

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 16 October 2024

Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 2, 2024/25



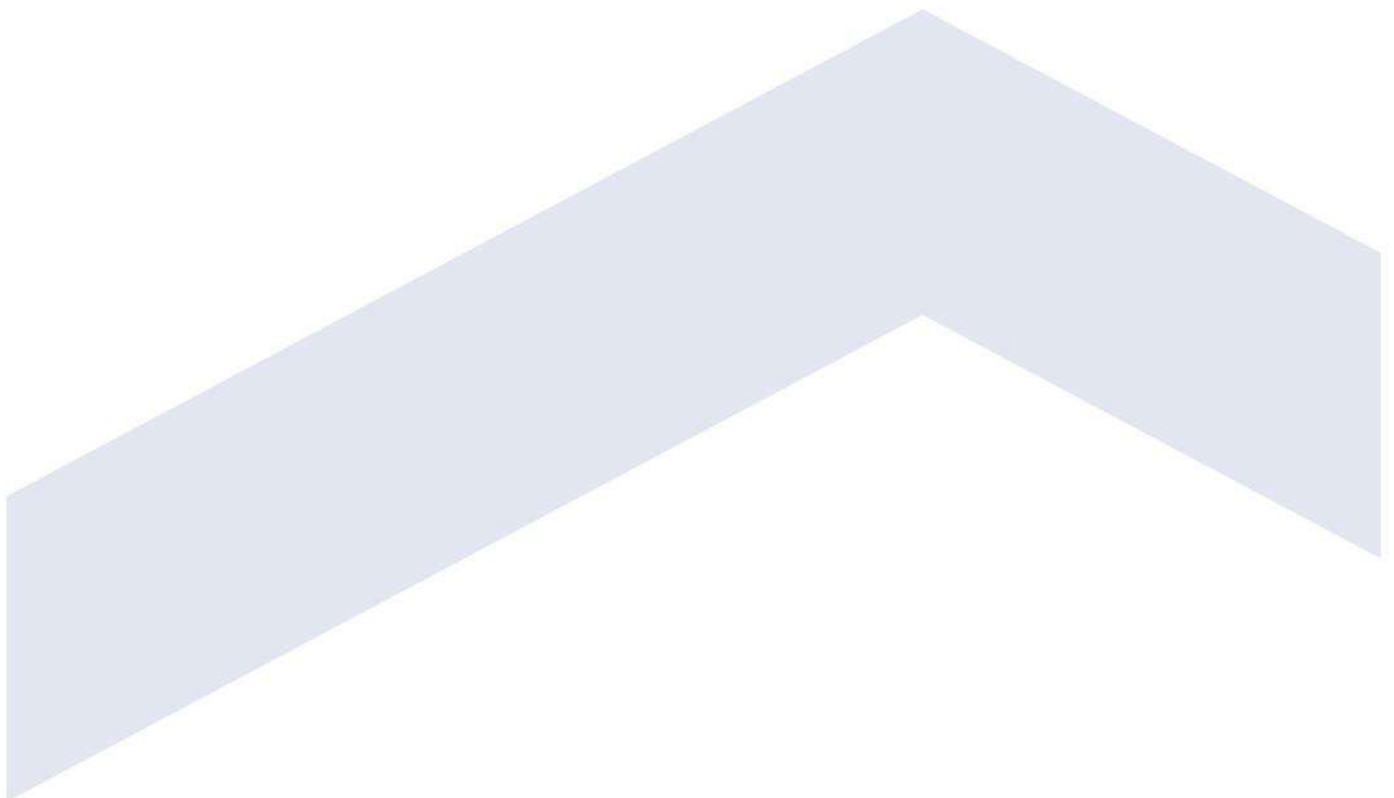
Cllr Alan White, Leader of Staffordshire County Council said:

"We continue to deliver on our priorities, including creating the right conditions for our economy to grow, improving our roads and supporting those who need our help the most.

"We know the importance of good roads to residents and our economy and an additional £8 million investment in the highways recovery plan in May is already seeing results. Since then, crews have fixed more than 11,300 potholes, cleaned thousands of gullies and completed seven major improvement schemes.

"Local businesses continue to get the support they need to get started and to grow and the 'We are Staffordshire' brand continues to raise the profile of the county as a great place to live, work in and invest.

"Despite facing rising demand for services and costs, we continue to deliver a balanced budget and will invest to keep growing the county in a sustainable way, to make a positive difference in the lives of our residents. We continue to find new, better, and lower cost ways of delivering services including the use of digital technology to achieve better results."





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

"We continue to make significant progress across the organisation with departments delivering on their corporate priorities.

"Rising costs across the organisation and levels of demand, particularly in Adult Social Care continues to present challenges. The service has also been put on notice for an imminent Care Quality Commission inspection. Growing demand for services across our Children's and Families Directorate also remains a challenge as the service continues to deliver the improvement plan.

"The latest revenue forecast outturn shows an underspend of £2.781m (-0.41%). Like many councils, we still face financial challenges, but we are a well-run authority and continue to live within our means, deliver value for money for taxpayers, whilst improving the services we deliver to our customers."



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, annual 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 16 October 2024

Integrated Performance Report - Quarter 2, 2024/25

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

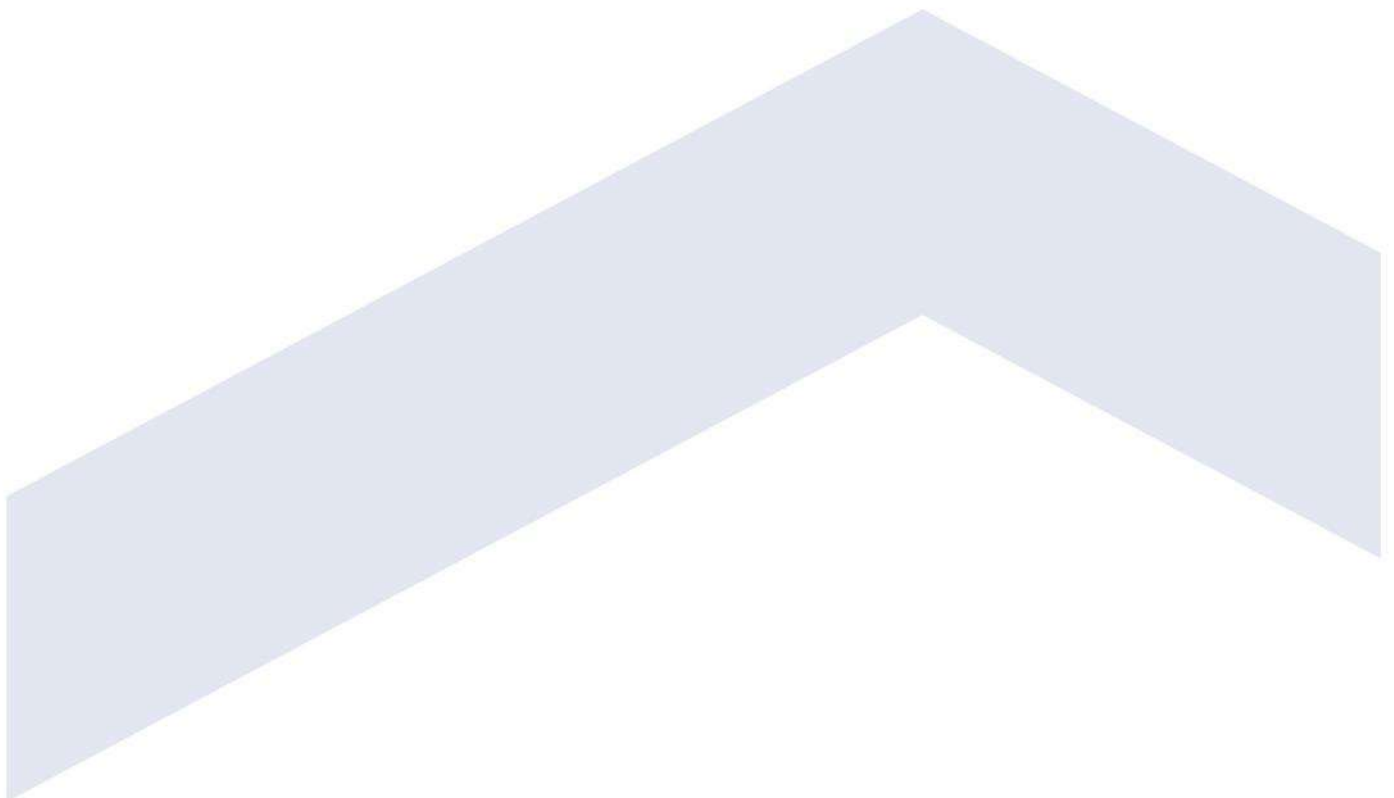
We recommend that Cabinet:

- 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

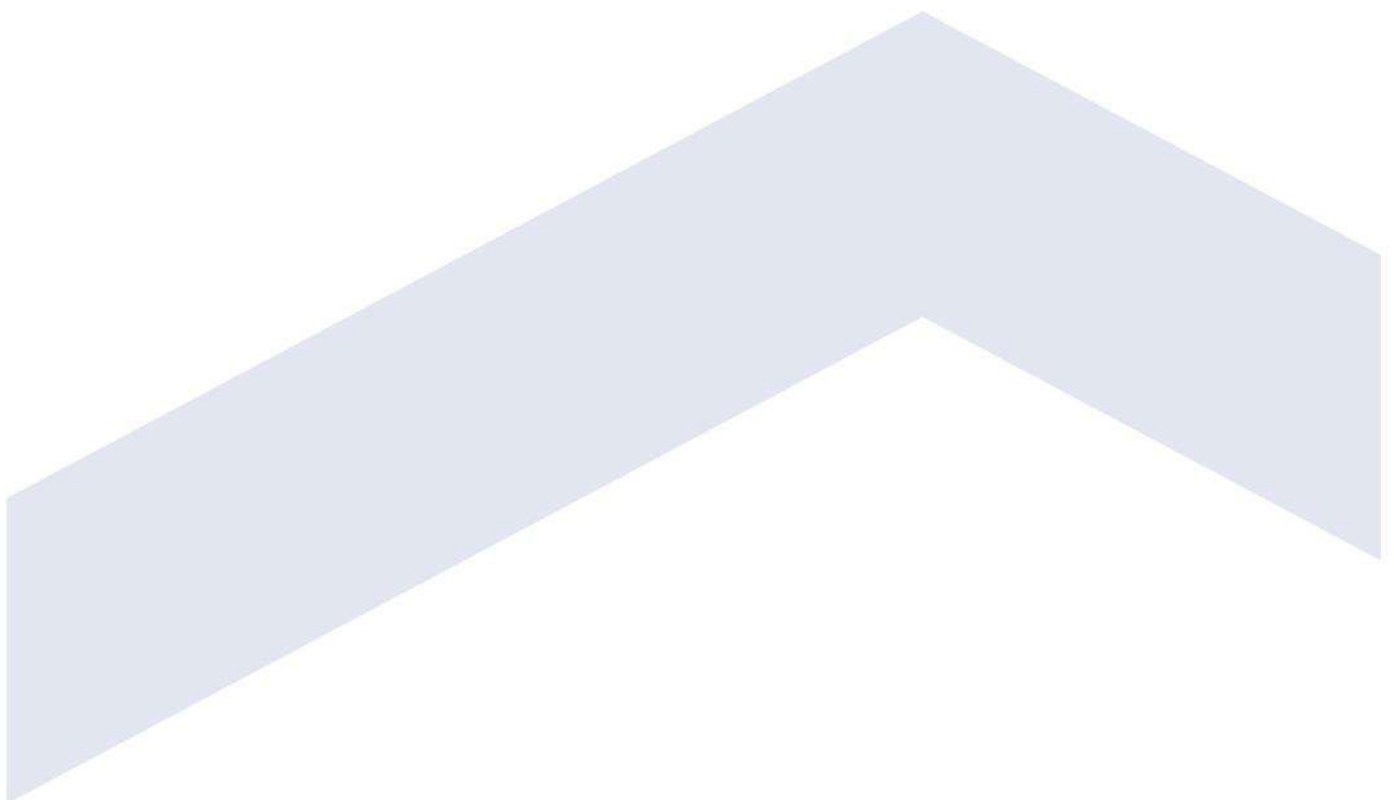
This is an opportunity for Cabinet to consider and discuss Staffordshire County Council's quarterly performance and financial position.



