

Report to:	Cabinet Council	Date of Meeting:	Thursday 27 July 2023 Thursday 14 September 2023
Subject:	Financial and Corporate Performance 2022/2023		
Report of:	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To inform Cabinet and Council of the revenue and capital outturn position in relation to the 2022/23 financial year. In doing so the report will outline any key variations and where appropriate any impact on future years' financial performance. In addition, it provides details of the Council Corporate Performance for 2022/23 and current corporate risks.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is recommended to: -

Revenue Outturn

- Note the General Fund net deficit of £2.808m for 2022/23 that will reduce the Council's General Balances by £5.700m more than was budgeted for, but in line with the decisions of Cabinet during the year to partially fund the pressures faced during the year.
- Note the decrease in Schools' balances of £0.296m for 2022/23 and the net reduction of non-schools centrally retained DSG balances of £5.962m.
- Note the overall deficit on the High Needs Budget of £18.666m.
- Note the changes to Earmarked Reserves in 2022/23.
- Request Council to approve the addition and utilisation of the Earmarked Reserves detailed in paragraph 6.4.(a), (c) and (d).

Capital Outturn

- Note the total capital outturn of £35.941m for the financial year 2022/23.
- Note the successful delivery of a number of schemes as set out in section 11 that have supported the delivery of the Council's core purpose.

Corporate Performance

- Consider the Council's Corporate Performance Report for 2022/23 and the latest Corporate Risk Register alongside the financial outturn for the year.

Council is recommended to: -

Revenue Outturn

- Approve the addition and utilisation of the Earmarked Reserves detailed in paragraph 6.4.(a), (c) and (d).

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The production of a revenue and capital outturn report is a key feature of effective financial management and will allow Members to make informed decisions that will support service delivery and medium-term financial sustainability.

This report should be read in conjunction with the Treasury Management Outturn report for 2022/23 also on this agenda.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

N/A

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

All financial implications are reflected within the report.

(B) Capital Costs

All financial implications are reflected within the report.

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):
None
Legal Implications:
None

Equality Implications:

There are no equality implications.

Impact on Children and Young People: Yes

The report highlights the significant additional investment made in the Children’s Social Care Service and Home to School Transport during 2022/23 as well as the financial position of education services funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will

Have a positive impact	No
Have a neutral impact	Yes
Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	No

The allocations of capital funding outlined in sections 9 to 13 may be spent on projects that will have a high climate change impact as they could relate to new build, rebuild, refurbishment, retrofit and demolition proposals. Environmental consideration will be taken into account when specific projects are designed and tendered – which will help to mitigate negative impacts.

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose:

Effective Financial Management and the development and delivery of sustainable annual budgets support each theme of the Councils Core Purpose.

Protect the most vulnerable:

See comment above.

Facilitate confident and resilient communities:

See comment above.

Commission, broker and provide core services:

See comment above.

Place – leadership and influencer:

See comment above.

Drivers of change and reform:

See comment above.

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:

See comment above.
<u>Greater income for social investment:</u> See comment above.
<u>Cleaner Greener:</u> See comment above.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.7303/23) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5503/23) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

N/A

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting and immediately following the Council meeting.

Contact Officer:	Paul Reilly
Telephone Number:	Tel: 0151 934 4106
Email Address:	paul.reilly@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

APPENDIX A – Corporate Risk Register – July 2023

APPENDIX B1 – Corporate Performance Report 2022/23

APPENDIX B2 – Corporate Performance Report 2022/23 – Performance Indicators

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The report details the revenue outturn position for the financial year 2022/23 and provides details of the major variations within that position for the General Fund and Schools' Delegated Budgets including the High Needs Budget. The report also provides details of the Capital Outturn position for 2022/23.
- 1.2 In addition, the report includes the Council's Corporate Performance Report for 2022/23 (Appendix B1 and B2) together with the latest Corporate Risk Register (Appendix A).

General Fund Revenue Outturn 2022/23

2 Overall Position 2022/23

- 2.1 The outturn figures for 2022/23 are explained in more detail in section 3 but can be summarised as follows:

<u>Net Revenue Expenditure</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Variance</u>
	<u>£m</u>	<u>£m</u>	<u>£m</u>
<u>Services</u>			
Strategic Management	4.038	4.074	0.036
Adult Social Care	102.929	102.706	-0.223
Children's Social Care	52.876	73.256	20.380
Communities	18.611	16.209	-2.402
Corporate Resources	5.673	4.868	-0.805
Economic Growth & Housing	6.811	6.703	-0.108
Education Excellence	11.643	13.293	1.650
Health and Wellbeing	19.374	17.682	-1.692
Highways & Public Protection	11.508	11.592	0.084
Operational In-House Services	17.008	17.880	0.872
Other Services	2.923	2.798	-0.125
Energy Costs	0.000	2.058	2.058
<u>Total Service Net Expenditure</u>	253.393	273.116	19.723
Remedial Action Plan - July	0.000	-9.700	-9.700
Remedial Action Plan – September	0.000	-4.800	-4.800
Corporate Items	-8.526	-7.415	1.111
Levies	35.222	35.222	-
Parish Precepts	1.382	1.382	-
<u>Total Net Expenditure</u>	281.471	251.419	6.334
Financed by:			
Council Tax Payers	-151.707	-151.707	-
Business Rates Top-Up	-22.151	-22.151	-

Retained Business Rates	-38.149	-38.149	-
General Government Grants	-72.356	-72.990	-0.634
Total Financing	-284.363	-254.881	-0.634
Amount added to (-) / funded from General Balances	-2.892	2.808	5.700

3 **General Fund Revenue Outturn 2022/23 – Variation Analysis**

3.1 From the above table it can be seen that the Council in 2022/23 was overspent on net service expenditure by £19.7m. It is important to note that this was due to the issues that were reported through the year in respect of Children's Social Care who were £20.380m overspent. Most other services were underspent or reporting close to balanced positions including Adult Social Care, which is the largest budget within the Council and was underspent for the year. As a result, as shown in section 2, the outturn for 2022/23 shows that there was a transfer from General Balances of £2.808m which was £5.700m more when compared to the increase in General Balances of £2.892m that was budgeted for. This relates to the use of General Balances included as part of the Remedial Actions Plans approved by Council in July 2022 (£2.8m) and September 2022 (£2.9m).

