

## **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Tuesday 1 August 2023

**10:00**

Oak Room, County Buildings, Stafford

The meeting will be webcast live and archived for 12 months. It can be viewed at the following link: <https://staffordshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

John Tradewell  
Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Corporate Services  
24 July 2023

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### **Agenda**

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2023** (Pages 1 - 4)
- 4. Integrated Performance Report, Quarter 1 2023/24** (Pages 5 - 54)
- 5. Work Programme** (Pages 55 - 62)
- 6. 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>	
Tina Clements	Bernard Peters
Mike Davies	Bob Spencer
John Francis	Samantha Thompson (Vice-Chair (Overview))
Gill Heath (Vice-Chair (Scrutiny))	Mike Wilcox (Chair)
Jeremy Oates	Mike Worthington
Kath Perry, MBE	Nigel Yates
Jeremy Pert	

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

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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.

**Minutes of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 20 June 2023**

Present: Mike Wilcox (Chair)

<b>Attendance</b>	
Tina Clements	Jeremy Pert
Mike Davies	Samantha Thompson (Vice-Chair (Overview))
Gill Heath (Vice-Chair (Scrutiny))	Mike Worthington
Jeremy Oates	Nigel Yates
Kath Perry, MBE	

**Also in attendance:** Councillor Alan White

**Officers:** Kate Loader, Chris Ebberley and Lyndsey Bissell

**Apologies:** John Francis, Bernard Peters and Bob Spencer

**Part One**

**1. Declarations of Interest**

None declared at the meeting.

**2. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2023**

The Chairman thanked Councillor Greatorex as the previous Chairman of the Committee and wished him well in his new role.

**Resolved:** – That, the minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**3. Integrated Performance – Performance and Finance Final Outturn Report, 2022/23**

The Leader of the Council introduced the Integrated Performance and Financial Outturn Report for 2022/23 which summarised the Councils performance and financial position against the Strategic and Delivery Plans.

It was reported that there was an overspend of £11.294m, which had reduced from £11.635m predicted at the end of quarter three.

The main issues discussed by members were:

- Children and Families service remained an area of concern.

However, it was anticipated that the recent investment in Children's services would show a change in services within the next financial year.

- The number of Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCP) issued had continued to rise. The reasons for this were not clear and information on the number per district or borough was not readily available. Lockdown and its impact on young people's mental health was believed to be partly responsible. Educational Psychologists and key support workers had been recruited and this should ensure that children receive appropriate support and annual reviews. The Childrens Improvement Board looked at this detail as part of the improvement plan monitoring.
- The warmer homes project would continue to be promoted throughout the County although it was acknowledged that some districts/boroughs had promoted it more than others.
- The changing levels of demand for home care and care homes could not be explained at present.
- The recruitment and retention of care workers was being addressed through the "Social Care workforce strategy". A copy of which would be circulated to members for information.
- There was a discussion on the extension of the Amey contract and how this was being monitored. It was noted that Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee received regular reports updating them on the transformation programme. The Leader reported that he had met with Amey and that providing value for money; an efficient service; and having good customer services was high on their list of priorities. Funding challenges for category 3 highway defects and the need to address potholes in close proximity to each other was discussed. This was being referred to as "Whole Place Repair". Members felt that this repair policy was not adequately communicated to all staff in all divisional teams.
- A dedicated member of communications staff had been allocated to highways service area.
- Household waste sites charging for DIY waste would be looked at, as there seemed to be some confusion over who and when charges were made. This information would be forwarded to members.
- The potential benefits and drawbacks of smaller regional highway repair contracts and capital projects was discussed.
- The slippage of highway capital projects had been discussed with Amey.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the Integrated Performance and Financial Outturn Report be noted as the position as at the end of year 2022/23.
- b) A copy of the "Social Care workforce strategy" be circulated to members for information.
- c) Information clarifying the position with the Household waste sites

charging for DIY waste would be forwarded to members when available.

#### **4. Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report**

The Chairman introduced the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report 2022-23. The report summarised the activity and outcomes for Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the municipal year. The report would be considered by Council on 20 July 2023.

The benefits of scrutiny and the activity undertaken over the previous 12 months was discussed. The Chairs of the Committees thanked Officers for their support.

**Resolved:** That the report be approved and referred to Council for consideration on 20 July 2023.

#### **5. Overview and Scrutiny Quarterly Update**

The Chairman introduced the report and reminded the Committee that as part of its role as overarching Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) committee, they had responsibility for developing and agreeing the combined work programme for the Council's O&S function.

**Resolved:** That the quarterly work programmes be agreed.

#### **6. Draft Work Programme 2023-24**

The Committee considered the draft work programme for 2023/24 which had been compiled with items previously agreed by the Committee and a number of regular quarterly or annual reports such as the Integrated performance and finance reports.

It was acknowledged that the Leaders Board was on the work programme as a potential area for scrutiny, but it was felt that this should be considered from the angle of developing policy and member input at an early stage.

It was noted that there was a triangulation meeting arranged for 29 June which may generate additional areas of work.

**Resolved:** That the work programme be approved.

#### **7. Climate Change Working Group - update**

The Chair of the Climate Change Working Group, Councillor Thompson, updated the Committee on the work undertaken by the group since the

last meeting. The Working Group had narrowed its focus to look at an area of the Climate Change Action Plan where more work was needed. This was Sequestration – taking carbon from the air. The Working Group would commence evidence gathering on Thursday 29 June 2023 with a visit to Norbury Park Estate Forest and BiFOR research woodland which was set within the grounds of Norbury Park to see and hear evidence relating to tree nurseries, skills required, best practice tree planting and scientific experiments taking place on site.

Cllr Thompson informed the Committee that Cllr Haden had been asked to attend the visit as she had a particular interest in this area.

The membership of the working group was discussed. It was felt that, if all previous members wanted to remain on the group they should be able to do so.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the update on the working group activity be received.
- b) That Cllrs Smith and Wileman be asked if they wish to remain on the working group.
- c) That subject to councillors confirming their wish to remain on the Group, the membership remain as:
  - Cllr S Thompson (Chair)
  - Cllr C Wileman
  - Cllr N Yates
  - Cllr T Clements
  - Cllr J Pert
  - Cllr B Peters
  - Cllr D Smith

## **8. Appointment of Members to the Medium Term Financial Strategy Working Group**

The Chairman asked for volunteers to serve on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Working Group for 2023/24.

**Resolved:**

That the following members be appointed to the MTFS working group:

- Cllr M Wilcox (Chair)
- Cllr B Peters
- Cllr N Yates
- Cllr J Pert
- Cllr G Heath
- Cllr S Thompson
- Cllr J Oates

**Chair**

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

## **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Tuesday 01 August 2023**

### **Integrated Performance Report, Quarter 1 2023/24**

#### **Recommendation**

I recommend that:

- a. Committee Members note and challenge performance and advise of any further information and/or action required.

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

#### **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, Delivery Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- 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 19 July 2023**

### **Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2023/24**



**Cllr Alan White, Leader of the Council said,**

"We continue to do what is necessary to support our most vulnerable residents who need us most, while creating the right conditions for our economy and businesses to thrive.

"Our work to promote Staffordshire as a top location to live, work, invest in and visit continues. Our 'We are Staffordshire' team attended the UK Real Estate Infrastructure and Investment Conference in Leeds in May where they got the chance to promote the many investment opportunities available in the county. This, alongside supporting local businesses, helping attract new businesses with better quality jobs for people remains a priority.

"Our Household Support Fund continues to help thousands of local families with the ongoing cost of living pressures and during the May half term holiday provided supermarket vouchers to 27,000 families. Over Easter, the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme also saw its highest take up rate meaning more children and young people benefited from the scheme.

"Work to tackle climate change is ongoing, and since December 2022, the Staffordshire Warmer Homes scheme has installed 459 measures in 328 properties to make them more energy efficient.

"We continue to face challenges within Children's Services including the rising cost, number and complexity of Children in Care, and ongoing placement pressures, however additional recruitment will help to ease this. We are also seeing increased demand for Children's Services and Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) for Education, Health, and Care Plans, but again, the recruitment of additional staffing capacity is underway.

"Despite the many pressures facing councils like ours, we will invest to keep growing the county in a sustainable way to make a positive difference in the lives of our residents."





**Cllr Ian Parry, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources said,**

“All council departments continue to deliver against their priorities, whilst progressing with activities in the organisation’s Delivery Plan.

“Like most local authorities, we do face rising costs across the organisation and high inflation which puts extra pressures on our finances. We also continue to face challenges around demand and capacity within Children’s services and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities teams.

“We continue to do what is necessary and to manage our finances effectively. The latest revenue forecast outturn shows an overspend of £9.5m (1.39%), compared to the balanced budget.

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

## **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, Corporate Delivery Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

## **Recommendation**

We recommend that Cabinet:

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

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

## **Cabinet – Wednesday 19 July 2023**

### **Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2023/24**

#### **Recommendation of the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources**

We recommend that Cabinet:

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

#### **Report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Director for Corporate Services and the Director of Finance**

##### **Reasons for Recommendations**

This is an opportunity for Cabinet to consider and discuss Staffordshire County Council's quarterly performance and finance position.

# Quarter 1 Summary

This report provides an update on Quarter 1 progress in relation to delivering the council's priorities and pledge as set out within the council's [Strategic Plan 2022-26](#).

## Key highlights

- **We are Staffordshire:** The team led the Staffordshire at the UK Real Estate Infrastructure and Investment Conference (UKREiIF) in May, setting out why the county is a top location to live, work, invest in and visit.
- **Staffordshire Warmer Homes Scheme:** Project with Broad Oak properties 'highly commended' at the West Midlands Energy Efficiency Awards in June. Since December 2022, 459 measures have been installed in 328 properties.
- **Integrated Co-occurring Needs Pathway (ICoN):** The new ICoN initiative is being pioneered in Staffordshire to support people with both mental health issues and drug and alcohol use, in a holistic way. The programme will be used as a good practice model.
- **Household Support Fund:** In May half term over 27,000 families of children in receipt of Free Schools Meals were issued with supermarket vouchers.
- **Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme:** The Easter HAF offered more places (almost 11,000) than any previous HAF and saw the highest take-up rate; meaning more children and young people benefit from the scheme.
- **Highways maintenance:** Delivery of major capital highways maintenance schemes continues, alongside Highways Transformation Programme.
- **Business support:** Procurement completed to extend the successful Staffordshire Start Up programme into 2023/24.
- **Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs):** Cabinet approved the introduction of permits for vans and trailers at Staffordshire's HWRC sites.

## Key challenges

- **Children in Care:** Continued pressures across Children's services, including the rising cost, number and complexity of Children in Care, and ongoing placement pressures. Recruitment underway following investment.
- **SEND:** Increased demand for Education, Health and Care Plans. Capacity continues to be a challenge; however, recruitment of additional Key Workers and Educational Psychologists is underway.
- **Adult Social Care Demand:** Safeguarding and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding requests remain high, with additional capacity being explored.

Further details of the above can be found in the main report and accompanying appendices.

#### 4. Financial Overview

5. The latest revenue forecast outturn shows an overspend of £9.5m (1.39%), compared to the balanced budget. There continues to be areas of financial risk in Children and Families, with further details included within this report and appendices 2-7.

#### 6. Encourage good health and wellbeing, resilience and independence

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
<b>GREEN</b>	<b>GREEN</b>

7. In Quarter 1, demand for Care Act Assessments stabilised but continues to be higher than before the pandemic (approximately 17% higher); there were 1,534 assessments initiated in May 2023, which is similar to May last year (1,532). The council continues to exceed its target for completed Care Act Assessments within 28 days (see Appendix 1).

8. The number of safeguarding contacts continues to fluctuate monthly; demand reduced in April 2023 (1,180) before increasing again in May 2023 (1,348). This increase impacts on the number of people waiting and these will begin to be prioritised. The council is securing additional resource from an external provider to support with the increased demand.

9. The number of reviews of people receiving services for 12 months or more has continued to remain high, with 84% reviewed in the previous 12 months in May 2023, exceeding the target of 80% (see Appendix 1). The best performance is in reviews of people receiving Mental Health services (87.7%).

10. Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLs) applications (where it is necessary to deprive a person of their liberty in a hospital or care home if they lack capacity to consent to their treatment and care) is an area of demand that continues to impact on resources. The council had 1,147 DoLs applications waiting to be completed at the end of May 2023, however the majority of these are low priority and over half are in progress. The possibility of procuring additional capacity to manage these applications is being explored.

11. Significant work is continuing in preparation for the new Care Quality Commissioning (CQC) assurance framework which will assess how the council is performing against duties under the Care Act 2014.

12.As part of the council’s objective to showcase technologies in care, Nexus are commencing a pilot of Fitbits with people in their reablement and home care services. These smart watches will monitor the biometrics of individuals and feedback the data to a central system. The central system will then compare this data to the individual’s usual state and highlight any deviation that might require intervention. Future updates will be provided on how this pilot progresses.