Introduction

This report provides an overview of performance at Staffordshire County Council for Quarter 2 in relation to delivering the priorities as set out within the council's [Strategic Plan 2022-26](#) and annual Delivery Plan.

During 2024/25 the council is reporting on 58 strategic performance measures which have been developed to assess the organisation's performance, as well as progress against the 18 priority deliverables which the council has committed to delivering. Monitoring of both the priority actions and strategic performance measures, alongside our financial position, help the council to understand the impact of its work and give a more rounded view of performance.



Quarter 2 (June – August 2024) Summary

Key highlights

- **Prepare for Adult Social Care Assurance:** Notification of Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection received in August, communicated to staff and key partners, and required documents have been submitted to CQC.
- **Home to School Transport Policy Implementation:** Transport has been organised for almost 2,200 pupils in time for the new academic year.
- **We Are Staffordshire:** Successful approval of the We Are Staffordshire brand presence at UKREiIF (UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum) in May 2025.
- **Digital Innovation:** New Digital Strategy approved at Cabinet in July.
- **Highways Operational Delivery and Transformation:** Highways Recovery Plan announced in May seeing results, including increased defect repairs. Successful completion of seven structural maintenance schemes during Quarter 2.
- **Staffordshire Communities Strategy:** Cabinet approved Strategy in September, with Delivery Plan in development.

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

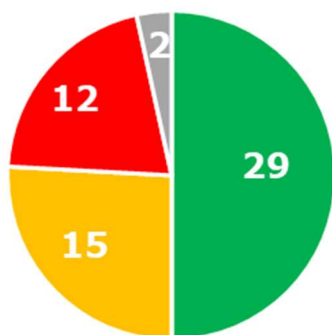
Key challenges

- **Childrens Services Improvement:** Significant work has begun to address key recommendations in the ILACS report and a revised improvement plan is currently in progress. More focus is required on engaging the wider partnership and refocusing the work of the Staffordshire Families Strategic Partnership to improve outcomes for more vulnerable children.
- **SEND Improvement:** Staffordshire Enhanced District Inclusion Support (SEDIS) model is progressing well and the impact should be more clearly seen in Quarter 4. Five districts gone live, with a sixth going live in January 2025. A third round of provider expressions of interest launched for the remaining two districts.
- **Home to School Transport Policy Implementation:** Financial forecast still showing an underlying overspend against the budget of £1m (although there has been a cost reduction of £500k from Q1 to Q2). The number of children with an EHCP continues to increase, resulting in additional demand for transport.
- **Highways Performance:** Despite delivery plan activity being reported as on track, high demand continues to be a key challenge and impacts on performance.
- **Climate Change and Net Zero:** Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure project progressing on a location and capacity feasibility study, however complexities require further detailed work resulting in a delayed completion of March 2025.
- **Environment and Countryside:** Some projects are behind original dates; however activities are progressing to bring delivery back on track against revised due dates, e.g., Staffordshire Way audit.
- **Waste Management:** Work is ongoing to review the council's waste management infrastructure, which is now due to be completed by December.

Organisation Overview of Performance and Delivery

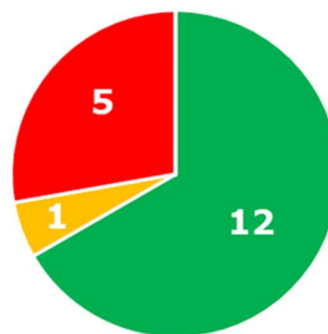
1. The charts and tables below show that at the end of August 2024, 50% of the council's strategic performance measures were on target and 67% of priority deliverables as set out in the council's Delivery Plan were on track. Details of the strategic performance measures can be found in Appendix 1.

Strategic Key Performance Measures -
Q2 Performance against target



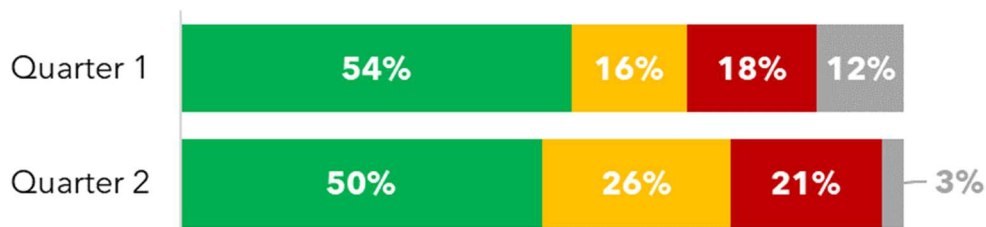
Red = Action being taken
Amber = Review
Green = Good
Grey = Not available or TBC

Delivery Plan Priorities -
Q2 Performance against target

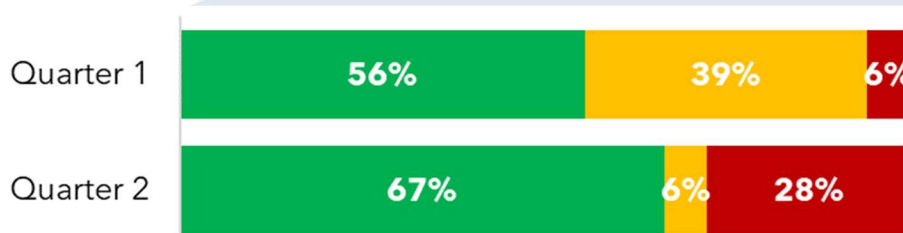


Red = Immediate action
Amber = Attention is needed
Green = No action needed
Grey = Not available

Strategic Performance Measures – Quarterly Comparison



Delivery Plan Performance – Quarterly Comparison



2. The following sections within the report provide more detail in relation to the strategic performance measures and delivery of the council's priorities, aligned to the key themes within the Strategic Plan.

Encourage good health and wellbeing, resilience and independence

Key Performance Measures Summary

3. Good performance continues for **people in receipt of services for 12 months or over** with a review in the last 12 months, with the August figure of 94% well above the target of 80%. The **percentage of services sourced within timescale** also continues to show strong performance at 94% in August, against a target of 75%.
4. Performance challenges include **care act assessments completed within 28 days**, with performance of 68% below the current target of 70%. This is because of an increase in the complexity of assessments alongside capacity challenges during the summer. Plans are in place to recover performance back in line with target and the council will continue to prioritise assessments for adults at the greatest risk.
5. **The percentage of safeguarding referrals closed or assigned within 5 working days** has dipped below target in July (75% vs target of 80%) due to usual seasonal variations in demand mixed with a reduction in available staffing. Two thirds of people over the 5-day threshold had their concern closed or assigned within a further 5 working days.
6. The total number of households with measures installed since the start of the **Warmer Homes programme** is slightly below target (1,057 vs target of 1,126), however a new project has now commenced (Home Upgrade Grant - HUG Phase 2) with the first installations being completed, which will positively impact on the figures over the coming months. Staff from the public health team at the council have also been visiting off-gas properties during September to explain how households could be eligible for free home energy upgrades, funded by the Staffordshire Warmer Homes Scheme. This element of the scheme is due to close on 18th October.
7. **Care providers rated good or outstanding by Care Quality Commission (CQC)** remains below the 80% target, at 78%, and there continues to be very limited change due to reduced CQC inspections which is a trend seen both locally and nationally.
8. **Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard referrals outstanding after 21 days** remains above target at 484. New demand in July was 915, which is substantially higher than average (730) and the highest since January (also 915). A new pathway process with local acute hospitals commenced in August, which will enable hospitals to make better use of their urgent

authorisations and allow the DoLs team to focus on those that need a standard authorisation. This is expected to have a positive impact on both the workflow and for people referred.

Delivery Plan Performance Summary

Delivery Plan Priority	Delivery RAG
Additional Nursing Home Capacity	GREEN
Prepare for Adult Social Care Assurance	GREEN
Supported Living	GREEN
Drug & Alcohol Treatment Services	GREEN

Additional Nursing Home Capacity

9. Staffordshire County Council has proposed the build of two new nursing homes in Lichfield and Tamworth, in response to increasing demand from an aging population. A business case to identify the benefits of this approach and set out how the homes could be built, operated and funded is being developed. An update on this will be taken to Cabinet in June 2025, with a final decision on whether to develop additional nursing homes expected in 2026.

Preparing for Adult Social Care Assurance

10. The council has been preparing for a future assessment of local authority adult social services by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). In August, the council received its notification letter that it will be inspected by the CQC, and this has been communicated to all staff and key partners. The council has since submitted all the required "Information Return" documents to the CQC, including the self-assessment. A second letter will be received providing 6-8 weeks' notice of the visit, the council will continue to monitor its quality and performance, and delivery of improvement plans will be used as evidence to support the visit.

Supported Living

11. During Quarter 2 the council has continued to work on the recommissioning of its supported living care services for people aged 18 and over with disabilities, to ensure quality, access, sustainability, and equity. Following positive engagement events with Supporting Living Providers the first part of a full consultation, which started in July, is now complete. Feedback has informed the second part of the consultation which is now underway and findings from both will be used to inform the Supported Living Cabinet Report (including the Commissioning Plan) which will now go to Cabinet in December.

Drug & Alcohol Treatment Services

12. The council has transferred its drug and alcohol treatment services to Midlands Partnership University Foundation Trust (MPFT), under a Section 75 Agreement, to provide drug and alcohol treatment alongside other services such as mental health, learning disability and adult social care, which will make it easier for people to get the help they need. Work has continued during the quarter to ensure the smooth transition of the service, which commenced from 1st April. All initial indicators continue to be positive, with co-ordination of the various premises moves ongoing and three of the four premise moves making good progress and nearing completion. The review of the service, involving staff and stakeholders, has now concluded. Recommendations from this review will be used to inform future service redesign and ensure capacity is there to meet demand and improve quality, which is planned for the autumn.

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

Key Performance Measures Summary

13. Performance continues to improve for **children subject of a child protection plan** and is currently 35.9 per 10,000 children, which is lower than the same period last year (39.8) and remains lower than statistical neighbours (38.6) and England (43.2).

