

# Report to Cabinet

**17 January 2024**

<b>Subject:</b>	Performance Management Framework – Q2 Monitoring
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources Cllr Bob Piper
<b>Director:</b>	Chief Executive – Shokat Lal
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Kate Ashley – Strategic Lead: Service Improvement Kayleigh Walker – Senior Lead: Service Improvement Sarah Sprung – Senior Lead: Service Improvement

## 1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That Cabinet note progress on the further development of the Corporate Performance Management Framework and approve the Q2 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 then, the corporate PMF has been further refined and built into business processes. In June 2023, Cabinet approved a revised Corporate Plan with a revised set of Corporate Performance Indicators. This report sets out the Council’s performance against the Corporate Performance Indicators for Q2 of 2023/24. **Appendix 1** lists the measures and performance, including a RAG rating against target where applicable. The appendix also includes the direction of travel of performance since last quarter (Q1) and compared to the same period last year.
- 2.3 Performance of key contracts is included in the quarterly performance reports to provide oversight of the performance of these services and assurance that contract management mechanisms continue to be in place and effective.

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

	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
	
	
	
	
	



- 3.1 An effective performance management framework facilitates increased accountability, learning and improvement. It also provides early warning signals and facilitates decision-making.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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.

## 4 Quarter 2 Performance – key messages

### Corporate Performance Report

- 4.1 In Q2, the number of Quarterly PIs given a RAG status has increased from 65 to 71 (out of a total of 128). In total, the percentage of 'red' and 'amber' PIs has increased, and the number of 'green' PIs has decreased, as can be seen below.
- 4.2 Of the 71 indicators given a RAG status this quarter,
  - 25 (35%) are RAG rated 'red' (compared to 21 (32%) in Q1\*)
  - 15 (21%) are rated 'amber' (compared to 10 (15%) in Q1\*)
  - 31 (44%) are rated 'green' (compared to 34 (52%) in Q1\*)

*\*Totals have been amended from Q1 to include quarterly PIs only, the summaries provided last quarter included some Annual PIs where data was available)*

32 PIs do not have a RAG rating as a target is not applicable and/or the PI is for information only. For 25 PIs no data is available; this is because there is no data available this quarter or the PI is being developed. The Corporate Performance Team is working with Directorates to develop PIs and ensure more data is available next quarter.



Area	Total	Red	Amber	Green	RAG NA	Data not available	Annual
Best Start	39	3	7	7	1	0	21 (4 reported in Q2; 1 'red'. 1 'amber' and 2 'green')
Live well Age Well	36	1	1	3	4	11	16 (1 reported in Q1: 'red')
Strong Resilient Communities	24	2	2	5	3	1	11
Quality Homes	21	8	1	4	1	0	7
Strong Inclusive Economy	15	2	0	1	3	3	6
Connected and Accessible	11	0	0	1	0	0	10
One Team One Council	58	9	4	10	20	10	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>76</b>

## Corporate Plan

4.3 In total in Q2, 210 Business Plan actions were given an update, compared to 212 in Q1 (of 255 actions in total). In total, the number of 'red' and 'green' issues has slightly decreased, and the number of 'amber' issues has increased.

4.4 Of the 210 Business Plan actions given a RAG Status this quarter:

- 6 (3%) were rated as 'red' (significant issues) (compared to 8 (4%) in Q1)
- 42 (20%) were rated as 'amber' (medium issues) (compared to 37 (17%) in Q1)



- 162 (77%) were rated as 'green' (on track) (compared to 167 (79%) in Q1)

There were 44 actions with no update available.

- 4.5 Last Quarter it was identified that the following actions were 'red' or 'amber' because the action or piece of work has stalled or need to be re-evaluated. An update on these actions for Q2 is included below.
- 4.6 **The redesign of the communal areas at Walker Grange (extra care housing complex) (rated 'red' in Q1):** It was reported in Q1 that draft proposals have been prepared by Urban Design, but no budget has been approved yet because of the pressures on the HRA budget and that HRA forecasts need to be remodelled. At the end of Q2 this is rated 'red' with plans to start remodelling from February after receiving housing stock condition data. Accurate remodelling is important because over the past year, a number of pressures against HRA budgets have been identified that result in a significant deficit if we continue to deliver work already approved in the timescales proposed. We need to remodel the HRA forecasts for the coming 5 years to avoid that situation. Walker Grange communal work will be included in those discussions to identify when the work could commence.
- 4.7 **The plan for replacement of diesel fleet with sustainable fuel vehicles (rated 'red' in Q1):** In Q1 it was reported that this was an area of risk given the number of electric charging points available and technological limitations in replacing some of the larger fleet with EV or an alternative fuelling option. Consultancy, EVP solutions were appointed to look at this and develop a plan for electrification going forwards. In Q2 this is still rated as 'red', but EVP have been working on this and the results of the review will shape the replacement strategy going forward. The Service confirmed that when vehicles are due for replacement, they will consult to ensure the most appropriate type of vehicles are ordered and retain the policy requiring business case for any non-electric vehicles.



