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13 October 2023

Dear Councillor,

Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee
6:00pm, Tuesday 24 October 2023
Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Cannock

You are invited to attend this meeting for consideration of the matters itemised in the following Agenda.

Yours sincerely,

T. Clegg
Chief Executive

To: Councillors:

Aston, J. (Chair)
Johnson, J.P. (Vice-Chair)

Bancroft, J.T.	Jones, P.G.C.
Boulton, C.	Lyons, N.
Boyer, M.	Mawle, D.
Frew, C.L.	Sutherland, M.
Hill, J.	Wilson, L.J.
Johnson, P.	

Agenda

Part 1

1. **Apologies**

2. **Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members**

   (i) To declare any interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct and any possible contraventions under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

   (ii) To receive any Party Whip declarations.

3. **Minutes**

   To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2023 (enclosed).

4. **Quarter 1 Performance Report 2023/24**

   To receive the quarter 1 2023/24 performance information for the Responsible Council Priority Delivery Plan (Item 4.1 - 4.10).

   The documents included are as considered by Cabinet on 14 September 2023.

5. **Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24**

   To note the updated work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year (Item 5.1).

Cannock Chase Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the

Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee

Held on Monday 10 July 2023 at 6:00pm

In the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Cannock

Part 1

Present: Councillors

Aston, J. (Chair)
Johnson, J.P. (Vice-Chair)

Bancroft, J.T.	Jones, P.G.C.
Boulton, C.	Lyons, N.
Boyer, M.	Mawle, D.
Frew, C.L.	Sutherland, M.
Hill, J.	Wilson, L.J.
Johnson, P.	

1. **Apologies**

None received.

2. **Declarations of Interest of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restrictions on Voting by Members and Party Whip Declarations**

No declarations of interests or party whip declarations were received.

3. **Minutes**

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2023 be approved.

4. **Introduction to the Role of the Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee**

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Transformation & Assurance that covered: support for the committee; background; purpose of scrutiny and effective scrutiny; committee's role and remit; work programme and examples of work scrutiny; and undertaking a review.

5. **End of Year Performance 2022/23**

Consideration was given to the end of year performance information for the Responsible Council Priority Delivery Plan 2022/23 (Item 5.1 - 5.13) *(presented by the Head of Transformation & Assurance).*

The Head of Transformation & Assurance reported that overall performance for the responsible council priority delivery plan was positive, with eight of the thirteen actions having either been completed or were on target. The five remaining actions had slippage of less than three months, the reasons for which were set out in the report.

The Head of Transformation & Assurance then further reported that in respect of the key performance indicators for the responsible council priority, four had exceeded target and four were below target.

In response to a query from a Member as to current levels of absenteeism, the Head of Transformation & Assurance advised this would need to be checked with HR and reported separately. Linked to this however there was a need for leadership team to review how such information was collated and reported corporately, particularly with the move to wider shared services. It was acknowledged that some services had an aging workforce and saw higher levels of absence rates, but in most cases, absences were short term issues.

In response to a query from a Member regarding the lack of improvement in the turnaround time for land charges searches, the Head of Transformation & Assurance advised that this was largely outside of this Council's control as it was a County Council issue. Added to this, the target figure was nationally set. Furthermore, there was an ongoing national project for land charges services to be transferred to the Land Registry, but this had progressed slower than originally envisaged.

In response to a comment from another Member concerning scrutiny input into the medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) for the forthcoming year, the Head of Transformation & Assurance advised that this report provided a year-end focus for 2022/23 and an update for quarter 1 2023/24 would be provided at the next meeting as that quarter had only finished at the end of June.

In response to a query from the same Member as to when the hybrid working trial would conclude, the Head of Transformation & Assurance advised that this had been delayed due to capacity issues within HR, but it was hoped progress would be made within the next month or so.

6. **Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Transformation & Assurance (Item 6.1 - 6.13).

The Head of Transformation & Assurance provided an overview of the report, noting the key section for Members' consideration was the draft work programme included at appendix 4.

A Member noted that in respect of the task & finish groups established last year (customer contact and the new civic hub), their work had not concluded, but demonstrations of the new customer portal and website would be interesting to see as they were important for the accessibility of the Council going forward. The Head of Transformation & Assurance noted that in respect of the customer contact review, it had not been possible to progress this work due to capacity issues, but Members could be given an update presentation on this.

