

## **Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 15 February 2023**

### **Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 3, 2022/23**



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

“Creating the right conditions for businesses and our economy to thrive remains a priority for the county council while managing the inflationary pressures we continue to face.

“Our Here to Help campaign and dedicated webpages which launched in October continue to signpost families to help and support with rising cost of living pressures. The Holiday Activities and Food programme also ran over the Christmas holidays helping families by providing eligible children with a healthy meal and positive activities.

“The next phase of the successful Staffordshire Warmer Homes scheme (Sustainable Warmth Competition) is underway and is helping residents by installing measures to make their homes more energy efficient. This scheme will be able to help people across the county and will run until March 2023.

“We continue to face challenges in both adult social care and children’s services including in recruitment and retention. Due to the delay in the adult social care charging reforms until 2025, the recruitment of additional capacity has been paused, however work to streamline pathways and explore digital solutions continues.

“We continue to support our local businesses to start up, survive, and adapt, including supporting five hundred individuals through the Staffordshire Start Up Programme. The number of business start-ups in the county have been increasing and are now in line with the national average for the first time. Businesses started within Staffordshire are also more likely to survive compared to the national average.

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



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

“Significant progress has been made across the organisation during Quarter 3, however inflationary, recruitment and retention pressures continue.

“Levels of demand also remain challenging, particularly in children’s services where there remain areas of financial risk. However, there have been improvements in some areas of adult social care over the quarter.

“The latest revenue forecast outturn shows a forecast overspend of £16.135m (2.74%), prior to additional funding for inflationary pressures being taken into account. Once this one-off funding is included and an allocation from the Inflation Reserve is assumed, the overspend reduces to £11.635m (1.97%). This is compared to an overspend of £6.408m reported at Quarter 2.

“Like many local authorities, we still face financial challenges, but we are a well run council and continue to keep our finances in as strong a position as possible. Well managed finances means we can continue to invest in our future, grow our economy and improve people’s lives.”



## **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. Approves the use of the remaining £4m of Contingency plus £1.189m of earmarked reserves.



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

## **Cabinet – Wednesday 15 February 2023**

### **Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 3, 2022/23**

#### **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.
- b. Approves the use of the remaining £4m of Contingency plus £1.189m of earmarked reserves.

#### **Report of the Director for Corporate Services and the Director for Finance**

##### **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

Performance ratings for the individual service areas across the council are as follows:

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

## Key highlights

- Cost of Living Campaign, Here to Help, launched in October with 19,800 visitors to web pages, 38,000 page views and 18,000 leaflets distributed to vulnerable residents.
- Winter Holiday Activities and Food programme of activities complete.
- Sustainable Warmth Competition contract awarded and now delivering.
- Recent reduction in demand in Adult Social Care. Work continues to prioritise individuals at the highest risk.
- Highways transformation on track and delivering, while continuing to deliver a safe and secure network. Work ongoing to develop customer, client and community offer.
- Improvement in Staffordshire's Business Start Up performance, likely to be partly due to the council's dynamic business support offer.
- 165 Community Champions recruited in Burton, Newcastle and Tamworth to promote local health initiatives and share helpful information and guidance, as well as 48 dedicated Ukraine Champions to date.

## Key challenges

- Continued pressures across Children's services, including the rising cost, number and complexity of Child Protection & Children in Care, and ongoing placement pressures. Additional investment agreed to create new posts, reduce pressures on existing staff and to strengthen recruitment and retention.
- Increased demand for Education, Health and Care Plans. Capacity of SEND Key Workers continues to be a challenge and was suggested as an area of focus in the review of the council's SEND Accelerated Progress Plan.
- The council continue to make as many contracted block booked care home beds live and in use as possible, although the number live is currently lower than anticipated, which impacts on savings.
- Continuing to monitor the number of Group A Strep cases in Staffordshire.
- Digital Infrastructure challenges remain due to lower than expected number of properties identified as eligible for broadband intervention by BDUK; discussions taking place.
- Inflationary pressures continue to be monitored closely, with the need for one-off resources to fund them.

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; Children and Families; Economy, Infrastructure and Skills; and Corporate Services.

Significant progress has been made across the organisation during Quarter 3, however inflationary, recruitment and retention pressures continue. Levels of demand also remain challenging, particularly in Children and Families. However, there have been improvements in Adult Social Care. There also continue to be areas of financial risk in Children and Families, with further details included within this report and its appendices.

