

Public Document Pack

Date of meeting Thursday, 5th December, 2024

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 - 12)
To consider the Minutes of a previous meeting.
- 4 **FIRST DRAFT SAVINGS PROPOSALS 2025/26** (Pages 13 - 40)
- 5 **FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER TWO - 2024/25** (Pages 41 - 76)
- 6 **TOWN DEAL AND FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND UPDATE** (Pages 77 - 90)
- 7 **WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 91 - 94)
- 8 **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
- 9 **URGENT BUSINESS**
To consider any business which is urgent within the meaning of Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972
- 10 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
Monday 17 December 2018 (7:00pm)

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

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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 :- Where the total membership of a committee is 12 Members or less, the quorum will be 3 members....Where the total membership is more than 12 Members, the quorum will be one quarter of the total membership.

SUBSTITUTE MEMBER SCHEME (Section B5 – Rule 2 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
	Adcock	J Waring

If you are unable to attend this meeting and wish to appoint a Substitute to attend on your place you need to identify a Substitute member from the list above who is able to attend on your behalf

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

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Agenda Item 3

Finance, Assets & Performance Scrutiny Committee - 18/09/24

FINANCE, ASSETS & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 18th September, 2024

Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

[View the agenda here](#)

[Watch the meeting here](#)

Present:	Councillor Mark Holland (Chair)	
Councillors:	Bryan J Tagg	Stubbs Edginton-Plunkett
Apologies:	Councillor(s) Parker, P Waring, Bettley-Smith, Brockie, Lewis and Lawley	
Substitutes:	Councillor David Grocott (In place of Councillor Wendy Brockie) Councillor Nicholas Crisp Councillor Dave Jones (In place of Councillor Rebekah Lewis) Councillor Andrew Fox-Hewitt (In place of Councillor Annabel Lawley)	
Officers:	Sarah Wilkes Georgina Evans-Stadward	Service Director - Finance / S151 Officer Service Director - Strategy, People and Performance
Also in attendance:	Councillor Stephen Sweeney	Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder - Finance, Town Centres and Growth

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received as listed above.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. **MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27th June 2024 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025/26 TO 2029/30**

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth presented the update on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for the upcoming five years. The Strategy had been agreed in February 2024 as part of the budget setting process and was designed to provide an overarching framework for the allocation of resources to the Council's key priorities in light of financial pressures forecasts.

Finance, Assets & Performance Scrutiny Committee - 18/09/24

Members submitted questions and responses were provided by the Service Director for Finance (S151 Officer).

Cllr Stubbs enquired about the £127k gas and electricity inflationary increase assumption for the year 2025-26. – It was advised that higher energy prices were still being experienced and, in addition to that there was additional usage with issues at J2. Councillor Stubbs referred to last year's MTFS where there had been a huge increase and this was a second one. Was there any thoughts that at some point these could be reduced in the budgets. It was advised that, while it was hoped that some of these energy costs would come down eventually there were currently no sign of reduction in energy prices.

Cllr Stubbs also asked if it was correct to say that an additional £476k borrowing costs were built into the Strategy. – Indeed these related to regeneration projects and would be partly covered by Capital and Centric as part of the business model.

Councillor Stubbs stated that the previous MTFS did have all of the projects in it and asked if any new projects been added to the current MTFS as, if that were the case, there were additional borrowing costs that members were not aware of last year. He was advised that the borrowing costs shown in the previous MTFS related to the new car park on the Ryecroft site but not the other projects because borrowing costs were not put into the Capital Programme until financial information was received on them.

Cllr Jones asked about the 3.5% pay award budgeted which fell under what had been actually awarded for the third year in a row. – This was discussed every year with the Staffordshire Chief Finance Officer Group with insights of what was happening at national level.

The Service Director for Finance (S151 Officer) advised that last year a higher increase had been expected. Officers sat on the Staffordshire Chief Finance Officer Group where all Staffordshire Councils came together to discuss their budget assumptions. There were lots of discussions over pay awards, including with West Midlands Employers. All of the information gained was then used as a guide.

Cllr Jones asked – going forward how could we avoid making the shortfall four years in a row. He was advised that assumptions could only be based on the information that was received.

The Chair commented that inflation was lower than in previous years.

Cllr Fox-Hewitt enquired about the risk assessment on capital reserves. – when could members expect to receive it? He was advised that, as part of the budget setting process, this report was the starting point. Meetings had been built in over the next four weeks - after which time the Service Director for Finance (S151 Officer) would work through the risk assessment and it should be available in December.

Councillor Stubbs referred to £100,000 that had been built in for restructuring costs and asked which department it was for. This information would be made available to members.

Cllr Stubbs asked about the Council's journey to become self sufficient and asked how the pressure of another £100,000 on income be justified when it was almost forecasting a drop of almost £400,000 each year. He was advised that there were

income areas where it was known that readjustments were required. Commercialisation was also being investigated.

Cllr Fox Hewitt referred to the £1.5m shortfall over the next twelve months and after that, £5.25m and asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth about the funding gap. The Portfolio Holder asked the Service Director-Finance (S151 Officer) to respond who advised that the £5.25m was over 5 years and included the £1.5m previously referred to. Regarding what was making those pressures up, the majority was pay awards. There was also business rate retention reset as it needed to be assumed that, if current business rates protection changed, there would be a gap of over £1.5m.

Cllr Fox-Hewitt asked if it was a mixture of anticipated savings through the Efficiency Board and reserves that would fill the gap. This was confirmed that efficiency savings would fill the gap.

The Chair advised that at the December meeting, the forecasts should be clearer and the document would be updated.

- Resolved:**
1. That the funding pressures of £1.429m in 2025/26 and £5.251m over the 5-year period covered by the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) be noted.
 2. That the approach regarding the development of savings and income generation proposals in the medium-term be noted.
 3. That the continued uncertainty regarding the medium-term impact on local government funding be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

5. **FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW REPORT - FIRST QUARTER 2024/25**

The Chair introduced the Financial and Performance Review Report stating that he would draw attention to the red indicators as they came up.

Cllr Stubbs referred to a line in the report that said that at the end of Q1, all savings had been achieved but there were no breakdowns of what they were or how they were achieved. The Service Director for Finance (S151 Officer) referred to appendix A where the savings were listed.

Cllr Jones asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth about an item under issues at paragraph 3.3. An amber action flag for Walleys Quarry stated that the Council was awaiting permission from the Secretary of State. Cllr Jones understood that permission had now been granted. The Portfolio Holder was asked if he was confident that there was enough money in the budget to undertake the legal proceedings. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that he was.

Cllr Stubbs, referring to the accounts, stated that there had not been any income from interest payments in the budget. There would be significant income sitting in the bank account that would provide significant income interest payments that were not in the budget.

The Service Director – Finance (S151 Officer) stated that, in respect of the interest receivables, there were forecasts which set out, as and when it would be spent and

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therefore it was expected that the funding would have been spent before it actually was and hence would not have generated interest.

Councillor Stubbs stated that over the last two years the Council had almost been saved by those interest payments but they weren't shown in the budgets and it was a significant amount.

The Service Director – Finance (S151 Officer) stated that, regeneration projects moved at different speeds. There was a plan of when certain aspects of the capital spend would be spent.

Councillor Stubbs stated that the amount should be shown somewhere.

The Chair stated that everything had been declared transparently.

Cllr Jones referred to the table outlining £3.286m in sales over the year. The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth was asked to outline what they were and how much was yet to be realised. The Portfolio Holder advised that some had come from Aspire and money from the new energy site. The Service Director – Finance (S151 Officer) advised that there were other areas which the Chair requested be circulated to all members of the Committee.

Cllr Jones stated that he had not seen a list of asset sales at this Committee, Council or on the Cabinet agenda and asked the Portfolio Holder if he could advise where the information was available for members. The Service Director -Finance (S151 Officer) clarified the question which was related to bigger sales or sales happening in the future. The information would come to this Committee in the form of a table showing what the Council was expecting to achieve against what had actually been achieved but the actual assets were not included in the table.

Cllr Fox-Hewitt asked the Portfolio Holder, in respect of the previously discussed additional borrowing that had occurred, what was the interest rate. The Portfolio Holder advised that the Council thought that they were not going to borrow and therefore thought that there would be no interest to pay, The Service Director – Finance (S151 Officer) advised that, for budget purposes there was an estimate of 5% but as months progress it could change.

Cllr Fox-Hewitt referred to, previously mention £400k approximately, borrowing. Would that be taken in one go or stage it in when the interest rates plateaued. The Service Director - Finance (S151 Officer) advised that, as and when borrowing was required it would be actioned as and when and not all in one go unless more beneficial to do so.

The Chair went through the performance indicators, pointing out the red ones:

The percentage of stage one complaints processed in 20 working days. The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth advised that things were now on track. The figures in the report related to April and May.

The percentage of complaints informed within the required timescales of any action to be taken about alleged breaches of planning control. The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth advised that there had been some complex cases to be dealt with which had taken up time and resources.

The Chair referred to the large red area under priority four. This was due to some indicators that were missing from this report. The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth advised that one indicator referred to markets. Some of the stalls had been taken away and with temporary stalls now also being used, the best way to assess the indicators was being looked into. Regarding the footfall indicator – this information was provided by the BID and it had not been provided in time.

Car parking usage – number of tickets purchased. The Portfolio Holder stated that the below target figure was possibly due to more online shopping and, with the town centre regeneration that was currently underway there were a lot of vans and commercial vehicles parked up for the day.

Councillor Grocott referred to the BID stating that they had been asked to attend Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee for over fifteen months and also referred to the lateness of providing information for this Committee. The Portfolio Holder advised that if the BID chose not to engage with the Council there was not much that could be done.

Councillor Stubbs asked if the Council was the senior partner and therefore there must be something that could be done.

Councillor Stubbs referred to ID 1.13 stating that long term sickness had fallen but there was a spike in short term and asked if there was any indication of what had caused the spike. The Service Director – Strategy, People and Performance stated that a spike was expected with summertime related issues. The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth stated that this figure had been red for many years but the fact that it was coming down and staying down was an improvement.

Resolved: That the contents of the report and appendices be noted and that the Council's service and financial performance for this period continue to be monitored and challenged.

[Watch the debate here](#)

6. **COMMERCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Deputy Leader introduced the half yearly update report on the Commercial Strategy for 2024 to 2025 which outlined the progress to date on the various schemes towards maximizing the Council's assets and delivering financial sustainability to the benefit of communities.

Cllr Stubbs referred to paragraph 2.2.5 and asked why the opportunities at Chatterley Valley had come to an end. The Portfolio Holder advised that people could choose where they wanted to build. It was an enterprise zone run with Staffordshire County Council.

Cllr Stubbs stated that the building was to be purpose built so would it be built and stand empty? The Portfolio Holder stated that it would be the builder taking the risk.

Cllr Fox-Hewitt asked how much had been committed to the Chatterley Valley Project and if there was a mechanism to recoup funding. The Service Director – Finance (S151 Officer) advised that the money that was spent to date was not anything significant, such as design costs etc. The Chair asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth if he could provide committee members with a

written breakdown of what had been spent to date; the Portfolio Holder confirmed that he would.

Councillor Grocott referred to paragraph 2.1 regarding commercial waste and asked how the number of businesses using the service would be increased and if prices would be higher. The Service Director - Finance (S151 Officer) advised that the Service Director - Sustainable Environment was looking into the charges but it was difficult to compare against competitors due to commercial sensitivity.

Resolved: That the updated Commercial Strategy and progress to date be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

7. TOWN DEAL AND FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND UPDATE

The Deputy Leader presented the update on the progress made in relation to the various projects that were being funded or partly funded through the two Town Deals – Newcastle and Kidsgrove, and the Future High Street Funds for Newcastle Town Centre.

Cllr Fox Hewitt referred to paragraph 2.1.3, Castle Car Park and asked if the new parking charges had been set. The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth advised that the fees had been agreed and would be marginally more expensive (10p) than other car parks.

Cllr Stubbs referred to paragraph 2.3.2, Kidsgrove Train Station works and asked if there was any progress on this and also referred to the sentence about HS2 cancellation and funds being transferred and whether there were any documents guaranteeing that. The Portfolio Holder for Finance Town Centres and Growth advised that he did not know if there were any documents. The Chair stated that the new Government's Transport Minister was reviewing projects on an individual basis and would therefore be the person to say if there had been any changes.

Cllr Stubbs referred to the budget for the Kidsgrove Town Deal and stated that 79% of the consultancy figures had been spent but only 39% of the project spend had been made. Given that the biggest project had had less than 1% spent on it, would there be enough money to support a £6m project. The Service Director – Finance (S151 Officer) advised that the majority of the spend was done before the project started- with business cases for each project.

Cllr Stubbs stated that there was £142k left in the budget and there was just under £10m of project left to do and said that he would be keeping a close eye on this over the next few months as he felt that it was an area of concern. The Service Director – Finance (S151 Officer) advised that there were partners involved with a lot of the projects who were putting their own funding into them too. These partners would be doing their own project management. The majority of the £670k spend was spent on the business cases to produce the projects.

The Chair stated that the Council had shown the money that it was responsible for.

Resolved: That the report on the delivery of the Town Deal and Future High Street Funds projects be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

8. TURNOVER REPORT

The Service Director for Strategy, People and Performance presented the review on staff turnover figures over the past year, including an analysis of leaving reasons, work undertaken and next steps to provide assurance on internal processes and practise.

Cllr Fox-Hewitt, referring to the percentile turnover target, asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth if there was a problem with recruitment retention as last year the workforce reduced by 14% since 2018. The turnover rate over the past year had been over 15%. In addition, it was asked if the Council had the capacity to deliver its services. The Service Director for Strategy, People and Performance stated that the reduction since 2018 had been due to service restructures. The turnover figures did not show who the people were or the circumstances for leaving. The Portfolio Holder for Finance Town Centres and Growth added that in 2018 there had been a lot of vacancies, specifically in Licensing and Elections. The new administration then set about getting staff into those positions. The One Council approach was also brought in, saving the Council over £1m each year which allowed for the filling of gaps.

Cllr Stubbs referred to the number of people failing their six month review which had increased due to a change in the way that the Council was recruiting. Was this a flaw in recruitment or the way in which officers were employing the wrong people? The Service Director for Strategy, People and Performance stated that it was not true that the people failing was down to a change in the way of the recruitment process. The Council had high expectations. There were circumstances were not meeting the basic requirements.

Cllr Stubbs asked why such people were in the building in the first place if they were failing their probation. The Service Director for Strategy, People and Performance advised that the Council's recruitment processes were good, taking up references and DBS's where appropriate.

Cllr Bryan asked if anything was being done to amend the recruitment techniques to try and reduce the number of failures. The Service Director for Strategy, People and Performance advised that there were a number of things to look at in the recruitment process such as interviews, presentations, exercises and there was a bank of tools that could be used to review them.

Cllr Fox-Hewitt stated that the figures had not taken into account staff sickness levels with less people doing increased or a more diverse workload. Was that impacting on stress levels, mental health, anxiety.

The Chair stated that there had been very detailed reports over the last twelve months about sickness absence which had been scrutinised. The Service Director for Strategy, People and Performance was asked, if the average turnover was 20% and this Council's was 15%, was 10% an ambitious target. The Chair was advised that it was an ambitious target and also needed to be careful not to assume that the low turnover rate was positive.

The Chair asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth, given that turnover varies between services, was a single figure for turnover helpful. The Portfolio Holder stated that this was an interesting point and would take it away and discuss it.

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Cllr Grocott referred to the retirement figure of 24%. Was there a plan for replacements and was it a trend that would happen over the next four years. The Service Director for Strategy, People and Performance advised that people could not be asked to retire but managers do get a sense of when somebody intends to. The use of apprentices was being looked into and structures were looked at to see where they could be made more robust.

Resolved: That the information included in the report be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

9. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair went through the Work Programme for the items on the December meeting. In addition to those listed, the Chair had spoken with the Leader of the Council regarding work on the One Council Programme which had now completed. This Committee would receive a final report on what the process achieved.

Members were asked if there were any further items that they would like to add to the Work Programme.

Cllr Fox-Hewitt asked if the report on One Council would incorporate any kind of staff survey. The Chair felt that this was an excellent suggestion and would also like to see that. The Service Director for Strategy, People and Performance stated that the intention was to get staff surveys in there. The annual staff survey was currently being run and questions on One Council could be asked within that in the future.

Cllr Fox-Hewitt stated that he did not feel that success could not be fully evaluated or scrutinised without hearing from the Council's employees when One Council had impacted on roles, career progression and opportunities.

The Chair asked if Cllr Fox-Hewitt was proposing not to receive a report on One Council until it was possible to combine its outcome with the staff survey. This Committee did not have the authority to commission an additional staff survey.

The Chair stated that he would like to see the report as soon as it came to Cabinet in December. Cllr Fox-Hewitt was asked if he would like to put it to a vote and he stated that he would. Cllr Jones seconded the proposal stating that the impact that something as big as this would have had on staff needed to be shown.

A vote was taken on delaying the report with 5 members in favour. The Chair advised that a report on One Council would not be received in December.

Resolved: That the work programme be discussed.

[Watch the debate here](#)

10. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

11. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on Thursday 5 December, 2024.

**Councillor Mark Holland
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 8.51 pm

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NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S REPORT TO

Finance Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee 05 December 2024

Report Title: Revenue and Capital Budget 2025/26 – 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"/>
<p>To present the refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy including the first draft savings proposals being considered to balance the 2025/26 revenue budget and the proposed capital programme for 2025/26 to 2027/28.</p>			
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>That Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the first draft savings proposals as set out in Appendix A and Appendix B to the report. 2. Note the revised Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) funding gap (Appendix C). 3. Note any surplus funds identified when setting the budget to be transferred to Reserves in order to achieve future financial resilience. 4. To note the commencement date of the Budget Consultation period as mid-November to mid-December 2024. 5. Note the Mid-Year Capital Estimates for 2024/25. 6. Notes the proposed setting of Council Tax at 1.99 per cent for 2025/2026 			
<p><u>Reasons</u></p> <p>To ensure that the Council meets its statutory duty to set a balanced budget in February 2025.</p>			

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The funding pressures facing the Council for the period 2025/26 to 2029/30 were presented to Cabinet on 10 September 2024. The report indicated that there would be a budget 'gap' of £1.429m in respect of 2025/26 (£5.251m 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 2025/26 of £1.429m reported to Cabinet on 10 September 2024 resulting in a revised budget 'gap' of £1.453m. 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.

The revised budget 'gap' therefore amounts to £1.453m for 2025/26 and £4.033m 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 and a contribution to reserves to be proposed for 2025/26. Further details for 2025/26 are shown in Appendix A.

Detail	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000
Income	235	-	-	-	-
Staffing Related	189	-	-	-	-
Good Housekeeping	179	-	-	-	-
Tax Base	425	306	345	430	401
Council Tax Increase	175	177	180	184	188
Government Grants	300	-	-	-	-
TOTAL SAVINGS	1,503	483	525	614	589
UPDATED MTFS GAPS	1,453	959	783	290	548
REMAINING GAP	(50)	476	258	(324)	(41)

2.5 The savings and fundings strategies are provided using current intelligence around the Local Government Finance Settlement (notification is due in December) and around the Extended Producer Responsibility funding (notification is due during November), estimates are provided for both regarding likely funding but may be subject to change.

Capital

2.5 The Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2027/28 (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 £94.604m 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 financed by borrowing, primarily for cash flow purposes, whilst assets are procured and constructed, after which time significant capital receipts are expected. The associated borrowing costs have been factored into the MTFS. The Capital Financing Requirement is set to increase to £23.585m by 2027/28 based on the 3 year Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2027/28, the Capital Financing Requirement at 31 March 2024 (£10.262m) and the Capital Financing Requirement for capital expenditure during the current financial year and the financial years 2025/26 to 2027/28 (£13.323m).

2.7 The Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2027/28 includes an estimate for the development of York Place, this assumes spend of £16.8m over the period 2025/26 to 2026/27 and a subsequent capital receipt of the same value during 2026/27. This is subject to the business case that is currently being developed.

2.8 The Capital Programme for this period also includes an estimate for the redevelopment of the Midway Carpark and assumes spend of £28.6m over the period 2025/26 to 2026/27 and a subsequent capital receipt of the same value during 2027/28. This is subject to the business case that is currently being developed.

2.9 In addition, the Capital Programme also includes an estimate for the Aparthotel on the Ryecroft site of £30.0m over the period 2026/27 to 2027/28 together with a subsequent capital receipt of the same value in 2027/28. Again, this is subject to the business case that is currently being developed.

2.10A mid-year review of the Capital Programme for 2024/25 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 2024/25 into future years. The revised Capital Programme for 2024/25 totalling £51.295m can be seen at Appendix B.

2.11 The table below sets out the key dates of the events to take place before the budget for 2025/26 is finally approved:

Event	Committee	Date
Budget consultation	Mid November to mid December	
Approval of final MTFS & consideration of draft budget proposals	Cabinet	7 January 2025
Scrutiny of draft budget proposals	FAPSC	16 January 2025
Final budget proposals recommended for approval by Full Council	Cabinet	4 February 2025
Full Council to approve budget	Full Council	12 February 2025

3. **Recommendations**

- 3.1 That Committee note the first draft savings proposals as set out in Appendix A and Appendix B to the report.
- 3.2 That Committee note the revised Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) funding gap (Appendix C).
- 3.3 Note any surplus funds identified when setting the budget will be transferred to Reserves in order to achieve future financial resilience.
- 3.4 To note the commencement date of the Budget Consultation period as mid November to mid December 2024.
- 3.5 That Committee note the approved Mid-Year Capital Estimates for 2024/25.
- 3.6 The Committee notes the proposed setting of Council Tax at 1.99 per cent for 2025/2026.

4. **Reasons**

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget by February 2025. 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.

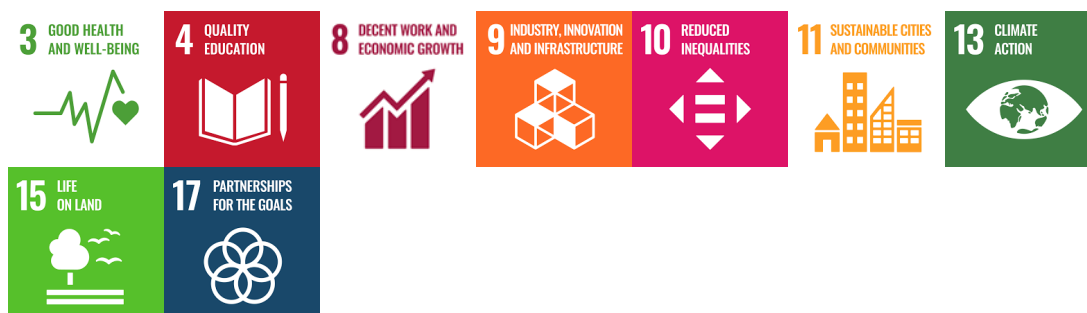
9. Major Risks and Mitigation

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 2025/26 reports to Cabinet on 4 February 2025 and to Council on 12 February 2025.

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. **One Council**

11.1 Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

One Commercial Council

Commercial activities have been considered and included within the budget preparation.

One Digital Council

The digital agenda has been considered when setting the budget and investment in this area has been included within the capital programme.

One Green Council

The sustainability agenda also forms part of the budget, including energy saving initiatives in order for the Council to achieve its goal of being carbon neutral by 2030. Funding for this is included within the capital programme.

12. **Key Decision Information**

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

14. **List of Appendices**

- 14.1 Appendix A – 2025/26 MTFS Funding Strategy
- 14.2 Appendix B – 2025/26 to 2027/28 Capital Programme
- 14.3 Appendix C – MTFS ‘Gaps’
- 14.4 Appendix D – MTFS 2025/26 to 2029/30

15. **Background Papers**

15.1 None

Appendix A – 2025/26 MTFS Funding Strategy

Ref	Service Area	Description	£000's	Detail
Income				
I1	Sustainable Environment	Trade waste	70	Introduction of recycling in respect of Trade Waste
I2	Commercial Delivery	Car Parking	91	Increased demand, pricing and permits for new car park
I3	Commercial Delivery	Leisure Memberships	28	Promotion of memberships and Skillscourt offer at Jubilee 2
I4	Commercial Delivery	Museum Donations	3	Split of donations between improvements and contribution to running costs
I5	Commercial Delivery	Direct Cremations	30	Net income following the introduction of a new fee for direct cremations
I6	Neighbourhood Delivery	Fixed Penalty Notices	5	Additional income generated from fixed penalty notices (fly tipping)
I7	Finance	Purchase Card Rebates	8	Rebates generated on credit card purchases from existing suppliers
			235	
Staffing Related Efficiencies				
S1	Commercial Delivery	Facilities/Property restructure	103	An amalgamation of the Facilities and Property functions
S2	Corporate	Vacancy factor	71	An increase in the assumed vacancy factor of posts from 3.5% to 4%
S3	Corporate	Annual leave purchase scheme	15	Scheme to enable staff to purchase additional leave
			189	
Good Housekeeping/More Efficient Processes				
G1	Commercial Delivery	Reduction in subsidy	50	An ongoing allowance in respect of subsidy to Kildgrove Sports Centre is no longer required, suitable provision is held in reserves
G2	Commercial Delivery	Solar Panels	20	Reduction in electricity costs following installation of solar panels on Council property
G3	Information & Technology	Internet Fibre Connections	60	Installation of internet fibre connections and associated rental
G4	Information & Technology	Printing	10	Reduction in member and staff printing volumes
G5	Corporate	Parish Councils	20	Replacement of Council Tax Support Grant with demand led contributions
			160	
Alternative Sources of Finance/Other				
A1	Corporate	Tax base – Council Tax	100	Increase in tax base based on market housing supply requirement and current year tax base forecasts
A2	Corporate	Tax base – Business Rates	190	Assumed increase in tax base of 2.5%
A3	Corporate	Single Persons Discount review	30	Assumed increase in Council Tax from a Borough wide review of claimants of discounts

A4	Corporate	Empty Homes Premium	94	The impact of the change in eligibility of a premium Council Tax charge for empty homes, this was effective from 1 April 2024 (approved in February 2024)
A5	Corporate	Second Homes Premium	11	The impact of the change in eligibility of a premium Council Tax charge for second homes, this was effective from 1 April 2025 (approved in February 2024)
A6	Corporate	Council Tax increase	175	Assumed increase of 1.99% per Band D property
A7	Corporate	Equipment Replacement Fund	9	Contributions will not be made until fund requires replenishment
A8	Corporate	Heritage Grants Fund	10	Contributions will not be made until fund requires replenishment
A9	Sustainable Environment	Extended Producer Responsibility funding	300	Estimate regarding levy paid by producers of materials collected and disposed of by Local Authorities
			919	
Grand Total			1,503	

Appendix B 2025/26 to 2027/28 Capital Programme and 2024/25 Mid-Year Estimate



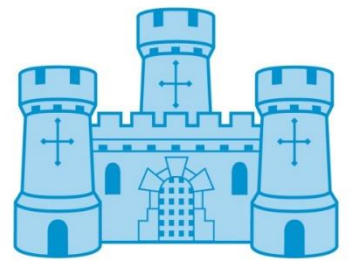
CAPITAL PROGRAMME	2024/25 MID YEAR	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	TOTAL 2025/26 to 2027/28
	£	£	£	£	£
PRIORITY – One Council Delivering for Local People					
Service Area - Council Modernisation	1,967,318	434,000	336,000	80,000	850,000
Total	1,967,318	434,000	336,000	80,000	850,000
PRIORITY – A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough					
Service Area - Housing Improvements	1,984,832	1,670,000	1,670,000	1,595,000	4,935,000
Service Area - Managing Property & Assets	12,168,633	15,843,846	39,125,982	20,495,475	75,465,303
Total	14,153,465	17,513,846	40,795,982	22,090,475	80,400,303
PRIORITY – Healthy, Active and Safe Communities					
Service Area - Environmental Health	72,000	-	-	-	-
Service Area - Streetscene and Bereavement Services	844,705	250,000	160,000	135,000	545,000
Service Area - Recycling and Fleet	2,046,150	3,169,500	6,003,100	1,222,514	10,395,114
Service Area – Leisure and Cultural	192,000	150,000	-	-	150,000
Service Area - Engineering	385,000	120,000	50,000	-	170,000
Total	3,539,855	3,689,500	6,213,100	1,357,514	11,260,114
PRIORITY – Town Centres for All					
Future High Streets Fund	2,441,925	-	-	-	-
Town Deals – Newcastle	19,828,498	807,000	-	-	807,000
Town Deals - Kidsgrove	8,415,328	1,236,000	-	-	1,236,000
Total	30,685,751	2,043,000	-	-	2,043,000
CONTINGENCY (will be carried forward to 2025/26)	948,980	51,020	-	-	51,020
TOTAL	51,295,369	23,731,366	47,345,082	23,527,989	94,604,437

FUNDING					
Capital Receipts	3,786,000	4,150,000	50,787,087	34,350,000	89,287,087
External Contributions	32,960,583	3,543,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	6,543,000
Borrowing	14,548,786	16,038,366	(4,942,005)	(12,322,011)	(1,225,650)
TOTAL	51,295,369	23,731,366	47,345,082	23,527,989	94,604,437

Appendix C – 2025/26 to 2029/30 MTFs 'Gaps'



Detail	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000	Description
Employees:						
Increments	60	60	60	60	60	<i>Employees due an increment</i>
Pay awards	594	446	461	477	493	<i>3.5% pay award assumed for 2025/26 plus £1,290 per FTE re. 2024/25, 3% thereafter</i>
Members pay awards	8	7	8	8	8	<i>3.5% pay award assumed for 2025/26, 3% thereafter</i>
Superannuation increases	144	111	115	118	122	<i>22% of increase in salaries</i>
Superannuation lump sum	41	43	45	45	45	<i>Net increase of lump sum pension payment</i>
National insurance rate	120	-	-	-	-	<i>Increase of employer rate from 13.8% to 15%</i>
National insurance threshold	283	-	-	-	-	<i>Change in employer threshold from £9,100 to £5,000</i>
National Insurance	90	76	78	80	83	<i>National insurance on increase in salaries</i>
Premises:						
Business Rates	26	27	28	29	30	<i>Inflationary increase in business rates (per CPI)</i>
Utilities	127	31	33	34	35	<i>Inflationary increase in gas and electric (per CPI), additional pressure in 2025/26 to reflect current costs</i>
Transport:						
Fuel	11	12	12	12	13	<i>Inflationary increase in fuel (per CPI)</i>
Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil	8	8	8	9	9	<i>Inflationary increase in HVO (per CPI)</i>
Financing:						
Borrowing costs	45	136	(48)	(47)	206	<i>Borrowing costs regarding the financing of capital</i>
New Pressures:						
ICT software	16	10	10	10	10	<i>ICT costs re. systems maintenance and licences</i>
Restructuring	100	-	-	-	-	<i>Potential additional resource requirements</i>
Commercialisation	64	-	-	-	-	<i>Introduction of Commercialisation post</i>
Income:						
Fees and charges	(408)	(399)	(415)	(431)	(449)	<i>4% increase to enable continued cost recovery</i>
National insurance	(403)	-	-	-	-	<i>Re. National Insurance contribution changes</i>
Business Rates Retention reset	500	500	500	-	-	<i>To allow for a reset of the scheme in 2027/28</i>
Business Rates baseline funding	(73)	(109)	(112)	(114)	(117)	<i>Inflationary increase in baseline funding level (per CPI)</i>
Income Pressures	100	-	-	-	-	<i>To correct income shortfalls from budget</i>
TOTAL GAPS	1,453	959	783	290	548	



**NEWCASTLE
UNDER LYME**
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 – 2029/30



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Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 to 2029/30

1. Corporate 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.

2. Financial Strategy

- 2.1. A sound financial strategy is key to the delivery of the Corporate 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 £101.912m for 2024/25) 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 years of austerity and 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 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.

