

Agenda Item No:

Report To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet



Date of Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Tuesday 08th November
Cabinet: Thursday 24th November

Report Title: Performance Report, Quarter 2 2022/23

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Portfolio Holder Cllr. Peter Feacey
Portfolio Holder for:

Summary: This report summarises performance against the council's updated suite of KPIs reflecting the Corporate Plan 2022-24, for the Quarter 2 period 2022/23.

This report pulls from across council services the information necessary to reflect the quarterly KPIs. Representing these in the four themes of the Corporate Plan that of Green Pioneer, Caring Ashford, Targeted Growth and the councils underlying principles.

In addition to surrounding narrative for specific KPIs where available, this report highlights some of the key actions over the quarter where relevant to the aims and objectives of the Corporate plan.

Key Decision: No

Significantly Affected Wards: None

Recommendations: **Overview and Scrutiny Cabinet, is asked to:-**

I. Consider the performance data for Quarter 2 2022/23

Policy Overview: Performance measures have been updated to reflect the objectives and priorities of The Corporate Plan 22-24.

	This quarterly Performance Report acts as an opportunity to monitor the progress made by the council against the Corporate Plan.
Financial Implications:	N/A
Legal Implications:	N/A
Equalities Impact Assessment:	Not required as the report presents information on past council performance and does not recommend any change to council policy or new action.
Data Protection Impact Assessment:	N/A
Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):	N/A
Sustainability Implications:	N/A
Other Material Implications:	N/A
Exempt from Publication:	No
Background Papers:	The Corporate Plan 2022-24
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Portfolio Holder's Views:

This Q2 performance report provides an opportunity to monitor and review the council's performance against its Corporate Plan. It demonstrates some of the progress and constraints that are influencing our short and medium term performance.

Regular review of the material included in this report ensures Members and Officers remain focused on our priorities and understand the issues that are affecting our residents, providing an early indication of the areas we need to focus our attention on moving forward.

Report Title: Performance Report, Quarter 2 2022/23

Introduction and Background

1. In 2019 we embarked on a comprehensive study to inform our next Corporate Plan, envisaging that this would be developed and adopted during 2020. As our work with stakeholders was coming to a conclusion the coronavirus pandemic forced the country into lockdown in March 2020. Our [Recovery Plan](#) was developed as an interim strategic document to focus our work towards enabling a timely recovery from the pandemic, supporting residents, communities and local business.
2. With the start of the 22/23 financial year the Recovery Plan has now been superseded by the [Corporate Plan 22-24](#). This Corporate Plan continues this journey and looks ahead, with renewed vigour, to realise the [Ashford Ambition](#) that was developed with a wide range of local stakeholders for a vibrant, caring and sustainable borough.
3. The Ashford Ambition is supported by three priority themes:
 - Green Pioneer – Where businesses, communities and the public and third sector have come together to become carbon neutral, respect the local environment and ecology, and embrace a more sustainable way of living.
 - Caring Ashford – A caring and supportive place to live, with rich heritage; thriving towns, villages and rural communities; great schools; high-quality housing; a plethora of cultural activities and events; and a strong sense of civic pride.
 - Targeted Growth – A place where productive, innovative, responsible town and rural business communities offer good quality work to an agile and skilled local workforce who have embraced a culture of lifelong learning.

These along with our underlying principles provide a framework that focuses our efforts on working towards our strategic objectives.
4. This report seeks to provide an overview of performance against the council's key performance indicators for Quarter 2 2022/23. The council's performance framework captures key performance data from across the organisation as it relates to the council's Corporate Plan.

