

Date of meeting Wednesday, 13th December, 2023

Time 7.00 pm

Venue Astley Room - Castle

Contact Geoff Durham 742222



**NEWCASTLE
UNDER LYME**
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Castle House
Barracks Road
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
ST5 1BL

Finance, Assets & Performance Scrutiny Committee

AGENDA

PART 1 – OPEN AGENDA

- 1 APOLOGIES
- 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
- 3 MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 3 - 10)
To consider the Minutes of a previous meeting.
- 4 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2024/25 - FIRST DRAFT SAVINGS PLANS (Pages 11 - 38)
- 5 FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW REPORT - 2ND QUARTER 2023-24 (Pages 39 - 74)
- 6 TOWN DEAL AND FUTURE HIGH STREET FUNDS UPDATE (Pages 75 - 84)
- 7 TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY 2023-28 REPORT (Pages 85 - 100)
- 8 WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 101 - 104)
- 9 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME
Any member of the public wishing to submit a question must serve two clear days' notice, in writing, of any such question to the Borough Council
- 10 URGENT BUSINESS
To consider any business which is urgent within the meaning of Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972
- 11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING
Monday 18th January 2024 (7:00pm)

Members: Councillors Holland (Chair), Bryan (Vice-Chair), Parker, J Tagg, P Waring, Bettley-Smith, Stubbs, Brockie, Allport, Lewis and Lawley

Members of the Council: If you identify any personal training/development requirements from any of the items included in this agenda or through issues raised during the meeting, please bring them to the attention of the Democratic Services Officer at the close of the meeting.

Meeting Quorums :- 16+= 5 Members; 10-15=4 Members; 5-9=3 Members; 5 or less = 2 Members.

SUBSTITUTE MEMBER SCHEME (Appendix 9, Section 4 of Constitution)

The Constitution provides for the appointment of Substitute members to attend Committees. The named Substitutes for this meeting are listed below:-

Substitute Members:	Grocott	D Jones
	Whieldon	Fox-Hewitt
	Panter	Wright
	Wilkes	Gorton
	Crisp	J Waring
	Adcock	

If you are unable to attend this meeting and wish to appoint a Substitute to attend in your place you need go:

- Identify a Substitute member from the list above who is able to attend on your behalf
- Notify the Chairman of the Committee (at least 24 hours before the meeting is due to take place) NB Only 2 Substitutes per political group are allowed for each meeting and your Chairman will advise you on whether that number has been reached

Officers will be in attendance prior to the meeting for informal discussions on agenda items.

NOTE: THERE ARE NO FIRE DRILLS PLANNED FOR THIS EVENING SO IF THE FIRE ALARM DOES SOUND, PLEASE LEAVE THE BUILDING IMMEDIATELY THROUGH THE FIRE EXIT DOORS.

ON EXITING THE BUILDING, PLEASE ASSEMBLE AT THE FRONT OF THE BUILDING BY THE STATUE OF QUEEN VICTORIA. DO NOT RE-ENTER THE BUILDING UNTIL ADVISED TO DO SO.

Agenda Item 3

Finance, Assets & Performance Scrutiny Committee - 09/11/23

FINANCE, ASSETS & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 9th November, 2023
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

[View the agenda here](#)

[Watch the meeting here](#)

Present: Councillor Mark Holland (Chair)

Councillors:	Bryan Parker J Tagg	P Waring Bettley-Smith Stubbs	Brockie Lawley Grocott
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Apologies: Councillor(s) Allport

Substitutes: Cllr Lewis

Officers:	Sarah Wilkes Simon McEneny Geoff Durham Martin Hamilton	Service Director - Finance / S151 Officer Deputy Chief Executive Civic & Member Support Officer Chief Executive
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Also in attendance: Councillor Dave Jones Group Leader

Councillor Andrew Fox-Hewitt

Councillor Richard Gorton

Councillor John Williams

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest stated.

2. MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September, 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

3. RYECROFT REDEVELOPMENT - CALL IN

The committee had been convened to consider a Call-In made in relation to the decision of Cabinet on 17 October, 2023. Cabinet had resolved:

“That:

- (i) The interests from developers to secure portions of the site for residential development be noted and that delegated authority be given to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth, and Portfolio*

Holder for One Council, People and Partnerships to finalise a masterplan for the hotel and residential developments and agree terms with developers to enable these developments to progress.

- (ii) The outcome of the procurement for a Hotel brand for the site be considered, and agree to the selection of Accor Hotels, with their Ibis Styles brand, for the development of the next stage of business case development, at a cost of £50,000;*
- (iii) Further update reports on progress of the various elements be received as and when further details have been developed. “*

The Chair outlined the procedure that would be followed at the meeting, in accordance with the constitution.

The Call-in was introduced by Councillor Stubbs as lead Call-In member stating that the reason for the Call-In was to discuss and deliberate upon a recent Cabinet decision that had raised concerns amongst residents. The decision in question that had prompted the Call-In was number (i) as written above.

Councillor Stubbs outlined the reasons for the Call-In:

- Lack of Scrutiny. The decision in question was made without sufficient consultation of either Full Council or the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee.
- Lack of transparency. Concerns had been raised about the transparency of the decision making process.
- Significant change in the in-year budget was clearly reportable. For full transparency, Full Council should have been reported to as per the Financial Regulations.

The Call-In aimed to achieve the following outcomes:

- To re-evaluate the decision, taking into account the concerns raised by Councillors and to consider alternative solutions that could serve the community.
- Enhance transparency, seeking to establish a more transparent and accountable decision making process where the rationale for decisions was clearly communicated to residents.
- That the Council receives a presentation from Capital and Centric outlining their vision for the developments within the town centre.
- Prior to approval, to delegate agreement of terms. That Council receive a paper for approval outlining the financial plans, risks and timeframes of the York Place, Midway, Ryecroft and Castle Car Park Projects.

Councillor Stubbs expanded on the points, stating that there had been a lack of formal reports to scrutiny and Full Council meetings. In addition, reference

was made to the blueprint for the Ryecroft redevelopment which, Councillor Stubbs said that nobody had seen.

More information was requested regarding Capital and Centric as it was felt that not enough was known about them. Councillor Stubbs also stated that delivering the Capital Programme for 2023/24 would require prudential borrowing to be undertaken.

Councillor Gorton as one of the Call-In Members addressed the committee, explaining that he signed the Call-In because he felt that the decisions taken by Cabinet on the 17th of October, concerning the redevelopment of the Ryecroft site had not received adequate scrutiny and stated that the proposal had not been made available and therefore no examination had taken place. As Capital and Centric would shape the future of the borough, Councillor Gorton asked what safeguards had been built in to ensure it was an equal partnership.

Councillor Brockie, as one of the Call-In members addressed the committee stating that changes to the Capital Budget would have a significant impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Councillor Brockie sought reassurance that Members would have the opportunity to see a detailed outline of the proposals and the risks involved.

The Chair then called the Leader and Portfolio Holder for One Council, People and Partnerships Councillor Simon Tagg to respond to the Call-In. Councillor Tagg stated that he was disappointed with the political nature of the Call-In and addressed the points raised, firstly the claim that part of the decision was contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework. The Leader stated that the Framework process was set out in the Financial Procurement Rules and everything was voted on at the February Council meeting each year.

The Leader stated that the proposals coming forward were open and transparent, bringing forward those regeneration plans which had been made possible by the investments through the Future High Streets Fund and the Newcastle Town Deal Fund.

With reference to the comment raised about the blueprint, the Leader stated that it had been to several meetings and since the summer, almost every Cabinet meeting had a report on the regeneration plans and it had also gone to both scrutiny committees. Similarly, the Capital and Centric Partnership model had been discussed at several meetings. The Council was expecting to have Capital and Centric's proposals in January at which point the Cabinet, scrutiny and Full Council would get to debate them before any budget implication being signed off by Full Council.

There had been no changes to the financial models in modelling of the asset management plan. It was the same as when it was taken to Cabinet and through to scrutiny.

A request had also been made for Council to receive a report on the financial plans. Those would come through the Council meeting process for all Members to view, debate and vote on.

Councillor Sweeney, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth stated that the Call-In was unnecessary as the points listed had not happened yet. The only finance item on the Cabinet report being Called-In was £50,000, which was already in the Capital Strategy.

Councillor John Williams, as one of the Call-in Members also felt that there had not been enough scrutiny undertaken and Capital and Centric had not made any presentation to Full Council. Councillor Williams asked if it was just the Cabinet or the Conservative group that had discussed the development and been introduced to the developer.

The Leader stated that the Conservative Group had not met Capital and Centric but at group meetings they did review Cabinet decisions, the details about them would be outlined by the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth.

Councillor Jones asked the Leader if he was confident and had steps been taken to ensure that, upon completion, the developer would be in a position to purchase the buildings.

The Leader confirmed stated that checks were being done as part of a feasibility study as to whether they were meeting their deadlines and whether they were financially viable. All of the information should be included in future reports.

Councillor Jones asked for confirmation that Capital and Centric would be able to purchase the buildings upon completion.

The Service Director – Finance / Section 151 Officer confirmed that it was at the appraisal stage but Capital and Centric were being looked into and looking at their investments elsewhere.

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that, in discussions with Capital and Centric they had been detailing funds and the equity companies that they worked with and were working to create a new fund and third party equity fund, which they would be able to draw upon to purchase the properties. Details would hopefully be received before Christmas.

Councillor Jones asked what, in total, the Council would commit to paying Capital and Centric up to the onset and completion of development. The Leader referred to the pagabo process whereby at various levels the Council could evaluate and use that work to date if it was decided to go with another developer to finish the project. To date £256,000 had been committed to Capital and Centric to draw up a feasibility study. After any required amendments had been made a decision could be made to move to the next level – a commitment for the planning permission through to

development. A decision at Full Council would be required to commit to the bigger funds.

The Deputy Chief Executive stated that the £256,500 was for the feasibility/business cases for three schemes: York Place, the Midway and the Ryecroft. If it was then decided to go to the next level, Capital and Centric would have to submit new proposals and set of fees which should then lead to a full planning application and full building cost. It was too soon to say how much would actually be spent with Capital and Centric at this point in time.

Councillor Jones asked for a rough estimation on the costs. The Deputy Chief Executive stated that he could give an estimation of costs on getting the contract for the car park to this point, which was when the contract had been awarded; this was between £400,000 and £450,000 which included the planning permissions, surveys and licenses that had to be paid for.

The Leader added that the Capital and Centric model was just a different approach to financing the development instead of taking on a forty year borrowing requirement and the building would then be managed by them upon completion.

Councillor Fox Hewitt asked why no financial supports or Medium Term Financial Strategy revisions had not accompanied any reports or been undertaken, given that the proposals would impact upon future income generation and revenue streams for the Council.

The Leader stated that the Council was in the process of bringing about the much needed redevelopment of the remainder of the Ryecroft site. Work was about to begin on the car park in January, 2024. Scrutiny had been kept up to date at every stage, it had been discussed at Cabinet meetings and included in the Leader's Statement at Full Council meetings.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance Town Centre's and Growth stated that the car park would belong to the Council as would the income from it. There would be the Council Tax from the development and people spending money in the town. There would also be income from the Midway car park once it had been redeveloped and sold.

Councillor Grocott asked if, as the hotel would come under the Council's jurisdiction once completed, did the Council have contingency plans, staffing and maintenance costs as there was nothing shown in the budget. In addition, Councillor Grocott stated that a number of residents had raised concerns regarding the impact on Council Tax.

The Leader stated that under the Capital and Centric model, they would take responsibility for the hotel and there would be no liability on the Council. However, if a different model was chosen the Council could potentially be in charge of it.

Councillor Waring stated that the Call in was based on false premise because a lot of decisions were yet to be made. Confirmation was sought that once a decision was required, it would be brought to scrutiny.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth confirmed that that was the case.

Councillor Stubbs, responding to Councillor Waring stated that there had regularly been information sent to scrutiny regarding the redevelopment. Changes had been made to the plans which had not had any opportunity to go through scrutiny.

The Chair stated that he gave members the opportunity to add to the work programme or call for reports at every meeting.

Councillor Waring stated that his point was that the timing of the Call-In was premature. The time to call-In would be when the Cabinet had a plan to do something.

Councillor Lewis queried if members were able to ask questions before large amounts of money were spent. The Leader confirmed that questions could be asked but Councillor Lewis was talking about a decision taken at the September meeting of the Cabinet which then went to scrutiny and Full Council.

Councillor Bettley-Smith asked for clarity on why the item had been called-in.

Councillor Jones stated that it had been called in as it was felt that the Council should receive a presentation from Capital and Centric outlining their vision. The Call-In also asked for Council to be furnished with the information regarding the Ryecroft development. Previously asked questions had still not been answered.

The Leader agreed that the Call-In was too soon as everything being asked for was in train to come.

Councillor Bettley-Smith queried whether Call-In's stopped the clock in terms of progressing with a development. The Chair confirmed this as being the case.

The Chair asked for clarification on an item on the form – that *the decision may be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework set by the Council and the Monitoring Officer had advised accordingly*. Confirmation was sought that they had been advised as stated. Councillor Jones stated that the box had been ticked accidentally and was to be removed. The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer had accepted it as a valid Call-in.

The Chief Executive confirmed that it did fall to himself and the Monitoring Officer to review Call-In requests. Although there had been issues with the first box being wrongly ticked, the final box where *the decision gave rise to*

significant legal, financial and propriety issues fulfilled the democratic process for a Call-In.

The Leader asked the Chief Executive to confirm when he knew that the first part was ticked in error as the Leader had asked that him to go back to the Labour group to ask if it was correct.

The Chief Executive stated that he had spoken to Councillor Jones but the form had not been amended.

Councillor Lawley asked if assurance of the proposals had been gained, for example had town centre businesses, Market Traders, Business Improvement District or the Chamber of Commerce been consulted.

The Leader confirmed that an extensive consultation took place.

Councillor Brockie asked when Members would be receiving a presentation from Capital and Centric with the costings and risks.

In concluding remarks, Councillor Stubbs stated that the Call-In concerned the financial scrutiny, asset management and overall performance of the Council. It was a call for transparency, accountability and adherence to scrutiny. Regulations.

In concluding, the Leader stated, in respect of the blueprint, it had gone through the Council's various procedures in Spring 2022 and it was now beginning to be delivered upon with the car park commencing early next year. Other proposals would be coming forward to the relevant decision making committees of the Council.

There had been scrutiny of the Capital and Centric model with opportunities for all Members to comment upon and there would be further opportunity in the coming months as proposals were firmed up and budgetary decisions brought to a future Full Council meeting.

Referring to the point raised about 'changing financial modelling of the Asset Management Plan and the Council's Portfolio', the Leader stated that that was not the case and urged Members to read the Asset Management Plan

The recommendations from the Call-In sheet were voted upon but fell

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the decision of Cabinet stand.
 - (ii) That the Committee endorse the Cabinet's decision and congratulates the administration on their important progress.
 - (iii) That the Committee admonish the Labour group for their politically motivated posturing.

[Watch the debate here](#)

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

5. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

6. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

There was no requirement for the meeting to go into closed session.

7. CONFIDENTIAL APPENDICES

Consideration was given to the confidential appendices, attached to the report.

Resolved: That the confidential appendices be received and noted.

**Councillor Mark Holland
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 8.59 pm

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S REPORT TO

Finance Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee 13 December 2023

Report Title: Revenue and Capital Budget 2024/25 – First Draft Savings Plans

Submitted by: Service Director for Finance (Section 151 Officer)

Portfolios: Finance, Town Centres and Growth

Ward(s) affected: All

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
To present the refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy including the first draft savings proposals being considered to balance the 2024/25 revenue budget and the proposed capital programme for 2024/25 to 2026/27.			
<u>Recommendations</u> That the committee: 1. The first draft proposals as set out in Appendix A and Appendix B to the report be noted. 2. The amendment to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) funding gap as a result of revisions to capital financing and inflationary assumptions be noted (Appendix C). 3. The refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) (Appendix D) be noted. 4. The Committee identify any areas where further information is required for consideration. 5. The Committee suggest any further areas of savings that should be considered.			
<u>Reasons</u> To ensure that the Council meets its statutory duty to set a balanced budget in February 2024.			

1. Background

- 1.1 The funding pressures facing the Council for the period 2024/25 to 2028/29 were presented to Cabinet on 19 September 2023. The report indicated that there would be a budget 'gap' of £2.751m in respect of 2024/25 (£5.082m over the 5 year period of the MTFS) and that this will need to be closed in order to produce a balanced budget.

2. Issues

- 2.1 The MTFS provides an overarching framework for the allocation of resources to the Council's key priorities as set out in the Council Plan. The Council Plan for 2022-2026 was approved by Cabinet on 6 September 2022 and noted by Full Council on 28 September 2022.
- 2.2 The financial strategy will continue to focus on the need for the Council to become self-sustaining through developing a strong and growing tax base, making best use of its resources, promoting an "everyone's responsibility" culture in which there is widespread ownership of the Council's financial position, a robust financial position and a fair funding settlement for Newcastle-under-Lyme.
- 2.3 The MTFS funding gap is constantly reviewed and assumptions made are challenged and amended as circumstances dictate. A small number of changes have been made to the budget 'gap' for 2024/25 of £2.751m reported to Cabinet on 19 September 2023 resulting in a revised budget 'gap' of £2.686m. It is also likely that a reset of the Business Rates Retention funding scheme will be undertaken during the medium term. Initial forecasts indicate that the funding the Council currently benefits from will reduce to a lower baseline. The MTFS phases this potential loss over a 3 year period from 2025/26 onwards by utilising the balance of the Business Rates Reserve which was established for this purpose.

The revised budget 'gap' therefore amounts to £2.686m for 2024/25 and £6.879m over the 5 year period of the MTFS (Appendix C).

Proposed Savings and Funding Strategies

- 2.4 A number of savings and funding strategies have been identified as being both feasible and sustainable, via a vigorous Financial Efficiency Board process including challenge sessions for each of the Cabinet Portfolios involving Cabinet Members, the Corporate Leadership Team, Service Directors and the Finance Manager. The proposed savings identified to date for the period of the MTFS, and the remaining funding gaps have enabled a balanced financial position to be proposed for 2024/25. Further details for 2024/25 are shown in Appendix A.

Detail	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000
<i>Income</i>	680	91	-	-	-
<i>One Council</i>	230	-	-	-	-
<i>Staffing Related</i>	199	-	-	-	-
<i>Good Housekeeping</i>	489	-	-	-	-
<i>Tax Base</i>	424	383	394	407	419
<i>Council Tax Increase</i>	164	166	168	170	172
<i>Government Grants</i>	500	-	-	-	-
TOTAL SAVINGS	2,686	640	562	577	591
UPDATED MTFS GAPS	2,686	1,557	997	1,092	547
REMAINING GAP	-	917	435	515	(44)

Capital

- 2.5 The Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2026/27 (Appendix B) is based on new schemes which are vital to ensure continued service delivery and in assisting the Council to achieve its corporate and service objectives as set out in the Council Plan 2022-26. These schemes total £41.230m including major investment into the Borough via external funding in terms of the Future High Streets Fund and the Town Deals Fund for both Newcastle and Kidsgrove.
- 2.6 The Capital Programme will require to be part funded by borrowings. The total net amount of borrowing over 3 years of the proposed Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2026/27 will amount to £2.092m, significant borrowing will be required during 2024/25 (£7.685m), which may be partially repaid during 2025/26 and 2026/27. The associated borrowing costs have been factored into the MTFS. It should be noted that this is in addition to borrowing that may be required to fund the 2023/24 Capital Programme (£16.728m).
- 2.7 The Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2026/27 includes an estimate for the development of York Place, this assumes spend of £16m over the period 2024/25 to 2025/26 and a subsequent capital receipt of the same value during the first 3 year period of the Capital Programme. This is subject to the business case that is currently being developed.
- 2.8 A mid-year review of the Capital Programme for 2023/24 has been undertaken as part of the Efficiency Board and budget setting process in order to identify any projects that may need to be re-profiled from 2023/24 into future years. The revised Capital Programme for 2023/24 totalling £55.467m can be seen at Appendix B.
- 2.9 The table below sets out the key dates of the events to take place before the budget for 2024/25 is finally approved:

Event	Committee	Date
Budget consultation	Proposed to run during December	
Scrutiny of first draft savings proposals	FAPSC	13 December 2023
Approval of final MTFS & consideration of draft budget proposals	Cabinet	16 January 2024
Scrutiny of draft budget proposals	FAPSC	18 January 2024
Final budget proposals recommended for approval by Full Council	Cabinet	6 February 2024
Full Council to approve budget	Full Council	14 February 2024

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The first draft proposals as set out in Appendix A and Appendix B to the report be noted.

3.2 The amendment to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) funding gap as a result of revisions to capital financing and inflationary assumptions be noted (Appendix C).

3.3 The refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) (Appendix D) be noted.

3.4 The Committee identify any areas where further information is required for consideration.

3.5 The Committee suggest any further areas of savings that should be considered.

4. **Reasons**

4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget by February 2024. Best practice is for financial planning to take place over a 5 year period in the form of a Medium Term Financial Strategy that sets out how the Council plans to allocate resources to meet its objectives.

5. **Options Considered**

5.1 None.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 The MTFS is not a statutory document but it is considered best practice.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 Local authorities have a responsibility to meet the Public Sector Duty of the Equality Act 2010. The Act gives people the right not to be treated less favourably due to protected characteristics. It is important to consider the potential impact on such groups and individuals when designing or delivering services and budgets. Budget proposals requiring changes or new services and policies will be subject to Equality Impact Assessments including consultation with affected people and organisations.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 These are addressed in the body of the report.

9. **Major Risks and Mitigation**

9.1 Section 25 of the Local Government Acts 2003 places a duty on the Section 151 Officer to report on the robustness of the budget. The main risks to the budget include spending in excess of budget; income falling short of the budget (including capital receipts from disposal of assets); and unforeseen elements such as changes to Government funding. In the context of uncertainty regarding Government funding reforms there are significant budget risks that will need to be managed. It will be essential the Council has sufficient reserves to call on if required.

9.2 It should be noted that a number of assumptions and proposals are provisional or draft, and as such the opinion of robustness will be confirmed in the Revenue and Capital Budgets and Council Tax 2024/25 reports to Cabinet on 6 February 2024 and to Council on 14 February 2024.

10. **UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)**

10.1 In shaping detailed budget proposals consideration will be given to the need for investment in order to deliver the Council's Sustainable Environment Action Plan and the regeneration projects detailed in the Council Plan.



11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 Final approval of the MTFS as part of the budget setting process will be a key decision.

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12.1 None

13. **List of Appendices**

- 13.1 Appendix A – 2024/25 MTFS Funding Strategy
- 13.2 Appendix B – 2024/25 to 2026/27 Capital Programme
- 13.3 Appendix C – MTFS 'Gaps'
- 13.4 Appendix D – MTFS 2024/25 to 2028/29

14. **Background Papers**

14.1 None

Appendix A – 2024/25 MTFS Funding Strategy



Ref	Service Area	Description	£000's	Detail
Income				
I1	Planning	Planning Application fees	192	National increase of 25% for minor and 35% for major planning applications
I2	Planning	Pre-Planning Application fees	10	Increase in the charge to bring in line with other Local Authorities
I3	Planning	Section 106 monitoring	7	Introduction of a fee for the monitoring of Section 106 obligations
I4	Sustainable Environment	Food waste	86	Rebate received for the collection of food waste, the contractor now pays for haulage costs
I5	Sustainable Environment	Green waste	34	A below inflation increase to the green waste collection subscription
I6	Commercial Delivery	VAT on Leisure income	120	An increase in income has occurred following a change in VAT legislation for leisure fees
I7	Commercial Delivery	Depot rent	50	Rental from the sharing of depot space with partner
I8	Commercial Delivery	Commercial property rent	70	Additional rental income being achieved following rent reviews
I9	Commercial Delivery	Bereavement Services	10	Additional income to be generated from on line sales and charges for searches
I10	Commercial Delivery	Car Parking	91	Increased demand, pricing and permits for new car park - assumed 6 months of income for 2024/25 and remaining 6 months in 2025/26
I11	Neighbourhood Delivery	Fixed Penalty Notice's	10	Introduction of a charge and new processes regarding fly tipping
			680	
One Council				
O1	Corporate	One Council	230	Further efficiencies to be generated from the One Council Programme including continuous review and development of services and increased performance management in order to maximise revenue income in line with the Council's objectives.
			230	
Staffing Related Efficiencies				
S1	Planning	Planning structure	45	Savings that have been generated through the review and digitalisation of processes under the One Council initiative
S2	Regulatory Services	Reduced hours	9	Reduction in hours of Food Safety Officer
S3	Regulatory Services	Licencing structure	33	Reduction of 1 FTE following reduced demand and more efficient processes
S4	Regulatory Services	Housing and Vulnerability structure	17	Restructure of team which includes greater utilisation of ongoing funding
S5	Neighbourhood Delivery	Professional fees	95	Application of professional fees (e.g. Landscape) to capital projects
			199	
Good Housekeeping/More Efficient Processes				
G1	ICT	Procurement savings	37	Contract and procurement savings from telephony, printing and email monitoring
G2	Commercial Delivery	Energy efficiency	14	Energy savings from the installation of pool covers at Jubilee 2
G3	Commercial Delivery	Reduction in subsidy	175	A reduction in running costs at Jubilee 2 following a 'deep dive' review of the service, this includes more efficient rota's of staffing, increased income following the benchmarking of fees and charges and the generation of addition income (e.g. swimming lessons)
G4	Sustainable Environment	Green Waste route optimisation	39	Optimisation of collection routes for green waste to increase efficiency

G5	Sustainable Environment	Streetscene route optimisation	31	Efficiencies generated from greater use of data held to optimise routes and responses
G6	Corporate	Vacancy factor	193	An increase in the assumed vacancy factor of posts from 2% to 3.5%
			489	
Alternative Sources of Finance/Other				
A1	Corporate	Tax base – Council Tax	114	Increase in tax base based on market housing supply requirement (451 properties per year) and current year tax base forecasts
A2	Corporate	Tax base – Business Rates	280	Assumed increase in tax base of 4%
A3	Corporate	Single Persons Discount review	30	Assumed increase in Council Tax from a Borough wide review of claimants of discounts
A4	Corporate	Minimum Funding Guarantee	500	Government grant ensures that there is a minimum 3% increase in core spending power (i.e. replaces any lost grant such as New Homes Bonus)
A5	Corporate	Council Tax increase	164	Assumed increase of 1.99% per Band D property
			1,088	
Grand Total			2,686	

Appendix B 2024/25 to 2026/27 Capital Programme and 2023/24 Mid-Year Estimate



CAPITAL PROGRAMME	2023/24 MID YEAR	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	TOTAL (2024/25 to 2026/27)
	£	£	£	£	£
PRIORITY – One Council Delivering for Local People					
Service Area - Council Modernisation	2,172,370	394,000	434,000	336,000	1,164,000
Total	2,172,370	394,000	434,000	336,000	1,164,000
PRIORITY – A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough					
Service Area - Housing Improvements	1,670,000	1,620,000	1,670,000	1,670,000	4,960,000
Service Area - Managing Property & Assets	9,636,154	8,197,482	9,744,888	748,895	18,691,265
Total	11,306,154	9,817,482	11,414,888	2,418,895	23,651,265
PRIORITY – Healthy, Active and Safe Communities					
Service Area - Environmental Health	-	72,000	-	-	72,000
Service Area - Streetscene and Bereavement Services	1,004,569	210,000	250,000	160,000	620,000
Service Area - Recycling and Fleet	5,828,408	710,000	1,230,000	5,943,100	7,883,100
Service Area – Leisure and Cultural	636,862	47,000	150,000	-	197,000
Service Area - Engineering	117,300	385,000	120,000	50,000	555,000
Total	7,587,139	1,424,000	1,750,000	6,153,100	9,327,100
PRIORITY – Town Centres for All					
Future High Streets Fund	5,855,826	-	-	-	-
Town Deals – Newcastle	18,937,732	2,251,000	807,000	-	3,058,000
Town Deals - Kidsgrove	8,607,615	2,794,000	1,236,000	-	4,030,000
Total	33,401,173	5,045,000	2,043,000	-	7,088,000
CONTINGENCY (will be carried forward to 2024/25)	1,000,000	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	55,466,836	16,680,482	15,641,888	8,907,995	41,230,365
FUNDING					
Capital Receipts	3,325,000	2,450,000	21,050,000	4,050,000	27,550,000
External Contributions	35,413,441	6,545,000	3,543,000	1,500,000	11,588,000
Borrowing	16,728,395	7,685,482	(8,951,112)	3,357,995	2,092,365
TOTAL	55,466,836	16,680,482	15,641,888	8,907,995	41,230,365

Appendix C – 2024/25 to 2028/29 MTFS ‘Gaps’

Detail	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	Description
Employees:						
Increments	40	10	2	-	-	Employees due an increment
Pay awards	799	501	518	536	555	3.5% pay award assumed for all years plus £1,925 per FTE re. 2023/24
Superannuation increases	185	112	114	118	122	22% of increase in salaries
Superannuation lump sum increases	39	41	43	45	45	Net increase of lump sum pension payment
National Insurance	116	70	72	74	77	National insurance on increase in salaries (increments and pay awards)
Premises:						
Business Rates	30	32	33	34	35	Inflationary increase in business rates payable (per CPI)
Utilities	116	30	32	33	34	Inflationary increase in gas and electric (per CPI)
Transport:						
Fuel	12	13	14	14	15	Inflationary increase in fuel (per CPI)
Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil	9	9	9	10	10	Inflationary increase in HVO (per CPI)
Financing:						
Borrowing costs	471	561	-	86	32	Borrowing costs regarding financing of capital expenditure
New Pressures:						
ICT software, hosting and maintenance	100	10	10	10	10	ICT costs re. systems maintenance and software licences
Audit fees	95	-	-	-	-	Increase in external audit fees
Temporary accommodation/vulnerable residents	425	-	-	-	-	Increase in both demand and costs
Staff Retention	40	-	-	-	-	Initiatives to encourage staff retention
Building Control	5	-	-	-	-	Increase in contract
Income:						
Fees and charges	(230)	(270)	(281)	(292)	(304)	4% increase in fees and charges
New Homes Bonus	500	-	-	-	-	Drop out of New Homes Bonus legacy payments
Government grant	12	12	12	12	12	Reduction in Housing Benefit /Council Tax Admin grant
Business Rates baseline funding level	(258)	(174)	(181)	(188)	(196)	Inflationary increase in baseline funding level (per CPI)
Business Rates Retention Reset	-	500	500	500	-	Reduction in retained business rates forecast to result from Fair Funding Review and reset
Income pressures	180	100	100	100	100	General income shortfalls
TOTAL GAPS	2,686	1,557	997	1,092	547	

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Medium Term Financial Strategy

2024/25 – 2028/29



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Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2028/29

1. Council Plan

- 1.1 The Council Plan for 2022-2026 sets out the Council's priorities for the next four years and serves to focus the work of everyone at the Council.
- 1.2 The Council Plan is shaped around our four key priorities:
 - One Council Delivering for Local People
 - A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough
 - Healthy, Active and Safe Communities
 - Town Centres for All
- 1.3 The Council Plan sets out how we will work to make Newcastle-under-Lyme a better place for everyone who lives here or comes here to work, to study or for leisure. Our aims can only be achieved by taking advantage of every opportunity available and developing further opportunities through innovation and collaborative working.
- 1.4 The Council is committed to strong and sustainable economic growth for the borough, focusing on opportunities around Keele University, Newcastle Town Centre and Kidsgrove.
- 1.5 The Council has worked hard to secure more than £50m from government programmes aimed at boosting the economic fortunes of areas such as ours. This plan includes a transformational portfolio of major projects but also reflects our ambition to attract yet more funding and take this work even further.
- 1.6 The Council Plan builds on a number of years of achievement, despite the huge disruption caused by the Covid-19 lockdown. It is very likely that the initial period of this plan's delivery and the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Strategy will be strongly influenced by the impact of rising energy costs and inflation and their impact on the cost of living.