- 4.8 **A number of new build housing schemes have been impacted by construction costs (due to increased inflation) and are not able to proceed at the current time (rated 'amber' in Q1):** This remains 'amber' in Q2.
- 4.9 **The government has withdrawn the Housing Transformation Fund so the planned work to support independent living using this funding is on hold (rated 'red' in Q1):** This has been rated 'amber' in Q2. The project remains on hold as per Q1 but work with colleagues in Adult Social Care has taken place to develop dementia friendly units of accommodation at Walker Grange. Viewings of the showflat have taken place and feedback will inform the development of a further 5 units in 2024.
- 4.10 **Commercial bus services in the West Midlands are being reduced due to viability/footfall issues and this has impacted on the level of bus service provided in Sandwell.( However, the metro extension project from Wednesbury to Dudley is on track and in budget to open to passengers by December 2024.) (rated 'amber' in Q1):** This is rated 'amber' again in Q2. The metro extension project is still on track to open to passengers by December 2024.
- 4.11 **Year-end commercial income projections for Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre, Forge Mill Farm, Lightwoods House and Park (Visitor Services) for 2023/24 were lower than target in Q1 (rated 'amber'):** This is rated 'amber' again in Q2; income targets for the year to date have not been met because of the operational delays and poorer than expected weather in Q1.
- 4.12 In addition to the above updates, the following actions have been rated 'amber' or 'red' in Q2 for reasons other than slippage.
- 4.13 **Stop Smoking Support:** This was rated 'green' in Q1, but 'amber' in Q2 because the latest prevalence estimates show that Sandwell has increased and now has a higher estimated rate of smokers than regional or national levels (however there is a new survey methodology being



used with a larger confidence interval). Cessation provision in Sandwell continues to be strong (delivering quitters above the regional and national average per head), with the stop smoking cessation service in Sandwell offering vapes as a quit aid as well as a new digital offer which went live earlier this year. This will help to ensure as many smokers can access the support they need. The focus is on supporting priority groups to quit continues through partnership working and joint referral pathways with e.g. homelessness services, maternity, drug & alcohol services, mental health services etc. Public Health are working closely with Regulatory Services to expand their capacity towards tackling illegal tobacco and vapes.

**4.14 Greenspaces utilisation:** This was rated 'green' in Q1, but 'amber' in Q2 because of some issues with the Albion Foundation, the provider who is delivering a physical activity programme within the green space of each of the borough's six towns with a focus to improve public health outcomes and increase physical activity levels of those who are inactive. There are concerns that are being addressed regarding diversity of activities being offered and promotion. There are also issues with data being provided due to issues with provider's system. Again, is being addressed and service provision is continuing.



#### 4.15 Below is the summary of Corporate Plan actions for Q2.

	Best Start	Live Well & Age Well	Strong Resilient Communities	Quality Homes	Strong Inclusive Economy	Connected & Accessible	One Council One Team	Total
No of Corporate Plan 'we wills'	12	21	20	17	11	8	18	107
No of Directorate Business Plan Actions	23	85	38	23	18	17	51	255
On Track	9 (12)	59 (62)	22 (21)	15 (11)	15 (14)	13 (12)	29 (35)	162 (167)
Medium Issues	2 (5)	12 (10)	6 (6)	7 (5)	2 (2)	2 (3)	12 (6)	42 (37)
Significant Issues	-	5 (4)	1 (1)	0 (1)	-	-	0 (2)	6 (8)
No Update available	12 (6)	9 (9)	9 (10)	1 (6)	1 (2)	2 (2)	10 (8)	44 (43)
Totals	23	85	38	23	18	17	51	255





- 4.16 The comments for 8 Quarterly PIs reference recruitment and recruitment issues impacting performance. However, closer analysis has found there is no common theme in the commentary across these PIs.
- 4.17 The comments for 3 Corporate Plan updates refer to construction cost inflation as impacting performance
- 4.18 The following sections provide on oversight of Corporate Plan monitoring and performance across the strategic outcomes

## 5. The Best Start in life for Children and Young People

### Performance Monitoring

- 5.1 We are below target for 'Financial performance against budget (SCT)'. At the end of Q2, SCT are projecting a £207k Annual Deficit against the Contract Sum. In response to this, the council has requested details on the mitigations the Trust are employing to address the overspend. Finance reports are being made available through Operational Partnership Board (OPB) and Strategic Partnership Board (SPB) and during four way meetings with the S151 officer, Director of Childrens Services (DCS), Chief executive of the Trust and Director of Resources at the Trust.
- 5.2 The 'percentage of Schools 'Good' or 'Outstanding' OFSTED rating - Special and alternative provision' is below target (71% against a target of 86%). Performance for Primary and Secondary Schools is also just below target ('amber'). This data includes academies as well as Local Authority maintained schools
- 5.3 'Early Help - Referrals to Social Care with no evidence of Multi-Agency Early Help in the prior 12 months' is above target (RAG rated 'red'). Performance has remained relatively stable since last quarter and is 5% better than 12 months ago.