3.2 As would be expected, during the financial year, there has been a number of significant variations in individual services. The major variances are highlighted in the following paragraphs: -

3.2.1 **Children's Social Care** - Children's Social Care overspent in 2022/23 by £20.380m, a position that was reported to Cabinet throughout the year.

The service continued to see rising demand and further investigatory work is ongoing with partner agencies with the aim of addressing this. Overall, the overspend was made up of the following key areas: -

- Due to a significant number of vacancies within the service, especially with regard to Social Workers, the expenditure on agency staff has been £6.5m over the staffing budget. Within this £3.5m relates to managed teams as well as the costs of employing additional social workers to manage the additional casework brought about by the rising demand for services.
- At the start of the financial year as inflation took hold in the UK, unbudgeted for inflation on accommodation costs has resulted in an overspend of £1.2m; and,
- A number of additional complex and high-cost placements have had to be entered into which have led to an overspend on this budget of £8.3m. Since the budget was set in March there was an increase in Independent Residential Placements from 69 to 79. In addition, there were more cases requiring high-cost accommodation and support than previously, and the costs of these had also risen significantly. Some new cases were initially costing substantial amounts per week. Within the budget for 2023/24 there was provision for an additional 5 placements therefore this increase from 69 to 79 will result in a budget pressure in the new year.

Members will be familiar from the reports previously presented to Cabinet that the service are working through options to address each of these issues. The introduction of the social worker academy with an annual cohort of 30 staff and the proposal to bring to the Council 25 international social workers will reduce the reliance on expensive agency workers going forward and proposals around supporting children and development of in-house accommodation will support future budget planning and control in respect of accommodation costs. In addition, a fundamental review of the service's budget is being undertaken.

- 3.2.2 **Communities** – The surplus of £2.402m primarily relates to reduced expenditure on sports facilities due to the closure of Splashworld and significant vacancy savings on family wellbeing staffing. There were also other vacancy savings across the service, as well as additional grant funding made available to offset existing costs in the year.
- 3.2.3 **Corporate Resources** – The surplus of £0.805m for Corporate Resources primarily relates to savings made against staffing budgets which is due to posts being held vacant in order to contribute to the overall budget pressures faced by the Council.
- 3.2.4 **Education Excellence** – The net overspend of £1.650m is due to a significant increase in the costs of Home to School Transport. There was an increase in the number of children being transported, especially relating to out of borough placements. In addition, there was an increase in the cost of providing the transport, particularly from September.
- 3.2.5 **Health & Wellbeing** – A net surplus of £1.692m arose primarily due to savings on contracts procured during the year, including on substance misuse and health prevention services. In addition, there were also vacancy savings in the service, as well as additional grant funding made available to offset existing costs in the year.
- 3.2.6 **Operation In-House Services** - The net overspend on the Service was £0.872m. This relates to a number of areas across the Service, including forecast shortfalls in income on Burials and Cremations, Catering, Green Sefton activities (mainly golf courses) and vehicle maintenance.
- 3.2.7 **Energy Costs** - As reported throughout the year, the global increase in energy prices had a significant impact on the Council's energy and fuel costs, increasing costs by £2.052m above budget. It should be noted that energy is a national issue and affected all local authorities. However, no additional Government funding was made available for local government, despite representations made both nationally and locally.
- 3.2.8 **Remedial Action Plans** – Due to the overall pressures faced during the year, particularly from the increased costs of energy, the pay award and Children's Social Care, Cabinet approved Remedial Action Plans to fund these pressures. In June they approved one-off savings of £9.7m (plus the use of £2.9m of General Balances) and in September approved further one-off savings of £4.8m (plus the use of £2.8m of General Balances).

3.2.9 **Corporate Items:** There are various corporate items that have had an impact on the Council's outturn position, with a net impact of £1.111m. The most significant are described below:

- The approved Base Budget included a provision for the 2022/23 pay award of 3%. This was in line with most other local authorities who had budgeted for between 2.5% and 3% (and when the Spending Review 2021 was published, the Office for Budget Responsibility was forecasting inflation to be 4% in 2022). On 1 November 2022, trade unions accepted the offer from the National Employers for local government services body of a fixed increase of £1,925 (plus an additional day's annual leave from April 2023). For Sefton, this equated to an increase in the pay bill of about 6.5% or an additional £4.100m above the amount included in the 2022/23 budget. As previously mentioned for energy costs, this was a national issue for local government, however, no additional Government funding was made available.
- The Budget Report for 2022/23 outlined that Council's budget included the potential deficit for the Strand Shopping Centre for 2022/23 of £0.5m. The deficit for the year has now been finalised at £0.626m with the impact on the outturn position being an overspend of £0.126m. However, it should be noted that this position is better than that included in the latest Business Plan approved by Cabinet in January 2023, which indicated an estimated deficit of £0.777m (so an improvement of £0.151m).
- Due to the increase in interest rates across the year, the Council was able to achieve increased returns on its cash investments. This resulted in a net underspend of £1.026m in the Council's Treasury Management budget.
- As reported throughout the year, it was imperative that the Council achieved a balanced outturn position to ensure its financial sustainability and that General Balances weren't utilised further. A number of remedial actions were put in place, including a recruitment freeze and ceasing non-essential spend in most services across the Council. In addition, a further review of the emergency funding received by the Council has determined that a further £1.518m can be released to ensure a balanced outturn position can be achieved.

3.3 As a result of the variations detailed within this report an overall Council-wide balanced outturn position has been recorded for the year which represents the outcome of stringent financial management through the year as the Council continues to meet the unprecedented financial pressure from demand led services, energy costs, pay and price inflation, the extreme challenges of national government policy as well as the continuing impact of COVID19. The outturn position excludes the impact of COVID19 with any additional expenditure and loss of income being met by utilising various additional funding sources provided by the Government.

3.4 As was detailed within the Budget report presented to Council in March 2023, the Council continues to face unprecedented financial pressure particularly within Children's Social Care. This position is not unique to Sefton; however, the challenge is significant and will require very careful financial management throughout 2023/24 and beyond. The Council acknowledged these risks in its

budget report and significant additional resources were built into 2023/24 budget in recognition of these additional demands.

