

Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 23rd February 2022

Council Plan 2020-2025 Quarterly Performance Progress Report: Period under review: 1st April 2021 to 31st December 2021

Recommendation

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- (i) Consider progress on the delivery of the Council Plan 2020 - 2025 for the period as contained in the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Council Plan Quarter 3 Performance Progress Report for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st December 2021 was considered and approved by Cabinet on 17th February 2022. 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 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 3
Warwickshire’s communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent	27	25
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	13

2.2 Overall, the Council continues to maintain its robust performance across the board in the face of increased and changing demand, due to the ongoing and varying degree of impact of the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in significant changes in how services are delivered. Despite some restrictions being reintroduced Council Services are continuing to provide support to communities most in need but are now focusing more resource on their core work and less on specific pandemic response, which is now being reflected in KBM performance.

2.3 Of the 54 KBMs, 17 are in the remit of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee and at Quarter 3, 16 KBMs are currently available for reporting. The data for the % of Pension Fund Returns Compared to Target KBM was delayed at the time of reporting and not available until January 2022, it will therefore be reported at Year End. At Quarter 3 50% (8) KBMs are On Track and 50% (8) are Not on Track.

2.4 Table 1 below summarises KBM status at Quarter 3 by agreed Outcomes.

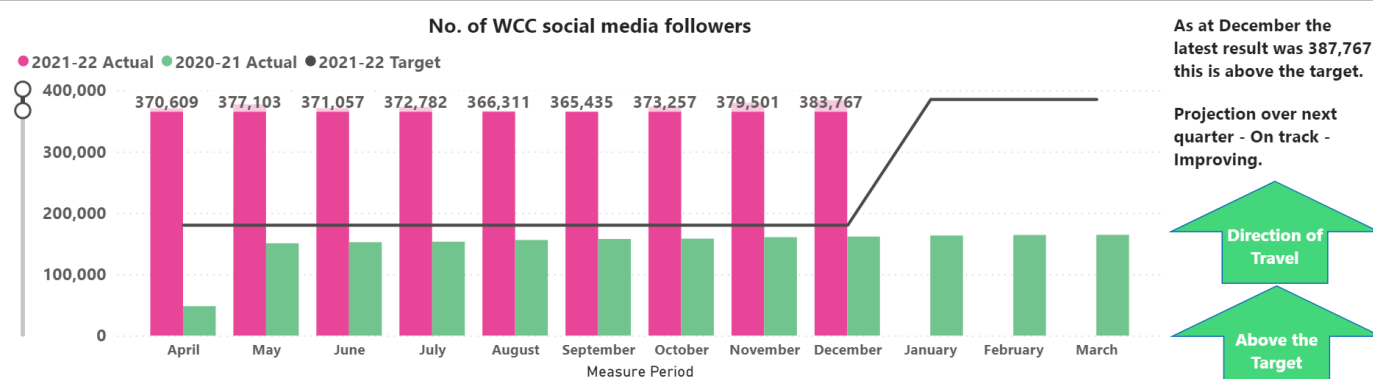
Outcome	Current Status	Number of measures
Warwickshire’s communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent	On Track	0
	Not on Track	3
	Not Applicable	0
Warwickshire’s economy is vibrant and supported by the right jobs, training, skills and infrastructure	On Track	0
	Not on Track	0
	Not Applicable	0
WCC making the best use of its resources	On Track	8
	Not on Track	5
	Not Applicable	1

Table 1

2.5 Of the 50% (8) KBMs which are On Track at Quarter 3, there are 3 of note as Areas of Good Progress which are detailed in Table 2 below:

WCC makes the best use of its resources

No. of WCC social media followers



Current performance:

The number of social media followers continues to exceed targets and, encouragingly, the increase continues at a steady pace.

