



**ST HELENS**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Town Hall, St. Helens, Merseyside, WA10 1HP**

**Telephone: 01744 676277 (James Morley)**

# **Agenda**

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

**PUBLIC MEETINGS ARE WEBCAST (LIVE STREAMED)**

**Date: Monday, 22 April 2024 Time: 5.30 pm Venue: Room 10**

### **Membership**

<b>Lab 8 Councillors</b>	<b>Bell, Hattersley, Johnson, D Long (Chair), T Long, McCormack, Osundeko and Sweeney</b>
<b>Green 1 Councillor</b>	<b>Richards</b>
<b>LD 1 Councillor</b>	<b>Spencer</b>
<b>Inds 1 Councillor</b>	<b>Tasker</b>
<b>Con 1 Councillor</b>	<b>Mussell</b>
<b>Co-opted (Voting)</b>	<b>Mr D Thorpe, Church of England</b>

<u>Item</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
1.	<u>Apologies for Absence</u>	
2.	<u>Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2024</u>	3
3.	<u>Declaration of Interest from Members</u>	
4.	<u>Declarations of Party Whip</u>	
5.	<u>Chairs Updates</u>	
6.	<u>Financial Monitoring Report Period 3</u>	5
	Richard Gibson, Director of Finance has been invited to attend	
7.	<u>Quarter 3 Performance Report 2023-24</u>	51

<u>Item</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
	Vicky Willet, Director of Policy and Transformation and Hannah Myers, Assistant Director of Policy and Transformation have been invited to attend.	
8.	<u>UN Sustainable Development Goals</u>	81
	Hannah Myers, Assistant Director of Policy and Transformation and Chris Collinge, Team Manager Performance and Business Intelligence have been invited to attend.	
9.	<u>Scrutiny Work Programmes 2023/24</u>	99

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

At a meeting of this Committee held on  
5 February 2024

**(Present) Councillor D Long (Chair)**  
**Councillors Bell, Hattersley, T Long, McCormack, Mussell,**  
**Osundeko, Spencer and Sweeney**

**(Not Present) Councillors Johnson, Richards, and Tasker**

**Mr C Williams – Roman Catholic Church**  
**MR D Thorpe – Church of England**

**31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** -----

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Johnson and Tasker, and Mr Thorpe.

**32 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 JANUARY 2024**

\* **Resolved that the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2024 be approved and signed.**

**33 DECLARATION OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**

No Declarations of Interest from Members were made.

**34 DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP**

No Declarations of Party Whip were made.

**35 2024/25 BUDGET SCRUTINY TASK GROUP REPORT**

The Commission gave consideration to a report documenting the activity of the 2024/25 Budget Scrutiny Task Group. The report detailed the findings of the Task Group in relation to the robustness of the Council's budget setting process and set out a statement regarding the conclusions and recommendations of the task group that the Commission was requested to adopt so that it could be submitted the Director of Finance (S151) to include in reports to Cabinet and Council for them to consider as part of the budget approval process.

During the discussion about the report the following points were made:

- Members of the Commission agreed that while the response rate to the public consultation may have been within an acceptable range for the Council it would have been preferable to have had a larger engagement in the consultation.
- Members requested that officers give consideration to a greater range of promotional methods - in particular messages on highway matrix signs, QR codes, and encouraging councillors to promote consultation among their constituents - to increase the awareness of residents of future budget consultations and encourage

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION


more responses, including increased accessibility of hard copy as well as digital consultation forms.

- Members agreed that consideration should be given to alternative approaches to budget setting such as establishing a citizen's jury for the budget and greater co-production of revised operational policies and strategies.
- Given the existential challenge faced by local government nationally, Members agreed that Cabinet should develop a radical, long term, strategy for cost collaborations with partner organisations for the Autumn 2024 to support the next budget setting process.
- It was suggested that the timing and process for scrutiny of the budget had been squeezed and Members hoped there would be an opportunity to revise the budget scrutiny process for next year. It was also suggested that during future scrutiny exercises related to budget setting additional information regarding impact assessments and options considered and dismissed would be beneficial to the scrutiny process.
- Members questioned why Government only provided one-year settlements when local authorities were required to set three year medium term financial strategies (MTFS). The Director of Finance (S151) informed the Commission that MTFS's were required to ensure local authorities understand potential medium-term requirements to set effective annual budgets and confirmed that the Council had previously lobbied Government regarding the benefits of three-year rather than annual settlements. The Commission supported the argument for three-year settlements.
- Members felt that it would be beneficial to include more information regarding impacts on specific sections of the population and place of budget decisions: for example, the percentage of residents effected by a decisions, or implications of a decision for rural vs urban communities.

Having considered the points raised during the discussion of the report, the Commission agreed to a number of additional points to be included in the statement, as set out in the report, that would be submitted to the Director of Finance. Following agreement regarding the general points that the Commission wished to add to the statement it was agreed that the Chair would work with the Senior Scrutiny Officer to develop precise wording for the amendments after the meeting following which the statement would be emailed to the Director of Finance (S151).

\* **Resolved that:**

- (1) the report be noted;**
- (2) subject to the inclusion of amendments proposed during the meeting, the statement of the Commission regarding the robustness of the budget setting process as set out in paragraphs 4.8 to 4.17 of the report be approved;**
- (3) the Chair submit the precise wording for the amendments to the statement agreed during the meeting to the Senior Scrutiny Officer following the meeting; and**
- (4) the Senior Scrutiny Officer submit the amended statement to the Director of Finance (S151).**

 <b>ST HELENS</b> BOROUGH COUNCIL	<h2>Overview and Scrutiny Commission</h2> <h3>22 April 2024</h3>
--	--

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Financial Monitoring Report Period 3 2023/24</b>
<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	Corporate Services
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Martin Bond
<b>Exempt Report</b>	No
<b>Reason for Exemption</b>	N/A
<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Public Notice issued</b>	N/A
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All
<b>Report of</b>	Cath Fogarty Executive Director of Corporate Services <a href="mailto:cathfogarty@sthelens.gov.uk">cathfogarty@sthelens.gov.uk</a>
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Richard Gibson Director of Finance <a href="mailto:richardgibson@sthelens.gov.uk">richardgibson@sthelens.gov.uk</a>

<b>Borough Priorities</b>	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	
	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	
	Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all	
	Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	
	Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	
	Be a responsible Council	X

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Overview and Scrutiny Commission with the forecast financial position in relation to the revenue and capital budget for 2023/24. It also summarises the Council's reserves and balances position and includes the Treasury Management Position Statement.
- 1.2 The report also provides detail on the delivery of the 2023/24 programme of budget savings, including savings brought forward from prior years. The failure to deliver the agreed savings presents a key risk to the Council.
- 1.3 At this stage, there is a forecast service overspend of £11.819m against the updated net portfolio budget of £178.245m, with inflation, increased service demand, staffing challenges and the non-delivery of savings all being significant factors.
- 1.4 Treasury Management and other corporate underspends will offset this pressure by £5.441m, resulting in a forecast net budget overspend of £6.378m for 2023/24.
- 1.5 The position is summarised in the table below.

<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Variance at Period 3 £000</b>
Economy, Business & Skills	+8
Children & Young People	+7,430
Integrated Health & Care	+2,886
Wellbeing, Culture & Heritage	(435)
Corporate Services	(209)
Safer Communities	+34
Environmental Services & Climate Change	+697
Strategic Transport	+158
Regeneration & Planning	(148)
<b>Portfolio Position excluding Pay Award</b>	<b>+10,421</b>
<b>Pay Award</b>	<b>+1,398</b>
<b>Net Portfolio Position</b>	<b>+11,819</b>
Treasury Management	(3,290)
Corporate Budgets	(2,151)
<b>Net Position</b>	<b>+6,378</b>

- 1.6 There is a severe and worsening pressure in the Children & Young People portfolio, the main drivers of this being increasing demand, social work staffing challenges and delivery of the ongoing programme of efficiencies. The other main pressure is within the Integrated Health & Care portfolio, reflecting

continuing demand pressures and the complexity of needs of a cohort of individuals.

- 1.7 There will be significant consequences for the Council should robust action not be taken to mitigate this position. The current forecast determines that there will be a requirement to draw upon an additional £6.378m from reserves to meet the shortfall, severely impacting reserves levels and reducing the Council's financial stability. The Council's reserves are not excessive, and it is essential to protect reserves to ensure future financial resilience and sustainability.
- 1.8 If the projected overspend is not reduced permanently, the Council will continue to need to use reserves to fund the revenue budget, increasing the risk of a Section 114 notice. Whilst this risk is substantial, it is not likely over the period of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- 1.9 The position will continue to be closely monitored during the year, with significant focus via the Savings Delivery Board meetings.

## **2. Recommendations for Decision**

**Overview and Scrutiny Commission is recommended to:**

- 1) Note the forecast outturn revenue overspend position for 2023/24 summarised at Section 1 above and detailed in Sections 1 and 2 of the Appendix, and in individual portfolio positions detailed at Annex C.**
- 2) Note the management actions outlined in Section 1 of the Appendix to mitigate the 2023/24 revenue position.**
- 3) Note the latest position with regard to the implementation of 2023/24 budget savings and those brought forward from prior years, as detailed in Section 3 of the Appendix.**
- 4) Note the revised capital programme as detailed in Section 4 of the Appendix.**
- 5) Note the latest Reserves and Balances position as detailed in Section 5 of the Appendix.**
- 6) Note the Other Financial Monitoring Matters as detailed in Section 6 of the Appendix.**
- 7) Note the Treasury Management Position Statement at Annex G to the Appendix.**
- 8) Note the proposed alternative means of achieving saving OPS01 (removal of cash payment options for car parking) detailed at paragraph 3.6 of the Appendix.**

**9) Note the realignment of savings ICH6 (Learning Disability Services Review) and IH&SC01 (Care Package Reviews) detailed in paragraph 3.8 of the Appendix.**

**10) Note the proposed alternative means of achieving saving PH7 (Cessation of Support to Non-Mandatory Council Services) detailed at paragraph 3.9 of the Appendix.**

**11) Note the delegation of accepting the confirmed UK Shared Prosperity Fund Grant to the Director of Strategic Growth in consultation with the relevant portfolio members and the Director of Finance, as detailed in Section 6.1.7 of the Appendix.**

### **3. Purpose of this report**

- 3.1 The Council remains committed to the regular monitoring of its financial performance. This report is provided to update Overview and Scrutiny Commission on the severe position in respect of the revenue budget for 2023/24, and to underline the need for the budgetary pressures to be brought permanently under control.
- 3.2 The report is also provided to update Overview and Scrutiny Commission on progress in delivering the capital programme, as detailed in Appendix 1.
- 3.3 The report was prepared excluding any financial implications that may have arisen from agenda items considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 28 February 2024.

### **4. Background**

- 4.1 The Council's budget supports all the Borough priorities through the allocation of resources and ensuring that they are effectively managed.
- 4.2 This is the third Financial Monitoring Report of 2023/24, covering the period to December 2023.
- 4.3 Despite the implementation of a recruitment freeze, a halt to all non-essential expenditure and a review of agency worker usage, the net portfolio revenue position for 2023/24 has worsened since the previous Financial Monitoring Report considered by Cabinet on 22 November 2023. This report sets out the details of that in Appendix 1.

### **5. Consideration of Alternatives**

- 5.1 None.

### **6. Conclusions**

- 6.1 Forecasts determine that there is future risk to the Council's ongoing financial sustainability and resilience, and a series of actions and measures are necessary to address this position.



6.2 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Revenue and Capital Budget report contained elsewhere on the agenda is pivotal in relation to the future financial position of the Council.

## **7. Legal Implications**

7.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight the forecast financial position of the Council and at this stage has no direct legal implications, unless noted.

7.2 Local authorities are required by legislation to set a balanced budget for each financial year, with the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) responsible for financial administration and having a number of duties related to financial resilience, including a duty to report on the robustness of the Council's budget estimates and the adequacy of its reserves.

7.3 The Chief Financial Officer also has a statutory duty to issue a formal report if they believe that the Council is unable to set or maintain a balanced budget.

## **8. Financial Implications**

8.1 As detailed in the report.

## **9. Equality Impact Assessment**

9.1 Whilst there are no equality implications arising directly from the report, any potential implications need to be considered and understood when taking action to ensure sustainability of the Council's financial position.

## **10. Social Value**

10.1 There are no direct social value implications arising from the report, but the financial challenge is such that any associated adverse impacts on the local economy, particularly in terms of spend and procurement, need to be fully considered and understood.

## **11. Net Zero and Environment**

11.1 There are no direct implications arising from the report, but the financial challenge is such that any associated adverse impacts on net zero and the environment need to be fully considered and understood.

## **12. Health and Wellbeing**

12.1 There are no direct implications arising from the report, but the financial challenge is such that any associated adverse impacts on health and wellbeing need to be fully considered and understood.

## **13. Customer and Resident**

# 6

13.1 There are no direct implications on people accessing Council services or those resident in the Borough from this report, but any potential adverse impacts must be fully considered and understood when taking action to ensure the Council's financial sustainability.

## **14. Asset and Property**

14.1 Section 4 and Annex F provide detail on the Council's capital programme, which includes investment in the Council's land and property assets.

## **15. Staffing and People Management**

15.1 There are no direct implications on staffing arising from this report, but due to the extreme financial challenge, any associated potential adverse impacts upon staffing will need to be considered and understood.

## **16. Risks**

16.1 The report outlines the Council's forecast budget position and highlights a number of serious risks in relation to the Council's financial position and sustainability.

## **17. Policy Framework Implications**

17.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report, but due to the extreme financial challenge, any associated potentially adverse impacts will need to be considered and understood.

## **18. Impact and Opportunities on Localities**

18.1 None arising directly from this report, but any potential impacts and opportunities need to be fully considered and understood when taking action to ensure the Council's financial sustainability.

## **19. Background Documents**

19.1 None.

## **20. Appendices**

20.1 Appendix 1 – Financial Monitoring Report Period 3 2023/24

**FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT - PERIOD 3 2023/24****SECTION 1: SUMMARY****Revenue Budget**

- 1.1 This is the third Financial Monitoring Report of 2023/24, covering the period to December 2023. The report has been prepared excluding the financial implications of any other reports presented on the same agenda. There will be a final outturn report covering the full-year financial performance for 2023/24.
- 1.2 There is a forecast service overspend of £11.819m against the updated net portfolio budget of £178.245m.
- 1.3 Underspends within the Treasury Management and corporate budgets will offset the projected overspend by £5.441m, **resulting in a forecast net budget overspend of £6.378m**. These underspends are generally one-off in nature for 2023/24. Without them, the overall forecast position would be significantly worse, and would result in an even lower forecast level of general balances.
- 1.4 The overall position is summarised in the table below.

<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Variance at Period 3 £000</b>
Economy, Business & Skills	+8
Children & Young People	+7,430
Integrated Health & Care	+2,886
Wellbeing, Culture & Heritage	(435)
Corporate Services	(209)
Safer Communities	+34
Environmental Services & Climate Change	+697
Strategic Transport	+158
Regeneration & Planning	(148)
<b>Portfolio Position excluding Pay Award</b>	<b>+10,421</b>
<b>Pay Award</b>	<b>+1,398</b>
<b>Net Portfolio Position</b>	<b>+11,819</b>
Treasury Management	(3,290)
Corporate Budgets	(2,151)
<b>Net Position</b>	<b>+6,378</b>

- 1.5 There is a severe and worsening pressure in the Children & Young People portfolio, the main drivers of this being increasing demand, social work staffing challenges and ongoing delivery of the programme of efficiencies. Placement costs associated with caring for children looked after, frontline social care staffing costs and costs relating to family support packages continue to be the main pressures. Actions continue to be progressed to help mitigate and combat these challenges.

- 1.6 Nevertheless, the forecast pressure in the Children & Young People portfolio has increased by £2.132m from the Period 2 position reported to Cabinet at its meeting on 22 November 2023. This is primarily because projected costs associated with delivering appropriate care and accommodation for children looked after have increased by £1.254m since the Period 2 projections. In addition, the need for adequate staffing resource with manageable caseloads has increased the forecast frontline social care staffing pressure by £0.798m.
- 1.7 The other main pressure is within the Integrated Health & Care portfolio, reflecting ongoing demand pressures and the complexity of needs and acuity of individuals. The most significant pressures continue to be within Learning Disability Services and Physical Support (Frail and Older People).
- 1.8 The main pressure within the Environmental Services & Climate Change portfolio relates to School Meals (+£0.489m) due to the impact of food price inflation and reduced income from secondary schools.
- 1.9 As noted at Period 2, there will be severe consequences for the Council should further action not be taken to mitigate this position. The current forecast position determines that there will be a requirement to draw upon an additional £6.378m from reserves to meet the shortfall, severely impacting reserves levels and reducing the Council's financial stability. If the projected overspend is not reduced permanently, the Council will continue to need to use reserves to fund the revenue budget, increasing the risk of a Section 114 notice. Whilst this risk is substantial, it is not likely over the period of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- 1.10 In response to the severe overspend situation, the Executive Leadership Team previously instructed an immediate recruitment freeze, a halt to all non-essential expenditure and a review of agency worker usage.
- 1.11 As a result of the recruitment freeze, the Council's vacancy rate has increased by 2%, from 12.8% to 14.8%, which equates to a total of 411 Full-Time Equivalent positions spread across all departments. All vacancies are now being managed by each Departmental Management Team (DMT) to ensure that only key vacancies are filled in the short term. This is reflected in the latest position set out in this report.
- 1.12 The impact of the non-essential expenditure freeze is harder to track on an item-by-item basis but is reflected in the overall position reported for each service.
- 1.13 Each DMT has now reviewed its agency staff usage and is working towards reducing demand for it, most notably within the Environmental Services and Climate Change (Waste Services) and Children & Young People (Children's Social Workers) portfolios.
- 1.14 The position will continue to be closely monitored for the remainder of the year, with significant focus via the Savings Delivery Board meetings.
- 1.15 The position includes the impact of the Local Government Pay Award, which was higher than budgeted. The approved 2023/24 budget allowed for pay inflation of 5%. As reported in previous Financial Monitoring Reports, this assumption was not unrealistic when considered against the inflation forecasts within the Autumn Statement 2022 and the Government's statements at the time on restraint of public-sector pay. However, in November 2023, agreement was reached on a £1,925 increase on all pay points, which equated to an average increase of approximately 6.44%. This has generated a pressure of £1.398m, which has been included on a separate line at Table 1 and within each portfolio summary at Annex C, to aid comparison with Period 2.

- 1.16 When setting the 2023/24 budget, savings totalling £7.445m were approved against a savings requirement of £6.568m for the year, with the balancing £0.877m built into budget as a one-off contribution to the Inflation Reserve in view of the extraordinary economic volatility the Council faces. It is proposed that these funds be called upon to mitigate the pressure relating to the final settlement of the 2023/24 Pay Award.
- 1.17 As outlined at 2.3 below, the Council is due a sum of £0.540m under the Mid-Mersey Business Rates Pool arrangement with Warrington and Halton Borough Councils in relation to Warrington's Business Rates growth. This sum, along with the foregone one-off contribution to reserves detailed at 1.16, will offset the Pay Award pressure in full.
- 1.18 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024-2027 and Revenue & Capital Budget 2024/25 is presented on the same agenda as this report, and provides an update on the estimated funding gap and quantum of savings required to deliver a balanced budget in future years.

### **Savings Programme**

- 1.19 The 2023/24 budget was approved by Council on 1 March 2023. In doing so, Members agreed to the delivery of £7.445m savings during the year. This is in addition to £3.210m savings previously approved for 2023/24 and £1.698m of savings slipped from previous years, giving a total of £12.353m of savings to be delivered. Section 3 provides a summary of the progress made towards delivering these savings, and portfolio commentaries provide additional information. The failure to deliver savings presents a key risk to the Council's financial position.

### **Financial Outlook**

- 1.20 The environment within which the Council operates continues to pose serious financial challenges. The most severe of these is pressure from demand-led expenditure budgets, mainly within children's and adults' social care. This continues to be exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis, with more and more families needing Council support. The threat from inflation remains immense. Given the magnitude of these pressures and the current forecast overspend position, further use of reserves will be necessary in 2023/24, but this position is not sustainable.
- 1.21 With continued uncertainty over the mechanics of local-government funding and with councils continuing to be provided with one-year financial settlements (which limits long-term planning) the financial outlook remains extremely challenging and uncertain. After more than a decade of austerity, the Council has never faced a more challenging funding position. These pressures continue to require robust financial management.
- 1.22 In the absence of any significant additional government support to address inflationary and demand pressures, further reductions to the Council's service offer will be necessary. The financial pressure that the Council is experiencing cannot be overstated. Strong planning and robust decision-making will continue to be necessary, including the identification of mitigations and sustainable savings options to reduce the budget pressures.

### **Capital Budget**

- 1.23 The capital programme covers the three-year period through to 2025/26. The capital budget has been updated to reflect new schemes approved, and schemes have been reprofiled to reflect the latest spending estimates. Further details are included in Section 4 and Annex F.

### **Reserves and Balances**

- 1.24 Section 5 of this report provides detail on the Council’s reserves and balances. As part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2023-2026, Members agreed to rebuild reserves to afford the Council additional resilience to changes in funding, inflationary pressures and unexpected events, whilst at the same time ensuring that it has sufficient resources to support its priorities. The Council’s reserves are not excessive, and it is essential to protect reserves to ensure future financial resilience and sustainability.
- 1.25 Given the scale of the inflationary and demand pressures the Council is experiencing, use of reserves will be necessary again in 2023/24 to absorb the forecast overspend. Based on the projected outturn position set out in Table 1, the level of general balances at 31 March 2024 is forecast to be £5.622m. This is in contrast to the current Reserves Strategy and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2023-2026, which identify the Council’s required level of general balances as being £12m. Use of earmarked reserves will therefore be necessary to replenish general balances at outturn. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024-2027 and Revenue & Capital Budget 2024/25 presented on the same agenda as this report provides further commentary and proposals in relation to this position.
- 1.26 Such use of reserves (general or earmarked) to address recurrent pressures is not sustainable, and further action is necessary to avoid the financial threats that the Council is facing.
- 1.27 Section 5.2 provides a summary of earmarked reserves until March 2024, whilst Annex E provides detail on the forecast level of earmarked reserves to March 2026.

### **Treasury Management**

- 1.28 This report includes the Treasury Management Position Statement at Annex G.

### **SECTION 2: REVENUE BUDGET**

- 2.1 The budget and forecast outturn positions for 2023/24 are summarised in Table 1. At the end of Period 3, there is a projected portfolio budget pressure of £11.819m. This includes the Pay Award pressure of £1.398m referred to at 1.15.
- 2.2 There is a forecast underspend of £3.290m relating to Treasury Management activity. The increased Bank Rate and available market returns have increased forecast investment interest by £1.290m against budget. Forecast debt management costs are also £2.000m lower than budget, reflecting the profile of future capital expenditure funded by borrowing and decisions around the continued deferral of additional borrowing, given current rates.
- 2.3 As part of the Mid-Mersey Business Rates Pool arrangement with Warrington and Halton Borough Councils, St Helens is due a sum of £0.540m in relation to previous financial years, this being a proportionate share of the levy savings that would otherwise have been payable in relation to Warrington’s Business Rates growth. This sum has been included in the forecasts at Table 1 below.
- 2.4 The forecast outturn position also includes a one-off technical adjustment for the 2023 Business Rates revaluation. The Council will receive an additional £0.198m to reflect the difference between the draft Business Rates rating list and the updated 2023/24 list.
- 2.5 On 5 February 2024, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities confirmed the distribution to local authorities of a surplus on the Business Rates Retention

System Levy Account for 2023/24. St Helens' allocation is expected to be in the region of £0.388m, which has been factored into the forecast outturn position at Table 1 below.

- 2.6 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has also confirmed that it will compensate local authorities for the Green Plant and Machinery Business Rates exemption introduced from 1 April 2023. St Helens' award has been confirmed at £0.148m for 2023/24. This has been built into the forecasts at Table 1 below.