A Fair Financial Settlement for Newcastle-under-Lyme

- 2.14 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.
- 2.15 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 was held up due to the Covid-19 pandemic and it is currently unclear when the new 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.
- 2.16 As a member of the Staffordshire Business Rates Pool the Council currently saves £0.814m 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 £2.705m 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.
- 2.17 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 current incurs 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.
- 2.18 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). The Council will continue to work to secure inward investment in the borough to drive growth and employment opportunities for local people.

3. Economic Context (at October 2024)

- 3.1 UK inflation fell to around the Bank of England's target, dropping from 3.2% in March to 2.0% in May, then rising slightly to 2.2% in July and August. Core inflation remained higher at 3.6% for general goods and 5.6% for services. The UK economy grew more slowly, expanding by 0.5% in the second quarter, down from 0.7% in the first, and showed no growth in July. The job market is easing, with unemployment dropping to 4.1% and employment rising to 74.8%. Average regular earnings increased by 5.1%, leading to real pay rises when adjusted for inflation.
- 3.2 In response to lower inflation, the Bank of England reduced interest rates from 5.25% to 5.00% in August, maintaining this rate in September, though concerns about persistent inflation remain. They expect the economy to grow through 2024 but predict inflation will rise again before falling below 2% by 2025.

- 3.3 The US Federal Reserve cut interest rates to a range of 4.75% to 5.00% in September, with plans for further cuts in the coming years. Meanwhile, the European Central Bank reduced its main interest rates to 3.65% in September, but hasn't provided a clear future path for rates, anticipating inflation to stay above 2% until 2026.
- 3.4 Sentiment in financial markets mostly improved, but bond yields remained quite unpredictable. While yields generally increased early on, they later settled close to where they began. This meant bond investors faced a lot of ups and downs due to various economic and global events.
- 3.5 For example, the yield on the 10-year UK government bond started at 3.94% and ended at 4.00%, peaking at 4.41% in May and dropping to 3.76% in mid-September. Similarly, the 20-year bond yield rose from 4.40% to 4.51%, reaching a high of 4.82% in May and a low of 4.27% in mid-September. Throughout this period, the average overnight interest rate was 5.12%.

4. Borough Profile

- 4.1 Newcastle-under-Lyme has a population of 128,100 (2023 mid year estimate), an increase of 5000, or 4.1%, since the 2021 mid year estimate. This is a far large increase than for the national, regional or county – England's population increased by 2.0%, the West Midlands region by 2.2% and Staffordshire's by 2.4%.
- 4.2 In the ten years from 2013-2023, the percentage of the borough's population aged 70+ increased from 13.3% to 15.8%, keeping this rate higher than across the West Midlands region (13.9%) and England (13.7%), though slightly lower than Staffordshire's rate of 16.6%.
- 4.3 The general population has increased by 3.4% over the past decade (2013-2023), but with the number of residents over 65s increasing by 12.8%, lower than the Staffordshire increase of 17.8%, the England increase of 16.1% and the West Midlands increase of 14.3%.
- 4.4 The 2023 median age for the borough is 42 years, higher than for the West Midlands (40) and England and Wales (41) but lower than Staffordshire (43). The borough's median is the same as it was in 2010.
- 4.5 It is estimated that the number of households in the Borough 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 2023, the annual mean gross weekly pay for full-time workers was £629. This was lower than for the West Midlands (£652) and Great Britain (£683).

(Gross weekly pay for full-time workers)

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	West Midlands	Great Britain
Females	£594	£594	£629
Males	£664	£695	£728
Overall	£629	£652	£683

4.9 In the year up to June 2023, an estimated 79.0% of residents aged 16-64 were classed as 'in employment', slightly higher than the West Midlands (74.3%) and Great Britain (75.6%).

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

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	West Midlands	Great Britain
July 2017- June 2018	75.7% (64,900)	72.8%	75.0%
July 2018- June 2019	74.9% (64,200)	73.5%	75.6%
July 2019- June 2020	71.0% (60,100)	74.2%	75.9%
July 2020-June 2021	69.0% (57,700)	73.5%	74.4%
July 2021- June 2022	77.8% (64,500)	73.5%	75.5%
July 2022-June 2023	79.0% (67,300)	74.3%	75.6%

4.10 As of 2022, a little over two-thirds (69%) of residents' jobs were full-time, with the remaining 31% part-time. This is very similar to the rate for the West Midlands (58%) and Great Britain (69%).

4.11 According to official crime summary data, the number of recorded crimes for headline offences in Newcastle-under-Lyme between April 2023 and March 2024 was 8,287.

4.12 The crime rate for headline offences from April 2023 to March 2024 was 66 per 1,000 residents, slightly lower than the Staffordshire rate of 75 per 1,000 people and in the middle of the Staffordshire boroughs.

4.13 In Newcastle-under-Lyme the three most common types of recorded crime were:

- Violence against the person (3,731)
- Theft offences (2,106)
- Stalking and harassment (1,590)

4.14 The latest available local estimates from the ONS (Life Expectancy at Birth 2022) suggest that life expectancy at birth for males born in Newcastle-under-Lyme is 79.2 years, which is broadly similar to the Staffordshire (79.9 years) and the England average (79.3 years). Female life expectancy is 82.7 years, again broadly similar to the Staffordshire and England averages of 83.2 years.

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 (avoidable mortality) of 287 was higher than the Staffordshire rate of 242, the West Midlands rate of 277 and England's 253.

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 2023, the local housing affordability ratio i.e. median house price compared to median gross income was 5.52, significantly lower than all of the other Staffordshire districts. Across the West Midlands the ratio is 7.10, and across England it is 8.18. The borough's rate is lower than in 2013 when the ratio was 5.26.

4.21 In 2023, 94.0% of residents of working age had qualifications at level FQF1 or above, higher than the 87.5% across the West Midlands and the Great Britain average of 89.0%. However, an estimated 37.9% of adults aged 16-64 were qualified to level RQF4 or above – lower than both the West Midlands rate of 42.5% and the Great Britain rate of 47.3%.

4.22 The unemployment claimant count for the borough of 3.3% as at August 2024 was slightly higher than Staffordshire's rate of 3.1%, but lower than Great Britain's 4.3%. 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 four 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 2024 covering the period 2024/25 to 2028/29. For 2024/25 Net Expenditure of £17.046m on services was budgeted for with a Council Tax Requirement of £8.472m. There is a Council Tax Base of 38,738 and a Band D Council Tax of £218.69. There was a balanced budget for 2024/25 but a forecast gap of £4.193m across the period 2025/26 to 2028/29.

5.2 The MTFS gaps have been rolled forward a year to cover 2029/30, this was reported to Cabinet on 10 September 2024 and the assumptions updated, further updates will be reported to Cabinet on 3 December 2024 and again on 7 January 2025. 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 4 February 2025.

5.3 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 £4.033m over the next five years. £1.453m of this is in 2025/26 and whilst the overall strategy is to have a balanced five year plan the focus of attention will be on this first year.

Detail	2025/26 (£000's)	2026/27 (£000's)	2027/28 (£000's)	2028/29 (£000's)	2029/30 (£000's)	Total (£000's)
Income	(284)	(8)	(27)	(545)	(566)	(1,430)
Expenditure	1,737	967	810	835	1,104	5,463
Gap	1,453	959	783	290	548	4,033

Income

- 5.5 A provision for income losses of £0.100m has been built in for 2025/26. An assumed annual increase in fees and charges has also been included of 4% for 2025/26 and for each year thereafter.

Detail	2025/26 (£000's)	2026/27 (£000's)	2027/28 (£000's)	2028/29 (£000's)	2029/30 (£000's)	Total (£000's)
National Insurance	(403)	-	-	-	-	(403)
Business Rates Baseline Funding	(73)	(109)	(112)	(114)	(117)	(525)
Business Rates Reset	500	500	500	-	-	1,500
Fees and Charges	(408)	(399)	(415)	(431)	(449)	(2,102)
Income Pressures	100	-	-	-	-	100
Total	(284)	(8)	(27)	(545)	(566)	(1,430)

Government Grant

- 5.6 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 2025/26 New Homes Bonus award being offset by the Funding Guarantee, with continued one year settlements until further notice. It is also assumed that the changes to Employers National Insurance will be fully reimbursed to Local Government.

Business Rates

- 5.7 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.
- 5.8 The MTFS currently assumes an inflationary increase of 2.5% in each year 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 (1.7% for 2025/26).

Council Tax

- 5.9 The Council has a market housing supply of 2,815 properties over the 5 year period of the MTFS. The MTFS assumes that the requirement will be met per the trajectory in the draft Local Plan, thus increasing the tax base accordingly. The MTFS assumes a Council Tax increase of 1.99% per Band D property for all years.
- 5.10 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.

Savings/Income Generation

- 5.11 To date savings of £1.503m have been identified for 2025/26 enabling a balanced position and a contribution to reserves to be proposed. £2.211m has been identified to largely close the gap for the remainder of the MTFs (total shortfall of £0.319m).

Detail	2025/26 (£000's)	2026/27 (£000's)	2027/28 (£000's)	2028/29 (£000's)	2029/30 (£000's)	Total (£000's)
Income	235	-	-	-	-	235
Staffing Related	189	-	-	-	-	189
Good Housekeeping	179	-	-	-	-	179
Tax Base	425	306	345	430	401	1,907
Council Tax Increase	175	177	180	184	188	904
Government Grants	300	-	-	-	-	300
Total	1,503	483	525	614	589	3,714

Expenditure

- 5.12 Employee pressures relate to assumed pay awards of 3.5% for 2025/26 (£0.501m) and 3% for all years thereafter, 2025/26 also provides for the 2024/25 pay award (£1,290 per full time employee regardless of grade) that was over and above amount assumed, this amounts to a further pressure of £0.093m excluding the associated increases to National Insurance and pension contributions.
- 5.13 National Insurance contributions related to assumed pay awards and the 2024/25 pay award amount to an additional £0.090m for 2025/26, whilst associated pension contributions result in a pressure of £0.184m. Changes to Employers National Insurance Contribution rates and the associated thresholds amount to a pressure of £0.403m, it is assumed that the changes to Employers National Insurance will be fully reimbursed to Local Government.
- 5.14 A number of new pressures facing the Council in 2025/26 have also been provided for, these include increased costs relating a restructure of the Legal service and the introduction of a Commercial post to identify new income streams.

Detail	2025/26 (£000's)	2026/27 (£000's)	2027/28 (£000's)	2028/29 (£000's)	2029/30 (£000's)	Total (£000's)
Employees	1,340	743	767	788	811	4,449
Premises	153	58	61	63	65	400
Transport	19	20	20	21	22	102
Financing	45	136	(48)	(47)	206	292
Pressures	180	10	10	10	10	220
Total	1,737	967	810	835	1,114	5,463

Inflation

- 5.15 Provision for price increases is made in line with the Bank of England target for CPI (Consumer Price Index) where appropriate.

Investment

- 5.16 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

- 5.17 The proposed Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2027/28 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 £94.604m 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.
- 5.18 The Capital Programme will require to be financed by borrowing, primarily for cash flow purposes, whilst assets are procured and constructed, after which time significant capital receipts are expected. The associated borrowing costs have been factored into the MTFS. The Capital Financing Requirement is set to increase to £23.585m by 2027/28 based on the 3 year Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2027/28, the Capital Financing Requirement at 31 March 2024 (£10.262m) and the Capital Financing Requirement for capital expenditure during the current financial year and the financial years 2025/26 to 2027/28 (£13.323m).

Other financing adjustments

- 5.19 The Council has eliminated reliance on capital receipts to finance revenue expenditure.

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

- 6.1 There remains a small amount of 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 2025/26 to 2029/30.

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, assessment of 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 the MHCLG 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 was 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 focussed 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 facilitated a fundamental change in Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's operating model and how the Council address's its challenges. Significantly, it set out to enable the Council to make better use of the resources available to it, ensuring both efficient and effective service delivery.
- 7.5 One Council was a "spend to save" programme with an agreed investment of £1.2m. Recurrent benefits of £1.173m have been achieved (£0.196m achieved in 2021/22, £0.601m achieved in 2022/23 with a further £0.376m in 2023/24).
- 7.6 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 gave 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

- 7.7 The programme realised 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

- 7.8 A core aim of the overall programme was 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.
- 7.9 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.
- 7.10 The site is cleaner and more modern than the 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 established 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 the customer facing team.

One Front Door

- 7.11 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. 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.
- 7.12 Work initially focussed on the previous teams for Customer Services and Revenues and Benefits and the two areas were 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.

Internal Support

- 7.13 Efficiencies have been developed within our internal services. These continue to provide services with streamlined support and guidance whilst releasing those with technical expertise to focus on value added delivery.
- 7.14 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 Full Time Equivalents (FTE) assigned to the teams.

Mobile Multi-Function Team

- 7.15 The Mobile Multi-Functional Team recently renamed the Neighbourhood Delivery 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 has been significant and positive.

Strategy and Performance Team

- 7.16 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 has enabled the Council to better use data and performance indicators to drive outcomes against the Council Plan and other strategic aims.

- 7.17 In addition this service will continue to 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.

Future of One Council

- 7.18 The One Council Programme has completed the initial 3 year programme of works. The programme has been successful in realising £1.173m of reoccurring savings, has implemented process improvements, and had a positive impact on the culture of the Council through seeking continuous improvement to services. This approach of improvement and change is now embedded within service provision.
- 7.19 Due to the success of the One Council Programme, three further workstreams have commenced. These workstreams will focus on the sustainable agenda (One Green Council) the digital agenda (One Digital Council) and the commercial strategy (One Commercial Council).
- 7.20 The One Green Council will focus on the Sustainable Environment Strategy in order to achieve the Council's Net Zero target in 2030 and the Borough's Net Zero target in 2050.
- 7.21 The One Digital Council will focus on the delivery of the Digital Agenda and the continuous improvement of services via technology.
- 7.22 The One Commercial Council will concentrate its activity on the Commercial Strategy, reviewing commercial options in order to generate additional income for the Council whilst improving service delivering and organisational efficiency.

Commercial

- 7.23 The Council's Commercial Strategy was updated and approved by Full Council in February 2024. The vision is for Newcastle-under-Lyme to be a sustainable and business-oriented Council that maximises commercial opportunities in order to deliver long-term benefits for residents of the borough and support the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 7.24 As a Council which adopts a commercial mind-set across the organisation, we expect staff to think innovatively and deliver services differently. We will use commercial principles to maximise the impact of our assets (whether physical or intangible) to benefit our communities and deliver financial sustainability.
- 7.25 The primary objective is to use the Council's resources as effectively and efficiently as possible when delivering the Council Plan. Achievement of the primary objective will come in part through the following:
- Developing a commercial culture
 - Putting sound governance in place – being clear about responsibilities, authorities, processes, templates and funding
 - Ensuring there is appropriate performance management in place for commercial initiatives
- 7.26 The overarching aim of this strategy is to deliver a financial return, which contributes to the Council's efficiencies and additional income targets. This will help to safeguard, and develop, frontline services that the Council currently provides and enhance the Council's ability to invest in its place shaping agenda.

Property

- 7.27 The Council's Asset Management Strategy for 2023-2028 was approved by Cabinet in September 2023. The Asset Management Strategy provides a clear framework for understanding the value and condition of property owned by the Council so that, in turn, investment decisions can be taken to optimise the use of the said land/property to meet the needs of the Borough's residents, businesses and visitors.
- 7.28 The Asset Management Strategy directs the Council's disposal of surplus land and property assets, it also sets out the approach to managing the Council's assets, both those that are operational and those that are commercial.
- 7.29 A key element of this is ensuring that all buildings and land holdings continue to meet the needs of our users and are effective to manage. The Council needs to ensure that assets maximise income where they are commercial assets to ensure that the Council generates income to support operational costs and investment plans.

8. Reserves

- 8.1 Forecast balances for the Council's reserves as at 31 March 2025 are as follows:

Reserve/Fund	Balance 31.3.24 (£'000's)	Forecast Balance 31.3.25 (£'000's)
General Fund	2,157	2,007
Walleys Quarry Reserve	200	500
Equipment Replacement	54	-
Budget Support Fund	484	125
Budget Support Fund (Local Plan)	211	-
Budget Support Fund (Homelessness)	184	-
Borough Growth Fund	79	-
Conservation & Heritage Fund	30	20
Mayor's Charity Fund	30	-
Museum Purchases Fund	46	30
Business Rates Reserve	1,654	1,302
Elections Reserve	50	123
Clayton Community Centre Fund	24	17
Totals	5,203	4,124

- 8.2 A full reserves risk assessment is completed as part of the 2025/26 budget preparation. Based on a preliminary assessment it is considered that the current balance of the general fund reserve provides 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 2024/25 to 2033/34 in February 2024, this will be refreshed as part of the 2025/26 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 Council's corporate objectives
- Oversees the development and implementation of the asset management and commercial strategies
- Reviews new capital project and 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 2025/26 to 2034/35 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 2024/25 in February 2024, the strategy for 2025/26 will be updated alongside the proposed budget and capital programme as part of the 2025/26 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 £23.585m by 2027/28 based on the 3 year Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2027/28, the Capital Financing Requirement at 31 March 2024 (£10.262m) and the Capital Financing Requirement for capital expenditure during the periods below (£13.323m).

Funding Stream	Capital Receipts (£000's)	External Contributions (£000's)	Borrowing (£000's)	Total (£000's)
2024/25	3,786	32,961	14,549	51,295
2025/26	4,150	3,543	16,038	23,731
2026/27	50,787	1,500	(4,942)	47,345
2027/28	34,350	1,500	(12,322)	23,528
Total	93,073	39,504	13,323	145,900

11. Budget Preparation Timetable

11.1 Work on the development of budget proposals for 2025/26 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 2025.

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	Mid November to mid December	
Scrutiny of first draft savings proposals	FAPSC	5 December 2024
Approval of final MTFs & consideration of draft budget proposals	Cabinet	7 January 2025
Scrutiny of draft budget proposals	FAPSC	16 January 2025
Final budget proposals recommended for approval by Full Council	Cabinet	4 February 2025
Full Council to approve budget	Full Council	12 February 2025

Appendix A – Summary of Refreshed MTFs Assumptions

Detail	2025/26 (£000's)	2026/27 (£000's)	2027/28 (£000's)	2028/29 (£000's)	2029/30 (£000's)	Total (£000's)
Employees	1,340	743	767	788	811	4,449
Premises	153	58	61	63	65	400
Transport	19	20	20	21	22	102
Financing	45	185	(20)	38	228	476
Pressures	180	10	10	10	10	220
Income	(284)	(8)	(27)	(545)	(566)	(1,430)
Total	1,453	1,008	811	375	570	4,217
Contribution to Reserves	50					
Savings						
Income	235	-	-	-	-	235
Staffing Related	189	-	-	-	-	189
Good Housekeeping	179	-	-	-	-	179
Tax Base	425	306	345	430	401	1,907
Council Tax Increase	175	177	180	184	188	904
Government Grants	300	-	-	-	-	300
Total	1,503	483	525	614	589	3,714
Gap	-	525	286	(239)	(19)	553

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

05 December 2024

Report Title: Financial and Performance Review Report – Second Quarter 2024/25

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</u> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To provide the Committee with the Financial and Performance Review Report for 2024-25 (Quarter Two).	
<u>Recommendation</u>	
That (Committee): note 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.	

1. Background

- 1.1 This quarterly report provides Members with a detailed update on how the Council has performed during the quarter by presenting performance data and progress summaries set within a financial context. The report provides broad financial information (Appendix A) and also details service performance (Appendix B) for the period to the end of quarter two in 2024/25.
- 1.2 The Council approved a General Fund Revenue Budget of £17,046,150 on 14 February 2024. Further financial information is provided in Appendix A.

2. Performance

- 2.1 The Q2 report (April 2024 to September 2024) has been produced using 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.
- 2.2 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.

- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 For this report a total of 49 indicators were monitored, 20 of these indicators were contextual and had no set target. Of these contextual measures that had historic trend data available, 38% showed an improvement or maintenance when compared to the previous year's performance. Of the remaining 29 indicators, the proportion which have met their target during this period stands at 83%, with the remaining 17% falling short of target. 20% of off target measures this quarter show a positive trend when comparing to the same time period of the previous financial year. It must also be noted that a small number of these 'off target' measures have more stretching targets this year, in line with benchmarking findings and council ambition. In terms of trend data overall, with measures where there is comparable data, the proportion of indicators showing an improvement or maintenance of the previous year's performance stands at 44%.
- 2.5 Three project/actions have been classified as completed by their respective owners this quarter

3. Issues

- 3.1 There are five indicators 'off target' this quarter and officers do not feel that these give rise to serious cause for concern at present (see commentaries in Appendix B). The management of each of the service areas concerned continue to monitor and take steps to address performance improvement where feasible and appropriate.
- 3.2 Progress on delivery of planned activities is summarised for each priority with two activities/actions being amber rated in Quarter Two; both are associated with priority two.
- 3.3 The first action flagged as amber is the Walleys Quarry odour problem. Comments by the action owner is listed below;

LEGAL ACTION

On 29 July 2024 the Secretary of State Environment, Food and Rural Affairs responded to the Leader's request for permission to prosecute Walleys Quarry Ltd under statutory nuisance legislation. The Secretary of State granted consent for a prosecution to proceed. On 30 September the Chief Executive provided an update stating; ""there are very few precedents for taking legal action against an operator regulated by a Government agency, so there is a great deal of legal advice and preparation involved, however I believe we will be ready to take the next step by the end of October"". Odour complaints reported in Q2 (July-September) are higher than reported over the same Quarter in 2023.

COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY

A member-led committee of inquiry was set up to look at the impact on local communities from the Walleys Quarry Landfill operation. The lines of inquiry were:
What is the impact of the ongoing odour issue?

What needs to be done next, and by whom, to bring about resolution?

What, if any opportunities have been missed to resolve the issue sooner?

The inquiry heard more than 11 hours of submissions over 2 days from the EA, UK Health Security Agency, community groups and others, and considered additional written statements. On 25 September the final report was presented to full Council recommending that the EA serve a closure notice to commence the process of the site being closed with an additional 10 other recommendations detailed in the report "Walleys Quarry Committee of Inquiry July/August 2024".

3.4 The second action flagged as amber and not progressing as expected is the Delivery of the £16m Kidsgrove Town Deal. Where some issues have continued in regard to the delivery of the Railway station project whilst technical issues are resolved on the ground conditions around the railway station. Work continues with the Town Deal Board and project partners to resolve these.

4. Recommendation

4.1 That Committee note 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.

5. Reasons

5.1 To enable financial and performance information to be presented for continued scrutiny and encourage improvement within council delivery.

6. Options Considered

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

7. Legal and Statutory Implications

7.1 The Council has a Best Value duty to provide value for money services.

8. Equality Impact Assessment

8.1 There are no differential equality issues arising directly from this report

9. Financial and Resource Implications

9.1 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.

10. Major Risks & Mitigation

10.1 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.

10.2 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.

11. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)



12. One Council

Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

One Commercial Council

One Digital Council

One Green Council

13. Key Decision Information

13.1 This is not a key decision.

14. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

14.1 Not relevant

15. List of Appendices

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

16. Background Papers

16.1 Working papers held by officers responsible for calculating indicators.



2024/25

**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 second report for 2024/25.
- 1.2 The report summarises overall financial performance for 2024/25 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 2024/25.
 - **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	2024/25 General Fund	
	Estimate £	Band D Council Tax £
Central Services	2,397,680	61.89
Cultural Services	3,555,470	91.78
Environmental Services	8,150,380	210.40
Planning	1,730,040	44.66
Transport	(270,890)	(6.99)
Housing	2,168,480	55.98
Net Cost of Services	17,731,160	457.72
Pensions Liabilities Account	400,000	10.33
Investment Properties	(84,510)	(2.18)
Interest and Investment Income	498,000	12.86
Net Operating Expenditure	18,554,650	478.73
Contribution to/(from) Revenue Reserves	273,000	7.05
Contribution to/(from) Capital Reserves	(1,771,500)	(45.73)
Amount to be met from Government Grant and Local Taxpayers	17,046,150	440.05

- 2.2 The Council approved a General Fund Revenue Budget of £17.046m on 14 February 2024 for 2024/25. 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 £0.011m has been achieved. The projected outturn on the General Fund Revenue Account for the year is £17.023m. This represents a positive outturn of £0.023m for the year.
- 2.5 The adverse variances that have occurred at the close of the second quarter of 2024/25 include:
- a. Income shortfalls from sales, fees and charges which amount to £0.096m (forecast to be £0.275m for the financial year).
 - b. Holding costs for York Place (e.g. utilities and business rates) are expected to amount to £0.110m for the financial year, £0.090m had been incurred during the first two quarters.
 - c. A pay award of £1,290 per employee has been offered that is in excess of the amount provided for in the budget (3.5%), this would amount to a pressure of £0.120m (£0.060m at quarter two).
- 2.6 These adverse variances have been offset in full by the following favourable variances:
- a. Interest receivable on cash that the Council holds in terms of Town Deal and Future High Street funding totals £0.507m at the close of quarter two (it is forecast that this will grow to £0.650m of income by the close of the financial year).
 - b. Interest payable on borrowing has yet to be incurred due to the cash that the Council holds in terms of Town Deal and Future High Street funding. It is forecast that borrowing may be required in the final quarter of the financial year dependent upon cash flow and that interest payable will be £0.395m lower than budgeted for (£0.263m at the close of quarter two).

A contribution to reserves has been assumed as a result of the favourable variance shown above in respect of interest receivable regarding cash that the Council holds in terms of Town Deal and Future High Street funding. Part of this reserve will fund the inspection stage of the Local Plan. At the close of the financial year the remainder will be contributed to the Budget Support Fund to increase the Council's financial resilience should the projected outturn remain unchanged.

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 2024/25.
- 3.2 The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (approved in February 2024) included the five year (2024/25 – 2028/29) Efficiency and Savings Plan targeting savings of £6.885m.
- 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 2024/25 budget was set in February 2024 with the assumption of £2.692m of savings in the year. These savings are detailed in the table below:

Category	Amount £'000	Comments
Income	680	Additional sources of income generation and an increased demand for services that the Council charges for
One Council	230	Efficiencies to be generated from the introduction of a new Council operating model and increased performance management
Staffing Related Efficiencies	199	No redundancies are anticipated to arise from these proposals
Good Housekeeping/More Efficient Processes	489	Various savings arising from more efficient use of budgets
Tax Base Increase	424	Increased in Council Tax and Business Rates tax base
Council Tax Increase	164	An assumed 1.99% per Band D equivalent increase in Council Tax
Government Reimbursement	506	Grant in respect of New Homes Bonus and Minimum Funding Guarantee
Total	2,692	

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 2024.

Priority	Budget at Period 6 £'000	Actual at Period 6 £'000	Variance at Period 6 £'000
One Council Delivering for Local People	517	506	(11)
A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough	8,045	8,037	(8)
Healthy, Active and Safe Communities	1,647	1,660	13
Town Centres for All	3,183	3,190	7
Total	13,392	13,393	1

4.3 A Capital Programme totalling £16.680m was approved for 2024/25, excluding a £1.000m contingency. Of this total £10.135m relates to the total cost of new schemes for 2024/25 together with £6.545m for schemes funded by external sources (Town Deals Fund, Future High Streets Fund and Disabled Facilities Grants). In addition £42.174m was brought forward from the 2023/24 Capital Programme, including projects planned under the Town Deals and Future High Streets funds that will be progressed during 2024/25 (£25.641m), the Council's contribution towards the construction of a new multi storey car park (£8.100m) and fleet replacement (£4.751m), resulting

in a total Capital Programme of £59.855m for 2024/25 (including a £1.000m contingency).

- 4.4 The expected total capital receipts due to be received this year following the sale of assets amount to £3.786m. A summary of the expected income is shown in the table below.

