

Dear Members

**Please note venue
for meeting**

Resources Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of the Resources Scrutiny Committee will be held in the **MET Studio, Gatehouse Theatre, Eastgate Street, Stafford, ST16 2LT** on **Tuesday 17 August 2021 at 6.30pm** to deal with the business as set out on the agenda.

Please note that this meeting will be recorded.

Members are reminded that contact officers are shown at the top of each report and members are welcome to raise questions etc in advance of the meeting with the appropriate officer.



Head of Law and Administration

**RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE -
17 AUGUST 2021**

Chair - Councillor R P Cooke

A G E N D A

- 1 Minutes of 8 June 2021 as published on the Council's website.
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Public Question Time - Nil
- 4 Councillor Session - Nil
- 5 Called in Items - Nil
- 6 Members' Items

Councillors A T A Godfrey and G P K Pardesi have submitted the following item under Paragraph 2.8 of the Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules:-

"We would like the committee to hear a verbal report from Mr Tim Clegg on his first few weeks as CEO at both Stafford Borough Council and Cannock Chase District Council."

		Page Nos
7	Officers' Reports	
ITEM NO 7(a)	Freedom Leisure Annual Report 2020-2021	4 - 29
	HEAD OF OPERATIONS	
ITEM NO 7(b)	Quarter 1 - Climate Change and Green Recovery	30 - 35
	CORPORATE BUSINESS AND PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER	
ITEM NO 7(c)	Quarter 1 Performance Reporting	36 - 42
	CORPORATE BUSINESS AND PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER	
ITEM NO 7(d)	Work Programme - Resources Scrutiny Committee	43 - 46
	HEAD OF LAW AND ADMINISTRATION	

Membership

Chair - Councillor R P Cooke

A R G Brown	R A James
R P Cooke	R Kenney
M G Dodson	J A Nixon
A T A Godfrey	G P K Pardesi
A S Harp	P Roycroft

Cabinet Members:-

Councillor R M Smith – Resources Portfolio

Councillor J K Price - Environment Portfolio

Councillor C V Trowbridge – Leisure Portfolio

ITEM NO 7(a)**ITEM NO 7(a)**

Report of:	Head of Operations
Contact Officer:	Lee Booth
Telephone No:	01785 619896
Ward Interest:	All
Report Track:	Resources 17/08/2021 (Only)

RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**17 AUGUST 2021****Freedom Leisure Annual Report 2020-2021****1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide Resources Scrutiny Committee with the Freedom Leisure Annual Report (attached) to scrutinise. The Annual Report has been received by the Council and covers the period from April 2020 to March 2021 in respect of the Leisure and Cultural Services contract that Freedom Leisure manage on behalf of the Council. The Annual Report has been written and created by Freedom Leisure.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That Resources Scrutiny Committee notes the impact that the Covid-19 forced closures of leisure and cultural activities has had on the performance of the outsourced Leisure and Cultural Activities contract.
- 2.2 That Resources Scrutiny Committee notes the Freedom Leisure Annual Report April 2020 to March 2021.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Annual Report has been received by the Council and has been written and created by Freedom Leisure. The Annual Report sets out how the Government mandated closures of leisure centres and cultural activities has impacted on the performance of the Leisure and Cultural Services contract.
- 3.2 The Annual Report highlights the fragmented closures and reopening of services from April 2020 to March 2021.
- 3.3 The Annual Report highlights the actions taken to mitigate risk of performance and financial failure throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives

4.1 The report is linked to the following Corporate Business Objectives:

- To improve the quality of life of local people by providing a safe, clean, attractive place to live and work and encouraging people to be engaged in developing strong communities that promote health and wellbeing.
- To be a well-run, financially sustainable and ambitious organisation, responsive to the needs of our customers and communities and focussed on delivering our objectives.

5 Report Detail

Background

- 5.1 Since December 2017, the Council has outsourced a Leisure and Cultural activities contract to Freedom Leisure on a contract term of ten plus five plus five years.
- 5.2 On behalf of the Council, Freedom Leisure manage the sites of Stafford Leisure Centre, Stone Leisure Centre, Rowley Park, Stafford Castle, the Gatehouse Theatre, Izaak Walton Cottage and Ancient High House as well as the Active Communities programme and an events programme.
- 5.3 The services provided by the Leisure and Cultural Activities contract have a key role in supporting residents' health and wellbeing. Active Lives survey data consistently indicates that the most popular recreational physical activities (after walking) are swimming and fitness and therefore heavily reliant on leisure centres for their delivery.

Impact of Covid-19

- 5.4 As part of measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19, a series of full closures, partial closures and partial re-opening have been in place for the period covered in the Annual Report and beyond, with closures beginning on 21st March 2020 for the vast majority of services provided by the Leisure and Cultural Activities contract.
- 5.5 The mandated closures saw virtually all operations for Freedom Leisure cease immediately and saw Freedom Leisure place the vast majority of the workforce on the Job Retention Scheme (furlough).

- 5.6 The contract has been managed by the Council and Freedom Leisure to provide a balance between minimising financial risk, ensuring statutory site checks and maintaining permitted activities for residents. Full closure and partial closure periods resulted in core staff being retained for statutory building checks and grounds maintenance and the opening and closing of outdoor activities when permitted. During re-opening periods, staff gradually returned to work to provide the permitted services to residents. Freedom Leisure have utilised the Government furlough Job Retention Scheme for staff that have not been working.
- 5.7 The Gatehouse Theatre, Ancient High House, Izaak Walton Cottage, Active Communities and the Events programme have had extremely limited operations since 21 March 2020.
- 5.8 Regular dialogue has been taking place between the Council and Freedom Leisure throughout to ensure what can be reasonably delivered has been and to protect assets and services.

6	Implications
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6.1	Financial	Nil
	Legal	Nil
	Human Resources	Nil
	Human Rights Act	Nil
	Data Protection	Nil
	Risk Management	Nil

6.2	Community Impact Assessment Recommendations	<p>The Borough Council considers the effect of its actions on all sections of our community and has addressed all of the following Equality Strands in the production of this report, as appropriate:-</p> <p>Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.</p>
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Previous Consideration - Nil

Background Papers – File available in Operations

**FREEDOM LEISURE
ANNUAL REPORT
CONTRACT YEAR 3
APRIL 2020 – MARCH 2021**
for
Stafford Borough Council
Leisure and Cultural Services Management Contract

KEVAN MURRAY - AREA MANAGER, FREEDOM LEISURE STAFFORD



REPORT CREATED MAY 2021

Contents	Page
1. Circulated To	3
2. Executive Summary	4
3. Financial Performance	5
4. Participation	6
5. Stafford Active Communities and Events	6
6. Gatehouse Theatre	9
7. Heritage, Venues & Events	11
8. Stafford and Stone Leisure Centres	18
9. Rowley Park and Grounds Maintenance	22
10. Human Resources and Training	23



I. Circulated To

Freedom Leisure

Ivan Horsfall-Turner, Managing Director

Matt Wickham, Operations Director

David Talbut, Finance Director

Emma Reeve, Commercial Director

Ian Morey, Business Development Director

Jackie Robinson, Human Resources Director

Jeremy Rowe, Regional Director

Paul Hawkes, Regional Commercial Manager

Mark Lee, Group H&S Manager

Steve Jefferies, Area Facilities Manager

Stafford Borough Council

Tim Clegg, Chief Executive

Robert Simpson, Head of Operations

Phil Gammon, Neighbourhood Services
Group Manager

Lee Booth, Corporate Contracts
Manager

James Davis, Public Buildings Manager

Clair Smith, Technical Officer

Steve Allen, Car Parking Manager

Emma Fullagar, Interim Head of
Finance

Councillor Carolyn Trowbridge,
Portfolio holder for Leisure

Councillor Mike Smith, Portfolio
holder for Resources



2. Executive Summary

Freedom Leisure commenced operation in partnership with Stafford Borough Council (SBC) on 1st December 2017. This report covers year 3 of the contract for the period April 2020 – March 2021.