13.Staffordshire’s Warmer Homes Scheme were finalists in the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards 2023, in the category which recognises councils that are making the most of their role in public health. The Warmer Homes entry showcased how lifting people out of fuel poverty and helping households with rapidly increasing energy bills is a public health priority in Staffordshire. The Warmer Homes project with Broad Oak properties was also ‘highly commended’ at the West Midlands Energy Efficiency Awards in June. Latest figures from the Sustainable Warmth Competition show that since December 2022, there have been 459 measures installed within 328 properties. This brings the total number of measures installed through Staffordshire Warmer Homes to 1,220 within 964 properties. The council has also secured an additional £1m in funding for the extension of the scheme that specifically supports low-income households heated by mains gas, which runs until September 2023.

14.A new initiative to support people with both mental health issues and drug and alcohol use is being pioneered in Staffordshire. The new ICoN (Integrated Co-occurring Needs pathway) will bring together the local authority, NHS, voluntary and community sectors in a single approach. This pathway has a dedicated team of professionals including psychologists, mental health practitioners, and substance use coordinators, and will use phases of intervention to offer the right support, to the right people, at the right time. The service has been identified as national good practice.

**15.Offer every Staffordshire child and young person the best start in life, and the chance to achieve their potential**

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
<b>AMBER</b>	<b>RED</b>

16.Children in Care demand has continued to increase, with close monitoring of those past estimated exit dates continuing. A review of those in residential placements has also been completed with actions now in place to find suitable alternative placements where appropriate. Recruitment of additional capacity is progressing following the additional cabinet investment of £5.7m.

17. As at the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023, there were 1,397 children and young people in the authority's care in Staffordshire, representing a slight increase compared to the previous quarter (1,385). This is a rate of 83 per 10,000; higher than the most recent national benchmark (70 per 10,000 - March 2022) but lower than regional (88 per 10,000 - March 2022). The number of children subject of a Child Protection Plan at the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023 was 687 down from a peak of 721 in April. This is a rate of 41 per 10,000 in Staffordshire compared to the most recent benchmarks from March 2022 of 42 nationally and 43 regionally.
18. The number of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) was 7,103 at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023 compared to 6,527 a year earlier. This increasing demand means that the number of EHCP's issued in time (within 20 weeks) remains low in Staffordshire; 31% compared to the most recent national benchmark of 49% (2022). Recruitment is underway to increase capacity, with eleven Senior Key Workers already in post and two due to start in September, as well as eight Key Worker positions recruited and due to be in post by September. Recruitment for Educational Psychologists continues with five roles secured, and a further recruitment round due to take place from September.
19. Work continues across the four main programmes of work within Children & Families; Children in Care, Children's Workforce, SEND Improvement and Embedding the Children & Families System. Progress has been made across several elements in the last quarter including the mapping of residential placements to ensure children and young people are in the most appropriate placement for them and work to review Children in Care to ensure predicted exit dates are realised and progressed wherever possible.
20. At the end of May 2023, 195 families have been confirmed as achieving a successful and sustained outcome through the Building Resilient Families and Communities Programme since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. Additional family cohorts are still being reviewed with final figures for Quarter 1 available in the following performance report. The Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have increased this year's target number of families by 62% to 1,290, but as we strive to achieve more for our families in Staffordshire, we are hoping to achieve outcomes for 1,677 families (30% above DLUHC target).
21. Staffordshire's most vulnerable families will have access to a share of £11 million of funding received from the Department for Work and Pensions for 2023/24. The Household Support Fund (HSF) supports families and others who need it most, to pay for food and energy bills. In May half term over 27,000 families of children in receipt of Free Schools Meals were issued with supermarket vouchers and over 3,100 households benefited through the professionals' referral scheme.



22. Further support has also been made available to Staffordshire’s most vulnerable families through the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme, which continues to offer children and young people free activities and a healthy meal, over school holidays. The Easter HAF offered more places (almost 11,000) than any previous HAF and saw the highest take-up rate; 71%. Meaning that more children and young people could benefit from the scheme.

**23. Support Staffordshire’s economy to grow, generating more and better paid jobs**

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
<b>GREEN</b>	<b>GREEN</b>

24. A key driver for further investment in Staffordshire is the council’s Place Marketing campaign, with progress made during Quarter 1 in promoting the ‘We are Staffordshire’ place brand. A ‘Quality of Life’ campaign was launched advocating Staffordshire as a great place to live and work – the video launch reached over 45,000 people and was highlighted in local news outlets. The new ‘We Are Staffordshire’ website was launched with a fresh look, streamlined user experience, and a new toolkit of promotional materials available to download to help promote Staffordshire. Network events continued, and in April the council held its best attended Ambassador Event with over 100 attendees.

25. The ‘We are Staffordshire’ team also led Staffordshire’s presence and ‘Staffordshire: A Place to Prosper’ campaign and prospectus at the UK Real Estate Infrastructure and Investment Conference (UKREiiF) in May, setting out why the county is a top location to live, work, invest in and visit. Staffordshire showcased over £1bn worth of investment opportunities at the three-day event, where potential investors found out more about recent successes in Staffordshire and major projects underway. These included the Stafford Gateway project, regeneration of town centres, Chatterley Valley Enterprise Zone, i54 South Staffordshire, the A50/A500 Growth Corridor, and the West Midlands Interchange.

26. During Quarter 1, the council has continued to support local businesses to start up and grow through its dynamic range of business support schemes. Between June 2020 and May 2023, the council has supported 570 businesses through the Staffordshire Start Up Programme. Of these, almost half (269) have started trading following the programme. Procurement to extend the Start-Up Mentoring Scheme to June 2024 (which was due to end in June 2023), is now complete. Get Started and Grow has supported 167 business owners who have been trading up to 5 years with professional services support in marketing, finance, or digital marketing. Additionally, 98 businesses have been approved for the ‘My Own Boss’ programme.



27. The Ladder for Staffordshire is the leading multi-organisation champion for apprenticeships in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. There is a collaborative, joined-up approach to improving skills and enrichment opportunities for all, linking up employers, training providers and candidates. Up to the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023, 55 apprentices had been recruited since its official launch in February 2023.

## 28. Fix more roads, and improve transport and digital connections

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
AMBER	GREEN

29. Funding has been awarded to the council which will help county councillors tackle potholes in their local area. The £2 million fund will be used to tackle defects already reported to the council by the public and gives county councillors the opportunity to prioritise local repairs above other non-urgent repairs. The money is part of the £4.8 million the county council received from the Department for Transport's pothole fund. This is on top of £5 million investment for road repairs, and a £30 million investment in the county's roads over the next two years. The scheme will run alongside the existing member's Divisional Highways Programme (DHP), where members work with communities, parish councils and other local organisations to identify improvements that can be made in their local areas. These improvements can be anything from addressing local concerns about road safety, to signage and other maintenance tasks. The scheme is now live, with work anticipated to start in July.

30. Following the winter period there has been an increase in the number of high-risk Category 1 and Category 2 defects identified in April and May, which are being prioritised. The additional 'pothole' funding is providing additional resources, together with the usual shift of core resources from Winter Operations (e.g. gritting), to carry out these repairs. Between April and mid-June, there has also been 750,000 square metres of carriageway pothole prevention resurfacing treatments delivered across the county, which equates to around 70 miles of carriageway and 50% completion of this year's planned programme.

31. The Highways Transformation Programme is also progressing well in Quarter 1, with a detailed programme of activity to implement the new operating model now emerging, focussing on developing the member and community offer. Alongside this transformation, the delivery of major capital highways maintenance schemes continues, with schemes progressing well at A34 Holmcroft, Stafford; A34 Walton Island, Stone;

and A522 Beamhurst (JCB), Uttoxeter. The scheme at A521 Uttoxeter Road, Blythe Bridge is also now complete.

32.As part of Project Gigabit, which aims to provide gigabit-capable coverage to Staffordshire residents, there remain a high number of premises still under review for broadband intervention, which are being monitored by a Rolling Open Market review, which confirms where gigabit capable broadband infrastructure currently exists or is planned to be built and identifies eligible target areas for intervention. Discussions are ongoing between the council and Building Digital UK (BDUK).

### 33.Tackle climate change, enhance our environment, and make Staffordshire more sustainable

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
<b>GREEN</b>	<b>GREEN</b>

34.In Quarter 1, the council’s Cabinet approved the introduction of permits for vans and trailers at Staffordshire’s Household Waste Recycling Centre sites (HWRCs). The changes follow public consultation and now require Staffordshire residents with vans or trailers to apply for permits, which will allow them to make 12 visits per year to the sites. Staffordshire residents with cars will still be able to use the sites freely. The new scheme also means that people from outside Staffordshire with trade waste can no longer dispose of their waste at Staffordshire’s HWRCs. The changes are expected to help reduce queues and improve services for residents.

35.Membership of the Staffordshire Business Environment Network (SBEN) has now been extended for 2023/24 to businesses in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. SBEN is coordinated by the council and is now supported by Steelite International and Michelin Tyre PLC, whose backing means members can benefit for environmental legislation updates, events, networking, and a bespoke carbon tracker tool. SBEN has over 430 members and in the last year supported 33 businesses in cutting energy costs and improving energy use through Low Carbon Business Evolution project grants. It has also supported 68 businesses through carbon literacy training, and 315 businesses have attended events over the year.

36.A giant carbon bubble is going to be touring the county to help raise awareness of climate change as part of plans to help the county reduce its carbon footprint and achieve its target of net zero by 2050. The aim of this is to help people visualize the impact of their daily activities on carbon emissions. When visiting the bubble, people will also get the chance to meet staff for advice on the changes they can make to help

the environment. The tour will be visiting locations across the county up until August 2023.

### 37. How we work

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
<b>GREEN</b>	<b>GREEN</b>

38. To achieve the council's ambitions, we continue to challenge and change how we work.

39. Good progress can be seen during the quarter as part of the council's commitment to working with its communities. 'Green Libraries' month in May included 92 events in libraries to help promote the importance of caring for the environment. The programme included both online and in-person events and was developed in response to the Green Libraries Manifesto, hosted by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), in partnership with Arts Council England, British Library, Libraries Connected and Julie's Bicycle.

40. Work has continued on the Staffordshire History Centre, with construction remaining on track in Quarter 1. Rugeley Power Station exhibition also launched in May at the Museum of Cannock Chase, funded by Section 106 money.

41. Digital continues to be fundamental to the way the council works as an organisation, as well as how it will interact with partners, citizens, and communities. Good progress has been made across multiple priorities, such as the trialling of automation software in Health & Care and Finance to free up capacity for added-value work, with further opportunities being scoped. Work is continuing with Lichfield District Council (LDC) to progress a collaborative "Single Front Door" approach across Staffordshire. The Customer Service Waste and Recycling pilot is now live with a shared knowledge base in place for Customer Service Advisors. Two further pilots have also been agreed: Environmental Health and Disabled Facility Grant Information Advice and Guidance (IAG).

42. Work to deliver the council's refreshed internal People Strategy will continue during 2023/24. Benefits of the new applicant tracking system WeRecruit (a system that allows the council to attract, select and hire people more quickly and easily) are now being realised, with time to hire rate at 45 days or less.

43. There is a continued focus on absence across the council to help improve the number of days lost due to sickness absence; with a consistent

downward trajectory seen for the last nine months. This focus includes working directly with those teams experiencing the highest days lost to understand the root causes for absence and proactively supporting them. Across these teams the council has seen a 75% improvement in their absence in the last quarter. Additionally, absence related surgeries have been provided to the wider management teams to help them manage absence through their directorate absence reduction plans.

44. As a result of this work, long term absence now stands at 8.38 days lost per employee; similar position to last year (8.28 days) but represents an improvement from Q3 where performance was 8.7 days. Short-term absence now stands at 3.52 days lost per employee, again similar to last year (3.53 days). Over half of the workforce has had no sickness absences over the last year (49.2%, 2,105 people), with a further 24.2% (1,038 employees) having been absent for 5 days or fewer. Return to work in the last quarter is at 73% completed; an improvement from last year's 70%.

#### 45. **Live within our means and deliver value for money**

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
<b>AMBER</b>	<b>GREEN</b>

46. Key priorities for 2023/24 continue to include carrying out the council's pledge of living within its means and delivering value for money, improving the customer experience, and inspiring a culture of innovation.

47. Work to refresh the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy is on track, with an update due to be presented at Informal Cabinet in the Autumn. Development of a new online financial self-assessment portal to improve customer experience continues and is on track for a 'go-live' in October.

48. Inflation and rising demand for council services as living costs rise, requires the council to keep finding new, better, and lower cost ways of delivering services and achieving results. This requires further creativity and innovation across the council, finding new ways of working, trialling technology, and applying ideas from other councils, public and private organisations. The council has therefore launched a leadership development programme, supported by an internal staff engagement campaign to generate new and innovative ideas from across the organisation.

49. During 2023/24, the council aims to raise c.£13 million net income through the sale of unused land and buildings to fund transformation of

services and activity, in line with new Government regulation. By the end of May 2023, the council had delivered £788,500.

50. Work on the council's schools and corporate projects is ongoing. The Anna Seward Primary School (Lichfield) and the relocation/enlargement of St Leonards Primary School (Stafford) are on track, both to be completed early July ahead of a September opening. In addition, the Tamworth Library renovation is progressing and the relocation of Children's Services staff and reception facilities from Stafford Borough Council Civic offices to Staffordshire Place is complete and operational.

