

Report to Cabinet

12 July 2023

Subject:	Performance Management Framework – Q4 Monitoring
Cabinet Member:	Deputy Leader, Cllr Bob Piper
Director:	Chief Executive – Shokat Lal
Key Decision:	No
Contact Officer:	Kate Ashley – Strategic Lead: Service Improvement Kayleigh Walker – Senior 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 Cabinet note progress on the further development of the Corporate Performance Management Framework and approve the Quarter 4 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. The report on performance during Quarter 4 (Q4) of 2022/23 (January-March 2023) seeks to build on the intelligence gathered for previous quarters of this financial year and offers the opportunity to assess end of 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.
	
	
	
	

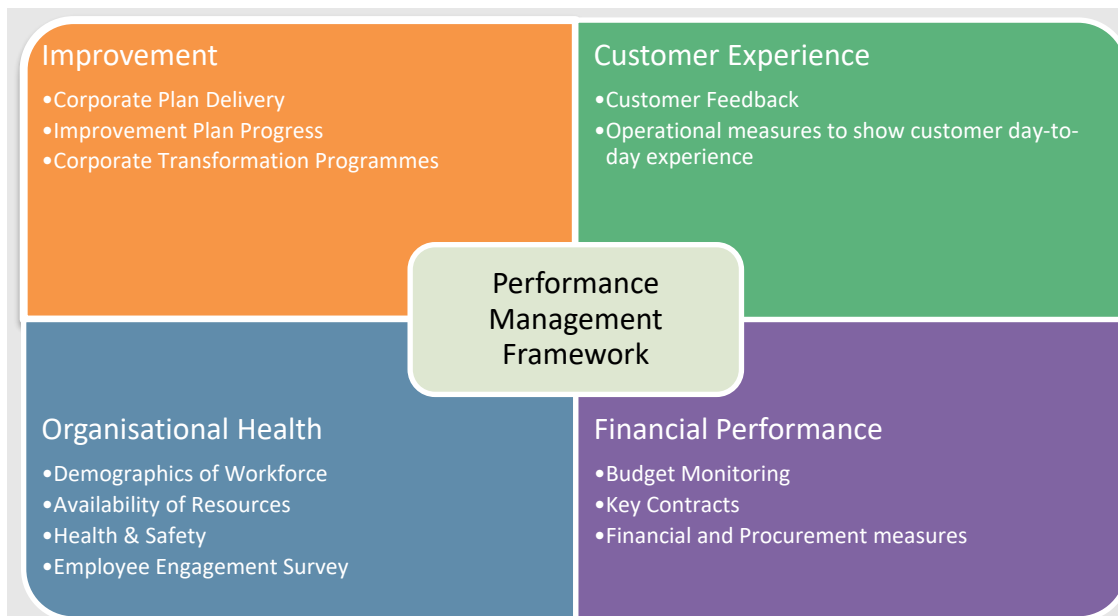
4 Context and Key Issues

- 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 Q4 of 2022/23, including Annual performance information. The detailed Q4/Annual reports are included as appendices to this report.

6 Financial Performance

6.1 The 2022/23 outturn position is an underspend of £1.9m for the General Fund, although it should be noted that this is after applying some risk-based reserves to partly offset inflationary and demand pressures that have emerged during the year. Cabinet has received a comprehensive outturn report setting out the key variances by Directorate. The underspend will be contributed to the General Fund balance to offset prior year audit adjustments in relation to under providing for bad debts over a number of years.



- 6.2 The Housing Revenue Account outturn is a break-even position, but this is after contributing £6.5m to reserves due to slippage in the Capital Programme which meant less revenue contributions to capital were required. This will be retained in HRA reserves to fund the Capital Programme in future years.
- 6.3 The other key performance measures for finance relate to the collection of debt and processing of claims. See Appendix 1 – Q4 Finance report.
- 6.4 Processing time for new Housing Benefit New Claims continues to be at 19 days, which is better than the national average of 21 days (DWP national average figure).
- 6.5 A summary of KPIs that did not meet their performance target is as follows:
- Sundry Debt Collection – Performance was 84.47% against a target of 98%. This is because there are more invoices this year compared to last year and some large invoices raised in March which were all due immediately (note – the council has immediate payment terms).
 - Housing Benefit Overpayment - £1.353m against a target of £1.1m
 - Number of days taken to process Housing Benefit Changes in Circumstances – 8 days against a target of 3 days. Whilst the Q4 figure is also worse than in previous quarters, we are still below the latest DWP national figure which was 9 days
 - % of ASC payments made on time in accordance with contract terms – 93% against a target of 95%. Delayed payments in Community Care Business Unit (CCBU) were due to delay prior to CCBU processing. The service is working with ASC to resolve these issues
 - Adult Social Care Financial Assessments - performance at Q4 is significantly below target. This is due to staff focusing on the implementation of the revised non-residential charges policy.
 - Rent collected as a % of rent due is slightly below target due to rising cost of living pressures. The service is 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.
 - Council Tax collection and Business Rates collection are both below target. However, Business Rates collection has improved



