Agenda Item No:

Report To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet

Date of Meeting: Tuesday 26th November 2024
Thursday 12th December 2024

Report Title: Performance Report, Quarter 2 2024/25

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Portfolio Holder: Cllr Heather Hayward
Portfolio Holder for: Performance and Direction

Summary: This report summarises performance against the council's suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set out in the Borough Plan 2024-28, for the Quarter 2 period 2024/25.

This report pulls from across council services the information necessary to reflect the quarterly KPIs. Representing these in the four themes of the Borough Plan, that of Planet, People, Place and the councils Underlying Principles.

In addition to surrounding narrative for specific KPIs where available, this report highlights some of the key actions over the quarter where relevant to the themes of the Borough Plan.

Key Decision: No

Significantly Affected Wards: None

Recommendations: **Overview and Scrutiny**
The Cabinet is recommended to:-

I. Consider the performance data for Quarter 2 2024/25

Policy Overview: Performance measures reflect the objectives and priorities of The Borough Plan 2024-28.

	This quarterly Performance Report acts as an opportunity to monitor the progress made by the council against the Borough Plan.
Financial Implications:	None
Legal Implications:	None
Equalities Impact Assessment:	Not required as the report presents information on past council performance and does not recommend any change to council policy or new action.
Data Protection Impact Assessment:	Not required
Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):	Not required
Sustainability Implications:	None
Other Material Implications:	None
Exempt from Publication:	No
Background Papers:	The Borough Plan 2024 – 2028
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Report Title: Performance Report, Quarter 2 2024/25

Introduction and Background

1. This is the second performance report produced since Our Plan for the Borough (known as the Borough Plan) 2024 – 2028 was presented to Cabinet in July.

2. The key performance indicators reported here have been reorganised to reflect the themes of the Borough Plan with more formal re-categorisation including associated re-numbering being implemented going forward.

3. A number of measures are also undergoing revision or addition to reflect the new priorities and as such there may be some changes to the measures in future quarterly performance reports. For example, Ashford Port Health measures are still in development.

4. This Q2 report is the first to include the Planning Decision Quality measures, measured by the proportion of decisions on applications that are subsequently overturned at appeal. These measures can be found in the 'Place' section of the appendix. They replace the previous Planning Application Approvals measure which was considered to be redundant.

5. Any further changes will be highlighted in any subsequent reports for transparency purposes.

Current Position

6. The Borough Plan is the council's corporate plan. It describes in strategic terms the council's priorities for the period. It is from this plan, the council's policies and strategies, operational plans as well as teams and officer's objectives flow.

7. The vision of the Borough Plan: *To make Ashford a place where people, business and nature can collectively thrive*, is supported by three pillars, those of:

8. Planet – Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and creating places for nature will be at the heart of everything we do.

9. People – Listening and serving the Ashford community is our philosophy; we will make best use of available resources to build an equitable and fair society.

10. Place – Planning for the future of our community to make Ashford a place people are pleased to call home and love to visit.

11. These quarterly performance reports seeks to provide an opportunity to monitor the council's performance as reflected by these themes.

12. Highlights from the respective themes are summarised below with the **full quarterly Key Performance Indicator suite set out in Appendix A**

Planet

Highlights from the Quarter

13. **Two Kent councils join forces to launch innovative plan to help unlock housing developments from 'Stodmarsh ban'**

Ashford Borough Council and Canterbury City Council are establishing a Joint Venture company to satisfy nutrient neutrality rules in the River Stour catchment area, enabling thousands of much-needed new homes to be built.

A report setting out how the neighbouring authorities plan to unlock housebuilding in the two districts was presented to Ashford Borough Council's Cabinet during the reportable period (Thurs 26 Sept), with members approving recommendations that will lead to the Joint Venture Company being created.

Once established, Stour Environmental Credits Ltd, will source the mitigation that is required to get the stalled housing market moving in the River Stour catchment area of both authorities. It will enable the buying and selling of mitigation credits to developers, enabling them to demonstrate that their housing schemes are nutrient neutral and can proceed.

Ashford's Cabinet heard that the councils would set up Stour Environmental Credits using some of the £9.8m of the Local Nutrient Mitigation Funding awarded to the catchment by Government.

The new company will bid for approximately £7.5m funding from this allocation, with £450,000 to cover the first year's running costs and the balance to buy enough mitigation to unlock around 2,000 homes in Ashford and Canterbury.

14. **Finalists in the APSE Service Awards 2024 in the Best Efficiency and Transformation initiative category.**

Like many organisations post-pandemic, we had to review the validity of providing a desk space for every employee, resulting in a lot of unwanted furniture. Our insistence on a reuse rather than bin-it strategy has resulted in massive benefits to our local business and schools communities, significant

cost savings and an internal culture shift normalising circular approaches and breading responsibility for a climate conscious approach across departments.

People

Highlights from the Quarter

15. **Work starts on new homes to replace properties damaged by Mill View explosion**

Ashford Borough Council has started work on building four new homes to replace a row of houses that were badly damaged following an explosion at Mill View in Willesborough in 2021.

