

Cabinet

Wednesday 17 April 2024

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
9 April 2024

Agenda

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16**
- 3. Decision notice of the meeting held on 20 March 2024** (Pages 5 - 18)
- 4. Leader's Update**
Oral report of the Leader of the Council
- 5. Staffordshire Means Back to Business** (Verbal Report)
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills
- 6. Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 4, 2023/24** (Pages 19 - 68)
Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources
- 7. Decisions taken by Cabinet Members under Delegated Powers** (Pages 69 - 70)

8. **Forward Plan of Key Decisions** (Pages 71 - 74)

9. **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”.

Part Two

(All reports in this section are exempt)

10. **Review of Local Authority Social Care Case Management Systems** (Pages 75 - 98)

(Exemption paragraph 3)

Cabinet Member for Health and Care and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

11. **Unregulated Placements Update** (Pages 99 - 104)

(Exemption paragraph 3)

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Membership	
Alan White (Chair)	Jonathan Price
Philip White	Robert Pritchard
Mark Deaville	Mark Sutton
Keith Flunder	Simon Tagg
Paul Northcott	Mike Wilcox
Ian Parry	Victoria Wilson

Notes for Members of the Press and Public

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Recording by Press and Public

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Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 20 March 2024

Attendance	
Mark Deaville	Alan White (Chair)
Ian Parry	Philip White
Jonathan Price	David Williams
Mark Sutton	Mike Wilcox
Simon Tagg	Victoria Wilson

Cabinet Support Member in attendance: Paul Northcott

Apologies: Robert Pritchard

Part One

103. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

104. Decision notice of the meeting held on 21 February 2024

Decision – That the notes of the meeting held on 21 February 2024 be approved.

105. Leader's Update

Decision – That the oral report of the Leader of the Council giving an update on a range of issues including nine out of ten parents being allocated their first choice secondary school in Staffordshire this year, well above both the national and regional average, with nearly 99 per cent allocated one of their top three preferred schools; Staffordshire, one of 20 areas across the country, being selected to join a national pilot to encourage people to pursue a career in early years and childcare; the Holidays, Activity and Food scheme running over the Easter holidays with 15,000 places available to eligible children aged between five and sixteen on benefits related free school meals; the Council’s commitment to spend an extra £50 million in maintaining and improving Staffordshire’s highways over the next three years alongside a total of £53M being spent on a range of major projects, vital road improvements and general road maintenance in 2024/25; the Local Transport Fund deal which will see the county council allocated nearly £286million from 2025/26 from a national fund of £4.7bn; Staffordshire being chosen by City Nation Place to host its UK conference which will bring together leaders to focus on how to build place attractiveness and reputation – and to build pride, attract visitors,

talent and investment be noted.

106. Minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 6 March 2024

Decision – That the minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 6 March 2024 be received.

107. Staffordshire Means Back to Business

Decision – That the oral report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills giving an update on “Staffordshire Means Back to Business” activity including the following matters be noted:


- This month saw an increase of 855 universal credit claimants in Staffordshire, whilst at the same time we have seen significant increases both regionally and nationally. This reflects the challenging economic conditions businesses continue to operate in across the country and will in part be due to some seasonal jobs coming to an end. The total number of claimants in the county now stands at 15,910 and the claimant rate has increased this month from 2.8% to 3.0% of the working age population. However, it is important to note that the claimant count rate in Staffordshire continues to be one of the lowest in the West Midlands, far lower than the average for the region of 5.0%, and lower than the average for England of 3.9%.
- The youth claimant count in Staffordshire saw an increase of 140 claimants this month to a total of 3,020 young people. Increases were also seen regionally and nationally. The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 that are claiming work-related Universal Credit has increased this month from 4.6% to 4.8%. This continues to be lower than the national rate of 5.3% and far lower than the regional rate of 7.1%.
- Last month I updated Cabinet on our work to transfer the functions of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership into the County Council. Government has confirmed that one of the LEPs previous responsibilities, namely the delivery of an economic strategy across the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent geography, will now be the responsibility of the upper tier authorities from April and that this will be a key document in being able to access future national funding programmes. Whilst this is now the responsibility of the County and City Council’s, we will of course need to continue to work closely with our district and borough partners, local businesses and relevant economic stakeholders. The Staffordshire and

Stoke-on-Trent Economic Strategy needs to be published by the end of September and therefore this work will be progressing quickly over the coming months and I'll ensure that Cabinet are updated and have a chance to shape this important piece of work.

- Since 2010, the number of our residents who have no qualifications has almost halved, whilst we now have around 60,000 more residents who have a degree level qualification. This is a huge achievement and is a key reason why we have seen related successes in recent months and years, including average earnings of our residents now equalling the national average and the significant additional number of jobs that have been created in the area. Recently released jobs data shows that 15,000 additional jobs were created in Staffordshire between 2021 and 2022, whilst we now have almost 60,000 more jobs within the county when compared to 2010. This huge improvement in the skills levels of our residents is thanks to significant investment and the work of not only the County Council but all our skills providers across Staffordshire. Our Community Learning Service plays an important role in providing opportunities for lifelong learning and this week is our Adult Learning and Skills Festival, which is taking place at venues across the county, and will offer events and adult learning taster session for Staffordshire residents, whether they are looking to learn new skills for personal wellbeing, a career change or starting a business.
- We of course know that the skills required by not only our existing but also future businesses is continually evolving, and therefore we need to make sure that our skills system continues to be capable of providing the skills we need. Our Institute of Technology will play a key role in this by delivering higher level technical qualifications, led by the Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group in collaboration with university and private sector partners. Construction on the site officially started at the end of last month, with the first learners due to start in 2025.
- Last week was our Enjoy Staffordshire Tourism & Good Food Awards, a chance to celebrate and champion our tourism and hospitality businesses which contribute so much to our local economy. The awards have been growing year-on-year and we received a record number of entries for this year with our awards now being the largest tourism awards competition in the Midlands and the second largest in England. In total there were 20 award winners and 14 of these will now go on to represent the county at the national VisitEngland Awards for Excellence to be held in

Liverpool in June.

108. Capital Programme for Schools 2024/ 25

	<p>“Maintaining our schools and creating an environment that encourages learning is crucial for our children to thrive.</p> <p>This year, we're investing nearly £57 million in Staffordshire schools for upkeep and improvements. The funds will also be used to make schools more energy-efficient, directly contributing to the county council's goal of achieving net zero carbon emissions.</p> <p>Some of this funding will also be used to deliver new school places and improve existing provision in schools for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This is to ensure children and young people, irrespective of background, can access a good education that enables them to fulfil their potential.”</p> <p>Jonathan Price, Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To consider approving the Schools Capital Programme for 2024/25.

Decision – (a) That the Schools Capital Programme 2024/25 investment proposal (as set out in the supporting appendices to the report) be approved.

(b) That the Assistant Director for Commercial and Assets be authorised to monitor progress and make any necessary in-year alterations in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND).

(c) That authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services to enter contracts for projects in the Capital Programme which have a value of £2,000,000 or above. Other contract awards and modifications will be in accordance with the Council's Procurement Regulations.

109. Highways and Transport Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27



"Staffordshire's huge road network is vital for keeping our county connected and its residents and businesses on the move, and we know that good roads are extremely important to our residents.

Over the next three financial years the County Council is planning to carry out at least an extra £50 million worth of repairs and essential maintenance to Staffordshire's roads, on top of any grant given by government. This includes more road resurfacing schemes and getting potholes repaired quicker.

The investment will enable 34 road reconstruction schemes to be carried out, including the resurfacing of junctions/roundabouts at key locations into our towns, 1.5 million sq. m of preventative surface treatments and £2.75M of work to repair highway drainage.

This year will also see more than £53 million invested in a range of major projects, vital local improvements, and general road maintenance.

In January 2023 we were also successful in securing £19.8M through the Levelling Up Fund for improvements to roads and bus and cycling routes in Staffordshire that will see investment in environmentally friendly buses and active travel between Stafford and Cannock, as well as significant investment around the A38 Branston interchange in Burton upon Trent.

However, we recognise that there is always more to be done and we continue to lobby central Government for the money necessary to keep Staffordshire's roads in the condition we expect and ensure local communities and businesses can see the benefits of an improved highway network."

David Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Reasons for the Decision – To consider approving the Highways and Transport Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27.


Decision – (a) That the Highways and Transport capital investment proposals (set out in the supporting appendices to the report) be approved and it be noted that, at the time of writing, the allocations from the Department for Transport have not been provided.

(b) That the additional investment of £30M by the County Council into highway maintenance to be delivered over the period from 2025/26 to 2026/27 be approved.

(c) That the progression of the programme of developer funded s.278/s111 highway improvement projects be approved and that authority be delegated to the Director of Economy, Infrastructure & Skills to agree the details of the works agreements and authorise the contracts for works to be entered into.

(d) That the Assistant Director for Highways and the Built County monitors progress of the overall programme and be given delegated authority to make any in-year alterations and additions to the programme in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.

110. Climate Change Strategic Development Framework - Update

	<p>"Climate Change is a critical issue facing Staffordshire. The County Council declared a climate change emergency in 2019 to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.</p> <p>We recognise reducing emissions in isolation is not enough and we must also build resilience into our services to the changing climate.</p> <p>The revised Climate Change Strategic Development Framework outlines our priorities for achieving our net zero ambition and how to better prepare ourselves and local communities for the changing climate."</p> <p>Simon Tagg, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To consider approving the updated Climate Change Strategic Development Framework.

Decision – (a) That the updated Climate Change Strategic Development Framework be noted and approved.

(b) That it be noted that the revised Climate Change Strategic Development Framework highlights the importance of considering climate change mitigation and adaption in combination.

(c) That it be noted that the Climate Change Action Plan is being refreshed to incorporate carbon reduction initiatives and building climate change resilience across all council services.

111. Staffordshire County Council Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy and LEVI Update



"It is not the county council's role or responsibility to install or operate the charging points, but by working with partner local authorities, we will be in the strongest position to attract commercial providers which will undertake this.

Our partnership strategy has identified where the most appropriate places for charging points could be and how we will work with the private sector to facilitate successful delivery. We will also work with businesses to encourage workplace charging and residents to support off-street charging, in addition to people and organisations making planning applications.

We understand that electricity may not be the only type of alternative power for vehicles in future years, but it's vital that we have our Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure in place as soon as possible."

David Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport



"The County Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and we are making great progress as an organisation to achieve our target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

We have a role to play in inspiring and making it easier for more people to switch to green and active travel, such as walking and cycling, or the use of electric vehicles. Indeed, the Government has banned the sale of all new petrol and diesel cars beyond 2035 so across the country and in Staffordshire we need to see more charging points

	<p>installed for electric vehicles in public places, on-street and in workplaces.”</p> <p>Simon Tagg, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To seek approval to accept capital funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) to enable the private sector to deliver public electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in Staffordshire.

Decision – (a) That the Council agrees to accept funding from the Department for Transport to enable the private sector to deliver public EV charging infrastructure in Staffordshire.

(b) That the final decision to either remain in a local authority consortium with Midlands Connect or for Staffordshire County Council to procure an EV infrastructure partner independently be delegated to the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change.

(c) That the completion of any legal agreements associated with the installation of electric vehicle chargepoints, i.e. s50 and SCC private leases, be delegated to the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills.

(d) That the Department for Transport focus for on-street charging infrastructure and the need to include a combination of off-street and on-street provision as a requirement of the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding, be noted.

(e) That the continued collaboration with district and borough councils to allocate LEVI funding to facilitate the installation of EV infrastructure at areas of off-street parking where there is a residential need, be noted.

112. Section 75 Agreement for Adult Social Care Assessment & Case Management and Occupational Therapy in Staffordshire

	<p>"This new agreement allows the Council to build on our long-running, successful partnership with Midlands Partnership Foundation NHS Trust.</p> <p>Together, we will continue to put people's needs at the heart of everything we do and provide integrated health and social care services for older people, people with physical disabilities, and those living with mental health conditions."</p> <p>Mike Wilcox, Cabinet Member for Health and Care</p>
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Reasons for the Decision – To consider entering into a new Section 75 Agreement for the provision of adult social care assessment and case management.

Decision – (a) That the progress with the current Section 75 Agreement with Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (MPFT) be noted.

(b) That the Council enter into a new Section 75 Agreement with MPFT to continue to provide adult social care assessment and case management and occupational therapy in Staffordshire.

(c) That the completion of a change control to the Section 75 Agreement, to transfer the existing Mental Health Floating Support Service contract with MPFT into the Section 75 Agreement, be authorised.

(d) That the Director of Health and Care and Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health and Care, be authorised to finalise and implement a Section 75 Agreement for adult social care assessment and case management and occupational therapy commencing 1 April 2025.

113. Provision of Apprenticeship Services 2024



"Skills are the life blood of any economy and having a skilled workforce is essential if we are to grow the Staffordshire economy and attract further investment and more businesses.

Apprenticeships are key to this and last year 6,300 people started an apprenticeship in Staffordshire. Apprenticeships are also an important aspect of workforce development for Staffordshire County Council. We currently have over 100 apprentices doing 35 different subjects and a further 95 apprentices working in our grant-maintained schools.

As use of the Apprenticeship Levy becomes more established, and we use it to create a workforce with skills for both now and the future we need access to a wide range of specialist training providers. The appointment of Crown Commercial Services will make sure training is delivered by providers who have been approved and checked for due diligence. It will make it more efficient to award and manage the increasing number of contracts."

Philip White, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills

Reasons for the Decision – To consider the requirement to change to a new Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) to procure apprenticeship provision.

Decision – (a) That approval be given for the Council to join Crown Commercial Service, Apprenticeship Training Dynamic Marketplace – Framework RM6102 until April 2025.

(b) That this be reviewed in April 2025 to consider whether it is appropriate to transfer to the CCS new framework RM6303 after considering the Apprenticeship Strategy that is currently being commissioned through People Services.

(c) That the Assistant Director for Skills and Employability be authorised to approve the award of contracts with training providers and the release of funds from the apprenticeship levy to fund training.

114. Staffordshire's All Age Carers Strategy 2024 - 2029



"Carers make an extraordinary contribution in helping their loved ones lead healthier and more independent lives, and it is important that they are supported to care for them as long as they want to.

This new strategy—produced in partnership with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and with direct input from carers themselves—recognises the extraordinary contribution carers make up and down the county, and ensures they have the help and support they need. It also reflects how we'll continue to seek the views of carers, and work with them to ensure they are aware of the support available and building access to support in their own communities.

We've listened to what carers want and in building this strategy and have also integrated the needs of our inspirational young carers to ensure support specific needs."

Mike Wilcox, Cabinet Member for Health and Care

Reasons for the Decision – To consider a new All-Age Carers Strategy (2024-2029) to replace the current strategy.

Decision – That the Staffordshire All Age Carers Strategy 2024 – 2029 be approved.

115. Extension to the Dynamic Purchasing System Agreement for the supply of Residential and Nursing Care home placements



"Ensuring timely access to care home placements, for people who can no longer be safely supported to live independently, is an essential part of ensuring the health and well-being of some of our most vulnerable citizens.

Having a care home market, which is contracted with the Council, ensures quality of care and capacity is available to meet the needs of the people we support."

Mike Wilcox, Cabinet Member for Health and Care

Reasons for the Decision – To consider an extension to the Dynamic

Purchasing System Agreement for the supply of Residential and Nursing Care Home placements.

Decision – (a) That an extension to the Council’s Dynamic Purchasing System for adult care home placements be approved.

(b) That it be noted that a new commissioning model for care homes is in the final stages of development and that it will be brought to Cabinet for consideration in summer 2024.

