

Agenda Item No:



Report To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet

Date of Meeting: Tuesday 9th July 2024
Thursday 25th July 2024

Report Title: Ashford Borough Council Annual Performance Report
2023/24

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

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Heather Hayward
Portfolio Holder for:

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

The Annual Performance Report:

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

Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: None

Recommendations: The Cabinet is recommended to:-

- I. **Note the contents of the Annual Performance Report and approve its publication on the council's website.**

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

Financial Implications: None

Legal Implications:	None
Equalities Impact Assessment:	Not required as the Annual Performance Report is a record of past performance and does not propose any new actions.
Data Protection Impact Assessment:	Not required
Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):	Not required
Sustainability Implications:	None
Other Material Implications:	None
Exempt from Publication:	NO
Background Papers:	Corporate Plan 2022 – 2024
Contact:	Tom.swain@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330432

Report Title:

Introduction and Background

1. The Annual Performance Report (2023/24) is an important pillar for the council's transparency agenda:
 - Providing an opportunity to look at the council's achievements and the milestones reached, in the context of the Corporate Plan, from the past financial year.
 - As well as summarising the council's performance against its suite of key performance measures.
2. The Annual Performance Report details the retrospective year covering the period up until 31st March 2024.
3. It is important to note that since the closure of the period and the date of this reports publication many of the items covered, performance indicators measures, will have moved on and further detail about this progression will be covered in future quarterly reports.
4. For example, a new waste and recycling service began on the 25 March right at the end of the period covered in this report. The new service will bring new technology and industry improvements, whilst retaining large parts of the existing service, which helped make Ashford one of the best recycling local authorities in Kent.
5. We are aware of initial issues with the change in service provider and understand these are leading to delays and missed collections. We are working closely with SUEZ to overcome these issues to minimise disruption during this transitional period.
6. Similarly, towards the end of the reporting period the council announced that in preparation for pending regulations for housing providers it had been working to make sure it was ready for these new standards and one of these measures was to commission an independent, external specialist, the Housing Quality Network (HQN), to carry out a comprehensive review of our housing services.
7. Following shortcomings highlighted in this HQN report and self-referral to the regulator, a robust action plan is being created which covers the recommendations provided by HQN. Work has already started in terms of delivery – internal systems are being urgently reviewed and a full stock condition survey underway. Until the full outcomes of this work is understood items such as the HRA business plan referenced in this annual performance report should now be viewed with some caution.

Conclusion

8. This is the last periodic report based on the Corporate Plan 2022-24 with the Borough Plan (2024-28) providing the overarching strategic vision and objectives to guide the council in planning its work programme over a the next four-year period.
9. It is reminded that residents that would like to influence the council's direction, are encouraged to join our Citizens Panel. Our citizens' panel is an opportunity for voices to be heard by decision makers within the council.

Contact and Email

10. Tom Swain – tom.swain@ashford.gov.uk

Ashford Borough Council

Annual Performance Report

2023-2024

Draft

Contents

Contents	02
Our Borough Key facts and figures	04
Corporate Plan 2022-24	06
Green Pioneer	08
Caring Ashford	12
Targeted Growth	16
Underlying Principles	20



Message from the Chief Executive



Welcome to our Annual Report – this provides an opportunity to look back on some of the achievements, milestones and challenges seen across our borough over the last year. Whilst inflation may finally be improving the year once again has been a difficult one, with budgets both within the council and more importantly our residents continuing to be squeezed.

Through our legacy of forward thinking, entrepreneurship, careful planning and a partnership approach we continue to be robustly placed to weather these pressures and remain focused on our long term objectives to strive for a greener, more caring and prosperous borough. We are taking difficult decisions to make sure every pound goes as far as it can, for example, the relocation of the Civic Centre with an estimated saving of £1.3m annually.

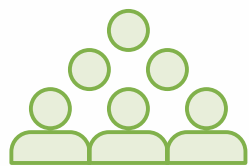
Whilst ensuring our community resources remain, for example, stepping in to ensure our town centre cinema remains open and our town centre businesses supported with various grants and events which drive footfall.

Our Green objectives have remained central with our commitments to decarbonisation, renewable energy provision and recycling, central to many of our projects.

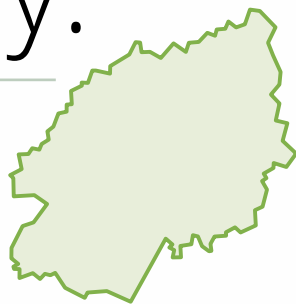
There is also much to look forward to, from our acquisition of the former Kent Wool Growers Site to the launch of our next Borough Plan 2024-28, which I look forward to introducing to you soon. We have also launched our Citizens Panel, please do sign up and give your views and opinions on the services we deliver, ensuring we continue to meet the needs and expectations of our residents.

Tracy Kerby

The borough today:



Population
132,740
(Census 2021)



Area
224 square miles
(largest borough in Kent)



Households
53576
(Census 2021)



Ethnicity
12% population black and ethnic minority
(Census 2021)



Average House Prices 2022
£393,167
(KCC House prices and sales in Kent: 2022)



Average Annual Salary 2023
£31,096
(gross full time by place of work)
(Annual survey of hours and earnings, ONS)



Crime
Average of 950 street level crimes per month
(data.police.uk)



Listed buildings
Over 3000
(ABC website)



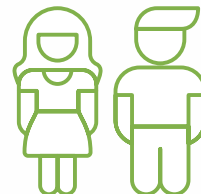
Visitors each year
3.8 million day visits
371,600 staying trips
(Visit Kent - Economic Impact of Tourism 2022 results, Nov 2023)



National Landscapes
(formerly AONB)
2 areas
High Weald and Kent Downs



Number of businesses
(VAT and/or PAYE registered)
6375
90% are micro business (0-9 employees)
(KCC - UK Business Counts 2023)



Life expectancy
(at birth) (2022)
Males 80.9 | Females 83.9
(Local Authority health profiles – fingertips public health data)



Unemployment rate
3.1% (Nov 23)
(Model based estimates of unemployment, ONS)



Universal credit claimants
14% (Oct 23) (age 16 – 64)
(KCC - Universal Credit Claimants, Nov 23)



14% of homes
are rented from the council or a housing association
(Census 2021)



17.9% of homes
are rented from a private sector landlord
(Census 2021)

Corporate Plan 2022-24

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

- Green Pioneer
- Caring Ashford
- Targeted Growth

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

Ashford Ambition:

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



Theme

Objectives

Outcomes

Green Pioneer

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

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

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

Caring Ashford

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

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

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

Targeted Growth

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

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

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

Green Pioneer

Heat Networks

We are working with central government and our appointed consultants AECOM to understand the possibility of developing a District Heat Network (DHN) in Ashford.

This could help us decarbonise and move away from using fossil fuels, such as gas, and using renewable energy and waste heat to warm our buildings instead.

Heat Networks are a feature of the national low carbon energy strategy – delivering heat from centralised generation or waste sources directly to our homes and business rather than fuel like gas or oil. Following the successful securing of funding, we are now able to explore the viability of a heat network for Ashford. Work with the Dept for Energy Security and Net Zero has been ongoing to deliver the feasibility study and an Ashford Town wide Heat Network Zoning Study which will identify areas suitable for exploring our first Borough Heat Networks.

Grants available to provide energy efficiency and clean heating upgrades to low-income households in Ashford

A grant scheme was launched to provide energy efficiency and clean heating upgrades to low-income households in the Ashford borough.

Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 (HUG2) is a new Government grant scheme to fund energy-saving upgrades for residents with 'off-grid' gas heating systems who are most likely to be impacted by the high cost of energy bills.

The grant pays for improvements which could help local people to use less energy, reduce their carbon footprint and spend less on energy bills. The scheme is funded by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) and Ashford Borough Council has signed up to support the delivery of the scheme across the district.

E.ON has been appointed as the approved installer in this area and will guide customers through the application journey, helping them understand and establish eligibility for the scheme. If eligible, E.ON identify which improvements for the home provide the greatest benefits and arrange any necessary surveys and installations.





New waste and recycling service arrived

Last year Ashford was one of three Kent councils, alongside Maidstone Borough Council and Swale Borough Council, who signed the new waste and recycling contract with SUEZ, worth around £19m per year across the whole Mid Kent contract.

The new waste and recycling service across Ashford began on Monday 25 March. The new service will bring new technology and industry improvements, whilst retaining large parts of the existing service, which helped make Ashford one of the best recycling local authorities.

Recent figures from Defra show that the Ashford borough has the highest recycling rate in Kent, with a recycling rate of 51%.

