

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 20 October 2021

Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 2, 2021/22



Cllr Alan White, Leader of the Council said,

“Dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic remains our focus and we continue to do what is required to control the spread of the virus and keep people safe.

“COVID-19 is still very much with us and over Quarter 2 we have seen a steady increase in the number of cases. The impact that COVID-19 can have on lives and potentially on livelihoods is still very real. The vaccine has been a game changer and in Staffordshire 82% of adults have had both vaccines. Maximising vaccine uptake amongst those eligible, including booster doses and extending vaccine roll out to children aged 12 to 15, will all help to reduce the spread. As we approach autumn and then winter, we need to continue to keep people safe, keep the economy moving and reduce the pressures on our hospitals.

“We still face capacity issues and challenges in adult social care but in September, we had the long-awaited announcement from Government on how this will be funded. While many people will welcome the cap of £86,000 on people’s contribution to their own care when they are elderly, the introduction of a 1.25% health and care levy on working people will be a difficult pill for many to swallow. In the short term the money will go into the NHS to clear the backlog of appointments and operations and will increase the county council’s costs. So, we need to see more detail of how these proposals will work in practice.

“We will continue to support those who need us most, including the care sector and vulnerable families, children and communities. We continue to provide advice and support for businesses, as we work to get our economy back on track. We have plans in place to ensure we bounce back stronger and generate new opportunities for better jobs, improved lives, and a greener county for everyone.”



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

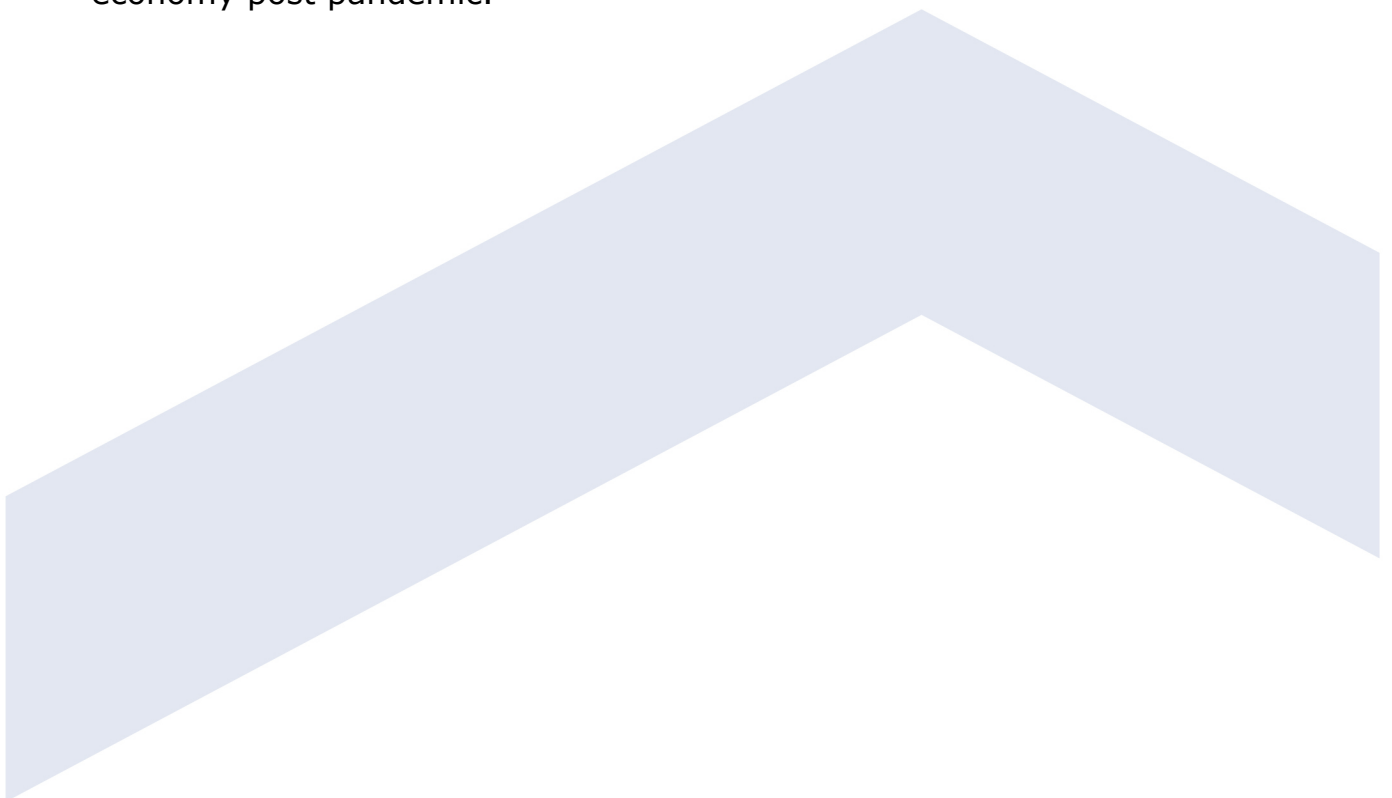
“Coping with the COVID-19 pandemic continues to put extra pressures on our finances, but we continue to manage them effectively and are doing what is needed and spending what is required.

