



Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held in The Council Chamber at The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD on Monday 22 April 2024 at 6.00 pm

Agenda

1.	Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members
2.	Declarations of Interest Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.
3.	Minutes (Pages 5 - 10) To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6 February 2024.
4.	Chair's Announcements To receive communications from the Chair.
5.	Corporate Plan Performance Report - Q3 2023-24 (Pages 11 - 44) The Committee to consider the Corporate Plan Performance Report for Q3 2023-24 to inform ongoing performance management scrutiny.
6.	Revenue Monitoring Report - Period 9 2023-24 (Pages 45 - 92) The Committee to receive the Revenue Monitoring Report for Period 9 2023-24 considered by Cabinet on 13 February 2024. The Executive Director – Finance will also provide a verbal update on the latest outturn position.
7.	WNC Revenue Reserves (Pages 93 - 102) The Committee to receive a paper from the Executive Director – Finance on the Council's use of its Reserves.

8.	<p>Medium Term Financial Strategy - Quarterly Update</p> <p>Verbal update from the Executive Director – Finance on the progress of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy during Quarter 3 2023-24.</p>
9.	<p>Review of Committee Work Programme (Pages 103 - 110)</p> <p>The Committee to consider and note its draft work programme for the 2024-25 municipal year.</p>
10.	<p>Urgent Business</p> <p>The Chair to advise whether they have agreed to any items of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.</p>

Catherine Whitehead
Proper Officer
12 April 2024

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members:

Councillor Ian McCord (Chair)	Councillor Sam Rumens (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Maggie Clubley	Councillor Rupert Frost
Councillor Jonathan Harris	Councillor Keith Holland-Delamere
Councillor David James	Councillor Koulla Jolley
Councillor Colin Morgan	Councillor Ken Pritchard
Councillor Brian Sargeant	

Information about this Agenda

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence and the appointment of substitute Members should be notified to democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk prior to the start of the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item

Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare that fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

Evacuation Procedure

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Access to Meetings

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named below, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting.

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Please ensure that any device is switched to silent operation or switched off.

Queries Regarding this Agenda

If you have any queries about this agenda please contact Tracy Tiff / Richard Woods, Democratic Services via the following:

Tel: 01327 322043

Email: democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk

Or by writing to:

West Northamptonshire Council
The Guildhall
St Giles Street
Northampton
NN1 1DE

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Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in The Jeffrey Room at The Guildhall, St Giles Street, Northampton, NN1 1DE on Tuesday 6 February 2024 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Ian McCord (Chair)
Councillor Sam Rumens (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Rupert Frost
Councillor Jonathan Harris
Councillor David James
Councillor Koulla Jolley
Councillor Ken Pritchard

Also Present:

Councillor Malcolm Longley (Cabinet Member for Finance)
Councillor Jonathan Nunn (Leader of the Council)
Councillor Sally Beardsworth (Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Participant)

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Maggie Clubley
Councillor Colin Morgan
Councillor Brian Sargeant

Officers:

Martin Henry, Executive Director - Finance (Section 151 Officer)
Richard Corless, Intelligence & Partnerships Manager (For Minute Item 23)
Tracy Tiff, Deputy Democratic Services Manager
Richard Woods, Democratic Services Officer

20. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

21. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 November 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

22. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair advised that Agenda Items 5, 7 and 8 would be taken prior to the Budget Scrutiny Item.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair also thanked all Councillors and Officers who took part in the recent Budget Scrutiny exercise for their time, effort, and diligence.

23. Corporate Plan Performance Report - Q2 2023-24

The Committee considered a report from the Intelligence & Partnerships Manager which provided Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the Council's performance metrics for the current year set against the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.

In response to questions from the Committee as to why some of the data had only just become available for the period covering Q2, the Intelligence & Partnerships Manager explained that some services for which data was collected had contractual arrangements, which could occasionally delay the release of the date.

In providing an overview of some of the key highlights, the Intelligence & Partnerships Manager advised that visits to leisure centres was below target during the Q2 period, and that this was due to maintenance-related closures at some of the sites leading to a restriction in the hours of operation.

In response to questions from the Committee regarding the performance of the Council's Planning Service, the Intelligence & Partnerships Manager advised that this continued to be a key area of focus for the authority, with a focus on improving the timeframes for processing planning applications and maximising the possibilities of income generation by driving improvements in the Planning Service.

On the performance of Children's Social Care, the Intelligence and Partnerships Manager explained that, due to demand-led pressures and market forces beyond the Council's control, the cost of children's placements continued to be volatile, however this was something the Council continued to closely monitor.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Chair thanked the Intelligence & Partnerships Manager for a thorough report and advised the Committee that the performance data Q3 2023-24 would be brought to the 22 April 2024 meeting of the Committee.

Resolved

(1) That the contents of the report be noted.

24. Draft Report of the Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group

The Deputy Democratic Services Manager submitted a report which provided an overview of the comments and recommendations of Corporate Overview and

Scrutiny Committee on the Draft Budget 2024-25 and the Medium Term Financial Plan.

In introducing the report, the Chair of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee explained that, over a series of seven meetings, the Committee undertook in-depth scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2024-25 and considered three key areas of the budget to focus on, providing comment as part of the West Northamptonshire Council's budget consultation process. The three areas of the budget selected for scrutiny input were; Adult Social Care, Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation, and Miscellaneous Budgets, which consisted of an overview of a number of smaller budgets from across the authority. The Committee also provided commentary on the ongoing financial pressures at Northamptonshire Children's Trust, however, did not select this as one of its three focus areas in order to enable actions taken by the Council and the Trust to bring its finances under control to be embedded.

The Committee agreed that its budget scrutiny process had worked very well and had been both engaging, informative and had enabled the Committee to fulfil its budget scrutiny role. A highlight of this was inclusion of other non-Executives who were not members of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee being involved in the budget scrutiny process this year, to provide a more rounded perspective from across different areas the Council.

The budget scrutiny session held on 23 January 2024 also highlighted a number of potential issues for inclusion onto the Committee's Work Programme for the 2024-25 municipal year, namely a review of External Audit costs to the authority, how reserves are utilised, a review of the budget for road repairs, a review of the operation of the Council Tax Hardship Fund, and a Trading Standards review to determine if further income could be generated that could then be used to reinvest and improve the service in the future.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Chair thanked all Members and Officers who had taken part in the Budget Scrutiny process and highlighted that engagement from across the Council was vital to maximising opportunities for scrutiny input into the Draft Budget, and thus the successful delivery of the budget and the operation of the Council's services for its residents.

Resolved

- (1) That the final recommendations of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet (Annexe to the Minutes) on the Draft Budget 2024-25 and Medium Term Financial Plan be forwarded to the Executive Director – Finance to be appended to the report to Cabinet and then to Full Council.

25. **Revenue Monitoring Report - Quarterly Update**

The Cabinet Member for Finance and the Executive Director – Finance provided a verbal update which set out the Council's current Revenue Monitoring position as at the end of Period 9 for the Financial Year 2023-24 and provided an assessment of the Council's financial performance against its approved 2023-24 Budget.

In introducing the update, the Cabinet Member for Finance explained that the current forecast outturn position for 2023-25 as at the end of Period 9 was an overspend of £3.5m after the use of £.2m of general budget contingencies, which were set aside in the budget for risks that may manifest themselves during the financial year.

Whilst the projected overspend equated to less than 1% of the net budget, the Cabinet Member for Finance advised that the Period 9 position showed an adverse movement of £0.8m on the Period 7 position reported to Cabinet in December 2023.

In response to questions from the Committee regarding the reasons for the adverse movement, the Executive Director – Finance advised that this was largely down to continued cost pressures and high demand within the Children’s Trust, however pressures remain within homelessness and temporary accommodation, adult social care, and the home to school transport service.

Resolved

- (1) That the verbal update on the Council’s revenue monitoring position as at the end of Period 9 2023-24 be noted.

26. Medium Term Financial Strategy - Quarterly Update

The Cabinet Member for Finance and the Executive Director – Finance provided a verbal update on the progress of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy.

In introducing the update, the Cabinet Member for Finance reiterated that, although the Budget for 2024-25 showed a balanced position, there was considerable uncertainty in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, caused by demand-led pressures both locally and nationally, economic uncertainty caused by national and global events, uncertainty surrounding inflation and interest rates, possible business rates reform, political uncertainty beyond the anticipated general election later in 2024 and any future government’s priorities for local government finance, and uncertainty on future funding from central government including future Council Tax threshold limits.

The Executive Director – Finance explained that the Council’s current medium term financial position projected a deficit of £90m over a four year period starting with a deficit of £53.6m in 2025-26, however this was subject to the uncertainties already mentioned and also assumed a business rates reset in 2025-26, which if moved beyond 2025-26, would drive a material improvement in the medium-term financial position.

Resolved

- (1) That the verbal update on the progress of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy be noted.

27. Review of Committee Work Programme

Following on from the Budget Scrutiny discussion, Members of the Committee agreed that an overview of the Council's External Audit costs, a Transformation progress update, Trading Standards, and the Council's use of reserves be added to the Committee Work Programme for future consideration and scrutiny activity.

Resolved

(1) That the Committee Work Programme be noted, subject to the addition of the following items to the Work Programme for 2024-25:

- 1) A review of External Audit costs
- 2) Transformation Progress Update
- 3) A review of Trading Standards budgets
- 3) Analysis of the use of reserves in budgeting

28. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.34 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22 April 2024

Councillor Jonathan Nunn, Leader of the Council

Report Title	Corporate Plan Performance Report – Q3 2023-24
Report Author	Richard Corless, Intelligence & Partnerships Manager richard.corless@westnorthants.gov.uk

List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	22 February 2024
Chief Finance Officer (S151)	Martin Henry	22 February 2024
Other Director	Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive and All Directors via EPB	22 February 2024
Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	22 February 2024

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Corporate Plan Report – 2023-24 Q3

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The attached appendix provides an update for the third quarter of 2023-24 to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on West Northamptonshire Council's (WNC) performance metrics for the current year and set against the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.

2. Executive Summary

- 1.2. This report provides an overview of performance for West Northamptonshire Council for the period of October to December 2023 (Quarter 3).
- 1.3. The performance indicators included in the report have been subject to review, challenge, and approval by both the Cabinet and the Executive Leadership Team with our aim being to create a

meaningful dashboard of measures that provide members and officers with good insight into the council's performance.

- 1.4. The performance indicator changes in this year's report reflect changes implemented by government departments in the past 12 months which impact a number of regulatory/ inspection regimes. These change how we are inspected as well as create changes in data collection frameworks. In some cases, these have entirely changed some of the national metrics that are collected, and that local Authorities will report against, this also causes challenges for us in being able to provide trend information for some indicators.
- 1.5. There have been many changes to teams, services, and systems as part of creating the new council and therefore some indicators will need to be developed in order to provide a complete unitary view and move away from the old district and borough boundaries. This is also exacerbated where we have different delivery vehicles or contracts for services, such as Northamptonshire Children's Trust or Public Health contractual services that has the opposite effect of not being able to provide a West Northamptonshire only version of performance.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
 - a) Note the content of the appendix covering the third quarter of 2023-24

1. Reason for Recommendations

The appendix provided with this report is for information purposes and discussion only, there are no direct decisions to be made following the report

4. Report Background

- 4.1 It is important that the Council is clear and transparent on its performance and that there are clear action plans where our performance falls below target or that of other benchmark authorities.
- 4.2 The council monitors performance across all services areas and against hundreds of national and contract metrics to ensure that services are performing well and identified priorities are monitored and delivered against. These are monitored within services and reported in line with national cycles or as required to Overview and Scrutiny, and other committees.
- 4.3 This performance report provides an overall high-level summary of the key metrics that underpin our stated corporate priorities and sets out proposed metrics that we will be developing and monitoring for this quarterly report in addition to the wider overall performance framework we have in place.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 This is a report for information and discussion and therefore there are no choices to be made, as outlined in section 6.4, consultation and discussion around metrics has occurred with cabinet members in the leadup to this report.

6. Implications

6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 There are no direct financial implications from the report. However, services need to consider the implications of under- or over-performance and identify what resources may need to be reallocated to address these.
- 6.1.2 Financial indicators included within the performance report can be found in greater detail within the finance reports that are presented to Cabinet.

6.2 Legal

- 6.2.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from the proposals.

6.3 Risk

- 6.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

6.4 Consultation and Communications

- 6.4.1 The metrics included in this report have been chosen based upon the priorities identified within the Corporate Plan and in consultation with members of Cabinet and senior officers. The Corporate Plan priorities and wider service objectives are underpinned by the Council's communications and consultation activities to keep the public, staff and stakeholders informed and engaged on what the council is doing and how it is performing. The inclusion of additional performance metrics further builds on the Council's communications principles of transparency and openness to inform and engage residents on its corporate priorities, objectives and outcomes.

6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

- 6.5.1 Relevant performance data will be provided to Overview and Scrutiny Committees as required to support their agreed work plans.

6.6 Climate Impact

- 6.6.1 There are no direct implications on climate/environmental impact from this report, it does however provide an update on the delivery of the corporate plan which includes commitments to be Net Zero by 2030. This quarterly report will provide updates on the council's progress to this aim as appropriate.

6.7 **Community Impact**

6.7.1 Managing our performance is key to ensuring we are making a positive impact on our communities, celebrating our successes, and addressing our challenges.

7. **Background Papers**

7.1 The West Northamptonshire Council Corporate Plan 2021-25 provides the basis for the data and project updates that are provided within this quarterly report. The Corporate Plan can be found on our website - [Corporate Plan | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/corporate-plan)



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Corporate Plan 2023-24 Quarter 3 Report

Oct to Dec 2023

Last Updated: 21st February 2024



Welcome to the latest update on delivery of the West Northamptonshire Council Corporate Plan with data and project updates covering the second quarter of 2023-24 broken down into monthly information where that is available. The metrics included in this report have been chosen based upon the priorities identified within the corporate plan and consultation with both the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and Cabinet members.

The data elements that are provided in this report include a monthly breakdown of the current quarter, where the information is available to that level, as well as an overall quarterly position. In addition to this there is trend information for the current year and last year. Where there is externally published information available we have begun to add in benchmark data, covering national (normally England), regional (East Midlands) and where appropriate statistical neighbour groups (for Children's Services).

The report contains two main elements - a summary 'dashboard' type information on each page alongside a short narrative and also at the end of the report all indicators are available in a detailed scorecard view. Some of these areas are long term projects and therefore there will not always be an update to that narrative each quarter, we will provide an update each quarter assuming that there has been progress or something has changed since the previous report.

Green and Clean Environment & Wellbeing

1

- Net Zero by 2030
- Climate summit in first few months
- Increased wildlife species & more trees
- Increased electric charging & energy efficiency
- Vibrant towns & villages
- High quality parks
- Accessible green space for all

Thriving Villages & Towns Place shaping & Homes

4

- Regeneration of our core town centres
- Safer communities with less anti social behaviour
- Flourishing and supported small business
- Sustainable planning for growth
- Increased affordable housing & Council homes
- Raised standards of privately rented homes

Improved Life Chances Health, Social Care & Families

2

- Healthy, safe and protected Children
- Increased aspirations in young people
- Investment in new schools & provision
- Adults supported to live independently
- Care provided for those that need it
- Reduced hospital stays and delays
- Joined up and local services with health
- Safe and secure accommodation for all

Economic Development Growth & Prosperity

5

- Published west strategic infrastructure plan
- Framework for long term economic growth
- Increased inward investment
- Building on our rich heritage
- Increased visitors to our attractions
- Infrastructure benefits and investment through our role in regional forums and plans

Connected Communities Transport & Connectivity

3

- Improved road, rail and bus networks
- Completion of major roads projects
- Improved road quality
- Increased use of electric vehicles & charging points
- Enhanced broadband and mobile connectivity

Robust Resource Management Transparency & financial probity

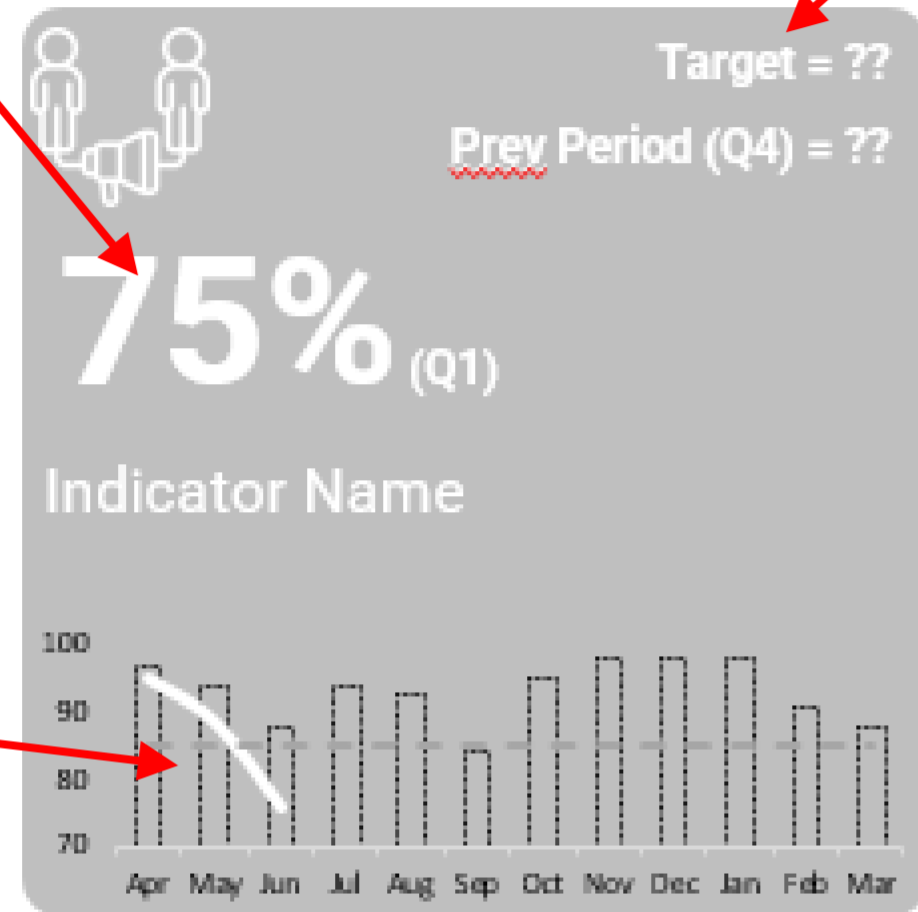
6

- Council tax rises capped at £99 a year
- Stable finances and rainy day reserves
- Robust scrutiny of spending
- Open and transparent decision making
- Financial prudence underpinning long term decisions and plans
- Optimised debt management

The diagrams below for the indicator dashboard pages and the detailed scorecards outline the data elements within them and how to interpret what is being shown.

The current period's performance.

This will be the period for the current report, unless otherwise stated. The current period can always be found in the bottom left corner of each page



The previous period's performance

The last period will states if that is a quarter or a specific month

Trend Chart

White line - shows recent trend, either by month (if available) or by quarter

Dotted Line - represents target

Bar chart - represents last year's performance

Indicator details

This section includes the indicator name, the priority it is relevant to in the Corporate Plan, the lead directorate and indicates whether the performance should be higher or lower.

Performance Data

This section includes the target and current performance data broken down to month where available, quarterly and year to date (YTD).

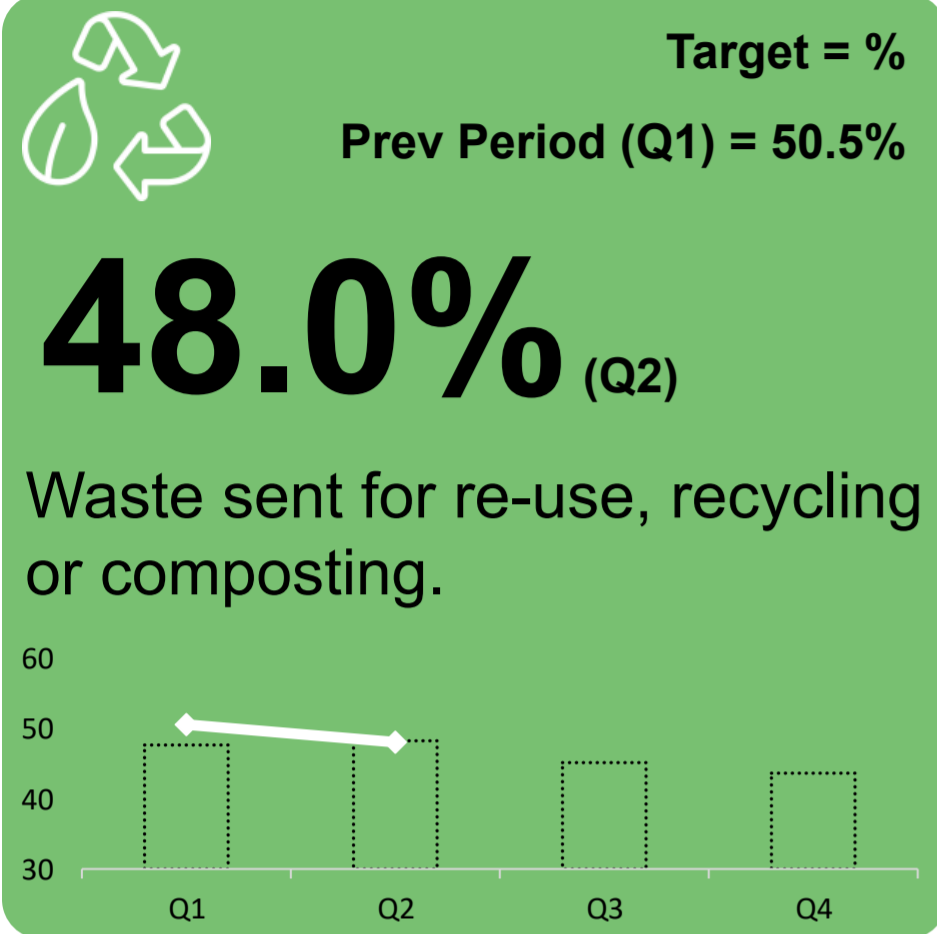
In addition benchmarking information is included on the right hand side, covering regional, national and statistical neighbour groups. There are and will continue to be a number of indicators that have no published data in order to benchmark against.

Corp Ref:	Metrics (Number / Rates / Financial)	Priority	Directorate	Better to be?	Target	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Jul	Aug	Sep	Q2	YTD	Regional	National
1.2	Percentage of household waste sent for re-use, recycling or composting	Green & Clean	Place & Economy	Higher		50.85%	52.32%	56.42%	53.33%					53.33%		
1.3	Percentage of waste from HWRCs diverted from landfill								71.50%							
1.4a	Net trees planted this year												-140	-91	n/a	n/a
1.5	Council vehicles that are electric or hybrid	1. Green & Clean	Place & Economy	Higher									22			
1.6	Council owned parks and green spaces that have Green Flag accreditation	1. Green & Clean	Place & Economy	Higher	10 in 5 years				5				5	5		

Temporary image as an example only

Priority 1 – Green and Clean

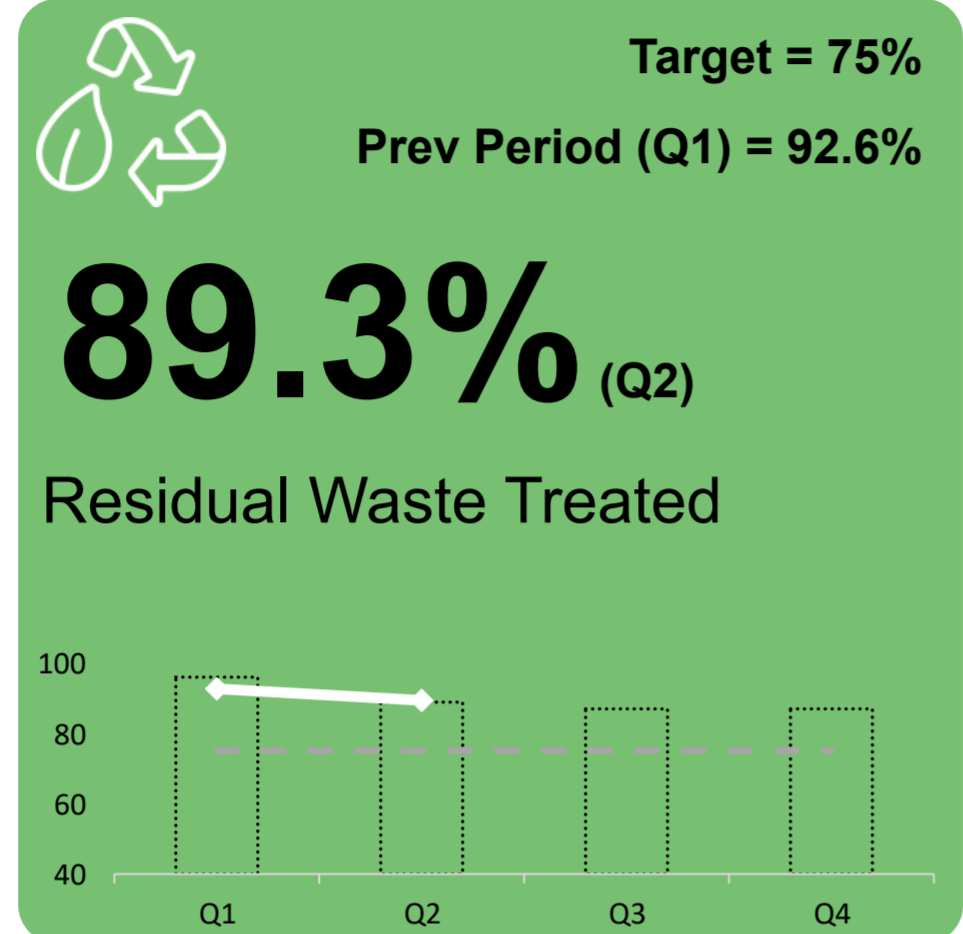
Environment & Wellbeing



This indicator measures household waste that is sent for re-use, recycling, or composting across West Northants.

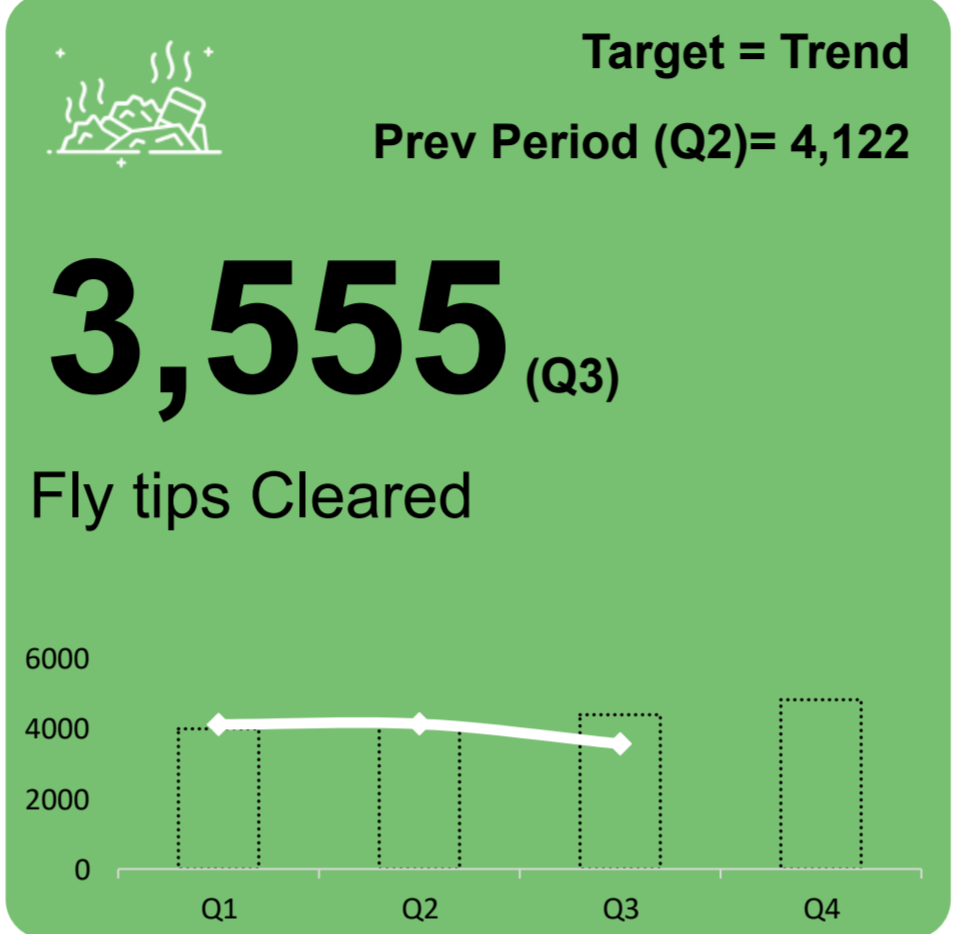
The performance for this measure remains relatively consistent across the year with some seasonal shifts in household recycling habits. This measure is reported in arrears due to reporting processes via WasteDataFlow. Therefore this report shows performance for Q2.

The cost of living crisis has decreased the amount of goods that people are purchasing and therefore there is less recycling. The introduction of charges for garden waste has also reduced the amount of garden waste collected. However, as a comparison, the latest national average for unitary authorities is 42.2% for the 2021-22 year.



This indicator measures a combination of all waste types that through some form of treatment process (i.e. do not go to landfill) and provides an overview of how waste is treated in West Northamptonshire.

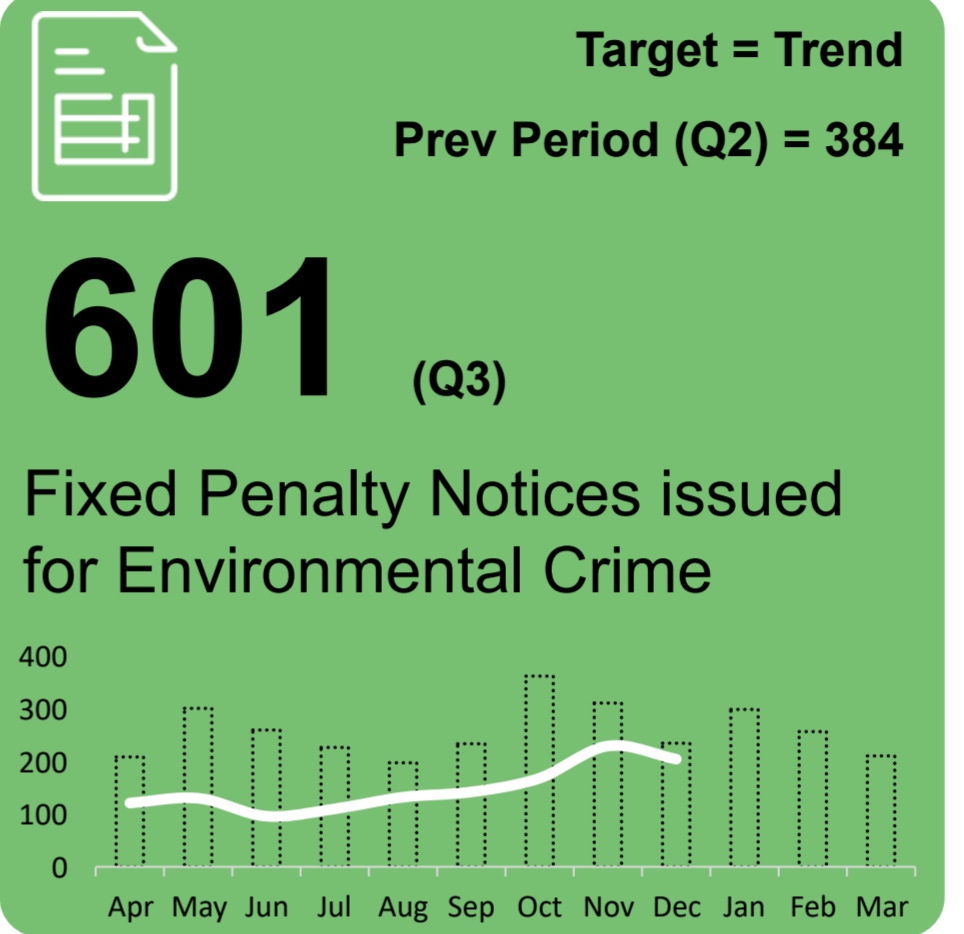
This measure is also reported in arrears due to reporting processes via WasteDataFlow. Therefore this report shows performance for Q2. This latest data shows that 89.3% of residual waste was treated, this is an improved of 0.5% when compared to the same period last year. This metric is affected by seasonal fluctuations in waste habits and despite the reduction current performance remains above the target set for the year.



Fly-tipping is the illegal dumping of liquid or solid waste on land or in water. The waste is usually dumped to avoid disposal costs or for convenience. Should the fly-tipping occur on public land, it is the responsibility of the LA to clear the rubbish and pay for all associated costs.

Quarter three has seen a decrease when compared to the previous period from 4,122 in Q2 down to 3,555 clearances in Q3. This is also a reduction when compared to the same period last year when 4,380 fly tips were cleared in Q3.

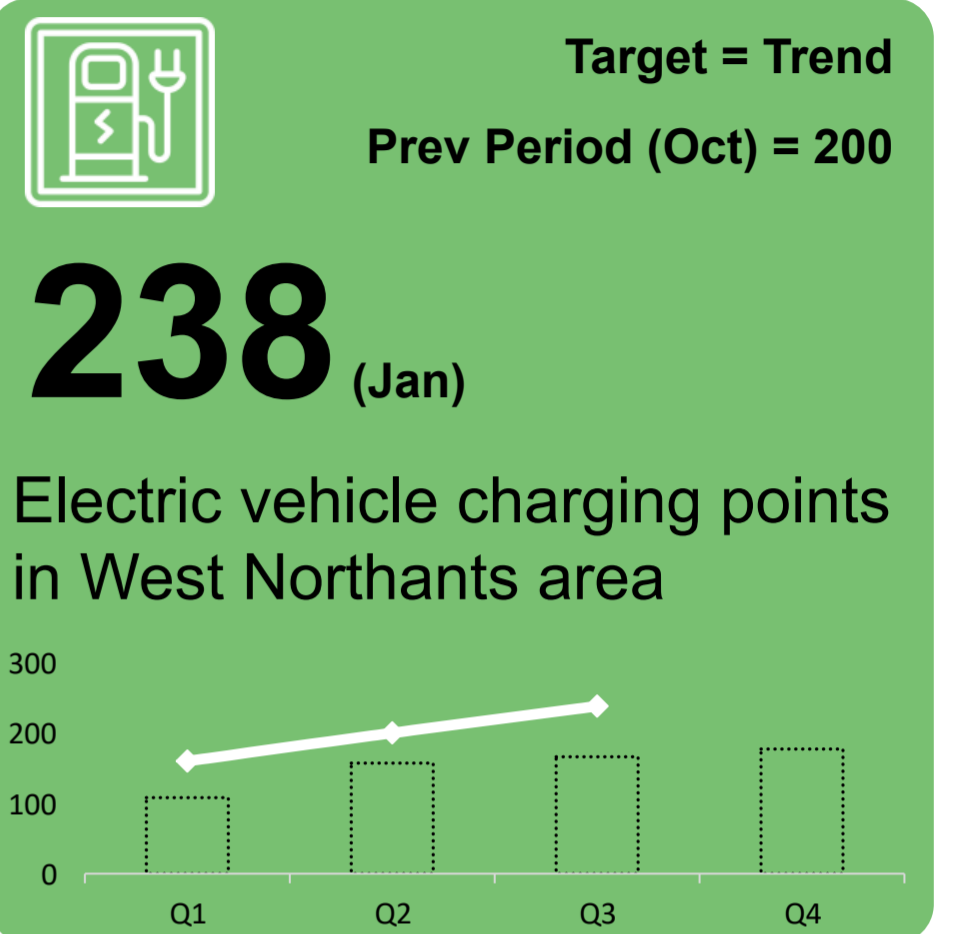
The total number of clearances in the current year is 11,780, a reduction from 12,495 across the first 9 months of last year.



This measure reports against those fixed penalty notices (FPNs) that have been issued on behalf of WNC for environmental crime, this would include those fines issued for fly-tipping.

Across the third quarter this year 601 FPNs have been issued, an increase from the 384 issued in quarter two and 347 issued in quarter one

Overall, there have been 1,332 FPNs issued for environmental crime this year, this is a reduction from the 2,328 FPNs issued to the same point last year.



The total publicly accessible charging points for West Northamptonshire as of January 2024 shows that there are 238 public charging devices, an increase of 38 since October, of the 38 additions 21 are defined as rapid charging devices bringing the total number to 105 publicly accessible rapid charging devices.

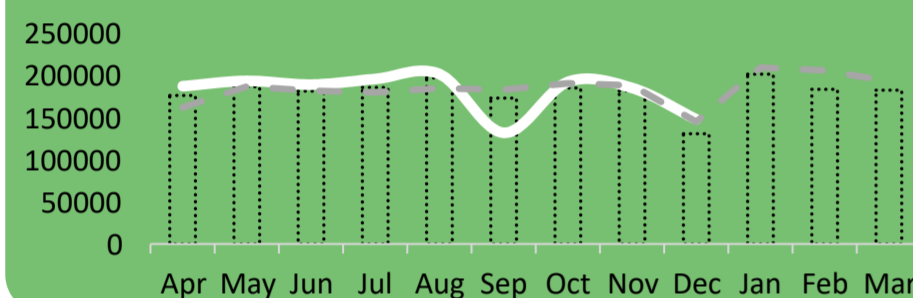
The West Northamptonshire area has 55.8 charging points per 100,000 population (up from 46.9 in October 2023). This is higher than the East Midlands (50.4) but lower than the England (82.0) average.



Q3 Target = 522,200
 Prev Period (Q2) = 528,038

524,066 (Q3)

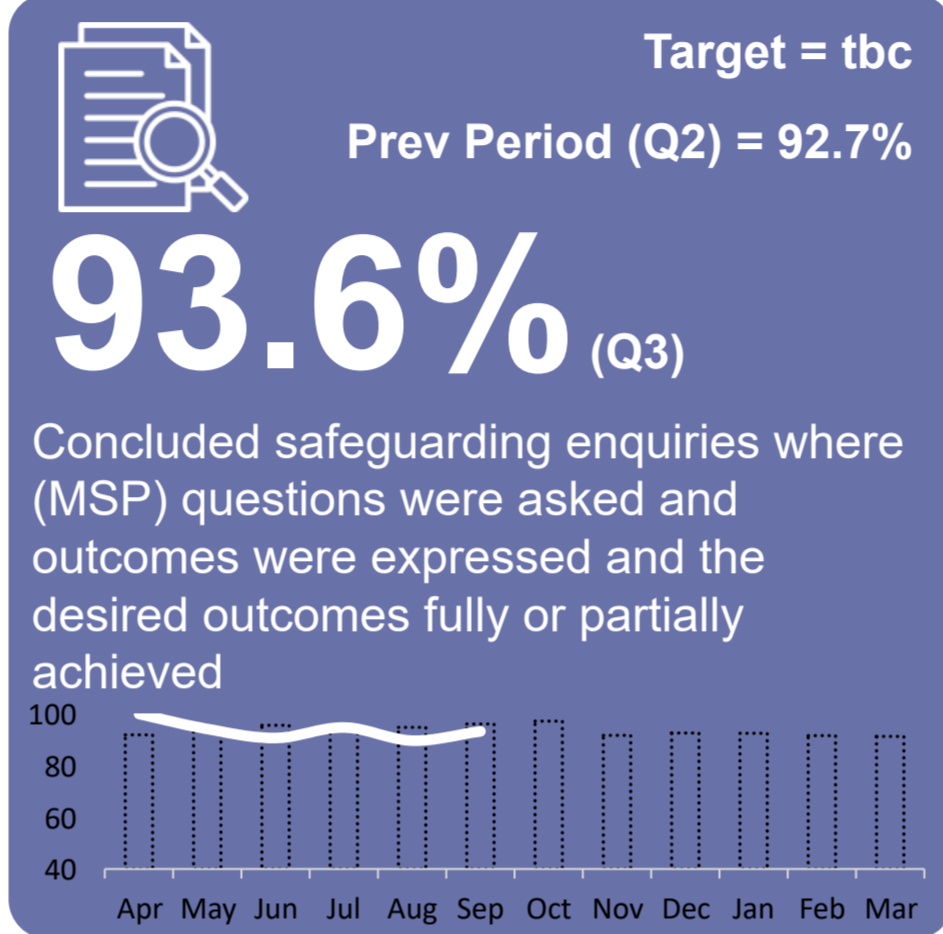
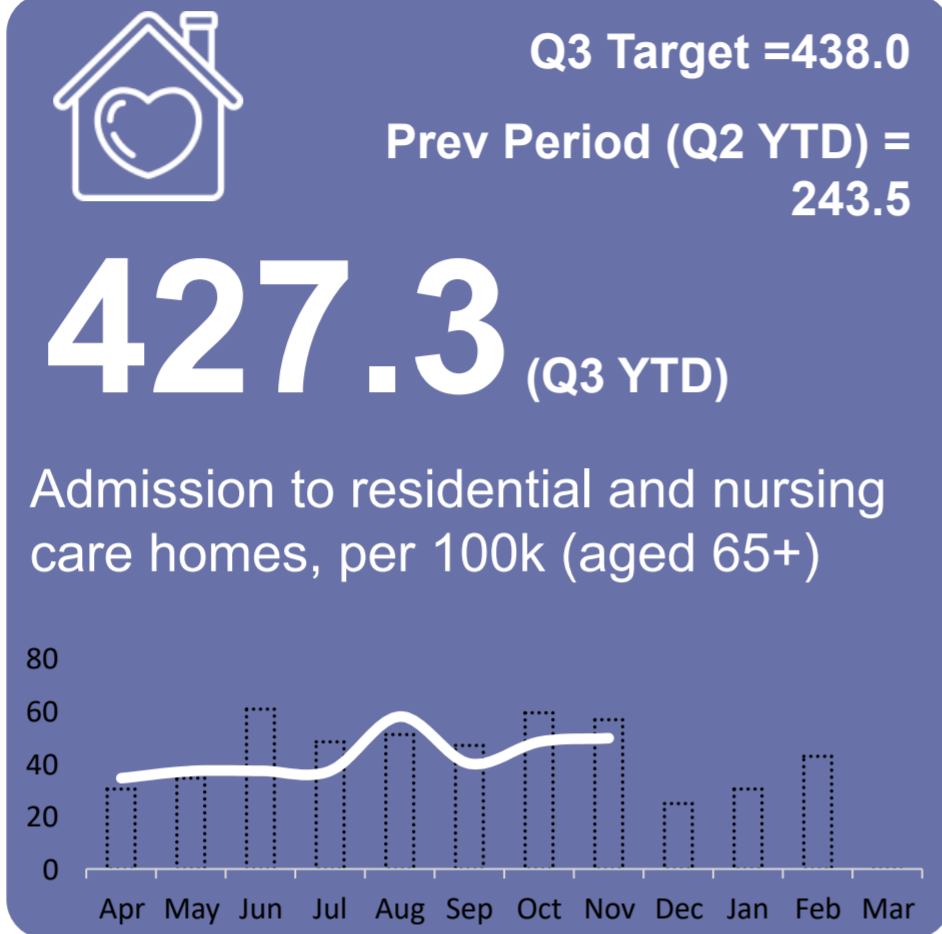
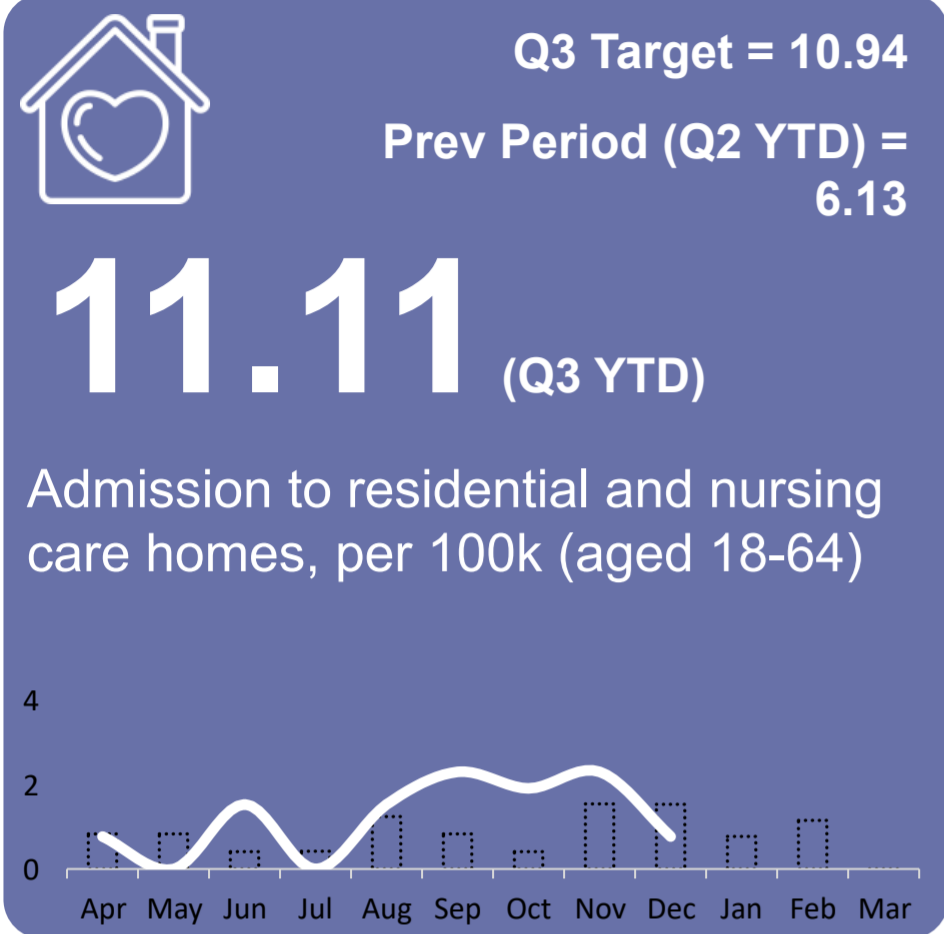
Visitors to Leisure Centres



This measure counts the number of visitors to leisure centres run by West Northamptonshire Council.

The Q3 performance is above the target set for that period, this is despite one of our centres, at Moulton, being closed for part of October to complete repairs on the pool floor.

Comparing to the same period last year there is an increase of 28,000 visitors to leisure centres, in addition when comparing the first 9 months of this year to last year there is an increase of 27,500 visitors.



Both of these indicators are performing very well, both in comparison to previous years and against our regional and national comparators, our outturn last year for the 18-64 cohort was 8.81 vs a 13.9 latest national average, similarly in the over 65 age group our outturn was 434.8 vs 538.5 latest national average. Continually in recent years, we have reduced admission to long-term support via residential and nursing home provision.

Avoiding permanent placements in residential and nursing care homes is a national best practice of delaying dependency and research suggests that, where possible, people prefer to stay in their own homes rather than move into residential care. However, it is acknowledged that for some people admission to residential or nursing care homes can represent an improvement in their situation.

Admissions for those aged 18-64

For the first 9 months of the year there have been 11.11 people per 100,000 population admitted to residential or nursing homes, this relates to 29 individuals. This is an increase on the same point last year when 8.04 per 100,000 had been admitted.

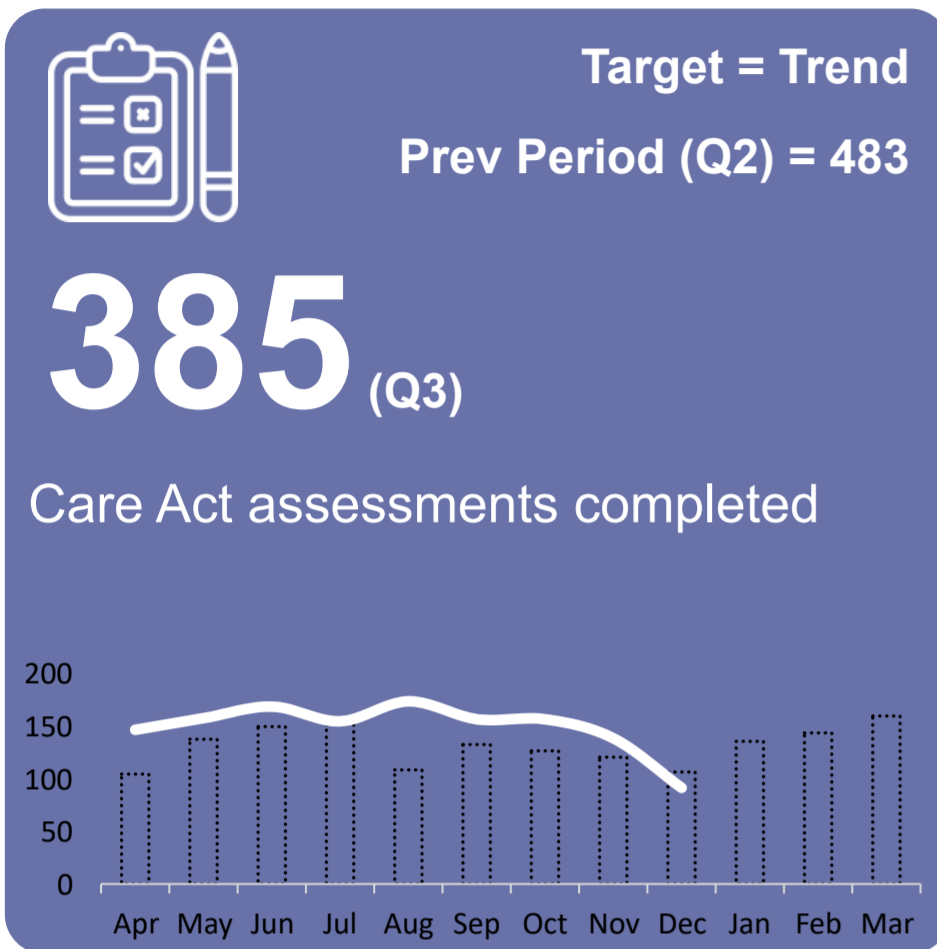
Admissions for those aged 65+

To the end of the third quarter there have been 427.3 people per 100,000 population admitted to residential or nursing homes, this relates to 318 individuals. This is a increase on the same point last year when 411.4 per 100,000 had been admitted.

