimant numbers due to COVID-19, the county's position going into the pandemic has meant claimant rates remain lower than both regional (7.0%) and national (6.1%) averages. The proportion of young claimants, aged 18-24, has increased from 3.7% in March 2020 to 6.9% in May 2021, with 'A Plan for Jobs 2020' initiatives such as the Kickstart Scheme being put in place to support Staffordshire's young people's employment prospects, to help prevent them becoming long-term unemployed.
40. Staffordshire's Economic Growth Programme, which began in 2014, has continued to create and safeguard jobs and enable house builds. As at end of May 2021, 10,074 jobs have been created/safeguarded and 2,822 new houses enabled.
41. A £23.6 million government funding boost will support ambitious growth plans for Newcastle-under-Lyme and further enhance Staffordshire's post-COVID economic recovery. The district is one of 30 towns across the country to be confirmed as a recipient of the £700million Town Deals funding. The town's allocation is expected to generate an increase of more than £69 million a year in gross value added (GVA).
42. Staffordshire residents are being asked for their views on the county's highways and transport services – from the condition of roads and footpaths to the quality of cycling facilities. Their feedback will be compared with the views of others from across England and Scotland as part of the National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction survey, with local and national results to be published in late October 2021.
43. The overall financial position at Quarter 1 for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills is a forecast saving of £0.137m with small forecast savings across the business. The forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £1.588m.

#### 44. Corporate Services



45. Corporate Services continues to provide vital support to the organisation in delivering on its priorities, as well as significant activity in support of Local Outbreak Control.
46. A successful virtual welcome day to the new council took place in May which distributed information to members and began the induction programme which now runs until end of 2021.
47. Over the last quarter progress has been made on the roll-out of the new Staffordshire story and place brand, with the first 12-month place marketing plan for Staffordshire approved by the new Staffordshire Place Board. The new "We Are Staffordshire" website was launched with over 50 ambassadors registered in the first month; and the council hosted two further virtual events as part of the new ambassador programme, with attendees from businesses and organisations across Staffordshire and the West Midlands.

48. As a consequence of the various restrictions over the last 18 months, there has been significant disruption to wedding registration services in the county. Staffordshire has over 120 licenced venues for marriage, with an excess of over 700 ceremonies from April to December 2021, the majority of which are May-September. This means that approximately 3,750-4,000 ceremonies will be conducted and administered in 2021/22; a rise of over 25% on normal figures.
49. In Quarter 1, the council delivered £5.6m through the sale of six assets, including the key sale of Great Wyrley Day Centre and Community Support.
50. A film festival, a virtual market to support local businesses and author talks were amongst the events for the sixth annual Staffordshire Day celebrations on the 1<sup>st</sup> May. Organised by Enjoy Staffordshire with the help of the council and other local authority partners, thousands of people from across the county joined over 50 online events and activities to show their pride in the county and what it has to offer. #Staffordshireday was also trending on Twitter, helping to raise the county's profile further.
51. In Corporate Services the financial position at Quarter 1 is a forecast saving of £0.325m. This is largely due to staffing vacancies and increased incomes. The forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £0.554m.
52. Strategic Plan Principles
53. Positive progress has been made this quarter to drive forward the council's four principles, which continue to underpin priority work. A summary of key activities is set out below.
54. Communities
55. Current focus has been on the delivery of the council's 2021/22 Communities Delivery Plan which aims to promote social action in local communities and to build capacity in the voluntary and community sector.
56. Working with 'Everyone Health Staffordshire', parish councils and other partners in the voluntary and community sector, the council's first #DoingOurBit campaign on loneliness, 'Let's Beat Loneliness Together', has been successfully delivered. More than 420,000 people were reached via social media and around 7,000 referrals made to loneliness related Staffordshire Connects pages. To help the digitally excluded, 3,000 leaflets and 50 posters were distributed to Parish Councils and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) to share locally. This included church groups and village halls through Support Staffordshire.
57. The council's Members Fund launched at the end of June, giving each County Councillor £2,500 to spend in a local area. The fund will focus on supporting a thriving VCSE sector in Staffordshire, helping organisations to restart fundraising and paused activities. It will work alongside other funds specifically focused on COVID-19 recovery and engagement has taken place with partners to position and promote the fund.



58. The last quarter of the VCSE Strategic Capacity Building Contract (January – March 2021) saw 155 organisations provided with one to one development support, £1,847,972 external funding secured by VCSE organisations and 423 individuals supported to access local volunteering opportunities.

#### 59. Digital

60. The council's Digital Programme is continuing to be delivered through its 32 existing projects, which include improvements to online access to services and information, as well as enabling digital innovations.

61. Digital inclusion remains a key priority and work is ongoing to address barriers to this in Staffordshire. More than 25 devices have been donated as part of 'Donate IT' Digital Device Recycling Scheme and these will be distributed to people who are at risk of digital exclusion in the county. Rural connectivity projects are also underway with 30 communities working with the council to obtain funding for Community Fibre partnerships.

62. Work continues to ensure that staff are digitally enabled and feel supported to develop their digital skills. A new Learning Experience Platform has been launched to support the roll out of Microsoft 365 (including Microsoft Teams) across the organisation.

#### 63. Climate Change

64. A key activity this quarter has been the delivery of a series of engagement sessions across priority themes (Fuel & Transport, Property, Waste and Natural Environment) to identify how to meet the council's challenging climate change targets.

65. Furthermore, an updated Climate Change Action Plan is being finalised, focussing on the council's actions for the next 12 months. A blueprint is also being drafted which will set out the longer-term transition needed for Staffordshire to be net carbon neutral by 2050 and will underpin current and future actions plans.

66. This year's annual Earth Day celebration was endorsed by the council, with Staffordshire residents urged to do their bit to think green to help the environment on this day. Top tips included replacing lightbulbs in the house with LED Lightbulbs, reduce travel by car, and advice how to reduce, reuse and recycle waste from [Waste Savvy Staffs](#).

#### 67. Workforce

68. Over the last quarter, ongoing COVID-19 response work has included preparations for the lifting of lockdown and supporting all Staffordshire education and early years settings. Steps are being taken to ensure all council premises are health & safety ready and to support managers with the tools and resources to help staff with this transition.

69. Work to deliver the council's internal People Strategy is ongoing. Delivery of the council's new Employer Brand, aimed at attracting and retaining talented people in the council's workforce, is near completion.

70. The wellbeing of colleagues remains a high priority with the strengthening of its Mental Health Awareness training and the promotion of Wellbeing Feel Good Habits. Over the last quarter delivery has included the launch of the new wellbeing calendar of events, starting with the MindKind Thrive with Nature campaign to support workforce mental health, and a series of webinars in partnership with CTC Healthcare.

