

Report to Cabinet

15 March 2023

Subject:	Performance Management Framework – Q3 Monitoring
Cabinet Member:	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources, Cllr Bob Piper
Director:	Chief Executive – Shokat Lal
Key Decision:	No
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 progress on the further development of the Corporate Performance Management Framework be received and approval be given to the Q3 monitoring reports.








2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 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.



2.2 Since April, the corporate PMF has been further refined and built into business processes. Reporting on Q1 and Q2 were presented to Cabinet in 2022. The report on Q3 seeks to build on the intelligence gathered for Q1 and Q2 and offers the opportunity to assess in year progress.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	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.
	
	
	
	

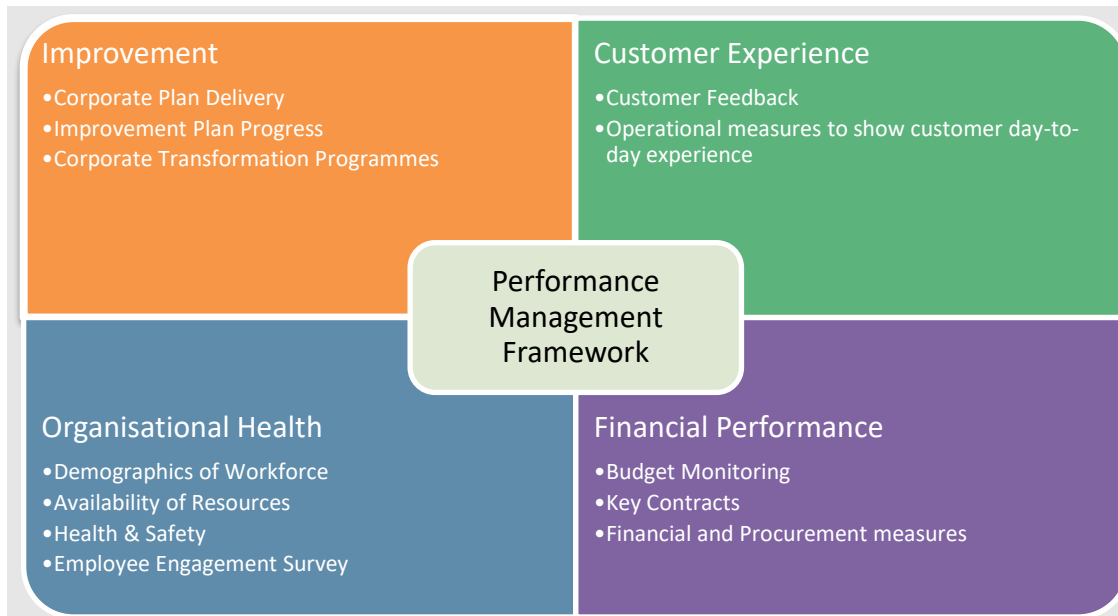
4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 An effective performance management framework facilitates increased accountability, learning and improvement. It also provides early warning signals and facilitates decision-making.
- 4.2 On a quarterly basis, the Council gathers and analyses a wide range of data and information to understand how effectively its plans are being implemented and whether the strategic outcomes contained in the Corporate Plan are being achieved.
- 4.3 The information collected is used to enable the Authority to better understand the impact of its work on local people, and where necessary, target actions and resources.



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 Q3 of 2022/23. The detailed Q3 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 December (Q3) was presented to Cabinet at its meeting in February 2023. In summary, the forecast outturn for the year for the General Fund is an underspend of £1.8m and the Housing Revenue Account is currently forecasting an underspend of approximately £1m.



The General Fund position has changed from an overspend position in Qtr 2 due to a change in methodology for repaying borrowing. This has helped to mitigate the inflationary pressures on the Council's financial position during 2022/23.

