

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 28 MAY 2024

INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT (IPM) REPORT – 2023/24 QUARTER 4 / YEAR END

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

LEAD CABINET MEMBER - COUNCILLOR ROGER LEES BEM, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

PART A – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

1.1 This report provides the year end and quarter 4 information on performance, finance, and risk as of 31st March 2024. This includes results against performance targets set to monitor delivery of the Council Plan 2020 – 2024.

1.2 This is the final year of the current Council Plan 2020-24.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Members review and note this report.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

POLICY/COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Council Plan objectives?	
	Yes	It reports progress against Council Plan targets.
	Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) been completed?	
	No	This report does not impact on equality issues
SCRUTINY POWERS APPLICABLE	The IPM report is presented to O&S at Quarter 2 and 4.	
KEY DECISION	No	
TARGET DATE	Performance reports are prepared quarterly.	
FINANCIAL IMPACT	Yes	The report details the provisional financial position as at the end of Quarter 4 2023/2024.
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires the Council to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	This report includes all Council strategic risks and a summary position statement on operational risks.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	All Wards

4. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4.1 Finance



REVENUE

Net Revenue Budget 2023/24 £m	Provisional expenditure at Q4 2023/24 £m
£19.061	£18.194
Provisional Variance 2023/24 £m	Percentage Variance from Budget 2023/24
£0.866	4.5%



CAPITAL

Capital Budget 2023/24 £m	Capital Spend to Date Q4 2023/24 £m
£18.642	£6.195

4.2 Performance

Current Position	G	A	R	N/A
21 Council Plan Targets at Q4	17	0	4	
<i>Revenue Budget - Service (Net) Expenditure</i>	4	2	0	
<i>Revenue Budget - Other Expenditure</i>	2	0	0	
<i>Revenue Budget - External Funding</i>	6	0	0	
Overall Revenue Budget - Appropriations to Reserves				
Capital Programme	10	0	0	

4.3 Strategic and Operational risks

Strategic Risks	7
Operational Risks	75

5. IPM Narrative Report

5.1 Review of the Quarter/year end

5.1.1 There has been strong performance across the Council in Quarter 4 with 17 of the 21 Council Plan targets being achieved with four measures receiving a RAG rating of Red. Of the 17 green, Welfare services performance was particularly strong in processing changes to circumstances, the team are processing in an average of 2.5 days against a target of 6 days; 95% of food businesses are rated broadly compliant for food hygiene against a 80% target.

5.1.2 The four indicators which are rated red, performance remained strong, however slightly below the year end target.

- Online payments were just over 500 transactions short of the target of 43,607.
- Business Rates collection was 97.7% against a target of 98%, this relates to a recent large rateable value increase which increased collectable debit. We attempted to collect this before the end of March, but the amount will be paid instead in April 2024. The council tax collection was above target at 98.1%.
- Improved business continuity and resilience, 2 of the 3 systems approaches were implemented by April 2024, however the Civica (revenue and benefit system) was delayed until later in 2024 for implementation due to annual billing taking place in the early part of 2024.
- Processing housing benefit claims has remained at 17 days against the target of 15 days; however, the national average is 21 days.

5.2 Long term successes/measures which were underperforming but are now on target

5.2.1 The continued success of all waste management measures have not only ensured a positive RAG rating across all 4 waste measures but have also decreased the delivery of waste and recycling service risk from 20 to 15. Savings have been achieved in the waste and recycling budgets due to increase sale of recycled materials, vacancies and a lower than budgeted level of inflation.

5.2.2 Against a target for investigating 80% of planning enforcement complaints within 12 weeks, by Q4 this was over 95% a continued improvement over the year, as in Q3 this had already improved to over 83%.

5.2.3 Cumulatively, 302 businesses received support in 2023-24, 201% of the yearly target, due to events, drop-in sessions and delivery of the Strive For Success business growth programme. At quarter 3 only 67% of the yearly target had been achieved. To mitigate and increase business support by year end the Council launched the "Start in South Staffs" start-up programme in mid-December 2023. This support is fully funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which is due to end in March 2025.

