

Agenda Item No:

Report To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet



Date of Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Tuesday 14th February
Cabinet: Thursday 23rd February

Report Title: Performance Report, Quarter 3 2022/23

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

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 3 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 3 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

Contact:

Tom.Swain@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330432

Portfolio Holder's Views:

This Q3 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 3 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 3 2022/23 period. 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 remains clear from a number of measures that the cost of living squeeze and associated inflationary pressures are starting to present a material impact on our residents and the council's budgets.
6. With our communities still in the recovery phase following the pandemic, the cost of living squeeze is a further set back and this is reflected across many of our KPIs.
7. The council is continuing to focus on mitigating these pressures, with careful monitoring of its own internal budgets, please see the quarterly financial monitoring reports, as well as providing additional support to our residents where needed. Residents are reminded that our [Welfare Intervention](#) Officers are always available to assist.
8. The [Eat Well Spend Less](#) roadshow has also returned. The roadshows focus on providing targeted help and advice for local families who may need extra support as a result of rising food prices.
9. Our Town Centres are not immune and whilst occupancies rates are still above there pandemic lows, notable closures are starting to be experienced. 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.
10. With legislative changes affecting a number of our Housing teams and increased scrutiny from Government on the sector, this period has seen the Housing team take the opportunity to refocus, ensuring our homes continue to meet the needs of local people of all ages, incomes and abilities to live sustainably and safely. With a focus on compliance, voids, rent collection and repairs.
11. The period has seen the awarding of a new waste contract to SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK Ltd. 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.
12. Finally, our Planning service with the new planning system now beginning to bed in and [Stodmarsh mitigation](#) measures moving forward, improvements in the associated measures should start to be seen. The team have a second clearance week planned for February, with the first successfully clearing in excess of 150 applications, this second week should also start to see the number of live applications begin to fall (CP_KPI_56).

Performance Report for the Corporate Plan 2022-24, Quarter 3 - 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 disadvantaged 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

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







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.

Quarterly Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 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.									
CP_KPI_09 Recycling Rate	% of borough waste recycled or composted	54.67%	50%		52.67%	50%		54%	50%		Recycle average is leading towards achieving 53% recovery for the FY at present. Q3 figures based on October figure only.
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.	99.96%	99.96%		99.96%	99.96%		99.97%	99.96%		Waste data from UK local authorities is reported to WasteDataFlow with statistics available at the following links: WasteDataFlow Waste and recycling statistics
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.											

Caring Ashford

Highlights from the Quarter

Ryland Road brand new play area now open

Rylands Road play area, situated on Rylands Road, Bockhanger, Ashford, is now officially open after a revamp following a £340,000 investment.

The brand new play area allows children of all ages and abilities lots of exciting options to play and have fun including a new multiplay unit for toddlers, trampolines and play panels, a large junior multiplay unit with a slide, large climbing unit, springers, teacup dipper and bouncing spinners, a disability friendly roundabout and a range of different swings.

Brand new play area coming to Spearpoint Recreation Ground

Residents will soon see the build of a brand new play and fitness area at Spearpoint Recreation Ground, Kennington, with 65 new play features, inviting all ages to have fun

The play area will be split into zones with easy access between each, for infants, toddlers, juniors, teens, with a respite and fitness area.




The infant and toddlers areas are full of spinning, sliding and swinging features ready to explore with multiplay units, rockers, spinners, swings including you&me seats and an inclusive roundabout. A bespoke Heinkel Plane for toddlers is included and will commemorate the heritage of the site.

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.

Quarterly Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 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*	99.2%	98.5%		98.8%	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 202223.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

CP_KPI_17 Council Affordable Housing – New Build	No. of additional new build affordable homes delivered by council housing	17			0			0			No houses completed during the period due to Stodmarsh restrictions unfortunately.
---	---	----	--	--	---	--	--	---	--	--	--

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.

