

Written Responses: Corporate Performance and Risk Monitoring Report: Q3 2023/24

Regarding disadvantaged performance gaps, there is an awareness that lots of work going into this space. However, reassurance was sought that this is an area being resourced to level required to impact outcomes in positive way.

Response from Andrew Best (Head of School Effectiveness):

As a Local Authority the disadvantaged gap remains a dual responsibility of both schools and the Council in addressing the gap, with what is a mixed system of maintained schools and academies. In terms of resourcing, all our schools have had the opportunity of attending a Disadvantaged Learners Conference in the Autumn Term, where we launched our Affordable Schools Strategy. This has been followed by a series of Network events that provide practical support to leaders and practitioners. The programme focuses not just on improving academic performance outcomes, but the health, well-being and attendance of the most vulnerable. 12 schools have also engaged in a targeted programme of Disadvantaged Learner support called IPPOP which looks at systems and processes in schools that have the greatest gap. It is also a strategic priority of the Wiltshire Learning Alliance as an area of focused improvement. Academy Trusts also have their own strategies and approaches at a strategic level, with their own priority work undertaken around disadvantaged outcomes within each individual Trust.

Paragraph 22 - EHCPs. There is an awareness of the Safety Valve plan. Considering all the implications highlighted to wider Safety Valve plan – (recognising for individual families involved for whom this is extremely difficult) – the fact this metric is not moving at expected pace, how is that going to impact SV plan?

Response from Ben Stevens (High Needs Block Sus Strat Lead) and Lisa Fryer (Performance and Quality Lead (SEND)):

The metric is not out of line with expectations. While EHCP numbers have gone up compared to last year (+704 as at Jan '24 compared to Jan '23), we are broadly in line with the unmitigated forecast on which Safety Valve was based. The actual numbers are 31 EHCPs ahead of the forecast, and this is likely a result of the faster than expected backlog clearance and so will not impact the plan. At this stage, we expected the number of EHCNA requests to remain high: 99(+14) as at Jan '24 compared to Jan '23. The mitigations required to begin bringing this number down are being prioritised in the plan.

While the work on the Safety Valve plan has begun, the Safety Valve deal formally begins from April 1st and we are expecting to see the impact of our mitigations in the first quarter of 24/25.

Paragraph 38 – Anti-social Behaviour. The service is under resourced with just one officer for whole of county. Is the Council looking at alternative ways to cover rather than just replacement of maternity cover?

Response from John Carter (Head of Public Protection):

The ASB team comprises of 2 ASB Officers, together with a Community Safety Officer. The ASB Officers focus on domestic related ASB, which is often linked to drug and alcohol issues. The Community Safety Officer deals more with ASB issues which impact on wider areas and town centres, and is leading on the implementation of Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs).

The maternity leave of one of the ASB Officers is having a significant impact on the resources available to deal with ASB complaints. We do work closely with Wiltshire Police, housing providers and Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner to identify which agency is best placed to deal with an issue. We have recently advertised for temporary ASB Officer to cover the maternity leave and following the second advert we have now had a good number of suitable applicants and interviews will be held on 13th and 14th February, and it is hoped that we will be able to recruit to the maternity cover post at that time.

In addition the Technical Support Officer who provides administrative supports the ASB team has been seconded to another role and we are unable to backfill so that is having a further impact on the ASB team

Paragraph 40. It was cited that care experienced young people not in suitable accommodation = 6%. What length of time are these individuals in unsuitable accommodation and are these as a result of lack of capacity?

Response:

The 6% of Care experienced young people reported as not in suitable accommodation equates to 12 young people :

- 3 are in custody and therefore deemed to be in unsuitable accommodation and for 1 of them we are paying a retainer so they can return to their home when they are released.
- 3 are in fact in suitable accommodation and this was a recording error which has now been corrected.
- 3 have informed their Personal Advisor that they are living out of area and have not been engaging, we do not know their address but Personal Advisors continue to regularly try to contact them.
- 3 young people have been offered suitable accommodation, 2 have declined it and 1 is due to move in in February.

The length of time that young people are in unsuitable accommodation varies according to their circumstances and choices. Wiltshire Council's Accommodation & Support Protocol for Care Experienced Young People has recently been launched which outlines how Wiltshire Council's Children in Care Team will work together with the Property & Support Service and Housing Solutions Service to support care experienced young people as they transition from placements funded by Wiltshire Council into suitable, long-term accommodation. Securing suitable accommodation for care experienced young people is, therefore, much more than just finding them somewhere to stay and a multi-agency approach is adopted when securing and sustaining accommodation for care experienced young people; agencies work

together to meet their statutory duties and corporate parenting responsibilities to provide a safe and supportive pathway to independent living.

Paragraphs 47 & 48 - Planning application time frames. What % of Planning applications have an agreed 'extension' and is that % increasing?

Response from Simon Day (Performance Delivery Manager, Building Control & Planning Tech Services):

Below are the data relating to the number of decisions/number of EOTs and the percentage. Whilst the percentage of EOTs agreed on Majors has increased steadily over each year, the same cannot be said of Non-Majors as 2021 showed a higher percentage of EOTs agreed than 2022 and 2023. This is despite officers being encouraged to agreed EOTs more and more recently.

Major Decisions	Number of Decisions	Number of EOTs	Percentage of EOTs
2021	135	88	65%
2022	117	82	70%
2023	117	86	74%

Non-Major Decisions	Number of Decisions	Number of EOTs	Percentage of EOTs
2021	4290	2692	63%
2022	3947	1852	47%
2023	3317	1696	51%