



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Notice of a Meeting, to be held in the Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PL on Tuesday, 13th June, 2023 at 7.00 pm.

The Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are:-

Cllrs. Bell, Betty, Blanford, Brunger-Randall, Campkin, Chilton, Joseph, Krause, Meaden, Mulholland, Suddards, Al Vacancy.

Agenda

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1. **Election of Chair**
 2. **Election of Vice-Chair**
 3. **Apologies/Substitutes**

To receive Notification of Substitutes in accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2 (c)
 4. **Declarations of Interest** 3 - 4

To declare any interests, which fall under the following categories, as explained on the attached document:
 - a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)
 - b) Other Significant Interests (OSI)
 - c) Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests
See Agenda Item 4 for further details
 5. **Minutes of the last Meeting** 5 - 8

To approve the Minutes of the last Meeting held on the 14th March 2023.
 6. **O&S Work Programme 2023/24** 9 - 28
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| 7. | O&S Annual Report 2022/23 | 29 - 42 |
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Declarations of Interest (see also “Advice to Members” below)

- (a) **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)** under the Localism Act 2011, relating to items on this agenda. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared, and the agenda item(s) to which it relates must be stated.

A Member who declares a DPI in relation to any item will need to leave the meeting for that item (unless a relevant Dispensation has been granted).

- (b) **Other Significant Interests (OSI)** under the Kent Code of Conduct relating to items on this agenda. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared, and the agenda item(s) to which it relates must be stated.

A Member who declares an OSI in relation to any item will need to leave the meeting before the debate and vote on that item (unless a relevant Dispensation has been granted).

However, prior to leaving, the Member may address the Committee in the same way that a member of the public may do so.

- (c) **Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests** not required to be disclosed under (a) and (b), i.e. announcements made for transparency alone, such as:

- Membership of amenity societies, Town/Community/Parish Councils, residents' groups or other outside bodies that have expressed views or made representations, but the Member was not involved in compiling or making those views/representations, or
- Where a Member knows a person involved, but does not have a close association with that person, or
- Where an item would affect the well-being of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc. but not his/her financial position.

[Note: Where an item would be likely to affect the financial position of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc.; OR where an item is an application made by a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc., there is likely to be an OSI or in some cases a DPI. ALSO, holding a committee position/office within an amenity society or other outside body, or having any involvement in compiling/making views/representations by such a body, may give rise to a perception of bias and require the Member to take no part in any motion or vote.]

Advice to Members on Declarations of Interest:

- (a) Government Guidance on DPI is available in DCLG's Guide for Councillors, at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5962/2193362.pdf
- (b) The Kent Code of Conduct was adopted by the Full Council on 19 July 2012, and a copy can be found in the Constitution alongside the Council's Good Practice Protocol for Councillors dealing with Planning Matters. See <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/media/2098/z-word5-democratic-services-constitution-2019-constitution-of-abc-may-2019-part-5.pdf>
- (c) Where a Member declares a committee position or office within, or membership of, an outside body that has expressed views or made representations, this will be taken as a statement that the Member was not involved in compiling or making them and has retained an open mind on the item(s) in question. If this is not the case, the situation must be explained.

If any Member has any doubt about any interest which he/she may have in any item on this agenda, he/she should seek advice from the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, or from other Solicitors in Legal and Democracy as early as possible, and in advance of the Meeting.

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held in Committee Room No. 2, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **14th March 2023**.

Present:

Cllr. Chilton (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Cllrs. Blanford, Farrell, Hayward, Ledger, Meaden, Mulholland

Apologies:

Cllrs. Burgess, Ovenden (Chair).

In attendance:

Cllr. Bartlett

Chief Inspector Sarah Rivett and Detective Inspector Simon Johnson, Kent Police

Safety & Wellbeing Manager, Community Safety and Resilience Team Leader, Policy & Scrutiny Officer, Member Services Officer.

Also in Attendance (virtually)

Cllrs. Harman, Howard-Smith,

Policy & Performance Manager

346 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 14th February 2023 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

347 Community Safety Partnership Update

The Community Safety and Resilience Team Leader introduced the report, which provided the annual update of Community Safety within the Borough and highlighted an overall decrease in many crime types including Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in Ashford.

The Chairman and Committee thanked the Officers for their comprehensive report, which was then opened up to the Committee and the following questions and points were raised: -

- The table at para 16 of the report revealed a large drop in ASB and a Member acknowledged that Covid and Lockdowns would have played only some part in that reduction. He queried what other factors could be attributed to the

figures and whether previous year's data would give a clearer depiction. The Community Safety and Resilience Team Leader explained that the current report only ever displayed two years (present and last year) at a time and that previous reports would evidence preceding year's data for comparison. She added that a wider time period could be included in the report going forward if the Committee requested that. DI Johnson explained that various social factors including the fallout from Covid and the economic crisis impacted the figures and types of crime and ASB had changed during and since that time. The methods for managing crime were also contributory factors.

- In response to a question asking whether any analysis had been undertaken on the components of ASB, to ascertain any correlation to locality, ethnicity or substance abuse, it was explained that the current system (called M3) was universally used as a reporting mechanism, but new systems to better categorise ASB were being explored. Further data analysis could be explored potentially once new systems were procured. In addition, annual strategic assessments were produced with data from various agencies and partners; this was being compiled by a consultant and would include the priorities for the CSP.
- DI Johnson confirmed that Home Office Counting Rules determined the rules about recording crime, and the definition of different types of crime. ASB was recorded via their logging system and was coded to define the type of ASB. Ultimately, other crimes could crossover and overlap into ASB.
- ASB would remain a priority for 2023/24 because of the detrimental impact it could have on communities and businesses and to continue the good work that was evidently underway. It also retained the spotlight on young people and street drinkers, and methods to manage their behaviours, support them and ultimately deter and prevent further ASB.
- Serious and Organised crime included knife crime and was often linked to drug use and County Line activity.
- Knife bins were generally well utilised in the Borough, with kitchen type knives being the most dominant. Requests from residents or communities for more knife bins would be considered, and was dependent on funding. The average cost was £3000 and they were emptied monthly.
- In response to a query regarding crime in rural areas, and Tenterden in particular, DI Johnson explained that the report highlighted the wards with the greatest crime figures, and clarified that the statistics were for Ashford Borough as a whole, including rural areas. Designated Officers were focussed on rural crime and were well supported by the Parish and Community. Tenterden did experience some ASB, particularly around the Town Centre, and CCTV had been implemented to tackle this.
- Chief Insp. Rivett confirmed that Kent Police were experiencing financial constraints in the current economic climate, alongside other public services. However, there had recently been an uplift in recruitment for Officers, funded separately by Central Government, which would result in twelve extra Officers

for Ashford Borough. The Neighbourhood Review was due for completion in June 2023, and this would likely result in more ward based Officers.

- The Portfolio Holder thanked Chief Inspector Sarah Rivett and Detective Inspector Simon Johnson for attending the Overview & Scrutiny meetings and KALC meetings, which had reinforced the good relationship between Kent Police and ABC. He added that Members also played a role as Councillors to bring any issues indicated by residents to the Police, ABC and/or KCC. Significant improvements had already been seen in Kennington and Bockhanger, and it was hoped that those enhancements would continue throughout Ashford and surrounding areas.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

348 Safeguarding Update

The Safety & Wellbeing Manager introduced the report which detailed the work the Council had undertaken to meet its obligations in relation to safeguarding. It contained information on the support given to National Safeguarding Adult Awareness week and improvements to training for staff.

The Chairman and Committee thanked the Officers for their report, which was then opened up to the Committee and the following point was raised: -

- The Table on Page 38 of the report represented only referrals made by ABC staff, not instances recorded.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

349 Future Reports Tracker

The Policy & Performance Manager confirmed that the item included on the Tracker to review the Freedom Leisure Contract was in relation to the Stour Centre and Julie Rose. Members spoke about the urgency to review the closure of Tenterden Leisure Centre.

Resolved:

That the Report Tracker be received and noted.

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Agenda Item No: 6



Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

[Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24]

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to;

- i. **Approve the following topics for the work programme;**
 - **Monitoring of the Savings Schedule.**
 - **Consultation and Engagement Recommendations Update.**
 - **Update on future system upgrades with Arcus Global.**
 - **Annual Reports – Overview and Scrutiny, Performance, Sickness, Safeguarding and the Community Safety Partnership, Budget Scrutiny.**
 - ii. **Consider whether the Freedom Leisure Contract item should be subject to scrutiny once the internal audit has been completed.**
 - iii. **Approve the Scrutiny Topic Selection Matrix and suggested scoring.**
 - iv. **Raise any other issues or topics that would benefit from scrutiny, including one topic for in depth review.**
-

Date of O&S meeting: 13 June 2023

Chair of O&S Committee: To be confirmed.

Relevant Portfolio(s): Policy and Performance

Summary: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviews its work programme annually. Members have been asked to consider any topics for the scrutiny programme. Topics have been assessed using the Topic Selection Matrix.

The report details the draft work programme for 2023/24, including any annual reports/updates expected to the Committee at various points in the year.

Members are advised that scrutiny topics can be considered at any point during the year.

**Exempt from
Publication:**

NO

Background Papers:

None.

Contact:

Abi.sheppard@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330394

Report Title: Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24

Introduction and Background

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee adopts a new work programme each year. At the recent Scrutiny Essentials training, Members were asked to suggest topics that they think would benefit from scrutiny. No additional topics have been suggested at present, therefore any remaining topics from last year have been assessed by the scrutiny team via the Topic Selection Matrix (Appendix A). Currently there are four topics for consideration by the Committee for the Work Programme (Appendix B). The council's Management Team have also been consulted over the work programme and support the future work of the Committee.
2. Details of suggested topics and any annual reports expected this year are outlined in this report. Members are asked to consider any other topics for the main Committee's work programme that can be brought forward as a presentation or written report. We would expect to undertake one in depth review in addition to budget scrutiny which is yet to be suggested and agreed by the Committee.
3. The Cabinet's Schedule of Key Decisions (Appendix C) is included in addition to this report and will be a standing item on the Overview and Scrutiny agendas. This allows Members to learn of the items that are due to be discussed by the Cabinet several months in advance. This provides the opportunity for Members to conduct pre decision scrutiny by requesting that some items be reviewed by the Committee in advance of being considered by Cabinet.

Overview of Topics

Monitoring of Savings Schedule

4. During budget scrutiny of the 2023/24 draft budget, it was suggested that the proposed savings schedule for the council was subject to regular monitoring. Members recommended that the delivery of identified savings was reviewed by the Committee on a six monthly basis to monitor the progress.
5. The scrutiny matrix indicates this topic is of key interest to the Members and residents and therefore it is recommended that this should be prioritised during the year.

Freedom Leisure Contract

6. In 2022, after a year of operations, it was suggested that the new leisure operator at the Stour Centre could be reviewed. Scrutiny of this topic would

examine how the service has been running, the savings made to the council and the levels of customer satisfaction with the service.

7. It was felt that a report would be sufficient to provide the update, as well as inviting a representative from the Leisure operator to attend a future meeting and answer Member queries.
8. However, Members were made aware that an internal audit of the Freedom Leisure contract was underway and it was proposed that a report could be prepared for the Committee, once the audit had been completed. As this topic will likely be covered by the Audit Committee once the audit has been concluded, and does not represent a key issue of concern to stakeholders, this topic ranked a score of 24 on the matrix. This scoring suggests that the topic should be held in abeyance when considering whether to take this forward in to the work programme.

Recommendation Updates

Consultation and Engagement

9. Last year, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to review the council's approach to consultation and engagement. Members were particularly interested in how the council consulted with residents regarding current issues, new policies and projects. Members also wanted to understand what the challenges were with engaging hard to reach groups and compare best practice with other local authorities. It was agreed that a Task Group would convene to undertake the review of consultation and this concluded during the 2022/23 municipal year.
10. The following recommendations were made by the Task Group and were approved by Cabinet in November 2022:
 - i. Corporate consultation guidance be produced to provide services with good practice for setting up future consultations. The guidance should include details on the different methods of consultation and set out some minimum standards that need to be complied with before and after a consultation has concluded.
 - ii. Non-conventional methods of consultation should continue to be explored by the council in order to increase levels of engagement from residents such as video and Hello Lamppost.
 - iii. The use of easy-read versions of consultation papers should be considered for all public consultations.
 - iv. An internal advisory group should be formed for Officers to review consultations before they are published. The group would meet informally to test and feedback to services about proposed surveys.

- v. A calendar of consultations is produced to ensure that the council can oversee how many consultations are issued to residents during one period.
 - vi. Work to increase subscribers to ABC publications should continue to be developed by the Council.
 - vii. The council explore options around creating a Citizens Panel to encourage local residents to give their views and opinions on services and issues that affect the Borough.
 - viii. Residents are engaged with the scrutiny work programme each year using the Council's communications channels
11. Members agreed that an update on the recommendations would be received by the Committee after six months to review the progress of them. Therefore, this has been put forward for the 2023/24 scrutiny work programme.

Update on future system upgrades with Arcus Global

12. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee previously identified that there had been issues with the delivery of the new planning IT system with Arcus Global. It was agreed that a review should be prioritised in the work programme and undertaken by a dedicated Task and Finish Group.
13. The aim for the review was to understand what issues had been experienced during the project and also what lessons could be taken forward in future transformation projects and system rollouts. In particular, Members were aware of plans in 2023 to develop the Arcus Global system further with the Planning and Development Service and also upgrade the system used by the Safety and Wellbeing Service. Therefore, it was important for the Task Group to understand the lessons that could be learnt from the delivery of the planning IT system project. The review concluded at the end of 2022 and eight recommendations were put forward to Cabinet.
14. Following approval of the lessons learnt report and recommendations, it was proposed that Overview and Scrutiny could receive updates on the next phase of system upgrades with Arcus Global in the Planning and Development Service and Safety and Wellbeing Service.

