

Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

27 February 2024

Council Plan 2022-2027 Integrated Performance Report Quarter 3 2023/24

Recommendations

That the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers and comments on the Integrated Performance Report for Quarter 3 2023/24 contained within this Report and Appendices.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a retrospective summary of the Council's performance at the end of Quarter 3 (April - December 2023) against the strategic priorities and Areas of Focus set out in the Council Plan. All information contained within this report has been taken from the Quarter 3 Integrated Performance and Finance reports presented to Cabinet on 15 February 2024. The paper sets out a combined picture of the Council's delivery, performance, HR, and risk:
- performance is assessed against the Key Business Measures (KBMs) contained within the agreed Performance Management Framework (PMF) in Section 2 and [Appendix 1](#);
 - progress against the Integrated Delivery Plan is summarised in Section 3 and more fully presented within [Appendix 2](#);
 - management of Finance is summarised in Section 4 and more fully presented in [Appendix 3](#); and
 - management of Risk is summarised in Section 5 and more detailed information is presented in [Appendix 4](#).
- 1.2 This summary report and the detailed performance appendices provide the complete picture of the Council's performance enabling scrutiny and transparency for the organisation, partners and the public. It enables Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consider performance within their own remits. All Members also have continual access to the Performance Management Framework (PMF) using the [Performance Portal](#) in Power BI to further monitor performance on an ongoing basis.
- 1.3 The approach to strategic performance reporting continues to evolve and reflect the Council's key priorities and pressures. Members will be aware of

the wealth of information and data available at both strategic and service levels. In addition, Government is developing the 'Office for Local Government' (Oflog). As such, the Council's performance framework will continue to evolve, and be streamlined to ensure that Members have the most useful performance data, including reference to Oflog metrics.

1.4 There are key themes that emerged last year that continue to be highlighted by this report, which impact the Council's current operating environment, including:

- increasing demand and costs being reported in Children & Families, Adult Social Care, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Home to School Transport and in the number of applications made through the Local Welfare Scheme.
- in these areas demand is increasing more quickly than resources, creating capacity, workload and delivery challenges; reflecting staff feedback, addressing this is a high priority for the organisation.
- continuing recruitment and retention difficulties in specific service teams including Children and Young People, Social Care and Health, Waste & Environment, Schools, Commercial and Contracts, On-Call firefighters and Planning officers; and
- a small number of services continue to experience specific challenges around staff absence levels particularly Business Support, Customer Contact and Social Care and Health.

Planned improvement activity to address these issues is described in section 4 of the report to Cabinet on 15 February 2024.

1.5 The 2023/24 PMF contains 105 KBMs, 97 of which are available for reporting in Quarter 3. The remaining 8 that are not being reported are all new measures to the PMF and not due for reporting until Year End.

There are 30 KBMs within the remit of this Committee, and 29 of those KBMs are available for reporting this Quarter. Two measures have moved to this Committee from the remit of Resources and Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee this Quarter; the % of Maintained Schools with a Deficit Budget and Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block in year forecast overspend as a % of the in-year High Needs overspend that is expected within the Dedicated Schools Grant Recovery Plan. The remaining 1 measure is a new annual measure due for reporting at Year End.

Table 1 below indicates the current assessment of performance:

Quarter	On Track	Not on Track
1	55.5% (10)	44.6% (8)
2	59.1% (13)	40.9% (9)
3	51.7% (15)	48.3% (14)

Table 1

Table 2 below indicates the Direction of Travel (retrospective comparison), however, please note not all measures have a status e.g. where they are new and there is no previous baseline:

Direction of Travel	On Track			Not on Track		
	Improving	Static	Declining	Improving	Static	Declining
Quarter 1	50%(5)	40%(4)	10%(1)	38%(3)	24%(2)	38%(3)
Quarter 2	45.5%(5)	36.4%(4)	18.2%(2)	22.2%(2)	44.4%(4)	33.3%(3)
Quarter 3	46.2%(6)	38.5%(5)	15.4%(2)	21.4% (3)	38.5%(5)	46.2%(6)

Table 2

Table 3 below indicates the future projection forecast for the next reporting period:

Forecast	On Track			Not on Track		
	Improving	Static	Declining	Improving	Static	Declining
Quarter 1	40%(4)	60%(6)	0%(0)	50%(4)	25%(2)	25%(2)
Quarter 2	15.4%(2)	69.2%(9)	15.4%(2)	55.6%(5)	44.4%(4)	0%(0)
Quarter 3	40%(6)	60%(9)	0	28.6%(4)	35.7%(5)	35.7%(5)