This indicator measures the effectiveness of outcomes from safeguarding enquires where Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) questions were asked and if outcomes were fully or partially achieved.

Performance in this area has been good over the past 18 months since collection began with monthly performance regularly being above 89%, with April 2023 having 100% of enquires with outcomes achieved.

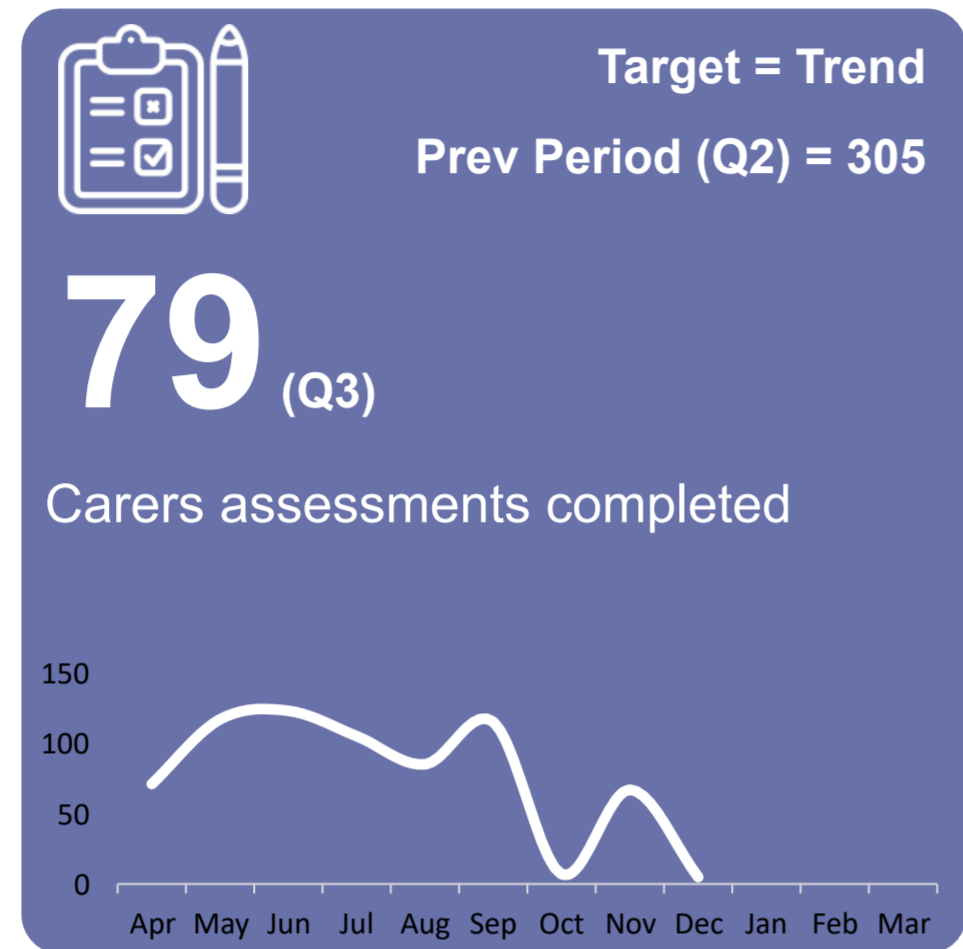
The outturn for quarter 3 which is based upon 218 enquires with 204 having outcomes achieved either fully or partly, representing an increase of 0.9% from the previous quarter.



Care Act assessments are undertaken to determine if a person is eligible and their needs have a significant impact on their lives that would require long-term support from social care.

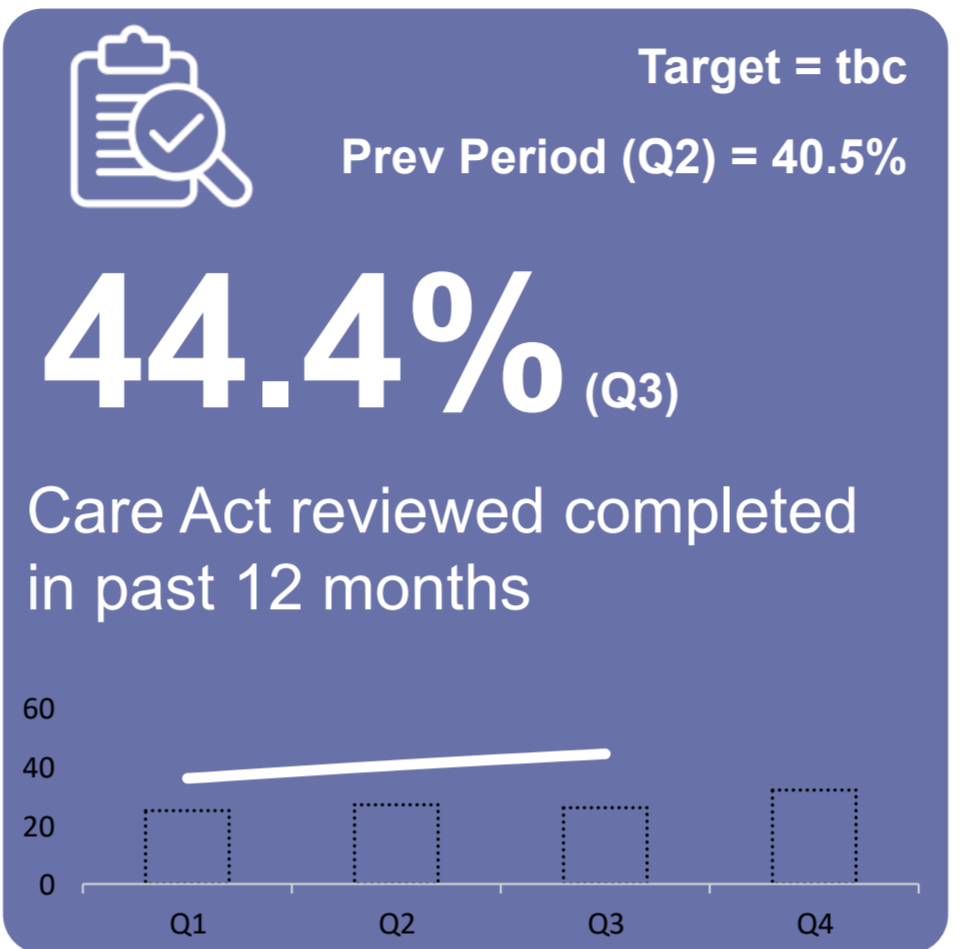
In the 3rd quarter of this year we have completed 385 assessments, a reduction of 98 from the previous quarter and compares to the 352 completed in the same period last year. This quarter's position is a provisional figure due to the lag in some workflow's completion, which will result in the figure being updated retrospectively in future periods.

Of the 385 Care Act assessments, 333 resulted in an outcome where the person was eligible for a service provision.



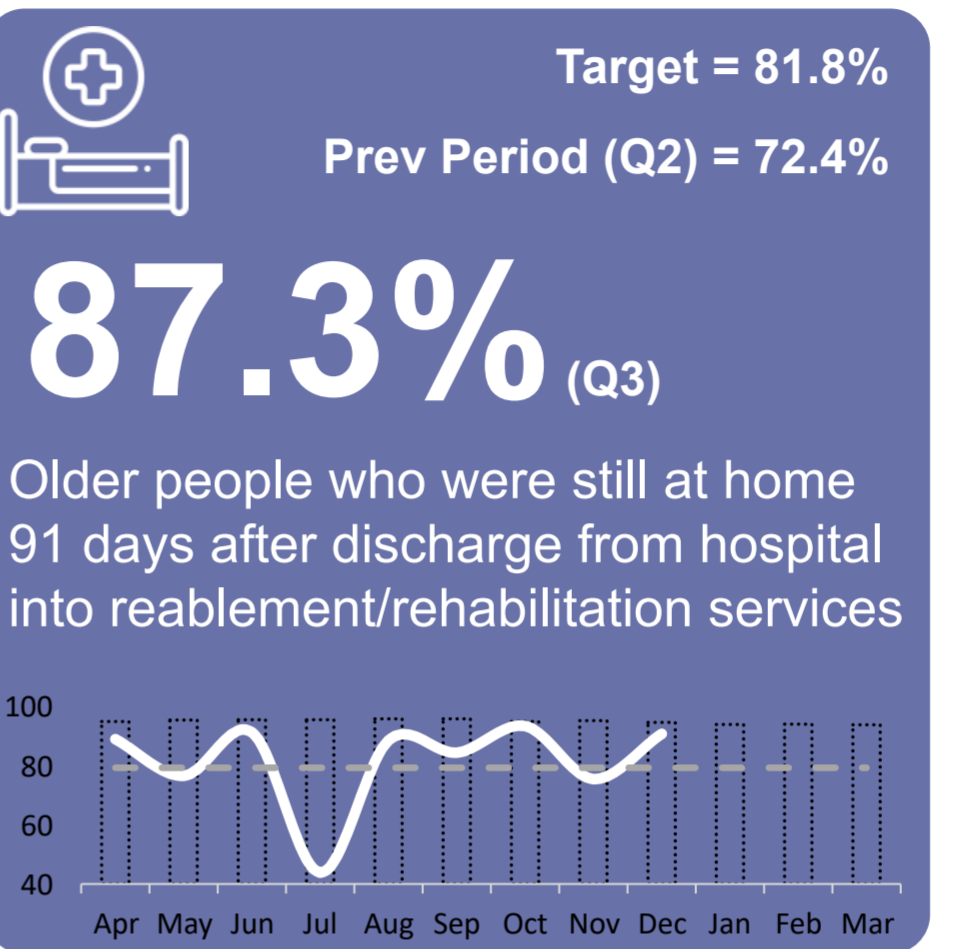
Carer assessments are undertaken to determine if a carer is eligible to receive services to support them in their caring role. These assessments are completed by Northamptonshire Carers on our behalf. Changes to the collection frameworks this year mean that this is the first year we are able to show assessments separate from reviews, previously the data showed a combination of both.

The data for the third quarter this year is appearing low, we believe this is a data quality challenge rather than a reduction in activity. We are working with Northamptonshire Carers to understand this area and support them in ensuring the data is an accurate reflection of activity, any changes will be updated in the next quarters report.



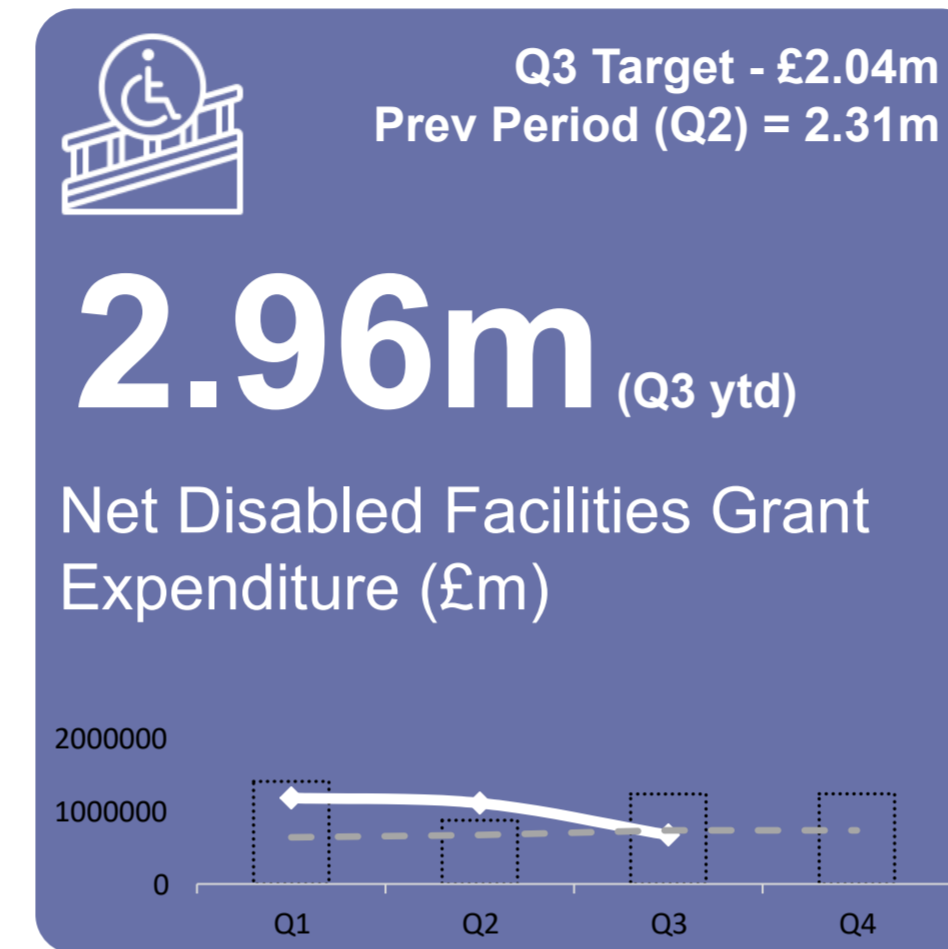
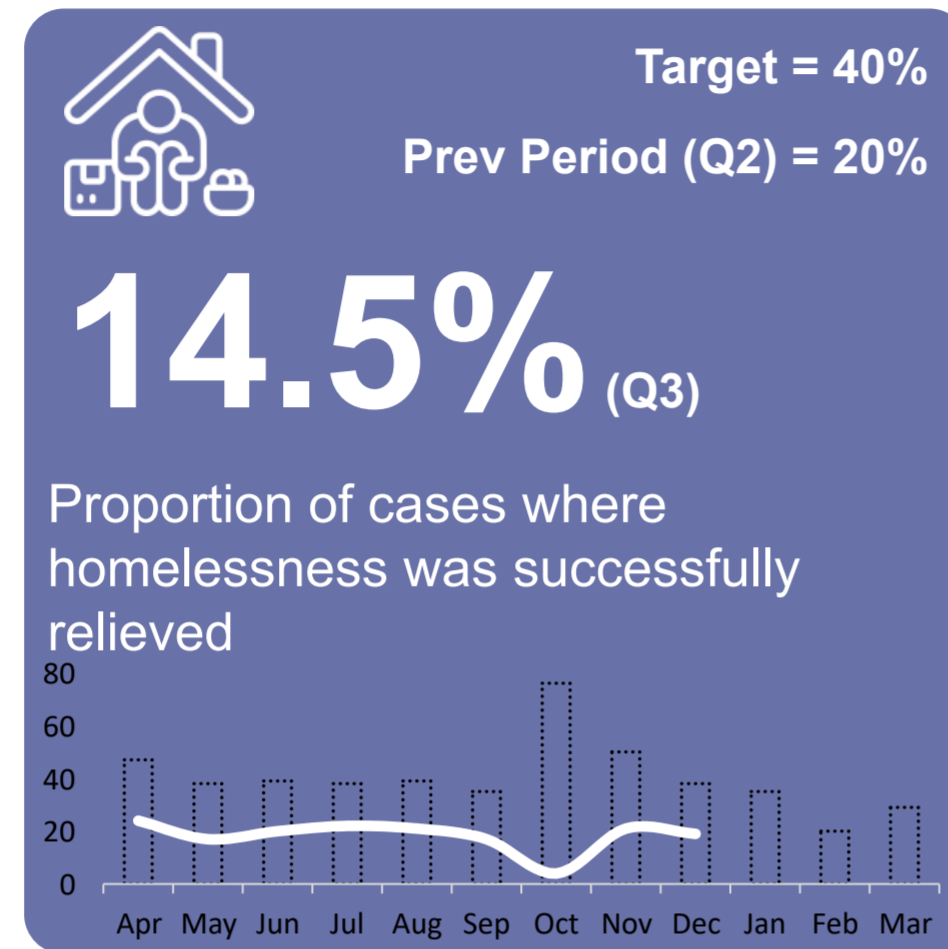
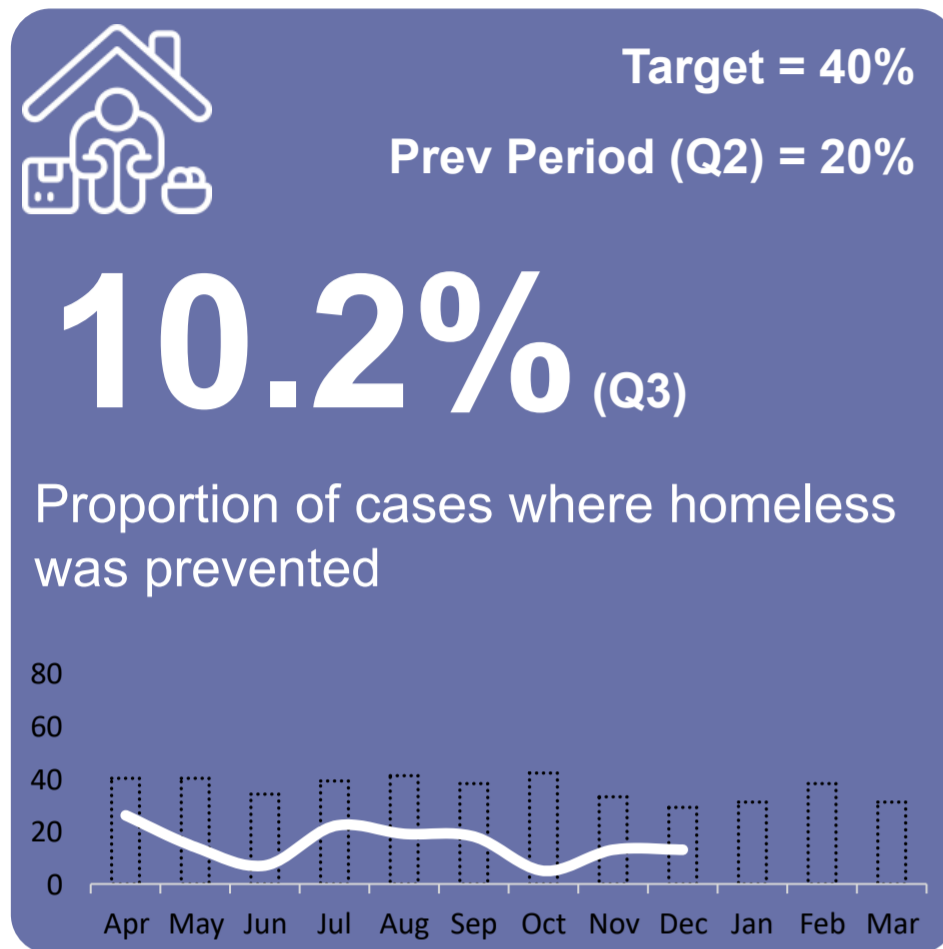
This indicator looks to monitor the timeliness of reviews for people who are in receipt of a long term service for 12 months or more following a Care Act assessment.

Although this indicator is not currently in the position we would like it to be, there have been improvement actions underway this has resulted in the performance increasing from 25% in Q1 of last year to 44.4% at the end of the 3rd quarter this year. Each of the 7 quarters in this period has seen a sustained improvement in performance, the most recent change being a +3.9% improvement in this indicator.



This indicator measures the proportion of older people who were still at home 91 days after they had been discharged from a hospital into a reablement or rehab services. Data for this indicator at the local authority level is available from the NHS Digital Secondary Uses Service (SUS) database. The SUS database is a repository for healthcare data in England that supports the NHS in the delivery of healthcare services.

The third quarter of the year has seen an increase in the level of people returning to their normal place of residence as the previous quarter, up by +14.9% from 72.4%. Performance across the first three quarters is 81%.



The Housing Solutions team are responsible for taking steps to prevent homelessness from occurring and to relieve homelessness where it occurs.

In quarter 3, 10.2% of households were prevented from becoming homeless, and 14.5% of households secured alternative accommodation to relieve their homelessness.

Actions are currently being undertaken to improve housing outcomes for households, and it is anticipated that this will improve performance in relation to prevention and relief outcomes.

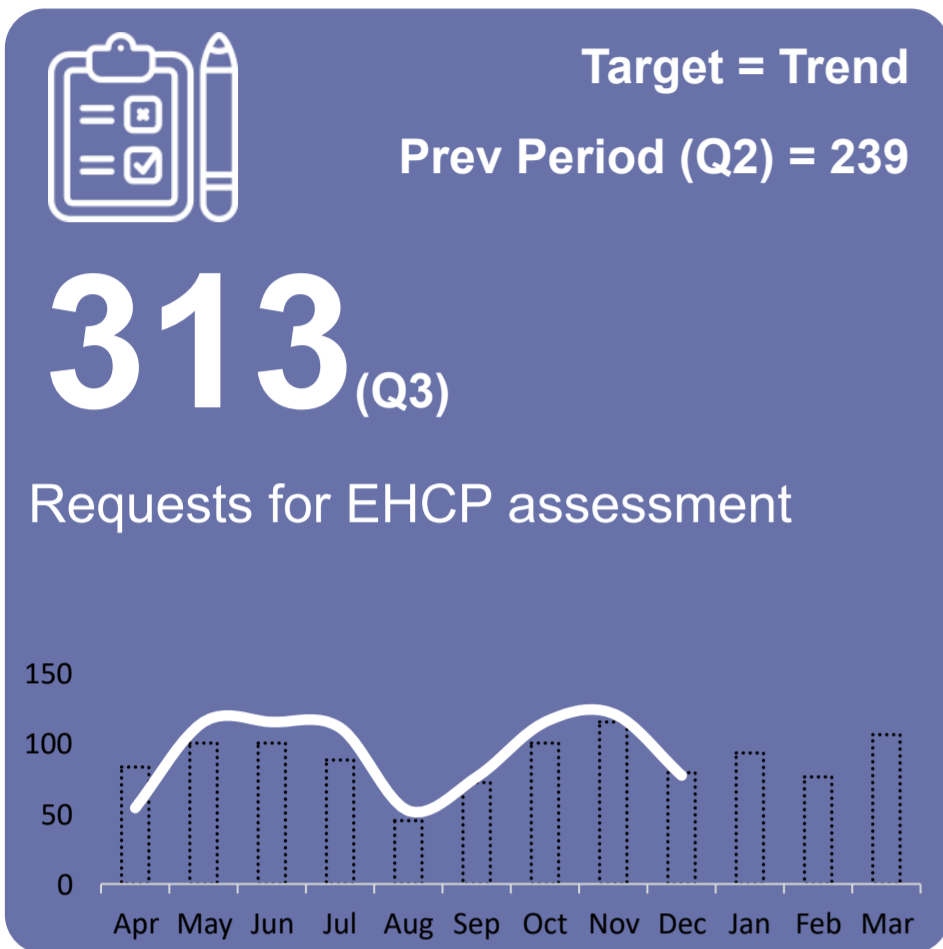
This is inclusive of a Housing Solutions service restructure which will improve efficiencies and create a focus on the prevention agenda; the implementation of the new Allocations Scheme and the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy; and the development of specific homelessness pathways for vulnerable groups, such as those who have approached due to domestic abuse, and those who are being discharged from hospital.

The Housing Solutions team will also embed and maximise key tools to prevent and relieve homelessness, including the Landlord Incentive Scheme and mediation with friends and family to enable households to remain together.

A Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is a grant administered by the local council available to fund a range of work that will help a disabled person remain in their home. It has to be supported by an occupational therapist's recommendation. The maximum amount per grant is £30,000.

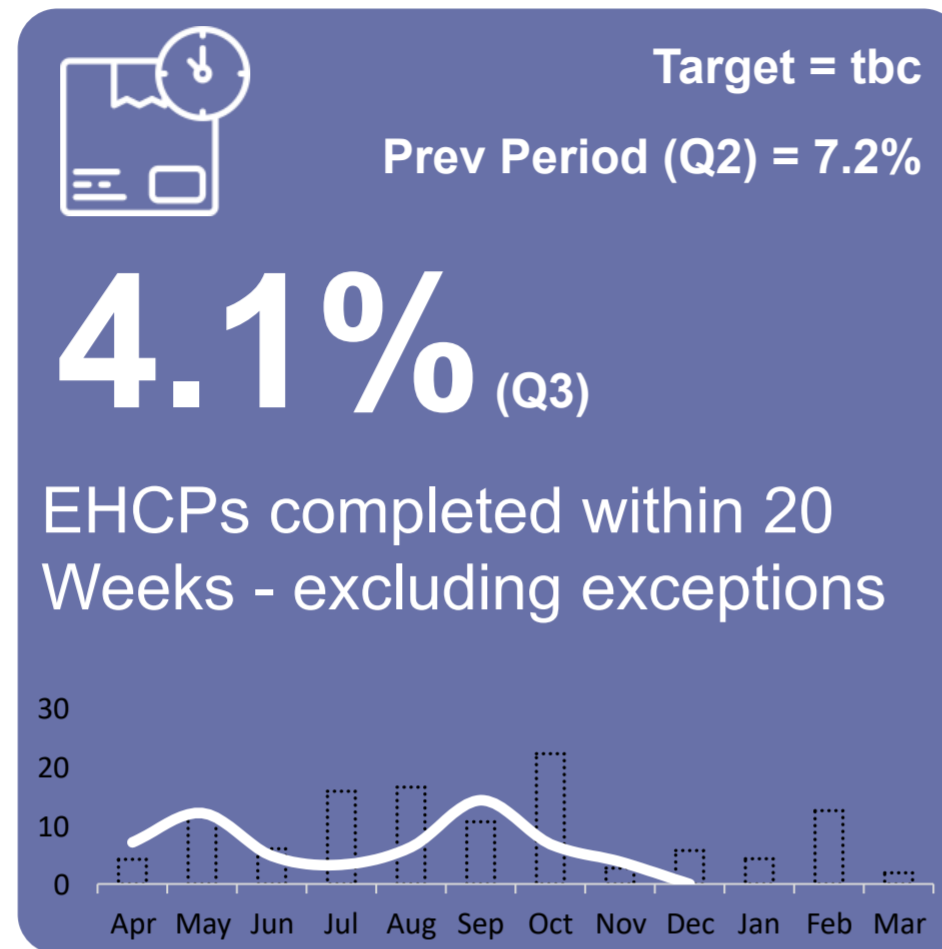
This measure seeks to monitor the expenditure against the DFG sum that the authority has to spend, we currently have an underspend from the Covid period which is now being utilised.

The Q3 position shows the total amount which includes committed spending, some of this may not be realised due to clients withdrawing from the grant approval or works being delayed into the next financial year.



Requests for statutory assessments have continued to rise since the COVID-19 pandemic and show no sign of slowing at the current time. Assessments can come from schools, other professionals, parents or a child and are made if a child's needs are beyond what the school can provide.

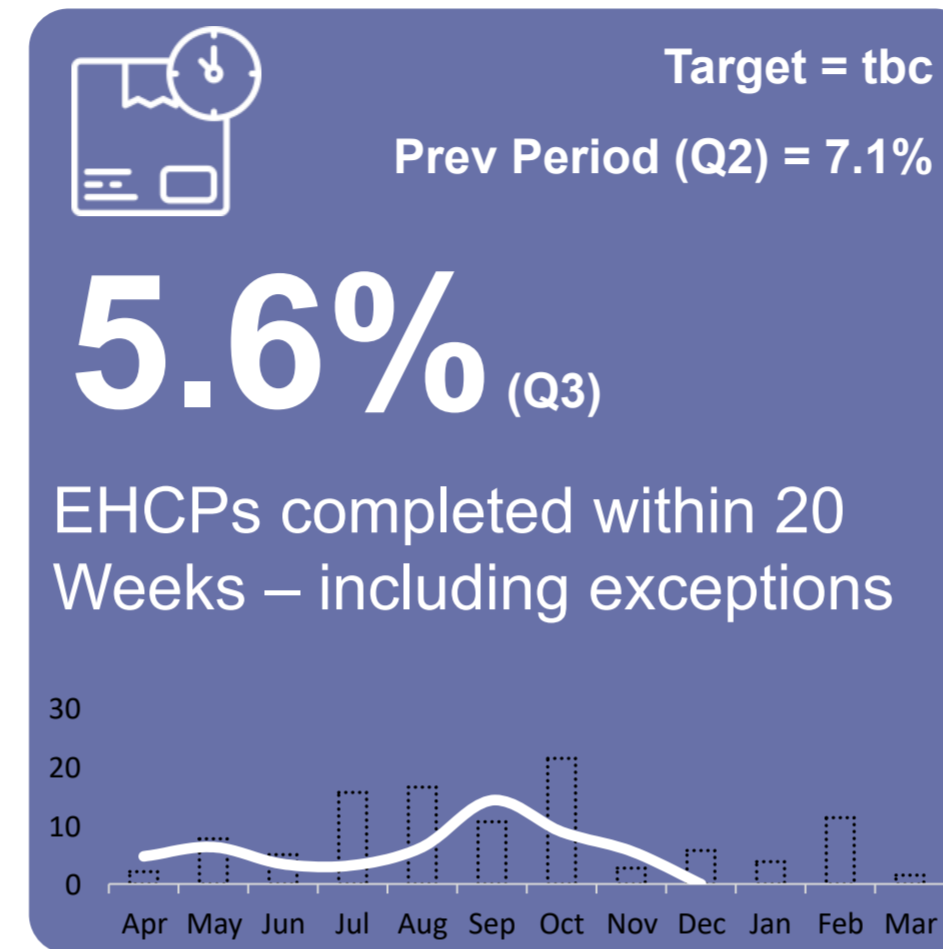
The third quarter of this year has seen 313 requests for assessment, and increase from 284 in the previous period. However, most requests come from schools and therefore periods of the year when schools are closed result in fewer requests – There has been 836 requests in the year to date, an increase of 13.5% when compared to the same period last year.



These two measures demonstrate performance between a request being received and an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) being completed, the national timeframe for this process is 20 weeks and the measure is split to show all assessments (including exceptions) and a separate measure that shows performance if those with exceptions are excluded from the calculation.

Performance in this area is affected by a number of different factors that contribute to the process of completing an EHCP, information is required from partner organisations as well as advice being received from professionals. In quarter 3 we issued 124 EHCPs (-45 from last quarter), of these 2 had exceptions. The resulting performance against these two indicators was 7 plans being completed within the 20 week timeframe.

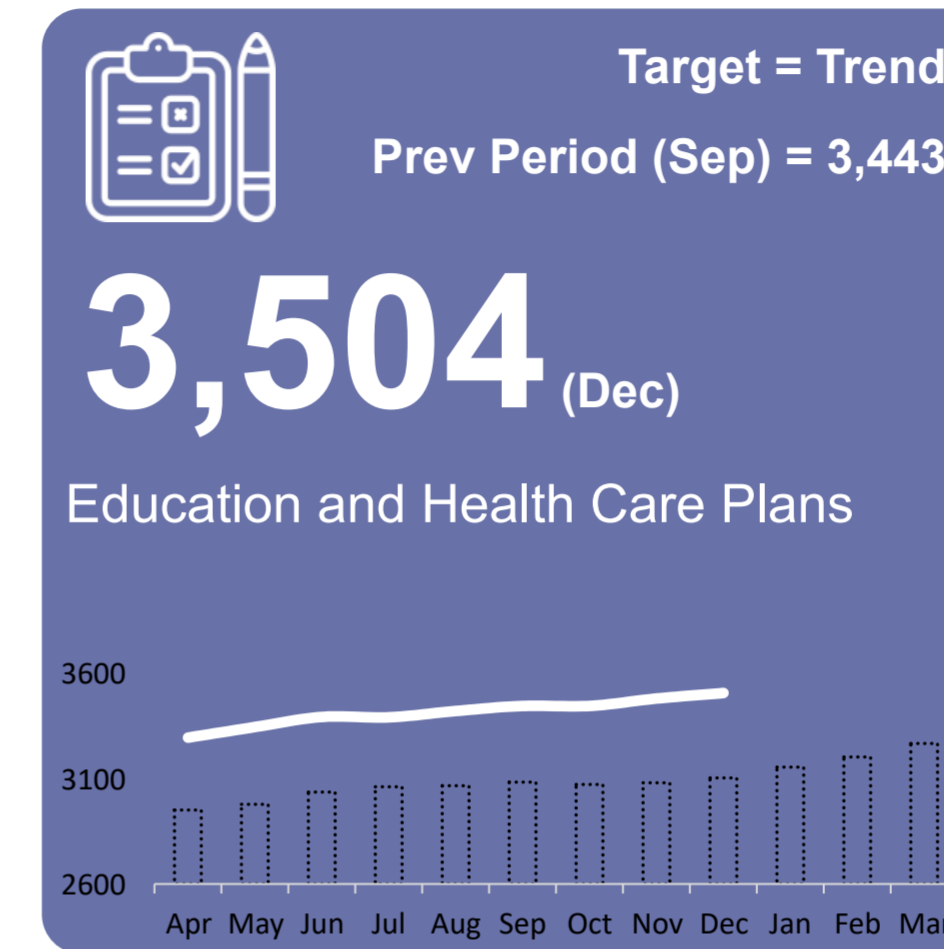
WNC has seen a significant increase in requests for EHCPs which is above the national increase. The main reason that EHCPs cannot be completed on time, is that professional advice is not received on time. This includes Educational Psychology assessments, social care assessments and specialist health assessments. The Council has commissioned additional EP capacity and is reviewing the efficiency of internal processes to help address this issue. It will take a number of months before the backlog is cleared and we see consistently improved performance in this area.



An education, health and care plan (EHCP) is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support that is ordinarily available.

EHCPs identify educational, health and social care needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.

The number of children on EHCPs has continued to rise locally and nationally over recent years, the current number who are on a plan in West Northants is 3,504, this is an increase of 402 (13%) from the same point last year.

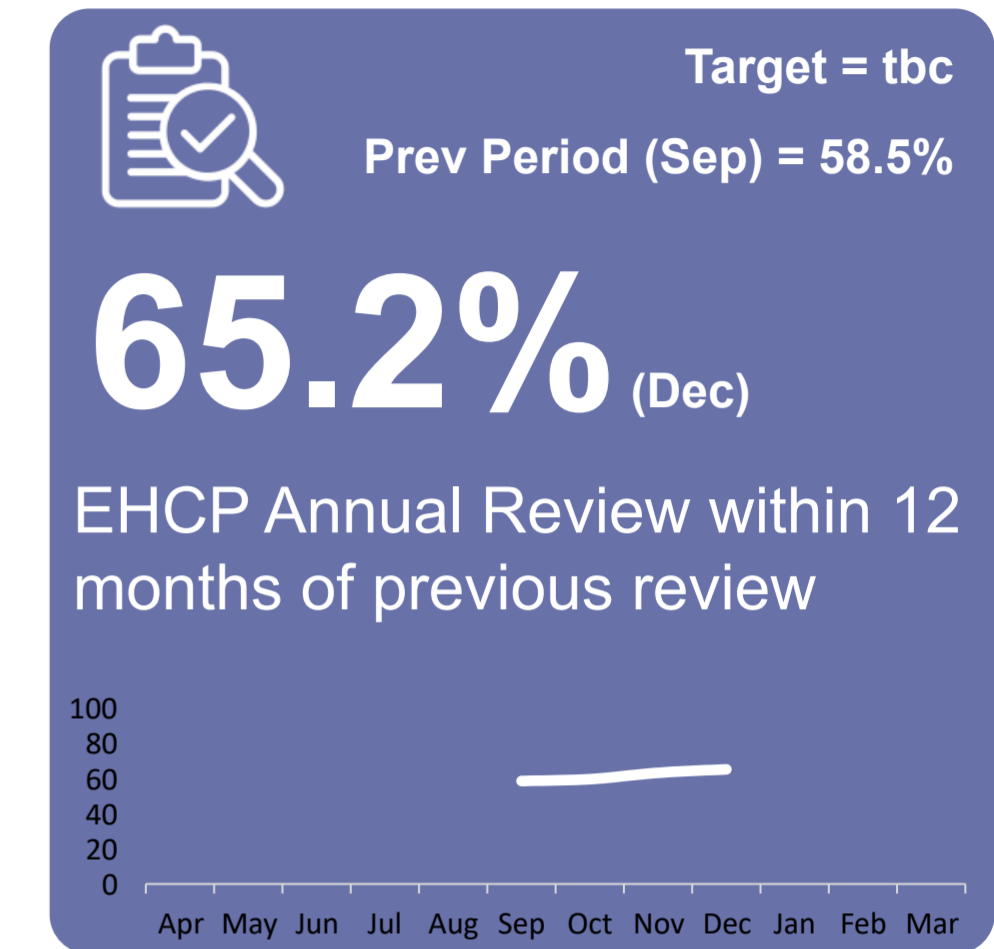


This indicator monitors our performance of our duty to complete an annual review of every EHCP within a year of either

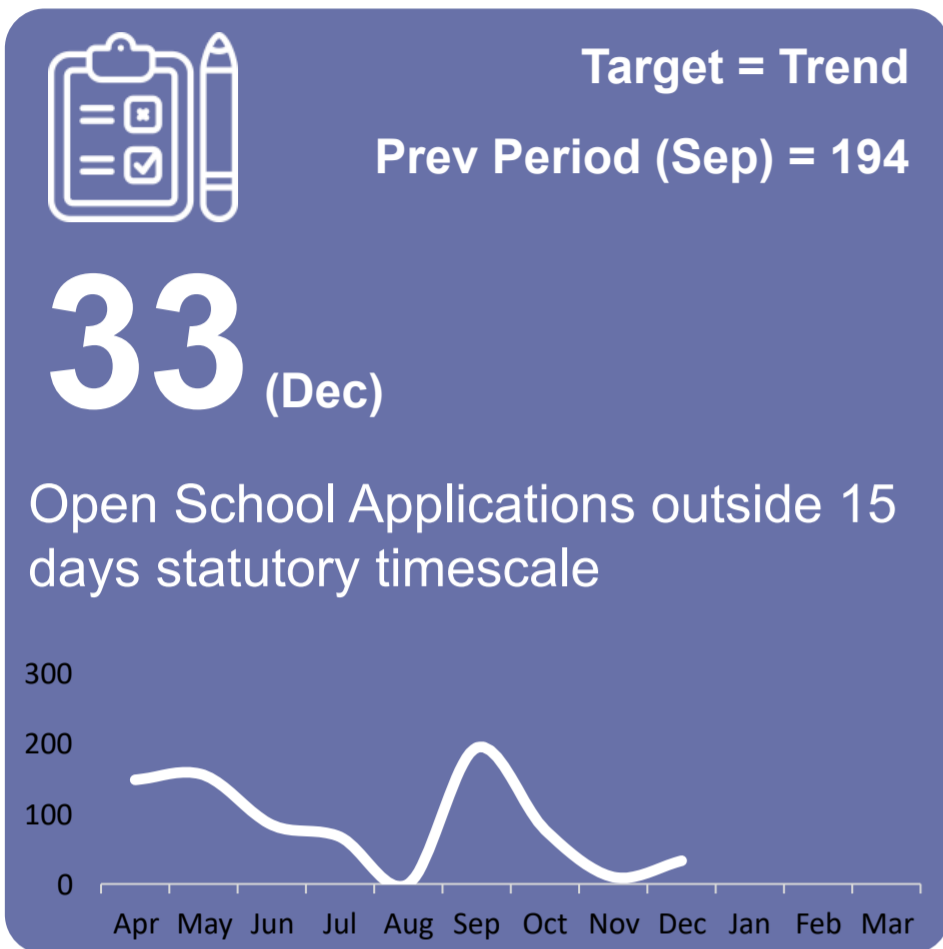
- the last review being concluded; or
- the issue of the plan for the first time

The increasing number of EHCPs in place increases pressure on the service to undertake reviews within appropriate timescales, despite the additional demand of increasing EHCPs performance of this measure improving, with the current performance showing 65.2% of reviews at the end of December had taken place within 12 months of the previous review, up from 58.5% at the end of Sept.

Additionally at the end of Dec 77.1% of children due a review had had one in the past 12 months.



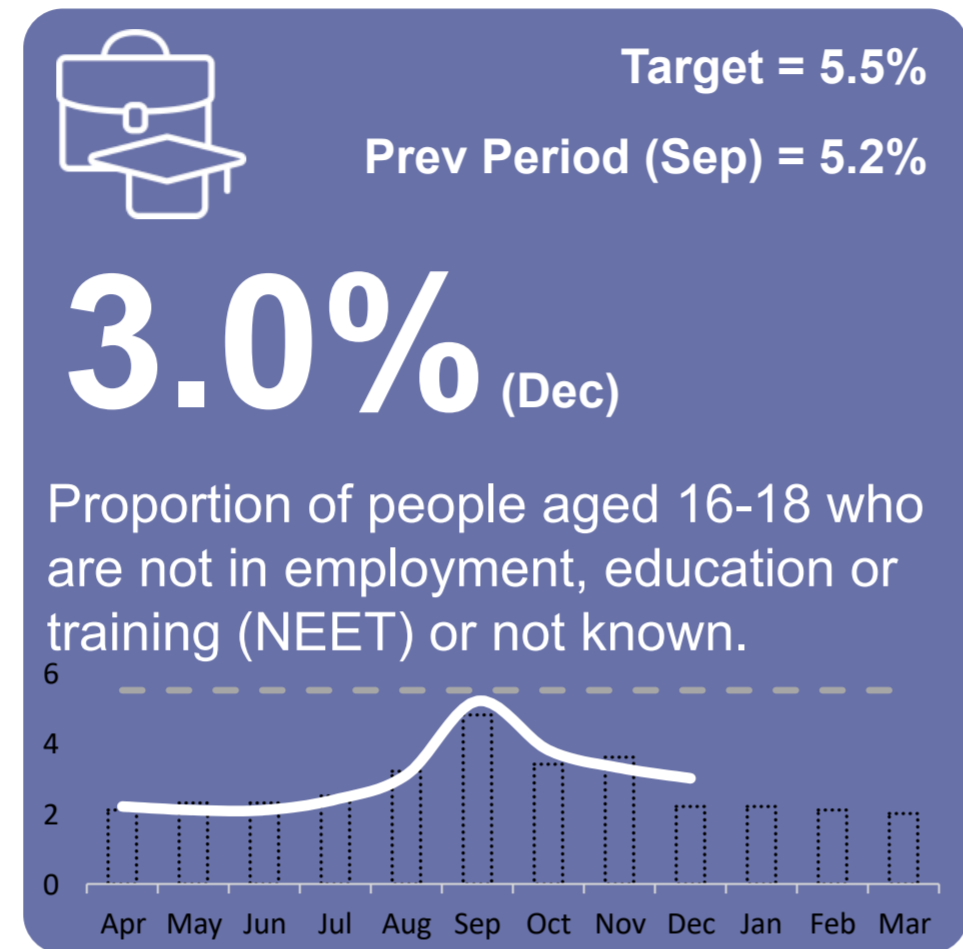
Additionally at the end of Dec 77.1% of children due a review had had one in the past 12 months.



This measure reports against those school applications which are currently open, relate to children without a school place and are outside of the 15 days statutory timescale for placement. This data does not include the normal Reception and Year 7 in-take application period or those applicants who are attending a WNC school currently and are seeking a transfer.

This indicator is impacted by two things, the volume of applications received and being processed and secondly the availability of school places to meet the in-year demand. The position at the end of September is a seasonal high point which will always show a high figure.

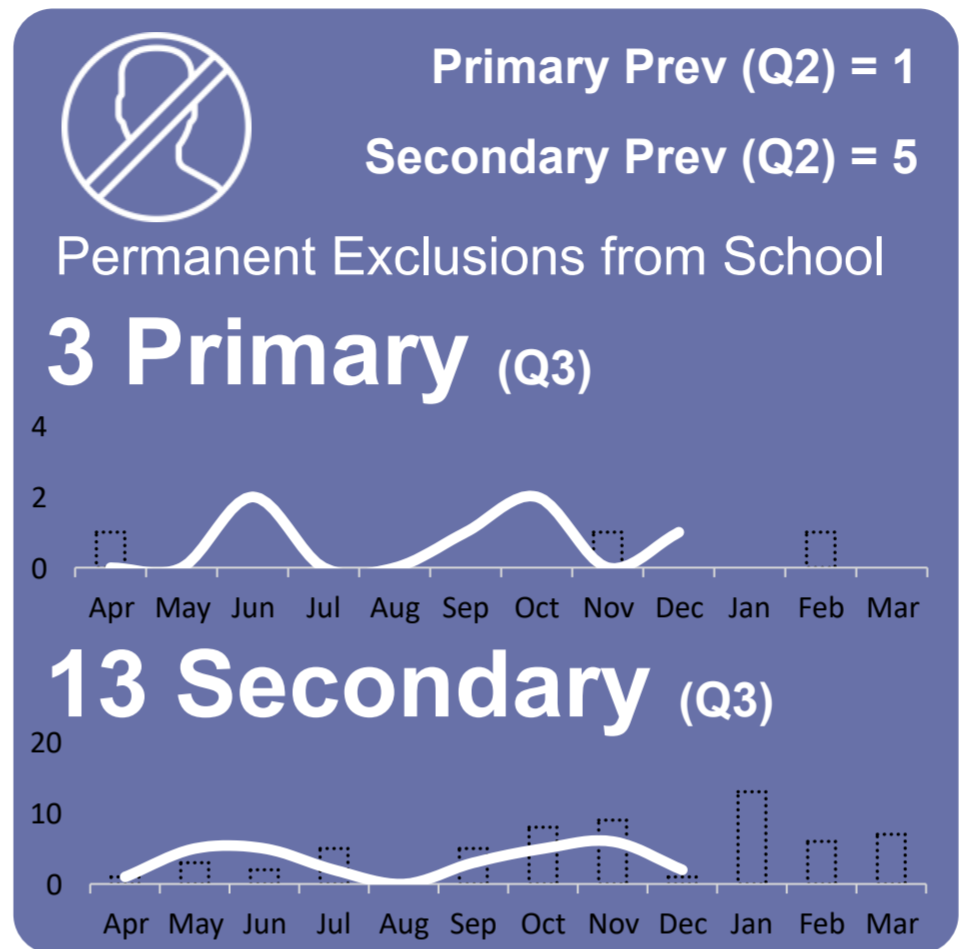
The position at the end of December shows there were 33 applications outside the time frame at that point in time, this is partly impacted by schools closing for the holiday period.



This indicator shows the proportion of young people (aged 16-18) who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) or their status is 'not known'.

The latest position at the end of December shows that 3.0% of young people are either NEET or not known, a decrease from 5.2% at the end of September and is 0.8% higher than the same point last year.

The high point recorded in September is a normal seasonal high due to a brand new cohort and initial reporting having to be collected from schools in Sept. The vast majority of the increase in this report is due to the 'not known' cohort which reduces over October and November as locations are identified.



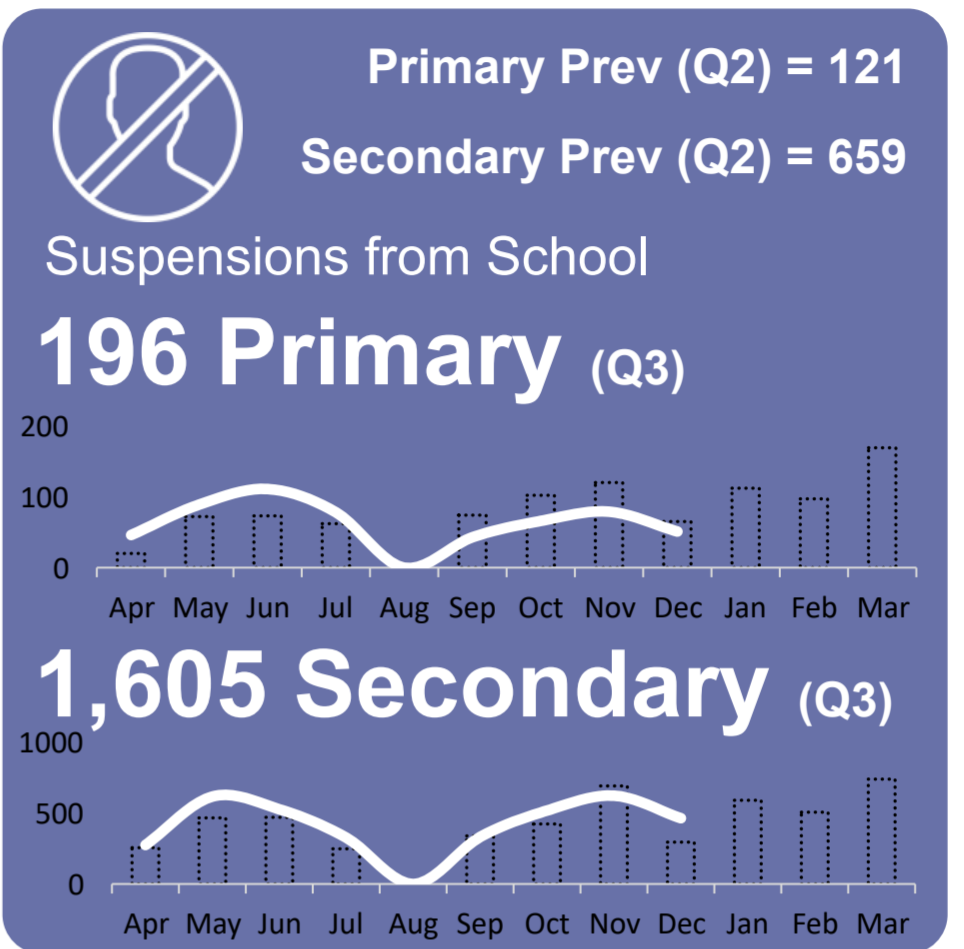
These metrics provide an overview of exclusions and suspensions across both the primary and secondary phases of education. For both measures, it is normal that secondary phases result in a greater number of exclusions and suspensions. The data being presented here is draft information covering October to December and is subject to change when the school census data with this information is received.