Annual Reports – Overview and Scrutiny, Performance, Sickness, Safeguarding and the Community Safety Partnership, Budget Scrutiny

15. The Committee will expect to receive six annual reports in the coming year;
- Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report – A summary of all the work carried out by the Committee during the last year, including any agreed recommendations.

- Corporate Performance Reports – These are quarterly reports detailing the council’s performance and an annual report is also produced to give an overview of the council’s performance and achievements during the last year.
- Annual Sickness Report – A report providing the Committee with annual sickness information for the recent year.
- Safeguarding – This report provides the Committee with the council’s annual safeguarding update. The report pays particular regard to the council’s obligation to work in partnership to protect children, young people and adults at risk from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development.
- Community Safety Partnership (CSP) - This report provides the Committee with the community safety annual update. The report pays particular regard to the council’s statutory obligation to work in partnership to reduce crime and disorder, this work being progressed through the Ashford CSP.
- Budget Scrutiny Task Group – The aim of the Task Group will be to review the draft budget for 2024/25 and consider any financial risks. The Task Group will then produce final findings with recommendations to Cabinet prior to Full Council approval of the draft budget.

Training and Events

16. The following scrutiny training sessions are due to be held by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny:
 - Using information and Developing Effective Questioning Skills (4th July)
 - Council Finance, Budget and Commercial Scrutiny (26th September)
17. Members are encouraged to attend both training sessions which are to be held in person at the Civic Centre, and further details will be provided in due course.
18. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny hosts additional workshops and events throughout the year for scrutiny Councillors across the country, both virtual and in person. Dates for events will be shared with Members by the scrutiny team as and when they are available.

Conclusion

19. The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2023/24 so far includes a combination of items previously suggested by the Committee last year and quarterly/annual reporting. Members would be encouraged to make

suggestions for topics far looks to prioritise key topics with the aim of completing at least one task and finish group addition to the wider work programme. There are a number of annual reviews expected to the Committee at various points in the year regarding the council's performance, levels of sickness, and also updates on safeguarding and community safety.

20. This report seeks approval of the work programme for 2023/24 and asks Members to recommend any further topics for consideration in the future. It should be noted that Members are able to make suggestions for scrutiny at any point throughout the year by raising the issue at a meeting or by contacting the Chairman or Policy and Scrutiny Officer.

Contact and Email

21. Abi Sheppard, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Abi.sheppard@[ashford.gov.uk](mailto:Abi.sheppard@ashford.gov.uk) 01233 330394

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<u>Scrutiny Topic Selection Matrix</u>	1. Represents a key issue for local people.	2. The issue is strategic and significant.	3. The topic falls within a community or corporate priority area.	4. Scrutiny of the issue will lead to effective outcome.	5. Had the topic been covered elsewhere? <i>(Yes = low score No = high score)</i>	6. Represents an issue of concern to stakeholders and partners.	7. The issue is of community concern or there is a high level of dissatisfaction with one or more services.	8. The scrutiny activity is timely.	Score	Rank	Review Type
Monitoring of Savings Schedule	5	5	5	4	3	5	5	5	37	1	R
Freedom Leisure Contract	4	3	4	3	3	2	2	3	24	2	R

Each of the topics are scored for degree of 'fit', e.g. 1 (low) to 5 (high). The reviews with the best fit achieve the highest score.

1. Represents a key issue for local people.
2. The issue is strategic and significant.
3. The topic falls within a community or corporate priority area.
4. Scrutiny of the issue will lead to effective outcomes.
5. Has the topic been covered elsewhere in other services? (Yes = low score No = high score)
6. Represents an issue of concern to stakeholders and partners
7. The issue is of community concern or there is a high level dissatisfaction with one or more services.
8. The scrutiny activity is timely.

Review Type:

Each topic has an indicated review type: Task Group (TG), One-off report or Presentation (R), Member Briefing (B), Other (O)

Score	What the score means
31 to 40	The issue/item has a high likelihood of entering the Scrutiny Work Programme but should be prioritised according to score
20 to 30	Item/issue has less chance of gaining a place on the Scrutiny Work Programme and should be held in abeyance
Under 20	Item/issue should not normally gain a place on the Scrutiny Work Programme

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Draft Work Programme – June 2023

Current Work Programme			
Report Title	Date due to O&S	Reporting Service	Scope of what is to be scrutinised
Freedom Leisure Contract	TBC	Environment, Property and Recreation	<p>A report to review the council's new leisure operator. Scrutiny of this topic would examine how the service has been running, the savings made to the council and the levels of customer satisfaction with the service.</p> <p>Note: An internal audit of the contract is underway and a report could come to O&S after the audit process has been completed.</p>
Monitoring of Savings Schedule	TBC	Finance, IT and Digital	It was recommended by the Budget Scrutiny Task Group for O&S to monitor the delivery of the proposed savings identified on an ongoing and regular basis.
Update on Future System Upgrades with Arcus Global	TBC	Planning and Development	Following approval from Cabinet, it was agreed that the Committee could receive updates on the next phase of system upgrades with Arcus Global in the Planning and Development Service and Safety and Wellbeing Service.
Consultation and Engagement Review – Recommendations Update	July 2023	Policy and Performance	A report will be shared to provide an update on the recommendations from the Consultation and Engagement review.

Annual Sickness Report	July 2023	HR, Customer Services, Communications and Digitalisation	A report providing the Committee with annual sickness information for the recent year.
Corporate Performance Report Q1	September 2023	Policy and Performance	Quarterly Performance Report in relation to Quarter 1. Information on what the Council has achieved through its decision making; key performance data and wider contextual information.
Corporate Performance Report Q2	November 2023	Policy and Performance	Quarterly Performance Report in relation to Quarter 2. Information on what the Council has achieved through its decision making; key performance data and wider contextual information.
Budget Scrutiny 2024/25	December 2023 /January 2024	Policy and Performance Finance, IT and Digital	Scrutiny of the draft budget 2024/25 will take place over three or four meetings during December and January. A final report and findings from the annual Budget Scrutiny Task Group will be submitted, including any recommendations for consideration by Cabinet.
Safeguarding Update	February 2024	Safety and Wellbeing	Annual update to the committee on the council's work on safeguarding adults and children at risk.
Community Safety Partnership Update	February 2024	Safety and Wellbeing	A review of the decisions made and action taken in connection with the discharge of crime and disorder functions by the members of the Community Safety Partnership. The Committee operates as the designated Crime and Disorder Committee for the council.
Corporate Performance Report Q3	February 2024	Policy and Performance	Quarterly Performance Report in relation to Quarter 3. Information on what the Council has achieved through its decision making; key performance data and wider contextual information.

**CABINET
SCHEDULE OF KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN**

The following Key Decisions will be taken by Ashford Borough Council's Cabinet on the dates stated.

Ashford Borough Council's Cabinet is made up of: - Councillors xx, xx,xx etc

Copies of the reports and any other relevant documents that are submitted to the Cabinet in connection with a proposed decision will be available for inspection, or on screen, five clear days before the decision date at the Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford and at The Town Hall, 24 High Street, Tenterden, during opening hours, or at <https://ashford.moderngov.co.uk>

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
May 2023					
NO MEETING DUE TO BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTIONS					
29th June 2023					
Corporate Plan Annual Report 2022/23	<i>To present the Annual Report 2022/23 highlighting performance against the Corporate Plan priorities.</i>		Tom Swain	Open	4/7/22
Final Outturn 2022/23 (including UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update)	<i>Final budget outturn for previous financial year.</i>		Lee Foreman	Open	4/7/22

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
Business Continuity Policy	<i>Approval is required of this reviewed Business Continuity Policy in order to ensure a clear organisational approach and commitment, as well as guide business continuity planning at an overarching and service level.</i>		Laurel Niven	Open	27/2/23
Adoption of the Charing Neighbourhood Plan	<i>To report the outcome of the referendum of the Charing Parish Neighbourhood Plan to Cabinet.</i>		Claire Marchant	Open	13/4/23
Purchase of Trafalgar House - Use of Chief Executive's Delegated Authority			Mark James	Exempt	13/4/23
Service Restructure Proposals – Planning Business Support, Policy and Performance and Environment, Property and Recreation	<i>Combined report proposing new staffing structures for the affected teams following consultation with staff.</i>		Joy Cross (Louise Lambourn/ Charlotte Hammersley/ Jo Fox)	Open	2/5/23
27th July 2023					
Revenues & Benefits Recommended Write-Offs Schedule	<i>Proposed formal write-off of debts</i>		Nic Stevens	Open (Exempt Appendix)	30/7/22

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
Corporate Debt Policy			Nic Stevens	Open	15/2/23
Update on Levelling Up Funding and Newtown Works Development			Andrew Osborne	Open	3/2/23
Ashford Parks Foundation			James Laidlaw	Open	11/4/23
Parking Charges			Alison Oates	Open	1/12/22
Brompton Development	<i>To update of the progress of the discussions with both Brompton and the Developer in bringing forward the proposed development including the setting up a of joint venture company.</i>		Paul McKenner	Open	28/7/22
Ashford Town Centre Business Grants			Thomas Jenkins	Open	11/5/23
Covert Surveillance Report			Samantha Clarke	Open	11/4/22

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
Corporate Enforcement Statement	<i>To present an updated Corporate Enforcement Statement. Setting out how the Council will uphold the 6 principles of the Regulators Code, the stages of enforcement action and the areas where the Council has responsibility to take action against breaches of regulation or legislation.</i>		Natalie Pearce	Open	6/2/23
Anti-Social Behaviour Policy	<i>To approve the reviewed ASB policy in order to ensure a clear organisational approach and commitment to managing and addressing ASB within the borough for private residents and housing tenants. The policy will set out the obligations of all stakeholders including the CSU, Housing, Kent Police and Members.</i>		Laurel Niven	Open	14/12/22
Review of the Statement of Community Involvement			Tim Hickling	Open	22/5/23
Community Grants Policy - outcome of consultation			Charlotte Hammersley	Open	22/5/23

31st August 2023

KEEP CLEAR FOR HOLIDAYS

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
28th September 2023					
Financial Monitoring – Quarterly Report	<i>Quarterly budget monitoring report</i>		Lee Foreman	Open	30/9/22
Corporate Performance Report	<i>The report seeks to give Members and the Borough’s residents an overview of how the Council is performing. It seeks to do this in a transparent and easily-accessible manner, giving a key performance ‘snapshot’.</i>		Tom Swain	Open	30/9/22
Broadband and Digital Infrastructure Update	<i>To update on projects and initiatives to improve broadband in the Borough and outline the work that the team suggests can take place in the coming year.</i>		Thomas Jenkins	Open	30/9/22
Parking Strategy			Alison Oates	Open	1/12/22
Senior Restructure			Tracey Kerly	Open	11/4/23
Civic Centre Proposed Move to International House			Hannah Clayton-Peck	Open	11/4/23
26th October 2023					
Medium Term Financial Plan	<i>To ask Cabinet to note the Medium Term Financial Plan ahead of this year’s Budget process.</i>		Lee Foreman	Open	28/10/22

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
Corporate Commercial Property Strategy – Annual Report	<i>To advise of the revenue performance of the Council's corporate property portfolio during the last financial period and to advise of proposals to increase profitability in the coming financial period.</i>		Eloise Duffy	Open	28/10/22
30th November 2023					
Corporate Performance Report	<i>To give Members and residents an overview of how the council is performing with a key performance 'snapshot'.</i>		Tom Swain	Open	28/11/22
Council Tax Base 2023/24	To present for approval the estimated 2023/24 Council tax base calculation for the Borough and each parished area, on which the major preceptors and local Parish Councils will base their requirements.		Lee Foreman	Open	28/11/22
Draft Budget 2024/25	<i>To present the preliminary draft service budget and outline MTFP for the purposes of subsequent formal scrutiny by the O&S Task Group and public consultation.</i>		Lee Foreman	Open	28/11/22
Financial Monitoring – Quarterly Report	<i>Quarterly budget monitoring report.</i>		Lee Foreman	Open	28/11/22

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
21st December 2023					
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2023-2053 (including Financing and Affordable Homes Programme)	<i>To detail the financial position in the HRA and ask Members to agree Housing's priorities for the next year.</i>		Sharon Williams/Mark James	Open (Exempt Appendix)	16/12/22
25th January 2024					
Revenues & Benefits Recommended Write-Offs Schedule	<i>Proposed formal write-off of debts</i>		Nic Stevens	Open (Exempt Appendix)	27/1/23
29th February 2024					
Revenue Budget 2024/25	<i>To present the draft revenue budget for 2024/25 to the Cabinet for recommendation to Council.</i>		Lee Foreman	Open	24/2/23
Financial Monitoring – Quarterly Report	<i>Quarterly budget monitoring report</i>		Lee Foreman	Open	24/2/23

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
Corporate Performance Report	<i>The report seeks to give Members and the Borough's residents an overview of how the Council is performing. It seeks to do this in a transparent and easily-accessible manner, giving a key performance 'snapshot'.</i>		Tom Swain	Open	24/2/23
21st March 2024					
Annual Pay Policy Statement (including Review for 2024/25)	<i>A review of the annual Pay Policy Statement and Ashford Living Wage Allowance.</i>		Michelle Pecci/ Joy Cross	Open	31/3/23
25th April 2024					

***If you wish to contact a Report Author by email, unless stated otherwise, the addresses are;
first name.surname@ashford.gov.uk***

22/5/23

An aerial photograph of a large, calm lake with several small, tree-covered islands. In the foreground, a grassy hill slopes down towards the water. The background shows a town with buildings and more trees under a clear sky. The entire image has a blue-green color cast.

