

Agenda

Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

Thursday, 12 January 2023 at 6.00 pm
In the Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Declarations of Interest

Members to declare any interests in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

3 Minutes

7 - 18

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2022 and 6 December 2022 as a correct record.

4 Additional Items of Business

To determine whether there are any additional items of business to be considered as a matter of urgency.

5 Q2 Budget Monitoring 2022/23

19 - 22

To receive the 2022/23 Budget Monitoring Q2 report and identify any recommendations to Cabinet.



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| 6 | Performance Management Framework – Q2 Monitoring | 23 - 144 |
| | To consider and comment upon the progress and further development of the Corporate Performance Management Framework and the Q2 monitoring reports. | |
| 7 | Cost of Living | 145 - 148 |
| | To receive and comment on the work currently ongoing by the Council to address the cost of living crisis. | |
| 8 | Scrutiny Review - Customer Journey | 149 - 156 |
| | To consider and agree the draft Scoping Document for the Scrutiny Review of the Customer Journey and consider establishing a working group to conduct the review. | |
| 9 | Cabinet Forward Plan | 157 - 174 |
| | To consider the Cabinet Forward Plan. | |
| 10 | Budget & Corporate Scrutiny Management Board Work Programme | 175 - 178 |
| | To consider the Budget & Corporate Scrutiny Management Board's work programme for 2022/23. | |

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Distribution

Councillor Moore (Chair)
Councillors Anandou, Fenton, E M Giles, Simms, Trumpeter, Akhtar,
H Bhullar, Hinchliff and Taylor

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Minutes of Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

Thursday, 29 November 2022 at 6.00 pm
In Council Chamber at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

Present: Councillor Moore (Chair);
E M Giles, Fenton, Hinchliff, Bhullar, Taylor and Simms.

In attendance: Michael Jarrett (Director of Children’s Services and Education), Neil Cox (Director of Business Strategy and Change), Kate Ashley (Strategic Lead – Service Improvement), Rebecca Maher (Assistant Director of Finance), Rebecca Jenkins (Senior Lead – Service Improvement Team), Trisha Blackstock (Assistant Director - Social Work and Therapy), Susanne Moore (Business Partner for Adult Social Care), Elaine Taylor (Business Partner for Children’s Services), Comie Campbell (Head of Financial Business Partnering – Place), Tammy Stokes (Service Manager for Growth and Spatial Planning), Nigel Collumbell (Assistant Director for Housing Management), Chris Hilton (Interim Service Manager for Land and Assets) Suky Suthi-Nagra (Democratic Services Manager) and Anthony Lloyd (Democratic Services Officer).

50/22 **Councillor Ann Shackleton**

The Chair reported on the passing of late Councillor Ann Shackleton, Chair of Children’s Services and Education Scrutiny Board. Councillor Shackleton had previously led a career as a teacher and Headteacher.



Members and officers also paid tribute to the late Councillor Ann Shackleton and her dedication to improving children's services in Sandwell.

The Chair, on behalf of the Board, passed on condolences to her family.

The Board stood in silent tribute to the late Councillor Shackleton.

51/22 Apology for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Anandou, Giles and Trumpeter.

52/22 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

53/22 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2022 are approved as a correct record.

54/22 Additional Items of Business

There were no additional items of business to consider.

55/22 Improvement Plan Progress

The Strategic Lead – Service Improvement was invited to address the Board on progress made on the Improvement Plan.

A quarterly update on progress against the Improvement Plan, which was agreed by Council on 7 June 2022, was provided. The Improvement Plan incorporated all recommendations from the Grant Thornton Governance Review, the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge and the CIPFA Financial Management Review, as well as the Statutory Directions from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Significant progress had been made to deliver actions of the improvement plan. This included the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive. A decision had also been made by Council in relation to a 4-yearly election cycle. The three main recommendations for Scrutiny made by the Grant Thornton review had also seen good progress. Effective development and support for members in statutory roles had begun, forward plans were shared with Audit Committee and Scrutiny Boards, and training on governance roles, reading reports and asking questions was underway. It was highlighted that the LGA report confirmed that Scrutiny at Sandwell now had a sense of energy and drive and was going from strength to strength.

A comprehensive monitoring tool was in place to monitor progress against the Improvement Plan. This tool included both a risk rating for each main action within the Improvement Plan and a progress status rating for all actions. An update on the Improvement Plan's six themes was provided to the Board:

Organisational Culture:

Progress had been made with some slippage in the delivery of workforce strategy and the delivery of corporate governance training for members.

The Director Business Strategy and Change highlighted that a much wider approach had now been taken regarding workforce strategy. Slippage was due to the detailed approach at identifying what the values and culture of the strategy should be.

The Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer addressed the Board. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny had undertaken training with members that focused on the code of governance. Further training had been scheduled. Training in relation to the implementation of the changes to the code of governance had also been looked at.

The Code of Corporate Governance would go to Council for approval in December and therefore, delays with training had taken place until approval was sought and confirmed.

Corporate Oversight:

No progress issues were reported.

Strategic Direction:

The LGA framework had been adopted to progress the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (EDI). The framework contained four modules that enabled officers to examine the effectiveness of the Council's EDI agenda. At the end of this process, the Council would be able to produce a strong EDI strategy.

The Strategy would also look outwards towards the communities of Sandwell to ensure that EDI was a top priority when engaging with residents. The strategy would take 12 months to complete, following this, a complete roadmap would be available to refresh EDI policies.

Decision Making:

Slippage had occurred with the revised financial regulations. Key changes had been approved at Council in July with further changes going to Council in December. Financial threshold and Contract Procedure Rules had already been changed and implementation had begun.

Procurement and Commercial:

An Expert Determination process was underway in relation to the Lion Farm options agreement. The Council was still awaiting an update for the process to progress.

Partnerships and Relationships:

Progress had been made across several workstreams however slippage had occurred in relation to the Sandwell Children's Trust Key Performance Indicator (KPI) review and partnership structures around transition from Children's to Adult's services.

The Director of Children's services confirmed that the KPI Suite had been reviewed and agreed. Completion was due to take place in December 2022 with a planned implementation of April 2023. Slippage regarding the transition work had taken place due to the unsuccessful recruitment of a Project Lead. A delay in obtaining funding had contributed to the delays.

Embedding activity into business as usual as well as reflecting on the findings from the re-visits of external reviewers were the main focuses going forward.

In response to questions from members, the following answers and clarification was provided: -

- Difficulties had been faced with the recruitment of a project lead due to it being a specialised post with a very small talent pool.
- Both the Council and the Commissioners reported to the Secretary of State on a 6-month basis.
- Conversations would be arranged with independent witnesses regarding the customer journey aspect of the improvement plan; this would include interviews with security officers, members of the public and frontline staff.
- Significant progress should be seen regarding the customer journey aspect of the improvement plan over the next few months.
- Customer feedback would be utilised to ensure Council services were adapting to the needs of the public.

The Board noted the excellent progress against the Improvement Plan and officers were thanked for their hard work.

Resolved that the comments of the Board on the progress of the Improvement Plan be reported to Cabinet for consideration.

56/22

Draft General Fund Budget 2023/24 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy

The Assistant Director of Finance presented the Draft General Fund Budget 2023/24 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to the Board. The report contained budget pressures, growth items and saving proposals for directorates. Responses to the public budget consultation were also included. The draft report was originally presented to Cabinet on 16 November 2022; the final budget report would be received by Cabinet in February 2023.

Prior to savings identified by directorates, the budget gap was approximately £15m. In total, directorates had identified savings of £9.6m and corporate savings of £6.4m had also been found. A predicted surplus of £1.4m was identified, however, this would

most likely change due to the on-going financial climate and cost of living crisis. The Autumn Statement was not yet factored into the draft budget.

The assumptions included in the draft budget was: -

- Inflation where it was contractual and unavoidable with an estimated increase in utilities by 80%;
- Provision for an annual pay reward at 5%;
- Pension contributions assumed at the current rate;
- Business rates income on current trends with no changes expected;
- 1% increase in Council Tax base;
- A 2.99% increase in Council Tax.

The Winter Statement was announced by central government on 17 November 2022, following the production of the draft budget.

The following key points were identified:-

- The departmental expenditure budget would be maintained at the levels set at the spending review, however, inflation would have a big impact on spending power.
- The core school's budget would receive an additional £2.3 billion in 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- Social Care reforms had been delayed until October 2025 however, funding would be retained to off-set adult social care pressures. There would be a corresponding reduction in a separate grant as a result.
- Additional funding for Adult Social Care and discharge arrangements of £2.8 billion next year and £4.7 billion the year after was available.
- Core Council Tax could now be increased by 3% before a referendum was required
- Adult Social Care precept could now be increased by 2%.
- Business rates bills would be updated following a revaluation that was taking place.
- Business rates multipliers were to be frozen next financial year.
- The retail, hospitality and leisure relief would be extended. Local authorities would be compensated for the decisions made by central government regarding the freezing of business rates.

- Social Housing rents would be capped at 7% and the national living wage would increase from 1 April 2023.

The provisional settlement was expected to be received on 19 December 2022; until then, it would be difficult for officers to know how the funding would impact Sandwell Council specifically. Decisions would be required from Cabinet quickly regarding Council Tax increases. No further information had been received in relation to the Fair Funding reform, business rates reset or new homes bonus.

In response to questions from members regarding the impact to core care services following constraints on the budget, it was noted that safe and effective care remained a priority and that although a financial impact would be felt, a person would never be left at risk.

A 33% increase in the number of children with Educational Health and Care plans highlighted that although the demand was increasing, Councils were struggling to stay on budget when delivering services. Members displayed their concerns around the short-term nature of many of the funding options and how this made it difficult to forward plan.

Additional short-term funding streams such as the household support fund could be used to help individuals who were struggling with the cost of living crisis. Reassurance was provided by officers regarding the deliverability of the budgeted savings.

Members thanked officers for the work in creating the draft budget despite the ongoing financial and political pressures.

Resolved the comments of the Board in relation to the draft budget proposals for 2023/24 be reported to the Cabinet to inform final budget proposals.

57/22

Cabinet Forward Plan

After consideration by members of the Board, it was identified that the Tree Strategy and Policy item contained within the forward plan should be considered by the appropriate Scrutiny Board as part of pre-decision scrutiny.

58/22 **Work Programme**

The Board noted its work programme for 2023.

Meeting ended at 7.31pm.

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk

Minutes of Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

**Tuesday, 6 December 2022 at 6.00 pm
In Council Chamber at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Moore (Chair);
Councillors Fenton, Hinchliff, Taylor, Trumpeter and Simms.

In attendance: Neil Cox (Director of Business Strategy and Change), Kate Ashley (Strategic Lead – Service Improvement), Elaine Newsome (Service Manager - Democratic Services), Kim Bromley-Derry (Managing Director Commissioner), Kerrie Carmichael (Leader of the Council), Victoria Lee (Head of Human Resources), Debbie Sant (Assistant HR Business Partner), Surjit Tour (Monitoring Officer and Director of Legal Services), Suky Suthi-Nagra (Democratic Services Manager) and Anthony Lloyd (Democratic Services Officer).

60/22 Election of a Vice Chair to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

Councillor Ellen Fenton was elected as the Vice Chair to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board.

60/22 Apology for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Anandou and Elaine Giles.



61/22 **Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest made.

62/22 **Additional Items of Business**

There were no additional items of business to consider.

63/22 **Employee Engagement and Organisational Culture**

The Board was informed that positive improvements had been made and many external reviewers such as Grant Thornton and the LGA had praised the progress made by the Council thus far in achieving milestones including the preparation of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and work around Council Culture. Ensuring that members and officers knew the importance of the improvement plan as well as promoting good working relationships between officers and the public were key factors in progressing further.

The difficulties faced by Sandwell Council over the past several years and over the pandemic provided important lessons on maintaining a cultural grip on organisation and staff. Additional issues such as managerial behaviour and the relationship between members and officers were also affected during this time. As a result, staff morale was low, and many officers did not feel empowered in their roles. These problems had cascaded down throughout the Council to frontline officers which, in turn, created further issues with the recruitment and retention of staff.

The Employee Engagement Survey (EES) was conducted between February and March 2022 with a response rate of 61% of employees (2,374 responses from a staff population of 3,913). The survey remained broadly consistent with 2018 and previous years. The survey was accessible via an email invitation as well as paper surveys.

The results of the EES showed that employee engagement had fallen from 69% in 2018 to 63% in 2022. Whilst scores across all five factors were lower in 2022 than in the previous survey, Sandwell scored above the local authority benchmark in pride amongst staff (7 percentage points above benchmark) and

recommending the council as a good place to work (8 percentage points above).

Corporate level results were presented to Leadership Team on 12 May 2022 and with staff via an All Staff Briefing on 26 May 2022. The results were also published on the intranet.

Directorates compiled the key actions to address the top three issues in their specific areas and the top three high performing areas to ensure good practice continued. These action plans were reviewed by Leadership Team on 18 October 2022, with the agreement that the action plans would be monitored corporately on a quarterly basis.

Organisational Culture:

The organisational culture workstream consisted of two main phases. Phase 1 included conversation exercises with staff and members. The second phase would be to then utilise the information obtained from these conversations to better inform what the desired values, behaviour and culture should actually be.

A “Culture Working Group” was established, this included representatives from across the council that contributed to and provided constructive challenge to the approach, including leads on EDI and Member Development; Culture Champion volunteers were also appointed. Culture Champions were offered training sessions that enabled them to carry out listening group sessions. The sessions were to seek qualitative feedback from employees regarding the current culture and their aspirations for the future. Staff who could not attend these sessions were invited to fill out surveys.

The next phase was to agree the values and behaviours that would then inform the activities to embed the culture. This would include the following actions:

- Leadership Team sign off the agreed desired values and behaviours.
- Develop a plan to promote and communicate values and behaviours.
- Embedding values and behaviours into HR practices, appraisals, and performance management, employee induction and the alignment to a management development programme.

- Embed values and behaviours as a foundation of the council's workforce strategy and aligned with and to our work on Customer Journey and equalities, diversity and inclusion
- Consider the approach for frontline workers due to difficulties around access to work devices
- Staff briefings and Leadership communications

Members identified that implementing changes would be more difficult with the introduction of hybrid working. It was highlighted that although more difficult, hybrid working was a part of the recruitment retention policy and many staff would look elsewhere if the arrangements were changed to working full-time within the office. The main goal was to ensure that staff were present in the building, alongside their teams, at core times. Team attendance within Council buildings would be clustered to ensure that enough desk space was available; this would also ensure that the aforementioned core service terms were covered every day.

Members welcomed the idea of regular updates to the Scrutiny Boards to help shape and monitor any actions taken.

Councillor Fenton left the meeting at 6.49pm

Intermittent surveys would take place that would cover a variety of topics to keep employee engagement and feelings relevant and up-to-date. Concerns were raised around Employees of the Council not believing that leaders or managers communicated efficiently or that their feedback would be listened to.

Councillor Trumpeter left the meeting at 7.00pm

Members were assured that there was an appraising system in place however, compliance with the system had been an issue at Sandwell Council. A planned "re-launch" and emphasis on appraisal would take place and performance would be measured to ensure that those that work hard are recognised and rewarded.

Members thanked officers for their time and encouraged open dialogues with staff to ensure that views were listened to and noted.

Meeting ended at 7.15pm.

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk

Report to Budget & Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

12 January 2023

Subject:	Q2 Budget Monitoring 2022/23
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Piper – Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources
Director:	Simone Hines - Director of Finance
Key Decision:	Yes
Contact Officer:	Rebecca Maher (Head of Finance) Rebecca_Maher@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board considers the 2022/23 Budget Monitoring Q2 report and identify any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet.







2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 At its meeting on 7 December 2022, the Cabinet considered the 2022/23 Budget Monitoring report for Quarter 2 and referred the report to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board for consideration and comment.
- 2.2 Any recommendations arising from the consideration of this report will be reported to the Cabinet.

3. How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

The Council's financial status helps to underpin the Council's Corporate Plan and the associated aspirations.



	Best start in life for children and young people
	People live well and age well
	Strong resilient communities
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods
	A strong and inclusive economy
	A connected and accessible Sandwell

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 The Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board has been requested to consider the Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring 2022/23 to ensure the Council can conduct its business efficiently, act to provide for the security of the assets under its control, and for ensuring that the use of these resources is legal, properly authorised, provides value for money and achieves best value.

5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 If the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board does not consider the information presented, the opportunity to make recommendations would be lost.

6 Implications

Resources:	Further details on the financial implications will be presented to the meeting.
Legal and Governance:	The Local Government Act 2003 places a requirement on local authorities to provide Members with regular financial monitoring.



Risk:	This information is contained within the main body of this report.
Equality:	No direct implications arising from the recommendations.
Health and Wellbeing:	The financial prosperity of the Council provides a foundation for health and wellbeing across the remit of the Council.
Social Value	No direct implications arising from the recommendations.

7. Appendices

None

8. Background Papers

Q2 Monitoring Report to Cabinet 7 December 2022

<https://sandwellintranet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s12018/16%20-%20Q2%20Monitoring%20Report%20Cabinet%202022-23.pdf>

<https://sandwellintranet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s12019/2022-23%20Cabinet%20Report%20Monitoring%20Template%20Q2.pdf>



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Budget & Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

12 January 2023

Subject:	Performance Management Framework – Q2 Monitoring
Director:	Director of Business Strategy and Change, Neil Cox
Contact Officer:	Kate Ashley – Strategic Lead: Service Improvement Jane Alexander – Senior Lead: Service Improvement Rebecca Jenkins – Senior Lead: Service Improvement Sarah Sprung – Senior Lead: Service Improvement Narinder Phagura – Business Partner Audit Services

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board considers and comments upon the progress and further development of the Corporate Performance Management Framework and the Q2 monitoring reports.







2 Reasons for Recommendations

1. Council approved a corporate Performance Management Framework (PMF) on 12 April 2022, to address the recommendations of the Governance Value for Money Review by Grant Thornton and as a key element of the Council's Improvement Plan.
2. Since April, the corporate PMF has been further refined and built into business processes. Reporting on Q1 was presented to Budget and



Scrutiny Management Board on 13 October 2022. The report on Q2 seeks to build on the intelligence gathered for Q1 and offers the opportunity to assess in year progress.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people
	People live well and age well
	Strong resilient communities
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods
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	A connected and accessible Sandwell

The corporate PMF includes measures under all strategic objectives in the Corporate Plan to monitor progress in these key areas. The PMF also includes elements that measure the council's use of its resources to ensure delivery of the strategic objectives.

The Strategic Risk Register details the key strategic risks that need to be managed to ensure that they do not negatively impact on the successful delivery of the Corporate Plan objectives.

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 The updated Improvement Plan was approved by Council in June 2022. In regard to progressing the PMF, commitment was given to the following actions:

- Develop and embed a corporate performance management framework that provides Leadership Team and members collective



oversight of progress on the Corporate Plan, key operational level intelligence, organisational health and improvement activity;

- Ensure public consultation results are incorporated into performance management framework, including on budget development;
- Build organisational health metrics into performance management framework, including 'pulse' checks on organisation's wellbeing;
- Embed management of key corporate contracts within the performance management framework to ensure oversight of performance and link to the Corporate Plan;
- Build benchmarking of financial and service performance into performance management framework;
- Develop, implement and monitor progress of Directorate and Service level plans to deliver the Corporate Plan;
- Embed regular budget monitoring reporting to Leadership Team and Cabinet within corporate performance management framework; and
- Explore implementation of a corporate performance management system.

4.2 Good progress has been made against many of the commitments in this list. This report sets out the progress we have made against establishing the Corporate Performance Management Framework and building its monitoring into the Council's business processes. This report signifies a major step forward in providing consolidated performance and risk reporting for Cabinet. Further reports will be brought to Cabinet on the remaining commitments in due course.

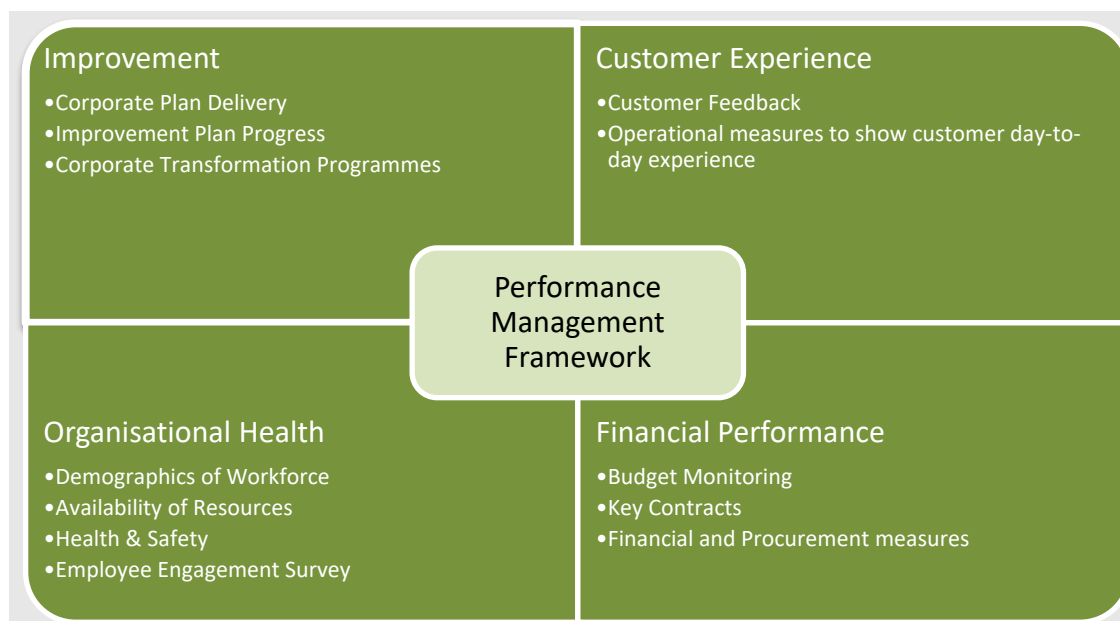
4.3 Progress in relation to the Q2 budget monitoring report, and the Improvement Plan are the subject of further reports on Cabinet's agenda.

5 Corporate Performance Management Framework

5.1 There are four key components to the Corporate PMF. Combined, these provide the oversight and intelligence the council needs to determine



progress in delivering the Corporate Plan and how the organisation is performing in key areas.



5.2 A suite of performance information was identified and agreed for each element of the PMF and this forms the basis of monitoring progress. The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of progress against each element of the PMF for Q2 of 2022/23. The detailed Q2 reports are included as appendices to this report.

6 Financial Performance

6.1 Budget Monitoring

6.1.1 The Council's financial position as at the end of October (Q2) is subject to a separate report on this agenda.

6.1.2 In summary, the forecast outturn for the year for the General Fund is an overspend of £1.9m. This is being driven predominantly by inflationary pressures on pay, contracts and supplies and services. The Council budgeted for a 2% pay award. The Q1 forecast assumed a 5% pay award. However, the recent pay offer from the Local Government Employers is a fixed sum for all spinal points which averages 7% and has now been accepted. This equates to an additional £8.3m payroll costs.