Contractor Jenner has begun construction of two, three-bedroom homes and two, two-bedroom homes constructed on the cleared site where 13, 15, 17 and 19 Mill View previously stood.

Three council-owned properties and one privately owned home were badly damaged in the explosion, which a Kent Fire & Rescue Service investigation later found was caused by a leak from a portable gas heater in one of the homes. Alternative accommodation was provided for the people affected.

The new homes will be built to a high standard, with a focus on energy efficiency, including solar panels on roofs. Measures have also been included that will help 'future-proof' the properties – straight stairs that would allow a stair-lift to be installed if required, and square shaped bathrooms so they could easily be converted into a wet room.

Work on building the four new homes in Mill View is expected to be completed by August 2025.

16. **Ashford Borough Council buys 14 newly-built studio apartments in town centre to help tackle homelessness**

Ashford Borough Council has acquired the freehold interests of 13-14 Elwick Road. The building consists of 14 newly-built studio apartments and the long leasehold interest of the ground floor commercial space.

The council acquired the adjoining property – Trafalgar House at the bottom of Bank Street – in May 2023 and this latest deal will enable the authority to use both buildings to bring forward much needed cost-effective temporary accommodation (TA). 13-14 Elwick Road shares common parts with Trafalgar House.

The ability to place 33 individuals / households in Trafalgar House, in addition to the 14 apartments at 13-14 Elwick Road plus Christchurch House (eight

units), Christchurch Lodge (eight units) and, from September 2024 Fortis House at Henwood (23 units), will help significantly lower the spend on costly bed and breakfast accommodation to the General Fund.

17. **Innovative temporary accommodation scheme for homeless people on Ashford car park continues to scoop prestigious awards**

An ambitious scheme by Ashford Borough Council which is creating high quality temporary accommodation apartments for homeless people on an under-used car park on the edge of Ashford Town Centre continues to shine in prestigious awards schemes.

The council has delivered the project with ZED PODS, an award-winning British modular company, to design and build 23 high-quality, extremely energy efficient, factory-produced modular homes for the site.

In recent times, the Henwood car park project has been shortlisted as a finalist in eight categories across five different award organisers, including the Constructing Excellence (London & South East region) 2024 Awards, where the project won the Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) award.

The council successfully applied for financial support from Homes England for the scheme – the Government is contributing £80,000 per unit, making a total of £1,840,000 towards the scheme costs of £7.4m.

The quality of the homes is a standout feature of the project. Originally it was planned to use converted shipping containers but the ZED PODS product is far superior because of its 'green' credentials – relevant to the council's ambitions to be a Green Pioneer. The project has evolved from being basic accommodation to the modular solution that is more sustainable for the long-term.

Place

Highlights from the Quarter

18. **Works start to restore the listed buildings at Newtown Works despite challenges in progressing the scheme**

Ashford International Studios has the potential to deliver on the ambitions for growth at a local, regional and national level, but there is still a long way to go and there remains many challenges which still need to be met. That was the headline at Ashford Borough Council's Cabinet meeting who received an update work on the scheme's progress in the reportable period (Thursday 27 September).

It is hoped the Ashford International Studios / Newtown Works project will

regenerate a 4.8-hectare brownfield site with 5 grade II listed buildings into a dynamic Ashford International Film Studios, residential development, education centre, commercial space and hotel.
Ashford Borough Council was awarded £14,773,745 from the Government's Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Round 1 to support the delivery of the Newtown Works development scheme that received planning consent in September 2020.

With a set deadline of the end of March 2025 imposed by the LUF funding, and the challenges with taking forward the Locomotive Sheds and educational facilities within those timescales, the Council and the Ashford International Development Company (AIDC) have looked at alternative options to ensure the LUF funding could be spent on works that would retain value and viability into the site.

19. **Showcasing the best of Ashford – proposals to improve town centre market offer**

Proposal for the expansion of the monthly Makers Market and creation of new permanent street trading pitches within Ashford Town Centre are on the way.

During the reportable period (Thursday 27 September) Ashford Borough Council's Cabinet gave the green light to recommendations from a cross-party working group which was created to improve the market offer in Ashford Town Centre and find a sustainable, community-led approach to its implementation

Last year Cabinet approved setting up this group to investigate opportunities for market activity in the town centre, alongside delivering the aims in the existing Town Centre Reset Strategy*, in response to a Motion put forward to Council to create a "Best in Kent" market.

20. **£4.53m investment in light industrial units at Ninn Lane, near Great Chart moves a step closer**

Strong demand for light industrial units in the area has prompted Ashford Borough Council to bring forward plans to invest £4.53m in developing a 40,000 sq ft light industrial estate at Ninn Lane near Great Chart.

The creation of the estate is expected to create around 50 jobs with companies who are currently clamouring for more light industrial space in the borough, inject new life into a derelict brownfield site, boost the local economy and provide the council with a good return on its investment.

