

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 16 February 2022

Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 3, 2021/22



Cllr Alan White, Leader of the Council said,

“Dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic remains a challenge and we continue to do what is required to control the spread of the virus and keep people safe. The vaccine programme has been a game changer and as of January 2022, in Staffordshire 88% of people over 18 have had their first dose, 86% have had two doses and 71% have had the booster.

“We continue to do what is necessary to support those who need us most, including vulnerable residents, the care sector, local communities and businesses.

“Growing our economy, creating better quality jobs, and supporting local businesses with their recovery through the Staffordshire Means Back to Business Programme remains a priority. Putting more money in people’s pockets and improving their financial security, especially at a time when living costs are on the increase, is vital.

“The cost of social care continues to rise, and we face capacity issues and challenges in the sector. The home care market is continuing to experience rising demand, compounded by ongoing recruitment and retention difficulties but during quarter 3 we have made good progress to mitigate this across the sector.

“In October we introduced a new model for the delivery of our Children and families service and our work through the Building Resilient Families and Communities programme continues to support vulnerable families. The programme has already achieved its target for the year. The Staffordshire Warmer Homes programme also continues to grow from strength to strength supporting households with updating heating and has attracted an additional £5.9m funding from Government.

“Despite the many pressures facing councils like ours, we will invest to keep growing the county in a sustainable way to make a positive difference in the lives of our residents. We want Staffordshire people to enjoy a better quality of life, in thriving communities, and live longer in good health.”



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 do what is necessary and to manage them effectively. A recent audit report also confirmed this alongside our sound approach to financial management during the pandemic.

“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 £3.963m compared to the previous forecast of a saving of £1.992m at Quarter 2.

“Like most 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 reforms to social care which was welcome, but we do need to see more details of how this will work in practice. We also have concerns that any funding available will not match the costs.

“We continue to keep our finances in as strong a position as possible and to ensure that we provide good value for money for local 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.

Local Members Interest
N/A

Cabinet – Wednesday 16 February 2022

Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 3, 2021/22

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 Director for Corporate Services

Reasons for Recommendations

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



Quarter 3 Summary

The overall Performance rating of the council for Quarter 3, 2021/22 is **AMBER**. Delivery and Finance ratings for the individual service areas are as follows:

Service Area	Delivery	Finance
Health & Care	A	G
Families & Communities	A	A
Economy, Infrastructure & Skills	G	G
Corporate Services	G	G

Key highlights

- Children's Transformation – New model successfully went live in October 2021.
- Staffordshire Means Back to Business Programme continues to succeed for Staffordshire's businesses; popular new 'Get Started' programme launched in November 2021.
- Staffordshire has already exceeded its annual target for the number of successful family outcomes through the Building Resilient Families and Communities (BRFC) Programme.
- An additional £5.9m funding has been awarded to further support the successful Warmer Homes programme.

Key challenges

- Demand and capacity issues in Adult Social Care.
- Home care market is continuing to experience rising demand, compounded by ongoing recruitment and retention difficulties, with mitigating actions in place.
- Ongoing COVID-19 response.
- Continued pressures relating to the number and complexity of children in care.
- Work continues to bring the day-to-day management and running of Staffordshire's Household Waste Recycling Centres back in-house.

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

1. Summary

This report provides an update on Quarter 3 activities for each service area: Health and Care; Families and Communities; Economy, Infrastructure and Skills; and Corporate Services.

Significant progress has been made across the organisation during Quarter 3, however 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 £3.963m (0.7%). This is compared to the previous forecast of a saving of £1.992m (0.4%) at Quarter 2.

2. Health and Care

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
Amber	Green

3. Significant progress has been made across Health and Care in Quarter 3, both in leading the council's response to COVID-19, and in the recovery of key adult social care services. The GREEN finance rating reflects significant in-year underspend, despite longer term cost pressures. The AMBER delivery rating reflects progress to date, whilst continuing to manage some key challenges.



4. Following the national trend, overall demand remains high for adult social care assessments, leading to capacity issues and waiting lists, with work continuing to understand and respond to this demand. The home care market is also continuing to experience rising demand, compounded by ongoing recruitment and retention difficulties. There have been record referrals into brokerage in 2021 with December being the second highest on record. This, combined with market capacity issues, have impacted on timeliness of sourcing for brokerage, although this has improved in the last quarter of the year following a sustained fall through 2021. As of December 2021, brokerage was sourced within the agreed timescale for 71% of referrals. Capacity issues within the NHS and adult social care have also been significantly affected during Quarter 3 by Covid related pressures due to illness and staff absence.