since last year and whilst the % of Council Tax collection is below last year, in monetary terms, it is higher.

7 Key Contracts - Sandwell Children's Trust

- 7.1 Since April 2018, children's services have been delivered by Sandwell 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.
- 7.2 Sandwell Children's Trust delivers the following range of services:
- Children's Social Care
 - Fostering
 - Targeted Early Help
- 7.3 In May 2022, the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services improved the rating from 'inadequate' to 'requires improvement to be good'.
- 7.4 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.
- 7.5 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.
- 7.6 A summary of the KPI's is detailed below:
- Performance against the contract KPIs continues to be largely maintained. At the end of Q4, 11 out of the 15 KPIs were green, with three in the amber tolerance zone. There continue to be significant issues in recruiting and retaining social workers, with the Vacancy Rate indicator remaining red however performance has marginally improved.



Despite these pressures, SCT has maintained the position in respect of children not being allocated to a social worker for more than five working days, with only one child falling into this group. This was a concern in Summer 2022.

- The Trust had three project teams, funded by the LA, in place to help alleviate the pressure linked to recruitment and retention. Work was undertaken to exit these project teams however there may be a need to re-engage them should the pressures around recruitment and retention continue

7.7 Numbers of Children in Care:

- The total number of children in care, as of March 2023, is 802. This is a significant reduction against the March 2022 position when 844 children were in care and maintains the quarterly reduction in the overall number of children in care, with there being 816 at the end of quarter 3.
- The rate per 10,000 of children in care in March is 94.5. This is a significantly better position than March 2022, when the rate per 10,000 was 101.7.

7.8 Numbers of Children and a Child Protection Plan

- The number of children on a child protection plan has decreased over the last 12 months with 339 children on a plan in March 2023 compared to 408 in March 2022. This translates to a rate per 10,000 of 39.9 in March 2023 compared to 49.3 in March 2022. The England average for children on a plan in March 2022 was 42.1.

7.9 Finances:

- The 2022/23 financial performance is being measured against the agreed 2022/23 Contract Sum as approved by Cabinet in February 2022.
- The financial position remains similar to Q3. The expectation of SCT was to achieve a surplus of £1.9m in 2022/23, however they continue to experience pressures from exceptionally high cost placements and increased costs linked to staffing. SCT are projecting a very small surplus at the end of the financial year: this



will mean that the deficit from earlier years will be slightly reduced this year.

- Cabinet approved the contract sum, £74.475m for 2023/24 on the 15th February, which is an increase of £2.5m or approx. 3.5%. In addition to the base contract sum £138,002 was agreed by Public Health towards the cost of the DECCA Service, which is delivered by SCT as part of their targeted youth offer.
- Cabinet approved the contract sum, £74.475m for 2023/24 on the 15th February, which is an increase of £2.5m or approx. 3.5%. In addition to the base contract sum £138,002 was agreed by Public Health towards the cost of the DECCA Service, which is delivered by SCT as part of their targeted youth offer.

8 Key Contracts - Serco

8.1 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.

8.2 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
- 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

8.3 Key points over Q4 are:

- Missed bins remain a challenge for the service. Continuing from quarters 2 and 3, throughout quarter 4 (and into quarter 1 2023/4) there have been periods of sustained service disruption. Serco report the cause of the missed bins as a combination of workforce unavailability and vehicle breakdowns.



- In Q4, street cleansing performance is substantially improved. The Street Cleansing Improvement Plan went live in the middle of Q3 and Serco have now purchased a suite of new equipment including mini-sweepers, large mechanical sweepers and electric street vacuums, all of which should significantly improve the borough's cleansing standards.

