

## **Meeting of the Corporate and Economic Strategy Select Committee**

**Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2024 at 6.00pm**  
**In Committee Room 3, The Council House, Priory Road,**  
**Dudley**

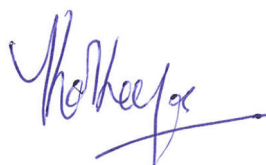
### **Agenda – Public Session** **(Meeting open to the public and press)**

1. Apologies for absence
2. To report the appointment of any substitute members serving for this meeting of the Committee
3. To receive any declarations of interest under the Members' Code of Conduct
4. To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2023 as a correct record (Pages 4 – 19)
5. Public Forum
6. Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension Delivery Update Presentation (Pages 20 – 33)
7. Progress on Major Regeneration Projects (Pages 34 – 52)
8. Corporate Quarterly Performance Report – Quarter 2 (1<sup>st</sup> July – 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2023) (Pages 53 – 91)
9. Corporate and Economic Strategy Select Committee Progress Tracker and Future Business (Pages 92 - 95)

10. To consider any questions from Members to the Chair where two clear days notice has been given to the Monitoring Officer (Council Procedure Rule 11.8)

**Distribution:**

Councillor D Stanley (Chair)  
Councillor S Henley (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors C Eccles, J Foster, A Hopwood, L Johnson, E Lawrence, S Mughal, N Neale, T Russon and P Sahota.



**Chief Executive**

**Dated: 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2024**

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## **Minutes of the Corporate and Economic Strategy Select Committee**

**Thursday, 2nd November 2023 at 6.00 pm  
In Committee Room 2, The Council House, Dudley.**

### **Present:**

Councillor D Stanley (Chair)  
Councillor S Henley (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors J Foster, E Lawrence, W Little, S Mughal, N Neale, C Reid, and P Sahota

### **Officers:**

C Blunn (Corporate Performance Manager), F Parrett (Head of Commercial) S Haycox (Corporate Performance Support) and K Buckle (Democratic Services Officer).

### **Invitee:**

P Atkins (Cabinet Member for Corporate Strategy)

### **Also in Attendance:**

M James (Commercial Manager) - Observer

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### **26 Opening Remarks of the Chair**

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting including those Councillors that had recently been appointed to the Committee and those who were substituting for absent Members.

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27 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors C Eccles and A Hopwood.

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28 **Appointment of Substitute Members**

It was noted that Councillors C Reid and W Little had been appointed to serve as a substitute Members for Councillors C Eccles and A Hopwood respectively for this meeting of the Committee only.

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29 **Declarations of Interest**

No member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

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30 **Minutes**

Councillor J Foster referred to Minute number 20 – Stalled Sites – Strategies for bringing back into use privately owned vacant land and property – Members questions referring to paragraph n) advising that the training had been requested for all Members with the training requested being in relation to neglected and stalled sites, although it was agreed that previous training had been more suitable for officers than members.

The same Councillor referred to Minute number 21 – Consultation Process Review across the Authority – this paragraph under e) – line four stating that the word majority should be replaced with the word many as she was only aware of the community groups that had been targeted within her Ward.

**Resolved**

That subject to the amendments referred to above the minutes of the meetings held on 30<sup>th</sup> August and 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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31 **Public Forum**

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

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## 32 **Commercial Strategy**

A report of the Director of Digital, Customer and Commercial Services was submitted to provide an update on the commercial strategy, core commercial activity and key projects and to assure the Committee on the value of the work undertaken by the Commercial team.

The Head of Commercial gave a detailed presentation to the Committee and in doing so referred to the objectives of the strategy, the definition of commercial activity in Dudley, the aligned values to the values of the organisation and the volume of commercial services that were supported by a team delivering core commercial functions.

It was reported that the team was small and as a result had to prioritise their activity with a clear set of priorities that could include introducing new services, changing offers, the commercial approach or ceasing services. There was the need for the Authority to deliver services effectively and at the same time operate as a business.

It was noted that Regeneration and Enterprise generated 60% of commercial income during 2022/23 and schools were the key commercial customers generating 38% of the commercial income for the same period.

Work was also underway with the Council's Communications and Public Affairs team in relation to the Himley Hall bonfire, advertising space income, town centre rentals and the Mayoral Business Club.

The Directorate Plan actions, objectives and key performance indicators (KPI's) for 2023/24 were outlined and it was noted that the KPI's had been met last year and were on target to be met this year.

A graph was displayed containing those services that had potential growth, those that were in deficit, profitability and surplus and it was reported that working with services to increase profitability was taking place and there was a real shift in focus leading to improved governance, profitability, and accountability.

The challenges that were faced included resistance from service areas when officers may not have adequately briefed members on the impact of commercial decisions. The Finance structure and methodology did not allow the easy access to the profitability of a service meaning additional resource to manage this. A lack of an overarching effective commercial approach requiring investment in systems, resources, and customer communications.

The speed of responses with the need to react quickly in a challenging Council environment was required and work was being conducted with officers to enable them to make decisions through the appropriate governance process.

Core commercial activity to date was referred to with baseline financially sustainable work continuing with finance and service areas where budgets were agreed collectively.

There was a review of the pricing strategy across the organisation. Collaborative decision making to achieve the maximum revenue that customers could sustain continued with this impacting on the excess of £700k being achieved in 2023/24 with regards to Regeneration and Enterprise.

It was reported that following commercial initiatives and interventions successes had followed with the launch of Connect2Dudley on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022, with drivers to grow income, reduce recruitment costs and improve the quality of agency staff which had resulted in a forecasted surplus of £240k by year five ahead of schedule in April 2023.

The agreement to invest £0.5m in a play area facility at Himley Hall, bringing additional customers and revenue to the site with a forecasted cumulative surplus of £582k by year five.

The agreement to invest £0.65m at Dudley Town Hall, improving the venue and the offer, increasing the number of events, footfall and secondary spend.

The price revenue in Telecare with a potential increase of £600k in income per year from 2023/24.

Working closely with schools continued with a good retention policy.

Himley bonfire would be in profit this year following work with Communications and Public Affairs.

The deliverable income forecasted for 2023/24 was £2m and £3m for 2024/25.

Following the school meals review, project management of the closure of the service to time and to budget driving forward activity to ensure agreed savings were delivered.

There was the plan for the cessation of the Digital Grid for Learning from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025, alongside technology colleagues who would be developing a new commercially viable offer to schools.

Working with 322 schools on the delivery of 68 services continued with work to retain as much profitable business as possible.

Monitoring performance, setting clear targets, and taking action to improve sales continued at the Leisure Centres, Himley Hall, Town Halls and Brooke's Bistro.

Difficult decisions were made in relation to school meals due to the deterioration in finances, with 37% of schools moving to new providers. There was a £1.1m subsidy for school meals during the current financial year and a £1.2m subsidy for 2023/24, with little option available other than increasing the cost of school meals by 30-40% to cover the subsidy. There was the need to ensure the quality of services and minimise the impact on staff.

There had been positive outcomes with 17 of 69 schools transferring to new providers, 11 having a clear plan with an agreed date, 17 with a plan in place, 17 out to tender and 7 schools considering their options.

In relation to Connect2Dudley the objectives and additional objectives contained within the presentation were referred to and it was reported that at the end of quarter 1 the service was in a profit position, sooner than expected. A revised forecast illustrated that at the end of the first full year of trading the service would be ahead of forecast by £27k and a full year profit position, 12 months ahead of schedule.

Phase two would focus on commercialisation with a soft launch taking place in January 2024. The two-year ventures forecasted a total cumulative profit of £865k to be shared between the partners.

Members asked questions, made comments and responses were provided where appropriate as follows: -



- a) Councillor N Neale, referring to the predictions above, asked whether they would be impacted upon by the budget setting process and the savings required. There was a request to be provided with revised figures following the budget summit and how the projection would be revised.

In response the Head of Commercial stated that all other budget changes would not impact on the projected trajectory for Connect2Dudley.

Some customers had been lost in relation to the Telecare service and projections may need to be reviewed regarding that service due to customer demand. The Head of Commercial was confident with all other forecasts contained in the report and presentation submitted.

- b) Councillor P Sahota in referring to the Commercial Strategy and the policy changes regarding delivery of services for the borough questioned why Equality Impact Risk Assessments had not been carried out and none had been identified although the Telecare service would be used by vulnerable people.

It was questioned whether the Council's Human Resources section had conducted a fact-finding exercise in terms of how services were running at the Crystal Café and why the staff had not been consulted on their ideas to make services at the Café more profitable.

Concerns were raised that the report did not identify any environmental or climate change impacts.

Page 33 of the report submitted detailed all services however there was no information in relation to finance and legal services.

Councillor P Sahota suggested that the Authority were weak in marketing for Brooke's Bistro and Leisure Centres, and although the report referred to work of the Communications and Marketing team, work had not happened to market those facilities.

The Head of Commercial operated within a small team and questions were raised whether that would raise issues in delivery for such large agendas and whether any benchmarking had been conducted with other authorities on how to turn services around and make them profitable.

The Head of Commercial responded stating that Equality Impact Risk Assessments were only required if making any significant changes to any services but in terms of the current report that related to supporting and not impacting on services.

It was confirmed that line managers had been consulted in relation to the Crystal Café who had in turn consulted with staff. It was noted that Commercial are in ongoing contact with services.

It was accepted that capacity within the team was an issue and those concerns had been raised.

- c) Councillor L Johnson requested confirmation as to who would be responsible for the provision of school meals in the future and how did their costs compare to other Authorities.

In response the Head of Commercial stated that every school was able to choose their own supplier and 37% of schools had already chosen to do so with the majority transferring to Shropshire Council, whose charges were similar. It was not anticipated that the costs would rise above the normal price index rate.

- d) Councillor E Lawrence referred to governance processes and how staff were empowered to make those commercial decisions.

The Head of Commercial provided an example in relation to the fees at Himley Hall, with the increase in fees and charges requiring authorisation of the Cabinet Member, however where there was an interest expressed in multiple bookings and a reduction in fees could be provided, the Head of Service had delegated authority to approve rather than going back through the process of the fees and charges.

It was a similar case in relation to Brooke's Bistro in that the line management structure could approve price changes as appropriate.

- e) Councillor J Foster raised concerns in relation to contracting out in relation to school meals, comparing that to contracting out civil parking enforcement. Should school meals be contracted out parents money would not be received by the authority but instead transferred to where the school was procuring, and if Shropshire Council could provide a comparable service, why in Dudley has a success not been made of the service.

The Head of Commercial stated that Dudley Council were making a loss, losing £1m with more money being expended than received. Shropshire were a larger entity and as a result able to grow their offer and rely on economies of scale. Dudley Council's competitors had continued to grow and cut the service in every way possible.

Councillor J Foster stated that Shropshire Council was a unity and not a large Authority in terms of population and in terms of budgets was unsure how they compared to Dudley Council. There was the need to examine what was going wrong with the service in Dudley. It was questioned how the system had failed and what had resulted in that failure.

The Head of Commercial stated she was unable to answer questions on the operational success of the service but would refer the question to the Head of Corporate Landlord Services for a response.

In terms of finances there had been a slow deterioration of customers in her opinion resulting in the service struggling and subsequent complaints in relation to the quality of services being received. Schools had subsequently spoken with their feet and left and with academisation it had become apparent that service provision would reduce.

Councillor J Foster referred to the longevity of the service and although aware of the concerns relating to the quality of meals believed that the decision should have been called in for scrutiny, in order that failures could have been identified. As the Authority were following the commercialisation route, unless satisfied that the whole system would work, concerns were raised that a dire financial situation could result.

Councillor P Atkins stated that the decision in relation to cessation of school meals was contained in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy that was submitted to both the Cabinet, Full Council and Select Committees for scrutiny, with that scrutiny process already taking place. There was a large difference in the number of schools in Shropshire as opposed to the Dudley borough, with Dudley Council unable to match their offer, however the operational delivery of the school meals service did not form part of his remit.

Councillor J Foster suggested that prior to considering outsourcing, the position in relation to the provision of school meals required a dedicated session to explore where failings had occurred and examine the position in comparable authorities.

The Head of Commercial advised that benchmarking exercises were conducted, and many authorities had been consulted which had revealed that the South Gloucester and Luton Borough Council had moved away from providing school meals with other authorities moving to put the provision into a different model or reduce the offer. Staffing costs were also a factor in terms of Local Government Terms and Conditions having to be met and pension costs.

Councillor J Foster referred to the arrangement with Kent County Council and the opportunity to collaborate with the other authorities mentioned to provide a service.

The Head of Commercial reiterated that every individual school determined who they entered into contracts with for the provision of school meals and it was schools who were making their own decisions under their own governance structures.

- f) The Chair expressed concerns in relation to Telecare services, as previously those costs were factored into the housing budget and the residents who benefited from the service were paying council housing rent. It was queried how many clients had been lost from the service.

The Head of Commercial confirmed that this was an operational question and would need to be investigated further to provide a definitive response, however it was in the region of 50% of customers so far and there remained work to contact remaining tenants. As the equipment is hard wired in many properties, some tenants had moved into properties where Telecare was installed, however they had young families and did not require the service.

It was reported that the cost of Telecare could be reduced by benefits and a reduction would be applied for those tenants in receipt of income related council tax reduction.

- g) Councillor C Reid referred to her work in sheltered schemes referring to the provision of Telecare being a real lifeline for some and enquired of the position in relation to those receiving limited private pensions and on limited benefits.

The Head of Commercial provided assurances that those in sheltered accommodation would not be charged for the service. It was also stated that those receiving council tax reduction due to income related benefits would receive financial reductions in relation to the Telecare service. Adult Social Care colleagues may also be able to assist with financial advice regarding benefits for Telecare services.

- h) Councillor E Lawrence enquired from a commercial element what work was being completed in relation to the 2025 analogue switch off for Telecare Services.

In response the Head of Commercial advised that Housing and Adult Social Care colleagues were working in collaboration with the Director of Digital, Customer and Commercial Services to ensure the project moved forward.

Councillor N Neale referred to the increase in charges resulting from the system changes that were required.

The Head of Commercial advised that this was an operational query but her understanding was each household would require a sim card which would be supplied at a minimal cost where possible.

The Chair raised concerns in relation to the elderly who were not conversant with technology.

- i) Councillor P Sahota suggested that marketing was essential to provide key messages to those who were vulnerable and elderly, with the need for the Communications and Marketing team to become involved.
- j) In response to a query from Councillor C Reid the Head of Commercial advised that there would be no need for the internet once the changes were made providing opportunities for savings for many households.

k) Councillor C Reid referred to the high-rise flats within her Ward requesting the provision of any marketing material to re-assure those who were fearful of losing their landlines.

The Head of Commercial confirmed that she would feedback the suggestion to the relevant service areas who were managing the analogue switch off.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the information contained in the report and presentation contained within Appendix 1 to the report submitted, be noted.
- (2) That the Head of Commercial be requested to: -
  - (i) Liaise with the Head of Corporate Landlord Services to provide details of the operation of the system in relation to the school meal service, how the system had failed and what had resulted in that failure to members.
  - (ii) Advise members how many customers had left the Telecare service.
  - (iii) To advise the relevant service areas who were managing the analogue switch off of the request that elected members be provided with material detailing the analogue switch off to assure those who had concerns in relation to the loss of their landlines.

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### **33 Corporate Quarterly Performance Report – Quarter 1 (1<sup>st</sup> April – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023)**

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the Quarter 1 Corporate Quarterly performance report covering the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 which aligned to the 2022-25 Council Plan.

In presenting key information through presentation slides, the Corporate Performance Manager stated that of the twelve measures to be reported on there were four on target, one below target and four with no targets with those being noted in the respective scorecards. A further three would be reported on during Quarter 2 and 3. Members were provided with a detailed account of the performance indicators at the meeting.

Reference was made to the three Directorate Service Summary Documents that had been appended to the report submitted, providing an overview of service delivery, service achievements and opportunities for improvement during the relevant quarter focusing on Digital, Customer and Commercial Services, Finance and Legal and Regeneration and Enterprise.

Members were referred to the detail of the benchmarking exercise carried out on the customer satisfaction measures and workforce sickness data measures to ensure that Dudley were comparable and in line with other authorities, and to ensure that there was external context to those pieces of performance information, as contained in the report submitted.

It was noted that the Council Plan from 2022-25 sets out the vision and priorities under four core priorities and the plan was refreshed every three years mapping out the journey and commitment that the Council will constantly strive to improve the method in which services were delivered to meet the needs of local people and to ensure that achievements could be demonstrated and measured.

In concluding the detailed presentation, the Corporate Performance Manager requested the Committee to consider how they would wish to receive the presentation of future reports.

Members asked questions, made comments and responses were given where appropriate as follows: -

- a) Councillor J Foster expressed that she was aware that the Chief Executive was interested to hear about complaints, their timeliness and the investigation process and enquired whether any consideration had been given to the categorisation of those complaints and looking at them in more detail in terms of scrutiny together with the code of conduct of complaints, and making recommendations on procedures, time taken to investigate and outcomes as that was a further area that she would wish to be considered.

In response the Corporate Performance Manager indicated that should Members wish to scrutinise performance further relevant to this committee, she would consult the relevant Heads of Service to present those in the future.

- b) In response to a question from Councillor S Mughal in relation to short term absence, it was noted that the performance indicator did include Coronavirus which was now recorded as a sickness absence, however that indicator did not include those who were working from home.

The same Councillor requested information on what work was being conducted in relation to work related sickness. The Corporate Performance Manager advised that she would consult with the relevant service to explore future reporting to include working from home statistics if this information was recorded corporately, however the management of sickness was the responsibility of managers with support from HR Business Partners.

- c) The Chair suggested the possibility of focusing on individual items in future reports.
- d) Councillor E Lawrence suggested that Members request information on any specific items prior to future meetings in order that the relevant officers can be requested to attend to address those questions/issues.
- e) Councillor J Foster specified that one of the roles of scrutiny was to drive improvement and complaints were an area where there was that need to drive down in terms of improvement. Grievances and Code of Conduct complaints may also be another area for in-depth scrutiny.
- f) Councillor P Atkins agreed with a focused approach.



- g) Councillor J Foster referred to the need to obtain details of the process in relation to complaints, how they were handled and then obtaining feedback. This would in turn provide a focus on how the process could be improved.

The Corporate Performance Manager confirmed that corporately Digital and Customer Services held the data in relation to corporate complaints and suggested the possibility of in future forwarding draft reports to members prior to meetings in order to determine issues that were to be focused upon and in turn the relevant officers would be invited to attend future meetings.

## **Resolved**

- (1) That the information contained in the report submitted be noted.
- (2) That the review of the Directorate and Corporate Key Performance indicators agreed by the Committee in June that were monitored and reported against the Council Plan for 2023 and the benchmarking exercise undertaken, be noted.
- (3) That the Council Plan refresh referred to in paragraph 10 of the report submitted, be noted.
- (4) That the Chair and Vice-Chair in conjunction with the Corporate Performance Manager be requested to consider how future reports should be presented to the Committee above, referring to the suggestions by members above.
- (5) That the Corporate Performance Manager be requested to: -
  - (i) Report on the details in relation to the complaints procedure to include processes, how they were handled and feedback from complainants to include timeliness.
  - (ii) Report on what work was being conducted in relation to work related sickness in future Corporate Quarterly reports.