<b>Table 1 – Revenue Budget 2023/24</b>	<b>Current Budget (a) £000</b>	<b>Forecast outturn at Q3 (b) £000</b>	<b>Variance at Q3 inc. Pay Award + / - (b)-(a) £000</b>	<b>Variance at Q3 exc. Pay Award + / - £000</b>	<b>Variance at Q2 exc. Pay Award + / - £000</b>	<b>Section Reference Annex C</b>
Economy, Business and Skills	2,281	2,297	+16	+8	+145	(i)
Children and Young People	64,647	72,233	+7,586	+7,430	+5,298	(ii)
Integrated Health and Care	63,165	66,400	+3,235	+2,886	+3,217	(iii)
Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage	6,141	5,799	(342)	(435)	(351)	(iv)
Corporate Services	7,532	7,438	(94)	(209)	(206)	(v)
Safer Communities	1,656	1,694	+38	+34	+18	(vi)
Environmental Services and Climate Change	10,527	11,822	+1,295	+697	+857	(vii)
Strategic Transport	13,839	14,010	+171	+158	+76	(viii)
Regeneration and Planning	8,457	8,371	(86)	(148)	+358	(ix)
<b>Pay Award</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+1,398</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Net Portfolio Budgets</b>	<b>178,245</b>	<b>190,064</b>	<b>+11,819</b>	<b>+9,412</b>		
Levies & Precepts	22,932	22,932	0	0		
Treasury Management	9,174	5,884	(3,290)	(2,750)		
Restructuring Costs	1,001	1,001	0	0		
Transfers to / (from) Earmarked Reserves	(5,345)	(6,222)	(877)	0		
Capital Charges	(17,142)	(17,142)	0	0		
<b>Net Corporate Items</b>	<b>10,620</b>	<b>6,453</b>	<b>(4,167)</b>	<b>(2,750)</b>		
Council Tax / Retained Business Rates	(145,105)	(145,105)	0	0		
Collection Fund Deficit	64	64	0	0		
Business Rates Retention System Levy Account	0	(388)	(388)	0		
Formula Top-Up	(18,628)	(18,628)	0	0		
Section 31 Grant	(17,501)	(17,501)	0	0		
2023/24 Services Grant	(1,869)	(1,869)	0	0		
Other Funding	(5,826)	(6,712)	(886)	0		
<b>Funding</b>	<b>(188,865)</b>	<b>(190,139)</b>	<b>(1,274)</b>	<b>0</b>		
<b>NET POSITION 2023/24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,378</b>	<b>+6,378</b>	<b>+6,662</b>		

- 2.7 The previous budget approved by Cabinet on 22 November 2023 has been revised to include:

- (i) Approved use of earmarked reserves in the period and rephasing of approved use of reserves during 2023/24 into 2024/25;

- (ii) Neutral technical adjustments (e.g., relating to recharges and capital charges);
- (iii) The use of £0.948m of earmarked reserves in 2023/24 to smooth the impact of a shortfall in Section 31 grants received during the year. Additional Business Rates income will be received in 2024/25, which will then be used to replenish reserves. This is solely due to the prescribed statutory mechanics of the Collection Fund, and has been reflected in the reserves forecasts at Section 5 and Annex E.

2.8 Details of portfolio budget movements can be found in Annex A. This report also provides details of the forecast outturn position on a priority basis at Annex B.

### **Portfolio Budget Position**

For 2023/24, an in-year overspend of £11.819m against the current service budgets is currently projected based on the respective forecast outturn positions, as shown in Table 1. Commentary in relation to the key portfolio variations is detailed in Annex C.

### **SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION OF 2023/24 SAVINGS PROPOSALS AND OUTSTANDING SAVING PROPOSALS FROM PRIOR YEARS**

- 3.1 The budget for 2023/24 was set against a backdrop of significant demand and inflationary pressures, with the one-off use of £4m of earmarked reserves to balance the budget and with significant savings that must be delivered during the year to protect the Council's financial position. This section summarises the latest position in relation to the delivery of these savings.
- 3.2 Savings for the financial year 2023/24 have been reported in three categories:
- Savings slipped from previous financial years;
  - 2023/24 savings approved when setting previous years' budgets;
  - 2023/24 savings approved in setting the latest Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 3.3 The forecast overspend position outlined at Section 2 reflects in part the non-delivery of savings within the year. The value of savings on track to be delivered has increased since the previous Financial Monitoring Report, from £7.568m to £7.961m. As Table 2 shows, this equates to 64% of the required savings total of £12.353m.

<b>Table 2 - Budget Savings 2023/24</b>	<b>Total Saving 2023/24 £000</b>	<b>Savings on track to be delivered £000 (a)</b>	<b>Slippage on delivery in year £000 (b)</b>	<b>Saving Not Achievable £000 (c)</b>	<b>Mitigation 2023/24 £000 (d)</b>
Integrated Health and Care	4,602	2,856	1,746	-	1,167
Public Health	376	247	129	-	129
Children's Services	1,858	754	1,104	-	978
Place Services	3,747	2,403	1,164	180	1,304
Corporate Services	1,361	1,361	-	-	-
Council Wide	409	340	69	-	69
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,353</b>	<b>7,961</b>	<b>4,212</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>3,647</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>64.44%</b>	<b>34.10%</b>	<b>1.46%</b>	
<b>Total forecast financial saving 2023/24 (a)+(d)</b>	<b>11,608</b>				



- 3.4 Of the £4.392m of savings that have not yet been achieved, temporary mitigations of £3.647m have been identified for the current year only. This means that the total forecast financial saving is £0.745m less than required. While this is more favourable than the position reported at Period 2, it is critical that unachieved savings are delivered or alternative permanent reductions in expenditure are found. Continued failure to deliver approved savings will render the Council unable to deliver a balanced budget.
- 3.5 The savings that are currently not considered achievable are:
- OPS01 (Removal of cash payment options for car parking – £0.040m) following the Government’s announcement that local-authority car parks must retain cash payment facilities (see 3.6)
  - SG05 (Review of leasehold properties – £0.140m) owing to complexities around provision of alternative accommodation and completion of legal arrangements.
- 3.6 Saving OPS01 is being mitigated by a permanent reduction to the Council’s parking enforcement contract. Given the Government’s announcement that local-authority car parks must retain cash payment facilities, **it is recommended that approval be granted to formalise this mitigation and make the required £0.040m saving via a permanent reduction to the parking enforcement contract budget instead.**
- 3.7 The non-achievement of savings presents a risk for both current and future financial years. It is imperative that action continues to be taken to alleviate these risks, either by delivering the approved savings in full or by identifying alternatives to offset savings that have slipped or cannot be delivered. These actions will continue to be monitored and challenged through the Budget Savings Delivery Board.
- 3.8 There have been challenges in the delivery of saving ICH6 (Learning Disability Services Review – £1.763m). There has also been an overachievement of £0.750m in the delivery of saving IH&SC01 (Care Package Reviews - £0.135m). **It is therefore recommended that approval be granted to realign these two savings, by increasing the required saving for IH&SC01 by £0.750m and reducing the target for ICH6 by the same amount.** The review of Learning Disability Services will continue into 2024/25, and it is anticipated that the review will deliver future savings as the department works with care providers to reduce support in a safe and planned way. Further detail is provided at Annex C.
- 3.9 Public Health saving PH7 (Cessation of Support to Non-Mandatory Council Services – £0.063m) against the Affordable Warmth Service is no longer considered achievable. **It is therefore recommended that approval be granted to offer an alternative to mitigate this saving permanently. The saving can be delivered through a reduction in activity-based services with GPs and pharmacies.**

**SECTION 4: CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 to 2025/26**

- 4.1 The capital budget has been updated to reflect revised expenditure profiles for capital schemes, based on most recent estimates of when expenditure will be incurred on multi-year schemes, including:
- Expected deferral of £16.600m equity investment in Parkside Joint Venture into 2024/25
  - Reprofile of £8.800m of expenditure on Parkside Link Road between 2023/24 & 2024/25
  - Reprofile of £12.200m of expenditure on Earlestown Town Centre from 2023/24 to 2024/25 and 2025/26
  - Reprofile of £3.800m of expenditure on Town Deal projects from 2023/24 to 2024/25
  - Reprofile of £2.200m of expenditure on fleet replacement to match the expected delivery date from 2023/24 to 2024/25
  - Reprofile of £1.200m of expenditure on Children's Residential homes from 2023/24 to 2024/25
  - Updating the St Helens Town Centre Phase 1 expenditure to reflect the profile over the next four years, including £23.000m of expenditure in 2026/27 included in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy
- 4.2 The capital budget has also been updated to reflect the addition of new schemes during the quarter, including:
- £0.100m to fund new festive lighting for Earlestown and St Helens town centres, as detailed in Operational Decision ENVP003051
  - Capital expenditure of £0.061m for the implementation of a new Asset Management Data System, approved as part of Delegated Executive Decision 0051
  - Grant-funded expenditure of £0.329m to support with the expansion of funded childcare for working parents with children aged over 9 months and increase the supply of wrap-around care in primary schools

- 4.3 Table 3 presents a summary of the Council's current three-year capital programme. The detailed programme is provided at Annex F.

<b>Table 3 - Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2025/26</b>	<b>2023/24 £000</b>	<b>2024/25 £000</b>	<b>2025/26 £000</b>
Children & Young People	3,109	15,700	1,300
Integrated Health & Care	0	25	0
Economy, Business & Skills	11	0	0
Wellbeing, Culture & Heritage	815	1,565	0
Corporate Services	775	1,379	0
Strategic Transport	38,100	23,589	7,645
Environmental Services & Climate Change	6,973	3,470	700
Regeneration & Planning	28,004	68,942	42,801
Safer Communities	736	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>78,523</b>	<b>114,670</b>	<b>52,446</b>
<b>FINANCED BY</b>			
Grants and Other Contributions	47,698	66,922	17,208
Capital Receipts	115	1,874	126
Revenue Contribution	534	869	24
Borrowing	30,176	45,005	35,088
<b>Total</b>	<b>78,523</b>	<b>114,670</b>	<b>52,446</b>

## **SECTION 5: RESERVES AND BALANCES**

### 5.1 **General Balances**

The level of general balances at 31 March 2024 is forecast to be as follows, having regard to the forecast outturn position detailed in Table 1.

<b>Table 4 – General Balances</b>	<b>Original Estimate £000</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn £000</b>
General Balances at 1 April 2023	12,000	12,000
Net Position 2023/24	-	(6,378)
<b>General Balances at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>5,622</b>

- 5.1.1 The Council recognises that the level of reserves it maintains must reflect its future priorities and the operational and financial risks it faces. The Council's current Reserves Strategy is included within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2023-2026 and Revenue and Capital Budget 2023/24 report considered by Cabinet on 22 February 2023 and approved by Council on 1 March 2023.
- 5.1.2 The unfavourable movement in 2023/24 is due entirely to the forecast overspend of £6.378m detailed at Section 2.
- 5.1.3 The Council's required level of general balances is identified as being £12m. This is considered a prudent amount set aside to cushion against uncertainty and act as an emergency fund in exceptional circumstances. As outlined at paragraph 1.24, the figure will decrease to £5.622m if the forecast overspend is not reduced. This presents a severe risk to the Council's financial resilience and is not sustainable. Further proposals in relation to this will be considered as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024-2027 and Revenue and Capital Budget 2024/25 presented on the same agenda as this report.

### 5.2 **Earmarked Balances**

The forecast position in relation to general and legacy Covid-19 earmarked balances at 31 March 2024 is provided in Tables 5 and 6.

Annex D details approved use of earmarked balances during the period and Annex E provides a forecast of earmarked balances to 2025/26.

<b>Table 5 – General Earmarked Balances</b>	<b>£000</b>
General Earmarked Balances at 1 April 2023	46,815
Transfer to / (from) during the year	(2,524)
<b>Forecast General Earmarked Balances at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>44,291</b>

<b>Table 6 – Covid-19 Earmarked Balances</b>	<b>Collection Fund £000</b>	<b>Other £000</b>
Covid Earmarked Balances at 1 April 2023	488	4,210
Transfer to / (from) during the year	(488)	(3,210)
<b>Forecast Covid-19 Earmarked Balances at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,000</b>

### 5.3 **Schools Balances**

The projected position reflects schools' current spending plans for the financial year, as approved by the individual governing bodies.

<b>Table 7 – School Balances</b>	<b>£000</b>
School Balances at 1 April 2023	11,887
Forecast Net Position 2023/24	(1,587)*
<b>Forecast School Balances at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>10,300</b>

\*The forecast net position includes the impact of Brook Lodge Primary School academising on 1 November 2023.

### 5.4 **Usable Capital Receipts**

<b>Table 8 – Usable Capital Receipts</b>	<b>£000</b>
Capital receipts brought forward at 1 April 2023	19,103
Receipts generated in year to date from land, property and fleet sales	133
Receipts set aside for the Land and Property Acquisition Fund	(10,000)
Receipts set aside to resource the Transformation Programme where the use of flexibilities can be applied	(1,000)
Required to fund Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2025/26	(2,115)
<b>Available Balance (after taking commitments into account)</b>	<b>6,121</b>

## **SECTION 6: OTHER FINANCIAL MONITORING MATTERS**

### 6.1 External Grant Funding

#### 6.1.1 NHS Resilience and Emergency Care Funding

In September 2023, selected local authorities were invited to bid for funding from the Department of Health and Social Care to support urgent and emergency care and create resilience over the winter period through hospital avoidance/hospital discharge measures. St Helens has been informed that its bid was successful and has been awarded £0.452m.

#### 6.1.2 Local Stop Smoking Services and Support Funding

In October 2023, the Department of Health and Social Care announced a programme of funding to support current smokers to quit smoking. St Helens has been awarded an indicative allocation of £0.207m for 2024/25.

#### 6.1.3 Highways Maintenance Funding

In November 2023, the Department for Transport announced £8.3 billion of redirected HS2 funding to repair and resurface roads, with funding allocated through to 2034. Of this, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has been awarded an indicative allocation of £2.684m in both 2023/24 and 2024/25. At the time of drafting this report, the Council is awaiting details of its share of this allocation.

#### 6.1.4 Family Hubs Funding

Previously, the Council was notified that it is one of 75 local authorities eligible for Tier 2 Family Hubs funding and has now received confirmation of funding allocations for 2024/25, with £0.068m allocated to support the capital costs of the programme in addition to a revenue grant of £0.981m. Cabinet accepted this funding on 22 November 2023.

#### 6.1.5 Grow Back Greener Funding

The Council has been awarded capital grant funding of £0.271m for 2023/24 from the Northern Forest Partnership's Grow Back Greener programme, to support woodland creation schemes throughout the Mersey Forest area. Delegated Executive Decision 0062 provides further details.

#### 6.1.6 Safer Streets 5 Funding

In November 2023, the Council was notified that its bid to secure £0.201m from the Home Office's Safer Streets 5 Programme for the delivery of interventions in the local nighttime economy to prevent violence against women and girls was successful. Delegated Executive Decision 0072 provides further details.

#### 6.1.7 UK Shared Prosperity Fund

In January 2024, the Council was notified that it has been awarded an allocation of £0.898m from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan for 2024/25. The funding has been provided to deliver the Council's Ways to Work project, providing employment support and training outcomes to local residents. **It is recommended that approval be granted for delegation of accepting the confirmed grant funding to the Director of Strategic Growth in consultation with the relevant portfolio members and the Director of Finance.**

**SECTION 7: TREASURY MANAGEMENT POSITION STATEMENT**

- 7.1 A summary of the Council's Treasury position at the end of the reporting period is included in Table 9. The Treasury Management Position Statement is included in Annex G.

<b>Table 9 – Treasury Management Position</b>	<b>As at 1 April 2023</b>	<b>As at Previous Period</b>	<b>As at Current Period</b>
Investments Outstanding	£127.0m	£144.9m	£130.8m
Investment Returns (average for the year to date)	-	4.70%	4.83%
Benchmark Returns	-	4.49%	4.70%
Borrowing	£137.5m	£137.5m	£132.5m

**Budget Movements since the previous reporting period****Annex A**

PORTFOLIO	Approved Budget	Use of Reserves in Period	Earmarked Reserves Rephased into Future Years	Earmarked Reserves Not Required	Technical & Accounting Adjustments	Current Budget
	£000 *1	£000 *2	£000 *2	£000 *2	£000 *3	£000
Economy, Business and Skills	2,316	-	(20)	-	(15)	2,281
Children and Young People	64,429	-	-	-	218	64,647
Integrated Health and Care	63,320	-	(31)	-	(124)	63,165
Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage	6,329	-	(244)	-	56	6,141
Corporate Services	7,743	70	(774)	-	493	7,532
Safer Communities	1,668	-	-	(14)	2	1,656
Environmental Services and Climate Change	9,864	229	(15)	-	449	10,527
Strategic Transport	13,652	-	(57)	(15)	259	13,839
Regeneration and Planning	8,715	-	(100)	-	(158)	8,457
<b>TOTAL DIRECTORATE BUDGETS</b>	<b>178,036</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>(1,241)</b>	<b>(29)</b>	<b>1,180</b>	<b>178,245</b>
Council-Wide Budgets	(178,036)	(299)	1,241	29	(1,180)	(178,245)
<b>Net Position 2023/24</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

\*1 Approved budget – Cabinet, 22 November 2023

\*2 Use of earmarked reserves during the period (see Annex D)

\*3 Neutral technical and accounting adjustments (e.g. recharges and capital charges)



Annex BPortfolio Budgets on a Priority Basis

	<b>Current Net Budget 2023/24 £000</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £000</b>	<b>Variance 2023/24 £000</b>
Priority 1 – Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	64,647	72,233	+7,586
Priority 2 – Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	63,223	66,458	+3,235
Priority 3 – Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all	8,062	8,455	+393
Priority 4 – Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	5,866	6,342	+476
Priority 5 – Create green vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	29,867	30,830	+963
Priority 6 – Be a modern, efficient and effective Council	6,580	5,746	(834)
<b>Total</b>	<b>178,245</b>	<b>190,064</b>	<b>+11,819</b>

(i) Economy, Business and Skills

<b>Economy, Business and Skills</b>	<b>Current Expend. Budget 2023/24 £000 (a)</b>	<b>Current Income Budget 2023/24 £000 (b)</b>	<b>Current Net Budget 2023/24 £000 (c)=(a)+(b)</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £000 (d)</b>	<b>Variance Q3 2023/24 £000 (e)=(d)-(c)</b>	<b>Variance Q2 2023/24 £000</b>
<b>People's Services Directorate</b>						
Adult Community Learning	658	(626)	32	32	0	0
<b>Non-Schools Total</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>(626)</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total People's Services</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>(626)</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Place Services Directorate</b>						
Economic Development	1,647	(1,158)	489	539	+50	+54
Environmental Health	1,723	(577)	1,146	1,139	(7)	+118
Trading Standards	608	(15)	593	560	(33)	(23)
Licensing and Land Charges	730	(709)	21	19	(2)	(4)
<b>Subtotal exc. Pay Award</b>	<b>4,708</b>	<b>(2,459)</b>	<b>2,249</b>	<b>2,257</b>	<b>+8</b>	<b>+145</b>
<b>Pay Award</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>+8</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Place Services</b>	<b>4,708</b>	<b>(2,459)</b>	<b>2,249</b>	<b>2,265</b>	<b>+16</b>	<b>+145</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,366</b>	<b>(3,085)</b>	<b>2,281</b>	<b>2,297</b>	<b>+16</b>	<b>+145</b>

- 1.1 The non-achievement of £0.184m of staff savings across the portfolio is currently being offset by staff slippage of £0.292m across the portfolio.
- 1.2 The Environmental Health forecast includes a shortfall in income targets of £0.116m in the Environmental Wardens and Pest Control services. A decision to cease in-house provision of the Environmental Wardens service was approved in November 2023 (Delegated Executive Decision 0052), so it is anticipated that this will not be a financial pressure from 2024/25 onwards. It is currently offset by staff slippage of £0.123m (included in the overall figure of £0.292m referred to at 1.1), resulting in a forecast underspend of £0.007m for the service.

(ii) Children and Young People

Children and Young People	Current Expend. Budget 2023/24 £000 (a)	Current Income Budget 2023/24 £000 (b)	Current Net Budget 2023/24 £000 (c)=(a)+(b)	Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £000 (d)	Variance Q3 2023/24 £000 (e)=(d)-(c)	Variance Q2 2023/24 £000
<b>People's Services Directorate</b>						
<b>Schools</b>						
Schools Delegated Budget	119,183	(119,183)	0	0	0	0
<b>Schools Total</b>	<b>119,183</b>	<b>(119,183)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Non-Schools</b>						
Other Expenditure Attributable to Schools	8,948	(2,841)	6,107	5,867	(240)	(210)
Early Years Development (incl. PVIs)	8,134	(7,766)	368	368	0	0
Support for Children with SEND	9,392	(7,267)	2,125	2,037	(88)	(30)
Behaviour Support Services	3,740	(3,684)	56	56	0	0
Home to School/College Transport	3,760	(95)	3,665	3,765	+100	0
Management & Other Support Services	6,585	(4,183)	2,402	2,408	+6	(15)
Social Care and commissioning Teams	12,468	(466)	12,002	14,804	+2,802	+2,068
Children Looked After	38,249	(8,727)	29,522	33,962	+4,440	+2,468
Child Protection	1,956	(107)	1,849	1,914	+65	+94
Children's Centres/Early Help Service	3,241	(1,784)	1,457	1,626	+169	+200
Support for Disabled Children	2,070	(279)	1,791	1,832	+41	+115
Family Support Services	3,056	(410)	2,646	2,874	+228	+658
Youth Justice Services	1,793	(1,136)	657	564	(93)	(50)
<b>Subtotal exc. Pay Award</b>	<b>103,392</b>	<b>(38,745)</b>	<b>64,647</b>	<b>72,077</b>	<b>+7,430</b>	<b>+5,298</b>
<b>Pay Award</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>+156</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>103,392</b>	<b>(38,745)</b>	<b>64,647</b>	<b>72,233</b>	<b>+7,586</b>	<b>+5,298</b>

- 2.1 Demand pressures, children's social work staffing challenges and delivery of the ongoing programme of efficiencies have been the main factors driving the considerable budget challenges within the portfolio in 2023/24.
- 2.2 Expenditure on delivering the required placements associated with caring for children looked after, including care leavers, is forecast to be in the region of £35.400m for 2023/24, resulting in a projected financial pressure of £3.761m. The most financially challenging area within this is caring for children and young people within a residential care setting. Over the last ten years, the average annual cost of a residential care placement has more than doubled from £0.136m in 2013/14 to around £0.287m currently.
- 2.3 There are a number of national challenges within the system, including a lack of capacity within the residential care market; difficulties in recruiting and retaining foster carers; an increasing number of placement breakdowns due to the complex needs of some of the young people in care, a lack of capacity within the wider system, e.g., CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services); and the impact of care arrangements for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC).

- 2.4 The Council continues to progress a number of actions to help mitigate and combat these challenges, including:
- the ongoing project to expand internal residential home capacity
  - the agreement of a lease to operate trainer flats under the Staying Close programme for those young people who are getting ready to leave care
  - an ongoing review of placements to identify opportunities to step down to lower-cost provision or return the children safely to the family home (28 placements at a total saving of approximately £2.700m)
  - continuing the programme of work to expand in-house foster care capacity. To date, five additional foster carers have been approved during 2023/24, with a further two pending approval. In addition, there are currently 11 potential foster carer applications being processed. The feasibility of funding the cost of small extensions to the properties of existing foster carers is being assessed in order to expand the current capacity.
- 2.5 The department also provides support to families who have children and young people who are at risk of needing to be brought into care. This helps the children and young people to continue to remain in the family environment and avoid being brought into more expensive fostering or residential care. These arrangements also include support for a relatively small cohort of young people who have complex and challenging needs. However, this support results in a projected budget pressure of £0.852m.
- 2.6 The challenges associated with the recruitment of suitably skilled and experienced children's social care staff are prevalent across the whole sector. Demand is high and the earning potential of agency employment can be considerable, which can contribute to permanent staff turnover. The need to maintain appropriate caseloads and therefore an appropriate level of staffing resource within the children's social care workforce is resulting in an ongoing need to engage agency staff. The costs associated with agency staff tend to be higher than those directly employed, and this has resulted in a forecast budget pressure of £3.060m associated with frontline social care staffing costs. The department regularly reviews the number of agency staff engaged to limit usage, whilst being mindful of the need to maintain appropriate individual caseload numbers for staff.
- 2.7 The department has been proactive in attempting to address these recruitment and retention challenges through a number of actions, including:
- a review of salary levels of qualified social care staff to ensure a competitive level of remuneration
  - engaging additional other staffing capacity to undertake non-statutory functions, to alleviate social worker workloads
  - launching programmes to train and develop staff to the level of qualified social worker status
  - an ongoing recruitment campaign, including from channels outside of the traditional workforce marketplace.
- 2.8 Other budget variances within the department are anticipated to deliver a net underspend of £0.087m. These variances encompass a wide range of services, but the position includes projected pressures within Adoption Services (£0.503m),

primarily arising from fees associated with adoptive placements; and Early Help and Children's Centres (£0.200m). There are also forecast underspends within the Edge of Care Service (£0.600m), mainly arising from slippage against employee budgets and variances associated with residual pension liabilities (£0.240m).

2.9 It is forecast that there will be an overall pressure of £7.586m within the portfolio.

(iii) Integrated Health and Care

Integrated Health and Care	Current Expend. Budget 2023/24 £000 (a)	Current Income Budget 2023/24 £000 (b)	Current Net Budget 2023/24 £000 (c)=(a)+(b)	Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £000 (d)	Variance Q3 2023/24 £000 (e) =(d)-(c)	Variance Q2 2023/24 £000
<b>People's Services Directorate</b>						
Physical Support - Frail & Elderly	37,846	(23,275)	14,571	16,105	+1,534	+1,239
Sensory Support	1,326	(259)	1,067	886	(181)	(163)
Support with Memory & Cognition	14,472	(5,496)	8,976	8,907	(69)	+212
Learning Disability Support	38,601	(12,888)	25,713	27,619	+1,906	+1,520
Mental Health Support	4,894	(697)	4,197	4,193	(4)	+267
Assistive Equipment & Technology	4,218	(3,097)	1,121	1,450	+329	+419
Care Management - Assessment & Review	12,296	(4,776)	7,520	6,921	(599)	(250)
Transport and Generic Services	1,698	(1,698)	0	52	+52	+4
Management, Commissioning & Support Services	5,811	(5,811)	0	(82)	(82)	(31)
<b>Subtotal exc. Pay Award</b>	<b>121,162</b>	<b>(57,997)</b>	<b>63,165</b>	<b>66,051</b>	<b>+2,886</b>	<b>+3,217</b>
<b>Pay Award</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>+349</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>121,162</b>	<b>(57,997)</b>	<b>63,165</b>	<b>66,400</b>	<b>+3,235</b>	<b>+3,217</b>

- 3.1 At Period 3, it is projected that the Integrated Health and Care budget will be overspent by £3.235m, which includes £0.349m in respect of the Pay Award for 2023/34. This position reflects ongoing demand pressures and the complexity of needs and acuity of individuals. The most significant pressures are within Learning Disability Support and Physical Support (Frail and Older People).
- 3.2 The Council operates a pooled budget arrangement with Health under a Section 75 agreement. There is increased activity on the pooled budget and a pressure of circa £7.00m is currently being projected, of which approximately £2.00m will fall upon the Council. There are regular meetings between both partners to monitor this position.
- 3.3 The department has a significant savings target of £4.400m, and this presents a risk to the budget position. It should also be noted that additional savings against some of these savings schemes will continue into 2024/25. There have been challenges in the delivery of the Learning Disability Review saving (£1.700m) during the year. The review of care packages is well underway, and there is now external support in place to support the delivery of these reviews.