- 6.1.3 There are also inflationary pressures on non-pay budgets, including utilities costs, exceptionally high social care placement costs and contractual increases.
- 6.1.4 The additional cost pressures have been mitigated by a review of 2021/22 underspends to identify ongoing savings that can be achieved for 2022/23 as well as a review of vacant posts. There is also some use of earmarked reserves to mitigate pressures, including £1.1m from the Financial Planning reserve which was established as part of the 2022/23 budget process specifically to cover risks associated with increased inflation during the year. Leadership Team are continuing to identify further corrective action that can be taken for the remainder of the year to reduce the forecast overspend.
- 6.1.5 The Housing Revenue Account is currently forecasting an underspend of approximately £1.1m as although the HRA is also experiencing inflationary pressures, there are a high level of vacancies which are offsetting the increased costs.
- 6.1.6 The other key performance measures for finance relate to the collection of debt and processing of claims. See Appendix 1 – Q2 Finance report.
- 6.1.7 Processing time for new Housing Benefit Claims continues to be at 19 days, which is better than the national average of 20 days.
- 6.1.8 Compared to Q1 performance, Council Tax and Sundry Debt collection rates have improved and have met their targets this quarter.
- 6.1.9 A summary of KPIs that did not meet their performance target is as follows:
- In relation to the number of days taken to process Housing Benefit Changes in Circumstances, performance has not met target for Q1 or Q2 due to a backlog of work. There has been good progress in addressing the backlog and performance should start to improve.
 - In relation to Adult Social Care Financial Assessments, performance has not met the quarterly targets. It should be noted that as the targets are set at 100% it is unlikely to be achieved. Therefore these targets need to be reviewed. Performance for Non-residential care financial assessments taking place within 3 weeks of a care package being approved is at 57% for Q2. The reason for the reduced performance is due to a focus on



outstanding cases and moving customer billing from statements to invoices

- Rent collected is slightly below target due to rising cost of living pressures. We are working with partners to provide information and advice to tenants to prevent them getting into arrears as far as possible.

6.2 Key Contracts - Sandwell Children's Trust

6.2.1 Since April 2018, children's services have been delivered by Sandwell's Children's Trust on behalf of the Council. The contract sum for 2022/23 was £70.47m. Following subsequent agreements to additional sums, that are related to pressures around staffing and placements, the total contract sum is £71.7m.

6.2.2 Sandwell Children's Trust delivers the following range of services:

- Children's Social Care
- Fostering
- Targeted Early Help

6.2.3 The contract is managed through a well-established governance framework. Grant Thornton, in their Value for Money Governance Review (December 2021) commented that *'There is a robust governance framework in place for the Council and other stakeholders to monitor of the performance of SCT'* and recommended the continuation of these arrangements.

6.2.4 There is a requirement to undertake a contract review after four years of operation and the review was presented to Cabinet in September 2022. Cabinet agreed that they do not recommend to the Secretary of State for Education that the break clause is invoked. As set out in the Service Delivery Contract, the Contract Review will be presented to the Operational Partnership Board and the Strategic Partnership Board, following which, the reviews will be sent to the Secretary of State.

6.2.5 Performance is monitored through a monthly review of 15 KPIs within the contract, and a monthly review of performance within agreed tolerances. As part of the contract review, the Director of Children and Education has been authorised to agree with Sandwell Children's Trust revised contractual key performance indicators, to commence on 1st April 2023.



6.2.6 In May 2022, the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services improved the rating from 'inadequate' to 'requires improvement to be good'.

6.2.7 The Q2 Performance Report is attached at Appendix 2 and is summarised as follows:

6.2.8 Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers:

- There continues to be significant issues in recruiting and retaining social workers and the Trust has been working to ensure that no child remains unallocated for longer than 5 days.
- Three project teams are in place providing interim capacity whilst the Trust continues to recruit to the workforce
- Three cohorts of AYSE social workers (assessed and supported year in employment) have joined the Trust.

6.2.9 The Trust were able to bring the number of children unallocated for longer the 5 days figure down to zero in September 2022. This was a red rated KPI at Q1.

6.2.10 Numbers of Children in Care:

- The total number of children in care, as of September 2022, is 818. This is a significant reduction against the March 2022 position when 844 children were in care. The target for March 2023 is 796.
- At the end of September 2022, Sandwell was performing well at a rate of 98.6 children in care per 10,000, compared with a March 2022 rate of 101.7. Comparator data is not yet available for Q2, but at the end of quarter 1, Sandwell was performing well against WM statistical neighbours, with some work still required to match the whole statistical neighbour average.
- The general trend across statistical neighbours for the last 12 months has been an increase in the rate of children in care, whereas in Sandwell the rate has fallen.

6.2.11 Report on the 15 Contract KPIs:

- Improvement in performance against the KPIs since the last quarter, with 10 out of the 15 KPIs now green
- The current red rated KPIs are:



- Percentage of Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) in 15 working days
- Out of the total number of open Single Assessments, the percentage of assessments completed within 45 working days
- Vacancy rate of social workers
- The KPIs that are red as of September 2022 can be directly linked to the national workforce issues.

6.2.12 Finances:

- The 2022/23 financial performance is being measured against the agreed 2022/23 Contract Sum as approved by Cabinet in February 2022.
- The high cost of placements, as well as recruitment and retention issues, means that SCT are forecasting an overspend, against the MTFP, of £570k as at the end of Quarter 2. This is in addition to the savings target of £2.3m.
- The council and SCT have discussed options to take corrective action including reviewing the Trust's Workforce Strategy, freezing non-operational vacancies and an increase of in year savings targets.
- In September 2022, Cabinet agreed to fund additional costs to recruit additional project teams. It is estimated that this will cost £750K for the year. The funding of this additional cost will, in part, be offset slightly by a saving of approx. £250k in the costs of paying market supplements due to vacant posts – agreed by Cabinet in March 2022. The Council maintains a risk reserve for the Trust and it is proposed to use a combination of Social Care Grant and the reserve to offset the remaining £500k.
- The annual Contract Sum provides for the Council to fund the cost of the pay award each year. This was estimated at 2% in line with the Council's assumption in its own budget, the Council will need to fund the actual costs once confirmed.

6.3 Key Contracts - Serco

6.3.1 The Council's contract with Serco was awarded in 2010 and runs until 2035. It has a contract value in the region of £30m per annum.

6.3.2 The contract covers the following services:



- Weekly residual waste kerbside collection for all households in Sandwell (121,000)
- Weekly recycling kerbside collection for all households in Sandwell
- Optional green waste collection service (fortnightly - seasonal)
- Optional food waste collection service (weekly)
- Household Recycling Centre management
- Other recycling offered including batteries
- Street cleansing including fly tip collection, annual cleansing including weed spraying and collection, leaf collection
- Fleet management and renewal - SMBC undertakes the fleet servicing through a contractual arrangement with Serco

6.3.3 The Council has been focusing on improving the overall performance of the Serco Contract and the management of this contract is a component of the Council's Improvement Plan. Key achievements to date have been:

- Agreement of the Contract Monitoring Framework
- Agreement of standardised agendas for contract monitoring meetings
- Implementation of the Waste and Recycling Recovery Plan
- Approval of the Street Cleansing Recovery Plan (which is due for implementation from October)
- Approval of and delivery of Fleet Replacement as per the agreed schedule
- Contract initial review

6.3.4 Q2 performance was reported to Leadership Team in November and included information around governance and contract management arrangements, quarterly contract performance, SMBC contract monitoring and penalties issued, HR issues, stakeholder management, improvement focus, and an example of improvement activity that has taken place in relation to gully cleansing.

6.3.5 Key points over quarter 2 were:

- Governance and contract management arrangements are in place and over this quarter, all contract meetings have taken place.
- Regular cross channel communication takes place between the SMBC and Serco teams
- Performance reporting has been significantly improved. Key Performance Indicators have been introduced for areas of concern



and annual plans and schedules are being provided for the Council's review

- Performance over Q2 has decreased for missed bins which reflects Summer disruptions
- Contract deductions are being applied to reflect underachievement against Key Outcome Targets

6.3.6 The ongoing focus for improvement is across 3 key work streams:

- Street cleansing improvements:
 - Street cleansing plan due to be implemented from October
 - SMBC identifying location in 6 towns for storage of new "street hoover" type machines
 - Serco purchasing initial 3 "street hoovers" at £20,000 each
 - Gully work underway to improve data capture and risk based approach
- Data / reporting / systems
 - Contract management software research undertaken by SMBC
 - Contract management module for Intend procurement system being progressed for integrated contract support
 - Whitespace back office system for waste is being improved (upgrade to most recent version) by Serco to support crews uploading images
 - Whitespace integration to My Sandwell or the Council website being reviewed by SMBC to consider upload of annual schedules such as weed spraying and clearance
 - Further KPIs being added to monthly reporting. SMBC now receives a member's scorecard, a KOT performance pack & a service slide pack on a monthly to review and understand service delivery. Enables more regular touch points.
- Annual plans are now meeting contractual compliance

6.4 Key Contracts – Sandwell Leisure Trust

6.4.1 Sandwell Leisure Trust (SLT) manages the following leisure centres in Sandwell:

- Haden Hill Leisure Centre
- Hadley Stadium



- Harry Mitchell Leisure Centre
- Langley Swimming Centre
- Portway Lifestyle Centre
- Smethwick Swimming Centre
- Tipton Leisure Centre
- Tipton Sports Academy
- Wednesbury Leisure Centre

6.4.2 As part of the Council's resolution of the issues identified, Cabinet at their meeting 9 February 2022 terminated the Management Funding Agreement (MFA) with SLT; SLT will formally cease to deliver services on 2nd May 2023.

6.4.3 Cabinet at their meeting 22 June 2022 decided that SLT will be replaced by a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC). The formation of the LATC is ongoing. Bevan Brittan are providing advice on the process for terminating the MFA and legal settlement with SLT; details will be provided in the Q3 performance report.

6.4.4 A key workstream in the preparation for the LATC is the development of a comprehensive services specification, which will govern how the LATC will operate, deliver services and interact with the Council. The specification will include a detailed framework for governance, contract and performance management.

6.4.5 As an interim measure, a schedule of monthly contract review meetings has been implemented. A separate series of meetings with SLT has been scheduled to support the transition of the operation to the LATC. This agenda includes contract novations, staff transfer and data access.

6.4.6 Interim contract management measures are in place which include:

- Schedule of monthly contract review meetings in place
- Series of meetings to support transition
- Revised KPIs in place

6.4.7 Q2 performance was reported to Leadership Team in November and this included information around the revised KPIs. Sport and Leisure is a traded service and performance was particularly impacted by Covid lockdowns; the last financial year unaffected by pandemic-related restrictions was 2018-19. As such, pending the implementation of the revised suite of KPIs, interim contract performance monitoring has



focused on financial performance and is summarised below.
Retrospective reporting on KPIs for Q1 and Q2 will be available for future performance reports.

6.4.8 SLT financial performance to 31st August is stable and £123K better than budget. Consisting of trading income £2.85m (budget £2.75m), and expenditure £3.96m (budget £3.98m).

6.4.9 The current improvement focus consists of 3 strands:

- Trading - identifying how SLT's post-Covid trading is rebounding in comparison to national and statistical comparators
- Supporting the transition to LATC
- Supporting the preparation for the public opening of Sandwell Aquatics Centre

6.5 Key Contracts – Places for People Leisure

6.5.1 A 25-year contract is in place with Places Leisure to operate West Bromwich Leisure Centre and an annual management fee of £20K is paid to the Council. It has a contract value of £18,500pa.

6.5.2 Q2 performance was reported to Leadership Team in November and included performance information around governance performance, activity programming and sports development, participation, service planning delivery and control, building maintenance and housekeeping, customer feedback, health and safety, marketing overview, and corporate social responsibility).

6.5.3 Monthly operational reporting and quarterly Contract Management Meetings are in place and well-established. There has been 100% compliance of meetings across Q1 and Q2.

6.5.4 In terms of Q2 participation:

- Total visits to date: 32,000
- Participation to Date: 205,000 (up from 108,000 Sep 2021; down from 235,000 Sep 2019)
- Memberships Year to date: Fitness Live (increase from Sep 2019), Swimming (decrease from Sep 2019)

7 Organisational Health

7.1 The majority of organisational health indicators are reported annually and were included in the Q1 PMF report. Sickness absence is reported



on a quarterly basis along with a set of 6-monthly indicators, as outlined below. Quarterly reports on Health and Safety are made to Leadership Team.

7.2 **Sickness Absence**

- 7.2.1 Sickness absence is reported on a quarterly basis to Leadership Team and Directorate Management Teams. A detailed breakdown for Q2 is included at Appendix 3.
- 7.2.2 At Q2, an average of 5.29 working days per employee were lost due to sickness against a target of 3.86. An increase from Q1. Figures are cumulative for the financial year to quarter end.
- 7.2.3 The largest cause of sickness absence is stress, depression and mental health, followed by infection and muscular-skeletal problems. The primary cause of “infection” absence is coronavirus.
- 7.2.4 Over forthcoming months, a detailed review is being undertaken to analyse causes and trends in sickness absence, and to review sickness absence management processes.

7.3 **6-monthly Indicators**

- 7.3.1 6-monthly indicators are set out in Appendix 4. The percentage of leavers and starters to the Council along with the current number of apprentices is lower than the year end position. For starters and leavers the direction of travel is influenced by many variables and will reflect overall business and workforce plans. At this point in the year recruitment is pending for further apprentice intakes so this figure is not an indication of the final year out turn. Our new workforce strategy will include future talent plans, including apprenticeships and graduates, seeking to build back post-pandemic.

7.4 **Employee Engagement**

- 7.4.1 The Q1 performance report included details of the Employee Engagement Survey that was completed in April 2022. Messages from the survey included views from staff that:
- the Council is not harnessing all the strengths of our staff because there is not a culture of inspiring staff to innovate and do things differently



- the visibility and accessibility of Senior Leaders needs to improve
- Council Leaders do not live the Council's values
- customer focus is not improving
- recognition of hard work and dedication needs to improve
- action will not be taken as a result of the survey

7.4.2 Actions to respond to the survey have been embedded in the Improvement Plan, and Directorate-level actions agreed.

7.5 Health and Safety

7.5.1 Overall accountability for health and safety rests with the Chief Executive and the Leadership Team. The current Corporate Health and Safety Policy 2021-2023 sets out the communication and monitoring approach to ensure that health & safety information is considered at the right level.

7.5.2 Quarterly Health and Safety Performance Reports are made to the Leadership Team as part of regular performance conversations. This includes management information around accidents and incidents, proactive tasks undertaken by the Health and Safety Unit (such as audits and TU representative's queries), and an update on training and development.

7.5.3 Each of the nine Directorates receives its own quarterly Health and Safety report which are presented via the appropriate forums (e.g. Directorate JCC / Health and Safety Committee Meeting) for discussion, action and dissemination.

7.5.4 A quarterly Corporate Health and Safety Board is in place to assist the Chief Executive Officer and Leadership Team in the discharge of their health & safety responsibilities. The purpose of the board is to consider corporate matters affecting the health and safety of council employees, and others affected by the council's activities via formal consultation and review of our health and safety management system, monitoring activities and referrals from employee representatives. The board is chaired by the Director of Business Strategy and Change and involves one member of each Directorate Management Team along with Trade Union representatives, the Head of Health and Safety.



8 Improvement – Corporate Plan Delivery

8.1 Progress on Corporate Plan PMF

8.1.1 Since the approval of the PMF at Council on 12 April 2022, progress has continued in developing the Corporate Plan PMF. There are now 170 measures across the seven strategic outcomes, owned across our nine directorates. Work has taken place with each directorate to further refine measures, to understand the intricacies of the measures and when data can be made available. A summary of the activity that has taken place is set out below:

8.1.2 Achievements July to September 2022

- We have conducted a lessons learned exercise and have embedded the learning from this into Q2.
- We have continued to work with Research and Intelligence to develop the intelligence offer, particularly around the Corporate Plan PMF, with a view to publication of data on the Sandwell Trends website.
- We have strengthened relationships with directorates and sought to put in place a more structured approach to Q2 to improve understanding and clarity.

8.1.3 Our journey needs to continue to collectively develop a fully functioning performance management culture across the organisation.

8.1.4 The indicators chosen as part of the Corporate Plan PMF include metrics that are available either quarterly, annually, biannually and in some cases termly. This provides a challenge for quarterly reporting as not all the measures are available at the same point. With those measures that are available quarterly, reporting for many of them has at least a 3 to 4-week lag following the quarter end.

8.2 Progress against the seven strategic outcomes of the Corporate Plan

8.2.1 To provide assurance in our progress delivering the Corporate Plan each directorate has submitted a return outlining actions that have been taken during Q2 that contribute to Corporate Plan delivery. This intelligence together with those measures that are currently available for the Corporate Plan PMF have been brought together to provide corporate oversight of progress.



8.2.2 Summaries of progress for each of the seven strategic outcomes are set out below. Appendix 5 contains a more in-depth overview.

8.3 **Best Start in Life for Children and Young People**

8.3.1 Overall there has been good progress in education and support for young people in Sandwell through Q1 & Q2. The reach of children's centres in Sandwell for community outreach programmes has increased by 20% compared to the Q1 figure. The percentage of children who have a repeat care plan within two years of ceasing on a care plan has also improved from Q1.

8.3.2 By working in partnership with partners such as West Midlands Police to tackle youth violence and sharing good practice with early years teams in Warwickshire and Hampshire, Sandwell is striving to ensure that every child and young person in Sandwell gets the best start in life.

8.3.3 No actions have been RAG rated red across this strategic outcome.

8.4 **People live well and age well**

8.4.1 On the whole under people that live well and age well there has been progress in terms of putting the building blocks in place to help people to live healthily and independently for longer and many of the key deliverables are on track, for example the Healthy Sandwell Advice and Referral Service is working well, work has advanced on establishing the LATC to take over SLT managed facilities and various operational reviews are on track.

8.4.2 There has been some slippage under each theme, but actions are in place to address this.

8.4.3 There are no red RAG rated actions in this strategic outcome.

8.5 **Strong Resilient Communities**

8.5.1 We are reflecting on and learning from events run over the summer and have put in place our programme for Autumn/Winter 2022/23.

8.5.2 We continue to work collaboratively with key partners in relation to community safety to deliver better outcomes for our residents, taking a more intelligence led approach to tackling key issues.



- 8.5.3 There are also several areas where an amber rating has been applied, generally these relate to areas where we are trying to secure funding, and areas where we are experiencing difficulties in recruiting.
- 8.5.4 Two actions in this strategic outcome have been RAG rated red, these relate to the governance arrangements and budgets for grants to the voluntary sector and capital funding for the replacement of 4,000 high energy street lights with low energy LED lighting.

8.6 Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods

- 8.6.1 Overall, there has been good progress in developing quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods with many corporate plan actions being on track. There does continue to be issues in sourcing sufficient resource to manage the volume of repairs to council stock.
- 8.6.2 Importantly, it should be highlighted that we are performing well in relation to supporting our residents in the cost of living crisis, as demonstrated by the number of individuals assisted by our Welfare Rights Service. We know that this support really matters to our residents, as captured in the results of our residents survey where 67% of respondents said the issue that most concerned them was the cost of living.
- 8.6.3 There is one action that has been RAG rated red where there is significant slippage and uncertainty. This is in relation to delivery of the Black Country Plan.

8.7 A Strong Inclusive Economy

- 8.7.1 We continue to make good progress in developing an inclusive economy across Sandwell and in maximising funding opportunities and local investment.
- 8.7.2 Monitoring of the Regeneration Strategy and pipeline indicates that the vast majority of the 66 projects are on track or amber, meaning they are progressing through the delivery stages. 23 projects remain at the concept stage and are therefore identified as red risks.



8.7.3 There is one action that has been RAG rated red in this Strategic Outcome this relates to the development of a borough plan that feeds into the Black Country Plan.

8.8 **A Connected Accessible Sandwell**

8.8.1 Overall there has been good progress on key infrastructure pipeline projects such as the Metro extension and Blackheath Interchange which are at various stages of delivery.

8.8.2 The ULEV charging scheme has progressed from business case to delivery stage. Phase I will deliver 75 Charging points, future phases will look to deliver 250 charging points by 2025. This is a clear indicator showing that Sandwell is making strides in becoming more connected and accessible.

8.8.3 There has been some slippage on projects due to recruitment difficulties and also budget pressures related to inflation. If not addressed these slippages could cause further issues/delays for the projects.

8.9 **One Council, One Team**

8.9.1 Recruitment campaign for permanent CEX launched to provide stability in leadership and continuity of style and approach. An appointment was made in November

8.9.2 Progress made on implementing systems that will enable a modern, outstanding council: New Systems Integrator procured for Oracle Fusion and in final stages of agreeing implementation plan to move, and data collection in progress to determine future telephony requirements.

8.9.3 Performance in customer services impacted by increased demand for face-to-face contact and additional responsibilities, e.g. energy rebate. Focus on improving customer journey – Customer Commitments drafted and feedback to be sought from customers. Progress made on digital inclusion with funding of Digital Dens agreed and recruitment of co-ordinator underway.

8.9.4 Wellbeing provision has continued to be developed with appointment of wellbeing specialist. Resources identified to undertake HR policy review



in support of best practice, effective and efficient people management policy and procedure.

- 8.9.5 Progress in listening and accountable – residents wellbeing and perception and budget consultation surveys conducted and initial results shared and will be embedded in business planning. Consultation on proposed changes to election cycle conducted to help inform Council’s decision in November. Development of proposal for cross-council resident engagement - to be presented to LT in Q3.
- 8.9.6 Corporate performance reporting aligned with financial and risk reporting to provide Leadership Team and Members with oversight of key information to support decision making.
- 8.9.7 MTFS has been reviewed and progress made across all aspects of Making the Most of our Resources. Options paper on charging for green waste developed for discussion at Cabinet in Q3, improving rating from Red to Amber.
- 8.9.8 Two actions in this strategic outcome remain RED rated this quarter: the refresh of the Council’s Storage Area Network is dependent upon delivery on hardware which has now been shipped; the Corporate Data Strategy remains delayed due to resources being focused on the council’s Improvement Plan and corporate performance framework.
- 8.9.9 Whilst some slippage of targets is inevitable when managing the number of actions that underpin our Corporate Plan, it should be noted that there are a higher number of amber actions in this strategic outcome than in others. In total there are 20 amber actions in the One Council Strategic outcome.

8.10 Resident Wellbeing and Perception Survey & Resident Budget Consultation

- 8.10.1 In May 2022 the Council commissioned Enventure, a market research agency, to conduct a borough-wide residents’ survey to support evidence-based policy, service delivery and performance management. This was a large-scale quantitative survey covering several themes and particularly aligned to LGA Benchmarking resident satisfaction surveys (June 2022 was used).



8.10.2 The survey was undertaken by telephone, with an adult sample that was designed to be representative of the wider borough by gender, age, ethnicity, employment status and geography. Provision was made for communicating with typically under-represented, or 'hard-to-reach' groups and respondents whose first language is not English through community groups and networks and the use of translators and interpreters.

8.10.3 The residents' survey secured 1,062 responses, which is a sample large enough to provide statistically highly reliable findings at the borough level and sufficient responses to examine the results by sub-groups including at town level. These will be analysed in detail by the Research & Intelligence Team to inform a programme of dissemination within the Council and more widely.

