Agenda Item No:

Report To:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday 30th June 2026 Thursday 9th July 2026
Report Title:	Annual Performance Report 2025/26
Report Author: **Job Title:**	Natalie Sloan Performance and Insight Officer
Portfolio Holder: **Portfolio Holder for:**	Cllr. Heather Hayward 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 year 2025/26. This report pulls from across council services the information necessary to reflect the KPIs. Representing these in the four themes of the Borough Plan, that of Planet, People, Place and the council's Underlying Principles. In addition to explanatory narrative for specific KPIs where available, this report highlights some of the key actions over the year 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. Note the contents of the Annual Performance Report and approve its publication on the council's website.**
Policy Overview:	Performance measures reflect the objectives and priorities of The Borough Plan 2024-28. This Annual 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: Annual Performance Report 2025/26

Introduction and Background

1. The Annual Performance Report 2025/2026 is an important pillar for the council's transparency agenda:

    - Providing an opportunity to look at the council's achievements and the milestones reached, in the context of the Borough Plan, from the past financial year.

    - As well as summarising the council's performance against its suite of key performance measures.

2. The Annual Performance Report details the retrospective year, covering the period up until 31st March 2026.

3. It is important to note that since the closure of the period and the date of this report's publication, many of the items covered, performance indicators measured, will have moved on and further detail about this progression will be covered in future quarterly reports where appropriate.

Current Position

4. 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.

5. 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: Planet, People and Place. Further information about Ashford Borough Council's Borough Plan can be found on our website.

6. Highlights from the respective themes are covering the year are detailed in the narrative report, Appendix A, with the full quarterly Key Performance Indicator (KPI) suite set out in Appendix B**.**

7. Management Team have reviewed the targets and tolerances for the KPI suite. As a result, this report introduces new targets for some KPIs and revised targets for others. Any changes to targets have been noted against the respective KPIs in Appendix B.

8. KPI.PLACE.025 Revenue generated through the Border Control Post has been removed from the performance reports moving forward. Having been monitoring this KPI over a period of time, the Management Team have determined it to be operational and will therefore be moved to operational monitoring moving forward.

9. KPI.PLANET.002, previously reported as annual council owned renewable energy provision (kWh), has been revised into two KPIs to provide an indication of the total installed solar capacity and solar energy generation. The new KPIs are:

    - KPI.PLANET.002a Total potential capacity of council owned renewable energy provision (kWh)
    - KPI.PLANET.002b Total solar generation (kWh)

10. The council has introduced a new performance indicator tracker system to support the updating and monitoring of KPIs, with a view to improving transparency and performance reporting going forward.

11. A number of measures continue to undergo revision and as such there may be some changes to the measures in future quarterly performance reports.

12. Any further changes will be highlighted in any following reports for transparency purposes.

Conclusion

13. This is the second Annual Report for the Borough Plan 2024-28, which outlines the strategic vision and objectives guiding the councils work within this period.

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

15. The Performance Indicators will be presented again in the Q1 2026/27 performance report, where a further update will be provided on current performance and any notable changes.

Contact and Email

16. Natalie Sloan – Natalie.sloan@ashford.gov.uk

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Ashford Borough Council

Annual Performance Report

2025-2026

Ashford Borough Council

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Message from the Chief Executive



Welcome to this Annual Performance Report, which reflects on a year of progress across our Borough Plan priorities and highlights the work taking place to make Ashford a place where people, business and nature can collectively thrive.

Throughout this report you will see the breadth of activity delivered across the borough. From pioneering decarbonisation projects at Julie Rose Stadium, investment in low-carbon housing and support for residents to recycle more food waste, to schemes helping households stay warm and well, new affordable and specialist homes, and continued support for community wellbeing, culture and local pride, there have been many examples of positive progress over the past year.

We have also continued to invest in Ashford as a place - improving parks and leisure facilities, celebrating local events and markets, progressing regeneration opportunities, and strengthening the borough's cultural and economic offer. Alongside this, work has continued on major strategic priorities including housing delivery, environmental improvement, community safety, digital connectivity and international rail advocacy.

This has also been a year of change and ambition. We have seen new approaches to service delivery, further investment in council housing and public assets, innovation in areas such as border controls and environmental mitigation, and continued collaboration with partners to improve outcomes for residents.

At the same time, we recognise that there remain significant challenges, whether in responding to national policy change, maintaining momentum on regeneration, delivering improvements in housing services and ensuring that growth is supported by the right infrastructure.

As local government continues to evolve, including through proposals for simpler council structures across Kent and Medway, we remain focused on delivering good services, supporting our communities and planning responsibly for the future. This report shows both what has been achieved so far and the scale of the work still underway.

I hope you find this report informative and encouraging, and I look forward to sharing further updates as these projects and priorities continue to develop over this and coming years.

Tracey Kerly

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The borough today:



Population
132,740

(Census 2021)



Area
224 square miles

(largest borough in Kent)



Households
53,576

(Census 2021)



Ethnicity
12% population minority ethnic

(Census 2021)



Average House Prices
£344,000

(February 2026 –House Prices, ONS)



Average Annual Salary
£33,979

(Annual Pay – Gross, Full Time)
(Annual survey of hours and earnings 2025, ONS)



Crime
9,764

All Ashford Borough Crime for the year

Fall of 4.8% on the previous year



Average Private Rents
£1,239 - annual increase of 5%

(March 2026 – House Prices, ONS)



Visitors each year
4.6 million

(Kent Tourism Economic Impact Study 2024, Visit Kent)



National Landscapes
(formerly AONB)

2 areas

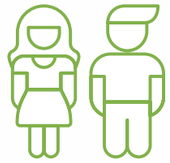
High Weald and Kent Downs



Number of businesses
6,555 - **VAT and/or PAYE registered)**

91% are micro business (0-9 employees)

(KCC - UK Business Counts 2025)



Life Expectancy at Birth
Male – 81.6 | Female – 83.9

(Local Authority Health Profiles – Fingertips Public Health Data)



Unemployment rate
3.0% (March 26)

(KCC - Economy and employment data)



Universal credit claimants
17.5% - December 2025

(KCC Universal Credit Claimants, February 2025)



14% of homes
are rented from the council or a housing association

(Census 2021)



17.9% of homes
are rented from a private sector landlord

(Census 2021)

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Borough Plan 2024-2028

The Borough Plan 2024-28 that this Annual Performance report is based upon sets out the council priorities over a four-year period, as we face the dual challenges of climate and economy and strive towards our vision: To make Ashford a place where people, business and nature can collectively thrive.



Three pillars support this vision:

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

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.

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

This Annual Report highlights the steps made towards this vision during the last year.



Planet

Ashford Borough Council partners with Teratherm Energy to pioneer innovative decarbonisation technology at Julie Rose Stadium

As part of Ashford Borough Council's commitment to achieving net zero emissions across its assets by 2030, an innovative ground source heating solution has been installed at Julie Rose Stadium, to replace the gas installation that was reaching the end of its life. The project was delivered in collaboration with Teratherm Energy, a local company specialising in innovative heat generation technology.

Supported by council funding, the Rural England Prosperity Fund, and private investment, the scheme has contributed to the decarbonisation of the council's assets and supported the local green economy. The new system, which has been tested in limited domestic scenarios, is a proof-of-concept at the stadium.

The benefits include lower maintenance, cost savings, higher efficiency, and potential for net zero operation. The project also supported green jobs and skill development in the region.



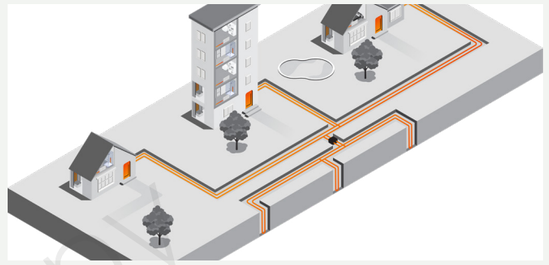


Energy efficiency schemes improving homes and helping to reduce costs

The council is delivering energy-efficiency improvements to homes through schemes aimed at cutting residents' heating costs, improving warmth and reducing carbon emissions.

A £2.2m scheme to install ground source heat pumps (GHSP) in 74 homes in Appledore and Charing is helping to reduce resident's bills and marks the first time that the council has installed GHSP heating systems in residential properties. The scheme forms part of a bigger drive by the council to retrofit around 700 homes with energy-saving measures using Government funding of £5.1m. The money – from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund – is bolstered by a £6.2m contribution from the council. Working with a delivery partner, improvements already delivered over the past 18 months includes cavity wall insulation, external wall insulation, new windows and doors, under floor insulation, air source heat pumps and solar panels.

In addition, the council secured £2m grant funding in September from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), which the council has match funded. This realises a total of £4m to be spent on energy improvements to around 250 homes across the Borough as part of the Warm Homes Social Housing Wave 3 project. The scheme will run over 3 years and is centred on improving the energy efficiency of council owned housing. The project will reduce heating costs for residents, reduce the cost of repairs, and improve the warmth of homes, along with a sense of well-being. The works will include but are not limited to, new heating and hot water systems, external wall insulation, new windows and doors, loft insulation and the installation of solar panels.



Ashford residents encouraged to recycle their food waste

In September, residents were encouraged to recycle their food waste by using the provided food caddies, helping reduce the amount of food waste found in both refuse and recycling bins.

As part of the campaign, households received:

- A helpful food waste recycling guide
- A roll of compostable food caddy bin liners
- A sticker placed on both their refuse bin and recycling bins if no food caddy is presented on collection day

Thanks to residents' efforts, food waste recycling in the borough has increased by 14% over the past year. However, nearly half of food waste (48%) is still being placed in refuse bins, and it continues to be one of the leading causes of contamination in recycling bins, so there's more we can do.

Outdoor food caddies are provided for free, including replacements, and food waste is collected weekly. Food waste collected in the food caddies is processed naturally to produce fertiliser for local farms and biogas. This biogas powers the recycling plant and contributes to the national grid, generating enough energy to power over 3,000 homes each year. Recycling food waste can also help residents save money by encouraging more mindful shopping and reducing unnecessary purchases.