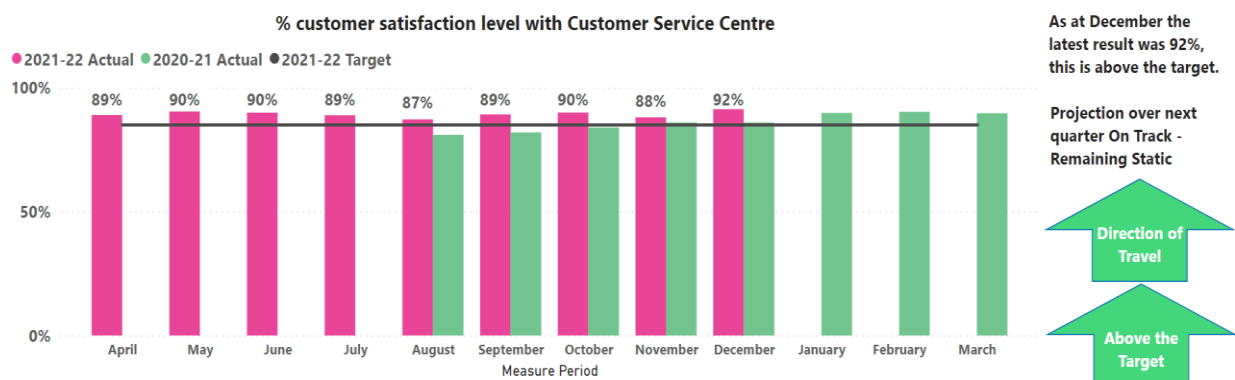
Improvement activity:

The current target of 180,000 has been reviewed and is now set to 385,000.

Explanation of the projection trajectory: On Track - Improving

Given the current performance, modest increase is anticipated.

% customer satisfaction level with Customer Service Centre



Current performance:

During Quarter 3, the Customer Service Centre (CSC) has continued to experience high call volumes. 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, Household Support Fund (welfare support) and Adult Social Care.

Data for this measure is provided via telephone surveys and the customer satisfaction levels continue to remain consistently above target. The December 2021 figure is particularly

encouraging at 92%, especially as this has been at a time when the service has experienced a peak in demand.

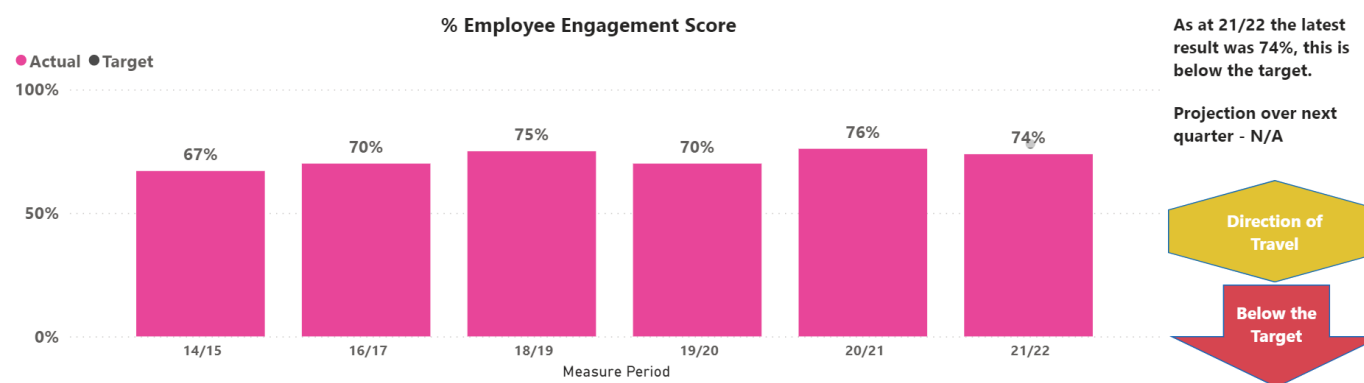
Improvement activity:

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

Explanation of the projection trajectory: On Track - Remaining Static

The CSC is operating from both virtual and office bases and has increased its service offer in response to Covid-19 and customer needs. Despite the increased call volume and challenging circumstances, individual customer feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and this is reflected in this measure and it is expected this will continue to be on or above target going forward.

% Employee Engagement Score (Staff Survey)



Current performance:

The performance is at 74% based on Winter check-in survey results (December 2021) compared with 76% in December 2020. This is a slight decrease compared to last year and the target of 78% whilst still being 4% above the 2019 comparator. Encouragingly there has been an improvement in the scores around line management, notably People Directorate scored highly in this area.