Overview and Scrutiny 2022/2023 Annual Report

Report Author:
Abi Sheppard

Chairman:
Cllr. Noel Ovenden

Chairman's Report

I am pleased to present the annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2022/23 year. The report details work carried out by the Committee over the year in line with the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

The Committee prioritised two in depth reviews and concluded these by the end of 2022. Firstly, a task and finish group was set up to understand the council's approach to consultation and engagement. Members noted the ongoing work being undertaken to explore new approaches to consultation and one recommendation supported that the option to set up a citizen's panel in the Borough be considered.

Important work was also undertaken by another task group to understand the lessons learnt from the implementation of the new planning IT system with Arcus Global. Members examined the different stages of the implementation and made recommendations to help improve the way that the council rolled out transformation projects in the future.

I would like to thank Members of the Committee for their attendance and contribution at meetings. Additionally, on behalf of the Committee, thanks are extended to Officers who have taken the time to present and participate at meetings over the year and in particular during in depth reviews.

Cllr. Noel Ovenden

Introduction and Background

The Local Government Act 2000 (the Act) introduced a requirement that councils with a 'Leader and Executive' arrangement must include the provision of one or more Overview and Scrutiny Committees within their council structure. Under section 21 of the Act, the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee has power to submit reports and make recommendations to the Cabinet or full Council on any aspect of council business or any matter affecting the Borough or its residents.

The constitution of Ashford Borough Council contains provisions for a single Overview and Scrutiny Committee to carry out the functions detailed in the Act, although the Committee may assemble task groups from its membership for specific reviews.

In the 2019/20 municipal year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had 12 members, appointed in line with the broad political balance of the council. The roles of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee were appointed to opposition members, although the Committee operates apolitically in its discussions, with all members of the Committee working together to ensure that the council and its services are acting effectively and efficiently.



Methods of Scrutiny

Issues can be scrutinised by the Committee in the following ways:

By considering reports produced by Officers and having the opportunity to ask questions about the different aspects of the council's business.

Inviting representatives from outside bodies or Parish and Community Councils to talk about topics of interest to residents.

Using the 'call in' method to bring forward matters of urgency for considerations by the Committee, and which are of interest to the public.

The Committee welcomes and encourages Cabinet Members and other non-Committee Members to attend meetings as and when appropriate.

Call in

The call-in process allows the Chair of the Committee, or five members of the Committee, to call in a decision of the Cabinet to a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee is able to recommend that the Cabinet reconsiders the decision or is able to refer directly to Council.

There have been no called in items this year.



Hybrid Meetings and Public Participation

Overview and Scrutiny is open to participation from the public and involvement in the process is actively encouraged. Throughout the year, scrutiny has been committed to being open and accessible by the public and therefore has been kept as a hybrid meeting. This has meant that residents have been able to access the meeting either in person or watch live online.

We have been encouraging involvement from residents by publishing a news item in the summer edition of the Ashford For You magazine. The item aims to inform residents how they could become involved in scrutiny and suggest potential topics for the work programme.

Some of the other ways the public could get involved include providing evidence to or at a meeting or being co-opted on to a Task Group. The Committee is keen to see more public participation both in its task and finish groups and in its committee meetings.

Council under scrutiny

If you are interested in scrutinising the work of the council here's how to get involved...

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee looks at council decisions and requires us to be open and accountable. The committee may look at any matter affecting the borough or its residents. It is made up of 12 councillors, reflecting the political balance of the authority. You can get involved by:

- Sharing your views in writing with the committee.
- Suggesting topics for future reviews; do you have a pressing issue that is affecting your local community which you think could be looked into? Scrutiny is not a forum to raise individual complaints, as we have a separate procedure for that.
- Attending a meeting, in person or watch the meeting virtually online.

If you feel there is an issue affecting residents that the committee should look at, email overviewandscrutiny@ashford.gov.uk or call 01233 330394. If you want to speak at a meeting, contact our Member Services team on 01233 330491.



Consultation and Engagement Review

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to review the council's approach to consultation and engagement. Members were particularly interested in how the council consulted with residents regarding current issues, new policies and projects. Members also wanted to understand what the challenges were with engaging hard to reach groups and compare best practice with other local authorities. It was agreed consultation and engagement would be a priority topic for the scrutiny work programme during the 2022/23 municipal year.

A scope was initially compiled for the review to establish where scrutiny could be beneficial. A scoping document was agreed which outlined 5 key aims for the review:

- What methods of engagement and communication are used by council services and could they be improved to engage with hard to reach groups?
- How is the council engaging with hard to reach groups in the Borough and what are the obstacles.
- To understand the council's public consultation process and how this contributes to decision making.
- To explore best practice and the tools used by other Local Authorities to carry out public consultations.
- Identify ways that Overview and Scrutiny could engage more with residents to increase public participation at Committee meetings.

The Task Group recognised the importance of consulting residents on various issues. Although public consultations had been undertaken for many policies, strategies and developments, a high response rate was not always received. Members agreed that new ways could be explored to help reach all types of residents in the Borough which may involve looking outside of traditional surveys and questionnaires. The creation of a Citizens Panel was also considered as a new way to increase regular engagement with residents.



Creating a corporate approach to consultations was seen as key for ensuring their quality. The Task Group concluded that more could be done to guide Officers when considering consultation methods and a wider group of consultation experts in the council could be formed to help with this.

The Task Group found that public participation at public facing committees had improved due to the new hybrid working arrangements. However, it was suggested that more work could be done to engage residents with the work of the O&S Committee through social media and the council's resident magazine.

Recommendations

I. Corporate consultation guidance be produced to provide services with good practice for setting up future consultations. The guidance should include details on the different methods of consultation and set out some minimum standards that need to be complied with before and after a consultation has concluded.

II. Non-conventional methods of consultation should continue to be explored by the council in order to increase levels of engagement from residents such as video and Hello Lamppost.

III. The use of easy-read versions of consultation papers should be considered for all public consultations.

IV. An internal advisory group should be formed for Officers to review consultations before they

are published. The group would meet informally to test and feedback to services about proposed surveys.

V. A calendar of consultations is produced to ensure that the council can oversee how many consultations are issued to residents during one period.

VI. Work to increase subscribers to ABC publications should continue to be developed by the Council.

VII. The council explore options around creating a Citizens Panel to encourage local residents to give their views and opinions on services and issues that affect the Borough.

VIII. Residents are engaged with the scrutiny work programme each year using the Council's communications channels.

Delivery of the Planning IT System Review

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee identified that there had been issues with the delivery of the new planning IT system with Arcus Global. It was agreed that a review should be prioritised in the work programme and undertaken by a dedicated Task and Finish Group.

The aim for the review was to understand what issues had been experienced during the project and also what lessons could be taken forward in future transformation projects and system rollouts. In particular, Members were aware of plans in 2023 to develop the Arcus Global system further with the Planning and Development Service and also upgrade the system used by the Safety and Wellbeing Service. Therefore, it was important for the Task Group to understand the lessons that could be learnt from the delivery of the planning IT system project.

The Task Group assembled 5 Members; Cllr Ovenden (Chair), Cllr. Ledger, Cllr. Harman, Cllr. Mulholland and Cllr. Hayward to review the success of the project delivery of the new IT system in the Planning and Development service and, if required, make some recommendations to improve the process for future system rollouts or projects.

A scope was initially compiled for the review to establish where scrutiny could be most beneficial. During discussions about the scope, it was important to Members that the purpose of the review was not to apportion blame for issues that occurred throughout the project, but to understand any lessons that could be learnt to inform similar projects in future.

The Task Group agreed that speaking to key individuals involved in the project would be the best way to understand issues completely. It was proposed that three or four 'Witness Sessions' would take place for Members to have a question and answer style discussion with the various individuals involved, for example, the project manager.

Recommendations

I. Projects of a certain size or importance require a professional project manager and this role should not be in addition to normal duties.

II. Unnecessary and historic data should not be transferred to new systems and any data migration should be considered during the early stages of a project. A data retention policy should be agreed and adopted for implementation in the project.

III. Internal and external user testing should be thoroughly scoped, agreed through PMG and carried out for any future system implementation or upgrade.

IV. Detailed scoping of Officers time should take place when considering project resources.

V. Consultation with external customers should take place at the outset of a project to inform its delivery.

VI. PMG should determine the governance arrangements of future projects, including frequency of highlight reports setting out key risks and challenges.

VII. Portfolio Holders should be kept informed of project updates for key projects in their Service on a regular basis, which is defined from the outset of a project.

VIII. System rollouts should foremost be designed to improve the customer experience and processes need to be mapped with this in mind.



Budget Scrutiny Task Group

The budget scrutiny sessions yielded much information on the financial and resource challenges facing the authority and the Task Group focused on a number of key risks relating to the achievability of next year's budget.

The draft budget for 2023/24 was presented to the Task Group at its first meeting; this included all service budgets and financial risks. The purpose of this session was to assist Members in determining which areas to dedicate additional scrutiny time. The following topics were identified and were discussed over three meetings:

- The council's reserves positions and forecast.
- Savings within the budget not yet identified
- Details on the borrowing portfolio and the expected borrowing interest rate increases.
- Housing Revenue Account Maintenance Programme
- Homelessness provision and housing options
- The risks around the maintenance of assets.
- Risks linked to the commercial property portfolio.



Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Budget Task Group recommended to the Cabinet that:

I. The council's draft budget for 2023/24 is sound and deliverable (noting recommendation II).

II. The Task Group supports the proposal to use reserves to fund the 2023/24 deficit.

III. The Task Group notes that in order to mitigate against the challenges presented by the current economic climate, a savings strategy needs to be developed to bridge the budget gap.

IV. The Task Group note that work should be undertaken to assess the council's estates portfolio to determine whether assets should be retained.

V. Resources should be allocated to ensure the council continues to deliver more than the minimum requirement of 10% for fire safety checks in homes.

VI. A presentation is provided to the wider council regarding the Housing Revenue Account.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report and recommendations at their meeting on 14 February 2023. It was noted that the recommendations made by the Task Group within the report reflected views of Members at the time when they met previously. However, the Committee made further recommendations to reflect the changes to the draft budget since it was scrutinised. It was additionally recommended that;

VII. The Committee approve the findings of the budget scrutiny task group at the time of writing.

VIII. That consideration should be given to increasing the council tax levels in line with government recommended levels to protect service delivery in the coming and future years.

IX. The Committee would like to monitor the delivery of the proposed savings identified on an ongoing and regular basis.

VII. £500,000 is earmarked from the Economic Resilience Reserve to safeguard against expected income from the international development company not being forthcoming.

Other Priority Topics

S106 Process Review

Process Mapping Update

The O&S S106 Task Group set out eight recommendations, which were endorsed by Cabinet in November 2021. The first recommendation sought a process mapping exercise of the way S106 agreements are prepared from start to finish to provide clarity and guidance to Officers and Members involved in the Section 106 process. It was anticipated that this would then inform the remaining recommendations.

An update on progress was reported to the Committee in May, which concluded that a further update would be brought back to the Committee within 6 months, with the task of completing the process mapping exercise a priority.

In September 2022, a report was prepared to update the Committee in respect of the process mapping exercise. It also updated the Committee in respect of progress towards the Mid Kent Audit actions following the publication of their report into the S106 process in 2021 and other tasks that had been progressed by the Plan Making and Infrastructure Team that were relevant to the S016 review.

Hybrid Working

Members of the Committee were interested in exploring how well the hybrid arrangements were working and in particular wanted to consider this in terms of performance, customer satisfaction, savings, human resources and recruitment. A Hybrid Working update report was prepared and aimed to review the progress of hybrid working.

The overarching conclusions were that hybrid working was here to stay across the country, but it needed sustained effort to ensure it continued to work efficiently. Management Team were keen to remain agile, keeping customers' needs at the forefront of decisions and continuing to work flexibly. It was agreed that an update report would be presented to the Committee in the future.

Performance Reporting

Quarterly reports were presented to the Committee to demonstrate the council's performance across all services and highlight any areas of concern.

Annual Reports

Corporate Sickness Report

This report provides members with sickness absence figures for the financial year 2021/22 (01 April 21 to 31 March 22). It was noted that similar data was provided to Management Team on a six-monthly basis in order that the Council's senior management team have an up-to-date overview of key HR Metrics.

The reported figures for Ashford Borough Council employees were from sickness absences recorded on the iTrent Payroll and HR system. The figures were presented as the average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employee during the year, starting 1 April 2021.

Community Safety Partnership

This report provided the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the community safety annual update. The report paid particular regard to the council's statutory obligation to work in partnership to reduce crime and disorder, this work being progressed through the Ashford Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

The report detailed crime statistics for the Borough and its positioning against other districts within the

county. Ashford showed as being a safe Borough as the level of recorded crime remained low, and there was a reduction in many crime types, including serious violence offences. The report highlighted an overall decrease in reports of anti-social behaviour.

The report also provided information on current community safety priorities, actions that were taken to meet priorities and raise awareness of emerging issues. It also supported the delivery of the priorities set by the Police and Crime Commissioner through his Safer in Kent plan 2022/2023.

Safeguarding

This update provided the Committee with the council's annual safeguarding update. The report focused on the council's obligation to work in partnership to protect children, young people and adults at risk from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development. It gave information on the safeguarding activity that had been undertaken and raised awareness of emerging issues. It also supported the delivery of the priorities set by the Kent Safeguarding Children's Multi-agency Partnership and the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board.