Fortnightly collections of general waste and recycling continue across the borough, alongside the weekly food waste collection and the optional fortnightly garden waste collection.

The new vehicles are being funded directly by the council to help save costs. The vehicles will be more modern and use electric bin lifts. This will help reduce the consumption of diesel dramatically, helping lower the services' carbon footprint.

As well as our waste collections service, our street cleansing service is now delivered by our new contractor SUEZ recycling and recovery UK Ltd. The new contract includes proposed improvements to the level of cleansing in rural and residential areas, as well as quicker response times on removing fly-tipping.

Electricals Recycling – Materials Focus

£10k external funding was secured to run six amnesty style electrical recycling projects. It highlighted the potential to recycle electricals and remove them from the waste stream and also increase accessibility for those in Parishes unable to get to the recycling centres easily. Projects ran alongside pop up repair café's and mens' sheds projects to additionally offer a preferable alternative to recycling through re-use. An independent recycling partner was secured to collect disposed items to ensure all projects are wholly self-funded. PAT testing training was offered to community groups to support increase reuse options and safety.

The six E-Cycle Revival events where residents were able to recycle their electricals were all positively received.

Ashford's Great Big Green Week 2023

This year's national 'The Great Big Green Week' activities organised by Ashford Borough Council were well met by local residents.

The Great Big Green Week is a national celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature. Ashford Borough Council organised various activities throughout the week to ignite conversations and encourage residents to get involved. The main event, Great Big Green Week Roadshow, took place in Ashford Town Centre last June.

Handlebars Vs Cars

A commuter revolution, where we set presenter Liu Batchelor the challenge of racing a car on her bike during rush hour traffic from Singleton to the Coachworks. The aim was to inspire more people to give active travel, cycling and giving commuting by bike a try. The project still continues to pick up media interest, interviews and positive feedback. During the two-week campaign Liu's own social media avenues attracted 16,283 facebook engagements, 8,773 linkedIn Impressions, 9,201 Instagram Views and 3,060 TikTok Views.



Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund

Our Principle Contractor (E.ON) is now in place and is mobilising fast. Retrofit Assessments are taking place across 727 properties and the results will determine the phasing of the scheme. The retrofitting is a 'fabric first' approach to all properties – External Wall Insulation, Cavity Wall Insulation, Loft Insulation, window replacement - as well as trialling some Ground Source Heat Pumps if feasibility is successful. Tenants are actively engaged in the process and workshops took place in July and September. We are working with E.ON on a social value strategy too which will look at imparting some educational value on residents about the green employment sector and climate change mitigation.



Solar

Carlton Road, PV Panels have been installed on all council owned industrial units. Monitoring software is being used to show the carbon savings. We are looking at options to possibly export the excess energy, the feasibility of which needs to be determined by UK Power Networks.

Stour Centre Solar Array, Detailed designs are being finalised for this project. Planning and Procurement are actively engaged and a project programme is being drawn up.



Caring Ashford



Award-winning Eat Well Spend Less

The incredibly successful Eat Well Spend Less roadshows received recognition at the Healthwatch Awards.

The roadshows started back in 2022 and bring together a range of partner organisations including frontline NHS staff and Ashford Borough Council officers, outreach organisations and charities, in one easy-to-access place.

They provide practical advice, information and support in key areas such as: healthy eating on a budget, health checks and MOTs, benefits advice, support available from food banks and other voluntary sector provisions.

Co-ordinated by ABC, the number of partners from a wide range of support services and charities has increased dramatically since those first few events two years ago, with over 20 different organisations at the most recent event.

Ashford's 30 year Housing Revenue Account Business Plan is balanced and affordable despite "perfect storm of pressures"

Ashford's 30-year Business Plan for its Housing Revenue Account sets out clear priorities and succeeds in balancing the books in difficult times to continue to deliver services that are important for our tenants.

Following a November meeting, Cabinet Members heard that the plan had been compiled amid a 'perfect storm' of uncontrollable external factors and pressures – higher interest rates and inflation, the multiple demands on the council caused by the Social Housing (Regulation) Act, the cost of living crisis, which is increasing temporary accommodation burdens on the General Fund, and the fact that Stodmarsh nutrient neutrality issues continue to restrict the delivery of the new homes in our affordable homes programme pipeline.

Councillors were told that the plan remains "balanced, affordable and viable" and the council is able to deliver on the construction, decarbonisation, management and tenant engagement priorities of the HRA.



Ashford Borough Council buys former Kent Wool Growers site and vows to breathe new life into historic location

The former Kent Wool Growers site occupying a key location between the town centre and the railway station is set to be given a new lease of life after being bought by Ashford Borough Council's Housing development team.

The site offers an unrivalled opportunity to create a vibrant community at the gateway to the town. Work is underway to shape a proposal that is likely to include mixed-use homes, commercial space, a community hub and substantial areas of green space.

Bordered by the Great Stour river to the east, the site is part of the Commercial Quarter, which includes the Connect 38 office building, International House and The Coachworks.

Social housing repairs service brought in house

Taking the repairs service for our 5,000-plus housing stock in house has the potential to save money and provide tenants with an improved and more efficient service, Cabinet heard during a meeting in July.

The provision of a day-to-day responsive repairs service was previously outsourced by the council to a main contractor Equans but this ended on the 30th November 2023.

Officers have consulted the Housing Quality Network (HQN) to assist in reviewing the options available and HQN identified that by bringing the service in house, increased satisfaction levels could be achieved based on sector-wide experience.



Celebrating the newly revamped Victoria Park

The Mayor of Ashford, Cllr Larry Krause unveiled a plaque to launch the revamped park and local councillors and invited guests took a tour of the new facilities.

The Victoria Park and Watercress Fields Project is a £5m+ project delivered by Ashford Borough Council and the National Lottery Heritage Fund to improve and protect Victoria Park for the local community.



14



Amongst other things, visitors to the park can now enjoy:

- A community building with new café and public toilets (open from 8am until 6pm daily)
- A new playground with climbing frame, swing, trampolines, a zip-wire and more
- A new hard-surface track for BMXers, skaters, and all other mini-wheels users – designed and built by the team behind the London 2012 Olympic BMX track.
- A colourful and fragrant sensory garden in the heart of a woodland meadow
- An entirely new seasonal wetland area in the heart of the park
- A better space for people at the fountain with new access and seating, improved surfacing and lighting, and new formal planting



New drive to provide affordable rented homes in rural areas; RACE launched by Kent Housing Group



For people struggling to find affordable rented housing in their local rural community or older residents needing to move from their current home there is hope that help could be on the way.

The Rural and Community Housing Enabling service (RACE) is an independent service for Kent and Medway, providing expertise and working directly with communities to deliver housing that matches what local people need.

RACE works with parish councils, housing teams at district and borough councils, housing associations and local developers to identify rural communities where action needs to be taken to meet the housing needs of local people.

Tenterden leisure Centre swimming pool reopened

Freedom Leisure and Ashford Borough Council announced that the wait for the swimming pool at Tenterden Leisure Centre to open was over. Tenterden Leisure centre managed under contract by Freedom leisure on behalf of Ashford Borough Council, reopened the swimming pool in June.



Targeted Growth



Lights, camera, Ashford Cinema – new home for film fans in Ashford Town Centre

Exciting plans for a new look to Ashford Town Centre's cinema were revealed during the period, with the former Picturehouse at Elwick Place welcoming residents and cinema fans under a new name - The Ashford Cinema.

The cinema opened its doors to visitors at the end of April, and over the coming months it will be transformed with plenty of exciting offers and events to appeal to a more family friendly and local community audience.

Earlier this year Ashford Borough Council announced their intention to step in and takeover operating the venue, after Picturehouse announced they would be leaving. This was subject to approval by councillors and following an Extraordinary Council meeting on Thursday 14 March, council members agreed to proceed.

THE ASHFORD CINEMA

The assignment of the Picturehouse lease to Ashford Cinema Ltd (ACL) as part of a transfer of all cinema assets and staff, has completed and Ashford Cinema Ltd have entered into a service agreement with The Big Picture Limited (Cinema & Leisure Solutions) for them to manage the day-to-day operation of the cinema on the councils behalf.

New schemes launched to support businesses in the borough

Ashford Borough Council has launched three new schemes to support businesses in Ashford Town Centre and the wider borough.

Applications for the next round of our town centre business grants scheme opened, providing businesses with the opportunity to apply for funding support of up to £3,000 or £10,000 to bring empty premises back into use and enable improvements to their current properties.

