

Cabinet – Wednesday 21 April 2021

Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 4, 2020/21

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

We recommend that:

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

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.

Report of the Director of Corporate Services

1. Background

2. All parts of Staffordshire County Council continue to deliver against their recovery priorities and wider service plans, whilst also undertaking some planning and delivery activity for the future. This report provides an update on Quarter 4 key activities for each directorate area.

3. Summary



4. At the end of Quarter 4, the overall assessment on the council's performance and financial position is amber. There continue to be areas of risk in Adult Social Care and Families and Communities. Further details are included within this report and its appendices. The latest revenue forecast outturn shows a forecast saving of £1.770m (0.3%), compared to the overspend of £0.587 (0.1%) at Quarter 3.

5. Health and Care

6. Significant work has continued across Health and Care, both leading the council's response to COVID-19 and exiting lockdown plans, as well as the recovery of key adult social care services.



7. Ongoing COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control activity has included:

- Ongoing management of COVID-19 incidents and outbreaks in settings.
- Roll out of asymptomatic testing model and support to NHS vaccination programme.
- Ongoing support to care providers in vaccinating eligible frontline care workers.
- Continuing to undertake local contact tracing for all positive cases to reduce further transmission.

8. Staffordshire has now been approved as part of the Community Collect Home Testing Scheme which means that residents can collect home testing kits from its Community Testing Centres as well as the national sites. An overview of testing in the county is available [here](#).
9. During Quarter 4, COVID-19 cases in Staffordshire have been falling, following the national and regional trends. In the seven days to 28th March, 444 cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in Staffordshire, a rate of 50.5 per 100,000 population. This is lower than both the regional rate (59.7) and the national rate (53.1). Residents can keep up to date with the latest case figures in Staffordshire, including a district breakdown by clicking [here](#).
10. The council's COVID-19 Local Outbreak Management Plan has been updated to reflect latest developments for test and isolate, outbreak management, vaccination, and the 'roadmap' out of lockdown. The first step of phase one began with pupils returning to school on 8th March. Further detail about how the government intends to gradually lift restrictions can be found [here](#).
11. Work has been underway in the adults' safeguarding service to reduce safeguarding waiting list numbers; in response to this priority work numbers have fallen to 332 as at the beginning of March, from 627 in November. Further safeguarding activity continues with the aim of clearing the waiting list back to manageable levels by end of April 2021.
12. Following the national trend, demand into all adult social work continues to increase in Staffordshire. Work is currently underway to understand this demand in more depth to help ensure service users continue to receive timely and effective adult social care services.
13. The Supportive Communities Programme continues to support individuals to remain independent for longer. A report to Cabinet in February acknowledged that while the last 12 months has seen an increase in people volunteering their time, some established charities, voluntary groups, and social enterprises have been adversely affected by the pandemic. In 2021/22 the council plans to work more closely with communities, voluntary sector groups and, particularly, parish councils as Staffordshire recovers from the pandemic. Working with partners, the programme will continue to focus on developing support for older people, as well as adults with learning disabilities and wellbeing issues, including connecting people to a wide range of community assets available.
14. Work also continues to refresh the council's Public Health & Prevention Strategy, with a focus on mitigating the ongoing public health risks from COVID-19. Recent delivery includes a second Stoptober stop smoking campaign which ran throughout January. The first ran throughout September and October 2020. These campaigns resulted in 67 direct referrals to the service.
15. Families from across Staffordshire have benefited from a campaign offering hints on keeping themselves healthy and happy during the winter months. The council's 'Do It to Feel Good' campaign went live on 30th November, running until 28th

February, reminding people of the importance of looking after their physical and mental health and wellbeing. In total, the campaign achieved 6,582 clicks through to a range of health and wellbeing webpages with 2,608 clicks going directly to the 'Do It to Feel Good' pages.

16. As part of the council's response to minimising the impact of COVID-19, in January the council launched an 'Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential supplies', which is a short-term intervention aimed at supporting residents who are struggling financially to fund heating their homes during the winter months. The programme is delivered via the Staffordshire Warmer Homes programme and could also provide further opportunities for longer term support for those in need. By the end of March, 85% of grants had been allocated during the first 10 weeks of the programme; with nearly two-thirds of funding being allocated to families with dependent children under the age of 18.
17. From a Finance perspective, the Health and Care forecast outturn at Quarter 4 is a saving of £4.199m. There are 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 £32.010m. The longer-term financial impact of COVID-19 is not yet clear but will undoubtedly affect the MTFS in future years.