8.10.4 The Council simultaneously commissioned Enventure to undertake a budget consultation survey with residents to inform the budget setting process. The representative budget consultation was conducted via telephone and face-to-face with quotas set on age group, gender, disability, ethnic group and area of the borough. In addition, some interviews were undertaken face-to-face on-street and in local community groups to consult with hard to reach residents.

8.10.5 Alongside the representative survey was an online survey open to all Sandwell residents. In total, 1,070 responses were received to the representative resident survey and 577 responses to the open online survey.

8.10.6 Appendix 6 details the key findings from the Resident Wellbeing and Perception Survey and the Budget Consultation.

9 Improvement Plan

9.1 The Council's Improvement Plan was agreed in June 2022 and responds to the Statutory Directions from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and the findings of three external reviews.

9.2 The Improvement Plan focuses on the governance arrangements of the council and areas of improvement across the organisation. The deliverables set out in the Improvement Plan will achieve long-term sustainable improvements in how the council operates and is able to



make effective decisions focused on improving outcomes for residents and experiences of service users. The underpinning objective of the Improvement Plan is to ensure that the council is able to deliver on the aims and priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan.

- 9.3 Progress of the Improvement Plan is monitored monthly by Directors and Cabinet Members and is reported to Cabinet Quarterly. The next report to Cabinet will be made alongside this Q2 performance report.
- 9.4 Audit & Risk Assurance Committee and Scrutiny Committees will be used for maintaining oversight of the actions and implementation of the Improvement Plan. The Improvement Plan Risk Register and overall progress is reported to the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee regularly. The next report will be made on 15 November 2022. Budget & Corporate Management Scrutiny Board has included several elements of the Improvement Plan on their work programme as well as regular reports on overall progress. The next report to Budget & Corporate Management Scrutiny Board will be made on 29 November 2022.
- 9.5 External assurance will continue to play a part in our improvement journey. Grant Thornton, CIPFA and the LGA have been conducting reviews over Autumn 2022 to monitor our progress in addressing the recommendations in their reviews. They will produce further review reports for the council's consideration.

10 Corporate Transformation

- 10.1 An Assistant Director for Transformation, a Corporate Transformation Manager and two Business Analysts have recently been appointed. Their initial focus is on a review of all Transformation activity across the Council, and bringing forward proposals for a Corporate Transformation Programme, with the required Governance and Resources to ensure its delivery.
- 10.2 A Framework for Corporate Transformation was approved in October 2022. The represents a key milestone in Sandwell Council's maturity towards Portfolio, Programme and Project Management (P3M). The Framework sets out how P3M will be carried out, what standards we expect and functionally, how we carry out Programme and Project



Management. It will help meet the Strategic Objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan and Improvement Plan including Service Improvement Plans and other strategic objectives.

- 10.3 The Project, Programmes and Portfolio Management Methodologies adopted by Sandwell Council are a blend of best practice and formal industry recognised approaches within the Public Sector. The main Methodologies adapted by Sandwell Council are PRINCE2, MORE Framework, ADKAR and Systems Thinking.
- 10.4 The Portfolio will have a Benefits Framework which sets out how we are going to measure success of the Portfolio and how we report progress to Elected Members.
- 10.5 Corporate Transformation will assure that risks are being identified documented and escalated where necessary. CTO will report on risk at Programme and Portfolio Boards and be responsible for escalation of risks.

11 Strategic Risk Register

- 11.1 Effective risk management is a key element of good corporate governance, as noted in the council's [Code of Corporate Governance](#), and is essential to the overall performance of the council in meeting its corporate plan objectives. Good risk management will ensure that resources are used efficiently and effectively and that assets and resources are protected against risk in the most efficient way.
- 11.2 The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) receive the Council's Strategic Risk Register on a regular basis for review and comment. The role of the ARAC is to provide assurance to the Council that it has a system of governance, risk management and internal control in place and that the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements continue to inform decision making
- 11.3 The Strategic risk register does not include all of the risks faced by the Council. Other risks are captured within directorate, programme and project risk registers in line with the Council's risk management framework. The SRR as at August 2022 was presented to ARAC on 22 September 2022 and was also included in the Q1 PMF report to Cabinet.



11.4 Following their consideration of the SRR, ARAC requested and has received further details and assurances in respect of the impact that the high levels of inflation are having on the council's finances and the spending control measures being implemented to assist in the mitigation of this risk. In addition, ARAC have in place a programme to receive directorate-level risk registers.

11.5 The next update on the Strategic Risk Register will be provided to Cabinet as part of the Q3 PMF report and to ARAC in March 2023.

12 Customer Experience

12.1 Since Q1, work has taken place to establish a Customer Journey Programme which will be governed within the Corporate Transformation Programme. The programme will consist of 5 workstreams as follows: Service Backlogs, Customer Experience Strategy, One Stop Shop/Community Hubs, Contact Centres, and Technology.

12.2 The Q2 Customer Experience performance report is attached in Appendix 7 and summarised below.

12.3 Channel Shift

12.3.1 In terms of channel shift (the ways that customers choose to contact the council), Q2 performance has followed the trends from Q1. In Q2, the majority of contact was made via MySandwell (53%) and by telephone (40%). The amount of contact in Q2 was lower than Q1 across all channels.

12.4 Contact Centre Performance

12.4.1 The Council operates three contact centres. Over Q2 all contact centres have experienced reduced performance. The common reasons for the reduced performance are due to staff vacancies and recruitment problems which will continue to impact on performance at Q3.

12.4.2 The Adults Social Care Contact Centre has been experienced reduced performance across all KPIs since Q1 and targets have not been met for the average wait measure and the average call time. At Q2 customers were waiting an average of 1minute (against a target of 30seconds), and call time exceeded the target by 30 seconds. The main reasons for this performance are due to staffing issues and some



specific issues with Blue Badge payments which have led to repeat calls and longer call times.

12.4.3 The Revenues and Benefits Contact Centre has experienced reduced performance across two of the three KPIs since Q1 and targets have not been met for the abandonment rate or the average call time. At Q2 the abandonment rate of 19.93% was above the quarterly target of 15% and slightly higher than the Q1 rate of 19.2%. The average call time was 9 minutes, in line with Q1 performance but a minute over target. The average wait was nearly 15 minutes at Q2, a minute increase on Q1. The reasons for this performance were due to staffing issues, demand for annual leave during the school holiday, re-introduction of Council Tax recovery, high demand linked to the energy rebate and the customer base requesting more support with household expenses. Over this quarter, some vacancies have been recruited to and training will be complete in December.

12.4.4 The Corporate Contact Centre, which receives general enquiries, housing and children's safeguarding calls, has experienced reduced performance since Q1 across all 3 KPIs and the abandonment rate and average wait measure did not meet their targets. The abandonment rate increased to 10.5% in Q2 from 5.9% at Q1 and was 2.5% above target. The average wait increased by 2 minutes from Q1 to 4.5 minutes at Q2. The reasons for this performance were due to staff vacancies and absence, recruitment difficulties, and pressures caused by staffing the OSS.

12.5 Information Requests

12.5.1 The number of Subject Access Requests (SARs) received at Q2 (46) has reduced from Q1 (66). Compliance against timescales for responding is significantly below the 95% for Q2, however, some system limitations have been identified which impacts on the data validity.

12.5.2 Legislation and guidance from the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) allows us to 'stop the clock' on the statutory timescale where we need to go back to the customer for clarity on the request, to request identification, to extend the timescale for complex requests or where we are waiting for the customer to confirm how they want to receive the information. The system doesn't allow the compliance timescales to be amended accordingly which means that there will be several requests that have been answered in line with statutory



requirements but the system and therefore the performance outcome will be reflecting these as non-compliant.

12.5.3 In order to produce validated data on SARs for future quarter, a manual data analysis has commenced. Work is also underway to identify a new system which will allow for improved reporting.

12.5.4 The number of FOIs received at Q2 is slightly lower than at Q1. The compliance against the statutory timescales for responding is significantly below 95% target at 68%, but this has improved by 2% since Q1. Work has now concluded to manage a backlog of FOIs within the system which is allowing officers to focus on keeping on top of incoming requests. Steps continue to be taken to bring performance in line with the target including regular meetings with Directorates and Directors to discuss performance, improved reporting, Governance Team Case Workers being allocated to Directorates to give more dedicated support, and training being provided across the Council. It is expected that these actions will continue to improve performance.

12.6 Customer Feedback

12.6.1 Q2 figures show a decrease in complaints compared to Q1, however, the total number of stage 1 is still an increase of 26% for the same quarter last year. Around 95% of Stage 1 complaints do not progress any further and are resolved at the stage 1 phase. There has been a decrease in the number of Stage 1 complaints upheld, but a slight increase in Stage 2 upheld complaints, however numbers are small. 7 Stage 2 complaints were upheld in Q2 compared with 4 at Q1.

12.6.2 The number of MP enquiries received has reduced since Q1 but is still higher than the quarterly average for last year. Positive feedback has been received on the new MP process that was implemented last year and the quality of responses that are now being received.

12.6.3 The number of compliments received has reduced since Q1 with 68 received in Q2.

12.6.4 Work is currently underway to resolve a backlog of complaints and this is expected to be completed in early 2023. In addition, analysis is taking place to look more closely at the types of complaints; trends and lessons learnt, initially focusing on Housing.



13 Alternative Options

- 13.1 The Directions issued by the Secretary of State, including the requirement to have a performance management framework in place, are a statutory requirement and the council has a legal obligation to respond appropriately. Failure to do so would likely result in further intervention measures.
- 13.2 The council had various options on what type of performance management framework to establish. Our approach has been developed through understanding the needs of the organisation and drawing on best practice from other local authorities. As we continue our improvement journey, the PMF will evolve to meet our changing requirements.

14. Implications

Resources:	There are no direct financial implications to this report.
Legal and Governance:	A corporate performance management framework was identified as a key gap in the council’s governance arrangements by Grant Thornton in 2021. The establishment of the corporate performance management framework was a key action in the council’s Improvement Plan agreed by Council in January 2022 and updated in June 2022. The PMF will enable officer and political leadership to improve oversight and corporate grip of the council’s performance.
Risk:	Should the council not implement a robust performance management framework, then it will not have the corporate oversight and intelligence to inform decision making and effectively manage risks to achieving service delivery and the strategic objectives identified in the Corporate Plan. These risks and the associated mitigations are noted in the SRR. The corporate performance management framework is a key mechanism to report progress and performance to the Government appointed Commissioners.



Equality:	Equality measures are included in the PMF, including the Organisational Health workforce indicators and the progress of the Corporate Plan.
Health and Wellbeing:	The measures to track progress of the Corporate Plan include a series of health and wellbeing indicators. This enables the council's leadership to see at a high level the direction of travel of the borough's health and wellbeing and seek to continue good practice or identify mitigating actions to address issues.
Social Value	Measures in the PMF include looking at percentage of spend in the local area.

15. Appendices

1. Finance Q2 Performance Report
2. Sandwell Children's Trust Q2 Performance Report
3. Sickness Absence Q2 Report
4. Organisational Health 6 monthly report 2022-2023
5. Corporate Plan Q2 Monitoring Report
6. Residents Survey and Budget Consultation – Key Findings
7. Customer Experience Q2 Performance Report

16. Background papers

- Report to Council 21 April 2022:
- [Performance Management Framework for the Council](#)
- [Appendix 1-3 – Organisational Health, Customer Experience and Finance & Contract Measures](#)
- [Appendix 4 – Corporate Plan PMF](#)
- [Report to Cabinet 28 September 2022](#)
- [Report to Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board 13 October 2022](#)



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Finance Performance Monitoring			2022 / 2023			Quarter 1			
Area	Indicator	Reporting Frequency	Data Owner	Data Collected By	2022-2023 Year End	Q1 Target	Q1 Performance	Q1 Target Met	Q1 Commentary
Financial Performance	Council Tax Collection	Monthly	Ian Dunn	Linda Tolley	98%	28.81%	28.30%	no	Collection is comparable to same time last year when it was 28.31%.
Financial Performance	Business Rates Collection	Monthly	Ian Dunn	Linda Tolley	98%	23.06%	32.87%	yes	Compared to 22.56%, over 10% up which has been helped by the Covid additional relief fund (CARF) payments being made to businesses
Financial Performance	Sundry Debt Collection	Monthly	Ian Dunn	Linda Tolley	98%	65.89%	41.43%	no	Some large invoices raised in schools has affected collection rate. Collection rates will improve in future months
Financial Performance	Prior year Council Tax collection	Quarterly	Ian Dunn	Linda Tolley	96%	93%	93.68%	yes	small improvement on May.
Financial Performance	Prior year Business Rates Collection	Quarterly	Ian Dunn	Linda Tolley	98%	95	96.36%	yes	Improvement on May.
Financial Performance	Prior year Sundry Debt Collection	Quarterly	Ian Dunn	Linda Tolley	97%	91%	91.91%	yes	Over 10% increase on May.
Financial Performance	Housing Benefit Overpayment	Monthly	Ian Dunn	Linda Tolley	£1.4m	412K	322K	no	The figure is lower than same point last year when it was £413k. This will vary based on overpayments being raised and payments being received
Financial Performance	Number of days taken to process Housing Benefit New Claims	Monthly	Ian Dunn	Linda Tolley	19	20	19	yes	This is the average number of days for the first quarter. The target figure is the DWP national average figure
Financial Performance	Number of days taken to process Housing Benefit Changes in Circumstances	Monthly	Ian Dunn	Linda Tolley	5	3	11	no	This is the average number of days for the first quarter. The target figure is the DWP national average figure. Performance has been affected by the impact of dealing with Household support fund over winter 21/22 and catching up with work
Financial Performance	% of invoices paid on time	Monthly	Rebecca Maher	Linda Tolley	95%	95%	77%	n/a	Work is ongoing to identify delays in the process and implement quick-wins whilst Oracle Fusion is being implemented.
Financial Performance	Variance from budget - General Fund	Monthly	Rebecca Maher	Linda Tolley	0	within 1% of budget (<£2.5m)	£2.2m overspend	Yes	Corrective action has been taken to mitigate inflationary pressures and this is a high risk area to be monitored for the rest of the year
Financial Performance	Variance from budget - Housing Revenue Account	Monthly	Rebecca Maher	Linda Tolley	0	within 1% of budget (<£2m)	£0.8m underspend	Yes	To be populated once Q1 budget monitoring report available
Financial Performance	% of spend in contract	Quarterly	Rebecca Maher	Linda Tolley					Under development
Financial Performance	% of spend spent locally	Quarterly	Fiona McLaughlin	Linda Tolley	n/a	n/a (to be determined)	44%	n/a	Under development
Financial Performance	% of ASC payments made on time in accordance with contract terms	Monthly	Kay Murphy	Linda Tolley	100%	100%	86%	No	Performance dipped due to SBS payment issues in May
Financial Performance	% of NRC Financial Assessments / re - assessments within 3 weeks (21 days) of CPLI approval	Monthly	Kay Murphy	Linda Tolley	100%	100%	75%	No	New measure - June figure provided
Financial Performance	% of Residential Financial Assessments within 8 weeks (56 days) of CPLI approval	Monthly	Kay Murphy	Linda Tolley	100%	100%	88%	No	New measure - June figure provided
Financial Performance	% of DP's with Financial review within the first 6 months	Monthly	Kay Murphy	Linda Tolley	100%	100%	n/a	n/a	n/a - Working on data collection methodology
Financial Performance	% of DP's with annual Financial review	Monthly	Kay Murphy	Linda Tolley	100%	100%	n/a	n/a	n/a - Working on data collection methodology
Financial Performance	SI66a - Rent collected as a % of rent due	Monthly	Manjit Rai	Karen New	95.93%	95.30%	95.21%	no	Customers continue to be under financial pressures due to the increasing costs of living and this will only increase during the financial year. The recent service review will enhance service delivery and allow officers to support our most vulnerable tenants.

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Performance

There has been an improvement in performance against the KPI's since the last quarter, with 10 out of the 15 KPI's now green. While there continues to be significant issues in recruiting and retaining social workers, the Trust has been working to ensure that no child remains unallocated for longer than 5 days. They were able to bring this figure down to zero in September.

The Trust has three interim project teams in place to help alleviate the pressure linked to recruitment and retention funded by the LA. It is expected that as the staffing situation stabilises these teams will be exited from the service. Three cohorts of AYSE's have joined the Trust (there are 57 AYSE's as of Sept 2022) and while they hold a smaller case load than fully qualified social workers, their introduction will help to ensure children are not left unallocated, as the short term project teams are exited, and that the timeliness of assessments improves.

The total number of children in care, as of Sept 2022, is 818. This is a significant reduction against the March 2022 position when 844 children were in care. The target for March 2023 is 796.

The rate per 10,000 of children in care in Sept 2022 is 98.6, this is a significant improvement against the rate in March 2022, 101.7. Quarterly comparator data for September is not yet available however at the end of quarter 1 (June 2022) Sandwell was performing well against WM statistical neighbours, with some work still required to match the whole statistical neighbour average.

	July 2022
Sandwell Rate per 10,000	102.17
Statistical Neighbour average (5 WM Authorities)	103.93
Statistical Neighbour average (all 10 comparators)	96.57

The general trend across statistical neighbours for the last 12 months has been an increase in the rate of children in care. It rose from 95.67 to 96.57, where as in Sandwell the rate has fallen, from 104.83 to 102.17.

		Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr - 22	May - 22	June - 22	Jul-22	Aug-22	S
PI.No	DESCRIPTION OF KPI															
1	Percentage of contacts to MASH referral timeliness	83.4%	77.2%	83.3%	72.3%	80.7%	71.3%	78.7%	75.0%	81.9%	78.1%	77.6%	74.9%	67.5%	73.2%	81.9%
2	Rate of Children on a Child Protection Plan per 10,000 CYP population	52.2	50.3	47.7	45.3	45.2	48.7	47.6	51.6	49.3	46.5	46.3	45.5	48.8	50.5	48.6
3	Percentage of Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) in 15 working days	89.8%	78.3%	88.6%	68.2%	93.5%	77.3%	87.8%	94.0%	59.5%	33.3%	84.0%	59.1%	81.5%	72.0%	52.6%
4	Out of the total number of open Single Assessments, the percentage of assessments completed within 45 working days	90.00%	80.20%	72.30%	71.00%	82.60%	78.50%	59.70%	56.50%	69.40%	67.40%	68.30%	68.10%	62.30%	60.40%	66.90%
5	Number of Children in need, including LAC & Children on Child Protection plan who have been unallocated for longer than five working days	65.0	57.0	27.0	0.0	3.0	17.0	4.0	57.0	20.0	0.0	112.0	258.0	215.0	0.0	0.0
6a	Percentage of young people with Child Protection Plans where 4 weekly visits have taken place	91.40%	87.50%	87.30%	93.10%	92.30%	91.30%	85.80%	88.20%	84.60%	80.10%	74.00%	74.10%	66.70%	75.40%	82.38%
7	% CP Plans in place and completed within six monthly intervals	87.40%	88.00%	90.80%	93.10%	90.40%	99.30%	97.00%	98.40%	100.00%	99.70%	97.90%	98.70%	99.80%	97.60%	94.30%
8	Percentage of 4 weekly supervisions on Child Protection cases	77.20%	56.10%	65.40%	71.50%	85.30%	61.10%	47.80%	62.80%	60.60%	74.60%	69.80%	63.00%	67.70%	77.30%	83.10%
9	% of Missing children return interviews within 72 hours	97.1%	87.5%	84.8%	81.6%	80.9%	80.6%	81.8%	87.2%	100.0%	84.4%	81.3%	76.5%	75.6%	81.1%	91.8%

10	% Children in Need Visited in the last 20 working days	63.8%	65.5%	65.8%	64.7%	69.2%	63.3%	57.6%	52.7%	60.4%	57.8%	61.1%	57.4%	42.8%	57.3%	80.3%
11	Percentage Looked After Children visited in timescale according to statutory requirements.	80.5%	82.4%	85.3%	84.6%	86.8%	85.7%	83.1%	80.1%	86.1%	86.4%	89.2%	80.4%	84.7%	87.3%	86.4%
12	% LAC reviews within timescales -	97.6%	96.9%	94.0%	91.1%	91.5%	87.9%	87.0%	86.4%	89.0%	93.6%	93.6%	91.8%	90.5%	87.0%	86.6%
13	Vacancy rate of social workers	36.90%	36.90%	35.90%	37.20%	36.20%	36.50%	36.10%	37.90%	39.64%	42.30%	43.60%	45.05%	45.05%	44.02%	37.80%
14	Average overall caseloads across Children's Services	17.94	15.39	14.93	17.00	17.36	18.19	19.74	20.63	21.07	20.94	20.85	19.61	18.64	18.51	16.52
15	Number of random monthly case file audits rated RI and above	93.8%	92.9%	85.7%	88.2%	90.9%	81.8%	80.0%	100.0%	81.8%	77.8%	100.0%	100.0%	83.3%	N/A	100.0%

Finances

The 2022/23 financial performance is being measured against the agreed 2022/23 Contract Sum as approved by Cabinet in February 2022.

The expectation of SCT was to achieve a surplus of £1.9m in 2022/23, however they are experiencing pressures from exceptionally high cost placements due to a combination of factors; including a difficulty in identifying suitable placements, an increase in the number of children with complex needs and a substantial increase in the weekly cost of placements compared with assumptions made in the 2021 MTFP. It is now expected that the deficit from earlier years will not be reduced. The high cost of placements, as well as recruitment and retention issues, mean they are forecasting an overspend, against the MTFP, of £570k as at the end of Quarter 2 in addition to not being able to meet the savings target.

The Trust has also recruited additional interim project teams funded by the LA, these are a relatively new phenomenon and are at enhanced rates, to fulfil the statutory requirements of the service and to mitigate the difficulties in recruitment and retention of permanent staff. It is estimated that this will cost £750k for the year, however this is subject to review between Council and Trust. The funding of this additional cost is, in part, offset slightly by a saving of approx. £250k in the costs of paying market supplements due to vacant posts (the payments of market supplements was agreed by Cabinet in March 2022, in addition to the base contract sum). It was agreed by Cabinet on the 28th September to fund these additional costs to ensure the Trust can continue to meet statutory responsibilities. The Council maintains a risk reserve for SCT and it is proposed to use a combination of Social Care Grant and the reserve to offset these additional costs.

The Council and SCT have discussed the current financial position and options to take corrective action. The Trust already has a savings target of £2.3m to achieve in 2022/23, with some risks around the ability to fully deliver the savings in relation to placements. SCT are considering a range of ways to source and retain social workers and have developed a Workforce Strategy to

take this approach forward. The Trust has also commissioned external support to undertake a review of the Trust's Workforce Strategy and approach to recruitment and retention.

A number of non-operational vacancies are being frozen and in year savings targets for the remainder of the organisation have been increased to partly compensate for increased operational costs.

The Trust also has a Transformation Programme in place which is currently focussing on a review of Edge of Care services, with the objective of improving service delivery so that families are supported early enough and with the appropriate level of intervention to prevent the need for expensive statutory intervention, and a reorganisation of the Front Door to improve the application of thresholds and reduce the number of inappropriate referrals that waste time and resources whilst still managing safe-guarding risks effectively. The transformation programme is addition to the 'invest to save' activity already being funded by the Council.