116. Joint Enterprise Delivery Committee



“Ensuring our businesses are at the heart of the conversation when local authorities make decisions that affect them is a priority to the county council and together with colleagues at Stoke-on-Trent City Council we will ensure that we build on the foundations put in place by the LEP.

Through our new joint committee we will also be a strong voice for businesses across our area, with a focus on securing funding for infrastructure development and future economic growth, both from government and private investors.

The committee will steer the work of the growth hub, careers hub and the newly established Local Visitor Economy Partnership, which will champion the county and city across the UK and internationally.”

Philip White, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills

Reasons for the Decision – To consider establishing a Joint Committee on behalf of Staffordshire County Council and Stoke on Trent City Council to take all decisions within the budget and policy frameworks for both councils arising from the winding down and cessation of the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Decision – (a) That the approach to form a Joint Enterprise Delivery Committee with Stoke-on-Trent City Council (“Joint Committee”) be endorsed.

(b) That the Terms of Reference for the Joint Committee be agreed.

(c) That the Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member

for Economy and Skills be appointed to the Joint Committee.

(d) That all necessary authority be delegated to the Assistant Director for Skills and Employability in respect of transferring the Careers Hub to Staffordshire County Council as the accountable body.

(e) That authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive & Director for Corporate Services to sign the Asset Transfer Agreement to formally transfer the SSLEP reserves to SCC as the Accountable Body for the LEP, with the reserves to be managed through the Joint Committee.

(f) That, once the SSLEP reserves are formally transferred to SCC as accountable body, the following funds are immediately ring-fenced (subject to Cabinet approval at Stoke-on-Trent City Council):

- i. SSLEP reserves of £298,250 and £425,934 are allocated to the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Growth Hub and Careers Hub respectively as a rolling contingency, thereby allowing an additional year of these services to be funded should national grants not be provided in 2025/2026, or any subsequent year.
- ii. SSLEP reserves of £324,130 are allocated to be spent on the establishment and work programme of the Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP).

117. Decisions taken by Cabinet Members under Delegated Powers

Decision – That the following decisions taken by Cabinet Members under delegated powers be noted:

Cabinet Member	Decision
Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)	In approving the admission arrangements relating to admissions to community and voluntary controlled schools.

118. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 17 April to 21 August 2024, which detailed the following issues, was approved:

Subject Matter	Contact
Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 4, 2023/2	Name: Wendy Tompson/ Rachel Spain Tel: 01785 854267/ 01785 854455
Review of Local Authority Social Care Case Management Systems	Name: Jo Crowcher/ Nisha Gupta Tel: 07772 011078/

	07890 402088
Unregulated Placement Update	Name: Nisha Gupta Tel: 07890 402088
Procurement for Garden Waste Disposal Framework	Name: David Atkinson Tel: 01785 277910
Roofing Framework Agreement	Name: Ian Turner Tel: (01785) 277228
Community Learning Accountability Agreement 2024-2025	Name: Anthony Baines Tel: (01785) 895984
Supported Living Commissioning Update	Name: Andrew Jepps Tel: (01785) 278557
Final Financial Outturn 2023/24	Name: Rachel Spain Tel: 01785 854455
Digital Innovation Strategy for Staffordshire County Council	Name: Linsey Bissell Tel: 07855 026263
Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service	Name: Natasha Moody Tel: 07976 191079

119. Exclusion of the Public

“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 the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below”.

PART TWO

120. Sale of Surplus Land at Histons Hill, Codsall (Exemption paragraph 3)

Reasons for the Decision – To consider the sale of surplus land at Histons Hill, Codsall.

Decision – That the recommendations contained in the report be agreed.

Leader of the Council

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 17 April 2024

Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 4, 2023/24



Cllr Alan White, Leader of Staffordshire County Council said:

"We continue to deliver on our priorities, including creating the right conditions for our economy to grow and supporting those in our communities who need our help the most.

"Local businesses continue to get the help they need to start up and grow and our 'We are Staffordshire' brand is successfully raising the profile of the county as a great place to live, work in and invest. Our work in tackling the effects of climate change is ongoing, including the highly successful Staffordshire Warmer Homes Scheme which is delivering energy improvements to hundreds of homes across the county.

"We still face challenges in both adult social care where demand is high and in children's services with rising costs and ongoing placement pressures despite a further reduction in the number of children in care. Demand for Education, Health and Care plans for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities also remain high.

"Despite facing rising costs and inflationary pressures we continue to deliver a balanced budget and will invest to keep growing the county in a sustainable way, to make a positive difference in the lives of our residents. We continue to find new, better, and lower cost ways of delivering services and achieving results."



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

“We continue to make significant progress across the organisation during the final quarter and departments are delivering on their priorities.

“Rising costs across the organisation and levels of demand and complexity of needs remain challenging, particularly in children’s and families services and in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities where transport costs are rising significantly.

“The latest revenue forecast outturn shows a forecast overspend of £4.0m (0.58%), compared to the Quarter 3 forecast overspend of £5.4m (0.9%). Like most local authorities, we still face financial challenges, but we are a well-run council and continue to live within our means, deliver value for money for taxpayers, whilst improving the services we deliver to our customers.”

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.

Local Members Interest
N/A

Cabinet – Wednesday 17 April 2024

Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 4, 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 4 Summary

This report provides an update on Quarter 4 progress in relation to delivering the council's priorities and pledge as set out within the council's [Strategic Plan 2022-26](#).

Key highlights

- **Number of Children in Care:** Number has further reduced, reflecting significant work that has taken place to bring overall numbers down, while continuing to make sure the right children are in care.
- **Secondary School Place Allocation:** 91% of offers to parents were for a first- choice secondary school with almost 99% being offered one of their top three choices.
- **Awards:** Shortlisted for two awards at this year's Local Government Chronicle (LGC) awards - Staffordshire Virtual School in the 'Large Team of the Year' category and Staffordshire Warmer Homes scheme in the 'Environmental Services' category.
- **New Care Act Assessment Pathway:** Streamlined process well received by practitioners following introduction in November; further work taking place to assess impact on quality.
- **We are Staffordshire:** successful in securing Lichfield as a host location for the City Nation Place UK Conference in September 2024
- **New Community Learning Framework:** Progressing well with 1,223 enrolments in the first term, above the target of 1,000.
- **Schools Property Projects:** All 3 new primary schools remain on track to open in September 2024.

Key challenges

- **Children in Care (sufficiency and cost of care):** Continued pressures across Children's services, including the rising cost and complexity of Children in Care, and ongoing placement pressures. Continuing to prioritise Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) improvement plan.
- **SEND:** Increased demand for Education, Health and Care Plans continues to impact on timeliness. Enhanced Assess, Plan, Do, Review (EAPDR) approach being implemented which will help improve timeliness in the longer term.
- **DoLS Demand:** Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS) requests remain high, however average waiting time reducing, and positive feedback received from family members and care providers.
- **Care Quality Commission (CQC) assurance:** Preparations continue following publication of guidance.
- **Highways Performance:** Levels of demand continue to be high, particularly in relation to higher risk defects, mostly due to the wet weather. Support for operations has been prioritised and crews redeployed to respond to higher risk defects, helping improve the timeliness of repairs between January and February for the defects that pose the highest risk.

Financial Overview

1. The latest revenue forecast outturn shows a forecast overspend of £4.0m (0.58%), compared to the Quarter 3 forecast overspend of £5.4m (0.9%). There continues to be areas of financial risk in Children and Families, with further details included within this report and appendices 2-7.
2. **Encourage good health and wellbeing, resilience, and independence**

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
GREEN	GREEN

3. In November 2023, a new Care Act assessment pathway was introduced in Staffordshire to streamline the process by reducing the number of assessment forms that need to be completed. This has been well received by practitioners and further work is underway to assess the impact on quality and to understand the experience of people who have been assessed. As a result of the change, the performance from November only includes people who require a more detailed assessment of their need. Overall demand for assessments remains largely consistent, however the proportion of people who receive their assessment within 28 days has reduced in January and February 2024 (71% in Feb 2024 compared to 87% in December 2023 - See Appendix 1), as it's the more complex cases that make it to this stage. This has been compounded by high demand in January but is expected to recover through March. The average number of days waiting for an assessment has reduced from 54-days in March 2023 to 30-days in January 2024. The council will monitor its performance closely over the coming months.
4. The number of monthly safeguarding contacts received in February 2024 was 1,263, which was largely consistent with the number received in February 2023, 1,269. Analysis indicates that there has been an increase in contacts which are lower in risk, with no indication there has been an increase in risk of abuse or neglect to adults within Staffordshire. Recognising the priority of safeguarding, the council has allocated additional temporary resource to the service and is reviewing its pathways to identify any further improvements that can be made.
5. The number of reviews of people receiving services for 12 months or more has remained high, with 89.9% reviewed in the previous 12 months to February 2024, exceeding the target of 80% (see Appendix 1). This is slightly less than the peak in performance observed in October 2023 of 92.2%. An audit of strengths-based practice (where the strengths of an individual are assessed at review and form the basis of the care plan)

was conducted in February 2024, which indicated that most reviews evidence the strengths and skills of the person, their family network, and access to community services.

6. Like other local authorities, the council continues to see high demand for 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. The council currently has 3,882 people with DoLS authorised, an increase of 20% since March 2023. Due to increased demand in January, the number of people waiting over 21 days has increased to 631, however requests are prioritised, and the service has continued to reduce both the number of people waiting and the average waiting time month on month. People have currently been waiting 30 days (down from 54 in March 2023). The council compares favourably to other local authorities on this metric based on latest data from 2023. Feedback from family members has indicated that the DoLS process has been explained to them well, that they were listened to and were satisfied with the service they received. Care providers were also generally positive, commenting on the professional manner and conduct of the council's assessors.
7. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is responsible for assessing how the council is performing against duties under the Care Act 2014. Following the completion of pilots with five councils in November 2023, the CQC published its guidance for local authority assessments in December 2023 and announced the first councils that will be inspected. The council is now reviewing its self-assessment and the required evidence for its own inspection which may happen any time between now and 2025.
8. The council continues to support its most vulnerable residents through the Staffordshire Warmer Homes Programme, which has been shortlisted for this year's Local Government Chronicle (LGC) awards in the Environmental Services category. Current figures show that 1,333 measures have been installed in 1,026 properties. The current Home Upgrade Grant Scheme 2 (HUGS2) brings eco-friendly heating solutions to rural residences (situated away from the gas network). In addition, the council has added local funding and is working with their Customer Journey provider to deliver a separate programme called 'Energy Company Obligation' (ECO4) and 'Great British Insulation Scheme' (GBIS). This approach allows some local flexibility to reach those individuals/properties that wouldn't be possible via the HUGS2 scheme alone. GBIS and ECO4 allow both off-gas and on-gas properties to be targeted, ensuring that both rural and urban fuel deprived homes are reached. This also means vulnerable on-gas owner/occupiers can be targeted.

9. 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
AMBER	RED

10. The council continues to face challenges within Children’s Services, including the rising cost and complexity of Children in Care. The council is continuing to prioritise its Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS) improvement plan ready for submission in April 2024 in response to the Quarter 3 OFSTED inspection that found that the service ‘required improvement to be good’.

11. Recruitment was completed in Quarter 4 for the Social Work Practice lead roles that were part of the Cabinet investment, with the posts now filled. This recruitment was linked to the career progression scheme project, which is now closed.

12. Progress continues to be made over Quarter 4 to reduce the number of children in care. As at the 29th February 2024, there were 1,335 children and young people in the authority’s care in Staffordshire, which is a slight reduction compared to the previous quarter (1,351, in December 2023). This is a rate of 79.0 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 29th February 2024 was 628, down from a peak of 717 in April 2023. This is a rate of 37.0 per 10,000 in Staffordshire, which is lower than the most recent benchmarks from March 2022 of 43.2 nationally and 44.8 regionally.

13. The number of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) was 7,684 on 29th February 2024, compared to 7,066 a year earlier. This increasing demand means that the number of EHCP’s issued in time (within 20 weeks) remains low in Staffordshire; 26.2% compared to the most recent national benchmark of 58% (2023). Work is underway to categorise the reasons for EHCP delays and mitigating actions are taking place. The council is implementing an Enhanced Assess, Plan, Do, Review (EAPDR) approach, which enables schools to assess what additional support the child or young person needs and refine this support through regular reviews. This will also help improve timeliness in the longer term.

14. Projected figures for Quarter 4 are expected to report that 1,400 families have achieved a successful and sustained outcome through the Building Resilient Families and Communities Programme since 1st April 2023, with final figures yet to be confirmed. The Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) increased this year’s target number

of families by 62% to 1,290, which has been achieved, but performance is below the higher target set by the council of 1,660. Work is continuing with partners to identify families that demonstrate successful and sustained outcomes.

15.The Household Support Fund (HSF) supports families and others who need it most, to pay for food and energy bills. Since April 2023, over 27,000 children have benefited from Education Support Fund food vouchers, and over 19,000 households have benefitted from the professional’s referrals scheme. Over 9,000 households have also benefited from financial budgeting support.

16.Nine out of 10 parents in Staffordshire were allocated their first-choice secondary school in Quarter 4. Of the 8,482 offers made for a Staffordshire secondary school at age 11, 90.8% were for a first-choice school. The national and regional average is around 83% based on the previous year’s results. Nearly 99% have been allocated one of their top three preferred schools.

17.Staffordshire Virtual School has been shortlisted for the ‘Large Team of the Year’ category at this year’s LGC awards. The Virtual School supports children and young people who are looked after by Staffordshire County Council, children who have left the authority and children who have a social work involvement. The Virtual School works with schools, social care partners, parents and carers to help improve education outcomes for children.

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

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
GREEN	GREEN

19.A key driver for further investment in Staffordshire is the council’s Place Marketing campaign, with good progress made during Quarter 4 in promoting the ‘We are Staffordshire’ place brand. The programme has been successful in securing Lichfield as a host location for the City Nation Place UK Conference in September 2024. This is only the second host location outside London and is attracting 200+ senior place, regeneration, and Destination Marketing Organisations (DMO) leaders nationally. There was also a successful Ambassador Event held at Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group (NSCG) new Skills and Innovation Centre in Stafford in January with over 100 attendees, and where the council’s new skills prospectus ‘A Place with the Right Skills’ was launched. Work is also well underway on the ‘We Are Staffordshire - A Place to Celebrate Conference’ in April. This is actively being marketed, with 150 already registered to attend. A review is also underway to

consider how We are Staffordshire can support other brands such as tourism and investment to ensure continuity and a strong market presence by Staffordshire.

20. In March, approval was given to We are Staffordshire to launch a 'Staffordshire Film Office' in the county. The £300k investment will fund a three-year pilot which, when established, will seek to attract the benefits of increased profile, tourism, and wider economic development by bringing film and TV productions to Staffordshire.

21. Construction has commenced in Quarter 4 on the A38 Branston Interchange near Burton. This is following the £6m allocation to the scheme from the Government's Levelling Up Fund as a result of the council's bid in 2022 and a £4m contribution from the main developer of the Branston Locks site, Nurton Developments. Work is set to be completed in spring 2025.

22. 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 February 2024, the council has supported 653 businesses through the Staffordshire Start Up Programme. Of these, almost half (310) have started trading following the programme. Get Started and Grow has supported 243 business owners who have been trading up to 5 years with professional services support.

23. The New Community Learning Framework (2023 – 2027) is progressing well with 1,223 enrolments in the first term, which is above the target of 1,000.