A report setting out how the authority plans to unlock the development potential of the disused site was presented to Cabinet during the reportable period (Thur 25 July).

Ninn Lane is a former wastepaper recycling site which is nearly three acres

with multiple concrete buildings and hard standings. Ashford Borough Council owns the freehold of the site.

The units proposed are simple structures which would allow small businesses to fit out to their own needs. The inclusion of green energy technologies, such as rooftop solar panels, will be considered to see if they are feasible from a design, carbon reduction and financial return perspective.

21. **Ashford Food & Drink Festival**

The annual Ashford Food and Drink Festival took place in the period, the month-long celebration of the fabulous local food and drink that the borough has to offer

Throughout July, the town centre served up a menu full of wonderful food and drink activities, alongside some tempting offers. From wine tasting, teddy bear picnics, markets, weekend festivals, to pizza making and competitions.

Highlights included:
Ashfood! at Elwick Place – a family friendly event featuring food stalls and entertainment, including live music from Whiskey & Wine, cocktails from World Margarita 2024 finalist Lexi Palmer Brown from Hide Bar and Oyster Buoys with seafood delicacies.

A Tasting Evening with The Wine Garden of England and Boys Hall at Revelations in St Mary's Church.

The Award Winning Comedian That Cooks – George Egg! at Coachworks and much more.

Underlying Principles

Highlights from the Quarter

22. **Free Parking this Christmas in Ashford and Tenterden**

This December, our community can once again enjoy free parking in all council-owned car parks in Ashford and Tenterden during the festive season. Free parking will be available in both town centres to encourage residents and visitors to do their Christmas shopping locally and to support our local businesses.

Free Christmas parking will be available on the following days and times:

Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 December - FREE all day
Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 December - FREE all day

Details on council-owned car parks including a full list of car parks within the borough to take advantage of the offer above can be found on our dedicated parking web page.

23. **Regulator of Social Housing gives Ashford Borough Council a C3 consumer grading**

Following Ashford Borough Council self-referral and through subsequent engagement, the regulator concluded that the council does not have adequate systems and processes in place for the delivery and oversight of legal requirements relating to tenant health and safety and that held data about homes is of poor quality.

As a result of this, failings in how Ashford BC was meeting health and safety requirements were highlighted, including overdue electrical safety checks, fire remedial actions that have not been completed and smoke and carbon monoxide detection that has not been installed in some homes.

Since the council's self-referral, steps to address the failures have been implemented. This includes work to complete improvements to systems and processes for delivery and oversight of health and safety checks, commissioning a full stock condition survey to ensure it holds accurate data on the condition of its homes, improving complaints handling resources and processes, and developing a tenant engagement strategy.

Conclusion

24. The suite of Key Performance Indicators included at Appendix A in this report have been pulled from across services to give a view of the council's current performance from the view of the themes of the Borough Plan.

25. The Performance Indicators will be presented again in the Q3 performance report where a further update will be provided on current performance and any notable changes.

Contact and Email

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Appendix A

Performance Report – Quarter 2 2024 – 2025
Borough Plan Themes and Key Performance Measures

Planet

Key Performance Measures - Reported Quarterly

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_06 Number of organisations committed to active travel plans cycling/ walking	Number of organisations committed to travel plans cycling/ walking	KCC have completed their public consultation on priority routes they have identified in the county and we are awaiting results likely to be in next Quarter. Sustrans have completed the feasibility report for Ashford Area LCWIP Route 4 March 2024 and this will be reviewed at the quarterly Active Travel meetings.			Cycle Counters There is currently discussion with KCC Transport Planners in the potential funding of or re-allocation of some electronic counters that can be placed on some of the key town and borough cycleways (yet to be determined) for active travel. We want to better understand the current numbers of cyclists using			KCC are looking into funding x2 electronic counters so that we can measure a key active travel route in the town which will allow us to combine a marketing and promotions plan to measure success via increased utilisation and develop KPI's to measure impact.			

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
					the cycleways and trails for active travel (and leisure). We want to understand the current use and monitor usage levels, and then review the utilisation after the implementation of a targeted marketing and promotions plan of these routes. This will support increased activity levels and may also show the economic, environmental, and social benefits of these routes and future planning and decisions aligned with the LCWIP.						

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_09 Recycling Rate	% of borough waste recycled or composted	49%	50%		51%	50%		50%	50%		Contract change Q1 2024/25 Defra's nationwide recycling league tables - Local authority collected waste: annual results tables (Historical) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
CP_KPI_10 Refuse Collection Success Rate	% of successful refuse collections per 100,000 refuse collections made.	99.6%	99.96%		Please see comment below for Q1 data.			99.92%	99.96%		

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	

Contract change Q1 2024/25

Count of Service	Column Labels			
Row Labels	Food	Recycling	Residual	Grand Total
Mar	287	270	190	747
Apr	961	524	828	2313
May	2085	1491	1316	4892
Jun	754	456	453	1663
Jul	263	249	208	720

Data slightly unclear for the Q1 period as missed bins were not reported as normal at the start of the contract change with missed/ uncollected streets rolled over to the subsequent days for collection rather than flagged as missed.