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Solar Together relaunches offering a move to renewable energy

Residents, businesses and community groups across the Ashford borough and wider Kent can once again come together to invest in renewable energy through a group-buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage.

Solar Together helps participants feel confident they are paying the right price for a high-quality installation from trusted installers. Since the launch of this initiative in 2020, more than 280 solar PV and battery installations have been completed across the Ashford borough.

It is free to register and there is no obligation to go ahead with an installation. Ashford Borough Council is working with Kent County Council, in partnership with iChoosr. As experts in sustainable energy, iChoosr are helping to make the transition to clean energy as cost-effective and hassle-free as possible.





Cycle Ashford campaign to encourage residents onto their bikes

Cycle Ashford, a new initiative to promote cycling as a key mode of active travel and leisure activity in the borough was introduced by Ashford Borough Council in August. The initiative aims to increase participation from all sections of the community by making it easier for everyone to utilise the cycling infrastructure that is available.

Central to Cycle Ashford is a new website, www.cycleashford.org.uk that provides information about cycling in Ashford and a bespoke route planner.

In addition, the website promotes cycling events, signposts users to local cycling services and shares hints and tips from local cycling enthusiasts.

The campaign is supported by Henry Urand, para triathlon World Champion and Paralympian, and Ashford resident.

Cycle Ashford



Green Flag Award for Victoria Park

In July, Victoria Park received the Green Flag Award. The Green Flag Award® scheme recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world.

The site is one of 2,250 in the UK to achieve the award, which is managed by Keep Britain Tidy under license from the UK Government Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

As set out in our Borough Plan, we want to make Ashford a place where people, business and nature can collectively thrive. We understand the importance of beautiful green spaces to our residents and seek to create places that offer spaces to be active, to relax and to build community, while also making space for nature.

The Green Flag Award assessment included desk research and a site visit in May 2025. It assessed presentation, safety and security, maintenance of equipment, buildings and landscaping, litter and cleanliness and general promotion of the area and facilities on offer.

Green Flag Award®

STOUR ENVIRONMENTAL CREDITS LTD

First free septic tank installation completed under Stour Environmental Credits Ltd nutrient mitigation scheme

The National Rivers Consortium (NRC) commenced its free septic tank upgrades as part of its expanding nutrient mitigation programme, helping to restore river health and unlock stalled housing development across Kent.

The installation at each location of a new, modern treatment plant marks the first upgrades delivered under the Consortium's agreement with Stour Environmental Credits Ltd (SEC), a joint venture company created by Ashford Borough Council and Canterbury City Council.

The installations at Charing Heath and Bilting are the first of a planned series of septic tank upgrades across the Stour River catchment, where phosphorus and nitrogen concentrations have been a limiting factor for planning departments. By tackling the source of nutrient pollution directly, the NRC programme supports both environmental recovery and local authority housing strategies.

For homeowners, the scheme provides upgraded wastewater treatment at no personal cost. The modern replacement systems offer higher performance, lower operational risk and full regulatory compliance. Participation is voluntary and the scheme is carried out with the support and co-operation of Stour Environmental Credits Ltd and local planning authority.

The nutrient mitigation framework underpinning the programme is fully aligned with Natural England's guidance and broader government ambitions for improved water quality, biodiversity recovery and sustainable development. By reducing nutrient loads at source, these interventions build long-term resilience into river catchments and help local authorities meet statutory environmental responsibilities.

People



Ashford Borough Council participating in National Energy Action's Warm Homes Healthy Futures scheme

Ashford Borough Council has received nearly £79,000 of funding from the leading fuel poverty charity National Energy Action (NEA) to participate in their Warm Homes Healthy Futures scheme.

The scheme, which ran until March 2026, aimed to engage with hundreds of residents who have health conditions made worse by the cold, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, depression and heart disease.

The scheme was opened to residents across the Ashford borough, with our Climate and Energy team working with GP practices, hospitals and social care teams to deal with responses and provide case-worker support to the most vulnerable residents to live in warm homes.

WARM HOMES HEALTHY FUTURES



Eat Well Spend Less & Wellbeing Roadshow

Throughout the year, residents in the borough were able to get additional Cost of Living and wellbeing support through the Eat Well Spend Less and Wellbeing roadshows (EWSLW) which were organised by Ashford Borough Council.

Funded by the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and completely free, the roadshows provided residents with resources, support and opportunities to thrive in all aspects of living.

The events brought together a range of partner organisations including frontline Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust staff and Ashford Borough Council officers, outreach organisations and charities, in one easy-to-access place.

Roadshows in the period took place across the borough, including Ashford Cinema, Tenterden Leisure, Repton Connect Community Centre and Singleton Village Hall.

EAT WELL SPEND LESS & WELLBEING ROADSHOW



Screen Ashford 2025-2026 programme returns

Screen Ashford, a programme that has supported local filmmakers to develop their skills, officially returned on 30th July at the Ashford Cinema.

The opening event showcased the exciting opportunities available to Kent-based filmmakers and artists for the year and included an exclusive screening of three exceptional short films by local filmmakers, a Q&A session, networking, plus the Screen Ashford Short Film Competition opened.

Since launching in 2024, Screen Ashford has provided masterclasses, commissions, networking, and training to over 1,500 participants, focusing on young people and underrepresented groups. The initiative has supported the creation of four locally commissioned films and built a grassroots screen hub and studios for regular events and courses.

Past feedback from residents has been overwhelmingly positive, with praise for the programme's role in developing talent and increasing cultural visibility. Ongoing investment ensures Screen Ashford will continue to nurture future film and TV professionals.



Work completed on four new homes replacing properties destroyed by portable gas heater explosion in Mill View, Ashford

Four new homes have been built to replace the three council-owned and one privately owned property destroyed by a 2021 portable gas heater explosion at Mill View, Willesborough. Ashford Borough Council partnered with Folkestone-based contractor Jenner on the £1.25m project, building two 2-bedroom and two 3-bedroom houses where the damaged properties once stood.

The new homes are energy efficient, featuring air source heat pumps, underfloor heating, PV panels, EV chargers, and insulation that earned them EPC band B. Each property is designed with future accessibility considerations, including straight staircases to accommodate potential stair lift installation and adaptable bathrooms. Additionally, two parking spaces are provided for each residence.



Ashford Borough Council's lettings agency wins top award

ABC Lettings has won a Kent Housing Group (KHG) Excellence Award in recognition of its work in helping thousands of people facing homelessness to find a new home in the private rented sector. The lettings agency run by Ashford Borough Council scooped the top award in the Private Sector Housing category at a packed awards ceremony held at the Eastgate Centre in Northfleet on Thursday 25 September 2025.

ABC Lettings continues to work with private sector landlords to help tackle homelessness across the borough. It works tirelessly to attract new landlords, offering a fully managed service for landlords who want a low-risk, hands off management service. For experienced landlords it also offers a tenant find service.

ABC Lettings manages more than 200 properties across Ashford, Folkestone and Hythe. It offers landlords a no hassle, no hidden cost lettings service – all from an organisation which has a reputation for a careful and considered approach and is not motivated by profit.



Ashford Borough Council Partners in Major Refurbishment of Tenterden Leisure Centre

Ashford Borough Council announced a major refurbishment of Tenterden Leisure Centre, operated by not-for-profit leisure trust Freedom Leisure on behalf of the Council. The project, taking place from October 2025 to May 2026, represents a significant investment in modernising the facility and enhancing the experience for the local community.

The multi-million-pound initiative, jointly funded by the Council and Freedom Leisure, will ensure that Tenterden Leisure Centre continues to serve as a hub for health, wellbeing, fitness, and family activities for residents and visitors alike.

Key improvements include:

- brand-new interactive soft-play centre and new water-play features in the popular leisure pool.
- A modernised café with additional seating for visitors.
- Upgraded toilet and changing facilities.
- Refurbished exercise class and indoor cycling studios.



Local champions announced at Ashford Community Awards

Inspiring local champions were honoured at the Ashford Community Awards 2025.

The awards celebrated local champions, inspiring individuals who have made a significant contribution to their communities. The community awards align with the council's Borough Plan priorities –– and the organisers were delighted to receive a large number of nominations from the public.

The awards were presented to the worthy winners by Mayor of Ashford, Cllr Lyn Suddards and Council Chief Executive Tracey Kerly at a ceremony at The Ashford Cinema at Elwick Place on 6th October 2025.

Work starts to create 59 high-quality homes for older people and adults with learning disabilities at Oakleigh House

Work has started on creating 59 high-quality homes for older people and adults with learning disabilities on the site of a former sheltered housing scheme in South Ashford. This £18m scheme, delivered with contractor Jenner, marks an early step in our commitment to build 1,000 new homes over the next five to seven years.

The project supports the Council's initiative to meet the needs of an ageing population by providing suitable housing that promotes independent living. Oakleigh House will offer 54 flats with shared amenities such as a lounge, terrace, hair salon, meeting room, scooter parking, and office, all designed to HAPPI standards to encourage community and reduce isolation.

Five apartments will be dedicated to adults with learning disabilities, arranged around courtyards near Watercress Lane and Beaver Lane. The scheme responds to local demand for affordable retirement and supported housing, with a non-institutional, architecturally distinctive design focused on sustainability and aiming for zero carbon operation.

Ashford Borough Council delivers 20 new low carbon affordable homes at Mabledon Avenue

Ashford Borough Council is progressing work on a major housing regeneration scheme at Mabledon Avenue, transforming a former industrial site into 20 high-quality, energy-efficient affordable homes for local people.

The new homes exceed standard building and affordable housing requirements, helping support the Council's wider commitment to reducing carbon emissions and improving energy efficiency across the borough.

Each home will incorporate a range of sustainability and energy-efficient features, including:

- Ground Source Heat Pumps providing low-carbon heating and underfloor heating
- Solar PV panels on every property
- EV charging points for all dwellings
- EPC A-rated homes – among the most sustainable, low-carbon and lowest-cost to run in the country.
- High thermal performance, including 200mm cavity walls
- Composite Rationel windows offering improved thermal and acoustic comfort
- Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) to reduce heat loss and enhance air quality.

These features will help minimise residents' energy bills, support long-term carbon savings and contribute to improved health and wellbeing.