# 6

- 3.4 There has been an overachievement of £0.750m in the delivery of savings from care management reviews of individuals in residential/nursing settings and individuals in receipt of domiciliary care.
- 3.5 As noted in Section 3 to this report, it is therefore proposed to seek approval to realign the over-delivery of savings from care management reviews and reduce the savings target for Learning Disability Reviews. The review of Learning Disability Services will continue into 2024/25, and it is anticipated that the review should deliver savings in the future as the department works with care providers to reduce support in a safe and planned way.
- 3.6 The continuing demand for services and complexity of individual care needs of some individuals is placing significant pressure on Integrated Health and Care budgets, and the department is carrying out a number of measures to mitigate this pressure and support the continued delivery budget savings. These measures include:
- Reviewing all short-term placements to ensure contracts for transitional beds are maximised before alternative placements are made
  - Ensuring contracted beds within specific settings are prioritised for St Helens residents
  - Prioritising continuous review of all requests for 1:1 as per the savings programme
  - Reviewing the potential to cease all spot care home placements via hospital discharge
  - Prioritising the reduction in high-cost supported living placements
  - Monitoring of all placements and packages of care.
- 3.7 Other options for one-off mitigations will be explored by the new Director of Adult Social Care.

(iv) Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage(a) Public Health Services

Public Health Services	Current Expend. Budget 2023/24 £000 (a)	Current Income Budget 2023/24 £000 (b)	Current Net Budget 2023/24 £000 (c)=(a)+(b)	Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £000 (d)	Variance Q3 2023/24 £000 (e)=(d)-(c)	Variance Q2 2023/24 £000
<b>People's Services Directorate</b>						
Sexual Health	2,216	0	2,216	2,216	0	0
Primary Care	95	0	95	69	(26)	0
Public Health Advice	647	0	647	647	0	0
Obesity	1,143	0	1,143	1,143	0	0
Physical Activity	1,596	0	1,596	1,596	0	0
Substance Misuse	3,986	(1,193)	2,793	2,765	(28)	0
Stop Smoking Services and Interventions	590	0	590	590	0	0
Healthy Child Programme	4,814	0	4,814	4,814	0	0
Miscellaneous Public Health Services	2,703	(100)	2,603	2,520	(83)	0
Management & Support Services	2,222	(2,222)	0	0	0	0
Public Health Grant	0	(16,439)	(16,439)	(16,302)	+137	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,012</b>	<b>(19,954)</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

- 4.1 It is anticipated that Public Health spending plans will be managed within the allocated resources for 2023/24. There are projected underspends across some activity-based contracts of circa £0.057m, and funding of £0.080m set aside for immunisations may now slip into 2024/25.
- 4.2 In accordance with the grant conditions, any underspend against the grant this year will be carried forward into 2024/25 to support the delivery of Public Health outcomes next year and in future years. Pressures may arise next year due to increased costs for drug and alcohol residential rehabilitation.
- 4.3 In addition, revenue funding provided by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for the delivery of an indoor air quality monitoring and health promotion intervention project has been refiled across 2023/24 (£0.058m) and 2024/25 (£0.244m) with agreement from DEFRA. The project aims to deliver improved outcomes for children with asthma living in Air Quality Management Areas across St Helens and Warrington.
- 4.4 There are two savings for 2023/24 within Public Health:
- PH02 – Sexual Health Service Review (£0.132m): it has not been possible to deliver the full saving in 2023/24 due to the budget process and lead-in time to work with the provider. Slippage of £0.066m will be temporarily mitigated through use of Public Health Grant monies carried forward from prior years. The service is no longer subject to a retender due to changes in legislation and can now make a direct award during 2024/25. As part of that commissioning exercise, the proposed new contract value from July 2024 will reflect the full saving.

- PH01 – Termination and Re-Tender of Integrated Wellbeing Contract (£0.181m): the Public Health team have worked closely with the service provider and it is now anticipated this saving will be delivered in full in 2023/24.

4.5 Prior-year saving PH7 (Cessation of Support to Non-Mandatory Council Services – £0.063m) against the Affordable Warmth Service is no longer considered achievable. It is therefore recommended that approval be granted to offer an alternative to mitigate this saving permanently. The saving can be delivered through a reduction in activity-based services with GPs and pharmacies. Section 3 above provides further details.

(b) Culture and Heritage

Culture and Heritage	Current Expend. Budget 2023/24 £000 (a)	Current Income Budget 2023/24 £000 (b)	Current Net Budget 2023/24 £000 (c)=(a)+(b)	Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £000 (d)	Variance Q3 2023/24 £000 (e) =(d)-(c)	Variance Q2 2023/24 £000
Arts Development and Support	663	(357)	306	307	+1	+1
Archiving	551	(366)	185	182	(3)	(2)
Sports Development	537	(364)	173	112	(61)	(61)
Indoor Sports & Recreation	5,519	(3,314)	2,205	1,873	(332)	(330)
Outdoor Sports & Recreation	518	(141)	377	346	(31)	(21)
Library Services	2,711	(151)	2,560	2,596	+36	+62
Tourism and Events	303	(26)	277	232	(45)	0
<b>Subtotal exc. Pay Award</b>	<b>10,802</b>	<b>(4,719)</b>	<b>6,083</b>	<b>5,648</b>	<b>(435)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Pay Award</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>+93</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Culture and Heritage Services</b>	<b>10,802</b>	<b>(4,719)</b>	<b>6,083</b>	<b>5,741</b>	<b>(342)</b>	<b>(351)</b>

- 4.6 The main unachieved saving in the portfolio relates to the implementation of the Localities model, where there is now £0.142m unachieved following completion of the Libraries Strategy and the Phase 3 restructure. Delivery of the Locality Hubs is phased over 5 years.
- 4.7 The non-achievement of portfolio-wide staff savings totalling £0.100m is currently being partly mitigated by additional staff slippage across the portfolio of £0.093m.
- 4.8 Indoor Sports & Recreation are forecasting additional income totalling £0.196m against the school swimming programme, memberships and Pay as You Go. There is also the previously reported one-off Swimming Pool Support Fund grant of £0.351m. The £0.332m reported in the table also includes an apportionment of the portfolio's staffing and Localities savings referred to in the above paragraphs.
- 4.9 There are also more minor underspends across the portfolio totalling £0.037m, mainly relating to general supplies and services.



(v) Corporate Services

Corporate Services	Current Expend. Budget 2023/24 £000 (a)	Current Income Budget 2023/24 £000 (b)	Current Net Budget 2023/24 £000 (c)=(a)+(b)	Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £000 (d)	Variance Q3 2023/24 £000 (e) =(d)-(c)	Variance Q2 2023/24 £000
Local Tax Collection	1,268	0	1,268	1,193	(75)	0
Emergency Planning	132	0	132	132	0	0
Local Welfare Assistance Schemes	306	(107)	199	199	0	0
Grants & Donations	50	(3)	47	47	0	0
Non-Distributed Costs	1,300	(17)	1,283	1,283	0	0
Finance	10,700	(10,700)	0	(165)	(165)	(173)
Audit & Risk	1,280	(1,280)	0	(5)	(5)	6
Coroners Court Services	270	0	270	270	0	0
Registration of Births, Deaths & Marriages	257	(211)	46	29	(17)	(11)
Democratic Representation & Management	1,692	0	1,692	1,690	(2)	0
Elections	467	(3)	464	464	0	0
People Management	3,124	(3,124)	0	162	+162	0
Legal Services	2,011	(2,011)	0	29	+29	+30
Governance & Administration	290	(290)	0	(1)	(1)	0
Housing Benefit Administration	44,151	(43,614)	537	928	+391	0
Corporate Management	1,594	0	1,594	1,593	(1)	0
I.T.	9,302	(9,302)	0	(374)	(374)	0
Press and Public Affairs	1,350	(1,350)	0	(5)	(5)	0
Policy Development	2,216	(2,216)	0	(65)	(65)	0
Organisational Development	1,206	(1,206)	0	(81)	(81)	(58)
Other Services	129	(129)	0	0	0	0
<b>Subtotal exc. Pay Award</b>	<b>83,095</b>	<b>(75,563)</b>	<b>7,532</b>	<b>7,323</b>	<b>(209)</b>	<b>(206)</b>
<b>Pay Award</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>+115</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>83,095</b>	<b>(75,563)</b>	<b>7,532</b>	<b>7,438</b>	<b>(94)</b>	<b>(206)</b>

- 5.1 The £0.391m projected pressure in Housing Benefit Administration has two main causes. Firstly, high levels of homelessness across the Borough has caused an increasing use of hotel accommodation, for which the Council does not receive full cost subsidy. Secondly, providers are increasing their use of high-cost supported accommodation, for which the Council is only able to reclaim 60% of its costs.
- 5.2 The £0.162m projected pressure in People Management is due to staffing costs related to overtime following the cyber incident and for Payroll processing.
- 5.3 Since Period 2, the recruitment freeze has had a favourable effect on staffing budget projections. There are currently several vacancies within IT contributing to a net underspend of £0.374m. There are further vacancies in Finance (£0.165m), Organisational Development (£0.081m), Local Tax Collection (£0.075m) and Policy Development (£0.065m). The reduction in agency workers and cessation of non-essential expenditure has also had a favourable impact.

(vi) Safer Communities

Safer Communities	Current Expend. Budget 2023/24 £000 (a)	Current Income Budget 2023/24 £000 (b)	Current Net Budget 2023/24 £000 (c)=(a)+(b)	Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £000 (d)	Variance Q3 2023/24 £000 (e) =(d)-(c)	Variance Q2 2023/24 £000
<b>Place Services Directorate</b>						
Community Safety	2,438	(782)	1,656	1,690	+34	+18
<b>Subtotal exc. Pay Award</b>	<b>2,438</b>	<b>(782)</b>	<b>1,656</b>	<b>1,690</b>	<b>+34</b>	<b>+18</b>
<b>Pay Award</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>+4</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,438</b>	<b>(782)</b>	<b>1,656</b>	<b>1,694</b>	<b>+38</b>	<b>+18</b>

6.1 The portfolio is currently projecting an overspend of £0.034m (excluding the impact of the Pay Award), which mainly relates to the non-achievement of staff savings across the portfolio.

(vii) Environmental Services and Climate Change

Environmental Services and Climate Change	Current Expend. Budget 2023/24 £000 (a)	Current Income Budget 2023/24 £000 (b)	Current Net Budget 2023/24 £000 (c)=(a)+(b)	Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £000 (d)	Variance Q3 2023/24 £000 (e) =(d)-(c)	Variance Q2 2023/24 £000
<b>Place Services Directorate</b>						
Parks & Open Spaces	2,764	(315)	2,449	2,441	(8)	+37
Street Cleansing	1,955	(179)	1,776	1,792	+16	+28
Cemetery and Crematorium	2,068	(2,647)	(579)	(310)	+269	+93
Waste Collection	2,727	(691)	2,036	2,013	(23)	+42
Recycling	6,997	(2,863)	4,134	4,550	+416	+483
Climate Change	328	(151)	177	177	0	0
Direct Services	21,243	(20,809)	434	649	+215	+324
Management & Support Services	1,830	(1,830)	0	(188)	(188)	+150
Councillor Improvement Fund	100	0	100	100	0	0
<b>Subtotal exc. Pay Award</b>	<b>40,012</b>	<b>(29,485)</b>	<b>10,527</b>	<b>11,224</b>	<b>+697</b>	<b>+857</b>
<b>Pay Award</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>+598</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,012</b>	<b>(29,485)</b>	<b>10,527</b>	<b>11,822</b>	<b>+1,295</b>	<b>+857</b>

7.1 The non-achievement of portfolio-wide staff (£0.241m) and non-staff (£0.032m) savings is offset by staff slippage of £0.375m across the portfolio.

7.2 Cemeteries and Crematorium are reporting overspends on repairs and maintenance (£0.095m) and general supplies and services (£0.049m). There is also a forecast shortfall in income of £0.106m due to a reduction in the number of traditional funerals taking place, with 18% of bereaved families opting for direct funerals at regional crematoria with discounted choices. The fees and charges for direct funerals have been reviewed as part of the wider fees and charges exercise with an aim that families will opt to choose the Council's service, and thus that there will be an improvement in income in 2024/25.

- 7.3 Waste Collection are forecasting additional trade waste tipping costs of £0.042m, but this is being mitigated by additional income of £0.040m and underspends on external vehicle hire and materials of £0.016m. The service is seeing a reduction in the amounts of residual waste collected, and whilst this is not expected to deliver any portfolio savings, it is likely to deliver a reduction on the Waste Levy charge from the waste disposal authority in future years.
- 7.4 Recycling are forecasting a shortfall in income of £0.176m relating to recycling sales and garden waste permits. There are also overspends on tipping fees for food disposal (£0.048m) and general supplies and services (£0.018m), but these are being mitigated by reduced costs of external vehicle hire (£0.080m).
- 7.5 Saving OPS04 (Green Waste Round Review) was implemented upon the launch of the new recycling service and will be fully realised in 2024/25. The financial risk to this area is the retender of the recyclates contract, but until bids are returned, the risk remains unknown.
- 7.6 A full review of agency staff working in Recycling and Waste Collection has been undertaken, and the budget has been realigned between the two services accordingly to reflect actual operational costs.
- 7.7 Grounds Maintenance are reporting overspends on plant hire and fuel (£0.033m) and chemicals/materials (£0.043m) along with a shortfall in income of £0.015m.
- 7.8 The Transport service is reporting an underspend on fuel costs of £0.084m, assuming the same level of purchases as 2022/23 at today's diesel price, plus 5% to cover any potential price rises. There is also additional income expected to be generated from the sale of old surplus vehicles of approximately £0.080m, along with additional MOT income (£0.018m) and rechargeable income (£0.029m).
- 7.9 The main pressure in Direct Services relates to the School Meals service, where food costs are expected to exceed budget by £0.189m as a result of the continuing impact of inflation. There is also a forecast shortfall in income of £0.300m, of which £0.224m relates to secondary-school cash income. Work is ongoing to address the overspend, with initial meetings having now been held and with plans to widen these to include Children's Services. The intention is to monitor schools on an individual basis. Imminently, the position is expected to improve when a loss-making contract transfers to another provider.
- 7.10 The focus of the monitoring will now shift to secondary schools, as this is where the bigger overspend is and where we can gather actual data. Primary schools monitoring is more assumption-based, due to how income is collected. Primary schools will therefore be reviewed once outturn is complete. School grid implementation will also allow for better monitoring on an actual basis.
- 7.11 There are also minor overspends on various budget lines across the portfolio totalling £0.032m.

(viii) Strategic Transport

<b>Strategic Transport</b>	<b>Current Expend. Budget 2023/24 £000 (a)</b>	<b>Current Income Budget 2023/24 £000 (b)</b>	<b>Current Net Budget 2023/24 £000 (c)=(a)+(b)</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £000 (d)</b>	<b>Variance Q3 2023/24 £000 (e) =(d)-(c)</b>	<b>Variance Q2 2023/24 £000</b>
<b>Place Services Directorate</b>						
Parking Services	1,333	(1,064)	269	304	+35	+110
Highways Maintenance	11,652	(2,183)	9,469	9,321	(148)	(118)
Street Lighting	2,873	(158)	2,715	2,989	+274	+93
Traffic Management & Road Safety	808	(214)	594	573	(21)	0
Transport Planning, Policy & Strategy	845	(53)	792	810	+18	(9)
<b>Subtotal exc. Pay Award</b>	<b>17,511</b>	<b>(3,672)</b>	<b>13,839</b>	<b>13,997</b>	<b>+158</b>	<b>+76</b>
<b>Pay Award</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>+13</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,511</b>	<b>(3,672)</b>	<b>13,839</b>	<b>14,010</b>	<b>+171</b>	<b>+76</b>

- 8.1 The non-achievement of portfolio-wide staff savings (£0.240m) is currently being covered by slippage of £0.256m on employee-related expenditure across the portfolio.
- 8.2 Parking Services are reporting a shortfall in income of £0.088m, which is mitigated by underspends on the parking enforcement contract (£0.047m) and premises-related expenditure (£0.041m).
- 8.3 Highways Maintenance are forecasting additional income of £0.110m which relates to chargeable street-works activity.
- 8.4 Street Lighting are forecasting an overspend on energy costs of £0.273m, which is based on the estimated annual kWh usage at current unit prices (average unit rate of £0.41/kWh).
- 8.5 There are also minor overspends on general supplies and services across the portfolio of £0.011m.

(iv) Regeneration and Planning

<b>Regeneration and Planning</b>	<b>Current Expend. Budget 2023/24 £000 (a)</b>	<b>Current Income Budget 2023/24 £000 (b)</b>	<b>Current Net Budget 2023/24 £000 (c)=(a)+(b)</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £000 (d)</b>	<b>Variance Q3 2023/24 £000 (e) =(d)-(c)</b>	<b>Variance Q2 2023/24 £000</b>
<b>Place Services Directorate</b>						
Building Control	737	(366)	371	505	+134	+82
Development Control	1,842	(974)	868	689	(179)	(71)
Planning Policy	696	(211)	485	455	(30)	(35)
Estates - Industrial & Commercial Premises (including Town Centre)	7,807	(6,574)	1,233	1,565	+332	+269
Market Undertakings	1,080	(363)	717	759	+42	+81
Growth Delivering Prosperity	1,335	(725)	610	656	+46	+39
Management & Support Services	1,194	(1,194)	0	17	+17	+21
Building Support Services	8,319	(8,316)	3	(495)	(498)	(80)
Estates Management	633	(572)	61	85	+24	+32
Housing Services	6,305	(2,574)	3,731	3,705	(26)	+25
Homelessness	1,845	(1,467)	378	368	(10)	(5)
<b>Subtotal exc. Pay Award</b>	<b>31,793</b>	<b>(23,336)</b>	<b>8,457</b>	<b>8,309</b>	<b>(148)</b>	<b>+358</b>
<b>Pay Award</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>+62</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,793</b>	<b>(23,336)</b>	<b>8,457</b>	<b>8,371</b>	<b>(86)</b>	<b>+358</b>

- 9.1 The non-achievement of portfolio-wide staff (£0.137m) and premises (£0.140m) savings is currently being partly offset by staff slippage across the portfolio of £0.192m.
- 9.2 Housing Services are currently projecting a shortfall in income of £0.048m predominantly linked to the Disabled Facilities Grant, along with an overspend of £0.027m on general supplies and services. Supported Housing are projecting an underspend of £0.101m based on current forecast activity levels.
- 9.3 Building Control are reporting a shortfall in income of £0.117m based on current forecasts, while Development Control are forecasting an overachievement of income of £0.090m.
- 9.4 There is a forecast income shortfall of £0.153m in Estates (Industrial & Commercial Premises), along with an overspend on Business Rates of £0.031m based on current levels of occupancy. There is also an unachieved saving of £0.140m relating to the review of leasehold properties.
- 9.5 Market Undertakings are also forecasting a shortfall in income of £0.024m, along with an overspend on Business Rates of £0.028m based on current levels of occupancy and an underspend on utilities of £0.037m.
- 9.6 Building Support are forecasting underspends on repairs and maintenance (£0.100m) and rental expenditure (£0.030m) budgets, along with a £0.030m overspend on general supplies and services and a shortfall in room/event booking income of £0.012m. There is a forecast underspend on utilities of £0.364m, largely due to gas prices coming in lower than budgeted.
- 9.7 There are also minor overspends on general supplies and services across the portfolio totalling £0.019m.

**Utilisation of Earmarked Reserves during the period****Annex D**

This table details use of reserves approved in the period (a); previously approved usage of earmarked reserves rephased into 2024/25 (b); and previously approved use of earmarked reserves that have now been identified as not being required and returned to reserves (c).

Portfolio / Corporate Items	Reserve	Detail	Further detail included in	Cash Limit Change 2023/24 £000
Corporate Services (a)	Transformation Reserve	To fund temporary additional senior capacity in the People Management service to ensure sufficient resources to deliver and realise the benefits of service and organisational transformation.	CORP001399	+70
Environmental Services and Climate Change (a)	Waste Management Development Fund	To fund the delivery of new and replacement recycling bags for the Council's kerbside recycling service to St Helens residents.	Delegated Executive Decision 0149 2022/23	+229*
Corporate Item (a)	Funding Reform Volatility Reserve	To smooth the impact of a shortfall in Section 31 grants received during the year. Additional Business Rates income will be received in 2024/25, which will then be used to replenish the reserve.	Section 2.7 to this report	+948
Strategic Transport (b)	Transformation Reserve	Flood Mitigation Measures – Rainford Brook	Operational Decision ENVP001608	(30)
Corporate Services (b)	Transformation Reserve	IT Refresh	Cabinet 18 September 2019	(764)
Corporate Services (b)	Transformation Reserve	Children Looked After in the LACE Programme	Operational Decision CORP000569	(10)
Strategic Transport (b)	Transformation Reserve	Funding of Eastern Region Interchange and Connectivity (ERIC) – Land Transfer	Cabinet 29 January 2020	(10)

Strategic Transport (b)	Transformation Reserve	Carr Mill Feasibility	Technical Adjustment	(17)
Integrated Health and Care (b)	Transformation Reserve	Recruitment of Social Workers	Operational Decision PEOP002303	(31)
Economy, Business and Skills (b)	Growth Reserve	Contribution to the Combined Authority for Destination Marketing (Visitor Economy) Project	Operational Decision ENVP001625	(20)
Economy, Business and Skills (b)	Growth Reserve	St Helens Local Plan	Delegated Executive Decision 0034 2019/20	(100)
Environmental Services and Climate Change (b)	Waste Management Development Fund	Recycling and Waste Collection (Revenue)	Cabinet 24 October 2019	(15)
Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage (b)	Funding Reform & Volatility Reserve	Air Quality Grant 2022/23	Cabinet 21 June 2023	(244)
Strategic Transport (c)	Transformation Reserve	Installation of 3 Controlled Puffin Crossings	Operational Decision ENVP0001621	(15)
Safer Communities (c)	Transformation Reserve	Hire of Mobile CCTV Cameras	Technical Adjustment	(14)
<b>Total</b>				<b>+1,919</b>

\*This is £0.025m more than the amount approved by Delegated Executive Decision 0149 due to a need to deliver the bags to a higher number of properties in a shorter timescale.

## EARMARKED BALANCES 2023/24 to 2025/26

Reserve	Balance at 1 April 2023 £000	Balance at 31 March 2024 £000	Balance at 1 April 2024 £000	Balance at 31 March 2025 £000	Balance at 31 March 2026 £000
Transformation Reserve	6,171	5,540	4,040	3,078	3,078
Growth Reserve	5,711	5,602	4,102	4,082	4,082
Councillor Improvement Fund	356	356	356	356	356
Insurance & Contingent Liability Reserve	3,208	3,208	3,208	3,208	3,208
Waste Management Development Fund	647	81	81	66	66
Inflationary Reserve	4,746	4,956	3,456	3,245	3,245
Restructuring Reserve	3,707	3,707	3,707	3,707	3,707
Funding Reform & Volatility Reserve	7,269	5,841	3,963	4,341	5,130
Pension Reserve	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Reserve	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
<b>Subtotal - General Earmarked Balances</b>	<b>46,815</b>	<b>44,291</b>	<b>37,913</b>	<b>37,083</b>	<b>37,872</b>
Covid-19 Reserve - Collection Fund	488	-	-	-	-
Covid-19 Reserve - Other	4,210	1,000	1,000	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51,513</b>	<b>45,291</b>	<b>38,913</b>	<b>37,083</b>	<b>37,872</b>

- <sup>1</sup> The balance as at 1 April 2023 includes earmarking of unconditional grants and contributions and other previously approved requests from prior years to deliver specific programmes of work in future years (£2.114m). At the time of drafting this report, £0.694m of this had been released into revenue budgets in 2023/24.
- <sup>2</sup> The table includes use of an additional £0.948m from the Funding Reform & Volatility Reserve in 2023/24 to smooth the impact of a shortfall in Section 31 grants received during the year. Additional Business Rates income will be received in 2024/25, which will then be used to replenish reserves. This is due to timing differences arising from the (prescribed statutory) mechanics of the Collection Fund.
- <sup>3</sup> The Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024-2027 and Revenue & Capital Budget 2024/25 report, presented on the same agenda as this report, proposes a realignment of reserves in order to reset General Fund balances at £12m for 2024/25. The balances as at 1 April 2024 reflect this, with those as at 31 March 2024 being prior to this realignment.



SUMMARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 to 2025/26

Annex F

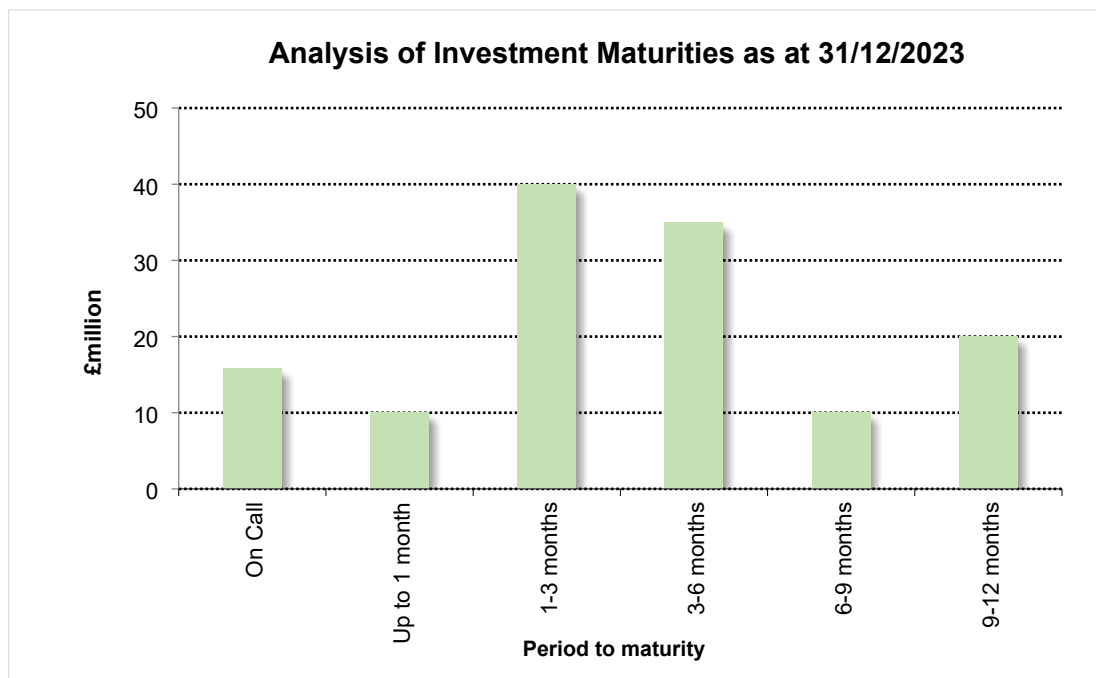
PORTFOLIO					Funding			
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total	Borrowing	Capital Receipts	Revenue	Grants / Conts.
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Children & Young People	3,109	15,700	1,300	20,109	2,854	0	12	17,243
Integrated Health & Care	0	25	0	25	0	0	0	25
Economy, Business & Skills	11	0	0	11	11	0	0	0
Wellbeing, Culture & Heritage	815	1,565	0	2,380	2,278	0	0	102
Corporate Services	775	1,379	0	2,154	875	515	764	0
Strategic Transport	38,100	23,589	7,645	69,334	13,875	0	0	55,459
Environmental Services & Climate Change	6,973	3,470	700	11,143	9,417	45	459	1,222
Regeneration & Planning	28,004	68,942	42,801	139,747	80,248	1,555	192	57,752
Safer Communities	736	0	0	736	711	0	0	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78,523</b>	<b>114,670</b>	<b>52,446</b>	<b>245,639</b>	<b>110,269</b>	<b>2,115</b>	<b>1,427</b>	<b>131,828</b>

## TREASURY MANAGEMENT POSITION STATEMENT

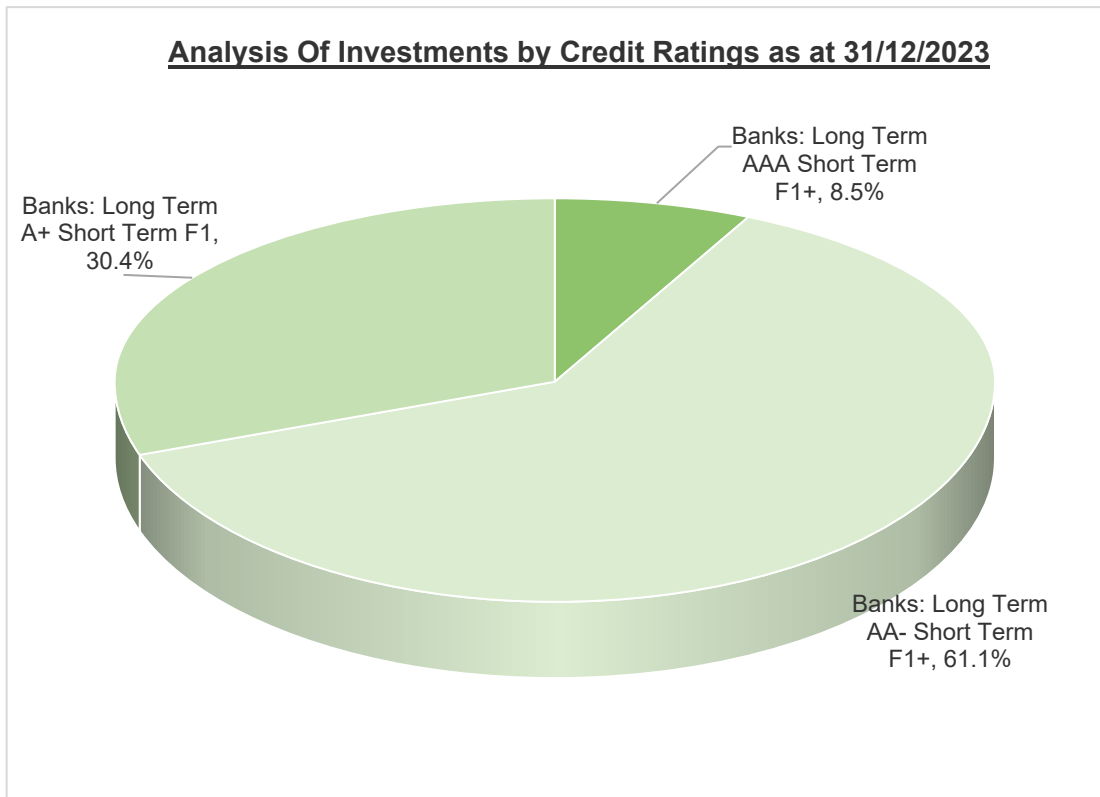
- 1.1 The CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) Code of Practice for Treasury Management recommends that Members be updated on treasury management activities regularly. This Section therefore ensures the Council is implementing best practice in accordance with the Code.

### Investments

- 1.2 The Council's investment priorities are the security of capital and liquidity of its funds, as described in the Council's *Annual Investment Strategy*. The Council's investment decisions for the period were intended to achieve the optimum return on its investments whilst still maintaining the proper levels of security and liquidity and giving due consideration to all inherent risks.
- 1.3 All investments must be placed with highly credit rated financial institutions, in line with the Council's authorised *Counterparty List*. The Council maintains a high degree of liquidity with its investments, so that cash can be available – if necessary – to deal with any emerging pressures that arise from the current economic climate.
- 1.4 The following chart show the split in the Authority's investments by maturity as at 31 December 2023.



- 1.5 On 31 December 2023, the Council had investments of £130.8m. The chart below shows the split of the Council's investment by type and the credit rating assigned to the different groups of Counterparties.



(These investments include funds (circa. £16.1m) held in relation to Schools and Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority.)

- 1.6 Of the institutions identified in the pie chart above, 8.5% of funds are invested with the highest-graded counterparties, i.e., those with the very best prospects and the lowest risk of failure, with extremely strong and stable characteristics. 30.4% of investments are with counterparties graded A+/F1. These have very strong prospects for ongoing viability and are not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events. The remaining investments (61.1%) are with counterparties graded AA-/F1+. These counterparties have strong prospects for ongoing viability, strong and stable fundamentals and a particularly good liquidity profile.
- 1.7 The average level of funds available, for investment purposes, for the period April to December 2023 was £149.622m. Investment rates available in the market have fallen from their peak in the summer of 2023 as the Government continues in its quest to bring inflation under control. Any sudden changes in rates will affect performance against benchmarks, as investment decisions need ensure the optimal security, liquidity and yield of investments.

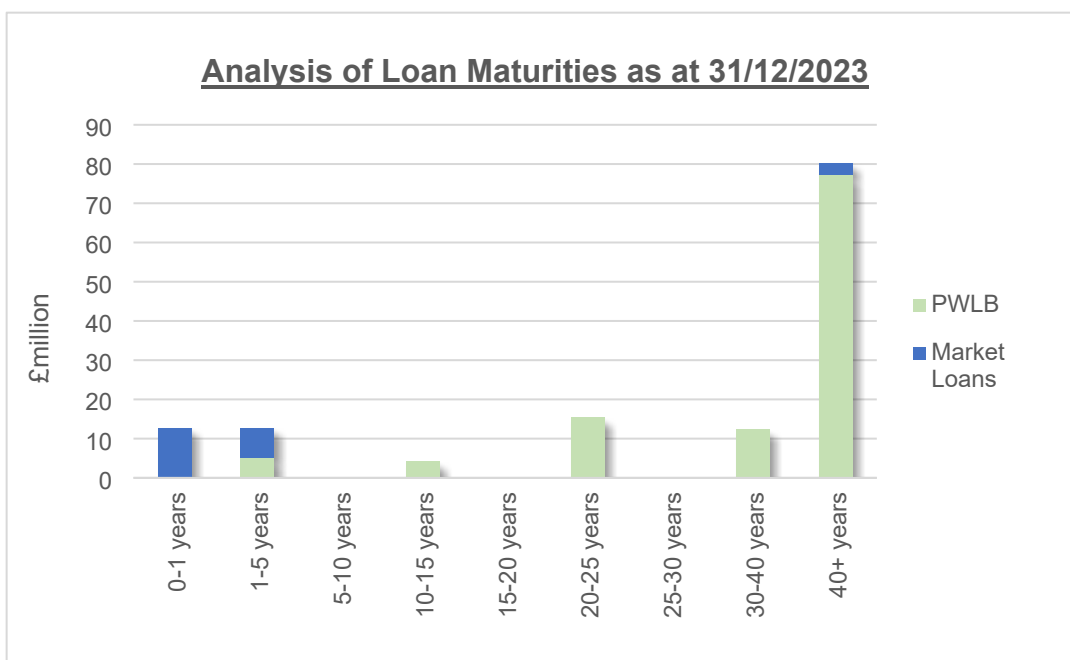
### Investment Returns 2023/24 (to 31 December 2023)

2023/24	Returns Achieved			Benchmark Returns	Performance relative to Benchmarks
Month	Fixed-Term Investments	Call Accounts	Combined Return	Backward Looking 90 Day SONIA	Overall +/- return
April	3.891%	4.104%	<b>3.926%</b>	<b>3.919%</b>	0.007%
May	4.119%	4.025%	<b>4.096%</b>	<b>4.116%</b>	(0.020%)
June	4.389%	4.087%	<b>4.312%</b>	<b>4.288%</b>	0.023%
July	4.748%	4.417%	<b>4.665%</b>	<b>4.520%</b>	0.145%
August	5.174%	4.757%	<b>5.086%</b>	<b>4.790%</b>	0.296%
September	5.299%	4.984%	<b>5.247%</b>	<b>5.050%</b>	0.197%
October	5.367%	4.859%	<b>5.270%</b>	<b>5.174%</b>	0.096%
November	5.509%	4.741%	<b>5.358%</b>	<b>5.219%</b>	0.139%
December	5.525%	5.193%	<b>5.472%</b>	<b>5.210%</b>	0.262%

- 1.8 The combined return on fixed-term investments and call accounts has risen from 5.247% at Period 2 to 5.472% at Period 3. Although the available rates of interest on new investments are not as high as they were over the summer, the average rate of return on investments made over the last quarter is still higher than the combined return at Period 2.

#### Borrowing

- 1.9 At the time of drafting this report, the Council has outstanding debt of £132.513m. No new borrowing has been taken during the period but a decision was made to repay a LOBO in January 2024 (see 1.11).
- 1.10 The following chart shows the maturity profile of the Council's loan portfolio as at 31 December 2023.



- 1.11 In accordance with the Prudential Code, the maturity of borrowing should be determined by the earliest date on which the lender can require payment. If the lender has the right to increase the interest rate payable (as is the case with a LOBO loan), then this should be treated as a right to require payment. In accordance with this guidance, the maturity dates of the Council's LOBO loans have been profiled as the next call date for each loan. This has made the Council's position look much more short term when all of these loans actually have maturity dates of 25+ years. In January 2024 one of the Council's LOBO's call dates was triggered; the new rate quoted to continue the loan was significantly higher than its pre-call rate, therefore the prudent decision was taken to repay the loan instead.
- 1.12 The current economic conditions mean that there will continue to be volatility in gilt yields and, in turn, PWLB borrowing rates. While movements will not affect the Council's current borrowing portfolio, which is wholly comprised of fixed rate agreements, inflated rates will mean that servicing of future debt requirements becomes more expensive and future capital investment and borrowing decisions will need to be considered in that light, as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial and Capital Investment strategies.

#### Budget Estimates

- 1.13 The budgeted and projected treasury costs for 2023/24 are detailed in the following Table.

<b><u>Treasury Management Budget 2023/24</u></b>	<b>2023/24 Budget (£m)</b>	<b>2023/24 Full- Year Forecast (£m)</b>	<b>2023/24 Variance (£m)</b>
<b><u>Debt Management Costs</u></b>			
External interest	9.756	7.756	(2.000)
Revenue provision (repayment of principal)	4.846	4.846	-
Investment Interest	(4.629)	(5.919)	(1.290)
<b>Total Treasury Cost</b>	<b>9.973</b>	<b>6.683</b>	<b>(3.290)</b>

- 1.14 The debt management forecast shows slippage of £2.000m as the Council continues to defer any additional borrowing for future capital expenditure. This is likely to remain the case while interest rates – and therefore the cost of borrowing – remain high, although this is contingent upon the availability of cash balances with which to internally borrow.
- 1.15 Investment interest is in surplus for two reasons. £1.190m is due to the high bank rate throughout the year and elevated market returns. The remaining £0.100m is due to the Council's ability to secure fixed-term investments at a higher rate than the potential discount achievable from the prepayment of pension contributions.

## Bank Rate

- 1.16 The Treasury Management Strategy Statement included a forecast for future changes in Bank Rate, with predicted increases over the course of the year. Due to the underlying economic conditions the current Bank Rate is 5.25%, which is higher than originally forecast. The latest estimates predict that the Bank Rate will drop to 3.75% by the end of next financial year and plateau at 3.00% by September 2025.

## Prudential Indicators

- 1.17 In line with the revised Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (2021), the Council produces updated prudential indicators every quarter. The indicators for the third quarter are included in Annex H.

## Annex H

<b>TREASURY LIMITS AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2023/24 to 2026/27</b>			<b>2023/24 Revised</b>	<b>2024/25 Estimates</b>	<b>2025/26 Estimates</b>	<b>2026/27 Estimates</b>
1(i)	Proposed capital expenditure that the Council plans to commit to during the forthcoming and subsequent two financial years.	<b>Capital Expenditure (£m)</b>	78.523	114.670	52.446	36.230
1(ii)	Additional in-year borrowing requirement for capital expenditure.	<b>In Year Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) (£m)</b>	26.507	40.044	28.618	13.476
2	The CFR is an aggregation of historic and cumulative capital expenditure, which has not yet been paid for by either revenue or capital resources.	<b>Capital Financing Requirement as at 31 March (£m)</b>	226.353	266.397	295.015	308.491
3	The "net borrowing" position represents the net of the Council's gross external borrowing and investments sums held.	<b>Net Borrowing Requirement:</b> External Borrowing (£m)	132.509	215.320	243.922	257.384
		Investments Held (£m)	<u>(126.000)</u>	<u>(165.000)</u>	<u>(160.000)</u>	<u>(156.000)</u>
		Net Requirement (£m)	<b>6.509</b>	<b>50.320</b>	<b>83.922</b>	<b>101.384</b>
4	Identifies the impact and trend of the revenue costs of capital financing decisions will have on the General Fund Budget over time.	<b>Ratio of financing cost to net revenue stream</b>	3.67%	4.96%	7.04%	9.60%

<b>TREASURY LIMITS AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2023/24 to 2026/27</b>			<b>2023/24 Revised</b>	<b>2024/25 Estimates</b>	<b>2025/26 Estimates</b>	<b>2026/27 Estimates</b>
5	The Council's Budget Strategy, as a general principle is that no unsupported borrowing should be undertaken as a means of financing capital expenditure plans.	<b>Incremental impact of capital investment decisions (increase in Council Tax Band D equivalent)</b>	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
6	This represents an absolute limit of borrowing at any one point in time. It reflects the level of external debt, which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term.	<b>Authorised Limit for External Debt (£m)</b>	208.662	269.737	297.895	310.992
7	This is the limit beyond which external debt is not normally expected to exceed.	<b>Operational Limit for External Debt (£m)</b>	185.201	256.968	285.122	298.215
8	These limits seek to ensure that the Council does not expose itself to an inappropriate level of interest rate risk and has a suitable proportion of debt.	<b>Upper Limit for Fixed Interest Rate Exposure</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%
		<b>Upper Limit for Variable Interest Rate Exposure</b>	50%	50%	50%	50%
9	This limit seeks to ensure liquidity and reduce the likelihood of any inherent or associated risk.	<b>Upper Limit for Sums Invested over 365 Days</b>	60%	60%	60%	60%
10	This indicator is used to highlight where an authority may be borrowing in advance of need.	<b>Gross Debt and the CFR (£m)</b>	73.865	31.982	32.806	33.531

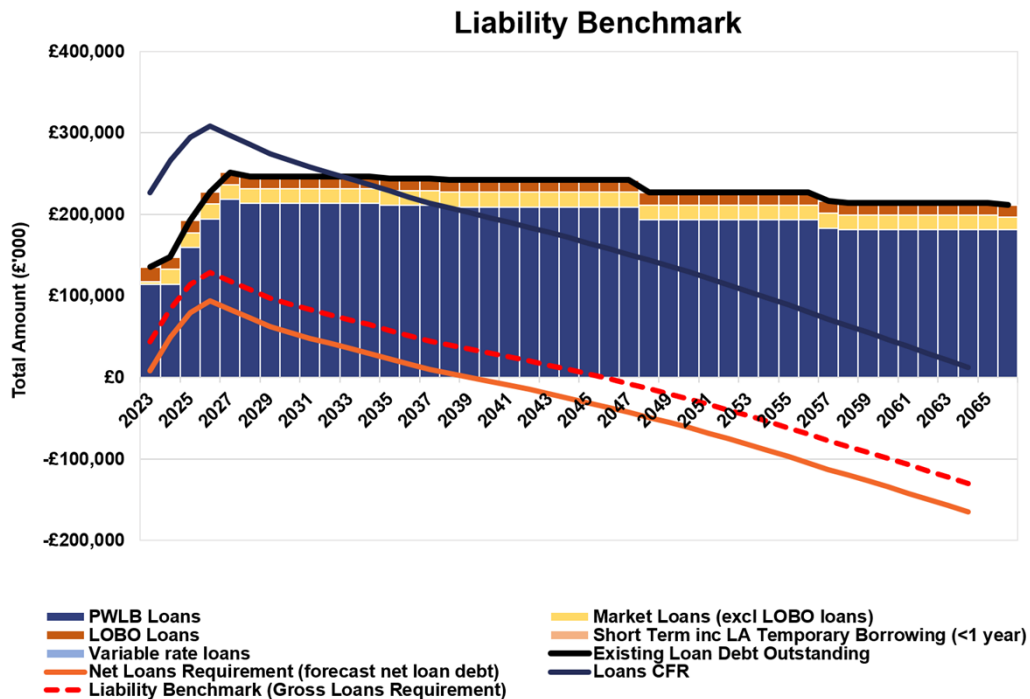


**Liability Benchmark**


The Authority is required to estimate and measure the Liability Benchmark for the forthcoming financial year and the following two financial years, as a minimum.

There are four components to the LB:

1. **Existing loan debt outstanding:** the Authority’s existing loans that are still outstanding in future years.
2. **Loans CFR:** this is calculated in accordance with the loans CFR definition in the Prudential Code and projected into the future based on approved prudential borrowing and planned MRP. Due to only approved prudential borrowing being included in the calculation a peak will appear after four years as no further borrowing will be approved at this point.
3. **Net loans requirement:** this will show the Authority’s gross loan debt less treasury management investments at the last financial year-end, projected into the future and based on its approved prudential borrowing, planned MRP and any other major cash flows forecast. This becomes a negative due to the position the Authority is in as a result of the balance of treasury investments, which are in excess of borrowing; this allows the Authority flexibility in regard to the timing of taking out future borrowing and therefore allows it to make sound treasury management decisions.
4. **Liability benchmark (or gross loans requirement):** this equals net loans requirement plus short-term liquidity allowance.



This page is intentionally left blank

 <b>ST HELENS</b> BOROUGH COUNCIL	<h2>Overview and Scrutiny Commission</h2> <h3>22 April 2024</h3>
--	--

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Quarter 3 Performance Report – 2023-24</b>
<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	Corporate Services
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Martin Bond
<b>Exempt Report</b>	No
<b>Reason for Exemption</b>	N/A
<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Public Notice issued</b>	N/A
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All
<b>Report of</b>	Vicky Willett Director Policy and Transformation <a href="mailto:vickiwillett@sthelens.gov.uk">vickiwillett@sthelens.gov.uk</a>
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Chris Collinge Performance, Strategy & Information Manager <a href="mailto:chriscollinge@sthelens.gov.uk">chriscollinge@sthelens.gov.uk</a>

<b>Borough Priorities</b>	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	
	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	
	Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all	
	Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	
	Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	
	Be a responsible Council	X

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 The Quarter 3 Performance Report 2023-24 (Annex A) provides an analysis of progress and performance over the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> of October to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2023-24 against each of the Council's 6 priorities. The report reflects the new performance framework and targets aligned to the priorities and outcomes of the Borough Strategy as agreed by Cabinet on the 26th of April 2023. This framework provides the basis for quarterly performance reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny over the course of 2023-24.
- 1.2 The Council acknowledges that effective performance management arrangements are critical to supporting decision making and work continues to ensure the development of the performance framework and performance management processes across the Council.

## 2. Recommendation for Decision

**Overview and Scrutiny Commission is recommended to:**

- 1) **Note the performance position at Quarter 3 2023-24.**
- 2) **Note the actions planned by the Corporate Services Directorate and services to address specific areas for performance improvement in relation to Priority 6.**
- 3) **Consider whether there are any potential items for further scrutiny as part of the Commission's work programme based on performance information received.**

## 3. Purpose of this report

- 3.1 The Council remains committed to the regular monitoring and reporting of performance information to ensure the delivery of efficient, effective and value for money services that meet the needs and expectations of the customers and communities it serves. The purpose of the report is to present a summary of progress against the priorities and outcomes of the Borough Strategy 2021-2030 through an overview of performance in relation to key indicators.
- 3.2 The format of the report is split into 2 distinct parts:
- Part 1 of the report is a statistical analysis of the performance position at Quarter 3 2023-24.
  - Part 2 of the report is a commentary on performance against delivery of the 6 Borough Strategy priorities and their respective outcomes, summarising performance and action being taken to improve performance where required. Scorecards for each priority area are included to provide further information on individual performance measures. Part 2 of the version of the report presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission only includes performance information relating to Priority 6 of the Borough Strategy.

## 4. Background / Reason for the recommendations

- 4.1 The Quarter 3 Performance Report 2023-24 reflects performance over the period October to December 2023 and the legacy impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the cost-

of-living crisis, rising demand for services and a requirement to deliver significant budget savings. As a result, it is more critical than ever that the Council has a clear understanding of what it needs to measure and how it is performing to inform effective decision making. The indicators reported are split between Tier 1 and Tier 2:

- **Tier 1** – A set of high-level strategic indicators and targets that constitute the Outcomes Framework of the Borough Strategy 2021-2030.
- **Tier 2** – A set of performance indicators and targets to address key priority areas of performance within Directorates / Departments linked to the business planning process and the Borough Strategy 2021-2030.