“We have used the extra funding and grants from Government to help support the additional pressures of continuing to provide vital services while protecting our residents. All council departments continue to deliver against their recovery priorities, whilst progressing with activities in the organisation’s Delivery Plan.

“The latest revenue forecast outturn shows a forecast saving of £1.992m (0.4%). This is compared to the previous forecast of a saving of £8.119m (1.5%) at Quarter 1.

“Like many local authorities, we still face financial challenges including in adult social care and in children’s social services. We have had the announcement from Government on the long-term funding of adult social care, which was good to see, but we do need to see more details of how this will work in practice.

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



Report Summary:

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

Recommendation

We recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Notes and challenges performance and advises of any further information and/or action required.
- b. Approve the use of up to £3.2m of the Exit and Transition Fund to support the cost of redundancies associated with the Children's Transformation programme.



Local Members Interest
N/A

Cabinet – Wednesday 20 October 2021

Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 2, 2021/22

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

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- b. Approve the use of up to £3.2m of the Exit and Transition Fund to support the cost of redundancies associated with the Children's Transformation programme.

Report of the Director for Corporate Services

Background

1. All parts of Staffordshire County Council continue to deliver against key service priorities, whilst also progressing with the activities outlined in the organisation's Delivery Plan. This report provides an update on Quarter 2 activities for each service area: Health and Care; Families and Communities; Economy, Infrastructure and Skills; and Corporate Services.


2. Summary



3. At the end of Quarter 2 the overall assessment on the council's performance and financial position is AMBER. Although significant progress has been made across the organisation during the quarter, challenges remain in relation to capacity and demand across all service areas. There continue to be areas of financial risk in Adult Social Care and Families and Communities, with further details included within this report and its appendices. The latest revenue forecast outturn shows a forecast saving of £1.992m (0.4%). This is compared to the previous forecast of a saving of £8.119m (1.5%) at Quarter 1.

4. Health and Care

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
Amber	Green

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1. Significant progress has been made across Health and Care in Quarter 2, both in leading the council's response to COVID-19 and exiting lockdown plans, and in the recovery of key adult social care services. The AMBER delivery rating reflects considerable progress made to date, whilst continuing to manage some key challenges. Following the national trend, there continues to be high demand for adult social care assessments, leading to capacity issues, with work underway to understand and respond to this demand. The home care market is also experiencing rising demand, compounded by recruitment and retention challenges. The GREEN finance rating reflects significant in-year underspend, despite longer term cost pressures.
 2. Demand and capacity continue to have been exacerbated by COVID-19, leaving more people needing extra support in their homes and more staff required to provide it. As the local economy has been re-opening, care providers have experienced an increase in staff turnover, which has led to some people having to wait longer for less urgent care packages. To tackle these issues, the council is maximising the effective use of available capacity, incentivising take-up of packages of care and working with care providers to support recruitment. Details of vacancies can be found at [Nexus](#) or through the [national portal](#).
 3. In addition to existing recruitment and retention issues, COVID-19 has also permanently increased costs in social care due to requirements for enhanced infection prevention and control. These pressures have been met short term by non-recurrent funding from Government, but the council will need to continue to lobby for a sustainable longer-term settlement.
 4. The care home market in Staffordshire will be reviewed to ensure the council can continue to offer quality care, value for money and timely access to care in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. A paper to the council's Cabinet has outlined the important role care homes have played throughout the pandemic, and the impact it has had on the care home market.
 5. The number of COVID-19 cases in Staffordshire have continued to rise during Quarter 2, following national and regional trends. In the seven days to 7th October, 4,524 cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in

Staffordshire, a rate of 512.2 per 100,000 population. This was higher than both the regional rate (414.0) and the national rate (355.3). Residents can keep up to date with the latest case figures in Staffordshire, including a district breakdown by clicking [here](#).