- 6.1.2 Cabinet and Council agreed the General Fund, HRA and Capital Programme budget for 2023/24 in February 2023.
- 6.1.3 The other key performance measures for finance relate to the collection of debt and processing of claims. See Appendix 1 – Q3 Finance report.
- 6.1.4 Processing time for new Housing Benefit Claims continues to be at 19 days, which is better than the national average of 21 days.
- 6.1.5 A summary of KPIs that did not meet their performance target is as follows:
- Collection rates for Council Tax, Business Rates and Sundry Debt – performance has improved throughout the year with all collection rates slightly below target performance at Q3.
 - Housing Benefit Change in Circumstances - At Q1 and Q2, the number of days taken to process did not meet targets due to a backlog of work. There has been good progress in addressing the backlog and performance has improved at Q3 to 6 days against a target of 3 days. The national average is 9 days.
 - Adult Social Care Financial Assessments - performance at Q3 is significantly below target. This is due to staff focusing on the implementation of the revised non-residential charges policy.
 - Invoices paid on time – performance has improved over the year and at Q3 was at 86% against a target of 95%. A process review is due to commence.
 - 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, and identifying households who meet the criteria for the Household Support Fund.

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

6.2.4 The contract is managed through a well-established governance framework. 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 has been presented to the Operational Partnership Board and the Strategic Partnership Board and has been 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 The Q3 Performance Report is attached at Appendix 2 and is summarised as follows:

6.2.6.1 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 and in Q3 work has commenced to exit the project teams



6.2.6.2 Numbers of Children in Care:

- The total number of children in care, as of December 2022, is 816. This is a significant reduction against the March 2022 position when 844 children were in care. The target for March 2023 is 796.
- Sandwell's position has significantly improved over the last 12 months, whilst rates of children in care have increased across statistical neighbours.

6.2.6.3 Report on the 15 Contract KPIs:

- Improvement in performance against the KPIs since the last quarter, with 13 out of the 15 KPIs now green
- The current red rated KPI is the vacancy rate of social workers.

6.2.6.4 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 a breakeven position which is an improved position from the projections at Q2.
- The breakeven position means that the deficit from previous years will not be reduced.

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. The contract covers services including waste and recycling collection, household recycling centre management, street cleansing and fleet management and renewal.

6.3.2 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 has commenced in Q3)
- Approval of and delivery of Fleet Replacement as per the agreed schedule
- Contract initial review
- All required plans and schedules have been provided and accepted by Waste Board

6.3.3 Q3 performance was reported to Leadership Team in February and included information around governance and contract management arrangements, quarterly contract performance, SMBC contract monitoring and penalties issued, HR issues, stakeholder management and improvement focus.

6.3.4 Key points over quarter 3 were:

- All contract meetings have taken place.
- Street Cleansing Improvement Plan went live.
- Missed bins: Over Q3 there has been improved service resilience following the Q2 position which reflected Summer disruptions
- Autumn/Winter leaf clearance proceeded well with better reporting, scheduling and delivery.

6.3.5 The current focus for improvement is across 3 key work streams:

- Street cleansing improvements (Improvement Plan re-zoning)
- Data / reporting / systems
- Improved resident information (street cleansing, weed spraying, leaf clearance, highway sweeping)

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.
- 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 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
- 6.4.6 Q3 performance was reported to Leadership Team in February including the revised KPIs. In terms of operational performance, Memberships reduced in quarter which represented an increase on December 2021 levels, but a decrease compared with pre-pandemic levels.
- 6.4.7 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 Q3 performance was reported to Leadership Team in February 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 All monthly operational reporting and quarterly Contract Management Meetings have been held.

6.5.4 In terms of Q3 participation:

- Total visits in Q3: 90,752
- Participation to Date: 295,000 (up from 185,000 Dec 2021; down from 335,000 Dec 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. Quarterly reports on Health and Safety are made to Leadership Team.

7.2 In relation to employee engagement, the Q1 performance report included details of the Employee Engagement Survey that was completed in April 2022. Actions to respond to the survey have been embedded in the Improvement Plan and Directorate-level action plans which are being monitored on a quarterly basis.

7.3 Sickness Absence

7.31 Sickness absence is reported on a quarterly basis to Leadership Team and Directorate Management Teams.

7.32 At Q3, an average of 8.28 working days per employee were lost due to sickness against a target of 6.21. An increase from previous quarters.

7.33 One third of sickness absence was short-term, and two thirds long-term.

7.34 The largest cause of sickness absence is stress, depression and mental health, followed by infection and muscular-skeletal problems.

7.36 A detailed review is being undertaken to analyse causes and trends in sickness absence, and to review sickness absence management processes.