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## **34 Corporate and Economic Strategy Select Committee Progress Tracker and Future Business**

A report on the Progress Tracker and Future Business was received and noted by Members and the following issues and suggestions were made: -

- a) Councillor J Foster raised the issue of no response being received from the Head of Economic Growth and Skills regarding the two resolutions arising from the Stalled Sites – Strategies for bringing back into use privately owned vacant land and property report.
- b) Councillor J Foster referred to future business and queried why reports were being submitted for scrutiny if they were for noting only and the need to drill down underperforming areas within the remit of the committee.
- c) Concerns were raised in relation to the disruption that may be caused in general to two town centres and traders due to the full funding now being obtained in relation to the metro rail, and a request was made for a report to be submitted to a future committee on this issue.
- d) Councillor J Foster stated that the relevant Cabinet Members and Directors should be invited to future meetings of the Committee including the Leader and Deputy Leader.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the information contained in the report submitted on the Corporate and Economic Strategy Select Committee Progress Tracker and Future Business, be noted.
- (2) That the Senior Democratic Services Officer be requested to contact the Head of Economic Growth and Skills regarding the two resolutions arising from the Stalled Sites – Strategies for bringing back into use privately owned vacant land and property report requesting responses as a matter of urgency.
- (3) That a report on mitigating the disruption that is to be caused in general to two town centres and traders due to the full funding now being obtained in relation to the metro rail be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.
- (4) That the Senior Democratic Services Officer be requested to invite the relevant Cabinet Members, Directors, Leader and Deputy Leader to future meetings of the Committee as and when required.

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## **35 Questions Under Council Procedure Rule 11.8**

There were no questions to the Chair pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 11.8.

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36 **Comments of the Chair**

The Chair thanked all Members and Officers for attending and the positive and constructive discussions and contributions made during the meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.00pm

CHAIR

# Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension Delivery Update

Dudley Select Committee

January 2024

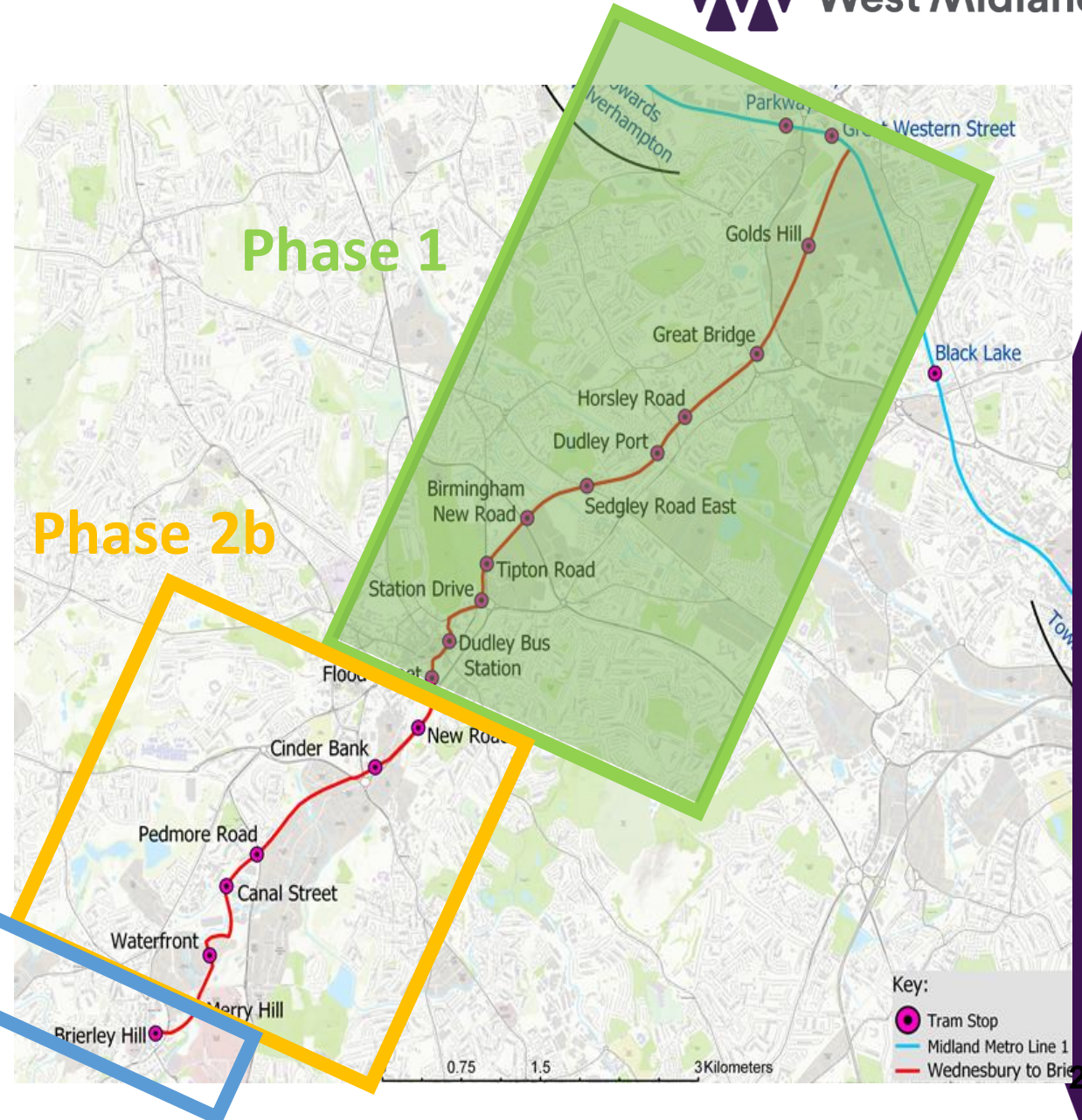
# Phase 1 : Construction

Construction complete at the end of 2024

Entry into service will commence after that which includes:

- Technical sign off
- Driver training
- Safety assessments

Phase 2c





# Phase 2

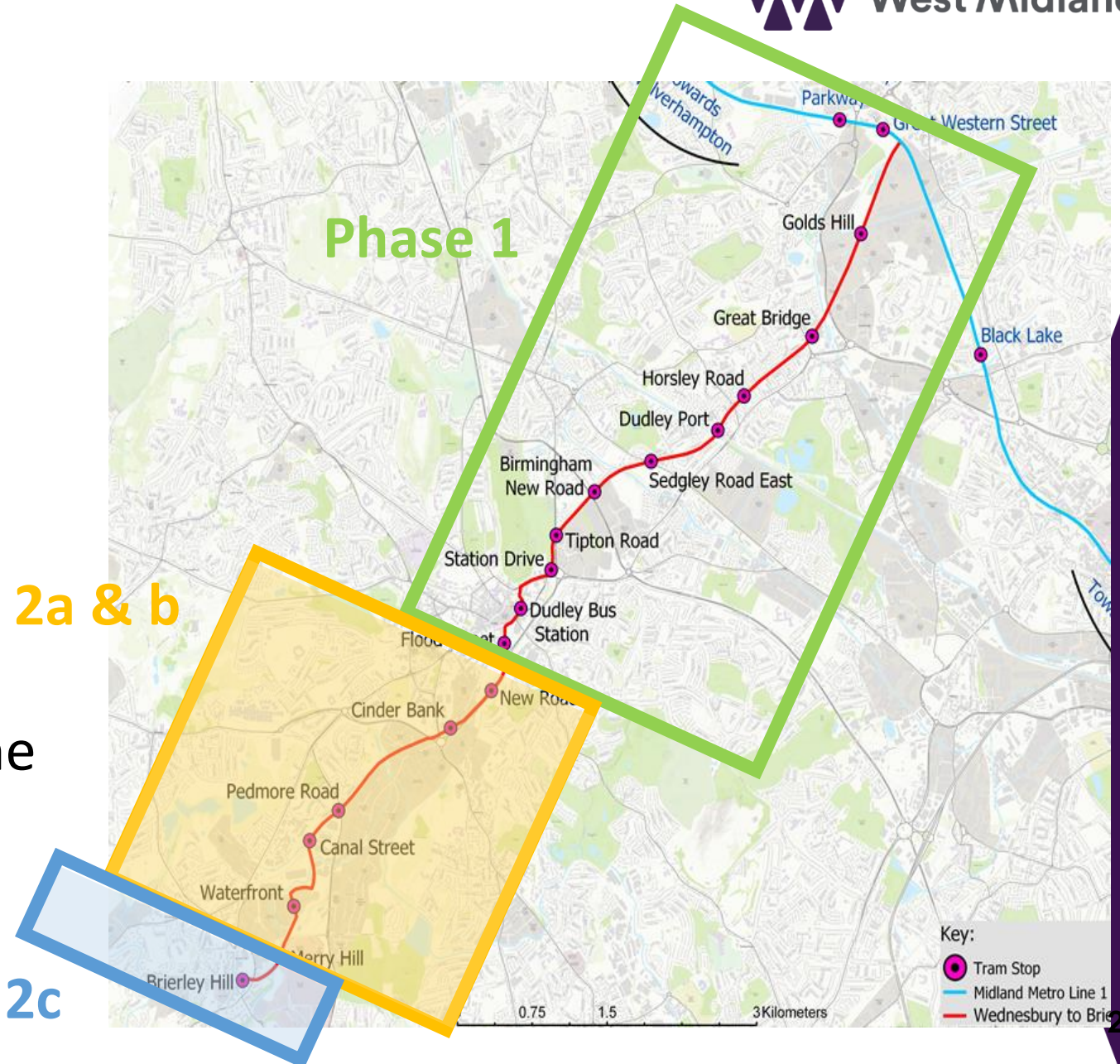
Phase 2 has been split into the following:

- 2a to Waterfront
- 2b to Merry Hill
- 2c to Brierley Hill

Work underway on refreshing the business case

Phase 2a & b

Phase 2c



There are a number of risks which could delay the entry into service:

- Canal bridge ownership needs to be resolved with Network Rail
- Mineshafts at Birmingham New Road
- Delta junction tie in works additional scope
- Lift at Dudley Port

These are being worked through with the MMA, TfWM and DMBC

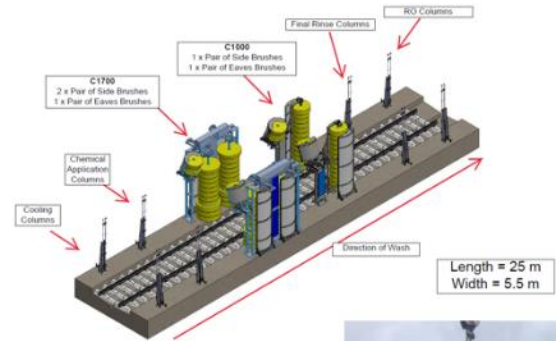


# Wednesbury Depot Expansion



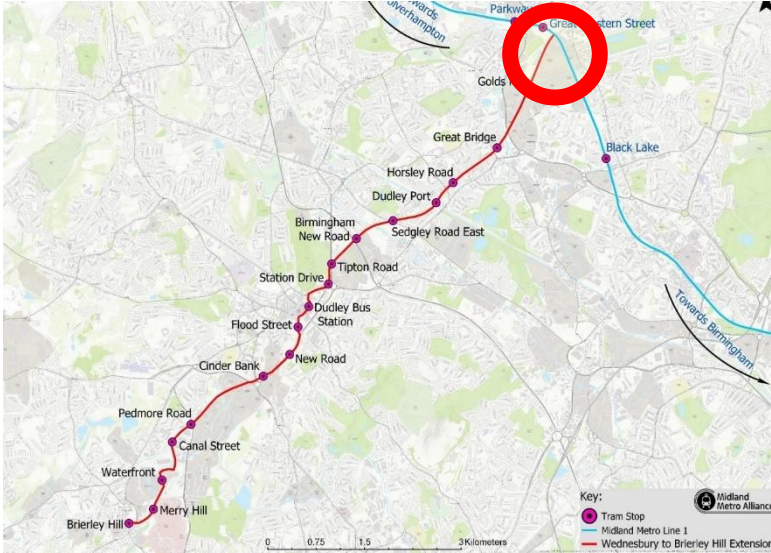
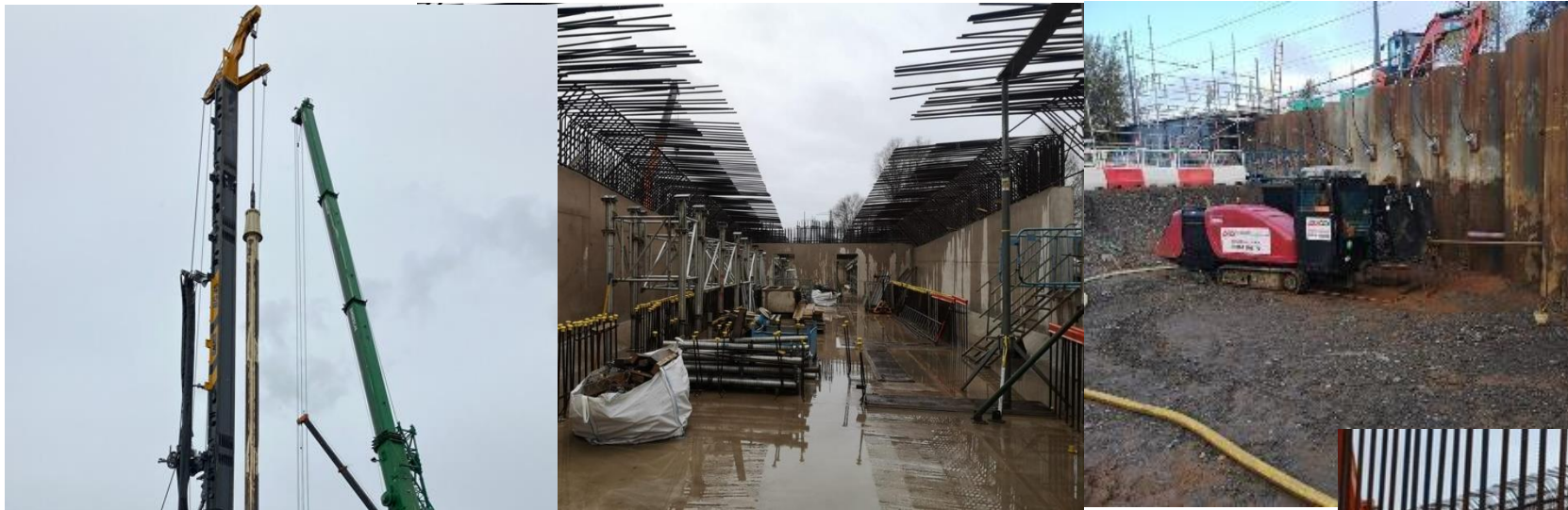
Alongside the WBHE extension, work is progressing well on an upgrade to the Wednesbury depot.

In recent months, ground clearance has continued, temporary tram wash facilities created, temporary staff areas installed allowing beginning of exterior demolition to begin.





# Wednesbury Delta Junction



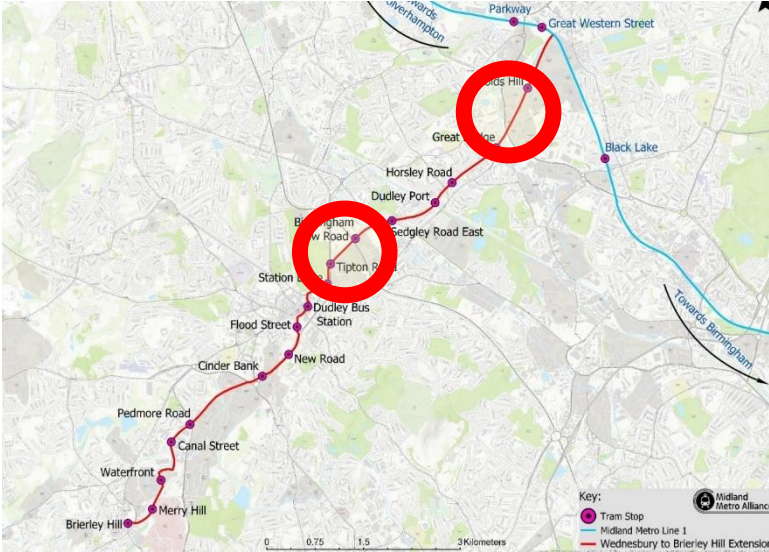
Work is continuing on the construction of a massive structure which in Wednesbury which will link the new route to existing line one.

Tie-in works on schedule for Easter 2024.





# Across the railway corridor



33,000 tons of ballast have been delivered ready for track to begin being installed across the railway corridor this autumn.



# Tramstops

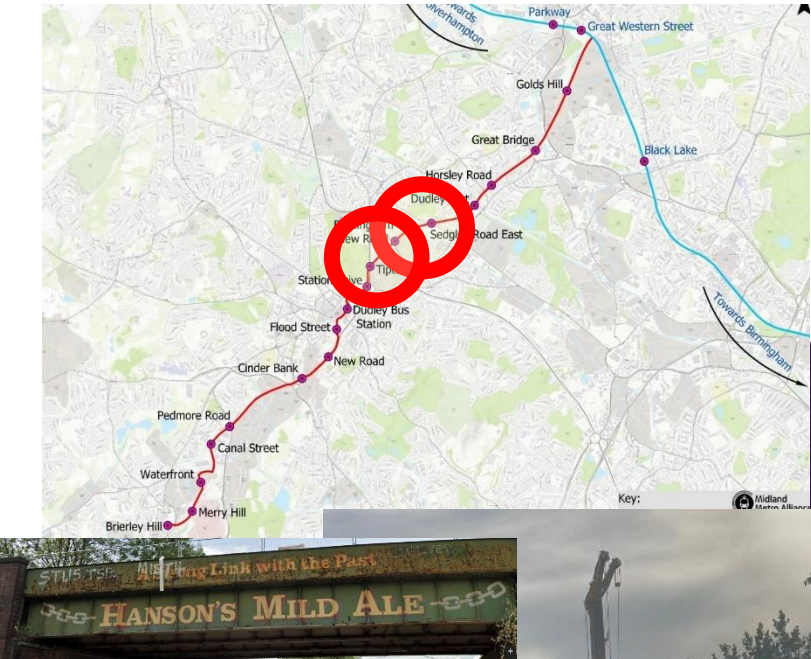
From retaining walls to foundations: tram stops across the route are starting to take shape.





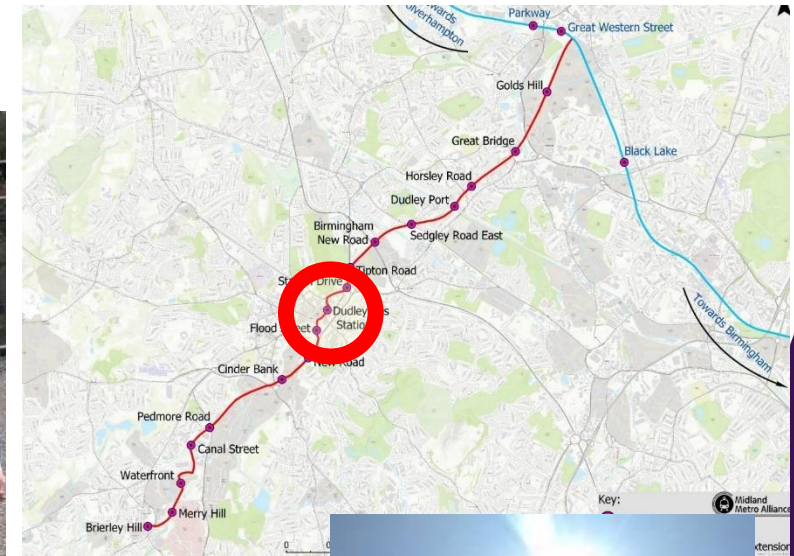
# Structures

The majority of the new structures for phase one of the new route have been delivered with just the previously mentioned delta junction in Wednesbury and the Handon's Ale bridge left to complete (more on the latter shortly).





