

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 21 July 2021

Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2021/22



Alan White, Leader of Staffordshire County Council said,

“Our focus remains firmly on tackling Covid-19 and doing what is needed to control the spread of the virus and protect the most vulnerable. Work to manage outbreaks is ongoing as is work dealing with the immediate economic and social consequences of the last eighteen months.

“Throughout the pandemic we have supported those who need us most, including the care sector, vulnerable families and local businesses. Our COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan continues to help manage local outbreaks. The emergence of the Delta variant remains a concern and recent outbreaks show just how quickly the virus can spread through our communities. Teams have also delivered targeted testing facilities across the county and continue to provide support to the NHS vaccination programme.

“In other council business, we continue to provide support for vulnerable adults and children and with this, we still need longer-term help from the Government for funding adult social care and children’s and family services. We continue to lobby Government for a long-term sustainable solution to this as well as more clarity on future settlement grants and funding opportunities.

“The government have also confirmed an additional £5.7m funding increase for the upkeep of Staffordshire County Council maintained schools which is welcome news. A new source of funding to provide more specialist places and improve provision for SEND pupils has also been confirmed.

“We continue to provide advice and support for businesses, as we work to get our economy back on track. We have plans in place to ensure we bounce back stronger and generate new opportunities for better jobs, improved lives, and a greener county for everyone.”



Ian Parry, Cabinet Member for Finance said,

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

“We have had additional funds and grants from Government which have been used to help support the additional pressures of continuing to provide vital services while protecting our residents. All council departments continue to deliver against their recovery priorities, whilst progressing with activities in the organisation’s Delivery Plan. The latest revenue forecast outturn shows a forecast saving of £8.119m (1.5%).

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

Report Summary:

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

Recommendation(s)

We recommend that:

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

Local Members Interest
N/A

Cabinet – Wednesday 21 July 2021

Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2021/22

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 of the Director of Corporate Services

1. Background

2. All parts of Staffordshire County Council continue to deliver against their recovery priorities, whilst also progressing with the activities outlined in the organisation's Delivery Plan. This report provides an update on Quarter 1 key activities for each directorate area.

3. Summary



4. At the end of Quarter 1, the overall assessment on the council's performance 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 £8.119m (1.5%).

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:

- Management of COVID-19 incidents and outbreaks in settings; with a particular focus on COVID-19 outbreaks in Leek, Newcastle and Tamworth.
- Flexible and targeted testing facilities to support rollout of asymptomatic testing model and continuing support to NHS vaccination programme; excellent COVID vaccination rate with figures as at 30th June showing two-thirds of Staffordshire residents aged 20+ have received 2 doses.
- Ongoing support to care providers in vaccinating eligible frontline care workers; as at 1st June, 100% of care home staff & residents had their 1st dose and 92% had received their second dose.

8. COVID-19 cases in Staffordshire were falling at the start of Quarter 1, but have started to increase again since May, following national and regional trends. In the seven days to 27th June, 1,287 cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in Staffordshire,

a rate of 146.3 per 100,000 population. This was lower than both the regional rate (156.1) and the national rate (171.6). Residents can keep up to date with the latest case figures in Staffordshire, including a district breakdown by clicking [here](#).

9. Residents affected by odours from Walleys Quarry in Newcastle are being asked by the council to complete a daily survey detailing any health problems. The daily symptom tracker launched in May, with residents asked to report levels of smell and key symptoms. Headaches, nausea, and sleeplessness were the main problems recorded in the first week. It is hoped responses will provide a deeper understanding of the scale and nature of the health problems and build evidence to support future regulation of the landfill site. The survey can be found [here](#).
10. Staffordshire Together for Carers Service, the council's new carers service and pathway, commenced on the 6th April 2021 providing a single point of contact for carers of all ages and the cared for. The service delivered by n-compass offers support to prevent, reduce and delay dependency on health and care services, developing carer friendly communities which support carers to maintain their caring role safely, in line with the council's Carers Strategy.
11. In June, the Supportive Communities Programme Board approved the delivery plan for 2021/22 which will be used to embed the supportive communities approach across the organisation and support individuals to remain independent for longer. The programme is wide ranging and includes the recently launched #DoingOurBit COVID-19 Self Isolators Grants Scheme, which will provide small grants to help Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) groups working with vulnerable self-isolators. The scheme closes on 30th September 2021.
12. 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 activity includes the Staffordshire's Chamber of Commerce Mental Health Awareness webinar, restart of the healthy walks programme in line with COVID-19 guidance, #TalkSuicide and 'Let's Beat Loneliness' campaigns with work already ongoing to extend these.
13. The 'Do It to Feel Good' email campaign was launched in June and is being delivered by the council in conjunction with Everyone Health Staffordshire. It aims to remind people of the importance of looking after their mental health and the positive impact that making small changes can have on a person's wellbeing. This includes a weekly motivational email with practical tips based on 'The Five Ways to Wellbeing' - a series of actions proven to improve wellbeing in everyday life. They will also receive details about services and local organisations across Staffordshire that offer support. People can sign up to the 'Do It to Feel Good' campaign [here](#).
14. Families in Staffordshire are being encouraged to apply for funding to help make their homes greener and more energy efficient. The additional £4.2 million funding from the Government's Warmer Homes initiative follows the successful delivery of the Staffordshire Warmer Homes scheme. To date the scheme has helped install green homes measures in 240 Staffordshire homes. Building on funding already