Following on from the success of the Ashford Town Centre Support Grant (ATCSG) which first launched in 2021 and has continued to provide support each year, Cabinet members agreed to use s106 funding (from the Designer Outlet expansion) to deliver this scheme.

There were two grant schemes: the Shop Improvement Grant and the Empty Premises Grant. Both provide up to 60% of the cost of works. The Shop Improvement Grant provided up to £3,000 for work that needed to be carried out such as repairs or renovations to shopfronts, energy efficiency improvements or accessibility improvements. The Empty Premises Grant provided up to £10,000 for bringing an empty town centre unit back into use.

The other two schemes are both Government funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and are aimed at supporting businesses not just in Ashford Town Centre but also the wider borough.



Ashford Borough Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise Support programme

The council joined forces with Social Enterprise Kent to launch an initiative aimed at providing critical support to the thriving community of charities and social enterprises within the Ashford Borough.

On the Map: Ashford and Tenterden's Visitor Economy Programme

The council also joined forces with Visit Kent to launch the On the Map project designed to support the development of new visitor experiences that showcase the incredible local produce available in the borough. The aim was to create exciting new products and experiences by linking together different types of visitor economy businesses – both existing and art-ups.



Grants now available for rural businesses and communities in the Ashford borough

Ashford Borough Council successfully secured funding from UK Government's Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) following our proposed Plan for how we would spend our allocation being accepted.

Alongside the allocation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), Ashford Borough Council has been awarded £593,000 REPF funding, specifically to support rural areas in the borough up to March 2025.

Following consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and expressions of interest, Ashford's REPF plan, approved by government, set out four capital grant schemes aimed at filling gaps in support for businesses and organisations and deliver on REPF objectives. These were:

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

Rural Electric Vehicle Charging Point Grant – provided grants to support the installation of Electrical Vehicle Charging Points at publicly accessible parking sites in rural areas of the borough.

Rural Place and Provenance Grant – provided grants to support rural food and drink producers, hospitality and tourism attractions or venues to increase productivity and sustainability for businesses, support the creation of start-up spaces and tackle the 'Last Mile' challenge in rural areas.

Community Amenities Grant (Round 2) – provided grants using REPF and UKSPF funding for improvements to community infrastructure such as village halls or outdoor play areas. Following a successful first round for the 2023/24 financial year, further UKSPF and REPF funding has been allocated for projects proposed in the 2024/25 financial year.

Ashford's street art festival UNFRAMED

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

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

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

"Flamboyant Fawn", the giant mural of a stag painted by artist Curtis Hylton in Ashford Town Centre, was nominated for the Best Street Art in the World Award, via Street Art Cities.

Ashford's Carnival of the Baubles brings thousands of people into the Town Centre

On Saturday 25 November, thousands of residents lined the streets of Ashford Town Centre as the Carnival of the Baubles once again kicked off the festive season.

The day was fun-filled from start to finish, with the team from Made in Ashford running craft workshops at the bandstand and performances throughout the day to keep the crowds entertained on what indicators show was the busiest day in the Town Centre for many years.

The crowds then gathered at Elwick Place, where performances from TheatreTrain Ashford, Circadian and other local dance schools entertained the crowds before the team from Elwick Place illuminated the plaza with a spectacular lights switch on.

Farrah the Fox, a giant mechanical puppet, then appeared, music filled the air and the confetti cannon signaled the beginning of the procession of lights, which alongside Farrah, was led by students from TheatreTrain Ashford and the man himself, Father Christmas, who danced his way up the street greeting the crowds.

Create Music Village returned to Ashford Town Centre in October

Create Music Village (CMV) returned to Ashford Town Centre in October with a month-long celebration of music and sound. The diverse programme featured everything from bands to DJs, sing along movies to workshops, and is all driven by four core grass-roots music venues, providing something for all tastes and ages.

Revelation and Coachworks returned as core venues and were joined this year by Ashford Picturehouse and Low Key Tap Room. There was also a range of fringe events - many of which were FREE - hosted by venues all over the Town Centre.

Parking charges to rise for the first time since 2020

Parking charges across Ashford and Tenterden increased by less than the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the first increase for over three years.

Over the last few years, car parking costs have risen. Electricity bills for our parking sites have gone up by £173,000, and a significant funding gap currently exists. It's important that our car parks are maintained to ensure they are safe and we generate funds to invest, enabling the council to improve our services for the future. Members reluctantly agreed to a proposal of a minimal increase in charges. All tariffs rose by approximately 10% (rounded to the nearest 10p), half of the CPI, which has increased by 20.18% in real terms since the last increase in charges.



Underlying Principles

Council publishes Local Plan 2041 'Call for Sites' information

Ashford Borough Council published information on each of the sites submitted as part of its recent Local Plan 2041 - 'Call for Sites' exercise.

Between September and November 2023, residents, developers and businesses were invited to put forward sites that they own, or to suggest land that may potentially be available, for inclusion in a new Local Plan for the borough.

Overall, approximately 300 sites were submitted for a variety of different potential uses that range from housing and employment to biodiversity, wetlands and energy generation. Officers will now begin the process of individually assessing each site for their suitability, availability and achievability.

The list of submitted sites is published for information purposes only and no decision has been taken as to which sites will form part of a future strategy for the borough. Being put forward for consideration for development does not mean a site will be allocated in the Local Plan nor does it determine whether planning permission should be granted on any subsequent planning application that may be submitted. Once all sites have been assessed, the council's preferred options for growth will be published for public consultation.



Having an up-to-date Local Plan is important to guide and manage growth and change across the borough to ensure that future development is built in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. It sets out the spatial vision of the land that needs to be provided to meet identified needs for a range of uses such as new homes and jobs, as well as places for retail and leisure uses, community infrastructure, and visitor and tourism facilities. The plan also seeks to protect valued assets such as landscape, heritage, nature and open spaces.

Homes survey will ensure that all our social housing meets the highest standards

The regulations for housing providers are changing, introducing new standards that councils need to meet. Ashford Borough Council has been working to make sure we are ready for these new standards and one of these measures was to commission an independent, external specialist, the Housing Quality Network (HQN), to carry out a comprehensive review of our housing services.



This included the council's building safety compliance across our stock of 5,000-plus homes. The HQN review focused on the so-called Big Six areas of building safety compliance – gas, electricity, asbestos, fire safety, water safety and lift safety.

The review highlighted several key areas that need to be strengthened, while also shining a light on areas where we are performing well – for example, where gas is provided to the home a gas safety certificate is required at each property and we are 100% compliant.

The audit found that our property management framework, which should provide assurance that compliance and building safety are being delivered and managed, are not as effective as it should be. Record keeping and reporting mechanisms are not providing a clear audit trail of routine or follow-up maintenance being carried out.

This in turn, means that we are not able to demonstrate that we are meeting our legal and obligatory requirements.

A robust action plan is being created which covers the recommendations provided by HQN within a challenging timeframe. Work has already started in terms of delivery – internal systems are being urgently reviewed and our stock condition survey will play an important role in gathering data.





Government tells UK traders that Ashford will be responsible for SPS checks at Sevington Border Control Post

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) wrote to British businesses who trade with Europe to explain that Ashford Borough Council will be the enforcement authority responsible for Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) checks at Sevington Border Control Post. These measures ensure that food traded is safe to eat, and that animals and plants are free from pests and disease.

Sevington will provide, on one modern and purpose-built site, checks on the whole range of goods and live animals that arrive through both the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel. It is also ideally located to support the smooth flow of goods out of both points of entry without disrupting traffic flows out of the Port of Dover.



Full Council decision on Civic Centre move proposals

Ashford Borough Council's proposed relocation from the Civic Centre to International House was endorsed by councillors at an Extraordinary Meeting held in November.

Now the plans have been approved, it will mean that the council will save around £1.3m per year, without impacting on services delivered to our residents.

Earlier this year the council announced the authority is looking at the possibility of relocating from the Civic Centre offices, as part of wider budget saving ideas. The council confirmed it is facing some significant budget challenges over the coming years.



Update on Ashford Borough Council's approach to nutrient mitigation

Recently, the Government proposed amendments to the emerging Levelling Up & Regeneration Bill which would have removed the need to consider nutrient neutrality matters at a local decision-making level within the affected river catchments across the country. However, these amendments were defeated in the House of Lords.

The Council welcomes the fact that the Government has indicated its stance on this issue but it is disappointing that positive measures to address it have yet to be announced. The nutrient neutrality issue is, and should have always been, an issue for the highest levels of Government, with the key bodies actually responsible for water quality being accountable and delivering the solution. It cannot be appropriate for Natural England, the water

companies and the Environment Agency to simply pass this burden onto Local Planning authorities to resolve.

