

## Service Summary Sheet

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Digital, Customer and Commercial Services</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Quarter</b>	<b>Q1</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 Enterprising Council's Group to ensure we are identifying best practice opportunities.</li> <li>Engagement with East Riding, Luton, Shropshire, Sandwell 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>Digital Services include a project delivery team and digital front door (DFD) team.</li> <li>The project team have developed strategic digital roadmaps for three key areas – Housing, Adults and Childrens services</li> <li>The DFD and customer service team have procured a 5-year contract with Granicus and have commenced the development of a new digital platform for residents, councillors and officers.</li> <li>The Dudley Council Plus team have been working on plans to transfer 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 AV technology in the council chamber and committee rooms 1 and 2.</li> <li>Prepared a proposal for Cllr Technology refresh based on the councillor's feedback</li> <li>Planned to bring councillors back to the gov.uk domain and email system.</li> <li>Scheduled and locked the upgrade for over 200+ 2012 servers</li> </ul>			

- We have put more emphasis on governance and implemented TDA (Technical Design Authority) which is a design and cyber security gateway
- We have automated security patches for our server/device infrastructure to improve our security posture. This will help us maintain PSN compliance and work towards Cyber essentials.
- We successfully moved all our on-premises SharePoint sites to the cloud
- 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.
  - Work to model the commercial opportunity.
  - Approvals reached to launch commercial arm during Q2 and to start trading in Q3.
  - Mobilisation has commenced.
- School meals transition project is progressing.
  - Progress with schools transitioning has been slower than expected.
  - Formal review of progress and impact on finances will be undertaken during Q2.
- Report to Informal Cabinet on commercial activity in Regeneration & Enterprise. 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.

### Procurement

- The service supports all council areas to maximise both cashable and non-cashable benefits from all third party spend.
- We have completed 20 tenders worth c.£7m this quarter.
- Key issues: continue the improvement programme which includes the development of category plans; retention and recruitment of specialist staff; culture change and agreeing a corporate approach for 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

- New complaints PI's agreed as a result of benchmarking against other local authorities
- Commenced Granicus platform kick off and implementation of core platform
- Agreed 8 key priority programmes of work with Digital Board.

#### Technology Services

- We have received the cabinet office approval for PSN Compliance for years 2023-24
- We have successfully rolled out mobile devices to the social care staff. This will allow staff to access and update user care records whilst attending on-site assessments.
- Multi-Factor Authentication /Conditional Access is being rolled out to all staff
- Successfully delivered a pilot for Councillor Technology refresh.

### Commercial

- Connect2Dudley finalist in the Nachural Awards "Start up of the Year"

### Procurement

- Won the Nachural Awards “Excellence in technology or innovation” category for the procurement of the energy for Waste contract.

## 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

- Use of biometrics (face recognition or pin) to log into devices and self-user password reset to be deployed to all staff in the 2nd quarter of 2023-24 as there have been some delays. It will enhance the security of the user accounts to protect against any potential cyber-attacks.
- Password reset from the single device to be explored in quarter 2 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

### Commercial

- No formal compliments or complaints during this quarter
- Feedback from the School Business Manager conference regarding the excellent support the Schools team provides them.

### 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

## Draft Service Summary Sheet

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Finance and Legal</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>Quarter</b>	<b>Quarter 1 (1<sup>st</sup> April – 30<sup>th</sup> June 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
<b>PI.867 % Council Tax income collected</b>	28.6%	28%	★
<b>PI.868 % Business Rates income collected</b>	30.1%	29%	★

#### Council Tax collected:

Dudley - 28.6%  
Walsall - u/k  
Sandwell - 28.41%  
Warwick - 28.65%  
Wolverhampton - 27.08%  
Solihull - 29.63%  
Birmingham - 27.22%  
Telford - 27.79%  
Coventry - 28.3%

#### Business Rates collected:

Dudley - 30.01%  
Walsall - u/k  
Sandwell - 29.42%  
Warwick - 27.16%  
Wolverhampton - 30.97%  
Solihull - 29.59%  
Birmingham - 30.62%  
Telford - 31.03%  
Coventry - 31.2%

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

The 2021/2022 Statement of Accounts are now pending sign off by External Audit and we expect to receive an unqualified audit opinion. The accounts were adjusted to reflect updated pension valuations but this did not change the Council's useable reserves as at 31.3.22. Subject to a small number of outstanding property valuations the 2022/2023 Statement of Accounts are ready to be published and it is expected that the external audit will commence in September 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	21%	20%	★

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.