24. Fix more roads, and improve transport and digital connections

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
AMBER	GREEN

25. Demand challenges continued in Quarter 4, particularly in relation to the volume of high risk 'Emergency', 'Category 1' and 'Category 2' highways defects identified. This was mostly due to the particularly wet winter. The number of identified high risk defects doubled in January and February 2024 compared with January and February 2023. This required redeployment of some crews from 'lower risk' planned repairs to higher risk defects which was enabled through the agility and flexibility of the council's delivery model. The redeployment, along with prioritising support for operations, helped improve the timeliness of repairs between January and February for Emergency and Category 1 defects. However, the high level of demand impacted on the timeliness of Category 2 (lower priority) repairs, with a reduction in the response time against the

benchmark in February 2024 (see Appendix 1). To mitigate against some of the demand challenges, additional resource has now been recruited to the inspection team and recruitment is also due to commence for additional roles to support the Highways Transformation Programme.

26. In addition to tackling the high level of demand for reactive repairs, the council has also continued to successfully deliver its Highway Investment Strategy, with the final 2023/24 capital maintenance schemes starting in Quarter 4. These include Ashbank Road (Werrington) and A34/A449 Queensway/Wolverhampton Road (Stafford).

27. In Quarter 4, there was a Local Transport Fund announcement that the council will be allocated almost £286m over seven years from 2025/26 for a range of local transport projects. The main aims of the fund are to drive better connectivity within towns, suburbs and cities; drive better connectivity between towns and cities; and improve everyday local journeys for people.

28. As part of Project Gigabit, which aims to provide gigabit-capable coverage to Staffordshire residents, Connect Fibre have begun work to supply fibre broadband to 5,400 premises (a £16.5m public sector investment) in the north-east of the county. Work has included contacting communities that will be affected to ensure early communications with impacted areas. Challenges remain around a relatively high number of premises in the county still under review for broadband intervention. These 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. Plans to deliver to these premises are still on track to reach 85% coverage by 2025.

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

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
GREEN	GREEN

30. Staffordshire’s Climate Change Action Fund offers assistance to local communities to build resilience to a changing climate and reduce Staffordshire’s contributions to climate change. The deadline for Round 4 of the fund was extended to January 2024, with a total of 94 applications received over the two phases of the fund that ran between July 2023 and January 2024, totalling almost £66,000 of potential funding offered to community groups within Staffordshire. Funding for

LED lighting and energy efficiency measures formed around half of all successful applications.

31. In March 2024, the council started a new 'Net zero skills for growth' project with Keele University as part of the Innovate UK Pathfinder programme, which will run for 17 months. The approach will be to understand and map out the net zero (supply chain) opportunities up to 2050, and work with local businesses to understand the support they need to enable them to design that offer, as well as identify the skills required to support this growth. This will both help Staffordshire reach its net zero 2050 ambitions and help grow the local economy.

32. Carbon literacy training continues to be provided to start-ups and existing businesses in Staffordshire to increase awareness and help businesses understand their carbon footprint, with 106 individuals trained in 2023/24 (including 15 from Stoke-on-Trent).

33. How we work

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
GREEN	GREEN

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

35. The council is committed to working with its communities. In November '23, the council launched an engagement exercise, Our Staffordshire Communities, as the next step in the council's #DoingOurBit campaign. It aims to get residents involved with their communities, and to support the production of a new Staffordshire Communities Strategy. A resident survey ran alongside a wide range of other engagement activities, to help ensure the council reached as many people as possible. Staffordshire residents were asked about how they are helping others in their local area, what they would like to do and what stops them, and what ideas they had for the places where they live. The engagement closed on 29th February with 2,106 survey responses received and a vast range of feedback gathered as part of holding face to face community conversations. Detailed analysis of the engagement is now underway to provide a robust evidence base that will inform ongoing strategy development in the next quarter.

36. The council's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Capacity Building Framework continues to promote social action in local communities and build capacity in the voluntary and community sector. The contract is now in its second year which commenced in August 2023. Since August 2023, 213 organisations have been provided with

- developmental support such as help with planning, developing policies and safeguarding. This figure includes 118 children and young people's VCSE organisations which received specific developmental support. The 213 organisations have also been supported to secure over £2.7m of additional funding.
37. Work to deliver the Staffordshire History Centre project is on track to open in Winter 2024. Despite recent adverse weather conditions, internal works to the Grade II* William Salt Library building are progressing well.
38. Digital continues to be fundamental to the way the council works as an organisation. Work continues across multiple priorities, such as exploring opportunities within the Health & Care and Children & Families services, for automation software to streamline operational processes and free up capacity for added-value work. Work is ongoing with Lichfield District Council to progress a collaborative "Single Front Door" approach across Staffordshire and a Disabled Facility Grant Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) pilot. A fourth pilot which focuses on a single Blue Badges process, working with Lichfield District Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, is also progressing well.
39. Work continues to deliver the council's refreshed internal People Strategy. A new careers website was launched in October to improve the candidate experience and support the council's recruitment process. Since its launch, to the end of February, there have been 17,279 views of the website by 9,133 unique visitors. As of 29th February, the average time to hire was at 43 days, which is an improvement on the benchmark of 45 days.
40. There is also a continued focus on workforce absence across the council to help teams improve their days lost due to sickness, evidenced by a consistent downward trajectory for the last twelve months. The People Operations Team are working directly with those services with the highest days lost to understand the root causes for absence, and proactively supporting them with short and medium-term actions. Across these services, 75% have improved their absence in the last quarter. Work has already been completed to identify the next services for support into Quarter 1. Additionally, absence related surgeries have continued to help manage absence.
41. As a result of this work, as of February 2024, long term absence stood at 7.86 days lost per employee, compared to 8.76 days at the same point in 2023 and similar to Quarter 3 where performance was 7.88 days. Short-term absence stood at 3.14 days lost per employee compared to 3.78 days at the same point in 2023. Over half of the workforce has had no sickness absences over the last year (52%, 2,349 people), with a further 24% (1,103 employees) having been absent for 5 days or fewer.

42. Live within our means and deliver value for money

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
AMBER	GREEN

43. 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.

44. The council has successfully completed its work on refreshing its Medium Term Financial Strategy, with a balanced budget achieved for 2024/25. Full Council approved the budget at its meeting on 9th February.

45. During 2023/24, the council aims to raise £10.1 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 February 2024, the council had delivered £7.91m.

46. Work on the council's schools and corporate projects is ongoing. All three new primary schools at Beaconfields (Stafford), Amington (Tamworth) and Dunstall Farm (Tamworth) remain on track to open in September 2024. In addition, Burntwood Health Centre, Douglas Road, Wombourne Library, Hawthorne House and Brackenberry projects are all proceeding as per the programme.

47. To help improve customer interactions, the council launched a new Contact Centre Telephony called Netcall in February 2024. The system will provide enhanced functionality and provide more options for the public in the way they interact with the council. In March 2024, the council also launched the public facing Business Benchmarking survey to over 2,000 residents to help achieve ServiceMark status by March 2025, which is a national standard, awarded by the Institute of Customer Services, recognising an organisation's commitment to customer service.

48. Inflation and rising demand for council services requires the council to find new, better, and lower cost ways of delivering services and achieving results. This requires creativity and innovation across the council, finding new ways of working, trialling technology, and applying best practice from other organisations. As a way of encouraging and celebrating innovation across the council, finalists have been announced for the Staffordshire Innovation Awards 2024, that will take place in April 2024.

49. Legal Implications

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

50. Resource and Value for Money Implications

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

51. Climate Change Implications

The Corporate Delivery Plan monitors key activities that contribute to the Strategic Plan priority 'Tackle climate change, enhance our environment, and make Staffordshire more sustainable'. This report provides updates on these activities, but more specific climate change implications will sit within the details of individual projects and their associated plans.

List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Performance Dashboard
Appendix 2 - Finance Quarter 4 Summary
Appendix 3 - Finance Quarter 4 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

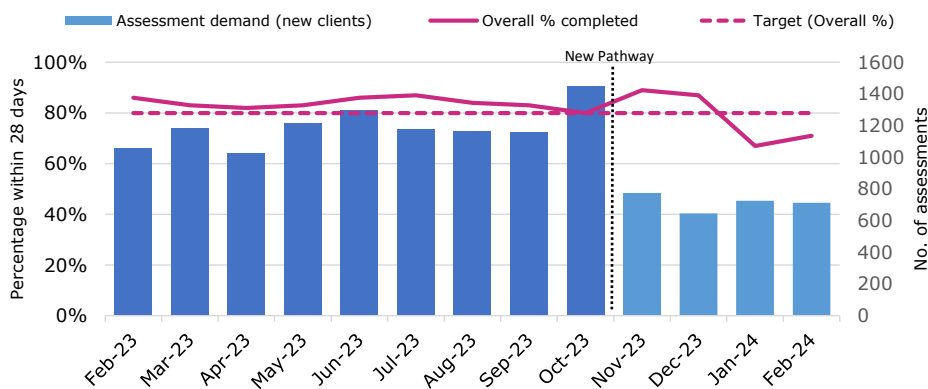
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Health, Wellbeing & Independence Dashboard

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

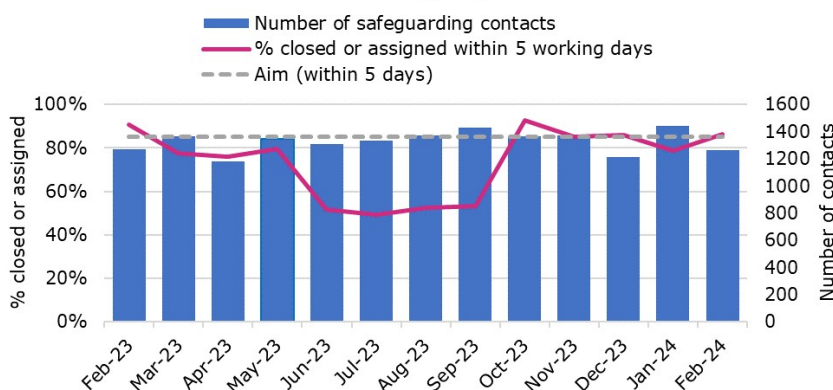


The number of assessments not completed in 28 days dipped below target in Q4. A new pathway was introduced from Nov 2023, where more contacts are completed prior to assessment, so the more complex cases make it to this stage. More contacts are completed prior to Care Act assessment which offers better customer experience. Performance also affected by high demand in January but is expected to recover through March.

Source: SCC

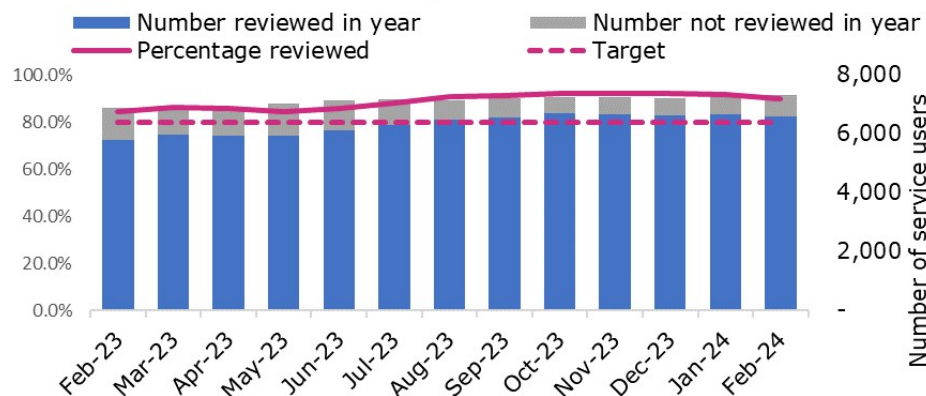
The number of safeguarding contacts received in February 2024 was largely consistent with the number received in February 2023. Additional temporary resource has been allocated to the service and pathways are being reviewed to identify any further improvements that can be made.

% 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

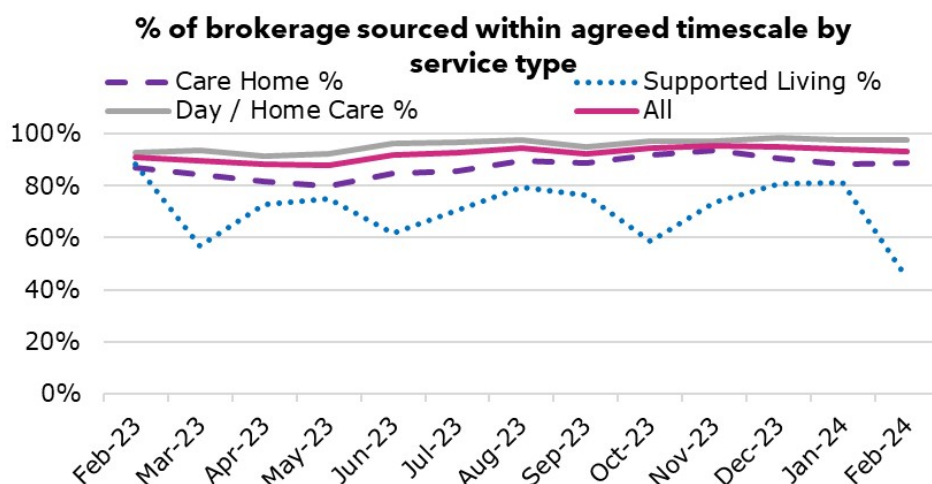


Performance has remained above target in Quarter 4. Where people have not been reviewed within 12 months this may be because they were unavailable (for example in hospital) or because of insufficient capacity, which is being addressed. However if overall demand increases, resource may need to be diverted to higher priority work.

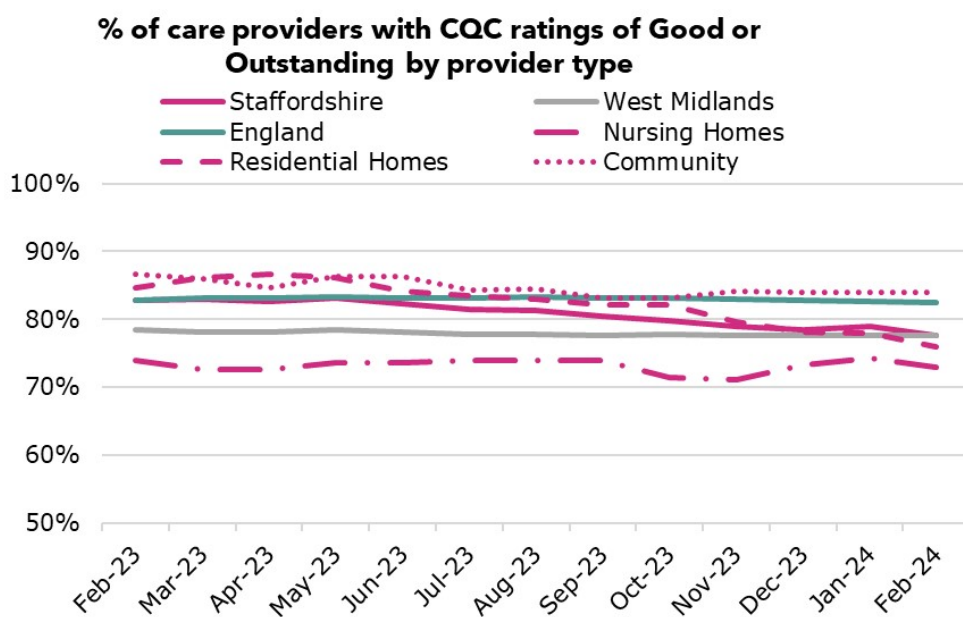
Source: SCC

Health, Wellbeing & Independence Dashboard

Timeliness of sourcing for brokerage (helping individuals to arrange care) has remained high in Quarter 4 with 93.2% receiving timely access to care in February 2024. Performance remained 'green' for the service. Supported living sourcing impacted by volume of cases being referred, and delays to arranging tenancy's with most providers reliant on private landlords.



