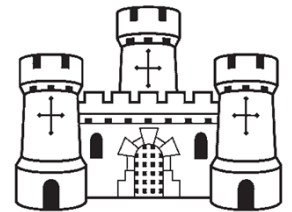


**Date of meeting** Thursday, 4th September, 2025  
**Time** 7.00 pm  
**Venue** Astley Room - Castle  
**Contact** Geoff Durham 742222



**NEWCASTLE  
UNDER LYME**

**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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

## **Finance, Assets & Performance Scrutiny Committee**

### **AGENDA**

#### **OPEN AGENDA**

- 1 APOLOGIES**
- 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
- 3 MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING** (Pages 3 - 10)  
To consider the Minutes of a previous meeting.
- 4 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2026/27 TO 2030/31** (Pages 11 - 20)
- 5 NUL QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REVISIONS 2025/28** (Pages 21 - 32)
- 6 FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW REPORT - FIRST QUARTER 2025/26** (Pages 33 - 70)
- 7 COMMERCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE** (Pages 71 - 86)
- 8 CIVIC PRIDE (EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITIES) STRATEGY 2025/28** (Pages 87 - 110)
- 9 TOWN DEAL AND FUTURE HIGH STREET FUNDS UPDATE** (Pages 111 - 122)
- 10 WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 123 - 126)
- 11 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME** (Pages 127 - 128)  
One public question has been received.
- 12 URGENT BUSINESS**  
To consider any business which is urgent within the meaning of Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972
- 13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2025 (7:00pm)

**Members:** Councillors Holland (Chair), Bryan (Vice-Chair), Parker, Turnock, P Waring, Bettley-Smith, Stubbs, Allport, Lawley, Grocott and Dean

**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:	Whieldon	J Tagg
	Beeston	D Jones
	Wilkes	Wright
	Adcock	Gorton
	Crisp	Lewis

***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.

**NOTE:** IF THE FIRE ALARM SOUNDS, PLEASE LEAVE THE BUILDING IMMEDIATELY THROUGH THE FIRE EXIT DOORS.

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

## **FINANCE, ASSETS & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Thursday, 26th June, 2025  
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

[View the agenda here](#)

[Watch the meeting here](#)

<b>Present:</b>	Councillor Mark Holland (Chair)		
Councillors:	Bryan Parker Turnock	P Waring Stubbs Grocott	Dean
Apologies:	Councillor(s) Bettley-Smith, Allport and Lawley		
Substitutes:	Deputy Mayor. Councillor Joan Whieldon (In place of Mayor - Councillor Robert Bettley-Smith)		
Officers:	Sarah Wilkes  Simon McEneny Vanessa Higgins	Service Director - Finance / S151 Officer Deputy Chief Executive Policy and Strategy Business Manager	
Also in attendance:	Councillor Stephen Sweeney	Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder - Finance, Town Centres and Growth	

### **1. APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed the new members to the Committee and shared apologies received as stated above.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

### **3. MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING**

Cllr Stubbs asked if there were any updates in relation to capturing data throughout the borough to improve Council's services as per his enquiry at the bottom of page 3 and top of page 4 of the agenda pack.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that this was work in progress.

The Chair added that, on a separate note, the Service Director for IT would be visiting the Committee later in the year to answer members' questions about digitalization.

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

[Watch the debate here](#)

**4. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW REPORT - FOURTH QUARTER 2024/25**

The Chair informed new members that the Committee would typically be going through the Performance indicators in red but they were welcome to ask questions about any indicators.

The Deputy Leader introduced the report.

Cllr Stubbs wished to thank the author of the report for flagging the Kidsgrove Town Deal as amber. The specifics would be discussed in the next item.

The Chair moved on to the indicators themselves.

Food business inspections completed on time - ID1.2

The Deputy Leader advised that the Quarter 2 drop was due to staff absence and the person had now been replaced.

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

The Deputy Leader commented that what was lost earlier in the year was being recovered.

Percentage of Council Tax collected - ID1.11

The Deputy Leader said that the figure had caught up to 97.4% further to people paying out later which he felt was reasonable.

Cllr Waring asked for clarification that the target was for the whole of the year, not just the end of March.

The Deputy Leader responded that the figure related to the year ending at the end of March however work had been done since then to catch up.

Cllr Stubbs suggested that this meant this was taken off the following year's figure and asked if the Council had responded to the current government review on Council tax, as well as which effects were to be expected regarding the collection rates.

The Service Director for Finance (S151 Officer) advised that the consultation was still open and the team was working on drafting a response. In relation to the collection rates, many variables were at stake that could impact people's circumstances and make them likely to e.g. pay or not pay. It was thought that the changes were not likely to massively impact the collection rates however the Council would monitor any effects as well as the results of the consultation and adjust the target as required for the following year.

Cllr Whieldon asked if Cllr Stubbs could elaborate on how, why and when the changes would impact residents of the borough.



Cllr Stubbs said that the rules on Council tax collection and recovery of debt were very strict compared to, for example, the process a business would have to go through to get their money back for unpaid invoices, ten times longer. The consultation seemed to be looking into relaxing those rules which may lead to abuses.

The Policy and Strategy Business Manager advised that as more and more information and guidance were being put on the website, the need for people to fill in a form to ask a question had reduced. Examples for which residents would previously submit an enquiry included the definition of a tidy allotment garden and the conditions required to make a noise complaint.

Materials collected for recycling and composting verified via WDF - ID1.4a

The Deputy Leader commented that despite the slight dip the Council remained one of the most performant authorities in Staffordshire and well above the 44% national recycling rate with flexible plastic and film being now recycled along with cartons.

Cllr Waring added that manufacturers were also trying to reduce the amount of packaging leading to less material needing to be recycled.

Cllr Stubbs wondered if the current charge on garden waste may not discourage some family to recycle.

Car parking usage - Number of tickets purchased - ID4.1

The Deputy Leader advised that the car parking usage was current fluctuating with all ongoing works in the town centre.

The Deputy Chief Executive said that less visitors meant less car parking tickets being sold, the town centre footfall being also below target.

Cllr Stubbs asked about potential changes to the targets to be more relevant to the actual situation.

The Deputy Leader responded that the high targets had been set for the previous year and some may not be achievable, which the team was looking into.

The Policy and Strategy Business Manager advised that there was a business planning process for priority delivery plans. Service directors reviewed performance and a value for money exercise was being undertaken. The targets were then discussed with the Leadership team and Cabinet.

Cllr Stubbs suggested that the Committee could be involved in scrutinizing changes in performance targets going forward before the start of the financial year – clarifying that he did not mean for the Committee to set the targets themselves.

Cllr Waring commented that the targets should remain consistent year to year to give an accurate picture. The numbers were not necessarily relevant in themselves but the trends were.

Cllr Parker asked if the car parking space allocated to J2 membership could be extended to other car parking areas.

## **Finance, Assets & Performance Scrutiny Committee - 26/06/25**

The Deputy Leader said the suggestion would be passed on and discussed with the Leader.

Cllr Parker enquired about staff absences which he could not find in the report.

The Service Director for Finance (S151 Officer) responded this was under ID1.13 and ID1.14.

The Chair added that both indicators had recovered, and a positive yearly trend had been recorded.

**Resolved:** That the contents of the report and appendices be noted, and that the Committee continue to monitor and challenge the Council's service and financial performance for this period.

[Watch the debate here](#)

### **5. TOWN DEAL AND FUTURE HIGH STREET FUNDS UPDATE**

The Deputy Leader introduced the report on the schemes delivered through the Town Deal and Future High Street Funds as presented at the latest Economy & Place Scrutiny Committee meeting. Most of the projects were expected to be completed by October.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Shared Service Hub scheme was no longer being developed as a stand alone scheme and the money would now be allocated to four new projects as agreed by the Town Deal Board.

The improvements planned around the train station which were reliant on a survey being carried out and potential remedial works for which an additional budget might have been required had also been suspended and the Town Deal Board had agreed to use the funds for works outside of the underpinning zone only i.e. existing building and access to the train and car parking at the front. A proposal was awaited from the train operator.

The Chair welcomed the update and news that the Town Deal plans had not been scrapped contrary to what had been suggested in the press but were evolving to meet what was actually doable with a proper attitude to risks.

Cllr Whieldon enquired about digital communication in relation to clarifying the situation for residents and dispelling misinformation.

The Deputy Leader commented that it was difficult to change people's mind through social media but pictures of the developments would be put on the official communication channels, like the screen displayed in the town centre, so they could see for themselves.

The Deputy Chief Executive warned against the risks of getting into arguments on social media which officers could not respond to.

Cllr Waring added that one should be wary of communicating on matters that hadn't been publicised yet not to expose the Council to rumours and criticism.

The Chair stated that the attitude of the administration and members of Cabinet had been positive and of a huge benefit. Residents asking questions about what was true and what wasn't were getting straight answers.

Cllr Waring commented that while the projects may have changed, they should still meet the same criteria and provide the same ultimate benefits that were agreed when the funds were granted.

The Chair supported the statement, and the Deputy Leader expressed his enthusiasm for upcoming projects scheduled in the town centre.

Cllr Stubbs recalled previous discussions that took place on social media and suggested it may be sometimes appropriate to react when incorrect information was circulated. It was felt that Kidsgrove Shared Service Hub project as included in the original application and needed by residents could not be directly replaced by the four new schemes proposed and an explanation on how the original intentions would be met may be helpful for residents.

The Deputy Chief Executive responded that the Shared Service Hub project could not be delivered due to changes in circumstances and withdrawal of stakeholders. While it was a loss for the borough, the four new projects were based on needs identified through the original consultation process with residents and would deliver the outputs agreed in the Town Investment Plan.

Cllr Stubbs shared his disappointment at not seeing any contingency for what would have been a generational change at Kidsgrove train station.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Council had investigated the fact there may be coal mining under the station however back then it was not a problem for the owners Network Rail who subsequently changed their approach to the risk. Funding was also expected from the Government in relation to the HS2 project which was supposed to be reallocated into a Local Transport Fund. No money was ever received and the Council had to look into yet another funding option from the Government which also ended up not being available. The plan was therefore now to use the money available to refurbish the train station, making it more attractive, safer looking and a pleasant environment for residents and visitors.

Cllr Stubbs asked what would be done with the remaining funds that would have gone into the originally scheduled works.

The Deputy Chief Executive responded that proposals from East Midlands Railway were currently awaited about how to maximize the spend and impacts of the project. Any money left would be for the Town Deal Board to reconsider what may come as a plan B as done with the Shared Service Hub.

Cllr Waring added that information shared earlier in the year suggested that the survey at Kidsgrove Train Station would have gone ahead if it wasn't for the government moving its position. About the Shared Service Hub the money was now going towards projects that should fulfil most aspects of the original plans in relation to mental health, adult education etc.

Cllr Stubbs expressed concerns about the fact that East Midlands Railway had been given what looked like a cost envelope and wondered about what sort of proposal would come out.

## **Finance, Assets & Performance Scrutiny Committee - 26/06/25**

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that this was a budget envelope and all aspects of the proposal would have to be justified and go through an economic assessment and value for money exercise.

The Chair concluded that the session brought serious scrutiny of the Town Deal schemes. It felt that it was outside of the Council's power to have changed anything to the fact that two of the Kidsgrove projects couldn't be delivered and more to do with the partners involved.

The Chair also recalled that an organization was still required for the Knutton Village Hall scheme to go ahead and asked if any progress had been made.

The Deputy Chief Executive responded that Support Staffordshire was talking to a group led by Cllr Grocott looking to create a Community Interest Company to take it on involving a formulation process.

Cllr Grocott commented that he would advise the Committee of any updates on the matter and took the opportunity to congratulate the team on the works completed in Chesterton for which he hoped to see pictures included in the report at the next meeting.

The Chair seconded the request.

Cllr Stubbs declared an interest as board member of VAST with whom a partnership with Support Staffordshire was being considered. He also said that Support Staffordshire may not be covering matters pertaining to the borough in the future and asked if this would have an impact on the project.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that Support Staffordshire was facilitating the discussions to create the group on which the emphasis would be and the timescale in relation to its amalgamation was irrelevant.

The Deputy Leader wished to conclude by sharing his satisfaction at the way things had been handled in both Chatterley Valley and Kidsgrove. The processes involved in the development of schemes were to be accepted as fluid and taking into account changes in circumstances.

The Chair reiterated that good scrutiny had been carried out by the Committee.

**Resolved:** That the report on the delivery of the Town Deal and Future High Street Funds projects be noted and pictures of the works completed in Chesterton be shared at the next meeting.

[Watch the debate here](#)

### **6. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair presented the work programme.

**Resolved:** That the work programme be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

**7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions received from members of the public.

**8. URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

**9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Resolved:** That the next meeting be held on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

**Councillor Mark Holland  
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 8.22 pm

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## NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S REPORT TO

#### Finance Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee 04 September 2025

**Report Title:** Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2030/31

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

**Portfolios:** Finance, Town Centres and Growth

**Ward(s) affected:** All

<p><b><u>Purpose of the Report</u></b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>To present an update regarding the financial pressures facing the Council for the period 2026/27 to 2030/31.</p>	<p><b><u>Key Decision</u></b> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The funding pressures of £1.777m in 2026/27 and £3.069m over the 5-year period covered by the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) be noted.</li> <li>2. To note the approach regarding the development of savings and income generation proposals in the medium-term.</li> <li>3. Note the continued uncertainty regarding the medium-term impact of local government funding.</li> <li>4. Note the letter sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Appendix B) from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth requesting further funding in respect of Temporary Accommodation.</li> </ol>	
<p><b><u>Reasons</u></b></p> <p>To ensure that the Council meets its statutory duty to set a balanced budget in February 2026.</p>	

#### 1. **Background**

- 1.1 Full Council agreed a Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2025/26 to 2029/30 in February 2025 as part of the budget setting process. This report updates the assumptions regarding financial pressures facing the Council from that time and sets out the strategy for development of the 2026/27 budget and MTFS for 2026/27 to 2030/31.

## 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.
- 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 internal ownership of the Council's financial position, a robust financial position and a fair funding settlement for Newcastle-under-Lyme.
- 2.3 The MTFS assumes that the Fair Funding Review will be completed ahead of 2026/27 which would see the accumulated growth built up since 2013/14 from Business Rates Retention being redistributed across the system alongside the introduction of a new Settlement Funding Assessment. As a member of the Staffordshire Business Rates Pool the Council currently saves 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 further 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.
- 2.4 Funding received and retained by the Council in 2025/26 that is subject to redistribution under the Fair Funding Review amounts to £9.360m, for 2026/27 it is anticipated through comprehensive modelling that this will amount to £8.396m – a reduction in funding of £0.964m. As part of the 2025/26 budget setting £0.500m was set aside to contribute to this anticipated reduction, as such a gap of £0.464m remains and has been included as a pressure to be addressed for 2026/27.
- 2.5 The Council has been successful in securing resources required to regenerate the Borough via Town Deals and Future High Street Fund funding. It is important that the Council continues to work, including closely with partners, to secure inward investment in the Borough to drive growth and employment opportunities for local people.
- 2.6 The current MTFS approved by Council as part of the budget setting process in February 2025 forecast a budget gap of £5.275m over the period 2025/26 to 2029/30 (including £1.821m for 2026/27). The MTFS is being rolled forward by a year and assumptions are constantly revisited. The current forecast around financial pressures facing the Council is for a gap in 2026/27 of £1.777m and over the 5-year period of the MTFS, £3.069m. Further details are shown in Appendix A.
- 2.7 Pressure will continue to be placed on the Council's finances in the medium term. These include inflation and interest rates that place pressure on the Council in terms of fuel and utilities, contractor costs, supplies and services and borrowing costs and the continuing rising costs of temporary and supported accommodation that the Council is required to provide for vulnerable and homeless residents.
- 2.8 The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth has recently written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer requesting further funding in relation to temporary accommodation. A copy of the letter can be seen in Appendix B.



- 2.9 In addition to the above, a budget pressure in respect of Local Government Reorganisation has been included in the MTFs. It is not yet known how much this will cost, therefore this will be closely monitored and updated.
- 2.10 With regards to the Local Government Reorganisation, the Council has continued to prepare its Medium Term Financial Strategy over a 5 year period until confirmation of transitional arrangements and dates have been received.
- 2.11 Work on the detail of the 2026/27 budget including investment and savings proposals is underway and is being overseen by an Efficiency Board chaired by the Leader of the Council. Draft budget proposals will be presented to Cabinet and the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee (FAPSC) in December.
- 2.12 The vigorous Efficiency Board process including challenge sessions for each of the Cabinet Portfolios involving Cabinet Members, the Corporate Leadership Team and Service Directors has been in operation since 2017/18. The savings and funding strategies identified for the nine year period of 2017/18 to 2025/26 amounts to £16.837m. This has enabled a balanced budget position to be provided in each and every year.
- 2.13 Based on this work, key themes for further exploration are anticipated to include digital transformation, commercial opportunities, sustainable and asset management.
- 2.14 A full risk assessment is being carried out on the Council's reserves. A preliminary assessment suggests that the current General Fund reserve of £2.007m will be required to provide sufficient cover for potential risks. Further consideration of the levels of other reserves held will be considered as part of this assessment.
- 2.15 The Council agreed a 10 year Capital Strategy in February 2025. The Capital Strategy sets out how the Council will invest capital resources to support service delivery and facilitate the achievement of key objectives. The strategy has been reviewed and updated including expected capital receipts from asset disposals.
- 2.16 The capital financing requirement is estimated to increase to £42.490m by 2035/36 based on the current capital programme and the revenue implications have been reflected in the revised MTFs. It is anticipated that the current borrowing revenue budget of £0.947m will need to be increased by £0.058m to provide for borrowing costs that may be incurred during 2026/27.
- 2.17 The table below sets out the key dates of the events to take place before the budget for 2026/27 is finally approved:

Event	Committee	Date
First draft savings proposals	Cabinet	2 December 2025
Budget consultation	Mid November to mid December	
Scrutiny of first draft savings proposals	FAPSC	4 December 2025

Approval of final MTFS & consideration of draft budget proposals	Cabinet	13 January 2026
Scrutiny of draft budget proposals	FAPSC	15 January 2026
Final budget proposals recommended for approval by Full Council	Cabinet	3 February 2026
Full Council to approve budget	Full Council	11 February 2026

### 3. **Proposal**

- 3.1 That Cabinet note the funding gap of £1.777m in 2026/27 and £3.069m over the life of the MTFS.
- 3.2 That Cabinet agree the approach regarding the development of savings and income generation proposals in the medium term.
- 3.3 That Cabinet note the continued uncertainty regarding the medium-term impact of local government funding.
- 3.4 Note the letter sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Appendix B) from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth requesting further funding in respect of Temporary Accommodation.

### 4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget by February 2026. 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

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 the cost-of-living crisis and 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.

## 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.



## 11. One Council

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

One Commercial Council ☒

*We will make investment to diversify our income and think entrepreneurially.*

One Digital Council ☒

*We will develop and implement a digital approach which makes it easy for all residents and businesses to engage with the Council, with our customers at the heart of every interaction.*

One Sustainable Council ☒

*We will deliver on our commitments to a net zero future and make all decisions with sustainability as a driving principle.*

12. **Key Decision Information**

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

13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

13.1 None

14. **List of Appendices**

14.1 Appendix A – MTFS 'Gaps'

14.2 Appendix B – Letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer

15. **Background Papers**

15.1 None

## Appendix A – 2026/27 to 2030/31 MTFS ‘Gaps’

Detail	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000	2030/31 £'000	Description
<b>Employees:</b>						
Increments	68	45	17	4	-	Employees due an increment
Pay awards	396	465	479	494	509	3% pay award assumed for all years (2026/27 includes 2025/26 difference of 0.3%)
Members pay awards	8	9	9	9	10	3% pay award assumed for all years
Superannuation increases	108	107	104	104	106	20.9% of salary increases
Superannuation lump sum increases	-	27	28	29	30	Net increase of lump sum pension payment
National Insurance	78	77	74	75	76	15% of salary increases
<b>Premises:</b>						
Business Rates	22	23	24	24	25	Inflationary increase in business rates payable (per CPI)
Utilities	29	30	31	32	33	Inflationary increase in gas and electric (per CPI)
<b>Transport:</b>						
Fuel	16	17	17	18	18	Inflationary increase in fuel/HVO (per CPI)
<b>Financing:</b>						
Borrowing costs	58	(9)	(53)	200	535	Borrowing costs regarding the financing of capital expenditure
<b>New Pressures:</b>						
ICT software	10	10	10	10	10	ICT costs re. systems maintenance and software licences
Restructuring	25	-	-	-	-	Potential additional resource requirements
Inflationary Pressures (contracts)	50	50	50	50	50	Inflationary uplifts allowance
Local Government Re-organisation	400	(200)	(200)	-	-	One off costs re. re-organisation (£400k in 2026/27, reduced to £200k in 2027/28 and nil in 2028/29)
<b>Income:</b>						
Fees and charges	(288)	(296)	(305)	(314)	(324)	3% increase in fees and charges assumed for all years
Settlement Funding Assessment baseline funding level	464	(535)	(535)	(95)	(96)	The Council currently receives £9.36m from Business Rates Retention and grants that are to be rolled into a new Settlement Funding Assessment for 2026/27 onwards. Initial forecasts estimate that this will amount to £8.40m in 2026/27 with increases of £0.535m in 2027/28 and 2028/29. £0.5m has already been included in the base budget for 2025/26 to allow for part of this reduction in 2026/27, a further allowance of £0.464m in 2026/27 is therefore required.
National Insurance reimbursement	233	-	-	-	-	Shortfall in grant re. National Insurance rises
Income pressures	100	100	-	-	-	General income shortfalls
<b>TOTAL GAPS</b>	<b>1,777</b>	<b>(80)</b>	<b>(250)</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>982</b>	

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**Our ref:**

**Your ref:**

**Date:** 1 August 2025

The Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP  
The Chancellor of the Exchequer  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

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

By post & e-mail: [public.enquiries@hmtreasury.gov.uk](mailto:public.enquiries@hmtreasury.gov.uk)

Dear Chancellor of the Exchequer,

I am writing to you today to request your support in seeking further funding from Central Government in relation to the growing challenges faced in our borough.

In line with other local authorities, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council faces large budget shortfalls due to the continuing Cost of Living Crisis. These factors place a direct pressure on the Council's finances, they also place pressure on the boroughs residents and their ability to pay their Council Tax, Business Rates and to utilise Council provided facilities such as leisure centres and commercial properties etc.

As a result of the Cost of Living Crisis, the Council is seeing a large increase in the demand for temporary accommodation. During 2024/25 the Council spent £930k on temporary accommodation, which is around 5.4% of the Council's net budget, due to the increase in demand and increases in accommodation provider costs. Due to the lack of housing available we are finding that homeless people are having to use temporary accommodation from anywhere between 5 nights to 50 nights which is having a huge financial impact on the Council.

The Business Rates Retention reset is also a concern for us, initial forecasts indicate that this may reduce the Council's funding by £1.5m which is a considerable amount for a small local authority. Whilst there is recognition for changes, there is concern over the complexity of the changes that would be introduced in addition to the potential reduction in funding. We firmly believe that the current level of Business Rate Retention should be retained at the current rate or increased to encourage local economic growth.

In relation to businesses, this November will see the re-ballot of Newcastle's Business Improvement District where the BID will be seeking a mandate for a further 5-year term of delivery. The Council is very supportive of the BID, and has increased its partnership activity to ensure our businesses are well-supported and operate in a borough which has Civic Pride at its heart. However, there are costs associated with the ballot process which will be unrecoverable for the Council, and I would ask that Ministers consider changes to BID legislation to reduce the burden on local authorities.

Whilst Newcastle is a safe place to live, the cost of delivering community safety for reducing antisocial behaviour is an increasing pressure. The demand for further CCTV and Neighbourhood Wardens is being requested to which there is no additional available funding. The Council prioritised part of the UK Shared Prosperity Funding for this area, however it is not currently clear if this funding will continue or be cut, therefore we would request that consideration be given to extend the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in order to continue to provide this important community safety provision.

Our Council has raised major concerns around the forced Local Government Reorganisation (FLGR) process and its move away from the delivery of quality local services in Newcastle to more remote, less accountable super-councils. Following the resolution of our full Council we are nonetheless investigating options for FLGR, and have therefore needed to set aside a significant sum in our budgets of £200,000 for work on this process, money which I am sure you will appreciate would be better spent on delivery of services, including in the areas set out above. The Leader of the Council has called on our local MPs to pledge their support to the borough through the FLGR process.

In order to mitigate some of the financial pressure the Council faces, we have instigated again this year a strict budget setting process to make further efficiencies where possible while protecting frontline services. I know you have previously campaigned against national cuts which impact on Councils providing local services. We have already saved over £10 million from Council budgets since 2018. I therefore request your support in providing the authority with the additional funding needed, to assist towards the pressures faced in order to avoid the Council having to again reduce the provision of its core services.

I would like to extend an invitation to visit Newcastle-under-Lyme and understand the progress we are making and the challenges we face. I would like to thank you for taking the time to review our request and look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours Sincerely



Cllr Stephen Sweeney  
Deputy Leader of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and  
Portfolio Holder – Finance, Town Centres and Growth

[Stephen.sweeney@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.sweeney@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk)

Cc.: Adam Jogee MP  
David Williams MP  
Leigh Ingham MP





# NUL Quarterly Performance Revisions

**2025 to 2028**



## Priority One: One Council Delivery for Local People

Measure	Service	Portfolio Holder	2023-24 Result	2024-25 Result	2024-25 Target	2025-26 Target	2026-27 Target	2027-28 Target
Develop professional talent across the Council and provide opportunities for staff to grow their careers								
Staff turnover	Strategy, People & Performance	Cllr. Simon Tagg	15.22%	13.13%	Max 10%	Max 10%	Max 10%	Max 10%
Voluntary Turnover	Strategy, People & Performance	Cllr. Simon Tagg	N/A	N/A	N/A	Contextual	Contextual	Contextual

**Rationale:** A secondary measure has been introduced to support the overall Staff Turnover metric by specifically tracking voluntary departures within the council. This measure captures instances such as resignations and retirements, helping to provide a clearer view of workforce movement.