Committee Membership 2022/23

Cllr. Ovenden (Chairman)
Cllr. Chilton (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. Ledger
Cllr. Hayward
Cllr. Burgess
Cllr. Howard-Smith
Cllr. Blanford
Cllr. Farrell
Cllr. Meaden
Cllr. Mulholland
Cllr. Brooks
Cllr. Barrett

15

**SCRUTINY REPORTS
& PRESENTATIONS**

7

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

3

TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

Future Scrutiny

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme is due to be discussed at its first meeting in June 2023. A draft programme has been included within an appendix to this report.

Agenda Item 8



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Agenda Item No:

Report To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet

Date of Meeting: Tuesday 13th June 2023
Thursday 29th June 2023

Report Title: Ashford Borough Council Annual Performance Report
2022/23

Report Author: Tom Swain
Job Title: Governance and Data Protection Officer

Portfolio Holder:
Portfolio Holder for:

Summary: The Annual Performance Report is an important pillar to the council's transparency agenda.

The Annual Performance Report:

- Summarises some of the achievements and milestones the council has realised over the year in the context of the Corporate Plan 2022 – 2024.
- Summarise performance against the council's suite of key performance indicators (KPI's) for the year 2022 – 2023.

Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: None

Recommendations: **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: The Annual Performance Report offers a means by which the council can embrace the transparency agenda and provides an opportunity to reflect on its performance and achievements from the last financial year.

Financial Implications: None

Legal Implications:	None
Equalities Impact Assessment:	Not required as the Annual Performance Report is a record of past performance and does not propose any new actions.
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:	Corporate Plan 2022 – 2024
Contact:	tom.swain@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330432

Ashford Borough Council

Annual Performance Report

2022-2023

DRAFT

Contents

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Our Borough Key facts and figures	04
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Green Pioneer	08
Caring Ashford	12
Targeted Growth	16
Our Principles	20



Message from the Chief Executive



Welcome to our Annual Report – this provides an opportunity to look back on some of the achievements and milestones seen across our borough over the last year. The year once again has been a challenging one, with us all living through a cost of living crisis and having to stretch our pounds even further.

We are not immune from these challenges and difficult choices are being made and will have to be made going forward, to ensure we can continue to offer effective and good value for money services, which continue to meet the justified high expectations of our residents. However, it is not all gloom, through our legacy of forward thinking, entrepreneurship, careful planning and a partnership approach we continue to be robustly placed to weather these pressures and remain focused on our long term objectives to strive for a greener, more caring and prosperous borough.

This can be seen in the year that has just gone, with our increased electric vehicle charging provision and continued commitment to tree planting; our sustained investment in our leisure, play and recreational spaces; the welcoming of the Jasmin Vardimon Companies' new purpose built space and the expansion of Ashford College; along with some fantastic events with our street art Unframed festival and the return of the Carnival of the Baubles having taken place.

There also remains much to look forward to, with the Ashford International Studios project gathering pace and the submission by Brompton of a planning application to build a revolutionary bicycle factory. I look forward to sharing with you these projects and many other developments from our Corporate Plan as they unfold over the coming years.

Tracy Kedy

Our Borough in 2022-23






Key Facts and Figures

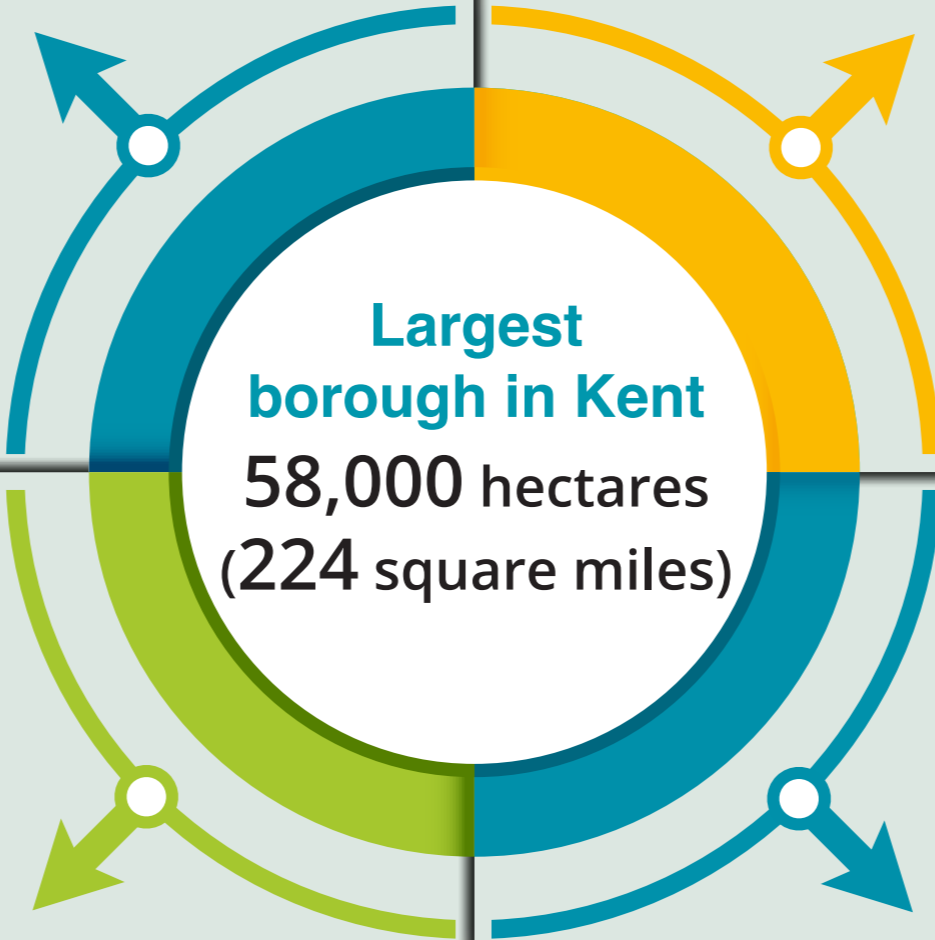
Population Census 2021

132,700 (2011 Census 118,000 this equates to a 12.5% population growth)



Accommodation Type Census 2021

Accommodation Type	Census 2011	Census 2021
Detached 	33.4%	↓ 32.7%
Semi-detached 	30.2%	↑ 30.7%
Terraced 	24.2%	↓ 22.2%
Flat, Maisonette or Apartment 	11.3%	↑ 13.1%
Caravan or Temporary 	1%	↑ 1.3%



Ethnicity Census 2021

Ashford is an increasingly diverse borough the percentage of the population who do not identify as 'White' has increased from 6% to **12%** since 2011.



Qualifications Census 2021

Highest Level of Qualification	Census 2011	Census 2021
No formal qualifications	21.2%	↓ 17.6%
Level 1 (1 to 4 GCSEs or equivalent)	15.6%	↓ 11.3%
Level 2 (5 or more GCSEs or equivalent)	17.8%	↓ 15.4%
Apprenticeship	3.9%	↑ 5.6%
Level 3 (2 or more A levels or equivalent)	12%	↑ 17.1%
Level 4 (Bachelors degree) or above	24.6%	↑ 30.1%
Other formal qualifications, level unknown	4.9%	↓ 2.9%

Corporate Plan 2022-24



The Corporate Plan 2022-24 that this Annual Performance report is based upon, starts the journey to achieving the Ashford Ambition that was developed in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders in 2020. There are three supporting themes:

- Green Pioneer
- Caring Ashford
- Targeted Growth

Each theme has a long term aim, objectives and actions to achieve the outcomes that will contribute to realising the Ashford Ambition, this Annual Report highlights the steps made towards this ambition from the last year.

Ashford Ambition:

To be a thriving, productive and inclusive borough by 2030 and beyond; a vital part of Kent and the South East where local businesses, social enterprises, communities and the public sector provide collective leadership to promote shared prosperity, happiness and wellbeing.



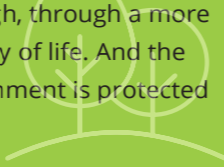
Theme

Objectives

Outcomes

Green Pioneer

Our long term aim: Every community and individual plays their part in becoming a carbon neutral borough, through a more sustainable way of life. And the natural environment is protected and enhanced.

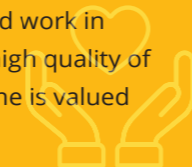


- GP1:** Reduce reliance on fossil fuels in line with our carbon neutral targets
- GP2:** Increase biodiversity and encourage sustainable lifestyles
- GP3:** Reduce the amount of waste produced from homes and business

- Homes are energy efficient and cheaper to heat. Renewable energy generation and consumption increases. Fewer local car journeys are made, air quality improves and residents are more active and healthy.
- Communities urban and rural areas value, enjoy and respect the natural environment and the abundance of wildlife increases
- A borough free of litter, where everyone takes responsibility for minimising the amount of waste they produce

Caring Ashford

Our long term aim: Towns, villages and rural communities are welcoming, safe places for all who live and work in them, offering a high quality of life where everyone is valued and respected.

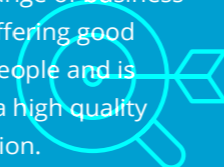


- CA1** - Homes and neighbourhoods in the borough meet the needs of local people of all ages and incomes to live sustainably and safely
- CA2** - Local people have access to life-long learning to ensure they have knowledge and skills to take up local employment
- CA3** - Reduce health inequalities and improve the wellbeing of local people
- CA4** - Communities celebrate their heritage and the diversity of their population to build a more connected community and strengthen social responsibility

- Communities feel safe and secure with easy access to locally - led services designed with communities to meet their needs
- Local people seek positive change for themselves and others through the development of their knowledge and skills, improving social inclusion and employability
- The lives of people with the worst health and wellbeing outcomes are improved
- Cultural activities and events bring communities together, increasing tolerance, respect and understanding

Targeted Growth

Our long term aim: A thriving, productive local economy supporting a range of business and industry offering good work to local people and is recognised as a high quality visitor destination.



- TG1** - Increase productivity and job opportunities and the establishment of sustainable, knowledge based and creative industries in the borough
- TG2** - Enable the improvement of digital infrastructure to support the growing needs of business, voluntary sector and residents
- TG3** - Strengthen local supply chains and increase the resilience of the local economy
- TG4** - Support growth in the visitor economy
- TG5** - Stimulate vibrant, accessible and sustainable Town Centres for residents visitors and business

- The borough attracts and grows businesses and industries that are innovative and sustainable that benefit local employment and incomes
- Fast, reliable digital connectivity is available across the whole borough so no one is disadvantaged in accessing online services or doing business
- Local business survival rates improve
- Ashford is a 'year round' visitor destination renowned for offering quality visitor experiences
- Our town centres are lively, safe places where people of all ages live, work and visit, coming together to enjoy events and activities

Green Pioneer



Progress being made on Stodmarsh mitigation measures

During the year we have continued to respond to the various issues that have arisen from the need for new housing and other developments to achieve 'nutrient neutrality', due to the deterioration of Stodmarsh Lakes.

Since July 2020, certain planning applications (those providing overnight accommodation, including new housing) located within the Stour catchment and/or which discharge foul water into the catchment, have been put 'on hold' until they can achieve nutrient neutrality.

In response to this issue, the council has been working on a way to deliver long term nutrient mitigation, by identifying suitable land in the borough for strategic wetlands, which can generate off-site nutrient mitigation that can then be secured by developments, allowing them to be granted planning permission.

Following March's Cabinet meeting, members agreed to support the continuation of this work on acquisition of potential sites for this purpose. They also agreed the proposed contents and broad scope of a future Nutrient Neutrality Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and for this to be subject to public consultation in due course.

A core component of the council's strategy is the creation of strategic wetlands within the borough as a means of providing off-site nutrient mitigation. There are two projects currently ongoing.

The Queen's Green Canopy Continues

The Council have continued to take part in The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) by aiming to plant 135,500 trees by the end of 2023, representing one tree of every resident in the borough.

QGC is a unique tree planting initiative initially introduced to mark Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee. However following the sad passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and the now wishes of His Majesty King Charles III, the QGC initiative has been extended to give people the opportunity to plant more trees in honour Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

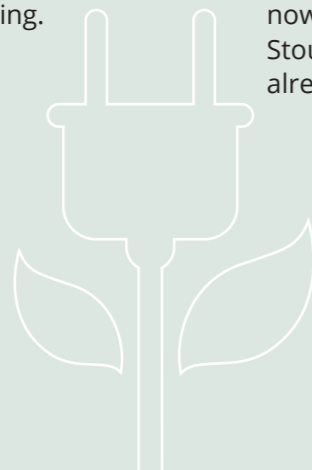
The Ashford tree planting initiative started in autumn 2021, and has continued with over 107,000 trees planted across the borough.

Tree planting has now ceased for the 2022- 2023 planting season. However we will be looking to restart planting in the autumn of 2023, in a final push to reach our target of 135,500.

More information on the initiative is available on [The Queen's Green Canopy website](#).

New Electric Vehicle Charging Points installed

The Council is continuing to work on a programme to install new electric vehicle charging points (EVCPs) throughout the borough. Nine new points have now been installed by EV dot at the Civic Centre and Stour Centre Car Park, to complement the two points already located at the site.



Aims to deliver more sustainable developments

The Council aims to deliver more sustainable forms of development by effectively tackling the causes and effects of climate change in the way it plans for new residential dwellings.

The Council's Cabinet approved the publication of Climate Change Guidance for Development Management which has been adopted as a material consideration for the purpose of making planning decisions.