71. Finally, an outcome of the COVID-19 response has been a significant and continued reduction in sickness absence levels; currently 9.34 days lost per employee (May 2021), representing a reduction of 18% from the same period last year. Absences relating to diagnosed/suspected cases of COVID-19 account for 1.01 days lost per employee over this period (11% of total), but this has been outweighed by improvements against most other absence reasons. Of note is the reduction in musculoskeletal absences, currently 1.31 days lost per employee, a reduction of 37% from last year.

#### **Link to Strategic Plan**

72. Cross-cutting as the performance of the Corporate Delivery Plan represents the most significant activity that directly delivers against all areas of the strategic plan.

#### **Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity**

73. Detailed scrutiny of the council's activity in relation to the various areas discussed in this report takes place at the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as appropriate.

#### **Community Impact**

74. This report represents a strategic summary of the county council's performance against key indicators, finances and delivery of priorities. The individual projects and programmes are reported separately where specific decisions are required, and community impact assessments are completed where appropriate. As such there is no community impact presented with this report

#### **List of Appendices:**

1. Finance Quarter 1 Summary
2. Finance Quarter 1 Detailed Report
3. Corporate Checklist
4. Revenue Forecast Outturn 2021/22
5. Capital Forecast Outturn 2021/22
6. Financial Health Indicators 2021/22

## Contact Details

**Report Commissioner:** Kerry Dove  
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# Latest Financial Summary

The following graphs summarise the financial performance of the council. Full details are contained in this report.

The graphs and charts are compiled using quarter 1 forecast information.

The latest revenue forecast outturn shows a saving of £8.1m (1.5%). Due to Covid 19 Central Government have issued additional grant payments to support the additional pressures of continuing to provide vital services while protecting the workforce and local residents.

There has been request for the use of £0.316m of the Exit and Transition Fund which was established in 2018/19.

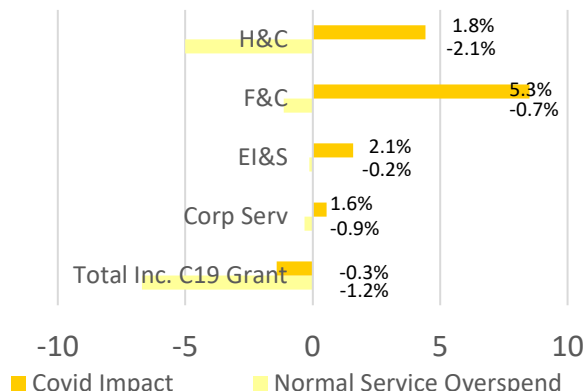
There is a forecast non-Covid saving of £5m on Care Commissioning Older People Placements budgets. The reduced number of placements has lead to this forecast – it does also mean that it is possible the forecast income may not be achieved and this will be monitored throughout the financial year.

Savings are categorised into confidence of delivery. There are £1.625m savings that are delivered as at quarter 1. There are £1.284m savings classes as Low confidence and some of those savings are £1.204m of Adult Social Care Client Income savings and £50,000 for Care Commissioning Single Management Team.

The latest capital outturn projection is £126.7m, compared to the budgeted position of £108.8m, an increase of 16.4%. This projection is a fully funded position. This increase is due to additional developer contributions for schools, new grants and additional costs and rephasing on the i54 project. More details can be found in the report.

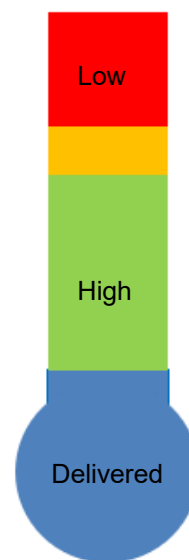
Within the national context, the retail price index is currently 3.3%, and the latest consumer price index is 2.1%. GDP is estimated to have increased by 2.3% in the three months to April 2021. Current unemployment figures show Staffordshire benefit claimant rate remains below that of the West Midlands and Great Britain.

## Revenue Budget Variance

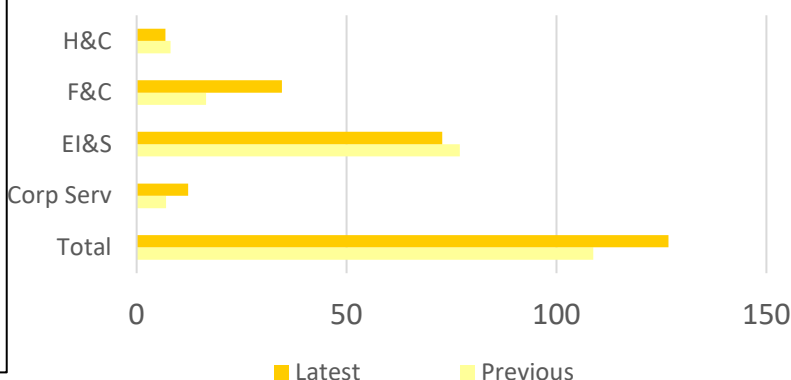


## Savings Tracker – Target £5.682m

Quarter 1 - £5.682m



## Capital Programme



### Introduction

#### Revenue Forecast

1. The latest revenue forecast outturn (as provided in appendix 4) shows a forecast saving of £8.119m (1.5%).
2. Since 2020/21, Covid 19 has been a global pandemic requiring a combined response from public sector services, which is also having a severe impact on the economy. In 2021/22 Central Government has issued general grant to local authorities, totalling £16.2m, in order to support the additional pressures of continuing to provide vital services during the pandemic while protecting both workforce and local residents.
3. The table below sets out the current forecast of additional costs relating to the pandemic, plus lost income and delayed savings caused by the crisis.

	£m
Additional Costs	4.722
Lost income	0.694
Delayed savings	9.370
Grant funding	(16.204)
Remaining Grant / (Shortfall)	1.418

All grants received by Staffordshire County Council in 2021/22 for Covid 19 related activities are listed below. The General Covid Grant can fund activity in all service areas, the remaining grants are specific and go directly to services. All grants allocated for Covid-related activities will be utilised in full, over the medium term, in order to fund the additional expenditure caused by the pandemic.