The latest revenue forecast outturn shows a forecast overspend of £16.135m (2.74%), prior to additional funding for inflationary pressures being taken into account. Once this one-off funding is included and an allocation from the Inflation Reserve is assumed, the overspend reduces to £11.635m (1.97%). This is compared to an overspend of £6.408m reported at Quarter 2.

## 2. Health and Care

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

3. Good progress has been made during Quarter 3 to deliver the Health and Care elements of the Corporate Delivery Plan; however, there remains a risk that any winter pressures may affect levels of demand early in Quarter 4. Immediate financial and recruitment pressures have eased in the short-term, as a result of the delay in the implementation of Adult Social Care Reform to 2025, however funding for adult social care reforms will continue to be used to support the care market. Due to the progress made in Quarter 3, the overall Delivery rating for Health and Care is Green. The Finance rating is also Green based on the current financial position for Quarter 3.



4. As a result of the Government's delay to the Adult Social Care Charging Reforms until 2025, the recruitment of additional capacity in Staffordshire has been paused, however work to streamline pathways and explore digital solutions continues.

5. Demand for adult social care assessments and safeguarding reduced in Quarter 3, with December's demand for Adult Social Care assessments recording the lowest level (1,017) since January 2022 (977). Safeguarding numbers returned to normal levels during Quarter 3

following a summer peak and over half (51.7%) were assessed within two working days in December 2022, which is a significant improvement on previous months and above target (30%). Work has commenced to verify ongoing capacity to prevent future waiting list increases. Despite the recent improvement in December, there were still 1,117 safeguarding contacts.

6. In December 2022, 80.1% of service users had received a review of their care within the past 12 months, meeting the target of 80%. The areas of Learning Disability (86.5%) and Mental Health (90.4%) performed particularly well. This improved performance is likely to be a consequence of implementing the action plan that has been put in place including additional resource dedicated to undertaking reviews, however, in the context of possible winter pressures and subsequent demand, ongoing positive performance in this area is dependent on resource not being diverted to higher priority work.
7. Timeliness of sourcing for brokerage (helping individuals to arrange care) also improved in December 2022. Following an increase in broker resource, a review of the supported living process and improving market conditions, December saw an improvement in sourcing within timescales from 67% in November to 78%. Improvements can be seen in care home, day/home care and supported living timeliness (see Appendix 1).
8. There have also been improvements in the Care Quality Commission assessment ratings of Staffordshire's registered locations in December with an increase in the percentage of 'good or outstanding' assessments for nursing care, residential care and community services (see Appendix 1). The council has made additional investment in its quality teams over the last financial year, increasing the number of officers within the team, which is having a direct impact on driving improvements in care services and helping increase the number of services with a positive rating.
9. The council continue to make as many contracted block booked beds live and in use as possible. Block booked beds contract for a fixed number of beds with guaranteed business once these beds are activated. They ensure timely access when required, as well as better value for money. The number live (in payment) is lower than anticipated due to lower than expected demand. This has delayed Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) savings however these have been met through alternative means. As of 6<sup>th</sup> January 2023, 340 beds were contracted, of which 210 were live and of those 96% were filled with 4% vacant.
10. During Quarter 3, the council has been pursuing additional options for use of digital and assistive technology in providing better quality care, enabling independence, and facilitating hospital discharge. The Integrated Commissioning Service for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent

has been successful in its 3-year bid application for £615,000 of funding to implement Digital Social Care Records management and Falls Detection technology in care settings. The process for the deployment of the funding is now underway.