The target for completion is Summer 2027.

Place

Ashford Town Centre business grants scheme reopened

The Ashford Town Centre Business Grants scheme opened during the period, with applications accepted until February 2026. The scheme provided businesses with the opportunity to bring vacant commercial properties back into active use.

Following the approval of the Empty Property Grants Scheme by Cabinet in March 2025, a budget of around £90,000 was allocated to specifically assist with filling empty units in the town centre.

This initiative has built upon the success of the Ashford Town Centre Support Grants (ATCSG) programme, which operated between October and December 2021. During that period, the council approved 23 grants, including six Empty Property Grants. These grants proved effective in bringing these previously vacant shops back into operation creating ten new jobs.

Between April 2025 and March 2026, the Empty Property Grant Scheme awarded a total of £124,415 in funding to 13 businesses, of which three were new businesses.

Ashford Borough Council awards £3.6m to fire safety projects

Ashford Borough Council awarded a contract of £2.4m to upgrade fire doors across its residential properties, following an initial £1.2m contract awarded in October 2024.

Both schemes fall under Ashford Borough Council's strategic programme of fire safety upgrades at its property assets across the borough, and this latest award encompasses independent living accommodation and multistorey social and affordable housing blocks.

The council procured the resident fire safety upgrade work through the LHC Public Sector Framework to secure cost and programme efficiencies, which enabled the first phase to be delivered in an accelerated five-month period.

The contract included the installation of both individual flat, and communal area 30-minute fire rated (FD30) door sets at nine residential blocks across the borough.



Ashford joins the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities

The council is now part of the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities, a growing initiative committed to making communities a better place to age in, working with the Centre for Ageing Better. This network encompasses over 30 million people across the UK, of which over 10 million are aged over 50.

By joining, we align ourselves with other UK communities working to change both physical and social environments to support health and independence. We are also joining a global movement led by the World Health Organisation, using an evidence-based framework to create better communities for ageing.

The decision to join reflects our commitment and support to older residents to ensure more people can continue to enjoy life as they age.

We will be talking to residents, local businesses and charities to develop our action plan, bringing a range of partners together to act and make improvements.



Expanded United Makers of Kent Food & Creative Market

In April 2025, the ever-popular United Makers of Kent Food & Creative Market in Ashford Town Centre expanded, becoming even bigger and better than before.

Ashford Borough Council formed a focused group for the market and proposed to improve the existing monthly market set-up, looking at other Kent towns and cities in the process to create a 'Best in Kent' market.

Following the research, the council allowed for the market to expand to more spaces in the town centre, allowing for an extension of traders to offer more variety to the public to dwell and spend time in the town centre vicinity.

The market takes place on the first Saturday of the month, with over 25 stalls showcasing a wide selection of what local artisans and market stall traders have to offer including food, drink and unique crafts.

The Ashford Food & Drink Festival returned

The Ashford Food & Drink Festival returned to Ashford Town Centre during the period, as a one-day event on Saturday 28th June.

Attendees had the chance to experience mouth-watering flavours and tastes from all over the globe. With the high street lined with food and drink stalls, plus Elwick Place which brought back Ashfood! bringing food, drink and community spirit to the venue. There was also a special stage put in situ hosting food masterclasses and Radio Ashford's Sam Griffin DJing throughout the day.

In addition to kids' crafts activities (including a cardboard kitchen), there were pizza making sessions at The Ashford Cinema and eccentric food-based puppetry and street theatre.

The Ashford Festival returned, championing local talent and community spirit

After a brief hiatus, The Ashford Festival returned, with the festival taking over Civic Park on 5th-6th July 2025.

The beloved grassroots music festival, deeply rooted in its community values, promised a weekend of local talent, vibrant market stalls and a renewed commitment to supporting Ashford, fostering local talent and bolstering local businesses.

Attendees explored a diverse marketplace showcasing the best of Ashford's entrepreneurial spirit, while the main stage featured a stellar lineup of homegrown musical acts, highlighting the rich artistic talent within the community.

In a move to ensure the festival's long-term sustainability and continued community benefit, the organisers implemented a £1 weekend wristband.

The nominal fee directly supported the festival's new status as a not-for-profit Community Interest Company (CIC), helped to cover essential costs and ensured the event remained accessible for everyone.

Run entirely by a passionate team of volunteers, The Ashford Festival in the Park stands as the only field-based, community-led music festival within Ashford's event calendar.

Its return marked a significant moment for the town, offering a unique opportunity for residents and visitors alike to come together and celebrate local culture.

The festival was proudly supported by QMT Commercial Insurance and Ashford Borough Council.









Grants of up to £15,000 have helped businesses in the rural areas

Ashford Borough Council successfully secured funding from the UK Government's Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) over 2023-2026, as it seeks to further support rural areas in the borough.

Ashford Borough Council has used £439,000 REPF funding, specifically to support rural businesses in the borough up to March 2026.

From Ashford Borough Council's government approved REPF plan, the money went towards the following capital grant schemes, devised to help businesses and organisations deliver on REPF objectives and assist with much needed support.

Rural Green Business Grant – to provide grants to support energy efficiency or energy transition projects in commercial premises in rural parts of the borough.

Rural Place and Provenance Grant – to provide grants to support rural food and drink producers, hospitality and tourism attractions or venues, to increase productivity and sustainability for businesses. In addition, to support the creation of start-up spaces and tackle the 'Last Mile' challenge in rural areas, seeking to create viable travel routes to increase visitors to rural destinations.

The grant schemes supported 60 businesses and are set to lead to approximately 107,000 kg of CO_2 saved across the borough each year. That's the equivalent carbon reduction each year of 4,800 trees.

In addition, they are set to lead to the creation of 60 FTE jobs in rural areas of the borough as well as an average increase in visitors of 27% to those businesses.

Applications opened for ScaleUp Ashford, which has helped businesses grow turnover by 28%

Six local businesses in the Ashford borough benefitted from the 2025/26 ScaleUp Ashford programme – a part-funded scheme that allows businesses the chance to grow.

Delivered by the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce and part-funded by Ashford Borough Council, the ScaleUp Ashford programme provides businesses up to 20 hours of one-to-one support and 12 hours of peer networks over a 12-month period.

Previous programme participants have hugely benefitted from the scheme, including creating a total of 80 new jobs, increasing their average turnover by 28% and accessing capital investments of £1.8m.

The selected businesses receive support from a dedicated consultant to help them address barriers to growth and apply for grants and funding. In addition, they receive networking and peer support from previous participants.

The scheme will continue in 2026/27, with applications open and the next cohort of businesses expected to start in late summer 2026.



Work set to start on building in Ashford town centre that has stood unoccupied for more than 20 years as regeneration of the town centre begins

A building in Ashford town centre which has stood unoccupied for more than 20 years is to be demolished to make way for high-quality apartments located a short walk from Ashford International Station, with its 38-minute fast rail connection to central London.

Swanton House – next to Ashford College in Elwick Road and backing onto the Memorial Gardens – will be replaced by 34 apartments for rent as part of Ashford Borough Council's 'brownfield first' programme.

The Swanton House apartments will include a mix of six three-bedroom flats, 24 two-bedroom flats and four one-bedroom flats, all with private balconies and built to a very high specification. 25 of the 27 car parking spaces will be fitted with electric vehicle charging points.

Inside the building a panel will acknowledge the local history of the site, which served as an auxiliary military hospital in the First World War and was later used by Kent County Council Social Services.

After years of delay due to Stodmarsh, the project is now on the verge of starting with hoardings erected around the Elwick Road site and demolition underway.

Ashford Borough Council Releases WalkSafe App to Empower Community Safety

We proudly released WalkSafe, a free personal safety mobile app designed to help residents and visitors feel safer while moving around the borough.

Many people worry about walking alone at night, especially women and vulnerable groups. WalkSafe can help to improve self-confidence and support users when out and about or walking home by providing real-time journey sharing, a national Safe Space map, and instant SOS alerts. WalkSafe allows residents to plan safer routes and stay connected with trusted friends and family.

Users are able to report local safety concerns, such as poor lighting or crowded areas, to help others stay informed while WalkSafe also uses up-to-date police crime statistics to highlight hotspots and guide safer travel decisions.

The project was supported by funding from the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner.





Thousands of Ashford residents line the streets of the Town Centre to enjoy festive fun at Carnival of the Baubles

Ashford's Carnival of the Baubles returned to the Town Centre on Saturday 22 November 2025, with businesses, schools, and community groups making their way from the Lower High Street to Elwick Place carrying giant, illuminated baubles.

The day was packed with activities from beginning to end, featuring craft workshops and a range of performances to keep visitors entertained.

Despite the weather conditions, spirits remained high as participants danced, sang and cheered as they made their way through the streets of Ashford to Elwick Place. The grand finale featured drumming performances, lively disco music, and an electric atmosphere.

The Designer Outlet sponsored the event, which was organised in partnership with Emergency Exit Arts, Made in Ashford and supported by local businesses and artists.





Chilmington Green section 106 planning appeal dismissed by Planning Inspector

Following the council's significant efforts of presenting a case over a period of three months, the council received appeal decision notice from the Planning Inspectorate on the Chilmington Green section 106 agreement appeals concerning requests by Hodson Developments to discharge or modify 122 planning obligations.

The Planning Inspectorate dismissed the appeal relating to the Section 106 obligations at Chilmington Green development (up to 5,750 homes, schools, community facilities, infrastructure). The outcome is a significant win for Ashford Borough Council, Kent County Council and the local community as most of the developer's requests were rejected.

The Inspectorate's decision reinforces the principle that planning obligations should be retained unless there is clear evidence they no longer serve a useful purpose.

Viability arguments must be balanced against the public interest in securing infrastructure, affordable housing, and community benefits. The stewardship model and timely delivery of facilities remain central to the vision for Chilmington Green.



Elwick Place set for major revamp as new family entertainment proposals unveiled

Ashford Borough Council has officially unveiled plans to transform Elwick Place into a vibrant leisure and cultural destination, reinforcing its commitment to revitalising the town centre.

Under a long-term lease agreement, the cinema and Units 1–5 will be secured, alongside introducing a family-focused entertainment offer designed to attract visitors both during the day and evening.