### Workforce metrics

## 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 £800,000 had been allocated for the application element and the scheme is being administered in two phases – the first phase - Summer with a spending of £306,350 which has already helped 1924 residents and second phase - Winter with a budget of £528,650. The Winter scheme will be available for all customers who fit the criteria and complete an application which we hope will assist due to increased costs during winter months. Work is underway to ensure that the scheme 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

## 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.

## 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

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 external review of the Council's Constitution in this municipal year.



## Service Summary Sheet

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Regeneration and Enterprise</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>Quarter</b>	<b>Q1 (Mar-Jun)</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>Planning</b></p> <p>Corporate performance on major, minor and other planning applications each quarter is submitted to the government office via the national portal. Once per year the Government update the benchmarking positions of all English Planning Authorities.</p> <p><b>Economic Growth and Skills</b></p> <p>The teams across Economic Growth &amp; Skills 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.</p> <p>In addition, the Economic Intelligence Unit provide economic performance reporting on Dudley's economy comparing against sub regional, regional and national data sets.</p> <p><a href="https://theeiu.iceblue-web.co.uk/">https://theeiu.iceblue-web.co.uk/</a></p> <p><b>Corporate Landlord Services</b></p> <p>There are no statutory reporting requirements for (non housing) property related functions. CLS buys into CIPA Asset Management benchmarking group at which issues are discussed in forum. Benchmarking facility is available but whilst we have participated in past years, we have not participated in this since the Covid pandemic.</p> <p><b>Projects and Placemaking</b></p> <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, will be undertaken this autumn. 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> <p><b>Culture, Leisure and Bereavement Services</b></p> <p>Bereavement Services – Annual cremation numbers are reported to the FBCA (Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities) annually.</p>			



## Overview of service delivery

*Include any issues / risks*

### Planning

The development of the Dudley Local Plan is on track. The next stage is the Regulation 18 consultation stage which will be presented to Cabinet on 25th October 2023.

The Planning application performance continues to be at a very high level exceeding the national targets in both categories.

The LABC review into the Building Control service has been completed. Awaiting final meeting before implementing an action plan.

### Economic Growth and Skills

The provision of Post 16-18 within Dudley remains stable with Children's Services partnership leading on the September 2023 offer for young people to remain in suitable education provision until 18 including our contribution to the Preparing for Adulthood strategy.

Adult and Community Learning teams continued to perform well against all KPI's aligned to AEB funding and Corporate PI's. Work continues on the delivery of Gateways and SWAP's (sector work based academies) with a focus on identifying and securing future employment and training opportunities.

Black Country Impact programme now in final 9 months of delivery.

Focus in Q1 has been on developing an interim business support provision following the launch of Business Growth West Midlands on 1st April 2023, whilst developing a tender specification for the commissioning of an Information, Diagnostic, Brokerage and Account Management service using UK Shared Prosperity core business support funding with the tender due to go live end of July 23/24.

Continued development of UK Shared Prosperity Fund year 2 projects focussing on Communities & Place, Local Business activities following Cabinet approval for high level intervention priorities in March 2023

Launch of UK Shared Prosperity Fund Dynamic Purchasing System

Strategic Development projects, Heads of Terms were agreed with principal landowner for the freehold purchase of 122 to 126 Colley Gate to support the redevelopment of Colley Gate shops.

Stalled & Derelict sites - Executed Homes England Funding Agreement - 6th March

Delivery options and advice for 8 priority sites - 31st March including

- Written and professional advice on establishing a justification of CPO and advice on preliminary steps - 31st March 2023
- Written and professional advice on how best to use statutory powers available to a Local Authority including Housing and Planning Powers - 31st March

### Corporate Landlord Services

Ongoing Council House refurbishment project. The first floor and committee room 3 were reopened on 5<sup>th</sup> June with work continuing to upgrade the audio-visual kit in committee rooms 1 & 2 and council chamber. Phase 2 of the refurbishment has now completed which includes the lower ground/basement of the Council House and the first and second floors at the rear of the Council House, also known as former Revenues and Benefits / Crown Court. Phase 2a has recently started which will see the refurbishment of the Old Police Building. This is scheduled to complete in early December followed by Phase 3 the ground floor which is scheduled to be completed by mid 2024.

The accommodation strategy is due to be considered by SEB/Informal Cabinet later in October.

The Pens Meadow special school new build returns from tender at the end of October with a view to starting on site in December 2023.

The wind down of the school meals service is on track for termination in March 2024.

## Projects and Placemaking

### Activity for this team also reported via Capital Monitoring Report and Major Project Status Update Report.

A series of Council interventions are currently underway at Brierley Hill, which are intended to increase High Street footfall and visitor spend; and improve the level of facilities on offer. The long awaited refurbishment of the public toilets and public library projects commenced in spring 2023.