6. During Quarter 2, the council has continued its response to COVID-19 through Local Outbreak Control activity, including:
 - a. Management of COVID-19 incidents and outbreaks.
 - b. Flexible and targeted testing facilities to support the asymptomatic testing model and the NHS vaccination programme. Staffordshire has made good progress with the vaccination programme with 87% of the adult population having received their first dose and nearly 82% having received two doses as at 17th September.
 - c. The distribution of c.£1.5m of Infection Control Fund grant to 324 care services (as at 15th September 2021) to support providers to maintain enhanced infection control measures to reduce COVID-19 transmission in care settings.
 - d. The distribution of c.£1m of Rapid Testing Fund grant to 198 care homes (as at 15th September 2021) to support providers to maintain ongoing testing arrangement for staff and residents.
7. Work is ongoing to deliver the council's Public Health & Prevention plan, with a focus on mitigating the ongoing public health risks from COVID-19. Recent activity includes a conference around mental health and physical activity by 'TogetherActive' to address mental health/suicide prevention in sports settings; exploring NHS Health Check options in the workplace; developing the latest Stoptober communications campaign that will run during September/October (including targeting businesses using LinkedIn); and engaging with Parish Councils to help tackle loneliness and isolation.
8. In Staffordshire there has been an increase in referrals to the National Diabetes Prevention Programme, despite a decline nationally. As a result, NHS England is promoting the Staffordshire model as good practice.
9. The council with partners has been working collaboratively since March to tackle the impact of the operations at Walleys Quarry. A Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) of Staffordshire Resilience Forum agencies has been established and they continue to work on a range of tasks including further preparations of forthcoming engagement events, scenario planning, communications work, and monitoring of the wider situation. The SCG partners have committed to holding two further public engagement events in October. Additional mental health support is also being offered to residents aged 16 and over who live or work near the

site and are experiencing emotional distress owing to the odours from the site.

10. The next phase of the #TalkSuicide campaign was launched to coincide with World Suicide Prevention Day on Friday 10th September. It aims to raise awareness of the issue and to make it easier for people to talk about it. Sadly 10 lives are lost to suicide each month across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, with the highest suicide rate in the area being men in their 40's and 50's. People can find out more about the campaign at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/talksuicide.
11. The extension of the Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential supplies scheme, in conjunction with the Energy Saving Trust, has enabled a further 500 households to access emergency support with their energy bills. The learning taken from the Winter 2020 scheme will enable improved planning for the coming winter to further support families who may continue to struggle with the end of the furlough scheme.
12. The council was recognised by the National MJ Achievement Awards 2021 in September; with two finalists in the categories of Corporate Director of the Year and Public Health Improvement, for the Supportive Communities Programme. Dr Richard Harling, Director for Health and Care, was a finalist for Corporate Director of the Year for being a supportive and innovative leader and bringing people together to work in partnership to strengthen the council's pandemic response. The Supportive Communities team was a finalist for the programme's community-based approach to health and wellbeing, as well as its important role in supporting the response to the pandemic.
13. From a Finance perspective, the Health and Care forecasted outturn at Quarter 2 is a saving of £1.012m, compared to a £5m saving in Quarter 1. There remains a range of high risk Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) savings within this area, with the directorate seeking alternative savings where necessary. In addition, the level of client debt is above target and work is ongoing to recover this. The forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £4.367m.

