Agenda Item No:

Report To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet

Date of Meeting: Tuesday 22nd September 2026
Thursday 8th October 2026

Report Title: Performance Report, Quarter 1 2026/27

Report Author: Natalie Sloan
Job Title: Performance and Insight Officer

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

Summary: This report summarises performance against the council's suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set out in the Borough Plan 2024-28, for the Quarter 1 period 2026/27.

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

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

Key Decision: No

Significantly Affected Wards: None

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

I. **Consider the performance data for Quarter 1 2026/27**

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

This quarterly Performance Report acts as an opportunity to monitor the progress made by the council against the Borough Plan.

Financial Implications: None

Legal Implications:	None
Equalities Impact Assessment:	Not required as the report presents information on past council performance and does not recommend any change to council policy or new action.
Data Protection Impact Assessment:	Not required
Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):	Not required
Sustainability Implications:	None
Other Material Implications:	None
Exempt from Publication:	**No**
Background Papers:	**The Borough Plan 2024 – 2028**
Contact:	Natalie.sloan@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330208

Agenda Item No.

Report Title: Performance Report, Quarter 1 2026/27

Introduction and Background

1. This is the first quarterly performance report of 2026/2027, summarising performance against our Key Performance Indicators set out in Our Plan for the Borough (known as the Borough Plan) 2024 – 2028.

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

3. KPI.Planet.010 Number of organisations committed to active travel plans cycling/walking has been revised and replaced with KPI.PLANET.010a Number of journeys made by cycle. This revision reflects a change in focus to increase cycling, rather than the organisational approach. Two cycle counters are in place, providing us with tangible data to monitor the number of cycle journeys made.

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

5. During the presentation of the Annual Performance Report 2025/26 to Cabinet in July, a Member requested further information on the Council's carbon footprint (KPI.PLANET.001, reported annually) and how this compared to other authorities.

   Our carbon footprint for 2025 - 2026 is currently being calculated. The 2024-25 total was 1148 tCo2e, Folkestone's reported figure was 567, Dover 1384, Maidstone 1732 and Swale 276. The lowest was Tonbridge and Malling at 240 and highest Thanet at 2283.

   While this provides some context it should be noted that comparison of carbon footprints is not necessarily a fair benchmark as different authorities have different assets and property portfolios to decarbonise, and new purchases or developments inevitably add to totals, so it is not a static picture. As there is not yet a statutory requirement to record carbon footprints it should be noted that methodologies or toolkits used by different authorities vary, as does the scope of buildings and solar offsets included in analysis.

   Delivering a genuine carbon reduction requires electrification of gas heating and fleet operations. The Climate Team is currently working on a September submission to the Green Heat Network Fund to address this in our own core estate and wider into the town, and are developing a centralised Fleet Decarbonisation Plan to establish the current position across departments and timelines for remaining transition away from fossil fuels. We are also continuing work to assess the solar generation potential across the Council's estate, identify opportunities to increase solar capacity and manage a successful Warm Homes programme for both social and private sector housing decarbonisation.

While we focus our capacity on initiatives that will deliver the greatest impact supporting both Council and borough-wide carbon reduction targets, as part of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) preparation, we will be working closely with colleagues in Folkestone and Swale to establish greater consistency in carbon accounting methodologies and reporting arrangements across the new authority area - and intend to focus more time resource on this area in the coming year.

The Climate Change Network of Kent Authorities (CCN), in which we actively participate, shares good practice and has set a target to set a standardised methodology for our Scope 3 (indirect - supply chain) this year.

Current Position

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

7. The vision of the Borough Plan: To make Ashford a place where people, business and nature can collectively thrive, is supported by three pillars, those of: Planet, People and Place. Further information about Ashford Borough Council's Borough Plan can be found on our website.

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

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

Planet

Highlights from the Quarter

10. **Scheme approved to unlock up to 5,000 stalled homes across Ashford and Canterbury**

Approval has been granted for a major new environmental scheme in the Stour catchment that is set to unlock up to 5,000 new homes across Ashford, Canterbury and nearby towns by tackling the nutrient pollution and nutrient neutrality constraints that have held development back since 2019.

The Stodmarsh Ditch Enhancement Scheme, delivered by Greenshank Environmental in partnership with Dace Environmental, is one of the UK's largest nature-based nutrient neutrality and nutrient mitigation projects. At a scale not previously delivered in the area, the scheme provides the level of mitigation needed to move a significant number of stalled housing sites forward.

