



Cabinet

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held at the Council Chamber, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD on Tuesday 13 June 2023 at 6.00 pm

Agenda

| Public Session | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. | Apologies for Absence |
| 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 - 12) To confirm the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 11 April 2023. |
| 4. | Chair's Announcements To receive communications from the Chair. |
| 5. | Urgent Business The Chairman to advise whether they have agreed to any items of urgent business being admitted to the agenda. |
| 6. | Report from Overview and Scrutiny Committee (if any) |
| 7. | Corporate Plan - Quarterly Performance Report (Pages 13 - 38) |
| 8. | Household Support Fund 4 (Pages 39 - 46) |

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| 9. | Proposal to extend the age-range at Croughton All Saints CE Primary School (Pages 47 - 62) |
| 10. | Decision taken by the Leader of the Council under urgency: LAHF programme (Pages 63 - 72) |
| 11. | Procurement and implementation of Adult Social Care Case Management System (Pages 73 - 80) |
| 12. | Reablement Commissioning Intentions (Pages 81 - 94) |
| 13. | Disposal of London Road, Daventry (Pages 95 - 100) |
| 14. | Update to the Northampton Railway Station Multi Story Car Park Proposal (Pages 101 - 110) |
| Exclusion of the Press and Public | |
| 15. | <p>Exclusion of the Press and Public</p> <p>In respect of the following items the Chairman may move the resolution set out below, on the grounds that if the public were present it would be likely that exempt information (information regarded as private for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1972) would be disclosed to them: The Committee is requested to resolve: "That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that if the public were present it would be likely that exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act of the descriptions against each item would be disclosed to them"</p> |
| Private Session | |
| 16. | Private Appendix - Update to the Northampton Railway Station Multi Story Car Park Proposal (Pages 111 - 112) |

Proper Officer
5 June 2023

Cabinet Members:

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Councillor Jonathan Nunn (Chair) | Councillor Adam Brown (Vice-Chair) |
| Councillor Fiona Baker | Councillor Rebecca Breese |
| Councillor Matt Golby | Councillor Mike Hallam |
| Councillor Phil Larratt | Councillor Daniel Lister |
| Councillor Malcolm Longley | Councillor David Smith |

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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Tel:

Email: democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk

Or by writing to:

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One Angel Square
Angel Street
Northampton
NN1 1ED



Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at The Forum, Towcester, NN12 6AF on Tuesday 11 April 2023 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Jonathan Nunn (Chair)
Councillor Adam Brown (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Fiona Baker
Councillor Rebecca Breese
Councillor Matt Golby
Councillor Mike Hallam
Councillor Phil Larratt
Councillor Daniel Lister
Councillor Malcolm Longley
Councillor David Smith

Also Present:

Councillor Sally Beardsworth
Councillor Phil Bignell
Councillor Jonathan Harris
Councillor Nigel Hinch
Councillor Keith Holland-Delamere
Councillor Kevin Parker
Councillor Ken Pritchard
Councillor Bob Purser
Councillor Wendy Randall

Officers:

Anna Earnshaw, Chief Executive
Martin Henry, Executive Director - Finance (Section 151 Officer)
Jane Carr, Director of Communities & Opportunities
Sarah Reed, Executive Director - Corporate Services
Sally Burns, Interim Director of Public Health
Sarah Hall, Deputy Monitoring Officer
James Povey, Transport Strategy and Transport Manager
Becky Hutson, Head of Communications
Paul Hanson, Head of Democratic and Elections
Kathryn Holton, Committee Officer
Jed Scoles, Political Assistant to the Labour Group

171. **Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

172. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet on Tuesday 7 March 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

173. **Chair's Announcements**

There were none.

174. **Report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (if any)**

There were no reports from Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

175. **Planning Advisory Service - Planning Peer Review**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Breese presented the report and summarised the salient points. With a view to establishing best practice, the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) had been asked to undertake a Planning Service peer review of WNC. Some areas of particular challenge had been identified and an action plan had been drawn up to positively move the service forward.

Councillors made the following comments:

- The report was disappointing and concerning. Why had transformation not been commenced earlier?
- Poor behaviour on planning committees should not have been allowed to continue.
- Acceptance of the issues raised was key to moving forward positively.
- Transparency was needed regarding the reasoning behind changes.
- Training was needed for planning members.
- Staff needed to be better supported. There was a huge backlog of work and morale was low.
- Town and parish councils needed to be recognised and their views taken into consideration.
- There were concerns regarding the community infrastructure levy (CIL) and Section 106 contributions.
- A broader view needed to be taken – for example, notifying neighbouring parishes of major developments.
- Were WNC on target to get things done?
- Planners needed to be at the centre of the service.
- Significant housing growth and town centre regeneration needed to be well-managed.

The Leader expressed complete confidence in the Cabinet Member for Planning and noted that WNC had requested the report in order to fully understand the issues around planning and had put in place an action plan to address them.

Councillor Breese accepted that there had been issues and made the following points:

- Communications, such as timely responses to emails, were being improved,
- A comprehensive training programme was being developed for parish councils and members.
- Section 106 reporting systems had not been adequate and new systems were being looked at.
- Transformation had not been commenced earlier because during the shadow period Covid restrictions had been in place and the council had to concentrate on the government agenda during the crisis.
- Recent feedback suggested that staff were feeling better supported and more settled. The Northampton planning team would be moving to Towcester in May/June which would help cohesion.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- a) Noted the finding and recommendations of the PAS Peer Review (Appendix A)
- b) Endorsed the Action Plan and the next steps for the Planning Service (Appendix B) and;
- c) Agreed the proposed mechanism for monitoring and reporting progress on the Action Plan and transformation programme.

176. **Community Grants Framework**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Smith presented the report and summarised the salient points. The framework would provide a consistent platform for both existing and new grants.

Councillors made the following comments:

- The report was welcomed.
- Could there be a representative from the voluntary sector on the community funding panel?
- Will there be one member from each group on the cross-party advisory group?
- Promotion of partnership and collaboration was important to prevent duplication.
- It was important that the application process was not over-complicated.
- Multi-year grants were preferred because this enabled organisations to plan and recruit staff.
- Were community transport groups eligible to apply for these grants?
- It was disappointing that there had not been an increase in budget this year.

Councillor Smith responded and made the following points:

- The grants were one-off rather than ongoing funding.
- A cross-party working group had worked well in the past.
- Voluntary sector representation on the grants panel would be considered.
- Community transport groups could make an application for a grant.

Councillor Brown welcomed the report and had seen the value of the grants in the sporting and performing arts sectors. The flexibility of one-year grants could be useful for those starting out.

Councillor Golby also supported the report and advised that the anti-poverty oversight group spoke highly of the way WNC had been engaging with the voluntary sector.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet

- a) Approved the proposed Community Funding Grants Framework for West Northamptonshire Council for implementation from 2023/24.
- b) Approved the composition of the Community Funding Panel and the role of the Cross-party Advisory Group.

177. Private Sector Housing Enforcement and Civil Penalties Policy

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Brown presented the report and summarised the salient points.

A councillor made the following comments:

- The report was welcomed and the team commended.
- The removal of early bird discounts was welcomed.
- Did WNC have the capacity to monitor 33,000 privately rented properties?
- It would be good to see all private rental housing registered.

Councillor Brown acknowledged that the team will never be big enough to monitor all private housing stock. The aim was to respond to complaints effectively and proactively seek out properties showing signs of poor management in order to protect the people living in the homes.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet

- a) Approved the Private Sector Housing Enforcement and Civil Penalties Policy v2 (attached to the report as Appendix A)
- b) Delegated to the Head of Private Sector Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Culture and Leisure; the responsibility to maintain the policy and make any minor amendments in light of legislative changes, Court or Tribunal decision, or identified typographic error.

178. Replacement of existing contract for WNC's main Housing Management System 'OpenHousing'

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Hallam presented the report and summarised the salient points. A short-term extension of the current contract would ensure adequate time to undertake proper procurement of a new system.

A councillor commented that this was an important project which needed to be progressed as the system was the core software for managing housing stock.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet authorised the Chief Information Officer to award a contract to Capita for the use of the OpenHousing housing management system, via the KCS framework (Y20023), for three years with the option of extension for a single year.

179. **A43 Northampton - Kettering Improvements Phase 3**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Larratt presented the report and summarised the salient points. The report provided an update on progress with the A43 Northampton to Kettering improvement, seeking to agree joint working arrangements with North Northamptonshire Council (NNC). 83% of the works were in WNC, who would lead on the scheme. The existing congestion problem would be tackled and active travel improved.

Councillors made the following comments:

- Not everyone would see the scheme as an improvement – it could just move the problem further along the road.
- Health and wellbeing needed to be looked at. The embodied carbon calculation and air quality data were not yet available. Careful consideration was needed to ensure the scheme provided improvements in these areas.
- Active travel needed to be included in the over-arching strategy. How was this scheme promoting active travel?
- Would the scheme be value for money? A strong assurance was needed that costs would be controlled and kept within budget.

Councillor Larratt made the following points:

- The scheme could not be allowed to cause problems further down the road.
- The scheme addressed the growth in the Moulton area, and would deliver benefits alongside the northern orbital road.
- Carbon and air quality issues would be raised with officers.
- The scheme was funded by the Department for Transport and WNC would be working with them to ensure the project was delivered within budget and on time.
- An active travel strategy was being worked on which would feed into the overall transport strategy for West Northants. There would be an active travel corridor along the route.

Councillor Brown noted that it was essential where possible to provide infrastructure alongside new housing – which was being done with this project.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- a) Noted the progress made to date in undertaking improvements to the A43 between Northampton and Kettering.
- b) Agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Place and Economy to agree the joint working arrangements with North Northamptonshire Council, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste, the S151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer and the Portfolio Holder for Finance.

180. **2023/24 Bus Subsidy Budget**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Larratt presented the report and summarised the salient points. The report agreed the use of money from the contingency fund to enable non-commercially viable bus services to continue. A bus review has been commissioned which will inform a report to Cabinet in the summer. Any changes will be subject to consultation.

Councillors made the following comments:

- The continued support for bus services was appreciated by residents and mitigated rural isolation.
- The bus group needed to meet swiftly once the report was published to provide comments.
- Concern was expressed that subsidy may not be the most cost-effective way to deliver services.
- The promised consultation on changes to services was welcomed.

Councillor Larratt advised that the bus report had not yet been seen by members. The bus group would meet once the report was received. Wider issues such as rural isolation needed to be taken into account when planning the way forward.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- a) Agreed the use of £215k from the contingency fund in 2023/24 to provide continuing support for non-commercially viable bus services.
- b) Noted that this will be used to continue to support the services currently receiving financial support.

181. **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Report**

At the Chair's invitation Councillors Hallam and Baker presented the report and summarised the salient points. Councillor Hallam advised that the report fell into his area because of the complaint and ombudsman involvement. The report from the ombudsman had been accepted. Councillor Baker advised that the report informed Cabinet of the findings in relation to a complaint. The SEND cohort was expected to rise by 25% and there was also a rising national crisis for Educational Psychologists to implement EHCPs.

Councillors made the following comments:

- The report was shocking to read. A child had been left isolated because the school could not meet their needs. The council did not amend the EHCP for 3 months. WNC needed to work with, not against, parents.
- 1:1 support should be provided for children that needed it.
- Data needed to be collected to ensure that the new specialist school in 2025 provided suitable provision.
- What was being done to ensure children were adequately supported now?

Councillor Baker advised that when children were out of school, every effort was made to put in a part-time tutor at home. This was recognised as not being ideal because it did not help with peer socialising. The team needed to be supported in their work – continual accusations of doing a bad job were making staff leave.

Councillor Brown recognised that any issue with children was deeply emotive. The service provided for over 3,000 children with SEND and was striving to do better in future.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet noted the findings of the report and considered the public interest that may be generated by the publication of the report.

182. SACRE Annual Report

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Baker presented the report and summarised the salient points. It was the duty of all schools to teach religious education. There had been failings in the board who were still without an adviser. This had resulted in RE data not being collected or monitored. Plans were in place to take over the monitoring because this had to take place in future.

A councillor who was also a member of SACRE advised that the service faced challenges because it was shared with NNC, with the vacant post being paid for equally by both councils which made it difficult to implement agreements for WNC. The capacity of SACRE had been reduced due to Covid and support from the council was appreciated.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet received and approved the SACRE annual report.

183. Consolidating printers into a single contract

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Hallam presented the report and summarised the salient points. Fewer machines were needed due to office optimisation and improved ways of working had reduced print volumes. The units would be bought outright and good savings would be delivered.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet delegated authority to the Executive Director – Corporate Services in consultation with the portfolio holder for Corporate Services to progress and enter into a single contract for the provision of multi-functional devices.

184. Consolidating phone lines into a single contract

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Hallam presented the report and summarised the salient points. This consolidation provided a more modest saving than the printers. It was not changing the telephony system but consolidating the physical phone lines.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet

- a) Agreed to the Chief Information Officer carrying out a procurement process to select a new provider; and
- b) Authorised the Chief Information Officer to award the contract for a period of up to 5 years to the successful bidder on completion of the procurement process.

The meeting closed at 7.45 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

13th June 2023

Councillor Jonathan Nunn, Leader

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Report Title | Corporate Plan Performance Report – 2022-23 Q4 |
| Report Author | Richard Corless Business Intelligence, Policy & Performance richard.corless@westnorthants.gov.uk |

List of Approvers

| | | |
|---|---|------------|
| Monitoring Officer | Catherine Whitehead | 24/05/2023 |
| Chief Finance Officer (S.151) | Martin Henry | 24/05/2023 |
| Other Director | Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive and All Directors via ELT and EPB. | 24/05/2023 |
| Communications Lead/Head of Communications | Becky Hutson | 24/05/23 |

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Corporate Plan Report – 2022-23 Q4

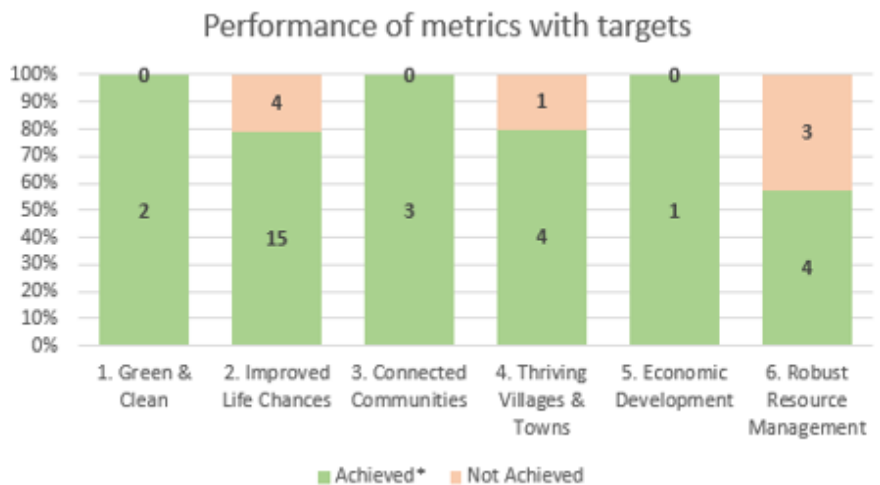
1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The attached appendix provides an update for quarter four to Cabinet on West Northamptonshire Council's 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 January to March (quarter 4). Full details of that performance for this quarter can be found enclosed within the appendix.

1.3. There are 58 metrics currently reported in the corporate scorecard, the majority of these have a target in place or are in place for trend purposes. The corporate scorecard is supported by a much larger set of metrics recorded and monitored through various internal scorecard, reports and discussed as part of regular performance meetings.



Looking specifically at the metrics (excluding revenue outturn as the final position is not yet available and will be presented to a later Cabinet) which have an agreed target in place and

splitting those by each of the priorities in the corporate plan the majority of these (76%) have achieved that target for the current year. In addition when comparing to last year's performance 72.5% of the metrics have improved on their performance this year

1.4. The performance indicators included in the report have been subject to review, challenge and approval by both the Cabinet and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) in the previous quarter with our aim being to create a meaningful dashboard of measures that provides members and officers with good insight into the Council's performance.

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.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- a) Note the content of the appendix covering the final quarter of 2022-23

4. Reason for Recommendations

- This report is for information purposes and discussion only, there are no direct decisions to be made following the report
- The council is required as part of Local Government Act 1972 to report performance of the council to members

5. Report Background

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 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.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 This is a report for information and discussion and therefore there are no choices to be made

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 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.

7.2 Legal

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

7.3 Risk

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

7.4 Consultation and Communications

- 7.4.1 The metrics included in this report have been chosen based upon the priorities identified within the Corporate Plan and in consultation with Cabinet and the Executive Leadership Team. 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.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

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

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 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.

7.7 Community Impact

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

8. Background Papers

8.1 The West Northamptonshire Council Corporate Plan 2021-25 provides the basis for the data and project updates that are provided within this quarterly report.



Corporate Plan 2022-23 Quarter 4 Report

January to March 2023

Last Updated: 24th May 2023



Welcome to the latest update on delivery of the West Northamptonshire Council Corporate Plan with data and project updates covering the final quarter of 2022-23 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.

1 Green and Clean Environment & Wellbeing

- 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

1

4 Thriving Villages & Towns Place shaping & Homes

- 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

4

2 Improved Life Chances Health, Social Care & Families

- 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

2

5 Economic Development Growth & Prosperity

- 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

5

3 Connected Communities Transport & Connectivity

- 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

3

6 Robust Resource Management Transparency & financial probity

- 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

6

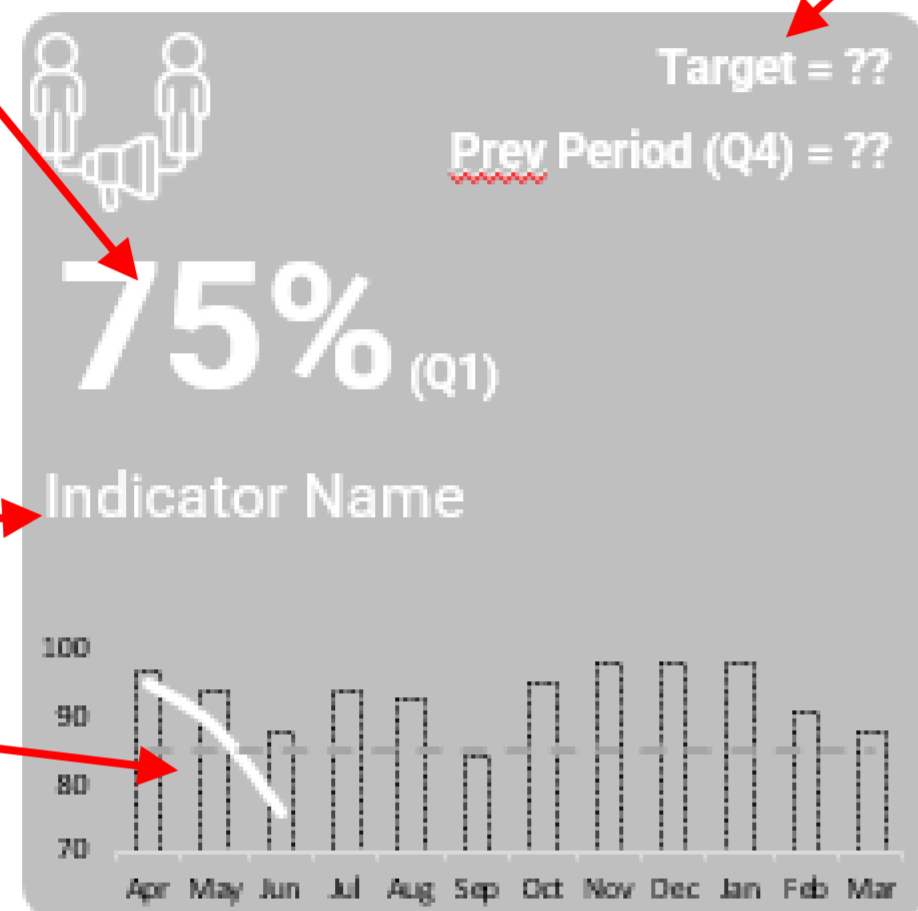
The below diagrams for the indicator dashboard pages and the detailed scorecards outline the data elements within them and how to interpret what is being shown.

The current performance.

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

The previous period's performance

The last period, will be stated if that is a quarter or a specific month.



Indicator Name

Trend Chart

White Line: This will show the recent trend, either by month (if available) or by quarter

Dotted Line – this is the target

Bar chart – this is last years performance

Indicator details

This section includes the indicator name, the priority it is relevant to in the corporate plan, the lead directorate plus if it is better for the performance to be higher or lower.

Performance Data

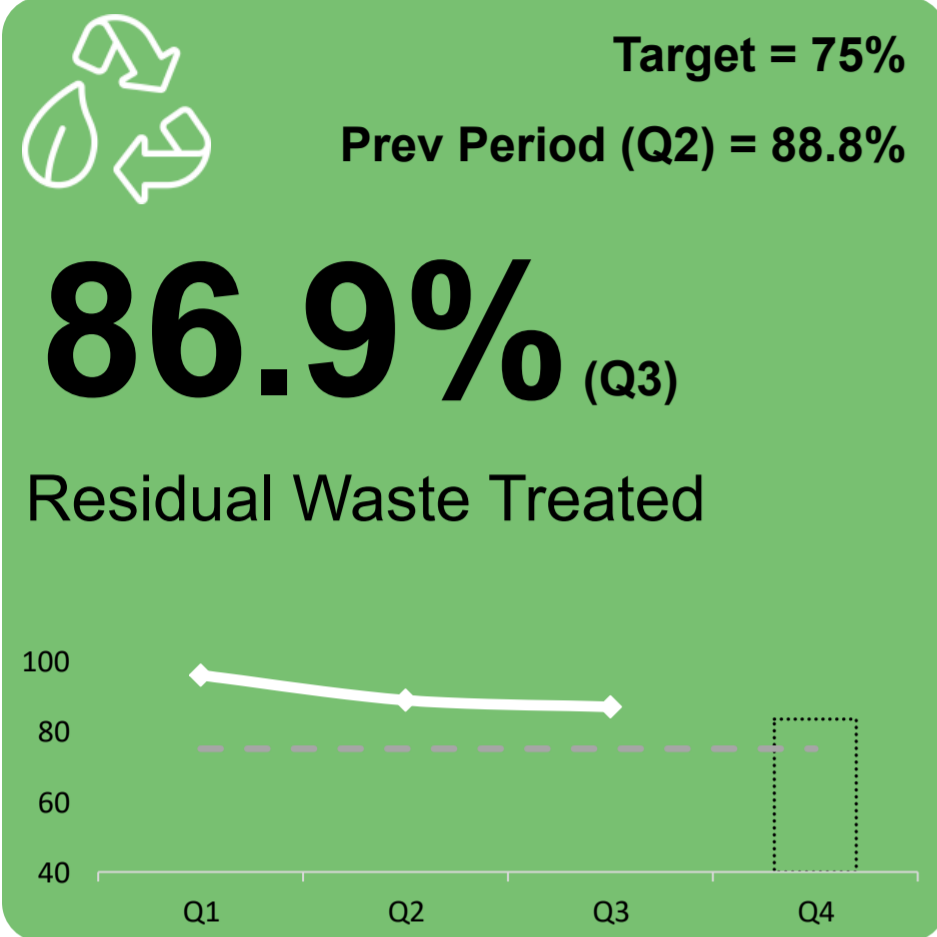
This section includes the target and current performance data broken down to month where available, quarterly and year to date (YTD).

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 | 1. 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 | | |

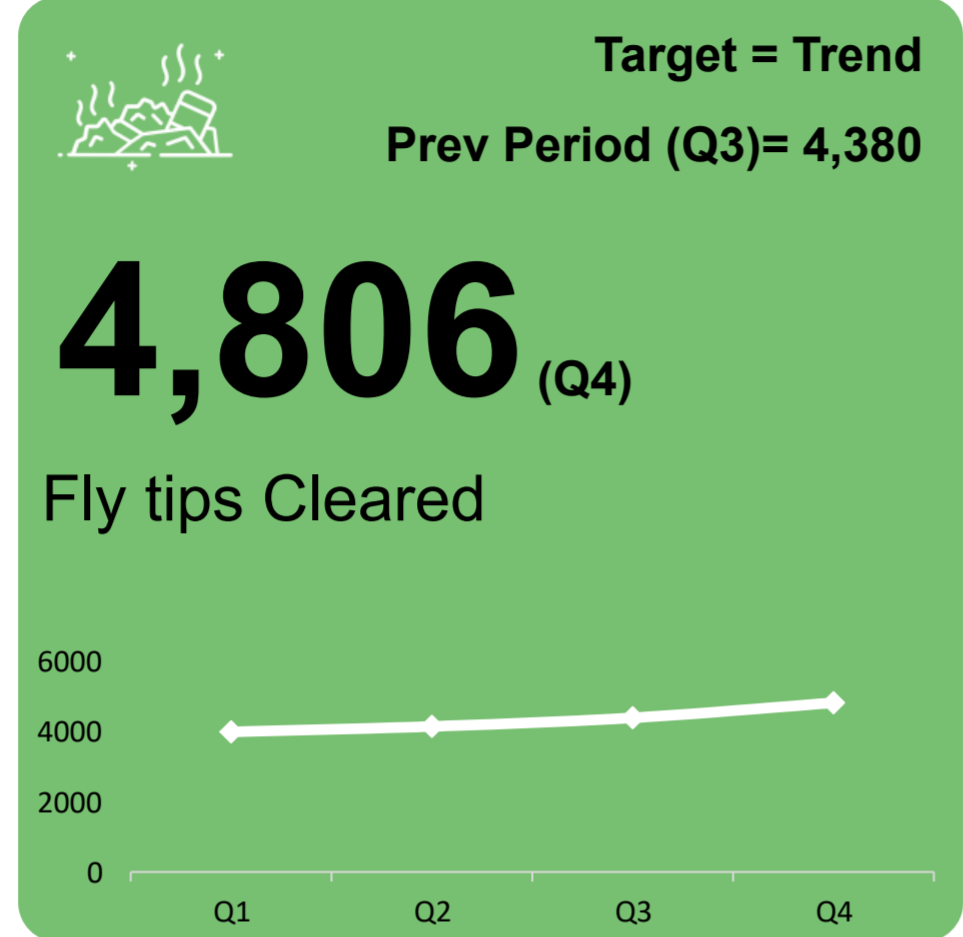
Temporary image as an example only

Priority 1 – Green and Clean Environment & Wellbeing



This indicator measures a combination of all waste types which go 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.

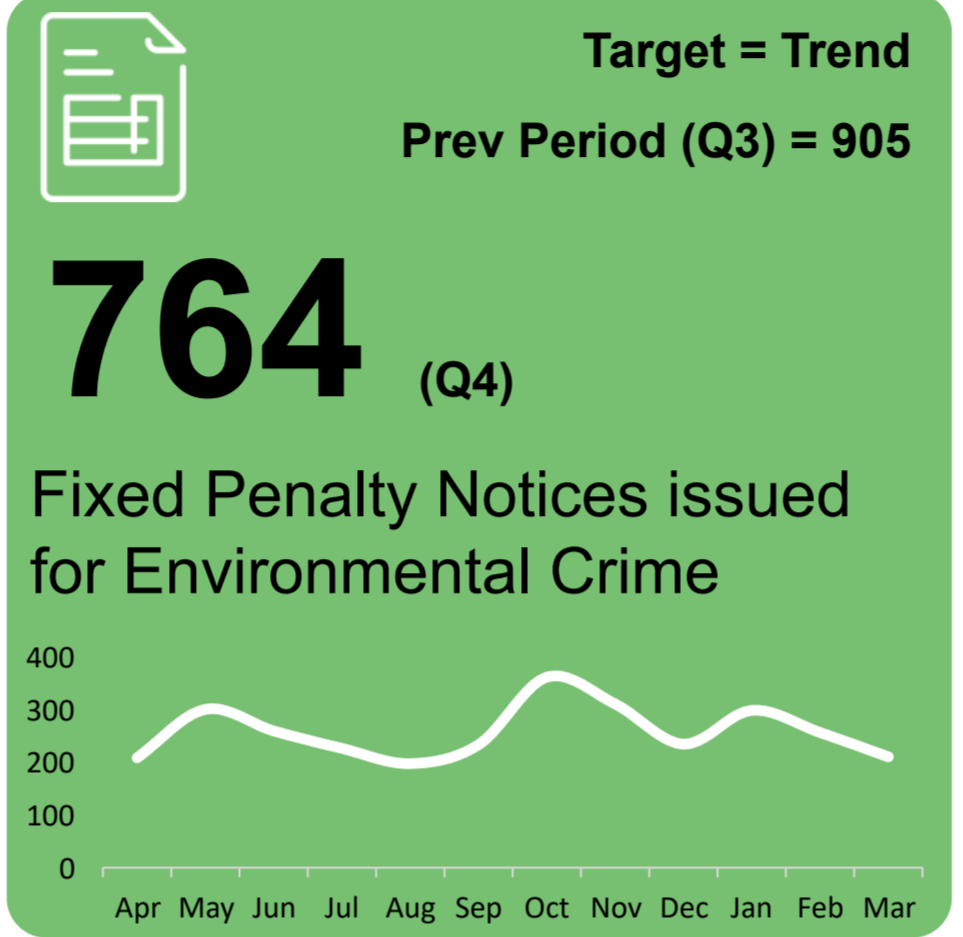
This measure is reported a quarter in arrears due to reporting processes via WasteDataFlow and therefore this report shows the performance for Q3 of 2022-23. The latest data for the autumn period shows that performance has reduced by 1.9% points to 86.9% of residual waste treated. This metric is affected by seasonal fluctuations in waste habits and despite the reduction current performance remains above the target set for the year.



Fly-tipping is 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 falls to the Local Authority to clear the rubbish away, the cost of disposal then falls on the LA.

This is a new measure in the corporate scorecard this year and is a trend based measure, whilst there is no target against this measure we have a responsibility to clear all fly-tips in relevant land.

The final quarter this year has seen a further rise in the volume, with WNC needing to clear 4,806 fly-tipping incidents, taking the total for the year to 17,301

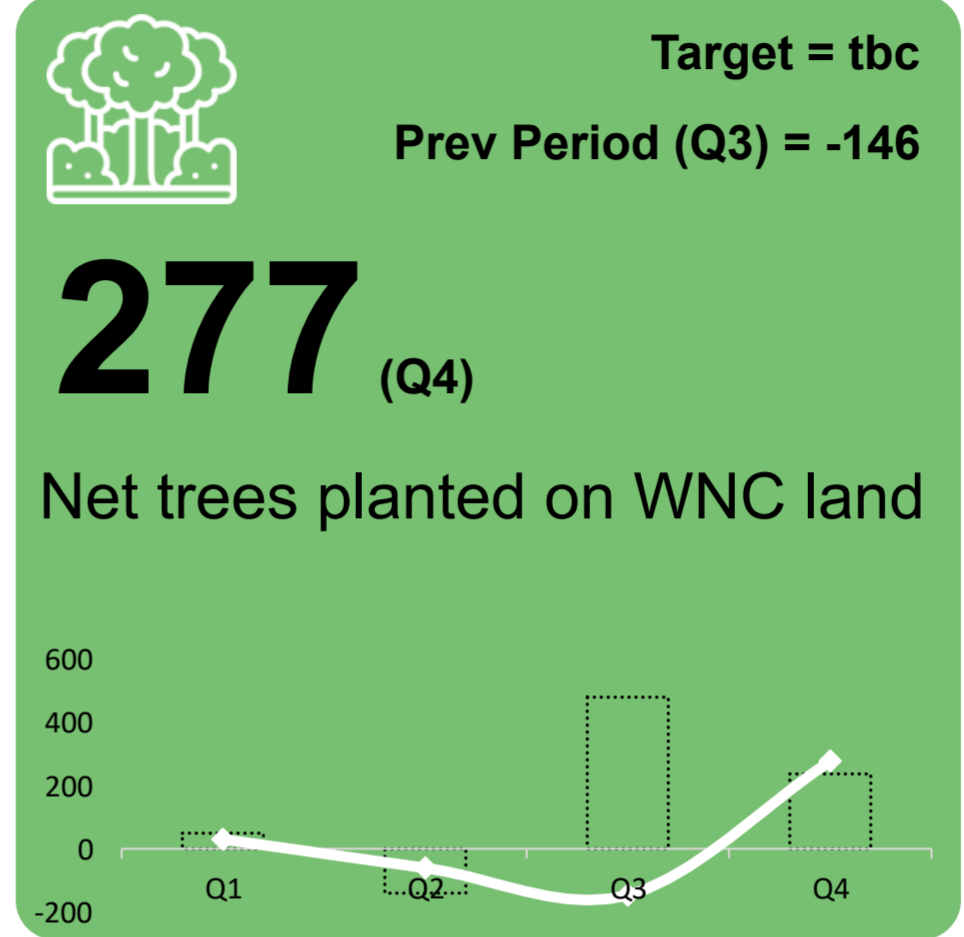


This measure reports against those fixed penalty notices (FPNs) which have been issued on behalf of WNC for environmental crime, this would include those fines issued for fly-tipping.

This measure is a new collection for the authority this year (although fines were issued last year but not formally reported against as a metric).

Across the third quarter this year 764 FPNs have been issued, a decrease of 141 from the number issued in the previous quarter.

The total number of FPNs issued this reporting year has been 3,092



Normal planting season for trees is in the months between October and April which means that any removals of trees outside this period due to planned works or developments are likely to result in a negative net trees planted position.

This quarter has seen 383 tree's planted and 106 trees removed with a net position of 277 trees planted.

In addition to this as part of the Queen's Green Canopy project to mark the jubilee the council is working with Parish Councils and community groups to plant trees.

As of the 31st March 2023 the final number (initiative now ended) of pledged trees that we are aware of within the WNC area is 11,337, this is made up as follows;

- Parks - 2,468
- Town & Parish Councils - 4,877
- Schools - 462
- Private - 3,530



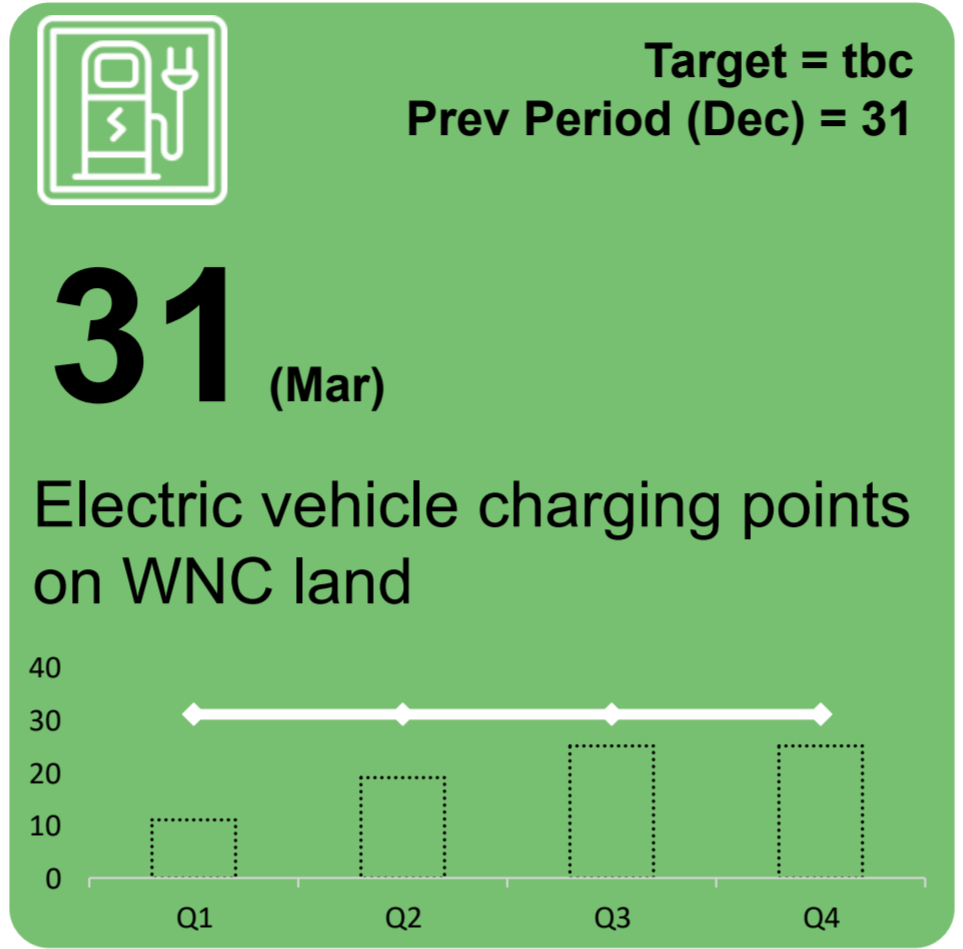
Priority 1 – Green and Clean Environment & Wellbeing



This measure counts the number of visitors to leisure centres that are ran by West Northamptonshire Council.

Overall numbers each month remain consistently above the forecast target but some classes / sessions remain below pre-covid levels at the current time. The full reporting year has seen 2.16m visitors into the leisure's centres with the latest quarter reporting 565,831 visitors.

