

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 21 October 2020

Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 2, 2020/21



Cllr Alan White, Leader of the Council said,

“Throughout the pandemic we have continued to support those who need us most, including the care sector, vulnerable families and local businesses.

We continue to do what we can and spend what is needed to control the virus, but we still need longer-term help from the Government to face issues such as funding adult social care and children’s and family services. This year, before the pandemic began, two-thirds of the council’s annual budget was allocated to providing to those two areas, but we see that costs continue to increase. We need the Government to work with us in finding a long-term sustainable solution.

We continue to support the care sector through the pandemic. By mid-August more than 3 million items of personal protective equipment (PPE) have been delivered to front line care staff. This has helped ensure every care home and care provider in Staffordshire has what it needs to care for the most vulnerable.

Ongoing work with schools throughout the summer has also helped ensure their safe opening for the new term with 92% of children in attendance during the first week. We will continue to work closely with schools and childcare providers to ensure education provision remains open as part of managing any local outbreaks.

We continue our efforts to control the spread of the virus. Our COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan continues to help contain local outbreaks. Preparations are now also underway for winter planning, with additional capacity being secured to deal with the increase in extra cases and potential second wave.

We have a huge amount of work to do to control Coronavirus and deal with the immediate economic and social consequences of this Spring’s lockdown and the ongoing restrictions on our lives. In the longer term I am confident that we can overcome this, but for now, we must all do our bit and follow the official advice to help reduce the spread of the virus.”



Cllr Mike Sutherland, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources said,

“Coping with the COVID-19 pandemic continues to put extra pressures on our finances, but we continue to manage them effectively and we will do what is needed and spend what is required.

At the end of Quarter 2, the overall assessment of our performance and financial position is amber with particular areas of risk in Adult Social Care and Children’s and Families. The latest revenue

forecast outturn shows a forecast overspend of £1.809m (0.3%) which is mostly due to the pandemic.

For Families & Communities there is a forecast overspend of £0.875m, a decrease of £1.7m since Quarter 1.

We are forecasting an overspend of just under £2m, mostly due to the effects of COVID-19. We have received extra government grant, which is welcome, but it is still a bit short compared to the overall financial impact this year. The financial impact of the pandemic in future years remains a serious concern.

By keeping our finances in a strong position, we will be able to invest in reigniting and renewing the economy through investment in skills and training and supporting businesses to adjust to a post COVID-19 world.

We will continue to manage all our finances effectively and to ensure we provide good value for money for local tax-payers.”

Report Summary:

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

Recommendation(s)

We recommend that:

- a. Cabinet notes and challenges performance and advises of any further information and/or action required.
- b. Cabinet approves the use of £0.384m of Contingency to fund part of the pay award as agreed, for 2020/21.

Local Members Interest
N/A

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Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 2, 2020/21

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

We recommend that:

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- b. Cabinet approves the use of £0.384m of Contingency to fund part of the pay award as agreed, for 2020/21.

Report of the Director of Corporate Services

1. Background

2. COVID-19 continues to have a significant impact both nationally and locally. All parts of Staffordshire County Council continue to progress work against their recovery priorities and wider service plans, considering the impact of the pandemic. This report provides a summary update on Quarter 2 key activities for each directorate area.
3. For further detail around the Council's approach to planning and recovery from COVID-19 please refer to Cabinet Paper "The Impact of COVID-19 on SCC Communities, Economy and Organisation – Update October 2020".

4. Summary



5. At the end of Quarter 2, the overall assessment on the Council's performance and financial position is amber. Significant progress has been made in the recovery of services and the organisation, whilst there are some areas of risk in Adult Social Care and Families and Communities. Further details are included within this report and its appendices. The latest revenue forecast outturn shows a forecast overspend of £1.809m (0.3%). This is mostly due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. Health and Care

7. Significant work has been underway in Health and Care's recovery of services and priorities.
8. The Council has developed and implemented a COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan to facilitate the effective management of outbreaks. To date early identification and prompt action has helped contain several recent outbreaks, including Stone, Burton and Silverdale.