- 4.2 Annual targets were set where possible within the context of national, Northwest, and local authority comparator group data. Targets equally aspire to be challenging but achievable within the context of the available resources. The targets also took account of performance during 2022-23 and the legacy impact of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, rising service demand and a challenging financial position for local government.
- 4.3 There are 86 performance indicators, where Quarter 3 performance against target is available to be reported. Of these:
- **72%** of indicator targets have been either exceeded, met fully, or met within 95% of target. This compares to 73% of indicators in Quarter 3 2022-23.
  - **28%** of indicator targets were not met, compared to 27% in Quarter 3 2022-23.
  - The trend measure indicates over the course of the last 12 months **51%** of indicators showed improvement, **10%** of indicators maintained the same performance and **39%** of indicators showed a downward trajectory. The position in Quarter 3 2022-23 was that **52%** of indicators showed improvement, **7%** of indicators maintained the same performance and **41%** of indicators showed a downward trajectory.
  - **21%** of all indicators where comparison is possible are in the top quartile, compared to 24% at Quarter 3 2021-22, whilst **33%** are in the bottom quartile, compared to 27% at Quarter 3 2022-23. 14% and 33% of indicators are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile respectively, compared to 20% and 29% in Quarter 3 2022-23 (NB percentages rounded to nearest whole number).
- 4.4 Performance should continue to be viewed within the context of what has continued to be a challenging operational period for the Council. The legacy impact of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, rising demand for services and the requirement to deliver significant budget savings which has resulted in a recruitment freeze and reductions to the workforce, impacted the Council's ability to meet targets and demonstrate improvements in performance trends. Equally in many areas the impact of the pandemic on performance is yet to be fully realised and understood. However, given the effect of the pandemic on St Helens to date there is the strong likelihood that existing inequalities may be widened. This presents risks for future performance, but particularly in areas such as public health, education and schools and children's services where comparative performance is already challenging.
- 4.5 The report takes the format of an executive summary of performance, followed by a more detailed breakdown for each priority and their respective outcomes. Tables have been included to highlight performance against outcome areas, along with a summary of actions that are being taken to improve performance.

4.6 In summary, at Quarter 3 2023-24 there are a number of outcome areas which demonstrate strong and / or improving performance. Equally there are areas where performance against outcomes is either some distance from target or an outlier in terms of St Helens' performance relative to the England average or our statistical neighbours. Areas of challenge include:

- **Priority 1**

- ***The children's social care outcome:***

This includes rates of Children in Need and Children Looked After, where current performance remains statistically significantly higher than last published England averages and that of our nearest neighbours.

The rate of children subject to a child protection plan is also comparatively high compared to the last published England averages and that of our nearest neighbours, but the in-year rate has again shown further improvement during the course of Quarter 3.

The number of early help episodes that have been closed and have subsequently not gone on to have a social care intervention in the following 12 months as a percentage of total closures is also some way from target at Quarter 3, although there has been a positive increase in the number of early help cases now open.

The percentage of former care leavers aged 19-21 years in employment, education or training has dropped in Quarter 3 and is now below target.

- ***The children's aspiration and attainment outcome:***

This includes the timeliness of EHCP completions which although showing some improvement is still well below target.

The percentage of young people NEET in December 2023 is slightly worse than target and the performance position at the same point in the previous year.

- ***The children's health and resilience outcome:***

This includes the number of teenage conceptions for which St Helens has the seventh highest rate in England, albeit no new data has yet been published by the ONS.

Under-18 hospital admissions for alcohol and breastfeeding rates are statistically significantly worse than last published England averages and those of our nearest neighbours.

The MMR vaccination take-up for 5-year-olds increased in Quarter 3 but is still performing below target.

The percentage of children re-offending increased sharply according to the most recent data, albeit figures are subject to fluctuation due to the relatively small cohort.

- **Priority 2**

- ***The health and wellbeing outcome:***

This includes very high rates of hospital admissions for all age alcohol specific conditions for which St Helens has the 12<sup>th</sup> highest rate in England and the 6<sup>th</sup> highest in the North West according to last published national data.

High mortality rates due to suicide persist with St Helens having the 17<sup>th</sup> highest rate nationally and the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in the North West according to last published national data.

Emergency hospital admissions for falls in the 65 plus population increased according to the latest provisional data, and the last published verified data shows that rates remain statistically significantly worse than last published England average.

The two drug treatment indicators showed improvement during Quarter 3 but remain off target. St Helens' mortality rates due to CVD remain comparatively high and have increased over the course of the first 3 quarters.

- ***The independent living outcome:***

Performance against target at Quarter 3 remains largely strong, with a number of areas showing further improvement.

The number of people using adult social care receiving direct payments is 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile and not meeting target at Quarter 3.

User satisfaction with adult safeguarding outcomes also remains off target.

- ***Priority 3***

- ***The housing and homes outcome:***

This includes homelessness prevention or relief, rough sleeping, and households in temporary accommodation including households with children where performance is some way from target at Quarter 3.

The indicator relating to the completion of new homes also remains below target at Quarter 3.

- ***Priority 4***

- ***The economy outcome:***

Specifically, the rate of economic inactivity due to long-term sickness and the 18-24 year old claimant rate, which have remained high over the course of Quarter 3.

The percentage of planning appeals granted as a percentage of all appeals also failed to meet target at the end of Quarter 3.

- ***Priority 5***

- ***The Environment outcome:***

The 3 waste and recycling indicators all failed to meet target.

- ***Priority 6***

- ***The communication and engagement outcome:***

This includes the volume of complaints which remain high, although complaint response times have improved substantially during Quarter 3 with the indicator now performing better than target.

FOI request response times remain off target.

The percentage of Customers that have had their call answered within the promised timeframe dipped over the course of Quarter 3, due to increased numbers of calls related to the roll out of the new Waste and Recycling scheme.

## **5. Consideration of Alternatives**

5.1 None

## **6. Conclusions**

6.1 The Quarter 3 Performance Report 2023-24 at Annex A provides an assessment of the Council's performance over the period October to December. The legacy of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis and sustained financial pressure on local government continue to pose significant challenges for the Council and St Helens Borough. Robust and appropriate performance management arrangements continue to be critical to support effective decision making and enable the delivery of the Council's desired outcomes across the borough and its communities.

## **7. Legal Implications**

7.1 Performance data and effective performance management contribute to the Council's governance position.

## **8. Financial Implications**

8.1 The Council's performance management framework and processes are critical to ensuring the organisation provides value for money.

## **9. Equality Impact Assessment**

9.1 The performance framework supports the community in understanding the progress the Council makes to achieve its priorities. Consideration will be given to presenting this information in a format that is easily understandable and accessible.

## **10. Social Value**

10.1 The indicators include measures relating to the voluntary / community sector, employment, and the local economy.

## **11. Net Zero and Environment**

11.1 The indicators include measures relating to Net Zero and the environment.

## **12. Health and Wellbeing**

12.1 The indicators include measures relating to the health and wellbeing of the local population.

## **13. Customer and Resident**

13.1 The indicators include measures relating to customers.



**14. Asset and Property**

14.1 None

**15. Staffing and Human Resources**

15.1 None

**16. Risks**

16.1 There is a risk that performance may decline in some areas. Where this occurs action will be taken to address performance issues, these will be outlined in action plans the impact of which will be reported to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny.

**17. Policy Framework Implications**

17.1 The recommendations within this report are in line with existing council policies. The performance framework links to the priorities and outcomes of the Borough Strategy and related key council strategies.

**18. Impact and Opportunities on Localities**

18.1 There is the opportunity to link aspects of the performance framework to the Localities agenda and report elements of performance at a locality level.

**19. Background Documents**

19.1 N/A.

**20. Appendices**

20.1 **Annex A** – Quarter 3 Performance Report 2023-23.

This page is intentionally left blank

**COMMISSION**  
**PERFORMANCE REPORT**  
**QUARTER 3 2023-24**



## Contents

<b>1. Our Borough Strategy 2021-30 Priorities</b> .....	3
<b>2. Borough Strategy Priorities and the UN Sustainable Development Goals</b> .....	4
<b>3. Purpose of the Report</b> .....	5
<b>3. Executive Summary</b> .....	6
<b>4. Part 1 - Statistical analysis</b> .....	7
<b>4.1 Performance Against Target</b> .....	8
<b>4.2 The Performance Trend</b> .....	8
<b>4.3 Inter Authority Comparison</b> .....	9
<b>4.4 Summary and conclusion of statistical analysis</b> .....	10
<b>5. Part 2 - Commentary on performance against priority and outcome</b> .....	12
<b>Priority 6 - Be a responsible council</b> .....	12

# 1. Our Borough Strategy 2021-30 Priorities

Performance Management in St Helens Borough Council is focused around achieving the 6 strategic priorities outlined in Our Borough Strategy 2021-30.



**Priority 1 - Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life**

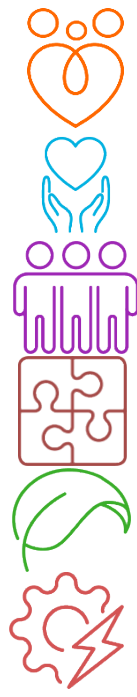
**Priority 2 - Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities**

**Priority 3 - Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all**

**Priority 4 - Support a strong, thriving, inclusive, and well-connected local economy**

**Priority 5 - Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture**

**Priority 6 - Be a responsible council**



## 2. Borough Strategy Priorities and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". The SDGs were set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030. Making progress towards the global goals by 2030 depends on local action. SDGs fit with Our Borough Strategy Vision and the Council's approach to Reset and Recovery. All 17 Sustainable Development Goals have been mapped against the 'Our Borough Strategy' priorities and outcomes.

62

 <p>ENSURE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A POSITIVE START IN LIFE</p>	     	 <p>SUPPORT A STRONG, THRIVING, INCLUSIVE AND WELL-CONNECTED LOCAL ECONOMY</p>	          
 <p>PROMOTE GOOD HEALTH, INDEPENDENCE AND CARE ACROSS OUR COMMUNITIES</p>	   	 <p>CREATE GREEN AND VIBRANT PLACES THAT REFLECT OUR HERITAGE AND CULTURE</p>	      
 <p>CREATE SAFE AND STRONG COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS FOR ALL</p>	  	 <p>BE A RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL</p>	       

### 3. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to inform and update Elected Members on performance against the 6 priorities of the Our Borough Strategy 2021-30 and respective outcomes as set out above. The report covers the period Quarter 3 2023-24 providing the performance position reported over the course of the period. The reporting format splits the report into 2 distinct parts:

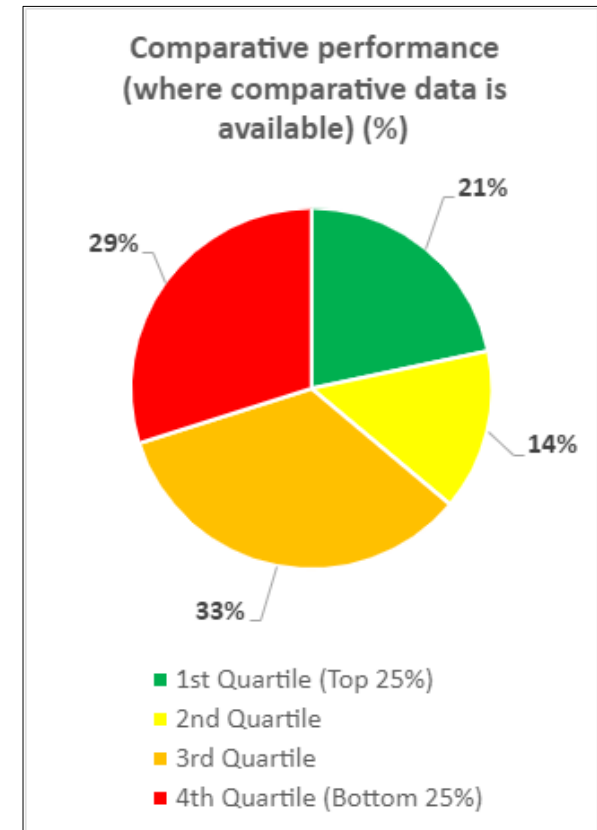
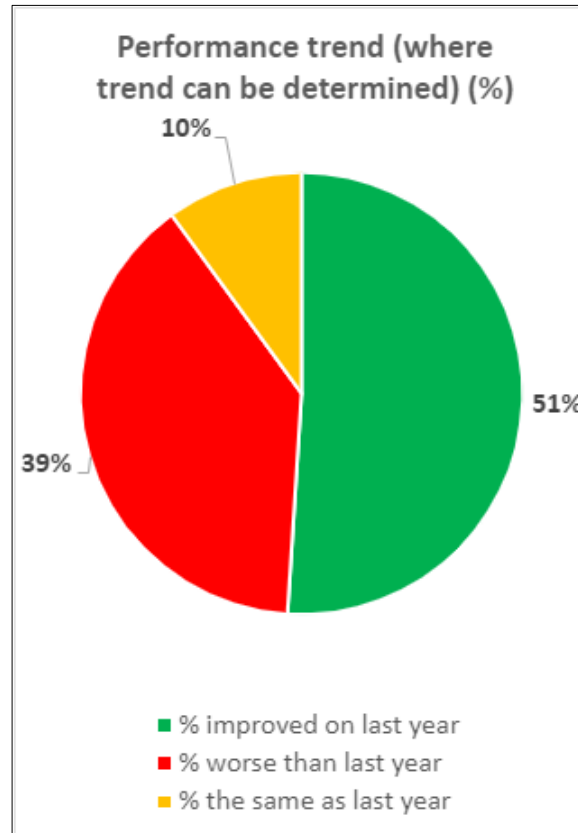
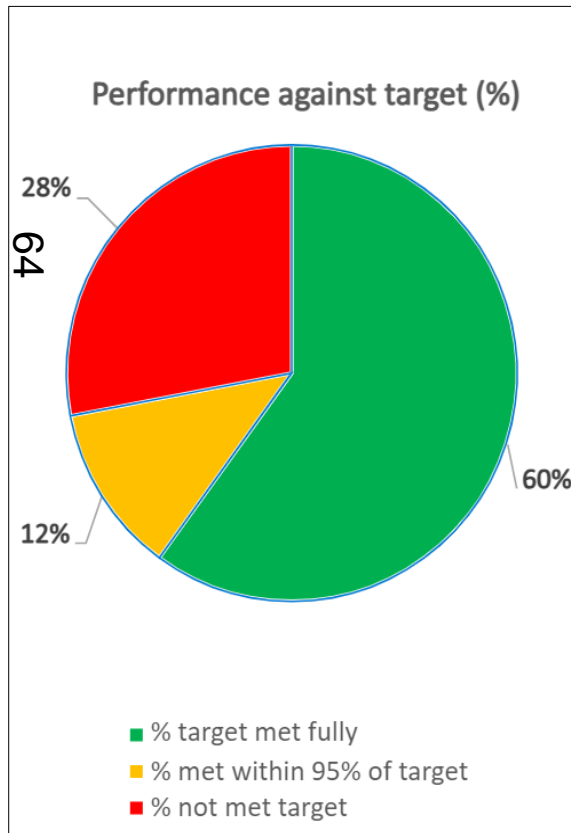
**Part 1** of the report is a statistical analysis of the performance position at Quarter 3 2023-24.

**Part 2** of the report is a commentary on performance against delivery of the 6 strategic priorities and their respective outcomes summarising current performance within the quarter and action being taken to improve performance where required.

### 3. Executive Summary

The charts below provide an overview position of all performance measures across all 6 Borough Strategy priorities as at Quarter 3 2023-24, examining:

- Performance against target.
- Trend - whether performance has improved / worsened since the position 12 months ago.
- Inter Authority performance - how St Helens' performance compares to that of a family group of authorities similar to St Helens.





## 4. Part 1 - Statistical analysis

To measure performance at Quarter 3 2023-24, the Council is reporting against a total of 86 performance indicators, where targets were set. The indicators reported are split between Tier 1 and Tier 2:

**Tier 1** – A set of high-level strategic indicators and targets that constitute the Outcomes Framework of the Borough Strategy 2021-2030.

**Tier 2** – A further set of performance indicators and targets to address key priority areas of performance within Directorates / Departments.

In the supporting scorecards for each priority area, this distinction is maintained and both tiers are shown as they are all relevant to an understanding of overall performance.

The Quarter 3 report statistical analysis looks at performance under 3 areas:

1. Performance against targets
2. Trend over 12-months
3. Inter-authority comparison

## 4.1 Performance Against Target

This measure sets out:

- The percentage of indicators by priority where targets have been fully met or exceeded.
- The percentage of indicators by priority that have not fully met target but are within 95% of target.
- The percentage of indicators by priority that have failed to meet the target by more than 5%.

In the supporting scorecards for each priority area, green, amber, and red colours are used to depict indicators in each of the above three bullet point situations.

Priority	Number of Indicators with data	% target fully met	% target met within 95%	% target not met
1. Ensure children and young people have a positive start	21	52% (11)	24% (5)	24% (5)
2. Health, independence, and care	21	57% (12)	14% (3)	29% (6)
3. Safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods	14	64% (9)	0% (0)	36% (5)
4. Strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected economy	8	63% (5)	0% (0)	37% (3)
5. Green and vibrant places reflecting our heritage and culture	9	67% (6)	0% (0)	33% (3)
6. Responsible Council	13	70% (9)	15% (2)	15% (2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>86**</b>	<b>60% (52)</b>	<b>12% (10)</b>	<b>28% (24)</b>

\*\* Some new indicators do not have targets set for the year as baseline data is being collected in 2023-24. See individual priorities for details.

A listing of indicators, which have met or exceeded target, have met within 95% of target, or have failed to meet target by more than 5% are shown within each of the 6 priority scorecards.

## 4.2 The Performance Trend

This measure compares performance at Quarter 3 2023-24 with performance at Quarter 3 2022-23 by setting out:

- The percentage of indicators where performance compared to last year has improved.
- The percentage of indicators where performance compared to last year has declined.
- The percentage of indicators where performance compared to last year is the same.

St Helens Borough Performance Report - Quarter 3, 2023/24

In the supporting scorecards for each priority a black arrow pointing up, downwards or sideways is used to depict indicators in each of the above 3 scenarios.

NB. There are a small number of indicators for 2023-24, where performance data in 2022-23 is not available and therefore it is not possible to show a performance trend. Where this is the case N/A appears.

Priority	Number of Indicators with data	% improved on last year	% worse than last year	% the same as last year
1. Ensure children and young people have a positive start	22	45% (10)	41% (9)	14% (3)
2. Health, independence, and care	19	42% (8)	42% (8)	16% (3)
3. Safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods	11	45% (5)	55% (6)	0% (0)
4. Strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected economy	5	60% (3)	40% (2)	0% (0)
5. Green and vibrant places reflecting our heritage and culture	8	63% (5)	37% (3)	0% (0)
6. Responsible Council	13	70% (9)	15% (2)	15% (2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>51% (40)</b>	<b>39% (30)</b>	<b>10% (8)</b>

### 4.3 Inter Authority Comparison

This measure shows how performance in St Helens compares to the performance of a family group of authorities similar to St Helens. It does this by ranking each authority's performance by quartile. The top performing 25 % are in the first quartile and the bottom 25% in the fourth quartile. Authorities in between are placed in either the 2nd or 3rd quartiles. Comparative national data is only available to be used for **43** indicators.

In the supporting scorecards for each priority, where this measure is used, green indicates that St Helens is in the top best performing quartile, red that it is in the bottom quartile or yellow/amber that St Helens is in either the 2nd or 3rd quartile). The England average figure (Eng, Av) is also now presented, as is the statistical neighbour group average (LA Av.) to provide additional context to comparative performance.

Priority	Number of Indicators with data	% in 1st quartile	% in 2nd quartile	% in 3rd quartile	% in 4th quartile
1. Ensure children and young people have a positive start	22	23% (5)	14% (3)	23% (5)	40% (9)

Priority	Number of Indicators with data	% in 1st quartile	% in 2nd quartile	% in 3rd quartile	% in 4th quartile
2. Health, independence, and care	11	18% (2)	9% (1)	46% (5)	27% (3)
3. Safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods	0	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
4. Strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected economy	6	33% (2)	17% (1)	50% (3)	0% (0)
5. Green and vibrant places reflecting our heritage and culture	2	0% (0)	50% (1)	0% (0)	50% (1)
6. Responsible Council	2	0% (0)	0% (0)	50% (1)	50% (1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>21%* (9)</b>	<b>14% (6)</b>	<b>33%* (14)</b>	<b>33%* (14)</b>

NB – Percentages rounded to nearest whole number

The latest available picture of inter authority performance largely relates to the 2021-22 financial year. Therefore, St Helens position vis-a-vis its quartile position is based on St Helens performance in that particular year relative to its statistical neighbours. Future reports will be updated to reflect the 2022-23 comparative performance position as and when verified data is published.

#### 4.4 Summary and conclusion of statistical analysis

- **72%** of indicator targets have been either exceeded, met fully, or met within 95% of target. This compares to 73% of indicators in Quarter 3 2022-23.
- **28%** of indicator targets were not met, compared to 27% in Quarter 3 2022-23.
- The trend measure indicates over the course of the last 12 months **51%** of indicators showed improvement, **10%** of indicators maintained the same performance and **39%** of indicators showed a downward trajectory. The position in Quarter 3 2022-23 was that **52%** of indicators showed improvement, **7%** of indicators maintained the same performance and **41%** of indicators showed a downward trajectory.
- **21%** of all indicators where comparison is possible are in the top quartile, compared to 24% at Quarter 3 2021-22, whilst **33%** are in the bottom quartile, compared to 27% at Quarter 3 2022-23. 14% and 33% of indicators are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile respectively, compared to 20% and 29% in Quarter 3 2022-23 (NB percentages rounded to nearest whole number).
- Annual targets were set where possible within the context of national, Northwest, and local authority comparator group data. Equally targets aspire to be challenging but achievable within the context of the available resources. The targets also take account of performance during the last 3 years which has been an unprecedented period due to the onset and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, a cost-of-living crisis, increasing demand for services and severe financial constraints.
- Performance should therefore be viewed within the context of what has continued to be a challenging operational period for the Council. The legacy impact of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, rising demand for services and the requirement to deliver significant budget savings has impacted the Council's ability to meet targets and demonstrate improvements in performance trends. Equally in many areas the impact of the pandemic on performance is yet to be fully realised and understood. However, given the effect of the pandemic on St Helens to date there is the strong likelihood that

St Helens Borough Performance Report - Quarter 3, 2023/24

existing inequalities may be widened. This presents risks for future performance, but particularly in areas such as public health, education and schools and children's services where comparative performance is already challenging.

## 5. Part 2 - Commentary on performance against priority and outcome

### Priority 6 - Be a responsible council



#### Outcomes

- Communicate, listen, engage, and work in partnership well with our residents, communities, local organisations, and partners recognising the strengths and skills in our community
- Invest in developing the strengths and skills of our workforce and elected members
- Embrace innovative ways of working to improve service delivery and the operations of the council
- Meet our community's needs by delivering accessible and responsive services
- Provide value for money and ensure we are financially resilient and sustainable

#### Overview of priority performance

The tables below show provide an overview of performance at Quarter 3 2023-24 for the indicators reported.

#### Performance Against Target

Number of Indicators with data	% target fully met	% target met within 95%	% target not met
13	70% (9)	15% (2)	15% (2)

#### The Performance Trend

Number of Indicators with data	% improved on last year	% worse than last year	% the same as last year
13	70% (9)	15% (2)	15% (2)

#### Inter Authority Comparison

Number of Indicators with data	% in 1st quartile	% in 2nd quartile	% in 3rd quartile	% in 4th quartile
2	0% (0)	0% (0)	50% (1)	50% (1)

## Priority 6 – Be a responsible council

### Tier 1

Outcome	Ref	Performance Indicator	Reporting Frequency	Higher / Lower is better?	22/23 Outturn	23/24 Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	% Variance from Target (DEC)	Trend	Comparative Performance
							June	Sept	Dec			
Communicate, listen, engage, and work in partnership well with our residents, communities, local organisations, and partners recognising the strength and skills in our community	CS-001	Number of complaints received	Quarterly	Lower	745	654	290	543	826	-67.89%	↓	N/A
	CS-002	Percentage of Stage 1 complaints responded to within policy timescales.	Quarterly	Higher	38%	60%	24	63	73	21.67%	↑	N/A
We invest in developing the strengths and skills of our workforce and elected members	CS-003	The percentage of staff completing mandatory core E-learning training	Quarterly	Higher	65%	70%	54	54	58	28.89%	↑	N/A
	CS-004A	The percentage delivery of the Member Development Programme over 12 months	Quarterly	Higher	100%	100%	100	100	100	0%	↔	N/A

Outcome	Ref	Performance Indicator	Reporting Frequency	Higher / Lower is better?	22/23 Outturn	23/24 Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	% Variance from Target (DEC)	Trend	Comparative Performance
							June	Sept	Dec			
	CS-005	The percentage of training outcomes perceived to be above 'Satisfactory'	Quarterly	Higher	87%	85%	83.8	94	96	12.94%	↑	N/A
	CS-006	The number of apprenticeships commenced in financial year as a percentage of the total workforce.	Quarterly	Higher	1.9%	1.7%	0.46	0.99	1.28	0.39%	↑	N/A
72  <b>Embrace innovative ways of working to improve service delivery and the operations of the Council</b>	CS-007	Percentage of transformation programmes with delivery confidence as 'on track'	Quarterly	Higher	N/A	TBC	87	87	Awaiting data	-%	N/A	N/A
	CS-008	Customer Satisfaction Score - Customer rating on satisfaction with contact with the Council	Quarterly	Higher	2.8	3.5	4.1	3.9	4.1	17.14%	↑	N/A
	CS-009	Customer Effort Score - Customer rating on how easy the Council made it to resolve their issue	Quarterly	Higher	2.8	3.5	4.1	3.7	3.9	11.43%	↑	N/A



Outcome	Ref	Performance Indicator	Reporting Frequency	Higher / Lower is better?	22/23 Outturn	23/24 Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	% Variance from Target (DEC)	Trend	Comparative Performance
							June	Sept	Dec			
	CS-010	Percentage of Customers that have had their call answered within the promised timeframe	Quarterly	Higher	36%	60%	85	61.5	57.7	-3.83%	↑	N/A
Provide value for money and ensure we are financially resilient and sustainable	CS-011	Percentage of council tax collected	Quarterly	Higher	94.51%	95%	27.3	53.1	79.15	-0.44%	↓	3rd Quartile Eng Av. 96 LA Av. 95.2 (2022/23)
	CS-012	Percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year which were received by the authority	Quarterly	Higher	95.29%	95.6%	30.4	55.3	82.42	1.75%	↑	4th Quartile Eng Av. 96.8 LA Av. 97.1 (2022/23)

## Tier 2

Outcome	Ref	Performance Indicator	Reporting Frequency	Higher / Lower is better?	22/23 Outturn	23/24 Target	Q1 June	Q2 Sept	Q3 Dec	% Variance from Target	Trend	Comparative Performance
Communicate, listen, engage, and work in partnership well with our residents, communities, local organisations, and partners recognising the strength and skills in our community	CS-013	Percentage of FOIs responded to within policy timescales.	Quarterly	Higher	76%	80%	71	66	65	-16.67%	↔	N/A
	CS-014	The number of users engaging with the Council's social media posts	Quarterly	Higher	81,908	96,996	32974	51797	81374	11.86%	↑	N/A

### Summary of Performance against outcome and action for improvement

#### Outcome - Communicate, listen, engage, and work in partnership well with our residents, communities, local organisations, and partners recognising the strengths and skills in our community

##### Current Performance

- CS-001** - A total of 826 complaints were received by the Council over the course of the first 3 quarters, compared to 485 in the same period in 2022-23. The volume of complaints is above the cumulative Quarter 3 target of 492. Of the 826 complaints received, 64 complaints were logged under the children’s statutory complaints policy, 63 were logged under the adult's social care statutory complaints policy and 699 were logged under the council’s complaints policy.