The new-look destination is expected to launch by late summer 2026 and will feature four key elements: cinema, live events, social game entertainment and workspace, as well as a full food and bar offer.



Curtain raised on plans to bring Ashford's former Odeon/Mecca back to life as a flexible cultural and community venue

Ashford Borough Council is moving forward with plans to bring the former Odeon/Mecca Bingo building back into cultural use. This major step supports the Borough Plan 2024–28 and answers the community's call for more arts, cultural and performance space in the town centre.

After detailed feasibility work, the Council has created a realistic and financially responsible proposal to transform the front part of the building - including restoration of its art deco style High Street frontage, foyer and first-floor spaces into a small arts, cultural and community theatre venue.

The design brief focuses on:

- Restoring the 1930s frontage as a celebrated local landmark
- Highlighting the building's unique character and history
- Creating modern, flexible spaces for small theatre performances, gigs, workshops, exhibitions and community events

This proposal directly responds to proven demand in the Council's Arts & Cultural Industries Strategy and Local Plan, which show a clear need for flexible creative spaces in Ashford. While the plans do not recreate a full-scale theatre, they strengthen the town's cultural offer and avoid competing with larger regional venues.



Local Government Reorganisation

Underlying Principles

Councils send proposals for new councils to ministers

Proposals for the preferred number of new councils needed for Kent and Medway, and the geographical areas they should cover, were submitted to the government on Friday 28th November.

In the biggest shake up of local government in 50 years, ministers asked councils to come up with plans to create unitary councils.

Under the current system Kent County Council (KCC) delivers some services such as education, social services and roads, and district or borough councils deliver others like emptying your bins and providing housing services.

Under the proposed system, unitary councils would deliver all council services in one area. Medway Council operates in that way today.

During November, councillors across Kent and Medway met to decide their preference. In Ashford, an Extraordinary Full Council meeting was held on Thursday 27 November at the new Council Chamber at International House to debate the subject before Cabinet made their decision the same evening. Cabinet decided to back option 4d.

It was felt the 4d model goes a step further than the other business cases on the basis that minor boundary changes are acceptable, making this is a once in a life time opportunity to remodel the geographical areas that make sense of the developed communities of Kent reflecting their local identities, creating a sense of place, travel to work opportunities, balancing urban and rural across a four unitary model with strategic capacity.

A decision by the government on the final structure of unitary councils is expected in the summer.



Freedom Leisure celebrates shortlisting for eight prestigious UK Active Awards

Freedom Leisure was named a finalist in eight awards across six categories at the highly respected UK Active Awards 2025, including nominations for both the Stour Centre and Tenterden Leisure Centre.

This remarkable achievement highlights Freedom Leisure's unwavering commitment to innovation, inclusion and community impact, and reflects the strength of its people, partnerships and purpose.

The UK Active Awards recognise and celebrate organisations transforming lives through physical activity and wellbeing.

Being shortlisted across so many categories is a powerful endorsement of Freedom Leisure's mission to inspire healthier, happier communities through accessible leisure opportunities.



Putting Kent Back on the International Rail Map

Kent is not just a place to speed through; the county is more than ready to welcome back European visitors – but, at the moment, it can't.

Eurostar currently has no plans to stop in Kent, and cannot be relied on to ever bring services back. With the anniversary of 30 years since the opening, Kent County Council (KCC) is uniting with council partners, MPs, local businesses, residents and stakeholders to demand the return of international rail services to Ashford and Ebbsfleet.

On 26th September 2025 they signed a memorandum of understanding, formalising their shared commitment to bringing back international rail services to Kent. This united front demonstrates their collective determination to secure Kent's rightful place back on the international rail map.



Ashford International Station Prospectus

A Platform for Growth

A Platform for Growth – launching the Ashford International Station Prospectus

In October, the Ashford International Station Prospectus was jointly commissioned by ABC, London St Pancras and Kent County Council.

In an area of growth, Ashford International Station with the capacity to process 850 to 900 passengers per train, with 1,800 parking spaces, and having attracted over 600,000 passengers a year previously, represents existing investment that has the great potential to service the increasing demand for sustainable international rail services.

The Prospectus showcases the existing opportunities and demand for inbound and outbound business and leisure travel, expanding the number of passengers through this regional transport hub, which is already within the top 6% of busiest stations in the country.

Following on from the successful Grow In Kent event held at Ashford and Ebbsfleet International Stations in September, this brochure is part of an ongoing campaign.

The Ashford International Station Prospectus is available to view on our **website.**

Ashford sees strong increase in broadband connectivity across the borough

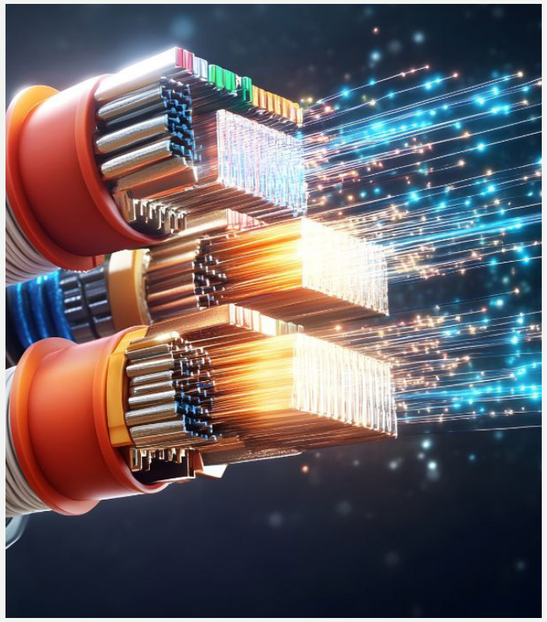
The Ashford borough is becoming more connected than ever, with Ashford experiencing a 44% rise in full-fibre coverage (FTTP) connectivity over the past three years. This increase is notably higher than averages for Kent (38%) and the UK (41%), highlighting that Ashford is very much leading the way when it comes to ensuring residents are better connected.

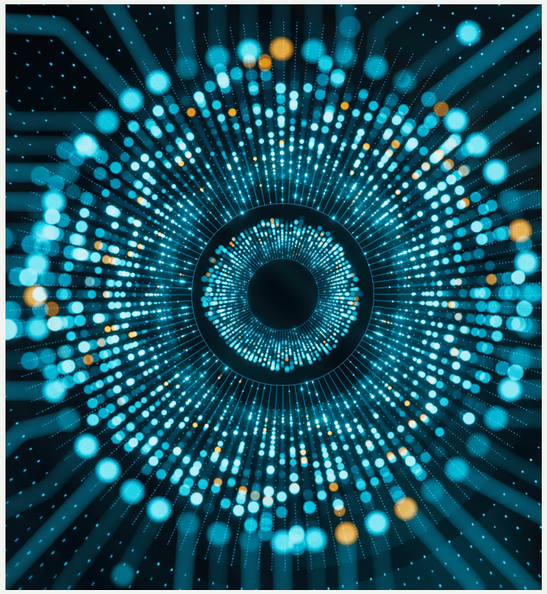
Over the past year, FTTP in the Ashford borough has increased by 17%, which is mainly down to Openreach and Netomnia undertaking a FTTP rollout across the Ashford urban area.

Ashford Borough Council is supporting this rollout by ensuring council-owned housing can be connected more efficiently. The council has signed flexible wayleaves for its social housing stock with broadband providers, enabling 450 households to gain FTTP connections, with another 470 due to be connected in the near future.

Additionally, under the UK Government's Project Gigabit scheme, approximately 6,800 homes and businesses in the Ashford borough will, in the coming years, have access to lightning-fast, gigabit-capable broadband.

Ashford Borough Council has been very proactive in ensuring that fibre broadband is available for residents and has been recognised by





providers as one of the best-case studies for how local government can support broadband improvements. In addition, Ashford Borough Council has been asked by other authorities taking charge on broadband improvement to share their experiences and knowledge in this field.

Due to the rural nature of the borough, Ashford faces its own challenges when it comes to broadband, however work is being done to continue supporting improvements of digital connectivity. Despite the challenges, Ashford Borough Council remains firmly committed to ensuring connectivity is achieved across the entire borough.



Ashford Borough Council launches UK-first digital transformation in Border Controls powered by AI

Ashford Borough Council has introduced a new Artificial Intelligence (AI) system at Ashford Port Health Authority (APHA), becoming the first facility in the UK to fully automate the initial stage of import document checks and allowing it to maintain its prices for the coming year.

Since the Sevington Border Control Post opened in April 2024, Ashford Borough Council has been responsible for overseeing official border controls on the highest volume of commercial freight entering the UK. This includes checks on products of animal origin (POAO), high-risk food and feed of non-animal origin (HRFNAO), organic goods and other regulated imports, all within a complex and highly regulated framework.

The Council undertook a full review of how import documentation was processed, identifying opportunities to strengthen performance without compromising regulatory standards. Working in partnership with Salesforce Ltd and Cospire Technologies, APHA has developed the UK's first fully automated, AI-driven system for the initial stage of import document checking.

This groundbreaking solution uses Intelligent Document Processing to capture and structure import documents, enabling Artificial Intelligence to carry out the initial compliance checks, accurately replicating the existing manual process in a faster, more consistent and auditable way. The system has been tailored specifically to match the operational requirements, ensuring it strengthens rather than replaces professional oversight.



