



Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held at The Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE on Monday 16 January 2023 at 6.00 pm

Agenda

1.	Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members
2.	Declarations of Interest Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.
3.	Minutes (Pages 5 - 10) To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 November 2022.
4.	Chair's Announcements To receive communications from the Chair.
5.	Pay and Grading Review The Committee to provide scrutiny input to the Council's pay and grading review.
6.	Performance Monitoring Report (Pages 11 - 40) The Committee to consider the Quarter 2 Performance Monitoring Report to inform performance management scrutiny.
7.	Revenues and Benefits Performance Update (Pages 41 - 54) The Committee to receive and review the performance of the Council's Revenues and Benefits Service.

8.	<p>Treasury Management Review (Pages 55 - 70)</p> <p>The Committee to receive the report of the Treasury Management Task and Finish Group for approval.</p>
9.	<p>Quarterly Revenue Monitoring Report (Pages 71 - 110)</p> <p>The Committee to consider and review the Revenue Monitoring Report for Quarter 2 2022-23.</p>
10.	<p>Review of the Committee's Work Programme 2022-2023 (Pages 111 - 116)</p> <p>To review and note the Committee Work Programme 2022-23.</p>
11.	<p>Urgent Business</p> <p>The Chair to advise whether they have agreed to any items of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.</p>

Catherine Whitehead
Proper Officer
6 January 2023

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members:

Councillor Ian McCord (Chair)	Councillor Andrew Grant (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Jamal Alwahabi	Councillor Sally Beardsworth
Councillor Paul Clark	Councillor Maggie Clubley
Councillor Rupert Frost	Councillor Keith Holland-Delamere
Councillor Mark Hughes	Councillor David James
Councillor Koulla Jolley	Councillor Colin Morgan
Councillor Ken Pritchard	Councillor Azizur Rahman
Councillor Richard Solesbury-Timms	Councillor Danielle Stone

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.

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

Queries Regarding this Agenda

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

Tel: 01327 322043

Email: democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk

Or by writing to:

West Northamptonshire Council
One Angel Square
Angel Street
Northampton
NN1 1ED

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Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at The Council Chamber, Lodge Road, Daventry, NN11 4FP on Monday 7 November 2022 at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Ian McCord (Chair)
 Councillor Andrew Grant (Vice-Chair)
 Councillor Jamal Alwahabi
 Councillor Paul Clark
 Councillor Maggie Clubley
 Councillor Rupert Frost
 Councillor Keith Holland-Delamere
 Councillor Mark Hughes
 Councillor David James
 Councillor Koulla Jolley
 Councillor Colin Morgan
 Councillor Ken Pritchard
 Councillor Azizur Rahman
 Councillor Danielle Stone

Also Present: Colin Foster – Chief Executive (NCT)
 Andrew Tagg – Director of Finance and Resources (NCT)
 Councillor Malcolm Longley – Cabinet Member for Finance
 Councillor Wendy Randall (For Minute Item 29)

Officers: Anna Earnshaw, Chief Executive
 Martin Henry, Executive Director - Finance (Section 151 Officer)
 Stuart Timmiss, Executive Director - Place and Economy
 Simon Bowers, Assistant Director - Assets and Environment
 Tracy Tiff, Deputy Democratic Services Manager
 Richard Woods, Democratic Services Officer

24. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

25. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

26. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed Colin Foster and Andrew Tagg from the Northamptonshire Children's Trust to the meeting, who were in attendance to provide the Committee with an overview of the Children's Trust Budget and its main cost drivers.

27. **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

28. **Budget Scrutiny**

The Committee received a presentation from the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Resources of the Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) which provided an overview of the Children's Trust budget and its main cost drivers.

In introducing the presentation, the Chief Executive (NCT) outlined that the shared mission between West Northamptonshire Council and North Northamptonshire Council was to create a service capable of radically improving services for children, young people, and families across Northamptonshire. The present leadership of the trust acknowledged that the trust had emerged out of a very difficult set of circumstances with the former Northamptonshire County Council, however the new model had been set on a clear path towards improvement.

The Chief Executive (NCT) explained that a core ambition for the trust was to achieve a 'Good' rating in the next full Ofsted inspection scheduled for 2025, however the result of the recent inspection carried out over the autumn of 2022 would not be made public until late November 2022. Some of the key achievements of the trust so far included:

- 1) Delivered 6,000 more placement days using approx. same funds as 2019/20
- 2) Improved quality of social care practice and management oversight, which is helping to keep children safe, as evidenced in Ofsted visits and inspections, peer reviews and internal quality assurance
- 3) More of our social worker posts are filled 15.8% social worker vacancies in June 2022 (England average 17%) compared with 22.28% in October 2019 and no unallocated cases
- 4) Improved working with our partners and a stronger strategic approach to early help; improved early help assessment, step down process and timeliness of support
- 5) An embedded quality assurance framework working alongside practitioners to collaboratively reflect on practice, celebrate good practice and identify learning, which is 'improving children's experiences'
- 6) Achieved 100% supporting families PBR grant funds through improving practice 21/22 (previous best 37%)
- 7) Reducing pressures in the system in the context of increasing demand

In outlining the key cost drivers behind the Children's Trust budget, the Chief Executive (NCT) explained that these were an increase in children's social care cases in the care system, and increased number of children in care, increased cost

and reduced availability of placements, increasing independent fostering agency fees, and workforce pressures. In terms of additional pressures aside from the key cost drivers that were outlined, the contract negotiation also included the implementation of a staff pay award above the contract sum provision (£1.9m) based on the flat rate of increase of £1,925. There were also additional pressures related to demand growth in children's placements (£4.380m), inflationary increases above the contract sum in placements (£2.062m) and transport (0.675m), the non-delivery of £1.2m for the development of children's homes which had been built into future savings forecasts following the confirmation of capital funding in October 2022, and a cost of £0.844m following a Local Government Ombudsman judgement relating to adoption.

In response to questions from the Committee regarding how the Trust was managing workforce pressures, the Chief Executive (NCT) explained that following several years of upheaval, instability and reliance on agency staff, the overarching ambition was to return the service to a position of stability and make the Trust an attractive employer, however noted the national shortage in children's social workers.

The Chief Executive (NCT) also outlined that the percentage of social worker posts that were vacant across Prevention and Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting (17%) not only compared favourably to the Trust's KPI target of 20% but had reduced by 2.2% since October 2022. However, the percentage of the social worker workforce filled by agency staff across Prevention and Safeguarding was 18.63%, which remained slightly above the Trust's KPI target of 18%, however this excluded temporary funded posts.

In outlining the current budget position of the Trust, the Chief Executive (NCT) advised that the forecast outturn position for 2022-23 was an overspend of £11.062m against the approved net budget of £128.33m. In accordance with the contractual split percentage between West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) this equated to an overspend of £5.973m for WNC and £5.09m for NNC respectively, with the full savings programme of £2.99m having been contained within the forecast outturn position.

In response to questions from the Committee regarding how the Trust planned to mitigate this overspend, the Chief Executive (NCT) explained that in order to achieve planned savings whilst simultaneously improving the service offer, separate one-off investment options of £1.35m revenue and £1.8m, however both options would be subjected to separate detailed business cases in accordance with each Council's governance processes.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Chair thanked the Chief Executive (NCT) and the Director of Finance and Resources (NCT) for their detailed analysis of the Children's Trust Budget, and the Committee agreed that the cost drivers for the Children's Trust Budget would become a key focus of its budget scrutiny work throughout the budget setting process.

The Chair also explained that once arrangements had been finalised with Officers for the format of the Committee's budget scrutiny process, such arrangements would be communicated to Members of the Committee in due course.

Resolved

- (1) That the information on cost drivers of the Children's Trust Budget be fully utilised to inform the Committee's budget scrutiny activity going forward.
- (2) That, once finalised with officers, it be agreed that arrangements for the Committee's budget scrutiny process be communicated to Members of the Committee as soon as practicable.

29. Call-in of Cabinet Decision of 11 October 2022 - Agenda Item 13: Office Optimisation Stage 1 building adaptations budget and disposals

The Chair introduced the Call-In request and explained that, on the advice of the Monitoring Officer, the Call-In request had been through the appropriate channels and was deemed to be valid. The Chair then explained the procedure for the Call-In and invited the Call-In originator, Councillor Wendy Randall, to address the Committee and outline the reasons for the Call-In.

In outlining the reasons for the Call-In, Councillor Randall explained that the decision of Cabinet to proceed with Stage 1 of the Council's office optimisation and building adaptation proposals, which included the closure of the Lodge Road Offices in Daventry and the establishment of a smaller office base in The Abbey Centre, had been taken without the appropriate consultation with staff having taken place, inadequate consideration of alternative options, inadequate consideration of the impact the decision could have on voluntary organisations based in The Abbey Centre, and also a lack of consideration to the CCTV system operated by Daventry Town Council, the cabling for which was linked to the Lodge Road building.

Councillor Randall questioned why no business plan or forward plan had ever been produced and shared with all Councillors prior to the taking of this decision and explained that it was of vital importance that Councillors be fully consulted not only on this decision, and all decisions of such magnitude in the future.

In outlining the possible impact of the Cabinet decision on staff based at Lodge Road, Councillor Randall expressed disappointment with the fact that the announcement of this decision was shared with all staff via email with no prior warning for the affected staff, though noted the Chief Executive's explanation that this had to be done quickly and decisively to quash inaccurate rumours. As part of the Call-In, Councillor Randall also requested further information on the effect of this decision on office-based staff at Lodge Road, who it was claimed were now facing additional costs associated with more regular home working or travelling to the Council's other office buildings in Northampton and Towcester.

Members of the Committee had no questions of the Call-In originator.

In response to the Call-In, the Executive Director – Place and Economy sought to explain the rationale behind the office optimisation project, which was to ensure that the Council's core buildings were used in the most efficient and effective way, taking

account of changes to working practices and building requirements following the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular the introduction of worker types for all staff across the organisation.

The work behind the office optimisation project had reviewed the Council's core buildings for the best use and space, monitored the occupancy levels of the buildings, sought to understand the future space and storage requirements of all services, and considered the current costs, age, flexibility, usage, and local context of all core buildings.

The Executive Director – Place and Economy explained that the project would facilitate the creation of local hubs, which would be based out of The Abbey Centre in Daventry, The Forum in Towcester, and The Guildhall in Northampton, along with the Council's main office locations at One Angel Square and The Guildhall in Northampton, with a main office base for the Council's Planning service to be created at The Forum in Towcester.

In response to questions from the Committee regarding the cost and savings associated with the closure of Lodge Road, the Executive Director – Place and Economy addressed the issue raised in the Call-In regarding staff consultation and transparency and explained that the proposed operating model was not shared with staff or unions due to the necessity to move forward with the first stage of the project in order to realise the savings arising from the closure as soon as possible.

The Executive Director – Place and Economy explained that, after taking into consideration a programme of refurbishments of approximately £1m being required to The Abbey Centre in order to create the Council's new Daventry hub, the overall position of vacating and selling the Lodge Road Building would deliver a saving of approximately £343,379.

In summarising the Call-In, Councillor Randall reiterated the view that the decision of Cabinet to proceed with Stage 1 of the office optimisation project had been rushed, had not been subjected to the appropriate consultation with affected staff and unions, had not been subjected to the appropriate prior scrutiny, had not considered the possible impact on Daventry Town Council's CCTV system, left unanswered questions with regards to staff wellbeing and individual circumstances and did not appropriately consider the impact on service provision with fewer desks being available for staff at the proposed Abbey Centre hub.

Findings and Conclusions

During the deliberation session, the Committee concluded that there was a need for the decision to be referred back to Cabinet as there had been a lack of consultation and communication regarding the closure of the offices at Lodge Road, a lack of consideration of the impact on the town's CCTV system linked to the Lodge Road site and adopted by Daventry Town Council, lack of consideration of service provision and concerns over the layout of desk space at the Abbey Centre. The Committee also agreed that there was a need for Councillors to have sight and review of the desk plan for the Abbey Centre.

After all of the evidence had been heard, it was proposed by Councillor Danielle Stone and seconded by Councillor Andrew Grant that the call-in be upheld and the decision be referred back to Cabinet for further consideration. The motion was put to the vote with nine votes cast in favour of the proposal and two votes cast against, therefore the motion was carried.

Resolved

- (1) That the call-in be upheld and the decision referred back to Cabinet on the grounds that:
 - (i) There is a need for wider consultation and communication regarding the closure of the offices at Lodge Road, to ensure that the people of Daventry do not lose out democratically or in service provision.
 - (ii) There is a need for consideration on the impact on the Town's CCTV system linked to Lodge Road and adopted by Daventry Town Council.
- (2) That Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee request that all Councillors are provided with desk plans for the proposed hub at The Abbey Centre as soon as such plans are available.

30. **Review of Committee Work Programme**

The Committee considered its work programme and no changes were proposed.

Resolved

- (1) That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 9.24 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

16th January 2023

Councillor Jonathan Nunn, Leader

Report Title	Corporate Plan Performance Report – 2022-23 Q2
Report Author	Richard Corless Business Intelligence, Policy & Performance richard.corless@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West MO	Catherine Whitehead	21st November
West S151	Martin Henry	22nd November
Other Director/SME	Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive and All Directors via ELT and EPB.	21st November

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Corporate Plan Report Cabinet Paper

Appendix 2 – Corporate Plan Report – 2022-23 Q2

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The included appendices provide an update for quarter 2 to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee 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 July to September 2022 (quarter 2). 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) with our aim being to create a meaningful dashboard of measures that provides members and officers with good insight into the council's performance.

- 1.3. Full details for quarter 2 are included in the attached report and Appendix on performance that was considered at Cabinet on 6 December.
- 1.4. At the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 19th October members requested that links to the main nationally published local authority datasets be provided, these are included below and are our main sources of benchmarking information.
 - [LG Inform](#) is the local area benchmarking tool from the Local Government Association. The LGA's Research and Information team, using data in LG Inform, have written a series of ready-made reports on a range of topics to provide an easy way to access a deeper level of information and intelligence about your local area or community.
 - **Adult Social Care** - [NHS Digital Analytical Hub](#) is an interactive data source, where information is available to supports clinicians at work, help patients get the best care, and to drive improved treatment.
 - **Education** – [DfE Explore Education Statistics \(ESS\)](#) allows users to browse statistical summaries and download associated data to help understand and analyse a range of statistics relating to Education.
 - **Schools Ofsted Data** - [Ofsted](#) is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. They also inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people.
 - **Public Health Fingertips** – [Fingertips](#) is a large public health data collection. Data is organised into the themed profiles.
 - **Children Social Care** - [Local Authority Interactive Tool \(LAIT\)](#) presents information in interactive tables and charts with the local authority's rank and position in England. The tool covers a range of measures associated with children's social care.
 - **ONS** is responsible for collecting, analysing and disseminating statistics about the UK's economy, society and population. This includes data relating to the UK Census, employment, labour market information, inflation and Coronavirus.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the content of the appendix covering quarter 2 of 2022-23.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 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.

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 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny, and other committees.

This performance report provides an overall high-level summary of the key metrics that underpin our stated corporate priorities and sets out metrics that we will 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.

7.1.2 Financial indicators included within the performance report can be found in greater detail within the finance reports that are presented to Cabinet.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report or recommendations.

7.3 Risk

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

7.4 Consultation

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 Carbon Neutral 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.

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

6 DECEMBER 2022

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR JONATHAN NUNN

Report Title Corporate Plan Performance Report – 2022-23 Q2

Report Author Richard Corless
Business Intelligence, Policy & Performance
richard.corless@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West MO	Catherine Whitehead	21/11/2022
West S151	Martin Henry	22/11/22
Other Director/SME	Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive and All Directors via ELT and EPB.	21/11/22
Communications	Becky Hutson	21/11/22

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Corporate Plan Report – 2022-23 Q2

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The attached appendix provides an update for Quarter 2 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 July to September 2022 (Quarter 2). Full details of that performance for this quarter can be found enclosed within the appendix.
- 1.3. The performance indicators included in the report have been subject to review, challenge and approval by both the Cabinet and the Executive Leadership Team (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 councils performance.
- 1.4. 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, for example in Revenues and Benefits where the services are run in three different contracts and models.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

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

4. Reasons for recommendations:

- To comply with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972 to report Council performance to members

This report is for information purposes and discussion only, there are no direct decisions to be made following the report

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

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.

7.1.2 Financial indicators included within the performance report can be found in greater detail within the finance reports that are presented to Cabinet.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report or recommendations.

7.3 Risk

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

7.4 Communication and Consultation

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 2 Report

July to September 2022

Last Updated: 23rd November 2022



Welcome to the latest update on delivery of the West Northamptonshire Council Corporate Plan with data and project updates covering the second 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.

Quarterly Update content

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

- Carbon neutral 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

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

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

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

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

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

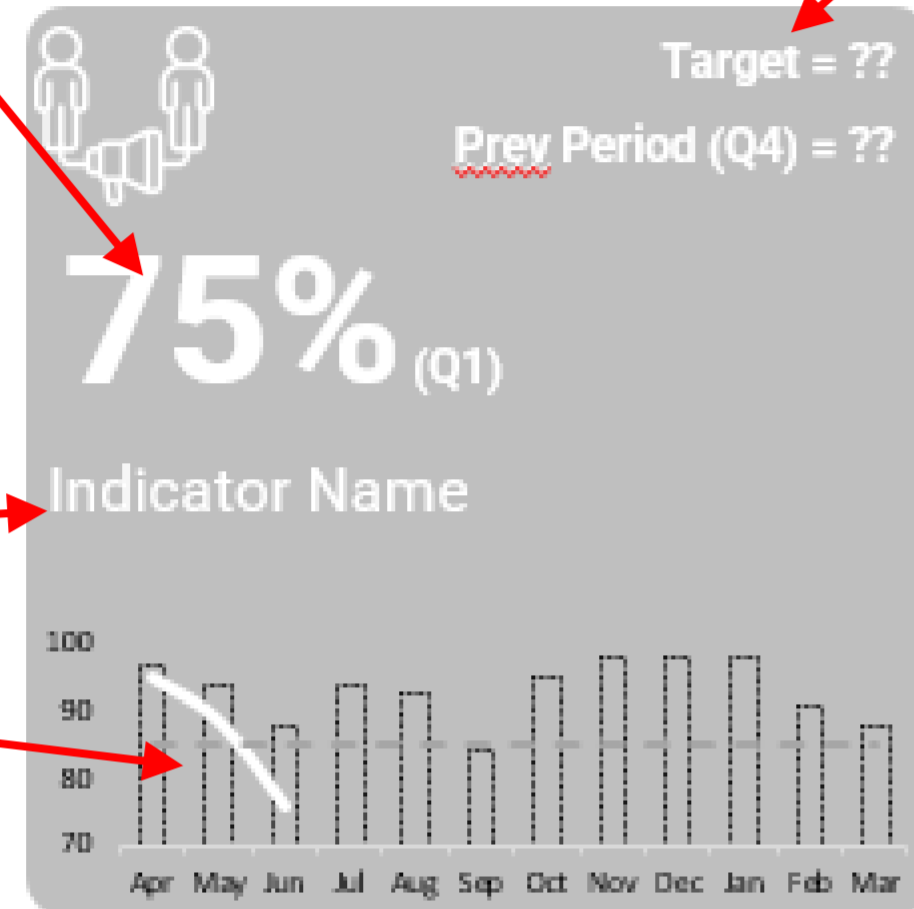
The below diagrams for the indicator dashboard pages and the detailed scorecards outline the data elements within them and how to interpret what is being shown.

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

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

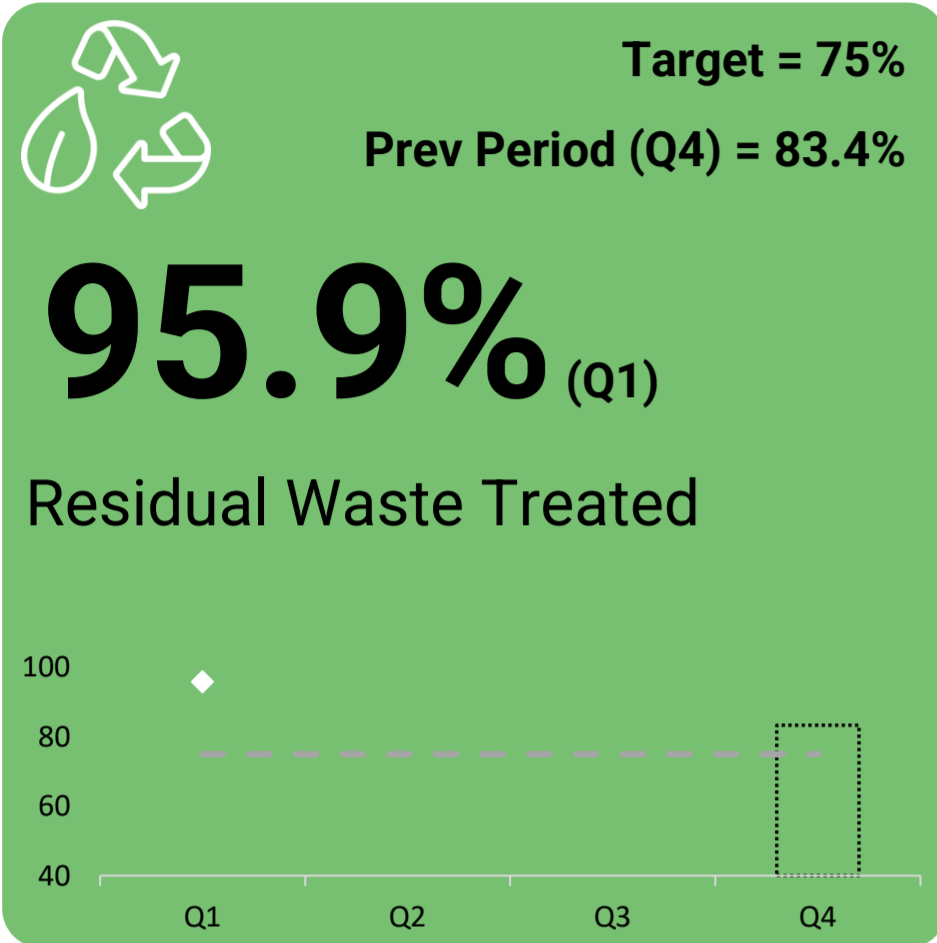
This section includes the target and current performance data broken down to month where available, quarterly and year to date (YTD).

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

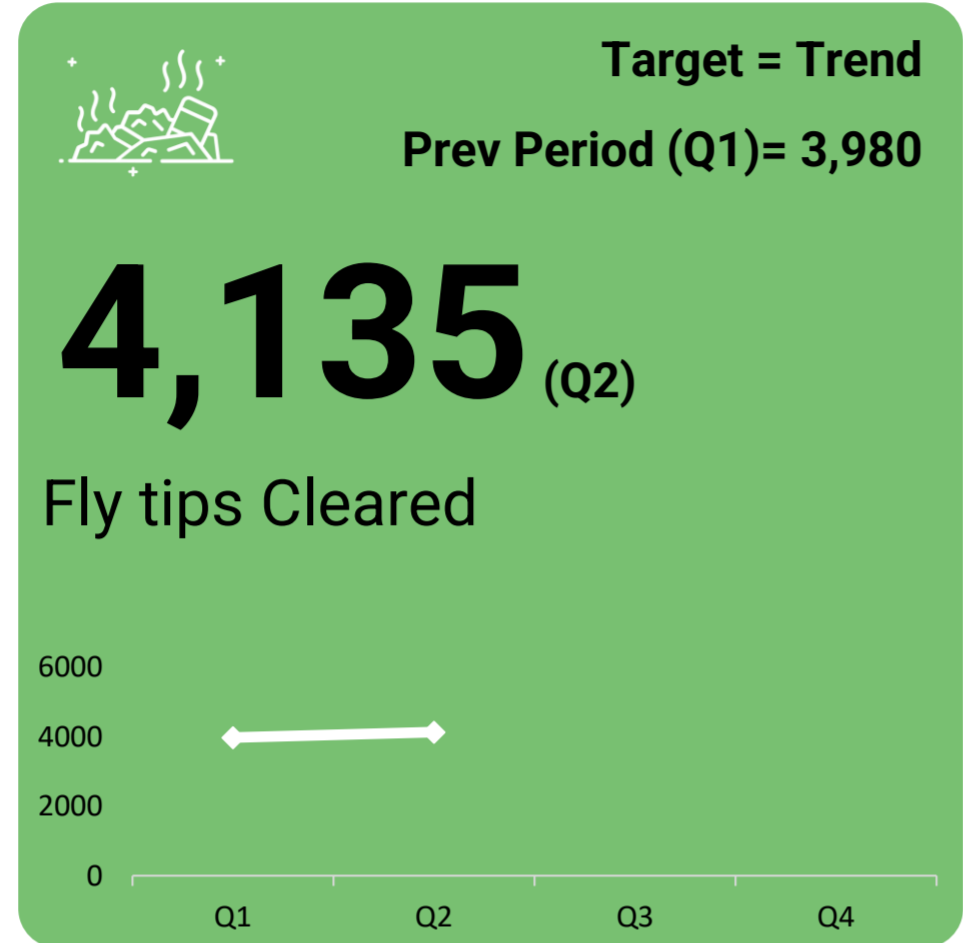
Priority 1 – Green and Clean Environment & Wellbeing



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 indicator replaces the two recycling measures previously included in this report. This is because those two measures form part of the Residual Waste metric, but also combine other elements which would otherwise be absent from reporting.