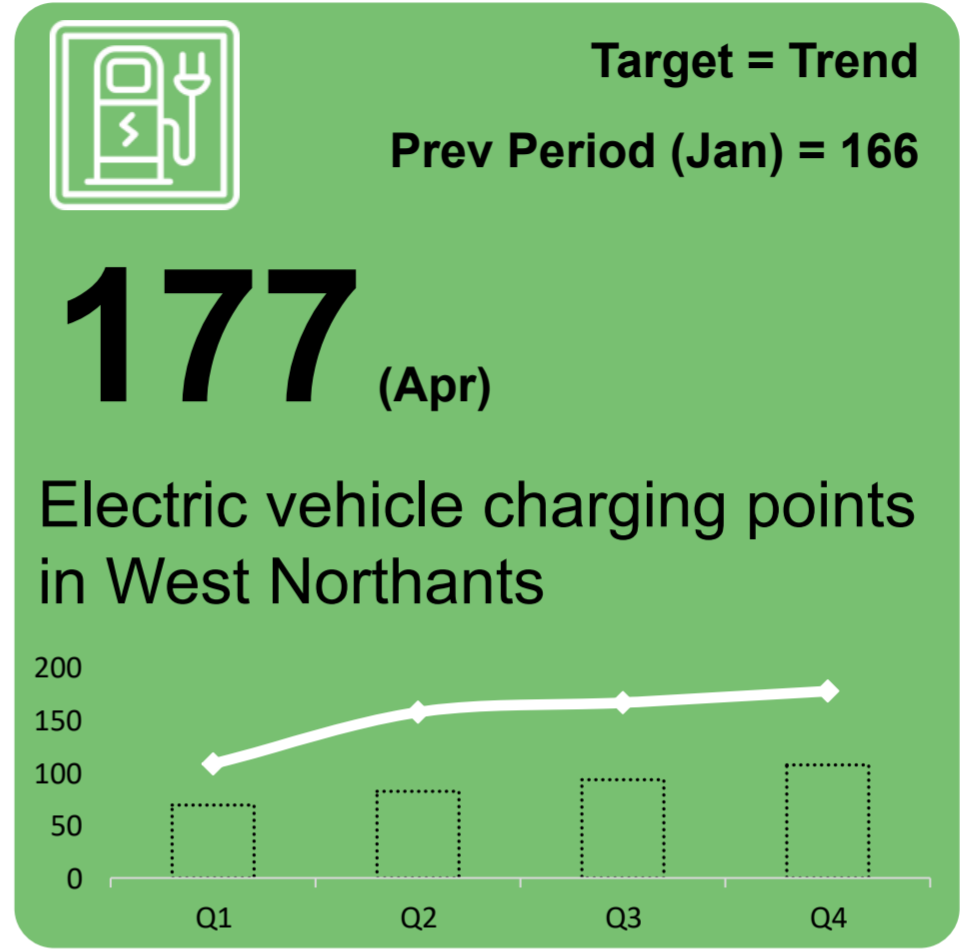
The Q4 performance is above the target set for that period, and has also resulted in the number of visitors this year exceeding the target of 1.9m with all sites returning good performance particularly through fitness classes and swimming'

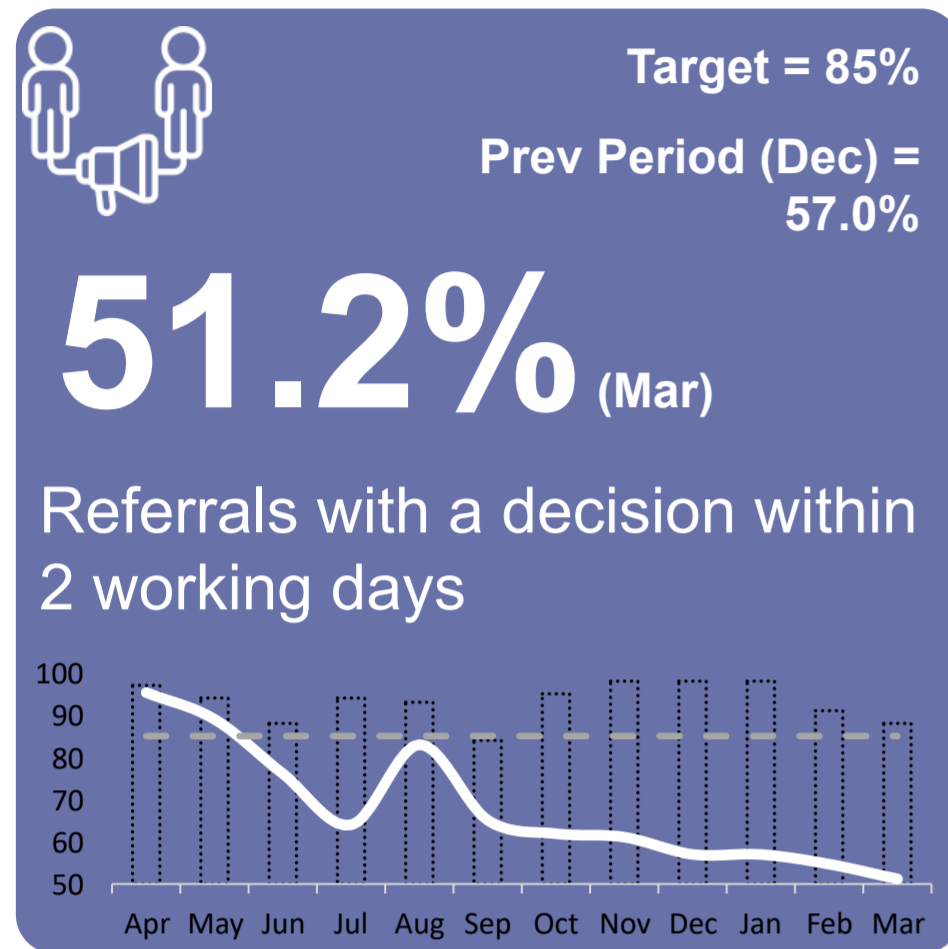


WNC has 31 electric vehicle charge points in place on either the highway or within WNC car parks or property that are available for electric vehicles, this is no change in the number of these since the beginning of the year.

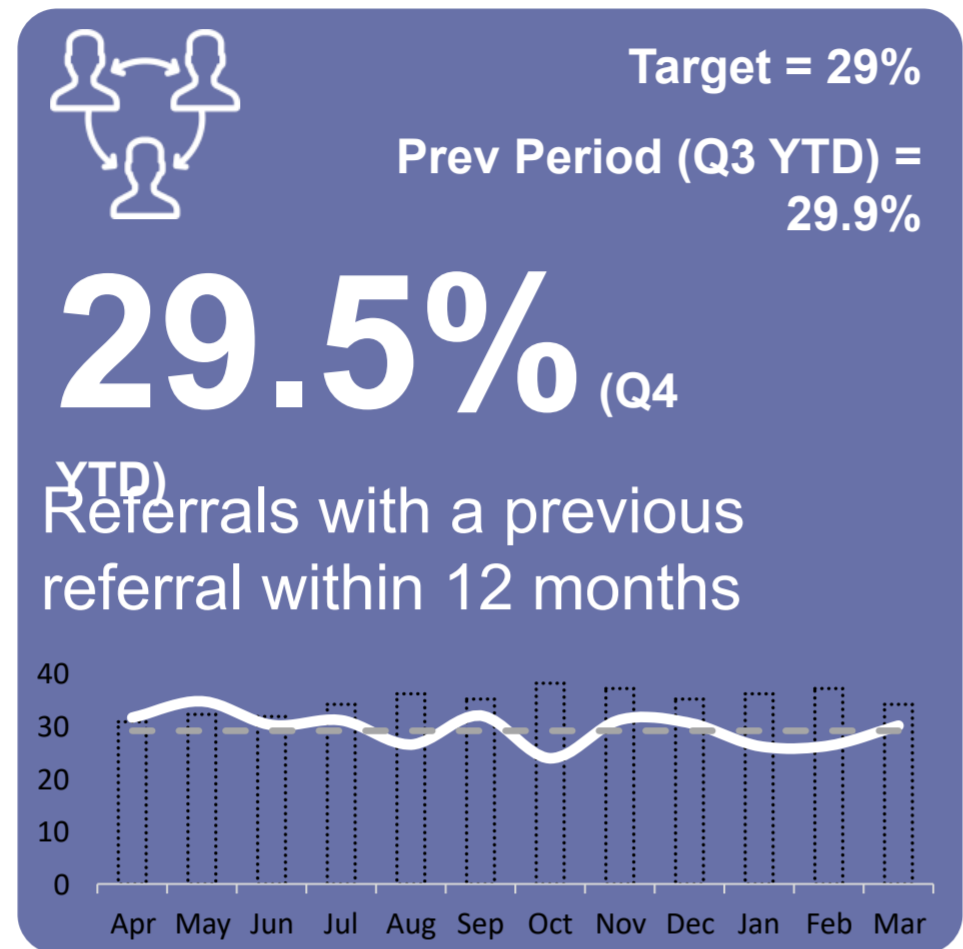
Additionally the total charging point access for West Northamptonshire as at April 2023 shows that there are 177 public charging devices, an increase of 11 since January, of these 11 new installations 9 of them are defined as rapid charging devices bringing the total number to 66 publicly accessible rapid charging devices.

The West Northamptonshire area has 415 charging points per 100,000 population (up from 40.8 at Jan 2023). This is higher than the East Midlands (40.8), but lower than the England (60.5) average.





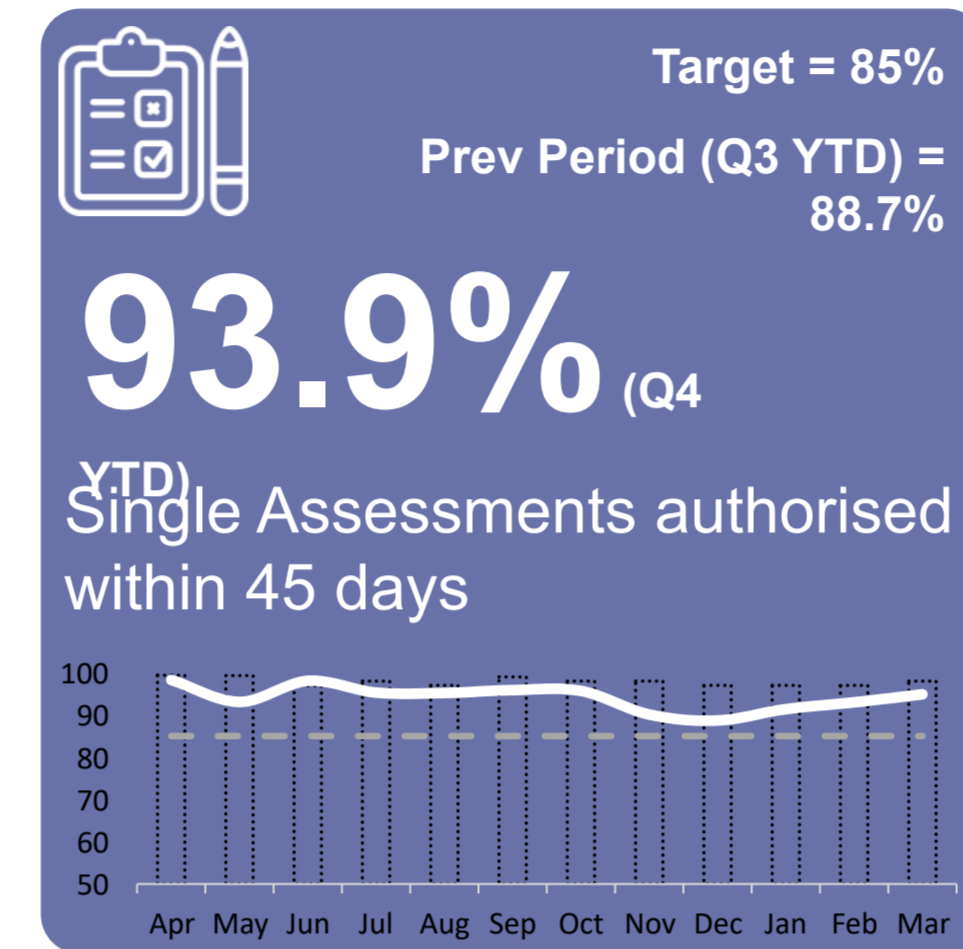
Whilst an action plan is implemented, timeliness and overall performance have dropped and performance remains outside tolerance. Issues contributing to this position: staffing challenges, in particular MASH officer and business support, police working on a backlog of PPN's on an overtime basis so high volumes coming in at once; increase in requests for information due to agencies clearing backlogs (CAFCASS and Probation). Focus on clearing the backlog and ensuring timely decision making is sustained. Recruitment of staff is a priority focus, and additional staff has been agreed. All referrals are considered and rag rated and cases that are rag rated RED are prioritised and decisions made within 1 day. 2



Re-referrals have increased this month above target whilst remaining within tolerance; this 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. Work with all partners continues to ensure appropriate and robust application of thresholds.

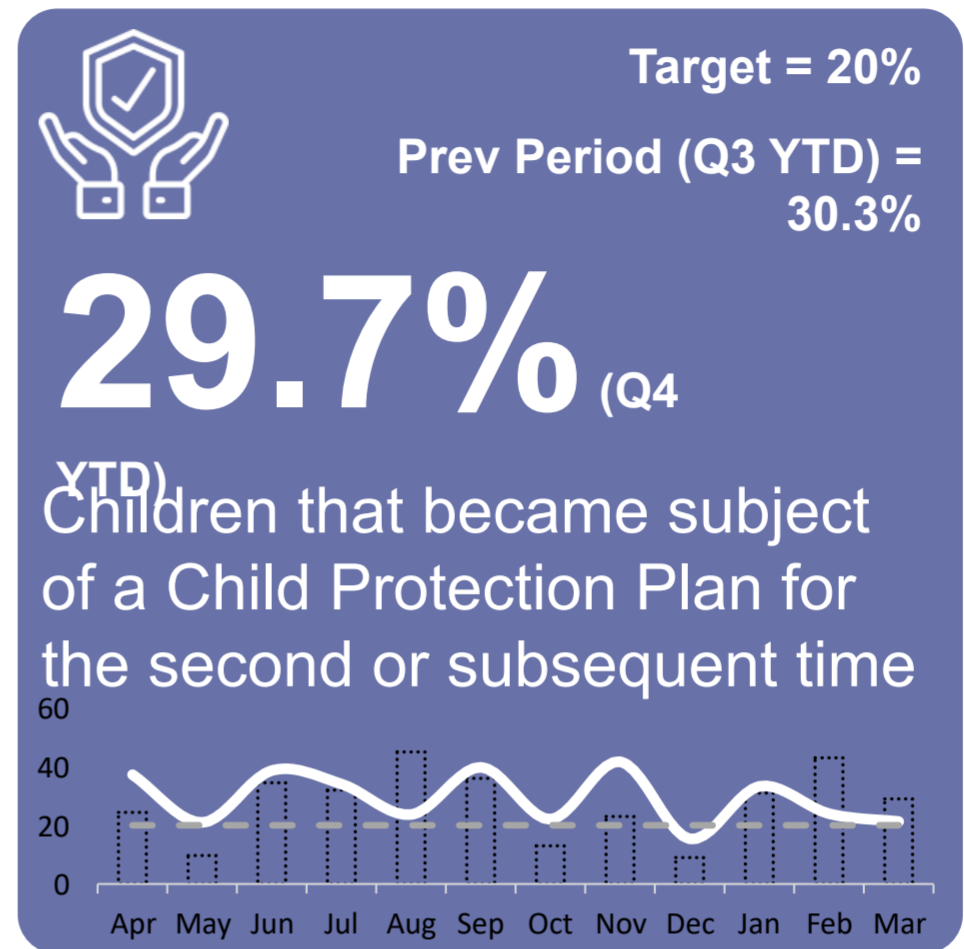
Steps have been taken to strengthen the Early Help partnerships with Partnership Support Team (Early Help MASH) being placed in the MASH pods and a leaner step down process. It is anticipated that and developments in CFSS/Early Help will continue to support appropriate reduction going forward.



Assessment timescales remain consistently above target and national average, increasing to 95% 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. Whilst staffing has presented challenges due to vacancies and higher levels of staff sickness in DAAT, there is now positive move and a higher than average number of new starters.

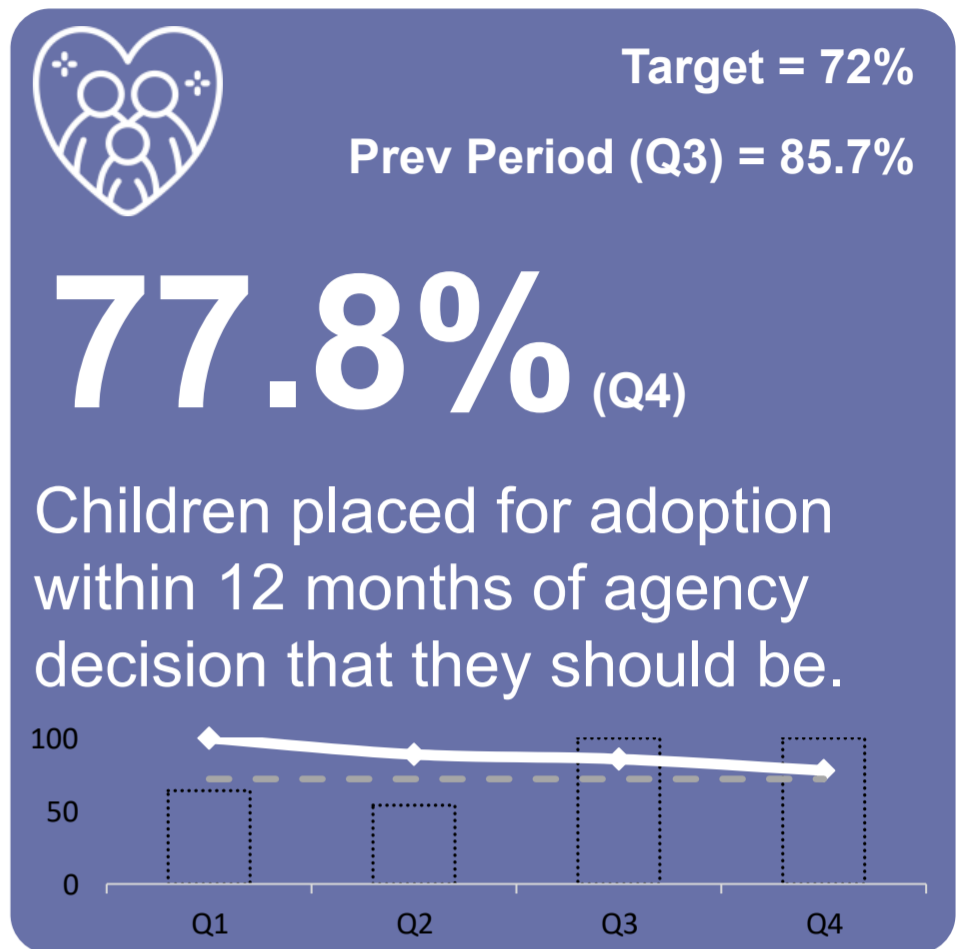
In addition to timeliness, we work on increasing the quality of assessments and more effective use of SofS in our interventions.



This measure continues to be variable and, on occasion, too high.

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.

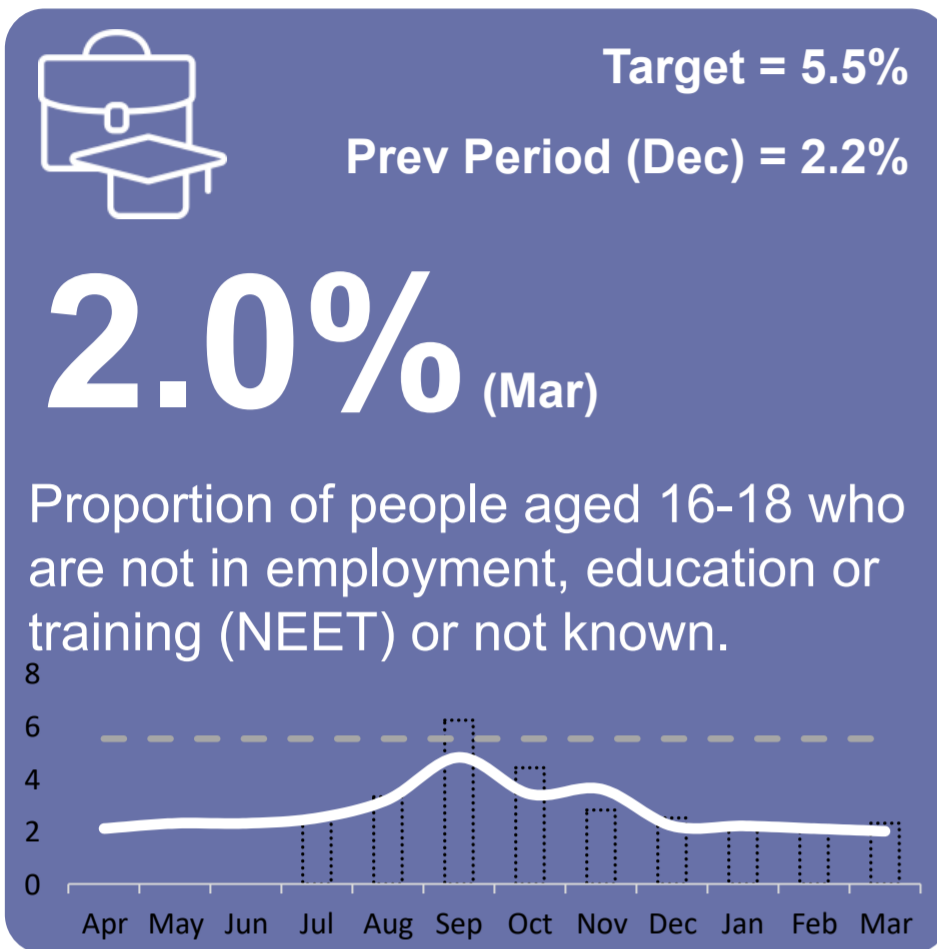
Requests for a second or subsequent CP plan is overseen by Service Managers to ensure the right intervention for the child/family.



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.

This quarters performance relates to 9 children who have been placed for adoption. The year to date has resulted in 30 children placed for adoption and of those 86.7% were placed within the 12 months of decision that they should be.



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

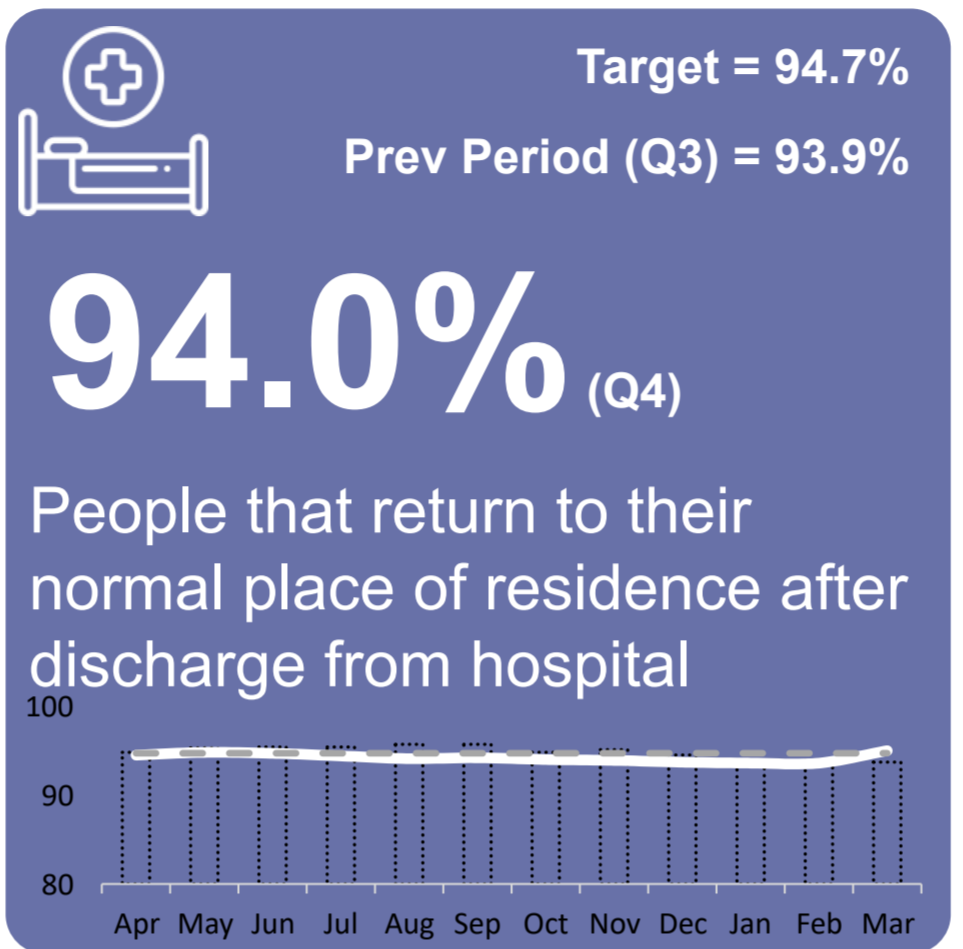
Whilst there is data going back prior to April 2021, that data is not split to the unitary council area in a way that enables comparison's to previous years.

The latest position at the end of March shows that 2.0% of young people are either NEET or not known, this is a reduction from the 4.8% high point recorded at the end of Q2 and the 2.2% reported at end of Q3. The high point recorded in Q2 is a normal seasonal high due to a brand new cohort and initial reporting having to be collected from schools in Sept.



A statutory reported measures in the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF), it measures of those in receipt of social care that have a direct payment or a personal budget which results in the outcome of people managing their own support as much as they wish, so that they are in control of what, how and when support is delivered to match their Needs.

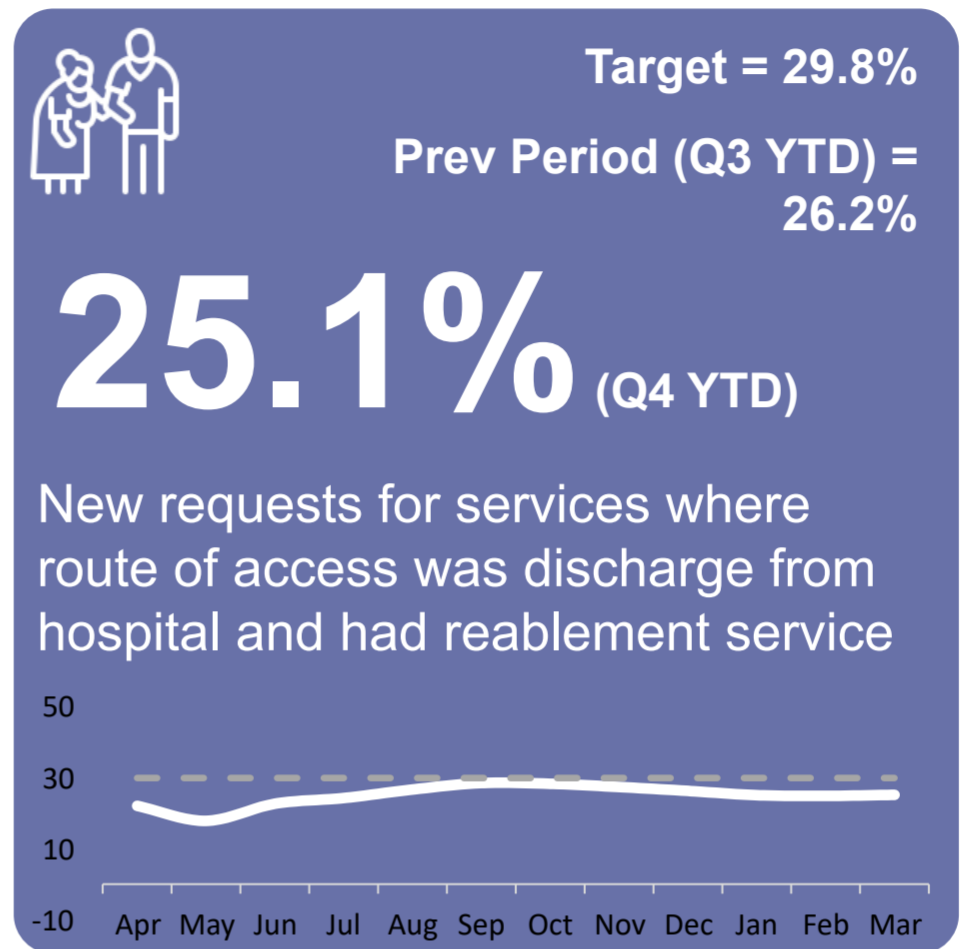
Currently the performance on this metric is showing that 100% of those in receipt of social care are managing their own support as much as they wish, this has been the case throughout the year and inline with our approach to personal budgets.



This indicator looks to measure the proportion of people that return home after a discharge from hospital.

Date for this indicator at 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 which supports the NHS in the delivery of healthcare services.

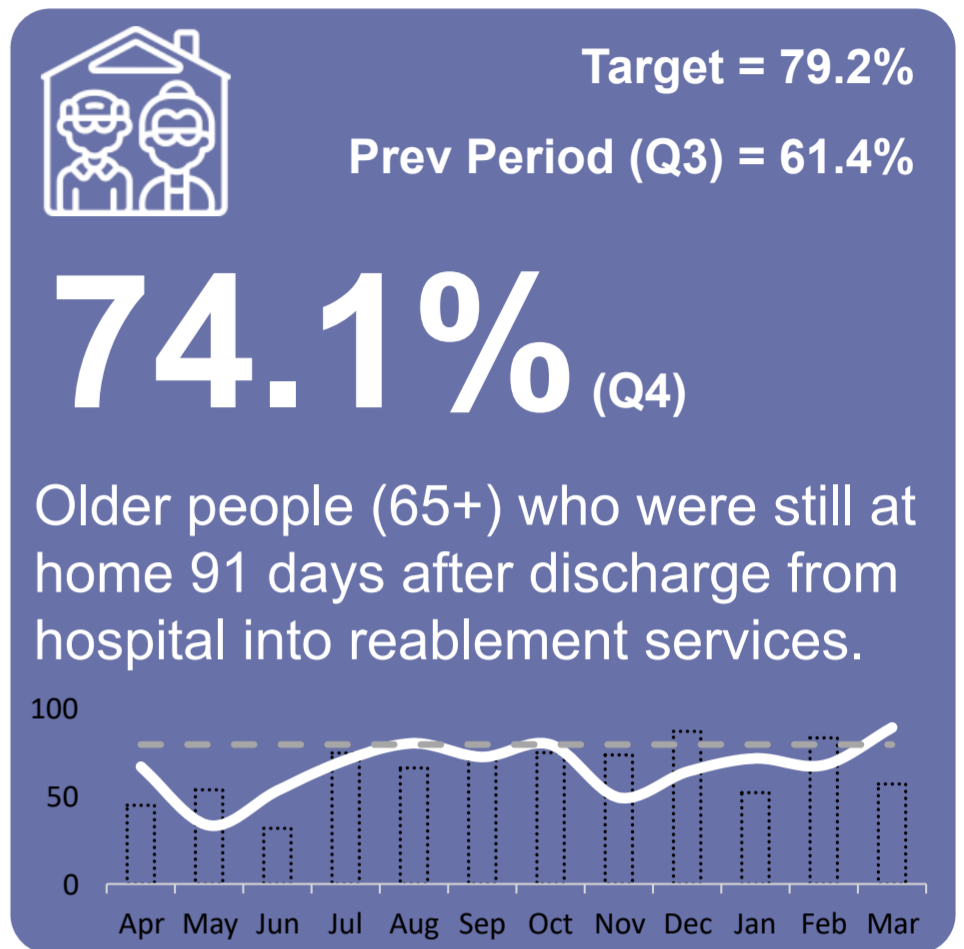
The 4th quarter of the year has seen a similar level of people return to their normal place of residence as the previous quarter (+0.1%), with the whole year performance at 94.7%.



This measure is one from the SALT return and focuses on new requests for service that directly follow a period of stay and discharge from hospital that had resulted in some form of reablement services.

Looking at the individual quarters' performance we have seen a reduction this quarter from the 22.5% in Q3 to 21.8% for Q4 of those new requests for service have had a reablement service, this has then reduced the overall years performance to 25.1%.

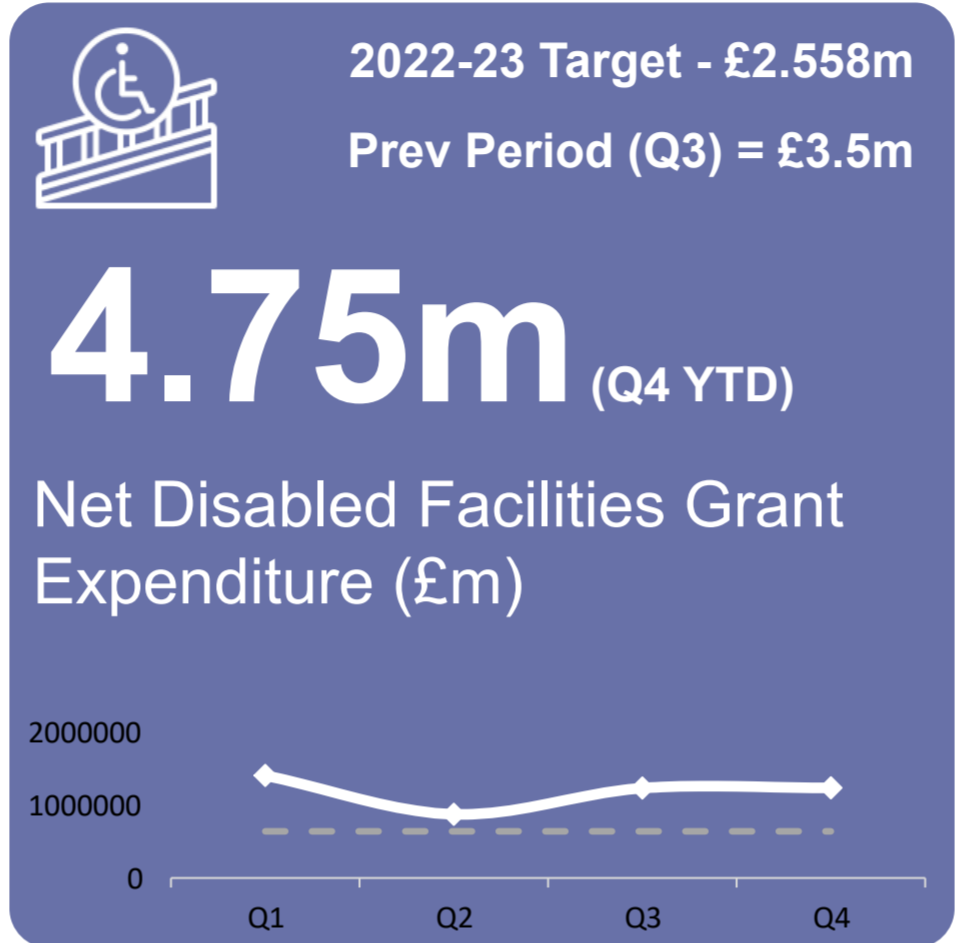
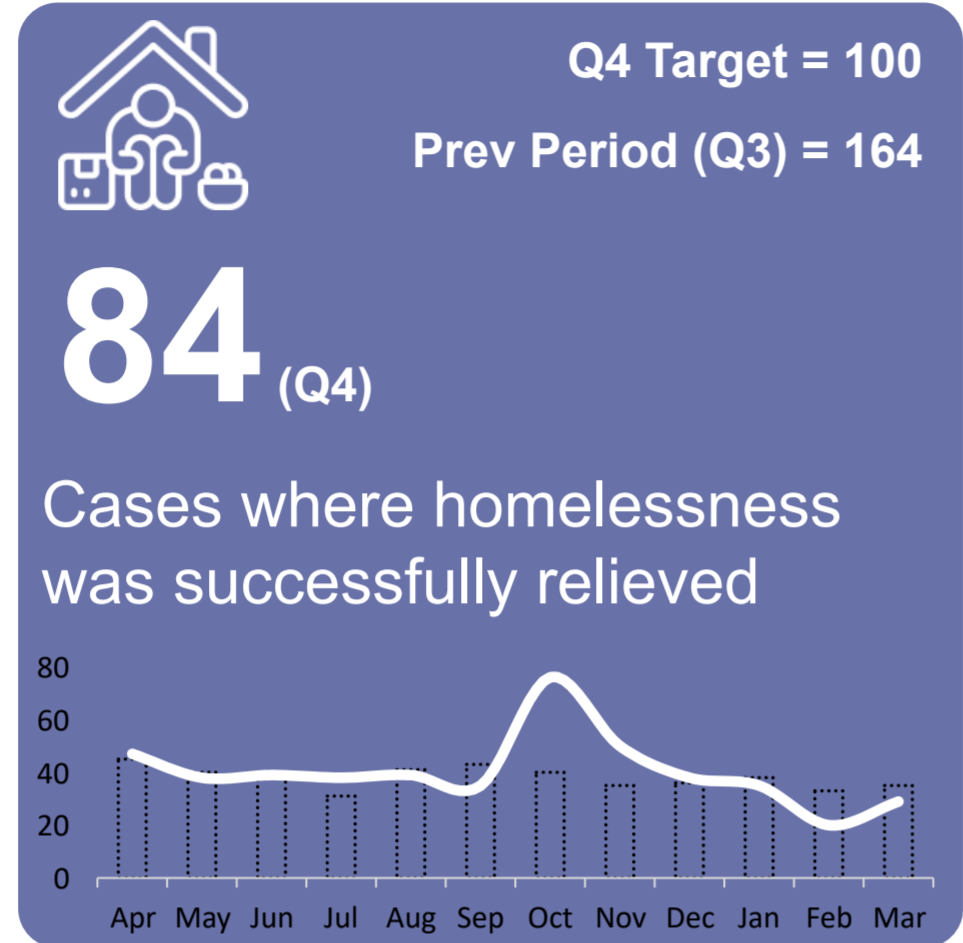
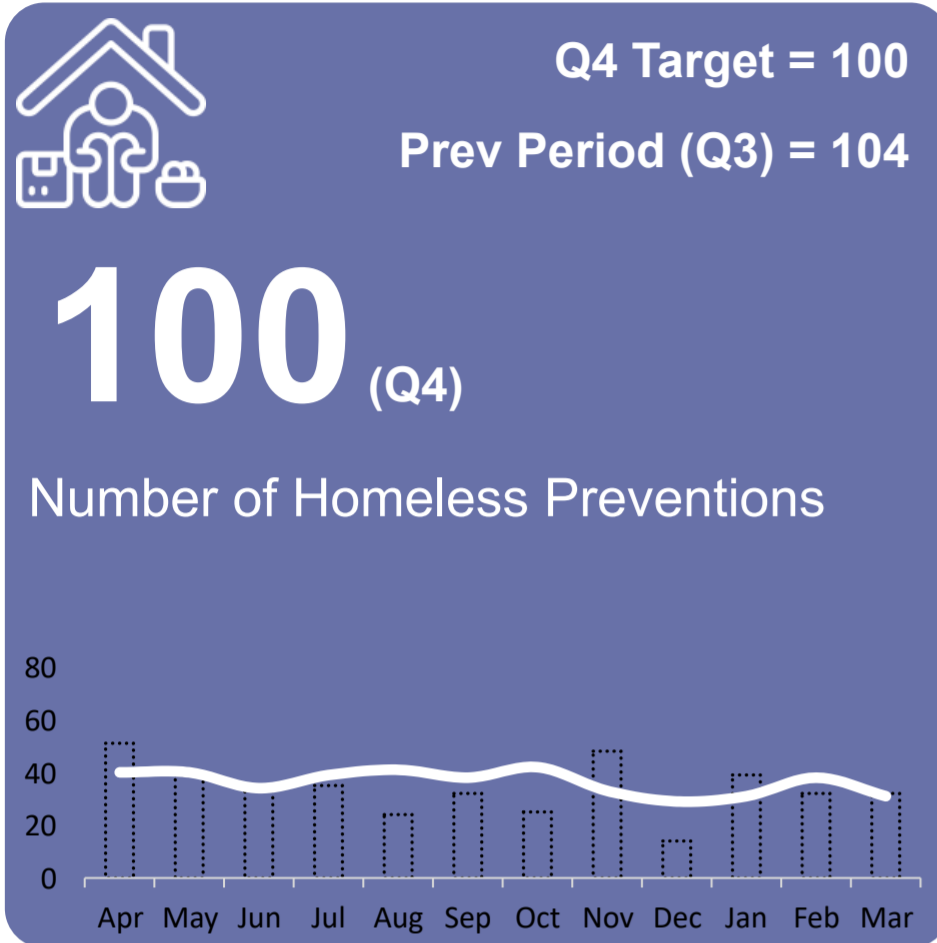
This has resulted in the outturn for the year being below the target, based on previous years regional average of 29.8%.



