

Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 September 2021

Council Plan 2020-2025 Quarter 1 Performance Progress Report: Period under review: 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021

Recommendation

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Considers and comments on the progress of the delivery of the Council Plan 2020 - 2025 for the period as contained in the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Council Plan Quarter 1 Performance Progress Report for the period April 1st 2021 to June 30th 2021 was considered and approved by Cabinet on 9th September. The report provides an overview of progress of the key elements of the Council Plan, specifically in relation to performance against Key Business Measures (KBM)s, strategic risks and workforce management. A separate Financial Monitoring report for the period covering both the revenue and capital budgets, reserves and delivery of the savings plan was presented and considered at the same Cabinet meeting.
- 1.2. This report draws on information extracted from both Cabinet reports to provide this Committee with information relevant to its remit.
- 1.3. Comprehensive performance reporting is now enabled through the following link to Power BI [full OSC Quarter 1 2021/22 Performance Report](#).

2. Council Plan 2020 - 2025: Strategic Context and Performance Commentary

2.1 The Council Plan 2020 – 2025 aims to achieve two high level Outcomes:

- **Warwickshire’s communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent;** and,
- **Warwickshire’s economy is vibrant and supported by the right jobs, training, skills and infrastructure.**

Delivery of the outcomes is supported by **WCC making the best use of its resources.**

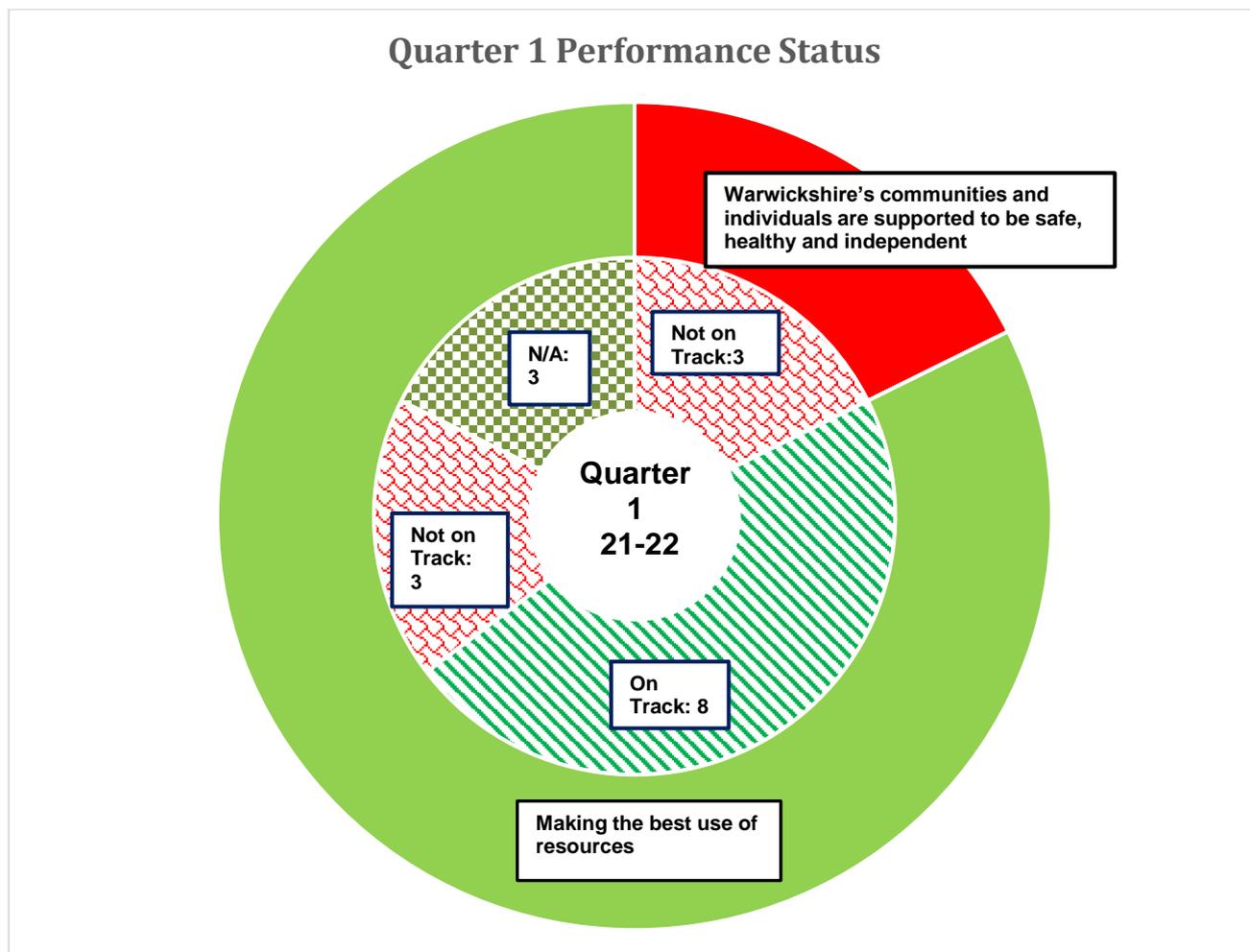
Progress to achieve these outcomes is assessed against 54 KBMs.