# Dudley Town Centre

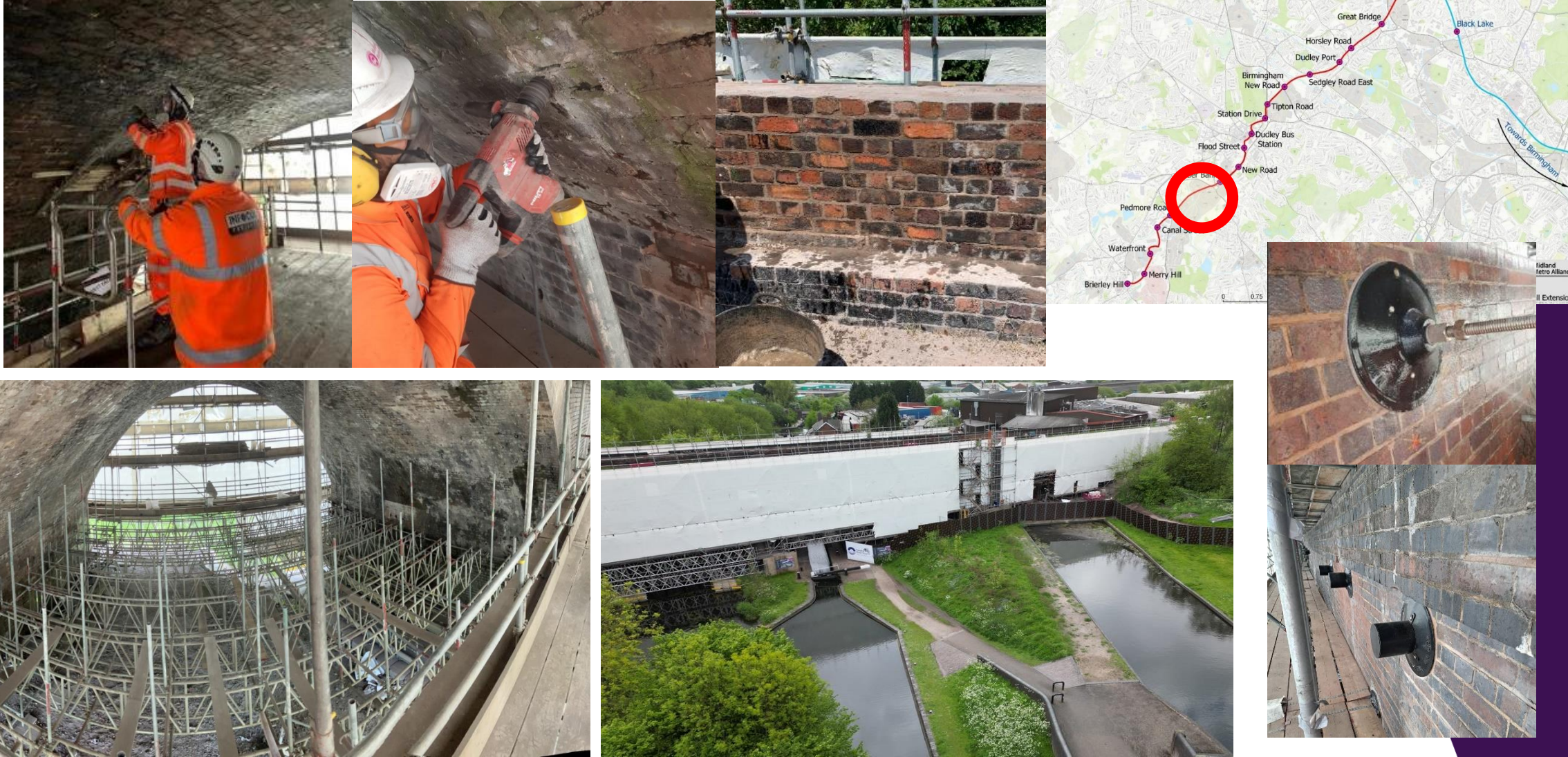


Over in Dudley town centre, after track work completed in Castle Hill, the installation of rail continues at pace in Flood Street and King Street.

Earlier in the spring, the Prime Minister visited to see progress at site.



# Parkhead Viaduct



The work to strengthen historic Parkhead Viaduct in Dudley (which will see tram traffic as part of phase two of the route) is almost complete and scaffolding is due to be removed later in the autumn.

The activity to design methods to strengthen the structure was recently highly commended at ICE West Midlands awards.



# Communicating forthcoming disruptive activity

Over the past few years our team have been busy delivering a number of activities, including the construction and placement of a number of new structures which are designed to meet the needs of a modern tram network.

The MMA and TfWM is working closely with colleagues at Dudley and Sandwell Councils to plan for disruptive works and also ensure that local people are prepared and allow extra time for their journeys during any closures. This includes:

- Weekly meetings between DMBC Traffic Manager and MMA Site Agents and Comms are in place to ensure all parties can co-ordinate works and ensure adequate temporary traffic management arrangements are in place and communicated to the public and wider stakeholders.
- Majority of phase 2 (Dudley to Brierley Hill) is along the rail corridor and therefore highway impact is limited.
- At Waterfront, Merry and Brierley Hill Terminus detailed Temporary Traffic Management will be required and agreed prior to the commencement at all highway interfaces (this is particularly relevant to Level Street roundabout and Venture Way crossing point).
- Engagement with elected members for any queries they may receive.
- Communicating directly with the local community via dedicated mailing.
- Sharing the news and progress with local media and asking them to share journey planning messaging.
- Targeted social media;
- And working with local attractions to continue to promote that they're open as usual.

Alongside the ongoing delivery, the following work is underway to support the overall programme of works:

- Design and costings review
- Business case update underway with sign off required by DfT and DHLUC.
- This business case is expected to be submitted to Government in Mid 2024
- Following submission, this is expected to be considered later in 2024 with mobilisation for Phase 2 commencing thereafter (subject to approval).



**Thank you.**

**Any questions?**

## **Meeting of the Corporate and Economic Strategy Select Committee - 11th January 2024**

### **Report of the Director of Regeneration & Enterprise**

#### **Progress on Major Regeneration Projects**

##### **Purpose of report**

1. To provide an update on the major regeneration projects and other town centre proposals/projects in development.

##### **Recommendations**

2. It is recommended:-
  - That the contents of this report are noted.

##### **Background**

3. In the last few years there have several well documented major regeneration projects developed and completed. This report gives an update on the status on next phase of projects both in the main town centres and around the borough. This report does not give an update on the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension as that is the subject of a separate presentation to the Scrutiny Committee, by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM).

#### **Dudley – projects on site/with consent**

##### **Towns Fund- Health Innovation Dudley (HID)**

In July 2021 DMBC secured £25 million to build a new higher education facility at the bottom of Castle Hill. A full business case was submitted in April 2022 and funding was confirmed in Summer of the same year.

Dudley's proposed Towns Fund Project is The Health Innovation Dudley ('HID') project which will deliver a new 3,618 sqm (approximately) University Centre at Castle Hill focused on Health and Life Sciences. The HID will be constructed by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) and leased to Dudley College of Technology and the curriculum delivered by the University of Worcester.

The project aims to attract new students to Dudley, provide new technical skills and degree programmes which align with local employment opportunities, and to improve progression rates for local people into higher-skilled employment opportunities.

Planning consent was issued on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

Most of the proposed site for the new University Centre is already in Council ownership, however the project will require the assembly of third-party interests. The Council is currently in negotiation with the owners of these properties regarding acquisition. If these discussions do not result in the mutually agreed sale and acquisition of land interests, the Council will, where appropriate and if needed, use its Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers. The CPO Order was made on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2023. The Inquiry is anticipated to take place around March/ April of 2024 unless the objections are withdrawn beforehand.

The parcel of land already in the Council's ownership was formerly occupied by the Hippodrome building which has now been demolished and land secured ready for commencement of construction works.

## **Dudley Interchange**

The existing Dudley Bus Station is over 30 years old and is dated in its design. Furthermore, the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension under construction by the Midlands Metro Alliance (MMA), will run through the existing bus station making it inoperable in its current format.

Designs and highway layouts have been developed in partnership with West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and TfWM, to provide a new Interchange facility to accommodate both bus and Metro. Full planning consent was approved by Planning Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022, and an amended interchange building design has subsequently been submitted and approved.

The council have designed the public realm around the new Interchange to create high quality pedestrian routes and spaces.

This work will be built by TfWM and funded by City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) monies. The council have assisted TfWM by using its CPO powers to acquire the required properties.

WMCA/TfWM and DMBC are due to start site enabling works in January 2024 with construction works likely to last between 12 and 15 months. While the works are being carried out, all the bus stops will be relocated to Tower Street and Coronation Gardens.

## **Dudley Townscape Heritage Initiative (TH2)**

The Townscape Heritage (TH 2) programme is funded through the National Lottery Heritage Fund and offers grant assistance to carry out repair, reinstatement and refurbishment works to historic buildings in the historic core of the Dudley Town Centre Conservation Area as well as a programme of complementary education and community engagement activities. The TH2 programme is building upon the success of projects delivered through TH1 delivered between 2008 -2015.

TH2 is operating with a grant budget of £1.178m from the NLHF and £300,000 match funding from the Council. Achievements since the last include:

- Plaza Malls (Phase 2) – new shopfront to ground floor, complete subject to some minor snagging items to the lead detail above the fascia.
- Fountain Arcade – repair and architectural reinstatement work to Market Street elevation (first and second floor) and installation of 4 new shopfronts (2 external and 2 internal, one of which is the Butchers shop) – complete subject to some minor snagging items to be addressed by the contractor.
- 208 and 209 Wolverhampton Street - repair and architectural reinstatement works and installation of new shopfronts – complete subject to some minor snagging items to be addressed by the contractor.
- 207 Wolverhampton Street - repair and architectural reinstatement works and installation of new shopfronts – ongoing.
- Delivery of community engagement projects such as ‘Growing up in Dudley’ which saw a wealth of images, oral histories and artwork inspired by people’s experiences and memories of Dudley <https://www.dudleypeoplesarchive.com/growing-up-in-dudley> and ‘Dudley Days’ which held workshops with small groups of local volunteers to create music inspired by connections with Dudley
- Installation of a plaque on the front elevation of Fountain Arcade to acknowledge and thank the funders of the project, the NLHF and Dudley Council.
- Successful delivery of Heritage Open Days annually every September from the Coroners Court and provision of 12 virtual tours of heritage

buildings in the Conservation Area:

<https://www.dudleyheritageopendays.org.uk/>

- Training session for bricklaying students at Dudley College has been provided where they were provided hand-on training from a conservation bricklaying specialist.
- Production of travelling exhibition material in the form of 4 pull-up banners about the history of Dudley, this has been on display in the Museum, Dudley Castle and in the recent Constable exhibition.
- Successfully re-established the Dudley Coffin Race in 2018
- Evaluation and monitoring of the project – work on this has commenced.

By the end of December/beginning of January the priority is to complete the snagging items on Fountain Arcade and 208 and 209 Wolverhampton street. To complete the render repairs and installation of the new shopfront on 207 Wolverhampton Street, complete any outstanding items in the activities programme, complete the evaluation and monitoring of the project and to work with the main funder (NLHF) on the closedown of the project.

For more information about the above visit the webpage for the project:

<https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/planning/historic-environment/historic-buildings-and-structures/heritage-led-regeneration/dudley-landscape-heritage-programme/>

### **Castle Hill Vision - Phase Two – Dudley Castle Repair Grant**

The Castle Hill vision (Phase Two) is a master plan document prepared with the express intention of building upon the success of what was delivered under Phase One, e.g. restoration of 5 Tecton Structures, repair of the 1950's chair lift and the substantial infrastructure improvements including the creation of the new car park and public realm along Zoological Way.

The focus of Phase Two is on a series of improvements and investments to the Castle Hill Conservation Area with particular emphasis on Dudley Castle, 4 Tecton structures, Stores Cavern, a new visitor and education building and the Castle Hill Woodland. Thanks to the Castle Hill Vision (Phase 2) document, development funding of £82,000 has been successfully levered in from Historic England for Dudley Castle in the form of the 'Dudley Castle Repair Grant'. The funding has been used to:

- undertake extensive vegetation clearance to expose all the elevations of the Castle
- undertake a full measured survey of the Castle and
- compile a detailed condition survey and costed management and maintenance plan of the Castle.

The remaining last 15% of the grant was claimed from Historic England at the end of March 2023 with the successful completion of the condition survey and costed management and maintenance plan for Dudley Castle. This information is now being used to inform the contents of further bids for

external funding for works at Dudley Castle and also for other projects identified in the Castle Hill Vision Phase 2 document, in particular the 4 Tecton Structures (Tropical Bird House, former Moat Café, Queen Mary Restaurant and Elephant House) who thanks to £120,000 of funding from the Getty Foundation are now at RIBA Stage 3.

## **Black Country Blue Network 2**

Black Country Blue Network 2 aims to improve the biodiversity and conservation status of 121.84 hectares of green space linked by the canal and river network.

The funding is from ERDF for a 3 year programme ending in June 2023 with the match funding from CIL, Section 106, capital monies, contribution from Metro and The Wildlife Trust of Birmingham & the Black Country. Proposed total spend is £648,400.

There were 7 individual projects in the Dudley Borough:

1. Castle Hill – Perimeter barrier improvements, removal of dead and dying Ash trees, path improvements and new tree and wildflower planting.
2. Peggy's Meadow- restoration of existing pastureland and fencing area to allow for future grazing.
3. Sedgley Beacon – new footpath from Wolverhampton Road, water retention swales, tree thinning works, hedge laying, grassland improved to create more biodiversity and work to expose limestone outcrops.
4. Holloway St. – converting existing pedestrian routes to formal compacted stone footpaths, tackling drainage issues and forming a low grassland meadow area.
5. Coseley Open Spaces – park improvements to increase biodiversity, woodland planting.
6. Turls Hill – restoration of meadow for grazing and boundary improvements.

All schemes are now complete.

## **Dudley – projects in development/pipeline**

These following sites have been identified in the Dudley Area Action Plan (AAP) (adopted 2017) as located within designated Development Opportunity Sites and consequently subject to site allocations and design parameters. The Dudley AAP is in the process of being reviewed to form part of the Dudley Local Plan (DLP).

## Portersfield

A report was presented to Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023 updating on the project and the key actions/timescales moving forward.

Several site surveys were commissioned and have been completed during the mid/end of 2023 – including Archaeology and Heritage, Ecology and Tree, Invasive Plants, Topographical and environmental Ground investigation. The results of these surveys are supporting the ongoing work to prepare the development brief and a scheme design.

A public consultation exercise was also held from 26<sup>th</sup> July to 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023. 459 people completed the questionnaire which asked ten questions about movement, accessibility, heritage and landscaping. All questions secured a 'strongly agree or agree' rating from more than 70% of respondees, with several in the high 80%/low 90% rating – and these results are also informing the preparation of the development brief and scheme design.

Heads of Terms have also been agreed with the main third-party landowner Avenbury, enabling the preparation of a Collaboration Agreement (CA). The CA will document the intentions of both parties; how DMBC and Avenbury will work together to progress a joint disposal of their respective land interests to a third-party developer; details of costs and value apportionment; and timescales.

Work in the first half of 2024 will include:

- Ongoing discussions to complete the Collaboration Agreement and then to agree a draft Development Agreement for inclusion as part of the development partner procurement process.
- Progressing negotiations with the other smaller third-party landowners – to progress land acquisition in lieu of commencing a CPO process.
- Completion of the Development Brief/Scheme Design for approval by Cabinet in February 2024.
- Progressing the procurement of a Development Partner through a competitive dialogue process. This will commence in early 2024.
- Engaging with partners to identify the funding package for the site, based on the preferred development brief/scheme design and the viability assessment.

## **Eton College**

In March this year it was announced as part of the Levelling Up Agenda that Star Academies and Eton College would be bidding for funds for potentially three academic sixth form colleges, one of which was to be located in Dudley.

The Council has worked with Star Academies to identify a preferred site which is in Council ownership. To accommodate the new college, several relocations will be required each with its own issues and risks and Corporate Landlord Services are working on gaining vacant possession and working with occupiers to relocate where required and possible.

Star Academies submitted the bid for funding to DfE at the end of November and an announcement was made late summer 2023 confirming the award of the Department for Education (DfE) funding to Star Academies and Eton College for the proposed college.

Star Academy's programme assumes a start on site in December 2024 with an opening date to new students in September 2026.

## **Flood Street**

This is a key gateway site, opposite the new Duncan Edwards leisure centre and is predominantly in council ownership with the exception of the "Homescene" property. Following a competitive bidding process, terms have been agreed (subject to Full Council approval) for the Council to acquire the Freehold of this property to avoid a future CPO and to complete its strategic landholding of the site.

The Flood Street site is located close to the town centre and the soon to be redeveloped Interchange, and with a Metro stop adjacent, it provides an opportunity to enhance the leisure offer and create a new quarter. Officers are in discussions with a Leisure Provider on this site for a multi-use scheme focused on a key leisure facility, with negotiations are underway on an exclusivity agreement.

## **Wellington Road**

The site of the former Dudley Leisure centre has been vacant since the new leisure centre opened in 2022. Officers have prepared a development brief for a medium density housing scheme which has been shared with several prospective developers. The site was under an exclusivity agreement (EA) to allow one of these developers to undertake due diligence checks including pre application discussions. The EA expired earlier in the year 2023, following which the decision was made to market the site for disposal. The marketing closed at the end of December 2023.



## **Brierley Hill - Projects on site/with consent**

### **Brierley Hill Future High Street Fund Programme**

Brierley Hill High Street was awarded funding from the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) in December 2020. This confirmed investment of £9.985m to support a mixed package of interventions. These include:

- Highway junction enhancements to improve traffic flows and air quality. The highway works completed in June 2022.
- Public realm works to improve connectivity and integration of the High Street to the new Metro terminus. The High Street works commenced on site on 8th January 2023 and will complete in March 2024.
- Refurbishment of the High Street public library and re-opening of the town centre public toilets.
- Redevelopment by DMBC of the long-term vacant Daniels Land and High Plateau sites; and the rear car park of the Moor Centre for new homes.

The Future High Streets (FHS) grant funding needs to be spent by 2023/24 to align with the programme rules. Delivery on the larger projects will continue to 2025/26 to allow the remaining match funding to be spent.

West Midlands Combined Authority's decision during 2022/23 to delay the Midlands Metro extension to Brierley Hill meant the public square improvements around the Metro Terminus could not be delivered within Future High Street Fund timescales. The funding has therefore been re-allocated to other projects within the Future High Streets programme.

West Midlands Combined Authority's decision in July 2022 to delay implementation of the Midland Metro to Brierley Hill has had a serious impact on the redevelopment programme and the ability to spend FHS monies by March 2024. This is because of the need to construct the tram viaduct and undertake works on the Embankment to create the Merry Hill tram stop before full redevelopment works can commence on the sites.

After lengthy negotiation with the Department for Levelling Up, the Council has successfully obtained approval to re-allocate the £3.55m of unspent headroom into a schedule of replacement projects at Brierley Hill High Street. These include an extended programme of public realm works to address connectivity issues, funding for the repair of historic buildings, improvements to Marsh Park, an environmental improvement programme, improvement to the Moor Centre open space and funding for a Changing Places toilet. A programme extension has been granted to March 2025 to spend the reprofiled grant funding.

The decision in Autumn 2023 to cancel the HS2 Northern Route has allowed transport funding to be re-allocated to local transport schemes. As the result, the West Midlands Mayor has given a commitment to fund the Metro extension to Brierley Hill.

Therefore, in parallel, the Council is holding discussions with Homes England and West Midlands Combined Authority over strategic acquisition of the development sites.

### **Brierley Hill High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ)**

The Brierley Hill High Street HAZ is a 4-year programme, due for completion by March 2024, it is Government funded and run by Historic England. At the start of the programme a grant of £1.8m was awarded by Historic England with £400,000 match funding coming from the Council, equating to an overall grant of 81.80% from Historic England and an overall budget of £2.2m. At the end of September 2021, this figure was increased with an additional grant of £242,171 from Historic England, which with the 18.20% match from the Council provides a total grant increase of £296,052.46 and therefore an overall budget of just under £2.5m.

The programme provides grant assistance to third parties to carry out repair, reinstatement and refurbishment works to historic buildings as well as grant assistance towards bringing vacant floorspace back into use. It also provides grant towards public realm improvements, plus there is a programme of complementary education and community engagement activities.