This indicator is one of the measures from the Better Care Fund (BCF) in the current year and measures those people (aged 65+) who were still at home 91 days after left hospital and had some form of reablement service.

This indicator has improved significantly in the final quarter, up from 61.4% reported in Q3 to 74.1% this period. This has improved the overall performance for the year to 65% (+3.5%) of people still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital.

The national comparison for this indicator looks at the discharges in the 3 months between October and December only, so whilst not directly comparable due to the time of year the national average last year was 79.2% and the WNC outturn for that period was 76.2%.



The council has a duty to support people and families from becoming homeless.

During the Prevention Duty we must take reasonable steps to prevent any eligible applicant from becoming homeless, regardless of priority need status, intentionality and whether they have a local connection. This can involve assisting you to stay in your current accommodation or helping you to find a new place to live. Under this part of our duty we have prevented 100 households from becoming homeless in Q4, taking the total number of households to 436 for the whole year.

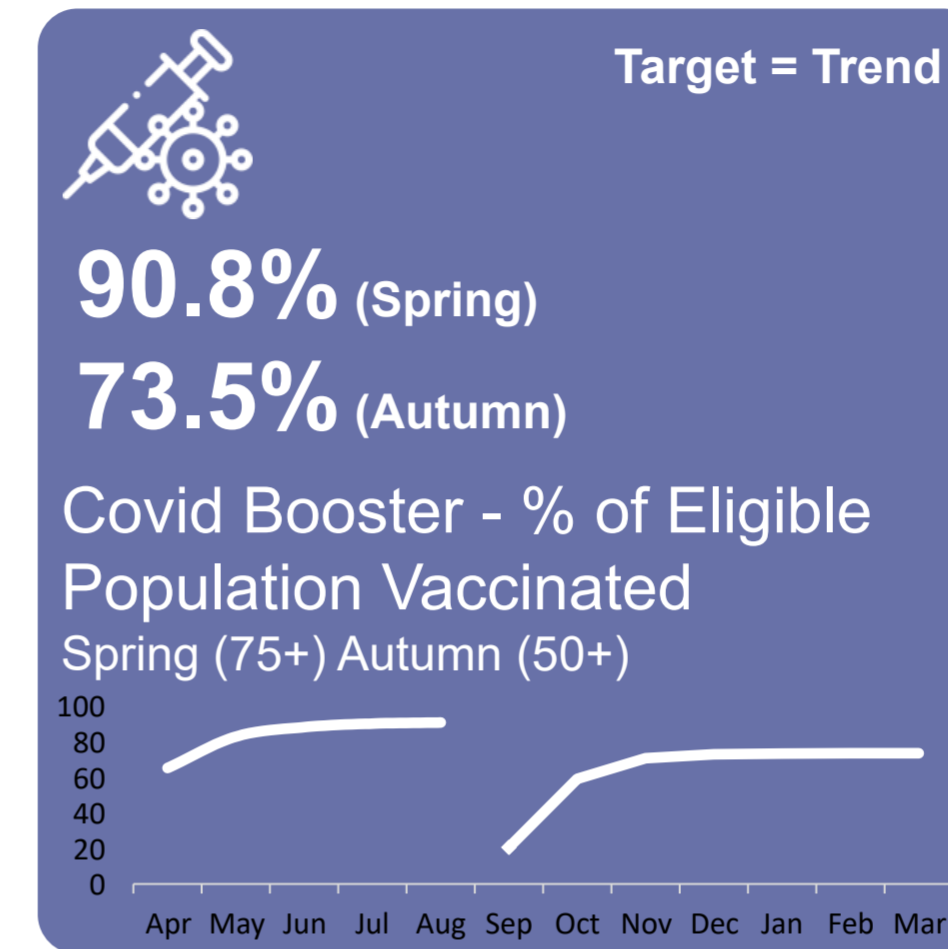
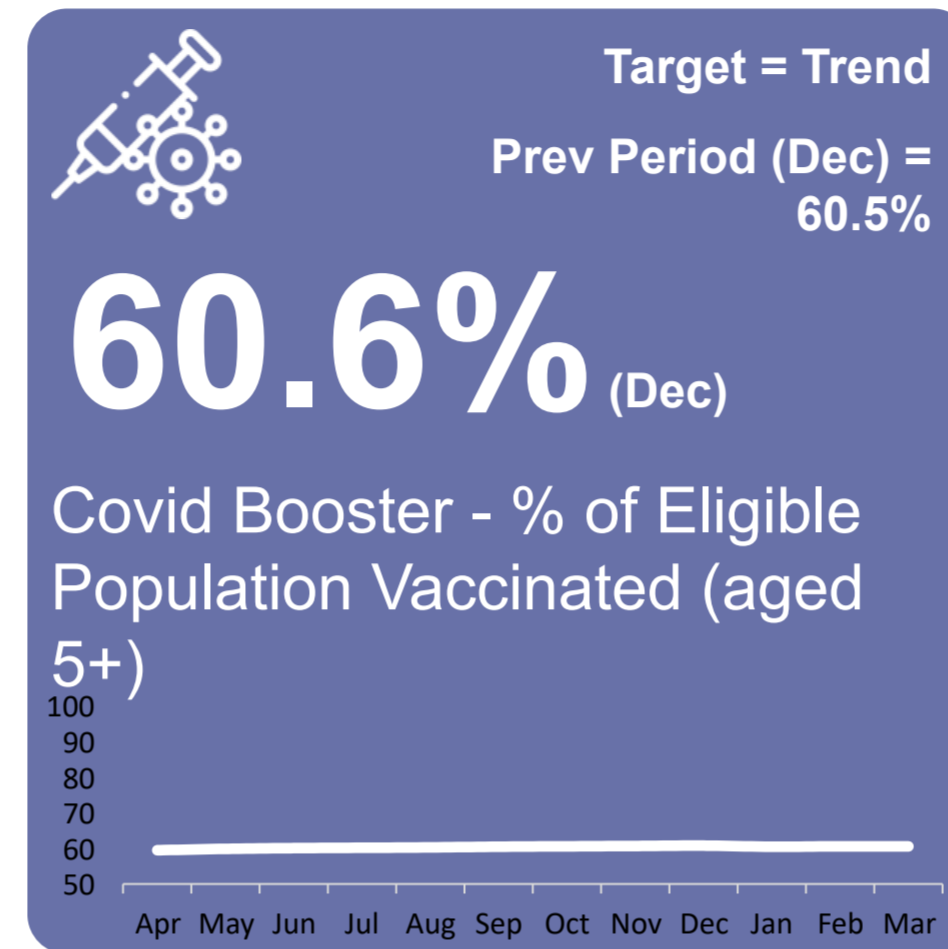
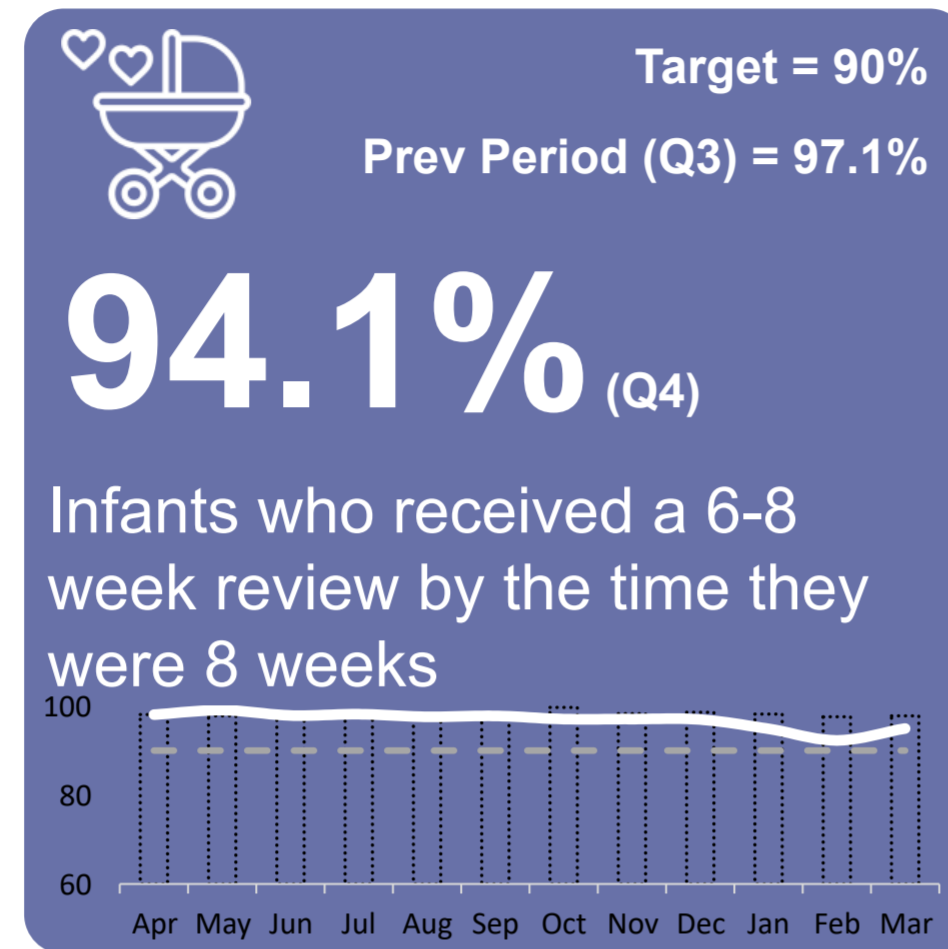
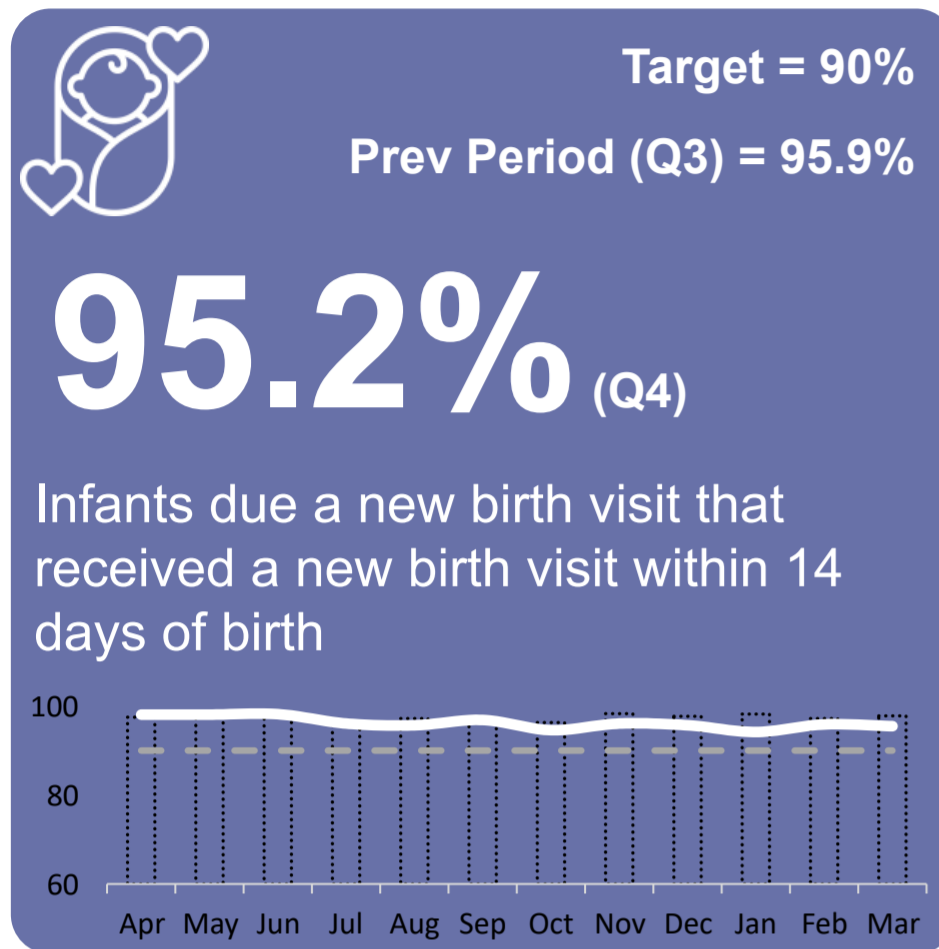
If we have not been able to prevent you from becoming homeless under the Prevention Duty, you will be owed the Relief Duty. During the Relief Duty we must take reasonable steps to help you to secure suitable accommodation. The Relief Duty lasts for up to 56 days and is available to all households who are homeless and eligible, regardless of whether they have a priority need. Under this part of our duties we have had 84 cases where homelessness was successfully relieved in Q4, taking the total number of households to 484 for the whole year.

Combined under the two duties we have supported 184 households across the authority area from becoming homeless in Q4 of the current year and the total for the year of 920 households.

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 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 in the current year, this total is £4.75m for 2022-23.

The Q4 year to date position shows the total amount which includes committed spend, some of this may not be realised due to clients withdrawing from the grant approval or works being delayed into the next financial year.



The health visiting service leads on 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 good performance in both of the measures reported here, despite minor decreases in the latest quarter, with the new birth visits completed within 14 days reporting at 95.2% for quarter 4, a decrease from the 95.9% reported in the first quarter. Similarly an decrease in the 8 week reviews completed, from 97.1% in quarter 3 to 94.1% in this quarter

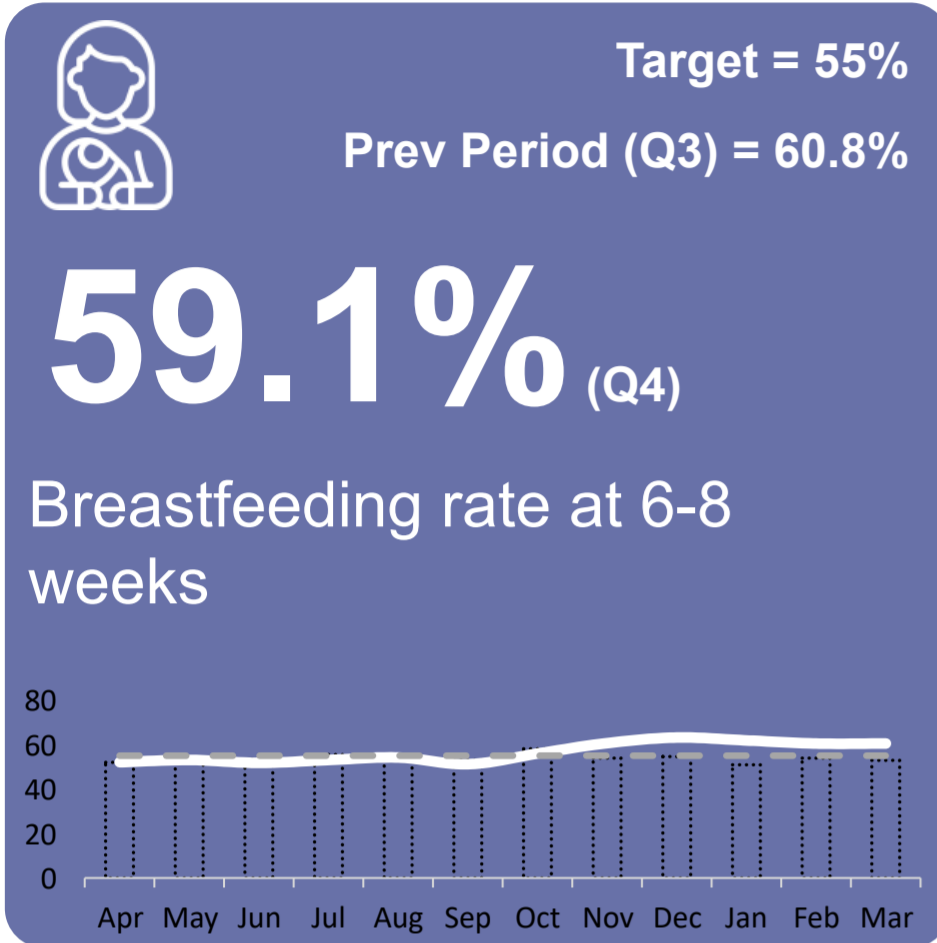
Both of these indicators perform well in comparison to national averages of 82.6% for 14 day visits and 81.5% for the 8 week visits and are above our local target of 90% for each indicator.

These two metrics are in place to monitor the progress of boosters for the Covid19 vaccination programme. The Booster is eligible to those who have received their 1st and 2nd doses and are aged over 5 years.

The first of the above metrics monitors the take-up of the 1st booster, sometimes referred to as the 3rd dose, this shows that 60.6% of those aged 5+ have received at least 3 doses of the Covid19 vaccine. The second metric monitors the booster programmes for this year, the 'Spring Booster' (previously referred to as the 2nd booster) ended in August and at that time 90.8% of the eligible (those aged over 75) had received this booster. The current programme, the 'Autumn Booster' commenced in September and continues this booster programme for those aged 50+. Uptake of this booster to the end of March is showing that 73.5% of those aged 50+ have received this booster.

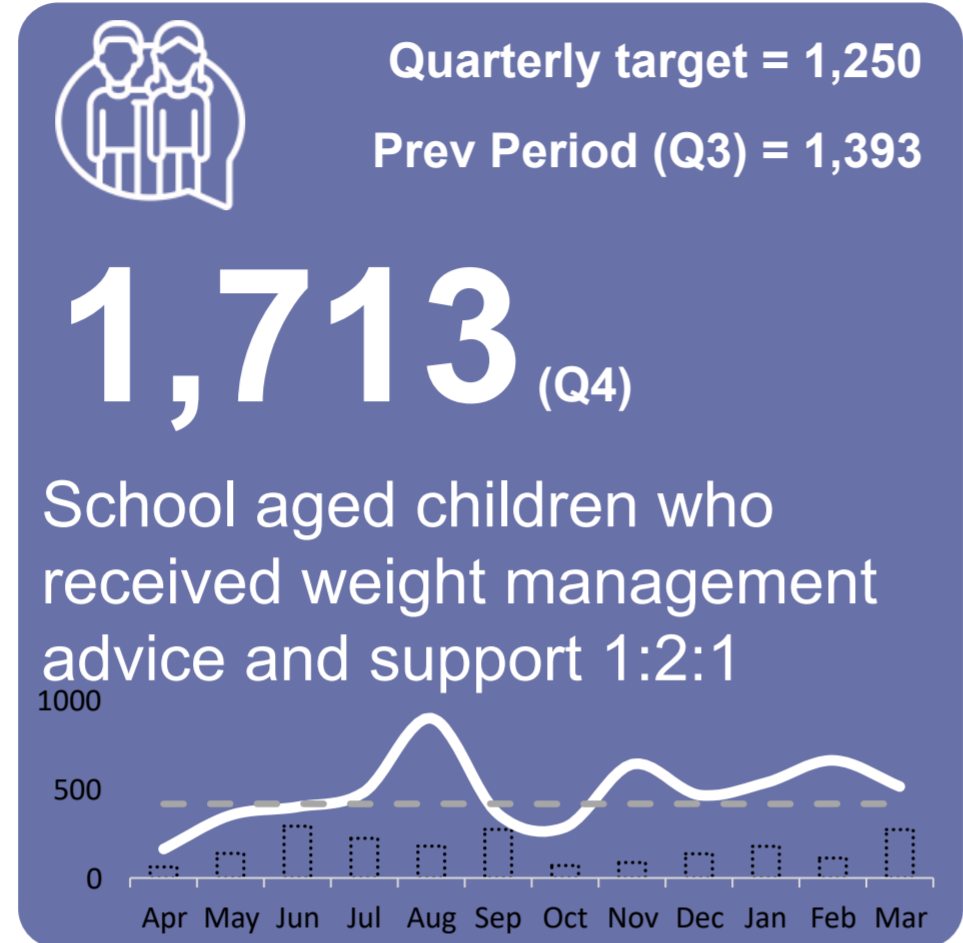
Contributory factors to the performance of both of these measures are the take-up of the 1st and 2nd doses (i.e. there cannot be more 1st boosters than there are 2nd dose take-ups) As at the end of December there have been;

1st Dose – 78.5% with 155 1st doses administered in Q4
2nd Dose – 75.4% with 221 2nd doses administered in Q4



Increases in breastfeeding are expected to reduce illness in young children, have health benefits for the infant and the mother and result in cost savings to the NHS through reduced hospital admission for the treatment of infection in infants (Quigley et al 2007.) Breast milk provides the ideal nutrition for infants in the first stages of life.

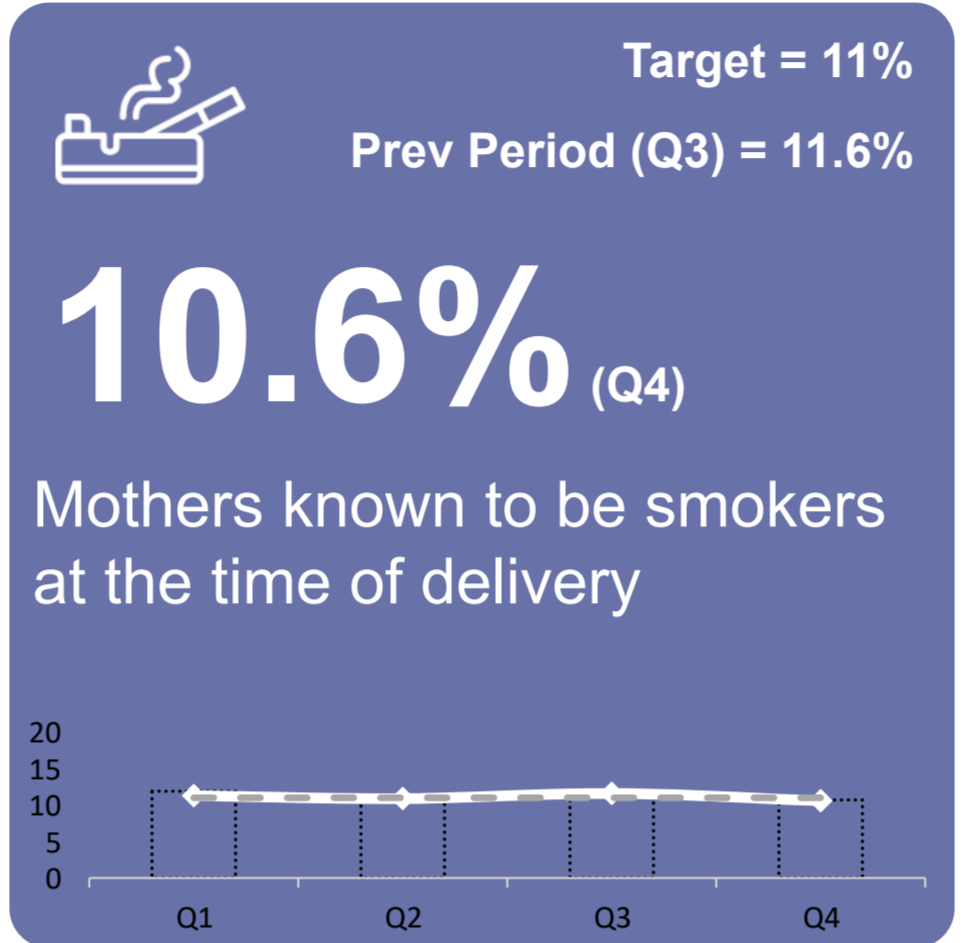
In West Northamptonshire there were 59.1% of babies are breastfed at 6-8 weeks in the final quarter this year, a decrease over the previous period (60.8%). The performance of this measure has been relatively consistent over the past year (52-61%), this compares favourable with the latest national average of 49.3%.



Though not part of the Public Health statutory services, this measure looks at the support that is provided to school age children with weight management advice and support, this is delivered through the Health Child Programme – a series of public health interventions for children and families from birth to age 19.

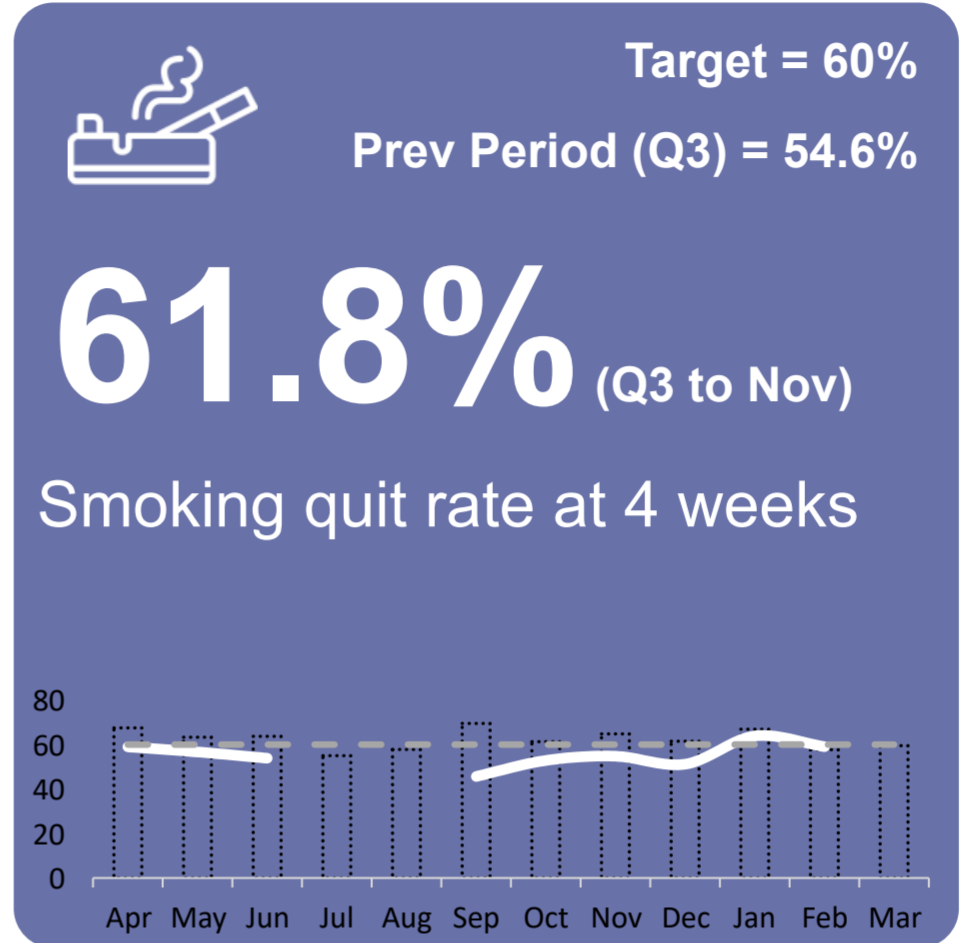
This quarter the service has supported 1,713 school aged children through this service offer which is an increase from the previous quarter's 1,393 children supported.

The total number of children supported this year is 5,765.



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 10.6% of mothers are known to be smokers at the time of birth, this is 1.0% lower than the performance in the previous quarter and compares with a latest (2021-22) regional average of 11.8% and England average of 9.1%.

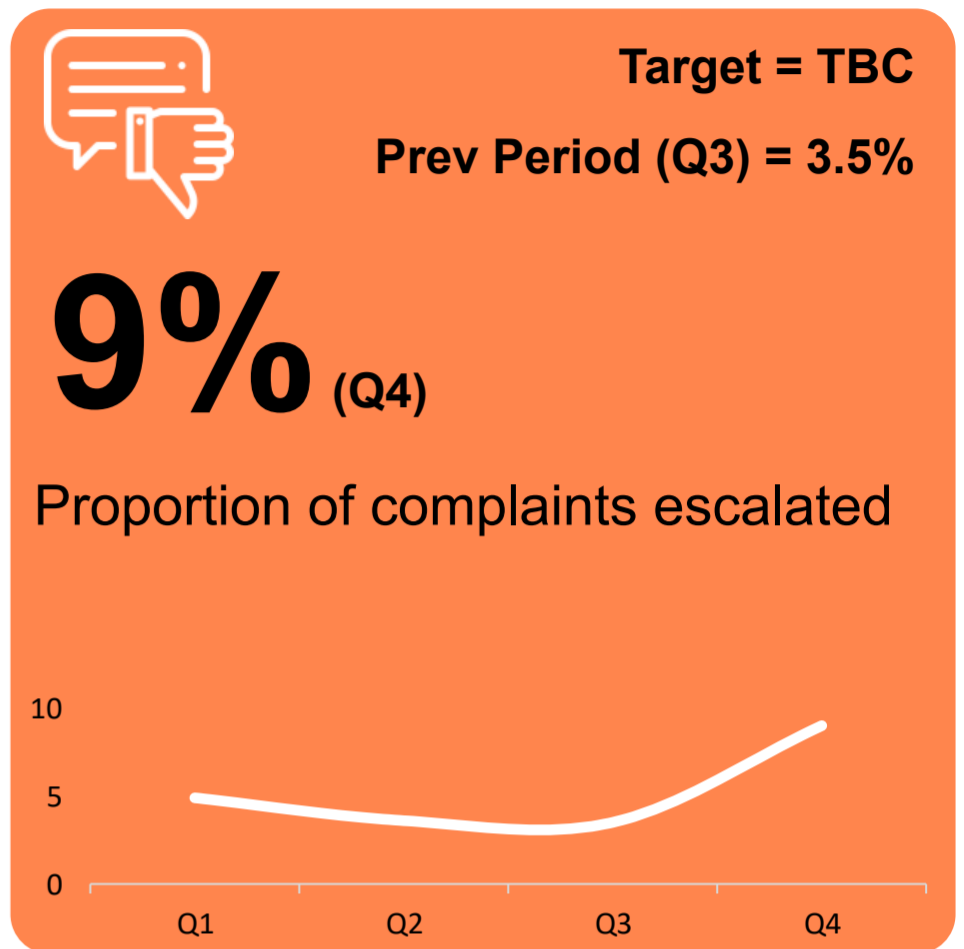
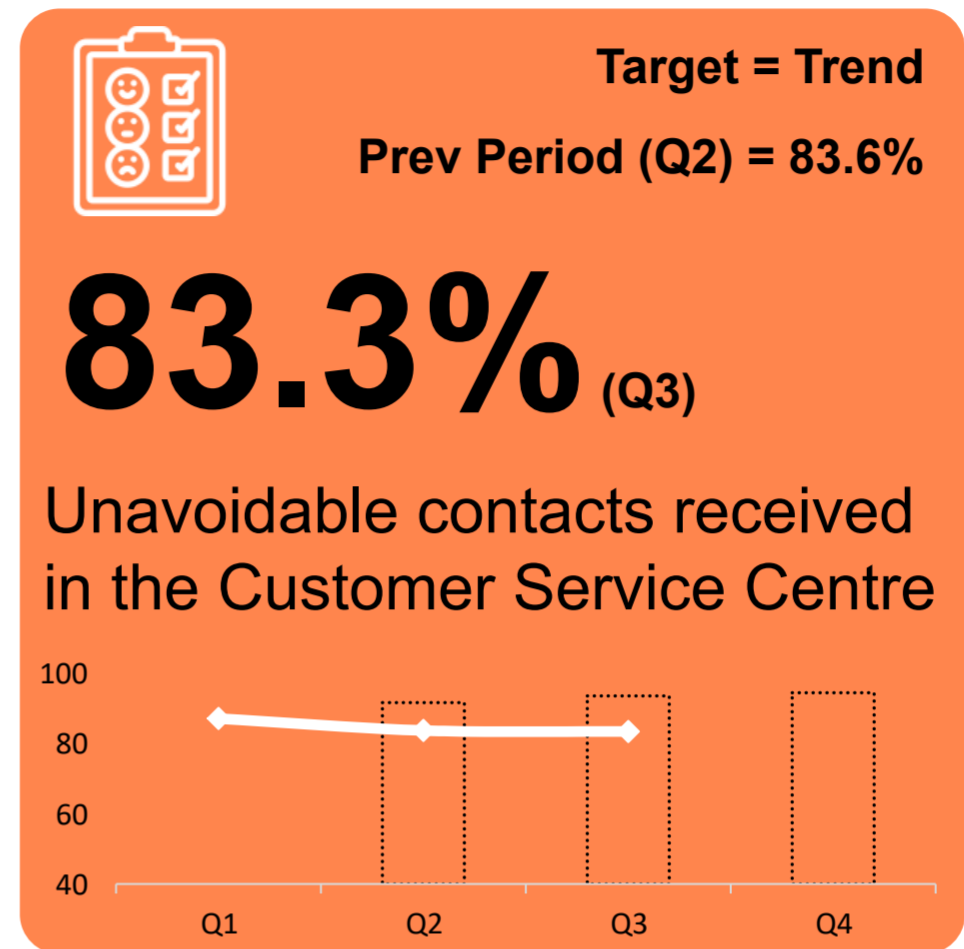
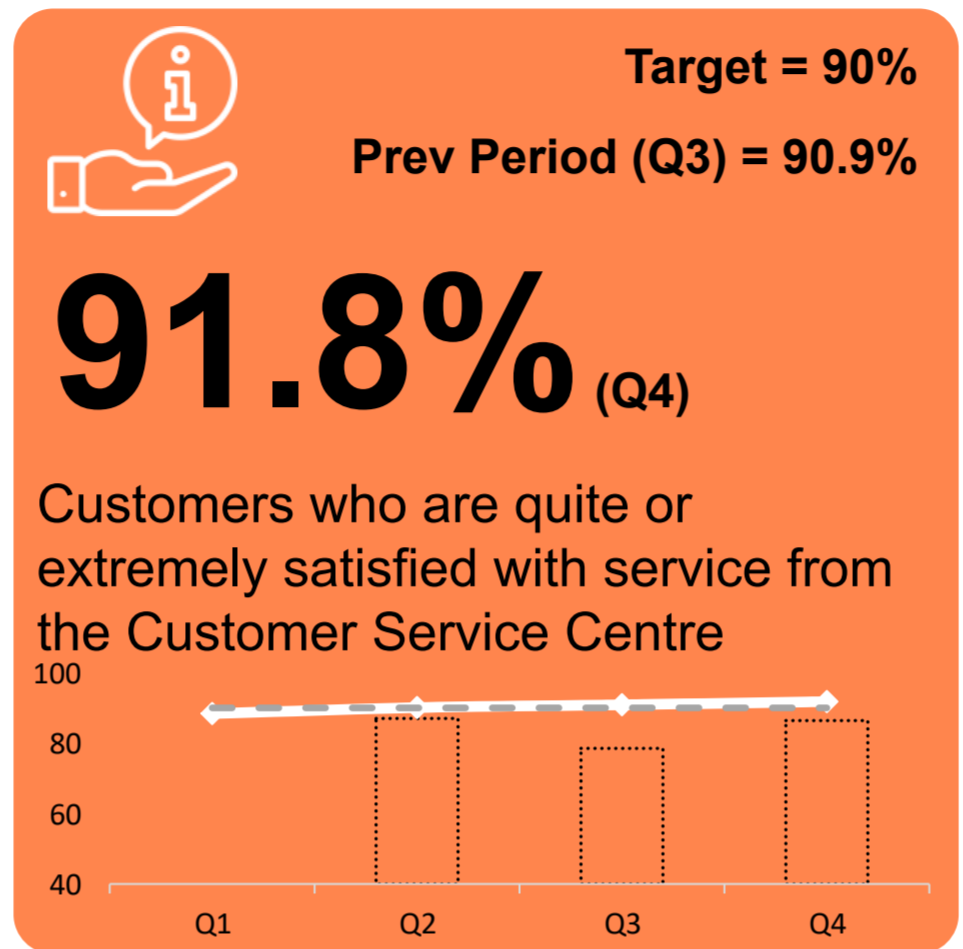
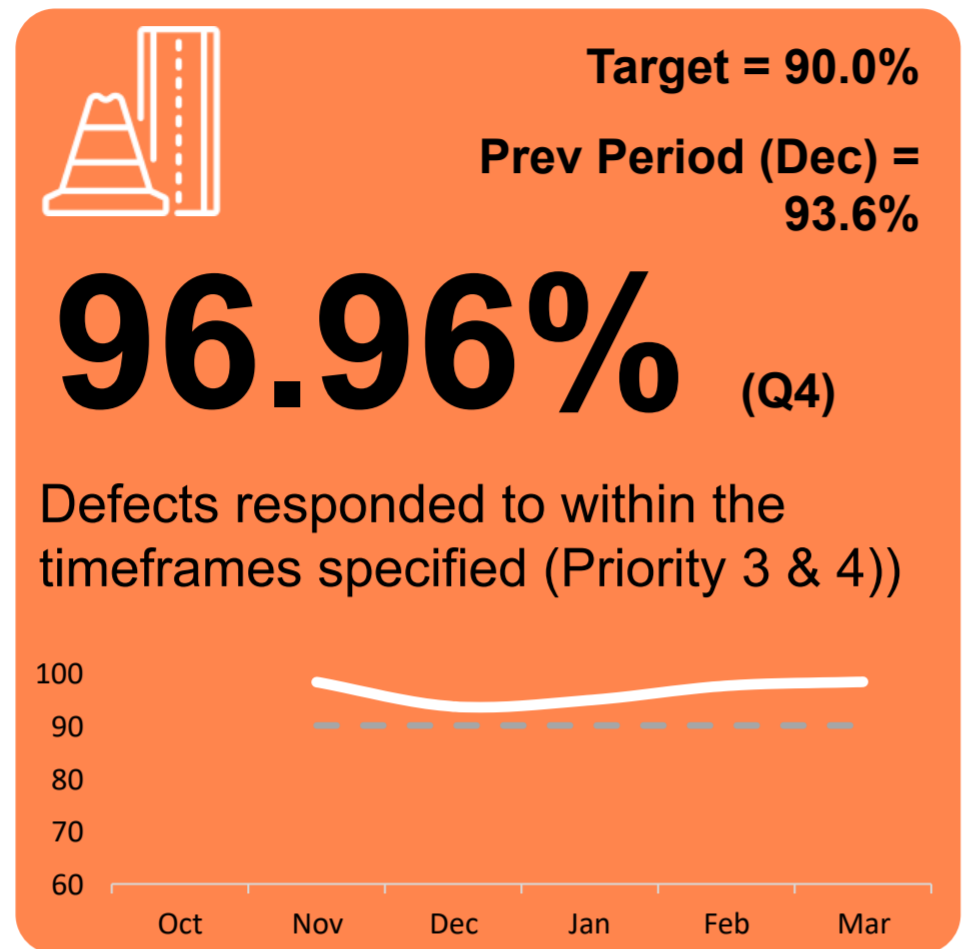
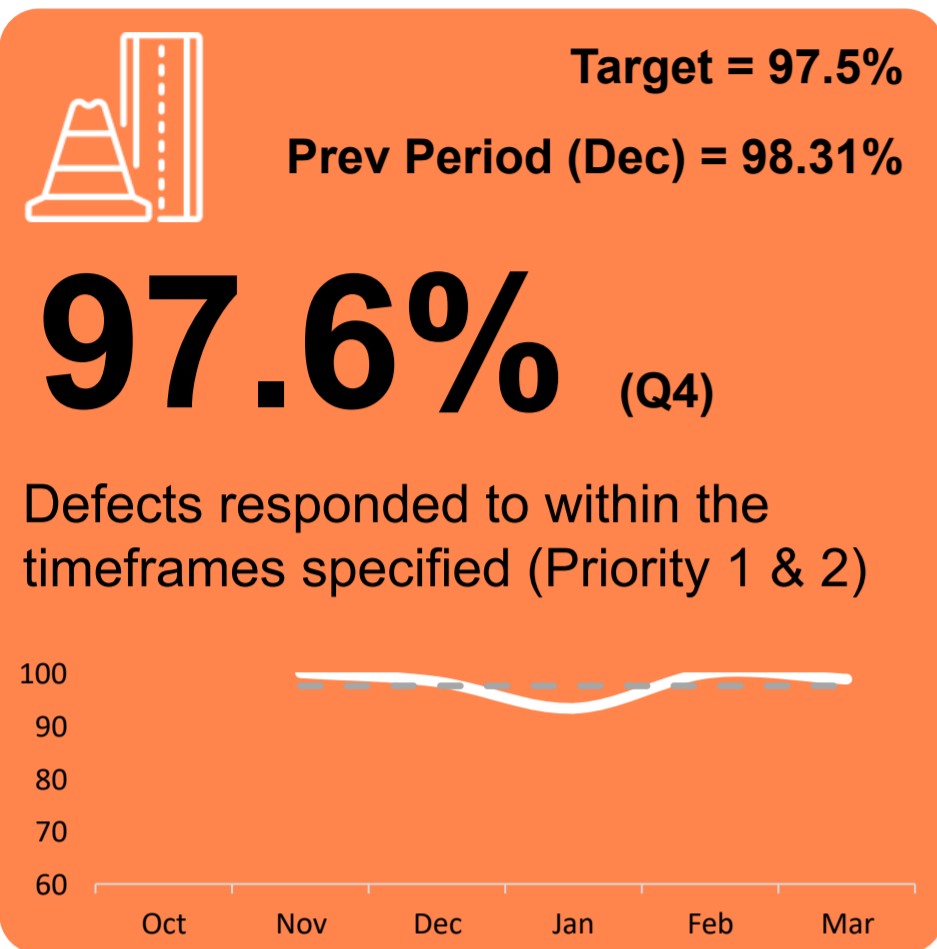


Due to lag in data being available for this measure we are currently only able to report to end of February for the final quarter of the year.