Areas of Note

5. Whilst measures reflecting our statutory functions continue to show positive progress and largely meet targets. It is clear from a number of measures that the cost of living squeeze is starting to have a material impact on our residents.
6. With our communities still in the recovery phase following the pandemic, the cost of living squeeze is a further set back and is starting to show an impact across our KPI suite.
7. Specifically within Ashford Town Centre where occupancies rates whilst still above their pandemic low are starting to fall, this is reflected in both CP_KPI_34 and 35. This will likely filter through to our commercial investment measures with time. The council has ownership of a number of key sites within Ashford Town Centre and with the Town Centre Reset, a now Super Six project, this will continue to be an area of focus.
8. This cost of living squeeze can also be seen in an increase in the number of homelessness presentations being received CP_KPI_19 with the financial implications of this being closely monitored in our Financial Monitoring reports.
9. The Council is currently running a short [survey](#) asking residents what additional support and advice it can best offer to aid with the increasing cost of living. Additionally residents are reminded that our [Welfare Intervention](#) Officers are available to assist.
10. Finally, due to the short turnaround time of this report, for O&S, the Planning related KPIs have not yet been updated, the narrative has however and it is expected that performance will broadly be in line with the previous quarters. It should be noted that in the medium term with the new planning system bedding in and Stodmarsh mitigation measures now moving forward, improvements in these measures should start to be seen.

Performance Report for the Corporate Plan 2022-24, Quarter 2 - 2022/23

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	Challenges	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.	Tackling climate change by achieving carbon neutrality Enabling development whilst protecting the environment Ensuring no one is disadvantaged as we reduce the carbon footprint of our services and operations	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 in 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.	Enabling homes that are affordable to local people on low incomes Improving wellbeing and opportunities for people living in the most disadvantage areas Raising educational attainment and skills level of local population	CA1: Homes and neighbourhoods in the borough meet the needs of local people of all ages, incomes and abilities 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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.	Ensuring our towns remain vibrant places and adapt to changing consumer habits Matching local skills with the needs of employers Attracting new industries to establish in borough and retain and grow existing business	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 - The borough 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

Introducing the Super Six







With the 'Big 8', a set of strategically important infrastructure projects, which became the cornerstone of the [AshfordFOR](#) inward investment campaign, now delivered or significantly completed, a new chapter in the Ashford FOR story is needed

The period of this report, saw the announcement of the super six projects, made up of; Project Green, Ashford College phase 2, Town Centre Reset, Stodmarsh, Newtown Works and South of Ashford Garden Community. These all sit within our Corporate Plan, fitting neatly across the themes of Green Pioneer, Caring Ashford and Targeted Growth.

The creation of the Super 6 provides a new focus and impetus for a new campaign to help deliver these ambitious projects, but also to put Ashford on the map nationally, ensuring the maximum opportunity to attract future investment and government funding.



Corporate Plan Themes and Key Performance Measures

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

Green Pioneer

Highlights from the Quarter

Ashford's first Great Big Green Week

In the quarter, 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.

The Queen's Green Canopy Update - Memorial Tree Planting For Her Majesty

Following the death of Her Majesty The Queen, and the wishes of our Patron, His Majesty The King, The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) initiative will be extended to the end of March 2023 to give people the opportunity to plant trees in memoriam to honour Her Majesty.

As a nationwide initiative created to mark the Platinum Jubilee, The Queen's Green Canopy was due to conclude in December - the end of the Jubilee year. However, as the official tree planting season in the United Kingdom is from October to March, the initiative will now be extended to include this full tree planting season, beginning in October 2022 and concluding in March 2023.

Quarterly Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_06 Number of organisations committed to active travel plans cycling/walking	Number of organisations committed to travel plans cycling/walking	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 through the autumn of 2022									
CP_KPI_09 Recycling Rate	% of borough waste recycled or composted	49%	50%		54.67%	50%		50%	50%		Q2 figures based on data for July figure only – data to follow from KCC shortly for August and September.
Ashford's recycling rate remains comfortably above the national target of 50% DEFRA's nationwide recycling league tables .											
Waste data from UK local authorities is reported to WasteDataFlow with statistics available at the following links. WasteDataFlow Waste and recycling statistics											
CP_KPI_10 Refuse Collection Success Rate	% of successful refuse collections per 100,000 refuse collections made.	99.97%	99.96%		99.96%	99.96%		99.96%	99.96%		Waste data from UK local authorities is reported to WasteDataFlow with statistics available at the following links: WasteDataFlow Waste and recycling statistics

Caring Ashford

Highlights from the Quarter

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.