Figures from May onwards however, are more reliable and show the increase in missed collections as a result of the contract change, new routes and equipment becoming established. These figures begin to fall as the period progresses and are continuing to be closely monitored as part of the broader contract management.

Waste data from UK local authorities is reported to WasteDataFlow with statistics available at the following links. [WasteDataFlow Waste and recycling statistics]

CP_KPI_38 Digital uptake - % of total council /% Increase transactions completed	Digital uptake - % of total council /% Increase transactions completed electronically.	89.74%	80%	✔	88.25%	80%	✔	85.93%	80%	✔	

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
electronically.											

Month	Digital Transactions	Calls	Total Transactions	Digital Uptake
Jul-24	52,395	8,283	60,678	86.35%
Aug-24	45,179	6,337	51,516	87.70%
Sep-24	43,160	7,069	50,229	85.93%

People

Key Performance measures - Reported Quarterly

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_17 Council Affordable Housing - New Build	No. of additional new build affordable homes delivered by council housing	0			0			1			
CP_KPI_18 Council Affordable Housing - On-Street Purchases	No. of additional on-street purchase affordable homes delivered by council housing	8			34			8			

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_19 Homelessness - New Triage Cases	No. of new triage cases	585			513			465			July (186) August (137) Sept (142)
CP_KPI_19b Homelessness Preventions (still in accommodation)	No. of households where homelessness was prevented	35			42			45			July (20) August (12) Sept (13)
Demand for the service remains consistently high, and to support this, an additional resource is being recruited. This role will help strengthen our ability to engage with households as soon as they present to the service, improving our chances of preventing homelessness and providing timely assistance to those in need.											

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
New Measure Number of families in temporary accommodation six week on		2			2			4			Data represents the number of families who have been in B&B accommodation for over 6 weeks at the end of each respective quarterly period The team have managed to keep the number of families in B&B over 6 weeks under the MHCLG target of 6. In order to achieve this, requires close monitoring and manging to create a chain lettings approach.
New Measure Housing arrears	Housing arrears as a percentage of rent collectable	New measure from Q1 24/25			2.58%			2.73%			

The team is putting additional actions in place to improve performance-

- Assessing the current situation by analysing the arrears profile and identifying addresses that are causing a high balance.
- Identifying accounts which require immediate court action.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	

- Build a list of long term static debt which could be targeted and recommended for a DHP.
- Using the MRI system to its full potential by ensuring that each rent account has an arrangement added.
- Identifying tenants who would benefit from assistance from the DHP and other support funds currently available.

The KPI for Housing arrears as a percentage of rent collectable will be calculated based upon two figures.

A. The current arrears figure as per the Business Objects report from the last Sunday of the Quarter
B. The total rent debit at the end of Q2 multiplied by 4 to calculate an annual rent charge

The formula to calculate the % of Housing arrears is as follows – “A” divided by “B” x 100
Arrears as at Q2 (29-09-2024) - £863,514.02
£15,793,704.40 rent debit for Q2 x 2 for the annual figure - £31,587,408.80

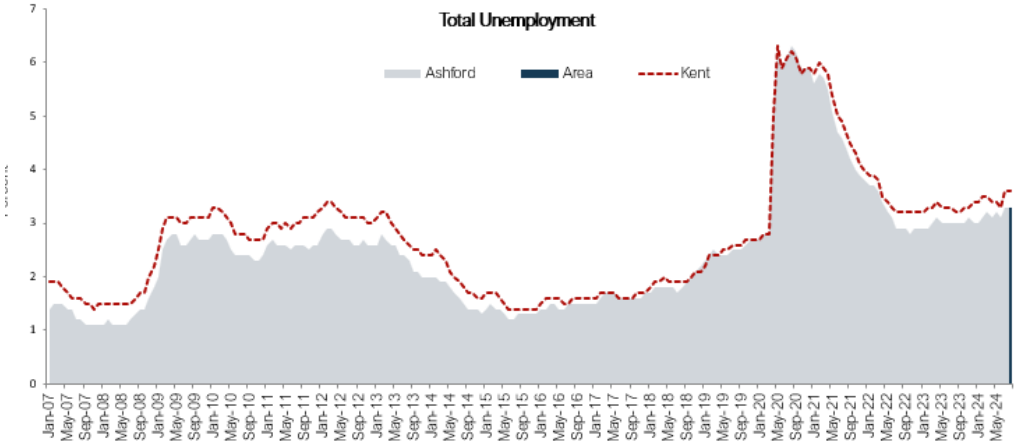
The percentage for Q2 is 2.73%

New Measure Housing voids – average void time (excluding major voids)	Average void time	New measure from Q1 24/25	14.1	21		41	21		Figure for September in average number of days. Period of officer leave, uncoordinated month. Less control than normal with failed post inspections not followed up as promptly as normal.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
New Measure Number of adaptations completed against number waiting (HRA)		New measure from Q1 24/25			33 / 72			9 / 59			Number completed: 24 June 2024 – 29 September 2024 (9). The number of applications received 2nd quarter were 59. This covers both minor and major adaptations. There have been more recent completions. We have 68 works on site currently. They are all active, with quotes awaited or inspections to be scheduled with OT.
New Measure Number of adaptations completed against number		New measure from Q1 24/25			No current waiting list			No current waiting list			