- 3.5 As the report suggests, General Fund Balances have been used in this year due to the unprecedented pressure in Children's Social Care. As this was known during the year, provision was made in the 2023/24 budget to increase the balances by a further £4.423m. This means that there are £16.414m of balances available in 2023/24.

4 Schools' Delegated Budgets Outturn 2022/23

- 4.1 The level of schools' balances as at the end of 2022/23 stand at a cumulative surplus of £17.756m (£18.289m 2021/22). This overall sum consists of direct school balances of £17.495m (£17.961m 2021/22); Schools Supply Funding Pool surplus of £0.051m (£0.005m surplus in 2021/22) and the Schools Rates Pooled Account surplus of £0.210m (£0.323m 2021/22). However, some residual deficit balances included in the above, relating to two forced academy convertor schools and one closed school were written down in the year by the Local Authority against the closed schools' deficit earmarked reserve (£0.237m) leaving the overall carried forward balances for the maintained schools of the Authority at £17.993m including pooled accounts. These total balances represent 16.1% of schools' 2022/23 delegated budgets. Overall, schools' direct balances decreased in the year by £0.229m after allowing for the writing down of the deficits mentioned above (£0.237m); The Schools Supply Pool balances increased by £0.046m and the Rates Pool Account reduced by £0.113m.
- 4.2 Analysis of the Schools Balances, including those ultimately written down in the year, shows that 35 schools saw an increase in their balances totalling £3.143m; whilst 49 schools experienced a fall in their balances of £3.609m giving a net decrease in the year of £0.466m. Of the 49 schools with falling balances, there were 39 Primary schools; 2 Secondary; 5 Special and 3 Nursery Schools with a fall in balances of £1.711m; £0.502m; £1.243m and £0.153m respectively.
- 4.3 At the start of 2022/23, there were seven schools in a deficit balance position, including three Maintained Primary Schools; three Maintained Secondary Schools; and one Pupil Referral Unit with net deficit balances of £0.287m; £1.113m and £0.059m respectively (£1.459m). These seven schools were all operating under a licensed deficit in 2022/23.
- 4.4 By the end of 2022/23, based on the outturn position, seven schools were in a deficit position, including three Maintained Primary schools; and four Maintained Secondary Schools, with net deficit balances of £0.456m and £0.918m respectively (£1.374m). Three of these schools however, (two Primary and one Secondary), had their deficit balances charged against the Council's closed schools' deficit earmarked reserve (£0.237m) leaving just one Primary school and three secondary schools in a deficit position (£1.137m). One of the secondary schools, Savio, converted to an academy on 1 January 2023, but the accounts have remained open to end of April 2023, i.e., into the 2023/24 financial year to allow the required statutory time to close them down following conversion.
- 4.5 High Needs budgets were overspent by £6.172m in 2022/23 (£4.245m in 2021/22). This has resulted in the overall High Needs accumulated deficit now standing at

£18.666m. Cost pressures have continued across High Needs provision with increasing demand for Special School places driven by growing numbers of children being assessed for an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). During 2022/23 an extra 560 children have been assessed as requiring an EHCP across the Borough (a 22% increase). Numbers of places commissioned out of Borough, have also continued to increase (68 in 2022/23, a 37% increase), due, in part, to a shortage of in-house places. Initial spending forecasts were well exceeded in terms of overspending in the year. Some increase in costs, however, was anticipated, following a Cabinet Member agreement to making a £2m investment in rightsizing and updating the funding allocations across the maintained special schools; Resourced Units and PRUs. In addition, there has been a significant take-up of dedicated 'Group' funding over the year by many of the mainstream schools, to gradually start to replace the need for many individual 1:1 s in the classroom, and to focus on specialised group classroom teaching methods and support for SEN children. This is considered considerably cheaper to fund and is seen to be quite beneficial by the schools.

- 4.6 During the year, the Council engaged with Newton Europe to examine High Needs spending and other operational issues as part of the Government's Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme for those local authorities with significant High Needs deficits. Along with 55 other local authorities, Sefton were selected to be part of Tier 2 of the DBV programme. This programme set about obtaining and analysing Sefton's High Needs spending to help their statistical experts to forecast trends and to hopefully identify some potential areas of spending mitigation over the next 5 to 8 years. Their own initial forecasting suggests, that, without any mitigations over the next 5 to 8 years, the Council would have a significantly increased accumulative net deficit on its High Needs spending. This is clearly unsustainable but is something also being forecast in many other local authorities under the DBV Programme. Of great concern is the fact that from the end of 2025/26, the Government's statutory override mechanism for DSG deficits to be ringfenced comes to an end, and should it not be extended, local authorities may be required to fund any deficit from its General Fund. Sefton is actively seeking clarity from the Government on how deficits are to be funded once the statutory override finishes as it will be one of a number of local authorities for whom it would impact on financial sustainability. This issue has been covered in great detail in both the Budget Report for 2023/24 and the Robustness Report of the S151 Officer on the same agenda. The significance of this issue cannot and is not being underestimated and as stated engagement with staff in Treasury, DLUHC and DfE is to take place. As a result, the quarterly reports produced for Cabinet and Council by the Assistant Director of Children's Services (Education) are critical to inform members of developments, demand, mitigating work that will reduce or contain cost, the Delivering Better Value Programme and national and sector discussions. Due to the significance this issue is also included on the Council's Corporate Risk Register.
- 4.7 Unlike the original Safety Valve Programme, the DBV Programme does not offer any funding towards writing down accumulated deficits on High Needs but does allow local authorities under the programme to apply for up to £1m grant towards supporting the development and structure required to start to deliver some mitigating actions towards reducing High Needs spending. However, this is one-off funding to support the Council, the legacy of which, would be left to the Authority to

support once the funding runs out. Sefton has applied for this funding. The DBV programme at Sefton has now drawn to its conclusion.