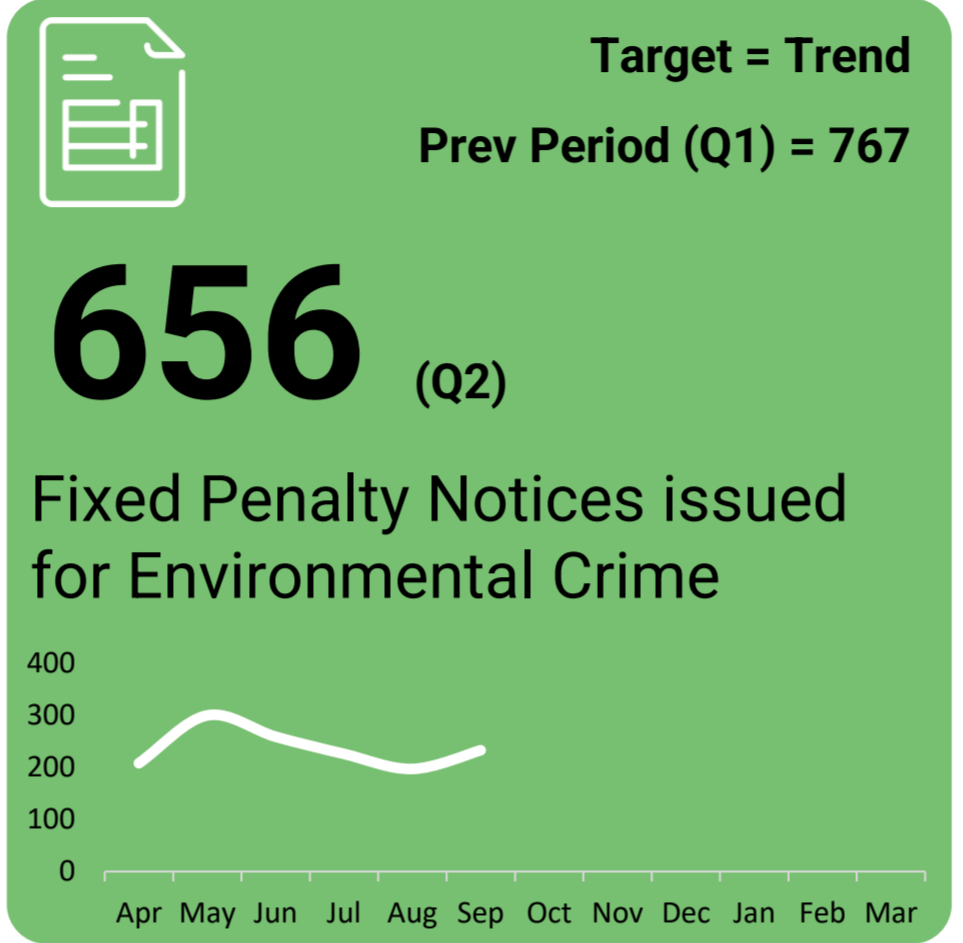
This measure is reported a quarter in arrears due to reporting processes via WasteDataFlow and therefore this report shows the performance for Q1 of 2021-22.



Fly-tipping is illegal dumping of liquid or solid waste on land or in water. The waste is usually dumped to avoid disposal costs. 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.

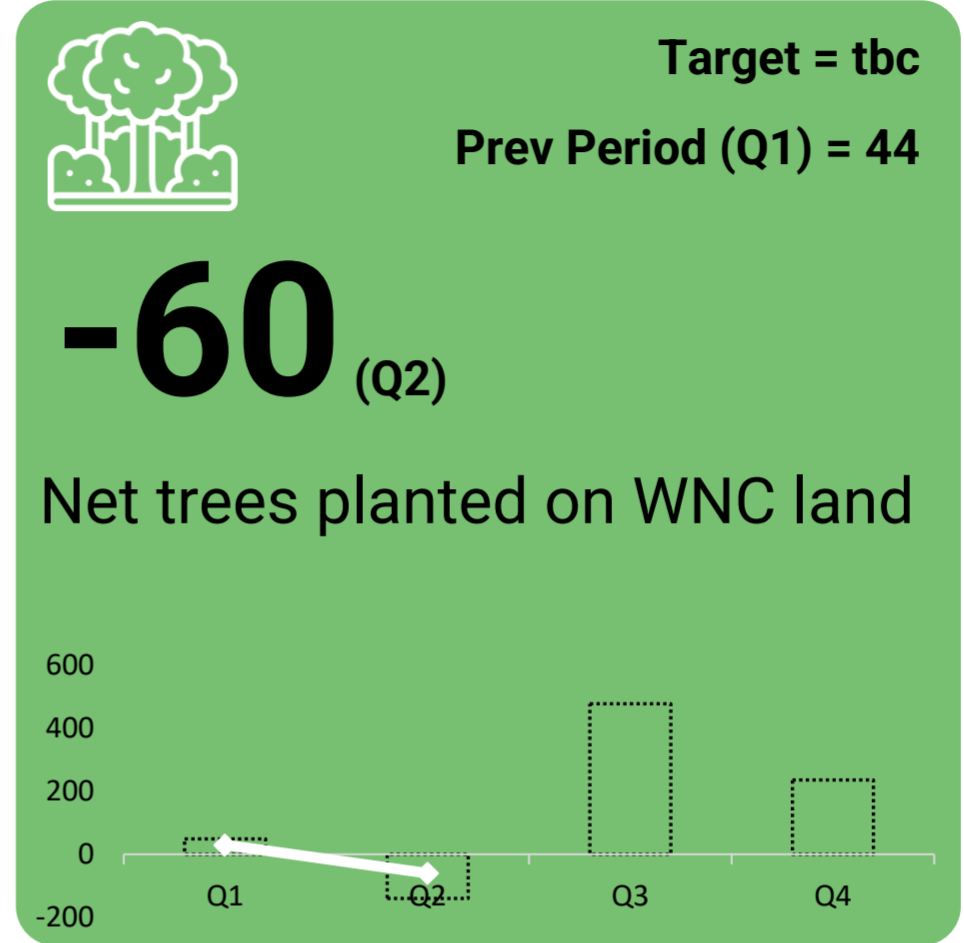
This is a new measure in the corporate scorecard this year and is a trend based measure, whilst there is no target against this measure we have a responsibility to clear all fly-tips in relevant land.

The second quarter this year has seen WNC needing to clear 4,135 fly-tipping incidents, an increase from 3,980 reported in quarter one.



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). Across the second quarter this year 656 FPNs have been issued, a reduction of 111 in the volume issued in the previous quarter.



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

This quarter, which is out of normal planting season has seen 60 tree's removed. In addition to this as part of the Queen's Garden Canopy project to mark the jubilee the council is working with Parish Councils and community groups to plant tree's across 2022 through to March 2023. So far there are 3,306 tree's planted or planned by Town/ Parish Councils, 2,416 in Parks, 380 in schools and a further 3,402 through community groups or private parties.

Priority 1 – Green and Clean Environment & Wellbeing

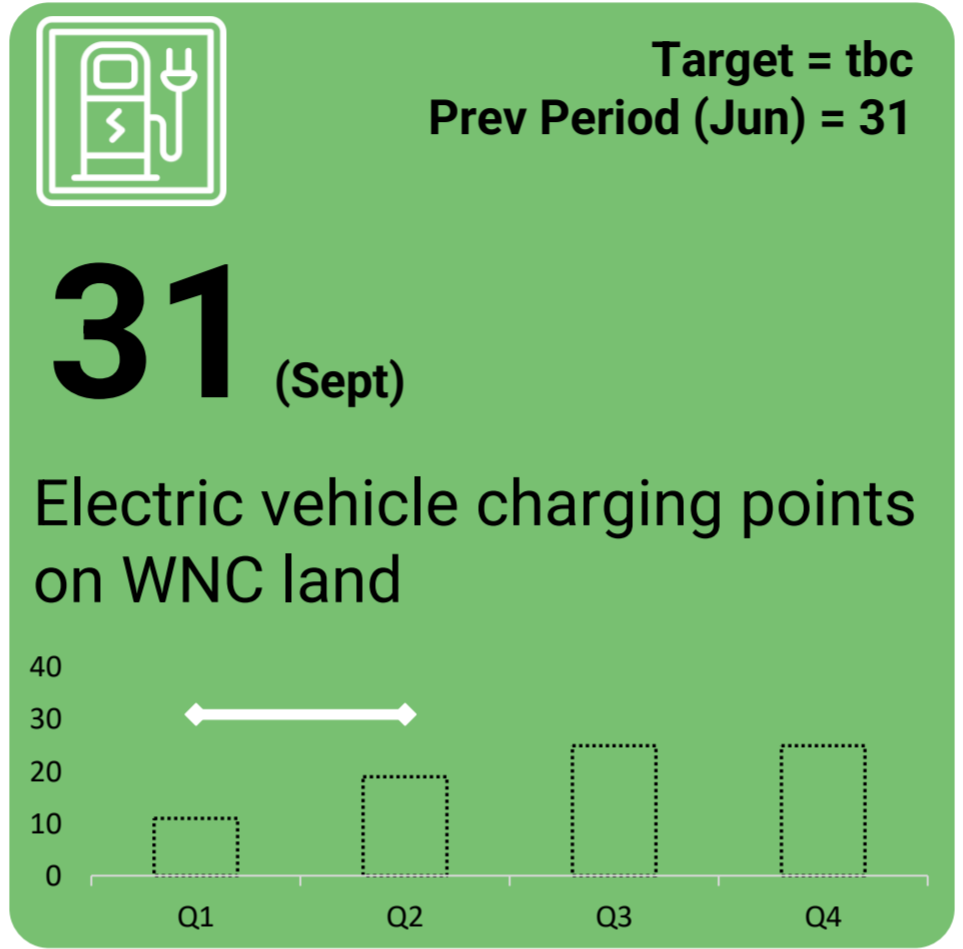


This measure counts the number of visitors to leisure centres that are ran by West Northamptonshire Council.

Overall numbers each month remain consistently above the forecast target but some classes / sessions remain below pre-covid levels at the current time.

The first two quarters of the current year have each seen over 0.5million visitors into the leisure's centres with a total year to date of 1,096,833 visitors.

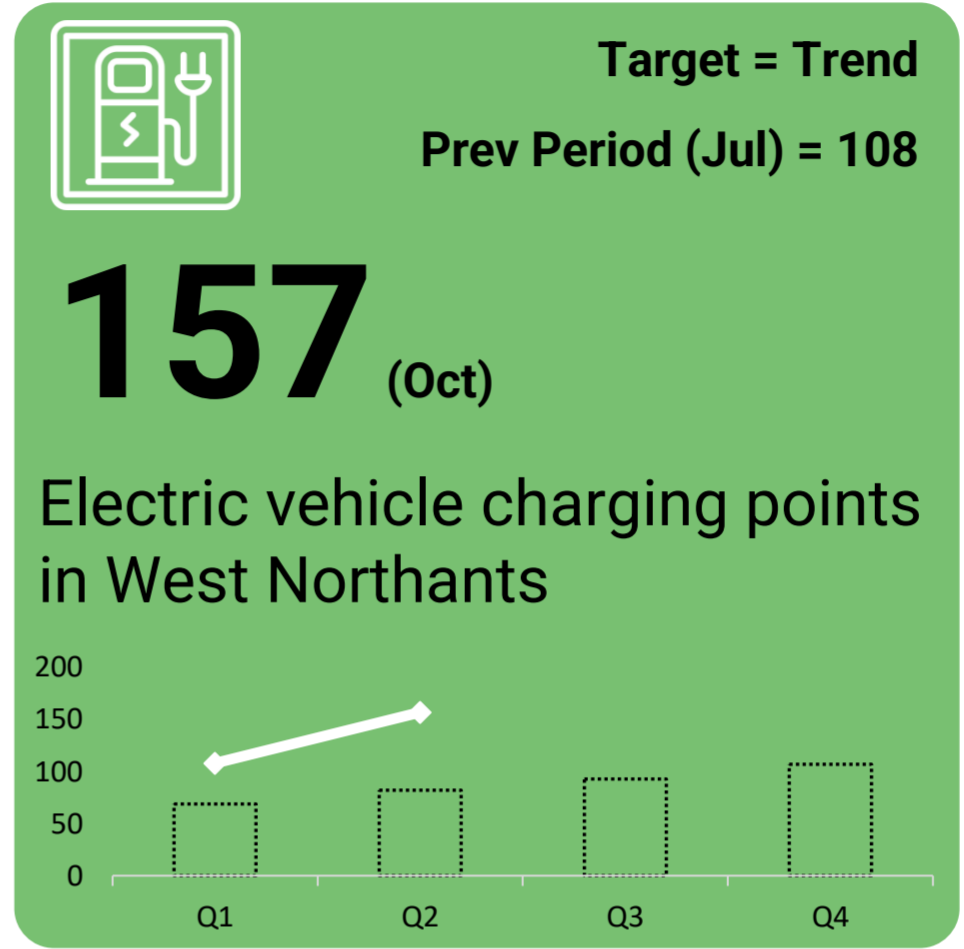
Leisure centres overall have benefitted from the summer holidays, with high throughput figures over the six weeks from end July to start of September.

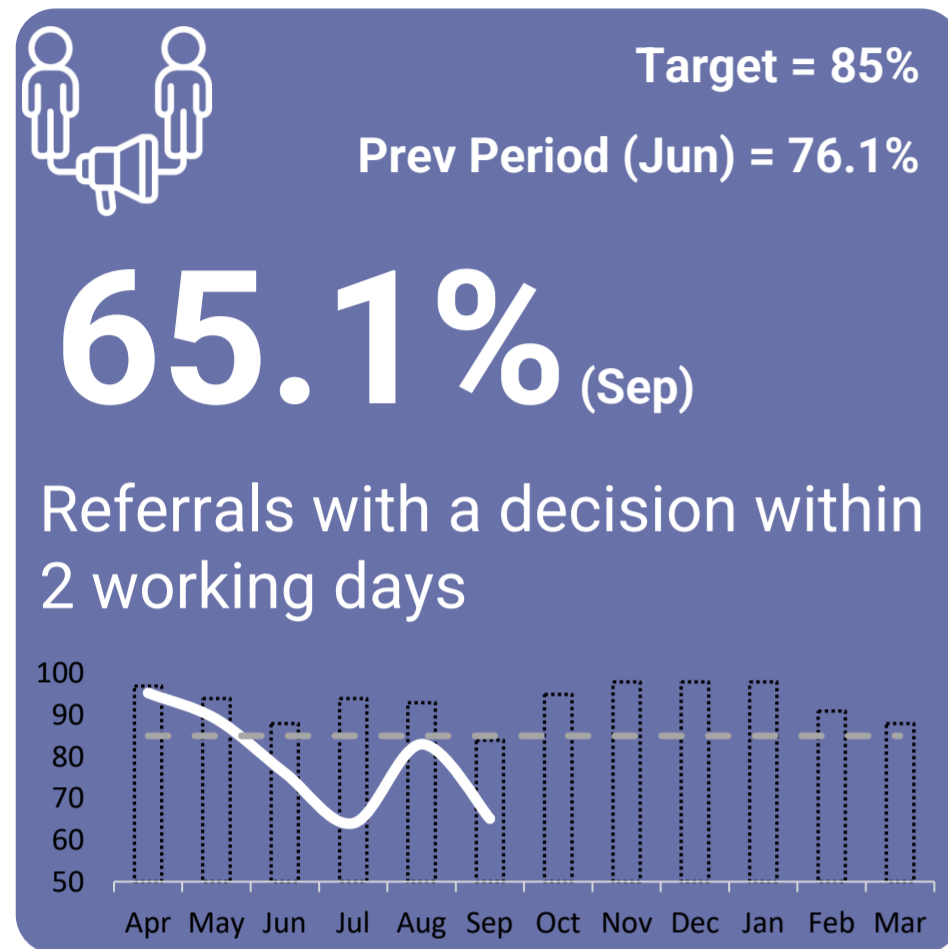


WNC has 31 electric vehicle charge points in place on either the highway or within WNC car parks or property that are available for electric vehicles, this is no change from the position at the end of June.

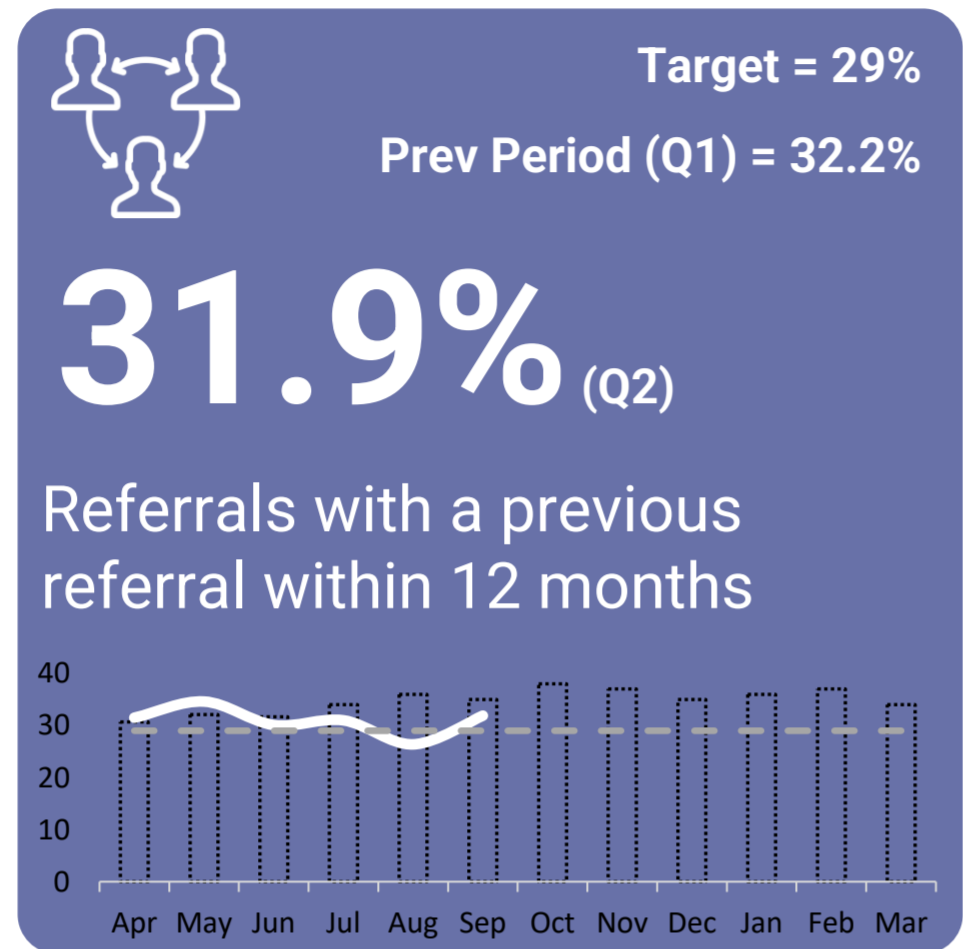
Additionally the total charging point access for West Northamptonshire as at October 2022 shows that there are 157 public charging devices, an increase of 49 since July 2022, of these 50 are rapid charging devices (an increase of 13 from July).

The West Northamptonshire area has 38.6 charging points per 100,000 population (up from 26.6 at July 2022). This is higher than lower than the East Midlands (37.9), but lower than the England (52.7) averages.

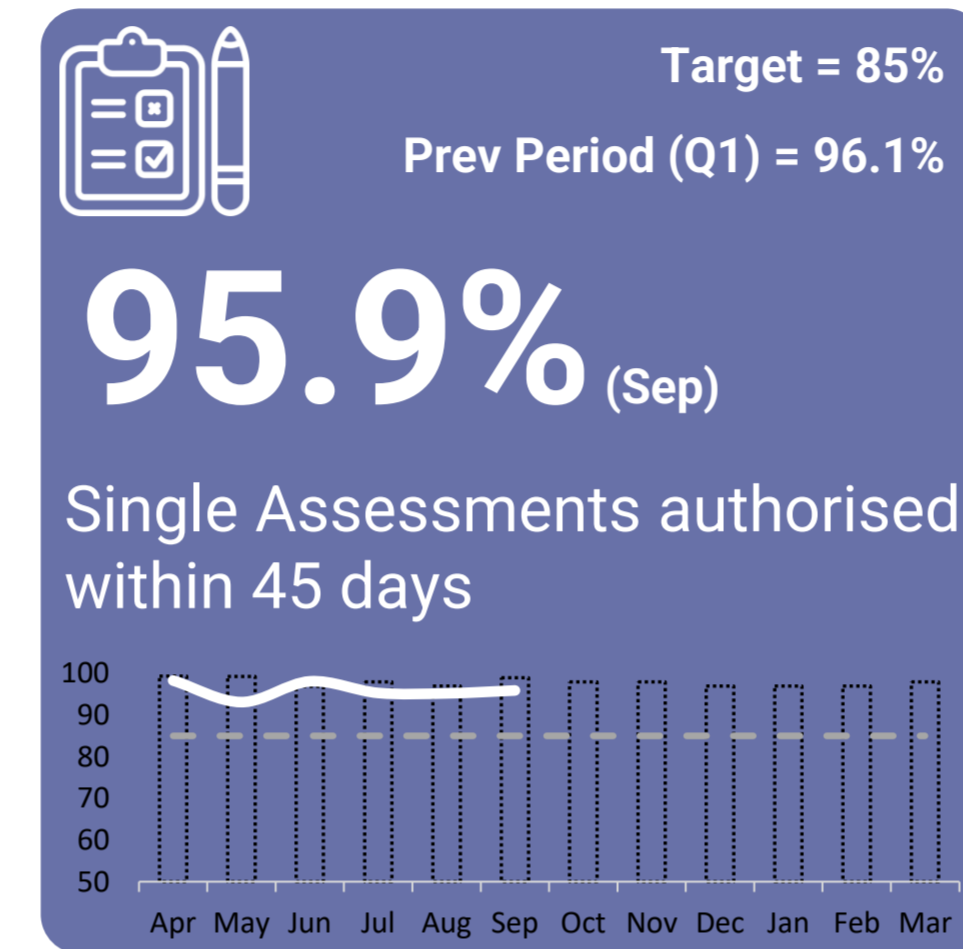




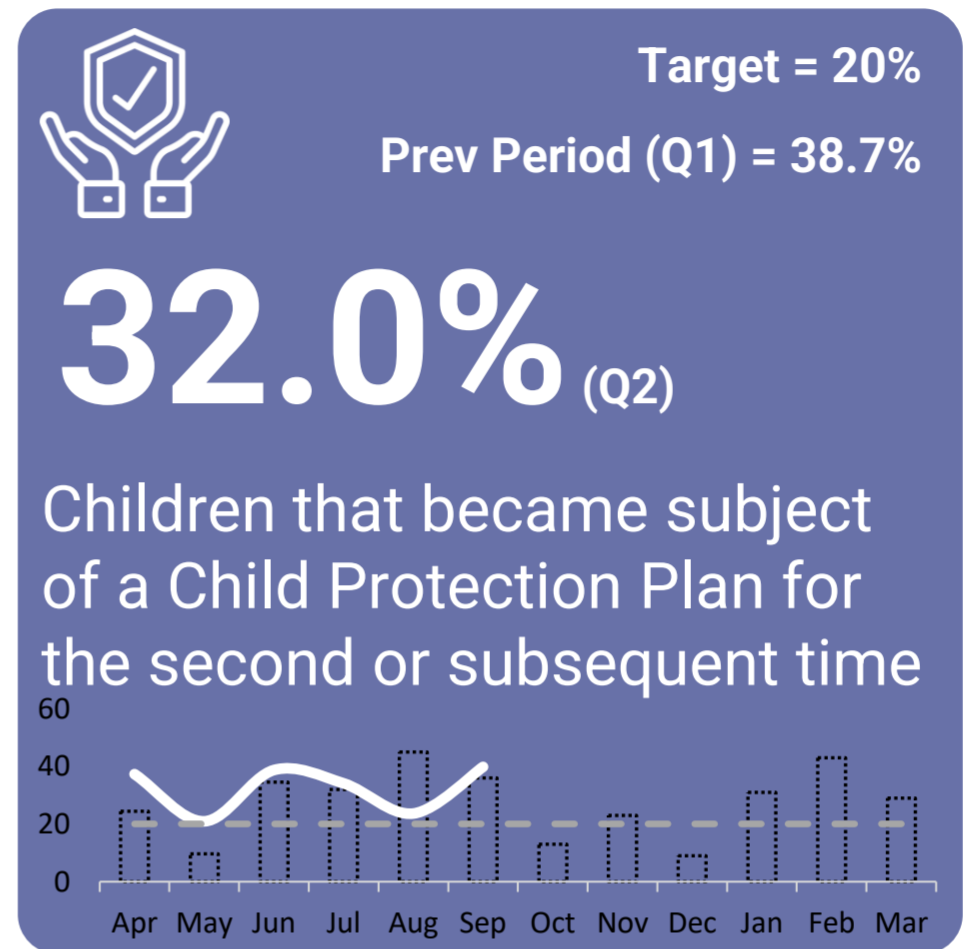
A referral is defined as a request for a social care intervention/assessment, and a contact is information given to social care about a situation which does not meet the threshold for referral, for example notifying that the child has gone missing or domestic violence notifications from police if a child was present. Contacts are logged to give a complete history for the child but only count as a referral where they have resulted in an assessment. Performance has declined this month due to IT breakdown, PPN challenges and increase in business. The service continues to work hard on ensuring timely decision making is maintained. Cases that are rag rated RED are prioritised and decisions made within 1 day.



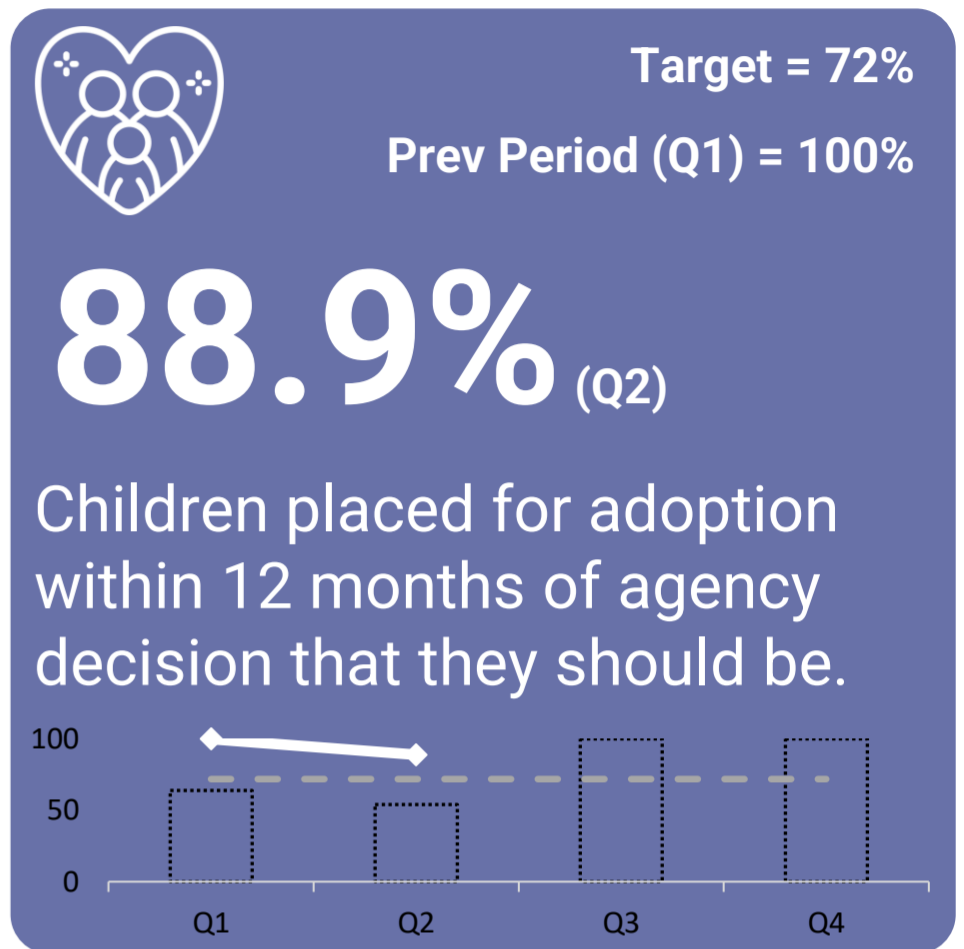
This is 3% above target this month whilst remaining an area of ongoing focus with audit and review for learning. It is anticipated that the strengthened model in MASH and developments in CFSS/Early Help will continue to support appropriate reduction going forward. Steps have been taken to strengthen the Early Help partnerships with Partnership Support Team (Early Help MASH) being placed in the MASH pods and a leaner step down process. The high number of cases stepping down is presenting challenges in regards to capacity in Family Support/Early help partnership.