Outcome	No. of KBMs	No. of KBMs available for reporting at Quarter 1
Warwickshire’s communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent	27	21
Warwickshire’s economy is vibrant and supported by the right jobs, training, skills and infrastructure	13	8
WCC making the best use of its resources	14	11

2.2 Overall, the Council continues to maintain its robust performance across the board in the face of the challenges posed by the pandemic, including increased and changing demand, new service delivery to meet the challenges of the pandemic and significant changes in how services are delivered. The Council continues its journey towards a more business as usual situation as restrictions are removed, Services are focusing on their core work and this is reflected in KBM performance.

2.3 Of the 54 KBMs, 17 are in the remit of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee and at Quarter 1, 14 KBMs are available for reporting as 3 are annual measures and will be reported by year end. 57% (8) KBMs are On Track and 43% (6) are Not on Track.

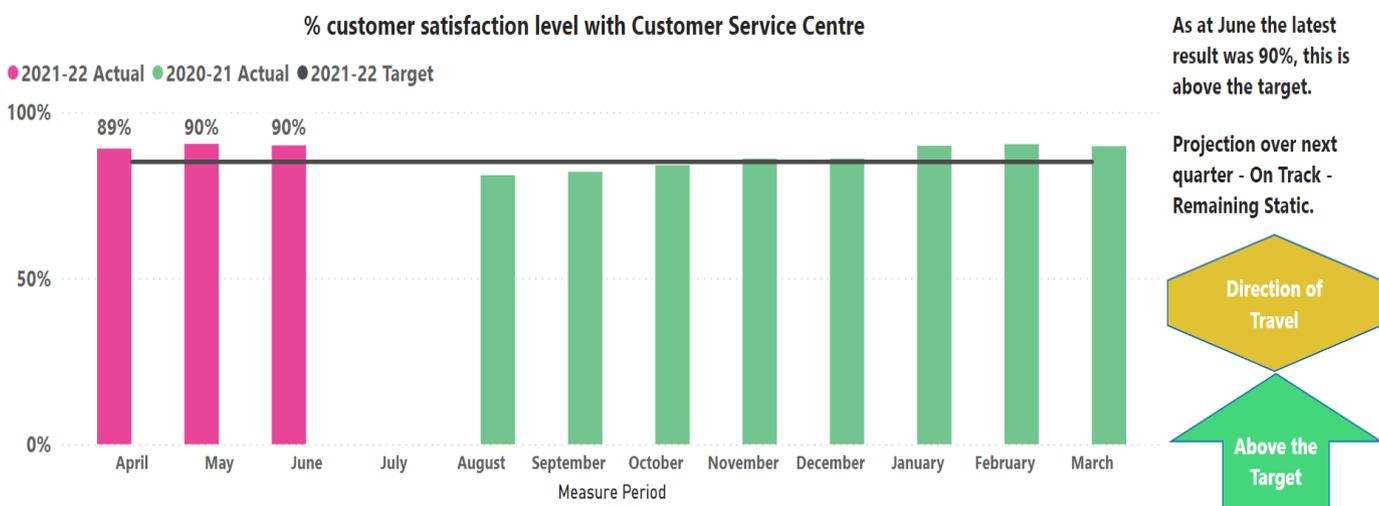
2.4 Chart 1 below summarises KBM status at Quarter 1 by agreed Outcomes



2.5 Of the 57% (8) KBMs which are On Track, there are 2 of note which are detailed in Table 1 below:

WCC makes the best use of its resources

% customer satisfaction level with Customer Contact Centre



Current performance narrative:

During Quarter 1, the Customer Service Centre (CSC) has continued to experience high call volumes both inbound and outbound. This is reflective of the corporate response to Covid-19 to ensure the most vulnerable can access services and support through all channels including telephone e.g. Covid-19 hotline with the focus shifting more towards testing queries, Covid-19 Local Grant Scheme (welfare support) and Adult Social Care. NB. The April – July 2020 data was unavailable for reporting as the mechanism for capturing the satisfaction survey information was temporarily turned off due to Covid-19.