The guidance provides developers, applicants and decision makers with clarity as to what the Council expect certain types of new residential development to deliver in the way of infrastructure to help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

£2.5m investment in Tenterden Leisure Centre power plant will cut carbon emissions and lower running costs

£2m of Government funding was secured to replace the ageing power plant at Tenterden Leisure Centre with a state-of-the-art system which will slash running costs, cut carbon emissions providing a boost to bold ambitions to make the borough carbon neutral by 2030

The Council also invested more than £465,000 into the ambitious project, taking the total to nearly £2.5m.

This new work follows the updating of the centre's plant during 2022, which saw a new pool air handling unit, combined with an air source heat pump, new pool filtration vessels and new control panels.



New waste and recycling service on its way

Three Kent councils have agreed a new waste and recycling contract with SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK Ltd, worth around £19m per year across the whole Mid Kent contract.

Ashford, Maidstone and Swale councils - who work together as the Mid Kent Waste Partnership - have awarded the eight-year contract to Suez after a joint tender process. The new service begins in March 2024 and will bring in new technology and industry improvements, whilst retaining large parts of the existing service.

Fortnightly collections of waste and recycling will continue across the three boroughs, with one wheeled bin for dry recycling, alongside the regular weekly food waste collections. The new contract offers the chance to increase recycling rates, improved efficiency of the routes, lower emissions from vehicles and add better technology to keep residents up to date.

Ashford's first Great Big Green Week

During the year, for the first time, Ashford Borough Council took part in the nation campaign - The Great big Green Week (24 September - 2 October).

The council worked with local organisations to produce a weeks' worth of events. Bringing together and raising awareness of local green initiatives to the community and helping residents learn how they can play a part by contributing through everyday actions and choices.

The main event - The Great Big Green Week Roadshow, created a vibrant atmosphere in Ashford town centre. Many residents engaged with the local stalls, learning tips on recycling, saving energy, how to get a more biodiverse garden and tips on shopping locally. Families got to enjoy the free activities available, which included making your own draft excluder and for the more competitive the smoothie bike challenge.



Caring Ashford



Freedom Leisure announced as new operator of Tenterden Leisure Centre

During the period it was announced that Freedom Leisure will be operating Tenterden Leisure Centre from spring 2023.

Tenterden Leisure Trust (TLT) commenced negotiations with Ashford Borough Council to relinquish the lease of Tenterden Leisure Centre in March. Since then, the council has been working with TLT and operator Serco to enable as smooth a transition as possible.

As landlord, the council has committed to capital works for the building to improve the structure and ensure sustainability for the leisure facilities in the future and this included a new roof, a new air handling unit, a new pool filtration system and switchgear.

Ashford Community Lottery celebrates its first year

Since its launch in March 2022, Ashford Community Lottery has raised more than £22,000 for local not-for-profit groups.

More than £7,600 has been given away in winnings, and hundreds of people have won extra tickets too!

There are currently more than 70 local not-for-profit groups and organisations (good causes in lottery terms) signed up to the Ashford Community Lottery, as a fun and effective way to raise funds for their valued services in the community.

Good causes not only benefit from receiving 60p from every £1 ticket bought through their page, they also receive a host of marketing materials as well as their own Ashford Community Lottery web page.

Central Park, Park Farm play area officially opened

Local families, residents and school children attended the opening ceremony of Central Park, Park Farm's new play area on Thursday 9 March.

Central Park play area is situated in Park Farm, Ashford, and has officially been opened following a £400,000 investment, part of the council's £1.1m Play Regeneration Programme.

The brand new play area includes an all-inclusive flush roundabout, multi tower multiplay unit, a wide range of swings, including a basket swing, parent/child swing, a multi person rope swing and a sensory play zone.

There is also a new outdoor gym area, featuring a range of equipment for strength, balance, stability and agility training.

New seating, wheelchair friendly picnic tables and bins have been installed to provide a communal leisure space for residents to use.





Spearpoint Recreation Ground brand new play area now open

Local children, families and residents, attended the opening ceremony of Spearpoint Recreation Ground's brand new play area on Monday 13 February.

Spearpoint Recreation Ground play area is situated in Kennington, Ashford, and has officially reopened following a £360,000 investment.

The play area has been split into zones with easy access between each, for infants, toddlers, juniors, teens, a respite area and fitness area. It features 65 new play activities, with equipment for all abilities.

Working with Kompan on the design and construction of the play area, recycled materials have been used in parts throughout, with the toddler four tower multiplay unit manufactured predominantly from post-consumer plastic including recycled ocean waste.

Julie Rose Stadium officially opened after significant investment

The Julie Rose Stadium was officially re opened on Friday 17 February by the Deputy Mayor of Ashford, Cllr Larry Krause in front of Ashford MP Damian Green and representatives from Ashford Borough Council and Freedom Leisure.

The iconic venue now boasts a brand new athletics track, a new running chute and indoor throwing cage, as well as an expanded gym and exercise studio - transforming the facilities on offer after a £1 million investment.

Freedom Leisure and Ashford Borough Council worked on plans to re-surface the outdoor athletics track at the stadium, which was built in 1997.

This follows on from the complete refurbishment and opening of the new gym and exercise studio last year, and is further evidence of the great partnership between the Council and the not-for-profit leisure trust to improve the health, wellbeing and sporting facilities for the people of Ashford and the surrounding area.

The Victoria Park and Watercress Fields Project Progressed

The Victoria Park and Watercress Fields Project is a £4.5m project being delivered by Ashford Borough Council and the National Lottery Heritage Fund to improve and protect Victoria Park for the local community. The project focuses on the natural, built and social heritage of Ashford's largest public park, and particularly aims to improve it for residents by updating the community facilities and play spaces. Progress to date includes:

Sensory Garden - The garden has been re-levelled to ensure it is fully accessible to all, with new pathways and entrance points completed. It was fully seeded by our landscape contractors and planted with 2500 sensory inspired plants by our wonderful volunteers.

Wetland - The Wetland is taking shape nicely with the central islands looking very striking. Recent rainfall has demonstrated that it does hold water when it's wet, which is a positive step towards the new environment we are looking to introduce to the already varied ecology of the park.

Pump track - The brilliantly successful British Cycling Places to Ride project has put a high demand for new pump tracks on the small group of expert contractors in the UK which means that a lot of parks and communities are experiencing delays in the original timeframes for pump track works. This includes delays to the Victoria Park pump track for which we are currently waiting to confirm new construction dates.

Fountain piazza works - These works have been progressing on schedule, so far this has involved the development of the existing piazza to explore drainage issues, the expansion of the upper seating area and the new access path.

New Café/ Nursery Refurbishment - This has been progressing positively with the outline of the building completely visible and interior spaces marked out with an expectation to have the building open for the summer.

New Playground - Work has now started on the new children's play park. Without any delays from weather or materials, we anticipate this should be complete by the summer.





Eat Well Spend Less Continues In 2023

Last year's popular Eat Well Spend Less roadshow returned to the borough in 2023. The roadshows focus on providing targeted help and advice for local families who may need extra support as a result of rising food prices.

The events brought together a range of partner organisations including frontline NHS staff and council officers, outreach organisations and charities, in one easy-to-access place. Families were able to access a range of services including:

- Guidance from Our Kitchen on shopping, preparing and cooking healthy, nutritious meals
- Benefits and housing advice and advice on what support is available locally
- Information on where and how to access local food banks
- Advice on what support is available locally
- Health MOT's from Kent Community Health (NHS) Foundation Trust

Jasmin Vardimon Company unveils state of the art space in Ashford

The acclaimed dance company becomes the first choreographer-named organisation to have its own purpose-built home outside London. JVC has revealed its new state-of-the-art purpose-built home.

Eight years in the planning and part funded by a £3million National Lottery grant with other financing from Kent County Council and Ashford Borough Council, JVC Home also includes incubator and start-up spaces for emerging local creative companies and individuals.



Work begins on Phase 2 of Ashford College

It's an exciting time for Ashford College, with construction work underway on a brand new extension.

Called Phase 2, the new wing will house classrooms and laboratories for Business, Information Technology, and Engineering. The new facilities will create a renewed focus on these up-and-coming fields, and allow 250 more students each year to access the high quality education offered at Ashford College.

Featured will be an 'Engineering Hub', which will highlight the role engineering can play in creating solutions to climate change and promoting decarbonisation.

The extension will also be key in delivering the new T Level qualifications, which are equivalent to three A Levels and provide learners with work experience as part of their training.



Ashford Civic Awards honour community heroes

The Ashford Borough Council Platinum Jubilee Civic Awards took place on Friday 23 September at Chart Hills Golf Club, Biddenden.

The awards provided an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the hard work and dedication of individuals who have enriched the lives of others in their community, who have made significant achievements or who have acted as role models for our residents.

Taking place in this historic year of the Platinum Jubilee of the reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the event honoured those people who have delivered community service by outstanding achievement or dedicated contribution within the borough of Ashford.

Short-stay accommodation for homeless people at Henwood Road car park

Plans have been approved to create new high quality short-stay accommodation apartments for homeless people on the under-used Henwood car park on the edge of Ashford town centre.

This will be the first-of-its-kind modular development in the borough. As well as all necessary flood risk mitigation measures, these apartments will be highly-insulated and triple-glazed, with heat recovery ventilation and integrated solar panels. The fabric of the building designed to create zero carbon homes with low energy consumption and running costs.



Targeted Growth



Ashford International Studios project gathers pace

Plans are gathering pace to deliver an exciting film studios-led £250m investment and regeneration project.

The TV and film studios on the site of the derelict Newtown Works railway site will bring significant benefits to Ashford in terms of investment and job creation, and promises to be one of the most important economic drivers for the borough.

Cabinet agreed that a loan facility of £50m be made available to the AIDC for the construction of the studios and workshop space, subject to the completion of the due diligence process and to the granting of planning permission satisfactory to the film studio operator. It was agreed that this loan facility will either be repaid on completion of the works from the sale proceeds or through a lease to an operator on a long-term basis.



Ashford's street art festival UNFRAMED

UNFRAMED, Ashford's first mural festival officially launched. Our contemporary street art trail, curated by Accent London and The London Mural Company, has transformed blank walls and building surfaces into high quality mural paintings and bespoke integrated artwork.

Work began on the murals, at the beginning of March 2023, when world renowned Mr Doodle, who lives in the Ashford borough, created what is believed to be the world's biggest doodle on the side of a multi storey car park.

Other artists including Alex Chinneck, Charley Peters, Curtis Hylton and local artist Danielle Williamson have all taken on the challenge of converting blank walls into spaces of colour and creativity.

After several weeks of work bringing the murals to life, the festival was officially launched at Coachworks Ashford, on Friday 31 March 2023.

To find out more about the festival, please visit the [Love Ashford website](#).

Brompton submits planning application to build revolutionary bicycle factory of the future in Ashford

Ashford Borough Council has confirmed that a planning application has been received from Brompton for a revolutionary new factory, delivering a £100 million investment for the local area and potential for up to 4,000 jobs for the Kent economy.



Carnival of the Baubles kicked off the countdown to Christmas in Ashford town centre

Christmas celebrations were in full swing in Ashford in late November as Carnival of the Baubles brought a day of festive, family fun to the town centre.

Thousands of people lined the streets to watch the Outer Space themed procession of giant illuminated lanterns and baubles make its way through the heart of the town. Local school children and community groups gathered at Elwick Place and proceeded up

Bank Street through to the Lower High Street where the procession came to a celebratory end with an amazing drumming performance by Blocofogo. The star of the show was BinBot, a giant mechanical puppet, who led the procession of lights alongside students from Theatre Train Ashford and the man himself, Father Christmas, who danced his way up the street in a rocket.



Reset sets out next stage of development and regeneration of Ashford Town Centre

There has never been a more important time to set out a clear focus and strategy for Ashford Town Centre. High streets up and down the country are facing many challenges with the after-effects of the Covid pandemic joining the cost-of-living crisis, ongoing financial uncertainty, and the growing competition of online shopping. What is clear is that the space required for retail in town centres is shrinking.

Ashford Borough Council understands the challenges that our town centre residents, businesses, users and community groups face. Town Centres are facing considerable changes over a short period of time, being influenced by wider economic, environment and social changes. It is vital that we continue to invest in carefully thought-through ideas and solutions to help bring about significant change, for the benefit of all.

The Town Centre Reset – including the revitalisation of our High Street is a ‘Super 6’ project, and a key priority in our Corporate Plan 2022-24. It identifies a number of areas that require improvement and intervention, and these areas have had to be prioritised to focus available resources over the next few years.

Works begin to preserve the life of Ashford Shared Space

During the period Kent County Council (KCC) carried out roadworks aimed at preserving the life of Ashford Shared Space and Lower High Street.

Once achieved the area will be better preserved for the longer term, making it more resistant to damage in the future and improving accessibility.

Works totalling up to £600,000 began in November and is expected to be completed in five phases with everything aimed to be completed by the Spring of 2023.

The scheme is a joint project by KCC and Ashford Borough Council (ABC), originally set up to improve the look and feel of the town centre as well as enhancing safety for pedestrians.

Fabric of Ashford

Ashford’s high street saw a series of family-friendly events and workshops as part of The Fabric of Ashford; The Place That Makes Us campaign. This has featured a line-up of events throughout July and August including pop-up workshops, live music, storytelling workshops, street entertainment and art installations.

The finale event on 20 August showcased the borough’s community spirit in the form of the Ashford Tapestry; a community-created art project comprising colourful fabric artwork, all sewn together to form an impressive art installation.

New places to enjoy in Ashford Town Centre

Parts of Ashford Town Centre looked a little different during the period as new seating, furnishings and bunting decorating upper Bank Street and Middle Row.

The temporary pilot scheme delivers some interventions that links to key themes from the Town Centre Reset - integrated play, feature lighting, temporary public realm and outdoor seating. If successful this could lead to further, more permanent features in the future.