Table 3

- 1.6 At Quarter 3, with a refreshed PMF and based on percentages the overall position is a slight decline on the position at Quarter 2, where 59.1% of KBMs were reported as On Track compared to 51.7% at Quarter 3. Due to annual measures being available and the two measures detailed into 1.5 moving into the remit of this Committee, there are more measures being reported on at Quarter 3 (29) than Quarter 2 (22). This means that there are more On Track measures this Quarter (15) than compared to Quarter 2 (13), showing good

progress in some areas. However, there are also more Not on Track measures this Quarter (14) than compared to Quarter 2 (9). Many of the challenges outlined in 1.4 affect the metrics in this area, and there is a continuing volatile, uncertain, and high-risk operating environment adding challenge. [Appendix 1](#) details information for all measures within the PMF, including reasons why some measures are not being reported. Detailed measure-by-measure performance reporting is accessible through the [Performance Portal](#).

- 1.7 The position is positive in terms of delivery of the 41 actions within the remit of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the Integrated Delivery Plan. 61% are On Track, 22% At Risk or Compromised, 2% not started and a further 15% now completed. It is these actions which are reported on in [Appendix 2](#) on an exception basis.
- 1.8 At the end of Quarter 3 the services that come within the remit of Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee are reporting an unprecedented level of overspend of £12.481m (after the use of earmarked reserves is taken into account) equivalent to 13.3% of its revenue budget. This is primarily driven by and related to two main areas: children's placements (including the Council's own children's homes) and staffing. Savings targets are forecast to be under-achieved by £1.831m whilst 60.5% of the current capital schemes forecasting a delay. The forecast overspend is being addressed with unprecedented seriousness and effort by the Director and the Senior Leadership Team. Details of the forecast as well as the management action included in the Quarter 3 Financial Monitoring report and annexes.
- 1.9 During the preceding periods, a risk working group was convened to review and refresh the strategic risks that face the Council in the pursuit of its priorities. This work has resulted in a smaller number of high-level cross cutting risks being established. In Quarter 3, those risks have been reviewed, refined again and the mitigations updated. Strategic risks which are aligned, but not exclusively, to the work of this committee include:
 - mismatch between demand and resources (high); and
 - being unable to keep children & vulnerable adults safe (medium).
- 1.10 At a more detailed service level, 85 risks are currently being monitored, 15 of which relate to the work of this Committee. Service risks are being reviewed and refreshed across the Council to ensure that they are reflective of the current environment, priorities and plans and to ensure that appropriate mitigations are in place. Further detail relating to strategic and service risks is included in Section 5 below.
- 1.11 There is a wider context that continues to impact all aspects of the Council's work, including industrial action across many sectors, the legacy impact of the pandemic, global conflict, high inflation and interest rates and the resulting fiscal challenges are impacting the communities of Warwickshire. Such a combination of events at a global and national level creates a period of

significant uncertainty and a very challenging financial outlook in the short- to medium-term. This volatility is impacting on the Council's resources, both financial and in terms of recruitment and retention, levels of demand, and uncertainty about medium-term national policy direction in a number of key areas of our work. Performance reporting will continue to track and highlight our delivery and performance and inform prioritisation of activity and resources.

- 1.12 A reprioritisation of the Integrated Delivery Plan (IDP) is underway and a refresh of the PMF will follow for reporting in 2024/25. It is anticipated that both the IDP and the PMF will be simplified to focus on the key priorities ensuring we grip and improve the drivers of cost pressures to maintain service and financial resilience. Service Business Plans and performance measures will evolve to reflect the more strategic approach at Council level.

2 Performance against the Performance Management Framework

- 2.1 The three strategic priorities set out in the Council Plan 2022 - 2027 are delivered through seven Areas of Focus. In addition, there are three further themes that will help the Council to be known as 'a Great Council and Partner'. The full performance summary is contained in [Appendix 1](#).
- 2.2 Comprehensive performance reporting is enabled through the Power BI Performance Portal as part of the Performance Management Framework. Where applicable, some performance figures may now have been updated on the Power BI reporting system. The number of reportable measures will change each quarter as the framework considers the availability of new data.
- 2.3 Of the 29 KBMs which are being reported at Quarter 3, 51.7% (15) are On Track and 48.3% (14) are Not on Track.
- 2.4 Notable aspects of positive performance for specific measures include:
- The % of 3- and 4-year-old children accessing their entitlement to 15 hours per week of government funded early years provision has moved above the target of 96% to 97%. This is in comparison to the estimated national average take up of 94%. This is due to proactive work promoting places and developing new places in line with demand. An increased mix of provision allows more parents to choose the type of provision that they require to meet their families' needs.
 - Warwickshire's latest data on young people participating in education, employment or training is positive. The % of 16 –17-year-olds participating in education and training is 94.5%, compared to a target of the national average, which was 92.3%. Through the Council's support to local areas in monitoring figures and developing the offer for young people it is expected that strong performance in this area will continue over the next year.