These are the key headlines for this year:

- Due to Covid-19 Stafford Castle Visitor Centre, Ancient High House, Izaak Walton's Cottage and the Gatehouse Theatre have been closed to the public for the entire year; No Heritage events took place and both the Shakespeare festival and Pantomime were unable to go ahead. The Active Communities and Events calendar was also reduced to just a single event which was the Christmas Lights switch on done digitally and a video created with the Mayor.
- Rowley Park and the Castle grounds were open for the majority of the year apart from the first month of the first lockdown and have seen high volumes of passive footfall at both venues.
- Due to Covid-19 Stafford 10K and Half Marathon running events had to be cancelled.
- Both Stafford and Stone Leisure centres were closed for 8 months across 3 lockdowns and in the time they were open it was with regulations and limits in place.
- Fitness memberships across both centres were reduced to 51% of the pre-covid member-base.
- Learn to Swim children enrolled were reduced to 74% of pre-covid member-base.
- Turnover income was over £4 million less than the previous year.
- Grants and funding applied for raised over £1,500,000 including the National JRS (furlough).
- Total Participation due to closures and reduced capacity was a fraction of the previous year.
- Staffing levels went from 330 registered to 97 at it's lowest.
- The buildings have been well managed and a building checks team was put in place agreed with the officers to monitor, secure and maintain the buildings to a high standard allowing us to reopen quickly when possible.
- The Gatehouse Theatre was successful in an application for grant funding from the Arts Council of England to the total value of £375,000, awarded in 2 parts - firstly £250,000 and a further £125,000. A small refurbishment has allowed us to better distance customers, digitise our marketing, remove and reduce pinch points and improve customer flow whilst connecting the areas better and enhancing the general look and feel of the front of house areas.
- We received Sport England administered NLRF (national leisure recovery fund) grant supported by Stafford Borough Council to the value of £277,851.

3. Financial Performance

We are currently still awaiting for year end accounts for this period to be finalised and audited. A full financial summary will be provided as soon as it is available, this is being worked on by Emma Fullagar (SBC) and David Talbot (Freedom Leisure).

4. Participation

4.1 Participation has been significantly affected due to the pandemic with the Leisure Centres being closed for 8 of the 12 months. Alongside this, the Gatehouse Theatre, Ancient High House, Izaak Walton's Cottage, Active Communities and Events and the Castle visitor centre closed for the whole financial year. Please note that the figures provided are active bookable attendances instead of passive attendances such as outside visitors and dog walkers.

The graphs below illustrates the total participation across all sites compared to year 2.

Participation	2019	2020/2021
Stafford Leisure Centre	403998	68230
Stone Leisure Centre	233234	41427
Rowley Park	131072	9851
Gatehouse Theatre	130781	0
Ancient High House	13118	0
Stafford Castle	14670	0
Izaak Walton's Cottage	317	0
Events	29118	0
Active Communities	7822	0
TOTAL	964,130	119,508

This table shows that we achieved 12% of the previous years (2019) participation.

5. Stafford Active Communities Plan 2020-2021

Active Communities and Events

Overview

As a result of Government mandated restrictions in response to the global pandemic, the Active Communities and Events team were placed on furlough from 1st April 2020. The team remained on furlough until the end of March 2021 and this arrangement will be continually reviewed from April 2021 onwards. The summer festival programme of events was not able to take place, this included Party in the Park and Stafford Castle's Summer Sunday music festival. The annual 10K usually held in September and the Christmas Switch on Show planned for November could not be delivered. Instead of a large scale community event for the switching on of the Christmas lights in the market square a video was created featuring the Mayor to mark the start of the festive period and to coincide with the Christmas lights being turned on in Stafford Town Centre at the end of November. The holiday activities programme and on-going sports coaching sessions were also cancelled.

The 2021 Stafford Half Marathon has been moved from its usual March date to Sunday 19 September 2021 to facilitate the delivery of a live event in the autumn. Entries opened on New Year's Day with 1900 places sold in the last quarter of the financial year with a target of 3000 places sold pre-race day. The Stafford Fun Run is also rescheduled for September. The Stafford 10K event will return in September 2022.



Human Resources

There are vacant roles within the Active Communities and Events team and the Active Communities and Events Manager has remained on flexible furlough. Job adverts are currently out at the time of writing this report to replace key roles.



Financial Impact

Moving the 2021 Stafford Half Marathon from March to September will mean that this now falls in the next financial year and the income will be accrued accordingly. Sales for this event are very encouraging and on target to generate the forecast income. The demand for places is high with a new and renewed interest in running and live events during the pandemic.

Funding

Sponsorship agreements are in place for the March 2021 Stafford Half Marathon have been extended to the new September date, with a value of £12,000.



Activity during Furlough Period

The welfare of our all colleagues has been a priority during the extended furlough period. Monthly newsletters have been circulated to the Stafford contract colleagues keeping them up to date with news and activities that have been taking place across the contract. In addition to make sure no one felt left out or lonely a WhatsApp group 'Hello Staffs!' was set up for the team to share and chat on a daily basis as well as quick updates as and when different colleagues returned to work and we were able to welcome back our customers.

The logo for 'the freedomflyer!'. The text is in a bold, sans-serif font, with 'the' in blue and 'freedomflyer!' in purple. Below the text is a thick, curved purple line that tapers off to the right.

6. Gatehouse Theatre

- 6.1** 2020 has been an extraordinary year in the life of The Gatehouse Theatre, when we closed our doors on Monday 16th March 2020 we could never of imagined that the building would still be closed over a year later. The sense of loss and sadness at all the things that have been postponed and cancelled over the last 12 months is immeasurable. It was with great sadness that we had to cancel our planned annual pantomime, summer school and Shakespeare at The Castle productions and also put on hold the 30th year of Shakespeare at The Castle celebrations and exhibition.

However, like our town, the team at The Gatehouse are a resilient group of people and from the moment we were plunged into lockdown we were determined to make the very best out of every challenge that this year has thrown at us. We have always believed passionately that everyone who lives and works in our great borough should have access to great art and culture and access to our fantastic building. At the start of lockdown in March 2020 we immediately began making plans to redevelop and update the whole of the downstairs areas of the theatre and to reimagine our beautiful building and our vision for it and the future.

In October 2020 we submitted a grant application to the DCMS Culture Recovery Fund for £249,901 to help support the huge loss of income caused through the pandemic and to also help us to rebuild and reimagine the theatre post lockdown. We were delighted to receive the news that we had been successful in our grant application and so began our plans to give The Gatehouse the facelift it had needed for so many years and to make the venue covid safe. In March of 2021 we made a second grant application for £124,950 to the Culture Recovery Fund to help us further develop and expand our ambitious plans and again we were delighted to receive the news that our second bid had also been successful. The success of these grant applications and the support of Stafford Borough Council has allowed us to develop our old box office into new administration offices, the old theatre bar into a new light and spacious box office complete with digital screens for marketing and advertising and new seating areas and furniture. Alongside these developments we have also opened up all of the low ceilings downstairs to allow more light and air into the building. We have also redeveloped the old Churchill Room into a new theatre bar area that links up the whole of the downstairs areas to The MET Studio for our audiences to ease and improve the flow of people around the building. Also in the near future we will be updating our MET Studio with support from Stafford Borough Council with a new motorised lighting rig and with part of the grant money from the recovery fund we have also intend to install a new retractable seating bank in The MET.

