

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 19 July 2023

Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2023/24



Cllr Alan White, Leader of the Council said,

“We continue to do what is necessary to support our most vulnerable residents who need us most, while creating the right conditions for our economy and businesses to thrive.

“Our work to promote Staffordshire as a top location to live, work, invest in and visit continues. Our ‘We are Staffordshire’ team attended the UK Real Estate Infrastructure and Investment Conference in Leeds in May where they got the chance to promote the many investment opportunities available in the county. This, alongside supporting local businesses, helping attract new businesses with better quality jobs for people remains a priority.

“Our Household Support Fund continues to help thousands of local families with the ongoing cost of living pressures and during the May half term holiday provided supermarket vouchers to 27,000 families. Over Easter, the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme also saw its highest take up rate meaning more children and young people benefited from the scheme.

“Work to tackle climate change is ongoing, and since December 2022, the Staffordshire Warmer Homes scheme has installed 459 measures in 328 properties to make them more energy efficient.

“We continue to face challenges within Children’s Services including the rising cost, number and complexity of Children in Care, and ongoing placement pressures, however additional recruitment will help to ease this. We are also seeing increased demand for Children’s Services and Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) for Education, Health, and Care Plans, but again, the recruitment of additional staffing capacity is underway.

“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.”



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

“All council departments continue to deliver against their priorities, whilst progressing with activities in the organisation’s Delivery Plan.

“Like most local authorities, we do face rising costs across the organisation and high inflation which puts extra pressures on our finances. We also continue to face challenges around demand and capacity within Children’s services and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities teams.

“We continue to do what is necessary and to manage our finances effectively. The latest revenue forecast outturn shows an overspend of £9.5m (1.39%), compared to the balanced budget.

“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 taxpayers. Well managed finances also mean we can invest in our future and continue to grow our economy.”



Report Summary

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

Recommendation

We recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Notes and challenges performance and advises of any further information and/or action required.



Local Members Interest
N/A

Cabinet – Wednesday 19 July 2023

Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2023/24

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

We recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Notes and challenges performance and advises of any further information and/or action required.

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Director for Corporate Services and the Director of Finance

Reasons for Recommendations

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



Quarter 1 Summary

This report provides an update on Quarter 1 progress in relation to delivering the council's priorities and pledge as set out within the council's [Strategic Plan 2022-26](#).

Key highlights

- **We are Staffordshire:** The team led the Staffordshire at the UK Real Estate Infrastructure and Investment Conference (UKREiIF) in May, setting out why the county is a top location to live, work, invest in and visit.
- **Staffordshire Warmer Homes Scheme:** Project with Broad Oak properties 'highly commended' at the West Midlands Energy Efficiency Awards in June. Since December 2022, 459 measures have been installed in 328 properties.
- **Integrated Co-occurring Needs Pathway (ICoN):** The new ICoN initiative is being pioneered in Staffordshire to support people with both mental health issues and drug and alcohol use, in a holistic way. The programme will be used as a good practice model.
- **Household Support Fund:** In May half term over 27,000 families of children in receipt of Free Schools Meals were issued with supermarket vouchers.
- **Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme:** The Easter HAF offered more places (almost 11,000) than any previous HAF and saw the highest take-up rate; meaning more children and young people benefit from the scheme.
- **Highways maintenance:** Delivery of major capital highways maintenance schemes continues, alongside Highways Transformation Programme.
- **Business support:** Procurement completed to extend the successful Staffordshire Start Up programme into 2023/24.
- **Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs):** Cabinet approved the introduction of permits for vans and trailers at Staffordshire's HWRC sites.

Key challenges

- **Children in Care:** Continued pressures across Children's services, including the rising cost, number and complexity of Children in Care, and ongoing placement pressures. Recruitment underway following investment.
- **SEND:** Increased demand for Education, Health and Care Plans. Capacity continues to be a challenge; however, recruitment of additional Key Workers and Educational Psychologists is underway.
- **Adult Social Care Demand:** Safeguarding and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding requests remain high, with additional capacity being explored.