Eat Well Spend Less a success

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.

The roadshows had a family-focus to provide practical advice, information and support in key areas such as: healthy eating on a budget, benefits advice, free school meals and healthy start vouchers, support available from food banks and other voluntary sector provisions.

Ashford's events took place at The Ray Allen Centre, Stanhope, Repton Connect and the One You Shop, Park Mall.

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.

Tenterden Leisure Centre swimming pool reopens

The swimming pool at Tenterden Leisure Centre reopened on Wednesday 21 September, following an extended period of closure while the centre's storm-damaged roof was repaired.

Work had begun in September 2021 to remove the roof covering and replace it with a more thermally efficient option, which will also require less maintenance. However, storm damage in October last year meant the pool had to close completely while investigations were carried out into the extent of this damage.

Following extensive repairs to the roof, a deep clean of the facility and the installation of a new filtration system, the centre operators Tenterden Leisure Centre Trust have been able to announce it's reopening.

Plans on short-stay accommodation for homeless people at Henwood Road car park approved

Ambitious 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. It will be built on a steel podium, and all necessary safety features and flood risk mitigation measures have been adopted for this scheme due to the site situated in a flood zone area.

On the right track – new athletics running track at Julie Rose Stadium opens




The Julie Rose Stadium now has a brand new athletics track following a £300,000 investment on the new running surface by Ashford Borough Council.

Freedom Leisure and Ashford Borough Council worked on plans to re-surface the outdoor athletics track at the iconic stadium that was built in 1997. Works began in March this year and the finishing touches were completed in July.

The next phase of investment will see the indoor running chute replaced along with a refurbishment of the indoor throwing cage later this year.

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.

Quarterly Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_13 Food Hygiene Rating	% of businesses in the borough with a food hygiene rating above 3*	99.1%	98.5%		99.2%	98.5%		98.8%	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)											
CP_KPI_17 Council Affordable Housing - New Build	No. of additional new build affordable homes delivered by council housing	31			17			0			There are now no houses on site sadly. This is as Halstow Way is completed and all other sites are caught up in the planning system or 'subject to Stodmarsh' mitigation measures in time.
However in the pipeline for delivery we have 20 homes with approval in Mabledon Avenue that we would hope to begin on site as soon as possible and that in the planning process we currently have 3 x infill schemes totalling 12 homes, an independent living scheme totalling 69 dwellings and a temporary accommodation scheme totalling 23 dwellings.											

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Latest Note
		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			3			1			The quarter saw 1 completion.

As listed in previous quarters this way of acquiring properties is not as competitive as it was during recent months since the property market boomed over the early part of the 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.

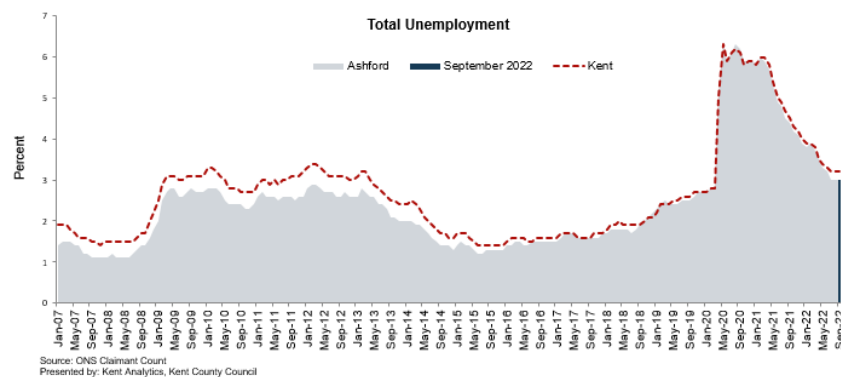
CP_KPI_19 Homelessness Presentations	No. of homelessness presentations	404			391			466			
CP_KPI_19b Homelessness Preventions (still in accommodation)	No. of households where homelessness was prevented	28			24			28			

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](#)

The prevision of Temporary Accommodation has seen an increase in demand and in the latest [financial monitoring report](#) forecasted a pressure of £183,000, this is an area of increased risk in the current economic climate.