Good progress is being made with the public realm improvement works, which are progressing along the High Street. The Council's contractor McPhillips is working closely with local businesses and residents to ensure there is minimal disruption during the works and this approach has been well received.

Project Adjustment Request No 2, submitted to DLUHC and BEIS, to reallocate underspend from Daniels Land and High Plateau to a schedule of replacement projects on the High Street, with BCR of 2+. This was following Metro delivery delays impacting on FHSF spend. Outcome awaited.

Discussions ongoing with WMCA and Homes England re public sector acquisition of Daniels Land and the High Plateau sites for strategic transport and regeneration purposes.

Meetings held with Suzanne Webb MP regarding future programme for Lye. Lye Project Plan and Logic Model prepared and endorsed by SEB. Currently awaiting Deputy Leader sign off, following which consultation will be held with local ward members. Will then appoint project managers, set up workstreams and engage with funders. Forward activities to be agreed, depending upon other corporate priorities, i.e. Dudley Plan, LUF. Review establishment of a Lye Town Board.

Engagement with High Street Taskforce to inform the Lye delivery programme scheduled for October 2023. Member of the Institute of Place Management appointed to work with the Council's internal group. Lye Project Plan to be reported to Forging Ahead Board in November 2023.

- Familiarisation, training and commencement of establishing live major projects on the Dudley Portal in accordance with the Project Management Framework.
- Collation of output and financial information to support the successful closure of ERDF funded projects. This has included concluding delivery of the Black Country Blue Network funded projects in Dudley which have improved 6 sites (Sedgley Beacon, Holloway Street, Castle Hill and Peggy's Meadow, Coseley Open Spaces, and Turl's Hill) through works such as boundary strengthening, path creation and meadow restoration.
- A project team focused on Stourbridge has been established. This programme is seeking to develop the regeneration narrative for Stourbridge through mapping recent, current and pipeline projects for the town and using this to support delivery of early interventions, where funding is already in place, and to make the case for future funding. This will lead to a consultation in the autumn subject to staff resource.
- Portersfield consultation documents drafted in preparation for public consultation in the next quarter. The results of this will be used to inform next steps.
- Delivery of Dudley Townscape Heritage 2 (TH2), funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, continued with work at 203/204 Wolverhampton Street, 216 Wolverhampton Street and 204a Wolverhampton Street has been completed, with 14 New Street and Fountain Arcade being practically complete. Other properties within the programme include the following:
  - 208 and 209 Wolverhampton Street: shopfronts have been installed and awaiting signage
  - Plaza Mall: shopfront has been manufactured and ready for installation June
  - 207 Wolverhampton Street: project includes comprehensive repairs to the building and reinstatement of shopfront. Work to windows, re-rendering and reinstatement of shopfront due for completion August
- Delivery of Public Art pieces for Round Oak and Covid Memorial Rainbow for Russells Hall Hospital have continued using local artists and fabricators. Some delays anticipated due to programme slippage and creating a pinchpoint for the metal fabricator involved with both projects.

- Dudley Interchange project which is being led by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) and to which the Council is a partner. Preparation for CPO inquiry and continuing land assembly activity.
- Brierley Hill High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) consists of a number of programmes. The public realm programme is being delivered through the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) and is making good progress with the installation of new paving in the High Street. The buildings programme, which is dependent on building owners accepting grants and appointing contractors, has made contact with the owners of all priority projects with the majority engaging positively with the Council. Grants have been offered and accepted on 6 projects. The Community Programme has a range of activities being delivered by different groups to engage and activate communities. The Cultural Programme is being delivered in conjunction with Brierley Hill Community Forum. A range of activities had have funding approved including: Brierley Hill Songbook, 100 Faces of Brierley Hill and the great Big Green Week.
- Changing Places Toilets opened at Dudley Zoo and the Black Country Living Museum utilising Changing Places funding secured by the Council the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities.
- Towns Fund – discharge of pre-commencement conditions complete and demolition of the Hippodrome well underway.
- Metro Wednesbury to Brierley Hill extension – West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board agreed a paper with a funding package, subject to business case, to take the Metro to Waterfront following budget pressures leading to a decision to stop at Dudley previously.

The 7 individual projects in the borough under the Black Country Blue Network 2 scheme are at or near completion. This aims to improve the biodiversity and conservation status of 121.84 hectares of green space linked by the canal and river network. The projects are at: Castle Hill, Peggy's Meadow, Sedgley Beacon, Holloway Street, Coseley Open Spaces and Turls Hill.