11. There has been a recent national increase in notifications of 'Group A Streptococcus' which is more commonly known as 'Group A Strep' to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), including Scarlet fever and 'Strep throat'. Proactive support and information has been sent to schools and nurseries as there have been a few cases reported in Staffordshire, with the situation continuing to be monitored. Further information on Group A Strep and Scarlet fever can be found [here](#).
12. The next phase of Staffordshire Warmer Homes (Sustainable Warmth Competition) has started installing measures with 67 installations between December 2022 and 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023, with the highest number in Newcastle-under-Lyme (15) and Stafford (14). The project runs until the end of March 2023 and is being rolled out in all districts. This will enable the council to continue helping low-income households to upgrade energy inefficient homes through the installation of insulation measures and replacement heating systems. Wrap around support services through the previous schemes saved c.£1.5m for vulnerable residents between May 2019 and October 2022.
13. As part of the Supportive Communities programme, the Community Champions scheme promotes local health initiatives and shares helpful information and guidance with specific groups through trusted community voices. In Quarter 3 the scheme was expanded to also include Tamworth, and there are now 165 Community Champions across Newcastle, Burton and Tamworth. In addition, there are also 48 dedicated Ukraine Champions to support families that have come to Staffordshire. A pilot project is also taking place in Staffordshire Moorlands to better connect adult social care practitioners to support and resources out in communities, with a focus on the strengths of both individuals and the place they live. Phase 1 of the 'Linking Supportive Communities' pilot has been successfully completed during Quarter 3, with an evaluation report to follow.
14. The Covid vaccination programme remains strong in Staffordshire with 66% of those eligible having received their Autumn Booster. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent is one of only two systems in the Midlands to be above the national average for all cohorts.
15. From a Finance perspective, Health and Care is forecast to have a breakeven position at Quarter 3, compared to a breakeven position at 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.

## 16. Children and Families

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
AMBER	RED

17. Progress has been made across the Children and Families service in Quarter 3. The Amber delivery rating continues to reflect the challenges in relation to increasing demand and complexity of need, and workforce capacity and recruitment issues. The Red finance rating reflects overspend and cost pressures resulting from these issues, as well as pressures around the SEND High Needs Block and placement costs for children in our care; despite much work in quarter to address these.



18. In Quarter 3, increasing demand, complexity of need, and challenges around recruitment and retention remained. Additional investment has therefore been agreed to create new posts, reduce pressures on existing staff and to strengthen recruitment and retention, with new recruitment of posts now underway. The new children's change governance arrangements are now in place, consisting of four main programmes of work; Workforce, Embedding Ways of Working, Children in Care and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), but workforce capacity issues continue to be a high risk for all programmes. The Children in Care Programme is currently progressing at pace, with all children being reviewed in order to appropriately reduce numbers in our care by the end of March 2023.

19. Progress has been made across several elements of the SEND Programme; Task and Finish groups have been set-up to progress the Education Health and Care Needs Assessment pathway and co-production engagement work is being progressed to develop a Charter and toolkit for Staffordshire to support professionals by April 2023. The next quarter will see a focus on more detailed plans for the Workforce and Embedding Ways of Working programmes of work.

20. At the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022, there were 1,382 children in care in Staffordshire, representing an increase compared to the quarter 2 position (1,330). This is a rate of 81 per 10,000 which is higher than the most recent national benchmark (70 per 10,000 - March 2022) but lower than the regional benchmark (88 per 10,000 - March 2022). The number of children subject of a Child Protection Plan appears to have stabilised following a continuing increase that was seen in the previous quarter. At the end of December there were 700 children and young people subject of a plan compared to 716 at the end of Quarter 2 (a rate of 41 in

Staffordshire compared to the most recent benchmarks, March 2022, of 42 nationally and 43 regionally).

21. The number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) issued in time (within 20 weeks) in Staffordshire remains low. The rolling 12-month figure in Staffordshire to December 2022 is 38% compared to the most recent national benchmark of 58% (from 2021/22). Increasing numbers of new plan requests, alongside annual reviews, means that the number of cases allocated to each Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) key worker has increased, impacting on timeliness.
22. The capacity of SEND Key Workers was one of a number of suggested areas of focus from the recent 6-month review of the council's SEND Accelerated Progress Plan. The plan was reviewed in late September by the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England, with feedback that the authority was on target. In addition to SEND Key Workers, the limited capacity of Social Workers and Educational Psychologists was also highlighted, as well as measuring impact in terms of the 'lived experience' of service users. The plan will be reviewed again, by the DfE and NHS England, early in the next financial year.
23. The Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have confirmed that the authority has retained its Earned Autonomy status for 2023-2025, demonstrating a level of maturity in Staffordshire's Early Help System of support, and retaining a status held by only 10% of local authorities. At the end of Quarter 3, Staffordshire has achieved successful outcomes for 957 families through the Building Resilient Families and Communities programme since April 2022; exceeding the target set by DLUHC (797). Staffordshire has set its own ambitious local target of 1,195 families, and by the end of the quarter the authority is already 80% of the way towards achieving this.
24. Round three of the Household Support Fund, which runs for 6 months from 1st October 2022, continues to support Staffordshire's most vulnerable children and families. In total over 54,300 supermarket vouchers have been provided to children and young people in the October half term and Christmas holidays. An additional 1,437 households and 781 care leavers and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) have also received supermarket vouchers. 984 households have also benefited from the Winter Warmth Scheme, with each household having received either top up credit on prepaid meters or credit paid directly to their energy supplier. In addition, eligible residents will have access to a "top up" grant to contribute to new boiler systems.
25. The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme continues to offer children and young people free activities and a healthy meal on site to help with the cost of food over school holidays. Following its success in the summer, which benefitted 2,769 primary aged and 905 secondary