Ashford Borough Council is committed to being open and transparent and we follow the code of recommended practice for local authorities on data transparency. As well as our performance reports we produce a number of monitoring reports which are made available on our webpages including:

- Annual Governance Statement
- Statement of accounts and Budget books
- Quarterly Financial monitoring report
- Medium term financial monitoring report
- Housing current delivery reports
- Planning updates and many more

Ashford Borough Council

Appendix A
Annual Performance Report 2025-2026
Borough Plan Themes and Key Performance Measures

Planet
Key Performance Measures - Reported Annually

Code & Short Name	Description	2024-2025 Annual Figure	2025-2026 Annual Figure	Latest Note
KPI.PLANET.001 Council's carbon footprint (tCO2e) Annual	Council's carbon footprint for Scope 1 and 2 (i.e. direct use of fossil fuels in heating and vehicles and purchased electricity). This does not include indirect carbon from purchased goods and contracts.	In May 2021 report from Laser Energy returned a carbon baseline of 1277 tCO2e for Y2019/20 (Figure adjusted from last year's report to provide a direct comparison to the FY 2025/26 figure)	The carbon footprint for FY 2024-25 was 1,148 tCO2e.	Note below:

In July 2021 Ashford Borough Council declared its aim to become carbon neutral in its own estate and operations by 2030 and Borough wide by 2050. The target actions and approach to achieve this have recently been updated in a comprehensive Energy Strategy 2026-28 which retains the core principle of urgent decarbonisation but acknowledges the social and economic benefits of a thoughtful and fair transition to renewables; empowering and benefitting residents and generating income streams from renewables to self-fund future projects. The strategy recognises that carbon tonnages do not particularly resonate with the public and measures that deliver a more accessible narrative have been developed e.g. around cost-of-living benefits and home improvements.

While the carbon footprint calculation does little to demonstrate the breadth of activity undertaken in the wider borough and the portfolio changes making direct comparison difficult, it is still a useful means to measure activity for our own assets in our direct control. A baseline position was commissioned in May 2021 and a further assessment was undertaken last year for 2024/2025. Unfortunately, our flagship decarbonisation projects at our Leisure facilities do not sit within the scope of our ABC footprint as these sites are not directly managed and are not therefore reflected in these figures. Please also note that our move to International House and the significant carbon savings anticipated from that move, will come out in next year's data.

Code & Short Name	Description	2024-2025 Annual Figure	2025-2026 Annual Figure	Latest Note
KPI.PLANET.002a Total potential capacity of council owned renewable energy provision (kWh)	Total potential capacity of council owned renewable energy provision (kWh)	Total installed solar capacity is 477 kW	Total installed solar capacity is 1696.7 kW	The figures exclude solar capacity and generation in our tenanted properties. Our solar generation capacity continues to expand. Work is in progress to develop a more strategic portfolio approach to maximise the opportunities afforded from solar and wind generation as well as plan our final asset decarbonisation pathway. By working at scale, all our rooftop assets in the Borough could generate significant impacts – self-financing projects, impacting fuel poverty by lowering bills as well as reducing our own operational costs. We are also in the process of supporting the setup of our first community energy company – which will seek community investment to develop localised solar solutions with local governance and benefits.
KPI.PLANET.002b Total solar generation (kWh)	Total solar generation (kWh)	New Measure	Solar generation total – 330,652 kWh	
KPI.PLANET.003 Number of EV charging points on council property Annual	Number of EV charging points on council property	29 EVCPs in ABC car parks in Ashford and Tenterden, with 53 connections.	47 EVCPs	ERCP currently closed (loss of 12 chargers, 11 to be replaced in the temporary car park)

Code & Short Name	Description	2024-2025 Annual Figure	2025-2026 Annual Figure	Latest Note
KPI.PLANET.004 Air Quality	Number of Air Quality Management Areas	24-25 0 Air Quality Annual Status report produced each June	The air quality annual status report is produced in June. The number of Air Quality Management Areas is expected to be 0 for 2025/26.	Air quality annual status reports are produced each year in June. Reports are available on our website via the following link: Information and reports about national and local air quality.
KPI. PLANET.005 Area of land (km2) managed for nature conservation Annual	Area of land (km2) managed for nature conservation	1.2km2 of land managed for nature conservation	1.2km2 of land managed for nature conservation	
KPI. PLANET.007 Level of biodiversity in defined project areas Annual	Level of biodiversity in defined project areas	138,000m2	185,200m2	
KPI.PLANET.008 Contamination rate in recycling loads Annual	Contamination rate in recycling loads	13.9%	13.9%	This is the percentage of waste delivered to the Materials Recovery Facility that was rejected as contamination

Code & Short Name	Description	2024-2025 Annual Figure	2025-2026 Annual Figure	Latest Note
KPI. PLANET. 009 Reported incidences of fly-tipping Annual	Reported incidences of fly	Fly tipping reports for 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 - 1132	Fly tipping reports for 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 – 1244	

Planet
Key Performance Measures - Reported Quarterly

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025/26			Q4 2025/26			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PLANET.010 Number of organisations committed to active travel plans cycling/ walking	Number of organisations committed to travel plans cycling/ walking	To access the Q1 notes for this measure, please refer to the respective performance reports available on our website			Forecasted number of organisations committed to active travel plans cycling/walking: **2** (Cycle Circle Charity Group, The Hub)			Forecasted number of organisations committed to active travel plans cycling/walking: **5**			Moving forward we are looking to revise this KPI to measure the number the number of journeys made by cycling, using cycle counter data. Two cycle counters have been installed on key routes and have recently started transmitting data. It is expected we will be able to begin reporting this data from Q1.			
KPI.PLANET.011 Recycling Rate	% of borough waste recycled or composted	50.2% (June)	50%	✅	50% (Sept)	50%	✅	45% (Dec)	50%	⚠	49% (Mar)	50%	⚠	The decrease in recycling rates during Q3 is in line with similar downward trends observed countywide and nationally. We are addressing this at a local and county level.
KPI.PLANET.012 Refuse Collection Success Rate	% of successful refuse collections per 100,000 refuse collections made.	99.94%	99.96 %	⚠	99.94%	99.96 %	⚠	99.94%	99.96 %	⚠	99.94%	99.96%	⚠	Waste data from UK local authorities is reported to WasteDataFlow with statistics available at the following links. WasteDataFlow Waste and recycling statistics

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025/26			Q4 2025/26			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PLANET .013 Digital uptake - % of total council /% Increase transactions completed electronically	Digital uptake - % of total council /% Increase transactions completed electronically	89.76%	80%	✅	87.48%	80%	✅	89.2%	80%	✅	88.5%	85%	✅	Due to consistent performance above 80%, the target has been reviewed and increased to 85% moving forward. The new target is in line with our historic averages.

Month	Digital Transactions	Calls	Digital Uptake %
Jan-26	62649	6371	90.77%
Feb-26	39655	5655	87.52%
Mar-26	47818	7415	86.58%

KPI.PLANET .014 EVCP usage - number of sessions		**Q1 Total – 865** June 268 May 294 April 301	**Q2 Total – 965** September 324 August 329 July 312	**Q3 Total – 1197** December 430 November 398 October 369	**Q4 Total – 1162** March 399 February 348 January 415	We have a target set for 500 EVCP sessions per month.

People
Key Performance measures - Reported Annually

Code & Short Name	Description	2024-2025 Annual Figure	2025-2026 Annual Figure	Latest Note
KPI.PEOPLE.001 Indices of multiple deprivation score Annual	Indices of multiple deprivation score	152 – Last available update 2019	133 – Latest available update 2025	See below:
Deprivation is a multi-dimensional problem and, to reflect this, the Indices of Deprivation are based on a basket of indicators organised across seven distinct types of deprivation or 'domains'. These are: 1. Income Deprivation; 2. Employment Deprivation; 3. Education, Skills and Training Deprivation; 4. Health Deprivation and Disability; 5. Crime; 6. Barriers to Housing and Services; and 7. Living Environment Deprivation. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) combines information from the seven domains to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation. The latest release is the English indices of deprivation 2025 - GOV.UK and is published by central government to help local authorities identify the most disadvantaged areas so that resources and funding can be allocated appropriately				
KPI.PEOPLE.002 Health profile indicators	Health profile indicators for smoking prevalence, healthy weight and physical activity	Smoking prevalence in adults (18+) current smokers - latest data 2023 – **13.3%** Percentage of physically active adults – 2023/24 – **70.4%** Overweight prevalence in adults (18+) – **64.3%**	Smoking prevalence in adults (18+) current smokers - latest data 2024 – **7%** Percentage of physically active adults – 2023/24 – **70.4%** (latest available) Overweight prevalence in adults (18+) – 2023/24 – **64.3%** (latest available)	Most recently available information source and trend data available at: Local Authority Health Profiles - OHID (phe.org.uk) Overall, there is a downward trend seen in smoking. Smoking prevalence in Ashford is at **7%**, which is lower than the averages for the South East (9.4%) and England (10.4%).

Code & Short Name	Description	2024-2025 Annual Figure	2025-2026 Annual Figure	Latest Note
KPI.PEOPLE.003 Annual footfall to key leisure sites	Annual footfall to key leisure sites: Stour Centre, Julie Rose, Tenterden Leisure Centre	**733,560** This is the Annual Participation for all sites for the 24-25 contract period	**1,064,160** This is the Annual Participation for all sites for the 25-26 contract period	
KPI.PEOPLE.004 Value of grants awarded via community grant fund. Annual	Value of grants awarded via community grant fund	**Awarded: £318,680** Capital Grants: £62,099 Community Event Grants: £10,000 Ward Member Grants: £96,081 Community Services: £150,500	**Total Awarded in 25/26: £339,945** Capital Grants: £75,615 Community Event Grants: £19,000 Ward Member Grants: £104,330.05 Community Services: £141,000	
KPI.PEOPLE.005 Trends in volunteering Annual	Trends in volunteering	The council's Community Connector contract with the Ashford Volunteer Centre helps to support a resilient and sustainable local voluntary and community sector in the Ashford Borough, which in turn enables its independence, diversity and accessibility. During this period 720 community groups were signposted to additional support and advice – this has included local support provided by Ashford Borough Council (in particular to services supporting the cost-of-living crisis) and to Kent County Council. 74 Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations received tailored support in funding applications, governance, and business planning. AVC promoted 211 free training opportunities on topics including volunteer management, governance, and	Maintained a broad and growing volunteering infrastructure, with 731 organisations listed on the directory. Strong organisational engagement, with 631 organisations receiving infrastructure and capacity-building support. Sustained demand for volunteer brokerage, evidenced by 535 organisations supported through referrals and signposting. Consistent resident engagement in volunteering, with 388 individuals supported into opportunities Improved safer recruitment processes, with 132 DBS checks completed to support safe volunteering placements Ongoing delivery of training and networking activity, with 12 events delivered to support the sector.	