Source: SCC

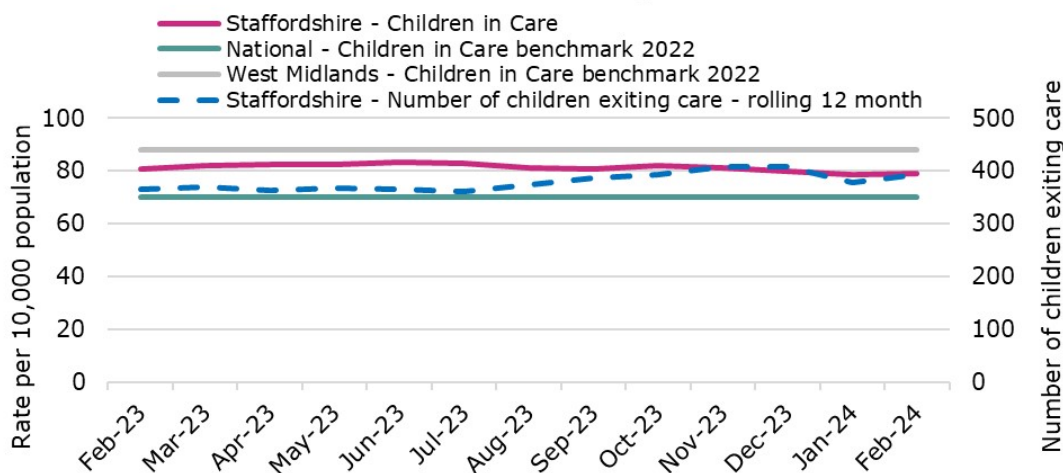


Source: SCC and Care Quality Commission

There has been a slight decrease in Quarter 4 of Care Quality Commission Good or Outstanding assessment ratings of Staffordshire's registered locations, with 77.7% Good or Outstanding in February 2024, which is lower than national (82.4%) but similar to the regional average (77.6%).

Offer the Best Start in Life Dashboard

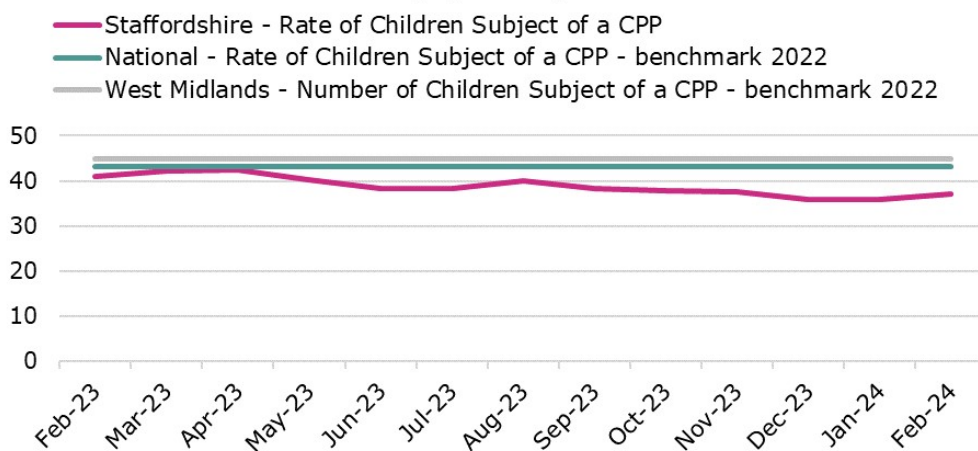
Rate of children in care (rate per 10,000 population) and number of children exiting care



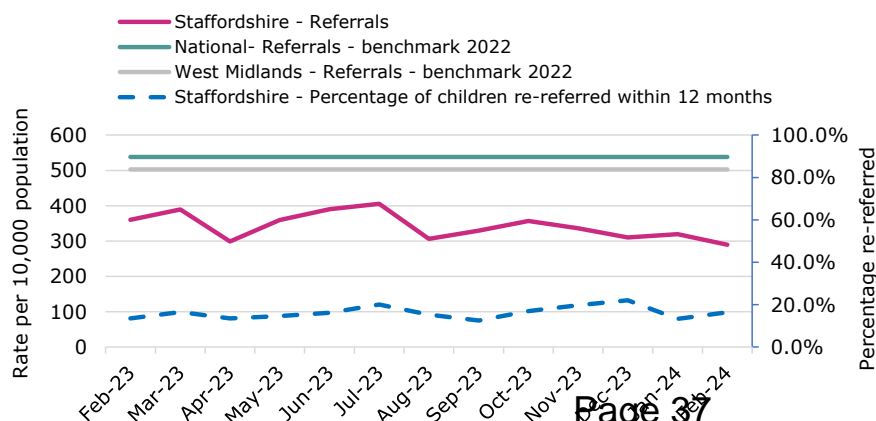
As at the 29th February 2024, there were 1,335 children and young people in the authority's care; a slight decrease compared to the previous quarter (1,351). To help address demand those past exit dates are regularly reviewed to understand any barriers to exiting care and agree any action that might be required.

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

The number of children subject of a Child Protection Plan at the 29th February 2024 was 628, down from a peak of 716 in April 2023.

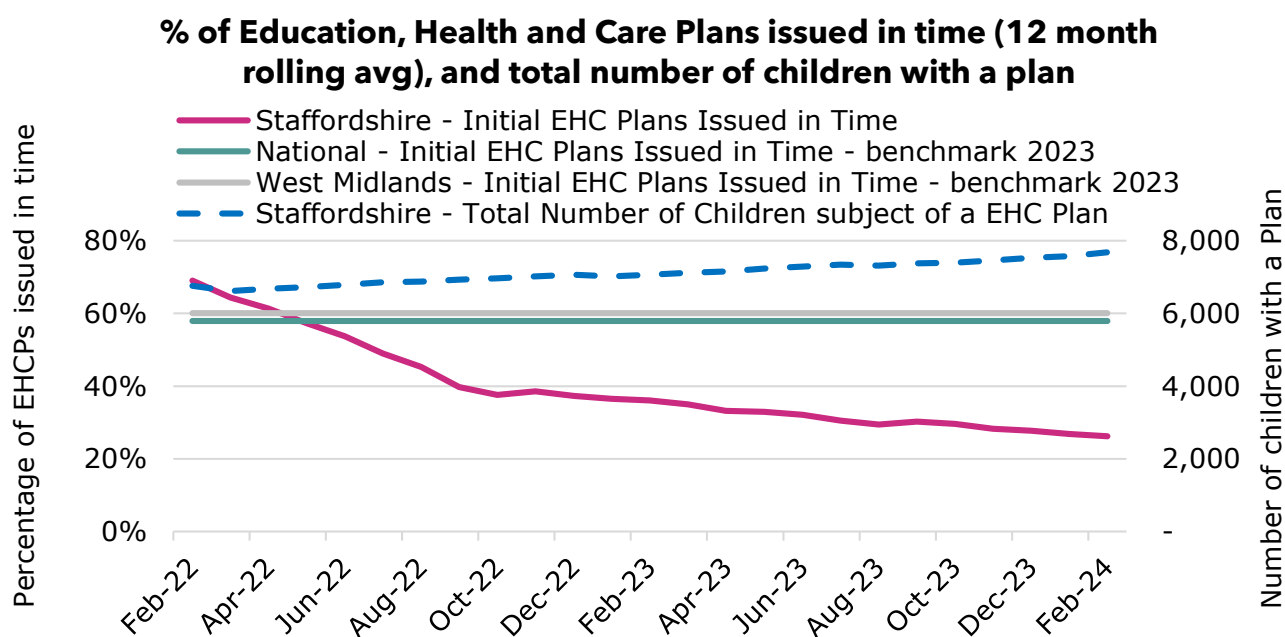


Rate of children referred, rolling 12 month average (per 10,000 population), and % re-referred within 12 months



Referrals continue to remain below both national and regional benchmarks. In Staffordshire, 16.4% of children have been re-referred within 12 months as of February 2024 (compared to latest national benchmark of 21.5% in 2022).

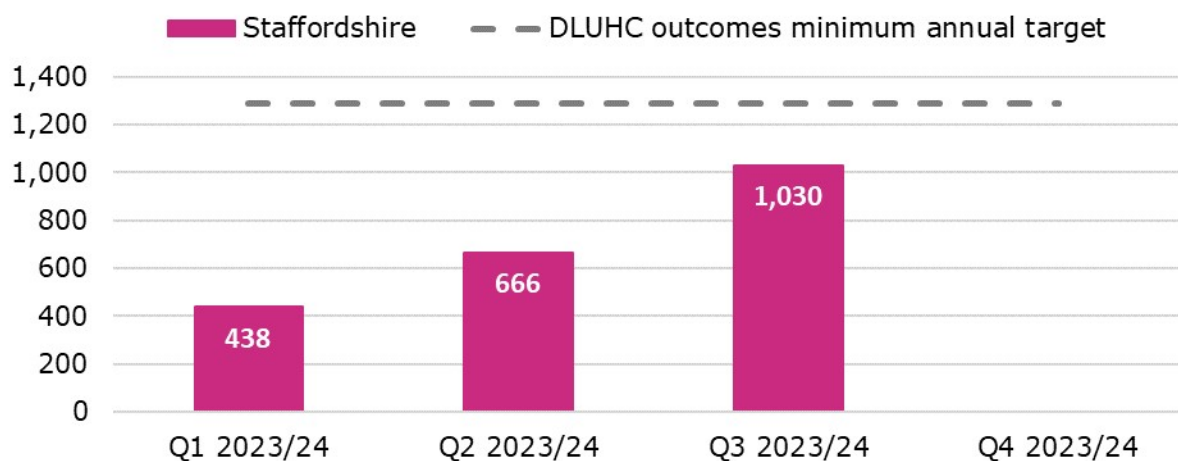
Offer the Best Start in Life Dashboard



Source: SCC and Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT)

The number of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) was 7,684 at 29th February 2024 compared to 7,066 a year earlier. This increasing demand means that the number of EHCP's issued in time (within 20 weeks) remains low in Staffordshire; 26% compared to the most recent national benchmark of 58% (2023).

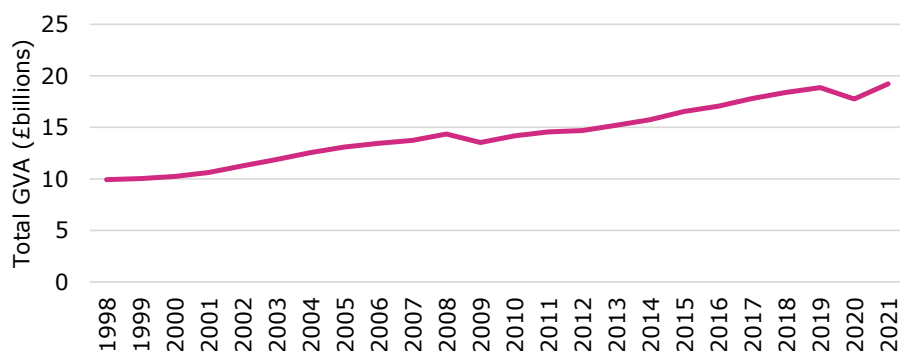
Supporting Families Programme - Reported successful family outcomes in 2023/24 (Cumulative)



Quarter 4 figures are not yet finalised but it is projected that by the end of Quarter 4, the Department for Levelling up, the Housing and Communities (DLUHC) target of 1,290 families achieving successful outcomes will have been achieved.

Supporting Staffordshire's Economy to Grow Dashboard

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



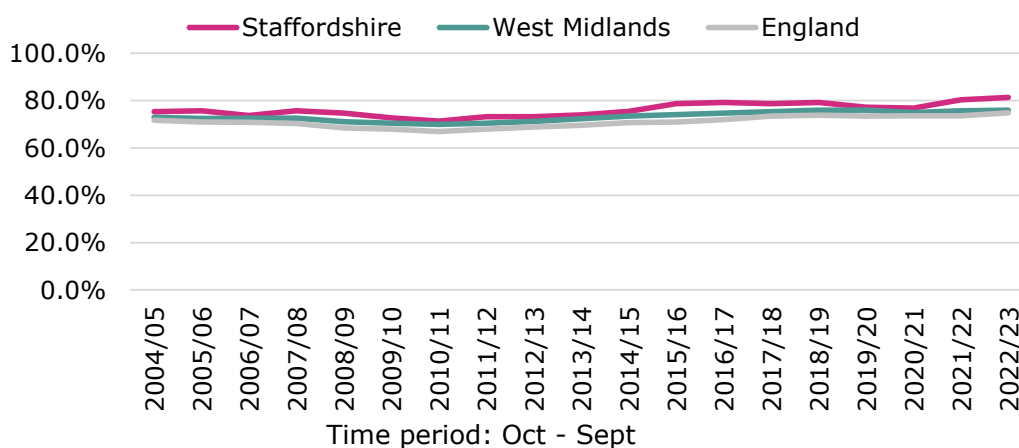
In 2021 (latest data) the Staffordshire economy was worth £19.2bn showing an increase of over £1.5bn between 2020-2021, equivalent to a 8.3% growth and greater than the growth seen for the West Midlands (6.9%) and England (7.1%).

Source: Office for National Statistics

NO UPDATE SINCE QUARTER 1

Employment Rate (aged 16-64)

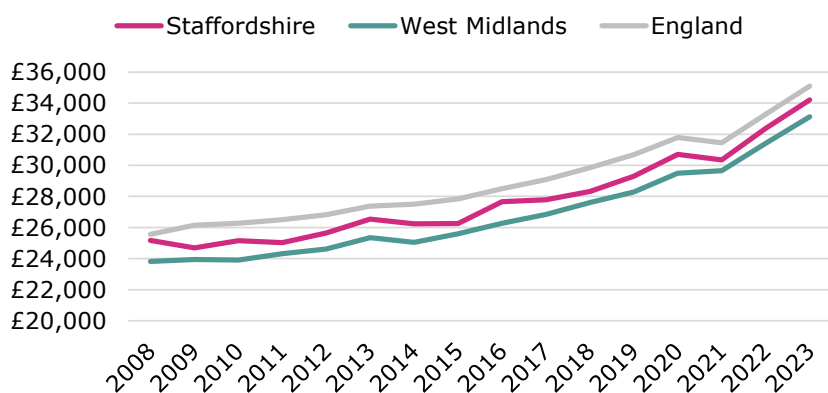
Latest employment figures for the period October 2022-September 2023 show that in Staffordshire there were an estimated 427,500 working age (aged 16-64) residents employed, with an employment rate of 81.4% well above the national and regional averages (75.9% and 74.8% respectively).