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
waiting (DFG)											
CP_KPI_20 Disabled Facilities Grants Completed	No. of disabled facilities grants administered by the council	24			36			21			Slower month due to higher holiday period but comparable to Q2 23/24
CP_KPI_20b Disabled Facilities Grant Spend	Actual spend per month for disabled facility grants	£382,318.30			£329,992.81			£355,563.96			steady month with progressive cases

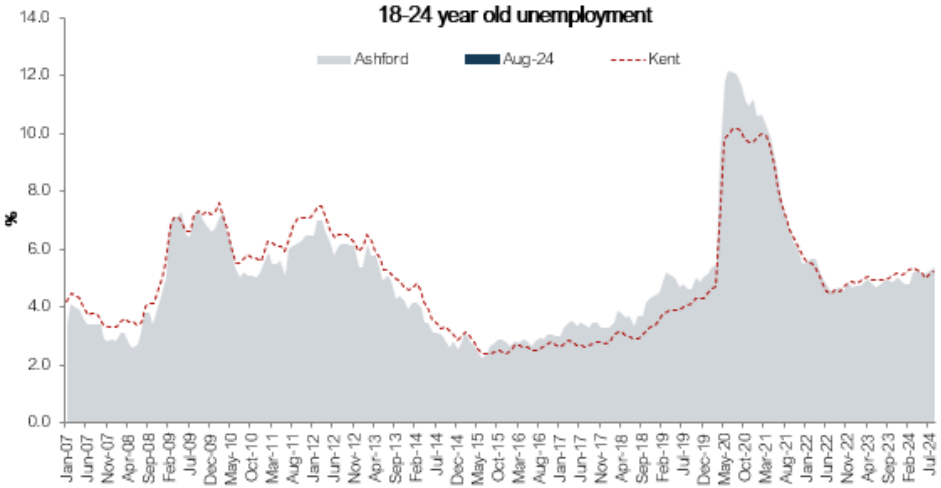
Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_21 Unemployment	Unemployment figures taken monthly from Kent County Councils Economy and employment data.	3.2%			3.1%			3.3%			August data latest available More information available within - Economy and employment data - Kent County Council



August 2024

Area	Number	Rate	Number change since last month	Percentage change since last month	Number change since last year	Percentage change since last year
Ashford	2,710	3.3%	+0	+0.0%	+300	+12.4%
Kent	34,425	3.6%	+15	+0.0%	+3,380	+10.9%

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_22 Unemployment 18-24yr olds	Unemployment 18-24yr olds taken monthly from the Kent County Council economy and employment data	5.2%			5.2%			5.4%			August data latest available More information available within - Economy and employment data - Kent County Council



18-24 unemployment

Area	Number	Rate	Number change since last	Percentage change since last	Number change since last	Percentage change since last
Ashford	495	5.4%	+10	+2.1%	+45	+10.0%
Kent	6,115	5.3%	+95	+1.6%	+385	+6.7%

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_32 Support to 'vulnerable' groups through leisure centre activity	Support to 'vulnerable' groups through leisure centre activity	**Latest information from May 2024** **723** attendance to healthy communities programs in May Highlights from May **<u>Health</u>** One You Kent visited both Julie Rose Stadium and The Stour, delivering Health Checks and Blood Pressure Checks to members at both sites. A local 'Moving on Up' group accesses the gym once a week at the Stour to support local community members in gaining confidence and encouragement to train in a safe environment. Reduced gym entry is provided to users of this session. **<u>Young People</u>** Link up with the Nike store from the local Ashford Outlet, which provides Community Ambassadors to support sessions in the community, specifically targeting young people between the ages of five and 17. Outreach visit to a Careers Fair at Highworth Senior & 6th Form School. Opportunity to inspire the next generation of Lifeguards and Swim Teachers, plus promoting the different Junior Memberships available.							**Latest information from August 2024** **Healthy Communities** Key group highlights: Xyla Health & Wellbeing has been selected to deliver the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme (NHS DPP) across our Ashford sites. NHS England, Public Health England and Diabetes UK have committed to improving efforts to prevent diabetes, It will be launched at the Stour. Five schools identified that could benefit from the ZOGGS funding. This initiative, which provides free yearly swimming lessons and rotates year groups each term, will benefit approximately 250 students, offering them the opportunity to learn a crucial life skill. Tenterden: An outreach program for Tenterden Food Bank based at the site has been set up, and we are meeting with the Mildred Trust to support more community programs. **<u>Health</u>** One You Kent visited both Tenterden, JRS and The Stour, delivering Health Checks and Blood Pressure Checks to members at both sites. **<u>Young People</u>**			