- 4.8 During the year any changes planned to address the funding given to mainstream schools for local SEN support of children without/working towards an EHCP was put on hold, pending the funding provision mentioned above and also due to the release of the Government's Green Paper consultation, as part of its SEND Review, (Right support; right place; right time) which came out in March 2022, and concluded in mid-July 2022. Conclusions and recommendations were made by the DfE in late 2022 following the consultation, and these included that a 'national' banding structure may be put in place for SEND support to schools, along with a wide range of other proposals. However, many of these are not planned to happen until the end of 2025, and few, if any, would directly benefit the serious High Needs funding issues currently faced by local authorities.
- 4.9 As reported the last year has again seen unprecedented growth in demand for High Needs places, along with cost increases, post-pandemic. High Needs has continued to be reviewed by the Council, with the introduction of a new funding mechanism for our Special schools, offering them greater financial stability, and involving a right sizing of their budgets, despite the additional cost of doing this, to High Needs. There has also been an expansion of new places across our Resourced Provision in the year, with further expansion planned in 2023/24 following a sufficiency and planned-place report conducted in recent months by the SEN Manager. New capital funding has also been provided to create space for more in-house places across a range of locations.
- 4.10 Early Years provision had a small net underspending of £0.181m in 2022/23. This was following adjustments that were made to the original funding by the DfE after taking account changes to headcount between January 2021 and January 2022 where we received additional funding in the year of £0.234m. Spending from the Early Years centrally retained reserves continued as planned in support of Providers (£0.173m), leading to a net underspending of £0.008m in 2022/23.
- 4.11 Early Years centrally retained balances started the year with a surplus balance of £0.636m in 2022/23 and after spending on planned initiatives during the year, and underspending against Early Years provision, ended the year at a surplus of £0.644m.
- 4.12 The Council holds Centrally Retained DSG reserves, separate to its Maintained Schools' balances. These are shown below:

<u>Centrally Retained DSG Balances</u>	1 April 2022 Surplus (-) / Deficit	Net Movement In Year 2022/23	31 March 2023 Surplus (-) / Deficit
	£m	£m	£m
Schools Block	-0.761	-0.202	-0.963
Early Years Block	-0.636	-0.008	-0.644
High Needs Block	12.494	6.172	18.666
	11.097	5.962	17.059

5 Council Balances

5.1 The change in the level of Council and School Balances as at 31 March 2023 are set out in the tables below:

<u>Non-School General Fund Balances</u>	£m	<u>£m</u>
Actual Non-School General Fund Balances at 31 March 2022		-14.799
Less underspend in comparison to the 2022/23 Base Estimate:		
- Assumed Increase in Balances 2022/23	-2.892	
- Use of General Balances approved by Council as part of in-year remedial action plans	5.700	
- In-Year Variance	0.000	
Actual Increase in Balances in 2022/23		-3.462
Actual Non-School General Fund Balances at 31 March 2023		-11.991

<u>Schools' Balances</u>	<u>£m</u>
Schools' balances as at 1 April 2022	-18.289
Total net variation on Schools' Delegated Budgets	0.296
Schools' balances at 31 March 2023	-17.993

5.2 With the known use of general fund balances on 2022/23, the budget for 2023/24 has included provision for the addition of £3.400m and there is a further sum of £1.023m carried forward within General Balances for use in 2024/25, meaning that available general fund balances in 2023/24 stand at £16.414m or approximately 6.5% of the Council's net budget.

6 Earmarked Reserves

6.1 Unlike General Fund balances, Earmarked Reserves are held for a specific purpose. These purposes may be determined by the Council to coincide with its policy objectives, dictated by statute (e.g., Schools Earmarked Reserves) or relate to revenue grants and contributions that haven't been fully applied by the end of the financial year.

6.2 Once approved, expenditure incurred in accordance with the reserve's purpose is funded by applying the reserve, without any need for further approval. If the reserve is no longer required for the originally intended purpose it is released back into the General Fund.

6.3 An analysis of the Council's Earmarked Reserves, and the movement during 2022/23 is shown in the table below:

Movements in 2020/21	<u>1 April</u> <u>2022</u> £000s	<u>Transfers</u> <u>in</u> £000s	<u>Transfers</u> <u>Out</u> £000s	<u>31 March</u> <u>2023</u> £000s
Environmental Warranty	-9,000	0	0	-9,000
Insurance Fund	-1,948	0	0	-1,948
Transforming Sefton	-2,232	-299	670	-1,861
Redundancy Reserve	-1,326	0	380	-946
Community Transition Fund	-386	0	58	-328
Contamination Clearance	-1,380	0	22	-1,358
Regeneration Schemes Reserve	0	-2,500	0	-2,500
Secondary School Deficit Reserve	-1,000	-750	237	-1,513
Business Rates S31 Grants Reserve	-18,305	0	18,305	0
Collection Fund Deficit Spreading Reserve	-6,137	0	5,638	-499
Revenue Grants and Contributions Unapplied	-28,470	-11,626	17,577	-22,519
Other Earmarked Reserves	-11,069	-1,878	3,292	-9,656
	-81,253	-17,053	46,178	-52,128

6.4 The main changes in Earmarked Reserves are as follows:

- a) **Regeneration Schemes Reserve** – The Council received an amount during 2022/23 relating to the surrender of a lease at the Strand Shopping Centre. ***Council is asked to approve the creation of a reserve from the receipt of £2.500m to be utilised in future years to offset the loss of income from the lease surrender.***
- b) **Business Rates S31 Grants Reserve** – In response to COVID19, the Government introduced an expanded Business Rates retail relief scheme in 2020/21, which continued into 2021/22. This resulted in a significant deficit on the Collection Fund which was recovered in 2022/23. However, the Council received S31 grants to offset the reliefs granted which were received in 2021/22. These were therefore reserved so they could be used to offset the deficit in 2022/23.
- c) **Collection Fund Deficit Spreading Reserve** – Due to COVID19, the income received from Business Rates and Council Tax was significantly reduced in 2020/2021. The Government amended regulations so that the deficits arising could be spread into future years. The creation of a reserve to offset these future deficits, primarily funded from COVID government grants, was approved by Budget Council in March 2021. In addition, the level of S31 grants received in 2022/23 relating to Business Rate Reliefs was lower than budgeted for due to less businesses qualifying for the reliefs than anticipated. However, this meant that additional Business Rates were collected which offset this but under Collection Fund Regulations these can only be credited to the General Fund in 2023/24. The Council will therefore utilise some of the remaining Collection Fund Deficit Spreading Reserve to offset the shortfall in 2022/23 with the Business Rates Surplus replacing the budgeted for use of the reserve in 2023/24. ***Council is asked to approve the use of £2.569m of the Collection Fund Deficit Spreading Reserve in 2022/23 to offset the shortfall in Business Rates S31 grants.***
- d) **Revenue Grants and Contributions Unapplied** – There was a large increase in grants received during 2020/21 and 2021/22 due to the receipt of various tranches

of funding to support the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These include COVID19 emergency funding and the Contain Outbreak Management Fund. These were reserved to fund costs and loss of income that was incurred in 2022/23 and will be in future years. A further review of the emergency funding received by the Council has determined that a further £1.518m can be released to ensure a balanced outturn position can be achieved in 2022/23. ***Council is asked to approve the utilisation of £1.518m to support the outturn position in 2022/23.***

- e) **Other Earmarked Reserves** – A number of Earmarked Reserves were utilised as part of the remedial action plans agreed during the year to support the budget.