2. Financial Strategy

- 2.1. A sound financial strategy is key to the delivery of the Council Plan and financial resilience.
- 2.2. There are five key strands to the strategy:
 - A financially self-sustaining Council
 - Value for Money
 - Everyone's responsibility culture
 - Underpinned by robust financial position
 - Ensuring a fair financial settlement for Newcastle-under-Lyme

Financially Sustainable Council

- 2.3. The change in the balance of funding to local authorities has shifted over the last ten years. The reduced Revenue Support Grant awarded by Government has been replaced by income from retained Business Rates and Council Tax. This has led to a need for local authorities to increase self-financing with a need to promote and grow the local economy and Council Tax bases to provide prosperity and reduce need alongside delivering efficiencies and generating more income.

- 2.4 Newcastle-under-Lyme has a growing population, but in recent decades it has seen low levels of house building which have not kept up with housing demand. The resulting affordability gap for residents influenced by the cost of living puts pressure on our homelessness and temporary accommodations services but also has the risk of dampening council tax income.
- 2.5 Newcastle-under-Lyme's industrial and retail sectors have remained healthy in recent times and the business rates base has grown significantly (rateable value of £101.246m for 2023/24) since the borough joined the Staffordshire Business Rates Pool in 2013/14 (rateable value of £83.842m).
- 2.6 Alongside the growth in the tax base the rates need to keep base with the Council's inflationary and demand pressures, whilst also reflecting the financial pressures facing our residents. Accordingly the MTFS assumes annual inflationary increases in the tax base.

Value for Money

- 2.7 It is essential that the Council makes best use of its finite resources. In simple terms this means evidence based decisions, testing the market, strong business cases, delivering on the corporate objectives.

Culture

- 2.8 The Council's finances need to be everyone's responsibility. It is not the sole responsibility of the Council's Section 151 Officer. Ownership is required across the entire Council. This has increasingly been the case through ten years of austerity and now more than ever with the financial impacts of the Covid-19 and Cost of Living crises and the continued uncertainty around Local Government funding.

Robust Financial Position

- 2.9 There needs to be clear, transparent and integrated service and budget planning to ensure the Council's finite resources are directed to where they are most needed. It is essential that the finances are understood by members, senior officers, managers and the community. The finances need to be sustainable. A single year budget is not enough, the finances need to be planned over the medium term and good practice is for this term to be five years.
- 2.10 The budgets need to be robust with realistic savings plans to avoid in year volatility. The five year plan needs to recognise all future pressures and income flows. Local Government is a dynamic environment with many demand led services and the growth in demand for services needs to be accurately modelled. The same applies on the income side with a clear understanding required of changes to the Council Tax and Business Rates tax bases and the level of Government support.
- 2.11 There is inevitably a gap between the two or the need to invest in priority areas which will need to be met by changing the way in which the Council operates. This will be through delivery of efficiencies, reducing services or generating more income. All of these measures need to be realistic with appropriate processes in place to ensure their delivery.
- 2.12 Finally, the Council needs to hold an appropriate level of reserves to ensure that it can continue to deliver its objectives in times of financial uncertainty. These reserves will cover the smoothing of spend areas that are known to move from year to year, for specific and general risks and a general provision for unknown risks.

- 2.13 Much work has been done over the past five years to put the Council's finances on a robust sustainable footing. Undeliverable savings and historical overspends have been built back into the base budget, there is a more focussed view of the medium term and there is a far more realistic assessment of future demographic pressures and investment needs. In addition, a 'Ten Year Capital Strategy' has ensured that decision making considers this wider, long term context. This Strategy will set out how this approach can be taken further forward.
- 2.14 The Council has been operating in a period of great uncertainty with the impact of the worldwide Covid-19 Pandemic and the Cost of Living crisis. Detailed scenario planning will therefore be required to identify the different actions that may be necessary to ensure the Council's continued financial sustainability depending on the financial impact and any potential ongoing consequences.

A Fair Financial Settlement for Newcastle-under-Lyme

- 2.15 The Government introduced its Business Rates Retention model for funding local government in 2013/14. It however relied on the historical needs data and damping arrangements from the previous model. At the time government committed to address both of these issues and also set out plans to reset the business rates growth on a regular basis.
- 2.16 Government has been developing Fair Funding proposals to remedy the position, this is now overdue and local authorities have been disadvantaged by both the lack of an update of the underlying data and the damping arrangements. Implementation has been held up due to the Covid-19 pandemic and it is currently unclear when the Government will press ahead with plans for a business rates reset which would see the accumulated growth built up since 2013/14 being redistributed across the system.
- 2.17 As a member of the Staffordshire Business Rates Pool the Council currently saves £0.880m per annum in levy payments which would be payable to the Treasury if the Council ceased to be part of a pooling arrangement. In addition to this, growth within the Borough has enabled a further £2.230m of business rates income to be retained by the Council (this has been recognised in previous savings) over and above the funding baseline set by Central Government. In the event that a business rates reset goes ahead strong lobbying will be required to ensure that appropriate transitional arrangements are in place to cushion the impact locally.
- 2.18 The MTFS assumes that a business rates reset will occur during the medium term with a strong likelihood of this taking place during the 3 year period 2025/26 to 2027/28. Initial forecasts assume that this reset will eliminate around half of the benefit that the Council currently receives from the scheme. The MTFS phases the loss over a 3 year period and assumes utilisation of the Business Rates Reserve to assist with the transition if the reset occurs in 2025/26 or 2026/27. The Business Rates Reserve was established to be utilised in this way.
- 2.19 Finally the Council has been successful in ensuring that significant resources required to regenerate the borough have been secured via Town Deals and Future High Street Fund (a number of projects are well underway) and continue to work closely with partners to secure inward investment in the borough to drive growth and employment opportunities for local people.

3. Economic Context

- 3.1 UK inflation and wage growth remain elevated but, following a no-change Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decision in November, Bank Rate appears to have peaked in this rate cycle. Near term rate cuts are unlikely, although downside risks will increase as the UK economy likely slides into recession and inflation falls more quickly.

The much-repeated message from the MPC is that monetary policy will remain tight as inflation is expected to moderate to target only slowly. In the Bank's forecast, wage and services inflation, in particular, will keep (Consumer Price Index) CPI above the 2% target until 2026.

The UK economy has so far been relatively resilient, but recent data indicates a further deceleration in business and household activity growth as higher interest rates start to bite. Global demand will remain soft, offering little assistance in offsetting weakening domestic demand. A recession remains a likely outcome.

Employment demand is easing, although the tight labour market has resulted in higher nominal wage growth. Anecdotal evidence suggests slowing recruitment and pay growth, and we expect unemployment to rise further. As unemployment rises and rates remain high, consumer sentiment will deteriorate. Household spending will therefore be weak. Higher interest rates will also weigh on business investment and spending.

Inflation will fall over the next 12 months. The path to the target will not be smooth, with higher energy prices and base effects interrupting the downtrend at times. The MPC's attention will remain on underlying inflation measures and wage data. We believe policy rates will remain at the peak for another 10 months, or until the MPC is comfortable the risk of further 'second-round' effects has diminished.

Maintaining monetary policy in restrictive territory for so long, when the economy is already struggling, will require significant policy loosening in the future to boost activity.

Global bond yields will remain volatile, particularly with the focus on US economic data and its monetary and fiscal policy. Like the Bank of England, the Federal Reserve and other central banks see persistently high policy rates through 2023 and 2024 as key to dampening domestic inflationary pressure. Bond markets will need to absorb significant new supply, particularly from the US government.

There is a heightened risk of geo-political events causing substantial volatility in yields.

The MPC held Bank Rate at 5.25% in November. We believe this is the peak for the Bank Rate.

The MPC will cut rates in the medium term to stimulate the UK economy but will be reluctant to do so until it is sure there will be no lingering second-round effects. We see rate cuts from Q3 2024 to a low of around 3% by early 2026.

The immediate risks around Bank Rate remain on the upside, but these diminish over the next few quarters and shift to the downside before balancing out, due to the weakening UK economy and dampening effects on inflation.

Arlingclose expects long-term gilt yields to eventually fall from current levels (amid continued volatility) reflecting the lower medium-term path for Bank Rate. However, yields will remain relatively higher than in the past, due to quantitative tightening and significant bond supply.

4. Borough Profile

- 4.1 Newcastle-under-Lyme has a population of 125,300 (2022 mid year estimate), an increase of 2,300 (rounded up), or 1.8%, since the 2021 census. This is similar to the national, regional and county who all saw increases over this period.
- 4.2 In the ten years from 2011-2021, the percentage of the borough's population aged 70+ increased from 12.9% to 16.2%, keeping this rate higher than across the West Midlands region (13.9%) and England (13.6%), though slightly lower than Staffordshire's rate of 16.6%.
- 4.3 The general population has decreased by 0.7% over the past decade, but with the number of residents over 65 increasing by 18.3%, lower than the Staffordshire increase of 23.5% and the England increase of 19.9% over the same period but higher than the West Midlands increase of 17.9%. The over 65 population is projected to increase by a further 14.6% over the next decade, with the under 65 population projected to increase by only 1.5%.
- 4.4 The 2020 median age for the borough is 43 years, higher than for the West Midlands (40) and England and Wales (40.2) but lower than Staffordshire (45). The borough's median has barely changed since 2010 when it was 42.
- 4.5 From 2011 to 2021 there has been an estimated 1.6% increase in the number of households in the borough, from 52,600 to 53,400. It is estimated that this will increase to 59,200 by 2029, and to 62,100 by 2039.
- 4.6 Measured through the average rank for IMD 2019, Newcastle-under-Lyme is the 150th most deprived local authority in England, out of 317 overall. Newcastle's ranking compared with other local authorities in England has improved slightly from 156th in 2015. In terms of Health Deprivation and Disability the borough is the 80th most deprived local authority but 197th most deprived in terms of Barriers to Housing and Services.
- 4.7 Parts of the borough including Cross Heath and Knutton are in the 10% most deprived areas in England. Further parts of Holditch and Chesterton, Kidsgrove and Ravenscliffe, Crackley and Red Street, Town and Westlands are also in the 20% most deprived. However, parts of Loggerheads, Westbury Park and Northwood, Madeley and Betley and Westlands are in the top 10% least deprived parts of England, with parts of Clayton, Crackley and Red Street, Thistleberry, Westlands, Bradwell, Madeley and Betley, Newchapel and Mow Cop in the top 20% least deprived.
- 4.8 Across the borough in 2022, the annual mean gross weekly pay for full-time workers was £567. This was lower than for the West Midlands (£613) and Great Britain (£642).

(Gross weekly pay for full-time workers)

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	West Midlands	Great Britain
Females	£528	£550	£585
Males	£593	£661	£688
Overall	£567	£613	£642

- 4.9 In the year up to March 2021, an estimated 74.5% of residents aged 16-64 were classed as 'in employment', broadly similar to the West Midlands (73.7%) and Great Britain (75.2%). This reverses a downward trend for the borough over the past few years.

(All people in employment) Numbers in brackets are people.

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	West Midlands	Great Britain
April 2015-March 2016	76.9% (64,300)	70.4%	73.7%
April 2016- March 2017	77.4% (66,600)	71.4%	74.3%
April 2017- March 2018	78.0% (68,500)	72.7%	75.0%
April 2018- March 2019	74.6% (63,700)	73.8%	75.4%
April 2019- March 2020	72.5% (60,000)	73.9%	76.0%
April 2020- March 2021	74.5% (61,600)	73.7%	75.2%

- 4.10 As of 2021, two-thirds (66%) of residents' jobs were full-time, with the remaining one-third (34%) part-time. This is very similar to the rate for the West Midlands and Great Britain, where 68% were full-time.
- 4.11 According to official crime summary data, the number of recorded crimes for headline offences in Newcastle-under-Lyme between April 2022 and March 2023 was 10,024.
- 4.12 The crime rate for headline offences from April 2022 to March 2023 was 81 per 1,000 residents, slightly lower than the Staffordshire rate of 87 per 1,000 people but higher than all of the Staffordshire boroughs apart from Cannock Chase.
- 4.13 In Newcastle-under-Lyme the three most common types of recorded crime were:
- Violence against the person (4,761)
 - Theft offences (2,338)
 - Stalking and harassment (2,058)
- 4.14 The latest available local estimates from the ONS (Life Expectancy at Birth 2021) suggest that life expectancy at birth for males born in Newcastle-under-Lyme is 76.9 years, which is below the Staffordshire (78.9 years) and the England average (78.7 years). Female life expectancy is 82.2 years, while the Staffordshire and England averages are both higher at 82.9 years and 82.8 years respectively.
- 4.15 There are, however, wide variations across the borough with the inequality driven by deprivation. For Newchapel and Mow Cop ward, the life expectancy at birth for males is 82.4 years, but in Town ward it is 6 ½ years lower at 75.9 years.
- 4.16 For females in Loggerheads life expectancy at birth is 87.1 years, but in the Town ward it is 11 years lower at 76.1 years.
- 4.17 Across the borough, the age-standardised mortality rate of 1,047 was higher than the Staffordshire rate of 992 and England's 1,008, but lower than the West Midlands rate of 1,055.
- 4.18 There are circa 53,400 homes in the borough (2021). At the 2021 Census housing tenure was as follows:
- Owned outright 38%
 - Owned with mortgage/loan 30%
 - Social rented 17%
 - Private rented 15%

- 4.19 Overcrowding is mostly assessed by the 'bedroom standard' which assesses the number of bedrooms needed according to the size and composition of households. In the 2021 census, Newcastle-under-Lyme had an overcrowding rate of 2.1% – very similar to Staffordshire's 1.9%. and significantly lower than England's 4.4%.
- 4.20 Across 2021, the local housing affordability ratio i.e. median house price compared to median gross income was 5.59, significantly lower than all of the other Staffordshire districts. Across the West Midlands the ratio is 6.55, and across England it is 7.4. The borough's rate is lower than in 2009 when the ratio was 5.07.
- 4.21 84.2% of residents of working age have qualifications at level NVQ1 or above, similar to the 84.8% across the West Midlands but lower than the average of 87.9% in Great Britain. As of December 2021, an estimated 36.0% of adults aged 16-64 were qualified to NVQ level 4 or above – lower than both the West Midlands rate of 38.9% and the Great Britain rate of 43.6%.
- 4.22 The unemployment claimant count for the borough of 3.1% as at August was slightly higher than Staffordshire's rate of 2.8%, but lower than Great Britain's 3.7%. As with most of the country, there has been an increase from March 2020 when the rate was 2.4%. There is some variance across the borough – in five wards the rate is higher than the national average, in five wards it is lower than half that rate.

5. Refresh of Financial Assumptions

- 5.1 Council agreed a five year Medium Term Financial Strategy in February 2023 covering the period 2023/24 to 2027/28. For 2023/24 net expenditure of £16.857m on services was budgeted for with a Council Tax Requirement of £8.169m. There is a Council Tax Base of 38,099 and a Band D Council Tax of £214.42. There was a balanced budget for 2023/24 but a forecast gap of £3.770m across the period 2024/25 to 2027/28.
- 5.2 The MTFS gaps have been rolled forward a year to cover 2028/29, this was reported to Cabinet on 19 September 2023 and the assumptions updated, a further update has been reported to Cabinet on 5 December 2023. There will continue to be further review of the gaps throughout the budget setting process, cumulating in an updated gap being reported to Cabinet on 14 February 2024.
- 5.3 The recovery from Covid-19 and the ongoing Cost of Living Crisis are expected to continue to have an impact on the Councils' finances, however, the degree of that impact is difficult to predict. The MTFS has been revised to reflect current information and includes an estimate of pressures that have both a short and medium term impact on the tax base for Council Tax and Business Rates.
- 5.4 Overall, rolling forward a year the Council is forecast to have a funding gap of £6.879m over the next five years. £2.686m of this is in 2024/25 and whilst the overall strategy is to have a balanced five year plan the focus of attention will be on this first year.

	2024/25 (£000's)	2025/26 (£000's)	2026/27 (£000's)	2027/28 (£000's)	2028/29 (£000's)	Total (£000's)
Income	204	168	150	132	(388)	266
Expenditure	2,482	1,389	847	960	935	6,613
Gap	2,686	1,557	997	1,092	547	6,879

- 5.5 The year one gap has decreased from £2.751m (as reported to Cabinet on 19 September 2023) to £2.686m, primarily due to an increased assumption (£0.094m) in the level of funding expected to be received from Central Government as part of the

settlement due to the level of inflation at the close of September (upon which part of the settlement is based).

Income

- 5.6 A provision for income losses of at least £0.100m has been built in for each year of the MTFS. An assumed annual increase in fees and charges has also been included of 4% for 2024/25 and for each year thereafter.

Detail	2024/25 (£000's)	2025/26 (£000's)	2026/27 (£000's)	2027/28 (£000's)	2028/29 (£000's)	Total (£000's)
Government Grant	512	512	512	512	12	2,060
Business Rates	(258)	(174)	(181)	(188)	(196)	(997)
Fees and Charges	(230)	(270)	(281)	(292)	(304)	(1,377)
Income Pressures	180	100	100	100	100	580
Total	204	168	150	132	(388)	266

Government Grant

- 5.7 Local Government has been through an unprecedented period of austerity. The assumption is for legacy New Homes Bonus grant funding to reduce to nil, any loss from the 2023/24 New Homes Bonus award being offset by the Funding Guarantee, with continued one year settlements until further notice.

Business Rates

- 5.8 There have been significant impacts to Business Rates as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. Firstly, there have been a wide range of interventions from Government with extensive discounts and also provision of grant to small businesses. These discounts have been matched with Section 31 grant and have therefore not impacted the Council's bottom line.
- 5.9 The MTFS currently assumes an inflationary increase of 4% in 2024/25 and 4% per annum thereafter in terms of collectable Business Rates, this is in addition to an inflationary increase in the base level funding set for the Business Rates Retention Scheme by Central Government.

Council Tax

- 5.10 The Council has a market housing supply requirement of 2,153 properties over the 5 year period of the MTFS (excluding affordable housing). The MTFS assumes that the requirement will be met at an average of 431 properties per annum (451 in 2024/25), thus increasing the tax base accordingly. The MTFS assumes a Council Tax increase of 1.99% per Band D property for all years.
- 5.11 The Council operates a Council Tax Support scheme, introduced following the localisation of support by Government at the start of austerity. Increased levels of Council Tax Support were awarded during 2020/21 in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. The MTFS forecast assumes that the levels of support have now returned to pre-pandemic levels, however this will continually be reviewed in light of the Cost of Living Crisis.

Savings/Income Generation

- 5.12 Work is continuing to identify additional savings proposals in order to address the increased forecast gaps in 2024/25 and beyond. To date savings of £2.686m have been identified for 2024/25 enabling a balanced position to be proposed. £2.370m has been identified to largely close the gap for the remainder of the MTFS (total shortfall of £1.822m).

Detail	2024/25 (£000's)	2025/26 (£000's)	2026/27 (£000's)	2027/28 (£000's)	2028/29 (£000's)	Total (£000's)
Income	680	91	-	-	-	771
One Council	230	-	-	-	-	230
Staffing Related	199	-	-	-	-	199
Good Housekeeping	489	-	-	-	-	489
Tax Base	424	383	394	407	419	2,027
Council Tax Increase	164	166	168	170	172	840
Government Grants	500	-	-	-	-	500
Total	2,686	640	562	577	591	5,056

Expenditure

- 5.13 Employee pressures relate to assumed pay awards of 3.5% for 2024/25 (£0.483m) and for all years thereafter, 2024/25 also provides for the 2023/24 pay award (£1,925 per full time employee regardless of grade) that was over and above the 4% assumed, this amounts to a further pressure of £0.316m excluding the associated increases to National Insurance and pension contributions.
- 5.14 National Insurance contributions related to assumed pay awards and the 2023/24 pay award amount to an additional £0.116m for 2024/25, whilst associated pension contributions result in a pressure of £0.224m.
- 5.15 A number of new pressures facing the Council in 2024/25 have also been provided for, these include increased costs relating to temporary and supported Accommodation, ICT maintenance and software licences and other inflationary costs and pressures regarding service provision.

	2024/25 (£000's)	2025/26 (£000's)	2026/27 (£000's)	2027/28 (£000's)	2028/29 (£000's)	Total (£000's)
Employees	1,179	734	749	773	799	4,234
Premises	146	62	65	67	69	409
Transport	21	22	23	24	25	115
Financing	471	561	-	86	32	1,150
Pressures	665	10	10	10	10	705
Total	2,482	1,389	847	960	935	6,613

Inflation

- 5.16 Provision for price increases is made in line with the Bank of England target 2% for CPI (Consumer Price Index), with the exception of 2024/25 whereby budgets have been analysed following the Cost of Living Crisis and pressures accordingly accounted for.

Investment

- 5.17 The base budget includes an annual contribution to the Borough Growth Fund of £0.250m to fund investment in key Council priorities. At the present time the assumption is that this level of investment will continue over the life of the MTFS.

Capital financing

- 5.18 The proposed Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2026/27 is based on new schemes which are vital to ensure continued service delivery and in assisting the Council to achieve its corporate and service objectives as set out in the Council Plan 2022-26. These schemes total £41.230m including major investment into the Borough via external funding in terms of the Future High Streets Fund and the Town Deals Fund for both Newcastle and Kidsgrove and associated projects.
- 5.19 The Capital Programme will require to be part funded by borrowings. The total amount of borrowing over 3 years of the proposed Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2026/27 will amount to £2.092m, in addition to £16.728m that may be required for the 2023/24 capital programme. The associated borrowing costs have been factored into the MTFS.

6. In Year Response to Financial Pressures Arising from Covid-19 and Cost of Living Crisis

- 6.1 There is uncertainty at present with regards to the recovery of lost income levels resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis. The medium term therefore contains risks around loss of income, these are included as part of the risk assessment informing the Council's level of reserves. A number of steps have been taken in year, or are planned for future periods to continue to address the financial impact and ensure that the Council remains financially resilient including:

- A review of income forecasts as part of monthly budget monitoring processes.
- Maintaining spend within the existing budget envelope as far as possible.
- Identifying management action to reduce in year cost pressures.
- Re-focusing the income collection approach to reduce the impact of bad debt.
- Reassessment of Capital Programme commitments.
- A comprehensive review and risk assessment of the Council's reserves.
- Use of grants to substitute for existing spend wherever possible.
- Asset review to maximise receipts from disposals.

7. Approach

- 7.1 The following section sets out the central approach to developing the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2024/25 to 2028/29.

Foundation analysis

- 7.2 Over the summer and early autumn the groundwork for the MTFS has been undertaken which is primarily the review of the Borough Profile and assessment of the impact of Covid-19 and the Cost of Living Crisis, a full benefit opportunity assessment and benchmarking to give a clear context in which to identify areas for investment and redirection of resources, opportunities for efficiency and income generation and service reconfiguration. Service level benchmarking has primarily been based on DLUHC Revenue Outturn data focussed on the Council's CIPFA statistical "nearest neighbours" and Staffordshire geographical near neighbours. Spend has also been mapped to strategic priorities and outcomes.

One Council

- 7.3 The One Council Programme was launched in February 2021 following Full Council approval of the budget in order to meet the changing needs of our residents by increasing our ability to provide flexible, efficient and customer driven services. The programme is designed to respond to the key lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic, how this impacted on how customers accessed Council services, and how services flexed in order to remain resilient. The programme focusses on reviewing customer need alongside modernising internal processes whilst developing our internal cultural transformation and ensuring we address financial demands.
- 7.4 The One Council programme facilitates a fundamental change in Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's operating model and how we address our challenges. Significantly, it sets out to enable the Council to make better use of the resources available to it, ensuring both efficient and effective service delivery.
- 7.5 Given the broad remit of the programme, overall aims have been considered by integrated work streams aligned to core principles of delivery and achievement and the initial work has been supported by the delivery partner Ignite Consulting who have enabled the team to develop skills in management change and service redesign. Whilst a significant aspect of the programme is to facilitate a move to customer self service via an enhanced website, traditional face to face and telephone access will remain available to those who need it.
- 7.6 One Council is a "spend to save" programme with an agreed investment of £1.2m. Recurrent benefits will continue to be achieved moving forward. The savings have been staggered over the life of the 3 year programme (£0.196m has been achieved in 2021/22, £0.601m has been achieved in 2022/23 and a further £0.376m has been achieved in 2023/24).
- 7.7 In order to build the programme and consider the areas for change and focus, the broad concepts of purpose were considered alongside a benchmarking exercise which placed the customer and delivery of services at centre stage. This analysis supported the development of certain big ideas which have formulated the overall Future Operating Model design and have given a structure to the design of service change through the development of the "Big operating Model Building Blocks" of:
- Leadership and Management
 - Information Advice and Guidance and Website
 - One Front Door
 - Internal Support
 - Mobile Multifunction Team
 - Strategy and Performance Team

Leadership and Management

- 7.8 The programme realises the importance of cultural development, attitudes, behaviours and overall quality and consistency of leadership as a driver for success. As such a dedicated Culture work stream was initiated which considered our purpose as a Council and provider of services as well as the important people driven elements which would support the achievement of our goals. Focus groups across the council considered our purpose, strengths and weaknesses and contributed to the development of an overall mission statement and related values.