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
		Continuation of the Julie Rose juniors programme, providing to 150 children across three evenings **Older People** The new staff member delivering the Walk 2 Jog Programme at Julie Rose Stadium has settled in. Popular weekly session with an average of 14 attendees, at each weekly session, a total of 112 visits for the month Evergreen Badminton sessions at The Stour are still well attended, with over 12+ visits to each session, to the twice-weekly provision of the LTS programme. **Women and Girls** One of the Stour Personal Training team, delivering a circuit session in partnership with Ashford School for girls aged 14 – 18. This weekly session takes place during term time. **Low Socio-Economic Families** ZOGGS Funding has been secured to help offer free swimming lessons at the Stour, with the potential to provide swimming costumes and equipment. **SEND** Two junior school visits to the soft play area at the Stour for SEND children.									This summer saw the launch of the Stour Centre Summer Passport Challenge. The passport encourages children to stay active at the Stour Centre by collecting various activity stamps. The Rising Sun Service helps children suffering from domestic violence and abuse. This partnership will generate invoiced income for Clip to Climb, catering, and soft play while supporting this essential local community outreach. Link up with the Nike store from the local Ashford Outlet, which provides Community Ambassadors to support sessions in the community, specifically targeting young people between the ages of 5 and 17. The LTS programme now has over 2400 children signed up and Continuation of the Julie Rose juniors programme, providing 150 children across three evenings. **Older People** Walk 2 Jog Programme at JRS remains a popular weekly session with an average of 14 attendees, at each weekly session, a total of 112 visits for the month.	

Place

Key Performance Measures - Reported Quarterly

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_13 Food Hygiene Rating	% of businesses in the borough with a food hygiene rating above 3	98.06%	98.5%		98.3%	98.5%		98.4%	98.5%		

Food Hygiene Rating System

Distribution of FHRS ratings over time for Ashford at 17/10/24 01:25

Food Standards Agency

Number of establishments in each rating

FHRS Rating	Feb - 24	Mar - 24	Apr - 24	May - 24	Jun - 24	Jul - 24	Aug - 24	Sep - 24	Oct - 24
5 - Very good	918	928	928	935	935	945	941	948	967
4 - Good	99	97	95	95	95	83	80	79	75
3 - Generally satisfactory	42	40	39	38	38	43	42	29	28
2 - Improvement required	10	9	9	8	8	7	8	9	9
1 - Major improvement required	9	10	10	9	9	7	8	8	9
0 - Urgent improvement required	4	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
Total rated establishments	1082	1086	1083	1087	1087	1086	1080	1074	1089
Establishments with rating of 3 or better	1059	1065	1062	1068	1068	1071	1063	1056	1070

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_33 Business survival - current vacancy rates	Current Vacancy rates	10.1%			10.4%			10.38%			5,411 premises in the borough 562 with either an exemption or empty relief indicating vacancy.

Business survival, measure based upon our business rates records comparing the total number of rated premises against those which have an empty property exemption or relief applied to their accounts.

Date	No of props	Exemptions	Empty 'Reliefs'
01-Jul-23	5437	306	197
01-Oct-23	5442	298	217
01-Jan-24	5451	319	222
01-Apr-24	5423	314	236
01-Jul-24	5422	313	252
01-Oct-24	5411	313	249

CP_KPI_34 Ashford town centre vacancy rate	Ashford town centre vacancy rate	17.6%			18.8%			18.7%			The area surveyed is the High Street, Middle Row, New Rents, North Street, Bank Street, Tufton Street, County Square, Park Mall and Elwick Place. This is surveyed manually quarterly.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	

Excluding Park Mall, County Square, Elwick Place

Date	Total number of units surveyed	Number of units vacant	% of units vacant	National benchmark
Oct-22	235	29	12.3%	10.9%
Jan-23	235	28	11.9%	10.2%
Apr-23	235	27	11.5%	11.0%
Jul-23	235	29	12.3%	10.9%
Oct-23	235	26	11.1%	11.2%
Jan-24	236	32	13.6%	15.3%
Apr-24	236	34	14.4%	15.3%
Jul-24	235	33	14.0%	
Oct-24	237	33	13.9%	

Including Park Mall, County Square, Elwick Place

Date	Total number of units surveyed	Number of units vacant	% of units vacant	National benchmark
Oct-22	335	50	14.9%	10.9%
Jan-23	335	51	15.2%	10.2%
Apr-23	335	48	14.3%	11.0%
Jul-23	335	51	15.2%	10.9%
Oct-23	335	48	14.3%	11.2%
Jan-24	336	59	17.6%	15.3%
Apr-24	336	61	18.2%	15.3%
Jul-24	335	63	18.8%	
Oct-24	337	63	18.7%	

CP_KPI_35 Contribution to budget from commercial investments	Contribution to budget from commercial investments	95%	95.46%	92.19%	Contribution to budget from commercial investments utilising the budgeted figures provided as part of the councils budget books.