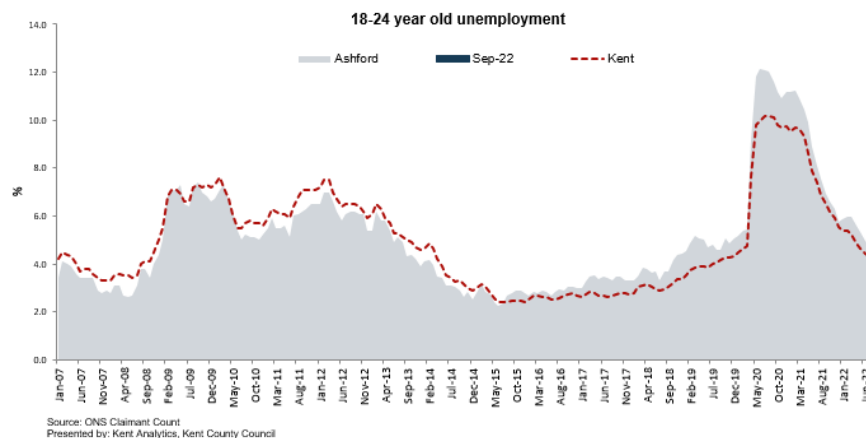
CP_KPI_20 Disabled Facilities Grants Completed	No. of disabled facilities grants administered by the council	13			16			20			Average figure for the time of the year.
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Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_20b Disabled Facilities Grant Spend	Actual spend per quarter for disabled facility grants	£200,928.24			£196,521.61			£284,750.48			Average spend for this time of the year
CP_KPI_21 Unemployment	Unemployment figures taken monthly from Kent County Councils Economy and employment data.	3.7%			3.2%			3%			<p>The unemployment rate in Ashford is 3%. This is below the rate for Kent (3.2%). 2,335 people were claiming unemployment benefits in Ashford. This has fallen since last month.</p> <p>More information available within - Economy and employment data - Kent County Council</p>









September 2022	Number	% rate	Number change since August 2022	% change since August 2022	Number change since September 2021	% change since September 2021
Ashford	2,335	3.0%	-20	-0.8%	-1,095	-31.9%
Kent	30,650	3.2%	+205	+0.7%	-12,060	-28.2%

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_22 Unemployment 18-24yr olds	Unemployment 18-24yr olds taken monthly from the Kent County Council economy and employment data	6%			4.9%			4.9%			<p>More information available within - Economy and employment data - Kent County Council</p> <p>Latest available data on Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) is available from - Tracking Young People - KELS!</p>



18-24 Unemployment

September 2022	Number	% rate	Number change since August 2022	% change since August 2022	Number change since September 2021	% change since September 2021
Ashford	430	4.9%	+5	+1.2%	-175	-28.9%
Kent	5,365	4.5%	+40	+0.8%	-2,425	-31.1%

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Latest Note
		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	1.84	10		1.94	10		2.17	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	25.96	28		28.78	28		27.72	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_29 Value of grants awarded via community grant fund.	Value of grants awarded via community grant fund	£334,453.70 for 2021/22			£249,101 for H1 of 22/23						Value of grants awarded via community grants fund to date this financial year - £249,101. This level of funding will not be repeated in the next 6 month period as some grants schemes are fully allocated at the beginning of the financial year
CP_KPI_30 Number of tickets sold local lottery Scheme	Number of tickets sold local lottery scheme – generating x amount.	New Measure			Since start of scheme 17 Feb 2022, 16,614 tickets			Since start of scheme 17 Feb 2022 24,106 tickets			Lottery: Since lottery scheme started selling tickets on 17 Feb 2022, 24,106 tickets generating £12053 income for good causes to date.