The pandemic and forced closure of the theatre has had a large impact on the staff of The Gatehouse Theatre, at the start of 2020 the theatre had 14 full time, 13 part time and 27 casual members of staff and over 70 volunteers, but by the end of 2020 the theatre had only 10 full time, 11 part time and 14 casual staff. The theatre manager, front of house manager and technical manager had all moved onto new jobs. All staff were furloughed during the lockdown period with only 8 members of staff returning for a brief three week period during the autumn. We are currently undergoing a major staff recruitment drive.

From a financial perspective we managed to operate from January 1st – March 16th 2020. During this time we sold 15,687 tickets for 92 events, ticket revenue for this period was £249,774.25. In June 2020 we refunded approximately £92,000 of advanced ticket sales and then again in August we refunded £36,000 of bookings. At present we are taking around £1,500 of ticket sales per week in contrast to 2019 when we were taking around £35,000 per week of ticket sales. Bar and café sales were approximately £100 - £150 per day and at present they are zero. On a positive note during 2020 we received £4,136.25 of donations of support from customers and local people.

We had a really exciting programme planned for 2020 in the theatre and the MET and have managed to reschedule approximately 80% of these shows for the autumn and spring 2022. During the first few months of 2020 our youth theatre programme welcomed over 100 young people from across the borough and we saw an increase of attendance in our weekly Theatre Tots workshops.

In February and March of 2020 our youth theatre performed Terry Pratchett's – *The Amazing Maurice & His Educated Rodents* and Philip Pullman's *Grimm's Tales* in the MET Studio over six nights to packed audiences.

We continue to work with and develop our relationships with local businesses and partners and over the last twelve months have strengthened our partnership and sponsorship agreement with The University of Wolverhampton.

We are indebted to our principal funders **Arts Council England** and **Stafford Borough Council**, the **DCMS Culture Recovery Fund** and the **Coronavirus Job Retention** scheme for supporting The Gatehouse throughout the pandemic. If it wasn't for this crucial investment and belief in The Gatehouse, as well as the unwavering support from our audiences and communities, the theatre wouldn't be here today.



7. Heritage

The Heritage Centres have been closed from March 2020 until reopening on May 22nd 2021. Throughout lockdown we have maintained a presence at each site. Ensuring inspections, health and safety checks and maintenance of our buildings continued. Staff have been brought back in to ensure the buildings are clean, safe and ready for our visitors. Liaising with other museum bodies in the months prior to reopening has been key. We have kept up to date with developments in the sector by speaking with local museums, taking advice from big players such as National Trust and by utilising a wealth of on line support in the form of guides, Q & A sessions and online workshops. We are therefore confident that we are following best practice for returning visitors and ensuring we exceed the governments COVID guidelines.

We have appointed Carl Franklyn as our museum mentor in January 2020 which will be the final addition to our new structure already approved by the accreditation scheme. Carl has already had discussions and input with regards to the exhibition programme that is planned for the Ancient High House in the next 2 years. As well as supporting the accreditation process he will also assist with application for funding in the next two years.

We continue to receive support from our Heritage and culture partners Awen Cultural Trust.

Events:

Teddy Bear Picnic

Visitor Figures: 122 visitors in 2019 no event in 2020

There will be no picnic in 2021 however we plan for this event to become a sustainable and environmentally friendly event in 2022 with all activities and entertainment to feed into that key theme.

Christmas through the ages

Visitor figures: 106 adults 30 children in 2019 No event in 2020

Treasure hunts entered into competition = 19

This event will take place in 2021. However, it will be different to previous years. We have acted upon the feedback from our last event and the surveys that were completed. The plan is to include more of an interactive two way engagement. We are looking to make links with more diverse areas of our community and incorporate them into all our events and exhibitions. With support from the Gatehouse theatre, we aim to bring the event to life with actors and scenes that take place on Greengate Street and into the house.

Re – enactment day at Stafford Castle.

Visitor figures: 341 in 2019 No event in 2020

We had planned to expand this small yet succesful event into a full weekend with a World War 2 theme linked to the anniversary of D Day, with not just military displays but street parties, music and dancing, food and other themed entertainment.

Due to the time required to organise the re-enactment to a quality standard and it being within only 8 weeks of any government announcement we decided to not proceed with a weekend event this year but plan to have a re-enactment event in 2022 along perhaps more of a medieveel theme. This is yet to be confirmed.

Classic Car Show.

Attendance: 1576 (we counted people this year and not a ratio per car parked) Plus entrants with the 120 cars in 2019. No event in 2020

The classic car show will not take place this year but plans for 2022 are already being looked at, changing the concept slightly. This is not yet definitive but research into other shows and popular events is currently under way to ensure we offer an attractive event whilst maintaining quality.

Retail

We have made a conscious decision to move away from plastic wherever possible in our new product choices. The emphasis is now firmly on local artists and local suppliers who can provide a unique product that showcases either the Heritage sites themselves or Stafford as a town. This has resulted in books, calendars and cards as well as a newly commissioned contemporary take on the high house with a range of ceramics and paintings by local artist Mandy Billington. We are using items that are handmade and biodegradable in an attempt to reduce the plastics we have in stock.

We have always utilised china mugs for staff drinks and we expanded on this by offering a tea and coffee service with china mugs at the castle which proved very successful albeit for just a few months before the lockdown.



Wreath making workshop:

On offer in 2019 we had workshops to make wreaths for £15 with all materials supplied. We offered 18 spaces per session and these sold out in advance of the event. We had made significant changes to this event and actively gained feedback from all attendees.

After the complete success of this event in 2019 the event was again offered for pre booking only for 2020 but over 2 days this time with capacity increased to meet demand. We had bookings for the event well in advance but it did not go ahead. We do intend to offer this workshop again in 2021 and believe there will be increased demand. The event will be pre bookable on the Gatehouse Theatre website. Capacity will be based on the COVID guidelines as they might be at the time but the pre booking system means we may be able to add additional workshops if the demand is sufficient.

Haunted High House

This was a new evening event in 2019. 150 tickets on offer and all sold. Event did not go ahead for 2020.

This event will take place again in 2021, using the feedback from our visitor surveys we have made some changes to the layout of the event and we are introducing more of a show element to part of the evening. Once again this will be an advanced ticket event aimed to attract local families. We will be once again supported by the Gatehouse Theatre for technical items such as lighting and sound effects.

Tickets were £2 per adult and £1 child – we will again aim to offer an affordable event to a family market. We offered free craft workshops included in the price as well as apple bobbing, an unlucky dip and storytelling. This year's price has yet to agreed.

A Survey Monkey questionnaire was sent to all attendees and a 37% response rate gave us a good idea of what people liked or didn't like and we have made changes to the event for 2021 based on this feedback along with our own observations on the night.

Wildlife Fair:

In 2019, 903 visitors attended the Wildlife fair. For 2020 we had a slightly different event planned with quality children's workshops and more general visitor interaction with sustainable, eco-friendly or environmental theme displays. We had also introduced new stalls, with local company support and a strong emphasis on the products of Staffordshire.