7 Council Wholly Owned Companies

- 7.1 The Council has three wholly owned companies, namely, Sefton New Directions, Sandway Homes Limited and Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited. During the year Cabinet have received comprehensive Business Plan updates on each of these companies and outturn reports detailing progress against business plan both in terms of service delivery/meeting of objectives and financial performance will be presented to overview and scrutiny committee in early autumn. In terms of the key financial metrics for each company: -

Sandway Homes Limited

- The latest Business Plan for the Company was presented to Cabinet on 1 December 2022.
- The report highlighted that the Council's dividend was forecast to be £1.050m in line with the original business plan (rather than the £1.350m subsequently reported to Cabinet and Budget Council) and was expected to be delivered in 2025/26 rather than 2024/25.
- It remains the forecast that the capital receipt in respect of the three sites in Phase 1 totalling £2.3m will also be received in 2024/25.
- The Council has agreed peak debt for the company of £8.3m. As at 31 March 2023 the company has drawn down £6.4m of this and at this stage does not expect this sum to increase. This is expected to be repaid during 2024/25.

A further report on the Company will be presented to Cabinet in September 2023 updating on all aspects of the business plan.

Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited

- The latest Business Plan for the Company was presented to Cabinet on 1 December 2022.
- The report outlined that despite the economic and sectoral challenges highlighted in the report, and the delay to the opening of the Lake House in Summer 2022, financial performance is consistent with previous expectations.
- The Full Business Case, approved by Cabinet in February 2021, approved a loan of £500,000 from the Council to cover working capital. This would be

- repaid to the Council as the first financial commitment for profits generated over the 10 years of the Full Business Case.
- The Full Business Case also outlined that a saving of nearly £0.250m would be achieved for the Council through the removal of the subsidy previously included in the budget. In addition, dividends would be due to the Council in later years as the Company becomes more profitable and the loan is repaid.
 - However, the report to Cabinet in December 2022 highlighted that no shareholder dividends or commencement of repayment of the working capital loan to the Council are proposed during the latest Business Plan period (to 2024/25). However, based on performance of the business and the progression of future opportunities, this will be re-evaluated on an annual basis as part of the Business Plan process.

Sefton New Directions

- The latest Business Plan for the Company was presented to Cabinet on 23 June 2022.
- A report on the latest position of the Company is presented elsewhere on today's agenda.

8 Revenue Outturn 2022/23 - Conclusion

- 8.1 In March 2022, the Council set a one-year budget for 2022/23. Through the application of stringent financial management throughout the year, the Council continued to meet the financial pressures from demand led services and especially Children's Social Care, and the increased costs of energy and pay and price inflation. In addition, it was able to withstand the financial pressures that continued to arise from COVID19 by utilising the resources provided by the Government to support the Council's response.
- 8.2 Whilst the position reported is largely favourable, the Council is still facing significant financial pressure from some of its main demand led budgets, in particular Children's Social Care. The experience in Sefton is currently similar to many local authorities across the country and as a result will require careful financial management in the forthcoming year in order that these pressures are aligned with the delivery of the overall savings target that the Council has to meet. This approach and pressure were identified within the Budget report of March 2023 and significant additional resources were included in the budget for 2023/24.
- 8.3 The Council's accounts are scheduled to be completed by the middle of August 2023. They will then be subject to review by the external auditor, Ernst & Young, and following final completion of the audit, the Accounts will be presented to the Audit & Governance Committee for consideration, together with the ISA 260 report that will reflect their findings and conclusions.

Capital Outturn 2022/23

9 Overall Position for 2022/23

9.1 The approved capital budget for 2022/23 was £45.157m against which capital expenditure of £35.941m has been incurred at the year end. This has resulted in a year end variance of £9.216m. A service-by-service breakdown is shown in the following table:

Service Area	Budget 2022/23	Actual Expenditure 2022/23	Variance to Budget
	£m	£m	£m
Adult Social Care	4.648	4.100	-0.548
Children's Social Care	0.450	0.263	-0.187
Communities	1.159	0.916	-0.243
Corporate Resources	7.440	6.338	-1.102
Economic Growth & Housing	8.301	7.237	-1.064
Education Excellence	4.258	3.853	-0.405
Highways & Public Protection	16.989	11.789	-5.200
In House Operational Services	1.912	1.445	-0.467
Total Programme	45.157	35.941	-9.216

9.2 In addition to the core programme, capital expenditure totalling £2.764m was incurred by the Council. This included Schools Devolved Formula Capital which is provided directly to and managed by schools and capitalisation of Highways expenditure. Total capital expenditure in 2022/23, including this was £38.705m.

10 Programme Funding

10.1 The table below shows how the capital programme has been funded in 2022/23:

Source	£m
Grants	28.892
Prudential Borrowing	6.441
Contributions	1.016
Capital Receipts	1.517
Section 106	0.840
Total Programme Funding	38.705

11 Programme Delivery 2022/23

11.1 As would be expected with a capital programme of this size, the investment that has been incurred during the year has led to both the development and improvement of the Council's infrastructure and supported the delivery of key

outcomes as set out in the Framework for Change programme. The key areas of delivery are as follows:

11.1 Adult Social Care

11.1.1 Disabled Facilities Grants Core Programme (£2.011m)

During 2022/23 there were 279 adaptations certified as complete on behalf of clients including items such as stair lifts, vertical lifts, bathroom adaptations, extensions, and hoists. The number has increased when compared to last year due to the increased number of referrals for adaptation received from the Occupational Therapist Team along with increased staff resource.