The short-term regeneration project aimed to encourage active and healthy lifestyles by introducing informal play opportunities, attractive places to meet and dwell and enhancing of public spaces.

It provided a new look and feel to areas of the town centre, with additional cleaning, re-decoration and new planting, bunting and seating adding a touch of colour.



Ashford Borough Council supports businesses with two innovative programmes

As part of our continued commitment to developing the economic prosperity of the borough, we are working with Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce (KICC) to roll out two exciting programmes to support businesses and enable them to grow further.

Scale Up Ashford and Growth Entrepreneur Ashford are both expert-driven growth and expansion schemes to help businesses to fulfil their full potential and explore new ideas and concepts that they need might need further guidance or help to drive forward.



Our Principles

Residents' survey reveals satisfaction levels with Council

The 2022 Residents' Survey indicates that residents' general views on the council and our performance have stayed broadly consistent. Satisfaction levels with key services remains high and efforts to improve community safety and communication with residents appear to have been effective.

The survey, which took place over the summer, asked residents for their views regarding the council and specific service areas, their local area and other topical questions.

Feedback on the council's response to the pandemic was positive and residents were generally happy with our digitalisation efforts.

The continued importance of accessible in person options for older and digitally excluded residents was also made clear.

Areas for improvement include residents continuing to feel they have little influence over council decisions whilst development and car parking provision in the borough remain areas where residents were less satisfied.

[Residents Survey 2022.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)



Hello Ashford - finding out resident's views on our Town Centre changes

Using the engagement platform Hello Lamp Post, members of the community will be able to interact with objects around the town centre via their mobile phone.

Residents can strike up conversations with familiar street furniture such as benches, bins, flower beds, lamp posts, the bandstand and more.







Signs are placed in and around Bank Street and Middle Row, you can either text the number displayed on the sign or scan the QR code to receive information on the object.



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

Annual Performance Report 2022 – 2023
Key Performance Indicators

PI Status		Long Term Trends	
	Alert		Improving
	Warning		No Change
	OK		Getting Worse

Green Pioneer Annual Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline Figure	2022- 2023 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_01 Council's carbon footprint (tCO2e) Annual	Council's carbon footprint (tCO2e)	Annual measure – Baseline figure 3599 tCO₂e for Y2019/20 Work is ongoing to begin using the LGA toolkit and redefining our baseline to include scope 3 emissions, including: - staff commuting travel and top 3 contracts (Leisure – Stour Centre, Waste and Housing Maintenance).		In July 2019 Ashford Borough Council declared its aim to become carbon neutral in its own estate and operations by 2030. The Climate Change Advisory Committee (CCAC), leads on the commitment to act and achieve this agenda.
<p>In May 2021 officers initiated consultancy work with Laser Energy (our corporate estate energy provider) to establish the Council's own carbon baseline (on own assets and assist with the borough wide picture) with a view to modelling potential carbon descent plans for net zero for council owned assets. This returned a carbon baseline of 3599 tCO₂e for Y2019/20</p> <p>Detailed information on Ashford Borough Council's framework for climate action is included within - Climate Change Action - A Systemic Approach.pdf (moderngov.co.uk).</p>				





Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline Figure	2022- 2023 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_02 Council owned renewable energy provision (kWh) Annual	Total potential capacity of council owned renewable energy provision (kWh)	21-22 estimated average of 492,493.31 kwh per year.		<p>This is made up from metered readings from ABC portfolio which is 303,213.31 kwh plus 189,280 kwh which is designed in capacity for the Stour Centre (no meter available).</p> <p>The council has been proactive in installing Solar PV on its buildings since 2011.</p> <p>The importance of maximising the use of solar photovoltaic (PV) on Council buildings is understood and projects including the installation at Carlton Road - Stour Centre Car Park - Ellingham Industrial Estate - Blindrooms Lane are being explored.</p>
CP_KPI_03 Number of EV charging points on council property Annual	Number of EV charging points on council property	Annual measure – Baseline figure from 21-22 14 EV charging points on council property. 24.633 KWH consumed	37 Council managed charging points	<p>Ashford Borough Council has started a programme to install some EV chargers (EVCPs) throughout the borough. Residents and visitors can expect more places to charge electric vehicles as part of plans to accelerate the transition to cleaner modes of transportation. The council currently has 37 live council managed charging point bays.</p>
<p>As we install the EVCPs and go live with hardware and software, we will update our website and external sites such as Zap Map and use local media to advise accordingly. As part of our installation, we will be including 22kw and Rapids to future proof demand.</p> <p>This proposal will improve service by increasing access to charging facilities for the anticipated increase in electric vehicle users in the coming years. This will encourage the use of electric vehicles while reducing the environmental impact of vehicle emissions.</p>				

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline Figure	2022- 2023 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_04 Air Quality	Number of Air Quality Management Areas	Annual measure – Baseline figure from 21-22 0 Air Quality Annual Status report produced each June	0 Air Quality Annual Status report produced each June	Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are declared when there is an exceedance or likely exceedance of an air quality objective. After declaration, the authority should prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) within 12 months setting out measures it intends to put in place in pursuit of compliance with the objectives. Ashford Borough Council currently does not have any declared AQMAs. For reference, a map of Ashford Borough Council's monitoring locations, as well as those undertaken by National Highways within Ashford, is available from 2022 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ashford.gov.uk)
CP_KPI_05 Area of land (km2) managed for nature conservation Annual	Area of land (km2) managed for nature conservation	86,156M2 of meadows created	1.2km2 of land managed for nature conservation	Ashford Borough Council have set out how they will increase biodiversity within council-owned green spaces by introducing a variety of habitats and varying maintenance regimes. The creation of more meadows and enhanced Land Management Plans across the borough, will benefit wildlife, improve the wellbeing of our residents by connecting them with nature as well as continuing to maintain our open spaces in a way that promotes a sense of place and space.
The council's in-house landscape management service, Aspire, are proposing to make some changes to selected areas of land they manage including introducing areas of uncut grass for meadow creation. The Creation of Meadows and enhanced Land Management Plans to support increased biodiversity: (moderngov.co.uk)				

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline Figure	2022- 2023 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_07 Number of trees planted (net gain) supported	Number of trees planted (net gain) supported through ABC projects	Annual measure – Baseline figure from 21-22 40,000 trees have been planted across the borough so far	107,000 trees planted to date	As part of the Platinum Jubilee, Ashford Borough Council has been delivering a tree planning programme with the aim of planting one tree for each resident living in the borough in 2022. There will be almost 135,500 trees planted over the three year programme.
CP_KPI_08 Level of biodiversity in defined project areas Annual	Level of biodiversity in defined project areas	New meadow areas have been created at Queen Mothers Park and Singleton to date.	122,000 M2 of meadows	Ashford Borough Council have set out how they will increase biodiversity within council-owned green spaces by introducing a variety of habitats and varying maintenance regimes.





Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline Figure	2022- 2023 Annual Figure	Latest Note																	
CP_KPI_11 Contamination rate in recycling loads Annual	Contamination rate in recycling loads	average total contamination rate for 21-22 was 13.72%	Top 4 contaminants in recycling (with average %) – again based on present figures Food = 4.4% Textiles = 2.2% Black bags = 0.76% Sanitaryware/nappies = 0.73%	Recycling is collected commingled via an alternate weekly collection system using a 240-litre green wheeled bin, or clear sacks, with accepted materials including paper and card, cartons, plastic bottles and pots, tubs and trays, metal cans, and glass bottles and jars accepted at the kerbside. Residual waste is collected using 180-litre wheeled bins, and the council offers a weekly food waste and fortnightly garden waste service. Rejected contaminated loads, for example, contained black sacks, food waste, nappies and sanitary waste, as well as other non-recyclable items, are sent to the Allington Energy from Waste (EfW) facility, where due to their contamination, loads are incinerated, rather than being recycled.																	
CP_KPI_12 Reported incidences of fly-tipping Annual	Reported incidences of fly-tipping	Annual measure – Baseline figure from 21-22 1514 registered fly-tips.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2020 – 2021</th> <th>2021 – 2022</th> <th>2022 – 2023</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>No. of fly tips registered</td> <td>2027</td> <td>1514</td> <td>1292</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fines Issued</td> <td>7</td> <td>48</td> <td>14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total £ paid in fines</td> <td>£775.00</td> <td>£3595.77</td> <td>£6450</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				2020 – 2021	2021 – 2022	2022 – 2023	No. of fly tips registered	2027	1514	1292	Fines Issued	7	48	14	Total £ paid in fines	£775.00	£3595.77	£6450
	2020 – 2021	2021 – 2022	2022 – 2023																		
No. of fly tips registered	2027	1514	1292																		
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**Green Pioneer
Quarterly Measures**

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_06 Number of organisations committed to active travel plans cycling/walking	Number of organisations committed to travel plans cycling/walking	Officers are developing a proposal for a travel plan for Ashford Borough Council staff. Work continues to explore how we can work with a local business to pilot an active travel plan within the borough to inform further role out. Initiatives to get people cycling through 'guided rides' and bike repair and maintenance schemes have been successful and will continue to be offered.												
CP_KPI_09 Recycling Rate	% of borough waste recycled or composted	54.67 %	50%		52.67 %	50%		47.53	50%		49.6%	50%		Average for first 3 Quarters 49.6% - Data for Quarter 4 not currently available. DEFRA's nationwide recycling league tables.

Our recycling rate is cyclical with a fall seen over the Christmas, new year period. Garden waste collected during the winter months also falls with tonnages being low up until the warmer/drier days return in the spring.

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 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_10 Refuse Collection Success Rate	% of successful refuse collections per 100,000 refuse collections made.	99.96 %	99.96 %		99.96 %	99.96 %		99.97 %	99.96 %		99.96 %	99.96 %		Q4 based on Jan data only

[New Waste Contract.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#) This Cabinet report identifies the evaluation undertaken, the costs and the key changes and benefits that will occur from the proposed new waste contract.

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

Caring Ashford Annual Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline Figure	2022 – 2023 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_14 Number of all recorded crime figures Annual	Recorded Town Centre crime	Victoria ward which includes the town centre rolling year all crime figure 1894, 16% fall on previous year violence against the person 782, 7% fall on previous year.		Ashford Community Safety Partnership: an update on community safety activity in the borough 2022/2023 was presented to March's O&S committee Report Title: (moderngov.co.uk)

In Autumn 2021, following a successful bid to the Home Office, Ashford was awarded almost £550,000 to make the streets of its town centre safer, particularly for women and girls. To date this has enabled:

- Installation of four CCTV cameras in Edinburgh Road Car Park
- Installation of nine public space CCTV cameras in key locations such as the station underpass and Beaver Road
- Improved monitoring of CCTV cameras at Elwick Place by switching them to the council's monitoring centres platform
- Purchase and distribution of over £5k worth of safety equipment to the public
- Educational inputs to year six pupils around staying safe and healthy relationships
- Complete replacement of the Memorial Gardens fencing
- Creation of Safe Spaces and associated bystander training for staff who work within the town centre
- Additional APAC radios were purchased to improve connectivity for businesses and Safe Spaces
- Streetwise app development – over 5000 downloads so far and the app developer is in discussion with other boroughs due to its success in Ashford
- Improvements to the street scene through alleyway mirrors, litter picking equipment and pressure washer for Biffa
- Providing Ashford Street Pastors with a purposed vehicle, the first district mobile Safe Space. The vehicle supports the Street Pastors' activity in the night-time economy, allowing them to expand their operations to safeguard more vulnerable people

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline Figure	2022 – 2023 Annual Figure	Latest Note
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Additionally, Ashford Borough Council has joined forces with Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT) a project which aims to use the power of sport and physical activity to create safer, stronger and more respectful communities by engaging with young people in some of our most high-need areas.

This project has now been funded until 1 April 2025. With Charlton Athletic to date provided 1-2-1 mentoring to 21 high risk young people as well as ‘PL Kicks’ sessions on a Friday evening which is regular attendance by at least 40 young people. The venue at Tower's School provides a central and safe location where coaches can have a positive impact on young people. This has helped to improve community cohesion and reduce risky and anti-social behaviours.

They have managed to increased their mentoring hours at Goldwyn and Tower's School by the number of referrals they have received for both locations. This has helped to reduce violent crime, improve the understanding of the services available to young people, parents, and the school. Additionally, they have managed to build stronger and healthier relationships with for young people.

Young people have expressed to having an increased understanding and awareness of their behaviours on themselves and others, and the risks associated to them.

CP_KPI_15	Number killed or seriously injured on Ashford's roads	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Collisions</th> <th>Casualties</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Fatal</td> <td>7</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Serious</td> <td>37</td> <td>44</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Slight</td> <td>199</td> <td>284</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>243</td> <td>335</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Collisions	Casualties	Fatal	7	7	Serious	37	44	Slight	199	284	Total	243	335	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Collisions</th> <th>Casualties</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Fatal</td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Serious</td> <td>50</td> <td>56</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Slight</td> <td>202</td> <td>311</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>256</td> <td>371</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Collisions	Casualties	Fatal	4	4	Serious	50	56	Slight	202	311	Total	256	371	The number of personal injury collisions at any location in Kent is available at www.crashmap.co.uk .
			Collisions	Casualties																														
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Number killed or seriously injured on the roads Annual	Calendar year 2021	Calender year 2022 – subject to final revision from DfT.																																