	£m
General Covid Grant Funding	16.204
Adult Social Care Lateral Flow Testing	2.039
Adult Social Care Infection Control	3.117
Clinically Extremely Vulnerable	1.477
Local Support Grant	0.523
Practical Support Framework	0.681
Covid Winter Grant	0.678

## Appendix 2 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

Contain Outbreak Management	4.182
<b>Total</b>	<b>28.901</b>

4. The following paragraphs consider the key financial issues in each of the council's portfolios.
5. **Health and Care** **Covid impact - £4.149m**  
**Normal service forecast – £5m saving**
6. *Public Health & Prevention* *Forecast – Breakeven*
7. Adults Public Health is forecast to breakeven. Proposals to supplement the current programme using the uncommitted £5.1m Public Health reserve in 2021/22 are being drawn up and submitted to the Director of Health and Care for consideration and approval.
8. *Adults Social Care & Safeguarding* *Covid impact - £0.2m*  
*Normal service forecast – breakeven*
9. Overall, the service is forecast to breakeven. Covid related costs are forecast to be £0.2m. There are currently a number of vacancies in the Adults Learning Disability Team (ALDT) which are expected to be filled during the year. It is assumed that agency staff will be required in the coming months and that the service will not exceed its budget.
10. Section 75 agreements for both Mental Health North and South are now in place and it is forecast that the costs will equal the budget. It is also forecast that the £0.154m MTFs saving for Mental Health North will be delivered in full.
11. Following the addition of £0.650m into the Learning Disability In-House Residential Care services budget, it is not forecast that historic overspends will be incurred again this year. However, it is possible that there could be pressures in these services and the Specialist Day Opportunities services as a result of Covid 19, but it is assumed that these will be met from Covid 19 grant funding.

## Appendix 2 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

### 12. Care Commissioning

*Covid impact - £3.949m*

*Normal service forecast – £5m saving*

13. The number of older people in residential and nursing placements reduced significantly as a result of Covid 19. It is still unclear what the longer-term impacts of the pandemic will be on the number of residents supported in residential and nursing homes and this will be considered in the wider market position review.
14. While there has been an increase in the number of placements in recent months (mainly due to the completion of pathway 3 reviews), overall numbers are still significantly below the number of placements that have been budgeted for in the current financial year. As a result, the forecast saving on the older people placements budget is £5m. The reduced number of placements means that it is possible we will not achieve the income target for 2021/22 however we will monitor this throughout the financial year.
15. The Council is currently in the process of transferring the provision of services delivered from Meadowyrthe and Bracken (two former in-house residential care homes) from Green Square Accord Housing Association to Nexxus (the council's Local Authority Trading Company), with agreement from Informal Cabinet. It is anticipated that the contract with Green Square Accord Association will end on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.
16. The Learning Disability placement budget is forecast to breakeven. There is a continued risk though that the Community Officer and Reviews Programme MTFS saving will not be delivered in full. However, it is expected that continued increases in health income will offset this. The forecast is based on the assumptions that other MTFS savings will be achieved in full. It is assumed that any additional unplanned care cost arising from the on-going Covid 19 pandemic will be met from the additional grant funding. There remains a risk that demographic growth and care price increases could exceed the budget assumptions, and these will be monitored through the year.
17. The council will continue to work with the local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to support the discharge of people with learning disabilities or autism from specialist hospitals to community-based settings under the Transforming Care Partnership (TCP). The National Health Service England (NHSE) reduced the amount of funding that accompanied each individual, and therefore there

## Appendix 2 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

has been a substantial pressure for the Staffordshire Health and Care economy. We are expecting a further grant allocation from the government to support future discharges, but this has not yet been confirmed. There remains a risk of further pressures in 2021/22 as a result of this programme.

18. The Mental Health budget is forecast to breakeven. The placement budget was increased in recognition of the growth in placements costs during the last financial year but there remains a risk of further increases in referrals as a result of the impact of Covid 19. It is assumed that the £0.2m Mental Health contract saving will be delivered in full.
19. The new Carers service has now gone live following a delay caused by Covid 19. It is expected that the new service costs will not exceed the budget. It is also assumed that the £0.150m Advocacy contract saving will be delivered in full.
20. The final inflation figures on the Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (MPFT) Section 75 have not yet been agreed. There is therefore a small risk that these inflation figures could exceed the assumptions built into the budget.
21. The governments February 2021 white paper for the reform of Health and Social Care contained several specific and targeted social care changes including: “The introduction of new Assurance Framework for Social Care including a duty on the CQC to assess local authorities’ delivery of adult social care and a power for the Secretary of State to intervene where the CQC finds that a local authority is falling to meet its duties”. The aim of this framework is to “improve the outcomes and experience of people and their families in accessing high quality care and support, regardless of where they live”.
22. Considering the further demand on Health & Care staff arising from the pandemic and in anticipation of the additional requirements that will be placed on local authorities as a result of the assurance framework , it is now expected that staffing will need to be increased across the directorate. The estimated cost impact, including minor savings assumed that will not now be delivered, is £0.5m. This overspend can be offset from growth that was built into the budget in anticipation of the council having to reimburse providers with back-pay for sleep in arrangements. This funding is no longer required for this purpose as the Supreme Court ruling in March 2021 found that social care staff are not



## Appendix 2 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

entitled to the national minimum wage for every hour they work, including sleep-in shifts.

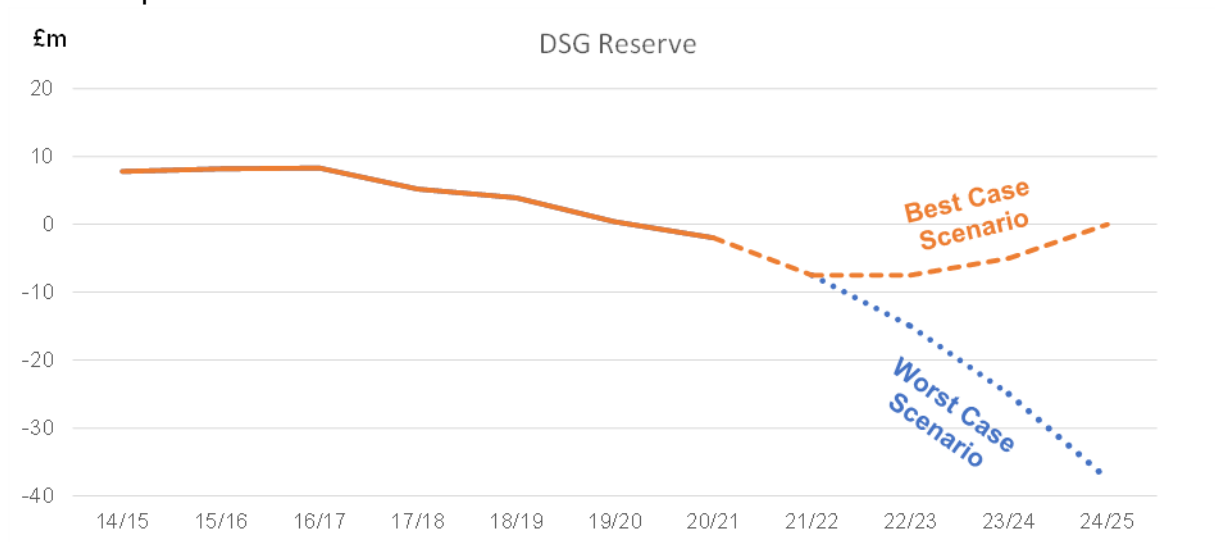
23. The council has been allocated £5.156m in 2021/22 for Adult Social Care Infection Control and Testing Fund ring fenced grant. The guidance identified a proportion of the funding to be passported directly to care homes, drug and alcohol settings and community providers with the remainder to be allocated at the council's discretion. A report setting out proposals to allocate and spend the funding in line with the grant conditions has been approved by SLT. Funding needs to be passported to providers or spent by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021, with any unspent allocation to be returned to the Department of Health and Social Care.
24. Community testing, Contain Outbreak Management Fund and Clinically Extremely Vulnerable funding has been bought forward into the current year to support ongoing work to deliver these strategies.
25. The additional Covid related costs consist of £2.646m unachievable savings that been reprofiled to future years, £0.560m additional staffing costs that have incurred to support the ongoing response to Covid 19 and ensure continuity of service, additional expenditure incurred to support the provider market such as providing a care home loan scheme of £0.590m and £0.353m other exceptional costs.
26. **Families & Communities** **Covid impact - £8.505m**  
**Normal service forecast - £1.139m saving**
27. *Children's Services* *Covid impact - £7.915m*  
*Normal service forecast - £0.930m saving*
28. The forecast saving of £0.930m are mainly a result of staff vacancies within the Intensive Prevention Services, Family Group Conferencing Team and Short Stay Residential Teams, as well as additional grants for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and a saving of £0.4m within Looked after Children placements.
29. There is a forecast overspend in the Independent Conference Chair service of around £0.3m due to additional staffing levels.