## Priority One: One Council Delivery for Local People

Measure	Service	Portfolio Holder	2023-24 Result	2024-25 Result	2024-25 Target	2025-26 Target	2026-27 Target	2027-28 Target
<b>Ensure our services are efficient and accessible</b>								
Percentage of requests resolved at first point of contact	Neighbourhood Delivery	Cllr. Simon Tagg	99.99%	98.9%*	98%	Contextual – Establish baseline	TBC on baseline	TBC on baseline
% Unmet demand (number of calls not answered as a % of total call handling volume)	Neighbourhood Delivery	Cllr. Simon Tagg	15.60%	19.2%*	19%	Contextual – Establish baseline	TBC on baseline	TBC on baseline

**Rationale:** Following the introduction of the new telephony system, Anywhere 365, at the end of February 2025, the target for 2025/26 has been revised to a contextual measure. This adjustment reflects the shift in reporting capabilities and allows for the establishment of a baseline using the new software. Future targets will be set based on performance during this baseline year.



## Priority One: One Council Delivery for Local People

Measure	Service	Portfolio Holder	2023-24 Result	2024-25 Result	2024-25 Target	2025-26 Target	2026-27 Target	2027-28 Target
Ensure our services are efficient and accessible								
Total number of digital online transactions	Information & Technology	Cllr. Simon Tagg	80873	74268	75000	75000	To be reviewed in 2026	To be reviewed

**Rationale:** The target will remain unchanged for 2025/26, as no additional Jadu forms are planned for implementation during this period. However, with the transition to a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, the target will be reviewed in 2026 and incorporated as part of the new platform's rollout.



## Priority One: One Council Delivery for Local People

Measure	Service	Portfolio Holder	2023-24 Result	2024-25 Result	2024-25 Target	2025-26 Target	2026-27 Target	2027-28 Target
Ensure our services are efficient and accessible								
Total number of unique users to the website	Information & Technology	Cllr. Simon Tagg	345276	Measure to be removed from corporate performance metric suite.				

**Rationale:** This measure will be removed from the performance metrics, as it has previously served only a contextual purpose and provides no benefit. Customer interaction with the Council's digital services is now better represented through measure 1.8: Total Number of Digital Online Transactions now that the CMS is fully implemented.



## Priority 2: A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough

Measure	Service	Portfolio Holder	2023-24 Result	2024-25 Result	2024-25 Target	2025-26 Target	2026-27 Target	2027-28 Target
Protecting our communities by improving how we use our enforcement powers								
<b>Year to Date</b> - Percentage of complainants informed within the required timescales of any action to be taken about alleged breaches of planning control	Planning	Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	63.9%	72%	75%	75%	75%	75%
<b>Quarter in Isolation</b> - Percentage of complainants informed within the required timescales of any action to be taken about alleged breaches of planning control	Planning	Cllr. Andrew Fear	N/A	N/A	75%	75%	75%	75%

**Rationale:** A second measure has been introduced to complement the original cumulative version by presenting each quarter in isolation. This approach is expected to more clearly highlight any fluctuations between quarters, thereby offering valuable context to help explain changes in the year-to-date figure.



## Priority 2: A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough

Measure	Service	Portfolio Holder	2023-24 Result	2024-25 Result	2024-25 Target	2025-26 Target	2026-27 Target	2027-28 Target
Protecting our communities by improving how we use our enforcement powers								
Speed of major development applications (P151a). (Government Target)	Planning	Cllr. Andrew Fear	90.90%	91.5%	75%	92%	92%	92%
Speed of non-major development applications (P153). (Government Target)	Planning	Cllr. Andrew Fear	95.10%	95.9%	85%	90%	90%	90%

**Rationale:** The updated "Improving Planning Performance: Criteria for Designation" document released December 2024 has changed the assessment period for speed of decision-making for both major and non-major applications from 24 months to 12 months, this has meant that there is no annual comparison available for the upcoming year.



### Priority 3: Healthy, Active and Safe Communities

Measure	Service	Portfolio Holder	2023-24 Result	2024-25 Result	2024-25 Target	2025-26 Target	2026-27 Target	2027-28 Target
Ensure that there are good homes for everyone and that every citizen has a safe and secure place to live								
The average number of working days from occupational health referral to completion of works for stairlifts provided by a DFG	Regulatory	Cllr. Gill Heesom	N/A	N/A	Contextual	130 Days	125 Days	120 Days
Percentage of non-complex Disabled Facilities Grants completed in 120 days from Occupational health referral	Regulatory	Cllr. Gill Heesom	N/A	N/A	Contextual	65%	70%	75%

**Rationale:** The two Disabled Facilities Grants measures have been amended to fall in line with the national guidance targets.





### Priority 3: Healthy, Active and Safe Communities

Measure	Service	Portfolio Holder	2023-24 Result	2024-25 Result	2024-25 Target	2025-26 Target	2026-27 Target	2027-28 Target
Delivering an economic and cultural legacy from the celebration of the borough's 850th anniversary in 2023								
Number of People Accessing the Museum's collections person	Commercial Delivery	Cllr. Craig Skelding	96161	76778	85000	60000*	61000	61000

**Rationale:** The 2025/26 target has been adjusted to account for new counting software scheduled for implementation early in 2025. While a reduction in recorded numbers is anticipated, the data will more accurately reflect actual visitor figures.



### Priority 3: Healthy, Active and Safe Communities

Measure	Service	Portfolio Holder	2023-24 Result	2024-25 Result	2024-25 Target	2025-26 Target	2026-27 Target	2027-28 Target
Support the development of community solutions to local problems								
Jubilee 2 Customer Satisfaction – Overall Visitor Experience	Commercial Delivery	Cllr. Craig Skelding	35.68%	26.09%	40%	75%	75%	75%

**Rationale:** There is a difficulty in understanding the Net Promoter Score, particularly how it fluctuates in relation to the national survey, this has led to the introduction of a new local survey as a replacement that still allows for national benchmarking. The new survey will provide more meaningful and accessible insights into customer satisfaction.



### Priority 3: Healthy, Active and Safe Communities

Measure	Service	Portfolio Holder	2023-24 Result	2024-25 Result	2024-25 Target	2025-26 Target	2026-27 Target	2027-28 Target
Further increasing recycling rates across the borough with a particular focus on food waste								
Total % of materials collected for recycling and composting verified via WDF	Sustainable Environment	Cllr. David Hutchison	48.28%	48.1%	50%	51%	52%	45%*

**Rationale:** No significant changes are anticipated until 2027/28, at which point the target will be reduced due to the anticipated impact of the Deposit Return Scheme. The scheme's introduction is expected to alter performance and thus has prompted this reassessment.



## Priority 4: Town Centre for All

Measure	Service	Portfolio Holder	2023-24 Result	2024-25 Result	2024-25 Target	2025-26 Target	2026-27 Target	2027-28 Target
Increasing the number of people living, working and using Newcastle town Centre								
Car parking usage:- Number of tickets purchased	Neighbourhood Delivery	Cllr. Stephen Sweeney	368987	326847	340000	Contextual	Contextual	Contextual

**Rationale:** The target for 2025/26 has been revised to a contextual measure in response to evolving parking habits, influenced by the regeneration programme underway in Newcastle-under-Lyme. Castle Car Park, the initial phase of this initiative, has been designed with increased capacity to accommodate future demand as new developments are introduced over the next two to four years. Future targets may be set based on current year baseline. Additionally, alternative metrics are being explored to provide a more meaningful representation of car park usage across the borough.

## NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

04 September 2025

**Report Title:** Financial and Performance Review Report – First Quarter 2025/26

**Submitted by:** Corporate Leadership Team

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

**Ward(s) affected:** All

<b><u>Purpose of the Report</u></b>	<b><u>Key Decision</u></b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To provide the Committee with the Financial and Performance Review Report for 2025-26 (Quarter One).			
<b><u>Recommendation</u></b>  <b>That (Committee):</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>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.</b></li> <li><b>Approve the movement in reserves under section 7 of the Finance Appendix A (£100k to the Planning Appeals Reserve, £150k to the Local Plan Support Fund and £150k to the Budget and Borrowing Support Fund, all of which to be transferred from the Business Rates Reserve).</b></li> </ol>			
<b><u>Reasons</u></b>  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 one in 2025/26.
- 1.2** The Council approved a General Fund Revenue Budget of £19.730m on 12 February 2025. Further financial information is provided in Appendix A.

## **2. Performance**

- 2.1** The Q1 report (April 2025 to June 2025) 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 the reasons behind the performance and what steps are being taken to ensure improvement in the future.
- 2.4** For this report a total of 49 indicators were monitored, 17 of these indicators were contextual and had no set target. Of these contextual measures that had historic trend data available, 62% showed an improvement or maintenance when compared to the previous year's performance. Of the remaining 32 indicators, the proportion which have met their target during this period stands at 78%, with the remaining 22% falling short of target. 43% of off target measures this quarter show a positive trend when comparing to the same time period of the previous financial year with 29% of the off-target measures not having any historical data to compare against. 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 68%.
- 2.5** Four project/actions have been classified as completed by their respective owners this quarter

### **3. Issues**

- 3.1** There are seven 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 One; both are associated with priority two.
- 3.3** The first action flagged as amber is the Walleys Quarry odour issue. Comments by the action owner are listed below;

"Following Walleys Quarry Ltd entering into liquidation at the end of February 2025 and the subsequent disclaimer of the environmental permits, the Environment Agency are using their discretionary power to arrange for steps to be taken to remove the risk of serious pollution.

- The contractor appointed to undertake the work has now completed:
  - works to manage the accumulation of liquid in the western void
  - the installation of a new drain in the western void to manage any landfill gas and leachate
  - a new access track to the western flank of the landfill site to allow access to this part of the site for equipment and materials
- The contractor continues to progress with the following works:
  - installation of an engineered clay bund to the waste flank in the western void

- engineering works to remedy shallow surface depressions and capping defects on the top of the site
- Materials (e.g. clay) continue to be brought onto site to undertake the works. The site however remains closed to any incoming waste.
- In Quarter 1, the data shows:
  - Odour complaints reported to NULBC have reduced further and stabilised at a lower level of 24 (April), 15 (May) and 16 (June)
  - there has been no weekly exceedance of the World Health Organisation [WHO] odour annoyance guideline throughout this period”

**3.4** The second action flagged as amber and not progressing as expected is the Delivery the £16m Kids Grove Town Deal, where issues regarding the delivery of the railway station project have slowed progress. The Town Deal Board met in May to review the railway station and the shared service hub projects. The railway station project is undergoing a scope reduction / redesign exercise to bring the scheme in within the available budget and avoiding land on the site which will need remediation for coal mines, whilst the shared service hub budget / project has been re-allocated into four separate projects to deliver enterprise units, a community learning hub and public realm / highways improvements.

#### **4. Recommendation**

- 4.1** That the 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 ☒

*We will make investment to diversify our income and think entrepreneurially.*

One Digital Council ☒

*We will develop and implement a digital approach which makes it easy for all residents and businesses to engage with the Council, with our customers at the heart of every interaction.*

One Green Council ☒

*We will deliver on our commitments to a net zero future and make all decisions with sustainability as a driving principle.*

## **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.

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**2025/26**

**Quarter One  
Financial  
Performance**

## 1. Background and Introduction

- 1.1 In accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules and recommended good practice, a quarterly financial report is presented to Members. This is the first report for 2025/26.
- 1.2 The report summarises overall financial performance for 2025/26 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	2025/26 General Fund	
	Estimate £	Band D Council Tax £
Central Services	2,449,120	61.52
Cultural Services	3,513,630	88.27
Environmental Services	8,701,440	218.59
Planning	1,673,670	42.04
Transport	(238,330)	(5.99)
Housing	2,326,630	58.45
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>18,426,160</b>	<b>462.88</b>
Pensions Liabilities Account	400,000	10.05
Investment Properties	(101,270)	(2.54)
Interest and Investment Income	588,000	14.77
<b>Net Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>19,312,890</b>	<b>485.16</b>
Contribution to/(from) Revenue Reserves	2,683,000	67.40
Contribution to/(from) Capital Reserves	(2,266,000)	(56.92)
<b>Amount to be met from Government Grant and Local Taxpayers</b>	<b>19,729,890</b>	<b>495.64</b>

- 2.2 The Council approved a General Fund Revenue Budget of £19.730m on 12 February 2025 for 2025/26. 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 one a positive variance of £0.034m has been achieved. The projected outturn on the General Fund Revenue Account for the year is £19.730m. This represents a balanced outturn for the year.
- 2.5 The adverse variances that have occurred at the close of the first quarter of 2025/26 include:
- a. Income shortfalls at the close of quarter one from car parking (£0.050m), trade waste (£0.025m) and bereavement services (£0.048m). It is forecast that these will total £0.368m for the financial year.
  - b. Use of overtime, casual and agency staff within the Waste and Recycling Service along with increased contractor disposal payments has resulted in an overspend of £0.099m at the close of quarter one. It is forecast that this will amount to an overspend of £0.196m for the financial year.
- 2.6 These adverse variances have been offset in full by the following favourable variances:
- a. Income from planning applications at the close of quarter one amounts to £0.319m more than budgeted, it is anticipated that income for the remainder of the financial year will remain in line with that budgeted and that the variance for the financial year will stay at £0.319m.
  - b. Interest receivable on cash that the Council holds in terms of Town Deal funding totals £0.058m at the close of quarter one. It is forecast that interest receivable will amount to £0.078m for the financial year.
  - c. Interest payable on borrowing has not been incurred due to the cash that the Council holds in terms of Town Deal funding, this has saved £0.154m. It is anticipated that borrowing may commence during the second quarter, as such it is estimated that this saving may amount to £0.205m for the financial year.

### **3. Efficiency and Savings Plan**

- 3.1 This section of the report considers the financial performance of the Council's Efficiency and Savings Plan in 2025/26.
- 3.2 The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (approved in February 2025) identified pressures amounting to £5.275m for the period 2025/26 to 2029/30.
- 3.3 The Efficiency and Savings Plan to address these pressures aims to both reduce expenditure and increase income. The need to grow income continues to be a priority as the Council moves towards becoming 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 2025/26 budget was set in February 2025 with the assumption of £1.890m of savings in the year. These savings are detailed in the table below:

Category	Amount £'000	Comments
Income	235	Additional sources of income generation and an increased demand for services that the Council charges for
Staffing Related Efficiencies	156	No redundancies are anticipated to arise from these proposals
Good Housekeeping/More Efficient Processes	167	Various savings arising from more efficient use of budgets
Tax Base Increase	425	Increased in Council Tax and Business Rates tax base
Council Tax Increase	175	An assumed 1.99% per Band D equivalent increase in Council Tax
Government Reimbursement	732	Grant in respect of Extended Producer Responsibility
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,890</b>	

3.5 At the end of quarter one, all savings have been achieved or are on target to be achieved throughout the remainder of the financial year.

#### 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 June 2025.

Priority	Budget at Period 3 £'000	Actual at Period 3 £'000	Variance at Period 3 £'000
One Council Delivering for Local People	231	232	1
A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough	834	852	18
Healthy, Active and Safe Communities	3,249	3,250	1
Town Centres for All	2,167	2,171	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,481</b>	<b>6,505</b>	<b>24</b>

4.3 A Capital Programme totalling £23.731m was approved for 2025/26, excluding contingency. In addition £23.553m was brought forward from the 2024/25 Capital Programme, including projects planned under the Town Deals funds that will continue to be progressed during 2025/26 (£18.354m), resulting in a total Capital Programme of £48.233m for 2024/25 (including a top up of £0.949m to re-establish a £1.000m contingency).

4.4 The expected total capital receipts due to be received this year following the sale of assets amount to £6.225m. A summary of the expected income is shown in the table below.

Funding	Amount
Proceeds from Right to Buy sales	£0.500m
Asset sales	£5.725m
<b>Total</b>	<b>£6.225m</b>

## 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 been received, all of which has been spent at 31 March 2025.
- 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. £19.8m has been received to date of which £12.6m has been spent as shown below:

Project	Award (£000's)	Spend (£000's)	Remaining (£000's)
Digital Infrastructure	2,285	1547	738
Sustainable Public Transport	3,421	841	2,580
Electric Vehicle Charging	400	400	0
Pedestrian Cycle Permeability	950	359	591
Transform Key Gateway Sites	3,810	1,177	2,633
Astley Centre for Circus	1,810	640	1,170
Digital Society	3,510	2,992	518
Heart into Knutton Village	3,534	2,958	576
Cross Street, Chesterton	2,955	987	1,968
Project Management	925	733	192
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,600</b>	<b>12,634</b>	<b>10,966</b>

- 4.7 £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 £7.3m has been spent as shown below:

Project	Award (£000's)	Spend (£000's)	Remaining (£000's)
Kidsgrove Sports Centre	2,328	2,328	0
Chatterley Valley West	3,496	3,496	0
Kidsgrove Station	3,638	246	3,392
Shared Services Hub	6,183	328	5,855
Canal Enhancement	420	64	356
Project Management	835	806	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,900</b>	<b>7,268</b>	<b>9,632</b>

- 4.8 The Council was awarded £4.8m (all of which has now been received and spent), over a 3 year period, of Phase 1 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.
- 4.9 A further £1.6m of Phase 2 UK Shared Prosperity Funding has been received in full by the Council for the financial year 2025/26. To date £0.4m has been spent as detailed below:

Project	Award (£000's)	Spend/ Ordered (£000')	Remaining (£000')
Outreach Mental Health Worker	45	12	33
Cultural Offer	85	0	85
Philip Astley Project (PAP)	30	0	30
Navigation House – Homeless Hub	292	301	(9)
Volunteering for all in Newcastle	30	3	27
Discharge Officer	45	12	33
Health Initiative	50	7	43

Homecoming	15	0	15
Natural Environment Project	50	0	50
Street Medic	16	0	16
Brampton Business Development	6	0	6
Honeybox	28	0	28
Promotional Work	15	0	15
Work Innovation Festival	20	0	20
Business Community Connects	17	0	17
Business Enterprise Coaching	33	0	33
Beauhurst Database	10	10	0
Flourishing Keele (KU)	141	0	141
Moving Ahead (KU)	82	0	82
Advanced Digital innovation (SU)	123	0	123
SSLEP Growth Hub	15	0	15
Carbon output calculator	15	0	15
Newcastle Community Connector	32	0	32
Training Academy	87	0	87
Digital Initiative & AI	50	0	50
NSCG Technical Innovation	36	0	36
Project Management	54	14	40
Contingency	140	0	140
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,582</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>1,063</b>

- 4.10 Several projects within the Town Deals and Future High Streets Fund (e.g. Ryecroft Development, York Place and Chatterley Valley) 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 Investments and cash held at the bank on the 30 June 2025 amounted to £4.082m. Interest earned amounted to £0.058m at the close of quarter one. The average level of funds available for investment between 1 April 2025 and 30 June 2025 was £6.181m.
- 5.3 The Council has not budgeted to receive investment income in 2025/26. 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.



## **Borrowing**

- 5.4 External borrowing has not yet been required during 2025/26 to fund the capital programme, it is anticipated that this will be required.
- 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 external borrowing. 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 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 one collection rate was as follows:
- Council Tax – 26.71% of Council Tax was collected by 30 June 2025, compared to a target at the close of quarter one of 24.38%.
  - Business Rates – 31.00% of Business Rates was collected by 30 June 2025, compared to a target at the close of quarter one of 24.38%.
- 6.4 The current forecast of Council Tax and Business Rates receipts and Section 31 grant is shown below:

<b>Tax</b>	<b>(Surplus)/Deficit at 30.6.25</b>	<b>Council's Share</b>
Council Tax	£0.635m	£0.069m (11%)
Business Rates (2025-26 only)	£0.314m	£0.126m (40%)
Business Rates (2024-25 balance)	£2.291m	£0.916m (40%)
Business Rates Section 31 Grant	(£0.001m)	(£0.000m) (40%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3.240m</b>	<b>£1.111m</b>

- 6.5 The deficit position on the Council Tax collection fund will improve during the remainder of the financial year to reflect the inclusion in the tax base of properties being built throughout the Borough.
- 6.6 The Business Rates deficit in relation to 2024/25 reflects a change between the estimated surplus declared in January 2025 and the actual position calculated at 31 March 2025, largely relating to significant changes in rateable value agreed by the Valuation Office during the interim period. An amount to compensate for this is held in the Business Rates Reserve.

## **7. Reserves**

- 7.1 Cabinet approved the transfer of £0.200m from the Business Rates Reserve to the Budget Support and Borrowing Fund in order to fund the work needed to submit the Council's final Local Government Reorganisation Plan.

7.2 Further transfers are recommended from the Business Rate Reserve of:

- £0.100m to the Planning Appeals Reserve to provide for any appeals that may be adverse to the Council's finances.
- £0.150m to the Local Plan Support Fund to provide for costs associated with the final proceeding of the Local Plan and to future plans.
- £0.150m to the Budget and Borrowing Support Fund to increase the Council's financial resilience.



Quarter 1 - April 2025 to June 2025

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	7
Priority 3: Healthy, Active and Safe Communities	23
Priority 4: Town Centres for All	3
	49

Smart Narrative

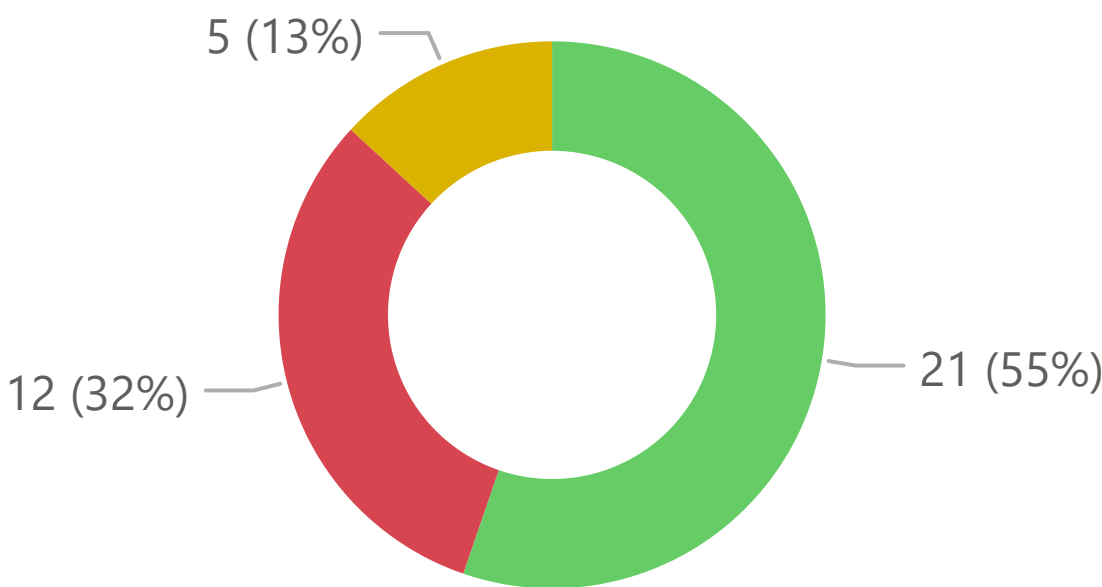
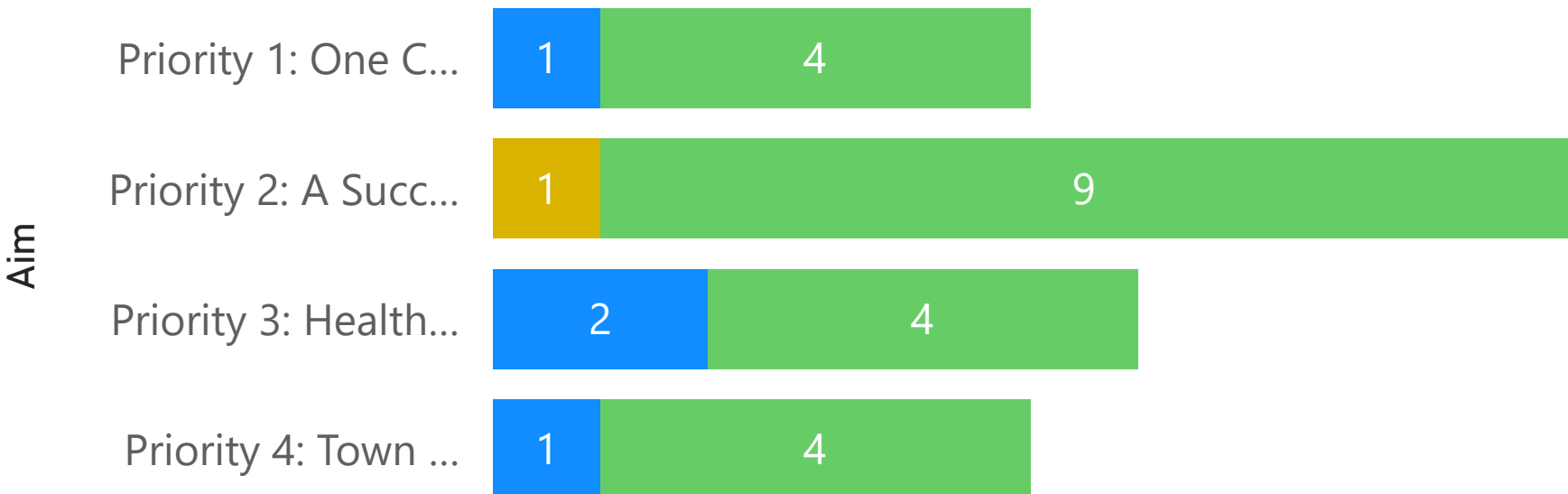
- A total of **32** measures were assigned targets this quarter. Of these, **78% achieved their targets**.
- 11** measures not only met their targets but also showed improvement compared to the same period last year. **5** met their targets but showed a negative year-on-year trend. **4** showed no change. **5** had no historical data available for comparison.
- The remaining **22%** did not meet their set targets this quarter.
- Of these, **3** measures showed year-on-year improvement. **2** demonstrated a negative trend compared to the same period last year. **2** lacked historical data for comparative analysis - these are shown in orange in the status visual.
- An additional **17 measures were contextual** and therefore did not have set targets.
- 7** showed improvement. **5** showed a decline. **1** remained unchanged. **4** lacked historical data for comparison.

**4 projects/actions** have been completed, across **Priority 1, 3 and 4**. **Priority 2** has **2 projects/actions** identified as **not progressing as expected**, with further details provided within this report.