secured, the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme will be delivered by the council and it is expected to benefit a further 445 households.

15. The successful 'Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential supplies' scheme was also extended to cover all of Quarter 1; the council pledged a further £57,500, which has been match funded by the Energy Saving Trust. The funding was available to support residents struggling to pay their energy bills.
16. From a Finance perspective, the Health and Care forecast outturn at Quarter 1 is a saving of £5m. There remains a range of high risk Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) savings within this area, with the directorate seeking alternative savings where necessary. In addition, the level of client debt is above target and work is ongoing to recover this. The forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £4.149m. The longer-term financial impact of COVID-19 is not yet clear but will undoubtedly affect the MTFS in future years.

17. Families and Communities



18. Work to progress recovery plans, transformation and wider service delivery continue to take place across the Families and Communities area, with a particular focus on the Children's and Families System Transformation Programme.

19. Progress is being made on the Children's and Families System Transformation, with the property now purchased for a new in-house residential unit to support some of the county's most vulnerable young people. The council is waiting for the planning application before work commences to adapt the property for purpose.

20. As at 4th June 2021, there were 1,245 children in care, which represents a slight increase over the previous 6 weeks. 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 (85.6 per 10,000 at end of March 2020).
21. As at 7th June, the number of children subject of a Child Protection Plan was 576 and has been slowly reducing over the previous 12 months, with a current rate of 34 per 10,000. This is below both the most recent national benchmark (43 per 10,000 at the end of December 2020) and regional rate (43.5 per 10,000 at the end of March 2020).
22. From the 5th July, parents of eligible children in Staffordshire can register for a space on the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF). The programme offers inclusive activities and hot meals over the school summer holidays for children aged 5-16 years. It is free to those who receive benefit related free school meals or who are at risk of financial exclusion.
23. Foster carers from across Staffordshire are leading a new campaign to help highlight the urgent need to find more foster families, with Staffordshire needing 60 more foster families to be found this year. #WhyWeCare is the latest campaign by

the Fostering Network as part of this year's Foster Care Fortnight which was launched in May. The council's Fostering Service has supported the campaign with a series of online events and videos to help find families for some of the county's most vulnerable children.

24. The council and key partners have begun work on an Action Plan to deliver key outcomes set out within Staffordshire's five-year Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) strategy. This will be developed over the coming weeks.
25. Work is ongoing to develop and implement the council's Children's Commissioning Strategy focussing on physical and mental health related priorities. This strategy will define the core priorities and ensure that the commissioning approach within Families and Communities supports the Children's and Families System Transformation. A draft strategy has been prepared and the first engagement sessions held. The final strategy will reflect feedback from parents, practitioners, and partners.
26. A key priority for the council is the provision of domestic abuse services (the council contributes to a jointly commissioned service). On the 29th April the Domestic Abuse Bill was signed into law. Provisions in the Bill put responsibility on councils to implement the Safe Accommodation Duty for domestic abuse victims and their families. Funding has been received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and work has begun to distribute funds to relevant districts for 2021/22 provision.
27. The Trading Standards team continues to support businesses and the council through safeguarding and compliance advice. During April and May the team has dealt with over 2,500 engagements and interventions with businesses; with over £130,000 prevented from being lost to scams and fraud through the council's intervention.
28. Staffordshire County Council and its partner, the William Salt Library Trust, have received a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of nearly £4m towards the Staffordshire History Centre Project. The project will include an extension to the existing Staffordshire Record Office on Eastgate Street in Stafford, incorporating the William Salt library. The library will be restored and will retell the story of the building, as well as William Salt and his collection. In addition to modern reading areas and activity spaces, the centre will also allow people to discover more about their family or local history by visiting exhibitions, taking part in events and family activities and deliver a learning programme for schools and colleges. The centre will be supported by a series of touring exhibitions and targeted projects, to reach all communities across the county.
29. In terms of the financial position at Quarter 1, for Families & Communities there is a forecast saving of £1.139m. This is largely due to staffing vacancies and additional grant incomes. The forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £8.505m which is additional exceptional costs and lost income. Positively, central government recently confirmed a £5.7m funding increase for the upkeep of Staffordshire County Council maintained schools. This increase will be brought into the capital programme in due course and will give the council

opportunity to further address condition priorities in schools. A new source of funding to provide more specialist places and improve provision for SEND pupils has also been confirmed. Further details of these announcements can be found in Appendix 2.