Income direct to good causes will rise 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](#)

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_32 Support to 'vulnerable' groups through leisure centre activity	Support to 'vulnerable' groups through leisure centre activity	New Measure			Ongoing projects and activities: Silent Sunday (SEN); a weekly soft play session targeted towards children up to 12yrs with special educational needs. 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. 75+ free swimming was launched recently in Q2. Local link ups to Age UK are aiming to boost participation. GP Referral Re-launch; newly re-launched scheme across both Stour and Julie Rose with a dedicated staff member, more pathways to referral, better monitoring and use of more facilities such as the Stour Bio-circuit.						

Overall performance across the leisure centre contract has remained constant or shown increases in participation in some areas. This summer holiday period was the first one the Stour has been fully open since Freedom took over which meant that a full programme of swimming and holiday activities could be delivered for the first time. The Julie Rose running track was re-laid by ABC's contractors at the end of this quarter, with positive feedback from users. August saw Centurion, North Downs Way 100 mile Ultra Race was hosted by the Julie Rose Stadium with 219 participants.

Pressure on operational costs from increases in utility prices remain as key challenges. A pre-booking system for the tennis courts a Spearpoint came into use (remaining free to use). Freedom continue to develop their environmental policy, with some key targets being developed for the future of the contract.

Stour Centre Members 2068. Julie Rose Stadium 448 Members. Learn to Swim participants 114. Stour Centre total visitors 89,117. Julie Rose total visitors 6,107. Total swimming visits 36,446. Spearpoint visitors 527. Facebook page visits were up by 26.7% at 5230 visits

Targeted Growth

Highlights from the Quarter

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.

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.

This 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.

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

It provides 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.

Fibre to the Premises is rolling out in the Ashford borough

Areas of the Ashford borough are seeing Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) being rolled out by several companies including Netomnia and Openreach. Work is underway by both companies to upgrade infrastructure in a number of areas across Ashford and Tenterden.

In July Netomnia invited Cllr Neil Bell, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development, along with officers from Ashford Borough Council on a site visit to see how FTTP upgrades happen on the ground. They began at the BT Exchange in Ashford and then visited two properties enabling them to see how the fibre cabling is installed and understand its journey from the exchange to households and businesses.

One of the objectives in our Corporate Plan 2022-2024 is to enable the improvement of digital infrastructure to support the growing needs of business, voluntary sector and residents.

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.

Quarterly Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Latest Note
		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	8.4%			8.65%			9.4%			5335 properties 341 exemptions 160 empty reliefs
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.											
CP_KPI_34 Ashford town centre vacancy rate	Ashford town centre vacancy rate	14.8%			15.4%			15.5%			July 2022 335 units 52 empty - 15.5%
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, remain significantly above the previous low of 8% in November 2017, and remain significantly above national benchmarks, which were 12% in January 2022.											
CP_KPI_35 Contribution to budget from commercial investments	Contribution to budget from commercial investments utilising the budgeted figures provided as part of the councils budget books.	85%			92.2%			81.5%			Figure based on Ellingham, Carlton Road, Elwick Place, International House, Matalan and Wilkos.
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 likely future performance is on the October Cabinet agenda.											

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Latest Note			
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status				
CP_KPI_36 Vacancy rates (in our corporate property)	Vacancy rates (in our corporate property)	8%			8%			6%			Site	Square foot let	Total square foot	Percentage let
											Ellingham	64,897 sf	64,397 sf	99.2%
											Carlton Road	37,244 sf	42,065 sf	88.5%
											Elwick Place	92,026 sf	94,351 sf	97.5%
											International House	72,800 sf	82,462 sf	88.3%
												266,967 sf	283,275 sf	94.2%

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.