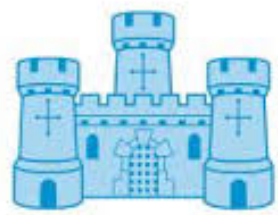
Summary Project Status Split

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

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



● Improvement of Previous Year ● Deterioration of Previous Year ● No Change



Priority 1: Performance Indicators Current Status



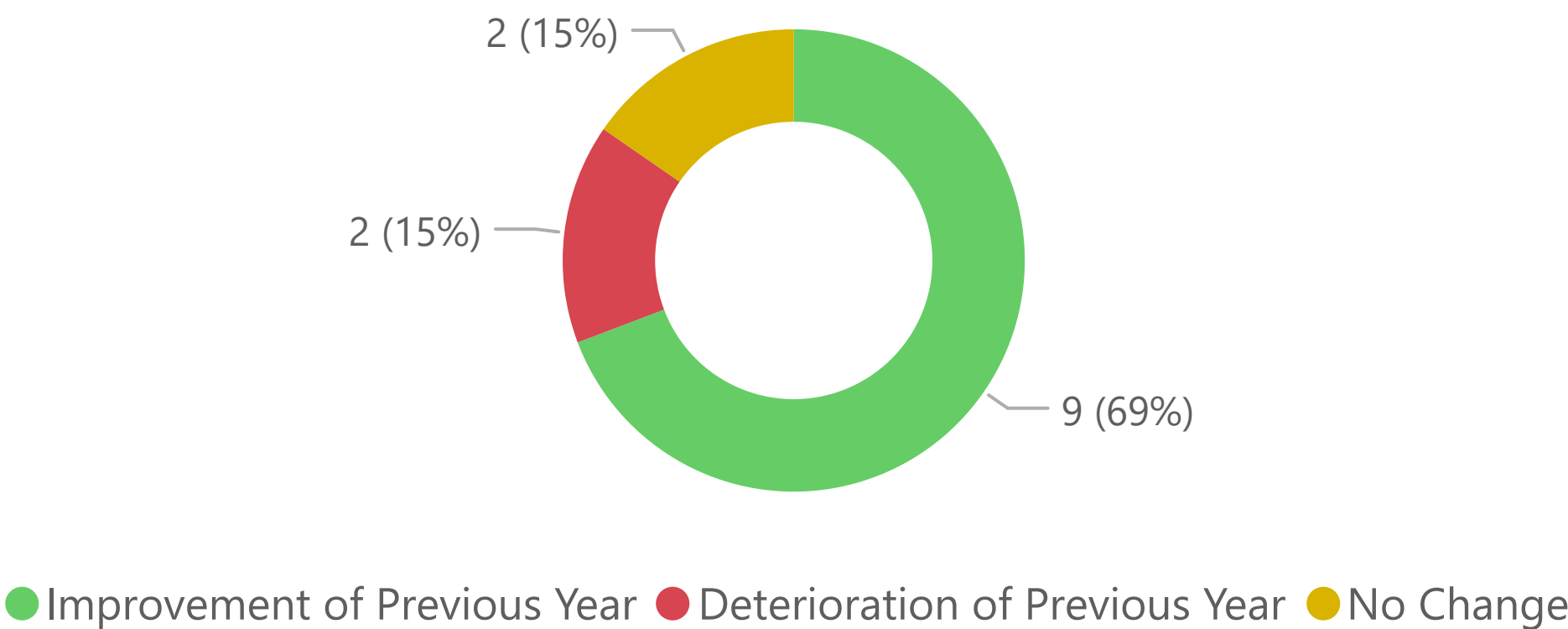
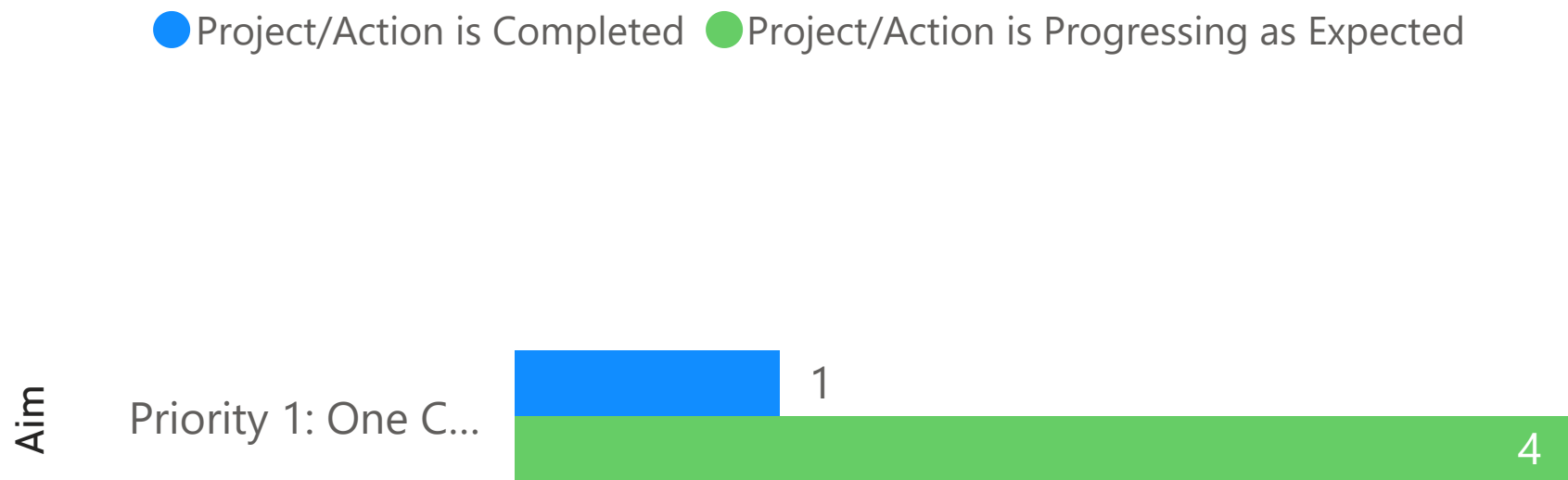
Corporate Objective	Count
Deliver services to a high standard every day	3
Develop professional talent across the Council and provide opportunities for staff to grow their careers	5
Ensure our services are efficient and accessible	6
Ensure strong financial discipline across the Council	2
Total	16

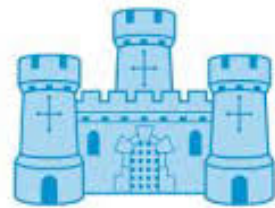
Smart Narrative

- A total of **10** measures were assigned targets this quarter. Of these, **70% achieved their targets**.
- **5** measures not only met their targets but also showed improvement compared to the same period last year. **1** met their targets but showed a negative year-on-year trend. **1** showed no change.
- The remaining **30%** did not meet their set targets this quarter.
- Of these, **2** measures showed year-on-year improvement. **1** demonstrated a negative trend compared to the same period last year.
- An additional **6 measures were contextual** and therefore did not have set targets.
- **2** showed improvement. **1** remained unchanged. **3** lacked historical data for comparison.
- **1 projects/actions** has been completed, with all other project/actions progressing as expected this quarter, with further details provided within this report.

Priority 1: Summary Project Status Split

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



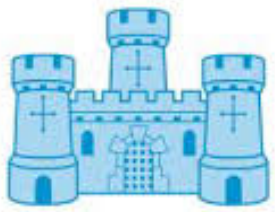


Low Is Good  Per Quarter (Snapshot)  Positive Yearly Trend	ID1.1 - Percentage of food premises that have a zero or one national food hygiene rating	Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
	<div><div><div>FY</div><div><div>2023/24</div><div>2024/25</div><div>2025/26</div><div>Target</div></div></div><div><div>CLlr. David Hutchison</div><div><div><div>Percent (%)</div><div>2</div><div>1</div><div>0</div></div><div><div>Quarter 1</div><div>Quarter 2</div><div>Quarter 3</div><div>Quarter 4</div></div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div></div>	0.41✓	Not Required as Target Met
		Target: 2.00	
High Is Good  Cumulative (Per Annum)  No Change Yearly Trend	ID1.2 - Percentage of category A and B food business inspections completed on time	Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
	<div><div><div>FY</div><div><div>2023/24</div><div>2024/25</div><div>2025/26</div><div>Target</div></div></div><div><div>CLlr. David Hutchison</div><div><div><div>Percent (%)</div><div>100</div><div>50</div><div>0</div></div><div><div>Quarter 1 - April to June</div><div>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</div><div>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</div><div>Quarter 4 - April to March</div></div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div></div>	100.00✓	Not Required as Target Met
		Target: 97.00	
High Is Good  Cumulative (Per Annum)  Positive Yearly Trend	ID1.16 - Percentage of Stage 1 complaints processed in time being 20 working days	Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
	<div><div><div>FY</div><div><div>2023/24</div><div>2024/25</div><div>2025/26</div><div>Target</div></div></div><div><div>CLlr. Simon Tagg</div><div><div><div>Percent (%)</div><div>100</div><div>50</div><div>0</div></div><div><div>Quarter 1 - April to June</div><div>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</div><div>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</div><div>Quarter 4 - April to March</div></div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div></div>	96.43✓	Target Met - (APR) 7 responses were due and 7 were processed on time. (MAY) 9 responses were due and 8 were processed on time, 1 (Leisure) was processed 3 days over SLA date. (June) All responses were processed in time.
		Target: 85.00	
High Is Good  Cumulative (Per Annum)  Positive Yearly Trend	ID1.17 - Percentage of FOI's dealt with in time being 20 working days	Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
	<div><div><div>FY</div><div><div>2024/25</div><div>2025/26</div><div>Target</div></div></div><div><div>CLlr. Simon Tagg</div><div><div><div>Percent (%)</div><div>100</div><div>50</div><div>0</div></div><div><div>Quarter 1 - April to June</div><div>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</div><div>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</div><div>Quarter 4 - April to March</div></div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div></div>	88.00✓	Target Met - Both May and June demonstrated strong performance in handling FOI requests within the required timeframe. With 98% completed on time in May and a 91% success rate in June, the measure has successfully met and gone beyond the quarterly target of 85%.
		Target: 85.00	

Deliver services to a high standard every day

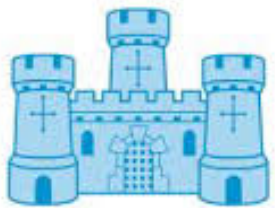
Ensure our services are efficient and accessible





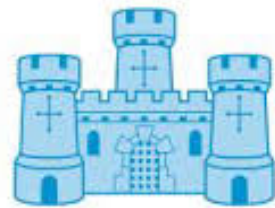
ID1.13 - Average number of days per employee lost to sickness - Per Employee		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
<div>Low</div> <div>Is Good</div> <div>Cumulative (Per Annum)</div> <div>Positive</div> <div>Yearly Trend</div>	<div><div>FY</div><div>● 2023/24 ● 2024/25 ● 2025/26 ● Target</div><div>Cllr. Simon Tagg</div><div><div>Days</div><div><div>10</div><div>0</div></div><div><div>Quarter 1 - April to June</div><div>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</div><div>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</div><div>Quarter 4 - April to March</div></div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div>	2.87!	Whilst absence is consistently above target, June saw another significant reduction with the absence the lowest we have seen over the past four years. The majority of absence was short term with much lower numbers of long term absence than usual. hopefully the reduction in sickness absence shows the benefit of all the well-being initiatives we have been trying to provide for employees. The team continue to undertake proactive work on well-being, with a new private health cash plan and on-site Physio launched in May 2025.
		Target: 2.20	
ID1.14 - Staff Turnover		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
<div>Low</div> <div>Is Good</div> <div>Cumulative (Per Annum)</div> <div>Positive</div> <div>Yearly Trend</div>	<div><div>FY</div><div>● 2023/24 ● 2024/25 ● 2025/26 ● Target</div><div>Cllr. Simon Tagg</div><div><div>Percent (%)</div><div><div>20</div><div>10</div><div>0</div></div><div><div>Quarter 1 - April to June</div><div>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</div><div>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</div><div>Quarter 4 - April to March</div></div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div>	2.62!	Turnover for June reduced significantly in comparison to both previous months and June in previous years. Please see below information on adjusted turnover to account for natural leavers
		Target: 2.50	
ID1.14b - Voluntary Staff Turnover		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
<div>Low</div> <div>Is Good</div> <div>Cumulative (Per Annum)</div> <div>N/A</div> <div>Yearly Trend</div>	<div><div>FY</div><div>● 2025/26</div><div>Cllr. Simon Tagg</div><div><div>Percent (%)</div><div><div>2</div><div>1</div><div>0</div></div><div><div>Quarter 1 - April to June</div><div>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</div><div>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</div><div>Quarter 4 - April to March</div></div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div>	1.75	Voluntary turnover removes leavers who left due to end of FTC, dismissal or TUPE . This is a new measure designed to give context to the turnover figure by showing which of the leavers have left by choice (resigned/retired) so that a more rounded view of retention can be obtained.
ID1.15 - Staff Vacancy Rate		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
<div>Low</div> <div>Is Good</div> <div>Per Quarter (Snapshot)</div> <div>Positive</div> <div>Yearly Trend</div>	<div><div>FY</div><div>● 2023/24 ● 2024/25 ● 2025/26</div><div>Cllr. Simon Tagg</div><div><div>Percent (%)</div><div><div>10</div><div>5</div><div>0</div></div><div><div>Quarter 1</div><div>Quarter 2</div><div>Quarter 3</div><div>Quarter 4</div></div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div>	8.57	Vacancy rates remain consistent, with regular reviews of vacant posts to ensure efficiency. Very few posts remain hard to fill

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



High Is Good Cumulative (Per Annum)  N/A Yearly Trend		ID1.6 - Percentage of Customer Hub requests resolved at first point of contact	Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target	Ensure our services are efficient and accessible
		<div><div>FY 2025/26</div><div>Cllr. Simon Tagg</div><div><div>Percent (%)</div><div>80</div><div>60</div><div>Quarter 1 - April to June</div><div>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</div><div>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</div><div>Quarter 4 - April to March</div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div>	97.00	Since the start of the financial year, all data has been captured exclusively via Anywhere 365. The software provides enhanced visibility into specific call queues and customer demand. Phase two of the telephony system is scheduled to roll out in the coming months, aiming to further improve performance by enabling more accurate routing—ensuring customers are connected to the right service the first time.	
Low Is Good Cumulative (Per Annum)  Positive Yearly Trend		ID1.10 - Time taken to process Housing Benefit new claims/change events (Days)	Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target	
		<div><div>FY 2023/24 2024/25 2025/26 End of Year Target</div><div>Cllr. Simon Tagg</div><div><div>Days</div><div>5</div><div>0</div><div>Quarter 1</div><div>Quarter 2</div><div>Quarter 3</div><div>Quarter 4</div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div>	4.19✓ Target: 6.00	Not Required as Target Met	
High Is Good Cumulative (Per Annum)  Negative Yearly Trend		ID1.11 - Percentage of Council Tax collected	Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target	Ensure strong financial discipline across the Council
		<div><div>FY 2023/24 2024/25 2025/26 Target</div><div>Cllr. Stephen Sweeney</div><div><div>Days</div><div>100</div><div>50</div><div>0</div><div>Quarter 1 - April to June</div><div>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</div><div>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</div><div>Quarter 4 - April to March</div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div>	26.71✓ Target: 24.38	Not Required as Target Met	
High Is Good Cumulative (Per Annum)  Positive Yearly Trend		ID1.12 - Percentage of National non-domestic rates collected	Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target	
		<div><div>FY 2023/24 2024/25 2025/26 Target</div><div>Cllr. Stephen Sweeney</div><div><div>Days</div><div>100</div><div>50</div><div>0</div><div>Quarter 1 - April to June</div><div>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</div><div>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</div><div>Quarter 4 - April to March</div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div>	31.00✓ Target: 24.38	Not Required as Target Met	





Low		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
Is Good			
Cumulative (Per Annum)			
N/A			
Yearly Trend			
ID1.7 - % Unmet demand (number of calls not answered as a % of total call handling volume)			
FY 2025/26			
Cllr. Simon Tagg			
25.00			
Since the beginning of the financial year, all data has been collected exclusively via Anywhere 365. Quarter 1 has seen a positive shift, with unmet demand decreasing by 2% from the start to the end the quarter, indicating the team's growing effectiveness in responding to incoming calls.			
ID1.8a - Total number of digital online transactions			
FY 2023/24 2024/25 2025/26 Target			
Cllr. Simon Tagg			
16,352			
Target: 18,750			
Jadu form usage decreased by 1,550 while Citizen Access has increased by 415 compared with the same time last year. This shift is influenced by various factor; system and customer journey improvements, work to deflect customer to the correct organisation, and promotion of Citizen access.			
ID1.8b- Total number of calls offered into the Customer Hub			
FY 2023/24 2024/25 2025/26			
Cllr. Simon Tagg			
19,911			
Call volumes have continued to reduce, with 6,392 fewer calls recorded by the end of Quarter 1 compared to the same period last financial year. This reduction may be attributed to a combination of factors, including enhanced system functionality, improved service delivery, and evolving customer demand patterns.			
ID1.3 - No. Accidents/Incidents reported (RIDDOR)			
FY 2023/24 2024/25 2025/26			
Cllr. Stephen Sweeney			
2			
Two RIDDOR-reportable accidents/incidents were recorded this quarter, with both cases occurring within the Recycling and Waste service area. This performance is comparable to Quarter 1 last financial year.			

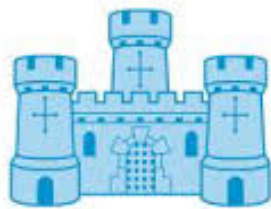
Ensure our services are efficient and accessible

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





Priority 1: One Council delivering for Local People

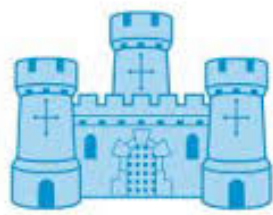


NEWCASTLE·UNDER·LYME  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

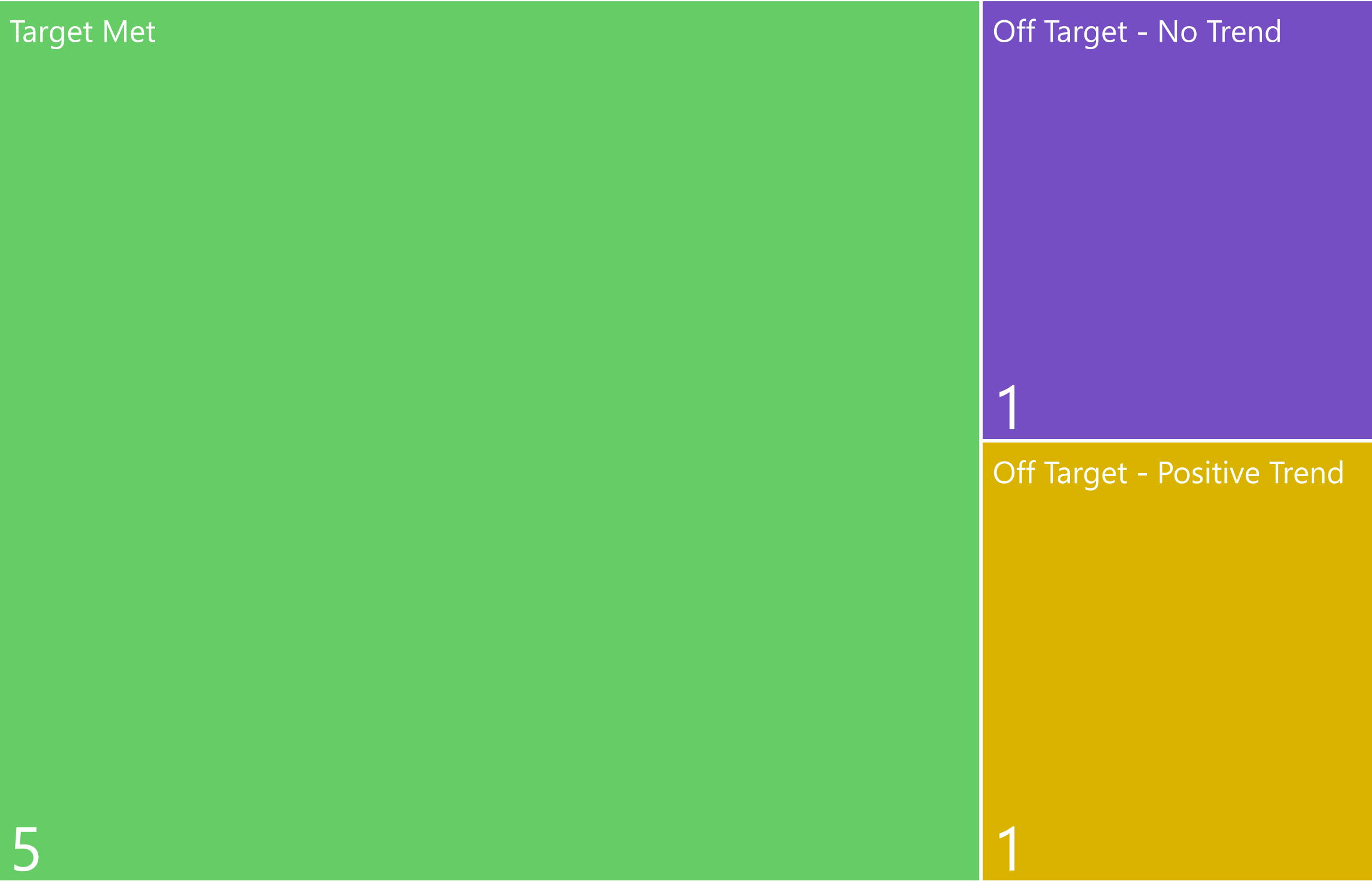
Project Status Split for Priority 1.

Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	Project/Action is Completed
4	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 in place in and progress with particular focus on health and wellbeing and leadership. Plans to align the apprenticeship process with outline workforce plans before this year's efficiency board to ensure talent pathways are in place.
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	The Commercial Board considered the business case for the development of a pet cremation service, this is due to go to Cabinet in July.
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	Communications strategy seeks to ensure that all communities are represented and provided for. The Civic Pride programme looks to support communities working together.
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	Partnership Board is established and productive. A planning event was held in June 2025 which set for the work plan and objectives moving forwards. Better Health Newcastle supports the achievement of health aims and targets through partnership working with Health and Voluntary services. The Authority has engaged with partners including the ICB on developing proposals to address key aspects of health inequality across the Borough.



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.	2
Support the sustainable development of our towns and villages	4
Total	7

Smart Narrative

- A total of **7** measures were assigned targets this quarter. Of these, **71% achieved their targets**.
- **3** measures not only met their targets but also showed improvement compared to the same period last year. **2** met their targets but showed a negative year-on-year trend.
- The remaining **29%** did not meet their set targets this quarter.
- Of these, **1** measures showed year-on-year improvement. **1** lacked historical data for comparative analysis.
- There are no **contextual** measures within this priority.
- There are **2 projects/actions** identified as **not progressing as expected** with all other project/actions progressing as expected this quarter, with further details provided within this report. further details provided within this report.