[Housing Revenue Account HRA Business Plan 2022 -2052 including Financing and Affordable Homes Pro.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

CP_KPI_18 Council Affordable Housing - On-	No. of additional on-street purchase affordable homes delivered by council housing	3			1			1			1 home completed in this period for the HRA. Two further property for the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP) completed in this period too but that is from the general fund and not normally included within
---	--	---	--	--	---	--	--	---	--	--	--

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
Street Purchases											these figures.

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			
CP_KPI_19b Homelessness Preventions (still in accommodation)	No. of households where homelessness was prevented	24			28			27			

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](#)

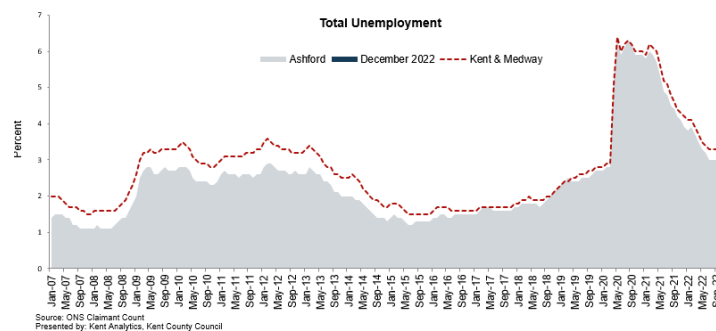
Temporary Accommodation has seen a further increase in demand and is forecasting an additional pressure of £197,000, [Novembers Quarterly Financial Monitoring: \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#) this is a total variance of £400,000 on the original budget. This trend is reflected across the County.

CP_KPI_20 Disabled Facilities Grants Completed	No. of disabled facilities grants administered by the council	16			20			20			A good figure considering the run up to Christmas.
	Actual spend per	£196,521.61			£284,750.48			£309,199.04			Average spend for this time of year.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_20b Disabled Facilities Grant Spend	month for disabled facility grants										

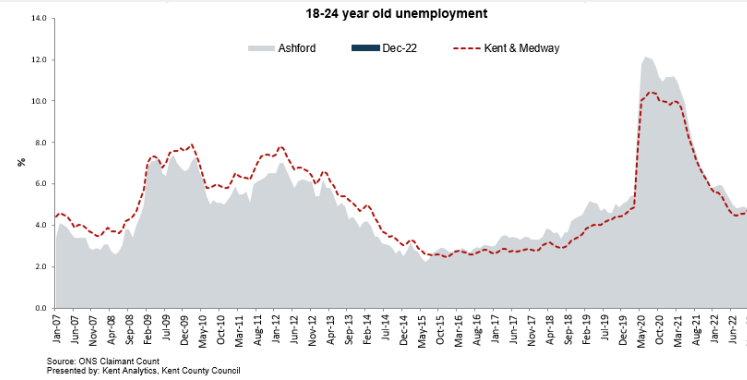
This report sets out the findings of a review into the Councils' processes for administering Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) and disabled adaptations in the Council housing stock [Disabled Adaptations Review.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

CP_KPI_21 Unemployment	Unemployment figures taken monthly from Kent County Councils Economy and employment data.	3.2%			3%			3%			More information available within - Economy and employment data - Kent County Council The unemployment rate in Ashford is 3%. This is slightly below the rate for Kent (3.3%). 2,370 people were claiming unemployment benefits in Ashford.
---------------------------	---	------	--	--	----	--	--	----	--	--	--



December 2022	Number	% rate	Number change since November 2022	% change since November 2022	Number change since December 2021	% change since December 2021
Ashford	2,370	3.0%	+40	+1.7%	-690	-22.5%
Kent & Medway	37,845	3.3%	+840	+2.3%	-9,145	-19.5%




Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 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	4.9%			4.9%			5%			<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

December 2022	Number	% rate	Number change since November 2022	% change since November 2022	Number change since December 2021	% change since December 2021
Ashford	440	5.0%	-5	-1.1%	-65	-12.9%
Kent & Medway	6,920	4.9%	+145	+2.1%	-1,315	-16.0%

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	🟢	Benefit change of circumstance processing time continues to remain on target.
--	--	------	----	---	------	----	---	------	----	---	---