14. Performance challenges include the **rate of children in care** in Staffordshire, which is now 76.6 per 10,000 children. This is lower than the same period last year but remains higher than statistical neighbours (67.3). This is a complex area which is influenced by many factors including the decision making within the family courts. The **average number of days between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family** also shows improvement compared to the previous year and is better than the national average (485 for 2023/24), but at 443 days remains above the target of 426 days. Improving performance is a result of more staff accessing support and training to improve their understanding of the adoption process, monthly tracking meetings across the system about children who have a plan or a potential plan of adoption and districts now having a link worker in the adoption service for advice and support.

15. The **percentage of initial child protection conferences held in time** has risen to 81.6% against a target of 90%, and latest figures remain above statistical neighbours. Performance continues to be better than comparators (78.7% SN, 78.4% National). Work is ongoing to improve recording in this area. The **percentage of children's social**

work assessments completed on time remains below target (68.8% vs 85% target), however this needs to be linked to the quality of assessments which are improving, and this can be evidenced by the rates of re-referral that are at 15% over the recent 6 month period.

16. **Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) timeliness** is currently 55.7% against a target of 48%. Although the timeliness of EHCPs being issued each month continues to improve (and was above the national average for the first time this year), the rolling 12-month average is 33%, and the number of assessments that have been in progress for more than 20 weeks has increased from 288 to 365. To improve performance in this area the council is continuing to deliver its SEND Improvement Plan, including exploring Educational Psychology capacity. The **percentage of children with an EHCP in mainstream schools** has fallen slightly after some improvement (latest performance 30.5%) but remains below the target of 40%. Performance for the new academic year is still being updated for those young people transferring between phases of education so performance is likely to improve.

17. In Quarter 1, 418 families achieved **successful sustained outcomes delivered under the Supporting Families Programme (known as BRFC)**, 24% of the annual target (1,735). The council has received confirmation that they have retained their Earned Autonomy status until the end of March 25. An action plan is in place to increase the number of families included in the programme.

Delivery Plan Performance Summary

Delivery Plan Priority	Delivery RAG
Children's Services Improvement	RED
SEND Improvement	RED
Home to School Transport Policy Implementation	RED

Children's Services Improvement

18. The council is committed to improving the quality and consistency of children's social care services in an efficient, effective, and evidence-based way. Since April progress has been made across the service to deliver a series of practical measures identified in the council's Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) improvement plan in response to an Ofsted inspection of children's services published in January, which found that the service 'required improvement to be good'.

19. There has been significant work undertaken to review the improvement work across Children's Services and a revised plan is in progress. Leadership training has commenced to inform consistency in practice,

and this will continue through to 2025. A programme of Clinical supervision for all managers has been commissioned and this will further support the quality of social work practice.

20. There is work underway to review the Staffordshire Families Strategic Partnership Board to ensure that key priorities for children are shared with partners and agreement is reached to progress at pace.

21. Increased leadership capacity will be necessary to support the improvement required at the ambitious pace expected from the regulators and the Local Government Association (LGA) are supporting this work currently.

SEND Improvement

22. Improving support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Staffordshire is a priority for the council. The council is working with partners to deliver a range of activities to deliver its SEND strategy and increase support for these children sooner, and within their local mainstream school, as well as increase special school places.

23. During Quarter 2 work has continued to implement the Enhanced Assess, Plan, Do, Review (EAPDR) process and the Staffordshire Enhanced District Inclusion Support (SEDIS) model to help reduce the pressure on the High Needs Block. As of 1st September, implementation of the SEDIS model is behind plan with 5 of the 8 districts having gone live with this new model, and a 6th set to start in January 2025. An improvement plan is in place, and it is hoped a third round of Expressions of Interest (EOI) will conclude the commissioning process for the remaining 2 districts. A SEND Self Evaluation Framework and SEND Quality Assurance Framework have been approved by the SEND and Inclusion Partnership, with work progressing on a detailed delivery plan for each section.

Home to School Transport Policy Implementation

24. During 2024/25 the council is continuing to implement the updated SEND Home to School Transport process, including the promotion of personal travel assistance budgets and the approach to the application of the Home to School Travel assistance policy, for statutory school age children.

25. During Quarter 2 transport has been organised for almost 2,200 pupils in time for the new academic year. However, an increasing population of those with an EHCP remains a challenge in this area. Improvements and

actions that are being implemented following the review of SEND transport are mitigating against anticipated further rises in demand and costs as far as possible e.g. improving average occupancy levels and identifying the most efficient transport routes. The financial forecast is still showing an underlying overspend against the budget of £1m, although there has been a cost reduction of £500k from Quarter 1 to Quarter 2.

Support Staffordshire's economy to grow, generating more and better paid jobs

Key Performance Measures Summary

26. **Regeneration Programme Delivery Status** remains Amber due to the budget for Fifty500, however lobbying activity for the programme is being refocused post General Election and the project team continues to explore funding opportunities. The other defined projects are delivering as expected against programme and budget.

27. Whilst the total number of claimants both in Staffordshire and England has increased over recent months, positive performance includes an improvement to the **claimant count** gap between Staffordshire and England rates (1.3%). It is important to note that the Department of Work and Pensions are currently rolling out a change which will affect a proportion of claimants over a period of around 6 months, increasing the Claimant Count over that time. This therefore needs to be viewed with some caution whilst these changes are implemented.

28. Current performance challenges include the **number of new job seekers supported through the council's Staffordshire Jobs & Careers Service** with performance below target for July (8 vs a target of 18). This measure does however fluctuate and there are no concerns in achieving the full year target. The **number of apprenticeship opportunities generated** remains at 75 based on June performance, against a target of 400 by March 2025, however the Ladder for Staffordshire reports there should be a substantial increase in the number of starts in September.

29. The **percentage of 16- and 17-year-olds not in education, employment or training** remains at 4.3% against a target of 4.2% by the end of January 2025 and is better than England (5.8%) rate. To minimise any impact the council's Avenues Engagement Programme trial is progressing well with young people now attending.

Delivery Plan Performance Summary

Delivery Plan Priority	Delivery RAG
Economic Growth and Skills	GREEN
We Are Staffordshire	GREEN

Economic Growth and Skills

30. Through the delivery of the council's Employment and Skills Strategy residents will be given the skills to access higher value, better-paid jobs, across a wide range of priority sectors, helping to deliver a more diverse, inclusive, and sustainable economy. Highlights this quarter include the council's Community Learning programme which will achieve its planned 3,000 enrolments for the 2023/24 academic year. The Ignite programme has also delivered a lesson to over 5,770 students in the 2023/24 academic year against a target of 4,120 students.

We are Staffordshire

31. The 'We are Staffordshire' brand is successfully raising the profile of the county as a great place to live, work in and invest. Highlights this quarter include the successful approval of the We Are Staffordshire brand presence at UKREiiF (UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum) in May 2025, which will help to raise Staffordshire's profile for inward investment. A successful Ambassador Event was held at Weston Park in Stafford in June with over 75 attendees and four new Ambassador registrations secured following the event. Work is also underway to develop a long-term strategy and future delivery model for We Are Staffordshire, with stronger links to wider economic growth services.

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

Key Performance Measures Summary

32. **Environment and Countryside volunteer hours** continue to be below target (3,917 vs 5,000), impacted by capacity within the service. Development work in relation to the corporate volunteering offer continues.

Delivery Plan Performance Summary

Delivery Plan Priority	Delivery RAG
Climate Change and Net Zero	AMBER
Waste Management	RED
Environment and Countryside	RED

Climate Change and Net Zero

33.To make the county more resilient to climate change and work towards the council's net zero 2050 ambition, the council is working to deliver and continually evolve its climate change action plan. A Climate Adaptation Strategy to further safeguard the county in the event of extreme climate has been agreed by Cabinet. Work is also progressing on the annual review of the council's Climate Change Action Plan, and the council's Climate Change Action Fund opened for applications for funding in July. Now in its fifth year the fund has so far allocated over £267,000 through 290 successful applications to the fund.

34.The council is also working to facilitate a robust electric vehicle charging infrastructure in Staffordshire, with a location and capacity feasibility study currently underway. Due to the complexity of the project there are challenges with delivery, with more detailed work required, resulting in a delayed completion date of March 2025.

Waste Management

35.The council is committed to taking an environmentally and financially sustainable approach to waste management. Work is progressing on the council's Waste Minimisation Plan, which is being integrated into work around the Circular Economy. This will focus in the short term on zero waste. Building on the successful project to bring the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) back inhouse, further work is ongoing to review the council's waste management infrastructure, which is now due to be completed by December.

Environment and Countryside

36.The council is committed to improving Staffordshire's natural environment and developing its environmental assets so communities and visitors can enjoy the benefit of these. Progress has continued on the Cannock Chase and Chasewater Country Park investment projects, with positive stakeholder involvement and 20 submissions received in response to the invitation to tender for the feasibility work. The study for Cannock Chase Visitor Centre is now underway and the Chasewater study will start in October. Although progress is being made there have been delays to delivery with some projects having revised due dates set.

37.An audit in relation to restoring Staffordshire Way as a regional route began in August and is due to be completed by October.

Fix more roads, and improve transport and digital connections

Key Performance Measures Summary

38. Challenges remain in relation to highways response times. Timeliness of highways **'emergency' defect repairs** improved in August compared with the previous month but was slightly below target (98.08% vs target of 99.99%). Category 1 repair timeliness dipped to 93.47% against a target of 96.68%, however this is in the context of continued high demand, with a 44% increase in identified emergency and Category 1 defects compared with the same month last year (199 in August 2024 and 138 in August 2023). Options are being explored to further improve response times to high-risk defects including different types of crew, repair techniques and use of other resources such as inspection teams.

39. **Capital Maintenance delivery programme** dipped to 96% due to one project (Horninglow Road North) being delayed for mobilisation until Quarter 3, but this measure is on track to deliver for the year.

Delivery Plan Performance Summary

Delivery Plan Priority	Delivery RAG
Highways Operational Delivery and Transformation	GREEN

Highways Operational Delivery and Transformation

40. Following the particularly bad weather during the winter, demand continues to be high in terms of identified new road defects compared to previous years. The additional £8m Highways Recovery Plan to improve defect repair response times, reduce the overall workstack and improve resilience in anticipation of a further wet winter in 2024/25 is seeing results.

41. During Quarter 1 and Quarter 2, 21,372 potholes were repaired across the county, and good progress is being made with the gully programme to tackle drainage issues. As part of the preventative treatment programme, the council completed 594 roads against a target of 458. The overperformance of 136 roads was due to the completion of 38 roads from 2023 that got delayed due to the weather and the completion of 98 roads brought forward from the 2025 programme.

42. This work is part of the council's £53m investment in Highways over the next 3 years to fix more roads.

43. The council's Highways Transformation Programme remains on track and continues at pace with the extra investment having a positive impact.

44. Maintenance of the county's network has continued in Quarter 2 with seven structural maintenance schemes completed during the Quarter, including A449 Wolverhampton Road and A34 Gaol Square, Stafford. Four schemes were mobilised or in construction during the same period, including A34 Radford Bank and A34 Cannock Road.

How we Work: Communities, Culture and Digital

Key Performance Measures Summary

45. **Library visits, digital and physical engagement with the Archives and Heritage Service, and Archive Service volunteer hours** continue to be below target, however the methodology for these measures is currently being reviewed to take account of seasonal fluctuations, with a more accurate assessment of performance to be provided from Quarter 3.

46. Within Trading Standards there has been an increase in the percentage of **businesses that were either compliant when visited or brought into compliance** during the period. (91% vs target of 90%). Two specific planned operations resulted in several uncompliant businesses visited in the last month.