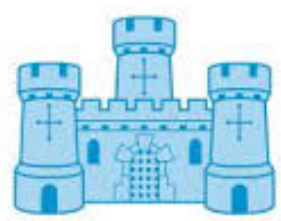
Priority 2: Summary Project Status Split

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

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

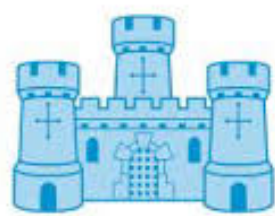


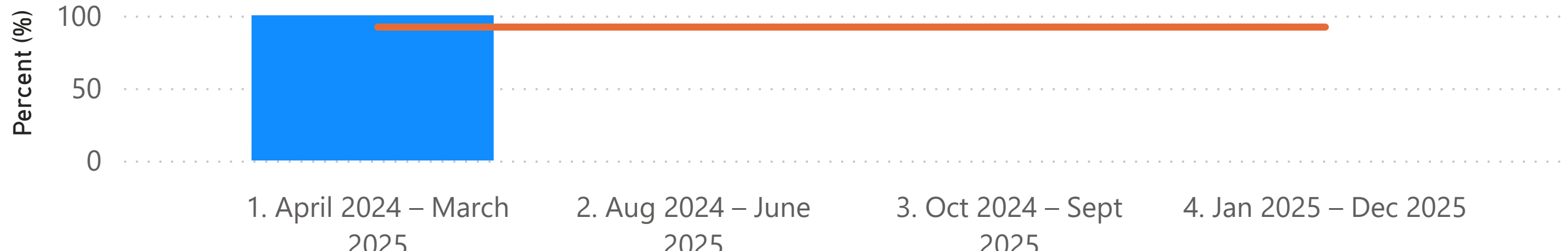
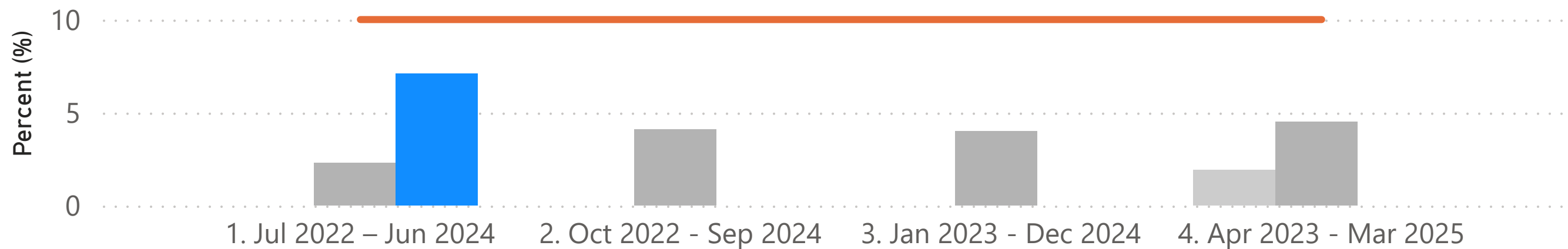

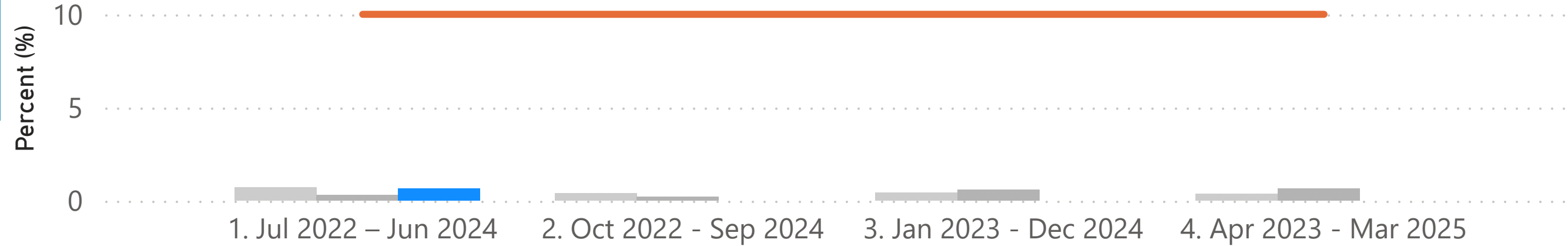
● Deterioration of Previous Year ● Improvement of Previous Year



ID2.1 - Percentage of investment portfolio vacant (NBC owned)		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
Low Is Good  Per Quarter (Snapshot)  Negative Yearly Trend	<div><div>FY</div><div><div>2023/24</div><div>2024/25</div><div>2025/26</div><div>Target</div></div></div> <div><div>Cllr Stephen Sweeney</div><div><div><div>Percent (%)</div><div>10</div><div>5</div><div>0</div></div><div><div>Quarter 1</div><div>Quarter 2</div><div>Quarter 3</div><div>Quarter 4</div></div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div>	8.80✓	Not Required as Target Met
		Target: 11.00	
			A strong and sustainable economy where everyone benefits
ID2.6a - Year to Date - 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)  Positive Yearly Trend	<div><div>FY</div><div><div>2023/24</div><div>2024/25</div><div>2025/26</div><div>Target</div></div></div> <div><div>Cllr. Andrew Fear</div><div><div><div>Percent (%)</div><div>50</div><div>0</div></div><div><div>Quarter 1 - April to June</div><div>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</div><div>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</div><div>Quarter 4 - April to March</div></div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div>	63.70!	Target: 75.00
			Performance in this quarter is lower than was reported previously due to an extremely high amount of correspondence being received for certain planning applications that has taken up a great deal of Officer time. This has resulted in delays in the processing of enforcement complaints. It is anticipated that there will be improvement in the next quarter as the amount of incoming correspondence reduces to normal levels.
			(Blank)
ID2.6b - Quarter in Isolation - Percentage of complainants informed within the required timescales of any action to be taken about alleged breaches of planning control		Current Status	
High Is Good  Per Quarter (Snapshot)  N/A Yearly Trend	<div><div>FY</div><div><div>2025/26</div><div>Target</div></div></div> <div><div>Cllr. Andrew Fear</div><div><div><div>Percent (%)</div><div>50</div><div>0</div></div><div><div>Quarter 1</div><div>Quarter 2</div><div>Quarter 3</div><div>Quarter 4</div></div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div>	63.70	Target: 75.00





High  Is Good  Planning  N/A Yearly Trend	ID2.2 - Speed of major development applications (P151a - 12 Month Rolling Period up to End of Each Quarter)				Current Status		SMART Actions if Off Target	
	FY <span>●</span> 2025/26 <span>●</span> Target Cllr. Andrew Fear				100.00✓		The updated "Improving Planning Performance: Criteria for Designation" document has changed the assessment period for speed of decision-making for both major and non-major applications from 24 months to 12 months - because of this no annual comparison is available this year. Measure shown is the % within 13 weeks or within agreed time - Central Gov metric which measures a rolling time period of 12 months - Newest metric showing up until the end of March 2025	
								
	Timeframe of Measure				Target: 92.00			
Low  Is Good  Planning  Negative Yearly Trend	ID2.3 - Quality of major development applications (P152a - 24 Month Rolling Period - See SMART Actions)				Current Status		SMART Actions if Off Target	
	FY <span>●</span> 2023/24 <span>●</span> 2024/25 <span>●</span> 2025/26 <span>●</span> Target Cllr. Andrew Fear				7.10✓		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 July 2022 – June 2024	
								
	Timeframe of Measure				Target: 10.00			
High  Is Good  Planning  N/A Yearly Trend	ID2.4 - Speed of non-major development applications (P153 - 12 Month Rolling Period up to End of Each Quarter)				Current Status		SMART Actions if Off Target	
	FY <span>●</span> 2025/26 <span>●</span> Target Cllr. Andrew Fear				95.20✓		The updated "Improving Planning Performance: Criteria for Designation" document has changed the assessment period for speed of decision-making for both major and non-major applications from 24 months to 12 months - because of this no annual comparison is available this year. Measure shown is the % within 13 weeks or within agreed time - Central Gov metric which measures a rolling time period of 12 months - Newest metric showing up until the end of March 2025	
								
	Timeframe of Measure				Target: 90.00			
Low  Is Good  Planning  Negative Yearly Trend	ID2.5 - Quality of non-major development applications (P154 - 24 Month Rolling Period - See SMART Actions)				Current Status		SMART Actions if Off Target	
	FY <span>●</span> 2023/24 <span>●</span> 2024/25 <span>●</span> 2025/26 <span>●</span> Target Cllr. Andrew Fear				0.65✓		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 July 2022 – June 2024	
								
	Timeframe of Measure				Target: 10.00			

Support the sustainable development of our towns and villages

Support the sustainable development of our towns and villages

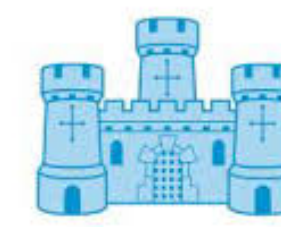


Project Status Split for Priority 2.

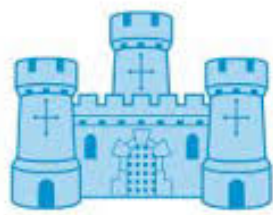
Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	Project/Action is ...
9	1

Portfolio Holder	Service Area	Action	Corporate Objective	Status report	Commentary on progress
Cllr. David Hutchison	1. Sustainable Environment 2. All	Deliver the Sustainable Environment Strategy	Ensuring that the Council's operations are carbon neutral by 2030	✔ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	All Council Directorates now have action/delivery plans for their own areas, with regular update meetings being held with SE staff. A dashboard has been developed for monitoring progress which can be used to update CLT, Cabinet and wider Council members. Sustainable One Council Board has now met twice and again monitors progress on delivery of the SES.
Cllr. David Hutchison	1. Regulatory 2. Neighbourhoods	Secure a successful resolution to the Walley's Quarry odour problem.	Protecting our communities by improving how we use our enforcement powers.	✔ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	<p>Following Walleys Quarry Ltd entering into liquidation at the end of February 2025 and the subsequent disclaimer of the environmental permits, the Environment Agency are using their discretionary power to arrange for steps to be taken to remove the risk of serious pollution.</p> <p>The contractor appointed to undertake the work has now completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- works to manage the accumulation of liquid in the western void</li><li>- the installation of a new drain in the western void to manage any landfill gas and leachate</li><li>- a new access track to the western flank of the landfill site to allow access to this part of the site for equipment and materials</li></ul> <p>The contractor continues to progress with the following works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- installation of an engineered clay bund to the waste flank in the western void</li><li>- engineering works to remedy shallow surface depressions and capping defects on the top of the site</li></ul> <p>Materials (e.g. clay) continue to be brought onto site to undertake the works. The site however remains closed to any incoming waste.</p> <p>In Quarter 1, the data shows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- odour complaints reported to NULBC have reduced further and stabilised at a lower level of 24 (April), 15 (May) and 16 (June)</li><li>- there has been no weekly exceedance of the World Health Organisation [WHO] odour annoyance guideline throughout this period</li></ul>
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 7 of the Borough Tree Planting Strategy is now being planned for delivery in winter 2025/26. Funding bids are being prepared and design work is in progress. Applications for Fields in Trust status are in progress for identified sites to protect them for the future.
Cllr. Gill Heesom	1. Regulatory 2. Legal & Governance	Ensure that there are good homes for everyone and that every citizen has a safe and secure place to live	Ensure that there are good homes for everyone and that every citizen has a safe and secure place to live	✔ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	The Housing Strategy and the Homelessness and Rough Seeping Strategy are both due for renewal in 25/26. Work has commenced to research and develop a new combined strategy. Work has also included preparation for new legislation relating to The Renters Reform Bill and Supported Accommodation Licensing.





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	Quarter one delivery has taken place for the Shared Prosperity Fund schemes. Currently we are in discussions with Homes England for grant support for the town center regeneration projects. Future funding opportunities will continue to be investigated but LGR is limiting these opportunities currently.
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	The Town Deal Board met in May to review the railway station and the shared service hub projects. The railway station project is undergoing a scope reduction / redesign exercise to bring the scheme in within the available budget and avoiding land on the site which will need remediation for coal mines, whilst the shared service hub budget / project has been re-allocated into four separate projects to deliver enterprise units, a community learning hub and public realm / highways improvements.
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	Project delivery continues with the roll out of the Real Time Passenger Information at key bus stops, groundwork for the new housing developments at Knutton and Chesterton continues and the work on the fibre network continues. Plans continue for the housing redevelopment at the Carpark site.
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	On 13th December 2024, the UK government confirmed that Newcastle under Lyme will receive an additional year of SPF funding of £1,582,136 in 2025/26. £292,112 of this allocation must be used as capital. The aim of this additional SPF 'transition' year is to provide a smooth transition from the existing SPF programme to a new, yet to be confirmed, future funding framework. The programme continues with the previously set priorities and but has streamlined the list of outcomes and outputs for UKSPF delivery in 2025-26. The Communities and Place investment priority focuses on supporting place and aiding voluntary and community groups. Under the Supporting Local Businesses investment priority, interventions have primarily focused on innovation and startup advice for local businesses, as well as support for entrepreneurship activities and business startups. The People and Skills investment priority must concentrate on reducing the skills gap in the area and helping individuals move towards the labour market. We are currently running 23 projects which are providing services which address a strong and sustainable economy to ensure opportunities and support are available to everyone to improve their lives.
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 Local Plan was submitted for examination on the 20 December 2024. Local Plan Public Examination Hearing Sessions were held on the week of the 19 May and then further weeks of hearings were held on the 16 and 23 of June respectively. The Council is now completing a number of 'action points' that have arisen during the examination hearings and then will await the interim views of the Inspector on the next stages with the examination of the Local Plan.
Cllr. David Hutchison	1. Sustainable Environment 2. All	Play an active role in the Staffordshire Sustainability Board	Secure a carbon neutral Borough by 2050	✓ Project/Action is Progressing as Expected	the Council continues to play a leading role in the Staffordshire Sustainability Board. the Council is as of June the only authority within the partnership to have completed successfully all ten base pledges. Work is now looking at a new set of pledges which will incorporate sustainability and waste pledges in equal measure.



Priority 3: Performance Indicators Current Status



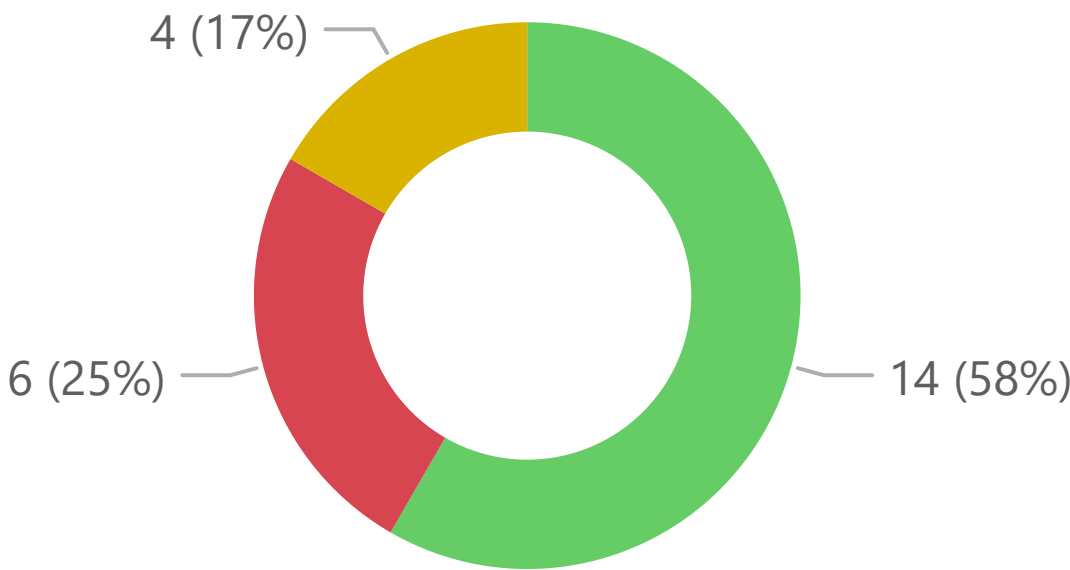
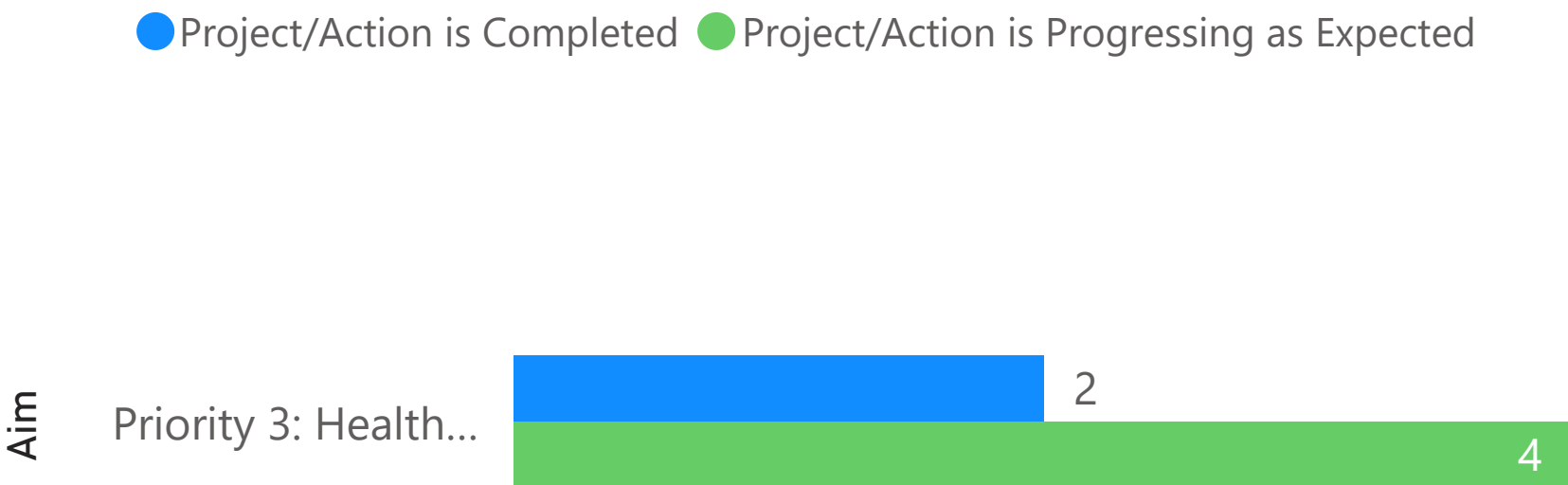
Corporate Objective	Count
Delivering an economic and cultural legacy from the celebration of the borough's 850th anniversary in 2023.	1
Ensure that our most vulnerable residents are supported through the impact of the rising cost of living.	1
Ensure that there are good homes for everyone and that every 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	1
Total	28

**Smart Narrative**

- A total of **14** measures were assigned targets this quarter. Of these, **86% achieved their targets**.
- **6** measures not only met their targets but also showed improvement. **1** met their targets but showed a negative year-on-year trend. **3** showed no change. **2** had no historical data available for comparison.
- The remaining **14%** did not meet their set targets this quarter.
- Of these, **1** demonstrated a negative trend compared to the same period last year. **1** had no historical data available for comparison.
- An additional **13 measures were contextual** and therefore did not have set targets.
- **8** showed improvement. **4** showed a decline. **1** remained unchanged.
- **2 projects/actions** has been completed, with all other project/actions progressing as expected this quarter.

Priority 3: Summary Project Status Split

Priority 3: Qtr.1 Trend Status of PI's Compared On Same Qtr in the Previous Financial Year

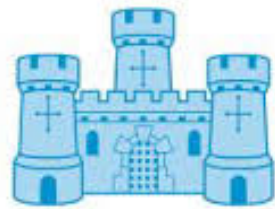


● Improvement of Previous Year ● Deterioration of Previous Year ● No Change





Priority 3: Healthy, Active and Safe Communities



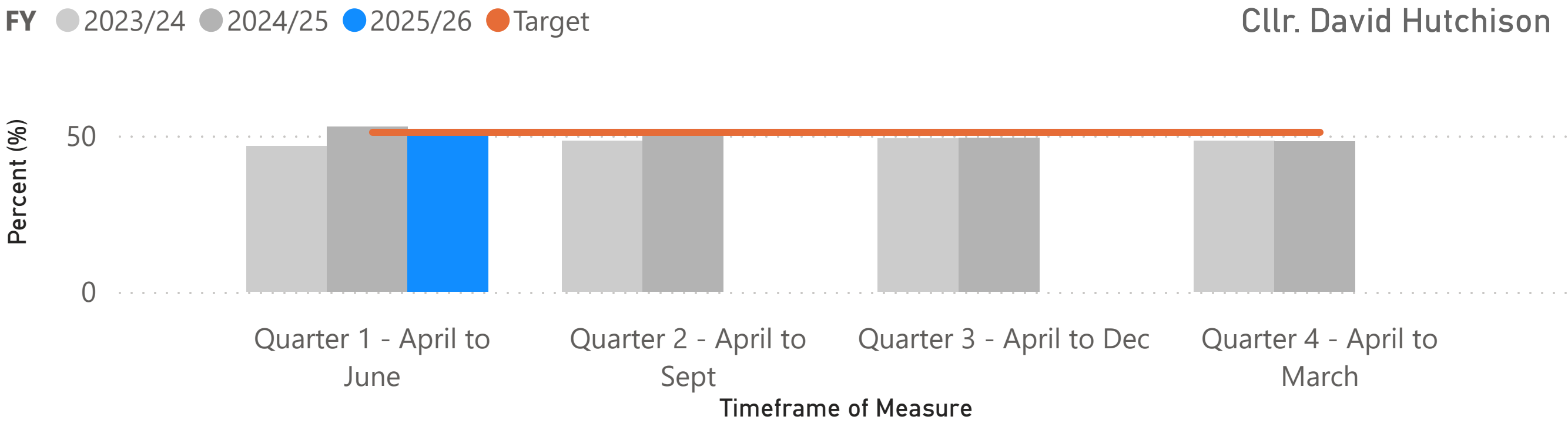
NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

High  
Is Good  
  
Cumulative (Per Annum)  
  
Negative  
Yearly Trend

ID1.4a - Total % of materials collected for recycling and composting verified via WDF

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target



50.99!

Target:  
51.00

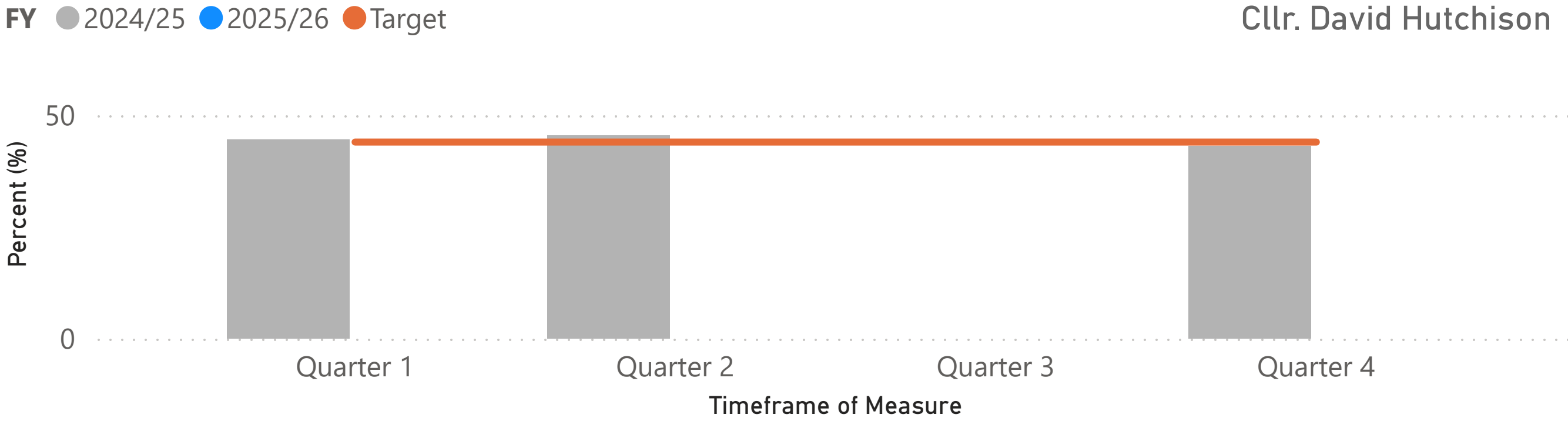
At the end of Quarter 1, the measure fell just 0.01% short of the newly set stretching target. However, it would have successfully met the previous year's target. Performance in Quarter 1 shows a slight decline compared to the same period in the last financial year

High  
Is Good  
  
Per Quarter (Snapshot)  
  
N/A  
Yearly Trend

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

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target



N/A

Target:  
37.00

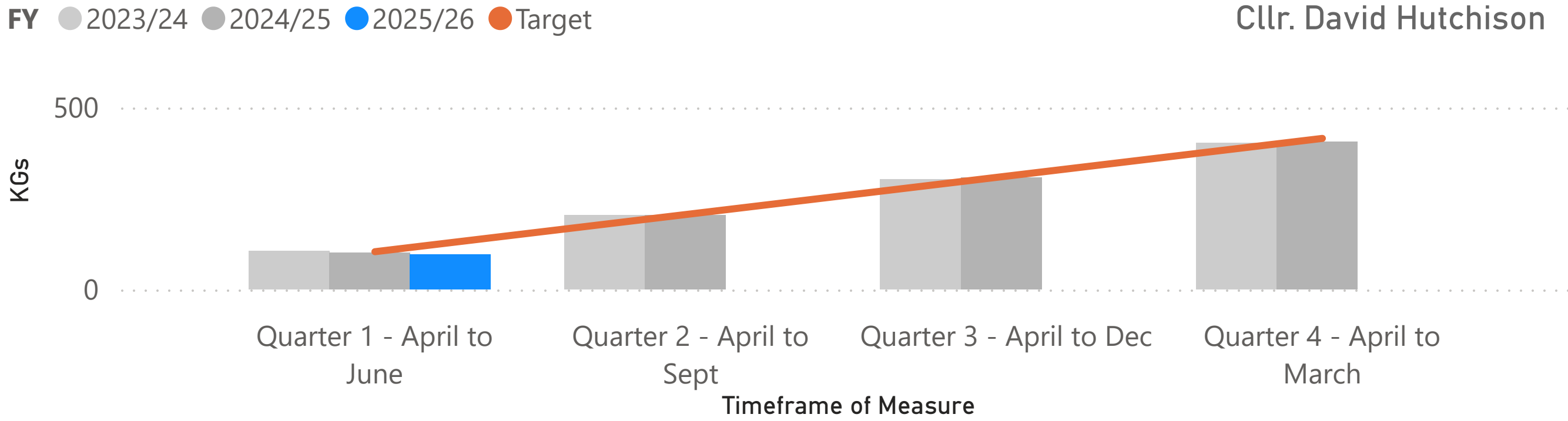
The Food Survey will be conducted and reported biannually, with results to be published in Quarter 2 and Quarter 4 reports.