5.4 The number of Children on a Child Protection Plan has risen from 338 in April 2023 to 479 in August 2023, although there has been a slight decrease in September 2023 to 462, now at a rate of 54.4 per 10,000 (RAG rated 'Amber'), this is slightly above Statistical Neighbour Average (52.6). The increase in CP plans over the quarter is due to a number of factors including:

- Some delays in core groups (review meetings) has impacted on plans being updated and progressed, resulting in some children being on plans for longer
- Threshold discussions not taking place consistently prior to a conference being arranged, meaning less challenge on how best to manage risk

Children on a CP Plan for a 2nd or subsequent time (within two years) has increased from 18.7% in Q1 to 22% in quarter (3.3% increase – RAG rating 'amber').

5.5 Improving the opportunities for Care Leavers continues to be a priority for the Children and Education Directorate and the wider Council, and senior managers met in Q2 to discuss how they could improve opportunities for Care Leavers this quarter. Performance for percentage of Care leavers that are NEET (aged 19-21) remains above target at 54% (amber). In addition, a NEET panel has been set up where cases are discussed every 2 weeks and solutions can be found for Care Leavers to prevent them becoming NEET.

5.6 Provisional data for 'Key Stage 4: Attainment 8 - Reduce the Points gap between the LA Disadvantaged and Non-Disadvantaged pupils nationally' is available and is above target at -14.9 (RAG rated 'red'). The national gap measure was larger than in Sandwell at -15.2, with West Midlands slightly smaller at -14.8.



- 5.7 Provisional data for 'Educational Attainment Sandwell All Pupils – attainment at the expected level or above in reading, writing and maths at KS2' (56% - RAG rated 'Green') and 'Educational Attainment Sandwell All Pupils - KS4 attainment of English and maths at Grade 4 or above' (55% - RAG rated 'Amber') is available, however the figures for Children in Care are not yet available.

## Corporate Plan Monitoring

- 5.8 Libraries continue to provide good outreach with 132 Deliver Play, Talk, Read sessions in all libraries.
- 5.9 Improving School attendance remains a priority, all schools now have a dedicated school attendance officer, 'how to' guides produced for school & partners i.e., how to manage illness.
- 5.10 There has been some slippage on projects such as the review of School Admission Appeals, this is to enable the annual school appeals to be heard within statutory deadlines. The review will commence in October 2023 in consultation with Schools Admissions.

## 6. People Live Well and Age Well

### Performance Monitoring

- 6.1 The proportion of section 42 safeguarding enquiries where a risk was identified and the reported outcome was that this risk was reduced or removed is below target at 87% (RAG rated 'red'). Due to a change in management structure staffing in the team, there has been an increase in the backlog of allocations that has meant that by the time cases are allocated, the degree of the issues would either be resolved or risk removed, reducing transition into S42.



- 6.2 Safeguarding has also opened up across the service with a change in practice. Whilst the opening up of safeguarding across services is helping to make safeguarding everyone's business and increasing ASC operational capacity to respond to the increased demand in the system, impact of the knowledge gap previously has meant that understanding best practice and performance outcomes for safeguarding is low among staff. To address this, teams are offered support through surgeries and feedback from learning from performance validation meetings on specific areas of performance.
- 6.3 We are also addressing practitioner knowledge relating to best practice in analysing and applying the threshold questions resulting from point (a) (receipt of the contact) and practice at large. With this, we should now see an increase in the transition rate into S42 as delegated enquiries and a proportion of enquiries would be completed on this step on the module. This should have the effect of increasing this performance measure overtime. Regular meetings are also taking place with performance to address any quality issues, following this we are engaging with safeguarding and area teams.
- 6.4 The target for the 'Use of the Sandwell Language Network to support learning English and Health literacy' has been exceeded with 586 participants enrolled (against a target of 270). There have been 32,851 language learning hours completed, 56 volunteers have enrolled of which 6 volunteers achieved Adult Education Training Qualifications, 84% have improved ability to understand the NHS and 90% have improved ability to explain a personal health concern to a healthcare professional (contract year runs 1st Sept 22 - 31st Aug 23). The new contract year reporting will be available at the end of Q3 23/24.

### **Corporate Plan Monitoring**

- 6.5 Work with faith sector continuing to build with the Corporate Faith Covenant verified by Faith Leaders.
- 6.6 Co-production agenda is well on track. Following reports in Q1 the conversation has now moved to a Place Based approach with a number of place-based colleagues having participated in working groups and represented on the steering group.