51. The council's 2023 Community Fund was launched on 9 May 2023 having been held back due to local elections in many districts and boroughs. To date the council has received 19 applications, six of which are retrospective applications linked to celebratory events for the King's Coronation. The council specifically allowed until 30 June for the submission of Coronation funding applications. A total of £155,000 is available and the council will look for matched funding either financial or in kind (for example volunteer hours which we 'value' at £10.42 per hour in line with the National Living Wage).

## **52. Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications of note in relation to this report, which is for information and discussion.

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

Please see Finance Appendices, where resource and value for money implications are set out.

## **54. Climate Change Implications**

There are no direct climate change implications of note.

## **55. Link to Strategic Plan**

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.

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

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.

## 57. Community Impact

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:

- Appendix 1 - Performance Dashboard
- Appendix 2 - Finance Quarter 1 Summary
- Appendix 3 - Finance Quarter 1 Detailed Report
- Appendix 4 - Revenue Forecast Outturn 2023/24
- Appendix 5 - Capital Forecast Outturn 2023/24
- Appendix 6 - Financial Health Indicators 2023/24
- Appendix 7 - Prudential Indicators

### Contact Details

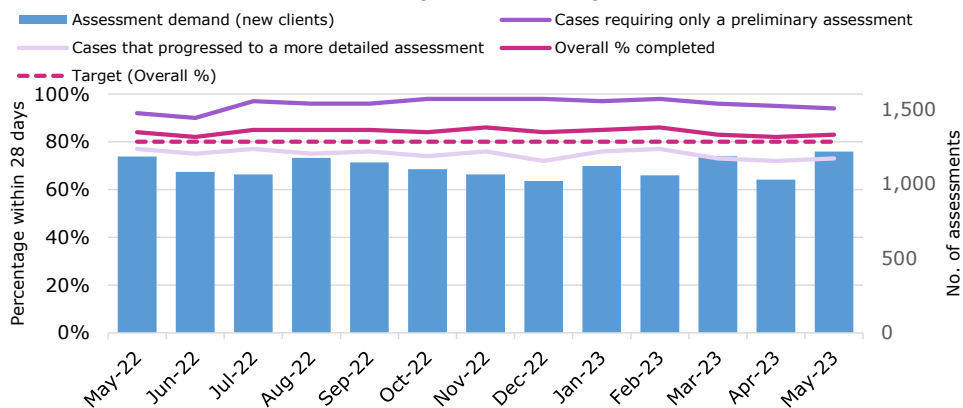
**Report Author:** Wendy Tompson  
**Job Title:** Head of Policy and Insight  
**Telephone No.:** 01785 854267  
**E-Mail Address:** [wendy.tompson@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:wendy.tompson@staffordshire.gov.uk)

**Report Author:** Rachel Spain  
**Job Title:** Chief Accountant  
**Telephone No.:** 01785 854455  
**E-Mail Address:** [rachel.spain@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.spain@staffordshire.gov.uk)



# Health, Wellbeing & Independence Dashboard

**% of Care Act assessments of new clients completed in 28 days and number of requests received per month**

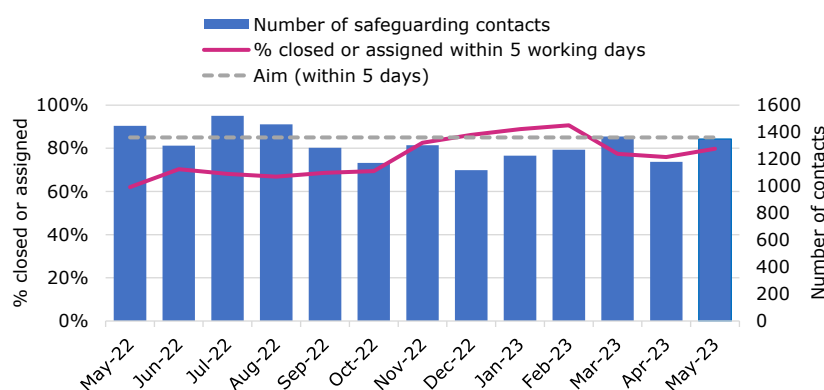


Source: SCC

Performance remained above target in April and May 2023. Where assessments are not completed in 28 days, this is usually because they are more complex. The council tracks these individually to ensure that progress is being made to determine appropriate care and support arrangements, and that any risks are being mitigated.

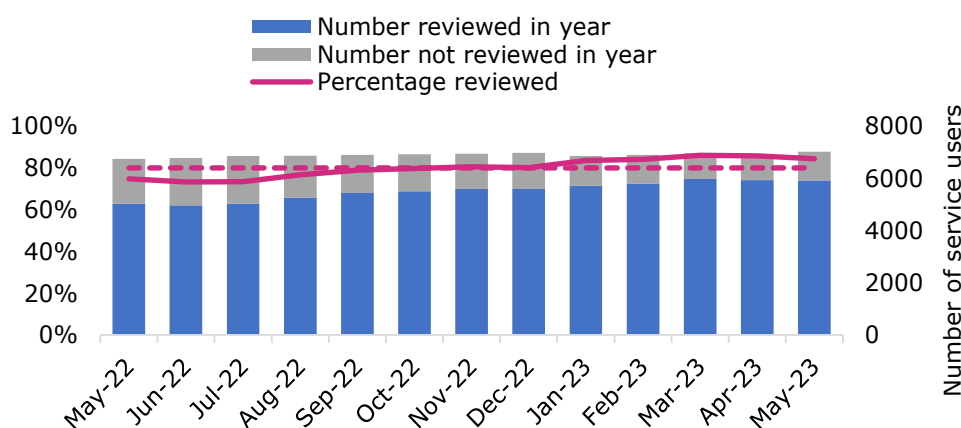
The number of safeguarding contacts increased in May 2023, which impacts on the number of people waiting and these will begin to be prioritised. The council is securing additional resource from an external provider to support with the increased demand.

**% of safeguarding referrals closed or assigned within 5 working days**



Source: SCC

**Overall % and number of people who have been receiving services for 12 months or over, who have had a review in the previous 12 months**



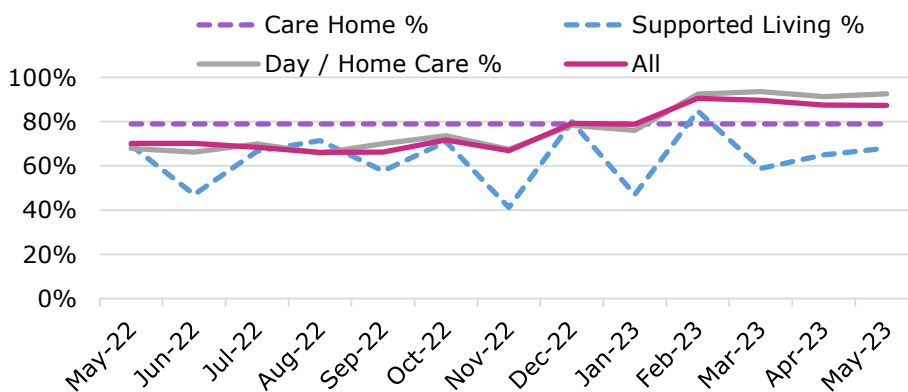
Performance has remained above target in Quarter 1. Where people have not been reviewed within 12 months this may be because they were unavailable (for example in hospital) or because of insufficient capacity, which is being addressed. However if overall demand increases, resource may need to be diverted to higher priority work.

Source: SCC

# Health, Wellbeing & Independence Dashboard

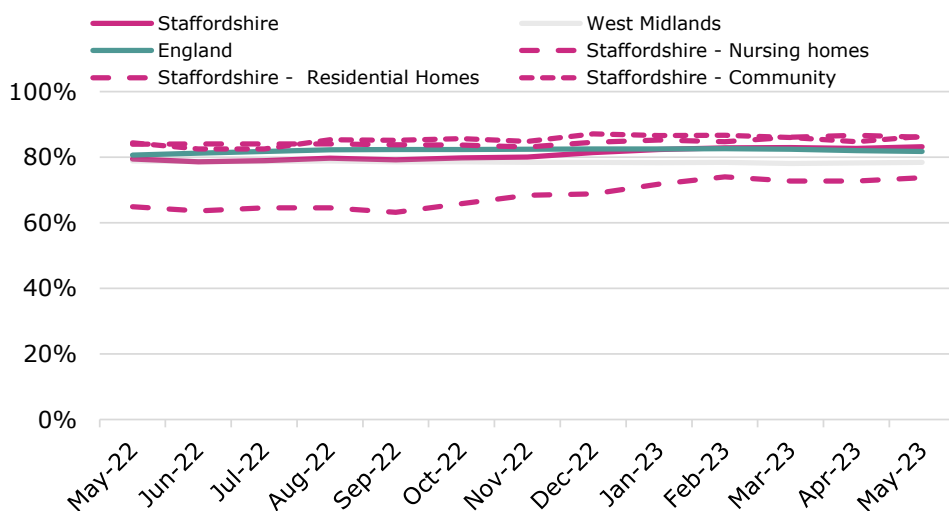
Timeliness of sourcing for brokerage (helping individuals to arrange care) has remained high in Quarter 1 with 87% receiving timely access to care, and performance remaining 'green' for the service.

**% of brokerage sourced within agreed timescale by service type**



Source: SCC

**% of care providers with CQC ratings of Good or Outstanding by provider type**



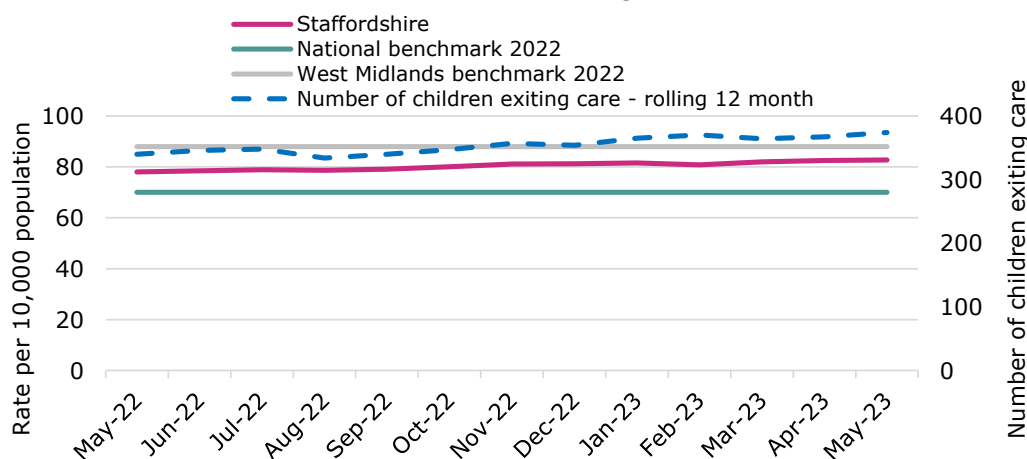
Source: SCC and Care Quality Commission

There have been improvements in the Care Quality Commission assessment ratings of Staffordshire's registered locations, with 83% Good or Outstanding in May 2023. The council has made additional investment in its quality teams over the last financial year, which is having a direct impact on driving improvements in care services.



# Offer the Best Start in Life Dashboard

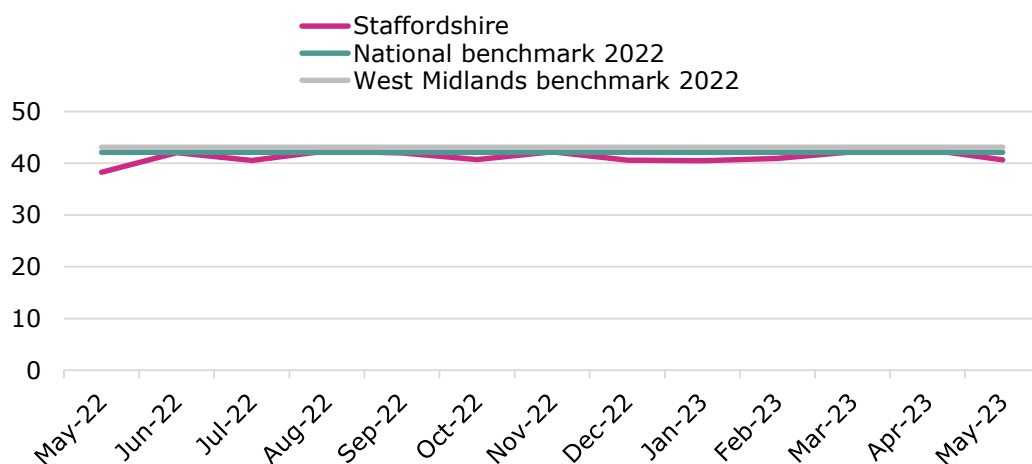
**Rate of children in care (rate per 10,000 population) and number of children exiting care**



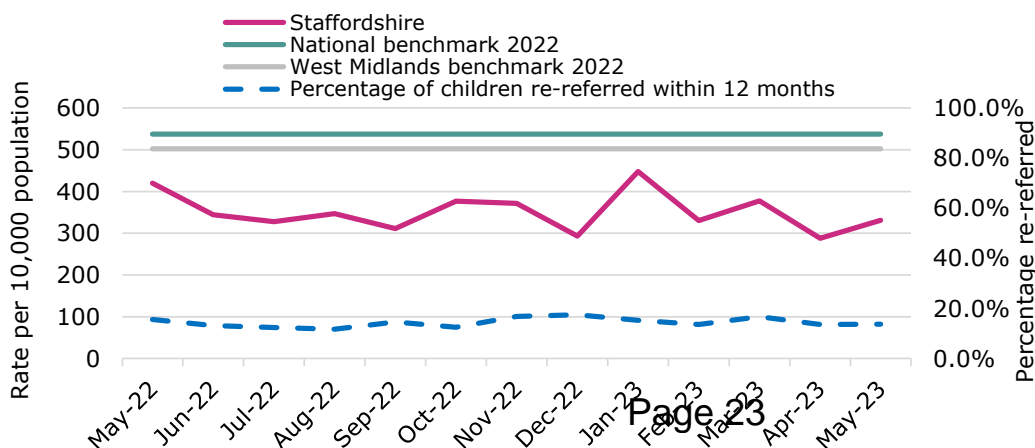
Children in Care demand has continued to increase, with close monitoring of those past estimated exit dates continuing. Recruitment of additional capacity is progressing following the additional cabinet investment of £5.7m.