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

1. Financial Overview

2. The latest revenue forecast outturn shows an overspend of £9.5m (1.39%), compared to the balanced budget. There continues to be areas of financial risk in Children and Families, with further details included within this report and appendices 2-7.

3. Encourage good health and wellbeing, resilience and independence

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
GREEN	GREEN

4. In Quarter 1, demand for Care Act Assessments stabilised but continues to be higher than before the pandemic (approximately 17% higher); there were 1,534 assessments initiated in May 2023, which is similar to May last year (1,532). The council continues to exceed its target for completed Care Act Assessments within 28 days (see Appendix 1).

5. The number of safeguarding contacts continues to fluctuate monthly; demand reduced in April 2023 (1,180) before increasing again in May 2023 (1,348). This increase impacts on the number of people waiting and these will begin to be prioritised. The council is securing additional resource from an external provider to support with the increased demand.

6. The number of reviews of people receiving services for 12 months or more has continued to remain high, with 84% reviewed in the previous 12 months in May 2023, exceeding the target of 80% (see Appendix 1). The best performance is in reviews of people receiving Mental Health services (87.7%).

7. Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLs) applications (where it is necessary to deprive a person of their liberty in a hospital or care home if they lack capacity to consent to their treatment and care) is an area of demand that continues to impact on resources. The council had 1,147 DoLs applications waiting to be completed at the end of May 2023, however the majority of these are low priority and over half are in progress. The possibility of procuring additional capacity to manage these applications is being explored.

8. Significant work is continuing in preparation for the new Care Quality Commissioning (CQC) assurance framework which will assess how the council is performing against duties under the Care Act 2014.

9.As part of the council’s objective to showcase technologies in care, Nexus are commencing a pilot of Fitbits with people in their reablement and home care services. These smart watches will monitor the biometrics of individuals and feedback the data to a central system. The central system will then compare this data to the individual’s usual state and highlight any deviation that might require intervention. Future updates will be provided on how this pilot progresses.

10.Staffordshire’s Warmer Homes Scheme were finalists in the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards 2023, in the category which recognises councils that are making the most of their role in public health. The Warmer Homes entry showcased how lifting people out of fuel poverty and helping households with rapidly increasing energy bills is a public health priority in Staffordshire. The Warmer Homes project with Broad Oak properties was also ‘highly commended’ at the West Midlands Energy Efficiency Awards in June. Latest figures from the Sustainable Warmth Competition show that since December 2022, there have been 459 measures installed within 328 properties. This brings the total number of measures installed through Staffordshire Warmer Homes to 1,220 within 964 properties. The council has also secured an additional £1m in funding for the extension of the scheme that specifically supports low-income households heated by mains gas, which runs until September 2023.

11.A new initiative to support people with both mental health issues and drug and alcohol use is being pioneered in Staffordshire. The new ICoN (Integrated Co-occurring Needs pathway) will bring together the local authority, NHS, voluntary and community sectors in a single approach. This pathway has a dedicated team of professionals including psychologists, mental health practitioners, and substance use coordinators, and will use phases of intervention to offer the right support, to the right people, at the right time. The service has been identified as national good practice.

12.Offer every Staffordshire child and young person the best start in life, and the chance to achieve their potential

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
AMBER	RED

13.Children in Care demand has continued to increase, with close monitoring of those past estimated exit dates continuing. A review of those in residential placements has also been completed with actions now in place to find suitable alternative placements where appropriate. Recruitment of additional capacity is progressing following the additional cabinet investment of £5.7m.