- 6.7 There is ongoing slippage in some areas. These include implementing the new day opportunities model across the market which is on hold whilst the barriers to Direct Payments and delays in processing are resolved. There has been an external report undertaken by Community Catalysts that has been shared through the Commissioning Board which identifies what needs to be done. Social Work capacity to undertake reviews and consider people for Direct Payments to enable them to access a diversified day opportunities model will also be considered.
- 6.8 Another area of slippage is the Joint Equipment Stores Development. The company A1 clutches share land on the site at Dolton Way alongside several other businesses and they installed a barrier that they padlock closed each evening and at weekends. The Community Alarms Team require 24/7 access and the barrier needs to be removed (Staff safety will be a concern if they have to get in and out of vehicles to unlock a padlock barrier each time they want to access/exit the site). The Council's Legal team continue to chase the company for a response.
- 6.9 The upgrade of the Walker Grange Communal areas has slipped because the HRA budget and that HRA forecasts need to be remodelled (as referenced in paragraph 4.6). Accurate remodelling is important because over the past year a number of pressures against HRA budgets have been identified that result in a significant deficit if we continue to deliver work already approved in the timescales proposed. The Housing Directorate needs to remodel the HRA forecasts for the coming 5 years to avoid that situation. Walker Grange communal work will be included in those discussions to identify when the work could commence.

## 7. Strong Resilient Communities

### Performance Monitoring

- 7.1 The number of Friends Groups working in Partnership with The Council' is below target (9 against a target of 10). The Parks and Open Spaces team are currently working with a number of groups and individuals who are interested in becoming Friends Groups working in partnership with the Council. We therefore expect to meet the year-end target of 14.



- 7.2 The number of library visits in person is 4% under target (RAG rated 'amber'). This was due to unavoidable one day library closures (six) over the summer period due to staff sickness and job vacancies. The service is operating on minimum staffing due to reduced budgets, which means when staff are sick there is often no-one to cover. The libraries that were closed (all Saturdays) were Oakham Library (12 August), Great Bridge and Hamstead (2 September) Brandhall (23 September), Great Barr and Oakham (30 September). Brandhall, Oakham, and Great Barr now have the Library Plus system installed, which means we can allow registered members into the library even when it is not staffed. Great Bridge and Hamstead are also due to have this system installed before 31 March 2024.
- 7.3 Under 16 issue figures (physical and electronic to include books, audiobooks, magazines & comics) is 4% under target. A charge for reserving items were introduced 1 April 2023, this was previously a free service. The charge has led to a 61% reduction in the number of items reserved during Q2, resulting in fewer issues. All other Corporate Library PIs are 'Green' and measures have been taken to help residents during the cost of living crisis, for example more events (most are free) and increasing the hours that PCs can be accessed (beyond library opening hours).
- 7.4 Domestic Abuse has increased in this quarter compared to the previous quarter by 880 offences. (No target so no RAG rating). There was a decrease of 175 offences when compared to the same time period as last year. Non-Crime incidents have increased by 145 compared to the previous quarter, and by 148 non-crime incidents compared to the same time period of last year. Year to date there has been a decrease of 260 offences and an increase of 169 non-crime incidents compared to the previous year. *(A non-crime is where police have been called but no crime has been committed - for example two family members having a loud argument, a third party calls the police, the police attend and calm the situation down, but no crime has taken place).* As set out in the Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment that was recently approved by the Safer Sandwell Partnership, the increase in Domestic Abuse cases may be attributed to various factors such as the COVID 19 pandemic and increased awareness and reporting.



- 7.5 An organisation called Safer Together have been commissioned to write the Serious Violence Strategy which includes a focus on Domestic Abuse, to ensure all local partners meet the Serious Violence Duty and pick up on the recommendations from the Strategic Needs Assessment. A launch event for this work took place on the 4th of December.

### **Corporate Plan Monitoring**

- 7.6 The Libraries and Archives Strategy is being delivered which includes rollout of Library+ (a new model of delivery) - 4 libraries live with Library Plus (as referred to in paragraph 6.2).
- 7.7 There were 3,369 attended fly-tipping incidents in Q2. The total cost of removal of these fly-tips was £195,754. The increase from the previous quarter is in part due to a system issue impacting on reports in July and also linked to the industrial action prevention or reducing attendance by Serco colleagues at fly tip incidents and increased clear-up timescales following the resolution of the industrial action.

## **8. Quality homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods**

### **Performance Monitoring**

- 8.1 The 'Percentage of homelessness cases successfully prevented (under Homelessness Reduction Act duty)' is below target (57.60% - RAG rated 'RED'). Due to the impact of the historic backlogs, we are still seeing a number of cases that have escalated beyond prevention and into relief. This has been progressing through the system and prevention levels returned to target levels in September 2023; therefore, the overall Q3 should show improved performance.
- 8.2 The 'Number of long-term empty homes brought into use' is below target (1 against a target of 6). An Empty Homes Officer started in October and will be able to progress a number of cases in train.