Code & Short Name	Description	2024-2025 Annual Figure	2025-2026 Annual Figure	Latest Note
		fundraising. 30 VCSE groups received direct DBS support, ensuring safer recruitment processes. 8 VCSE organisations were assisted in implementing sustainability initiatives. 7 organisations were assisted in compliance and reporting, preventing potential funding loss. Volunteers were connected to 521 VCSE organisations operating in the Ashford Borough. Additionally, 29 individuals received dedicated guidance in launching new community projects.	Emerging focus on environmental volunteering, with 23 green funding opportunities and 15 green roles promoted. Strengthened local intelligence on volunteering trends, through engagement with 30 volunteer managers	

People
Key Performance measures - Reported Quarterly

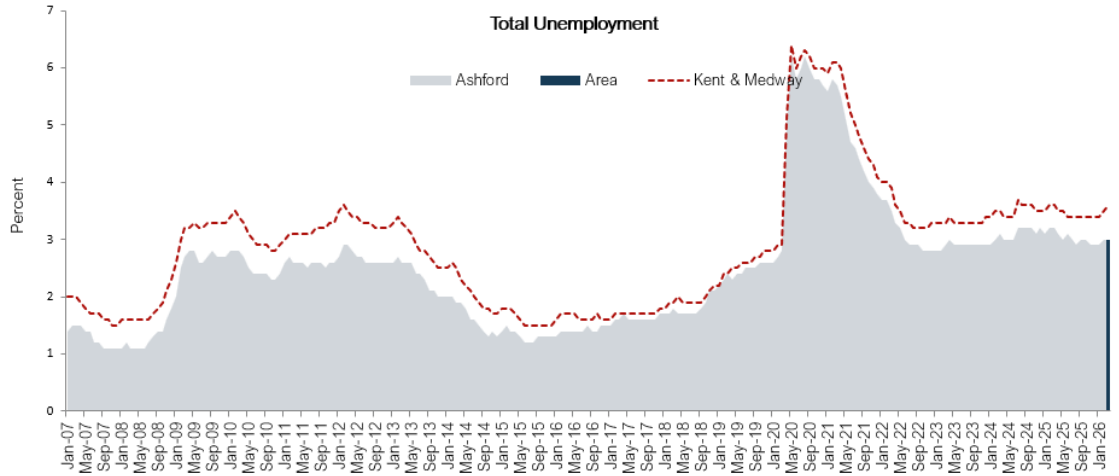
Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025-26			Q4 2025-26			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PEOPLE.008 Homelessness - New Triage Cases	No. of new triage cases	393 April (124) May (133) June (136)			516 July (184) August (166) September (166)			441 October (171) November (152) December (118)			524 January (191) February (161) March (172)			Following the 2025 service review, we are moving forward with a team restructure to better support our service goals. The current staff will transition into the new team structure outlined below. 2 x Senior Housing Options Officer 2 x Housing Options Trainee 2 x Housing Options Support Officers 1 x Housing Options Coordinator 5 x Housing Options Officer In addition, a new Homelessness Prevention Officer will be joining the team. These changes aim to create a more responsive, cost-effective, and cohesive service.
KPI.PEOPLE.009 Homelessness Preventions (still in accommodation)	No. of households where homelessness was prevented	88 April (45) May (23) June (20)			62 July (27) August (14) September (21)			56 October (13) November (24) December (19)			72 January (30) February (19) March (23)			

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025-26			Q4 2025-26			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PEOPLE.010 Number of families in temporary accommodation six week on		1			0			0			0			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.
KPI.PEOPLE.011 Housing arrears	Housing arrears as a percentage of rent collectable	1.66%			1.82%			2.19%			1.72%			Arrears at the end of Q4 – week 52, Sunday 5th April 2026 - £552,495.21 The 2025/26 actual rent debit is £32,088,891.10 The current true arrears for Q4 is calculated at 1.72%

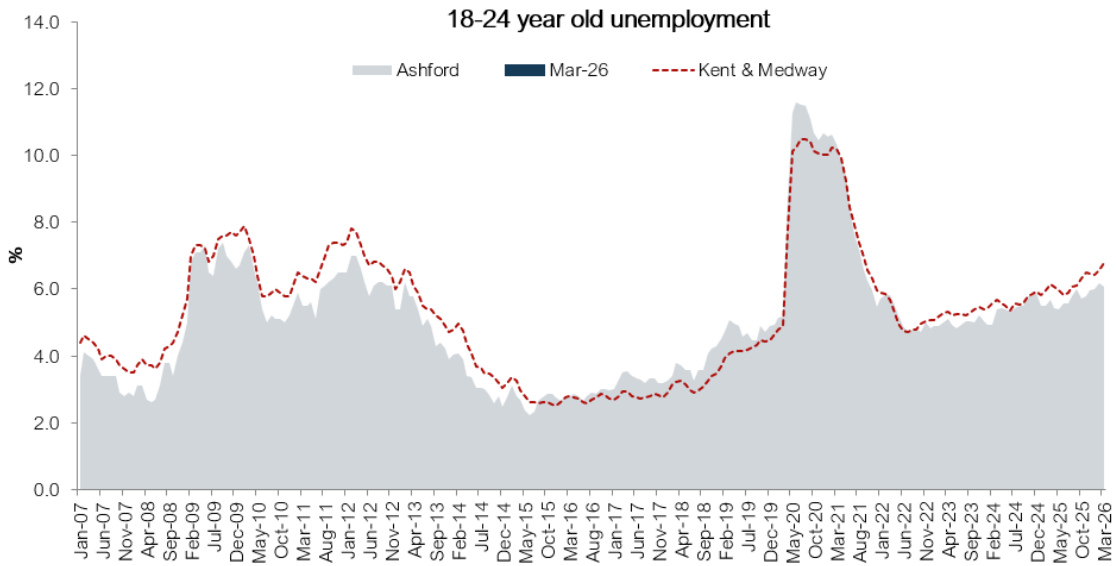
Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025-26			Q4 2025-26			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PEOPLE.012 Housing voids – average void time (excluding major voids)	Average void time	44	21	🛑	63.62	21	🛑	47.5	21	🛑	24.23	21	🛑	Operational void times and void numbers have returned to a manageable level. Work continues to improve on results further across the service to address bottlenecks which will lead to further enhancements and overall service delivery
KPI.PEOPLE.013 Number of adaptations completed against number waiting (HRA)		57/97			42 / 82			38/87			41/91			The number completed 1st January 2026 – 31st March 2026 (41) against the number received 1st January 2026 – 31st March 2026 (91). This covers both minor and major adaptations.
KPI.PEOPLE.014 Number of adaptations completed against number waiting (DFG)		18			12			23			11			We do not have an active waiting list, and all referrals are passed to our agents to process with immediate effect, this has been the process for many years now.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025-26			Q4 2025-26			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PEOPLE.015 Disabled Facilities Grants Completed	No. of disabled facilities grants administered by the council	18			11			17			11			Data reflects the number of referrals received and administered within the quarter.
KPI.PEOPLE.016 Disabled Facilities Grant Spend	Actual spend per month for disabled facility grants	£245,408.45			£194,106.07			£277,318.72			£154,179.56			The amount for January is £39,835.30, which reflects a reduction due to contractors resuming work following the Christmas period.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025-26			Q4 2025-26			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PEOPLE.017 Unemployment	Unemployment figures taken monthly from Kent County Councils Economy and employment data.	3.1%	3%		3.1%	3%		3%	3%		3%	3%		March 2026 data set More information available within Economy and Employment Data - Kent County Council (kent.gov.uk)



Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025-26			Q4 2025-26			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PEOPLE.018 Unemployment 18-24yr olds	Unemployment 18-24yr olds taken monthly from the Kent County Council economy and employment data	5.8%	4.5%		6.1%	4.5%		6.1%	4.5%		6.1%	4.5%		March 2026 data set More information available within Economy and Employment Data - Kent County Council (kent.gov.uk)



Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025-26			Q4 2025-26			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PEOPLE.019 Leisure Social Value - Number of Risk Groups Impacted Via Leisure Centre Programmes	Support to 'vulnerable' groups through leisure centre activity	This KPI has been revised, having been previously titled 'Support to 'vulnerable' groups through leisure centre activity'. To access the notes from previous quarters for this measure, please refer to the respective performance reports available on our website. Q4 2025/2026 Number of risk groups impacted via leisure centre programmes: 20 (across multiple programmes) **Healthy Communities – March 2026 update** Over the year, programmes have been delivered to support wellbeing including: Parkinson's boxing, supporting people living with Parkinson's through tailored boxing sessions with an aim to improve mobility, balance and confidence. Step Into the Ring, a boxing and self-defence programme to support physical and mental wellbeing. Together We Thrive, a wellbeing initiative focused on connection, support and positive mental health, specifically designed for adults with special educational needs and disabilities. Sport and recreation funded memberships were introduced for refugees in the local area, supporting community integration and ensuring everyone has access to health and wellbeing opportunities. Restart a Heart Day was successfully delivered across the area, with over 300 participants taking part in CPR and emergency response training throughout the day The Centres provided a wide range of engaging activities and healthy meals over the summer holidays, ensuring children and families were supported and active. In addition, a GP referral scheme was launched, supporting residents with long-term health conditions to engage in a safe, tailored exercise programme to improve physical and mental wellbeing.												
KPI.PEOPLE.019b Leisure Social Value (£)		**New Measure**			**New Measure**			£3,018,018.14 (reported as an estimated total across all programmes over the year) £310,796.64 (actual figure for Q3 based on the main programme delivered within the quarter)			£310,796.64			Figure attained from Sport England Social Value calculator and the leisure centre contract programmes.