8.4 The improvement focus for Q4 was in the following 3 areas:

- **Improving service reliability** - Alongside Serco's TOM, additional focus has been placed on Serco's fleet replacement programme. Serco are about to place an order for 16 new RCVs.
- **Flats recycling** - Completing the pilot of new recycling options at Kenrick House. The pilot conducted in Q4 has yielded positive results suggesting better recycling than the borough average
- **Charged Garden Waste** - Following agreement by Cabinet in November, the Council and Serco have worked together to design, implement and launch a subscription-based garden waste service. The subscription system went live on 1 February and the first collections for the subscription-based service were from 27 March. As at the end of Q4 just under 19,000 residents had subscribed to the service (as at 13/05/23 this has risen to 29,055 residents to a value of £1.03m).

9 Key Contracts – Sandwell Leisure Trust

9.1 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



- 9.2 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 with SLT will formally ceasing to deliver services on 30 April 2023.
- 9.3 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.
- 9.4 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.
- 9.5 As an interim measure, a schedule of monthly transition review meetings has been implemented. These meetings cover
- Estate
 - Performance
 - Finance
- 9.6 Following approval from Leadership Team and Cabinet, officers are now seeking to extend the termination period with SLT to March 2027, due to the cost benefit in relation to utility costs.
- 9.7 In terms of operational performance for Q4, Memberships increased in quarter, and increased compared to March 2022 levels, however there is a decrease compared with pre-pandemic levels.
- 9.8 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

10 Key Contracts – Places for People Leisure

- 10.1 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.



- 10.2 Monthly operational reports are provided to update on performance – operational and technical.
- 10.3 Quarterly contract management meetings are held to ensure the ongoing monitoring of the contract and performance. These cover;
- Operational Performance
 - Health and Wellbeing outputs
 - Customer Feedback
- 10.4 In terms of Q4 participation (March data missing due to system error):
- Total visits in January and February: 69,033
 - Participation to Date (excluding March figures for comparison): 364,772 (up from 243,891 February 2022 down from 416,978 February 2020)
 - Memberships Year to date: Fitness Live (increase from Financial year 2020), Swimming (decrease from Financial Year 2020)

11 Organisational Health

- 11.1 The majority of organisational health indicators are reported annually. 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. Appendix 2 details the full set of indicators.
- 11.2 Indicators with a positive direction of travel include:
- The percentage of top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic Communities and the percentage Ethnic Minority employees.
 - The number of graduates on a Graduate Programme as at year end.
 - An improvement in the gender pay gap mean and median figures.
 - The number of formal disciplinary investigations has decreased.
- 11.3 Those indicators with a negative direction of include:
- Average working days lost per employee due to sickness absence (FTE) - Sickness absence is increasing although it is below the regional benchmarking figure.
 - Number of apprentices at year end – There are significantly fewer apprentices than there were; however, there are plans to increase the number of apprenticeships in the Council.
 - The top earners who are female, top earners who have a disability and the number of disabled employees has decreased.



- The number of formal grievance cases – This has increased significantly from 17 in 2021/22 to 32 in 2022/23.

11.4 Sickness Absence - headlines

- Sickness absence is reported on a quarterly basis to Leadership Team and Directorate Management Teams.
- For 2022/23, an average of 10.81 working days per employee were lost due to sickness compared to 10.31 days last year, which is an increase of 0.5 days.
- Sickness levels have increased for the last two consecutive years since the coronavirus pandemic began in 2020-21.
- Borough Economy, Finance and Regeneration and Growth have achieved a reduction in sickness compared to last year.
- All other directorates have seen an increase and the highest increase was for Law and Governance.
- The most significant increase is for stress related sickness and other muscular skeletal problems.
- Cost of sickness in 2022-23 was £4.89m compared to £4.29m in 2021-22, this is an increase of almost £600k.
- A detailed review is being undertaken to analyse causes and trends in sickness absence, and to review sickness absence management processes.

12 Improvement – Corporate Plan Delivery





Progress on Corporate Plan PMF

- 12.1 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:



Progress against the seven strategic outcomes of the Corporate Plan

- 12.2 To provide assurance in our progress delivering the Corporate Plan each directorate has submitted a return outlining actions that have been taken during Q4 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.
- 12.3 In Q4 we continue to build upon our in-year intelligence. The table below shows that there remains a significant proportion of actions on track.