The Corporate Property Annual Performance Report 2022/23 reviewing revenue performance of the Council's corporate property portfolio during the financial year, as well as advising on its expected future performance: Report Title: (moderngov.co.uk)

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_36 Vacancy rates (in our corporate property)	Vacancy rates (in our corporate property)	9.7%			11.6%			10%			

KPI 36 Vacancy Rates for Corporate Property
Occupancy for Q1 was 89.4% and Q2 saw an increase to 90%.

Q2 Performance Narrative
The Industrial sector is performing well with strong demand for units at Ellingham Industrial Estate and Carlton Road. Vacant units have gone under offer relatively quickly, especially with the smaller units. Rents continue to rise and this is shown from open market lettings.

The retail sector has slightly improved mainly due to cheaper rents. Sales volumes have increased, and footfall has remained steady over the last quarter. Discount stores, cafes, barbers and other services on the high street are doing well. It seems there is more demand from independent retailers also as long as rents are low enough.

There is subdued demand across the office sector from occupiers which has taken its toll on the office sector and vacancy levels are high generally across the board. Home working is still popular, however employees and employers are both seeing the benefits of hybrid working. Grade A office space is far easier to let as businesses are wanting less but better space.

CP_KPI_41 Parking usage	Parking usage Ashford and Tenterden	281,757	259,083	302,647	Made up of 193,294 from Ashford town centre car parks & 109,353 from Tenterden car parks.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_52 Number of new 106 files opened	number of new 106 files opened	Number of new 106 files opened – 4 Number of Draft 106 agreements sent out – 9 Number of 106 cases completed - 2			Number of new 106 files opened – 3 Number of Draft 106 agreements sent out – 2 Number of 106 cases completed - 0			Number of new 106 files opened – 2 Number of Draft 106 agreements sent out – 4 Number of 106 cases completed - 1			
New Measure Planning decision quality - Major	Measured by the proportion of decisions on applications that are subsequently overturned at appeal	New measure						3.03%	<10%		
New Measure Planning decision quality – Non Major	Measured by the proportion of decisions on applications that are subsequently	New measure						0.43%	<10%		

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
	overturned at appeal										

Reported with a 9-month lag time allowing for appeals to process.

The quality of decisions made by local planning authorities for applications for major and non-major development, measured by the proportion of decisions on applications that are subsequently overturned at appeal (including those arising from a 'deemed refusal' where an application has not been determined within the statutory period).

Planning Decision Quality measures replace previous Planning Application Approvals measure. Planning application approval information is available within the statistical return nationally reported available at Live tables on planning application statistics

The Q2 figures indicate that the Council continues to be successful in the majority of cases that are appealed to the Planning Inspectorate and indicators for both major and non-major schemes fall well within the national and local threshold of 10% of overall decisions being overturned.

CP_KPI_54 Speed of Major Planning Application Decisions	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks (or within such extended period as agreed in writing between the	91%	65%	✔	100%	65%	✔	100%	65%	✔	

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
	applicant and the local authority)										
CP_KPI_54b % of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	66%	75%		71%	75%		76%	75%		

The latest data tables on local government Planning including Ashford Borough Council, covering the speed and quality of planning decisions are available at the following link: Live tables on planning application statistics

Performance in Q2 for this indicator was excellent with all decisions on major applications made within the statutory time period or an agreed Extension of Time with the applicant. This has further improved the Council's position against the rolling 24 month target where it should be noted that the Government minimum target is 60%.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_55 Speed of Non-Major Planning Application Decisions	% of minor and other planning applications determined within 8 weeks (or within such extended period as has been agreed in writing between the applicant and the council).	89%	75%	✅	92%	75%	✅	92%	75%	✅	
CP_KPI_55 b % of non majors determined within 8 weeks amended to	% of non majors determined within 8 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	84%	80%	✅	85%	80%	✅	86%	80%	✅	

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
reflect 24 rolling month											
The latest data tables on local government Planning including Ashford Borough Council, covering the speed and quality of planning decisions are available at the following link: Live tables on planning application statistics Performance in determining non-major schemes remains significantly above target and has improved when measured against the rolling two-year performance indicator.											
CP_KPI_56 Number of live planning casework reducing backlog	Number includes all conditions applications, pre-app cases, as well as applications for outline, full or reserved matters consent. Reducing backlog with a capacity set at 550 open cases	614 (424)	550		595 (407)	550		535 (326)	550		
Q2 has seen this indicator fall below the live cases threshold target of 550 cases for the first time for several years even taking account of cases restricted from a decision being made due to nutrient neutrality (Stodmarsh). At the end of Q2, 209 fell into this category leaving a net figure of											

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
live NON-STODMARSH cases reflected in brackets above. It is anticipated that the setting-up of the Joint Venture Company (Stour Environmental Credits) with Canterbury City Council to acquire and manage nutrient mitigation credits will help to unlock some of these cases. Numbers of decisions being issued has consistently been higher than new cases being received and managers have been proactively working with officers to focus on the handling of older cases alongside the introduction of the Good Practice Guide to encourage the efficient processing of non-major schemes.											
New Measures Port Health											New measures reflecting the now fully operational status of the Port health facility – details of the measures currently being developed. Defra have agreed to release the information that we need to be able to calculate the potential income but unfortunately, they can't do it retrospectively as such the first set of reports should be available for the next quarterly report Received income for Q2 - £2,316,564.