Data for this measure is provided via telephone surveys and the customer satisfaction levels continue to remain above target.

This is the third consecutive quarter % customer satisfaction level with the Customer Service Centre has remained on track.

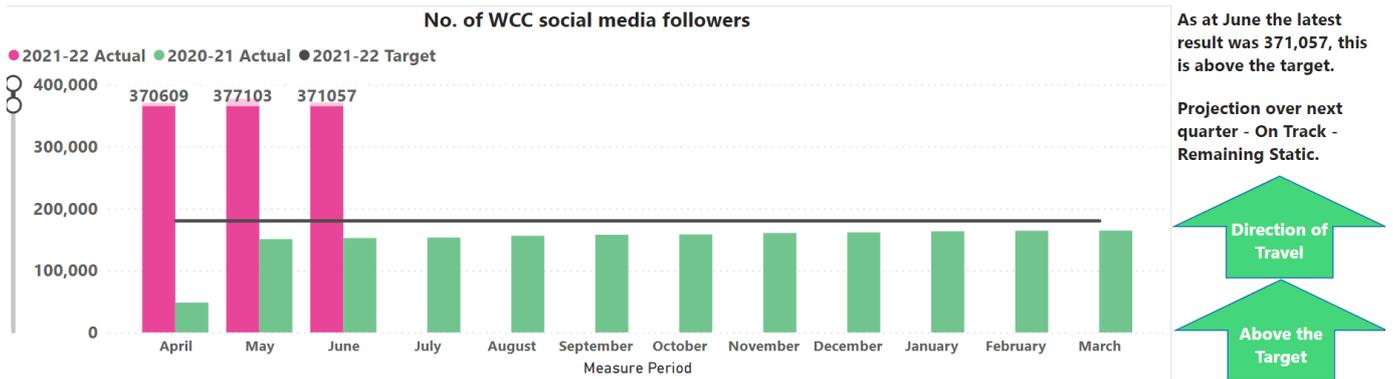
Improvement activity:

The Service will continue its quality assurance processes as well monitor demand and resource availability and action when needed.

Explanation of the projected trajectory: On Track – remaining static

The CSC is operating both virtual and from office bases and has increased its service offer in response to Covid-19 and customer needs. Individual customer feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and this is reflected in this measure as there has been a steady increase in satisfaction levels and it is expected this will continue to be on or above target going forward.

No. of WCC social media followers



Current performance narrative:

Social media followers continue to exceed targets. The drop in followers between May and June 2021 is accounted for by the ongoing decommissioning of inactive social media accounts across all networks.

Improvement activity:

The Service are currently auditing their social media accounts. The current target of 180,000 will be reviewed at the end of the next quarter.

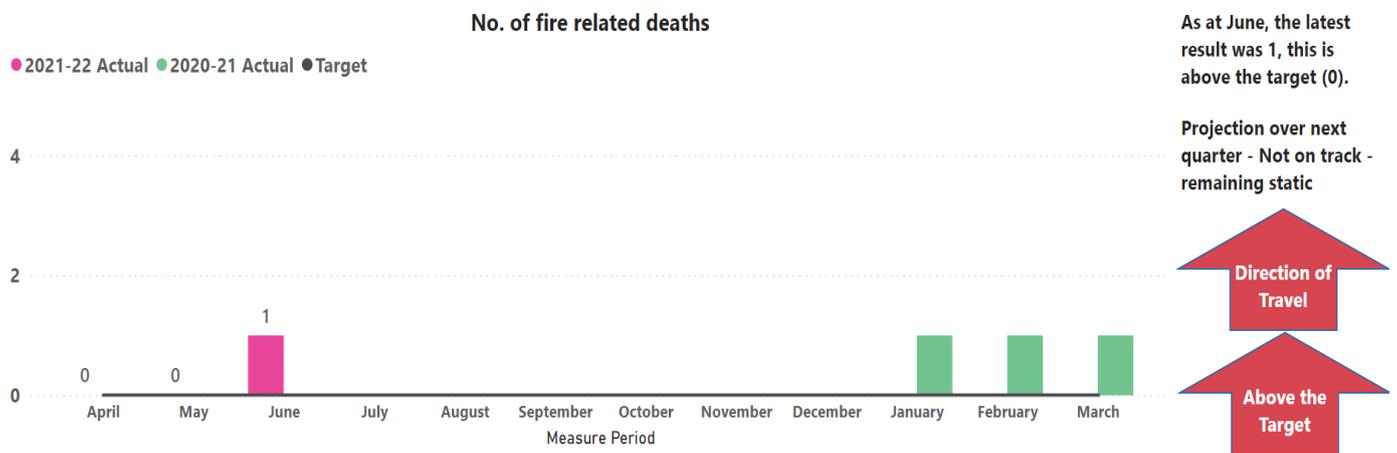
Explanation of the projected trajectory: On Track – remaining static

Given the current performance, this is projected to remain static.