Source: ONS National Population Survey

Supporting Staffordshire's Economy to Grow Dashboard

Average (median) annual resident earnings

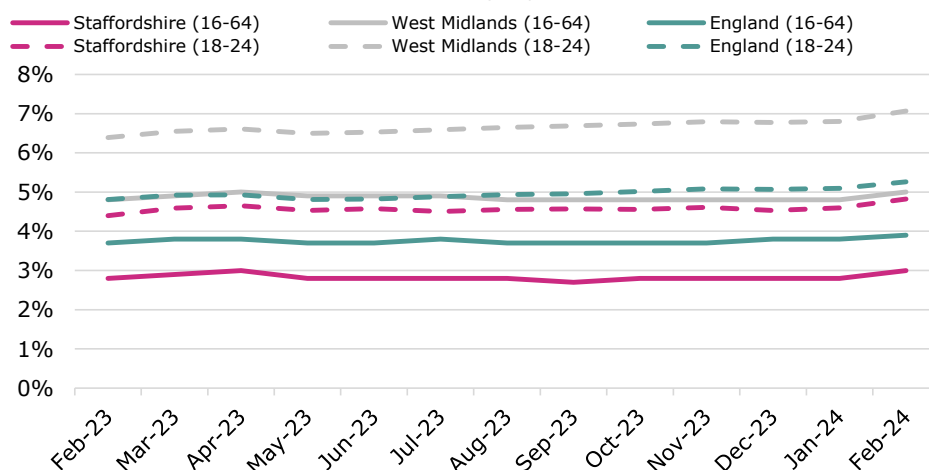


In 2023 average annual resident earnings for full-time workers in Staffordshire stood at £34,204 which was just below the England average of £33,208. Between 2019-23 Staffordshire saw faster improvement in resident earnings compared to national, with 16.8% growth compared to 14.4% for England.

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

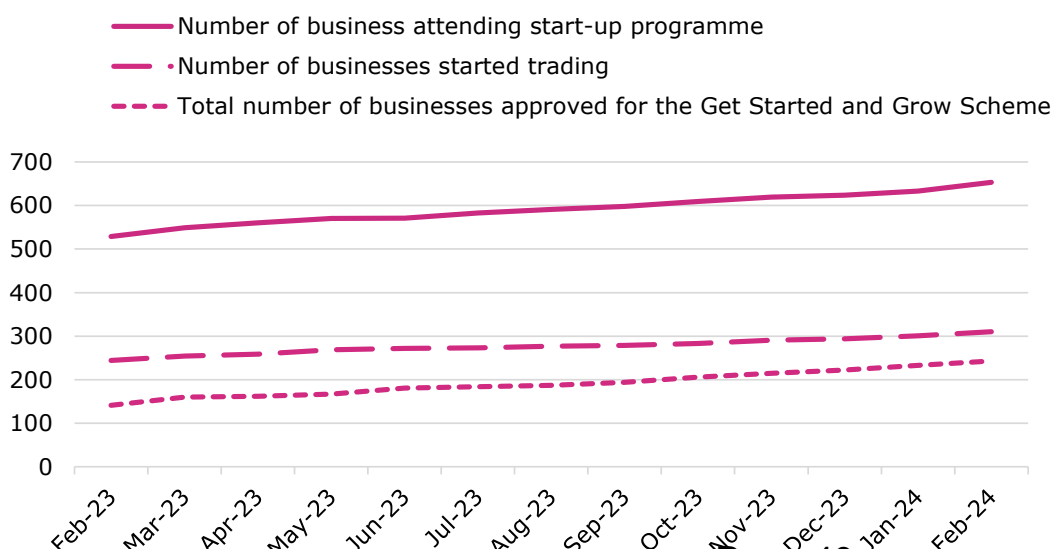
As of February 2024, there were 15,910 claimants in Staffordshire; an increase of 745 claimants compared with the figures reported in Quarter 3 (15,165). Staffordshire Moorlands records the lowest rate (2.2%), and East Staffordshire records the highest at 3.7%, which is still just below the national position (3.9%).

Claimant Count rate by age



Source: Office for National Statistics

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

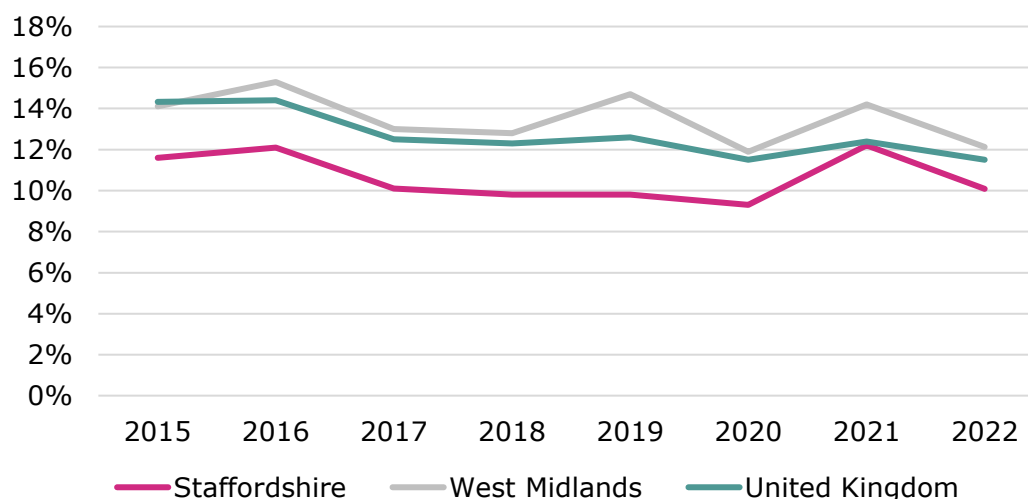


The top sector for businesses attending the start-up programme is 'Professional Services' (digital, financial, marketing, training, science and tech). The 'Get Started' scheme expanded in Quarter 3, 2022/23 to include 'Step up' support for businesses aged 2-5 years.

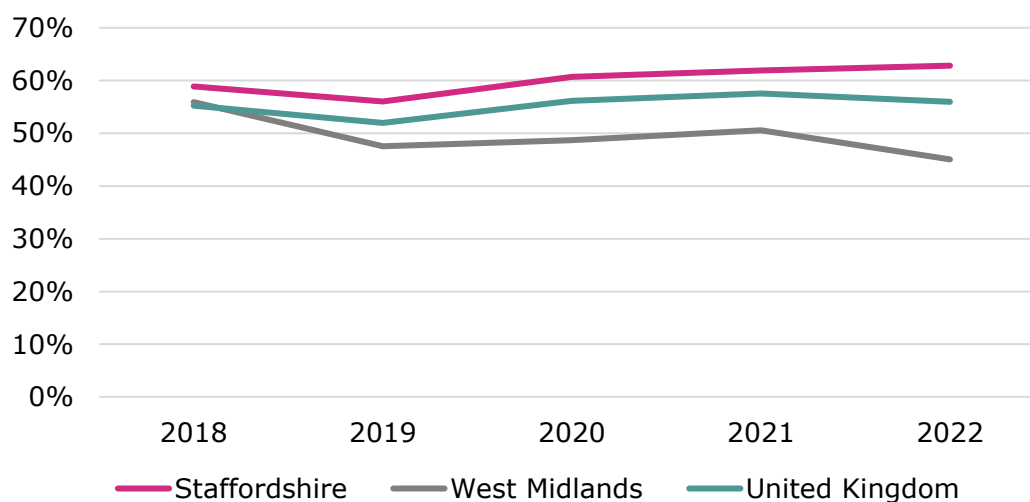
Source: SCC

Supporting Staffordshire's Economy to Grow Dashboard

Annual Business Start-up Rates, 2015-2022



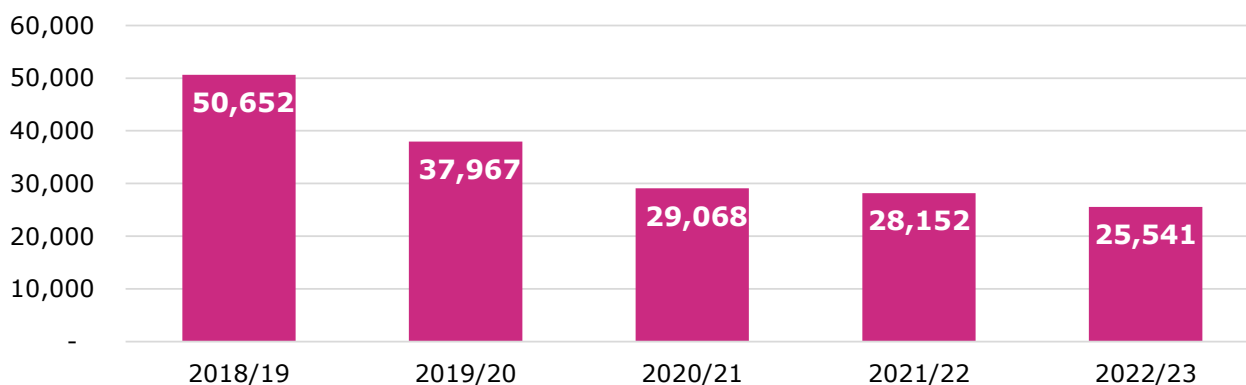
3-Year Business Survival Rates, 2018-2022



Despite a dip in 2022 in Staffordshire's annual business start-up rate (which was also seen regionally and nationally), Staffordshire's 3-year business survival rate continues to increase and outperforms national and regional rates.

Climate Change, Environment & Sustainability Dashboard

Staffordshire County Council's carbon emissions - Tonnes of carbon (tCO₂e)

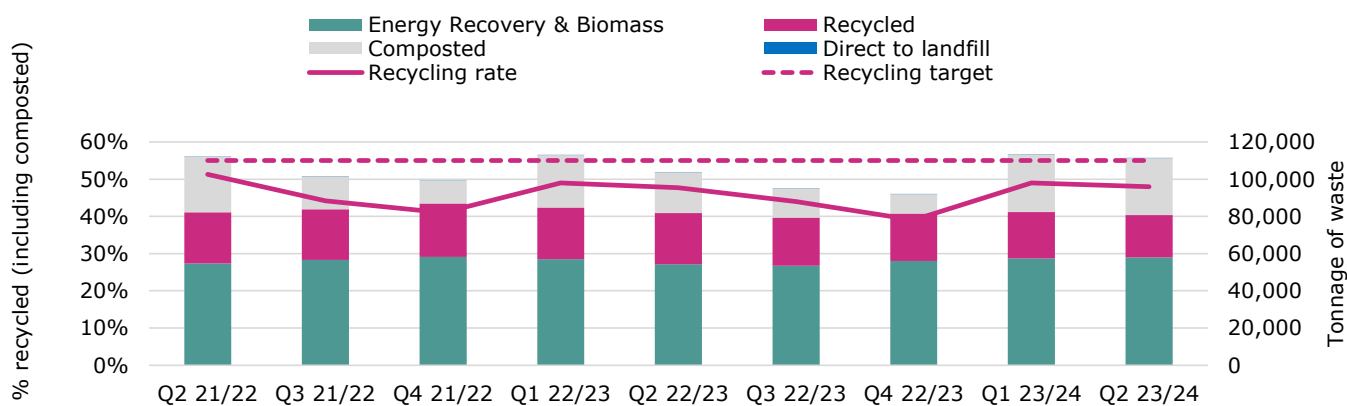


There has been a 12% reduction in the authority's carbon emissions since 2020/21, and a 50% reduction since 2018/19 .

NO UPDATE SINCE QUARTER 3

Source: SCC

% of waste recycled and tonnage of waste disposed of by method

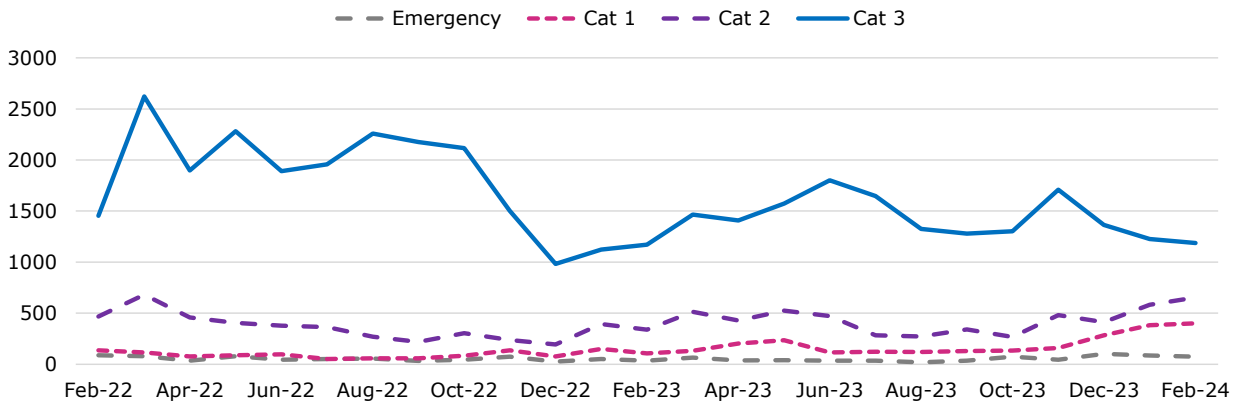


Source: SCC

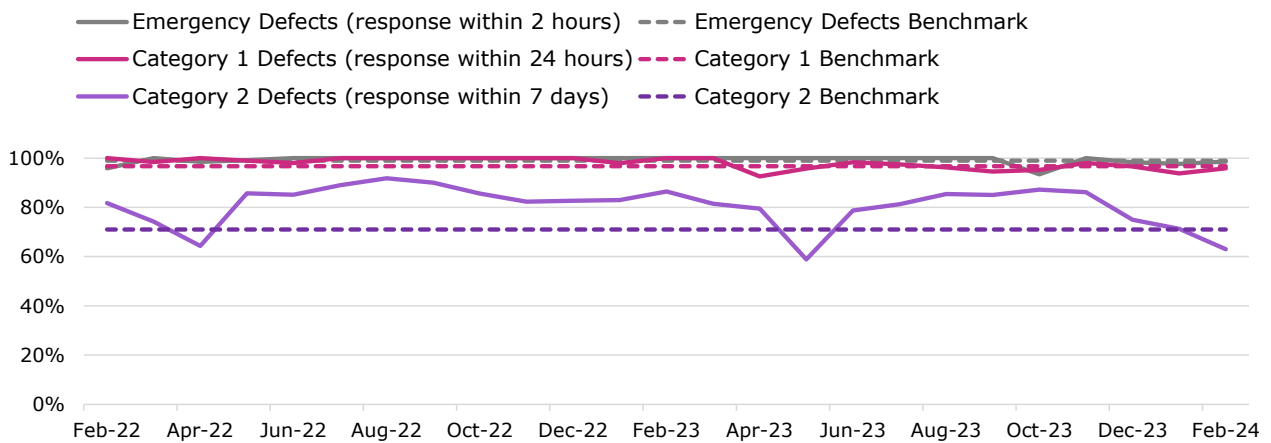
The recycling rate was similar in Quarter 2 (48%) to Quarter 1 (49%). Staffordshire continues to send minimal waste directly to landfill.

Roads, Transport and Digital Connections Dashboard

Number of safety defects identified each month



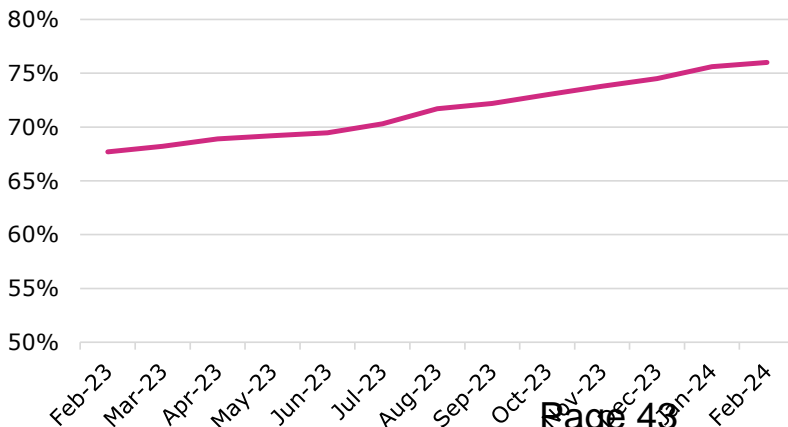
% of Emergency, Category 1 and Category 2 defects repaired in time



Source: Amey, Confirm

There were demand challenges in relation to the volume of high risk 'Emergency', 'Category 1' and 'Category 2' highways defects identified in Quarter 4, mostly due to the wet weather. Due to increase in demand, the timeliness of repairing Category 2 defects has dipped, with crews being redeployed to help tackle higher risk defects. Support for operations is being prioritised and additional recruitment is taking place.