Improvement activity:

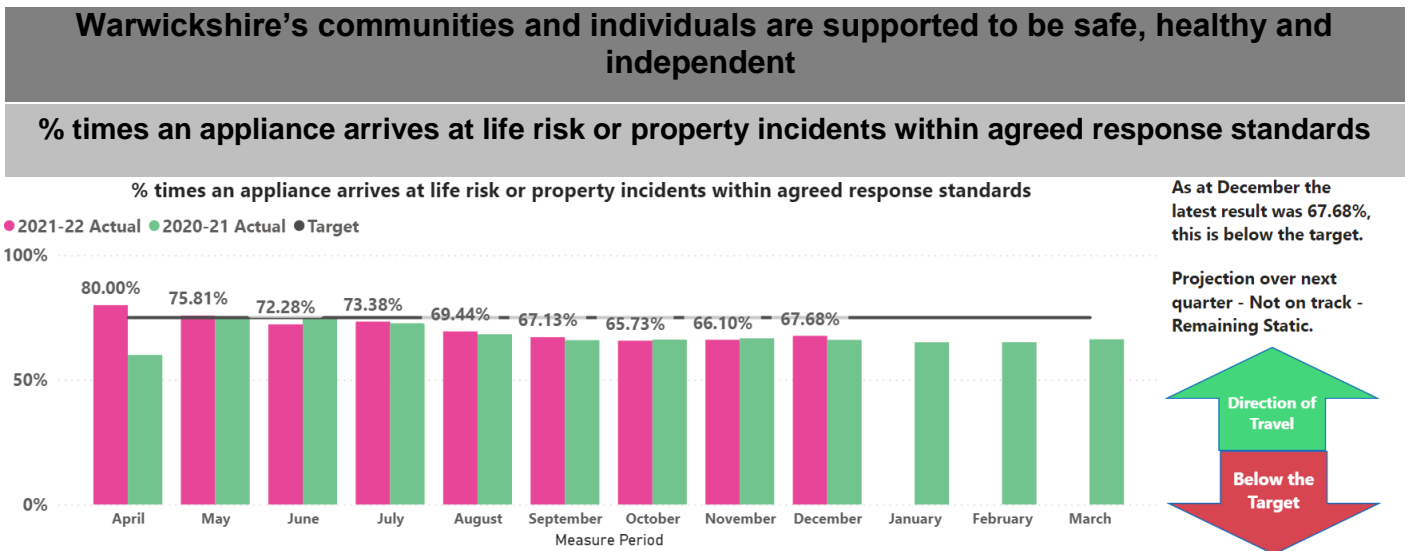
Continued focus on colleague engagement as part of Our People Strategy. A live engagement project is in place to both increase response rates and engagement levels as part of Our People Strategy.

Explanation of the projection trajectory: N/A

The response rate to the December 2021 check in survey was significantly lower than the preceding year and comes at a time when further restrictions were in place as a result of the global pandemic.

Table 2

2.6 Of the 50% (8) KBMs that are Not on Track at Quarter 3, 3 KBMs require highlighting below with details of the current performance narrative, improvement activity and explanation of projected trajectory:



Current performance:

The April to December 2021 figure 67.68% is a slight improvement on the year end 2020/21 figure of 66.05%.

The beginning of a return to normality post-covid has brought an increase in operational activity but no reduction in staff absences due to positive Covid-19 tests or self-isolating. Increased social contact outside of the work environment has increased Covid-19 related absence. The resultant reductions in crewing levels have a direct impact on appliance availability and attendance times.

Improvement activity:

Covid-19 related safety precautions have been reinforced across all fire stations. The Service deploys staff flexibly across duty systems to provide optimum operational crewing at any given time. 20 new wholetime recruits joining the Service by the end of February 2022 should improve wholetime availability. Recruitment and retention of On-Call firefighters is an ongoing and increasingly difficult challenge, reflecting the national picture, and the Service now has a dedicated On-Call support officer looking at options to address this.