Funding	Amount
Proceeds from Right to Buy sales	£0.500m
Asset sales	£3.286m
Total	£3.786m

Major Projects Funding

- 4.5 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 £10.268m has been spent at 30 September 2024, as shown below:

Project	Award (£000's)	Spend/Ordered (£000's)	Remaining (£000's)
Ryecroft / Site Preparation	3,756	3,348	408
Multi Story Car Park	3,500	3,494	6
York Place	3,015	2,858	157
Stones Public Realm	321	108	213
Market Stalls	76	81	(5)
Project Management	380	379	1
Total	11,048	10,268	780

- 4.6 £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. £14.2m has been received to date of which £3.3m has been spent as shown below:

Project	Award (£000's)	Spend/Ordered (£000's)	Remaining (£000's)
Digital Infrastructure	2,285	29	2,256
Sustainable Public Transport	3,421	65	3,356
Electric Vehicle Charging	400	-	400
Pedestrian Cycle Permeability	950	-	950
Transform Key Gateway Sites	3,810	439	3,371
Astley Centre for Circus	1,810	640	1,170
Digital Society	3,510	662	2,848
Heart into Knutton Village	3,534	881	2,653
Cross Street, Chesterton	2,955	-	2,955
Project Management	925	628	297
Total	23,600	3,344	15,951

- 4.8 £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 £13.4m has been received of which £6.9m 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	3,496	3,496	-
Kidsgrove Station	3,658	212	3,446
Shared Services Hub	6,183	164	6,019

Canal Enhancement	400	-	400
Project Management	835	702	133
Total	16,900	6,902	9,998

4.9 The Council has been awarded £4.8m (all of which has now been received), 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. 33 projects have been identified for which spend has commenced. Total spend at 30 September 2024 amounted to £3.1m as shown below:

Project	Award (£000's)	Spend/Ordered (£000's)	Remaining (£000's)
CML Community Hubs	6	6	-
Newcastle 850 Anniversary	16	16	-
Nature and Wellbeing	21	20	1
Canal Connectivity	102	5	97
Clough Hall Park	234	19	215
Mental Health Worker	86	65	21
Nature Recovery	265	130	135
Epicentre for Circus	100	73	27
Homelessness Hub	1,115	637	478
Beat The Street	20	20	-
New Vic Theatre - 850 Event	10	10	-
Kidsgrove Workshop	156	108	48
Community Connector	67	34	33
Promotional Videos/Photos	15	14	1
Honeybox	55	55	-
Volunteering for all	71	51	20
Discharge Officer	86	65	21
BES Enterprise Coaching	89	82	7
Kidsgrove Town Hall	255	255	-
Security Marshalls	33	33	-
Flourishing Keele (KU)	466	352	114
Moving Ahead (KU)	277	277	-
Advanced Digital Technologies	409	204	205
Chamber Growth Hub	59	28	31
Brampton Wedding Venue	44	44	-
Markets For All	21	-	21
Community Connects	55	55	-
Feasted	44	44	-
Business Connects	6	3	3
Business Development	10	-	10
Technical Innovation Upskilling	159	86	73
Disadvantaged Upskill Project	28	8	20
Green Projects	164	123	41
Contingency	99	-	99
Project Management	193	153	40
Total	4,836	3,075	1,761

4.10 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.

4.11 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.

- 4.12 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 2024 amounted to £11.900m. Interest earned on these investments at the close of quarter two amounted to £0.507m. The average level of funds available for investment between 1 April 2024 and 30 September 2024 was £14.975m.
- 5.3 The Council has not budgeted to receive investment income in 2024/25. This was due to the expectation that borrowing would have taken place earlier in the financial year, however due to projects being delayed for a number of reasons, funding has remained in the Council's bank account and in turn generated interest. A surplus of £0.650m is anticipated for the financial year due to the cash that the Council holds in terms of Town Deal and Future High Street funding.

Borrowing

- 5.4 Borrowing is likely to be required during the final quarter of 2024/25 to fund the capital programme.
- 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, Arlingclose, 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 – 52.0% of Council Tax was collected by 30 September 2024, compared to a target at the close of quarter two of 48.75%.
- Business Rates – 54.4% of Business Rates was collected by 30 September 2024, compared to a target at the close of quarter two of 48.7%.

6.4 The current forecast of tax receipts and Section 31 grant are shown below:

Tax	Forecast (Surplus)/Deficit at 30.9.24	Council's Share
Council Tax	(£0.035m)	(£0.004m) (11%)
Business Rates	(£0.053m)	(£0.021m) (40%)
Business Rates Section 31 Grant	(£0.029m)	(£0.012m) (40%)
Total	(£0.117m)	(£0.037m)



Quarter 2 - April 2024 to September 2024

All Performance Indicators Current Status



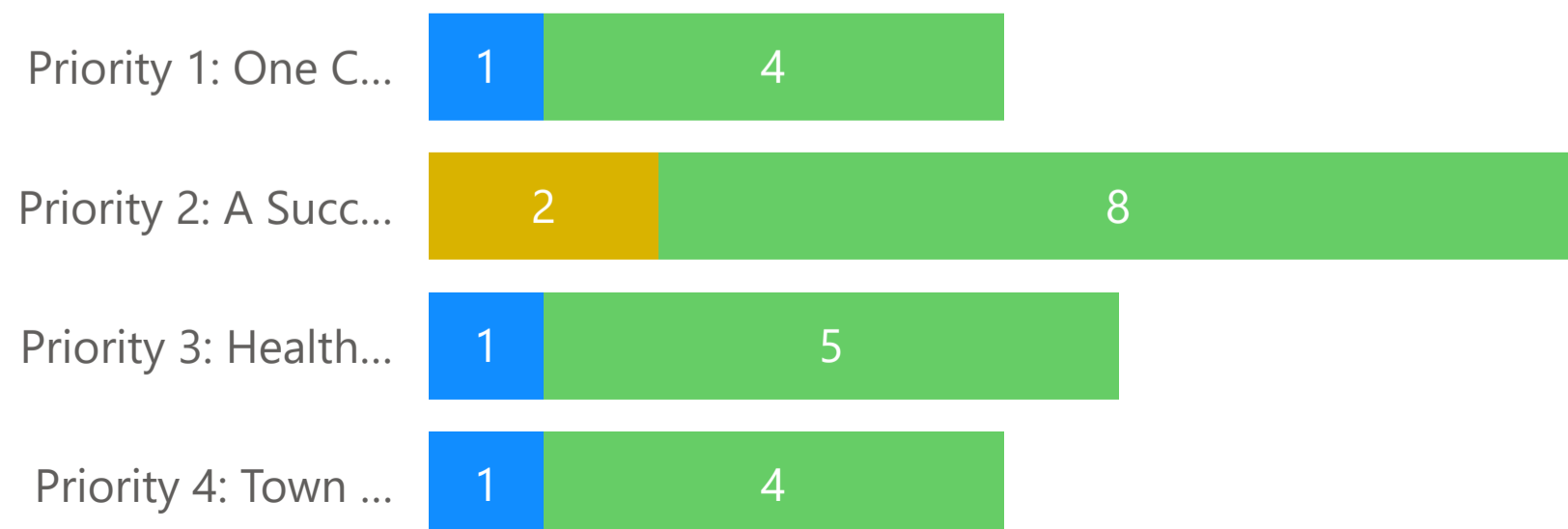
Corporate Aim (Priority)	Count
Priority 1: One Council delivering for Local People	16
Priority 2: A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough	6
Priority 3: Healthy, Active and Safe Communities	24
Priority 4: Town Centres for All	3
Total	49

Smart Narrative

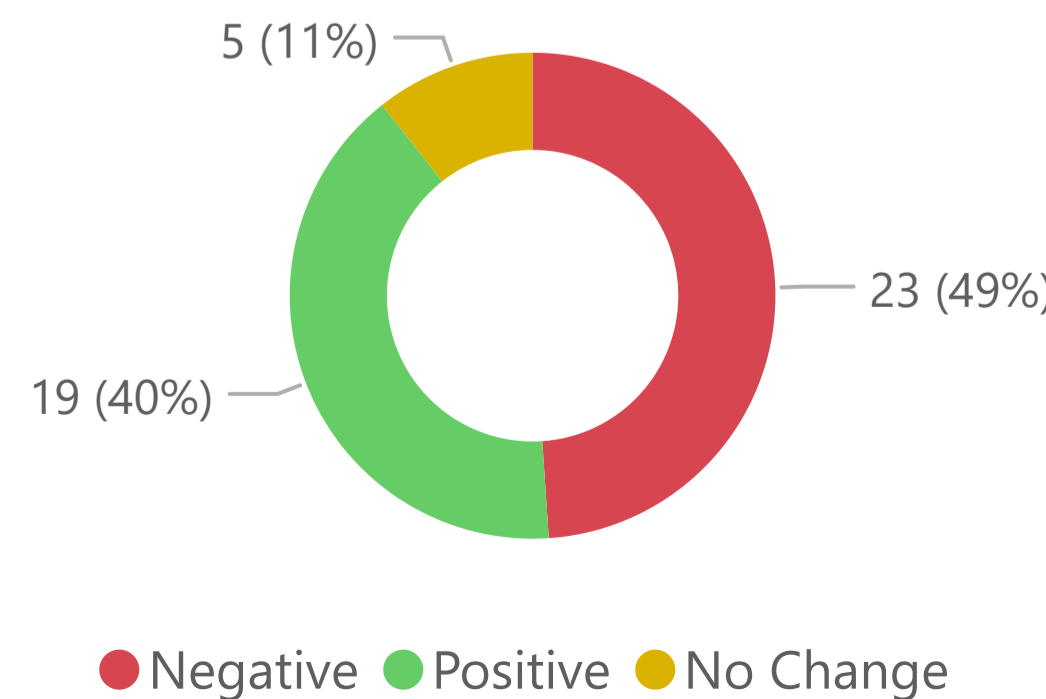
- There are 29 Indicators which have set targets this quarter.
- 83% met their targets within Quarter Two. 10 Indicators which met their target also showed improvement when compared to the same time period last year. 11 Indicators which met their target showed a negative trend when being compared to last year. 2 Indicators showed no change.
- 17% of Indicators were off target this quarter. 1 of these indicators showed an improvement when compared to last year and 4 indicators showed a negative trend.
- There are 20 Indicators which are contextual this quarter and do not have a target to meet. When compared to last year 5 measures showed an improved trend with 8 of the contextual measures showing a negative trend. 7 measures did not have any historic data to compare against.
- There are 3 Projects/Actions that have been classified as completed being split equally between Priority 1, 3 and 4. Priority 2 has 2 Project/Action's that have been identified as not progressing as expected - detail of these is provided in this report.

Summary Project Status Split

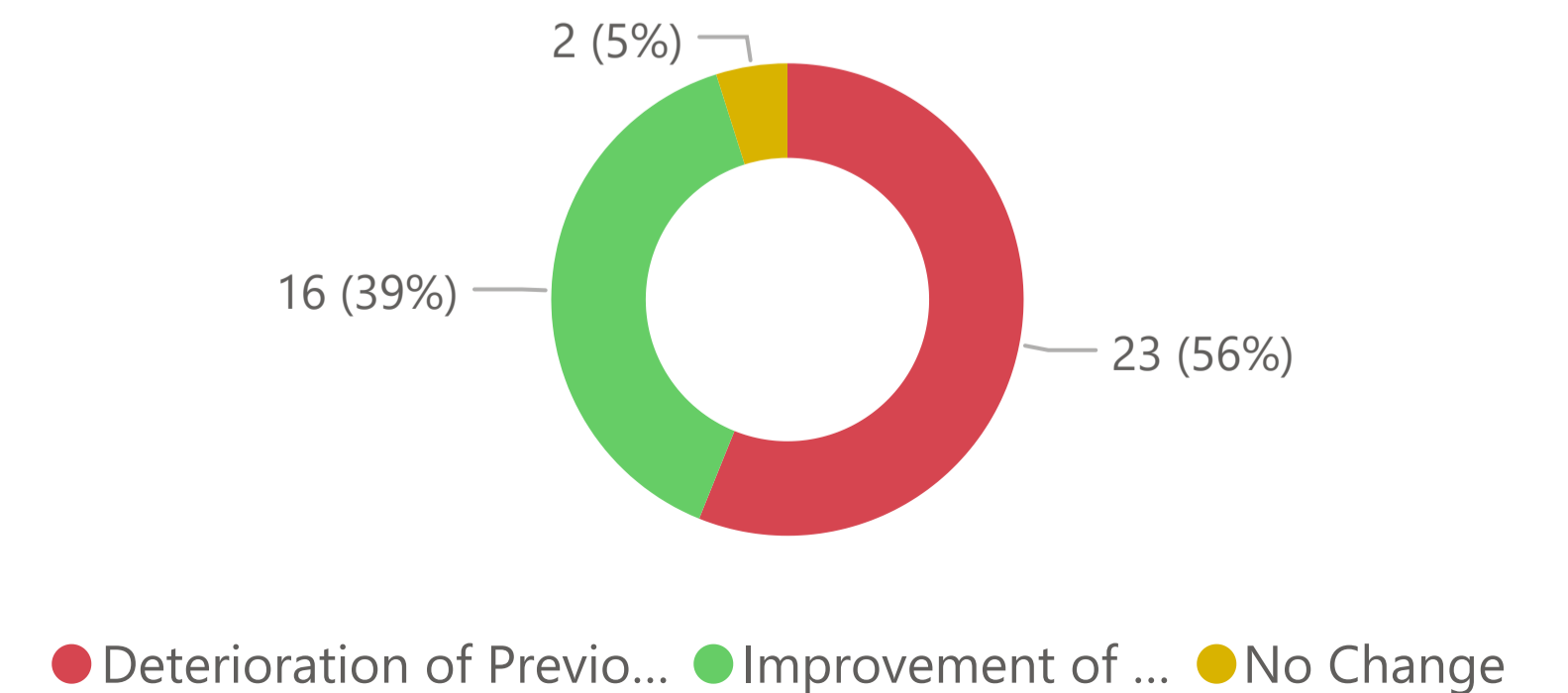
● Project/Action is Completed ● Project/Action is Not Progr... ● Project/Action is Progr...



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

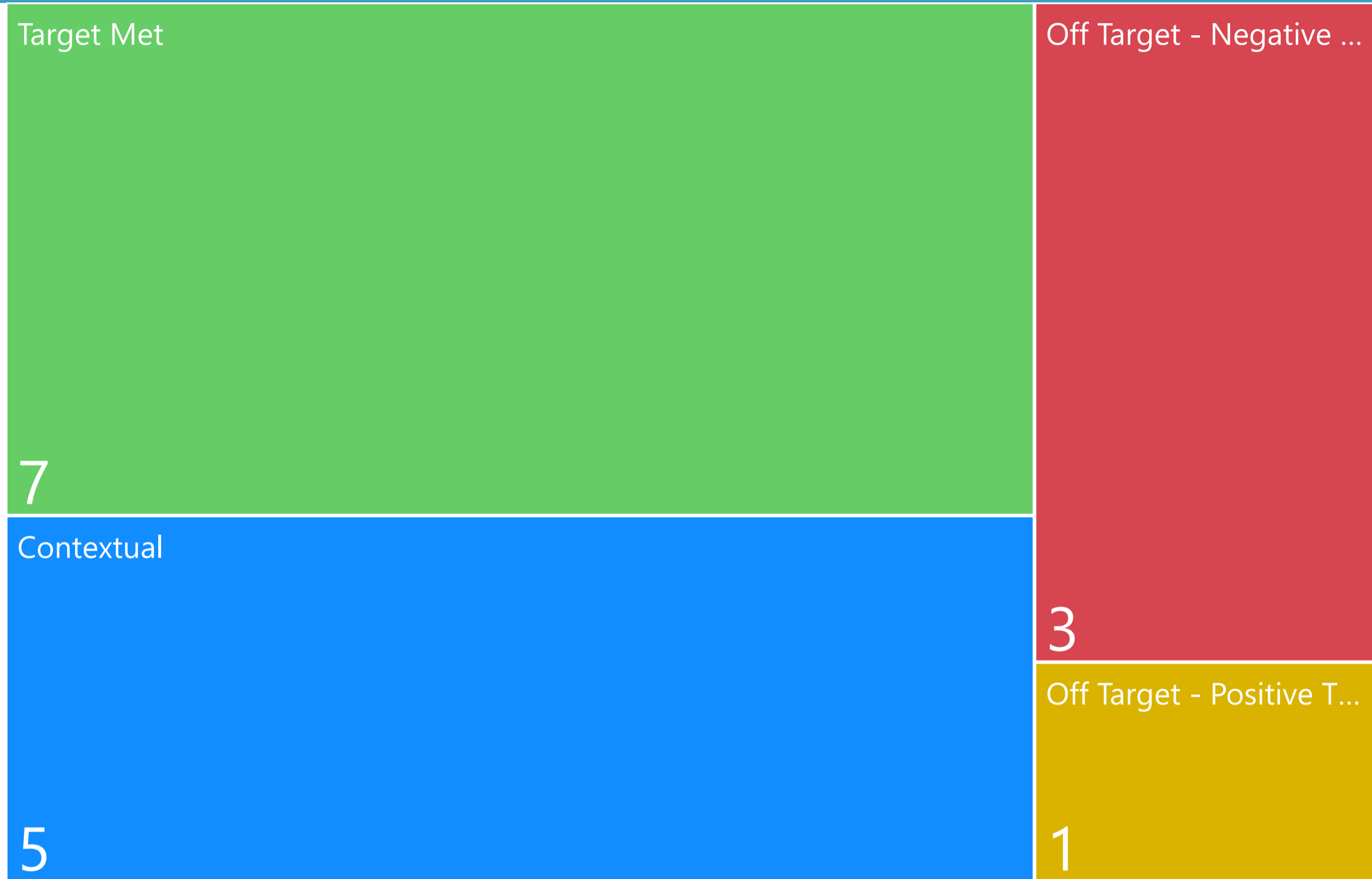


All Qtr.2 Trend Status of PI's Compared On Same Qtr in the Previous Financial Year





Priority 1: Performance Indicators Current Status



Corporate Objective	Count
Deliver services to a high standard every day	3
Develop professional talent across the Council and provide opportunities for staff to grow their careers	4
Ensure our services are efficient and accessible	7
Ensure strong financial discipline across the Council	2
Total	16

Smart Narrative

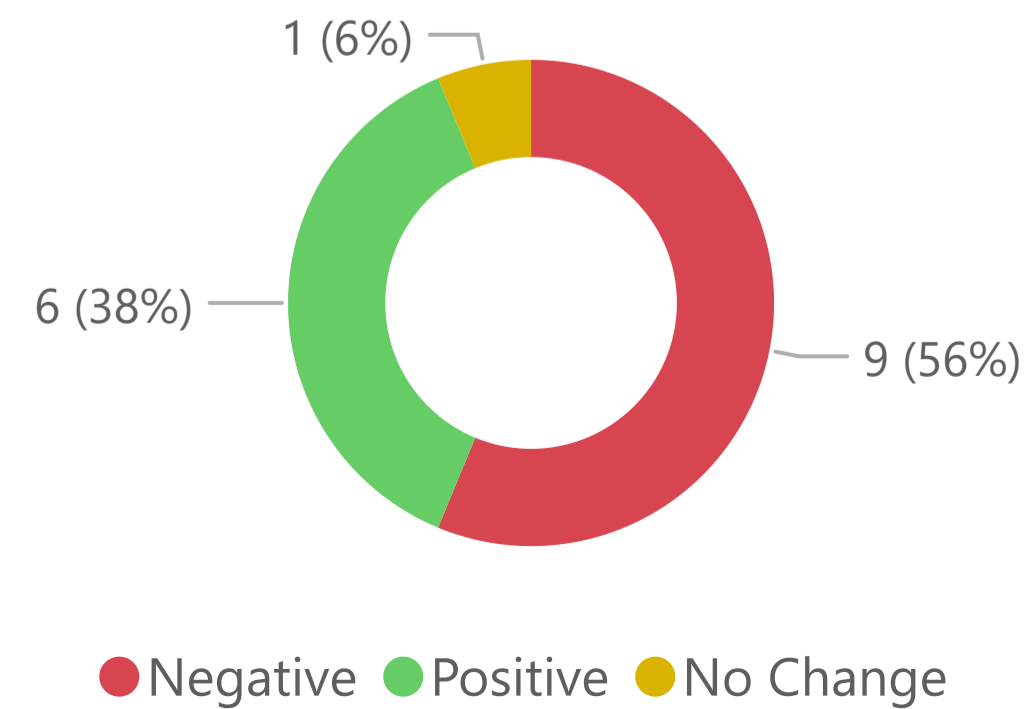
- There are 11 Indicators which have set targets this quarter within Priority 1.
- 64% met their targets within Quarter Two. 2 Indicators which met their target also showed improvement when compared to the same time period last year. 5 Indicators which met their target showed a negative trend when being compared to last year.
- 36% of Indicators were classed as off target this quarter. Only 1 of these indicators showed a positive trend when compared to last year and 3 showed an negative performance on the year previous.
- There are 5 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, 1 measure demonstrated an improvement and 1 measure did not have any historic data to compare against.
- There has been one Project/Action that has been classed as completed in Priority 1, this being the Delivery of the One Council Programme. All other Projects/Actions within Priority 1 are classed to be progressing as expected.

Priority 1: Summary Project Status Split

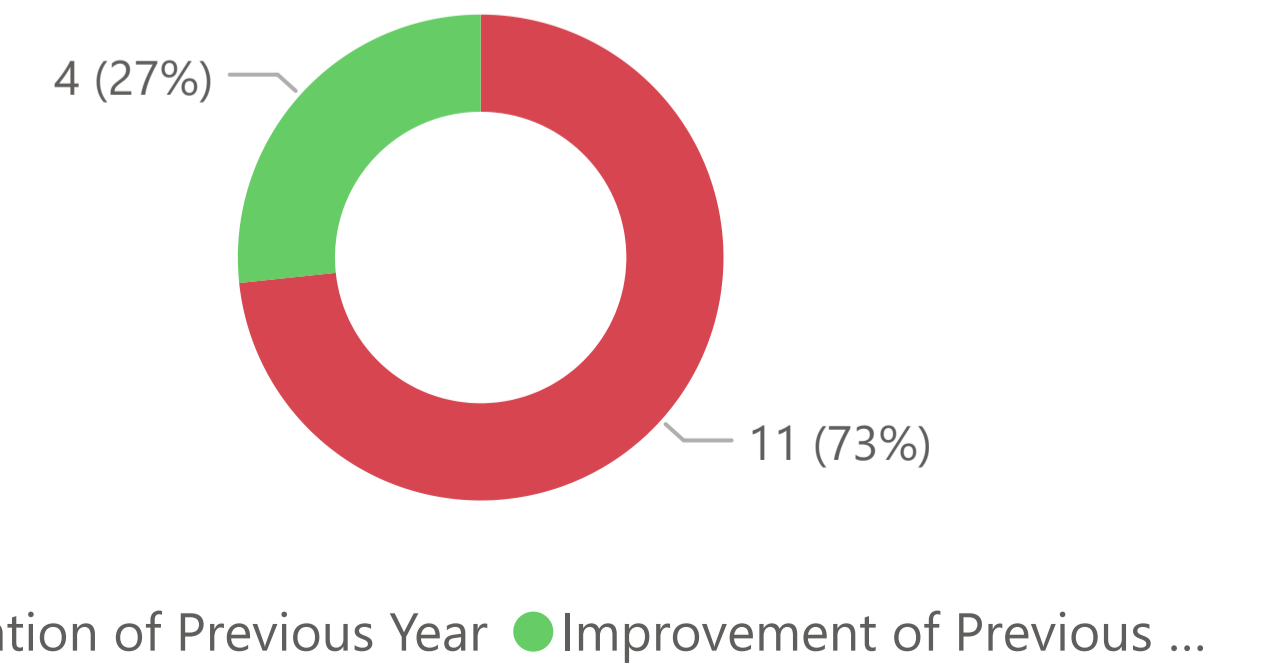
● Project/Action is Completed ● Project/Action is Progressing as Expected

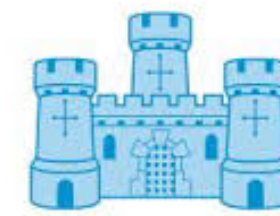


Priority 1: Qtr.2 Trend Direction of PI's Compared to Previous Quarter



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



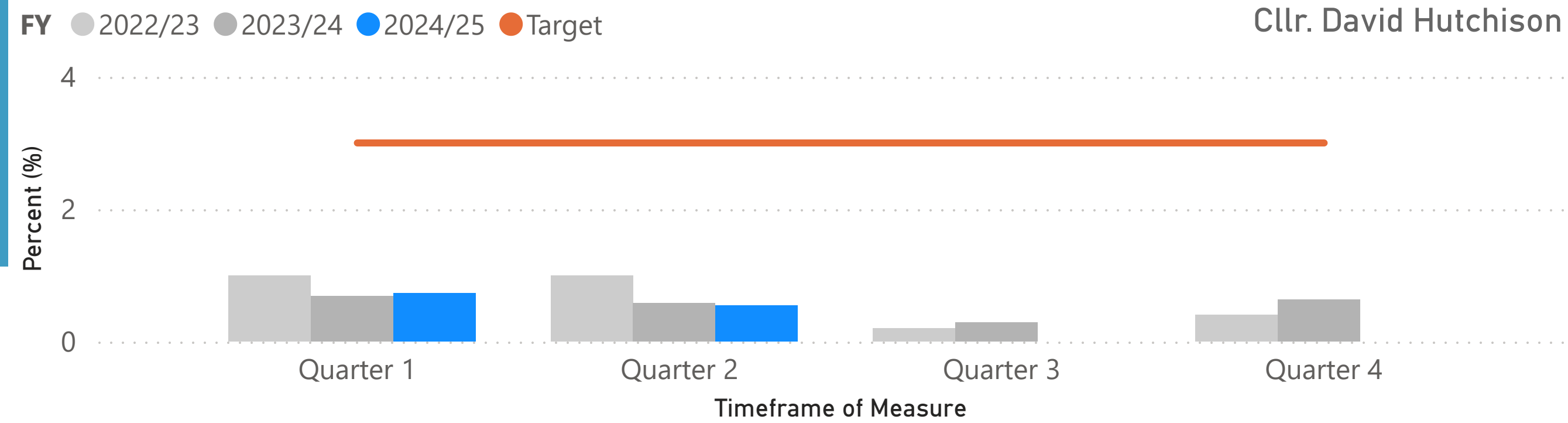


Low
Is Good
Per
Quarter
(Snapshot)

ID1.1 - Percentage of food premises that have a zero or one national food hygiene rating

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target



0.54 ✓

Target: 3.00

Not Required as Target Met

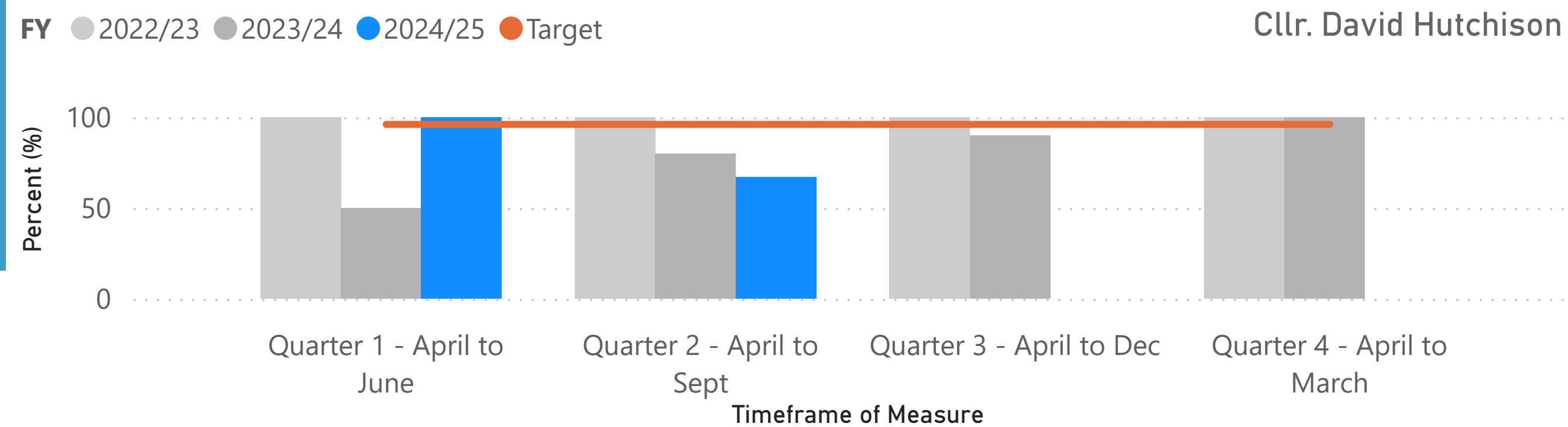
Positive
Yearly Trend

High
Is Good
Cumulative
(Per
Annum)

ID1.2 - Percentage of category A and B food business inspections completed on time

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target



67.00 !

Target: 96.00

5 inspections planned for quarter with 2 inspections due end of August which were delayed due to staff illness and a vacant post, these have been prioritised and due to be completed on 17.10.24 and we are on target to catch up with the inspection program. 4 of 6 inspections completed in total for year to date.