% of premises with Gigabit capability

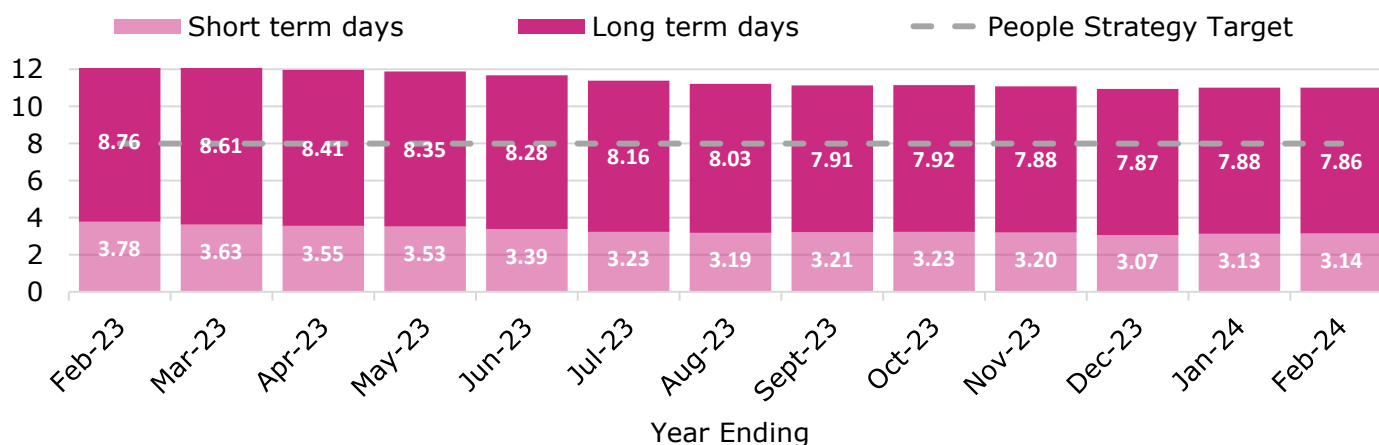


The percentage of premises with Gigabit capability continues to increase, with a target of 85% by the end of 2025 and close to 100% by 2030. It is not appropriate to benchmark against other areas due to differing approaches in rolling this out.

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%)

Quarter 1, 2023/24	Quarter 2, 2023/24	Quarter 3, 2023/24	Quarter 4, 2023/24
1.39% (£9.5m overspend)	1.13% (£7.7m overspend)	0.89% (£5.4m overspend)	0.58% (£4.0m overspend)

Source: SCC

A forecast 0.58% overspend is acceptable as it is within the council's Financial Health target of 2% variation on revenue budgets.

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 4 forecast information.

The latest revenue forecast outturn shows an overspend of £4.0m (0.58%), compared to the quarter 3 forecast overspend of £5.4m (0.89%).

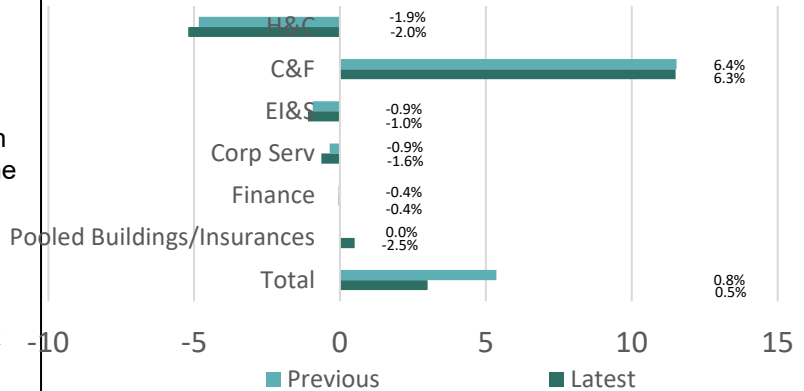
There is a forecast overspend of £11.5m for Children’s Services. This is a highly complex and volatile service and costs depend on the type of placements provided. The service is taking mitigating actions to address these pressures as far as possible.

Savings are categorised into confidence of delivery. There are £6.119m savings that are delivered as at quarter 4. There are £5.057m 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 £125.7m, compared to the quarter 3 position of £127.0m, a decrease of 1.0%. This projection is a fully funded position. There have been movements across the whole capital programme, however, there has been some slippage within Economic Planning and Future Prosperity.

Within the national context, the latest consumer price index is 4.2%. Interest rates remain at 5.25%, making them the highest level in 15 years. GDP is estimated to have increased in January by 0.2% in January 2024, following a decrease of 0.1% in December 2023. Current unemployment figures show Staffordshire benefit claimant rate remains below that of the West Midlands and Great Britain.

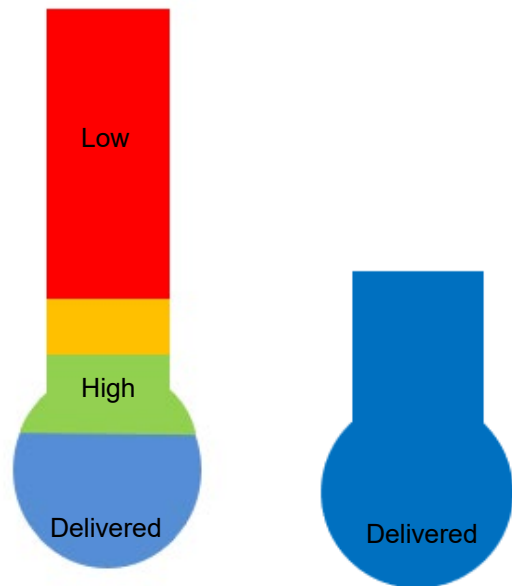
Revenue Budget Variance



Savings Tracker – Target £11.176m

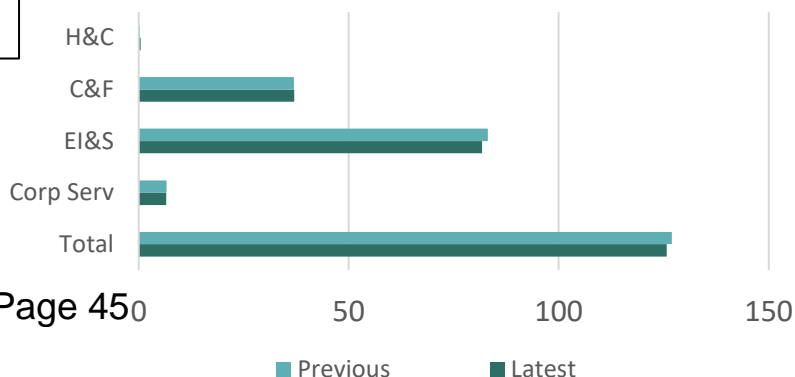
Quarter 3 - £11.176m

Quarter 4 - £6.119m



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



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Introduction

Revenue Forecast

1. The latest revenue forecast outturn (as provided in appendix 4) shows a forecast overspend of £4.0m (0.58%), compared to the quarter 3 forecast overspend of £5.4m (0.9%).
2. The following paragraphs consider the key financial issues in each of the council's portfolios.
3. **Health and Care** **Forecast – £5.201m saving**
4. *Public Health and Prevention* *Forecast – Breakeven*
5. The Public Health budget is forecast breakeven. Inflationary costs are likely to exceed any increases in the Public Health Ring Fenced Grant which may produce a cost pressure in future years, however it is anticipated that this could be met from Public Health reserves.
6. *Adults Social Care & Safeguarding* *Forecast - £2.287m saving*
7. There remain a number of vacancies in the Adults Learning Disability Team (ALDT) which has led to a forecast saving of £0.830m. The team is supported by temporary external capacity which is being funded from reserves.
8. Mental Capacity and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) Act overspend is £1.294m. This is because additional capacity to reduce the DoLS backlog has been funded with £1.256m from the revenue budget rather than drawing on reserves. In addition, staffing is overspent by £0.038m due to posts being created to prepare for Adult Social Care Assurance.
9. There is a £0.272m forecast overspend for the Section 75 contract with the Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (MPUFT) due to the 2023/24 pay award being higher than budgeted.
10. In house services are now forecast to save £2.245m which reflects vacancies in the residential services and Independence at Home homecare service being

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funded from the Adult Social Care Discharge grant. This is offset by a small overspend within the Complex Needs Services.

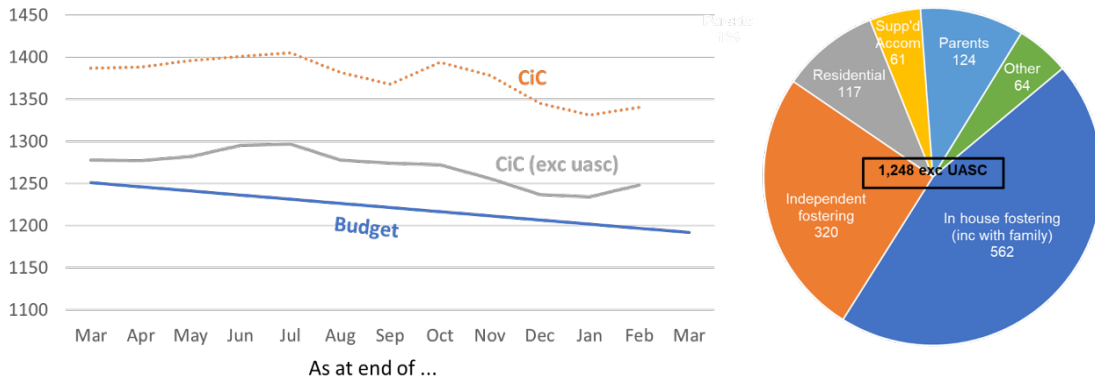
11. Other variances in the Adults Social Care and Safeguarding budget amount to a saving of £0.778m and include in year staffing vacancies.
12. *Care Commissioning* *Forecast - £2.914m saving*
13. The Older Peoples budget is forecast to save £2.660m. The ongoing management of demand and prices continues to have a positive impact on the financial position. This position is a consequence of a forecast saving of £3.849m on the home care budget, mainly due to the utilisation of £2.0m non-recurrent funding in year. This is offset by a forecast overspend on the Residential and Nursing budget of £0.893m, which includes a transfer of £0.350m costs from Mental Health. Other variances result in a forecast overspend of £0.296m. The review of placement costs between Older People and Mental Health continues to progress, the outcome of which may impact on the position for Older People and will be reflected in future reports.
14. The Physical Disabilities budget is forecast to save £1.363m. The Home Care budget forecast to save £0.933m and the direct payments budget forecast to save £0.610m due to lower than anticipated demand across both services. Other variances result in a small forecast overspend of £0.180m.
15. There is a forecast overspend of £0.155m for legacy items such as pension costs and operational support.
16. There is a forecast additional client income of £1.530m, in line with increased expenditure on residential and nursing placements.
17. The Learning Disability budget is forecast to overspend by £1.601m. This is due to an increase in the number and price of Supported Living placements and because the £1.2m MTFS saving is not expected to be fully achieved. There is a risk of further increases in demand and price which commissioners will develop a plan of action to avoid the overspend becoming recurrent.
18. The Mental Health budget is forecast to overspend by £2.295m, which includes a transfer of £0.350m costs to Older People. This is due to an increase in the number and price of supported living placements. There is a risk of further

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increases in demand and price over and above the additional budget in the MTFS, but this will be monitored. Commissioners will develop a plan of action to avoid the overspend becoming recurrent.

19. The Carers budget is forecast to save £0.302m and the Advocacy contract is forecast to save £0.183m both due to lower activity than assumed in the budgets. These are partially offset by some additional temporary commissioning costs forecast to be £0.188m. There is a forecast saving on the reablement contract of £0.576m due to final contract value being lower than the sum assumed when the budget was set.
20. Other variances in the Care Commissioning budget amount to an underspend of £0.539m.
21. **Covid Funding**
22. The Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) of £9.703m has been brought forward to 2023/24. Grant conditions require that this must be spent on Covid related activities and there is a final cut-off date where all funds must be utilised by 30th September 2024, when any remaining grant will need to be returned. Forecast spend for 2023/24 is £4.312m with £5.391m being carried forward to 2024/25 and expected to be spent in full.
23. **Children & Families** **Forecast - £11.498m overspend**
24. *Children's Services* *Forecast – 9.862m overspend*
25. The forecast for the service is an overspend of £9.8m at quarter 4, an increase from the quarter 3 position of £9.3m.
26. At the end of February, the number of Children in Care (CiC) was 1,340 (1,248 excluding Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers). The current number of CiC remains 50 (4%) lower than at the highest point at the end of July earlier this year. Demand remains significantly higher than the level assumed in the transformation programme - especially for more expensive residential provision – and, given the pressure which has accumulated through the year so far, the CiC Placements budget and Section 17 support, exacerbated by rising costs of inflation, is forecast to be £10m overspent:

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27. The Service is taking mitigating actions to address as far as possible the pressures for CiC Placements including:
- Continuously monitor thresholds for children entering care, especially those requiring residential provision
 - Reviewing and expending Edge of Care provision to mitigate and avoid escalation
 - Reviewing and improving the reunification support offer
 - A review of all existing children in care by cohort, considering areas working well and areas for potential improvement
 - Maximising income contributions from key partners
 - Engaging with providers to actively source quality placements and ensure a vibrant market so that costs of care are competitive
28. In recent times, the service has been hindered by on-going recruitment and retention problems leading to inconsistent support and capacity. This was recognised in the MTFs, and significant additional resource brought into the budget this year to address those concerns. The service has secured people within several roles and is actively recruiting to others, planning to realign services and appointing to new positions; however this will take time and, for now, continues to rely on more expensive agency support for essential service delivery leading to an underlying forecast overspend of £1.8m across the District structure. This is offset by vacancy savings and one-off savings due to the staged implementation of the workforce review/restructure that is currently being worked through and is forecast to total £2.5m.

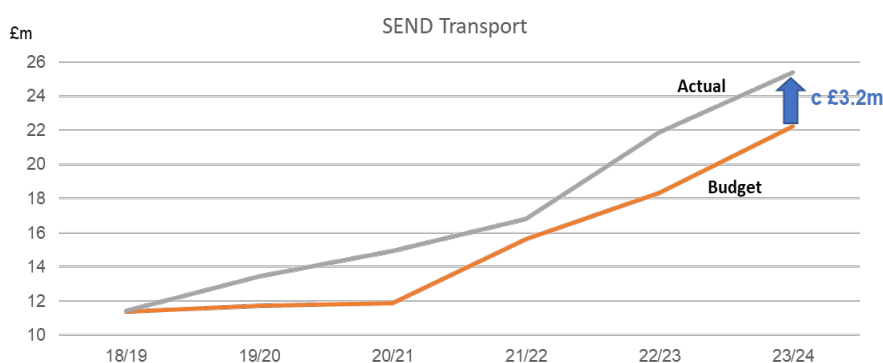
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29. There are also other forecast overspends of £0.5m including additional provision for aged debts. There is a risk that the overspend will increase further if high need or complex placements are brought into SCC care before the year end.