**Rate of children subject of a Child Protection Plan (per 10,000 population)**

There has been a slight reduction in the rate of children subject of a Child Protection Plan in May 2023 (40.7), dipping below national (42.1) and regional (43.1) benchmarks.



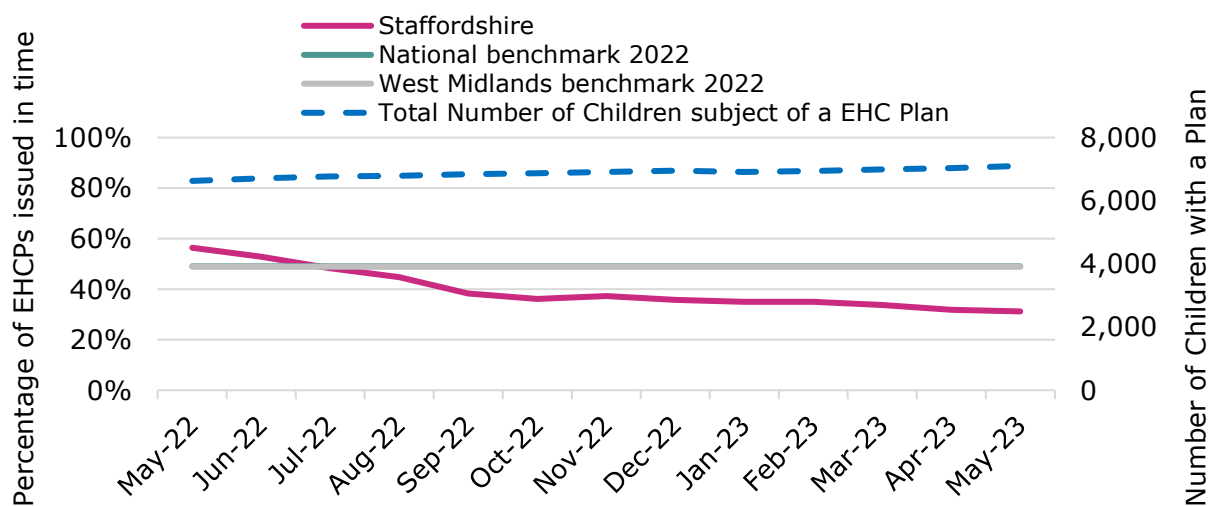
**Rate of children referred, rolling 12 month average (per 10,000 population), and % re-referred within 12 months**



Referrals continue to remain below both national and regional benchmarks.

# Offer the Best Start in Life Dashboard

## % of Education, Health and Care Plans issued in time (12 month rolling avg), and total number of children with a plan

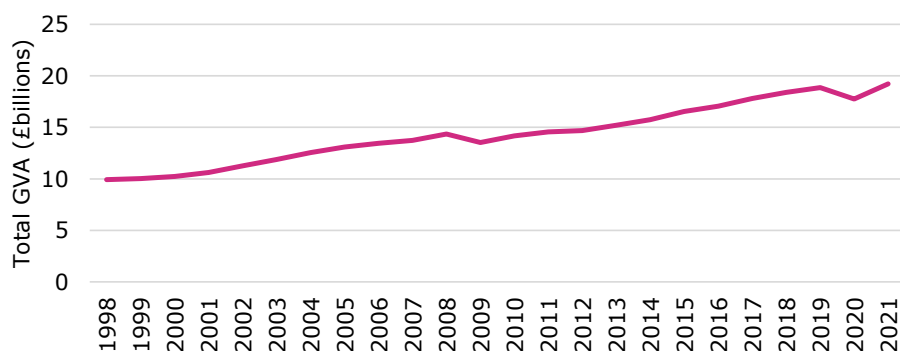


Source: SCC and Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT)

The number of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) was 7,103 at 31st May 2023 compared to 6,527 a year earlier. This increasing demand means that the number of EHCPs issued in time (within 20 weeks) remains low in Staffordshire; 31% compared to the most recent national benchmark of 49% (2022). Recruitment is underway to increase capacity.

# Supporting Staffordshire's Economy to Grow Dashboard

## Total Gross Value Added (GVA) in Staffordshire (£billions)

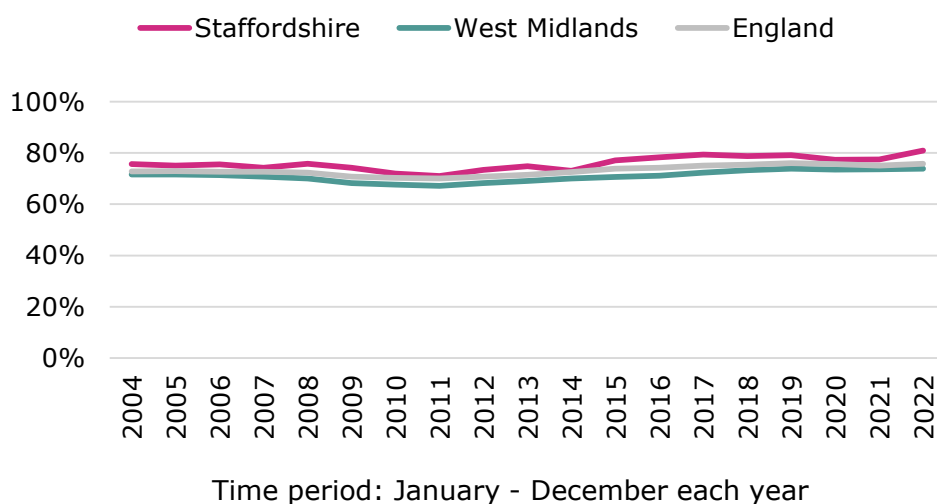


In 2021 (latest data) the Staffordshire economy was worth £19.2bn showing an increase of over £1.5bn between 2020-2021, equivalent to a 8.3% growth and greater than the growth seen for the West Midlands (6.9%) and England (7.1%).

Source: Office for National Statistics

## Employment Rate (aged 16-64)

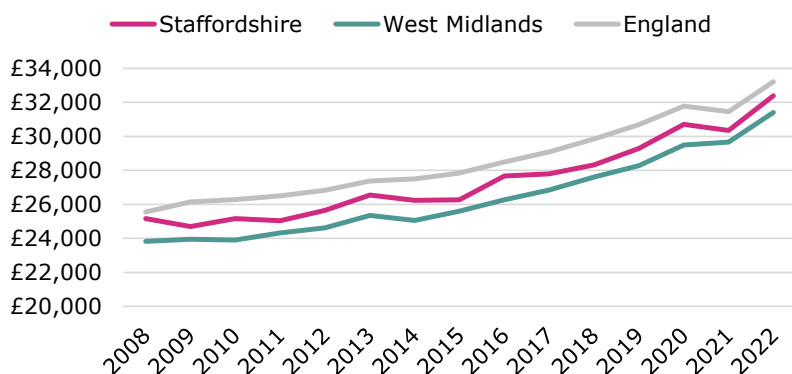
Latest employment figures for the period Jan 2022- Dec 2022 show that in Staffordshire there were an estimated 424,400 working age (aged 16-64) residents employed, with an employment rate of 80.9% well above the national and regional averages (75.8% and 73.8% respectively).



Source: ONS National Population Survey

# Supporting Staffordshire's Economy to Grow Dashboard

## Average (median) annual resident earnings

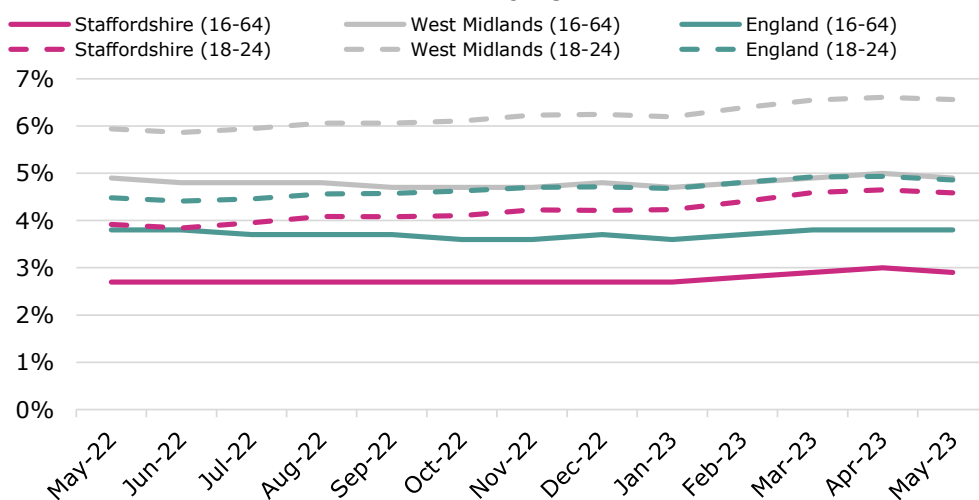


In 2022 average annual resident earnings for full-time workers in Staffordshire stood at £32,386 which was just below the England average of £33,208. Between 2017-22 Staffordshire saw faster improvement in resident earnings compared to national, with 16.5% growth compared to 14.2% for England.

Source: ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings—resident analysis

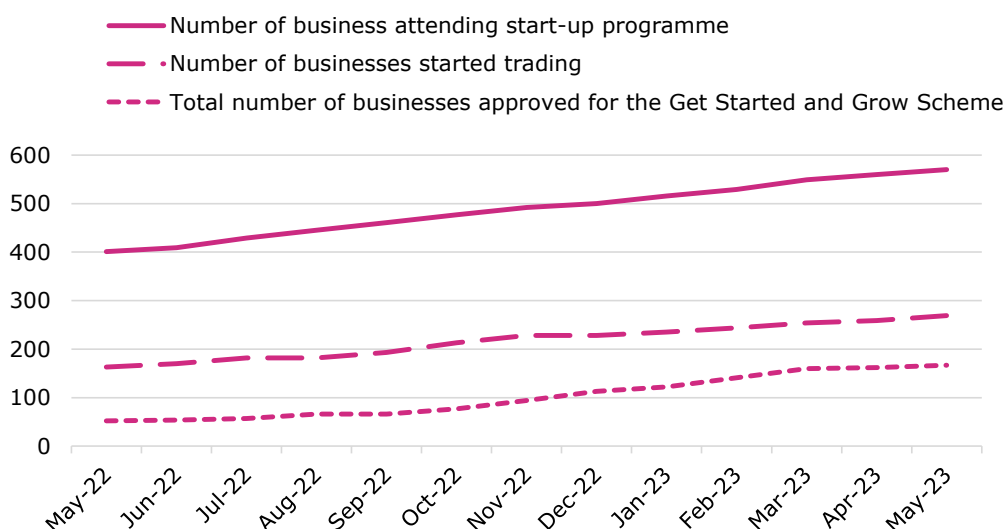
As of May 2023, there were 15,385 claimants in Staffordshire; a decrease of 330 claimants compared with the figures reported in the outturn report (March 2023). Staffordshire Moorlands records the lowest rate (2.0%), and Tamworth and Cannock record the highest at 3.5%, which is still just below the national position (3.8%).

## Claimant Count rate by age



Source: Office for National Statistics

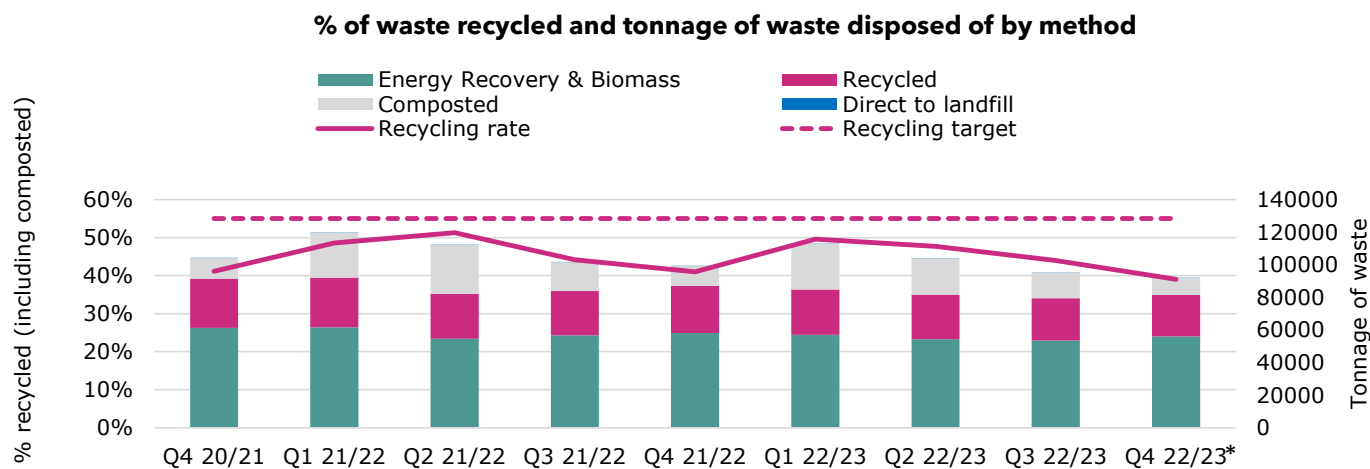
## Number of start-up businesses supported by the council (cumulative)



The top sector for businesses attending the start-up programme is 'Retail, Leisure and Tourism, Accommodation'. The 'Get Started' scheme expanded in Quarter 3, 2022/23 to include 'Step up' support for businesses aged 2-5 years.