Spread across five sites and more than 2.5 kilometres of small watercourses, the scheme uses natural interventions to reduce the levels of nitrogen and phosphorus entering the River Stour before it reaches the protected Stodmarsh wetlands.

Nutrient neutrality rules mean new housing developments must not add to existing pollution in the river. To meet this requirement, developers can purchase nutrient neutrality credits generated by schemes like this one, which offset the impact of wastewater from building new homes.

The Stodmarsh Ditch Enhancement Scheme will restore heavily managed agricultural ditches into more natural streams that slow the flow of water and allow nutrients to be filtered out. This reduces pollution in the catchment while generating the credits needed to support new development. The scheme requires only narrow strips alongside existing ditches, allowing surrounding farmland to remain in production. It will also support local wildlife and help manage both drought and heavy rain by holding more water in the landscape.

The work is secured for more than 80 years to ensure long-term environmental benefit and certainty for local planning authorities and developers.

The first phase of the scheme has received approval and is projected to unlock between 3,000 and 5,000 homes across Ashford, Canterbury and the wider River Stour catchment. A second phase is expected to support a further 3,000 homes, bringing the total potential to up to 8,000 homes over the two phases.

11. **Stour Environmental Credits begin selling nutrient credits and opening building opportunities in the Stour catchment**

Stour Environmental Credits (SEC) has begun issuing nutrient credits, opening the door for new homes and mixed-use developments across the Stour catchment that have previously been delayed by nutrient neutrality rules.

The scheme’s initial mitigation programme is expected to support the delivery of more than 1,500 new homes, with an initial credit release already enabling up to 30 dwellings to progress. Further credits will be released on a regular basis as existing schemes progress, and new environmental mitigation projects are explored.

SEC is already working with developers, landowners and other stakeholders to expand the supply of credits over time, helping ensure the scheme can respond to future housing need across the catchment.

12. **Community owned energy set to thrive in Ashford with local residents the key**

Ashford Borough Council has partnered with Community Energy Pathways to support the development of a community-led energy organisation that will identify and deliver renewable energy projects across the borough.

The initiative aims to create projects that generate clean electricity locally while keeping financial and social benefits within the community.

Early opportunities are expected to focus on rooftop solar installations on large buildings with high energy use, helping to reduce carbon emissions, running costs and strengthen local energy resilience.

People

Highlights from the Quarter

13. **Proven Success Drives Expansion of 'Upcycle Your Skills' Across Kent**

Following the standout success of its Spring programme, SUEZ in collaboration with CXK is scaling up its Upcycle Your Skills initiative with renewed investment from Ashford, Maidstone and Swale Borough Councils to deliver an expanded Autumn programme.

The programme has already made a tangible difference, helping young people across Kent build confidence, develop practical skills and take real steps toward employment, education and training.

Its impact has been so strong that all three councils have committed to funding a second round, backing a model that is delivering results.

Designed for young people not currently in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of falling into that category, the free five-week programme combines hands-on workshops, one-to-one coaching and direct employer engagement. Crucially, participants also gain the opportunity to interview for live vacancies with SUEZ, turning potential into real-world job prospects.

More than just a course, Upcycle Your Skills is changing lives by equipping young people with the confidence, motivation and career readiness to move forward into jobs.

Place

Highlights from the Quarter

14. **Award winning architects Haworth Tompkins appointed to work on Odeon transformation**

Haworth Tompkins will be working with Ashford Borough Council on the transformation of the former Odeon cinema building into a vibrant new cultural and community venue in the heart of Ashford.

Appointed alongside Price & Myers, Skelly & Couch, and Bristow Consulting, the team has developed a Strategic Vision and Concept Design that reimagines the historic 1930s cinema as a flexible and welcoming civic asset which is sustainable, accessible, and financially resilient.

The project builds upon the Council's ambition to restore the building's distinctive art deco frontage and bring renewed High Street activation, while creating a range of adaptable spaces for performance, events, creative arts and community use.

The concept design and accompanying business plan were approved at Cabinet on the 12 March, marking a significant milestone and enabling the project to move into its next stage of development.

15. **Protecting three of Ashford's best loved heritage landmarks**

Ashford Borough Council is proposing to spend £1 million to protect and improve three local landmarks: the Hubert Fountain in Victoria Park, Woodchurch Windmill and Ashford's First World War Mark IV tank. The plans were agreed at the Council's Cabinet meeting on 14 May 2026.