However, this activity at the national level has necessitated a review of the Council's previously stated aim of delivering strategic wetlands within the borough as a means of providing mitigation for housing proposals currently caught by the need to be nutrient neutral and which are unable to deliver their own mitigation solutions.

Instead, the Council is looking at different ways in which deliverable nutrient mitigation opportunities may be created from its own assets so that this may enable a limited number of housing schemes to be delivered to help address the need for affordable accommodation in the borough.

Citizens Panel

A Citizens' Panel, to encourage residents to give their views and opinions on services and issues that affect the borough, has been launched.

Aiming to bring together cross section of local people to engage with the council regarding issues and proposals across the borough.

Citizens who sign up will be able to share opinions and take part in consultations through online surveys and polls to provide their views on various topics of interest to residents.

ASHFORD
CITIZENS'
PANEL





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

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

Annual Performance Report 2023 – 2024

Key Performance Indicators

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

Green Pioneer Annual Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	2022- 2023 Annual Figure	2023- 2024 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_01 Council's carbon footprint (tCO2e) Annual	Council's carbon footprint (tCO2e)	Annual measure – Baseline figure 3599 tCO2e for Y2019/20		Work is currently underway to capture the 2023-24 carbon footprint. For the first time we are also integrating scope 3 information on indirect emmissions e.g. business travel, home working and commuting. This will involve some development of IT systems to capture this information. Additionally we hope to work with contractors to understand some of the embodied carbon footprint in our key developments and maintenance projects e.g. International House Roof The Policy and Performance team are also working on a dashboard to collate and present climate data – with a focus on energy use in our buildings and vehicles.
In July 2019 Ashford Borough Council declared its aim to become carbon neutral in its own estate and operations by 2030. The Climate Change Advisory Committee (CCAC) leads on the commitment to act and achieve this agenda. In May 2021 officers initiated consultancy work with Laser Energy (our corporate estate energy provider) to establish the Council's own carbon baseline (on own assets and assist with the borough wide picture) with a view to modelling potential carbon descent plans for net zero for council owned assets. This returned a carbon baseline of 3599 tCO2e for Y2019/20 Detailed information on Ashford Borough Council's framework for climate action is included within - Climate Change Action - A Systemic Approach.pdf (moderngov.co.uk).				

Code & Short Name	Description	2022- 2023 Annual Figure	2023- 2024 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_02 Council owned renewable energy provision (kWh) Annual	Total potential capacity of council owned renewable energy provision (kWh)	21-22 estimated average of 303,213.31 kwh per year.	22-23 estimated average of 365,024.18 kwh per year.	Additional to ABC portfolio there is an approx 189,280 kwh which is designed in capacity for the Stour Centre (no meter available). The council has been proactive in installing Solar PV on its buildings since 2011.
CP_KPI_03 Number of EV charging points on council property Annual	Number of EV charging points on council property	Annual measure – Baseline figure from 21-22 14 EV charging points on council property. 22-23 37 Council managed charging points	23-24 39 	We're currently on 39 charge points. We've had a lot more success recently in getting some new points installed, but unfortunately, we also lost some older chargers as BP decided to stop providing service to smaller charge units to concentrate on their rapid network. We're working with a KCC backed scheme to have these points adopted, once this is done, we will have 51. We're also waiting for the completion of our other chargers (Vic Lane, Station Rd and Tenterden Leisure Centre) which will bring the total to 67 hopefully by the end of the year.
As we install the EVCPs and go live with hardware and software, we will update our website and external sites such as Zap Map and use local media to advise accordingly. As part of our installation, we will be including 22kw and Rapids to future proof demand. This proposal will improve service by increasing access to charging facilities for the anticipated increase in electric vehicle users in the coming years. This will encourage the use of electric vehicles while reducing the environmental impact of vehicle emissions.				

Code & Short Name	Description	2022- 2023 Annual Figure	2023- 2024 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_04 Air Quality	Number of Air Quality Management Areas	Annual measure – 21-22 0 22-23 0	Annual measure 23-24 0 Air Quality Annual Status report produced each June	Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are declared when there is an exceedance or likely exceedance of an air quality objective. After declaration, the authority should prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) within 12 months setting out measures it intends to put in place in pursuit of compliance with the objectives. Ashford Borough Council currently does not have any declared AQMAs. For reference, a map of Ashford Borough Council's monitoring locations, as well as those undertaken by National Highways within Ashford, is available from Ashford Borough Council Air Quality Annual Status Report 2023
CP_KPI_05 Area of land (km2) managed for nature conservation Annual	Area of land (km2) managed for nature conservation	1.2km2 of land managed for nature conservation	1.2km2 of land managed for nature conservation	Ashford Borough Council have set out how they will increase biodiversity within council-owed green spaces by introducing a variety of habitats and varying maintenance regimes. The creation of more meadows and enhanced Land Management Plans across the borough, will benefit wildlife, improve the wellbeing of our residents by connecting them with nature as well as continuing to maintain our open spaces in a way that promotes a sense of place and space. Whilst the 1.2KM2 figure has not increased, areas of land managed as meadows are increasing as referenced within CP_KPI 08 accordingly.
The council's in-house landscape management service, Aspire, are proposing to make some changes to selected areas of land they manage including introducing areas of uncut grass for meadow creation. The Creation of Meadows and enhanced Land Management Plans to support increased biodiversity: (moderngov.co.uk)				

Code & Short Name	Description	2022- 2023 Annual Figure	2023- 2024 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_07 Number of trees planted (net gain) supported	Number of trees planted (net gain) supported through ABC projects	Annual measure – Baseline figure from 21-22 40,000 trees have been planted across the borough so far 107,000 trees planted to date	A increased of 1161 to a new total of 108,161 .	
CP_KPI_08 Level of biodiversity in defined project areas Annual	Level of biodiversity in defined project areas	New meadow areas have been created at Queen Mothers Park and Singleton to date. 122,000 M2 of meadows	Increased 16,000m2 total a new total of 138,000m2	Ashford Borough Council have set out how they will increase biodiversity within council-owned green spaces by introducing a variety of habitats and varying maintenance regimes.
CP_KPI_11 Contamination rate in recycling loads Annual	Contamination rate in recycling loads	Top 4 contaminates in recycling (with average %) – again based on present figures Food = 4.4% Textiles = 2.2% Black bags = 0.76% Sanitaryware/nappies = 0.73% 2022/23 = 18.3% contamination rate	2023/24 = 19.2% contamination rate	Recycling is collected commingled via an alternate weekly collection system using a 240-litre green wheeled bin, or clear sacks, with accepted materials including paper and card, cartons, plastic bottles and pots, tubs and trays, metal cans, and glass bottles and jars accepted at the kerbside. Residual waste is collected using 180-litre wheeled bins, and the council offers a weekly food waste and fortnightly garden waste service. Rejected contaminated loads, for example, contained black sacks, food waste, nappies and sanitary waste, as well as other non-recyclable items, are sent to the Allington Energy from Waste (EfW) facility, where due to their contamination, loads are incinerated, rather than being recycled

Code & Short Name	Description	2022- 2023 Annual Figure			2023- 2024 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_12 Reported incidences of fly-tipping Annual	Reported incidences of fly-tipping	Annual measure – Baseline figure from 21-22 1514 registered fly-tips.			Total fly tips reported April 23 – March 24 was 1249 .	Fly tipping FPN's issued (£400) – 1 Householder duty of care FPN's issued (£400 reduced to £300 if paid within 14 days) – 7 Fail to comply with CPN FPN's issued (£100) – 2 Fail to comply with Section 5 Notice FPN's issued (£300) – 1 Fail to comply with Section 34(5) Notice FPN's issued (£300) – 1
			2021 – 2022	2022 – 2023		
		No. of fly tips registered	1514	1292		
		Fines Issued	48	14		
		Total £ paid in fines	£3595.77	£6450		

**Green Pioneer
Quarterly Measures**

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2023/24			Q2 2023/24			Q3 2023/24			Q4 2023/24			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_06	Number of organisations committed to travel plans cycling/walking	KCC have completed their public consultation on priority routes they have identified in the county and we are awaiting results likely to be in next Quarter.												
Number of organisations committed to active travel plans cycling/ walking		Sustrans have completed the feasibility report for Ashford Area LCWIP Route 4 March 2024 and this will be reviewed at the quarterly Active Travel meetings.												
CP_KPI_09	% of borough waste recycled or composted	53%	50%	✔	53.33%	50%	✔	51%	50%	✔	49%	50%	✔	Defra's nationwide recycling league tables - Local authority collected waste: annual results tables (Historical) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Recycling Rate														
CP_KPI_10	% of successful refuse collections per 100,000 refuse collections made.	99.73%	99.96%	✔	99.77%	99.96%	✔	99.6%	99.96%	✔	99.6%	99.96%	✔	
Refuse Collection Success Rate														