Source: SCC

# Climate Change, Environment & Sustainability Dashboard



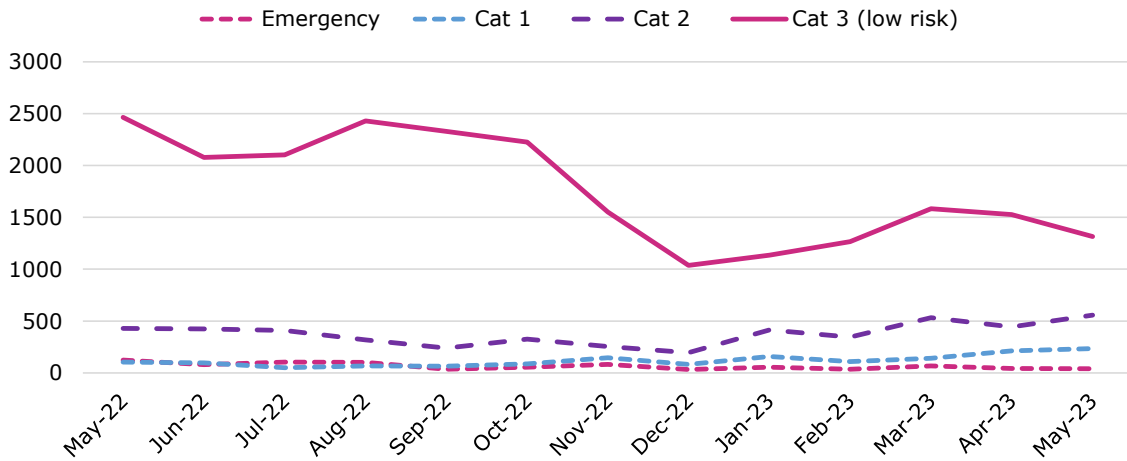
Source: SCC

\* Provisional figures, subject to audit

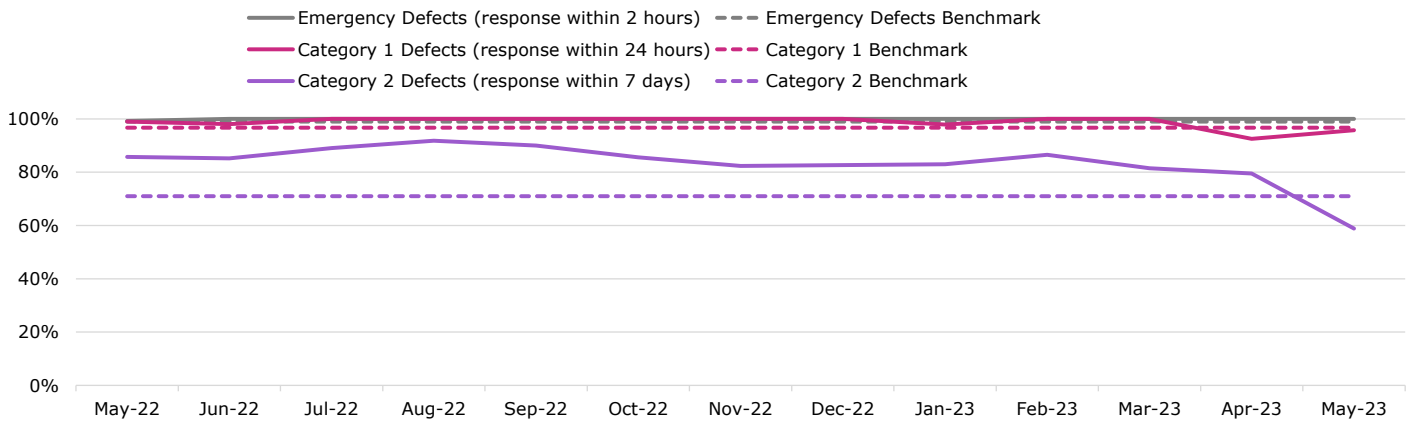
There was a reduction in the recycling rate in Quarter 4, which is not unusual during the winter due to less composted waste, however based on the provisional figures there was also less waste recycled (e.g., from kerbside recycling etc.) in Quarter 4 2022/23 compared with the same period in the previous year. Further analysis is going to be undertaken to understand this reduction. Staffordshire continues to send minimal waste directly to landfill.

# Roads, Transport and Digital Connections Dashboard

**Total number of safety defects identified**



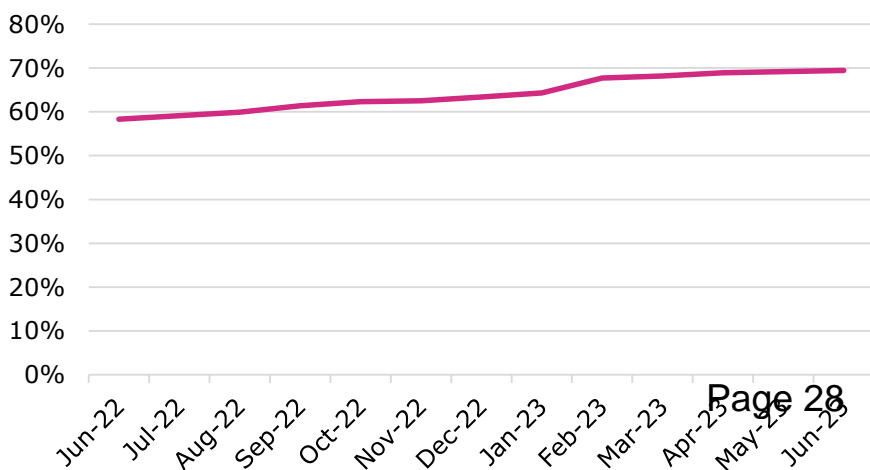
**% of Emergency, Category 1 and Category 2 defects repaired in time**



Source: Amey, Confirm

Following the winter period there has been an increase in the number of high-risk Category 1 and Category 2 defects identified in April and May, which are being prioritised. The additional 'pothole' funding is providing additional resources, together with the usual season shift of core resources from Winter Operations (e.g. gritting), to carry out these repairs.

**% of premises with Gigabit capability**

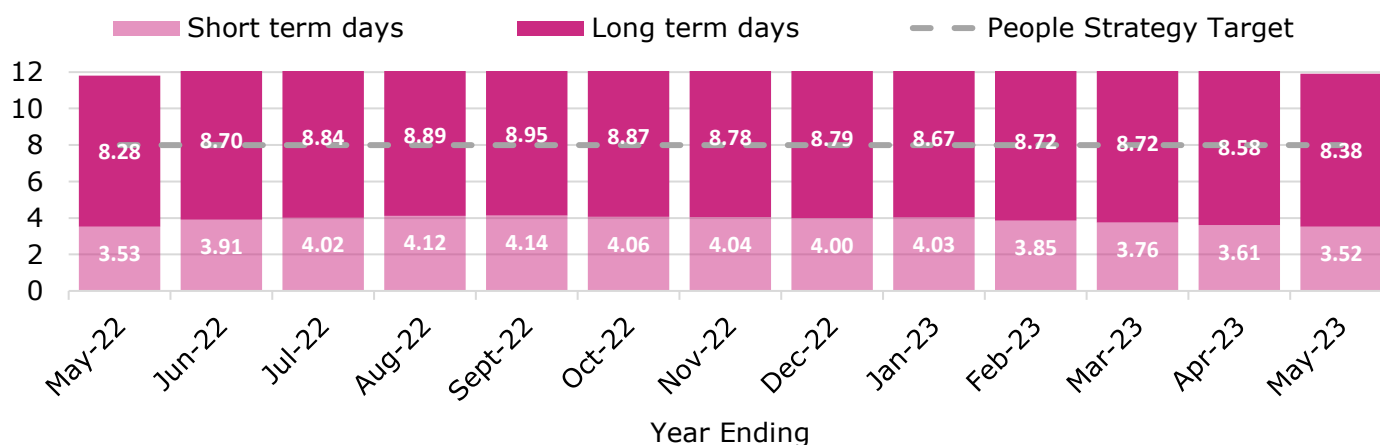


The percentage of premises with Gigabit capability continues to increase, with a target of 85% by the end of 2025 and close to 100% by 2030. It is not appropriate to benchmark against other areas due to differing approaches in rolling this out.

Source: Thinkbroadband.com

# How we Work Dashboard

## Average payroll days lost per employee

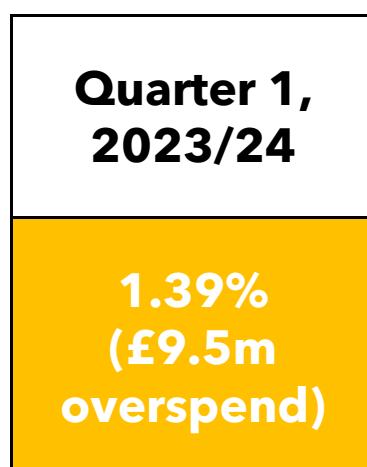


Source: SCC

There is a continued focus on staff absence levels to help teams improve their days lost to sickness, including working with those service areas experiencing the highest absence levels and promoting best practice absence management.

# Live Within Our Means Dashboard

## Revenue outturn forecast variance compared to the overall budget (target no more than +/- 2%)



A forecast 1.39% overspend is acceptable as it is within the council's Financial Health target of 2% variation on revenue budgets.





# 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 an overspend of £9.5m (1.39%).

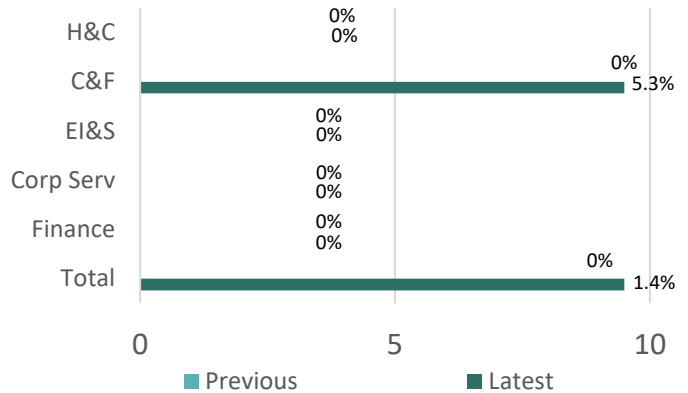
There is a forecast overspend of £8.2m for Children’s Services. This is a highly complex and volatile service and costs depend on the type of placements provided. The service is taking mitigating actions to address these pressures as far as possible.

Savings are categorised into confidence of delivery. There are £0.650m savings that are delivered as at quarter 1. There are £6.118m savings classed as Low confidence which mainly related to reductions in Looked After Children’s placement costs, and Adults Social Care accommodation-based care.

The latest capital outturn projection is £126.0m, compared to the MTFs position of £110.9m, an increase of 13.6%. This projection is a fully funded position. There have been movements across the whole capital programme, however, there has been increased investment in Highways Schemes.

Within the national context, the latest consumer price index is 7.8%. Interest rates have increased to 4.5% making them the highest level in 15 years. GDP is estimated to have increased by 0.2% in April 2023, following a decrease of 0.3% in March 2023. Current unemployment figures show Staffordshire benefit claimant rate remains below that of the West Midlands and Great Britain.