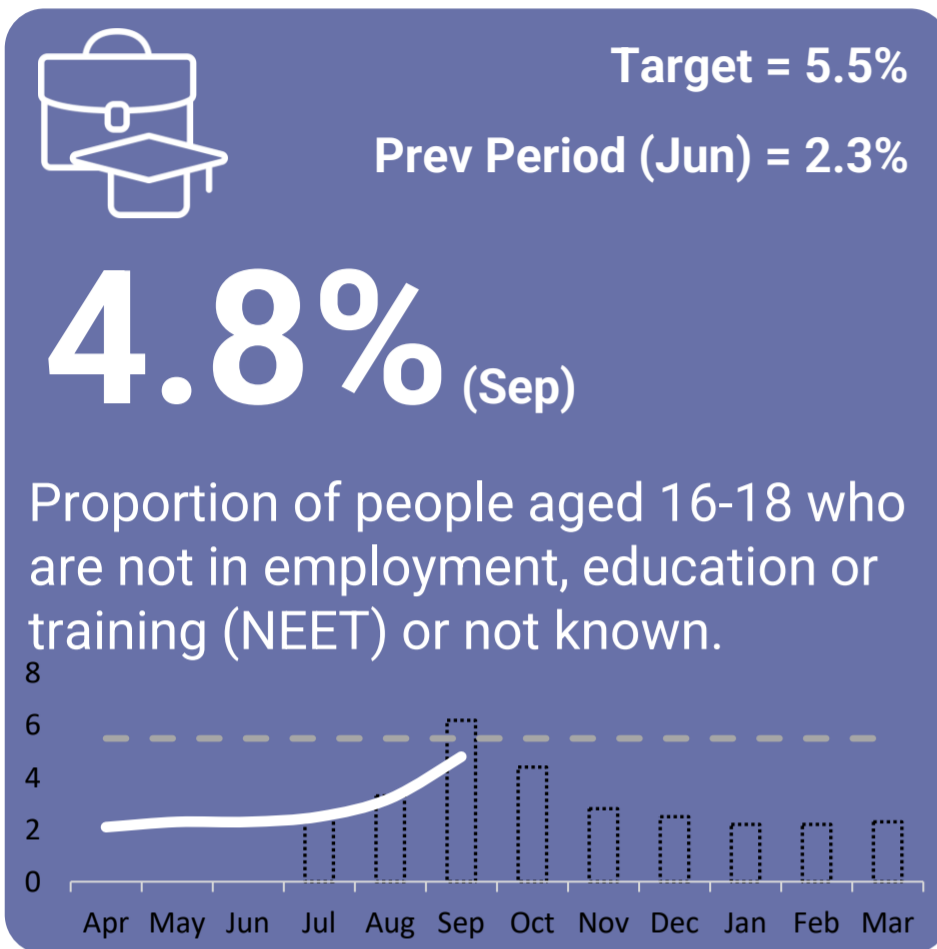
Assessment timescales remain consistently above target. All managers monitor this very closely via daily reports. A narrative is provided for cases that go beyond 45 days and this remains a very small minority. In addition to timeliness, we work on increasing the quality of assessments and more effective use of SofS in our interventions. PIP peer review has identified improvements in the quality of assessments



This measure continues to be variable and, on occasion, too high. 33 of 83 plans starting in September are for children who had been on a plan before (17 families). 5 families ended plans within the last 1-2 years and 12 ended 2 or more years ago. If looking at those repeating within 2 years, the figure is 13%. 10 of the families returned with the need 'neglect' (5 of those had neglect for the previous plan as well). 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.



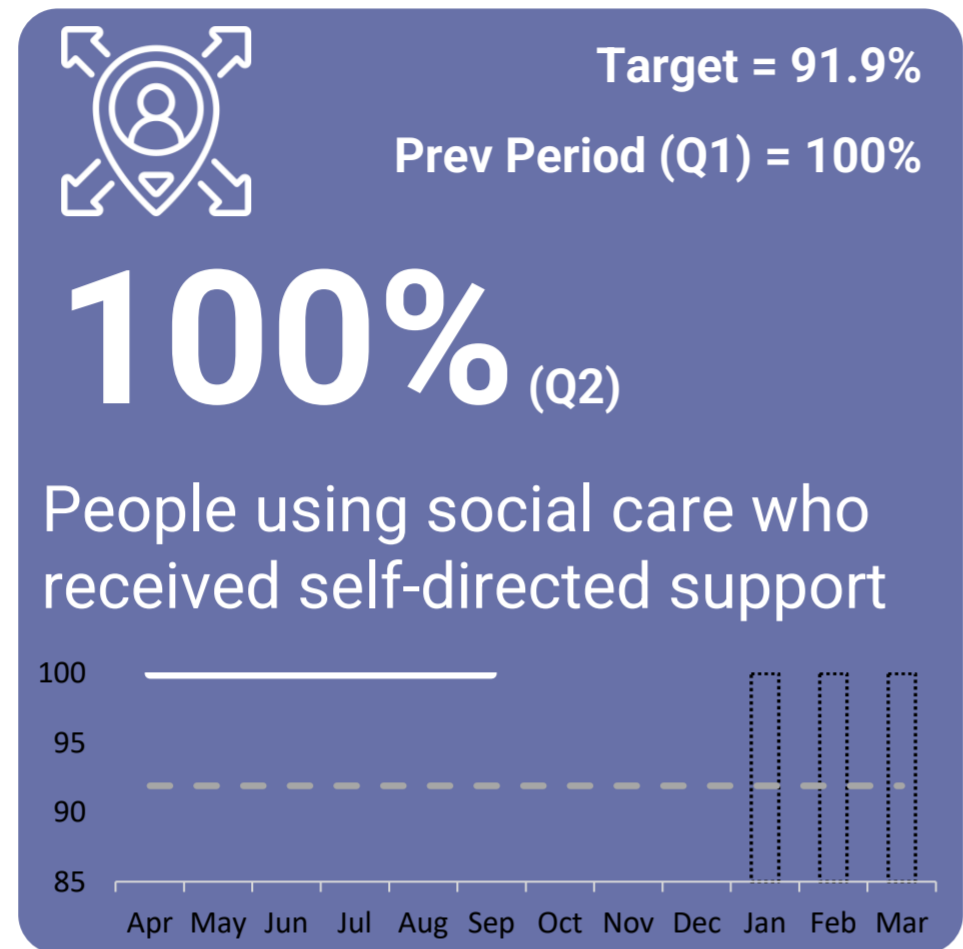
Strengthened family finding and matching processes have been implemented which alongside improved permanency tracking arrangements have supported timely decision making process and ability to progress adoption placements. The use of foster to adopt placements have also positively influenced this performance indicator. This quarters performance relates to 9 children who have been placed for adoption.



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'.

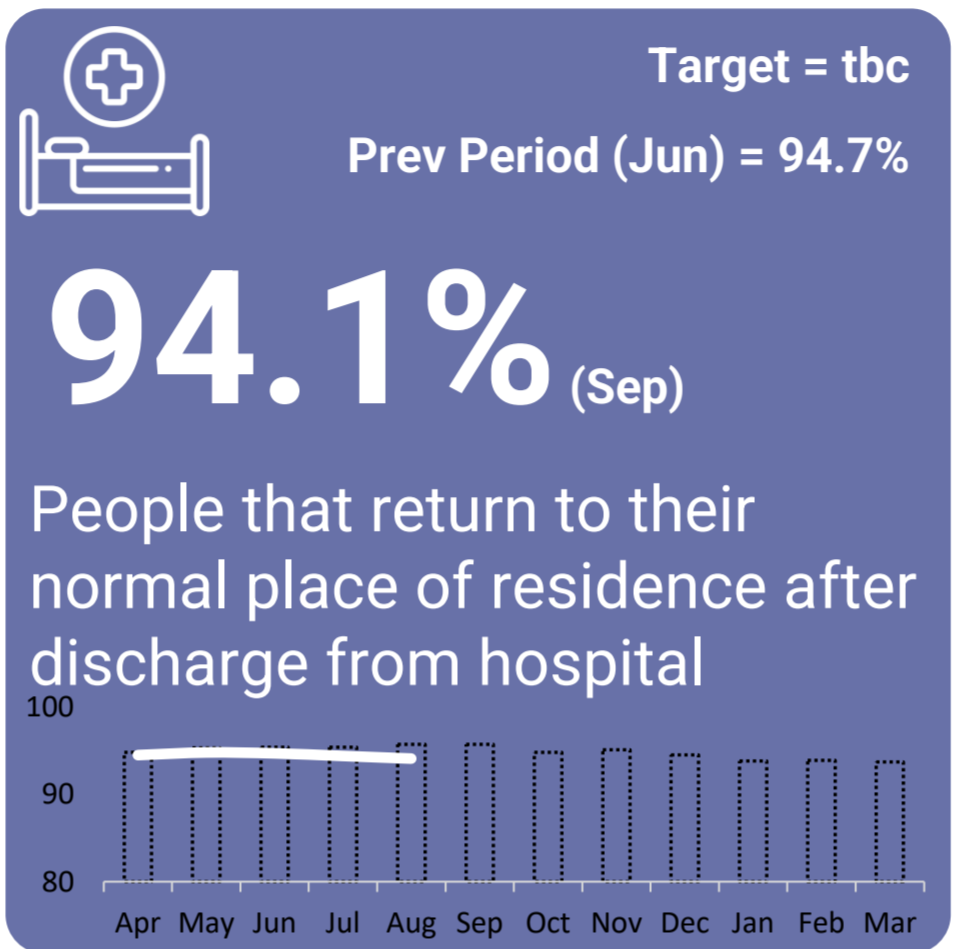
Whilst there is data going back prior to April 2021, that data is not split to the unitary council area in a way that enables comparison's to previous years.

The latest position at the end of September shows that 4.8% of young people are either NEET or not known, this is an increase since the end of the previous quarter. This is an expected increase as is seen each year in Q2 shows a large increase 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.

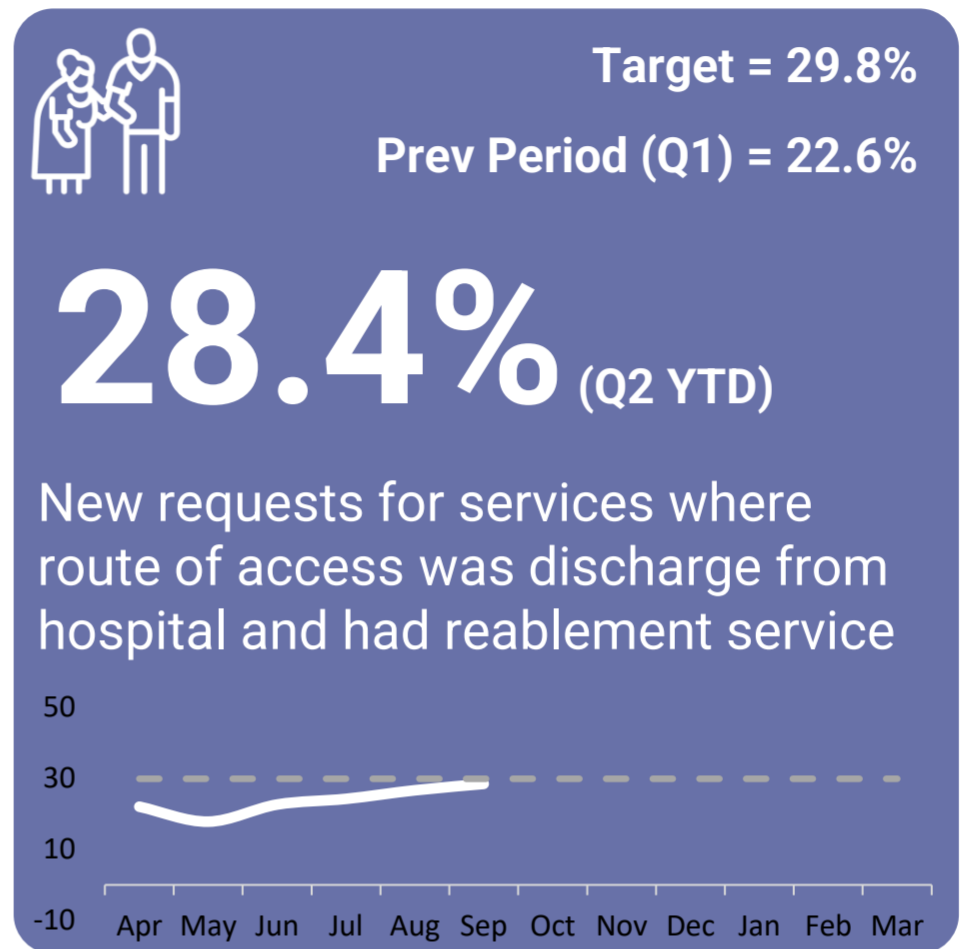
Currently the performance on this metric is showing that 100% of those in receipt of social care are managing their own support as much as they wish, this has been the case across the entire first half of the current year.



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.

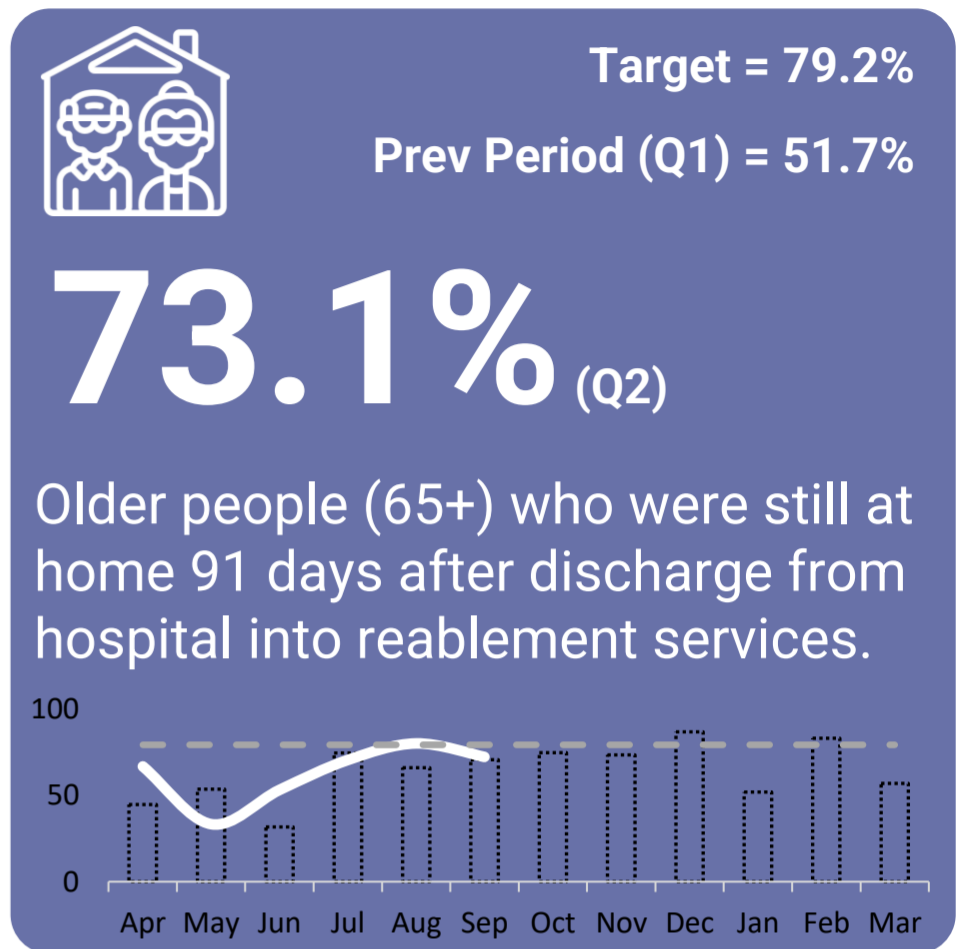
Performance has been broadly consistent across the second quarter of the year with July at 94.% and August/September both at 94.1%. This is a small reduction when compared to last year of c0.5% each month. The target for this measure is in the process of being set through the Better Care Fund (BCF) work.



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.

Performance in the second quarter of the year has improved after action taken earlier in the year and this shows that 34.2% (up from 22.6% in Q1) of those new requests for service have had a reablement service, taking the combined year to date position at end of Q2 to 28.4%.

This takes local performance close to the latest regional average and our target for the current year of 29.8% for this indicator.

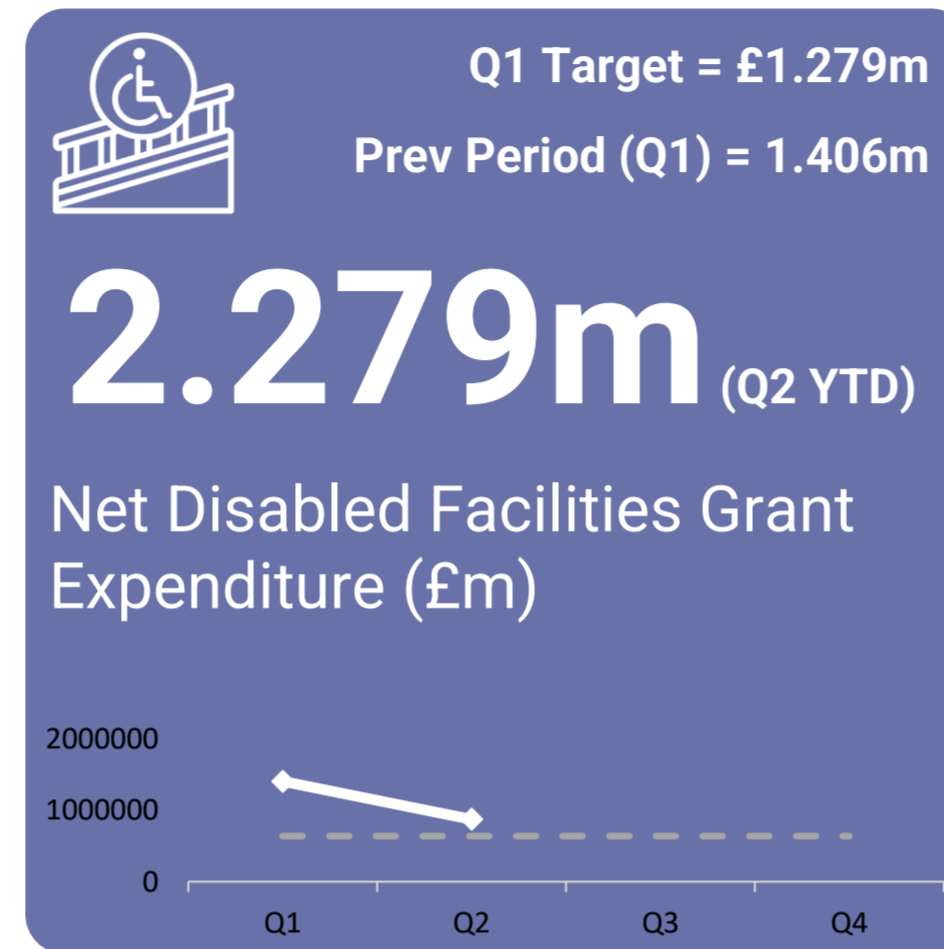


This indicator is one of the measures from the Better Care Fund (BCF) in the current year and measures those people (aged 65+) who were still at home 91 days after left hospital and had some form of reablement service.

Performance for this indicator has improved this quarter, up by more than 20%, from 51.7% to 73.1%, this also takes the overall year to date position to 61.7% 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%.

Priority 2 – Improved Life Chances Health, Social Care & Families



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

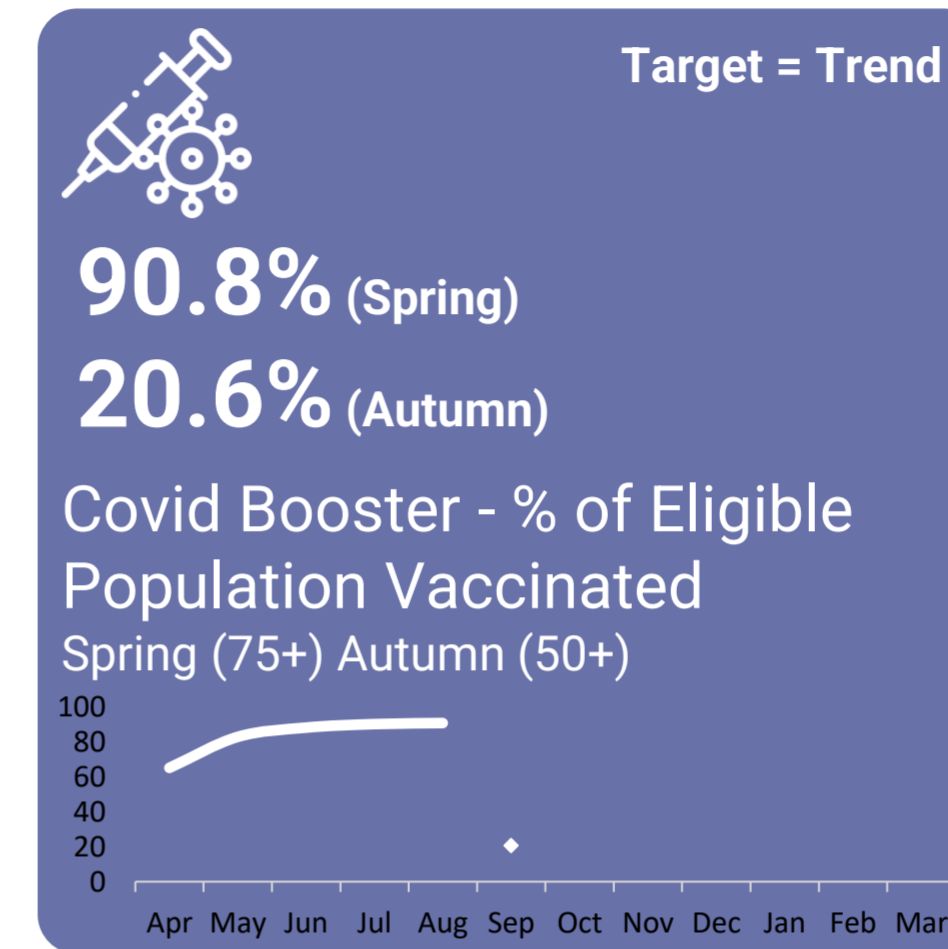
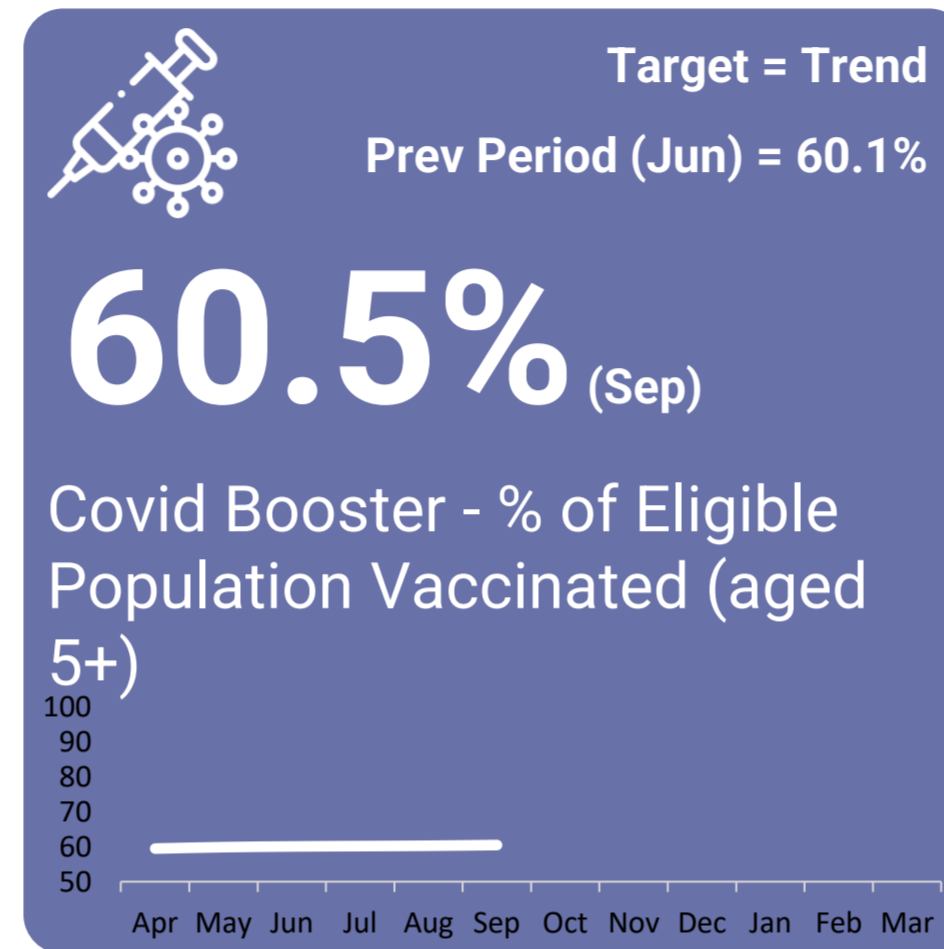
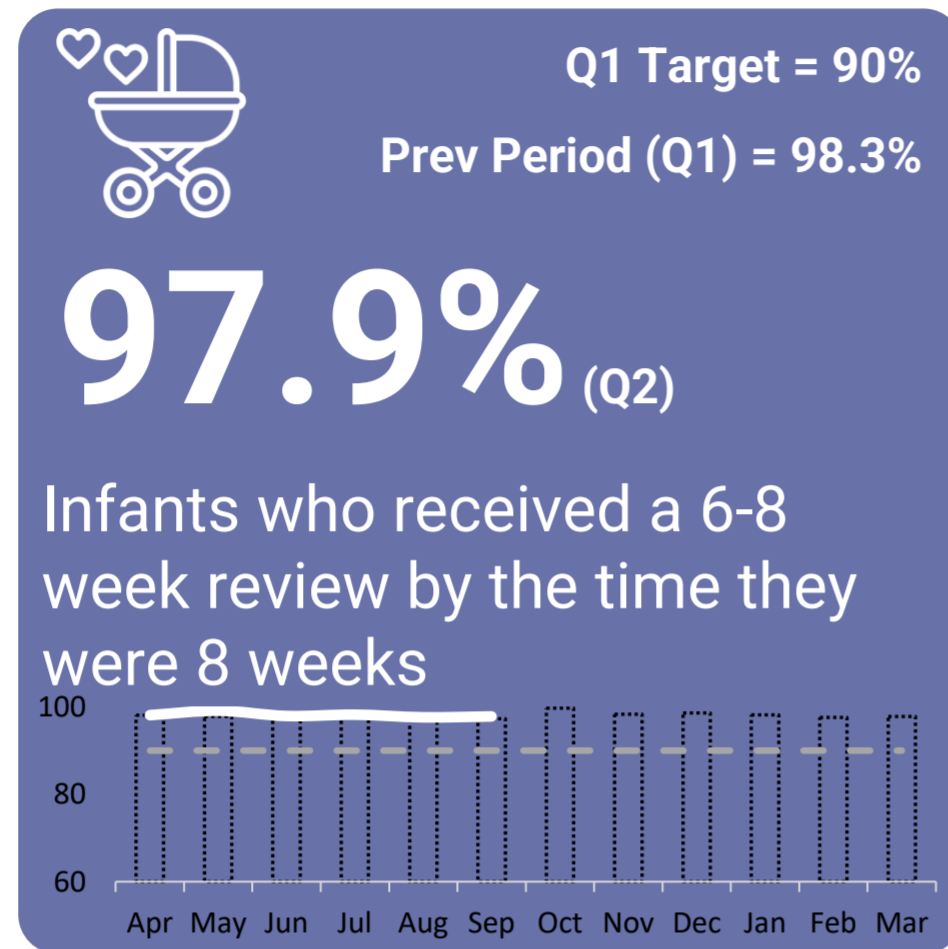
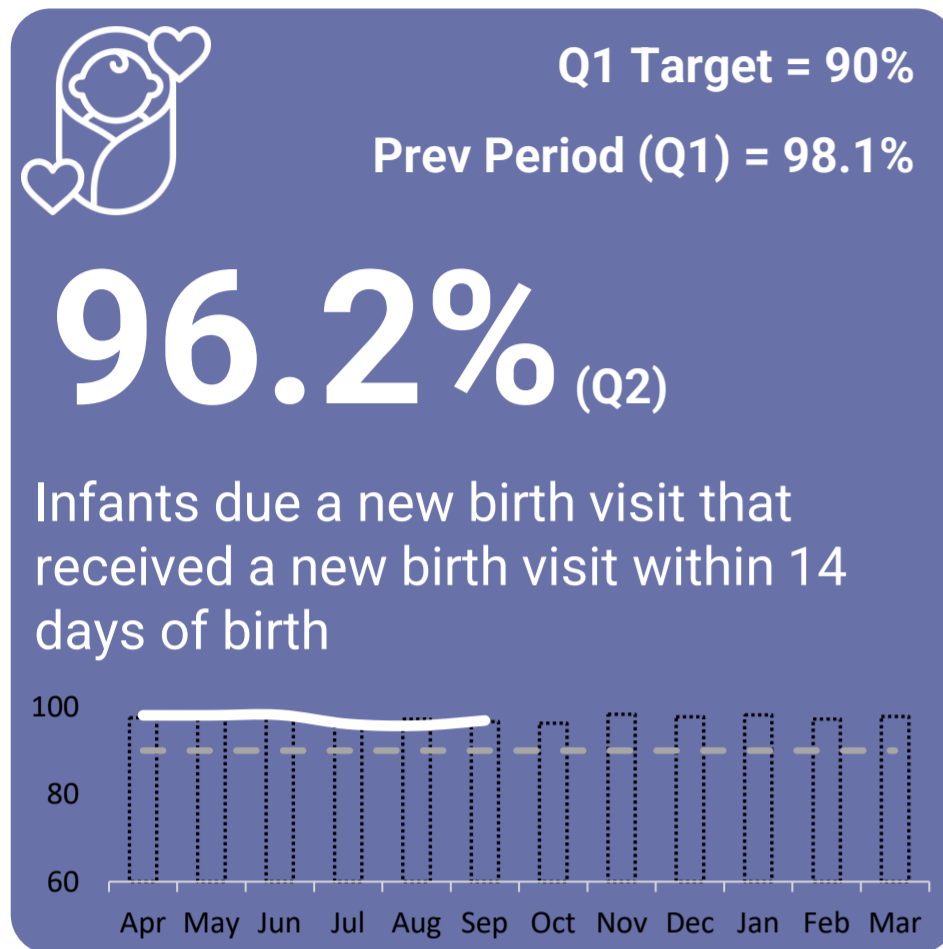
During the Prevention Duty we must take reasonable steps to prevent any eligible applicant from becoming homeless, regardless of priority need status, intentionality and whether they have a local connection. This can involve assisting you to stay in your current accommodation or helping you to find a new place to live. Under this part of our duty we have prevented 118 households from becoming homeless in the first quarter of the year, this is above our target for this period.