8 Improvement – Corporate Plan Delivery

8.36 Progress on Corporate Plan PMF

8.37 Since the approval of the PMF at Council on 12 April 2022, progress has continued in developing the Corporate Plan PMF. There are 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:

8.38 Achievements October to December 2022





- We have conducted a lessons learned exercise and have embedded the learning from this into Q3.
- We have continued to work with Research and Intelligence to develop the intelligence offer, particularly around the Corporate Plan PMF.
- We have continued to strengthen our relationships with directorates and sought to put in place a more structured approach to Q3 that focuses on exception reporting. This will allow focus on elements of the Corporate Plan that might be experiencing slippage or other issues that require attention.

8.39 Progress against the seven strategic outcomes of the Corporate Plan

8.40 To provide assurance in our progress delivering the Corporate Plan each directorate has submitted a return outlining actions that have been taken during Q3 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.

8.41 In Q3 we continue to build upon our in-year intelligence. The table below shows that a higher proportion of our Corporate Plan actions are on track and actions that have significant slippage have reduced.



	Q2		Q3
Actions on Track	258		273
Medium issues/risks/slippage	90		101
Significant issues/risks/slippage	9		3
No update available	53		33

8.42 Summaries of progress for each of the seven strategic outcomes are set out below. Appendix 4 contains a more in-depth overview.

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

- The Children's Trust Contract Review is underway and scheduled to be completed in Q4. The contract sum negotiations is nearing completion and will be confirmed by the Cabinet in Q4
- The Family Hubs programme continues to progress at pace and Sandwell's plan has been agreed by the DfE
- The directorate is championing school attendance to address boroughwide issues and to contribute to educational attainment levels across all phases of education
- Ministerial approval for the Education and Priority Investment Area submission is expected in Q4
- The Corporate Parenting Board is focussing on thematic reviews and deep dives across the partnership – accountability and ownership is pivotal
- SEND Transport – SEND 3 procurement processes will commence in Q4
- Workforce pressures across the entire children's sector is having significant impact on the delivery of core and statutory services.

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

8.44 **People live well and age well**

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. We have also gained national recognition for our work on mapping social isolation.

Harvest View has been officially opened and work is underway to embed strength based practices across Adult Social Care, the Carers Strategy has been agreed and a review of all commissioned services is taking place to ensure they are fit for purpose.

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.

8.45 **Strong Resilient Communities**

- Progress continues with the LED replacement programme for streetlights
- Highways and road safety work have experienced some slippage in the main due to recruitment challenges
- The potential archive and story-telling centre development is progressing to stage 2 feasibility
- Tree strategy work has now incorporated a Cabinet workshop and scrutiny providing an adjusted timeline
- Chargeable garden waste is due to be operational for the coming season
- Serco fleet replacement programme continues with 42 electric street sweepers due for delivery in the coming quarter
- The Annual plans including Street Cleansing plan have been signed off by Waste Board

One action in this strategic outcome have been RAG rated red, this relates to the governance arrangements and budgets for grants to the voluntary sector.



8.46 Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods

- Plans to reduce backlogs in homelessness and housing allocations are being implemented with 39% reduction in backlog of households awaiting triage for help on homelessness (178 to 108). Housing applications backlog reduced to 550, from 1,200.
- Damp and Mould Team set up November 2022 and 125 category 1 (highest priority) properties have had anti-fungal wash. Work ongoing to address all identified cases, involving holistic approach to tenant support and property improvement.
- Housing Revenue Account Business Plan developed with targeted consultation and Scrutiny Board input.
- Empty Homes Strategy launched and will be supported through re-structure and increased capacity in this area.
- New project designed to pilot 3 options for recycling in high rise blocks, to be rolled out February 2023.
- New Assistant Director Asset Management appointed, and new post of AD Building Safety approved and being filled.

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

8.47 A Strong Inclusive Economy

- Business support – with the dissolution of the Local Enterprise Partnership business support activity in the Council will increase. The Business Growth Team will need to expand to support this.
- Sandwell Anchor Network established and funded. We are working with the Centre for Economic Activity to drive Social Value and local employment. Business Ambassadors are very supportive of this initiative.
- UKSPF funding secured to support development and growth of business start-ups. Start-up business school to be undertaken in Feb 23 to support 30 start-ups. Other start up initiatives being developed for 23/24 and 24/25. An Enterprise Officer is in place.
- Business Growth Team is working with WMCA Business Support Specialist Products for Decarbonisation. Programme scheduled to start in April 23.
- Sandwell Local Plan – Following the halt of the Black Country Plan, in November, Cabinet took the decision to commence preparation of a Sandwell Local Plan. December Cabinet approved consultation on



Issues and Options and opening call for sites exercise to take place in Feb and March 23. Forecast adoption date end of 2025/early 2026 and therefore, Sandwell's Local Plan will be out of date for longer than originally anticipated through the Black Country Plan process (late 2024). A part time Programme Manager has been recruited to oversee the work.