aged children and young people, the winter scheme which ran during the Christmas holidays, made available over 13,500 places, with attendance figures available in Quarter 4.

26. Over 460 Staffordshire residents have come forward and agreed to accommodate almost 2,000 Ukrainians as part of the government's Homes for Ukraine Scheme. Since March 2022, almost 860 Ukrainians have arrived in Staffordshire, with over 630 still being hosted by local sponsors. In December 2022, Cabinet endorsed proposals to develop a Resettlement Integration and Independence Support offer and to create a dedicated resettlement team within the council that will work on both the Homes for Ukraine programme and broader resettlement work.

27. In terms of the financial position at Quarter 3 for Children & Families, taking into account a one-off funding allocation, there is a forecast overspend of £11.064m, compared to an overspend of £5.8m at Quarter 2. This is largely due to higher than forecast placements of children in the authority's care and an increase in placement costs, and the service is taking mitigating actions to address these pressures as far as possible.

## 28. **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills**

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

29. Economy, Infrastructure and Skills is currently on track in terms of both Delivery and Finance in Quarter 3. The overall Green Delivery and Finance ratings reflects considerable progress made across the service against its key plans.



30. Progress has been made in Quarter 3 with an aligned way forward with Stoke-on-Trent City Council in terms of the development of a solution to waste disposal arrangements in the north of the county post 2025. Details of this are currently being worked through.

31. The Highways Transformation Programme is progressing well. Work is ongoing to develop the community focus, Member priorities and customer journey improvements. This is in parallel to continuing to ensure that Staffordshire's highways network remains safe and secure; successfully delivering a structural maintenance programme, with one site completed (Weston), six currently on site (Holmcroft, Blythe Bridge, Saredon, Burntwood, Rolleston on Dove, and Essington) and one due to start in February 2023 (Stone).

32. 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. As part of this scheme, the

Staffordshire Apprentice 500 initiative was launched in April 2021 to provide incentives to small and non-levy employers to provide apprenticeships to Staffordshire's young unemployed residents. This has now been completed and between the launch and November 2022, 418 apprentices have been approved and 401 of those have started their apprenticeship.

33. The number of business start-ups in Staffordshire have been increasing and latest performance for 2021 shows that Staffordshire is now in line with the national average for the first time with a start-up rate of 12.2% compared to the national rate of 12.4% (see Appendix 1). Staffordshire's three-year business survival rate in 2021 stood at 61.9% which was higher than the UK survival rate of 57.6%. This positive performance will partly be due to the enabling role that the council has played, especially since the start of the pandemic, and the dynamic range of business support that the council offers.

34. Between June 2020 and December 2022, the council has supported 500 individuals through the Staffordshire Start Up Programme, commissioned through the Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce. Of these, almost half (228) have started their own business. Get Started and Grow has supported 113 business owners who have been trading up to 5 years with professional services support in marketing, finance or digital marketing, with the 'start up' support being in place since November 2021 and the 'step-up' element launching in Quarter 3. The programme is looking to expand further in 2023 to areas such as Human Resources and the council will continue to procure established Staffordshire businesses to provide this support.

35. Procurement took place during Quarter 3 for a new 'Working for Yourself' pilot scheme which launched in January 2023. This is taking place in Burton-on-Trent and is aimed at residents whose first language is not English, to provide them with support to start their own business. This scheme will work alongside 'My Own Boss' which started in 2022 to provide bespoke 1-2-1 mentoring to those who need additional support over and above the Start Up programme to help them launch their new business.

