

**STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Cabinet**

**6 August 2024**

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Staffordshire Moorlands Annual Report 2022 - 2023</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>Councillor Mike Gledhill - Council Leader SMDC</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICERS:</b>	<b>Tanya Cooper- Head of Organisational Development and Transformation Julie Nankivell- Information Business Partner</b>
<b>WARDS INVOLVED:</b>	<b>Non-specific</b>

**Appendices Attached:**

**Appendix 1: Staffordshire Moorlands Annual Report 2022 - 2023**

**1. Reason for the Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present the Council's Annual Report for 2022/23, which compares Staffordshire Moorlands performance and costs with local authorities in the West Midlands region and nationally.

**2. Recommendations**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Notes the Annual Report 2022/23
- 2.2 Notes the main issues, threats and opportunities for the Council which are summarised in Section 9 of this report
- 2.3 Notes the findings of the benchmarking exercise which are summarised in Section 10 of this report.
- 2.4 Identifies any other areas that it considers should be considered for future action

**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 but also the local place context of the

Staffordshire Moorlands and how it compares against a range of socio-demographic measures.

3.2 The Annual Report sets out profile of the Staffordshire Moorlands and also includes details of the approach that the Council is taking to recognise equalities, diversity and inclusion and to respond to the challenges of climate change. This analysis, in addition to the financial context and risk analysis, confirm a number of issues, threats and opportunities for the Council which are summarised in Section 9 of the report.

3.3 The Annual Report looks back over the Council's achievements in 2022/23 and uses national benchmarking data (2021/22) to assess value for money. The analysis is built around the Corporate Plan (2019/23) priorities. The conclusion from the benchmarking analysis is that the Council's performance is comparatively strong with the costs of its services being comparatively low. There are however a number of areas of service delivery that require improvement (these are identified in Section 10 of the report).

#### 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 There are no option to consider

#### 6. Implications

6.1	<u>Community safety, including safeguarding and prevention of terrorism</u> The profile of Staffordshire Moorlands details the levels of crime in the district
6.2	<u>Workforce</u> None
6.3	<u>Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment</u> Chapter 3 of the Annual Report sets out the approach that the Council is taking to embed equalities, diversity and inclusion in its activities
6.4	<u>Financial Considerations</u> Effective performance management contributes to the Council's financial objectives  The value for money assessment needs to be used to inform future resource allocation

6.5	<u>Legal</u> None
6.6	<u>Climate Change and Sustainability</u> Chapter 4 of the Annual Report sets out The approach that the Council is taking to meet the challenges of climate change
6.7	<u>Conservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity</u> None
6.8	<u>Consultation</u> The report has been reviewed by the Alliance Leadership and Management Teams
6.9	<u>Risk Assessment</u> Chapter 6 sets out the principal threats and opportunities facing the Council

**ANDREW P STOKES**  
**Chief Executive**

**Web Links and  
Background Papers**

Grant Thornton CFO Insights reports

LG Inform  
<https://lginform.local.gov.uk/>

Corporate Peer Challenge Report (February 2024)  
<https://democracy.highpeak.gov.uk/documents/b10646/Corporate%20Peer%20Challenge%20Update%2022nd-May-2024%2010.00%20Resources%20Overview%20Scrutiny%20Panel.pdf?T=9>

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## 7. Introduction & Background

- 7.1 The purpose of the 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.
- 7.2 The Annual Report does this by:
- Considering a place profile for the Staffordshire Moorlands including factors such as health, deprivation levels, economic indicators and access to housing
  - Outlining the financial challenges facing the authority over the course of its Medium Term Financial Plan.
  - Setting out details of the principal risks facing the Council
  - Considering the Council's performance against its own targets
  - Analysing performance and costs against national and regional comparisons
- 7.3 The Annual Report establishes the context for the Council in planning its future performance delivery.
- 7.4 In order to obtain complete datasets for comparative purposes the report looks back over the Council's achievements in 2022/23 and uses national benchmarking data (2021/22) to assess value for money.

## 8. Annual Report 2022/23

- 8.1 The Annual Report 2022/23 is attached at Appendix A.
- 8.2 The report is set out as follows:
- **Chapter 1: Profile of the District** – Life in Staffordshire Moorlands: contextual information on housing provision, employment and skills, health issues and levels of crime
  - **Chapter 2: Financial Context** - The financial challenges facing local government and how the Council is addressing them
  - **Chapter 3: Equality and Diversity** – The approach that the Council is taking to embed equalities, diversity and inclusion in its activities
  - **Chapter 4: Climate Change** – The approach that the Council is taking to meet the challenges of climate change
  - **Chapter 5: Our Vision** - The key priorities for the Council as set out in the Corporate Plan (2019-2023)
  - **Chapter 6: Managing Strategic Risks** – The principal threats and opportunities facing the Council
  - **Chapter 7: Demonstrating Value for Money** - Progress against the corporate priorities and comparison of performance compared to other local authorities

- **Chapter 8: Future Priorities** – details of ongoing priority actions and influencing objectives