	Q3		Q4
Actions on Track	272		249
Medium issues/risks/slippage	101		69
Significant issues/risks/slippage	3		3
No update available	34		90

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

12.5 Best Start in Life for Children and Young People

- Good progress has been made under the themes of First 1,000 days and Ready for School in respect of early years' language development.
- There have been some improvements in educational outcomes for children and young people and a refreshed work experience offer.



- Support to vulnerable children is progressing with the School Nursing Service having a designated Vulnerable Children's Team and children receiving targeted support around relationships and sex education.
- There has been some slippage in support to babies and parents, performance has declined due to staffing pressures - 26% vacancy rate for Health Visitors. This is a national issue - will be discussed as part of co-operative working.
- School Nursing Service vacancies are reducing, but the increase in referrals continues. Referrals continue to be triaged, which means that there is a longer waiting time than previously to deal with non-urgent cases.

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

12.6 Performance Summary:

- The number of Children in Care has continued to reduce between June 2022 and March 2023
- The rate of children on a Child Protection Plan is lower than all benchmarking comparators.
- Children becoming subject of a CP Plan for the second or subsequent time (within 2 years) is 10%, lower than at any other point throughout the year and in line with regional comparison at 10.6%.
- There is good performance across the early help indicators providing assurance that the early help service is meeting need
- % of 16s and 17s (NEET) stands at 1.2%, lower than the regional (2.9%), statistical neighbour (3.3%), and England (3%) figure in Q4.
- We have a higher number of SW vacancies than regional, statistical neighbour and national comparators.

12.7 People live well and age well

- Progress has been made in tackling health inequalities and promoting healthy lifestyles through initiatives such as smoking cessation, weight loss management programmes, cycling and Sandwell Stride programmes, some progress in the improving air quality work.
- Work is underway with partners to reduce social isolation and there is further investment into community based mental health programmes.



- There has been slippage in some areas including physical activity in parks; establishing operating model for the intermediate community Social Work Team, staff recruitment - Knowle, site development of joint equipment stores, under occupancy at Willow Gardens.

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

12.8 Performance Summary:

- In 2022-23 80.7% of service users said they have as much control over my daily life as they want or they have adequate control over their daily life, an increase from 76.3% in 2021-22.
- In 2022-23 51.9% of service users said they have as much social contact as they want with people they like, an increase from 46.6% in 2021-22.
- The majority of adults with learning disabilities are supported in the community. The Sandwell score has been consistently above the regional and national average.
- During 2022/23 71.6% of service users said they were "extremely satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their care and support. This is an increase from 63.5% during 2021/22.
- Whilst smoking prevalence is higher in Sandwell than regionally and nationally, the data for deaths for drug misuse, hospital admissions for substance misuse (15-24 years), admission episodes for alcohol-specific conditions – under 18s and admission episodes for alcohol-related conditions are all lower than the regional and national position.
- There were 334 admissions to permanent residential and or nursing care during 2022-23, this is a decrease from 360 admissions during 2021-22.
- During 2022-23 63.7% of people were at home 91 days after being discharged from hospital into a reablement service. This compares to 65.6% during 2021-22.
- There are 152 CQC registered locations in Sandwell and of these 110 are rated as Outstanding or Good

12.9 Strong Resilient Communities

- Delivery of the Serco fleet replacement programme 2022/23 - Some delay in approval by Serco. Approval now received for increased tranche of 18 Refuse Collection Vehicles.
- Highways and road safety work have experienced some slippage in the main due to recruitment challenges



- Pilot of recycling service for high rise residential buildings in the Borough - Pilot of 4 options underway - Initial observations encouraging. Review of pilot and recommendations scheduled for Q1 23/24.
- The Annual plans including Street Cleansing plan have been signed off by Waste Board
- The Levelling Up Fund Bid for a purpose-built youth facility in West Bromwich was unsuccessful. £700k has been secured from Corporate to fund the 2 new youth buses, anticipated delivery of one bus during the summer and the second bus in the autumn.
- Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 1 is underway and due to complete by 31/7/23. The outturn of properties completed is the order of 200

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.