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_27 Benefit New Claim Processing Time	Average time taken to process a new benefit payment claim in no. days	28.78	28		27.72	28		26.1	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			£268,978.35 to date for the financial year.			Value of grants awarded via Community Grants Fund to date this financial year: £268,978.35. Only increase in grants awarded since last period is from member grants – no additional capital grant round this period and community services grants all awarded in quarter 1
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			Ashford Community Lottery: 35,305 tickets sold to 31/12/22 generating £21,183 for good causes since start of lottery in Feb 2022 (60p from every ticket sold direct to good causes now implemented)
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											
CP_KPI_32 Support to 'vulnerable'	Support to 'vulnerable' groups through leisure centre activity	Ongoing projects and activities: Silent Sunday (SEN); a weekly soft play session targeted towards children up to 12yrs with special educational needs averaging 100 participants per month									

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
groups through leisure centre activity		<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. 70+ members.</p> <p>Fit for Life – 100+ participants a month.</p> <p>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. 34 referrals since June.</p> <p>Refugee support – 135 free memberships in 2022.</p>									
<p>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 last quarter, with positive feedback from users.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>An update on the Freedom leisure progress was provided to members prior of November's Cabinet.</p>											

Targeted Growth

Highlights from the Quarter

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 TheatreTrain 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) begin 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.

Quarterly Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_33 Business survival -	Business survival, measure based upon our business rates records	8.65%			9.4%			9.2%			5351 properties, 331 exemptions, 161 reliefs

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
current vacancy rates	Current Vacancy rates										

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	15.4%			15.5%			15.2%			Jan-23, 335 units, 51 empty - 15.2%
Ashford town centre vacancy rate											

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 \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

CP_KPI_35	Contribution to budget from commercial investments utilising the budgeted figures provided as part of the councils budget books.	92.2%			81.5%			88%			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			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%			6%			6.5%			

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	94,351 sf	97.5%
International House	71,101 sf	82,462 sf	86.2%
Total	264,768 sf	283,275 sf	93.5%

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 /% Increase transactions completed electronically.	83	80		80.39	80		83	80		In December 2022 we saw our best ever month in terms of digital uptake with 89.63% of transactions happening digitally. The previous best was in December 2021 at 89.07%. We anticipated December to have an increase on previous months as our webpage views for bin collections tend to peak at this time of the year, coupled with the fact that the call centre isn't open for as many days.
-----------------------------	--	----	----	--	-------	----	--	----	----	--	--

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 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
				Oct 22			Nov 22			Dec 22	
		Digital Transactions		27,523			27,111			36,383	
		Total Transactions		34,454			34,465			40,594	
		Digital Uptake		79.88%			78.66%			89.63%	

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 (April-June)	Q2 (July-Sept)	Q3 (Oct-Dec)	Latest Note
CP_KPI_39 Social media engagement	Social media engagement	<p>Impressions</p> <p>Facebook: 977,240 Twitter: 62,471 Nextdoor: 91,593 Instagram: 2,747</p> <p>Followers</p> <p>Facebook: 10,115 Twitter: 9,082 Nextdoor: 25,536 Instagram: 2,574</p>	<p>Impressions</p> <p>Facebook: 867,487 Twitter: 47,088 Nextdoor: 123,428 Instagram: 8,766</p> <p>Followers</p> <p>Facebook: 10,459 Twitter: 9,112 Nextdoor: 26,407 Instagram: 2,633</p>	<p>Impressions</p> <p>Facebook: 798,723 Twitter: 27,170 Nextdoor: 172,687 Instagram: 11,724</p> <p>Followers</p> <p>Facebook: 10,679 Twitter: 9,101 Nextdoor: 27,004 Instagram: 2,677</p>	<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 residents and ensure that our social media strategy is shaped by the results of the data.</p> <p>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.</p>

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_41 Parking usage	Parking usage Ashford and Tenterden Car Parks	243,026			259,506			277,199			

Overview of Car Park and on-Street sales for December 2022. These income figures are generated from the following systems, Pay and Display Machines (Flowbird), Pay by Phone (RingGo) and SAGOSS (ANPR).