These three sites have been identified as priorities based on their significance to Ashford's heritage and the urgency of work needed to safeguard them.

Ashford has a rich local history and many protected buildings and places. The Council looks after a number of heritage sites and wants to make sure they are safe and in good condition for years to come.

The work will help protect important parts of Ashford's story, improve public spaces, and create chances for local people to get involved through volunteering, education and events. The Council will also look for grant funding and partners to help the projects go further.

The proposal is to allocate up to £300,000 towards the restoration of each of the Hubert Fountain, Woodchurch Windmill and the Mark IV tank. The remaining £100,000 would be used to help maintain other heritage assets the Council owns.

- The Hubert Fountain (Victoria Park): repair and restore the fountain to stop further deterioration and protect a key feature of the park.
- Woodchurch Windmill: carry out repairs following storm damage so it can be made safe and reopened to visitors.
- WWI Mark IV Tank: tackle corrosion and stabilise the structure to prevent further damage while longer-term options are explored.

Ashford Borough Council recognises the importance of its heritage assets, the value they hold for local people, and their contribution to the life of the borough through tourism, placemaking and civic identity. It is also essential

that these assets are well managed and properly maintained to ensure they remain in good condition for future generations.

Since the plans were agreed by Cabinet, there has been a positive development in relation to the WWI Mark IV Tank. The Ashford Heritage and Memorial Charitable Foundation has been invited to work with the Council on developing a funding bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, following an Expression of Interest submitted earlier this year. While this does not represent a funding award, it marks an encouraging step towards securing a sustainable future for the Grade II listed tank, which is also a registered war memorial and prominent town centre landmark.

16. **Ashford Town Centre serves up a sizzling success at Food and Drink Festival 2026**

Ashford Town Centre was buzzing on Saturday 27 June as the Ashford Food and Drink Festival returned, bringing crowds into the town centre for a lively day of food, drink, entertainment and family activities. More than 40 stalls lined the High Street and Elwick Place, offering street food and artisan produce.

All ages were spoilt for choice with a full menu of activities including the Cardboard Café, DJ and Doodle Booth, and Panna Football Cage, while street theatre, live music, dance performance and food and drink demonstrations added to the festival atmosphere.

Highlights included live appearances from Buzz Lightyear and Jessie, the finale of the Jellycat Trail and the sold-out Wine Garden of England evening held the night before.

Conclusion

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

18. The Performance Indicators will be presented again in the Q2 2026/27 performance report where a further update will be provided on current performance and any notable changes.

Contact and Email

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

Appendix A
Performance Report – Quarter 1 2026 – 2027
Borough Plan Themes and Key Performance Measures

Planet
Key Performance Measures - Reported Quarterly

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/27			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PLANET .010a Number of journeys made by cycle	Number of journeys made by cycle	**New Measure**			**New Measure**			58,000 Figure reflects the number of cycling journeys made in June			This KPI replaces KPI.Planet.010 Number of organisations committed to active travel plans cycling/walking. The revision reflects a change in focus to increase cycling, rather than the organisational approach. Two cycle counters are in place, providing us with tangible data to monitor the number of cycle journeys made.
KPI.PLANET .011 Recycling Rate	% of borough waste recycled or composted	45% (Dec)	50%	⚠	49% (Mar)	50%	⚠	53% (June)	50%	✓	
KPI.PLANET .012 Refuse Collection Success Rate	% of successful refuse collections per 100,000 refuse collections made.	99.94%	99.96%	✓	99.94%	99.96%	✓	99.93%	99.96%	✓	Waste data from UK local authorities is reported to WasteDataFlow with statistics available at the following links. WasteDataFlow Waste and recycling statistics

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/27			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PLANET .013 Digital uptake - % of total council /% Increase transactions completed electronically	Digital uptake - % of total council /% Increase transactions completed electronically	89.2%	80%	✅	88.5%	85%	✅	87.99%	85%	✅	Due to consistent performance above 80%, the target was reviewed and increased to 85% from Q4 onwards. The new target is in line with our historic averages.

Month	Digital Transactions	Calls	Digital Uptake %
Apr-26	51310	6940	88.09%
May-26	53563	6754	88.80%
Jun-26	53507	7949	87.07%

KPI.PLANET .014 EVCP usage - number of sessions		**Q3 Total – 1197** December 430 November 398 October 369	**Q4 Total – 1162** March 399 February 348 January 415	**Q1 Total – 1258** April 392 May 426 June 440	We have a target set for 500 EVCP sessions per month.