14. Families and Communities

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
Amber	Amber

15. Significant progress has been made across the Families and Communities service area in Quarter 2. The overall AMBER performance ratings reflect much work that has taken place during the quarter, balanced with managing some key issues. Staffordshire has been experiencing a rise in children in care demand, as well as capacity challenges associated with the implementation of a large-scale children's system workforce structure to help tackle demand. In addition, increasing cost pressures within Children in Care and the SEND High Needs Block (Dedicated Schools Grant deficit) has potential to impact on the delivery of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. 
16. The Children's Transformation programme is key to tackling the challenges of demand and capacity, particularly in relation to Children in our Care. Work to progress the transformation continues across the service, including the new district operating model set to go live in October 2021, supported by a new workforce structure and some streamlined pathways and processes. Work also continues on the SEND transformation with its first workstream, aimed at ensuring a more consistent approach to data, process and improvement, now underway. Phasing of further transformation is currently being planned in line with the recruitment of key vacant leadership roles.
17. At the 24th September 2021, there were 1,252 children in care in Staffordshire; which represents a reduction in September but an overall increase compared to the Quarter 1 position (1,245) and slightly higher than the revised business case number. The rate is 73.1 per 10,000 which is higher than the most recent national benchmark (67 per 10,000 – Nov 2020) but lower than regional (85.6 per 10,000 at end of June 2020).
18. At the 24th September 2021, the number of children subject of a child protection plan was 569 (33.4 per 10,000); which is a reduction compared to the Quarter 1 position (576) and remains below the most recent national and regional benchmarks. (National - 43 per 10,000 at the end of December 2020, Regional – 43.5 at the end of June 2020).
19. More detailed work is also being undertaken to better understand the children exiting care population in Staffordshire as part of the Newton project, which is a wider study that the council has been approached to be involved in as part of the county council network. Six local authorities are taking part, with findings helping the council to understand local context as well as national challenges and learning.
20. In Quarter 2, the council achieved successful outcomes for a further 309 families through the Building Resilient Families and Communities (BRFC)

programme, which combined with the 316 successful outcomes achieved in Quarter 1 is already 76% of the annual target for 2021/22 (817) set by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). If current performance is maintained the council is on track to exceed this target.

21. Families needing help will benefit from a county wide support network under new proposals. Cabinet agreed in September to build on its existing 'early years' delivery to support families with children aged up to 18 years old – or to 25 in the case of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The 'Family Hub' network will build upon existing children's centres and be based in the community to provide practical support. The proposals for the hub will go out to consultation later this year and will include joint working across different agencies and voluntary sector groups so that people only tell their story once.
22. All Staffordshire schools reopened following the summer break, with COVID-19 testing completed on site. The council will be supporting schools, young people, and parents, working with the local NHS to roll out the vaccinations for 12-15-year olds and minimise disruption for pupils. The vaccinations themselves will be delivered by the same nursing teams who carry out flu vaccinations in schools during the Autumn term.
23. Funding to create new school places and improve existing provision for children with SEND is being made available to Staffordshire schools. An additional £2.4 million has been made available by the Department for Education to support the council's five-year SEND strategy. Staffordshire currently has more than 6,300 children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP). From January 2021 to September (17th) 2021, 84% of EHC plans have been issued in time in Staffordshire; this is above the most recent national average of 61%.
24. Many Afghan families who helped British Forces have been placed in short-term accommodation in Newcastle-under-Lyme by the Home Office, until they are offered permanent homes around the country. The council alongside other local public services and the NHS are supporting these families with health, education, and other needs, and have also been inundated with offers of support from the community. A JustGiving page has been set up in partnership with local charity the Community Foundation for Staffordshire, to take donations that will be used to buy clothes, children's toys, and other essential items.
25. The Trading Standards team continues to support businesses and the council through safeguarding and compliance advice. Between April and August 2021, the team has dealt with over 6,400 engagements and

interventions with businesses; with over £320,000 prevented from being lost to scams and fraud through the council's intervention.

26. Work is ongoing to deliver the council's 2021/22 Communities Delivery Plan which aims to promote social action in local communities and to build capacity in the voluntary and community sector. The final quarter of Year 5 of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Strategic Capacity Building Partnership Contract (April – June 2021) saw 225 organisations provided with one to one development support, c.£3.7m external funding secured by VCSE organisations (c.£2.8m of this was for COVID-19 related projects and support) and 60 individuals supported to access local volunteering opportunities. A delivery plan for Year 6 (the final year) of the contract has also been developed and agreed with commissioners and providers.
27. In terms of the financial position at Quarter 2 for Families & Communities, there is a forecast overspend of £1.657m, an increase of £2.6m since Quarter 1, reflecting the rise in the number of Children in our Care and the need for placements. The forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £8.410m.

28. **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills**

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
Green	Green

29. Economy, Infrastructure and Skills is currently on track in terms of both Delivery and Finance in Quarter 2. The overall GREEN performance ratings reflect considerable progress made across the service against its key plans, whilst continuing to respond to a number of ongoing challenges.