9. COVID-19 cases in Staffordshire have been rising, following the national trend. In the 7 days up to 8th October, there were 922 cases of COVID-19 in Staffordshire, a rate of 104.8 per 100,000 population. This is lower than the regional and national rates (109.8 and 141.1 respectively). Preparations are well underway for winter planning, with additional capacity being secured to deal with the increase in cases and incidents and potential second wave of COVID-19. Residents can keep up to date with the latest case figures in Staffordshire, including a district breakdown by clicking [here](#).
10. Building on the “Rule of Six”, a number of updates to national Coronavirus restrictions were announced on 22nd September in a bid to stop the spread of COVID-19. In parts of Burton the number of cases has been rising, with further restrictions in addition to the national guidance, which can be viewed [here](#).
11. The NHS COVID-19 app and QR check-in launched on 24th September in England and Wales. This means that certain premises, including council-run venues, will be legally required to display NHS QR code posters. The Council has been working closely with partners to make sure that venues across Staffordshire are prepared ahead of the roll-out. Staffordshire residents are now being urged to download the NHS COVID-19 app to aid effective contact tracing.
12. By mid-August more than 3 million items of personal protective equipment (PPE) have been delivered by the Council to front line care staff, social workers and other roles in direct contact. This has helped ensure every care home and care provider in Staffordshire has what it needs to care for the most vulnerable. Ongoing work to source further PPE supplies continues, in the event of future outbreaks causing further shortages.
13. During the height of the pandemic the creation of a shortened assessment for care and support was introduced, which led to a backlog of Care Act assessments and reviews. During this quarter, significant progress has led to all backlogs now being cleared.
14. However, in the adults’ safeguarding service an increase in its waiting list is currently being experienced, largely due to increased demand and reduced capacity. In response to this, plans have been put in place for Adult Social Care teams to prioritise the work for completion, whilst ongoing transformation work is seeking to identify future capacity requirements.
15. The Council’s Supportive Communities programme continues to be expanded as a result of the rise of volunteering and community action during the pandemic. Staffordshire County Council and Support Staffordshire joined forces to develop and implement a digital solution for community volunteering, called ‘Do It-Staffordshire’. This was launched in August and by the end of September over 500 volunteers had signed up to the site, with the aim of achieving 1,000 by the end of October 2020.
16. The Council’s Public Health & Prevention Strategy has also been refreshed, with a £750,000 investment programme agreed to mitigate the ongoing public health risks from COVID-19, such as obesity, mental ill health and addiction. Initial

investment will focus on delivering a newly launched #DoingOurBit Community Grant fund, expansion of stop smoking service for up to an additional 1,500 residents and the launch of a new workplace health scheme.

17. Ensuring care market resilience has continued to be a key part of recovery operations. The Council provides ongoing support to care providers with infection prevention and control to help prevent and manage outbreaks. Furthermore, a review of future care market capacity has commenced to better understand the requirements of the care sector in the context of COVID-19. Alternative models to building based day services and replacement care have also been trialled, where appropriate.
18. Within the service much work has been done to embrace the learning from the Council's response to the pandemic. More agile and flexible working practices has been required, with virtual social work practice now being embedded where appropriate. In particular, video and telephone social care assessments and reviews routinely continue to help prevent the spread of infection to vulnerable people. Other improved ways of working include the extension of the First Contact role in completing assessments quickly and effectively.
19. Further work is planned to resume pre-COVID work, such as delivery against the targeted reviews programme to ensure people continue to receive the appropriate level of support. In addition, work is underway with NHS colleagues to improve the urgent care pathway by identifying the right hospital discharge options for people, whilst maximising the opportunities offered from assistive technology and growing community capacity.
20. From a Finance perspective, the Health and Care forecast outturn at Quarter 2 is a saving of £0.878m. There remains a range of high risk Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) savings within this area, with the directorate seeking alternative savings where necessary. In addition, the level of client debt is above target and work is ongoing to recover this. The forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £26.385m. The longer-term financial impact of COVID-19 is not yet clear but will undoubtedly affect the MTFS in future years.

21. Families and Communities



22. Both recovery and day to day service activity continue to take place across the service. Ongoing work with schools has helped ensure the safe opening of schools into the summer and to prepare for a full re-opening to all pupils in September, with 92% of children in attendance during the first week. Moving forwards a key focus of our activity will be to work with schools and childcare providers to ensure education provision remains open, as part of managing any local outbreaks.
23. Funding from Department for Education has been awarded, up to £469,000, to place social workers in schools, as part of a trial scheme to embed social work practice within these settings. This will help social workers in the early identification of risks and ability to offer support to young people and families. Staffordshire is

one of just 21 local authorities selected for the extended national trial, which will run from September until summer 2021.