The public realm proposals for the Civic Hall Green and St Mary's Church are underway and being delivered in conjunction with the wider public realm proposals for the Future High Street programme.

In terms of building projects, the programme is dependent on the acceptance of grants by building owners and on contractors being appointed and being able to manage time pressures (imposed by the tight spend window for the project, significant rising costs and material delays). That notwithstanding grant offers have been offered and accepted on seven projects:

- 2A and 2 Albion Street, repair and architectural reinstatement and bringing vacant floor space back into use – (building had been vacant/derelict for a number of years) – complete, subject to some minor snagging items to be addressed by the contractor.
- 68 High Street, repair and architectural reinstatement - complete, subject to some minor snagging items to be addressed by the contractor.
- 101 High Street (Phase 1 – roof) – complete

- Brierley Hill Institute – repair and architectural reinstatement works, contractor has commenced site set up and relevant pre-commencement planning conditions have been discharged
- 8 Mill Street – repair and architectural reinstatement - complete, subject to some minor snagging items to be addressed by the contractor
- St Mary's Church (door) – complete in time for the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of the building.
- 121 High Street - repair and architectural reinstatement and bringing vacant floor space back into use – (building had been vacant/derelict for a number of years) - underway

Projects that are currently in development looking to receive grant funding through the programme are:

- Brierley Hill Market – planning consent granted, tenders returned and contractor in the process of being appointed.
- 101 High Street (Phase 2 – new shopfront) – planning consent granted and tenders returned and being assessed.
- 3-5 Church Street - planning consent granted, tenders returned and being assessed.

As is currently stands, if all these projects progress to completion all of the HAZ funding will be fully committed.

Community engagement and activities are also being positively progressed and delivered in conjunction with Brierley Hill Community Forum, Friends of Marsh Park, Dudley Market, Black County Living Museum and with teams in Adult and Community Learning, Museums, Communications and Public Affairs, Dudley Business First and the Historic Environment Team. There is in-place an Activity Plan for the project with agreed milestones. An example of one of the delivered projects in the Bells of Brierley Hill which has been promoted on the webpages of Historic England: <https://heritagecalling.com/2023/03/16/the-bells-of-brierley-hill/>

Another major element of the High Street Heritage HAZ is the development of a Cultural Programme. The Arts Council England, National Heritage Memorial Fund and Historic England are providing funding for the development and delivery of the High Street HAZ Cultural Programme providing the total sum of £94,000. In accordance with a milestone and instalment schedule issued by Historic England, the following projects have been approved and have either been delivered or are in the process of being delivered:

- 100 Faces of Brierley Hill
- Radio Public Library (social art project) – Workshop 24
- Pop Up Gallery and Shop – Dudley College
- Brierley Hill Song Book – Dan Whitehouse

- Great Big Green Week – Ekho Collective
- These People, This Place - Ekho Collective

All the funding for this programme has been committed and is now in the process of commencing the evaluation and monitoring stage.

For more information visit the webpage for the project:  
<https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/planning/historic-environment/brierley-hill-high-street-heritage-action-zone/>

## **Stourbridge - projects in development/pipeline**

### **Stourbridge Project Plan**

Following the removal of the temporary Covid Emergency Active Travel measures in Stourbridge Town Centre, officers were asked to consider what permanent improvements could be developed to improve pedestrian movement and safety together with wider sustainable connectivity enhancements supporting the town centre. Alongside this, officers were also requested to identify potential funding streams to aid delivery of these improvements.

To support this work a project plan has been developed for the town centre, to include opportunities for improving access to and within the town centre for walking and cycling within an overall enhanced public realm environment. Public consultation on the proposals contained within the project plan is scheduled to take place in January 2024. This will inform the business case necessary to secure the West Midlands City Regions Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) allocation towards a sustainable connectivity package for Stourbridge Town Centre. The Council has already secured an indicative allocation of £3M and this funding is subject to the approval of the required Business Case submissions to the West Midlands Combined Authority Single Assurance Framework, which requires compliance with strict criteria relating to the design of active travel measures.

In parallel with the consultation and business case development, work is underway to deliver previously committed to projects which have funding in place. These include a Changing Places Toilet at the Town Hall, enhancements to Stourbridge bridge, and a 'pocket park' approach to the northern gateway at the top of Lower High Street.

### **Lye Regeneration Programme**

Lye is one of the poorest areas within Dudley Borough and features highly on the national Index on Multiple Deprivation. There are a number of key regeneration and investment opportunities within the district centre to support renewal and new growth. These include: -

- Land South of Lye Bypass - Regeneration of Council owned vacant land and underutilised car parks south of Lye By-Pass presenting mixed development opportunities.
- Stour Valley - Opportunities exist to consolidate the area as a location for housing growth and improve the green infrastructure.

Strategic Connectivity Package - Improve connectivity within the town centre and address poor air quality with the opportunity for improved linkages to Lye station which provides the transport connection to Central Birmingham and mainline rail services. High Street - Improvement of public realm and enhancement of the historic environment. To support the approach,

In 2021 the Government introduced a requirement for all local planning authorities to develop local design codes. This is part of the government's agenda to improve design quality, particularly for new developments. On the back of this, the government (via the Office of Place) has established a National Design Code Pathfinder Pilot Programme whereby local authorities and other organisations have been selected as pilots to produce exemplar design codes for areas within their local authority boundary. The Council secured £120,000 from the Department of Levelling Up to produce a Design Code as part of the National Design Code Pathfinder Programme. Building Design Partnership (BDP) were appointed to develop a masterplan and design code for the Lye and Stour Valley area. The pilot project is nearing completion and will be used to inform the strategic regeneration programme to be taken forward across the town centre.

The Council made a submission to Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund in July 2022. This was for a mixed regeneration funding package to support the town centre. The funding bid was unsuccessful.

In the period since, West Midlands Combined Authority has secured regeneration funds through the Devolution Deal with Government. The intention is now to align the Lye programme to these funds. A Project Plan was prepared in the summer of 2023. This sets out a 10 year strategic approach for the town and the next steps of an implementation strategy, including internal governance arrangements and opening a dialogue with strategic funders. The programme includes an infrastructure and connectivity package, public realm and historic buildings improvement programme, a community programme and support for the private sector to bring forward new homes on brownfield land. There is also approval to set up a Town Board. The overall programme has a value in the region of £90m. There is a requirement for an initial £20-25m of funding support from public partners.

There has been engagement with the High Streets task Force which has offered support from a member of the Institute of Place Management to help develop the Lye proposals. In particular, support around food and drink and re-establishment of the night-time economy.

Initial engagement with WMCA has been very positive. The Project Plan follows a 'place based' approach which WMCA is looking to develop for the distribution of its Devolution Deal funding. The Chief Executive Laura Shoaf has requested her Directors establish a high-level dialogue with the Council on strategic principles, so the parties can then discuss funding and access to Devolution Deal monies.

Briefings have been held with the local MP Suzanne Webb who is supportive of the approach. The Lye Ward Members have been briefed and a series of update meetings scheduled going forward.

The intention is to establish internal governance and reporting arrangements in Q4 2023/24 and appoint internal project managers to take forward the individual work packages.

### **Pipeline Projects/Bids**

#### **Levelling Up Growth Zones (LUZs)**

The Council has been engaging with the West Midlands Combined Authority during 2023 on the Dudley Levelling Up Zone (LUZ) and associated business rate retention sites. The process has been evolving and adapting, as WMCA and Government agree the details on arrangements for the West Midlands area, and most appropriate way for the local authority areas to benefit.

The process has reached a conclusion, with agreement on three LUZs within the West Midlands that have business rate retention sites within them. This has required the Sandwell and Dudley Growth Zones to be presented as one zone, the '**Sandwell and Dudley Growth Zone**'. Assurances from WMCA have been secured that this is for presentational purposes only and that the two zones will operate separately with their own governance and financing arrangements.

The Dudley Levelling Up Zone has been drawn to be consistent with the emerging Priority Regeneration Corridor within the Dudley Local Plan. Within that there are three proposed business rate retention sites, detailed in the spreadsheet below.

Name	Size (ha)	Site details
Brierley Hill LUZ site	14.0	Level Street/Waterfront Way, Brierley Hill
Dudley LUZ site 1	2.5	Plot 3 Castlegate Park, Dudley
Dudley LUZ site 2	8.8	Includes Hall Street, Portersfield, Flood Street sites
<b>Totals</b>	<b>25.3</b>	

There is still a considerable amount of work to do to understand the financial modelling for the proposed business rate retention sites, with colleagues in Revenues and Benefits continuing to work with DHLUC to provide baseline data.

We also need to develop a programme and governance framework for the Dudley LUZ, which will be subject to cabinet approval (likely in early 2024). This will require more clarity on the financial modelling, the risks/ rewards to the Council and the engagement/reporting process with WMCA and DLUHC.

### **Long Term Plan for Towns (LTPfT)**

The Council has been awarded £20m for a 10-year socio-economic regeneration programme, focused on the town of Dudley. LTPfT funding can be drawn down from Government from the summer of 2024, subject to the identification of an inclusive Town Board and the preparation and approval of a 'Long Term Plan'. A report was presented to Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

The report set out the detail of the LTPfT initiative, the priority themes, objectives and the steps that the Council need to progress. It identifies that work during the early part of 2024, to enable the drawdown of resources, should include:

- *Engagement with DLUHC* – government is developing further guidance that will include advice on developing the Town Board, as well as further detail on funding. When this is received, the Director of Regeneration & Enterprise will engage with DLUHC and the proposed Towns Taskforce on the implementation of the initiative.
- *Creation of the Town Board* – including engagement with the Dudley North MP and with key groups and individuals. The key groups to be represented on the Board are detailed in the LTPfT guidance and The Director of Regeneration & Enterprise has been given approval to engage with the key groups and individuals, including those on the current Dudley Town Board, to refresh and re-purpose the existing Dudley Town Board. This will need to include the identification of a Chair.

- *Preparation of the 'Long Term Plan'*- the Long Term Plan should be in place by Summer 2024. To achieve that date, approval has been given for work to commence on the Long Term Plan, alongside the creation of the Town Board and in discussion with emerging Board members. This could include the planning of community engagement events, in conjunction with key stakeholders and emerging Board members.

Membership of the final Board and agreement to the Plan will be subject to Cabinet approval.

### **Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Round 3**

In August 2022, the Council submitted four LUF bids to Government. The LUF has been established to invest in local infrastructure that has a visible impact on people and their communities – including a range of high value local investment priorities, such as local transport schemes, urban regeneration projects and cultural assets.

Unfortunately, in January 2023 it was confirmed that none of these bids were selected for funding, although it is understood that the Brierley Hill bid, in the Dudley South constituency, made a shortlist.

On 20<sup>th</sup> November Michael Gove announced non-competitive allocations of £20m to both the Brierley Hill and Halesowen bids.

The Brierley Hill bid will support the development of an Education and Learning Quarter. This includes investment to help Dudley College build a new Technology Centre at Venture Way; and a package of support to address connectivity issues between the High Street and Merry Hill.

The Halesowen bid will use the Pool Road Car Park as a catalyst for change by providing a new college facility that will be operated by Halesowen College. The college will offer hair & beauty courses, catering & hospitality, and adult learning. The facility will also include a public-facing restaurant and other retail provision – offering practical training for students, economic uses in the town centre and valuable new amenities for residents.

The bid will also include the creation of additional parking capacity at Andrews Road and Halesowen Leisure Centre to offset some of the loss at Pool Road, as well as improving the entrance to Cornbow Hall. To support the Pool Road scheme and improve active travel there will be significant infrastructure, public realm, and landscape improvements.

Further guidance is awaited.



## **Dudley Economic and Regeneration Strategy**

In June 2023, the Council appointed SQW to prepare an 'Economic and Regeneration Strategy' for the Council. The Strategy is required to address a highlighted corporate priority and to underpin future funding bids to Government, The West Midlands Combined Authority, and other sources.

SQW has been liaising closely with a core officer team within the Regeneration & Enterprise Directorate and has undertaken the following:

- A detailed econometric analysis and preparation of a Key Issues Paper, highlighting the Boroughs key challenges and the themes that should form the focus of the Strategy.
- A workshop with the Council core team in early October 2023 to discuss the above and agree the evolving Strategy.
- A series of stakeholder consultations across different Council departments and external bodies/ individuals – and four themed workshops with internal/external parties in late October 2023.
- A workshop with the 'Dudley Business Champions' and the 'Education and Skills' Boards on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023.
- A workshop with the Council core team on the 6<sup>th</sup> December to discuss the draft Strategy and the Action Plan.

SQW is currently finalising the Strategy and Action Plan for its consideration at Cabinet on March 20<sup>th</sup> 2024.

## **New Legislation**

### **The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023**

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURB) received royal assent on 26 October 2023, becoming an Act. The Act includes a number of measures to encourage investment and development in towns and cities by providing practical measures for local authorities to apply, or seeks to speed up and simplify existing measures :

- New powers for local planning authorities to instigate auctions to take leases on vacant high street properties thereby forcing/encouraging landlords to not leave their properties unoccupied.
- Simplifying the process for compulsory purchase orders, to reduce the time and risks involved and empowering local authorities to acquire brownfield land compulsorily for regeneration of their area.
- A requirement for local planning authorities to have an authority wide design code in place
- The replacement of Section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Level (CIL) regimes with a new Infrastructure Levy
- Introduction of National Development Management Policies (NDMPs), they will sit separately to the NPPF and cover issues of national importance such as climate change, greenbelt and heritage.
- New powers to local planning authorities to serve a 'completion notice' on developers that are being too slow or have a track record of not implementing planning permissions within a reasonable timescale.

There are also a number of heritage related provisions in the Act which include

- Historic Environment Records will have statutory status
- Temporary stop notices in relation to listed buildings
- Urgent works to listed buildings: occupies buildings and recovery of costs
- Removal of compensation for building preservation notices
- Registered Parks and Gardens will get the same level of protection in the planning system as listed building and conservation areas

There will be a phased implementation of the various provisions within the Act and some matters will require secondary legislation and further public consultation.

## **Finance**

4. Any budgetary implications for individual schemes detailed are contained within the body of the report.

## **Law**

5. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to do anything calculated to facilitate the discharge of any of its functions (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive, to the discharge of any of their functions.

Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides for the Council to obtain best consideration when disposing of land and property. The Council has adopted a Best Consideration Protocol which forms part of the Constitution.

Pursuant to Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, a Local Authority has the power of competence to do anything that individuals generally may do.

## **Risk Management**

6. Each project has its own risk register managed as appropriate by the council or the delivery partner.

A overall risk register for the co-ordination of major projects is managed by Projects and Placemaking. The significant risks are included on the Corporate risk register and managed on Spectrum.

## **Equality Impact**

7. All of these projects will have a positive impact on people with different protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).
8. As each project is being delivered in a different way and are at different stages there has been a variety of consultations as appropriate.

## **Human Resources/Organisational Development**

9. Any staffing requirements resulting from this report will be accommodated within existing resources (internal and external) and therefore the report has no specific impact for HR/OD.

## **Commercial/Procurement**

10. All contractual agreements associated with the delivery of these projects will be let in accordance with the requirements of the Contract Standing Orders.

## **Environment/Climate Change**

11. All new buildings will be built to Net Zero standards.

## **Council Priorities and Projects**

12. The project will contribute to the 2030 Borough Vision through;
  - Full of vibrant towns and neighborhoods, offering regeneration of current disused sites
  - Better connected with high quality and affordable transport, combining road, tram, rail, and new cycling and walking infrastructure
  - A place to visit and enjoy that drives opportunity

These projects link to the Regeneration and Enterprise section of the Council Plan – particularly regenerating the borough and growing a stronger visitor economy and the wider regeneration of Dudley Town Centre



**Helen Martin**  
**Director of Regeneration & Enterprise**

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## **Appendices**

### **List of Background Documents**

Meeting of Cabinet – Joint Report of the Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Legal – Capital Monitoring Report – 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022 - <https://cmis.dudley.gov.uk/cm5/Meetings/tabid/116/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/543/Meeting/6443/Committee/468/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

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**Corporate and Economic Strategy Select Committee – 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

**Report of the Chief Executive**

**Quarterly Performance Report – Quarter 2 (1 July – 30 Sept 2023)**

**Purpose**

1. To present the Quarter 2 Corporate Quarterly Performance report of the financial year 2023-24 covering the period 1 July to 30 September 2023. Aligned to the 2022-25 Council Plan.

**Recommendations**

2. It is recommended that the Corporate and Economic Strategy Select Committee:
  - Review the contents of the Quarter 2 performance report, any identified performance issues must be raised and referred to the relevant Service Director.
  - Review directorate service summary sheets, which provide a detailed account of activity and achievements carried out during the quarter.

**Background**

3. The Quarter 2 performance report provides the committee with progress against the delivery of the 2022-25 Council Plan priorities and our Future Council Programme:
  - Dudley the borough of opportunity
  - Dudley the safe and healthy borough
  - Dudley the borough of ambition and enterprise
  - Dudley borough the destination of choice

The Future Council programme incorporates everything we do, it sits at the heart of the Council Plan enabling our services. The comprehensive programme ensures the council is 'fit for the future'. The programmes are key themes are:

- People
- Digital
- Place
- Process
- Financially sustainable

The council plan cycle is 3 years, directorate service plans are revised annually against the council plan. Reviewing and revising plans allows us to be responsive to developing priorities as well as ensuring we are delivering against the current plan. It is from these plans that our core corporate key performance indicators are reviewed and collated by our directors and heads of service, the councils strategic executive board issue final approve for the quarterly/annual reporting process.

#### 4. **Corporate & Economic Key Performance Indicators and Summary**

Overall, there are 34 Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) monitored at directorate level, 17 of which have been identified as corporate measures and 64 key initiatives /actions.

The 17 measures are also monitored and reported to the Strategic Executive Board and Overview & Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis, by the performance manager, in line with the Corporate Performance Framework.

The table below provides a summary of these measure along with the directorate/service areas which are aligned to this committee.

Directorate/service	KPI – Corporate	KPI – Service level in directorate plan
Finance and Legal	0	20
Digital, Customer and Commercial Services	5	11
Regeneration and Enterprise	7	0
People and Inclusion	5	3

Overall, of the 17 measures monitored, 12 are quarterly measures, 4 annual and 1 biannual. When mapping the measures to the council plan priorities, the breakdown is as follows:

- Dudley the borough of opportunity; **3**
- Dudley the safe and healthy borough: **0**

- Dudley the borough of ambition and enterprise: **3**
- Dudley the destination of choice: **2**
- Future Council: **9**

The performance management team have developed a document which clearly maps out the Corporate KPI's via the directorate service plans clearly showing the alignment to our council plan priorities. For further information or to review the document, please email the [CorporatePerformance](#) mailbox who will be happy to assist.

## 5. **Q2 Performance Summary**

In Quarter 2, of the 12 measures to be reported there are 3 on target, 4 below target, 4 have no targets, these are noted within the respective scorecards. One measure will not be reported until Q3.

Directorate dashboards have been produced that show the status of corporate key performance indicators and of key initiatives/actions being delivered for each directorate.

KPI scorecards are used to report and monitor performance outturns for the given quarter along with exception commentary for those measures below target. Please refer to the directorate dashboards within the Corporate & Economic quarterly performance report for further information.

### **Performance short-term and long-term trends**

The report also compares direction of travel comparing short term trend and annual trend within the respective scorecards. Where a target has been set the short-term trends (trend from Q1 to Q2) indicate:

- Improved: **2**
- Consistent: **0**
- Worsening: **7**

New KPI's for 2023-24 cannot be compared for annual trend, as annual trend compares the current quarter with the same quarter last year. For those where an annual comparison is possible and a target has been set, trends indicate:

- Improved: **3**
- Consistent: **1**
- Worsening: **2**

The following provides a snapshot of measures showing areas of concern with assurances given by relevant services to monitor and improve performance.