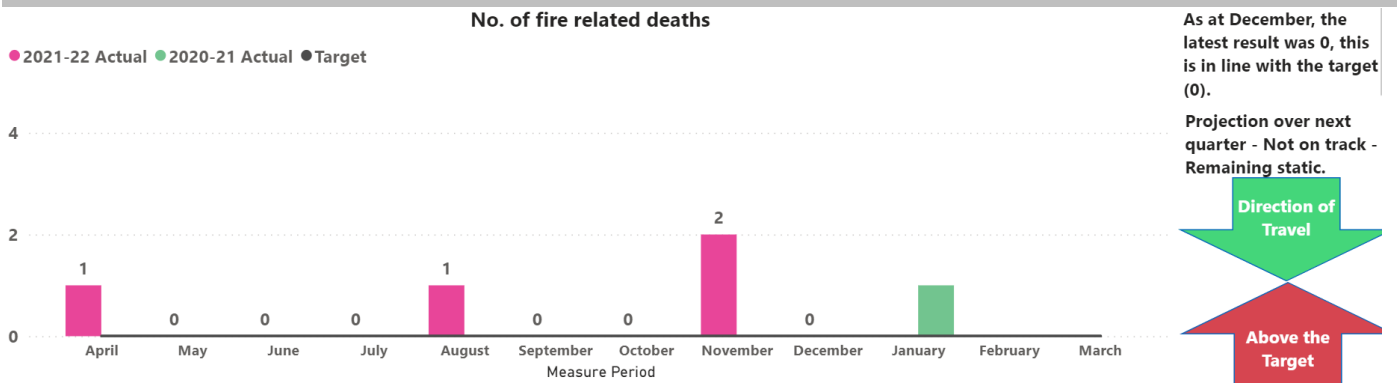
A review has been undertaken of The Service risk profile. This risk profile is being used to drive improvement across the service. A prevention, protection and response strategy has been produced that will ensure that The Service place the right resources in the right place, at the right time against risk. The Integrated Risk Management Plan Assurance Panel is reviewing the targets around response.

Explanation of the projected trajectory: Not on Track - Remaining Static

In the longer term the Service Asset Management Plan sets out the intention to relocate some wholetime 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.

No. of fire related deaths



Current performance:

For the period 1st April to 31st December 2021 there have been 4 fire related deaths, compared to zero in the same period of 2020.

There were 3 suicides by self-immolation, one in April and 2 in November. In August there was a major non-domestic fire incident occurred at the Leasons premises (in Leamington Spa) and is currently under investigation.

Improvement activity:

The Service rigorously investigates every fire related death 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 has joined the multi-agency suicide prevention group to see if any prevention strategies can be deployed.

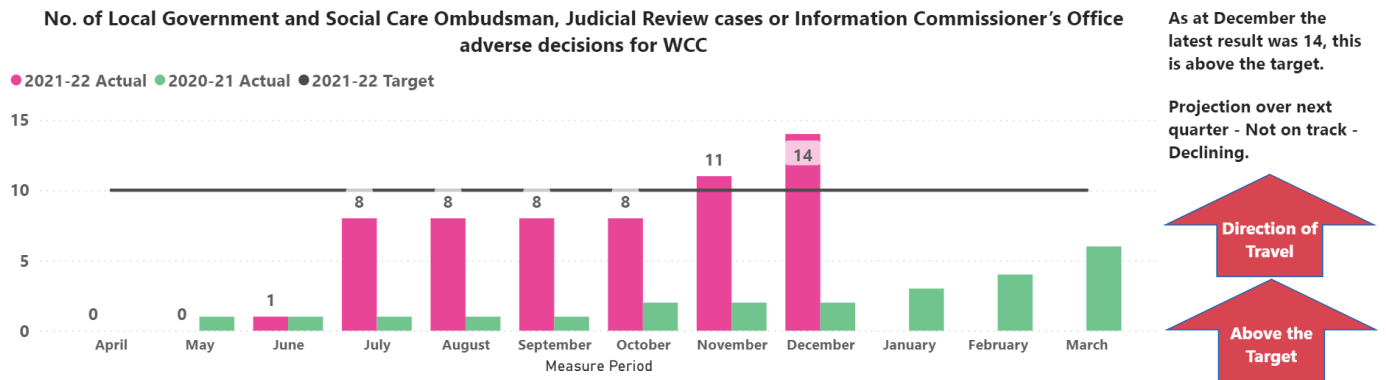
As a result of feedback and recommendation from Her Majesty's Inspectorate Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services all fire related deaths are reported to the Fire Leadership Team and a new Serious Incident Review approach is being designed.