We intend to do this event again next year but again the theme is to move to sustainability, environmental responsibility and strong local links. Offering a high quality event, appealing to a diverse community.

Other Activities/School Tours

We closed 2019 with an increasing interest in our School Tours and we have made it a priority to be able to facilitate these tours under the current guidelines. With one tour undertaken at the beginning of 2020 we were able to test our new guidelines and implement any changes we felt necessary. Therefore we are confident we can commit to our tour programme fully and safely in 2021.

We were unable to secure the Sandford Award due to lockdown but liaised with our assessor throughout the year to complete a partial on line assessment that will either be completed on line in July 2021 or possibly with our judge attending a tour.

In 2019 we worked with local schools and particularly St Patricks Academy group who we liaised with for a whole term of projects. This culminates in an exhibition, open evening and attendance of families across the following week. It was planned for 2020 in the same way except with live video for others to watch who couldn't attend on the night. We are confident of this or similar projects returning in 2021 and we are keen to utilise the new technology that has become so vital during the pandemic.



Weddings

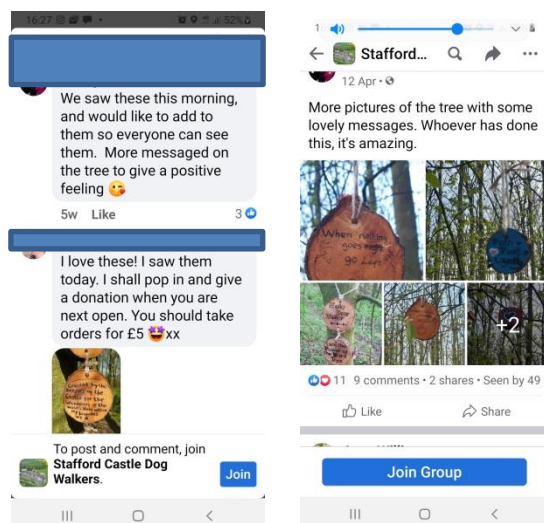
Sadly all the wedding bookings were cancelled for 2020, three at the high house and one at the cottage. However, this amount of bookings was a marked increase on previous years. We are hopeful that the current small wedding limits may offer some opportunity going forward into 2021.

Other items

We have returned to heritage for the beginning of the 2021 year. Staff have had regular contact throughout the lockdown period via phone calls, zoom meets, what's app groups and walking groups.

We created a positivity tree at the castle for the benefit of any visitors; we have had verbal feedback and posts on social media about the project.





We have an exhibition in place ready for opening which is created by the team themselves. Using the team's individual stories and experiences, alongside projects that staff undertook to keep busy. We have an interactive space for visitors to tell us about their stories and for children to place their drawings on the community art wall.



Our grounds team have kept up a schedule of grass cutting, hedge trimming and keeping the grounds tidy. The Castle herb garden hedges and beds are also cared for by the grounds team. The cottage too has had consistent schedule of mowing and hedge trimming, ensuring the ragwort did not take over during the closure period.



We are opening the sites with a detailed plan ensuring we are exceeding guidelines and keeping visitors and staff safe. The Castle Visitor Centre is operating a one way system with reduced services and activities initially. The Ancient High House is accessed via pre booking on the Gatehouse Theatre website. This use of the Spectrix system is to be expanded in 2021 to include all workshops, events and school tours.

8. Stafford and Stone Leisure Centres

The first national lockdown meant that the facilities closed on the evening of 20th March 2020. Due to this being our direct debit collection date for Learn to Swim and half of our Fitness Memberships, these payments were collected. All memberships were frozen.

Colleagues were furloughed when the facilities closed until reopening on the 25th July 2020 for Gym, Fitness Classes, Badminton and Squash.

All Facilities were regularly checked by a building management team during the lockdowns, ensuring security, stability and allowing us to quickly re-activate when allowed to do so. These people were our unsung heroes.

The swimming pools reopened to the public on Saturday 8th August 2020 with APEX Swim Club also returning to Stafford on this day.

Our Learn to Swim and Gymnastics schemes returned on Thursday 20th August 2020.

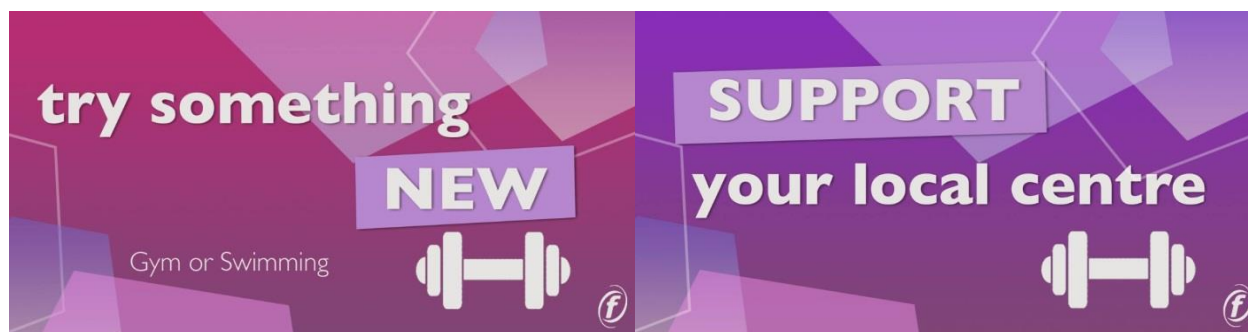
When we reopened we contacted all our direct debit members and learn to swim customers and merged both the 10th and 20th collections together to that we only had one collection on the 10th of the month moving forward. At this point we only took 50% of the payment for customers originally on the 10th, and didn't collect from customers originally on the 20th.

We also extended all annual memberships by the period of time we were closed, plus an additional month as a thank you for being loyal to us.

On the 5th November 2020 we had to close again due to the circuit break second lockdown. This was for one month and we reopened on 2nd December 2020. Memberships were again frozen. On our return Staffordshire was put into Tier 3, meaning that adult indoor group exercise was not allowed (fitness classes and adult swimming lessons). Also Squash and Badminton could only be played by people within the same household or support bubble.

On the 30th December 2020 the government announced Staffordshire would go into Tier 4 local lockdown, followed by a national lockdown. We did not reopen in the 2020/21 financial year.

Stafford and Stone Leisure Centres were closed for 8 of the 12 months of this financial year with the facilities only partially open for parts of August, September, October and December.



School swimming was something that suffered during lockdown, with Entrust (the company who ran them) no longer offering this service to the schools – we took the decision to contact the schools and operate school swimming directly and we now have more schools participating in lessons than previously.

Since February 2021 Stone LC has operated as a lateral flow Covid-19 testing centre with our core staff providing assistance to the NHS staff and helping to get through, at its peak, around 300 tests a day. We have been continuing with the testing centre on specific dates in the car park since we reopened to offer the local community a quick and easy way to get tested. We did receive positive feedback and a commendation from Staffordshire County Council for our support on this.



Membership Numbers

Stafford:

	Stafford Pre COVID-19	25th July - reopen	2nd December reopen	Financial Year End Point 31st March	Percentage of Pre COVID-19 members remaining
Direct Debit Members	1467	1039	829	708	48%
Annual Members	161	122	122	121	75%

Stone:

	Stone Pre COVID-19	25th July - reopen	2nd December reopen	Financial Year End Point 31st March	Percentage of Pre COVID-19 members remaining
Direct Debit Members	1337	912	724	606	45%
Annual Members	273	271	223	221	81%

All direct debit members were given the opportunity to suspend their membership for a further 3 months under the COVID-19 guarantee free of charge when we reopened in July.