36. The Ignite programme delivered by Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce was launched in 2021, supporting young people in the final year of further education who have the aspiration to start their own business. The programme is constructed around an intensive workshop, to provide the skills needed to start a business, with 13,500 students supported on the programme to date. The programme continues to evolve.

37. It has been announced that the council was successful with its Government Levelling Up Fund bid of £20m. The associated schemes will improve a number of major roads around the county, reduce journey

times, put greener, cleaner buses on main roads, improve walking and cycling routes and reduce the impact of housing and commercial developments. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council was also successful with its £17.1m bid to redevelop Leek town centre.

38. Linked to Staffordshire's Local Transport Plan, there has been confirmation of an allocation of £314,000 from the Active Travel Capability Fund Bid for 2022/23 to promote cycling and walking in the county, with similar levels of funding expected for the next two years.

39. Work is underway on Chatterley Valley West development in Newcastle-under-Lyme. The multi-million-pound Enterprise Zone development will see major private sector investment, with an additional £3.7m funding through the Kidsgrove Town Deal and a £3.5m investment by the council. Through this joint funding, essential roads and infrastructure at the site are now being delivered to pave the way for the development of industrial units. The site could create up to 1,700 jobs and when fully built it could release total business rates of more than £2.5m a year that will be wholly retained within the area.

40. As part of Project Gigabit, work continues to take place locally to provide additional mapping analysis and local knowledge to help with the identification of premises and areas, that are not currently covered by providers' plans, to potentially be connected. There are challenges with lower-than-expected numbers of premises identified by BDUK as eligible for broadband intervention and this is being discussed between the council and BDUK.

41. Work to refresh the annual Climate Change Action Plan which identifies the priorities and actions for the year ahead has been completed. This will help the council to play its part in the global effort to reduce the impact of climate change and meet its net carbon zero target by 2050. This and the Climate Change Annual Report were approved at Cabinet in November. Further work during Quarter 3 to support these commitments saw the county's libraries introduce Climate Change Champions to inspire communities to be 'greener'.

42. The Climate Action Fund is now into its third year and continues to receive high levels of positive interest. The deadline for the latest round of applications was 23rd December 2022, with 92 applications received totalling over £90,000 of potential funding to community groups within Staffordshire.

43. Empowering our communities is a key part of the council's Strategic Plan 2022-26. It is one of the 'How We Work Statements' because it is central to delivering against all the Strategic Plan priorities and the way the council works. To ensure the council delivers on this work, a draft Communities Delivery Plan 2023 has been developed following

discussions with Cabinet and the Communities Leadership Group. This plan includes key communities-related priorities from across the council, greater detail on performance measures and milestones, and a robust performance management framework. A 'Communities Position Statement' is also being developed to accompany the plan. This statement will set out what the council has done in the past 18 months, what the council wants to achieve alongside its communities in the future, and how the council plans to do it. The draft plan and position statement are set to be discussed at Full Cabinet on 15th February 2023.

44.The council's 'Here to Help' campaign was launched in early October to make sure people are aware of the support and advice available, focussing on areas such as money and bills, food and essentials, staying warm and helping others. Up to December there were 19,800 visitors to web pages, 38,000 page views and 18,000 leaflets distributed to vulnerable residents.

45.Progress is being made in building the brand new £5.4m history centre for Staffordshire. Work on site is due to start in February. More than 60 volunteers have donated over 2,800 hours up to December 2022, which equates to £56,535 in matched funding for the project.

46.The financial position at Quarter 3 for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills is a forecast saving of £0.108m, compared to a saving of £61,000 at Quarter 2. This is following an allocation of one-off funding for inflationary pressures materialising in highways and transport.

**47. Corporate Services**

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

48. 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. 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 ongoing challenges regarding capacity.



49. In Quarter 3, 'We are Staffordshire' was recognised for its place branding work and was shortlisted for a 'Place brand of the year' top international industry award, which celebrated the best quality in marketing and design of locations across the world. Throughout the quarter, significant work also continued around promoting the Staffordshire story and place brand, with 150 Ambassadors now

registered and a successful Ambassador event took place at Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce 'Let's do Business Expo' in October, which attracted 50 attendees and speakers.