14. As at the 31st May 2023, there were 1,397 children and young people in the authority's care in Staffordshire, representing a slight increase compared to the previous quarter (1,385). This is a rate of 83 per 10,000; higher than the most recent national benchmark (70 per 10,000 - March 2022) but lower than regional (88 per 10,000 - March 2022). The number of children subject of a Child Protection Plan at the 31st May 2023 was 687 down from a peak of 721 in April. This is a rate of 41 per 10,000 in Staffordshire compared to the most recent benchmarks from March 2022 of 42 nationally and 43 regionally.
15. The number of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) was 7,103 at 31st May 2023 compared to 6,527 a year earlier. This increasing demand means that the number of EHCP's issued in time (within 20 weeks) remains low in Staffordshire; 31% compared to the most recent national benchmark of 49% (2022). Recruitment is underway to increase capacity, with eleven Senior Key Workers already in post and two due to start in September, as well as eight Key Worker positions recruited and due to be in post by September. Recruitment for Educational Psychologists continues with five roles secured, and a further recruitment round due to take place from September.
16. Work continues across the four main programmes of work within Children & Families; Children in Care, Children's Workforce, SEND Improvement and Embedding the Children & Families System. Progress has been made across several elements in the last quarter including the mapping of residential placements to ensure children and young people are in the most appropriate placement for them and work to review Children in Care to ensure predicted exit dates are realised and progressed wherever possible.
17. At the end of May 2023, 195 families have been confirmed as achieving a successful and sustained outcome through the Building Resilient Families and Communities Programme since 1st April 2023. Additional family cohorts are still being reviewed with final figures for Quarter 1 available in the following performance report. The Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have increased this year's target number of families by 62% to 1,290, but as we strive to achieve more for our families in Staffordshire, we are hoping to achieve outcomes for 1,677 families (30% above DLUHC target).
18. Staffordshire's most vulnerable families will have access to a share of £11 million of funding received from the Department for Work and Pensions for 2023/24. The Household Support Fund (HSF) supports families and others who need it most, to pay for food and energy bills. In May half term over 27,000 families of children in receipt of Free Schools Meals were issued with supermarket vouchers and over 3,100 households benefited through the professionals' referral scheme.

19. Further support has also been made available to Staffordshire’s most vulnerable families through the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme, which continues to offer children and young people free activities and a healthy meal, over school holidays. The Easter HAF offered more places (almost 11,000) than any previous HAF and saw the highest take-up rate; 71%. Meaning that more children and young people could benefit from the scheme.

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

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
GREEN	GREEN

21. A key driver for further investment in Staffordshire is the council’s Place Marketing campaign, with progress made during Quarter 1 in promoting the ‘We are Staffordshire’ place brand. A ‘Quality of Life’ campaign was launched advocating Staffordshire as a great place to live and work – the video launch reached over 45,000 people and was highlighted in local news outlets. The new ‘We Are Staffordshire’ website was launched with a fresh look, streamlined user experience, and a new toolkit of promotional materials available to download to help promote Staffordshire. Network events continued, and in April the council held its best attended Ambassador Event with over 100 attendees.

22. The ‘We are Staffordshire’ team also led Staffordshire’s presence and ‘Staffordshire: A Place to Prosper’ campaign and prospectus at the UK Real Estate Infrastructure and Investment Conference (UKREiIF) in May, setting out why the county is a top location to live, work, invest in and visit. Staffordshire showcased over £1bn worth of investment opportunities at the three-day event, where potential investors found out more about recent successes in Staffordshire and major projects underway. These included the Stafford Gateway project, regeneration of town centres, Chatterley Valley Enterprise Zone, i54 South Staffordshire, the A50/A500 Growth Corridor, and the West Midlands Interchange.

23. During Quarter 1, the council has continued to support local businesses to start up and grow through its dynamic range of business support schemes. Between June 2020 and May 2023, the council has supported 570 businesses through the Staffordshire Start Up Programme. Of these, almost half (269) have started trading following the programme. Procurement to extend the Start-Up Mentoring Scheme to June 2024 (which was due to end in June 2023), is now complete. Get Started and Grow has supported 167 business owners who have been trading up to 5 years with professional services support in marketing, finance, or digital marketing. Additionally, 98 businesses have been approved for the ‘My Own Boss’ programme.

24. The Ladder for Staffordshire is the leading multi-organisation champion for apprenticeships in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. There is a collaborative, joined-up approach to improving skills and enrichment opportunities for all, linking up employers, training providers and candidates. Up to the 30th April 2023, 55 apprentices had been recruited since its official launch in February 2023.