30. *Education Services* *Forecast - £2.384m overspend*

31. The service is forecast to overspend by £2.384m, improving on the forecast overspend of £2.721m at quarter 3.

32. The forecast overspend is primarily due to pressures in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) transport budget which in recent years has seen a significant increase in demand as a result of the rise in Educations, Health and Care Plan (EHCPs). Costs increased significantly in 22/23 as a result of the rising costs of inflation and despite a further increase in budget this year it is likely that a further overspend of £3.2m will arise this year:



33. 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, for example, to improve average occupancy levels and to identify the most efficient transport routes.

34. There is an additional pressure of £0.5m within the Educational Psychology service due additional locum costs to meet the continuing increasing demand for EHCP assessments.

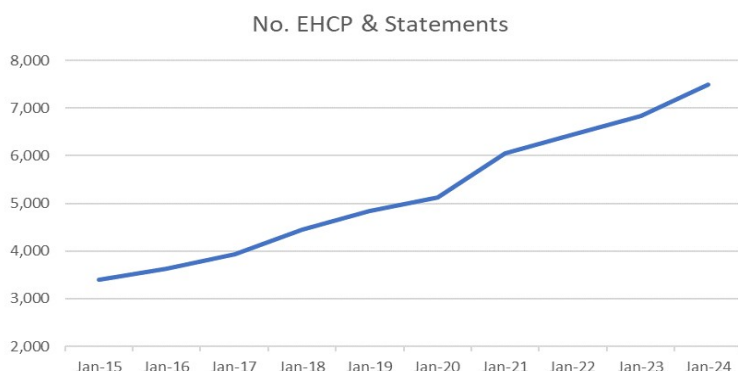
35. Savings across Education Services include historic teacher pensions contributions and provision for school deficit converters. There are additional savings within school admissions and planning teams due to extra income of £0.3m.

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36. SEND High Needs Block

37. The High Needs Block (HNB) is forecast to overspend by £21m and reflects:

- Continuing growing demand for SEND support. This is impacting across all areas but especially the Independent sector with numbers now more than double what they were just four years ago and, given the more expensive placement cost, by some way the largest budget pressure in the HNB.
- Increasing complexity of need and costs impacting across all areas.
- From April 2022 the Council implemented a new 'Education Banding Tool' for assessing a child's EHCP. Following concerns of increasing costs, has been temporarily suspended whilst further consideration is undertaken.

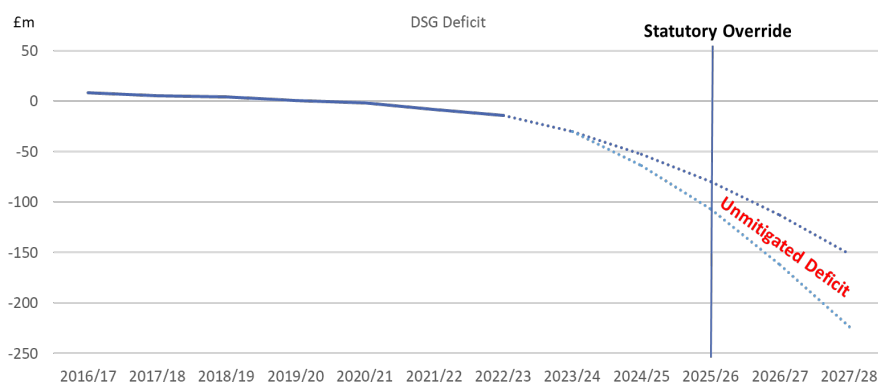


38. This is a position shared by many Councils across the sector. The Government has put in place a 'statutory override' requiring that accumulated Designated School Grants (DSG) deficits should remain ringfenced separate to the Council's other reserves and that this has now been extended through to end of 2025/26.

39. Accordingly this overspend will be charged against the DSG reserve which, at the end of 2022/23, was already £14.2m in deficit and, given the forecast overspend this year, will be over £30m in deficit at the end of the current year. The Council's Deficit Management Plan (DMP), that is consistent with the wider objectives outlined in the SEND Strategy, outlines the targeted interventions that will seek to mitigate the existing shortfall. This will take time and is unlikely to address in full the worsening position without further Government support. A key element of the 2024/25 DMP is for a 0.5% funding switch from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block as permitted under Government guidelines; this was

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initially rejected by Schools Forum, but the Council's subsequent disapplication request to the Secretary of State has since been approved and will provide for an additional £3.2m next year.



40. *Partnerships & Wellbeing* *Forecast - £0.747m saving*

41. The forecast for the service is a saving of £0.747m, an increased saving of £0.246m compared to quarter 3. This is mainly due to savings against the short breaks contract £0.2m, along with one off staffing savings of £0.1m and a reduction in the costs associated with the transfer in-house of the Early Years Entrust contract of £0.4m.

42. A large majority of the Wellbeing and Partnerships budget is funded from government grants, including Resettlement grants of £10.6m, Household Support Fund of £11m, Holidays and Activities Fund of £2.4m and Supporting Families of £2.6m. The programmes included in the service have Cabinet approved plans to utilise the allocations and to deliver national programmes of work for the benefit of local residents.

43. **Economy, Infrastructure & Skills** **Forecast – £1.106m saving**

44. *Business & Enterprise* *Forecast – £0.313m saving*

45. The service is forecast to save £0.313m, an increase in savings of £0.178m compared to the quarter 3 report. The decrease is a result of reduced spend on supplies and services and increased income in Business Support, County Farms and Planning.

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46. There is funding for short term projects including UKSPF and BEAS which is temporary for this financial year and next.
47. *Infrastructure & Highways* *Forecast - Breakeven*
48. The forecast for the service is to breakeven, although there are various overspend and underspends forecast across the budget area.
49. This position continues to assume that additional network management income will be used to offset a budget pressure in the traffic signals energy cost area and that staffing vacancies in the school crossing patrol teams will be used to offset the land charges budget pressure.
50. The current forecast position also assumes that the emerging new priority work can be delivered through carry forward of unspent highways transformation monies, with some monies being redirected to enable the continuation of capital workstack reduction activities. 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.
51. *Transport, Connectivity & Waste* *Forecast - £0.169m saving*
52. The Transport & Connectivity service is forecast to save £0.169m, a decrease of £0.036m compared to the quarter 3 report. There continue to be risks in the Concessionary Fares service as future Government directives could change and the impact of the Department for Transport Toolkit review is still unclear. There is provision to mitigate these risks, but the impact is still uncertain. Furthermore, any underspend in this area will need to be ringfenced to support the bus service in future years.
53. The Sustainability & Waste service is forecasting a breakeven position, which includes the delivery of the £0.565m MTFs Dry Mixed Recycling credits saving.
54. It is proposed that the additional third-party waste income and electricity generated income surpluses from the W2R Waste to Energy plant contract are to be carried forward to fund the remaining 4 years of the 5 year Household

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Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) capital investment programme, and to earmark' £0.400m to cover the remaining £1.0m necessary for the Local Transport Assessment work.

55. *Skills* *Forecast - £0.590m saving*
56. The Skills service is forecast to save £0.590m at quarter 4, an increase in saving of £0.031m compared to the quarter 3 report. £500,000 is the result of savings from the Schools Careers Service, which was brought back in house this year from Entrust. This saving has been earmarked going forward for the continuation of the Jobs and Careers Service and the Careers Hub. The remaining saving is the result of vacancies not being filled across the service.
57. *Culture, Rural & Communities* *Forecast – Breakeven*
58. The service is forecast to breakeven at quarter 4, a minor increase of £1,000 in spend compared to quarter 3.
59. This is made up of a £50,000 pressure within Rural County from increased expenditure on equipment and service purchasing costs and an underachievement of income, partly offset by savings from vacancies and reduced transport costs.
60. This overspend is offset by a forecast saving on Culture of £0.033m. This is made up of staffing vacancies across Libraries and Archives vacancies offsetting an underachievement in income. This also assumes a £348,000 contribution into the Libraries Refurbishment reserve at year end.
61. A further saving of £0.017m is forecast in Community Safety resulting from additional in year income from works in Trading Standards, largely offsetting the previously assumed costs for legal works due to cattle in our care due to delays in the court system.
62. *EI&S Business Support* *Forecast - £0.035m saving*
63. The service is forecast to save £0.035m at quarter 4, a minor increase in saving of £0.002m compared to the quarter 3 report. This is related to small savings across training and pension liabilities budgets.

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64. **Corporate Services** **Forecast – £0.641m saving**

65. The service is forecast to save £0.631m, which is an increase of £0.284m from the reported quarter 3 position.

66. The additional saving is a result of increased income earned by Legal Services of £250,000, an increased saving in Strategic Property of £60,000 and increased income received of £30,000, as well as an additional saving of £14,000 from staff vacancies.

67. These forecast savings are slightly offset by an increase in the shortfall of income within Commercial Services of £40,000 and £20,000 in the Communications Service, and a slight increase in expenditure on annual web streaming licences in Member and Democratic Services of £10,000.

68. **Finance** **Forecast - £0.048m saving**

69. The service is forecast to save £0.048m at quarter for, an additional minor saving on £0.002m compared to the quarter 3 report. This saving position includes provision for future capacity in the Adult Finance Services team, offset by temporary staffing vacancies.

70. **Centrally Controlled** **Forecast - £0.500m saving**

71. The forecast for this area is save £0.500m, which is an increase of £0.500m compared to the reported quarter 3 position.

72. There is a saving of £1.500m as a result of significant savings against gas and electricity budgets due to anticipated cost increases not materialising.

73. This saving is offset by a £1m pressure on insurance charges. This is a result of increased insurance claims relating to Highways, which have increased significantly from 2022/23.

74. Additional income generated on short term investments has resulted in a significant forecast underspend on the Capital Financing budget. This is due to interest rates remaining higher for longer than originally assumed within the budget. This underspend will be carried forward in the Inflation reserve and will

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be used to fund some of the inflationary pressures in the MTFS from 2024/25 onwards.

75. There is a small amount remaining in the Care Market pressures budget which will be allocated to fund the procurement and implementation of a new social care system.

76. **Capital Forecast**

77. Appendix 5 compares the latest capital forecast outturn of £125.7m, a decrease of £1.3m when compared with the quarter 3 forecast of £127.0m. The key reasons for this decrease of £1.3m are set out in the following paragraphs.

78. **Health and Care** **Forecast spend £0.426m**

79. There has been an increase of £0.118m from the quarter 3 report due to a refinement to the budget of the Hawthorn House extension and refurbishment project of £116,000 plus a slight increase in costs at the Douglas Road Respite Service of £2,000.

80. **Children and Families** **Forecast spend £36.999m**

81. *Maintained Schools* *Forecast Spend £36.802m*

82. There has been a small increase of £0.063m from the quarter 3 report due to an increase from minor budget refinements across various projects with the respective Education programme of £63,000.

83. **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills** **Forecast spend £81.753m**

84. *Economic Planning & Future Prosperity* *Forecast spend £3.119m*

85. There has been a reduction of £1.191m from the quarter 3 report. This is a result from uncertainty over cashflow for the Chatterley Valley project as the contractor has gone into administration and the budget has been rephased into the 2024/25 financial year, reducing costs by £690,000.

86. There has also been a reprofiling of the Newcastle Enterprise Centre Extension and Refurbishment project due to delays with tender, reducing costs by £68,000, minor rephasing of the Forward Programme to 2024/25 of £11,000 and Eastgate

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Regeneration of £35,000 and A50 compensation payments of £301,000, along with minor budget refinements and rephasing across a number of projects, reducing costs by £28,000 and introduction of the new Stafford Tech Park Drainage project, adding £20,000

87. County Farms has reduced costs from budget refinement of the general budget and reduced cost of sales totalling £16,000 and a further reduction in costs with budget of £61,000 being rephased into 2024/25.

88. *Highways Schemes* *Forecast spend £73.661m*

89. There has been a minor decrease of £1,000 from the quarter 3 report. This is a result of a decrease due to reprofiling and refining of budgets for SWAR with the latest project progress reports moving spend of £681,000 into 2024/25, offset by an increase in costs from additional workstack costs to be funded for revenue surplus and reserves, totalling £680,000.

90. *Skills* *Forecast Spend - £0.212m*

91. The Gigabit Broadband Voucher has no forecast adjustments from the quarter 3 report.

92. *Rural County* *Forecast Spend - £0.347m*

93. There has been a decrease of £0.090m from the quarter 3 report. Decrease due to the rephasing of Greenways ARF, with £41,000 of costs reprofiled into 2024/25 and £40,000 of costs reprofiled into 2025/26 and rephased costs of the MHCLG grant of £9,000 into 2024/25.

94. *Waste & Sustainability Projects* *Forecast Spend - £1.239m*

95. There has been a small decrease of £0.100m from the quarter 3 report. This decrease is due to rephasing of Newcastle HWRC of £15,000 and HWRC Mobilisation of £85,000 in line with the 5 year delivery plan into 2024/25.

96. **Property, Finance and Resources & ICT** **Forecast spend £6.525m**

97. There has been a decrease of £0.068m since the quarter 3 report. This decrease is due to the net effect of minor budget refinements across a number of

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projects totalling £52,000 and the rephasing of elements of the Wireless Refresh project of £100,000 into 2024/25.

98. These decreases are offset by an increase in the anticipated impact of inflationary price rises on cost of vehicle acquisitions, totalling £84,000.
99. **Financial Health**
100. Appendix 6 provides a forecast outturn performance against the key Financial Health Indicators approved as part of the 2023/24 budget setting process.
101. There have been 97.6% of invoices paid within 30 days of receiving them at the end of May, exceeding the financial health indicator target.
102. The Debt Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is set at £27.75m for 2023/24 with an updated target approved for 2024/25.
103. The estimated level of outstanding sundry debt over 6 months old is £24.568m. This is under the revised 2023/24 target of £27.75m by £3.182m. This position is an increase of £0.326m since the quarter 3 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.
104. The level of CCG health debt over 6 months old is now £0.341m, £0.859m below the target figure.
105. Non-Residential Client debt now stands at £13.984m. For both adult social care residential and non-residential debt, our key performance indicator, collectible debt over 6 months is over target. Debt has increased in line with the increased value of invoiced income. In 2020/21 client income was £28.4m, last year it increased to £52.2m and for the 2023/24 year estimated income is £75.3m. Of that increase, £18m has arisen out of the “Net to Gross” billing change for residential care, the remainder is for non-residential care reflecting both an increased number of clients and an increase in the cost of care. Our other KPI, debt recovery performance as a percentage of income, is significantly better than target which supports the view that the rise in debt is driven by increased income. The targets for collectible debt over 6 months have been revised to reflect income changes and will be used in the reports from 24-25 Quarter 1

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onwards. Performance in other categories of debt is better than or in line with targets.

Debtor Type	2023/24 Target	31/12/2023	31/03/2024	Increase / (Decrease)
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Health Bodies & CCGs	1.200	0.339	0.341	0.002
Other Govt. and Public Bodies	2.800	2.102	1.929	(0.173)
Other General Debtors (Individuals & Commercial)	5.200	5.514	6.739	1.225
H&C Non-Res Client Debt	11.000	14.980	13.984	-0.996
H&C Residential Client Debt	1.300	1.307	1.575	0.268
TOTAL	21.500	24.242	24.568	0.326

106. Prudential Indicators

107. Appendix 7 provides a forecast outturn performance against the Prudential Indicators approved as part of the 2023/24 budget setting process.

108. 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.