12.10 Performance Summary:

- The number of people visiting libraries has increased over the year and the service was also successful in achieving the 95% target for gifting Bookstart packs.
- There has been a reduction in the number of fly tips in 2022/23 (6954) compared to 2021/22 (7124).
- The number of high-risk MARAC cases has increased throughout the year and there has been a 28.4% increase in 2022-23 in comparison to the previous year. These challenges are reflected across the West Midlands region, with partnering Local Authorities experiencing similar demands.
- There has been a reduction in the overall recorded crime rate of 1.9%. This compares to a 1.7% increase across the West Midlands as a region.

12.11 Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods

- The majority of actions under this theme are on track.
- Those under medium /risk of slippage include 19 new homes/unit being delivered as opposed to 24 in Quarter 3.
- Willow Gardens is experiencing some under occupancy.



- In terms of helping people stay independent we have procured new suppliers for the major adaptations and renewal framework – two suppliers were appointed and started in April this year.
- There has been some slippage in bringing empty homes back into use in terms of the restructure and recruiting to an Empty Property Officer but there has still been some success in bringing properties back into use through low level intervention, advice and assistance.

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

12.12 Performance Summary:

- The Welfare Rights Service has exceeded the profile target of assisting 11,000 residents to claim additional benefits by 1,635 residents for 2022/23
- The total monetary value of benefits awarded assisted by the Welfare Rights Service was just below target (£19,902,156 against a target of £20m) but the shortfall is due to the reported nationwide delays in the DWP processing benefit claims.
- Performance for the number No. of private sector properties reported to be in state of disrepair with a positive resolution peaked in Q3 at 246, but has got much better again in Q4, despite there being a marked increase in disrepair complaints in Q4
- 72.3% of homelessness cases were successfully prevented
- The target for the number of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) approved was narrowly missed, 5% below target.

12.3 A Strong Inclusive Economy

- Much of this area is on track. The Commonwealth Games legacy work is moving forward as is the work on town regeneration and support to businesses and enhancing digital skills and access; reference the digital den project. Work is underway to increase the take up of apprenticeships.
- We continue to engage with the WMCA as lead agency on the LUZ/ IZ opportunities for Sandwell.
- We are in discussion with Govt officers from DLUC on the announcement of Sandwell becoming a Levelling Up Partnership Area. Tipton was announced as one of the 16 areas receiving up to £20m of regeneration funding to implement the scheme set out in the LUF Round 2 bid.
- The development of the Sandwell Plan is progressing, issues and options consultation completed. Site assessment completion is running



behind programme due to staffing issues but should not impact on overall programme.

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

12.14 A Connected Accessible Sandwell

- Progress on delivering the capital programme of maintenance in relation to highways infrastructure has been constrained due to recruitment difficulties.
- Work has taken place to improve Sandwell's cycling infrastructure across the borough.
- Defra confirmation is expected this month regarding Sandwell's declaration of a new boroughwide Smoke Control Area and an enforcement policy is to be produced to reflect legislative changes.
- Partnership working continues with the Canals and River Trust to improve the canals and paths.
- On the whole the work is on track to deliver under this outcome.

12.15 One Council, One Team

- A Large proportion of actions on remain on track, including many of the actions relating to systems and governance.
- Key procurement activities to deliver the Council's consultation and engagement framework have been delivered.
- Work continues to develop the Sandwell offer, work has also progressed on a number of workstreams in HR, including a new graduate scheme which will be launched in 2023.
- Capacity is a key driver for a proportion of the amber actions as staff time has had to be focused on priority areas.

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 whilst there has been progress and development since the Q3 update, work is not yet at a point where the action can be deescalated.

In terms of performance, under the Member Development Programme, 27.8% Members have a Personal Development Plan, 79.4% have attended Code of Conduct Training, 100% have attended Licensing Training, 56% have attended Planning Training (all compulsory) and 48.40% have attended discretionary training. These figures are all



below target, but the Member Development programme is continuing into 2023/24.

13 2022/23 Year End Highlights

13.1 Appendix 5 captures key progress made against the Corporate Plan for the year end 2022/23. Good progress has been made against delivery of all the strategic outcomes of the Corporate Plan.

14 Improvement Plan

14.1 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.

14.2 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.

14.3 Progress of the Improvement Plan is monitored monthly by Directors and Cabinet Members and is reported to Cabinet Quarterly. The last quarterly report to Cabinet was made in June 2023 which included the council's 6 monthly report to the Secretary of State for Levelling up Housing and Communities. The last report was made in June 2023.