The annual Contract Sum agreement with Sandwell Children's Trust provides for the Council to fund the cost of the pay award each year. As this was estimated at 2% when the Contract Sum was agreed, in line with the Council's assumption in its own budget, the Council will need to fund the actual costs once confirmed.

Contractual Matters

There is a requirement in the Service Delivery Contract (SDC) to undertake a contract review after four years of operation. The review was presented to Cabinet on 28th September and Cabinet agreed that:

- i) they do not recommend to the Secretary of State that the break clause is invoked
- ii) authorise the Director of Children and Education, in consultation with the Chief Executive of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Children and Education, to agree with Sandwell Children's Trust revised contractual key performance indicators, to commence on 1st April 2023
- iii) the requirement to achieve a judgement of 'Good' as per the ILACS framework be revised from within four years of contract commencement (March 2022) to the next standard ILACS inspection by Ofsted (within three years of the previous inspection).

As per the process laid out in the Service Delivery Contract the Contract Review will be presented to the Operational Performance Board and the Strategic Partnership Board, following which, the reviews will be sent to the Secretary of State with an agreed recommendation in respect of the break clause.

SCT attended Children and Education Scrutiny Panel on 10 October 2022 to provide a performance update, this is a contractual requirement twice per year.

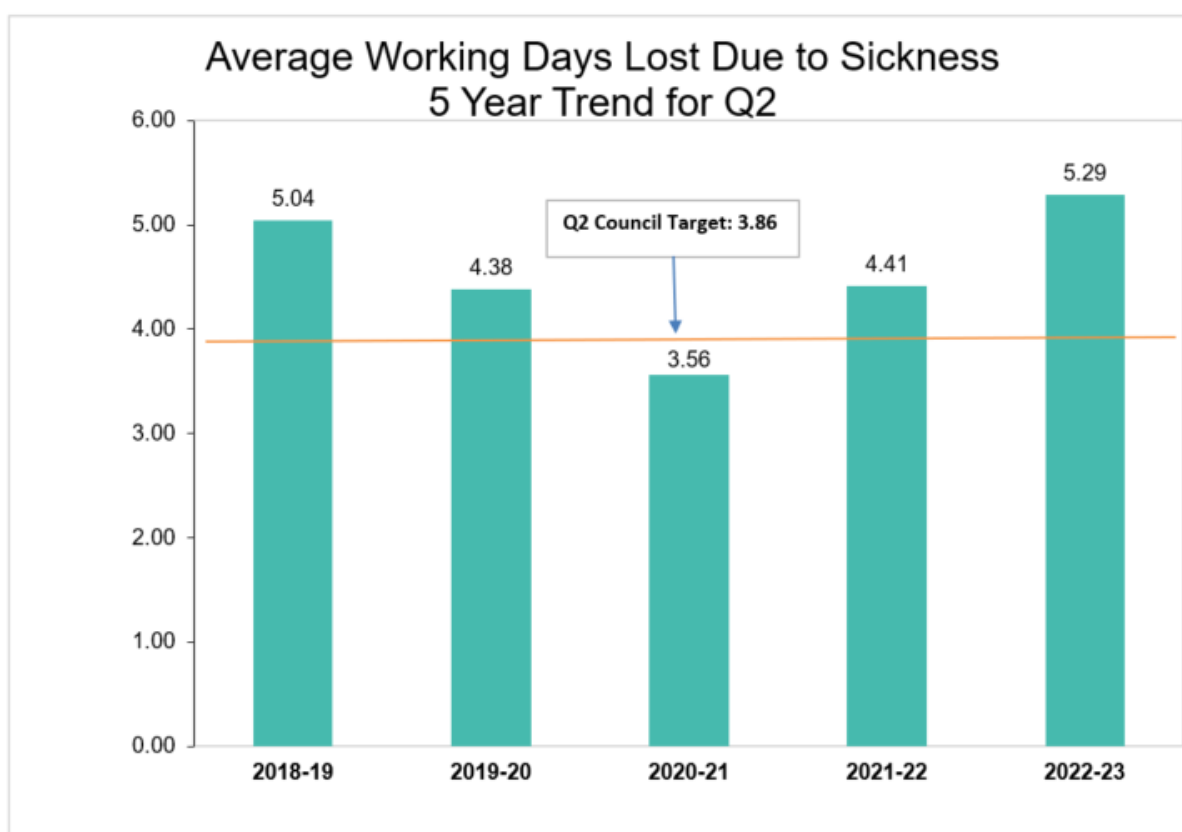
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Quarterly Sickness Absence Monitoring

Leadership Team (25-Oct-22)

Headline Q2 Outturn

An average of **5.29** working days per employee were lost due to sickness at the end of Q2 this year compared to **4.41** days during Q2 last year. This represents an increase of **0.88** days and is the highest Q2 outturn for the last 5 consecutive years. An average of **2.74** working days per employee were lost due to sickness during Q1 in comparison to the council target 2.24. Q1 was 0.50 days above the threshold:



Performance compared to Q2 target

The corporate cumulative quarterly sickness target was last reviewed in 2018-19 and is still ongoing and is as follows:

Quarter 1 = 2.24 days

Quarter 2 = 3.86 days

Quarter 3 = 6.21 days

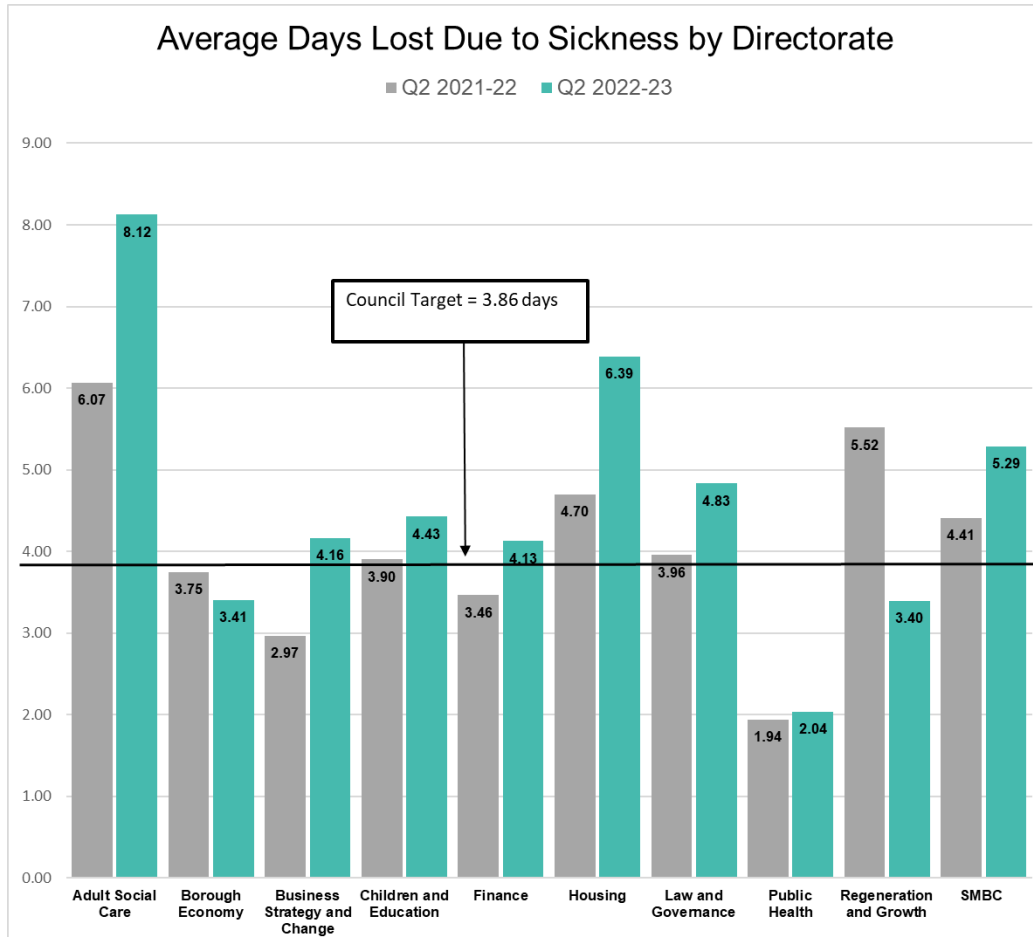
Quarter 4 = 8.70 days

Performance at the end of Q2 this year was **1.43** days above the threshold for the quarter. There are currently no Directorate level targets in place. Directorates, should aim to be within the corporate target. If this is not in reach, then Directorates

should set their own targets/ aim for continuous improvement when compared to the same period last year.

Outturn by Directorate

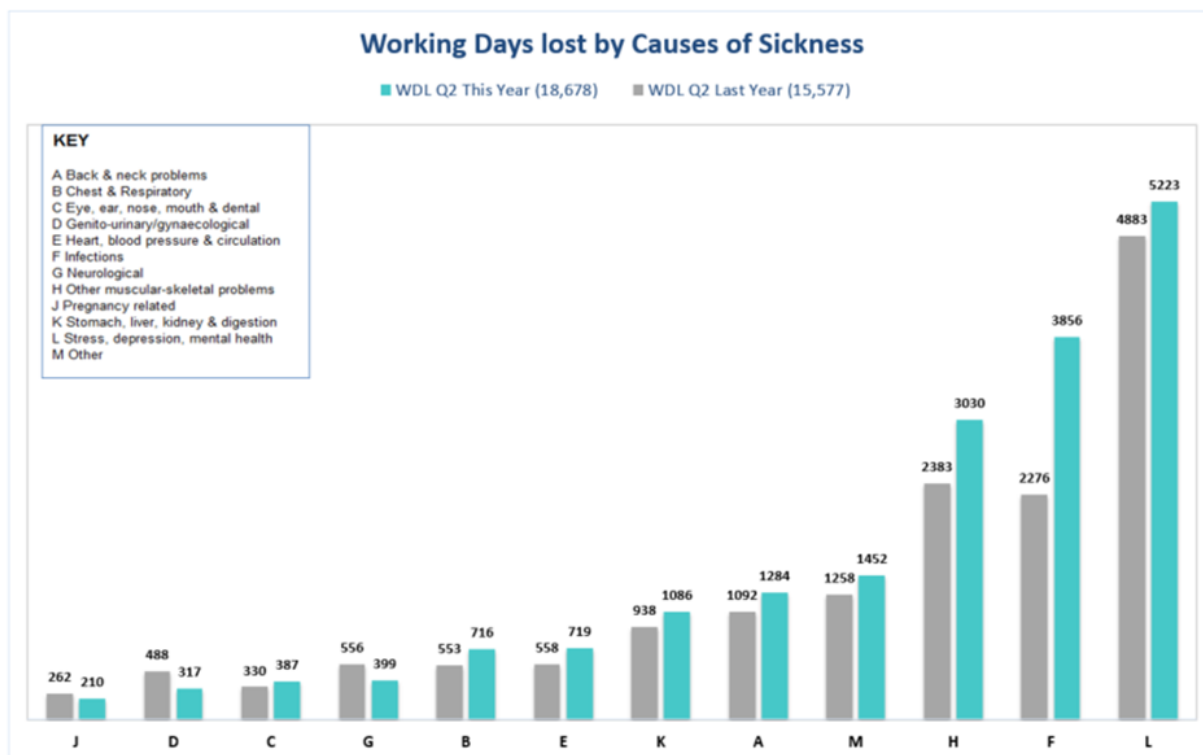
Outturn by Directorates this year compared to Q2 last year shows that all Directorates, except Regeneration and Growth and Borough Economy have seen an increase in sickness levels:



Directorate	Trend Compared to Q2 last year
Adult Social Care	2.06
Borough Economy	-0.34
Business Strategy and Change	1.20
Children & Education	0.52
Finance	0.66
Housing	1.69
Law and Governance	0.87
Public Health	0.10
Regeneration and Growth	-2.12
Sandwell Council	0.88

Total Working Days Lost by Cause of Sickness

The total working days lost at the end of Q2 this year was **18,678** compared to **15,577** for the same period last year. This represents an increase of just over **3,100** days (**19.9%**). The underlying data by causes of sickness, shows an **increase in Infections by 1,580 (69%)** working days lost. This significant increase moved Infections from third to the second leading cause of sickness. **Stress, depression, mental health increased by 340 working days (7.0%)** and remains as the leading cause of sickness. **Other muscular skeletal problems increased by 647 (27%)** and moved down to the third leading cause behind Infections.



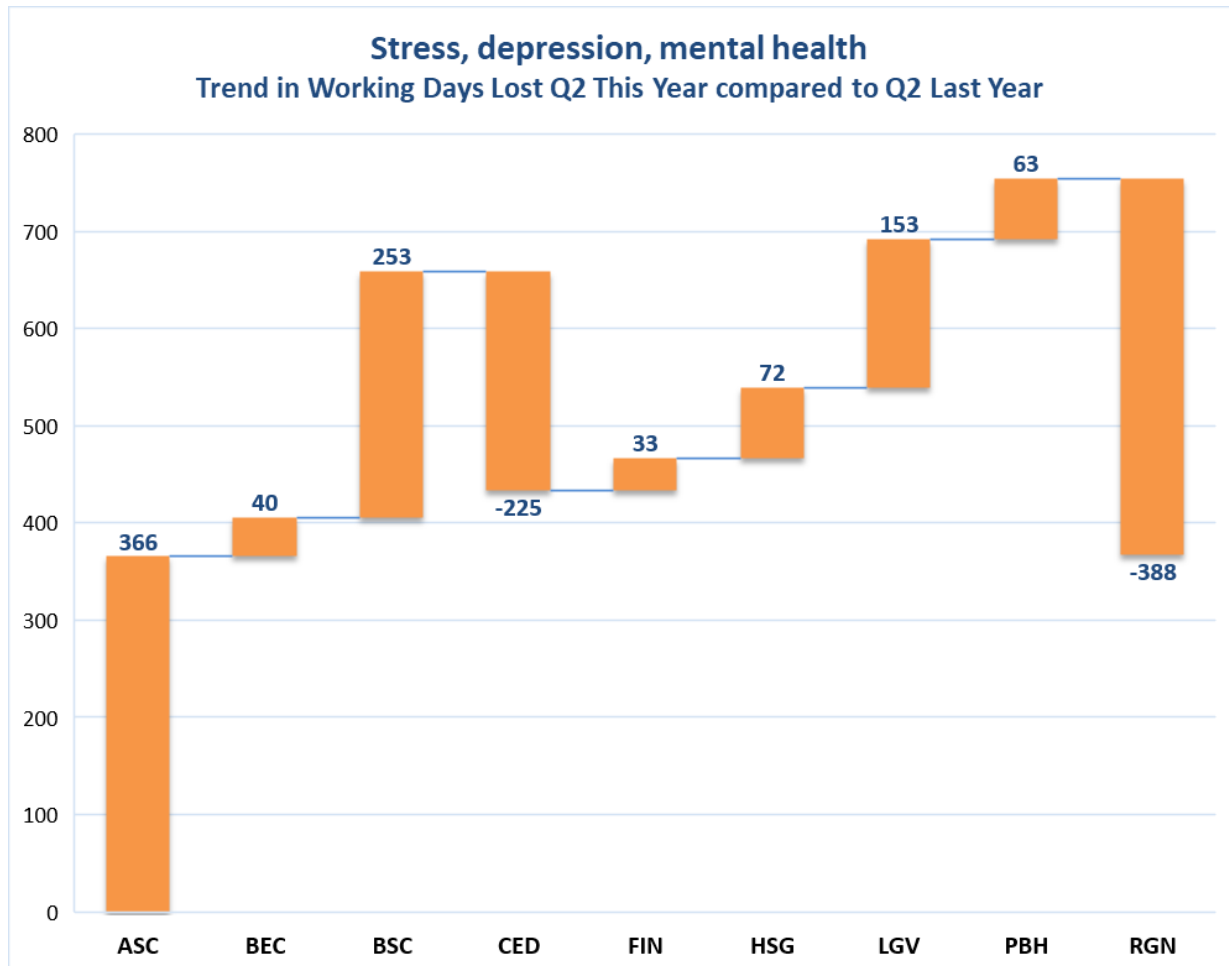
A heatmap summary of the total working days by Directorate is as follows:

Directorate	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	All Causes
Adult Social Care	460	178	130	134	260	889	145	756	6	230	1635	367	5191
Borough Economy	71	160	62	32	18	415	13	350		82	363	25	1591
Business Strategy and Change	20	12	24	12	11	230	29	64	58	163	604	137	1365
Children and Education	119	24	34	33	160	488	38	209	16	144	269	416	1950
Finance	41	118	39	52		239	18	167	19	113	446	122	1373
Housing	413	217	53	32	192	1239	113	1272	109	268	1278	265	5451
Law and Governance	30		11	17	20	156	17	74	1	65	367	46	804
Public Health			10			26	4			7	63	15	125
Regeneration and Growth	130	6	23	6	57	174	24	138		14	197	59	829
Grand Total	1284	716	387	317	719	3856	399	3030	210	1086	5223	1452	18678

The red, amber, green coding is auto-generated in Excel and is dependent upon the set of values in each row (Directorate). The higher the value the deeper the strength of the colour coding.

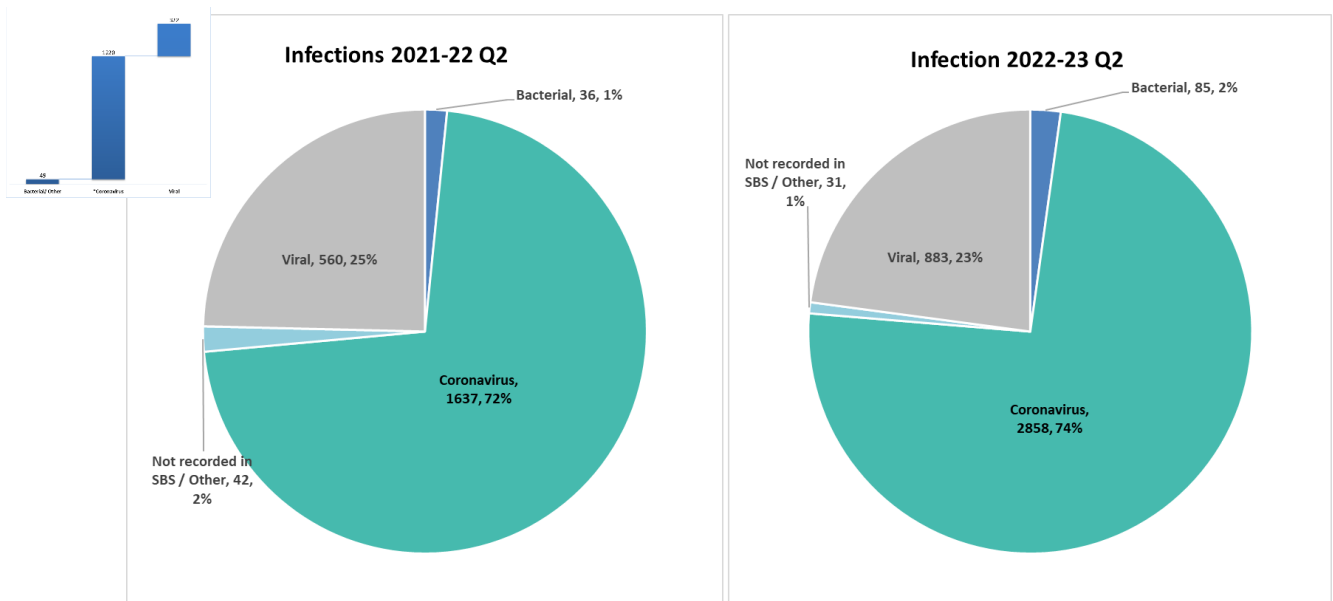
Trend in Stress, Depression and Mental Health by Directorate

Regeneration and Growth and Children and Education were the only directorates with a reduction in working days lost due to stress, depression and mental health. All other directorates had seen an increase compared to Q2 last year:



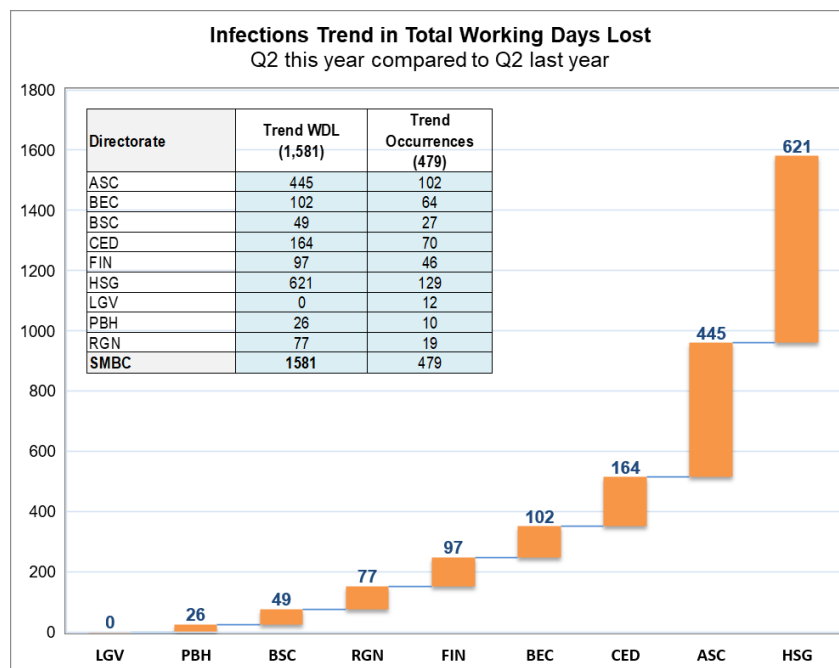
Breakdown and trend for Infections

Coronavirus was the biggest cause of the increase in Infections and accounts for over 70% of the working days lost due to Infections:



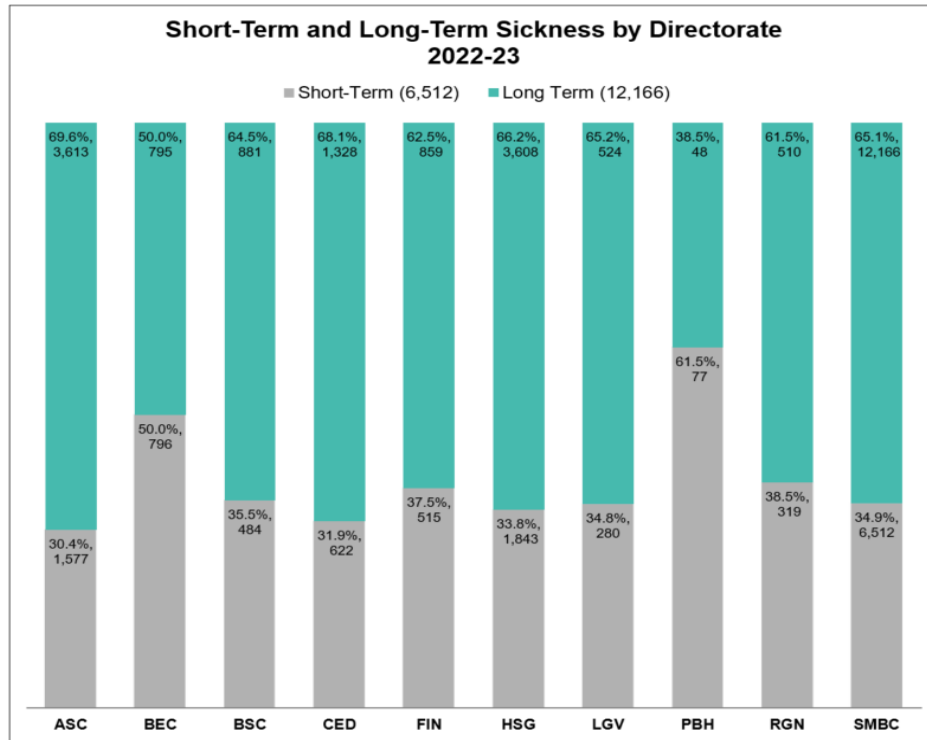
Breakdown of Infections by Directorate

The most significant increase in working days lost due to Infections was for the Housing Directorate followed by Adult Social Care:

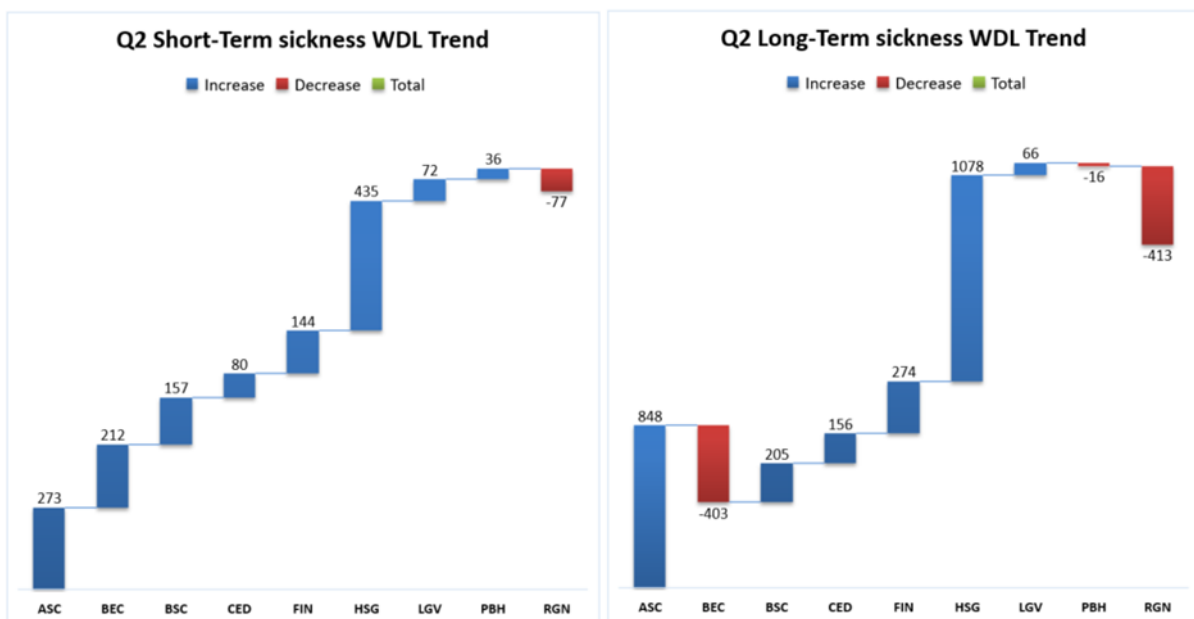


Short-Term / Long-term Sickness by Directorate

Just over one third (35%) of all sickness to the end of Q2 this year was short-term and two-thirds (65%) long-term. Long-term sickness is continuous absence of 20 working days or more. A summary of short-term and long-term sickness by Directorates is as follows:

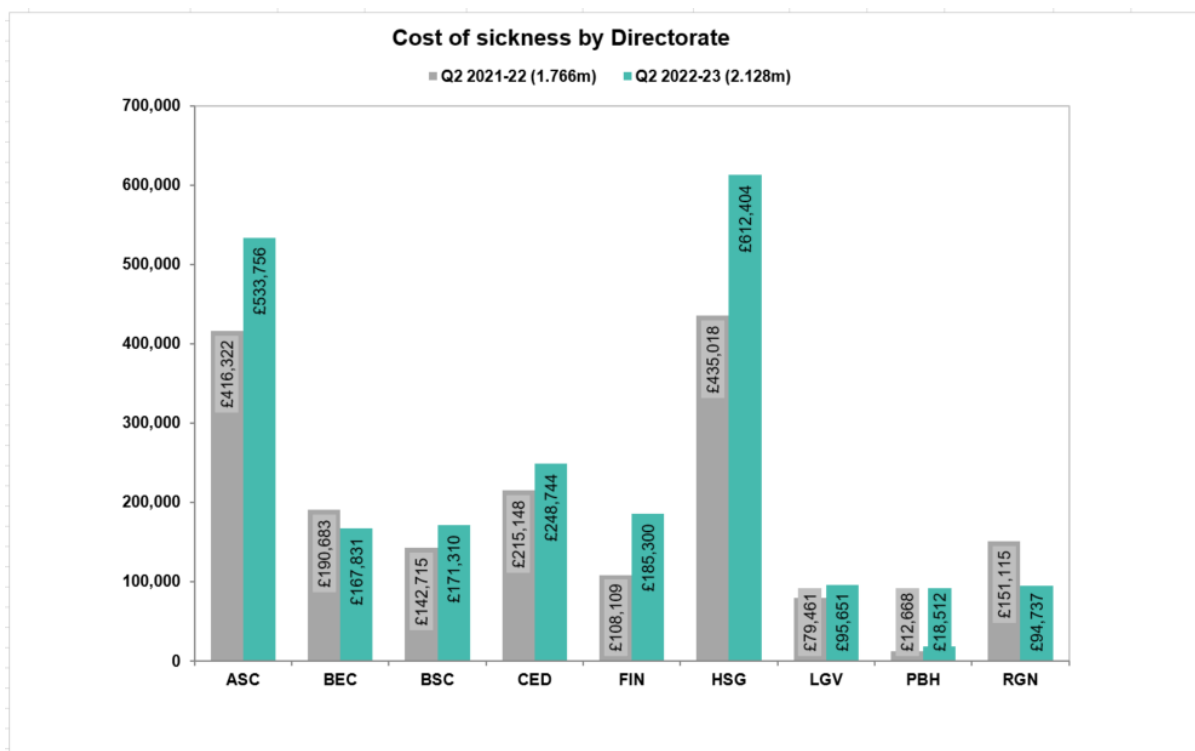


Total working days lost due to **short-term sickness have increased by 1,333 (26%)** and **Long-term by 1,769 (17%)**. The trend by Directorate is as follows:



Cost of sickness by Directorate

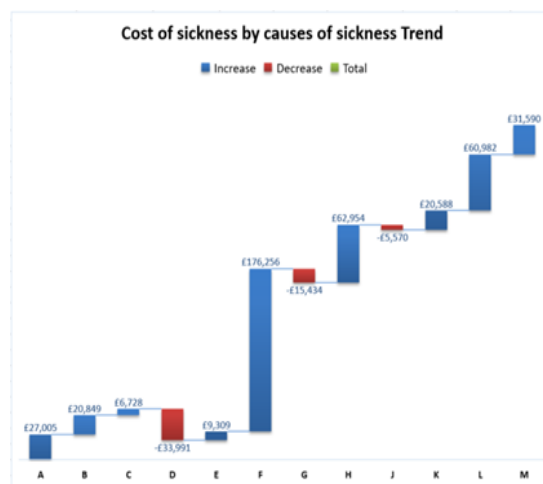
The cost of sickness is measured as loss of productive time for each absence due to sickness. At the end of Q2 this year the **cost of sickness was £2.128m compared to £1.766m for the same period last year**. This is an increase of **£361K** and is summarised by Directorates as follows:



Cost of sickness by Cause

The cost of sickness by cause at the end of Q2 for the last two years is as follows and shows a significant increase due to **Infections**:

Cause of Sickness	Q2 2021-22	Q2 2022-23	Trend
A Back & neck problems	£115,860	£142,865	£27,005
B Chest & Respiratory	£58,243	£79,092	£20,849
C Eye, ear, nose, mouth & dental	£36,123	£42,850	£6,728
D Genito-urinary/gynaecological	£68,879	£34,888	-\$33,991
E Heart, blood pressure & circulation	£64,147	£73,456	£9,309
F Infections	£263,834	£440,090	£176,256
G Neurological	£62,517	£47,083	-\$15,434
H Other muscular-skeletal problems	£250,319	£313,272	£62,954
J Pregnancy related	£28,697	£23,127	-\$5,570
K Stomach, liver, kidney & digestion	£101,321	£121,909	£20,588
L Stress, depression, mental health	£574,168	£635,150	£60,982
M Other	£142,872	£174,463	£31,590
SMBC	£1,766,980	£2,128,245	£361,266



Further Q2 Sickness Data/ Dashboards

Directorate level sickness absence summaries are now available to Directorates via their HR Business Partners. Sickness Dashboards will follow at the end of October.

Vickie Lee, Head of Human Resources


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Organisational Health Indicators – 6 monthly update

*compared to the previous year

Last updated: 14-Oct-2022

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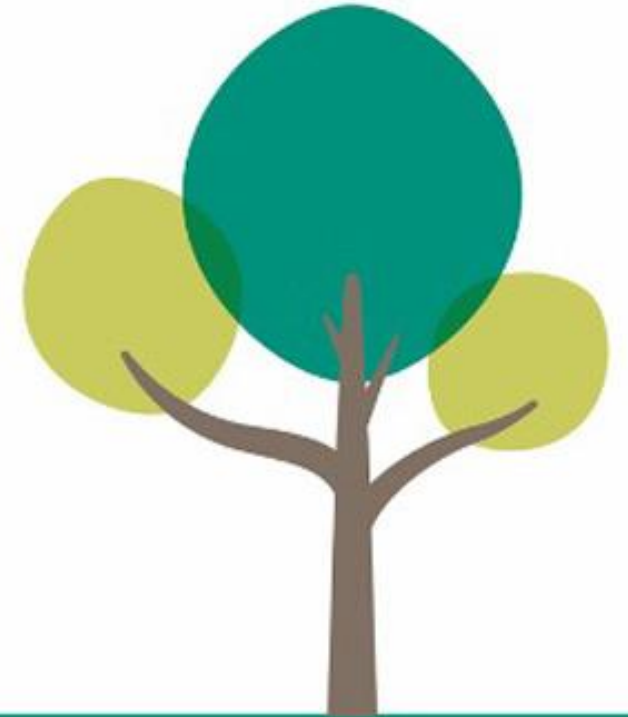
Description	2020/21 Outturn	2021/22 Outturn	2022/23 Outturn	Direction of Travel*	Reporting Cycle	Target (2021/22)	Benchmark	Benchmark Sources
The percentage leavers from Sandwell Council <i>(aligned to WME definition from 2021/22 onwards)</i> .	6.6%	9.0%	5.7% (Apr-Sep)	Not Applicable	6 Monthly	TBC	7.9% (8.7 All WM Authorities)	Infinistats 2020/21 Median for West Midland MET Authorities (4 out of 7)
The percentage new starters to Sandwell Council <i>(amended to include apprentices)</i>	5.6%	6.2%	5.6% (Apr-Sep)	Not Applicable	6 Monthly	TBC	N/A	Benchmark data not available
Number of apprentices as at year end <i>(see note 3)</i>	71	69	48		6 Monthly	TBC	N/A	Benchmark data not available
The number of graduates on the Sandwell Management Graduate Programme as at year end <i>(see note 4)</i>	8	1	Recruitment to the Trainee Management Graduate Programme has been on hold since the start of the Coronavirus Pandemic		6 Monthly	TBC	N/A	

Note 3 - This metric is mainly limited to entry level apprenticeships recruited externally as a possible future talent pipeline. Higher level Apprentices (Level 4-7) who are internal employees are excluded.

Note 4 - Recruitment to the Trainee Management Graduate Programme has been on hold since the start of the Coronavirus Pandemic. Funding of graduate salaries will be required from individual Directorates budgets to move this initiative forward in the future. There may be technical / specialist graduates across the Council that have been recruited and are managed within individual service areas.



Corporate Plan Quarter 2 Progress





Overview

- Our Corporate Plan contains seven strategic outcomes that our nine directorates deliver on.
- This report details the progress made during quarter 2 (July to September 2022) in delivering the actions that underpin our strategic outcomes.
- Each action in directorate business plans that contributes to a corporate plan action has been RAG rated using the following categories:









RAG Definitions

On Track	Progress against the action is good and there is i) a low level of risk and/or issues; and/or ii) progress is in line with the delivery date with no/ minor slippage (e.g. less than 2 months); and/or that iii) there is no or minor concern around the measures of success being fulfilled.
Medium issues/risks/slippage	Progress on the action is being made but there is i) a medium level of risk and/or issues and/or ii) slippage (actual / projected) of less than 3 months; and/or iii) there is a medium level of concern that the measures of success will not be achieved
Significant issues/risks/slippage	There is a significant level of risk, issues and/or slippage (e.g. more than 3 months) or significant concern around the measures of success being fulfilled





Q1 > Q2 – Direction of Travel

	Q1		Q2
Actions on Track	252		258
Medium issues/risks/slippage	85		91
Significant issues/risks/slippage	7		9
No update available	66		53



Headlines – Corporate Plan Monitoring Q2

	Best Start in Life for Children & Young People	People who Live Well and Age Well	Strong Resilient Communities	Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods	A Strong and Inclusive Economy	A Connected & Accessible Sandwell	One Council One Team	Totals
No of Corporate Plan Actions	17	20	21	20	22	18	27	145
No of directorate actions contributing	46	127	63	33	41	28	73	411
On Track	42(39)	77 (74)	40 (44)	20 (21)	24 (17)	15 (16)	40 (41)	258 (252)
Medium issues/risks/slippage	3 (3)	42 (36)	7 (10)	6 (3)	4 (8)	3 (4)	26 (21)	91 (85)
Significant issues / risks/slippage	0 (0)	0 (0)	4*(1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	2 (3)	9 (7)
No update available	1 (4)	8 (17)	12 (8)	6 (8)	12 (14)	9 (7)	5 (8)	53 (66)

*3 of the 4 red actions relate to the same issue, but as it contributes to three separate actions in the Corporate Plan it appears three times.





Direction of Travel Red Actions – Corporate Plan Monitoring Q1 - Q2

Strategic Outcome	Red Action from Q1		Q2 Update
Strong Resilient Communities	Bring together governance arrangements and budgets to ensure VCS grants are aligned to corporate objectives.		Still a red action in Q2. Team continues to support the commissioners with grant reviews as part of the council's 2022/23 savings programme. No formal decision on implementing a centralised approach to grant management made. The team continues to operate at less than full capacity due to sickness absence.
Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods	We will have a current strategic plan for the Borough that feeds into the Black Country Plan and ensures we allocate appropriate development land to meet our future needs for housing, employment opportunities, amenities and community facilities.		The Leader of Dudley Council announced that he would be withdrawing the Council from the Plan. The three remaining Councils have taken the decision to develop their own individual plans to continue to shape the development needs of their areas at the earliest opportunity. Proposals to develop these local plans are to be discussed by each Council at future Cabinet meetings between October and December 2022.
A Strong & Inclusive Economy	We will continue to progress the review of the Black Country Plan to ensure the policy base is robust and meet the needs of Sandwell and the Black Country.		See above update.
A Connected & Accessible Sandwell	Deliver the capital programme for 2022/23 of annual maintenance schemes to renew or repair highway infrastructure prioritised in red risk condition (HIAMP) £4.741 Million capital budget.		Still a red action in Q2. Budget Pressures associated with inflation and escalating red risk conditions and delays in Cabinet approval of capital funding.
One Council One Team	The refresh of the Council's Storage Area Network (SAN).		Still a red action in Q2. New hardware has now been shipped by the vendor and delivery arrangements are being made. Once onsite there will be approximately 3 months of work to install, migrate data and decommission old system. A new data backup system will also go live at the same time.
	Development of the Corporate Data Strategy to define and deliver our approach to Business Intelligence.		No further progress on this area. Resources continue to be dedicated to delivering Improvement Plan.
	Delivery of income generated from chargeable garden waste Option B through spend to save proposal.		Action has been reduced to amber. An options paper has been prepared and is to be presented to Cabinet in Q3.





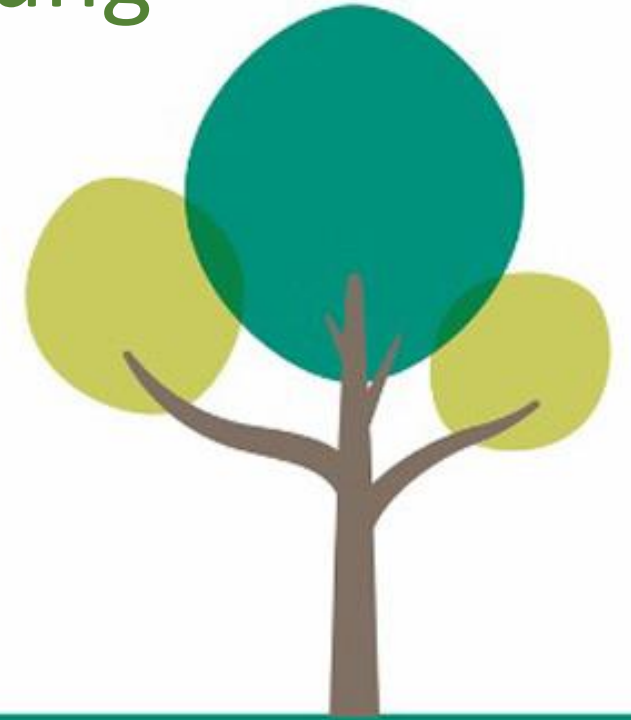
New Red Actions Q2

Strategic Outcome	Red Action Q2	Commentary
Strong Resilient Communities	Replace 4,000 high energy street lighting lanterns with low energy LED lighting and computer management, providing the same lighting levels.	Capital funding report will be considered by Cabinet in Q3.



Best Start in Life for Children and Young People

Quarter 2 Progress





Director Insight – Director of Children’s Services & Education

- Ofsted – ILACS outcome: out of inadequacy first time in over a decade
- Education Investment Area – 1 of 55 LAs / Priority Investment Area – 1 of 24 LAs
- Education Attendance – new multi agency priority setting across all agencies
- Strategy development and launches: Early Help and Corporate Parenting
- Safeguarding in Education – whole system engagement / vulnerable children
- Emotional health and well-being: whole system support for CYP mental health
- SEND transport – procurement and implementation; new framework
- System-wide agreement with six strategic priorities.





Summary

- Overall there has been good progress in education and support for young people in Sandwell through Q1 & Q2. The reach of centres in Sandwell for community outreach programmes has increased by 20% compared to the Q1 figure. The percentage of children who have a repeat care plan within two years of ceasing on a care plan has also improved from Q1.
- By working in partnership with partners such as West Midlands Police to tackle youth violence and sharing good practice with early years teams in Warwickshire and Hampshire, Sandwell is striving to ensure that every child and young person in Sandwell gets the best start in life.
- No actions have been RAG rated red across this strategic outcome.





First 1000 Days

- The Black Country Early Years Outcomes team from all 4 black country LAs are currently working with the National Literacy Trust to launch First Words Together across the Black Country. The Early Years Team have been contacted by the early years teams in Warwickshire and Hampshire for support with their speech, language and communication development. Sandwell's pathway has been shared to support the strategic thinking and visits to Sandwell are being planned.
- A key priority is to establish a community outreach programme to further improve the community reach. The reach of centres in Sandwell is showing a 20% increase in Q2 (against Q1 figures).





Ready for School / Education

- The children's services Ofsted rating (ILACS) has improved from Inadequate to Requires Improvement to be Good for the first time in over a decade
- 92% of Early Years providers are rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' with Ofsted
- 91.58 % success of achieving 1st, 2nd or 3rd preference for state Secondary school places. This is higher than the 91.02 % of Q1.
- Sandwell scores better than the Region and England average on the Key Stage 4: Attainment 8 indicator, which looks at the points gap between the LA disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.





Ready for School

- The Council continues to maintain a safeguarding oversight via, The MASH safeguarding team including direct work with schools, MARAC and LADO. The Children Missing Education and Elective Home Education teams focus on suitable education
- The September update to the Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny review confirms the enhancement of support for EHE families
- In the academic year 2021/22 Sandwell successfully completed more than 90% of intended delivery objectives, including the use of Covid funds to enhance community engagement via the delivery of a series of community events during half terms 5 and 6
- Sandwell has less % of pupils with persistent absence in secondary and special schools than the Regional and England average. However, in primary schools it has the highest % of persistent absence compared to the Regional and England average. This has been prioritised for action in the autumn term: Attendance is Everyone’s Business event 29.9.22.

% of pupils with persistent absence (> 10% absence)			
	Primary %	Secondary %	Special %
Sandwell	21	23.7	34.8
Regional	20.5	28.1	39.6
England	19.5	27.7	39.4





Children & Young People that need more Support

- The vulnerable children's group (VCG) continues to meet weekly in Q2 with a focus on the following priority themes:
 1. Violence reduction (WMP / VR Partnership)
 2. Afghan and Ukraine resettlement programmes
 3. Emotional health and well-being (CYP mental health)
- All VCG partners have supported Trust colleagues to embed the early help strategy re-launched by SMBC and the Trust with VCS in March 2022
- Sandwell children who have a repeat care plan within two years of ceasing on a CP Plan is at 11.2% and in line with regional comparison of 10.6%. This is an improvement from Q1 (11.7%). This represents a good measure to ensure we have closed children open to the service safely and robustly without further the need for statutory intervention.





Children & Young People that need more Support

- Referrals for Education and Health Care Plan needs assessments continue to rise, and all agencies including the Council's Inclusive Learning Service report capacity and staff recruitment issues
- Statutory compliance in relation to the timelines is impacted due to increase workload and staffing shortages
- Child Mental Health action plan has now been submitted and adopted by the SEND strategic board.





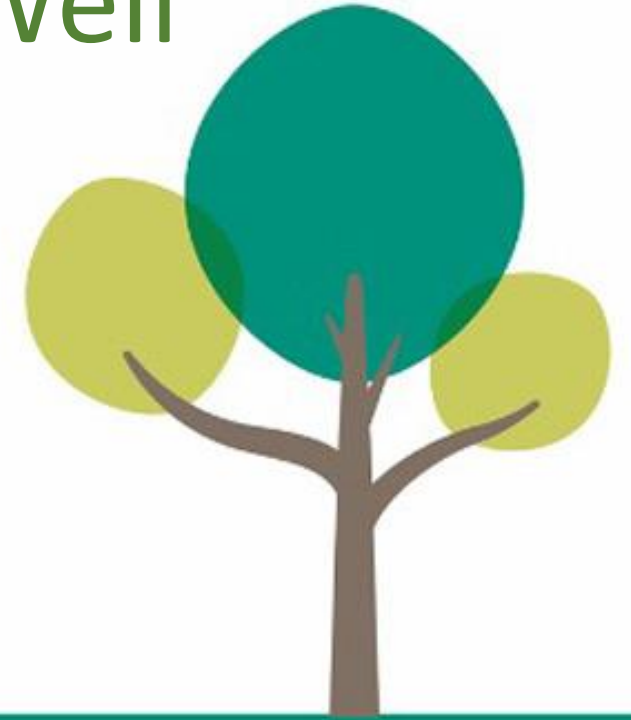
Children & Young People that need more Support

- Our rate of Children in Care at 98.6 per 10,000 is the fourth highest in our Statistical Neighbour Group and 3rd highest in the West Midlands. Our rate of CIC is higher compared to Statistical Neighbour Average of 94.8 per 10,000 and have 38 more Children in Care compared to SN average. The rate has improved from the Q1 rate of 102.2 per 10,000
- 55.3% of Children in care who have left school are engaged in training, employment, further education (up to the age of 21). The current performance is 7.7% below Regional and 9.7% below national average this is primarily due to lower number of young people EET at 19-21 which is just above 48% EET compared to 75 % for our 17 and 18-year olds.