Delivery Plan Performance Summary

Delivery Plan Priority	Delivery RAG
Staffordshire Communities Strategy	GREEN
Staffordshire Cultural Strategy	GREEN
Digital Innovation	GREEN

Staffordshire Communities Strategy

47. To encourage communities to help themselves and each other, the council is committed to working with residents, groups, businesses, and partners to develop a long-term, aspirational Communities Strategy for Staffordshire. Work has continued to test and further shape the development of the draft strategy over the summer. The initial timescale of July, for approval of the final strategy, had been delayed to September due to impacts of the General Election. However this enabled further testing of the strategy, and engagement with parish and town councils during August, and planning of ongoing engagement with residents and community roadshows for the Autumn. Cabinet approved the final

strategy on September 18th. To mitigate any further delays, work had already progressed during the summer to refresh the council's Communities Delivery Plan, to incorporate the activity proposed under the draft strategy.

Staffordshire Cultural Strategy

48. The council will invest in its libraries and Staffordshire History Centre to ensure that they are safe, welcoming spaces that enrich lives and strengthen communities. As part of this work the council has agreed to develop a new Cultural Strategy, to raise the profile and importance of culture, heritage, sport, and leisure across the county. During Quarter 2 work to develop the new Strategy has taken place and was approved by Cabinet in September. To ensure delivery of the strategy an action plan will be developed.

49. A delivery plan for Staffordshire Libraries' investment proposals is also being produced with timeframe and costings for each library in scope. The refurbishment of Burton Library commenced during Quarter 2 and the refurbishment of Wombourne Library is scheduled to begin in Quarter 4. Both projects were awarded Libraries Improvement Funding.

Digital Innovation

50. The council has committed to develop an ambitious agenda for digital adoption, maximising the use of digital innovations to transform the council into a modern, future facing organisation, using digital to enhance service provision and improve customer experience. During the quarter work has continued across multiple priorities, including exploring opportunities across the council such as automation software to streamline operational processes and utilising AI to enhance best practice and free up capacity for added-value work. Furthermore, to support delivery of the council's new Digital Strategy, which was approved at Cabinet in July, the redesigning of the resources the council needs to take its digital work forwards has continued at pace. The new model is on track with all new posts recruited to.

Live within our means and deliver value for money

Key Performance Measures Summary

51. The council's overall **sickness absence** levels (11.31 days) continue to increase and remain above target (11 days) and higher than the same month last year (11.17 days). Thorough reviews are taking place with all senior managers to address this, as well as focussed analysis to identify any trends and areas of support required.

52. Customer **speed to answer phone calls** remains above target in August (4 minutes 10 seconds against a target of 3 minutes), however this is an improvement on previous months because of the callback feature being disabled. Additional recruitment is also taking place to help performance recover in this area.

53. Good performance continues for the **percentage of invoices paid within 30 days**, rising to over 98% for August – above the target of 95%. **Collectible debt greater than 6 months old** is in line with target.

54. **Capital Expenditure against capital allocations** is below target for Quarter 2 (86.9% vs target of 90%). There has been a significant rephasing of the schools' capital programme into 25/26, which is partially offset by accelerated spend into 2024/25 relating to the Highways Recovery programme.

Delivery Plan Performance Summary

Delivery Plan Priority	Delivery RAG
Embedding a Customer Experience	GREEN
New Social Care Case Management System	GREEN

Embedding a Customer Experience

55. The council is committed to developing and delivering a Customer Experience Strategy that will aim to provide excellent customer service for all interactions with the council. To achieve this, further progress has been made this quarter on the Vision, Strategy and the supporting Quality Framework. The Target Operating Model was also agreed in August which defines our way of working and will help to improve the customer experience.

New Social Care Case Management System

56. The council will design, procure, and implement a new case management system for adults' and children's social care to replace the existing system and optimise the efficiency of social care processes. During Quarter 2 work has continued with key stakeholders from across the organisation to gather future system requirements which has informed the production of a specification for the new system. The specification is now signed off and the council has published the procurement pack, with the tender window closing at the end of October, and evaluation taking place during November.

57. Legal Implications

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

58. Resource and Value for Money Implications

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

59. Climate Change Implications

The council's Delivery Plan monitors key activities that contribute to the Strategic Plan priority 'Tackle climate change, enhance our environment, and make Staffordshire more sustainable'. This report provides updates on these activities, but more specific climate change implications will sit within the details of individual projects and their associated plans.

List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Strategic Key Performance Measures
Appendix 2 - Finance Quarter 2 Summary
Appendix 3 - Finance Quarter 2 Detailed Report
Appendix 4 - Revenue Forecast Outturn 2024/25
Appendix 5 - Capital Forecast Outturn 2024/25
Appendix 6 - Financial Health Indicators 2024/25
Appendix 7 - Prudential Indicators

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Appendix 1 – Strategic Key Performance Measures

Progress on the council's strategic key performance measures is set out on the following pages. To give a clear indication of performance, the following categories are used:

RAG Rating: **Red** = Action taking place , **Amber** = Review, **Green** = Good
Grey = Not available or TBC












Direction of travel: Improving =  Static =  Declining = 

Please note that some figures for the month of May may differ slightly to those reported at Quarter 1 as some measures may be updated retrospectively as new data becomes available or as performance is validated.

Encourage good health and wellbeing, resilience and independence

Key Performance Indicator	Target	Q2 Outturn (as at Aug 24 unless indicated otherwise)	RAG rating against target	Previous performance (and months/quarters if different to headings)			Compared with same period last year	
				Jul	Jun	May	Performance	Trend
% safeguarding referrals closed or assigned within 5 working days	≥80%	75% (July 24)	Amber	82% (June 24)	83% (May 24)	84% (Apr 24)	49% (July 23)	
% care act assessments completed within 28 days	≥70%	68% (July 24)	Amber	70% (June 24)	73% (May 24)	73% (Apr 24)	N/A	
% of people in receipt of services for 12 months or over who have had a review in last 12 months	≥80%	90% (July 24)	Green	91% (June 24)	93% (May 24)	94% (Apr 24)	88% (July 23)	
% of services sourced within timescale	≥75%	94.10% (Aug 24)	Green	95.5% (July 24)	94.70% (June 24)	95.3% (May 24)	94.30% (Aug 23)	
% care providers rated good or outstanding by CQC	≥80%	78% (June 24)	Amber	78% (May 24)	78% (Apr 24)	78% (Mar 24)	81% (June 23)	
Number of DOLS requests outstanding after 21 days	≤400	484 (Jul 24)	Red	485 (June 24)	519 (May 24)	525 (Apr 24)	539 (Aug 23)	
Home First: % of people with a reduced need for social care at the end of a reablement episode	≥70%	75% (May 24)	Green	78% (Apr 24)	N/A (Mar 24)	80% (Feb 24)	N/A	
Warmer homes: cumulative total number of households with measures installed since start of programme (adjusted indicator for March 24)	>1126	1057 (Aug 24)	Amber	1048 (July 24)	1025 (June 24)	1021 (May 24)	997 (Aug 23)	
Warmer homes: % with EPC increased by one or more bands	≥90%	91% (Aug 24)	Green	91% (July 24)	91% (June 24)	91% (May 24)	91% (Aug 23)	
Proportion of all supported living care services contracted by the Council and with active placements rated "Good" or "Outstanding"	>80%	80% (Aug 24)	Green	80% (July 24)	80% (June 24)	80% (May 24)	N/A	


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

Key Performance Indicator	Target	Q2 Outturn (as at Aug 24 unless indicated otherwise)	RAG rating against target	Previous performance (and months/quarters if different to headings)			Compared with same period last year	
				Jul	Jun	May	Performance	Trend
Number of successful sustained outcomes delivered under the Supporting Families Programme (known as BRFC) *	1735	418 YTD (June 24, available quarterly)	Amber	1383 YTD (353, Mar 24)	1030 YTD (363, Dec 23)	667 YTD (229, Sep 23)	438 YTD (Jun 23)	
% Childrens social work assessments completed on time*	85%	68.8%	Red	78.4% (July 2024)	79.8% (June 24)	79.9% (May 24)	75.80%	
% of initial child protection conferences held in time*	90% (SN 78.7%)	81.6% (Aug)	Amber	78.4% (July 2024)	91.8% (June 24)	96.2% (May 24)	0.944	
Rate (number) of children subject of a child protection plan per 10,000*	n/a (SN 38.6)	35.9 (606)	Green	36.4 (615) (July 24)	37.5(633) (June 24)	35.4(599) (May 24)	39.8 (672)	
Rate (number) of children in care per 10,000*	n/a (SN 67.3)	76.6	Red	76.5 (July 24)	77.2 (1305) (June 24)	76.3 (1290) (May 24)	81.4 (Aug 23)	
Average number of days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, adjusted for foster carer adoptions. (scorecard indicator A10)*	426	443 (June 24, Q1)	Amber	468 (Mar 24, Q4)	444 (Dec 23, Q3)	461 (Sep 23, Q2)	413 (June 23, Q1)	
% of care experienced children aged 17/18 in education employment or training*	66% (63.3% SN)	70.8%	Green	71.2% (July 24)	73.3% (June 24)	72.2% (May 24)	57.4% (Aug 23)	
% of care experienced young people aged 19/21 in education employment or training*	54.6% (SN)	59.5%	Green	58.5% (July 24)	58% (June 24)	57.1% (May 24)	55.4 (Aug 23)	
% of children receiving first school preference*	National (2023): P 92.5% S 82.6%	2024 P 94.8% S 89.8%	Green	Annual figure	Annual figure	Annual figure	2023 offers: Primary 95.3% Secondary: 91.4%	
Overall absence for Staffordshire school children*	7.5% (National)	6.5% (AY 2023-24 - Aut/Spring)	Green	No data	No data	No data	No data	
% of children with an EHCP in mainstream schools*	40% (ENG) (by 2028)	30.5%	Red	33.1% (June 24)	33.1% (May 24)	32.5% (Apr 24)	30.7% (Jan 24)	
% of EHCPs issued in time (20 weeks)*	48%	55.7%	Green	40.8% (July 24)	35.7% (June 24)	42.5% (May 24)	28.8%	