30. Economy, Infrastructure and Skills



31. The council continues to support local businesses to survive, adapt and continue to operate as part of delivering its 5-year Staffordshire Means Back to Business Strategy.
32. A key part of this strategy is the extensions to the Enterprise Centres at Cannock Chase and Silverdale with both opening for business during summer 2021. The extensions have been funded by the council, the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the Pye Green Investment Fund jointly held with Cannock Chase District Council. All units at the Cannock Chase Centre extension are pre-let and Silverdale will be promoted, with interest already shown.
33. Businesses across Staffordshire have continued to be supported by the council and its partners through a range of targeted initiatives, to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19. Some specific examples are included below.
34. The Countywide Redundancy Task Group, in partnership with the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP) and 26 partner agencies, continues to meet fortnightly providing support to businesses and residents impacted in relation to redundancies, as well as implementing the wider Plan for Jobs programmes such as Kickstart, Restart, Jobs Entry Targeted Support (JETS) and UK Community Renewal Fund (UKCRF).
35. The new Staffordshire Start-Up course has 219 individuals participating, with nearly half (48%) of the new businesses now in a position to start trading.
36. The £5m [Staffordshire Means Back to Business Support Scheme](#) is active across the county and is providing fully funded apprenticeships and workforce training. Grants of up to £5,000 are being allocated to businesses with ambitions to grow and to date £55,025 has been spent across the 8 districts.
37. As part of the Staffordshire Means Back to Business Support Scheme, the council's Ignite Programme was launched earlier in the year; it 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. It is intended that the lesson plan will be delivered to 7,000 students, 293 students have registered for the online learning platform and 257 have registered to undertake the 5-day course.
38. Work continues to deliver the council's apprenticeship programme. The Staffordshire Apprenticeship 500 initiative began on 1st April 2021 and as at the end of May had received 179 expressions of interest and 64 applications, resulting in a possible 107 apprenticeship starts.

39. Positively, the latest out-of-work claimant figures have decreased to 4.4% of the working age population in May 2021, totalling 23,400 claimants. Whilst Staffordshire has previously 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 (7.0%) and national (6.1%) averages. The proportion of young claimants, aged 18-24, has increased from 3.7% in March 2020 to 6.9% in May 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.
40. Staffordshire's Economic Growth Programme, which began in 2014, has continued to create and safeguard jobs and enable house builds. As at end of May 2021, 10,074 jobs have been created/safeguarded and 2,822 new houses enabled.
41. A £23.6 million government funding boost will support ambitious growth plans for Newcastle-under-Lyme and further enhance Staffordshire's post-COVID economic recovery. The district is one of 30 towns across the country to be confirmed as a recipient of the £700million Town Deals funding. The town's allocation is expected to generate an increase of more than £69 million a year in gross value added (GVA).
42. Staffordshire residents are being asked for their views on the county's highways and transport services – from the condition of roads and footpaths to the quality of cycling facilities. Their feedback will be compared with the views of others from across England and Scotland as part of the National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction survey, with local and national results to be published in late October 2021.
43. The overall financial position at Quarter 1 for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills is a forecast saving of £0.137m with small forecast savings across the business. The forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £1.588m.

44. Corporate Services



45. Corporate Services continues to provide vital support to the organisation in delivering on its priorities, as well as significant activity in support of Local Outbreak Control.
46. A successful virtual welcome day to the new council took place in May which distributed information to members and began the induction programme which now runs until end of 2021.
47. Over the last quarter progress has been made on the roll-out of the new Staffordshire story and place brand, with the first 12-month place marketing plan for Staffordshire approved by the new Staffordshire Place Board. The new "We Are Staffordshire" website was launched with over 50 ambassadors registered in the first month; and the council hosted two further virtual events as part of the new ambassador programme, with attendees from businesses and organisations across Staffordshire and the West Midlands.