50. During 2022/23, the council aimed to raise £8m through the sale of unused land and buildings to fund transformation of services and activity, in line with new Government regulation. By the end of December 2022, the council was progressing sales with four surplus sites, set to deliver £6.6m. Two further sites have been delayed to 23/24 due to complexities which will not be resolved before the financial year end.

51. Work on the council's schools and property projects is ongoing. Bilbrook House in South Staffordshire site sale has been completed and the Enterprise Hub in the Shire Hall Stafford is now open. Brackenberry service has also relocated into Chesterton Vision Centre. Work continues on the construction of a new primary school at Deanslade (Lichfield) and work has also started on the £4m refurbishment of the Kingston Centre (Stafford) which will see pupils and staff from St Leonard's Primary School (Stafford) move from their current Victorian building to the new larger site in September 2023. In addition, contractors are also on site at Tamworth library for refurbishment to modernise and make the building greener. The c.£8m schools maintenance programme which comprises of over 100 projects also remains on track to be delivered during this financial year.

52. The council continues to review and develop its digital approach, with a refreshed Digital Delivery Plan for 2023/24 approved in December 2022. Good progress has been made, including purchasing automation software for trialling in a number of areas in Adults and Children's Financial Services, with benefits expected before the end of Quarter 4. Work is also continuing with district and borough councils to progress the "Single Front Door" project across Staffordshire, moving forward with pilots on Customer Experience and Single Phone Number.

53. Following a successful commissioning process, the new Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Capacity Building Framework went live on 1st August 2022. The Framework aims to promote social action in local communities, build capacity in the voluntary and community sector, and support the delivery of Staffordshire's Young People's Offer. Latest available data shows that between 1st August and 30th September 2022, 88 organisations were provided with development support such as help with planning, developing policies, and safeguarding. An additional 39 children and young people's organisations were provided with specific development support for their area. VCSE groups were also supported to access over £600,000 of additional funding, including an award of over £200,000 to Burton Addiction Centre from the National Lottery Community Fund, and several successful applications to the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme.

54. The council's 2022 Community Fund opened on the 19th April 2022 and closed on 31 October 2022. In total 199 applications were received, from 180 unique organisations. The total value of projects in the applications (including the requests from the fund) is nearly £1m – this total means that communities were offered around £4 for every £1 requested from the fund. Outstanding applications are currently being processed, and an end of year report will be brought to Full Council later in the year.
55. The first stage of the Electoral Review has now been completed, with the Council Size Submission submitted in November 2022 approved by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). The in-principle decision, released on January 10<sup>th</sup>, is to retain a council size of 62. The second stage of the process is a public consultation on division arrangements which runs from 10<sup>th</sup> January to 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023; during this time any individuals, groups or organisations can submit their proposals for new division boundaries. Work is also underway on a developing Staffordshire County Council's proposal, using local data and gathering community insight and knowledge, to propose a solution that reflects the LGBCE criteria.
56. There is a continued focus on absence across the whole of the council to help teams improve their number of days lost due to sickness absence. The People Operations team are working directly with the top 30% of locations with the highest days lost to understand the root causes for absence and proactively support them with both short and medium-term actions. Absence related surgeries have also been provided to the wider management teams to help them manage absence through their directorate absence improvement plans. A new Sickness Absence policy has also been launched in Quarter 3.
57. Long term absence is at 8.66 days lost per employee, higher than the same point last year (8.06), but an improvement from Quarter 2 where performance was 8.97. Short-term absence is at 4.04 days lost per employee, higher than the same point last year (2.99), but an improvement from Quarter 2 where performance was 4.13. Total absence levels (12.7 days lost per employee) are higher than the same period last year (11.05) but have improved by 0.4 days since Quarter 2 (13.1). Employees who have had no absence is at 46.3% (1,925 employees) of the workforce and 24.4% (1,015 employees) have had less than 5 days absence.
58. Corporate Services is forecast to have a saving of £0.140m at Quarter 3, compared to a saving of £0.181m at Quarter 2. There is potential for some additional income from Registrars due to the higher number of weddings that are being booked following the lifting of all COVID restrictions.

## 59. Legal Implications

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

## 60. Resource and Value for Money Implications

Please see Finance Appendices.

## 61. Climate Change Implications

There are no direct climate change implications of note.

## List of Appendices:

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Appendix 5 - Revenue Forecast Outturn 2022/23  
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