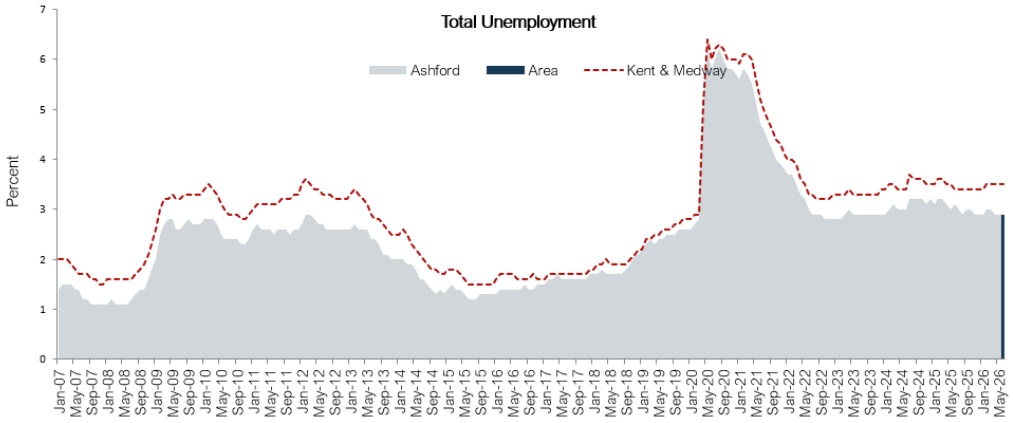
People
Key Performance measures - Reported Quarterly

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/27			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PEOPLE.008 Homelessness - New Triage Cases	No. of new triage cases	441 October (171) November (152) December (118)			524 January (191) February (161) March (172)			435 April (145) May (138) June (152)			Following the 2025 service review, we have moved forward with a team restructure to better support our service goals, with an aim to create a more responsive, cost-effective, and cohesive service. The restructure of the team is now complete. All procedures have been fully reviewed and refreshed, and a new training package is in place for the team.
KPI.PEOPLE.009 Homelessness Preventions (still in accommodation)	No. of households where homelessness was prevented	56 October (13) November (24) December (19)			72 January (30) February (19) March (23)			79 April (37) May (25) June (17)			
KPI.PEOPLE.010 Number of families in temporary accommodation six week on		0			0			0			Data represents the number of families who have been in B&B accommodation for over 6 weeks at the end of each respective quarterly period The team have managed to keep the number of families in B&B over 6 weeks under the MHCLG target of 6. In order to achieve this, requires close monitoring and manging to create a chain lettings approach.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/27			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PEOPLE.011 Housing arrears	Housing arrears as a percentage of rent collectable	2.19%			1.72%			2.03%			Arrears at the end of Q1 – week 13, Sunday 5th July 2026 - £695,608.73 The 2026/27 actual rent debit is estimated to be £34,232,389.84 The current true arrears for Q1 is calculated at 2.03%
KPI.PEOPLE.012 Housing voids – average void time (excluding major voids)	Average void time	47.5	21		24.23	21		27.45	21		New processes and procedures implemented continue to add performance measurement and order tracking/management capabilities and have helped improve the overall Void Service delivery
KPI.PEOPLE.013 Number of adaptations completed against number waiting (HRA)		38/87			41/91			11/53			The number completed 1st April 2026 – 23rd June 2026 (11) against the number received 1st April 2026 – 23rd June 2026 (53). This covers both minor and major adaptations.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/27			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PEOPLE.014 Number of adaptations completed against number waiting (DFG)		23			11			22			We do not have an active waiting list, and all referrals are passed to our agents to process with immediate effect, this has been the process for many years now.
KPI.PEOPLE.015 Disabled Facilities Grants Completed	No. of disabled facilities grants administered by the council	17			11			22			Data reflects the number of referrals received and administered within the quarter.
KPI.PEOPLE.016 Disabled Facilities Grant Spend	Actual spend per month for disabled facility grants	£277,318.72			£154,179.56			£252,872.43			