In response to a comment from a Member regarding the lack of inclusion of the MTFS in the draft work programme (other than for the budget consultation meeting), the Head of Transformation & Assurance advised that the Committee received quarterly updates as part of the performance reports, and constitutionally, this scrutiny committee was the only one consulted on the budget each year. Furthermore, production of budget monitoring reports had been impacted by the implementation of the new finance system, but it was hoped in future to be able to present this committee with financial information alongside the performance updates.

Another Member commented that they wanted the Amazon Rugeley closure prioritised as an issue for review given its potential impact on the Council's finances, and queried whether if an emergency budget was discussed, it would be appropriate for this committee to undertake pre-budget scrutiny. In response, the Head of Transformation & Assurance advised it would be down to timing, but also a need to identify the material impact on the budget alongside finalising the 2022/23 accounts to have a clearer understanding of the Council's financial position.

Another Member noted that for the Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee, one of the suggested work programme items was the Amazon closure, specifically its impact on workers and the community and what help could be provided to those affected.

A Member asked that inclusivity of the Council be a suggested review topic, focused on accessibility, diversity, sexuality etc. in terms of what the Council does and its wider community impact. Included within this would be whether the Council's equality & diversity policy and equality impact assessments were fit for purpose and needed reviewing. The Head of Transformation & Assurance advised that the current equality & diversity policy was in the last year of its cycle so was due for review anyway.

Another Member noted that linked to this, the provision of equality & diversity training had previously been raised with the head of service. The Head of Transformation & Assurance advised that was still on the list to be looked at, but it was suggested that the overarching policy be reviewed first and then training developed in line with the refreshed policy document.

Resolved:

That the following review topics be agreed for the Committee's 2023/24 work programme:

(A) Hybrid working (continuation of previous review).

(B) Updated presentation on customer contact / access.

(C) Medium-term financial strategy update presentation.

(D) Digital strategy presentation.

(E) Demonstrations of the new customer portal and the new Council website.

(F) Inclusivity of the Council.

The meeting closed at 6:42 p.m.

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Chair

Report of:	Head of Transformation and Assurance
Contact Officer:	Adrian Marklew
Contact Number:	01543 464 598
Portfolio Leader:	Resources & Transformation
Key Decision:	No
Report Track:	Cabinet: 14/09/23

Cabinet

14 September 2023

Quarter 1 Performance Report 2023/24

1	Purpose of Report

1.1   To advise Members on the progress of the Priority Delivery Plans (PDPs) and Council's performance at the end of the first quarter of 2023-24.

2	Recommendation(s)

2.1   To note the progress at the end of the first quarter relating to the delivery of the Council's priorities as detailed at Appendices 1a-1d and the performance information set out at Appendix 2.

3	Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations

Key Issues

3.1   The Priority Delivery Plans set out the key projects and actions for delivery in 2023/24. These are based on the Corporate Plan 2022-26 and the supporting four-year delivery plans.

3.2   Overall, 65% of the projects have been delivered or are on schedule to be completed. Progress in delivering the PDPs is summarised in section 5 of the report and set out in detail in Appendices 1a to 1d.

3.3   With regard to the operational performance of the key services of the Council, 83% of targets have been met or exceeded. Further details can be found at 5.7 and in Appendix 2.

Reasons for Recommendations

3.3 The performance information allows Cabinet to monitor progress in delivery of the Council's corporate priorities and operational services.

4	**Relationship to Corporate Priorities**

4.1 The indicators and actions contribute individually to the Council's priorities and objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan 2022-26.

5	**Report Detail**

5.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2022-26 was approved by Council on 27 April 2022, setting out the priorities and strategic objectives. The supporting four-year delivery plans were approved on 16 November 2022.

5.2 The Priority Delivery Plans (PDPs) set out in Appendices 1a to 1d to this report are the annual documents that set out how the Council will achieve progress against its strategic objectives; these plans establish the actions and timetable for delivery that are the basis of the Council's performance reporting framework.

5.3 In addition to the PDPs, performance is also reported against the delivery of key operational services; Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for these services are set out in Appendix 2.

5.4 Where applicable, we will also report on new or additional duties undertaken by the Council during the quarter, as part of this report.

Priority Delivery Plans

5.5 A commentary on performance and a rating for each of the projects/actions set out in the PDPs is given in Appendices 1a-1d. A summary of progress, by rating, is given in the table below.