Monthly sales can fluctuate because of daily variation and the number of weekdays and Saturdays that fall within a given month, which may have a slight effect on income trends .

Please see monthly revenue as below;-

Month	Income	Notes
December	£202,995	Low Seasonal Trend. This could be attributed to free parking offer over the festive period and impact of cost of living. In comparison (pre-covid). Dec 2018 was £211,456
November	£244,106	
October	£225,664	
September	£211,014	
August	£216,092	
July	£202,580	
Average monthly total	£215,000	

Please see the monthly transactions below:

Month	Income
December	91,122
November	101,633

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
	October	105,522									
	September	95,762									
	Average monthly transactions (pre-covid)	106,774									

Our income is built up of 70% from Ashford and 30% from Tenterden.

Top Performing Car Parks this month

1. Vicarage Lane Car Park (Ashford) £44k – same as previous month

The forecast for this car park alone at end of financial year = is over £550k, which equates to around 21% of total income.

2. Recreation Ground Car Park (Tenterden) £38k – same as previous month

3. Elwick Place (Ashford) £30k – slight increase from previous month

Total Financial Year Figures/ Income

Forecast for 2022-23	£2,500,000
2021-22	£2,203,918
2020-21	£819,698
2019-20 Income	£2,591,786

Recovery

We want to 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.

I have provided Finance with estimates for 2022–2023 based on the material in this monthly report. The forecast indicates that earnings will exceed expectations.

Our Principles

Highlights from the Quarter

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 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

Quarterly Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 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	98%	95%		95.6%	95%		100%	95%		156 requests received, no requests responded to beyond 20 working days

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

CP_KPI_46 Gas Safety Certificates	% of ABC properties with up to date gas safety certificates	99.81%	100%		99.74%	100%		99.87%	100%		99.93% December
--------------------------------------	---	--------	------	--	--------	------	--	--------	------	--	-----------------




Our homes must meet the needs of local people of all ages, incomes and abilities to live sustainably and safely, although 99.93%, the measure as of December 2022 appears high, 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				
---	--	---	--	--	--	--	--------------------	--	--	--	--

Sickness absence per employee Q3 01 Oct 22 to 31 Dec 22







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

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
peak period of seasonal illnesses. Annual Sickness Report 202122.pdf (modern.gov.co.uk)											
CP_KPI_48 Average Speed of Customer Service Calls Answered	Average wait time for customer service calls - to be benchmarked with results across Kent	0h 01m 14s	0h 01m 38s		0h 01m 30s	0h 01m 38s		0h 00m 49s	0h 01m 38s		FTE in December was 9.51 5 csa's absent totalling 66 hours 15 csa's took annual leave totalling 279.25 hours
CP_KPI_51 number of ongoing litigation/court proceedings (volume measure)	number of ongoing litigation/court proceedings (volume measure)	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		Number of ongoing litigation matters = 118 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 - 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		Number of new 106 files opened 4 Number of Draft 106 agreements sent out - 1 Number of 106 cases completed - 4						

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
		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%		

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 returned to target.







A recent update on the Stodmarsh situation was presented to Cabinet [Stodmarsh Update.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#), 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%		
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	82%	75%		79%	75%		77%	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](#)




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

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.

CP_KPI_55	% 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).	86%	75%		83%	75%		81%	75%		
CP_KPI_55b	% of non majors determined within 8 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	90%	80%		89%	80%		87%	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.

CP_KPI_56	Number includes all conditions applications, pre-app cases, as well as applications for	817	550		831	550		985	550		
------------------	---	-----	-----	---	-----	-----	---	-----	-----	---	--

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2022/23			Q2 2022/23			Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
planning casework reducing backlog	outline, full or reserved matters consent. Reducing backlog with a capacity set at 550 open cases										

Application numbers have continued to increase. Stodmarsh is a known factor which is holding applications up (approximately 220 cases at Q2) 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 holding a second clearance week in February, 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.