2.6 Of the 43% (6) KBMs that are Not on Track at Quarter 1, 4 KBMs require highlighting below with details of the current performance narrative, improvement activity and explanation of projected trajectory:

Warwickshire's communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent

No. of fire related deaths



Current performance:

For the period 1st April to 30th June 2021 there has been 1 fire related death (in the same period of 2020 there were 0 deaths). The incident was a fire suicide.

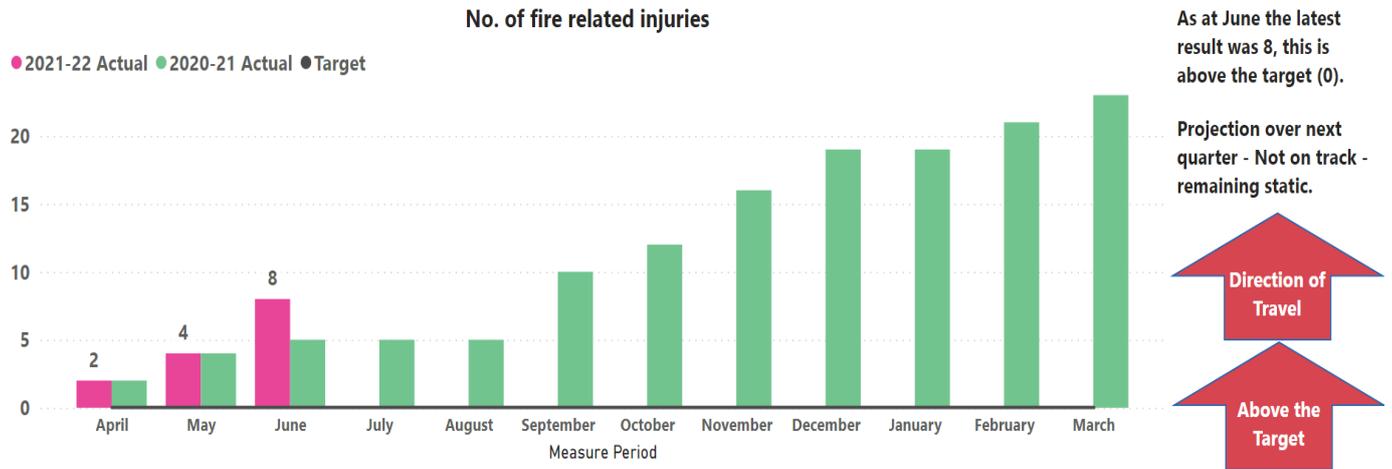
Improvement activity:

The Service investigates takes every fire related death very seriously and investigates each one in an effort to understand causes and identify any appropriate Improvement activity. Where it is identified that an improved multi agency approach could have prevented the fatality a multi-agency serious case review is carried out. With a growing trend, albeit in small numbers, for suicide by self-immolation the Service will be joining the multi-agency suicide prevention group to see if any prevention strategies can be deployed.

Explanation of the projection trajectory: Not on Track – remaining static

Detailed reports have previously been to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Committee Members recognise that it is difficult to influence fire death outcomes as a result of suicide or crime. However, the Service will endeavour to seek all preventable causal factors to fire deaths.

No. of fire related injuries



Current performance:

Of the 8 fire related injuries, 1 victim was taken to hospital for serious injuries, 2 taken to hospital for slight injuries and 5 were given first aid at the scene. For the victim with serious injuries - the individual tried to light a fire pit using petrol and set themselves on fire.