- 8.3 The 'Rough sleepers bi-monthly count outturn' is above target at 5 against a target of 3. Nationally there has been an increase in rough sleeping. This was demonstrated in the 2022 annual count for a majority of local authorities, including the West Midlands region. Sandwell has continued to perform well over 2023/24 with an increase in the September 2023 count which was largely due to a number of people with no recourse to public funds being discovered in one place. Subsequent counts have seen the number return to previous levels.
- 8.4 The percentage of current tenancies with a live valid Home Check in place (in the last 3 years) is below target (17.60% against a target of 20%) but has improved since last quarter (12.70% in Q1). Performance has been impacted by a new structure, which has impacted on Housing Services Officer's ability to focus on Home Checks. Additional temporary resources have been agreed which should lead to an increase in the rate at which Home Checks are completed.
- 8.5 The 'Percentage of properties with a Domestic Electrical Installation Condition report (DEICR) under 5-years old (or in legal resolution)' is worse than target (93.31% against a target of 100%) but has improved since last quarter. We continue to struggle with access issues, but the no access escalation process we have introduced is having a positive impact. Efforts will continue to be increased with the objective of achieving compliance by December 2023.
- 8.6 Fire Safety Checks and Asbestos Safety Checks are both below target and RAG rated 'Red'. Performance is below target for Fire Safety Checks because the team were completing the data collation, verification and registration of high-rise buildings (55) to the Building Safety Regulator by the 1st of October 2023. The team intends to catch up on Fire Safety Checks by the end of 2023.
- 8.7 Performance is below target for Asbestos Safety Checks because the inhouse team that deal with the surveys also carry out other building surveys and due to the rise in the Housing Disrepair (HDR) claims they have been focusing their time on these. Recruitment is underway to increase capacity to manage the HDR claims in the short and long term. This will be looked at by the transformation team which is being established to look at HDR backlogs with the intention of clearing them as soon as possible. The aim is to have resolved the majority of current cases by the end of the year.





8.8 The number of residents assisted by Welfare Rights in Q2 is below target by 549 cases (RAG rated 'RED'). This is due to the increase in complex cases which is resulting in officers having to spend more time on each case. The team are still working overtime which has been introduced within the service to support the increasing number of residents and the service has recruited two new members of staff into temporary posts which will increase the support to residents. This did not hinder performance on the monetary gains for the quarter as the service were successful in gaining £1,621,554 for residents, which was above target.

## Corporate Plan Monitoring

8.9 The majority of actions under this theme are on track.

8.10 Those under medium /risk of slippage include construction costs increasing for council home new builds (as referenced in paragraph 4.8).

8.11 Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 1 – delivery of properties reduced due to delivery difficulties of contractors. The works have now concluded and the funding element to the project is being finalised (which will take place by the 15<sup>th</sup> December).

## 9. A Strong Inclusive Economy

### Performance Monitoring

9.1 "The number of Businesses supported' is below target at 58 against a target of 100 and 'Businesses receiving Financial Assistance or Grants' is below target at 2 against a target of 20. Delays in funding to support/start business support programmes coupled with lower enquires for business support than anticipated have resulted in the target not being met. The delay in funding was a result of the West Midlands Combined Authority being late in releasing the budget for the business support programmes. The funding has now been released and we anticipate that we should be back on target by the end of next quarter.



9.2 The latest data from NOMIS (an Office for National Statistics Service) shows that in Sandwell, of the 69.1% of people economically active, 64.7% are employed. For the West Midlands, 77.5% are economically active with 73.6% in employment and for Great Britain, 78.4% are economically active, with 75.5% in employment. The employment rate had been on a downward trajectory since March 2021 in Sandwell when it peaked at 74%; however, the latest data shows an increase for the first time since then.

### **Corporate Plan Monitoring**

9.3 Development of safer green spaces strategy has been rescheduled for March Cabinet.

9.4 Development of Corporate Fleet Strategy – an interim report of the Fleet Review was received by Leadership Team in November, with development of strategy underway.

9.5 Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing visited Wednesbury as part of programme announcement. Cabinet decisions taken in Q2 to progress Levelling Up Programme. Project team now established, and this is now in operational delivery.

9.6 Three of the four apprentice opportunities available in Registration Services have now been successfully filled.

## **10. A Connected and Accessible Sandwell**

### **Performance Monitoring**

10.1 We have completed 4 more road safety improvement schemes this quarter than target (6 in Q2). Schemes completed this quarter include:

- 1. Londonderry Lane, Smethwick** – Traffic Calming and Cycle Infrastructure – Final phase of road safety and sustainable travel improvements to compliment the new Sandwell Aquatics Centre
- 2. Windmill Lane Puffin Crossing, Smethwick** – Installation of a new controlled pedestrian crossing between Trafalgar Road and Ballot Street



to aid child and parents walking to and from St Matthews CofE Primary school and the practitioners at the Jamia Masjid Mosque.

**3. Puffin Crossing Manor House Road Wednesbury** - Installation of a new controlled pedestrian crossing outside of St Mary's Primary School to aid child and parents walking to and from school following retirement of School Crossing Patrol point.