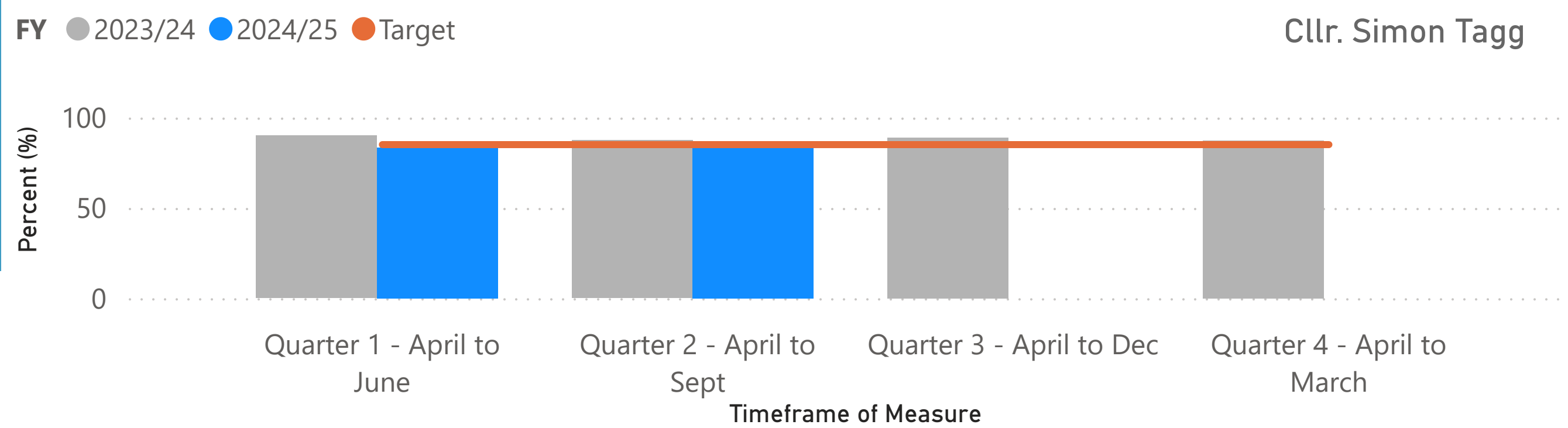
Negative
Yearly Trend

High
Is Good
Cumulative
(Per
Annum)

ID1.16 - Percentage of Stage 1 complaints processed in time being 20 working days

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target



83.33 !

Target: 85.00

Of the 12 stage 1 complaints received, 10 were addressed within the designated time frame. The two outstanding complaints required additional information which resulted in a delay. Both were resolved within 5 additional days.

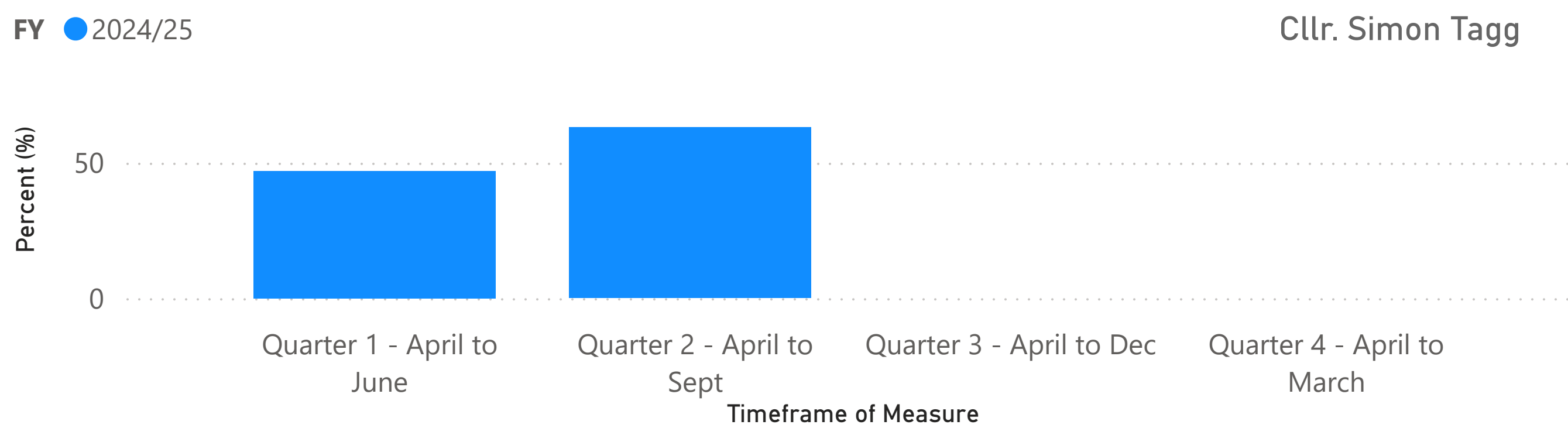
Negative
Yearly Trend

High
Is Good
Cumulative
(Per
Annum)

ID1.17 - Percentage of FOI's dealt with in time being 20 working days

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target



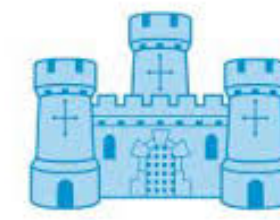
63.00

Continue to work at 80% slowly bringing the percentage up as we progress through the year.

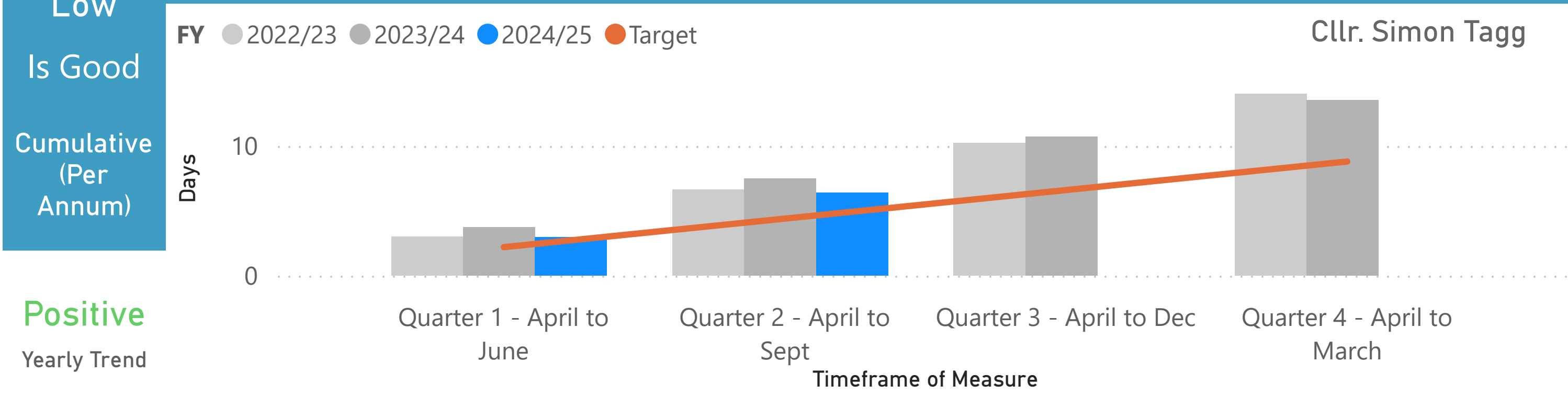
N/A
Yearly Trend

Deliver services to a high standard every day

Ensure our services are efficient and accessible



ID1.13 - Average number of days per employee lost to sickness - Per Employee Current Status SMART Actions if Off Target

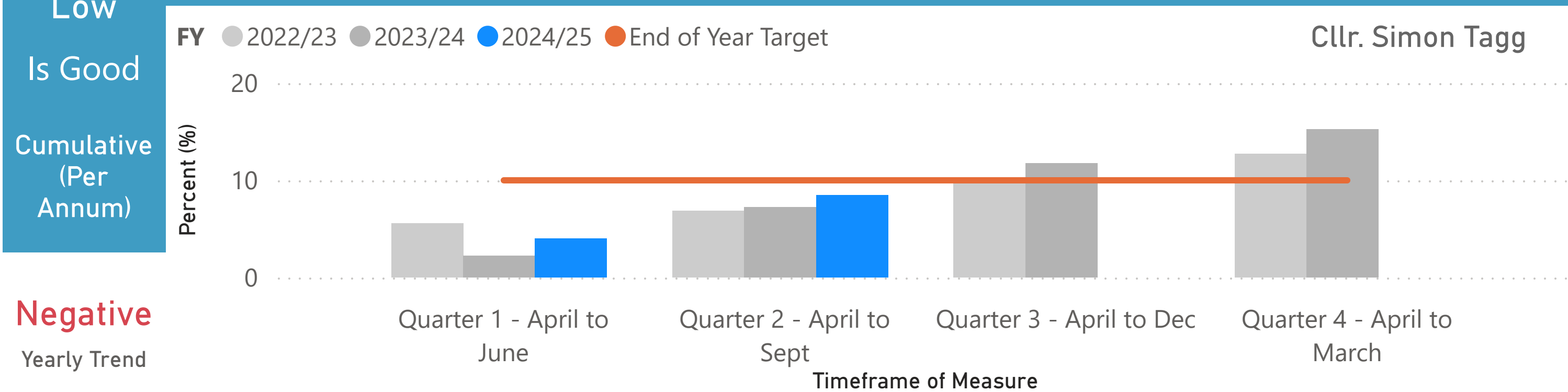


6.40!

Target: 4.40

Sickness remains above target but has continued to decrease slightly in September after a spike in July and is marginally lower than it was in September 2023, the reduction was in long term absence with a slight increase in short term absence. The team continue to undertake proactive work around well-being and managing absence.

ID1.14 - Staff Turnover Current Status SMART Actions if Off Target

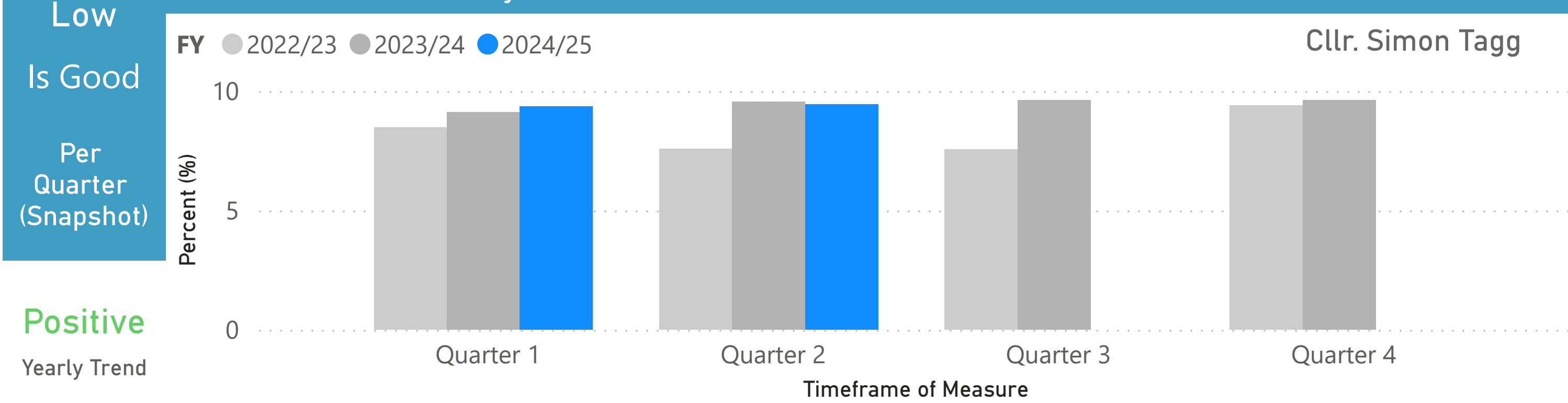


8.46✓

End of Year Target: 10.00

Target met but this is due to it being a cumulative figure

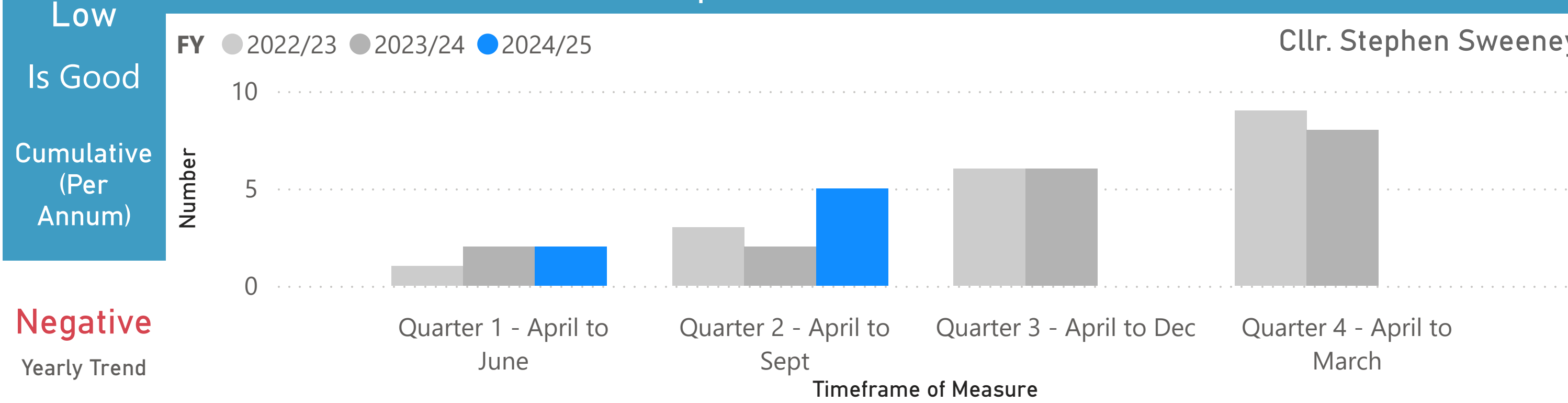
ID1.15 - Staff Vacancy Rate Current Status SMART Actions if Off Target



9.44

Vacancy rates remain stable, and slightly lower overall in Q2 than Q1. Some posts are being covered by agency in the short term. There are a small number of hard to recruit specialist posts which have not been filled substantively for some time.

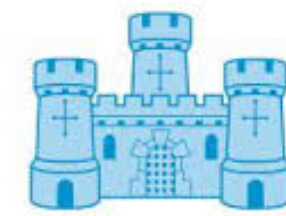
ID1.3 - No. Accidents/Incidents reported (RIDDOR) Current Status SMART Actions if Off Target



5

Delayed reporting from members of the public resulted in two late submissions for the initial quarter.

Develop professional talent across the Council and provide opportunities for staff to grow their careers



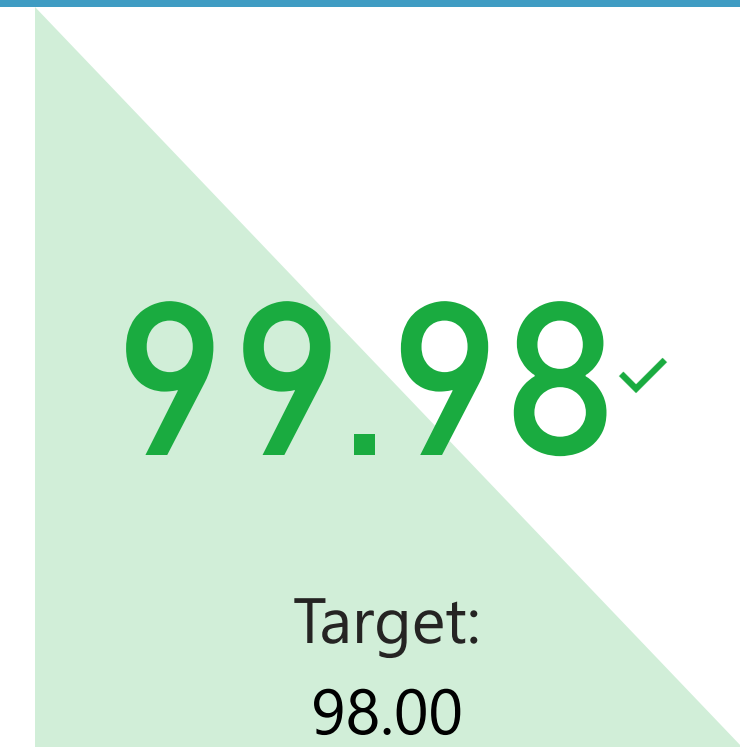
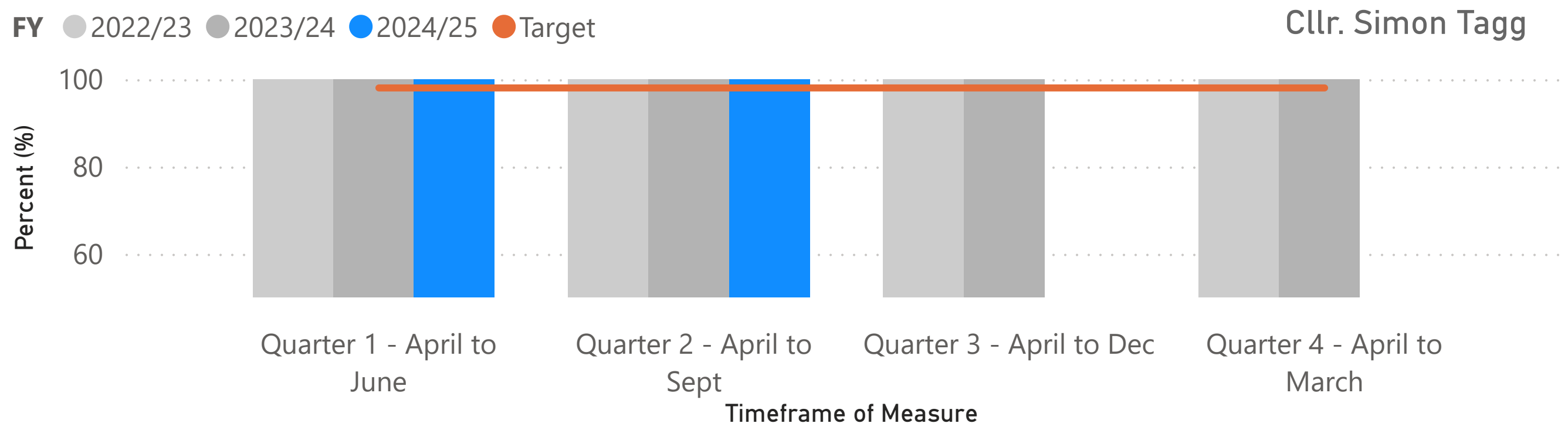
High
Is Good
Cumulative (Per Annum)

ID1.6 - Percentage of Customer Hub requests resolved at first point of contact

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

Cllr. Simon Tagg



Not Required as Target Met

Ensure our services are efficient and accessible

Negative
Yearly Trend

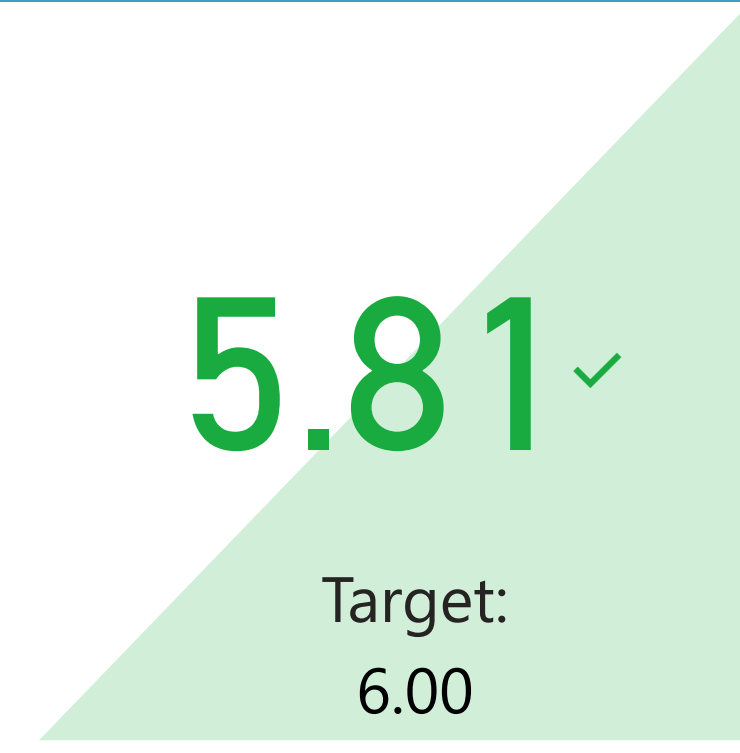
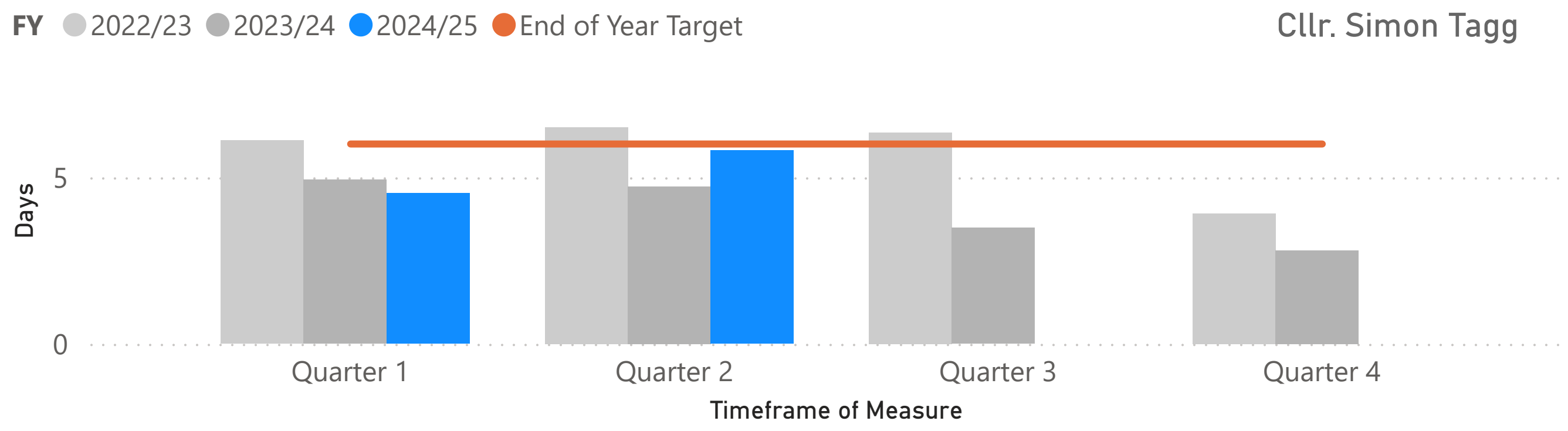
Low
Is Good
Cumulative (Per Annum)

ID1.10 - Time taken to process Housing Benefit new claims/change events (Days)

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

Cllr. Simon Tagg



Not Required as Target Met

Deliver services to a high standard every day

Negative
Yearly Trend

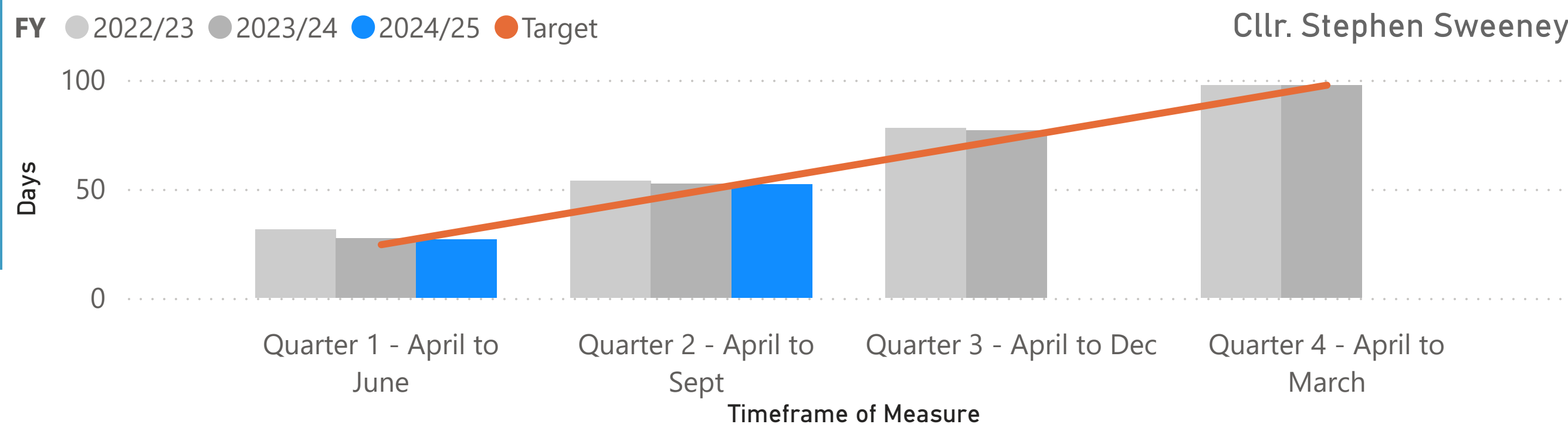
High
Is Good
Cumulative (Per Annum)

ID1.11 - Percentage of Council Tax collected

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

Cllr. Stephen Sweeney



Not Required as Target Met

Ensure strong financial discipline across the Council

Negative
Yearly Trend

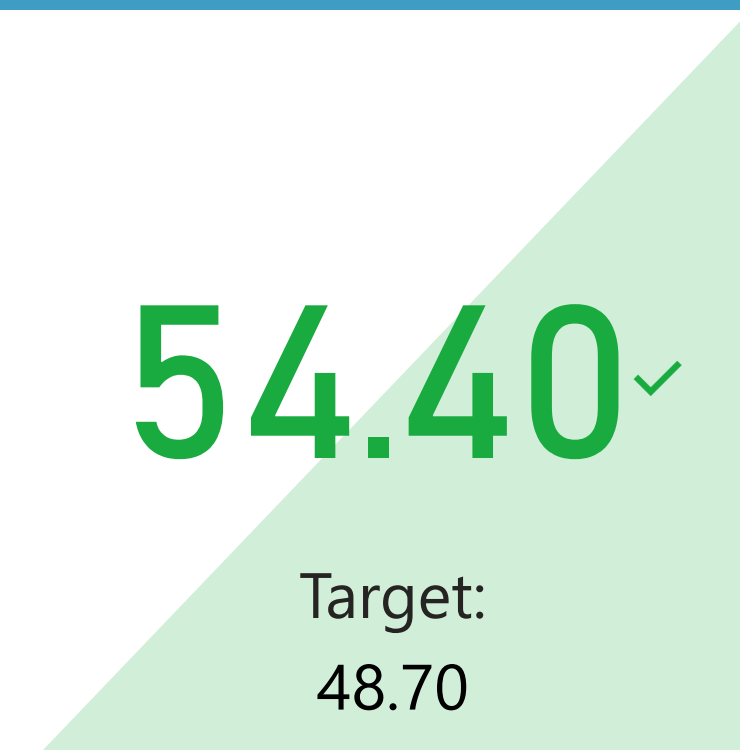
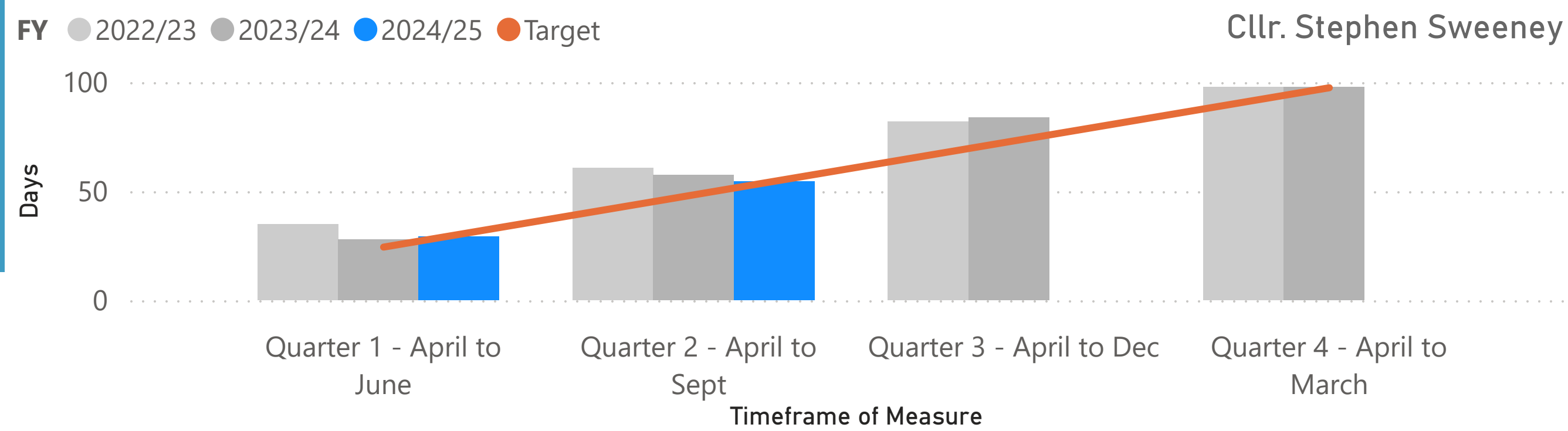
High
Is Good
Cumulative (Per Annum)

ID1.12 - Percentage of National non-domestic rates collected

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

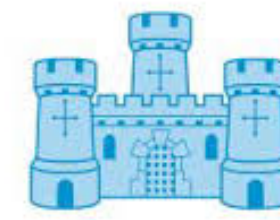
Cllr. Stephen Sweeney



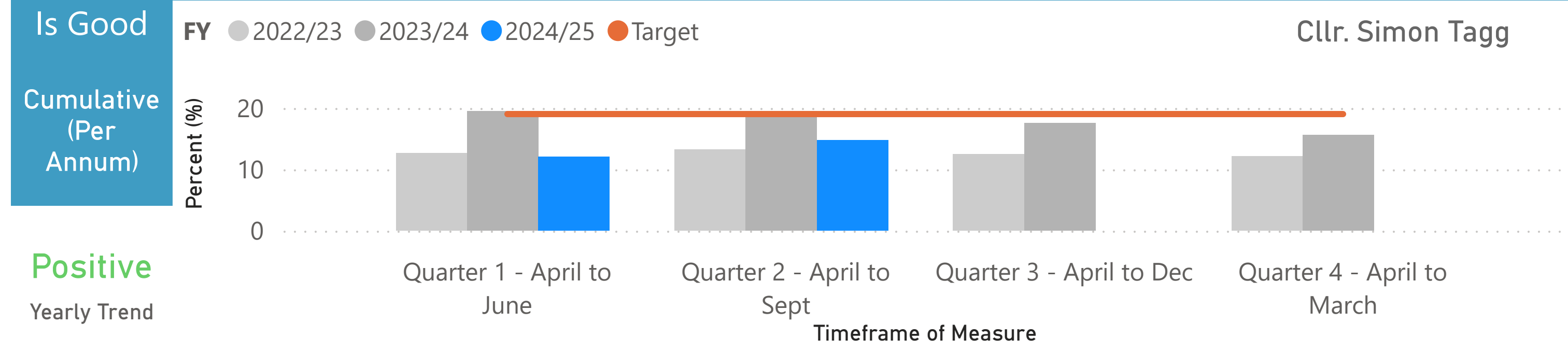
Not Required as Target Met

Ensure strong financial discipline across the Council

Negative
Yearly Trend



Low ID1.7 - % Unmet demand (number of calls not answered as a % of total call handling volume) **Current Status** SMART Actions if Off Target