- **PI.2266 % of applicable contracts awarded that include Social Value outcomes.**

In Q2, 8 of 20 applicable contracts did not contain social value outcomes resulting in an outturn of 60% the compared to 92% the previous quarter. The low figure is due to a tender with 5 lots that resulted in 5 contracts for Early Years Inclusion Hubs that did not include social value. In future social value will be included in these contracts.

Social Value is the additional benefits and outcomes to the community from procurement processes over and above the delivery of goods, services and works. Social value delivery is mandatory for all procurements above £213k for goods or services and £5.3m for works. Although the procurement team includes it in all contracts it is involved with where possible.

- **PI.2642 Number of employers, partners and funding agencies worked with us to drive inclusive growth and social value for major investment projects.**

This PI measures the number of employers, partners and funding agencies who have supported us to drive inclusive growth and social value for major investment projects, this is a new measure and outturn for quarter 2 shows 1 employer set against a target of 2.

The service are due to launch the “iCAN” programme, which will enhance the offer of our boroughs two largest employers enabling real career support with a link to residents into good quality life enhancing employment opportunities and employers taking inclusive growth forward as a clear and ongoing focus. Targets will be achieved by Q4.

In comparison to the above measures, key performance indicators that are below target with an improved short-term and or long-term trend, are detailed below. It is important to note that these measures do not meet target tolerance, however, provides some assurance that services are embedding new ways of working to ensure they work towards the aspirational targets set.

- **PI.47 % Corporate Complaints given a full response within 20 working days**

The outturn for this measure for this quarter is 79%, against an 85% target, whilst not quite on target, the trend of increasing positive performance against this KPI has continued. Teams are working hard to keep on top of an ever-improving picture against current targets, this quarter sees best performance in many years.

Housing have now been removed from this KPI as the Housing Ombudsman has changed their target. Housing are being monitored separately, sitting at 50% of complaints having been responded to within 10



days in Q2. A further breakdown by directorate can be made available on request.

- **Sickness Absence**

Overall, for this financial year, sickness absence has improved. PI.352 working days lost per FTE (excluding schools) has decreased from 6.91 last year and there has been a 16.35% decrease in sickness days lost from 27493 to 22998 in this period. 1525 employees (34.4% of non-casual workforce) have had a period of sickness absence in Q2. The estimated cost of sickness in Q2 (based on an average full time daily rate + 25% on-costs) is £3,454,458.

Long-term sickness days lost (PI.370) has also seen a 9.37% decrease from 19532 last year to 17701, with Long-Term Days Lost per FTE decreasing from 4.91 to 4.78 in this period. 458 employees have had a period of long-term absence with the average length of long-term absence being 40.9 FTE days.

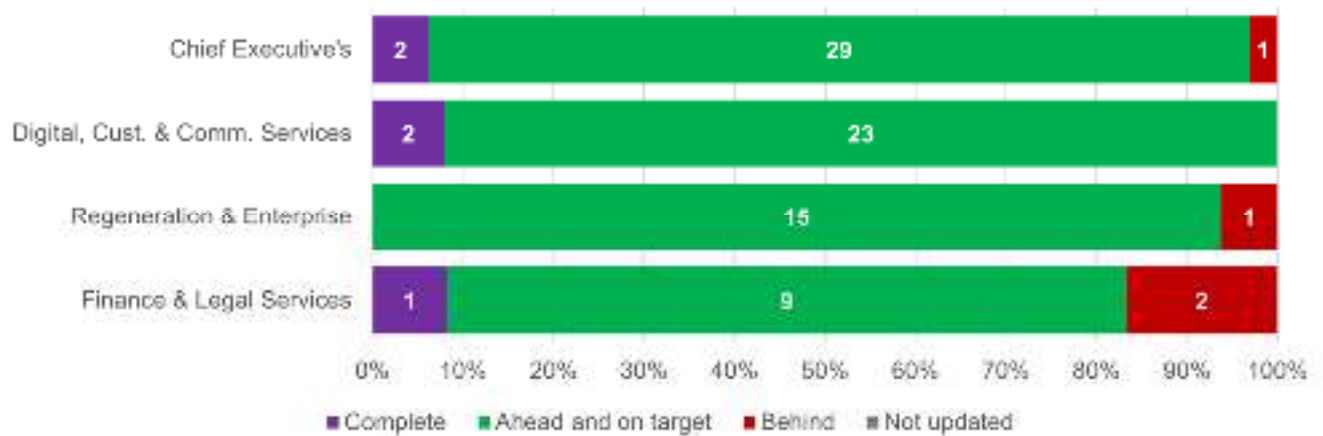
Short-term sickness days lost have seen a 33.5% decrease from 7961 FTE days to 5297 (a reduction of 2664 FTE days). Short-term days lost per FTE has decreased from 2.00 last year to 1.43 in this period. 1157 employees have taken short-term sickness over 1452 periods of absence. The top reason for short-term sickness is Covid - Symptoms/Positive Test (212 employees over 736.31 FTE days).

For further information please refer to the main report and the detailed scorecards together with the exception reporting where applicable.

## 6. **Key Initiatives / Actions Monitoring**

As stated in section 4, we also monitoring delivery on key initiatives/actions aligned to our council plan priorities.

Actions are identified in directorate service plans and replicated in Spectrum journals. Teams then provide narrative regarding progress as well as assigning a status of either behind, on target, ahead or completed. The graph below illustrates the progress made on key initiatives/actions recorded for quarter 2. Please refer to [Spectrum](#) for action narrative aligned to directorate service plans.



## 7. **Key activities / awards and accreditations**

The following provides highlights of key activities that have taken place across directorates during Q2 including any awards or accreditations that have been awarded.

- Digital, Customer and Commercial Services**  
 A two-week roadshow including sixteen MyDudley engagement events resulted in over 3000 residents participating and offering their views and feedback.  
  
 MS Teams telephony migration has been piloted successfully, full-scale rollout in progress.
- Regeneration and Enterprise**  
  
 Leisure Centre memberships are now just under 7,000; highest number of members ever.  
  
 Black Country Impact programme is now in the final 3 months of delivery however it is intended to fund a scaled down version of Dudley Impact from Q1 2024/25 using UKSPF.
- Chief Executives**  
  
 Funding secured from Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund (CWGLF) for additional resources to deliver our Grow Your Own Plan and development of our apprenticeships offer.  
  
 Successful delivery of national level sporting event, the British Cycling Dudley GP.

- Finance & Legal Services

Successful Proceeds of Crime Act hearing following the prosecution of a former Dudley Head Teacher. The Judge awarded the full compensation order as well as ordering the repayment of the Council's costs in full, giving a total repayable to the Council of £191,232.

## 8. **Directorate Service Delivery**

Inclusive to the report Service Summary Sheets provide a detailed account of service delivery. The following provide detailed information on service delivery for quarter 2 that are aligned to this committee as follows:

- Finance and Legal Services
- Digital, Customer and Commercial Services
- Regeneration and Enterprise
- People and Inclusion

## 9. **COVID-19 Situation in Dudley**

The Corporate Performance Report also provides information on the Covid-19 situation in Dudley. The report provided is the latest data at the time the final Corporate Performance report is circulated to the committee prior to the scrutiny meeting. For a live account on the Covid-19 situation in Dudley please go to <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus/> and navigate to Data Dashboard.

## **Finance**

10. There are no direct financial implications in receiving this report

## **Law**

11. There are no direct law implications in receiving this report.

## **Risk Management**

12. The current performance reporting period, risk management is contained and reviewed in the performance reporting, however as part of the new risk management framework approved at audit and standards committee, risk reporting will not sit within performance and each directorate will need to develop a risk register for monitoring purposes.

## **Equality Impact**

13. There are no special considerations to be made with regard to equality and diversity in noting and receiving this report.

No proposals have been carried out.

No proposals have been made, therefore does not impact on children and young people.

### **Human Resources/Organisational Development**

14. There are no specific direct human resource issues in receiving this report. In terms of the Council's sickness level and the management of attendance, the People and Inclusion team continues to work with Directors and Heads of Service to assist and provide support in tackling those areas identified as having high levels of sickness.

### **Commercial/Procurement**

15. There is no direct commercial impact.

### **Council Priorities and Projects**

16. The Council Plan and Corporate Performance Management Framework enables a consistent approach for performance management across the organisation, aligning the Council Plan, Borough Vision and Future Council Programme and provides that golden thread between them.

Our Council Plan is built around 4 key priority areas, and our Future Council programme. The Council Plan is a 3-year '[Plan on a Page](#)'. Each directorate has a directorate service plan that aligns to the priority outcomes that the Council is striving to achieve and includes an assessment of how the service has contributed towards these priorities along with a range of key performance indicators to enable us to keep track of progress.

Performance management is key in delivering the longer-term vision of the Council. Quarterly Corporate Performance Reports are reported and reviewed by Strategic Executive Board, the Deputy and Shadow Deputy Leader and Scrutiny/Select Committees.

This will help to enable the council to deliver the objectives and outcomes of the Council Plan and in turn the Borough Vision.



**Kevin O'Keefe**  
**Chief Executive**

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## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Corporate Quarterly Performance Management Report Quarter 2  
Appendix 2 - Directorate Service Summaries

# Corporate quarterly performance management report **2023-24**

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## Quarter 2 (1 July to 30 September 2023)

### Extract for Corporate and Economic Strategy Select Committee

- Finance and Legal Services
- Digital, Customer and Commercial Services
- Regeneration and Enterprise
- Chief Executive's

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## Introduction

This Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Report highlights performance for the period 1 June to 30 September 2023. It provides specific information related to corporate performance indicators and key initiatives/actions that link to outcomes in the Council Plan 2022-25. Measuring indicators and actions allows us to monitor progress towards our Borough Vision 2030.

This extract of the full Q2 report relates to the performance measures of four directorates:

- Finance & Legal Services
- Digital, Customer & Commercial Services
- Regeneration & Enterprise
- Chief Executives.

## Council plan 2022-25

The Council Plan sets out our priorities and objectives, mapping out our journey to achieving the aspirations of Future Council and the Borough Vision. The plan is refreshed every three years with the current plan being effective from 1 April 2022.

In addition to the Future Council programme at the heart of the plan, the four priorities of the current council plan are:

- The borough of opportunity
- The safe and healthy borough
- The borough of ambition and enterprise
- The destination of choice

Further information on the Council Plan can be found on the [dudley.gov.uk council plan pages](https://dudley.gov.uk/council-plan/pages)





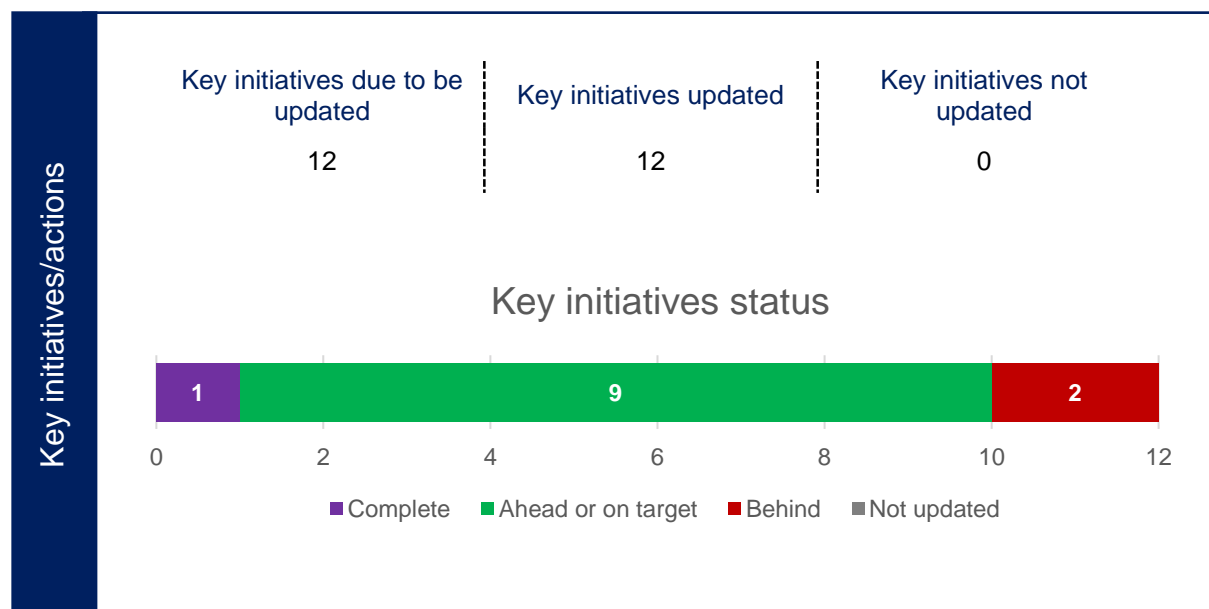
## Finance & Legal Services overview

This page provides a dashboard overview for the directorate of Finance & Legal Services. The chart shows the status of key initiatives/actions being delivered.

The Finance & Legal Services Directorate do not have separate corporate KPI's due to the directorates corporate supportive role which contributes to the delivery of existing front line KPI's.

In terms of budget General Fund, Outturn and Medium-Term Financial Strategy are reported on and agreed periodically throughout the year following an agreed budget process which includes all Scrutiny committees.

KPI's due to be reported	KPI's reported	KPI's missing data
0	0	0



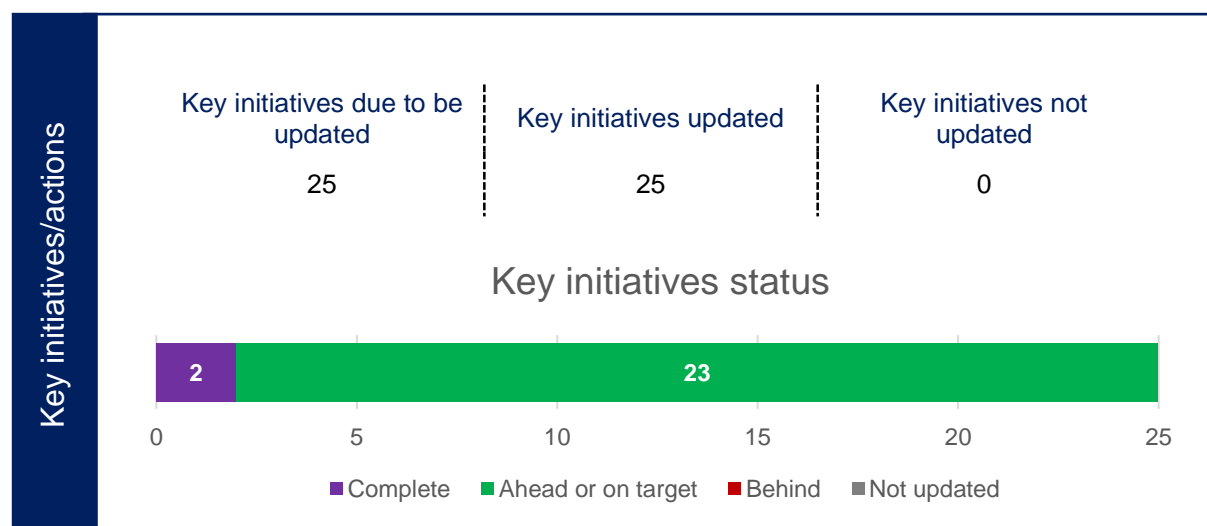
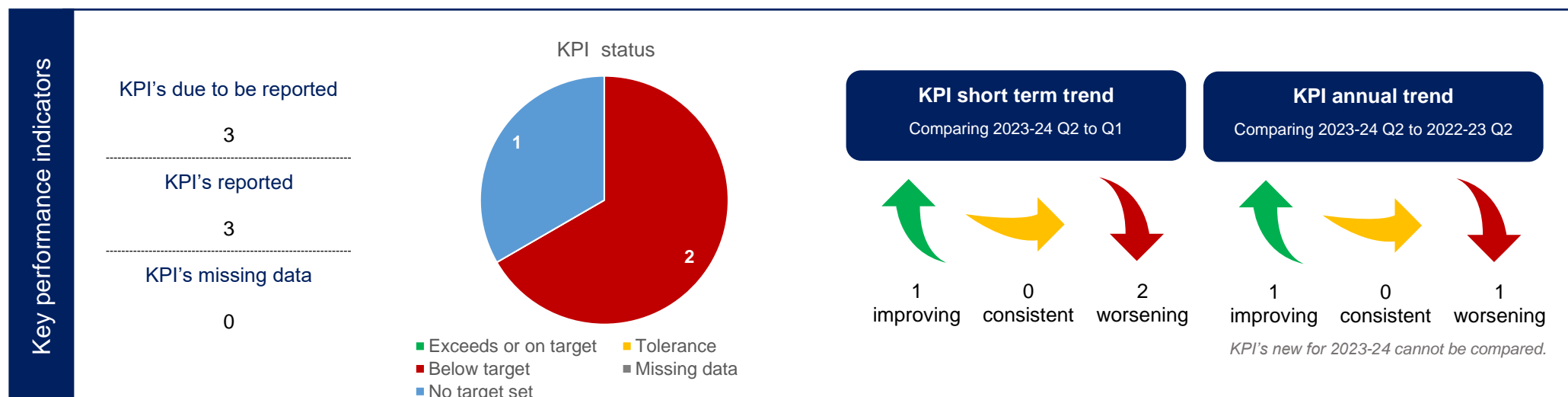
**Council plan links**

The table below provides a breakdown of key initiatives and corporate KPI's by directorate for this financial year including any not due to be reported this quarter.

Council plan priority	Key initiatives	Corporate KPI's
Dudley the borough of opportunity	3	0
Dudley the safe and healthy borough	3	0
Dudley the borough of ambition and enterprise	1	0
Future council	16	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>

## Digital, Customer & Commercial Services overview

The following pages provide a dashboard overview for the directorate of Digital, Customer & Commercial Services. They show the status of corporate key performance indicators and of key initiatives/actions being delivered. KPI scorecards are used to report and monitor performance outturns for the given quarter along with exception commentary for those measures below target.



**Council plan links**

The table below provides a breakdown of key initiatives and corporate KPI's by directorate for this financial year including any not due to be reported this quarter.

Council plan priority	Actions	Corporate KPI's
Dudley the borough of opportunity	4	0
Dudley the borough of ambition and enterprise	4	1
Future council	17	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>5</b>

## Digital, Customer & Commercial Services scorecard

	Performance Indicator	2022-23				2023-24						Benchmarking comparator data
		Qtr. 1 outturn	Qtr. 2 outturn	Qtr. 3 outturn	Qtr. 4 outturn	Qtr. 1 outturn	Qtr. 2 outturn	Target	Score	Short term trend	Annual trend	
Ambition & enterprise	<b>PI.2266</b> Percentage of applicable contracts awarded that include Social Value outcomes	81.6%	80%	81.25%	58.33%	92%	<b>60%</b> (12 / 20)	85%	▲	↘	↘	Local measure, benchmark against previous years
Future council	<b>PI.47</b> % Corporate Complaints given a full response within 20 working days	69%	69%	69%	71%	77%	<b>79%</b> (305 / 386)	85%	▲	↗	↗	Local measure, benchmark against previous years
	<b>PI.2578</b> % of corporate Complaints Upheld / Justified	New measure				25%	<b>27%</b> (104 / 386)	See note*		↘	N/A	New measure, no benchmarking available

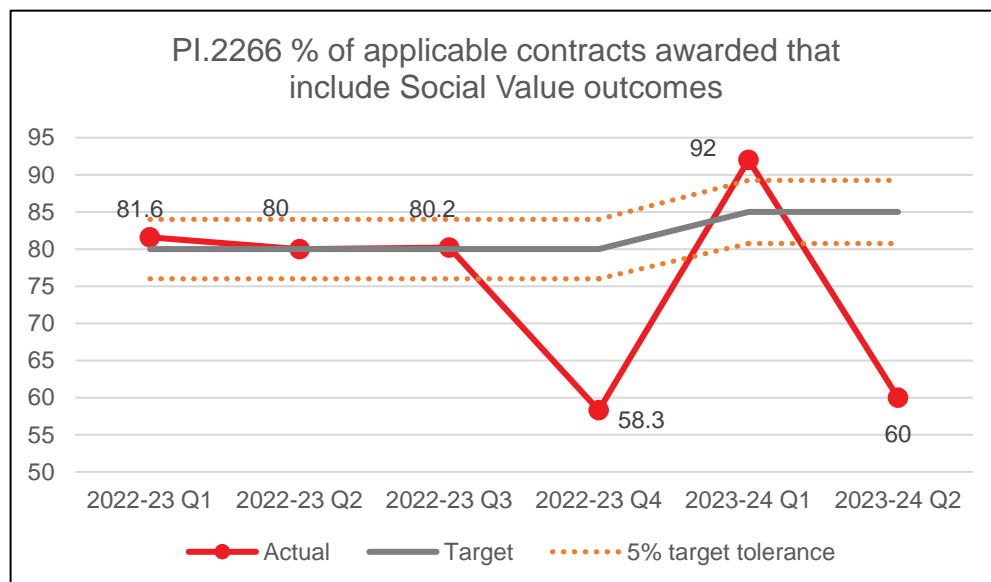
Short term trend compares current quarter with previous quarter within the same year. Annual trend compares the same quarter between years.