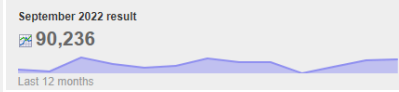
CP_KPI_38 Digital uptake	Digital uptake - % of total council transactions /% Increase transactions completed electronically.	80%	80%		83%	80%		80.39%	80%		Our current digital uptake target is 80%
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The Customer Service, IT and Digital Strategy was adopted 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 \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

	July 22	Aug 22	Sept 22
Digital Transactions	31577	28557	31545
Total Transactions	39173	36091	39239
Digital Uptake	80.61%	79.12%	80.39%

CP_KPI_39 Social media engagement	Social media engagement	<u>Q4 (Jan-March)</u> Impressions Facebook: 972.4k Twitter: 84.4k Nextdoor: 78,163k Instagram: 3k	<u>Q1 (April-June)</u> Impressions Facebook: 977,240 Twitter: 62,471 Nextdoor: 91,593 Instagram: 2,747	<u>Q2 (July-Sept)</u> Impressions Facebook: 867,487 Twitter: 47,088 Nextdoor: 123,428 Instagram: 8,766	<p>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.</p> <p>The data will allow the Council to better understand the needs of our</p>

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
		Followers Facebook: 9.9k Twitter: 9k Nextdoor: 22k Instagram:2.5K			Followers Facebook: 10,115 Twitter: 9,082 Nextdoor: 25,536 Instagram: 2,574			Followers Facebook: 10,459 Twitter: 9,112 Nextdoor: 26,407 Instagram: 2,633			residents and ensure that our social media strategy is shaped by the results of the data. With circa 50,000 combined total followers across all ABC social platforms, the Communications Team are also actively exploring methods to further grow each platform through various digital tools so that they can effectively reach more residents across the borough, including those in rural areas.

CP_KPI_41	Parking usage	250,895	243,026	259,506	<div>September 2022 result</div> <div></div> <div>90,236</div> <div>Last 12 months</div>
Parking usage	Ashford and Tenterden Car Parks				

Parking Report - Overview of Car Park and on Street Sales for September 2022

Top Performing Car Parks this month

1. Vicarage Lane Car Park (A) – £48,961.00, slightly down but on par with last month and forecast for this car park alone at end of financial year = is over £500k, which equates to around 20% of total income.
2. Recreation Ground Car Park (T) £37,238.00
3. Elwick Place – £30,804.00

Total Financial Year Figures/ Income

Forecast for 2022-23 - £2,505,000










2021-22 £2,203 918

2020-2021 £ 819 698





2019-2020 Income £2,591 786







Our Principles



Quarterly Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Latest Note
		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	99%	95%		98%	95%		95.6%	95%		180 requests received in the period, 8 responded to outside of the 20 working day window. 155.5 officer hours used to respond to requests in the period.
CP_KPI_43 Business Rates Collection	% of national non-domestic rates collected by the council - cumulative figure per month	97.6%	99%		30.12%	24.75		56.38%	49.5%		Government finance including Ashford Borough Council, covering borrowing and investment, capital payments and receipts, local Council Tax support, quarterly revenue outturn and receipts of Council Taxes and national non-domestic rates are available here
CP_KPI_44 Council Tax Collection Rate	Percentage of council tax collected - cumulative figure per month	97.4%	98.25%		30.1%	24.57%		57.25%	49.14%		
CP_KPI_45 Percentage of invoices paid on time	Percentage of invoices paid on time	New measure			Due to system upgrades the information remains pending						