15 Corporate Transformation

15.1 Transformation activity continues across the council including Oracle Fusion, Customer Journey and a review of business support arrangements.

15.2 Local Partnerships are working collaboratively with the Corporate Transformation Office to design a Corporate PMO. A series of workshops, internal and external interviews have taken place to inform the model, governance arrangements and associated templates. The exercise is on track for completion in June 2023



16 Strategic Risk Register

- 16.1 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.
- 16.2 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
- 16.3 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 was presented to ARAC on 16 March 2023.
- 16.4 Since its meeting of 16 March 2023, as requested by the ARAC, it is being provided with additional detailed information and assurances on the effectiveness of the mitigations in place for risk 21a in respect of the council's performance of responses to the Freedom of Information Act and Subject Access Requests, given this was the reason for the risk being assessed as red.
- 16.5 The ARAC programme for 2023/24 will continue to receive the strategic risk register and will also be focussing on the strategic risk in respect of the Customer Journey to seek assurances on the timely and effective progress in the management and reduction of this red risk.
- 16.6 The ARAC also has a programme in place to receive and comment upon directorate level risk registers and has reviewed the majority of these during 2022/23, and will continue this activity into 2023/24.



17 Customer Experience

17.1 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.

17.2 The Q4/2022/23 Customer Experience performance report is attached in Appendix 6 and summarised below.

17.3 Channel Shift

- In terms of channel shift (the way that customers choose to contact the council), in 2022/23 there has been a marked decrease in telephone contact (41.86%), and an increase in the use of My Sandwell (51.11%) compared to last year (51.26% for telephone contact and 42.53% for My Sandwell in 2021/22).
- There has also been an increase in Face to Face contact, and a reduction in Email contact in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22.
- Targets could be set for these PIs based on the strategy for Channel Shift moving forwards.

17.4 Contact Centre Performance

- The Council operates three contact centres. Over Q4 performance has improved in some areas; the Revenues and Benefits Contact Centre has taken on new staff which has improved the abandonment rate and call wait times and the Adult Contact Centre Abandonment rate was 3%, below the target of 5%.
- Staff resourcing issues in the Adult Contact Centre have impacted the call wait measure with performance worse in Q4 than in Q3 and staff resourcing issues (amongst other factors) have had a negative impact on the abandonment rate and call wait measure in the Corporate Contact Centre. Recruitment will continue to fill vacant positions and alleviate pressure. The average call time in Revenues and Benefits has increased in Q4 because of calls regarding Council Tax arrears and support.



17.5 Information Requests

- The number of Subject Access Requests (SARs) received has reduced in 2022/23 (178) compared to 2021/22 (257). Compliance against timescales for responding is below the 95% target at 67% for 2022/23 (outturn for 2021/22 not available). Performance has got worse in Q4 compared Q3 – In Q4 compliance against timescales was 67%; a reduction from 71% in Q3.
- The number of FOIs received in 2022/23 (1089) has increased compared to 2021/22 (1050). There has been an improvement in compliance with statutory timescales in each quarter of 2022 / 2023 from 66 % in Q1 to 87% in Q4 (although still below the 95% target). This is showing that the measures put in place by the Governance Team and Directorates across the Council are working. We are expecting this upward travel in performance to continue into 2023 / 2024.

17.6 Customer Feedback

- There has been an increase in both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints, the number of complaints upheld and the number of MP enquiries at the end of 2022/23 compared to 2021/22. This will have put more pressure on services.
- The number of compliments received in 2022/23 is the same as 2021/22 at 382.

18 Alternative Options

- 18.1 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.
- 18.2 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.

19 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.
Climate Change:	No direct climate change implications.
Corporate Parenting	No direct implications.

20 Appendices

1. Q4 Finance Report
2. Organisational Health Indicators 2022/23
3. Sickness Outturn 2022/23
4. Corporate Plan Q4 Progress
5. Year End highlights
6. Customer Experience Q4 and Annual Performance Report

21 Background papers

21.1 [Performance Management Framework - Q3 Report to Cabinet - March 2023](#)

[Performance Management Framework - Q4 Report to Budget & Corporate Scrutiny Management Board](#)

21.2 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](#)