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 identify and address all preventable causal factors to fire deaths.

WCC makes the best use of its resources

No. of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, Judicial Review cases or Information Commissioner's Office adverse decisions for WCC



Current Performance:

After 3 quarters there have been 14 adverse decisions against the Council - 11 upheld Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) decisions and 3 upheld Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) decisions. The target has therefore been exceeded. The impact of Covid-19 both in the context of the Council's ability to respond to complaints and the Ombudsman pausing investigations of complaints has had some impact on the increase in the number of adverse decisions the organisation is seeing this year.

Of the 11 LGSCO upheld decisions, 5 relate to Adult Social Care 3 relate to Education Services and 3 relate to Children & Families. One of the upheld ICO complaint relates to Fire & Rescue and related to a request for information about incident details attended by Fire & Rescue and the Council's initial decision to refuse disclosure. The other 2 upheld ICO complaints were both from the same complainant and were in relation to information requested about village greens. Both complaints were only partly upheld, one because WCC did not respond to the requests for information on time and the other because the ICO found that WCC failed to provide appropriate advice and assistance to the complainant.

One significant current challenge is the response to subject access requests within required timeframes. These requests tend to come from services and often involve very complex cases. Performance has been flagged by the ICO and the Organisation is in dialogue with them. The ICO are satisfied with the steps taken to date and the additional provision in the MTFs approved by Council includes increasing staffing capacity in this area of work. There is an action plan in place to tackle this issue, however, it will take a little time to see improvements, and this could affect the trajectory of ICO cases over coming months.

Improvement activity:

The trajectory for this measure has been significantly impacted by Covid-19, over this year and last. As a result, until the 'hump' of cases has come through the system, it is difficult to improve on the current position as decisions that are likely to be upheld by either the LGSCO or the ICO in the next quarter are already being investigated. However, lessons learned from all upheld complaints are always considered and shared with relevant officers. In addition, provision has been made in the MTFs for additional funding to support services to improve the complaints process. This should have a positive impact in terms of our complaints handling overall and, in particular, the cases progressing to the LGCSO.

Explanation of the projection trajectory: Not on Track – Declining

There are currently a further 11 complaints of which the Council is aware, being investigated by the LGSCO - 3 of these have a draft upheld decision (they relate to Adult Social Care, Education Services and Children & Families). There is also 1 complaint about WCC currently being investigated by the ICO. 4 threats of Judicial Review have also been received although these all appear to be at the pre-action stage and therefore it is unlikely that there will be any final determinations this financial year. Therefore, this measure is projected to decline further over the next reporting period.

Table 3

2.6 Table 4 below illustrates the considered forecast performance projection over the forthcoming reporting period

	On Track			Not on Track			Not Applicable
	Improving	Remaining Static	Declining	Improving	Remaining Static	Declining	
Warwickshire’s communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Warwickshire’s economy is vibrant and supported by the right jobs, training, skills and infrastructure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WCC making the best use of its resources	1	4	1	1	1	2	4

Table 4

2.7 It is forecast that over the next period overall performance will be similar to current performance. Of the 35% (6) of measures reporting On Track, 4 will remain static, 1 is projected to improve and one is forecast to decline, which is:

- Number of days sick leave per FTE (rolling 12 months).

Of the 41% (7) of the measures reporting Not on Track, 4 are projected to remain static, 1 is projected to improve (% General and Directorate Risk Reserves Compared to the Net Revenue Budget) and 2 are forecast to decline:

- % of capital expenditure against budget; and,
- No. of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, Judicial Review cases or Information Commissioner’s Office adverse decisions for WCC.

24% (4) KBMs have a projection status as N/A, 3 of the KBMs are annual and have been reported in this financial year and % of Pension Fund Returns Compared to Target KBM did not have data available at the time of reporting and therefore it was not possible to forecast performance over the next quarter.