People that Live Well and Age Well

Quarter 2 Progress





Director Insight – Director of Public Health

Our recent focus in Public Health has been on cost of living work. This has included the launch of the Cost of Living Champion Programme, the VCS & Faith Sector Warm Spaces and the Winter Wellness Guide.

Joint working with NHS colleagues has secured over £1m in extra funding for health inequalities work (from NHSE) as well as England's first Joint Council and ICS Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

Focused work on mental health has led to several new projects in the community. An evaluation study showed significant MH improvement.





Director Insight – Director of Adult Social Care

- We have made some positive steps towards the measures identified in the corporate plan – namely in terms of the preparations to open Harvest View in November and in preparing for ground work to progress the workstreams in regards to embedding Strength Based Practice into everyday practice. We have sought support from SCIE in developing our programme for SBP.
- Housing have agreed the funding via the DFG for the refurbishment of 16 homes in Walker Grange. The STAR review is being finalised and will be shared with health colleagues to agree next steps.
- We will also continue to focus on recruiting sufficient Navigators to deliver the 12 week assessment programme for people with learning difficulties.





Summary

- On the whole under people that live well and age well there has been progress in terms of putting the building blocks in place to help people to live healthily and independently for longer and many of the key deliverables are on track, for example the Healthy Sandwell Advice and Referral Service is working well, work has advanced on establishing the LATC to take over SLT managed facilities and various operational reviews are on track.
- There has been some slippage under each theme, but actions are in place to address this.
- There are no red RAG rated actions in this strategic outcome.





Rebuilding

- The Healthy Sandwell advice and referral service average number of contacts is well above the monthly target at 1,633; both the stop smoking support with maternity units and community based are on track.
- The engagement of the Faith Sector in Public Health work is also on track, with a Faith Board established and 200 organisation engaged.
- Development of LATC to take over operation of SLT managed facilities on track
- Draft plans in place for successful operation of new Sandwell Aquatic Centre





Healthy Lives

- Promoting healthy lives – a number of schemes are on track – the inclusive cycling programme; the Sandwell Stride programme (volunteer led walking scheme) and digital app-based walking offer; physical activity in parks and open spaces
- Programme of 1612 cultural events and activities across all libraries and museums including at Sandwell Live Site for Commonwealth Games
- Strength based practice framework approach to developing a Stronger Sandwell- developing scope an workstreams with partners
- Investment and support of community mental health programmes, including pre and post natal support groups, parenting programme and anti bullying campaign – are on track





Choice and Independence

- Draft operating model for Harvest View in place and continuing to recruit staff. Sufficient resources for phased opening on 8 November
- Options appraisal on STAR service has been drafted
- Review and option appraisal of in-house day services offer underway – 12 week assessment pilot started plus recruitment, goes live in January 2023
- Restructure and implementation of social work and therapy underway and on track
- Walker Grange – feasibility information and briefing paper for the upgrade has been drafted





Choice and Independence

- The proportion of adults with a learning disability that live in their own home or with their family was 86% in 2021/22 compared with 85% the previous year and remains at 86% in Q2
- Carers provided with support per 100,000 carer population was 2,541 in 21/22, and is 605 in Q2
- Quality of care homes - % of CQC registered locations in Sandwell rated as good/outstanding was 72% in Q2, compared with 79% regionally and 80% nationally





Choice and Independence

Ensuring safeguarding processes are effective – the following areas are on track :

- embedding the learning from safeguarding adults reviews (SARs) and internal audits;
- adult safeguarding improvements in practice and performance – completion of quality assurance audits, developments included in action plan;
- falls prevention service;
- delivery plan for new burdens funding for support in safe accommodation – dedicated monitoring officer for this;
- Draft Prevention of Violence Exploitation (PoVE) plan and strategy shared with partners.

Making safeguarding personal - % of safeguarding Section 42 Enquiries concluded during the period where the individuals desired outcomes had been fully or partially met was 97% in 21/22 and is 96% in Q2





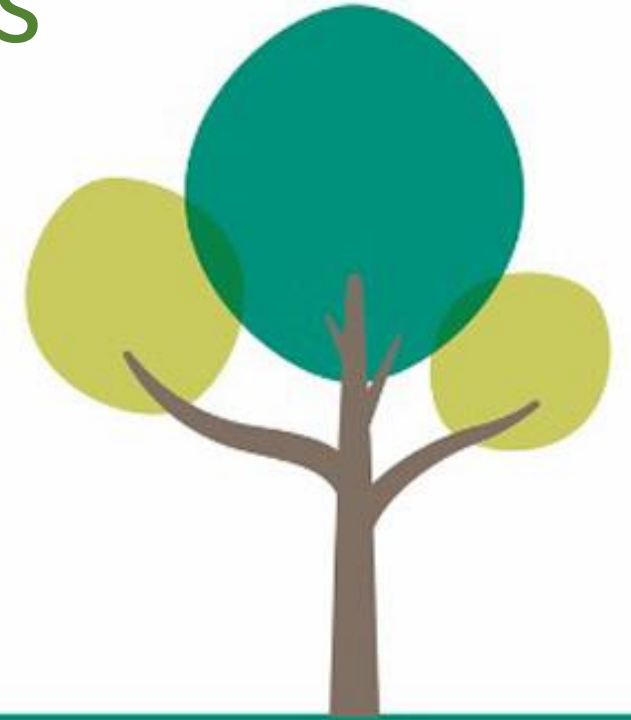
Joined Up Health and Social Care

- High level workforce strategy with partners in place and sub strategies for specific service areas is next step.
- Proportion of older people (65 and over) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services in 20/21 was 60% compared with 75% regionally and 79% nationally. The opening of Harvest View should further improve this measure.
- Sandwell continues to build a historically strong performance on Delayed Transfer of Care – stronger than the Black Country and England average. Transformation of out of hospital community services, including Harvest View, will further strength this performance.



Strong Resilient Communities

Quarter 2 Progress





Director Insight – Director of Borough Economy

- Numerous areas of progress are now evident with some delay in respect of key reports due to the Purdah impact on October Cabinet – this included LED replacement programme for street lighting
- Key projects continue to be developed and delivered including Master Planning tender for Sandwell Valley and Library +
- Forthcoming focus remains in place for major contracts and Q2 saw the recruitment to the Assistant Director - Contracts role (Leisure / Waste) following the departure of the waste contract manager
- LATC work continues in partnership with SLT and the appointed advisors





Summary

- We are reflecting on and learning from events run over the summer and have put in place our programme for Autumn/Winter 2022/23.
- We continue to work collaboratively with key partners in relation to community safety to deliver better outcomes for our residents, taking a more intelligence led approach to tackling key issues.
- There are also several areas where an amber rating has been applied, generally these relate to areas where we are trying to secure funding, and areas where we are experiencing difficulties in recruiting.
- Two actions in this strategic outcome have been RAG rated red, these relate to the governance arrangements and budgets for grants to the voluntary sector and capital funding for the replacement of 4,000 high energy street lights with low energy LED lighting.





Vibrant Communities

- The £67.5m Towns Fund Programme has successfully secured all funds from DLUHC for all 16 projects. 15 of the projects have now progressed to either Delivery Stage, On Site or Complete.
- West Bromwich Quarter (Town Hall and Central Library) Project – confirmation of successful grant funding from DLUHC, building work procurement has commenced.
- We have secured additional resource through the Violence Reduction Partnership for additional detached sessions and youth work training.
- We have also been successful in securing additional detached resources through the Safer Streets Fund for work in Lightswood Park. The review of the Youth Offer is ongoing.
- In relation to work bringing together governance and budget arrangements for voluntary sector grants, the action is currently red as there has been limited staffing resource to progress this workstream; however the team continues to support commissioners with grant reviews as part of the 2022/23 savings programme. No formal decision on implementing a centralised approach to grant management has been made.





Culture

- We are on track with implementing our Commonwealth Games Health and Wellbeing legacy plan, multiple work strands are underway including our community sport plan.
- Delivery of Library+ is on track with a libraries strategy being developed.
- Programme of autumn events in place for the rest of the year, including Christmas lights switch ons, support to civic events such as remembrance Sunday, October half term, and Fireworks and Illuminated Garden Weekend at Dartmouth Park
- Procurement process underway to award contract for the development of a Sandwell Valley Masterplan.





Safe

- During Q2 there have been 15 compliance visits undertaken for taxi operators and their bases.
- 57 compliance visits have been carried out to licenced premises and a further two joint operations with Police and Trading Standards.
- One premises licence has been revoked as a result of enforcement activity.
- 14 cases have been referred to our anti social behaviour response pilot and deployable cameras assigned to hotspot areas.
- A new Implementation Oversight Group that reports to the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership has been established to support the delivery of the Domestic Abuse Strategy.
- In Q2 2056 DA crimes / non crimes were recorded (slightly above the Q1 figure of 2034) MARAC figures are not yet available and will be reported in Q3.
- In Q2 there were 9,627 incidence of crime, this is a reduction of 324 compared to Q1.
- We have reviewed the Road Safety Plan but have experienced delays in rolling out initiatives to support reductions in road traffic accidents due to recruitment difficulties.





Clean

- We are developing options for the introduction of recycling services for high rise residential buildings - Initial scoping undertaken with Serco / Borough Economy / Housing Management – a list of pilot intervention options is being prepared.
- The Serco fleet replacement programme 2022/23 has been agreed and is on track. We are working with Serco to identify smaller fleet vehicles to switch to electric together with the charging infrastructure required to support this.
- A street cleansing plan has been provided to SMBC by Serco, to improve standards of street cleansing across the Borough. Serco are to provide services and deliver this plan, this is due to be considered by the Waste Board in October 2022.



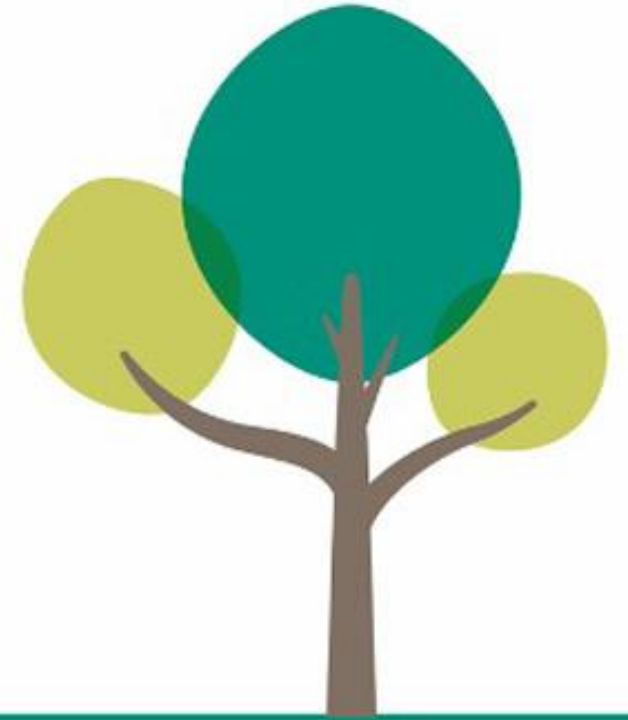


Green

- Delivery has commenced in relation to Carbon Literacy training
- We still need to secure capital funding to replace 4,000 high energy street lighting lanterns with low energy LED lighting, report due to be considered by Cabinet in November 2022.
- Whilst we continue to tackle environmental crime, the underspend we were hoping to utilise to boost capacity in this area is no longer available, alternative means to support this activity are being investigated.
- Our long term trees strategy has been drafted and is scheduled for consideration by Cabinet in November 2022.



Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods Quarter 2 Progress



Director Insights – Director of Housing

- The Housing Needs Assessment has been produced and shows the demand for affordable housing in Sandwell is rising, including accessible housing for disabled people. This Assessment is informing the new Housing Strategy that will be adopted early 2023.
- More people are seeking help because of the risk of homelessness and this is reflected in increased numbers of households in temporary accommodation (98). We are opening more in-house temporary accommodation to avoid families being in hotels.
- We are focussing on preparation for the new social housing and building safety regulations to ensure full compliance by April 2023.





Summary

- Overall, there has been good progress in developing quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods with many corporate plan actions being on track. There does continue to be issues in sourcing sufficient resource to manage the volume of repairs to council stock.
- Importantly, it should be highlighted that we are performing well in relation to supporting our residents in the cost of living crisis, as demonstrated by the number of individuals assisted by our Welfare Rights Service. We know that this support really matters to our residents, as captured in the results of our residents' survey where 67% of respondents said the issue that most concerned them was the cost of living.
- There is one action that has been RAG rated red where there is significant slippage and uncertainty. This is in relation to delivery of the Black Country Plan.





Building New Homes

- 251 new affordable homes delivered (figure based upon planning applications)
- 194 Disabled Facilities Grants approved, supporting people to remain independent in their own homes.
- Willow Gardens fully open operationally and filling current voids
- Walker Grange plan to upgrade and refurbish some flats to be dementia friendly has been approved for implementation
- Project to deliver 54 affordable flats for young people through Live and Work Scheme is progressing with contractor starting on site January 2023





Regeneration & Resources

- The Lovell Housing site at Fountain Lane, Oldbury is now on site with the construction of 246 homes underway. The site is a pilot for ‘First Homes’ which are a specific kind of discounted market sale housing and should be considered to meet the definition of ‘affordable housing’ for planning purposes.
- Hall Green Lane, West Bromwich – developer, Countryside Properties, now on site delivering 223 homes, anticipated completion date of September 2024.
- It has been agreed that Black Country authorities will complete separate strategic plans. The impact on the delivery of the SDP is a significant risk as it could mean that we are without an up to date local plan. A report will be considered by Cabinet in November 2022 proposing a way forward.





Existing Estate

- The review of the current housing renewal and adaptations policy is underway and is not limited to major adaptations, it will encompass a wider set of interventions across private housing e.g. improving the warmth of disabled people's homes.
- The 30 year HRA Business Plan has been prepared and is going through the democratic process for adoption in February 2023. Proposals for rent setting in 2023 are being considered.
- 4,405 properties have not had external improvements with the next major refurbishment of a high rise block starting at Darley House in November 2022.
- Home checks fully operational with 1,654 being completed and resulting in follow up actions e.g. safeguarding referrals, welfare rights referrals.
- Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group fully operational with agreed 12 month work plan. The Chair of the Tenant Scrutiny Group has been co-opted on to the Council's Stronger Neighbourhoods and Communities Scrutiny Board.
- A new Tenant Engagement Officer (TEO) is now in post to help deliver activities relating to the Tenant Engagement Framework and 5 Tenant Auditors have been recruited to look at the quality and safety of our council housing.





Existing Homes

- 97% of emergency and urgent repairs were completed within target timescale. Additional contractors engaged to work through backlog of repairs.
- 15.5 days was the average time taken to complete a repair. There are ongoing issues sourcing sufficient resource to manage the volume of repairs that is a legacy of the pandemic. 2 new contracts started 1/10/22 to help address this.
- Number of private sector properties reported to be in state of disrepair where Housing intervened with a positive resolution – 325 cases in last 6 months.
- Additional Licencing Scheme went live in West Bromwich 1st July with 13 small HMOs licensed under this scheme voluntarily by landlords. Enforcement plans are being developed to identify and take action in relation to unlicensed properties.
- The Empty Homes Strategy 2023-28 was considered by Scrutiny Board and will go to Cabinet for approval, with a full-time officer and funding being allocated to support implementation.





Vulnerable People, Homelessness and Community Engagement

- Homelessness Strategy is in place and a delivery plan is being developed with partners to ensure that the strategy is delivered. We are achieving a 62% homelessness prevention rate with 2,181 households seeking help in 6 months.
- Total monetary value of benefits awarded to residents assisted by Welfare Rights Service was £8.65m with 6,919 people helped.
- The expectation of Welfare Rights is to see 2,750 clients per quarter, however higher numbers have been assisted in Q2, due to the increased need for the service because of the cost of living crisis.
- Rent collection rate dipped slightly to 95% and we have plans to create a hardship fund for tenants struggling with arrears who do not qualify for discretionary housing payments.
- We are working with 44 hosts to maintain accommodation and support for Ukrainian refugees.



A Strong and Inclusive Economy Quarter 2 Progress





Summary

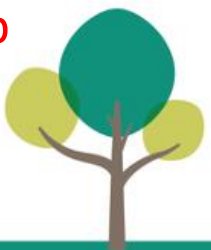
- We continue to make good progress in developing an inclusive economy across Sandwell and in maximising funding opportunities and local investment.
- Monitoring of the Regeneration Strategy and pipeline indicates that the vast majority of the 66 projects are on track or amber, meaning they are progressing through the delivery stages. 23 projects remain at the concept stage and are therefore identified as red risks
- There is one action that has been RAG rated red in this Strategic Outcome this relates to the development of a borough plan that feeds into the Black Country Plan.





Spend Our Money and Invest Locally

- £400m project for a new Waste to Energy Plant commenced construction – creating c.400 construction jobs and exploring feasibility of local heat network using plant's energy
- Negotiation with WMCA to achieve best UKSPF allocation for Sandwell to deliver Inclusive Recovery action Plan
- Legacy Build phase of the Sandwell Aquatic Centre to add local leisure facilities has now commenced and working towards refreshing the Games Legacy Plan – increasing opportunities for residents to increase physical activity
- Project for new health centre in Wednesbury being funded and delivered by SMBC for NHS commenced construction, plus 5 new council homes on site
- Sandwell's expression of interest for a new Investment Zone has been submitted to DLUHC via the WMCA- focused on sites in the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill metro extension corridor
- DfE have brought forward a proposal for a new Academy (George Betts Academy) in West Bromwich
- It has been agreed that Black Country authorities will complete separate strategic plans. The impact on the delivery of the SDP is a significant risk as it could mean that we are without an up to date local plan.





Jobs and Training

- We are working with schools and employers to improve opportunities for young people to access apprenticeships and permanent employment.
- Events schedule in place to showcase apprenticeship opportunities available in Council
- Employers regularly engaged to showcase benefits of apprenticeships. A new supported internship programme established with DPD
- Work experience taking place in Council but opportunities remain limited in service areas
- Negotiation with WMCA to achieve best UKSPF allocation for Sandwell to deliver employment and skills agenda





Working with Businesses

- The Business Growth Team secured funding through COMF to provide business activities, supporting the inclusive Recovery Action Plan. Recruitment is underway for the required personnel resources.
- The Business Growth Team is working with WMCA to align Sandwell's Inclusive Recovery Plan to that of the proposed Regional Business Support offer to maximise the benefit for the borough



A Connected and Accessible Sandwell Quarter 2 Progress





Summary

- Overall there has been good progress on key infrastructure pipeline projects such as the Metro extension and Blackheath Interchange which are at various stages of delivery.
- The ULEV charging scheme has progressed from business case to delivery stage. Phase I will deliver 75 Charging points, future phases will look to deliver 250 charging points by 2025. This is a clear indicator showing that Sandwell is making strides in becoming more connected and accessible.
- There has been some slippage on projects due to recruitment difficulties and also budget pressures related to inflation . If not addressed these slippages can cause further issues/delays for the projects.



A connected and accessible Sandwell

- Wednesbury to Brierly Hill Metro Extension comprises of 2 phases. Phase I from Sandwell to Dudley Town Centre is funded. Phase II from Dudley to Merry Hill is currently unprogrammed and unfunded. Phase I commenced in 2018 and is scheduled for completion 2024.
- The £16m capital programme of improvement works is underway at 48 locations in the borough. These will deliver improvements to road safety, congestion, town centres, street lighting, speed reduction, bridge refurbishment, cycling, walking, major route signing. However, progress on this project is constrained by recruitment difficulties and delayed approval of the workforce plan.



A connected and accessible Sandwell

- The Local Plan and the Local Transport Plan show that projects relating to the improvement of the highway network are to be delivered during their respective plan periods. This will support the local economy and the movement of goods and people across the borough.
- There is a significant budget risk to the delivery of the capital programme for 2022/23 of annual maintenance schemes to renew or repair highway infrastructure (£4.741 Million capital budget) Forecast budget pressures associated with escalating inflation mean that this is now a red risk, an overspend is likely is if the Council is to deliver its planned works.





Key Infrastructure Projects

- All key infrastructure projects are in various stages of delivery, detailed updates to be reported annually.
- Birchley Island is at detailed design phase, the outline business case is complete/approved. Full Business Case will not be approved until CPO has been undertaken. This will take approx. 2 years to complete. Anticipated start on site August 2024 complete November 2027.
- Funding is secured and the route from Dudley Port Railway Station to Great Bridge is currently in detailed design stage. Outline Business Case submitted by TfWM.
- Blackheath Interchange is at a prelim design stage. This is a Towns Fund project, consultation is to commence November 2022.





Key Infrastructure Projects/ Digital

- The ULEV charging scheme has progressed from business case to delivery stage. Phase I is on site and will complete during 2023 (75 Charging points). Future phases to be completed by 2025 (250 charging points).
- Teams are embedding the positive changes made during COVID to improve service delivery and accessibility giving service users greater opportunities to self-help. Children's directorate are working to revise School Self Evaluation Forms in line with new draft Local Area SEND inspection.
- Sandwell are currently working with WM5G to ensure that we maximise opportunities for 5G infrastructure.





Clean & Green

- TfWM and service providers are ensuring all public transport options available locally are as green as possible.
- We are currently working with partner organisations to identify opportunities for infrastructure improvements throughout the borough and neighbouring LAs, so that we can maximise Government funding opportunities.
- Schemes within the Sandwell's Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan are in various stages of delivery. Rowley Regis, West Bromwich and Smethwick have progressed from business case stage to on site.