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline Figure	2022 – 2023 Annual Figure	Latest Note
	<p>The County is served by three Highway Authorities: Kent County Council (KCC), Highways England and Medway Council. Kent Police collects over 60 pieces of statistical data for each injury crash for the whole county.</p> <p>Crashes are categorised by severity:</p> <p>Fatal - a crash resulting in a death Serious - detention in hospital, includes paralysis, fractures and severe lacerations Slight - includes whiplash, sprains and minor lacerations</p> <p>Human error is a factor in 95% of road crashes. Based on the Department for Transport's (DfT) figures the cost to the community of a fatal crash is around £1.9 million, a serious crash costs in the region of £216,000 and a slight crash costs £23,000. For more information about crash and casualty figures please see www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-safety/crash-and-casualty-data.</p> <p>Ashford Borough Council is committed to supporting the introduction of lower speed limits within the borough. It hopes to see more schemes being introduced and has adopted a Vehicle Speed Policy to help encourage this to happen.</p>			
CP_KPI_16 Number of play areas revamped/refreshed/replaced Annual	Number of play areas revamped/refreshed/replaced	This year, Brisely Farm and Goat Lees, completely refreshed the safety surfaces of both.	There have been three brand new play areas opened at the end of 2022 and beginning of 2023; Central Park, Park Farm, Rylands Road, Bockhanger and Spearpoint Recreation Ground, Kennington, which were part of the £1.1m Playground Regeneration Programme.	<p>Ashford Borough Council is committed to providing local communities with high quality and accessible play spaces, and we continually seek to secure additional funding to maintain and strengthen the local play offer.</p> <p>Work on installing new individual pieces of play equipment in a number of play areas across the borough has started.</p> <p>Works includes the installation of new swings, springer units, multiplay units, climbing frames, seesaws and inclusive roundabouts.</p>

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline Figure	2022 – 2023 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_23 Indices of multiple deprivation score Annual	Indices of multiple deprivation score	152	152 – Last available update 2019	IMD - Rank of average rank (National) - 1 being the most deprived National rank out of 317 local authorities.
<p>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.</p> <p>The latest release is the English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (IoD2019) and is published by central government to help local authorities identify the most disadvantaged areas so that resources and funding can be allocated appropriately.</p>				
CP_KPI_24 Health profile indicators	Health profile indicators for smoking prevalence, healthy weight and physical activity	Most recently available information source and trend data available at: Local Authority Health Profiles - OHID (phe.org.uk)	Smoking Prevalence in adults (18+), Source annual Population Survey 10,096 10.1% . Percentage of physically active adults, Source: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (based on the Active Lives Adult Survey, Sport England) 66.9% . Percentage of adults (18+) classified as overweight or obese, Source: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (based on the Active Lives Adult Survey, Sport England) 63.5% .	

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline Figure	2022 – 2023 Annual Figure	Latest Note
				<p>The One You shop continues to see an increase in visitor numbers delivering a variety of free health services. Find out more details about the One You health shop located in Ashford's Park Mall shopping centre.</p> <p>A series of Eat Well Spend Less roadshows took place in July, August and September, across East Kent, focussing on providing targeted help and advice for local families who may need extra support because of rising food prices. The 12 events (three in Ashford) brought together a range of partner organisations (over 50 across the region) including Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust, frontline NHS staff and council officers, outreach organisations and charities, in one easy-to-access place. More are planned for 23-24. Eat Well Spend Less a success (ashford.gov.uk).</p>
CP_KPI_25 Annual footfall to key leisure sites	Annual footfall to key leisure sites	Data from latest available quarter: Quarterly data Stour centre visitors 82,880 Julie Rose visitors 6,261	Data From latest available quarterly report with comparison from the same period the previous year Quarterly data Stour centre visitors 80,552 compared with 61,861 in prior year comparable period.. Julie Rose 7,899 compared with 6,328 in prior year comparable period.	<p>A continued focus on growth of participation is resulting in positive growth in the majority of areas.</p> <p>Major investment works of the track replacement at Julie Rose Stadium took place during the year.</p>

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline Figure	2022 – 2023 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_28 Exceptional Circumstance Payments spend Annual	Exceptional Circumstance Payments	Expenditure on ECP 2022 April to June £20,980.00	£65,568.55 ECP expenditure for 2022/2023.	An Exceptional circumstances Policy has been created by Ashford Borough Council to assist persons who have applied for Council Tax Reduction and who are facing 'exceptional circumstances'. This is to provide further assistance where an applicant has made a claim for Council Tax Reduction but do not qualify for support or even with support are unable to meet their Council Tax liability.
<p>Our Welfare Intervention Officers continue their support for people who need help with any housing or benefit related issues. Providing practical advice and signposting to other helpful organisations.</p> <p>Offering advice with; Council Tax, including Council Tax debt advice; Claiming Council Tax reduction or housing benefit; Claiming Discretionary Housing Payments or Council Tax Exceptional Circumstances Payments; General housing advice, including advice regarding rent arrears; Referrals for homelessness advice; General advice around claiming other benefits and support, such as Universal Credit, Foodbank vouchers, and other Department for Work and Pension benefits.</p>				
CP_KPI_29 Value of grants awarded via community grant fund. Annual	Value of grants awarded via community grant fund	£334,453.70 for 2021/22	£390.856.43 for 2022/23	Value of grants awarded via Community Grants Fund this financial year: £ 390,856.43 Broken down into: Capital £94,725 Event Reset £12,050 Community Services £162,520 Ward Member £121,561.43

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline Figure	2022 – 2023 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_31 Trends in volunteering Annual	Trends in volunteering			<p>The council funds a community connector project delivered by Ashford Volunteer Centre (AVC) aimed at supporting a resilient and sustainable local voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the Ashford Borough, which enables its independence, diversity and accessibility.</p> <p>During 2022/2023 the AVC has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • had 262 VCS group registered with AVC to receive info and signposting via an e-newsletter and social media on current support available for VCS such as training, funding streams, targeted help with cost of living issues, best practice, consultations etc. • Three in person courses delivered on Micro volunteering, Duke of Edinburgh Scheme and Virtual Volunteering. • Three VCS networking event delivered during the year • offered advice and support to 12 individuals looking to establish new community groups in the borough • 29 community groups received additional support on funding/governance/business planning • Over 260 community groups connected with the county-wide Kent Volunteers project in order to access over 100+ free volunteer management resources • Volunteers signposted to 194 organisations operating in the Borough of Ashford • To celebrate National Volunteers Week, AVC held 2 volunteer get-togethers, sent thank you cards to all registered community groups, and signposted to useful Volunteers Week resources e.g. templates for press releases, logos etc • Supported the ABC 202 Civic Awards and networked groups with the Lord Lieutenant of Kent’s webinar that promoted the Queens Award for Voluntary Services – the highest award for voluntary groups. • Highlighted environmental schemes, ideas and free training aimed at encouraging green principles • Worked with ABC green champions to help increase council ‘greener’ community group engagement

**Caring Ashford
Quarterly Measures**

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_13 Food Hygiene Rating	% of businesses in the borough with a food hygiene rating above 3*	99.2 %	98.5%	✔	98.8%	98.5%	✔	98.8%	98.5%	✔	98.5%	98.5%	✔	

Ashford Borough Council's Annual Food Service Plan 2022/23, includes a review of performance in delivering official food controls during 2021/22 is available at: [Food Services Plan 2022/23.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/2022/02/23/food-services-plan-2022-23/)

CP_KPI_17 Council Affordable Housing - New Build	No. of additional new build affordable homes delivered by council housing	17			0			0			4			Regrettably delivery on site has stopped due to Stodmarsh nutrient neutrality. We are however able to report that we are just completing on 4 x shared ownership homes on the Chilmington site - these are 4 x Jarvis s106 acquisitions.
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[Housing Revenue Account HRA Business Plan 2022 -2052 including Financing and Affordable Homes Pro.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/2022/02/23/housing-revenue-account-hra-business-plan-2022-2052-including-financing-and-affordable-homes-pro/)

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_18 Council Affordable Housing - On-Street Purchases	No. of additional on-street purchase affordable homes delivered by council housing	3			1			1			2			Two properties were completed in Q4 this period - one in FairView and one in King's Prospect. These are both street purchases for the HRA stock

As listed in previous quarters this way of acquiring properties is not as competitive as it was during recent years since the property market boomed over the early part of last year when the stamp duty holiday was in place. There are reports that the market is slowing down so the suitability of such an approach in the market will be re-evaluated as things progress.

CP_KPI_19 Homelessness Presentations	No. of homelessness presentations	391			466			394			631			Q4 is cyclically the quarter with the highest presentations, following the quieter Christmas months and as families deal with money and family pressures following the festive period. However, there were an additional 227 presentations compared to Q4 2021/22.
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The reasons for increases in presentations are in the main due to affordability issues and also private sector landlords leaving the market. Despite this sharp upturn the housing options team has managed these presentations and the number of placements into temporary accommodation has remained fairly static as a result. The team are continually assessing the availability of alternative housing for those under threat of homelessness and have been successful in procuring private properties via the social lettings agency. However the continued impacts from a lack of affordable housing delivery due to Stodmarsh is adding to the pressures for those waiting in temporary accommodation.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_19b Homelessness Preventions (still in accommodation)	No. of households where homelessness was prevented	24			28			27			30			

The latest data tables on local government housing including Ashford Borough Council, covering social housing sales, homelessness, and affordable housing supply are available at the following links: [Social housing sales](#) [Homelessness](#) [Affordable housing supply](#)

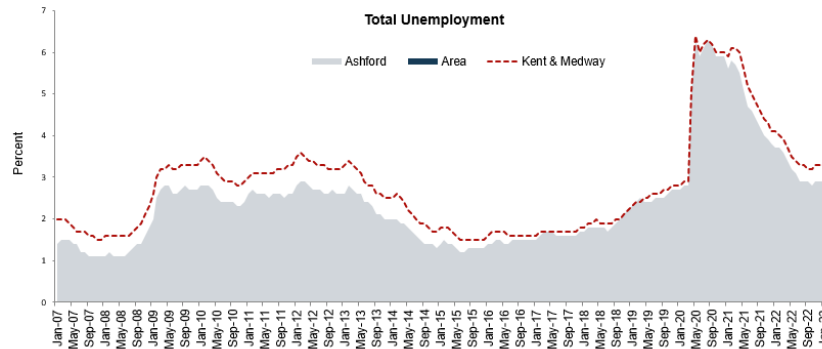
Temporary Accommodation has seen a further increase in demand and is forecasting an additional pressure of £197,000, [Novembers Quarterly Financial Monitoring: \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#) this is a total variance of £400,000 on the original budget. This trend is reflected across the County.

CP_KPI_20 Disabled Facilities Grants Completed	No. of disabled facilities grants administered by the council	19			20			20			32			Total 91 completed cases for the year. Highest completion seen in a year.
CP_KPI_20b Disabled Facilities Grant Spend	Actual spend per month for disabled facility grants	£196,521.61			£284,750.48			£309,199.04			£235,990.22			Final payment month, backdated payments may increase the total.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	

This report sets out the findings of a review into the Councils' processes for administering Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) and disabled adaptations in the Council housing stock [Disabled Adaptations Review.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

CP_KPI_21 Unemployment	Unemployment figures taken monthly from Kent County Councils Economy and employment data.	3.2%	3%	3%	3%	More information available within - Economy and employment data - Kent County Council 14.9% or a 430 fall on the previous year.
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March 2023









Area	Number	Rate	Number change since last month	Percentage change since last month	Number change since last year	Percentage change since last year
Ashford	2,465	3.0%	+85	+3.6%	-430	-14.9%
Kent & Medway	38,765	3.4%	+920	+2.4%	-5,190	-11.8%

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_22 Unemployment 18-24yr olds	Unemployment 18-24yr olds taken monthly from the Kent County Council economy and employment data	4.9%			4.9%			4.7%			4.9%			More information available within - Economy and employment data - Kent County Council 12.5% or 65 fall on the previous year.



18-24 unemployment

Area	Number	Rate	Number change since last month	Percentage change since last month	Number change since last year	Percentage change since last year
Ashford	455	4.9%	+20	+4.6%	-65	-12.5%
Kent & Medway	7,110	5.1%	+210	+3.0%	-550	-7.2%

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_26 Benefit Change of Circumstance Processing	Average time taken to process a benefit change of circumstance in no. days	1.94	10		2.17	10		2.14	10		1.91	10		Benefit change of circumstance processing time continues to remain on target.
CP_KPI_27 Benefit New Claim Processing Time	Average time taken to process a new benefit payment claim in no. days	28.78	28		27.72	28		26.1	28		24.97	28		Processing time returned to target following Q1 delay in the processing of a number of new claims in Exempt Supported Accommodation and Temporary Accommodation due to delays in obtaining clarification regarding subsidy implications from the DWP
CP_KPI_30 Number of tickets sold local lottery Scheme	Number of tickets sold local lottery scheme – generating x amount.	Since start of scheme 17 Feb 2022, 16,614 tickets			Since start of scheme 17 Feb 2022, 24,106 tickets			Since start of scheme 35,305 tickets sold			Since start of scheme 46,134 tickets sold			Lottery – Tickets sold to 01/04/23 46,134, generating £27,680.40 income for good causes

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	

Income direct to good causes rose by 10p to 60p from each ticket sale from 7 Nov when change takes effect.