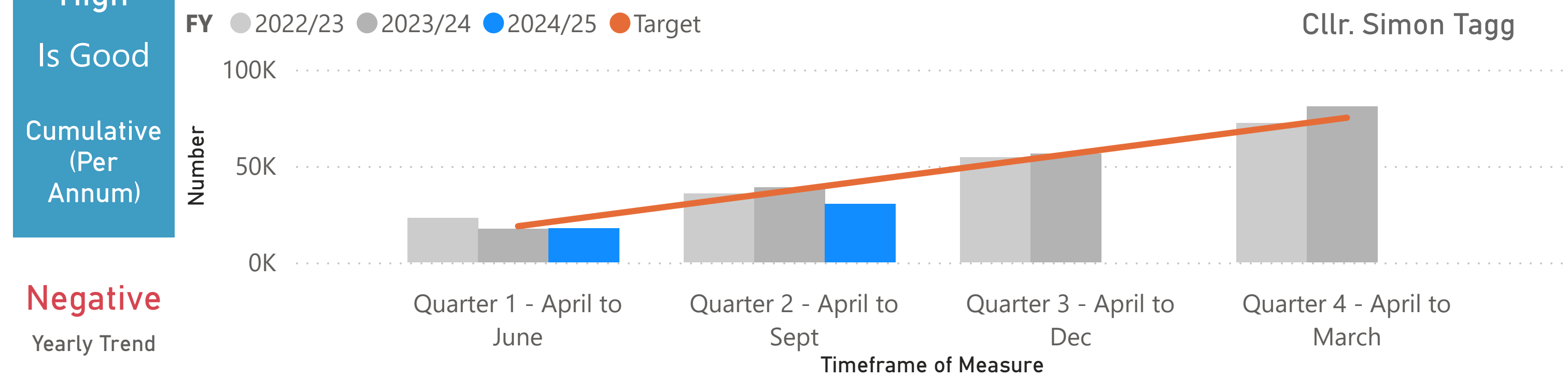


14.70 ✓

Target: 19.00

Not Required as Target Met

High ID1.8a - Total number of digital online transactions **Current Status** SMART Actions if Off Target

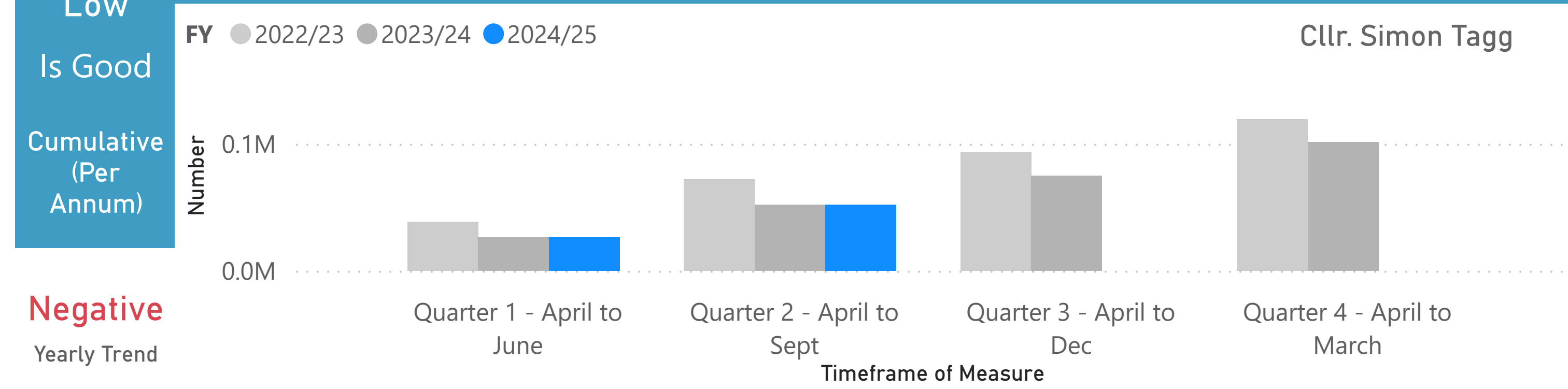


30,297 !

Target: 37,500

The council is actively maintaining and updating the information, advice, and guidance available to residents through the website, which has consequently decreased the number of completed forms. For instance, the previously available 'general enquiries' form has been substituted with targeted information and guidance.

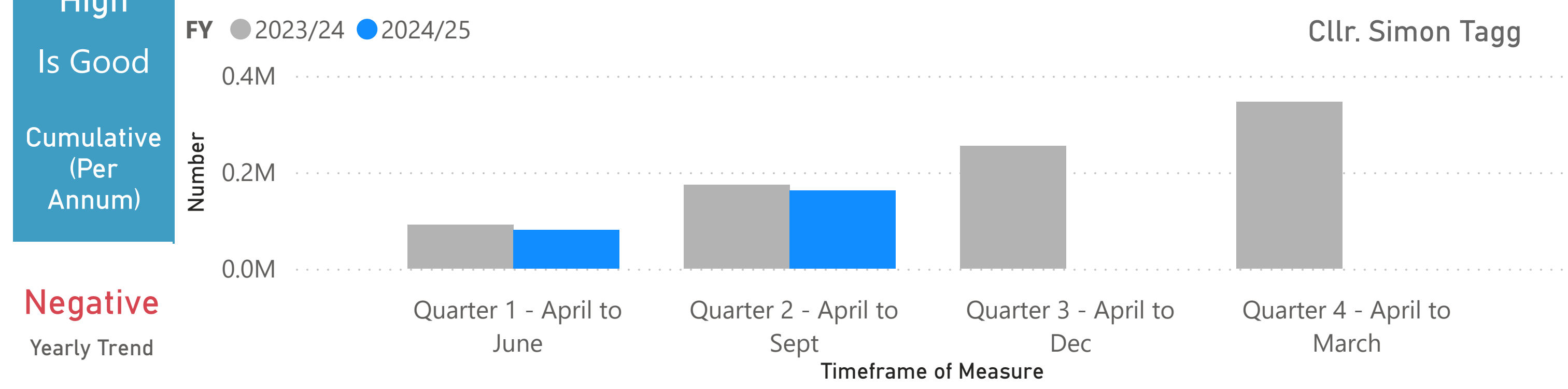
Low ID1.8b- Total number of calls offered into the Customer Hub **Current Status** SMART Actions if Off Target



52,132

No set target and used to compare different types of demand

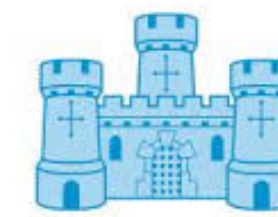
High ID1.9 - Total number of unique users to the website **Current Status** SMART Actions if Off Target



162,032

11,686 less unique users by end of quarter 2 from the previous financial year. Drop in number have been impacted by the reduced figure seen in Quarter 1 and numbers overall for Quarter 2 in isolation remain relatively close to that seen last year. Continued monitoring of the measure will take place as the year progresses

Ensure our services are efficient and accessible



Project Status Split for Priority 1.

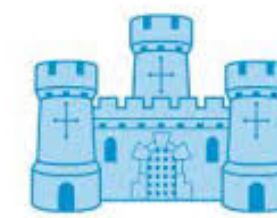
Project/Action is Progressing as Expected

4

Project/Action is Completed

1

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	strategy realisation continues
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 Completed	Project/Action has been completed.
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	Officers are beginning a new programme to investigate commercialisation opportunities across the Council, this will enable each service to review where they can operate more commercially.
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	Ongoing partnership work continues. Work continues in developing our Priority Delivery Plans in line with our understanding of our communities and the overall Council Priorities and Plan. We continue to work with partners and also with data to understand the context in which we operate, invite feedback and consultation e.g. budget consultation, local plan consultation.
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	Ongoing partnership work continues. Partnership working continues to be a strength for the organisation with positive outcomes in regard to Community Safety , Town Centre experience and ease of access to council services. Significant progress is being achieved in relation to Better Health outcomes as the Active Referral scheme is embedded



Priority 2: Performance Indicators Current Status



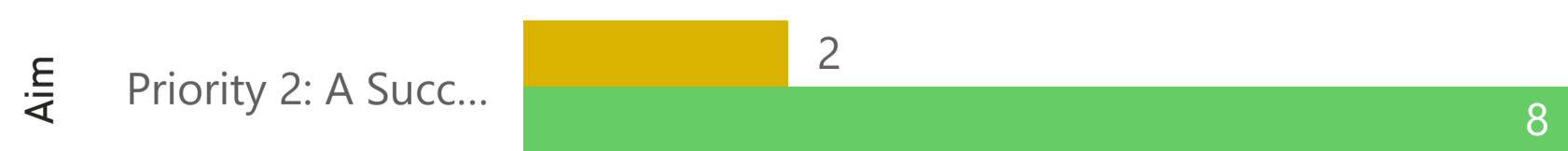
Corporate Objective	Count
A strong and sustainable economy where everyone benefits	1
Protecting our communities by improving how we use our enforcement powers.	1
Support the sustainable development of our towns and villages	4
Total	6

Smart Narrative

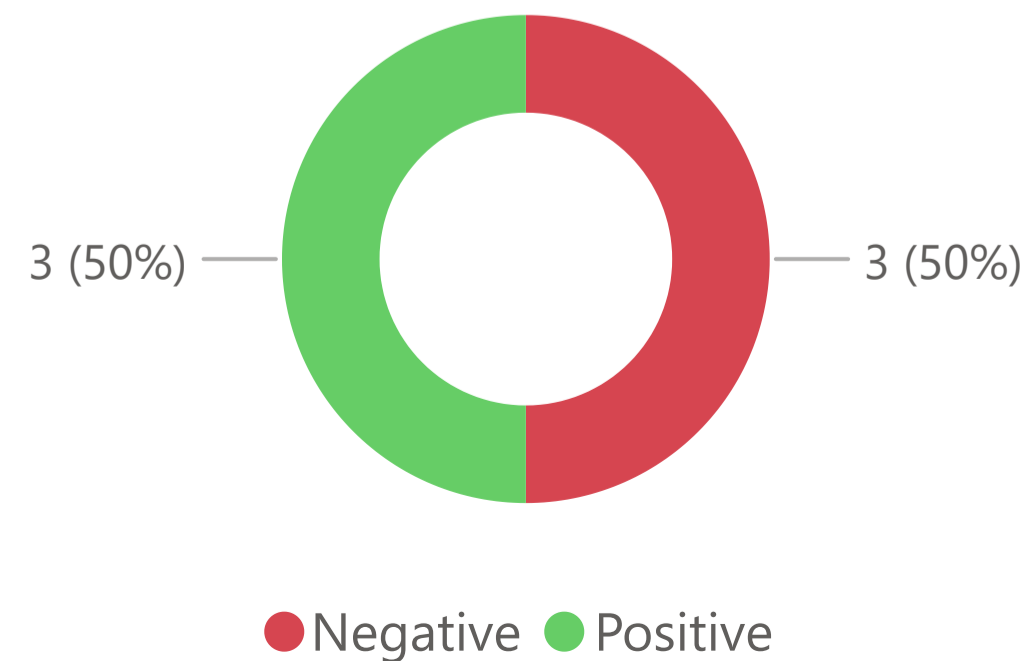
- There are 6 Indicators which have set targets this quarter within Priority 2.
- 83% met their targets within Quarter Two. 2 Indicators which met their target showed improvement when compared to the same time period last year. 3 Indicators which met their target showed a negative trend when being compared to last year.
- Within Priority 2, there are 2 Projects/Actions that have been raised to not be progressing as expected and relate to the following; "Secure a Successful Resolution to Walleys Quarry" and "Delivering the £16m Kidsgrove Town Deal" Further detail in regards to this project/action is supplied within the body of the report.

Priority 2: Summary Project Status Split

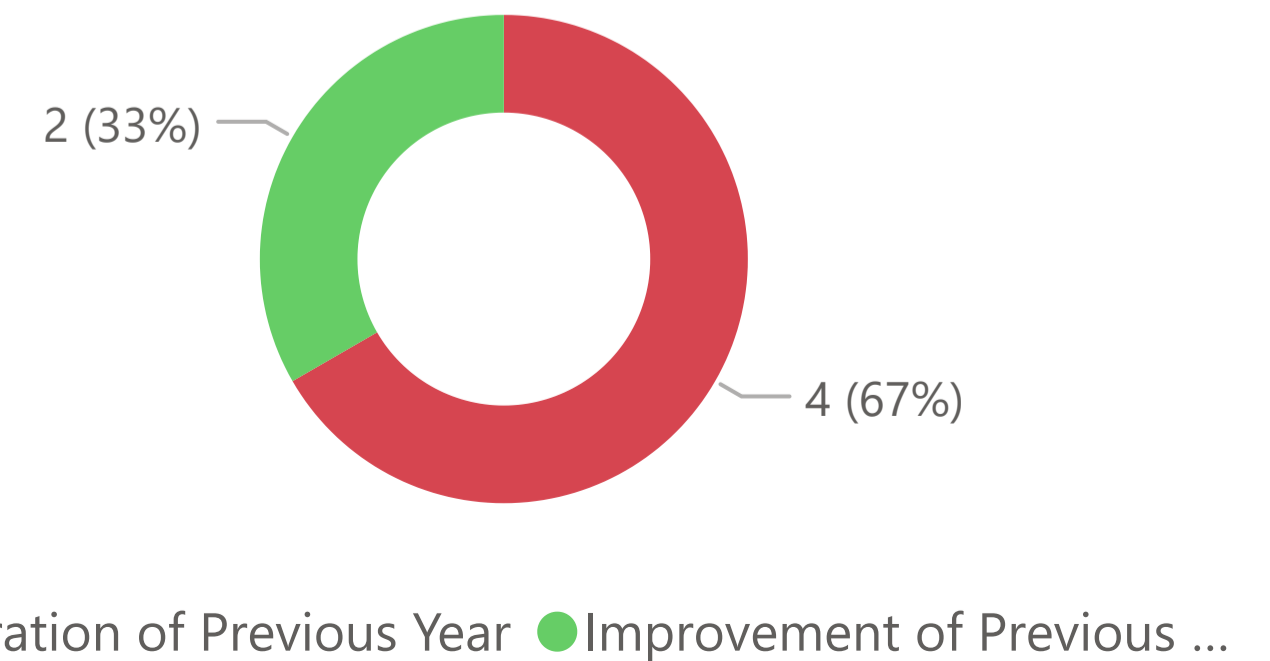
● Project/Action is Not Progressing as Expected ● Project/Action is Progressing as Expe...

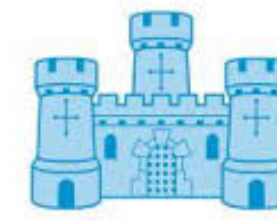


Priority 2: Qtr.2 Trend Direction of PI's Compared to Previous Quarter



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)

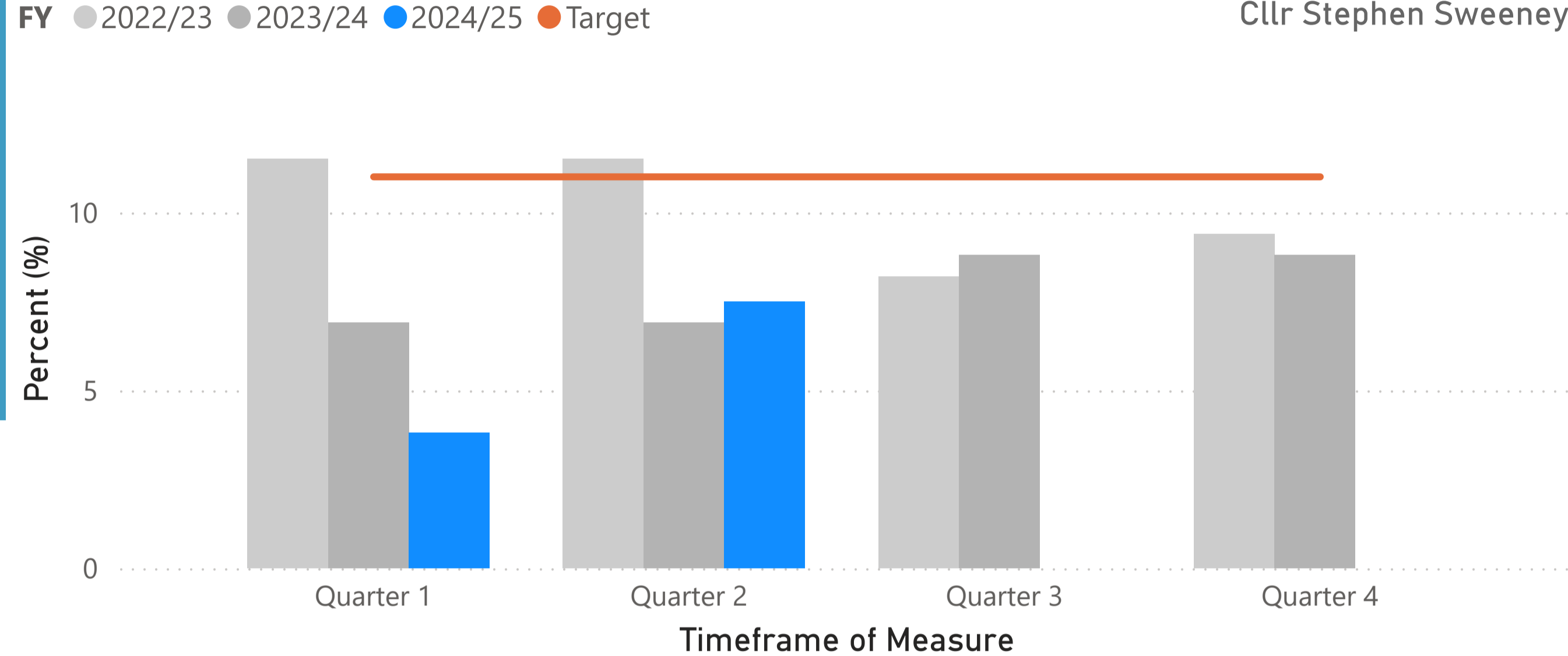
Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

Low
Is Good

Per
Quarter
(Snapshot)

Positive
Yearly Trend



Cllr Stephen Sweeney



Not Required as Target Met

A strong and sustainable economy where everyone benefits

ID2.6 - Percentage of complainants informed within the required timescales of any action to be taken about alleged breaches of planning control

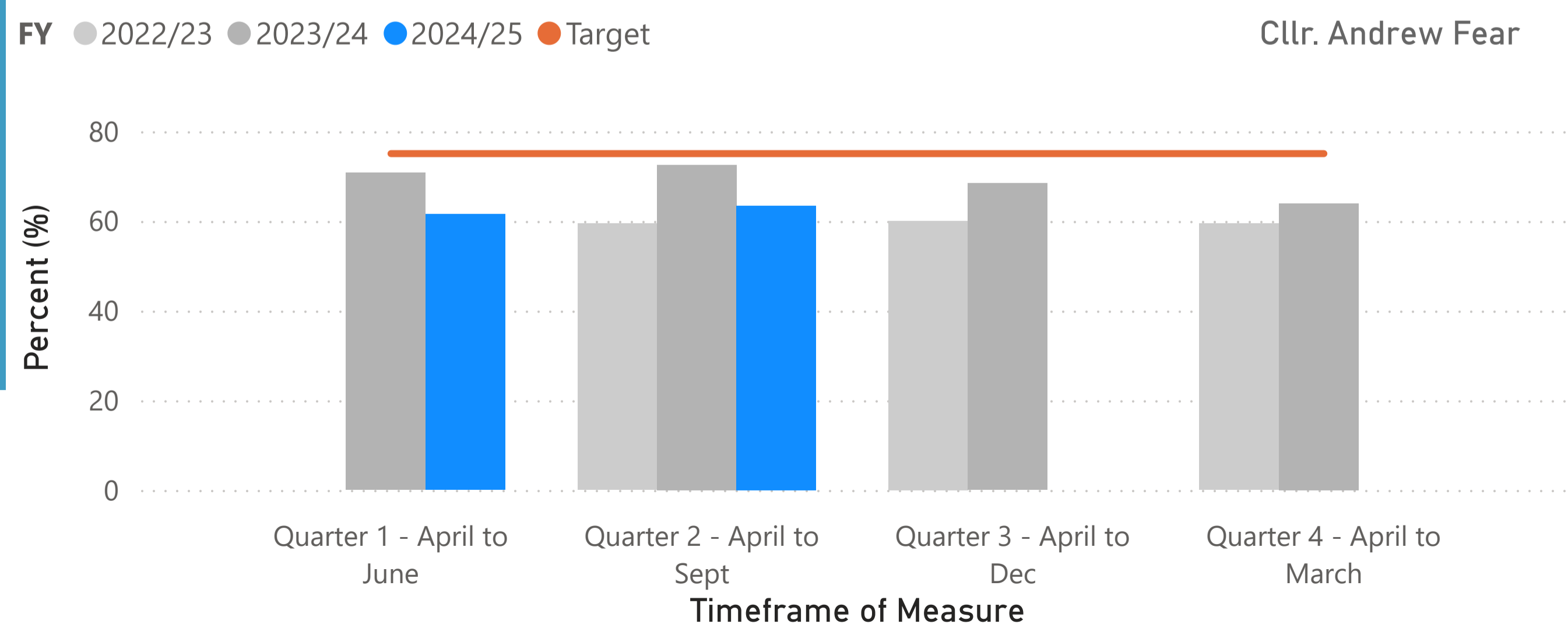
Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

High
Is Good

Cumulative
(Per Annum)

Negative
Yearly Trend

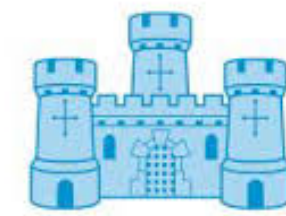


Cllr. Andrew Fear



Performance in this quarter is slightly higher than the Q1 but remains below the Target. As previously, the service was impacted by a number of difficult and/or time consuming cases taking up a lot of resources. Performance was also impacted by a combination of annual leave, sickness absence and prioritisation being given to the processing of planning applications. Better case management and senior management overview is now being implemented

Protecting our communities by improving how we use our enforcement powers.



High
Is Good
Planning
Positive
Yearly Trend

ID2.2 - Speed of major development applications (P151a - 24 Month Rolling Period up to End of Each Quarter)

Cllr. Andrew Fear

Timeframe of Measure	2022/23 (%)	2023/24 (%)	2024/25 (%)	Target (%)
1. Jul 2022 - Jun 2024	100	95	90	75
2. Oct 2022 - Sep 2024	100	95	90	75
3. Jan 2023 - Dec 2024	100	95	-	75
4. Apr 2023 - Mar 2025	95	90	-	75

Current Status

93.20 ✓

Target: 75.00

SMART Actions if Off Target

Measure shown is the % within 13 weeks or within agreed time - Central Gov metric which measures a rolling time period of 24 months - Newest metric shows the following time period October 2022 – September 2024

Low
Is Good
Planning
Negative
Yearly Trend

ID2.3 - Quality of major development applications (P152a - 24 Month Rolling Period - See SMART Actions)

Cllr. Andrew Fear

Timeframe of Measure	2022/23 (%)	2023/24 (%)	2024/25 (%)	Target (%)
1. Jul 2021 - Jun 2023	5	2	2	10
2. Oct 2021 - Sep 2023	4	4	4	10
3. Jan 2022 - Dec 2023	2	2	-	10
4. Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	2	2	-	10

Current Status

4.08 ✓

Target: 10.00

SMART Actions if Off Target

Measure shown is the Quality of decisions (% overturned at appeal) - Central Gov metric which measures a rolling time period of 24 months - They have currently advised they are behind schedule. Newest metric shows the following time period October 2021 – September 2023

High
Is Good
Planning
Positive
Yearly Trend

ID2.4 - Speed of non-major development applications (P153 - 24 Month Rolling Period up to End of Each Quarter)

Cllr. Andrew Fear

Timeframe of Measure	2022/23 (%)	2023/24 (%)	2024/25 (%)	Target (%)
1. Jul 2022 - Jun 2024	100	95	90	85
2. Oct 2022 - Sep 2024	100	95	90	85
3. Jan 2023 - Dec 2024	100	95	-	85
4. Apr 2023 - Mar 2025	95	90	-	85

Current Status

95.20 ✓

Target: 85.00

SMART Actions if Off Target

Measure shown is the % within 8 weeks or within agreed time - Central Gov metric which measures a rolling time period of 24 months - Newest metric shows the following time period October 2022 – September 2024

Low
Is Good
Planning
Positive
Yearly Trend

ID2.5 - Quality of non-major development applications (P154 - 24 Month Rolling Period - See SMART Actions)

Cllr. Andrew Fear

Timeframe of Measure	2022/23 (%)	2023/24 (%)	2024/25 (%)	Target (%)
1. Jul 2021 - Jun 2023	0.2	0.2	0.2	10
2. Oct 2021 - Sep 2023	0.2	0.2	0.2	10
3. Jan 2022 - Dec 2023	0.2	0.2	-	10
4. Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	0.2	0.2	-	10

Current Status

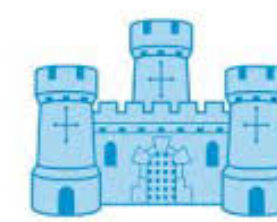
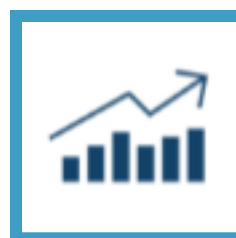
0.20 ✓

Target: 10.00

SMART Actions if Off Target

Measure shown is the Quality of decisions (% overturned at appeal) - Central Gov metric which measures a rolling time period of 24 months - They have currently advised they are behind schedule. Newest metric shows the following time period October 2021 – September 2023

Support the sustainable development of our towns and villages



Project Status Split for Priority 2.

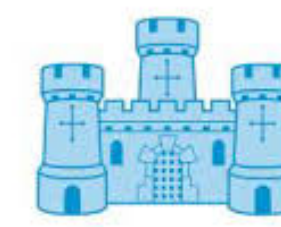
Project/Action is Progressing as Expected

8

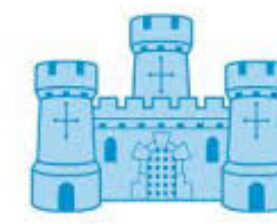
Project/Action is Not Progressing as E...

2

Portfolio Holder	Service Area	Action	Corporate Objective	Status report	Commentary on progress
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	A damp and mould project has been running March - September 2024. Outcomes include: completed an additional 27 inspection and intervention housing visits, developing links with social prescribers, creating a thermometer fridge magnet to promote services and help monitor internal temperatures, promoted work to 800 residents on the housing register currently in private rented accommodation, procured a thermal imaging camera to help with diagnosis in damp and mould cases.
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 Not Progressing as Expected	<p>LEGAL ACTION</p> <p>On 29 July 2024 the Secretary of State Environment, Food and Rural Affairs responded to the Leader's request for permission to prosecute Walleys Quarry Ltd under statutory nuisance legislation. The Secretary of State granted consent for a prosecution to proceed. On 30 September the Chief Executive provided an update stating; "there are very few precedents for taking legal action against an operator regulated by a Government agency, so there is a great deal of legal advice and preparation involved, however I believe we will be ready to take the next step by the end of October".</p> <p>Odour complaints reported in Q2 (July-September) are higher than reported over the same Quarter in 2023.</p> <p>COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY</p> <p>A member-led committee of inquiry was set up to look at the impact on local communities from the Walleys Quarry Landfill operation. The lines of inquiry were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the impact of the ongoing odour issue? What needs to be done next, and by whom, to bring about resolution? What, if any opportunities have been missed to resolve the issue sooner? <p>The inquiry heard more than 11 hours of submissions over 2 days from the EA, UK Health Security Agency, community groups and others, and considered additional written statements. On 25 September the final report was presented to full Council recommending that the EA serve a closure notice to commence the process of the site being closed with an additional 10 other recommendations detailed in the report 'Walleys Quarry Committee of Inquiry July/August 2024'.</p>
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 6 of the Borough Tree Planting Strategy is in the consultation phase, and tree planting will take place in Jan/Feb/Mar 2025. Sites will be designated as carbon capture areas in the Local Plan, hence protecting green spaces for future generations
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 an active and leading role in the SSB. Our progress in achievement of the ten base pledges is progressing well, with all but one achieving green (achieved/progressing according to plan) status. The Council is one of the few to have progressed a detailed and costed Sustainable Environment Strategy and delivery plan, and is leading on a number of initiatives such as the grassland management strategy.