Support Staffordshire's economy to grow, generating more and better paid jobs

Key Performance Indicator	Target	Q2 Outturn (as at Aug 24 unless indicated otherwise)	RAG rating against target	Previous performance (and months/quarters if different to headings)			Compared with same period last year	
				Jul	Jun	May	Performance	Trend
Business & Enterprise								
Regen Programme Delivery Status (% of SCC Regeneration Schemes on Time and Budget)	100%	90%	Amber	90%	90%	90%	N/A	
Claimant Count (Gap between the claimant rate in Staffordshire and the England average)	1.0%	1.3%	Green	1.3%	1.1%	1.0%	0.9%	↑
Total No. Businesses Supported through SCC Start-up and Step Up Programmes (combined)	Monthly average target 29. Annual target 350	57 (July 24)	Green	24 (June 2024)	33 (May 24)	26 (April 24)	24	↑
Number of businesses supported through energy audits	200 (total target for Mar 25)	20 (Aug 24)	Green	23 (July 24)	12 (June 24)	48 (May '24)		
Enterprise Centre Occupation Levels	85%	88% (Aug 24)	Green	86.5% (July 24)	84% (June 2024)	85% (May '24)	85%	↔
Major Mineral and Waste planning determinations within target	>90% Annual 2023/24	100% (Q1-Q2) 2024/25	Green	100% (Q1) 2023/24	96% (2023/24)	100% Q4 (2023/24)	94% (Q1-Q2) 2023/24	↑
Skills and Employability								
% of 16 and 17 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training or situation Not Known	End Jan 25 – 4.2 %	4.3% (Jul 24)	Amber	4.3% (Jun 24)	5.3% (May 24)	4.8% (Apr 24)	5.10%	↑
Number of new job seekers supported through Staffs Jobs & Careers	18	8 (July 24)	Red	15 (Jun 24)	8 (May 24)	32 (Apr 24)	3 (July 23)	↑
Number of apprenticeship opportunities generated	400 by Mar '25	75 (Jun 24)	Red	75 (Jun 24)	29 (April 24)	29 (April 24)	200 (July 23)	
Number of students receiving lessons in Ignite (quarterly measure)	4,120 (23/24 academic year)	5,770 (Feb 24)	Green	5,770 (Feb 24)	5,770 (Feb 24)	5,770 (Feb 24)	5,500 (Feb 23)	↑
Multiply: Number of residents participating in outreach engagement.	2574 by Jul '25	886 (Q1 24/25)	Green	886(Q1 24/25)	601 to date Full Q1 available Aug 24		58	↑
Multiply: Number of learner enrolments engaged in substantive and meaningful provision	2,522 by Jul '25	708 (Q1 24/25)	Green	708 (Q1 24/25)	515 to date Full Q1 available Aug 24		176	↑
Number of Community Learning enrolments engaged in first step learning	3,000 by Jul '25	2,352 (May 24)	Green	2,352 (May 24)	2,352 (May 24)		2552 (May 23)	↔








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

Key Performance Indicator	Target	Q2 Outturn (as at Aug 24 unless indicated otherwise)	RAG rating against target	Previous performance (and months/quarters if different to headings)			Compared with same period last year	
				Jul	Jun	May	Performance	Trend
Volunteer hours within Environment & Countryside	12,000 hours	3,917 (YTD Aug 24 - outturn not yet complete)	Red	3,261 hours (YTD Jul 24 - updated figure)	2,505 hours (YTD)	1,688 hours (YTD)	4,526 hours (YTD)	
% recycling rate	Local target 1% increase 23/24 (44.88%) Overall partnership target 55%	Reporting will continue in November	Amber	47.1% (Q2 2023/24)	47.1% (Q2 2023/24)	47.1% (Q2 2023/24)		
Overall tonnage	1% reduction (216,451)	Reporting will continue in November	Amber	177,859 (11/02/2024)	177,859 (11/02/2024)	177,859 (11/02/2024)		
Staffordshire County Council's carbon emissions – tonnes of carbon (tCO2e) - Annual measure	1,000 tCO2e (annual reduction)	Reported annually in October	Green	Reported annually in October	Reported annually in October	25,541 (2022/23)		



Fix more roads, and improve transport and digital connections

Key Performance Indicator	Target	Q2 Outturn (as at Aug 24 unless indicated otherwise)	RAG rating against target	Previous performance (and months/quarters if different to headings)			Compared with same period last year	
				Jul	Jun	May	Performance	Trend
Capital maintenance delivery programme status	100%	96%	Amber	100%	100% (May)	100%	100%	
Highway high-risk defects remedy within target timescale	Emer: 99.99% Cat 1: 96.68% Cat 2: 71%	Emer 98.08% Cat 1 93.47% cat 2 75.3%	Amber	Emer: 92.31% Cat 1: 98.27% Cat 2: 77.28%	Emer: 100% Cat 1: 99.04% Cat 2: 67.18%	Emer: 97.96% Cat 1: 96.87% Cat 2: 71.63%	Emer 100% cat 1 97.43% cat 2 85.4%	
Highway Development applications considered within 21 days	85%	85.87% (Q2/Q3 May - Jul)	Green	84.10% (Q2 Apr-Jun)	83.50% (Q4/Q1 - Mar-May)	83.40% (Q4/Q1 - Feb-Apr)	N/a (Only previous annual results available)	N/a (Only previous annual results available)
Home to School Transport operational effectiveness	Under 10% (Sep - Jul Academic year)	0.00%	Green	2.99% (Sep-Jul)	2.57% (Sep - Jun)	2.09% (Sep - May)	0.00%	

How we Work

Key Performance Indicator	Target	Q2 Outturn (as at Aug 24 unless indicated otherwise)	RAG rating against target	Previous performance (and months/quarters if different to headings)			Compared with same period last year	
				Jul	Jun	May	Performance	Trend
Visits trend (against last year)	5%	177,595 (-4.4% for same period August 2023)	Red	184,778 (+3.9% on same period July 2023)	154,119 + 2%	168,159 +21.9% (May 24)	-4.4% (185,817 August 2023)	
New Membership trends (against last year)	Target being redefined							
Digital Engagement with libraries	10%	16426 (+60% increase on July 2023)	Green	16,503 (+89% increase on July 2023)	16204 + 55%	17,873 +11% (May 24)	10,324 (+60% increase on July 2023)	
Physical Engagement with Archives and Heritage Service	5%	448 (-42%)	Red	348 (+26%)	473 (-29%) (Jun 24)	1081 (+264%) (May 24)	778 (Aug 23)	
Digital Engagement with Archives and Heritage Service	5%	49460 (-15%)	Red	45,390 (-20%) (June 2024)	63,380 (-28%) (May 24)	47,822 (-31%) (Apr 24)	58,455 (Jul 23)	
Engagement with the Summer Reading Challenge - Annual measure	1% increase			8331 starters 77%				
Number of Libraries and Arts volunteers and hours	1% increase	734 numbers (+108% on August 2023) 6900 hours (+12.61% on August 2023)	Green	682 numbers (+44.49% increase on June 2023) 7401.5 hours (0.49% increase on June 2023)	Numbers - 595 + 26% Hours - 6894 + 0.4%	Numbers - 528 Hours - 6,934	Numbers 353 Hours 6127	
Number of Archives and Heritage Service volunteers and hours	10% increase	428.5 (-13%) and 82 roles	Red	329 hours (-16%) & 79 number of roles (Jun 24)	Number - 77 (not recorded in 23/24) Hours - 449.5 (+10.9%) (May 24)	Number - 77 Hours - 497.25 (+26%) (Apr 2024 - updated figures)	442.5 (Jul 23)	
Percentage of businesses that were either compliant when visited or brought into compliance during the period	90%	91.00%	Green	92.5% (Apr- July 24)	90.5% (Apr-Jun 2024)	85.3% (Apr-May 24)	0.93	

Live Within Our Means

Key Performance Indicator	Target	Q2 Outturn (as at Aug 24 unless indicated otherwise)	RAG rating against target	Previous performance (and months/quarters if different to headings)			Compared with same period last year	
				Jul	Jun	May	Performance	Trend
Sickness Absence	11 days	11.31 days	Amber	11.27 days	11.08 days	11.00 days	11.17 days	
Speed to answer phone calls	00:03:00	00:04:10 (Aug 24)	Red	00:06:58 (Jul 24)	00:06:29 (Jun 24)	00:04:45 (May 24)	00:01:16	
Collectible debt greater than 6 months old - All SCC Debt Categories	£27.75m	£27.75m	Green	£27.571m	£27.398m	£26.259m		
Payment performance - % of invoices paid within 30 days	95%	98.52% (Aug 24)	Green	97.99% (Jul 24)	98.11% (Jun 24)	98.13% (May 24)	98.32% (Aug 23)	
Revenue Forecast Outturn	<2%	-0.41% (Q2)	Green	0.69% (Q1)	0.69% (Q1)	0.69% (Q1)		
Capital Expenditure against capital allocations.	>90%	86.9% (Q2)	Amber	86.9% (Q1)	86.9% (Q1)	86.9% (Q1)		

Latest Financial Summary

The following graphs summarise the financial performance of the council. Full details are contained in this report.

The graphs and charts are compiled using quarter 2 forecast information.

The latest revenue forecast outturn shows an underspend of £2.781m (0.41%).

The previous forecast overspend on Families & Communities of £5m has been offset by additional Social Care Grant received in year, helping to bring this area to breakeven at Q2.

Economy, Infrastructure & Skills have seen savings increase primarily due to staffing vacancies and reduced payments to operators in Transport & Connectivity.

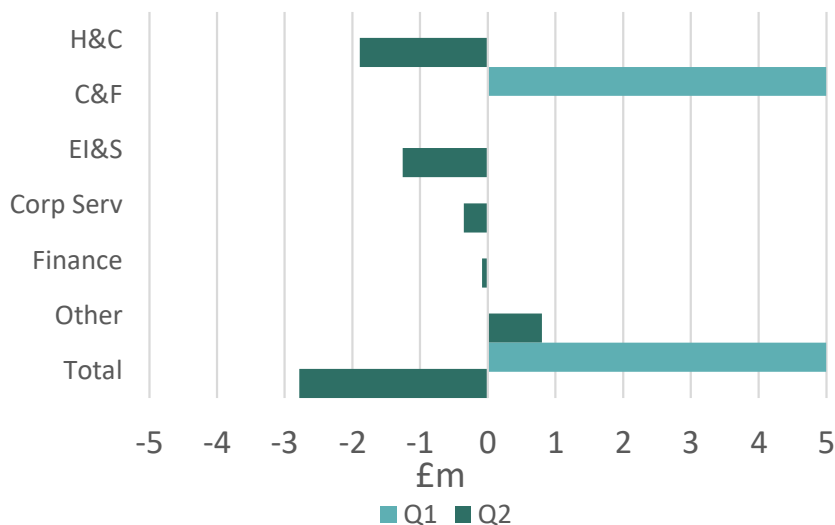
In Health & Care, savings have arisen from the Adult Social Care Discharge Grant being used to meet the Independence at Home Reablement Service during its second year of operation.

Savings are categorised into confidence of delivery. There are £5.404m savings as part of the MTFs. £0.480m of these savings have been delivered, with the remaining £4.924m of savings marked as low confidence of being delivered in 2024/25.

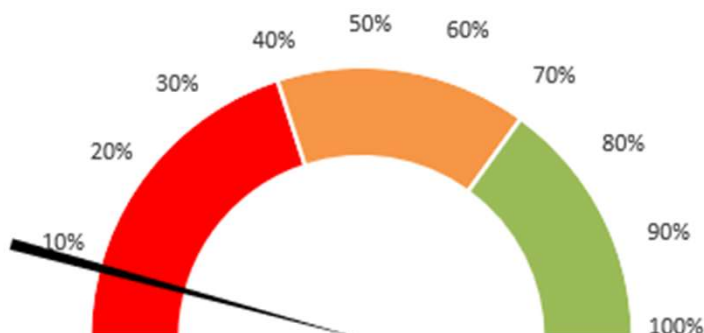
The latest capital outturn projection is £172.7m, compared to the quarter 1 position of £168.9m, an increase of £3.8m. This projection is a fully funded position. There have been movements across the whole capital programme, with the main increases arising within Families & Communities towards the purchase of six new children's homes.