- **CS-002** - Of the 289 Stage 1 complaints received in Quarter 3, 73% were responded to within agreed policy timescales, which is better than the quarterly target of 60%. Of the 23 adult social care statutory complaints, 96% were responded to on time. Of the 22 children's statutory complaints, 100% were responded to on time. Of the 244 complaints under the council's complaints policy, 69% were responded to on time.
- **CS-013** – For the period 1<sup>st</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> of December 180 FOIs were received, 18 of which are still open. Of the FOIs closed within Quarter 3, 106 were closed within timescale giving a compliance rate of 65%. Over the course of the first 3 quarters, the provisional position, excluding those FOIs that are still open shows that a total of 547 FOIs were received with 364 or 67% closed on time, which is below the Quarter 3 target of 78% and but equal to the performance position at Quarter 3 2022-23.
- **CS-014** - A total of 81,374 engagements with the Council's social media posts were recorded to end of Quarter 3 2023/24, which is 12% above target and an increase on engagement within the same period last year. further positive quarter for this indicator. Engagement was down in December (as expected at this time of year) but a number of high-performing posts earlier in the quarter boosted figures above the target. October saw the highest engagement for the year to date. Posts with the highest engagement included vaccination posts, a video poem about the borough for National Poetry Day, a competition to name our three new gritters and events such as the World Tipped and the Christmas lights switch on events. Posts about CYCLOPS during Road Safety Week also received high levels of engagement, as did recycling posts.

#### Action for Improvement

75

- **CS-001** - The projected go-live date for the triage of corporate complaints is planned for February. The Senior Complaints Officer is designing a toolkit for the Contact Centre and creating Frequently Asked Questions to support triage of complaints. The triage of complaints will assist in determining which complaints are actual complaints and which are requests for service. It should be noted that a high number of complaints is not necessarily a sign of poor performance, and the performance indicator requires review for 2024-2025 financial year.
- **CS-002** - The direction of travel for compliance is positive in the year to date. Children and adults' complaints compliance has improved significantly. There has been improvement in the number of complaints under the council's complaints policy which have been responded to on time.
- **CS-013** - The council continues to actively respond to improving the organisational monitoring of FOIs and compliance with the timeliness of FOI responses, although performance is still currently a challenge. The Information Governance team continues to offer support and help across the organisation, by encouraging FOI case managers to attend weekly meetings to identify issues. Automated chase ups from the system are functioning and the team is also seeking to enhance the approach to tracking and chasing of FOI requests to encourage the timeliness of response. The Team is meeting with Suffolk Council as part of a shared learning opportunity to identify opportunities for further improvement.

## Outcome - Invest in developing the strengths and skills of our workforce and elected members

### Current Performance

- **CS-003** - The percentage of staff completing mandatory core-E Learning training is on track to meet the annual target at the end of Quarter 3 2023-24. The overall completion figure increased this quarter to 58%. The breakdown for the current course completion is Data Protection 56%, Equality Diversity and Inclusion 64%, Unconscious Bias 69%, and Code of Conduct 55%. Completion data is accessible to all managers following the implementation of the Learning Management System dashboard and 'how to' articles have run in the weekly staff newsletter as well as regular reminders to all employee to complete their mandatory training.
- **CS-004A** - The Member Development Programme was delivered to plan over the first 3 quarters, with 100% of scheduled training delivered. Two sessions were delivered to plan within the quarter, Hate Crime Ambassador Training and People's Update. Members have access to the Members Resource Area on My Learning and The Learning Hub enabling completion of e-learning courses, wider reading, and personal development.
- **CS-005** - 96% of all training delivered to staff during Quarter 3 2023-24 was deemed to be above 'Satisfactory' by attendees, on par with Quarter 2 2022-23. Work is ongoing to encourage delegates to see the value in completing the evaluation hosted on the My Learning Platform. A richer data picture will be used to drive future improvements.

### Action for Improvement

## Outcome - Embrace innovative ways of working to improve service delivery and the operations of the council

### Current Performance

- **CS-008, CS-009, CS-010** – The Customer Effort and Customer Satisfaction score indicators are both exceeding target in Quarter 3, 2023-24. The average Customer Effort Score, which is a customer rating on how easy the Council made it to resolve the customers issue was 3.9 for the quarter, above the target of 3.5. The Customer Satisfaction Score, which is the customer rating on satisfaction with contact with the Council was 4.1 for the Quarter again above the target of 3.5. The percentage of Customers that had their call answered within the promised timeframe was 57.7%, against a target of 60%. This quarter has seen a large increase in call volume, with the Contact Centre handling an additional 14,442 calls compared to the previous quarter. This increase in calls is related to the roll out of the new Recycling and Waste scheme, seeing every household in the borough having new recycling containers delivered, followed by a change to refuse collection routes and dates.

- **CS-007** – The Corporate Transformation Board is scheduled for 29<sup>th</sup> January when the data will become available.

#### Action for Improvement

- **CS-008, CS-009, CS-010** - Since the end of Quarter 4 2022-23, within the Council's contact centre, absence rates have decreased, and vacancies have reduced. Additional measures to enhance the overall experience of contacting the Contact Centre have been introduced. The first 2 quarters of the year saw call volumes decrease to normal levels. However, Quarter 3 saw a significant increase with the roll out of the new Recycling and Waste scheme. To address the problem of residents facing extended wait times for their calls to be answered, a Virtual Queuing feature for customers experiencing financial difficulties has been introduced. This feature efficiently places callers in an automated phone queue if their waiting time exceeds 10 minutes, the callers' phone numbers are securely stored, and they are automatically contacted when it is their turn to engage with a representative. We will continue to monitor the impact of this new feature.

## Outcome - Provide value for money and ensure we are financially resilient and sustainable

#### Current Performance

- 77
- **CS-011 & CS-012** – In-year Council Tax collection is 0.35% below target at the end of Quarter 3, 2023-24. This is in part due to the delay in the billing and recovery cycle as a result of the cyber incident and the ongoing cost-of-living pressures on households. Work is continuing to bring billing and recovery work up to date. The Non-Domestic Rate collection rate at end of Quarter 3 2023-24 met target at 82.4%.
  - The Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton, presented their draft Audit Findings Report in relation to the audit of the Council's financial statements for 2022-2023 at the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee on 11 December 2023. The report confirmed that, in their opinion, the statements give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 31 March 2023 and had been properly prepared in accordance with relevant practices and legislative requirements. Official confirmation of the opinion was subsequently received on 15 December 2023.
  - The report also advised that the auditors' work on the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources was undertaken separately and that the outcome of that work would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.
  - Analysis of the Council's position regarding the most recent CIPFA Financial Resilience Index Annual Assessment was reported to the Audit and Governance Committee on 27 September 2023. The results supported the actions and decisions that had informed or determined the Council's approach within its Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2023-2026.
  - The report on the Council's Quarter 2 position against 2023-24 budget and delivery of savings was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 22 November 2023, with the Quarter 3 position to be considered at the meeting of 28 February 2024. The inflationary pressures detailed in the report, along with service demand pressures (particularly within children's and adult social care) and delays/failure in the delivery of some budget savings demonstrate the extraordinary financial challenges facing the Council, with a £6.2m net budget overspend forecast for the current year at Quarter 2.

- A Medium Term Financial Strategy update report was agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 27 September 2023 that modelled a £17.9m budget gap for the period through to 2026-27 - a level of budget shortfall, driven by factors extensively outside the control of the Council, that is significantly in excess of any ability to address solely through efficiencies. Faced with such a gap, the Council has been required to identify and develop significant budget savings options, informed by service and business planning reviews, to ensure sustainability of the Council's position in the short to medium term.
- That report also provided detail of a significant level of savings that are required in 2023-24 that remain off-track. Whilst some in year mitigations have been identified, failure to make the agreed savings within the budget create real pressure on the Council's financial position. If they are not made in the year, this will severely impact on the level of reserves and will also result in increased savings being required in 2024-25. Continued failure to deliver agreed savings on a permanent basis means that the Council is in danger of not being able to demonstrate delivery of a balanced budget and could ultimately lead to the requirement to issue a statutory notice.
- Individual directorates continue to implement in-year measures to reduce expenditure and mitigate ongoing budget pressures, and Council wide instruction has been issued in relation to the cessation of all non-essential expenditure, a review of agency workers and a recruitment freeze.
- The Council ran a comprehensive public budget consultation exercise from 10 November to 11 December 2023, providing information on the Council's revenue budget, capital programme, the financial challenge that the Council faces and seeking the views of residents and businesses on the Council's priorities and how to balance the budget over the three-year period 2024 to 2027. Cabinet received a report on 24 January 2024 that provided feedback on the consultation, whilst the detailed outcomes of the public consultation have been posted on the Council's website.
- The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was published on 18 December 2023 and reported to Cabinet at its meeting on 24 January 2024. The feedback from the budget consultation and detail of the Final Settlement will be incorporated into further budget considerations and inform final budget proposals for 2024-25.

### Action for Improvement


- As reported in the Financial Monitoring Report and Medium-Term Financial Strategy update reports to Cabinet, there is an ongoing requirement for plans and permanent mitigating actions to be implemented by management to minimise the financial risk to the Council this year, and in future years, from increasing demand, non-delivery of savings and other prevailing budget pressures – including those arising from pay and price inflation.
- A Budget Savings Delivery Board has been established to monitor the delivery of agreed savings during 2023-24 and beyond, to ensure that a robust challenge is in place and that Directorates are accountable for the delivery of approved savings. Individual Departmental savings will be reviewed at the Board Meetings on a 3-monthly rota basis, to ensure that due regard is given to each area and Directors have the opportunity to provide a full update on progress against targets – including progress against delivery milestones, identification of any alternative or mitigating actions that may be necessary, and matters arising for decision making.

- The Council will critically need to identify, develop, and agree significant budget savings options, informed by service and business planning reviews and consultation feedback, to ensure sustainability of the Council's position in the short to medium term.
- In-year collection rates will continue to be monitored monthly, in light of the continuing squeeze on household income due to inflationary pressures.

For more information about individual performance indicators that support the achievement of these outcomes please see the scorecard.

This page is intentionally left blank



 <p><b>ST HELENS</b> BOROUGH COUNCIL</p>	<h2>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Commission</h2> <p>22 April 2024</p>
--	--

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>St Helens and the UN Sustainable Development Goals</b>
<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	Corporate Services
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Martin Bond
<b>Exempt Report</b>	No
<b>Reason for Exemption</b>	N/A
<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Public Notice issued</b>	N/A
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All
<b>Report of</b>	Vicky Willett Director Policy and Transformation <a href="mailto:vickiwillett@sthelens.gov.uk">vickiwillett@sthelens.gov.uk</a>
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Chris Collinge Performance, Strategy & Information Manager <a href="mailto:chriscollinge@sthelens.gov.uk">chriscollinge@sthelens.gov.uk</a>

<b>Borough Priorities</b>	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	X
	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	X
	Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all	X
	Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	X
	Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	X
	Be a responsible Council	X

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) framework was adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 2015 and will be in force until 2030. The SDGs aim to address the key global challenges of economic, environmental, and social sustainability through a framework comprising of 17 global goals that collectively provide ‘a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet’. The SDGs apply at both domestic level and overseas and UN member states are responsible for their implementation both at home and contributing to progress internationally.
- 1.2 St Helens is committed to delivering the SDGs locally, and each of the 17 SDG Goals have been mapped against the 6 priorities of St Helens ‘Our Borough Strategy 2021-30’ (see Appendix 1). The following report provides a brief assessment against the Sustainable Development Goal framework globally and attempts a further assessment of St Helens’ position in relation to key aspects the SDG framework locally by drawing on a number of linked metrics and data sources.

## 2. Recommendations for Decision

**Overview and Scrutiny Commission are recommended to:**

**(1) Note the report and St Helens latest position against the UN Sustainable Development Goals.**

## 3. Purpose of this Report

- 3.1. The purpose of the report is two-fold. Firstly, to provide the Commission with an overview of the background to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Framework and a brief update on the latest position from the United Nations in relation to global progress. Secondly, the report attempts to present a further examination of St Helens position in relation to the SDGs, following on from the initial report to Overview and Scrutiny Commission in February 2023. In doing so, relevant metrics, many of which feature within St Helens Borough Strategy Performance Management Framework, have been mapped where possible against the 17 SDGs. St Helens latest available data for these metrics has subsequently been gathered and compared to the position both across the country as a whole and in relation to the North West. St Helens position has subsequently been RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated to provide an overview of how the Borough compares to the England and North West position.

## 4. Background /Reasons for the recommendations

- 4.1. Background to the UN Sustainable Development Goals – In 2015 the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by all United Nations Member States, both developed and developing in a global partnership (see Appendix 1). The SDGs Framework recognises that ending poverty and deprivation must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and drive economic growth, whilst tackling climate change and working to preserve the sustainability of the planet.
- 4.2. Within the framework of the 17 SDG headline goals, there are 169 targets, each with associated indicators that were established to allow the tracking of progress against each goal to demonstrate the progress made towards their achievement.
- 4.3. In July 2023, the United Nations published its latest [Sustainable Development Goals Report](#) which provided an overview of progress towards the 17 goals within the SDG framework using the latest available data. According to the report, which makes for harsh reading, ‘we have

entered an age of polycrisis with conflict, climate change, lingering effects of Covid-19 pandemic and other global challenges playing their part to derail the hard-earned progress towards the SDGs'. In summary the report concludes:

- The world is still reeling from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic with recovery being slow, uneven, and incomplete. This has led to significant reversals in global health outcomes and has contributed to the number of people living in extreme poverty increasing for the first time in a generation.
- Global conflict and human rights violations had displaced 110 million people, of which 35 million were refugees.
- The climate crisis is worsening as greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, oceans are facing severe plastic pollution, and species extinction continues to grow.
- Developing countries are grappling with an unprecedented rise in external debt as a result of high inflation, rising interest rates, trade tensions and constrained fiscal capacity.
- The SDGs remain the roadmap out of these crises and for our own survival. However, the severity and magnitude of the challenges demand sweeping changes and accelerated action on a scale not yet seen in human history.

4.4. Following this, in September 2023, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a [political declaration to accelerate action towards achieving the SDGs](#). It was announced that despite commitments around SDGs, progress has been slow with only 15% of the targets being on track, with many other targets going in reverse. The declaration included a commitment to financing for developing countries and supports the proposal for an SDG Stimulus of at least \$500 billion annually. It also calls for reforming the international finance architecture to address outdated and unfair practices. In terms of challenges and urgent areas the following were confirmed:

- Hunger remains a critical issue, affecting millions of people globally.
- Transition to renewable energy needs acceleration.
- The benefits of digitisation must be more widely accessible.
- Collective action from all stakeholders is essential to meet the SDGs by the 2030 deadline.

4.5. Initial Assessment of St Helens' Position Against the Sustainable Development Goals Framework – St Helens like many other local authorities has committed to the delivery of the SDG Framework at a local level. Following the approval of the Our Borough Strategy 2021-30, and its outcome-based performance framework, the 17 SDGs were aligned against the Strategy's 6 high level priorities (see Appendix 1).

4.6. Following the alignment of the SDGs against the priorities of the Borough Strategy, a further exercise was undertaken to select and map a series of local metrics against the targets of the SDG Framework, where data for St Helens is readily available. It should be noted that some of the metrics selected are a like for like match against the indicators defined by the UN within the SDG framework. However, it should also be acknowledged that a number of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and associated global targets do not readily lend themselves to monitoring at a local authority level or are not applicable to an area such as St Helens. These include indicators in Sustainable Development Goals relating to Clean Water and Sanitation, Life Below Water and Life on Land.

- 4.7. The local metrics / indicators selected to provide an initial assessment of St Helens' position against the SDG framework are set out against the relevant Goals at Appendix 2. A good number of these metrics, 35 in total, are existing indicators that already feature within St Helens Performance Management Framework. Where there was not a like for like match to indicators within the UN SDG framework, a proxy metric available from St Helens statistics closest to the corresponding global SDG indicator has been selected. However, there are a number of SDG Goals where relevant local metrics do not readily exist and cannot currently be applied.
- 4.8. Following the selection of the relevant indicators / metrics, St Helens' latest available nationally verified data has been sourced and compared to the England and North West average. The following RAG (red, amber, green) rating has then been applied to each indicator / metric:
- 'Green' indicates St Helens' position vis a vis the latest available data is better than the England and North West average position,
  - 'Amber' indicates St Helens' position is within 95% of the England and North West average position
  - 'Red' indicates St Helens' position is worse than the England and North West average position by more than a 5% variance.
- 4.9 It should be noted that there are a small number of local indicators linked to the SDG framework at Appendix 2 that are currently reported within St Helens existing performance framework where no England or North West data is available for comparison. In the case of these indicators, the RAG status is derived from the latest assessment of performance against the local target for Quarter 3 2023/24 and labeled 'T'.
- 4.10 Prior to consideration of St Helens' position against the SDG Framework within Appendix 2, the following context should be taken into account. St Helens is a relatively highly deprived Borough with high levels of inequality in terms of health, income and employment compared to the country as a whole which have been endemic within the area for decades. The growing engagement and adoption of the SDGs at a local level within the UK has occurred during a period in which local authorities have been facing huge reductions in budgets and significantly increased demand for services. For the past decade and through the period of a global pandemic, and now an escalating cost-of-living crisis, local authorities have been asked to maintain services while having less and less resources to do so. Given the context of financial constraints and deprivation within the borough, coupled with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living-crisis that has the potential to significantly deepen the inequality and poverty evident within St Helens, the achievement of progress against many of the SDG Goals remains a real challenge at a local level (see 4.13 below).
- 4.11 However, the challenge is also replicated at a UK level. Analysis from the second 'Measuring Up' report from the Global Compact Network UK, published in September 2022 concluded that progress in the UK towards the delivery of the 17 UN SDGs has remained fairly stagnant, with performance only classed as good on 17% of the targets relevant to the domestic delivery of the goals and regression recorded in a number of areas. The report expresses concern that poverty is deepening, with the number of people facing in-work poverty having increased even before energy and food prices began to increase. The report concludes that there is still a need for a holistic approach to policymaking and collaboration, backed by transformative action to maximise positive outcomes across the Goals, and that considering the UK Government's levelling up agenda and the cost-of-living crisis, more needs to be done to reduce inequality in this country.

- 4.12 In October 2023, a [Westminster Hall Debate on the UK progress on the UN SDG's](#) took place which concluded the UK is only performing well on 21% of the relevant targets related to the domestic delivery of the SDG's. There have been improvements in 24 targets, regression in 14 targets and no change in 64 targets. Notable trends include:
- The UK has made good progress in reducing food waste since 2007, with an estimated 15% reduction.
  - Childhood obesity rates have surged, affecting one in four reception-aged children and two in five year 6 children in England.
  - Prevalence of Food and Nutritious Food is a critical concern and is likely to worsen.
  - The pandemic has significantly affected progress on the SDGs, and its full extent is yet to be revealed.
- 4.13 The latest picture presented at Appendix 2 to in relation to St Helens position against the SDG framework continues as is perhaps to be expected given the socio-economic make-up of the borough, some of the long-standing challenges it faces and the disparity between northern boroughs and the country as a whole. St Helens position is worse than the England average for the majority of indicators across the SDGs. When St Helens position is compared to the North West average the picture changes somewhat and performance in a number of areas is shown as better than the North West average.
- 4.14 Key challenges where the Borough lags the England average have not significantly changed since the 2023 report and are highlighted below against the relevant SDGs.

<b>Sustainable Development Goal</b>	<b>Areas of Challenge Indicators</b>
No Poverty	Overall deprivation, income deprivation affecting children and older people, and pension credit claimants
Zero Hunger	Adult and child obesity rates and healthy diet indicator
Good Health and Wellbeing	Life expectancy indicators and mortality rates for suicide, alcohol related conditions, CVD, cancer, and respiratory disease
Quality Education	The Early Learning Goals indicator, Attainment at Key Stage 2 and 4, school absence rates and Level 3 and Level 4 skill levels
Gender Equality	Female gross weekly pay and domestic abuse incidence
Affordable and Clean Energy	Households in fuel poverty
Decent Work and Economic Growth	GVA, male universal credit count and business density
Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure	The percentage of professional and scientific jobs
Responsible Consumption and Production	Household recycling rates

Climate Action	CO2 emissions per capita
Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	Overall crime and violent crime rates

## 5 Consideration of Alternatives

5.1 None.

## 6 Conclusions

6.1 The report highlights the fact that significant challenges both locally, nationally, and globally remain in the delivery of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The challenges against the delivery of the SDGs locally within St Helens are well known and broadly encompass the health of the local population, the local economy, and aspects of the local environment.

6.2 There is a strong linkage between the 17 SDGs and the outcomes and the associated performance framework of the Our Borough Strategy 2021-30. The Our Borough Strategy 2021-30 and its range of sub-strategies have been adopted to promote a better borough by improving people's lives and creating distinct, attractive, healthy, safe, inclusive, and accessible places in which to live, work, visit and invest. Action to achieve this end is ongoing through the delivery of this strategic approach.

6.3 However, if St Helens is to deliver against the SDG indicators and improve its position relative to the national average position, further transformative action both locally and perhaps more importantly at a UK Government level is still urgently required.

## 7. Legal Implications

7.1 None

## 8. Financial Implications

8.1 The indicators within the SDG framework, the council's performance management framework and associated performance management processes are critical to ensuring the organisation provides value for money.

## 9. Equality Impact Assessment

9.1. None

## 10. Social Value

10.1 The SDG Framework and indicators include measures relating to the voluntary / community sector, employment, and the local economy.

## 11. Net Zero and Environment

11.1 The SDG Framework and indicators include measures relating to sustainability and the environment.

**12. Health and Wellbeing**

12.1 The SDG Framework and indicators include measures relating to health and well-being.

**13. Equality and Human Rights**

13.1 None

**14. Customer and Resident**

14.1 The SDG Framework and indicators include measures relating to the well-being of residents.

**15. Asset and Property**

15.1 None

**16. Staffing and Human Resources**

16.1 None

**17. Risks**

17.1 There is a risk that performance across the SDGs and indicators may decline in some areas. Progress against the Council's performance framework is reported quarterly to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny. Progress against key strategies will be reported periodically.

**18. Policy Framework Implications**

18.1. The SDG framework links to the priorities of the Our Borough Strategy, related key council strategies and the council's performance framework.

**19. Impact and Opportunities on Localities**

19.1. There is the opportunity to link aspects of the SDG framework and the council's performance framework to the Localities agenda and report elements of performance at a locality level. Locality profiles exist within the [Local Insight](#) tool.

**20. Background Documents**

20.1 None

**21. Appendices**

21.1 Appendix 1 - Sustainable Development Goals Mapped to Our Borough Strategy Priorities.

21.2 Appendix 2 - 2024 Assessment of St Helens' Position Against the Sustainable Development Goals Framework.

This page is intentionally left blank



# Appendix 1 - UN Sustainable Development Goals Framework

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". The SDGs were set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030. Making progress towards the global goals by 2030 depends on local action.