Learn to Swim Stafford:

	Stafford Pre COVID-19	Financial Year End Point 31st March	Percentage of Pre COVID-19 members remaining
Learn to Swim Members	1138	876	77%

Learn to Swim Stone:

	Stone Pre COVID-19	Financial Year End Point 31st March	Percentage of Pre COVID-19 members remaining
Learn to Swim Members	936	667	71%

At the time of writing this report in May, Stafford Leisure Centre Learn to Swim scheme has returned to previous levels and Stone Leisure Centre is approaching previous levels. Fitness membership have made a 15% improvement at both centres, but still impacted by COVID-19 regulations and occupancy restrictions. Both centres are growing and recovering slowly.

We were also successful in receiving the Sport England administered NLRF (national leisure recovery fund) grant supported by Stafford Borough Council to the value of £277,851. Thank you to the client officers at Stafford Borough Council for their efforts in supporting this.

9. Rowley Park & Grounds Maintenance

Rowley Park

The park was open for people to do their daily exercise throughout the year but the facilities were not open although we did have staff onsite to maintain the grounds and security of the facility.

During the year we lost 2 full time employees although one has been replaced to the grounds team and is currently into his fourth week. Visitors to the park have on the whole been really responsive to the signage displayed at the park about social distancing especially when spectating at junior football games. We are full again Monday through to Thursday evening and walking football (over 55s) has seen record numbers since we returned on the 29th March 2021, which just shows the popularity of football

and how important this facility is to the local community. Bowls are back and all booked in ready for the season with 2 teams based at Rowley Park we have been working closely with the bowls teams during lockdown and have had regular catch ups with the captains as they have helped out with litter picks during the lockdown which has been a real help and built a great relationship which is helping to promote bowls the park. Other activities that have taken place in the park are PT training sessions from Nordic Walking to one on one HITT classes and buggy fit walking classes as well as a number of groups who use the park to get daily exercise from the local care homes and hospital.

We have introduced 2 wildlife areas where we are trying to get insects and wild flowers established we have recently had wild bees which was very exciting for us!

We have rotated football pitches and set up the top pitch, which is getting well used, at the moment in order for teams to get all their matches played before the end of the season. The other pitches are rotated to allow a bit of time off helping the goal mouth ground areas recover.

We are now looking for companies who would like to advertise their businesses around the 3G pitch and sponsors to help fund some upgrades to the pavilion.



Grounds Team

The team were operational from the start of May 2020 with the priority to get the Bowls Green to the required standard, as May was the hottest on record but we quickly got it back to a very good standard and the local bowls teams have been very happy with the results. Thank you to the Stafford Borough Council Streetscene team for your support with this.

Stafford Castle has had the grounds and car park cleaned and weeded along with the path right up to The Keep, the Moat Walk Way has been reinstated and the dog walkers have loved the extra path to follow.

Izzak Walton's Cottage has had the hedges all trimmed and garden looked after ready to reopen, weeding, hedges trimmed and grass cut and all rubbish removed.

All car parks have been cleared of weeds and hedges cut back and generally tidied up.

10. Human Resources and Training

The year of the Covid-19 pandemic has really took it's toll on the workforce and is demonstrated by the reduction in actual staff numbers left on our payroll system. Due the pandemic, many people have moved on for various reasons, retired, got new jobs or different outlooks on life. We have reduced from a total of 330 staff including casual to just under a hundred; with 97 the lowest recorded number.

At the early part of the pandemic during the first lockdown we did enter into consultation with four colleagues and had to terminate their employment within probation, due to having no work, as our facilities were closed. We did re-employ one of these colleagues on our return.

The good news is we are now recruiting successfully to the vacancies and continue to grow back stronger and our casual workforce has returned to work. The June 2021 staffing is already 150 plus.

During lockdown it was pleasing to see how the teams rallied together and supported each other in what were very difficult times. The freedom staff shop benefits, help line numbers and other counselling services received hugely increased volume which hopefully helped to make a difference to people who may have been struggling.

The Stafford colleague newsletter, the 'freedom flyer', continues to be issued monthly. During lockdown we received feedback for more communication from our staff and volunteers so we obliged. A Staff Whatsapp group was also set up for colleagues to share good news stories and lockdown good habits. Health and fitness, cooking recipes, pictures from lovely walks were all hot topics.

Training requirements critical to opening were maintained such as National Pool Lifeguard Qualification, First Aid at Work and COVID-19 awareness training. All colleagues returning to work were briefed each time they returned ensuring a smooth and safe re-activation.

Contributors to this report

Kevan Murray -	Area Leisure & Culture Manager
Luke Jackson -	Membership & Retention Manager
Richard Whinnerah -	General Manager Stone Leisure Centre & Rowley Park
Sarah Lakin -	General Manager Stafford Leisure Centre
Liz Hulse -	Active Communities and Events Manager
Tracie Wheeldon -	Heritage Coordinator
Tim Ford -	Gatehouse Theatre Manager

End

ITEM NO 7(b)**ITEM NO 7(b)**

Report of:	Corporate Business and Partnerships Manager
Contact Officer:	Tracy Redpath
Telephone No:	01785 619 195
Ward Interest:	Nil
Report Track:	Resources 17/08/21 (Only)

RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**17 AUGUST 2021****Quarter 1 - Climate Change and Green Recovery****1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide an update on the activities that have been undertaken in relation to climate change and green recovery for quarter one.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the progress is noted.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 In 2019, Stafford Borough Council declared a climate change emergency and committed to become a carbon neutral authority by 2040. Since the declaration was made, preliminary work has been progressing to enable this to be achieved.
- 3.2 The report sets out the progress made in relation to Climate Change and Green Recovery for quarter 1 against the following objectives:
- Reducing emissions from our own activities
 - Working in partnership with Government, Elected Bodies and Elected Members, Partners and Residents across the Borough to take action that contributes to carbon neutrality and sustainable development within communities and across the natural environment
 - Mitigating and adapt to climate change
 - Continuing to implement our green recovery objectives.

4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives

- 4.1 Although this directly supports the delivery of business objective 3, climate change and green recovery are cross-cutting issues that contribute and support the over-arching vision and business objectives contained in the Corporate Business Plan.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 The council has recognised that it has an important role in responding to the threat of climate change and in response to this formulated a Climate Change and Green Recovery Strategy that was approved at full council in November 2020. The strategy outlined what the commitments would be over the next 20 years with a focus upon:
- Reducing emissions from our own activities
 - Working in partnership with Government, Elected Bodies and Elected Members, Partners and Residents across the Borough to take action that contributes to carbon neutrality and sustainable development within communities and across the natural environment
 - Mitigating and adapt to climate change
 - Continuing to implement our green recovery objectives.
- 5.2 The work to implement the strategy was delayed due to the Covid-19 and all staff teams being heavily involved in the response to the pandemic, ensuring that our most vulnerable residents were supported. Although work has continued in terms of responding to the pandemic, we have made quite a bit of progress on our climate change agenda. Below contains a thematic summary of the work conducted by the Council since the implementation of the strategy in November 2020.
- 5.3 **Responsible Officers:** A new internal Climate Change and Green Recovery Group has been set up to oversee and co-ordinate this agenda and to monitor performance and progress. The group contains officers from across the authority who have the experience and specialisms in each of the workstream areas contained in the strategy. We have also appointed a full time Corporate Climate Change Officer who has been working in the Corporate Business and Partnerships Team on a full time basis since June.
- 5.4 **Reducing emissions from our own activities:** One of our commitments is to be a carbon neutral organisation by 2040 and in order for us to understand our carbon emissions we commissioned a carbon audit that was completed in May 2021. As the majority of our staff have been working from home over the past 18 months, the carbon audit utilised information from 2019 - 2020 in order to provide a more realistic baseline. The audit highlighted that buildings, waste and transport are the highest emitters and that the priority focus needs to be on these areas. As part of our recovery strategy and planning we acknowledged that now there are opportunities to create a new normal, building on what we have achieved over the past 12 months and linking it to the Digital Customer Strategy, promoting the digital workplace supported by appropriate infrastructure and linking this to our climate change objectives.