Exclusions: The third quarter this year has resulted in 3 primary (0.007 per 100 pupils) and 13 secondary (0.04 per 100 pupils) exclusions. However, it should be noted that during this period, five primary aged pupils were placed, as dual registered pupils, in The Spires Academy to prevent permanent exclusion.

The latest comparator information available for the 2022-23 academic year shows that the national rate per 100 pupils for exclusions is 0.02 (primary) and 0.20 (secondary).

Suspensions: the third quarter this year has seen 196 suspensions in primary (0.52 per 100 pupils), resulting in 345.5 days of education lost and 1,605 suspensions in secondary (5.3 per 100 pupils), resulting in 2,843 days of education lost. The most common reason for suspensions this quarter was disruptive behaviour.

The latest comparator information available for the 2022-23 academic year shows that the national rate per 100 pupils for suspensions is 1.72 (primary) and 17.74 (secondary).

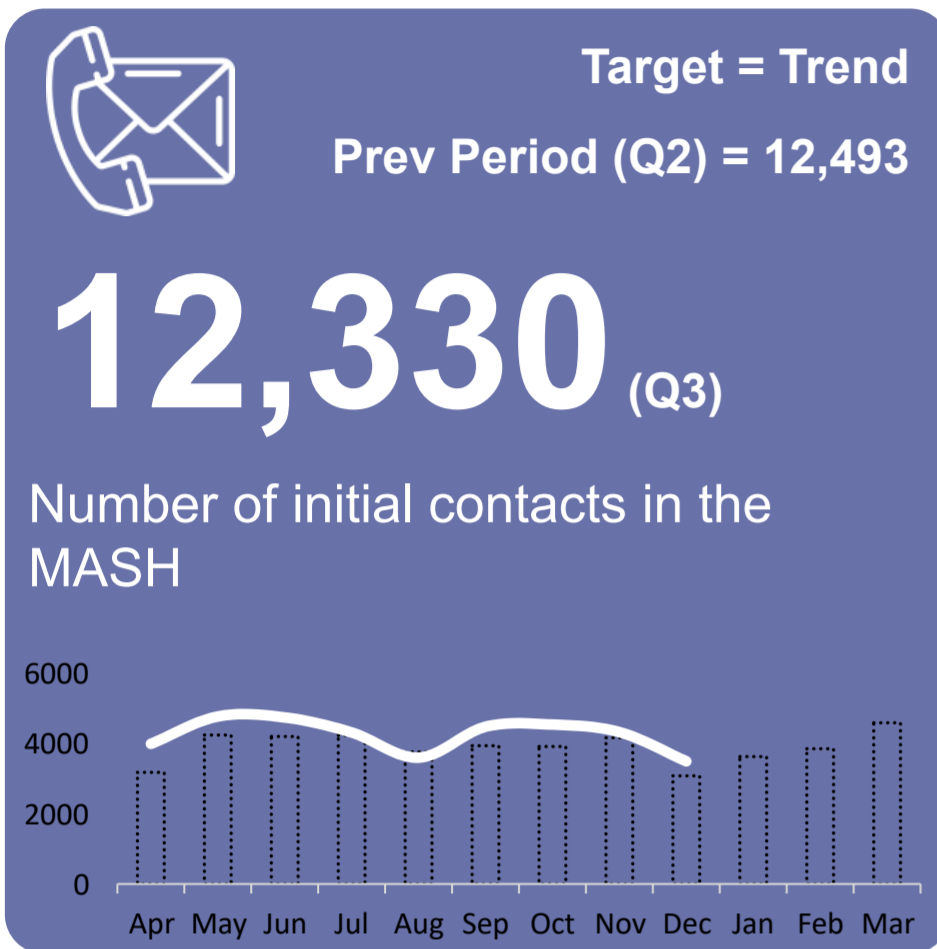


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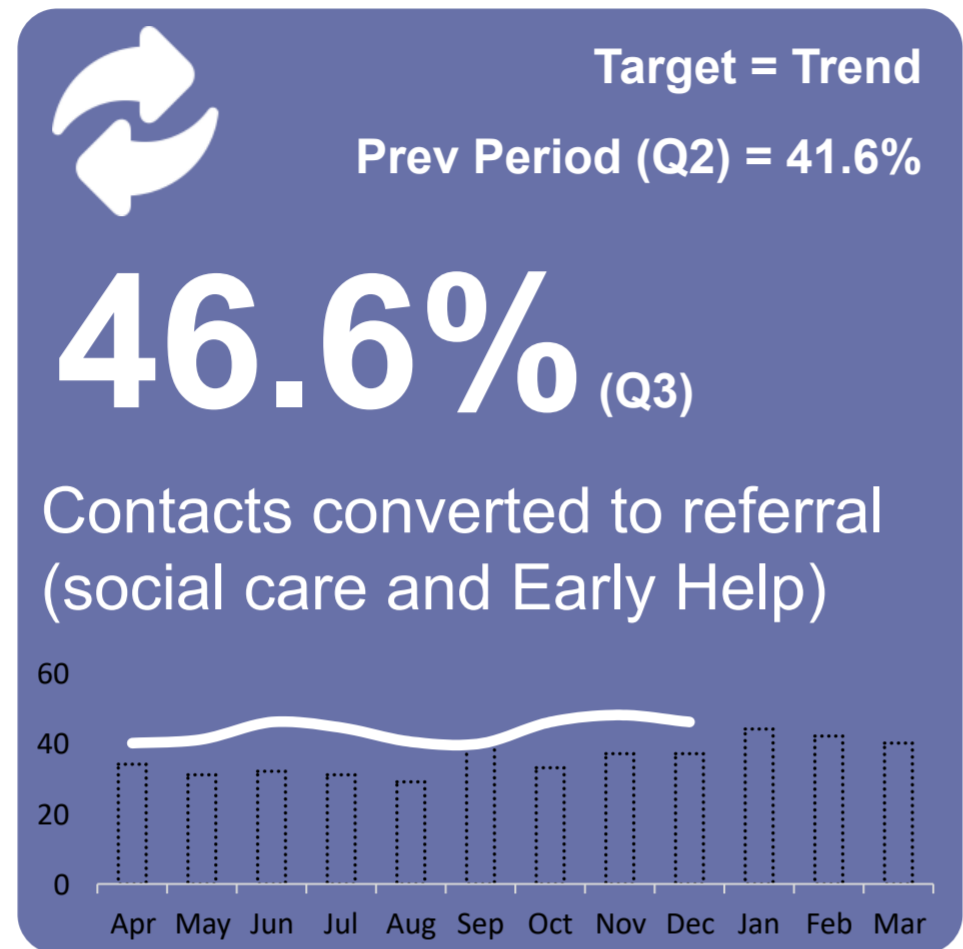
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This indicator monitors the volume of contacts that are received in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Contacts continue to be high with 12,330 contacts received in quarter 3, a similar number to the previous quarter, but is higher than the same period last year (+1,203). The first three quarters this year have resulted in 38,308 referrals, an increase of 3,699 from the same period the previous year (34,609).

Of the contacts received in the MASH the majority of these continue to have no further action (NFA) as the outcome, 57% of the contacts across the first nine months of the year.

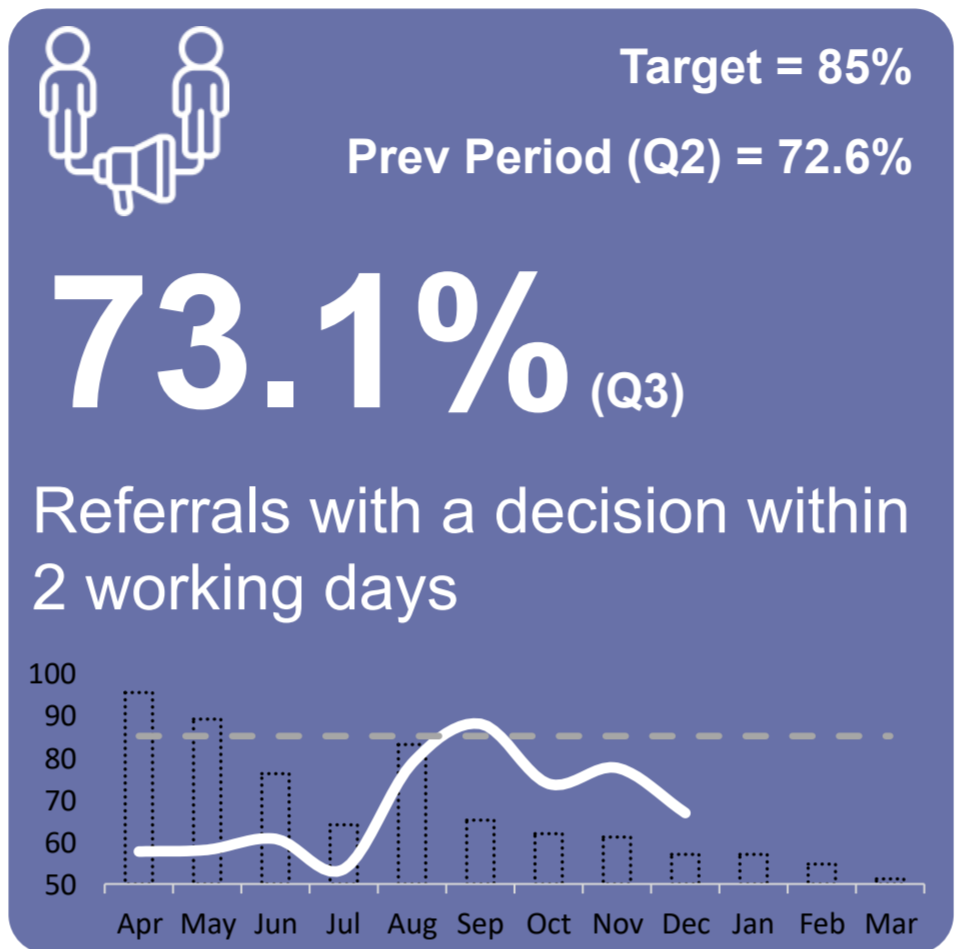


This measure shows the proportion of initial contacts that are converted to a referral to either social care or early help.

Social Care
From the 12,330 initial contacts received in the second quarter of the year 18.4% of those have been converted to a referral to social care, this relates to 2,272 referrals.

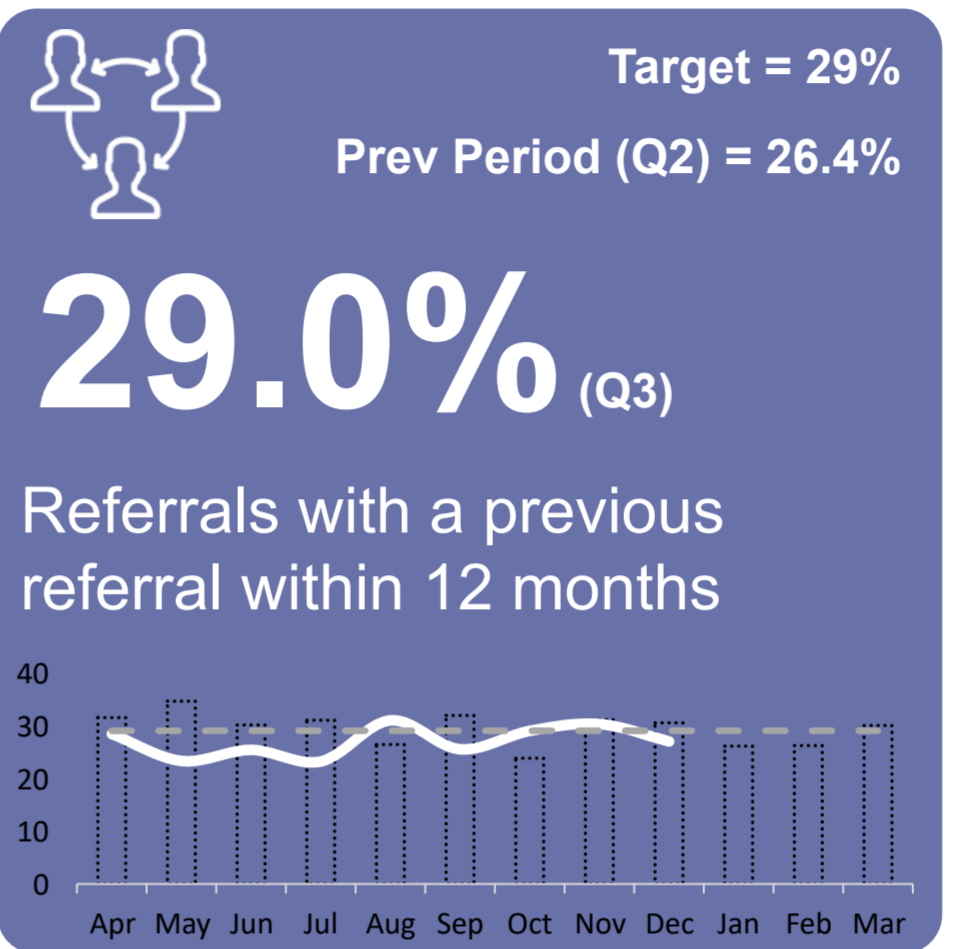
Early Help
28.2% of initial contacts from the second quarter resulted in a referral to Early Help, this relates to 3,471 referrals.

Combined the two areas increased the conversion rate by 5% from the previous quarter.



A referral is a request for assessment/ social care service and a contact is information given to social care about a situation which does not meet the threshold for referral, for example notifying that the child has gone missing or domestic violence notifications from police if a child was present. Contacts are logged to give a complete history of the child but only count as a referral where they have resulted in an assessment.

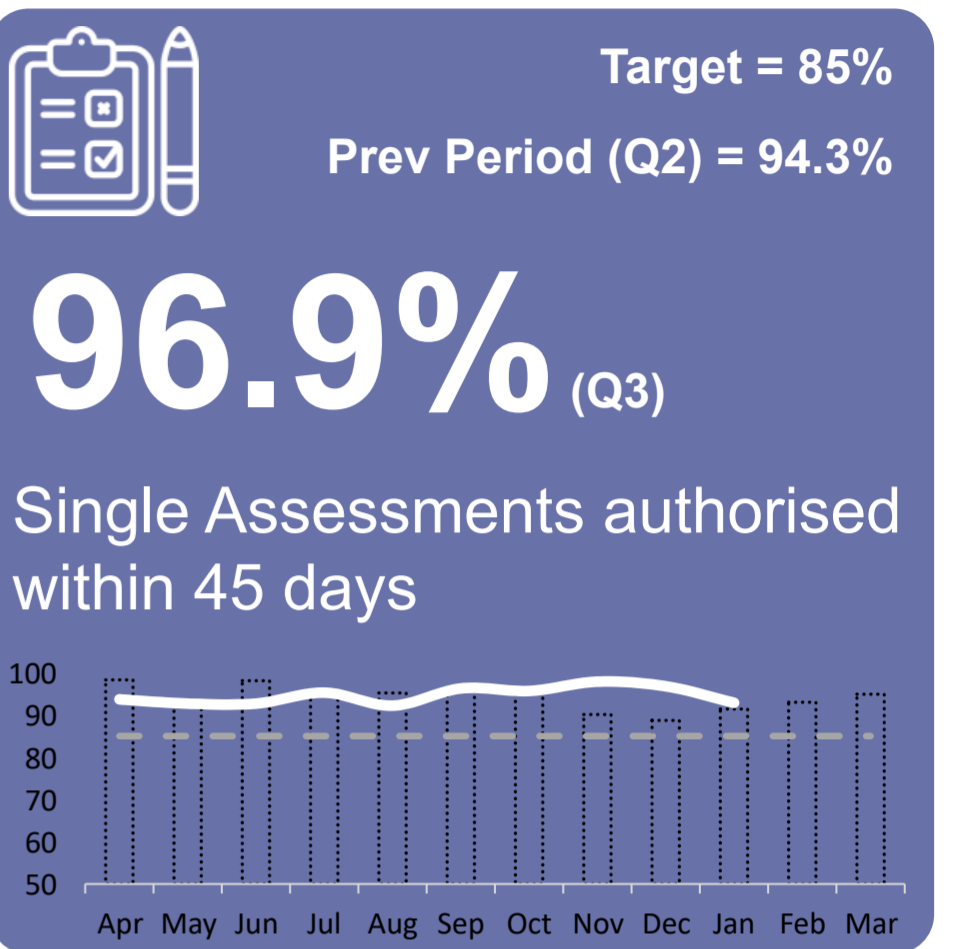
There is ongoing improvement work in the MASH to effectively manage timeliness and increase quality of the response. Recruitment and retention of staff is a priority focus and more recently recruitment to vacant positions has been successful.



Re-referrals have remained similar to the previous quarter and continue to fluctuate but remain better than target this year. It remains an area of ongoing focus with audit and review for learning.

The dedicated education roles in MASH are working positively with schools to ensure appropriate referrals and compliments from schools about their roles are increasing.

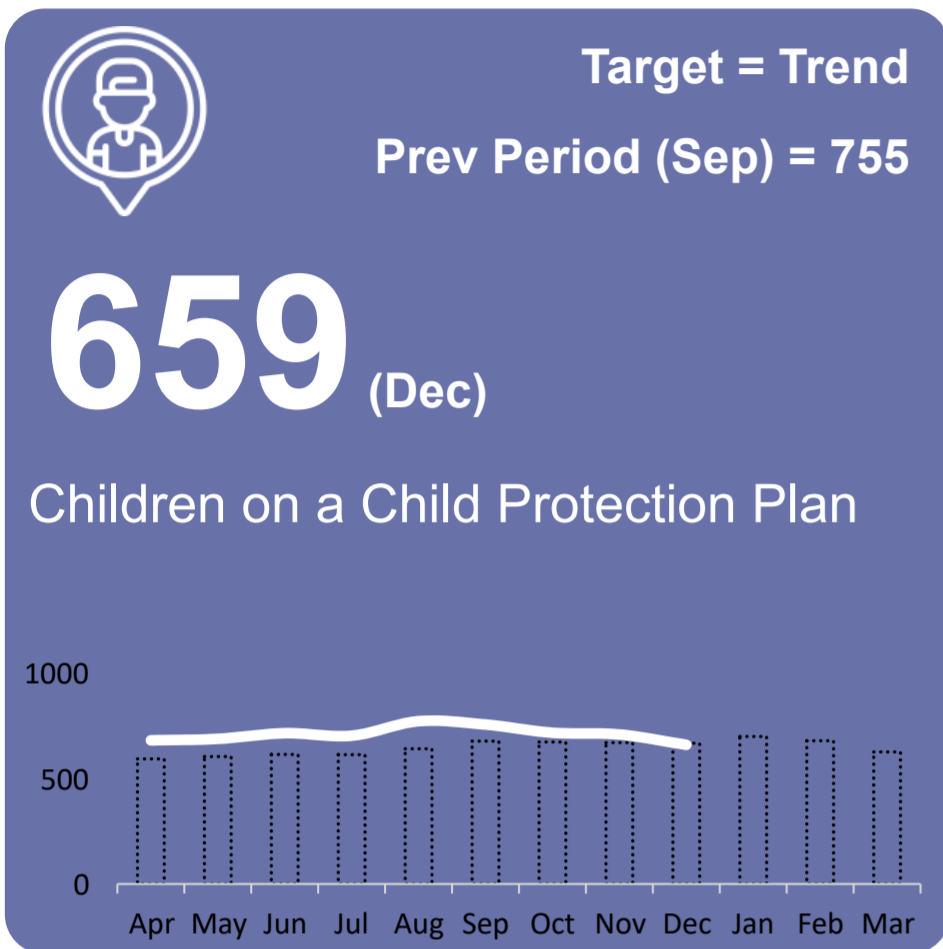
Steps have been taken to strengthen the Early Help partnerships with Partnership Support Team (Early Help MASH) being placed in the MASH pods and a leaner step down process. It is anticipated that the strengthened model in MASH and developments in CFSS/Early Help will continue to support appropriate reduction going forward.



Assessment timescales remain consistently above target and national average, decreasing slightly to 96.8% this month.

All managers monitor this very closely via daily reports. A narrative is provided for cases that go beyond 45 days and this remains a very small minority. More appropriate staffing levels being achieved and sustained in the DAAT.

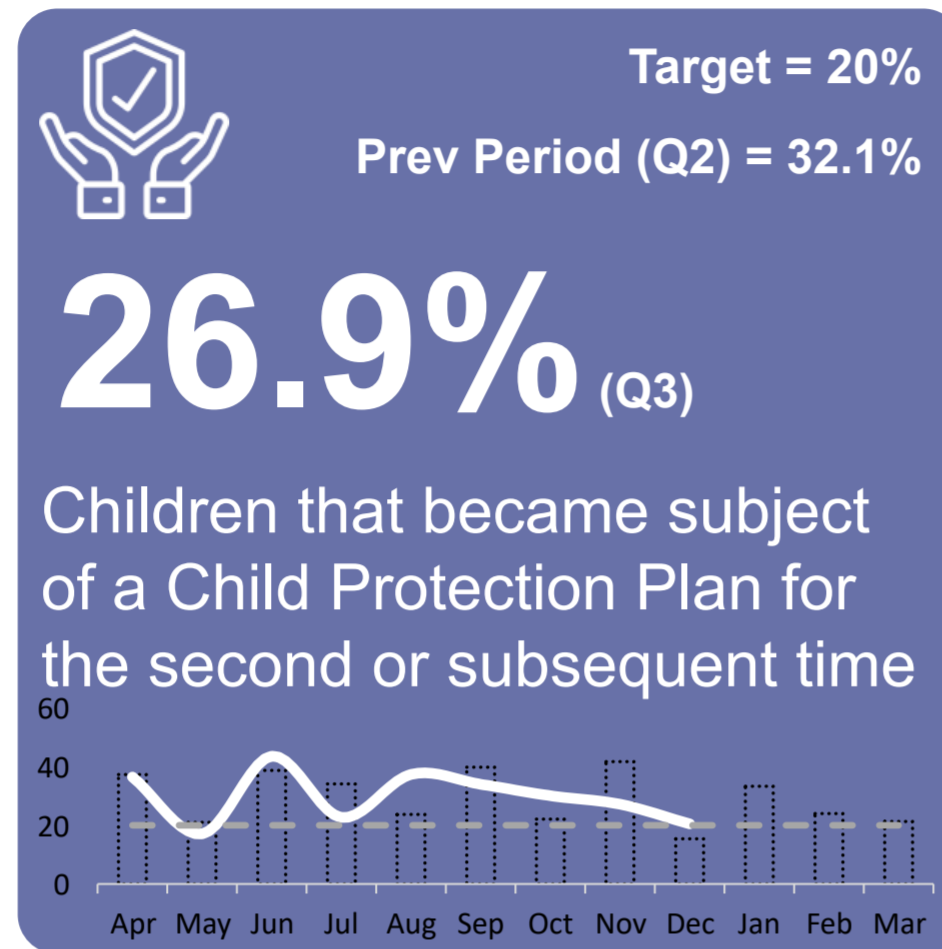
In addition to timeliness, we work on increasing the quality of assessments and more effective use of Signs of Safety in our interventions.



The purpose of a child protection plan is to facilitate and make explicit a co-ordinated approach to:

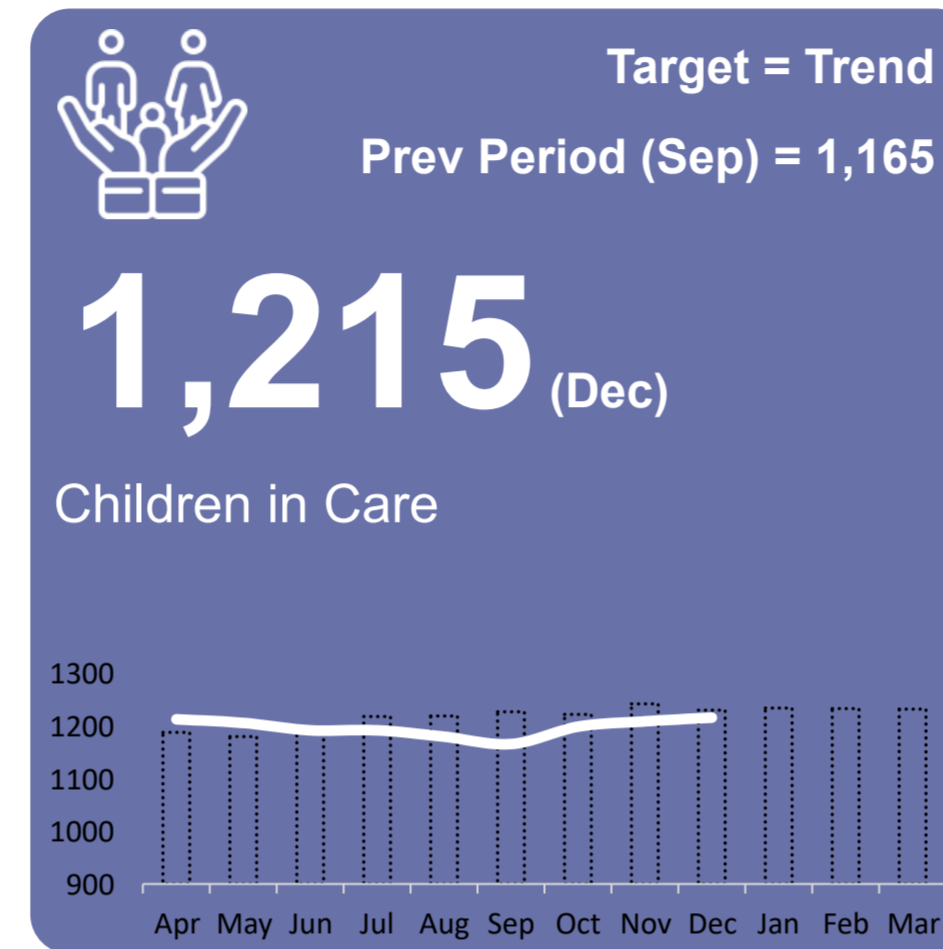
- Ensure that each child in the household is safe and prevent them from suffering further harm;
- Promote the child's welfare, health and development;
- Provided it is in the best interests of the child, to support the family and wider family members to safeguard and promote the welfare of their child.

The number of children on a plan has reduced each month this quarter after an overall increase in the previous 12 months. Currently there are 759 children on a plan, which is a decrease of 76 children from the end of the period quarter and is similar to the 666 at the same point last year.



This measure continues to be variable and, on occasion, too high although performance has improved for the last two months. 8 of 39 plans starting in December are for children who had been on a plan before. If looking at children repeating within 2 years, the figure is 15.4%.

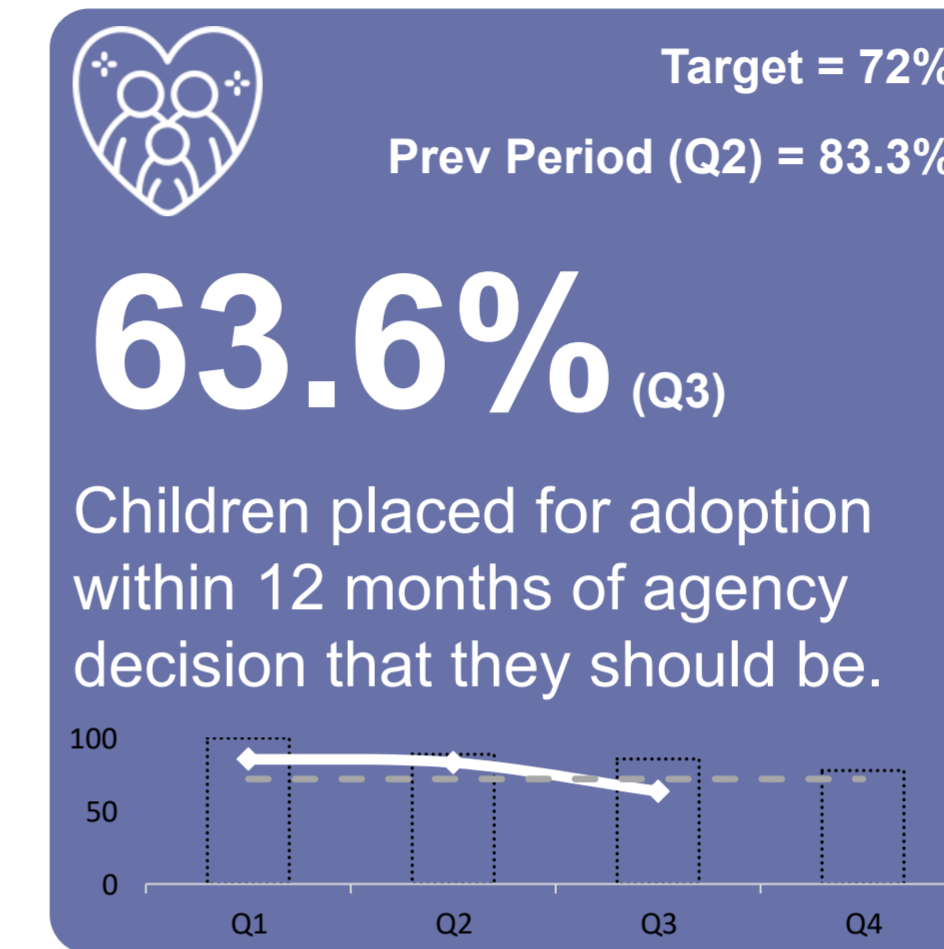
Cases are regularly reviewed and findings so far indicate that the pandemic and rising cost of living may have contributed to increased stresses and pressure for families, consequently escalating their needs. Presenting issues are mostly associated with neglect and varying degrees of disguised compliance. Neglect subgroup now operational and training in place for staff.



This measure monitors the number of children currently in care of the authority.

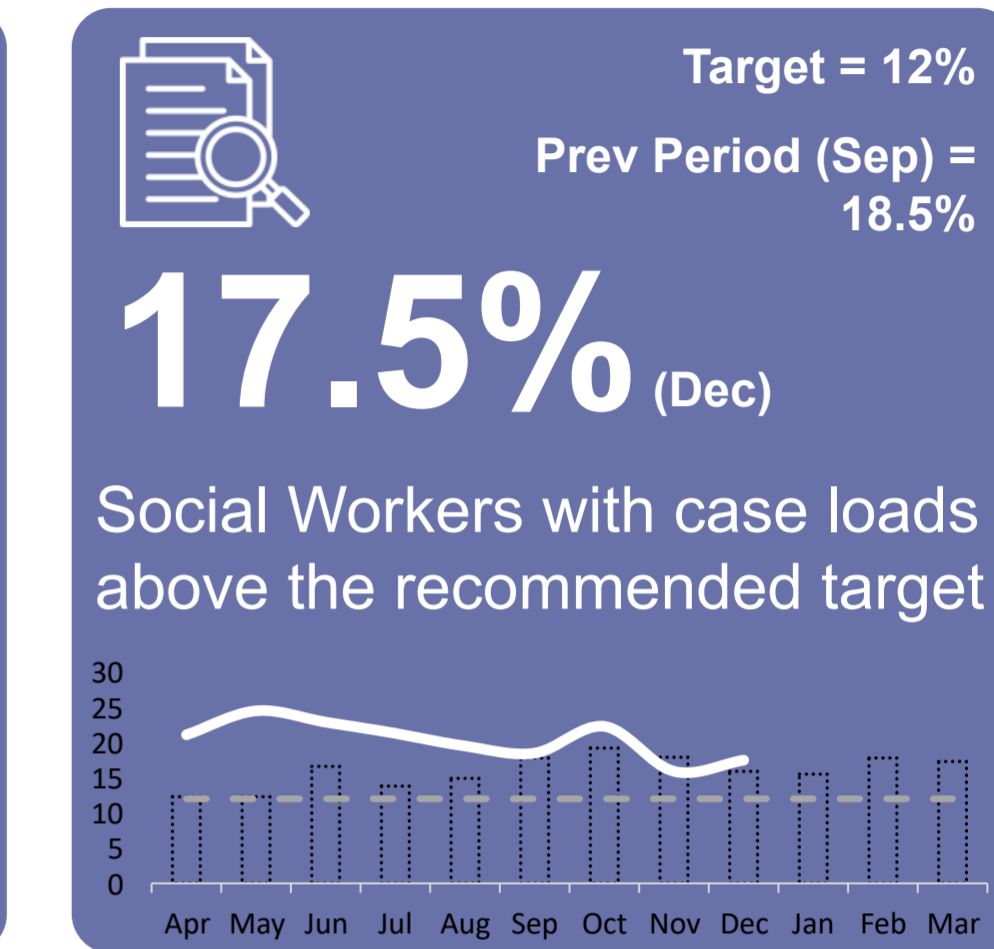
At the end of December there were 1,215 children in care, this number has increased each month this quarter after falling in the proceeding 3 months and is lower than the same point 12 months ago (1,229) and a reduction from a high point of 1,233 at the end of January.

When looking at the current number of children in care as a rate of the population, for Northamptonshire, at the end of September this is 68.1 per 10,000 population, this compares to the national average of 70 per 10,000.



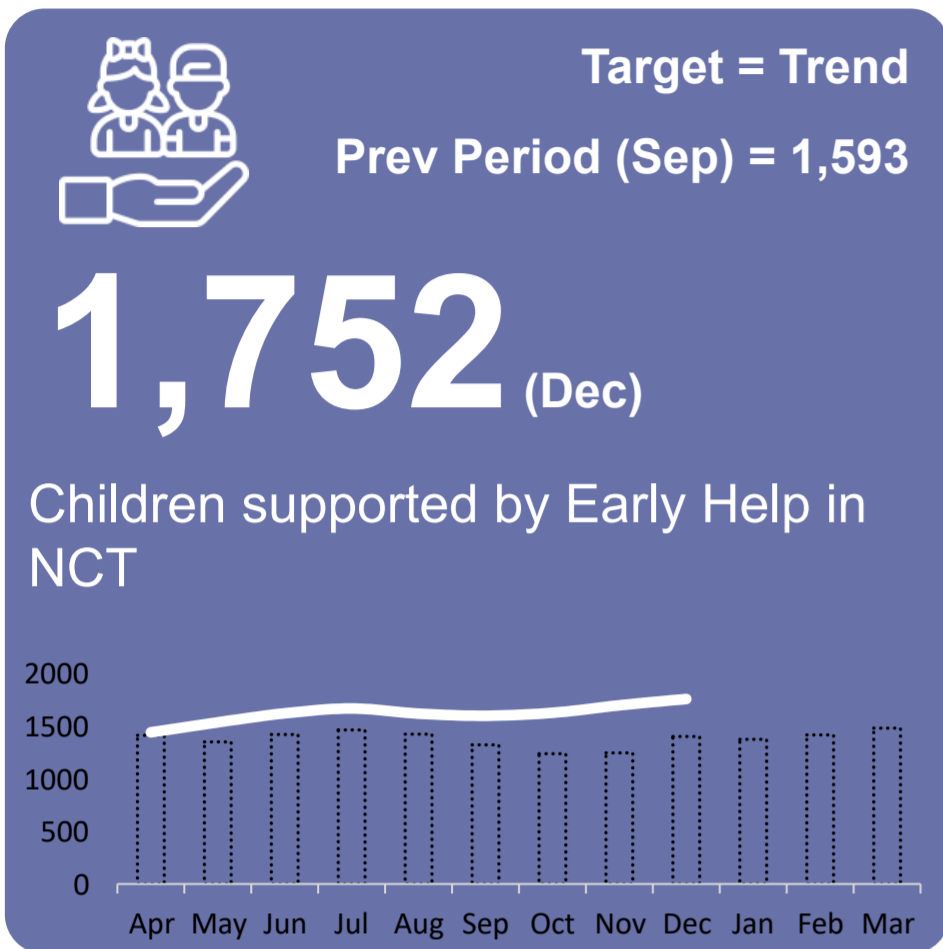
Strengthened family finding and matching processes have been implemented which alongside improved permanency tracking arrangements have supported timely decision making process and ability to progress adoption placements. The use of foster to adopt placements have also positively influenced this performance indicator.

Performance of this indicator can fluctuate considerably from period to period due to small numbers. This quarters performance relates to 11 children who have been placed for adoption, taking the total number this year to 25 adoptions with 75% being within 12 months of agency decision.



September sees another improvement in workers with caseloads above target to 17.5%, a 1.0% improvement in the position reported at the end of September.

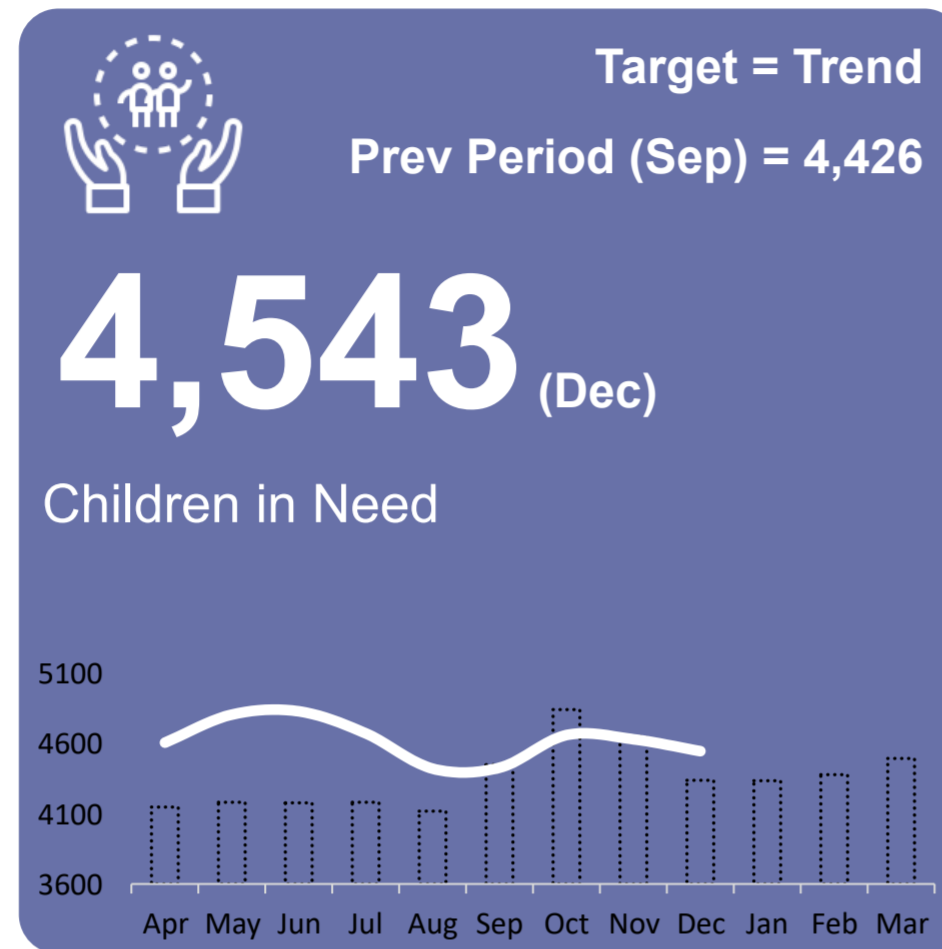
Three managed teams provide additional capacity in managing the cases open to the Safeguarding service to support business needs and ensure manageable caseloads, however, the pressure remains high. The recruitment drive remains central to implementation of the workforce strategy. The area with the issue continues to be Safeguarding where recruitment and retention has been an issue in recent months, with an action plan for recruitment and retention in progress. The last few weeks have seen additional social workers recruited.



This measure is in place to monitor the number of children being supported by Early Help service provision in NCT. Early help is in place to ensure that the right help and support is available to families as soon as it is needed, it is open and accessible to families with children and young people of any age.

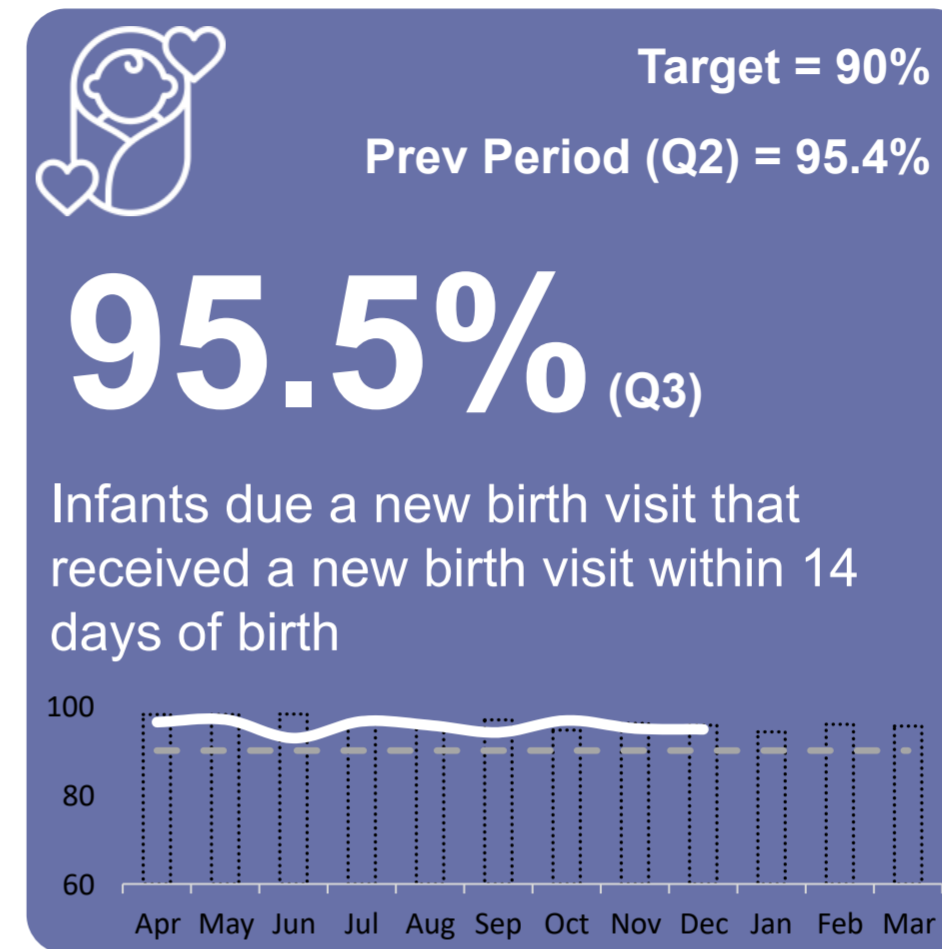
The number in the caseload has fluctuated over the past 12 months but has remained within a similar range, however this is now showing signs of sustained increase

At the end of December 1,752 children were being supported, which is higher than the same point last year and also the end the pervious quarter.



Children in Need are those assessed as needing help and protection as a result of risks to their development or health. This group includes children on a child in need plans, children on child protection plans, children looked after by local authorities, care leavers and disabled children. Children in need include young people aged 18 or over who continue to receive care, accommodation or support from children’s services and unborn children.

The current number of children in need in Northamptonshire is 4,543, an increase from the previous quarter of 4,426 and is higher than the same point last year when the CIN number was 4,336.

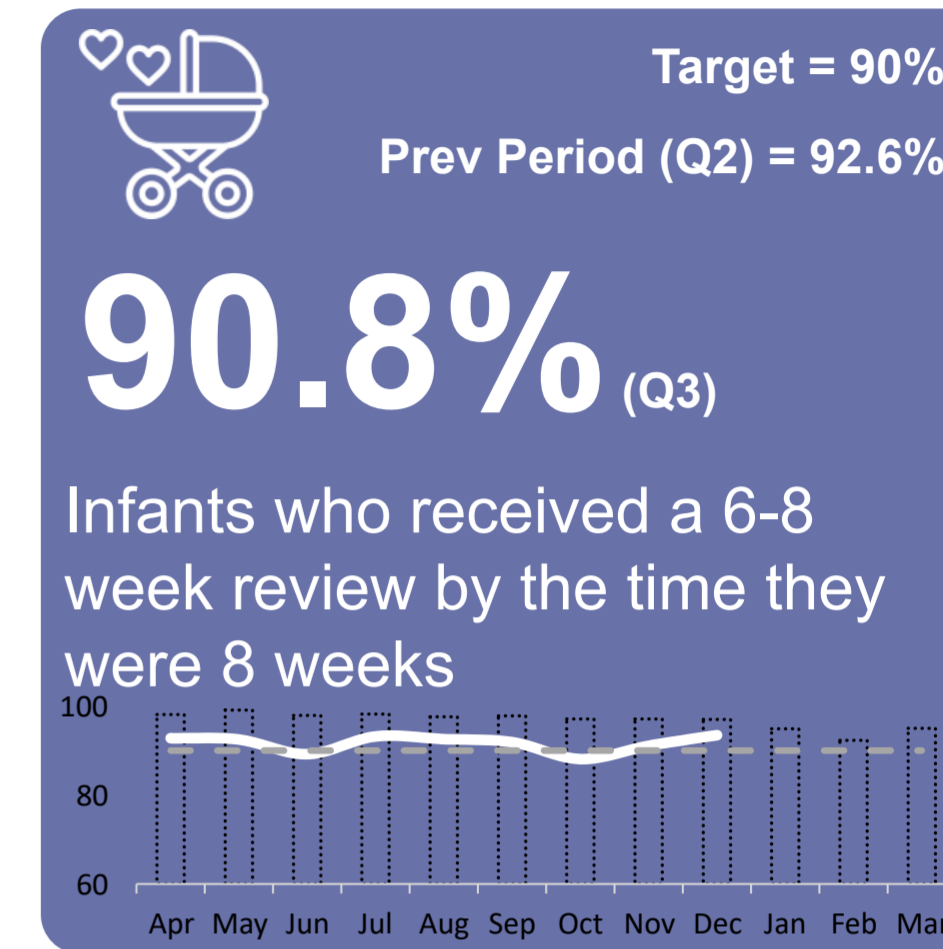


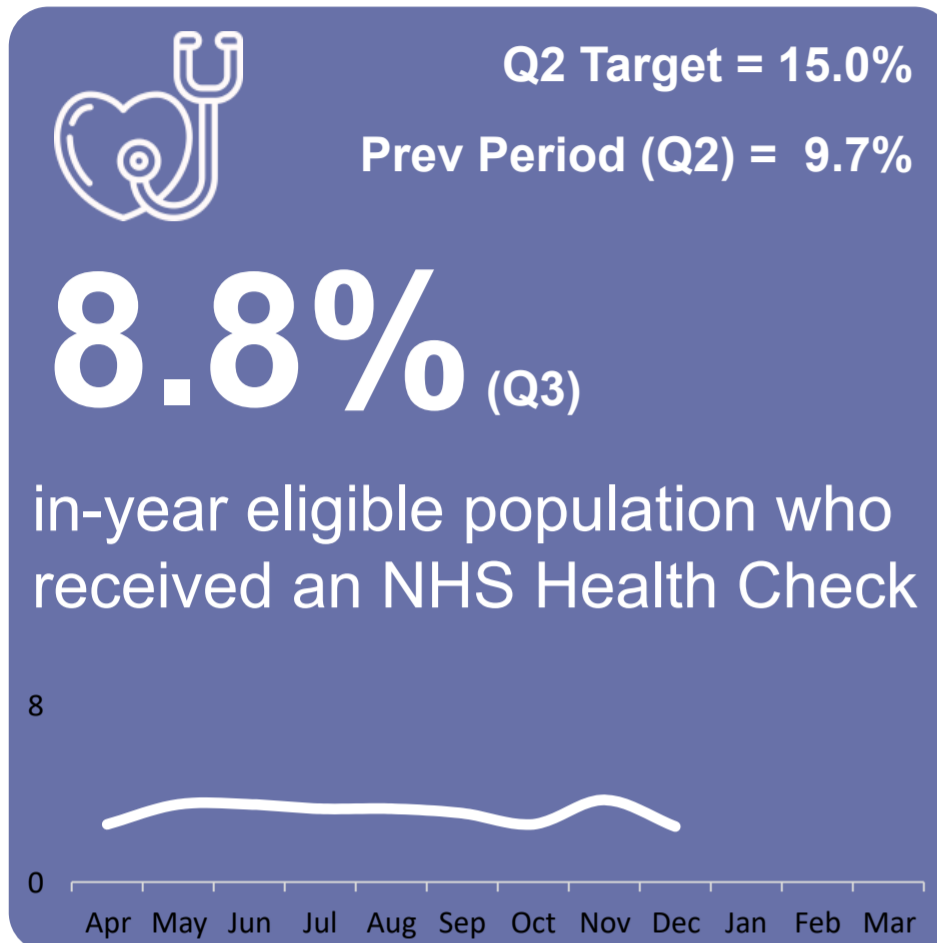
The health visiting service leads the delivery of the Healthy Child Programme (HCP), which was set up to improve the health and wellbeing of children aged 0 to 5 years. This is achieved through health and development reviews, health promotion, parenting support, and screening and immunisation programmes.

The health visiting service consists of specialist community public health nurses and teams who provide expert information, assessments and interventions for babies, children and families, including first time mothers and fathers with complex needs. The indicators included here are for both new birth assessments and the check at 6-8 weeks.

There is a good performance in both of the measures reported here in the latest quarter with the new birth visits completed within 14 days reporting at 95.5% for quarter 3, similar as the previous quarter. The 8-week reviews completed measure has reduced performance this quarter to 90.8%, but remains above target.

Both of these indicators perform well in comparison to national averages of 82.7% for 14-day visits and 81.6% for the 8-week visits and are above our local target of 90% for each indicator.