## Appendix 2 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

30. Due to Covid 19, planned transformation works and savings of £6.4m impacting across Children's Services have been delayed due to external factors and have been reprofiled within the MTFs. It is anticipated that the transformation relating to new staffing structures will be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021.
31. Additional exceptional costs of £1.5m are forecast to support an extended summer school programme, support providers that have seen reduced demand for services and additional care package costs to ensure that the most vulnerable are protected and that, in the longer term, business continuity and market sustainability is assured.
32. *Education Services* *Covid impact - £0.4m*  
*Normal service forecast - breakeven*
33. The forecast position is for the service to breakeven. While there is a budget saving of £0.2m in historical pensions liabilities, this will be offset by other one off additional agency costs.
34. SEND transport is currently forecast to be delivered within budget due to additional resources allocation to the service in the MTFs. However there remains a risk that contract retendering due later in the year could lead to further pressures in this area.
35. There are Covid costs relating to SEN transport cleaning.
36. *SEND High Needs Block*
37. The High Needs Block is currently forecast to overspend by £7.5m. This reflects continuing growing demand for SEND support. This overspend will be charged against the DSG reserve which, at the end of 2020/21 was £2m in deficit. Staffordshire County Council is not alone in this difficult financial predicament – this is a position shared by the majority of Councils across the sector.
38. Going forward, it is forecast that the SEND Transformation Programme – with the full roll out of the district hub model – will provide for a more inclusive system that enables the necessary early support and intervention to manage demand within overall resources. However, this will take time and will not generate the immediate savings required to address the current shortfall.

## Appendix 2 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

39. Given the latest forecast overspend in 2021/22, the deficit is likely to increase this year and going forward until such time that the SEND Transformation Plan can impact:



40. Schools Forum, at its meeting in October 2020, approved a deficit management plan utilising surplus Growth Fund money (after amounts have been used to fund National Funding Formula (NFF) shortfalls and contributions to schools for in year growth) that will be transferred to the DSG reserve. It is estimated that for 2021/22 this will be between £1m - £1.5m but given the worsening financial position outlined above further action will be required.

41. *Culture & Communities* *Covid impact - £0.150m*  
*Normal service forecast - breakeven*

42. The forecast is for the service to breakeven, however there is a small pressure due to reduced income within the Archives and Heritage Service of £30,000 which is forecast to be offset by other one off savings mainly within the Shugborough contingency budget.

43. Covid 19 has led to reduced income for the service from reduced trading activity.

44. *Rural County* *Covid impact - £40,000*  
*Normal service forecast - £0.139m saving*

45. The service is forecast to save £0.193m due to one off staffing vacancies held pending the re-organisation of the service to be carried out during the final quarter of the financial year partial offset by increased costs of new IT system and one-off training of staff.

## Appendix 2 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

46. The Covid 19 pandemic has meant loss of income for the service from reduced trading activity, parking and penalty fines.
47. *Community Safety* *Covid impact – nil*  
*Normal service forecast - £70,000 saving*
48. The forecast saving of £70,000 is due mainly as a result of staff vacancies and service contract saving which have results from the impact of Covid 19 and are likely to return to normal levels for the rest of the financial year.
49. **Economy, Infrastructure & Skills** **Covid impact - £1.588m**  
**Normal service forecast - £0.137m saving**
50. *Infrastructure & Highways* *Covid impact - £0.235m*  
*Normal service forecast - breakeven*
51. The forecast for the service is breakeven – there are some small forecast overspends including Highways Maintenance and Lighting and Signals, but these are likely to be offset by savings withing School Crossing Patrols and the Network Management services.
52. The forecast impact of Covid 19 is £0.235m, which is largely a continued loss of income for street parking and bus enforcement in the Regulation and Governance area, a loss of income on land charges and a small number of increased costs on Safe Operating Procedures such as PPE.
53. *Transport, Connectivity & Waste* *Covid impact - £1.153m*  
*Normal service forecast - £0.102m saving*
54. The Transport and Connectivity service is forecast to save £0.102m, this includes £60,000 due to vacancies and forecast additional recharged income in Transport Planning and savings forecast on the operational transport budgets.
55. Additional Covid 19 costs include providing additional cleaning on home to school transport until the end of July and additional transport capacity to avoid full and standing buses at peak times. It should be noted that specific central

## Appendix 2 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

government grant for this ends in June although an allowance has been made to continue support until the end of the summer term.

56. Within the Sustainability and Waste services the forecast is breakeven. This position assumes that the £0.5m MTFS saving for Green Waste Recycling credits will be achieved.
57. There is £1m forecast for the impact of Covid 19 on Waste – this is the cost of additional tonnages which have been seen since March 2020 as a result of the change in working habits but also the loss of third party income to the Energy from Waste sites as a result of this increased tonnage. It should be noted that waste budgets are demand led and will need continued close monitoring throughout the year to track tonnages and costs as social restrictions are eased and any 'new normal' is established.
58. **Corporate Services** **Covid impact - £0.554m**  
**Normal service forecast - £0.325m saving**
59. The service is forecast to save £0.325m, this includes a £0.175m forecast saving in ICT due to vacancies and a forecast saving of £0.2m of additional income in Registrars due to the higher number of weddings that are now being booked for 2021/22 as Covid 19 restrictions are starting to be lifted. These savings are partly offset by a forecast overspend in HR which is the non-delivery of a 2019/20 MTFS saving.
60. The forecast for the impact of Covid 19 is £0.554m which includes costs of the temporary mortuary facility extension and the closure of the first annual leave purchase scheme window.
61. **Centrally Controlled**
62. The business as usual forecast saving is £0.1m which is within Pooled Buildings and relates to savings on energy and electricity costs.
63. There is a forecast spend of £0.124m of Covid 19 pressures which includes some loss of rental income and potential additional costs to modify the office space in Staffordshire Place 1 post Covid 19.