2.8 The Pandemic continues to impact on a proportion of these measures leading to delays in programmes of activity and both additional and frequently changing service demands. Improvement activity is in place to improve performance across all measures, and this is under constant review to ensure it is robust. Full context on all measures is provided in the [Power BI report](#).

2.9 The Council is developing a new performance management framework alongside the Council Plan refresh, which aims to provide a sharpened focus on performance and trajectory and will better support delivery of the Organisation’s new priorities as outlined in the refreshed Council Plan. A Member Working Group (MWG) has been supporting the development of the new Framework and Cabinet will receive a full report, including the recommendations from the MWG and the full proposed Performance Management Framework, in March.

3. Financial Commentary

3.1. Revenue Budget

3.1.1. The Council has set the performance threshold in relation to revenue spend as zero overspend and no more than a 2% underspend. The following Table 5 shows the forecast position for the Services concerned.

Service Area	Approved Budget	Service Forecast	(Under) /Over spend	Variation as a % of budget	Change from Q2 forecast	Represented by:				Remaining service variance as a % of budget	Remaining Service Change from Q2 forecast
						Investment Funds	Impact on Earmarked Reserves	Covid Impact	Remaining Service Variance		
	£m	£m	£m	%	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	%	£m
Business and Customer Services	19.051	27.611	8.560	44.93%	3.444	(0.110)	0.085	8.657	(0.072)	(0.38%)	(0.098)
Commissioning Support Unit	7.106	8.589	1.483	20.87%	(1.411)	(0.560)	0	2.271	(0.228)	(3.21%)	(0.165)
Enabling Services	25.577	23.546	(2.031)	(7.94%)	0.236	(0.912)	0.035	0.352	(1.506)	(5.89%)	0.260
Finance	6.336	5.827	(0.509)	(8.03%)	(0.620)	(0.624)	0.083	0.142	(0.110)	(1.74%)	(0.026)
Governance & Policy	2.591	3.821	1.230	47.47%	0.142	0.009	0.015	1.022	0.184	7.10%	0.066
Fire & Rescue	22.249	22.294	0.045	0.20%	(0.108)	0	0.061	0.121	(0.137)	(0.62%)	(0.214)
Total	82.91	91.688	8.778	10.59%	1.683	(2.197)	0.279	12.565	(1.869)	(2.25%)	(0.177)

Table 5

3.1.2. **Business and Customer Services** is forecast to overspend by £8.560m, including £8.657m of covid pressures which is fully funded from Covid grant income. The material aspects of the Covid pressure are attributable to Household Support, New Social Impact Fund & Social Supermarkets, and the Welfare and Critically Extremely Vulnerable Support. After taking account of Covid pressures, the remaining service underspend is £0.072m.

3.1.3. **Commissioning Support Unit** is forecast to overspend by £1.483m at the end of Quarter 3 including £2.271m Covid pressures. Covid pressures will be funded from Covid grant

income. After taking account of Covid related pressures and the impact of Investment/Transformation funds the remaining service variance is an underspend of £0.228m (3.21% underspend), which has increased by £0.163m since Quarter 2 due to delays in recruitment and increased income achieved from rebates on contracts.

3.1.4. **Enabling Services** is reporting an underspend of £2.031m including Covid pressures of £0.352m. Covid pressures will be funded from Covid grant income. After taking account of Covid and the impact of earmarked reserves and Investment/Transformation Funds, the remaining service underspend is £1.506m (5.89% underspend).

The material aspects of the remaining underspend are attributable to the following factors, further details can be found in the Q3 Finance Monitoring report:

- £0.496m underspend across Property Services mainly due to over recovery of income and in year staffing underspends; and
- £0.737m underspend across ICT Strategy and Commissioning due to in-year staff underspends and delays in ICT project activity being limited whilst staff continue to work from home.

3.1.5. **Finance** is reporting an underspend of £0.509m including £0.142m Covid pressure, which will be funded from Covid grant income. The investment funds are forecast to underspend by £0.624m and is due to the reprofiling of the Agresso development programme to allow for completion of the required upgrades before the start of phase 2. After taking account of Covid pressures and the impact of earmarked reserves and Investment/Transformation Funds, the remaining service underspend is £0.110. (1.74% underspend).