2.5 There are a number of performance challenges this Quarter:

- The two measures for the % of in-year applications with a school place offered within the target of 10 school days and within the statutory deadline of 15 school days have both moved to Not on Track, despite being On Track last Quarter. This is due to the necessary use of the Fair Access Protocol leading to timescales being extended in some cases. Every Local Authority must have a Fair Access Protocol which is a mechanism developed by the local authority that aims to ensure that vulnerable children, and those who are having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, are allocated a school place as quickly as possible. It is utilised when suitable places are not available at schools within a reasonable distance (approximately 3 miles or less).
- There is a national upward trend in the percentage of children who are overweight or very overweight in year 6. With 35.2% of all year 6 children being overweight, including obese, Warwickshire was slightly better than the England average of 36.6%. There were disparities in the region, with the highest figures in Warwickshire seen in Nuneaton & Bedworth (40.7%) and North Warwickshire (38.3%). There is a support offer for children in Warwickshire delivered through Health Visiting and the School Health and Wellbeing Services, targeted at high priority families, communities and schools. This includes a pilot offering free school meals using Tackling Social Inequalities Funding to all primary school aged children in Creating Opportunities area schools. Creating Opportunities is Warwickshire County Council's unique brand name used for projects and plans associated with Levelling Up, reducing inequalities, increased social mobility and Community Powered Warwickshire. There is also an enhanced offer of support for high-priority schools (based on Body Mass Index and Indices of Multiple Deprivation scores) through the school health and wellbeing service, Connect for Health's, Healthy Lifestyles offer. It is expected that the impact of Covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis on child activity levels and nutrition will show in the national and regional weight data for several years.
- The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs % overspend compared to DSG recovery plan is at 260.74% and remains a significant challenge due to demand and individual unit costs continuing to rise above expectations, and the wider national systemic issues relating to SEND. There are a variety of contributing reasons including increased expenditure on Special Schools top up funding, Independent School places and Alternative Provision. Although the Council continues to work with the Department for Education on the Delivering Better Value programme to mitigate this risk, it is highly unlikely it will prevent growing long-term overspends in the absence of a fundamental national solution to the SEND system and its funding.
- Another broader area of challenge is the 'Deliver our Child Friendly Warwickshire strategy - Happy, healthy, safe children' Area of Focus. This has been highlighted at every Quarter in the 2023/24 reporting year, and

this Quarter 6 of the 7 measures in the area are Not on Track. This follows a period of previously improving performance related to numbers of Children in Care and those with an open Child in Need category over the 2022/23 reporting year. The decline in performance can be attributed to an increase in demand from people requesting and accessing services within the period due to the cost-of-living crisis, alongside rising numbers of teenagers with social, emotional and mental health needs. This increased demand is expected to continue. This has resulted in a rise in caseloads for some key teams. It should be noted that targets have been reviewed this year and are more challenging.

- 2.6 For 27 of the reported measures there is enough trend data available to ascertain a Direction of Travel. For the measures that are On Track and with enough trend data to show a Direction of Travel the majority (84.6%) of which are either improving or static. For the measures that are Not on Track with a Direction of Travel the majority (78.6%) are either static or declining (see table 2).
- 2.7 All 29 reported KBMs have a forecast projection from the responsible service for the forthcoming period (see table 3). Of the measures that are forecast to be On Track at Year End, the majority at 60% (9) are forecast to remain static, with the remainder (40% or 6 measures) forecast to improve. Of those that are forecast to be Not on Track, there is an almost even split between declining (5), static (5) and improving (4) performance.

Of those that are forecast to be Not on Track, the following are forecast to decline further at the next reporting period, and full details can be found within [Appendix 1](#) and the [Performance Portal](#):

- % of in year applications that have a school place offered within the target deadline of 10 school days;
 - % of in year applications that have a school place offered within the statutory deadline of 15 school days;
 - % of Year 6 children (aged 10-11 years) who are overweight including obese;
 - Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block (HNB) in year forecast % overspend compared to the DSG Recovery Plan; and
 - % of Maintained Schools with a Deficit Budget.
- 2.8 A set of high-level, cross-cutting, long-term Warwickshire Outcome Measures, which the Council can influence but is not solely responsible for, are reported in a State of Warwickshire reporting dashboard, which includes Levelling Up and Cost-of-Living metrics. A summary position will be included in the Year End Integrated Performance Report.