18. Families and Communities



19. Work to progress recovery plans, transformation and wider service delivery continue to take place across the Families and Communities area.
20. With the news that schools would reopen on the 8th March to all pupils, the Health and Safety at Work Service and Local Outbreak control team supported the settings to be ready for this. This included revised guidance and support to revise their risk assessments, as well as support with the implementation of lateral flow testing. Management arrangements in relation to vaccinations were also developed and launched. Staff in education settings supporting children who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable were identified and were offered vaccination by the government deadline of 15th February.
21. The implementation of an Emotional Wellbeing in Schools programme is enabling schools to provide effective wellbeing support to children and young people who are dealing with the emotional impact of COVID-19. The next phase of the programme will focus on Early Years and teachers' wellbeing in response to feedback from the schools who accessed the first sessions.
22. At the end of February 2021, the number of children in care in Staffordshire has decreased slightly to 1,245, from 1,269 in December 2020. This remains in line with the children & families revised business case forecast. The current rate is 73 per 10,000; higher than the national benchmark (67 per 10,000 in 2020) but lower than regional (86 per 10,000 at end of December 2020). Furthermore, for the rolling

12 months the number of children coming into care is 20% lower compared to the previous 12 months.

23. The number of children subject of a Child Protection Plan is 656 (19th February) and has remained relatively stable in the previous 12 months, with a current rate of 38 per 10,000. This is below the most recent national benchmark (43 per 10,000 at the end of December 2020) and lower than the regional rate (46 per 10,000 at the end of December 2020).
24. Over the last quarter, the Social Workers in Schools comprehensive 'virtual' offer has continued to support children and families within schools, with the aim of reducing the number of referrals for specialist help. Funding has now been extended to March 2022.
25. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have confirmed ongoing funding for the Troubled Families Programme for 2021/22. Staffordshire has been allocated £1.8 million for the Building Resilient Families & Communities (BRFC) programme and will retain its 'Earned Autonomy' status (funding is up-front, rather than Payment by Results). In the current year, Staffordshire's programme has achieved successful outcomes for 1,203 families, exceeding its annual target of 784.
26. Family Hubs continue to play a critical role during the pandemic. They currently administer the Defra Emergency Food Scheme, which has meant 25,000 children have had access to a £15 voucher per week during the Easter Holidays. In addition, the council has received £2.2 million from the Department of Education to deliver a Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme at Easter, Summer and Christmas, supporting children and their families to stay safe, happy, and healthy. The council is currently in the process of establishing a steering group to drive this forward with partners.
27. As part of the COVID-19 response, the local authority and partners experienced a surge in the number of donations received, such as masks, PPE, food and clothes. The Staffordshire Resilience Forum (SRF) agreed to develop an approach across the partnership to ensure the receipt of safe and sustainable donations, which supports families in a crisis and in delivering the authority's community agenda.
28. The council and Staffordshire's Clinical Commissioning Groups are working with others to improve the way children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) are supported. Recently they approved and published Staffordshire's five-year Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) strategy following extensive engagement with parents, as well as professionals, the NHS and school representatives. Practical commitments include educating more children closer to home, providing more support for teaching in mainstream classrooms and funding the appointment of extra staff to process Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessments more quickly. As well as making the right support available for children, other priorities to emerge from the consultation included improving the timeliness of communication with families and improved access to out-of-school activities for children with SEND.