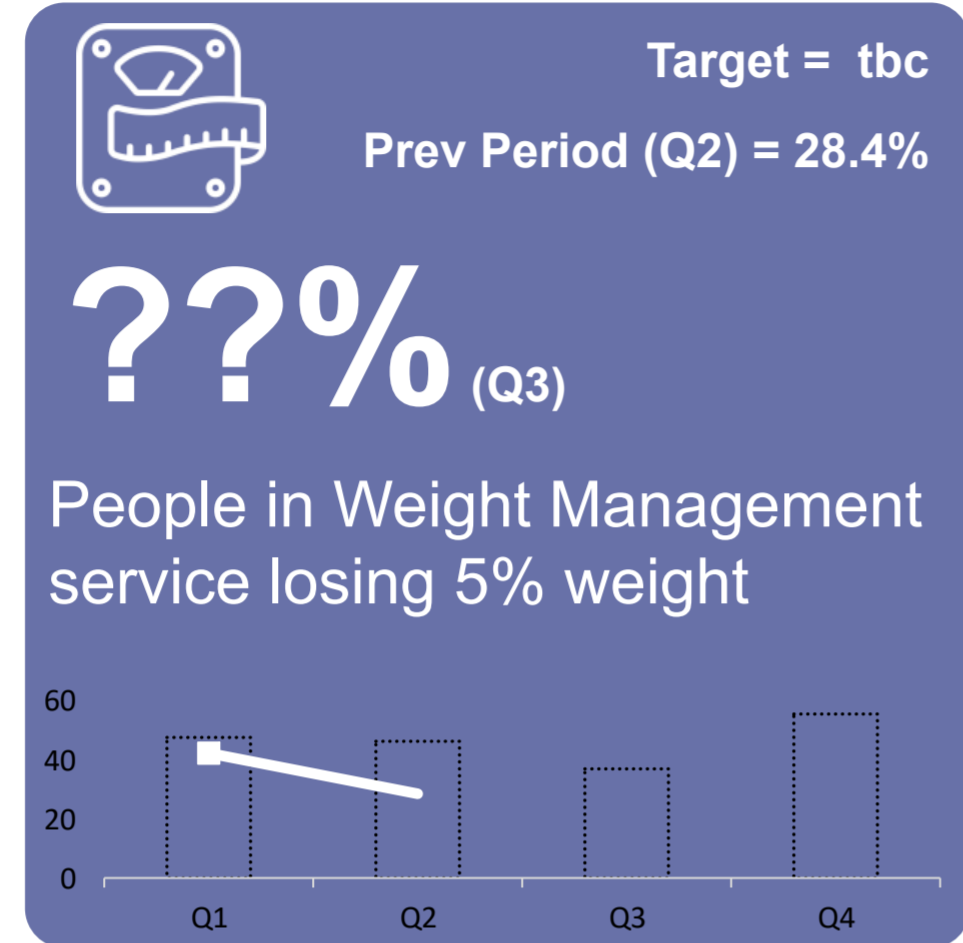




The NHS Health Check is a health check-up for adults in England aged 40-74. It's designed to spot early signs of stroke risk, kidney disease, heart disease, type 2 diabetes or dementia.

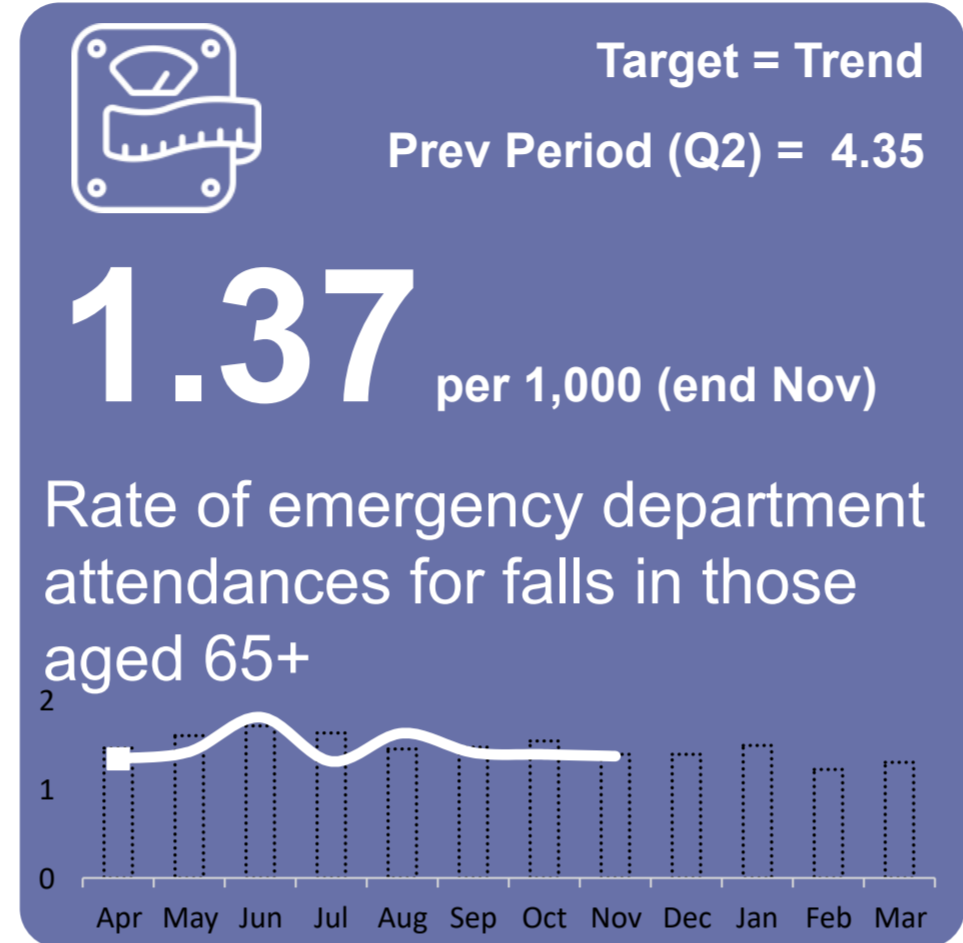
The performance of this indicator is looked at as a whole year and this number will grow as the year continues. The target for this year is 60% of the eligible in-year population have received a health check, the target has been profiled to 15% per quarter.

The performance for the third quarter shows that 8.8% of the eligible population have received their health check in this period and the total year to date performance is 28.1%.



Being overweight there is a higher risk of heart disease; stroke; type 2 diabetes; some types of cancer; arthritis and back pain and losing weight has many health benefits.

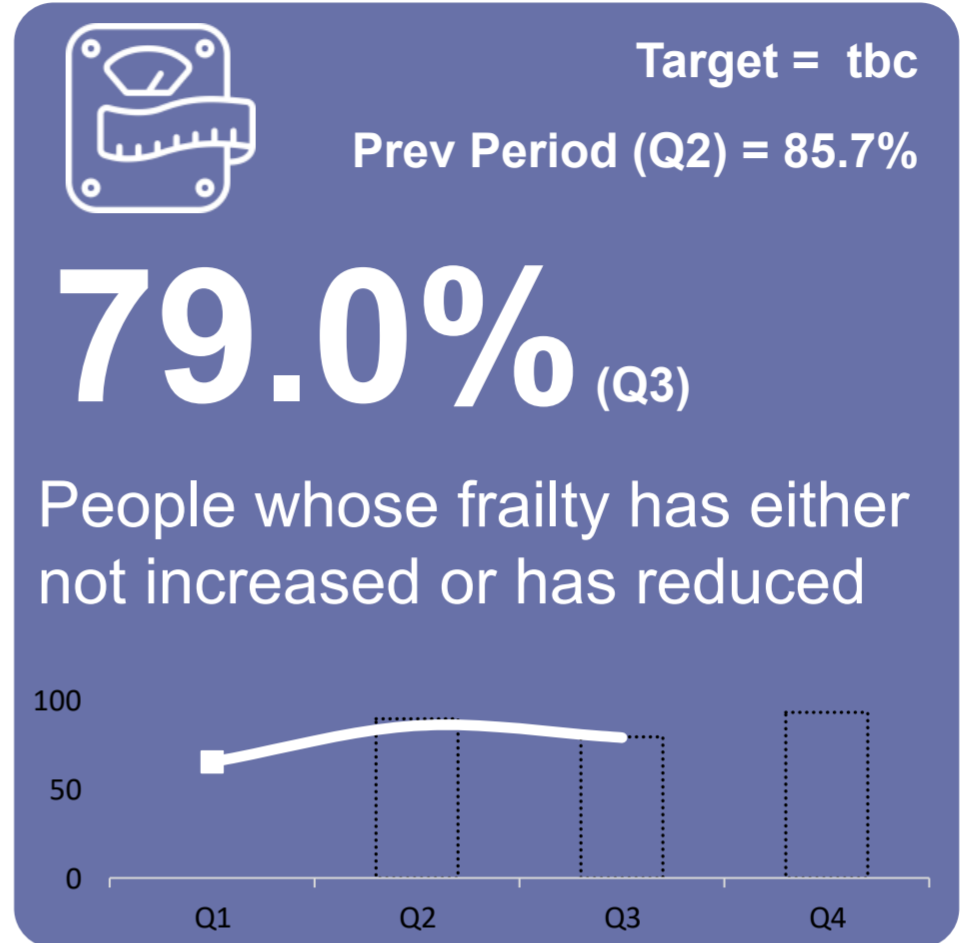
The data and reporting for this metric is produced by NNC colleagues, this remains outstanding as of 15th Feb and has been chased on multiple occasions.



This indicator is calculated by the Northamptonshire ICB and based upon emergency hospital admissions for the relevant primary diagnosis codes for falls and the patient's home address being in West Northants.

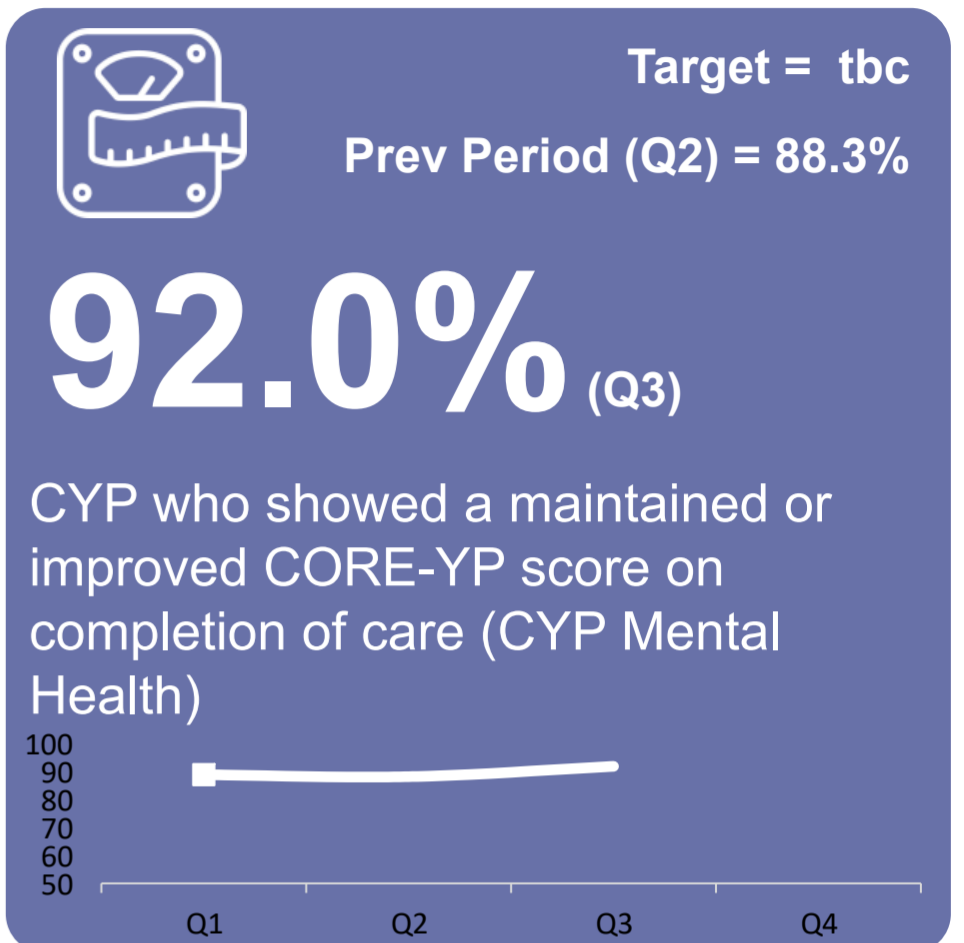
The full data for quarter 3 is not yet available so this position shows October and November combined only. In that period there has been 212 emergency admissions for falls resulting in a rate of 2.76 per 1,000 population (aged 65+).

This is a decrease from previous quarter which had 4.35 per 1,000 population.



This data demonstrates that 78.95% of customers coming through the service who completed both the Initial and Final Edmonton assessment, evidenced that their frailty level had either remained stable or reduced following up to 12 weeks of support with their Wellbeing Advisors through a variety of interventions in the community, to maintain their independence.

Support offered ranging from low level Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, to Walk and Talk's with the aim of becoming more active and increasing socialisation, to support accessing social opportunities to reduce isolation and advice on lifestyle issues such as nutrition or alcohol use.

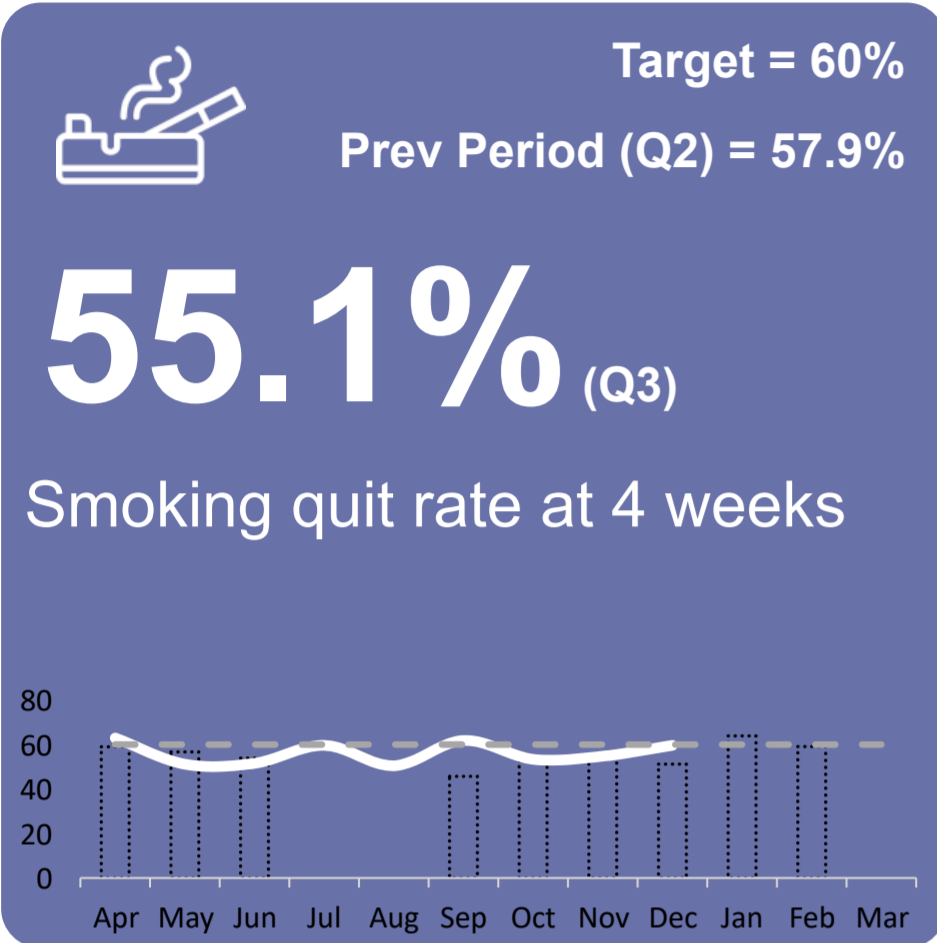


A 'Collaborative' of providers (REACH) deliver time-limited counselling sessions to young people aged 11-19 (up to 25 if SEND), offering support and information and signposting and referring to other appropriate services.

The indicator measures the percentage of young people who have maintained or improved emotional and mental wellbeing scores following counselling sessions.

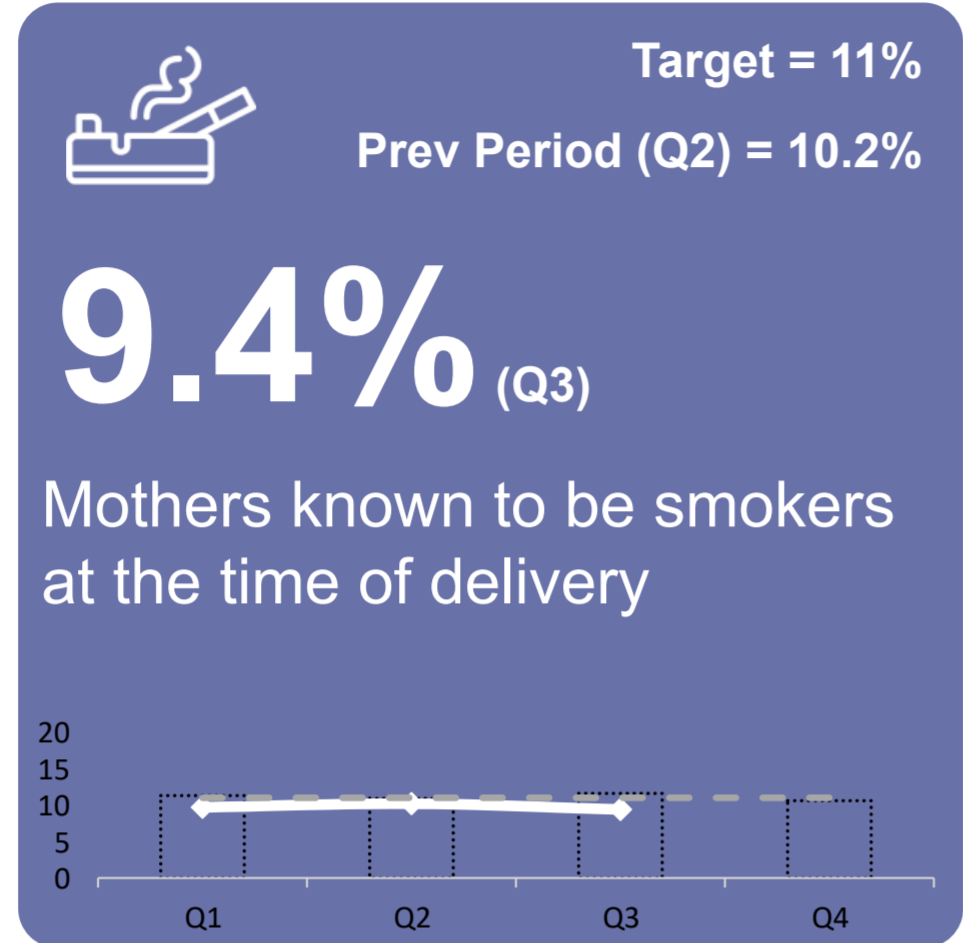
This quarter 92.0% of young maintained or improved emotional health and wellbeing score, an increase from 88.3% in the previous quarter.

This measure is Northamptonshire



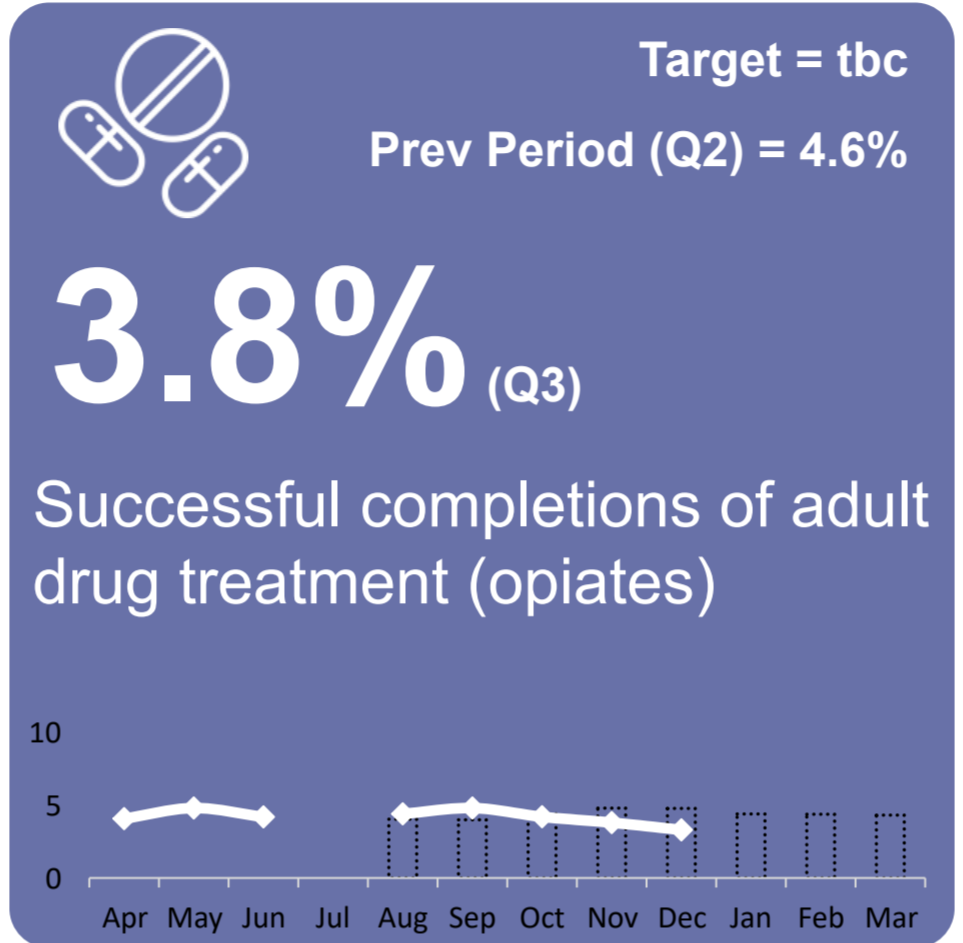
Our local performance data shows that 55.1% of clients who set a quit date have successfully quit at 4 weeks in the 3rd quarter of this year. This takes the year to date position to 55.5% to the end of December.

In comparison to the national quit rate for 2022-23 of 54% (latest available) West Northamptonshire is above the national average for those who quit smoking through the local service offer.



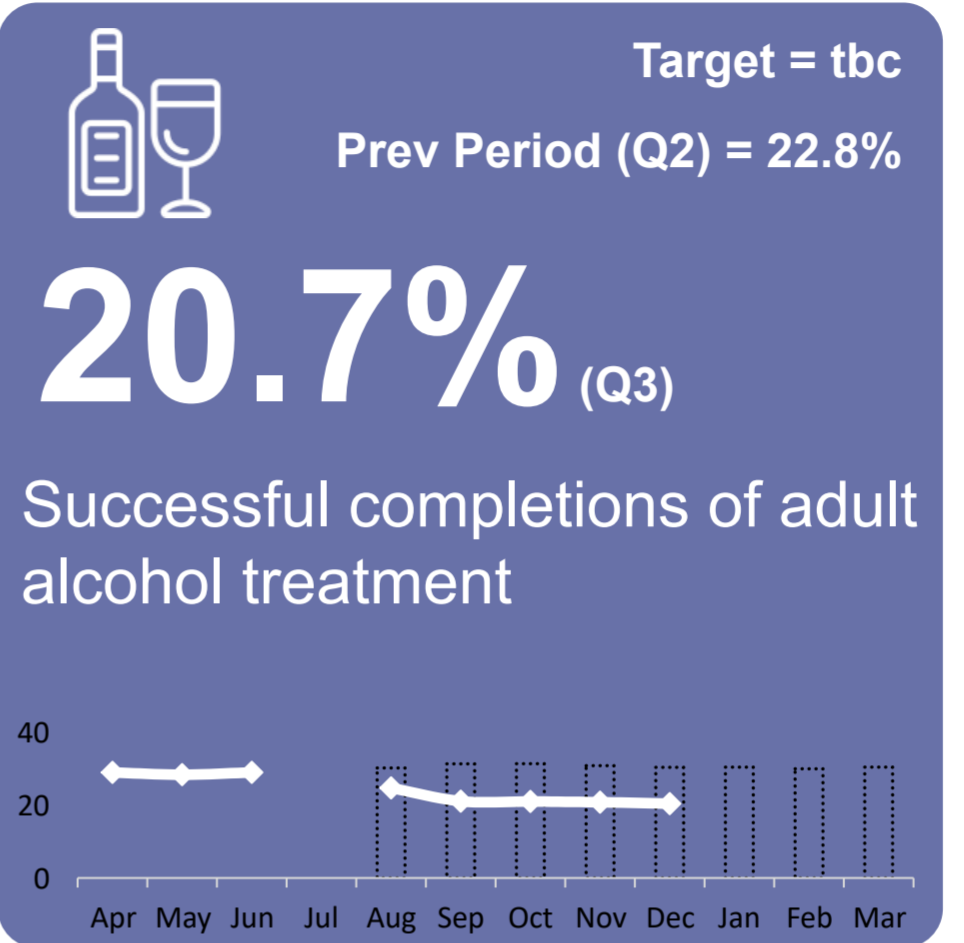
Smoking in pregnancy has well known detrimental effects for the growth and development of the baby and health of the mother. On average, smokers have more complications during pregnancy and labour, including bleeding during pregnancy, placental abruption and premature rupture of membranes.

Of the births this quarter 9.4% of mothers are known to be smokers at the time of birth, this is 0.8% improvement on the performance in the previous quarter and compares with a latest (2022-23) regional average of 11.4% and England average of 8.8%.



This indicator shows the percentage of opiate drug users that left drug treatment successfully and did not re-present to treatment within six months. Individuals achieving this outcome demonstrate a significant improvement in health and well-being in terms of increased longevity, reduced blood-borne virus transmission, improved parenting skills and improved physical and psychological health.

The current quarter's performance is 3.8% completions, this relates to 89 people who were successfully discharged and did not return to services within six months. The current performance is below the national performance of 5% which has been approximately the national rate since 2020, having seen a steady decline from nearly 9% in 2011.



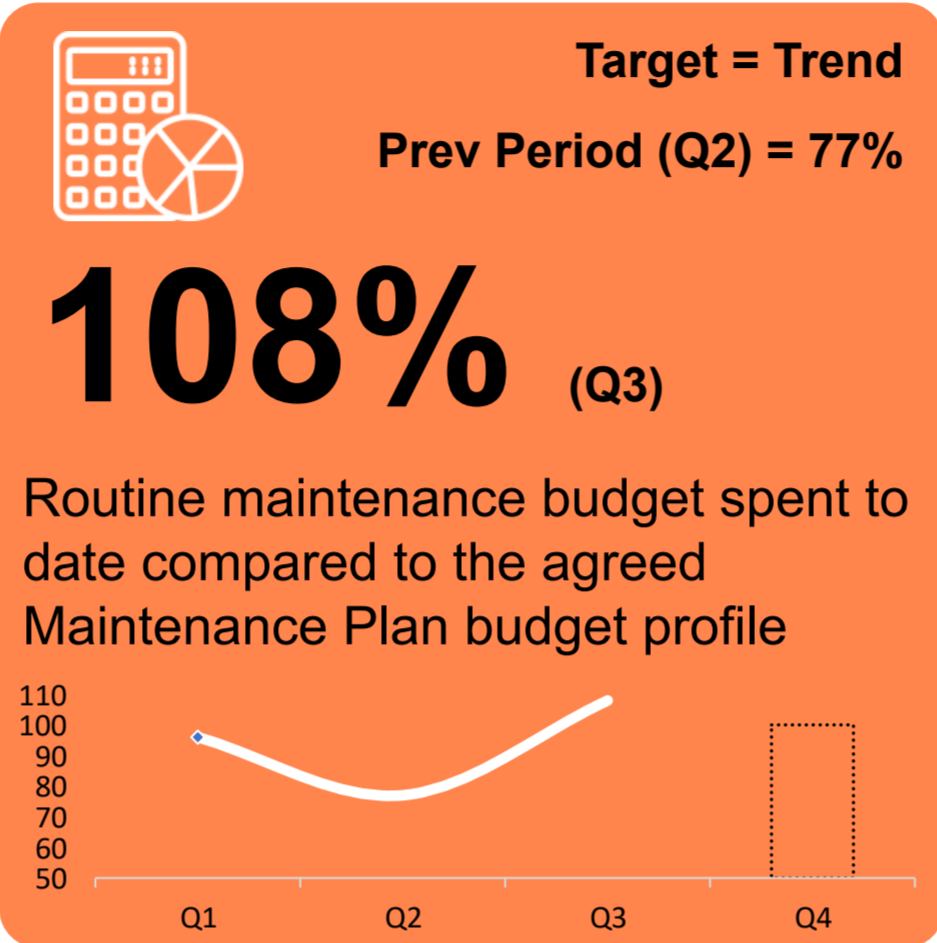
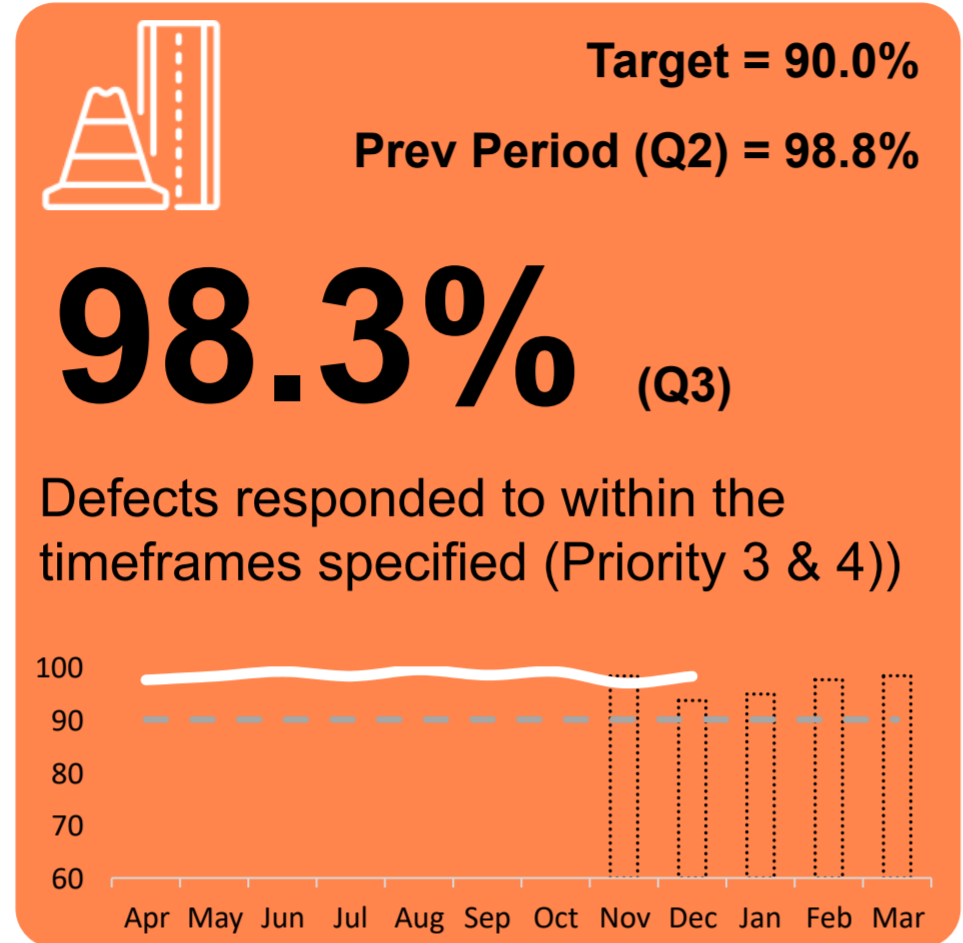
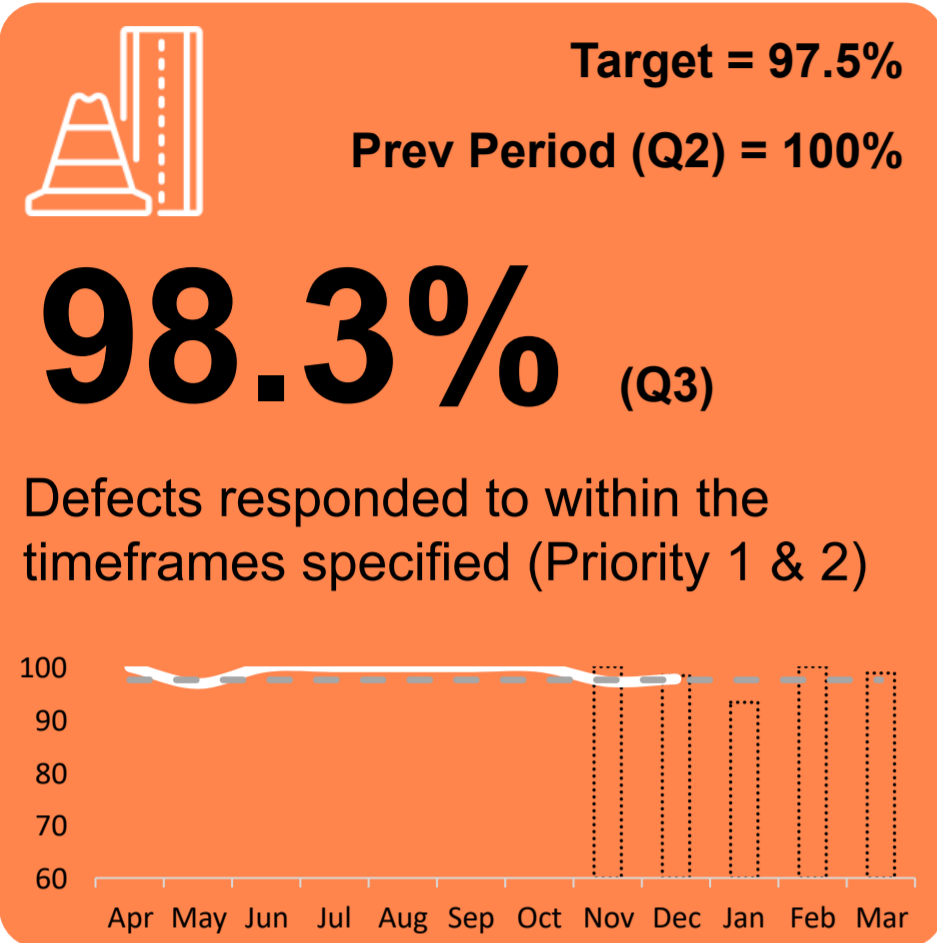
This indicator demonstrates the percentage of adults who successfully complete structured treatment for alcohol dependence in a year and who do not re-present to treatment within six months.

The latest published data shows that 20.7% of adults who received treatment achieved this outcome in this period, equivalent of 338. This is a reduction from 22.8% in the previous quarter (which reflects annual performance since 2021). The national average for the same period is 34.4% successful completions.

Significant additional investment has been made into the local treatment system over the last year and therefore we don't expect to see this trend continue.

Priority 3 – Connected Communities

Transport & Connectivity



Highways defects are split into 4 separate categories, depending on their severity, each of these categories has a different timescale for repair from the most severe (P1) to the least severe (P4). These indicators are split into two separate measures to report against the more and less severe repairs.

Data collection for these indicators commenced as part of the new highways contract for West Northamptonshire Council in November 2022, therefore trend information is not available for comparison prior to that period.

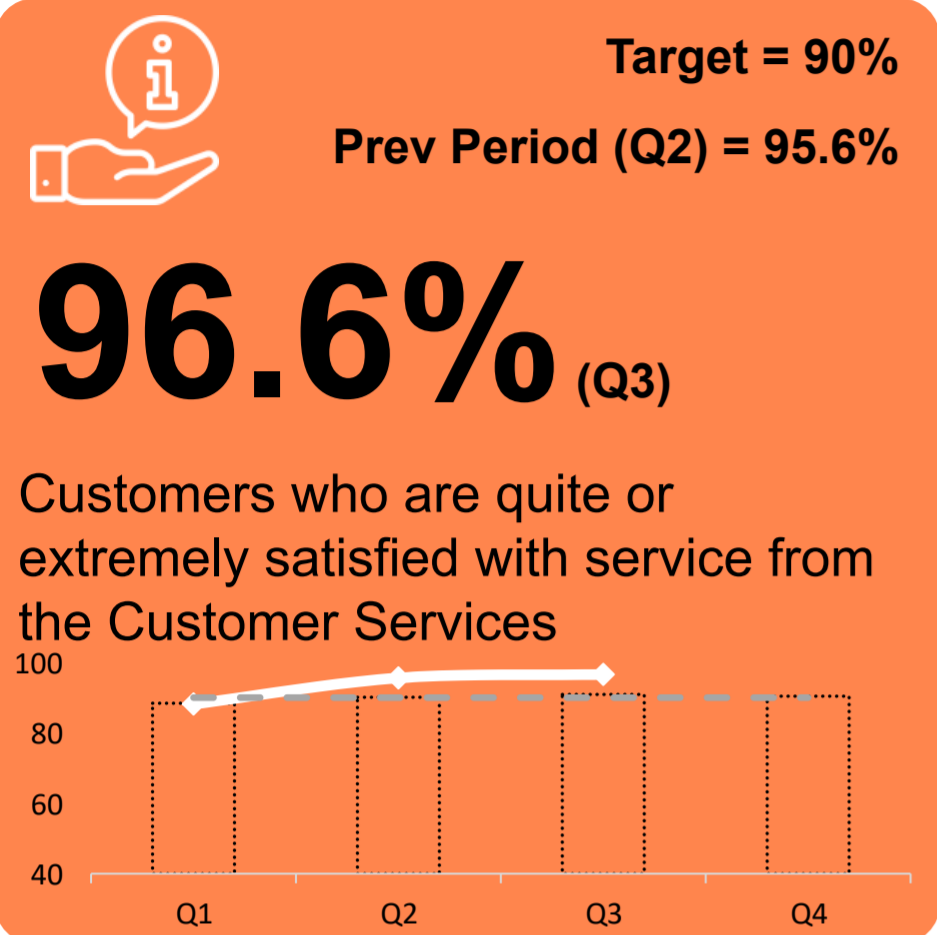
Performance data shows that the two indicators in the period are performing well against the targets that have been set as part of the contract in each month of this quarter, broken down we can see the monthly trend against these two indicators as follows;

- P1/ P2 repairs achieved 100% in October. 97.2% in November and 97.7% in December. A total of 115 repairs over the quarter
- P3/ P4 repairs achieved 98.4% in October, 99.1% in November and 96.9% in December. A total of 4,780 repairs over the quarter
- Both of the indicators continue to perform well and are above target and similar to the previous reporting period

The final measure above shows the percentage of the routine maintenance budget that has been spent to date compared to the agreed budget profile. For quarter 3 this is reporting as 108% of the budget profile has been spent, this position at more than 100% is due to some of the planned budget spend being moved from the previous quarter.

Priority 3 – Connected Communities

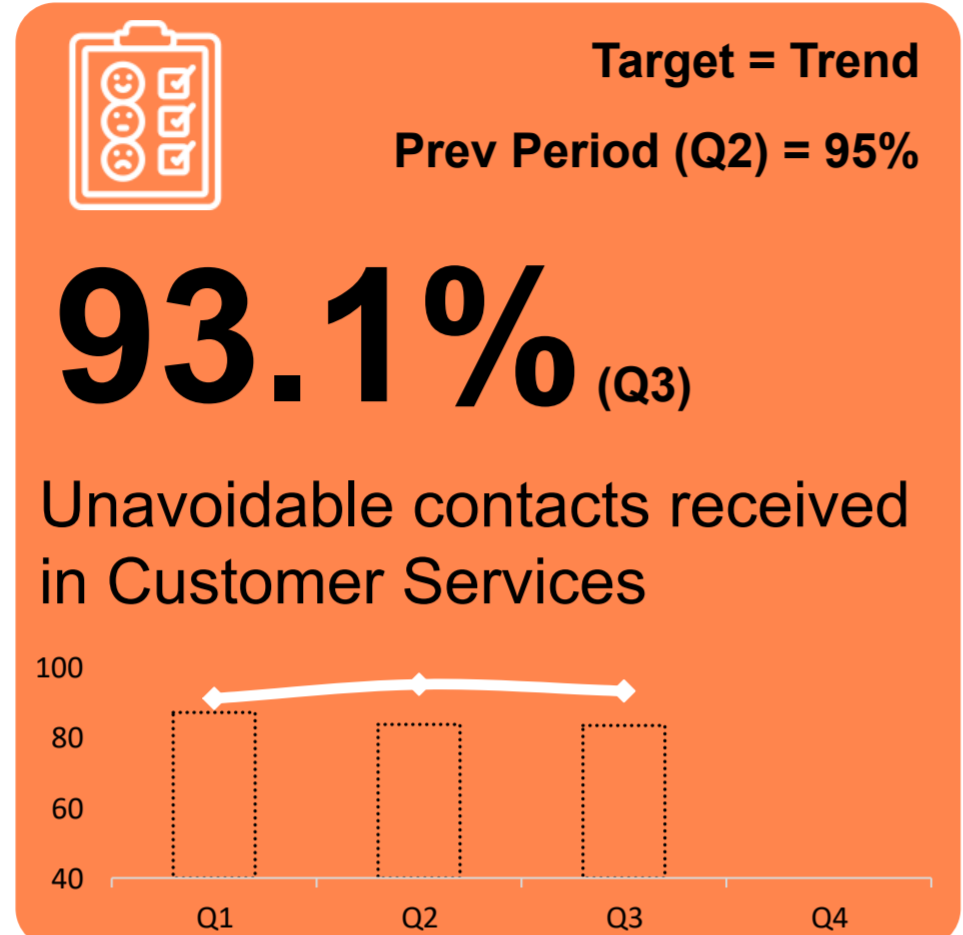
Transport & Connectivity



This indicator reflects the levels of satisfaction from residents who interact with our Customer Services function. Performance for this indicator is broadly consistent since collection began 18 months ago and within tolerances of the 90% target.

Quarter 3 has resulted in 205 surveys completed, and when asked how satisfied they were with the service received, of these 96.57% were satisfied with the service they received.

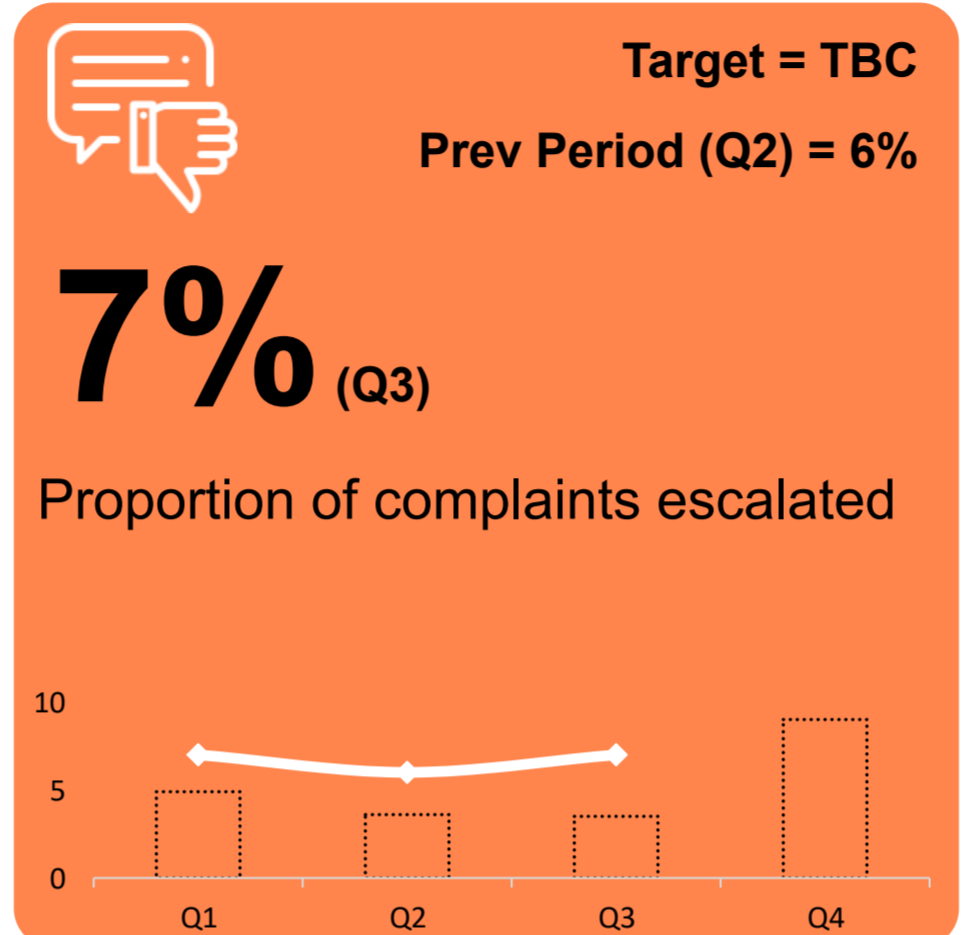
This is a similar position to the previous quarter and an increase of 5.7% when compared to the same period last year.



This indicator shows the percentage of unavoidable contacts received. The remaining proportion are repeat contacts, for example following-up on a previous request made to the council, or requests which could have easily been resolved through self-service.

This measure is trend-based, and we would like the vast majority of contacts into the Council to be unavoidable.

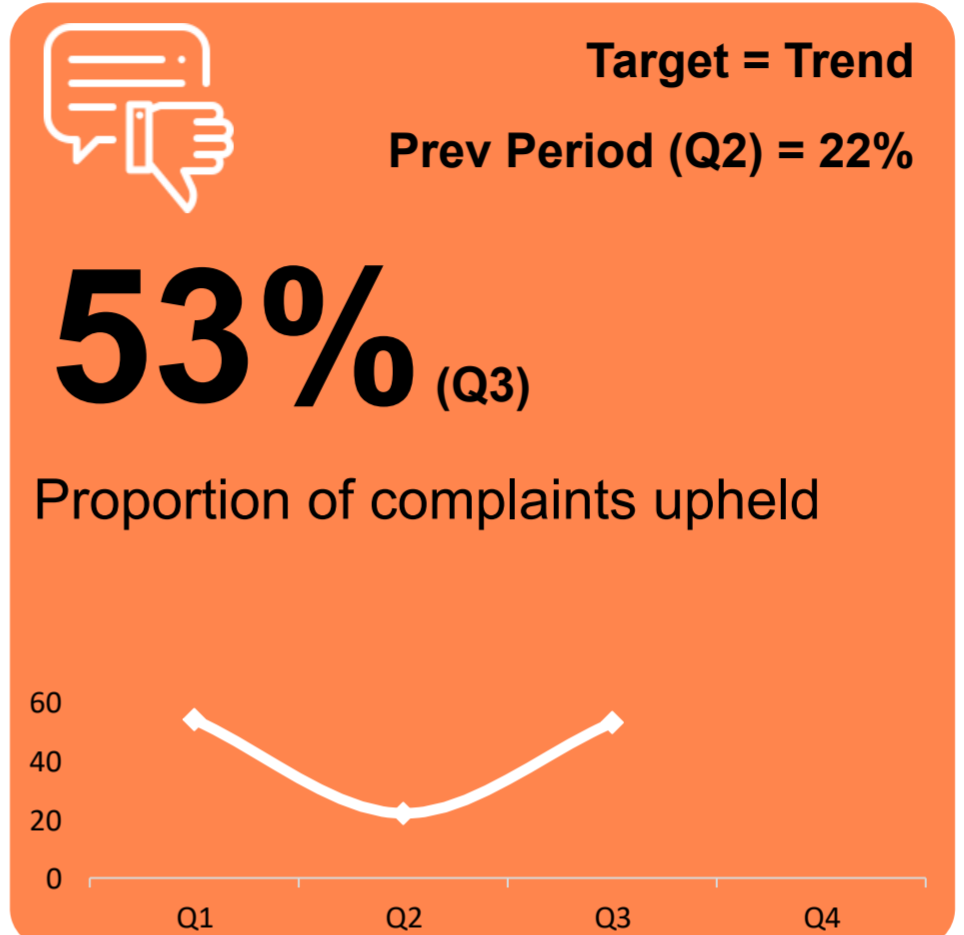
The current quarter reports 93.1% of calls being unavoidable into the CSC, this is a decrease on the previous period of 1.9% and is based upon 57,856 contacts into Customer Services.



These two measures look to capture complaints that are escalated to stage 2 and also a trend based measure to monitor and record the proportion of complaints that are upheld, the latter is a newly recorded measure that has no previous trend before April.