Information, Advice and Guidance / website

- 7.9 A core aim of the overall programme is to enable residents and local business to self-serve wherever possible, thereby freeing up expertise and staff time to support delivery of complex tasks and innovative services in a more efficient model.
- 7.10 The digital work stream engaged with services to consider changes needed to enable this transition for users of our website and contracted with Jadu to develop the new website which was launched on 27 October 2021.
- 7.11 The site is cleaner and more modern than our previous site and has been developed with a focus on functionality and ease of use to support the customer. The website developments integrate directly with the new One Front Door (or Customer Hub) and drive traffic away from resource heavy phone lines enabling a deeper and broader remit and function to develop within our customer facing team.
- 7.12 Another aim of One Council is to make our site more commercial. Using the new tools and techniques in Jadu we will be able to sell our services more effectively to increase revenue. Examples include J2, Bereavement Services and Garden Waste.

One Front Door

- 7.13 The One Front Door, now known as the Customer Hub, is the customer facing function designed to offer end to end service, advice and transactional support to customers of the Council. Overtime this will sit across all outward facing services and by contacting the team, our customers will be able to undertake a range of tasks from planning related queries, to questions around waste collection. A strong feature of this service is providing the team with training and development across a range of services, as well as giving them access to in service technology to allow them to have up to date information and ability to transact specific elements of queries easily and efficiently.
- 7.14 Work initially focussed on the previous teams for Customer Services and Revenues and Benefits and the two areas have now been consolidated. Pulling the teams together, with focussed work on processes alongside the website development has enabled the team to be resourced more efficiently and for knowledge to be spread amongst a larger number of employees.
- 7.15 As we continue to embed the learning and knowledge in the team, the service is looking across the rest of the organisation and considering how this concept and model can grow to incorporate further processes and support our customers across a wider range of matters.

Internal Support

- 7.16 Work is continuing on developing efficiencies within our internal services. This will again provide services with streamlined support and guidance whilst releasing those with technical expertise to focus on value added delivery.
- 7.17 Much like the One Front Door, efficiencies of scale have been identified here as well as process and technology developments which have enabled a reduction in Whole Time Equivalents (WTE) assigned to the teams.

Mobile Multi-Function Team

- 7.18 The Mobile Multi-Functional Team enables an agile and diverse team of operatives to be dispatched where there is immediate need. Linked to a preventative delivery arm and the One Front Door, the impact on the Borough and residents will be significant and positive.

Strategy and Performance Team

- 7.19 The Strategy and Performance Team supports services in their strategic aims as well as becoming a critical friend and challenging function in terms of performance and delivery. This function enables the Council to better use data and performance indicators to drive outcomes against the Council Plan and other strategic aims.
- 7.20 In addition this service will look outward to strengthen relationships with our partners, consider policy and strategy development and ensure effort and activity drive us closer to our overall aims and vision.

Commercial

- 7.21 The Council approved its Commercial Strategy in October 2019 with the objectives of maximising commercial opportunities as Government support drops away, requiring councils to become more self-financing. Key themes set out in the Commercial Strategy include:
- Creating and nurturing commercial and development opportunities
 - Greater focus on procurement and contract management
 - Creating a sustainable commercial programme
 - Establishing a strong commercial culture and investing in staff and member skills
 - Extracting maximum value from our land and property assets and income streams
 - Challenging where services can be commissioned
 - Driving our digital agenda forward
- 7.22 Progress in implementing the commercial strategy in the current year has been limited due to restrictions placed on borrowing for commercial purposes. However, going forward this remains a key supporting strand of the MTFS whereby regeneration priorities can also be met and will need to be properly resourced.

Property

- 7.23 The Council updated its Asset Management Strategy during 2023 which identifies assets which may be suitable for disposal, generating funding for the Capital Programme.

8. Reserves

8.1 Forecast balances for the Council's reserves as at 31 March 2024 are as follows:

Reserve/Fund	Balance 31.3.23 (£'000's)	Forecast Balance 31.3.24 (£'000's)
General Fund	2,160	1,910
Walleys Quarry Reserve	672	125
Income Reserve	100	-
Equipment Replacement	37	30
Budget Support Fund	528	300
Budget Support Fund (Local Plan)	195	-
Budget Support Fund (Homelessness)	312	150
Borough Growth Fund	59	-
Conservation & Heritage Fund	32	30
Mayor's Charity Fund	10	-
Museum Purchases Fund	38	38
Business Rates Reserve	1,043	1,654
Elections Reserve	-	50
Clayton Community Centre Fund	19	24
Totals	5,205	4,311

8.2 A full reserves risk assessment is completed as part of the 2024/25 budget preparation. However, based on a preliminary assessment it is considered that the current balance of the general fund reserve will be more than sufficient to provide sufficient cover for foreseeable risks.

8.3 It should be noted that the balance of the Business Rates Reserve is to be held to mitigate against future collection fund losses and as a contingency for the Fair Funding Review.

9. Capital Strategy

9.1 The Council agreed its Capital Strategy and ten year Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2032/33 in February 2023, this will be refreshed as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process. The Capital Strategy explains how the Council invests its capital funds and the various sources of funding and how this facilitates the delivery of its objectives.

9.2 The main governance of the Capital Strategy is through the Capital, Assets and Commercial Investment Review Group which:

- Reviews and recommends to Cabinet all new General Fund Capital projects
- Ensures capital resources are viewed corporately with a clear link to corporate objectives
- Ensures any revenue costs are identified and considered in the Treasury Management Strategy and the Council's MTFs
- Develops a Capital Strategy which supports the Councils corporate objectives
- Oversees the development and implementation of the asset management and commercial strategies
- Reviews new capital project and commercial investment requests on behalf of Cabinet.

- 9.3 As part of the Efficiency Board process every capital scheme and in-year capital commitment has been reviewed.
- 9.4 The draft ten year Capital Programme for the period 2024/25 to 2033/34 provides for investment into the Borough. This programme will be funded by capital receipts, significant external contributions (Town Deals and Future High Streets Funding) and borrowing. The revenue impact of borrowings has been included within the MTFS.

10. Treasury Management Strategy

- 10.1 The Council agreed its Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 in February 2023, the strategy for 2024/25 will be updated alongside the proposed budget and capital programme as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process.
- 10.2 As referred to in the above section, the Council will be required to borrow to fund the draft ten year Capital Programme. The PWLB and Council to Council borrowing are the primary borrowing options that the Council is currently reviewing to fund borrowing in relation to the capital programme.
- 10.3 The Capital Financing Requirement is set to increase to £29.503m by 2026/27 based on the draft three year Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2026/27, the existing Capital Financing Requirement at 31 March 2023 (£10.682m) and the Capital Financing Requirement for 2023/24 capital expenditure (£16.728m).

Funding Stream	Capital Receipts (£000's)	External Contributions (£000's)	Borrowing (£000's)	Total (£000's)
2023/24	3,325	35,414	16,728	55,467
2024/25	2,450	6,545	7,685	16,680
2025/26	21,050	3,543	(8,951)	15,642
2026/27	4,050	1,500	3,358	8,908
Total	30,875	47,002	18,820	96,697

11. Budget Preparation Timetable

- 11.1 Work on the development of budget proposals for 2024/25 is at an advanced stage. The final revenue budget and Council Tax proposals, along with the Capital Strategy, Capital Programme and Treasury Management Strategy will be presented for approval at Council in February 2024.
- 11.2 An Efficiency Board chaired by the Leader of the Council plays a key role in shaping the MTFS and providing input and challenge to savings and investment proposals.
- 11.3 The decision making timetable was as follows:

Event	Committee	Date
Budget consultation	Proposed to run during December	
Scrutiny of first draft savings proposals	FAPSC	5 December 2023
Approval of final MTFS & consideration of draft budget proposals	Cabinet	16 January 2024
Scrutiny of draft budget proposals	FAPSC	18 January 2024
Final budget proposals recommended for approval by Full Council	Cabinet	6 February 2024
Full Council to approve budget	Full Council	14 February 2024

Appendix A – Summary of Refreshed MTFS Assumptions

	2024/25 (£000's)	2025/26 (£000's)	2026/27 (£000's)	2027/28 (£000's)	2028/29 (£000's)	Total (£000's)
Employees	1,179	734	749	773	799	4,234
Premises	146	62	65	67	69	409
Transport	21	22	23	24	25	115
Financing	471	561	-	86	32	1,150
Pressures	665	10	10	10	10	705
Income	204	168	150	132	(388)	266
Total	2,686	1,557	997	1,092	547	6,879
Savings						
Income	680	91	-	-	-	771
One Council	230	-	-	-	-	230
Staffing Related	199	-	-	-	-	199
Good Housekeeping	489	-	-	-	-	489
Tax Base	424	383	394	407	419	2,027
Council Tax Increase	164	166	168	170	172	840
Government Grants	500	-	-	-	-	500
Total	2,686	640	562	577	591	5,056
Gap	-	917	435	515	(44)	1,823

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S REPORT TO FINANCE, ASSETS & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 December 2023

Report Title: Financial and Performance Review Report – Second Quarter 2023-24

Submitted by: Corporate Leadership Team

Portfolios: One Council, People & Partnerships, Finance, Town Centres & Growth

Ward(s) affected: All

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision No</u>
To provide Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee with the Financial and Performance Review report for the second quarter of 2023-24.	
<u>Recommendation</u> That Members note 1. The contents of the attached report and appendices and continue to monitor and challenge the Council's service and financial performance for this period.	
<u>Reasons</u> The Financial and Performance Management monitoring reports provide information on a quarterly basis regarding the performance of individual council services and progress with delivery against our priorities, alongside related financial information on the organisation. Consideration of this information by Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee is an important aspect of the organisation's overall governance arrangements.	

1. **Background**

- 1.1 This quarterly report provides Members with a detailed update on how the Council has performed during the second quarter of 2023/24 by presenting performance data and progress summary set within a financial context. The report provides broad financial information (Appendix A) and details service performance (Appendix B) for the second quarter 2023/24. The second quarter covers the period July – September 2023.

2023-24 Revenue and Capital Budget Position

- 1.2 The Council approved a General Fund Revenue Budget of £16,856,730 on 15 February 2023. Further financial information is provided in Appendix A.

Performance

- 1.3 The Q2 report (April 2023 to September 2023) has been produced using new business intelligence tools in order to automate and improve the monitoring, analysis and reporting of Council performance. The indicators included are those agreed as part of the new Council

Plan and reflect the priorities for the Borough. In addition to reporting on key performance indicators, the report also includes progress summaries for each priority action, detailing the progress with the delivery of planned activities.

- 1.4 Contextual performance information is provided (indicators without a target), not only to ensure the monitoring of the corporate activities of the Council, but also to inform Members, businesses and residents of performance in their local area that the Council cannot directly control.
- 1.5 Any indicators failing to meet the set targets include a comment explaining why the indicator has not performed well, and what steps are being taken to ensure improvement in the future.
- 1.6 For this report a total of 46 indicators were monitored, 17 of these indicators were contextual and had no set target. Of the remaining 29 indicators the proportion of indicators which have met their target during this period stands at 79% (23 indicators), with the remaining 21% (6 indicators) falling short of target. A number of these 'off target' measures have more stretching targets this year, in line with benchmarking findings and council ambition but as it is still early in the year, it is hoped that these targets can be met as the year progresses. In terms of trend data, the proportion of indicators showing an improvement or maintenance of the previous year's performance stands at 50%.

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 There are 6 indicators off target this quarter, and officers consider that the performance against these indicators does not give rise to serious cause for concern at present (see commentaries provided in Appendix B). The management of each of the service areas concerned continue to monitor and take steps to deal with under achievement of targets where possible and/or appropriate.
- 2.2 Progress on delivery of planned activities is summarised for each priority and the only concern raised is around the delivery of the £16m Kidsgrove Town Deal. The Railway Station project continues to experience issues with resolving ground conditions associated with historic mine works at the site. The project team continues to work finding a satisfactory resolution of these issues.

3. **Proposal**

- 3.1 That Members note and consider the contents of the attached report and Appendices A and B and continue to monitor and challenge the Council's performance alongside its financial performance for the same period.

4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

- 4.1 To encourage improvement within council delivery.

5. **Options Considered**

- 5.1 At this time it is felt there is no other option necessary for consideration, however the presentation of information is continually reviewed.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 The Council has a duty to set targets for performance of a range of functions and needs to monitor these closely.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 Local authorities have a responsibility to meet the Public Sector Duty of the Equality Act 2010. The Act gives people the right not to be treated less favourably due to protected characteristics. There are no differential equality issues arising directly from this report.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 Any positive variance for the full year on the General Fund Revenue Account will enable that amount to be transferred to the Budget Support Fund and will be available in future years for use as the Council considers appropriate. Conversely, if there is an adverse variance, the amount required to cover this will have to be met from the Budget Support Fund.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 The ongoing changing market conditions represents the greatest risk to the revenue budget, particularly with regard to the impact it may have upon income receivable in relation to services where customers may choose whether or not to use Council facilities or in the case of the waste/recycling service where the volume of recycled materials is liable to fluctuate. The impact of Covid 19 is still apparent in the reporting of this quarter, despite seeing improvements, impacting on many areas and the situation will continue to be monitored through the normal budget monitoring procedure.

9.2 The capital programme will require regular monitoring to identify any projects which are falling behind their planned completion dates. This will be carried out by the Capital Programme Review Group, which meets on a bi-monthly basis together with quarterly reports to Cabinet.

10. **UN Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Change Implications**



11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 Included on the Forward Plan

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12.1 N/A

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 Financial information (Appendix A) and Performance Outturn (Appendix B)

14. **Background Papers**

14.1 Working papers held by officers responsible for calculating indicators.



2023/24

Quarter Two Financial Performance

1. Background and Introduction

- 1.1 In accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules and recommended good practice, a quarterly financial report is presented to Members. This is the first report for 2023/24.
- 1.2 The report summarises overall financial performance for 2023/24 with particular emphasis on the key sources of financial risk to the Council. Specific considerations are as follows:
- **General Fund Revenue Account (Section 2)** – considers budgetary performance on the General Fund Account by looking at variations in income and expenditure and the funding received by the Council.
 - **Efficiency and Savings Plan (Section 3)** – considers progress in achieving the efficiency and savings forecast for 2023/24.
 - **Capital Programme (Section 4)** – provides an update to Members on progress against the Council's Capital Programme and major project funded through the Town Deal Funds and Future High Street Fund.
 - **Treasury Management (Section 5)** – sets out the key statistics in terms of investments and borrowings;
 - **Collection Fund (Section 6)** – considers progress to date in collecting the Council Tax, Business Rates and Sundry Debts.

2. General Fund Revenue Budget

- 2.1 This section of the report considers the financial performance of the General Fund Revenue Account against budget by setting out variations in income and expenditure and funding received by the Council.

Area	2023/24 General Fund	
	Estimate £	Band D Council Tax £
Central Services	2,157,470	56.63
Cultural Services	3,769,940	98.95
Environmental Services	8,868,690	232.78
Planning	1,838,180	48.25
Transport	(294,420)	(7.73)
Housing	1,493,410	39.20
Net Cost of Services	17,833,270	468.08
Pensions Liabilities Account	415,000	10.89
Investment Properties	74,940	1.97
Interest and Investment Income	227,000	5.96
Net Operating Expenditure	18,550,210	486.89
Contribution to/(from) Revenue Reserves	904,430	23.74
Contribution to/(from) Capital Reserves	(2,597,910)	(68.19)
Amount to be met from Government Grant and Local Taxpayers	16,856,730	442.45

- 2.2 The Council approved a General Fund Revenue Budget of £16.857m on 15 February 2023 for 2023/24. The actual and forecast position compared to this budget is continuously monitored by Budget Holders, the Corporate Leadership Team and Portfolio Holders in order to detect any significant variances of expenditure or income from the approved amounts contained in the budget.
- 2.3 The table above shows how this budget has been allocated.
- 2.4 At the close of quarter two a positive variance of £0.007m has been achieved. The projected outturn on the General Fund Revenue Account for the year is £16.836m. This represents a positive outturn of £0.021m for the year.
- 2.5 The adverse variances that have occurred during the second quarter of 2023/24 include:
- a. Income shortfalls from sales, fees and charges which amount to £0.263m (forecast to be £0.453m for the financial year),
 - b. A shortfall of £0.200m in Housing Benefits subsidy grant regarding accommodation and payments for which full subsidy is not claimable (forecast to increase to £0.400m for the financial year),
 - c. The provision of temporary accommodation for the homeless and vulnerable amounts to £0.061m after utilising an element of grant funding (forecast to increase to £0.122m for the financial year).
 - d. Holding costs for York Place (e.g. utilities and business rates) are expected to amount to £0.169m for the financial year. Proportionally, this amount to £0.085m at the close of quarter two.
 - e. A pay award that is forecast to be in excess of the amount provided for in the budget (4%), including national insurance and pension the additional amount is forecast to total £0.200m at the close of quarter two (and £0.400m for the financial year),
- 2.6 These adverse variances have been offset in full by the following favourable variances:
- a. Utilisation of the Cost of Living Reserve that was established during the budget setting for 2023/24 in order to respond to any above inflationary increases in costs. This will be fully used to offset the forecast pay award (£0.200m at the close of quarter two and £0.400m for the financial year).
 - b. Interest receivable on cash that the Council holds in terms of Town Deal and Future High Street funding, together with Section 31 grant and remaining Coronavirus grant funding (that are repayable to Central Government) totals £0.607m at quarter two following recent interest rate hikes (it is forecast that this will grow to £1.113m of income by the close of the financial year).

3. Efficiency and Savings Plan

- 3.1 This section of the report considers the financial performance of the Council's Efficiency

and Savings Plan in 2023/24.

- 3.2 The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (approved in February 2023) included the five year (2023/24 – 2027/28) Efficiency and Savings Plan targeting savings of £5.874m.
- 3.3 The Efficiency and Savings Plan is set on the need to both reduce expenditure and increase income. The need to grow income is now more of a priority as the Council moves more towards being self-financing. The plan has been developed with the underlying principles of protecting frontline service delivery. It is also intended that the plan is a tool to enable the Council to ensure that its service spending is determined by the established priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.
- 3.4 The 2023/24 budget was set in February 2023 with the assumption of £2.103m of savings in the year. These savings are detailed in the table below:

Category	Amount £'000	Comments
Income	270	Additional sources of income generation and an increased demand for services that the Council charges for
One Council	376	Efficiencies to be generated from the introduction of a new Council operating model and the continued prioritisation of digital delivery
Staffing Related Efficiencies	18	No redundancies are anticipated to arise from these proposals
Good Housekeeping/More Efficient Processes	215	Various savings arising from more efficient use of budgets
Tax Base Increase	337	Increased in Council Tax and Business Rates tax base
Council Tax Increase	159	An assumed 1.99% per Band D equivalent increase in Council Tax
Government Reimbursement	728	Grant in respect of New Homes Bonus and Minimum Funding Guarantee
Total	2,103	

- 3.5 At the end of quarter two, all savings have been achieved.

4. Capital Programme and Major Projects

- 4.1 This section of the report provides an update to Members on the Council's Capital Programme and major projects funded by the Town Deal Funds and Future High Street Fund.
- 4.2 The table below shows a high level (service) summary of the General Fund Capital Programme position at 30 September 2023.

Priority	Budget at Period 6 £'000	Actual at Period 6 £'000	Variance at Period 6 £'000
----------	--------------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------------

One Council Delivering for Local People	138	149	11
A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough	453	451	(2)
Healthy, Active and Safe Communities	1,526	1,531	5
Town Centres for All	3,950	3,951	1
Total	6,067	6,082	15

- 4.3 A Capital Programme totalling £30.360m was approved for 2023/24. Of this total £17.863m relates to the total cost of new schemes for 2023/24 together with £12.497m for schemes funded by external sources (Town Deals Fund, Future High Streets Fund and Disabled Facilities Grants) and £1.000m contingency. In addition £24.013m was brought forward from the 2022/23 Capital Programme (including £22.771m from the Town Deals Fund and the Future High Streets Fund), resulting in a total Capital Programme of £54.373m for 2023/24.
- 4.4 A mid-year review of the capital programme will be undertaken in the autumn with any changes being reported to Members.
- 4.6 The expected total capital receipts due to be received this year following the sale of assets amount to £1.500m. A summary of the expected income is shown in the table below.

Funding	Amount
Proceeds from Right to Buy sales	£0.500m
Asset sales	£1.000m
Total	£1.500m

Major Projects Funding

- 4.7 The Council was awarded Future High Streets Fund funding in June 2021 of £11.0m to progress projects to help future economic growth. The full £11.0m has now been received of which £5.7m has been spent at 30 September 2023, as shown below:

Project	Award (£000's)	Spend/Ordered (£000's)	Remaining (£000's)
Ryecroft / Site Preparation	3,756	2,799	957
Multi Story Car Park	3,500	654	2,846
York Place	3,015	1,938	1,077
Stones Public Realm	321	-	321
Market Stalls	76	3	73
Project Management	380	260	120
Total	11,048	5,654	5,394

- 4.8 £23.6m was awarded to the Council via the Town Deals Fund for Newcastle to enable a vision to improve communications, infrastructure, and connectivity in Newcastle-under-Lyme to become a reality. £15.0m has been received to date of which £1.0m has been spent as shown below:

Project	Award (£000's)	Spend/Ordered (£000's)	Remaining (£000's)
Digital Infrastructure	2,285	-	2,285
Sustainable Public Transport	3,421	-	3,421
Electric Vehicle Charging	400	-	400

Pedestrian Cycle Permeability	950	-	950
Transform Key Gateway Sites	3,810	-	3,810
Astley Centre for Circus	1,810	12	1,798
Digital Society	3,510	273	3,237
Heart into Knutton Village	3,534	169	3,365
Cross Street, Chesterton	2,955	-	2,955
Project Management	925	529	396
Total	23,600	983	22,617

4.9 £16.9m has also been awarded via the Town Deals fund for Kidsgrove to enable real and lasting economic benefits to be realised in Kidsgrove and the surrounding area. To date £9.2m has been received of which £6.8m has been spent as shown below:

Project	Award (£000's)	Spend/Ordered (£000's)	Remaining (£000's)
Kidsgrove Sports Centre	2,328	2,328	-
Chatterley Valley West	3,661	3,661	-
Kidsgrove Station	3,638	182	3,456
Shared Services Hub	6,183	25	6,158
Canal Enhancement	420	-	420
Project Management	670	608	62
Total	16,900	6,804	10,096

4.10 The Council has been awarded £4.8m over a 3-year period of UK Shared Prosperity Funding as part of the governments mission to level up opportunity and prosperity and to overcome geographical inequalities. It also aims to level up people's pride in the places they love and seeing that reflected in empowered local leaders and communities, a stronger social fabric and better life chances. 25 projects have been identified for which spend has commenced. The 2022/23 and 2023/24 allocations totalling £1.8m have been received, total spend at 30 September 2023 amounted to £0.5m as shown below:

Project	Award (£000's)	Spend/Ordered (£000's)	Remaining (£000's)
CML Community Hubs	6	6	-
Newcastle 850 Anniversary	20	10	10
Nature and Wellbeing	22	15	7
Canal Connectivity	102	5	97
Clough Hall Park	234	-	234
Cold Night Shelter	160	-	160
Mental Health Worker	86	20	66
Nature Recovery	265	85	180
Epicentre for Circus	100	24	76
Homelessness Hub	955	14	941
Beat The Street	20	20	-
New Vic Theatre - 850 Event	10	-	10
Kidsgrove Workshop	156	-	156
Community Connector	67	-	67
Promotional Videos/Photos	15	9	6
Honeybox	55	-	55
Volunteering for all	71	19	52
Discharge Officer	86	20	66
BES Enterprise Coaching	89	49	40

Kidsgrove Town Hall	250	31	219
Security Marshalls	32	24	8
Flourishing Keele (KU)	466	6	460
Moving Ahead (KU)	276	5	271
Advanced Digital Technologies	408	2	406
Chamber Growth Hub	59	-	59
Brampton Wedding Venue	54	39	15
Markets For All	21	-	21
Community Connects	55	-	55
Feasted	45	-	45
Business Connects	6	-	6
Technical Innovation Upskilling	159	-	159
Disadvantaged Upskill Project	28	-	28
Green Projects	164	-	164
To Be Confirmed	101	-	101
Project Management	193	92	101
Total	4,836	495	4,351

4.11 Several projects within the Town Deals and Future High Streets Fund (e.g., Multi Storey Car Park, Ryecroft Development, York Place and Chatterley Valley) will require further funding from the Council in addition to the government grants, this will include the Council borrowing to fund these projects.

4.12 The Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) borrowing rate is subject to change daily and could have a significant impact on the financial viability if increases in interest rates are forthcoming or may result in considerably less costs in the instances of lower rates being obtained when borrowing is required. Additionally, the level of inflationary demands is also considered on a project-by-project basis.

4.13 Rigorous financial challenge and monitoring of each project's expenditure will be required in both the interim and during subsequent construction phases. Financial monitoring will continue to be reported as part of the scrutiny process and will also form part of the quarterly financial report to Cabinet.

5. Treasury Management

5.1 This section of the report sets out the key treasury management statistics in relation to the Council's investments and borrowings. This report comprises a high level treasury management summary. The Audit and Standards Committee receives detailed operational updates on treasury management.

Investments

5.2 Cash Investments held on the 30 September 2023 amounted to £27.531m. Interest earned on these investments at the close of quarter two amounted to £0.607m and the average level of funds available for investment was £25.391m.

5.3 The Council has not budgeted to receive investment income in 2023/24. A surplus of £1.113m is anticipated for the financial year which is due to rising interest rates, the most recent being an increase to the Bank of England base rate of 0.25%, to 5.25% in August 2023.

Borrowing

- 5.4 Borrowing may be required during the latter part of 2023/24 to fund the capital programme however no borrowing arrangements have been required to date, primarily due to advanced monies being received in terms of Town Deals and Future High Streets funding.
- 5.5 Although not utilised in recent years, the Council has previously considered the option of long-term borrowing from the PWLB. After the utilisation of capital receipts and internal borrowing, the Council will look to borrow short term from other local authorities in the first instance and will then review any other sources of funding if required.
- 5.6 Advice from the Council's Treasury Management Advisors, Arling Close, is to continue to utilise internal funding whilst it is available as opposed to borrowing whilst the interest rates are high. This approach also reduces the need to place funding in long term deposits, whilst minimising any potential investment risks.