11.1.2 Integrated Community Equipment (£0.656m including Children's spend)

Loan equipment has been purchased to issue to Sefton residents with medical needs or a disability to enable them to remain safe and independent in their own homes. The equipment provided includes walking aids, bathing aids, toileting aids and patient handling equipment to enable carers to assist and care for residents in a safe manner. All equipment is issued on a loan basis and ownership is retained by the Council. When no longer needed by service users it is collected, decontaminated in accordance with strict infection control procedures and recycled for future issue to others.

11.1.3 Single to Double Handed Care Equipment (£0.126m)

The equipment purchased, predominantly for patient handling, is specifically designed to enable a reduction in the number of carers required to care for an individual. The service provides gantry hoists, specialist slings and a variety of patient handling pieces taking advantage of new product development and techniques, with the ultimate aim of reducing a care package for the individual whether that care be provided by family or formal carers. The benefits of the equipment provide a more dignified care process for the recipient. All equipment is issued on a loan basis and when no longer needed by the service user, collected and recycled for further use.

11.1.4 ICT Development and Transformation (£0.265m)

The Council's Liquidlogic and ContrOCC systems were migrated to cloud hosting. This migration was followed by upgrade works which were largely completed during the financial year, with the go-live of the latest upgrades taking place in May 2023. In addition, improvement works took place on both the Adults and Children's Social Care systems, with a particular focus on Children's in order to support the wider operational improvement works in that area.

11.1.5 Care Home Improvement Grants (£0.362m)

Positive outcomes are being achieved for care home providers and their residents with 58 care homes that have benefitted from improvement grants to date. Round three of the Grant Programme launched January 2023 and criteria also included the implementation of energy efficiency digital solutions and the reduction of

carbon footprint in acknowledgement of increases to energy costs. 34 grants have been issued under round three.

11.2 Communities

11.2.1 Dunes Splashworld – Essential Repairs (£0.545m)

Dunes Splashworld leisure centre has undergone a range of extensive work centred on recoating the main steel frame, remediating concrete failures in the flume tower structure and complete retiling of the pool tank, along with a range of electrical improvement works. Works are now complete, and the centre is back in operation.

11.2.2 Dunes Splashworld – Health & Safety Works (£0.247m)

A range of works have been completed including safety flooring, pump and filtration equipment, replacement and repaired locks on lockers, café equipment, refurbished toilets and showering facilities.

11.3 Corporate Resources and Customer Services

11.3.1 Corporate Maintenance (£0.465m)

This programme includes a number of larger schemes with a range of site-based challenges requiring consultation and clear communication with all parties involved or affected by the works. There have also been budgetary challenges to overcome due to industry costs increases. Good progress is now being made and works on the Cambridge Arcade and Southport Town Hall scheme will commence soon. This programme has also delivered a range of health and safety improvement across several sites, along with funding in support of Bootle and Southport Town Hall energy retrofit programme, which are now complete.

11.3.2 Green Homes Local Delivery Scheme (£5.326m)

516 properties received funded works that were eligible due to having a poor energy efficiency rating and a low household income. The funded works included external wall insulation, cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, under floor insulation, photovoltaic panels, double glazing, and upgrades to heating controls. The aim of the scheme was to improve the energy efficiency rating from a D, E, F or G to a C or above. The works will help reduce household utility bills and also lower carbon emissions.

11.3.3 ICT Transformation (£0.487m)

The funding has enabled Sefton Council to upgrade and move the majority of its on-premises data centre to the Azure Cloud in line with the Digital Strategy of the Council. This includes the deployment of specialist applications for legacy systems to ensure they perform as expected within the Cloud, supporting the authority's move to agile working, as well as modernising and securing our ICT infrastructure.

The funding has also enabled the delivery of a new CRM system for Sefton replacing the legacy system, which was end of life. The solution has also enabled Sefton to improve its customer offer around self-service.

11.4 Economic Growth and Housing

11.4.1 Crosby Lakeside Redevelopment (£1.509m)

Expenditure during 2022/23 was on completion of the hospitality side of the lakeside building which opened in August 2022. Predevelopment work on a bunk barn was also carried out during the year for the next phase of the project.

11.4.2 Bootle Canalside (£0.151m)

Site preparation works were completed on the Canalside space – site levelling, surfacing, boundary treatment, landscaping and design works which will allow the site to be used for community activities and events.

11.4.3 Marine Lake Events Centre (£4.288m)

The Marine Lake Events Centre project continues to make good progress and planning permission was obtained in April 2023. Prior to this Kier Construction have been appointed under a pre-construction service agreement to undertake the demolition and enabling works. Kier has and will continue to work with the delivery and design team to finalise the stage 4 plans to then allow detailed costings to be agreed ready for the main contract to commence in October 2023.

The design team have completed stage 3 design and stage 4 designs are due to be completed in July 2023. Given the size of the MLEC projects and specialist nature of expertise required, there are several consultants supporting the Council in key areas from architects, venue advisors, engineers and cost consultants.

11.4.4 Enterprise Arcade (£0.107m)

The RIBA Stage 3 report and detailed design work for the project has been completed during the year.

11.4.5 Brownfield Fund for Housing Development (£0.488m)

The Council received £1.050m from the Brownfield Development Fund administered by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. This bid was to enable the Council's housing development company, Sandway Homes Limited, to bring forward a development in Netherton. The grant has now been fully utilised (across 2021/22 and 2022/23) to part fund enabling work that has now completed at the site. The construction of 63 dwellings is due to commence in October 2023.

11.5 Education Excellence

11.5.1 Schools Programme (£3.091m)

Completions on schemes funded by the Schools Condition Allocation can be summarised as follows: upgrading / repairs and renewal of flooring, windows /

doors and roofs, along with remodelling classrooms and toilet facilities, and improving accessibility to sites, playground / car park and drainage improvements covering 20 projects at schools, replacing outdated electrical systems, fire alarms and boiler replacements covering 8 projects at schools. The full list of schemes is provided below.