**4. Lightwoods Hill Safety Scheme, Old Warley** – Installation of new Vehicle Activated electronic Speed Signs and new 20mph limit to reduce vehicle speeds and improve safety environment following petition and community concerns.

**5. Vehicle Activated Speed Sign (VASS) Project** – Installation of a number of electronic speed activated warning signs at various location in the borough in response to community concerns over speeding vehicles. Includes:

**6. School Street, Ferndale Road, Hamstead** – an 18-month pilot project of closing off road to vehicle traffic at Ferndale Primary School entrance at school arriving and leaving times to improve safety environment for children and to help encourage walking to school.

## Corporate Plan Monitoring

- 10.2 Sandwell Strategic Road Safety Plan 2023 – 2030 was considered by Scrutiny in October, prior to Cabinet in December.
- 10.3 Blackheath Interchange - feedback from consultation with indoor market traders indicates a low level of support for this scheme and therefore it is subject to review.
- 10.4 Progress on delivering the capital programme of maintenance in relation to highways infrastructure is on track. The expenditure profile delivers more costly work in the final two quarters.



## 11. One Team One Council

### Performance Monitoring

- 11.1 Sickness absence levels have increased for the last two consecutive years since the coronavirus pandemic began in 2020-21. An average of 5.75 working days were lost per employee due to sickness in Q2 compared to 5.29 days during the same period last year. Housing achieved a reduction in sickness compared to last year, and a marginal decrease was achieved by Children and Education and Public Health directorates. All other directorates have seen a marginal increase apart from Adult Social Care and Borough Economy who encountered the highest increases. The most significant increase is for stress related sickness, followed by 'other' problems. There has been a decrease in infections, due to a decrease in coronavirus cases.
- 11.2 The average waiting time in the Adults Contact Centre has increased from 1 minute 9 seconds to 1 minute 27 seconds. There has been a significant increase in the level in new Blue Badge enquires (doubled in the recent month) which take a long period of time to complete and we are carrying 4.5 vacancies. Once recruitment is completed, we should see this reduce. Through the transformation programme we are looking at our demand and capacity modelling and how we can make improvements and efficiencies in this area.
- 11.3 The Abandonment Rate and Average Wait measures in the Revenues and Benefits Contact Centre have been affected by short term staffing issues in July and August; performance significantly improved in September. Across the period there were also days where corporate systems were down so wait times were longer. New staff have been appointed and are undertaking seven weeks of training. Once this is completed, they will be fully operational.



- 11.4 The Abandonment Rate targets were missed in the Corporate Contact Centre (9.09% against a target of 8%) due to continued staff vacancies (28%) and sickness (9.1%). The Corporate Contact Centre Average Wait measure was 9 seconds above target (RAG rated 'Amber'). During Q2, there have been two recruitment drives, and the service will continue to undertake a rolling recruitment programme in an attempt to fill all vacancies. We have also continued to support the face-to-face delivery of services at the OSS (two advisors daily) and at the Community Hubs Pilot at West Bromwich and Blackheath Library twice weekly each Tuesday and Wednesday (two advisors each day). Sickness has continued to be managed as per the sickness management procedure.
- 11.5 'SARs compliance with timescales' is significantly below target at 50% (target 95%). Performance is being massively impacted by the volume of requests for Housing Disrepair claims whereby the documents required to make a HDR claim are being requested through the SAR process. Excluding SARs made for HDR claims the compliance rate would be 68%. SARs for HDR claims make up 33% of all SARs received in Q2 (25 out of 75).
- 11.6 'FOI compliance with timescales' is below target at 83% (against a target of 95%). However, the final month of Q2 (September) has seen us reach our highest ever rate of compliance at 90% (July - 81%, August - 79%).
- 11.7 The percentage of complaints responded to in 10 working days (also service standard) has improved since last quarter but is still significantly worse than target. In Q2 of all Stage 1 complaints received only 64% were responded to within the SLA of 10 working days (68% excluding ASC). The average number of days complaints were responded to in Q2 was 14 days.
- 11.8 Council Tax Collection and Business Rate Collection are slightly down on last year (both RAG rated Amber). The Council have just carried out a single person review which has removed 2,000 Single Person Discount awards and therefore increased our outstanding debt. However, by doing the Single Person Discount review it has increased



our council tax base which will help when setting the council tax and with New Homes Bonus. This additional debt will be collected over the remainder of the year. Business Rate Collection is down on last year due to the £6m COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) payments added last year, but the gap is closing.