Below is a breakdown of the council's carbon of emissions by area of operation 2019/2020:

Stafford Borough Council – Carbon Emissions by Area of Operation 2019/20

Energy	Gas	12%
	Electric	14%
	Water	1%
LPG Consumption		0%
Process Fuel		4%
Waste Handling		29%
Commercial Fleet		5%
Staff/Member Travel		1%
Freedom Leisure		34%

We want to reduce our carbon emissions as much as possible, but we are pragmatic and recognise that some of our services will continue to produce some emissions. In order for us to achieve our net zero commitment, we are currently investigating options for carbon sequestration, (removing carbon from our atmosphere) where the carbon emissions cannot be reasonably reduced any further, for example by planting more trees.

- 5.5 **Working in Partnership:** For the past 6 months the council have been working in partnership with Keele University, Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) and local authorities across Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent. The purpose of the partnership is to take a collaborative, problem solving, systematic approach and to experiment, learn and make sense of what is required in order for us to achieve our vision of carbon neutrality. The partnership aims to create knowledge from and for the system, build capacity for implementation, build networks to sustain results, and create solutions with a deeper understanding of root causes. So far, this process has looked at the carbon zero requirements pan Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent, the journey so far, and started mapping this out across the following themes:

A. Structures

- Social
- Technological
- Environmental
- Economic
- Political

B. Communication and Collaboration

C. Values and Mindsets

In addition to this, work is underway to set up a small panel of community representatives to work with us to support the development of a climate change pledge and information packs for residents in line with the Sustainable Staffordshire initiative being run by Staffordshire County Council. We will also want this group to support, and be advocates of, our approach to community engagement and to work with communities and elected members. We are also in discussions with Keele and CAT to develop carbon literacy training that will be rolled out to our staff, members and businesses.

- 5.6 **Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change:** The council has undertaken a comprehensive risk based assessment of vulnerabilities to weather and climate and identified the priority risk areas for the council. This is being fed into the refresh of the Local Climate Impact Profile which is already underway. The next steps will be to produce an action plan that will address those significant vulnerabilities and also identify opportunities.
- 5.7 **Continue to implement our green recovery objectives:** During this year we have committed to follow the Lawton principles of delivering more, bigger, better and connected habitats and in order for us to achieve this we are developing a local nature recovery strategy and working to support the Borough's Nature Recovery Network. We are also continuing to work in partnership to improve air quality by assessing the air quality/nitrogen dioxide for Southern Staffordshire Special Area of Conservation.
- 5.8 This report provides a detailed account of the work undertaken in relation to climate change and green recovery and a summary has been included in the narrative updates for quarter 1.

6 Implications		
6.1	Financial	Nil
	Legal	Nil
	Human Resources	Nil
	Human Rights Act	Nil
	Data Protection	Nil
	Risk Management	Nil
6.2	Community Impact Assessment Recommendations	We will continue to take the opportunity to work at a local level to tackle the effects of climate change, by working with and encouraging local residents, local businesses and other organisations – to focus on green recovery, reduce their energy costs, reduce congestion, to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change in order to improve the local economy and the environment.
Previous Consideration - None		
Background Papers - Corporate Business and Partnerships		

Resources Climate Change and Green Recovery

Q1 Narrative Updates

Q1

Ref	Key Deliverable	RO	End Date	Performance status	Commentary/Action
3.1 Reduce emissions from our own activities					
3.1.1	Undertake a meaningful audit of the council's carbon footprint to derive the council's own carbon inputs and output	Eleanor Warren	From April 2021 and then on-going	Good	The council's carbon audit was completed in May 2021 and the carbon usage is contained in the covering report.
3.1.2	Formulate a delivery plan with realistic targets for energy, water, travel and transport, monitor progress and report to scrutiny on a quarterly basis and to council annually.	Eleanor Warren	From April 2021 and then on-going	On Track	The council has formulate a climate change and green recovery delivery plan and progress against that plan will be reported through the scrutiny process. A full-time Corporate Climate Change Officer has been appointed and has been working on a full time basis in the Corporate Business and Partnerships Team since June 2021. A new internal Climate Change and Green Recovery group has been set up to co-ordinate the activities in relation to this. The group contains officers from across the authority who have the experience and specialisms in each of the workstreams contained in the strategy.
3.2 Work in partnership with Government, Elected Bodies and Elected Members, Partners and Residents across the Borough to take action that contributes to carbon neutrality and sustainable development within communities					
3.2.1	Encourage elected members to work with their communities to raise awareness and identify opportunities for sustainable low carbon initiatives and promote community action on reducing emissions	Eleanor Warren		On Track	For the past 6 months the council have been working in partnership with Keele University, Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) and local authorities across Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent. The purpose of the partnership is to take a collaborative, problem solving, systematic approach and to experiment, learn and make sense of what is required in order for us to achieve our vision of carbon neutrality. The partnership aims to create knowledge from and for the system, build capacity for implementation, build networks to sustain results, and create solutions with a deeper understanding of root causes. The council is also working in collaboration with Staffordshire County Council and other Staffordshire district and borough council's to champion a "Make Staffordshire Sustainable" campaign. This will see the council encouraging local residents and communities to "do their bit" to help take climate action through the provision of practical advice.
3.2.2	Work with government and elected bodies to determine best practice and use this to raise awareness in our communities, businesses and contractors	Eleanor Warren	From April 2021 and then on-going	On Track	As mentioned above, work in regards to increasing climate awareness in local communities is progressing. We are currently looking to form a stakeholder group, with representatives from the community who will be involved in the council's climate change programme of works, and are considering how to further encourage schools and young people to engage in sustainability.