6. Collection Fund

- 6.1 This section of the report details progress to date in collecting the Council Tax, Business Rates and Sundry Debt.
- 6.2 Local tax income is collected by billing authorities and paid into local 'collection funds' (the Council is a billing authority). Where there is a shortfall in tax receipts (compared to expected levels), this leads to a deficit on the collection fund. Billing and major precepting authorities are usually required to meet their share of any deficit during the following financial year.
- 6.3 The quarter two collection rate was as follows:
- Council Tax – 52.2% of Council Tax was collected by 30 September 2023, compared to a target for the second quarter of 48.8%.
 - Business Rates – 57.3% of Business Rates was collected by 30 September 2023, compared to a target for the second quarter of 48.7%.
- 6.4 The current forecast of tax receipts and Section 31 grant are shown below:

Tax	Forecast (Surplus)/Deficit at 30.6.23	Forecast (Surplus)/Deficit at 30.9.23	Council's Share
Council Tax	(£0.290m)	(£0.234m)	(£0.027m) (11%)
Business Rates	(£0.143m)	£0.455m	£0.182m (40%)
Business Rates Section 31 Grant	(£0.147m)	(£0.412m)	(£0.165m) (40%)
Total	(£0.580m)	(£0.191m)	(£0.010m)

ANNEX A**Capital Programme 2023/24 approved at Council on 15 February 2023**

CAPITAL PROGRAMME	2022/23 MID YEAR	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	TOTAL (2023/24 to 2025/26)
	£	£	£	£	£
PRIORITY – One Council Delivering for Local People					
Service Area - Council Modernisation	309,303	1,991,500	269,000	481,500	2,742,000
Total	309,303	1,991,500	269,000	481,500	2,742,000
PRIORITY – A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough					
Service Area - Housing Improvements	1,720,000	1,670,000	1,670,000	1,720,000	5,060,000
Service Area - Managing Property & Assets	930,725	883,342	1,442,918	1,266,411	3,591,671
Total	2,650,725	2,552,342	3,112,918	2,986,411	8,651,671
PRIORITY – Healthy, Active and Safe Communities					
Service Area - Environmental Health	60,000	60,000	-	12,000	72,000
Service Area - Streetscene and Bereavement Services	940,000	790,000	240,000	280,000	1,310,000
Service Area - Recycling and Fleet	900,927	5,601,000	303,000	1,230,000	7,134,000
Service Area – Leisure and Cultural	800,341	368,000	16,000	150,000	534,000
Service Area - Engineering	155,000	110,000	1,415,000	120,000	1,645,000
Total	2,856,268	6,929,000	1,974,000	1,792,000	10,695,000
PRIORITY – Town Centres for All					
Service Area - Managing Property & Assets	-	7,300,000	-	-	7,300,000
Future High Streets Fund	5,388,399	1,691,166	-	-	1,691,166
Town Deals – Newcastle	14,356,811	4,706,000	2,251,000	807,000	7,764,000
Town Deals - Kidsgrove	6,415,000	4,190,000	2,794,000	1,236,000	8,220,000
Total	26,160,210	17,887,166	5,045,000	2,043,000	24,975,166
CONTINGENCY	1,000,000	1,000,000	-	-	1,000,000
TOTAL	32,976,506	30,360,008	10,400,918	7,302,911	48,063,837
FUNDING					
Capital Receipts	3,684,500	2,400,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	10,400,000
External Contributions	27,877,210	12,497,166	6,545,000	3,543,000	22,585,166
Borrowing	1,414,796	15,462,842	(144,082)	(240,089)	15,078,671
TOTAL	32,976,506	30,360,008	10,400,918	7,302,911	48,063,837

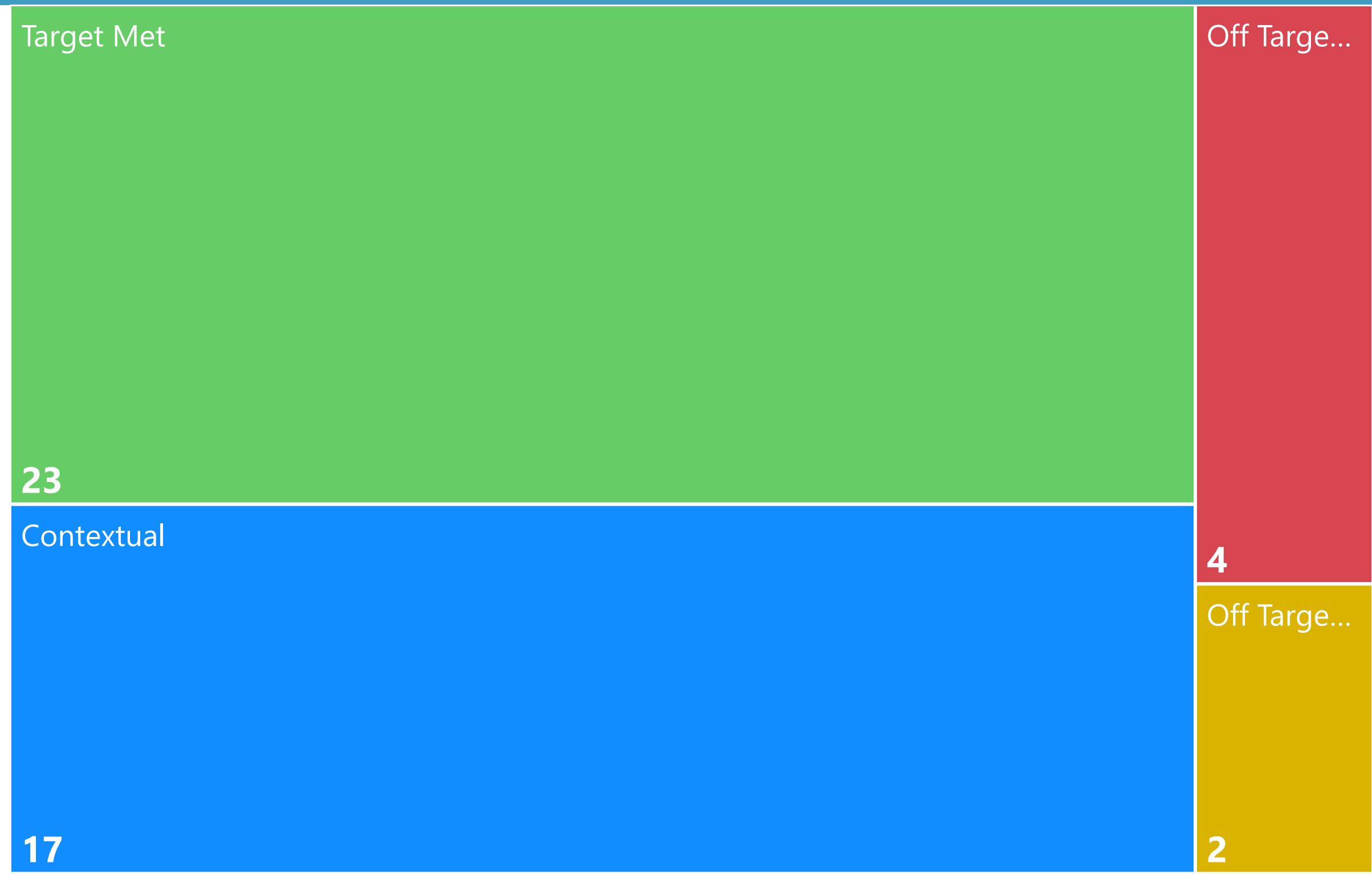
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Quarter 2 - April 2023 to September 2023



All Performance Indicators Current Status



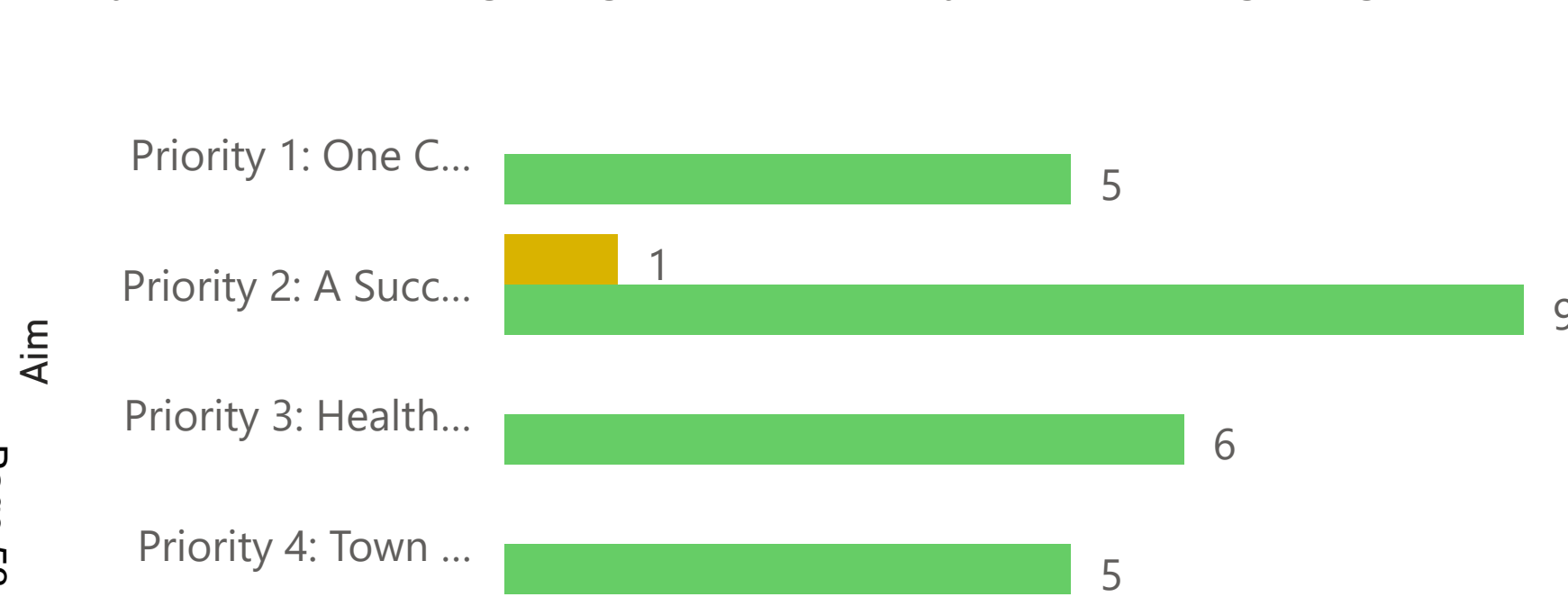
Corporate Aim (Priority)	Count of ID
Priority 1: One Council delivering for Local People	22
Priority 2: A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough	6
Priority 3: Healthy, Active and Safe Communities	15
Priority 4: Town Centres for All	3
	46

Smart Narrative

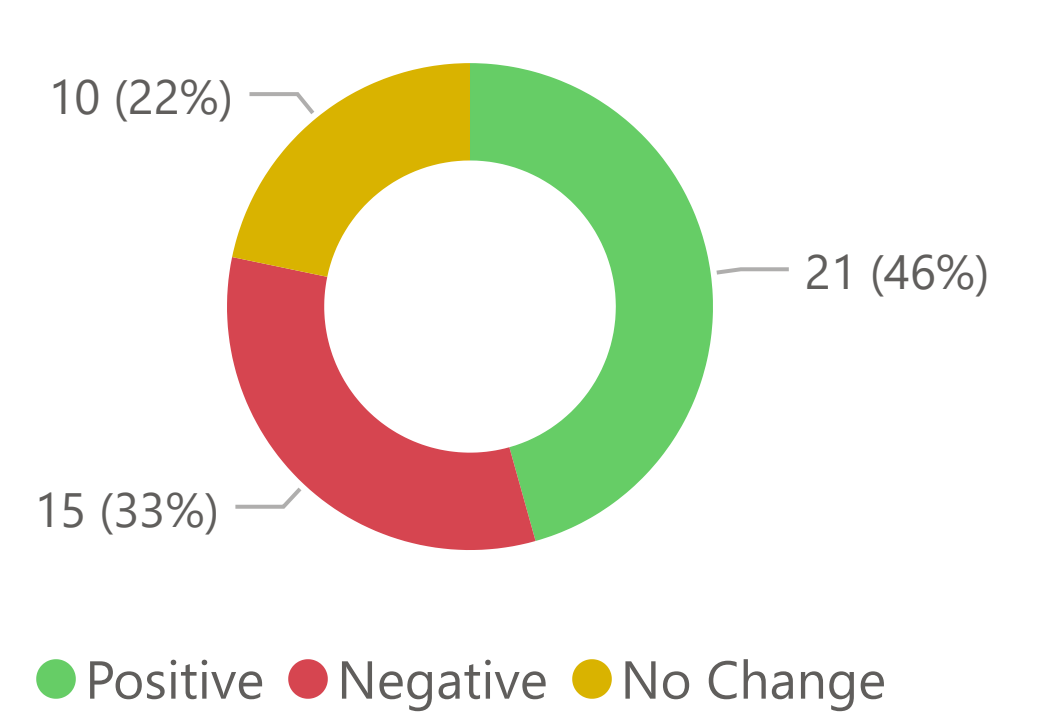
- There are 29 Indicators which have set targets this quarter.
- 79% met their targets within Quarter Two. 15 Indicators which met their target also showed improvement when compared to the same time period last year. 8 Indicators which met their target showed a negative trend when being compared to last year.
- 21% of Indicators were off target this quarter. 2 of these indicators showed an improvement when compared to last year. 4 indicators showed a negative trend.
- There are 17 Indicators which are contextual this quarter and do not have a target to meet. When compared to last year, 11 of the contextual measures showed a negative trend, 5 measures showed an improved trend and 1 measure show no change.
- 1 Projects/Actions within Priority 2 has been identified as not progressing as expected.

All Qtr.2 Summary Project Status Split

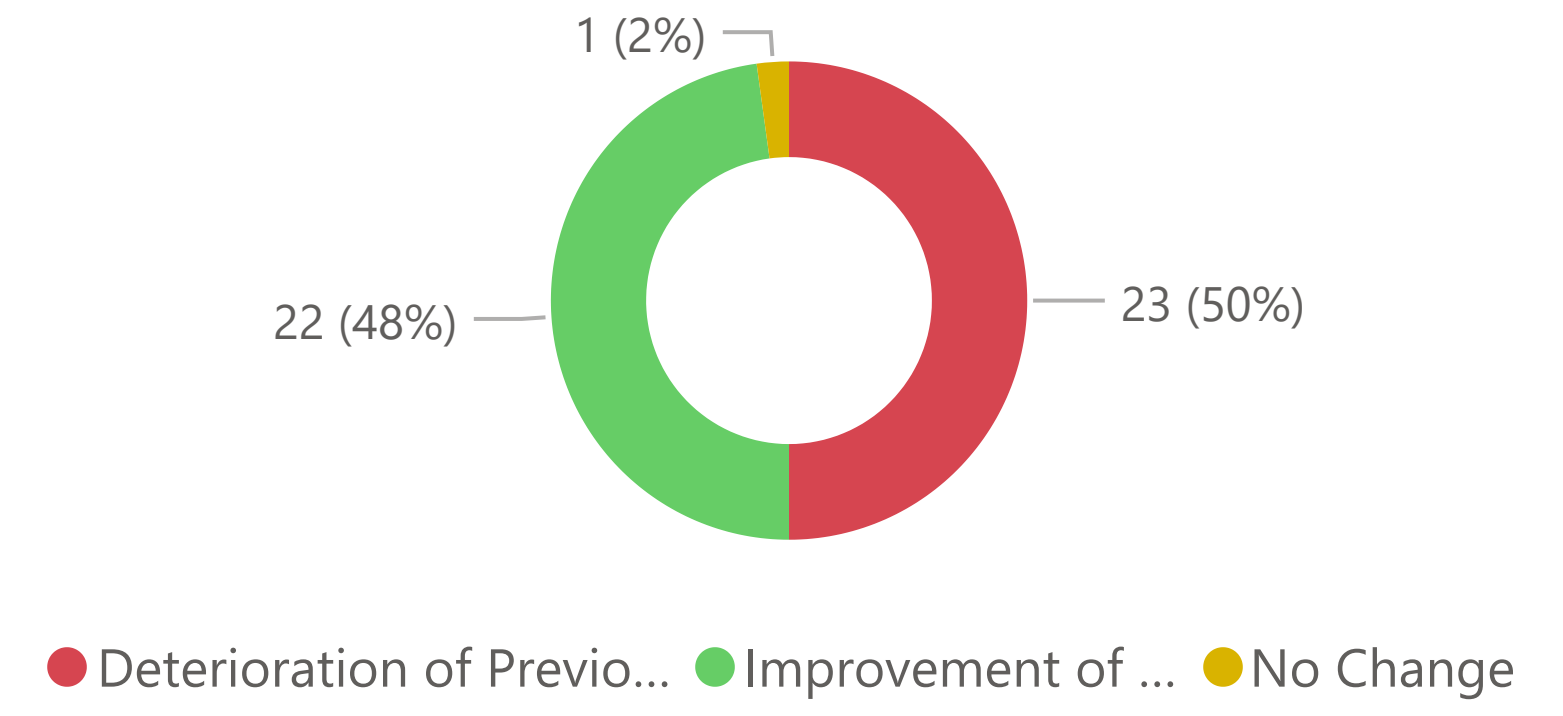
● Project/Action is Not Progressing as Expected ● Project/Action is Progressing as Expec...

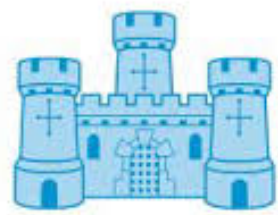


All Qtr.2 Trend Direction of PI's Compared to Previous Quarter



All Qtr.2 Trend Status of PI's Compared On Same Qtr in the Previous Financial Year





Priority 1: Performance Indicators Current Status



Corporate Aim (Priority)	Number of Indicators
Priority 1: One Council delivering for Local People	22

Smart Narrative

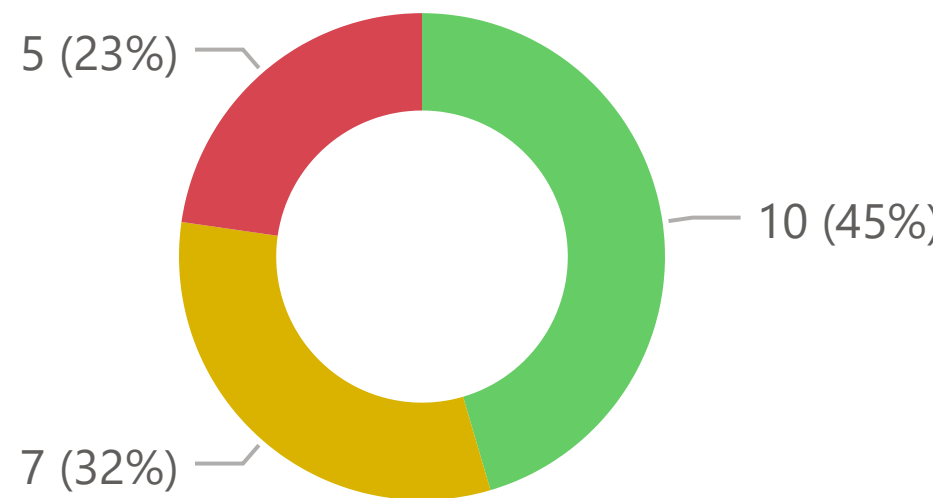
- There are 18 Indicators which have set targets this quarter within Priority 1.
- 72% met their targets within Quarter Two. 8 Indicators which met their target also showed improvement when compared to the same time period last year. 5 Indicators which met their target showed a negative trend when being compared to last year.
- 28% of Indicators were classed as off target this quarter. Only 1 of these indicators showed an improvement when compared to last year. 4 indicators showed a negative trend.
- There are 4 Indicators which are contextual this quarter and do not have a target to meet. When compared to last year, 3 of these measures showed a negative trend whereas 1 of the measures showed a positive trend.
- All Projects/Actions within Priority 1 are classed to be progressing as expected.

Priority 1: Qtr.2 Summary Project Status Split

● Project/Action is Progressing as Expected



Priority 1: Qtr.2 Trend Direction of PI's Compared to Previous Quarter

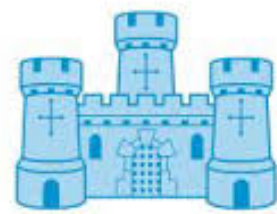


● Positive ● No Change ● Negative

Priority 1: Qtr.2 Trend Status of PI's Compared On Same Qtr in the Previous Financial Year

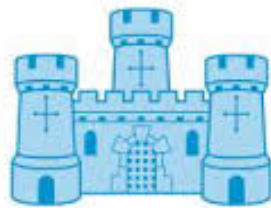


● Deterioration of Previous Year ● Improvement of Previous Year

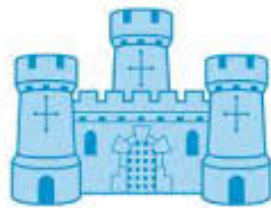


<div>Low</div> <div>Is Good</div> <div>Per Quarter (Snapshot)</div> <div>Positive</div> <div>Yearly Trend</div>	ID1.1 - Percentage of food premises that have a zero or one national food hygiene rating		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
	<div>FY 2021/22 2022/23 2023/24 Target</div> <div>Cllr. David Hutchison</div>		<div>0.58✓</div> <div>Target: 5.00</div>	Not Required as Target Met
<div>High</div> <div>Is Good</div> <div>Cumulative (Per Annum)</div> <div>No Change</div> <div>Yearly Trend</div>	ID1.2 - Percentage of category A and B food business inspections completed on time		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
	<div>FY 2021/22 2022/23 2023/24 Target</div> <div>Cllr. David Hutchison</div>		<div>100.00✓</div> <div>Target: 90.00</div>	Not Required as Target Met
<div>Low</div> <div>Is Good</div> <div>Cumulative (Per Annum)</div> <div>Positive</div> <div>Yearly Trend</div>	ID1.10 - Time taken to process Housing Benefit new claims/change events (Days)		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
	<div>FY 2021/22 2022/23 2023/24 End of Year Target</div> <div>Cllr. Stephen Sweeney</div>		<div>4.75✓</div> <div>End of Year Target: 10.00</div>	Not Required as Target Met

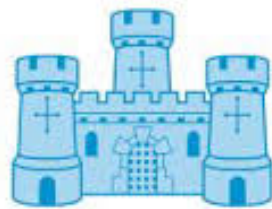
Page 55



<div>Low</div> <div>Is Good</div> <div>Cumulative (Per Annum)</div> <div>Negative</div> <div>Yearly Trend</div>	<div>ID1.13 - Average number of days per employee lost to sickness - Per Employee</div> <div><div>FY</div><div>● 2021/22 ● 2022/23 ● 2023/24 ● Average of Target</div></div> <div>Cllr. Simon Tagg</div> <div><div>Days</div><div>10</div><div>0</div><div>Quarter 1 - April to June</div><div>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</div><div>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</div><div>Quarter 4 - April to March</div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div> <div><div>7.47!</div><div>Target: 4.40</div><div>Sickness absence actually reduced in September in comparison to August with an average 1.07 working days lost per employee. We are implementing an action plan to reduce sickness absence.</div></div>
<div>Low</div> <div>Is Good</div> <div>Cumulative (Per Annum)</div> <div>Negative</div> <div>Yearly Trend</div>	<div>ID1.14 - Staff Turnover</div> <div><div>FY</div><div>● 2021/22 ● 2022/23 ● 2023/24 ● End of Year Target</div></div> <div>Cllr. Simon Tagg</div> <div><div>Percent (%)</div><div>10</div><div>0</div><div>Quarter 1 - April to June</div><div>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</div><div>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</div><div>Quarter 4 - April to March</div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div> <div><div>7.22✓</div><div>End of Year Target: 10.00</div><div>Not Required as Target Met</div></div>
<div>Low</div> <div>Is Good</div> <div>Per Quarter (Snapshot)</div> <div>Negative</div> <div>Yearly Trend</div>	<div>ID1.15 - Staff Vacancy Rate</div> <div><div>FY</div><div>● 2021/22 ● 2022/23 ● 2023/24</div></div> <div>Cllr. Simon Tagg</div> <div><div>Percent (%)</div><div>10</div><div>5</div><div>0</div><div>Quarter 1</div><div>Quarter 2</div><div>Quarter 3</div><div>Quarter 4</div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div> <div><div>9.56</div><div>Vacany rates remain consistent, with regular reviews of vacant posts to ensure efficiency. Very few posts remain hard to fill</div></div>
<div>Low</div> <div>Is Good</div> <div>Cumulative (Per Annum)</div> <div>Positive</div> <div>Yearly Trend</div>	<div>ID1.3 - No. Accidents/Incidents reported (RIDDOR)</div> <div><div>FY</div><div>● 2021/22 ● 2022/23 ● 2023/24</div></div> <div>Cllr. Stephen Sweeney</div> <div><div>Number</div><div>10</div><div>5</div><div>0</div><div>Quarter 1 - April to June</div><div>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</div><div>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</div><div>Quarter 4 - April to March</div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div> <div><div>2.00</div><div>RIDDOR reportable accident levels are currently running below that in the comparable period for 22/23. However it should be noted that the latter half of the year typically increases due to inclement weather conditions.</div></div>



High Is Good Cumulative (Per Annum) Positive Yearly Trend	ID1.6 - Percentage of Customer Hub requests resolved at first point of contact		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target																																																																																																																						
	<div><div><div><div><div>FY</div><div>2021/22</div><div>2022/23</div><div>2023/24</div><div>Target</div></div><div><table><tr><th>Timeframe of Measure</th><th>2021/22</th><th>2022/23</th><th>2023/24</th><th>Target</th></tr><tr><td>Quarter 1 - April to June</td><td>100</td><td>100</td><td>100</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</td><td>100</td><td>100</td><td>100</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</td><td>100</td><td>100</td><td>-</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>Quarter 4 - April to March</td><td>100</td><td>100</td><td>-</td><td>100</td></tr></table></div></div><div>Cllr. Simon Tagg</div></div><div>100.00✓</div><div>Target: 97.00</div><div>Not Required as Target Met</div><tr><td rowspan="2">Low Is Good Cumulative (Per Annum) Negative Yearly Trend</td><td colspan="2">ID1.7 - % Unmet demand (number of calls not answered as a % of total call handling volume)</td><td>Current Status</td><td>SMART Actions if Off Target</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"><div><div><div><div><div>FY</div><div>2021/22</div><div>2022/23</div><div>2023/24</div><div>Target</div></div><div><table><tr><th>Timeframe of Measure</th><th>2021/22</th><th>2022/23</th><th>2023/24</th><th>Target</th></tr><tr><td>Quarter 1 - April to June</td><td>10</td><td>13</td><td>20</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</td><td>11</td><td>13</td><td>20</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</td><td>14</td><td>13</td><td>-</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>Quarter 4 - April to March</td><td>14</td><td>12</td><td>-</td><td>20</td></tr></table></div></div><div>Cllr. Simon Tagg</div></div><div>19.50✓</div><div>Target: 20.00</div><div>Not Required as Target Met</div><tr><td rowspan="2">High Is Good Cumulative (Per Annum) Negative Yearly Trend</td><td colspan="2">ID1.11 - Percentage of Council Tax collected</td><td>Current Status</td><td>SMART Actions if Off Target</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"><div><div><div><div><div>FY</div><div>2021/22</div><div>2022/23</div><div>2023/24</div><div>Target</div></div><div><table><tr><th>Timeframe of Measure</th><th>2021/22</th><th>2022/23</th><th>2023/24</th><th>Target</th></tr><tr><td>Quarter 1 - April to June</td><td>50</td><td>30</td><td>30</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</td><td>50</td><td>50</td><td>50</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</td><td>75</td><td>75</td><td>-</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>Quarter 4 - April to March</td><td>100</td><td>100</td><td>-</td><td>100</td></tr></table></div></div><div>Cllr. Stephen Sweeney</div></div><div>52.20✓</div><div>Target: 48.75</div><div>Not Required as Target Met</div><tr><td rowspan="2">High Is Good Cumulative (Per Annum) Negative Yearly Trend</td><td colspan="2">ID1.12 - Percentage of National non-domestic rates collected</td><td>Current Status</td><td>SMART Actions if Off Target</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"><div><div><div><div><div>FY</div><div>2021/22</div><div>2022/23</div><div>2023/24</div><div>Target</div></div><div><table><tr><th>Timeframe of Measure</th><th>2021/22</th><th>2022/23</th><th>2023/24</th><th>Target</th></tr><tr><td>Quarter 1 - April to June</td><td>55</td><td>35</td><td>35</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</td><td>45</td><td>55</td><td>55</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</td><td>75</td><td>85</td><td>-</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>Quarter 4 - April to March</td><td>95</td><td>100</td><td>-</td><td>100</td></tr></table></div></div><div>Cllr. Stephen Sweeney</div></div><div>57.30✓</div><div>Target: 48.65</div><div>Not Required as Target Met</div></div></td></tr></div></td></tr></div></td></tr></div>		Timeframe of Measure	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Target	Quarter 1 - April to June	100	100	100	100	Quarter 2 - April to Sept	100	100	100	100	Quarter 3 - April to Dec	100	100	-	100	Quarter 4 - April to March	100	100	-	100	Low Is Good Cumulative (Per Annum) Negative Yearly Trend	ID1.7 - % Unmet demand (number of calls not answered as a % of total call handling volume)		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target	<div><div><div><div><div>FY</div><div>2021/22</div><div>2022/23</div><div>2023/24</div><div>Target</div></div><div><table><tr><th>Timeframe of Measure</th><th>2021/22</th><th>2022/23</th><th>2023/24</th><th>Target</th></tr><tr><td>Quarter 1 - April to June</td><td>10</td><td>13</td><td>20</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</td><td>11</td><td>13</td><td>20</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</td><td>14</td><td>13</td><td>-</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>Quarter 4 - April to March</td><td>14</td><td>12</td><td>-</td><td>20</td></tr></table></div></div><div>Cllr. 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High

Is Good

Per
Quarter
(Snapshot)

Negative

Yearly Trend

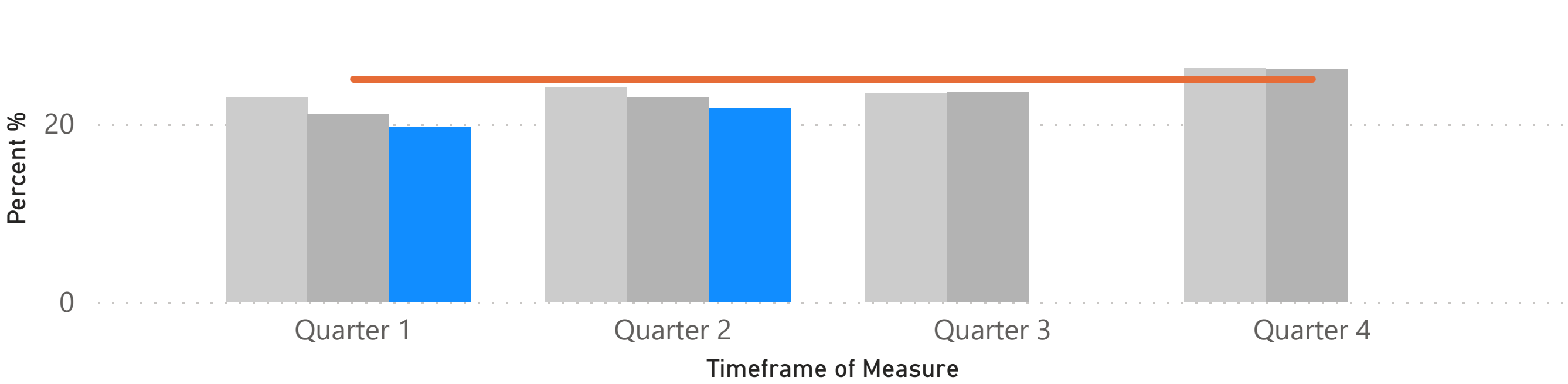
ID1.4a - Dry Recycling:- Household collections from the kerbside (%)

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

FY 2021/22 2022/23 2023/24 Target

Cllr. David Hutchison



21.76!