48. As a consequence of the various restrictions over the last 18 months, there has been significant disruption to wedding registration services in the county. Staffordshire has over 120 licenced venues for marriage, with an excess of over 700 ceremonies from April to December 2021, the majority of which are May-September. This means that approximately 3,750-4,000 ceremonies will be conducted and administered in 2021/22; a rise of over 25% on normal figures.
49. In Quarter 1, the council delivered £5.6m through the sale of six assets, including the key sale of Great Wyrley Day Centre and Community Support.
50. A film festival, a virtual market to support local businesses and author talks were amongst the events for the sixth annual Staffordshire Day celebrations on the 1st May. Organised by Enjoy Staffordshire with the help of the council and other local authority partners, thousands of people from across the county joined over 50 online events and activities to show their pride in the county and what it has to offer. #Staffordshireday was also trending on Twitter, helping to raise the county's profile further.
51. In Corporate Services the financial position at Quarter 1 is a forecast saving of £0.325m. This is largely due to staffing vacancies and increased incomes. The forecast financial impact of COVID-19 for the directorate is £0.554m.
52. Strategic Plan Principles
53. Positive progress has been made this quarter to drive forward the council's four principles, which continue to underpin priority work. A summary of key activities is set out below.
54. Communities
55. Current focus has been on the delivery of the council's 2021/22 Communities Delivery Plan which aims to promote social action in local communities and to build capacity in the voluntary and community sector.
56. Working with 'Everyone Health Staffordshire', parish councils and other partners in the voluntary and community sector, the council's first #DoingOurBit campaign on loneliness, 'Let's Beat Loneliness Together', has been successfully delivered. More than 420,000 people were reached via social media and around 7,000 referrals made to loneliness related Staffordshire Connects pages. To help the digitally excluded, 3,000 leaflets and 50 posters were distributed to Parish Councils and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) to share locally. This included church groups and village halls through Support Staffordshire.
57. The council's Members Fund launched at the end of June, giving each County Councillor £2,500 to spend in a local area. The fund will focus on supporting a thriving VCSE sector in Staffordshire, helping organisations to restart fundraising and paused activities. It will work alongside other funds specifically focused on COVID-19 recovery and engagement has taken place with partners to position and promote the fund.

58. The last quarter of the VCSE Strategic Capacity Building Contract (January – March 2021) saw 155 organisations provided with one to one development support, £1,847,972 external funding secured by VCSE organisations and 423 individuals supported to access local volunteering opportunities.

59. Digital

60. The council's Digital Programme is continuing to be delivered through its 32 existing projects, which include improvements to online access to services and information, as well as enabling digital innovations.

61. Digital inclusion remains a key priority and work is ongoing to address barriers to this in Staffordshire. More than 25 devices have been donated as part of 'Donate IT' Digital Device Recycling Scheme and these will be distributed to people who are at risk of digital exclusion in the county. Rural connectivity projects are also underway with 30 communities working with the council to obtain funding for Community Fibre partnerships.

62. Work continues to ensure that staff are digitally enabled and feel supported to develop their digital skills. A new Learning Experience Platform has been launched to support the roll out of Microsoft 365 (including Microsoft Teams) across the organisation.

63. Climate Change

64. A key activity this quarter has been the delivery of a series of engagement sessions across priority themes (Fuel & Transport, Property, Waste and Natural Environment) to identify how to meet the council's challenging climate change targets.

65. Furthermore, an updated Climate Change Action Plan is being finalised, focussing on the council's actions for the next 12 months. A blueprint is also being drafted which will set out the longer-term transition needed for Staffordshire to be net carbon neutral by 2050 and will underpin current and future actions plans.

66. This year's annual Earth Day celebration was endorsed by the council, with Staffordshire residents urged to do their bit to think green to help the environment on this day. Top tips included replacing lightbulbs in the house with LED Lightbulbs, reduce travel by car, and advice how to reduce, reuse and recycle waste from [Waste Savvy Staffs](#).

67. Workforce

68. Over the last quarter, ongoing COVID-19 response work has included preparations for the lifting of lockdown and supporting all Staffordshire education and early years settings. Steps are being taken to ensure all council premises are health & safety ready and to support managers with the tools and resources to help staff with this transition.

69. Work to deliver the council's internal People Strategy is ongoing. Delivery of the council's new Employer Brand, aimed at attracting and retaining talented people in the council's workforce, is near completion.

70. 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. Over the last quarter delivery has included the launch of the new wellbeing calendar of events, starting with the MindKind Thrive with Nature campaign to support workforce mental health, and a series of webinars in partnership with CTC Healthcare.

71. Finally, an outcome of the COVID-19 response has been a significant and continued reduction in sickness absence levels; currently 9.34 days lost per employee (May 2021), representing a reduction of 18% from the same period last year. Absences relating to diagnosed/suspected cases of COVID-19 account for 1.01 days lost per employee over this period (11% of total), but this has been outweighed by improvements against most other absence reasons. Of note is the reduction in musculoskeletal absences, currently 1.31 days lost per employee, a reduction of 37% from last year.

List of Appendices:

1. Finance Quarter 1 Summary
2. Finance Quarter 1 Detailed Report
3. Corporate Checklist
4. Revenue Forecast Outturn 2021/22
5. Capital Forecast Outturn 2021/22
6. Financial Health Indicators 2021/22

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