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

8.48 **A Connected Accessible Sandwell**

- 5G full fibre connectivity –BT Openreach have a £40m programme to roll out in Sandwell which will be delivered by end 25/26. They have currently completed 39% of works.
- 5G Infrastructure - the West Midlands is a test bed for 5G, led by WM5G (part of WMCA).
- Walking and cycling infrastructure – there has been a substantial investment in our green infrastructure, there are many 'part-routes' in the borough, investment over the next 3 to 4 years will focus on connecting these areas so we have a connected active travel network, for example cycling from Birmingham New Street to the Midland Metropolitan Hospital.
- The approval process for the Birchley Island Scheme has experienced some delays, this project is directly funded by the Department for Transport

8.49 **One Council, One Team**

Actions in relation to delivering Social Value, Oracle Fusion together with the review of democratic governance remain on track.

Progress has also been made in implementing a corporate approach to resident consultation and engagement with a new framework agreed by Leadership Team in November 2022.

There are some areas of slippage, for example in relation to the Commercial Strategy, the Corporate Asset Management System and the Draft ICT Strategy. Work has commenced in these areas and plans are in place to deliver.

There are two red actions in this strategic outcome relating to the development of a corporate data strategy and the lean review of the Council's payment processes. For both of these actions the resources to deliver have had to be dedicated to other areas of activity.



9 Improvement Plan

- 9.36 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.
- 9.37 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.
- 9.38 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 Q3 performance report.
- 9.39 External assurance continues to play a part in our improvement journey. Grant Thornton, CIPFA and the LGA conducted follow-up reviews over Autumn 2022 to monitor our progress in addressing the recommendations in their reviews. The follow-up reviews found that the council had continued to build on the initial improvements recognised by the reviewers in their original reports, and has made significant progress. Actions to respond to the findings of the Grant Thornton and LGA reviews are included in the refresh of the Improvement Plan reported to Cabinet alongside this Q3 performance report. Actions to respond to the CIPFA financial management follow up review will be included in the next refresh of the Improvement Plan.

10 Corporate Transformation

- 10.36 Officers have now been realigned to the Corporate Transformation Office. The Corporate Transformation Manager is working in partnership with Learning and Development to undertake a skills gap analysis to identify current and future training requirements for the newly formed team. Work continues to reset the Transformation Programme and develop the Programme and Project framework.



11 Strategic Risk Register

11.36 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.

11.37 The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) receive the Council's Strategic Risk Register (SRR) 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

11.38 The SRR 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 January 2023 is being presented to ARAC on 16 March 2023. The key changes to the SRR since last reported to Cabinet include:

- A reduction in risks 27 and 27a -MTFS and Future Government Policies and Funding Sources, from 16 (red) to 8 (amber) as a result of the local government settlement which confirmed that business rates reset and fair funding would not happen in this Parliament, which was a big risk in the MTFS. Also, the adult social care reform has been deferred which was another key risk.
- The risk assessment for risk 27b- Budget Monitoring and Management has been split into two. This is to reflect the fact that the council does have in place effective arrangements to monitor and manage the current year's budget (assessment of amber). Nevertheless, the achievement of the planned savings and efficiencies to manage the budget and any overspends is likely to continue to remain a significant challenge for the council for the foreseeable future, hence an assessment of this element of the risk as red.
- A review and update of risk 42a- Cyber Security with a focus on the risk being investment in cyber security.