Target:
25.00

Recycling rates across the country are falling, potentially due to cost of living crisis. Residual waste volumes have not increased, so would point to a change in residents shopping behaviour. The Council remains the second highest performer of Staffordshire authorities for recycling. Looking wider across the country within the Councils Recycling rate in comparison against CIPFA neighbours puts the Council at the top of the league table

High

Is Good

Per
Quarter
(Snapshot)

Positive

Yearly Trend

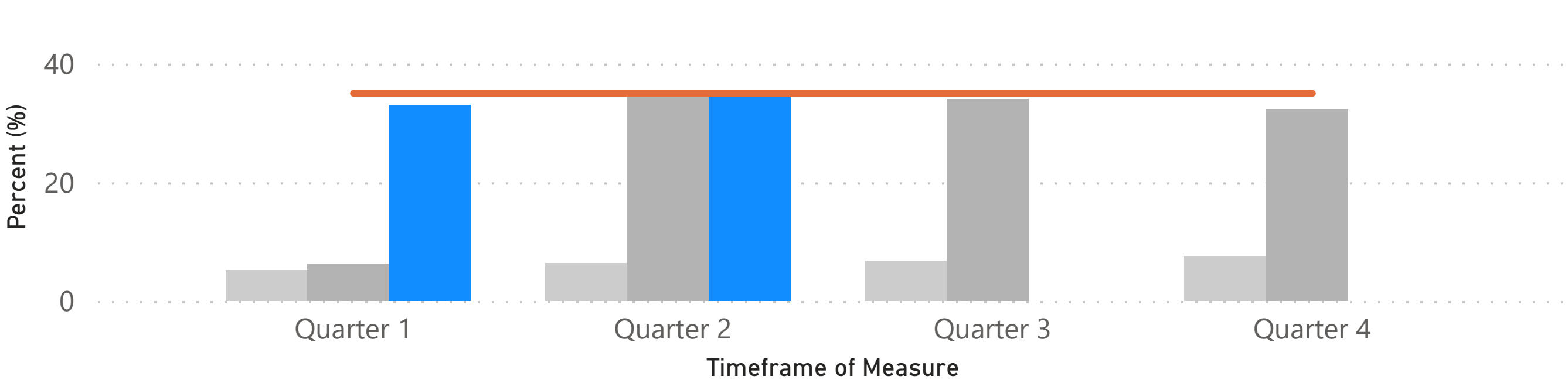
ID1.4b - Food:- Household collections from the kerbside (%)

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

FY 2021/22 2022/23 2023/24 Target

Cllr. David Hutchison



35.00✓

Target:
35.00

Not Required as Target Met

Low

Is Good

Cumulative
(Per
Annum)

Negative

Yearly Trend

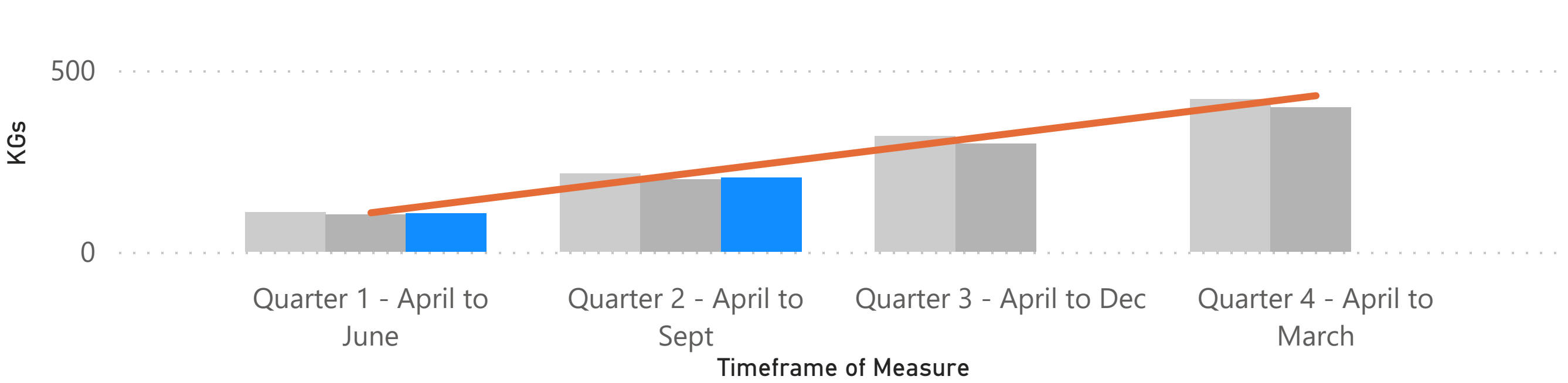
ID1.4c - Residual Waste per household:- Household collections from the kerbside (Kgs)

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

FY 2021/22 2022/23 2023/24 Target

Cllr. David Hutchison



204.74✓

Target:
215.00

Not Required as Target Met

Low

Is Good

Per
Quarter
(Snapshot)

Negative

Yearly Trend

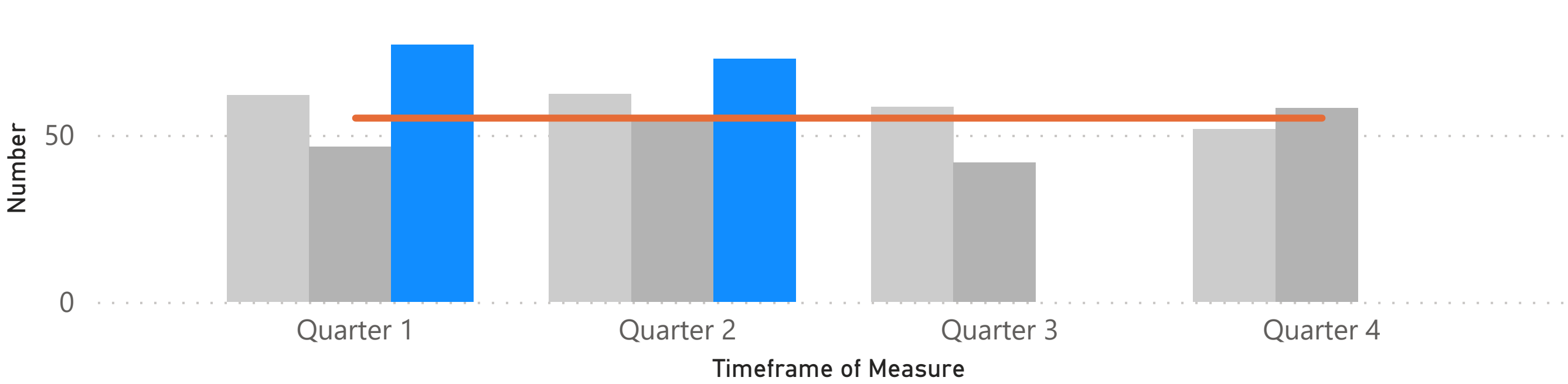
ID1.4d - Number of missed kerbside collections:- Total (per 100,000 collections)

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

FY 2021/22 2022/23 2023/24 Target

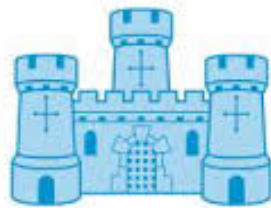
Cllr. David Hutchison



72.68!

Target:
55.00

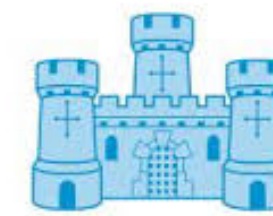
Staffing issues along with vehicle problems have disrupted collections over the summer months, resulting in more missed collections than we would like. However the successful collection rate is very high at 99.99% collected. A reduced number of missed collections from Q1 has been noted so trend direction is positive.



		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
<div>High</div> <div>Is Good</div> <div>Per Quarter (Snapshot)</div> <div>Positive</div> <div>Yearly Trend</div>	<div>ID1.5a - Litter: Levels of street and environment cleanliness (LEQ survey) free / predominantly free of litter</div> <div><div>FY</div><div>● 2021/22 ● 2022/23 ● 2023/24 ● Target</div><div>Cllr. David Hutchison</div><div><div>Percent (%)</div><div><div>Quarter 1</div><div>Quarter 2</div><div>Quarter 3</div><div>Quarter 4</div></div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div>	<div>97.50✓</div> <div>Target: 92.00</div>	<div>Not Required as Target Met</div>
	<div>ID1.5b - Detritus: Levels of street and environment cleanliness (LEQ survey) free / predominantly free of detritus</div> <div><div>FY</div><div>● 2021/22 ● 2022/23 ● 2023/24 ● Target</div><div>Cllr. David Hutchison</div><div><div>Percent (%)</div><div><div>Quarter 1</div><div>Quarter 2</div><div>Quarter 3</div><div>Quarter 4</div></div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div>	<div>88.75!</div> <div>Target: 92.00</div>	<div>Previous sweeper fleet became very unreliable, and a design fault took a number of them off the road for a period of time, putting sweeping schedules behind. The new sweeper fleet is now in service and redressing the backlog, and making positive progress in improving sweeping operations</div>
	<div>ID1.5c - Graffiti: Levels of street and environment cleanliness (LEQ survey) free / predominantly free of graffiti</div> <div><div>FY</div><div>● 2021/22 ● 2022/23 ● 2023/24 ● Target</div><div>Cllr. David Hutchison</div><div><div>Percent (%)</div><div><div>Quarter 1</div><div>Quarter 2</div><div>Quarter 3</div><div>Quarter 4</div></div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div>	<div>100.00✓</div> <div>Target: 98.00</div>	<div>Not Required as Target Met</div>
	<div>ID1.5d - Fly-Posting: Levels of street and environment cleanliness (LEQ survey) free / predominantly free of fly-posting</div> <div><div>FY</div><div>● 2021/22 ● 2022/23 ● 2023/24 ● Target</div><div>Cllr. David Hutchison</div><div><div>Percent (%)</div><div><div>Quarter 1</div><div>Quarter 2</div><div>Quarter 3</div><div>Quarter 4</div></div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div>	<div>100.00✓</div> <div>Target: 99.00</div>	<div>Not Required as Target Met</div>



Priority 1: One Council delivering for Local People



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BOROUGH COUNCIL

Project Status Split for Priority 1.

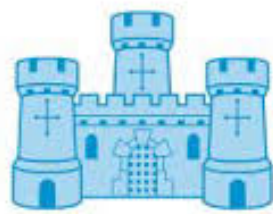
Project/Action is Progressing as Expected

5

Portfolio Holder	Service Area	Action	Corporate Objective	Status report	Commentary on progress
Cllr. Simon Tagg	1. Strategy, People and Performance 2. All services	Deliver a Workforce Strategy	Develop professional talent across the Council and provide opportunities for staff to grow their careers	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	The People Strategy is in development. Sessions with the People Team and COT have taken place to consider themes and outcomes, with next sessions planned with Trade Union colleagues and Business Managers in November.
Cllr. Simon Tagg	1. Strategy, People and Performance 2. IT and Digital 3. Neighbourhoods 4. All (digital enablement)	Deliver the One Council Programme	Ensure our services are efficient and accessible	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	The One Council is on track to release its target benefits, with final services considering their customer journeys and process review over the coming months.
Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	1. Commercial Delivery 2. Finance 3. Legal & Governance	Identify and deliver opportunities to generate income from commercial development	Ensure strong financial discipline across the Council	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	1. The Museum continues to offer a wide range of events, this quarter has included the Matisse exhibition and the Obsolescence and Renewal exhibition as part of the British Ceramics Biennial has opened. 2. Bereavement Services continue to expand the range of memorial options, new columbaria vases are now available at Bradwell. 3. Site investigation studies continue at Keele for a potential solar project.
Cllr. Simon Tagg	1. Strategy, People and Performance 2. All services	Work with our communities to ensure services reflect local need	Work with our communities to ensure services reflect local need	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	Partnership Board themes to date have included employment and skills, Sustainability and Mental Health and Wellbeing with our next focus around Cost of Living in order to help our wider and joined understanding of local need, and ensuring our commissioned services are performing in line with strategic intent.
Cllr. Simon Tagg	1. Strategy, People and Performance 2. neighbourhoods 3. Regulatory	Work with partners to deliver the best for our communities	Work with partners to deliver the best for our communities	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	We remain in close contact with partners over a number of key areas including vulnerability and community safety.



Priority 2: A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough



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BOROUGH COUNCIL

Priority 2: Performance Indicators Current Status



Corporate Aim (Priority)	Number of Indicators
Priority 2: A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough	6

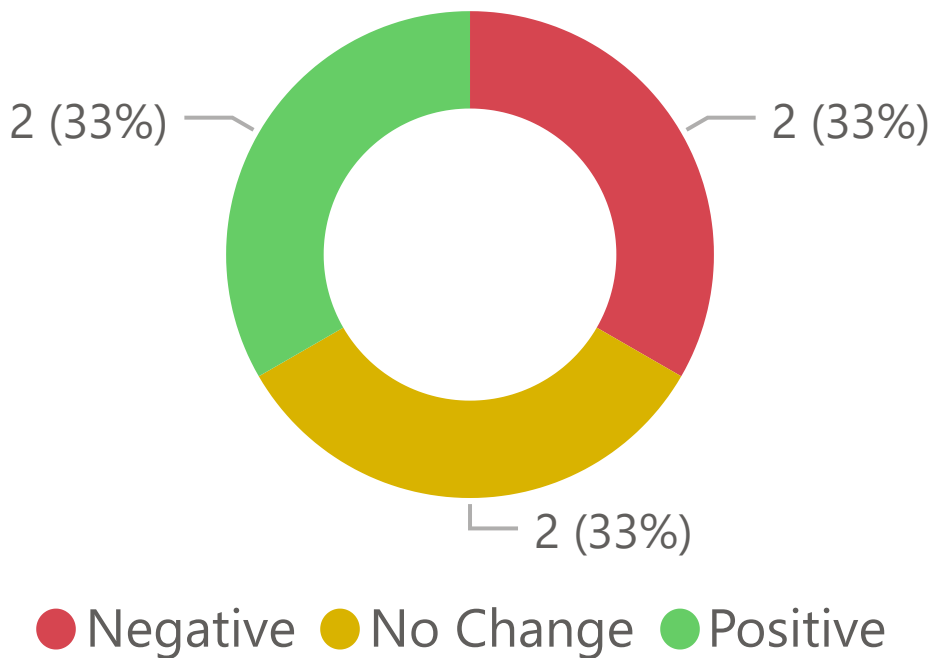
- Smart Narrative
- There are 6 Indicators which have set targets this quarter within Priority 2.
 - 83% met their targets within Quarter Two. 2 Indicators which met their target showed improvement when compared to the same time period last year. 3 Indicators which met their target showed a negative trend when being compared to last year.
 - There is 1 measure (2.6) shown as off target this quarter which equates to 17% overall. This measure however did show an improvement when compared to the previous financial year.
 - Within Priority 2, there was 1 Projects/Actions which was raised to not be progressing as expected and related to the following; "Delivering the £16m Kidsgrove Town Deal"

Priority 2: Qtr.2 Summary Project Status Split

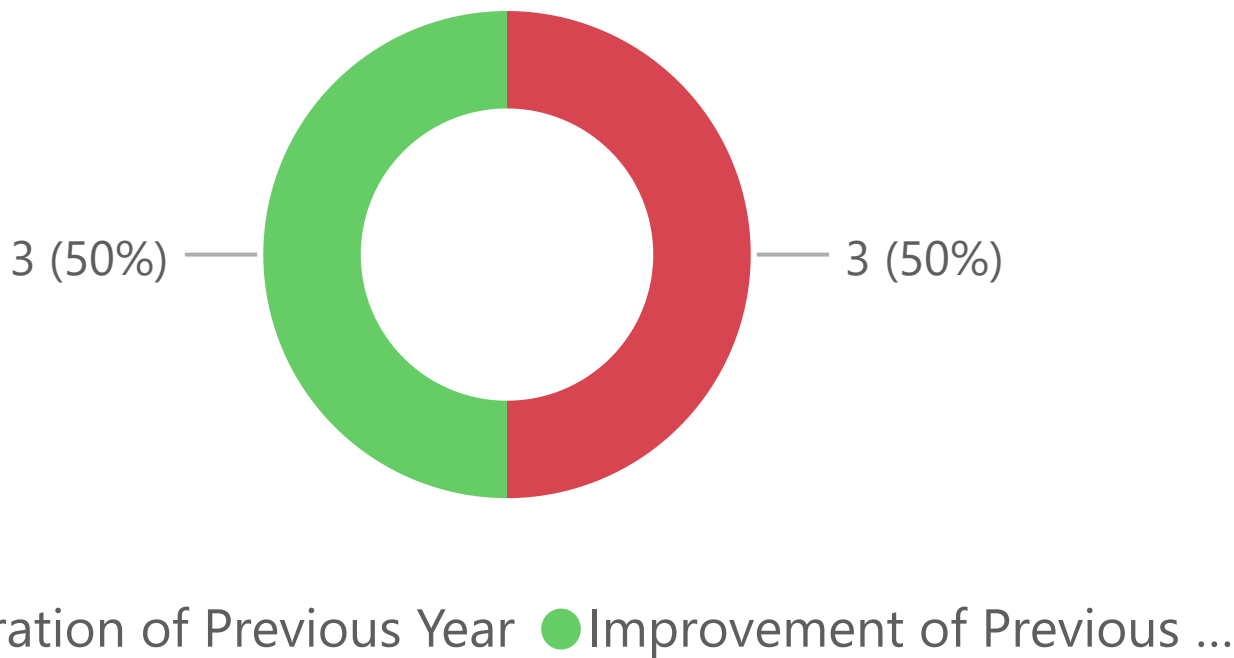
● Project/Action is Not Progressing as Expected ● Project/Action is Progressing as Expe...

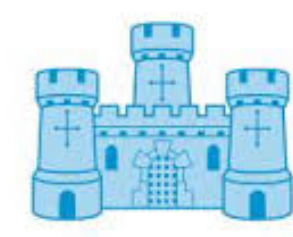


Priority 2: Qtr.2 Trend Direction of PI's Compared to Previous Quarter

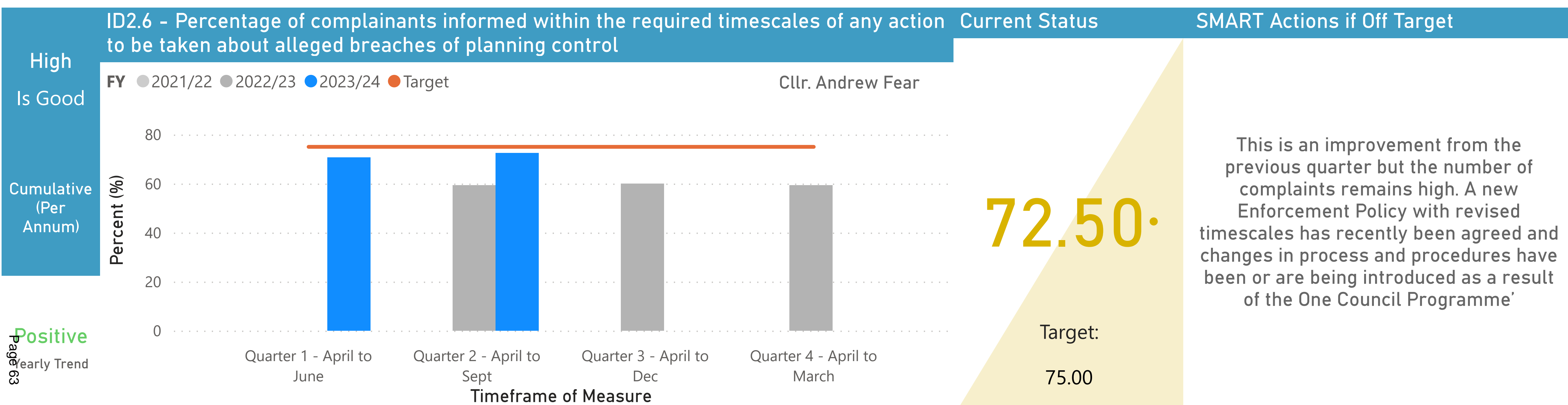
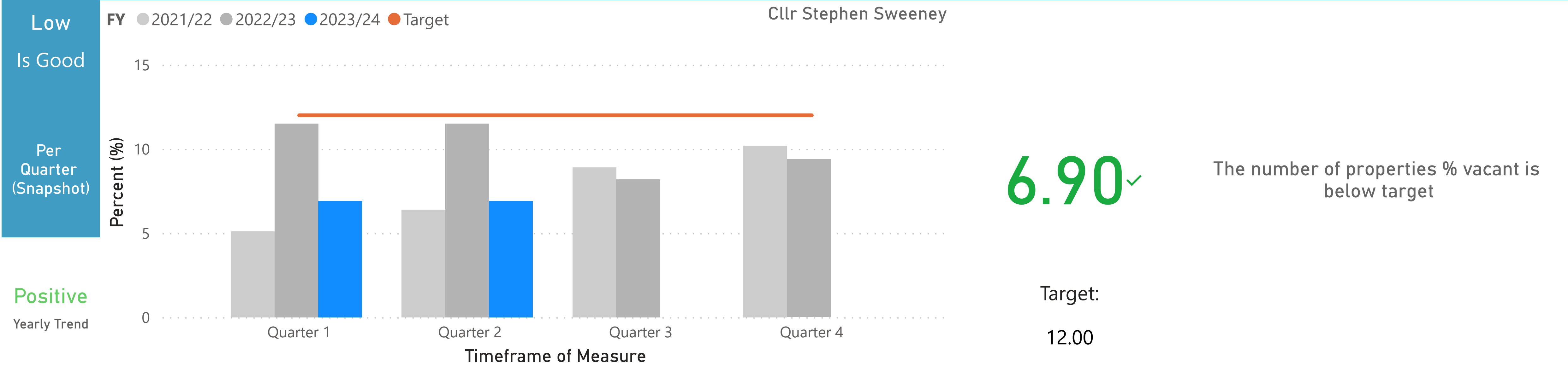


Priority 2: Qtr.2 Trend Status of PI's Compared On Same Qtr in the Previous Financial Year





ID2.1 - Percentage of investment portfolio vacant (NBC owned)Current StatusSMART Actions if Off Target





Project Status Split for Priority 2.

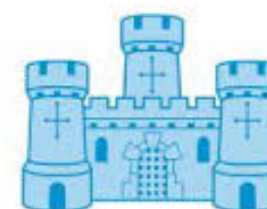
Project/Action is Progressing as Expected

9

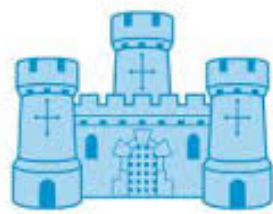
Project/Action is ...