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/27			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PEOPLE.017 Unemployment	Unemployment figures taken monthly from Kent County Councils Economy and employment data.	3%	3%		3%	3%		2.9%	3%		June 2026 data set More information available within Economy and Employment Data - Kent County Council (kent.gov.uk) and on Kent County Council's Unemployment in Kent Dashboard (Power BI)



June 2026

Area	Number	Rate	Number change since last month	Percentage change since last month	Number change since last year	Percentage change since last year
Ashford	2,510	2.9%	+10	+0.4%	-50	-2.0%
Kent & Medway	41,275	3.5%	+380	+0.9%	+1,655	+4.2%

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/27			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PEOPLE.018 Unemployment 18-24yr olds	Unemployment 18-24yr olds taken monthly from the Kent County Council economy and employment data	6.1%	4.5%		6.1%	4.5%		6.2%	4.5%		June 2026 data set More information available within Economy and Employment Data - Kent County Council (kent.gov.uk) and on Kent County Council's Unemployment in Kent Dashboard (Power BI)

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	550	6.2%	+5	+0.9%	+60	+12.2%
Kent & Medway	8,780	6.6%	+5	+0.1%	+1,015	+13.1%

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/27			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PEOPLE.019 Leisure Social Value - Number of Risk Groups Impacted Via Leisure Centre Programmes	Number of Risk Groups Impacted Via Leisure Centre Programmes	This KPI has been revised, having been previously titled 'Support to 'vulnerable' groups through leisure centre activity'. To access the notes from previous quarters for this measure, please refer to the respective performance reports available on our website. **Q1 2026/27** Number of risk groups impacted via leisure centre programmes: **41** **Healthy Communities – June 2026 update** A Health and Wellbeing Day, delivered in partnership with the Sagamartha Gurkha Nepalese Community, brought people together through activities celebrating, health, wellbeing, culture and community. Good Boost was introduced, offering personalised exercise and rehabilitation support to help people with various health conditions become more active. Free Act Now, Age Better exercise classes supported older adults to remain active and independent by improving mobility, balance and strength to support physical wellbeing and reduce the risk of falls. The Stour Centre hosted the Kent School Games Multiskills Event for Year 3 and 4 pupils requiring support to develop movement and fundamental physical skills. Through a range of fun and engaging activities, participants were able to build confidence, improve coordination and enjoy being active in a supportive environment.									
KPI.PEOPLE.019b Leisure Social Value (£)		£3,018,018.14 (reported as an estimated total across all programmes over the year) £310,796.64 (actual figure for Q3 based on the main programme delivered within the quarter)			£310,796.64			£310,796.64			Figure attained from Sport England Social Value calculator and the leisure centre contract programmes.

Place
Key Performance Measures - Reported Quarterly

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/2027			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PLACE.003 Food Hygiene Rating	% of businesses in the borough with a food hygiene rating above 3	98.9%	98.5%		98.8%	98.5%		98.70%	98.5%		Note below:

Food Hygiene Rating System
Distribution of FHRS ratings over time for Ashford at 04/08/26 01:41

Number of establishments in each rating

FHRS Rating	Dec - 25	Jan - 26	Feb - 26	Mar - 26	Apr - 26	May - 26	Jun - 26	Jul - 26
5 - Very good	1041	1041	1019	1030	1033	1035	1035	1027
4 - Good	95	89	84	84	87	90	92	91
3 - Generally satisfactory	29	31	29	28	22	21	20	19
2 - Improvement required	11	11	11	11	9	9	11	10
1 - Major improvement required	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	3
0 - Urgent improvement required	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Total rated establishments	1178	1174	1145	1156	1154	1158	1162	1151
Establishments with rating of 3 or better	1165	1161	1132	1142	1142	1146	1147	1137
Awaiting inspection	69	65	52	49	54	54	60	77
Exempt	40	40	36	36	37	37	37	37
Sensitive	52	51	50	49	48	48	48	48
Excluded	72	73	69	70	71	72	74	76
Total establishments	1411	1403	1352	1360	1364	1369	1381	1389

Trading Standards (KCC) are responsible for enforcing the legislation that covers display of an incorrect rating. The scheme as it operates does not allow ABC to remove a hygiene rating sticker, as the business has 3 weeks from being notified of the score to lodge an appeal. There is also no requirement for a rating to be displayed at the premises. When we write to a business following an inspection, we do inform them of their responsibility to remove the old sticker. This is something we can check when a revisit is completed, however a revisit would normally be undertaken within the appeal / notification period, so still time for an appeal to be lodged. We would inform a business if the wrong rating is being displayed during a visit, and where practical remove a rating if it is outside of any appeal period.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/2027			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PLACE.004 Business survival - current vacancy rates	Current Vacancy rates	10.82%			10.59% Target: 10%			10.49% Target 10%			5,491 premises in the borough 576 with either an exemption or empty relief indicating vacancy. A new target of 10% was introduced in Q4 based on current rates and aspirations to bring this down.