### 64. **Capital Forecast**

65. Appendix 5 compares the latest capital forecast outturn of £126.7m, an increase from the budgeted position of £108.8m. The key reasons for this increase of £17.9m are set out in the following paragraphs.

### 66. **Health and Care** **Forecast spend £6.926m**

67. There has been a reduction of £1.213m since the budget was set in December, which is due to the significant impact of Covid 19 which has resulted in uncertainty over demand and capacity requirements moving forward, therefore current plans are on hold for building new nursing homes at Histon Hill reducing forecast spend by £1.129m and Rowley Hall reducing forecast spend by £1.131m, with a potential knock on effect for Dementia Centres of Excellence of £0.197m.

68. The Care Director budget now reflects rephasing of additional works into 2021/22 of £0.492m and rephasing of Supported Living Scotch Orchard and Specialist LD Day Services in Lichfield to 2021/22 of £0.280m and £0.150m. Also, the Changing Places grant scheme has been put on hiatus until sufficient interest can be garnered, reducing forecast spend by £72,000.

### 69. **Families and Communities** **Forecast spend £34.629m**

#### 70. *Maintained Schools* *Forecast Spend £33.742m*

71. There has been an overall increase in forecast spend of £18.037m since the budget was set in December. There has been significant additional developer contributions on Schools, including Anker Valley of £2.651m, Netherstow High of £1.346m, Coton Green of £0.964m, Sir Graham Balfour of £0.958m, St Johns Primary Essington of £0.497m and Deanslade 1FE Primary in South Lichfield of £0.404m. There have also been various other developer contributions and rephasing of projects across the whole programme which total to an additional forecast spend of £3.507m on Schools.

72. As a result of increased government investment and a revised allocation system, Staffordshire will this year receive capital funding of £9.6m, which is the highest allocation since 2015/16. This is an increase of £5.7m and is not yet reflected above due to very recent notification of the allocation. This will be brought into the capital programme in due course. This significantly higher

## Appendix 2 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

allocation will give the Council opportunity to further address condition priorities in schools.

73. For Non-Schools spend, there has been the introduction of the new Decarbonisation grant of £3.004m, additional SEND provision of £3.381m and other rephasing of schemes which totals £1.324m.
74. The SEND amount above includes £2.4m of new funding and is Staffordshire's share of a national funding package of £280m confirmed by DfE for 2021/22 (High Needs Provision Capital Allocations (HNPCA)). This will be used to deliver new places and improve existing provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities or who require alternative provision.
75. **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills** **Forecast spend £72.794m**
76. *Economic Planning & Future Prosperity* *Forecast spend £11.968m*
77. There has been an increase of £5.720m since the budget was set in December. This is due to i54 Western Extension costs increasing and rephasing into 2021/22 of £5.091m. In addition a number of projects have been rephased from 2020/21 to 2021/22 totalling £0.642m. In addition, a new scheme has been added – Rural Enterprise Studies with a forecast spend of £35,000 and the A50 scheme now reflects some rephasing into 2022/23 leading to a reduction of £0.366m.
78. There has been an increase on County Farms spend of £0.530m which is due to the implementation of a new minor grants scheme and the introduction of additional works to assets.
79. *Highways Schemes* *Forecast spend £59.017m*
80. There has been a decrease of £10.466m since the budget was set in December 2020. The original budget included a potential need for significant investment in the Highway Network of £18m. The County Council agreed to extend its previous highways investment for one more year by £5m and for that investment to be reviewed as part of the Strategic Plan and MTFS in the summer of 2021. Government funding was £5.2m less than anticipated when

## Appendix 2 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

the original budget was being finalised giving an overall gap of £18.2m. This has been offset by £3.5m being carried forward from previous years due to slippage of schemes, most notably Chetwynd Bridge and additional third-party income of £1.2m.

81. There has been an increase in forecast spend of £2.885m due to rephasing spend into 2021/22 on Stafford Western Access Route due to Covid pressures and flooding, and budget refinements on Lichfield Southern Bypass.
82. *Connectivity* *Forecast spend £1.430m*
83. There has been an increase of £1.271m since the budget was set due to the introduction of the new Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme of £1m and the rephasing of Superfast Broadband into 2021/22 of £0.271m.
84. *Waste & Sustainability* *Forecast spend £0.379m*
85. There is a reduction of £0.769m since the budget was set, this is due to rephasing of works on Newcastle Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) into 2022/23 of £0.790m offset by other rephasing of HWRC works into 2021/22 of £49,000 and Health and Safety works at Leek HWRC of £0.208m.
86. **Finance and Resources & ICT** **Forecast spend £0.754m**
87. There has been an increase of £0.359m since the budget due to rephasing of spend on the Wireless Refresh project of £0.150m, Data Centre Refresh of £0.145m and Computer Refresh of £64,000.
88. **Property** **Forecast spend £11.050m**
89. There has been an increase of £4.690m since the budget was set in December, due to a number of factors. These include the introduction of a new scheme – Shire Hall Regeneration of £2m and One Public Estate Funding of £0.189m.
90. There has also been reprofiling of spend to 2021/22 for District Rationalisation of £1.508m, Responding to Accommodation Changes of £0.103m, Greenwood House of £0.444m, Asset Renewal of £0.381m, Newcastle Family Contact Centre of £0.223m. These increases have been offset by reductions on Pre-



## Appendix 2 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

sale planning and improvement costs of £48,000 and removal of Fire Compartmentation budget of £0.110m as the works are covered by revenue maintenance budgets.

### 91. **Financial Health**

92. Appendix 6 provides a forecast outturn performance against the key Financial Health Indicators approved as part of the 2021/22 budget setting process.
93. There have been 97.6% of invoices paid within 30 days of receiving them at the end of February, exceeding the financial health indicator target. This position also reflects early payments to suppliers to help them with cashflow during the pandemic.
94. The estimated level of outstanding sundry debt over 6 months old is £19.913m, this is over the target of £14.7m by £5.213m. This is a decrease of £1.032m since the end of the 2020/21 financial year. The debt recovery process involves chasing by a range of methods with the eventual escalation to the external collection agent or to Legal for the possibility of a court decision to recover the debt. It should be noted that a return to full debt recovery services, including legal action was only possible from September 2020 due to Covid 19.
95. The level of CCG health debt over 6 months old is £0.9m below the target figure. This is a decrease of £49,000 since the end of the 2020/21 financial year.
96. Client debt now stands at £9.682m and could potentially increase as a consequence of the on-going pandemic. A working group has been established to look at why clients are not paying debts and to implement ways to avoid clients getting into debt in the first instance, this includes an initiative to encourage and assist clients with setting up direct debit instructions.