24. Work has also continued to implement an Emotional Wellbeing in Schools programme. The Department for Education (DfE) and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) have funded approximately £180,000 to support schools with the emotional impact of COVID-19. Funding is being used to better equip schools and colleges to promote emotional wellbeing, including delivery of appropriate training and ongoing advice and support.
25. In September 2020, the number of Staffordshire Children in our Care increased slightly to 1,250 from 1,246 in July 2020. This increase is partially due to court delays caused by COVID-19. The current rate is 74 per 10,000, higher than the national benchmark (65 per 10,000 in 2019) but lower than regional (83.6 per 10,000 at end of June). The number of children subject of a Child Protection Plan is 700 and has remained relatively stable for the previous 9 months, with a current rate of 41 per 10,000. This is in line with the most recent national benchmark (41 per 10,000 in 2019) and lower than the regional rate (47.9 per 10,000 at the end of March).
26. Work on transforming the Children's system has restarted, specifically the development of a proposed district model and pathways and processes for support. The SEND transformation has been considered a priority and therefore continued throughout the pandemic. Governance arrangements have been revised, with the creation of a new countywide Inclusion and SEND Partnership Group, who met for the first time in August, to oversee and shape this area of work. SEND public engagement restarted in the summer, using online methods, with public consultation planned for the Autumn. Findings will be used to inform the development of a Staffordshire SEND strategy. A full progress report is being considered by Cabinet in November 2020.
27. Furthermore, considerable progress has been made to address the timeliness and backlog of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Dedicated resource, improved data reporting and adjustments to processes has resulted in 70% of the EHCP backlog being cleared. This has led to 33% of all EHC Plans being issued within 20 weeks, up from 13% in January 2020. Improvements in timeliness can also be seen for the issuing of new EHCPs, with 86% of plans completed within the 20-week timescale.
28. During 21st to 25th September Private Fostering Week was held, highlighting the vital support available to private foster carers in Staffordshire, as part of our role in helping to keep children safe. This support ranges from advice and support for parents, training, benefits advice and helping to bring families in crisis back together.
29. Children's Centres have recommenced childcare provision, including resuming Family Time as a key priority for supporting Children in our Care. The creation of Family Hubs in each District is providing much needed additional support, including working with partners to deliver over 4,000 survival kits to families most in need. In

addition, the Hubs have helped administer the £800,00 Defra Emergency Food Scheme to ensure families in need have access to food supplies.

30. Following the easing of lockdown restrictions, key community assets have begun to reopen across the county. Archives and Heritage services and all countryside sites and car parks have fully reopened. All 43 libraries have also reopened, and a reduced mobile library service is also operational. All Council managed libraries are offering PC access and managed browsing.
31. Despite COVID-19 restrictions, the Council's Library Service has also taken part in the annual Summer Reading Challenge aimed at children aged 4-11 years. At the start of September over 1,100 children across the county had signed up to the challenge. Staffordshire Archives and Heritage Service also launched a new project called 'Lockdown Memories', with the aim of creating a lasting record of people's experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown.
32. In terms of the financial position at Quarter 2, for Families & Communities there is a forecast overspend of £0.875m, a decrease of £1.7m since Quarter 1. While the directorate continues to face pressures as a result of the non-delivery of prior year savings, at this time it is considered these can be mitigated through savings across service. In response to COVID-19 further overspends of £6.799m are forecast as a result of non-delivery of savings, as well as additional exceptional costs and lost income.

33. Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

34. An immediate focus of recovery has been to maintain service delivery and provide support where required. As the easing of lockdown restrictions continue, much work has been done to monitor and adjust operational arrangements, for example House Waste Recycling Centres have returned customer service and visits to pre-COVID levels.
35. The Council has also worked closely with local District and Borough Councils across the county, assisting them with plans to safely re-open town centres for business. This joint working, alongside Staffordshire County Council's infrastructure planning, enables the Council to maximise the impact of available Government funding for Staffordshire.
36. The Council continues to support local businesses to survive, adapt and continue to operate as part of delivering its 5-year Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation Strategy.