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

Caring Ashford Annual Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	2022 – 2023 Annual Figure	2023 – 2024 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_14 Number of all recorded crime figures Annual	Recorded Town Centre crime	Victoria ward which includes the town centre rolling year all crime figure 1894, 16% fall on previous year violence against the person 782, 7% fall on previous year.	Victoria Ward which includes the town centre rolling year all crime figure 1803, 5% fall on previous year. Violence against the person 697, 11% fall on previous year.	Ashford Community Safety Partnership: an update on community safety activity in the borough 2022/2023 was presented to March's O&S committee Report Title: (moderngov.co.uk) Ashford Community Safety Partnership: an interim update on community safety activity in the borough 2023/2024 Report Title: (moderngov.co.uk)
Ashford is shown as being a safe borough as the level of recorded crime remains low, and there has been a reduction in many crime types, including serious violence offences. Ashford Community safety Partnership demonstrates the value of multi-agency working and the encouraging results that can be achieved through effective information sharing, joint decision making and coordinated activity. A number of events have taken place including Year 9 roadshows where over 2000 young people received inputs on healthy relationships and consequences of substance misues as well as Violence Against Women and Girls Walk and Talk events. The Ashford One Stop Shop is a drop-in service for anyone affected, in any way, by domestic abuse where support, help and advice is given. It is a free and confidential service provided weekly and no appointment is necessary. It continues to be an area for professionals to work together to provide a coordinated response to domestic abuse. Additionally, Ashford Borough Council has joined forces with Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT) a project which aims to use the power of sport and physical activity to create safer, stronger and more respectful communities by engaging with young people in some of our most high-need areas. This project has now been funded until 1 April 2025. With Charlton Athletic to date provided 1-2-1 mentoring to 21 high risk young people as well as 'PL Kicks' sessions on a Friday evening which is regular attendance by at least 40 young people. The venue at Tower's School provides a central and safe location where coaches can have a positive impact on young people. This has helped to improve community cohesion and reduce risky and anti-social behaviours. They have managed to increased their mentoring hours at Goldwyn and Tower's School by the number of referrals they have received for both locations. This has helped to reduce violent crime, improve the understanding of the services available to young people, parents, and the school. Additionally, they have managed to build stronger and healthier relationships with for young people.				

Code & Short Name	Description	2022 – 2023 Annual Figure			2023 – 2024 Annual Figure			Latest Note
CP_KPI_15 Number killed or seriously injured on the roads Annual	Number killed or seriously injured on Ashford’s roads							The number of personal injury collisions at any location in Kent is available at www.crashmap.co.uk .
			Collisions	Casualties		Collisions	Casualties	
		Fatal	7	7	Fatal	6	7	
		Serious	37	44	Serious	75	83	
		Slight	199	284	Slight	222	351	
		Total	243	335	Total	303	441	
		Calendar year 2021			Calendar year 2023			
			Collisions	Casualties		Collisions	Casualties	
		Fatal	4	4				
Serious	50	56						
Slight	202	311						
Total	256	371						
Calender year 2022								

The County is served by three Highway Authorities: Kent County Council (KCC), Highways England and Medway Council. Kent Police collects over 60 pieces of statistical data for each injury crash for the whole county.

Crashes are categorised by severity:

Fatal - a crash resulting in a death

Serious - detention in hospital, includes paralysis, fractures and severe lacerations

Slight - includes whiplash, sprains and minor lacerations

Human error is a factor in 95% of road crashes. Based on the Department for Transport's (DfT) figures the cost to the community of a fatal crash is around £1.9 million, a serious crash costs in the region of £216,000 and a slight crash costs £23,000. For more information about crash and casualty figures please see www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-safety/crash-and-casualty-data.

CP_KPI_16 Number of play areas revamped/	Number of play areas revamped/refreshed/ replaced	There have been three brand new play areas opened at the end of 2022 and beginning of 2023; Central Park, Park Farm, Rylands Road, Bockhanger and Spearpoint Recreation Ground, Kennington, which were part of the	New equipment replacements installed in the following play area sites during 2023- 24 - The Limes - Hamstreet	Ashford Borough Council is committed to providing local communities with high quality and accessible play spaces, and we continually seek to secure additional funding to maintain and strengthen the local play offer.
---	---	--	--	---

Code & Short Name	Description	2022 – 2023 Annual Figure	2023 – 2024 Annual Figure	Latest Note
refreshed/ replaced Annual		£1.1m Playground Regeneration Programme.	• St Stephens Walk • Gordon Close • Quantock Drive	
CP_KPI_23 Indices of multiple deprivation score Annual	Indices of multiple deprivation score	152 – Last available update 2019		IMD - Rank of average rank (National) - 1 being the most deprived National rank out of 317 local authorities.
Deprivation is a multi-dimensional problem and, to reflect this, the Indices of Deprivation are based on a basket of indicators organised across seven distinct types of deprivation or ‘domains’. These are: 1. Income Deprivation; 2. Employment Deprivation; 3. Education, Skills and Training Deprivation; 4. Health Deprivation and Disability; 5. Crime; 6. Barriers to Housing and Services; and 7. Living Environment Deprivation. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) combines information from the seven domains to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation. The latest release is the English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (IoD2019) and is published by central government to help local authorities identify the most disadvantaged areas so that resources and funding can be allocated appropriately.				
CP_KPI_24 Health profile indicators	Health profile indicators for smoking prevalence, healthy weight and physical activity	Most recently available information source and trend data available at: Local Authority Health Profiles - OHID (phe.org.uk)	Smoking prevalence in adults (18+) current smokers - latest data 2022 – 13.6% Percentage of physically active adults – 2022/23 – 71.9% Overweight prevalence in adults (18+) – 70%	
The One You shop continues to deliver a variety of free health services. Find out more details about the One You health shop located in Ashford's Park Mall shopping centre.				

Code & Short Name	Description	2022 – 2023 Annual Figure	2023 – 2024 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_25 Annual footfall to key leisure sites	Annual footfall to key leisure sites	Data From latest available quarterly report with comparison from the same period the previous year Quarterly data Stour centre visitors 80,552 Julie Rose 7,899	Data From latest available quarterly report with comparison from the same period the previous year Quarterly data Stour centre visitors 89,253 Julie Rose 9,826	The Freedom team have focused on member retention efforts, which has resulted in a +21% in Stour membership in the last two quarters. Julie Rose is experiencing growth. They are actively engaging with new housing developments and local businesses and increasing participation in school sports events. This proactive approach is heightening awareness of the facilities offered.
CP_KPI_28 Exceptional Circumstance Payments spend Annual	Exceptional Circumstance Payments	£65,568.55 ECP expenditure for 2022/2023.	£42,168.87 ECP expenditure for 2023/24	An Exceptional circumstances Policy has been created by Ashford Borough Council to assist persons who have applied for Council Tax Reduction and who are facing 'exceptional circumstances'. This is to provide further assistance where an applicant has made a claim for Council Tax Reduction but do not qualify for support or even with support are unable to meet their Council Tax liability.
Our Welfare Intervention Officers continue their support for people who need help with any housing or benefit related issues. Providing practical advice and signposting to other helpful organisations.				
Offering advice with; Council Tax, including Council Tax debt advice; Claiming Council Tax reduction or housing benefit; Claiming Discretionary Housing Payments or Council Tax Exceptional Circumstances Payments; General housing advice, including advice regarding rent arrears; Referrals for homelessness advice; General advice around claiming other benefits and support, such as Universal Credit, Foodbank vouchers, and other Department for Work and Pension benefits.				
CP_KPI_29 Value of grants awarded via community grant fund. Annual	Value of grants awarded via community grant fund	£390.856.43 for 2022/23	Awarded: £304,399.54 Capital Grants: £46,855 Events Reset: £4,000 Ward Member Grants: £88,569.54 Community Services: £164,975	The Value of the grants awarded to the voluntary sector over the past year are set out to the left; The events reset grant ended in December 2024. Funding opportunities available through other streams – namely the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund meant there was less draw on the Capital Grants scheme during 2023/24.