Portfolio Holder	Service Area	Action	Corporate Objective	Status report	Commentary on progress
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, Future High Street Fund and Shared Prosperity Fun
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	Working groups now set up with each service area within the Council, and individual service area action plans are being formulated to take projects further. there are a number of positive project proposals which will reduce our carbon emissions, and with some creating cost savings too. Our enhanced, accredited, Carbon Literacy Training has commenced fully in this quarter, with a programme moving forward to provide training to all employees and members. from a governance point it has been agreed to follow the principles set with the 'One Council' programme with the formation of a 'Green One Council Board which will meet once a quarter to monitor progress of the SES and delivery plan. The board is made up of - Councillor Simon Tagg, Councillor Stephen Sweeney, Councillor David Hutchison, and Officers, Simon McEneny, Andrew Bird, Georgina Evans-Stadward, and Sarah Wilkes.
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	Some issues continue with delivery of the Railway station project whilst technical issues are resolved on the ground conditions around the railway station. Work continues with the Town Deal Board and project partners to resolve these.
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	Progress continues on all projects in line with the projected delivery plan.
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	During the last quarter the UKSPF grant funding has seen the projects encompass a wide variety aspects, including job creation, increased productivity, enhanced public services, and improved quality of life for residents. For example the recent Supporting Businesses themes facilitated the legal support for 96 business requests, over 36 students have been engaged with businesses to share skills and knowledge from their educational studies. Over 5 businesses have submitted research and development grant funding applications with another 3 adopting new products to market. In the people and skills theme we had 238 economically inactive people referred through our Community connector project and of these 12 have gained employment (over 4 weeks) and 4 have entered volunteering. In the community theme we have enabled work with the homeless and seen 10 preventions occur. The UKSPF projects have now covered areas such as park spaces, business development and educational settings support
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	The Final Draft Local Plan is currently being consulted upon until the 7th October 2024. Following consultation and subject to representations received, the next stage will be submission of the Local Plan for examination which is expected to take place by the end of the calendar year.



Priority 3: Performance Indicators Current Status

Contextual

Target Met

18

10

Corporate Objective	Count
Delivering an economic and cultural legacy from the celebration of the borough's 850th anniversary in 2023.	1
Ensure that our most vulnerable residents are supported through the impact of the rising cost of living.	1
Ensure that there are good homes for everyone and that every citizen has a safe and secure place to live	10
Further increasing recycling rates across the borough with a particular focus on food waste	4
Reduce anti-social behaviour and crime in our communities	5
Secure a step change in street cleanliness and the quality of the public domain	6
Support the development of community solutions to local problems	2
Total	29

Smart Narrative

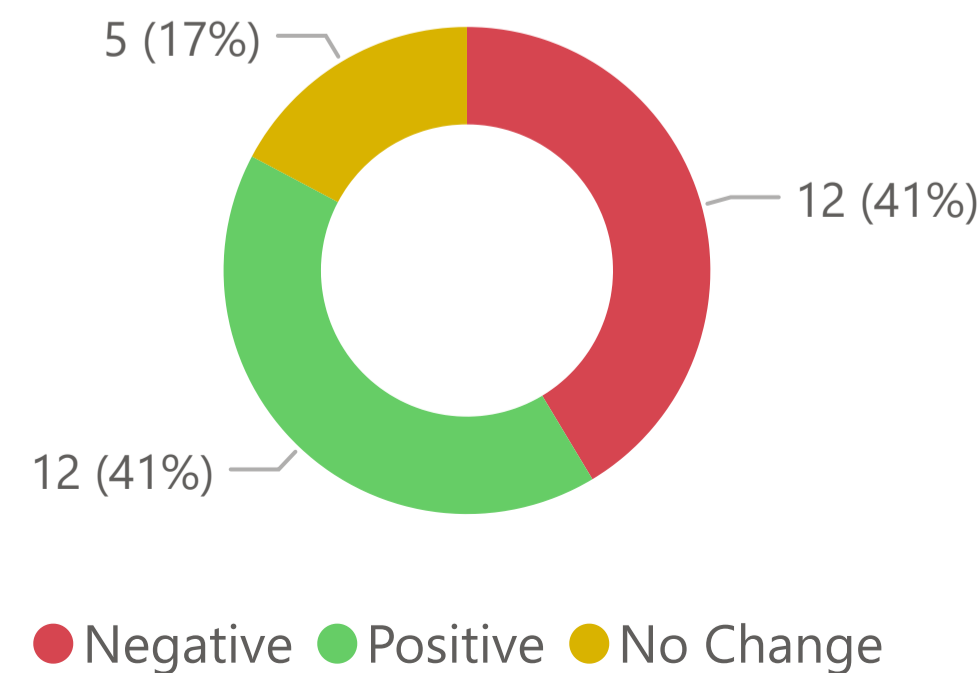
- There are 10 Indicators which have set targets this quarter within Priority 3.
- 100% met their targets within Quarter Two. 5 Indicators which met their target also showed improvement and 2 measures showed no change when comparing to the same time period last year. Only 2 measures showed a negative trend.
- 1 measure which relates to Food % participation has changed collected method and therefore has no historic data to compare against.
- There are 18 Indicators which are contextual this quarter and do not have a target to meet. When compared to last year, 5 measures had showed a negative trend, 7 measures demonstrated an improvement when comparing to 23/24, 1 measure show no change and 5 contextual measure did not have any historic data to compare against.
- Within Priority 3, there was 1 Projects/Actions which was been classed as completed, this being "Expansion of the street warden scheme and the creation of neighbourhood delivery teams.". All other Projects remain are shown to be progressing as expected.

Priority 3: Summary Project Status Split

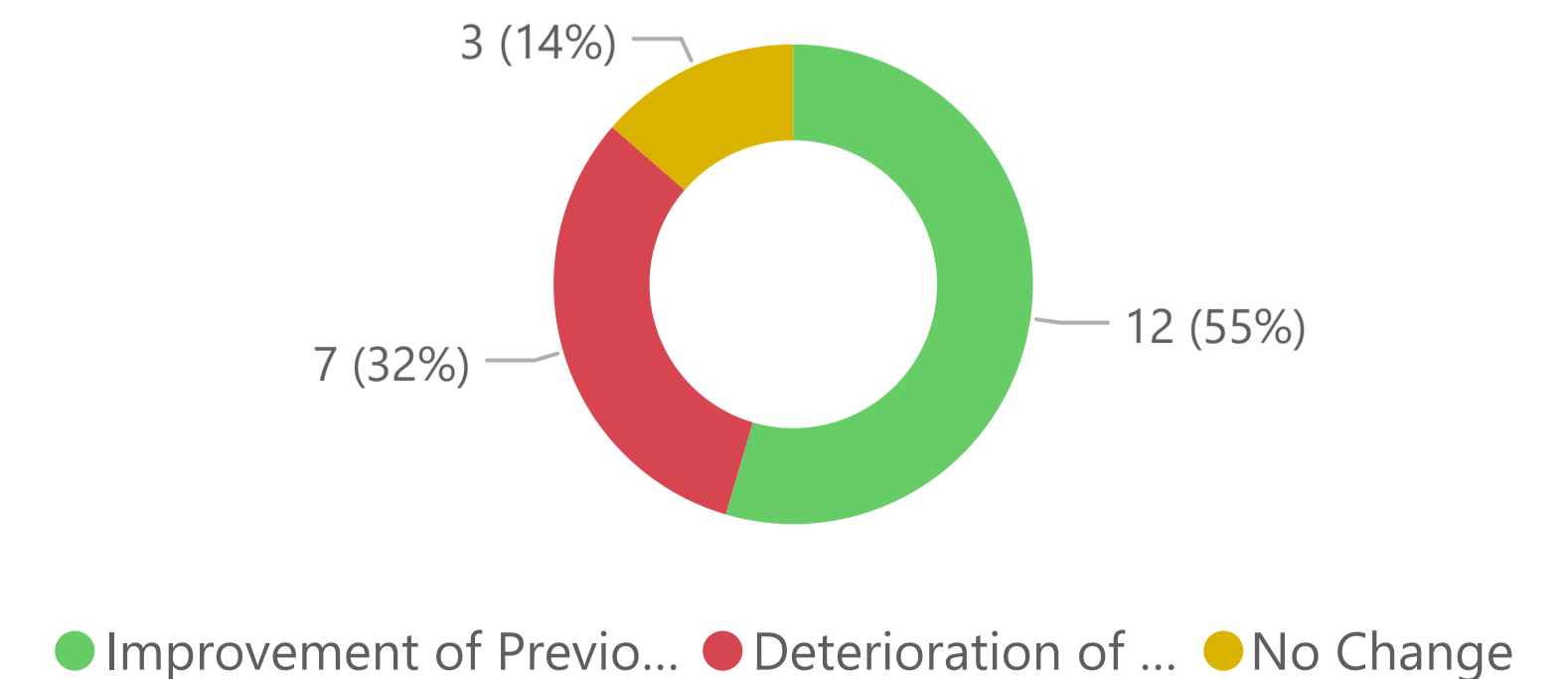
● Project/Action is Completed ● Project/Action is Progressing as Expected

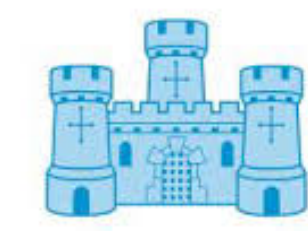


Priority 3: Qtr.2 Trend Direction of PI's Compared to Previous Quarter

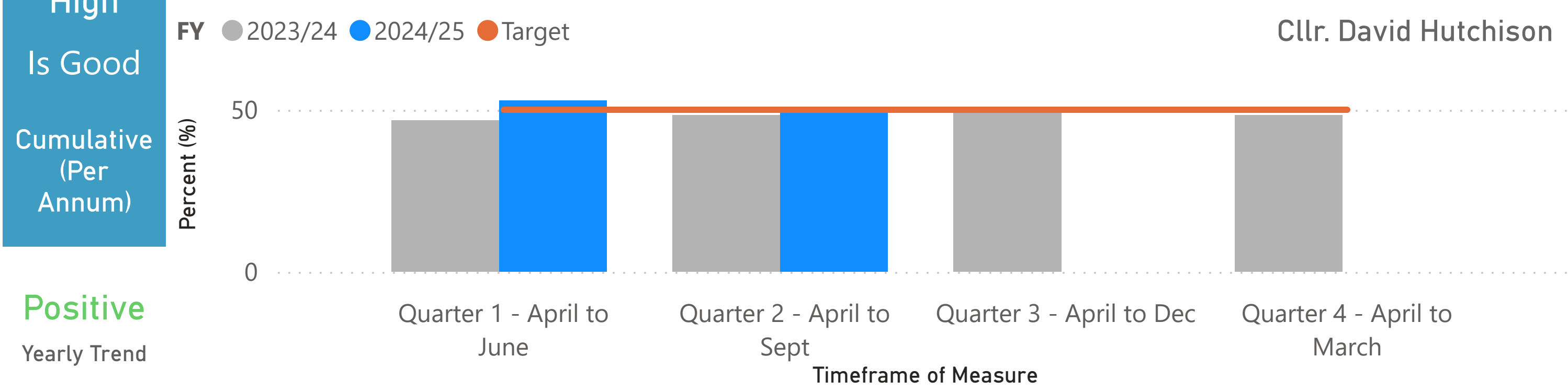


Priority 3: Qtr.2 Trend Status of PI's Compared On Same Qtr in the Previous Financial Year





High Is Good Cumulative (Per Annum) ID1.4a - Total % of materials collected for recycling and composting verified via WDF Current Status SMART Actions if Off Target



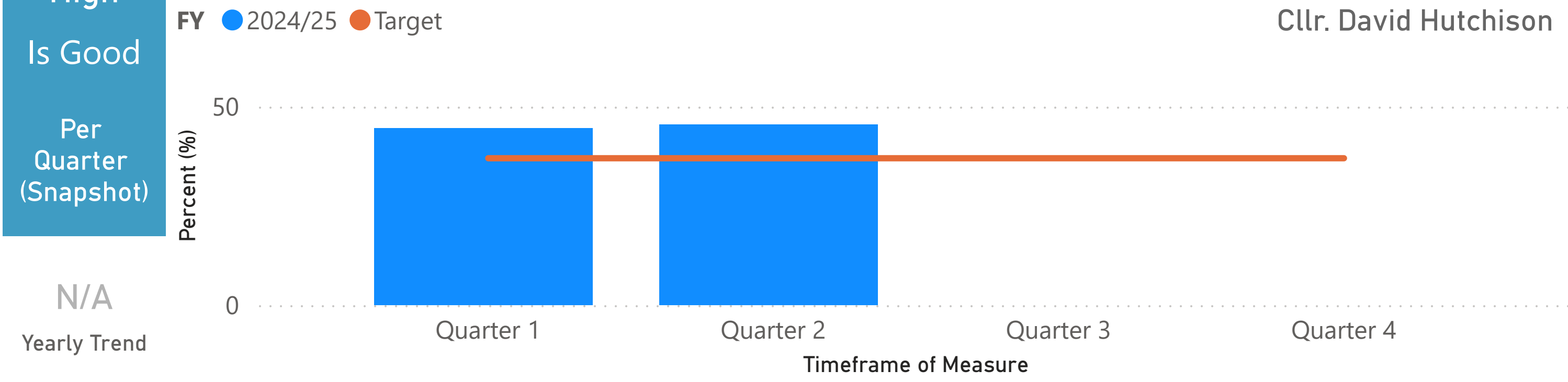
50.78✓

Target: 50.00

Not Required as Target Met

Positive Yearly Trend

High Is Good Per Quarter (Snapshot) ID1.4b - Food:- Household collections from the kerbside (%) Current Status SMART Actions if Off Target



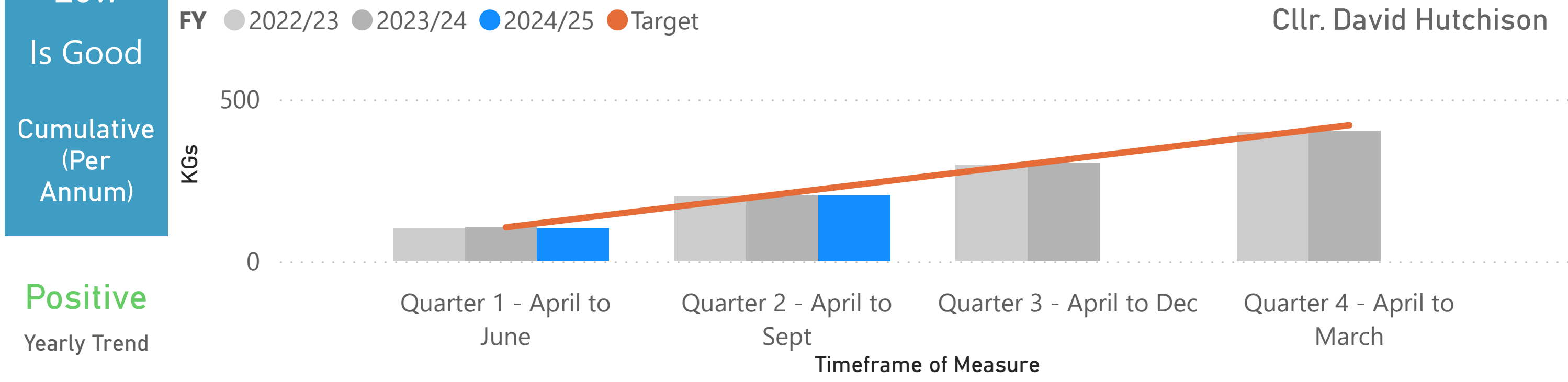
45.40✓

Target: 37.00

Presentation / set out was up slightly at 32.9%. Based on the WRAP studies we add 12.5% for accurate participation so the current figure is 45.4% of properties participating in the food waste service (an increase from 44.5% last time). It must be noted that collection method has been changed and because of this any historic trend data has been removed as it is not currently comparable. Target was set prior to the change in the calculation method. 32% relates to set out rate and not participation rate. The participation rate is 10-15% higher based on industry standards validated by WRAP research. Mid point added to set out.

N/A Yearly Trend

Low Is Good Cumulative (Per Annum) ID1.4c - Residual Waste per household:- Household collections from the kerbside (Kgs) Current Status SMART Actions if Off Target



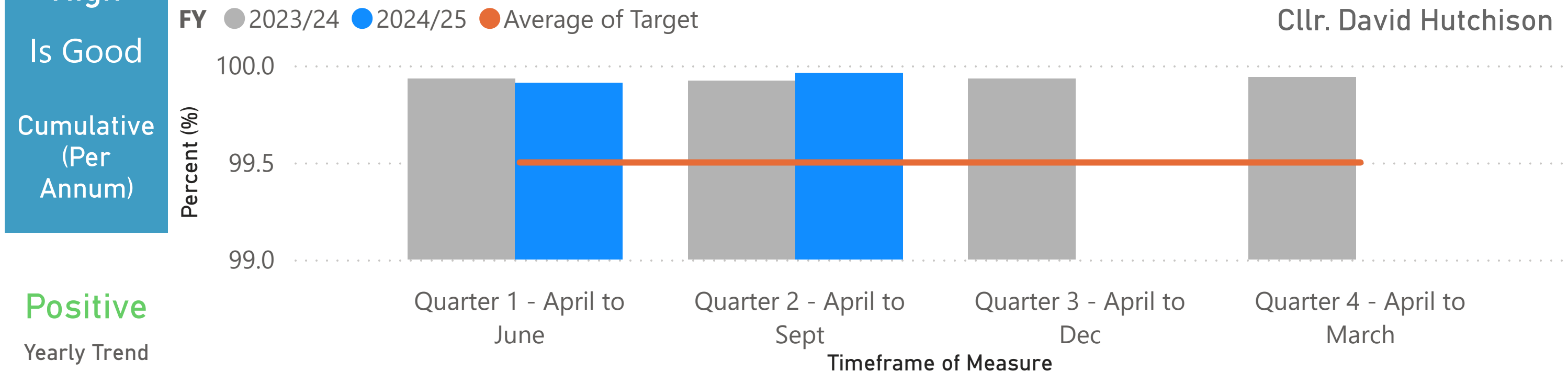
204.78✓

Target: 210.00

Not Required as Target Met

Positive Yearly Trend

High Is Good Cumulative (Per Annum) ID1.4d - Percentage of Successful Collections Current Status SMART Actions if Off Target



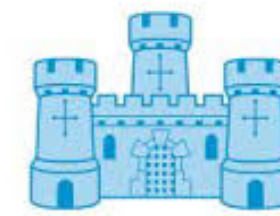
99.96✓

Target: 99.50

Not Required as Target Met

Positive Yearly Trend

Further increasing recycling rates across the borough with a particular focus on food waste



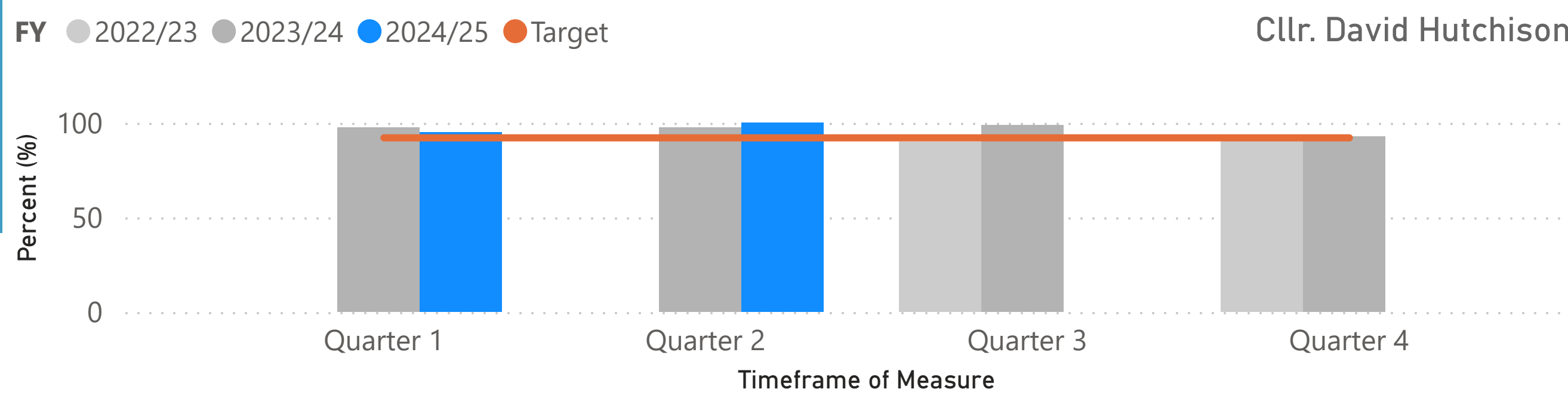
High
ID1.5a - Litter: Levels of street and environment cleanliness (LAMS survey) free / predominantly free of litter

Is Good

Per Quarter (Snapshot)

Negative

Yearly Trend



Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

100.00 ✓

Target:
92.00

Not Required as Target Met

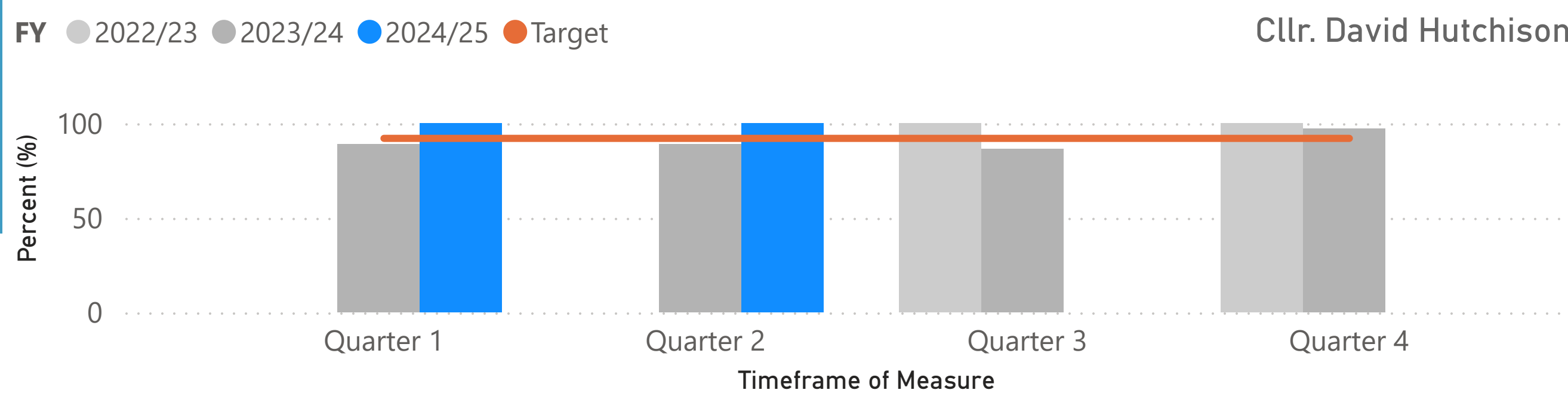
High
ID1.5b - Detritus: Levels of street and environment cleanliness (LAMS survey) free / predominantly free of detritus

Is Good

Per Quarter (Snapshot)

Positive

Yearly Trend



Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

100.00 ✓

Target:
92.00

Not Required as Target Met

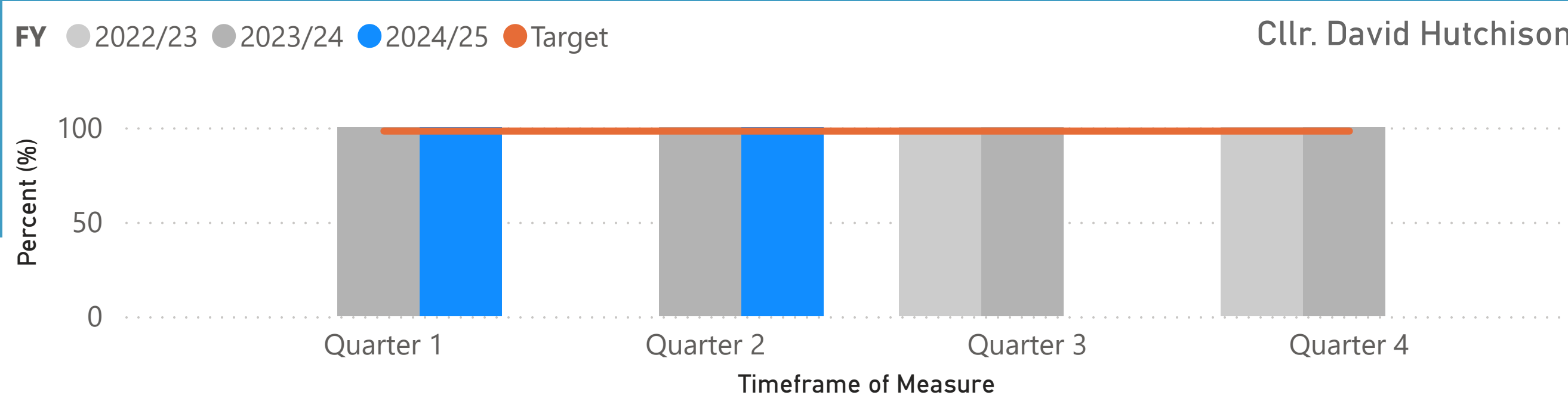
High
ID1.5c -d environment cleanlin_Levels of street aness (LAMS survey) free / predominantly free of graffiti

Is Good

Per Quarter (Snapshot)

No Change

Yearly Trend



Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

100.00 ✓

Target:
98.00

Not Required as Target Met

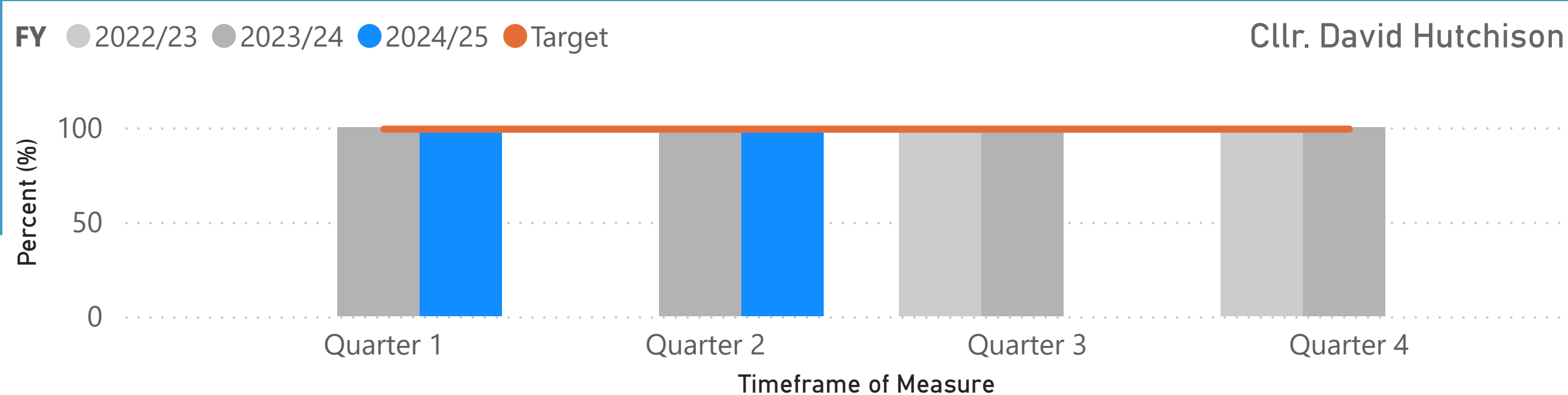
High
ID1.5d - Fly-Posting: Levels of street and environment cleanliness (LAMS survey) free / predominantly free of fly-posting

Is Good

Per Quarter (Snapshot)

No Change

Yearly Trend



Current Status

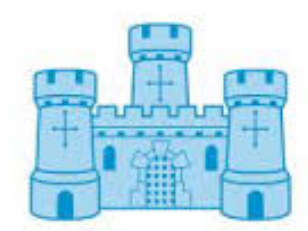
SMART Actions if Off Target

100.00 ✓

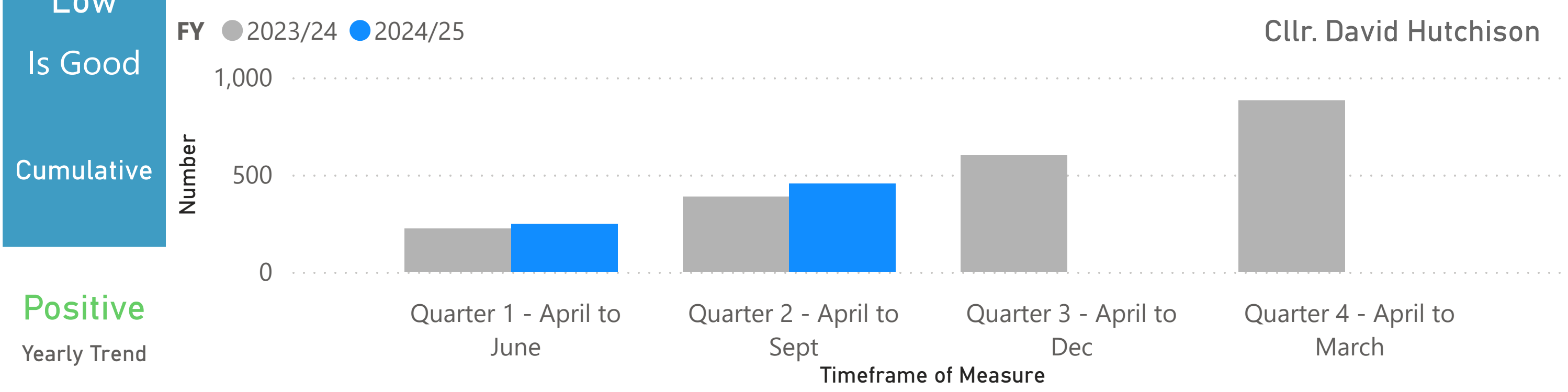
Target:
99.00

Not Required as Target Met

Secure a step change in street cleanliness and the quality of the public domain



ID3.11 - Number of Fly-Tipping Incidents (as per national measure) Current Status SMART Actions if Off Target

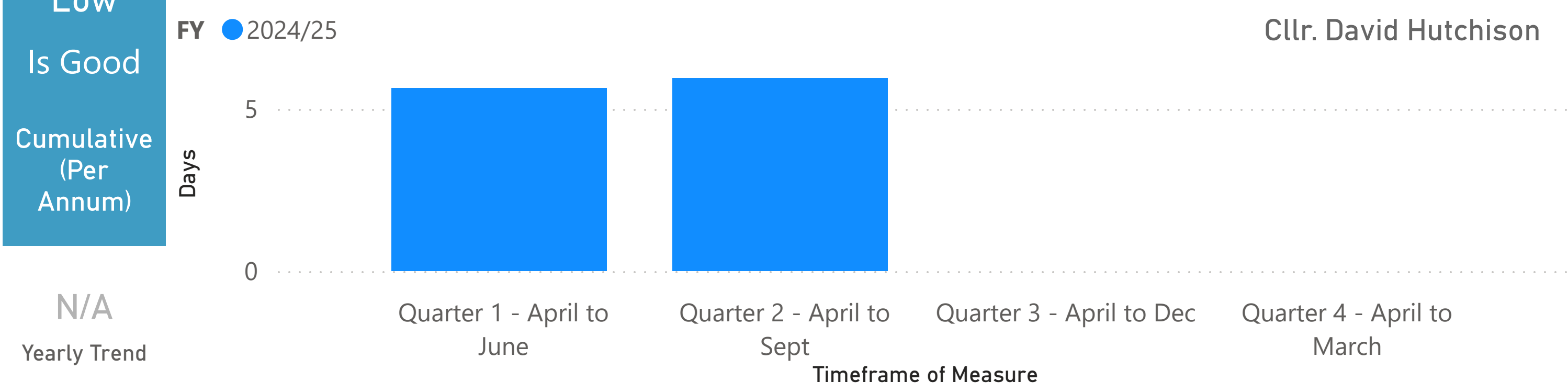


454

This is a new measure to scope number of fly tips that have been reported. These are fly tipping reports made directly to the Council for us to action. Streetscene to respond initially to clear the fly tip. Neighbourhood Delivery to then follow this up with enforcement if relevant.