The position therefore reported above is reflective of October & November, which at 61.8% is above the local target of 60% and also better than the national quit rate for 2019-20 of 51% (latest available). West Northamptonshire is above the national average for those that quit smoking through the local service offer at that time.

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.

Performance data shows that for 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 93.25% in January, 100% in February and 98.78% in March.
- P3/ P4 repairs achieved 94.81% in January, 97.53% in February and 98.28% in March.

This indicator reflects the levels of satisfaction from residents who interact with our Customer Services function.

Performance this quarter and across the year has been broadly consistent and within tolerances of the 90% target.

Quarter 4 has seen 635 people respond to the survey when asked how satisfied they were with the service received, of these 583 were satisfied with the service they received. This is an increase of 0.9% when compared with the previous quarter.

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.

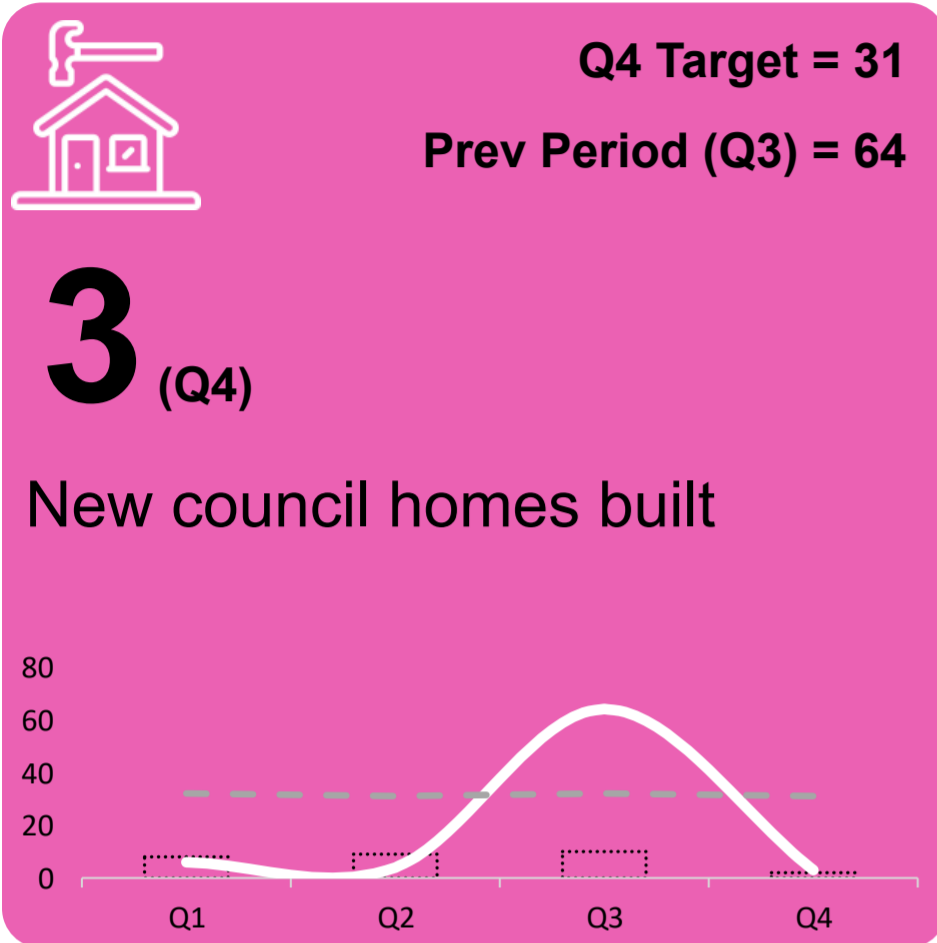
Data to follow

The Corporate Complaints Team has been working very closely with areas of high demand (Planning and SEND in particular) to support early resolutions and the avoidance of escalations, whenever possible. This has meant more focus on early contact with customers in order to resolve requests in full at the earliest opportunity.

Work underway in Customer Services to review contacts around our waste partner to understand how many are raised incorrectly as complaints and should be service requests for 'missed collections' – improving the accessibility for customers to report these issues and get a real time update will reduce interaction in this area.

Priority 4 – Thriving Villages & Towns

Place Shaping & Homes

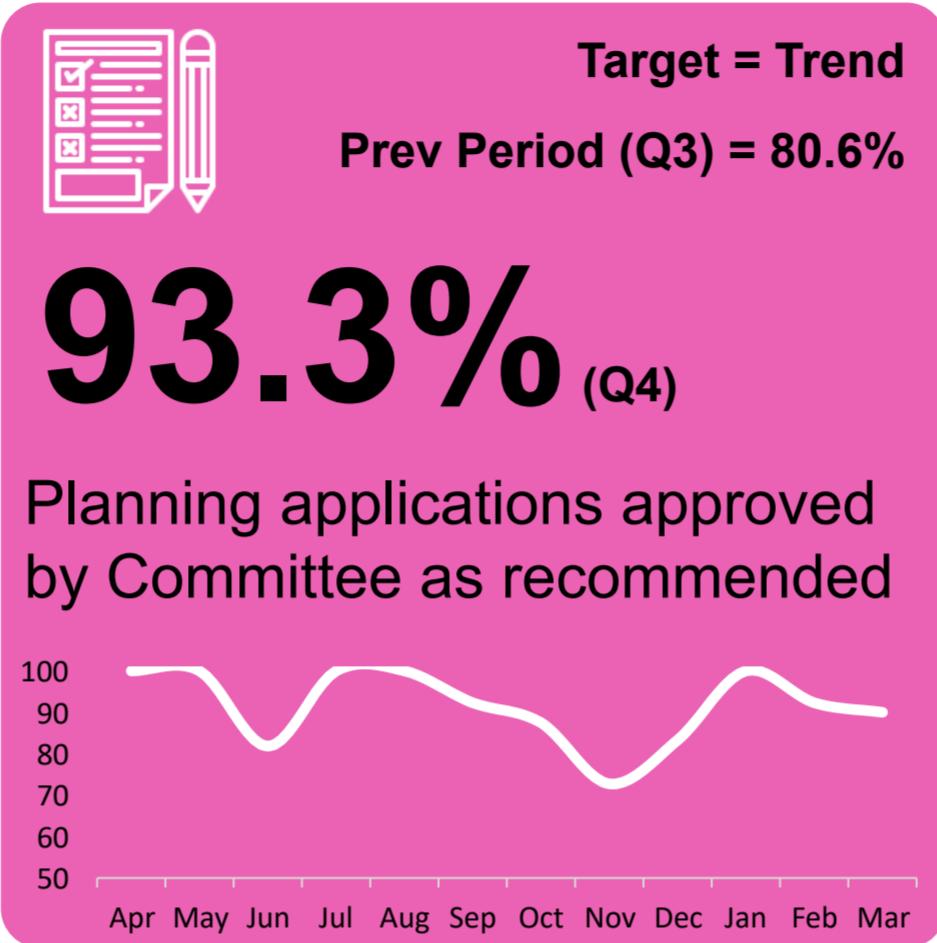
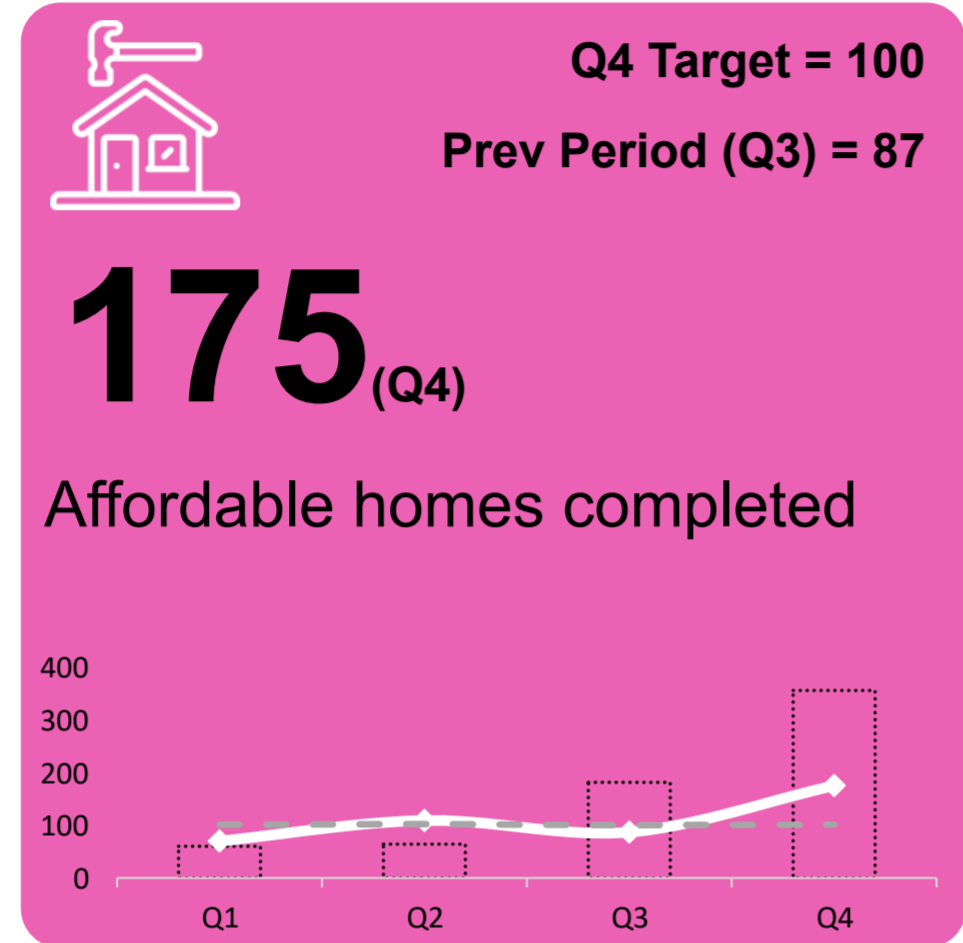


The West Northamptonshire Council corporate plan commits to build 500 council homes over the lifespan of the current corporate plan. Currently in West Northamptonshire only Northamptonshire Partnership Homes (NPH) are the only builder of council homes that is contributing to this indicator.

The most recent quarter has seen 3 council homes completed and this brings the year to date to 77 council homes completed. 7 properties in Kings Heath have been delayed because of outstanding S78 highways works. The remaining properties at Riverside House (60 flats), Dover Court (10 flats) and Woodstock (10 flats) will be delivered during 2023-24.

In addition to council homes we have also seen 175 affordable homes completed in the quarter some earlier than expected, but there have been delays on other sites due to a combination of highway works issues and poor construction which means that some properties expected during 2022-23 won't now be completed until during 2023-24.

A total of 518 new affordable homes have been delivered this year; of which 77 are council homes.



This measure monitors the relationship between recommendations that officers make on planning applications versus the decisions that the committee make on those applications. This is a trend based measure and not appropriate to have a target in place.

This quarter has had 30 planning applications that have been considered by the planning committee with 28 of these applications have had the decision made by the committee as recommended by Planning Officers.

Supporting the Local Visitor Economy

The Economy Team continues to advocate West Northants as the perfect staycation destination for visitors far and wide, along with residents to continue to explore. The most effective tool the Team uses is the Explore West Northants App, which includes local businesses, attractions, events and offers. This quarter the Team even had the platform rebranded for Valentines and ran a campaign to employers of "Love Your Customers" and to consumers to "Love Local".

The App has over 1,000 users and over 250 organisations operating to showcase everything West Northants has to offer. There will be future rebrands for different holidays with custom offers pages for each, such as Easter, Father's Day, Halloween and Christmas. A new poster promoting the Explore West Northants App will be on display around the Market Square hoarding in Northampton coming soon.

This quarter the Economy Team worked with the Communications Team to deliver a very effective marketing campaign for English Tourism Week which promoted all of West Northants on a national level, including our Amazing Places, Amazing People, Amazing Attractions in line with the theme of the initiative.

The Team have also sponsored the Animal Paradise Trail in Northampton, a two-week trail across the town of statues of endangered animals built with plastic bricks to entice residents and visitors to walk the Town, explore the fantastic independent businesses in the area and learn about different species at the same time. This event is running for 2 weeks over the Easter holidays from the start of April and is expected to create a surge in physical footfall, local spend and reputation enhancement for Northampton Town.

The Economy team continue to work in partnership with North Northamptonshire Council colleagues on the development of a Northamptonshire Visitor Economy Strategy, progressing the earlier piece of evidence based research that took place. The County has a strong tourism offer and this next stage is to develop and publish a Northamptonshire Visitor Economy Strategy, will contribute to providing a framework that can grow, develop and promote this important sector for Northamptonshire.

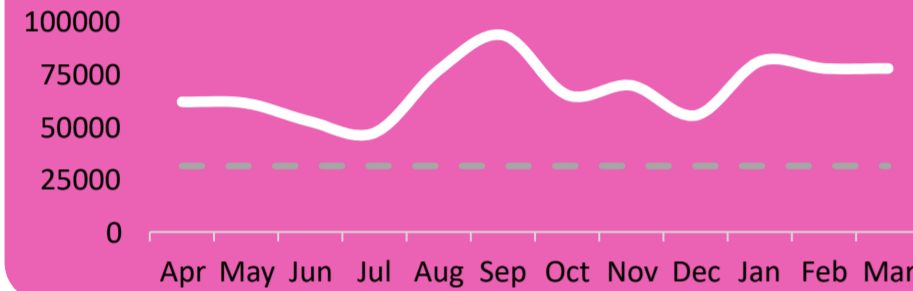
Priority 4 – Thriving Villages & Towns

Place Shaping & Homes

Quarterly Target = 125,000
Prev Period (Q3) = 189,438

235,684 (Q4)

Visitors to Libraries



This measure counts the number of visitors into our libraries across West Northamptonshire.

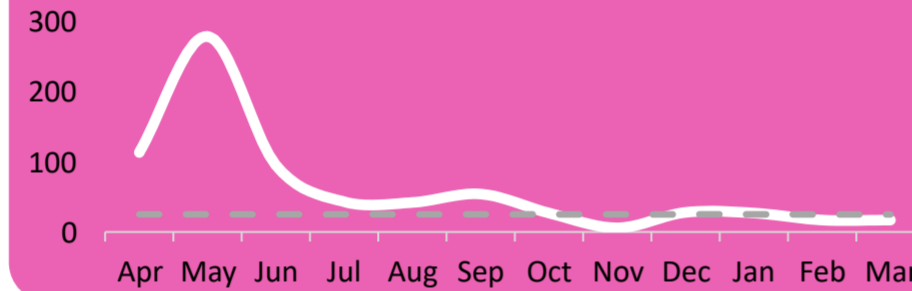
The final quarter of the year has seen 235,684 visitors across our libraries, an increase from the previous quarter of 46,000 visitors. This remains above the quarterly target of 125,000, which is based upon an annual aspiration for 0.5million visitors this year.

Libraries have recovered well from the Covid lockdowns and confidence in using the service physically has largely been restored which can be seen in the visitor numbers for the full year of 854,390.

Quarterly Target = 75
Prev Period (Q3) = 60

61 (Q4)

People resettled



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. 61 people resettled in the final quarter of the current year (50 Ukrainians and 11 Afghans), taking the total this year to 746.

The council is carrying out, on behalf of the government a number of activities under these schemes, including

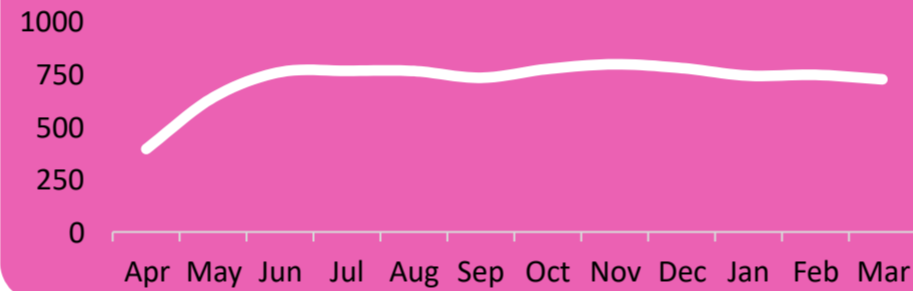
- Assessing the host properties
- Carrying out Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on hosts – enhanced checks will be required for homes which will be hosting children or vulnerable adults
- Providing immediate financial assistance, potentially until access to benefits and work entitlement is arranged
- Continuing to support the household over the first 12 months and help with access to services and integration into UK systems and processes

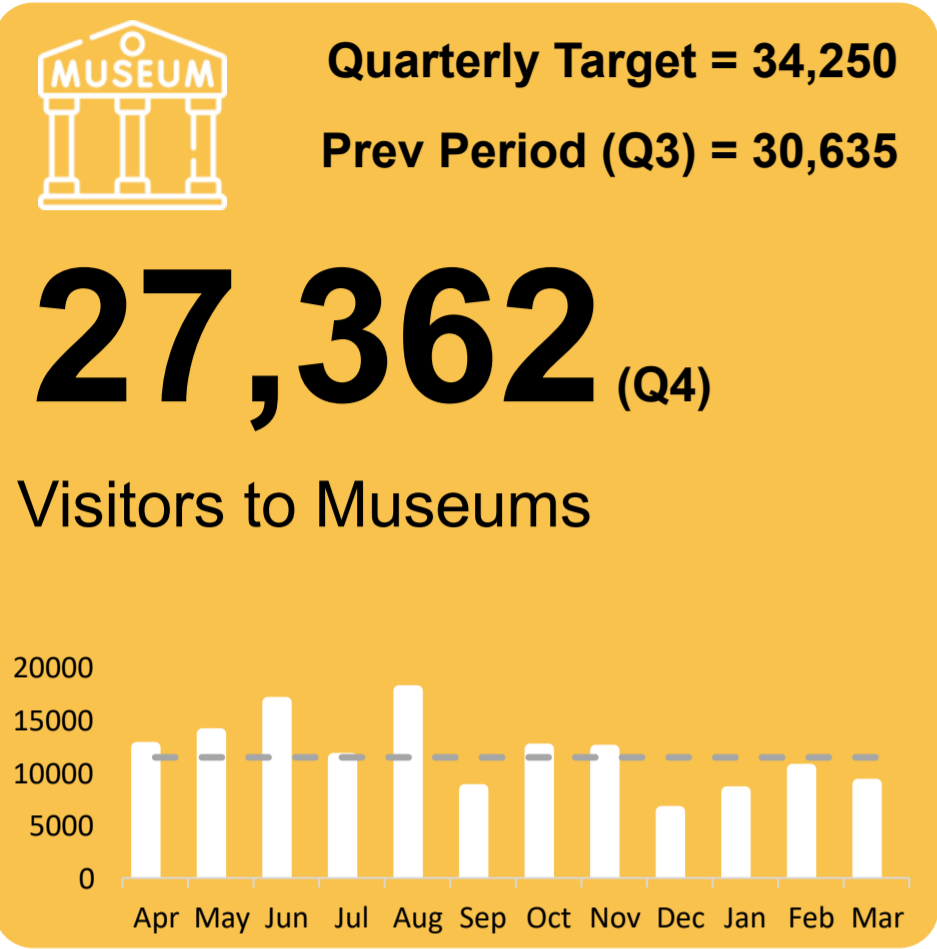
In addition to providing accommodation we are also providing ongoing wrap-around support 493 Ukrainians across West Northants and 230 Afghans currently placed in bridging accommodation since these two schemes commenced.

Prev Period (Dec) = 776

723 (Total at Mar'23)

People currently supported with wrap around care

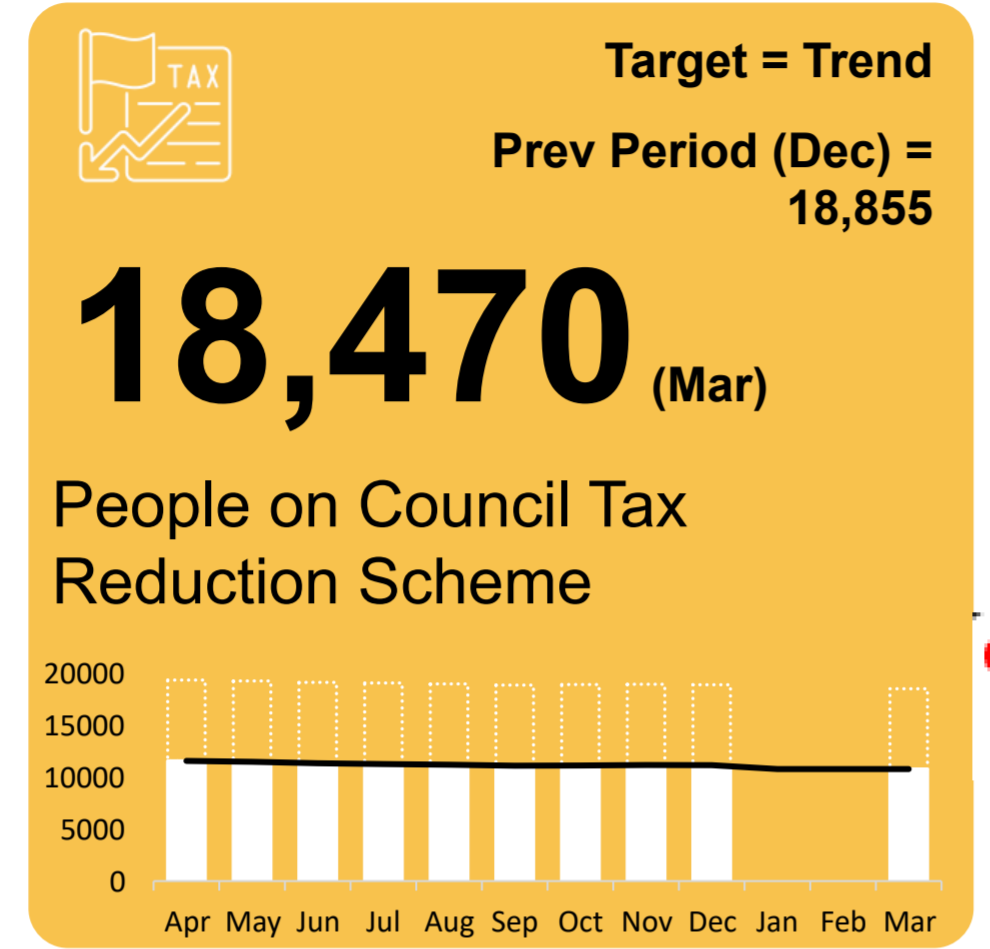




This metric covers two sites, the Northampton Museum & Art Gallery and the Abington Park Museum.

Visitor figures for the year exceeded target by 1% with 138,144 visits recorded. This compares very favourably against the national picture, with visits across the visitor attraction sector running at 23% below 2019 pre covid levels.

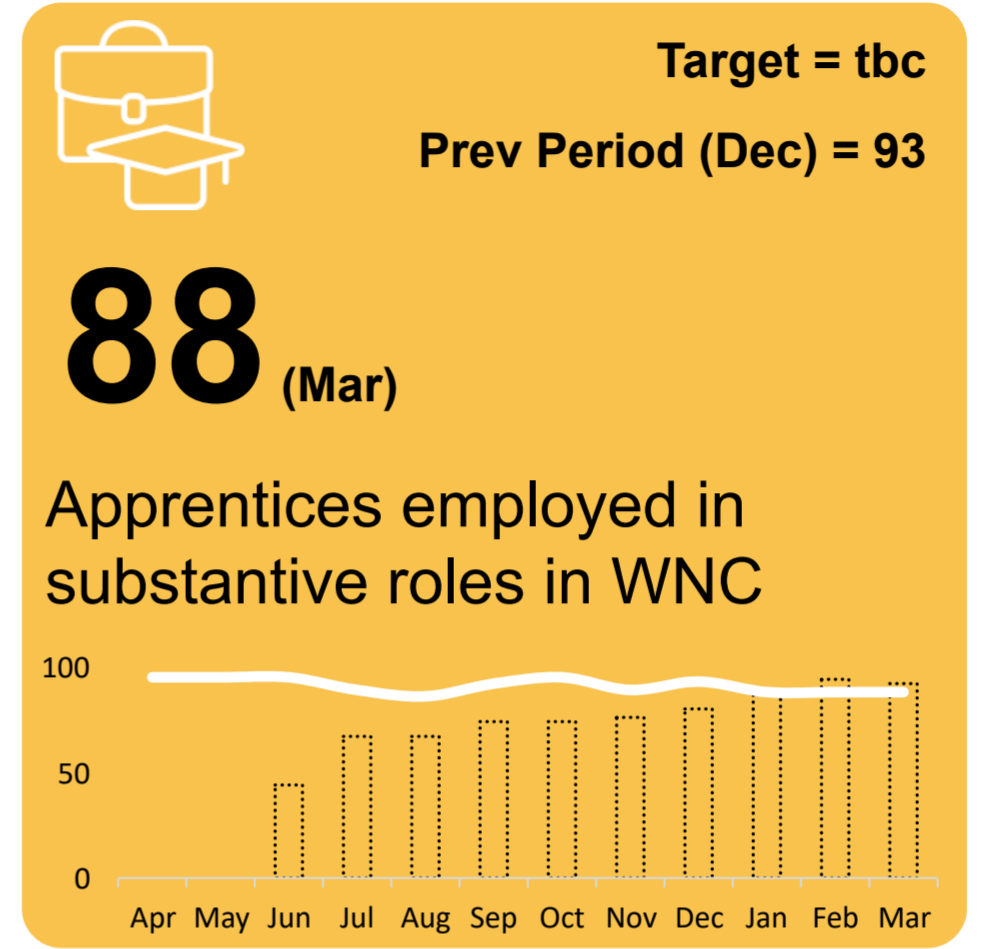
Northampton Museum and Art Gallery was boosted by the last weekend of the trainers exhibition in February and the Abington Park Museum had increased visitors as a result of the Vegan Fair at the end of January.



Each Local Authority is required to agree 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 to 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 31st March 2023 the number of LCTRS working age claimants was 10,758 which is a decrease of 374 from the 11,132 claimants at the end of December 2022. There are currently 7,712 pensioner claims and again this figure has reduced from the end of December (7,723).



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 opportunity and development to new and existing members of staff.

At the end of March West Northamptonshire Council had 88 apprentices employed within the authority that are undertaking the following levels of qualifications: 5 x Level 2, 34 x Level 3, 11 x Level 4, 12 x Level 5, 19 x Level 6 and 7 x Level 7.

Workforce headcount for WNC at end of March 2023 is 2,667 employees (not including agency or relief) which gives a percentage of apprentices employed of 3.3%. Up to April 2022 the Government target was 2.3% of the workforce, which equates to 61 apprentices.

In addition to this there have been 950 new apprenticeship starts in the period August to October 2022 (latest data available) and 230 people have completed their apprenticeship in this period.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

Internal services have submitted proposals to deliver various projects across the Communities and Place and Supporting Local Business interventions as the People and Skills funding is held until 2024/25. The Economy Team are actively enabling internal Teams to utilise this funding to deliver impactful initiatives to support the local community and benefit the economy.

These include funding for active travel enhancements in Northampton, grants for VCSE organisations, largescale business support and grants and much more. More projects will be announced as external tenders are completed in the near future.

A new funding co-ordinator has been recruited to oversee the management of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Rural England Prosperity Fund and the Multiply Fund.

Rural England Prosperity Fund

The Economy Team successfully submitted a UKSPF Addendum to outline the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) spend. Following consultation and data analysis this funding has been divided into two areas:

- Capital grant funding for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas
- Capital grant funding for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places

The £1.3m fund is intended to support businesses in eligible rural areas and address rural transport challenges by providing grants for local transport solutions for charities/social enterprises.

The REPF Addendum has been approved by DEFRA and the Economy Team are now liaising with Government to be able to begin processing these funds with input from relevant internal teams and external stakeholders

Supporting West Northamptonshire Businesses

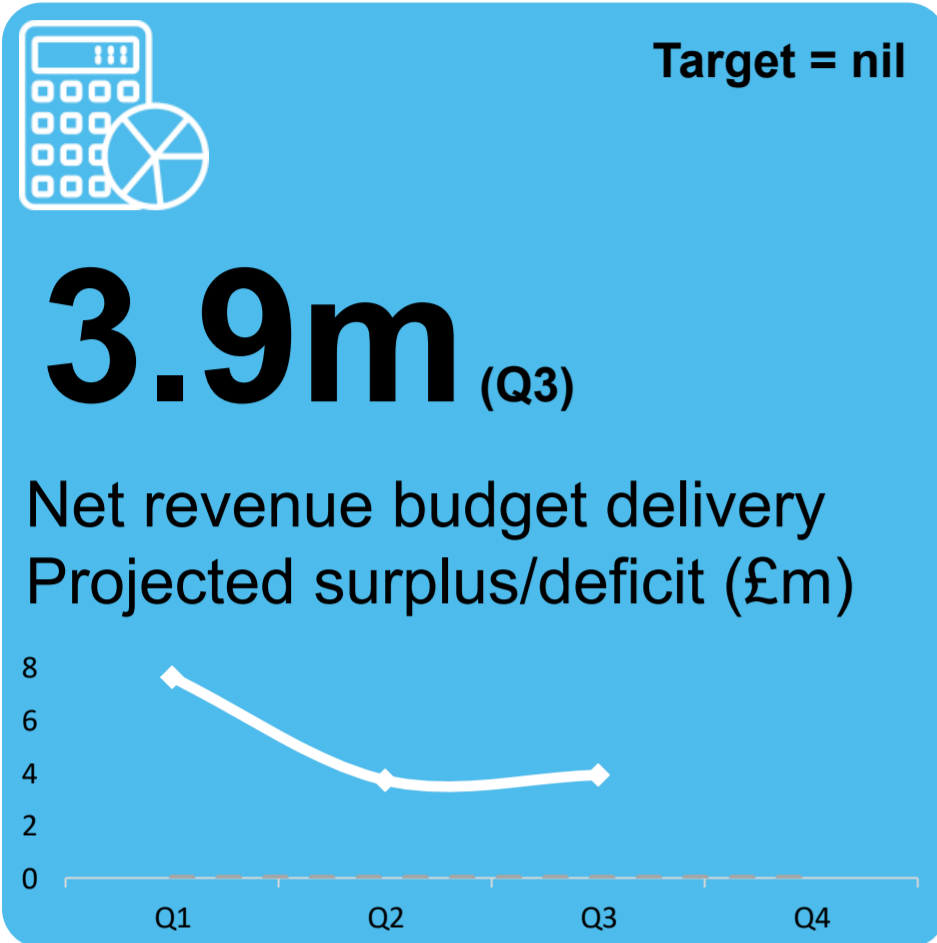
The Economy Team continue to proactively deliver innovative and creative interventions to support employers, attract inward investment, upskill the local workforce and nurture the local economy. Given West Northants has over 21,000 local businesses, the Team have been maximising their marketing delivery by establishing a new business e-newsletter, working collaboratively with the Communications Team to have this platform promoted. The monthly e-newsletter contains relevant information on funding, events, opportunities, good news and more; it is an essential tool to ensure local employers have the necessary information and support they need to overcome challenges and realise opportunities. The Team are also extremely active on social media, managing their own Twitter and LinkedIn accounts.

The Team have also been busy delivering and supporting local events, such as exhibiting at the largescale Northamptonshire Business Exhibition delivered by the Chamber of Commerce. Plus, the expansion of NNBN, a formerly North-Northants business network which is now County-wide, supporting businesses to network, collaborate and thrive in the business community. The Team are also working to ensure employers are actively engaged with the Local Skills Improvement Plan and that WNC has sufficient representation to inform this new policy regarding skills needs and the future workforce. The Economy Team are also heavily involved in the development of a new Place Vision to establish an ambitious narrative outlining the potential of West Northants as a place where everyone will thrive and extraordinary things happen. This is in collaboration with the Regeneration Team to create a bold statement to then create detailed strategies to achieve the vision and overarching corporate plan.

Supporting Local Employment

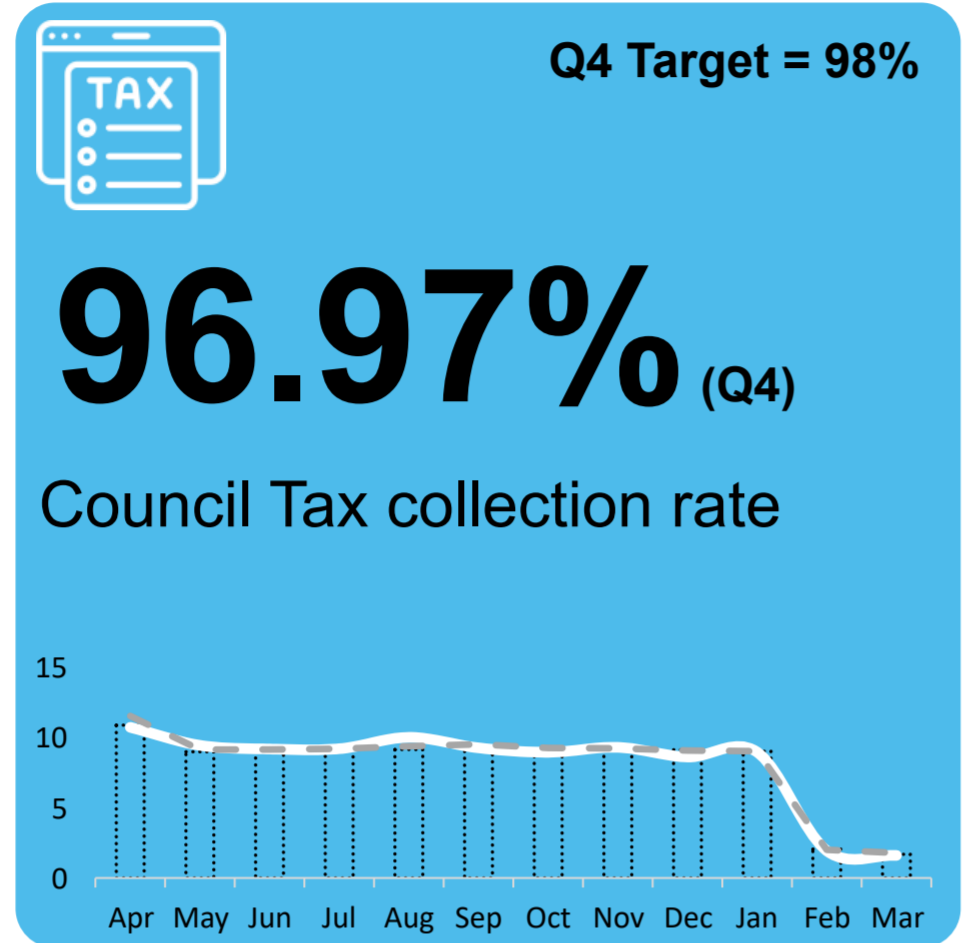
In order to best support residents to become employment-ready and secure sustainable, local employment the Economy Team have continued to deliver the West Northants Employment Support Service (WNESS). The WNESS is a free service to all residents and employers, combining the offer of over 25 organisations across the County that are delivering initiatives. The Economy Team are actively engaging with internal services to continue to reach the residents of greatest need, including Public Health, Anti-Poverty, Resettlement, Customer Services and more. Information on the WNESS can be found in all West Northants libraries, local leisure centres, the warm welcome spaces and in the offices of the WNESS partners, including DWP, Jobs 22, Citizens Advice and more.

In addition to responding to the frequent employment support enquiries which come in, the Team are also actively visible in the community so that everyone knows how and where to access this free service. This quarter the Team partnered with Jobs 22 to help their 1,200 participants of the DWP Restart Programme – people who have been unemployed in excess of 9 months. This event gave local people the opportunity to discuss available support, meet with employers and identify jobs to apply for. This event was about personal engagement and speaking to people on a 1-2-1 basis in order to provide a bespoke service to address their needs on a case-by-case basis. The Economy Team also exhibited at a Hospitality and Careers Fair hosted by the University of Northampton to champion employment support, engage with local students and showcase the vast range of employment options in the visitor economy industry. This also provided an opportunity to promote the Explore West Northants App, so was very successful. Similar to how the Economy Team have reinvigorated their marketing for businesses, the Team have also created a new-look employment e-newsletter. This includes local vacancies, careers fairs, training, events and more. Marketing campaigns this quarter included National Apprenticeship Week and National Careers Week.



The end of year outturn position is not yet available to be included within this report.