3 Progress against the Integrated Delivery Plan

- 3.1 The Integrated Delivery Plan aligns priority activity from across all service areas to the agreed Areas of Focus within the Council Plan 2022-27. The plan

shows how activity across services collectively contributes to delivering these priorities.

- 3.2 Detailed information on the performance summary of the Integrated Delivery Plan is included at [Appendix 2](#). A new Power BI reporting dashboard is now available and will enable Members to track progress by Service, status, Council Plan Area of Focus, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Portfolio Holder.
- 3.3 Of the 190 actions within the Integrated Delivery Plan, 41 are attributable to the Children’s Social Care OSC. At the end of this Quarter 61% of activities are On Track to achieve their objectives within the set timeframes. Seven percent of activities are At Risk, 15% are Compromised, 2% not started and a further 15% have now been Completed. Exceptions are covered in [Appendix 2](#).

4. Management of Finance

- 4.1 The key metrics of financial management are summarised below with further information available in [Appendix 3](#) and in the Quarter 3 Finance Monitoring Report presented to Cabinet on 23rd January 2024.
- 4.2 The headline revenue forecast reported the end of the third quarter is £14.179m (15.1%), however, once funding has been transferred from earmarked reserves, the adjusted remaining service variance is £12.481m (13.3%).

Metric	Target	Service	Performance at Q3 2023/24
Performance against the latest approved revenue budget as measured by forecast under/overspend	On budget or no more than 2% underspent	Children & Families	14.9% overspend
		Education – Non-DSG	0.40% overspend
Performance against the approved savings target as measured by forecast under/overachievement	100%	Children & Families	37.0%
		Education – Non-DSG	71.8%
Performance against the approved capital programme as measured by forecast delays in delivery	No more than 5% delay		-4.8%

5 Management of Risk

- 5.1 Over the preceding months, a risk management working group was established to consider strategic risks and elements of the Strategic Risk Management Framework (the Framework). The working group proposed a smaller number of high-level cross cutting strategic risks, which were agreed by Corporate Board as part of the Q2 risk review process. During Q3, adjustments have been made to the strategic risks to primarily refine and enhance the mitigations.
- 5.2 Risks are monitored in risk registers at a strategic level and at service level. At a strategic level the following risks are more related to the work of this committee, whilst also being relevant for other Overview & Scrutiny Committees:
- mismatch between demand and resources (high); and
 - being unable to keep children & vulnerable adults safe (medium).
- 5.3 Mitigating controls are in place in respect of this risk and include the Council Plan, which has driven priority initiatives. An associated Council Delivery Plan is being developed to operate from April 2024 replacing the Integrated Delivery Plan. A Children & Families Service Plan, inter-agency guidance in line with statutory duties and a multi-agency training plan to help ensure sound arrangements to protect children are in place. A Children & Families continuous improvement plan is being developed to enhance progress.
- 5.4 At a service level, there are 15 risks recorded against services relating to Children and Families and Education Services. This report is aimed at highlighting any key risks at service level and specifically where risks are red (high risk) and the risk level has been higher than the risk target for 3 quarters or more and currently three points or more above target. There are currently no such risks. To highlight the key risks, a table of both red risks and amber risks above target is provided at [Appendix 4](#).
- 5.5 There is one risk that is red: Increased demand on statutory services within SEND linked to the High Needs Block, which is being monitored and the controls updated as necessary. The Council is participating in the Department for Education programme Delivering Better Value and this shows a year by year increase in demand through the next five years with more children being placed in specialist provision, with the schools struggling to meet the need and the expectation is that unit costs will rise. The Council has applied for grant funding to take action to help mitigate this, will continue to lobby Government officials and expansion to two special schools has been agreed by Cabinet and is to be implemented by September 2024 and September 2025 respectively.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 None arising directly from this report.

7 Environmental Implications

7.1 None arising directly from this report.

Appendices

[Appendix 1 – Quarterly Performance Report](#)

[Appendix 2 – Progress on the Integrated Delivery Plan](#)

[Appendix 3 – Management of Financial Risk](#)

[Appendix 4 – Management of Risk](#)

Background Papers

Cabinet Report 15 February 2024

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