Secure a step change in street cleanliness and the quality of the public domain

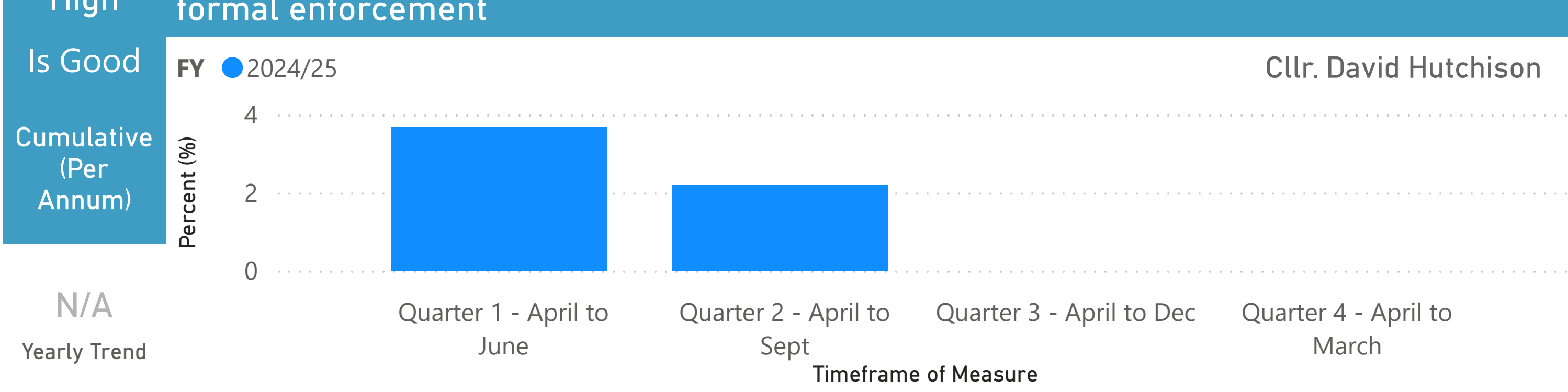
ID3.12 - Average number of days from report of fly-tipping to clear-up (Case closed) Current Status SMART Actions if Off Target



5.95

Measure has dropped from previous month and is now reporting at 5.95 days. Measure will be monitored throughout the year to understand trends.i

ID3.13 - % of fly-tipping incidents where sufficient evidence gathered to proceed to formal enforcement Current Status SMART Actions if Off Target

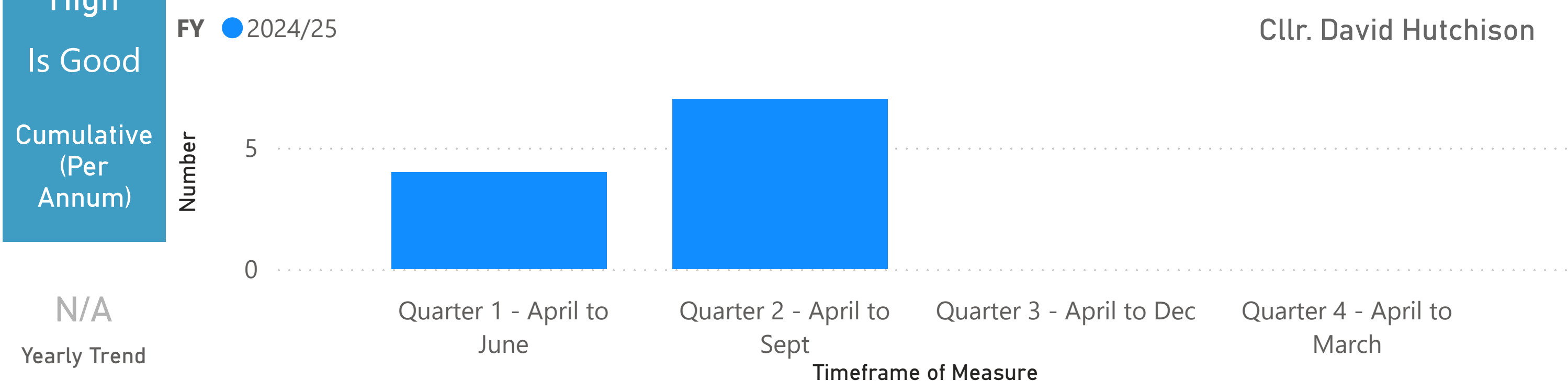


2.20

This measure demonstrates the percentage of fly tipping incidents where evidence has been retrieved by Streetscene operatives and passed to Neighbourhood delivery. This is a new measure and a new code has been added onto APP to allow us to effectively report on the number of cases where this is relevant.

Reduce anti-social behaviour and crime in our communities

ID3.14 - Number of Fly-tipping FPNs issued Current Status SMART Actions if Off Target



7

Total number of FPN's served against those cases where evidence has been seized. This includes offences such as fly tipping and duty of care offences. Data amended now incorporating DOC + Flytipping offences



High
Is Good
Cumulative
(Per
Annum)

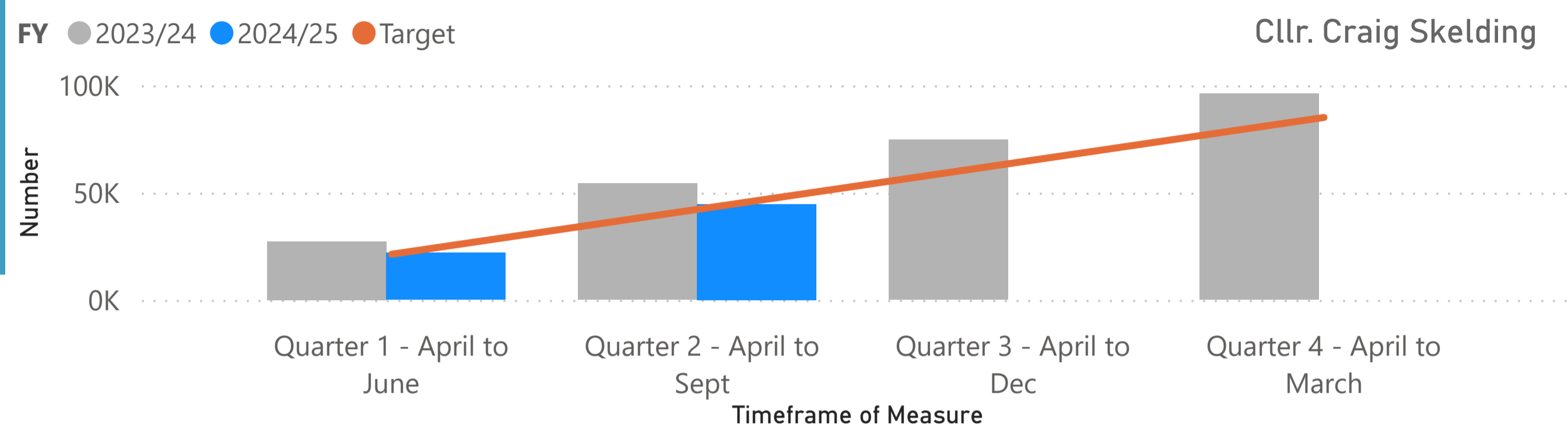
ID3.3 - Number of People Accessing the Museum's collections in person only

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

Delivering an economic and cultural legacy from the celebration of the borough's 850th anniversary in 2023.

Negative
Yearly Trend



44,656 ✓

Target: 42,500

Not Required as Target Met

High
Is Good
Cumulative
(Per
Annum)

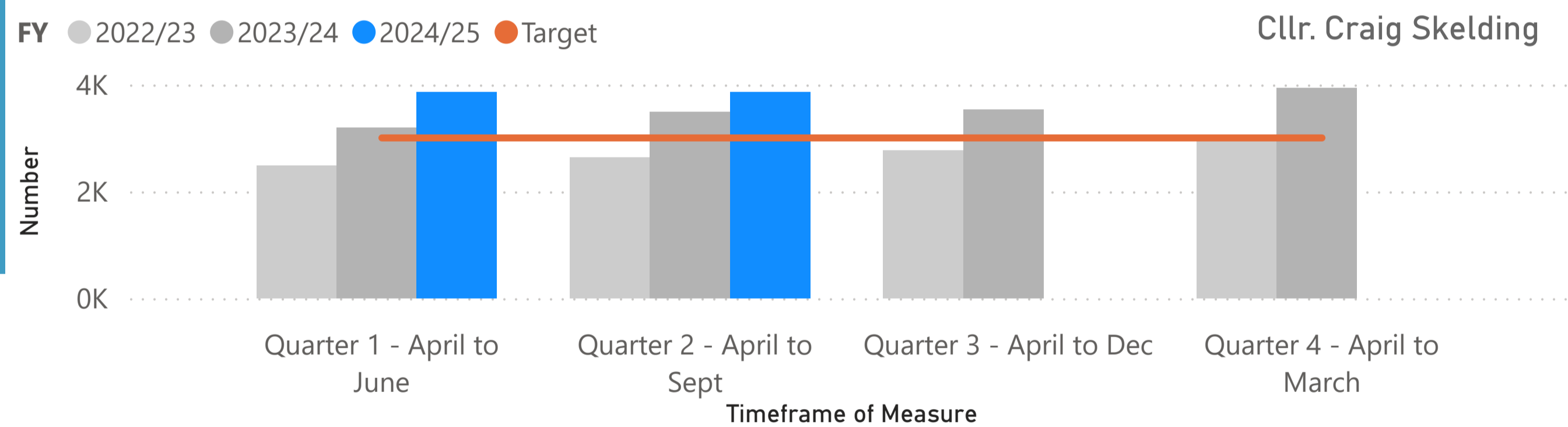
ID3.4 - J2 Membership growth

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

Support the development of community solutions to local problems

Positive
Yearly Trend



3,864 ✓

Target: 3,000

Not Required as Target Met

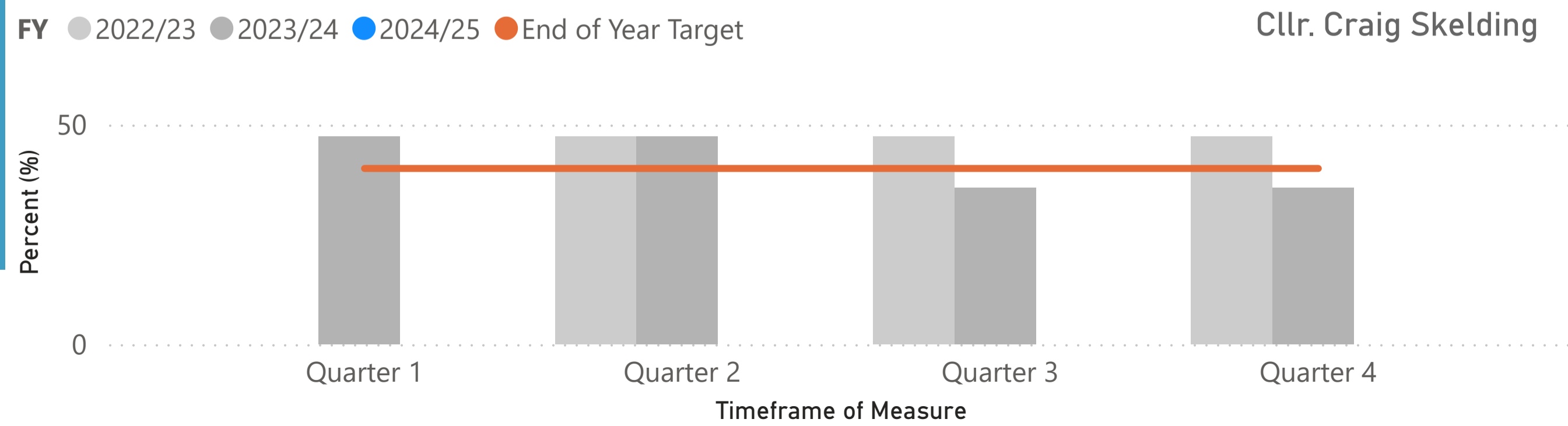
High
Is Good
Per
Quarter
(Snapshot)

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

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

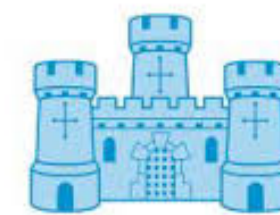
N/A
Yearly Trend



0.00 !

End of Year Target: 40.00

Not due until end of year - Recorded once per year. Previous measure of 35.68% is current Net Promotor Score for Jubilee2



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

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

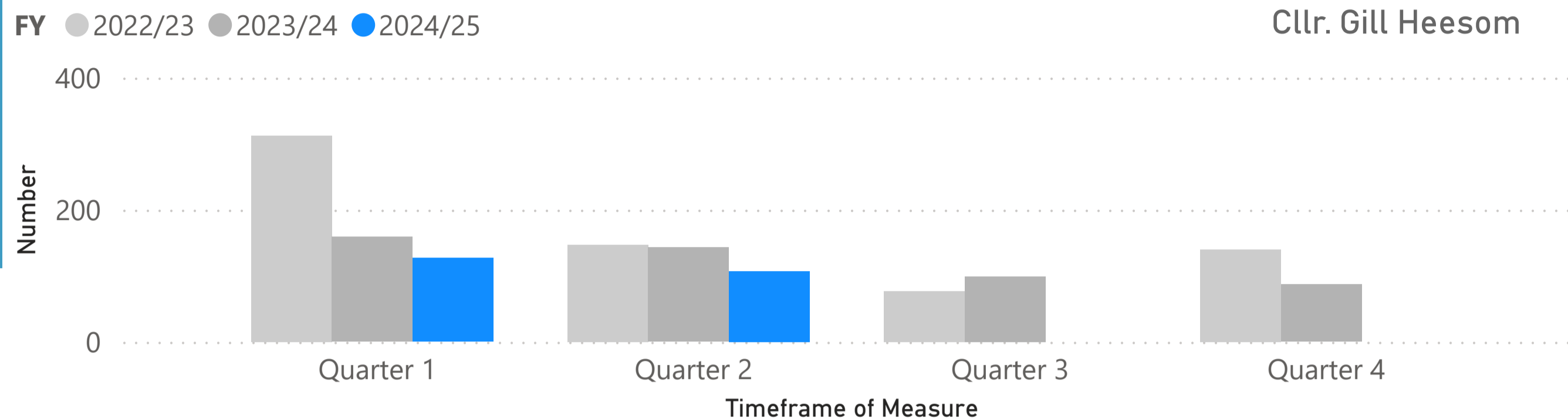
Low

Is Good

Per Quarter (Snapshot)

Positive

Yearly Trend



127

Training has recently been undertaken by professionals in regards to ASB - and how we can effectively triage, assess ASB cases. We are also contributing to a County wide ASB policy which will outline the what members of the public can expect from each of the respective partners.

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

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

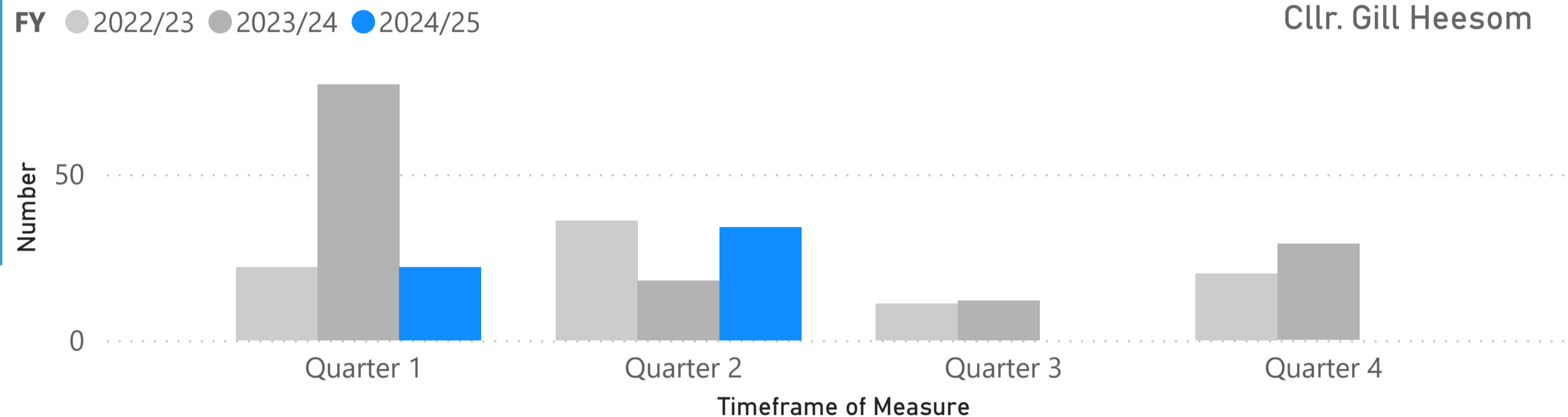
Low

Is Good

Per Quarter (Snapshot)

Negative

Yearly Trend



22

We continue partnership working to reduce ASB and ensure any complaints are dealt with efficiently and effectively in a timely manner.

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

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

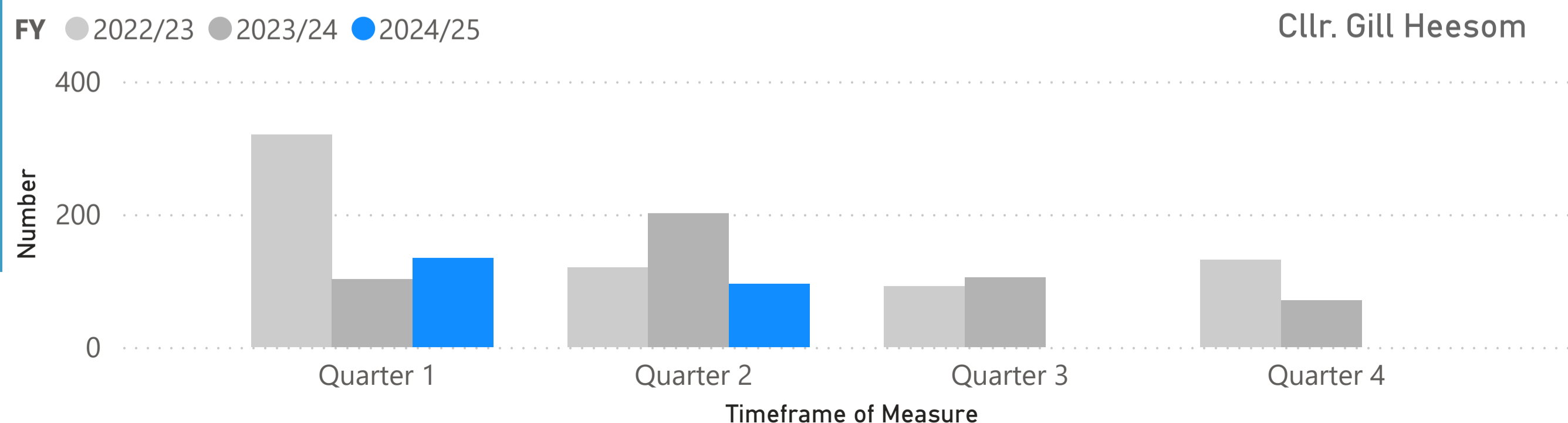
High

Is Good

Per Quarter (Snapshot)

Negative

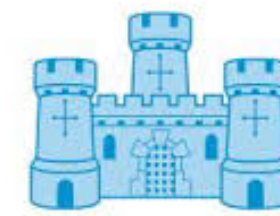
Yearly Trend



134

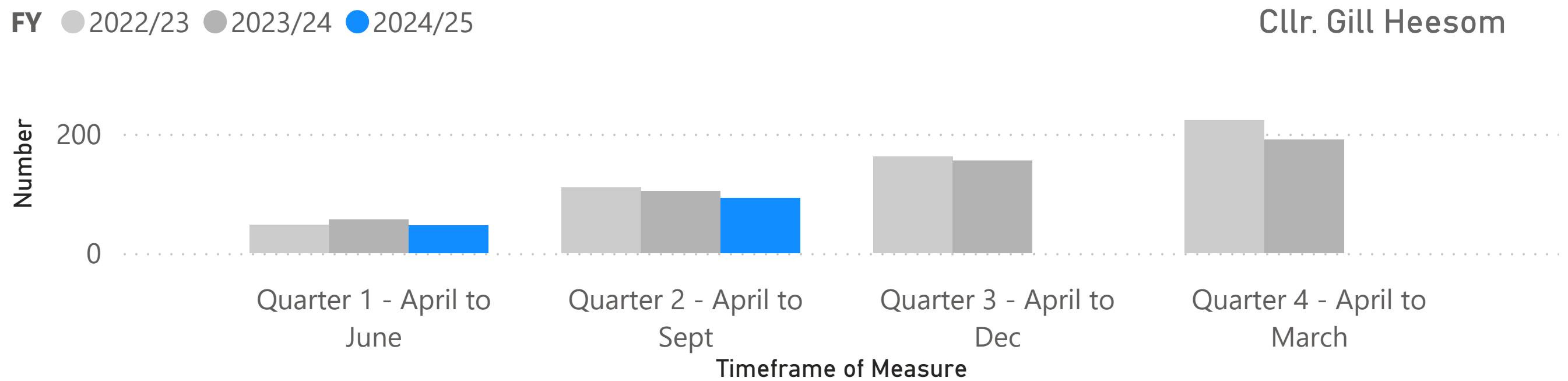
Value is also relative to the measure of new cases received. We continue partnership working to reduce ASB and ensure any complaints are dealt with efficiently and effectively in a timely manner.

Reduce anti-social behaviour and crime in our communities



Low
Is Good
Cumulative (Per Annum)

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



Positive
Yearly Trend

Current Status

92

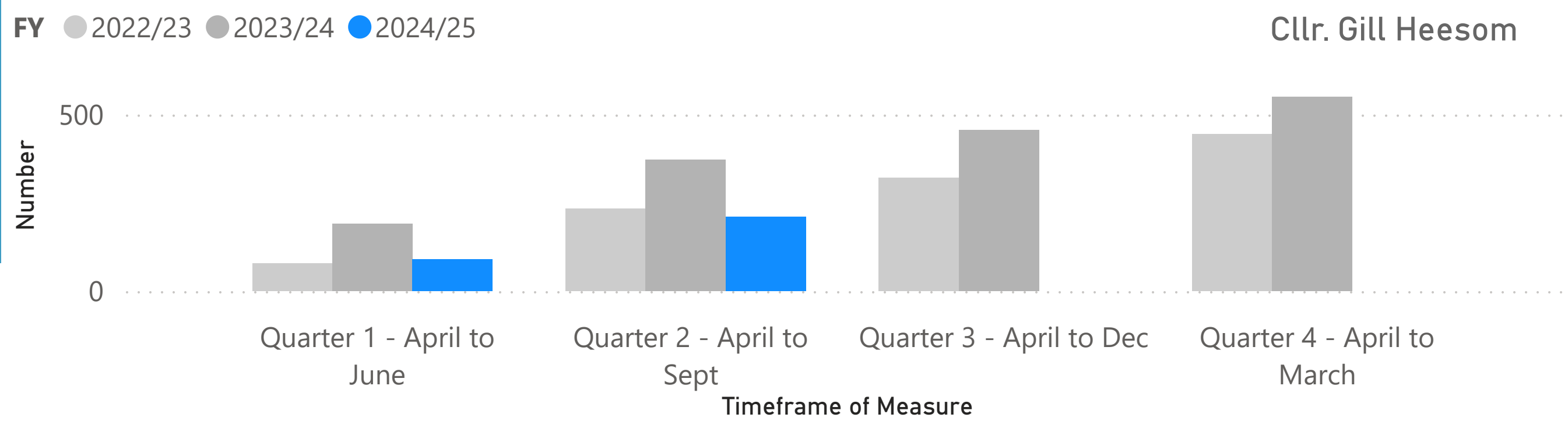
SMART Actions if Off Target

We have seen an increase of hoarding cases on the vulnerability hub. We are working with Reaching North Staffs on these cases to provide hoarding specialist support. We know that there is an increased risk of death by fire in severe hoarding cases. We have successfully obtained an allotment plot which will be used by individuals that we discuss on the hub. The aim is to reduce isolation, give them a purpose and improve their mental health. Other than the increase in hoarding cases we continue to see a steady stream of referrals on issues such as alcohol and substance misuse, mental health, domestic abuse and exploitation.

Ensure that our most vulnerable residents are supported through the impact of the rising cost of living.

Low
Is Good
Cumulative (Per Annum)

ID3.8 - Emergency homeless presentations



Positive
Yearly Trend

Current Status

210

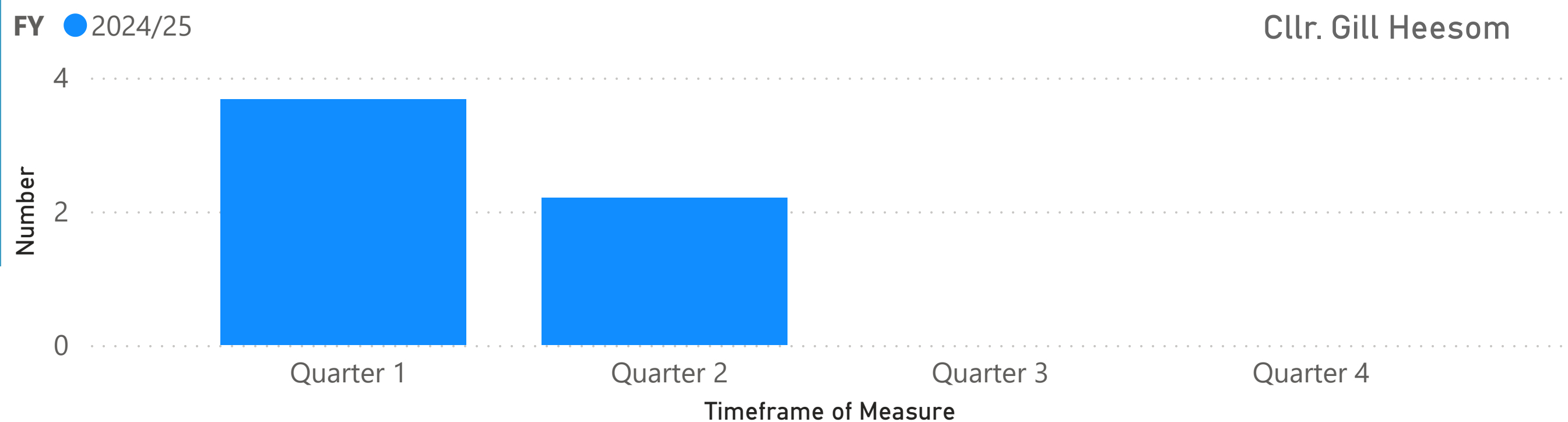
SMART Actions if Off Target

Homeless trend is increasing, measure will be monitored as year progresses, target is to reduce from last year

Ensure that there are good homes for everyone and that every citizen has a safe and secure place to live

Low
Is Good
Per Quarter (Snapshot)

ID3.9 - Number of open Disabled Facilities Grant enquiries



N/A
Yearly Trend

Current Status

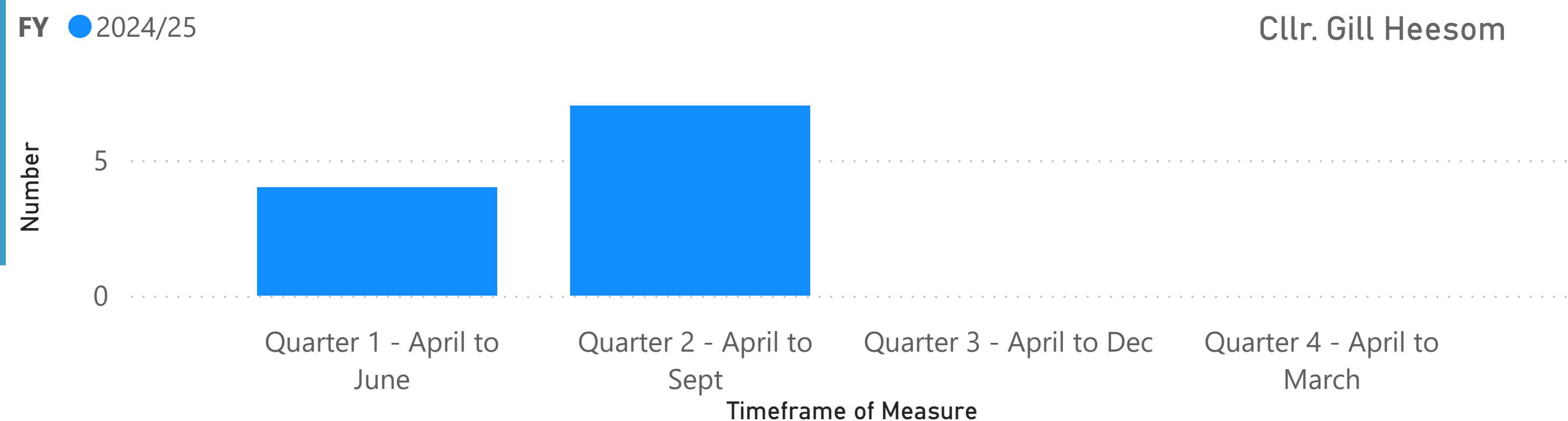
195

SMART Actions if Off Target

The aim is for this to decrease through the year as cases are processed more efficiently through to completion

High
Is Good
Cumulative (Per Annum)

ID3.10 - Number of Disabled Facilities Grants completed



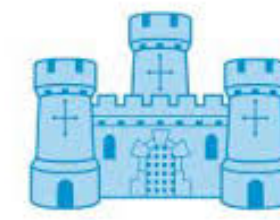
N/A
Yearly Trend

Current Status

77

SMART Actions if Off Target

Measure should increase through the year as grants are completed



Low
Is Good
Per Quarter (Snapshot)

ID3.6 - Live application on the housing register Current Status SMART Actions if Off Target

FY ● 2022/23 ● 2023/24 ● 2024/25 Cllr. Gill Heesom

Timeframe of Measure	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Quarter 1 - April to June	~1,200	~1,800	~2,500
Quarter 2 - April to Sept	~1,500	~2,100	~2,500
Quarter 3 - April to Dec	~1,600	~2,200	-
Quarter 4 - April to March	~1,700	~2,300	-

2,670

Trend increasing, data will be compared against previous year as we progress, new review module implemented

Negative
Yearly Trend

High
Is Good
Per Quarter (Snapshot)

ID3.7 - Number of lets to registered providers from the housing waiting list Current Status SMART Actions if Off Target

FY ● 2022/23 ● 2023/24 ● 2024/25 Cllr. Gill Heesom

Timeframe of Measure	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Quarter 1 - April to June	~100	~200	~150
Quarter 2 - April to Sept	~200	~350	~250
Quarter 3 - April to Dec	~350	~450	-
Quarter 4 - April to March	~550	~550	-

240

Monitoring nominations received from the housing providers, measure will be monitored as year progresses

Negative
Yearly Trend

Low
Is Good
Per Quarter (Snapshot)

ID4.4 - Total Rough Sleepers Verified in Quarter Current Status SMART Actions if Off Target

FY ● 2022/23 ● 2023/24 ● 2024/25 Cllr. Gill Heesom

Timeframe of Measure	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Quarter 1	~50	~10	~10
Quarter 2	~35	~15	~15
Quarter 3	~15	~10	-
Quarter 4	~10	~10	-

13

The last rough sleeper count took place on the 20th September 2024 and 13 individuals were verified. 5 were Stoke connection and the rest Newcastle.