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_46 Gas Safety Certificates	% of ABC properties with up to date gas safety certificates	99.54%	100%		99.81%	100%		99.74%	100%		Work continue weekly, if not on a daily basis to gain access to those hard to access properties.
CP_KPI_47 Number of days sickness per full time equivalent		9.96 days per FTE			For the complete year 21/22 8.04 days per FTE						
<p>Sickness absence per employee 2021/22</p> <p>A total of 3,225 days were lost due to sickness absence across the 12-month period from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. Based on the number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees at 31 March 2022, 509.29 FTE, the total amount of working days lost due to sickness in 2021/22 is 6.33 days per FTE. This is an increase from the previous year when the number of days was 4.7 days per FTE or 2,079 days.</p> <p>Had we included Covid related sickness absence in these figures (i.e. staff who were unable to work due to being symptomatic or self isolating and unable to work) the days lost would have been 8.04 days of absence per FTE overall.</p> <p>57% of employees did not incur any periods of sickness absence during the 12-month period.</p> <p>Annual Sickness Report 202122.pdf (moderngov.co.uk)</p>											
CP_KPI_48 Average Speed of Customer Service Calls Answered	Average wait time for customer service calls	0h 01m 35s	0h 01m 38s		0h 01m 14s	0h 01m 38s		0h 01m 30s	0h 01m 38s		Absence 91hrs - 6 CSA's A/L 267.5rs - 13 CSA's

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_51 Number of ongoing litigation/court proceedings (volume measure)	number of ongoing litigation/court proceedings (volume measure)	140			Number of ongoing litigation matters = 92 Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC = 0			Number of ongoing litigation matters = 109 Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC = 0			Measure covers those litigation/court proceedings being furthered by legal services.
CP_KPI_52 Number of new 106 files opened	number of new 106 files opened	Number of new 106 files opened – 4 Number of draft 106 agreements sent out – 5 Number of 106 cases completed – 3			Number of new 106 files opened - 10 Number of draft 106 agreements sent out – 4 Number of 106 cases completed – 56			Number of new 106 files opened - 6 Number of draft 106 agreements sent out – 7 Number of 106 cases completed – 3			
CP_KPI_53 Planning Application Approvals	% of planning applications approved	85%	90%		85%	90%		Q2 Data Pending.			
The national average performance for the percentage of planning applications approved is usually around 87 to 88% Q1 performance nationally was 88%. Whilst 85% is below the 90% target it should not be a cause for concern.											
CP_KPI_54 Speed of Major Planning	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks (or within such extended period as agreed in	85%	65%		50%	65%		Q2 Data Pending			

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
Application Decisions	writing between the applicant and the local authority)										
CP_KPI_54b % of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	85%	75%		82%	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. This quarter's performance is below par but it is 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.											
CP_KPI_55 Speed of Non-Major Planning Application Decisions	% of minor and other planning applications determined within 8 weeks (or within such extended period as has been agreed in writing between the applicant and the council).	79%	75%		86%	75%		Q2 Data Pending			
CP_KPI_55b % of non majors	% of non majors determined within 8 weeks amended to	90%	80%		90%	80%					

Code & Short Name	Description	Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
determined within 8 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	reflect 24 rolling month										
The latest data tables on local government Planning including Ashford Borough Council, covering the speed and quality of planning decisions are available at the following link: Live tables on planning application statistics											
Performance in non-major schemes remains strong and above target.											
CP_KPI_56 Number of live planning casework reducing backlog	Number includes all conditions applications, pre-app cases, as well as applications for outline, full or reserved matters consent. Reducing backlog with a capacity set at 550 open cases	839	550		817	550		Q2 Data Pending			
Application numbers have continued to increase. Stodmarsh is a known factor which is holding applications up (approximately 220 cases) and implementation of the new planning application management system (ARCUS) has resulted in the number of live applications increasing temporarily. In relation to Stodmarsh, officers are taking cases to the point where proposals can be agreed in all other respects pending the nutrient mitigation solution. This includes any applications where a Committee resolution may be required and/or a Section 106 Agreement to deal with other matters. In relation to the build-up of cases as a result of the introduction of ARCUS, officers are considering another clearance week following the very successful clearance week in May. This is designed to shift a lot of cases by freeing planning officers for one week to focus purely on making planning decisions. In May this resulted in 170 applications being determined in one week.											
Staffing resources remain fairly stable in the Development Management Team with most posts now filled on a permanent basis and reducing consultancy support. This trend is expected to continue but will be managed against on-going caseload numbers.											