Code & Short Name	Description	2022 – 2023 Annual Figure	2023 – 2024 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_31 Trends in volunteering Annual	Trends in volunteering	The council's Community Connector contract with the Ashford Volunteer Centre helps to support a resilient and sustainable local voluntary and community sector in the Ashford Borough, which in turn enables its independence, diversity and accessibility. During this period 516 community groups were signposted to additional support and advice – this has included local support provided by Ashford Borough Council (in particular to services supporting the cost-of-living crisis) and to Kent County Council. 19 individuals were supported to establish different community groups in the borough. 67 community groups received additional support (e.g. funding, governance and business planning) or were signposted when more specialist support was required. Volunteers were connected to 293 VCSE organisations operating in the Ashford Borough. In addition, 27 commercial organisations were signposted to VCSE organisations that employ social volunteering in the borough.”		

Caring Ashford
Quarterly Measures

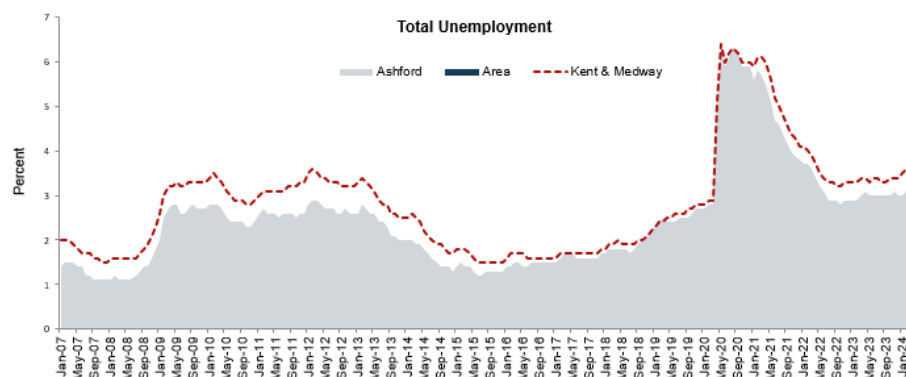
Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2023/24			Q2 2023/24			Q3 2023/24			Q4 2023/24			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_13 Food Hygiene Rating	% of businesses in the borough with a food hygiene rating above 3	98.2%	98.3%		97.7%	98.5%		97.8%	98.5%		98.06%	98.5%		
We continue to support food businesses by providing advice, signposting and taking enforcement action where necessary.														
CP_KPI_17 Council Affordable Housing - New Build	No. of additional new build affordable homes delivered by council housing	0			0			10			8			
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-Street Purchases	No. of additional on-street purchase affordable homes delivered by council housing	2			1			2			0			

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2023/24			Q2 2023/24			Q3 2023/24			Q4 2023/24			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_19 Homelessness Presentations New Triage Cases	No. of new triage cases	733			620			551			585			
CP_KPI_19b Homelessness Preventions (still in accommodation)	No. of households where homelessness was prevented	33			33			48			35			

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](#)

CP_KPI_20 Disabled Facilities Grants Completed	No. of disabled facilities grants administered by the council	25			24			26			24			7 completed cases for March - Total completed DFG for the year is 99 , our best year ever.
CP_KPI_20b Disabled Facilities Grant Spend	Actual spend per month for disabled facility grants	£334,368.87			£248,246.35			£286,163.47			£382,318.30			

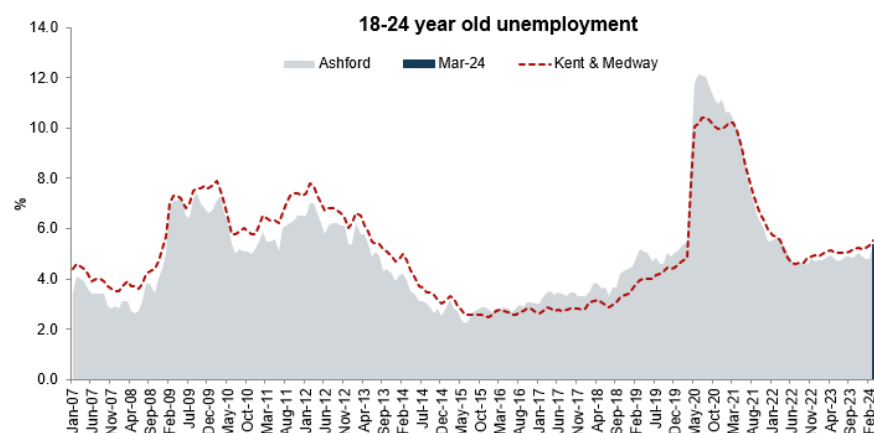
Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2023/24			Q2 2023/24			Q3 2023/24			Q4 2023/24			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_21 Unemployment	Unemployment figures taken monthly from Kent County Councils Economy and employment data.	3%			3%			3.1%			3.2%			March - 3.2% or 2610 residents slight increase on previous months - Kent average 3.6% 180 increase in unemployment compared to the year prior. More information available within - Economy and employment data - Kent County Council



March 2024

Area	Number	Rate	Number change since last month	Percentage change since last month	Number change since last year	Percentage change since last year
Ashford	2,610	3.2%	+60	+2.4%	+180	+7.4%
Kent & Medway	40,790	3.6%	+470	+1.2%	+2,380	+6.2%

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2023/24			Q2 2023/24			Q3 2023/24			Q4 2023/24			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_22	Unemployment 18-24yr olds taken monthly from the Kent County Council economy and employment data	4.8%			4.9%			5.2%			5.4%			50 increase in unemployment compared to the year prior. More information available within - Economy and employment data - Kent County Council



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	495	5.4%	+55	+12.5%	+50	+11.2%
Kent & Medway	7,645	5.5%	+240	+3.2%	+625	+8.9%

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2023/24			Q2 2023/24			Q3 2023/24			Q4 2023/24			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_26 Benefit Change of Circumstance Processing	Average time taken to process a benefit change of circumstance in no. days	2.1	10	✓	2.29	10	✓	2.29	10	✓	2.06	10	✓	
CP_KPI_27 Benefit New Claim Processing Time	Average time taken to process a new benefit payment claim in no. days	24.94	28	✓	21.11	28	✓	20.69	28	✓	22.63	28	✓	
CP_KPI_30 Number of tickets sold local lottery scheme	Number of tickets sold local lottery scheme – generating x amount.	Since start of scheme 56,306 tickets sold			Since start of scheme 70,563 tickets sold 11,862 tickets sold in the quarter.			Since start of scheme 78,655 tickets sold 10,573 tickets sold in the quarter.			Since start of scheme 89,067 tickets sold 10,412 tickets sold in the quarter.			

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2023/24			Q2 2023/24			Q3 2023/24			Q4 2023/24			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	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	The Council works closely with our leisure operator (Freedom Leisure) to ensure the leisure service is accessible to all and to increase participation in hard to reach and 'vulnerable' groups. Through partnership working we want to be able to demonstrate that investment and action is making a difference to people's lives and to be able to demonstrate the impact the delivery of the leisure service is having on local individuals and communities within the district. Freedom Leisure work to support the Council to help deliver improvements in areas of public concern, for example narrowing health inequalities, increasing activity and participation levels, a positive impact on the local economy, building strong partnerships and supporting the growth of the town. In 2023/24 Freedom Leisure have provided the following sessions for 'vulnerable' groups: <u>Older Adults</u> - Walk to Jog (2 x sessions per week / 110 participants per month) - Evergreen Badminton (2 x sessions per week / 90 participants per month) <u>SEND</u> - Ashford Sensory Football (1 x session per week / 100 participants per month) <u>Ethnically diverse</u> - Refugee Cricket (1 x session per week / 80 participants per month) <u>Health – obesity</u> - GP Referral (weekly sessions / 40 participants per month) <u>Social deprivation</u> Little Leapfrogs (1 x session per week / 40 participants per month)												

**Targeted Growth
Annual Measures**

Code & Short Name	Description	2022 – 23 Annual Figure	2023 – 24 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_37 Percentage of creative industries in the borough	Percentage of creative industries in the borough	8.3%	8.3%	Creative industry enterprises Ashford 2023: 555 enterprises equating to an increase of 2.8% (15 enterprises) on the year. Kent 9.1% Creative industries in Kent
CP_KPI_40 Percentage of tourism related businesses in the borough	Percentage of tourism related jobs in the borough	6.2%	6.7%	Tourism enterprises in Ashford 2023: 430 enterprises representing 6.7% of enterprises. This is a 3.6% (15) increase on the previous year and a 11.7% increase from 5 years ago. Kent average 9.1% for 2023. Tourism Industries in Kent

**Targeted Growth
Quarterly Measures**

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2023/24			Q2 2023/24			Q3 2023/24			Q4 2023/24			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_33	Business survival, measure based upon our business rates records	9.2%			9.4%			9.9%			10.1%			
Business survival - 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.