## Revenue Budget Variance



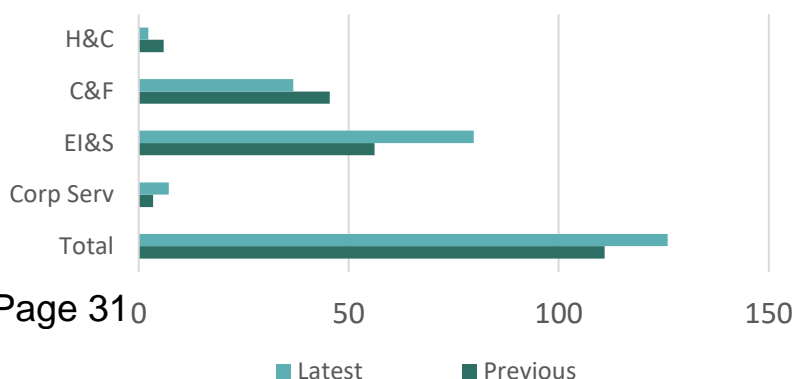
## Savings Tracker – Target £11.176m

Quarter 1 - £11.176m



Savings Rating Key – Blue – Delivered - savings completed in year  
 Green – High confidence – Expectation saving will be delivered in year  
 Amber – Medium confidence – work still to be done to achieve saving  
 Red – Low confidence – expectation that saving will not be made in year

## Capital Programme





## Appendix 3 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

### Introduction

### Revenue Forecast

55. The latest revenue forecast outturn (as provided in appendix 4) shows a forecast overspend of £9.5m (1.39%), compared to the balanced budget.
56. The following paragraphs consider the key financial issues in each of the council's portfolios.
57. **Health and Care** **Forecast – Breakeven**
58. *Public Health and Prevention* *Forecast – Breakeven*
59. The Public Health team are developing a longer-term plan for allocating the Public Health Ringfenced Grant (PHRFG) over the next 2-3 years. Discussions are taking place with Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (MPUFT) to determine the impact of the 2023/24 NHS pay award.
60. *Adults Social Care & Safeguarding* *Forecast - Breakeven*
61. There are a number of vacancies in the Adults Learning Disability Team (ALDT) which are planned to be filled during the year. Due to vacancies, it is likely that the budget will not be fully spent this year. There is a risk that the 2023/24 NHS pay award could lead to higher than budgeted costs for the Section 75 agreement with the MPUFT.
62. The restructure of the In-House Provider residential services has now been completed and planned savings have been achieved. A review of the day opportunities is planned to take place this year and the services are expected to operate within their approved budgets. This is the first full year of operation of the new Independence at Home (IAH) Homecare service. Costs will gradually increase as the service fully mobilises but are not expected to exceed the approved budget.
63. *Care Commissioning* *Forecast - Breakeven*
64. The upward trend in both the numbers of people receiving care and support and the price of each person is ongoing. The increase in numbers is slightly

### Appendix 3 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

below the forecast included in the Councils Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the increase in price is slightly above. The net effect is that we are forecasting a balanced position for 2023/24. We continue to see a rise in the price of care home placements over and above the annual fee uplift. This manifests as rising prices for new placements and in a number of incidents, care homes serving notice on existing placements in order to renegotiate prices. Mitigations include commissioning of block booked beds and consideration of development of Council owned nursing homes as an alternative to the independent market.

65. Growth was built into the MTFS in 2022/23 to take account of the high demand for home care that had arisen during the Covid pandemic. The growth in the number of hours of home care provided appears to have stabilised between 48,000 and 49,000 hours per week during quarter 1. In addition, the backlog of hours that had built up has been reduced to a much lower level (33 hours). As a result of the additional funding built into the home care budget for older people, we are forecasting break even for this financial year.
66. Additional funding has been build into the 2023/24 Physical Disabilities budget to take account of the forecast demographic changes and inflationary pressures. At this time, we are forecasting that this budget will breakeven in year.
67. There is a risk that the Learning Disability placement budget will be exceeded again this year. There is a risk that the £1.2m MTFS saving will not be fully achieved, and Commissioners are working to address this. There is also a risk that demographic growth and care price increases could exceed the budget assumptions, and these will be monitored as we move through the year.
68. The Mental Health budget is forecast to break even. The placement budget was increased in recognition of the growth in placements costs during the last few years but there remains a risk of further increases in referrals as we move through the year.
69. **Covid Funding**
70. The Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) quarter 4 2022/23 return has been submitted which contains a draft 2023/24 budget. £9.7m has been

## Appendix 3 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

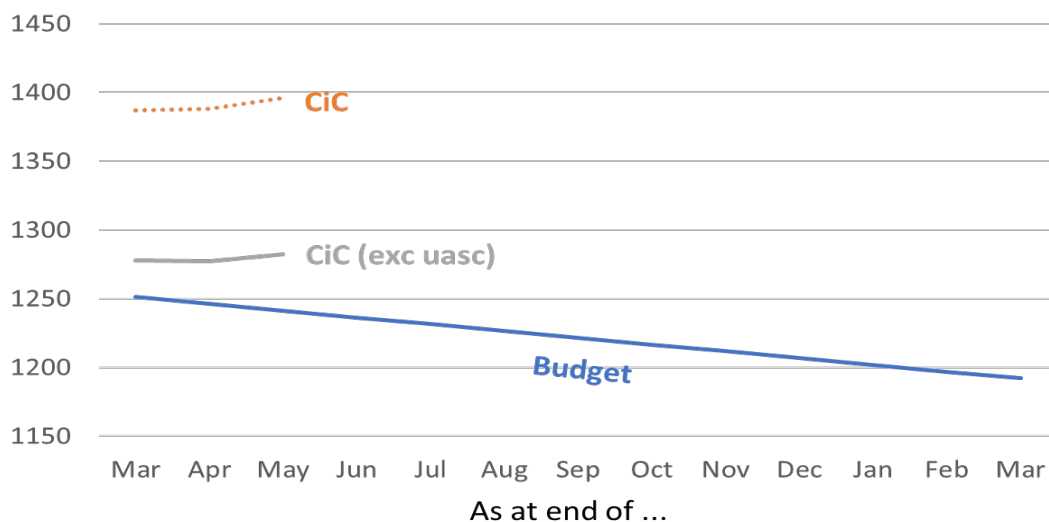
brought forward to 2023/24, against which we have estimated further commitments of £5.8m, leaving £3m uncommitted at this time.

71. A webinar recently took place with all local authorities who had unspent COMF funding carried forward into 2023/24, the aim of this was to work with those authorities to develop spend plans and share examples of how other authorities have spent their funding and a regional UK Health Security Agency representative will be assisting with this. It has been confirmed that COMF can be carried forward into 2024/25, however the request is that funding is allocated and spent as soon as possible as 2024/25 may be the final year we are able to carry forward COMF funding.

72. **Children & Families** **Forecast - £9.5m overspend**

73. *Children’s Services* *Forecast - £8.2m overspend*

74. The forecast for the service is an overspend of £8.2m. The number of Children in Care (CiC) has slightly increased from the start of the year (currently at 1,397) and – after allowing for increasing numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children for whom we receive additional government grant funding – is significantly removed from the approved business case and underlying assumptions that make up the existing budget and MTFS. If numbers do not reduce, then the gap will steadily increase and the CiC Placements budget and Section 17 support, exacerbated by rising costs of inflation, is forecast to be £10.2m overspent.

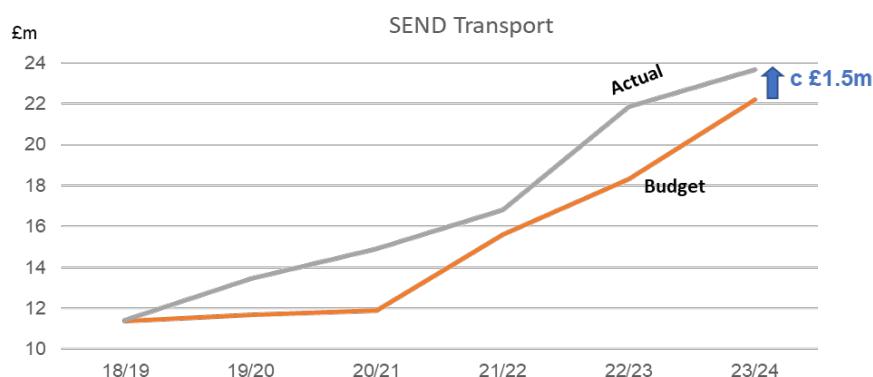


### Appendix 3 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

75. The service is taking mitigating actions to address this pressure as far as possible, including:
- Continuously monitoring thresholds for children entering care, especially those requiring residential provision
  - Reviewing and expanding Edge of Care provision to mitigate and avoid escalation
  - Review and improve the reunification support offer
  - Review all existing children in care by cohort, considering areas working well and areas for potential improvement
  - Maximise income contributions from key partners
  - Eliminate the use of unregulated placements
  - Reduce placement breakdowns through innovative solutions, e.g. House Project
  - Engaging with the market to actively source quality placements and ensure a vibrant market so that costs of care are competitive
76. In recent times and following the transformation programme that was implemented from October 2021, the service has been hindered by on going recruitment and retention problems leading to inconsistent support and capacity.
77. This issue was recognised in the MTFs and significant additional resources were brought into the budget this year to address these concerns. The service is actively recruiting, planning to realign services, and appointing to new positions. However, this will take time and, for now, the service continues to rely on more expensive agency support for essential service delivery leading to a forecast overspend of £1.7m across the district structure. This is offset by vacancy savings and one off saving due to the delayed implementation of the workforce review / restructure that is currently being worked through, saving £2.5m.
78. There are other savings of £1.2m, mainly additional unaccompanied asylum seeking children (uasc) grant, which leads to an overspend of £8.2m for Childrens Services.
79. *Education Services* *Forecast - £1.3m overspend*
80. The service is forecast to overspend by £1.3m. This is primarily due to pressures in SEND transport which in recent years has seen significant

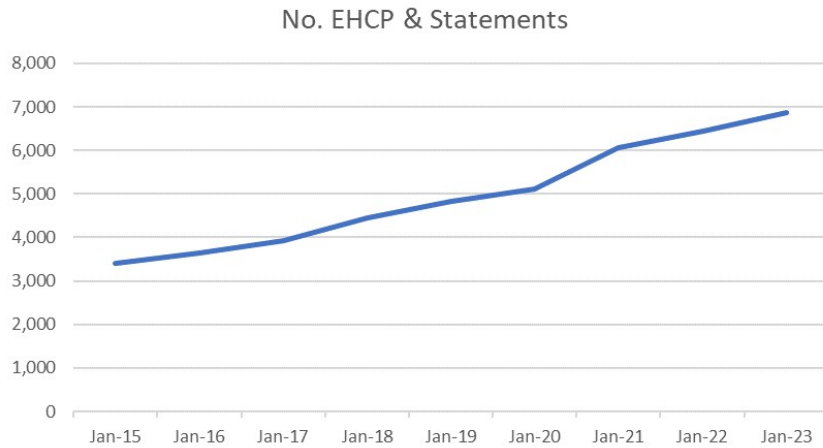
### Appendix 3 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

increase in demand as a result of the rise in Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Costs increased significantly through 2022/23 due to the rising costs of inflation, and despite a further increase in budget this financial year it is forecast that there will be an overspend of £1.5m.



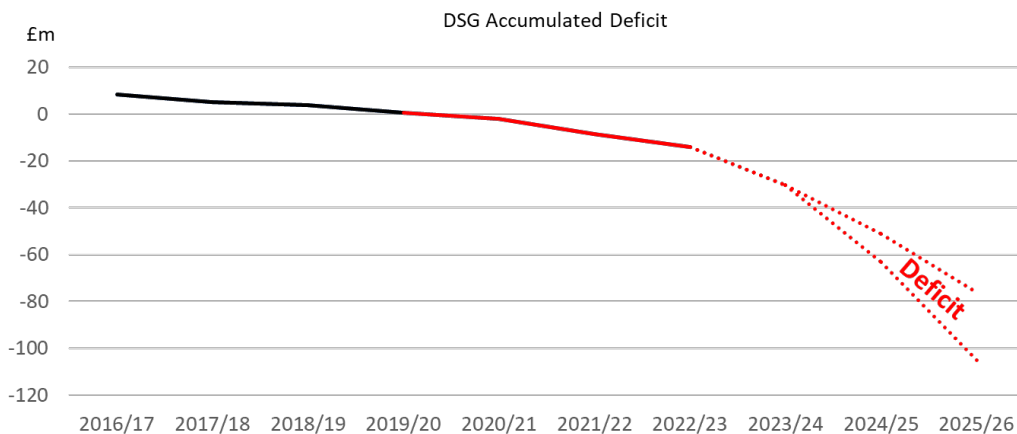
81. A review of SEND transport is being implemented to identify any actions that may be taken to mitigate the existing demand and costs as far as possible.
82. There are other small savings across the service, mainly historic teacher pension contributions) totalling £0.2m that lead to a total forecast overspend of £1.2m.
83. *SEND High Needs Block*
84. The High Needs Block is forecast to be overspent by £18m and reflects the increasing complexity of need and costs impacting all areas. From April 2022 the Council implemented a new 'Education Banding Tool' for assessing a child's EHCP needs. This has now been in place for a year and as planned, is now being reviewed to ensure it is meeting intended objectives and to understand the impact on costs which appear to have increase significantly since its introduction.
85. There is also continuing growing demand to SEND support. This is impacting across all areas but especially the Independent sector with numbers now double what they were just three years ago. Given the more expensive placement costs, this is by some way the largest budget pressure in the High Needs Block.

## Appendix 3 – Quarter 1 Finance Report



86. Staffordshire County Council is not alone in this difficult financial predicament – this is a position shared by the majority of Councils across the sector. The Government has put in place a ‘statutory override’ requiring that accumulated DSG deficits should remain ringfenced separate to the Councils other reserves and this has now been extended through to the end of 2025/26.

87. Accordingly, the final overspend will be charged against the DSG reserve which is currently £14.2m in deficit. The Councils Deficit Management Plan – that is consistent with the wider objectives outlined in the SEND Strategy – outlines the targeted interventions that will see to mitigate the existing shortfall. This will take time and at this stage, does not appear to have had any significant impact on what is a worsening position.