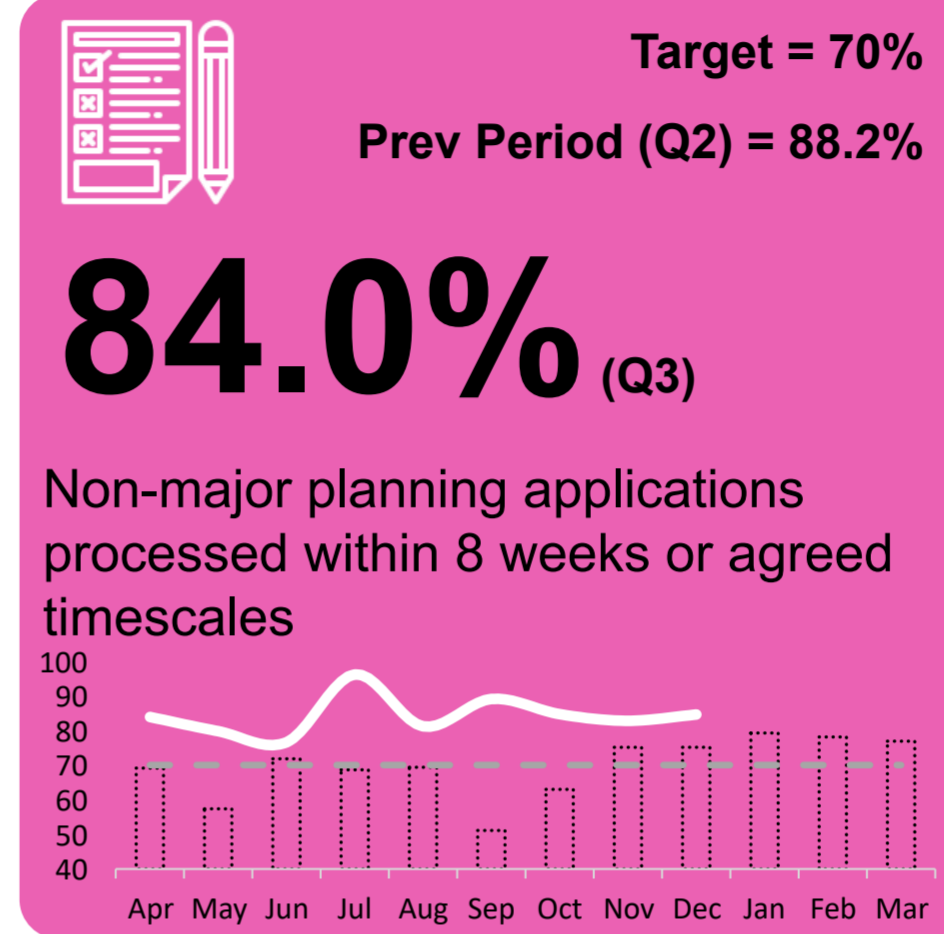
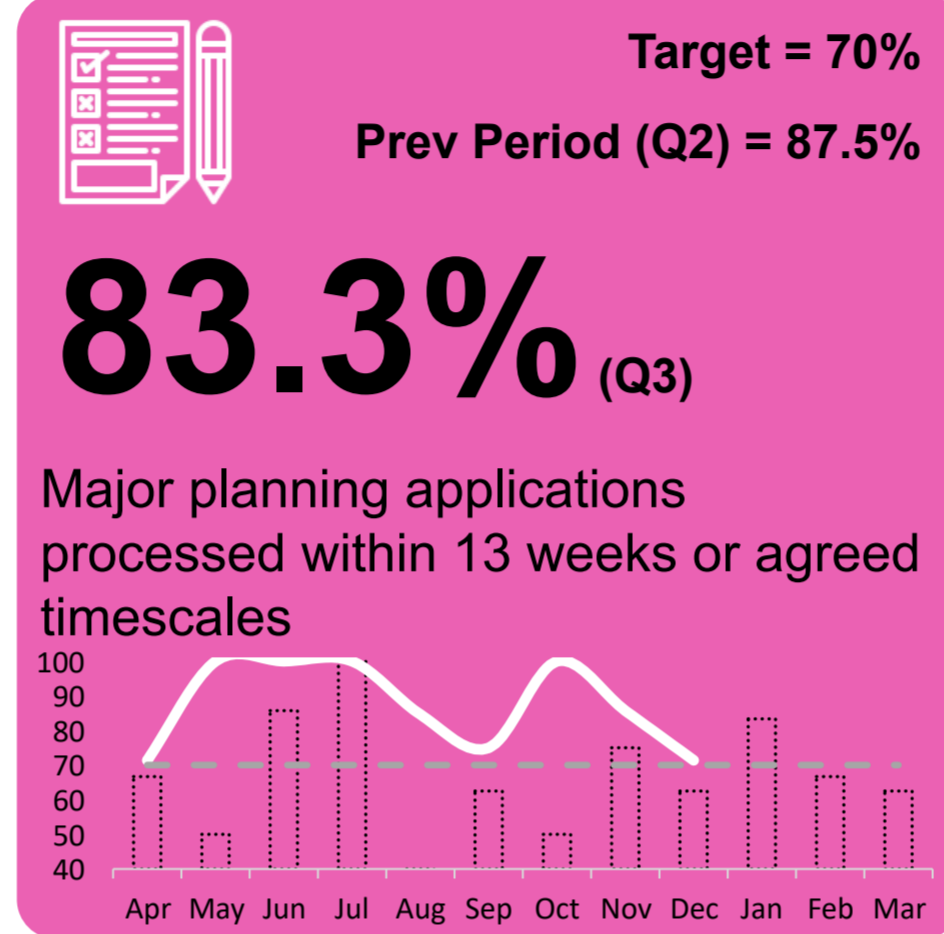
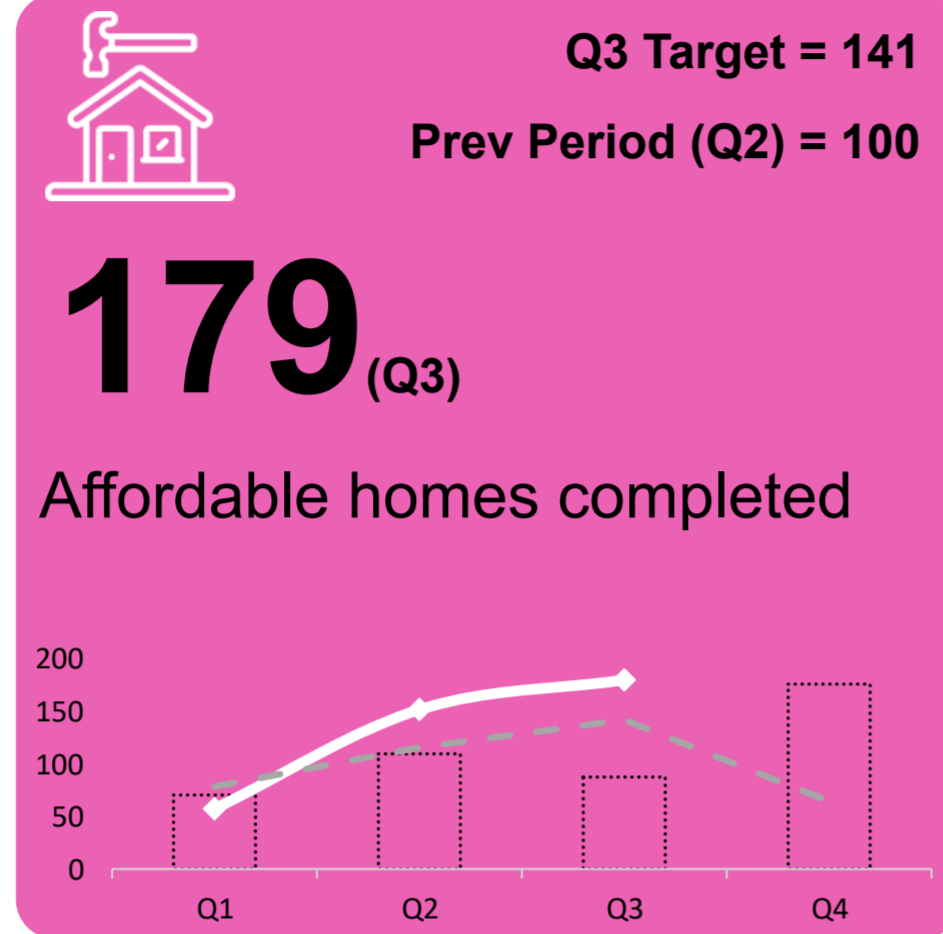
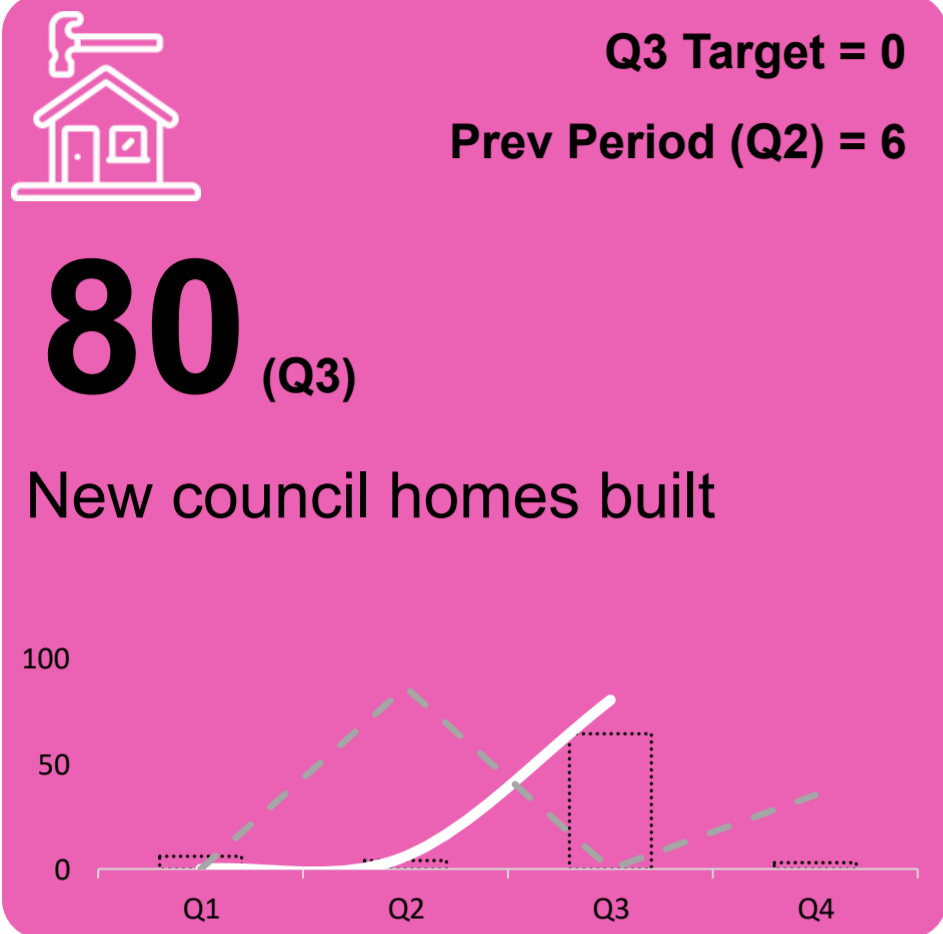
The third quarter of the year has seen 629 complaints received by the corporate complaints team, a decrease from the previous quarter's complaints (794). The majority of complaints are around delays in actioning repairs, issues relating to temporary accommodation and delays in responding to communications.

- 43 complaints escalated to stage 2 within the quarter this represents a small percentage of the overall complaints received in the period and is similar to the 41 in the previous quarter.
- Based upon complaints closed within quarter three the proportion of complaints either fully or partially upheld is 53%, an increase from the 22% in the previous quarter.
- Additionally, 84% of complaints closed in the period were done within agreed timescales, a decrease from 94% in quarter two.



Priority 4 – Thriving Villages & Towns

Place Shaping & Homes



The West Northamptonshire Council corporate plan commits to building 500 council homes over the lifespan of the current corporate plan. Currently, in West Northamptonshire, the Northamptonshire Partnership Homes (NPH) are the only builder of council homes that is contributing to this indicator.

There were no Council Homes originally expected for this quarter, however due to the delay in completions in the previous quarter due to handover quality assurance and snagging there has been 80 council homes completed in quarter 3. Those properties handed over in this quarter are the previously delayed units at Riverside House (60 units), Dover Court (10 units) and Billing Road (10 units)

In addition to council homes, we have also seen 179 affordable homes delivered. Overall 246 units were expected to completed, this is because of lack of information coming forward from a number of Registered Providers as well as some delays elsewhere that are expected to be completed in the next quarter.

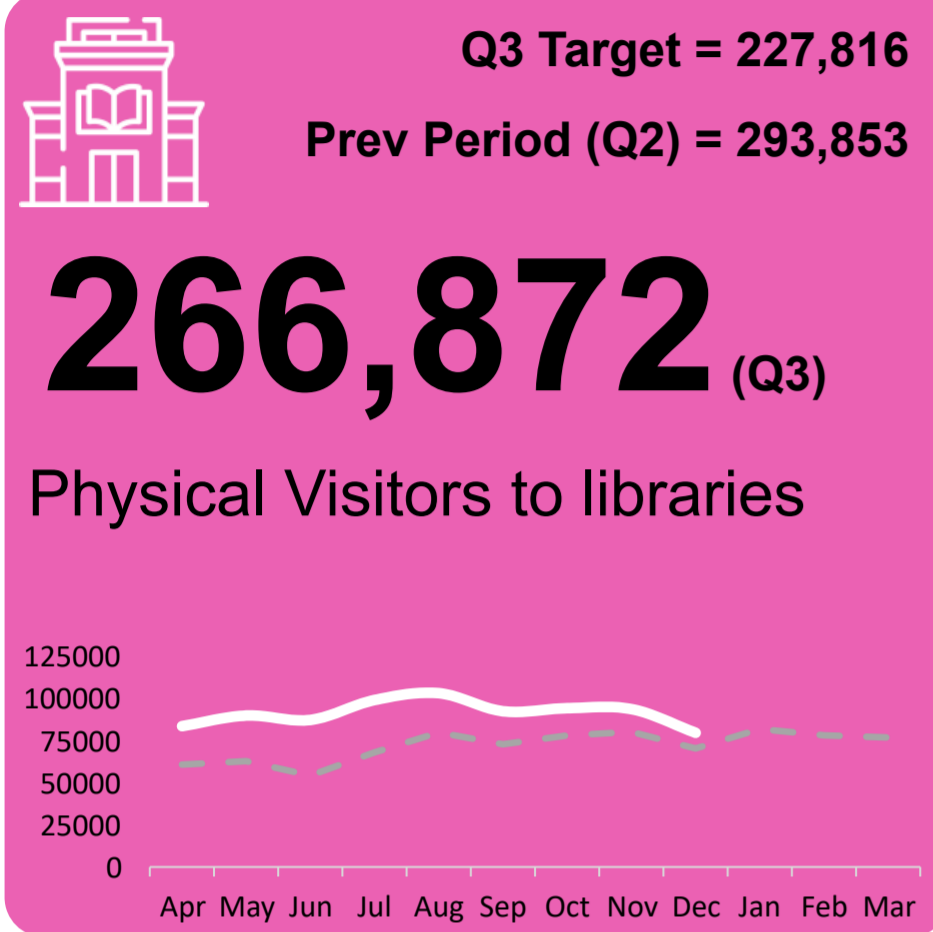
Planning applications of an area of current key focus for the authority, as we look to improve on the timeframe that we are processing decisions within, the two measures will show how we are performing against the two key measures that central government will judge our performance against, these are around the processing of planning applications for both major and non-major applications.

- There were 18 major planning applications processed in the third quarter of this year, of these 15 were processed within the agreed timescales
- There were 470 non-major planning applications processed in the third quarter of this year, of these 395 were processed within the agreed timescales

Both these measures have improved performance over the last quarters outturn and have continually shown an improving overall trajectory over the past 12 months.

Priority 4 – Thriving Villages & Towns

Place Shaping & Homes



This measure counts the number of visitors, but physical visitors and virtual visitors into our libraries across West Northamptonshire.

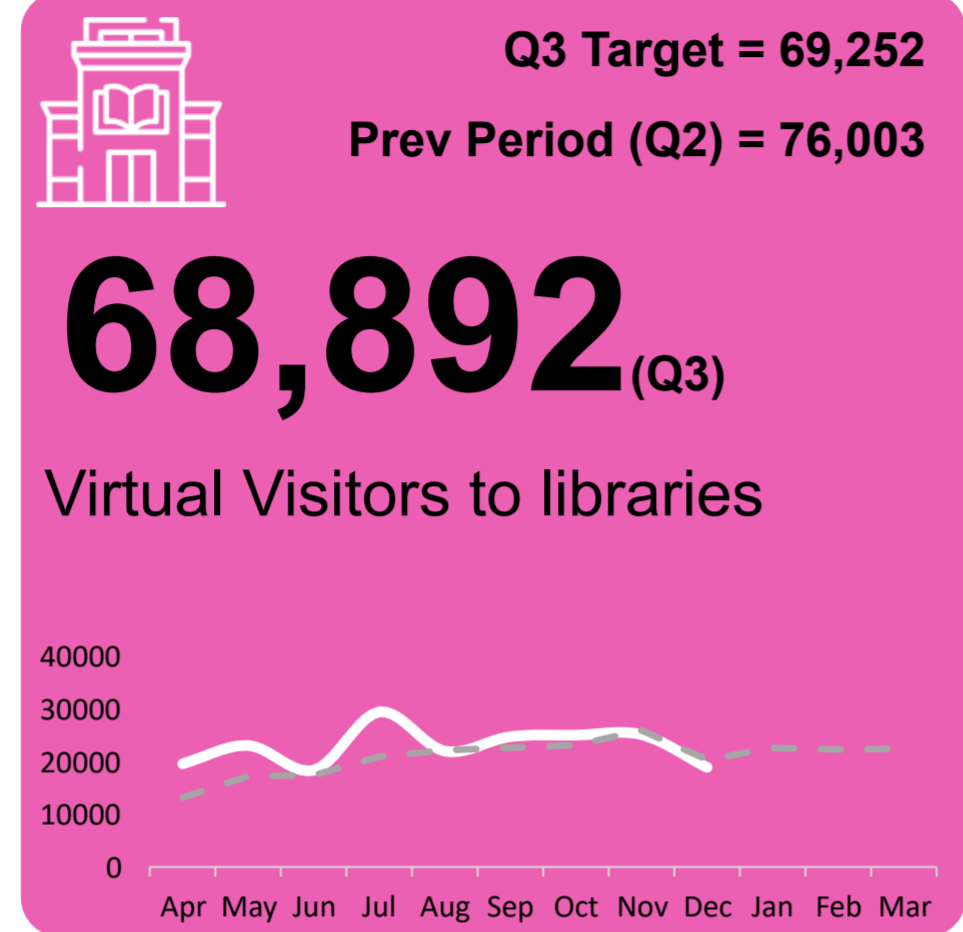
The data for last year was collected and reported as a combined measure, for comparison purposes the combined number for Q3 last year was 225,570 and the same period this year total across both measures is 335,764 which shows a rise in visitors when compared to last year.

Physical Visitors

There was an expected dip in visitor numbers in December, due to seasonal closure around the Christmas holidays. Current performance is in line with overall targets for the year.

Virtual Visitors

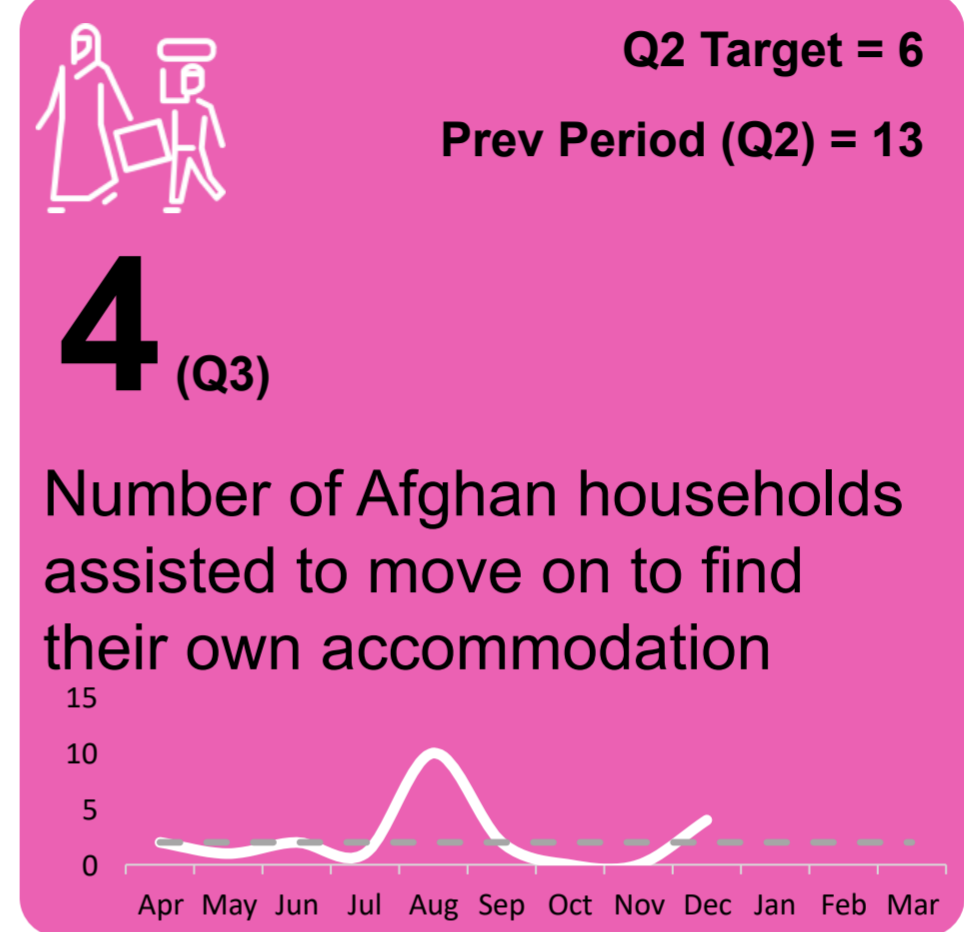
This year is a baseline year for collection and monitoring of virtual visitors, the second quarter as continued to show above the target that was profiled and a similar pattern to physical visits with a drop in numbers across December.



This metric covers two sites, the Northampton Museum & Art Gallery and the Abington Park Museum.

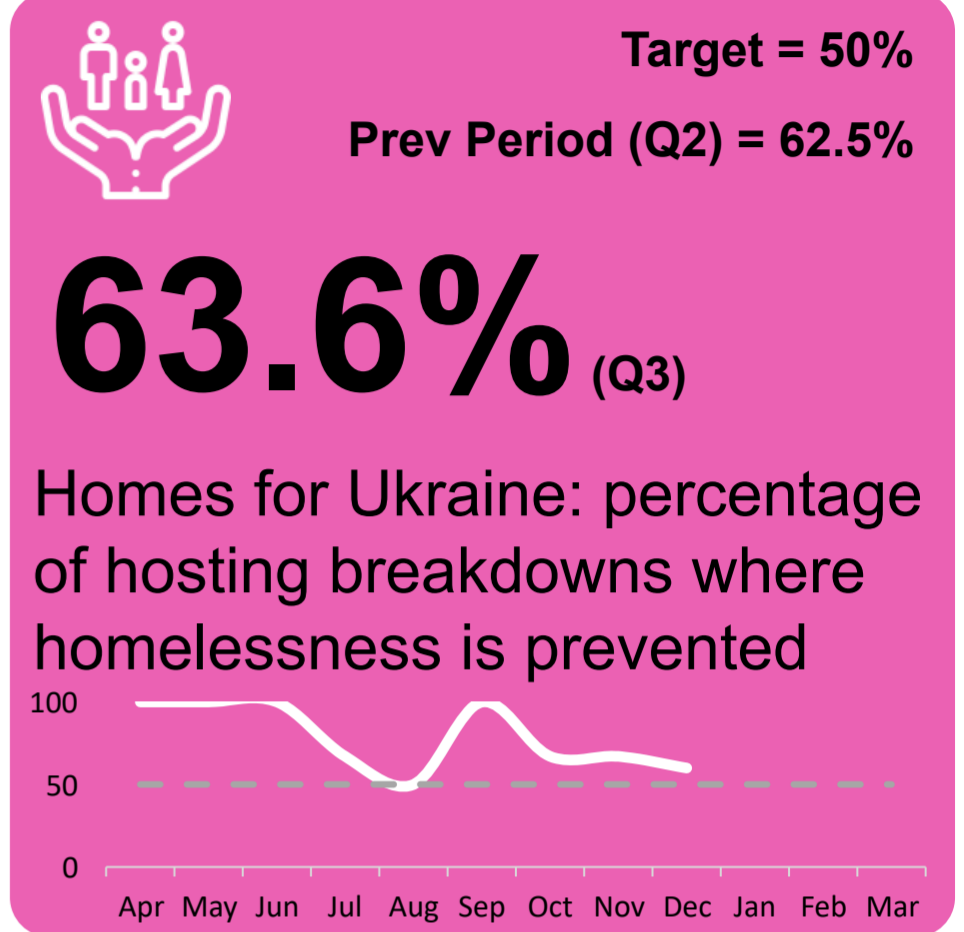
The third quarters performance is below the performance target set, however overall across the year visitor numbers are 12,000 ahead of target and 13,000 ahead of the position at the end of December last year,

Part of the reasons for the overall increase has been the Lego and The BFG exhibitions proved strong draws over the summer holiday period.



West Northamptonshire Council have been supporting people from the Ukraine and Afghan countries via hotel accommodation and also placing in households who are able to support. The two measures reported this year against this area of work have shifted from last years indicators that showed resettled and supported families to show those assisted to move onto find their own accommodation and where risk of homelessness was prevented.

- Through the Afghan relocations and assistance policy (ARAP) and Afghan citizens resettlement scheme (ACRS) we have supported 4 households this quarter to move on into their own accommodation either in West Northants or further afield.
- The team worked with 11 households over the course of the first quarter were there was a risk of homelessness, in 7 cases prevention was success through either continuing with current arrangements, supporting into private sector housing, through mediation or re-matching.



Supporting the Local Visitor Economy

The EGII Team finalised the content of the Northamptonshire Tourism Strategy in order to submit to Cabinet for adoption. The strategy sets out the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities to enhance and amplify the visitor economy across the County. Also included is a draft action plan which is intended to be taken forward in partnership with private sector stakeholders as an accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP), which is a public-private partnership to nurture and support tourism and the visitor economy, accredited by Visit England.

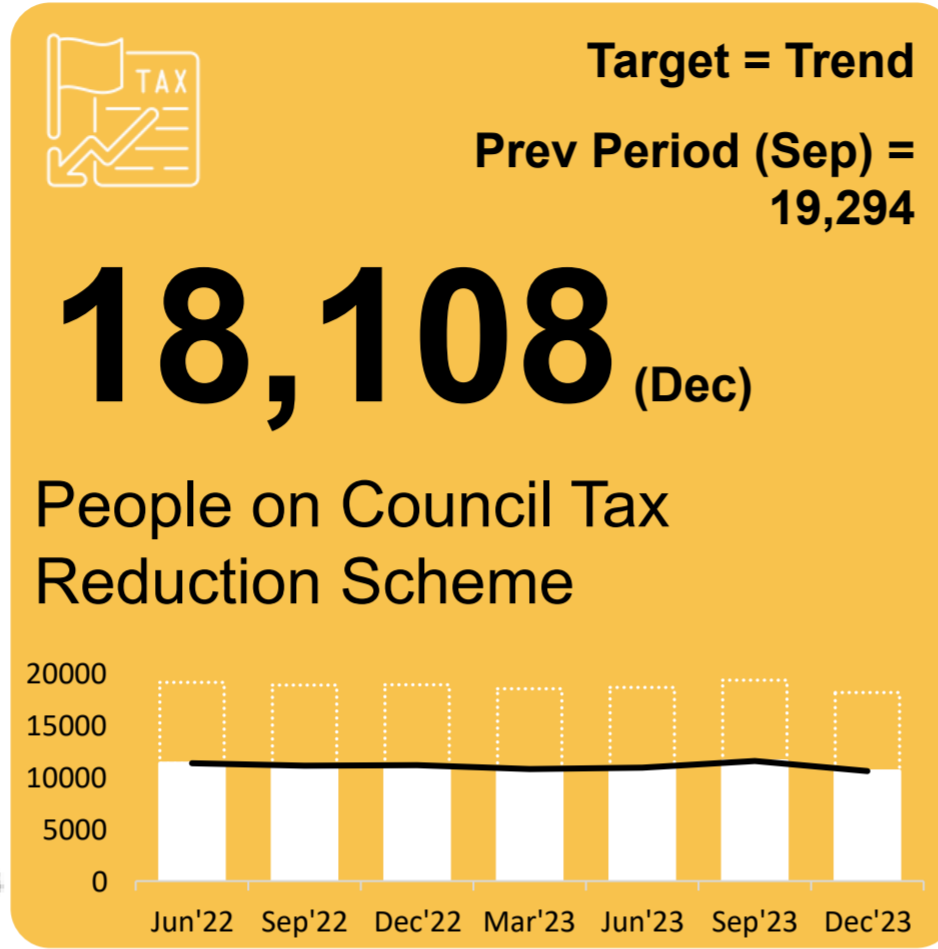
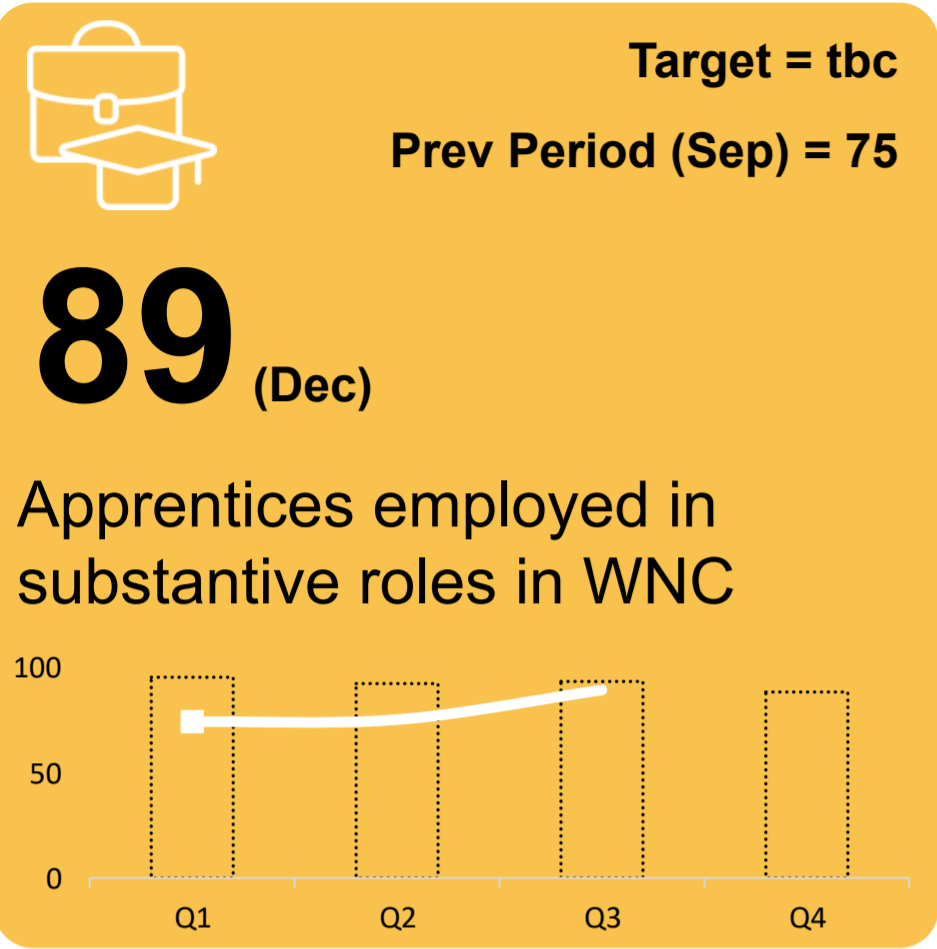
To inform next steps once the strategy became adopted by both West Northamptonshire Council and North Northamptonshire Council, a partner workshop was held in December to discuss potential options of what an LVEP could look like for Northamptonshire and gauged appetite for a partnership approach working collaboratively.

In order to shine a spotlight on our local businesses, the EGII Team worked closely with the Communications Team for Small Business Saturday, the national day to think local and support small businesses. The campaign included a diverse range of marketing initiatives and resources to promote all local businesses and the high streets and villages to residents and to visitors to utilise and support the local economy. Support was also provided to retailers and local businesses to grow, plan for 2024, engage more customers and increase footfall and spend locally. The EGII Team are dedicated to showcasing every local business to a local, regional, national and international audience in order to deliver economic prosperity for West Northants, whereby visitors stay and spend time and time again, spreading the word about everything that makes West Northants a must-visit destination.

Work has been undertaken to develop a Think Local social media and marketing campaign for 2024 to engage local businesses and attractions in promoting the West Northamptonshire retail and heritage offer. Alongside this, the ground is being prepared to move forward the area's tourism offer following Cabinet approval of the tourism strategy earlier this month. We have also contacted local businesses and attractions to understand to what extent they will be commemorating the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings in June.

Priority 5 – Economic Development

Growth & Prosperity



The government introduced a number of changes to encourage employers to offer more apprenticeship opportunities to both their current employees and to new staff joining their organisations. The council currently supports a variety of different apprenticeship schemes in order to offer opportunities and development to new and existing members of staff.

At the end of December, West Northamptonshire Council had 89 apprentices employed within the authority who are undertaking the following levels of qualifications: 4 x Level 2, 15 x Level 3, 13 x Level 4, 12 x Level 5, 33 x Level 6 and 12 x Level 7.

The workforce headcount for the West in December 2023 is 2,782 employees. This gives a percentage of 3.2 % of the current workforce undertaking apprenticeships. Up to April 2022, the Government target was 2.3% of the workforce, which equates to 63 apprentices

In addition to this there have been 10,710 new apprenticeship starts in the 2022-23 period (latest data available) and 4,700 people have completed their apprenticeship in this period.

Each Local Authority is required to agree to a Council Tax Reduction Scheme each year. The scheme applies only to working-age claimants as the government provides a prescribed scheme for those of pension age.

As the scheme is a local one there is a financial impact on the authority and moving forward, we plan to report on the number of both working-age and pension claims to enable us to forecast any possible impact.

As of Dec'23, the number of LCTRS working-age claimants was 10,563, a decrease from 11,531 at the end of September. There are currently 7,545 pensioner claims and again this figure has also decreased from the end of September (7,763).

Hosting the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) Activities

WNC were successful in our expression of interest to take on hosting the SEMLEP Activities on behalf of the other Local Authorities in the South East Midlands, with services including the Growth Hub and the Careers Hub. This is a great opportunity and puts West Northamptonshire Council in the role of hosting regional activities and will deliver closer working relationships with the Hubs, as well as stronger liaison with the 5 neighbouring authorities.

We were extremely keen to secure this role, as the largest unitary authority in the area with the highest number of residents and employers. It was of particular importance to safeguard the SEMLEP functions and maintain their momentum in terms of delivering impactful initiatives benefiting the regional economy. We are also involved with the wider Oxford-Cambridge Pan-Regional Partnership activities and the Central Area Growth Board. Hosting the SEMLEP activities showcases our dedication to driving economic growth in this area.

Supporting West Northamptonshire Businesses

Activities these quarter are varied, including attending events and forums such as the Northamptonshire Logistics Forum to develop this vital industry to joining SEMLEP Growth Hub's Network & Learn to fly the West Northants Council flag and champion our business support services and funding.

A key success for local businesses was the Chamber of Commerce Business Awards, of which West Northamptonshire Council sponsored two categories, *West Northamptonshire Business of the Year* (won by Acorn Analytical Services based in Moulton Park) and *West Northamptonshire Sustainability Award* (won by Sedgebrook Hall based in Northampton). Out of the total sixteen categories, West Northants businesses were successful in nine overall.

The team has also been supporting the Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 Team with their largescale expansion which has recently secured planning permission, increasing their workforce by an estimated 500 new employees. The Team have been meeting with Mercedes to discuss social value and local recruitment, ensuring maximum economic benefits from this exciting development. This has included working with the South East Midlands Careers Hub to explore how Mercedes can build on their extensive social activities to benefit as many local schools as possible and inspire the future workforce to consider careers in motorsport and engineering

Supporting Local Employment

Members of the EGII Team have worked closely with Public Health colleagues and wider teams to inform a bid to Government's Work Well Partnership Programme (WWPP), which was led by the Integrated Care Board for Northamptonshire. The WWPP is a dedicated fund initially going out to around 15 vanguard locations as a pilot to address the health barriers preventing residents to start, stay and succeed in work. Supporting local residents to overcome barriers, enabling them to live their best lives and secure local, sustainable employment is a top priority for the EGII Team. The outcome of the bid will be confirmed in April 2024.

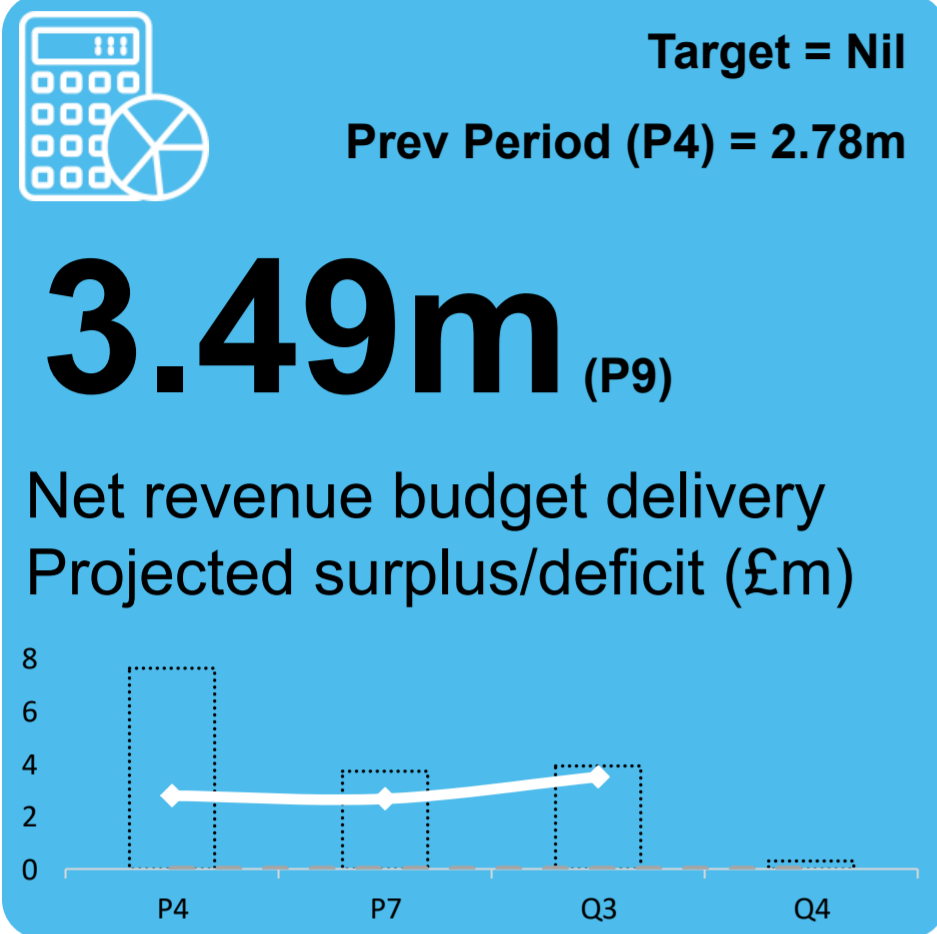
UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)

We have £5.4M of UKSPF and £1.3M of REPF Funding for building pride place and increasing life chances. Projects continue to progress, such as:

- Northamptonshire Partnership Homes to enable households realise the instant and long-lasting benefits of improved home energy efficiency and supporting to combat fuel poverty and climate change, project delivering much needed support to West Northants residents
- Rural England Prosperity Funding launched the Transport Grant Programme; a capital grants scheme specific to eligible rural areas to address Transportation & Rural Business Growth both programmes launched late last year
- Launch for the Business Growth & Innovation and Supporting Businesses to Decarbonise, both tendering processes were completed late December 2023 and are currently awaiting the announcement of the winners aimed at the end of Jan 2024.
- NGAGE Solutions Limited was appointed to administer and manage the Rural Business Growth grant process and applications, a total pot of £820k on behalf of West Northants Council. Businesses will be required to provide 50% of equal match funding to access grants from £2500 - £100,000. Over 45 businesses have sent Expressions of Interest and are now being invited to submit full applications, to be assessed by a Rural Business Grant Panel, with expertise drawn from different sectors. The Panel aims to have its 1st meeting early March 2024.
- Rural Transport Scheme launched late last year, with a total pot of £950k open to eligible Voluntary Sector Organisations in West Northants to support expansion and current grant funded transport projects and services,
- A community Transport expression of interest opened end of November 2023 and closed on the 08/01/2024. Currently the project has attracted over 13 expressions of interest from existing providers and new projects. A review process aims to complete by the end of Jan 2024 with projects and informed of outcomes by the end of Feb - March 2024.
- A UKSPF partners & Stakeholder Meeting took place at Vulcan Works, Monday 30th October representing the different sectors of the community, this enabled participants to contribute invaluable suggestions and feedback in regards to helping in progressing the UKSPF and Rural Funds forward to address the pertinent needs of our communities and bring growth our local economy
- UKSPF quarter 1 & 2 Reports have now been completed and submitted to DLUHC and evaluation of current funded projects continue to be monitored quarterly which includes expenditures and agreed milestones to ensure projects are working towards targets
- People & Skills funding of £1.5m for 2024/25 to upskill the local labour market, address economic inactivity and address the barriers that poor health can impact on employment continues to take shape with the aim to launch this funding scheme in April 2024.
- Full details of live and upcoming initiatives can be found on our website – www.westnorthants.gov.uk/funding

Priority 6 – Robust Resource Management

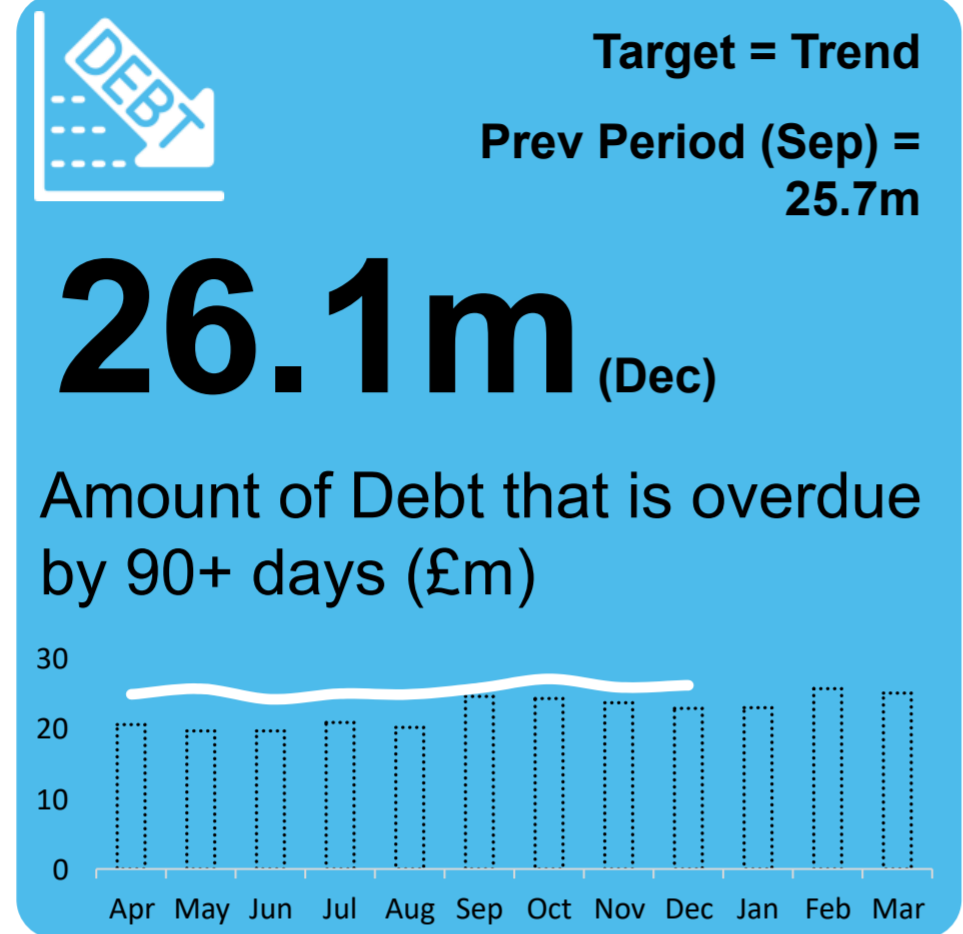
Transparency & Financial Probity



The forecast outturn position for 2023-24 is an overspend of £3.5m after the use of £8.2m of general budget contingencies, which were set aside in the budget for risks that may crystallise in the current financial year. This equates to less than 1% of the net budget.

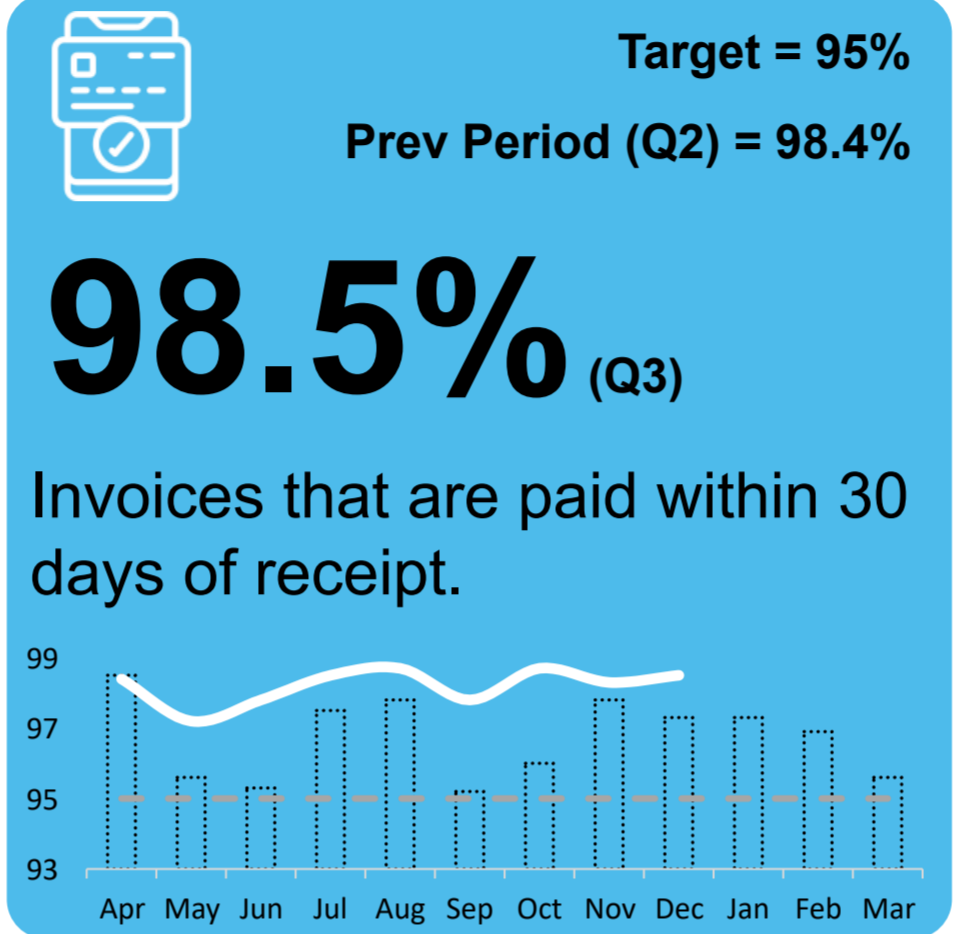
The main reasons for the underlying pressures are as follows:

- Continued demand and cost pressures within the Children’s Trust contract.
- Pressures within housing and temporary accommodation.
- Demand and cost pressure on Adult Social Care independent care budgets.
- Demand led pressure in the delivery of Home to School Transport
- The cost of the 2023-24 pay award being greater than forecast at the time of setting the budget.



The latest performance of this metric shows that £26.1m of debt owed to the authority is currently overdue by at least 90 days.

This is an increase from the £25.7m reported at the end of September 2023. However reductions can be seen in 7 of the 12 directorate areas from the same point in 2022-23.



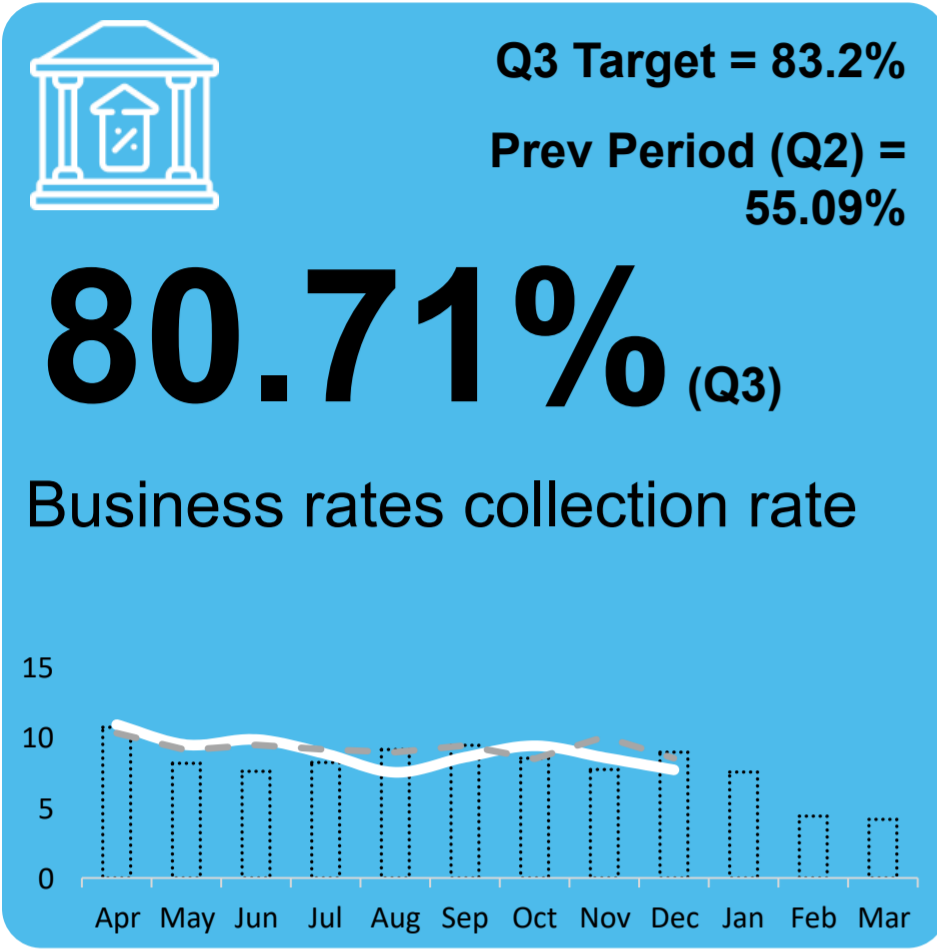
5,737 of the 5,824 invoices paid during the third quarter this year were processed within 30 days resulting in an outturn of 98.5% of this quarter. October was a particularly high-performing month with 98.7% paid on time, the highest performing month in the past 2 years.