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

CP_KPI_34	Ashford town centre vacancy rate	15.2%	15.2%	14.3%	17.6%	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.
Ashford town centre vacancy rate						

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2023/24			Q2 2023/24			Q3 2023/24			Q4 2023/24			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	

January 2024 saw a reversal in recent trends in Ashford, as vacancies spiked sharply. Prior to this, unit occupations had nearly risen to parity with national averages – at least outside the shopping centres, which had remained largely static – but this quarter all areas saw losses. Some of this is normal seasonal change; after Christmas, January is the quietest trading period of the year. However, the total vacancy rate was 17.6%, the highest since the coronavirus pandemic in 2020. This is up 3.3% from the previous quarter and 2.4% year-on-year.

Bank Street is undergoing a significant degree of change but still looks to have strong new business interest even while others leave. The upper High Street/New Rents area however still has a significant number of vacancies. Discussions with Stafford Perkins indicate a good level of interest in vacant properties across the centre generally with some issues around lack of space for commercial bin storage causing problems for incoming tenants. Ashford Town Centre Business Grants are also currently being issued to support refurbishment of occupied and empty units and the scheme is currently seeking applicants for the second round of funding. So far, seven grants worth over £16,000 have been approved.

Town centre (excluding shopping centres):

Date	Total number of units surveyed	Number of units vacant	% of units vacant	National benchmark
Apr-22	234	31	13.2%	11.2%
Jul-22	235	32	13.6%	11.2%
Oct-22	235	29	12.3%	10.9%
Jan-23	235	28	11.9%	10.2%
Apr-23	235	27	11.5%	11.0%
Jul-23	235	29	12.3%	10.9%
Oct-23	235	26	11.1%	11.2%
Jan-24	236	32	13.6%	

Town centre (including shopping centres):

Date	Total number of units surveyed	Number of units vacant	% of units vacant	National benchmark
Apr-22	332	51	15.4%	11.2%
Jul-22	335	52	15.5%	11.2%
Oct-22	335	50	14.9%	10.9%
Jan-23	335	51	15.2%	10.2%
Apr-23	335	48	14.3%	11.0%
Jul-23	335	51	15.2%	10.9%
Oct-23	335	48	14.3%	11.2%
Jan-24	336	59	17.6%	

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2023/24			Q2 2023/24			Q3 2023/24			Q4 2023/24			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
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. Measure to start from Sept 20	85%			91.6%			78.98%			95%			Figure based on Ellingham, Carlton Road, Elwick Place, International House, Matalan and Wilkos.

The Corporate Property Annual Performance Report 2022/23 reviewing revenue performance of the Council's corporate property portfolio during the financial year, as well as advising on its expected future performance: [Report Title: \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://moderngov.co.uk)

Fall in anticipated collections due to the vacancy of the formal Wilkos site and a lower than anticipated collection figures for Elwick Place.

CP_KPI_36 Vacancy rates (in our corporate property)	Vacancy rates (in our corporate property)	10.5%			9.3%			9.4%			9.7%			Major sites that we acquired are included. Please note Park Mall and the Commercial Quarter are not included as these were purchased for development and regeneration purposes.
--	---	-------	--	--	------	--	--	------	--	--	------	--	--	---

Site	Square foot let	Total square foot	Percentage let
Ellingham	61,397 sf	64,397 sf	95.3%
Carlton Road	40,618 sf	42,065 sf	96.6%
Elwick Place	92,486 sf	104,391 sf	88.6%
International House	65,087 sf	76,714 sf	84.8%
Total	259,588 sf	287,567 sf	90.3%

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2023/24			Q2 2023/24			Q3 2023/24			Q4 2023/24			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_38	Digital uptake - % of total council /% Increase transactions completed electronically.	90.95%	80	✓	90.97	80	✓	95.63	80	✓	89.74%	80	✓	2023/24 had an average monthly digital uptake of 90.53% - compared to 2022/23 when it was 82.80%

Month	Digital Transactions	Calls	Total Transactions	Digital Uptake %
Jan-24	60234	7373	67607	89.09%
Feb-24	43995	6744	50739	86.71%
Mar-24	64320	7357	71677	89.74%

We have seen an annual increase in 2023/24 which had an average monthly digital uptake of 90.53% - compared to 2022/23 when it was 82.80%. In that time, calls have dropped to 81,585 in 2023/24 down from 88,454 in 2022/23.

In terms of digital transactions, our website analytics tool Universal Analytics (Google) was upgraded to Google Analytics 4 which has different metrics, meaning we are now measuring pageviews, rather than unique pageviews. We are also measuring MyAshford customer portal interactions since that was launched in August 2023.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2023/24			Q2 2023/24			Q3 2023/24			Q4 2023/24			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_39	Social media engagement	Q1 (Apr-June)			Q2 (July- Sept)			Q3 (Oct – Dec)			Q4 (Jan – Mar)			
		Impressions:			Impressions:			Impressions:			Impressions:			
		Facebook: 572,290 Twitter ('X'): 57,012 Nextdoor: 102,792 Instagram: 8,588			Facebook: 584,786 Twitter ('X'): 18,881 Nextdoor: 99,279 Instagram: 2,760			Facebook: 620,668 Twitter ('X'): 24,478 Nextdoor: 121,755 Instagram: 6,865			Facebook: 644,613 Twitter: 10,602 Nextdoor: 160,347 Instagram: 4,446			
		Followers:			Followers:			Followers:			Followers:			
Social media engagement		Facebook: 11,312 Twitter ('X'): 9,103 Nextdoor: 28,400 Instagram: 2,755			Facebook: 11,646 Twitter ('X'): 9,066 Nextdoor: 28,832 Instagram: 2,793			Facebook: 11,856 Twitter ('X'): 9,039 Nextdoor: 29,257 Instagram: 2,839			Facebook: 10,210 Twitter: 9,029 Nextdoor: 29,786 Instagram: 2,875			

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

The data will allow the Council to better understand the needs of our residents and ensure that our social media strategy is shaped by 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.

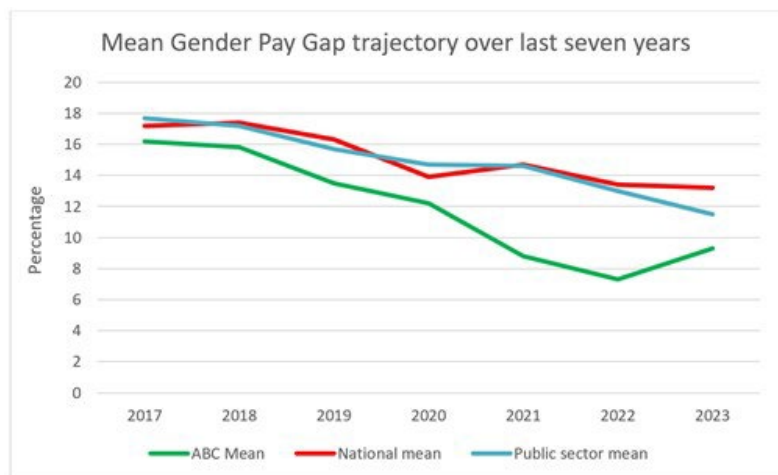
CP_KPI_41 Parking usage	Parking usage Ashford and Tenterden car parks	262,691	307,984	323,630	281,757	
--------------------------------	---	---------	---------	---------	---------	--

Our Principles
Annual Measure

Code & Short Name	Description	2022 – 2023 Annual Figure	2023 – 2024 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_45 Percentage of invoices paid on time	Percentage of invoices paid on time	96.56%	97.86% Excluding housing	Invoices paid within 30 days of the date of the invoice 97.86%
CP_KPI_49 Complaints resolved at Stage 1	% of complaints resolved as stage 1	88.1%	84.8%	648 stage 1 complaints received Jan-Dec 2023, of which 99 escalated to stage 2.

Code & Short Name	Description	2022 – 2023 Annual Figure	2023 – 2024 Annual Figure	Latest Note
CP_KPI_50 Mean Gender Pay Gap	The difference in average pay between men and women in the council's workforce.	7.3 %	9.3%	9.3% Data is retrospective so relates to 31 March 2023 - Ashford Borough Council's statistics on the gender pay gap amongst their staff for 2022-23.

The difference in average pay between men and women in the council's workforce, expressed relative to men's earnings. A positive figure indicates that women are paid less than men on average. A negative figure indicates that the average pay for women in the organisation is higher than the average pay for men.