Place
Key Performance Measures - Reported Annually

Code & Short Name	Description	2024-2025 Annual Figure	2025-2026 Annual Figure	Latest Note
KPI.PLACE .001 Percentage of creative industries in the borough	Percentage of creative industries in the borough	8.8%	8.6%	Creative industry enterprises Ashford 2025: 565 enterprises equating to a decrease of 0.9% (5 enterprises) on the year. Kent 9.7% Creative industries in Kent Business in Kent - Kent County Council
KPI.PLACE .002 Percentage of tourism related businesses in the borough	Percentage of tourism related jobs in the borough	6.7%	7.4%	Tourism enterprises in Ashford 2025: 485 enterprises representing 7.4% of enterprises. This is a +11.5% (50) change on the previous year. Kent average 9.2% Tourism Industries in Kent Business in Kent - Kent County Council

Place
Key Performance Measures - Reported Quarterly

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025/26			Q4 2025/2026			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PLACE.003 Food Hygiene Rating	% of businesses in the borough with a food hygiene rating above 3	98.4%	98.5%	▲	98.4%	98.5%	▲	98.9%	98.5%	✓	98.8%	98.5%	✓	Note below:

Food Hygiene Rating System
Distribution of FHRS ratings over time for Ashford at 26/05/26 01:40

Food Standards Agency

Number of establishments in each rating

FHRS Rating	Sep - 25	Oct - 25	Nov - 25	Dec - 25	Jan - 26	Feb - 26	Mar - 26	Apr - 26	May - 26
5 - Very good	999	1020	1025	1041	1041	1019	1030	1033	1034
4 - Good	96	90	93	95	89	84	84	87	90
3 - Generally satisfactory	30	30	28	29	31	29	28	22	21
2 - Improvement required	14	11	11	11	11	11	11	9	9
1 - Major improvement required	4	4	3	2	2	2	3	2	2
0 - Urgent improvement required	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total rated establishments	1143	1155	1160	1178	1174	1145	1156	1154	1157
Establishments with rating of 3 or better	1125	1140	1146	1165	1161	1132	1142	1142	1145
Awaiting inspection	93	87	87	69	65	52	49	54	60
Exempt	43	40	40	40	40	36	36	37	37
Sensitive	54	52	52	52	51	50	49	48	48
Excluded	69	67	70	72	73	69	70	71	71
Total establishments	1402	1401	1409	1411	1403	1352	1360	1364	1373

Trading Standards (KCC) are responsible for enforcing the legislation that covers display of an incorrect rating. The scheme as it operates does not allow ABC to remove a hygiene rating sticker, as the business has 3 weeks from being notified of the score to lodge an appeal. There is also no requirement for a rating to be displayed at the premises. When we write to a business following an inspection, we do inform them of their responsibility to remove the old sticker.

This is something we can check when a revisit is completed, however a revisit would normally be undertaken within the appeal / notification period, so still time for an appeal to be lodged. We would inform a business if the wrong rating is being displayed during a visit, and where practical remove a rating if it is outside of any appeal period.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025/26			Q4 2025/2026			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PLACE.004 Business survival - current vacancy rates	Current Vacancy rates	11.26%			11.49%			10.82%			10.59% Target: 10%			5,324 premises in the borough 564 with either an exemption or empty relief indicating vacancy. A new target of 10% has been introduced based on current rates and aspirations to bring this down.

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
01-Jan-25	5412	303	247
01-Apr-25	5406	338	263
01-Jul-25	5407	347	267
01-Oct-25	5432	348	276
01-Jan-26	5425	348	239
01-Apr-26	5324	315	249

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.

KPI.PLACE.005 Ashford town centre vacancy rate	Ashford town centre vacancy rate	18.3% (April 25 – latest survey)			20% (July 25)			21% (October 25)			14.6% (January 2026) Target: 14%			The area surveyed is the High Street, Middle Row, New Rents, North Street, Bank Street, Tufton Street, County Square, and Elwick Place. This is surveyed manually quarterly. A new target of 14% has been introduced, with a view to reduce to 10% once the overall economic position improves.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025/26			Q4 2025/2026			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	

	All areas - including County Square and Elwick Place	Town Centre Streets - excluding County Square and Elwick Place
Vacant Units	46	30
Total Units Surveyed	315	237
Vacancy Rate	14.6%	12.7%

Surveys are undertaken by officers in person and are a snapshot on the day, meaning that upcoming openings and closures are not factored in. The survey in January 2026 was undertaken after the closure of Park Mall, which is reflected in the overall number of units in the town centre reducing from 344 to 315. The actual number of vacancies in Ashford town centre has reduced from 74 in October 2025 to 46 in January 2026. Many of the vacant properties, where there are live Planning issues, offers being negotiated and absent landlords, are not able to be taken up at present.

Analysis via Savills and Green Street shows that, nationally, the vacancy rates for High Streets as of January 2026 was 13.4%, whereas vacancy in Shopping Centres nationally was 16.3% in the same period. Therefore, the national average across high street and shopping centre vacancies for January 2026 can be calculated as 14.9%. Source: https://www.savills.co.uk/research_articles/229130/387975-0

KPI.PLACE.008 Number of new 106 files opened	Number of new s106 files opened	11			6			13			10			Figures corrected to reflect the numbers of 106s for nutrient mitigation for Stodmarsh

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025/26			Q4 2025/2026			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PLACE.008b Number of draft 106s sent out	Number of draft 106s sent out	9			9			23			9			Figures corrected to reflect the numbers of 106s for nutrient mitigation for Stodmarsh
KPI.PLACE.008c Number of 106s completed	Number of 106s completed	27			9			37			19			Figures corrected to reflect the numbers of 106s for nutrient mitigation for Stodmarsh
KPI.PLACE.009 Planning decision quality – Major	Measured by the proportion of decisions on applications that are subsequently overturned at appeal	6.3%	10%		6.8%	10%		7%	10%		8.8%	10%		MHCLG published position for quality on quality on major decisions between April 2023 - March 2025. The measure used for assessing the quality of decisions is the percentage of planning applications refused, including those arising from a 'deemed refusal' where an application has not been determined - and the appeal was received by the Planning Inspectorate - within the statutory period, for major development that have been overturned at appeal, once nine months have elapsed following the end of the assessment period; as recorded in the data collected by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Planning Inspectorate.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025/26			Q4 2025/2026			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PLACE.009b Planning decision quality – Non Major	Measured by the proportion of decisions on applications that are subsequently overturned at appeal	0.4%	10%	✅	0.5%	10%	✅	0.5%	10%	✅	0.8%	10%	✅	The MHCLG published position for quality on non-major decisions between April 2023 - March 2025
Reported with lag time (normally 9 months) 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 data tables P152 & P154														
KPI.PLACE.010 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 applicant and the local authority)	100%	65%	✅	90%	65%	✅	100%	65%	✅	100%	65%	✅	

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025/26			Q4 2025/2026			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PLACE.011 % of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks amended to reflect 12 rolling month	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks amended to reflect 12 rolling month	91% (24 rolling month) 100% (12 rolling month)	75%		97%	75%		97%	75%		97%	65%		The target has been reviewed and adjusted to 65%. The national threshold for this measure is 60%.
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														
KPI.PLACE.012 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).	99%	75%		95%	75%		95%	75%		95%	75%		

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025/26			Q4 2025/2026			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PLACE.013 % of non majors determined within 8 weeks amended to reflect 12 rolling month	% of non majors determined within 8 weeks amended to reflect 12 rolling month	91% (24 rolling month) 95% (12 rolling month)	80%	✅	96%	80%	✅	96%	80%	✅	96%	75%	✅	The target has been reviewed and adjusted to 75%. The national threshold for this measure is 70%.
KPI.PLACE.014 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	589 (400)	550	⚠️ ✅	594 (406)	550	⚠️ ✅	565 (376)	550	⚠️ ✅	696 (511)	550	🛑 ✅	It remains the position that, once the number of cases restricted from a decision being made due to nutrient neutrality (Stodmarsh) is accounted for, this indicator still lies below the 550-case target figure. It is expected that the availability of off-site nutrient credits provided by Stour Environmental Credits and manage nutrient mitigation credits and other private mitigation providers will help to unlock some of these cases in the near future and should allow the gross caseload figure to fall back below the target figure.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025/26			Q4 2025/2026			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PLACE.016 Parking usage	Parking usage Ashford and Tenterden	275,090			272,446			257,619			247,703			Q4 figure - Made up of 161,507 from Ashford town centre car parks & 86,196 from Tenterden car parks
KPI.PLACE.026 Percentage of parking transactions that are cashless (Ashford)	Percentage of parking transactions that are cashless (Ashford)	82.9%	85%	⚠	89.24%	85%	✅	89.41%	85%	✅	91.33%	85%	✅	The two measures on cashless parking transactions are part of our broader aim to better understand and support the shift towards digital payment methods across our parking services. These measures will help us monitor uptake, identify trends, and assess accessibility and user experience for residents and visitors. Ultimately, we're looking to use this data to inform future improvements, ensure inclusivity, and support the Council's wider digital transformation goals.
KPI.PLACE.027 Percentage of parking transactions that are cashless (Tenterden)	Percentage of parking transactions that are cashless (Tenterden)	76.8%	80%	⚠	78.65%	80%	⚠	79.15%	80%	⚠	80.28%	80%	✅	

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025/26			Q4 2025/2026			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PLACE.028 Commercial Property - Invoiced vs Budget	Commercial Property - Invoiced vs Budget	95.59 %	100%		95.41 %	100%		99.5 %	100%		94.47%	97%		Following a review by Management Team, the target has been revised to 97% moving forward.
KPI.PLACE.029 Commercial Property - Collected Against Invoiced	Commercial Property - Income Collected Against Invoiced	95.25 %	100%		97.68 %	100%		97.7 %	100%		98%	97%		Following a review by Management Team, the target has been revised to 97% moving forward.