Total invoices processed on time for the first 3 quarters of this year is 17,008, or 98.2% of invoices paid.

Performance improved over the last 18 months as staff familiarised themselves with the new system in which to raise Purchase Orders and pay invoices for WNC. This is evident with every month over the past 2 years above the 95% target.

Priority 6 – Robust Resource Management

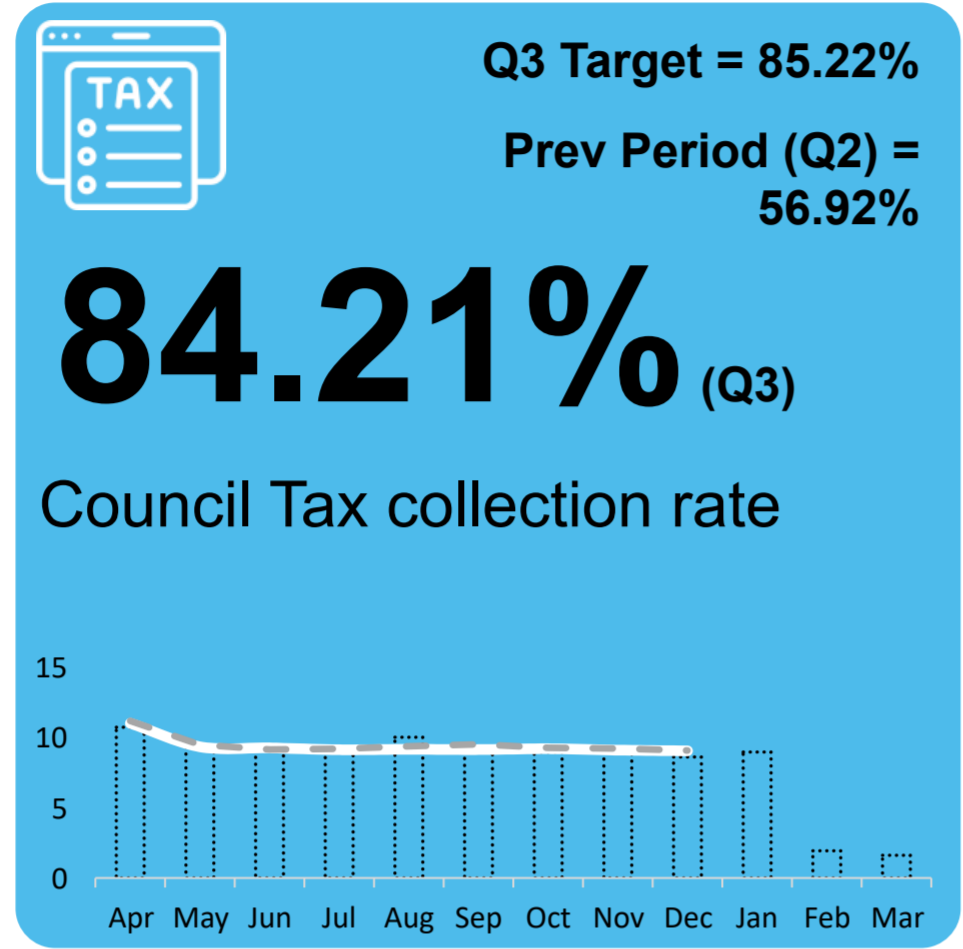
Transparency & Financial Probity



The latest quarter has resulted in a performance of 80.71% against a target of 83.22% which is a shortfall of £5.1m.

Collection rates were in a similar position at this point in 2022-23. We now have more 12 monthly payers which will be impacting on collection at this point, but the team are on track to achieve collection.

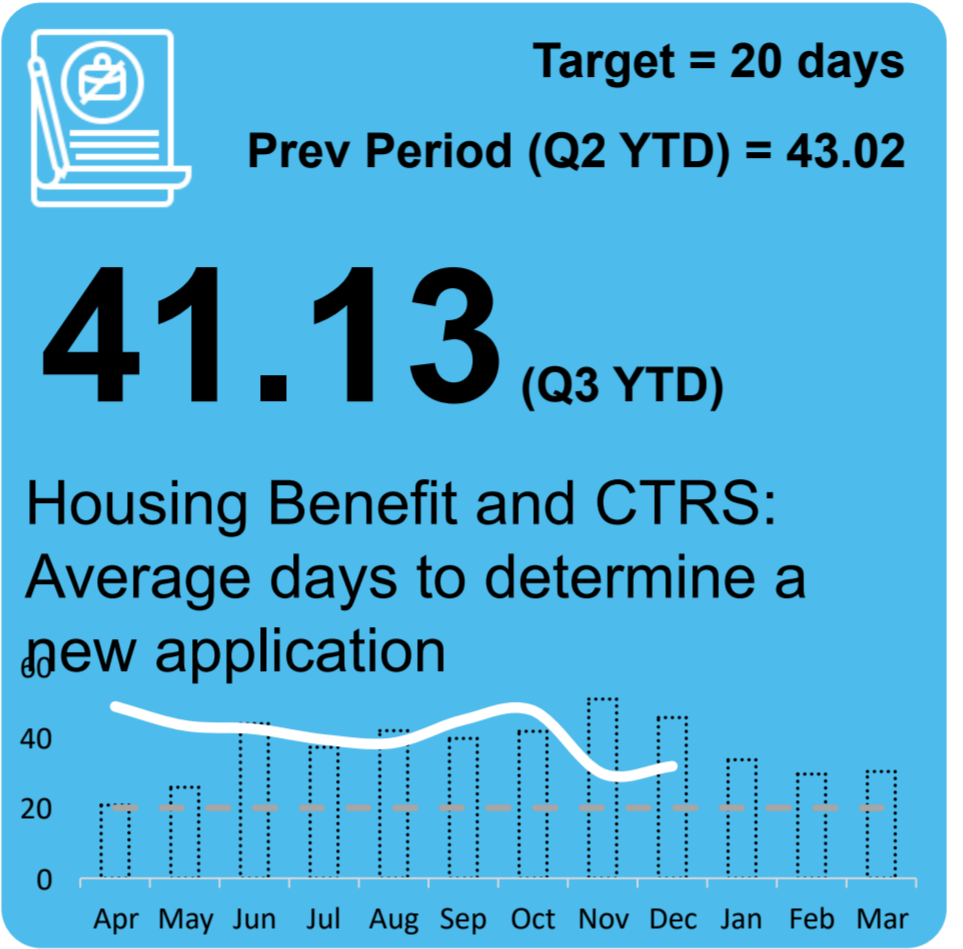
We will be reviewing the profiled targets in 2024-25.



84.21% against a target of 85.22%. We are currently 1% under target which is around £3.15m in monetary terms.

Phase one of the single system project has just been completed and the loss of systems for a period of time will have impacted on collection.

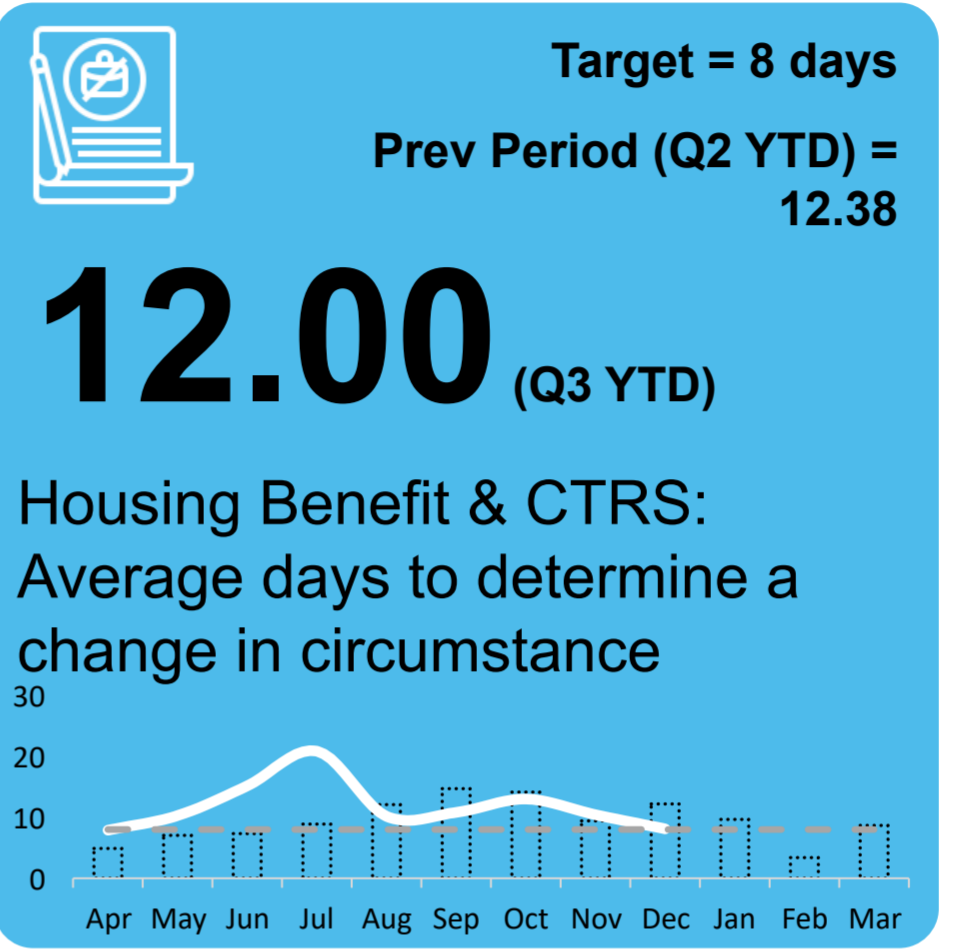
The team are actively taking steps to maximise collection for 2023-24.



Up to the end of the 3rd quarter of this year, the time taken to determine a new application is 41.13 days, this is against a target of 20 days and a national average of 22 days.

The current performance against a target of 20 days is below target, but is an improvement from each of the past two quarters.

Phase one of the single system project has just been completed and the loss of systems for a period of time will impact on this performance indicator moving forward as we tackle the backlog.

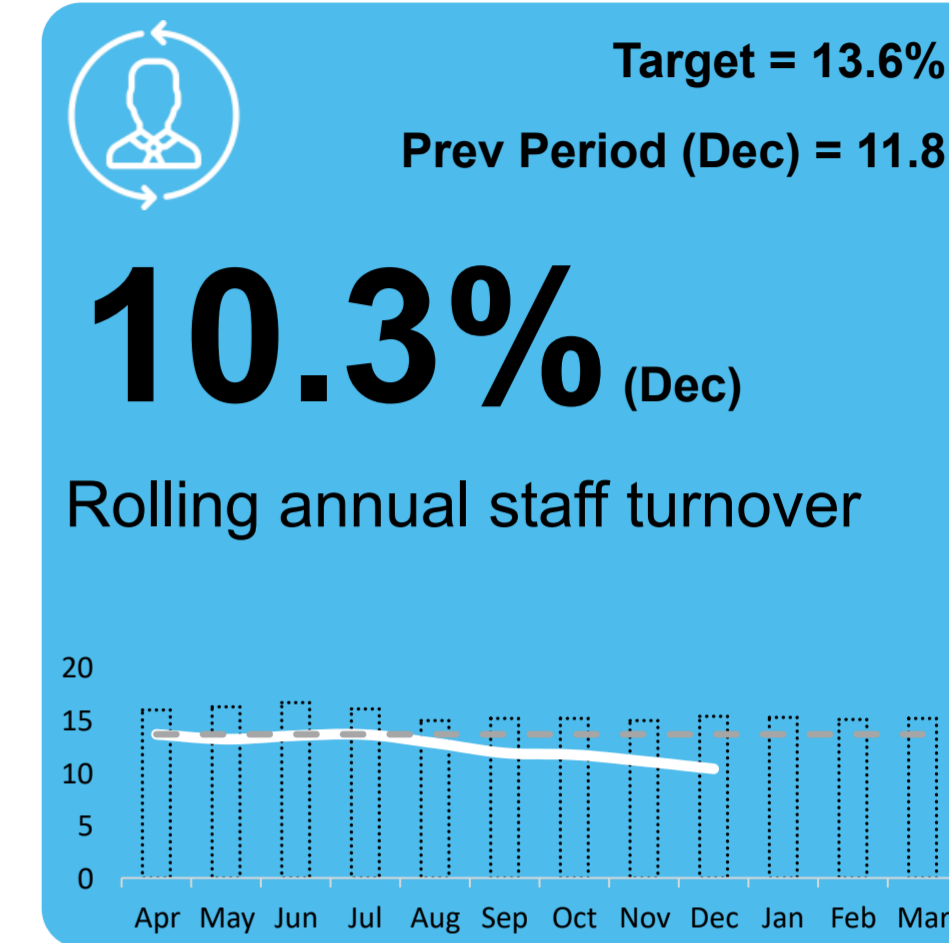
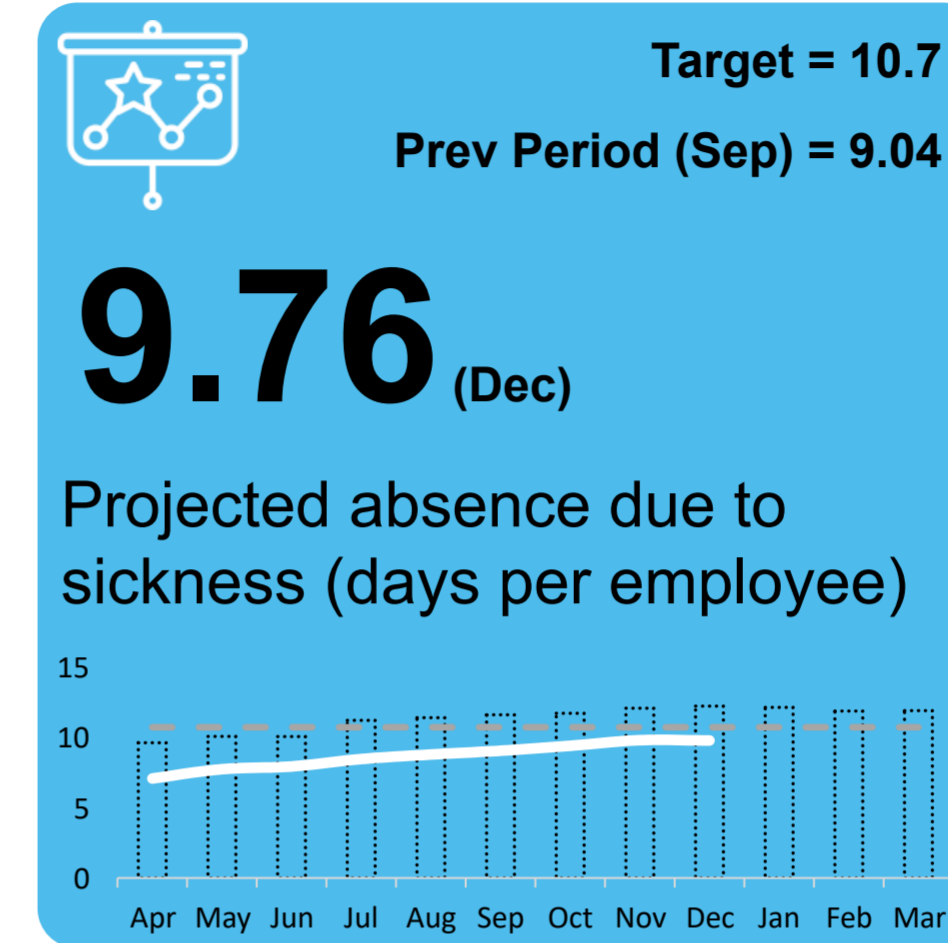
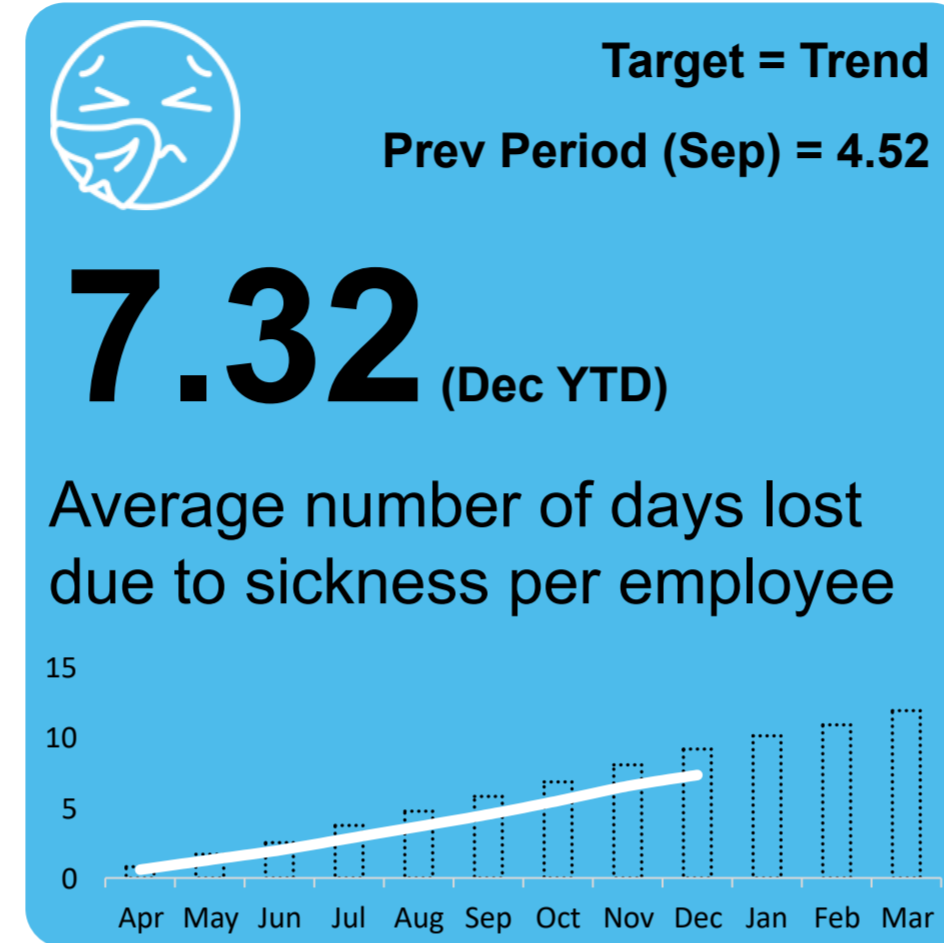
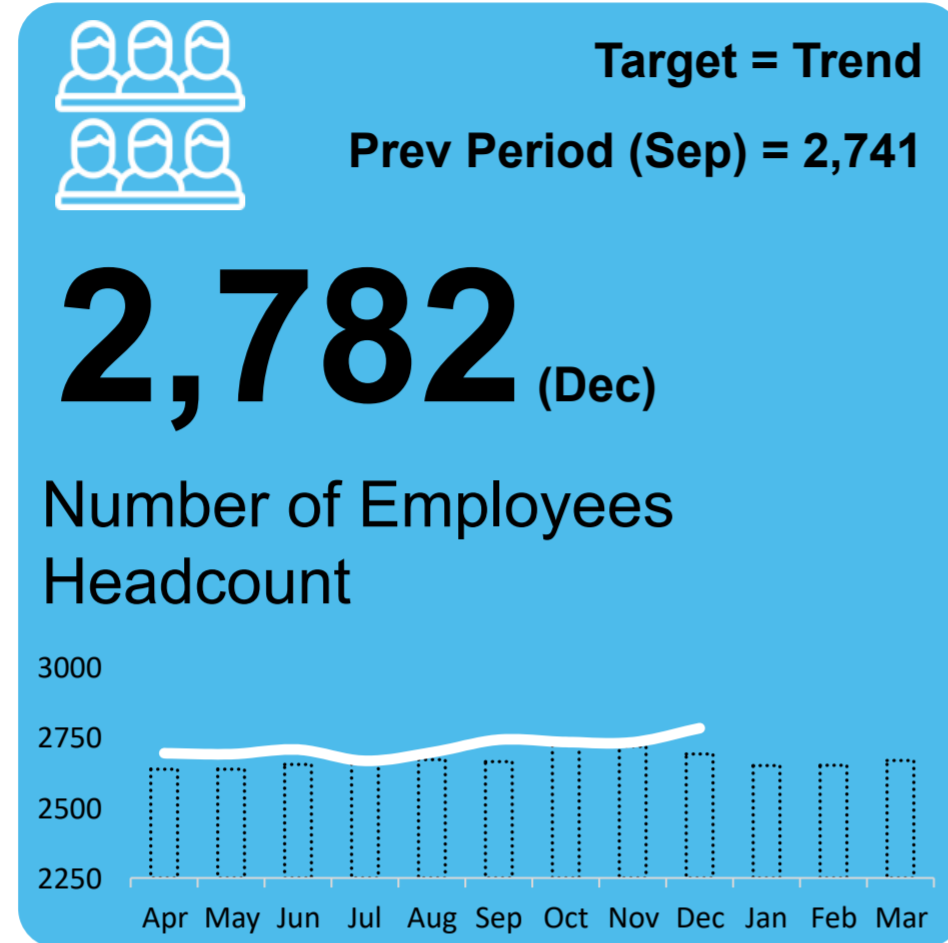
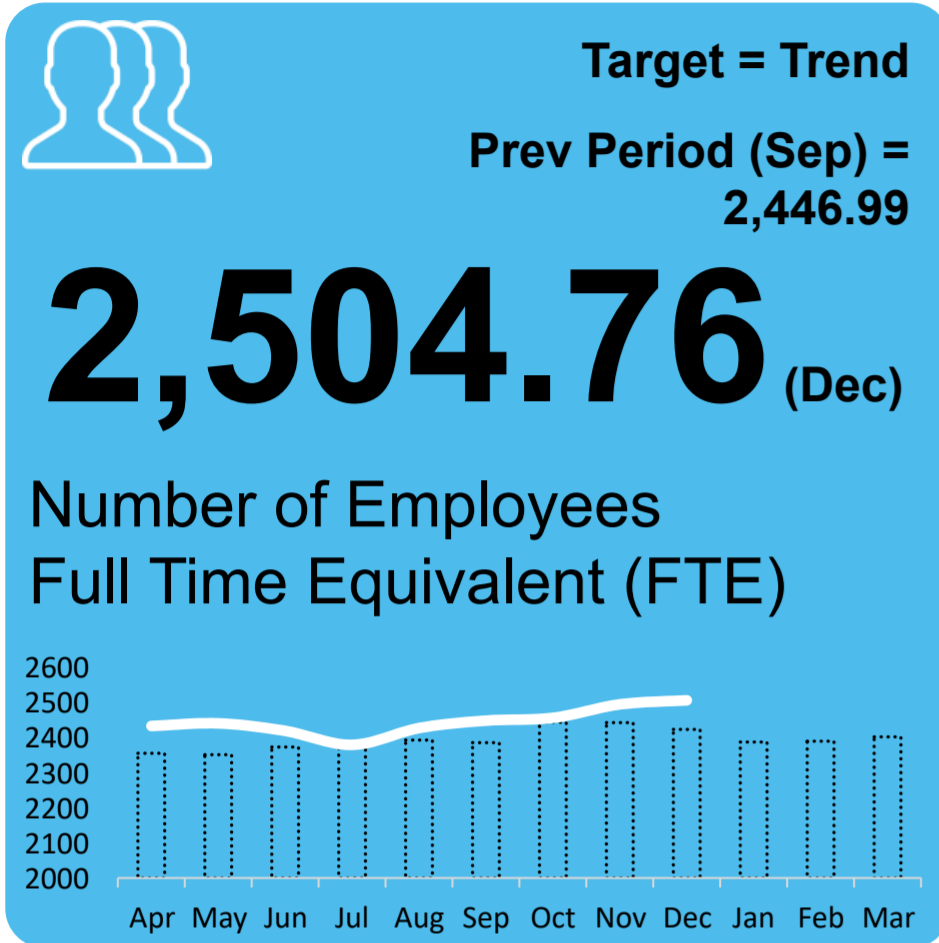


Across the first three quarters of this year the team has processed 48,937 changes to circumstances and for these, the average number of days to deal with changes in circumstances in this year is 12.00 days. This is an improvement on the previous quarters position.

Phase one of the single system project has just been completed and the loss of systems for a period of time will impact on this performance indicator moving forward as we tackle the backlog of changes that came in during system closedown.

Priority 6 – Robust Resource Management

Transparency & Financial Probity



These two indicators provide detail on the number of employees within the council, both individual people (headcount) and the full-time equivalent, which for West Northamptonshire Council refers to 37 hours per week.

The current establishment shows 2,782 employees at the end of December 2023, an increase of 41 when compared to the position reported at the end of September (2,741), there is a similar trend in the number of FTEs with an increase to 2,504.76 at the end of December 2023.

Comparing the position at the end of September last year we employ 92 more people now than we did at the same point last year, this also resulted in an increase in the full-time equivalent of 82.9. Over the course of the last 12 months, there have been numerous service disaggregation's from NNC resulting in a rising headcount alongside a greater success in filling vacancies as the post covid employment market eases combined with the impact of our work on building our employer brand.

These two indicators provide both an actual absence average per month across the year and the second indicator is the projected absence due to sickness by the end of the year, each of these indicators is an average per employee.

Current sickness absence from work continues to be impacted by Covid-19 which will be directly impacting the ability to attend work in parts of the organisation, typically those front-line services. But also the current working arrangements with office-based staff continuing to work from home for at least part of the week is likely to be resulting in less staff absence in parts of the organisation.

The average number of days projected to be lost due to sickness at the end of the year is 9.76 days per employee, which represents a reduction when compared to the outturn from last year of 11.88 days per employee. Sickness reporting currently looks low when compared to last year and work is being undertaken to ensure that all sickness absence is being recorded on ERP as would be expected.

Sickness trigger reporting takes place monthly within HR and managers are then contacted and supported in managing sickness absence cases to support individuals to return to work.

It is healthy for any organisation to have a level of staff turnover through staff moving on to other organisations and the council attracting new staff into the organisation.

The latest figures show that in the past 12 months, there has been a turnover figure of 10.3%, a reduction of 1.5% from the position at the end of Sep and also a decrease of 5% when compared to the same point last year.

The reduction is expected because we are seeing a less buoyant recruitment market and this may also be some evidence of WNC starting to establish its culture and values and people are opting to remain with us.

Appendix – Scorecard Detail

Ref	Metric Title	Priority	Lead Directorate	Better to be?	2022-23 Q4	2022-23 Outturn	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Jul	Aug	Sep	Q2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q3	YTD	Stat Neighbour	Regional	National	Comparator Period
WAS-01	Percentage of waste sent for re-use, recycling or composting	1. Green & Clean	Place	Higher	43.6%					50.5%				48.0%							42.2%	42.5%	2021-22
WAS-02	Percentage of residual waste treated	1. Green & Clean	Place	Higher	86.9%					92.6%				89.3%									
WAS-04	Fly-tips cleared	1. Green & Clean	Place	Higher	4,806	17,301				4,103				4,122				3,555	11,780				
EC-01	Fixed Penalty Notices issued for Environmental Crime	1. Green & Clean	Place	No Tolerance	764	3,092	121	130	96	347	110	132	142	384	168	229	204	601	1,332				
SLC-01	Number of visitors to leisure centres	1. Green & Clean	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	565,831	2,158,761	186,761	193,040	188,670	568,471	195,317	201,174	131,547	528,038	191,923	184,646	147,497	524,066	1,620,575				
3.5a	Number of charging points - WN area (all)	1. Green & Clean	Place	Higher	177	177				160				200				238			2,462	46,374	Jan-24
3.5b	Number of charging points - WN area (Fast Chargers)	1. Green & Clean	Place	Higher	66	66				56				84				105			834	8,428	Jan-24
3.5c	Charging Points per 100,000 population - WN area	1. Green & Clean	Place	Higher	41.5	41.5				37.5				46.9				55.8			50.4	82.0	Jan-24
ASCOF-2D-CLD	Older people (65+) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Adult Social Care	Higher	88.9%	88.9%	88.9%	76.5%	91.2%	85.3%	43.8%	88.5%	84.3%	72.4%	93.3%	75.4%	90.7%	87.3%	80.8%		82.0%	81.8%	2021-22
ASCOF-04-SALT	Admission to residential and nursing care homes, per 100k (aged 18-64)	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Adult Social Care	Higher	-	8.8	0.8	0.0	1.5	2.3	0.0	1.5	2.3	3.8	1.9	2.3	0.8	5.0	11.1		18.4	13.9	2021-22
ASCOF-05-SALT	Admission to residential and nursing care homes, per 100k (aged 65+)	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Adult Social Care	Higher	-	434.8	34.4	37.1	37.2	108.7	37.2	57.8	39.9	134.8	48.2	49.6	86.0	183.7	427.3		562.0	538.5	2021-22
CORP-02	Care Act Assessments completed	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Adult Social Care	Higher			146	157	168	471	154	173	156	483	156	138	91	385	1,339				
CORP-03	Carers assessments completed	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Adult Social Care	Higher			71	117	123	311	105	85	115	305	7	67	5	79	695				
CORP-04	Concluded safeguarding enquiries where (MSP) questions were asked and outcomes were expressed	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Adult Social Care	Higher	91.3%	-	100.0%	94.2%	90.7%	94.4%	94.8%	89.7%	93.3%	92.7%	91.6%	95.6%	94.0%	93.6%	93.5%				
CORP-05	Care Act reviews completed in past 12 months	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Adult Social Care	Higher	32.0%	32.0%				36.0%				40.5%				44.4%			65.0%		2022-23 Q4
2.2a	Percentage of all referrals with a decision within 2 working days	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	Higher	-	67.5%	57.7%	58.1%	60.7%	57.7%	53.5%	78.6%	87.9%	72.6%	73.7%	77.5%	66.8%	73.1%	67.8%	-	-	-	-
2.2b	Percentage of referrals with a previous referral within 12 months	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	Lower	-	29.5%	28.4%	23.3%	25.4%	25.5%	23.2%	31.0%	25.5%	26.4%	29.0%	30.3%	27.0%	29.0%	26.9%	22.0%	23.1%	21.5%	2021-22
2.2c	Percentage of Single Assessments authorised within 45 days	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	Higher	-	93.9%	93.7%	92.7%	92.7%	92.9%	95.3%	92.2%	96.3%	94.3%	95.7%	97.9%	96.8%	96.9%	94.7%	85.8%	92.3%	84.5%	2021-22
2.2d	Percentage of children that became the subject of a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	Lower	-	29.7%	36.5%	17.1%	43.6%	33.3%	22.7%	37.4%	34.0%	32.1%	30.1%	27.2%	20.5%	26.9%	31.2%	23.3%	26.9%	23.3%	2021-22
2.2e	Percentage of children in care who were placed for adoption within 12 months of an agency decision that	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	Higher	77.8%	86.7%				85.7%				83.3%				63.6%	75.0%	72.5%	-	74.0%	2020
2.2f	Number of contacts in the MASH	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	No Tolerance	11,658	46,624	3,981	4,760	4,744	13,485	4,392	3,633	4,468	12,493	4,529	4,315	3,486	12,330	38,308				
2.2g	Contacts converted to referral (social care and Early Help)	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	Higher	-	-	40%	41%	46%	43%	44%	40%	40%	42%	46%	48%	46%	47%	43%				
2.2h	Number of children supported by Early Help in NCT	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	No Tolerance	-	1,475	1,436	1,531	1,616	-	1,638	1,595	1,593	-	1,621	1,692	1,752	-	1,752				
2.2i	Number of children open under Children in Need (CIN)	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	No Tolerance	-	4,491	4,604	4,803	4,826	-	4,670	4,419	4,426	-	4,658	4,628	4,543	-	4,543	294.7 per 10,000	285.9 per 10,000	334.3 per 10,000	2021-22
2.2j	Number of children on a Child Protection Plan (CPP)	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	No Tolerance	-	625	680	687	714	-	702	771	755	-	716	708	659	-	659	35.04 per 10,000	43.0 per 10,000	42.1 per 10,000	2021-22
2.2k	Number of children looked after	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	No Tolerance	-	1,231	1,212	1,205	1,191	-	1,191	1,179	1,165	-	1,198	1,208	1,215	-	1,215	63.4 per 10,000	65.0 per 10,000	70.0 per 10,000	2021-22
2.2m	Social Workers with case loads above the recommended target	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	Lower	-	17.3%	21.1%	24.5%	22.9%	-	21.3%	19.5%	18.5%	-	22.3%	15.9%	17.5%	-	17.5%				

Appendix – Scorecard Detail

Ref	Metric Title	Priority	Lead Directorate	Better to be?	2022-23 Q4	2022-23 Outturn	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Jul	Aug	Sep	Q2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q3	YTD	Stat Neighbour	Regional	National	Comparator Period
2.2n	Proportion of young people (aged 16-18) who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) or Not Known	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	Lower	-	2.0%	2.2%	2.1%	2.1%	-	2.4%	3.1%	5.2%	-	3.8%	3.3%	3.0%	-	3.0%	5.6%	4.5%	4.8%	2022
SEN2	Number of Requests for EHCP Assessment	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	No Tolerance	275	1,057	54	115	115	284	111	52	76	239	115	121	77	313	836				
SEN1	EHCPs completed within 20 Weeks - excluding exceptions	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	Higher	6.9%	10.2%	7.1%	12.1%	4.8%	7.8%	3.3%	6.3%	14.3%	7.2%	6.8%	3.8%	0.0%	4.1%	7.3%	44.8%	32.1%	50.7%	2022
SEN1a	EHCPs completed within 20 Weeks - including exceptions	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	Higher	5.2%	9.1%	4.7%	6.3%	3.4%	4.8%	3.2%	6.3%	14.3%	7.1%	8.9%	5.6%	0.0%	5.6%	6.3%	44.3%	31.8%	49.1%	2022
SEN0	Number of EHCPs	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	No Tolerance	-	3,265	3,293	3,343	3,391	-	3,389	3,419	3,443	-	3,443	3,478	3,504	-	3,504				
SEN1f	EHCP Annual Reviews within 12 months of previous review	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	Higher	-	42.4%	46.8%	47.9%	44.8%	-	12.5%	58.5%	58.5%	-	59.6%	63.2%	65.2%	-	65.2%				
NI14e	Number of Exclusions - Primary Phase	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	Lower	1	3	0	0	2	2	0	-	1	1	2	0	1	3	6				
NI14f	Number of Exclusions - Secondary Phase	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	Lower	60	26	1	5	5	11	2	-	3	5	5	6	2	13	29				
LS6	Number of Suspensions - Primary Phase	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	Lower	378	966	46	89	111	246	78	-	43	121	66	79	51	196	563				
LS7	Number of Suspensions - Secondary Phase	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	Lower	1,835	5,023	275	617	527	1,419	327	-	332	659	518	623	464	1,605	3,683				
LS14n	Open school applications outside 15 days statutory timescale	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	Lower	-		148	155	84	-	67	0	194	-	77	10	33	-	33				
PH8	Percentage Smoking quit rate at 4 weeks	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Higher	54.6%	-	63.0%	51.2%	51.6%	53.7%	59.7%	50.5%	61.9%	57.9%	53.4%	54.8%	59.7%	55.1%				54.0%	2022-23
PH9	Percentage of mothers known to be smokers at the time of delivery (Northamptonshire)	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Lower	10.6%	-				9.7%				10.2%				9.4%			11.4%	8.8%	2022-23
PH1	Infants due a new birth visit that received a new birth visit within 14 days of birth	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Higher	95.2%	-	96.4%	97.0%	92.8%	95.4%	96.6%	95.7%	94.1%	95.4%	96.8%	95.0%	94.8%	95.5%	95.5%			82.7%	2021-22
PH2	Infants who received a 6-8 week review by the time they were 8 weeks	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Higher	94.1%	-	92.8%	92.5%	89.1%	91.5%	93.2%	92.6%	91.9%	92.6%	88.1%	91.1%	93.5%	90.8%	91.6%			81.6%	2021-22
PH3	In-year eligible population who received an NHS Health Check	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Higher			2.6%	3.5%	3.5%	9.6%	3.3%	3.3%	3.1%	9.7%	2.6%	3.7%	2.5%	8.8%	28.1%			2.3%	2022-23 Q4
PH11	People whose frailty has either not increased or has reduced	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Higher	New	New				65.2%				85.7%				79.0%				-	-
PH10	People in Weight Management service losing 5% weight	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Higher	55.3%					42.1%				28.4%								-	-
PH5	CYP who showed a maintained or improved CORE-YP score on completion of care (CYP Mental Health)	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Higher										88.3%				92.0%				-	-
PH6	Successful completions of adult drug treatment - opiate users	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Higher			4.1%	3.8%	4.2%	4.0%		4.4%	4.8%	4.6%	4.2%	3.8%	3.3%	3.8%	4.1%			5.0%	2023-24 Q2
PH7	Successful completions of adult alcohol treatment	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Higher			29.0%	28.3%	29.0%	28.8%		24.7%	21.1%	22.8%	21.0%	20.8%	20.4%	20.7%	25.5%			35.0%	2023-24 Q2
PH12	Rate of emergency department attendances for falls in those aged 65+	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	No Tolerance	4.01		1.34	1.42	1.81	4.57	1.31	1.63	1.41	4.35	1.39	1.37	0.17	2.93	11.84				
HS-08	Proportion of cases where homeless was prevented	2. Improved Life Chances	Communities & Opportunities	Higher			26.0%	14.0%	17.0%	19.0%	21.7%	19.1%	18.0%	20.0%	4.8%	13.2%	13.5%	10.2%					
HS-09	Proportion of cases where homelessness was successfully relieved	2. Improved Life Chances	Communities & Opportunities	Higher			24.0%	17.0%	20.0%	21.0%	22.3%	21.0%	17.0%	20.0%	3.7%	22.4%	19.1%	14.5%					
PSH-01	Net Disabled Facilities Grant Expenditure	2. Improved Life Chances	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	1,236,454	4,750,175	274,087	645,317	261,001	1,180,405	467,160.0	411,387.0	231,472.0	1,110,019.0	108,277.0	257,258.0	307,373.0	672,908.0	2,963,332.0				

Appendix – Scorecard Detail

Ref	Metric Title	Priority	Lead Directorate	Better to be?	2022-23 Q4	2022-23 Outturn	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Jul	Aug	Sep	Q2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q3	YTD	Stat Neighbour	Regional	National	Comparator Period
HW-04	Percentage of routine maintenance budget spent to date compared to the agreed Maintenance Plan budget	3. Connected Communities	Place	Higher	-	-				96.0%				77.0%				108.8%					
HW-07	Percentage of defects responded to within the timeframes specified (Priority 1 & 2)	3. Connected Communities	Place	Higher	98.8%	-	100.0%	96.8%	100.0%	98.7%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	97.2%	97.7%	98.3%					
HW-08	Percentage of defects responded to within the timeframes specified (Priority 3 & 4)	3. Connected Communities	Place	Higher	98.3%	-	97.5%	98.2%	99.1%	98.2%	98.2%	99.4%	98.4%	98.8%	98.4%	99.1%	96.9%	98.3%					
3.1a	Percentage of customers who are quite satisfied and extremely satisfied with the service received from	3. Connected Communities	Corporate Services	Higher	90.4%	90.7%				88.2%				95.6%				96.6%					
3.1b	Percentage of contacts received within Customer Services for the first time (unavoidable contacts)	3. Connected Communities	Corporate Services	Higher						91.0%				95.0%				93.1%					
3.1c	Proportion of complaints escalated	3. Connected Communities	Corporate Services	Lower	9.0%	-	-	-	-	7.0%				6.0%				6.8%					
3.1d	Proportion of complaints that are upheld	3. Connected Communities	Corporate Services	Lower	New	New	-	-	-	54.0%				22.0%				53.0%					
HSP-05	Number of new council homes built	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Place	Higher	3	77	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	80	86				
HSP-01	Number of affordable homes completed	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Place	Higher	175	441	-	-	-	57	-	-	-	100	-	-	-	179	336				
LIB-01	Visitors to libraries - Physical Visitors	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	New	New	83,381	89,632	87,011	260,024	98,823	102,854	92,176	293,853	93,985	93,443	79,444	266,872	820,749				
LIB-02	Visitors to libraries - Virtual Visitors	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	New	New	19,553	23,008	18,328	60,889	29,372	21,939	24,692	76,003	24,975	25,058	18,859	68,892	205,784				
LIB-05	Visitors to Museums	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	27,362	138,114	13,412	10,991	13,773	38,176	14,000	20,122	12,204	46,326	12,974	16,218	9,999	39,191	123,693				
CSE-03	ARAP / ACRS: number of households assisted to move on to find their own accommodation	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	New	New	2	1	2	5	1.00	10.00	2.00	13.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	4.00	22.00				
CSE-02	Homes for Ukraine: percentage of hosting breakdowns where homelessness is prevented	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	New	New	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.67	0.50	1.00	0.63	0.67	0.67	0.60	0.64					
DM-01	Percentage of major planning applications processed within 13 weeks or agreed timescales	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Place	Higher	79.0%	-	71.4%	100.0%	100.0%	87.5%	100.0%	84.6%	75.0%	87.5%	100.0%	85.7%	71.4%	83.3%	77.8%		92.0%	92.0%	2022-23 Q4
DM-02	Percentage of non-major planning applications processed within 8 weeks or agreed timescales	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Place	Higher	64.0%	-	83.9%	79.8%	76.6%	80.3%	96.2%	81.2%	89.1%	88.2%	84.7%	82.8%	84.6%	84.0%	84.2%		83.0%	87.0%	2022-23 Q4

Appendix – Scorecard Detail

Ref	Metric Title	Priority	Lead Directorate	Better to be?	2022-23 Q4	2022-23 Outturn	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Jul	Aug	Sep	Q2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q3	YTD	Stat Neighbour	Regional	National	Comparative Period
Econ2	Support to local businesses (Narrative Updated)	5. Economic Development	Place	-																			
5.4a	Total number of people on Council Tax Reduction Scheme	5. Economic Development	Finance	Lower	-	18,470				18,598				19,294.00				18,108.00					
5.4b	Pensioners on Council Tax Reduction Scheme	5. Economic Development	Finance	Lower	-	7,712				7,707				7,763.00				7,545.00					
5.4c	Working age people on Council Tax Reduction Scheme	5. Economic Development	Finance	Lower	-	10,758				10,891			640.00	11,531.00				10,563.00					
5.5a	Apprentices employed in substantive roles by WNC	5. Economic Development	Corporate Services	Higher	-	87				74				75				89	75				
5.5b	Apprenticeships starts in West Northants	5. Economic Development	Corporate Services	Higher	-	950	-	-	-	2,150													
6.1	Net Revenue budget delivery - Projected surplus/ deficit (£m)	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Lower							£2.78m				£2.66m		£3.49m						
6.2	Council Tax collection rate	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Higher	-	96.97%	10.99%	20.31%	29.55%	29.55%	38.7%	47.8%	56.9%	56.9%	66.1%	75.2%	84.2%	84.2%			96.0%	2022-23	
6.3	Business Rates collection rate	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Higher	-	98.02%	10.89%	20.35%	30.19%	30.19%	39.0%	46.5%	55.1%	55.1%	64.5%	73.0%	80.7%	80.7%			96.8%	2022-23	
6.4	Amount of debt owed to the council that is overdue by at least 90 days (£m)	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Lower	-	25	24.80	25.60	24.06		24.86	24.80	25.70		26.99	25.81	26.08		25.70				
6.5	Percentage of invoices that are paid within 30 days of receipt	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Higher	96.6%	96.7%	98.4%	97.2%	97.8%	97.8%	98.5%	98.7%	97.8%	98.4%	98.7%	98.3%	98.5%	98.5%	98.1%				
6.6a	Housing Benefit & CTRS - time to determine new applications	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Lower	-	36.45	48.79				39.39	38.47	45.02	43.02	47.61	29.71	31.84	41.13					
6.6b	Housing Benefit & CTRS - time to determine change in circumstances	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Lower	-	7.68	7.92				20.88	10.18	10.83	12.38	13.02	10.44	8.12	12.00					
6.7a	Number of Employee's - Full Time Equivalent (FTE)	6. Robust Resource Management	Corporate Services	No Tolerance	-	2400.72	2,432.01	2,439.22	2,417.85		2,378.21	2,425.93	2,446.99		2,454.86	2,493.25	2,504.76		2,446.99				
6.7b	Number of Employee's - Headcount	6. Robust Resource Management	Corporate Services	No Tolerance	-	2,667	2,693	2,690	2,706		2,666	2,696	2,741		2,733	2,732	2,782		2,741				
6.7c	Average number of days lost due to sickness	6. Robust Resource Management	Corporate Services	Lower	-	11.88	0.59	1.29	1.98		2.82	3.66	4.52		5.48	6.53	7.32		4.52				
6.7d	Projected sickness	6. Robust Resource Management	Corporate Services	Lower	-	11.88	7.07	7.73	7.92		8.45	8.77	9.04		9.39	9.79	9.76		9.04				
6.7e	Rolling Annual Staff Turnover	6. Robust Resource Management	Corporate Services	No Tolerance	-	15.1%	13.6%	13.1%	13.5%		13.6%	12.8%	11.8%		11.7%	11.0%	10.3%		11.8%				

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22 April 2024

Councillor Malcolm Longley, Cabinet Member for Finance

Report Title	Revenue Monitoring Period 9 - Financial Year 2023-24
Report Author	Martin Henry, Executive Director (Finance) Martin.Henry@westnorthants.gov.uk

List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	12 April 2024
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	12 April 2024
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	12 April 2024

List of Appendices

Cabinet Report – 13 February 2024

Appendix A – 2023-24 Revenue Forecast Outturn by Directorate as at Period 9

Appendix B – Budget Savings Tracker

Appendix C – Treasury Management Update

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The report contained within was considered by Cabinet on 13 February 2024 and provides an assessment of the Council's financial performance against its approved 2023-24 budget, incorporating key financial risks, issues and opportunities identified since 1st April 2023 for General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) as at the end of Period 9 2023-24, The Executive Director – Finance will also provide Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a verbal update on the latest outturn position.

2. Implications (including financial implications)

Resources and Financial

- 2.1 The resource and financial implications for West Northamptonshire Council are set out in the body of, and appendices to, the Cabinet report attached.

Legal

- 2.2 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals. The Cabinet report has been cleared by Legal Services.

Risk

- 2.3 The Cabinet report sets out the financial forecast for this financial year. The key risks associated with the report relate to the continued challenging economic conditions being experienced, slower than forecast reductions in inflationary pressures alongside demand led pressures on both adults and children's social care and housing services potentially driving further financial pressures over and above those already identified. These risks are identified earlier in the report.

- 2.4 There continues to be financial risk in a number of budgets which could worsen between now and year end including:

- 2.4.1 Adult Social Care
- 2.4.2 Children's Social Care
- 2.4.3 Home to School Transport
- 2.4.4 Temporary Accommodation

Consultation

- 2.5 The Council carries out public consultation and communications on its annual budget proposals. These activities took place in the months prior to the budgets being approved by Full Council in February 2023 for the 2023-24 budget.
- 2.6 Any management interventions that require a policy change will be subject to a consultation before any decision is taken.
- 2.7 Where consultation is necessary, full details will be presented to Cabinet separately. Cabinet can only make a decision after taking careful account of the results of such consultation in order to reach an informed decision.

Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

- 2.8 All 2023-24 budget proposals were consulted on prior to the budget being approved by Full Council in February 2023. Any management interventions that require a policy change will be subject to a consultation before any decision is taken. Where consultation is necessary, full details will be presented to Cabinet separately. Corporate Overview and Scrutiny carried out a

full budget scrutiny programme of work which fed into the final budget proposals and also consider the regular budget monitoring reports throughout the year.

- 2.9 Corporate Scrutiny will consider this report.

Climate Impact

- 2.10 All management interventions and mitigations identified within this report will be reviewed on an individual basis for any environmental impact.

Community Impact

- 2.11 This report will have a positive impact on the community by providing scrutiny on how public funds are being used to fund services for local residents in 2023-24.

Communications

Communication will continue with service directors to seek to deliver a balanced budget in 2023-24.