\* New measure. No target set as 2023-24 will be the baseline.

## Digital, Customer & Commercial Services exception commentary

### PI.2266 % of applicable contracts awarded that include Social Value outcomes

PI	2022-23				Q1	2023-24			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		Quarter 2			
						Outturn	Target	S	T
PI.2266	81.6	80	81.2	58.3	92	60%	85%	▲	▼



#### Performance: what is the data telling us?

Social Value is the additional benefits and outcomes to the community from procurement processes over and above the delivery of goods, services and works. Social value delivery is mandatory for all procurements above £213k for goods or services and £5.3m for works. Although the procurement team includes it in all contracts it is involved with where possible.

This KPI measures contracts where the value is above the PCR 2015 threshold (these are values set by contract type in the regulations).

In Q2, 8 of 20 applicable contracts did not contain social value outcomes.

#### Assurance: evidence that actions are in place and having an impact

The low figure is due to a tender with 5 Lots that resulted in 5 contracts for Early Years Inclusion Hubs that did not include social value. In future social value will be included in these contracts.

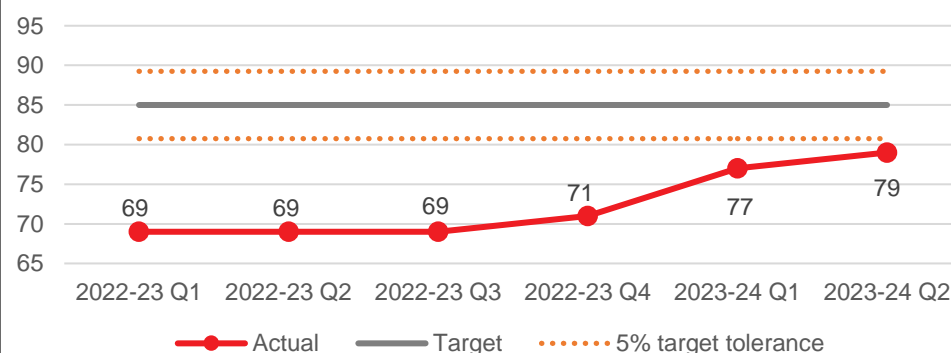
#### Impact: what are the issues/risks for service delivery?

There are no issues or risks to service delivery. However, the Council could be missing out on additional value that could have been delivered for the residents of the Borough. Although, as 5 of the contracts that did not include social value are for Early Years Inclusion Hubs, it is likely that these will be delivering social value anyway e.g. employing local people and spending in the Dudley economy.

## PI.47 % Corporate Complaints given a full response within 20 working days

PI	2022-23				2023-24				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Quarter 2			
						Outturn	Target	S	T
PI.47	69	69	69	71	77	79%	85%	▲	➡

PI.47 Corporate complaints given a full response within 20 working days



### Impact: what are the issues/risks for service delivery?

An issue/risk to service delivery is maintaining the upward trend of better performance against targets, whilst there are ongoing issues with complex cases, staffing resourcing/specialist shortages and budget constraints. The greatest risk, however, is a new combined LGSCO and Housing Ombudsman code which could potentially increase complaints, worsen customer experience and place demand on budgets. Consultation is currently underway on a new policy and target required by all councils on this matter and it will be raised to the risk register.

### Assurance: evidence that actions are in place and having an impact

Teams are working hard to keep on top of an ever-improving picture against current targets - this quarter sees best performance in many years.

Consultation exercise with LGSCO is underway and concerns will be collated, approved and submitted.

### Performance: what is the data telling us?

Whilst not quite on target, the trend of increasing positive performance against this KPI has continued.

Housing have now been removed from this KPI as the Housing Ombudsman has changed their target. Housing are being monitored separately, sitting at 50% of complaints having been responded to within 10 days in Q2.

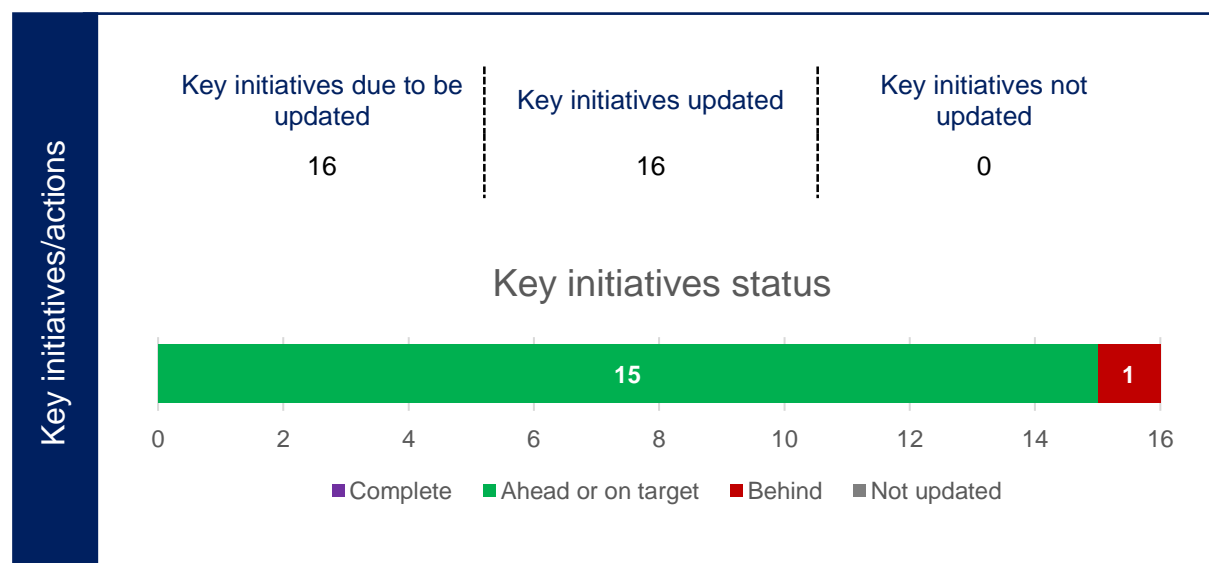
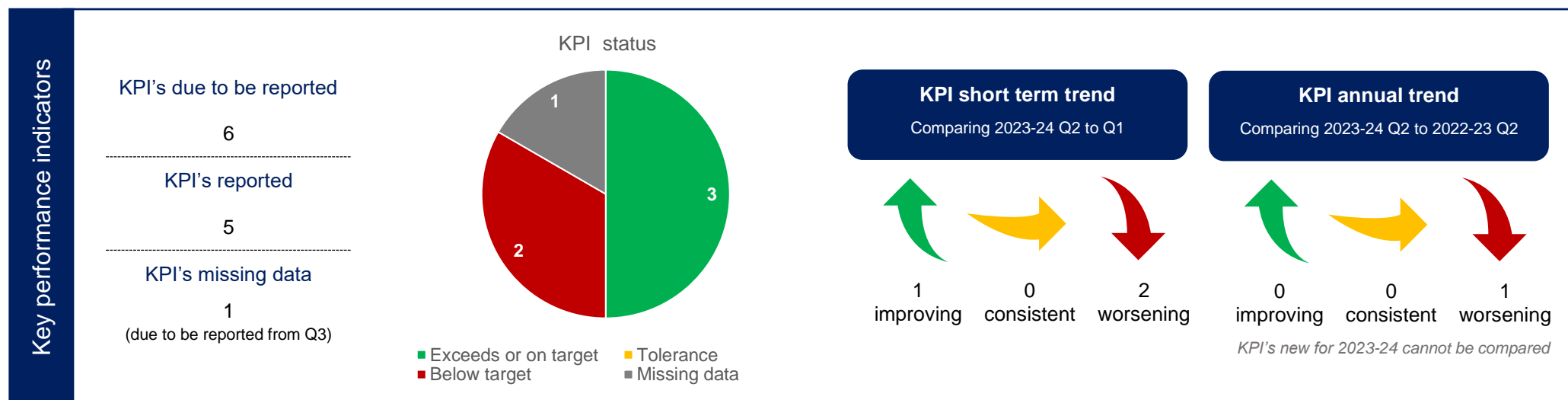
Revenues and Benefits report that their individual % complaints answered within 20 days was 98% and the 1 complaint outside of this timeframe was subject to ongoing communication with the customer. Their actual number of complaints was 44 compared to 33 in Q1 and 63 in Q2 last year. 1 business rates compliment was received. Within the division, the number of Revenues complaints received this quarter was 41 compared to 52 in Q2 last year and the number for Benefits was 3, compared to 11 in Q2 last year.

Social Care/Education/Disabilities complaints team note complaints for Children's Services increased this quarter, whilst Adult Social Care decreased. Complaints are detailed and complex and can involve more than one service and cross directorate input which can also affect adhering to timeframe for response. The 3 main issues are communication (lack/delay), quality of service/support and staff attitude/behaviour. All services are requested to complete monitoring and learning forms which are sent to relevant leads for analysis/reporting to senior management on noted trends, as well as action to be implemented. An overall performance and learning report for this area is analysed and presented to senior management quarterly.

Environment report there were a number of complaints for Greencare this quarter, mainly grass cutting, weeds and vegetation, which is a seasonal issue. Work is continuing with the Arboriculture team with tree complaints and issues to provide clear information on policies and timely responses. The area continue to look at processes across all areas of Environment Directorate to send informative responses and assist with response times. The area have received many compliments for efficiency and help staff at the pop-up tip at Lister Rd on fortnightly Saturdays.

## Regeneration & Enterprise overview

The following pages provide a dashboard overview for the directorate of Regeneration & Enterprise. They show the status of corporate key performance indicators and of key initiatives/actions being delivered. KPI scorecards are used to report and monitor performance outturns for the given quarter along with exception commentary for those measures below target.



The table below provides a breakdown of key initiatives and corporate KPI's by directorate for this financial year including any not due to be reported this quarter.

Council plan priority	Key initiatives	Corporate KPI's
Dudley the borough of opportunity	2	3
Dudley the safe and healthy borough	1	0
Dudley the borough of ambition and enterprise	5	2
Dudley borough the destination of choice	3	2
Future council	5	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>7</b>

## Regeneration & Enterprise scorecard

	Performance Indicator	2022-23				2023-24						Benchmarking comparator data
		Qtr. 1 outturn	Qtr. 2 outturn	Qtr. 3 outturn	Qtr. 4 outturn	Qtr. 1 outturn	Qtr. 2 outturn	Target	Score	Short term trend	Annual trend	
Borough of opportunity	<b>PI.2641</b> Number of adult education programmes (age 19+) developed to support priority sectors of the economy (FAFFA indicator)	New measure				3	3	4	▲	↘	N/A	Local measure, cannot compare against other WMCA authorities
	<b>PI.2642</b> Number of employers, partners and funding agencies worked with us to drive inclusive growth and social value for major investment projects	New measure				Reporting due from Q2	1	2	▲	N/A	N/A	Local measure, cannot compare against other WMCA authorities
	<b>PI.2643</b> Number of Community organisations supported to develop and improve community engagement to access learning, training and employment opportunities across the borough	New measure				Reporting due from Q3	12	- (Target set from Q3 onwards)	★	N/A	N/A	Local measure, cannot compare against other WMCA authorities
Ambition & enterprise	<b>PI.2639</b> Number of Dudley Businesses receiving non-financial support (WMCA UKSPF Performance measure)	New measure				Measure available from Q3 (the project this measure comes from is dependent on WMCA funding due to commence in Q3)						New measure, no benchmarking available
Destination of choice	<b>PI.1691</b> % of major applications determined within 13 weeks (large and small scale combined)	Measure amended for 2023-24 so no previous comparable data				90% (9 / 10)	78% (7 / 9)	65%	★	↘	N/A	1st DCLG ranking (June 2020) National target 60%
	<b>PI.1693</b> % of other applications determined within 8 weeks	100%	97.38%	97.53%	96.34%	92% (239 / 257)	95% (192 / 202)	70%	★	↗	↘	4th DCLG ranking (June 2020) National target 70%

Short term trend compares current quarter with previous quarter within the same year. Annual trend compares the same quarter between years.

## Regeneration & Enterprise exception commentary

### PI.2641 Number of adult education programmes (age 19+) developed to support priority sectors of the economy

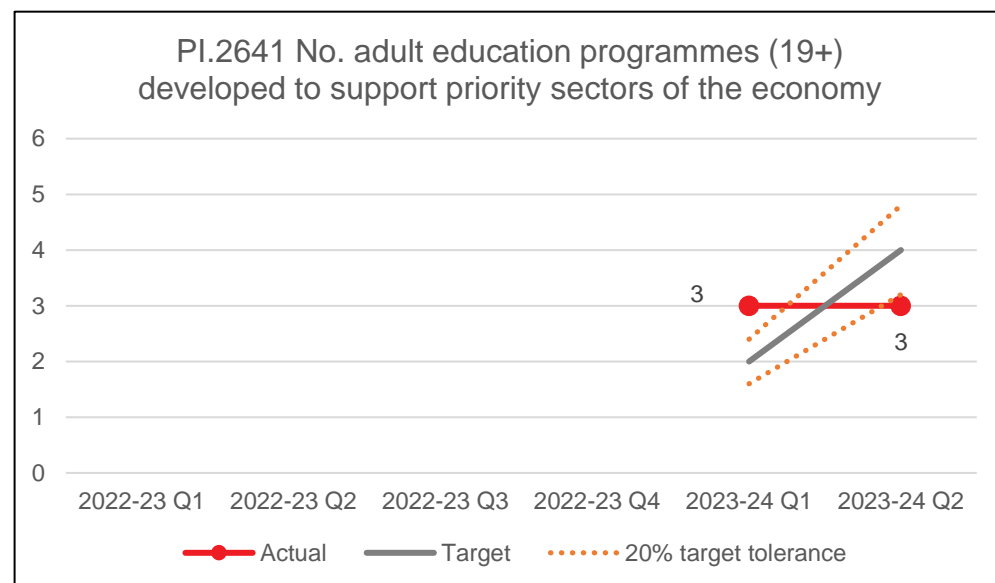
PI	2022-23				2023-24				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Quarter 2			
						Outturn	Target	S	T
PI.2641	New measure				3	3	4	▲	➡

#### Performance: what is the data telling us?

This is a new PI for 2023-24 and reflects the move in adult education towards employability and skills provision. The PI measures the number of Sector into employment programmes developed in the areas of Care, Customer Service, Warehousing and Employability. These are sectors identified as needing support with recruitment in our borough and therefore are linked to employer needs. The Gateways provide learners with entry level skills for these sectors and are developed and run by the Adult and Community Learning team. Employability and helping people get into jobs is a key focus for the teams funders (WMCA). Performance is slightly behind target in Q2 due to setting up infrastructure taking longer than anticipated.

#### Assurance: evidence that actions are in place and having an impact

The funding rules have now been confirmed allowing programmes to be developed in full. This in turn will then allow the delivery of programmes to learners and employers to recommence.



#### Impact: what are the issues/risks for service delivery?

Fewer programmes have been run which is a direct impact on service delivery to learners and employers and may lead to the team supporting fewer residents into work. Delivery has been held up due to changes to funding rules and redefining programmes the team develop to link with Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund. Not linking programmes to funding rules would pose a risk to the team in potentially having funding claimed back.



## PI.2642 Number of employers, partners and funding agencies worked with us to drive inclusive growth and social value for major investment projects

	2022-23				2023-24				
PI	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Quarter 2			
						Outturn	Target	S	T
PI.2642	New measure				1	2	▲	-	

Insufficient data to produce trend chart.

### Performance: what is the data telling us?

This PI measures the number of employers, partners and funding agencies who have supported us to drive inclusive growth and social value for major investment projects. Infrastructure is being finalised with the first large employer receiving ongoing support and funders being linked to all resident flow discussions. Our first employer has successfully engaged with and employed local residents and is supporting us to develop a wider programme for growth within the organisation.

### Assurance: evidence that actions are in place and having an impact

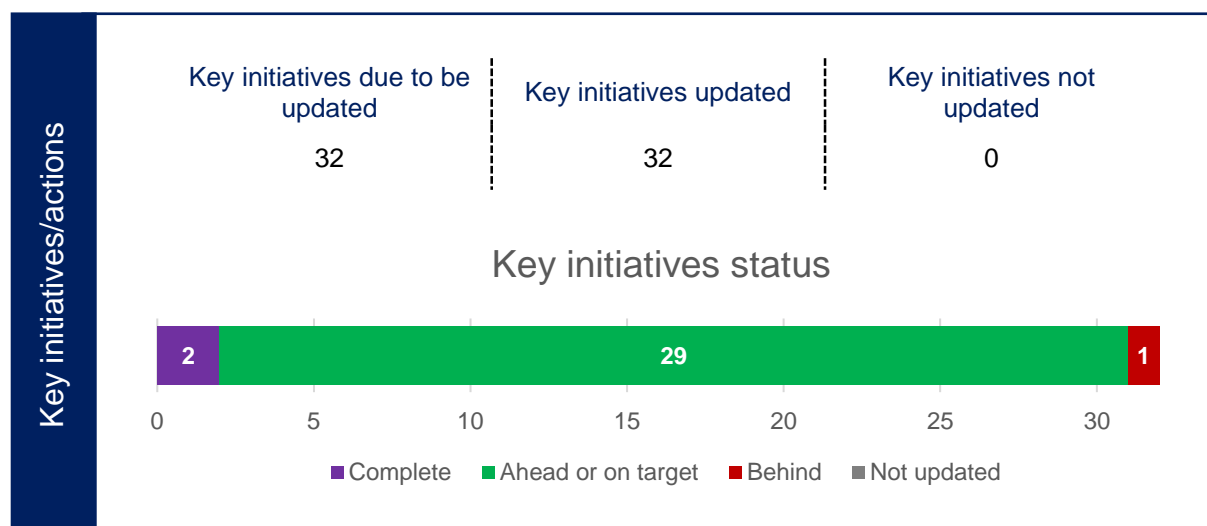
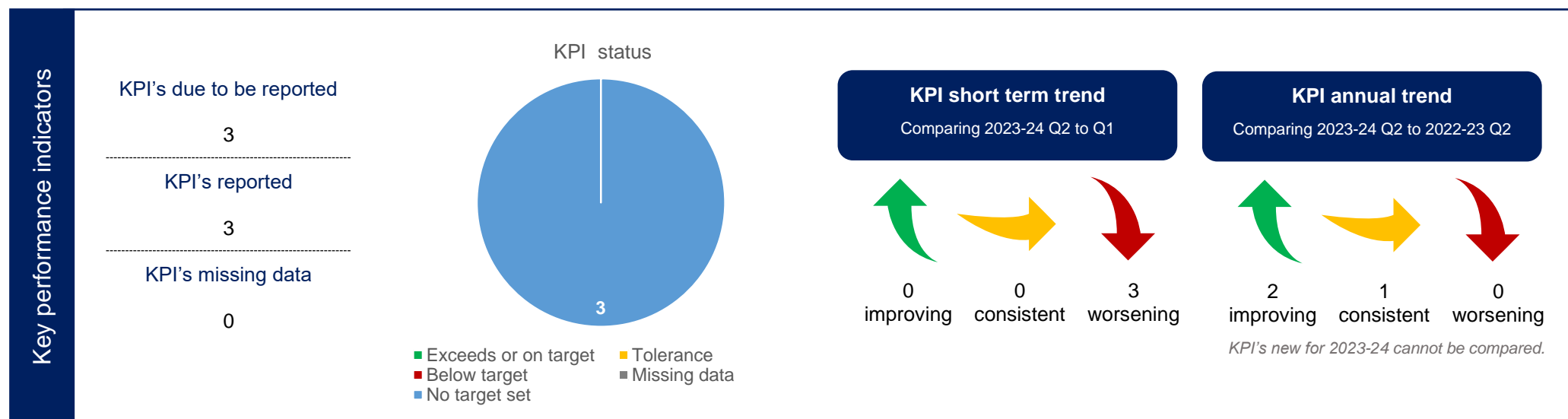
Linking employers, funding opportunities such as shared prosperity funding and Commonwealth games legacy for student support and partners into employer needs linked to social value and inclusive growth opportunities in line with the developing regeneration strategy will enable clearer links within growth opportunities and residents into suitable careers Change in place to enable this work to focus on new and changing organisations within the borough. Targets will be achieved by Q4.