Low  
Is Good  
  
Cumulative (Per Annum)  
  
Positive  
Yearly Trend

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

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target



96.58✓

Target:  
103.75

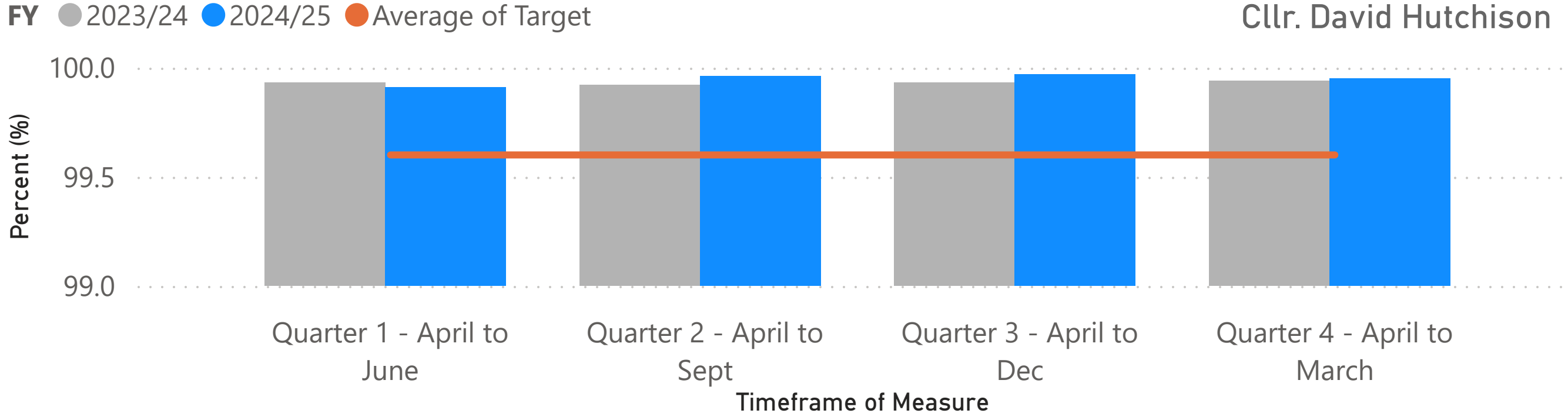
Not Required as Target Met

High  
Is Good  
  
Cumulative (Per Annum)  
  
Negative  
Yearly Trend

ID1.4d - Percentage of Successful Collections

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target



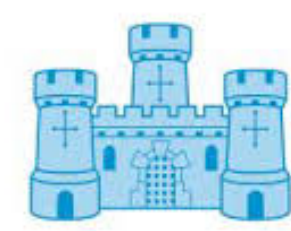
99.97✓

Target:  
99.60

Not Required as Target Met

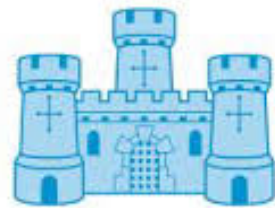
Further increasing recycling rates across the borough with a particular focus on food waste





High Is Good		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
Per Quarter (Snapshot)	ID1.5a - Litter: Levels of street and environment cleanliness (LAMS survey) free / predominantly free of litter		
	FY 2023/24 2024/25 2025/26 Target Cllr. David Hutchison		
		100.00✓	Not Required as Target Met
	Positive Yearly Trend	Target: 94.00	
High Is Good		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
Per Quarter (Snapshot)	ID1.5b - Detritus: Levels of street and environment cleanliness (LAMS survey) free / predominantly free of detritus		
	FY 2023/24 2024/25 2025/26 Target Cllr. David Hutchison		
		100.00✓	Not Required as Target Met
	No Change Yearly Trend	Target: 95.00	
High Is Good		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
Per Quarter (Snapshot)	ID1.5c -d environment cleanlin_Levels of street aness (LAMS survey) free / predominantly free of graffiti		
	FY 2023/24 2024/25 2025/26 Target Cllr. David Hutchison		
		100.00✓	Not Required as Target Met
	No Change Yearly Trend	Target: 98.00	
High Is Good		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
Per Quarter (Snapshot)	ID1.5d - Fly-Posting: Levels of street and environment cleanliness (LAMS survey) free / predominantly free of fly-posting		
	FY 2023/24 2024/25 2025/26 Target Cllr. David Hutchison		
		100.00✓	Not Required as Target Met
	No Change Yearly Trend	Target: 99.00	

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



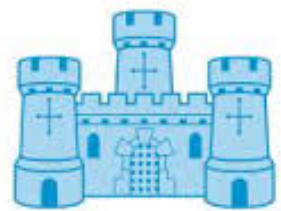
Low Is Good  Cumulative  Negative Yearly Trend	ID3.11 - Number of Fly-Tipping Incidents (as per national measure)		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
	<div><div>FY</div><div>● 2023/24 ● 2024/25 ● 2025/26</div></div> <div><div>Number</div><div>1,000</div><div>500</div><div>0</div></div> <div><div>Quarter 1 - April to June</div><div>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</div><div>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</div><div>Quarter 4 - April to March</div></div> <div>Timeframe of Measure</div> <div>Cllr. David Hutchison</div>		263	Quarter 1 has seen a slight increase in fly-tipping incidents compared to the same period last financial year, with 18 more cases reported. However, other monitored metrics show positive developments—clean-up times have improved and a greater number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) are being issued. These actions are expected to contribute to a reduction in incidents going forward.
Low Is Good  Cumulative (Per Annum)  Positive Yearly Trend	ID3.12 - Average number of days from report of fly-tipping to clear-up (Case closed)		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
	<div><div>FY</div><div>● 2024/25 ● 2025/26 ● Target</div></div> <div><div>Days</div><div>5</div><div>0</div></div> <div><div>Quarter 1 - April to June</div><div>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</div><div>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</div><div>Quarter 4 - April to March</div></div> <div>Timeframe of Measure</div> <div>Cllr. David Hutchison</div>		4.76✓ Target: 6.00	Not Required as Target Met
High Is Good  Cumulative (Per Annum)  Positive Yearly Trend	ID3.13 - % of fly-tipping incidents where sufficient evidence gathered to proceed to formal enforcement		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
	<div><div>FY</div><div>● 2024/25 ● 2025/26 ● Target</div></div> <div><div>Percent (%)</div><div>5</div><div>0</div></div> <div><div>Quarter 1 - April to June</div><div>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</div><div>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</div><div>Quarter 4 - April to March</div></div> <div>Timeframe of Measure</div> <div>Cllr. David Hutchison</div>		5.57✓ Target: 1.50	Not Required as Target Met
High Is Good  Cumulative (Per Annum)  Positive Yearly Trend	ID3.14 - Number of Fly-tipping FPNs issued		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
	<div><div>FY</div><div>● 2024/25 ● 2025/26 ● Target</div></div> <div><div>Number</div><div>10</div><div>0</div></div> <div><div>Quarter 1 - April to June</div><div>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</div><div>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</div><div>Quarter 4 - April to March</div></div> <div>Timeframe of Measure</div> <div>Cllr. David Hutchison</div>		5✓ Target: 2.50	Not Required as Target Met

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

Reduce anti-social behaviour and crime in our communities



Priority 3: Healthy, Active and Safe Communities



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ID3.3 - Number of People Accessing the Museum's collections in person only		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
High Is Good  Cumulative (Per Annum)  N/A Yearly Trend	<div><div><div><div><div></div><div>FY</div></div><div><div>2025/26</div><div>Target</div></div></div><div><div></div><div>Cllr. Craig Skelding</div></div></div><div><div>Number</div><div><div><div>50K</div><div>0K</div></div><div><div>Quarter 1 - April to June</div><div>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</div><div>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</div><div>Quarter 4 - April to March</div></div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div></div>	19,704✓  Target: 15,000	Not Required as Target Met
ID3.4 - J2 Membership growth		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
High Is Good  Cumulative (Per Annum)  Positive Yearly Trend	<div><div><div><div><div></div><div>FY</div></div><div><div>2023/24</div><div>2024/25</div><div>2025/26</div><div>Target</div></div></div><div><div></div><div>Cllr. Craig Skelding</div></div></div><div><div>Number</div><div><div><div>5K</div><div>0K</div></div><div><div>Quarter 1 - April to June</div><div>Quarter 2 - April to Sept</div><div>Quarter 3 - April to Dec</div><div>Quarter 4 - April to March</div></div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div></div>	4,094✓  Target: 4,000	Not Required as Target Met
ID3.5 - Jubilee 2 Customer Satisfaction – Overall Visitor Experience		Current Status	SMART Actions if Off Target
High Is Good  Per Quarter (Snapshot)  N/A Yearly Trend	<div><div><div><div><div></div><div>FY</div></div><div><div>2023/24</div><div>2024/25</div><div>2025/26</div><div>End of Year Target</div></div></div><div><div></div><div>Cllr. Craig Skelding</div></div></div><div><div>Percent (%)</div><div><div><div>50</div><div>0</div></div><div><div>Quarter 1</div><div>Quarter 2</div><div>Quarter 3</div><div>Quarter 4</div></div><div>Timeframe of Measure</div></div></div></div>	N/A  End of Year Target: 75.00	Data not yet available for this indicator, anticipated that survey data will be made available for Quarter 2 report.

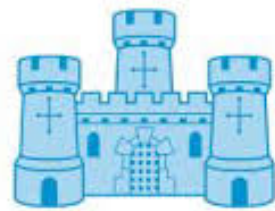
Delivering an economic and cultural legacy from the celebration of the borough's 850th anniversary in 2023.

Support the development of community solutions to local problems





Priority 3: Healthy, Active and Safe Communities



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

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

Low

Is Good

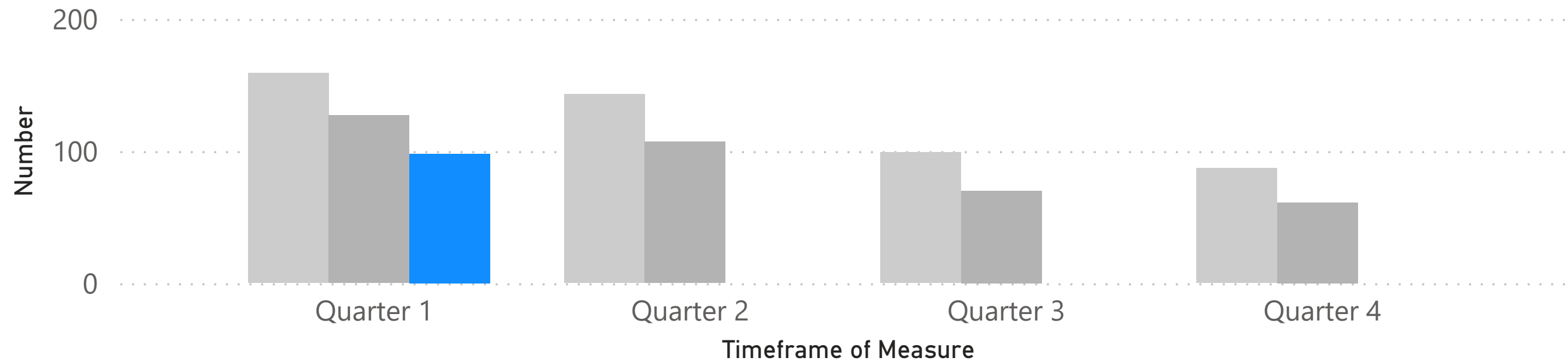
Per  
Quarter  
(Snapshot)

Positive

Yearly Trend

FY 2023/24 2024/25 2025/26

Cllr. Gill Heesom



98

Quarter 1 has seen 29 fewer cases received compared to the same period last financial year. Recent training has been delivered to professionals focused on effectively triaging and assessing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) cases, enhancing response quality and consistency. Additionally, we are actively contributing to the development of a county-wide ASB policy, which will define clear expectations for the public across all partner organisations.

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

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

Low

Is Good

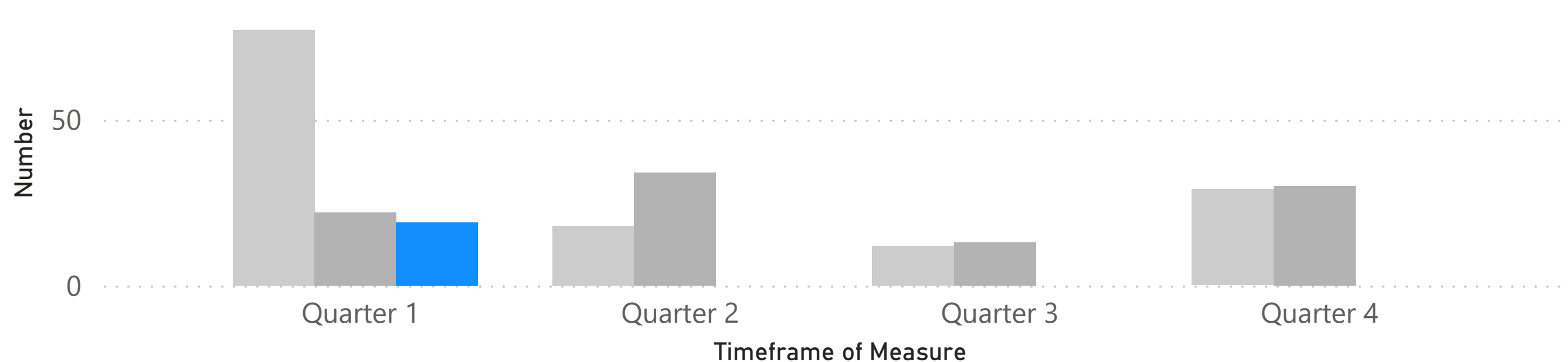
Per  
Quarter  
(Snapshot)

Positive

Yearly Trend

FY 2023/24 2024/25 2025/26

Cllr. Gill Heesom



19

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

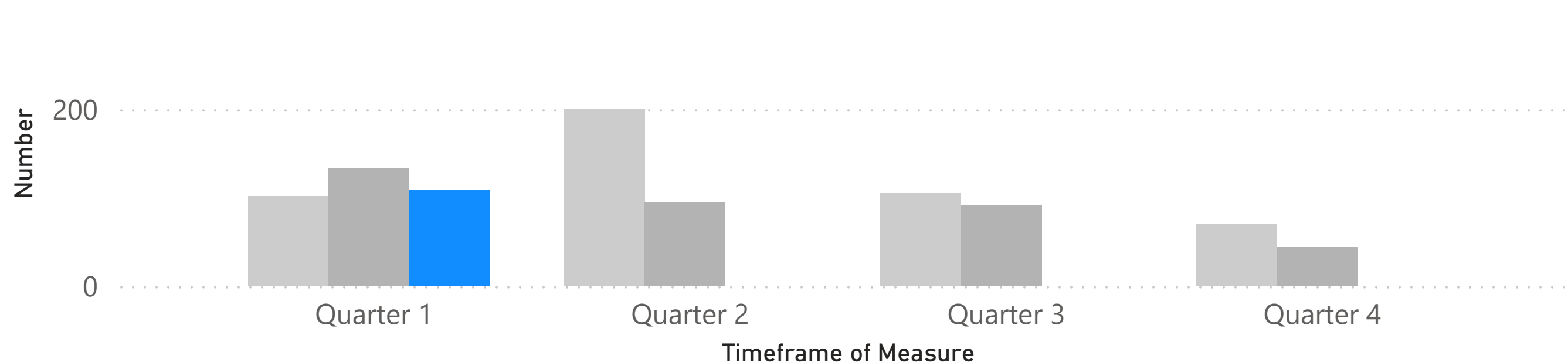
Per  
Quarter  
(Snapshot)

Negative

Yearly Trend

FY 2023/24 2024/25 2025/26

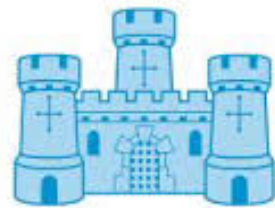
Cllr. Gill Heesom



109

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

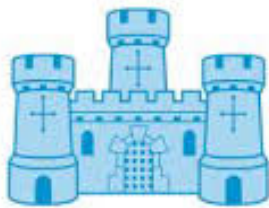
Reduce  
anti-social  
behaviour  
and crime in  
our  
communities



Low Is Good Cumulative (Per Annum)		Current Status		SMART Actions if Off Target	
ID3.2 - Number of referrals made regarding vulnerability by participating organisations at the Daily Hub		35		The vulnerability Hub continues to have a high number of complex cases with a broad range of vulnerabilities. The Hub partners are going to consider putting on a 'Vulnerability' Day to try and raise awareness on the range of issues people are facing with a view to accessing support earlier, we will look at this ahead of the winter.	
Positive Yearly Trend		Cllr. Gill Heesom		Ensure that our most vulnerable residents are supported through the impact of the rising cost of living.	
FY ● 2023/24 ● 2024/25 ● 2025/26		Cllr. Gill Heesom			
ID3.8 - Emergency homeless presentations		125		All Homeless tonight presentations are monitored. A focus on earlier intervention.	
Negative Yearly Trend		Cllr. Gill Heesom			
FY ● 2023/24 ● 2024/25 ● 2025/26		Cllr. Gill Heesom			
ID3.9 - The average number of working days from occupational health referral to completion of works for stairlifts provided by a DFG		145!		Four stairlifts were completed in Quarter 1, with three delivered within target timeframes. One installation was delayed due to a design revision required by the manufacturer, resulting in an outlier. As installation activity increases throughout the year, the overall completion average is expected to improve	
N/A Yearly Trend		Cllr. Gill Heesom		Ensure that there are good homes for everyone and that every citizen has a safe and secure place to live	
FY ● 2025/26 ● Target		Cllr. Gill Heesom			
		Target: 130.00			
ID3.10 - Percentage of non-complex Disabled Facilities Grants completed in 120 days from occupational health referral		66✓		Not Required as Target Met	
N/A Yearly Trend		Cllr. Gill Heesom			
FY ● 2025/26 ● Target		Cllr. Gill Heesom			
		Target: 65.00			



Priority 3: Healthy, Active and Safe Communities



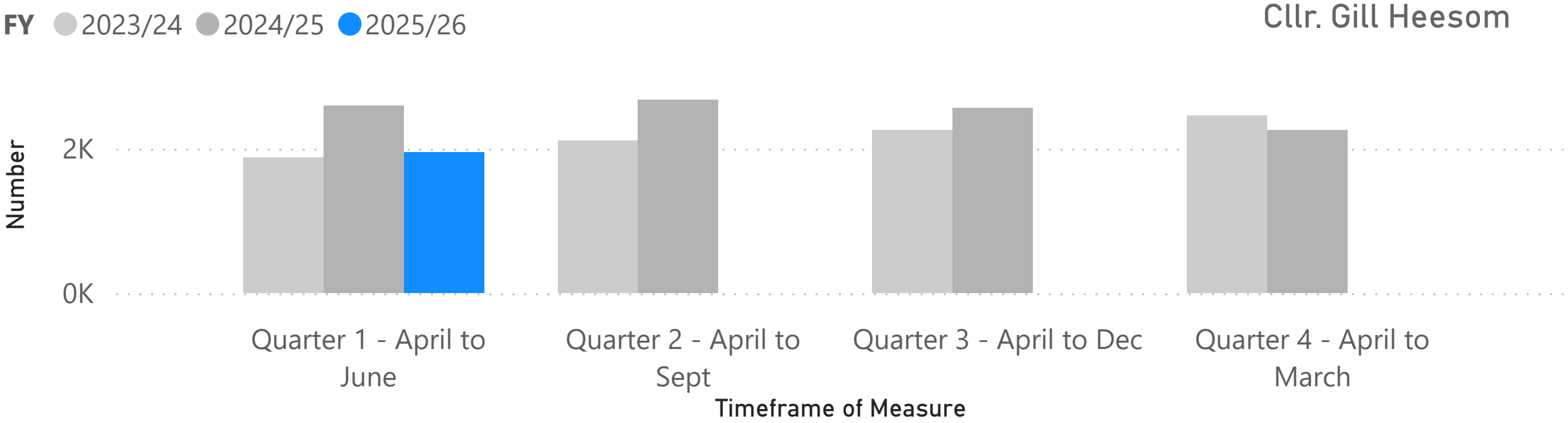
NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Low  
Is Good  
  
Per  
Quarter  
(Snapshot)  
  
Positive  
Yearly Trend

ID3.6 - Live application on the housing register

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target



1,951

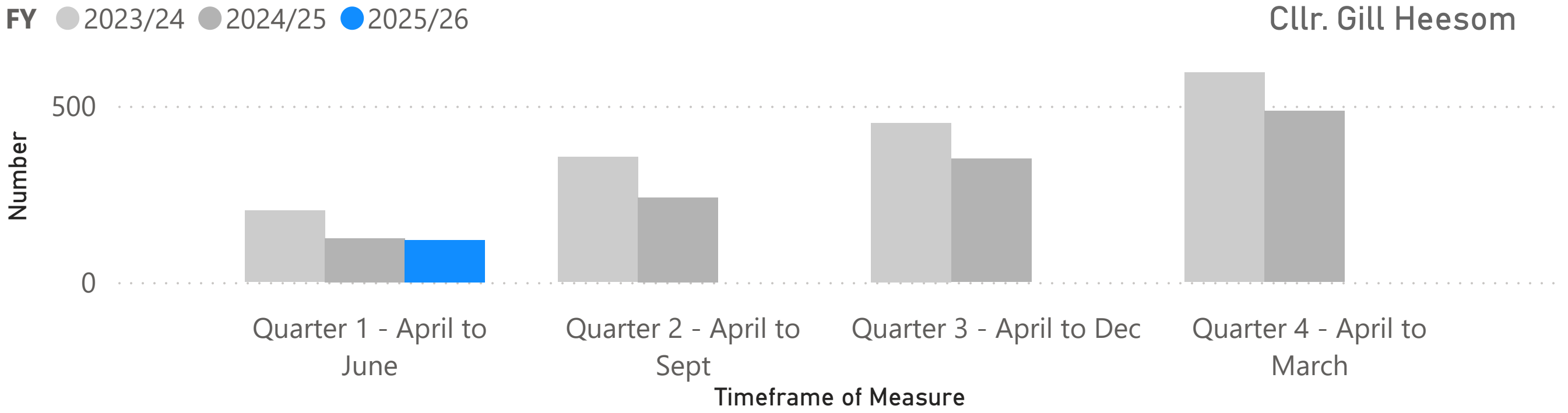
Trend increasing however compared to the previous year shows a reduction. Review module now in place.

High  
Is Good  
  
Per  
Quarter  
(Snapshot)  
  
Negative  
Yearly Trend

ID3.7 - Number of lets to registered providers from the housing waiting list

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target



119

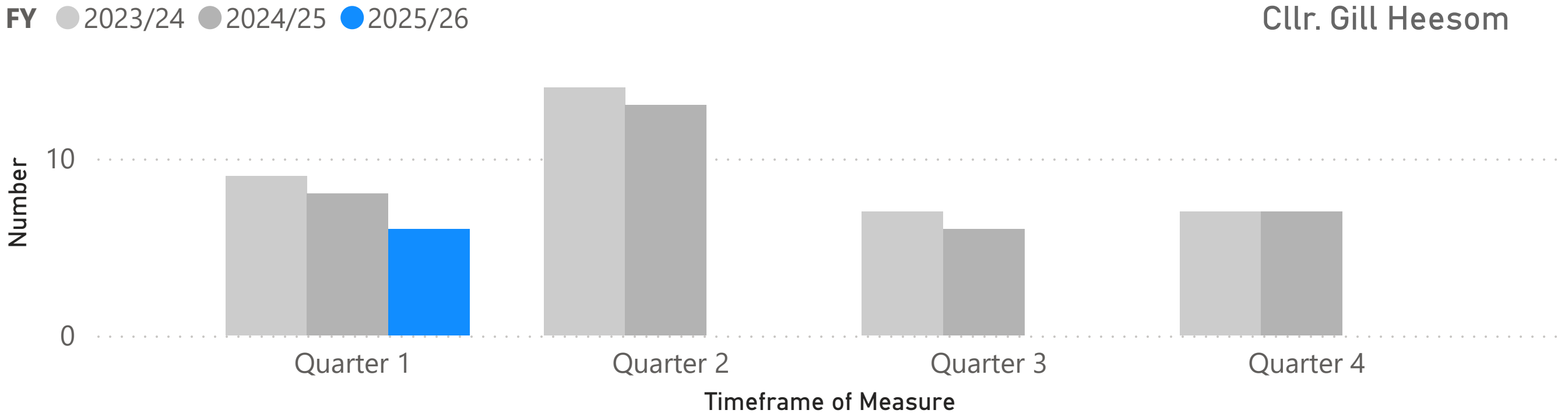
Nominations are monitored through Lettings Forum meetings. Nomination targets (75% for Aspire / 50% other providers)

Low  
Is Good  
  
Per  
Quarter  
(Snapshot)  
  
Positive  
Yearly Trend

ID4.4 - Total Rough Sleepers Verified in Quarter

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target

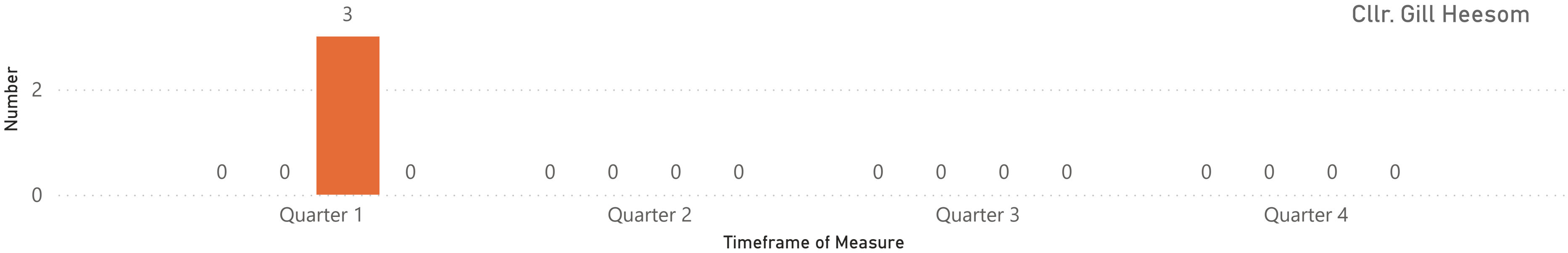


6

A vast improvement from last year's annual count which was 10. This year the count took place 20th November when we verified 7 rough sleepers. This reduction in figures is attributed to the hard work and dedication of the team.

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

● 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 ...

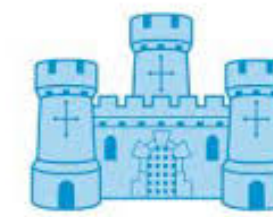


Ensure that there are good homes for everyone and that every citizen has a safe and secure place to live





## Priority 3: Healthy, Active and Safe Communities



NEWCASTLE·UNDER·LYME  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Project Status Split for Priority 3.

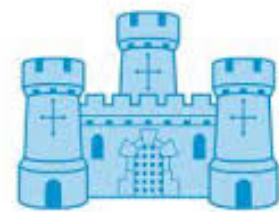
Project/Action is Progressing as Expected

4

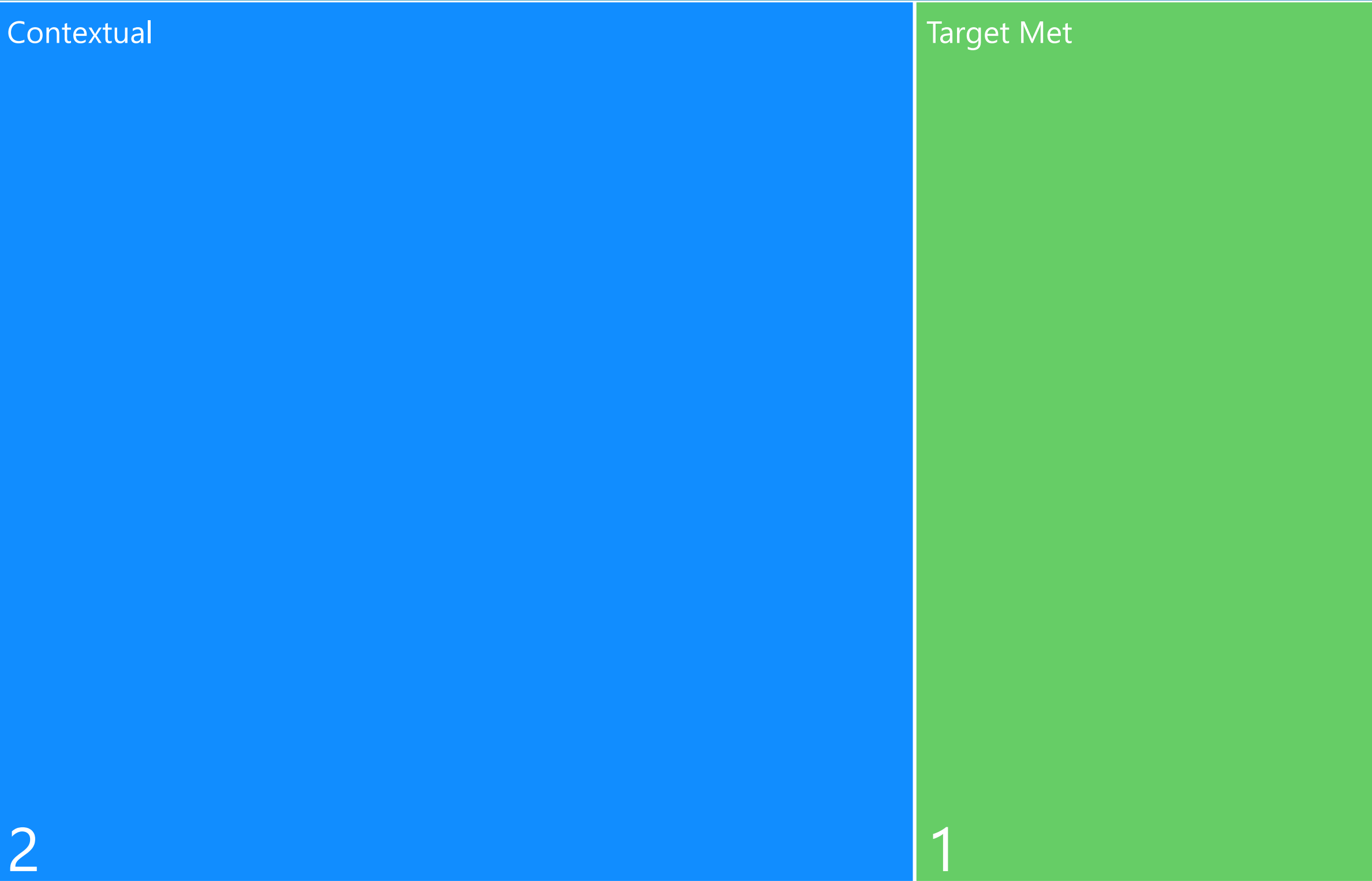
Project/Action is Completed

2

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	The Community Safety Partnership action plan has been updated for 2025/26 in accordance with the refreshed Strategic Assessment. Partnership work with Staffordshire Police is ongoing, with a particular focus on Newcastle town centre. The town centre PSPO is being reviewed with a view to amending it later in 2025, subject to consultation.
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 Completed	Project/Action has been completed.
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	The Council has introduced collections of flexible plastics and film as well as cartons two years ahead of mandatory inclusion. Targeted food waste communications are continuing.
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	Prevent and Protect agendas are embedded in ways of working to support community safety and confidence. Better Health Programme is working to directly positively impact the physical health of our communities. Partnership Board brings a variety of partners together to share and collaborate on core community goals.
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	The Civic Pride initiative is progressing with partners, with events held or scheduled in all neighbourhoods across the Borough to engage with local community groups and volunteers. The Civic Pride Strategy will be launched for consultation in July and the Civic Pride Investment Fund is now open, with the first round of applications closing on 11th July.