Within the national context, the latest consumer price index is 3.1%. Interest rates reduced to 5% at the Start of August 2024. GDP is estimated to have increased to 0.5% at July 2024, after growing 0.4% to April 2024. Current unemployment figures show Staffordshire benefit claimant rate remains below that of the West Midlands and Great Britain.

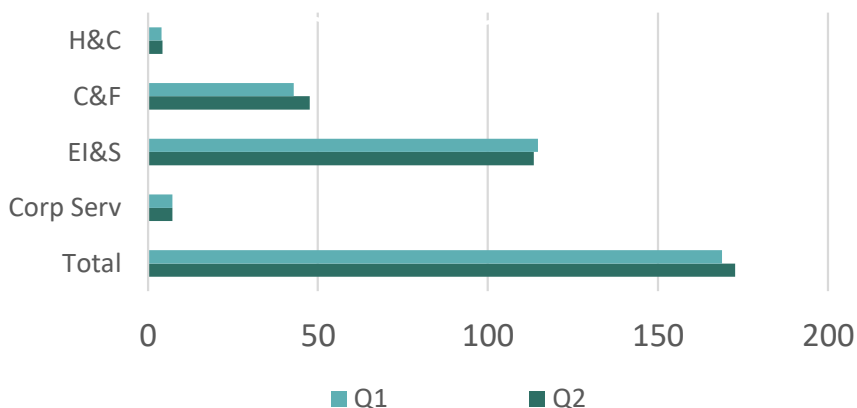
Revenue Budget Variance



Savings Tracker – Target £5.404m



Capital Programme



Appendix 3 – Quarter 2 Finance Report

Introduction

Revenue Forecast

1. The latest revenue forecast outturn (as provided in appendix 4) shows a forecast underspend of £2.781m (0.41%), compared to the balanced budget.
2. The following paragraphs consider the key financial issues in each of the council's portfolios.
3. **Health and Care** **Forecast – £1.892m saving**
4. There are a range of cost pressures in Health and Care from both rising demand and prices. These are currently being contained within the assumptions in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The approved Health and Care Directorate budget has increased by £3.902m following the allocation of additional one-off Social Care Grant to offset additional pressures.
5. *Public Health and Prevention* *Forecast – Breakeven*
6. The Public Health budget is forecast breakeven. A proposed transfer of £0.700m to the Public Health Ringfence reserve has been assumed to arrive at the forecast breakeven position. This is after considering an amount funded from the bought forward Contained Outbreak Management Funding (COMF).
7. *Adults Social Care & Safeguarding* *Forecast - £0.031m overspend*
8. The Adults Social Care & Safeguarding budget is forecast overspend by £0.031m at quarter 2.
9. There is a planned budget pressure of £0.673m in Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) Act as new legislation remains delayed. This is requiring additional capacity to contain and reduce the backlog of DoLS authorisations. This pressure has been managed within Health and Care overall, however, funding is available from the Health and Care reserves, should it be necessary.
10. This pressure is offset by staff vacancies in the Adults Learning Disability Team (ALDT) generating a forecast saving of £0.465m. The vacancies are planned to be filled during the year to ensure adequate capacity to complete assessments and reviews.

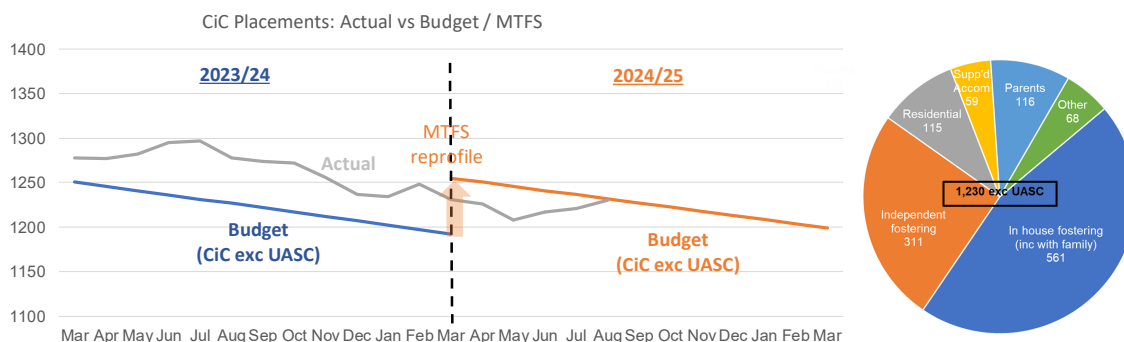
Appendix 3 – Quarter 2 Finance Report

11. There are savings of £0.177m as a result of further staff vacancies across Adults Social Care & Safeguarding.
12. *In House Provider Services* *Forecast – £2.150m saving*
13. The In House Provider Services budget, is forecast to make savings of £2.150m at quarter 2.
14. The Independence at Home reablement service is in its second year of operating. The cost is being fully met this year by the Adult Social Care Discharge Grant. The Complex Needs service and Residential services are forecast to overspend by £0.133m. This is largely due to the vacancy factor built into the staff budgets not being realised.
15. *Care Commissioning* *Forecast - £0.227m overspend*
16. The Care Commissioning budget is forecast to overspend by £0.227m at quarter 2. Growth was built into the MTFs for 2024/25 to reflect the anticipated impact of demographic changes and inflationary pressures within Care Commissioning.
17. The Learning Disability placement budget is forecast to save £0.838m. There are pressures on the Residential and Supported Living budgets that are offset by a reduction in the cost of direct payments and additional income.
18. The Mental Health budget is forecast to overspend by £3.179m, largely due to a growth in supported living placements in recent years and an increase in the number of people aged over 75 being supported.
19. The placement budget was increased in recognition of the growth in placement costs during the last few years but there remains a risk of further increases in referrals as we move through the year. There is a high risk that Mental Health placement costs will exceed budgets again this year. Commissioners are working to reduce this risk.
20. There is a £0.104m forecast saving on the Carers budget and also a £0.063m forecast saving on the Advocacy contract both due to lower activity than assumed in the budgets. These are offset by the cost of the Learning Disability and Autism Personal Social Inclusion navigation service which has created a pressure of £0.322m.

Appendix 3 – Quarter 2 Finance Report

21. There is a forecast overspend of £1.515m on Older People and Physical Disabilities, including Extra Care Contracts, after considering full application of Better Care Fund income. This is due to a rise in residential and nursing placements, particularly Older People nursing. The impact of the work ongoing to increase Block Booked Bed (BBB) usage is expected to have a mitigating impact on this position. This is being monitored and will be subject of future reports as and when actual cost benefits are realised.
22. Increases in Legal costs are resulting in a forecast overspend of £0.192m on the Care Act budget offset by other variances in the Care Commissioning budget resulting in a saving of £0.074m.
23. There remains a risk of further increases in demand and price. Commissioners continue to explore actions to mitigate these and avoid recurring pressures. The recommissioning of Supported Living contracts is taking place this year and there is a risk that this could create further additional cost pressures to be managed.
24. The forecast pressures have been offset against the additional £3.902m added to the Health and Care budget in-year from additional Social Care Grant received. This is currently expected to be a one-off allocation, but future year grant levels are to be determined.
25. **Children & Families** **Forecast - Breakeven**
26. *Children's Services* *Forecast - Breakeven*
27. The forecast position at quarter 2 is a breakeven position on Children's Services.
28. At the end of August, the number of Children in Care (CiC) was 1,299 (1,230 excluding Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers). Numbers have reduced significantly over the last year and, despite recent increases, remain within targeted levels at this time overall. There remains a forecast underlying overspend of £3.800m this year due to higher than expected reliance on more expensive residential provision and unregulated placements.

Appendix 3 – Quarter 2 Finance Report



29. Through various service performance and improvement programmes, action is being taken to bring forward the operational and cultural improvements required, for example, as identified in the latest Ofsted report, and address as far as possible pressures for CiC Placements, including:

- Continuously monitor the thresholds for children entering care, especially those requiring residential provision.
- Review and expand Edge of Care provision to mitigate and avoid escalation.
- Review and improve the reunification support offer.
- A review of all existing children in care by cohort, considering areas working well and areas for potential improvement.
- Maximise income contributions from key partners.
- Engaging with providers to actively source quality placements and ensure a vibrant market so that costs of care are competitive.

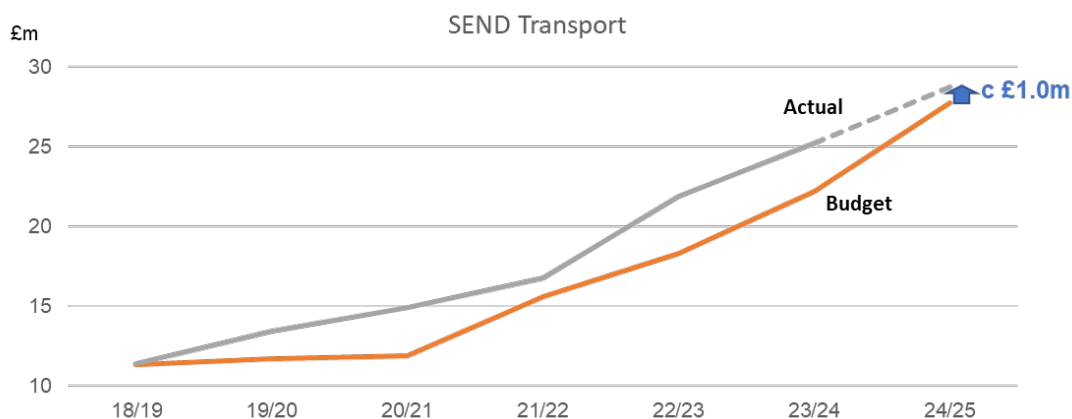
30. There are also other net pressures of £0.100m mostly due to additional agency cover and s17 support within the District structure, net of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) grant, to provide for an overall net underlying overspend in Children's Services of £3.900m. This is offset by the redistribution of additional one-off government social care grant of £3.900m to provide for a breakeven forecast.