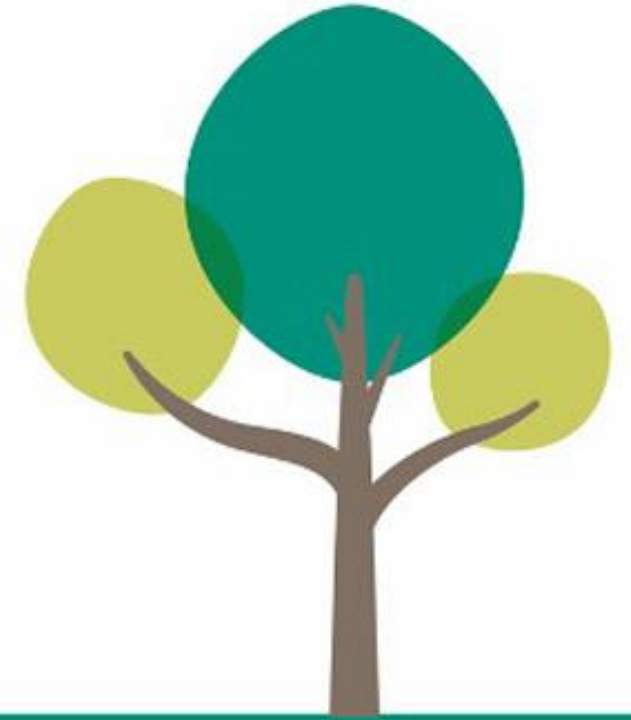
Connected Travel & Partnerships

- Towns Funding has been secured for a Canal and River Trust project in Rowley Regis. The project has progressed from business case stage to on site as of October 2022. Scheduled to complete 2023.
- We are currently on track to deliver towpath and access improvements on Dudley No2 Canal, Birmingham Old Line Canal and Midland Metropolitan University Hospital canal.
- Progress has been constrained by onerous approval processes with National Highways for the programme of works scheduled for 2022/23 of the £30m Birchley Island major junction improvement.





One Council One Team Quarter 2 Progress





Director Insights – Director of Finance

- Work continues in all areas of the plan, with some slippage in reporting timelines to Cabinet due to the pre-election period
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy review has been completed and will be reported to Cabinet in November alongside a report on the draft budget for 2023/24 and savings options
- A Corporate and Transformation Savings Plan has been developed to underpin the MTFS for 2023/24 onwards, although more work is needed to develop specific project plans for the each of the transformation workstreams
- There has also been a focus on Cost of Living initiatives and the Revenues and Benefits Team will be administering the next round of Household Support Fund which has just been launched





Director Insights – Director of Law & Governance

- Constitution Review is progressing well with engagement through the cross-member working group and wider member group sessions – Phase 2 of the review will be presented to Full Council on 8 Nov for approval. Phase 2 includes -

Council Procedure Rules	Executive Procedure Rules
Access to Information Rules	Articles 7 and 13 – Executive and Decision Making
Officer Employment Rules	Scheme of Delegation to Officers
Member Officer Protocol	Officer Code of Conduct

- Phase 3 has commenced and will report to Dec Council which will focus on the remaining elements of the constitution. A review of committee structures and their terms of reference fall outside the Gov Review.
- Member Development Plan has been reviewed again in year. The MDP is a dynamic programme and is reviewed periodically throughout the Municipal Year. Member PDPs are underway and will feed into the next MDP review. The revised MDP will be considered by the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee on 1 Nov.
- Scrutiny Review has been completed and improvement made. The outcome of the review is to be reported to Full Council on 8 Nov.
- The Council’s Equality Policy has been reviewed and will be progressing to Cabinet for approval on 16 Nov, along with approval of using the LGA Equality Framework to progress the EDI Agenda.
- Training and guidance re: decision making and the new constitutional updates (once approved) is planned during Nov and Dec. Further development work will continue into the new year.





Director Insights – Director of Business Strategy & Change

- Significant progress has been made on a number of key areas of the plan, however, the competing priority of managing the improvement plan continues to limit the resource available to move forward in some areas. Temporary resource has been identified and therefore we hope to rectify this position across the remainder of the year.
- The delivery of the Residents Well Being and Perception survey has been a highlight of this quarter, and along with the continued work to embed the corporate performance management framework provides another step towards becoming more intelligence led in our organisational decision making. To build on this work we now need to focus on the development of our business intelligence strategy which is one of the main areas to suffer as a result of the pressure on resources highlighted above
- We have continued to lay the foundations on key pieces of work which will support our wider workforce and organizational development, and in quarter 3 expect to be able to share proposals for a new set of organisational values and behaviors along with a proposed workforce strategy which supports their delivery.
- Whilst we have continued to progress the development of our Customer Access strategy, we are having to respond to immediate operational corporate wide challenges in respect of customer service which will be a key focus as we move through the next quarter of the financial year.





Summary

- Recruitment campaign for permanent CEX launched – appointment anticipated end October to provide stability in leadership and continuity of style and approach
- Progress made on implementing systems that will enable a modern, outstanding council: New Systems Integrator procured for Oracle Fusion and in final stages of agreeing implementation plan to move, and data collection in progress to determine future telephony requirements.
- Performance in customer services impacted by increased demand for face-to-face contact and additional responsibilities, e.g. energy rebate. Focus on improving customer journey – Customer Commitments drafted and feedback to be sought from customers. Progress made on digital inclusion with funding of Digital Dens agreed and recruitment of co-ordinator underway.
- Wellbeing provision has continued to be developed with appointment of wellbeing specialist. Resources identified to undertake HR policy review in support of best practice, effective and efficient people management policy and procedure.
- Progress in listening and accountable – residents wellbeing and perception and budget consultation surveys conducted and initial results shared and will be embedded in business planning. Consultation on proposed changes to election cycle conducted to help inform Council's decision in November. Development of proposal for cross-council resident engagement - to be presented to LT in Q3.
- Corporate performance reporting aligned with financial and risk reporting to provide Leadership Team and Members with oversight of key information to support decision making.
- MTFS has been reviewed and progress made across all aspects of Making the Most of our Resources. Options paper on charging for green waste developed for discussion at Cabinet in Q3, improving rating from Red to Amber.
- **Two actions in this strategic outcome remain RED rated this quarter: the refresh of the Council's Storage Area Network is dependent upon delivery on hardware which has now been shipped; the Corporate Data Strategy remains delayed due to resources being focused on the council's Improvement Plan and corporate performance framework.**
- Whilst some slippage of targets is inevitable when managing the number of actions that underpin our Corporate Plan, it should be noted that this strategic outcome has the second highest number of amber actions. In total there are 25 amber actions in the One Council Strategic outcome.





Council Organisational Structure

- Recruitment campaign for permanent Chief Executive launched, with appointment anticipated for end October 2022.
- New directorate structure implemented in Children's & Education directorate to ensure resources are aligned to corporate priorities.
- Continued progress in cross-council working and embedding of One Council One Team ethos, including Housing, ASC and R&G working together to improve the offer to vulnerable adults
- Oracle Fusion – New Systems Integrator procured and in final stages of agreeing implementation plan. Business Case being developed showing benefits and cashable/non-cashable savings. Planned to be reported to December Cabinet.
- Further data capture and analysis required to determine future needs for telephony system; lessons learned captured from other LAs to feed into scope and requirements





Access to Services

Corporate approach to improve both the accessibility of Council services and the quality of service:

- Customer Access Strategy development - Draft Customer Commitments and Strategic Objectives shared with Leadership at Away Day on 22 September 2022. Feedback on draft Commitments obtained from OSS Customers throughout Customer Services Week.
- Performance in customer facing services impacted by external demands (e.g. Energy Rebate Bills) and an increase in face-to-face visits – cross-council actions to address backlog/high demand being developed
- Exploring options for co-location and close working with key partners as part of discussion on community hubs and what the council offers
- Digital Inclusion Strategy – continued funding of Digital Dens agreed, and recruitment of Digital Inclusion Co-Ordinator underway
- Supplier identified for new case management system for Coroner’s service, but delays likely due to in year budget pressures
- Mod.gov implementation is on track with final phase aligned to Governance Review





Organisational Development

Invest in a range of opportunities, qualifications and experiences for our workforce: –

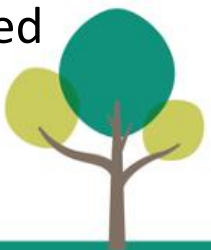
- Workforce planning toolkit is available for use at Service Manager level. To be used to identify med-long term workforce actions plans that will require input from cross functional teams within HR.
- Continuing to identify, develop and deliver wellbeing interventions and initiatives to help support managers and employees recognising the hybrid working styles of employees. Successfully recruited to the Wellbeing Specialist role who commences in November 22 and will be will launching/promoting the dedicated Wellbeing Hub space
- Resources identified to undertake HR policy review in support of best practice, effective and efficient people management policy and procedure
- Development and experience opportunities for local people (e.g. work experience, apprenticeships, etc.) to be incorporated into Workforce Development Strategy (due 2023). Funding for future graduate placements to be identified within the Strategy.





Making the Most of Our Resources

- Medium Term Financial Strategy – a fundamental review of the MTFS has been undertaken to update assumptions and forecast budget pressures. This will be reported to Cabinet in November 22, along with a set of savings proposals to meet the anticipated budget gap. A series of Star Chamber sessions were held with all directorates to identify opportunities for alternative approaches for financing services.
- Review of Fees and Charges has been completed with the development of a Cost Recovery model and Charging Strategy
- Social Value Policy embedded within the new Contract Procedure Rules approved by Council in July 2022 and included in corporate governance training to managers in September 2022.
- The Corporate Commercial Strategy is in draft form, and a report has been completed on potential business streams and high level savings estimates.
- Cyber Security Investment Programme developed and presented to Leadership Team
- Corporate Asset Management System - Some modules may have to be implemented after December deadline due to tight timescales. Vital modules expected to be implemented on time.
- Options paper drafted on charging for green waste for consideration by Cabinet in Q3 – improved from Red in Q1 to Amber in Q2.





Listening Learning & Accountable

- Sandwell Wellbeing and Perception Survey (June 2022), Budget Consultation (August 2022) and SHAPE Survey (Summer 2022) results disseminated to Leadership Team, Service Managers and Cabinet in September 2022. Focus groups to be planned on key themes, including customer experience to support improvements to the customer journey
- Corporate approach to consultation and engagement with residents developed by cross-council working group - to be presented to LT for adoption/approval in November 2022 for implementation from Q3/4.
- Focused project on analysing customer feedback and lessons learned in Housing to identify good practice and inform Customer Access Strategy
- The Vulnerable Children Group led on highly successful 'Attendance is Everyone's Business' conference with partners. Continue to work with and listen to parents from parent/carer groups in relation to SEND transport.





Systems and Governance

New hardware for the refresh of the council's Storage Area Network has been shipped, and once delivered the work will take approximately 3 months. This is within the delivery date in the Corporate Plan, but RED rated due to uncertainty of delivery date of hardware. This impacts the ability to refresh the VMWare hosting platform

Corporate performance management framework further embedded through a lessons learned review of Q1 monitoring approach to inform Q2 process, and reporting of performance to Cabinet and Scrutiny. Dedicated resources to be appointed in Q3.

- Corporate Data Strategy to define and deliver our approach to Business Intelligence continues to be rated Red. Resource focused on embedding the Improvement Plan, Corporate Performance Management Framework, and performance against delivery of the Corporate Plan. Due to recruitment issues to increase capacity, there is delay in determining how the information being generated via these routes informs the design and implementation to a strategic approach for utilising business intelligence.
- Corporate Governance Review – Council agreed changes to Constitution in July 2022 to support efficient and effective decision making including revised Key Decision Thresholds, Contract Procedure Rules and Land & Asset Disposal Protocol. Phase two of the review of governance arrangements is currently being considered by members, with final recommendations to be considered by Council in November 2022. Best practice has been built into the review, and wide-ranging consultation with officers and members has taken place to inform the changes. Cross-party working group has been involved at all stages of the review.
- The Equality Policy is being updated and due to be considered at Cabinet in November 2022. This will then lead to the development of a single framework Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy.
- Corporate Governance Training Programme for Officers and Members was delivered in September 2022 in conjunction with the LGA. -delay to the Corporate Governance training was due to Council not approving the revised CPRs until July (original target date was April). Now this has been approved the finance and procurement elements of the training will be delivered during September (Amber risk).
- Internal communication channels were refreshed in August 2022 to ensure they are set up to engage staff in the improvement plan and support organisational culture change. The corporate affairs function was established in September 2022, creating new channels to deliver messages to members and stakeholders.



Sandwell Resident Wellbeing & Perception Survey

Sandwell Resident Budget Consultation

Key Findings

In May 2022 the Council commissioned Enventure, a market research agency, to conduct a borough-wide residents' survey to support evidence-based policy, service delivery and performance management. This was a large-scale quantitative survey covering several themes and particularly aligned to LGA Benchmarking resident satisfaction surveys (the latest one being in June 2022). The survey was undertaken by telephone, with an adult sample that was designed to be representative of the wider borough by gender, age, ethnicity, employment status and geography. Provision was made for communicating with typically under-represented, or 'hard-to-reach' groups and respondents whose first language is not English through community groups and networks and the use of translators and interpreters.

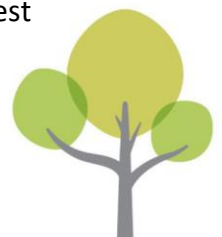
The residents' survey secured 1,062 responses, which is a sample large enough to provide statistically highly reliable findings at the borough level and sufficient responses to examine the results by sub-groups including at town level. These will be analysed in detail by the Research & Intelligence Team to inform a programme of dissemination within the Council and more widely.

The Council simultaneously commissioned Enventure do undertake a budget consultation survey with residents to inform the budget setting process. The representative resident survey was conducted via telephone and face-to-face with quotas set on age group, gender, disability, ethnic group and area of the borough. In addition, some interviews were undertaken face-to-face on-street and in local community groups to consult with hard to reach residents. Alongside the representative survey was an online survey open to all Sandwell residents. In total, 1,070 responses were received to the representative resident survey and 577 responses to the open online survey.

Key Findings: Resident Wellbeing and Perception Survey

Living in Sandwell

- 78% of respondents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, with Tipton was lowest on this measure, at 74%.
- Four in five (82%) say they feel strongly about belonging to their local area, ranging from 79% in Smethwick to 85% in Oldbury.
- 77% agree their local area is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together, with Rowley Regis highest (80%) and Wednesbury lowest (68%).
- Three in five (56%) agree that people in the local area pull together.



Satisfaction with Sandwell Council

- Satisfaction with the Council is slightly higher than the national average (66% compared to 62%) with Wednesbury lowest at 63%.
- Three in five (60%) think Sandwell Council acts on the concerns of local residents, compared with 52% nationally.
- Three in five (60%) think Sandwell Council keeps residents informed about services and benefits it provides, compared with 57% nationally
- Trust in the Council is higher amongst Sandwell residents than nationally (67% and 58% respectively).

Council interaction and communications

- Just over a quarter (27%) of respondents had been in contact with Sandwell Council recently.
- Housing, missed bin collections, reporting anti-social behaviour, and council tax queries are the most common reasons for contacting the Council.
- The most common ways of receiving news and information about Sandwell is via family and friends, Sandwell Herald Council newspaper, Sandwell Council Facebook page, and Sandwell Council's newsletter.

Satisfaction with Council services

Services where satisfaction is higher amongst Sandwell residents when compared nationally:

- Waste: 88% compared with 81% nationally.
- Street cleaning: 67% compared with 66% nationally.
- Road maintenance: 50% compared with 37% nationally.
- Pavement maintenance: 61% compared with 49% nationally.
- Sport and leisure services: 56% compared with 55% nationally.
- Services and support for children and young people: 41% compared with 39% nationally.

Services where satisfaction is lower amongst Sandwell residents when compared nationally:

- Library services: 49% compared with 60% nationally.
- Services and support for older people: 36% compared with 41% nationally.
- Parks and open spaces: 70% compared with 82% nationally.

Crime and Anti-social behaviour

- Half (50%) say they feel safe in their local area after dark, but this is lower than the national average of 76%.



- Almost nine in ten (87%) say they feel safe in their area during the day, which is slightly lower than the national average of 95%.
- Respondents believe the worst anti-social problem is people using or dealing drugs, identified by 45%, with Tipton having the most concerns.
- Rubbish or litter lying around was also seen as a particular problem.

Digital connectivity

- The majority have access to the internet (home broadband, cellular devices, at work).
- 9% do not have access to the internet (mainly those aged 65 and older) and a further 19% say their digital skills are limited, an issue particularly affecting people with health problems.

Climate emergency

- The majority of respondents already reduce waste/recycle at home although 17% do not.
- 31% have not reduced energy use at home.
- Half say they use public transport, walk or cycle where possible.

Resident concerns

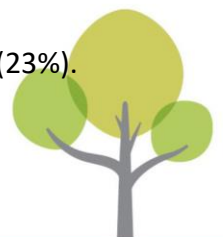
- Respondents are most concerned about the cost of living increases and inflation (67%), NHS waiting lists (39%) and having a family that is healthy (35%). Issues spontaneously raised include community safety, street-based services and the local environment.

Loneliness and social isolation

- Three in five (31%) say they have experienced loneliness at least on occasion, with 6% saying they experience it often or always.
- 11% say they have some social contact with people, but not enough, and a further 6% have little social contact and feel socially isolated.

Access to healthcare

- 28% indicated a long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses.
- Yet almost two-thirds (65%) said they did not have any barriers to accessing healthcare or social care.
- Not being able to get a doctor's appointment is the most common problem (23%).



In most respects, the residents survey is encouraging for the Council and its partners. Neighbourhood satisfaction, commitment to the area and community cohesion is notably strong. Crime and anti-social behaviour emerge though as key concerns. The cost of living crisis is obviously topical, but the climate emergency seems less so, with a minority taking no steps to recycle, reduce waste or energy use.

Responsibility for public health was passed to local authorities in 2010 and wellbeing issues were explored in this survey. The level of illness and disability and reported loneliness and social isolation are concerning. Linked to this, is the degree of digital exclusion.

The Council emerges well from the residents' survey for service delivery and customer and public engagement, generally scoring above national (LGA) averages. This is a positive finding given austerity and the improvement journey the Council is on. It will be important to unpack these issues for key groups and at town level to understand differing experiences of Council activity.

Key Findings: Budget Consultation Survey

Note: For brevity, this summary covers the representative survey responses, not the online sample.

Closing the budget gap

- The option most supported by respondents was *sell/develop Council buildings* (34%).
- *Introduce more charging for non-essential services and stop or reduce non-essential services* were also frequently mentioned (29%).

Most valued services

Theme 1: The best start in life for children and young people

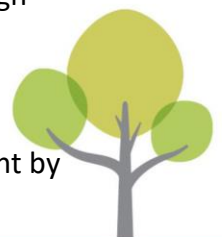
- *Preventative help for vulnerable children* was selected as the most important area of work, chosen by half (50%).
- *Early years education* (37%) and *children's social care* (35%) were next most frequently selected.

Theme 2: People live well and age well

- *Helping older people live independently for longer* was viewed as important by over half (55%).
- *Providing day centres for older people* (44%) and *encourage exercise and better health by maintaining parks and open spaces* (37%) were also selected by high proportions of respondents.

Theme 3: Strong resilient communities

- *Community safety and tackling anti-social behaviour* was chosen as important by 64%.



- Over half of respondents also selected *maintaining our parks and open spaces* (51%).
- A quarter (26%) said that *providing social hubs and community centres* was important.

Theme 4: Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods

- The most frequently mentioned area was *accessible affordable housing*, mentioned by 58% of respondents.
- *Tackling homelessness and rough sleeping* was viewed as important by 47%.
- A minority said that *more energy efficient housing* was important (35%).
- One third (33%) suggested *working with private landlords to bring empty homes back into use*.

Theme 5: A connected and accessible Sandwell

- *Maintaining roads and pavements* was selected as important by high proportions of respondents (72%).
- Almost half mentioned *improving transport options and transport links* (47%) while 30% acknowledged *improved partnership working with local authorities and West Midlands Combined Authority*.

Theme 6: A strong and inclusive economy

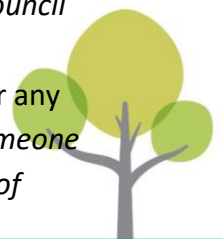
- Over half (55%) said that *creating more jobs for local people* was important and half (51%) said the same about *creating apprenticeship opportunities for young people*.
- Around one third (31%) mentioned *improving Sandwell's town centres*.

Service provision

- *Adult social care services* were expected to be provided at no cost by the majority of representative (58%).
- Respondents were most willing to contribute financially towards *public shows and events* (74% representative) and *sports and leisure facilities* (71%).
- Over 50% indicated that they would be willing to contribute towards *pest control services, car parking, cultural services and bulky waste item collections*.

Accessing services online

- Over half indicated that they would be *happy to contact the Council/use MySandwell account for all services* (56%).
- However, over three in ten (31%) said that they would prefer to access *all council services* in-person or by telephone.
- Of those who preferred to contact the Council in-person or via telephone for any service, the majority said this was because they *simply prefer to speak to someone* (40%) and the next most frequent response was related to the *convenience of speaking to someone* (18%).



Doing things differently

- The most common suggestion for other things the Council could do to help with making the required savings was to *work more efficiently* (16%).
- *No unnecessary spending/cut back on non-essentials* was suggested by 13%.
- Other common responses included *reduce staff/managers/salaries* (11%) and *sort problems quickly/more prevention* (6%).