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 112 cases where homelessness was successfully relieved in quarter 2, as with the first indicator this is above our target for this period.

Combined under the two duties we have supported 230 households across the authority area from becoming homeless in the second quarter of the current year.

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 £2.558m for 2022-22. The Q2 year to date position shows the total amount which includes £1.279m of committed spend, some of this may not be realised.



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 decreases in the latest quarter, with the new birth visits completed within 14 days reporting at 96.2% for quarter 2, a decrease from the 98.1% reported in the first quarter. Similarly an increase in the 8 week reviews completed, from 98.3% in quarter 1 to 97.9% in the second quarter this year.

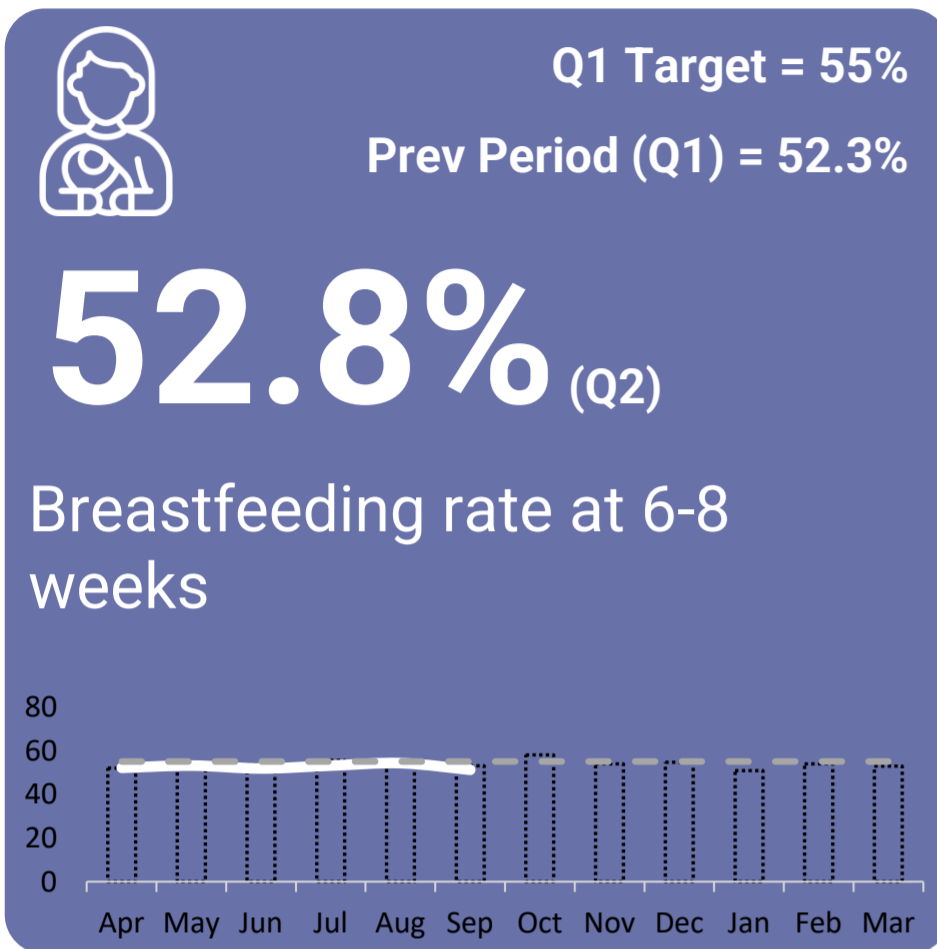
Both of these indicators perform well in comparison to national averages of 88% for 14 day visits and 80.2% for the 8 week visits and are above our local target of 90% for each indicator.

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 60.5% 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+. The first months reporting shows that 20.6% of those aged 50+ have received this booster.

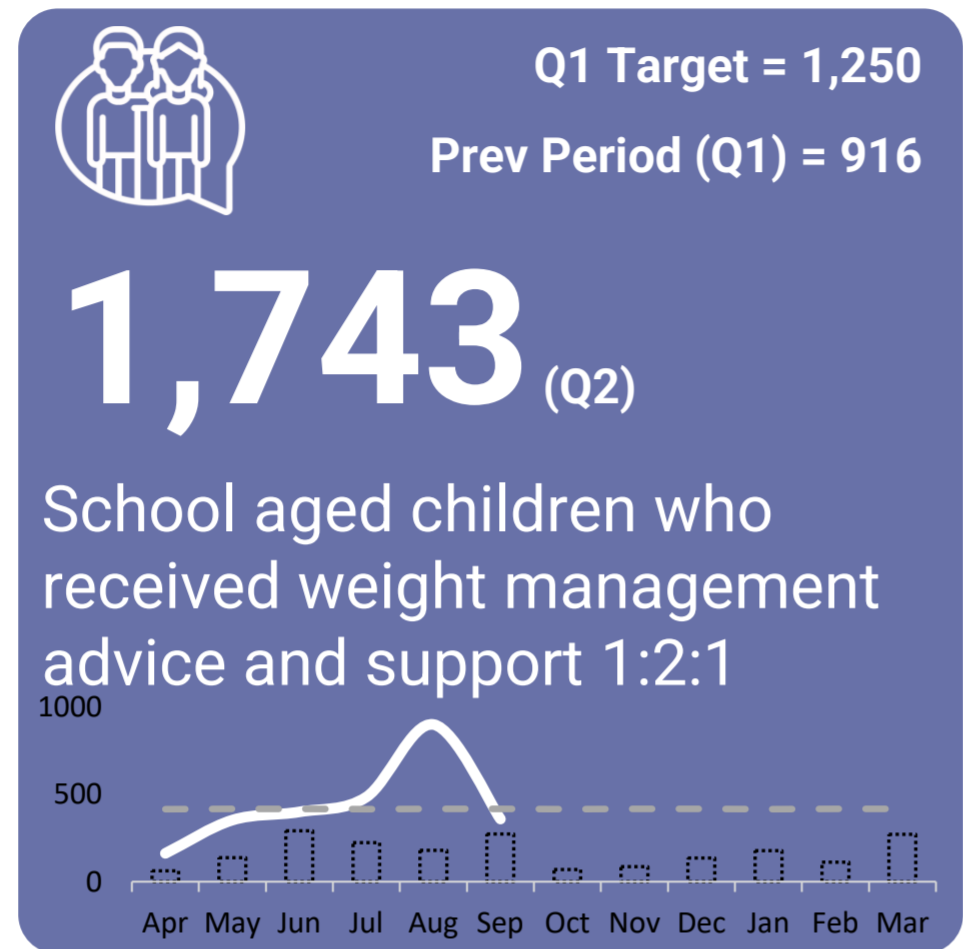
Contributory factors to the performance of both of these measures are the take-up of the 1st and 2nd doses (i.e. there cannot be more 1st boosters than there are 2nd dose take-ups) As at the end of September there have been;

1st Dose – 78.8% with 458 1st doses administered in Q2
2nd Dose – 75.5% with 1,986 2nd doses administered in Q2



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.

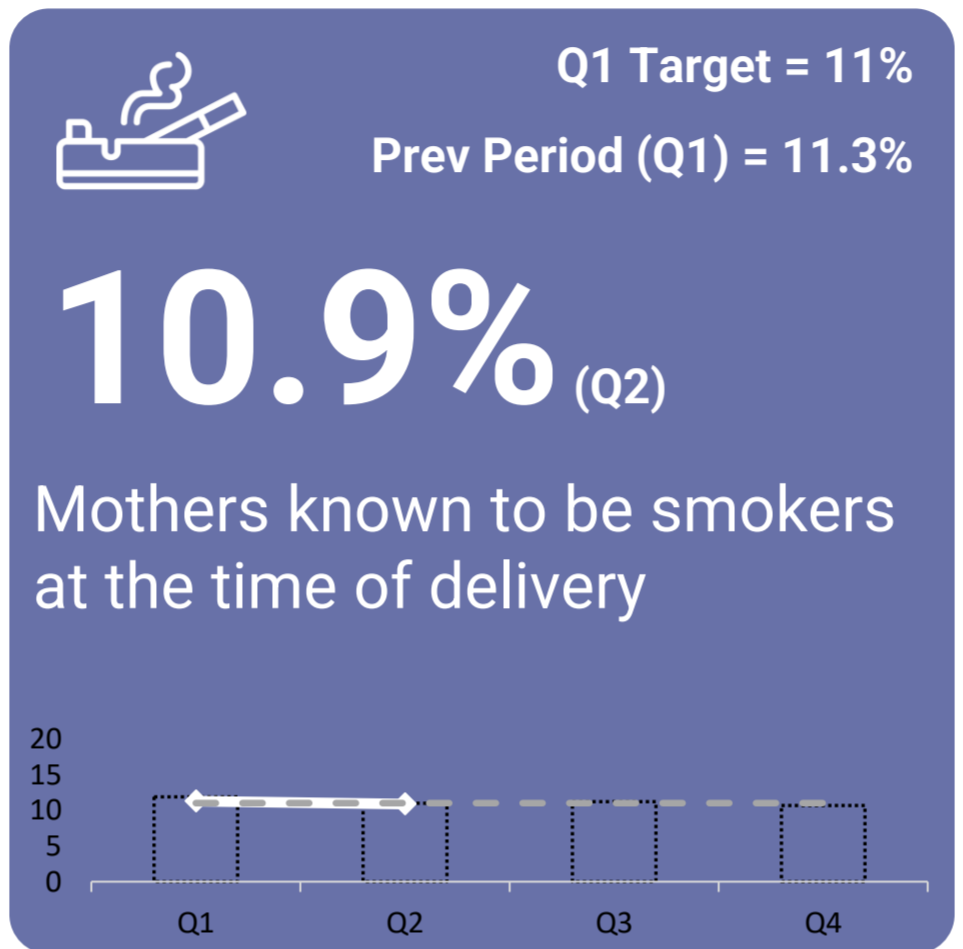
In West Northamptonshire there were 52.8% of babies are breastfed at 6-8 weeks in the second quarter this year, a similar level to the previous period (52.3%). The performance of this measure has been relatively consistent over the past year (52-57%), this compares favourable with the latest national average of 47.6%.



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.

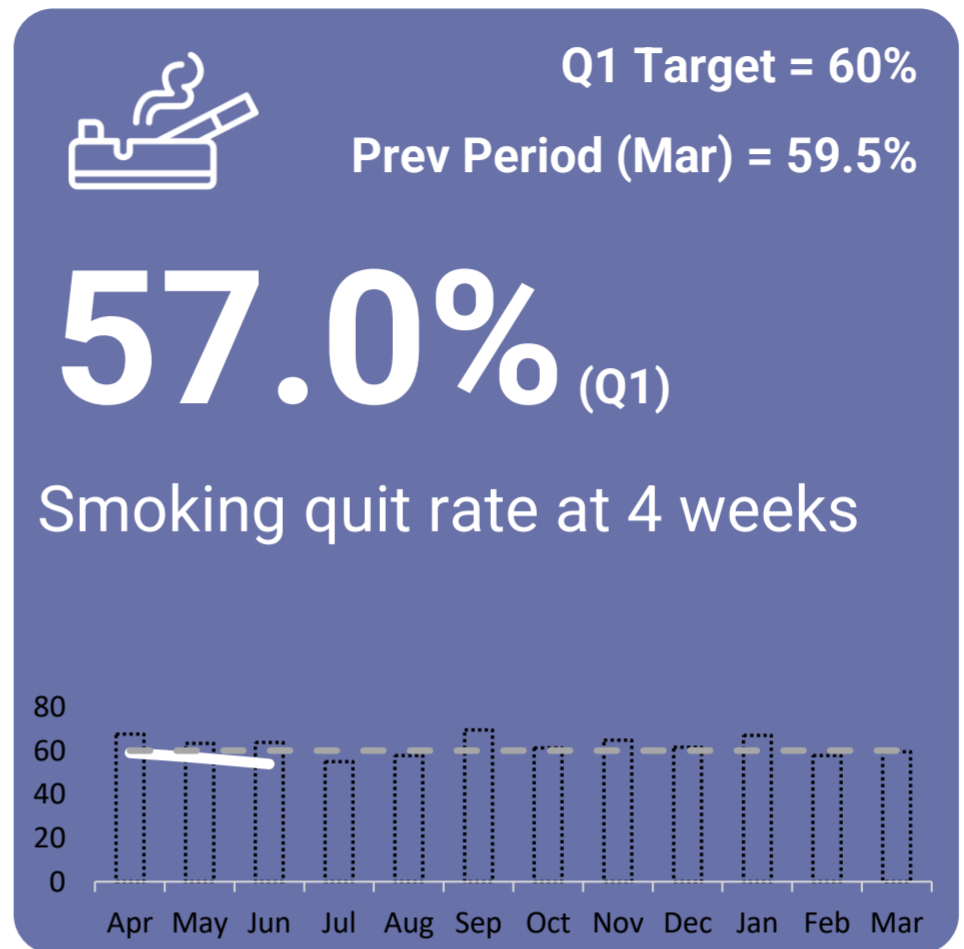
This quarter the service has supported 1,743 school aged children through this service offer which is an improvement on the 916 children supported in the previous quarter and also an increase in comparison with the same period last year when 675 children were supported.

The total number of children supported this year is 2,659.



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 10.9% of mothers are known to be smokers at the time of birth, this is 0.4% lower than the number in the previous quarter and compares with a latest (2020-21) regional average of 11.4% and England average of 9.6%.

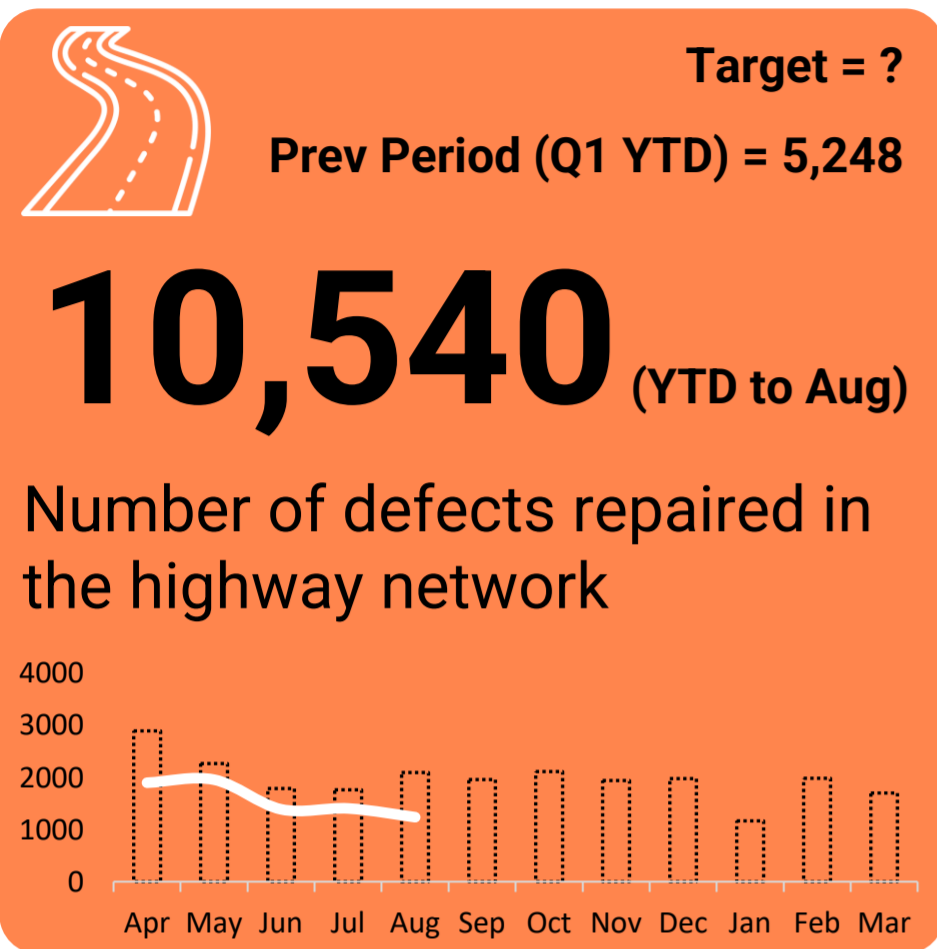


We are not currently able to report the Q2 performance for this indicator. This is due to discrepancies in the figures that occurred after the disaggregation of the system. This is being worked through and the Q2 data will be reported alongside Q3 in the next report.

There is an update to the previous data and the future Q1 outturn is 57% against a target of 60% and in comparison to 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

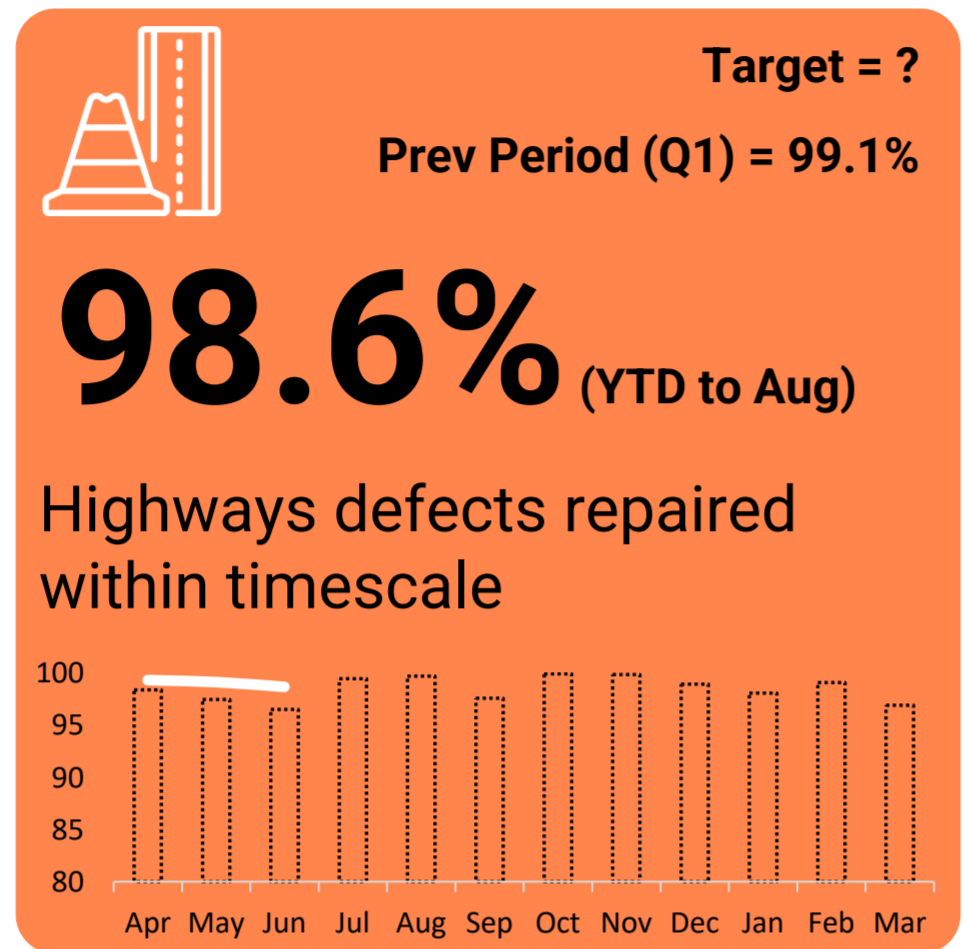
Transport & Connectivity



Repairs to the highways network are always needed, nationally there is a backlog of outstanding repairs with increasing traffic volume and changeable weather conditions, of which both contribute to the deterioration of the road network.

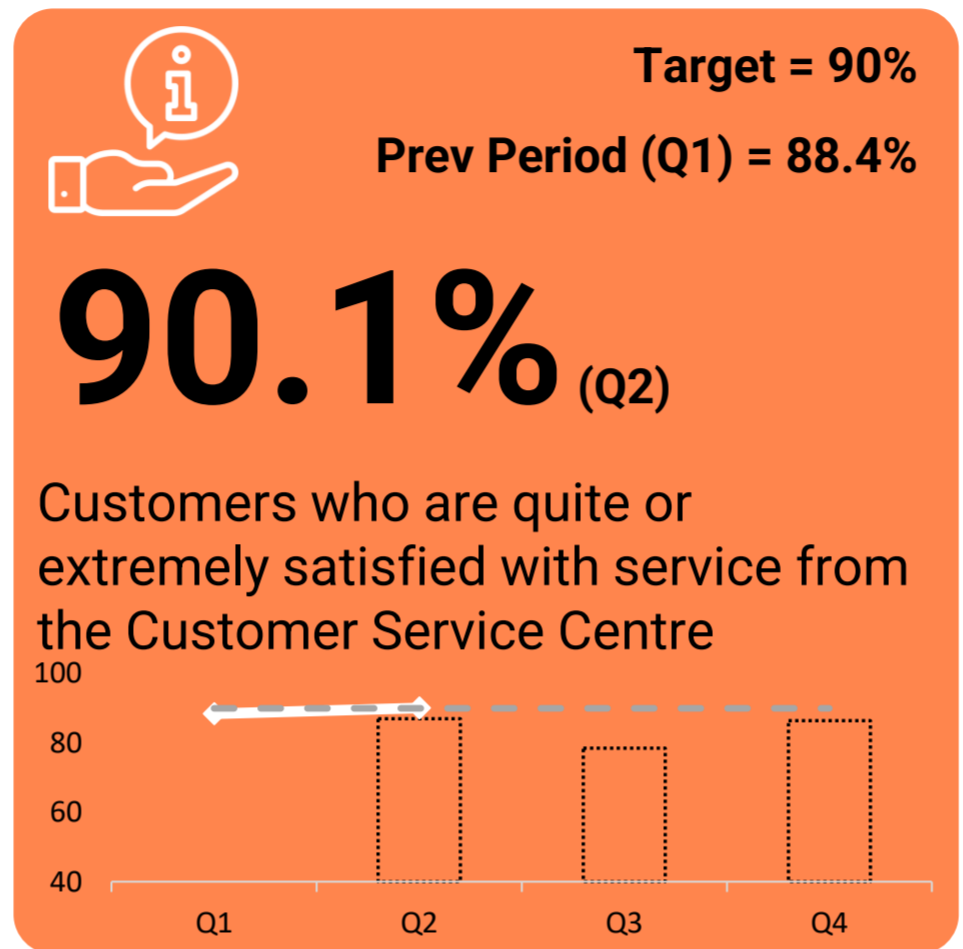
The number of repairs undertaken has seasonal fluctuations due to different programmes of work that highways undertake.