## Appendix 2 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

<b>Debtor Type</b>	<b>2021/22 Target</b>	<b>31/03/2021</b>	<b>30/06/2021 Est</b>	<b>Increase / (Decrease)</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
Health Bodies & CCGs	3.900	3.018	2.969	<b>(0.049)</b>
Other Govt. and Public Bodies	2.000	4.099	3.247	<b>(0.852)</b>
Other General Debtors (Individuals & Commercial)	4.700	4.110	4.015	<b>(0.095)</b>
Health & Care Client Debt	4.100	9.718	9.682	<b>(0.036)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14.700</b>	<b>20.945</b>	<b>19.913</b>	<b>(1.032)</b>

## Appendix 3 – Corporate Checklist

### **Equalities implications:**

Through the delivery of county council business plans, service delivery is increasingly reflecting the diverse needs of our various communities.

### **Legal implications:**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **Resource and Value for money implications:**

The resource and Value for money implications are set out in the report.

### **Risk implications:**

The risk implications concern the robustness of the forecast outturn which may change owing to pressures on services with a consequent effect on county council functions being able to keep within budgets and a potential call on balances.

### **Climate Change implications:**

Staffordshire's communities are places where people and organisations proactively tackle climate change, gaining financial benefit and reducing carbon emissions' is one of the county council's priority outcomes. Through the monitoring and management of this outcome; climate change and carbon emissions are being addressed in an active manner.

### **Health Impact Assessment and Community Impact Assessment screening:**

Not required for this report.

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## Revenue Forecast Outturn 2021/22









	Revised Budget Qtr 1 £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Covid Impact	Normal Service Overspend / (Savings)	Total Variation £m
<b>Health and Care</b>					
Public Health & Prevention	(5.669)	(5.669)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Adult Social Care & Safeguarding	39.411	39.411	0.200	0.000	0.200
Care Commissioning	200.642	195.642	3.949	(5.000)	(1.051)
Specific Grant Allocation (Public Health)	(1.307)	(1.307)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Exit and Transition Fund	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
<b>Health and Care Total</b>	<b>233.077</b>	<b>228.077</b>	<b>4.149</b>	<b>(5.000)</b>	<b>(0.851)</b>
<b>Families and Communities</b>					
Children's Services	118.151	117.221	7.915	(0.930)	6.985
Children's Public Health	(4.546)	(4.546)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Education Services	31.497	31.497	0.400	0.000	0.400
Culture and Communities	5.438	5.438	0.150	0.000	0.150
Rural	2.356	2.217	0.040	(0.139)	(0.099)
Community Safety	8.323	8.253	0.000	(0.070)	(0.070)
Specific Grant Allocation (Public Health)	(1.710)	(1.710)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Exit and Transition Fund	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
<b>Families and Communities Total</b>	<b>159.509</b>	<b>158.370</b>	<b>8.505</b>	<b>(1.139)</b>	<b>7.366</b>
<b>Economy, Infrastructure and Skills</b>					
Business & Enterprise	2.194	2.194	0.000	0.000	0.000
Infrastructure & Highways	29.687	29.687	0.235	0.000	0.235
Transport, Connectivity & Waste	39.880	39.778	1.153	(0.102)	1.051
Skills	2.435	2.400	0.000	(0.035)	(0.035)
EI&S Business Support	1.097	1.097	0.000	0.000	0.000
Specific Grant Allocation (Public Health)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Covid related capital project costs	0.000	0.000	0.200	0.000	0.200
Exit and Transition Fund	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
<b>Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Total</b>	<b>75.293</b>	<b>75.156</b>	<b>1.588</b>	<b>(0.137)</b>	<b>1.451</b>
Corporate Services	34.858	34.849	0.544	(0.009)	0.535
Specific Grant Allocation (Public Health)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Exit and Transition Fund	0.000	(0.316)	0.000	(0.316)	(0.316)
<b>Corporate Services Total</b>	<b>34.858</b>	<b>34.533</b>	<b>0.544</b>	<b>(0.325)</b>	<b>0.219</b>
<b>Traded Services</b>	<b>(0.622)</b>	<b>(0.622)</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>TOTAL PORTFOLIO BUDGETS</b>	<b>502.115</b>	<b>495.514</b>	<b>14.786</b>	<b>(6.601)</b>	<b>8.185</b>
<b>Centrally Controlled Items</b>					
Interest on Balances & Debt Charges	34.669	34.669	0.000	0.000	0.000
Pooled Buildings and Insurances	27.478	27.378	0.000	(0.100)	(0.100)
Investment Fund	0.798	0.798	0.000	0.000	0.000
Covid 19 Grant	0.000	0.000	(16.204)	0.000	(16.204)
<b>TOTAL FORECAST OVERSPEND</b>	<b>565.060</b>	<b>558.359</b>	<b>(1.418)</b>	<b>(6.701)</b>	<b>(8.119)</b>

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22**

	<b>MTFS</b>	<b>Enhancements to Programme</b>	<b>1st Quarter Budget</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b>Health and Care</b>			
Care and Independence	8.139	(1.213)	6.926
<b>Health and Care Total</b>	<b>8.139</b>	<b>(1.213)</b>	<b>6.926</b>
<b>Families and Communities</b>			
Maintained Schools	15.705	18.037	33.742
Academy Conversion Residual	0.000	0.000	0.000
Rural County (Countryside)	0.769	0.021	0.790
Vulnerable Children's Projects	0.075	0.009	0.084
Tourism and Culture	0.042	(0.029)	0.013
<b>Families and Communities Total</b>	<b>16.591</b>	<b>18.038</b>	<b>34.629</b>
<b>Economy, Infrastructure and Skills</b>			
Economic Planning & Future Prosperity	6.248	5.720	11.968
Highways Schemes	69.483	(10.466)	59.017
Connectivity	0.159	1.271	1.430
Waste & Sustainability Projects	1.148	(0.769)	0.379
<b>Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Total</b>	<b>77.038</b>	<b>(4.244)</b>	<b>72.794</b>
Trading Services - County Fleet Care	0.235	0.272	0.507
Finance, Resources & ICT	0.395	0.359	0.754
Property	6.360	4.690	11.050
Corporate Leased Equipment	0.040	(0.040)	0.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>108.798</b>	<b>17.862</b>	<b>126.660</b>