3. Background Papers

- 5.1 The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report:

- 5.2 Final Budget Report and Medium Term Financial Plan, meeting of Council, 22 February 2023
<https://westnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s10478/2023-24%20Final%20Budget%20Report%20-%20Full%20Council.pdf>

- 5.3 Revenue Monitoring report Period 4
<https://westnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s13437/Item%2008%20-%20WNC-%20Revenue%20Monitoring%20Report%20-%202023-24%20-Period%204.pdf>

- 5.4 Revenue Monitoring report Period 7
<https://westnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s14591/Revenue%20Monitoring%20Period%207%20-%20Financial%20Year%202023-24.pdf>

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

13 FEBRUARY 2024

CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE: COUNCILLOR MALCOLM LONGLEY

Report Title	Revenue Monitoring Period 9 - Financial Year 2023-24
Report Author	Martin Henry, Executive Director (Finance) Martin.Henry@westnorthants.gov.uk

List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	5 th February 2024
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	5 th February 2024
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	5 th February 2024

List of Appendices

Appendix A – 2023-24 Revenue Forecast Outturn by Directorate as at Period 9

Appendix B – Budget Savings Tracker

Appendix C – Treasury Management Update

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The report provides an assessment of the Council's financial performance against its approved 2023-24 budget, incorporating key financial risks, issues and opportunities identified since 1st April 2023 for General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 West Northamptonshire Council provides a range of services to residents and businesses across the area including care to vulnerable adults and children, education, the collection and disposal of waste, household waste recycling, leisure and community wellbeing, highways, planning, economic development, collection of council tax and business rates, housing benefit, council tax support, housing and support for the homeless.
- 2.2 Now in its third year of operation the Council continues to drive forward the delivery of the Council plan and its key corporate priorities, against the continuation of a challenging local, national and global economy, both within the current financial year and the medium-term horizon. These pressures are in line with those being experienced both on a local and national basis and include;
- Demand and cost pressures within Children’s Social Care.
 - Pressures within housing and temporary accommodation.
 - Demand and cost pressure on Adult Social Care independent care budgets.
 - Demand led pressure in the delivery of Home to School Transport
 - The cost of the 2023-24 pay award being greater than forecast at the time of setting the budget.
 - Inflationary pressure reducing at a slower pace than predicted in the first half of the financial year.
- 2.3 The Council is continuing to experience demand led pressures which are reflected in the current position. In response to the continuation of these demand led cost pressures currently being experienced by the Council, service management teams are focussed on reducing the cost of service delivery in their areas to support the council to forecast spend closer in line with the budget, while ensuring that services are still delivered and that there isn’t a corresponding reduction in service provision.

2.4 Table one summarises the revenue forecast currently being estimated for this financial year.

Table One - Forecast Outturn 2023-24 by Directorate

Directorate	Net Budget £'000	P9 Forecast Net Spend £'000	P9 Outturn Forecast Variance £'000	P7 Outturn Forecast Variance £'000	Movement Since P7 £'000	Forecast Variance against budget %
Corporate Services	18,022	17,626	(396)	(180)	(216)	-2.2%
Chief Executive Office	2,975	2,975	0	0	0	0.0%
Education Services	5,219	5,684	465	324	141	8.9%
Children's Trust	81,790	98,195	16,405	13,960	2,445	20.1%
Communities and Opportunities	14,068	15,544	1,476	2,335	(858)	10.5%
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	130,307	134,434	4,127	3,546	581	3.2%
Place and Economy	92,986	92,049	(937)	164	(1,101)	-1.0%
Finance Directorate	11,573	11,073	(500)	57	(557)	-4.3%
Cost of services	356,940	377,581	20,641	20,206	435	5.8%
Technical / Centrally Controlled Budgets	26,577	12,070	(14,507)	(14,908)	401	-54.6%
Total budgeted expenditure	383,517	389,651	6,134	5,298	836	1.6%
Less funding	(383,517)	(386,158)	(2,641)	(2,641)	0	0.7%
Net Position 2023-24	0	3,493	3,493	2,657	836	0.9%

*Technical / Centrally controlled includes use of unallocated general contingency of £8.2m

2.5 The forecast outturn position for 2023-24 is an overspend of £3.5m after the use of £8.2m of general budget contingencies, which were set aside in the budget for risks that may crystallise in the current financial year. This equates to less than 1% of the net budget. The Period 9 position shows an adverse movement of £0.8m from the period 7 position reported to Cabinet on 12th December 2023.

2.6 The main reasons for the underlying pressures are as follows:

- Continued demand and cost pressures within the Children's Trust contract.
- Pressures within housing and temporary accommodation.
- Demand and cost pressure on Adult Social Care independent care budgets.
- Demand led pressure in the delivery of Home to School Transport
- The cost of the 2023-24 pay award being greater than forecast at the time of setting the budget.

2.7 Directorates are continually seeking ways to reduce cost and manage demand in the most efficient and effective way.

Housing Revenue Account

- 2.8 The Housing Revenue Account is a ring-fenced account used to manage the Council's housing stock. The costs of managing and maintaining the properties, collecting rents and meeting the interest cost of monies borrowed to pay for investment in the housing stock are all charged to the housing revenue account.
- 2.9 Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) are an arms-length management organisation and manage the Council's housing stock on its behalf, and is responsible for the delivery of the following services:
- Allocations and lettings
 - Repairs and maintenance
 - Housing management, including dealing with anti-social behaviour
 - Tenancy support
 - Tenant involvement
- 2.10 The financial reporting of service delivery for these areas is also supplied by NPH and are incorporated in the Councils HRA's financial position for the current year.

Table Two: HRA Forecast Outturn 2023-24 by Activity

Retained WNC Budgets	Net Budget	Period 9 Forecast Outturn	Period 9 Outturn Forecast Variance	Period 7 Outturn Forecast Variance	Movement from Period 7	Forecast Variance against budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Dwelling Rents	(57,181)	(56,989)	192	337	(145)	-0.3%
Non-Dwelling Rents	(1,094)	(1,054)	40	40	0	-3.7%
Other Charges for Services	(2,906)	(2,801)	105	(13)	118	-3.6%
Contributions towards Expenditure	(9)	(12)	(3)	(11)	8	33.3%
Repairs & Maintenance	0	93	93	0	93	0%
General Management	1,632	1,340	(292)	(31)	(261)	-17.9%
Special Services	51	51	0	0	0	0%
Rent, Rates, Taxes & Other	302	302	0	0	0	0%
Provision for Bad Debts	600	550	(50)	(50)	0	-8.3%
General Fund Recharges	2,820	2,820	0	0	0	0.0%
Interest Capital Financing Charges	8,774	8,390	(384)	(271)	(113)	-4.4%
Depreciation (MRA)	13,699	13,999	300	0	300	2.2%
Voluntary Repayment Contributions *	0	516	516	517	(1)	0%
Revenue Contributions to Capital *	517	0	(517)	(517)	0	-100%
Total Retained Budgets	(32,795)	(32,795)	0	0	0	
Budgets Managed by NPH						
Repairs & Maintenance	17,964	17,964	0	0	0	0.0%
General Management	8,793	8,793	0	0	0	0.0%
Special Services	6,038	6,038	0	0	0	0.0%
Total Managed Budgets	32,795	32,795	0	0	0	0.0%
Net Position	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%

* Voluntary Repayment Contributions and Revenue Contributions to Capital are interchangeable and dependent upon the prevailing cost of borrowing. Voluntary Repayment Contributions are calculated as a minimum floor for future repayment of borrowing.

- 2.11 The HRA is reporting a balanced position against the original budget.
- 2.12 The position includes a shortfall in rental income and service charges of £0.3m due to new build properties coming online slower than expected, and an increase to the depreciation charge of £0.3m, which is part offset by reductions in borrowing costs due to major scheme rephasing, and an improved bad debt position.
- 2.13 In addition to this, a detailed review of Housing Revenue Account retained budgets has highlighted a number of legacy residual budgets that are no longer used, reflected in the £290k forecast underspend within General Management, which brings the HRA into a balanced position overall.

Dedicated Schools Grant

- 2.14 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is a ring-fenced specific grant allocated to the Local Authority (LA) by the Government to support a range of education related services.
- 2.15 The Department for Education (DfE) currently operate a four-block funding model for funding schools and pre-16 education including early years as set out in the following table:

Dedicated Schools Grant			
Schools Block	Early Years Block	High Needs Block	Central Schools Services Block (CSSB)

- 2.16 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) forecast at the end of Period 9 is as follows:

Table Three – DSG

DSG Block	Gross Expenditure Budget £'000	Recoupment £'000	Net Expenditure Budget £'000	Period 9 Forecast Expenditure £'000	Period 9 Forecast Variance £'000	Movement from Period 7 £'000
Schools	342,175	(273,243)	68,932	68,798	(134)	(160)
Early Years Provision	27,845	0	27,845	27,471	(374)	(118)
High Needs	71,475	(16,851)	54,624	60,223	5,599	1,207
Central Schools Services Block	3,791	0	3,791	3,781	(11)	0
TOTAL	445,286	(290,094)	155,192	160,272	5,080	929

- 2.17 The DSG is currently forecasting an overspend of £5.1m – an adverse movement of £0.9m from the position reported at P7 mainly due to additional demand pressures in the high needs block.

High Needs Block

- 2.18 The forecast pressure in the high needs block totalling £5.6m has increased by £1.2m since the position reported at P7. The increase is mainly across provision for pupils with SEN (£0.9m) due to increased support for pupils in mainstream schools and those without EHCPs. This brings the total forecast overspend in this area to £2.6m. By supporting more mainstream schools to meet higher levels of need, pressures on more expensive specialist placements are avoided.
- 2.19 The large majority of the remaining high needs block overspend is mainly due to increased demand and cost for independent placements provision (including out of county placements) for pupils with SEND (£2.8m) with sufficiency issues in meeting demand in county.
- 2.20 Independent special school placements had increased by 34 pupils since the end of July, in comparison the increase for the whole of 2022-23 which was 52. The cost of placements has also increased from an annual average of £50k to £55k which is a combination of increased need but also inflation on the costs being charged.
- 2.21 The capital programme includes £34m investment in a new special school with a target completion date of September 2025, and continuation of works to increase resourced places in mainstream schools and special school expansions over the next academic year to support

better outcomes for children, create in excess of an additional 600 places and reduce financial pressures over the medium term. This will be funded through central government grants and Council borrowing.

Early Years Block

- 2.22 The early years block is forecast to underspend by £0.4m on central expenditure which in the main relates to staffing vacancies.

Schools Block

- 2.23 There is a £0.1m forecast underspend on the school improvement group de-delegation which will be ring fenced (to maintained schools whose delegated budgets were reduced for this central function following approval through the schools forum) and carried forwards into next financial year to support this activity.

Public Health Grant

- 2.24 The Public Health Grant for 2023-24 is £19.7m and is a ring-fenced grant for use on public health functions.

Table Four – Public Health

	2023-24 Budget	Period 9 Forecast	Period 9 Forecast Variance	Period 7 Forecast	Movement from Period 7
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Health Protection and Healthcare Public Health	2,809	2,789	(20)	2,709	80
Wider Determinants	3,480	3,432	(48)	3,420	12
Health Improvement and Communities	1,073	1,071	(2)	1,074	(3)
People & Wellbeing and Commissioning	8,334	8,453	119	8,594	(141)
Management and Admin	4,034	3,985	(49)	3,933	52
Public Health Grant	(19,730)	(19,730)	0	(19,730)	0
General Fund (for Healthwatch)	153	101	(52)	101	0

- 2.25 The Public Health Directorate are reporting a £52k underspend. This includes a balanced Public Health Grant position. Although there are some underlying pressures against the Public Health Grant due to the cost of disaggregation, project delivery, and adults prevention and wellbeing services these are currently mitigated through reductions in non-statutory expenditure and planned use of the Public Health reserve.

3 Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- a) Note the forecast outturn position for 2023-24 and associated risks.
- b) Note the deliverability assessment of West Northamptonshire Council savings requirement for 2023-24 summarised in section 7 and detailed in Appendix B
- c) Note the Treasury Management update in appendix C
- d) Delegate authority to the Executive Director – Finance in consultation with the portfolio holder for finance to apply any budget virements required to effectively manage the overall budget.

4 Reason for Recommendations

- *To update members on the financial position of the Council and ensure that the Authority complies with its financial regulations.*

5 Report Background

5.1 The Council's budget for 2023-24 is £383.5m and was approved on 24 February 2023 by Full Council, the budget includes £32m of savings proposals. This report includes an analysis of the deliverability of these efficiency and income proposals, and the in-year variations to budgeted assumptions.

6 Financial Overview by Directorate

2.26 This section of the report provides an update on the forecast variations against the 2023-24 budget. A more detailed breakdown of the 2023-24 forecast is included in Appendix A.

Corporate Services

Net budget £18.02m

Forecast outturn £17.63m

Forecast underspend £0.39m

Variance percentage -2.2%

2.27 The Corporate Services Directorate delivers services including human resources, customer services, Digital Technology and Innovation (DTI), legal, democratic and transformation services. The Directorate is reporting an underspend of £0.4m.

2.28 There are significant pressures within the DTI service budget of £2.9m due to the additionality of cost for existing and new IT contracts, which has been partially offset by savings through contract rationalising, review of cost recharging models to partners and savings on staffing due to delays in recruitment resulting in a net position of £0.5m overspend.

- 2.29 Corporate Services Managers have identified further underspends and mitigations of £1.1m which fully offset the other pressures within the directorate and contribute towards the overall position of the authority.

Chief Executive Services

Net budget £2.98m

Forecast outturn £2.98m

Forecast underspend £0m

Variance percentage 0%

- 2.30 Chief Executive Office includes the Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive, Communications Business Intelligence Services, and Sustainability team.

- 2.31 The Directorate is reporting an overall balanced position, which has not moved from the position reported at P7.

Education Services

Net Budget £5.22m

Forecast Outturn £5.68m

Forecast overspend £0.47m

Variance percentage 8.9%

- 2.32 Education Services is made up of Council services which deliver statutory education functions against approximately 200 duties as set out in various Education and Children Acts, and regulations including, but not limited to, school quality assurance and intervention, pupil place planning and admissions, early years and special educational needs.

- 2.33 The Directorate is reporting a forecast overspend of £0.5m. This is a £0.1m adverse movement from the position reported at P7 mainly due to the increased requirement for associate Educational Psychologists (which come at a premium cost compared to WNC staff) to cover staff vacancies in this team to meet the demand for new assessments to improve timeliness and performance.

- 2.34 The total overspend is made up of £0.2m forecast non-delivery of savings on the consolidation of commissioning and business intelligence services in Children's and Public Health, and slippage in legal savings due to continued demand in relation to tribunals and related costs.

- 2.35 Educational Psychology income is forecast to fall short of the target by £0.3m due to the continued focus on statutory work.

- 2.36 Additional capacity in the Educational Psychology team is being commissioned on a fixed term basis, funded by one off resources, to undertake work on the backlog of statutory assessments needed to significantly improve the current performance, while enabling the substantive service to continue to recruit permanent staff and complete new assessments.

Northamptonshire Children's Trust

Net budget £81.79m

Forecast outturn £98.20m

Forecast overspend £16.41m

Variance percentage 20.1%

- 2.37 The contract for Northamptonshire Children's Trust provides children's social care services across both West and North Northamptonshire Councils. At period 9 NCT is forecasting an overspend across the whole County of £29.7m.
- 2.38 Of this total amount the Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) financial contribution from West Northamptonshire Council is currently estimated to be £16.4m greater than the Council's share of the initial contract sum of £150.9m which is representative of a challenging national context relating to the cost of children's services. This represents an adverse movement of £2.4m from the position previously reported.
- 2.39 Forecast pressures across all children's placements now make up £21.3m of the total (a deterioration of £3.1m from the period 7 reported position) with £13m of the total attributable to WNC. The total across both Councils includes approximately £9m relating to a structural deficit due to additional demand and increased average placement costs since the setting of the contract sum in November 2022. The total also includes placements savings proposals totalling £1.3m which are forecast as undeliverable, and as a result have been written out in the 2024-25 contract sum. The remaining pressure is due to a combination of demographic growth, complexity of need driving higher average placement costs (particularly in residential and supported accommodation) and average price increases above budgeted growth and inflation.
- 2.40 Staffing costs are expected to be £3.6m higher than the amount included in the initial contract sum (£2m WNC share). The total includes £1m additional funding for the in-year pay award which has been approved, and £1.1m for the continuation of additional managed team capacity to support improvement. The remaining overspend is due to requirement for agency staff (which come at a cost premium) to cover vacant posts. The recruitment of social workers is a key challenge both locally and nationally and there is a shortage of social workers across the country, with the agency market and the associated costs attracting a greater number of social workers. The NCT pay offer ensures that the lowest paid receive a higher percentage increase in recognition of the increased impacts of the cost of living and will assist in the recruitment and retention of key staff in hard to recruit areas.
- 2.41 Legal costs, transport and expenditure in children's homes make up a total of £1.2m (£0.7m WNC) forecast overspends which are mainly due to increased demand and inflation above budgeted levels. Forecast underspends of £0.4m (£0.2m WNC) across other non-placement related care expenditure mitigates this in part.
- 2.42 Following a review of historical aged debt in relation to partner contributions for complex joint funded packages of care and placements, NCT have made a provision in their accounts for bad debt totalling £1.2m which is a charge to revenue (£0.7m WNC share). Further work is being undertaken in seeking settlement of the majority of historical invoices, and there is an upside

benefit that the provision won't be required in its entirety, which would result in a writing back of some provision into the accounts.

- 2.43 There are £0.7m total costs outside the service delivery contract payable to NCT which mainly relates to the provision of the Adults Emergency Duty service by NCT. After accounting for approved funding included in the WNC budget, the net additionality to the Council is £0.2m.
- 2.44 Forecasting is challenging given the current pressures on placement provision through demand, complexity and in some cases court ordered placement provision. Combined with inflationary pressures on these demand led budgets and social work recruitment, these factors present a risk to year end projections. The Trust have management actions in progress around joint funded packages of care, but have raised concerns that costs could increase due to issues surrounding placements and continue to closely monitor the financial position.

Communities and Opportunities

Net budget £14.07m

Forecast outturn £15.54m

Forecast overspend £1.48m

Variance percentage 10.5%

- 2.45 The Communities and Opportunities Directorate includes Housing, Leisure, Libraries, Economic Development, Regeneration and Community Safety & Engagement.
- 2.46 The Directorate is forecasting an overspend of £1.5m, which in the main is driven by pressures on both temporary and supported accommodation, with an increasing number of cases requiring emergency accommodation. As well as this, costs of nightly purchased accommodations are continuing to increase. However, this a favourable movement of £0.9m from the position reported at P7 mainly due to the increase in demand for accommodation slowing and an allocation of grant funding to offset against accommodation costs.
- 2.47 Service project groups are working on a number of key initiatives to address prevention and supply options which should bring down costs over time.
- 2.48 Overspends are also forecast within the museum service due to pressure on both commercial income and staffing budgets, with increased movement due to factors beyond the control of the

service in relation to the allocation of Non-Domestic Rates at Abington Park Museum from 2017 to 2023-24.

- 2.49 These pressures are offset by various underspends across the directorate which include better than expected recovery of Leisure Contract Management Fees, along with other savings which include both staffing underspends and utilisation of grant funding.

Adult Social Care

Net budget £130.31m

Forecast outturn £134.44m

Forecast overspend £4.13m

Variance percentage 3.2%

- 2.50 The Adult Social Care Directorate consists of services that provides support to older people or those living with disabilities or with mental or physical illness under the Care Act, to promote their independence and improve their well-being. This support enables them to manage their needs and live life to the fullest regardless of the challenges they may face as a result of their circumstances. The Directorate also has responsibility for Public Health.
- 2.51 Adult Social Care had significant net growth added into the budget for 2023-24 of £24m, that included proposals to bring the independent care budget in line with forecast demand and to respond to both inflationary pressure and increases in national minimum wage. However, the cost of packages through both hospitals and the community, since setting the budget, continue to increase contributing to pressure on independent care. These pressures are consistent with those seen nationally. The service has implemented a number of planned mitigations that are being monitored closely throughout the year given this increased demand and the volatility we see through winter.
- 2.52 The Directorate is reporting a £4.1m pressure. This is despite £10.1m of savings being largely on track for delivery in full as detailed in table at 7.1 of this report. This is a £0.6m movement from the position reported at P7 mainly due to an increase in pressures in independent care driven by higher acuity of clients and an increase in short term episodes of care.
- 2.53 Within Adult Services the independent care overspend is £4.7m. Pressures on the budget continue to increase, despite several ongoing successful projects delivering £5.5m of savings by aligning the size of care packages to eligible need and increasing reablement episodes to prevent clients going into early long-term care. It is also evident that care packages from hospital discharges are continuing and exceed the available funding from health once the initial six-week period has passed. However, the income target from Client Contributions is forecast to exceed by £1.6m due to number of back dated invoices being raised in the current year. This is contributing to offset the position and needs to be tracked closely until the end of the year.
- 2.54 Other pressures across Adult Services relates to transport costs of £1.0m based on journeys recharged year to date through the Place Directorate. A project team has been set up to review transport requirements for the Directorate and explore other transport options for service users.

- 2.55 Within Safeguarding and Wellbeing, there is a pressure of £0.5m against the Longlands Specialist Care Centre primarily driven by the inability to recruit to permanent staff and having to employ agency staff. Other overspends of £0.05m relate to Adults Mental Health Practice (AMHP), Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLs) and Quality and Performance due to staffing pressures. These pressures are offset in part by both staffing and non-staffing underspends across Adults Services of £0.7m. Prevention and Assistive Technology are forecasting an underspend from increased sales of equipment £0.3m and other minor underspend across Call Care.
- 2.56 Within ASC Management there is an overspend of £0.2m due to an undeliverable saving following a review of external funding conditions. In addition to this there is a non-deliverable saving relating to the Spinneyfields Specialist Care Centre as the PFI unitary charge is assumed to be borne by WNC until the end of January.

Place and Economy

Net budget £92.99m

Forecast outturn £92.05m

Forecast underspend £0.94m

Variance percentage -1.0%

- 2.57 The Place Directorate delivers services including Waste Management, Highways and Transportation, (including Home to School Transport), Asset Management (including car parking), Environment Services, Regulatory Services & Planning.
- 2.58 The Directorate is reporting an overall underspend of £0.9m in 2023-24. Within this position, there is pressure of £1.3m on savings delivery and in year net savings and mitigating actions totalling £2.1m. This is a favourable movement across the Directorate from period 7 of £1.1m.
- 2.59 Of the £1.3m budgets savings delivery pressures identified, approximately £0.9m is due to in year implementation delays on several proposals. There are approximately £0.4m of undeliverable budget savings proposals, these are primarily from the waste services team, although the original savings delivery proposals are undeliverable, the pressures are mitigated within the waste service.
- 2.60 Assets and Environment in year pressures of £0.5m have been identified, mainly consisting of; £0.2m base inflation pressure on the Northampton Schools PFI contract, and £0.3m in relation to pressures on service charge income and office optimisation.
- 2.61 Highways and Transport forecast in year pressures total £2.6m. These consist of; inflationary pressures on the Streetlighting PFI scheme of £0.1m, increased demand (SEN) and price (Mainstream) on Home to School Transport of £2.1m, on street pay and display income and costs are forecasting a pressure of £0.1m, and a pressure on traffic signal utility costs of £0.1m following disaggregation of budgets from the former County Council.
- 2.62 Waste Services have identified in year pressures of £0.5m consisting of a net pressure on waste collection and disposal of £0.3m (adverse movement from P7 £0.2m) due to increased volumes and tonnages), and £0.2m resulting from legacy income pressures and a technical adjustment.

- 2.63 The Planning Service is forecasting a £0.3m risk pressure on income based on activity to date. It is proposed to utilise the Planning Income Risk Reserve of £0.3m to manage this emerging pressure. Additional HS2 income is now being forecast to recover costs of £0.1m.
- 2.64 These pressures are being offset by an overall net staffing underspend across the Directorate of £0.7m (favourable movement from P7 £300k). This is due to delays in service restructures and recruitment to vacant posts. Further service specific in year savings are detailed below:
- 2.65 Assets and Environment have identified £0.4m business rates savings across property estates, car parks and the market due to revaluations. In addition, Car park income is currently forecast higher than budget by £0.2m based on activity to date. Utilities across the property portfolio are forecast to underspend by £0.1m following receipt of revised prices and consumption. The service is also due to recover legal costs of approximately £0.1m.
- 2.66 Highways and Transport have identified £1.5m specific mitigations to offset the non-delivery of the Home to School Transport Policy changes which will not be implemented until September 2024, and the pressure within Home to School Transport. Additional income of £0.6m is forecast due to an increase in network management activity in the year (movement from period 7 £0.2m favourable). There is a one-off benefit in 23-24 resulting from an over accrual and reconciliation of PFI Street Lighting energy from 22-23 totalling £0.3m (favourable movement from P7).
- 2.67 Within the Waste Service, pressures are being offset by in-year savings on refuse, recycling, and fuel deflation, plus a net underspend on garden waste subscription costs and income totalling £0.8m (movement from P7 £0.1m favourable). Additional income from the sale of recyclables is forecast at household waste recycling centres £0.2m. There is forecast risk share income and an underspend on contract variations totalling £0.1m.
- 2.68 The Regulatory Service is forecasting favourable variances to budget primarily as a result of increased taxi licence income, recovery of legal costs, and external funding totalling £0.2m.
- 2.69 There are various minor underspends/overspends across the Directorate totalling a net £0.4m (favourable movement from P7 £0.1m).

Finance

Net budget £11.57m

Forecast outturn £11.07m

Forecast underspend £0.50m

Variance percentage -4.3%

- 2.70 The Finance Directorate services include strategic finance, accountancy, revenue and benefits, procurement, finance operation and internal audit services.

2.71 The Directorate is reporting an underspend of £0.5m. This results from a saving on external audit costs.

Technical/Centrally Held Items

Net budget £26.58m

Forecast outturn £12.07m

Forecast underspend £14.51m

Variance percentage -54.6%

2.72 Technical and centrally controlled budgets include the treasury budgets, pension deficit contribution payments for West Northants and the contingency budgets. This area will also reflect any council wide corporate cross cutting issues or opportunities. The Technical and Centrally Controlled Directorate are forecasting an overall underspend of £14.5m against budget for 2023-24. This is an adverse movement of £0.4m from the position reported at period 7 due to the reasons set out below.

2.73 A council wide contingency budget is managed within the centrally controlled budget which at the start of the year stood at £19.0m. This consisted of a disaggregation budget of £0.5m brought forward from 2022-23, pay inflation £7.6m and a general contingency of £10.9m.

2.74 £8.2m general contingency has been released as an underspend to offset service pressures within the position. A summary of commitments against the general contingency is shown below:

	Period 7 Forecast	Period 9 Forecast	Movement from Period 7
	£m	£m	£m
2023-24 Opening Contingency Budget	19.0	19.0	0
Pay Inflation	(7.6)	(7.6)	0
Disaggregation contingency allocation to Corporate Services	(0.5)	(0.5)	0
General Contingency Balance	10.9	10.9	0
Agreed transfers			
Pay award (additional due to local agreement)	(1.2)	(1.2)	0
Cultural events	(0.2)	(0.2)	0
Bus subsidies	(0.2)	(0.2)	0
Forecast Commitments	(1.1)	(1.1)	0
Remaining balance	8.2	8.2	0

2.75 There is a forecast underspend of £3.6m within treasury management, which is an adverse movement of £0.6m from the position reported at period 7.

2.76 An opportunity to exit a LOBO loan arrangement of £10m was progressed due to a demand to increase the interest rate by the lender. This loan was replaced with a PWLB loan, at a lower rate than the proposed increased LOBO rate, but higher than the original LOBO rate, resulting in additional financing costs of £0.3m. In addition to this, a decrease in the forecast level of available cash balances has resulted in a reduction in investment income of £0.3m, despite improved yield rates compared to budget.

2.77 There is also a forecast underspend of £1.8m on MRP due to a reprofiling of capital spend along with £1.0m underspend due to over delivery of the pension saving proposal and other overspends totalling £0.1m, taking the total centrally controlled forecast underspend (including contingency release) to £14.5m.

Funding

2.78 The Council's net service budget is funded from the following areas: Council Tax income, Business Rates income, Government grants, one off funding and reserves. A breakdown of the funding budget is detailed below in Table Five.

Table Five

Funding	Net Budget
	£'000
Council Tax income	(244,908)
Business Rates income (including S31 Grant)	(90,839)
Adult Social Care Grants	(33,855)
Transfer from Reserves	(7,939)
New Homes Bonus	(3,510)
Services Grant 23-24	(2,028)
Other Government Grants	(438)
Total Funding	(383,517)

2.79 The Period 9 position includes forecast additional business rates income of £2.6m. The 2023-24 budget includes the Council's known funding assumptions at a point in time and this increase reflects the current position and additional income identified surplus to the balance reported within the NNDR return.

3. Summary of savings delivery 2023-24

3.1 The Council has a savings requirement within its 2023-24 budget of £32m. Service Directors have undertaken a review of savings deliverability, with the summary forecast position reported in table six.

Table six

Directorate	2023-24 Savings Proposals £'000					
	Budgeted saving	RAG Analysis				Expected saving
Blue		Green	Amber	Red		
Adult Social Care	(10,110)	(8,220)	(378)	(580)	(932)	(10,110)
Centrally Controlled Budgets	(7,563)	(2,000)	(5,515)	0	(48)	(7,563)
Chief Executive Office	(636)	(263)	(359)	0	(14)	(636)
Communities and Opportunities	(1,737)	(831)	(198)	0	(708)	(1,737)
Corporate Services	(5,440)	(2,900)	(2,288)	(68)	(184)	(5,440)
Education Services	(530)	(160)	(126)	(8)	(236)	(530)
Finance	(714)	(90)	(619)	(5)	0	(714)
Place and Economy	(5,248)	(1,222)	(2,508)	(246)	(1,272)	(5,248)
Total	(31,977)	(15,686)	(11,991)	(907)	(3,394)	(31,977)

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3.2 Overall, there are thirty-two savings (£3.4m) flagged as 'red' which are unlikely to be delivered and thirteen savings (£0.9m) flagged as 'amber' which are deliverable but have risks. These pressures are set out in the directorate section and included in the budget monitoring figures contained in the report. A detailed assessment of the individual savings proposals is set out in Appendix B.

3.3 Within Adult Social Care £0.5m of the Winter Planning Project proposal remains amber until full analysis of the demand vs funding of hospital discharge activity over the Christmas and January period is complete. The proposal to reduce provision to non WNC residents is at amber risk (£0.1m) of delivery as discussions around a 3rd party occupancy are still ongoing that would mitigate the risk.

3.4 Within Place and Economy £0.2m of the Street Lighting proposal remains amber rated. The delivery of this proposal is dependent upon weather, installation and expected light during the last quarter of 2023-24.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

Resources and Financial

- 4.1 The resource and financial implications for West Northamptonshire Council are set out in the body of, and appendices to, this report.

Legal

- 4.2 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals. The report has been cleared by Legal Services.

Risk

- 4.3 This report sets out the financial forecast for this financial year. The key risks associated with this report relate to the continued challenging economic conditions being experienced, slower than forecast reductions in inflationary pressures alongside demand led pressures on both adults and children's social care and housing services potentially driving further financial pressures over and above those already identified. These risks were identified earlier in the report.

- 4.4 There continues to be financial risk in a number of budgets which could worsen between now and year end including:

- Adult Social Care
- Children's Social Care
- Home to School Transport
- Temporary Accommodation

Consultation

- 4.5 The Council carries out public consultation and communications on its annual budget proposals. These activities took place in the months prior to the budgets being approved by Full Council in February 2023 for the 2023-24 budget.

- 4.6 Any management interventions that require a policy change will be subject to a consultation before any decision is taken.

- 4.7 Where consultation is necessary, full details will be presented to Cabinet separately. Cabinet can only make a decision after taking careful account of the results of such consultation in order to reach an informed decision.

Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

- 4.8 All 2023-24 budget proposals were consulted on prior to the budget being approved by Full Council in February 2023. Any management interventions that require a policy change will be subject to a consultation before any decision is taken. Where consultation is necessary, full details will be presented to Cabinet separately. Corporate Overview and Scrutiny carried out a

full budget scrutiny programme of work which fed into the final budget proposals and also consider the regular budget monitoring reports throughout the year.

- 4.9 Corporate Scrutiny will consider this report.

Climate Impact

- 4.10 All management interventions and mitigations identified within this report will be reviewed on an individual basis for any environmental impact.

Community Impact

- 4.11 This report will have a positive impact on the community by providing scrutiny on how public funds are being used to fund services for local residents in 2023-24.

Communications

Communication will continue with service directors to seek to deliver a balanced budget in 2023-24.

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report:

- 5.2 Final Budget Report and Medium Term Financial Plan, meeting of Council, 22 February 2023
<https://westnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s10478/2023-24%20Final%20Budget%20Report%20-%20Full%20Council.pdf>

- 5.3 Revenue Monitoring report Period 4
<https://westnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s13437/Item%2008%20-%20WNC-%20Revenue%20Monitoring%20Report%20-%202023-24%20-Period%204.pdf>

- 5.4 Revenue Monitoring report Period 7
<https://westnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s14591/Revenue%20Monitoring%20Period%207%20-%20Financial%20Year%202023-24.pdf>

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West Northamptonshire Council - Budget Proposals 2023/24 to 2026/27

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2023/24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	2023/24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-001	Adult Social Care	Optimisation of WNC Adult Social Care in-house provision	A full review of WNC's in house services to ensure optimal usage.	(70)	(70)			
2324-B4-002	Adult Social Care	Additional Client Contributions	Alignment of client contributions budget with actual income being invoiced in 22-23. This corresponds with the increased number of active clients.	(500)	(500)			
2324-B4-003	Adult Social Care	External Funding Review by Adult Social Care	Maximise external funding opportunities across the Directorate.	(1,000)	(820)		0	(180)
2324-B4-004	Adult Social Care	Progression and improvement of independent outcomes across Learning Disability services	Progression and Improving independent outcomes within Learning Disability services. This will result in individuals receiving the care that they need.	(1,000)	(1,000)			
2324-B4-005	Adult Social Care	Optimise use of single handed care	Further drive on reducing the need for two carers via use of Assistive Technology.	(1,000)	(815)	(185)		
2324-B4-006	Adult Social Care	Strength Based Working Reablement West	Restructure of the service has increased the number of people who will benefit from reablement and therapeutic intervention reducing the need for long term care spend.	(1,666)	(1,473)	(193)		
2324-B4-007	Adult Social Care	Domiciliary Care Redesign	Domiciliary care aligned to Local Area Partnerships (LAP) to reduce travel time and more efficient deployment of staff alongside the introduction of electronic call monitoring.	(1,500)	(1,500)			

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2023/24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	2023/24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-008	Adult Social Care	Optimisation of WNC in house provision	Full review of WNC's day service offer to ensure optimal use.	(500)	(500)	0		
2324-B4-009	Adult Social Care	Positive Living Outcomes	Implementation of a four year Supported Accommodation Strategy that will provide people with care and support needs with sustainable support and housing options.	(660)	(660)	0		
2324-B4-010	Adult Social Care	Alignment of external funding to the base budget for Adult Social Care	This aligns the base budgets within Adult Social Care to a number of external funding sources	(700)	(700)			
2324-B4-011	Adult Social Care	Reduction in WNC Service Provision to non WNC Residents	Reduction in WNC service provision to non WNC residents following disaggregation of the county council.	(1,000)	(127)		(121)	(752)
2324-B4-012	Adult Social Care	Winter planning project	Mitigation of winter pressures through whole system working.	(500)	(41)		(459)	
2324-B4-013	Centrally Controlled Budgets	Overhead Recovery	Recognition that as a new unitary authority, there is an increasing cost of supporting the various services we support outside of the Council Tax funded budgets	(73)		(73)		
2324-B4-014	Centrally Controlled Budgets	Increase in Grant Income	Forecast increase in central grant income	(266)		(218)		(48)
2324-B4-015	Centrally Controlled Budgets	Treasury growth realigned	Removal of legacy and future predicted Treasury costs, with more specific revised Treasury forecasts provided.	(2,000)		(2,000)		
2324-B4-016	Centrally Controlled Budgets	Pension Contribution adjustment	Following the receipt of the Councils Pension Funds Triannual valuation and actuarial advice, a much improved funding position means that the council is able to reduced its contribution rate by 3% to ensure an optimum level of resources are invested in the fund.	(2,000)	(2,000)			
2324-B4-017	Centrally Controlled Budgets	Treasury Management - Additional Investment Returns	Realigned investment income budget including additional investment returns due to rising interest rates	(3,224)		(3,224)		

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2023/24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	2023/24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-018	Chief Executive Office	Executive Support - Consultancy Budget	Consultancy budget from Executive Support no longer required for future years.	(54)		(54)		
2324-B4-019	Chief Executive Office	Removal of corporate CLA licence (photocopying of journals etc)	A recent review of Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA) licence used across all directorates has concluded it is not required and removal would have minimal impact on the Comms service or wider service areas	(17)		(17)		
2324-B4-020	Chief Executive Office	Income generation with external partners	Provide video and photographic services for partners and external organisations	(12)		(12)		
2324-B4-021	Chief Executive Office	Income generation with external partners	Provide consultation and engagement services for partner organisations	(5)		(5)		
2324-B4-022	Chief Executive Office	Chief Executive Services Restructuring	Chief Executive Services restructuring.	(453)	(263)	(190)		
2324-B4-023	Communities and Opportunities	Enterprise Zone Admin Budget Changes	Recalculation of budgets, funded from increased Business Rates income via the Enterprise Zone Reserve. Alongside ensuring recharging of resource time to reflect current support.	(110)	(110)			
2324-B4-025	Communities and Opportunities	Introduction of charging for viability assessments relating to affordable housing delivery.	Charges for the team that carry out in-house viability assessments to determine the % of affordable housing that can be delivered on a development site.	(10)				(10)
2324-B4-026	Communities and Opportunities	Housing Need Surveys	Charging for the completion of housing need surveys to determine housing need in parishes across West Northants.	(5)				(5)
2324-B4-027	Communities and Opportunities	Economic Development budget rightsizing	Legacy budget further reviewed and no longer required - no service impact	(1)	(1)			
2324-B4-029	Communities and Opportunities	Temporary Accommodation: reduction in the gardening/landscaping budget	Service can be delivered on a marginally smaller budget for council owned temporary accommodation (held in the General Fund).	(1)		(1)		

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2023/24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	2023/24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-030	Communities and Opportunities	Printing and photocopying legacy budget no longer required in Economic Development	Remove these costs from Economic Development budget as no longer required - limited impact as very little spend historically.	(2)	(2)			
2324-B4-031	Communities and Opportunities	Car Mileage and furniture budgets reduced to reflect WNC ways of working	Reduction in car mileage and furniture budgets across the whole directorate	(8)	(5)	(3)		
2324-B4-032	Communities and Opportunities	Reduction in base budget consultancy for Leisure services	50% reduction of 'consultancy' budget assigned to support services to older people.	(5)	(5)			
2324-B4-033	Communities and Opportunities	Inflationary Increase in Library charges for Learning Resources for Education	Increase income by increasing charges and reorganisation of staffing. Library education service to ensure it remains self funding from income	(5)	(5)			
2324-B4-034	Communities and Opportunities	Reduction in equipment budget	No new equipment can be purchased	(5)	(5)			
2324-B4-035	Communities and Opportunities	Consolidation of contracts for recycled furniture provision for temporary accommodation.	Consolidation of duplicate contracts/funding from legacy district/borough councils towards recycled furniture provision for temporary accommodation.	(5)		(5)		
2324-B4-036	Communities and Opportunities	Consolidation of Out of Hours Service contracts	Contracts between legacy district/borough councils and Call Care Out of Hours Service to be aggregated.	(5)		(5)		
2324-B4-037	Communities and Opportunities	Libraries Inflationary increases in printing charges and room hire	Increase income by increasing printing charges , room hire.	(6)	(6)			
2324-B4-038	Communities and Opportunities	SLA payment to NLT (health walks and street games)	Reduce legacy grant fund payment by 50%	(10)	(10)			
2324-B4-039	Communities and Opportunities	Reduce base budget for consultancy fees in Economic Development	Reduction in base budget	(10)	(10)			
2324-B4-040	Communities and Opportunities	Reduce spend on hire of facilities/venues for sports & leisure activities.	The school holiday activity programme has been redesigned. The new format reduces hire costs.	(10)	(10)			

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2023/24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	2023/24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-041	Communities and Opportunities	Reshaping of funding to Nsport	Reduce general funding provided to NSport.	(10)	(10)			
2324-B4-042	Communities and Opportunities	Home Adaptations cost claim to Better Care Fund (BCF)	Ensuring effective claiming of the 15% policy agreed discretionary works charge to the BCF Grant Fund. Reliant on spending 100% of the BCF budget annually	(10)		(10)		
2324-B4-043	Communities and Opportunities	Reduction in funding to Royal & Derngate for storage	Offering excess budget previously allocated to Royal and Derngate for storage purposes. Annual grant of £300,000 will remain.	(10)	(10)			
2324-B4-044	Communities and Opportunities	Reduce spend on agency staff for Sport & Leisure	Reduce budget for agency staff, deliverable due to holiday activity programme redesign.	(12)	(12)			
2324-B4-045	Communities and Opportunities	Budget savings from Buildings Repair and Maintenance budget	Reduction of Building repair and maintenance budget as not used - no service impact	(13)	(13)			
2324-B4-046	Communities and Opportunities	Predecessor authority wellbeing budget	Remove budget as staff wellbeing is funded corporately through HR. Impact on service mitigated through on-going involvement in working group.	(15)	(15)			
2324-B4-047	Communities and Opportunities	Changes to HMO Licence Fees	Removal of early bird discount for new HMO licences, and reduction of early bird discount for renewal HMO licences.	(20)	(20)			
2324-B4-048	Communities and Opportunities	Aggregation of Private Sector Housing Teams	Aggregation of Private Sector Housing functions from the three sovereign District Council services	(20)				(20)
2324-B4-049	Communities and Opportunities	Appropriate allocation of staff time to resettlement programmes	Time Interim Head of Service spent on resettlement work recharged to grant aided resettlement programmes.	(21)	(21)			
2324-B4-050	Communities and Opportunities	Changes to provision of furniture in temporary accommodation.	Reduction of furniture budget by utilising donations and low cost pre-loved items.	(25)		(25)		

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2023/24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	2023/24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-051	Communities and Opportunities	Unallocated community grants.	Reduction in legacy grant arrangements from district/borough councils.	(27)	(27)			
2324-B4-052	Communities and Opportunities	Community centre funding	Release unused grant for community centres as facilities/assets have been transferred to Community Spaces Northampton	(28)	(28)			
2324-B4-053	Communities and Opportunities	Recharging of staff time to resettlement programmes	Time Resettlement Manager spent on resettlement work recharged to grant aided resettlement programmes	(31)	(31)			
2324-B4-054	Communities and Opportunities	Increased income generation through museum service	Increase in income generation through greater room hire at main museum as well as redeveloping and relaunching the wedding offer for Abington Park Museum to offer a select range of ceremony and reception packages, and increasing school sessions.	(47)		(18)		(29)
2324-B4-055	Communities and Opportunities	Safe Accommodation funding	Legacy councils grants to domestic abuse refuge providers consolidated service arrangements.	(35)	(35)			
2324-B4-056	Communities and Opportunities	Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Coordinator	Use of grant funding to fund this post.	(45)	(45)			
2324-B4-057	Communities and Opportunities	Economic Development Budget savings due to aggregation	Review of unused budget for Economic Development.	(48)	(48)			
2324-B4-059	Communities and Opportunities	Increase income from retail sales at Northampton Museum	Further development and promotion of retail offer and selling gallery.	(54)				(54)
2324-B4-060	Communities and Opportunities	Budget savings from Economic Development	Consultancy budget can be reduced.	(60)	(60)			

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2023/24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	2023/24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-061	Communities and Opportunities	Sport Leisure Management (SLM) contract payment	Contract amended and this budget no longer required.	(120)	(120)			
2324-B4-062	Communities and Opportunities	Regeneration Service - Reduction in professional fees budget	Reduce consultancy feasibility spend on projects.	(80)	(80)			
2324-B4-063	Communities and Opportunities	Recharging of staff time to resettlement programmes	Senior management time spent on resettlement work recharged to grant aided resettlement programmes.	(5)	(5)			
2324-B4-066	Communities and Opportunities	Changes to Housing Civil Penalty Notices	Removal of early payment discount of 20% for civil penalty notices issued by Private Sector Housing.	(10)	(10)			
2324-B4-067	Communities and Opportunities	Travellers site management changes	Costs of travellers site management offset by additional income.	(100)		(32)		(68)
2324-B4-068	Communities and Opportunities	Temporary Accommodation (TA) prevention and management plan savings	Reduction in TA spend through improved move on and reduced use of expensive nightly purchased accommodation.	(500)				(500)
2324-B4-069	Communities and Opportunities	Increase in management recharges to the Housing Revenue Account	Review of service reflects true cost of providing support to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).	(100)		(78)		(22)
2324-B4-070	Communities and Opportunities	Alternative funding sources for	Use of external funding to support community funding	(50)	(50)			
2324-B4-071	Communities and Opportunities	Libraries reduction to book fund	Reduce book fund by £45K which will be a £22.5k saving for each authority	(22)	(22)			
2324-B4-072	Communities and Opportunities	Council owned temporary accommodation, change in refurbishment methods between lets.	Current practices of renewing flooring between temporary accommodation placements to be amended.	(21)		(21)		
2324-B4-073	Corporate Services	Budget realignment	Following a detailed review of Corporate Services, the budget can be amended to more accurately reflect likely spend.	(184)		(173)		(11)

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2023/24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	2023/24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-074	Corporate Services	Registrars income generation	Additional income from the Registrars Service.	(72)		(72)		
2324-B4-075	Corporate Services	Revisited charging model for the Leys	Charging Northampton and Kettering General Hospital for storage	(18)			(18)	
2324-B4-076	Corporate Services	Dividend Income	Opus dividends	(30)		(30)		
2324-B4-077	Corporate Services	Contract Rationalisation	IT Contract rationalisation and review.	(507)		(507)		
2324-B4-078	Corporate Services	In House Legal Services	The creation of an in house Legal Service results in a reduced cost base compared to the current externalised arrangement.	(500)		(500)		
2324-B4-079	Corporate Services	Corporate Services Target Operating Model	Implementation of New Corporate Target Operating Model.	(1,000)		(827)		(173)
2324-B4-080	Corporate Services	Customer Services review	Customer Services review of current services.	(100)		(100)		
2324-B4-081	Corporate Services	Transformation Team	Transformation Team - removal of initial funding. Funding of the team beyond 2022/23 will be through the Future Use of Capital Receipts policy that we have.	(2,900)	(2,900)			
2324-B4-083	Education Services	Corporate Overheads review	Review of inflationary rate applied to corporate overheads chargeable to the central schools services block (CSSB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)	(160)	(160)			
2324-B4-084	Education Services	Capitalisation of salaries	Capitalisation of staff salaries due to extensive SEND expansion programme	(29)				(29)

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2023/24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	2023/24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-086	Education Services	Consolidation of services	Consolidation of commissioning and business intelligence within Children's Service with Public Health.	(266)		(106)		(160)
2324-B4-087	Education Services	SEND improvement	SEND improvement (investment from DSG) to improve processes and reduce number of cases going to tribunal and therefore legal costs	(75)		(20)	(8)	(47)
2324-B4-089	Finance	Revenues and Benefits budget	Reduction in training budget	(10)	(10)			
2324-B4-090	Finance	Procurement budget realignment	Budget realignment within Procurement	(25)		(25)		
2324-B4-091	Finance	Strategic Finance budget review	Reconfiguration of strategic financial support	(25)		(25)		
2324-B4-092	Finance	Customer Engagement restructure	Review of Performance and Governance Service	(50)		(50)		
2324-B4-093	Finance	Audit and Risk budget realignment	Budget realignment within Audit and Risk Management following the in-house team being in place since April 2022.	(31)		(31)		
2324-B4-094	Finance	Procurement Budget realignment	Staffing Budget realignment	(34)		(29)	(5)	
2324-B4-095	Finance	Revenues and Benefits staffing	Revenues and Benefits - Staffing Budget realignment	(80)	(80)			
2324-B4-096	Finance	Revenues and Benefits Bad Debt review	Reduction in bad debt provision can lead to a one year release of excess bad debt provision.	(100)		(100)		
2324-B4-097	Finance	Audit and Risk Management staffing	Audit and Risk Management Staffing review to deliver efficiencies	(109)		(109)		
2324-B4-098	Finance	Accountancy Budget review	The legacy Statement of Accounts are complete therefore this budget will no longer be required.	(250)		(250)		

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2023/24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	2023/24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-100	Place and Economy	Office Rationalisation	Office rationalisation and intensifying accommodation use.	(655)	0	(655)	0	0
2324-B4-101	Place and Economy	Rectifying Northampton Estate	A review of the Northampton estate could lead to increased rental income	(100)	(100)	0	0	0
2324-B4-102	Place and Economy	Events to Northampton Town Council	As previously agreed Northampton Town Council will deliver these services in future. There will be a staged transfer of costs.	(107)	(107)	0	0	0
2324-B4-103	Place and Economy	Parking Payments	Council's parking payment systems being changed to remove the need for physical tickets and provide easier payment options for the larger car parks.	(55)	0	(55)	0	0
2324-B4-104	Place and Economy	Regulatory Services	Income from discretionary services within environmental health, trading standards and licensing	(80)	0	0	0	(80)
2324-B4-105	Place and Economy	Street lighting	Revenue savings resulting from Street Lighting capital investment	(194)	0	0	(194)	0
2324-B4-106	Place and Economy	More effective fixed penalty notices	Increased income from more effective use of fixed penalty notices in environmental crime.	(50)	0	(18)	(5)	(27)
2324-B4-107	Place and Economy	Concessionary fares	Removal of surplus budget for Concessionary Fares based on updated passenger number forecasts.	(132)	0	(132)	0	0
2324-B4-108	Place and Economy	Home to school travel assistance - Policy Change	Savings associated with proposed changes to policies.	(76)	0	0	0	(76)

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2023/24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	2023/24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-109	Corporate Services	Document Storage	Savings from reducing need for document storage contract	(50)			(50)	
2324-B4-110	Place and Economy	Air Quality Officer to increase grants	Employment of a specialist air quality officer to focus on development of action plans and development of grant funded work	(100)	0	0	0	(100)
2324-B4-111	Place and Economy	Network management income	Additional income to be generated through traffic offences, bus lane enforcement and parking enforcement.	(230)	0	0	0	(230)
2324-B4-112	Place and Economy	Garden Waste Subscriptions	Increase Green Waste to an annual charge of £55.00 for residents.	(726)	(726)	0	0	0
2324-B4-113	Place and Economy	Environmental Health	Realignment of budget following reorganisation within the service	(5)	0	(5)	0	0
2324-B4-114	Place and Economy	Regulatory Services	Realignment of budget following reorganisation within the service	(5)	0	(5)	0	0
2324-B4-115	Place and Economy	Increase Commercial Waste Collections	Increased Commercial Waste Collections across the area	(12)	0	(12)	0	0
2324-B4-116	Place and Economy	Miscellaneous additional small income opportunities	Increased income from fixed penalty notices from abandoned vehicles	(10)	0	0	(2)	(8)
2324-B4-117	Place and Economy	Remove recycling bring bank service in Northampton	Remove the remaining bring banks in Northampton since a comprehensive kerbside recycling service is available.	(14)	(14)	0	0	0
2324-B4-118	Place and Economy	Expand pest control service	Promote existing pest control service to seek additional commercial opportunities	(15)	0	0	0	(15)

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2023/24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	2023/24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-119	Place and Economy	Charges for bulky waste collection	Increase charges for bulky waste collection to £30 for 3 items and £50 for 6 items	(18)	0	0	(2)	(16)
2324-B4-120	Place and Economy	Standby payments	Previous out of hours standby arrangements which were only in place in one predecessor area have been removed, staff previously undertaking service have been paid transitional tapering payment during 22/23, this will cease by April 23	(20)	(20)	0	0	0
2324-B4-121	Place and Economy	Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) cleaning contract	Do not renew the MSCP cleaning contract. The restructured parking team alongside working collaboratively with the Market Operatives to undertake the cleaning functions at MSCP sites.	(26)	(26)	0	0	0
2324-B4-122	Place and Economy	Facilities Management	Rationalisation of Facilities Management contracts across the Council's office buildings.	(238)	0	(71)	0	(167)
2324-B4-123	Place and Economy	Miscellaneous underspends	Aggregation of small unspent or underspent budgets	(40)	0	(40)	0	0
2324-B4-124	Place and Economy	Commercial waste income	Increase commercial waste fees and charges	(49)	0	(49)	0	0
2324-B4-125	Place and Economy	Asset Disposal Fees	Dependent on asset disposals and amount each year will be variable.	(125)	0	0	(10)	(115)
2324-B4-126	Place and Economy	Parking Team Restructure	Restructure CCTV & Transport Facilities team to improve efficiencies in operation.	(128)	(80)	0	0	(48)
2324-B4-127	Place and Economy	Regulatory Services Amalgamation	Manager post to be deleted as part of service restructure	(62)	(62)	0	0	0

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2023/24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	2023/24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-129	Place and Economy	Charge for replacement bins	Introduce a contribution towards the delivery of replacement bins to households where bins are repeatedly lost or damaged	(25)	0	0	0	(25)
2324-B4-130	Place and Economy	Increase New Roads & Street Works Act (NRSWA) income.	Recruit resources to generate additional income (over and above their costs).	(35)	0	(35)	0	0
2324-B4-131	Place and Economy	Targeted Food Waste Campaign	To encourage residents to use separate food waste collection, leading to reduced amount of waste in residual bins and therefore reduced treatment costs	(100)	0	(67)	(33)	0
2324-B4-132	Place and Economy	Planning restructure	Savings to be achieved through staff restructure, consultancy budget review and additional income initiatives.	(360)	0	(360)	0	0
2324-B4-133	Place and Economy	Capitalise bin budget	Currently bins are purchased from revenue	(47)	(47)	0	0	0
2324-B4-135	Place and Economy	Refuse Collections	Achieve efficiency savings within waste services and review waste collection arrangements as part of development of new Waste Strategy for West Northants	(200)	0	0	0	(200)
2324-B4-136	Place and Economy	Car Parking Charges	General uplift in existing car parking charges	(450)	0	(450)	0	0
2324-B4-137	Place and Economy	Car Parking Charges	Applying a flat charge of £2 all day on Sundays.	(50)	0	(50)	0	0
2324-B4-138	Chief Executive Office	Subscription Budget	Reduction in subscriptions budget	(31)		(17)	0	(14)
2324-B4-139	Chief Executive Office	Review Publication Costs	Review all printed publications across the organisation and determine if they are all still required and what the best format for is for publication.	(64)		(64)	0	

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2023/24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	2023/24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-140	Place and Economy	Household Waste Recycling Centres	Efficiencies in HWRC operations, as part of the wider development of the WNC waste strategy which will consider how many sites are required to serve the residents of WNC and where they should be located	(100)	0	0	0	(100)
2324-B4-141	Place and Economy	Street cleansing	Seek external contributions to Street Cleaning within Northampton Town Centre	(65)	0	0	0	(65)
2324-B4-142	Place and Economy	Car Parks	Mayorhold Car Park is significantly under utilised and could use other under utilised car parks in the town. Closing the car park will lead to reduced costs and therefore greater efficiency of the Council's resources.	(40)	(40)	0	0	0
2324-B4-143	Place and Economy	Car Parking Charges	Parking tariffs at country parks to be harmonised and also introduce new parking access equipment to improve service quality and allow more flexible pricing.	(100)	0	(100)	0	0
2324-B4-144	Place and Economy	Off street Parking Charges	Increase car park enforcement	(20)	0	(20)	0	0
2324-B4-146	Place and Economy	Home to school travel assistance - transformation	Increased operational efficiency and consistency with policies.	(375)	0	(375)	0	0
2324-B4-147	Corporate Services	Review of Fees and Charges	Land Charges additional income following annual review of fees and charges.	(29)		(29)	0	
2324-B4-148	Adult Social Care	Review of Fees and Charges	Call Care additional income from annual review of fees and charges.	(14)	(14)	0	0	
2324-B4-149	Place and Economy	Review of Fees and Charges	Additional income generation from service annual review of fees and charges.	(9)	0	(9)	0	0
2324-B4-151	Corporate Services	Democratic and Elections Restructure	Aggregation restructure in Democratic & Elections Services	(50)		(50)		
			Net Position	(31,977)	(15,686)	(11,991)	(907)	(3,394)

Treasury Management Update 2023-24 – Period 9

1. Executive Summary

The report sets out the treasury management activity covering the following topics:

- Economic update
- Interest rate forecast
- Update on treasury activity covering:
 - Treasury portfolio
 - Borrowing & Investments
 - Treasury Management budget performance
 - Compliance update on TMSS approved, prudential and treasury limits

2. Report Background

Capital Strategy

2.1 In December 2021, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, (CIPFA), issued revised Prudential and Treasury Management Codes. These require all local authorities to prepare a Capital Strategy which is to provide the following:

- a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services.
- an overview of how the associated risk is managed.
- the implications for future financial sustainability.