Information about the Ashford Community Lottery is available from [Ashford Community Lottery: Easy online fundraising for good causes - Ashford Community Lottery](#)

<p>CP_KPI_32</p> <p>Support to 'vulnerable' groups through leisure centre activity</p>	<p>Support to 'vulnerable' groups through leisure centre activity</p>	<p>New in this quarter:</p> <p>Refugee Football; refugee football starting with Kent Refugee Kids at Spearpoint</p> <p>Cardiac Rehab; now hosted at the Stour Centre the cardiac rehab service re-located from Kingsnorth 2 days per week</p> <p>Ongoing projects and activities:</p> <p>SEND Activities; partnered with a local inclusive dance school to provide free facilities for their pilot scheme, aimed towards SEND 16-24 year olds.</p> <p>Refugee Support; now accommodating 135 Afghanistan and Ukrainian refugee families with free membership. This was extended to Ukrainian refugees during this quarter</p> <p>Saturdads; a weekly soft play session targeted towards male caregivers spending time with their children.</p> <p>Silent Sunday (SEND); a weekly soft play session targeted towards children up to 12yrs with special educational needs</p> <p>Learning Difficulties Group, East Kent NHS Foundation; This is a 10- week course where supervised access to the gym and an exclusive Aqua Aerobics class is offered.</p> <p>75+ free swimming; was launched recently in Q2 and now has 9 members. Local link ups to Age UK are aiming to boost participation.</p> <p>Fit for Life; (Julie Rose) programme continues to grow in popularity with excellent feedback</p>
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An update on the Freedom leisure contracts was provided to members prior of November's Cabinet.

**Targeted Growth
Annual Measures**

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline figure	2022 – 23 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_37 Percentage of creative industries in the borough	Percentage of creative industries in the borough	8.6%	8.3%	<p>Creative industry enterprises Ashford 2022: 540 enterprises equating to 8.3% of all enterprises fall of 5.3% on the year (30) a 0.9% decrease (-5) fall on 5 years.</p> <p>Kent 9.4%</p> <p>Creative industries in Kent</p>
CP_KPI_40 Percentage of tourism related businesses in the borough	Percentage of tourism related jobs in the borough	6.2%	6.2%	<p>Most recent data 2021</p> <p>Tourism enterprises in Ashford 2021: 410 enterprises representing 6.2% of enterprises. this is a 1.2% (5) fall on the previous year but a 12.3% increase from 5 years ago. Employing circa 5000 people.</p> <p>Kent average 8.6%for 2021.</p> <p>Food & Drink Production Industries in Kent 2022</p> <p>Economy and employment data - Kent County Council</p>

**Targeted Growth
Quarterly Measures**

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_33 Business survival - current vacancy rates	Business survival, measure based upon our business rates records Current Vacancy rates	8.65%			9.4%			9.2%			9.2%			5423 properties - 343 exemptions and 154 empty reliefs
<p>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.</p>														
CP_KPI_34 Ashford town centre vacancy rate	Ashford town centre vacancy rate	15.4			15.5			15.2			14.3			Apr-23 - 335 units surveyed 48 empty (14.3%)

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	

The area surveyed is the High Street, Middle Row, New Rents, North Street, Bank Street, Tufton Street, County Square, Park Mall and Elwick Place. This is surveyed manually quarterly.

Vacancy rates peaked at 20% in September 2020, due to the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic. Although improved from the low, vacancy rates remain significantly above the previous low of 8% in November 2017, and remain significantly above national benchmarks, which were 12% in January 2022

[Ashford Town Centre Reset - Strategy Action Plan.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

Page 82	CP_KPI_35	Contribution to budget from commercial investments utilising the budgeted figures provided as part of the councils budget books. Measure to start from Sept 20	92.2		81.5%		88%		93%		Figure based on Ellingham, Carlton Road, Elwick Place, International House, Matalan and Wilkos.
	Contribution to budget from commercial investments										

The Corporate Property Annual Performance Report 2021/22 reviewing revenue performance of the Council's corporate property portfolio during the financial year, as well as advising on its expected future performance: [Corporate Property Performance Annual Report 2021/22](#)

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_36 Vacancy rates (in our corporate property)	Vacancy rates (in our corporate property)	8%			6%			6.5%			9.7%			

Site	Square foot let	Total square foot	Percentage let
Ellingham	64,397 sf	64,397 sf	100.0%
Carlton Road	37,244 sf	42,065 sf	88.5%
Elwick Place	92,026 sf	104,391 sf	88.2%
International House	71,101 sf	82,462 sf	86.2%
Total	264,768 sf	293,315 sf	90.3%

Major sites that we acquired for commercial/investment purposes included. Please note Park Mall and the Commercial Quarter are not included as these were purchased for development and regeneration purposes.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note																
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status																	
CP_KPI_38 Digital uptake	Digital uptake - % of total council /% Increase transactions completed electronically.	83	80		80.39	80		83	80		83.02	80		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Jan-23</th> <th>Feb-23</th> <th>Mar-23</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Digital Transactions</td> <td>48712</td> <td>36326</td> <td>40526</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Transactions</td> <td>56084</td> <td>42430</td> <td>48817</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Digital Uptake</td> <td>86.86%</td> <td>85.61%</td> <td>83.02%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Digital Transactions	48712	36326	40526	Total Transactions	56084	42430	48817	Digital Uptake	86.86%	85.61%	83.02%
	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23																											
Digital Transactions	48712	36326	40526																											
Total Transactions	56084	42430	48817																											
Digital Uptake	86.86%	85.61%	83.02%																											

The Customer Service, IT and Digital Strategy was adopted at the end of June 2022 with a key focus of keeping the customer at the centre of our services. [Customer Service IT Digital Strategy.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

CP_KPI_39 Social media engagement	Social media engagement	<u>Q1 (April-June)</u> Impressions Facebook: 977,240 Twitter: 62,471 Nextdoor: 91,593 Instagram: 2,747 Followers Facebook: 10,115 Twitter: 9,082 Nextdoor: 25,536 Instagram: 2,574	<u>Q2 (July-Sept)</u> Impressions Facebook: 867,487 Twitter: 47,088 Nextdoor: 123,428 Instagram: 8,766 Followers Facebook: 10,459 Twitter: 9,112 Nextdoor: 26,407 Instagram: 2,633	<u>Q3 (Oct-Dec)</u> Impressions Facebook: 798,723 Twitter: 27,170 Nextdoor: 172,687 Instagram: 11,724 Followers Facebook: 10,679 Twitter: 9,101 Nextdoor: 27,004 Instagram: 2,677	<u>Q4 Jan-March 2023</u> Impressions: Facebook: 522,101 Twitter: 21,731 Nextdoor: 110,663 Instagram: 5,105 Followers: Facebook: 11,002 Twitter: 9,109 Nextdoor: 27,996 Instagram: 2,718	Ashford Borough Council's Communications team is responsible for managing the council's social media accounts. Our most active platforms that residents can engage with the council on, include Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor and Instagram. The data will allow the Council to better understand the needs of our residents and ensure that our social media strategy is shaped by
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Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
													the results of the data. With circa 50,000 combined total followers across all ABC social platforms, the Communications Team are also actively exploring methods to further grow each platform through various digital tools so that they can effectively reach more residents across the borough, including those in rural areas.	
CP_KPI_41	Parking usage	243,026			259,506			277,199			289,988			
Parking usage	Ashford and Tenterden Car Parks													

New Car Parks

- Adleys Yard car park opened in March 2023 bays. This has 19 bays, including a dual EV charge point/disabled bay

We can also ensure that people visit and stay in our communities by deploying technologies that improve access and services for all of our consumers. Our cashless parking system is accessible in all car parks for individuals who wish to pay using a mobile device. This has been a tremendous success, with strong client participation.

**Our Principles
Annual Measure**

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline figure	2022 – 2023 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_49 Complaints resolved at Stage 1	% of complaints resolved as stage 1	85.62%	92.13%	527 stage 1 complaints received Jan-Dec 2022, of which 45 escalated to stage 2. Significant increase in complaints seen compared to the previous year with housing complaints seeing an increase.
CP_KPI_50 Mean Gender Pay Gap	The difference in average pay between men and women in the council's workforce.	8.8%	7.3%	7.3% Data is retrospective so relates to 31 March 2022 - Ashford Borough Council's statistics on the gender pay gap for 2021/22 The difference in average pay between men and women in the council's workforce, expressed relative to men's earnings. A positive figure indicates that women are paid less than men on average. A negative figure indicates that the average pay for women in the organisation is higher than the average pay for men.

**Our Principles
Quarterly Measures**

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_42 FOI Response Rate	% of freedom of information requests responded to within 20 working days	98%	95%	✔	95.6%	95%	✔	100%	95%	✔	98%	95%	✔	202 requests received in the Q4 period 2 completed late. Across the year 759 requests received 17 completed late ~98% completed on time
CP_KPI_43 Business Rates Collection	% of national non-domestic rates collected by the council - cumulative figure per month	30.12 %	24.75 %	✔	56.38 %	49.5%	✔	82.11 %	74.25 %	✔	98.6%	99%	✔	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
CP_KPI_44 Council Tax Collection Rate	Percentage of council tax collected - cumulative figure per month	30.1%	24.57 %	✔	57.25 %	49.14 %	✔	85.57 %	73.71 %	✔	97.5%	98.25 %	⚠	

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_45	Percentage of invoices paid on time	1 st April 2022 – 17 th March 2023												
Percentage of invoices paid on time		Invoices paid within 30 days of the date of the invoice - 96.56 %												
CP_KPI_46	% of ABC properties with up to date gas safety certificates	99.81 %	100%		99.74 %	100%		99.87 %	100%		100%	100%		
Gas Safety Certificates														
Our homes must meet the needs of local people of all ages, incomes and abilities to live sustainably and safely, our target is 100% and there is reviewed focus to achieve this consistently with a zero tolerance approach to access issues.														
CP_KPI_47	Number of days sickness per full time equivalent	For the complete year 21/22 8.04 days per FTE						10.41 days per FTE						

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	

Sickness absence per employee Q3 01 Oct 22 to 31 Dec 22 latest available data

A total of 1,293.77 days were lost due to sickness absence during the quarter 01.10.22 to 31.12.22; annualised this figure would be 5,175.08. FTE at 31.12.22 was 497.29. Therefore, total days sickness per FTE (annualised for a 12-month period) equals 10.41 days. Please note that this is a winter quarter which has been annualised and absence levels are higher during this peak period of seasonal illnesses.

[Annual Sickness Report 202122.pdf \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

CP_KPI_48	Average wait time for customer service calls - to be benchmarked with results across Kent	0h 01m 14s	0h 01m 38s		0h 01m 30s	0h 01m 38s		0h 00m 49s	0h 01m 38s		0h 00m 48s	0h 01m 38s		
Average Speed of Customer Service Calls Answered														

CP_KPI_51	number of ongoing litigation/court proceedings (volume measure)	Number of ongoing litigation matters = 92	Number of ongoing litigation matters = 109	Number of ongoing litigation matters = 118	Number of ongoing litigation matters = 125	Measure covers those litigation/court proceedings being furthered by legal services.
number of ongoing litigation/court proceedings (volume)		Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC = 0	Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC = 0	Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC = 0	Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC = 0	





Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
	measure)													
Ongoing trend of Disrepair claims which now make up a third of all litigation cases in which we are defending matters and a decline in areas such as environmental crime cases where we are prosecuting matters.														
CP_KPI_52	number of new 106 files opened	Number of new 106 files opened - 10			Number of new 106 files opened - 6			Number of new 106 files opened - 4			Number of new 106 files opened – 7			In the Q1 period, one Appellant chose to complete 27 s.106 Deeds for each of his two appeals. This reflects the high number of completed cases for this period. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee formed a Task Group to review the council's Section 106 process, recommendations available within the final report. S106 Task Group - FinalReport.pdf (modern.gov.co.uk) with a S106 Scrutiny Review – Update provides to the committee in May 22
number of new 106 files opened		Number of draft 106 agreements sent out – 4			Number of draft 106 agreements sent out – 7			Number of Draft 106 agreements sent out – 1			Number of Draft 106 agreements sent out – 0			
		Number of 106 cases completed – 56			Number of 106 cases completed – 3			Number of 106 cases completed - 4			Number of 106 cases completed - 2			

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_53 Planning Application Approvals	% of planning applications approved	85%	90%		90%	90%		92%	90%		87%	90%		

The national average performance for the percentage of planning applications approved is usually around 87 to 88%. As the financial year has progressed our performance here has stabilised to around target.

A recent update on the Stodmarsh situation was presented to Cabinet [Report Title: \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk), explaining the progress made towards a mitigation to this strategic issue.

CP_KPI_54 Speed of Major Planning Application Decisions	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks (or within such extended period as agreed in writing between the applicant and the local authority)	50%	65%		69%	65%		88%	65%		78%	65%		
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Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_54 b % of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	82%	75%		79%	75%		77%	75%		76%	75%		

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

Performance remains good across the broader period in respect of major application determinations. Q1 performance was below par but it was based on just 11 cases (i.e. 5 out of 12 is 55%). The cases that ran over the statutory target date were mostly subject to particular causes of delay and difficulty associated with S106, Stodmarsh, Committee referral and two were refused without agreement to an EOT from the applicant.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_55 Speed of Non-Major Planning Application Decisions	% of minor and other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	86%	75%		83%	75%		81%	75%		85%	75%		
CP_KPI_55 b % of non majors determined within 8 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	% of non majors determined within 8 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	90%	80%		89%	80%		87%	80%		86%	80%		

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

Performance in non-major schemes remains strong and above target.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Q4 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_56	Number of live planning casework reducing backlog	817	550		831	550		985	550		792	550		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

Stodmarsh continues to be an affecting factor which is holding applications up (approximately 220 cases). In relation to Stodmarsh, officers are continuing to take cases to the point where proposals can be agreed in all other respects pending the nutrient mitigation solution.

February clearance week resulted in 143 applications being determined.

A recent vacancy has arisen in one of our Team Leader positions with recruitment being actively pursued. Otherwise, staffing resources remain fairly stable in the Development Management Team with most posts now filled on a permanent basis and workloads being managed accordingly. Further strategies are being deployed in order to continue to reduce the overall caseload of the service where possible, whilst accounting for the obvious constraints with Stodmarsh.