Corporate Plan Priority	★	✓	△	✗	N/A	Total Number of Projects
	Action completed	Work on target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	Work not yet due to be started	
Economic Prosperity	1	16	2		1	**20**
Health and Wellbeing	1	9	1	0	5	**16**
Community		8		2	8	**18**
Responsible Council		9	4			**13**
Total	**2**	**42**	**7**	**2**	**14**	**67**

5.6   At the end of quarter 1, of the 67 actions planned for delivery in 2023/24:

- 3% have been completed;
- 63% are on target to be completed;
- 10% have slipped slightly;
- 3% are more than 3 months behind schedule; and
- 21% are not yet due.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

5.7   A dashboard of key performance indicators for the Council's operational services is set out in Appendix 2. In summary:

- 10 indicators show performance above target (55%):
- 5 indicators show performance on target (28%); and
- 3 indicators show performance below target (17%)

The reasons for underperformance and the corrective action to be taken is set out in Appendix 2.

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6   Implications

6.1   **Financial**

There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

The financial management of the PDPs is standard in accordance with Financial Regulations and any measure to address a performance shortfall as reflected in a PDP report will require compensatory savings to be identified in the current year and be referred to the budget process for additional resources in future years.

6.2   **Legal**

None

6.3   **Human Resources**

None

6.4   **Risk Management**

The Council's Strategic Risk Register sets out the risks the Council faces in delivering its priorities.

6.5   **Equality & Diversity**

Equality and diversity matters are addressed in individual services areas and by undertaking equality impact assessments for projects and programmes of work where this is necessary and appropriate.

6.6   **Climate Change**

There are specific objectives within all of the priority areas which address the challenge of climate change.

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7   Appendices to the Report

Appendix 1d: Responsible Council PDP

Appendix 2:   Key Performance Indicators

Previous Consideration

None

Background Papers

Corporate Plan 2022-26 - Council 27 April 2022

4-Year Delivery Plans 2022-26 - Cabinet 15 September 2022

Priority Delivery Plan for 2023-24

PRIORITY 4 - RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL "To be a modern, forward thinking and responsible Council"

Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 1

★	✔	🔺	❌	N/A	**Total Number of Projects**
Action completed	Work on target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	Action not yet due	
	9	4			13

Summary of Successes as at Quarter 1

The foundations for sharing services with Stafford Borough Council are being established with the legal arrangements first to be put into place. A joint Leadership Team has been established and there is just one post, pending recruitment, to be filled. There is still further work needed regarding the managers' structure and to bring teams together. A transformation strategy is being prepared which will provide a framework for the work needed over the next 2-3 years.

 Good progress is being made in setting up the new customer portal.

Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 1

There has been some minor slippage on the IT strategy. Whilst it has been drafted, it is undergoing a review prior to it being considered by Leadership Team and Cabinet for approval.

With regard to the trial of the hybrid working, a survey has been undertaken and the results are to be reported to Leadership Team in Quarter 2. In the meantime, the trial is continuing to operate.

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
Improve our customers' access to services							
Develop a new customer portal to deliver better access to services online	Implementation of new system - Phase 1		X			The new system is currently being built and is due to go live later in the year. A small number of e-forms are being created as part of the first phase to allow us to test and develop the system. The focus is on those forms that have the highest usage.	✔️
	Development of new e-forms and processes - Phase 2			X	X	A plan is being developed for Phase 2.	✔️
Enhance the use of technology and new ways of working							
Update our digital technology strategy and plan future improvements	Review of digital strategy and development of action plan	X				A digital strategy has been drafted and is currently being reviewed prior to it going to Leadership Team and Cabinet for approval.	🔺
Develop our workforce to ensure they are suitably skilled							
Develop and deliver a workforce plan	Overarching framework for workforce plan to be developed		X			Work has not yet commenced on this and is now likely to be delayed to later in the year. The vision and culture work for the organisation needs to be completed first	🔺
	Review of the trial of the hybrid working model and policy development	X				A survey has been undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the trial of hybrid working. The results of this will be reported to Leadership Team in Q2.	🔺