## Corporate Plan Monitoring

- 11.9 Libraries support to delivery of Community Hubs - Pilots at Blackheath Library and Central Library, West Bromwich going well.
- 11.10 Medium risk on achieving full cost recovery for Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre, Forge Mill Farm, Lightwoods House and Park (Visitor Services) - Income targets not met for Q1 and Q2, due to weather and operational delays in Q1 (as referenced in paragraph 4.11)
- 11.11 Design & Deliver a new EDI Strategy is medium risk. The EDI team are currently developing the EDI Strategy Timetable and format, phase one of the strategy development will commence during Q3.
- 11.12 Development of a Customer Access Strategy that offers a range of high-quality ways to contact the council that meets the needs of all Sandwell residents has been subject to delay due to resource allocation. It has been agreed that internal resource will be directed to develop a Strategy for the next 3 years whilst a wider piece of work runs concurrently to procure a Strategic Partner/Provider to undertake a more in-depth Strategy across Customer taking into account co dependencies with ICT/Digital Strategies.

## 12. Housing Improvement Plan

- 12.1 A series of additional directorate and service level performance dashboards and monitoring plans are being developed as part of a wider Housing Improvement and Transformation Plan. This will also take into account existing internal and external improvement plans to ensure better governance, service delivery and improve the management of



resources across the Housing Directorate. An officer is being recruited to lead this work (which will include developing a team to solely focus on this) which will form part of the wider Corporate Transformation programme. The Housing Directorate will work with the Corporate Team to identify the information needs to be included in the Corporate Performance Report moving forwards to ensure corporate oversight. An update will be provided in the Q3 report.

### 13. Contract Governance

13.1 Reports on contract governance have been provided for Sandwell Childrens Trust (SCT), Serco, Places Leisure and Sandwell Leisure Trust (SLT) and assurance of governance arrangements has been provided through these reports. A summary for each one is detailed below.

#### Sandwell Children's Trust

13.2 Since April 2018, children's services have been delivered by Sandwell Children's Trust on behalf of the Council. The Trust delivers the following range of services:

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

13.3 SCT was part of the Area SEND inspection that took place in Q1, the report was published in September 2023. SCT, as one of the parties jointly responsible for the commissioning of SEND services, along with the Council and ICB, are working with the partnership to address the areas of improvement identified by inspectors.

13.4 With regards to governance, approval was gained from Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> October to extend the appointment of the independent non-executive director Stephen Rimmer for up to 3 years and the process of agreeing the contract sum for 2024/25 has commenced in line with the process laid down in the Service Delivery Contract.



- 13.5 At the end of Q2, SCT are projecting a year end deficit of £2.073m against the Contract Sum of £74.475m, in real terms this is an overspend of £2.815m as there is an expectation for them to achieve a surplus of £742k by the end of the year. These projections are based on 6 months of activity and subject to change. In response to the projected deficit (and as set out in paragraph 5.1), formal contract sum negotiations have commenced in Q2 and will conclude in Q3.
- 13.6 Performance against the contract KPIs continues to be monitored. There was a significant fall in performance at the beginning of Q2, with only 5 of the 15 KPI's being green. This improved over the quarter to the point that there are no KPI's in the red zone and 11 being green. Some of the falls in performance can be attributed to SCT introducing a new system for the allocation of initial child protection conference chairs that led to some children waiting for longer than normal. SCT has now rectified this, and performance has rebounded.

## Serco

- 13.7 The council's contract with Serco was awarded in 2010 and runs until 2035. It has a contract value in the region of £34m per annum. The contract covers services including waste and recycling collection, household recycling centre management, street cleansing and fleet management and renewal.
- 13.8 The contract has a set of regular meetings in place with standard agendas relating to the contractual requirements from key outcome targets (KOTs) to operational issues. These meetings are supported by regular cross channel communications between the SMB and Serco teams. Leadership Team also receive regular contract reports that provide oversight and issues are raised as appropriate.





- 13.9 The contract contains the requirement for the provision of regular data from the contractor to be provided, there is also an associated requirement for SMBC to provide information to Serco, relating to Council priorities annually and fleet maintenance through a set of KPIs.
- 13.10 As reported in Q1, the impact of the summer's industrial action spilled over into the first few weeks of Q2, specifically
- Refuse catch-up (backlog of accumulated waste) was completed on the 9 July.
  - Recycling collections recommenced on the 10 July
  - Recycling catch-up (backlog of accumulated waste) was completed on the 21 July.
- (Performance figures for Q2 remain interim figures and do not yet accurately capture actual performance.)
- 13.11 The financial settlement of the missed service during the industrial action remains ongoing. Based on legal advice an initial claim was submitted to Serco in November and discussions are taking place.
- 13.12 Other works that were necessarily stood down / delayed as a result of the industrial action have now been reactivated, notably:
- The consultation on the Litter Bin Strategy was concluded at the end of October. More than 900 survey responses were submitted. The Litter Bin Strategy will be reported in Q3.
  - The Waste Insights work – looking at how frequently residents present their bins – was also concluded in October. The outcome of this research will also be reported in Q3.

## Places Leisure

- 13.13 A 25-year contract is in place with Places Leisure to operate West Bromwich Leisure Centre and an annual management fee of approximately £20K is paid to the Council.