Financial Health Indicators 2021/22

Appendix 6

Indicator	Current Performance	
<p><u>Debtors</u> Level of outstanding general debtors more than 6 months old does not exceed £14.7m (Current Performance – £19.9m)</p>		
<p><u>Payments to suppliers</u> At least 90% of invoices have been paid within 30 days of us receiving them during the last quarter (Current Performance – 97.6%) This reflects early payments to suppliers to help them with cashflow during the pandemic.</p>		
<p><u>Monitoring</u> Quarterly financial monitoring reports have been issued to Cabinet during the last 12 months</p> <p>The council's most recent revenue outturn forecast did not vary by more than +/-2% when compared to the overall revenue budget</p> <p>Quarterly monitoring reports of progress against MTFS savings have been produced for the Senior Leadership Team during the last 12 months</p>	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">          </div>	
 Indicator not met	 Indicator not met by small margin	 Indicator met

Local Members' Interest
N/A

## **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 29 July 2021**

### **Proposals for Scrutiny of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Annual Budget and Council Tax**

#### **Recommendations**

1. The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider and agree the arrangements, processes and timescales for conducting scrutiny of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Annual Budget and Council Tax, including the appointment of a Working Group.
2. Appointment of Members to the Working Group.

#### **Report of the Chair – Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **Report**

#### **Background**

3. The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising the approach to determine whether the County Council is allocating and using its resources effectively to achieve the priorities set out in the Strategic Plan. Specifically, this will involve:
  - a. scrutiny of the development of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), Annual Budget and Council Tax setting process;
  - b. scrutiny of how the Council manages its property and assets, including Treasury Management; and
4. In previous years, the Committee has appointed a Working Group to undertake scrutiny of the MTFS as part of its work programme. This report sets out proposals for how this scrutiny can be undertaken.

#### **Best Practice**

5. The Committee has undertaken budget scrutiny previously by appointing a Working Group which utilises an approach which has been refined over time and includes adopting a 'risk-based' approach to the interviews with Cabinet Members in order to make the most effective use of time. The original model was developed with reference to good practice elsewhere and in 2009 was shortlisted for the Centre for Public Scrutiny award for Finance Scrutiny.

## **Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Review**

6. Proposed terms of reference for scrutiny of the MTFS, based on previous experience, are set out below.

### **Scope**

7. The scope of the work is to:
  - a. assist the Cabinet and County Council in the development of the Council's MTFS;
  - b. review the Annual Budget and Council Tax setting process; and
  - c. consider whether the County Council's business planning process supports good financial planning.

### **Intended Outcome**

8. That Staffordshire County Council delivers a good and balanced budget which has been subject to robust scrutiny and challenge.

### **Lines of Enquiry**

9. It is proposed that the Committee review and provide comment to the Cabinet on whether the budget is balanced and good by considering:
  - a. the financial strategy in the wider planning context (i.e. does the County Council's business planning approach support good financial planning);
  - b. by what processes the budget is constructed and decisions made;
  - c. what criteria, information and consultation shape the budget; and
  - d. whether resources are allocated according to identified priority.
10. Further criteria which might be used to judge whether a budget is balanced and good include:
  - a. income equals expenditure;
  - b. Cost reduction targets and investment proposals are credible and achievable;
  - c. key assumptions are "stress tested";
  - d. there is a medium term focus, supporting the Strategic Plan/Manifesto;
  - e. it is not just driven by short term fixes to immediate issues;
  - f. it demonstrates how the County Council has listened to consultation;
  - g. it is transparent and well scrutinised;
  - h. it is integrated with the Capital Programme; and
  - i. it maintains the County Council's financial stability.

### **Proposed Review Arrangements**

11. While it is proposed that the Terms of Reference for the scrutiny of the MTFS remain consistent with previous years, Members are asked to consider whether the process can be refined, based on the experiences of prior years.



## Questions and Interviews with Cabinet Members, Senior Leadership Team/Wider Leadership Team and External Platforms

12. Scrutiny of the MTFs has previously involved seeking information from Cabinet Members and senior officers regarding the services for which they are responsible. It is proposed that Members consider building on the risk-based approach which they developed previously (and which was considered very successful) to further concentrate their scrutiny on areas/services which pose the greatest risk to the MTFs.
13. As large budget gaps are forecast for future years, a different approach to producing the MTFs is being delivered and Members may want to consider aligning their scrutiny with this new approach. This would involve scrutinising the key strands of the approach which are cross-cutting across all services and not solely focusing on those with large budget areas.
14. In order to prioritise the areas for interview, Members should take into account:
  - a. each strand of the new approach;
  - b. largest budget areas;
  - c. areas where spending was more volatile or subject to significant external influence;
  - d. links to high priority areas in accordance with the aims set out in the Strategic Plan; and
  - e. areas with a history of overspending or that were not on target to meet the previous year's efficiency savings.
15. It is suggested that this year, to make best use of the time available, Members utilise information that is already available in order to undertake this prioritisation exercise. The same information can also be used to identify *specific* issues and questions at the outset, rather than sending general questions to all Cabinet Members. The information which the Working Group may use includes:
  - a. issues that were identified through last year's budget scrutiny;
  - b. new ways of working where associated risks have not been previously scrutinised;
  - c. current performance and financial management data and information regarding budget pressures (which is reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis); and
  - d. latest summary data regarding which targets are on track to be delivered.
16. If Members choose to adopt this approach, it will mean that service areas which Members didn't identify as having particular risks associated with them last year, and which are also on track to meet their financial targets this year, will not be subject to review by Members. The Working Group will not request written responses from all Cabinet Members, but will only request written responses on an exception basis, depending on the outcome of the risk assessment. This will enable Members to spend more time scrutinising those service areas which potentially have the greatest risk to non-delivery of the MTFs.

17. The Working Group will have the opportunity to interview the Leader of the County Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources regarding the Authority's overall financial position (including discussion of: Council Tax; use of reserves; borrowing etc). The Working Group will also be able to draw on the outcomes of the other, discrete, pieces of work included on your work programme to inform the final report and recommendations. If required, the Working Group may also interview the council's external auditors and investigate, learn and adapt from best practice evidenced elsewhere via platforms such as New Local.
18. Based on the above proposals, a potential timetable for MTFs scrutiny is set out below.

<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Activity</b>
July/August 2021	The Overview and Scrutiny Committees may identify issues which they think should be fed into the MTFs scrutiny. As such, it is proposed that the Working Group write to the Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen to request that they feed in any issues so that this intelligence can be used to further inform the questions to Cabinet Members.
August/September/October 2021	Members undertake interviews with the appropriate Cabinet Members and Senior Leadership Team/Wider Leadership Team/ External witnesses.
November/December 2021	The Committee receives details of the draft Budget setting out budget pressures and the savings options identified to deliver a balanced budget and interviews the Leader of the County Council regarding the Authority's overall finances.
January 2022	Consideration of the draft report and recommendations.
January 2022	Agreement of the Working Group's final report and recommendations by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for submission to the Cabinet at their meeting in February 2022.