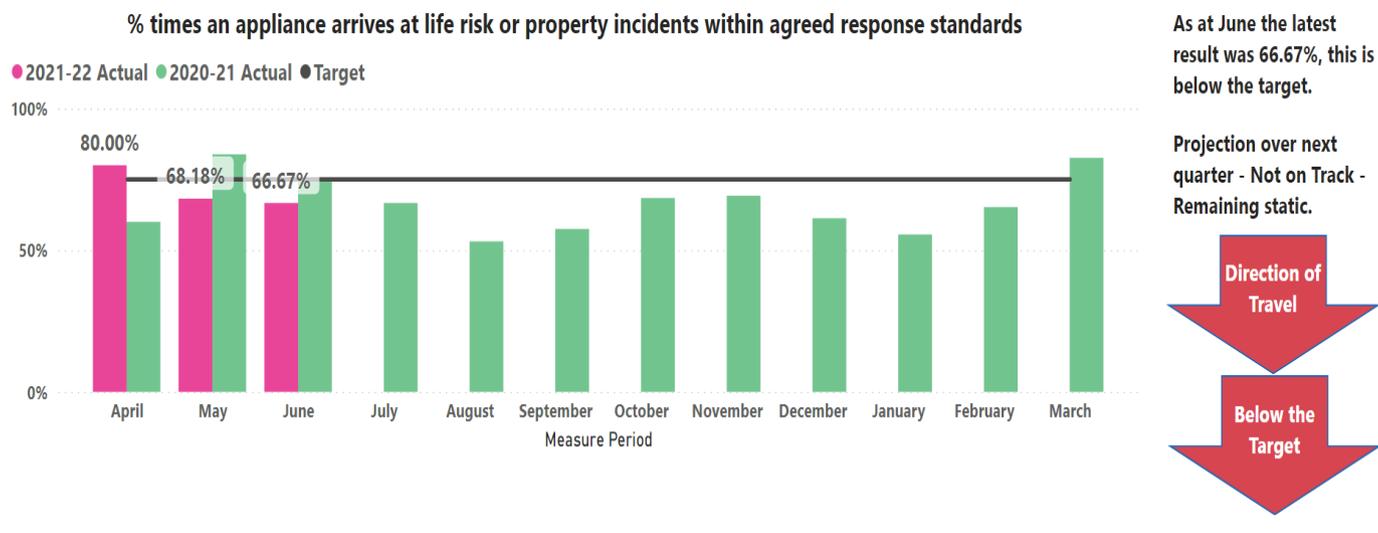
Improvement activity:

The Service closely monitors levels and types of incidents involving fire related injuries to address any emerging issues to inform community prevention activity. Similarly, to the fire related deaths measure, the Service will continue to work with partners to better understand any causal factors (such as alcohol/drug dependency/mental health issues) in the hope of preventing similar incidents and injuries in the future. Smoke hoods have been purchased to allow crews to escort members of the public through smoke to safety.

Explanation of the projection trajectory: Not on Track – remaining static

Detailed reports have previously been to OSC, and Committee Members recognise that it is difficult to influence fire related injury outcomes. However, the Service will endeavour to identify and reduce all preventable causal factors to fire injuries.

% times an appliance arrives at life risk or property incidents within agreed response standards



Current performance:

The April to June 2021 figure for the percentage of times an appliance arrives at life risk or property incidents within agreed response standards is 71.62% which is an improvement on the year end 2020/21 figure of 66.54%.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has resulted in a welcome reduction in life risk incidents as people spot potential situations in the home earlier and travel less, resulting in a reduction in serious fires and Road Traffic Collisions (RTC). The pandemic has also had the effect of reducing the support available to On-Call fire stations from wholtime stations as the Service introduced station "bubbles". This meant that at the height of the pandemic the Service was not moving wholtime staff around to support On-Call stations.

The decision to cancel the recruits' course was predominately around reducing infection and transmission between the existing workforce. The impact was not fulfilling those vacancies that On-Call units have been experiencing.

Average response times for initial appliances;

7 minutes 53 seconds for Fire incidents; 73 Fire incidents.

8 minutes 22 seconds for Road Traffic Collisions; 15 RTC incidents.

8 minutes 59 seconds for Special Services incidents; 13 Special Service incidents.

For initial appliances which missed the 10-minute target the average time for response was:

13 minutes 42 seconds for Fire incidents; 18 Fire incidents; 34 minutes and 0 seconds was the longest response.

12 minutes 45 seconds for Road Traffic Collisions; 5 incidents; 15 minutes and 0 seconds was the longest response.

15 minutes 52 seconds for Special Services incidents; 5 incidents; 22 minutes and 27 seconds was the longest response.

The Service focuses its attention and short-term remedial measures on the incidents which occurred within the modelled 10-minute response time but at which that target time was missed.

This is the fourth consecutive quarter % times an appliance arrives at life risk or property incidents within agreed response standards has been not on track.

Improvement activity:

Recruitment and retention of On-call firefighters is an ongoing challenge, reflecting the national picture, and the Service has seen significant variations in On-call availability across Stations in recent months.

Resources are positioned to meet the demand and risks within Warwickshire. Unfortunately, due to the geographical make up of Warwickshire and the large rural areas that are covered, the Service does occasionally have challenges with meeting the response standards due to some of the travel distances involved. Targeted fire prevention activity is delivered to remote rural areas which the Service knows it will struggle to reach within the 10-minute response time.