- 13.14 Monthly operational reports are provided to update on performance – operational and technical. Quarterly contract management meetings are held to ensure the ongoing monitoring of the contract and performance.
- 13.15 In terms of Q2 participation, there has been an increase visits, Fitness Live memberships and swimming compared to last year and the occupancy of group exercise sessions is also higher than last year.

### **Sandwell Leisure Trust**

13.16 In Q2, Sandwell Leisure Trust (SLT) managed the following leisure centres in Sandwell:

- Haden Hill Leisure Centre
- Hadley Stadium
- Harry Mitchell Leisure Centre
- Langley Swimming Centre
- Portway Lifestyle Centre
- Sandwell Aquatics Centre
- Smethwick Swimming Centre
- Tipton Leisure Centre
- Tipton Sports Academy
- Wednesbury Leisure Centre

(In July 2023, Langley Swimming Centre and Smethwick Swimming Centre closed and the Sandwell Aquatics Centre opened. The swimming pool at Haden Hill Leisure Centre has also been closed since Mar 2023; the rest of the site is still open and will be until early next year when it will close for the rebuild/refurbishment.)

13.17 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 and SLT will formally ceasing to deliver services on 30 April 2023.



- 13.18 Cabinet at their meeting 22 June 2022 decided that SLT will be replaced by a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC). However, following approval from Leadership Team and Cabinet, officers have extended the termination period with SLT to March 2027, due to the cost benefit in relation to utility costs, improved partnership working and revised governance arrangements.
- 13.19 In terms of performance, attendance cannot be directly compared with Q1 or last year given Langley and Smethwick Swimming Centres closed and Sandwell Aquatics Centre opened. Nevertheless, looking at the figures, the overall number of visits has increased significantly at 574,886 visits in Q2 23/24 compared to 540,261 in Q2 23/24. This can be largely attributed to Sandwell Aquatics Centre that had over 60,000 visits in August and in September.
- 13.20 In terms of finance, the current forecast outturn is £167k over budget; SLT have identified management action to bring this back to budget by the end of the year.

## 14. Strategic Risk Register

- 14.1 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.
- 14.2 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.



14.3 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 latest SRR was presented to ARAC on 23 November 2023 (providing an update to those risks that were not updated in September 2023) and is attached as Appendix 2.

## 15. Amended or deleted PIs (for approval)

It is proposed that the targets for 2 PIs are amended this quarter and 1 PI is changed. They are set out below, with a justification for the changes.

PI	Strategic Outcome and Directorate	Justification
% Care leavers that are NEET (aged 19-21)	The Best Start in Life for Children and Young People Children and Education	The target has been amended from 50% to 46.5% to drive service improvement.
The proportion of people who receive long-term support who are enabled to live in their home or with family	People Live Well and Age Well Adult Social Care	The target for this indicator has been revised due to a change in definition. It is now 70% (was 86%)
Forge Mill Farm Income (admissions, events, other & education)	Strong Resilient Communities	'Visitor spend per head (including secondary spend)' has been amended to 'Forge Mill Farm Income (admissions, events, other & education)' as spend per head is not fully reliable until Oracle Fusion is implemented and income data is readily available.

## 16. New PIs (for approval)

3 indicators have been put forward to be added this quarter. They are set out below, alongside the reason for their addition.



PI	Strategic Outcome and Directorate	Justification
A percentage reduction in carbon emissions within our corporate estate and across the wider borough	Strong Resilient Communities Regeneration	This will measure reductions in carbon emissions as per Climate change strategy.
A reduction in sites from surplus property/management of Land Register	One Council One Team Regeneration	This indicator monitors the progress of the Surplus Asset programme.
Number of surveys conducted through the Sandwell Consultation Hub	One Council One Team Assistant Chief Executive	This indicator will monitor how we are embedding an evidence-based continuous improvement approach to ensure we are directing our resources to meet our priorities.

## 17. Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	There are no direct financial implications to this report.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	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.
<b>Risk:</b>	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



	<p>to achieving service delivery and the strategic objectives identified in the Corporate Plan. These risks and the associated mitigations are noted in the SRR.</p> <p>The corporate performance management framework is a key mechanism to report progress and performance to the Government appointed Commissioners.</p>
<b>Equality:</b>	Equality measures are included in the PMF, including the Organisational Health workforce indicators and the progress of the Corporate Plan.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	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.
<b>Social Value</b>	Measures in the PMF include looking at percentage of spend in the local area.
<b>Climate Change</b>	There are measures in the PMF that look at air quality and passenger journeys on public transport and 'we will' statements in the Corporate Plan on renewable energy measures in the build of new homes.
<b>Corporate Parenting</b>	There are measures in the PMF that look at children in care related to education, placements moves, health assessments and NEET figures.

## 18. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Corporate Performance Report 2023/24 Q2

Appendix 2 – Strategic Risk Register



## 19. Background papers

Performance Management Framework – Q1 MonitoringThe appendices to this report are available here:

<https://sandwell.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=143&MId=6561&Ver=4>

Report to Council 21 April 2022:

Performance Management Framework for the Council

