



# Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee

**25 March 2024**

<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>
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<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	
	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	

## **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**

**Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:**

- 1) Note the performance position at Quarter 3 2023-24.**
- 2) Note the actions planned by the Children and Young People Directorate, Public Health Directorate and services to address specific areas for performance improvement in relation to Priority 1.**
- 3) Consider whether there are any potential items for further scrutiny as part of the Committee'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 Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee only includes performance information relating to Priority 1 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.

## **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 People Management**

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 2023-24.