## Appendix 2 - Initial Assessment of St Helens' Position Against the Sustainable Development Goals Framework

Indicators have been mapped against the framework, with comparative data shown for the North West region and England where possible. Green, amber, and red colours have been used to depict indicators in each of the following situations:

- **Green** in instances where the St Helens value has met or exceed the regional or national average.
- **Amber** in instances where the St Helens value has not fully met but is within 95% of the regional or national average.
- **Red** in instances where the St Helens value has failed to meet the regional or national average by more than 5%.
- **T** indicates the RAG rating is based solely on Quarter 3 performance against target as no comparative data is available

UN Sustainable Development Goals	Aim	PI Ref.	Indicator / Metric	North West RAG	England RAG	St Helens Avg. (Most recent)	North West Avg.	England Avg.	Date	
1	No Poverty		End poverty in all its forms, everywhere.	Percentage of children in relative low income households			20.2	23.7	19.9	2021/22
				Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD) Score	N/A		31.52	N/A	21.76	2019
				Cost of Living: Vulnerable households indicator	N/A		1.45	N/A	1.53	Mar-22
				IoD 2019 Income Deprivation Affecting Older People (IDAOPI) Score (rate)	N/A		16.9	N/A	14.2	2019
				Percentage of pensioners receiving pension credit	N/A		12.7	N/A	11.3	Aug-23
				IoD 2019 Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) Score (rate)	N/A		23.7	N/A	17.1	2019
2	Zero Hunger	PH-002	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable procurement.	Percentage of children in reception year who are overweight or obese			26.2	23.1	21.31	2022/23
				Percentage of children in Year 6 who are overweight or obese			40.6	38.3	36.57	2022/23

UN Sustainable Development Goals	Aim	PI Ref.	Indicator / Metric	North West RAG	England RAG	St Helens Avg. (Most recent)	North West Avg.	England Avg.	Date	
			PH-026	Percentage population meeting the recommended '5-a-day' on a 'usual day' (adults)			28.6	29.3	32.5	2021/22
			PH-024	Obesity: QOF prevalence (age 18 years +)			12.8	10.6	9.7	2021/22
3	Good Health and Wellbeing	Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all, at all ages.	PH-012	Life expectancy at birth (male)			76.7	77.3	78.9	2020-22
			PH-013	Life expectancy at birth (female)			80.4	81.3	82.8	2020-22
			PH-014	Inequality in life expectancy at birth - male			10.9	11.6	9.7	2018-20
			PH-015	Inequality in life expectancy at birth - female			9.4	10	7.9	2018-20
			PH-016	Admission episodes for alcohol specific conditions, all ages, per 100,000 population			1024	815	626	2021/22
			PH-018	Mortality rate due to suicide and injury of undetermined intent per 100,000 population			15.2	11.8	10.3	2021/22
			PH-019	Healthy Life Expectancy - Male			59.3	61.5	63.1	2018-20
			PH-020	Healthy Life Expectancy - Female			61.9	62.4	63.9	2018-20
				Under 75 mortality rate from respiratory disease (1 year range) per 1,000 population			35.1	42.8	30.7	2022
				Under 75 mortality rate from cancer (1 year range) per 1,000 population			141.4	135	122.4	2022
			PH-023	Under 75 mortality rate from CVD			101.3	93.4	76	2020-22

UN Sustainable Development Goals	Aim	PI Ref.	Indicator / Metric	North West RAG	England RAG	St Helens Avg. (Most recent)	North West Avg.	England Avg.	Date
		PH-025	Percentage of physically active adults			65.1	65.2	67.3	2021/22
			Alcohol-specific mortality (1 year range) per 1,000 population			54.4	47.6	39.7	2022
			Road casualties / KSI rate per 10,000 population			2.38	4.03	4.3	2022
4	Quality Education	E&S-001	The percentage of children attaining at least a 'Good' level of development in the Early Learning Goals.			64	64.3	67.2	2022/23
		E&S-002	The percentage of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 achieving the national expected standard or higher in Reading, Writing and Mathematics			61	59	60	2022/23
		E&S-004	Percentage of students at the end of Key Stage 4 attaining the pass threshold (grade 5 or above) in English and Mathematics			37.5	N/A	N/A	2022/23
		E&S-003	Average grade attained per pupil in St.Helens across 8 subjects at KS4, relative to the national average (Progress 8)			-0.35	-0.2	-0.03	2022/23
		E&S-005	Percentage of young people academic age 16-17 not in education, employment or training and not known combined			5.1	5.3	5.2	2023
		E&S-006	Percentage of state funded schools judged			90	90	89	Aug-23

UN Sustainable Development Goals	Aim	PI Ref.	Indicator / Metric	North West RAG	England RAG	St Helens Avg. (Most recent)	North West Avg.	England Avg.	Date	
			Good or Outstanding by Ofsted							
			G&P-004A	Proportion of the population aged 16-64 qualified to at least level 3 or higher.			61	64.6	66.4	2022
			G&P-004B	Proportion of the population aged 16-64 qualified to at least level 4 or higher.			41.5	42.6	45.1	2022
				School absence rate			7.4	7.3	7.4	2022/23
5	Gender Equality	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.	Gross weekly pay (Female full-time workers)			585.8	598.2	628.8	2023	
			Sexual Offences per 1,000 population			3.1	3.4	3	2022/23	
			Domestic abuse related incidents and crimes crude rate 1,000 population			33.8	31.9	30.6	2022/23	
6	Clean Water and Sanitation	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.								
			<i>Exploring data sources</i>							
7	Affordable and Clean Energy	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.	Percentage of households in fuel poverty			13.9	14.4	13.1	2021	
			HS-007	Number of households assisted to reduce fuel poverty.	T	T	853	N/A	N/A	N/A
8	Decent Work and Economic Growth	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.	GVA per head population at current basic prices / £ million			15263	25118	29356	2018	
				UC Claimant Count Male			4.9	5.1	4.5	Feb-24
				UC Claimant Count Female			3	3.4	3.3	Feb-24

UN Sustainable Development Goals	Aim	PI Ref.	Indicator / Metric	North West RAG	England RAG	St Helens Avg. (Most recent)	North West Avg.	England Avg.	Date
		G&P-002	Business density - Number of local units per 10,000 population			324.4	430.1	491.4	2022
		G&P-003	Number of people supported into Employment, Education and Training through employment support schemes	T	T	406	N/A	N/A	N/A
		G&P-005A	Rate of employment (working age)			73.6	73.5	76.3	2022
9	Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.	Travel time to town centre by public transport / walk			20	18.8	21	2019
			Travel time to nearest supermarket by public transport / walk			7	8.3	7	2019
			Travel time to nearest centre of employment (500+ jobs) by public transport / walk			9	10.9	9	2019
			Professional, scientific and technical jobs as a % of overall employment			6.2	9.4	9.4	2022
			Proportion of total employment in manufacturing			9.2	9	7.5	2022
10	Reduced Inequalities	Reduce inequality within and among countries.	Weekly earnings - Gap in £ between top 20th percentile and bottom 20th percentile			418	422	517	2023
			Male/Female % difference in pay (weekly pay differential)			5	13	14	2023

UN Sustainable Development Goals	Aim	PI Ref.	Indicator / Metric	North West RAG	England RAG	St Helens Avg. (Most recent)	North West Avg.	England Avg.	Date	
11	Sustainable Cities and Communities	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.	HS-003	Number of private sector vacant dwellings that are returned into occupation or demolished as a direct result of action by the local authority	T	T	20	N/A	N/A	2023/24 Quarter 3
			HS-001	Number of households who are being assessed as being owed the full housing duty (where homelessness has not been prevented or relieved) per 1000.			10.2	14	12.4	2022/23
				Households in temporary accommodation Crude rate - per 1,000 .			0.4	2	4.2	2022/23
			HS-005	Number of households that are families with children living in temporary accommodation	T	T	86	N/A	N/A	2023/24 Quarter 3
			HS-006	Total number of weeks households spent in temporary accommodation provided by the local authority (not B&B/refuge).	T	T	11.7	N/A	N/A	2023/24 Quarter 3
				Percentage of Community Safety Survey respondents reporting feeling safe or fairly safe in their local area	T	T	72	N/A	N/A	2022/23
			ENV-003	Air quality Mean concentration of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2)	N/A		28 (2023/24 projection)	N/A	24	2022

UN Sustainable Development Goals	Aim	PI Ref.	Indicator / Metric	North West RAG	England RAG	St Helens Avg. (Most recent)	North West Avg.	England Avg.	Date	
		HS-004	Number of long term empty homes in the borough.	T	T	1256	N/A	N/A	N/A	
		G&P-012	New affordable homes as a percentage of all new homes (gross)	T	T	26	N/A	N/A	2023/24 Q3	
12	Responsible Consumption and Production	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.	ENV-004A	Percentage of household waste arisings which have been sent for recycling			34	45.3	41.7	2022/23
			ENV-004B	Kilograms of residual household waste collected per household.			485	494	508.8	2022/23
13	Climate Action	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.		CO2 Emissions per Capita			7.1	5.7	5.1	2021
14	Life Below Water	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.		<i>No viable local data sources</i>						
15	Life On Land	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.		<i>No viable local data sources</i>						
16	Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all		All crime rate per 1,000 population			106.16	101.94	90.76	Q3 2023



UN Sustainable Development Goals	Aim	PI Ref.	Indicator / Metric	North West RAG	England RAG	St Helens Avg. (Most recent)	North West Avg.	England Avg.	Date
	and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.		Violent crime - Violence offences per 1,000 population			50.5	43.3	34.4	2022/23
17	<b>Partnerships for the Goals</b>		Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.						
			<i>No viable local data sources</i>						

This page is intentionally left blank

 <p><b>ST HELENS</b> BOROUGH COUNCIL</p>	<h2>Overview and Scrutiny Commission</h2> <h3>22 April 2024</h3>
<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Commission Work Programme 2023/24</b>
<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	Corporate Services
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Martin Bond
<b>Exempt Report</b>	No
<b>Reason for Exemption</b>	N/A
<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Public Notice issued</b>	N/A
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All
<b>Report of</b>	Jan Bakewell Director of Legal & Governance <a href="mailto:janbakewell@sthelens.gov.uk">janbakewell@sthelens.gov.uk</a>
<b>Contact Officer</b>	James Morley Scrutiny Support Officer <a href="mailto:karlallender@sthelens.gov.uk">karlallender@sthelens.gov.uk</a>

<b>Borough Priorities</b>	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	X
	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	X
	Create safe and strong communities and neighborhoods for all	X
	Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	X
	Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	X
	Be a responsible Council	X

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the process followed by members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and its thematic committees in determining their work programmes for municipal year 2023/24. Given resource constraints, new approaches have been introduced to further strengthen the process.

## 2. Recommendation for Decision

### **Overview & Scrutiny Commission is recommended:**

- (i) **to review the items listed within its work programme document and agree priorities and timescales;**
- (ii) **to request updates on the work programmes of the Scrutiny Committees from the Chairs; and**
- (iii) **to note the Scrutiny Committees' work programmes.**

## 3. Purpose of this report

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the process followed in drawing up work programmes for 2023/24.

## 4. Background/Reason for the recommendations

- 4.1 Overview and scrutiny activities play a key role in a successful democratic process, holding decision makers to account for future (overview) and past (scrutiny) decisions and in turn, contributing to the delivery of positive outcomes for residents and the Council's workforce and resources.
- 4.2 A comprehensive work programme is fundamental to the effectiveness of the Commission and its thematic scrutiny committees. It enables them to plan and manage their workloads to make best use of the available time and resources, ensure a focus on the Borough's priorities and add the most value to the performance of the Council and outcomes for residents.
- 4.3 Each committee agreed an allocation of up to two scrutiny reviews for the year.

### **Reviewing the Work Programme**

- 4.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Scrutiny Committees are required to review and agree their work programme at every committee meeting. When reviewing the work programme, new items can be added and items that no longer require scrutiny or are not considered to be a priority for action or monitoring can be removed.
- 4.5 When considering whether to add, remove and prioritise items for consideration Members should be mindful of the following:
- Would the Committee be able to add value through its work on the issue?
  - Is the issue linked to a Borough Priority?

- Is the issue a priority/concern for partners, stakeholders, and the public?
- Is the issue related to poorly performing services?
- Is there a pattern of budgetary overspends?
- Are there significant levels of public/service user dissatisfaction with the service?
- Has there been media coverage of the issue?
- Is the issue related to new Government guidance?
- Would consideration of the issue be timely?
- Are there sufficient resources (e.g., officer capacity to support a review or provide a report) to effectively consider the issue at this time?
- Would Scrutiny be duplicating work being undertaken elsewhere?
- Is the matter subject to judicial review (sub judice)?

4.6 The Work Programme Prioritisation Aid attached to this report is designed to assist members in considering whether a suggested addition to the work programme is suitable and meets the necessary criteria. If members consider that a suggestion would not be suitable for scrutiny, the Scrutiny Committee could choose to refer the matter elsewhere. If an item is considered an important issue but not a priority at this time an item may be added to the end of the work programme to be monitored for further consideration in the future.

## **5. Consideration of Alternatives**

5.1 None

## **6. Conclusions**

6.1 As this is the final meeting of the municipal year the Commission should consider which outstanding items in the work programme need to be carried forward into the 2024/25 municipal year.

## **7. Legal Implications**

7.1 N/A

## **8. Financial Implications**

8.1 N/A

## **9. Equality Impact Assessment**

9.1 N/A

**10. Social Value**

10.1 N/A

**11. Net Zero and Environment**

11.1 N/A

**12. Health and Wellbeing**

12.1 N/A

**13. Customer and Resident**

13.1 N/A

**14. Asset and Property**

14.1 N/A

**15. Staffing and People Management**

15.1 N/A

**16. Risks**

16.1 Failure to effectively manage the work programme could lead to inefficient use of the Committee's time and resources, negatively affecting the Committee's ability to add value and help the Council achieve its priorities. By examining the work programme regularly and following the prioritisation aid as recommended, the Committee should minimize the risk of using time and resources on ineffective items.

**17. Policy Framework Implications**

17.1 N/A

**18. Impact and Opportunities on Localities**

18.1 N/A

**19. Background Documents**

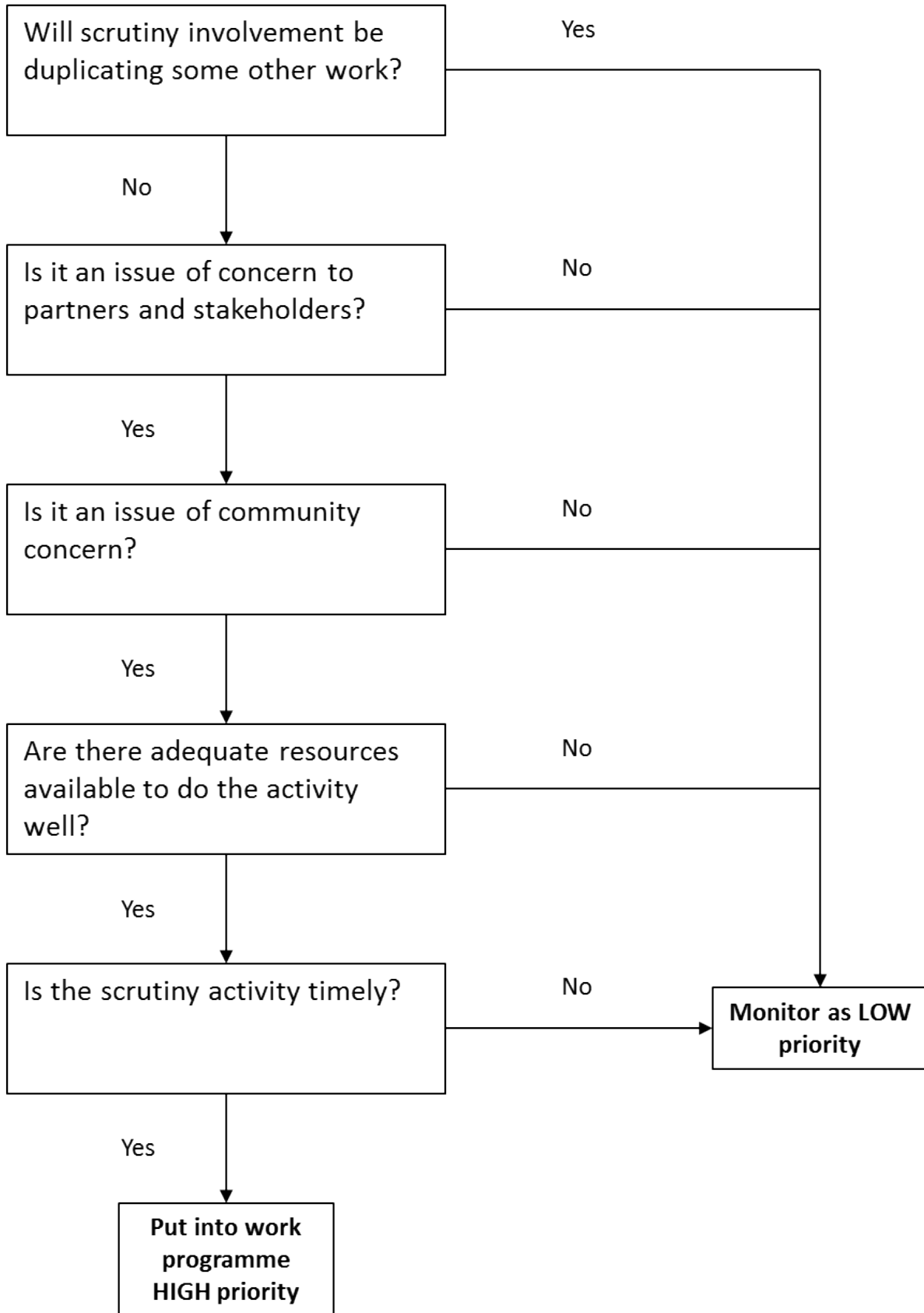
19.1 None

**20. Appendices**

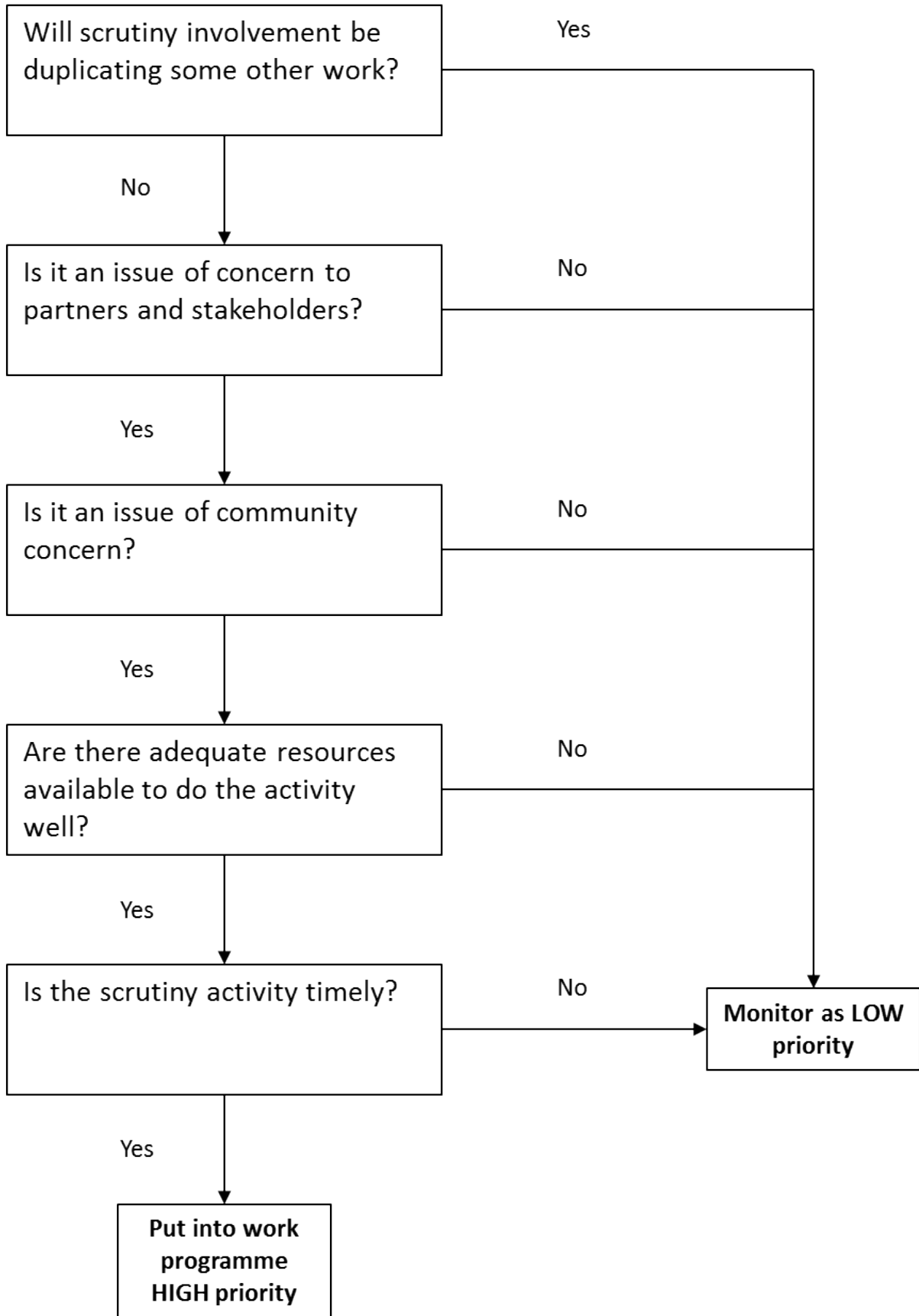
1. Work Programme Prioritisation Aid
2. Overview and Scrutiny Commission Work Programme 2023/24

3. Adults Health and Social Care Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24
4. Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24
5. Place Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24

**Appendix 1**  
**Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Prioritisation Aid**







This page is intentionally left blank

**Overview and Scrutiny Commission Work Programme 2023/24**

<b><u>Corporate Priorities</u></b>
Be a responsible Council

<b><u>Next meetings</u></b>		
Date: 22 April 2024 Time: 5.30pm Venue: Room 10	Date: 22 July 2024 Time: 5:30pm Venue: Room 10	Date: 14 October Time: 5:30pm Venue: Room 10

<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>Aims /Purpose</u></b>	<b><u>Portfolio</u></b>	<b><u>Lead officer</u></b>	<b><u>Corporate Priority</u></b>	<b><u>Method</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>
Financial Monitoring Reports	The Council produces quarterly reports regarding its Financial Performance in relation to the Budget for the municipal year	To monitor the Council's financial performance against budgets and highlight any areas for further scrutiny.	Corporate Services (Cllr Bond)	Richard Gibson	Be a responsible Council	Report to committee	26 June 2023 (Completed) 27 July 2023 (Completed) 15 January 2024 (Completed) 22 April 2024
Performance Reports	Scrutiny Committees are responsible for reviewing the performance reports for priorities relevant to their remit.	To use performance reports to monitor the performance of services within portfolios and hold Cabinet Members to Account	Corporate Services (Cllr Bond)	Cath Fogarty	Be a responsible Council	Report to committee	27 July 2023 (Completed) 16 October 2023 (Completed) 15 January 2024 (Completed)

							22 April 2024
Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23	Scrutiny is required to produce an Annual Report to set out its activity and outcomes each year. Report will be presented to Council once approved by Commission.	To inform the Council, Partners and Public about the work the Scrutiny Function has undertaken during the municipal year.	Corporate services (Cllr Bond)	Jan Bakewell	Be a responsible Council	Report	26 June 2023  (Completed)
108 Workforce Strategy Update	At the commission meeting on 26 June members discussed the issues around recruitment. Members request a brief update on the workforce strategy and its development as a extension to the discussion around the cost of Consultants within the council	To gain some understanding on the update of the strategy.  Skill gaps Versus head count and demand  Update on forward planning to optimise workforce capacity.	Corporate services (Cllr Bond)	Hannah Myers	Be a responsible Council	Report	16 October 2023 (Completed)
Impact of financial shock on residents and council's	Focus on the implications of the financial shock in 2022/23 on both	To understand, what work and support the council offered residence and to	ALL	Cath Fogarty	Be a responsible Council	Spotlight review	TBC

<p>response to impact both for residents and itself</p>	<p>residences and to look at the council response</p>	<p>consider the wider issues.  Overview of the implication on the council and, what it can and can't do in terms of ongoing demands, rising costs, wages and with less resource.</p>					
<p>Consultancy Report</p>	<p>Following on from the discussion at commission meeting on 26 June the chair requested a briefing to establish some understanding around the use of consultants across the council.</p>	<p>For members to gain a better understanding of this complex area.  A broad understand of the totally cost. In particular around specialist consultancy and recruitment costs</p>	<p>Corporate services (Cllr Bond)</p>	<p>Noel O'Neill</p>	<p>Be a responsible Council</p>	<p>Report</p>	<p>15 January 2024 (Completed)</p>
<p>Annual Budget Scrutiny</p>	<p>The commission runs a task group as part of the council's budget process each year</p>	<p>To ensure the Council's budget setting process is robust and that Cabinet members understand budgets within their portfolios and the implication of budget changes and theirs and other</p>	<p>ALL</p>	<p>Cath Fogarty</p>	<p>Be a responsible Council</p>	<p>Spotlight Review</p>	<p>5 February 2024 (Completed)</p>

109

		portfolios.					
Sustainability Development Goals. Implications Into reporting and wider thinking	SDGs consist of 17 global and interconnected goals relating to tackling inequality and addressing social, economic, and environmental issues.	To ensure that the SDG's embedded in reporting and thinking in day-to day business and big projects	ALL  Invite Cllr Mancy Uddin as champion	Chris Collinge	Be a responsible Council	Report	22 April 2024

## Appendix 2

### Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

<b><u>Corporate Priorities</u></b>	<b><u>Next Meeting</u></b>	
Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	Date: 15 April 2024 Time: 10:00am Venue: Room 10, Town Hall	