29. Over the last 12 months the Trading Standards team have dealt with over 1,400 COVID-19 related complaints, which included unsafe PPE and the removal of over 400,000 uncompliant face masks from the market. Whilst not safe or compliant to be used as surgical masks or face masks, many of the products were able to be regraded to be marketed as face coverings. COVID-19 related complaints accounted for over 12% of the total complaints received, with 37% of these relating to business closures and a further 27% related to social distancing.
30. The Stage 2 bid for the Staffordshire History Centre project was submitted on 1st March with the outcome expected in June. The bid is for £3.9m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund towards the £7m project to create the Staffordshire History Centre. If successful, the project brings three significant collections of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service, County Museum and William Salt Library together at the site on Eastgate Street, Stafford.
31. Staffordshire's Community Managed Libraries have 5-year contract and lease agreements with the council which can be renewed for a further 5 years. On 19 February 2020, Cabinet agreed a further support package for the community managed library model which will enable the sustainability of the Community Managed Libraries and support their work within communities.
32. Staffordshire Libraries has also been awarded £7,500 Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) funding to extend the Reading Friends initiative which was piloted during lockdown. The evaluation of the Staffordshire pilot concluded that the project had helped those involved to feel more connected to others and inspired them to read more. The additional funding will enable the Library Service to offer Telephone Reading Friends to Staffordshire Women's Aid and also parents across the county who are home educating, with the aim of reducing social isolation and loneliness and a love of reading to support well-being.
33. In terms of the financial position at Quarter 4, for Families & Communities there is a forecast saving of £0.510m, compared to the forecast saving of £62,000 in Quarter 3. This is largely due to staffing vacancies and additional grant incomes. The forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £5.961m, which includes additional exceptional costs and lost income.

34. Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

35. The council continues to support local businesses to survive, adapt and continue to operate as part of delivering its 5-year Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation Strategy.
36. The latest support programme delivered by the council as part of this strategy is a £2m loan fund to back small businesses through pandemic recovery, launching in April. The three-year Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Business Loan Fund will provide loans from £10,000 to £50,000 to companies across a range of sectors. The council will work with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and not-for-profit organisation BCRS Business Loans, which will administer the programme for both councils.



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

- Countywide redundancy task group, in partnership with the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP), delivered a successful virtual jobs fair in January;
- In addition, the countywide redundancy task group has supported 1,400 individuals, with 26% moving into a positive outcome;
- Staffordshire Start-Up Loan scheme is assisting those made redundant or unemployed to start up new businesses with loans of between £3,000 and £5,000, with no interest or fees. As at the beginning of March, 5 applications had been approved, totalling £23,000;
- Kickstart scheme to support young people's employment prospects is now up and running with 539 placements created in the SSLEP area.

38. Staffordshire businesses and employees can get a further boost through the £5m [Staffordshire Means Back to Business Support Scheme](#) which launched in March. With all Districts working together and contributing the aim is to:

- Pool resources and add additional money to the Additional Restrictions Grant to support businesses through the pandemic;
- Offer three new sources of support to help new businesses to get off the ground, support young people into employment and the costs of upskilling and training new employees.

39. As part of this scheme the council's Ignite Programme launched in January and is a new programme of free advice, workshops, mentoring and support for post-16 further education students looking to set up their own business in Staffordshire.

40. This support continues to be critical, with the latest out-of-work claimant figures showing a further increase to 4.8% of the working age population in February 2021, totalling 25,650 claimants. Whilst Staffordshire has been experiencing a rise in claimant numbers due to COVID-19, the county's position going into the pandemic has meant claimant rates remain lower than both regional (7.4%) and national (6.6%) averages. The proportion of young claimants, aged 18-24, has increased from 3.7% in March 2020 to 7.6% in February 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.

41. There have been several major job creation announcements in recent months, including fashion retailer ASOS committing to a new £90m fulfilment centre at Fradley near Lichfield which is set to create 2,000 jobs and be open in early 2022. Pets at Home are developing a new national headquarters at Redhill near Stafford, also due to open in early 2022 and forecast to employ 800 people. JCB has announced that it will be looking to take on around 400 agency staff to cope with an anticipated surge in production.