Priority 4: Performance Indicators Current Status



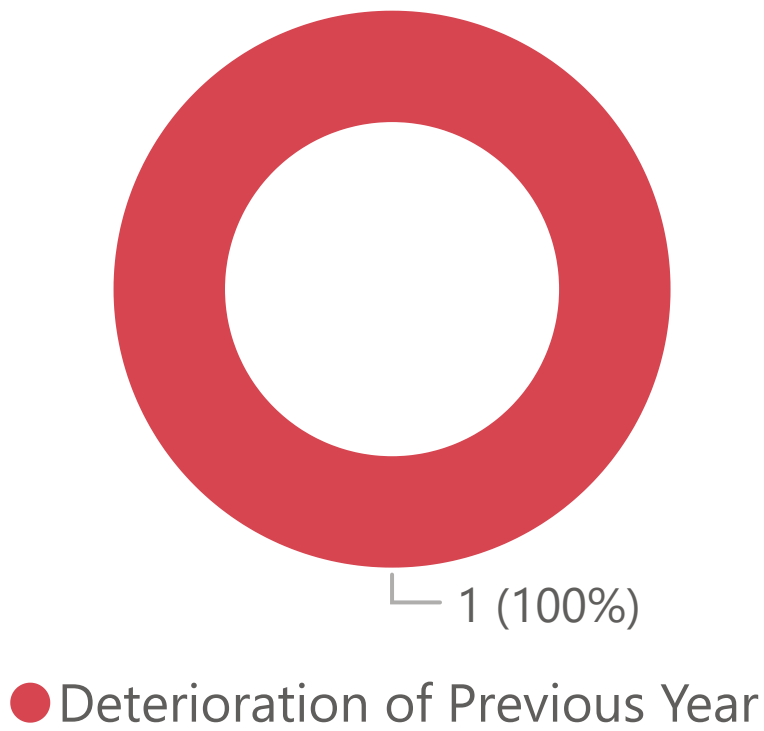
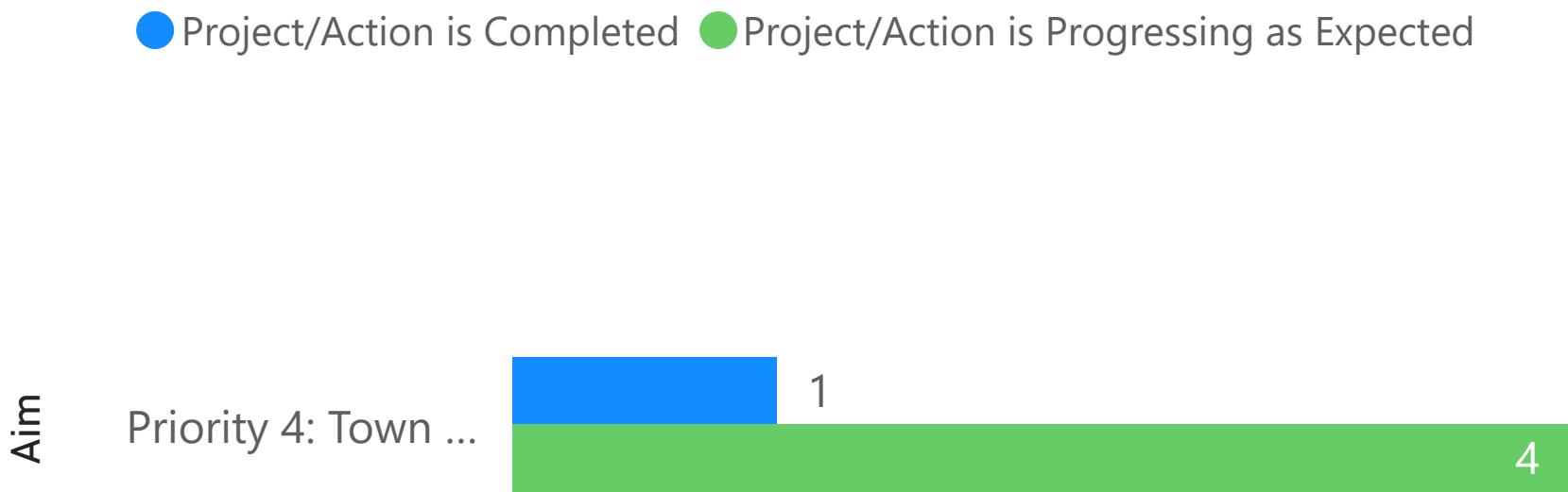
Corporate Objective	Count
Increasing the number of people living, working and using Newcastle town Centre	3
Total	3

Smart Narrative

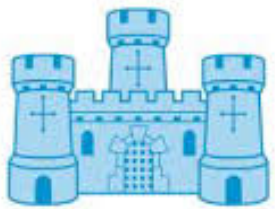
- A total of **1** measures were assigned targets this quarter. Of these, **100% achieved their targets**.
- An additional **2 measures were contextual** and therefore did not have set targets.
- **1** measure showed a decline in performance when compared to the previous year, with the other measure having no historic data to compare against.
- **1 projects/actions** has been completed, with all other project/actions progressing as expected this quarter, with further details provided within this report.

Priority 4: Summary Project Status Split

Priority 4: Qtr.1 Trend Status of PI's Compared On Same Qtr in the Previous Financial Year





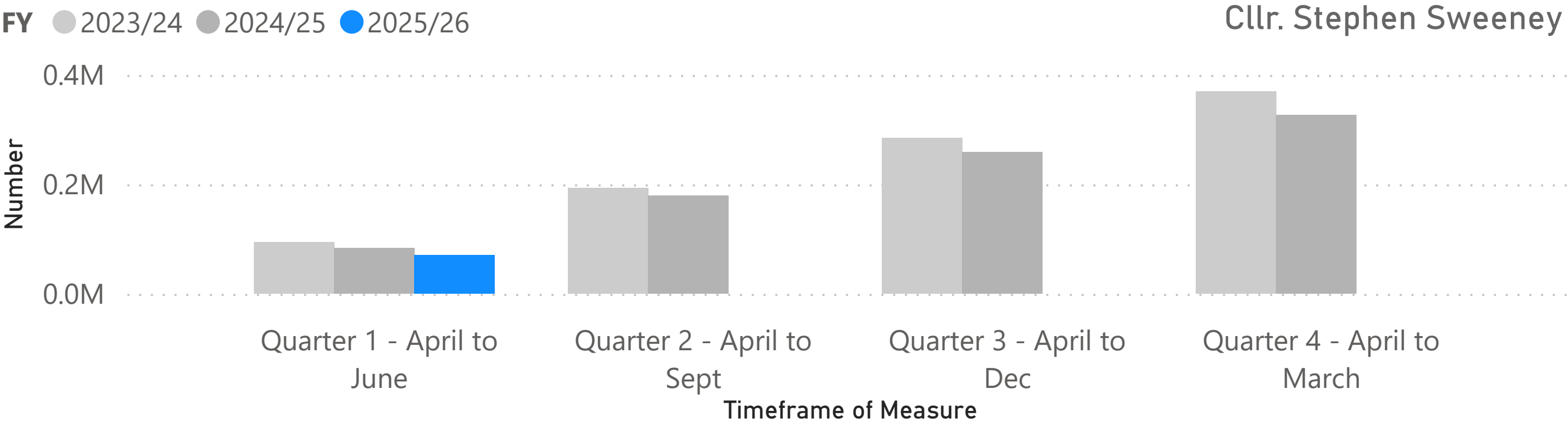


High  
Is Good  
  
Cumulative  
(Per Annum)  
  
Negative  
Yearly Trend

ID4.1 - Car parking usage:-Number of tickets purchased

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target



69,964

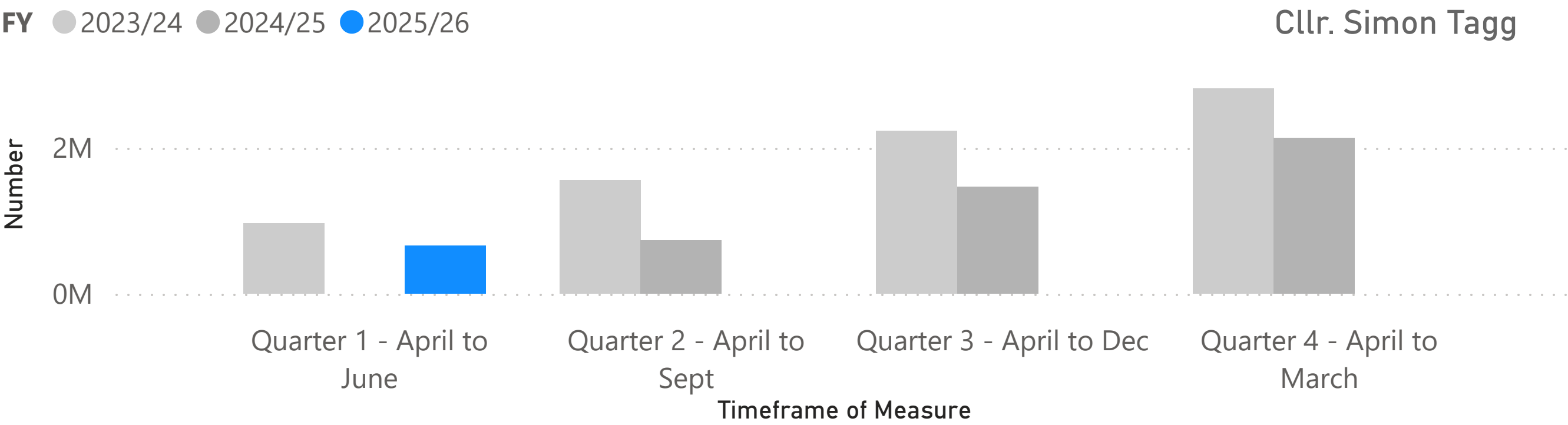
At the end of Quarter 1, 13,636 fewer tickets had been issued compared to the same period in the previous year. National comparator data is being sought to look at trends which are affecting car parking

High  
Is Good  
  
Cumulative  
(Per Annum)  
  
N/A  
Yearly Trend

ID4.2 - Town Centre Footfall - Newcastle

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target



658,293

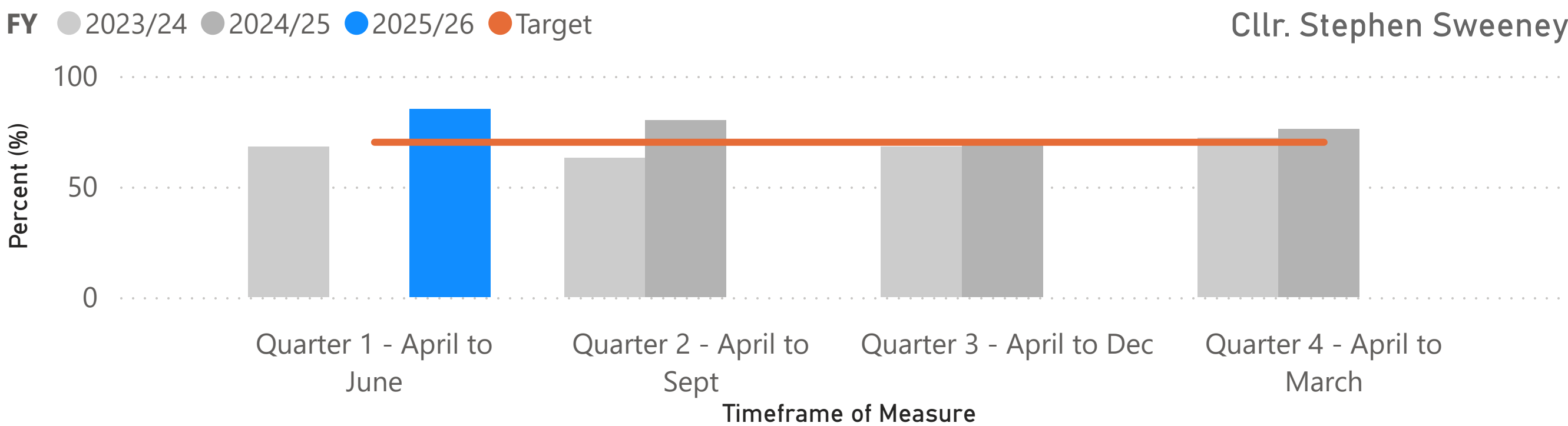
Town centre footfall showed a steady upward trend throughout Quarter 1, reflecting increased visitor activity month by month. There is no historic data available for comparison of the quarter due to limited data supplied from the previous financial year.

High  
Is Good  
  
Cumulative  
(Per Annum)  
  
N/A  
Yearly Trend

ID4.3 - Average stall occupancy rate for markets - Overall

Current Status

SMART Actions if Off Target



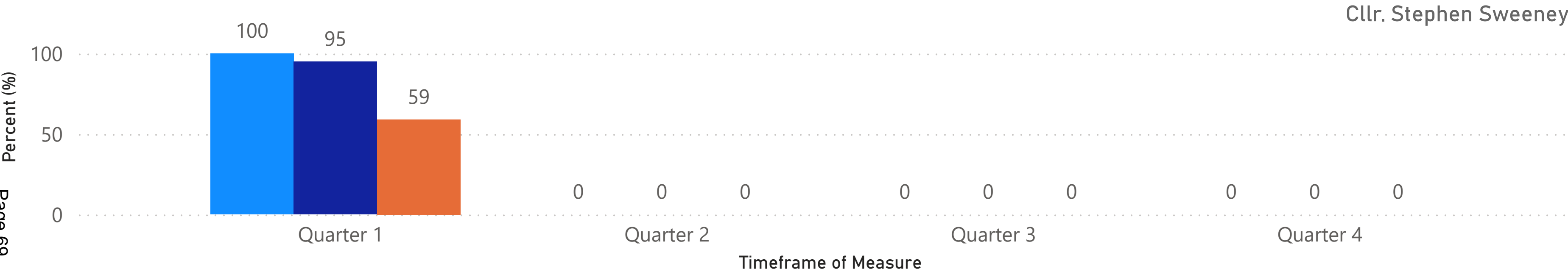
85.00✓

Target:  
70.00

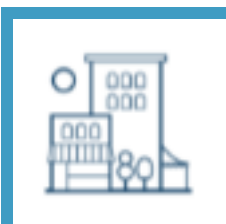
Seasonal fluctuations at the outdoor market follow national trends and warmer weather improves occupancy of the stalls. This is evidenced by the increase in the number of outdoor events held currently. The number of events booked in for the remainder of the year are at levels similar to 2024. NOTE: Monday continues to be a rent free day with no officer on duty.

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

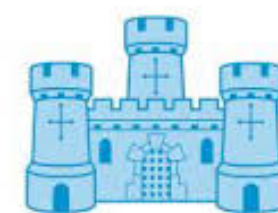
● 1. Specialist event markets - Average stall occupancy rate for markets ● 2. Antique Forum Group Licensed Market - Average st... ● 3. General market - Average stall occu...



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



## Priority 4: Town Centres for All



NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

### 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	Capital and Centric have continued to deliver against the pre-development agreements with planning permission for the site now given. Legal agreements are being drafted to award the construction contracts for the main works and discussions are ongoing with Homes England for grant monies to contribute to the scheme costs.
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	Plans continue for the Ryecroft redevelopment with Capital and Centric securing planning permission. Partners continue to deliver against the pre-development agreement. Hoardings will change on the site in the next quarter. Legal agreements are being drafted to award the construction contracts for the main works and discussions are ongoing with Homes England for grant monies to contribute to the scheme costs.
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	Capital and Centric have continued to deliver against the pre-development agreements with planning permission for the site now given. Legal agreements are being drafted to award the construction contracts for the main works and discussions are ongoing with Homes England for grant monies to contribute to the scheme costs.
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 remaining work to improve the public realm is scheduled for completion in summer 2025. Makers Market relaunched in May 2025 and a programme of specialist markets is in place for 2025.

**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S**  
**REPORT TO**  
**FINANCE, ASSETS & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**4<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025**

**Report Title:** Commercial Strategy Update

**Submitted by:** Deputy Chief Executive and Service Director for Finance (S151 Officer)

**Portfolios:** Portfolio Holders - Finance, Town Centres and Growth, and Sustainable Environment

**Ward(s) affected:** All

<p><b><u>Purpose of the Report</u></b></p> <p>To update Scrutiny Committee on the delivery of the Commercial Strategy as major projects develop.</p>	<p><b><u>Key Decision</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>That:</p> <p>1. The Finance Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee supports the continuation of the current Commercial Strategy approving minor updates and notes progress to date on key projects.</p>	
<p><b><u>Reasons</u></b></p> <p>As previously reported to this Committee the Council has updated the Commercial Strategy for 2025 to 2026 (the original was adopted in October 2019). This report enables the Committee to review the Strategy and outlines the progress to date on the various schemes as a half yearly update.</p>	

**1. Background**

- 1.1 The Council's Commercial Strategy was adopted by Cabinet in October 2019 and more recently updated and approved by Full Council in February 2025. Officers have reviewed the Strategy and made minor amendments including updating the priority areas (which are outlined below). This report enables Scrutiny Committee to review the strategy and key projects as a half year update, with the normal process being that Cabinet adopts the Strategy as part of the overall financial documentation in January.
- 1.2 Our 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. 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.

1.3 The primary objective is to use the Council's resources as effectively and efficiently as possible when delivering the Council Plan.

1.4 Achievement of the primary objective will come in part through the following secondary objectives:

- 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

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.

1.5 Direct investment in commercial property offers a relatively familiar path as the Council already has a diversified property portfolio including office, retail and industrial assets which currently generates a net annual revenue stream.

1.6 The aim of the strategic asset development programme will be to steer and manage development opportunities from the Council's property asset base so as to deliver capital receipts and improved revenue income streams but at the same time securing the regeneration and economic development objectives of the Council. Examples include acquisition and development of strategic town centre sites, housing and industrial sites within the borough. Developments may be undertaken on a co-investment basis with public, not for profit and private sector partners.

## 2. Issues

2.1 The following table shows the highest commercial priorities to investigate within the commercial programme.

Priority Area	Description	Impact
Commercial Waste	Developing the Commercial Waste income streams, building on the existing assumptions that form part of the Waste Transformation Programme. Developing	Increase the number of businesses using the council service and improve the level of income generated.



	improved digital interface for customers to manage their waste requirements.	
Light Industrial	Develop and regenerate sites into light industrial units	Increased revenue generation, servicing demand in the local area and supporting economic development
Fees and Charges	Increasing fees and charges that benchmarking has shown to be currently charged at low rates in Staffordshire	Increase in income generated
Investment Opportunities for commercial return	Continue to investigate investment opportunities that will deliver a commercial return and build up our commercial portfolio. Linking where appropriate to external funding opportunities.	Increased revenue generation, servicing demand in the local area and supporting economic development
One Commercial Council	<p>Delivery of digital screen including a small proportion of time dedicated to advertising.</p> <p>Delivery of a pet cremation service to support those in the loss of their loved companion.</p>	<p>Advertising to pay for the running costs of the screen and therefore supporting cultural events and community messaging in Newcastle town centre.</p> <p>Providing a local dedicated service to those who want a personalised memorial option.</p>

2.2 The Council is working a range of projects that could be considered in line with the Commercial Strategy, the following outline the headline project and indicative timescales for more business case / contract information:

### 2.2.1 Ryecroft (Ryepark)

The Castle Car Park was the first phase with this enabling high quality parking for the town centre.

Capital&Centric are developing plans for the remaining areas on the site. Planning permission has been secured for the Aspire Housing development and the Capital&Centric residential developments. Partners continue to deliver

against the pre-development agreement. Legal agreements are being drafted to award the construction contracts for the main works and discussions are ongoing with Homes England for grant monies to contribute to the scheme costs.

McCarthy and Stone have purchased the area of the site behind the Church with a development of residential development for over 55 year olds. Development is due to start by the end of the year.

### **2.2.2 York Place Shopping Centre (Astley Place)**

Capital&Centric are completed the partial demolition / strip out works to expose the existing concrete frame to be developed into a new commercial and residential development. Capital and Centric have continued to deliver against the pre-development agreements with planning permission for the site now given. Legal agreements are being drafted to award the construction contracts for the main works and discussions are ongoing with Homes England for grant monies to monies to contribute to the scheme costs.

### **2.2.3 Midway Car Park (Karparc)**

Capital&Centric have secured planning permission for the redevelopment of the Midway structure (as with York Place the concrete frame will be retained). Capital and Centric have continued to deliver against the pre-development agreements with planning permission for the site now given. Legal agreements are being drafted to award the construction contracts for the main works and discussions are ongoing with Homes England for grant monies to monies to contribute to the scheme costs.

### **2.2.4 North Street, Newcastle - Commercial/ Enterprise Units**

The former Zanzibar nightclub (Aspire Housing owned) has been demolished. It is intended to be replaced with an Aspire residential development, along with approximately 5 small commercial/enterprise units which the Council will own and manage. Planning permission has been approved for the commercial/enterprise units. Development completion is proposed for March 2027.

### **2.2.5 Meadows Road, Kidsgrove – Commercial/Enterprise Units**

Planning permission is being sought for 3 small commercial/enterprise units on part of a Council owned car park on Meadows Road, Kidsgrove. It is proposed that the development will be completed in Summer 2026. These units will form part of the Council's commercial property portfolio.

### **2.2.6 Disposal of Town Centre Car Parks**

The Council is currently out to consultation in respect of the disposal of car parks at Blackfriars, Newcastle, Bankside/ Garden Street, Newcastle and part of King Street, Newcastle. These car parks are underused and considered surplus since the opening of the new Castle car park. If sold the proposal is that these sites will be development for housing.

### **2.2.7 Disposal of former toilets, Merrial Street, Newcastle**

These disused toilets are currently being marketed for sale. They are situated opposite the McCarthy Stone development site and are considered suitable (subject to planning permission) for a variety of town centre uses.

## **3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Finance Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee supports the continuation of the current Commercial Strategy approving minor updates and notes progress to date on key projects.

#### **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 Commercial Strategy does not create any specific equality impacts.

#### **8. Financial and Resource Implications**

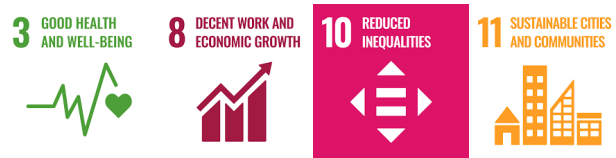
- 8.1 As detailed in section 2 of the report, the Council is working a range of projects that could be considered in line with the Commercial Strategy.
- 8.2 Expenditure of up to £2,649,000 to develop the three schemes (Ryecroft, York Place and Midway Car Park) to the end of RIBA Stage 3, and the submission of the requisite planning applications was approved at Full Council on 14 February 2024.

#### **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 This strategy is intended to ensure that the assets held by the Council support the corporate objectives and service needs. In that respect, the project supports 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**

*We will make investment to diversify our income and think entrepreneurially.*

### **One Digital Council**



*We will develop and implement a digital approach which makes it easy for all residents and businesses to engage with the Council, with our customers at the heart of every interaction.*

### **One Sustainable Council**



*We will deliver on our commitments to a net zero future and make all decisions with sustainability as a driving principle*

## 12. **Key Decision Information**

12.1 The strategy affects more than 2 wards and future investments have the potential to have significant financial implications. This will be subject to further reports which may be key decisions.

## 13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

13.1 Cabinet 16 October 2019 adopted the Commercial Strategy.

13.2 Full Council 12 February 2025 approved the updated Commercial Strategy.

## 14. **List of Appendices**

14.1 Commercial Strategy 2025 to 2027.

## 15. **Background Papers**

15.1 None



# Commercial Strategy

2025 to 2027



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What 'commercial' means to us?	4
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Objectives	6
Culture	6
Developing the programme and our priorities	7
How will we realise our strategic outcomes?	8
How will we make this happen?	8
How does the strategy support our organisational goals?	8
What is the governance structure?	9
How will risks be measured?	9
What are the tools and structures we will use?	10
How will we fund and resource the journey?	10

## Introduction

Our Corporate Plan sets out an ambitious agenda for Newcastle-under-Lyme. We want to help our communities to become stronger and more vibrant and we want to continue to deliver excellent services to our residents. We are focussing on our place-shaping role to create high quality neighbourhoods, facilities, town centres and jobs. We aspire to create new and better homes for our residents and we need to respond to the climate and ecological emergency. At the same time, our funding remains under pressure. Funding from Central Government continues to fall and, as a result, both our Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy recognise the need for the Council to be a more commercial organisation.