5. There are numerous actions in place to mitigate against the ongoing recruitment, retention, and absence difficulties in the home care sector,

including grant allocations to support the programme, a recruitment campaign, a reservist campaign (involving training staff from other areas so they are able to step in to help in the care sector if necessary) and a Home Care Improvement Plan, to name a few.

6. It is also recognised once the current Adult Social Care pressures reduce, significant support will be required to enable the workforce to recuperate. In addition, recovery work will be required to remove waiting lists, replace temporary care arrangements with suitable care packages, and recommence paused transformation work.
7. In the first week of January 2022, despite the Omicron variant of COVID-19 driving up case rates to the highest levels of the pandemic, Covid hospitalisations has remained at less than half of the peak seen last January. The 12-15yr old vaccination programme and booster roll-out has continued, with vaccination rates for both above the England and West Midlands averages.
8. The number of COVID-19 cases in Staffordshire have continued to rise during Quarter 3, following national and regional trends. In the seven days to 15th January, 9,025 cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in Staffordshire, a rate of 1,021.9 per 100,000 population. This was lower than the regional rate (1,062.8) but higher than the national rate (961.4). Residents can keep up to date with the latest case figures in Staffordshire, including a district breakdown by clicking [here](#).
9. During Quarter 3, the council has continued its response to COVID-19 through Local Outbreak Control activity, including the management of COVID-19 incidents and outbreaks, and 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 88% of the 18+ population having received their first dose, 86% having received two doses and 71% having received the booster as of January 2022.
10. The county council's Supportive Communities programme is continuing to evolve with various projects in place to help communities meet their own needs; including the Community Champions project, where resources and information are being shared between the council and communities to improve overall health and wellbeing and encourage independence. A pilot which began in the Burton area is being rolled out incrementally across the county, starting with a network of champions being developed in Knutton and Cross Heath. Champions can be representatives from organisations, business, or local residents.

11. One of the biggest current public health initiatives coordinated by Staffordshire County Council is the Warmer Homes Fund, which installs central heating and insulation for those experiencing fuel poverty. Families in Staffordshire are being encouraged to apply for funding to help make their homes greener and more energy efficient and to help those who might be struggling with fuel bills. To date the council has secured £10.8m from the Government and the National Grid to deliver free first-time central heating (FTCH) and a range of other insulation measures for Staffordshire residents. Up to December 2021, the scheme had helped install 306 gas FTCH measures, replaced 126 broken gas boilers and provided a total of 112 insulation and low carbon measures.
12. A further £5.9m has also been secured for the Sustainable Warmth Competition which is due to start in 2022 and if successful would deliver approximately another 500 thermal measures. The programme provides financial, benefits and thermal advice and support for anyone contacting the scheme and, up to December 2021, had made residents thermal savings of c.£183k and one-off savings of over £300k, with a current rate of benefit of £3 for every £1 invested in the programme.
13. A review of the Carer's Service in November 2021 concluded that the new pathway is embedding and working well, with most referrals for both adult carers and young carers being via the preferred streamlined pathway of First Contact, which provides a clear point of contact and ensures that carers' needs are met across the services. The First Contact team carries out statutory carers assessments, as well as care needs assessments for the cared for person.
14. An engagement exercise was undertaken during Quarter 3 to help shape the new Joint Mental Health Strategy, which is being developed by Staffordshire County Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in collaboration with other key public sector partners in Staffordshire. Engagement was conducted with the public, partners, front line staff in mental health and social care services, and people who use mental health services and their families and carers. Over 700 people took part over a six-week period between 4th October and 12th November 2021. The project is currently on track to have the new strategy in place for April 2022.
15. From a Finance perspective, the Health and Care forecasted outturn at Quarter 3 is a saving of £0.982m, compared to a £1.012m saving in Quarter 2. 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 £3.432m.

16. Families and Communities

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
Amber	Amber

17. Significant progress has been made across the Families and Communities service area in Quarter 3. The overall AMBER performance ratings reflect much work that has taken place during the quarter, balanced with managing some key issues in relation to demand and capacity.



18. Staffordshire has continued to experience pressures relating to the number and complexity of children in care, as well as challenges associated with the implementation and embedding of a large-scale children's system workforce structure that will help to address the 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.

19. The Children's Transformation programme is key to tackling the challenges of demand and capacity, particularly in relation to Children in Care. Work to progress the transformation continues across the service; a new district operating model went live in October 2021, supported by a new workforce structure and some streamlined pathways and processes. Refurbishment works have also begun on the council's new in-house residential unit and is on track for completion by the end of March 2022.