### Impact: what are the issues/risks for service delivery?

The programme could and will fail without the ability to engage the right employers whilst utilising the correct funding opportunities and finding the right residents. Our "iCAN" programme is about to be launched which will enhance the offer of our boroughs two largest employers enabling real career support with a link to residents into good quality life enhancing employment opportunities and employers taking inclusive growth forward as a clear and ongoing focus.

## Chief Executive's directorate overview

The following pages provide a dashboard overview for the directorate of the Chief Executive. They show the status of corporate key performance indicators and of key initiatives/actions being delivered. KPI scorecards are used to report and monitor performance outturns for the given quarter along with exception commentary for those measures below target.



**Council plan links**

The table below provides a breakdown of key initiatives and corporate KPI's by directorate for this financial year including any not due to be reported this quarter.

Council plan priority	Actions	Corporate KPI's
Future council	37	5
Total	37	5

## Chief Executive's directorate scorecard

		2022-23				2023-24						
Performance Indicator		Qtr. 1 outturn	Qtr. 2 outturn	Qtr. 3 outturn	Qtr. 4 outturn	Qtr. 1 outturn	Qtr. 2 outturn	Target	Score	Short term trend	Annual trend	Benchmarking comparator data
Future council	<b>PI.352</b> Working days/shifts lost per FTE due to sickness absence (excluding Schools) <i>cumulative calculation</i>	3.36 days	6.91 days	10.85 days	14.53 days	3.06 days	6.21 days	See note*		↘	↗	7.44 days (West Midlands Employees comparator)
	Sickness as % of FTE days	6.06%	6.23%	6.51%	6.55%	5.52%	11.19%					
	<b>PI.370</b> Long term sickness absence per FTE (excluding Schools) <i>cumulative calculation</i>	2.34 days	4.91 days	7.69 days	10.4 days	2.38 days	4.78 days	See note*		↘	→	4.86 days (West Midlands Employees comparator)
	Long-term sickness as % of FTE days	4.21%	4.42%	4.62%	4.7%	4.28%	8.61%					
	<b>PI.371</b> Short term sickness absence per FTE (excluding Schools) <i>cumulative calculation</i>	1.02 days	2 days	3.16 days	4.09 days	0.69 days	1.43 days	See note*		↘	↗	1.65 days (West Midlands Employees comparator)
	Short-term sickness as % of FTE days	1.85%	1.8%	1.9%	1.84%	1.24%	2.58%					

Short term trend compares current quarter with previous quarter within the same year. Annual trend compares the same quarter between years.

\* No target set in line with other local authorities. There will be regular corporate reporting on sickness absence levels across the organisation to monitor trends, identify hotspots and issues requiring potential further action and for benchmarking purposes (against previous quarters/years and other organisations).

## **Further information**

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For further information with reference to the corporate quarterly performance report, please contact:

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For additional performance data please visit: <http://appsrvr4/spectrum#>



## Service Summary Sheet

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Chief Executive's Directorate</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>Quarter</b>	<b>Q2 (Jul-Sep)</b>
<b>Benchmarking</b> <i>with local authorities/nearest neighbours</i> <i>Please consider if a <a href="#">Delivering Better Outcomes proforma</a> should be completed also.</i>			
<p><b>Chief Executives Office</b></p> <p>CPMO working with 'Local Partnerships' on where we can best utilise fully funded (HM Treasury &amp; LGA) transformation support.</p> <p>Developing links with WMCA to enable the sharing of knowledge and ideas/knowledge regarding Verto, ADKAR/Change Management and your Project Management journey in general. We are also seeking to collaborate and drive efficiencies where possible – particularly around reporting and returns information on projects.</p> <p><b>Communications and Public Affairs</b></p> <p>Visit to Barnsley Council as Council of the Year (Municipal Journal and Local Government Chronicle) to learn more about their success story to guide future council planning and borough vision approach.</p> <p>Registration services regional training group developing mental capacity training for registrars.</p> <p><b>People and Inclusion</b></p> <p>The people and inclusion team undertook a number of benchmarking exercises during this period with comparisons made against all councils in the West Midlands region including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benchmarking undertaken for first apprenticeships and care leavers project within Talent &amp; Reward</li> <li>Benchmarking for Job Evaluation</li> <li>Benchmarking for standby/call out rates</li> </ul>			
<b>Overview of service delivery</b> <i>Include any issues / risks</i>			
<p><b>Chief Executives Office</b></p> <p>Successfully organised and supported the LGA Peer Challenge week in September including organising the timetable, meetings, resources, SharePoint site and supporting colleagues to in person and hybrid meetings.</p> <p>The CPMO Team continued activities around embedding the new Corporate Project Management Framework and the roll out of the Dudley Project Portal (VERTO365), directing initial efforts towards Regeneration &amp; Enterprise. All directorates have now been approached and steady effort with the uploading of c.49 projects onto the Portal.</p> <p>The CPMO is collaborating with an external consultant to develop and roll out 'back2basics' Project &amp; Change Management training across the wider council with a view to upskill colleagues and build sustainable project management capability across the organisation.</p> <p>Review of the Corporate Performance Management Framework in line with audit recommendations and to support the development of training materials on corporate performance.</p> <p>The team also undertook the review of the quarterly corporate performance report taking on board feedback from members and redeveloped the report to show scorecards and exception commentary by directorate and a summary of PI's and actions by council plan priority. The team also liaised with directorate performance leads to ensure the framework is followed and consistency of reporting to select committees.</p>			

## Communications and Public Affairs

Communications strategy through to 2025 finalised, linking to Council Plan priorities and outlining communications approach including channels and key messages. Also feature in-year comms priorities as agreed through directorates and cabinet members. Approach shared and endorsed as part of LGA Peer Review.

## People and Inclusion

Leadership/Management development – new cohorts commenced for the year two programmes and proposal for final year of the programme presented to and agreed by SEB. In addition, the discovery phase for the Dudley Manager was completed in readiness for pilot launch.

Learning & Development – completion of the discovery phase and configuration and testing for the Thrive Platform. Launch on track for 01 December 2023.

People Policy Review - The second phase of the people policies review was completed, reported findings to SEB on 25 July 2023. Work is underway on Phase 3 focussing on producing streamlined modern policies.

Health & Wellbeing - The new Occupational Health Provider commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023 and transfer of full records in process. Procurement of the new occupational health contract was completed in partnership with Public Health. There are several activities which are being undertaken as part of this contract, pre-employment checks, management referrals, pension appeals, health surveillance etc.

Workforce Planning - Completion of workforce planning workshops to Heads of service that has enabled completion of plans in line with new framework.

Recruitment - Following the confirmation of the preferred supplier via West Midlands Employers (TribePad) work has commenced in preparation for the new applicant tracking system, this will continue to improve the recruitment process and candidate experience. Consulted with procurement and Digital.

Car Parking - Proposals developed in conjunction with Environment, Corporate Landlord and Finance to introduce free car parking to staff working in the central campus.

CCNG – First meeting of the Council's Consultative Negotiating Group meeting for the 2023/24 year.

## Service achievements

*Report of any external accreditation, awards, positive publicity, during the past quarter*

First whole directorate away day held at the end of September which included involvement from all areas of the directorate to plan and take part in the afternoon. Communication with staff will continue through feedback from the session.

## Chief Executives Office

Senior officers from Shropshire Council contacted us after hearing about our Corporate Project Management framework and use of the Portal and we organised a show and tell on the Portal and they expressed they are willing to 'buy' our framework to support them on their own journey.

The Corporate Performance Team launched their first four training videos for staff on the performance framework. This includes information on the council plan and golden thread. With the aid of colleagues in People and Inclusion, the team are also exploring the videos being added to the new e-learning platform and inclusion in corporate induction and the Dudley Manager.

## Communications and Public Affairs

Registration Services new online forms introduced, and 107 ceremony response forms completed to date.

Forging a Future for All borough vision top-level performance indicators that align the work of Dudley Council to Dudley Borough Vision have been identified. This will propose option to develop performance framework for vision and will be reported to the Forging a Future Executive on November 7.

Successful delivery of national level sporting event in the form of the British Cycling Dudley GP, together with the Musicom Festival at Himley Hall and Park (Saturday event at Himley cancelled due to high winds).

### People and Inclusion

Funding secured from Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund (CWGLF) for additional resources to deliver our Grow Your Own Plan and development of our apprenticeships offer. Recruitment in progress.

EVP - Successful procurement exercise completed for external provider to develop our Employer Value Proposition (EVP) and employer branding. Contract started early October 2023.

EDI - Roll out of Equality Impact Assessment training and Menopause Champion training cohort.

Workforce planning - Completion of the workforce planning across the organisation which has embedded the changes identified in the workforce planning Audit and:

1. established a strengthened workforce planning framework and a 3 year planning cycle.
2. identified the corporate themes for focus.

Completion of high-level assessment of the equal pay risk in the wake of the Birmingham position and putting plans in place to strengthen the arrangements to further mitigate this, confirmation of these with external auditors via the Director of finance. Work has commenced to complete desktop review and put a moderation process in place (the latter) by 1st December 2023.

Children's Services Transformation - Successfully delivered the required HR elements of the Childrens services review that enabled the Children's Services director to implement the new family safeguarding model on time and without any significant ER issues (the timetable for this was externally recognised as being extremely challenging).

### Opportunities for improvement

*Information relating to service complaints / compliments and learning from these*

#### Chief Executives Office

Whilst rolling out the utilisation of the Dudley Project Portal, there have been a number of 'continuous improvement' activities that have been brought to our attention. An action plan (configuration log) has been devised to keep tracked of these in order to maximise the use of the VERTO365.

The performance team have been contacted by peers in Sandwell and Birmingham councils who wish to share learning and experience. Meetings have been arranged for during Q3 and we hope to be able to use learning from the meetings to drive improvements to the performance framework and corporate performance reporting.

Duplication of performance reporting continues to be raised as an issue from directorates. We acknowledge there is some duplication between other reports and service summary sheets and continue to address this on a case-by-case basis.

### People and Inclusion

HR Systems – we have identified potential solutions to enable us to provide a centralised database that holds all of the establishment management information. Work has already commenced on this in partnership with finance.

### Any additional information relating to performance



## Service Summary Sheet

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Digital, Customer and Commercial Services</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Quarter</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Benchmarking</b> <i>with local authorities/nearest neighbours</i> <i>Please consider if a <a href="#">Delivering Better Outcomes proforma</a> should be completed also.</i>			
<b>Digital &amp; Customer Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No formal benchmarking, but we continue to engage with other Granicus councils to learn best practice process design</li> </ul>			
<b>Technology Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No formal benchmarking but extensive engagement with Councils across the country.</li> <li>Regular meetings with strategic partners e.g., Microsoft, NEC, Virgin, EE to assess where we are on the development roadmap compared to our peers</li> </ul>			
<b>Commercial</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Due to commercial sensitivities no formal benchmarking data is available.</li> <li>Attendance &amp; Membership of National Enterprising Council's Group to ensure we are identifying best practice opportunities.</li> <li>Engagement with Durham, East Riding, Shropshire, Wolverhampton, West Sussex and Walsall Councils on a wide range of projects to share best practice, ideas and opportunities.</li> </ul>			
<b>Procurement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal benchmarking will take place at the end of q3/start of q4.</li> </ul>			
<b>Overview of service delivery</b> <i>Include any issues / risks</i>			
<b>Digital &amp; Customer Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer Services include council tax, benefits, switchboard, environmental, housing, and public health services. Other activities managed include managing the Councillor Contact and complaints process, Local Government Ombudsman casework, Tell Us Once, and Blue Badge. Customers use many channels to contact us: telephone, online self-service, email, social media, and in-person.</li> <li>Performance and consistency across customer services is improving. With the launch of MyDudley online services in Q3 we expect the volume &amp; complexity of calls and in-person contact to change and a need to revisit the operating model. Forecasting has taken place and we will measure the impact against this.</li> <li>The Dudley Council Plus team have transferred the management of RMC into DC+ to offer consistency under single management team</li> </ul>			
<b>Technology Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This service manages the deployment, development, monitoring, maintenance, upgrading and supporting of organisational IT systems, keeps the council safe through a cyber security programme, and supports staff and members by advising and managing all incidents, problems, and change/service requests</li> <li>We are on target to deliver the AV Technology for committee rooms 1 and 2.</li> <li>Cllr Technology refresh is in progress (50%+) accounts have been migrated successfully</li> <li>Server upgrade is in progress 100+ (70%) 2012 servers have been upgraded</li> <li>We have put more emphasis on governance and implemented TDA (Technical Design Authority) which is a design and cyber security gateway</li> <li>E5 License adoption is on track.</li> </ul>			



- Internal Firewalls to be replaced in Dec 2023. At the same time, our web filtering solutions will also be moved to the new firewalls.
- A new SAN solution to provide fast and resilient storage space has been procured and implementation is to commence in Nov/Dec 2023.
- A pilot to prove Robotic Process Automation is underway, aiming to deliver the first saving by December by replacing Columbus software.
- Key issues are the recruitment of specialised staff, transformation to the cloud, procurement, and deployment of new solutions, and funding for the transformation.

### Commercial

- Connect2Dudley continuing to perform above target and is in profit month on month.
- Connect2TalentSolutions has gone live, first worker has been placed in a school, ahead of schedule.
- School meals transition project is progressing.
  - Impact on finances is within budget
  - Schools are driving forward – 15% have already left the service with a further 21% with a confirmed leave date – gaining traction
  - A full update report will be shared in Q3
- A range of significant projects have now commenced with commercial leading projects on:
  - Leisure Centre Cafes
  - Leisure Centre delivery
  - Brookes Bar & Bistro
- Robust dashboards, data analysis, monthly P&L are now being produced each month for the core commercial areas, these are shared with the Cabinet Member and the service area and enabling data driven commercial decisions.
- Full P&L for education traded services has been shared with the service area and an agreed approach to pricing for all traded services has been published in conjunction with finance.
- Review of proposed 24/25 fees and charges for Regen and Enterprise is almost completed and next phase is to review Environmental Directorate.

### Procurement

- The service supports all council areas to maximise both cashable and non-cashable benefits from all third party spend.
- We have completed 9 tenders worth c.£2m this quarter.
- Key issues: continue the improvement programme which includes the development of category plans; retention and recruitment of specialist staff; culture change and rolling out the corporate approach to contract management.
- A key issue is the capacity of the team to carry out the work required.

### Service achievements

*Report of any external accreditation, awards, positive publicity, during the past quarter*

### Digital & Customer Services

- A two week roadshow including sixteen MyDudley engagement events resulted in over 3000 residents participating and offering their views and feedback.
- MyDudley is the sponsor for the Dudley Borough Community awards.

### Technology Services

- We have successfully delivered AV technology in the council chamber
- Multi-factor authentication/Conditional Access has been rolled out to all staff
- MS Teams telephony migration has been piloted successfully. A full-scale rollout is in progress.

- Use of biometrics (face recognition or pin) to log into devices and self-user password reset has been deployed to all staff. We will focus on the adoption of this service. It will enhance the security of the user accounts to protect against any potential cyber-attacks.
- Decade-old firewalls have been refreshed successfully without any major issues.
- The service desk has achieved its targets i.e., meeting the SLA of 90% this quarter.

#### **Commercial**

- Connect2Dudley have submitted a nomination for the Dudley Borough Community Awards “New Business of the Year”

#### **Procurement**

- Procured a new e-tendering system that will lead to efficiencies
- Contract management framework developed

### **Opportunities for improvement**

*Information relating to service complaints / compliments and learning from these*

#### **Digital & Customer Services**

- Bringing RMC under the management of DC+ will enable the management team to share best practice, identify opportunities for consolidation and efficiency and consistency of service

#### **Technology Services**

- Password reset from the single device to be implemented for all staff in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the year 2023-24. It will negate the need for a service desk call or requiring 2<sup>nd</sup> device for password resets
- Data classifications to be adopted in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. It will the council to start classifying our data with email and document classification tags.

#### **Commercial**

- No formal compliments or complaints during this quarter
- Feedback via the Peer Review about the impact of decision making in service areas being impacted by the data provided by the Commercial team.

#### **Procurement**

- No formal compliments or complaints during this quarter
- Ongoing work to ensure council officers understand the consequences of not following the governance procedures.

### **Any additional information relating to performance**

## Service Summary Sheet

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Regeneration and Enterprise</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>Quarter</b>	<b>Q2 July to September</b>
<b>Benchmarking</b> <i>with local authorities/nearest neighbours</i> <i>Please consider if a <a href="#">Delivering Better Outcomes proforma</a> should be completed also.</i>			
<b>Planning</b> Nothing for this quarter.			
<b>Economic Growth and Skills</b> The teams across Economic Growth & Skills (EGS) are heavily involved with managing and delivering externally funded projects and programmes aligned to adult education and learning, employment and skills and business support related activity, with the monitoring of milestones, outputs and outcomes overseen by the Local Accountable Body (LAB) team. In addition, the Economic Intelligence Unit provide economic performance reporting on Dudley's economy comparing against sub regional, regional and national data sets. <a href="https://theeiu.iceblue-web.co.uk/">https://theeiu.iceblue-web.co.uk/</a>			
<b>Corporate Landlord Services</b>			
<b>Projects and Placemaking</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some of the benchmarking that might provide insight and performance information for Projects and Placemaking is intrinsically linked with those used for other service areas – for example the team contributes significantly to assessment of planning applications and the production of the DLP.</li> <li>As the team is heavily involved with managing and delivering externally funded projects there are milestones, outputs and outcomes attached to each of these which are regularly monitored and reported on.</li> <li>An 'audit' of the Historic Environment Record (HER), by the Historic Environment team in accordance with process and criteria set by Historic England, has been completed and submitted to Historic England this quarter. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill may see HERs gaining statutory status.</li> <li>There are two interims in Regeneration and Enterprise who are working directly with the Projects and Placemaking team in different ways and bringing with them the experiences and comparison of working in other Local Authorities.</li> </ul>			
<b>Culture, Leisure and Bereavement Services</b> Bereavement Services – Annual cremation numbers are reported to the FBCA (Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities) annually.			
<b>Overview of service delivery</b> <i>Include any issues / risks</i>			
<b>Planning</b> Nothing for this quarter.			