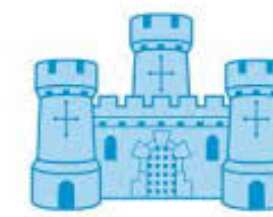
Positive
Yearly Trend

ID4.4a, 4.4b, 4.4c and 4.4d - Breakdown of Rough Sleepers Verified in Quarter Cllr. Gill Heesom

● 1. Prevented 1 - New Rough Sleepers ● 2. Non-Recurring 1 - Returning Rough Sleepers ● 3. Brief 1 - Entrenched Rough Sleepers ● 4. Prevented 2 - Rough Sleepers after ...

Timeframe of Measure	1. Prevented 1 - New Rough Sleepers	2. Non-Recurring 1 - Returning Rough Sleepers	3. Brief 1 - Entrenched Rough Sleepers	4. Prevented 2 - Rough Sleepers after ...
Quarter 1	2	2	4	0
Quarter 2	0	1	2	2
Quarter 3	0	0	0	0
Quarter 4	0	0	0	0

Ensure that there are good homes for everyone and that every citizen has a safe and secure place to live



Project Status Split for Priority 3.

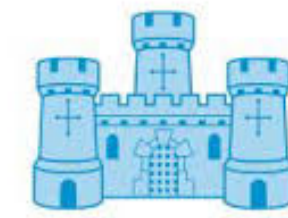
Project/Action is Progressing as Expected

5

Project/Action is Completed

1

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 work is continuing successfully with Staffordshire Police and data shows a reduction in crime, ASB, violence, theft, burglary and sexual offences.
Cllr. Craig Skelding	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 final element of this, the new Queen Elizabeth statue was unveiled on 11th October and visitors to Queens Gardens are now enjoying visiting the statue.
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 Completed	Project/Action has been completed.
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	Recycling rates from flats is improving, and additional containers to further reduce contamination are currently being procured. A waste prevention scheme in partnership with the County Council is being promoted with stickers being applied to residual waste bins being applied advising residents to dispose of their food waste using the separate food waste service.
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	Ongoing partnership work continues. Through the partnership board, we are progressing working groups around vulnerability, employability, cost of living and mental health. We also are the designated chair for Better Health Staffordshire in Newcastle and are in receipt of grant funding to impact on health inequalities.
Cllr. Craig Skelding	Neighbourhoods	Work with partners to develop effective community bodies	Support the development of community solutions to local problems	✔ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	Work is in progress with a community group in Bradwell to develop a project to improve local play and recreational facilities. Work has also commenced to develop an Empowering Communities Strategy for the Borough, based on the recently adopted Staffordshire County Council Communities Strategy



Priority 4: Performance Indicators Current Status



Corporate Objective	Count
Increasing the number of people living, working and using Newcastle town Centre	3
Total	3

Smart Narrative

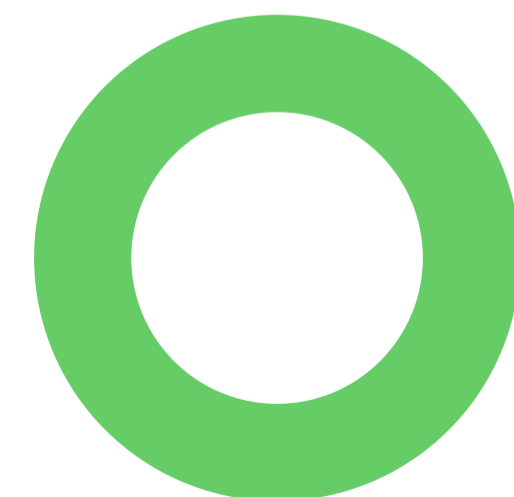
- There are 2 Indicators which have set targets this quarter within Priority 4.
- Both the indicators that have had data shared have met their respective targets. One of these also showed an improvement when compared to Quarter Two of the previous year, the other showed a negative trend when comparing the same time period from the previous year.
- There is 1 Indicators which is contextual this quarter and does not have a target to meet. The data provided only shows Quarter 2 with no data provided for Quarter 1. This has meant the measure did not have any historic data to compare against so no trend data has been provided.
- Within Priority 4, One project/action has been classed as completed; this being "Developing a Town Centre Strategy for Kidsgrove". All other Projects/Actions were identified to be progressing as expected.

Priority 4: Summary Project Status Split

● Project/Action is Completed ● Project/Action is Progressing as Expected



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



● Positive

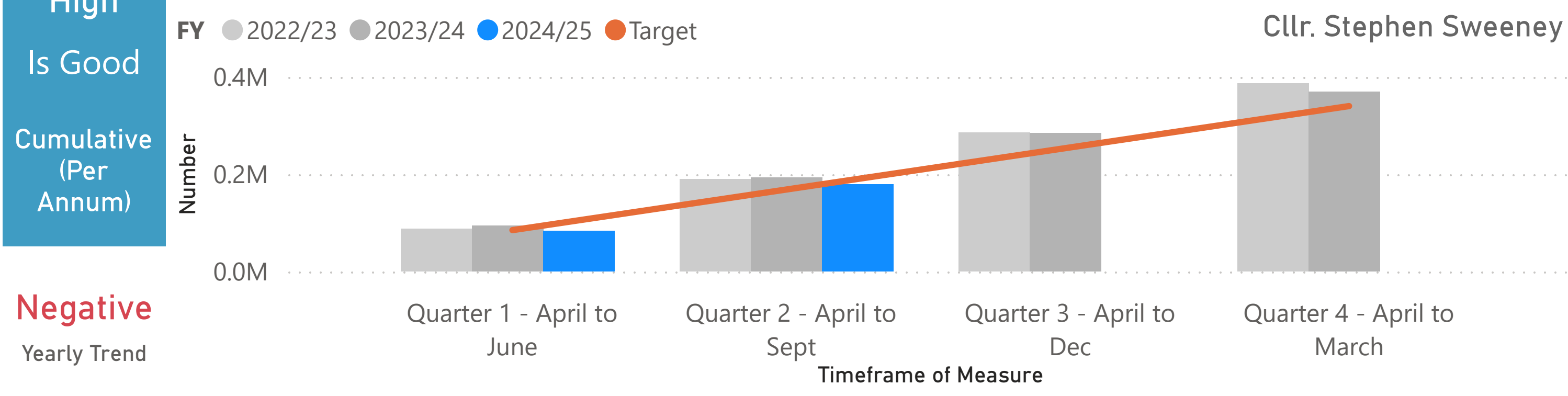
Priority 4: Qtr.2 Trend Status of PI's Compared On Same Qtr in the Previous Financial Year



● Deterioration of Previous Year ● Improvement of Previous Y...



ID4.1 - Car parking usage:-Number of tickets purchased Current Status SMART Actions if Off Target

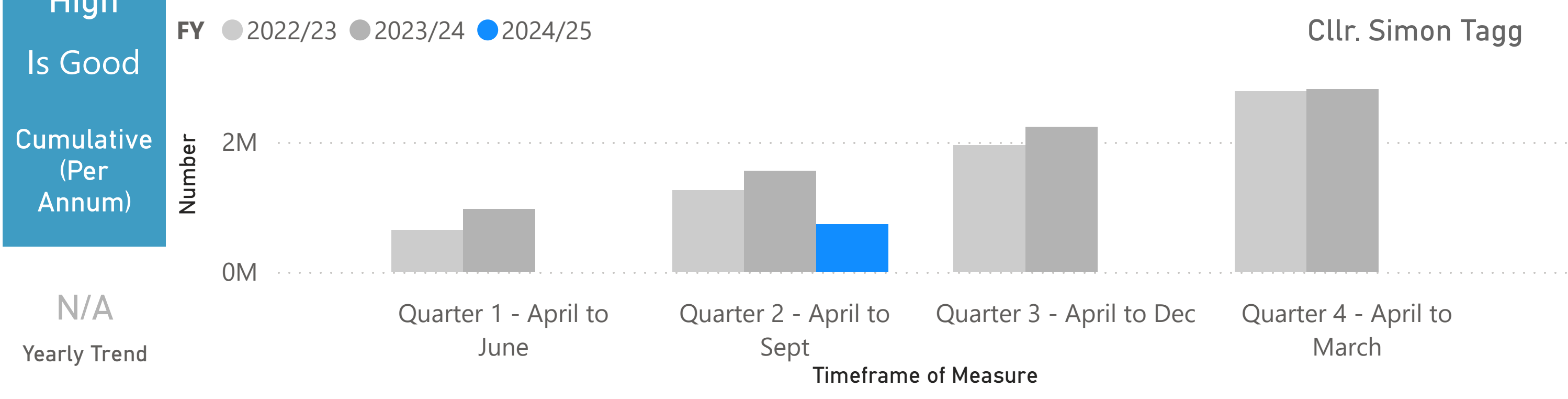


178,652 ✓

Target: 170,000

Not Required as Target Met

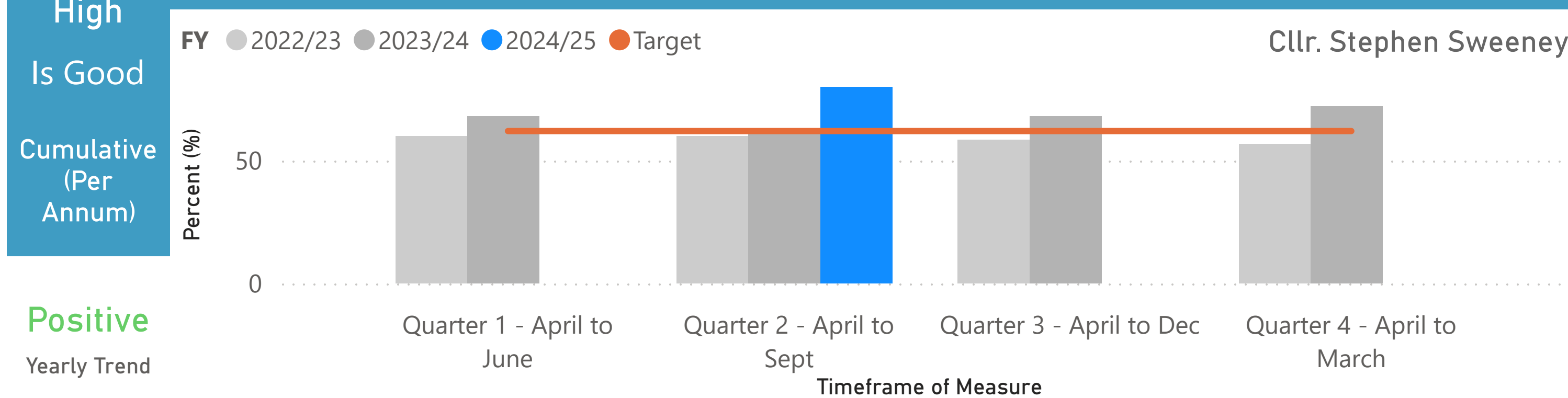
ID4.2 - Town Centre Footfall - Newcastle Current Status SMART Actions if Off Target



732,402

Data shown is for Q2 only and is the first dataset shared by the BID for 24/25 financial year. Data was not provided by the BID for Q1. Due to only showing Q2, comparison between financial years is not available.

ID4.3 - Average stall occupancy rate for markets - Overall Current Status SMART Actions if Off Target

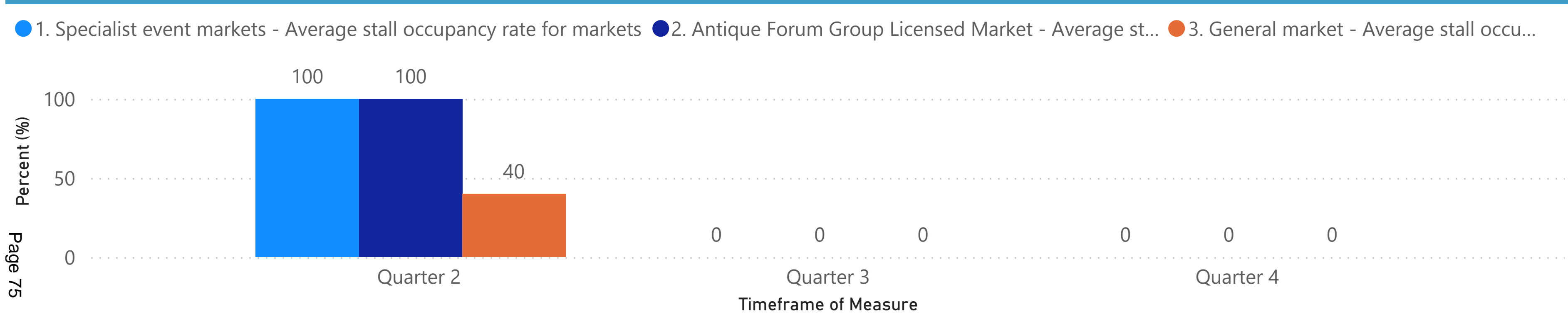


80.00 ✓

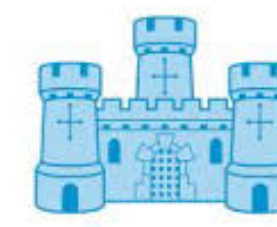
Target: 62.00

PIs for stall occupancy are now collected following a Market remodelling project, which reduced numbers of fixed stalls from 40 to 27.

ID4.3a, 4.3b and 4.3c- Average stall occupancy rate for Specific Markets



Increasing the number of people living, working and using Newcastle town Centre



Project Status Split for Priority 4.

Project/Action is Progressing as Expected

4

Project/Action is Completed

1

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	A planning application has been submitted by developer Capital and Centric for conversion of Midway car park in 114 apartments. Should the application be successful work is due to start in March 2025.
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 Completed	Project/Action has been completed.
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	Development of Castle Car Park is continuing with practical completion expected by the end of November. Planning applications are expected to be submitted by both Capital and Centric and McCarthy Stone in October for residential development on the site with an application for the hotel to follow in November.
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	Demolition works which will see York Place stripped back to its original concrete frame have begun by developer Capital and Centric in advance of a planning application seeking conversion to residential units with commercial units on the ground floor to be submitted in November.
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	The first phase of the market and public realm improvement project is complete and a planning application has been lodged for the final phase. The Makers Market is operating each month and a new market event is planned for October to support Castle Classics.

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

5 December 2024

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

The contract for public realm works to lower High Street completed in August and as previously reported 18 fixed stalls have been removed, leaving 27 fixed stalls which

have had new canopies fitted and some have been relocated into more appropriate areas. New temporary stalls have arrived for markets which require more than the remaining 27 fixed stalls.

Planning permission has now been received for the large digital screen and the Traffic Regulation Order for the 'Nipper Parking' has been agreed for implementation on the ground. Works to the project (including benching and planters) will be complete by the end of March 2025 in line with the funding deadline for spend.



2.1.2 York Place / Astley Place

The demolition / strip out contract for the removal of the building fabric, exposing the framework for future development continues at pace. A planning application has been submitted and is due for consideration in the New Year.

Cabinet agreed in November to award the next stage of the development – up to RIBA Stage 4 – which is the development of the construction drawings, selection of a contractor, confirmation of the construction price and the final programme, prior to any final award of the development agreement with Capital&Centric.

The development has had a new name selected going forward – Astley Place and this branding is now evident on site on the hoardings and will be used going forward.



Merrial Street / Red Lion Square



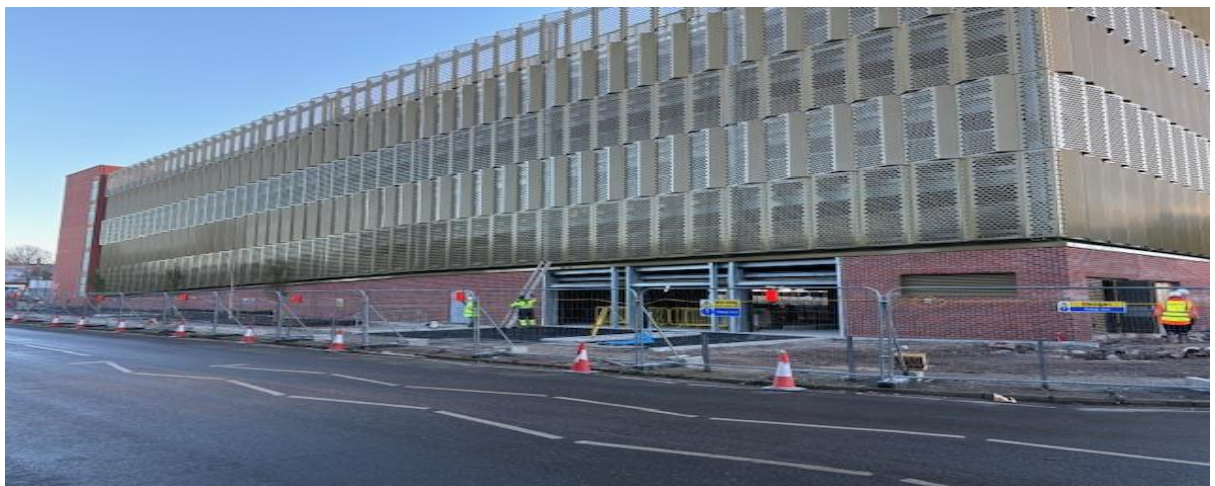
Internal Courtyard

Ryecroft / Rye Park

2.1.3 Castle Car Park

Construction continues on the project with completion imminent. Opening of the facility will be in early January, avoiding any confusion over car parking in the pre-Christmas period.

Directional signage, notices of change of car park, permit changes etc have all been organised and the Traffic Regulation Order to close Midway and open Castle Car Park have been approved and actioned.



2.1.4 McCarthy and Stone Residential Development

McCarthy and Stone have now submitted a planning application for their development to be determined in the New Year, and are in discussions with Capital&Centric to coordinate the start of ground works / level assignment across the wider site.



2.1.5 New Hotel / Apartment

Capital and Centric have submitted a planning application for the whole of the wider Ryecroft development submission, which includes provision for a new hotel / aparthotel. The planning application will be considered in the New Year and as noted above with the Astley Place development Cabinet agreed in November to award the next stage of the development – up to RIBA Stage 4 – which is the development of the construction drawings, selection of a contractor, confirmation of the construction price and the final programme, prior to any final award of the development agreement with Capital&Centric.



2.1.6 Aspire Housing

Aspire have agreed with Capital&Centric a site boundary and the works that will be undertaken to develop out residential units. As with the planning application and RIBA Stage 4, as noted above, the same dates and next steps apply for this development. Capital&Centric will develop this out on behalf of Aspire.



Aspire Residential Development

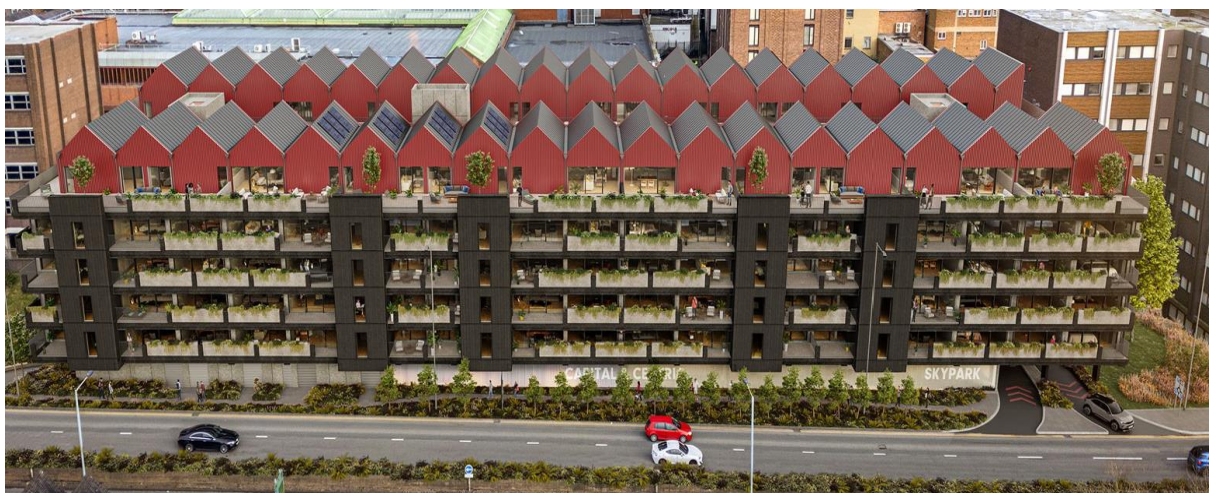


Capital&Centric Residential Development

2.2 Newcastle Town Deal

2.2.1 Midway Car Park / Carpark

Capital&Centric have now submitted the planning application for the new development and this is set to be determined in the New Year. As with the Astley Place and Rye Park schemes, Cabinet in November approved the next stage of the development. The delivery of RIBA Stage 4 works will be in the Spring of 2025 for all schemes with a view that construction works will commence in the second to third quarter of 2025.



2.2.2 Astley Performing Arts Centre

The Philip Astley CIC and the Council are continuing their investigation for Phase 2 for the circus skills training space, for ariel work etc

2.2.3 Knutton and Chesterton

Knutton

Aspire Housing are planning to commence construction works in early 2025 for the residential development at the High Street site. Planning permission has been granted and the land transfer documentation has been signed, allowing development to begin.

Also, as above, the former community centre site development by Aspire is due to commence at the same time.

Whilst work on the extension to the Enterprise Centre will be complete in December 2024.

The plans for a village hall at High Street in Knutton were considered by the planning committee in September 2024 and approved. Support Staffs are currently sourcing a group to act as tenant / operators – there are several interests being considered and once selected and agreements signed, the construction of the Hall can be tendered.

The development of the football changing rooms at the Wammy continues and will be complete in February 2025.

Cross Street Chesterton

Aspire Housing has appointed a contractor to deliver the next phase, and the contractor is mobilising on site.

2.2.4 Zanzibar Enterprise Units

These are to be Council owned small enterprise units to rent to small and developing businesses on North Street. Morgan Sindall have been appointed by Aspire for the overall development. A planning application for the development is expected by the end of 2024, with construction starting in spring / summer 25 and completion of the units by the end of 2025.

2.2.5 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 summer 2025.

2.2.6 Sustainable Travel

Work continues with the travel information totems with the most recent installations being on bus stops in Merrial Street, whilst the team at Keele University are progressing plans for the new bus entrance with the aim of it being opened in early 2025. academic year. A new circular bus route the 'K' route commenced in September 2025, operated by D&G. This covers Keele, Knutton, Silverdale, Cross Heath and Chesterton running Monday to Saturday. As a result of plans for the new

bus entrance, First Potteries Ltd are now operating the new X25 service between Newcastle town centre and the University.

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

Works continues with internal fit out works. Keele in Town is due to launch in at the end of 2024.



2.2.8 EV Charging Points

These works now form part of the new Castle Car Park project and will be in place ready for opening of the car park.

2.2.9 Digital infrastructure

A procurement exercise has completed and a contractor has been selected, ITS, and they are now working up the business case and proposals for the fibre network and the community hubs.

2.3 Kidsgrove Town Deal

2.3.1 Chatterley Valley

Works to the highway / entrance works to the new site continue and are now complete and the road is open. This element of the Town Deal project is complete.

2.3.2 Kidsgrove Train Station works

As reported previously 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.

2.3.3 Canal Pathways

Works by the Canal and Rover Trust are being tendered currently with works anticipated to commence in January 2025.

2.3.4 Shared Service Hub

An options appraisal is being undertaken on various new options for the hub on The Meadows, with some enterprise units, landscaping to the highway and an upgrade of space at The Kings Academy. This work is being presented to the Town Deal Board in December for review / comment.

3. **Recommendation**

- 3.1 Scrutiny Committee notes the progress made to date and continues to receive 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 £10.4 m has been spent at 18 November 2024, as shown below:

Project	Award (£000's)	Spend/Ordered (£000's)	Remaining (£000's)
Ryecroft / Site Preparation	3,756	3,444	312
Multi Story Car Park	3,500	3,500	0
York Place	3,015	2,925	90
Stones Public Realm	321	127	194
Market Stalls	76	76	0
Project Management	380	380	0
Total	11,048	10,452	596

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. £16.0m has been received to date of which £4.9m has been spent as shown below:

Project	Award (£000's)	Spend/Ordered (£000's)	Remaining (£000's)
Digital Infrastructure	2,285	29	2,256
Sustainable Public Transport	3,421	93	3,328
Electric Vehicle Charging	400	-	400
Pedestrian Cycle Permeability	950	-	950
Transform Key Gateway Sites	3,810	655	3,155
Astley Centre for Circus	1,810	643	1,167
Digital Society	3,510	1,369	2,141
Heart into Knutton Village	3,534	1,435	2,099
Cross Street, Chesterton	2,955	-	2,955
Project Management	925	638	287
Total	23,600	4,862	18,738

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 £14.5m has been received of which £6.9m 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	225	3,413
Shared Services Hub	6,183	169	6,014
Canal Enhancement	420	-	420
Project Management	670	548	122
Total	16,900	6,931	9,969

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. One Council

Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

One Commercial Council

One Digital Council

One Green Council

12. Key Decision Information

12.1 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.

13. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

13.1 None.

14. List of Appendices

14.1 None.

15. Background Papers

15.1 None.

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FINANCE, ASSETS AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Work Programme 2024/25

Chair	Cllr M. Holland
Vice-Chair	Cllr A. Bryan
Members	Cllrs D. Allport, R. Bettley-Smith, R. Lewis, A. Lawley, A. Parker, M. Stubbs, J. Tagg, P. Waring and N Crisp
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
5 December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Q2 Finance and Performance Report 2024/25 - Draft Savings Proposals 2025/26 - Town Deal and Future High Street Funds Update 	
16 January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revenue and Capital Budget and Strategies 2025/26 - Schedule of Fees and Charges 2025/26 - Town Deal and Future High Street Funds Update - One Council Review and Next Steps 	
27 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Q3 Finance and Performance Report 2024/25 - Commercial Strategy Update - Town Deal and Future High Street Funds Update 	
26 June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Q4 Finance and Performance Report 2024/25 - Town Deal and Future High Street Funds Update 	

Previous Items

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	NOTES
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	

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 Budgets and Strategies 24/25 - Draft Schedule of Fees and Charges 24/25 	
14 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Q3 Finance and Performance Report 2023/24 - Commercial Strategy Update - Town Deal and Future High Street Funds Update 	
27 June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Q4 Finance and Performance Report 2023/24 - Town Deal and Future High Street Funds Update 	Simon McEneny
18 September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 - Q1 Finance and Performance Report 2024/25 - Commercial Strategy Update - Town Deal and Future High Street Funds Update - Staff Turnover Report 	Requested at FAPS on 27/06/24

Last updated on 27 November 2024

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