The indicators for the new highways contract that commenced in Sept will be reported for Q3 onwards.



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) repairs that are required to be completed within 24hours to the least severe (P4) which have a 28 week repair timeframe. The vast majority of repairs that are completed fall within the P3 (28 days) or P4 (28 Week) categories.

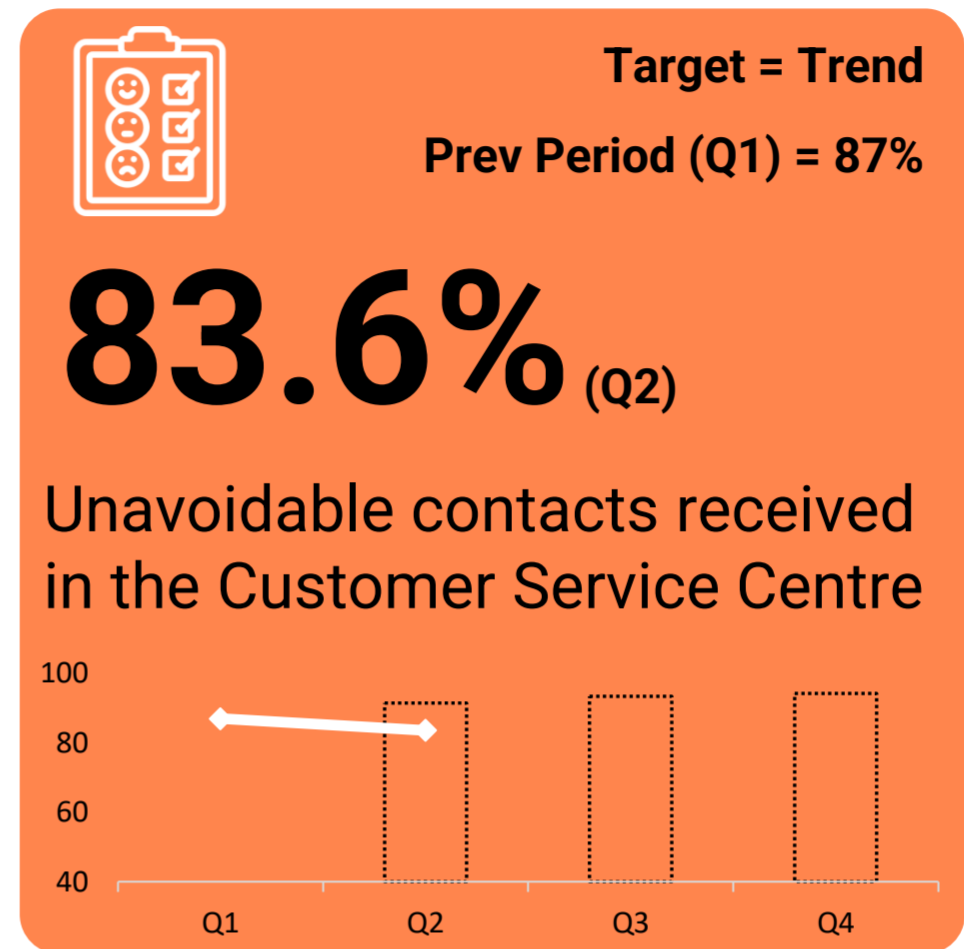
The indicators for the new highways contract that commenced in Sept will be reported for Q3 onwards.



This indicator being reported within the Customer Service Centre that seeks to gather feedback from customers on their satisfaction with the service received.

The second quarter of the year has resulted in a small increase in the satisfaction level in the Customer Service Centre – up 1.7% to 90.1% when compared to the previous quarter, in addition is an improvement on the 87% reported at the same point last year.

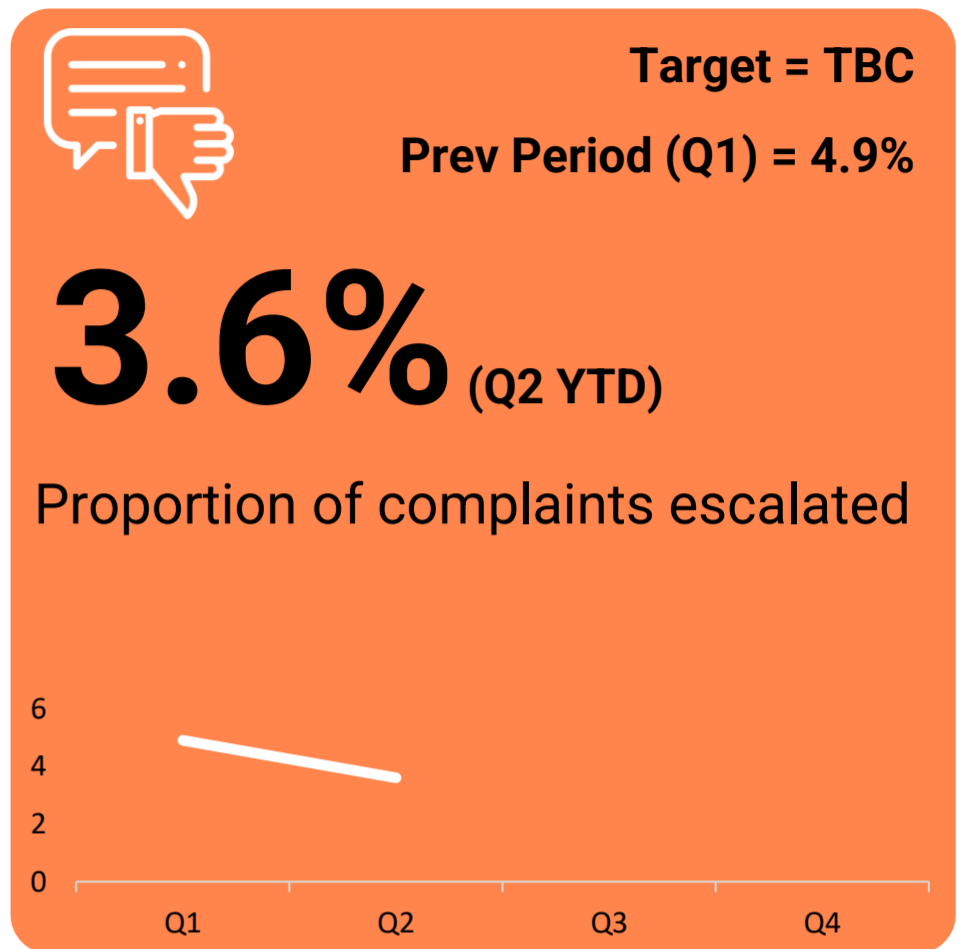
In total 374 customers took part (Q1 was 561) in the survey and of those asked 90.1% of those were either quite or extremely satisfied with the overall service.



This indicator shows the percentage of unavoidable contacts received, essentially first time that contact has been made with the council. The remaining proportion are repeat contacts, for example following-up on a previous request made to the council.

This measure is a trend based measure and we'd like to see that the vast majority of calls into the Customer Service Centre are unavoidable.

The current period shows 83.6% of unavoidable contacts in quarter 2, this is a decrease from the 87% reported in the previous quarter and is lower than the 91.5% reported in the same period last year.

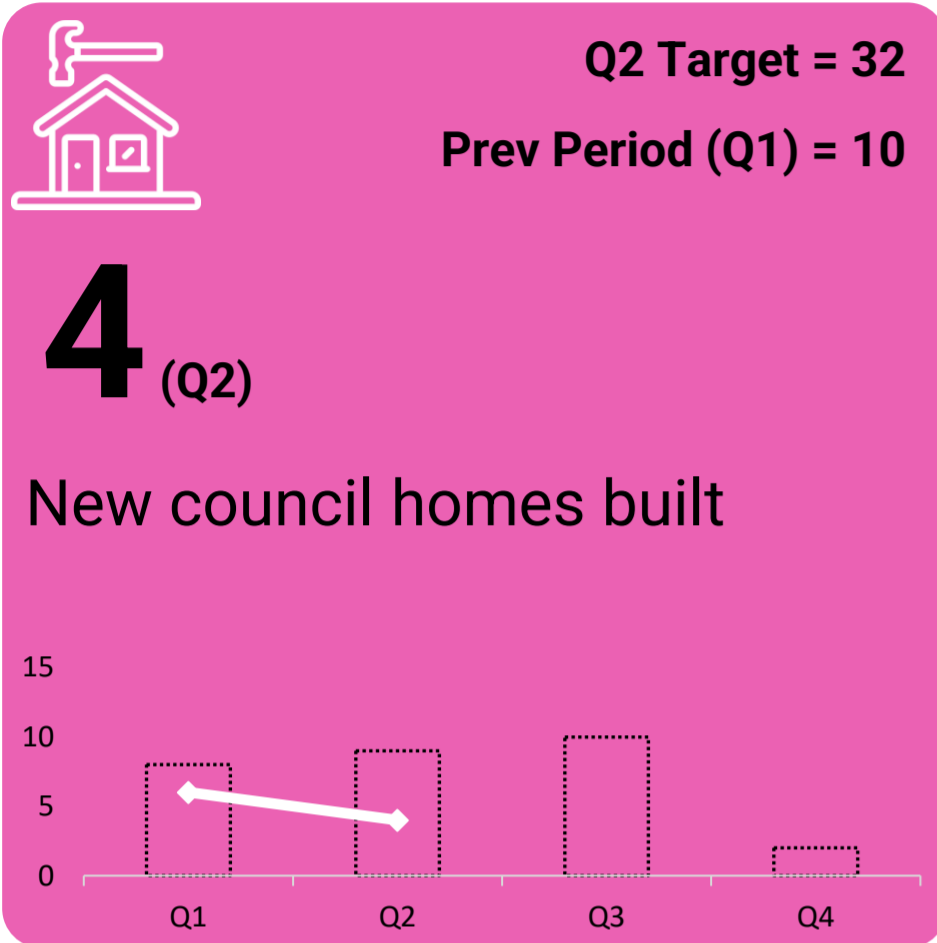


This is a new indicator included in the corporate scorecard and this shows the complaints that have been escalated as a proportion of all complaints received. This data includes all complaints across the council where the complaints has been logged and recorded within the corporate complaints team.

A total of 28 complaints have been escalated in the year to end of September, resulting in 3.6% off all complaints that have been formally escalated through to stage 2 of the complaints process, this is a reduction in the proportion escalated from the end of June.

Priority 4 – Thriving Villages & Towns

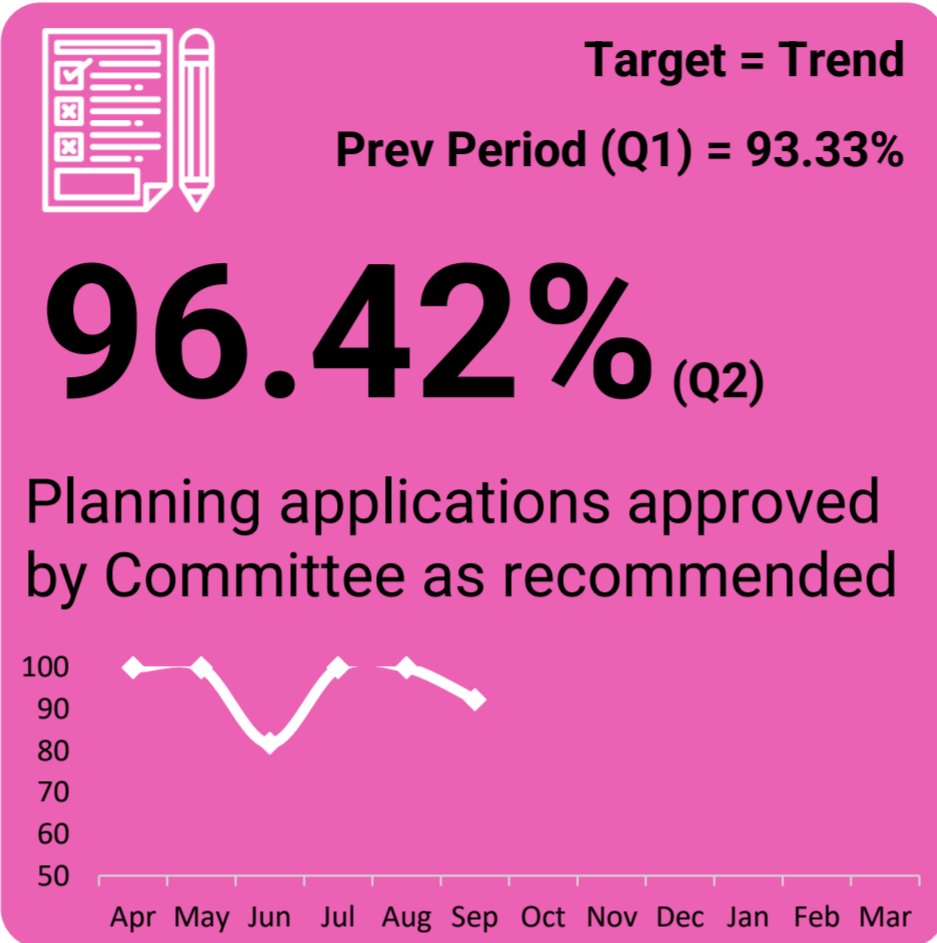
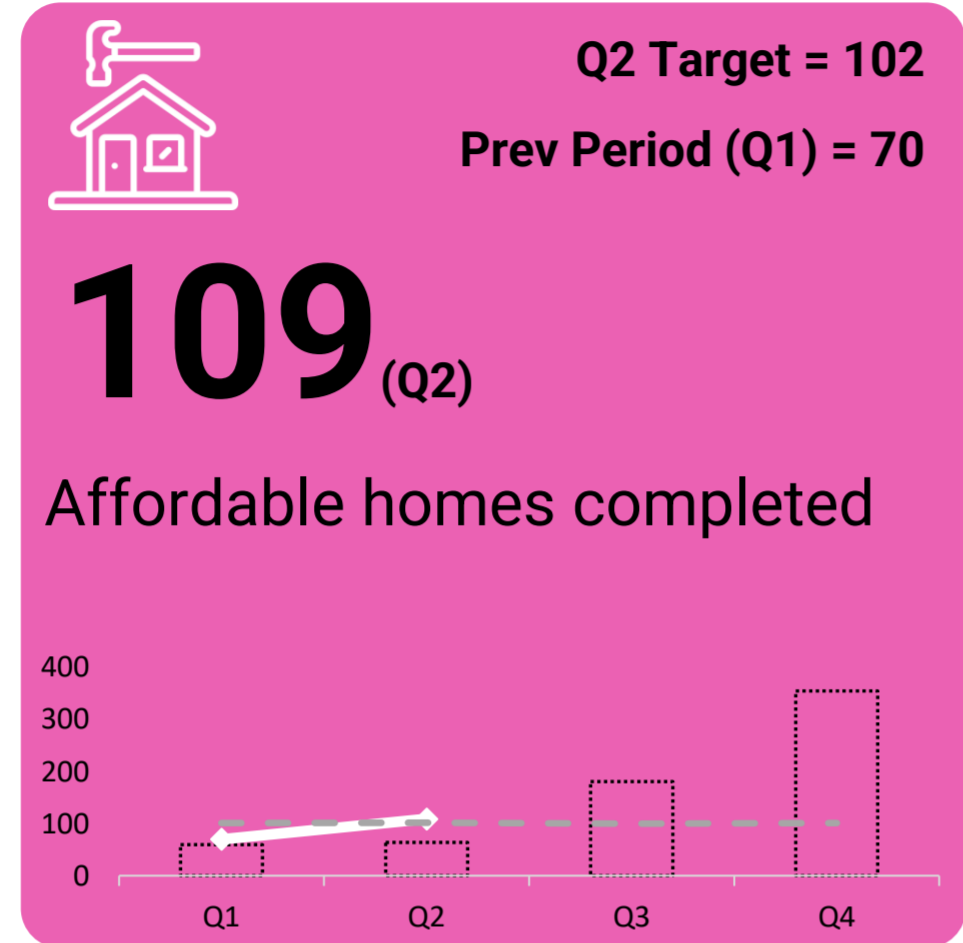
Place Shaping & Homes



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 4 council homes completed a decrease from the 6 completed in the previous quarter and taking the completions since the inception of West Northamptonshire Council to 51 homes. A further 60 properties were expected in the quarter but have been delayed until October due to snagging issues.

In addition to council homes we have also seen 109 affordable homes completed in the quarter and a year to date figure of 179 for the 2021-22 year.



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 27 planning applications that have been considered by the planning committee with 26 of these applications have had the decision made by the committee as recommended by Planning Officers.

Supporting the Local Visitor Economy

On top of the Explore West Northants App which is showcasing local businesses, attractions and events to residents and visitors, the Economy Team are involved in delivering initiatives and events to generate increased physical footfall and engagement with the local area.

Heritage Open Days in September was a widespread opportunity for local attractions, museums and more to partake in a national initiative to showcase cultural and heritage offerings to the local area. This is an entirely free campaign to raise awareness of the local offer, increase engagement with residents and visitors, but most importantly to celebrate and showcase the vibrant local heritage, history and culture.

The Economy Team also worked with partners, North Northamptonshire Council and Nenescape, to deliver a robust number of events taking place across the River Nene with pro-active marketing to showcase the natural beauty of the area. Unfortunately due to the passing of HRH Queen Elizabeth II, these events were cancelled, but a strong foundation has been established for next year.

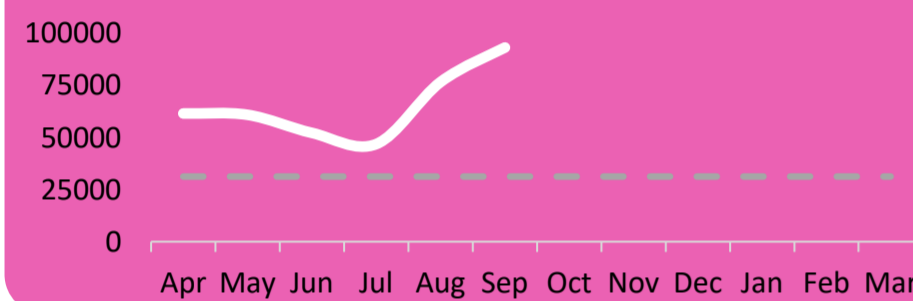
Priority 4 – Thriving Villages & Towns

Place Shaping & Homes

Q2 Target = 125,000
Prev Period (Q1) = 174,893

216,924 (Q2)

Visitors to Libraries



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

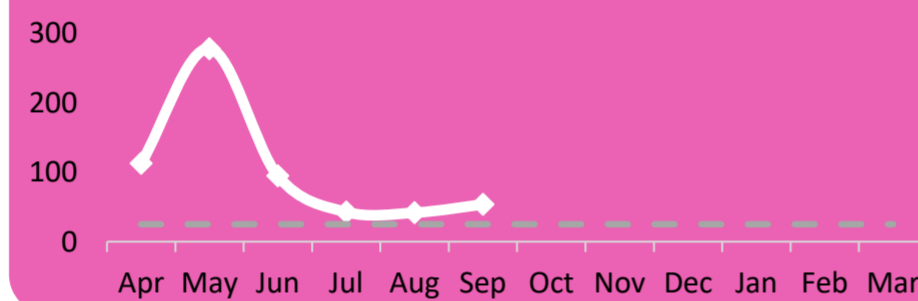
The first quarter of the year has resulted in 216,924 visitors which is above the quarterly target of 125,000 (based upon an annual aspiration for 0.5million visitors this year).

Visitors were highest in August (76,726) and September (93,230) with much of this increased visitors attributed to Summer Reading Challenge. Visits remained high in September despite the return to schools.

Q2 Target = 75
Prev Period (Q1) = 486

139 (Q2)

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. here have been 139 people resettled in the second quarter of the current year (104 Ukrainians and 35 Afghans), taking the total this year to 625.

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

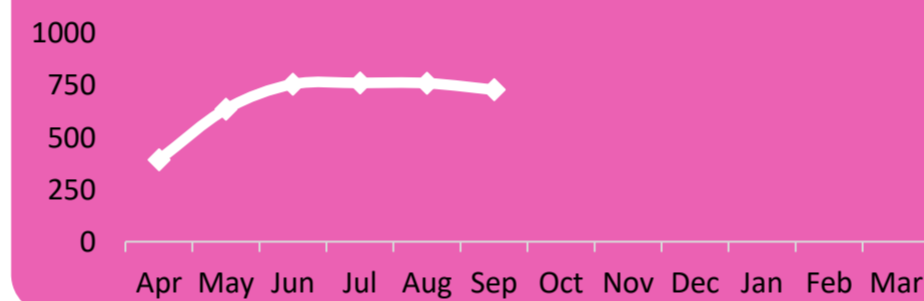
- Assessing the host properties
- Carrying out Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on hosts – enhanced checks will be required for homes which will be hosting children or vulnerable adults
- Providing immediate financial assistance, potentially until access to benefits and work entitlement is 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 475 Ukrainians across West Northants and 255 Afghans currently placed in bridging accommodation since these two schemes commenced.

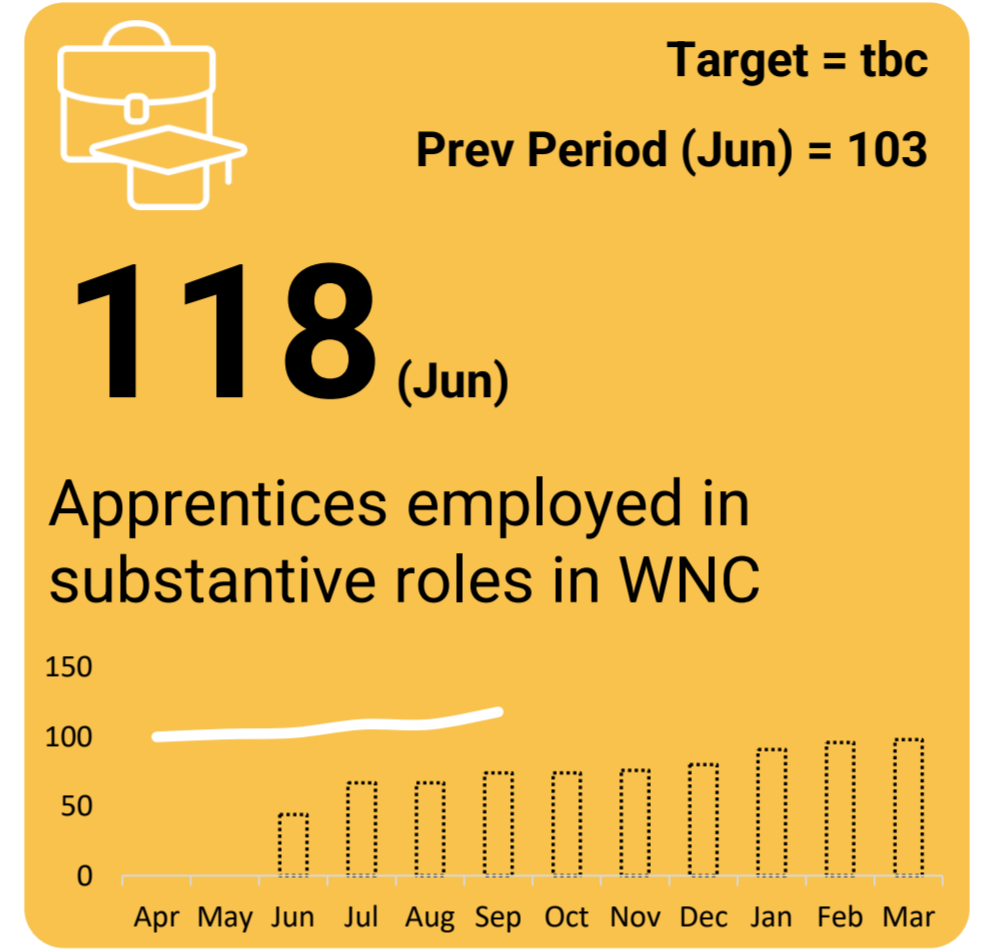
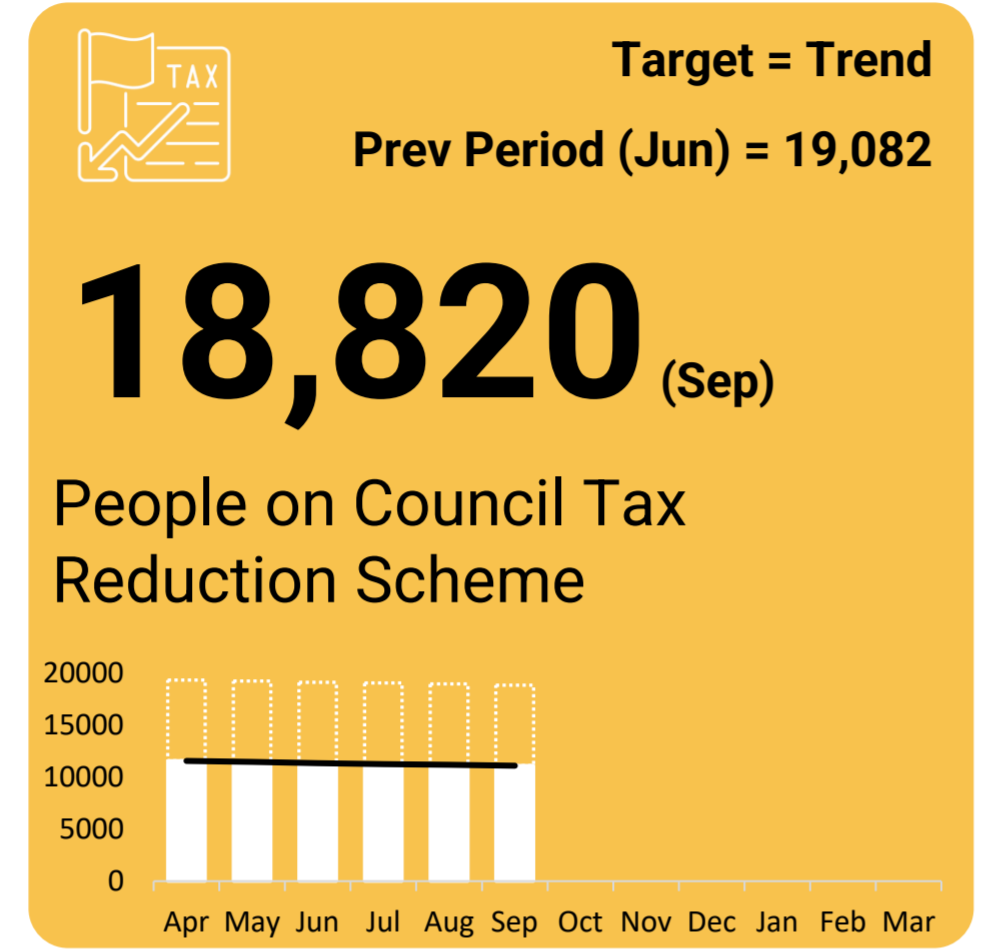
Prev Period (Jun) = 757

730 (Total at Sept*22)

People currently supported with wrap around care



Priority 5 – Economic Development Growth & Prosperity



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

August was our busiest month, with the 'Star Wars' and 'Tiger that Came to Tea' exhibitions continuing to attract good audiences. Abington Park Museum hosted its annual Heritage Fete, which generated a large number of visitors.