31. *Education Services* *Forecast - £0.400m overspend*

32. The Education Services position at quarter 2 is an overspend of £0.400m. This is primarily due to pressures in SEND transport which in recent years has seen a significant increase in demand as a result of the rise in EHCPs. Costs increased significantly in 2022-23 due to rising costs of inflation, exacerbated

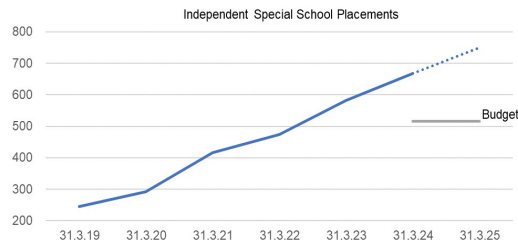
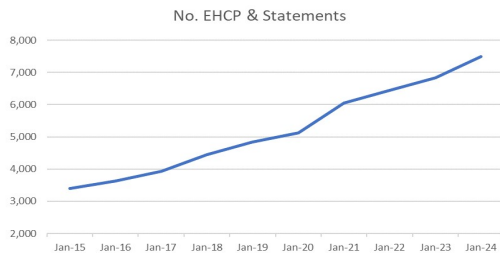
Appendix 3 – Quarter 2 Finance Report

by the conflict in Ukraine and, despite further increases in budget, it is likely that a further underlying overspend of £1.000m will arise this year. This has been offset in part against additional Government transport grant of £0.900m to provide for a overspend of £0.100m:

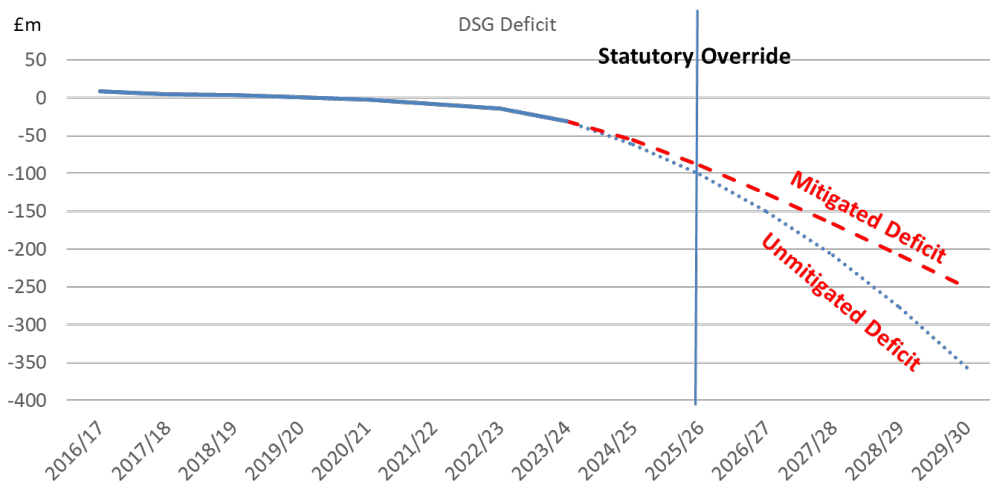


33. This is lower than previously forecast and reflects the improvements and actions that have so far been achieved this year following a review of SEND transport to mitigate anticipated further future rises in demand and costs as far as possible, for example, improving average occupancy levels and identifying the most efficient transport routes
34. There is a net pressure of £0.300m across Education Services mainly due to pressures in Educational Psychology & Specialist Support and SEND Assessment services to meet the continuing increasing demand for EHCP assessments leading to additional locum support and agency costs, but offset by other underspends from historic teacher pensions contributions, and within the school admissions and planning teams due to extra income. This provides for a forecast overspend overall of £0.400m
35. *SEND High Needs Block*
36. The High Needs Block is forecast to overspend by £28.0m and reflects:
 - Continuing growing demand for SEND support. This is impacting across all areas including more expensive placement costs within the Independent sector with numbers now more than double what they were just four years ago and new placements now averaging typically £0.070m per annum and rising:

Appendix 3 – Quarter 2 Finance Report



- Increasing complexity of need and costs impacting across all areas.
 - From April 2022, the County Council implemented a new 'Education Banding Tool' for assessing a child's EHCP needs. Following concerns of increasing costs, this has been temporarily suspended whilst further consideration is taken.
37. This is a position shared by many Councils across the sector. The Government has put in place a 'statutory override' requiring that accumulated DSG deficits should remain ringfenced separate to the Council's other reserves and that this has now been extended through to end of 2025/26.
38. Accordingly this overspend will be charged against the DSG reserve which, at the end of 2023/24, was £31m in deficit and, given the expected overspend this year, will deepen further to over £55m in deficit at the end of 2024/25 after allowing for other transfers from Early Years Block, Central Block and most significantly, surplus growth fund contributions as approved by schools forum.
39. This is in line with previous forecasts and the Council's Deficit Management Plan, which is consistent with the wider objectives outlined in the SEND Strategy, outlines the targeted interventions that will seek to mitigate the existing shortfall. This will take time and is unlikely to address in full the worsening position without further Government support:



Appendix 3 – Quarter 2 Finance Report

40. *Partnerships & Wellbeing* *Forecast - £0.400m saving*
41. The forecast position for Partnerships & Wellbeing is a saving of £0.400m. This is mainly due to the Early Years restructure, due to go live in January 2025. Recruitment to new roles has been challenging while job evaluation assessments are undertaken and, whilst some additional agency support has been utilised temporarily, this has resulted in a one-off saving this year of £0.300m.
42. Across Wellbeing and Partnerships further savings have been identified against employee costs and one-off contingency budgets totalling £0.100m
43. A large majority of the Wellbeing and Partnerships budget is funded from government grants including the Household Support Fund (£11.000m, due to end in September 2024, but extended through to Mar 2025), Building Resilient Families and Communities (BRFC, £2.900m) and the Wraparound Childcare Programme (£2.500m), as well as Resettlement funding to support the resettlement of refugees
44. **Economy, Infrastructure & Skills** **Forecast - £1.254m saving**
45. *Business & Enterprise* *Forecast - £0.249m saving*
46. Business & Enterprise is forecast make saving of £0.249m at quarter 2. Savings have been generated from current staff vacancies saving £0.258m and temporary third-party funding in excess of budget and temporary resource costs of £0.180m, as well as an improved financial position for Enterprise Centres due to additional rental incomes and reduced energy costs totalling £0.076m.
47. The forecast includes provision for a contribution to We Are Staffordshire, Highways Planning Tool, Farms Strategy work, Staffs Tech Park drainage issues and a £0.050m contribution to the Stafford Masterplan. Other minor pressures across the Business & Enterprise service total £0.063m.
48. *Infrastructure & Highways* *Forecast - Breakeven*
49. Infrastructure & Highways is forecast to have a breakeven position at quarter 2, although there are various pressures and savings across the service.
50. This position assumes that additional network management income and savings due to staffing vacancies in the school crossing patrol teams, and

Appendix 3 – Quarter 2 Finance Report

savings on the environmental teams in Community Liaison will be used to offset a budget pressure due to additional highways maintenance works.

51. *Transport, Connectivity & Waste* *Forecast - £0.903m saving*
52. Transport, Connectivity & Waste is forecast to generate savings of £0.903m at quarter 2. The impact of the DfT Toolkit review at this stage is still unknown.
53. Transport & Connectivity are forecast to make savings of £0.842m. This is due to savings on concessionary fares budget resulting from reduced payments to operators of £0.600m. A further £0.163m of savings is related to staffing vacancies across the service. Other minor savings across the Transport & Connectivity service total £0.079m.
54. Sustainability & Waste are forecast to make savings of £0.061m at quarter 2. These savings are due to reduced quantities of wood chip purchased in year on Wood Fuel, as well as increased income from sales of wood chip to other local authorities.
55. The pressure arising from the agreement with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council for South Staffordshire residents in the catchment postcodes of Wombourne to have access to Stourbridge Household Waste and Recycling Centre for six months can be met from existing Waste budgets.
56. *Skills* *Forecast - Breakeven*
57. Skills is forecast to forecast to have a breakeven position at quarter 2, though it is thought the service could make small savings by the end of 2024/25
58. Currently, variances are earmarked for the Jobs & Careers Service in 2025/26, as well as part-funding the Careers Hub, which will transfer from Stoke City Council in September 2024, and for the Supported Employment pilot scheme and the continuation of Ignite Student Start up activities. It is hoped that this position will become clearer by Quarter 3.
59. *Culture, Rural & Communities* *Forecast - £0.102m saving*
60. The Culture, Rural Communities budget is forecast to make savings of £0.102m at quarter 2, an improvement from the £0.050m overspend position at quarter 1.

Appendix 3 – Quarter 2 Finance Report

61. Savings have been generated from one off staffing savings on Libraries of £0.165m, along with a slight reduction in non-staffing costs of £0.006m.
62. This saving is offset by an external legal pressure of £0.050m for a trading standards case involving a five week crown court trial. This case related to offences between 2015 and 2018 and has been delayed by the covid pandemic and the backlog of cases in courts. There is also a forecast £0.019m pressure on pension liabilities budgets in both Community Protection and Scientific Services
63. *El&S Business Support* *Forecast - Breakeven*
64. The El&S Business Support budget is forecast breakeven at quarter 2. This is a pressure compared to the £0.050m saving reported at quarter 1 due to accumulated minor pressures across the service.
65. **Corporate Services** **Forecast - £0.353m saving**
66. Corporate Services is forecast to make savings of £0.353m at quarter 2. Savings have arisen from staffing vacancies across the directorate, including Business Support saving £0.200m, Strategy & Transformation saving £0.100m, Assets saving £0.079m, Governance saving £0.075m and People Services saving £0.050m.
67. These savings are partially offset by a reduction in rebate income in Assets of £0.019m, additional training costs in Governance of £0.012m, as well as a shortfall of income forecasted against the Annual Leave Purchase scheme of £0.050m and a rise in costs against subscriptions, training and licence costs of £0.060m. Other minor pressures across the service total £0.010m.
68. **Finance** **Forecast - £0.082m saving**
69. The Finance Directorate is forecast to make savings of £0.082m at quarter 2. This is due to staffing vacancies in the service, including Corporate Accounting saving £0.063m, Treasury & Pensions saving £0.050m and Decision Making Support saving £0.019m.

Appendix 3 – Quarter 2 Finance Report

70. These savings are offset by pressures from a shortfall in leasing income of £0.024m and costs associated with the Integra upgrade of £0.026m
71. **Centrally Controlled** **Forecast - £0.800m overspend**
72. The centrally controlled budgets are forecast to have a pressure of £0.800m at quarter 2.
73. *Central Accommodation* *Forecast - £0.200m saving*
74. There is a forecast saving of £0.200m on Central Accommodation at quarter 2 due to the reduction in rental payments for properties.
75. *Insurances* *Forecast - £1.000m overspend*
76. Insurances is forecast to overspend by £1.000m at quarter 2. The quantity and cost of insurance claims are following a similar trajectory to the 2023/24 financial year, which was also overspent, so an assumption has been made this pressure will continue throughout the 2024/25 financial year.
77. **Capital Forecast**
78. Appendix 5 compares the latest capital forecast outturn of £172.743m, an increase from the budgeted position of £168.894m. The key reasons for this increase of £3.849m are set out in the following paragraphs.
79. **Health and Care** **Forecast spend £4.294m**
80. There has been an increase of £0.289m from the quarter 1 report. This is due to the introduction of a new project to acquire a property to facilitate drug and alcohol support services in Public Health & Protection and is to be funded by COMF Grant.
81. **Children and Families** **Forecast spend £47.654m**
82. There has been an increase of £4.759m since the quarter 1 return in Children and Families.

Appendix 3 – Quarter 2 Finance Report

83. *Maintained Schools* *Forecast Spend £43.313m*

84. Increases since quarter 1 for Maintained Schools are due to the impact of a number of budget refinements across the Education programme, the most significant being budget increases at Paulet High Expansion £0.776m and Thomas Alleyne's High detached teaching block £0.450m both being financed from developer contributions. The net total increase is £1.269m.

85. Savings have been made due to the impact of £1.500m of works being rephased into 2025/26. This is offset by other increases, including significant budget changes to KEVI Boilers of £0.137m, Horton Loge Community School replacement of play equipment of £0.131m and St. Luke's C of E Primary refurbishment of £0.165m, along with other minor budget refinements, resulting in a total net reduction of £0.734m.

86. *Wellbeing & Partnerships* *Forecast spend £1.644m*

87. Wellbeing & Partnerships has seen an increase of £1.644m due to the introduction of new Early Years Childcare expansion and wraparound project to be funded by recently awarded Childcare grant

88. *Vulnerable Children's Projects* *Forecast spend £2.697m*

89. Vulnerable Children's Projects has seen an increase in spend of £2.580m from the quarter 1 report. This increase is due to the introduction of funding approved at Feb '24 Cabinet for provision of six new children's homes. Currently indicated as spend in 2024/25 but there is potential for some rephasing to 2025/26 depending upon progress identifying and securing suitable properties.