## **9. Key Challenges and Issues**

9.1 The profile of the Staffordshire Moorlands included in the Annual Report identifies a number of key challenges that need to be considered including:

- Population levels are static and aging
- Deprivation levels are low but there are issues around fuel poverty
- A substantial proportion of working population commute outside of the district
- The delivery of new homes is below target
- Long term health conditions partially linked to an ageing population profile need to continue to be prioritised
- Digital accessibility and cyber security

9.2 The risk section of the annual report sets out the key threats faced by the Council which include:

- World events and the impact on the UK economy and the consequences for the Council in the form of high and uncertain levels of inflation
- The uncertainty surrounding local government finance reforms
- The Council's assets stock and its fitness for purpose

9.3 There are a number of opportunities for the Council identified in the risk analysis:

- Effective commissioning and procurement
- Housing and business growth
- Access to national and regional funding opportunities

9.4 These issues, threats and opportunities were considered in the development of the Council's new Corporate Plan which was undertaken following the local elections in May 2023 and continue to be used to inform the Council's policy and strategy development and medium term financial planning.

## **10. Benchmarking**

10.1 The benchmarking comparisons are contained in Chapter 7 of the Annual Report (with supporting analysis in the Appendices). Where possible the analysis includes service performance and cost.

10.2 It is important to note that the overall analysis of comparative cost shows that the comparison of the Council's spend per capita against all district councils illustrates that Staffordshire Moorlands has relatively low spend (in the lowest 20% nationally) at £105.27 per head.



10.3 The analysis also demonstrates that Council's overall performance is strong when compared with other local authorities. This is confirmed in the Council's recent Corporate Peer Challenge report which concluded that the Council is **'performance-focused and can demonstrate the delivery of services that are high performing and low cost, with a value for money focus'**.

10.4 There are a number of areas which there is evidence of strong comparative performance including:

- Housing & Council Tax Benefits - Low Spend / High Performance for processing new claims, (one of the fastest in the region)
- Council Tax / Business Rates Collection – high performing (top quintile nationally) , low spend
- Recycling rate within top 20% nationally
- Planning processing performance above average regionally and nationally, spend decreased (bottom 40% nationally)

10.5 There are however a number of issues that are highlighted in the benchmarking analysis. These are set out below along with the actions that are in progress in response:

*Aim One: Healthier and Safer*

<b>Service</b>	<b>Benchmark Issue</b>	<b>Action in Progress</b>
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of temporary accommodation increasing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the Homelessness Strategy</li> <li>• Investment in additional staffing capacity</li> </ul>
Communities & Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCTV – high spend regionally, crime low</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCTV project completion</li> </ul>
Development Services / Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low levels of housing delivery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refresh of the Growth Strategy</li> <li>• Local Plan review</li> <li>• Consider housing delivery vehicle</li> </ul>
Leisure and Environmental Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sport &amp; Recreation Centres - Low spend, participation rates improved slightly but inactivity rates continue to increase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move More Strategy implementation to improve participation rates</li> <li>• Leisure transformation programme focussed on improving facilities</li> <li>• Leisure council controlled company being implemented</li> </ul>

### *Aim Two: Use of Resources*

<b>Service</b>	<b>Benchmark Issue</b>	<b>Action in Progress</b>
Customer Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ombudsman Complaints – lowest 40% nationally – issues with responsiveness to complaints</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the Access to Services Strategy</li> </ul>

### *Aim Three: Local Economy*

<b>Service</b>	<b>Benchmark Issue</b>	<b>Action in Progress</b>
Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business formation rate – small increase but lowest in the region and in the lowest 20% nationally.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refresh of the Growth Strategy</li> <li>• Accelerated business growth and employment programme</li> </ul>
Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism – high spend (top 40% nationally)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the Tourism Strategy</li> </ul>

### *Aim Four: Environment and Climate*

<b>Service</b>	<b>Benchmark Issue</b>	<b>Action in Progress</b>
Leisure and Environmental Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recycling – rate decreased but still within top 20% nationally - high spend.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of current arrangements in light of national waste strategy</li> </ul>
Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Toilets – high spend (top 20% nationally)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local priority</li> </ul>
Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parks and Open Spaces – spend decreased (lowest 40% nationally)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of Green Spaces Development Plan</li> </ul>
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Initiatives – below average / decreased spend</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan</li> </ul>

## **11. Future Performance Planning**

11.1 It is essential that the information contained within the report is used to inform future performance planning and budget allocation.



- 11.2 The Council adopted its new Corporate Plan (2023-2027) in October 2023 and consequently is in the process of revising its Performance Framework. This exercise has been delayed to undertake a more fundamental review to take account of the recommendations in the External Auditor's Annual Report 2022/23 (April 2024) for the Council to review and rationalise its performance indicators to create a smaller group of KPIs.
- 11.3 The consideration of the new Performance Framework to be adopted from 2024/25 is included on this meeting's agenda. The benchmarking information provides the Council with baseline information for the determination of targets against individual KPIs.