- A reduction in risk 53- Oracle e Business Suite from 12 (red) to 8 (amber) as a result of the review and reset of this programme.
- Removal of risk 54- SEND to the directorate register as a result of the completion of the procurement of the contracts in 2022.
- Removal of risk 57- New Operating Model, which focussed on embedding the hybrid and flexible working model and had been assessed as green for some time.
- Escalation from the directorate register of risk 57b – Customer Journey, which is assessed as red, given the priority this has within the corporate plan and the transformation plan.
- A reduction in risk 61- Partner Organisations Contract Service Delivery, from 12 (red) to 8 (amber) as a result of the work done in respect of the contract with the SCT and SLT and the progress being made on the Serco contract.
- Escalation from the directorate register of risk 66- Borough Archives which is assessed as red.
- Escalation from the directorate register of risk 67 – Elections Act, which is assessed as red as a result of the extensive work required to manage Voter ID process for the successful delivery of the May 2023 elections.
- Escalation from the directorate register of risk 68 – Sandwell Local Plan as a result of the halting of the Black Country Plan not being agreed. The work which has commenced to prepare the Sandwell Local Plan has enabled a reduction in the risk from 16 (red) to 8 (amber).
- Escalation from the directorate register of risk 69 – Adult Social Care Market Sustainability which is currently assessed as 16 (red) due to the Fair Cost of Care exercise.
- Escalation from the Improvement Plan risk register of risk 70 – Organisational culture which is assessed as amber.

11.39 An update on these risks, including the measures in place to mitigate them are included within appendix 4.

11.39 The ARAC has in place a programme to receive and comment upon directorate level risk registers also and has received the majority of these during the year.



12 Customer Experience

12.36 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.

12.37 The Q3 Customer Experience performance report is attached in Appendix 5 and summarised below.

12.38 Channel Shift

12.38.1 In terms of channel shift (the ways that customers choose to contact the council), Q3 performance has followed the trends from Q1 and Q2. In Q3 the majority of contact was made via MySandwell (49%) and by telephone (43%). The amount of contact across all channels was lower in Q3 than in Q2.

12.39 Contact Centre Performance

12.39.1 The Council operates three contact centres. Over Q3 the Adults Contact Centre and Revenues and Benefits Contact Centre improved performance on the Q2 position, performing at or close to target. All three contact centres experienced a reduction in the amount of contact over Q3 relating to the Christmas period.

12.39.2 The Corporate Contact Centre, which receives general enquiries, housing and children's safeguarding calls, experienced a further increase in the average wait times and abandonment rate related to staff vacancies and sickness in Q3. Recruitment is ongoing with an intake of new advisors starting in Q3 which will assist performance over Q4.

12.40 Information Requests

12.40.1 The number of Subject Access Requests (SARs) received has been reducing across quarters with 35 received during Q3. Compliance against timescales for responding is below the 95% target at 70% for Q3. However, the compliance rate has been improving across quarters. As reported at Q2, some system limitations had been identified which were impacting on data validity. A manual data analysis has now been



completed and compliance rate updated for all quarters. Work is underway to identify a new system which will allow for improved reporting.

12.40.2 The number of FOIs received at Q3 is slightly higher than at Q2. A significant improvement has been made in the compliance against the statutory timescales for responding although this remains below the 95% target. Performance at Q3 was 82%, an improvement on Q1 and Q2 at 66% and 68% respectively. Work concluded in Q2 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 over Q4.

12.41 **Customer Feedback**

12.41.1 Q3 figures show a decrease in the number of complaints received since Q1 and Q2. There has been a slight rise in the % of stage 1 and stage 2 upheld complaints in Q3. 192 Stage 1 complaints were upheld in Q3 and 45 Stage 2 complaints.

12.41.2 An analysis of complaints is taking place over Q4 to identify lessons learnt and further actions for improvement in how the council responds to complaints.

12.41.3 The number of MP enquiries received has continued to reduce through this year with 495 received in Q3. 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.

12.41.4 The number of compliments received has increased since Q2, rising closer to the Q1 performance. 92 compliments were received in Q3.



13 Alternative Options

13.36 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.

13.37 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 Q3 Performance Report
2. Sandwell Children's Trust Q3 Performance Report
3. Corporate Plan Q3 Monitoring Report
4. Strategic Risk Register
5. Customer Experience Q3 Performance Report

16 Background papers

16.36 [Performance Management Framework - Q2 Monitoring - Report to Cabinet 7 December 2022](#)
[Performance Management Framework - Q2 Monitoring - Report to Budget & Corporate SMB 12 January 2023](#)

16.37 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](#)

16.2 [Report to Cabinet 28 September 2022](#)

16.3 [Report to Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board 13 October 2022](#)