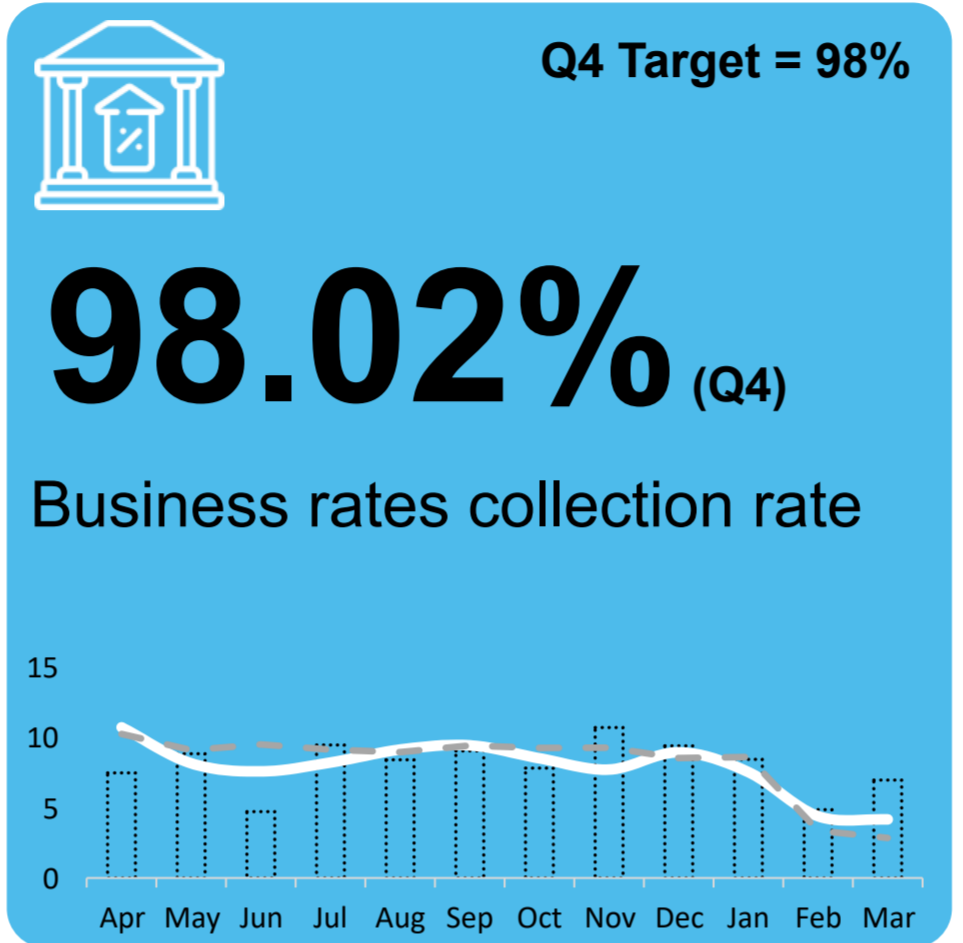
The revenue monitoring provisional outturn for 2022-23 will be presented at Cabinet in July 2023.



96.97% against a target of 98%. This is an improvement of almost 0.5% on the collection rates for 2021-22.

The team faced additional workloads during 2022-23 with the administration of the £150.00 fuel payments and the latest fuel schemes. The cost-of-living crisis has also impacted on collection with much higher levels of customer contact.

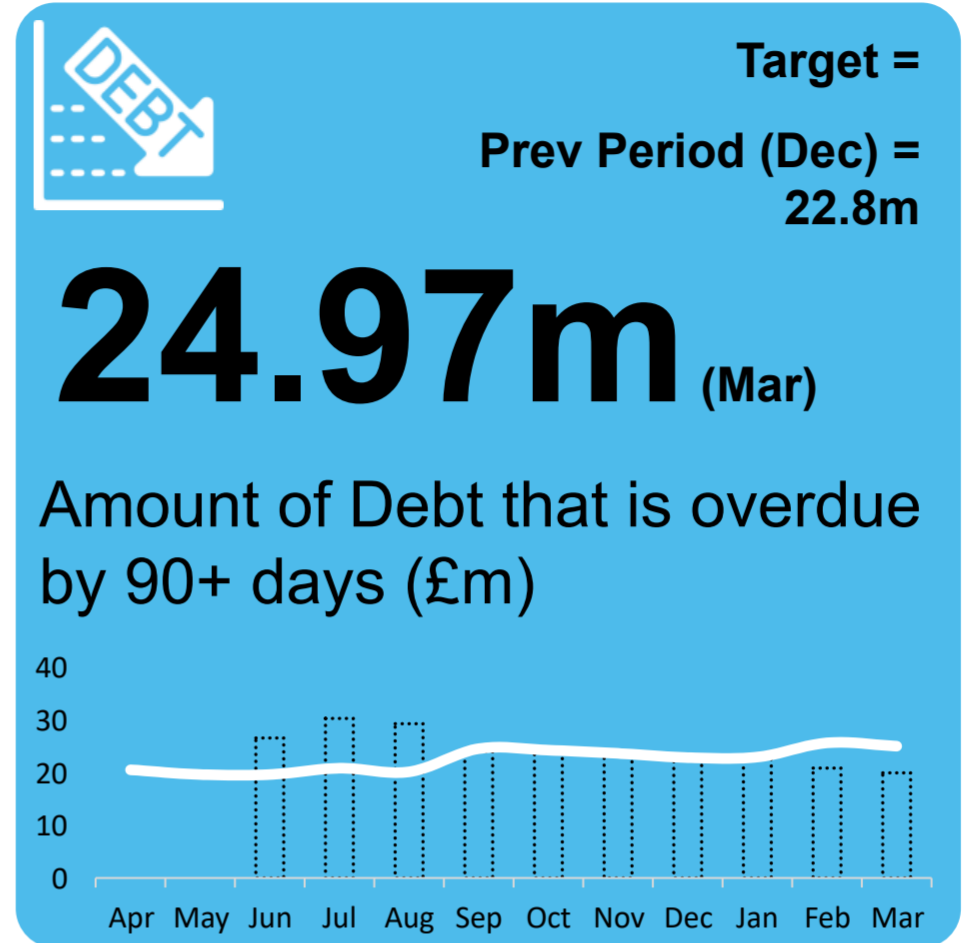
Whilst we will continue to strive for further improvement in 2023-24 this is a strong performance.



Collection for 2022-23 is 98.02% against our target of 98%.

This is a fantastic achievement especially when compared to the 2021-22 figure of 95.92% and considering the challenges facing the team from administration of the government business grant schemes and the current cost of living crisis.

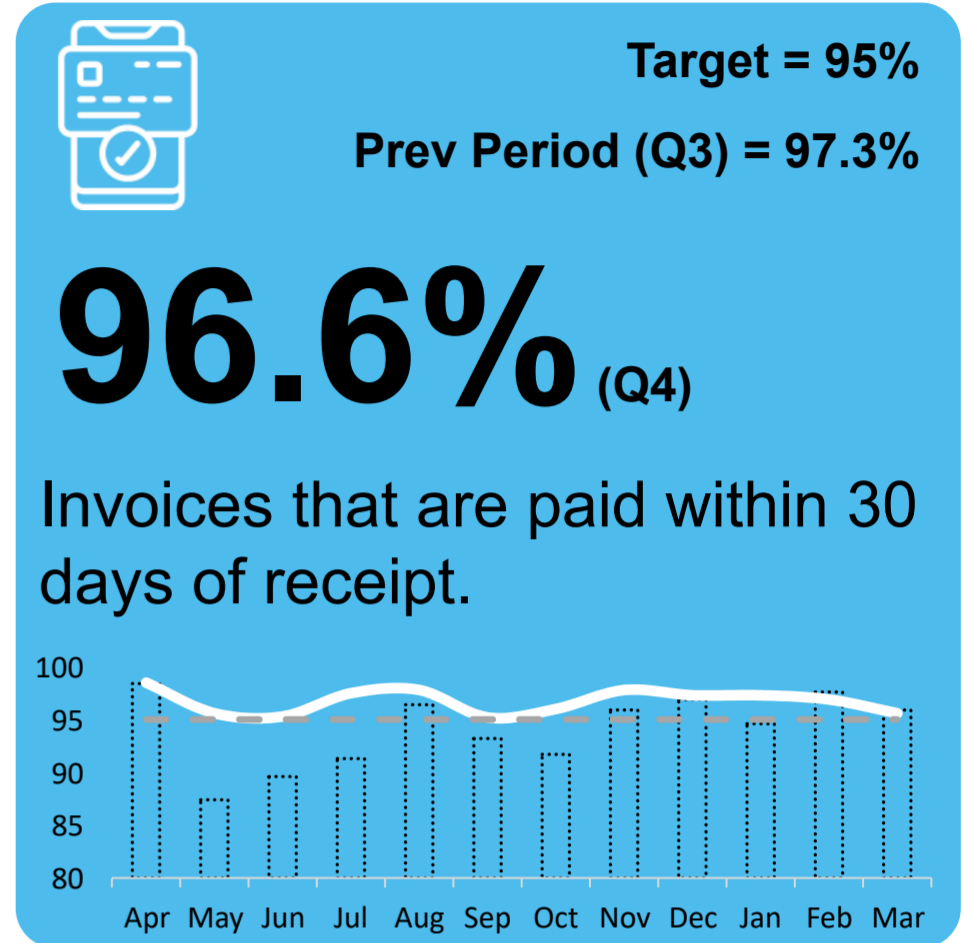
The national figures are not yet available for us to be able to compare how we have performed against other authorities across the country.



The latest performance of this metric shows that £24.97m of debt owed to the authority is currently overdue by at least 90 days. This represents an increase from the £22.8m reported at the end of December.

To provide context against the previous year the position at the end of March 2022 showed that aged debt outstanding stood at £19.9m. Revenue raised during 2022/23 is £175m which is a significant increase compared to 2021/22 where the total revenue figure was £113m.

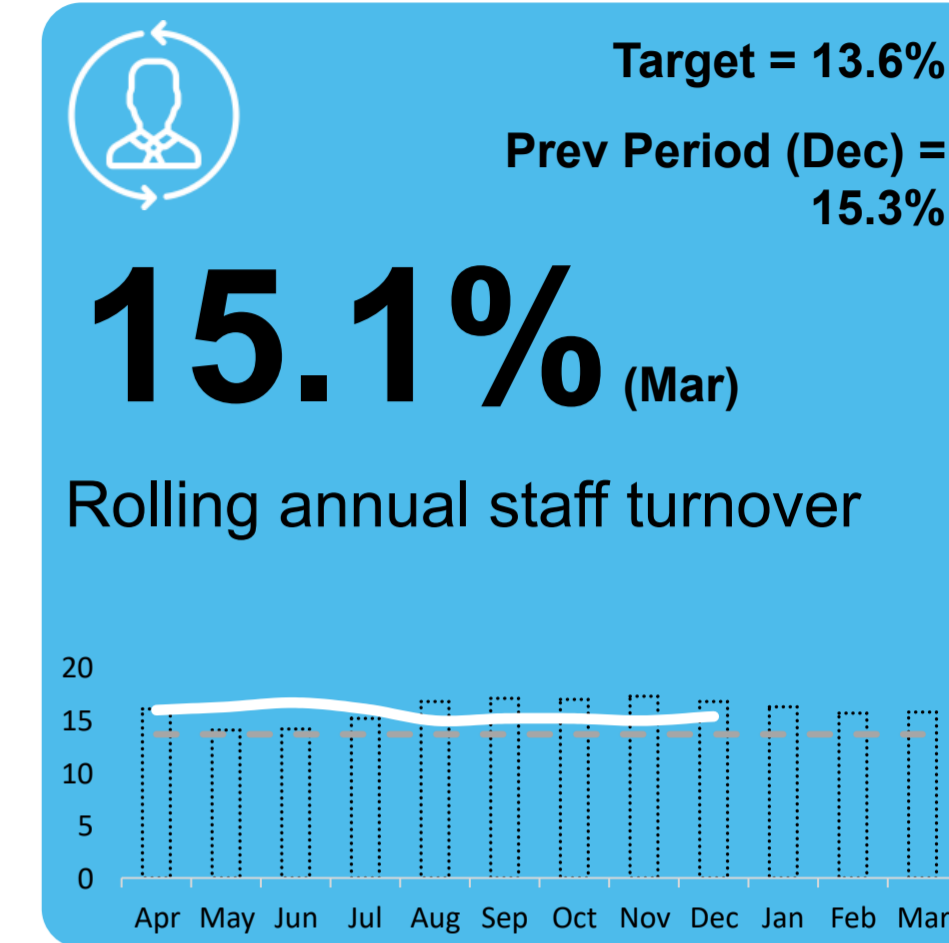
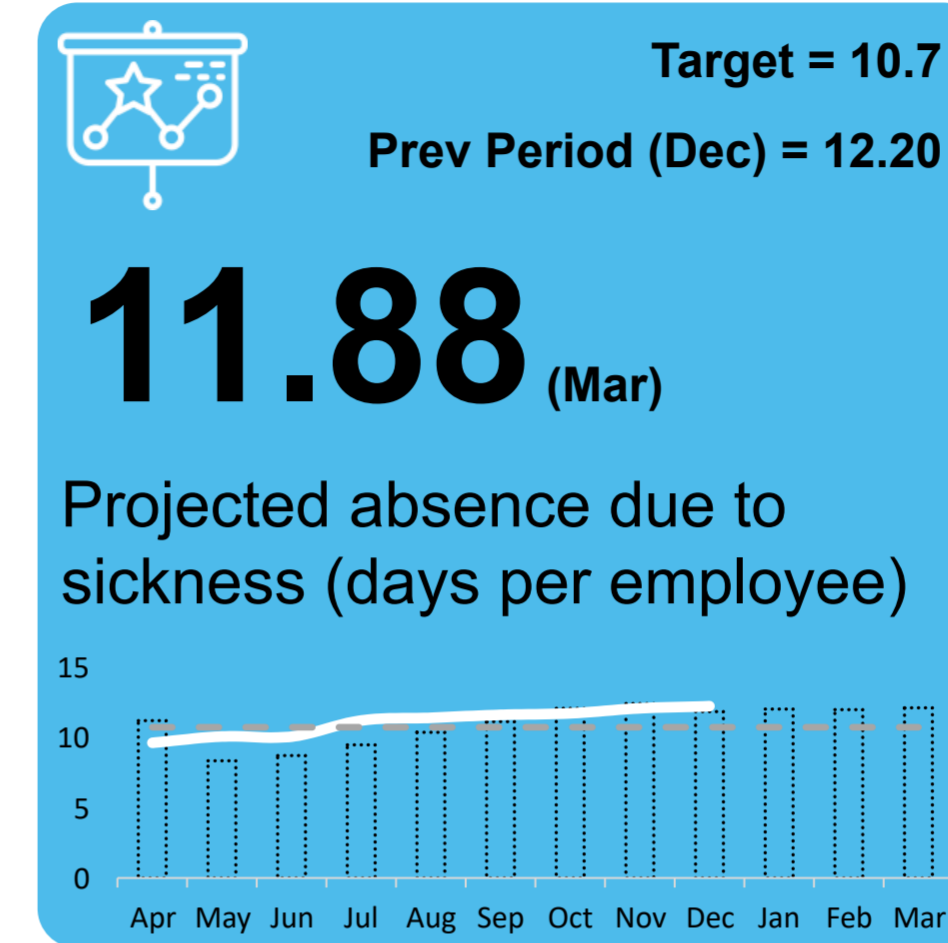
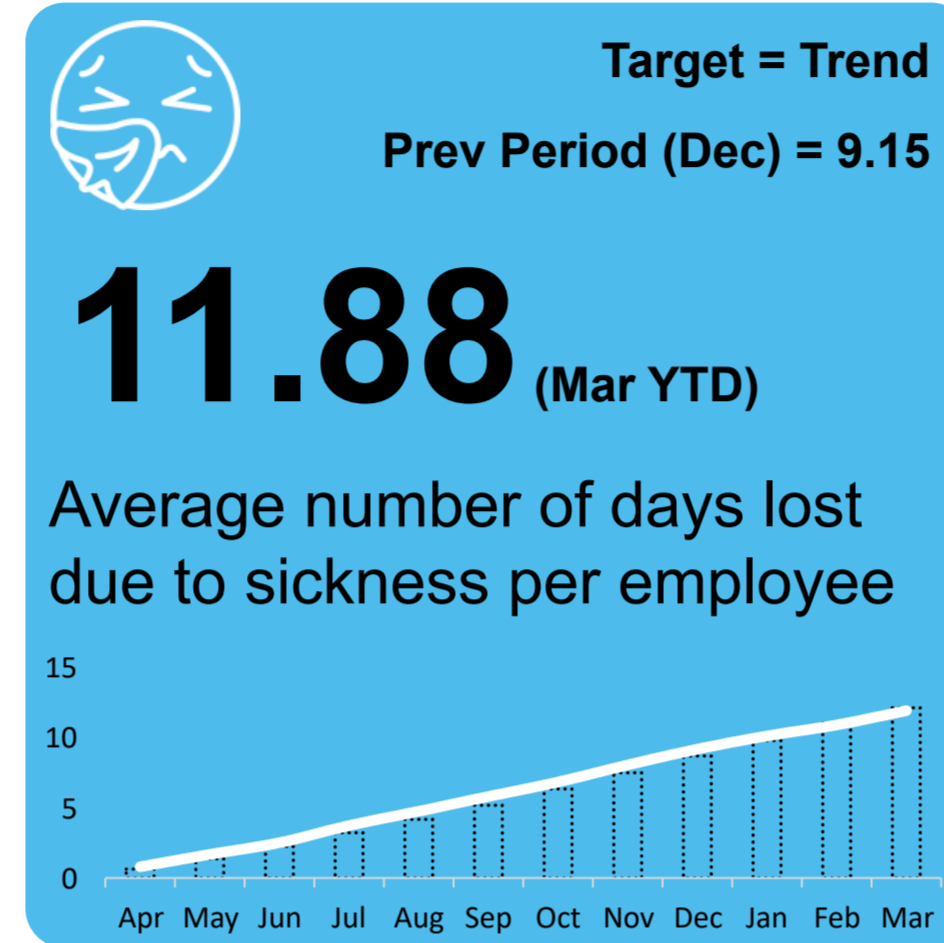
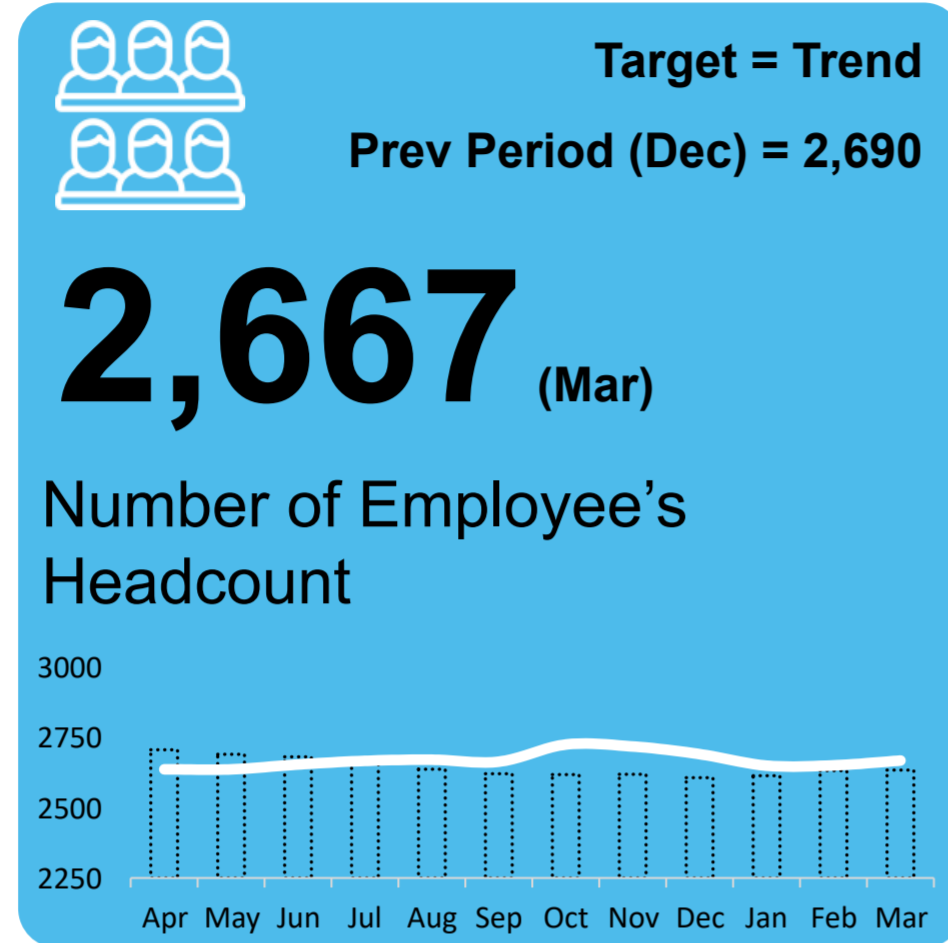
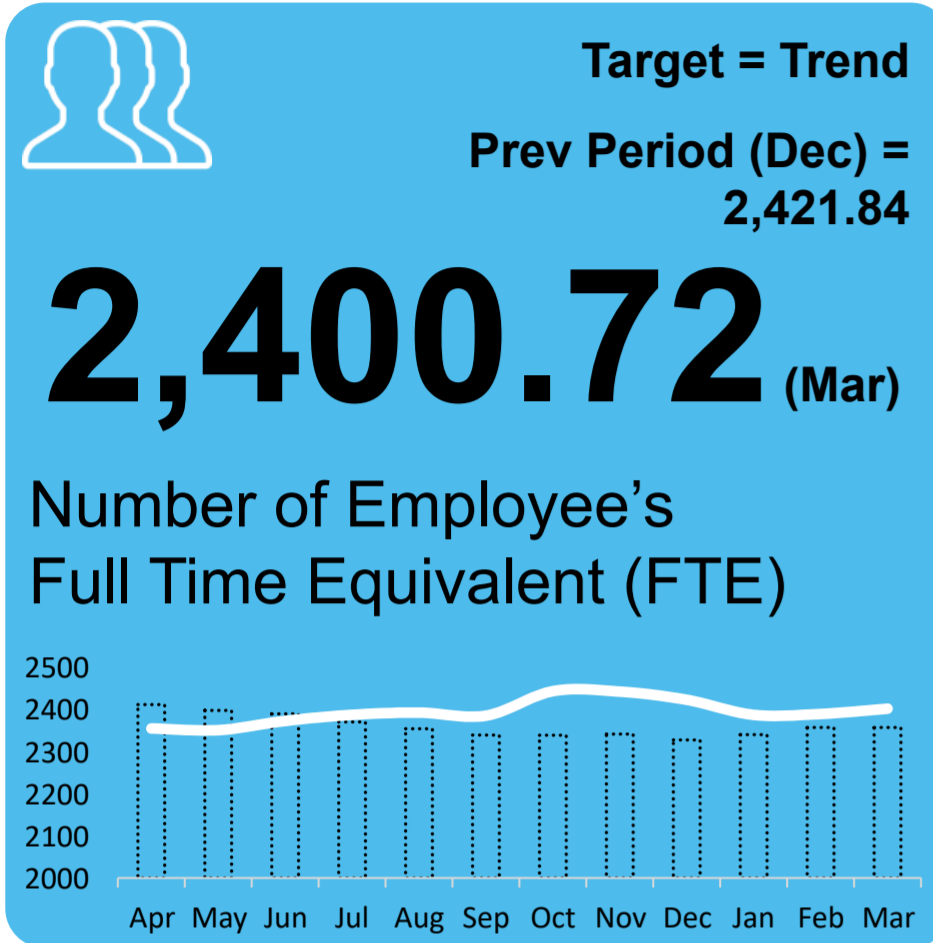
Therefore, the percentage of debt outstanding to total debt raised for the year is currently 14.3% compared to 17.6% this time last year which is an overall improvement.



6,168 of the 6,387 invoices paid during Q4 were processed within 30 days resulting in an outturn of 96.6% for the quarter, this is above the target of 95%.

The annual performance shows that 24,692 invoices have been processed with 23,887 of these paid within 30 days, resulting in a performance of 96.7% across the 2022-23 year. For comparison there were 24,679 invoices processed last year with an outturn of 94%.

Performance has generally improved since the turn of the year as staff are now more used to a new system in which to raise Purchase Orders and pay invoices. This is evident with every month in the current year exceeding the 95% target.



These two indicators provide detail on the number of employee's 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 2,667 employee's at the end of March 2023, a decrease of 23 when compared to the position reported at the end of December (2,690), there is a similar trend in the number of FTEs with a decrease to 2,400.72 at the end of March 2023.

When comparing trends we are only able to look back to last year (2021) as pre April 2021 there is no data for West Northamptonshire due to the unitary transition.

Comparing the position at the end of March last year we employ 34 more people now that we did at the same point last year, this also resulted in an increase in the full time equivalent of 44.6. Over the course of a full year there have been numerous service disaggregation's from NNC resulting in a rising headcount alongside a greater success in filling some vacancies in a difficult employment market

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 continue to be impacted by Covid-19 which will be directly impacting 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.

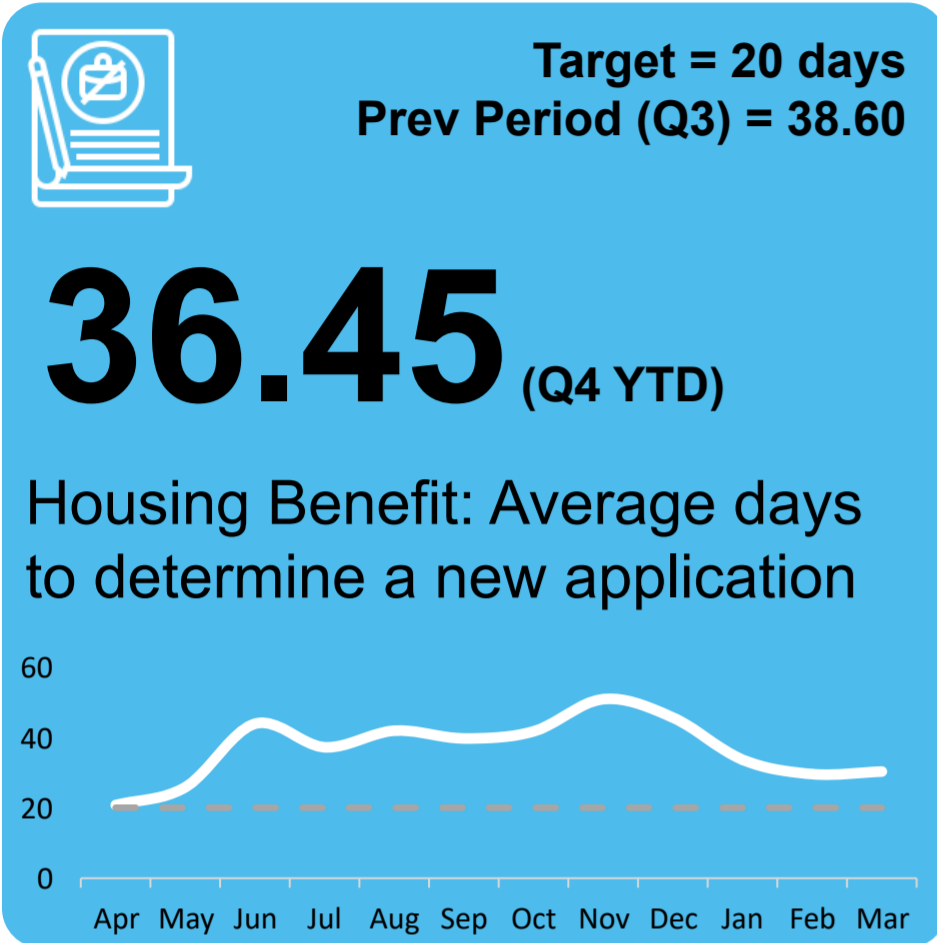
The average number of days lost due to sickness at the end of the year is 11.88 days per employee, which represents a small reduction of 0.2 days when compared to the outturn from last year of 12.08 days absence per employee.

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 organisation and the council attracting new staff into the organisation.

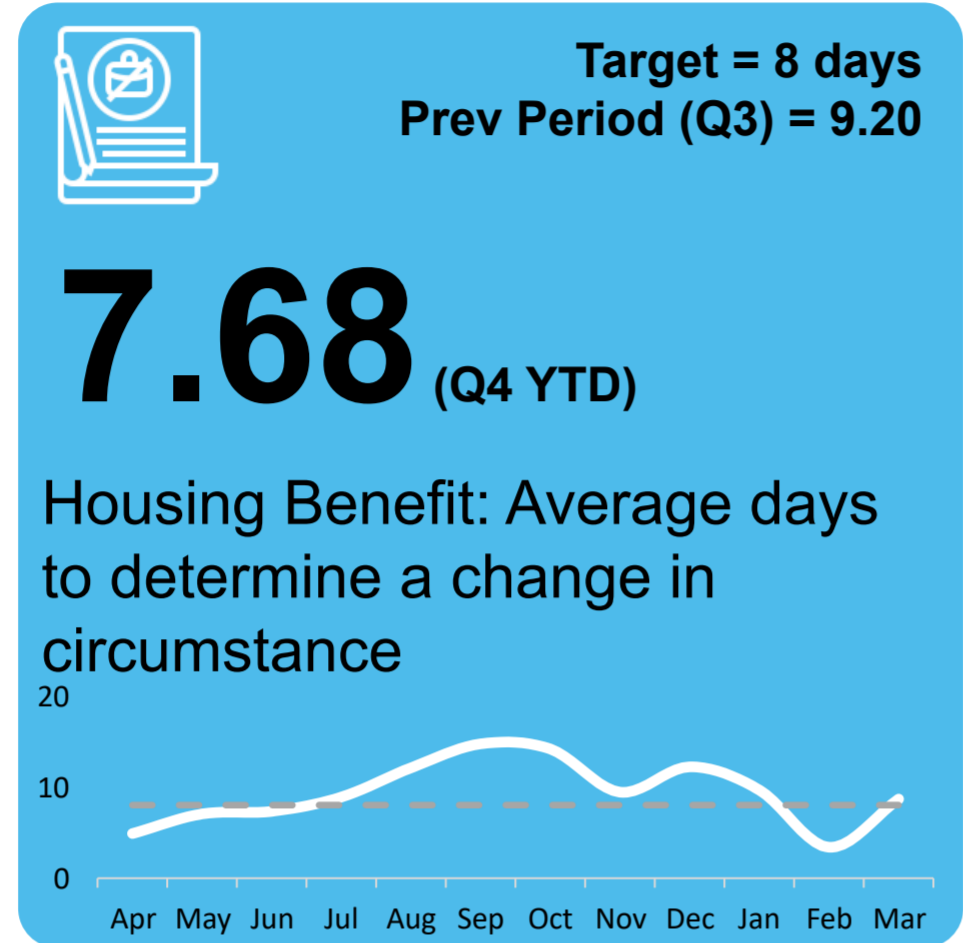
The annual staff turnover level typically fluctuates between 14% and 18%. The Majority of this turnover is voluntary turnover, part of a normal flow of staff in and out of the organisation.

The latest figures show that in the past 12 months there has been a turnover figure of 15.1%, a reduction of 0.2% from the position at the end of December, and also a decrease of 0.6% when compared to the same point last year.



The team ended 2022-23 on 36.4 days on average to determine a new application for housing benefit. This is against a target of 20 days and a national average of 22 days. This is an improvement on the 2021-22 performance of 37.4 days.

Whilst this area has showed continuous improvement we recognise that this is an area where further improvement is required, and an action plan has been implemented to work towards this. This will be supported further by the plans to move towards a single software system.



The average number of days to deal with changes in circumstances across 2022-23 is 7.6 days against a 8 days which is ahead of target for the first year since WNC was formed.

This is a much-improved position on 2021-22 when the performance was 10.2 days to deal with changes.

Detailed Scorecard Appendix

| Corp Ref: | Metric Title | Priority | Lead Directorate | Better to be? | 2022-23 Target | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Jan | Feb | Mar | Q4 | YTD | Stat Neighbour | Regional | National |
|-----------|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|----------------|----------|----------|
| 1.7 | Residual waste treated | 1. Green & Clean | Place & Economy | Higher | 75.0% | 95.9% | 88.8% | 86.9% | | | | | | - | - | - |
| 1.8 | Number of flytips cleared | 1. Green & Clean | Place & Economy | Lower | Trend | 3,980 | 4,135 | 4,380 | | | | 4,806 | 17,301 | - | - | - |
| 1.9 | FPNs Issued for Environmental Crime | 1. Green & Clean | Place & Economy | Trend | Trend | 767 | 656 | 905 | 298 | 256 | 210 | 764 | 3,092 | - | - | - |
| 1.4c | Net trees planted this year | 1. Green & Clean | Place & Economy | Higher | no target | 44 | -60 | -146 | 177 | -11 | 111 | 277 | 115 | - | - | - |
| 1.12 | Number of visitors to leisure centres | 1. Green & Clean | Communities & Opportunities | Higher | 1,900,000 | 542,576 | 554,257 | 496,097 | 200,894 | 182,975 | 181,962 | 565,831 | 2,158,761 | - | - | - |
| 3.5a | Number of charging points - WNC Land | 1. Green & Clean | Place & Economy | Higher | no target | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | | | 31 | - | - | - |
| 3.5b | Number of charging points - WN area | 1. Green & Clean | Place & Economy | Higher | - | 108 | 157 | 166 | 166 | | | | 166 | - | 1,842 | 29,774 |
| 3.5c | Charging Points per 100,000 population - WN area | 1. Green & Clean | Place & Economy | Higher | - | 26.6 | 38.6 | 40.8 | 40.8 | | | | 40.8 | - | 37.9 | 52.7 |
| 2.1a | Percentage of all referrals with a decision within 2 working days | 2. Improved Life Chances | People | Higher | 85% | | | | 57% | 55% | 51% | | 68% | - | - | - |
| 2.1b | Percentage of referrals with a previous referral within 12 months | 2. Improved Life Chances | People | Lower | 29.0% | | | | 26.1% | 26.2% | 30.0% | | 29.5% | 20.9% | 23.3% | 21.3% |
| 2.1c | Percentage of Single Assessments authorised within 45 days | 2. Improved Life Chances | People | Higher | 85.0% | | | | 91.4% | 93.0% | 94.9% | | 93.9% | 90.7% | 92.9% | 87.6% |
| 2.1d | Percentage of children that became the subject of a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent | 2. Improved Life Chances | People | Lower | 20.0% | | | | 33.3% | 24.0% | 21.3% | | 29.7% | 20.7% | 24.0% | 22.1% |
| 2.1e | Percentage of children in care who were placed for adoption within 12 months of an agency decision that | 2. Improved Life Chances | People | Higher | 72% | 100% | 89% | 86% | | | | 78% | 87% | 73% | - | 74% |
| 2.9 | Proportion of young people (aged 16-18) who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) or Not | 2. Improved Life Chances | People | Lower | 5.5% | | | | 2.2% | 2.1% | 2.0% | | | - | 6.2% | 5.5% |
| 2.4 | Proportion of people using social care who receive self-directed support | 2. Improved Life Chances | People | Higher | 91.9% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | - | 94.0% | 92.2% |
| 2.5 | Proportion of people that return to their normal place of residence after discharge | 2. Improved Life Chances | People | Higher | | 94.7% | 94.2% | 93.9% | 93.6% | 93.5% | 95.0% | 94.0% | 94.7% | - | - | - |
| 2.7 | Proportion of older people (65+) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into | 2. Improved Life Chances | People | Higher | 79.2% | 51.7% | 73.1% | 61.4% | 71.4% | 67.5% | 88.9% | 74.1% | 65.0% | - | 82.3% | 79.1% |
| 2.6a | New requests for services where route of access was discharge from hospital that had a reablement service | 2. Improved Life Chances | People | Higher | 29.8% | 22.6% | 34.2% | 22.5% | 25.0% | 24.8% | 25.1% | 21.8% | 25.1% | - | 29.8% | 34.6% |
| 2.8a | Number of homeless preventions | 2. Improved Life Chances | Communities & Opportunities | Higher | 400 | 114 | 118 | 104 | 31 | 38 | 31 | 100 | 436 | - | - | - |
| 2.8b | Number of cases where homelessness was successfully relieved | 2. Improved Life Chances | Communities & Opportunities | Higher | 400 | 124 | 112 | 164 | 35 | 20 | 29 | 84 | 484 | - | - | - |
| 2.17 | Net Disabled Facilities Grant Expenditure | 2. Improved Life Chances | Communities & Opportunities | Higher | 2,558,938 | 1,406,555 | 873,420 | 1,233,746 | 364,965 | 422,082 | 449,407 | 1,236,454 | 4,750,175 | - | - | - |

| Corp Ref: | Metric Title | Priority | Lead Directorate | Better to be? | 2022-23 Target | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Jan | Feb | Mar | Q4 | YTD | Stat Neighbour | Regional | National |
|-----------|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|----------------|----------|----------|
| 2.11 | Percentage Smoking quit rate at 4 weeks | 2. Improved Life Chances | People | Higher | 60.0% | 57.0% | 48.3% | 54.6% | 63.9% | 59.1% | | | | - | - | 51.0% |
| 2.12 | Breastfeeding rate at 6-8 weeks | 2. Improved Life Chances | People | Higher | 55.0% | 52.3% | 52.8% | 60.8% | 61.9% | 60.5% | 60.5% | 59.1% | | - | 49.6% | 49.3% |
| 2.13 | Number of school aged children who receive weight management advice and support 1:1 | 2. Improved Life Chances | People | Higher | 5,000 | 916 | 1,743 | 1,393 | 536 | 662 | 515 | 1,713 | 5,765 | - | - | - |
| 2.14 | Percentage of mothers known to be smokers at the time of delivery | 2. Improved Life Chances | People | Lower | 11.0% | 11.3% | 10.9% | 11.6% | | | | 10.6% | | - | 11.8% | 9.1% |
| 2.15a | Infants due a new birth visit that received a new birth visit within 14 days of birth | 2. Improved Life Chances | People | Higher | 90.0% | 98.1% | 96.2% | 95.9% | 94.2% | 95.9% | 95.5% | 95.2% | | - | 92.4% | 82.6% |
| 2.15b | Infants who received a 6-8 week review by the time they were 8 weeks | 2. Improved Life Chances | People | Higher | 90.0% | 98.3% | 97.9% | 97.1% | 94.9% | 92.3% | 95.0% | 94.1% | | - | 91.1% | 81.5% |
| 2.16a | Covid Spring Booster - % of Eligible Population Vaccinated (aged 75+) | 2. Improved Life Chances | People | Higher | Trend | | | | | | | | 90.8% | - | - | 62.3% |
| 2.16b | Covid Autumn Booster - % of Eligible Population Vaccinated (aged 50+) | 2. Improved Life Chances | People | Higher | Trend | | | | 73.3% | 73.5% | 73.5% | | 73.5% | - | - | 76.2% |
| 3.1 | [OLD CONTRACT - Q1/Q2 only] - Number of defects repaired in the highway network | 3. Connected Communities | Place & Economy | Higher | - | 7,894 | 2,646 | | | | | | 10,540 | - | - | - |
| 3.2 | [OLD CONTRACT - Q1/Q2 only] - Percentage of defects repaired within timescale (P1-P4) | 3. Connected Communities | Place & Economy | Higher | | 98.71% | 98.47% | | | | | | | - | - | - |
| 3.3 | Percentage of routine maintenance budget spent to date compared to the agreed Maintenance Plan | 3. Connected Communities | Place & Economy | Trend | - | | | | | | | | | - | - | - |
| 3.4 | Percentage of defects responded to within the timeframes specified (Priority 1 & 2) | 3. Connected Communities | Place & Economy | Higher | 97.5% | | | | 93.3% | 100.0% | 98.8% | | | - | - | - |
| 3.5 | Percentage of defects responded to within the timeframes specified (Priority 3 & 4) | 3. Connected Communities | Place & Economy | Higher | 90.0% | | | | 94.8% | 97.5% | 98.3% | | | - | - | - |
| 3.6 | Percentage of customers who are quite satisfied and extremely satisfied with the service received from the | 3. Connected Communities | Corporate Services | Higher | 90.0% | 88.4% | 90.1% | 90.9% | | | | | 88.4% | - | - | - |
| 3.7 | Percentage of contacts received within Customer Services for the first time (unavoidable contacts) | 3. Connected Communities | Corporate Services | Higher | Trend | 87.0% | 83.6% | 83.3% | | | | | | - | - | - |
| 3.8 | Proportion of complaints escalated | 3. Connected Communities | Corporate Services | Lower | TBC | 4.9% | 3.6% | 3.5% | | | | | 3.5% | - | - | - |
| 4.1 | Number of new council homes built | 4. Thriving Villages & Towns | Communities & Opportunities | Higher | 126 | 6 | 4 | 64 | | | | 3 | 77 | - | - | - |
| 4.5 | Number of affordable homes completed | 4. Thriving Villages & Towns | Communities & Opportunities | Higher | 404 | 70 | 109 | 87 | | | | 175 | 441 | - | - | - |
| 4.6 | Planning applications approved by Committee as recommended | 4. Thriving Villages & Towns | Place & Economy | Higher | | 93.33% | 96.42% | 80.64% | 100.00% | 92.31% | 90.00% | 93.30% | | - | - | - |
| 4.2 | Number of visitors to libraries | 4. Thriving Villages & Towns | Communities & Opportunities | Higher | 500,000 | 175,394 | 217,742 | 225,570 | 80,813 | 77,446 | 77,425 | 235,684 | 854,390 | - | - | - |