30. Work continues to bring day-to-day management and running of Staffordshire's Household Waste Recycling Centres back in-house. Governance arrangements are in place and a range of project plans are in development for key elements of the service. A Dynamic Purchasing System (procurement system for material off takers) and haulage tender (solution for haulage from operational take over) are both live. Residents will see no difference when the changeover happens in 2022, although there are plans to improve facilities and encourage more advanced recycling methods.
31. The council continues to support local businesses to survive, adapt and continue to operate as part of delivering its 5-year Staffordshire Means Back to Business Strategy. A key part is ensuring the right conditions for

growth in Staffordshire's town centres, particularly as they recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Working in partnership with Stafford Borough Council, Cabinet has agreed to invest in the Stafford Future High Street Fund proposals which will regenerate parts of Stafford town centre as well as delivering improvements to the Market Square and other surrounding streets. This builds on the investment to create new enterprise space at the Shire Hall. The Eastgate Regeneration scheme is also moving forward. The demolition of the former Magistrate Court and Probation Services building will make way for longer term development and improve links between the Riverside retail development and the town centre.

32. Businesses across Staffordshire have continued to be supported by the council and its partners through a range of targeted initiatives, to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19. Some specific examples are included below.
33. The Countywide Redundancy Task Group, in partnership with the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP) and partners, continues to meet fortnightly providing support to businesses and residents impacted in relation to redundancies, as well as implementing the wider Plan for Jobs programmes such as Kickstart, Restart, and promoting Sector-based Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs). To date the group has supported 1,926 individuals, with 35% moving into a positive outcome at the point of intervention.
34. Staffordshire Start-Up Loan scheme is assisting those made redundant or unemployed to start up new businesses with loans of between £3,000 and £5,000, with no interest or fees. As at 2nd September 2021, 10 start-up businesses supported through the scheme. Furthermore, the new Staffordshire Start-Up course (delivered through Staffordshire Chamber) is ongoing with 263 businesses signed up to the course by the 20th August.
35. As part of the £5m [Staffordshire Means Back to Business Support Scheme](#), the council's Ignite Programme was launched earlier in the year; it is a programme of free advice, workshops, mentoring and support for post-16 further education students looking to set up their own business in Staffordshire. During Quarter 2 the Ignite business start-up session was delivered to 7,000 further education students.
36. Work continues to deliver the council's apprenticeship programme. The Staffordshire Apprenticeship 500 initiative began on 1st April 2021 and at the end of August had received 87 applications, resulting in a possible 147 apprenticeship starts.

37. The latest out-of-work claimant figures have decreased to 3.8% of the working age population in August 2021, continuing the downward trend seen since February 2021. Whilst Staffordshire has previously been experiencing a rise in claimant numbers due to COVID-19, the county's position remains well below regional (6.3%) and national (5.3%) averages. The proportion of young claimants, aged 18-24, has increased from 3.7% in March 2020 to 5.7% in August 2021, with 'A Plan for Jobs 2020' initiatives such as the Kickstart Scheme being put in place to support Staffordshire's young people's employment prospects, to help prevent them becoming long-term unemployed.
38. Staffordshire's Economic Growth Programme, which began in 2014, has continued to create and safeguard jobs and enable house builds. As at end of July 2021, 10,421 jobs have been created/safeguarded and 4,076 new houses enabled.
39. In August, the 60-acre first phase of the i54 Western Extension was completed within the programmed period despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and poor weather. Progress has also been made with the Lichfield Southern Bypass (LSB) and Stafford Western Access Route (SWAR), with the former scheduled to open in October 2021 and the latter in November 2021.
40. Following recent changes to Government guidance, the council is currently reviewing its discretionary Temporary Vacant Seat Scheme, with a six-week public engagement exercise underway. This is set to run until midday on the 12th October 2021, with proposals being considered and a final decision to be taken after this date.
41. In September the council released its Climate Change Annual Report 2020/21 that described the steps it has taken to reduce its carbon emissions. The report highlights a significant 25% reduction in the council's carbon emissions in the first year since a climate change emergency had been declared. This has been achieved mainly by transferring all corporate council buildings, maintained schools, streetlights, and traffic signals to run on renewable energy.
42. Furthermore, the council also published its draft (2021-2025) Climate Change Action Plan which was reviewed by the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee and will be presented to Cabinet in October 2021. The document outlines how the council aims to continue to make progress towards the nationally set net zero target of 2050. The plan includes proposed actions such as increasing electric vehicle charging points across the county, improving the energy efficiency of all council owned buildings, looking into carbon offsetting options for areas such as disposal household waste, which are going to be impossible to eliminate.