<u>Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims/Purpose</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Corporate Priority</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Date</u>
Performance Reports	Scrutiny Committees are responsible for reviewing the performance reports for priorities relevant to their remit.	To use performance reports to monitor the performance of services within portfolios and hold Cabinet Members to account.	Integrated Health and Care /Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage  (Cllr Marlene Quinn/ Cllr Anthony Burns)	Mark Palethorpe/Jamaila Hussain/ Ruth Du Plessis	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	Report to Committee	July 2023 (Completed)  9 Oct 2023 (Completed)  15 Jan 2024 (Completed)  15 April 2024
Integrated Care Partnership	Integrated care systems (ICSs) are new partnerships between the organisations that meet health and	To update the committee on decisions about services and how they are being arranged	Integrated Health and Care  (Cllr Marlene Quinn)	Mark Palethorpe	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities.	Chair Briefing (verbal)	July 2023 (Completed)  9 Oct 2023 (Completed)

<u>Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims/Purpose</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Corporate Priority</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Date</u>
	care needs across an area, to coordinate services and to plan in a way that improves population health and reduces inequalities between different groups.	as well as the progress of the new partnerships					15 Jan 2024 (Completed)  15 April 2024
Market Position Statement Draft Strategy	Underpinning the challenges facing Adult Health and Social Care	Enable members to understand the vision and direction of adult social care year Plan	Integrated Health and Care (Cllr Marlene Quinn)	Mark Palethorpe/ Jamaila Hussain	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	Report	15 April 2024
Care Communities' Strategy	To establish an understand of the Care Communities framework and it respective teams. What its functions are and desired outcome.  To better understand the	Improve outcomes and reducing health inequalities.  Establish the aims, objectives, and outcomes for the respect teams.	Integrated Health and Care (Cllr Marlene Quinn)	Hilary Flett/Julie Gallegher  Jamaila Hussain  Hilary Flett/Julie Gallegher	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	Presentation  Presentation	26 July 2023 (Completed)  15 April 2024



<u>Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims/Purpose</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Corporate Priority</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Date</u>
	connectivity between the wider determinates of health (housing, environment, employment, education, and societal factors)	Understand the resource to risk element and what they measurable outcomes are expected.					
Inequalities Commission	The committee have agreed to look at the work undertaken by the inequalities commission since its conception and progress made against set goals	Understand the findings and the direct impact on residence. Based on the findings, establish if resource is being match with risk  How the inequality commission is reducing gaps in areas like health, education, income, and	Integrated Health and Care (Cllr Marlene Quinn)  Wellbeing, Culture Heritage  Cllr Antony Burns	Ruth Du Plessis	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	Report TBC	15 April 2024

<u>Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims/Purpose</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Corporate Priority</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Date</u>
		housing in the borough					
Mental Health provision in St Helens	To look at the mental health provision in the borough. Mersey care are the provider of Mental Health services.	What new provision has been put in place and to gain insight of the increased offer of services under Mersey care - Talking therapy, intervention, self-harm,	Integrated Health and Care /Wellbeing, Culture Heritage  (Cllr Marleen Quinn & Cllr Anthony Burn)	Jamaila Hussain  Tim McFee/ Leigh Thompson	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	Presentation	15 April 2024
SEND (Adults)	For some young people with special educational need, having access to timely and comprehensive information and support prior to 18 may be enough to	To establish how the transition from child to adult SEND is being delivered.  Is best practice is being shared with cohesion	Integrated Health and Care  (Cllr Marleen Quinn)	Jamaila Hussain/ Julie Gallagher	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	Report	26 July 2023 (Completed)

<u>Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims/Purpose</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Corporate Priority</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Date</u>
	<p>help them reach their goal.</p> <p>For other young people, more support may be needed during and beyond the transition period.</p>	between all partners / departments.					
Appointment of Co-Opted Representative for Healthwatch	The Overview and Scrutiny Procedure rules allow committees to appoint non-voting co-optees as appropriate.	Healthwatch has proposed Canon Geoff Almond be co-opted onto the Committee as their representative. Council on 15 November 2023 appointed Canon Almond as the new co-opted member.	Integrated Health and Care  (Cllr Marlene Quinn)	Mark Palethorpe	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	Report	9 Oct 2023 (Completed)
Amalgamation of Two trusts update	Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is an NHS trust that provides services	The Committee would like to receive feedback on the Amalgamation	Integrated Health and Care  (Cllr Marlene Quinn)	Mark Palethorpe / Geoffrey Appleton NHS	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	Verbal Update	9 October 2023 (Completed)

<u>Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims/Purpose</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Corporate Priority</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Date</u>
	<p>throughout Merseyside and West Lancashire</p> <p>It began operations on 1 July 2023, following the merger of Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust and St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust</p>	<p>of the Two Trusts.</p> <p>Understand what the opportunities for the organisation are, and how will that bring improvements for the people of St Helens.</p> <p>To understand the change from CCG to the Place Partnership Board</p> <p>To enable the committee and the wider public to understand what has changed.</p>					

<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>Aims/Purpose</u></b>	<b><u>Portfolio</u></b>	<b><u>Lead Officer</u></b>	<b><u>Corporate Priority</u></b>	<b><u>Method</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>
Tenancy Visits	Clock Face Pilot. Tackling loneliness, isolation and understanding	To receive the data from the pilot and to understand what current issues are arising and how this is being managed in terms of signposting, pathways. What support may be needed or could be offered.	Integrated Health and Care  (Cllr Marlene Quinn)/ Regeneration & Planning (Cllr McCauley)	Rachel Cleal/ Torus Housing	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	Verbal Update	9 October 2023 (Completed)
Peer Review Update	Light touch review in preparation of the recommencements of the Inspections of Adults Care provision	To review the findings of the peer review against potential inspection findings.	Integrated Health and Care (Cllr Marlene Quinn)	Rachel Cleal	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	Report	9 October 2023 (Completed)
Dentistry Spotlight Review	In the light of difficulties in accessing Dental Care practices, the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny	To understand the wider issues of provision and clarity on where we are now?	Wellbeing, Culture Heritage (Cllr Burns)	Mark Palethorpe	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities.	Spotlight	January 2024 (Completed)

<u>Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims/Purpose</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Corporate Priority</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Date</u>
	Committee agreed at its work programming sessions to commission a Dentistry Spotlight Review. The remit for the group is to investigate the provision of Dental Services in the borough and to understand the difficulties being experienced by some residents in accessing those services. To seek to identify areas where St Helens Council can add value to the community and residence.	where we have been? and where we are heading. it would also be useful to understand what the ICP hope to achieve in managing Dentistry					
'Vision for Adults Social Care ,5-year	A vision consisting of a 5-year plan to enable a strategic direction for the planning, skills, resource and	Enable members to understand the vision and direction of	Integrated Health and Care (Cllr Marlene Quinn)	Mark Palethorpe/ Jamaila Hussain	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	Report	15 July 2024 (Deferred)

<u>Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims/Purpose</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Corporate Priority</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Date</u>
	recruitment of Adult Social Care.	adult social care year Plan					
Family Hubs	<p>In February 2023 it was announced that funding for Family hubs has been secured –</p> <p>The Family Hub is a centre that offers a 'one stop shop' of services for parents and families with children up to 19 years old or up to 25 for those people with SEND.</p> <p>They bring together a wide range of services that can help provide support and advice on everything a family might need.</p> <p>The plan and the thinking around the spend and the</p>	<p>A Presentation on the plan and the thinking around the spend /funding is getting to where it is required.</p> <p>For the committee to establish understanding on deliverable outcomes expected.</p>	Integrated Health and Care (Cllr Marlene Quinn) Cllr Anthony Burns	Ruth Du Plessis / Hilary Brook / Shirley Goodhew	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	Reports to committee	15 January 2024 (Completed)

<u>Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims/Purpose</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Corporate Priority</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Date</u>
	<p>funding is getting to where it requires.</p> <p>To Include the link with CGL and the work they are doing to support the family's experience alcohol related issues.</p>						
120 Assistive Technology	<p>It is preferable for residents to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible as it is believed to be better for wellbeing and is less expensive than residential care. There are a variety of services and products that can be used to help people to maintain their independence at home.</p>	<p>To explore whether more can be done to support residents to remain in their own homes for longer whether as part of a social care package or as private clients not yet eligible for social care.</p> <p>To promote effective planning for older age to</p>	Integrated Health and Care (Cllr Marlene Quinn)	Jamaila Hussain / A.I officer (when appointed)	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	Report or Presentation	15 April 2024 (Deferred until 2024/25 municipal year)



<u>Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims/Purpose</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Corporate Priority</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Date</u>
		maintain independence and reduce crises requiring acute care.					

This page is intentionally left blank

**Children and Young People’s Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023 - 2024**

Corporate Priority	Next Meetings	
<b>Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life</b>	Date: 25 March 2024 Time: 10:00am Venue: Room 10, Town Hall	

123

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
Director’s Report/ Children’s Services Improvement Plan	Ofsted ILAC Inspection took place 23rd Sept - 4th Oct 2019. Ofsted gave an inadequate rating requiring Council to produce Action Plan for improvement. The committee will monitor the improvement process on an ongoing basis, including the outcomes and action arising from Ofsted monitoring visits.	To monitor the Council’s progress in improving Children’s Services including Ofsted monitoring visit feedback.	Children and Young People Cllr Nova Charlton	Director Children’s Services Hilary Brooks	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Report to committee  Standing Committee Agenda Item	6 Sept 2023 (Completed)  16 October 2023 (Completed)  8 January 2024 (Completed)

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
Quarterly Performance Reports	Scrutiny Committees are responsible for reviewing the performance reports for priorities relevant to their remit.	To monitor the performance of services within portfolios and to hold Cabinet Members to account.	Children and Young People Cllr Charlton	Director Children's Services Hilary Brooks	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Report to committee	6 Sept 2023 (Completed)
			Economy, Business and Skills Cllr Groucutt	Director Public Health Ruth du Plessis		Standing Committee Agenda Item	16 October 2023 (Completed)
			Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage Cllr Anthony Burns	Public Health Consultant Shirley Goodhew			8 January 2024 (Completed)
							25 March 2024
Update on Progress towards the SEND inspection	Provision of effective services for children and young people with SEND is critical in ensuring that those children and young people are included, can thrive, have high aspirations and can progress. This means that need is identified accurately and early, and the right interventions are	The purpose of the report is to ensure that Scrutiny members are clear about the strengths, the areas for development and associated actions, and impact of services for children and young people with SEND in St Helens; they understand the new inspection framework; and are	Children and Young People Cllr Nova Charlton	Assistant Director, Education and Learning, Jo Davies  Head of SEND and Inclusion Tom Howard	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Report to Committee	6 Sept 2023 (Completed)  25 March 2024

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
	put in place early so that children and young people have the best possible chance to succeed in their learning; their well-being is supported; they have the best possible chances in life; and that their families are confident in the support provided.	updated on preparation for inspection.					
Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy - Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children Spotlight Review	This Spotlight Review was held on 28/4/23, attended by members of the committee, officers and partners, to scrutinise work to reduce risk and harm to children arising from alcohol and substance use in pregnancy.	To present the draft report and findings to the CYPS Scrutiny Committee to seek approval to submit to Cabinet.	Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage Cllr Anthony Burns	Director Public Health Ruth Du Plessis  Public Health Consultant Michelle Loughlin	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Report to Committee	6 September 2023 (Completed)
Improving School Attendance Rates	This Spotlight Review was held	To present Cabinet's response	Children and Young People	Assistant Director,	Ensure children and young	Report to Committee.	6 September 2023

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
in St Helens Spotlight Review – Cabinet Response	on 3/11/23, attended by members, officers and staff from local schools, to scrutinise action to improve the borough's school attendance rates, which for the 21/22 Autumn and Spring Terms were lower than national and regional averages.	to the report and recommendations.	Cllr Nova Charlton	Education and Learning, Jo Davies	people have a positive start in life		(Completed)
Reducing Teenage Pregnancy Rates in St Helens' Spotlight Review	This Spotlight Review was held on 5/12/22 and 1/26/23, attended by members of the committee, officers and partners, to scrutinise work to reduce teenage pregnancy rates in St Helens.	To present Cabinet's response to the report and recommendations.	Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage  Cllr Anthony Burns	Director Public Health Ruth Du Plessis  Public Health Consultant Shirley Goodhew	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Report to Committee.	6 September 2023 (Completed)
Update on the Education, Health and Care Plan Process and Its	Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are legally binding documents	To understand and scrutinise the EHCP process, its strengths, the areas for	Children and Young People Cllr Nova Charlton	Assistant Director, Education and Learning Joanne Davies	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Presentation to Committee	16 October 2023 (Completed)

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
Impact in St Helens.	intended to ensure that the needs of children, young people and adults up to 25, who require support beyond that which an educational setting can provide at SEN level, are clearly identified in a timely manner; with input from all partners including the child or young person and their family; that plans are in place to ensure needs are met; and reviews take place to ensure all appropriate action is taken.	development, the actions to address these areas, and impact on children and young people in St Helens.		Head of SEND and Inclusion Tom Howard			
Listening to the Voices of Children and Young People in St Helens	Listening to children and young people and ensuring their views are valued and acted upon in terms of shaping	The purpose of this report is to understand and enable scrutiny of the feedback from and actions arising from the Bright	Children and Young People / Economy, Business and Skills /	Director of Children's Services Hilary Brooks	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Report to committee	8 January 2024 (Completed)

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
	<p>services for them, and the decisions and actions that affect their lives, is central to creating meaningful engagement and trust, enabling positive change, keeping them safe and providing the best possible services for them.</p> <p>The Report to include – Aspiration and employment opportunities for Children and Young People in St Helens</p>	<p>Spots Survey of children we look after and care leavers in St Helens, carried out between December 2022 and February 2023. This will allow Members to assess the degree to which services listen to children and young people and whether they use those views effectively to shape services, in decisions and actions about children and young people's lives and to keep them safe.</p>	<p>Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage</p> <p>Cllr Charlton Cllr Groucutt Cllr Burns</p>				
<p>Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy - Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children Spotlight Review – Cabinet Response</p>	<p>This Spotlight Review was held to scrutinise work to reduce risk and harm to children from alcohol and substance use in pregnancy.</p>	<p>To present the Cabinet's response to this Spotlight Review report and recommendations</p>	<p>Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage</p> <p>Cllr Anthony Burns</p>	<p>Director Public Health Ruth Du Plessis</p> <p>Public Health Consultant Michelle Loughlin</p>	<p>Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life</p>	<p>Report to Committee.</p>	<p>8 January 2024 (Completed)</p>



Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
Spotlight Review to scrutinise the TESSA process and contribution to its evaluation	TESSA was introduced to provide schools with a streamlined system to use to request support for children and young people with SEND.	To consider the impact of the TESSA process, contribute to its evaluation and make appropriate recommendations.	Children and Young People Cllr Nova Charlton	Assistant Director, Education and Learning Joanne Davies	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Spotlight Review  Report to Committee	5 February 2024 (Completed)  25 March 2024
A review of the strategy and collective action to address child neglect in St Helens.	Child neglect is a form of abuse which can impact on a child's physical and mental health and can lead to long term adverse consequences. It arises from many complex issues including parental mental health, drug and alcohol abuse and poverty.	The purpose of this Spotlight Review will be to scrutinise the strategy and collective action to reduce child neglect in St Helens.	Children and Young People Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage  Cllr Nova Charlton Cllr Anthony Burns	Director of Children's Services Hilary Brooks  SCP Business Manager Andrew Patty	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Spotlight Review	4 March 2024
Reducing Harm Caused by under-age Alcohol Consumption in St Helens	The rate of under 18 hospital admissions for alcohol specific reasons in St Helens is significantly higher	The purpose of this report is to give an understanding of the extent of underage drinking in St Helens; its impact on young	Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage  Cllr Anthony Burns	Director Public Health Ruth Du Plessis  Public Health Consultant	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Presentation to Committee	25 March 2024



130

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
	<p>than regional and national averages and will impact negatively on the health, well-being and life chances of too many of our children and young people.</p> <p>Underage drinking prevents children from having the best start in life because it can impact on the development of the body's organs and functions and is associated with wider health risks.</p> <p>Beginning to drink in early teenage years is associated with violent behaviour, mental health issues, suicidal thoughts and attempts, employment problems and risky behaviour in later</p>	<p>people; the collective action, together with its effectiveness, to address the issue; and to make appropriate recommendations.</p>		<p>Michelle Loughlin</p>			

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
	life such as drink driving and other forms of criminal behaviour.						
Review of the provision of mental health services for young people in St Helens.	Research, such as the DfE State of the Nation Report (published 2023) and recent anecdotal reports to Council from local Head Teachers, indicate that significant numbers of children and young people continue to experience challenges with their mental health. Half of all life-time mental health illnesses start in teenage years although treatment is often received only many years later. Mental health is also an equalities issue with the poorest	In the light of continuing mental health challenges experienced by children and young people, it is essential that the accessibility and effectiveness of mental health services for them, including those with SEND, are scrutinised to understand the support available, its strengths and the challenges within the provision.	Children and Young People and Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage  Cllr Charlton Cllr Groucutt Cllr Burns	Head of Children's Health and Maternity Commissioning  Matt Davies  Public Health Consultant Shirley Goodhew	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Report to committee	22 July 2024

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
	fifth of the population being twice as likely to develop mental health problems in adulthood.						
Reviewing progress of action plans arising from the previous municipal year's Spotlight Review recommendations .	<p>To date, Cabinet has accepted the recommendations of two of the following three spotlight reviews carried out in the municipal year 2022 to 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving Attendance Rates in St Helens (<i>To include- Severe Pupil absenteeism rate monitoring and actions update</i>)</li> <li>Reducing Teenage Pregnancy Rates in St Helens</li> </ul>	The purpose of the review is to enable scrutiny to understand how services have improved following critical friend recommendations arising from the spotlight reviews carried out in 2022 – 2023.	Children and Young People / Economy, Business and Skills / Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage Cllr Charlton Cllr Groucutt Cllr Burns	Jo Davies  Shirley Goodhew	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Report to committee	22 July 2024

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
Reviewing progress of action plans arising from the previous municipal year's Spotlight Review recommendations .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing risk of harm to children arising from alcohol and substance use in pregnancy.</li> </ul>	The purpose of the review is to enable scrutiny to understand how services have improved following critical friend recommendations arising from the spotlight reviews carried out in 2022 – 2023.	Children and Young People Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage Cllr Charlton Cllr Burns	Michelle Loughlin  Public Health Consultant	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Update to committee	14 October 2024

This page is intentionally left blank

**Appendix 2**

**Place Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme**

<b><u>Borough Priorities</u></b>	<b><u>Next Meeting</u></b>
Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	Date: 15 April 2024 Time: 5:30 pm Venue: Room 10
Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all	
Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	

<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>Aims/Purpose</u></b>	<b><u>Portfolio</u></b>	<b><u>Lead Officer</u></b>	<b><u>Corporate Priority</u></b>	<b><u>Method</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>
135 Performance Reports	Scrutiny Committees are responsible for reviewing the performance reports for priorities relevant to their remit.	To use performance reports to monitor the performance of services within portfolios and hold Cabinet Members to account.	Environmental Services and Climate Change (Cllr Bowden)  Regeneration and Planning (Cllr McCauley)  Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage (Cllr Burns)  Economy,	Lisa Harris	Priority Two: Promote good health independence and care across our communities.  Priority Three: Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all.  Priority Four: Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected	Report to Committee	26 July 2024 (Completed)  9 October 2023 (Completed)  8 January 2024 (Completed)  15 April 2024

<u>Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims/Purpose</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Corporate Priority</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Date</u>
			Business and Skills (Cllr Groucutt)  Strategic Transport (Cllr Gomez-Aspron)  Safer Communities (Cllr Uddin)		local economy Priority Five: Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture.		
136 Review of Task Group  Update recommendation Violence Against Woman and Girls (VAWG)	Domestic abuse is a key focus for Place Scrutiny. The committee would like an update on the progress made on the work carried out between October & December 2022 VAWG Task group.	For the Committee to receive an update on Task Work recommendations for VAWG	Safer Communities (Cllr Uddin)	Tanya Wilcock	Priority Three: Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all.	Report	15 April 2024
Climate Commission	Progress on Recommendations	Progress update on the delivery of the action plan as set out in the Cabinet report. 24 May 2023	Environmental services and climate change (Cllr Bowden)	Trevor Nicoll	Priority Five: Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	Presentation	15 April 2024
Housing Voids-Registered Providers	St Helens Council is not a landlord but has statutory responsibilities in relation to homelessness and the	The review will:  •Seek to engage the variety of housing partners in the borough.	Regeneration and Planning (Cllr McCauley)	Sam Murray	Priority Three: Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all.	Spotlight review	15 April 2024



<u>Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims/Purpose</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Corporate Priority</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Date</u>
	<p>allocation of social housing to those in need.</p> <p>20% of the housing stock in the borough is in the socially rented sector. 981 lettings of social homes were completed in 2021/22 but there are 6500 people on the Under- One-Roof waiting list.</p> <p>Over recent years, the sector has had to respond to several challenges with vacant properties (voids).</p> <p>This has resulted in applicants waiting longer for a property to become ready to occupy and for Homelessness Services this has an impact which means residents stay longer than is suitable in temporary accommodation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Seek to understand the challenges facing the housing sector.</li> <li>•Understand the turnover of properties and the number of void properties that exist in the Borough.</li> <li>•Investigate the work underway to reduce void turnaround.</li> <li>•Seek to understand the impact that this has on the Council statutory Housing related functions.</li> </ul>					
Leisure Services Task and Finish Group	The Council operates three Indoor Leisure Facilities and several	The Review will investigate:	Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage	Tanya Wilcock	Priority One: Ensure children and young people	Task and Finish review	To commence April 2024



138

<u>Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims/Purpose</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Corporate Priority</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Date</u>
	<p>outdoor sites, the largest of which is Ruskin Sports Village. Last year those sites were visited by over 1.3 million people There are over 7,000 members who pay a monthly subscription and the service collected income of over £3m. It is recognised that the service needs to change to maximise the health and well-being outcomes, optimise the commercial opportunities and meet the challenge of rising costs. It is proposed to conduct a full-service review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the service contributes to the Council's priorities, in particular its <b>Public Health</b> priorities and <b>tackling inequalities</b>.</li> <li>• How customer <b>data &amp; intelligence</b> is used to lead service development, facility improvement and guide decommissioning.</li> <li>• How we can improve the <b>management and maintenance</b> of the facilities, in order to meet customer expectations.</li> </ul> <p>To identify the level of investment required and where should that investment be targeted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the service supports the Council's journey to <b>net carbon</b></li> </ul>	<p>(Cllr Burns)</p>	<p>Dave Boocock</p>	<p>have a positive start in life.</p> <p>Priority Two: Promote good health independence and care across our communities.</p> <p>Priority Five: Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture</p> <p>Priority Six: Be a responsible council</p>		

<u>Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims/Purpose</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Corporate Priority</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Date</u>
		<p><b>zero.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•How Value for money is embedded in the service and the level of <b>commerciality</b> within the services.</li> </ul>					
Alcohol and Anti-Social behaviour	To understand the wider issues on alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour. The challenges and ongoing cost and resource required to manage.	To enable the committee to make focused and informed recommendations to reduce the use of alcohol, reduce anti-social behaviours because of alcohol and the lessen the impacts on communities	Safer Communities (Cllr Uddin)	Sam Murray / Sup Int Steve Brizell	Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all	Presentation	9 October 2023 (Completed)
Tree Planting	The Council has been successful in securing £150,000 from the woodland creation accelerator fund (WCAF). The fund provides financial support to increase the capacity of specialist skills to accelerate the delivery of tree planting and woodland Creation commitments.	<p>A report to look at the progress being delivered by the fund, benefits to residents and the environment.</p> <p>The committee would support and steer potential further opportunities in the councils' committees to delivering Net -Zero</p>	Environmental services and climate change (Cllr Bowden)	Trevor Nicoll	Priority Five: Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	Presentation	9 October 2023 (Completed)

<u>Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims/Purpose</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Corporate Priority</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Date</u>
Catering	The Council's Catering service provides meals to most of the schools within the borough, both in primary and secondary schools	<p>A report to look at how this service contributes to achieving the borough priorities and maximising the benefits to the health of young people.</p> <p>An opportunity to consider the opportunities and risk to the service.</p>	Environmental services and climate change (Cllr Bowden)	Trevor Nicoll / Andrew Ferguson	Priority One: Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Presentation	8 January 2024 (Completed)
140 Business Support Delivery Report (UK SHARED Prosperity Funding)	<p>The draft St Helens inclusive Growth Strategy and its baseline assessment (St Helens state of the borough) set out a range of issues and barriers to growth faced by local businesses.</p> <p>The data shows a declining GVA (Gross Value Added), a lack of knowledge base businesses and an overall lack of competitiveness leading to under performance in business growth which is undermining the wealth creation potential of the area.</p>	<p>The report would focus on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring the current business support infrastructure that exists in the borough.</li> <li>• Identify the local needs and the desired outcomes.</li> <li>• Identify the intended outcomes required to align with UK SHARED Prosperity Funding.</li> <li>• Consider the service structure required to</li> </ul>	Economy, Business and Skills (Cllr Groucutt)	Steve Berlyne	Priority Four: Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	Report	8 January 2023 (Completed)

<u>Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims/Purpose</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Corporate Priority</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Date</u>
		meet the commitment in the inclusive growth strategy to create conditions for business growth and inward investment.					

This page is intentionally left blank