42. Work has continued safely at pace on the i54 South Staffordshire Western 60-acre extension through the partnership with the council, City of Wolverhampton Council and South Staffordshire Council. The current i54 employment or business park has a workforce of circa 2,500 people, with half of the jobs held by people living within a ten-mile radius.
43. Work has taken place during Quarter 4 to prepare for the full re-opening of schools to all pupils on 8th March. The council's Active Travel team has supported the safe restart of home to school transport, including roll out of lateral flow testing to support operators.
44. With the announcement that adult learning could recommence from 8th March, the council's Community Learning Service with their learning providers continued to offer online learning courses throughout March and developed a new range of classroom-based courses to meet participants' needs and interests. The new range of classroom-based courses will start on 19th April 2021 and be delivered in COVID-19 safe community centres throughout Staffordshire.
45. In March, approval was granted of £69 million for investment plans targeting road safety and sustainable transport schemes, including the upgrade of busy junctions, updating traffic signals, and improving footways and cycle paths.
46. During this quarter a project to update thousands of Staffordshire streetlights that will use less energy and save money has begun. The council is replacing 47,000 conventional bulbs with LED lighting after taking out an interest-free loan to fund the project. The loan for the project will be repaid by the estimated £1.6 million-a-year savings from using less energy. The work is being carried out with partner E-on and is expected to be completed by March 2025. Engineers hope to be able to replace around 1,150 lights per month.
47. Residents and businesses in Stafford, Cannock, Newcastle-under-Lyme, and Burton have been invited to have their say on proposals to improve cycling and walking in their towns, with nearly 1,500 people sharing their views. The £1.8 million investment by the council will help to deliver its local cycling and walking infrastructure plan with work starting as early as April 2021.
48. The council's Air Aware Team has been awarded around £300k by DEFRA to expand its Air Aware programme and deliver new initiatives to tackle air pollution in the county. The money, from the government's Air Quality Grant, helps councils develop and implement measures to benefit schools, businesses and communities and reduce the impact of poor air quality on people's health.
49. The overall financial position at Quarter 4 for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills is a forecast saving of £78,000 with small forecast savings across the business. On top of this, the forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £5.389m.

50. Corporate Services



51. Corporate Services continues to provide vital support to the organisation in delivering on its priorities.

52. A significant amount of corporate work has been provided to Local Outbreak Control. During the last quarter this has included supporting the implementation of testing, vaccination roll out to all frontline staff and sourcing of buildings and ensuring Clinically Extremely Vulnerable are supported. Dedicated data and analytical capacity is also helping to target action in relation to Test and Trace activity and management of outbreaks.

53. Since it was confirmed that the county council elections will be going ahead in May 2021, the council has been working closely with the 8 district and borough election authorities to ensure that the polls are administered and delivered in a consistent, safe and legal manner. Work has included liaising with schools, health and safety and public health colleagues. Strategic planning has also commenced, including ongoing preparations to develop the council's new Strategic Plan.

54. Over the last quarter progress has been made on roll-out of the new Staffordshire story and place brand. The new place brand manager started in post in early February, and the council hosted the first virtual event in the new ambassador programme, attended by more than 180 people from businesses and organisations across Staffordshire and the West Midlands. More than 120 people also attended two creative masterclasses to hear about how they can apply the story and visual identity in their own organisation's activity. In February the Staffordshire Place Board met for the first time, with their role to support and direct the work of the place brand manager and delivery of the annual marketing plan.

55. A 'Celebrating Diversity' calendar has been developed to raise awareness of religious and cultural events and encourage positive discussion on Diversity and Inclusion practice across the organisation. Work has also been done to review the council's internal recruitment processes and analyse existing workforce data in reference to the nine protected characteristics.

56. In Corporate Services the financial position at Quarter 4 is a forecast saving of £0.529m, this is an improved position from the Quarter 3 savings position of £0.145m. The improved position is due to staffing vacancies and increased incomes. The forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £3.834m.

57. Strategic Plan Principles

58. Progress has been made this quarter to drive forward the council's four principles, which continues to underpin our priority work. A summary of key activities is set out below.