5.3 Measures below target

5.3.1 Welfare

- 5.3.2 At the end of Quarter 4, new benefit claims were still being processed in an average of 17 days against a target of 15 days. The above target number was due to other pressures of work within the team which diverted attention to more pressing matters. Furthermore, there were delays from the customer providing information, which are out of the team's control. The risk of cost-of-living impacting residents whose benefit claims take longer to process is a major concern and could increase as volumes of claims grow. Investment has been made in additional staffing in the Welfare team to deal with additional demand, which has reduced the potential impact on processing time. As expected, the annual billing processing in the final quarter of 2023/2024 meant that 15-day target was not met.
- 5.3.3 For 2024/2025 the team are working on streamlining the process to request further information and introducing more digital transactional forms. This should help reduce delays in the team waiting for customer information. There is an emerging pressure within Benefits Services relating to a reduction in the number of overpayments that are received back to the council though the Housing Benefit Subsidy. This is resulting in a projected budget pressure which will be covered by General Fund reserves. This is being addressed as part of budget setting for 2024/25 onwards.
- 5.3.4 Although we are underperforming against our council target (17 days against 15-day target) current performance is close to the mean for CIPFA nearest neighbours (16 days for the featured quarter – South Staffordshire at 17 days). The table below highlights South Staffordshire's performance relative to other similar councils – this the latest available is for Quarter 3.

Time taken to process housing benefit new claims - Quarterly (2023/24 Q3) for South Staffordshire

Period	Time taken to process housing benefit new claims - Quarterly			
	Mean			
	South Staffordshire	Minimum for South Staffordshire CIPFA nearest neighbours	Mean for South Staffordshire CIPFA nearest neighbours	Maximum for South Staffordshire CIPFA nearest neighbours
2023/24 Q3	17	10	16	27

Source:

Department for Work and Pensions

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5.4 Financial Performance

- 5.4.1 Total online payments received in Quarter 4 were 4,261. This brings the total for the year 43,099 against a target of 43,607. There has been a decrease in online payments each quarter. This should not impact the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Continual promotion of e-billing and the My Login system should help and increase the ability for residents to make online payments.
- 5.4.2 Council Tax and Business Rates collection rates – achieved 98.1% collection rate and Business Rates collection was 97.7% against a target of 98%.

- 5.4.3 All Council tax service revenue budgets are on target and without any significant variances to report.
- 5.4.4 When comparing to all CIPFA nearest neighbours South Staffordshire Council Tax collection is slightly above the mean. Differences between CIPFA nearest neighbours is generally minimal. This data is the most recent available benchmarking data.

Council tax collected as a percentage of council tax due (2022/23) for South Staffordshire

Period	Council tax collection rate			
	%			
	South Staffordshire	Minimum for South Staffordshire CIPFA nearest neighbours	Mean for South Staffordshire CIPFA nearest neighbours	Maximum for South Staffordshire CIPFA nearest neighbours
2022/23	97.96	96.70	97.94	98.87

Source:

Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

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5.5 Office for Local Government (OFLOG) indicators

- 5.5.1 Appendix 4 provides an overview from LG Inform of the OFLOG indicators being measured against the council. The timeframe for these measures varies from each indicator. Each indicator is compared against our CIPFA neighbours. OFLOG is a new performance body for local government, which will provide authoritative and accessible data and analysis about the performance of local government and support its improvement. OFLOG indicators alongside the council's performance framework will help provide a clear analysis of Council performance and areas of improvement.

5.6 Risk Management

- 5.6.1 The Council is currently reviewing its risk management processes. This will involve assessing the Council's current risk appetite and updating the Strategic Risk Register and Policy to ensure that they remain robust and relevant. The revised processes will also make clear who the owner is for each strategic risk. All updates will be designed to align to the new Council Plan and Integrated Performance Management.

6. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Not applicable

7. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Not applicable

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Appendix 1 – Quarter 4 Performance Scorecard
- Appendix 2 – Quarter 4 Finance Scorecard
- Appendix 3 – Quarter 4 Strategic Risk Register
- Appendix 4 – OFLOG indicators – LG Inform

Report prepared by

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