1

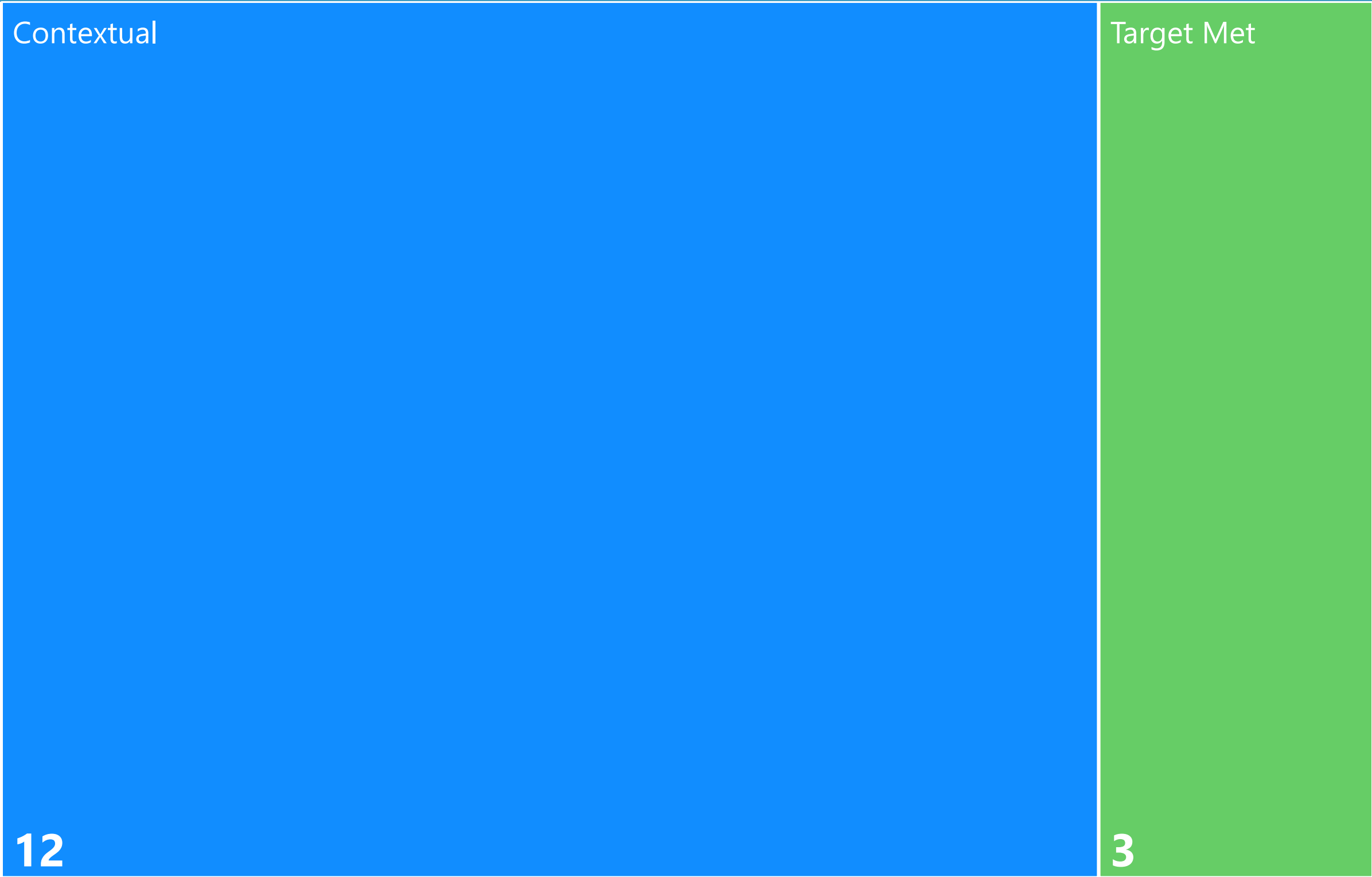
Portfolio Holder	Service Area	Action	Corporate Objective	Status report	Commentary on progress
Cllr. David Hutchison	1. Sustainable Environment 2. All	Deliver the Sustainable Environment Strategy	Ensuring that the Council's operations are carbon neutral by 2030	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	A review of the SES is scheduled for discussion at Cabinet at its October 23 meeting, and includes reporting on the decarbonisation analysis undertaken for the Councils operational buildings and fleet. this will now for the basis for a new action plan moving forward to take the Council to its net zero target. The report acknowledges the work in reducing carbon which has already taken place with a 50% reduction in carbon emissions being achieved over the last decade.
Cllr. David Hutchison	1. Regulatory 2. Neighbourhoods	Secure a successful resolution to the Walley's Quarry odour problem.	Protecting our communities by improving how we use our enforcement powers.	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	Complaints of odour have remained relatively low over the summer period. Monitoring and visits are continuing to support the investigation. The Environment Agency (EA) has required additional capping of the flanks at the site in order to better manage fugitive emissions. The EA has recently announced that inaccuracies have been identified with the hydrogen sulphide monitoring at all the MMFs. This has resulted in the UK-HSA being unable rely on this data to assess the risk to people's health. The risk of long-term health problems is likely to be small but cannot be excluded at this stage. A community zoom event was attended in relation to this issue. It is not considered that this alters the Councils abatement notice. There have been calls for a public inquiry
Cllr. Andrew Fear	1. Planning 2. Legal & Governance	Delivering the Newcastle Local Plan	Support the sustainable development of our towns and villages	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	Consultation on the First Draft Local Plan started on the 19th June and ended on the 14th August. The team are now registering comments received to the consultation alongside identifying key issues which have been raised. The identification and analysis of key issues raised will inform the development of the next draft of the Local Plan (the final draft Local Plan) alongside any new / revised evidence prepared to support the Plan and its proposals.
Cllr. David Hutchison	1. Neighbourhoods	Protect our parks and green spaces for future generations	Ensuring that the Council's operations are carbon neutral by 2030	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	Phase 5 of the Urban Tree Planting Strategy is in the planning stage, with public consultation programmed for October/November 2023. Subject to consultation results, 6 sites will be planted in January - March 2024.
Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	1. Commercial Delivery 2. Strategy, People and Performance 3. Finance	Continue to bid for government funding to support the borough's ambitions, including the further development of Keele Science and Innovation Park and the University Growth Corridor.	A strong and sustainable economy where everyone benefits	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	The Council continues to deliver the two Town Deals and the Shared Prosperity Fund.
Cllr. David Hutchison	1. Sustainable Environment 2. All	Play an active role in the Staffordshire Sustainability Board	Secure a carbon neutral Borough by 2050	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	The Council continues to play a leading role in the SSB, most recently making a presentation about the Councils separate collection of food waste, something it's been doing for the last 13 years, and is the only authority in Staffordshire to do so.



Portfolio Holder	Service Area	Action	Corporate Objective	Status report	Commentary on progress
Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	1. Commercial Delivery 2. Neighbourhoods	Delivering the £4.8m Uk Shared Prosperity Fund programme, including: Improving the town centre; Supporting culture and heritage; Skills development for local people; Supporting the most vulnerable people.	A strong and sustainable economy where everyone benefits	✔ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	In July confirmation was received that "slippage" funding could be used for additional projects which could be delivered within this financial year and operational from September. These projects would focus on job creation and supporting self-starters not only in the mainstream business functions such as engineering and social care but also in the cultural industry. One example is EEE4Disadvantaged - a registered Charity that has been established to train and employ disadvantaged individuals from the local conurbation by the recycling of redundant IT equipment. Their experience as an organisation has addressed the needs of individuals who are unable to become active members of the labour market due to physical and/or mental health issues, or through not having appropriate Basic Skills or having no hands-on experience of a real work environment. EEE4Disadvantaged uses the recycling and refurbishment of redundant electronic and electrical equipment to fund the training and employment of individuals who have a mental and/or physical health issue. It is our aim to train a minimum of 40 individuals each year. HoneyBox project Bringing local original musical talent from within the area while also presenting Spoken Word/Poetry this is a platform for local musicians and performances to showcase their talent and art work. The project supports cultural employment as well as volunteer opportunities for the back office technicians who learn the art of lighting, sound and digital media.
Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	Commercial Delivery	Delivering the £16m Kidsgrove Town Deal, including: Facilitating the Chatterley Valley Enterprise Zone development to deliver 1700 quality jobs for local people; Enhancing Kidsgrove Railway Station and access to the local canal network; Developing a Shared Service Hub with key partners.	A strong and sustainable economy where everyone benefits	⚠ Project/Action is Not Progressing as Expected	Delivery continues with the remain projects to be delivered through Kidsgrove Town Deal. The Canal & River Trust are on schedule to start on site in line with the terms of their funding agreement. A planning application has been submitted for construction of the Shared Service Hub and associated works and negotiations continue with relevant land owners and interested parties for that project. The Railway Station project continues to experience issues with resolving ground conditions associated with historic mine works at the site. the project team continues to work finding a satisfactory resolution of these issues.
Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	Commercial Delivery	Delivering the £23m Newcastle Town Deal, including: Development of key gateway sites including the 'Zanzibar' and Midway; Connecting residents and businesses to skills training for the digital world; Improving bus, cycling and walking infrastructure; Delivering a circus-themed performing arts Centre; Building more than 400 homes in Knutton and Chesterton.	A strong and sustainable economy where everyone benefits	✔ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	All Newcastle projects have now been approved for delivery by DLUHC. A number of projects have now commenced on-site works or are expected to in the next quarter. Planning consent has been received for Keele in Town, the extension of Newcastle Enterprise Centre, construction of a new Football Changing Room at the Wammy and the Philip Astley Centre, a circus heritage centre in Merrial Street.
Cllr. Gill Heesom	1. Regulatory 2. Legal & Governance	Ensure that there are good homes for everyone and that every citizen has a safe and secure place to live	Ensure that there are good homes for everyone and that every citizen has a safe and secure place to live	✔ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	The new DFG service is becoming established with 32 grants completions since 01.04.23 and 70 grants formally approved and waiting for works to start or complete. Cabinet approval has been gained to procure a property to deliver the homeless hub project using UKSPF.



Priority 3: Performance Indicators Current Status

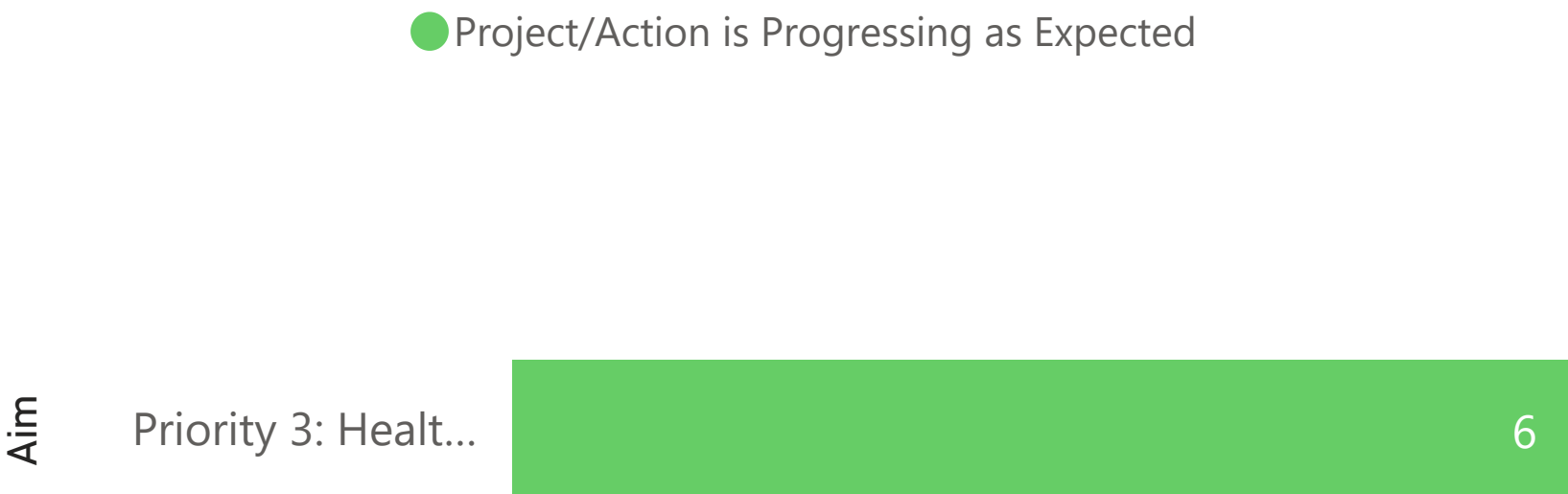


Corporate Aim (Priority)	Number of Indicators
Priority 3: Healthy, Active and Safe Communities	15

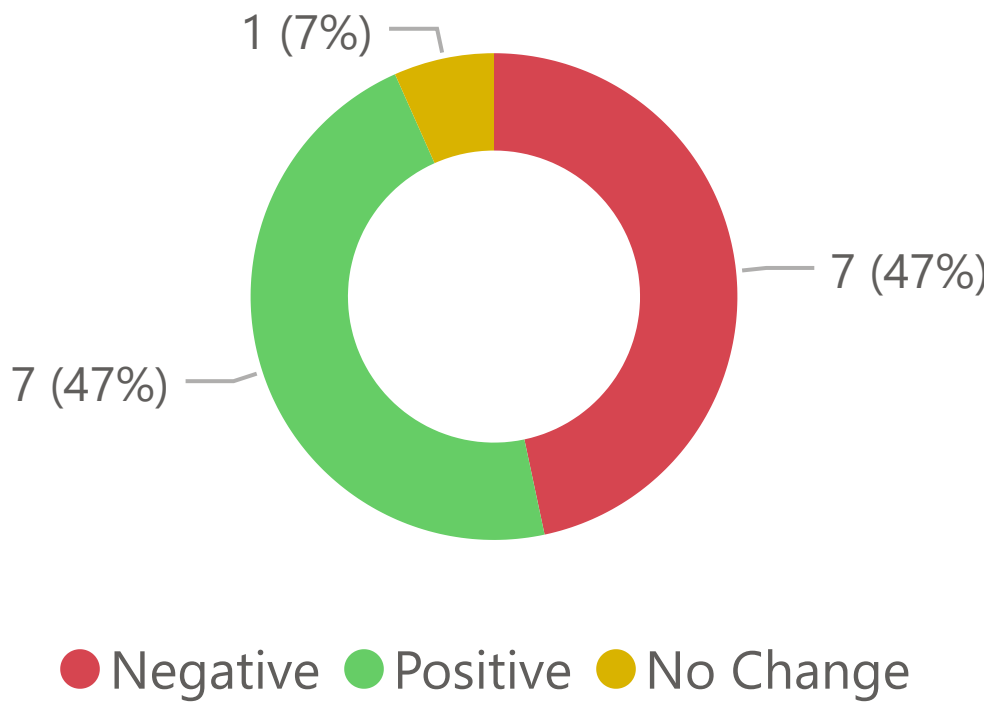
Smart Narrative

- There are 3 Indicators which have set targets this quarter within Priority 3.
- 100% met their targets within Quarter Two. All 3 Indicators which met their target also showed improvement when compared to the same time period last year.
- No Indicators were classed as off target this quarter.
- There are 12 Indicators which are contextual this quarter and do not have a target to meet. When compared to last year, 8 measures had showed a negative trend, 3 measures demonstrated an improvement when comparing to 22/23; 1 contextual measure did not change.
- All Projects/Actions within Priority 3 are classed to be progressing as expected.

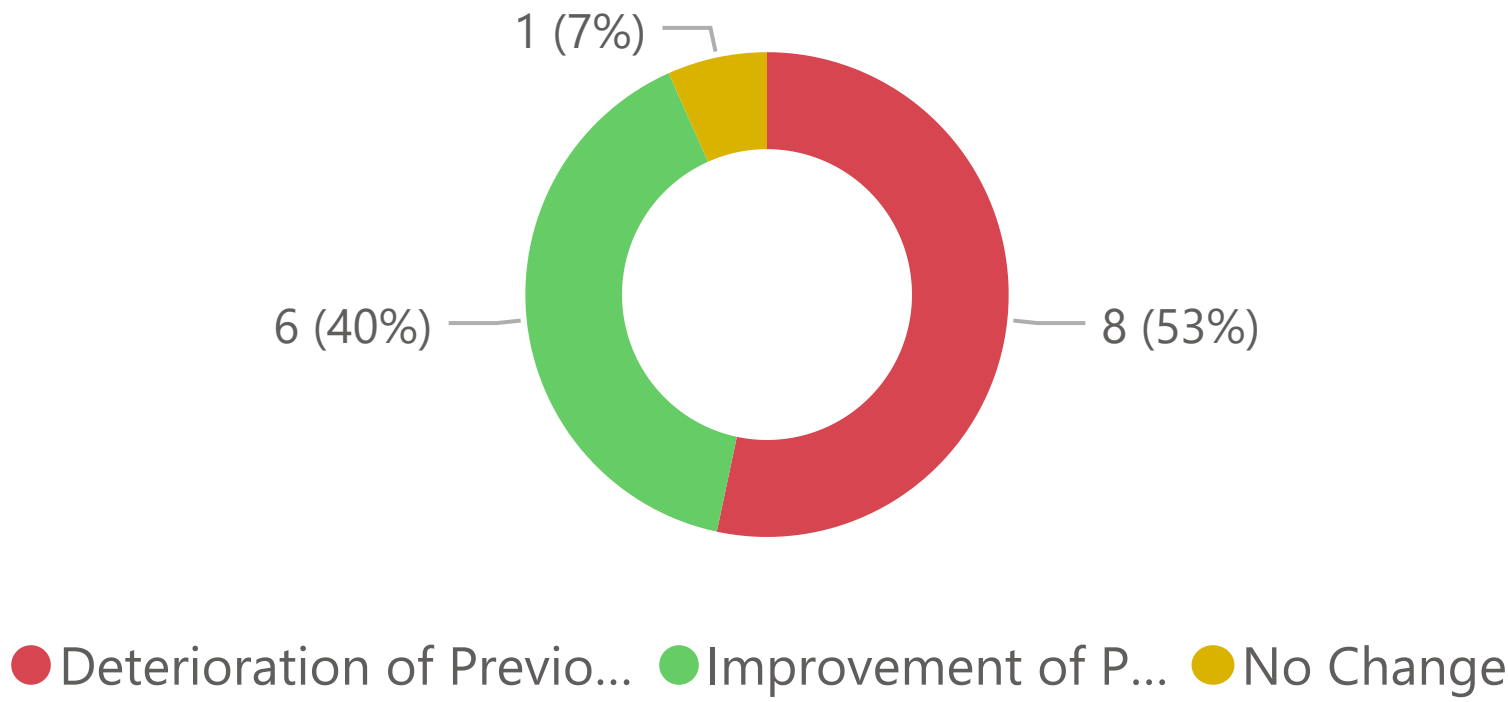
Priority 3: Qtr.2 Summary Project Status Split

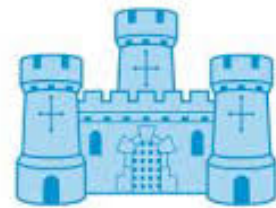


Priority 3: Qtr.2 Trend Direction of PI's Compared to Previous Quarter



Priority 3: Qtr.2 Trend Status of PI's Compared On Same Qtr in the Previous Financial Year





Low

Is Good

Per
Quarter
(Snapshot)

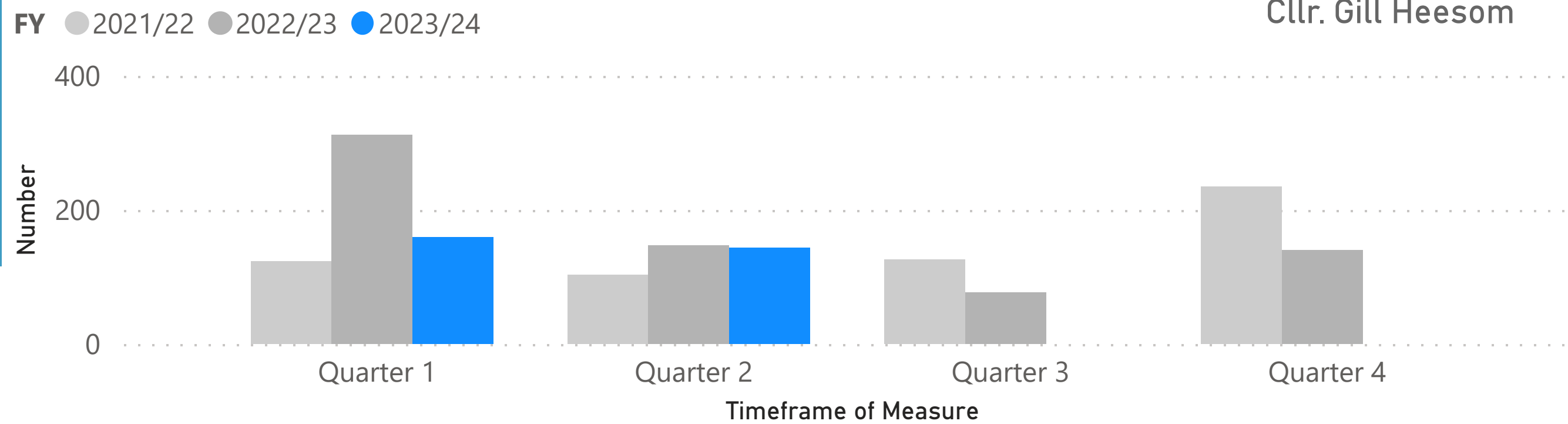
Positive

Yearly Trend

ID3.1a - Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) cases - New cases received during the quarter

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target



143.00

Work is continuing with a range of partner agencies to address ASB efficiently and effectively. We are also working on ways to encourage reporting of ASB to ensure that this is a fair reflection of ASB problems.

Low

Is Good

Per
Quarter
(Snapshot)

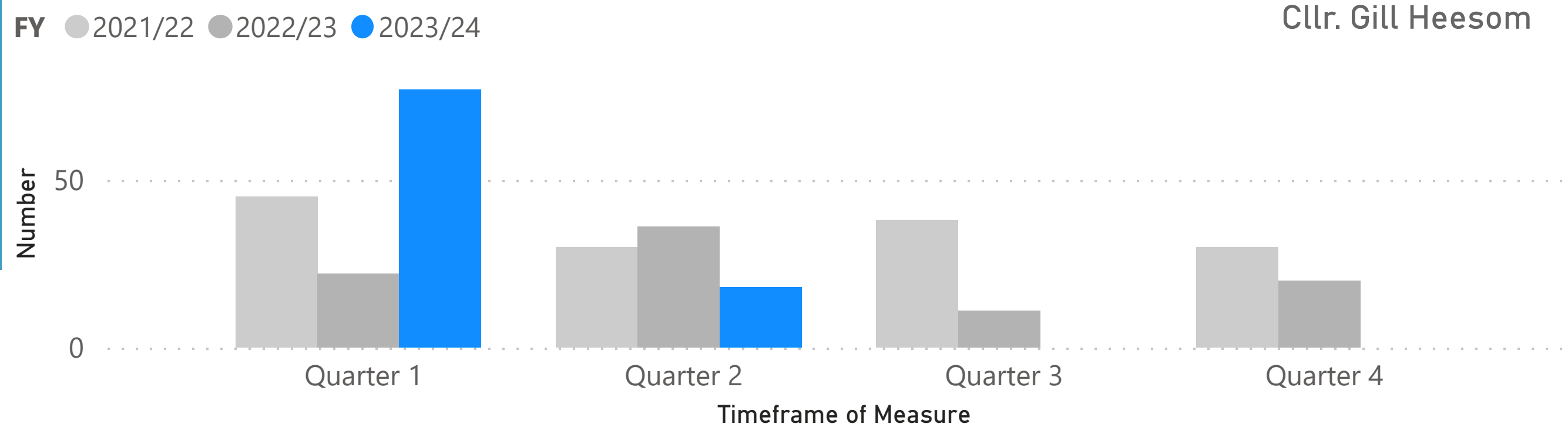
Positive

Yearly Trend

ID3.1b - (ASB) cases - Current open cases at the end of the quarter

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target



18.00

We continue partnership working to reduce ASB and ensure any complaints are dealt with efficiently and effectively in a timely manner. We are also working on ways to encourage reporting of ASB to ensure that this is a fair reflection on ASB problems.

High

Is Good

Per
Quarter
(Snapshot)

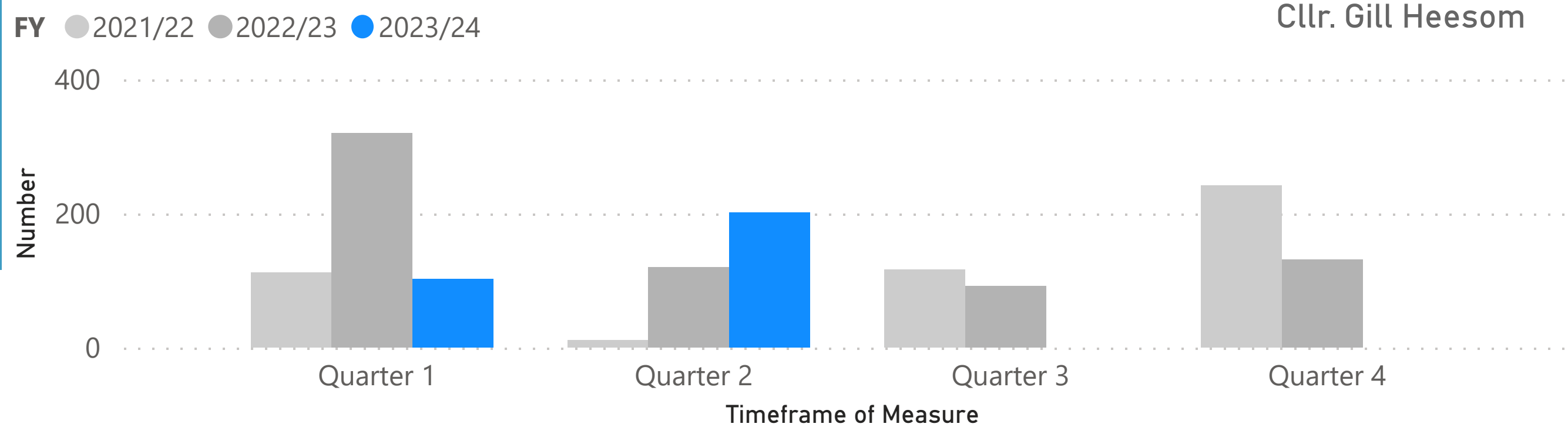
Positive

Yearly Trend

ID3.1c - (ASB) cases - Cases closed in the quarter

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target



201.00

Value is also relative to the measure of new cases received. We continue partnership working to reduce ASB and ensure any complaints are dealt with efficiently and effectively in a timely manner.

Low

Is Good

Cumulative
(Per
Annum)

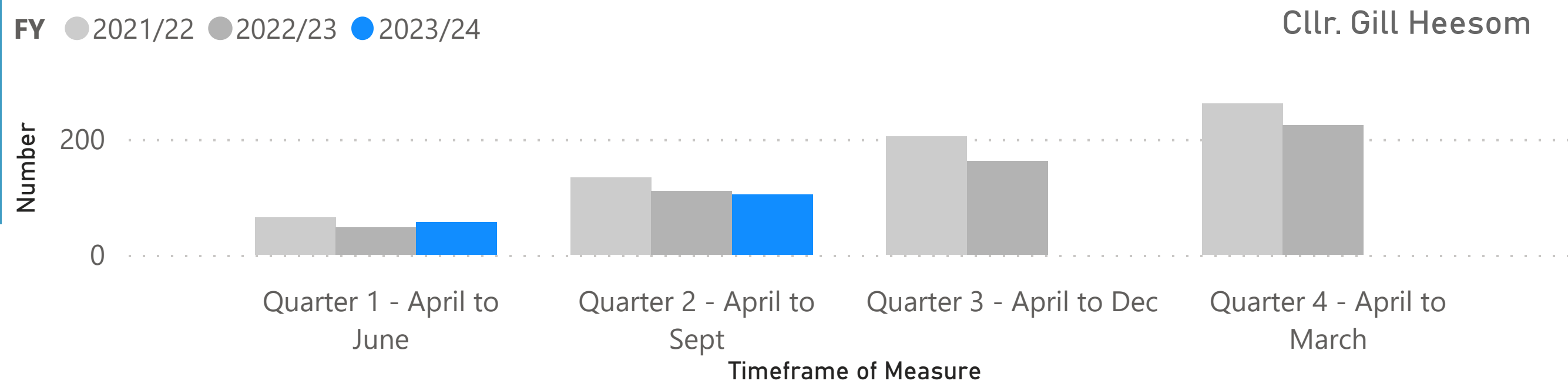
Positive

Yearly Trend

ID3.2 - Number of referrals made regarding vulnerability by participating organisations at the Daily Hub

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target



104.00

Service has seen a reduced number when comparing to previous financial year by 6 referrals and is less than 2021/22 by 29 referrals.