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
Be a responsible Council that lives within its means and is accountable for its actions							
Set a Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	• A rolling MTFS produced each year	X	X	X	X	While the budget is legally set in February/early March the process is ongoing throughout the year. At present, work is ongoing to assess the results of the outturn position and use this information to inform budget setting which is anticipated to begin in September.	✔
	• Delivery of savings for the budgets for 23/24 and 24/25	X	X	X	X	These are currently under review, informed by the outturn position. Due to challenges with the system effective quarterly monitoring has not yet been possible. The system is now in place and savings reporting is anticipated to begin in Q2. The current delivery will then inform future savings needs/delivery as many of the savings identified are permanent reductions in base budget need.	✔
	• Implementation and transformation of shared services, including the delivery of savings	X	X	X	X	The governance arrangements for sharing services with Stafford Borough Council have been put in place and a joint Leadership Team has been established. A transformation strategy is being developed.	✔

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
Make the best use of our assets							
Undertake a corporate wide review of our assets and develop a new Asset Strategy	• Undertake a programme of strategic review of the Council's non-HRA land and property assets	X	X			Through the Asset Management Group asset reviews are now starting to progress. This will now be an ongoing process.	✔
	• Develop the business case to create a new Civic Hub in Cannock town centre as part of the Levelling Up Fund scheme		X			Business case and RIBA 1 design work currently being finalised.	✔
Identify opportunities for funding for green initiatives to improve energy efficiency of our buildings	• Develop an Energy Management Strategy	X				An Energy Management Strategy has been drafted and is under the consideration of LT.	🔺
	• Develop asset management plans			X	X	Asset Management plans will be developed off the back of the asset review process (see above). This will now be an ongoing exercise.	✔
	• Identify `green` funding opportunities to support asset requirements	X	X	X	X	Initial research into opportunities for green funding has been undertaken. Current funding opportunities tend to have restricted bidding windows and hence for a funding application to be successful, a project will need to be already developed and specified, ready for submission at the requisite time.	✔

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2023/24 - as at end of Quarter 1

KPIs for Priority 4 - The Council

Indicator	Target	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year	Symbol	Comments
Local Taxation and Benefits								
Days taken to process new HB/CT Claims	20 days	37.6					❌	A backlog has arisen due to a recent turnover in staff, at our busiest time. 4 FTE new recruits have recently been identified and will go through the pre-employment process and then be trained. This process will require some time before performance returns to target level but agency support is also being applied to clear this so that the whole year average can achieve target.
Days taken to process new HB/CT change of circumstances	9 days	8.3					⭐	Performance remains on target notwithstanding the high levels of staff turnover.
% of Council Tax collected annually	98% by year end	28.0%					✔️	Whilst not yet back to pre-pandemic levels, in-year recovery is improving. Prior year arrears needs more attention.
% National non-domestic rates (NNDR) collected	98% by year end	25.7%					✔️	Whilst not yet back to pre-pandemic levels, in-year recovery is improving. Prior year arrears needs more attention.

Indicator	Target	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year	Symbol	Comments
Land Charges Searches								
Turnaround time for land charges searches (excluding personal searches) – average no. of working days	10 working days	12.54					❌	Performance has improved considerably compared to last year's average of 22.64 days. The resourcing issues at the County Council have been addressed; however we have experienced some technical issues accessing the data from their system following an upgrade.
Calls, Complaints and FOI requests								
% of calls answered	94%	94.9%					⭐	
Average call wait time	2 min	1.02min					⭐	
Complaints received and upheld: **Total stage 1 complaints** *Upheld in full* *Upheld in part* **Total stage 2 complaints** *Upheld in full* *Upheld in part*		15 3 0 3 0 1						
FOI requests within time i.e. 20 working days	85%	89%					⭐	

Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee
24 October 2023
Work Programme for 2023-24

Meeting Date	Agenda Items
10 July 2023	• End of Year Performance Report for 2022-23 for the Responsible Council PDP • Determine Review Programme for 2023-24
24 October 2023 *(was 13 September 2023)*	• Responsible Council PDP – Qtr 1 Progress Report April to June 2023 • **Demonstration of New Customer Portal**
11 December 2023	• Responsible Council PDP – Qtr 2 Progress Report July to September 2023 • **Demonstration of New Website**
23 January 2024	This meeting is for consultation on the budget / financial strategy only **(to include update presentation on the medium-term financial strategy)**
12 March 2024	• Responsible Council PDP – Qtr 3 Progress Report October to December 2023 • **Inclusivity of the Council**

Other agreed review / briefing items with dates to be confirmed:

• Hybrid working (continuation from previous review)

• Presentation on Digital Strategy

• Update presentation on customer contact / access