Detailed Scorecard Appendix

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|-----------|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------------|----------|----------|
| 4.2 | Number of visitors to libraries | 4. Thriving Villages & Towns | Communities & Opportunities | Higher | 500,000 | 175,394 | 217,742 | 225,570 | 80,813 | 77,446 | 77,425 | 235,684 | 854,390 | - | - | - |
| 4.7a | Number of people resettled | 4. Thriving Villages & Towns | Communities & Opportunities | Higher | 300 | 486 | 139 | 60 | 27 | 17 | 17 | 61 | 746 | - | - | - |
| 4.7b | Number of people currently supported through wrap around care | 4. Thriving Villages & Towns | Communities & Opportunities | Higher | 300 | 757 | 730 | 776 | 740 | 744 | 723 | 723 | 723 | - | - | - |
| 5.3 | Visitors to Museums | 5. Economic Development | Communities & Opportunities | Higher | 137,000 | 42,666 | 37,451 | 30,635 | 8,173 | 10,301 | 8,888 | 27,362 | 138,114 | - | - | - |
| 5.4a | Total number of people on Council Tax Reduction Scheme | 5. Economic Development | Finance | Lower | Trend | 19,082 | 18,820 | 18,855 | | | 18,470 | 18,470 | 18,470 | - | - | - |
| 5.4b | Pensioners on Council Tax Reduction Scheme | 5. Economic Development | Finance | Lower | Trend | 7,766 | 7,740 | 7,723 | | | 7,712 | 7,712 | 7,712 | - | - | - |
| 5.4c | Working age people on Council Tax Reduction Scheme | 5. Economic Development | Finance | Lower | Trend | 11,316 | 11,080 | 11,132 | | | 10,758 | 10,758 | 10,758 | - | - | - |
| 5.5a | Number of apprentices employed in substantive roles | 5. Economic Development | Corporate Services | Higher | | 95 | 92 | 93 | | | 87 | 87 | 87 | - | - | - |
| 5.5b | Number of apprenticeships starts in West Northants | 5. Economic Development | Corporate Services | Higher | - | 2,050 | 950 | | | | | | | - | - | - |
| 6.7a | Number of Employee's - Full Time Equivalent (FTE) | 6. Robust Resource Management | Corporate Services | No Tolerance | - | 2,371.85 | 2,384.28 | 2,421.84 | 2,386.02 | 2,388.39 | 2,400.72 | 2,400.72 | 2,400.72 | - | - | - |
| 6.7b | Number of Employee's - Headcount | 6. Robust Resource Management | Corporate Services | No Tolerance | - | 2,653 | 2,663 | 2,690 | 2,649 | 2,650 | 2,667 | 2,667 | 2,667 | - | - | - |
| 6.7c | Average number of days lost due to sickness | 6. Robust Resource Management | Corporate Services | Lower | | 2.51 | 5.79 | 9.15 | 10.09 | 10.87 | 11.88 | 11.88 | 11.88 | - | - | - |
| 6.7d | Projected sickness | 6. Robust Resource Management | Corporate Services | Lower | 10.70 | 10.04 | 11.58 | 12.20 | 12.11 | 11.85 | 11.88 | 11.88 | 11.88 | - | - | tbc |
| 6.7e | Rolling Annual Staff Turnover | 6. Robust Resource Management | Corporate Services | No Tolerance | 1360.0% | 16.6% | 15.1% | 15.3% | 15.2% | 15.0% | 15.1% | 15.1% | 15.1% | - | - | tbc |
| 6.1 | Net Revenue budget delivery - Projected surplus/ deficit (£m) | 6. Robust Resource Management | Finance | Lower | 0.0 | 7.6 | 3.7 | 3.9 | | | | | 7.6 | - | - | - |
| 6.2 | Council Tax collection rate | 6. Robust Resource Management | Finance | Higher | - | 29.28% | 57.69% | 84.49% | 93.43% | 95.36% | 96.97% | 96.97% | 96.97% | - | - | - |
| 6.3 | Business Rates collection rate | 6. Robust Resource Management | Finance | Higher | - | 30.07% | 56.37% | 81.95% | 89.47% | 93.86% | 98.02% | 98.02% | 98.02% | - | - | - |
| 6.4 | Amount of debt owed to the council that is overdue by at least 90 days (£m) | 6. Robust Resource Management | Finance | Lower | | 19.6 | 24.5 | 22.8 | 22.9 | 25.6 | 25.0 | 25.0 | 25.0 | - | - | - |
| 6.5 | Percentage of invoices that are paid within 30 days of receipt | 6. Robust Resource Management | Finance | Higher | 95.0% | 96.5% | 96.9% | 97.0% | 97.3% | 96.9% | 95.6% | 96.6% | 96.7% | - | - | - |
| 6.6a | Housing Benefit - time to determine new applications | 6. Robust Resource Management | Finance | Lower | 20.00 | 28.23 | 33.37 | 38.60 | 33.65 | 29.58 | 30.31 | 36.45 | 36.45 | - | - | - |
| 6.6b | Housing Benefit - time to determine change in circumstances | 6. Robust Resource Management | Finance | Lower | 8.00 | 6.38 | 8.28 | 9.20 | 9.66 | 3.39 | 8.67 | 7.68 | 7.68 | - | - | - |

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

13 June 2023

**Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing, and Health Integration:
Cllr Matt Golby**

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Report Title | Household Support Fund 4 |
| Report Author | Rhosyn Harris, Consultant in Public Health rhosyn.harris@westnorthants.gov.uk |

List of Approvers

| | | |
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| Chief Finance Officer (S.151) | Martin Henry | 17/05/2023 |
| Other Director | Stuart Lackenby | 17/05/2023 |
| Communications Lead/Head of Communications | Becky Hutson | 17/05/2023 |

List of Appendices

Appendix A – [DWP – Household Support Fund Guidance for County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England \(link to online resource\)](#)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Household Support Fund (HSF or The Fund) 4 scheme (HSF4) has been announced by government officials as part of the continuation of the cost of living support packages. Allocations and guidelines for the scheme from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) were published on 21st February 2023.

1.2 West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) has been allocated £5,199,257 to distribute between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024.

1.3 This report sets out the preferred option for distribution of The Fund to complement the WNC Public Health Anti-Poverty Strategy and action plan; indicating how the scheme would be delivered to maximise the local impact building on learning from previous HSF schemes.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 As part of HSF4, WNC has been allocated £5,199,257 to distribute between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024. This fund is to be used to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford energy and water bills, food, and other related essentials. It should be allocated to vulnerable households in most need of support according to DWP Guidelines (attached as Appendix A).

2.2 The proposed fund distribution in 2023/24 includes:

- a) 47% allocated to low-income families with children (those eligible for free school meals) with a majority focus on holiday food support,
- b) 32% in financial support to other vulnerable households or those experiencing significant hardship,
- c) 16% in voluntary sector grants to support food aid, energy saving measures, and money and debt advice, and
- d) the remaining 5% allocated for administration.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) Approves the recommended plan for distribution of the allocated £5,199,257 HSF4, as set out in section 6 of this report.
- b) Agrees that any under-spend and/or unclaimed support vouchers in a particular category of spend may be re-allocated to other categories based on need and demand as agreed by the Director of Public Health and Cabinet Member.
- c) Note the proposed consultation period and pilot to explore use of support vouchers to access Food Clubs/Larders.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- *The options proposed aligns with the Department for Work and Pensions guidance and with the Council's Anti-poverty Strategy.*
- *The recommended allocations are based on learning from previous HSF schemes including demand for different types of support.*

5. Report Background

5.1 On 17th November 2022, as part of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, the Government announced a further £842 million allocation to extend the HSF by a further 12 months from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

- 5.2 The additional funding is intended to be used by local authorities to support vulnerable households, following three successful HSF schemes which operated:
- December 2021 to March 2022 (referenced as HSF1)
 - April 2022 to September 2022 (HSF2)
 - October 2022 to March 2023 (HSF3).
- 5.3 Authorities are required to complete a delivery plan to outline their intentions for The Fund, clearly setting out their priorities and approach for use of The Fund, and to demonstrate the ways in which they intend to allocate their funding by 17th May 2023.

6. Issues and Choices

Working within the scope of the national guidance

- 6.1 Unitary Authorities have discretion on exactly how this funding is used within the scope set out in the DWP Guidance (Appendix A).
- 6.2 Key requirements of The Fund are that it:
- 6.2.1 is used to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford energy and water bills, food, and other related essentials.
 - 6.2.2 is allocated to vulnerable households in most need of support, giving particular consideration to households ineligible for other government support with cost of living and ensuring needs of different household types are considered (e.g. children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and disabled people).
- 6.3 Much of the guidance for HSF4 replicates that for the previous schemes, with some exceptions:
- 6.3.1 While previously there was a requirement to offer application-based support, the guidance has now been strengthened to require that “...*application-based support is available throughout the duration of The Fund, either continuously over the majority of The Fund Period or in regular intervals throughout the scheme.*”
 - 6.3.2 Guidance on communications has been strengthened, including more specific guidance on how and when to advertise available support, making it mandatory that any publicity material for the scheme (including via online channels and media releases) makes clear that funding is being provided by the DWP or the UK Government.
 - 6.3.3 Funding for supplementary advice services, including debt and benefit advice, is now considered eligible spend within the HSF scheme. As the primary focus of this grant is on practical support, however, expenditure on such services is expected to be limited and linked to the provision of practical support.

Learning from previous HSF Schemes

- 6.4 Proposals set for delivery of the HSF4 use our learning from delivery of the previous HSF schemes.

- 6.5 During the delivery of HSF1 WNC were able to build a highly efficient on-line application portal which enabled residents to self-service their application rather than utilising the voluntary sector set up. In total we were able to distribute close to 100k food and fuel vouchers across Northamptonshire using this online application process.
- 6.6 For HSF2, WNC was able to distribute funds to households who evidenced that they were suffering poverty for both food and fuel poverty via front-line workers in voluntary organisations, in a system managed by the Northamptonshire Community Foundation (NCF). All elements of the distribution were successfully managed and over 95% of all allocated funds were distributed.
- 6.7 The third tranche of DWP funding, HSF3, was for just under £2.6 million and has supported approximately 17,500 households across West Northamptonshire. The recipients included families with school-aged children, food banks (to allow purchase of food parcels), people who are employed within households but receive a low income, and those experiencing crisis and vulnerability due to financial hardship (supported via appropriate voluntary organisations).

Principles and Objectives

- 6.8 One objective is that HSF4 will continue as seamlessly as possible from the end of HSF3 to maintain continuity of support; particularly with regards to the school holiday food vouchers which have been provided for the Easter Holidays (April 2023) in line with previous arrangements.
- 6.9 With HSF4, WNC has an opportunity to provide money and debt advice to those in receipt of hardship support, in addition to direct provision of energy saving measures to homes (e.g. insulation of hot water tanks, fitting draft excluders to a door, or replacing inefficient lightbulbs or white goods). As part of the transition to the end of the current Northamptonshire Energy Saving Service (NESS) project, WNC will ensure learning from this project is incorporated into our energy saving measures and advice proposal.
- 6.10 It is also acknowledged that HSF4 offers an opportunity to support, to a greater degree, families in extreme hardship to move from emergency aid to more sustainable support. This will be achieved through provision of money and debt advice targeted to those receiving support, as well as through a linked pilot of upscaling food larders – encouraging those who need to access food aid parcels, or are in receipt of vouchers to move on to membership of larders.

Proposed Allocation

- 6.11 The table below illustrates the proposed allocation of HSF 4 funds by type of household and type of support; with 47% allocated to low-income families with children with a majority focus on holiday food support, 32% in financial support to other vulnerable households or those experiencing significant hardship, and 16% in voluntary sector grants to support food aid, energy saving measures, and money and debt advice. The remaining 5% is allocated for administration.

Table 1. Proposed HSF4 Allocation for WNC

| Cohort | Types of Support | Number of individuals/ households supported | Award value | Allocation | % | Admin cost | TOTAL |
|--|--|--|-------------|-------------------|-----|-----------------|-------------------|
| Families with children | School Holiday food vouchers | 12,500 households at £15 per week for 12 weeks | £15 | £2,250,000 | 47% | £90,000 | |
| | Uniform voucher | 12,500 | £15 | £187,500 | | | |
| | Infant Formula (EIF) programme | | | £25,000 | | | |
| Other households experiencing hardship | Online application bank transfer | 1,500 | £300 | £450,000 | 32% | £60,000 | |
| | Vouchers from food banks/VCSE front line | 10,000 | £120 | £1,200,000 | | £72,000 | |
| Voluntary Sector Grants | Food Bank capacity | | | £300,000 | 16% | | |
| | Food Club/Larder capacity | | | £300,000 | | £39,000 | |
| | Energy Saving Measures | | | £115,000 | | | |
| | Advice Services | | | £110,758 | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | £4,938,258 | | £261,000 | £5,199,258 |

Co-ordination and management

- 6.12 HSF schemes 1, 2 and 3 have been managed through the Recovery and Wellbeing Project team, operating within Public Health, due to the uncertainty in ongoing continuity. It has been agreed that the responsibility for HSF4 will be transitioned from a project delivery to a delivery through the core business-as-usual structure, managed variously (according to the relevant cohort/support type) by colleagues in Education, Communities, Revenues and Benefits.
- 6.13 A transition period of 3 months has been agreed from the current project delivery oversight team while business-as-usual structures are put in place.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 The Fund is incremental to the base budget for 2023/24. An administration/resourcing budget has been estimated at 5% for planning purposes, as allowed for in the DWP guidelines. All HSF4 monies are expected to be distributed into the community by the end of March 2024, if not before.

7.1.2 There are no direct resources or financial implications to Council's base budgets arising from the proposals.

7.2 Legal

There is a requirement for WNC to meet the grant conditions in distributing the Fund. Authorities must complete a delivery plan template provided by DWP and return with approval of the Cabinet Member and Section 151 Officer.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 There is a risk of excess requests for use of funds, and therefore the grant will be exhausted. The mitigation has been to model allocation of funds based on demand in 2022/23 and to ensure funds are released in tranches throughout the year.

7.3.2 There is a risk of excess funds remaining prior to the closure of the scheme. The mitigation will be to provide regular tracking of the funds run rate and as the distribution rate is modelled early contingency arrangements can be put in place. This report also seeks approval to redistribute unallocated funds to other support cohorts and types as required. The decision on resource re-allocation will be made by the Director of Public Health in discussion with the Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health.

7.3.3 There is a risk of duplication in requests for financial support. The mitigation will be in the form of a database record collected of households supported that can be cross-referenced prior to voucher allocation.

7.4 Consultation and Communications

7.4.1 Consultation with internal stakeholders has continued and a formal 'lessons learnt' document will be produced post the closure of the HSF3 scheme.

7.4.2 Additional consultation with the various voluntary sector organisations and wider partners has been conducted via the Anti-poverty Oversight Group.

7.4.3 As a result of the lessons learnt document issued post the HSF2 scheme, changes to the way the recipients' data are collected (compliant with UKGDPR), analysed and used to better manage communications and awareness to residents in high deprivation areas has been invaluable.

7.4.4 A communications plan is being developed and will focus on a range of key messages aimed at raising awareness and encouraging take-up, including Frequently Asked Questions, PR, social media and website content, updates and clear signposting to other grants and support. The Council will work closely with all partners including community, voluntary, health and wellbeing organisations to promote access to the available schemes.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 The management will ensure that any requests from the Scrutiny Commission will be responded to, and formal engagement or presentations required will take place.

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 Reducing food waste across WNC's area is a key function of some partners of the Food Aid Alliance West Northamptonshire (FAAWN), a key partner in distribution of HSF support.

7.7 Community Impact

7.7.1 The community will benefit significantly from the HSF4 scheme. There will be an anticipated 20,000 households positively impacted by the recommended HSF4 approach.

7.7.2 Working with voluntary organisations will enhance the co-ordination of the wide existing offer of support from our community and voluntary sector.

7.7.3 The distribution of funds is closely aligned to the areas of deprivation within the region, thus ensuring that the communities living in areas of significant poverty are prioritised.

8. Background Papers

DWP Guidance attached as appendix.

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

13th June 2023

Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education: Councillor Fiona Baker

Report Title Proposal to extend the age-range at Croughton All Saints CE Primary School (Formal agreement to lower the age range)

Report Author **Rehana Karim, Place Planning Manager**
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| Other Director | Ben Pearson Assistant Director for Education | 17/05/2023 |
| Communications Lead/Head of Communications | Becky Hutson/ Megan Denny | 17/05/2023 |

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| Legal advice | Shejal Patel Shejal.Patel@pathfinderlegal.co.uk | Inserted comments to Section 7.2 |
| Equalities | Kerry Ellis equalities@westnorthants.gov.uk Performance and Equalities | Equality Assessment Screening -signed off 17 May 23 |
| Finance advice | Beth Baines Beth.Baines@westnorthants.gov.uk Senior Finance Business Partner | Inserted comments to Section 7; 7.1.1,7.1.2, 7.2.3 and 7.1.6 |

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| Communications and consultation advice | Catherine Day CET@westnorthants.gov.uk | Provided advice and guidance for the LA public consultation. |
| Cabinet Member | Cllr Fiona Baker | |

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Croughton Primary consultation summary report

Appendix B – Croughton Primary Equalities Impact Assessment (EgIA)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) proposes the prescribed alteration to lower the admission age range of Croughton All Saints Church of England (CE) Primary School, High Street, Croughton, Brackley NN13 5LT by changing the age range from 4 to 11 years to 3 to 11 years. This would enable the school to offer funded early education entitlement (FEEE) places to three-year-old children, which would bridge the gap in provision. The proposed alteration will make provision for up to 13 full time equivalent (FTE) three-year-olds to attend the nursery provision.

2. Executive Summary

- 1.2. Croughton All Saints CE Primary School is proposing to create 13 FTE nursery places for 3-year-olds, this would bridge a gap in provision since the closure of Croughton Pre School. The proposal would also support the school's sustainability, as the overall reception intake has been declining over the last three years.

3. Recommendations

- a) It is recommended that the Cabinet approve the proposal to lower the admissions age range at Croughton All Saints CE Primary School, from 4 years to 3 years, to enable the school to offer FEEE to three-years-olds from September 2023.

Reason for Recommendations

- To comply with the statutory process to lower the age range by 1 year.
- To ensure the council can provide sufficient 3-year-old funded early entitlement places, for universal entitlement in the Croughton area.
- For children to benefit from high quality teaching and learning experience and a provision led by the Head (QTS).
- To support younger children with a smooth transition and integrated approach to school readiness.
- To maximise on numbers of children and support the sustainability of a small village school, impacted by reduced admissions numbers.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 Croughton All Saint CE School is a small village primary school currently serving 4- to 11-year-olds. The school's published admission number (PAN) for September 2022 is 25 for Year reception intake. The school has a total capacity of 175 from reception to year 6, however spring 2023 census data shows that only 107 children were on roll at the school.
- 4.2 Croughton All Saints CE Primary is a Voluntary Controlled (VC) School, the Governing board are seeking to extend the provision to include three-year olds. The proposed nursery provision is to offer 13 FTE nursery places, to the local and neighbouring community. The delivery would comprise of a mixed model of part-time and full -time provision; 15 hours free universal entitlement and up to 30 hours for working parents. Any additional hours following the free hours would be chargeable and as agreed with parents.
- 4.3 For the past 20 years early years provision has been provided by two main private providers in the Croughton village area, Croughton Preschool located in the village hall and Puddleducks day nursery which is situated on the Croughton All Saints school site. Puddleducks Day Nursery offers 40 full day care places for children aged between 3 months to 8 years old. Croughton preschool delivered 26 sessional places for two- and three-years olds FEEE children in the village. The two providers met the needs of the demographics of the community and provided sufficiency of early years places. Since the sudden closure of Croughton Preschool in December 2022, there has been a gap in three-year-old FEEE provision in Croughton. The governor's proposal to develop their own early years foundation stage unit (EYFS) is to bridge the sufficiency gap, which has now emerged. The nursery unit will also support the school's sustainability, as they experience declining numbers in reception year.
- 4.4 The existing early years provider Puddleduck Day Nursery operates an all year-round full day care model, offering flexible patterns to meet the needs of the working demographic. They are open between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year. The school have a positive working relationship with the onsite provider, they have actively engaged and consulted the provider on the proposals. The private provider is delivering at full capacity and recognises the school's proposal would provide essential three-year places to local children. The provider is in support the proposal.
- 4.5 Under the proposal the school nursery class capacity would be 13 FTE places, these would be delivered within a mixed class structure, combining the nursery children with the reception children. Following a statutory consultation in October 2022, the school have approval to reduce the reception PAN from 25 to 20 with effect from September 2023. This change forms part of the preliminary planning to ensure that the school can accommodate the nursery places. The school have reviewed the floor-space requirement as set out in the EYFS statutory guidance; the

reception classroom can accommodate a maximum capacity of 28 children under 5. The school has an additional 4 classroom where they provide the key stage 1 and 2 provision.

- 4.6 The school has been experiencing a decline in reception intake over the last three years, based on autumn census data. The proposal to lower the age range, would support the school to generate additional income, utilise teaching staff and sustain the school financial position. (Refer to section 6. Issues and choices)
- 4.7 Under this proposal, children aged 3 years would formally become part of the same structure as the school within the nursery school provision and on the nursery roll.
- 4.8 The changes proposed are expected to be permanent. LAs can propose a change of age range of one year group or more for community schools (including the adding or removal of nursery provision) by following the prescribed alterations' statutory process.
- 4.9 A statutory proposal and consultation to extend the age range of Croughton All saints CE Primary school was published on the Council's website on 20 March 2023.
The school undertook a 4-week open consultation, which concluded 28 February 2023.
- 4.10 If Cabinet approve this request, the school aim to open and deliver the nursery provision from 1 September 2023.
- 4.11 Croughton All saints CE Primary School proposes to offer the following:-
- Parents can claim funded places for three-year olds, either 15 hours universal or up to 30 hours for working parents.
 - Sessions will be delivered during term time, Monday to Friday and in line with the schools opening hours.
 - The provision will support the learning, development and school readiness for a smooth transition to the next stage of education.
- 4.12 Benefits for children and parents include:
- Provision led by the Headteacher, Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)
 - School readiness and a smooth transition to reception, due to familiarity of the environment and staff.
 - Interacting opportunities and developing positive links with peers
 - For those who have siblings in other year groups, ease and convenience of having all children on the same site.

For the school include: -

- One cohesive team working with the school's early years cohort.
- All children in the early year's foundation phase, within one mixed class

- Continuing to build on the existing high-quality teaching and learning experience for all children.
- One OFSTED inspection and the Head leading the EYFS unit.
- An over-arching benefit to the school's financial sustainability.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 Do nothing. This would result in a decrease in three-year-old FEEE places in the Croughton village area, due to closure of Croughton Pre-school.
- 5.2 Support this proposal – the creation of 13 places for three-year-olds would bridge a sufficiency gap and also give parents access to term time / school day provision. It would also help to stabilise the school as a result of their declining number of children on roll in years reception to 6.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 The school are up to date with their year-end processes, the overall outturn balance at the end of 2022-23 is a surplus position £130k including a 10% uncommitted reserve of £67k
- 6.1.2 The addition of the three-year-old provision does not significantly change their use of their building, therefore there is no capital costs. Neither is there to be a significant impact on the finances if the school maintain the uptake of the 13 FTE places.
- 6.1.3 Impact on the WNC general fund – no impact is forecast as a result of the extended age range. If unforeseen financial problems occur, for example if the uptake is lower than 13 children in the early years provision, the school is obligated to carry forward deficit balances into the next financial year, as per the scheme for financing schools. The school would then be expected bring the school back into financial balance over a maximum of 3 years. The risk to, and impact on, WNC general fund is therefore low.
- 6.1.4 As a maintained primary, with a nursery unit they will receive dedicated schools grant funding for early years children, from the Early Years National Funding Formula which is formulated on hours that children attend the setting.
- 6.1.5 The school has sufficient and suitable space to accommodate the nursery age children.
- 6.1.6 A summary of the costs associated with 13FTEs's include:

| Summary of costs associated to proposal nursery unit | £ per annum |
|--|--------------------|
| Increased Costs | 23,206. |
| Average Staffing costs Level 3 TA and Midday supervisor | |
| Increased Income for 13 pupils, 570 + 570 hours 38 weeks per early years child. Hourly rate of £4.18 | 61,947.60 |
| Total Income £4,765.20 per annum per child | |

6.1.7 Croughton All Saints governing board have identified and considered the potential risks alongside the overall benefits for children and families.

- Low take-up rate of the 13 FTE places within the nursery
- Loss of income from supplies and services
- Income against expenditure costs of staff, supplies and services

6.1.8 The school intend on closely monitor their nursery intake numbers into, as any risk of reduced numbers from the forecasted 13 FTE’s, would require the school to be reactive to the situation and consider reviewing their teaching structure and associated costs.

6.1.9 Autumn Census data table 1, shows the trend of declining numbers in reception over the last two years, and the declining birth rate will continue to have an impact on the small village school. Table 2 shows September intake numbers for all NCY groups, the impact of low reception numbers is having an impact on the whole school, as cohort progress through the school. On average the school is delivering at 66% capacity, it is anticipated that the nursery provision will attract increasing numbers of children at the school.

Table 1 – Showing autumn census data for year Reception.

| Academic Year | Autumn YR | |
|---------------|---|-----------------|
| | Published Admission Number Year Reception | Numbers on roll |
| 2019/20 | 25 | 18 |
| 2020/21 | 25 | 25 |
| 2021/22 | 25 | 14 |
| 2022/23 | 25 | 11 |

Table 2 – Showing autumn census data for NCY reception to year 6

| | CAPACITY NCY -Year 6 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Numbers of children on roll at Census | 175 | 117 | 123 | 114 | 108 |
| Take-up/ utilised capacity % | | 67% | 70% | 65% | 62% |

6.1.10 Projection data for year reception children suggests a gradual increase in numbers of children over the next 3 years for the area as a result of new housing development in the Brackley area, South Northamptonshire. However, these increases are materialising in primary schools near Brackley, these include The Radstone Primary School and Bracken Less Primary school. Croughton All Saints CE Primary school is located approximately 4 miles away from that locality area, exceeding the 2 miles radius travelling distance for primary aged children. Therefore, there

is no risk from a place planning perspective that demand will increase for year reception children within Croughton area, which would result in a sufficiency issue. The nursery unit would however support the sustainability of the school, due to declining numbers in year reception.

6.2 Legal

6.2.1 The process for lowering the age range to include a nursery to Voluntary Controlled school, is set out in the 'Making significant changes (prescribed alterations) to maintained school, Statutory guidance (England) Regulation 2013. The local authority must comply with the Regulation and give due regard to the Department for Education Guidance. have due regard for the regulations. The proposal has been published and subject to a public consultation, and this report is asking Cabinet to make a final decision as to whether to approve the proposal for implementation.

6.2.2 The Local Authority needs to give careful consideration to its duties under the Equalities Act 2010 and ascertain whether or not the proposal would have any impact on any protected characteristic group. The impact could be positive or negative and at varying ranges. The Local Authority should carry out an Equality Impact Assessment for this purpose. Even if any impact is identified the LA should rationalise its decision especially if there is likely to be more negative impact on any protected characteristic group. Aside from the impact that this proposal could have primarily on the cohort of pupils and parents the LA should also be mindful of the impact it would have on the school staff and there is likely to be an expansion of the number of pupils and possibly an increase to the existing staff's responsibilities.

6.2.3 The Local Authority has carried out a consultation which is required when making " Key Decisions" but it needs to ensure that it is a proper process, it has involved all interested parties and taken into consideration any feedback from them in evaluating its decision.

6.2.4 Although there is no longer a statutory 'pre-publication' consultation period for prescribed alteration changes, there is a strong expectation that governing bodies and local authorities will consult interested parties in developing their proposal prior to publication, consent of the site trustees and where a school is designated as having a religious character the trustees of the school, the diocese or relevant diocesan board , or any other relevant faith body.

6.2.5 Decision makers will need to be satisfied that the appropriate fair and open representation period has been carried out and that the proposal has been given full consideration to all the responses received during the pre-publication consultation. Decision makers should not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a particular view. Instead , they should give the greatest weight to responses from those stakeholders likely to be most affected by a proposal – especially parents of children at the affected school (s). Decision must be made within a period of 2 months of the representation period , or the proposal must be referred to the School Adjudicator.

6.2.6 Although there is no longer a statutory 'pre-publication' consultation period for prescribed alteration changes, there is a strong expectation that governing bodies and local authorities will consult interested parties in developing their proposal prior to publication, to take into account all relevant considerations. Governing bodies should have the

consent of the site trustees and where a school is designated as having a religious character the trustees of the school, the diocese or relevant diocesan board, or any other relevant faith body.

6.3 Risk

6.3.1 An Equalities Impact Screening (EIS) has been completed and signed out by the Equalities Team.

6.3.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out on the proposal to lower the age range at Croughton All Saints CE Primary School. The school's EqIA is attached, reference Appendix B to the report.

6.3.3 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendation in this report.

6.4 Consultation and Communications

Croughton All Saints CE Primary School conducted a consultation commencing on 24 January to 28 February 2023. This was made available to staff, governors, parents, children, onsite private provider and wider local community and stakeholders. The face-to-face open consultation event was held 21 February 2023. [Proposed Nursery Class Consultation – Croughton All Saints C.E. Primary School](#). A summary of the consultation can be found in Appendix A.

6.4.1 The council conducted a statutory public consultation from 20 March to 14 April 2023, no responses were received by either post or via email. The consultation was made available on the WNC website [Croughton All Saints CE Primary School - notice of consultation 2023 - West Northamptonshire Council - Citizen Space](#)

6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

6.5.1 The scrutiny committee has not requested to review the proposal.

6.6 Climate Impact

6.6.1 As this provision will be on an existing school site and delivering to the same local community, no issues have been highlighted in relation to increase in traffic or climate impact.

6.7 Community Impact

6.7.1 The EqIA has identified positive impact on the community by providing choice and creating additional places for families with children aged 3 years. (Appendix B)

7. Background Papers

7.1 DfE January 2023 – Statutory Guidance for proposer and decision makers - [Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

7.2 DfE March 2021 – Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five - [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-framework-for-the-early-years-foundation-stage)

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'Be Ready, Be Respectful Be Safe 'To believe, achieve, succeed together'

**CONSULTATION TO LOWER THE AGE RANGE AT
CROUGHTON ALL SAINTS CE PRIMARY SCHOOL TO 3 YEARS OLD AND FORM A
NURSERY PROVISION WITHIN THE SCHOOL.**

Responses

• **Families with pupils on roll at Croughton All Saints CE Primary School**

No objections just further questions as per the presentation already shared

• **Croughton Parish Council**

No objections – see email response.

From: Croughton Parish Clerk <clerk@croughtonparishcouncil.org.uk>

Sent: 20 February 2023 12:23

To: Bursar of Croughton All Saints CE Primary School <bursar@croughton.northants-ecl.gov.uk>

Subject: Croughton School Nursery Consultation

Dear Kaye,

Thank you for sending the consultation paper for the proposal to provide Nursery provision within Croughton School, to Croughton Parish Council. The Parish Councillors have asked me to express their full support for the proposal.

Kind regards

Karen

Karen Kerby

Croughton Parish Council Clerk

Croughton Village Hall, Wheelers Rise, Croughton, NN13 5ND

01869 819905 | clerk@croughtonparishcouncil.org.uk | www.croughtonparishcouncil.org.uk

Office hours: Monday and Wednesday 09:30-12:30

• **Peterborough Diocese**

No objections – see email response.

Good afternoon Sarah.

There has been a swift response from the Board Executive Committee and they have formally given their approval.

Kind regards

Peter

Peter Cantley

Diocesan Director of Education, Diocese of Peterborough

01604 887006 mob 07841032578

Education Office, Bouverie Court, 6 The Lakes, Bedford Road, Northampton NN4 7YD

www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk

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Find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/peterboroughdiocese

Education for life, deeply Christian, serving the common good

- **Puddle Ducks Day Nursery**
No objections
- **Local nursery provisions**
No objections
- **Posted on website and in Local Parish magazine**
No objections



Equality Impact Assessment

Lowering the age-range of Croughton All Saints CE Primary School from 4-11 years to 3-11 years to include a Nursery provision.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide for the Governing Body of Croughton All Saints CE Primary School an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) of their proposal for the School to lower the age range from 4-11 years to 3-11 years to include a Nursery provision within the reception class setting. The purpose of the EIA is to identify any equality implications of the proposal. The impact will be measured principally in terms of its impact on young people and families; our staff; other educational and community institutions in our vicinity.

2. Scope

The Proposal

The Governing Body of Croughton All Saints CE Primary School are consulting (between January 24th and February 28th) on the proposal to lower the age range of the school from 4-11 years to 3-11 years to include a Nursery provision within the current reception class from September 2023.

Objectives of this Assessment

The purpose of this EIA is to identify equalities implications of the proposal to lower the age range of the school. The Governing Body is committed, both as an employer and as a service provider, to ensure that it offers equal access to jobs and educational provision to all.

Context

Croughton All Saints CE Primary School is a small, Church of England, village primary school with approximately 107 pupils who are from the local area of Croughton, surrounding villages and Brackley.

Croughton vision

Be Ready, Be Respectful, Be Safe – To believe, achieve, succeed together'

This is firmly rooted in Christian values. We look to Jesus as our guiding light. He inspires us to live out our Christian values and strive for excellence in all we do; celebrating life in all its fullness.

Jesus said 'I have come that you may have life in all its fullness' (**John 10:10**). He calls us to a full life in mind, body, heart and spirit.

What is the proposed change?

The proposed change is that Croughton All Saints CE Primary School should lower the age range of the school from 4-11 years to 3-11 years to include a Nursery provision within the current Reception class for September 2023. The Governing Body have stated that they believe including a nursery class within the reception class will enable the school the best opportunity to maintain and further develop the high quality education provision for all pupils. The Governing Body have stated that there is no intention for there to be any changes to the ethos of the school as a result of the age-range change.

3. Who should be involved in the process?

This document has been prepared by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors.



Other people and groups involved include: school governors, staff, pupils, parents/carers, West Northamptonshire Council, Peterborough Diocese, Parish Council, and community representatives.

Any considerations of the potential impact of this proposed change will be considered in relation to:

Age, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, disability, ethnicity, race and culture, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, rural isolation, deprivation.

4. What groups will be affected by this?

Implications for current and prospective pupils

Lowering the age range of the school will not impact on the duties already on the school in respect of its arrangements for admissions, exclusions and special educational needs. Croughton All Saints CE Primary School is absolutely committed to the inclusion of all pupils. We have developed a wide range of strategies to respond to the individual needs of all our pupils. The school provides a highly personalised curriculum and fully meets the needs and aspirations of all its pupils. We will adhere to the School Admissions Code, as administered by the West Northamptonshire Council, which prioritises 'looked after children' to attend the school which is most appropriate to their individual needs.

Implications for staff

Staff are allocated to year groups/classes according to their experience and qualifications. No staff member will be made redundant. Staff will be offered any training that is required. The Governing Body is confident that there is no detriment to any individual or groups of our staff with respect to their existing terms and conditions of employment. There will be minor changes to some job descriptions to encompass the needs of the nursery class children.

Impact on Local Community

The Governing Body is committed to continue to fulfil its role as a local, Church of England, village primary school at the heart of its community. There is no intention to make any changes to our community provision as a result of this proposal. The Governing Body believe that including nursery age pupils within the school will place the school in the best position to protect its high-quality provision and ensure the sustainability of the School into the future.

The school reception class PAN is 20 pupils and the maximum capacity in the current reception classroom setting is 28 pupils at any one time. The school can only provide nursery provision during 'term time' and during school opening hours.

Our school is proposing to provide an early years' education for nursery age children within a 'Christian environment' which is not currently available in Croughton for parents/families. Therefore, this will have a positive impact on our local community.