3.3 Mitigate and adapt to climate change					
3.3.1	Undertake a comprehensive risk-based assessment of vulnerabilities to weather and the climate	Eleanor Warren		On Track	Work to produce a Local Climate Impact Profile for the Borough is currently under way. This will detail how the Borough is likely to be impacted by the effects of climate change in the future, and how service areas are likely to be impacted. It is expected to be completed by the end of September. The first draft of a Climate Change Risk Register has been completed.
3.3.2	Refresh the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy	Eleanor Warren		On Track	The first stage of the Climate Change Adaption Strategy is to complete the Local Climate Impact Profile. As mentioned above, this is currently underway. In addition to the work progressing internally in relation to Climate Adaptation, the council is also going to be involved in collaborative work with Sustainability West Midlands. The output of this work will be to consider how Stafford can contribute to climate adaptation across the wider region.
3.4 Follow the Lawton Principles of delivering more, bigger, better and connected habitats					
3.4.1	Develop Local Nature Recovery Strategy	Forward Planning		On Track	During this year we have committed to follow the Lawton principles of delivering more, bigger, better and connected habitats and in order for us to achieve this we are developing a local nature recovery strategy and working to support the Borough's Nature Recovery Network. We are also continuing to work in partnership to improve air quality by assessing the air quality/nitrogen dioxide for Southern Staffordshire Special Area of Conservation
3.4.2	Investigate green network enhancements in Stafford and Stone	Forward Planning	From 2021 and then on-going	On Track	During this year we have committed to follow the Lawton principles of delivering more, bigger, better and connected habitats and in order for us to achieve this we are developing a local nature recovery strategy and working to support the Borough's Nature Recovery Network. We are also continuing to work in partnership to improve air quality by assessing the air quality/nitrogen dioxide for Southern Staffordshire Special Area of Conservation
3.4.3	Adopt the New Local Plan to meet climate change mitigation and adaptation, and environmental measures through new development – Delivered by Business Objective 1	Forward Planning	Adoption of new Local Plan (2022/23)	On Track	Reported as part of business objective 1

Performance direction of travel - Key

Explanation for Narrative Performance	Text for Performance Status Box
Exceptional	Good
Doing Well	On Track
Below what it should be	Below Target

ITEM NO 7(c)**ITEM NO 7(c)**

Report of:	Corporate Business and Partnerships Manager
Contact Officer:	Tracy Redpath
Telephone No:	01785 619 195
Ward Interest:	Nil
Report Track:	Resources 17/08/21 (Only)

RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**17 AUGUST 2021****Quarter 1 Performance Reporting****1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide an update to members regarding performance reporting for Quarter 1 2020 – 2021 for Resources Scrutiny Committee.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the information is noted.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 During quarter 1 officer time has continued to be taken up with responding to the pandemic and with the continued provision of additional support to vulnerable residents and businesses.
- 3.2 The performance report as set out for this quarter includes progress made against business objective 3 – Climate Change and Green Recovery and business objective 4 - To be a well-run, financially sustainable and ambitious organisation, responsive to the needs of our customers and communities and focussed on delivering our objectives.
- 3.3 The performance reporting for Quarter 1 2021 – 2022 for the Resources Scrutiny Committee is detailed in the **APPENDIX**.

4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives

- 4.1 Performance reporting interlinks with all corporate business objectives.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 The Covid-19 pandemic continues to have a huge impact on residents living in the Borough and businesses operating in the Borough. Officers across the whole Council have been working exceptionally hard to ensure that a broad range of support continues to be provided to residents and businesses at the same time as continuing to keep all our critical services operating.
- 5.2 During quarter 1 work continued in respect of organisational recovery and hybrid working. The Organisational Recovery Group commenced a series of meetings to assess service delivery requirements and employees have been asked about their current experience of remote/home working. This feedback will inform the organisations approach to hybrid working. Proposals to share the Chief Executive with Cannock Chase District Council were approved in May, it was also agreed that a report will be submitted in 8 months with regards to the effectiveness of the interim sharing arrangements.
- 5.3 The volume of Building Control full plans, building notices and inspections has increased compared with quarter 1 in 2019-20. However, this is not an exact comparison due to down-turn in applications last year in the first quarter due to Covid-19. Building Control satisfaction survey has moved over to an on-line survey and the level of feedback received for quarter 1 is too low to draw a conclusion. It is envisaged that through promotion of the survey that this will improve for quarter 2.
- 5.4 The benefit processing times are now on target and Council Tax and Business Rates can now start to be addressed. Resilience has been created by the sharing of the service which has enabled it to deal with the atypical issues and to recover from the resultant backlogs and bottlenecks. Revenue and Benefits have also been able to provide extensive support to both Council's Economic Development teams in administering Business Grants.
- 5.4 Soft testing has taken place with regards to the Digital Strategy and discussions have been held with similar sizes authorities to learn from their experiences to help develop our own specification. Corporate contracts continue to be delivered regardless of the challenges presented by the pandemic.
- 5.5 General Fund Budget Monitoring reporting will commence from quarter 2 and the medium-term financial plan will also be refreshed in this quarter.
- 5.6 Narrative updates for the reporting period are contained within the **APPENDIX**, the report also includes relevant improvement reports in relation to performance indicators identified as performing below target.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial	The financial implications of individual actions are being reviewed by the lead organisation for each workstream.
Legal	Nil
Human Resources	Nil
Human Rights Act	Nil
Data Protection	Nil
Risk Management	Nil

6.2 Community Impact Assessment Recommendations	<p>The Borough Council considers the effect of its actions on all sections of our community and has addressed all of the following Equality Strands in the production of this report, as appropriate:-</p> <p>Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.</p>
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Previous Consideration – Nil

Background Papers – File available in Corporate Business and Partnerships
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Q1 Resources Performance Indicators

Performance at a glance

No	Indicator	Responsible Officer	Is good high or low	Q1 Actual	Q1 Target	Q1 Performance	Year End forecast	Year end target	Direction of Travel
LI13	Days taken to process new HB/CT Claims	Rob Wolfe	L	14.65 days	20 days	Good	20 days	20 days	Good
LI14	Days taken to process new HB/CT change of circumstances	Rob Wolfe	L	3.94 days	9 days	Good	9 days	9 days	On Track
LI15	Building Control-Applications registered and acknowledged within 3 days of valid receipt	Paul Beckley	H	92%	90%	On Track	90%	90%	On Track
LI16	Building Control-Full plans applications with initial full assessment within 15 days of valid receipt	Paul Beckley	H	73%	70%	On Track	70%	70%	On Track
LI17	Building Control-Site visits completed on day requested	Paul Beckley	H	99%	99%	On Track	99%	99%	On Track
LI18	Building Control-Customers satisfied or very satisfied with the service	Paul Beckley	H	67%	90%	Below Target	70%	90%	Below Target

Performance Key	
Performance 10% or more above target	Good
Doing Well	On Track
Performance 10% or more below target	Below Target

Resources

Improvement Report Q1

Performance Indicators

No	Measure Detail	RO	Actual	Target	Performance Symbol	Context for current performance	Improvement Actions Taken	Intervention/Review
LI18	Building Control-Customers satisfied or very satisfied with the service	Paul Beckley	67%	90%	Below Target	The service has moved over to an on-line survey and the level of feedback received for quarter 1 is too low to draw a conclusion. It is envisaged that through promotion of the survey that this will improve for quarter 2.	Raise profile of survey where possible and separate SBC from CCC	Review amount of returns and quality of responses to see if results are meaningful.

