

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

7 December 2021

TITLE:	Annual Report 2020/21
EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR:	Councillor Sybil Ralphs – Leader of the Council
CONTACT OFFICER:	Vanessa Higgins – Information Business Partner
WARDS INVOLVED:	All

Appendices Attached – Appendix A: Annual Report 2020/21

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 To present the Council's Annual Report for 2020/21, this is a core document which compares Staffordshire Moorlands' performance and costs with councils in the West Midlands region and nationally; and highlights further action where needed.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet notes the findings of the benchmarking exercises and the additional Priority Actions of the Corporate Plan suggested for the following 12 months.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 The Annual Report establishes the context for the Council in planning its performance delivery. This includes both the financial backdrop against which the council must deliver its services, the risk profile and also the local place context of the area and how it compares against a range of socio-demographic measures.
- 3.2 The report looks back over the Council's achievements in 2020/21 and uses national benchmarking data (2019/20) to assess value for money.
- 3.3 The analysis is built around the Corporate Plan priorities and provides a small refocus of Priority Actions for the next 12 months.

4. **How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

4.1 The Annual Report is built around the priorities contained within the Corporate Plan and therefore links into all four main aims and the supporting objectives.

5. **Alternative Options**

5.1 This report is for information with no decision required of the Panel.

Andrew Stokes
Chief Executive

Web Links and Background Papers

Information Team files
Benchmarking platforms

Contact details

Vanessa Higgins
Information Business Partner
vanessa.higgins@highpeak.gov.uk

6. **Detail**

6.1 The purpose of an Annual Report is to look back and take stock of the progress and achievements made against the Council's stated objectives and to use this intelligence to understand what still needs to be done and what new challenges lie ahead. The Annual Report does this by:

- looking at our performance against our own targets
- analysing our performance and costs against national and regional comparisons
- presenting the principal risks facing the council (NEW)
- presenting a place profile for the High Peak, such as health factors, deprivation levels, economic indicators and access to housing
- outlining the financial challenges facing the authority over the course of its Medium Term Financial Plan.

6.2 The highlights from the place profile are as follows:

- Over 30% of the area is classed as rural
- Ageing population, 65+ years projected to become the largest resident group by 2028
- Higher than average levels of unqualified residents
- Health outcomes – issues with adult obesity levels and smoking prevalence
- Indices of Multiple Deprivation – low overall but geographic and thematic pockets
- Employment – unemployment is higher than the county average and earnings are below average

- 6.3 Covid-19 continues to be felt in some of the council's performance results, with targets reviewed accordingly during 2020. As the benchmarking available for the Annual Report is for 2019/20 the full effect of lockdowns on national performance figures won't be known until the 2020/21 statistics become available.
- 6.4 Benchmarking shows that Staffordshire Moorlands is a low cost council; at £96.47 per head, net expenditure is 'very low' when compared to all district councils in England. The benchmarking issues highlighted below provide some further detail, along with the relevant actions that are planned or in progress:

Aim One: Healthier and safer

Benchmarks	Action in Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits – low spend / high performance for new claims, change of circs are slowest in the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, Universal Credit project, Access to Services Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fly-tipping – amongst lowest in region (increase in 20/21) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education (W.A.R campaign) / Enforcement - review of enforcement policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary accommodation low 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing projects - homelessness strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCTV – high spend, crime low 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCTV camera upgrade project, priority area for investment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure – low spend, participation rates improving but inactivity rates on the increase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports strategy, facilities improvement plan

Aim Two: Use of resources

Benchmarks	Action in Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Tax / Business Rates Collection – high performing, low spend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Package of support measures for businesses and tailored payment plans. 2020/21 national rates are likely to be negatively affected by the impact on the local economy from lockdown
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ombudsman Complaints – lowest 20% nationally. Reducing levels of complaints generally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Institute of Customer Services on an Access to Services Strategy

Aim Three: Local economy

Benchmarks	Action in Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business formation rate – small increase but lowest in the region. Vacancy rate (2020) was better than regional and national averages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerated business growth and employment programme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning processing speeds – performance is high, spend decreased and is now bottom 40% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding new team structures with a focus on customer services

• Tourism – high spend	• Tourism (recovery) Strategy
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Aim Four: Environment and Climate

Benchmarks	Action in Progress
• Waste & Recycling – high performing but high recycling cost / low waste cost	• Review of current arrangements in light of national waste strategy in 2021
• Public Toilets – high spend	• Local priority
• Parks and Open Spaces – mid 20% nationally on spend	• Parks Improvement Plans
• Emissions – Quarry activity in the area contributes to high emissions	• Implementation of Part 1 of the Climate Change Action Plan and publication of Part 2

6.5 The new Corporate Priority Actions arising from the 2020/21 Annual Report are identified as:

- ✓ Deliver a successful Corporate Peer Challenge visit from the LGA in January 2022, to shape further improvement activity
- ✓ Develop a Joint Venture company with Norse to deliver facilities management
- ✓ Publish Part 2 of the Climate Change Action Plan and commence delivery of the priorities contained within Parts 1 and 2