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

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
AMBER	GREEN

26. Funding has been awarded to the council which will help county councillors tackle potholes in their local area. The £2 million fund will be used to tackle defects already reported to the council by the public and gives county councillors the opportunity to prioritise local repairs above other non-urgent repairs. The money is part of the £4.8 million the county council received from the Department for Transport's pothole fund. This is on top of £5 million investment for road repairs, and a £30 million investment in the county's roads over the next two years. The scheme will run alongside the existing member's Divisional Highways Programme (DHP), where members work with communities, parish councils and other local organisations to identify improvements that can be made in their local areas. These improvements can be anything from addressing local concerns about road safety, to signage and other maintenance tasks. The scheme is now live, with work anticipated to start in July.

27. Following the winter period there has been an increase in the number of high-risk Category 1 and Category 2 defects identified in April and May, which are being prioritised. The additional 'pothole' funding is providing additional resources, together with the usual shift of core resources from Winter Operations (e.g. gritting), to carry out these repairs. Between April and mid-June, there has also been 750,000 square metres of carriageway pothole prevention resurfacing treatments delivered across the county, which equates to around 70 miles of carriageway and 50% completion of this year's planned programme.

28. The Highways Transformation Programme is also progressing well in Quarter 1, with a detailed programme of activity to implement the new operating model now emerging, focussing on developing the member and community offer. Alongside this transformation, the delivery of major capital highways maintenance schemes continues, with schemes progressing well at A34 Holmcroft, Stafford; A34 Walton Island, Stone;

and A522 Beamhurst (JCB), Uttoxeter. The scheme at A521 Uttoxeter Road, Blythe Bridge is also now complete.

29. As part of Project Gigabit, which aims to provide gigabit-capable coverage to Staffordshire residents, there remain a high number of premises still under review for broadband intervention, which are being monitored by a Rolling Open Market review, which confirms where gigabit capable broadband infrastructure currently exists or is planned to be built and identifies eligible target areas for intervention. Discussions are ongoing between the council and Building Digital UK (BDUK).

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

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
GREEN	GREEN

31. In Quarter 1, the council's Cabinet approved the introduction of permits for vans and trailers at Staffordshire's Household Waste Recycling Centre sites (HWRCs). The changes follow public consultation and now require Staffordshire residents with vans or trailers to apply for permits, which will allow them to make 12 visits per year to the sites. Staffordshire residents with cars will still be able to use the sites freely. The new scheme also means that people from outside Staffordshire with trade waste can no longer dispose of their waste at Staffordshire's HWRCs. The changes are expected to help reduce queues and improve services for residents.

32. Membership of the Staffordshire Business Environment Network (SBEN) has now been extended for 2023/24 to businesses in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. SBEN is coordinated by the council and is now supported by Steelite International and Michelin Tyre PLC, whose backing means members can benefit for environmental legislation updates, events, networking, and a bespoke carbon tracker tool. SBEN has over 430 members and in the last year supported 33 businesses in cutting energy costs and improving energy use through Low Carbon Business Evolution project grants. It has also supported 68 businesses through carbon literacy training, and 315 businesses have attended events over the year.

33. A giant carbon bubble is going to be touring the county to help raise awareness of climate change as part of plans to help the county reduce its carbon footprint and achieve its target of net zero by 2050. The aim of this is to help people visualize the impact of their daily activities on carbon emissions. When visiting the bubble, people will also get the chance to meet staff for advice on the changes they can make to help

the environment. The tour will be visiting locations across the county up until August 2023.

34. **How we work**

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
GREEN	GREEN

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

36. Good progress can be seen during the quarter as part of the council's commitment to working with its communities. 'Green Libraries' month in May included 92 events in libraries to help promote the importance of caring for the environment. The programme included both online and in-person events and was developed in response to the Green Libraries Manifesto, hosted by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), in partnership with Arts Council England, British Library, Libraries Connected and Julie's Bicycle.

37. Work has continued on the Staffordshire History Centre, with construction remaining on track in Quarter 1. Rugeley Power Station exhibition also launched in May at the Museum of Cannock Chase, funded by Section 106 money.