Explanation of the projection trajectory: Not on Track – remaining static

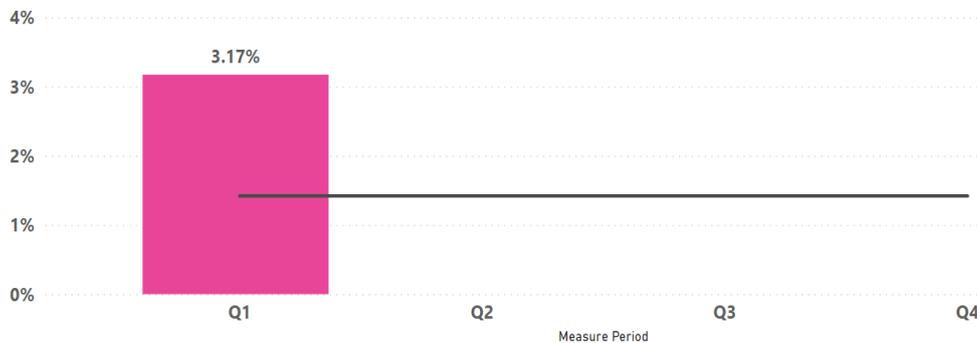
In the longer term the Service Asset Management Plan sets out the intention to relocate some whole-time response points onto transport nodes across the County with the intention of improving response to emergency incidents outside of the current predicted 10 minute travel time, particularly those on the motorway network.

WCC makes the best use of its resources

% Variation DSG overspend compared to Budget Provision

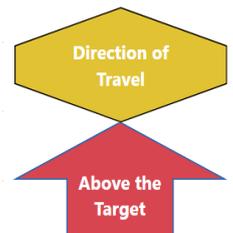
% Variation DSG overspend compared to Budget Provision

● 2021-22 Actual ● Target



As at Quarter 1 the latest result was 3.17%. This is above the target.

Projection over next quarter - N/A



Current performance:

Based on the Quarter 1 forecast Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is expected to overspend by £7.887m with £7.894m relating to the High Needs Block.

If the service were performing to the targets and projections within the current DSG recovery plan, the DSG overspend for 2021/22 would be £3.541m (which the target of 1.42% represents). This is the deficit to be addressed through future year savings/interventions between the current year and 2025/26 which are still to be determined.

However the current Quarter 1 projections (before the refresh of the recovery plan has been fully concluded) are forecasting the £3.541m deficit noted above (for which interventions are still to be determined) as well as a further £4.353m deficit on 'in year activity' that interventions in the current recovery plan were expected to have addressed.

For information, the drivers of the 'in year' overspend include:

- the objective of increasing the number of children with an EHC (Education, Health and Care) plan being placed at lower cost Mainstream schools is being achieved, but this is not yet being fully offset by the required reduction in the higher cost placements at Special Schools and Independent Special Provision;
- the reduction in independent settings has not been achieved in line with the recovery plan;
- an increase in the placement of children into other local authorities combined with an increase in the unit cost due to complexity of needs; and
- costs from Post 16 is greater than set in the recovery plan (this area is currently being reviewed which includes investigation for the reasons of this cost increase and whether it can be mitigated).

Note that there are some underspends in Alternative Provision and special school top ups. Please note that this will be flagged in Finance's Quarter 1 Monitoring Report, presented to Cabinet on 9th September.