Underlying Principles
Key Performance indicators - Reported Annually

Code & Short Name	Description	2024-2025 Annual Figure	2025-2026 Annual Figure	Latest Note
KPI.UP.001 Mean Gender Pay Gap		Mean (average) gender pay gap in hourly pay: **7.0%** Median (mid-point) gender pay gap in hourly pay: **8.9%** This dataset shows the gender pay gap amongst Ashford Borough Council staff for the 2023-2024 financial year	Latest data – March 2025: Mean (average) gender pay gap in hourly pay **7.5%** Median (mid-point) gender pay gap in hourly pay **9.1%** This dataset shows the gender pay gap amongst Ashford Borough Council staff for the 2024-25 financial year.	
KPI.UP.002 Number of local procurements		**Active Contracts under £25k** Total contracts 2024-2025: 1,444 204 (15%) x Ashford borough 334 (24%) x Kent (excluding the Ashford Borough figure above) Of the 204 that are in the Ashford borough there are: • 143 (70%) x Services • 14 (7%) x Supplies • 46 (23%) x Works Of the 334 that are in Kent there are: • 256 (77%) x Services • 12 (4.6%) x Supplies • 65 (19%) x Works **Active Contracts £25K and above** There are 653 contracts over £25k in value on the 2024 quarterly contract registers. Of these 653 there are: • 82 (13%) x Ashford borough	**Active Contracts under £25k** Total Contracts 2025-2026: 1,816 232 (13%) x Ashford borough 417 (23%) x Kent (excluding the Ashford Borough figure above) Of the 232 that are in the Ashford borough there are: • 163 (70%) x Services • 20 (8.6%) x Supplies • 49 (21%) x Works Of the 417 that are in Kent there are: • 316(87%) x Services • 20 (4.8%) x Supplies • 78 (19%) x Works **Active Contracts £25K and above** There are 695 over £25k in value on the 2025 quarterly contract registers. Of these 695 there are: • 85 (12%) x Ashford borough	Due to improvements in the reporting methodology, the figures have been updated from last year's report. The revised 2024/25 figures and updated methodology combine multiple published quarterly contract registers to provide a more comprehensive view of active contracts across the financial year.

Code & Short Name	Description	2024-2025 Annual Figure	2025-2026 Annual Figure	Latest Note
		• 139 (21%) x Kent (excluding the Ashford Borough figure above) • 411 (63%) x Nationally excluding both Kent and Ashford Borough figures above. • 21 (3.2%) x international excluding both Kent, Ashford Borough and National figures above. Of the 82 that are in the Ashford borough there are: • 38 (46%) x Services • 6 (7.3%) x Supplies • 37 (48%) x Works Of the 139 that are in Kent there are: • 90 (65%) x Services • 6 (4.3%) x Supplies • 42 (30%) x Works	• 147 (21%) x Kent (excluding the Ashford Borough figure above) • 441 (63%) x Nationally excluding both Kent and Ashford Borough figures above. • 22 (3.2%) x international excluding both Kent, Ashford Borough and National figures above. Of the 85 that are in the Ashford borough there are: • 39 (46%) x Services • 8 (9%) x Supplies • 37(44%) x Works Of the 147 that are in Kent there are: • 93 (63%) x Services • 8 (5%) x Supplies • 45 (31%) x Works	
KPI.UP.003 Percentage of invoices paid on time	Invoices paid within 30 days of the date of the invoice	93.16%	96.82% - Average per month, April 25 to March 26 for invoices excluding Direct Services Repairs. 76.82% - Average per month, April 25 – March 26 for invoices relating to Direct Services Repairs.	

Underlying Principles

Key Performance indicators - Reported Quarterly

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025/26			Q4 2025/26			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.UP.004 Number of Stage 1 complaints		219			225			286			277			The council is working to the ombudsman's complaint handling code, which has seen a reduction in the complaint handling time from 15 to 10 days. Overall, the council is compliant with the code and there has been training and new policies to support implementation. However, there is a downward trend in response rates within the targets. Reported performance against the 10- and 20-day complaint response times includes all complaints received, including those where an extension was agreed. In Q4, 29% of the 277 stage 1 complaints received had an extended deadline, with 86% of those cases resolved within the revised deadline. For stage 2, 36% of the 66 complaints received had an extension and 92% of those cases were resolved within the revised deadline.
KPI.UP.005 % Stage 1 complaints resolved in 10 days		70%			71%			58%			57%			
KPI.UP.006 Number of Stage 2 complaints		61			47			56			66			
KPI.UP.007 % Stage 2 complaints resolved in 20 days		49%			63%			Reported as 81% in Q3 report but subsequently reduced to 52% due to complaints resolved outside of the quarter			63%			

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025/26			Q4 2025/26			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
														Complaints in the housing service make up the majority of all complaints and this is the area where time-scale extensions are being used when resolving complaints. This is the area where we are not always meeting our stage 1 target of 10 days and a review is underway in the service to ensure resources are optimally deployed to deal with complaints swiftly and effectively.
KPI.UP.008 Benefit Change of Circumstance Processing	Average time taken to process a benefit change of circumstance in no. days	2.27	10		2.12	10		2.19	10		1.82	10		
KPI.UP.009 Benefit New Claim Processing Time	Average time taken to process a new benefit payment claim in no. days	22.82	28		23.52	28		26.61	28		25.71	28		

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025/26			Q4 2025/26			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.UP.010 FOI Response Rate	% of freedom of information requests responded to within 20 working days	100%	95%		99%	95%		100%	95%		100%	95%		In Q4 the council received 260 FOI/EIR requests with all requests coming due in the period answered with in the prescribed 20 working day window. In the 2025/26 period - the council received 978 FOI/EIR requests 2 of these were answered outside the 20-working day window. 99.8% requests within the year answered within the deadline window.
KPI.UP.011 Business Rates Collection	% of national non-domestic rates collected by the council - cumulative figure per month	28.8%	24.75 %		57.97 %	49.5%		81.68%	74.25%		96.9%	99%		Note below:
This excludes credits; by including credits it would increase in-year collection to 97.2%. Due to a number of external factors, particularly economic climate (e.g. cost of running business pressures; appeals against ratable values; reductions in value of RHL relief) and not being able to pursue recovery action promptly due to unavailability of court dates, it means more current financial year debt is now collected after year-end (i.e. in the next financial year) than previously was the case (i.e. reminders/summonses/liability orders are delayed due to court dates). This has an impact on in-year collection rates. 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-domestic rates are available here													

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025/26			Q4 2025/26			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.UP.012 Council Tax Collection Rate	Percentage of council tax collected - cumulative figure per month	29.59 %	24.57 %		57.02 %	49.14%		84.25%	73.71%		96.5%	98.25%		Note below:
This excludes credits; by including credits it would increase in-year collection to 96.9%. Due to a number of external factors, particularly economic climate (e.g. cost of living generally; CTR/vulnerable households; empty homes premiums; developers not selling new builds; increased resistance to paying council tax, e.g. 'Freemen of Land') and also not being able to pursue recovery action promptly due to unavailability of court dates, it means more current financial year debt is now collected after year-end (i.e. in the next financial year) than previously was the case (i.e. reminders/summonses/liability orders are delayed due to court dates). This has an impact on in-year collection rates.													
KPI.UP.013 Compliance - Gas Safety Certificates	% of ABC properties with up-to-date gas safety certificates	99.95 %	100%		100%	100%		99.85%	100%		100%	100%		In January, compliance fell to 99.83% due to a total of 7 properties with expired gas certificates. Compliance returned to 100% in February and March.
KPI.UP.014 Number of days sickness per full time equivalent		**9.14 days** (annualised) per FTE Based on the total FTE, as at 31st March 2025			Number of days sickness per FTE as at 30.09.25 (based on data for the 12 months up to 30.09.25) = **8.77** (actual rather than annualised data) Target: **9 days**			Number of days sickness per FTE as at 31.12.25 (based on data for the 12 months up to 31.12.25) = **8.71** (actual rather than annualised data) Target: **9 days**			Number of days sickness per FTE as at 31.03.26 (based on data for the 12 months up to 31.03.26) = **9.25** (actual rather than annualised data) Target: **9 days**			Sickness absence levels have increased slightly above our target, although they remain within agreed parameters. A full sickness absence analysis report is due for Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September based on absence in this period.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025/26			Q4 2025/26			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.UP.015 Average Speed of Customer Service Calls Answered	Average wait time for customer service calls - to be benchmarked with results across Kent	0h 01m 54s	0h 01m 38s	🛑	0h 01m 21s	0h 01m 38s	✅	0h 01m 29s	0h 01m 38s	✅	0h 01m 15s	0h 01m 38s	✅	
KPI.UP.016 Number of ongoing litigation/ court proceedings	Number of ongoing litigation/court proceedings	Number of ongoing matters = **208** Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC or settled with costs = **5**			Number of ongoing matters = **174** Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC or settled with costs = **5**			Number of ongoing matters = **190** Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC or settled with costs = **5**			Number of ongoing matters = **205** Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC or settled with costs = **7**			
KPI.UP.018 Social media engagement	Social media engagement	Q1 (Apr – Jun) **Impressions** Facebook: 637,338 X (Twitter): 3,022 Nextdoor: 77,529 Instagram: 9,230 **Followers** Facebook: 12,616 X (Twitter): 8,670 Nextdoor: 32,837 Instagram: 3,115			Q2 (Jul – Sep) **Impressions** Facebook: 938, 756 X (Twitter): 1,135 Nextdoor: 40,098 Instagram: 30,679 **Followers** Facebook: 13,148 X (Twitter): 8,656 Nextdoor: 33,351 Instagram: 3,177			Q3 (Oct - Dec) **Impressions** Facebook: 1,086,923 X (Twitter): 629 Nextdoor: 51,532 Instagram: 29,401 **Followers** Facebook: 13,426 X (Twitter): 8,617 Nextdoor: 33,747 Instagram: 3,220			Q4 (Jan - Mar) **Impressions** Facebook: 1,414,766 Nextdoor: 72,529 Instagram: 13,709 **Followers** Facebook: 13,918 Nextdoor: 34,163 Instagram: 3,280			Impressions/Followers for X (Twitter) have not been reported for Q4 as our Comms team have noticed engagement on X has been reducing over the past year (a pattern seen not only across public sector accounts, but across most accounts). As a result, we've made the decision to reduce our use of X to mainly just urgent updates or in emergency planning incidents, while we focus our resources on other platforms which are performance well and getting better engagements.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2025/2026			Q2 2025/2026			Q3 2025/26			Q4 2025/26			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
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, 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 51,000 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.														
KPI.UP.019 Garages Vacancy Rate	% of lettable garages	40%			40%			37%			35%			New target introduced 30% Q4 figure as of March 26
KPI.UP.020 Allotment vacancy rate	% of lettable allotments	7%			1%			2%			0%			New target introduced 0% Q4 figure as of March 26