38. Digital continues to be fundamental to the way the council works as an organisation, as well as how it will interact with partners, citizens, and communities. Good progress has been made across multiple priorities, such as the trialling of automation software in Health & Care and Finance to free up capacity for added-value work, with further opportunities being scoped. Work is continuing with Lichfield District Council (LDC) to progress a collaborative "Single Front Door" approach across Staffordshire. The Customer Service Waste and Recycling pilot is now live with a shared knowledge base in place for Customer Service Advisors. Two further pilots have also been agreed: Environmental Health and Disabled Facility Grant Information Advice and Guidance (IAG).

39. Work to deliver the council's refreshed internal People Strategy will continue during 2023/24. Benefits of the new applicant tracking system WeRecruit (a system that allows the council to attract, select and hire people more quickly and easily) are now being realised, with time to hire rate at 45 days or less.

40. There is a continued focus on absence across the council to help improve the number of days lost due to sickness absence; with a consistent

downward trajectory seen for the last nine months. This focus includes working directly with those teams experiencing the highest days lost to understand the root causes for absence and proactively supporting them. Across these teams the council has seen a 75% improvement in their absence in the last quarter. Additionally, absence related surgeries have been provided to the wider management teams to help them manage absence through their directorate absence reduction plans.

41.As a result of this work, long term absence now stands at 8.38 days lost per employee; similar position to last year (8.28 days) but represents an improvement from Q3 where performance was 8.7 days. Short-term absence now stands at 3.52 days lost per employee, again similar to last year (3.53 days). Over half of the workforce has had no sickness absences over the last year (49.2%, 2,105 people), with a further 24.2% (1,038 employees) having been absent for 5 days or fewer. Return to work in the last quarter is at 73% completed; an improvement from last year's 70%.

42.Live within our means and deliver value for money

Delivery Performance Assessment	Finance Performance Assessment
AMBER	GREEN

43.Key priorities for 2023/24 continue to include carrying out the council's pledge of living within its means and delivering value for money, improving the customer experience, and inspiring a culture of innovation.

44.Work to refresh the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy is on track, with an update due to be presented at Informal Cabinet in the Autumn. Development of a new online financial self-assessment portal to improve customer experience continues and is on track for a 'go-live' in October.

45. Inflation and rising demand for council services as living costs rise, requires the council to keep finding new, better, and lower cost ways of delivering services and achieving results. This requires further creativity and innovation across the council, finding new ways of working, trialling technology, and applying ideas from other councils, public and private organisations. The council has therefore launched a leadership development programme, supported by an internal staff engagement campaign to generate new and innovative ideas from across the organisation.

46.During 2023/24, the council aims to raise c.£13 million net income through the sale of unused land and buildings to fund transformation of

services and activity, in line with new Government regulation. By the end of May 2023, the council had delivered £788,500.

47. Work on the council's schools and corporate projects is ongoing. The Anna Seward Primary School (Lichfield) and the relocation/enlargement of St Leonards Primary School (Stafford) are on track, both to be completed early July ahead of a September opening. In addition, the Tamworth Library renovation is progressing and the relocation of Children's Services staff and reception facilities from Stafford Borough Council Civic offices to Staffordshire Place is complete and operational.

48. The council's 2023 Community Fund was launched on 9 May 2023 having been held back due to local elections in many districts and boroughs. To date the council has received 19 applications, six of which are retrospective applications linked to celebratory events for the King's Coronation. The council specifically allowed until 30 June for the submission of Coronation funding applications. A total of £155,000 is available and the council will look for matched funding either financial or in kind (for example volunteer hours which we 'value' at £10.42 per hour in line with the National Living Wage).

49. Legal Implications

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

50. Resource and Value for Money Implications

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

51. Climate Change Implications

There are no direct climate change implications of note.

List of Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Performance Dashboard
- Appendix 2 - Finance Quarter 1 Summary
- Appendix 3 - Finance Quarter 1 Detailed Report
- Appendix 4 - Revenue Forecast Outturn 2023/24
- Appendix 5 - Capital Forecast Outturn 2023/24
- Appendix 6 - Financial Health Indicators 2023/24
- Appendix 7 - Prudential Indicators

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