3.1.6. **Governance and Policy** is reporting an overspend of £1.230m including £1.022m Covid pressures and will be funded from Covid grant income. After taking account of Covid pressures and the impact of earmarked reserves and Investment/Transformation Funds, the remaining service overspend is £0.184m (7.10% overspend).

3.1.7 **Fire and Rescue Service** is reporting an overspend of £0.045m including £0.121m Covid pressures funded by Covid grant income. After taking into account the impact of Covid and planned movements in reserves the remaining service variation is £0.137m (0.62% underspend).

3.2. Delivery of the Savings Plan

3.2.1. The savings targets and forecast outturn for the Services are shown below in Chart 1:

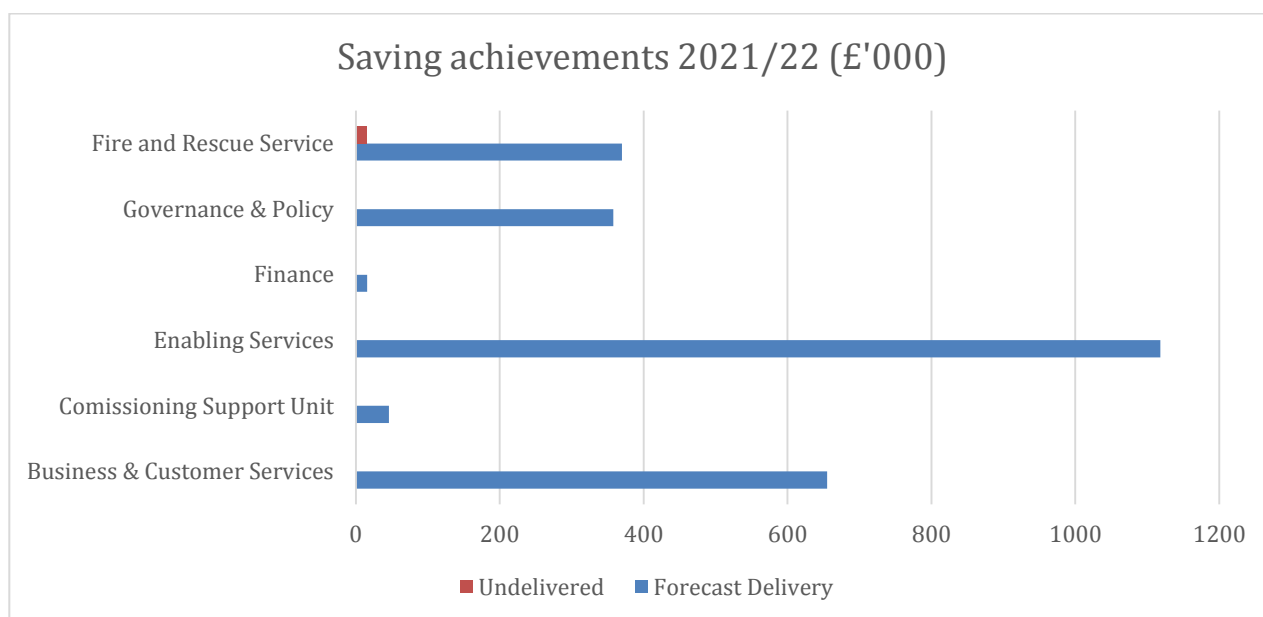


Chart 1

3.2.2. All services are forecasting to deliver their 2021/22 savings except for Fire and Rescue who expected to deliver a shortfall of £0.015m (3.9% of target) due to a delay on the Training capital programme.

3.3. Capital Programme

3.3.1. The Table 6 below shows the approved capital budget for the Services, new schemes and any delays into future years.