Treasury management

2.2 The Council operates a balanced budget, which broadly means cash raised during the year will meet its cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operations ensure this cash flow is adequately planned, with surplus monies being invested in low-risk counterparties, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering optimising investment return.

2.3 The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Council, the longer-term cash flow planning to ensure the Council can meet its capital spending operations. This management of longer-term cash may involve arranging long or short-term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses, and on occasion any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Council risk or cost objectives.

2.4 Accordingly, treasury management is defined as:

“The management of the local authority’s borrowing, investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”

3. Introduction

3.1 The CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) Code of Practice for Treasury Management recommends that members be updated on treasury management activities regularly (annual, mid-year or quarterly reports). This report, therefore, ensures this Council is implementing best practice in accordance with the Code and it covers:

- An economic update to the period to December 2023 updated to reflect the most recent developments in the economy.
- The Council’s capital expenditure, as set out in the Capital Strategy, and prudential indicators.
- A review of the Council’s investment portfolio for 2023-24.
- A review of the Council’s borrowing strategy for 2023-24.
- An update of any debt rescheduling undertaken during this reporting period.
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2023-24

4. Economics summary update

- The 3rd quarter saw: GDP drop by 0.3% in Oct. Growth for the second quarter, ending 30th September, was revised downwards to -0.1% and growth on an annual basis was also revised downwards, to 0.3%.
- CPI inflation continuing on its downward trajectory, from 8.7% in April to 4.6% in October, then again to 3.9% in November, then a slight rise ending up at 4.0% in December.
- The Bank of England holding rates at 5.25% in November and December.

MPC meetings 2nd November and 14th December 2023

- On 2nd November, the Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted to keep Bank Rate on hold at 5.25%, and on 14th December reiterated that view. Both votes still reflected a split vote, the latter by 6 votes to 3, with the minority grouping voting for an increase of 0.25% as concerns about “sticky” inflation remained in place.
- UK CPI inflation rose to 4.0% in December, and core inflation beginning to moderate (5.21%), markets are voicing a view that rate cuts should begin in Q1 2024/25, some way ahead of the indications from MPC members. Of course, the data will be the ultimate determinant, so upcoming publications of employment, wages and inflation numbers will be of particular importance, and on-going volatility in Bank Rate expectations and the gilt yield curve can be expected.
- In addition, what happens outside of the UK is also critical to movement in gilt yields. The US Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) has kept short-term rates in the

of 5.25%-5.50%, whilst the European Central Bank (ECB) has moved its Deposit rate to a probable peak of 4%. Markets currently expect both central banks to start cutting rates in 2024.

5. Interest rate forecasts

- 5.1. The Council has appointed Link Group as its treasury advisors and part of their service is to assist the Council to formulate a view on interest rates.
- 5.2. Links Group's forecast for interest rates was updated on 7th November and reflected a view that the MPC would be keen to underpin its anti-inflation credentials by keeping Bank Rate at 5.25% until at least Q2 2024. We expect rate cuts to start when both the CPI inflation and wage/employment data are unequivocally supportive of such a move, and that there is a strong likelihood of the overall economy enduring tepid growth (at best) or a mild recession (at worst) over the coming months.
- 5.3. Link Group's current and previous PWLB rate forecasts below are based on the Certainty Rate (the standard rate minus 20 bps) which has been accessible to most authorities since 1st November 2012.

Link Group Interest Rate View 07.11.23													
	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26
BANK RATE	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.25	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
3 month ave earnings	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.30	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
6 month ave earnings	5.60	5.50	5.40	5.10	4.60	4.10	3.60	3.40	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10
12 month ave earnings	5.80	5.70	5.50	5.20	4.70	4.20	3.70	3.50	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30
5 yr PWLB	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.70	4.40	4.20	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.50	3.50
10 yr PWLB	5.10	5.00	4.80	4.70	4.40	4.20	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.50
25 yr PWLB	5.50	5.30	5.10	4.90	4.70	4.50	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.10	4.00	4.00	4.00
50 yr PWLB	5.30	5.10	4.90	4.70	4.50	4.30	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.90	3.80	3.80	3.80

Link Group Interest Rate View 25.09.23													
	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26
BANK RATE	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75
3 month ave earnings	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80
6 month ave earnings	5.60	5.50	5.40	5.10	4.60	4.10	3.60	3.10	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.90
12 month ave earnings	5.80	5.70	5.50	5.20	4.70	4.20	3.70	3.20	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
5 yr PWLB	5.10	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.40	4.20	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.50
10 yr PWLB	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.60	4.40	4.20	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.50	3.50
25 yr PWLB	5.40	5.20	5.10	4.90	4.70	4.40	4.30	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.80	3.80
50 yr PWLB	5.20	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.50	4.20	4.10	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.60

Link Group Interest Rate View 26.06.23													
	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26
BANK RATE	5.00	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.25	4.75	4.25	3.75	3.25	2.75	2.75	2.50	2.50
3 month ave earnings	5.30	5.60	5.50	5.30	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.70	2.60	2.50	2.50
6 month ave earnings	5.80	5.90	5.70	5.50	5.10	4.60	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.70	2.60	2.60	2.60
12 month ave earnings	6.30	6.20	6.00	5.70	5.30	4.80	4.10	3.60	3.10	2.80	2.70	2.70	2.70
5 yr PWLB	5.50	5.60	5.30	5.10	4.80	4.50	4.20	3.90	3.60	3.40	3.30	3.30	3.20
10 yr PWLB	5.10	5.20	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.40	4.20	3.90	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.40
25 yr PWLB	5.30	5.40	5.20	5.10	4.90	4.70	4.50	4.20	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.80	3.70
50 yr PWLB	5.00	5.10	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.50	4.30	4.00	3.80	3.60	3.60	3.50	3.50

Link Group Interest Rate View 24.05.23													
	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26
BANK RATE	4.75	5.00	5.00	4.75	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.25	2.75	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50
3 month ave earnings	4.80	5.00	5.00	4.80	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.30	2.80	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50
6 month ave earnings	5.10	5.20	5.10	4.90	4.50	3.90	3.40	3.20	2.90	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.60
12 month ave earnings	5.40	5.40	5.30	5.00	4.50	3.90	3.40	3.20	2.90	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70
5 yr PWLB	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.80	4.50	4.10	3.70	3.50	3.30	3.20	3.20	3.10	3.10
10 yr PWLB	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.80	4.40	4.10	3.80	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.30	3.30
25 yr PWLB	5.30	5.30	5.20	5.10	4.80	4.50	4.20	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.60
50 yr PWLB	5.10	5.10	5.00	4.90	4.60	4.30	4.00	3.80	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.40	3.40

5.4. LIBOR and LIBID rates ceased at the end of 2021. In a continuation of previous views, money market yield forecasts are based on expected average earnings by local authorities for 3 to 12 months.

6. Summary of WNC's Treasury Portfolio Position

- 6.1 The treasury portfolio position for the period to December 2023 is the council is showing a net borrowing position of £423.3m and forecast to the end of year of £423.9m.
- 6.2 The expected borrowing requirement to fund the capital programme is expected to be nil for the rest of year, due to slippage.
- 6.3 There is continued expectation of reduced level of liquid cash being available which is reflected in table below.

Table 1

West Northamptonshire Council 2023-24

TREASURY PORTFOLIO 23-24				
Period to date			Forecast out-turn	
31-Dec-23			31-Mar-24	
Treasury investments	£000	%	£000	%
Total managed in house	59,860	88%	54,051	86%
Total managed externally	8,545	12%	8,545	14%
Total treasury investments	68,405	100%	62,596	100%
Third party loans	35,710		35,477	
Treasury external borrowing				
PWLB	463,234	88%	457,842	88%
Market, LOBO & other loans	64,187	12%	64,198	12%
Total external borrowing	527,422	100%	522,040	100%
Net treasury investments / (borrowing)	(423,306)		(423,967)	

6.4 The council has made £12.949m of long-term loan repayments. The details are below:

- Partial principal repayment of just over £1.56m on PWLB loans.
- Partial repayment of £1.34m on Growing Places Fund loan in June and Sept.
- Partial repayment of £0.049m on Homes & Communities Agency in Sept.
- Full repayment of a £10m LOBO loan as the council exercised its option to repay the loan following the lender issuing a notice to increase the interest rate.

The council also made a payment of £15m for short term loans for reasons previously reported.

6.5 The forecast position on total external borrowing is £522m by the end of the financial year. The council does not anticipate any further borrowing for the rest of the year.

7. Borrowing

7.1 The need for further borrowing will be reviewed in line with the capital programme delivery schedule, but as highlighted above we don't anticipate any new requirement to take out any further loans.

7.2 Table 2 below sets out the maturity profile of the Council's borrowing portfolio at the end of December 2023 of £527m

Table 2

Term Remaining	Borrowing		Limits
	£m	%	%
Under 12 months	17.1	4%	80%
1-2 years	15.8	3%	50%
2-5 years	34.1	6%	50%
5-10 years	5.1	1%	50%
10-20 years	19.7	4%	100%
20-30 years	70.7	13%	100%
30-40 years	217.9	41%	100%
40-50 years	127.0	24%	100%
Over 50 years	20.0	4%	100%
TOTAL	527.4	100%	

8. Borrowing Restructuring

- 8.1 During the December one of the councils LOBO loan lenders decided to exercise its option to increase the loan rate on a £10m loan on its call back date. The council exercised its option to pay back the loans without incurring an additional penalty for settling earlier than original loan duration with a new PWLB loan.

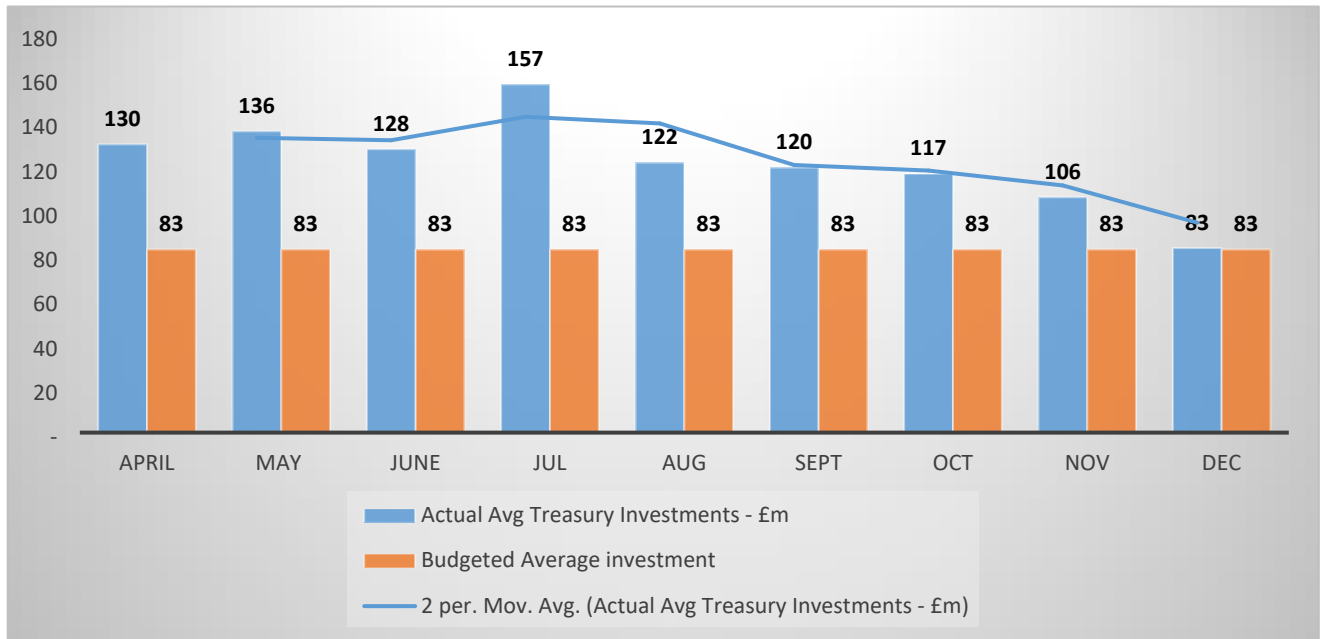
9. Investments

- 9.1 The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2023-24, which includes the Annual Investment Strategy, was approved by the Council on the 22 February 2023. In accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice, it sets out the Council's investment priorities as being:
- Security of capital
 - Liquidity
 - Yield
- 9.2 The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return (yield) on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity and within the Council's risk appetite. In the current economic climate, it is considered appropriate to keep investments short-term to cover cash flow needs, but also to seek out value available in periods up to 12 months with high credit rated financial institutions, using the Link suggested creditworthiness approach, including a minimum sovereign credit rating and Credit Default Swap (CDS) overlay information.
- 9.3 The average level of funds available for treasury investment purposes during the year to date was £122m, a reduction on the previous average (£138m reported in July) as shown in the table below. These funds were available on a temporary basis, and the level of funds available was dependent on the timing of payments, receipt of grants and other income. At the end of the period the Council held £31m of liquid cash balances and £65m of short terms investments expected to mature within the financial year.

Table 3 – Average Treasury Investment Funds per month (£m)

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	For the period to date
Actual Average Treasury Investments - £m	130	136	128	157	122	120	117	106	83	122
Budgeted Average investment	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	

Chart 1 – Average Treasury Investment Funds per month budget comparison



10. Investment performance year to date as of 31st December 2023

9.1 Below is SONIA (Sterling Overnight Index Averages) indicators based on a backward look showing the performance of the market when investments were made in the past.

FINANCIAL YEAR TO QUARTER 31/7/2023 (SONIA - Backward Looking)						
	Bank Rate	SONIA	1 month	3 months	6 months	12 months
Bank Rate	5.25%	4.89%	4.84%	4.71%	4.43%	3.6%
Councils Performance			5.50%	5.43%	5.32%	n/a
(Under)/Outperforming SONIA			0.66%	0.72%	0.89%	

9.2 As illustrated above, the Council outperformed the benchmark by eighty-nine basis point for the last 6 months of the reporting period. The Council’s budgeted investment return for 2023-24 assumed an average of 3.5% return based on the timing of placed and future short-term investment following budgets preparations, the Council has outperformed the budget assumption to date. The improved return is reflected in the amount of interest receivable, as shown in the table below.

11. Treasury Management budget

7.1 Outlined below is the Treasury budget performance for the period to Dec 2023. The net costs have varied significantly to budget as shown in the forecast out-turn with an improvement of £3.6m. Table 4.

Treasury revenue budget	Council Approved budget	Forecast -out-turn	Variance
	£'m	£'m	£'m
Net financing costs -	11.73	10.49	(1.24)
Interest receivable on investments	(4.80)	(7.20)	(2.40)
Total	6.93	3.29	(3.64)

7.2 The key explanation for variance to the budgets are:

- **Interest receivable on investments** – we are expecting a better yield performance of £2.4m due to increased interest rates and more liquid cash being available for investment in comparison to the budget assumptions highlighted in paragraph 9.3 above. The recent change in forecast from the last reported income expectation is due to a reduction in liquid cash as shown in table 3 above.
- **Net Finance costs** – shows a net underspend of £1.24m. This is mainly due to the council not forecasting to undertake any new borrowing to support the capital programme in 2023-24 totalling £1.64m. The changes in the forecast is attributable to additional short term loan taken earlier in year and refinancing of a LOBO loan following a lender exercising the option to increase the rates and council electing repay the loan with PWLB loan at lower rate than the new proposed rate on the old loan.

12. Approved Limits

7.3 Officers can confirm that the none of the approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy were breached during the period ended 31st December 2023.

13. Compliance with Treasury & Prudential limits

7.4 It is a statutory duty for the Council to determine and keep under review the affordable borrowing limits. During this period ending 31 December 2023, the Council has operated within the treasury and prudential indicators set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2023-24.

7.5 The Director of Finance reports that there are no difficulties expected for the current or future years in complying with these indicators.

7.6 All treasury management operations have been conducted in full compliance with the Council's Treasury Management Practices.

8. Treasury Prudential Indicators

Prudential Indicator	2023-24 Indicator	2023-24 - Period 9
Authorised limit for external debt <i>[Excluding PFI and Finance Lease Liabilities]</i>	----- £850.0m -----	
Operational boundary for external debt <i>[Excluding PFI and Finance Lease Liabilities]</i>	----- £800.0m -----	
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) <i>[Excluding PFI and Finance Lease Liabilities]</i>	£935m	TBC
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue streams	1.6%	TBC
Principal sums invested > 365 days <i>[Excluding third party loans]</i>	£20m	£nil
Maturity structure of borrowing limits: -		
Under 12 months	Max. 80% Min. 0%	4%
12 months to 2 years	Max. 50% Min. 0%	3%
2 years to 5 years	Max. 50% Min. 0%	6%
5 years to 10 years	Max. 50% Min. 0%	1%
10 years and above	Max. 100% Min. 0%	86%

9. Approved countries for investments as of 31st Dec 2023

Based on lowest available rating

AAA

- Australia
- Denmark
- Germany
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Singapore
- Sweden
- Switzerland

AA+

- Canada
- Finland
- U.S.A.

AA

- Abu Dhabi (UAE)

AA-

- Belgium
- France
- Qatar
- U.K.



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22 April 2024

CIr Malcolm Longley – Finance Portfolio holder

Report Title	WNC Revenue Reserves
Report Author	Martin Henry Executive Director – Finance Martin.henry@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	
Chief Finance Officer (S151)	Martin Henry	11 April 2024
Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	12 April 2024
Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	12 April 2024

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Revenue Reserves Briefing Paper

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To present to the Committee an initial report on the topic of revenue reserves and the current status of them.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 As part of the budget scrutiny exercise members highlighted their concern about the use of the Council's revenue earmarked reserves that were inherited since the start of WNC as it appears that a significant proportion have been utilised and that the current usage rate was not sustainable.
- 2.2 As part of formulating the remit of this piece of scrutiny the Committee members highlighted that they wished to understand why:
- The level of reserves that have been used and what were they used for; and
 - The approach to top reserves back up again

General

- 2.3 The draft budget report contained the following table in respect of the amount of reserves inherited on vesting day, 1 April 2021 and the anticipated level of reserves through to the end of the financial year 2024-25. The table is replicated below:

Description	Balance as at 01/04/21	Balance as at 31/03/22	Balance as at 31/03/23	2023-24 Forecast Closing Balance	2024-25 Forecast Closing Balance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
General Balance	(40,000)	(40,000)	(35,000)	(35,000)	(35,000)
Other Reserves Total	(65,939)	(64,027)	(59,846)	(41,939)	(29,654)
Ringfenced / Technical Reserves Total	(57,270)	(35,223)	(17,365)	(11,227)	(7,938)
Specific Covid Reserves Total	(7,942)	(4,706)	(1,702)	(562)	(361)
Earmarked Reserves Total	(131,151)	(103,956)	(78,912)	(53,727)	(37,953)
Grand Total	(171,151)	(143,956)	(113,912)	(88,727)	(72,953)

- 2.4 The shaded shows summarise the information that was included in the draft budget report for 2024-25 but two further columns have been included to show the reserves inherited on vesting day (still subject to finalisation and audit) and the reserves available at the end of the first financial year so members can see the true position of the use of reserves.
- 2.5 Consideration of the above use of reserves is, at first sight and without context, worrying as it shows that between 01 April 2021 and the forecast position at the end of 2024-25 there has been the utilisation of £98m of reserves in just four years and therefore we will have no funds left in a short period of time if we continue to use them at this rate. It is understandable how this conclusion is drawn based just on the above table.
- 2.6 However, we need to consider what was happening at the time and why we have used such a seemingly significant proportion of the reserves inherited.
- 2.7 Appendix A provides more detail on reserves, the different types of reserves held and the reasons why they have been used. The Appendix highlights:
- General fund balances – what they are and how they compare to our nearest neighbours
 - Other earmarked reserves – What they are and how they have been used

- 2.8 However, from the starting point highlighted above it is really important to deduct three specific reserves as set out in the Appendix.

Covid Reserves

£61m contained within the opening position

- 2.9 On vesting day the whole world was in the grip of the Pandemic and Council up and down the Country had been provided with significant funding to deal with the outbreak. This took the form of grant funding to deal with issues such as containing and managing the outbreak, to compensate us for reduced levels of Council Tax, Business Rates and Fees and Charges as they dropped through the floor in the pandemic and general COVID financial support to be used as required to deal with the consequences of the outbreak. In some cases the funding could not be used in the year it was received and had to be carried forward into the following year and in some cases it had to be spent on very specific COVID issues otherwise it would have to be returned to the Government. In essence this £61m had to be spent to deal with the outbreak or returned to the Government . This figure should be deducted from the opening position to give a truer position of the reserves inherited.

Public Health Reserves

£8.5m contained within the opening position

- 2.10 These reserves are very specific and can only be spent on eligible Public Health activity. The public health grant each year was not being spent in its entirety and the balance was increasing.
- 2.11 WNC took the view that the Public Health Grant should be spent in its entirety each year and the Public Health reserve should also be used to improve people's lives as that was what the funding was received for. There was also a risk that if the reserve just kept increasing the annual grant would be cut as it might be perceived that there was not the need for it in this area which is clearly not the case.
- 2.12 The decision was taken to invest these particular funds in further preventative public health initiatives. As the use of the reserve is very much restricted and there is clear need to invest it in public health initiatives and begin to reduce the reserve for the benefit of the public it should be deducted from the starting position.

Enterprise Zone Reserve

£3.5m contained within the opening position

- 2.13 Although this sits in our reserves, it is not a reserve that we have direct control over and its release is governed through the SEMLEP board made up of several local authority partners. As a result it should not be included in the starting position so we get a better indication of the reserves under our direct control.

Revised opening and Closing Position

- 2.14 If we deduct the three reserves highlighted above from the opening position we get a more realistic starting point. The table below does this and also deducts any residual amounts in these three reserves from the position forecast at the end of this financial year to provide a 'like for like' comparison of usage over the first three years, whilst ignoring the use of these exceptional items.

	01 April 2021	31 March 2024 (Forecast)	Usage over three years
	£000s	£000s	£000s
General Fund Balances	40,000	35,000	5,000
	01 April 2021	31 March 2024 (Forecast)	Usage over three years
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Other Reserves	131,151	53,727	77,424
Less:			
COVID reserves	(60,928)	(588)	(60,340)
Public Health reserves	(8,470)	(6,297)	(2,173)
Enterprise Zone reserves	(3,549)	(172)	(3,377)
Re-stated Other Reserves	58,204	46,670	11,534
Total Re-Stated reserves	98,204	81,670	16,534

2.15 The above analysis demonstrates that if you adjust for the exceptional items (particularly COVID), over the first three years of operation we have used:

- £5m of general fund balances which we consciously budgeted to do in 2022-23
- £11.5m of other earmarked reserves were used on the purposes the reserves were set up for. This is over a three year period and therefore on average we have used £3.8m of earmarked reserves each year since vesting day for the purposes they were set up for.
- If the same rate of usage continued other reserves would last for a further 12 years.
- Assuming we used no further general fund reserves and we then fell back on general fund reserves these would last for a further 9 years and therefore based on the above there is coverage for 21 years before cash balances run out.
- However, we would never take this approach and where reserves were deemed to be too low they would be a strategy to increase them again to a reasonable level.
- The view of the S151 officer is that we are not close to having to determine specific top ups at this point.

2.16 A breakdown of the £11.534m is available if required and can be broken down into:

	£000s
Use of reserves over three years	23,866
Increases in reserves	(12,332)
Net usage of reserves	11,534

2.17 Based on this analysis if there were no top ups to reserves the average annual use of reserves would be approximately £8m. Earmarked reserves would last for a further six years and general fund balances would last for a further four years. Providing cover, based on the previous stated assumptions of 10 years.

Topping reserves up

2.18 Members requested details on how reserves can be topped up. They can be topped up in several ways:

- Grant income received for specific purposes – these are held in reserve until they are utilised.
- Year end requests for carry forwards – If budgets are underspent or projects haven't been completed a request can be made to set a reserve up to carry funds forward. If agreed these create new earmarked reserves
- Corporate underspend – These can be directed to specific earmarked reserves or used to top up general fund balances
- Budgeting - We can specifically budget to top reserves up if we feel they are too low, clearly this would be a budget setting consideration and form part of deliberations associated with delivering a balanced budget
- Apply for a capital direction (Exceptional Financial Support) so that reserves can be topped up

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Considers the content of this report and determine any further tasks they wish to have carried out on reserves.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- To meet with the requirement of the Committee and its work programme

5. Implications

5.1 Resources and Financial

5.1.1 There are no direct resource or financial implications stemming from this report as it is reporting information on the use of reserves as requested by the scrutiny committee.

5.2 Legal

5.2.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with this report

5.3 Risk

5.3.1 There is a risk that further significant financial pressures will be faced which could significantly reduce the level of reserves held by the Council if they cannot be managed or mitigated against. This report seeks to set out the current position on reserves so it clear what balances remain should there be future, unmanageable financial pressures.

5.4 **Consultation**

5.4.1 There has been no specific consultation on the report.

5.5 **Climate Impact**

5.5.1 There are no direct climate impacts stemming from this report.

5.6 **Community Impact**

5.6.1 There are no direct Community Impacts stemming from this report

6. Background Papers

6.1 None

Reserves

This briefing note has been produced to explain the use of reserves since vesting day on 01 April 2021.

The note covers the use of general fund reserves and other earmarked reserves.

This follows concerns raised at the level of reserves used to date.

General Fund Balances

The general fund balance is the 'contingency of last resort'. Where all other cash, reserves and balances are used this is the final reserve that can be utilised to offset cost pressures.

It is critical to set this reserve at a reasonable level and manage the use of the reserve really carefully.

Ongoing reliance should not be placed on the use of general fund balances and if temporary reliance is placed on general fund balances there must always be an exit strategy to move reliance away from this temporary funding.

In the first two years of the Council's existence the final budget included the ability to fall back on up to £5m of general fund balances to be held as a budget contingency given we were a new organisation to help deal with any unforeseen financial impacts in the year.

This provision was not used at all in 2021-22

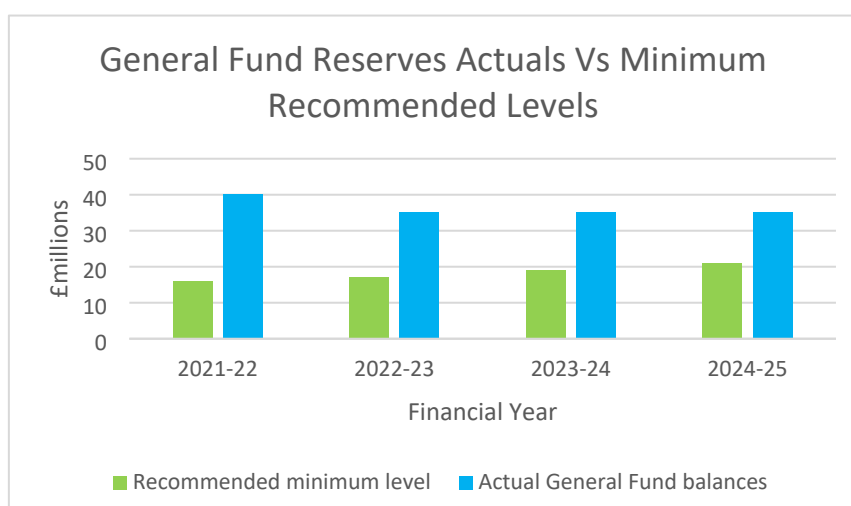
The provision was used in full in 2022-23

From 2023-24 there was no reliance being placed on the general fund balance to support the budget.

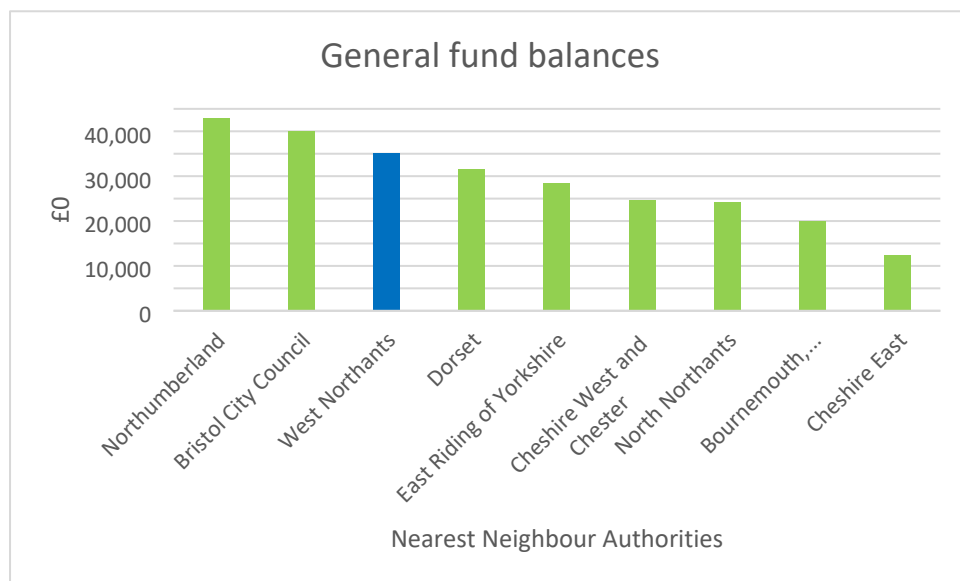
There is no reliance being placed on general fund balances for 2024-25 or over the medium-term financial plan.

Therefore, £5m of general fund balances have been used in a planned way in the four budgets the Council has set so far. They started at £40m and remain stable at £35m with no call against it currently planned or anticipated in the future.

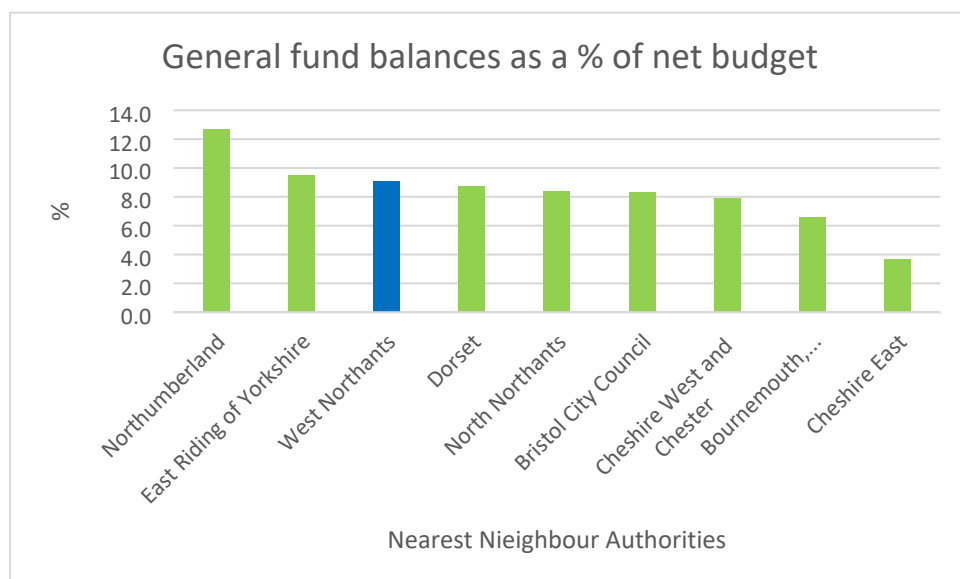
The Council's S151 officer sets a minimum level of general fund balances as part of his S25 statement each year. The chart below shows the minimum recommended level of general fund balances and the actual level of general fund balances held.



The Council also carries out benchmarking against its nearest neighbours on general fund balances



This can also be considered as a percentage against net budget to account for different sizes of authority.



Other Earmarked Reserves

Other earmarked reserves contain all of the other reserves held by the authority for a specific purpose or reason. They can, and should, be spent on the things they were earmarked for in the first place.

The Council has since its creation inherited or created 210 different earmarked reserves all being held for specific reasons and purposes.

There has been one substantial review of these reserves and iterative changes and re-purposing of the reserves on an ad-hoc basis.

They are often created as a result of grant funding being given to the authority for a specific purpose which will often have terms and conditions attached to the spend. Quite often if this grant funding is not spent in a certain timeframe and on the things it was received for it has to be returned to government.

The Council’s policy is to return as little grant funding to Government as possible and it will therefore seek to spend all of the grant for the purpose it was received and before having to return it to Government.

Estimated 'other reserves' on 01 April 2021 was £131.2m. This estimated opening position included significant grant funding to deal with the impacts of COVID which were rightly utilised to effectively manage the pandemic and the consequences of the pandemic.

The opening balance also included Public Health balances which include strict criteria in terms of how those funds can be utilised and has to be ringfenced specifically for public health.

Finally, there is also an Enterprise Zone reserve which is held by the Council but can only be released when all external partners on the EZ board agree. This reserve is therefore not within our control.

To get a better understanding of the balances inherited on vesting day, which hadn't been received for exceptional reasons (and had to be utilised for those reasons or repaid to Government) or are not within our direct control, these amounts should be deducted as set out below:

	Provisional Opening Balances 2021-22
Other reserves	131,152
Less:	
COVID grants and compensation	-60,928
Public Health Reserve	-8,470
Enterprise Zone reserve	-3,549
Adjusted 'Other reserves'	58,205

If we carry out the same calculation for the estimated balances at 31 March 2024 we can see how much of the 'other reserves' we have actually utilised in the three years we have been WNC.

	Forecast position 31 March 2024
Other reserves	53,727
Less:	
COVID grants and compensation	-588
Public Health Reserve	-6,297
Enterprise Zone reserve	-172
Adjusted 'Other reserves'	46,670

Therefore we have used **£11.535m** of other reserves in the three years we have been WNC after adjusting for the items detailed earlier. This figure includes draw downs from reserves and top ups to reserves.

A detailed list of the 'use of' and 'contribution to' reserves totalling £11.535m is available if required.

As WNC has been in existence for three years so the average use of 'other reserves' per year since vesting day has been **£3.8m on average per year**.

If the use of reserves continued at the same rate as has been the case to date then **other reserves** would be fully utilised after **12 years**.

If we then fell back on general fund balances and used these at the same rate then these would be available for a further **9 years**.

Therefore, if we continued to use reserves at the same rate as has been the case over the first three years of WNC they would last for a further 21 years.

Even if we based the analysis on the 'use of' reserves only and ignored 'top ups' to reserves contained within the net position of £11.535m referred to above then the reserves would last for at least 10 years.

This also assumes no other intervention in the meantime. This would clearly not be the case if it became apparent that they were becoming too low. There is no such concern at this point in time.

There is a base budget funded contingency of £10m which, if not required for any other reason, could be redirected to replenish reserves if it was deemed necessary. At the current point in time it is not deemed necessary to take this course of action.

	Topic identified and scheduled
	Topic identified but not yet scheduled
	Topic completed

Title	Proposed purpose	Date of Committee meeting	Cabinet Member and Executive Director	Proposed Task and Finish Group	Comments
Pay and Grading Review	To provide scrutiny input to the Pay and Grading Review	<p>16 January 2023 Meeting Taken Place</p> <p>18 September 2023 (date to be confirmed) - Further scrutiny input into the Pay and Grading Review - completed</p>	Cabinet Member for HR & Corporate Services and Executive Director – Corporate Services and Assistant Director – Human Resources	No - Whole Committee	The Committee to provide scrutiny input into the Pay and Grading Review
Budget Scrutiny	The Committee to confirm its budget scrutiny process and undertake budget scrutiny of the Council’s budget 2025/26	<p>18 September 2023 – The Committee to agree its budget scrutiny process for 24/25 COMPLETED</p> <p>16 November 2023 – The Committee to agree the timetable for budget scrutiny and Budget Scrutiny to continue over a number of meetings COMPLETED</p> <p>6 February - Report of the Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group to be considered – COMPLETED</p> <p>Budget Scrutiny for 2024-25 to be programmed</p>		No	<p>Committee to confirm its budget scrutiny process and undertake budget scrutiny of the Council’s budget 2023/24 - Task and Finish Group meetings scheduled for January 2023 COMPLETED</p> <p>18 September 2023 – The Committee to agree its budget scrutiny process for 23/24</p> <p>16 November 2023– Timetable to be confirmed</p>

Modernising Systems	The Committee to receive information regarding systems at the Council and to consider their value for money	<p>15 March 2022 - A report to the Committee providing background information, to assist the committee in deciding how it will undertake scrutiny activity</p> <p>Modernising Systems Inquiry Day(s) have been programmed from September 2022 onwards</p> <p>Reports to Committee November 2022 onwards. The Committee will conclude its scrutiny activity in April 2023 and report to the meeting of the Committee 15 May 2023 COMPLETED</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Finance</p> <p>Executive Director - Corporate</p>	To be confirmed	<p>The meeting on 15 March 2022 comprised a comprehensive question and answer session (Scrutiny Inquiry) to inform a potential scrutiny review.</p> <p>The Modernising Systems Task and Finish Group is evidence gathering and will conclude its work early in 2023.</p>
Analysis of the Reserves	The Committee to receive information regarding the Council's reserves and provide Scrutiny input	22 April 2024	<p>Cabinet Member for Finance</p> <p>Executive Director – Finance</p>	No	
Capital Schemes	The Committee to receive an update on the progress of the Council's Capital Schemes	25 June 2024	<p>Cabinet Member for Finance</p> <p>Executive Director – Finance</p>	No	

PFI Schemes	The Committee to receive an update on the Council's PFI schemes	25 June 2024	Cabinet Member for Finance Assistant Director – Assets and Environment	No	
Revenue and Benefits Update	The Committee to receive an overview of the operation of the Council Tax Hardship Fund, the progress of system harmonisation, and service performance.	10 October 2024	Cabinet Member for Finance Assistant Director – Revenues and Benefits	No	
Quarterly Budget Monitoring Reports	The Committee to receive regular budget monitoring reports at its meetings	12 October 2022 16 January 2023 7 March 2023 15 May 2023 18 September 2023 16 November 6 February 2024 22 April 2024	Cabinet Member for Finance Executive Director for Finance	No	To receive a quarterly budget monitoring report which will inform the budget scrutiny role of this Committee.

Quarterly reports on the MTFP	The Committee to receive regular MTFP monitoring reports at its meetings	12 October 2022 16 January 2023 7 March 2023 15 May 2023 18 September 2023 6 February 2024 22 April 2024	Cabinet Member for Finance Executive Director for Finance	No	To receive a quarterly budget MTFP report which will inform the budget scrutiny role of this Committee.
Performance Monitoring Report	The Committee to consider the Performance Monitoring Report to inform Performance Management Scrutiny	12 October 2022 16 January 2023 15 May 2023 18 September 2023 16 November 2023 6 February 2024 22 April 2024	Leader of the Council Assistant Chief Executive	No	The Committee to consider the Performance Monitoring Report to inform Performance Management Scrutiny
Transformation Projects	The Committee to review transformation projects: Definition of the Transformation Projects Spend on transformation Savings	7 March 2023 18 September 2023 COMPLETED	Leader of the Council and the Executive Director – Corporate and the Head of Transformation delivery	No	

The Children's Trust Budget	The Committee to receive a briefing on the Children's Trust budget	<p>15 September 2021 COMPLETED</p> <p>7 November 2022 - Budget Scrutiny - Actioned</p> <p>Further meeting TBC To consider the Business Plan for the Children's Trust</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Finance</p> <p>Executive Director – Finance</p>	No but following the briefing the Committee may consider setting up a Task and Finish Group	<p>The Committee received a briefing on the Children's Trust Budget at its September 2021 and November 2022 meeting and resolved to receive the business plan for scrutiny input at a future meeting</p> <p>Further meeting dates TBC</p>
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny annual report	The Committee to receive the annual report 2023/24 for Corporate OSC.	<p>15 May 2023 – Completed</p> <p>25 June 2024 – TBC</p>	Chair - Corporate OSC		Annual report 2023/24 - May 2024 meeting

“Wicked Issues”	To undertake scrutiny activity of wicked issues	7 March 2023 18 September 2023 COMPLETED	Leader of the Council together with the Executive Director – Corporate and Assistant Chief Executive		Completed
LAPs (local area partnerships)	The Committee to review and provide scrutiny input into the funding of LAPs	Date: 7 March 2023 NB: Potential cross Committee (Place, People and Corporate) - refer to O&S Co Ordinating for consideration) for future scrutiny input - Referred	Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing, and Health Integration for together with the Delivery Director for Health & Care Integration		

Asset Management	To undertake scrutiny activity of asset management	<p>15 March 2022 - The Committee to set up a Task and Finish Group to undertake this scrutiny activity Actioned</p> <p>A presentation was given to the Committee at its meeting 10 May 2022 and from there the Committee will consider Scrutiny work into this issue. - Actioned</p> <p>Date to be confirmed: The Sustainability Working Group is asked to report back to a future meeting regarding the alignment of workstreams around the development of the new Asset Management Plan to the Corporate Plan and the Council's commitment to carbon neutrality.</p> <p>15 May 2023 – The Committee to undertake Scrutiny of asset disposals. Taken Place</p> <p>Future Scrutiny - Date to be confirmed</p>	Cabinet Member for Finance Executive Director for Finance	To be confirmed	It was resolved that the Sustainability Working Group is asked to report back to a future meeting regarding the alignment of workstreams around the development of the new Asset Management Plan to the Corporate Plan and the Council's commitment to carbon neutrality.
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Potential cross-cutting themes for the Scrutiny Committees to be raised at Triangulation Group (suggested by the Corporate OSC Committee of 2023/24)

Major Contracts and Capital Contracts	The Committee together with Place and People Scrutiny Committees to undertake scrutiny of major contracts of the Council including the Children's Trust	Corporate, People and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committees NB: Potential cross Committee (Place, People and Corporate) - referred to O&S Co Ordinating Group at its March meeting for consideration) for future scrutiny input	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	
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LAPs (local area partnerships)	The Committee to review and provide scrutiny input into the funding of LAPs	Date: 7 March 2023 NB: Potential cross Committee (Place, People and Corporate) - refer to O&S Co Ordinating for consideration) for future scrutiny input – Referred	Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing, and Health Integration for together with the Delivery Director for Health & Care Integration	To be confirmed	
Housing	The Committee, together with Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee to undertake scrutiny activity of the housing costs and social value	Corporate and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committees	To be confirmed	To be confirmed - NB: Committees will now be Corporate OSC and Children's, Education and Housing OSC	
Highways Budgets	The Committee, together with Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to undertake scrutiny activity of the Highways Budgets	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	
Review of Trading Standards Budgets	The Committee, together with Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to undertake scrutiny activity of Trading Standards Budgets and identify areas for efficiency or income generation	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting dates in 2024-25:

- 25 June 2024 – Guildhall
- 10 October 2024 – Towcester
- 07 January 2025 – Guildhall
- 24 March 2025 – Towcester