88. *Partnerships & Wellbeing*

*Forecast - Breakeven*



### Appendix 3 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

89. The forecast for the service is a breakeven position. There is a small saving of £0.1m which will be used to contribute towards one-off redundancy costs during the year which are associated with the Family Hubs restructure.
90. A large majority of the services budget is funded from government grants, including Resettlement funding of £10.9m, Household Support Fund of £11m and Holidays and Activities Fund of £2.4m. These programmes have Cabinet approved plans to utilise these allocations and to deliver national programmes of work for the benefit of local residents.
91. **Economy, Infrastructure & Skills** **Forecast – Breakeven**
92. *Business & Enterprise* *Forecast – Breakeven*
93. The service is forecast to breakeven at quarter 1. There is a potential budget shortfall due to loss of European Regional Development Funding however additional income is expected from planning fees and in the Farms and Enterprise Centre budget areas to offset this.
94. *Infrastructure & Highways* *Forecast - Breakeven*
95. The forecast for the service is a breakeven position, although there are various overspends and savings across the budget area.
96. This position assumes that any underspend of highways transformation monies from 2022/23 is used on priority work in the early part of this financial year. It also assumes the additional revenue inflation allocation is needed as the situation around increased costs and material supplies remains challenging for Highways budgets. These areas will continue to be monitored closely as part of the usual budget monitoring process.
97. *Transport, Connectivity & Waste* *Forecast - Breakeven*
98. The Transport and Connectivity service is forecast to breakeven although there are several uncertainties in this area.
99. There are expected risks in the Concessionary Fares budget area as future government directives could change and the impact of the Department for Transport (DfT) Toolkit review is still unclear. There is provision to mitigate these risks in the MTFS, but the impact is still uncertain. Furthermore, any

### Appendix 3 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

savings in this area will need to be ringfenced to support the bus network in future years.

100. In other budget areas within Transport, the effect of inflationary pressures (including the rising fuel costs) has been felt through 2022/23. Terminated contracts that have had to be renewed at short notice are coming in at much higher costs and this trend is expected to continue into 2023/24. These pressures will need to be monitored closely to understand any impact in this and future financial years.
101. The Sustainability and Waste service is forecast to breakeven at quarter 1. This position assumes that the £0.565m MTFS saving in the Dry Mix Recycling Credits budget will be achieved.
102. The inflationary pressures in the Woodfuels area in 2022/23 are likely to continue but it is hoped that these can be offset by additional third party income across the Energy from Waste sites and additional electricity revenues.
103. *Skills* *Forecast - Breakeven*
104. The Skills service is forecast to breakeven. While there is a forecast saving due to vacancies in the team, this may be required to offset pressures following the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) of staff back into the service from Entrust.
105. *Culture, Rural & Communities* *Forecast – Breakeven*
106. The service is currently forecast to breakeven. There is a potential pressure in the Coroners areas which is hoped can be offset by savings elsewhere within the service. There is also a commitment to fund £50,000 towards Library Website developments included in this forecast.
107. **Corporate Services** **Forecast – Breakeven**
108. The service is forecast to breakeven. This position assumes the £0.220m property rationalisation MTFS saving will be achieved.

## Appendix 3 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

109. It is likely that there will be some additional income above budget in Registrars due to the higher number of weddings that are being booked now all Covid restrictions are lifted and the appointment of a dedicated events planner in this areas. This addition income will offset the annual leave purchase scheme pressure as much fewer staff are choosing to buy additional leave than previously forecast.

110. **Finance** **Forecast - Breakeven**

111. At quarter 1, the Finance directorate is forecast to achieve a break even position. There will be some small savings due to staffing vacancies but these savings will be needed to offset any capacity issue in the Adult Financial Services team.

112. **Centrally Controlled**

113. The forecast for centrally is to breakeven. This position assumes that the inflationary increases through the MTFS on energy budgets within Pooled Building are sufficient to meet the higher costs. This will be monitored regularly through the usual budget monitoring process.

114. There is a breakeven position forecast on Landlords Repairs and Maintenance and Insurances at quarter 1.

115. **Capital Forecast**

116. Appendix 5 compares the latest capital forecast outturn of £126.0m, an increase from the budgeted position of £110.9m. The key reasons for this increase of £15.1m are set out in the following paragraphs.

117. **Health and Care** **Forecast spend £2.269m**

118. There has been a reduction of £3.638m since the MTFS report. This is mainly due to the reprofiling of new build nursing home projects into future years.

119. **Children and Families** **Forecast spend £36.801m**

120. *Maintained Schools* *Forecast Spend £36.604m*

### Appendix 3 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

121. There has been a decrease of £8.670m since the MTFS. There has been rephasing of £10m of SEND Grant and £10m of Basic Needs into 2024/25 reflecting realistic spend and delivery profiles for projects in these areas.
122. There has been an increase of £2.9m in the Schools Capital Allocation for 2023/24 in addition to £4.5m of slippage from 2022/23.
123. Other increases include refining of budgets for large projects such as Netherstow High School of £0.197m, Deanslade Primary School of £0.617m, St Leonards Primary of £0.985m, Scienta Reach2 of £0.336m, new school at Parks Farm of £0.168m, Madeley High Academy of £0.177m.
124. The remaining change is made up of a number of other smaller instances of slippage into 2023/24 and budget refinements on projects across the whole programme.
125. **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills** **Forecast spend £79.769m**
126. *Economic Planning & Future Prosperity* *Forecast spend £8.347m*
127. There has been a reduction of £0.317m since the MTFS. Included within this overall reduction are significant changes on projects – A50 contingency reduced and reprofiled by £1.630m, new Stafford Town Centre project contribution increase of £0.870m, cost increases at i54 Strategic Employment Site following a review of £0.404m and slippage of £0.690m into 2024/25 for Chatterly Valley. There have been smaller movements across a number of other projects within this service area.
128. *Highways Schemes* *Forecast spend £64.083m*
129. There has been an increase of £23.131m since the MTFS report. There has been significant increase in investment by the Council including £5m in minor carriageway maintenance and £10m in the overarching highways programme of £10m.
130. Additionally further grant resources have become available including Active Travel Fund of £0.743m, additional DfT resources of £2.210m and HS2 Road Safety Funds of £0.508m. There are also further developer contributions for IT and Third Party Contributions for IT and Bridges.

## Appendix 3 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

131. There has been a rephasing of the budget for Stafford Western Access Route in line with the latest forecast completion timescale of £1.891m.
132. *Connectivity* *Forecast Spend £0.808m*
133. There has been an increase of £87,000 since the MTFS, which is due to the reprofile of the Gigabyte voucher schemes due to delays, eligibility changes and voucher amounts in the process of being amended.
134. *Rural County* *Forecast Spend £0.388m*
135. There has been a reduction of £6,000 since the MTFS, due to small increase due to rephasing on Rights of Way Maintenance of £4,000, ongoing M6 Toll associated costs due to land ownership issues of £50,000 and additional grant of £9,000. There has been the introduction of a new project – Tamworth 4 Footpath resurfacing of £30,000. These additions have been offset by rephasing of Chasewater Section 106 into future years of £99,000.
136. *Waste & Sustainability* *Forecast Spend £1.290m*
137. The forecast spend has increased by £0.315m since the MTFS. This is due to the introduction of a new project to acquire a flare at Bemersley Recycling Centre of £45,000 and the introduction of a County wide 5 year investment plan starting in 2023/24 of £1.245m. These increases are offset by delays with Newcastle Household Waste Recycling Centre which is now in business planning phase and potentially set for works to start late in 2023/24, reducing this years forecast by £0.975m.
138. **Property, Finance and Resources & ICT** **Forecast spend £6.503m**
139. There has been an increase of £3.748m since the MTFS. This increase is mainly due to the introduction of a new project – Tamworth Library Refurbishment of £1.159m and further investment in District Property Rationalisation to support MTFS pressures of £1.350m.
140. **Financial Health**

### Appendix 3 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

141. Appendix 6 provides a forecast outturn performance against the key Financial Health Indicators approved as part of the 2023/24 budget setting process.
142. There have been 97.7% of invoices paid within 30 days of receiving them at the end of May, exceeding the financial health indicator target.
143. The Debt Key Performance Indicator (KPI) has been refreshed, which reflects the following:
  - The same KPI and targets have been in place since the commencement of 2019/20. Increased income and other changes over the intervening period mean that the previous target was out of date
  - The decision of Social Care Ombudsman to require bill for residential care to be issued by SCC rather than the provider has close to doubled the volume and value of social care invoices raised
  - The previous single KPI did not focus sufficient attention on debt recovery or risk
  - The Covid pandemic and the cost of living crisis have changed the collection environment.
144. Due to increasing income levels year on year (in particular in residential care) the target will need to be reviewed and revised annually.
145. The estimated level of outstanding sundry debt over 6 months old is £19.943m, this is under the revised target of £21.5m by £1.557m. This position is an increase of £0.896m since the outturn report. 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.
146. The level of CCG health debt over 6 months old is now £0.647m, £0.453m below the target figure.
147. Non-Residential Client debt now stands at £11.589m and could potentially increase as a consequence of the 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 3 – Quarter 1 Finance Report

<b>Debtor Type</b>	<b>2023/24 Target</b>	<b>31/03/2023</b>	<b>30/06/2023</b>	<b>Increase / (Decrease)</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
Health Bodies & CCGs	1.200	0.341	0.647	<b>0.306</b>
Other Govt. and Public Bodies	2.800	2.289	2.105	<b>(0.184)</b>
Other General Debtors (Individuals & Commercial)	5.200	5.018	5.224	<b>0.206</b>
H&C Non-Res Client Debt	11.000	11.399	11.589	<b>0.190</b>
H&C Residential Client Debt	1.300	-	0.378	<b>0.378</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21.500</b>	<b>19.047</b>	<b>19.943</b>	<b>0.896</b>

#### 148. Prudential Indicators

149. Appendix 7 provides a forecast outturn performance against the Prudential Indicators approved as part of the 2023/24 budget setting process.
150. The County Council operated within the limits and Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management as set out in the County Council's Treasury Management practices, except for the indicator relating to variable interest rates. This indicator is calculated based on the highest expected cash balance in year, but this was surpassed towards the end of last financial year when forward funding was received.
151. Given the current volatile economic situation, these indicators are being monitored even more closely than usual. At the time of writing it is considered that the Treasury Management Strategy does not need amending but this will be subject to regular monitoring and any changes will be reported to Cabinet as part of the Half Year Treasury Management report.





## Revenue Forecast Outturn 2023/24

	Revised Budget Qtr 1 £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Total Variation £m
<u>Health and Care</u>			
Public Health & Prevention	0.263	0.263	0.000
Adult Social Care & Safeguarding	41.417	41.417	0.000
Care Commissioning	219.345	219.345	0.000
Specific Grant Allocation (Public Health)	(0.263)	(0.263)	0.000
<b>Health and Care Total</b>	<b>260.762</b>	<b>260.762</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<u>Children and Families</u>			
Children's Services	131.507	139.707	8.200
Children's Public Health	0.000	0.000	0.000
Education Services	38.256	39.556	1.300
Wellbeing & Partnerships	8.574	8.574	0.000
<b>Children and Families Total</b>	<b>178.337</b>	<b>187.837</b>	<b>9.500</b>
<u>Economy, Infrastructure and Skills</u>			
Business & Enterprise	3.062	3.062	0.000
Infrastructure & Highways	40.225	40.225	0.000
Transport, Connectivity & Waste	45.847	45.847	0.000
Skills	2.715	2.715	0.000
Culture, Rural & Communities	13.258	13.258	0.000
EI&S Business Support	1.200	1.200	0.000
<b>Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Total</b>	<b>106.307</b>	<b>106.307</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>Corporate Services Total</b>	<b>38.908</b>	<b>38.908</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>Finance Total</b>	<b>10.977</b>	<b>10.977</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>Total Portfolio Budgets (Saving)/Overspend</b>	<b>595.291</b>	<b>604.791</b>	<b>9.500</b>
<u>Centrally Controlled Items</u>			
Interest on Balances & Debt Charges	23.880	23.880	0.000
Pooled Buildings and Insurances	28.812	28.812	0.000
Pensions	1.706	1.706	0.000
Investment Fund	1.131	1.131	0.000
Care Market Pressures	15.000	15.000	0.000
Capital Investment Fund	2.500	2.500	0.000
Traded Services / Business Partner	(0.949)	(0.949)	0.000
Contingency	15.000	15.000	0.000
<b>Net Revenue Budget (Saving)/Overspend</b>	<b>682.372</b>	<b>691.872</b>	<b>9.500</b>











**CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24**

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Enhancements to Programme</u>	<u>1st Quarter Budget</u>
	£m	£m	£m
<b>Health and Care</b>			
Care and Independence	5.907	(3.638)	2.269
<b>Health and Care Total</b>	<b>5.907</b>	<b>(3.638)</b>	<b>2.269</b>
<b>Children and Families</b>			
Maintained Schools	45.274	(8.670)	36.604
Vulnerable Children's Projects	0.197	0.000	0.197
<b>Children and Families Total</b>	<b>45.471</b>	<b>(8.670)</b>	<b>36.801</b>
<b>Economy, Infrastructure and Skills</b>			
Economic Planning & Future Prosperity	8.664	(0.317)	8.347
Highways Schemes	40.952	23.131	64.083
Connectivity	0.721	0.087	0.808
Rural County (Countryside)	0.394	(0.006)	0.388
Tourism and Culture	4.444	0.409	4.853
Waste & Sustainability Projects	0.975	0.315	1.290
<b>Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Total</b>	<b>56.150</b>	<b>23.619</b>	<b>79.769</b>
Trading Services - County Fleet Care	0.630	0.000	0.630
Finance, Resources & ICT	0.450	0.425	0.875
Property	2.305	3.323	5.628
<b>Total</b>	<b>110.913</b>	<b>15.059</b>	<b>125.972</b>



Financial Health Indicators 2023/24

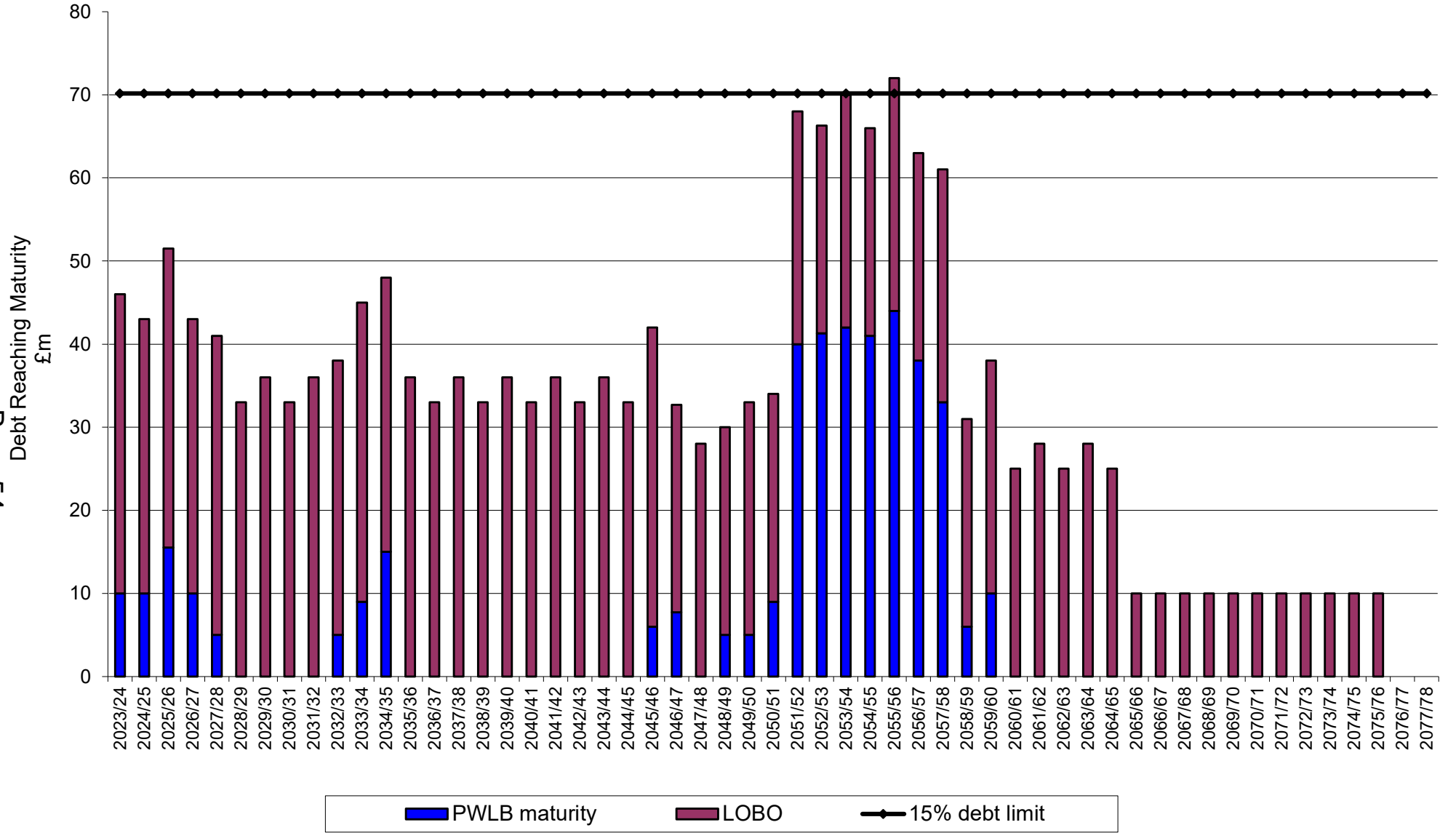
Appendix 6

Indicator		Current Performance
<u>Debtors</u> Level of outstanding general debtors more than 6 months old does not exceed £21.5m (Current Performance – £19.9m).		
<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 – 97.7%).		
<u>Monitoring</u> Quarterly financial monitoring reports have been issued to Cabinet during the last 12 months.		
The council's most recent revenue outturn forecast did not vary by more than +/-2% when compared to the overall revenue budget.		
Quarterly monitoring reports of progress against MTFS savings have been produced for the Senior Leadership Team during the last 12 months.		
 Indicator not met	 Indicator not met by small margin	 Indicator met



## Prudential Indicators 2023/24

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Budget 2023/24</b>	<b>Q1 Estimate 2023/24</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
External Debt – Authorised Limit for borrowing	621	459
External Debt – Authorised Limit for other liabilities	118	117
<i>Total</i>	<i>739</i>	<i>576</i>
External Debt – Operational Boundary for borrowing	525	459
External Debt – Operational Boundary for other liabilities	118	117
<i>Total</i>	<i>643</i>	<i>576</i>
External Debt - Loans	596.5	459
Interest Rate Exposures – Upper Limit (Fixed)	546.4	429
Interest Rate Exposures – Upper Limit (Variable)	(470.0)	(480.0)
Upper limit for total principal sums invested for longer than a year	245.0	30
Estimate of Capital Expenditure	111.9	136.0
Estimate of Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	572.1	578.5
Gross Debt – External Loans (Should remain below CFR, except in the short term)	568.2	459
Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream – Financing Costs	22.9	41.7
Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream – Proportion of Net Revenue Stream - %	3.6%	6.45%





## **WORK PROGRAMME**

### **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 2023/2024**

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.

#### **Councillor Mike Wilcox**

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 Mandy Pattinson, Scrutiny and Support Officer ([mandy.pattinson@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:mandy.pattinson@staffordshire.gov.uk))

### Work Programme 2022/2023

Date of Meeting	Item	Details (Background)	Action / Outcome
5 June 2023	Reserved for Call In		
20 June 2023	<b>Work Programme Planning -</b> Members: Alan White/Ian Parry	Development of the work programme for 2023/24	The draft work programme was approved. <b>Action-</b> Cabinet members and officers invited to meetings and dates confirmed
	<b>Appointment of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy Working Group</b> Officers: Mandy Pattinson		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr M Wilcox (Chair)</li> <li>• Cllr B Peters</li> <li>• Cllr N Yates</li> <li>• Cllr J Pert</li> <li>• Cllr G Heath</li> <li>• Cllr S Thompson</li> <li>• Cllr J Oates</li> </ul>
Page 56	<b>O&amp;S Annual report</b> Officer: Deb Breedon		The report was approved and referred to <b>Council for consideration on 20 July 2023</b>
Page 56	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes</b> Overview and Scrutiny Chairman	To ensure communication between the committees and no duplication	The quarterly work programmes was agreed.
	<b>Climate Change Working Group Update and member appointment</b> Officer: Zach Simister	To receive an update report	a) The update was received. b) Cllrs Smith and Wileman would be asked if the wish to remain on the working group. <b>Action-both confirmed they want to remain.</b> c) That subject to councillors confirming their wish to remain on the Group, the membership remain as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr S Thompson (Chair)</li> <li>• Cllr C Wileman</li> <li>• Cllr N Yates</li> <li>• Cllr T Clements</li> <li>• Cllr J Pert</li> <li>• Cllr B Peters</li> <li>• Cllr D Smith</li> </ul>

### Work Programme 2022/2023

Date of Meeting	Item	Details (Background)	Action / Outcome
	<b>Integrated Performance Report – Quarter 4</b> Members: Alan White/Ian Parry Officers: John Tradewell/Rob Salmon	Quarterly report.	a) The Integrated Performance and Financial Outturn Report was noted as the position as at the end of year 2022/23. b) A copy of the “Social Care workforce strategy” be circulated to members for information. c) Information clarifying the position with the Household waste sites charging for DIY waste would be forwarded to members when available. <b>Action-</b> b and c Emailed to members on 030723
July 2023	Reserved for Call In		
August 2023	<b>Integrated Performance Report – Quarter 1</b> Members: Alan White/Ian Parry Officers: John Tradewell/Rob Salmon	Quarterly report.	
7 August 2023 (2pm)	Reserved for Call In		
1 September 2023	Reserved for Call In		
12 September 2023	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes</b> Overview and Scrutiny Chairman	To ensure communication between the committees and no duplication	
	<b>1. Corporate Complaints Annual Report 2021/22.</b> <b>2. LGSCO Annual Report</b> Member: Alan White Officers: John Tradewell/Kate Bullivant	Annual reports	
6 October 2023	Reserved for Call In		

### Work Programme 2022/2023

Date of Meeting	Item	Details (Background)	Action / Outcome
24 October 2023	<b>Climate Change Annual report and action plan</b> Member: Simon Tagg Officers: James Cartwright	Pre decision scrutiny. Annual report	
	<b>Integrated Performance Report – Quarter 2</b> Members: Alan White/Ian Parry Officers: John Tradewell/Rob Salmon/Lyndsey Bissell	Regular quarterly report	
Page 9 of 9 9 November 2023	<b>Entrust – Review of changes</b> Member: Mark Deaville Officers: Ian Turner	Requested at 25 October 2022 O&S to scrutinise changes and implications.	
9 December 2023	Reserved for Call In		
18 December 2023	<b>Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion - Principles, Objectives and Action Plan update (to include gender pay gap update)</b> Member: Alan White Officers: S Getley	Requested at 25 October 2022 O&S to scrutinise changes and implications.	
	<b>Peoples Strategy</b> Member: Alan White Officers: S Getley	Suggested at triangulation June 2023. Scrutiny of actions taken. Fits with the Equality report above	
5 January 2024	Reserved for Call In		
16 January 2024	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes</b> Overview and Scrutiny Chairman	To ensure communication between the committees and no duplication	

### Work Programme 2022/2023

Date of Meeting	Item	Details (Background)	Action / Outcome
	Scrutiny of the <b>Local Enterprise Partnership</b> (including governance arrangements).	Annual scrutiny.	
	<b>MFTS 2022-2027 Working Group Report</b> Chair of COSC - Cllr Wilcox Rob Salmon/Rachel Spain		
9 February 2024	Reserved for Call In		
26 February 2024	<b>Quarterly Integrated Performance report (Quarter 3)</b> Members: Alan White Officers: John Tradewell/Rob Salmon/Lyndsey Bissell	Regular quarterly report	
8 March 2024	Reserved for Call In		
8 April 2024	Reserved for Call In		
9 April 2024			
29 April 2024	Reserved for Call In		

### Items for Consideration or needing more detail- Work Programme 2022/2023

Suggested Item	Details (Background)	Proposed Date of Meeting
Leaders Board for Staffordshire	Raised by the Leader at triangulation – Officer Keith Luscombe/Chris Ebberley	Member involvement - TBC
BEST Transformation and the impact on the children’s transformation	Raised at triangulation 08/11/22.	Discussion on appropriate time with Tracy Thorley. Very early stages of redesign – Report to committee for pre decision scrutiny

**Updates/ Briefing Notes / Visits 2022/2023**

Date	Item	Details (Background)	Action / Outcome

**Working Groups / Inquiry Days 2023/2024**

MTFS Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr M Wilcox (Chair)</li> <li>• Cllr B Peters</li> <li>• Cllr N Yates</li> <li>• Cllr J Pert</li> <li>• Cllr G Heath</li> <li>• Cllr S Thompson</li> <li>• Cllr J Oates</li> </ul>		
Climate Change Working Group	<p>Membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr S Thompson (Chair)</li> <li>• Cllr C Wileman</li> <li>• Cllr N Yates</li> <li>• Cllr T Clements</li> <li>• Cllr J Pert</li> <li>• Cllr B Peters</li> <li>• Cllr D Smith</li> </ul>		

Membership – County Councillors 2022-23	Calendar of Committee Meetings – 2023-24
<p>Mike Wilcox (Chairman) Samantha Thompson (Vice Chairman - Overview) Gill Heath (Vice Chairman - Scrutiny) Charlotte Atkins Tina Clements Mike Davies John Francis Jeremy Oates Jeremy Pert Bernard Peters Kath Perry Bob Spencer Mike Worthington</p>	5 June 2023 - cancelled
	20 June 2023
	6 July 2023 - cancelled
	1 August 2023
	7 August 2023 (2pm)
	1 September 2023
	12 September 2023
	6 October 2023
	24 October 2023
	6 November 2023
	1 December 2023
	18 December 2023
	5 January 2024
	16 January 2024
	9 February 2024
	26 February 2024
	8 March 2024
8 April 2024	
9 April 2024	
29 April 2024	