Customer Performance Monitoring		2022 / 2023				Quarter 1				
Area	Indicator	Reporting Frequency	Data Owner	Data Collected By	2021-2022 Year End	Q1 Performance	Direction of travel from previous quarter <i>Up arrow = improvement</i> <i>Down arrow = reduced performance</i>	Q1 Target	Q1 Target Met (nb/ tolerances for RAG to be established)	Q1 Commentary
Channel Shift	Numbers of Contact by Channel	Quarterly	Helen Green & Digital Transformation Team	Digital Team / BE	634,834 - Telephone 526,726 - MySandwell 25,895 - Face to Face 51,024 - E-mail	152,894 - Telephone 202,333 - MySandwell 15,656 - Face to Face 10,656 - E-mail	n/a	n/a	n/a	Contact Centre - 106,310, Rents - 8379, Repairs OOH - 2648. The total figure for the CCC, includes calls taken by the Repairs Out of Hours (OOH) and the Rents Team, both of which are not management / monitored by the Corporate Contact Centre
	% Contact by channel	Quarterly	Helen Green & Digital Transformation Team	Digital Team / BE	51.26% - Telephone	40.07% Telephone	n/a	n/a	n/a	Increase in Face to Face % Contact since Year end
					42.53% - MySandwell	53.03% MySandwell				
					2.09% Face to Face	4.10% Face to Face				
					4.12% - Email	2.79% - Email				
Contact Centre Performance	Adults Contact Centre Abandonment Rate	Quarterly	Charlotte Leadbeater	Ross Bailey	1.57% (1205 Calls)	1.57% (325 Calls)	↔	5%	Yes	The previous quarter was 1.55%. Performance exceeds expectations, 3.43% below our 5% target. This is an average of 5 calls per day.
	Adults Contact Centre Average Wait Measure	Quarterly	Charlotte Leadbeater	Ross Bailey	31 seconds	31 seconds	↔	30 seconds	1 Second over	The previous quarter was 00:00:30. We only just came in over our target by 1 second.
	Adults Contact Centre Average Call Time	Quarterly	Charlotte Leadbeater	Ross Bailey	530 seconds	532 Seconds	↓	540 Seconds per call	8 Seconds below target	The previous quarter was 544. Our agents have a target of 540 seconds (9mins) in which we measure talk time, hold time and wrap time to total to 540secs. we have done very well on this front coming in 8 seconds under.
	Revs and Bens Contact Centre Abandonment Rate	Quarterly	Ian Dunn	Theresa Shrigley	5.20%	19.20%	↓	15.00%	No	Council Tax recovery being re introduced along with administering the energy rebate have contributed to the the huge change between the first quarter last year and this year. RBCS are also running with long term sickness and 6 vacancies which in the last month has increased to 8. We are currently in the process of recruitment.
	Revs and Bens Contact Centre Average Wait Measure	Quarterly	Ian Dunn	Theresa Shrigley	3mins 55seconds	14 mins	↓	n/a	N/a	Target is Variable as our Stakehold line does not come through Inform 360 so this knocks out our timings but the average wait we aim for is approximately 10 minutes. Council Tax recovery being re introduced along with administering the energy rebate have contributed to the the huge change between the first quarter last year and this year. RBCS are also running with long term sickness and 6 vacancies which in the last month has increased to 8. We are currently in the process of recruitment
	Revs and Bens Contact Centre Average Call Time	Quarterly	Ian Dunn	Theresa Shrigley	8mins 27seconds	9mins04seconds	↓	8mins	No	Council Tax recover being re introduced along with administering the energy rebate have contributed to the the huge change between the first quarter last year and this year. RBCS are also running with long term sickness and 6 vacancies which in the last month has increased to 8. We are currently in the process of recruitment. Although the talk time is longer, this is expected due to the complexity of grants and funds we are currently awarding to Sandwell residents and the current economic climate.
	Corporate Contact Centre Abandonment Rate	Quarterly	Helen Green / Tracy Causer	Theresa Smith	16.96%	5.96%	↑	8%	Yes	Contact Centre - 3.95%, Rents - 32.16%, Repairs OOH - 4.72%. The overall Abandoned rate includes Repairs Out of Hours (OOH) and the Rents Team, both of which are not managed / monitored by the Corporate Contact Centre. Performance remains positive in relation to AR and below the 8% target.
	Corporate Contact Centre Average Wait Measure	Quarterly	Helen Green / Tracy Causer	Theresa Smith	6mins 19 seconds	2mins 37 seconds	↑	2mins 30 seconds	7 seconds below target	Contact Centre - 00:02:14, Rents - 00:08:49, Repairs OOH - 00:02:14. The overall Average Wait measure includes the Repairs Out of Hours (OOH) and the Rents Team both of which are not managed / monitored by the Corporate Contact Centre. Performance remains positive in relation to average wait times, and much improved on previous years figures. When only the Corporate CC figures are included, the Q1 target has been met.
	Corporate Contact Centre Average Call Time	Quarterly	Helen Green / Tracy Causer	Theresa Smith	6mins 50 seconds	6mins 14 seconds	↑	n/a	n/a	Contact Centre - 00:06:10, Rents - 00:07:57, Repairs OOH - 00:02:43 The overall Average Call Time includes calls taken by the Repairs Out of Hours (OOH) and the Rents Team both of which are not managed / monitored by the Corporate Contact Centre. Performance in this area is positive and in line with expected call durations. Staff Performance in relation to this and other indicators are monitored and reported on locally on a monthly basis.
Information Requests	Ombudsman Numbers Upheld	Quarterly	Helen Green / Tracy Causer	Theresa Smith	13 Upheld	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Quarter 1 : Still awaiting outcome for 5 cases Year End: 78 in total, awaiting outcome for 10 cases. Out of the 13 Ombudsman cases upheld, 7 were investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman. The remaining 6 cases were investigated by the Housing Ombudsman.
	SARs volumes	Quarterly	Vanessa Mahersmith	Dave Molineux	257	66	n/a	n/a	n/a	There are no performance targets against the number of SARs received as this can't be controlled.
	SARs compliance with timescales	Quarterly	Vanessa Mahersmith	Dave Molineux	Unable to provide	56.00%	n/a	95.00%	No	The timescale for completing a SAR is one calendar month and this is a statutory timescale. We have been unable to provide Year End figures due to system issues which have now been fixed but dont allow us to retrospectively report. Steps are being taken to bring performance in line with the target including improved reporting of performance, Governance Team Case workers being allocated to Directorates to give more dedicated support, and training being provided across the Council.
	FOI volumes	Quarterly	Vanessa Mahersmith	Dave Molineux	1050	298	n/a	n/a	n/a	There are no performance targets against the number of FOI requests received as this can't be controlled.
	FOI compliance with timescales	Quarterly	Vanessa Mahersmith	Dave Molineux	Unable to provide	66.00%	n/a	95.00%	No	The timescale for completing a FOI request is 20 working days and this is a statutory timescale. We have just completed a piece of work to ensure that there is now no back log of FOI requests within the system. Work will continue to ensure that a back log does not build up again however this will require the continued support from all teams across the Council to ensure that timescales are met. Other steps are being taken to bring performance in line with the target including improved reporting, Governance Team Case Workers being allocated to Directorates to give more dedicated support, and training being provided across the Council. Together with the clearance of the backlog, it is expected that these actions will start to improve performance. We have been unable to provide Year End figures due to system issues which have now been fixed but dont allow us to retrospectively report.
Customer Feedback	Numbers of complaints received	Quarterly	Helen Green / Tracy Causer	Theresa Smith	2593 Stage 1 Complaints, 135 Stage 2 Complaints	951 Stage 1 Complaints, 45 Stage 2 Complaints	↓	n/a	n/a	Qtr. 1 Figures show that there is an increase in complaints. Further investigation is required to understand the cause.
	Numbers of stage 1 and stage 2 Complaints upheld	Quarterly	Helen Green / Tracy Causer	Theresa Smith	846 Stage 1 Upheld, 20 Stage 2 Upheld	374 Stage 1 Upheld, 4 Stage 2 Upheld	↓	n/a	n/a	Qtr. 1 Figures show that there is an increase in stage 1 complaints upheld. Further investigation is required to understand the cause.
	Number of MP Enquiries received	Quarterly	Helen Green / Tracy Causer	Theresa Smith	2127	620	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	Numbers of compliments received	Quarterly	Helen Green / Tracy Causer	Theresa Smith	382	111	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	Lessons learnt from Complaints	Quarterly	Tracy Causer	Tracy Causer						This is currently being looked at by the customer feedback team focusing c
	Views from Residents' Panel / Survey	Quarterly	Kate Ashley	tba						Residents' Survey Reported separately

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Report to Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

12 January 2023

Subject:	Cost of Living
Director:	Director of Finance Simone Hines
Contact Officer:	Simone Hines



1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board notes the work already ongoing by the Council to support its residents through the current Cost of Living crisis
- 1.2 That the Board comments on the work already in place and considers any recommendations to Cabinet for further initiatives to be considered.


2 Reasons for Recommendations

The Budget and Corporate Management Scrutiny Board has a key role to play in commenting upon the approach and shaping future thinking around the Council's response to the cost of living crisis.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people Young people must be taken into account when working with the voluntary and community sector to deliver against this priority.
	People live well and age well



	Elderly people may be disproportionately impacted by increasing costs as they get older and their needs change and increase. The approach taken by Sandwell therefore needs to deliver against this priority.
	<p>Strong resilient communities</p> <p>The cost of living crisis is projected to have adverse impacts upon the borough, Sandwell has higher rates of deprivation than the national average and therefore may be less equipped to absorb higher costs without support. It is therefore important that an appropriate and wide- reaching response takes place to support our population.</p>

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 The Council recognises the key role it has to play in supporting residents through the Cost of Living crisis, with the high levels of inflation and spiralling energy costs having a particular impact. The Council has put a number of measures in place already, including establishing ‘warm spaces’. A summary of the support in place can be found on the Council’s website - https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200371/cost_of_living_help

As the cost of living crisis continues to evolve it is important that the members and scrutiny are given an opportunity to comment on and develop council policy. Communications to residents, community resources and locations where support can be obtained must actively be shaped by members to ensure the service offer from the council is effective.

5 Implications

Resources:	The initiatives in place are largely being funded by government grant and existing council resources. Further work is likely to incur additional financial costs and this is being considered by Leadership Team.
Legal and Governance:	The Board has a responsibility to scrutinise all matter as appropriate in relation to the way the Council uses its resources to support residents and businesses.
Risk:	There are no direct risk implications as a result of his report.



Equality:	There are no direct equality implications associated with this report.
Health and Wellbeing:	Implications on health and wellbeing of our communities will be set out in further detail in the appendixes.
Social Value:	Engagement with the Board allows an opportunity to participate in service improvement and development.
Climate Change:	There are no direct climate change implications associated with this report.

6 Appendices

N/A – presentation to be received at the meeting



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Report to Budget & Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

12 January 2023

Subject:	Scrutiny Review – Customer Journey
Director:	Director – Business Strategy & Change
Contact Officer:	Democratic Services Manager Suky Suthi-Nagra Suky_suthinagra@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 Consider and agree the draft Scoping Document for the Scrutiny Review of the Customer Journey (Appendix A).
- 1.2 Determine if the Budget & Corporate Scrutiny Management Board wishes to establish a working group to take forward the Scrutiny Review of the Customer Journey, and if so, to determine its membership.







2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board has agreed in July 2022 to conduct a scrutiny review on the Customer Journey. The scoping document (Appendix A) sets out the rationale and suggested way forward. It should be noted that this document is draft and the Scrutiny Board can amend or include additional items as its determines necessary in order to carry out an effective review.
- 2.2 The scoping document sets out the proposed project plan which includes a range of methods to gather evidence and the Scrutiny Board is invited



to consider any other methods or sources it wishes to utilise in carrying out the review.

3 How residents engage with the Council and their satisfaction with how we respond is fundamental to delivery of all corporate plan objectives.

	Best start in life for children and young people
	People live well and age well
	Strong resilient communities
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods
	A strong and inclusive economy
	A connected and accessible Sandwell

4. Context and Key Issues

4.1 As part of the Council’s Improvement Plan, the Council is seeking to embed values and behaviours as a foundation of the council’s workforce strategy and aligned with and to our work on Customer Journey and equalities, diversity and inclusion. The work of the review will therefore complement work ongoing to address the recommendations set out in the Improvement Plan.

5 Consultation

5.1 There is no content within this report that requires any further consultation at this stage.



6 Alternative Options

- 6.1 If the Scrutiny Board does not choose to conduct the review the opportunity to identify recommendations would be lost, along with any potential service improvements that those recommendations may have achieved.

7 Implications

Resources:	There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.
Legal and Governance:	The council is required to develop and implement an improvement plan that includes “ <i>actions to deliver rapid and sustainable improvements in governance, leadership and culture in the Authority.</i> ” Failure to comply with these Directions may lead to further intervention measures for the council.
Risk:	Organisational Culture and the Customer Journey is included within the Improvement Plan Risk Register, recognising the importance of organisation culture to successfully implement the necessary changes and embed the improvement.
Equality:	The Customer Journey will look to address any gaps in equality, diversity and inclusion and will ensure that all strategies are aligned.
Health and Wellbeing:	Employee and resident engagement and a positive organisational culture brings benefits to organisations, including greater customer/client satisfaction, increased employee happiness and wellbeing, and increased productivity and creativity.
Social Value:	The new values and behaviour will underpin work of the council, defining expectations for ways of working,



	and in turn directly influencing our delivery of social value.
Climate Change:	Current and previous engagement with residents has been done remotely or via the telephone where this approach will achieve the desired outcome. This reduces staff travel to offices or other venues. However, some engagement with residents is conducted face to face and from Council buildings which will mean increased staff journeys which will generate carbon emissions.

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Draft Scoping Document for the Scrutiny Review of the Customer Journey.



Scrutiny Review – Scoping Document

Review Title:	Customer Journey
Scrutiny Board:	Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board
Date of Review:	February 2023

Reasons for undertaking the review:

On Wednesday, 13 July 2022, the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board agreed to investigate the “Customer Journey” undertaken by Sandwell residents when accessing Council services.

The Membership of the Working will be agreed by the Board and a subsequent project plan will be completed for this review.

Key Lines of Enquiry identified:

- a) How people access Council services (Digital/Physical/Telephone)
- b) Contact Centre procedures and customer service best practice
- c) Customer Portal efficiency

Intended Outcomes:

To help identify, if deemed necessary, any outstanding issues with the Councils customer-focused services. Potential recommendations should be considered best practice and in line with Sandwell’s Vision 2030:

- To understand if Sandwell residents can obtain the assistance they require in an efficient but timely manner
- To identify if there is a need for alternating approaches to customer service when considering residents with varying circumstances e.g. residents without internet access/disabilities
- To investigate the customer journey process and how residents are accessing Council services (physical, digital or via telephone)
- To assess if the Council is providing a welcoming, friendly, and helpful service with accurate and timely advice
- To consider if the Customer Portal is efficient and effective at delivering it’s aims and objectives

- To identify if the Councillor Portal is fit for purpose

**Officer Group
(including partners):**

**Links to Corporate Plan
and Vision 2030:**

One Council, One Team

Ambition 3: Our workforce and young people are skilled and talented, geared up to respond to changing business needs and to win rewarding jobs in a growing economy.

Ambition 5: Our communities are built on mutual respect and taking care of each other, supported by all the agencies that ensure we feel safe and protected in our homes and local neighbourhoods.

Ambition 10: Sandwell now has a national reputation for getting things done, where all local partners are focused on what really matters in people's lives and communities.

**Scoping undertaken
by:**

Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

**Council Chief Officer
(or partner equivalent):**

Neil Cox – Director Business Strategy and Change
Other Chief Officers as applicable.

Existing data available for consideration:

Resident feedback survey
Customer service logs
Sandwell Council complaints team

Potential witnesses

Council Officers
Councillors
Sandwell residents
LGA
Other Local Authorities
Customer Service training providers
Trade Unions

Activities

Desk top research
Survey(s)
Focus group(s)
Meetings
Contact Centre site visit

	“Mystery Customer” visits/requests
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Review Work Programme:			
Task	Method	Lead person(s)	Completion by:
Briefing paper setting out an overview of the current customer journey (how people contact us, how we interact and our standard replies)	Report(s) to working group meeting	Neil Cox	February 2023
Performance information which tells us how we are doing, look at observations & feedback received (KPIs/feedback from residents surveys) Outline of themes and trends on complaints	Report to working group meeting	Neil Cox	February 2023
Gather evidence from residents/staff/trade unions on experience of interaction with the Council	Working Group Site visits/speak to witnesses	Democratic Services	February 2023

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The following items set out key decisions to be taken by the Executive in public session:-

	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
1	<p>Determination of Admission Priorities for Sandwell’s Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools 2024/2025</p> <p>Contact Officer: Donna Williams</p> <p>Michael Jarrett, Director of Children and Education</p>	<p>Cabinet – Children and Education (Cllr Hackett)</p>	<p>18 January 2023</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Report by: Director Children and Education:</p> <p>Appendix 1: Admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools in Sandwell for 2024/25</p>



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
2	<p>Schools Funding 2022/2023</p> <p>Contact officer: Elaine Taylor ACCA, Finance Business Partner – Children’s Services</p> <p>Contact Officer: Lesley Reynolds</p> <p>Michael Jarrett, Director of Children and Education</p>	<p>Cabinet – Children and Education (Cllr Hackett)</p>	<p>18 January 2023</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Report by: Director of Children and Education</p>
3	<p>Community Hubs</p> <p>Contact Officer: Director of Business Strategy – Neil Cox and Director of Housing – Gillian Douglas</p>	<p>Cabinet - Communities (Cllr Millard)</p>	<p>18 January 2023</p>		



Title/Subject		Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
4	<p>Council Finances and General Fund Budget 2023/24</p> <p>Contact Officer: Simone Hines</p> <p>Director of Finance – Simone Hines</p>	<p>Cabinet - Finance & Resources (Cllr Piper)</p>	<p>18 January 2023</p>		
5	<p>Council Tax Base Calculation 2023/24</p> <p>Contact Officer: Ian Dunn</p> <p>Director: Simone Hines, Director of Finance</p>	<p>Cabinet - Finance & Resources (Cllr Piper)</p>	<p>18 January 2023</p>		



Title/Subject		Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
6	<p>Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2022/23</p> <p>Contact Officer: Simone Hines</p> <p>Director of Finance – Simone Hines</p>	<p>Cabinet - Finance & Resources (Cllr Piper)</p>	<p>18 January 2023</p>		
7	<p>Oracle Fusion Implementation Update</p> <p>Contact Officer: Simone Hines</p> <p>Director of Finance – Simone Hines</p>	<p>Cabinet - Finance & Resources (Cllr Piper)</p>	<p>18 January 2023</p>		



Title/Subject		Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
8	<p>2023-24 Asset Management Investment Programme for Housing</p> <p>Contact Officer: J Rawlins</p> <p>Director: Gillian Douglas, Director of Housing</p>	<p>Cabinet - Housing (Cllr Padda)</p>	<p>18 January 2023</p>		
9	<p>Sandwell Museums – Approval of Forward Plan and Policies</p> <p>Contact Officer: Dawn Winter</p> <p>Director: Alice Davey, Director of Borough Economy</p>	<p>Cabinet - Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Rollins)</p>	<p>18 January 2023</p>		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
10	<p>Demolition Framework 2023-2027 procurement</p> <p>Contact Officer. Mark Drake</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern - Regeneration and Growth</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & Growth (Cllr Hughes)</p>	<p>18 January 2023</p>		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
11	<p>Rolfe Street Masterplan – Approval to consult</p> <p>Contact Officer: Kate Harris</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern - Regeneration and Growth</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & Growth (Cllr Hughes)</p>	<p>18 January 2023</p>		



Title/Subject		Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
12	<p>Trees Strategy and Policy</p> <p>Contact Officer: Matthew Huggins</p> <p>Director – Borough Economy, Alice Davey</p>	<p>Cabinet - Environment Service (Cllr Ahmed)</p> <p>Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Rollins)</p>	8 February 2023		
13	<p>Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2023-24</p> <p>Contact Officer: Ian Dunn</p> <p>Director: Simone Hines</p>	<p>Cabinet - Finance and Resources (Cllr Piper)</p>	8 February 2023		Local Council Tax Reduction Policy 2023-24



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
14	<p>Revenues and Benefits Policy Framework 2023-24</p> <p>Contact Officer: Ian Dunn</p> <p>Director: Simone Hines</p>	<p>Cabinet - Finance and Resources (Cllr Piper)</p>	<p>8 February 2023</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Debt Recovery Policy • Council Tax Award of Discount Policy • Council Tax Discretionary Reduction Policy • Flood Relief Policy • Discretionary Housing Payments Policy • Local Welfare Provision Policy • Non-Domestic Rate Hardship Relief Policy • Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Rate Relief Policy



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
15	<p>Adoption of Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan</p> <p>Contact Officer: Gillian Douglas</p> <p>Director: Gillian Douglas, Director of Housing</p>	<p>Cabinet – Housing (Cllr Padda)</p>	<p>8 February 2023</p>		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
16	<p>Levelling Up Fund Local Authority Memorandum of Understanding, Grant Determination Letter & Assurance Framework</p> <p>Contact Officer: Jenna Langford</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern, Director of Regeneration and Growth</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & Growth (Cllr Hughes)</p>	<p>8 February 2023</p>		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
17	<p>City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and Local Transport Capital Programme Update</p> <p>Contact Officer: Andy Miller</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern - Director of Regeneration & Growth</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration and Growth (Cllr Hughes)</p>	<p>8 February 2023</p>		
18	<p>Workforce Culture Values and Behaviours</p> <p>Contact Officer: Victoria Lee</p> <p>Director: Neil Cox, Business Strategy and Change</p>	<p>Cabinet - Finance & Resources (Cllr Piper)</p>	<p>15 March 2022</p>	<p>2 February 2022</p>	<p>Report to follow Values and behaviour framework</p>



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
19	<p>Preparation of a Compulsory Purchase Order report to support retail acquisitions in West Bromwich Town Centre</p> <p>Contact Officer: Alexander Oxley</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern, Director of Regeneration and Growth</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & Growth (Cllr Hughes)</p>	15 March 2023		
20	<p>Housing Strategy 2023 - 2028</p> <p>Contact Officer: Louis Bebb</p> <p>Director: Gillian Douglas, Director of Housing</p>	<p>Cabinet – Housing (Cllr Padda)</p>	17 May 2023	SNAC 24 November 2022	Housing Strategy 2023 - 2028



The following items set out key decisions to be taken by the Executive in private session:-

Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Reason for Exemption	List of documents to be considered



Annual Programme Reminder (these items are not added automatically)

Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
Review of Fees and Charges		January		
Determination of Admission Priorities for Sandwell's Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools		January/February		
Schools Funding		December/January		
Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring		February		
Council Finances		February		
Financial Regulations		February		
Business Plans		February		
Highways Asset Management Plan		March		



Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
Local Transport Settlement		March		
Revenues and Benefits Policy framework 2022/23		March		
Schools Capital Programme		April to June		
Financial Outturn		May		
Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules		July		
Review of Fees and Charges Sandwell Residential Education Services Centre Charges		May – July		
Childcare Sufficiency Report		July - September		



Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring		August		
Model Schools Pay Policy		October/November		
Winter Service Operational Plan		October/November		
Road Safety Plan		November		
Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring		November		
Council Tax Base Calculation		December		
Business Rates Retention Estimates		December		
Council Tax Reduction Scheme		December		



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Work Programme 2022/23 Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

Meeting Date	Item	Links with Strategic Aims	Notes (Director Lead)
12 January 2023	Q2 Performance Reporting		Sarah Sprung
	Qtr 2 Budget Monitoring 2022/23		Simone Hines/Rebecca Maher
	Cost of living report		Simone/Leadership
2 February 2023	Update on review of Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules, including the implication on SEND transport and how social care implications will be incorporated into future contracts		Simone Hines/Michael Jarrett
	Values and Behaviour pre-scrutiny before March Cabinet		Debbie Sant

	Resident engagement and panel – how are the views of the vast majority of residents in Sandwell being captured, from the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion perspective, how does the Council consult and engage with residents		Neil Cox/Surjit Tour
29 March 2023	Q3 Budget Monitoring 2022/23 Q3 performance reporting		As Qtr 1 Sarah Sprung

Items to be scheduled

Arrange 2 x additional meetings of SMB to consider the progress against Corporate Improvement Plan

Review the debt recovery process the Council undertakes including the use of enforcement agencies and their charges – Simone Hines

Income and expenditure for assets the council owns - Tony McGovern/Simone Hines

Joint session with Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board on the implications of charges and payments for adult social care and any ongoing pressure on budgets – Simone Hines/Rashpal Bishop

Quarterly budget reports to incorporate whether savings identified can be achieved – Simone Hines

Regular updates on Scrutiny Review – Surjit Tour/Suky Suthi-Nagra

Budget pressures in by Children's Services.

Financial analysis for the Brandhall site

Upgrading of technology in Committee Rooms to facilitate livestreaming

Scrutiny Review

Customer journey, how people access the building, customer portal, My Cllr Portal – Neil Cox and other Directors as appropriate (afternoon session – presentation, visit to see contact centre)

Draft scope for afternoon

Wfh separate session – cost to cl or savings, money towards bills vs cost of fuel (scope it out) Neil Cox, Victoria Lee

Reporting dates for Improvement Plan

Monitoring Period	Cabinet
August-October 22	7 December
November 22-January 23	15 March 23 (TBC)
February – April 23	June 23
May-July 23	Sept 23
August – October 23	Dec 23

2023/24 Item

Town Twinning – Surjit Tour

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