Underlying Principles

Key Performance indicators - Reported Quarterly
Quarterly Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
New Measure Number of Stage 1 complaints		149			224			178			The council has reduced its complaint handling time from 15 to ten days following guidance released by the Ombudsman. Whilst the guidance won't be officially adopted until early 2026, adoption by the council now will ensure compliance and expediate the resolution of complaints.
New Measure % Stage 1 complaints resolved in 10 days		81%			62%			78%			

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
New Measure Number of Stage 2 complaints		18			49			38			
New Measure % Stage 2 complaints resolved in 20 days		89%			84%			77%			
CP_KPI_26 Benefit Change of Circumstance Processing	Average time taken to process a benefit change of circumstance in no. days	1.98	10	✅	1.77	10	✅	1.87	10	✅	

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_27 Benefit New Claim Processing Time	Average time taken to process a new benefit payment claim in no. days	22.1	28		29.91	28		28.94	28		As working age claimants move over to UC, we are left with more complicated cases to assess such as temporary accommodation & supported accommodation cases, that generally take a bit longer to assess.
CP_KPI_42 FOI Response Rate	% of freedom of information requests responded to within 20 working days	98%	95%		98%	95%		98%	95%		Quarter 2 – 178 requests received in the period. 2 answered outside the require 20 working day window, both answered on the 21st working day.
CP_KPI_43 Business Rates Collection	% of national non-domestic rates collected by the council - cumulative figure per month	98.52%	99%		29.72%	24.75%		57.93%	49.5%		Government finance including Ashford Borough Council, covering borrowing and investment, capital payments and receipts, local Council Tax support, quarterly revenue outturn and receipts of Council Taxes and national non-

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
											domestic rates are available here
CP_KPI_44 Council Tax Collection Rate	Percentage of council tax collected - cumulative figure per month	97.4%	98.52%	⚠	29.58%	24.57%	✔	57.29%	49.14	✔	
CP_KPI_46 Compliance - Gas Safety Certificates	% of ABC properties with up to date gas safety certificates	100%	100%	✔	100%	100%	✔	100%	100%	✔	
CP_KPI_47 Number of days sickness per full time equivalent		9.31 days per FTE for 2023/24									A total of 4,881.71 days were lost due to sickness absence across the 12-month period from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
Information collected on a six-monthly basis in order that the Council's senior team have an up-to-date overview of key HR Metrics. OS Sickness Report 2023_24.pdf (moderngov.co.uk)											
CP_KPI_48 Average Speed of Customer Service Calls Answered	Average wait time for customer service calls - to be benchmarked with results across Kent	0h 00m 48s	0h 01m 38s	✅	0h 01m 59s	0h 01m 38s	🛑	0h 01m 30s	0h 01m 38s	✅	Measure returned to target in the quarter following the slight increase on call transaction time for Q1 which was due to the implementation of our new waste contract. Call handlers were becoming acquainted with the new associated systems and new working practices.
CP_KPI_51 number of ongoing litigation/ court proceedings	number of ongoing litigation/court proceedings	Number of ongoing litigation matters = 153 Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC = 0			Number of ongoing litigation matters = 159 Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC = 23 All these are associated to Disrepair Claims			Number of ongoing litigation matters = 156 Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC = 6 All these are associated to Disrepair Claims			

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2023/24			Q1 2024/25			Q2 2024/25			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_39 Social media engagement	Social media engagement	Q4 (Jan – Mar) **Impressions:** Facebook: 644,613 Twitter: 10,602 Nextdoor: 160,347 Instagram: 4,446 **Followers:** Facebook: 10,210 Twitter: 9,029 Nextdoor: 29,786 Instagram: 2,875			Q1 (Apr – June) **Impressions:** Facebook: 528,018 Twitter: 7,480 Nextdoor: 186,716 Instagram: 2,977 **Followers:** Facebook: 11,844 Twitter: 9,026 Nextdoor: 30,678 Instagram: 2,906			Q2 (July – Sept) **Impressions:** Facebook: 424,616 Twitter: 13,366 Nextdoor: 216,415 Instagram: 6,201 **Followers:** Facebook: 11,950 Twitter: 8,951 Nextdoor: 30,678 Instagram: 2,956			

Ashford Borough Council's Communications team is responsible for managing the council's social media accounts. Our most active platforms that residents can engage with the council on, include Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor and Instagram.

The data will allow the Council to better understand the needs of our residents and ensure that our social media strategy is shaped by the results of the data.

With circa 50,000 combined total followers across all ABC social platforms, the Communications Team are also actively exploring methods to further grow each platform through various digital tools so that they can effectively reach more residents across the borough, including those in rural areas.