37. Businesses across Staffordshire have continued to be supported by the Council and its partners through a range of targeted initiatives to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. Some specific examples include:

- Creation of a Redundancy and Recruitment Triage Service and County Wide Task Group to support businesses and individuals affected by large-scale redundancies. Potential demands on this service could increase as a result of furlough ending and a transition to the new Job Support Scheme.
- Emergency Grant Scheme funding has safeguarded 226 local businesses. Funding also helped micro-businesses with 1,700 PPE Start Back Packs to help restart with confidence.
- £360,000 fund for start-up businesses.

38. This support continues to be critical, with the latest out-of-work claimant figures standing at 5.1% of the local population, an increase from 4.9% or 1,015 claimants, between July 2020 and August 2020. Despite these increases claimant rates in Staffordshire remain lower than both the regional (7.4%) and national (6.6%) averages. The proportion of young claimants, aged 18-24, has increased from 3.7% in March 2020 to 8.3% in August 2020, with 'A Plan for Jobs 2020' initiatives such as the Kickstart Scheme being put in place to support Staffordshire's young people's employment prospects.

39. During Quarter 2 the Council successfully secured £10.85m investment from the Government's 'Getting Building Fund' for shovel ready and accelerated development projects, including off site access infrastructure to Drakelow Park, the delivery of the i54 Western Extension and the regeneration of Shire Hall in Stafford, among others.

40. Significant work has taken place to prepare for the full re-opening of Schools to all pupils in September. The Council's Active Travel team has worked with schools to produce 400 School Active Travel Plans to help manage congestion and safety. The Council has also successfully worked with operators to increase network capacity for those non-eligible pupils.

41. The Council's Skills Team has supported all local colleges, training providers and universities with plans to reopen safely in September, including a blended learning offer. A key positive this quarter is Keele University and Staffordshire University have both been shortlisted for the Times Higher Education Awards 2020, University of the Year category. The awards demonstrate the county's growing reputation as a prime location for innovation and investment.

42. In response to feedback from residents and Councillors a £2 million investment, on top of the £5 million already allocated by the Council, will be made to improving problem road drains, gully emptying, additional roadside grass cutting at the end of this summer and the start of the 2021 season, and more road sweeping and weed control. The Council will also be working with landowners, or taking direct action where necessary, to make improvements to problem ditches and overhanging trees that they have responsibility for. This investment will allow the

organisation to target some of the worst trouble spots and reduce the overall backlog.

43. Further work is planned to resume pre-COVID projects and programmes, such as Enterprise Centre expansion leading to more local jobs, mineral and waste site inspections, Farms Investment Programme and flood risk management programme, where access to sites has not been possible.
44. The financial position at Quarter 2 for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills is a forecast saving of £0.134m, which represents a reduction of £0.499m since Quarter 1. On top of this, the forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £4.684m, which is a reduction of £2.550m since Quarter 1.

45. Corporate Services



46. Corporate Services is providing vital support to the Council's priority areas of recovery.

47. A significant amount of corporate support has been provided to Local Outbreak Control in the effective identification and management of outbreaks. Customer Services have completed over 1,500 local contact tracing calls to potential contacts of positive cases to help facilitate the containment of outbreaks. In addition, dedicated data and analytical support, has and continues to be core to spotting outbreaks and incidents early, to ensure action is taken to prevent the spread of the virus and protect residents. This includes the development and management of interactive dashboards that brings together a range of key COVID-19 datasets.

48. The Council's Registration Services has significantly amended their processes and methods of engagement as part of the response to COVID-19. Since mid-June, registration services have successfully addressed the backlog of birth registrations resulting from the national lockdown and accommodated approximately 1000 marriage ceremony moves to a future date. Face to face appointments are now also available across Staffordshire for both births and marriage preliminaries, with death registrations continuing to be carried out by telephone.
49. COVID-19 has also delivered new challenges that have required involvement from Legal Services. This service has directly supported the organisation's recovery priorities, alongside carrying out their usual business of supporting vulnerable children and adults and other legal proceedings.
50. In Corporate Services the financial position at Quarter 2 is a forecast saving of £0.372m, however there is a forecast overspend in HR, which is non-delivery of 2019/20 MTFS savings, offset by a saving in ICT and Business Support. The change from the breakeven position reported at Quarter 1 is largely due to vacancies in the Commercial and Property Teams. At Quarter 2 the impact of COVID-19 is £4.857m, representing an increase of £2.104m from Quarter 1. This significant increase in the forecast is PPE in preparation for local outbreaks and a potential second wave.