Our Principles
Quarterly Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2023/24			Q2 2023/24			Q3 2023/24			Q4 2023/24			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_42 FOI Response Rate	% of freedom of information requests responded to within 20 working days	99%	95%	✓	98%	95%	✓	98%	95%	✓	98%	95%	✓	Quarter 4 - 243 requests received in the period - 4 answered outside the required 20 working day window. Year – 797 requests received in the year – 11 answered outside the required 20 working day window. 98.6%
CP_KPI_43 Business Rates Collection	% of national non-domestic rates collected by the council - cumulative figure per month	29.1%	24.75%	✓	57.13%	49.5%	✓	82.29%	74.25%	✓	98.52%	99%	⚠	Government finance including Ashford Borough Council, covering borrowing and investment, capital payments and receipts, local Council Tax support, quarterly revenue outturn and receipts of Council Taxes and national non-domestic rates are available here
CP_KPI_44 Council Tax Collection Rate	Percentage of council tax collected - cumulative figure per month	30.03%	24.57%	✓	57.83%	49.14%	✓	85.4%	73.71%	✓	97.4%	98.25%	⚠	

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2023/24			Q2 2023/24			Q3 2023/24			Q4 2023/24			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	

In terms of council tax collection, it is important to remember that the figure reported relates to **in-year** collection only (e.g. amount of 2023/24 council tax due that is collected in the 2023/24 year). Once the year has passed, the actual collection figure will continue to increase and eventually be over 99% (i.e. in future years, arrears are collected by the Recovery Team).

Our in-year collection has been as follows

Year End	Actual	Target	Variance
March 2018	98.17%	98.25%	-0.08%
March 2019	98.11%	98.25%	-0.14%
March 2020	98.10%	98.25%	-0.15%
March 2021	96.70%	98.25%	-1.55%
March 2022	97.40%	97.60%	-0.20%
March 2023	97.50%	98.25%	-0.75%

CP_KPI_46	% of ABC properties with up to date gas safety certificates	100%	100%		100%	100%		100%	100%		100%	100%		
Compliance - Gas Safety Certificates														

Our homes must meet the needs of local people of all ages, incomes and abilities to live sustainably and safely, our target is 100% and there is continued focus to achieve this consistently with a zero tolerance approach to access issues.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2023/24			Q2 2023/24			Q3 2023/24			Q4 2023/24			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_47	Number of days sickness per full time equivalent	9.68 days			9.8 days			10.3 days			This quarters sickness absence per FTE is 9.52 days (annualised)			This quarters sickness absence per FTE is 9.52 days (annualised) figures are down slightly but within a narrow range – full sickness report covering annual absence levels is due to O&S in July

[Annual Sickness Report 202223.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

CP_KPI_48	Average wait time for customer service calls - to be benchmarked with results across Kent	0h 01m 12s	0h 01m 38s	✓	0h 01m 20s	0h 01m 38s	✓	0h 00m 48s	0h 01m 38s	✓	0h 00m 48s	0h 01m 38s	✓	
Average Speed of Customer Service Calls Answered														

CP_KPI_51	number of ongoing litigation/court proceedings (volume measure)	Number of ongoing litigation matters = 167 (increase further due to disrepair claims) Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC = 0	Number of ongoing litigation matters = 140 Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC = 0	Number of ongoing litigation matters = 153* Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC = 0*	Measure covers those litigation/court proceedings being furthered by legal services. *Q3 data latest available
number of ongoing litigation/court proceedings (volume measure)					

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2023/24			Q2 2023/24			Q3 2023/24			Q4 2023/24			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_52 number of new 106 files opened	number of new 106 files opened	Number of new 106 files opened – 4			Number of new 106 files opened – 3			Number of new 106 files opened – 9			Number of new 106 files opened – 4			
		Number of Draft 106 agreements sent out – 1			Number of Draft 106 agreements sent out – 5			Number of Draft 106 agreements sent out – 2			Number of Draft 106 agreements sent out – 9			
		Number of 106 cases completed - 0			Number of 106 cases completed - 2			Number of 106 cases completed - 2			Number of 106 cases completed - 2			

CP_KPI_53 Planning Application Approvals	% of planning applications approved	87%	90%		86%	90%		80%	90%		81%	90%		
---	-------------------------------------	-----	-----	---	-----	-----	---	-----	-----	---	-----	-----	---	--

The national average performance for the percentage of planning applications approved is usually around 87 to 88%. Last July, the Council published its Good Practice Guide for non-major planning applications in order to ensure that cases are determined within statutory time periods in the large majority of cases. As expected that, in the short term, has resulted in more refusals being issued than previously as cases have been determined within statutory timescales rather than extended through one or more 'extension of time' agreement with the applicant.

As demonstrated elsewhere this has led to a continued fall in the number of live planning applications being handled by the Service and a gradual erosion of the application backlog that had built up previously. The additional capacity this has afforded within the service has enabled the limited re-introduction of the non-major pre-application advice service at the start of January 2024. This will enable more applicants to seek informal officer advice prior to a formal application being submitted which, in turn, should see a greater proportion of submitted applications being acceptable in principle. Officers will closely monitor the success rate in appeal decisions on refused applications to ensure that the balance between timeliness and quality in decision-making is retained.

It is worth stating that if the Council were to refuse applications that are constrained by Stodmarsh and which have no potential to deliver the necessary mitigation on-site, then the value of this indicator would be lower, hence it remains appropriate to hold those schemes that are otherwise acceptable in planning terms pending a strategic nutrient mitigation solution becoming available, rather than determine them.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2023/24			Q2 2023/24			Q3 2023/24			Q4 2023/24			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_54	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks (or within such extended period as agreed in writing between the applicant and the local authority)	44%	65%		67%	65%		88%	65%		91%	65%		
CP_KPI_54 b	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling months	63%	75%		66%	75%		65%	75%		66%	75%		For the current potential designation period (Oct 22 – Sep 24), after 6 of the 8 quarters within this period, the rolling average is now 71% against the Government's designation threshold of 60%. End of Q2 23/24 signified the end of the most recent designation review period (21-23). This is a 24 month period measuring performance of the LPA on speed of determination for major applications. The designation threshold is 60%.

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

Performance in Q4 for this indicator was good (91%) with 10 of 11 decisions on major applications made within the statutory time period or an agreed Extension of Time with the applicant. This has further improved the Council's position against the rolling 24 month target where it should be noted that the Government minimum target is 60%.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2023/24			Q2 2023/24			Q3 2023/24			Q4 2023/24			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_55 Speed of Non-Major Planning Application Decisions	% of minor and other planning applications determined within 8 weeks (or within such extended period as has been agreed in writing between the applicant and the council).	77%	75%		87%	75%		80%	75%		89%	75%		
CP_KPI_55 b % of non majors determined within 8 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	% of non majors determined within 8 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	84%	80%		84%	80%		83%	80%		84%	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 determining non-major schemes has recovered in Q4 and remains significantly above target. This is now the third quarter since the introduction of the Good Practice Guide last July and this has consolidated and improved performance for this indicator. Officers are now focused on the remaining 'backlog' cases (i.e. submitted pre-Good Practice Guide) and moving these forward to a determination (subject to nutrient neutrality) or withdrawal, and reducing the reliance on agreed 'extensions of time' with applicants to achieve good performance.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2023/24			Q2 2023/24			Q3 2023/24			Q4 2023/24			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
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	775	550		712	550		655	550		614	550		597 applications and 17 live pre-apps
					(541)			(471)			(424)			

Q4 has seen the continuation of the steady reduction in the overall caseload of live cases within the Service. Numbers of decisions being issued has consistently been higher than new cases being received and managers have been proactively working with officers to focus on the handling of older cases alongside the introduction of the Good Practice Guide to encourage the efficient processing of non-major schemes. The capped re-introduction of the non-major pre-application service at the start of 2024 has proved popular and it is proposed that the cap on 'minor' pre-application proposals (i.e not 'householder' schemes) will be raised to enable more to be considered as part of the overall caseload.

Nutrient neutrality requirements related to Stodmarsh lakes continue to be a significant factor that restricts the issuing of some planning decisions. At the end of Q4, 190 live cases (inc. those at appeal) fall into this category leaving a net figure of live NON-STODMARSH cases reflected in the table (in brackets) above. This 'net' figure has now fallen well below the overall target figure but is gradually increasing as a percentage of the overall live caseload. Officers are now closely examining how many of these applications can provide and secure suitable nutrient mitigation so that they can be permitted whilst continuing to take other cases to the point where proposals can be agreed in all other respects pending an off-site or strategic nutrient mitigation solution.