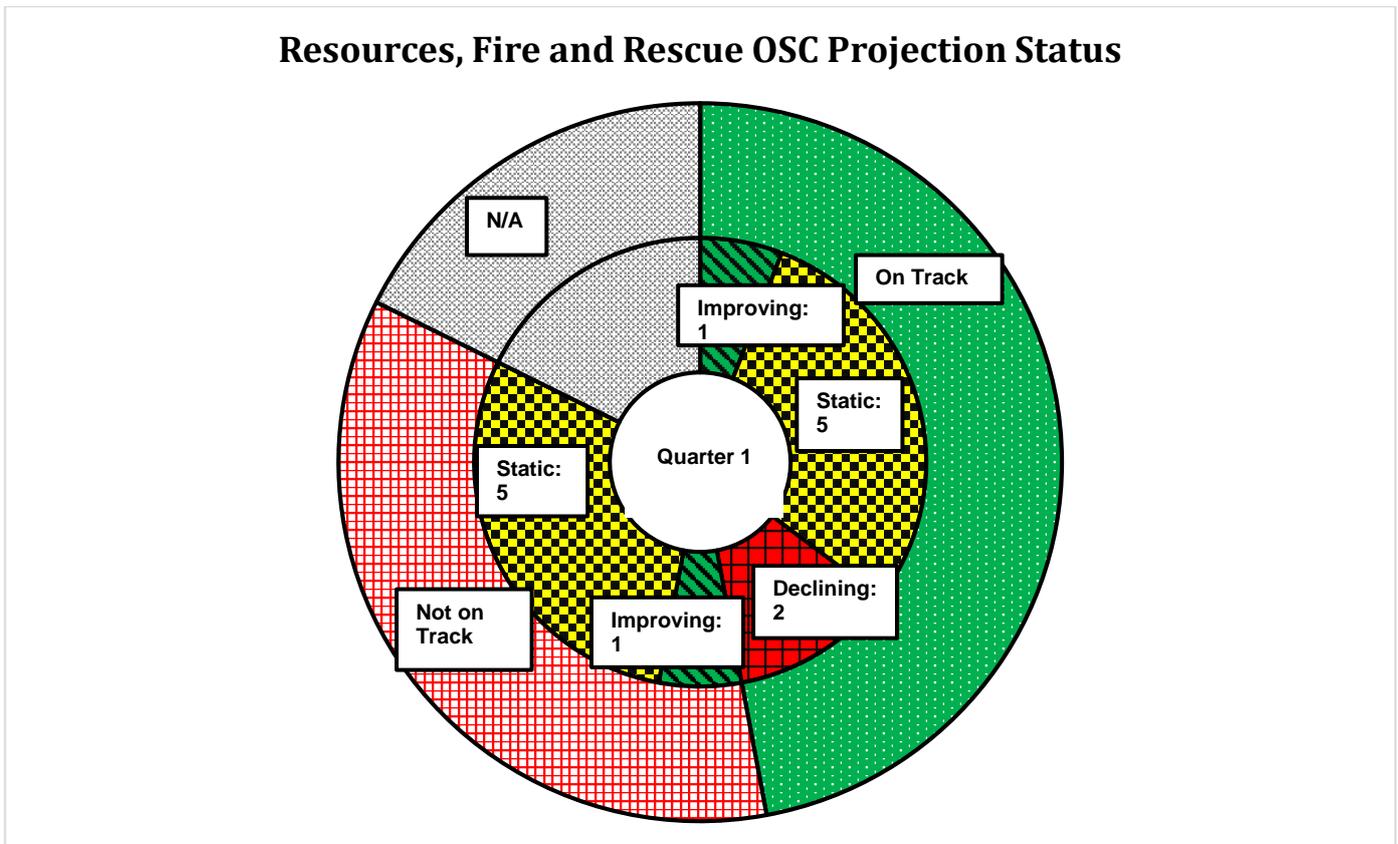
Improvement activity:

Work is ongoing to refresh the current DSG recovery plan and forecast taking into account the latest demand projections as well as recent Government announcements about 22/23 funding.

Explanation of the projection trajectory: Not applicable

The refresh of the DSG recovery plan will determine the projection, therefore, this is currently not applicable. In addition, by the time of Quarter 2 reporting, September school and placement data will be available and therefore a more robust forecast is expected.

2.6 Chart 2 below illustrates the considered forecast performance projection over the forthcoming reporting period as well as the three previous periods.



2.7 It is forecast that over the next period overall performance will be similar to current performance. Of the 57% (8) of measures reporting on track, 4 will remain static, with ‘% General and Directorate Risk Reserves Compared to the Net Revenue Budget’ measure set to improve and the following 2 are projected to decline:

- % of capital expenditure against budget - due to the work to refine capital forecast, by Quarter 2 a reduction in the forecast is anticipated. This will lead to the deterioration of this performance measure, into Not on Track, however it should be considered a positive change that will provide more accurate and reliable capital forecast; and
- No. of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, Judicial Review cases or Information Commissioner’s Office adverse decisions for WCC – overall the Authority is seeing an increase in complaints following a lull experienced during the pandemic and so it expected the overall trajectory will increase. Although projected to decline over the next quarter, this measure is still likely to remain On Track, compared to the target of 10.

2.8 Of the 43% (6) of measures which are currently Not on Track, it is forecast that 5 will remain static, however, the following is projecting performance to improve into being On Track, although the measure will continue to see peaks and troughs during year as and when significant volumes/values of debt are raised:

- Value of debt over 35 days old as a % of debt raised in last 12 months - Debt Recovery team is liaising with Schools Finance and Communities teams to ensure that appropriate action is being taken to resolve unpaid debts wherever possible.

Full context on all measures is provided in the Power BI reports.