109. 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 4 £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Total Variation £m
Health and Care			
Public Health & Prevention	0.263	0.263	0.000
Adult Social Care & Safeguarding	41.826	39.539	(2.287)
Care Commissioning	218.195	215.281	(2.914)
Specific Grant Allocation (Public Health)	(0.263)	(0.263)	0.000
Health and Care Total	260.021	254.820	(5.201)
Children and Families			
Children's Services	132.406	142.268	9.862
Children's Public Health	0.000	0.000	0.000
Education Services	39.802	42.186	2.384
Wellbeing & Partnerships	9.028	8.281	(0.747)
Children and Families Total	181.236	192.735	11.499
Economy, Infrastructure and Skills			
Business & Enterprise	2.627	2.314	(0.313)
Infrastructure & Highways	40.915	40.915	0.000
Transport, Connectivity & Waste	45.981	45.812	(0.169)
Skills	2.825	2.235	(0.590)
Culture, Rural & Communities	13.504	13.504	0.000
EI&S Business Support	1.199	1.164	(0.035)
Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Total	107.051	105.944	(1.107)
Corporate Services Total	39.070	38.429	(0.641)
Finance Total	12.038	11.990	(0.048)
Total Portfolio Budgets (Saving)/Overspend	599.416	603.918	4.502
Centrally Controlled Items			
Interest on Balances & Debt Charges	23.881	23.881	0.000
Pooled Buildings and Insurances	28.066	27.566	(0.500)
Pensions	1.706	1.706	0.000
Investment Fund	0.039	0.000	(0.039)
Care Market Pressures	15.000	15.000	0.000
Capital Investment Fund	3.500	3.500	0.000
Traded Services / Business Partner	(0.812)	(0.812)	0.000
Contingency	11.578	11.578	0.000
Net Revenue Budget (Saving)/Overspend	682.373	686.336	3.963

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24

	3rd Quarter Budget	Enhancements to Programme	4th Quarter Budget
	£m	£m	£m
Health and Care			
Care and Independence	0.308	0.118	0.426
Health and Care Total	0.308	0.118	0.426
Children and Families			
Maintained Schools	36.739	0.063	36.802
Vulnerable Children's Projects	0.197	0.000	0.197
Children and Families Total	36.936	0.063	36.999
Economy, Infrastructure and Skills			
Economic Planning & Future Prosperity	4.310	(1.191)	3.119
Highways Schemes	73.662	(0.001)	73.661
Connectivity	0.000	0.000	0.000
Skills	0.212	0.000	0.212
Rural County (Countryside)	0.437	(0.090)	0.347
Tourism and Culture	3.175	0.000	3.175
Waste & Sustainability Projects	1.339	(0.100)	1.239
Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Total	83.135	(1.382)	81.753
Trading Services - County Fleet Care	0.972	0.084	1.056
Finance, Resources & ICT	0.585	(0.100)	0.485
Property	5.036	(0.052)	4.984
Total	126.972	(1.269)	125.703

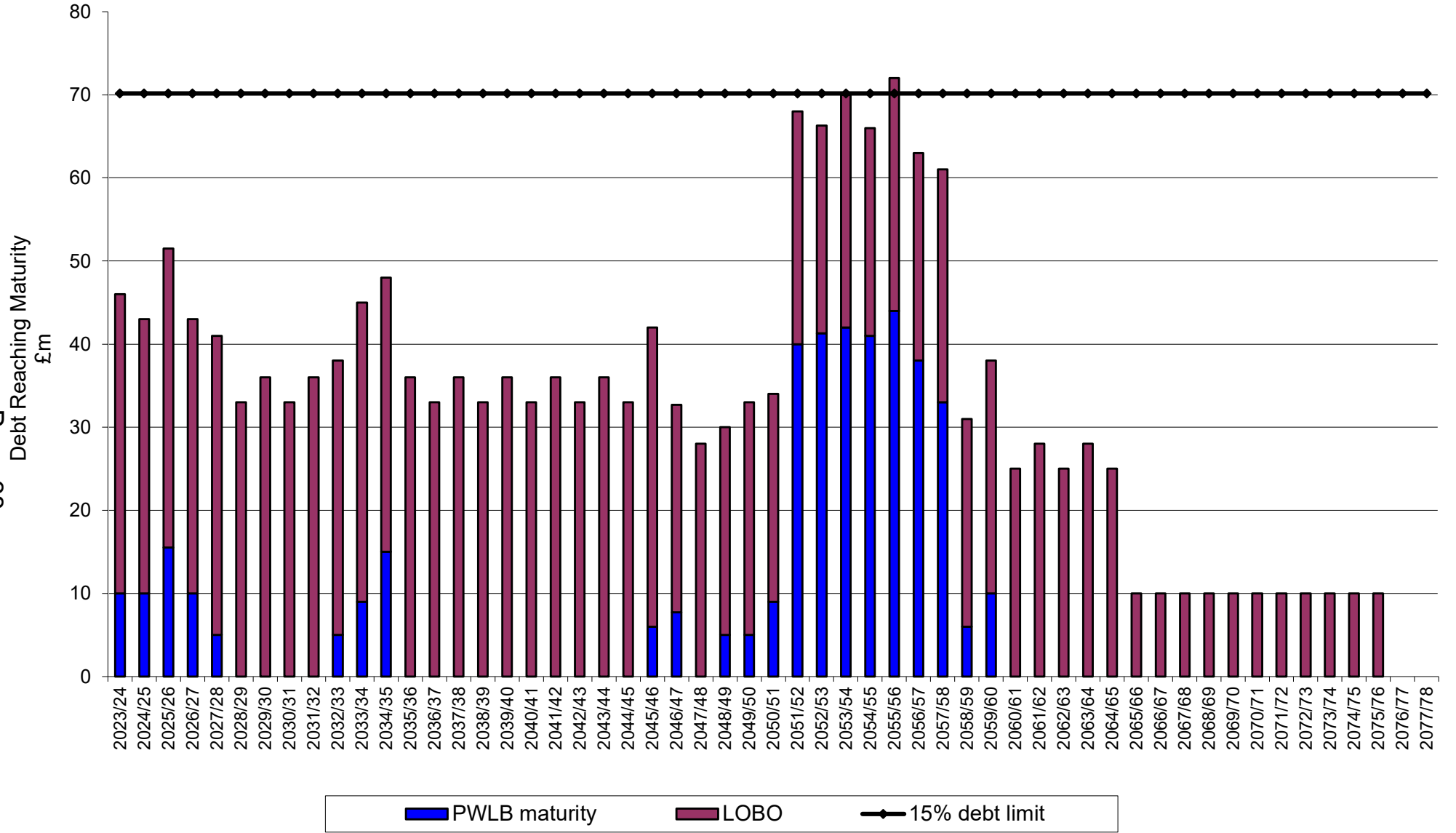
Financial Health Indicators 2023/24

Appendix 6

Indicator		Current Performance
<u>Debtors</u> Level of outstanding general debtors more than 6 months old does not exceed £27.75m (Current Performance – £24.6m).		
<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%).		
<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

Indicator	Budget 2023/24	Q4 Estimate 2023/24
	£m	£m
External Debt – Authorised Limit for borrowing	621	399
External Debt – Authorised Limit for other liabilities	118	69
<i>Total</i>	739	468
External Debt – Operational Boundary for borrowing	525	399
External Debt – Operational Boundary for other liabilities	118	69
<i>Total</i>	643	468
External Debt - Loans	596.5	399
Interest Rate Exposures – Upper Limit (Fixed)	546.4	399
Interest Rate Exposures – Upper Limit (Variable)	(470.0)	(425)
Upper limit for total principal sums invested for longer than a year	245.0	30
Estimate of Capital Expenditure	111.9	125.7
Estimate of Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	572.1	544.6
Gross Debt – External Loans (Should remain below CFR, except in the short term)	568.2	399
Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream – Financing Costs	22.9	19.2
Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream – Proportion of Net Revenue Stream - %	3.6%	2.97%



Cabinet - Wednesday 17 April 2024

Decisions taken by Cabinet Members under Delegated Powers

Recommendation of the Leader of the Council

1. That the decisions taken by Cabinet Members under delegated powers, as detailed in paragraph 3 below, be noted.

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Corporate Services

Reasons for Recommendations

2. To inform Cabinet of recent decisions taken by Cabinet Members under delegated powers.

Background

3. Cabinet are requested to note the following decisions taken by Cabinet Members under delegated powers:

Cabinet Member	Decision
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	In approving the preferred option to procure return home interviews for Children who go missing, from the Children and Families Support Services (CAFSS) Framework and award to the most competitive tender.

List of Background Papers:

Cabinet Member Delegated Decision No. 571.

Contact Details

Report Author: Mike Bradbury
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Forward Plan of Key Decisions - 15 May 2024 - 18 September 2024

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions is prepared on a monthly basis and published at least 28 days before the start of the period covered. Key Decisions are defined as those Executive decisions which are likely:

- a. to result in the County Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- b. to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions in the County's area.

The Forward Plan will contain **all** matters which the Leader of the Council has reason to believe will be the subject of a Key Decision to be taken by the Cabinet. It may also include decisions that are not key decisions but are intended to be determined by the Cabinet. Part of the Cabinet meetings listed in this Forward Plan may be held in private where a report for the meeting contains exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. If you would like to make representations about any particular decision to be conducted in private then please email: michael.bradbury@staffordshire.gov.uk. Such representations must be received in advance 6 clear working days before the date on which the decision is scheduled to be taken.

The Membership of the Cabinet consists of:

Leader of the County Council – Alan White
 Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills – Philip White
 Cabinet Member for Health and Care – Mike Wilcox
 Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change – Simon Tagg
 Cabinet Member for Strategic Highways – Mark Deaville
 Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources – Ian Parry
 Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture – Victoria Wilson
 Cabinet Member for Children and Young People – Mark Sutton
 Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) – Jonathan Price
 Cabinet Support Member for Highways (Operations North) – Keith Flunder
 Cabinet Support Member for Highways (Operations South) – Robert Pritchard
 Cabinet Support Member for Public Health and Integrated Care – Paul Northcott

A copy of the Forward Plan of Key Decisions may be inspected, free of charge, at the Member and Democratic Services office, County Buildings, Martin Street, Stafford, during normal office hours Monday to Friday. A copy of the notice will also be available on Staffordshire County Council's Website at <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/>.

Documents submitted for decision will be a formal report which will be available on the County Council's website at least 5 clear working days before the date the decision is to be made, unless that report is subject to any prohibition or restriction on its disclosure. Other relevant background documents used in compiling the report will also be made available in the same way unless they are subject to any prohibition or restriction on their disclosure. Minutes of Cabinet meetings will be published within three working days and will be subject to call-in. The call-in period lasts for three working days. If the decision is not called-in it will be implemented on the fourth working day. Special urgency items are exempt from call-in.

Forward Plan of Key Decisions - 15 May 2024 - 18 September 2024

Note:

1. The Forward Plan of Key Decisions sets out all Key Decisions intended to be made by Cabinet during the above period.
2. The Cabinet date can be provisional and items may move/roll forward to another meeting date but this will be monitored.
3. Items should remain on the Notice until a decision is made by Cabinet or is formally removed.
4. Where there is an intention to make a decision in private the exemption paragraph relied upon will be included within this notice

Predicted Date of Decision	Public or Private Decision	Title and Description	Consultation	Contact Officer
15 May 2024	Public	<p>Walleys Quarry: Addressing the Impact on our Communities Cabinet Member for Health and Care (Mike Wilcox)</p> <p>This report considers the ongoing impact of Walley's Quarry landfill site on communities in Newcastle under Lyme and recommends that the Council adopt a formal policy calling for urgent action by Government to reduce emissions.</p>	None	Dr Richard Harling MBE (Tel: 01785 278700) Service Area: Public Health and Prevention
		<p>Procurement for Garden Waste Disposal Framework Cabinet Member for Commercial Matters, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change (Simon Tagg)</p> <p>Staffordshire County Council (SCC) are procuring a Framework Agreement for the provision of a Green Waste Processing Service. The Framework will consist of 3 lots. Lot one for the treatment of green waste, with this lot being accessed by Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council only (NULBC). Lot two for the treatment of green waste, with this lot being accessed by Stafford Borough Council only (SBC) Lot three for the treatment of food and green waste, with this lot being accessed by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council only (SMDC). The framework is for a supplier(s) to supply treatment facilities for the acceptance of separately collected green waste to be processed with the exception of lot three which is for mixed food and green waste.</p>		

Page 73	15 May 2024	Public	<p>Roofing Framework Agreement Cabinet Member for Commercial Matters</p> <p>Renewal of Corporate Roofing Framework Agreement</p>	None at this stage	<p>Ian Turner (Tel: 01785 277228)</p> <p>Service Area: Strategic Property</p>
	15 May 2024	Public	<p>Community Learning Accountability Agreement 2024-2025 Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills (Philip White)</p> <p>The report provides an update on performance across Community Learning and the opportunity to consult on the Accountability Agreement which lays out priorities and targets for the 2024-2025 academic year. The Accountability Agreement forms the basis of the Council's Adult Education Budget grant agreement with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). It is a funding requirement to seek approval from Cabinet and submit the Accountability Agreement to the ESFA by the 30th June 2024 for funding to be released to the Council.</p>	N/A	<p>Anthony Baines (Tel: 01785 895984)</p> <p>Service Area: Skills & Employability</p>
	15 May 2024	Private	<p>Stafford Town Centre Update Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills (Philip White)</p> <p>To provide Cabinet with an update on developments in Stafford town centre including those of interest to Staffordshire County Council.</p>	None	<p>Anthony Hodge (Tel: 01785 277204)</p> <p>Service Area: Business and Enterprise</p>
	19 June 2024	Public	<p>Supported Living Commissioning Update Cabinet Member for Health and Care (Mike Wilcox)</p> <p>This report will provide an update on the re-commissioning of supported living care services as approved by Cabinet in July 2023, and seek approval from Cabinet for a future fee structure with assurance that this will ensure the sustainability of the market.</p>	None at present	<p>Andrew Jepps (Tel: 01785 278557)</p> <p>Service Area: Health and Care</p>

19 June 2024	Public	<p>Final Financial Outturn 2023/24 Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources (Ian Parry), Leader of the Council (Alan White)</p> <p>To update Cabinet on the final financial outturn against budget for 2023/24.</p>	Directorate SLTs and Corporate SLT will be consulted as appropriate.	Rachel Spain (Tel: 01785 854455) Service Area: Finance
17 July 2024	Public	<p>Digital Innovation Strategy for Staffordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources (Ian Parry)</p> <p>Proposing a revitalised Digital Innovation Strategy for Staffordshire County Council, our submission outlines a comprehensive framework aimed at driving digital excellence to enhance our services, fostering inclusivity and building a smarter, more connected future for our community. With a focus on leveraging emerging technologies, this strategy seeks Cabinet approval to empower our community with efficient, accessible, and forward-thinking digital solutions.</p>	N/A	Lynsey Bissell (Tel: 07855 026263) Service Area: Corporate Services
17 July 2024	Public	<p>Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (Mark Sutton)</p> <p>An options paper will outline the current joint-commissioned children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing service in Staffordshire and provide options for the future commissioning of a children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing service, along with a preferred option / recommendation.</p>	Not sure yet	Natasha Moody (Tel: 07976 191079) Service Area: Families and Communities Commissioning Team
17 July 2024	Public	<p>Treasury Management Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources (Ian Parry)</p> <p>Outturn information for the County Council's Treasury Management service.</p>	N/A.	Melanie Stokes (Tel: 01785 276330) Service Area: Treasury and Pensions.

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