20. At the 7th of January 2021, there were 1,279 children in care in Staffordshire, which represents a slight increase compared to the position reported in Quarter 2 (1,252) and slightly higher than the revised business case number. The rate is 74.7 per 10,000 which is higher than the most recent national benchmark (67 per 10,000 - March 2021) but lower than the regional benchmark (85 per 10,000 - March 2021). The Government's mandated National Transfer Scheme to provide crucial placements to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children continues to place additional pressures on all local authorities with children's services, including an impact on children in care numbers. In Staffordshire there were an additional 20 children transferred into care, as part of the Scheme, since October 2021.

21. At the 7th of January 2021, the number of children subject of a child protection plan was 584 (34.1 per 10,000); which is a slight increase

compared to the position reported in Quarter 2 (569) and remains below the national and regional benchmarks (national – 41.4 per 10,000, regional – 42.6, March 2021).

22. The number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) issued in time (within 20 weeks) in Staffordshire has declined during Quarter 3. In December 2021, 41% of EHCPs were issued in time, compared to the most recent national benchmark of 56% (from 2020/21). The overall 12-month position is at 75%, compared to the most recent national benchmark of 56%. This reduction is partly due to delays in educational psychology, which is a national issue, along with a necessity to recruit additional SEND key worker capacity. One-third of the 'out of time' EHCPs from December were issued within 25 weeks. In response to this an additional six SEND key workers have recently been recruited to help address current capacity issues, as well as performance of this key measure continuing to be closely monitored by the SEND Service and District Operations Teams.

23. Work has begun to develop a new Staffordshire Early Help Strategy. The Strategy will set out the partnership vision to develop and implement a consistent and co-ordinated approach to identifying and responding to need as early as possible, to make sure that children and families are kept safe and achieve positive outcomes. The Early Help Strategy will be in place from April 2022.

24. In Quarter 3, the council achieved successful outcomes for a further 381 families through the Building Resilient Families and Communities (BRFC) programme, which combined with the 625 successful outcomes achieved in Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 has already exceeded the annual target for 2021/22 (817) set by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

25. The council has been allocated an additional £5.5million for the Household Support Fund (HSF) which was distributed to those most in need during the Christmas holidays, to help with the costs of food and fuel, with further work planned for the February half term and Easter break. Already £1million has been allocated to support residents with council tax arrears and over £780k on vouchers for 26,000 children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). A further £615k has been distributed to residents across the county who have applied for additional help and support with food and emergency items and over £297k towards winter warmth.

26. The council has welcomed 178 Afghan evacuees to Newcastle-under-Lyme; 22 of these evacuees have been permanently resettled across the United Kingdom, with 14 permanently accommodated in Staffordshire

and Stoke-on-Trent. As a result of significant partnership efforts, families were welcomed and had access to healthcare, education, and jobs. In addition, Staffordshire residents kindly donated over £5,000 to ensure families have a warm welcome.

27. The Trading Standards team continues to support businesses through safeguarding and compliance advice. Between April and December 2021, the team dealt with almost 9,000 engagements and interventions with businesses; with over £500,000 prevented from being lost to scams and fraud through the council's intervention.

28. Midland Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (MPFT) took over Rising Brook library in Stafford in December. The library is one of 27 Community Managed Libraries (CML) in Staffordshire, in which the management and day-to-day running is taken on by a community group. MPFT currently manages eight other community libraries and in 2019, won the Health Service Journal's annual Health and Local Government Partnership Award for its innovative approach to supporting people through its work in community libraries. As of December 2021, 12 of the 15 CML contracts due for renewal had been re-negotiated.

29. 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. Between July and September 2021, the council's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Strategic Capacity Building Partner saw 222 organisations provided with one-to-one development support, c.£1.7m external funding secured by VCSE organisations and 63 individuals supported to access local volunteering opportunities. In December 2021, Cabinet gave approval to go out to market for a new VCSE Capacity Building Framework early in 2022, with planning now underway.

30. The second local #DoingOurBit campaign has been successfully delivered, focusing on promoting the health and well-being benefits of volunteering to both residents and staff (#Do-It to Feel Good). There were over 100 new sign-ups on the Do It Staffordshire platform because of the campaign, and work will now begin to see if it has made a difference to their well-being. The campaign also promoted specific volunteering opportunities in local children's centres in each district.

31. In terms of the financial position at Quarter 3 for Families & Communities, there is a forecast overspend of £1.313m, compared to an overspend of £1.657m in Quarter 2, while there continues to be a rise in the number of Children in Care and the need for placements, overall placement costs are lower than forecast. The forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £8.319m.

32. Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
Green	Green

33. Economy, Infrastructure and Skills is currently on track in terms of both Delivery and Finance in Quarter 3. The overall GREEN performance ratings reflect considerable progress made across the service against its key plans, whilst continuing to respond to ongoing challenges.



34. Work continues to bring day-to-day management and running of Staffordshire's Household Waste Recycling Centres back in-house. The haulage contract has now been awarded and Human Resources are working through the TUPE process for staff.

35. The council continues to support local businesses to survive, adapt and continue to operate as part of delivering its £6m Staffordshire Means Back to Business Support Scheme, which is a unique partnership with Staffordshire's eight boroughs and districts to prioritise support for small businesses and people whose jobs and employment prospects have been impacted.

36. As part of the Back to Business scheme, the Staffordshire Apprentice 500 initiative launched in April 2021 to provide incentives to small and non-levy employers to provide apprenticeships to Staffordshire's young unemployed residents. Between April-December 2021, 178 applications were received, resulting in a possible 295 apprenticeship starts.

37. The Nil Cost Training to Business programme provides incentives to small businesses to retrain or upskill staff to support business continuity and growth. As of the end of December 2021, 257 businesses were approved for funding, with a view to training over 2,000 staff.

38. The 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 of December 2021, 16 start-up businesses were supported through the scheme at a total of £78,000. The Staffordshire Start-Up course (delivered through Staffordshire Chamber) is also progressing. At the end of November 2021, 325 people had signed up to the course and nearly 40% had started trading.

39. Get Started is a new scheme that launched in November 2021 and complements the existing start-up mentoring and loans initiatives

mentioned above. The scheme gives participants extra confidence to launch or continue with their enterprise with the backing of free expert professional support. This involves accessing the services of appointed marketing and accountancy professionals – allowing entrepreneurs to test their business model through branding packages, market testing, website guidance and financial packages to predict profitability or to create a brand or website presence for their business. The new scheme is proving extremely popular; 68 applications had been received as of 20th December 2021.

40. In Quarter 3, Staffordshire was successful in its Community Renewal Fund bid and secured £1.5m, with £737k for the county council to help fund its business support schemes, including the new Get Started scheme.

41. Staffordshire's Economic Growth Programme, which began in 2014, has continued to create and safeguard jobs and enable house builds. As of the end of November 2021, 11,001 jobs had been created or safeguarded and 4,181 new houses had been enabled.

42. In December 2021, Cabinet agreed to invest £3.5m of viability gap funding to pump prime the Chatterley Valley West development site. The site, which forms part of the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone is anticipated to create 1,700 jobs and up to £70m per annum of Gross Value Added to the local economy.

43. The demolition of the former Stafford Magistrate Court and Probation building was concluded in December 2021 and benefited from funding from the Government Brownfield Land Release Fund. End uses for the site are being informed by a soft market testing exercise with developers and proposals will be presented to Cabinet in due course.

44. The latest out-of-work claimant figures have decreased to 3.2% of the working age population in December 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 (5.5%) and national (4.5%) averages. The proportion of young claimants, aged 18-24, has increased from 3.7% in March 2020 to 4.5% in December 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.

45. Work has continued with residents and businesses in more remote parts of rural Staffordshire without superfast broadband to take advantage of the UK Gigabit Voucher Scheme, with "top-ups" where required. Whilst

the original Superfast Staffordshire programme, combined with commercial roll-out, has enabled 96% of county properties to connect to superfast broadband, 4% currently miss out. [Project Gigabit](#) provides funding of up to £1,500 to eligible rural residential properties and £3,500 to eligible rural small and medium sized business properties to enable them to get connected directly to ultrafast broadband.