Date	No of props	Exemptions	Empty 'Reliefs'
01-Jul-23	5437	306	197
01-Oct-23	5442	298	217
01-Jan-24	5451	319	222
01-Apr-24	5423	314	236
01-Jul-24	5422	313	252
01-Oct-24	5411	313	249
01-Jan-25	5412	303	247
01-Apr-25	5406	338	263
01-Jul-25	5407	347	267
01-Oct-25	5432	348	276
01-Jan-26	5425	348	239
01-Apr-26	5324	315	249
Jul-26	5491	314	262

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

KPI.PLACE.005 Ashford town centre vacancy rate		21% (October 25)			17.7% (April 2026) Target: 14%			17.4% (July 2026) Target: 14%			The Q4 figure has been updated to reflect a later survey (April) than previously reported (January) for direct comparison. The area surveyed is the High Street, Middle Row, New Rents, North Street, Bank Street, Tufton Street, County Square, and Elwick Place. This is surveyed manually quarterly. A new target of 14% was introduced in Q4 2025/26, with a view to reduce to 10% once the overall economic position improves.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/2027			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	

	All areas - including County Square and Elwick Place	Town Centre Streets - excluding County Square and Elwick Place
Vacant Units	54	33
Total Units Surveyed	311	238
Vacancy Rate	17.4%	13.9%

Surveys are undertaken by officers in person and are a snapshot on the day, meaning that upcoming openings and closures are not factored in. The survey in July 2026, and since the survey in Jan 2026, was undertaken after the closure of Park Mall, which is reflected in the overall number of units in the town centre reducing from 344 to 311. The actual number of vacancies in Ashford town centre has reduced from 55 in April 2026 to 54 in July 2026. Many of the vacant properties, where there are live Planning issues, offers being negotiated and absent landlords, are not able to be taken up at present.

Analysis via Savills and Green Street shows that, nationally, the vacancy rates for High Streets as of April 2026 was 13.2%, whereas vacancy in Shopping Centres nationally was 16.9% in the same period. Therefore, the national average across high street and shopping centre vacancies for April 2026 can be calculated as 15.1%. National July figures are likely to be published in the latter part of July 2026 and therefore we continue to benchmark against the April figures.

KPI.PLACE.008 Number of new 106 files opened	Number of new s106 files opened	13			10			8			
KPI.PLACE.008b Number of draft 106s sent out	Number of draft 106s sent out	23			9			9			