This means that we need to improve service delivery and organisational efficiency and find ways to generate more income as a critical component of our financial strategy. Successful delivery of the Commercial Strategy should enable members and officers to make positive choices about what they want to invest in, and where, rather than being forced to make decisions about how, and where, to reduce expenditure.

Therefore, in order to deliver the priorities of the Corporate Plan, the Council needs a new, more agile, innovative, and commercially aware operating model to ensure that, in an environment of continued reductions in central funding, our limited resources are used to leverage maximum value and create a financially sustainable organisation that meets the changing needs and expectations of residents.

## Key objectives and priorities

The Council's Priorities contained in the Council Plan are:

One Council Delivering for Local People
A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough
Healthy, Active and Safe Communities
Town Centres for All

## Vision

Our 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. 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.

This will be achieved through:

- Generation of service efficiencies and new income streams

- We will continually identify and develop opportunities to commercialise existing and new services
- When we need to charge for our services, we will price commercially, ensuring that this covers the full cost of the service unless we have made a conscious and evidenced decision to subsidise
- We will be commercially astute – we will understand the market for our services, and know how to make it work for us
- Effective procurement and contract management
- Prudent investment in income generating assets
- We will all understand and recognise where we have a role to play in maximising the impact of the Council's assets for the benefit of residents and communities.
- Strategic asset development
- Commercial One Council co-ordinates the delivery of services to maximise income generation and achieve best value.

## Strategy outcomes

1. To generate income through commercial activity that can be reinvested in local priorities, services and improvements for our residents.
2. To build strong working relationships with public, private and third sector partners in order to maximise collaboration and generate efficiencies.
3. To embed a commercial culture within the council and ensure that our staff are equipped with the skills they need to operate in a more commercial environment.
4. To support the council in delivering the council plan and growth agenda as a key pillar of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and our goal of financial self-sufficiency.
5. To optimise the council's use of technology and support our digital agenda in order to enable new, more efficient and flexible ways of working and interacting with customers and residents.

## What 'commercial' means to us

Commercial approaches are being adopted by many local authorities. However, the focus and definition of what that means is different from one council to the next.

It is important therefore, to define what we, at Newcastle-under-Lyme, mean by being commercial.

Working commercially is about using our assets and capabilities in the most efficient and effective way to create a net benefit to the Council's finances. It is about identifying and implementing opportunities, which expand the ways the Council, can secure income.

Being commercial is also about being creative and exploring new ideas and activities, which will increase income to the Council. It means that we will need to work in different ways and Council employees will need to develop new skills and behaviours to help make the delivery of the Strategy a success.

Every commercial opportunity will be robustly assessed before it is put forward for formal approval and the Council will develop a range of commercial projects within the programme to balance risks. There will always be a clear link between any commercial endeavour and the Council delivering better services for residents.

Commercialisation is NOT just about making money. It is as much about avoiding costs, through early intervention and prevention, as it is about developing new projects.

This strategy impacts on all services across the Council. 'Being commercial' is a mindset that must underpin the way we all do our jobs.

This means 'commercialisation' at Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and includes all of the following:

- Preventing costs arising in the first place
- Creating social value to enable delivery of excellence in services to our communities
- Early intervention to prevent a cost escalating
- Redesigning our staff structures and internal processes to be most efficient and effective
- Reviewing service delivery models (e.g. outsourced, shared service, company) to be most efficient and effective
- Effectively procuring and managing our contracts
- Identifying new sources of income
- Commissioning the right outputs/outcomes
- Enhanced financial ownership by service managers
- Maximising existing sources of income
- Eliminating unnecessary demand and work
- Insight and Intelligence to make good choices

## Benefits

The successful delivery of the strategy will achieve multiple benefits including:

- Ensuring our resources are stewarded wisely to deliver outcomes for our residents and businesses.
- Enhancing our ability to provide social, economic and environmental outcomes that can help to deliver against all four of our priorities: One Council Delivering for Local People; A Successful and Sustainable Growing Borough; Healthy, Active and Safe Communities; Town Centres for All.
- Developing new income streams to support services and the Council's budget.
- Creating a culture where staff think and act differently to deliver new ways of service delivery to serve our residents and businesses.



- Inspiring staff by embedding a forward thinking, opportunity focused mind-set that can drive wider culture shift.
- Increasing the robustness of the organisation through the creation of a diverse commercial portfolio to ensure long term organisational sustainability.

## Objectives

### Primary Objective

The primary objective is to use the Council's resources as effectively and efficiently as possible when delivering the Council Plan.

### Secondary Objectives

Achievement of the primary objective will come in part through the following secondary objectives:

- 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

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.

Funding and investment will be required for the successful implementation of this strategy. It is important to note that the benefits of pursuing the Commercial Strategy are not purely financial. Becoming a commercially focused organisation means putting the customer at the heart of everything we do. We will actively encourage creative thinking to develop more effective and customer-centric ways to deliver our services.

## Culture

Developing a commercial culture is an important part of this strategy. To achieve the ambitious objectives outlined in this strategy, all participants need to fulfil their roles. Whilst large commercial projects will be important, we are looking to develop a commercial culture across all service areas where, thinking in a business-like way and making business-like decisions, along with being creative and innovative is the normal way of working at the Council.

An embedded commercial culture will enable all our services to reach their potential and it will unlock new and innovative ways of delivering services to residents and businesses in Newcastle-under-Lyme. A commercial culture will encourage us to be creative and entrepreneurial, finding ways to add value to the way we serve residents. This will include behaviours such as challenging current approaches to look for improvements, seeking ways to maximise value for customers and the Council from contracts and looking for growth opportunities.

A culture can be defined as 'the way we do things round here' and the way we operate across our service areas will be ambitious and bold, working in new ways to steward the resources we have in the most effective way to deliver the priorities highlighted in the Council Plan.

## Developing the programme and our priorities

Commercialisation crosses a range of issues therefore two key groups review projects, the first being the Capital, Assets and Commercial Investment Review Group and the second being the One Commercial Council Board.

The Capital, Assets and Commercial Investment Review Group regularly reviews opportunities for capital investment. This ensures that the Council pursues a diverse range of opportunities - different in their potential scale, complexity and nature – to balance the risks of the overall programme.

The One Commercial Council Board reviews new projects or service changes to enable the Council to operate efficiently and maximising financial return.

In selecting the opportunities, consideration has been given to:

- The need to generate a net financial return to support the pressures identified in the MTFS.
- The creation of large-scale commercial projects that have the potential to create long-term income for the Council.
- Development of a commercial culture across service areas, so that thinking and acting in a commercial manner becomes central to the Council's thinking and decision-making.

The following table shows the highest commercial priorities to investigate within the commercial programme.

Priority Area	Description	Impact
Commercial Waste	Developing the Commercial Waste income streams, building on the existing assumptions that form part of the Waste Transformation Programme. Developing improved digital interface for customers to manage their waste requirements.	Increase the number of businesses using the council service and improve the level of income generated.
Light Industrial	Develop and regenerate sites into light industrial units	Increased revenue generation, servicing demand in the local area and supporting economic development
Fees and Charges	Increasing fees and charges that benchmarking has shown to be currently charged at low rates in Staffordshire	Increase in income generated

Investment Opportunities for commercial return	Continue to investigate investment opportunities that will deliver a commercial return and build up our commercial portfolio. Linking where appropriate to external funding opportunities.	Increased revenue generation, servicing demand in the local area and supporting economic development
One Commercial Council	<p>Delivery of digital screen including a small proportion of time dedicated to advertising.</p> <p>Delivery of a pet cremation service to support those in the lose of their loved companion.</p>	<p>Advertising to pay for the running costs of the screen and therefore supporting cultural events and community messaging in Newcastle town centre.</p> <p>Providing a local dedicated service to those who want a personalised memorial option.</p>

## How will we realise our strategic outcomes?

- Act with intelligence and agility
- Embrace transformation and innovation
- Understand that resources are required for growth and change
- Act with integrity and high ethical standards
- Embrace commercialism and maximise income
- Create and nurture commercial and development opportunities
- Act strategically for the long-term benefit of the borough and its residents
- Greater focus on procurement and contract management
- Create a sustainable commercial programme
- Know the market place and act competitively
- Establish a strong commercial culture and invest in staff and member skills
- Drive our digital agenda forward
- Demand more from service providers and contracts
- Ensure we get value for money for residents
- Listen to our staff and customers
- Actively seek and work with partners commercially



- Engage with specialist commercial advisers and professional partners
- Pursue opportunities to generate efficiencies and financial savings
- Dispose of assets when the market is no longer viable
- Extract maximum value from our property and land assets and income streams
- Stop activities that add no value or benefit to customers
- Challenge where services can be commissioned

## How will we make this happen?

- Endorsement from members of the council
- Sponsorship from the Corporate Leadership Team
- Facilitated by a highly skilled commercial team
- Collaboration across all council services and teams
- External specialist advice and support
- Initiatives owned by services

## How does the strategy support our organisational goals?

- Robust financial and commercial service programmes aligned to the council plan.
- Supports the MTFS and closure of funding gap.
- Uses commercial activities to leverage funding opportunities to support the regeneration of the borough.

## What is the governance structure?

- Investment decisions will be taken by full Cabinet.
- Some changes may be required to the Council's Constitution to enable timely decision making as commercial opportunities present themselves.

## How will risks be managed?

- Partner with industry experts and specialists
- Ensure transparency and effective communication
- Rigorous approval processes and project scrutiny
- Following corporate risk management and mitigation procedures
- Effective contract management
- Meticulous due diligence

## What are the tools and structures we will use?

- Exercise statutory powers
- Shared service agreements
- Crown Commercial Service, g-cloud and local framework agreements
- Joint venture partnerships
- Arms-length management organisations and/or council owned companies

## How will we fund and resource the journey?

- Generate a return on investment to fund services
- Make every penny count
- Explore opportunities to share services with other councils
- Maximise existing revenue streams, including advertising
- Effective and proportionate risk management
- Robust strategic and operational planning
- Access to government grants and other funding
- Invest to save

## NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

**4 SEPTEMBER 2025**

**Report Title:** Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy 2025 - 28

**Submitted by:** Service Director – Neighbourhood Delivery

**Portfolios:** One Council, People and Partnerships; Community Safety and Wellbeing;  
Sustainable Environment

**Ward(s) affected:** ALL

<b><u>Purpose of the Report</u></b>	<b><u>Key Decision</u></b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To consider the draft Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy 2025 – 28 and provide feedback in advance of adoption			
<b><u>Recommendation</u></b>  <b>That Committee:</b>  <b>Considers the draft Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy 2025 – 28 and provides feedback in advance of adoption</b>			
<b><u>Reasons</u></b>  To boost civic pride across the Borough and strengthen its reputation as a place which is clean, safe and friendly			

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 In October 2024, the Council launched its Civic Pride campaign which aims to boost pride across the borough and strengthen its reputation as a place which is clean, safe and friendly, with a week of action in Newcastle town centre, followed over the next few months by a varied programme in Kidsgrove, Loggerheads, Chesterton and Holditch, Crackley and Red Street, Audley, Bradwell and Porthill, Knutton and Cross Heath, Clayton and Westlands, Wolstanton and May Bank, Westbury Park and Northwood, Silverdale and Thistleberry.
- 1.2 The Clayton and Westlands event on 11<sup>th</sup> June also hosted the launch of the new £22,000 Civic Pride Investment Fund where elected members were allocated £500 each to support community priorities in their respective wards via a simple application process. The first round of applications saw a total of £5,500 awarded to 5 projects. Further events are planned for the remainder of 2025 in the other neighbourhoods in the Borough as well as a further 2 rounds of the Civic Pride Investment Fund.

- 1.3 Civic Pride aims to create a strong sense of belonging to, and pride in, our fantastic borough. It's a response to feedback from residents and captures a lot of the work that already goes on by the council and its partners – under a unified #PrideInNUL badge – and is also a call to arms for people of all ages to get involved.
- 1.4 One of the council's priorities is to create healthy, active and safe communities. As part of this area of work, the Council is committed to working closely with partners, and local groups, to make a positive difference in every part of the borough. Civic Pride is a great legacy from the Borough's 850th anniversary celebrations and aims to build on the fantastic community spirit and pride shown by residents in 2023.
- 1.5 Cabinet approved the draft Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy for consultation at the meeting of 8 July 2025, which will provide a framework to guide our continuing work in this area and the Council has been consulting our communities and partners on the strategy since this date.

## 2. Issues

- 2.1 At the heart of how we work at Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council is listening to our communities and finding ways to give residents power over their own lives and the neighbourhoods they live in. This is central to our Civic Pride approach in Newcastle-Under-Lyme. Our community is active across our Borough with residents, partner organisations, schools, the college and the university, businesses and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors making a difference every day.
- 2.2 In 2024, Staffordshire County Council adopted the Communities Strategy, reaffirming how important the energy of the community is in setting the direction of how the County Council works and moving into implementation to take work forward. The vision was shaped by engagement and feedback, including stories from residents, partners, businesses and others about what happens in their local communities, including Newcastle, and has been adapted to help shape our strategy for the Borough. Building on and linking with this work, we are now launching a Borough Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy, which will set out the areas we will focus on as we make progress, respond to feedback, and continue to listen to our communities. The Strategy will be a dynamic document, evolving as we move forward. Our priorities will mirror those in the County Council's Communities Strategy and will focus on the Great Places Where We Live, our Connected Communities and The Way the Council Listens, Talks and Acts.
- 2.3 This strategy is the first step of our journey to support residents to achieve the lifestyles and local neighbourhoods that they want to see.
- 2.4 In every part of the Borough Council, our councillors, staff, volunteers and services interact with residents and partner organisations every day. It's important to do this in the right way. We know that when we work together with residents and communities, outcomes for everyone are improved. This is why working with our communities is central to our Council Plan 2022-2026. This strategy is the next step forward for this collaborative work.

- 2.5** The strategy has been developed by listening to what our communities have told us, and hearing from people who live in, work in, study in and enjoy Newcastle. People have talked about what they do to help themselves and each other in the Borough, and what the Council could do differently. This has informed the first iteration of our Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy 2025 – 2028.
- 2.6** A huge amount of work takes place across the Borough Council to improve how we work with communities, from finding better and more convenient ways to provide Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) to residents, to developing new forms of engagement that put residents at the centre. This is the first time we have brought all of this together into a strategy to make sure that this work helps us make progress with our collective vision over the next 3 years.
- 2.7** Integral to this strategy is our Delivery Plan, which sets out the practical actions we will take together with our community under the themes of Great Places Where We Live, Connected Communities and the Way the Council Listens, Talks and Acts. This translates our high level objectives into real actions our residents expect, and will show what difference we have collectively made in the future. We will review progress against the Delivery Plan every year, and conduct a reflection in 2028, taking soundings from our partners and residents to check that the direction is still relevant and delivering the right outcomes as we prepare for any changes Local Government Reorganisation may bring.
- 2.8** This strategy is intended to guide how Newcastle Borough Council works with its communities, how its communities can be involved in decision-making and local service delivery, and to support our workforce and partners. It is to provide clarity and guidance for:
- Residents
  - Our staff and volunteers
  - Partner organisations (through Newcastle Partnership Board)
  - Town and Parish Councils
  - Organised voluntary, community and social enterprise groups
  - Children and young people
  - Students
  - Businesses
- The draft strategy is attached to this report at Appendix 1.
- 2.9** Consultation is in progress with this group of stakeholders to sense check the draft strategy before formally adopting it later this year (2025) subject to the feedback we receive. The consultation is running online for 6 - 8 weeks from July to September 2025.

### **3. Recommendation**

- 3.1** That Committee considers the draft Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy 2025 – 28 and provides feedback in advance of adoption.

### **4. Reasons**

- 4.1** To boost civic pride across the Borough and strengthen its reputation as a place which is clean, safe and friendly.

## **5. Options Considered**

- 5.1 No other options were considered.

## **6. Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 6.1 The Council has a duty to work with partners to deliver particular functions and can engage with the communities of the Borough to assist in shaping service delivery.

## **7. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 It is intended that this strategy will have a positive impact on equality by providing opportunities for all Borough communities to engage in service design and delivery.

## **8. Financial and Resource Implications**

- 8.1 There are significant staff resource implications in consulting on the draft strategy and progressing the actions in the Delivery Plan.
- 8.2 Each service area will need to adapt and flex workplans to enable delivery of the actions, and be mindful of how this fits with other pre-identified priorities.
- 8.3 Some actions also have financial implications which, wherever possible, will be absorbed within existing approved budget provision. Where this is not possible, further reports will be brought forward to explore funding options.
- 8.4 A Civic Pride Investment Fund of £22,000 has been approved in the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2025/26 which invites applications up to a maximum of £500 from each ward member to support community projects which contribute to civic pride. The application form is available on the Civic Pride web page and the first round of applications resulted in 4 projects being approved, and a total of £5,500 being awarded.

## **9. Major Risks & Mitigation**

- 9.1 There is a risk of limited community and partner engagement with the Civic Pride campaign. Efforts will be made to promote the campaign and develop community ownership of local issues, including making funds available for local projects via the new Civic Pride Fund.
- 9.2 There is a risk of limited staff capacity impacting on the Council's ability to drive the strategy and deliver the actions in the Delivery Plan. Efforts will be made to balance competing priorities and support communities and members to take forward local actions.
- 9.3 There is a risk that Local Government Reorganisation could have a significant impact on the sustainability of the Civic Pride campaign in Newcastle. Options to mitigate this risk will be considered when more detail is known about the model of any future Council which covers the Borough.

## 10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)



## 11. One Council

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

One Commercial Council ☒

Providing Information, Advice and Guidance to communities on service efficiencies and commercial opportunities are a key element of the strategy.

One Digital Council ☒

Access to digital services and considering digital exclusion issues are a key element of the strategy.

One Sustainable Council ☒

Supporting communities to be involved in managing green spaces and contributing to the Council becoming carbon neutral by 2030 are a key element of the strategy.

## 12. Key Decision Information

12.1 This is not a key decision.

## 13. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

13.1 None

## 14. List of Appendices

14.1 Draft Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy 2025 - 28

## 15. Background Papers

15.1 Staffordshire County Council Communities Strategy 2024 - 29





# Civic Pride Strategy (Empowering Our Communities) 2025 – 2028



NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



# Foreword

## Mr Simon Tagg – Leader of Newcastle Borough Council



At the heart of how we work at Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council is listening to our communities and finding ways to give residents power over their own lives and the neighbourhoods they live in. This is central to our Civic Pride approach in Newcastle-Under-Lyme.

Our community is active across our Borough with residents, partner organisations, schools, the college and the university, businesses and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors making a difference every day

In 2024, Staffordshire County Council adopted the Communities Strategy ([add link here](#)), reaffirming how important the energy of the community is in setting the direction of how the County Council works and moving into implementation to take work forward. The vision was shaped by engagement and feedback, including stories from residents, partners, businesses and others about what happens in their local communities, including Newcastle, and has been adapted to help shape our strategy for the Borough.

Building on and linking with this work, we are now launching a Borough Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy, which will set out the areas we will focus on as we make progress, respond to feedback, and continue to listen to our communities. The Strategy will be a dynamic document, evolving as we move forward.

Our priorities will mirror those in the County Council's Communities Strategy and will focus on the Great Places Where We Live, our Connected Communities and The Way the Council Listens, Talks and Acts.

This strategy is the first step of our journey to support residents to achieve the lifestyles and local neighbourhoods that they want to see.

Thank you for being involved, and for being at the heart of everything we do.





# Introduction

In every part of the Borough Council, our councillors, staff, volunteers and services interact with residents and partner organisations every day. It's important to do this in the right way. We know that when we work together with residents and communities, outcomes for everyone are improved. This is why working with our communities is central to our [Council Plan](#) (2022-2026). This strategy is the next step forward for this collaborative work.

The strategy has been developed by listening to what our communities have told us, and hearing from people who live in, work in, study in and enjoy Newcastle. People have talked about what they do to help themselves and each other in the Borough, and what the Council could do differently. This has informed the first iteration of our Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy 2025 – 2028.

A huge amount of work takes place across the Borough Council to improve how we work with communities, from finding better and more convenient ways to provide Information, Advice and Guidance to residents, to developing new forms of engagement that put residents at the centre. This is the first time we have brought all of this together into a strategy to make sure that this work helps us make progress with our collective vision over the next 3 years.

Integral to this strategy is our Delivery Plan, which sets out the practical actions we will take together with our community. This translates our high level objectives into real actions our residents expect, and will show what difference we have collectively made in the future. We will review progress against the Delivery Plan every year, and conduct a reflection in 2028, taking soundings from our partners and residents to check that the direction is still relevant and delivering the right outcomes as we prepare for any changes Local Government Reorganisation may bring.



# Who is this strategy for?

This strategy is intended to guide how Newcastle Borough Council works with its communities, how its communities can be involved in decision-making and local service delivery, and to support our workforce and partners. It is to provide clarity and guidance for:



**Residents**



**Our staff and  
volunteers**



**Partner  
organisations**  
(through Newcastle  
Partnership Board)



**Town and  
Parish  
Councils**



**Organised  
groups**  
(Voluntary, community  
and social enterprise)



**Children  
and young  
people**



**Students**



**Businesses**



# Our Vision

Communities are at the heart of everything we do. We will work better with residents and partners to help people get more involved and make a local difference.

<b>Great Places Where We Live (#Pride in NuL – safe, clean, friendly)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen our work with partners to help people feel safer and more included within their neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Help residents get more involved in tackling climate change, take care of our environment and make Newcastle more sustainable</li> <li>• Help people to have better access to our town and neighbourhood centres by working with Staffordshire County Council on a Local Transport Plan</li> <li>• Engage with the County Council and our Town and Parish Councils, community groups and other external partners to understand and work with our communities better</li> </ul>
<b>Connected Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work with and support our thriving Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector</li> <li>• Make it easier for residents to find information, opportunities and connections that help them do their bit and be independent</li> <li>• Connect people of all ages to the right help, at the right time, in the right place</li> <li>• Support people to become digitally included, informed and connected across the Borough</li> </ul>
<b>The Way the Council Listens, Talks and Acts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try our best to engage with residents earlier, more accessibly, more creatively, more consistently and more locally</li> <li>• Adapt our approach to help residents get more involved, and support officers to understand how they can help</li> <li>• Support all our councillors to access the local information they need</li> </ul>





# Engagement Process

Staffordshire County Council engaged with Staffordshire's communities and partners, including Newcastle, from November 2023 to February 2024 using a multi-method approach which involved:

**An online  
residents  
survey**

**A paper  
residents  
survey**

**A dedicated  
partner  
survey**

**Face to face  
conversations  
with targeted  
groups of  
people**

**A social  
media  
campaign**

In addition, the Borough Council continually engages with communities in Newcastle via elected members and the Customer Hub, with our partners in the Newcastle Partnership, through the Public Consultations pages on our website, and through our day to day interactions with the community we serve.



# Feedback Themes

This engagement was crucial in helping us start to understand what matters to our residents and partners, what they already do in our local area, and what we could do differently to help them do more. We learned:

**Community: Residents see their community as where they live.** People consider their town or village as their community. Identity is based in local place. Fewer residents identify with other communities, such as groups or clubs they are members of, workplaces, or places of education, however younger people place a greater emphasis on online communities.

**Most Proud: Residents have pride in their communities.** People are most proud of the friendliness/neighbourliness. The sense that people look out for each other, neighbourliness, friendliness, and community spirit are sources of pride.

**Matters Most: Safety and neighbourliness.** Safety/low crime matters greatly. Feelings of safety associated with low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, along with neighbourliness or community spirit, are the things that matter to people in their communities, along with a clean and well-maintained green environment, and the availability of community groups, activities and events.

**Improve: Infrastructure and transport.** Residents think that better infrastructure would improve their community. Residents identify infrastructure and maintenance (roads and pavements) along with the need for better public transport as the things that could improve their communities. Transport was an important priority, particularly regarding accessing local amenities, and seeing this as necessary for a thriving local area.

**Involvement: Residents support each other through mostly informal neighbourliness.** Residents want to be more involved in local decision making. Residents feel that broadly, people in their community do help them out from time to time, mainly via neighbours helping them with small tasks. This has clear links to the idea of small actions making a bigger difference.

**Done Differently: Residents would like to help out further.** Residents want the Council to communicate more. They are already engaged where they are able, but they would also like to help out further given the right opportunities of additional support. Better information, advice or communication about opportunities that are available are something that would encourage people more. Residents would also like to see the council setting an example, getting more involved and listening to communities.





# The Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy for Newcastle-under-Lyme

We have analysed the feedback and learning from the County Council engagement and considered this alongside our experiences from other community work across the Borough Council.

We have also shared learning with partners via Newcastle Partnership Board and our pilot Civic Pride events, and learned from what they could tell us, which has helped test our thinking.

This has helped us to validate and agree the three overarching and ambitious aims set out in the County Council Communities Strategy for our work with communities in Newcastle. These will help us achieve our collective vision and set our focus for the next 3 years of the journey.







# Great Places Where We Live

## (#Pride in NuL – safe, clean, friendly)

Strengthen our work with partners and residents to help people feel safer and more included within their communities differentiate the objectives somehow.

People told us that feeling safe within their community and connections to other people were the things that mattered to them the most.

We have recognised this within our strategy and will continue to work with partners such as the Office of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner, our Local Policing Team, the County Council and Newcastle Partnership to support these aims.

Help residents to get more involved in tackling climate change, take care of our environment and make Newcastle more sustainable.

People told us that they would like to take a more active role in maintaining their local environment. The Borough Council Sustainable Environment Strategy sets out our vision to become carbon neutral as a Council by 20230, and as a wider Borough by 2050. The County Council Climate Action Fund supports community activity in this area and gives a great starting point. Our teams will work with partners and community groups to identify and provide more opportunities for people to get involved.

Help people to have better access to thriving local town centres and neighbourhoods, by working with Staffordshire County Council on developing a Local Transport Plan.

People told us how important it was to access their local area through well maintained roads and pavements, using a range of inclusive, sustainable and safe transport modes. We will support the County Council in writing the Local Transport Plan which will support the Government's target to de-carbonise the transport network by 2050 and play a key role in helping our communities to thrive.

Engage with our Town and Parish Councils, community groups and other external partners to understand and work with our communities better.

We also know that lots of other organisations understand our communities. It is important that we continue to work together, sharing whatever knowledge and resources we can, to help us work even better.





# Connected Communities

Continue to work with and support our thriving Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector.

A vital part of our work with communities is with organisations in the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector. It remains important that we help the sector to thrive and be sustainable, so this is a key priority within the Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy.

Make it easier for residents to find information, opportunities and connections that help them do their bit and be independent.