90. **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills** **Forecast spend £113.557m**

91. *Economic Planning & Future Prosperity* *Forecast spend £6.085m*

92. There has been a decrease in forecast spend of £0.346m since the quarter 1 report. This is the net result of budget rephasing and contingency refinements into 2025/26 on a number of projects, with savings from A50 contingency of £0.240m, Forward Programmes of £0.010m, i54 Western Extension of £0.102m and i54 Employment site of £0.078m, with pressures arising from Redhill of £0.030m and Newcastle Enterprise Centre Extension in Knutton of £0.032m.

Appendix 3 – Quarter 2 Finance Report

93. In addition, a new project, Shire Hall BC Alterations, had been added, creating a pressure of £0.022m.
94. There has been no changes on County Farms from the quarter 1 report.
95. *Highways Schemes* *Forecast spend £95.515m*
96. There has been an increase of £4.054m since the quarter 1 report.
97. This increase is due to the impact of various movements across the Highways programme including the acceleration of carriageways works relating to schemes brought forward which are to be funded from previously approved SCC Highways Investment profiled in future financial years.
98. There has also been an increase in the Levelling Up Fund programme of works reflects current delivery forecasts, for which funding strategies are currently being explored including value engineering exercises to reduce costs and/or seeking to secure additional funding. There is a risk of a further increase if the value of engineering work does not mitigate the costs.
99. This also reflects an increase for in year reallocation from carriageways into minor capital maintenance relating to Highways recovery plan with nil impact on the bottom line.
100. *Skills* *Forecast Spend - £0.663m*
101. There has been no change in the forecast spend in the quarter 1 report.
102. *Rural County (Countryside)* *Forecast Spend - £0.681m*
103. There has been a decrease of £0.399m in forecast spend since the quarter 1 report. This decrease is due to the rephasing of Revitalising Staffordshire Project into 2025/26 of £0.399m.
104. *Waste & Sustainability Projects* *Forecast Spend - £4.343m*
105. There has been a small increase in forecast spend of £0.086m since the quarter 1 report. Waste has increase spend of £0.186m due to the rephasing of

Appendix 3 – Quarter 2 Finance Report

HWRC Investment Plan funding in line with revised wider timelines, including the accelerated purchase of JCB vehicles, urgent surveying and repair works to the Wombourne HWRC site, totalling £0.186m.

106. Sustainability has decreased spend of £0.100m due to the rephasing of £0.100m into 2025/26 of Zero by Nature project funding whilst planting strategies are finalised.
107. *Connectivity* Forecast Spend - £2.454m
108. There has been a decrease in forecast spend of £4.588m compared to the quarter 1 report. This decrease is due to rephasing of Local Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (LEVI) funding into 2025/26 in line with the latest programme dates.
109. **Property, Finance and Resources & ICT** **Forecast spend £7.238m**
110. There has been a small £0.006m decrease in spend compared to quarter 1.
111. Strategic Property has reduced spend of £0.181m resulting from the net impact of a number of small project budget refinements and the District Property Rationalisation programme update, offset by the introduction of new project at Wombourne Library funded by Arts Council LIF award.
112. ICT has reduced costs of £0.100m from the quarter 1 report, due to the anticipated cost saving against the MFD Printer Refresh project.
113. County Fleet Care has increased costs of £0.275m compares to quarter 1, due to the introduction of 7 additional vehicles for a variety of services across the county, including Fostering and Day Services, as well as Highways.
114. **Financial Health**
115. Appendix 6 provides a forecast outturn performance against the key Financial Health Indicators approved as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process.
116. There have been 98.5% of invoices paid within 30 days of receiving them at the end of August, exceeding the financial health indicator target.
117. The Debt Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is set at £27.75m for 2024/25.

Appendix 3 – Quarter 2 Finance Report

118. The estimated level of outstanding sundry debt over 6 months old is £27.795m. This is over the 2024/25 target of £27.75m by £0.045m. This position is an increase of £1.536m from the quarter 1 report. This increase is in line with an increased volume of transactions relating to adult social care. The debt recovery process involves chasing by a range of methods with the eventual escalation to the external collection agent or to Legal for the possibility of a court decision to recover the debt.
119. The level of CCG health debt over 6 months old is now £0.319m, £0.881m below the target figure.
120. Non-Residential Client debt now stands at £18.562m. For both adult social care residential and non-residential debt, our key performance indicator, collectible debt over 6 months is not within its target. Debt has increased in line with the increased value of invoiced income.

Debtor Type	2024/25 Target	30/06/2024	30/09/2024	Increase / (Decrease)
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Health Bodies & CCGs	1.200	0.577	0.319	(0.258)
Other Govt. and Public Bodies	2.800	2.027	1.115	(0.912)
Other General Debtors (Individuals & Commercial)	5.200	5.253	5.395	0.142
H&C Non-Res Client Debt	16.350	16.355	18.562	2.207
H&C Residential Client Debt	2.200	2.047	2.404	0.357
TOTAL	27.750	26.259	27.795	1.536

121. Prudential Indicators

122. Appendix 7 provides a forecast outturn performance against the Prudential Indicators approved as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process.
123. The County Council operates within the limits and prudential indicators for Treasury Management as set out in the County Council's Treasury Management practices, except for the indicator relating to variable interest rates. This indicator is calculated based on the highest expected cash balance

Appendix 3 – Quarter 2 Finance Report

in year, but this was surpassed towards the end of last financial year when forward funding was received.

124. Given the current volatile economic situation, these indicators are being monitored even more closely than usual. At the time of writing it is considered that the Treasury Management Strategy does not need amending, but this will be subject to regular monitoring and any changes will be reported to Cabinet as part of the Half Year Treasury Management report.

Revenue Forecast Outturn 2024/25









	Revised Budget Qtr 2 £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Total Variation £m
<u>Health and Care</u>			
Public Health & Prevention	32.653	32.653	0.000
Public Health Ring Fenced Grant	(32.653)	(32.653)	0.000
Adult Social Care & Safeguarding	36.855	36.886	0.031
Care Commissioning	245.183	245.410	0.227
In House Care Services	10.988	8.838	(2.150)
ASC Capacity and Discharge Fund	(7.643)	(7.643)	0.000
ASC Market Improvement & Sustainability Fund	(15.496)	(15.496)	0.000
Improved Better Care Fund	(32.709)	(32.709)	0.000
Health and Care Total	237.178	235.286	(1.892)
<u>Children and Families</u>			
Children's Services	149.718	149.718	0.000
Children's Public Health	10.494	10.494	0.000
Public Health Ring Fenced Grant	(10.494)	(10.494)	0.000
Education Services	46.753	47.153	0.400
Wellbeing & Partnerships	10.961	10.561	(0.400)
Families & Communities	207.432	207.432	(0.000)
<u>Economy, Infrastructure and Skills</u>			
Business & Enterprise	2.730	2.481	(0.249)
Infrastructure & Highways	42.110	42.110	0.000
Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability	50.541	49.638	(0.903)
Skills	2.954	2.954	0.000
Culture, Rural & Communities	14.953	14.851	(0.102)
EI&S Business Support	1.225	1.225	0.000
Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Total	114.513	113.259	(1.254)
Corporate Services Total	42.503	42.150	(0.353)
Finance Total	12.917	12.835	(0.082)
Total Portfolio Budgets (Saving)/Overspend	614.543	610.962	(3.581)
<u>Centrally Controlled Items</u>			
Interest on Balances & Debt Charges	18.055	18.055	0.000
Centrally Controlled	27.581	28.381	0.800
Capacity Fund	0.343	0.343	0.000
Care Market Pressures	0.000	0.000	0.000
Digital Investment	1.500	1.500	0.000
Capital Investment Fund	2.450	2.450	0.000
Traded Services / Business Partner	(1.397)	(1.397)	0.000
Contingency	15.000	15.000	0.000
Net Revenue Budget (Saving)/Overspend	678.075	675.294	(2.781)

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25

	<u>Quarter 1 Budget</u>	<u>Enhancements to Programme</u>	<u>Quarter 2 Budget</u>
	£m	£m	£m
Health and Care			
Care and Independence	4.005	0.000	4.005
Public Health & Prevention	0.000	0.289	0.289
Health and Care Total	4.005	0.289	4.294
Children and Families			
Maintained Schools	42.778	0.535	43.313
Academy Conversion Residual	0.000	0.000	0.000
Wellbeing & Partnerships	0.000	1.644	1.644
Vulnerable Children's Projects	0.117	2.580	2.697
Children and Families Total	42.895	4.759	47.654
Economy, Infrastructure and Skills			
Economic Planning & Future Prosperity	6.431	(0.346)	6.085
Highways Schemes	91.461	4.054	95.515
Connectivity	7.042	(4.588)	2.454
Skills	0.663	0.000	0.663
Rural County (Countryside)	1.080	(0.399)	0.681
Tourism and Culture	3.816	0.000	3.816
Waste & Sustainability Projects	4.257	0.086	4.343
Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Total	114.750	(1.193)	113.557
Trading Services - County Fleet Care	0.660	0.275	0.935
Finance, Resources & ICT	1.011	(0.100)	0.911
Property	5.573	(0.181)	5.392
Total	168.893	3.849	172.743

Financial Health Indicators 2024/25

Appendix 6

Indicator	Current Performance	
<p><u>Debtors</u> Level of outstanding general debtors more than 6 months old does not exceed £27.75m (Current Performance – £27.80m).</p>		
<p><u>Payments to suppliers</u> At least 90% of invoices have been paid within 30 days of us receiving them during the last quarter (Current Performance as at August 2024 – 98.1%).</p>		
<p><u>Monitoring</u> Quarterly financial monitoring reports have been issued to Cabinet during the last 12 months.</p> <p>The council's most recent revenue outturn forecast did not vary by more than +/-2% when compared to the overall revenue budget.</p> <p>Quarterly monitoring reports of progress against MTFs savings have been produced for the Senior Leadership Team during the last 12 months.</p>		 
 Indicator not met	 Indicator not met by small margin	 Indicator met

Appendix 7

Prudential Indicators 2024/25

Indicator	Budget 2024/25	Forecast 2024/25
	£m	£m
External Debt – Authorised Limit for borrowing	625	572
External Debt – Authorised Limit for other liabilities	77	67
<i>Total</i>	<i>702</i>	<i>639</i>
External Debt – Operational Boundary for borrowing	487	399
External Debt – Operational Boundary for other liabilities	77	67
<i>Total</i>	<i>564</i>	<i>466</i>
External Debt - Loans	508	399
Interest Rate Exposures – Upper Limit (Fixed)	537.2	399
Interest Rate Exposures – Upper Limit (Variable)	(450.0)	(450)
Upper limit for total principal sums invested for longer than a year	245.0	30
Estimate of Capital Expenditure	168.0	172.7
Estimate of Loans Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	579.6	574.4
Gross Debt – External Loans (Should remain below CFR, except in the short term)	579.6	399
Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream – Financing Costs	21.7	16.3
Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream – Proportion of Net Revenue Stream - %	3.2%	2.4%