The headteacher has taken into the consideration the following and completed the following actions to address any possible local community impact:

- Shared consultation to a number of stakeholders and local community groups
- Placed on website
- Shared in Local monthly village communication
- Held a meeting to discuss further and share FAQ's
- Worked with CoG
- Worked with School Improvement Partner - Early Years

Further actions

- Sufficiency Meeting and data collection



5. Making a Judgement

Age Judgement: Positive - Positive impact identified. The school will be extending its provision from 4-11 years to 3-11 years, thereby providing further high-quality education provision within a Christian environment for nursery aged children within our local community. There are no changes to the terms and conditions of employment of existing staff relating to age.

Sex Judgement: Neutral - No adverse impact identified. The school will continue to comply with the School Admissions Code and no adverse implications have been identified. No changes to the terms and conditions of employment of existing staff regarding gender.

Disability Judgement: Neutral - No adverse impact identified. The Governing Body will still be under the legal duties of the Disability Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 and will continue to promote disability equality duties.

Ethnicity, Race and Culture Judgement: Neutral - No adverse impact identified.

Sexual Orientation Judgement: Neutral - No adverse impact identified.

Religion or Belief Judgement: Positive - Positive impact identified. Our school has an inspection grading of 'good' from the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools. Providing an early years' education for pre-school/foundation stage children within a 'Christian environment' is not currently available in Croughton Village for parents/families nor the wider local area. Therefore, this will have a positive impact on our local community. Our Nursery class will offer an early years' education where 'everyone is valued as an individual and helped to develop and progress in their own unique way within a Christian environment'. Croughton All Saints CE Primary School will continue to provide a quality education for all pupils; promoting a wide range of religions and beliefs.

Pregnancy and Maternity Judgement: Neutral - No adverse impact identified.

Marriage and Civil Partnership Judgement: Neutral - No adverse impact identified.

Gender reassignment Judgement: Neutral - No adverse impact identified.

Looked After Children Judgement: Neutral - No adverse impact identified.

Rural Isolation Judgement: Neutral - No adverse impact identified.

Deprivation Judgement: Neutral - No adverse impact identified.

6. Action Planning

Not applicable.

7. Monitoring and Review

Not applicable.

8. Community Cohesion

a. This service, document will help community groups to develop a vision of a shared future.
b. This service, document will help community groups to improve their understanding and respect for each other.

c. This service, document will promote engagement of children and young people in the locality.

d. All stakeholders and community leaders will be involved in the planning of this service. This document will be available on the school website.

At Croughton All Saints CE Primary School we build mutual respect through our school ethos, aims and values. We take positive steps to counter the effects of intolerance and harassment, and are continually working towards reducing the gap between achievements, in particular by raising aspirations and tackling problems caused by deprivation.



The School sets its ethos, aims and values at the centre of its main purpose, it works on fostering excellent and valued relationships between staff, governors, parents and their children and all agencies.



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

13 June 2023

CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOUSING, CULTURE AND LEISURE - COUNCILLOR ADAM BROWN

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Report Title | Decision taken by the Leader of the Council under urgency procedures: Approval for the Council to enter into an agreement with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to enable the acquisition of 30 homes during 2023-24 through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) programme. |
|---------------------|--|

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Report Author | Joanne Barrett, Assistant Director Housing & Communities Joanne.barrett@westnorthants.gov.uk |
|----------------------|---|

List of Approvers

| | | |
|---|---------------------|----------|
| Monitoring Officer | Catherine Whitehead | 17/05/23 |
| Chief Finance Officer (S.151) | Martin Henry | 17/05/23 |
| Other Director | Jane Carr | 26/05/23 |
| Communications Lead/Head of Communications | Becky Hutson | 17/05/23 |

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Record of Decision by the Leader in relation to approval of for the Council to enter into an agreement with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to enable the acquisition of 30 homes during 2023-24 through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) programme.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. This report seeks to notify Cabinet of the decision taken by the Leader of the Council to approve

the Council to enter into an agreement with DLUHC to enable the acquisition of 30 homes during 2023-24 through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) programme.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 2000 Section 9E provides that the Leader of the Council can take any executive decision alone or with his Cabinet. In West Northants the vast majority of Executive decisions, not otherwise delegated, are taken collectively by the Leader and Cabinet together but in cases of urgency the Leader of the Council can take decisions where it is necessary.
- 2.2 This report relates to an urgent decision that was made in relation to the Local Authority Housing Fund.
- 2.3 On 22nd December 2022 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) announced the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF), a capital funding programme for local authorities in England to provide accommodation to families with housing needs who have arrived in the UK via Ukrainian and Afghan resettlement schemes.
- 2.4 The Council was assessed and chosen as one of the 182 local authorities in England to be offered funding from the LAHF based on data and calculations from Ukrainian arrivals and its associated housing pressures on the local area. An indicative funding allocation of £3,731,000 was offered to West Northamptonshire Council to obtain and refurbish 30 additional homes during 2023 for those unable to secure their own accommodation who are here under the Ukrainian and Afghan resettlement schemes.
- 2.5 DLUHC required local authorities to make decisions relating to the LAHF programme quickly with an expression of interest and indicative plan on how they could deliver the allocated funding required to be submitted to DLUHC during week commencing 23rd January 2023 and the Chief Finance Officer (S.151) had to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with DLUHC to draw down the LAHF funding allocation by 15th March 2023. These timescales and deadlines gave officers very limited ability to work up a detailed proposal with partners and get approval by Cabinet through the regular process therefore an urgent decision was required.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet note the decisions taken by the Leader of the Council set out at Appendix A.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 To publish and note the decisions taken for urgency by the Leader of the Council without Cabinet. In the interests of transparency, the decision is reported to Cabinet for awareness.
- 4.2 The decision taken provided the authority for the Council to enter into an agreement with DLUHC to draw down allocated funding and progress with the acquisition of 30 homes during 2023-24 through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) programme within the necessary timescales.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) is a capital fund introduced by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in supporting authorities in England to provide accommodation to families with housing needs who have arrived in the UK via Ukrainian and Afghan resettlement and relocation schemes. The LAHF prospectus can be found here: <https://delta.communities.gov.uk/document-repository/public/download?uri=/document-repository/Local-Authority-Housing-Fund-Prospectus-Final.pdf>
- 5.2 As outlined above, A LAHF funding allocation of £3,731,0000 was offered to the Council. The funding was allocated to West Northamptonshire Council specifically to obtain and refurbish 30 homes during 2023 for those unable to secure their own accommodation who are here under Ukrainian and Afghan resettlement schemes.
- 5.3 The Prospectus sets out the purpose of the funding is to:
- Ensure recent humanitarian schemes (Afghan and Ukraine schemes) which offer sanctuary, via an organised safe and legal entry route to those fleeing conflict, provide sufficient longer-term accommodation to those they support.
 - Support areas with housing pressures which have generously welcomed substantial numbers of Ukrainian refugees so that these areas are not disadvantaged by increased pressures from these arrivals on the existing housing and homelessness systems.
 - Mitigate the expected increased pressures on local authority homelessness and social housing resources which arise from the eligible cohort as sponsorship/family placements/bridging accommodation arrangements come to an end by increasing the provision of affordable housing to those in the cohort who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or in bridging accommodation.
 - Utilise accommodation solutions to enable effective resettlement and economic integration of the eligible refugees.
 - Reduce emergency, temporary and bridging accommodation costs.
 - Deliver accommodation that as far as possible allows for the future conversion of housing units to support wider local authority housing and homelessness responsibilities to local residents (UK nationals) e.g. after usage by this cohort ends.
 - Reduce impacts on the existing housing and homelessness systems and those waiting for social housing. The potential for LAHF to help address immediate pressures relating to resettlement schemes and in the longer-term help build a sustainable stock of affordable housing to meet local housing need prompted WNC to consider utilising the fund.
- 5.4 WNC was identified as eligible for capital grant funding (under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003), with the following indicative allocation:
- Main element: £2,590,000 for a minimum of 25 homes.
 - Bridging element: £1,141,268 in funding for a minimum of 5 larger 4+ bedroom homes to be allocated to households currently residing in bridging accommodation.

- The funding includes £20,000 per property for refurbishment and other costs
- The total grant allocation is £3,731,000
- the indicative funds are to be split between the financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24
- timescale for delivery of the programme is by 30 November 2023

5.5 The Council and its Registered Provider partners are required to provide funding for the remaining costs for delivery. Under the scheme between 40% and 50% capital funding is provided towards property purchases. Therefore, either the Council or Registered Provider (RP) partners will need to identify between 50% and 60% match capital funding to support this programme. It is proposed that match funding will be either funding from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) or funding from Registered Provider partners to purchase the 30 properties, of which 25 are to be allocated for Ukraine and Afghan refugee households; and 5 larger (4 Bedroom +) properties are to be allocated to Afghans in bridging accommodation.

5.6 Properties acquired will become available to support the wider local authority general housing and homelessness responsibilities after the immediate needs of the eligible cohort have been addressed.

5.7 This programme needs to be delivered at pace given the requirement to deliver the additional homes during 2023. Therefore, DLUHC required local authorities to submit an expression of interest during week commencing 23rd January 2023 with an indicative plan on how it could deliver the allocated funding and then sign a Memorandum of Understanding in March 2023.

5.8 The LAHF proposal that was submitted by WNC outlined a hybrid method to achieve the number of acquisitions required by the programme with a combination of:

- Capital funding from the LAHF passported to RP partners to fund and acquire as many of the 30 properties as possible within the parameters of the scheme by the 30th November 2023; and
- Capital funding from the LAHF and Council HRA Borrowing to acquire any shortfall of properties required to meet the 30 property target should RP partners not be able to deliver the whole programme by the 30th November 2023.

5.9 A report was produced and presented to Capital Assets Board (CAB) on the 14 February 2023 seeking support for:

- the Council to enter into an agreement with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to enable the acquisition of 30 homes during 2023-24 through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) programme.
- the proposal that the properties acquired through LAHF programme will be a combination of units purchased by RP partners with the remainder of units being new council homes acquired through the Housing Revenue Account.

Capital Assets Board also recommended that the Board is engaged should units need to be acquired through the HRA so that consideration can be given to how the Housing Revenue Account Capital finances LAHF purchases.

5.10 The Capital Assets Board report included some indicative financial modelling for a hybrid delivery solution should RP partners not be able to find opportunities to acquire the full quota Page 66

properties. If the Council were to deliver 35% of the units through the Housing Revenue Account this will require match funding of 60% or more by the Council. Based on modelling of acquiring 9 properties in the Main Element of the programme and 2 properties in the Bridging element of the programme, £1.6 million match funding from the Council would be required for this scenario.

- 5.11 It should be noted as stated above, the Council will work with RP partners to maximise the delivery of units through them. The use of RPs to deliver the programme will involve 'passporting' grant funding to the RP for them to deliver the number of units agreed. It should be noted on this delivery method: the council would need to put a Memorandum of Understanding in place with RPs to ensure compliance with funding conditions; the council would retain nomination rights on the acquired dwellings; there is no budget matching requirement on the Council. The RPs will match fund from their own resources.
- 5.12 Regular reporting to CAB of the LAHF programme will keep the programme under review. Should RPs not be able to deliver the whole of the programme then Capital Assets Board will consider this but as it is not a decision-making body and any recommendations for additional budget will require approval from Cabinet. However, existing approved budgets may be able to be utilised.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 The decision taken was necessary to meet the tight DLUHC deadlines for LAHF and not lose the opportunity to secure this capital funding.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 The delivery of the LAHF Programme will be funded through government funding, external finance from Registered Provider partners and HRA Capital Programme funded should the Council need to make some acquisitions.
- 7.1.2 Expenditure relating to this programme will be monitored by Finance and the Capital and Assets Board.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 The Local Government Act 2000 Section 9E provides that the Leader of the Council can take any executive decision alone or with his Cabinet. In West Northants the vast majority of Executive decisions, not otherwise delegated, are taken collectively by the Leader and Cabinet together but in cases of urgency the Leader of the Council can take decisions where it is necessary.
- 7.2.2 This report is required to ensure that the Council complies with its constitution in making key decisions relating to securing external funding and the Council's capital assets, even when they are under the management of Northampton Partnership Homes. The Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been consulted

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 Funding for this programme and progress against budgets will be closely monitored by CAB on a regular basis and also Cabinet through budget monitoring reports should the council need to make some acquisitions and therefore use some council resources.

7.4 Consultation and Communications

7.4.1 Extensive consultation with Futures Housing Group and Grand Union Housing Group regarding their willingness and ability to support the Council in delivery of this programme. The Housing Strategy & Partnerships Team have also discussed opportunities with other key RP partners who are developing in the area to see if they could contribute towards delivery of the programme as well.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 The Chair of People Overview and Scrutiny Committee was consulted as part of the urgency decision process.

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 No specific climate impacts.

7.7 Community Impact

7.7.1 The LAHF acquisitions will be focused on localities where there is a good level of service provision e.g. shops and public transport links and existing community hub activities focused on resettlement.

8. Background Papers

8.1 None

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL
RECORD OF DECISION

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Date Of Decision: | 11 th March 2023 |
| Title: | Local Authority Housing Fund Resettlement Programme |
| Is this a “Key Decision”? | Yes |
| Purpose: | <p>To seek approval/decision for:</p> <p>a) the Council to enter into an agreement with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to enable the acquisition of 30 homes during 2023-24 through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) programme.</p> <p>b) the proposal that the approach to acquiring properties through the LAHF programme will be either wholly or with the majority of units being purchased by Registered Provider partners with any ‘gap’ in meeting the target for delivery to be achieved through additional council homes acquisitions through the Housing Revenue Account.</p> |
| Cabinet Member: | Cllr Adam Brown |
| Decision Maker: | Cllr Jonathan Nunn |
| Consultation and Scrutiny: | <p>A report has been taken to and discussed at Capital Assets Board on 14/02/23 – this meeting includes Cllr Daniel Lister and Cllr Malcolm Longley. A further meeting has taken place to discuss the report prior to informal cabinet including Cllr Adam Brown, Cllr Malcolm Longley and Cllr Jonathan Nunn. Cllr David Smith as Portfolio Holder for the Resettlement agenda is also informed on the report/proposals.</p> <p>The outcome of these meetings was:</p> <p>a) there is support for the Council to enter into an agreement with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to enable the acquisition of 30 homes during 2023-24 through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) programme.</p> <p>b) Supports the proposal that the properties acquired through LAHF programme will be a combination of units purchased by Registered Provider partners with the remainder of units being new council homes acquired through the Housing Revenue Account.</p> |
| Officer Recommendations: | <p>Officer recommendation is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To participate in the LAHF and enter into the relevant agreements/MoU with DLUHC. The additional homes provided through the programme will help mitigate the impact of homelessness and/or people in unsuitable housing conditions as a result of resettlement activity in West Northants. Also long term the units will provide additional affordable homes to meet general housing needs of West Northants residents. - Delivering all or the majority of the programme through registered provider partners will mean that council and NPH staff resources can focus on: |

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the ambitious acquisition programme planned for 2023-24 to meet general housing needs, move people out of temporary accommodation or to provide high quality and cost effective temporary accommodation for local resident in acute housing need; and - delivering the new build council house programme and increasing the delivery of affordable housing to meet local housing need. • Should WNC need to acquire properties to meet the programme target, officers should report to EPB/Cabinet and seek a decision on how the borrowing for this element will be covered – either within the existing approved acquisition budget in the HRA for 23/24 or additional borrowing. The appropriate decision making process should be followed dependent on the amount of funding involved e.g. whether a key decision etc. |
| <p>Decision Taken:</p> | <p>Agreed for the Council to enter into an agreement with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to enable the acquisition of 30 homes during 2023-24 through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) programme.</p> <p>Agreed the approach to the LAHF programme will be acquiring properties either wholly or with the majority of units being purchased by Registered Provider partners with any ‘gap’ in meeting the target for delivery to be achieved through additional council homes acquisitions through the Housing Revenue Account.</p> |
| <p>Reasons For Decision:</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Not participating in LAHF will mean that the Council will still need to fulfil its homeless duties to households facing homelessness who are resident in West Northants through Afghan and Ukraine resettlement programmes but have no additional short term housing provision to assist managing this pressure. 1.2 Not securing housing provision through the LAHF for refugee households who become homeless will mean the Council may have to provide more expensive nightly-let accommodation for these households creating an additional financial pressure on the council. 1.3 Working with Registered Provider partners to fund the programme will spread risk and provide additional benefits by reducing HRA borrowing and increasing the ability to meet the deadline of acquisitions by 30 November 2023. 1.4 The Council would have nomination rights to these properties to ensure local housing needs are met by this investment in the longer term. There is no loss incurred by the Council working with Registered Provider partners to deliver the scheme. 1.5 The LAHF programme provides an opportunity to support the current resettlement schemes and reduce housing pressure in the short and longer term with the provision of additionality in the social housing stock. 1.6 The hybrid approach involving the combination of the LAHF grant, funding from Registered Provider partners and HRA borrowing to |

| | |
|---|---|
| | will provide the most cost-effective option for delivery of the programme. |
| Alternative Options Considered (Including Reasons For Rejection): | <p>1.7 WNC do not participate in the LAHF programme which would mean the Council would not be awarded any of the grant funding and we would not have additional properties available as a housing option for the eligible cohort should they be at risk of homelessness. The Council's Resettlement Team has performed well at re-matching guests who have arrived under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme when the arrangements with their sponsor breakdown. However, this may not always be possible so to have some properties available for temporary accommodation when this occurs would reduce pressure on both the Council's Resettlement Service and Homelessness service.</p> <p>1.8 The Council could commit only to the Bridging element of the programme, this would help move on families from the 2 Bridging Hotels in West Northamptonshire who are settling in the area, attending schools, gaining employment, participating in community/voluntary work etc. However, this element of the programme does not help the Council to support those who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or who are living in unsuitable temporary accommodation under the other resettlement schemes.</p> <p>1.9 Committing to delivering a smaller number of properties was also considered. However, the grant funding would be reduced in proportion to the commitment made.</p> |
| Declarations of interest: | None |

Authorised By Relevant Cabinet Member/Chief Officer/Deputy Chief Officer:



Name: ..Cllr Jonathan Nunn

Date: 11/3/2023

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

13 June 2023

**Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health:
Councillor Matt Golby,**

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Report Title | Procurement and implementation of Adult Social Care Case Management System |
|---------------------|---|

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Report Author | Karen Emms, Assistant Director of Discharge to Assess Services karen.emms@westnorthants.gov.uk |
|----------------------|--|

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

| | | |
|---|--|----------|
| West MO | Catherine Whitehead | 24/05/23 |
| West S151 | Martin Henry | 24/05/23 |
| Other Director/SME | Stuart Lackenby Gus De Silva Chris Wales | 24/05/23 |
| Communications Lead/Head of Communications | Becky Hutson | 24/05/23 |

List of Appendices

None.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval to proceed with the replacement of the Adult Social Care (ASC) Case Management System within West Northants Council (WNC)

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 West Northants Council (WNC) requires modern technology solutions to support the implementation of the Council's, 'live you best life' strategy, which will help the residents of West Northamptonshire to improve or maintain their well-being and live as independently as possible.
- 2.2 The Council therefore requires a new and flexible case management system to replace its current system, Eclipse & Care First supplied by OLM, which can be configured to suit the Council's business needs and can evolve over time with minimal disruption and cost.
- 2.3 The new system will give the ASC & Public Health Directorate the opportunity to modernise and streamline its processes and allow officers to work more flexibly with access to case records from wherever they need them. This will help to improve delivery of preventative and social care services to the residents of West Northamptonshire.
- 2.4 The implementation of portals will allow residents and/or their carers to access their social care records electronically and to transact with the Council via a digital platform. This offers greater choice to residents and/or their carers' and will help to promote independence and give the resident more control over their own care.
- 2.5 The new system can offer the opportunity to share information with partner organisations which will improve services to residents as all partner agencies will have access to relevant information about an individual's situation.
- 2.6 The current contractual arrangement with OLM for the provision of the current case management system ends March 2025. There is a risk that from March 2025 WNC could not fulfil statutory requirements relating to the provision of social care services in West Northamptonshire because there would be no system in place to enable this.
- 2.7 This report outlines the approach and costs associated with procuring and implementing a new Case Management System contract for a 5-year period with an ability to extend for a further 2 years.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 3.1.1 Agrees to proceed with the replacement of the Adult Social Case Management, at an estimated contract cost, including supplier implementation (£300,000), hosting, and annual fee costs, of up to £2,500,000 as outlined in section 7.
- 3.1.2 Notes that in addition to the above costs a further £1.018m of costs will be incurred to implement the new system.
- 3.1.3 Subject to consideration at the transformation board, supports the use of Transformation Funds, at an estimated cost of £1,318,000 to fund the total implementation costs.
- 3.1.4 Notes that the ongoing costs of £367,000 per year are anticipated to be met from existing budgets and savings associated with the new system but if, following procurement, there is a shortfall the difference will be built into the 2025-26 budget.
- 3.1.5 Approves the use of the Crown Commercial Services RM (6259) Vertical Application Solutions (VAS) Framework Lot 2c to purchase the system to ensure compliance with the relevant procurement requirements.
- 3.1.6 Delegates authority to the Executive Director of People Services in liaison with the Lead Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, to take any further decisions and actions required to award the contract and implement the Case Management System.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 To implement a new Case Management System that is fit for purpose and enables the council to meet its statutory obligations for delivering Adult Social Care across West Northamptonshire.
- 4.2 There are several key business drivers to move from the existing case management system to a new system include the following:
 - 4.2.1 Efficiency –to deliver efficiencies through improving processes, removing unnecessary bureaucracy, and enabling greater staff self-sufficiency through mobile digital self-serve for day-to-day transactional services, releasing time for staff to spend on direct client contact.
 - 4.2.2 Residents & Market Providers –to enable Residents and Market Providers to self-serve and self-access services.
 - 4.2.3 Accurate and timely data –To provide accurate data that is simple to extract, enabled by seamless integration between systems.

- 4.2.4 Integrated access to information –to data to be accessed through a single reporting and business intelligence solution which will be integrated across all platforms, keeping data consistent, accurate, and unique. This will enable WNC to know our customer, their needs, and our service performance, all in one place.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 During 2019 Northamptonshire County Council awarded a contract with OLM (Eclipse) for the provision of a Children’s and Adult Social Care Case Management System and associated finance modules. Implementation commenced with Adult Social Care, which went live ahead of the vesting day of the new Councils.
- 5.2 Between the contract being awarded in 2019 and the planned implementation of the new system, Northamptonshire County Council was replaced by the two new Unitary Councils.
- 5.3 Post-vesting day, the OLM (Eclipse & CareFirst) implementation programme of the case management and finance module was transferred to the relevant organisations, West Northants Council, North Northants Council and Northants Children’s Trust.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 Other alternatives considered include:
- 6.2 To have no case management system, this would not be a viable option that could be considered.
- 6.3 To extend current contract, there is no provision for the current contract to be extended beyond March 2025
- 6.4 To explore alternative existing systems, there are no other case management software applications in use within the Council that could be utilised to meet the requirements of an ASC case management system.
- 6.5 The associated finance module remains outstanding resulting in Adult Social Care having to retain the legacy system (CareFirst).
- 6.6 The scope of the programme is to procure and implement a new integrated Case and Financial Management contract to provide services to Adults across West Northants

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 The current system comes to the end of contract in March 2025 and therefore there is a need to procure a new system to be fully implemented, tested and running from this date.

7.1.2 It is proposed that the new contract is let on a 5-year basis with the ability to extend for two years at the end of the original contract period. Therefore, the new contract could be for a maximum of 7 years.

7.1.3 The estimated contract value for the 7-year period is up to £2.5m as set out in the table below:

| Estimated Costs | Year 1 | Year 2 to Year 7 | Overall Estimated Cost |
|------------------------|---------|------------------|------------------------|
| Implementation | 300,000 | | 300,000 |
| Annual Fee | | 1,200,000 | 1,200,000 |
| Hosting Fee | | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| Overall Estimated Cost | 300,000 | 2,200,000 | 2,500,000 |

7.1.4 In addition to the supplier implementation costs that are contained in the table above and are part of the total contract sum there will be a requirement for further investment of £1.018m to ensure the smooth implementation of the system.

7.1.5 Therefore, the total estimated costs of the new system can be broken down into two elements:

- Implementation costs totalling £1.318m
- Annual running costs estimated to be £367,000 per year.

7.1.6 It is proposed that the implementation costs are considered by the Transformation Board and subject to their agreement funded through the Transformation resources.

7.1.7 It is estimated that the annual running costs from year 2 will be £367,000 pr annum (subject to annual inflationary increases). It is proposed that this cost will be met as follows:

| | |
|---|--------------|
| | £000s |
| Estimated Annual Running Costs | 367 |
| Existing budgets: | |
| Current case management system | (105) |
| Rationalisation of other applications in the service | (103) |
| Streamlining other services as a result of new system | (159) |
| | <u>(367)</u> |
| Net financial impact of ongoing costs | <u>0</u> |

7.1.8 Within the table above it is anticipated that efficiency savings can be made as a result of the new system which will generate £159,000 of ongoing savings within the service. If this cannot be met a budget growth item will need to be considered as part of the 2025-26 budget process to cover any shortfall in this assumption.

7.1.9 The implementation project is expected to start immediately on contract signature with the main adult social care case management system replacement to go live no later than the end of January 2025, ahead of the end of the OLM contract in March 2025.

7.1.10 The implementation programme will be delivered in two phases:

- Phase One by the end of March 2025, to include main case management system including mobile working, finance, and interfaces to corporate financial system for provider payments and client billing
- Phase Two by end of September 2025, to include self-serve to allow clients, their carers, other professionals, and service providers to access social care records and integration with other systems e.g., health and care providers

7.2 Legal and Governance

7.2.1 The current system contract was awarded under the G-Cloud Framework and commenced in 2019. The initial contract term was for 2 years, but Northamptonshire County Council exercised the right to extend this by a further 2 years at contract commencement. This is the maximum extension allowable under the current system contract, and there is no further contractual entitlement to extend the term.

7.2.2 The Council has the power to procure the facilities and services pursuant to section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 (GPOC) and section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 (power to do things conducive or incidental to functions).

7.2.3 The estimated value of the contract means that any procurement will be subject to the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Procedure rules.

7.2.4 The Council intends the procurement will be conducted as a 'mini competition' via Crown Commercial Services RM (6259) Vertical Application Solutions (VAS) Framework Lot 2c. This will provide a legally compliant route to tendering the requirement and provides an opportunity to reduce the time to conclude the tender process.

7.2.5 The data on the Case Management System is of vital importance to ASC as evidence to support legal action and court proceedings. A fresh procurement is an opportunity to strengthen the integrity and reliability of data and ensure GDPR compliance. A high-quality case management system will support an effective discharge of statutory social care functions.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 If the procurement of a new system does not take place, the Council will either have to attempt to extend the current arrangement via a new contract for the system or operate without a system. The former opens the Council up to legal challenge from other providers of case management systems as the Council has already extended the contract to its maximum length. The latter would pose a great risk to the delivery of good quality adult social care as a case management system is vital to the operation of services.

7.3.2 The costs included in this report are based on estimations and there is the possibility that there are increased costs for the implementation and/or the ongoing licence costs however until the procurement activities commence this cannot be established. The mitigation for this will be

that the management of the budget to deliver this programme of work will be undertaken by the governance approach as outlined within section 7.2.

7.4 Consultation & Communication

7.4.1 In developing the proposals, the Council has consulted with ASC colleagues as the primary user of the proposed system. There has also been extensive engagement with the Digital, Technology and Innovation Service and Business Intelligence Service. A communications plan is being developed to ensure all stakeholders will be kept informed and engaged at key stages of project implementation.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 This decision has not been considered by the Scrutiny Committee.

7.6 Climate and Environment Impact

7.5.2 Once a solution has been selected specific impacts can be assessed. However, one of the potential benefits of a new case management solution is a reduction in staff travel, post and associated printing that currently occurs within the services, which should have a positive impact in this area.

7.7 Community Impact

7.5.3 The implementation of the new case management system will have a beneficial impact on the community as it will enable residents and/or their carers to access their social care records electronically, offering them greater choice and helping to promote independence and give the resident more control over their own care.

8. Background Papers

None.

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

13 June 2023

**Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health:
Cllr Matt Golby,**

Report Title **Reablement Commissioning Intentions**

Report Author Paul Smith, Commissioner paul.smith@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

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| Chief Finance Officer (S.151 Officer) | Martin Henry | 24/05/23 |
| Other Director/SME | Stuart Lackenby | 12/05/23 |
| Communications Lead/Head of Communications | Becky Hutson | 24/05/23 |

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Map of West Northamptonshire’s Homecare Zones

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To outline Adult Social Care intentions to commission and procure contractual arrangements for a sustainable and affordable supply of Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered

reablement homecare services for people aged 65+, people with a physical disability and for individuals with a diagnosed Mental Health condition.

- 1.2. To seek Cabinet approval for the Executive Director of People Services in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health to have delegated authority to tender, procure and award a new framework for CQC registered reablement homecare to commence in October 2023.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) currently accesses a supply of CQC registered reablement homecare services via a short-term contract with a single provider. This contract was initially commissioned during the winter pressure period at the end of 2022 as a trial of externally provided services to supplement in house services where we had struggles to recruit the required capacity.
- 2.2 The existing contracts are due to expire mid-October 2023 and the Council proposes issuing a competitive, open tender to appoint a long-term provider of reablement having proven the value and benefits of the arrangements and the capacity and flexibility this gives us.
- 2.3 A recommissioning project is underway to plan, design and procure a new long-term contract for reablement homecare which meets the needs of individuals and recognises the post covid market conditions. as well as changes to National Strategies and priorities like Home First and a greater focus on returning people to their normal; place of residence post hospital stays and helping them stay at home and independent for longer following a fall or crisis.
- 2.4 The project has undertaken substantial engagement and design work during the past few months seeking the views and input of key stakeholders. This has helped shape the model and future contract requirements within an outcome-based delivery model, which will be the basis for procuring new reablement homecare arrangements for delivery from October 2023

The stakeholders have included:

- Reablement West (in house services)
- The local (and national) provider markets including the current provider
- wider Adult Social Care colleagues
- Corporate Services colleagues

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves:
 - a) the procurement and implementation of a framework for the purchasing of additional capacity of reablement home care services, to be introduced from 18 October 2023.
 - b) the duration of the framework to be 2 years with an optional break at the end of year 1 and an inclusive option to extend for a further period of up to 12 months; resulting in a framework for a maximum duration of 3 years.
 - c) the commencement of a competitive procurement process.

- d) the delegation of authority to the Executive Director for People Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health to take all operational decisions necessary to implement the above recommendations.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Care Act 2014 places a statutory duty on WNC to provide care and support to people that have assessed and eligible social care needs
- 4.2 The Council's strategic objective, through the existing Adult Social Care Transformation Programme, is to support people to live independently within the community for as long as possible.
- 4.3 The primary aim of the new arrangements will be to improve the customer experience of commissioned reablement home care by ensuring the timely availability of quality care throughout the West Northamptonshire area.
- 4.4 The competitive procurement process will ensure the Council is compliant with the Public Contract Regulations 015 and WNC's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 4.5 It provides the Council with the ability to surge and flex its capacity as required in a way that is harder to do with an employed internal service.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 In January 2023, WNC commissioned a pilot with a single provider to bolster the capacity of WNC's Reablement West (RW) service.
- 5.2 In many Local Authorities reablement homecare is provided by a mixed delivery approach of in house and external providers working alongside each other to deliver the best outcome for individuals, this is the model recommended for WNC.
- 5.3 The Council wishes to deliver reablement services via a mixed economy of provision which ensures flexibility of capacity and avoids a single point of failure for reablement.
- 5.4 The rapid increases in the National Living Wage during the past few years and the expected continued rise of this is very welcome, particularly in a sector which has traditionally been undervalued and under rewarded. However, when combined with constrained funding for Adult Social Care and the current levels of inflation it can be difficult for LA's to sustain both traditional and reablement homecare.
- 5.5 The proposed model therefore seeks to ensure longer term sustainability for reablement homecare which is a central feature of Discharge to Assess (D2A)

6. Issues and Choices

6.1 Demand for Reablement in WNC

Based on a snapshot taken w/c 24 April 2023:

- 6.1.1 WNC is providing approximately 760 hours per week to 31 residents through the externally provided services.
- 6.1.2 The total spend on external reablement homecare is c.£18,000 per week or c.£936,000 per annum.
- 6.1.3 This is in addition to 500 hours per week to 50 residents from the in-house service at a cost of c.£31,000 per week or c.£1,600,000 per annum.

6.2 Supply Chain

- 6.2.1 Supply in rural areas, particularly Daventry and South Northamptonshire continues to be more difficult to broker than urban areas such as Northampton Town.
- 6.2.2 Providers across WNC are local SMEs with smaller numbers of regional or national providers. In WNC's area some national providers deliver predominantly "self-funder" care and are unwilling or unable to deliver on behalf of the Council.
- 6.2.3 Reablement homecare attracts a higher premium than traditional homecare and there is confidence that the tender will attract bids.
- 6.2.4 The reablement tender will be issued at a similar time to the allocation of the new homecare framework and it will be mandated that providers successfully appointed to any of the nine Local Area Partnerships (LAPs), or Zones cannot also bid to be the provider of reablement in West Northamptonshire.
- 6.2.5 The rationale for this tender condition is that it could lead to a conflict of interest or lack of commitment to either of the contracts if a provider were appointed to both.
- 6.2.6 In WNC there are currently 76 Homecare Providers registered with CQC.

Table 1

| CQC Registered Homecare Providers | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Outstanding | Good | Requires improvement | Not yet inspected | Total |
| 2 | 31 | 20 | 23 | 76 |

6.3 Fair Cost of Care (FCoC)

- 6.3.1 In recognition of the imminent Adults Social Care Reforms [Proposed reforms to adult social care \(including cap on care costs\) - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](#) WNC, alongside several other East Midlands local authorities, commissioned the services of Care Analytics (CA), a specialist in the financial analysis of care markets and the cost of care, to undertake a 'Fair Cost of Care' (FCoC) detailed cost analysis exercise.
- 6.3.2 All providers operating in the domiciliary home care market within the area of the local authority were sent a detailed survey designed to capture the necessary operational and contextual detail to draw out the inherent costs of delivering care in the local market.
- 6.3.3 In compliance with the latest language contained within the guidance and resulting grant conditions for additional funding WNC is committed only to "moving towards" the calculated FCoC rates (including any future inflationary uplift as negotiated).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/market-sustainability-and-fair-cost-of-care-fund-2022-to-2023-guidance/market-sustainability-and-fair-cost-of-care-fund-2022-to-2023-guidance>

- 6.3.4 The rates to be advertised for reablement homecare are above the medium average rates published by WNC in its FCoC report

[Home Care FCOC Report - Publication 01.02.23 0.pdf](#)

6.4. Proposed approach

- 6.4.1 The current reablement homecare pilot contract is due to end in October 2023.
- 6.4.2 The new Reablement Home Care Contract will align with the new Home Care Framework, and it is expected that the appointed provider for reablement will work closely with the appointed home care providers and in partnership with RW.
- 6.4.3 Amongst several key deliverables, the new model will support an additional focus on outcomes:
- a. supporting people to remain independent for longer in their own homes
 - b. increasing the available capacity of services and support
 - c. making it easier for people to find support and participate in their communities
 - d. helping people to manage their own conditions for example, through peer support, using digital solutions for assistive technology.
 - e. presuming, maximising, and supporting "single handed care" where achievable
- 6.4.4 Commissioning of reablement homecare will also integrate closely with WNC's successful 3 Conversations Model and seek to achieve strengths based commissioning and progressive delivery.
- 6.4.5 Within the specification workstream work has been undertaken with WNC's Reablement West, Providers, Adults Social Care teams and Brokerage to ensure that the ethos of home first and

strengths based reablement are embedded within ongoing service delivery by independent providers.

6.5 Specific Deliverables of the Reablement Commissioning Project (RCP)

- a. A compliant procurement exercise via competitive tender
- b. New approach and model for commissioned reablement home care services
- c. New Service Specification for commissioned reablement home care services
- d. New Contract for commissioned reablement home care services
- e. New approach to quality assurance including outcome focused KPI's
- f. Improved customer experience including a mandated requirement for a single provider rated GOOD by CQC as a minimum being appointed to deliver reablement homecare
- g. Technology as standard throughout the end-to-end homecare process
- h. Better pay and terms and conditions for care workers
- i. Increased support for providers on recruitment and retention
- j. A reduction in the environmental impact of service delivery via an increase in walking runs and electric vehicles
- k. The introduction of the mandatory use of Electronic Rostering and digitised Care Planning systems
- l. New opportunity for providers to embrace the 3-conversation model and deliver strengths-based services
- m. New opportunity for community assets and the community themselves to become part of delivery
- n. Increased individualised outcomes linked to three conversations, increase in satisfaction with the service. and a subsequent reduction in demand
- o. Improved efficiency of service delivery including reduced travel time
- p. Increased collaboration between providers and WNC at a strategic and operational level
- q. Single handed care requirement.

Alternative options

1. An entirely in-house solution for the provision of reablement home care; this is not recommended due to the continuing inability to recruit to full staffing in Reablement West, despite several campaigns, one off incentive and changes to terms. This option would also diminish WNC's aspiration for a risk sharing around periods of demand and surge and allow a more mixed approach to delivery.
2. Partially insourcing the provision of reablement home care for rural packages. While this could address the challenge of providing commissioned care in rural areas it would also require the addition of travel time and expenses to be sustainable. This is not recommended; insourcing rural packages would increase the cost of reablement home care. It would also reduce the amount of commissioned reablement homecare by around 25% as care providers based in rural areas generally employ care workers who live in the geographic area of the service thus reducing travel time and increasing productive contact time. Insourcing the rural packages would fragment the overall activity and could undermine the operational and financial viability of the appointed provider and make the tender less attractive to the market.
3. An open approved "call off" list could be introduced as an alternative to a single contract. This is not recommended because this could increase the likelihood of a high number of very small

providers of reablement home care packages with each having the overhead, management and other costs (as see in the home/domiciliary care market) and which would further erode provider's operational and financial viability for the council as this in seen often to increase the hourly rate needed to sustain the business.

7 Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 It is not anticipated that the proposed framework will have any impact on the current resources available. The new arrangements should reduce any delay in the provision of reablement home care. This will also ensure the resources of the RW service are focussed on reablement and hospital discharge.
- 7.1.2 The council's annual gross expenditure on commissioned reablement home care during the 2023/24 financial year is estimated at c.£1 million funded from the Discharge Funding agreed via the Integrated Care Board. The expenditure will continue the strength-based ethos to ensure people receive the right amount of care at the right time in the right place.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 WNC has a statutory duty to provide care and support for people who meet the eligibility criteria as set out in the Care Act 2014 and supporting legislative framework. WNC has a duty to provide or arrange services that help prevent people developing a need for care and support and/or delay people deteriorating where they would need ongoing care and support. WNC may meet that duty by providing the care and support itself or by arranging for an alternate suitably qualified provider(s) to provide this service.
- 7.2.2 The competitive procurement process will be undertaken pursuant to the Public Contract Regulations 015 and WNC's Contract Procedure Rules. Advice and support will be provided by WNC's Legal and Procurement Services.