Both sites saw a drop in projected visitors during September, being 31% under target for the month. This was due to the cumulative effect of the Queens passing decreasing numbers and changeover of both the temporary exhibition gallery and the art gallery during the first weeks of September.

Chart Key:

Working Age (solid bar) | Pensioners (dotted bar)

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 30 Sept 2022 the number of LCTRS working age claimants was 11,080 which is a decrease from 11,316 at the end of June 2022. There are currently 7,740 pensioner claims and again this figure has reduced from the end of June (7,766). The reductions may be due in part to the peak in caseload figures we saw during the pandemic as we now move out of Covid.

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 September West Northamptonshire Council had 118 apprentices employed in substantive roles.

In addition to this there have been 2,050 new apprenticeship starts since April 2022 and 630 people have completed their apprenticeship

Rural England Prosperity Fund

West Northamptonshire has been allocated £1.3m of rural funding to develop “pride in place”, focusing on two priorities: Communities & Place and Supporting Local Business. This fund is a capital top-up of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and requires local authorities to develop an addendum to the UKSPF Investment Plan outlining which interventions have the greatest need and will have the greatest impact within eligible rural areas.

The Economy Team will mirror their approach to the UKSPF and re-engage with local stakeholders, partners and community groups, including MPs and Councillors. Once a robust database has been developed, alongside the results of existing policies, strategies and the WNC Big Conversation and the input of the consultation, an addendum will be developed and submitted by the deadline of 30 November 2022. The first-year funding is expected to be paid in April 2023 ending alongside UKSPF in March 2025.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

An Investment Plan has been submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on 1 August to draw down the £5.4m allocation. This included funding split between the three investment priorities as follows:

- Communities and place: 27 per cent = £1,467,082
- Supporting local business: 40 per cent = £2,159,532
- People and skills: 33 per cent = £1,799,610

A partnership forum of external stakeholders has been established to review and input into how each of the chosen interventions are delivered. Once approval of the investment plan has been received, any interventions to be delivered by external organisations will be tendered through a procurement process.

Supporting West Northamptonshire Businesses

The Economy Team submitted an application to the inaugural FSB Local Government Awards and were named regional champions of the All-Round Small Business Friendly Award category. This award was to recognise the ongoing support delivered by the Economy Team throughout the Covid-19 pandemic which included business support, widespread marketing campaigns and the development of the e-commerce/tourism app, Explore West Northants.

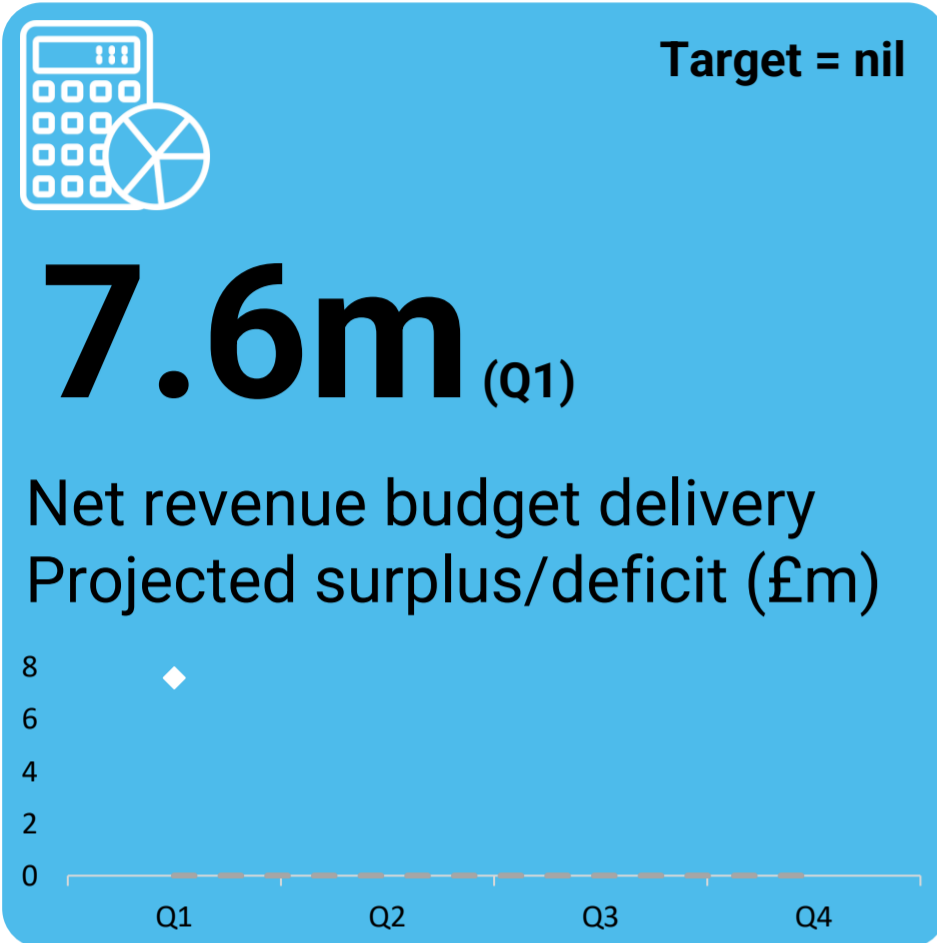
The Team showcased the wide range of free business support at the Northants Chamber Expo in September, promoting West Northamptonshire as the best place to do business. The finalists of the Northants Business Awards were announced at the expo, for which we have sponsored the “West Northants Business of the Year” category. Businesses were eager to find out about upcoming funding opportunities from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and to register on the Explore West Northants platform.

WNC Employment Support Activities

The Economy Team continue to receive regular enquiries for employment support from residents across all of West Northamptonshire, promoting the offer in every local library with literature and a banner on display.

In partnership with the Department for Working Pensions, the Economy Team ran a refugee employment support event to provide dedicated support to those from other countries, including Afghanistan and Ukraine. Translators were on hand along with a variety of partners at Northampton Central Library and the Economy Team were able to connect many people with help to allow them to access local, sustainable employment.

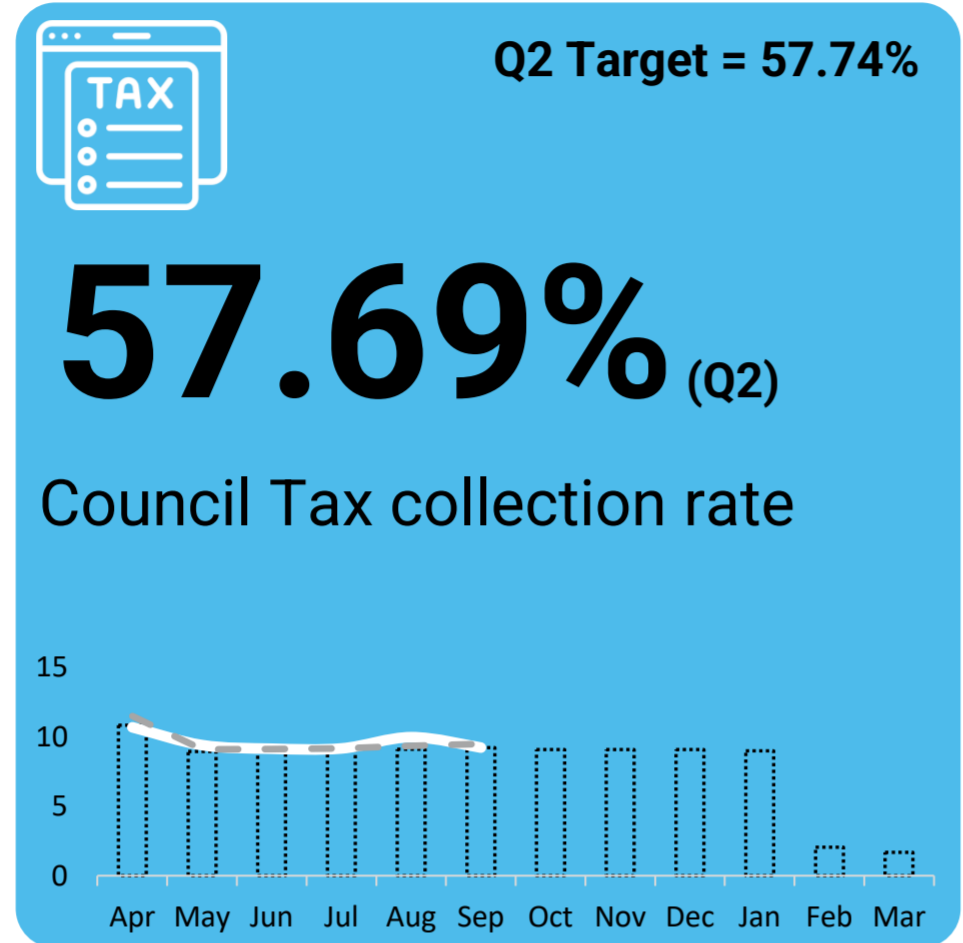
The Team continue to work with local employers to raise awareness of their employment opportunities so that they utilise the local labour market and residents secure local employment. Recent employers that have worked with the Economy Team to fill vacancies include Silverstone Park, the NHS, Whittlebury Hall, Hilton hotels and more.



The forecast outturn position for 2022-23 quarter one is an overspend of £7.6m.

Full details of the current position on the councils budget can be found in the Revenue Monitoring report, this outlines the main reasons for the pressures and how the council is going about addressing the gap. The Q1 revenue monitoring report was presented to Cabinet on the 23rd September 2022.

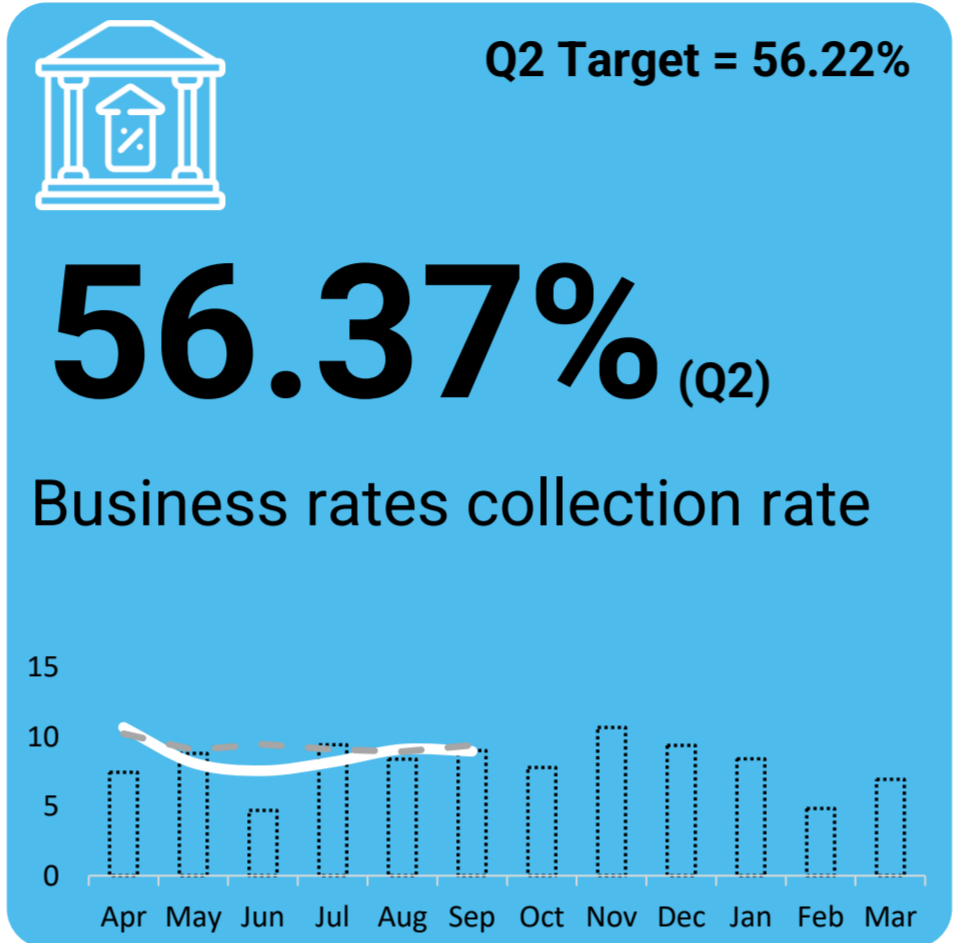
The quarter 2 position for this indicator will be included as part of the revenue outturn update being provided to Cabinet on 20th December 2022 and is therefore not available to be included in this paper.



Collection rates continue to be very strong despite the current challenges from the cost-of-living crisis with a collection rate of 57.69% against the profiled monthly target of 57.74%. This is 0.05% below target which equates to £142,122.22.

The collection rate, when compared to the same period last year has improved, up from 56.46% reported at the end of September 2021.

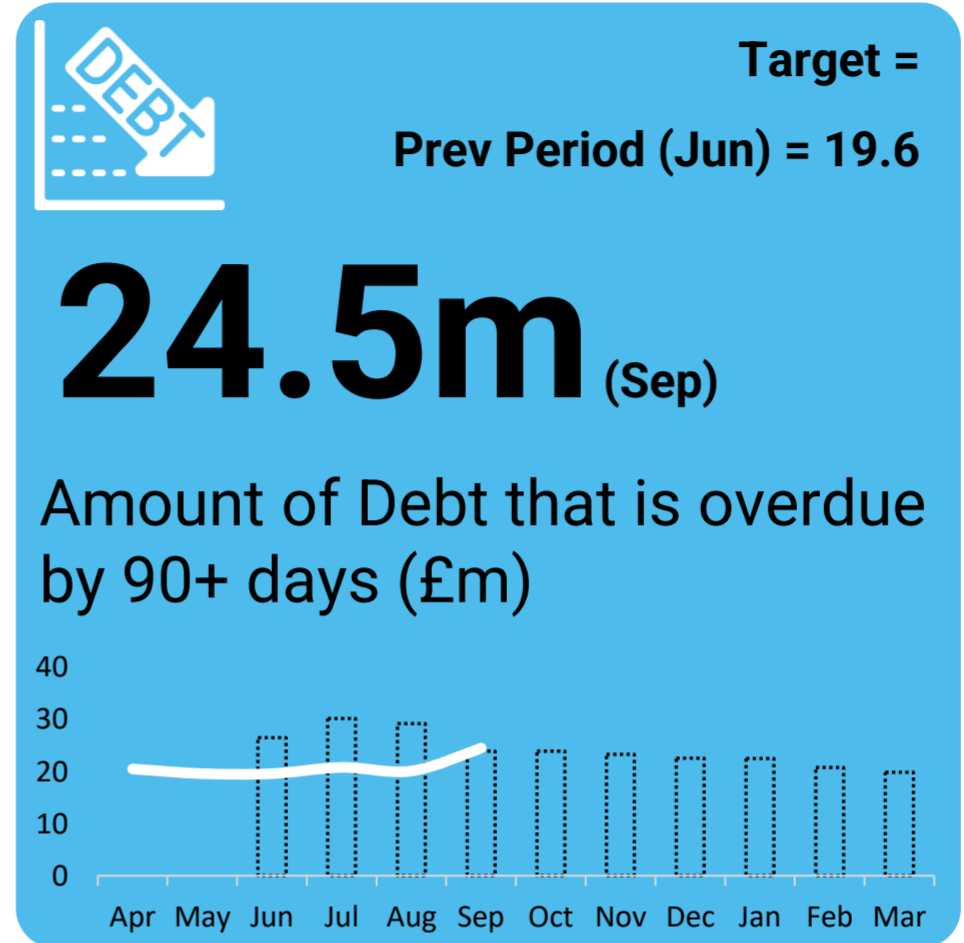
We are continuing to take a pro-active approach to collection and are working with the Magistrates Courts to increase the recovery action we are able to take post Covid.



Performance on collection of business rates is excellent at 56.37% against a target of 56.22% at the end of September 2022.

This equates to £300k in monetary terms. This is an excellent performance and the team have consistently performed above target across the year to date, collecting a total of £104.2m of business rates.

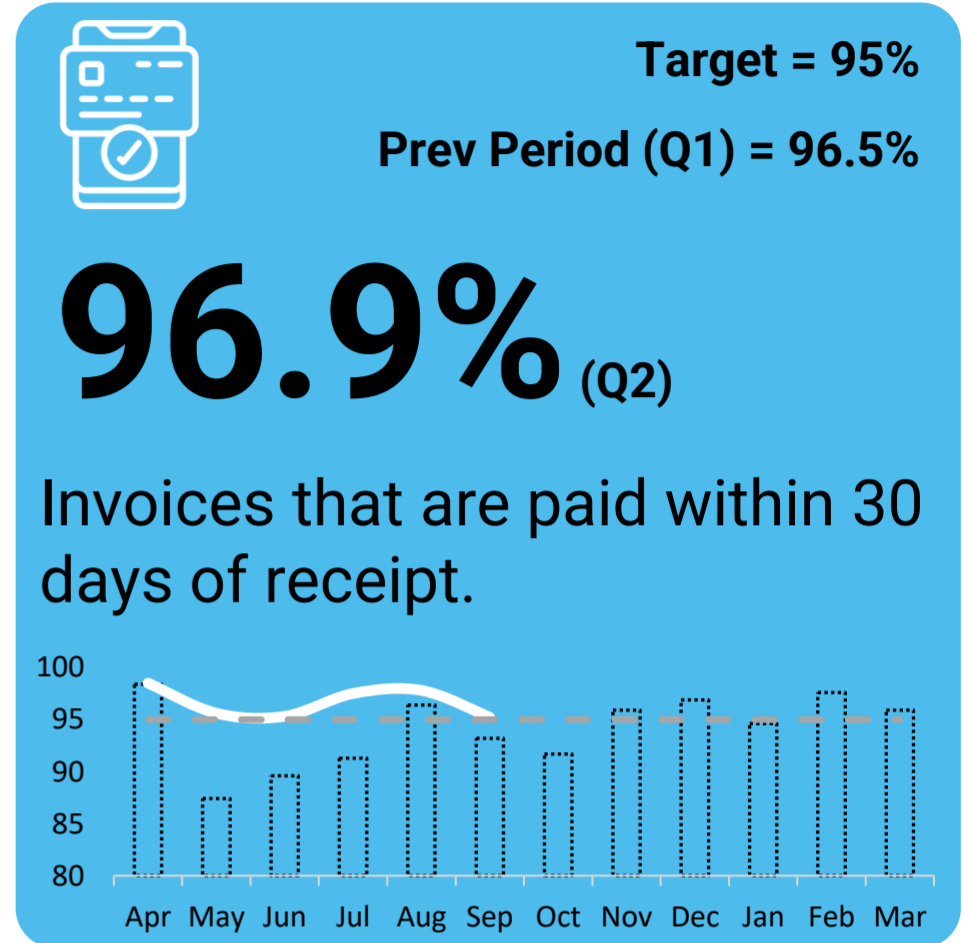
At the same point last year 47.84% of business rate debt had been collected, demonstrating the improvement in the team in collecting debt.



There has been an increase in the aged debt (90+ days) over the past year with the latest performance showing that £24.5m of debt owed to the authority is overdue by at least 90 days.

This represents an increase from the £19.6m reported at the end of June. To provide context against previous year, end the end of Sept 2021 the aged debt outstanding stood at £23.9m, a lower position to the figure reported above.