## **Economic Growth and Skills**

### **Employment & Skills**

The provision of Post 16-18 within Dudley has remained stable in Q2 with the focus being to ensure there is sufficient and quality post 16 provision to allow young people to make the right choices to be active in the labour market, and this work has continued throughout Q2 23/24. With the ending of the Black Country Impact Programme in December 2023 which has supported 16 to 18 NEET activity (Not in Education Employment or Training) since 2016 there is a potential void in NEET provision given the follow UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) can only support 19+ provision. This is being discussed with Connexions colleagues who have responsibility for NEET activity in Dudley and potential funding via Commonwealth Games Legacy Enhancement Fund (Jobs and Skills pillar) is being earmarked.

Adult and Community Learning teams continued to perform well against all KPI's aligned to AEB funding and however, some of the Corporate PI's have been affected by the delayed UKSPF funding agreement with WMCA which meant that funding contracts were not agreed until early September 23 which delayed the procurement of activity in Dudley.

Black Country Impact programme is now in the final 3 months of delivery however it is intended to fund a scaled down version of Dudley Impact from Q1 2024/25 using UKSPF.

### **Business Support**

Focus in Q2 has been on the development of the tender specification for an Information, Diagnostic, Brokerage and Account Management service using UK Shared Prosperity core business support funding. The tender went live during Q2 and it is anticipated that the appointed provider will be announced and delivery commence in Q3. A Business Start Up tender using UKSPF also went live in Q2 and it is similarly anticipated that the appointed provider will be announced and delivery commence in Q3. Officers also continued the development of UKSPF year 2 Communities & Place activity with tenders going live for Town Centre related activity in Dudley and Stourbridge.

### **Strategic development**

The acquisition of 122 to 126 Colley Gate was completed in Q2 to facilitate the redevelopment of Colley Gate shops. Work also continued on the stalled & derelict sites programme following receipt of the Homes England funded report by Thomas Lister and Freeths in Q1

## **Corporate Landlord Services**

### **Projects and Placemaking**

- Continued training to support roll out of Project Portal with Back2Basics Project and change management training and ongoing engagement with the CPMO. Getting projects on the portal and colleagues familiar and confident with Verto continues to be a pressure due to competing demands but working through it step by step.
- Regen audit, alongside Project Management framework roll out, identified areas for strengthening and improvement. As a result, bitesize procurement refresher training has been delivered in a team meeting by Procurement with further sessions on finance and risk being lined up for the next quarter.
- Working Group taking forward regen audit actions has continued to meet, seeking to implement and embed with and alongside the PM Framework as far as possible. Some still need wider organisation decisions and clarity before they can be completed.
- Continued significant sustained input into DLP evidence base, plans, content and review.
- Changing Places Toilet at Cornbow signed off by MDUK completing the three Round 1 funded toilets. Work towards second round funded toilet at Stourbridge town hall commenced.
- Continued quarterly reporting and monitoring of externally funded projects including VLR/BCIMO, Low Carbon and Future High Streets Fund.

- Public Art – Covid Memorial Rainbow glass completed ready for metal frame, assembly and installation once the fabricator has capacity to do so following pinchpoint identified earlier in the summer. Cllr visits to meet the fabricator and see the Round Oak memorial in production undertaken, including one with ex-Round Oak workers.
- HID/Hippodrome – demolition of the Hippodrome undertaken.
- Portersfield consultation completed with overwhelming support for the proposals expressed in the 459 responses
- Interchange – CPO agreed by Government without requiring the enquiry following the completion of the land assembly programme through negotiation and removal of objections.
- Heritage Open Days organised and delivered in Dudley and Brierley Hill attracted good levels of interest and engagement, particularly in Brierley Hill where the Community Forum arranged a day of activities including that delivered by the team.
- Stourbridge project team continued to progress with the development of projects which are already funded and to scope the public consultation which will seek views an input to help access further funding. This is likely to face some delays due to many of the same staff also being heavily involved in the DLP work which has taken priority.
- Following Government's decision to stop HS2 a headline announcement of funding to the Mayor to complete delivery of Metro to Brierley Hill. Details of the funding, timescales etc yet to emerge. Delivery of Metro in Dudley town centre continues to be working towards being open to passengers Dec 24.
- Announcement of £20m endowment style funding for Dudley Town Centre under Government's new "Long Term Plan for Towns." This will require refresh of the Town Board by spring 2024 and development and agreement of an investment strategy to unlock the funding. Indications are that this is in addition to LUF 3 rather than being instead of it.
- Participated in the LGA Peer Review and awaiting the report to take on board reflections and recommendations.

### **Culture, Leisure and Bereavement Services**

Red House Glass Cone - Work on the £1.5m project to renovate the cone is progressing well. The work is expected to be completed summer 2024.

Himley Play Area – Planning approval has now been granted, the play area installation will start in the new year, expected to open by Summer 2024.

Dudley Market - CLS working with HoS and Tudor Markets to re-configure stalls layout.

Bereavement Services – officers are in the process of designing and costing potential new burial land. A report will be taken to Informal Cabinet early next year. Also, £500k is in the Capital Programme to renovate Gornal Wood Crematorium, this work is scheduled to start later this year.

Halls – A programme of work to upgrade the technical equipment at Dudley Town Hall has started, this will allow for a more diverse range of shows.

Leisure Centres – work is ongoing looking at ways to make the centres more commercially viable.

Culture – Officers are looking to commission a borough-wide cultural strategy to support the borough's regeneration plans.

### **Service achievements**

*Report of any external accreditation, awards, positive publicity, during the past quarter*

#### **Planning**

Nothing for this quarter.

### **Economic Growth and Skills**

The service has seen positive press coverage for Adult and Community Learning teams following a visit by Andy Street as part of WMCA Digital devices project.





## Corporate Landlord Services

### Projects and Placemaking

- Opening of third of three round 1 funded Changing Places toilets – at Cornbow
- Successful Heritage Open Days at Dudley and Brierley Hill
- The refurbishment of the public toilets in Brierley Hill has now completed and the toilets re-opened on 9th October. The refurbished facilities include toilets with a baby change facility and a new disabled toilet. The works were supported by the Future High Streets Fund programme which is supporting a number of improvements to the High Street.
- 

### Culture, Leisure and Bereavement Services

Leisure Centre memberships are now just under 7,000; this is the highest number of members the borough has ever had. Borough Halls continue to offer a high number of shows.

### Opportunities for improvement

*Information relating to service complaints / compliments and learning from these*

### Planning

Working with Local Authority Building Control on review of Dudley's Building Control Service. The review will inform an action plan for the service to aid delivery. The benefit will be to the customers who require building regulation approval.

### Economic Growth and Skills

A Regeneration Strategy was commissioned in May 2023 for the delivery of a Dudley Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan. The strategy will seek to develop an understanding of the Borough's positioning in terms of the regional and sub regional economy and tease out what we do well and where are the deficiencies. This baseline will then underpin a review of the opportunities to create a prioritised action plan. The resulting regeneration strategy and action plan will provide a platform to promote the economic strengths of the borough to potential investors / businesses seeking to relocate and/or grow within the borough.

Q2 has seen a series of internal workshops undertaken and Q3 will see the commencement of external workshops with key stakeholders with the final strategy document due to be completed by the end of Q3 23/24 (December 23).

## Corporate Landlord Services

### Projects and Placemaking

- Actions identified in the Regeneration Audit continue to be implemented alongside the introduction of the Project Management Framework and Project Portal, and updated internal governance and board arrangements.
- The team undertook a quarterly review of the Service Plan. Additional activities identified demonstrating breadth of activity in the pipeline and underway but creating further pressures on resources and priorities. A result of which is a workflow assessment to review priorities and resources.

### **Culture, Leisure and Bereavement Services**

Commissioning a Cultural Strategy will be a positive step for the Authority, ensuring close working with local community groups / artists etc.

Approval is being requested for a commission to consider the possible future use of Crystal Leisure Centre.

Approval is being requested for a strategic site masterplan for Himley.

### **Any additional information relating to performance**

#### **Planning**

Performance within the KPIs for planning applications remains excellent, and well above the targets.

## Service Summary Sheet

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Finance and Legal</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>Quarter</b>	<b>Quarter 2 (1<sup>st</sup> July – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023)</b>

Performance reporting for 4 key Directorate PI's

### Service Improvement Priorities for 2023/24

- Develop the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy, advising Members and Senior Management on addressing financial sustainability
- Implement the Government's Household Support Fund scheme (HSF 4)
- Implement Business Rates reliefs.
- Implement new Health and Safety management software which is scheduled for implementation in June 2023.
- Identify and implement efficiencies in the Procure to Pay cycle
- Prepare for the requirements of the Elections Act and Elections in May.
- Improve the quality of asset valuations in the Statement of Accounts (working with Corporate Landlord).
- To further embed the council's Risk Management Framework and to identify sources of assurance on the management of risk, so that gaps in assurance can be identified.

### Benchmarking *with local authorities/nearest neighbours*

Please consider if a [Delivering Better Outcomes proforma](#) should be completed also.

### PI.867 % Council Tax income collected

### PI.868 % Business Rates income collected

Directorate Performance Measure (KPIs)			
PI	Actual	Target	SCORE
PI.867 % Council Tax income collected	55.5	56	🟡
PI.868 % Business Rates income collected	57.1	57	🟢

#### Council Tax collected:

Dudley – 55.5%  
Walsall – 49.8%  
Sandwell – 53.49%  
Warwick – 55.67%  
Wolverhampton – 51.06%  
Solihull – 56.86%  
Birmingham – 51.38%  
Telford – 54.11%  
Coventry – 54.2%  
Rugby – 57.66%

#### Business Rates collected:

Dudley – 57.1%  
Walsall – 53.7%  
Sandwell – 57.21%  
Warwick – 52.78%  
Wolverhampton – 55.59%  
Solihull – 57.73%  
Birmingham – 53.51%  
Telford – 56.7%  
Coventry – 59.1%  
Rugby – 59.13%

## PI 1403 Unqualified External Audit Opinion on Financial Statement of Accounts (Annual PI)

The 2021/2022 Statement of Accounts have now been signed off by External Audit - Grant Thornton.

As per statutory requirements, the 2022/2023 Statement of Accounts were subject to public inspection between 20<sup>th</sup> September and 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023 and work is underway with external audit to reach the point of sign off and then submission to Audit & Standards Committee in December 2023.

### PI.12 % of audit plan completed at key stages of the year

Corporate Performance Measure (KPIs)			
PI	Actual	Target	SCORE
PI.12 % of audit plan completed at key stages of the year	43	43	★

There is currently no benchmarking data available to measure against other local authorities.

## Overview of service delivery

*Include any issues / risks*

- **Financial Services** support the Council and its directorates in setting the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy, monitoring financial performance, preparing and liaising with External Audit on the Statement of Accounts and providing other financial advice and support. They coordinate the Council's cash-flows, loans and investments. They also arrange all insurances on behalf of the Council and maintain the Council's self-insurance fund.
- **Law and Governance** are headed by the Lead for Law and Governance who is the Council's Monitoring Officer. They provide legal advice and undertakes legal proceedings on behalf of all parts of the Council. Democratic Services support the formal decision-making processes of the Council, its Committees and Cabinet Members. The Health and Safety team provide corporate support to all directorates. The Elections team organise council, parliamentary and all other elections in which residents of the borough are eligible to vote.
- **Revenues and Benefits** are responsible for billing and recovery of Business Rates, Council Tax and Sundry Debts. They support low-income households by administering the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, Housing Benefits and Discretionary Housing Payments. During the last financial period Revenues and Benefits have had the additional responsibility of administering the Household Support Fund, Council Tax Support Fund, Council Tax Energy Bills Rebate and Alternative Energy Rebate Scheme.
- **Audit and Risk Management Services** provide an assurance function to the whole Council, lead against fraud and coordinate the management of risk.
- **Information Governance** advise all directorates on GDPR and Freedom of Information and coordinate the response to Subject Access and Freedom of Information requests.

## Service achievements

*Report of any external accreditation, awards, positive publicity, during the past quarter*

- Council tax collection regularly achieves upper quartile performance compared to other metropolitan authorities. A pleasing year end performance comparing favourably with our neighbouring authorities.
- The Household Support Fund (4) launched in April 2023 has been assisting Dudley residents who are in financial hardship due to the cost-of-living crisis. A fund of £944,332 has been allocated for the application element and the scheme is being administered in two phases. The first phase – 'Summer' with a total spend of £306,350 was split in 2 parts held in April and July, which helped 1924 residents. The second phase – 'Winter' which is again split in 2 parts in October and in January 2024 with a total budget of £637,982. The October

scheme £376,300 has helped 1860 residents so far. The final phase will be completed in January 2024 with a spend available of £261,682. Work is underway to ensure that the final application scheme in January is widely publicised.

- Successful external audit of Legal Services which took place in April.
- We have successfully transferred all of our direct debit payments and receipts over to Lloyds from HSBC which is part of the wider switching banks project.
- We have had a successful Proceeds of Crime Act hearing following the prosecution of a former Dudley Head Teacher. The Judge awarded the full compensation order of £140,810, as well as ordering the repayment of the Council's costs in full, amounting to £50,422, giving a total repayable to the Council of £191,232.

### Opportunities for improvement

*Information relating to service complaints / compliments and learning from these*

- Central Finance will continue to engage with colleagues in Corporate Landlords to improve the quality of property valuations.
- The service relies on feedback from Councillors, Directorates and other key contacts to ensure that we can continue to provide responsive services and comply with legal obligations on the Council. Any complaints, comments or compliments are recorded on the council's corporate system and forwarded to relevant service managers. We are committed to continuous improvement within the constraints placed on the service and maintain regular contact with service Directorates to ensure that we can implement learning from experience and plan for future workload demands wherever possible
- Most improvements that can be made in Revenues and Benefits rely on new IT applications. We have not been able to assess and possibly take advantage of these in recent years due to continued lack of resources. An unfortunate reality however is that debt collection may prove to be a very challenging area post Covid and now with the Cost of Living crisis.
- Improve use of council facilities such as Digital Mail services.
- Work needs to be undertaken with directorates to identify any assurance received against their key risks and linking performance indicators to risks.

### Any additional information relating to performance

The Finance and Legal Directorate has a key role in ensuring that we are a dynamic and sustainable organisation capable of achieving the aims of the Council Plan and ultimately on realising its Future Council vision by 2030. In doing this, we face the particular challenges of our financial position.

Dudley MBC is a low-spending, low-taxing council. Dudley residents benefit from having the lowest rate of Council Tax in the West Midlands and one of the lowest in the country. However, the consequence of this is that we have around £16m per year less to spend on services than we would have if we charged an average level of Council Tax. We have a low level of reserves (enough at the end of March 2022 to cover 19% of a year's expenditure – compared with 55% for the average metropolitan council).

A Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) up to 2025/26 was approved by Full Council on 6th March. Cabinet on 6th July and Council on 10th July reversed saving decisions in relation to libraries and other services and approved additional spending of £1m per year on weed control,



street cleansing, grounds maintenance and clean teams to respond to environmental concerns. The report of the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Legal set out the impact on the MTFS (see below) and recommended that members take account of the Council's financial position when considering these decisions. The external auditors have commented on the decisions in July and stated that they are minded to consider that they represent a significant weakness in financial sustainability and governance.

A Revenue Monitoring 2023/2024 report was approved by Cabinet 25<sup>th</sup> October. The joint report of the Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Legal set out the forecasted General Fund revenue outturn position for 2023/24 and the effect of General Balances at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and a number of control measures were agreed as a result of growing pressures on spend and use of limited reserves. Council reserves are set to drop to £6m this year but forecasts show the balance is likely to run dry in the next one to two years if action is not taken to address. Measures agreed include the introduction of a recruitment freeze, ceasing of any new contracts, termination of agency and interim contracts and more.

During the pandemic we had to divert significant resources to business grants and Covid isolation payments. We also saw an increase in numbers of Council Tax Reduction claimants although this is now starting to recover. Going forward, the increase in cost of living will be a significant challenge. Resources have been diverted to administer the Energy Support scheme and the applications element of the Housing Support.

There will be a full review of the Council's Constitution in this municipal year.

**Corporate and Economic Strategy Select Committee Progress Tracker**

Subject (Date of Meeting)	Recommendation/action	Responsible Officer/Area	Status/Notes
<p>Stalled Sites – Strategies for bringing back into use privately owned vacant land and property (6<sup>th</sup> September, 2023)</p>	<p>Resolution (5) - That the Head of Economic Growth and Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) circulate information on progress made to the remaining 48 sites to the Committee including a map identifying all 68 sites;</li> <li>(ii) liaise with the Technology, Systems and Services Department with regard to an accessible list of all sites including regular updates and an online directory of available rentable amenities within Dudley;</li> <li>(iii) liaise with Democratic Services with regard to future Member training.</li> </ul>	<p>Head of Economic Growth and Skills</p> <p>Head of Economic Growth and Skills</p> <p>Head of Economic Growth and Skills / Democratic Services</p>	<p>Link to GISMO sent to Members 07/11/2023 <b>(Completed)</b></p> <p>E-mail circulated to Members 08/11/2023. Rentable amenities are available to view on GISMO. <b>(Completed)</b></p> <p>Noted for arrangements for Future Member Training and Development Programmes <b>(Completed)</b></p>



	<p>(i) Report on the details in relation to the complaints procedure to include processes, how they were handled and feedback from complainants to include timeliness.</p> <p>(ii) Report on what work was being conducted in relation to work related sickness in future Corporate Quarterly reports.</p>	<p>Head of Digital and Customer Services</p> <p>Corporate Performance Manager</p>	<p>This item will be presented in March, 2024. <b>(Completed)</b></p> <p>Awaiting a response</p>
Corporate and Economic Strategy Select Committee Progress Tracker and Future Business (2 <sup>nd</sup> November, 2023)	Minute No. 34 (Resolution 2) - That the Senior Democratic Services Officer be requested to contact the Head of Economic Growth and Skills regarding the two resolutions arising from the Stalled Sites – Strategies for bringing back into use privately owned vacant land and property report requesting responses as a matter of urgency.	Senior Democratic Services Officer/ Head of Economic Growth and Skills	Responses circulated to Members on 7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> November, 2023. <b>(Completed)</b>
Corporate and Economic Strategy Select Committee Progress Tracker and Future Business (2 <sup>nd</sup> November, 2023)	Minute No. 34 (Resolution 3) - That a report on mitigating the disruption that is to be caused in general to two town centres and traders due to the full funding now being obtained in relation to the metro rail be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.	Director of Regeneration and Enterprise	An update will be provided at the January, 2024 meeting under the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Update Agenda Item. <b>(Completed)</b>
Corporate and Economic Strategy Select Committee Progress Tracker and Future Business	Minute No. 34 (Resolution 4) - That the Senior Democratic Services Officer be requested to invite the relevant Cabinet Members, Directors, Leader and Deputy Leader to future meetings of the Committee as and when required.	Senior Democratic Services Officer	Included on the Committee e-mail and meeting distribution list for information. Formal invitations for

(2 <sup>nd</sup> November, 2023)			specific items will be considered by the Chair and Vice-Chair. <b>(Completed)</b>
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### **Future Business 2023/24**

<b><u>Date of Meeting</u></b>	<b><u>Work Programme</u></b>	<b><u>Responsible Officer/Area</u></b>
6 <sup>th</sup> March, 2024	Economic Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan	H Martin (Director of Regeneration and Enterprise)  P Mountford (Head of Economic Growth and Skills)
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	P Mountford (Head of Economic Growth and Skills)
	Stalled Sites Progress Update	P Mountford (Head of Economic Growth and Skills)
	Quarterly Performance Report – Quarter 3	C Blunn (Corporate Performance and Programme Manager)