Service	Approved	New projects in year	Budget Reprofile	Net over / underspend	Total capital programme	Delays	Forecast In year capital spend	Delays %
	2021-22 capital programme							
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Fire and Rescue	3,902	27	25	-	3,954	-	3,954	0%
Business and Customer Support	471	-	-	-	471	(50)	421	-11%
Enabling Services	20,395	-	87	-	20,482	(1,626)	18,856	-8%
Governance and Policy	2,826	-	(89)	-	2,737	(1,038)	1,699	-37%

Table 6

3.3.2. **Enabling Services** is forecasting a delay of £1.626m, due to the Development of Rural Broadband project (£1.626m). The forecast expenditure on the project has reduced in 2021-22 and is due to national and third-party delays caused by:

- the project working in more rural areas;
- a national shortage of civil engineering contractors;
- revised DCMS guidance regarding finances and project end dates; and

- d) the recent Covid 19 pandemic.

In addition, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has put in place an annual Grant Gainshare clawback process which has resulted in a reduction in the Grant claimed back by DCMS in 2021-22 with the remainder expected to be claimed in yearly requests based upon DCMS's gainshare calculations.

3.3.3. **Governance & Policy** is forecasting a delay of £1.038m caused by:

- a) Strategic Sites planning applications relating to works with asbestos and both removal from structures and site demolition; and
- b) Ecology work (associated with archaeology) relating to Bovine remediation costs rescheduled in financial year 2022-23.

The current economic situation, both nationally and internationally post Covid-19, is likely to have an impact on the delivery of the capital programme in the short to medium term. Inflation, material shortages and supply chain issues are creating uncertainty and a challenging delivery environment.

4. Management of Risk

4.1 Strategic risks were updated and assessed by Corporate Board in January 2022. Those strategic risks owned by Resources Directorate are reported at Appendix A, along with mitigation strategies and an indication of the direction of travel for each risk.

4.2 Resources and WFRS service risk registers were also updated by Assistant Directors and service risk owners in January. The highest rated risks and movements in risk levels are then reported to respective Directorate Leadership Teams for oversight and assurance on mitigation actions. Directorate level risk reporting will continue to evolve in 2022/23, making use of Power BI to report aggregated risk and provide a facility to drill down to risk register information.

4.3 Key Resources risk themes and risks which impact across services, identified from Strategic and Service Risk updates are:

- The impact on financial planning of continued uncertainty about longer term policy, economic and funding forecasts;
- The sustained risk of inflationary pressures and cost of living increases putting pressure on direct costs, service budgets, service continuity and affordability, capital value and investment returns;
- Workforce resilience and impact on service capacity and individual well-being, particularly in customer contact roles; and
- WFRS resource capacity to meet required standards for fire protection and on call availability, following the HMICFRS inspection findings.

5. Supporting Papers

A copy of the full report and supporting documents that went to Cabinet on the 17th February is available via the committee system.

6. Environmental Implications

None specific to this report.

7. Background Papers

Appendix A

<p>Authors:</p>	<p>Vanessa Belton, Delivery Lead Business Intelligence Performance, Planning and Quality vanessabelton@warwickshire.gov.uk Mandeep Kalsi, Performance Officer mandeepkalsi@warwickshire.gov.uk Jane Alsop, Performance Officer janealsop@warwickshire.gov.uk Natalia Szabo, Lead Commissioner Finance Strategy nataliaszabo@warwickshire.gov.uk Lynn Todman, Technical Specialist - Risk Management lynntodman@warwickshire.gov.uk</p>
<p>Assistant Directors</p>	<p>Andrew Felton, Assistant Director Finance andrewfelton@warwickshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Craig Cusack, Assistant Director Enabling Services craigcusack@warwickshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Ben Brook, Chief Fire Officer; benbrook@warwickshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Sarah Stear, Assistant Director Business and Customer Services sarahstear@warwickshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Sarah Duxbury, Assistant Director Governance and Policy sarahduxbury@warwickshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Steve Smith, Assistant Director Commissioning Support Unit stevesmith@warwickshire.gov.uk</p>
<p>Strategic Directors</p>	<p>Mark Ryder, Strategic Director for Communities Markryder@warwickshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Rob Powell, Strategic Director for Resources robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk</p>
<p>Portfolio Holders</p>	<p>Cllr P Butlin, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property cllrbutlin@warwickshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Cllr A Jenns, Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation cllrjenns@warwickshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Cllr A Crump, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Fire & Community Safety andycrump@warwickshire.gov.uk</p>