8 Risk

- 8.1 If the recommendations described in the report are not approved, it will result in the council not having appropriate arrangements in place to purchase reablement home care services. This means the council could fail to meet its statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 when the current contract expires in October 2023.
- 8.2 The introduction of a framework will enhance the customers experience by improving provider's operational and financial viability linked to an improved service specification and suitable contract.
- 8.3 Providers may choose not to apply, or their application may be unsuccessful. Many providers, in West Northamptonshire already have a mixed customer base of WNC and self-funding customers people who fund their own care. Therefore, it is doubtful that any significant discontinuity of service provision or provider failure will occur directly because of the introduction of the contract.

8.4 It should be acknowledged that all commissioning of homecare (including reablement) exercises does come with the risk of some potential disruption to individuals and the Council. The risks associated with this project are acknowledged and detailed within an ongoing Risk Register which has been/will be reviewed regularly throughout the project.

Table 2

8.5 Risk Register

| Risk | Score | Proposed Mitigation | Score |
|---|--------------|--|--------------|
| Lack of interest from providers in the new arrangements | MED | Providers may not bid for this opportunity and focus their activity on self-funders. There are currently no indications that there will be insufficient interest in this opportunity. | LOW |
| Disruption to continuity of service provision for customers | MED | Reablement is a short term (generally up to 6 weeks) intervention with a continually changing base of customers. It is unlikely that any customer would see disruption as a result of the introduction of this new contact. | LOW |
| Damage to the council's reputation as a result of enforced changes of service provision to individuals who receive care as a result of the tender | MED | A communication plan is in progress which will ensure customers and stakeholders are aware of the process and outcome of the tender. All measures to minimise any disruption will be taken. | LOW |
| Delay in awarding the contract as a result of challenge from applicants regarding the delivery and /or outcome of the tender process | MED | The tender process will be compliant with legislation and council processes. In the event of delay it would be likely that the current pilot provider could/would continue to deliver the service until new arrangements are in place. | MED |
| | | | |

| | |
|--------|--|
| Low | Monitor, as necessary |
| Medium | Medium, potential to cause the project some difficulties – regular monitoring needed |
| High | High Excess of project risk – action needed to redress; very regular monitoring needed |

8.6 Consultation

- 8.6.1 Homecare Approved Providers – Providers have been engaged on the project via WNC Provider Forums.
- 8.6.2 All Member Briefing Session will be arranged if required
- 8.6.3 Adult Social Care Operations have been actively involved in the project
- 8.6.4 Political Groups Consultation. All Councillors will be included in a future Political groups' communication

8.7 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

- 8.7.1 The appropriate Scrutiny Committee can review the Reablement Commissioning Intentions report

8.8 Climate Impact

- 8.8.1 The project will have a golden thread to the Corporate Plan 2021-2025.
- 8.8.2 The overarching project and the products it delivers (including a redesigned service specification and contract for reablement homecare) will place particular emphasis on linked priorities within the Corporate Plan:
 - 8.8.2.1 Priority 1, Green and Clean
In recognition of the environmental impact of homecare (particularly in the rural zones, via travel by care workers), the specification will include performance measures linked to reduced mileage, efficiency of rotas, progression towards the use of electric vehicles and an increase in the use of walking and cycling care rounds.

8.9 Community Impact

- 8.9.1 Priority 2, Improved Life Chances
In recognition of the prominence of homecare in the daily lives of some of our most vulnerable residents, the redesigned approach will deliver improved outcomes using community assets and creating strengths based and technology led care located at the geographic centre of communities to ensure delivery with localised context.
- 8.9.2 Priority 3 Connected Communities
The project will deliver an improved use of transport networks, increase the use of electric vehicles, and encourage geographic, zone-based recruitment to minimise travel. The increased use of technology (mobile and fixed) in both the frontline delivery of care and the operational aspects of care delivery such as rostering and call monitoring will connect communities more closely with the service, build resilience and increase access to support networks.
- 8.9.3 Priority 4 Thriving villages and towns
High quality care often derives from being localised geographically and by recognising the cultural and demographic conditions of an area. A care worker who lives in the area that aligns with the zone in which they work can make an enormous difference to the quality of care and empathy that an individual receives. Simple things such as a care worker being able to speak in the individual's first language which may not be English and being able to chat about local news

issues whilst in the customers home can make the individual feel continued connection to their community. Villages and smaller towns benefit from a cluster of care workers who concentrate their delivery within the area and the new contract will encourage local recruitment bringing employment and revenue to communities.

8.9.4 Priority 5 Economic Development

Health and Social Care are often one of the largest employers in a local authority area and contributes hugely to GDP in West Northants. The reablement homecare project has an estimated value of c.£1 million per annum (c.£3 million overall) and sustains and creates employment for 100's of people. The homecare sector currently has recruitment and retention issues, and the project will deliver increased numbers of care workers and increased revenue in all areas of West Northants.

8.9.5 Priority 6 Robust Resource Management

The project will seek to reduce the number of care providers that WNC contract manages, and quality assures. Creating economy of scale and efficiency from both increased volumes with a single provider and reducing overheads of operating care, the new contract will use council resources more effectively and proactively.

8.9.6 The project will also link to the Councils Anti-Poverty Strategy; good, high-quality, sustainable reablement homecare can be an enabler to help support people out of poverty, for example: -

8.9.7 The Anti-Poverty Strategy states *“There is still a strong association between unemployment and poverty, along with a significant rise of in-work poverty.*

Some people living in higher working households comprised 17% of people living in poverty in 2018/19, compared to 14% 10 years earlier and 9% in 1996/97.

People living in lower work intensity households comprised 47% of people living in poverty in 2018/19, compared to 42% 10 years earlier and 35% in 1996/97.”

Better employment conditions and an increase in employment opportunities for care workers can support people to move out of the position of living in poverty whilst in work.

8.9.8 The Anti-Poverty Strategy also states, *“Lone parents, large families, carers and care leavers are more likely to experience poverty than people without children or caring responsibilities.”*

8.9.9 A deliverable of the project is that good, high-quality, sustainable reablement homecare will support family carers to enjoy more fulfilled and active lives in the knowledge that their relative is safely supported at home during recovery.

8.10 Communications

8.10.1 Communications must effectively inform all those affected by the recommissioning and support in the increase of further engagement with providers. To achieve this a robust communication and engagement plan is being developed.

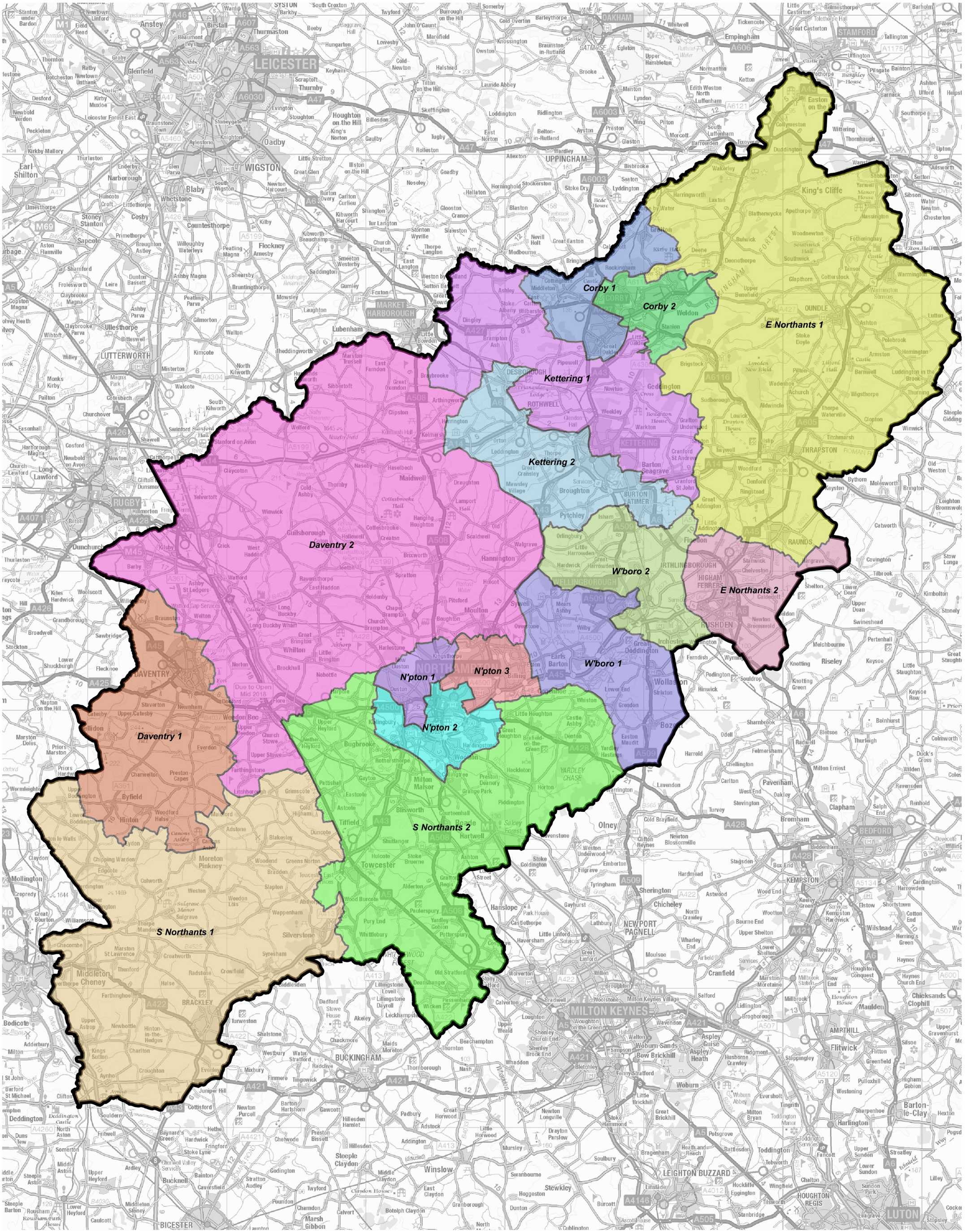
8.10.2 The communications and engagement plan will align with key project milestones with a focus on targeted communications to identified audiences, including current and prospective providers, stakeholders, members of the public, service users and stakeholders.

9 Background Papers

N/A

Appendix A- Map of West Northamptonshire's Homecare Zones

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Title: **Home Care Zones - Northamptonshire**

Date: 22-09-2020 Scale: 1:883

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

13th June 2023

**CABINET MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR FINANCE:
COUNCILLOR MALCOLM LONGLEY**

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Report Title | Disposal of Land at London Road, Daventry |
| Report Author | James Ring – Estates Surveyor James.Ring@westnorthants.gov.uk |

List of Approvers

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---------------|
| Monitoring Officer | Catherine Whitehead | 17/05/2023 |
| Chief Finance Officer (S.151) | Martin Henry | 17/05/2023 |
| Other Director | Stuart Timmiss – Executive Director Place, Environment and Economy. Simon Bowers – Assistant Director, Assets and Environment. | 27 March 2023 |
| Head of Communications | Becky Hutson – Head of Communications | |

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek authority to agree to the disposal of land off the A45 London Road, Daventry via a hybrid promotion agreement (which is a combination of an option and a promotion agreement) or, if necessary, via a further open market process.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) holds the freehold interest in approximately 0.7 ha (1.8 acres) of low-grade agricultural land located off the A45 London Road Daventry. It is approximately a mile from Daventry town centre. This site forms part of the EC9 Daventry South East Gateway, being a much larger site of circa 33.8 ha (16.7 acres) which was allocated by the Daventry District Settlements and Countryside Local Plan (Part 2) in February 2020. This Local Plan policy is intended facilitate regeneration and renewal for Daventry and enhance the employment opportunities through the potential provision of business uses or uses ancillary thereto up to 10,000 sq. m per unit.
- 2.2 Ownership of most of the site is held by four landowners who have employed a local agent to market it. These have worked collaboratively, originally with Daventry District Council (DDC), and now WNC, to promote the site. The Council's interest was referenced in the marketing whilst retaining its distinction from the consortium. However, as its land is an integral part of any development it has been agreed that the consideration from the disposal of the complete site would be apportioned based on gross equalisation. This is considered to fairly reflect the value of each landowner's part in the whole.
- 2.3 Following an aborted freehold sale in autumn 2022 due to changes in the wider economy the site has subsequently been presented for disposal on the basis of a hybrid promotion agreement (which allows the promoter to de-risk the site, promote it, and require a sale to the best bidder provided the minimum financial value is met); it is considered that this provides the best opportunity to price maximisation. On this basis, the promoter will be required to secure a satisfactory outline planning permission and then acquire the land from the collective landowners on predefined basis and time scale. Should this arrangement fail for any reason disposal via the open market is proposed.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet authorises the Assistant Director Assets & Environment in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder to agree terms for the disposal of land off the A45 London Road, Daventry and complete any documentation required to implement this, in accordance with the constitution and the following:
- a) A hybrid promotion agreement with GC No. 19 Limited or another company associated with Godwin Developments should be entered into to promote and facilitate the disposal of the Site via the open market.
 - b) Should the agreement not be achieved for any reason or elapse, disposal would be directly via the open market.
 - c) The consideration should not be less than the pro-rata minimum purchase price or such a figure that reasonably represents market value.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 The land is surplus to requirements and was being held with longer term development aspirations in mind. The site has been actively marketed jointly with the other associated landowners. The disposal would fulfil the objectives of good estate management.

- 4.2 The redevelopment of the Site would see a key strategic area of Daventry developed which would align with the proposed West Northamptonshire Spatial Vision, Strategic Plan Objective 13: Economic Advantage.
- 4.3 To generate a capital receipt for the Council in the short term, which would be difficult to obtain if it were not included as part of the larger development opportunity.
- 4.4 To comply with the obligations on the Council to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable in a freehold land disposal.
- 4.5 As a hybrid promotion agreement, all costs associated with promotion of the site, such as planning fees, agents, and legal fees are paid by the promoter.
- 4.6 The Council has a degree of security knowing that it can expect a minimum consideration when the site is disposed and therefore there is a minimum degree of risk to the local authority.

5. Report Background

London Road Site

- 5.1 The Council holds the freehold interest in approximately 0.7 ha (1.8 acres) of low-grade agricultural land located off the A45 London Road Daventry. It is approximately one mile from Daventry town centre. This site forms part of the EC9 Daventry South East Gateway being a much larger site of circa 33.8 ha (16.7 acres) which was allocated by the Daventry District Settlements and Countryside Local Plan (Part 2) in February 2020. This Local Plan is intended to facilitate economic development and regeneration for Daventry and enhance the employment opportunities through the provision of what were then described as B1 (b, c), B2 or B8 uses (broadly, manufacturing, storage, and distribution), or uses ancillary thereto, up to 10,000m² per unit.
- 5.2 Ownership of most of the site (excluding the Landmark Hotel and the Autogreen vehicle recycling site, and the Council's land) is held by four landowners who employed a local agent to market it. These have worked collaboratively, originally with DDC, and now WNC, to promote the site. The Council's interest was referenced in the marketing whilst retaining its distinction from the consortium.
- 5.3 As the Council's land is an integral part of any development it has been agreed that the consideration from the disposal of the complete site would be apportioned based on gross equalisation. This means that the value for the whole site is divided by the total area and then multiplied by the area of each landowner's land to calculate the value it is to receive. This allows for the fact that within any development some land is used for purposes not directly generating income e.g., roads or landscaping but this is still essential for the overall scheme to work. In this case the Daventry Wood site was excluded from equalisation as it is not developable. This approach is considered to fairly reflect the value of each landowner's part in the whole, including the value of the Council's land.

Marketing and disposal

- 5.4 Following marketing of the site the deadline for offers concluded on 29th March 2022. This produced attractive offers. Accordingly, in July 2022 Cabinet authorised freehold disposal of the Council's part of the land, in co-ordination with the other landowners, to a third party. However, due to changes in the wider economy and a subsequent rise in interest rates the successful applicant was unable to obtain funding for the acquisition and could not proceed.
- 5.5 The site has subsequently been presented for disposal via a hybrid promotion agreement. It was considered that this method of disposal offered the best opportunity for maximising the capital receipt. On this basis 14 applications were received with the best offer from Godwin Developments who intend to promote the site via GC No. 19 Limited, which is a company formed for this project then market the site with the benefit of planning permission. Under the terms of their offer the promoter would be granted an agreement term of four years, which could be extended on reasonable grounds. The intention would be that satisfactory outline planning permission for the development was secured within two years, followed by a disposal.
- 5.6 It would be a condition of the contract that the promoter will actively maximise value and the net developable acreage to obtain the optimum development scheme. Approval from the landowners prior to submission of any planning application will also be needed. This will act as a further safeguard to ensure best consideration. On the realisation of a satisfactory outline planning permission the promoter will have a two year 'sale window' to dispose of the site under the terms of the agreement.
- 5.7 The purchase price would be calculated using a formula set out the in the agreement. This provides for the price to be market value for a serviced site with outline planning permission, less 'deductible expenditure' and 'infrastructure costs'.
- 5.8 The promoter has allowed a total of £10.77m for anticipated infrastructure costs and this is to be treated as a cap. Deductible expenditure is expected to be in order of £1.019m and may change. However, in any event the purchase price cannot fall below a set minimum purchase price. This is £23m overall, £1.145m per net acre, subject to the results of ground investigations. If the promoter is unable to secure at least this level of receipt, the owners (including the Council) would not be obliged to accept a sale via the agreement. However, it is considered that this may rise significantly, as the wider economy improves. Based on minimum figures this would generate a capital receipt for the Council of circa £1.284m.
- 5.9 If this sale window expires, the other landowners have agreed that their collective interests would be sold on the open market. This appears a sensible approach.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 The Council has a number of choices at this point.
- 6.2 (1) Do nothing at this time – At present the Council's land offers little benefit either from a financial or economic perspective to the Council. It is currently held on a tenancy at will to an adjoining landowner (one of the other landowners in the consortium) at a peppercorn fee for storage. Therefore, its future even for this use is limited should development proceed. **Page 98**

- 6.3 (2) Agree to the proposed promotion agreement – If the Council’s interest was included as part of the larger development, its disposal would assist in the realisation of a capital receipt likely to be more than what could be realised if the land was disposed in isolation. This is likely to remain the case even if the proposed hybrid promotion agreement was not to deliver a disposal. In addition to obtaining a significant capital receipt the inclusion of the Council’s land would assist and facilitate the development of one of strategic sites in area which would align with one of the objectives of the Council as set out in the Settlements & Countryside Local Plan. The development would also result in inward investment, job creation and economic growth.
- 6.4 (3) Seek a separate disposal – For the reasons given above, this is considered unlikely to maximise financial returns. It is also likely to frustrate the development of this allocated development site, contrary to the Council’s planning policy intentions.
- 6.5 None of the options has a material adverse impact on people with different protected characteristics or otherwise adversely affects the Council’s equality duties.
- 6.6 It is therefore concluded that proceeding with a disposal alongside the landowner consortium (option 2) represents the best option for the Council.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 The consideration expected under the hybrid promotion agreement or freehold sale is in excess of its current asset value, at a minimum of circa £1.284m.
- 7.1.2 As part of the hybrid promotion agreement all legal costs would be covered by the promoter, consequently it would be advantageous to use external resources to ensure that the legal process is harmonised between all vendors. It is expected that Ladders will be appointed due to their prior involvement in the site and their status as retained solicitors for the other Vendors.
- 7.1.3 The Council will also be entitled to a percentage of the Vendors Agent Monitoring Fees (which is a Deductible Expense). The Council will receive 40% of these Fees. This is to ensure that the disposal proceeds in accordance with the Contract. These are expected to be £20k per annum in total, representing £8k pa for the Council apportioned on this basis.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 The general power of disposal is contained in section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, which gives a local authority the power to dispose of land held by it in any manner it wishes provided that the local authority achieves the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained.
- 7.2.2 The process undertaken in conjunction with the other landowners is designed to secure the highest financial value for the land, taking into account amount, certainty, and speed of receipt. As such, it should achieve the best consideration reasonably obtainable.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 GC No. 19 Limited is a company recently created by Godwin Developments to facilitate this project and no guarantees will be provided by Godwin Developments should GC No. 19 Limited fail to fulfil its contractual obligations. This is possible, notably if the financial case for the development was to falter. This significant risk would be mitigated by ensuring that the planning application is made as joint application. This would ensure the vendors (including the Council) would have a current outline planning permission for the site, which they could present to the market, should the company fail, or the agreement fall away for any other reason.

7.3.2 Risk would also be mitigated by the payment of an agreement fee of £225,000 to the vendors upon signing of the Agreement. This will be apportioned on pro rata basis between the vendors.

7.3.3 It is clearly possible that the other vendors might choose to not proceed, but this seems unlikely given the interest they have shown in bringing their land forward for development.

7.4 Consultation and Communications

7.4.1 The predecessor Council, Daventry District Council consulted via the Daventry District Settlements and Open Plan, which allocated this site for development.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 None.

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 The sale of the land of the A45 London Road, Daventry would enable development which is likely to have a climate impact. However, whilst the Council has goals to secure net zero it is not practical to prevent all development whilst the steps to achieve this are put in place. Even if the Council refused to dispose of its land for development (contrary to its own local plan policies) it is likely development would still take place, albeit in a sub-optimal form. Therefore, it is considered that climate impacts do not suggest the disposal should not proceed.

7.7 Community Impact

7.7.1 By proceeding with the disposal of the land off the A45 London Road, Daventry the Council would be facilitating in the realisation of the economic development and job creation in the Daventry area whilst realising significant capital receipts for areas of land which as they stand offer little towards the goals of the Council.

8. Background Papers

8.1 None



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

Tuesday 13 June 2023

Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Town Centre Regeneration and Growth: Councillor Daniel Lister

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| Report Title | Update to the Northampton Railway Station Multi Story Car Park Proposal |
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| Report Author | Kevin Langley, Head of Major Projects and Regeneration Kevin.langley@westnorthants.gov.uk |
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List of Approvers

| | | |
|---|---------------------|------------|
| Monitoring Officer | Catherine Whitehead | 24/05/2023 |
| Chief Finance Officer (S.151) | Martin Henry | 24/05/2023 |
| Other Director | Jane Carr | 24/05/2023 |
| Communications Lead/Head of Communications | Craig Forsyth | 24/05/2023 |

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on the changes to the structure of the arrangements for a new Multi Story Car Park at Northampton Station that are being proposed since the previous report that was taken to Cabinet on this matter in December 2021.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Since the new Northampton train station was opened in January 2015 there has been the intention to provide a MSCP due to the known undersupply of parking there. The development of the MSCP would free up land for the development of the wider site to provide a better gateway into the town while bringing forward brownfield development sites.

- 2.2 Network Rail (NR), Blocwork (NR's development partner), and the council have been working together to investigate the best mechanism to bring the MSCP forward. This would enable the wider site development which would support the continued economic growth and prosperity of the town and make significant enhancements to the overall environmental quality and pedestrian connectivity of the surrounding area.
- 2.3 In December 2021 West Northants Council (WNC) Cabinet approved entering into an Agreement for Lease and subsequent Lease for a new Multi Story Car Park (MSCP) at Northampton Railway Station. Since this time there have been significant changes within the economy which has impacted the proposed terms, structure and risk profile of the project that needs to be reported to senior officers.
- 2.4 Since December 2021 there have been significant changes within the economy which has impacted the proposed terms, structure and risk profile of the project. With the Bank of England base rate increasing, the financial terms for the project have changed with the commencing rent also increasing. For the project to still represent Value for Money, the assumed operating model has needed to be changed, along with other areas for the arrangements to continue to meet similar financial returns in the forecast in line with what was taken to Cabinet.
- 2.5 Further to this a new lease structure is proposed which has the potential to be advantageous to the council as it will allow the council to claim sale and leaseback relief (the "Relief") from SDLT.
- 2.6 The above lease structure will enable the construction works to be funded through a forward funding deal with a financial institution (such as Legal and General, M&G, Aviva, Canada Life). This type of funding structure relies on the council covenant strength, however it will mean that the council is exposed to car parking income risk throughout the duration of the Sub-underlease.
- 2.7 The updated financial model shows that the base case can still achieve the same level as profit the council could expect a net profit of £16.759m at the end of the 40-year term by the developer taking a lower level of profit, the council opting to operate the car park rather than commissioning a company to do this and through other mechanisms noted below.
- 2.8 The updated financial model has been run against a range of sensitivities to reflect potential changes to inflation and demand, the council continues to make a profit over the term in all but the most extreme of circumstances. A revised forecast setting out full analysis of the terms is included as a private appendix A.
- 2.9 Authority is sought to proceed on the new terms as set out within this report and to complete the arrangements, subject to these meeting or improving on the terms set out in this report.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Cabinet is asked to:
- a) Note the work undertaken since the cabinet report of December 2021.
 - b) Approve the terms as set out in the private Appendix A for entering into an Agreement for Headlease and subsequent Headlease, Agreement for Underlease and subsequent Underlease and an Agreement for Sub-Underlease and subsequent Sub-underlease of the new MSCP at Northampton Railway Station.

- c) Delegate authority to the Director of communities and Opportunities in consultation with Chief Finance Officer, the Monitoring Officer and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Town Centre Regeneration and Growth and Economy to take the final decision, take all necessary steps and complete the necessary documentation related to the new MSCP at Northampton Railway Station subject to (d) below
- d) Agree that the Council should only proceed with the proposed lease arrangements subject to the overall business case continuing to show a profit for the council. This will be assessed prior to entering into the agreements by the Head of Major Project and Regeneration.

3.2 Reason for Recommendations

- a) The proposal would help to achieve a number of key objectives including helping to meet an identified undersupply of car parking and providing a new income stream for the council. Meeting an undersupply of car parking at this site will support economic growth and the prosperity of the town and make significant enhancements to the overall environmental and pedestrian connectivity of the surrounding area. The recommendations enable the scheme to proceed, whilst there remain outstanding risks and interdependencies, without these approvals, the project could not continue at this stage.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 A proposal for the council to enter a 40-year income strip arrangement was recommended as the best route for this, which would enable the construction works to be funded through a forward funding deal with a financial institution (such as Legal and General, M&G, Aviva, Canada Life).
- 4.2 Without the council's covenant strength, the car park proposal will not come forward as it would fail to achieve a minimum level of commercial return, and therefore is unlikely to attract a commercial delivery partner.
- 4.3 As well as the pure financial case for the delivery of the car park the project also has significant benefits of unlocking the wider station gateway. The current station car park and forecourt area do not create a good impression when arriving at the station and through the delivery of the MSCP space is freed up for new residential and commercial plots that will be able to come forward.
- 4.4 This approach was presented and agreed by cabinet at its meeting in December 2021 with the following terms agreed:
 - Maximum Lease term – 40 years
 - Maximum yield 2.6%
 - Inflation limits of a minimum of 1% and maximum of 4%
- 4.5 It noted that the next stage of due diligence would be undertaken by council officers alongside our professional advisors to complete the arrangements, subject to these meeting or improving on the terms set out in the report.

Enterprise Zone agreement of Business Rate Retention

- 4.6 As the station sits within the Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone (NWEZ) the business rate uplift is retained by the council, as the administrator of the NWEZ, and can be used on projects as agreed by the Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone Board and the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP). It was recommended in the December 21 Cabinet report

(Appendix A) that the Council should only proceed with the proposed lease arrangements subject to gaining approval from the SEMLEP and Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone (NWEZ) Boards that the business rates from the proposed development can be retained for use on the project.

- 4.7 The Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone Board and SEMLEP Board agreed to this at the board meetings in May 2022.

Parking Demand

- 4.8 A parking demand study was undertaken to support the December 2021 Cabinet decision which built in a medium-term impact of COVID-19 and it being assumed that over the long-term demand for rail travel and the associated car parking will continue. Figures for the demand returning to previous levels over the long term were built into the forecast.
- 4.9 It was noted that a further demand assessment would be undertaken in Spring 2022 to assess the recovery following the pandemic. This was delayed until Summer 2022, given further movement restrictions that were put in place during the winter of 2022/23, to provide a more robust picture of rail parking demand with the findings compared to what was anticipated within the December 2021 Cabinet report. While overall recovery was found to be strong their travel demand patterns have changed with a stronger leisure market and continuing weakness of commuter and business travel. Additionally, there appears to be a concentration of demand into Tuesday / Wednesday and Thursday potentially related to working from home being preferred on Monday and Friday.
- 4.10 The study was supported by direct traffic counts over a 4-week period in May / June 2022. This showed an average of over 5,000 total vehicle movements per day via the station approach road. A car park count at the start of the survey was used to develop overall occupancy, which was slightly higher than that reported by WMT. Weekday average occupancy was 47% with a maximum of 68%, whilst weekend average was 30%. This supports the overall trends of market recovery, particularly the midweek concentration of demand and the increase in leisure trips.
- 4.11 This report found that parking demand has continued to improve following Covid but at a slightly lower level than built into the forecast included in the previous report. A reduction in the forecasted demand for the car park was made to account for the changes set out within report with the anticipated first year income reducing from over £2m to £1.735m
- 4.12 A further update to this report (Appendix B) has been undertaken in March 2023 to get the up-to-date position. The results in the report are broadly positive showing demand recovering in line with the previous forecasts with further rail services now running, having been reduced since Covid. Although further services are now running it is still anticipated that it will take time for passenger behaviours to change because of the increased services.
- 4.13 A further condition is being included for a further demand study to be carried out ahead of the agreements being entered into to test that the parking demand has continued to recover in line with forecasts, if this is not achieved it will give WNC the opportunity to not proceed.

Impact from changes to interest Rates

- 4.14 Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine there have been large financial implications with the Bank of England rapidly raising interest rate increases along with movement in the gilt rates – many of the institutional funds use UK Gilt rates as a proxy for certain types of financial mechanisms. The funding structure proposed for the MSCP is affected by gilt price changes. The institutional funders have found recent months very challenging in being able to value assets, however it is now

clear that the value of the car park has reduced which will drive up the annual headlease payment liability for the Council.

- 4.15 Please see further points in private appendix
- 4.16 As well as the changes set out in the private appendix there have also been significant increases to costs due to the high levels of construction inflation. Most of the pressure for the cost increases was able to be accounted for within inflation allowances, however some of the cost increases has needed to be met through an increase to the build cost.
- 4.17 The Council have worked hard to value engineer the position to help mitigate a reduction in the “margin of safety” (income vs cost) some of which has been bridged by alternative operational arrangements.
- 4.18 To value engineer the position various areas have been looked at and agreed:
- the developer has reduced the amount of profit they are taking from the scheme from 12% to 10%
 - following conversations with Assets, it has been agreed that the council will manage the car park in house and so the level of profit built in for an operator has been taken out.
 - agreed changes to the structure of the agreements to enable a more tax efficient structure for the council reducing the SDLT (Stamp Duty Land Tax) liability to WNC by £326k. This has reduced the amount of borrowing required to help offset the commencement rent.
 - The business rates cost of £125k pa has been removed from the financial model up to 2038 in line with the approvals from the NWEZ and SEMLEP Boards, as noted in para’s 4.6 and 4.7 above.
- 4.19 The updated financial position is summarised in the private appendix.
- 4.20 Blocwork have continued to progress the design development, planning application and legal agreements at their own risk since the Cabinet Decision with the planning application now submitted for the scheme. They are optimistic that with planning approval and completed legal agreements, with only a limited number of conditions, that the Investment market will offer a keen yield, that when alongside the other changes to the financial arrangements listed above mean that the financial profile submitted as part of the December 2021 cabinet decision can be met.
- 4.21 WNC has included conditions that will still need to be met which include:
- Requirement for further demand assessment being required ahead funding being drawn down and construction commencing. This condition will state that parking demand will have needed to recover in line or better than in the demand report included with the December 2021 Cabinet report.
 - Overall project IRR is maintained at 15% IRR and that revenue for the first 10 years is at least £3.7m. This will act as a keen financial hurdle rate with the IRR protecting the 40-year return and the 10-year revenue figure ensuring that the surplus isn’t anticipated later in the term of the agreement.
- 4.22 The developer considers that given the legal agreements are very advanced and that the scheme will have full planning permission that it is likely that the financial hurdle rate could be achieved.

summer. This is a significant risk given the current economic uncertainty but if the rate is not able to be achieved in the coming months, then the package can be taken back to the market later in the year when base rates may have stabilised, or hopefully started to fall.

Revised lease structure

- 4.23 Revised lease structure set out within the private appendix.

Further matters – wider scheme benefits

- 4.24 As part of the negotiations Network Rail has agreed to address the lack of lift or ramp at the front of the station subject to the car parking gaining approval. A proposal for a new ramp has been developed and will be progressed on agreement. This will help encourage both sustainable transport access (cycles) and equity of access for people with mobility difficulties.
- 4.25 Blocwork continues to engage a range of interested parties in the phase two scheme, with residential proposed that could begin construction immediately after the MSCP is complete.
- 4.26 Public access to and around the site would be improved, with a cycling hub also proposed as part of phase two as well as the taxi rank/drop-off to the station being improved as part of the Master planned scheme.

Alternatives considered

- 4.27 It was considered to no longer proceed with the project given the change in the yield that is required to still be financially worthwhile for the council to proceed. This was discounted as the current yield still achieves a return that would generate a profit rent for the council over the life of the lease in most scenarios tested as well as enabling the wider regeneration of the station area.

5. Implications (including financial implications)

Resources and Financial

- 5.1 The base model retains the overall surplus to the Council WNC of £16.759m by the end of the 40 years which equates to an IRR (Internal Rate of Return) of 19.72% which represents a reasonable level of return.
- 5.2 Given the council were previously assuming that the car park would be run by an operator in the previous financial model taken to Cabinet this still leaves a healthy level contingency/margin for the Council on top of the £16.759m anticipated profit.
- 5.3 The model is built on a number of assumptions, all of which are best estimates. The two biggest elements are the head lease payments and the car parking income.

Sensitivities

- 5.4 A full range of sensitivities that have been tested are set out in the private Appendix A showing the relative impact on the potential return to the council. These demonstrate while there is a breaking point when the car park will not generate a surplus for the

that in most tested circumstances the new MSCP is expected to provide the council with a surplus.

Legal

- 5.5 The Council has broad powers to invest in and deliver infrastructure within its area to support economic growth and its specific service responsibilities.
- 5.6 The lease provisions will need to meet the specific circumstances which enable Network Rail to maintain control due to its proximity to the railway but also ensures a period which enables the viability of the scheme and there are mechanisms available which would support these objectives, and which will be employed as is appropriate if the project progresses.
- 5.7 Given the ongoing testing of the business case it will be necessary to have a formal decision before moving forward following the necessary due diligence and this will be made in consultation with the statutory officers.

Risks

- 5.8 The principal risk is that the council will take on the risk that the car parking income will be sufficient to meet its obligations under the head lease for the 40-year term.
- 5.9 The continuing recovery in parking demand and changes in parking patterns as a result of greater flexible working causing lower than expected demand for station parking into the future. Many businesses are now opting for a hybrid style approach. The hybrid approach is seeing people working at home for part of the week and in an office for part of the week. If this continues to happen it is not yet known how this might impact upon rail travel and the potential use of the MSCP in Northampton.
- 5.10 The development of automated (driverless) cars results in lower levels of parking demand. This could arise from two sources. Firstly, cars which take people to the station may well be a form of taxi which then departs to seek other customers, or if owned by the user may return to their home or another free parking location. Secondly, it may suppress demand for rail trips because people are content to be taken longer distances by automated car than they would when having to focus on driving. Fewer rail trips would result in lower station parking demand. Whilst the development of driverless cars has been slower than its more enthusiastic proponents suggested, over the life of the proposed lease it seems likely that full automation will be achieved and become widespread. This could result in substantial reductions in parking demand. The council at the time might choose to mitigate this risk by:
 - 5.10.1 Reducing parking supply in other car parks, including redeveloping them. Of course, the ability to do this would be affected by where people wished to park.

- 5.10.2 Including provisions in the lease agreement which allowed it to change the use of parts of the car park if it was clear that there was no prospect of those parts being used for parking.
- 5.11 Inflation runs at high levels, increasing the head lease payments quicker than in the base scenario. This would lead to head lease payments overtaking the anticipated car parking income quicker than expected and lower levels of return to the council, including potentially leading to an overall deficit. RPI is a poor measure of inflation which tends to exaggerate increases in costs. The four per cent maximum annual increase would mitigate that risk to some degree.
- 5.12 Construction costs increase faster than can be anticipated, leading to the developer seeking an increased contribution from the build of the MSCP. This would have a negative impact on the levels of return to the council. In the event that this occurred, a fresh report to cabinet would be made if it was considered the scheme was nonetheless worthwhile.
- 5.13 Future phases of station redevelopment do not come forward. The council would have no way to control the future phases as it would be taking a head lease rather than entering into a development agreement.
- 5.14 Funders change the rates that they have quoted for the financing of the works due to the council not being able to gain the necessary approvals in time and the period that they are committed to the submitted prices ending. As with a change in construction costs, a fresh report to Cabinet would be made if it was considered the scheme was nonetheless worthwhile.
- 5.15 **Consultation**
- 5.16 Internal council teams such as assets, finance, legal and planning have been consulted and engaged as the scheme has been developed.
- 5.17 External consultation has taken place through the planning process.

Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

- 5.18 This report follows on from the cabinet report on the Station Multi Story Car Park report that was considered by Cabinet in December 2021.

Climate Impact

- 5.19 This proposal should have a significant positive climate impact, with rail travel being one of the most sustainable (with 80 per cent lower greenhouse gas emissions per kilometre compared with car) and safest forms of travel available. Having a greater car parking capacity at the station would allow more people the opportunity to use this mode of transport. Of course, it would also be helpful if people walked, cycled or used public transport to reach the station, but a degree of car use seems likely to continue. As

mentioned above, the scheme would result in improved access to the station with cycles (and for those with mobility difficulties).

- 5.20 As well as this, institutional funds and Government strategic objectives around carbon neutrality are increasingly becoming aligned. A number of the funding bids received refer to their aspirations around carbon neutrality. Two of the top three bids have made very clear statements about their commitments to investing in carbon neutrality.
- 5.21 Although the actual benefit and cost/funding mechanism has yet to be fully appreciated, it is likely that during the funder technical due diligence process they will seek to understand and promote the carbon neutral route for construction and delivery. Subject to approval by both parties it is likely that the funder may require “green clauses” to be implemented and that they are monitored throughout the life of the project.
- 5.22 Appropriate provision for charging of electric vehicles will also be provided for in the project.

Community Impact

- 5.23 Through the delivery of a new MSCP the train station will be able to serve a greater number of people, with the train station currently having capacity for higher numbers of passengers than use the facility.
- 5.24 The projects will also enable the wider area to be redeveloped providing new residential and employment opportunities for residents.

6. Background Paper

Northampton Station MSCP Cabinet Report – December 2021 - [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday 7th December 2021, 6.00 pm - West Northamptonshire Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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