46. There were several Climate Change initiatives during Quarter 3, particularly during COP 26 when the council ramped up efforts to promote the work the council is doing. This included a 2-week social media campaign promoting 26 things that the council is doing to be greener, attracting 2,000 engagements, and the council also introduced a tree planting initiative with 10 flagship schools.
47. The council launched the second round of the Climate Change Action Fund in Quarter 3, which awards funds for support to not-for profit organisations, including charities, societies, voluntary and community groups, parish councils and schools. Funding must deliver against at least one of the following four categories: Reducing carbon impact or adapting to our changing climate, improving air quality, Natural environment, Reducing waste. The fund will close for applications on 25 February 2022.
48. Since the street lighting LED retrofit programme commenced in April 2021, 7,311 lanterns have been exchanged for energy efficient LED units up to November 2021, reducing the associated energy consumption for street lighting by almost 1.5m kWh per annum. This figure is slightly ahead of the planned delivery targets. The delivery programme for the project is to convert around 47,000 lanterns over a four-year delivery period against a project completion target of March 2025.
49. The Stafford Western Access Route (SWAR) and Lichfield Southern Bypass (LSB) both opened to the public during Quarter 3, on time and to budget.
50. The council continues to progress with its Highways Transformation Programme. Work is on track in the development of a future delivery model (post 2024) with a preferred approach being presented at Cabinet in summer 2022. In addition, the council continues to transform its current Highways arrangements, with agreed changes to strengthen the council's control of highway management, including the transfer of some key functions back to the county council by April 2022. As part of the wider Medium Term Financial Strategy, an extra £15.5m capital and a minimum £1m revenue, subject to review, will be invested in the highway service during 22/23.

51. The financial position at Quarter 3 for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills is a forecast saving of £1.228m, compared to a saving of £0.367m in Quarter 2, with small forecast savings across the service. The forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £1.884m.

52. Corporate Services

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
Green	Green

53. Corporate Services is currently on track in terms of both Delivery and Finance in Quarter 3 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.



54. Over a two-year period, 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.£9m in year through the sale of 14 assets, including farms.

55. In addition, all work on the council's priority property projects is progressing well, including the successful completion of Greenwood House Health Centre in Lichfield and Codsall Community Hub in South Staffordshire. Work to fit out a new enterprise hub providing workspace for over 20 small businesses in Stafford's Shire Hall began in December and is due to be completed in early 2022. Furthermore, as part of the council's school's capital programme the new primary school at Anker Valley, Tamworth, opened in September 2021, as planned and work on the new schools in Uttoxeter and Fradley are progressing well for a September 2022 opening. The additional c.£5m schools maintenance funding programme was also approved by Cabinet in October 2021 with projects critical for Summer 2022 now being commissioned.

56. Digital inclusion remains a key priority and work is continuing to address barriers to this in Staffordshire. More than 150 devices have now 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. The next phase of this work is to link in with children's centres, schools, colleges, and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in early 2022.

57. The Member's Fund, called the 2021 Community Fund, was open for applications from 24 June to 26 November 2021, following an extension to the deadline. The fund was still linked to COVID-19; however, it had a broader 'recovery' remit. The fund has now closed, and remaining applications are being processed. 204 applications were received from 185 unique organisations. A full analysis and report will be presented to the council in 2022.
58. Over the last quarter there has been significant progress around promoting the Staffordshire story, building the council's network of advocates and place brand. This has included delivering a programme of strategic activity with partners and launching the Inward Investment Campaign in collaboration with Make It Stoke and Staffordshire and the district and borough councils. There are now over 100 Ambassadors registered and an Ambassador event held in November, celebrating Staffordshire's National Centres, saw over 50 businesses in attendance, plus 10 online attendees through a hybrid offer. Further external promotional events have been held and an outline strategic delivery plan for 2022/23 also developed.
59. Work to deliver the council's internal People Strategy is ongoing. In December the new employee platform for benefits and health and wellbeing support was launched in partnership with Vivup, aimed at helping the council to keep and attract talented people and promoting a positive working environment. Wellbeing of the workforce remains a key priority, with the launch of a new online occupational health management system (MYOH) during Quarter 3.
60. Absence levels continue to rise in year, although levels are lower compared with the pre-COVID period. Absences relating to diagnosed/suspected cases of COVID-19 account for 1.45 days lost per employee over this period (up to December 2021); an increase compared with the same point in 2020 (0.72). Outside of COVID related absence, 'psychological disorder' is the highest absence reason at 3.26 days lost, an increase of 15% from last year. However, 54% (2,125) of employees have had no absence and 19% (763) have had less than 5 days absence.
61. The council's Internal Audit team has carried out a review on how decisions were taken regarding the use of Covid grant monies. This review confirmed that, in general, decisions were well documented, and services ensured that senior leaders and Cabinet were kept updated regarding various Covid activities.
62. In Corporate Services the financial position at Quarter 3 is a forecast saving of £0.868m, compared to a saving of £0.9m in Quarter 2. This is largely due to staffing vacancies and increased incomes. The forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £0.501m.

63. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications of note in relation to this report, which is for information and discussion, not for decision.

64. Resource and Value for Money Implications

Please see Finance Appendices.

65. Climate Change Implications

There are no direct climate change implications of note.

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