- Bedford Primary – Flooring in assembly hall.
- Birkdale Primary – Replace fire alarm.
- Christchurch CEP – Windows & Doors.
- Farnborough Rd. Infants – Boiler replacement.
- Farnborough Rd. Juniors – Rewiring.
- Farnborough Road Site – Roof refurbishments.
- Forefield Infants – Land drains, Windows, Brickwork repairs.
- Freshfield – Boiler replacement.
- Grange Primary – Rewire.
- Grange Primary – Hall roof.
- Hatton Hill – Access ramps.
- Hatton Hill – Roof Phase 2.
- Hatton Hill – Boundary fence.
- Hudson Primary – Boiler replacement.
- Hudson Primary – Windows.
- Kingsmeadow – Rewire.
- Linacre Primary – Wall repairs.
- Lydiate Primary – Rewiring.
- Lydiate Primary – Concrete repairs.
- Melling Primary – New pupil places.
- Marshside Primary – Playground repairs.
- Netherton Moss – Fire doors.
- Northway Primary – Entrance lobby alterations.
- St Johns, Crossens – Repoint brickwork.
- St Philip's CEP – Replace boilers.
- Waterloo Primary – Repoint brickwork.
- Waterloo Primary – roof refurbishment.
- Woodlands Primary – Brickwork repointing and flue repairs.

11.5.2 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (£0.762m)

Completions on schemes funded by High Needs funding can be summarised as follows: upgrading and remodelling classrooms, toilet and changing facilities, accessibility works to entrances and footpaths over 14 projects at Schools (listed below), enabling works for the provision and installation of mobile classrooms at 3 schools' sites was also carried out.

- Bedford primary – Classroom and communal area alterations.
- Crosby High – New footpath.
- Crosby High – Mobile classroom.
- Daleacre – Toilets / Changing rooms and fire door and security improvements.
- Freshfield primary – Playground for ASD.

- Hudson Primary – Additional ASD classroom.
- Marshside Primary – Internal alterations to form ASD classroom.
- Oakfield PRU – Upgrade classroom.
- Pinefield – Entrance alterations and internal upgrading.
- Redgate Primary – Convert music service to ASD base.
- Rowan Park – Mobile classroom and new access route.
- Rowan High – Mobile classroom.
- St Nicholas CEP – SEND room.
- Waterloo Primary – Work to ASD classroom and equipment.

11.6 Highways and Public Protection

11.6.1 The Highways projects delivered within 22/23 from the £8.371m spend included:

- Development of two major scheme business cases (Southport Eastern access and Maritime corridor).
- Completion of Scarisbrick Avenue Public Realm works
- Improvements to A59 Ormskirk Road /toucan Crossing
- Development of Southport Public Realm works in support of the Town Deal & Southport investment Strategy.
- Commencement of Formby bypass active travel improvements
- Public rights of Way improvements to North Moss Lane, Formby
- Bridge Strengthening scheme to A565 Waterloo Road railway bridge
- Carriageway Micro Surfacing (76,124m²)
- Carriageway Surface Dressing (89,764m²)
- Carriageway Patching (5,400m²)
- Footway Reconstruction (2085m²)
- Carriageway Resurfacing (121,395m²)

11.6.2 LED Street Lighting Upgrade (£3.418m)

LED unit supply has been maintained to great effect and timeliness across several suppliers with limited warranty failures on the main supplier's units (0.25%). Over 12,000 LED units have been installed between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023, with over 1,500 new columns installed over the same period. Over 1,000 column units have been delivered to date from a new supplier which is continuing to go to plan, and preparation is underway for the remaining agreed steelwork.

Energy savings for 2022-23 are 2,840,133Kwh with a saving of £1.004m with Carbon savings of 593.3. Total Project savings to 31st March 2023 are 3,703,678Kwh with a saving of £1.136m with Carbon savings of 790.8.

11.7 Operational In-House Services

11.7.1 Coastal Monitoring Programme (£0.763m)

The Northwest Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme collected evidence to understand changes in beach levels and shoreline position. Surveys were primarily undertaken in Spring and Autumn to understand seasonal changes with

nearly 1700 beach profiles surveyed. Deployment of continuous radar monitoring systems continued, with 4 in operation around the Northwest coast, with one deployed at Hall Road, Crosby. These systems continuously collect wave and current information that can be used to derive changes in the seabed and beaches. This programme also supports posts in Sefton and Wyre Council, with the team undertaking surveys, commissioning works and representing the northwest coast at local, regional and national forums.

The Crosby Coastal defence scheme option assessment and design work for the interim protection north of Hall Road has been completed, ready to move into the delivery phase in 2024/25.

Several water level monitors with live data feeds have been deployed in critical watercourses across Sefton to improve the understanding of flood risk and flood risk warnings.

11.7.2 Parks Schemes (£0.183m)

Green Sefton have led on the delivery of a new multi-use games area (MUGA) in Rainbow Park, Melling with support from local ward funds and developer's contributions. A new play area was installed in Runnels Lane Park, Thornton with ward funding used as match for a successful Veolia Environment Fund bid. Mersey Forest funding was also used to plant additional trees. Funding from the Parks Levelling Up Fund was allocated to Poets Park and Seaforth Triangle where new paths, furniture and tree planting has taken place to improve the area for our communities.

11.7.3 Vehicle Replacement Programme (£0.367m)

The Council's Vehicle Replacement Programme continued in 2022/23 including the purchase of 12 new vans with further expenditure planned for 2023/24.

12 Explanations of Full Year Outturn Key Variance 2021/22

12.1 Adult Social Care

12.1.1 ICT Development & Transformation (£0.193m)

As the Council's Liquidlogic and ContrOCC systems were migrated to cloud hosting, followed by upgrade works which completed in May 2023, the implementation of the ContrOCC modules for Online Financial Assessment and Client Finance Portal were not able to begin until 2023/24. Preparations are now underway to implement these modules which will improve the customer journey. Funding for ICT equipment purchases was also identified elsewhere in the budget to support spend in 2022/23. The budget was therefore carried forward to 2023/24.

12.2 Corporate Resources and Customer Services

12.2.1 Sustainable Warmth Programme (£0.973m)

The scheme has experienced some movement on targets and the profile of spend has therefore been adjusted as a result. The scheme was extended with a final completion date for works of 30 September 2023 and it is anticipated that the remaining budget will be utilised within this timeframe (there is also a possibility however, that the Government may decide to delay the end date further to 31 December 2023, but this is not confirmed).