Priority 3: Healthy, Active and Safe Communities



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BOROUGH COUNCIL

All



High

Is Good

Cumulative
(Per
Annum)

Positive

Yearly Trend

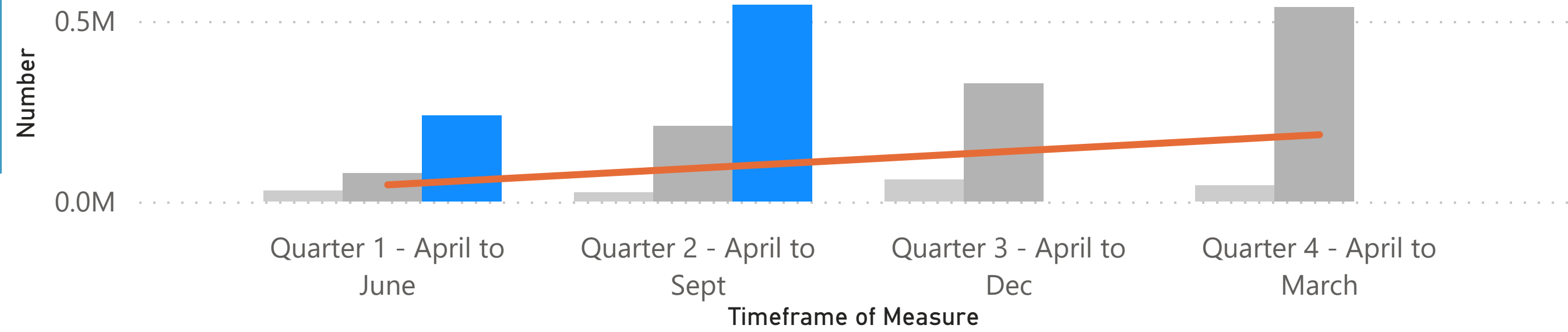
ID3.3 - Number of People Accessing the Museum's collections online and in person

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

FY ● 2021/22 ● 2022/23 ● 2023/24 ● Target

Cllr. Jill Waring



545.01K✓

Target:

92.50K

Not Required as Target Met

High

Is Good

Cumulative
(Per
Annum)

Positive

Yearly Trend

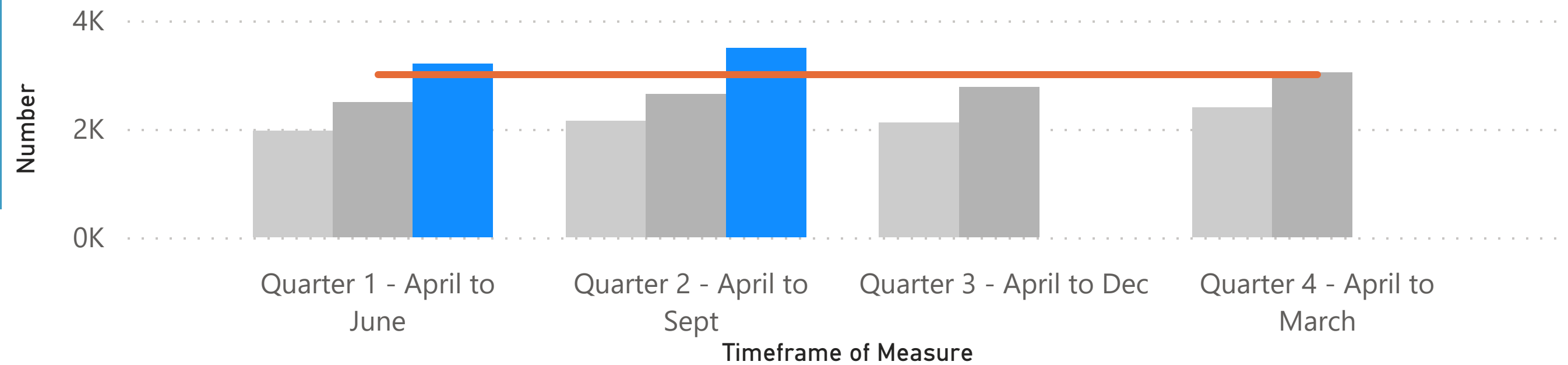
ID3.4 - J2 Membership growth

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

FY ● 2021/22 ● 2022/23 ● 2023/24 ● Target

Cllr. Jill Waring



3.49K✓

Target:

3.00K

Not Required as Target Met

High

Is Good

Per
Quarter
(Snapshot)

No
Change

Yearly Trend

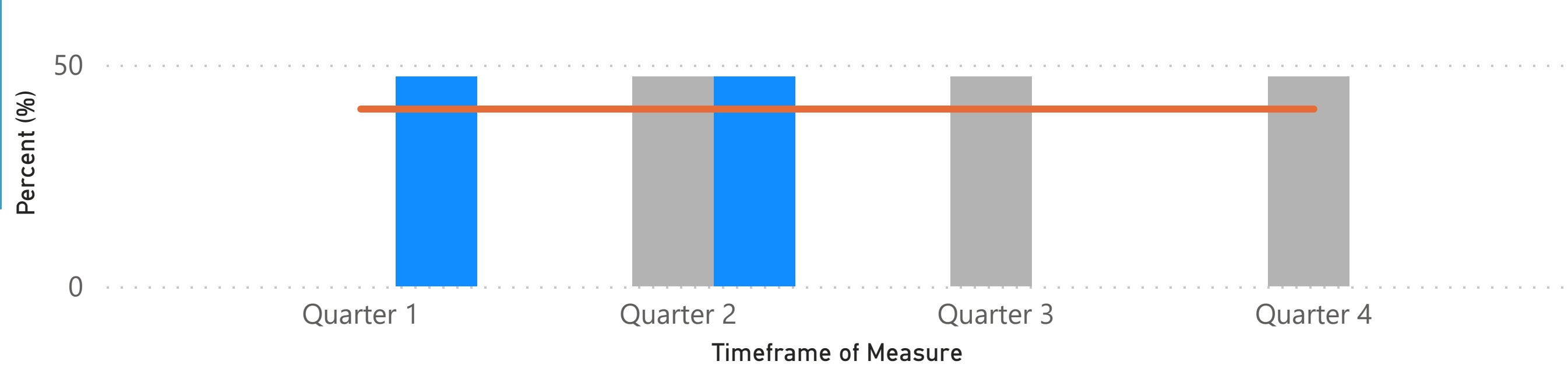
ID3.5 - Jubilee 2 Customer Satisfaction – Net Promotor Score

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

FY ● 2021/22 ● 2022/23 ● 2023/24 ● End of Year Target

Cllr. Jill Waring



47.30✓

End of Year Target:

40.00

Not Required as Target Met

Low

Is Good

Per
Quarter
(Snapshot)

Negative

Yearly Trend

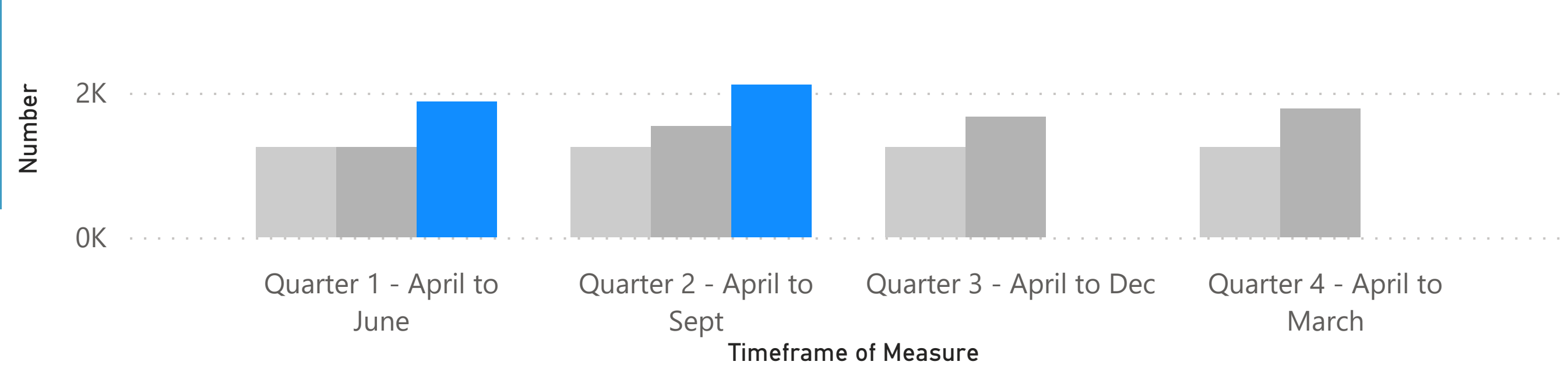
ID3.6 - Live application on the housing register

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

FY ● 2021/22 ● 2022/23 ● 2023/24

Cllr. Gill Heesom



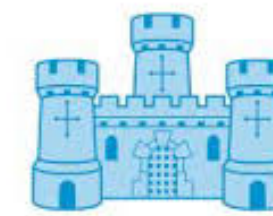
2.11K

Live application numbers reflects the increasing demand for social housing at a time of increasing housing costs

Timeframe of Measure	Blue	Dark Blue	Orange	Purple
Quarter 1	1.0	2.0	5.0	5.0
Quarter 2	4.0	3.0	5.0	2.0
Quarter 3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Quarter 4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0



Priority 3: Healthy, Active and Safe Communities



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BOROUGH COUNCIL

Project Status Split for Priority 3.

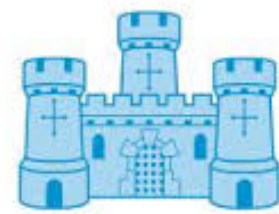
Project/Action is Progressing as Expected

6

Portfolio Holder	Service Area	Action	Corporate Objective	Status report	Commentary on progress
Cllr. Gill Heesom	Neighbourhoods	Build on our work with Staffordshire Police	Reduce anti-social behaviour and crime in our communities	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	Partnership working continues with Staffordshire Police, including a focus on Newcastle Town Centre enforcement of PSPO. Other initiatives are continuing, including the Safe Space for women and girls on Friday nights and the street pastors at weekends.
Cllr. Jill Waring	1. Commercial Delivery 2. Neighbourhoods	Delivering an economic and cultural legacy from the celebration of the borough's 850th anniversary in 2023.	Delivering an economic and cultural legacy from the celebration of the borough's 850th anniversary in 2023.	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	The museum continues to deliver a monthly programme of talks and events celebrating the 850. The first Chris Malkin memorial lecture was held on the Knights Templar of Keele, two history walks on Newcastle town and Newcastle cemetery have been held and the New Vic Theatre has launched the Astley Astounding Adventures show.
Cllr. David Hutchison	1. Neighbourhoods 2. Sustainable Environment	Expansion of the street warden scheme and the creation of neighbourhood delivery teams.	Secure a step change in street cleanliness and the quality of the public domain	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	Recruitment to vacant roles in the team has been successfully completed and training is in progress. Business as Usual is continuing across a number of environmental enforcement, community safety and neighbourhood issues.
Cllr. David Hutchison	Sustainable Environment	Further increasing recycling rates across the borough with a particular focus on food waste	Further increasing recycling rates across the borough with a particular focus on food waste	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	Nationally recycling rates have stalled and in some cases are going backwards. The Council is currently maintaining its recycling rates, and continues to look at opportunities to increase them, food waste being of particular focus.
Cllr. Simon Tagg	1. Strategy, People and Performance 2. Neighbourhoods	Work collaboratively with the Newcastle Partnership	Ensure that our most vulnerable residents are supported through the impact of the rising cost of living.	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	We are engaged with Better Health Staffordshire as well as projects around health inequalities, cost of living and community safety. Work has been undertaken to create a comprehensive list of partnership meetings and projects which feed into the Partnership Board to further embed knowledge across the Borough.
Cllr. Jill Waring	Neighbourhoods	Work with partners to develop effective community bodies	Support the development of community solutions to local problems	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	Support, advice and guidance continues to be offered to communities to assist in developing solutions to local neighbourhood issues and projects.

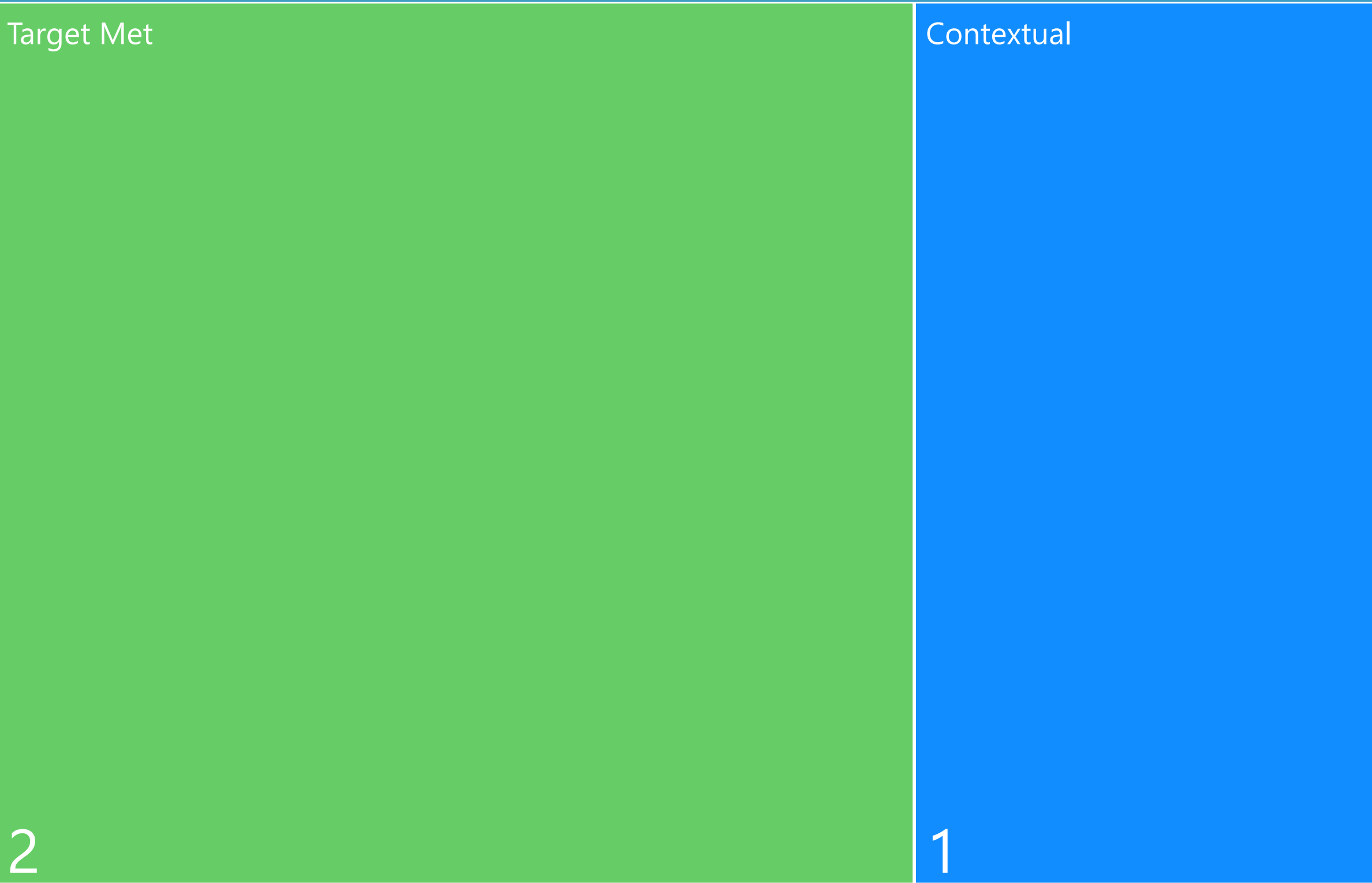


Priority 4: Town Centres for All



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BOROUGH COUNCIL

Priority 4: Performance Indicators Current Status



Corporate Aim (Priority)	Number of Indicators
Priority 4: Town Centres for All	3

Smart Narrative

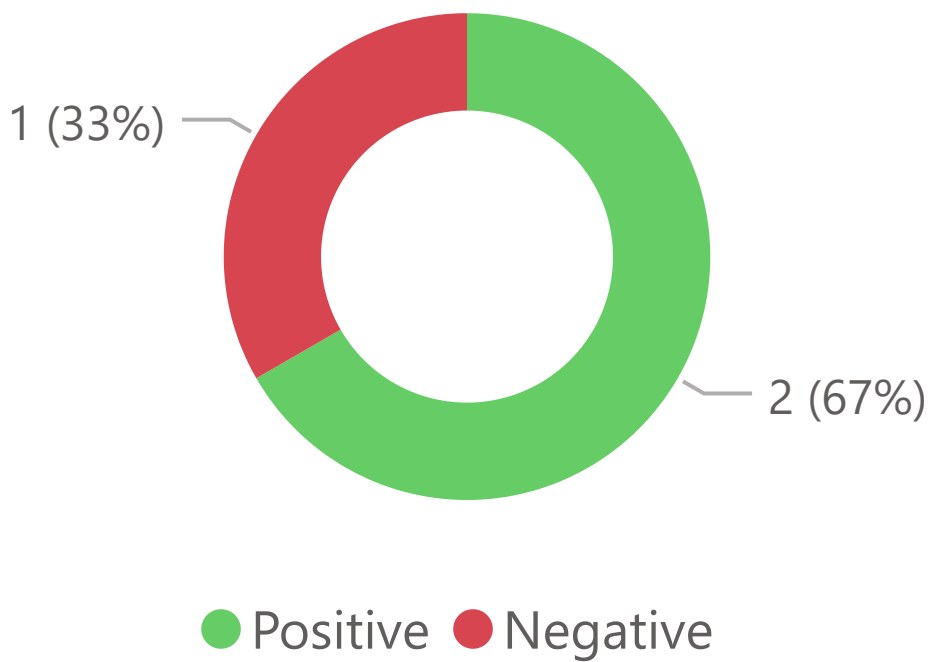
- There are 3 Indicators which have set targets this quarter within Priority 4.
- 100% of measures with set Target. met them within Quarter Two. With both indicators which met their target also showed improvement when compared to the same time period last year; the remaining 2 showed no change.
- There is 1 Indicators which are contextual this quarter and does not have a target to meet. When compared to last year, this measure demonstrated an improvement in terms of performance. 3.
- Within Priority 4, All Projects/Actions were identified to be progressing as expected.

Priority 3: Qtr.2 Summary Project Status Split

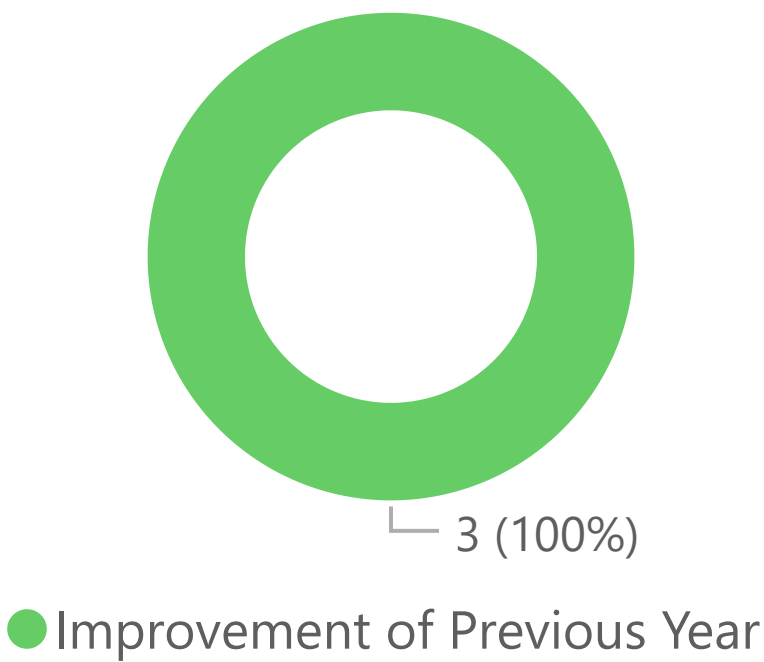
● Project/Action is Progressing as Expected

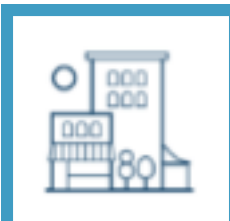


Priority 4: Qtr.2 Trend Direction of PI's Compared to Previous Quarter

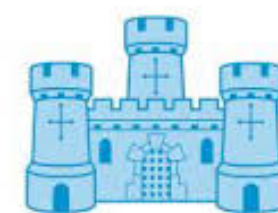


Priority 4: Qtr.2 Trend Status of PI's Compared On Same Qtr in the Previous Financial Year





Priority 4: Town Centres for All



NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Project Status Split for Priority 4.

Project/Action is Progressing as Expected

5

Portfolio Holder	Service Area	Action	Corporate Objective	Status report	Commentary on progress
Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	1. Commercial Delivery 2. Planning	Redeveloping Midway car park to provide aspirational town centre residential accommodation	Increasing the number of people living, working and using Newcastle town centre	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	Capital and Centric have been chosen as the developers for the site and initial surveys are underway.
Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	1. Neighbourhoods 2. Commercial Delivery	Developing a Town Centre Strategy for Kidsgrove	Encourage visitors and support local businesses in Kidsgrove	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	Town centre strategy drafted and consultation with Go Kidsgrove and Kidsgrove Town Council complete. Final strategy being prepared for publication on website.
Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	Commercial Delivery	Redevelopment of Ryecroft Site	Continuing to work with key partners to deliver the redevelopment of opportunities across the borough	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	The Council continues to work with several key partners to bring a variety of plans for different uses on the Ryecroft site. The development of the new multistorey car park is now commencing with initial ground works commencing. Procurement of the brand for the new hotel has been undertaken with a recommendation due to go to the October Cabinet.
Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	Commercial Delivery	Redevelopment of York Place	Continuing to work with key partners to deliver the redevelopment of opportunities across the borough	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	Work is progressing on the relocation of businesses at York Place to enable the redevelopment of the site. Capital and Centric have been appointed as the lead developer and plans are progressing for the tender and contract award for the partial demolition.
Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	Neighbourhoods	Further enhance the historic market and public realm and boost our signature specialist market programme	Further enhance the historic market and public realm and boost our signature specialist market programme	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	Work is in progress on preparing proposals to improve the market infrastructure and public realm. Consultation will take place in October and depending on the outcome, work will commence in November/December with completion due in March 2024.

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S REPORT TO ECONOMY AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE / FINANCE, ASSETS AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7th December 2023 and 13th December 2023

Report Title: Town Deal and Future High Street Funds Update

Submitted by: Deputy Chief Executive

Portfolios: Portfolio Holders - Finance, Town Centres and Growth

Ward(s) affected: All

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To update Scrutiny Committee on the Town Deal and Future High Street Funds projects.	
<u>Recommendation</u>	
That	
1. Scrutiny Committee notes this report on the delivery of the Town Deal and Future High Street Funds projects.	
<u>Reasons</u>	
To update the Scrutiny Committee on the progress with the various projects that are being funded or part funded through the two Town Deals – Newcastle and Kidsgrove, and the Future High Street Funds for Newcastle Town Centre.	

1. **Background**

- 1.1 As reported to previous Scrutiny meetings, the Council has secured Future High Street Funding and Town Deal Funds for the redevelopment of several key regeneration sites across the Town Centre and the wider Borough.

2. **Updates**

2.1 **Future High Street Fund**

Work has been continuing in the development of the schemes for the past couple of years, and the current position regarding each is as follows:

2.1.1 **Market improvements**

Work has been underway to upgrade the market experience through enhancing the existing assets and adding in new customer experiences in under utilised spaces at the bottom of High Street. It is planned to replace the fabric tops to the existing market stalls and the relocation / removal of some of the stalls along the bottom end of High Street to create spaces for pop up stalls and remove the under utilised fixed stalls that have become obsolete, to create a performance / market spill-over space, along with 'nipper parking' for quick, click and collect customers in the town, who only need up to 20 minutes of parking. (Funding £397k).

2.1.2 York Place

The Council purchased this site in March 2022 and secured planning consent in June 2023 for the demolition of the current building and rebuilding of a mixed-use development. Demolition works were due to commence in October 2023 but are on hold as the Council is currently investigating, with Capital and Centric, the retention of the main concrete frame and refurbishing the building around the retained frame. IT is currently envisaged that the project will contain residential units around an open courtyard, with offices in one 'wing' of the development. the Council is also looking at an entertainment venue as well as new commercial units on the ground floor for new restaurants and event spaces. It is anticipated that these will be developed and shared with the Council in mid-January 2024.(Funding £3m but anticipated to bring in a Capital receipt upon completion of the project).

Ryecroft

2.1.3 Castle Car Park

Planning consent was secured in June 2023 and a contract for delivery has been let to Morgan Sindall. Preliminary construction commenced in October 2023. with the main works commencing for the 450 space modern car park in January 2024, completion is due in the Autumn 2024. (Funding £12m (£3.50m from FSHF)).

2.1.4 McCarthy and Stone Residential Development

An area has now been agreed with McCarthy and Stone on the corner of Merrial Street and Corporation Street for a 50 unit, over 55 year old residential facility. Planning permission will be submitted in the new year with an anticipated start on site target date of mid 2024. (Capital receipt to be obtained for the land sale)

2.1.5 New Hotel

A procurement exercise has been undertaken to secure a brand that the hotel will operate under. Accor Hotels and Resorts have been selected for their Ibis Styles range. Initial works have commenced on design concepts and specifications required by the brand, through Capital and Centric design feasibility works. (option to operate the hotel and secure revenue funds or to obtain a capital receipt at the end of the project).

2.1.6 Aspire Housing

We are working with Aspire to establish a site boundary for them to develop out residential units. We anticipate that this work / site agreement will be finalised in the new year. (Capital receipt to be obtained for the land sale).

2.2 Capital and Centric and Regeneration Projects

2.2.1 Since the last Scrutiny meeting the Council has completed its appointment of Capital and Centric to produce outline feasibility studies for three of the Key Regeneration projects in the town centre – Ryecroft, York Place and the Midway Car Park.

2.2.2 Their appointment is in line with other projects that we have undertaken in that an initial study piece of work has been commissioned for the delivery of outline plans, initial cost estimates and programmes. These plans for the three projects are due to be presented to the Council in mid-January and then a decision will be made if these plans are affordable, desirable and deliverable. A subsequent Cabinet decision will then be made to appoint Capital and Centric to work up the schemes to a full planning application / approval stage, with fully costed and programmed schemes, for further approval should the Council decide to proceed.

2.2.3 Currently plans are being developed and only early plans have been discussed between all parties – the Council, Capital and Centric, Aspire Housing and McCarthy and Stone. To date there are no formal plans to share with the Scrutiny Committee, but it is anticipated that plans will be shared at the next meeting, if it is viable to proceed with Capital and Centric.

2.3 Newcastle Town Deal

Midway Car Park

2.3.1 Upon completion of the Castle Car Park on the Ryecroft site, the Midway Car Park will become surplus to requirements and therefore alternative uses will need to be considered. Funds are allocated in the Town Deal for its demolition, and the site is earmarked for residential development.



The Council has agreed to work with developer Capital and Centric to develop plans and the development of a business case for the Midway Car Park site, with the intent to start on this project element later in 2024 when the new Castle Car Park has opened. Early-stage survey work has been completed which will inform the development proposals that are put forward by Capital and Centric. It is currently anticipated that the concrete frame will be retained and the new development will be built off this frame, whilst cutting through various sections / elements to accommodate light wells and lift shafts. (Funding £1m with a potential capital receipt at the end of the project).

2.3.2 Astley Performing Arts Centre



Since confirmation that DLUHC had approved this project in August 2023 work has been completed at pace. Refurbishment of the Merrial Street building is well advanced in time for the fit-out contractor to start on site on week commencing 11 December 2023 to install the display elements. The Philip Astley CIC are due to take control of the building before Christmas and are busy with their delivery plans. The Centre is due to open to the public in January 2024. That will complete phase 1 delivery of this project with phase 2 due to commence in 2025. (Funding £1.81m)

2.3.3 Knutton and Chesterton

Knutton



Christmas.

The Project Adjustment Request that was submitted to DLUHC was approved in September 2023. This was to remove housing outputs from Town Deal to enable Homes England funding to be attracted for residential development at the High Street and former Community Centre sites. In September 2023 Aspire Housing submitted a planning application for residential development at the High Street site, this is due to be considered in early 2024. <http://publicaccess.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/online-applications/PLAN/23/00771/FUL>

An application for the former community centre site is currently under development and is hoped to be submitted before

Planning permission for the extension to the Enterprise Centre was granted in July 2023 <http://publicaccess.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/online-applications/PLAN/23/00138/FUL>. A grant funding agreement with Staffordshire County Council was completed in November 2023. Work is scheduled to start on site in March 2024.

In September 2023, the Borough Council authorised officers to develop plans for a village hall at High Street in Knutton to planning application stage. It is vital however that interest is attracted in forming a committee to run the village hall if this development is to progress.