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

Red House Glass Cone - Work on the £1.5m project to renovate the cone has now started. Scaffolding to be erected at the end of October. The work is expected to take approximately 18 months

Himley Play Area - the outcome of the recent planning application to provide a new play area within the grounds of Himley Park is expected in the coming weeks.

Dudley Market - Work is taking place to reconfigure the internal layout of the market area, CLS Or in the process of producing draft drawings.

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 is due to start later this year. This will allow for a more diverse range of shows.

### **Service achievements**

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

### **Economic Growth and Skills**

ACL Tutor Ian Winfield has won the first ever WMCA award for 'Inspirational Tutor of the Year – West Midlands'. The award recognises adult learning tutors who have gone above and over to make a positive difference in adult learning. Dudley Adult and Community Learning Team also received a Highly Commended Award from WMCA for their commitment to excellence in adult learning.

Q1 has seen the successful completion of the AIM for Gold ERDF Business Support Programme, with the Dudley Business First team achieving all required project output targets which is a huge

achievement given the impact the Covid 19 pandemic had on the capacity of the team to continue to deliver project outputs whilst overseeing circa £13 million of Covid 19 Grants to Dudley businesses.

Stalled & Derelict sites – completed £50k Homes England revenue funded project which included

- Written and professional advice on establishing a justification of CPO and advice on preliminary steps - 31st March 2023
- Written and professional advice on how best to use statutory powers available to a Local Authority including Housing and Planning Powers - 31st March

### **Corporate Landlord Services**

Successful completion of the new £200,000 flower room at Stourbridge Crematorium. The new oak framed structure gives better lighting, ambient frost protection, heating, internal sink and water point, new flower stands as well as improved accessibility.

Completion of the sale of the former Dudley Museum.

Handed back the keys to landlord of Harbour Buildings following successful decant.

### **Projects and Placemaking**

Newly refurbished Brierley Hill Town Centre toilets scheduled to re-open, October 2023. Publicity via CAPA / GLL to follow. Possible ministerial visit.

Newly refurbished Brierley Hill Library scheduled to re-open, November 2023. Publicity to follow.

Brierley Hill Shop Local publicity campaign to be republicised prior to Christmas. High Street public realm works will pause in December to allow Christmas trading period to proceed.

- Opening of two Changing Places toilets – one at Dudley Zoo and one at Black Country Living Museum.
- Successful conclusion of the Black Country Blue Network programme

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

As part of a nationwide tour John Constable's 'The Cornfield', from the National Gallery's London Collection, was on show at the Churchill Centre last month, with more than 2000 views.

## **Opportunities for improvement**

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

### **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. The final strategy document is due to be completed by Q3 23/24 (November 23).

### **Corporate Landlord Services**

Relating to the Corporate Estate strategy, a priority matrix agreed to allow highest priority requests to progress first. Opportunities to realise revenue savings and capital receipts from sites deemed surplus to operations.

### **Projects and Placemaking**



Regarding the Portersfield developments, there have been delays in finalising the Collaboration Agreement with Avenbury and the CPO process. The development brief is scheduled for completion in Oct 2023 following completion of formal consultation period to support the procurement process.

Review member feedback on Lye Project Plan and emerging priorities. Review feedback from High Streets Taskforce and Forging Ahead Board and on Lye programme and include good practice as appropriate.

Review governance, delivery and resource arrangements for recent £20m award through LUF 3 for Dudley Town centre.

Review timescales for Metro delivery following cancellation of HS2 and impact on delivery timescales for Daniels Land and High Plateau development sites.

- The actions contained within the Regeneration Audit, undertaken at the start of 2023, are being implemented to improve and strengthen governance of regeneration projects. These are linked with the introduction of the Project Management Framework and Project Portal, and updated internal governance and board arrangements.
- The team are heavily involved with multiple significant pieces of work through 2023 including the DLP, Portersfield and Stourbridge. This is putting pressure on staff and timescales so prioritisation of projects is necessary to ensure that those which are time-critical and recognised as particular priorities focused on resulting in refreshed timescales for other pieces of work.
- The Projects and Placemaking Service Plan was developed through engagement with the whole team and identified areas of learning from the last year as well as areas they would like to improve. This has included reflections on values and behaviour, skills and capacity, internal and external engagement, and projects and priorities.

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

Commissioning a Cultural Strategy is being discussed at a senior level.

A project brief is currently out for the commission of an options paper for the possible future use of Crystal Leisure Centre.

A project brief is currently out for the commission of a strategic site masterplan for Himley.

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