43. Working with the council’s Active Travel Team, Heath Hayes Primary Academy in Cannock and St Edwards CofE Academy in Leek have both won the Regional School Travel Awards for their work promoting greener travel and combatting air pollution outside their schools. The awards are given to schools who have demonstrated excellence in supporting sustainable travel. Both schools are involved with the Staffordshire County Council’s Air Aware Project to raise awareness of air pollution and to encourage less polluting and more sustainable journeys.
44. A successful 12-month trial to bring sustainable transport to Stafford and Newcastle-Under-Lyme through electric scooter hire came to an end in September. Since the trial started in September 2020, the council has been working with its transport partner Amey and electric scooter providers Ginger and Zwings to trial 200 micro mobility e-scooters in the towns, with over 40,000 rides taken across the county. The council and partners are now working together to bring an electric bike rental scheme to Staffordshire in the coming months.
45. The financial position at Quarter 2 for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills is a forecast saving of £0.367m, compared to a saving of £0.137m in Quarter 1, with small forecast savings across the service. The forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £2.033m.

46. Corporate Services

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
Green	Green

47. Corporate Services is currently on track in terms of both Delivery and Finance in Quarter 2 and continues to provide vital support to the organisation in delivering on its priorities, as well as significant activity in support of Local Outbreak Control. Whilst the overall GREEN performance ratings reflect a great deal of activity that has taken place to progress its plans, like other service areas it continues to manage challenges regarding capacity to deliver some of its day to day work.



48. Over the next two years the council aims to raise £17m through the sale of unused land and buildings to fund transformation of services and activity, in line with new Government regulation. To date the council has delivered c.£7m in year through the sale of eight assets, including farms. In addition, all work on the council’s priority property projects is progressing well and on track to deliver, including an additional c.£5million to support the school’s maintenance programme. There does

however remain procurement issues associated with many construction materials; an issue that is also being experienced nationally.

49. The Member's Fund for this year was launched at a Members event on June 24th. The fund is still linked to COVID-19; however, it now has a broader 'recovery' remit. The fund will focus on supporting community groups that are thinking about their future offer, who they work with, and how they fundraise / stay sustainable following COVID-19. As at 8th October, 84 applications for funding had been received for funding across Staffordshire.
50. Digital inclusion remains a key priority and work is continuing to address barriers to this in Staffordshire. More than 100 devices have been donated as part of 'Donate IT' Digital Device Recycling Scheme and these are now being distributed to people who are at risk of digital exclusion in the county.
51. Over the last quarter, work has continued on the roll out of the new Staffordshire story and place brand. This has included the launch of a dedicated ambassador portal within the "We Are Staffordshire" website, with almost 80 ambassadors now registered, and a partnership project with Staffordshire University Business School to engage young people in "We Are Staffordshire" key projects.
52. Work to deliver the council's internal People Strategy is ongoing. The council's new Employer Brand, aimed at attracting and retaining talented people in the council's workforce, is now live. Wellbeing of the workforce also remains a key priority, with the development of a new Wellbeing strategy agreed during Quarter 2 in preparation for implementation from October 2021.
53. An outcome of the COVID-19 response has been a significant reduction in sickness absence levels; currently 9.85 days (2.59 days short term, 7.26 days long term) lost per employee (August 2021), representing a reduction of 7.7% from the same period last year (2.74 days short term, 7.93 days long term). However, with the easing of lockdown, the council has seen a slight increase in absence levels. Absences relating to diagnosed/suspected cases of COVID-19 account for 1.19 days lost per employee over this period (12% of total), but this has been outweighed by improvements against most other absence reasons. Of note is the reduction in musculoskeletal absences, currently 1.57 days lost per employee, a reduction of 15% from last year.
54. In Corporate Services the financial position at Quarter 2 is a forecast saving of £0.9m, compared to a saving of £0.325m in Quarter 1. This is largely due to staffing vacancies and increased incomes. The forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £0.486m.

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- Appendix 4 - Revenue Forecast Outturn 2021/22
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