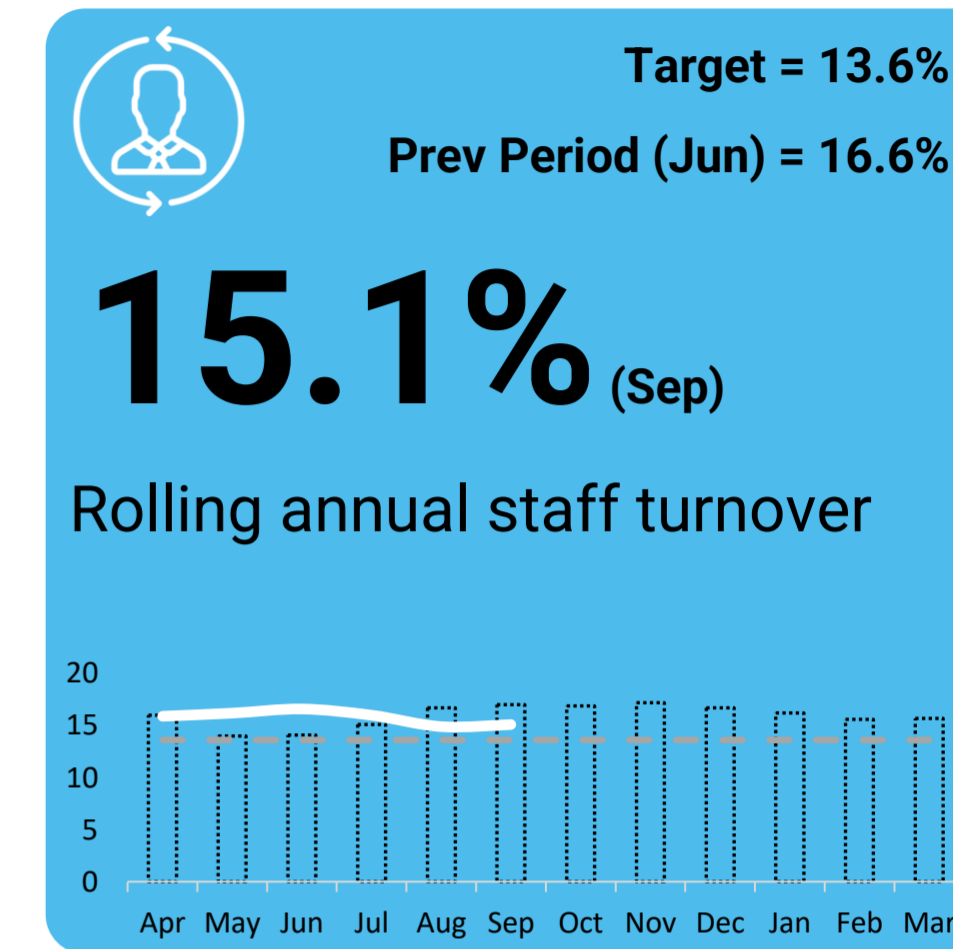
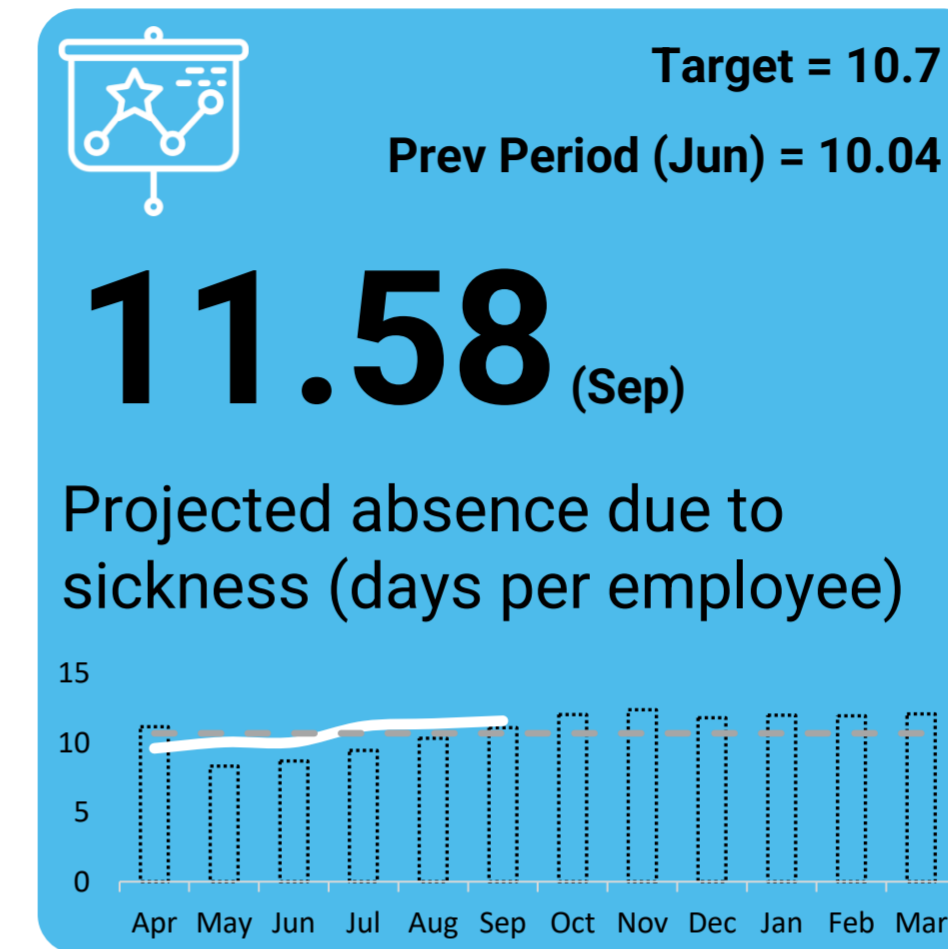
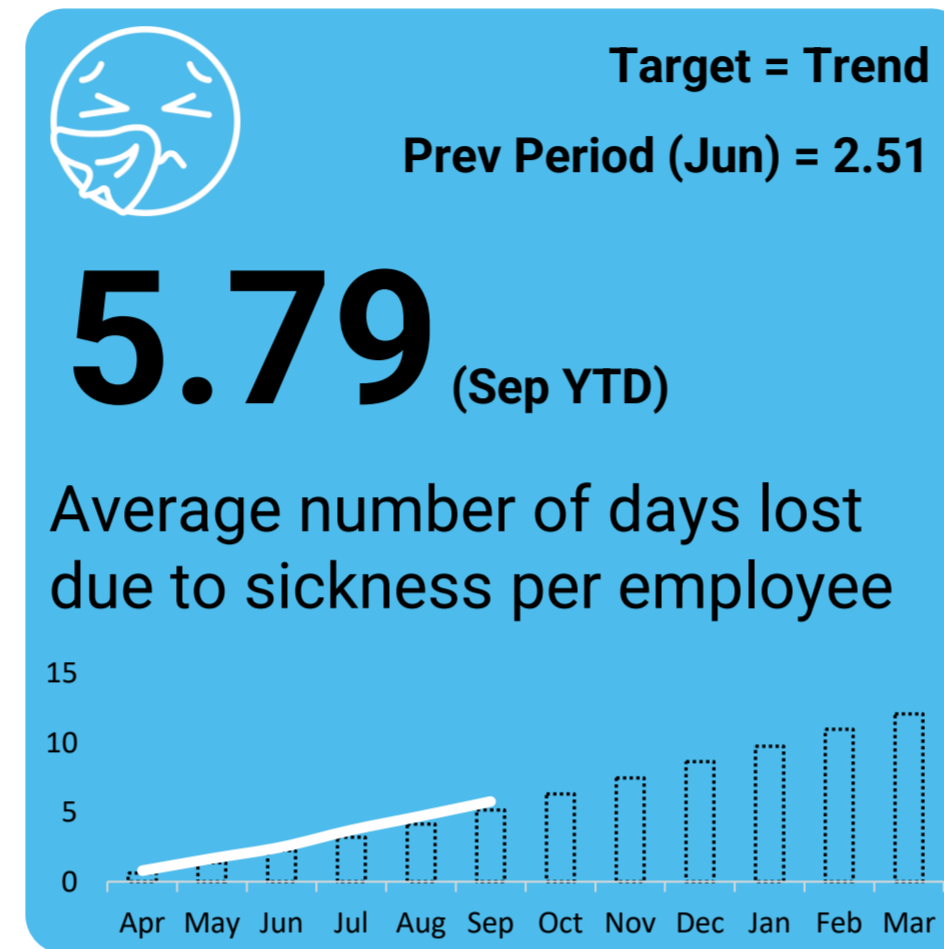
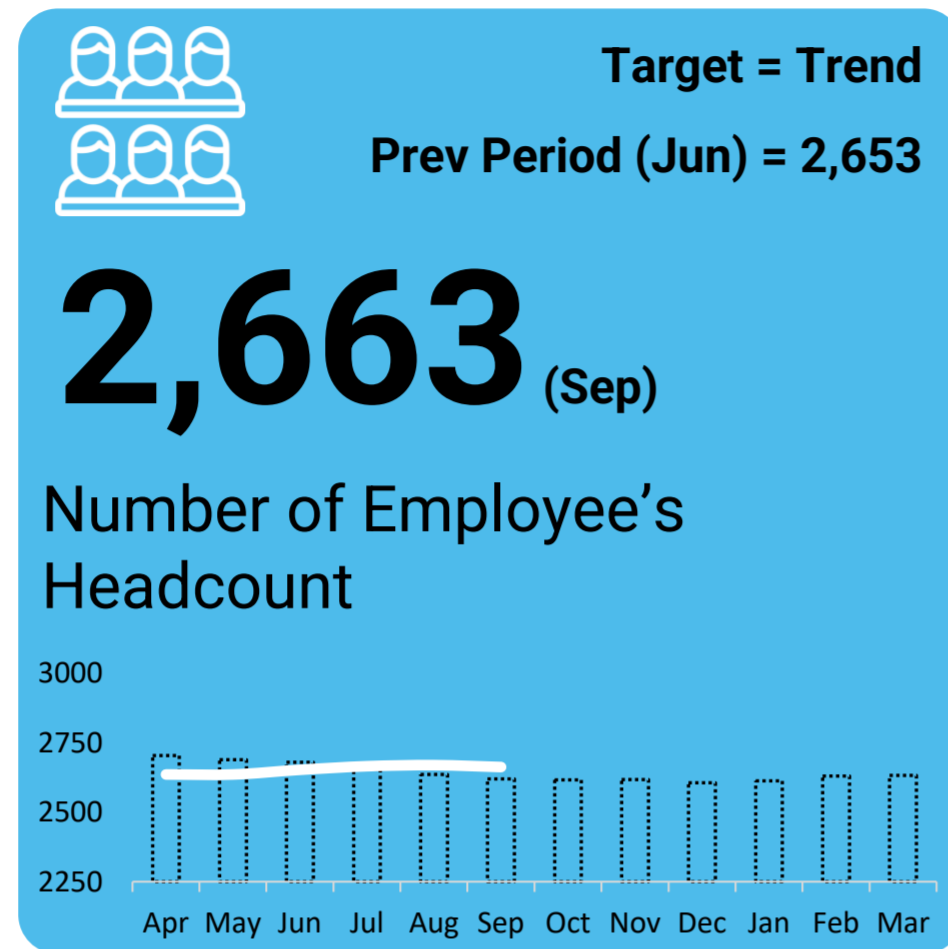
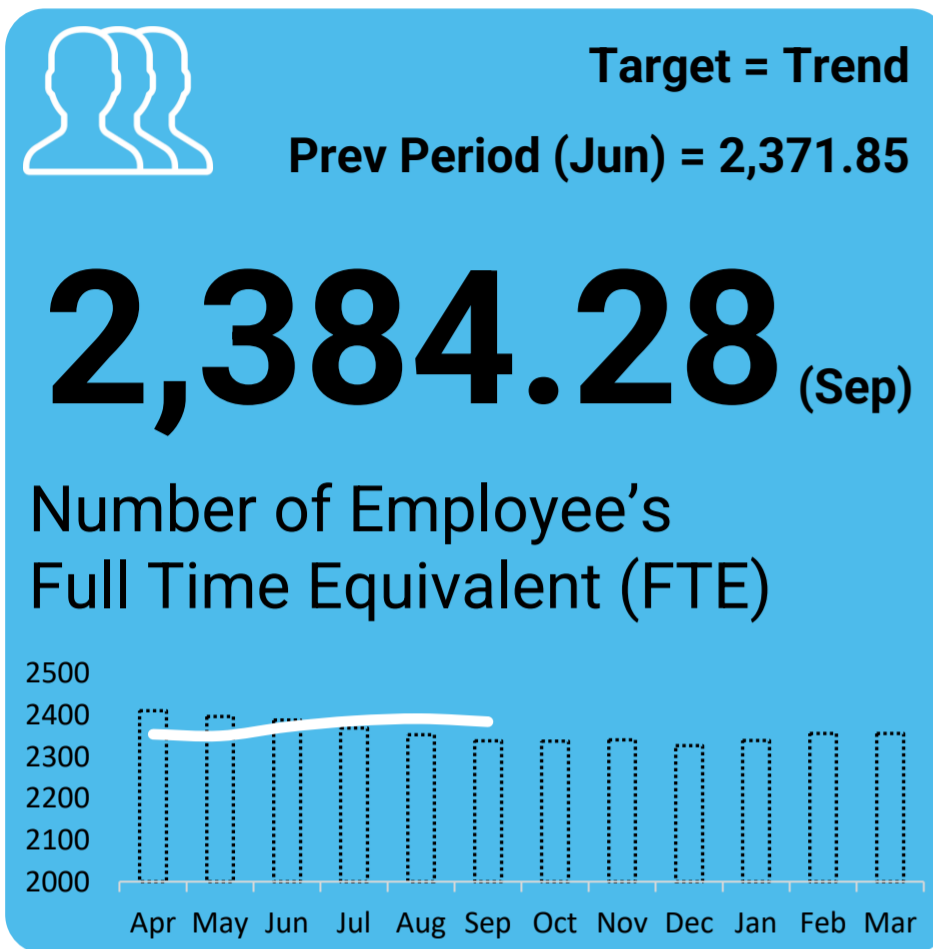
Invoices raised in April/ May (which would hit 90+ days in Q2) were significantly higher than the average across the year (£62.5m vs £31m average) which has contributed to the increase this year.



5,768 of the 5,954 invoices paid during Q2 were processed within 30 days resulting in an outturn of 96.9% for the quarter, this is above the target of 95%.

The performance this quarter compares favourable to the same period last year in which 93.5% of invoices were paid within 30 days of receipt.

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 8 of the 9 months this calendar year exceeding 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 2,663 employee's at the end of September 2022, an increase of 10 when compared to the position reported at the end of June (2,653), there is a similar trend in the number of FTEs with an increase to 2,384.28 at the end of September 2022

Due to the unitary transition and there are no trends available prior to the 1st April 2021 this year specifically for West Northamptonshire, this information is now available and we are able to compare those levels showing this quarter with that of 2021, this shows that the headcount and the FTE has increased from the same point last year (2,620 & 2338.15).

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.

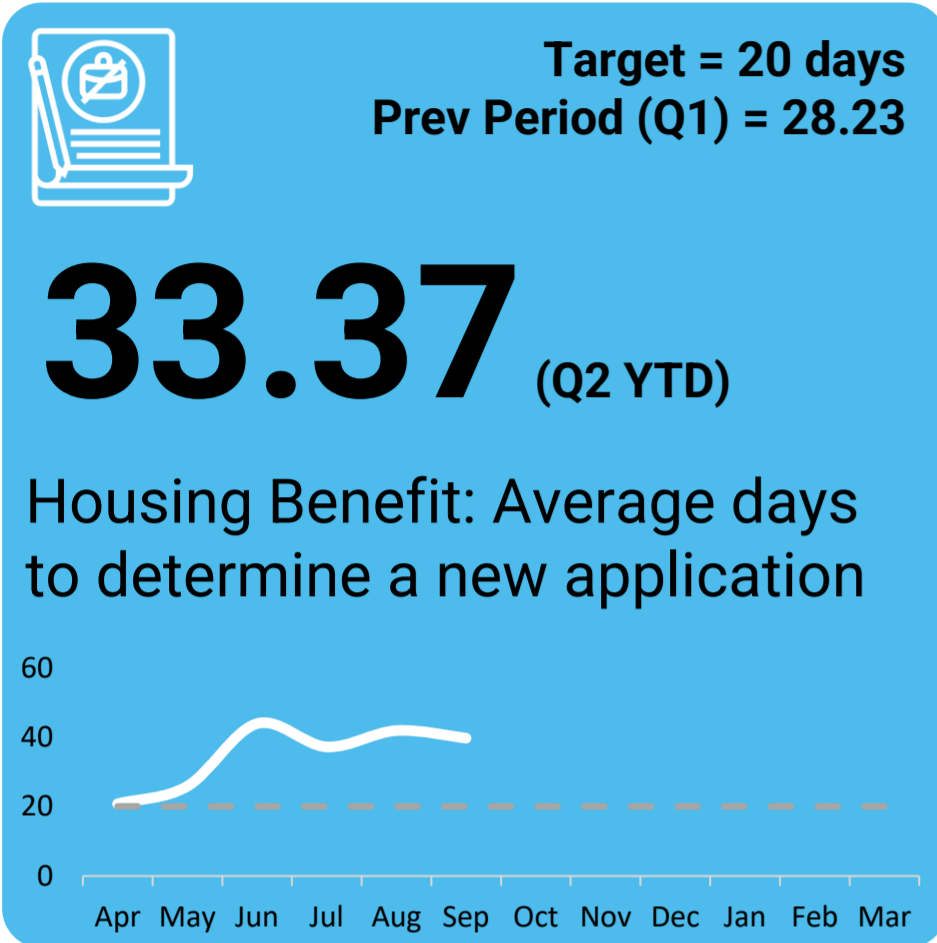
Current sickness absence from work continue to be impacted by Covid-19 which will be directly impacting ability to attend work in parts of the organisation, typically those front line services. But also the current working arrangements with office based staff continuing to work from home for at least 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 in the first 6 months of the year is 5.79 days per employee, which represents as small rise from the same period last year (5.16). Currently we are projecting that sickness per employee for the full year will be 11.58 days, should this occur it will be a reduction of 0.5 days per employee when compared to last years outturn of 12.08 days absent per employee

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.

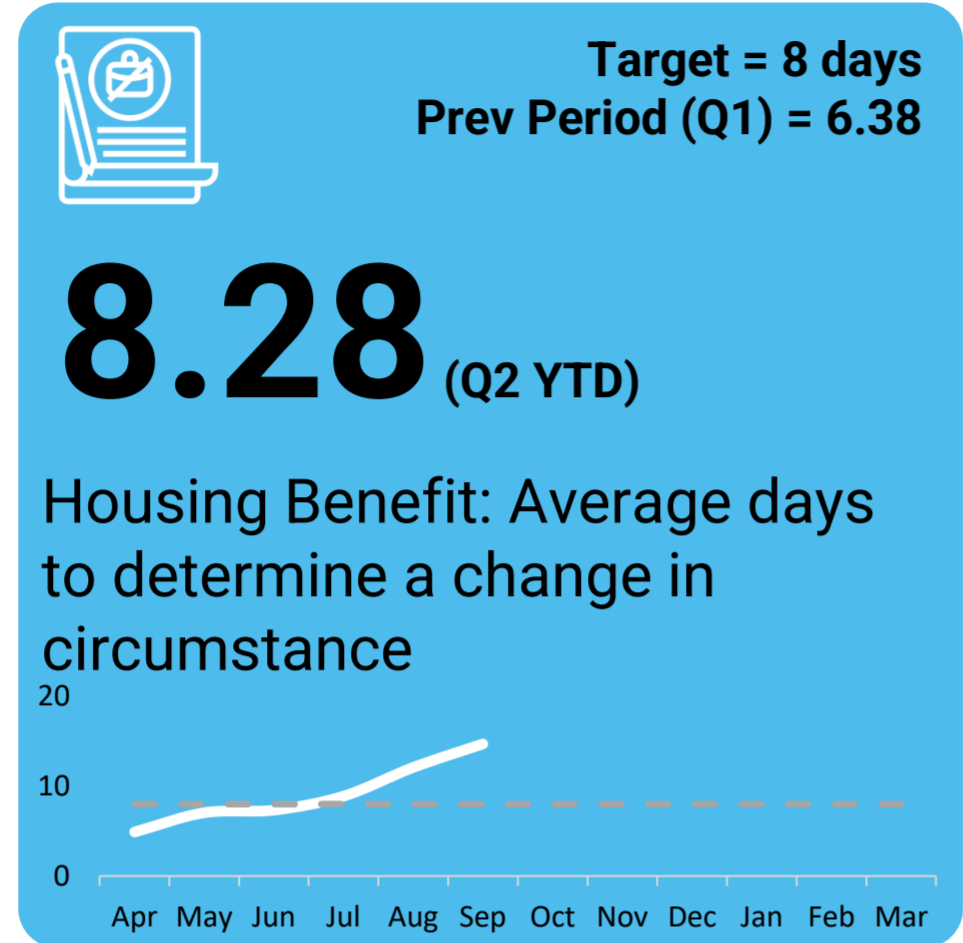
The latest figures show that in the past 12 months there has been a turnover figure of 15.1%, a decrease of 1.5% from the position at the end of June.



The average time taken to assess new claims for Housing Benefit for the second quarter this year is 39.56 days, an increase from the performance in the first quarter of 28.23 days and resulting in an increase in the year to date position to 33.37 days on average to determine a new application,

There are some challenges for the Benefits team including an increase in the more complex claims across temporary accommodation.

A new plan has just been launched to help to improve the current performance and this will be monitored each week.



The average time taken to assess changes in the second quarter this year is 11.85 days, an increase from the 6.38 days on average reported in the first quarter of the year.

As at the end of September the overall year to date average time taken to assess changes was 8.28 days against a target of 8 days.

Whilst slightly out of our target this continues to be a good performance in view of the current workloads.

Detailed Scorecard Appendix

Corp Ref:	Metric Title	Priority	Lead Directorate	Better to be?	2022-23 Target	Q1	Jul	Aug	Sep	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD	Stat Neighbour	Regional	National
1.7	Residual waste treated	1. Green & Clean	Place & Economy	Higher	75.0%	95.9%										
1.8	Number of flytips cleared	1. Green & Clean	Place & Economy	Lower	Trend	3,980				4,135			8,115			
1.9	FPNs Issued for Environmental Crime	1. Green & Clean	Place & Economy	Trend	Trend	767	226	197	233	656			1,423			
1.4c	Net trees planted this year	1. Green & Clean	Place & Economy	Higher	no target	44	-16	-19	-25	-60			-16			
1.12	Number of visitors to leisure centres	1. Green & Clean	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	1,562,829	542,576	185,170	196,510	172,577	554,257			1,096,833			
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								1,842	29,774
3.5c	Charging Points per 100,000 population - WN area	1. Green & Clean	Place & Economy	Higher	-		26.6								37.9	52.7
2.1a	Percentage of all referrals with a decision within 2 working days	2. Improved Life Chances	People	Higher	85%		64%	83%	65%					-	-	-
2.1b	Percentage of referrals with a previous referral within 12 months	2. Improved Life Chances	People	Lower	29.0%		31.0%	26.4%	31.9%				31.1%	20.9%	23.3%	21.3%
2.1c	Percentage of Single Assessments authorised within 45 days	2. Improved Life Chances	People	Higher	85.0%		95.3%	95.2%	95.9%				95.9%	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%		34.1%	23.7%	39.8%				32.0%	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%			93%	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%		2.5%	3.2%	4.8%					-	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%				-	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			94.4%	94.1%	94.1%					-	-	-
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%	70.4%	80.0%	72.2%	73.1%			61.7%	-	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%	24.2%	26.6%	28.4%	34.2%			28.4%	-	29.8%	34.6%
2.8a	Number of homeless preventions	2. Improved Life Chances	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	400	114	39	31	48	118			232	-	-	-
2.8b	Number of cases where homelessness was successfully relieved	2. Improved Life Chances	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	400	124	38	39	35	112			236	-	-	-
2.17	Net Disabled Facilities Grant Expenditure	2. Improved Life Chances	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	2,558,938	1,406,555	487,132	227,209	159,079	873,420			2,279,975	-	-	-
2.11	Percentage Smoking quit rate at 4 weeks	2. Improved Life Chances	People	Higher	60.0%	57.0%								-	-	51.0%

Detailed Scorecard Appendix

Corp Ref:	Metric Title	Priority	Lead Directorate	Better to be?	2022-23 Target	Q1	Jul	Aug	Sep	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD	Stat Neighbour	Regional	National
2.12	Breastfeeding rate at 6-8 weeks	2. Improved Life Chances	People	Higher	55.0%	52.3%	53.1%	54.2%	51.2%	52.8%				-	n/a	47.6%
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	485	899	359	1,743			2,659	-	-	-
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%				-	11.4%	9.6%
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%	96.1%	95.7%	96.9%	96.2%				-	91.8%	88.0%
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%	98.2%	97.6%	97.8%	97.9%				-	85.8%	80.2%
2.16a	Covid Spring Booster - % of Eligible Population Vaccinated (aged 75+)	2. Improved Life Chances	People	Higher	Trend		90.2%	90.8%					90.8%	-	-	62.3%
2.16b	Covid Autumn Booster - % of Eligible Population Vaccinated (aged 50+)	2. Improved Life Chances	People	Higher	Trend				20.6%				20.6%	-	-	76.2%
3.1	Number of defects repaired in the highway network	3. Connected Communities	Place & Economy	Higher	-	7,894	1,407	1,239		2,646			10,540	-	-	-
3.2	Percentage of defects repaired within timescale (P1-P4)	3. Connected Communities	Place & Economy	Higher			97.37%	98.47%						-	-	-
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%			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%	83.5%	86.1%	81.3%	83.6%				-	-	-
3.8	Proportion of complaints escalated	3. Connected Communities	Corporate Services	Lower	TBC	17				28			45	-	-	-
3.9	Proportion of complaints that are upheld	3. Connected Communities	Corporate Services	Lower	Trend									-	-	-
4.1	Number of new council homes built	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	126	6				4			10	-	-	-
4.5	Number of affordable homes completed	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	404	76				109			185	-	-	-
4.6	Planning applications approved by Committee as recommended	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Place & Economy	Higher		93.33%	100.00%	100.00%	92.31%	96.42%						
4.2	Number of visitors to libraries	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	500,000	175,631	46,968	76,726	93,230	216,924			392,555			
4.7a	Number of people resettled	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	300	486	43	42	54	139			625			
4.7b	Number of people currently supported through wrap around care	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	300		763	762	730				730			
5.3	Visitors to Museums	5. Economic Development	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	137,000	42,666	11,335	17,738	8,378	37,451			80,117			

Detailed Scorecard Appendix

Corp Ref:	Metric Title	Priority	Lead Directorate	Better to be?	2022-23 Target	Q1	Jul	Aug	Sep	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD	Stat Neighbour	Regional	National
5.4a	Total number of people on Council Tax Reduction Scheme	5. Economic Development	Finance	Lower	Trend		19,024	18,935	18,820				18,820			
5.4b	Pensioners on Council Tax Reduction Scheme	5. Economic Development	Finance	Lower	Trend		7,786	7,759	7,740				7,740			
5.4c	Working age people on Council Tax Reduction Scheme	5. Economic Development	Finance	Lower	Trend		11,238	11,176	11,080				11,080			
5.5a	Number of apprentices employed in substantive roles	5. Economic Development	Corporate Services	Higher		103	109	109	118	118			118	-	-	-
5.5b	Number of apprenticeships starts in West Northants	5. Economic Development	Corporate Services	Higher	-	2,050										
6.7a	Number of Employee's - Full Time Equivalent (FTE)	6. Robust Resource Management	Corporate Services	No Tolerance	-		2,386.30	2,391.58	2,384.28				2,384.28	-	-	-
6.7b	Number of Employee's - Headcount	6. Robust Resource Management	Corporate Services	No Tolerance	-		2,666	2,670	2,663				2,663	-	-	-
6.7c	Average number of days lost due to sickness	6. Robust Resource Management	Corporate Services	Lower			3.73	4.74	5.79				5.79	-	-	-
6.7d	Projected sickness	6. Robust Resource Management	Corporate Services	Lower	10.70		11.19	11.38	11.58				11.58	-	-	tbc
6.7e	Rolling Annual Staff Turnover	6. Robust Resource Management	Corporate Services	No Tolerance	1360.0%		16.0%	14.9%	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							7.6	-	-	-
6.2	Council Tax collection rate	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Higher	-	29.28%	38.46%	48.45%	57.69%	57.69%			57.69%	-	-	-
6.3	Business Rates collection rate	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Higher	-	30.07%	38.28%	47.40%	56.37%	56.37%			56.37%	-	-	-
6.4	Amount of debt owed to the council that is overdue by at least 90 days (£m)	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Lower			20.8	20.1	24.5				24.5	-	-	-
6.5	Percentage of invoices that are paid within 30 days of receipt	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Higher	95.0%	96.5%	97.5%	97.8%	95.2%	96.9%			96.7%	-	-	-
6.6a	Housing Benefit - time to determine new applications	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Lower	20.00	28.23	37.20	41.91	39.70	39.56			33.37			
6.6b	Housing Benefit - time to determine change in circumstances	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Lower	8.00	6.38	8.89	12.09	14.71	11.85			8.28			

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 January 2023

Cllr Malcolm Langley, Cabinet Member for Finance

Report Title	Revenues and Benefits Service
Report Author	Martin Henry, Executive Director, Finance

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West MO		
West S151	Martin Henry	5.1.23
Other Director/SME		

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Performance Information

Appendix B – Revenues and Benefits Structure chart

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To provide an overview of the Revenues and Benefits service and the work that has taken place so far since vesting day and to outline for members of Scrutiny Committee the transformation work that is planned for the next 18 months.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Revenues and Benefits provides one of the largest customer facing services of the Council. These services include:
- Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction support to over 31,000 households
 - Discretionary Housing Payments and Council Tax hardship awards
 - Council Tax billing and collection for over 178,000 households
 - Business Rates billing and collection for over 12,000 businesses

- Collection of the Business Improvement District Levy for Northampton Town Centre and Brackmills
 - Delivery of a Debt and Money Advice service.
- 2.2 On vesting day West Northamptonshire Council inherited a complex 'patchwork' of service delivery models across the three predecessor areas including:
- an 'in-house' team in the former Daventry area
 - an ex-LGSS lead authority model led by Milton Keynes in Northampton.
 - and a local authority TECKAL company delivering the service for the former South Northants area.
- 2.3 Following a full options appraisal and business case the decision was taken to introduce one in-house operating model for the delivery of the Revenues and Benefits service. This allowed for a 'clean-up' of the over complicated inherited arrangements and for the service to adopt West Northants Council's vision and values and the opportunity for improved service provision, streamlined processes and systems, ultimately reducing costs.
- 2.4 The report has come to the Committee following comments made at a recent Cabinet meeting where a request was made for the service's performance to be considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the committee:
- a) Note the progress made to date
 - b) Endorse the transformation plans for the service
 - c) Provide any insights and suggestions for further service improvements

4. Reason for Recommendations

- To outline the journey in the Revenues and Benefits service to date and to note some of the challenges that the team has faced.
- To understand and support the transformation approach, which ensures that the design is led by the service and has a strong customer focus.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 On vesting day, the service delivery for West Northamptonshire Council was a complex picture with three different models all with very different staffing structures.
- 5.2 An options paper was prepared and recommended the option of a single in-house team and to terminate the arrangements with both Milton Keynes Council and CSN Resources (the TECKAL company that provided the service for South Northants). The report was considered and approved by ELT in June 2021 and by Cabinet in July 2021.