### **Link to Strategic Plan**

19. It is the responsibility of this Committee to ensure that the County Council is allocating and using its resources effectively to achieve the priorities set out in the Strategic Plan; scrutiny of the MTFs is a key element of that.

### **Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity**

20. As set out in the proposed review arrangements, the Committee will seek information from the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees regarding specific issues that are relevant to the scrutiny of the MTFs. This information will inform the questions which are asked of the Cabinet Members.

## **Equalities and Legal Implications**

21. Members will be expected to consider the equalities implications of prioritisation/resource allocation processes.

## **Resource and Value for Money Implications**

22. Effective scrutiny of the MTFS is a crucial element of the County Council's budget process and helps ensure that services deliver value for money.

## **Risk Implications**

23. Public perception about Council spending and how it uses its resources makes an important contribution to the Council's overall reputation. An open and transparent Annual Budget, medium term financial planning process and asset management plans are more likely to enhance perception about public accountability.

## **Climate Change Implications**

24. There are specific financial implications to the Authority if it fails to reduce its carbon emissions in line with Government requirements - these will be explored with the relevant Cabinet Member as part of the scrutiny process. There are no specific climate change implications resulting from the process of scrutinising the MTFS.

## **Health Impact Assessment**

25. Members will be expected to consider the health impact implications of prioritisation/ resource allocation processes.

## **Contact Officers**

### **Scrutiny and Support**

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## WORK PROGRAMME – 2021/2022

### Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is the Council's principal overview and scrutiny committee. It is responsible for co-ordinating and approving the scrutiny work programmes, overseeing the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and ensuring coherence of approach to cross cutting policy themes. The committee also has a key role in challenging progress around the Council's ambitions of running the business well.

The Committee also scrutinises those areas of the County Council's activity focused on corporate improvement. Its remit covers:

- Holding the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources of the Council to account for achievement of the overall vision of a connected Staffordshire.
- The Council's overall performance and approach to managing performance and Strategic Corporate Planning
- The Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy
- The Council's on-going programme of improvement and transformation.
- The Committee is responsible for scrutiny of achievement against the Council's strategic priorities
- The Council as a commissioning organisation including how it uses customer insight to drive improvements in services

We review our work programme regularly to ensure it remains relevant to the challenges facing local communities, the Council and its partners.

#### **County Councillor Colin Greatorex**

Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

If you would like to know more about our work programme or how to raise issues for potential inclusion on a work programme then, please contact Nick Pountney - Scrutiny and Support Manager – [Nicholas.pountney@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Nicholas.pountney@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Date of Meeting	Topic	Link to Council's Strategic Priorities	Background/Outcome
10 June 2021	Introduction to the Committee and Work Programme Planning  Members: Alan White/Ian Parry Officers: John Tradewell/Rob Salmon/Nick Pountney		
2 July 2021 Reserved for Call In			
29 July 2021	Integrated Performance Report – Quarter 1 2020/21  Members: Alan White/Ian Parry Officers: John Tradewell/Rob Salmon		
6 August 2021 Reserved for Call in	Appointment of the Medium Term Financial Strategy Working Group  Officers: Carol Bloxham/Nick Pountney		
7 September 2021	Annual Report 2020/21  Member: Colin Greatorex Officer: Nick Pountney		
1 October 2021 Reserved for Call In			
5 October 2021			

Date of Meeting	Topic	Link to Council's Strategic Priorities	Background/Outcome
8 November 2021 Reserved for Call In			
16 November 2021			
3 December 2021			
7 January 2022 Reserved for Call In			
20 January 2022			
4 February 2022 Reserved for Call In			
4 March 2022 Reserved for Call In			
29 March 2022			

Date of Meeting	Topic	Link to Council's Strategic Priorities	Background/Outcome
5 April 2022 Reserved for Call In			
TBC	Equal Opportunities		<p>Raised at 3/7/20 committee – need more equality areas in the work programme. Discussion with Chair and Vice Chairs/officers 6/10/20.</p> <p>Draft paper being prepared, setting out the current position from both a community and workforce perspective. Focus groups to be arranged. Following this a general refresh of Equality Objectives will be carried out. Then report to Corporate Review for scrutiny and to inform the committee of the areas which need priority.</p>
TBC	<p>Governance and control of arm's length companies/partners. E.g. Nexxus/Entrust/AMEY. Particularly in light of Robin Hood Energy/Nottingham City Council. What is out process, how is performance measured, how are contract changes negotiated, what influence do we have.</p> <p>Member: Philip White Officer: Helen Riley/Darryl Evers/John Tradewell/Ian Turner</p>		Item discussed with Chair and Vice Chairs. MTFS to look at financial aspects. Report requested for early 2021, possibly January in line with MTFS findings.
TBC	<p>Digital Strategy</p> <p>Member: Ian Parry</p>		Digital Strategy requested at 10 January 2020 meeting. Also requested by Prosperous Committee.
TBC Development of new Strategic Plan and MTFS			
TBC Data Sharing			
TBC People Strategy Recruitment Smart Working/Future Office			



## Items for Consideration for the Work Programme

Suggested item	Link to the Council's Commissioning Plans	Background	Possible Option
Networks – E.g. Leaders group/CE groups/LGA - how is the information shared?		Discussed at Chairs/Vice Chairs meeting 07/10/20	
Scrutiny of the LEP  Member: Philip White Officers: Darryl Eyers/Anthony Hodges			

Page 47

## Working Group updates

MTFS 2021/22	<b>Appointment of Members 2021</b>	Membership •	Observers
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Suggested Working Group item	Link to the Council's Commissioning Plans	Background	Possible Option

Membership - County Councillors	Calendar of Committee Meetings
Colin Greatorex (Chairman) Conor Wileman (Vice Chairman - Overview) Gill Heath (Vice Chairman - Scrutiny)	10 June 2021 2 July 2021 29 July 2021  reserved for call in

Charlotte Atkins	6 August 2021	reserved for call in
Tina Clements	7 September 2021	
Mike Davies	1 October 2021	reserved for call-in
Jeremy Oates	5 October 2021	
Jeremy Pert	8 November 2021	reserved for call-in
Bernard Peters	16 November 2021	
James Salisbury	3 December 2021	
Bob Spencer	7 January 2022	reserved for call-in
Samantha Thompson	20 January 2022	
Mike Worthington	4 February 2022	reserved for call-in
	29 March 2022	
	5 April 2022	reserved for call-in