59. Communities

60. To promote social action in local communities and to build capacity in the voluntary and community sector, the council's Communities Delivery Plan was approved in Quarter 4, including a set of key activities.
61. Phase 2 of the council's #DoingOurBit campaign has begun, including launching of a new campaign in mid-March to help tackle loneliness in Staffordshire. Informed by findings from the COVID-19 Resident Survey carried out by the council last year 'Let's Beat Loneliness Together' will help raise awareness of the issue and promote the services available to those affected by it. The campaign will also support those individuals or volunteers who want to do something themselves to help reduce loneliness in their local community. The council is working with Everyone Health Staffordshire, parish councils and other partners in the voluntary and community sector that can support people if they are feeling lonely.
62. As part of allocating #DoingourBit Community Grant funding, 60% of these projects have now commenced and case studies have been received from completed projects showing how the funding has made a difference to their local communities. Much of this funding help groups and organisations to reopen/restart activity safely after lockdown restrictions are lifted.
63. Building on the council's commitment to listen and respond to the needs of its citizens, the first Citizen Survey has been conducted which ran from 30th November 2020 to 4th January 2021, achieving a substantial response of over 3,600. Follow up research has been undertaken, and resident voice now forms an integral part of the council's quarterly performance reporting process.
64. The last quarter of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Strategic Capacity Building Contract saw 180 organisations provided with one to one development support, £1,671,827 external funding secured by VCSE organisations and 114 individuals supported to access local volunteering opportunities.

65. Digital

66. The Digital First Strategy and Programme was agreed at Cabinet on 17th February. The strategy focusses on four themes - Digital Citizen, Digital Council, Digital Care and Digital Economy. These themes are underpinned by programmes of work, including improvements to online access to services and information, as well as enabling digital innovations.
67. Work has been ongoing to establish a Digital Infrastructure Strategic Framework to enable and accelerate delivery gigabit connectivity technologies and infrastructure to increase access in Staffordshire.
68. Digital inclusion remains a key priority. The council's Digital Device Recycling Scheme was initially launched internally during Quarter 4. Digital devices started to be donated during the quarter, with the aim of working with partners to distribute them to the people who are at risk of digital exclusion across Staffordshire.

69. In this quarter, the Digital Skills Project has scoped the digital training opportunities which exist within the organisation and brought together those involved in the development of new digital tools, including Microsoft 365 and the Learning Portal, through a regular task and finish group.

70. Climate Change

71. A key activity this quarter has been the Cabinet approval and publication of the Climate Change Strategic Framework.

72. Furthermore, the Climate Change Community Fund Scheme ran from November until the end of February to support projects in Staffordshire communities that do their bit towards the reduction of carbon emissions, improve air quality, or help people to deal with climate change. Over £70,000 was awarded to 107 submissions in the 2020/21 financial year.

73. As part of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme the council has been awarded over £3million to decarbonise 22 school buildings. This will include replacing oil boilers with heat pumps, insulating pipe work, installing energy management control systems, modification of heating systems to maximise efficiency and pressure and fitting water heater timers

74. Workforce

75. Over the last quarter, ongoing COVID-19 response work has included new vaccination and COVID-19 testing policies, supporting Staffordshire schools and the staff vaccination roll out. Steps have been taken to vaccinate eligible employees against COVID-19 and ensure work-based testing is available to frontline workers.

76. Progress has been underway to deliver the council's internal People Strategy, including a new Employer Brand which has been developed and approved during Quarter 4, aimed at attracting and retaining talented people in the council's workforce.

77. The wellbeing of colleagues remains a high priority with the strengthening of its Mental Health Awareness training and the promotion of Wellbeing Feel Good Habits. Furthermore, the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team has received £278k grant to develop access to the ThinkWell services for Independent Sector care staff.

78. Finally, an outcome of the COVID-19 response has been a significant and continued reduction in sickness absence levels; currently 9.93 days lost per employee (February 2021), representing a reduction of 17% from the same period last year. Absences relating to diagnosed/suspected cases of COVID-19 account for 1.13 days lost per employee over this period (11% of total), but this has been outweighed by improvements against the majority of other absence reasons. Of particular note is the reduction in musculoskeletal absences, currently 1.32 days lost per employee, a reduction of 40% from last year.

List of Appendices:

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

Contact Details

Report Commissioner: Andrew Donaldson
Job Title: Assistant Director – Strategy and Transformation
Telephone No.: 01785 278399
E-Mail Address: andrew.donaldson@staffordshire.gov.uk

Report Commissioner: Rob Salmon
Job Title: County Treasurer
Telephone No.: 01785 276350
E-Mail Address: rob.salmon@staffordshire.gov.uk