The funds were spread between those with gas central heating (LAD) and those without (HUG). For LAD final works are being completed and other adjustments to ensure the Council meets all of the scheme requirements in terms of average spend per property. For HUG, a request to realign the target numbers (from 75 to 47) was accepted recently by the Combined Authority and so this will reduce the funding associated with this scheme to be carried over into 2023/24 financial year.

12.3 Economic Growth & Housing

12.3.1 Crosby Lakeside (£0.207m)

The underspend on the project is due to the delay in starting the bunk barn works. This delay was due to difficulties in appointing the full project team and also due to having to move cabling that had not been fitted correctly as part of the original project.

12.3.2 Transformations De Southport (£0.153m)

Programme implementation has been put back to Autumn 2023 following business consultation and a request to defer works until after summer season to minimise disruption. Some initial work has been completed under the Highways Capital Programme.

12.3.3 Bootle Canalside Business Plan (0.470m)

A design review process has been undertaken on the project during 2022/23 and infrastructure works could not commence until this work was completed.

12.4 Education Excellence

12.4.1 The existing capital programme is made up of over 70 individual school's schemes at various stages of the delivery programme. Delays in delivering key schemes results from contractors' availability, staff resource limitations and site restrictions all of which will have a direct impact on the delivery timescales. Schemes may also have been impacted by delays resulting from material availability and final accounts settlement. It is also important to note that some of the identified resources (underspend) has been set aside for future years schemes, along with savings made due to academisation.

12.5 Highways and Public Protection

12.5.1 Delays to the progress of schemes are encountered as detailed design and consultation is undertaken, and approvals sought. Consequently, some schemes are not able to be progressed within the timescales originally proposed. Constraints due to sourcing materials and contractors have also contributed to an underspend on the 2022/23 Highways Capital Programme.

12.5.2 Priority was given to projects where spend was required to be completed/ committed in 2022/23, particularly Local Growth Fund projects and those funded through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) programme. Due to delays and programming constraints a number of schemes have been unable to be completed within 2022/23 and this has resulted in a re-phasing of committed projects. A summary of the key allocations carried forward is provided below.

Transport Block	
Local Transport Block/ CRSTS Carried forward due to delays to projects, owing to changes required following consultation, conflicting roadworks and to complete ongoing construction projects including land payments.	£770,970
Emergency Active Travel Fund Carried forward with approval of the Combined Authority and DfT to complete Active Travel Improvements on the Formby Bypass	£593,625
Pipeline Development Fund Carried forward to complete ongoing Major Scheme Business Cases	£628,203

Maintenance Block	
Carriageway Maintenance Block Carried forward to complete 2022/23 Carriageway resurfacing programme	£418,890
KRN Resurfacing – Carried forward to complete 2022/23 Carriageway resurfacing programme	£361,584
Drainage Carried forward to complete 2022/23 Drainage Improvement programme owing to difficulties procuring contractor.	£193,181
Street Lighting Carried forward to support ongoing LED replacement programme	£26,824
Highway Structures – Carried forward to owing to schemes being completed within budget	£164,474

<p>UTC LED Signal Head replacement – Project delayed following consultation with Combined Authority, owing to difficulties procuring contractor, works now scheduled to be undertaken in 2023/24-2024/25</p>	<p>£660,049</p>
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12.5.3 LED Replacement Programme

An underspend of £0.468m was experience during the year. The contractor has continued to undertake work as efficiently and effectively as possible. With more and more people working from home however, this has in some cases slowed delivery of the project due to parked vehicles with re-visits needing to be arrange and managed accordingly. This is alongside a difficulty in retaining skilled staff in the sector. To support this the main contractor has brought in a sub-contractor to assist in the delivery of LED unit installations and electrical tests. A decision was also made in light of rising energy costs, to reprofile the delivery programme and aim to deliver high wattage units as soon as practical, this is ongoing for 2023-24.

12.6 **Operational In-House Services**

12.6.1 Refuse & Recycling Collection (0.345m)

In November 2021, the government adopted the ‘Environment Act’ which concerns environmental governance, waste and resource efficiency, air quality, water, nature and biodiversity. The impact upon local authorities will mean a change to the collection regimes from households to include a food waste offer. The exact details of frequency and implementation requirements are yet to be announced by DEFRA. A strategic Waste Partnership has been created across the LCR with representation from LA’s, the CA and MRWA to seek consistency of collection arrangements where possible across the region. Whilst the details continue to be finalised it would be remiss to have procured waste receptacles that may not meet the criteria required, hence the re-profiling of capital monies to future financial years.

13 **Capital Outturn 2022/23 - Conclusion**

13.1 The capital programme continues to be a key element of the Council’s approach to meeting its core purpose. During the year expenditure has directly contributed to the delivery of key service priorities and services to residents and communities. The Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services will continue to manage the financing of the capital programme to ensure that capital funding arrangements secure the maximum financial benefit to the Council in future years.

14 **Corporate Performance 2022/23**

14.1 The Council has recognised that in considering its financial performance it should also provide details at year end of performance across a range of its services in order that it can demonstrate how outcomes that will drive the delivery of the core purpose relate to the budget.

14.3 As a result, the Council's Corporate Performance Report for 2022/23 is attached as Appendix B1 and B2 (together with the latest Corporate Risk Register - Appendix A) and provides: -

- An introduction and contextual statement from the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services.
- A detailed narrative on how the delivery of each element of the Council's core purpose has progressed during the year; and,
- A comprehensive suite of performance measures for key Council activities for 2022/23 and how these compare to 2021/22.

14.4 It is acknowledged that when reporting various Council activities on a year-on-year basis that there will be a degree of subjectivity within some areas, that a lot of Council activity is driven via demand from residents and businesses for which it has no direct control, and the external economic environment also impacts upon core activity. Those areas that are reported provide a clear view of the range of Council activity that is undertaken in supporting residents, communities and business across the Borough and how they support the core purpose.

14.5 Over this year the Council has strengthened performance reporting with regular quarterly reporting to Cabinet. Officers will continue to build upon this and it is to be noted that this year considerable progress has been made to strengthen performance reporting with the development of the Data Warehouse and implementation of Power BI (Business Intelligence).