- 2.9 As the Council continues to transform, the Performance Framework will evolve, providing a sharpened focus on performance and supporting delivery of the Organisation's priorities. Following the light touch review of the Performance Framework for the 2021/22 period, a comprehensive review of the entire Framework is already in progress ready for implementation in 2022/23 and a Cross Party Member Working Group is supporting the review.

Financial Commentary – relevant finance information taken from Cabinet report

3.1 Revenue Budget

- 3.1.1 The Council has set the following performance threshold in relation to revenue spend: a tolerance has been set of zero overspend and no more than a 2% underspend. The following table shows the forecast position for the Services concerned.

	2021/22 Budget £'000	2021/22 Outturn '000	Revenue Variance £'000 %	Retained Reserves £'000	Financial Standing £'000
Business and Customer Services	19,021	22,904	3,883 20.41%	0	3,883
After taking account of Covid related pressures of £2.986m; and the impact of earmarked reserves the remaining service variance is an overspend of £0.904m which represents a 20.4% variance against the approved budget. The remaining service variance of £0.904m is the result of an increase in staffing and employee costs, with the majority of this within the Business Support area where there have been increases in demand particularly in relation to Adults and Children & Families.					
Commissioning Support Unit	7,136	13,743	6,607 92.59%	0	6,607
After taking account of Covid related pressures of £7.009m; and the impact of Investment/Transformation funds the remaining service variance is an overspend of £0.044. The Covid related expenditure includes £5.228m COMF funding to be spent in 2021/22 still to be allocated and £1.657m for Covid Community Testing.					
Enabling Services	25,944	24,344	(1,600) -6.17	0	(1,600)
After taking into account Covid pressures and transfer to/from earmarked reserves leaves a service-related underspend of £1.228m which comprises of the following: £0.386m underspend across Property Services – mainly due to over recovery of income, which is likely to be one off; and some staffing underspends £0.032m underspend across HR Enabling mainly from staffing					

£0.094m net underspend across Digital and ICT (£0.456m staffing underspends offsetting overspends of £0.362m related to Software and Licensing costs; the recurrent nature of each requires further analysis in order to establish any long-term impact)

£0.711m underspend across ICT Strategy and Commissioning – £0.074m in year staff underspends and £0.637m one-off underspends from ICT projects.

Finance	6,245	6,311	66 1.06%	0	66
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After taking account of Covid related pressures of £0.126m; and the impact of earmarked reserves, the remaining service variance is an underspend of £0.041.

Governance and Policy	2,511	3,875	1,364 54.32%	0	1,364
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The Covid pressures relate to employee costs, printing and advertising within Communications, costs of reinstatement of face-to-face Council meetings and additional staffing. The remaining service forecast overspend predominantly comprises:

£0.521m of historic savings which date back to 2017/18 and are no longer achievable within the service.

£0.304m Legal Services increased spending on agency staff for backfill and decreased external income. Further review of this pressure is necessary in order to establish if there is a long-term impact and what mitigating actions are required to manage this pressure.

Fire and Rescue	22,080	22,039	(41) 0.19%	0	(41)
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After taking account of Covid related pressures of £0.046m; and the impact of earmarked reserves and Investment/Transformation funds, the remaining service variance is an underspend of £0.078m.

3.2. Delivery of the Savings Plan

3.2.1. The savings targets and forecast outturn for the Services concerned are shown in the table below.

	2021/22 Target £'000	2021/22 Forecast £'000
Business and Customer Services	524	379
£145k shortfall relating to vacancy management saving plan due to operational pressures.		
Commissioning Support Unit	46	46
Enabling Services	1,118	1,118

Finance	16	16
Governance and Policy	358	351
£7k shortfall on third party savings target.		
Fire and Rescue	385	370
£15k shortfall relating to third party saving plans		

3.3 Capital Programme

3.3.1. The table below shows the approved capital budget for the Services and any slippage into future years.

	Approved budget for all current and future years (£'000)	2021/22 Forecast £'000	Slippage from 2021/22 into Future Years (%)	Current quarter - new approved funding / schemes (£'000)	Newly resourced spend included in slippage figures (£'000)	All Current and Future Years Forecast (£'000)
Business and Customer Services	1,629	181	0%	0	0	1,629
Enabling Services	29,765	24,327	0%	0	(1,710)	28,055
Governance and Policy	3,626	3,626	0%	0	0	3,626
Fire and Rescue	7,545	5,200	-30%	0	50	7,595
£2.187 million delay caused by: Fire and Rescue HQ Leamington Spa - the project currently on hold.						

4. Supporting Papers

- 4.1 A copy of the full report and supporting documents that went to Cabinet on the 9th September 2021 is available via the committee system.

5. Environmental Implications

None specific to this report.

6. Background Papers

None

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