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/2027			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PLACE.008c Number of 106s completed	Number of 106s completed	37			19			37			
KPI.PLACE.009 Planning decision quality – Major	Measured by the proportion of decisions on applications that are subsequently overturned at appeal	7%	10%	✅	8.8%	10%	✅	5.17%	10%	✅	The Q1 figure represents the anticipated figure for the April 2024 – March 2026 designation period. The measure used for assessing the quality of decisions is the percentage of planning applications refused, including those arising from a 'deemed refusal' where an application has not been determined - and the appeal was received by the Planning Inspectorate - within the statutory period, for major development that have been overturned at appeal, once nine months have elapsed following the end of the assessment period; as recorded in the data collected by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Planning Inspectorate.
KPI.PLACE.009b Planning decision quality – Non Major	Measured by the proportion of decisions on applications that are subsequently overturned at appeal	0.5%	10%	✅	0.8%	10%	✅	0.9%	10%	✅	Quality figure reflects most current published quality figure relating to decisions made between July 2023 and June 2025. This is a rolling 24-month figure, not the anticipated quality figure expected for the designation period from which designation status is assessed.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/2027			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PLACE.010 Speed of Major Planning Application Decisions	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks (or within such extended period as agreed in writing between the applicant and the local authority)	100%	65%	✅	100%	65%	✅	100%	65%	✅	
KPI.PLACE.011 % of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks amended to reflect 12 rolling months	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks amended to reflect 12 rolling months	97%	75%	✅	97%	65%	✅	97%	65%	✅	The target was reviewed and adjusted to 65% from Q4 onwards. The national threshold for this measure is 60%.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/2027			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PLACE.012 Speed of Non-Major Planning Application Decisions	% of minor and other planning applications determined within 8 weeks (or within such extended period as has been agreed in writing between the applicant and the council).	95%	75%		95%	75%		93%	75%		
KPI.PLACE.013 % of non-majors determined within 8 weeks amended to reflect 12 rolling months	% of non-majors determined within 8 weeks amended to reflect 12 rolling months	96%	80%		96%	75%		95%	75%		The target was reviewed and adjusted to 75% from Q4 onwards. The national threshold for this measure is 70%.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/2027			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PLACE.014 Number of live planning casework reducing backlog	Number includes all conditions applications, pre-app cases, as well as applications for outline, full or reserved matters consent. Reducing backlog with a capacity set at 550 open cases	565 (376)	550	⚠ ✅	696 (511)	550	🛑 ✅	668 (488)	550	🛑 ✅	It remains the position that, once the number of cases restricted from a decision being made due to nutrient neutrality (Stodmarsh) is accounted for, this indicator still lies below the 550-case target figure. It is expected that the availability of off-site nutrient credits provided by Stour Environmental Credits and manage nutrient mitigation credits and other private mitigation providers will help to unlock some of these cases in the near future and should allow the gross caseload figure to fall back below the target figure.
KPI.PLACE.016 Parking usage	Parking usage Ashford and Tenterden	257,619			247,703			248,557			Made up of 160,962 from Ashford town centre car parks & 87,595 from Tenterden car parks
KPI.PLACE.026 Percentage of parking transactions that are cashless (Ashford)	Percentage of parking transactions that are cashless (Ashford)	89.41%	85%	✅	91.33%	85%	✅	92.30%	85%	✅	The two measures on cashless parking transactions are part of our broader aim to better understand and support the shift towards digital payment methods across our parking services. These measures will help us monitor uptake, identify trends, and assess accessibility and user experience for residents and visitors. Ultimately, we're looking to use this data to inform future improvements, ensure inclusivity, and support the Council's wider digital transformation goals.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/2027			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.PLACE.027 Percentage of parking transactions that are cashless (Tenterden)	Percentage of parking transactions that are cashless (Tenterden)	79.15%	80%	⚠	80.28%	80%	✓	79.41%	80%	⚠	
KPI.PLACE.028 Commercial Property - Invoiced vs Budget	Commercial Property - Invoiced vs Budget	99.5%	100%	⚠	94.47%	97%	⚠	98.50%	97%	✓	Following a review by Management Team, the target was revised to 97% from Q4 onwards.
KPI.PLACE.029 Commercial Property - Collected Against Invoiced	Commercial Property - Income Collected Against Invoiced	97.7%	100%	⚠	98%	97%	✓	98.4%	97%	✓	Following a review by Management Team, the target was revised to 97% from Q4 onwards.

Underlying Principles

Key Performance indicators - Reported Quarterly

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/27			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.UP.004 Number of Stage 1 complaints		286			277			288			The council is working to the ombudsman's complaint handling code, which has seen a reduction in the complaint handling time from 15 to 10 days. Reported performance against the 10- and 20-day complaint response times includes all complaints received, including those where an extension was agreed. In Q1, 40% of the 288 stage 1 complaints received an extension, with 84% resolved within the revised deadline. For stage 2, 55% of the 62 complaints received an extension, with 59% resolved within the revised deadline. The majority of all complaints relate to the housing service. Complaints response performance experienced a temporary reduction during the period as the service prepared for the introduction of the dedicated Housing Complaints and Resolution Team. During this period of organisational change, resources were focused on recruitment, onboarding and the transition of responsibilities into the new operating model. This resulted in a short-term impact on response times and an increase in the use of agreed extensions during Q1. The establishment of the new team is intended to strengthen complaint handling capacity and improve customer outcomes. As the team becomes fully embedded and new staff complete their induction and training, response rates are expected to improve, with the service better placed to deliver timely and consistent complaint resolution in future quarters.
KPI.UP.005 % Stage 1 complaints resolved in 10 days		58%			57%			58%			
KPI.UP.006 Number of Stage 2 complaints		56			66			62			
KPI.UP.007 % Stage 2 complaints resolved in 20 days		Reported as 81% in Q3 report but subsequently reduced to 52% due to complaints resolved outside of the quarter			63%			46%			