Q1 Resources

Narrative Updates

Ref	Key Deliverable	Responsible Officer	End Date	Performance Status	Commentary/Action
4.1.1	Determine a medium financial strategy to maintain the financial resilience of the Council	Emma Fullagar	From April 2024	On Track	The medium term financial plan will be refreshed in quarter 2, the ongoing position of the Council will be monitored monthly
4.1.2	Manage key corporate contracts to agreed service level specifications and standards	Lee Booth	From April 2021 and then on-going	On Track	Key corporate contracts continue to deliver services despite the challenges presented by the pandemic. The priority continues to be mitigating risk of failure and ensuring delivery of services during the recovery period.
4.2.1	Consider the impact of change and future ways of working on the Council workforce, members and customers, including accommodation transformation; organisational recovery group and transformational.	Organisational Recovery Group (ORG)	From April 2021 and then on-going	On Track	The ORG has commenced a series of meetings with senior managers to assess service delivery requirements and the need to increase numbers of employees in the workplace in accordance with government guidelines. In addition, employees are being asked about their current experience of remote/homeworking and their longer-term aspirations regarding continuing to work flexibly subject to service delivery requirements. This feedback will inform how the organisation will build on the transformation agenda work commenced prior to the Pandemic to ensure we continue to be able to recruit and retain an effective workforce.
4.2.2	Review the Customer Access/Digital Strategy to inform future procurement of a new digital services platform	Sue Pote	From April 2021 and then on-going	On Track	The updated Digital Strategy has been agreed at Leadership Team and soft market testing has taken place. We have also had discussions with other similar sized Authorities who have recently replaced their digital platform to share their experiences with us to help inform our Specification.
4.3.1	Investigate the opportunity for further shared services with neighbouring authorities	Leadership Team	From April 2021	On Track	Proposals to share the Chief Executive with Cannock Chase District Council were approved at Council in May. The agreement approved set out plans for the Chief Executive to be seconded for a period of 14 months and that an interim report be submitted after 8 months in relation to the effectiveness of the interim sharing arrangements and an outline business case for ongoing sharing between the two Councils.
4.3.2	Provide a Building Control service that while ensuring construction work meets the required national standards does this in a manner that meets customer needs.	Paul Beckley	From April 2021 then on-going	On Track	The volume of full plans, building notices and inspections has increased compared with quarter 1 in 2019-20. However, this is not an accurate comparison due to down turn in applications last year in the first quarter due to Covid-19. However a comparison with 2018-19 Quarter 1 also shows an increase in volume of work. The performance in processing applications and completing inspections with the increase in work is therefore pleasing. The only identified issue is the customer satisfaction rating and as previously indicated the change to on line surveys seems to have had an impact on response rate. There was only one negative response but with a low overall number this meant the target was not met.

4.3.3	Provide a Revenue and Benefits service that meets customer need	Rob Wolfe	From April 2021 then on-going	On Track	<p>It is very pleasing to see that the benefit processing times have been brought within target and most of the problems of the last year are behind us. This will allow us to concentrate on addressing the remaining niggles with the banded discount scheme and to reap the rewards of introducing the simplified scheme.</p> <p>Council Tax and Business Rate collections can now start to be addressed. Arrears increased last year as more customers found it difficult to pay their bills. This will have a knock on effect on the current years charges and recovering from the impact of the epidemic will take time.</p> <p>In both elements of the service the resilience created by the sharing of the service has enabled us to deal with the atypical issues and to recover from the resultant backlogs and bottlenecks, far better than might otherwise have been the case. We have also been able to provide extensive support to both Council's Economic Development teams in administering Business Grants.</p>
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Explanation for Narrative Performance Status
Exceptional - Good
Doing well - On Track
Below what it should be - Below Target

ITEM NO 7(d)**ITEM NO 7(d)**

Report of:	Head of Law and Administration
Contact Officer:	Andrew Bailey
Telephone No:	01785 619212
Ward Interest:	Nil
Report Track:	Resources 17/08/2021 (Only)

RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**17 AUGUST 2021****Work Programme - Resources Scrutiny Committee****1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Resources Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Resources Scrutiny Committee considers and comments upon their Work Programme.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The first stage in achieving a Member-led Overview and Scrutiny process is to develop a Work Programme for the Members of the Committee to own.
- 3.2 Accordingly, an up-to-date copy of the Resources Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme is provided for Members to consider or amend as appropriate.

4 Relationship to Corporate Business Objectives

- 4.1 This report is most closely associated with the following Corporate Business Objective 3:-

To be a well-run, financially sustainable and ambitious organisation responsive to the needs of our customers and communities and focussed on delivering our objectives.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 Members will recall that one of the fundamental philosophies behind the creation of Overview and Scrutiny is that the process should be Member-led and the first stage in achieving this is to develop a Work Programme that is:-
- Owned by all Members of the Scrutiny Committee;
 - Flexible to allow the Committee to react to urgent items;
 - Contain aspects of both Overview and Scrutiny.
- 5.2 Therefore, at each scheduled meeting of the Resources Scrutiny Committee, an up-to-date copy of the Work Programme will be provided for Members to consider or amend as appropriate.
- 5.3 The Work Programme includes provision for the Committee to scrutinise appropriate items delivered through the Council's Service Delivery Plan up to twelve months in advance, whilst maintaining the flexibility to respond to any issues that may arise.
- 5.4 Accordingly, attached at **APPENDIX** is the Resources Scrutiny Committee's current Work Programme to consider or amend as appropriate.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial	Nil
Legal	Nil
Human Resources	Nil
Human Rights Act	Nil
Data Protection	Nil
Risk Management	Nil

6.2 Community Impact Assessment Recommendations	<p>Impact on Public Sector Equality Duty:</p> <p>The Borough Council considers the effect of its actions on all sections of our community and has addressed all of the following Equality Strands in the production of this report, as appropriate:-</p> <p>Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.</p> <p>Recommendations Wider Community Impact:</p> <p>As detailed above.</p>
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Previous Consideration - Nil

Background Papers – File available in Law and Administration

APPENDIX

RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 AUGUST 2021

Work Programme - Resources Scrutiny Committee

TUESDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2021 AT 6.30PM

Minutes of Last Meeting:	17 August 2021
Officer Items by:	Monday 18 October 2021
Call-in Deadline:	Tuesday 19 October 2021
Member/Public Items by:	Thursday 21 October 2021
Agenda Despatch on:	Monday 25 October 2021
Officer Reports:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny of the Waste Contract Head of Operations • COVID-19 Recovery Corporate Business and Partnerships Manager • Gender Pay Gap Report - 31 March 2020 Head of Human Resources • Final Accounts 2020/21 Head of Finance • Financial Plan 2022/23 - 2024/25 Head of Finance • Fees and Charges Review 2022 Head of Finance • Fees and Charges Review 2022 - Leisure Contractor Head of Finance • Performance Update /Budget Monitoring Report Corporate Business and Partnerships Manager /Head of Finance • Review of the Constitution Head of Law and Administration • Work Programme Scrutiny Officer

TUESDAY 11 JANUARY 2022 AT 6.30PM

Minutes of Last Meeting:	2 November 2021
Officer Items by:	Friday 17 December 2021
Call-in Deadline:	Tuesday 14 December 2021
Member/Public Items by:	Tuesday 21 December 2021
Agenda Despatch on:	Friday 24 December 2021
Officer Reports:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund Revenue Budget 2021-22 to 2024-25 and Capital Programme 2021-22 - 2024-25

	Head of Finance • Resources Portfolio - General Fund Revenue Budget 2021-22 to 2024-25 and Capital Programme 2021-22 - 2024-25 Head of Finance • COVID-19 Recovery Corporate Business and Partnerships Manager • Work Programme Scrutiny Officer
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TUESDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2022 AT 6.30PM

Minutes of Last Meeting:	11 January 2022
Officer Items by:	Monday 31 January 2022
Call-in Deadline:	Tuesday 15 February 2022
Member/Public Items by:	Thursday 3 February 2022
Agenda Despatch on:	Monday 7 February 2022
Officer Reports:	• COVID-19 Recovery Corporate Business and Partnerships Manager • Review of the Constitution (If available by then) Head of Law and Administration • Performance Update /Budget Monitoring Report Corporate Business and Partnerships Manager /Head of Finance • Work Programme Scrutiny Officer

FUTURE ITEMS

- | |
|---|
| • Freedom Leisure Annual Report
Freedom Leisure |
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TASK AND FINISH REVIEW

- | |
|-------------------------------------|
| • Review of the Constitution |
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