People told us that they can find it hard to get information about activities in their community or about how they could get more involved. We know there is a lot of information available, but it can be hard to know which information is correct and up to date. We can build further on great work we have already done such as our Information, Advice and Guidance pages on our website, Citizen Access/MyAccount and our links with communications teams in partner organisations. If we can make the system simpler, we think this could help residents be and stay independent.

Connect People of all ages to the right help, at the right time, in the right place.

A lot of work has already taken place across the Borough Council and with our partners. Whenever people need help we try to link them to support which is nearer to home, and which helps them get on with their lives. This is why encouraging our communities to help themselves and each other is already an important part of our Council Plan.

Support people to become digitally included, informed and connected across the Borough.

We already support people to stay involved with the council through digital channels, from social media and emails, all the way through to digital ways of getting residents views on things. Digital can help us to do more of this, but we know that not everybody wants to engage with us in this way and we don't want to leave anyone behind. However, if we can support more people who would like to, then we can have better conversations together, and they can stay better informed.





# The Way the Council Listens, Talks and Acts

Try our best to engage with residents earlier, more accessibly, more creatively, more consistently and more locally.

People would clearly appreciate better communication and information from the Council. They are also clear on how important their very local area is to them. Across the council we are already engaging with residents in new creative ways. However, we want to make our engagement better every time.

Adapt our approach to help residents get more involved, and support officers to understand how they can help.

Working with communities is already a key part of our Council Plan and we have a long history of fantastic work with residents and partners which was highlighted in our Corporate Peer Challenge report. However, there is more work to do. This strategy will focus on making sure everyone in Newcastle Borough Council understands how their role, and every decision we make, impacts on the Borough's communities – and how we might be able to link up work and make things simpler and better.

Support all our councillors to access the local information they need.

Councillors across the Borough are vital to the success of this strategy. Not just Borough councillors, but county, town and parish councillors too. As local champions who understand the patch but who also understand the strategic work going on, they are the people who can join it all up. We need to ensure they have everything they need to do their essential job.





# Other Key Work and How this Strategy Relates

The Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy is closely related to other major pieces of work across the Borough and County Councils. Many other organisations and agencies are also working with communities differently too, and we will develop our next steps in partnership with them

**Newcastle Borough  
Council – Council  
Plan 2022-2026**

**Staffordshire  
County Council  
Communities  
Strategy 2022-2026**

**Newcastle  
Partnership –  
Workplan and  
Community Safety  
Partnership Action  
Plan**

**Newcastle Borough  
Council Sustainable  
Environment  
Strategy**

**Newcastle Borough  
Council Technology  
Strategy**

**Newcastle Borough  
Council - One  
Green Council, One  
Digital Council, One  
Commercial Council**



# Measuring Our Impact/What Will Be Different

We have been working differently with communities for a number of years but this strategy now gives us our long term vision for where we want to get to and marks the start of the next phase. An integral part of this strategy is the Delivery Plan which sets out what we will do to deliver each of the objectives and has clear milestones and implementation dates for each one. We will review this regularly, but most importantly we will not stop listening and talking to residents and partners about this work. The strategy will guide, co-ordinate and set the terms for everything we do with our residents and partners. It is essential that we continue to review this to make sure residents still feel we are going in the right direction.

We will monitor milestones under each of the objectives of the strategy. These will be reviewed annually but will be especially important at the review in 2028 when we will ask partners for views on progress and reflect on feedback provided by our communities in relation to the following themes:

- **Do residents feel safer in their communities, and feel the highways and transport in their area are improving**
- **Do residents feel better informed about where to find opportunities to get involved, and are more of them doing so**
- **Are residents and partners telling us they feel more engaged and that the Borough Council is more visible to them**
- **Are VCSE partners telling us that our systems are evolving and becoming easier for communities to get involved, with capacity being built.**
- **Is our information, advice and guidance being used regularly and increasing over time**

Long term	Mid-point review	Annually	All the time
This is a 3 year plan, so that we have a vision for the long term	After 1.5 years or sooner we will review progress and update the Delivery Plan	We will review our progress every year to make sure we are delivering what we aim to	We will try to maintain a more consistent dialogue with residents about our work with communities in the future



# Delivery Plan 2025-2028

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## Great Places Where We Live (#Pride in NuL – safer, cleaner, welcoming)

Pillar	Action	Lead Partner	Timescale
Strengthen our work with partners and residents to help people feel safer and more included within their communities	Deliver the Community Safety Action Plan Hold regular Civic Pride events across the Borough	NuLBC/Staffs Police NuLBC/SCC/Staffs Police/Aspire	Ongoing Ongoing annual programme
Help residents to get more involved in tackling climate change, take care of our environment and make Newcastle more sustainable	Deliver Newcastle in Bloom local competitions Support community volunteering in green spaces	NuLBC NuLBC	Annually in June Ongoing
Help people to have better access to thriving local town centres and neighbourhoods by working with Staffordshire County Council on a Local Transport Plan	Deliver Town Deal, FHSF and UKSPF projects Local Plan Digital Infrastructure Local Transport Plan	NuLBC and Town Deal Boards NuLBC NuLBC SCC	2025 – 2028 2025 Ongoing Ongoing
Engage with our Town and Parish Councils, community groups and other external partners to understand and work with our communities better	Deliver Placemaking Programme Action Plan Promote Civic Pride in Newcastle-under-Lyme	NuL BID/NuLBC Newcastle Partnership Board/ elected members/Town and Parish Councils/Support Staffordshire	Ongoing Ongoing



# Delivery Plan 2025-2028

## Connected Communities

Pillar	Action	Lead Partner	Timescale
Continue to work with and support our thriving Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector	Host Newcastle Partnership Board meetings Facilitate Newcastle Partnership Board workshop to identify priorities and update workplan	NuLBC NuLBC/Newcastle Partnership Board	Bi-monthly meeting June – October 2025
Make it easier for residents to find information, opportunities and connections that help them do their bit and be independent	Continue to develop the Information, Advice and Guidance pages on the website	NuLBC	Ongoing
Connect people of all ages to the right help, at the right time, in the right place	Support Staffordshire County Council Supportive Communities programme	SCC	Launched in April 2025
Support people to become digitally informed, included and connected across the Borough	Support Staffordshire County Council Supportive Communities Programme	SCC	Launched in April 2025



# Delivery Plan 2025-2028

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## The Way the Council Listens, Talks and Acts

Pillar	Action	Lead Partner	Timescale
Try our best to engage with residents earlier, more accessibly, more creatively, more consistently and more locally	Programme of "Ask the Leader" digital broadcasts Programme of face to face engagement events as part of Civic Pride days across the Borough Online engagement survey Civic Pride Online Community Panel	NuLBC NuLBC SCC/NuLBC NuLBC	Launch in July 2025 Launched in January 2025 Launched in January 2025 Launch in July 2025
Adapt our approach to help residents get more involved and support officers to understand how they can help	Regular feature in Team Talk and CastleNews Volunteering Scheme	NuLBC NuLBC	Ongoing Ongoing
Support all our councillors to access the local information they need	Members Area on Connexus	NuLBC	Ongoing





**Additionally, each Service of the Council will progress the following initiatives:**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Policy/Strategy</b>	<b>Action/Project</b>	<b>Communications</b>
Sustainable Environment	Grassland/Tree Management	Lyme Park Countryside Park; greenspace trail	Waste minimisation campaign
Planning	Planning policy and planning application decisions (healthy and vibrant town centres/protect built heritage and open spaces)	Work with property and land owners to add value to development proposals; use building control powers to ensure safety/accessibility and facilitate aesthetic improvements	Engage with communities on Local Plan proposals via road shows and online consultation
Commercial Delivery	Strategy for future cremated remains burial (Bradwell Crematorium extension)	Digital hubs in Community Centres; Knutton Village Hall	Town Deal newsletters; bereavement services customer information (memorial safety/tribute removal)
Regulatory	Partnership approach to supporting vulnerable people	Navigation House Hub	Energy efficiency/Staffordshire Warmer Homes campaigns
Legal and Governance	Governance support for town and parish councils	Civic and mayoral events/support for town centre enforcement	Promotion of local democracy to young people/promotion of social value procurement



Service	Policy/Strategy	Action/Project	Communications
Strategy, People and Performance	Council Plan to deliver community priorities and facilitate co-production of services	Better Health programme	Social Media campaign to enable improved interaction
Information Technology	Technology Strategy to deliver services to residents digitally	CRM/Customer Portal to improve resident access and communication	Promote digital connectivity to reduce digital divide
Finance	Capital Strategy to support community benefit and priorities	Setting budget to keep Council Tax low and support community priorities	Budget consultation for residents to have their say
Neighbourhood Delivery	Mobile Multi Functional operating model	PSPO enforcement/Great British Spring Clean/Safe Space	Publicity on enforcement successes



## NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

4<sup>th</sup> September 2025

**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

<b><u>Purpose of the Report</u></b>	<b><u>Key Decision</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To update Scrutiny Committee on the Town Deal and Future High Street Funds projects.	
<b><u>Recommendation</u></b>  That:-  <b>1. Scrutiny Committee notes this report on the delivery of the Town Deal and Future High Street Funds projects.</b>	
<b><u>Reasons</u></b>  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 across this programme has now completed and the fund is spent. The current (and final) position regarding each is as follows:

##### **2.1.1 Market improvements**

Works to the digital screen, benching and planters were completed by the end of August.

### 2.1.2 Astley Place

Capital&Centric are in the final stages of the procurement of the contractor for the works for a commencement in October. Completion is expected by the end of 2026.



Part of the new square created within the development will be a new small scale music venue which will be supported by Joules Brewery and a newly created CIC, with the aim of hiring out the facility for new and upcoming music acts, exercise classes, performance activities and art-based functions.

## RyePark

### 2.1.3 Castle Car Park

The new car park has now opened and is fully operational and is now being used regularly by visitors to the Town Centre.

### 2.1.4 McCarthy and Stone Residential Development

McCarthy and Stone's planning application was approved by the planning committee at its April 25 meeting. It is now anticipated that the works will commence in the autumn of 2025 with completion in later 2026 at the same time as the Capital&Centric works.





### 2.1.5 Ryepark

Capital&Centric are in the final stages of procurement of the contractor for the works. The first stages of the residential elements for Aspire and Capital&Centric will commence in October of 2025 and be complete by late 2026. The remainder of the site works will follow on accordingly. Some initial advance works will commence in early September – hoarding and earth / levels works.



## 2.2 Newcastle Town Deal

### 2.2.1 Karparc

As with the previous schemes Capital&Centric are in the final stages of procuring a contractor for the works. Works are expected to start in the summer of 2025 and be completed by the summer of 2027.



### 2.2.2 Astley Performing Arts Centre

This Centre is now open and operational.

### 2.2.3 Knutton and Chesterton

Knutton

Aspire have commenced works on the residential development at High Street.





Works on the former community centre site development by Aspire are due to commence shortly.

Whilst work on the extension to the Enterprise Centre is now substantially complete it is awaiting connection to a sub-station before the units can be occupied, which will probably be September.



The plans for a village hall are at a crossroads in that there is no end user been identified and as such with no end user we are unable to start construction works. Alternative plans for the site are now being developed for the Town Deal Board to consider later in the year, once options have been identified.

The development of the football changing rooms at the Wammy is now complete and Newcastle Town Football Club have hosted an informal open day at the site to try out the facilities. A formal opening ceremony will be held later in the year.



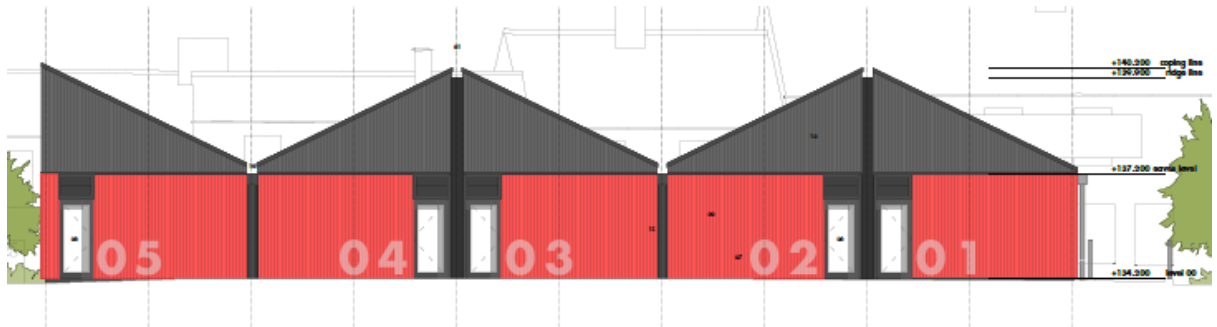
#### Cross Street Chesterton

The Town Deal funding agreement to support the remediation works for Cross St Phase 2 and Phase 3/4 was entered into in September 2024 - this enabled the Homes England funding bid to progress and a start on site for Phase 2 (43 No. Affordable Rented units) was achieved in October 2024, with developer Keon Homes. Phased handovers will commence from late 2025 and this Phase is expected to complete fully by June 2026.

Planning permission for Phase 3, which will deliver 39no social rented apartments and bungalows for over 55's, was granted in September 2024. Following a tender exercise, a Homes England bid was submitted and approved earlier this year. The contract with Countryside was entered into in March 2025 and is expected to complete by November 2026.

#### 2.2.4 Zanzibar Enterprise Units

A planning application for the development has been approved and works are due to start in the Autumn.



#### 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 along Barracks Road commenced in July.

#### 2.2.6 Sustainable Travel

The works to the new bus entrance to Keele University have now commenced with completion later in the autumn.

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

Keele in Town is now fully open and operational.

#### 2.2.8 EV Charging Points

These works form part of the new Castle Car Park project and are now fully operational.

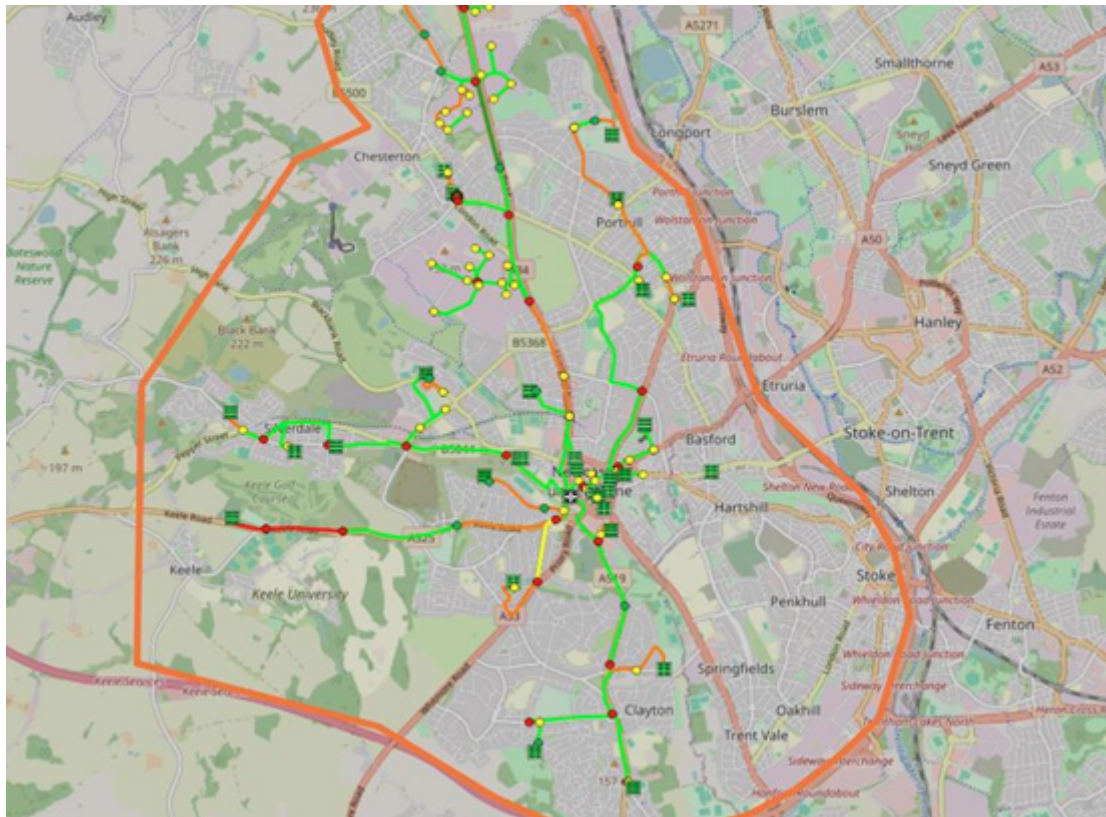
#### 2.2.9 Digital infrastructure

ITS Technology Group Ltd have now completed the installation of the new cables through the ductwork. A procurement exercise for the service provider has commenced to deliver the broadband service. Four community centres have been selected to receive a funded provision of both a free broadband connection as well as a managed wi-fi solution. The four centres are:-

- Silverdale Athletic Football Club.
- Marsh Hall Community Centre.
- Porthill Park Cricket Club.
- Northwood Lane Community Centre.



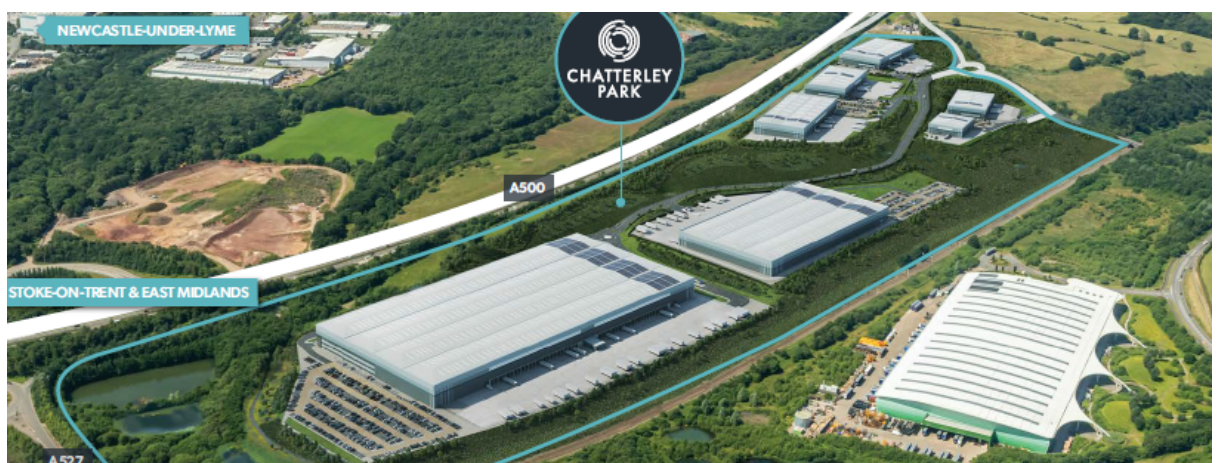
There will then be a second phase utilising Town Deal funding for additional community centre sites that have expressed an interest.



## 2.3 Kidsgrove Town Deal

### 2.3.1 Chatterley Valley

This element of the Town Deal project is complete.



### 2.3.2 Kidsgrove Train Station works

The previously reported issue with the costs of car park underpinning due to mine works underground have now been resolved and the Town Deal Board have agreed a revised scope of works to develop the station with a refurbishment to the existing buildings and car park works outside the area that has been indicated for underground mine remediation or the 'underpinning zone'. The Project Adjustment Form has been submitted to MHCLG for approval.



### 2.3.3 Canal Pathways

Works by the Canal and Rover Trust have now been completed. Thanks to efficiencies in -project delivery an additional area, which connects the canal towpath to the Avenue was included in the project. An extension to the scope has been agreed by the Kidsgrove Town Deal Board as part of the reallocation of funds from the Shared Service Hub. This is to enable improvements to a Public Right of Way on a path connecting the canal towpath with a nearby residential area.

### 2.3.4 Community Learning Hub on the Kings Academy site

Kidsgrove Town Deal Board has agreed for delivery of a community learning hub on the Kings Academy site. This project is under development.

### 2.3.5 Enterprise Units on the Meadows

Kidsgrove Town Deal Board has agreed for delivery of small-scale enterprise units on the Meadows. This has been submitted for planning permission.

### 2.3.6 Highway Improvements

The highway improvements at The Meadows / Station Road, and Market St / The Avenue / Heathcote St, along with public realm improvements by Kings Street parade. These projects are in delivery with a first informal consultation having taken place with surrounding properties on the proposed highway changes.

### **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 To continue to update Scrutiny Committee on the progress and issues surrounding the Future High Street Fund and Town Deal Fund projects.

### **5. Options Considered**

- 5.1 Not applicable – all Cabinet reports on each of the above projects details the options that were considered in more detail.

### **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 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 projects 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 and the allocation spent in full, as shown below:

<b>Project</b>	<b>Award (£000's)</b>	<b>Spend/Ordered (£000's)</b>	<b>Remaining (£000's)</b>
Ryecroft / Site Preparation	3,756	3,756	0
Multi Story Car Park	3,500	3,508	(8)
York Place	3,015	3,015	0
Stones Public Realm	321	317	4
Market Stalls	76	72	4
Project Management	380	380	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,048</b>	<b>11,048</b>	<b>0</b>

- 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. £19.0m has been received to date of which £12.8m has been spent as shown below:

Project	Award (£000's)	Spend/Ordered (£000's)	Remaining (£000's)
Digital Infrastructure	2,285	1,548	737
Sustainable Public Transport	3,421	997	2,424
Electric Vehicle Charging	400	400	-
Pedestrian Cycle Permeability	950	359	591
Transform Key Gateway Sites	3,810	1,156	2,654
Astley Centre for Circus	1,810	640	1,170
Digital Society	3,510	2,992	518
Heart into Knutton Village	3,534	2,958	576
Cross Street, Chesterton	2,955	987	1,968
Project Management	925	743	182
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,600</b>	<b>12,780</b>	<b>10,820</b>

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 £7.3m has been spent as shown below:

Project	Award (£000's)	Spend/Ordered (£000's)	Remaining (£000's)
Kidsgrove Sports Centre	2,328	2,328	0
Chatterley Valley West	3,496	3,496	0
Kidsgrove Station	3,638	246	3,392
Shared Services Hub	6,183	333	5,850
Canal Enhancement	420	64	356
Project Management	835	806	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,900</b>	<b>7,273</b>	<b>9,627</b>

## 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 ☒

*We will make investment to diversify our income and think entrepreneurially.*

One Digital Council ☒

*We will develop and implement a digital approach which makes it easy for all residents and businesses to engage with the Council, with our customers at the heart of every interaction.*

One Sustainable Council ☒

*We will deliver on our commitments to a net zero future and make all decisions with sustainability as a driving principle.*

**12. Key Decision Information**

12.1 Not applicable

**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 2025/26

#### **Chair**

Cllr M. Holland

#### **Vice-Chair**

Cllr A. Bryan

#### **Members**

Cllrs D. Allport, R. Bettley-Smith, L. Dean, D. Grocott, A. Lawley, A. Parker, M. Stubbs, A. Turnock and P. Waring

#### **Scrutiny Champion**

Sarah Wilkes

#### **Portfolio Holders within the Committee's remit**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Planned Items**

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	NOTES
4 September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/27</li> <li>- Performance Framework Changes Presentation</li> <li>- Q1 Finance and Performance Report 2025/26</li> <li>- Commercial Strategy update</li> <li>- Civic Pride (Empowering our Communities) Strategy</li> <li>- Town Deal and Future High Street Fund Update</li> </ul>	
4 December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Q2 Finance and Performance Report 2025/26</li> <li>- Town Deal and Future High Street Fund Update</li> <li>- First Draft Savings Proposals 2026/27</li> </ul>	

**Previous Items**

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	NOTES
25 September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Asset Management Strategy</li> <li>- Medium Term Financial Strategy 24/25</li> <li>- Q1 Finance and Performance Report</li> <li>- Commercial Strategy Update</li> <li>- Sickness Absence Reporting</li> </ul>	
9 November 2023	- Ryecroft Call-in Report	
13 December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Q2 Finance and Performance Report</li> <li>- Draft Savings Proposals 24/25</li> <li>- Town Deal and Future High Streets Fund Update</li> <li>- Technology Strategy 2023-2028</li> </ul>	



DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	NOTES
18 January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revenue and Capital Budgets and Strategies 24/25</li> <li>- Draft Schedule of Fees and Charges 24/25</li> </ul>	
14 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Q3 Finance and Performance Report 2023/24</li> <li>- Commercial Strategy Update</li> <li>- Town Deal and Future High Street Funds Update</li> </ul>	
27 June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Q4 Finance and Performance Report 2023/24</li> <li>- Town Deal and Future High Street Funds Update</li> </ul>	
18 September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26</li> <li>- Q1 Finance and Performance Report 2024/25</li> <li>- Commercial Strategy Update</li> <li>- Town Deal and Future High Street Funds Update</li> <li>- Staff Turnover Report</li> </ul>	Requested at FAPS on 27/06/24
5 December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Q2 Finance and Performance Report 2024/25</li> <li>- Draft Savings Proposals 2025/26</li> <li>- Town Deal and Future High Street Funds Update</li> </ul>	
16 January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revenue and Capital Budget and Strategies 2025/26</li> <li>- Schedule of Fees and Charges 2025/26</li> <li>- Town Deal and Future High Street Funds Update</li> <li>- One Council Review and Next Steps</li> </ul>	
27 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Q3 Finance and Performance Report 2024/25</li> <li>- Commercial Strategy Update</li> <li>- Town Deal and Future High Street Funds Update</li> </ul>	
26 June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Q4 Finance and Performance Report 2024/25</li> <li>- Town Deal and Future High Street Funds Update</li> </ul>	

Last updated on the 26/08/2025

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Question from Mr L Door:

Commercial Strategy Update

Energy costs for UK businesses are the highest in the developed world.

Several local businesses, or businesses employing residents of Newcastle-under-Lyme, have closed, or faced closure, in part due to the cost of energy.

The Silverdale and Apedale mines and collieries have long since closed as generators of wealth and employment in the area.

While the aim of rehabilitating the sites as country parks is laudable, the parks have recently become littered with drug paraphernalia, broken bottles and antisocial behaviour.

There may be an opportunity to return the land to a use in keeping with its heritage: generation of energy and wealth. The modern colliery is the wind or solar farm.

I would like the council to carry out an assessment of the economic viability of investing in wind and solar generation at the Silverdale and Apedale sites (preserving the Heritage Centre) to generate income for the Council, and, in particular to use a portion of the revenue to offer grants to local energy intensive businesses to defray energy costs in order to retain and attract investment and employment.

Thank you for your consideration.

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