51. Strategic Plan Principles

52. Recovery plans that cut across all service areas is being led through recovery groups linked to the Council's Strategic Plan Principles – Communities, Digital, Workforce and Climate Change. A summary of progress against these is set out below.

53. Communities

54. To build on our Communities approach, a new £200,000 #DoingourBit Community Grants fund was launched in September and is available to all voluntary and community groups working with vulnerable residents, particularly older people and children and families. Individual grants will be awarded in November 2020.

55. As part of the Council's response to COVID-19 the county Councillors' Members Fund was refocused for 2020/21 to provide emergency support to communities. Following a successful first phase it was agreed to extend the fund for a second tranche, seeing a further investment of £2,000 per Member. As at 23rd September 2020, the total amount paid or currently being funded to community groups to support vulnerable residents and community recovery is £152,180.

56. In August the Council also launched its COVID-19 Resident Survey, encouraging all sections of the community to participate. Following closure of the survey on 13th September 2020, a total of 3,775 Staffordshire residents gave their views on the impact of the pandemic and priorities for recovery. Findings are being analysed and will be used to inform both the Council's recovery and business planning activities.

57. A key focus for this quarter has been to identify learning from our response to COVID-19, and how this can be sustained. A set of recommendations has now been developed and is being used to inform Council change programmes and a refresh of the Communities Delivery Plan for finalisation in November. The Communities Recovery Group continues to work with partners, members and the Communities Leadership Group to mitigate identified risks for communities as a result of COVID-19.

58. Digital

59. Despite COVID-19 challenges, the Council continues to develop an ambitious Digital Strategy and Programme of work for 2020/21 onwards. Significant progress has been made, working with colleagues and Cabinet Members, to reset the priorities and agree key projects for delivery. Both the Digital Strategy and Programme will be discussed and agreed by Cabinet in November 2020.

60. Digital has been a key element of the response to COVID-19, providing the Council with opportunities to transform its future operations. One example within Adult Social Care is the embedding of virtual social work practice. Remote working has also resulted in the rapid rollout of Microsoft Teams across the organisation, enabling the workforce to remain agile and flexible in their day to day work.

61. Climate Change

62. Key activities this quarter include the ongoing work of the Climate Change Working Group to agree and prioritise key climate change activities for the next 12 months, to inform an action plan for delivery across the Council.

63. Furthermore, a baseline organisational carbon assessment has recently been developed and finalised. This baseline is helping the Council to understand where it needs to target efforts, to inform a 5-year action plan to deliver carbon reductions.

64. The council has secured some national funding to help deliver the Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, with further funding opportunities coming up that could help to advance this agenda further and contribute to the carbon neutral agenda.

65. Workforce

66. As part of resetting the Council's People Strategy priorities, a key focus this quarter has been on the easing of lockdown and supporting the organisation respond to new ways of working. The Council launched its iManage offer to help manage capability and ongoing appraisals, as well as its digital learning platform, iLearn, to all employees.

67. Council buildings have been made COVID-19 secure and teams are being supported to return to the office where necessary. The HR function has also supported home working arrangements, with a recent survey of its employees generating over 1,400 responses on their views and experiences of remote working.

68. One positive outcome of the COVID-19 response has been a significant reduction in sickness absence levels, currently 10.68 days lost per employee (August 2020), representing a reduction of 10% from the same period last year. Long term absence still accounts for nearly three-quarters of all days lost. Of particular note is the reduction of psychological absences, currently 2.74 days lost per employee, a reduction of 18% from last year.

List of Appendices:

1. Finance Quarter 2 Summary
2. Finance Quarter 2 Detailed Report
3. Corporate Checklist
4. Revenue Forecast Outturn 2020/21
5. Capital Forecast Outturn 2020/21
6. Financial Health Indicators 2020/21

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