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/27			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.UP.008 Benefit Change of Circumstance Processing	Average time taken to process a benefit change of circumstance in no. days	2.19	10	✅	1.82	10	✅	3.02	10	✅	
KPI.UP.009 Benefit New Claim Processing Time	Average time taken to process a new benefit payment claim in no. days	26.61	28	✅	25.71	28	✅	23.72	28	✅	
KPI.UP.010 FOI Response Rate	% of freedom of information requests responded to within 20 working days	100%	95%	✅	100%	95%	✅	100%	95%	✅	In Q1 2026/27, 245 FOI/EIR requests were completed by the council. Taking into consideration bank holidays, all requests were answered within the 20-working day window.
KPI.UP.011 Business Rates Collection	% of national non-domestic rates collected by the council - cumulative figure per month	81.68%	74.25%	✅	96.9%	99%	⚠️	30.9%	24.75%	✅	

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/27			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.UP.012 Council Tax Collection Rate	Percentage of council tax collected - cumulative figure per month	84.25%	73.71%		96.5%	98.25%		29.51%	24.57%		
KPI.UP.013 Compliance - Gas Safety Certificates	% of ABC properties with up-to-date gas safety certificates	99.85%	100%		100%	100%		100%	100%		
KPI.UP.014 Number of days sickness per full time equivalent		Number of days sickness per FTE as at 31.12.25 (based on data for the 12 months up to 31.12.25) = **8.71** (actual rather than annualised data) Target: **9 days**			Number of days sickness per FTE as at 31.03.26 (based on data for the 12 months up to 31.03.26) = **9.25** (actual rather than annualised data) Target: **9 days**			Number of days sickness per FTE as at 30.06.26 (based on data for the 12 months up to 30.06.26) = **9.75** (actual rather than annualised data) Target: **9 days**			Sickness absence levels have increased slightly above our target, although they remain within agreed parameters. A full sickness absence analysis report is due for Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September based on absence in this period.
KPI.UP.015 Average Speed of Customer Service Calls Answered	Average wait time for customer service calls - to be benchmarked with results across Kent	0h 01m 29s	0h 01m 38s		0h 01m 15s	0h 01m 38s		0h 01m 33s	0h 01m 38s		The average time taken to answer customer service calls increased compared with the previous quarter. In June, the average answer time rose to 0h 01m 46s, following an increase in calls regarding garden waste renewals and the waste audit.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/27			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.UP.016 Number of ongoing litigation/ court proceedings	Number of ongoing litigation /court proceedings	Number of ongoing matters = **190** Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC or settled with costs = **5**			Number of ongoing matters = **205** Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC or settled with costs = **7**			Number of ongoing matters = **199** Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC or settled with costs = **4**			
KPI.UP.018 Social media engagement	Social media engagement	Q3 (Oct - Dec) **Impressions** Facebook: 1,086,923 X (Twitter): 629 Nextdoor: 51,532 Instagram: 29,401 **Followers** Facebook: 13,426 X (Twitter): 8,617 Nextdoor: 33,747 Instagram: 3,220			Q4 (Jan - Mar) **Impressions** Facebook: 1,414,766 Nextdoor: 72,529 Instagram: 13,709 **Followers** Facebook: 13,918 Nextdoor: 34,163 Instagram: 3,280			Q1 Apr – Jun **Impressions** Facebook: 1,359, 285 Nextdoor: 154,251 Instagram: 26,029 **Followers** Facebook: 14,249 Nextdoor: 34,586 Instagram: 3,291			Impressions/Followers for X (Twitter) have not been reported from Q4 onwards as our Comms team have noticed engagement on X has been reducing over the past year (a pattern seen not only across public sector accounts, but across most accounts). As a result, we've made the decision to reduce our use of X to mainly just urgent updates or in emergency planning incidents, while we focus our resources on other platforms which are performing well and getting better engagements.

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

The data will allow the Council to better understand the needs of our residents and ensure that our social media strategy is shaped by the results of the data.
With circa 52,000 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.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2025/2026			Q4 2025/26			Q1 2026/27			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI.UP.019 Garages Vacancy Rate	% of lettable garages	37%			35%			35%			New target introduced 30%
KPI.UP.020 Allotment vacancy rate	% of lettable allotments	2%			0%			3%			New target introduced 0%