The Council was successful in securing Football Foundation funding toward development of football changing rooms at the Wammy. Unfortunately, however the Council is in the position of having to re-tender for a contractor to build the changing rooms so the start on site for this project will be delayed until this is completed. (Funding £3.534m)

Cross Street Chesterton



Aspire Housing are continuing to deliver the earlier housing phases of this development. Town Deal funding was requested for the later phases of delivery however it has been necessary to review outputs attributable to each funding provider to ensure the correct outputs are being attributed to each funding source. The Council is still working with Aspire to finalise details for a Project Adjustment Request (PAR), a draft PAR has been submitted to DLUHC for an initial review to inform what further work might need to be done to finalise this request. (Funding £2.955m)

2.3.4 Zanzibar Enterprise Units

These are to be Council owned small enterprise units to rent to small and developing businesses on North Street. The development is part of the wider former Zanzibar Nightclub site, owned by Aspire Housing. Morgan Sindall have been appointed on a design and build basis to develop out the residential scheme that Aspire have plans for and these units will be constructed at the same time. Initial plans have been shared but are still being worked on. The development is due to start on site in 2024 with a planned completion date in late 2025. (Funding £2.81m)

2.3.5 Walking and Cycling Provision

Works for these schemes has begun through Staffordshire County Council with cycling improvements implemented along George Street, at Gallowstree Roundabout and works will commence along Barracks Road in the new year. (Funding £950k)

2.3.6 Sustainable Travel

Following planning permission to install Real Time Passenger Information Totems (RTPI) at Newcastle Bus Station, work has been undertaken to install the power feeds for these and a works licence has been granted for the installation of the totems. Minor works have been undertaken by Staffordshire County Council in Merrial Street to lift the tree canopies that were overcrowding the bus shelters in this area. Costs have been established for the installation of RTPI in these bus shelters and a grant funding agreement is to be done for both Merrial Street and a further phase of RTPI which is proposed to be installed at bus stops around the Newcastle Town Deal area. Staffordshire County Council has established the bus stops which have the highest weekly use and the proposed locations are based on this work:



Stop Name	Stage Name	Total Passengers
Queen Elizabeth Park	Newcastle	482
Cherry Tree PH	Newcastle	448
Sainsbury's	Newcastle	406
Library	Chesterton	396
The Parade	Silverdale	346
Shops	Knutton / Cross Heath	276
Home Farm Drive	Keele	274
Rotterdam Road	Poolfields	237
Sneyd Arms	Keele	216
Drayton Street	Pool Dam	203
Wain Avenue	Poolfields	193

In other elements of this project, the team at Keele University are progressing plans for the new bus entrance with the aim of it being opened for the start of the 2024/25 academic year. Further development work is to be done on proposals for the new circular bus route before it can be commissioned for operation. (Funding £3.421m)

2.3.7 Digital Society – 53 Iron Market (Keele in Town)



The team at Keele University has been pushing on with delivery of Keele in Town, with publicity around the submission for planning permission receiving a positive response in the local press. ([Keele in Town - Keele University](#)). Planning permission was granted in September 2023 <http://publicaccess.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/online-applications/PLAN/23/00635/FUL>. Following a competitive procurement process a demolition contractor has started the strip out of the building. Procurement of a fit-out contractor is well underway, and the successful contractor will start on site in early

2024. Further information sessions with local businesses and residents are planned for 2024 and Keele in Town is due to launch in October 2024. (Funding £3.51m).

2.3.8 EV Charging Points

Construction of the new Castle Car Park where the EV charging points are to be delivered is delayed slightly due to a key supplier to Morgan Sindall going into administration. Construction will now start in January 2024 with the car park and new EV charging points opening in autumn 2024. Procurement of a partner for operation of the EV charging points will commence in December 2023 so that they are in place ready for opening of Castle Car Park. (Funding £400k).

2.3.9 Digital infrastructure



In response to the rapidly changing digital infrastructure environment, the subgroup agreed that it would be beneficial to commission a specialist review to support delivery of this project. Following a competitive procurement process, Regional Network Solutions was appointed to undertake this work. Over 26 stakeholder interviews took place in October 2023, including a range of local partners and commercial fibre providers. A report with proposals for delivery is in draft form and will be discussed at a Board meeting to be scheduled for December 2023. (Funding £2.285m)

2.4 Kidsgrove Town Deal

2.4.1 Chatterley Valley

The Town Deal has paid for the highway / entrance works to the new site, which are currently underway, yet subject to some delay due to the contractor going into administration in late Summer. AMEY have been appointed to complete the works and have started on site. (Funding £3.7m).

The Council is also working with the land owner on the development of the overall site and there is a potential for the Council to invest in the site for commercial returns and regeneration of the site – to bring employment opportunities to the Borough as set out below:

Plot D - to construct a circa 120,000 sq. ft. unit which will be let to an advanced ceramics organisation and associated research facility,

Plot C - to construct a circa 78,000 sq. ft. of industrial space which will be, split into units ranging from 19,000 sq. ft to 33,000 sq. ft. When built these units will form part of the Council's non-operational (investment portfolio) and be leased out.

Both of these developments and Council investments were subject to Cabinet approval on the 5th December 2023.

Both schemes / investments came to Cabinet on the 5th December 2023 to seek approval to undertake an independent third party review of the investment business cases prior to any decision being made on taking the investments further.

2.4.2 Kidsgrove Train Station works

There is currently an issue with the costs of car park underpinning due to mine works underground, which are being worked through. Network Rail are looking into costs and scope of works required and there is a suggestion that the HS2 cancellation will result in funds being transferred to this issue. We are awaiting feedback on several fronts before the scheme can progress. (Funding £3.85m)

2.4.3 Canal Pathways

Works are being developed by the Canal and Rover Trust with implementation during 2024. (Funding £420k)

2.4.4 Shared Service Hub

A site for the development has now been selected alongside the station in Kidsgrove – the Dales Garage and adjacent Car Park sites. Plans are being drawn to provide a new facility for Dales Garage and create the space for the Shared Hub.

Works are underway with a planning application submitted and a CIC to manage and operate the facility. (Funding £6.5m)

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Scrutiny Committee notes the progress made to date and continues to receives further reports at subsequent meetings.

4. Reasons

- 4.1 Generating efficiencies and additional income by adopting a more commercial approach is a key in the Council's plans for maintaining financial sustainability in the medium to long term. The Commercial Strategy provides a framework for managing and coordinating commercial activities, it is appropriate that the Council reviews key major projects when they are at an appropriate stage of business planning and contract award.

5. Options Considered

- 5.1 The Council continues to progress a number of strategies and approaches to ensure that it can maintain a financially sustainable future and deliver the key priorities set out in the Council plan.

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 6.1 The Local Government Act 2000 - powers to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the Borough.
- 6.2 The Council will need to make sure that its commercial activities are legally and state aid compliant, including having regard to the Public Sector Duty within the Equality Act 2010, statutory guidance on local authority investments and The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.
- 6.3 All commercial projects and investment opportunities will be examined to ensure that they are within the Council's powers and legal implications will be identified on a case-by-case basis.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1 The development of these projects does not create any specific equality impacts.

8. Financial and Resource Implications

- 8.1 The Council was awarded Future High Streets Fund funding in June 2021 of £11.0m to progress projects to help future economic growth. The full £11.0m has now been received of which £5.7m has been spent at 30 September 2023, as shown below:

Project	Award (£000's)	Spend/Ordered (£000's)	Remaining (£000's)
Ryecroft / Site Preparation	3,756	2,799	957
Multi Story Car Park	3,500	654	2,846
York Place	3,015	1,938	1,077
Stones Public Realm	321	-	321
Market Stalls	76	3	73
Project Management	380	260	120
Total	11,048	5,654	5,394

8.2 £23.6m was awarded to the Council via the Town Deals Fund for Newcastle to enable a vision to improve communications, infrastructure, and connectivity in Newcastle-under-Lyme to become a reality. £15.0m has been received to date of which £1.0m has been spent as shown below:

Project	Award (£000's)	Spend/Ordered (£000's)	Remaining (£000's)
Digital Infrastructure	2,285	-	2,285
Sustainable Public Transport	3,421	-	3,421
Electric Vehicle Charging	400	-	400
Pedestrian Cycle Permeability	950	-	950
Transform Key Gateway Sites	3,810	-	3,810
Astley Centre for Circus	1,810	12	1,798
Digital Society	3,510	273	3,237
Heart into Knutton Village	3,534	169	3,365
Cross Street, Chesterton	2,955	-	2,955
Project Management	925	529	396
Total	23,600	983	22,617

8.3 £16.9m has also been awarded via the Town Deals fund for Kidsgrove to enable real and lasting economic benefits to be realised in Kidsgrove and the surrounding area. To date £9.2m has been received of which £6.8m has been spent as shown below:

Project	Award (£000's)	Spend/Ordered (£000's)	Remaining (£000's)
Kidsgrove Sports Centre	2,328	2,328	-
Chatterley Valley West	3,661	3,661	-
Kidsgrove Station	3,638	182	3,456
Shared Services Hub	6,183	25	6,158
Canal Enhancement	420	-	420
Project Management	670	608	62
Total	16,900	6,804	10,096

9. Major Risks & Mitigation

- 9.1 Management of risk is central to the Council's commercial approach and all potential activities will be assessed with due regard to the risks being taken. This will be in line with the Council's corporate approach to risk management.

10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)

- 10.1 These projects support the realisation of the following UNSDG objectives:-



11. Key Decision Information

- 11.1 The plans affect more than 2 wards and any future investments have the potential to have significant financial implications. These will be subject to further reports which may be key decisions.

12. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

- 12.1 None.

13. List of Appendices

- 13.1 None.

14. Background Papers

- 14.1 None.

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S REPORT TO

Finance Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee

13 December 2023

Report Title: Technology Strategy 2023-2028 Report

Submitted by: Service Director – IT & Digital

Portfolios: One Council, People and Partnerships

Ward(s) affected: All

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To present the 2023-2028 Technology Strategy to scrutiny.			
<u>Recommendation</u> That: 1. The Strategy be considered by the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee and feedback be provided to the Portfolio Holder for One Council, People and Partnerships.			
<u>Reasons</u> 1. The current ICT strategy was implemented as an interim strategy in 2022. 2. There is a requirement to amalgamate the ICT and Digital strategies and team into one team – Technology Services. 3. A Strategy is required to provide a high-level, clear direction of travel towards the Council vision and objectives.			

1. Background

- 1.1 The current ICT strategy was an interim strategy created in 2022. However, since this time, there has been significant change within the ICT and Digital teams. As technology continues to move at pace, it is important that the Council has a clear direction of travel towards the adoption of the latest digital technology and tools in support of the Council plan priorities.

- 1.2 The Council, like many other organisations are becoming increasingly reliant upon Technology to deliver outcomes that meet the needs and requirements of our residents, businesses, and visitors.

2. Issues

- 2.1 In both the medium and long term, there will be a number of challenges to overcome in ensuring that technology continues to deliver, aid and support the council priorities.
- 2.2 This strategy highlights the need for continued financial investment, whilst at the same time rationalising existing systems and spend to ensure affordability and efficiency. It is important that the council continues to invest in technology, but in a way that is affordable.
- 2.3 It is important for effective governance to be in place to ensure that any decisions regarding future technological advancements are in-line with the corporate Technology Strategy as well as working to support the Council Priorities. This governance will ensure that all opportunities are explored prior to the procurement of new services/solutions, i.e., using existing systems and services.
- 2.4 The strategy also sets out our vision for technology and how the Council will utilise all modern technologies and tools to enable, enhance and redefine how our services are delivered. The strategy also sets out the importance of making it easy and inclusive for residents, promoting online services as the default method of access and supporting the development of digital within the borough. Whilst still ensuring we continue to provide a choice of access for those who do not have access or the skills to use digital technologies.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 The Strategy be considered by the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee and feedback be provided to the Portfolio Holder for One Council, People and Partnerships

4. Reasons

- 4.1 The new Technology Strategy provides a high-level, strategic document detailing how technology will support the delivery of the Council plan priorities in the coming years. It also emphasises the importance of iterative transformation, supported by the allocation of future resources.
- 4.2 To address the highlighted issues, the strategy sets out three Strategic Themes and Actions:
- 4.2.1 **Customer** – Supporting our residents to access the services and information they require online. Whilst ensuring a choice of access for those who are not digitally connected.

4.2.2 Workforce – Ensuring our workforce have the digital skills required to deliver services our customers, as effectively and efficiently as possible.

4.2.3 Infrastructure – Supporting the enhancement of technological infrastructure within the Borough, with access to high-speed fibre broadband and internet connectivity.

4.3 To ensure the delivery of this strategy, an action plan will be developed and provided to Cabinet for consideration at a future meeting.

5. Options Considered

5.1 None

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

6.1 There is a requirement for our website to be compliant with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018. This strategy confirms our ambition for our website to not only be compliant but also rated highly nationally for accessibility.

6.2 There is a requirement for everyone responsible for using personal data to follow strict data protection principles, as part of the Data Protection Act 2018. This strategy confirms our commitment to ensuring that we use personal data in accordance with legislation.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

7.1 There are no direct equality implications resulting from the adoption of the Technology Strategy.

8. Financial and Resource Implications

8.1 Whilst there is no direct financial or resource implications in adopting the Technology Strategy, there is a requirement for continued investment in technology initiatives. The financial and resource implications of such initiatives will be documented as part of the specific proposals, supported by the Technology Strategy.

8.2 This Strategy has been developed by the existing Technology Services team.

9. Major Risks & Mitigation

9.1 The council runs a risk to the delivery of operational services where it fails to invest in ICT and modern technologies.

9.1.1 This is an identified risk within the Corporate Risk Management system under the ICT Services profile.

9.1.2 The council have already taken steps to mitigate this risk with control measures, such as the implementation of a Technology Strategy, Consolidation of hardware and software and One Council transformation programme.

9.1.3 The continued investment in technology is a defined action to reduce and mitigate this risk.

10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)

10.1 The Technology Strategy works to support the Council's commitment to ensuring a sustainable future that leads to improvements within our communities, whilst striving to reduce our own impact on the environment in everything we do.



11. Key Decision Information

11.1 None

12. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

12.1 Cabinet meeting on 5 December 2023.

13. List of Appendices

13.1 Technology Strategy 2023-2028

14. Background Papers

14.1 None

TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY

2023 - 2028



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1. Foreword

The Council recognises the huge technological changes that have taken place over the last few years and how these are rapidly transforming our lives – whether that’s how we shop, travel, work, communicate or eat. It is important therefore that every organisation adopts new ways of working to benefit from these new technologies, and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council is no different.

Alongside this, the Government recently set out their ambition to make the UK [a science and technology superpower](#) and to prioritise economic growth. As a local council, we are focused on unlocking and leading economic growth in our Borough and see technology as a key driver through which to achieve this.

Our new Technology Strategy sets out the Council’s vision for the next five years; outlining how we will use and promote technology to provide high-quality, responsive, and efficient services and opportunities for our residents, businesses, and visitors. Our aim is for the Borough to be recognised as a forward-thinking and innovative place that adopts digital technologies to improve and enhance the lives of our residents and outcomes for our businesses.

The Council will work to further develop our ‘digital first’ approach, in line with the principles of our [One Council](#) programme. Identifying opportunities to improve the equality of services, adapting working practices and further refining our existing digital offer, whilst ensuring that we continue to provide choice of access to residents, businesses, and visitors.

Our 2023-2028 Technology Strategy will also underpin and support the delivery of the council’s vision and four strategic priorities, as part of the [Council Plan 2022 to 2026](#):

- One Council delivering for local people.
- A successful and sustainable growing borough
- Health, active and safe communities
- Town centres for all



Cllr Simon Tagg

Leader of the Council



Martin Hamilton

Chief Executive

2. Commitment

For most, digital technology is an essential part of daily life - whether shopping, banking online or keeping in touch with friends and family. This has changed how people expect to interact with the Council.

To meet these changing expectations, we need to enhance and expand our digital offer across all interactions. Much of this work has already begun, through our One Council programme, which in the last three years has delivered annual savings of one million pounds.

However, we're not stopping here. We need to expand and redefine our online services to make them as simple and user-friendly as possible, ensuring that they provide you with the information you need when you need it.

While many of our residents regularly use digital services in their day-to-day lives, some people do not feel as confident, and we're committed to ensuring that these people are not left behind.

Our new Technology Strategy seeks to build a framework for the council's future service delivery and engagement with customers, using digital technologies.

3. Vision

This strategy describes how the council will use modern technologies and digital tools to enable, enhance and redefine how services are delivered to both internal and external customers.

Central to this strategy is tackling the digital divide: the gap between those with access to digital devices, connectivity, and skills, and those without.

Over the last decade, the use of technology has changed dramatically. Large public sector organisations have set a new level of expectation regarding the access, ease of use, availability, and functionality of digital services – and it is now clear that customers expect local government and other public services to meet these same expectations.

Therefore, as an organisation, we need to understand the latest technological changes and how these can benefit our service delivery and overall effectiveness. This change will provide a foundation from which to exploit opportunities such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), 5G and Virtual Reality (VR).

This strategy sets out the council's approach to the required changes, along with our vision for a digital first, modern council which will:

- Make it easy and inclusive for residents, businesses, and visitors to access our services 24/7/365.
- Develop easy-to-use, accessible, and inclusive online services, alongside our more traditional methods of access.
- Support opportunities for digital jobs and investment.
- Work with partners to build a digital borough.
- Support business growth through technological advancements and connectivity e.g., fibre broadband, 5G.

To deliver this vision, we will need to ensure technology is embedded and embraced by all service areas across the council and tailored for residents, businesses, and visitors. Whilst it is key that our digital offerings keep pace with new technologies, we must do this in an inclusive way that supports all.

4. Where are we?

Number of residents – 123,300 (2021 census)

Annual Website visitors – 298973 (Nov 2022 to October 2023)

Monthly active MyAccount users – 30k active users per month

Inbound Telephony Calls in last 12 months – 100k

Emails – Over 500k

Forms submitted online – 75487 (Nov 2022 to October 2023)

Online Payments (inc Website, Direct Debit) – 91% of payments now completed online

Broadband Connectivity - 97% of residents have access to Superfast broadband (≥ 30 Mbps), although only 45% have access to full fibre ([FTTP or FTTH](#)). [ThinkBroadband.com]

5. Strategic Themes and Actions

We will do this by focusing on three strategic themes:

Residents & Customer

What it means:

- *Supporting our residents, businesses, and visitors to access the services and information they require online. Whilst ensuring we provide a choice of access for those who are not digitally connected.*
- Providing as many services online as possible, so our customers can book, order, report, pay and connect with us digitally.
- Harnessing automation, self-service, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to support service delivery and efficiency.
- Maintaining a clear understanding our residents, businesses, and visitors and their service requirements.
- Being an accessible and inclusive council.

Aims

- Improve our digital services so that our residents, visitors, and businesses use them as their preferred method of contacting the Council.
- Develop a single view of the customer by joining our data and systems together.
- Learn from the best public and private sector organisations, ensuring that our services are simple, intuitive, and inclusive.
- Focus the design of digital services on the complete customer journey. Ensuring that from first contact, progress updates and final closure of a case, customers have access to the information they require.
- Develop the customer portal to include as many council services as possible, allowing residents to self-serve.
- Develop the use of technologies such as AI, chatbots and robotics to improve customer service and access.
- Support our residents and businesses to become more digitally aware.
- Ensure that our website is rated highly nationally on the [Sitemorse Index](#) accessibility reports and is compliant with the [Public Sector Bodies \(Websites and Mobile Applications\) Accessibility Regulations 2018](#).

Workforce

What it means:

- Ensuring our workforce has the digital skills required to deliver services to our customers, as effectively and efficiently as possible, as well as the capacity for continuous learning and adaptation to respond to developments and changes.
- Providing the necessary tools to support the exploitation of data and data-led decision-making.
- Rationalise data and systems to remove duplicity and manual processing.
- Ensuring compliance with the General Data Protection Act 2018 by following the '[Data Protection Principles](#)'
- Support the core themes of our People Strategy by creating an engaged, empowered and developed workforce.

Aims

- Ensure our staff have access to the most appropriate technologies to support their role e.g., laptops, mobile devices, data dashboards, software etc.
- Support our workforce with the digital skills they need to deliver services more efficiently and effectively, working towards becoming a paperless and sustainable organisation.
- Provide staff with the tools to work remotely or in the 'field'.
- Ensure data, information and insight are used to improve services and service delivery.
- Create a culture of agility that allows the council to respond, adapt and harness new technologies to support service delivery.
- Ensure our recruitment and workforce planning processes support the recruitment of a digitally skilled workforce.
- Ensure Councillors have access to appropriate technology that is fit for purpose and supports their role within the community.
- Contribute to the Government's ambition to place the UK at the forefront of technology.

Infrastructure

What it means:

- *Work to enhance the technological infrastructure within the Borough, supporting access to high-speed fibre broadband and internet connectivity.*
- *Work with partners to develop employment and growth opportunities.*
- *Ensure the security of data and systems through effective cyber-security controls, supporting our compliance with the [General Data Protection Act 2018](#).*

Aims

- Ensure investment in digital infrastructure leads to improved and enhanced customer access and services.
- Support the Government's full-fibre and 5G network connectivity initiatives and programmes, promoting economic growth and development.
- Explore opportunities to integrate technological infrastructure and systems with partners.
- Ensure our infrastructure and IT systems remain fit for purpose and agile to future requirements.
- Implement effective cyber-security controls and defences to provide a safe and secure IT environment.
- Migrate to cloud technologies, decommissioning our IT data centres to realise cost savings and environmental sustainability benefits.
- Utilise the latest technologies across our systems and websites.

6. Digital Inclusion

The [UK Digital Inclusion Strategy](#) suggests that there are a number of barriers that can affect people from using digital services, including:

- **Access** – not everyone has the capability to connect to the internet.
- **Skills** – not everyone has the skills to use digital technologies and devices.
- **Trust** – some people lack trust in digital technology, for fear of becoming the victim of cybercrime or not knowing where to start.
- **Motivation** – knowing the reasons why using the internet is a good thing

Digital inclusion is central to our strategy. Whilst we aim for our digital services to become the default and efficient method of access, we understand there is a requirement for us to provide a choice of access for those who do not have the access or skills to use digital technologies.

As an organisation, we will aim to improve confidence, access, and skills by:

- **Design** – designing our systems and websites in line with the Government's [Digital Inclusion checklist](#) ensuring that they are easy-to-use, accessible, and inclusive.
- **Awareness** – presenting all available options to contact the Council, whilst continuing to highlight that our digital services remain the most efficient method of access.
- **Training** – promoting partners and local support groups who offer digital training and support ([Staffordshire Community Learning](#), [Citizens Online](#))
- **Access** – increasing the number of free-to-use computers in key locations, such as council buildings.
- **Connectivity** – enhancing the Borough's connectivity to the internet through the deployment of full-fibre broadband and free Wi-Fi access in Council buildings.

7. Cloud Computing

Cloud Computing is the delivery of on-demand delivery of IT resources and infrastructure over the internet. Instead of buying, owning, and maintaining physical data centres and servers, Cloud Computing allows access the latest technology services on a pay-as-you-use basis.

There are many associated benefits of cloud computing:

- **Sustainability** – Reduction in the on-premises energy consumption and physical hardware requirements.
- **Agility** – Quickly and easily access the latest technologies as and when they are released.
- **Elasticity** – Pay for what you use. Allowing you to quickly scale-up and down to meet demand without having to over-provision resources up-front.
- **Cost Savings** – Remove the large up-front costs of purchasing IT hardware, along with the ongoing contracts for electricity, maintenance, air conditioning and security.

Moving away from on-premises infrastructure and towards cloud computing will enable the council to operate at scale, maximise efficiency and drive greater savings and sustainability.

8. Cyber Security

Cyber security is a growing risk to both the private and public sector, with the ever-present threat of data loss, hacking, and ransom attacks. This is predominantly due to the large amount of sensitive data and assets of value to cyber criminals and hackers.

It is therefore imperative that the council allocates a proportional amount of resource towards the implementation and maintenance of suitable cyber defence measures to keep cybercriminals at bay. Alongside, regular security testing, auditing, and patching, adherence to the Future Network for Government (previously Public Services Network) standards and reviews of threat detection and protection systems.

9. Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

A strong Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform is the foundation on which to develop a single view of our customers and neighbourhoods, as well as enabling the delivery of complex and varied services to residents.

The key deliverables of the platform include:

- A single, online, easy-to-use 'front door' for interactions with the council, accessible 24 hours a day.
- The ability to check on a request or report and see the progress.
- Operational efficiency and effectiveness through automation and AI.
- Data reporting to support data-led decision-making, improvements, and analysis of performance.
- Consolidation of systems and processes.
- Agility to support future requirements of the council.

The continued development, refinement and review of the councils CRM solution will continue to support the principles of the [One Council](#) programme.

10. Future Technology

This strategy highlights the need to continue to invest and move at pace to realise the potential of future technologies, we cannot therefore become complacent. Instead, we will need to continue to:

- Make investments in the latest technology to enable officers to undertake their roles effectively and efficiently.
- Make investments into our Cloud Computing solution to realise cost savings and other efficiencies, such as reductions in carbon footprint.
- Exploit existing investments in technology to realise the full potential. E.g., utilising the full product suite within our Microsoft 365 licensing.
- Identify and realise savings through system rationalisation and efficiency. Alongside, opportunities for joint procurement, where these highlight cost savings or benefits for NuLBC.
- Exploit new technologies to drive efficiency, automation, and innovation e.g., robotics, AI, IoT and VR.
- Promote the importance of strong cyber-security defences and allocate resources accordingly.
- Allocate future funding to continue to develop our technology estate.
- Receive the commitment, engagement and support of all employees and members.

11. Governance

Adopting the right technologies, systems, processes, and culture is crucial to not only the success of this strategy, but the wider success of the Council. However, with change and technological advancement comes existential risk. It is therefore essential that the council implements robust governance measures, ensuring that we:

- ✓ Understand the needs of our residents, businesses, visitors, and colleagues.
- ✓ Manage both our business-as-usual operations and complex change programmes carefully.
- ✓ Use resources effectively and efficiently.
- ✓ Invest cautiously, understanding risk vs reward.
- ✓ Prioritise thoughtfully and intuitively.
- ✓ Innovate safely.
- ✓ Remain agile to change.

Our Technology governance arrangements are designed to work alongside the Council's existing committees and working groups, such as Cabinet, 'Finance, Audit and Performance Scrutiny' (FAPS), Information Governance Group, Technology Steering Group alongside regular portfolio holder briefings. These arrangements are intended to set the strategic direction, simplify processes, support cross-departmental collaboration, and prioritise the most important areas of need.

12. Summary

This strategy creates a foundation of technological advancements that will allow the council to continue to refine and develop for years to come.

The process of transformation is iterative. It is therefore important that as technology changes and develops, so must this strategy. One thing that should always remain unchanged is that our residents, businesses, and communities remain at the heart of everything we do.

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FINANCE, ASSETS AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Work Programme 2023/24

Chair

Cllr M. Holland

Vice-Chair

Cllr A. Bryan

Members

Cllrs D. Allport, R. Bettley-Smith, W. Brockie, R. Lewis, A. Lawley, A. Parker, M. Stubbs, J. Tagg and P. Waring

Scrutiny Champion

Sarah Wilkes

Portfolio Holders within the Committee's remit

Cllr S. Tagg, Leader – One Council, People and Partnerships

Cllr S. Sweeney - Deputy Leader – Finance, Town Centres and Growth

This committee scrutinises how the council, as a whole, performs. It scrutinises how the council develops and implements its various plans and strategies. It scrutinises how the council plans for and uses its finances (including income generation) and other assets including plant and machinery, equipment, vehicles, land and buildings and staff. In scrutinising the council's performance, it will also consider how the council performs alongside the organisations it works in partnership with.

This Work Programme is set and reviewed at quarterly meetings of the Scrutiny Management Group. The Chair and Vice Chair also meet regularly with the Portfolio Holders to discuss this Work Programme. There is an opportunity for committee Members to discuss the Work Programme at each committee meeting. Part D of the Council's [Constitution](#) governs the scrutiny process.

For more information on the Committee or its work Programme please contact the Democratic Services:

✚ Geoff Durham at geoff.durham@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk or on (01782) 742222

✚ Alexandra Bond at alexandra.bond@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk or on (01782) 742211

Planned Items

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	NOTES
13 December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Q2 Finance and Performance Report - Draft Savings Proposals 24/25 - Town Deal and Future High Streets Fund Update - Technology Strategy 2023-2028 	
18 January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revenue and Capital Strategies 24/25 - Draft Schedule of Fees and Charges 24/25 - Staff Health and Wellbeing Survey 	
14 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Q3 Finance and Performance Report - Commercial Strategy Update 	

Previous Items

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	NOTES
30 June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Q4 Finance and Performance Review - Asset Management Strategy 	
8 September 2022 CANCELLED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MTFS - Q1 Finance and Performance Review - Procurement Strategy - Commercial Strategy 	

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	NOTES
8 December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Q1 Finance & Performance Report 2022/23 - Q2 Finance & Performance Report 2022/23 - Commercial Strategy Update - 2023/24 Draft Savings Proposals 	
19 January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revenue and Capital Budget and Strategies 2023/24 - Schedule of Fees and Charges 2023/24 	
30 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Q3 Finance & Performance Report 2022/23 - One Council update 	
26 June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Q4 Finance & Performance Report 2022/23 - Commercial Strategy Update 	
25 September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asset Management Strategy - Medium Term Financial Strategy 24/25 - Q1 Finance and Performance Report - Commercial Strategy Update - Sickness Absence Reporting 	
9 November 2023	-Ryecroft Call-in Report	

Last updated on 5th December 2023

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