- 5.3 The focus was then to build a new structure to deliver the Revenues and Benefits service with the aim of improving the service to residents and businesses and maximising income to the Council as well as taking the opportunity to harmonise ways of working and creating a new one team culture based on WNC vision and values. The structure also offered a saving on staffing costs of £200,000 per annum.
- 5.4 Once the structure was built full consultation was undertaken with staff and union colleagues. The consultation process started on 6 September 2021 for a period of 30 days and included initial meetings with staff, information packs for all those in the service, FAQs, online question and answer facility and support from our Change Manager. Following a period of recruitment, the new structure went 'live' on 8 November 2021. Applications for voluntary redundancy were considered and every effort was made to minimise compulsory redundancy.
- 5.5 As of 8 November 2021, a position statement was taken as to the volume and age of the work across all the service areas and the current performance against national Performance Indicators.
- 5.6 It is worth noting that since the launch of the new structure the team have also been responsible for the administration of government grants schemes including Test and Trace, the various Business Grants which saw funding of £121.4m awarded to local businesses with an additional £7.7m in Covid Additional Relief Funding (CARF) also awarded, Council Tax hardship covid payments and the most recent £150 energy rebate scheme which has seen £19.9m awarded to just over 140,000 households across West Northants. In December 2022, the Government announced two new fuel schemes which will be administered by Revenues and Benefits, and we are currently awaiting further detail on each of the schemes.

6. Issues and Choices

Staffing

- 6.1 The Revenues and Benefits structure comprises of 117 full time equivalent posts. A structure chart can be found at Appendix B of this report. At the time of drafting this report there are 17 vacant posts 5 of which have been advertised and the successful candidates will be joining the team in January 2023. 3 of the vacant posts have been offered as part of the staffing budget realignment for the 23-24 budget setting process. Of the remaining vacant posts 8 will be advertised again in the new year and we are considering options around the remaining vacant post now that the service has been in place for 12 months. As of December 2022, there are 4 officers on long term absence, and we continue to work with the officers to support them in their return to work. With the number of vacant posts and long-term absences it has been necessary to use agency staff on a short-term basis and at the time of writing this report there are 13 agency members of staff. This is reviewed on a regular basis.

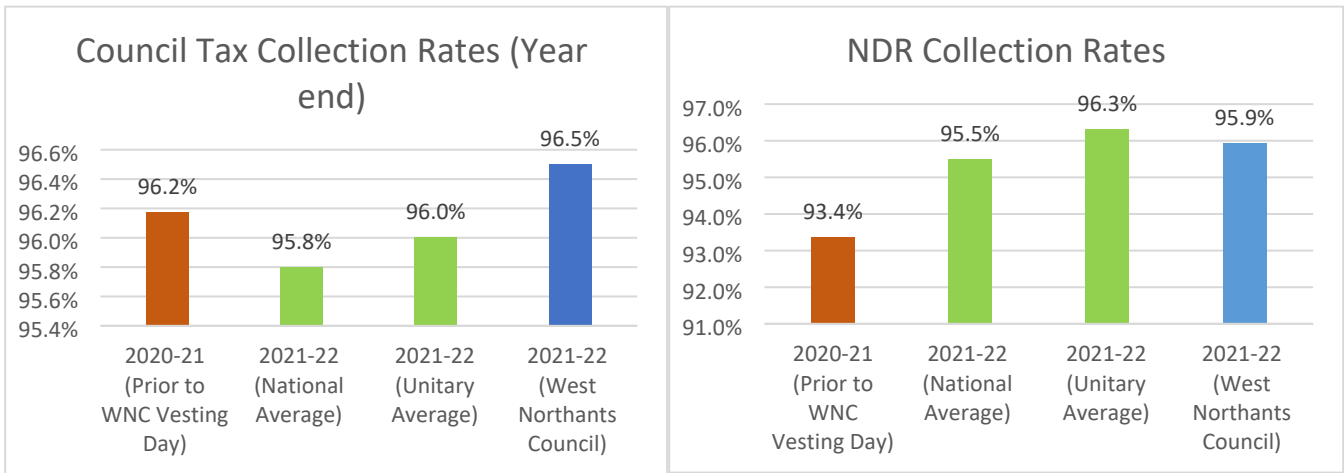
Performance

- 6.2 The new service inherited a much greater volume of work from the three sovereign areas than expected and the age profile of this work was also a challenge. The headline figures show

the Housing Benefits team had a total of over 8,000 claims outstanding with oldest dates going back to December 2020. Council Tax Billing had a total of almost 7,000 items of work with the oldest work as far back as February 2021. In addition to this the Council Tax Recovery team had 4,500 items of work. The NDR team had a total of 627 items of work outstanding. The performance against the national indicators (outlined at 6.3 of this report) also varied hugely over the three areas.

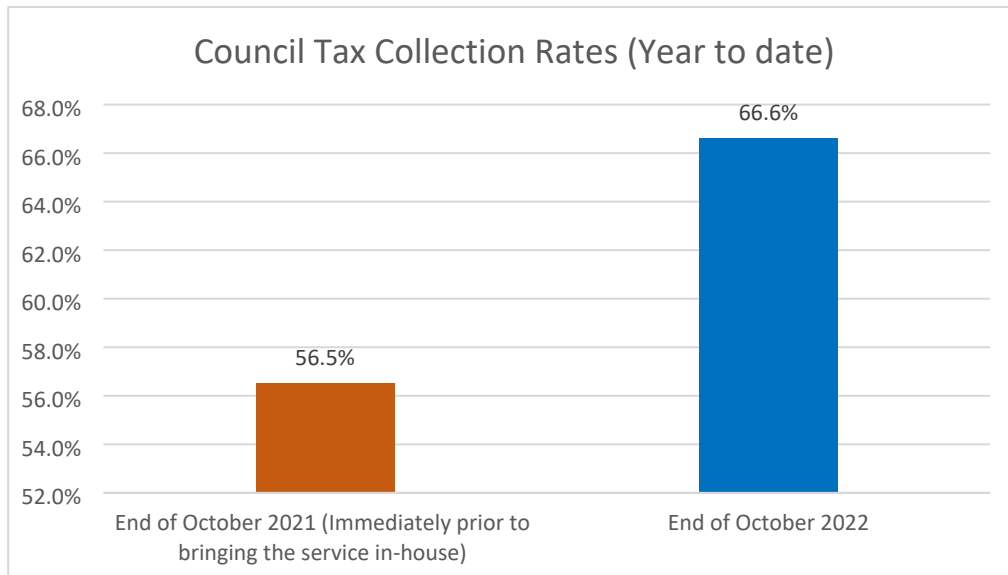
- 6.3 The volume of outstanding work steadily improved during the first 9 months of the new service across most areas. At the time of writing this report the outstanding work in Benefits stands at 4,459 with an improved age profile. Council Tax Billing currently has 7,258 items of work outstanding but again with an improved age profile. Business Rates work outstanding is currently at 235 and the team are working within 14 days. It is fair to say that the cost-of-living crisis has increased customer contact and the volume of incoming work across the service, and this continues to be a challenge.
- 6.4 Revenues and Benefits report on four national performance indicators, Council Tax collection rates, Business Rates collection rates, average time taken to assess new claims for Housing benefit and the average time to assess changes in circumstances.
- 6.5 The table below shows a summary of the performance as of November 2021 when the new service began, the end of year performance for 21-22 and the current performance levels. Collection rates for Council Tax are improving with end of October figures only slightly under target despite the challenges of covid and the current economic climate. Business Rates collection figures are much improved and are currently just under the profiled monthly target. Benefits performance continues to improve although it is acknowledged that further work is needed.

	2020-21 (Prior to WNC vesting day)	2021-22 (National Average)	2021-22 (Unitary Average)	2021-22 (West Northants Council)
Council Tax Collection Rates (Year end)	96.2%	95.8%	96.0%	96.5%
NDR Collection Rates	93.4%	95.5%	96.3%	95.9%

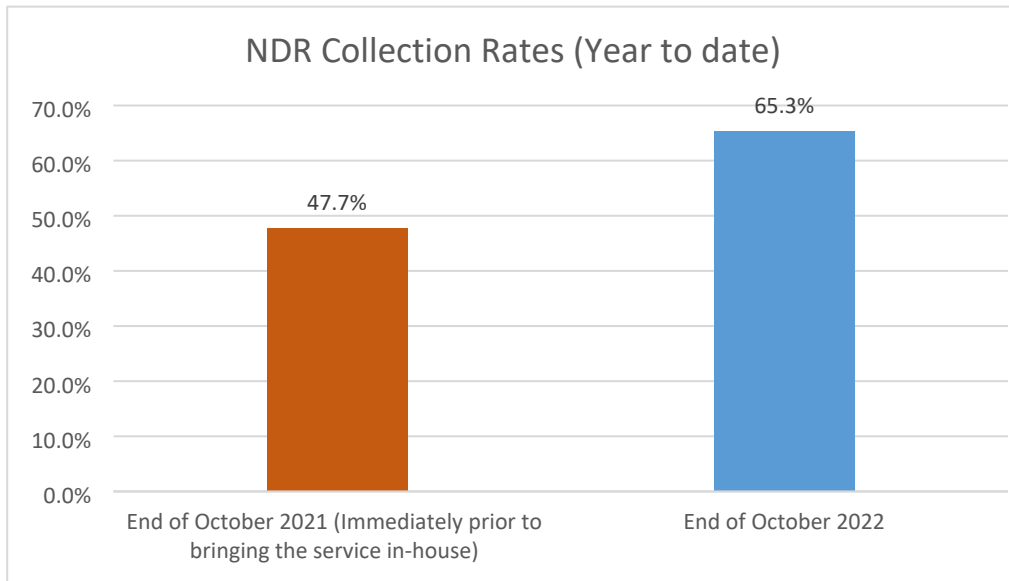


Note: The higher the figures the better for Council Tax and Business Rates collection.

	End of October 2021 (Immediately prior to bringing the service in- house)	End of October 2022
Council Tax Collection Rates (Year to date)	56.5%	66.6%
NDR Collection Rates (Year to date)	47.7%	65.3%

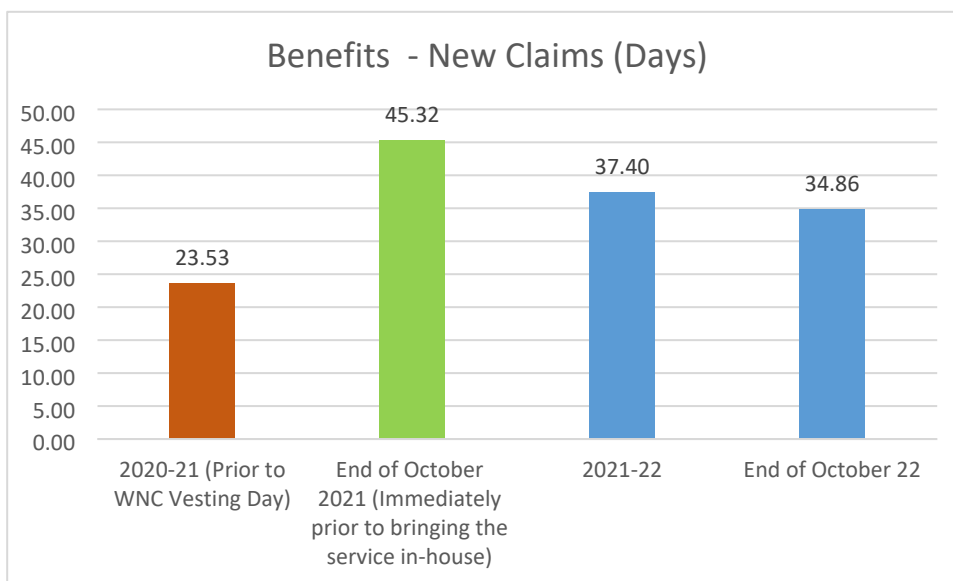


Note: The higher the figures the better for Council Tax and Business Rates collection.

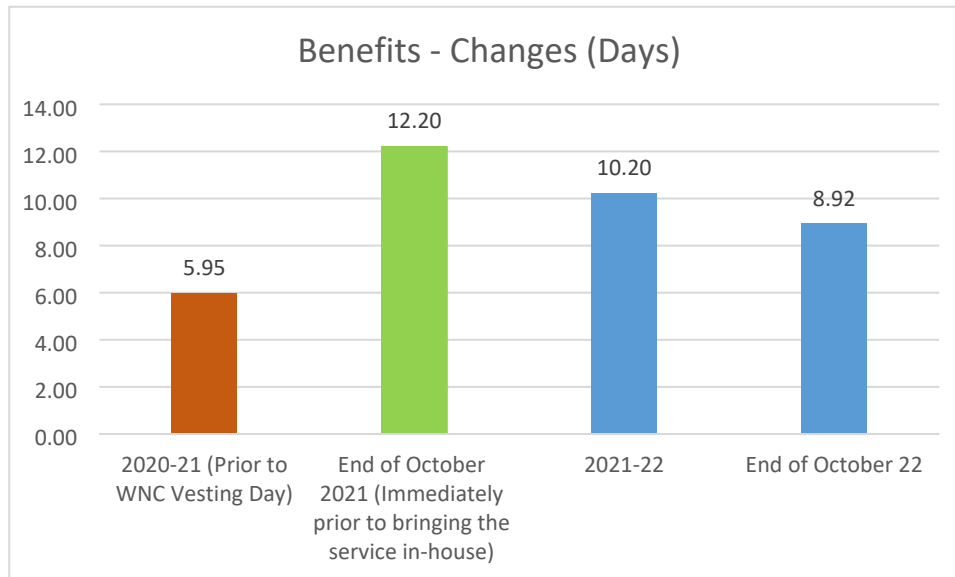


Note: The higher the figures the better for Council Tax and Business Rates collection.

	2020-21 (Prior to WNC Vesting Day)	End of October 2021 (Immediately prior to bringing the service in-house)	2021-22	End of October 22
Benefits - New Claims (Days)	23.53	45.32	37.40	34.86
Benefits - Changes (Days)	5.95	12.20	10.20	8.92



Note: The lower the figure the better for benefits performance



Note: The lower the figure the better for benefits performance

- 6.6 Appendix A of this report shows a full summary of the performance across the three sovereign areas and the blended figures for West Northants over recent years.

Unallocated payments

- 6.7 There are instances where payments cannot be allocated to accounts by our Income Team and this is due to incorrect and/or insufficient details being provided by customers when making their payments. For example, customers make payments to the incorrect sovereign bank account and/or use an incorrect reference number making it difficult for payments to be allocated. In such cases the payment will go into an income suspense account which is monitored on a daily basis. The Revenues and Benefits team continue to work closely with the Income team to identify payments in suspense and ensure that the payments are allocated to the correct accounts. To mitigate the risk from this moving forward we have updated the website to encourage customers to check their details before payment and we will be promoting Direct Debits on the annual Council Tax and Business Rates bills.

Challenges

6.8 The team has experienced major changes in the 18 months since vesting day including the introduction of a single in-house team and a complete team restructure as well as the changes as we came out of the pandemic. Throughout this time, we have received excellent support from colleagues in HR and transformation including ongoing help and support from our Change Manager. There have been, and continue to be, some challenges to overcome to ensure that we achieve the service improvements and customer experience that we are striving to reach. The main challenges are highlighted below:

- Introduction of the West ways of Working and worker types. As a customer facing service Revenues and Benefits are part flexible worker types which means that officers will have a blended approach of some days in the office of their choice and some at home. Whilst most officers have adapted to the new ways of working some individuals have found the transition more difficult and we continue to support and work with these officers to enable them to work at least two days from the offices.
- Software systems and ICT access. The Revenues and Benefits teams are currently accessing multiple software systems from the three sovereign sites. This is operationally very inefficient and offers challenges around use of resources, provision of information, processes and procedures and completion of government returns. Projects such as system upgrades and annual billing must be done multiple times. Our transformation plans include a move to a single software system which will result in further savings. The implementation of the new system is scheduled to begin in April 2023 and will be a 2-year project.
- Culture. The culture across the three sovereign areas was very different. The return to office working has been challenged by some staff but we continue to seek to embed the culture of West Northamptonshire. We have introduced Valuing Individual Performance (VIP) conversations, team meetings and workshops sessions with our Change Manager are all helping to positively influence the overall culture of the service. The plans to bring the team together at One Angel Square will also really support the move to a 'one team' culture.
- Different procedures are in place across the three sovereign areas. We are working towards harmonising the procedures
- Levels of training, skills and experience is very varied across the three sites which presents challenges in how resources are utilised.

Achievements

6.9 The team have achieved a remarkable amount since November 2021. The highlights are shown below:

- A full service plan has been drafted for 22-23 and 23-24 setting clear target and direction for staff in the service.
- Recovery on Council Tax and NDR has recommenced following a government hold on all recovery during Covid
- Collection rates on both Council Tax and NDR have improved and the performance in Benefits is also improving particularly in the former Northampton area
- Successful administration of the various and often complex Business Grants supporting our local businesses through the pandemic and the Government's Test and Trace scheme has been delivered largely using existing resources.

- Administration of the £150 fuel rebate scheme with payments to over 140,000 households largely using existing resources
- Training manuals have been re-written, and plans are in place to offer new entrant and refresher training to existing staff members.
- Workshops are taking place across the teams to look at how we can make continuous service improvements
- A new performance framework has been implemented across Benefits and Council Tax enabling daily performance reporting and regular feedback to officers. This will be rolled out to NDR too.
- Homes for Ukraine payments host payments continue to be made by the team.
- The automation of data files received from DWP has commenced in the Daventry area which will help with outstanding workloads and provide an improved customer service.
- Laptops have been rolled out where required to some team members
- The Capita software contracts have been aligned for the former South Northants and Daventry allowing greater development in the Daventry system
- Direct Debits dates have been aligned with those used in the former Northampton area introducing 4 dates now for all of WNC
- Automation of Direct Debit changes and recalls has been introduced in Daventry area.
- Introduction of PSL as the preferred corporate print supplier in Northampton area including all the changes to templates
- Online Benefits change of circumstances form is about to go-live in the former South area.
- We have aligned system access across the Capita sites
- Debt and Money Advice team continue to offer vital support to residents with financial gains of £3.7m and a project has commenced to look at options for future service delivery.
- Much work has taken place on culture and improving communication including one to ones, team meetings, workshops with our Change Manager from which action plans are agreed. Some of the suggestions implemented include a staff suggestion area on Teams, staff survey action plan, roadmap to show our future plans to help understanding and chat/support areas on Teams
- We have resolved a number of system issues across the area which have improved processes and customer service.
- Risk Based Verification to support the more efficient assessment of new claims for Housing Benefit continues in place for the former South Northants area and will be rolled out to the rest of West Northants as the harmonisation of software systems takes place.
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme has been harmonised since April 2021 and from April 2022 the scheme was reviewed to allow Council Tax Reduction for care leavers to be determined on 100% of their Council Tax liability.
- A Council Tax Hardship fund was established in April 2021 and continue to support those residents who are struggling to make payments of Council Tax.
- The Revenues and Benefits service currently works across multiple sites accessing multiple software systems. This is operationally inefficient, and a business case has recently been approved by both ELT and Cabinet to move towards a single software system. This work will begin in April 2023.
- There have been service delivery challenges across the service including the number of vacancies, high sickness levels in some areas including long term absences, resistance to

coming back into the office. Whilst this is all being proactively managed it has hampered progress in some areas.

Future plans and transformation

6.10 The vast majority of the team are embracing the need for change and transformation and the service has a number of key projects ahead in the next 12-18 months in addition to the day-to-day functions:

Area	Timeline
£150 Discretionary Scheme	Go live week 7 November 2022 with payments by 30 November 2022
Introduction of online discounts and exemptions and benefits e- change in circumstances forms in South area to improve service to customers	Go live is expected February 2023
Relocation of team members from Daventry office to OAS	Consultation completed and change support in place. Move completed November 22
Migration of the Northampton NDR server from Guildhall to Angel Street including all testing	27.10.22 – 24.11.22 with go live December 22
Migration of the South servers from off site data centre Cody Park Farnborough to Angel Street including testing	Work starts in November 22
Single software system including migration of data and merge of databases – hoping that work will start post annual billing April 23.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business case drafted • Business case considered by ELT 24 October • Cabinet approval obtained in November 2022 • Procurement • Project team to launch December 22 with a project go-live date of April 23
Annual Billing for Council Tax, NDR and Benefits 23-24	Work commences November 22, test billing January 23 and live across all systems February/March 23
NDR revaluation 2023	Work to start January 2023
Debt and Money Advice project for future service delivery working with partners and voluntary sector	In progress and to be completed by October 23.
New Income Management System project	Project is live Testing to start May 23
Anti-Poverty Strategy project	Active role in the corporate anti-poverty work
Culture and change work	To continue in 2023
Project to harmonise the three current document imaging systems	Initial work to start 2023.

Temporary accommodation and supported exemption accommodation review and subsidy loss impact – working with housing and ASC colleagues	Identified as an issue and highlighted as part of the budget work. Project to commence November 2022
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7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.1 There are no immediate financial implications directly arising from this report.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report. Legal advice and support will be required for future transformation projects such as the implementation of a single system

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 There are no risks arising directly from this report. There is a potential risk that the team will be required to administer future government grants arising from the current cost of living crisis. There is also an additional risk that we will see a further increase in demand across the services.

7.3.2 Any risks arising from future projects outlined in the report will be identified and mitigating actions will be deployed to reduce the impact of these.

7.4 Consultation

7.4.1 This report was requested at recent Cabinet meeting. Any transformation projects highlighted are being completed in conjunction with colleagues in ICT, Transformation, HR and Finance and Procurement.

7.5 Climate Impact

7.5.1 There are no immediate impacts arising from this report,

7.6 Community Impact

7.6.1 The Revenues and Benefits team offer a vital service to some of the most vulnerable residents, taxpayers, and local businesses across the West Northamptonshire area. Service improvements and projects outlined in this report will provide a positive community impact across West Northamptonshire.

7.7 Communications

7.7.1 It is vital that the team continue to work with colleagues in Communications on any future changes and that a strong communication plan is developed and implemented as part of any projects.

8. Background Papers

8.1 None.

Appendix A. Performance data

	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
Daventry	97.76%	98.15%	98.10%	97.97%	97.84%	95.35%	96.91%
Northampton	96.04%	96.32%	96.34%	93.23%	95.99%	95.61%	95.13%
South Northants	99.10%	99.02%	99.00%	98.50%	98.64%	96.68%	98.58%
West Northants	97.23%	97.44%	97.44%	97.28%	96.88%	96.17%	96.48%

Business Rates collection

	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
Daventry	99.42%	99.26%	99.57%	98.73%	98.88%	91.76%	94.69%
Northampton	98.43%	97.00%	97.42%	98.17%	97.92%	92.68%	95.86%
South Northants	98.18%	98.51%	98.68%	99.06%	98.50%	97.12%	99.06%
West Northants	98.66%	97.81%	98.17%	98.44%	98.27%	93.36%	95.92%

Benefits average time to assess new claims

	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
Daventry	30.21	27.37	28.20	25.44	25.26	21.88	22.71
Northampton	27.07	23.91	27.52	26.59	20.11	24.99	42.83
South Northants	9.55	13.24	10.34	9.30	6.83	12.74	11.00
West Northants	25.74	23.11	25.55	24.69	19.67	23.53	37.46

Benefits average time to assess changes

	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
Daventry	3.83	3.55	3.71	4.52	3.63	9.98	8.21
Northampton	9.51	5.97	10.02	7.47	7.06	5.84	11.77
South Northants	3.03	3.27	4.79	4.74	4.23	3.77	3.64
West Northants	8.19	5.34	8.76	6.89	6.40	5.95	10.25

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West Northamptonshire Council

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Treasury Management Strategy Review

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APPENDICES

Appendix A	Scope of the Review
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Chair's Foreword

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee approved its Work Programme for 2021/2022 and included a Review of the Council's Treasury Management processes.

As highlighted in the report, CIPFA states that *"effective scrutiny of treasury management is an important requirement of the Treasury Management Code of Practice. It supports good treasury management practice and better governance. It is a challenging task, and will require support, training and guidance."* The Review could not commence until the annual training on Treasury Management had been delivered for Councillors of West Northamptonshire Council. The Review commenced shortly after the training had been delivered.

The objective of the Task and Finish Group was to scrutinise the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and monitor progress on treasury management in accordance with CIPFA codes of practice.

Key lines of enquiry

- To be appraised on the delivery of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and review how the Council has complied with all elements of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement.
- To examine the policies, objectives and approach to risk management in accordance with the treasury management activities.
- To examine the treasury management practices that set out how the Council seeks to achieve the policies and objectives in the Treasury Management Policy statement

The Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group, comprising myself as Chair together with Councillors Sally Beardsworth and Keith Holland-Delamere was set up.

The Review took place between June 2022 and November 2022.

It was a very interesting and informative Review; with clear evidence received. I thank the Officers who provided clear and explanatory material to inform the key lines of enquiry of this Review.



Councillor Danielle Stone

Chair, Task and Finish Group – Treasury Management Strategy

Acknowledgements to all those who took part in the Review: -

- Councillors Sally Beardsworth and Keith Holland-Delamere who sat with me on this Review
- Audra Statham Assistant Director – Finance (Accountancy), Richard Hughes – Strategic Finance Business Partner, Biyi Adegbola – Senior Finance Business Partner for providing data and materials to inform this Review

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the review was to scrutinise the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and monitor progress on treasury management in accordance with CIPFA codes of practice.

Key lines of enquiry

- To be appraised on the delivery of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and review how the Council has complied with all elements of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement.
- To examine the policies, objectives and approach to risk management in accordance with the treasury management activities.
- To examine the treasury management practices that set out how the Council seeks to achieve the policies and objectives in the Treasury Management Policy statement

2 Context and Background

- 2.1 Following approval of its work programme for 2021/2022, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned the Task and Finish Group to undertake the review – Treasury Management Strategy. A Review commenced in June 2022 and concluded in November 2022.
- 2.2 A Task and Finish Group was established comprising Councillor Stone (Chair); and Councillors Beardsworth and Keith Holland-Delamare.

Corporate Priorities

- 2.3 This review links to the Council's corporate priorities, particularly corporate priority - Robust resource management.

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY FINDINGS

A significant amount of evidence was heard, details of which are contained in the report. After gathering evidence, the Task and Finish Group established that: -

- 4.1 After all of the evidence was collated the following conclusions were drawn:

CIPFA states that *“effective scrutiny of treasury management is an important requirement of the Treasury Management Code of Practice. It supports good treasury management practice and better governance. It is a challenging task, and will require support, training and guidance.”* Therefore, having considered all of the evidence, the Task and Finish Group agrees that it has completed its key lines of inquiry of this review and is satisfied that the evidence highlights that the Council is undertaking Treasury Management in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Conduct.

Delivery of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy

- 4.2 The Task and Finish Group acknowledges that there are a number of unfilled job vacancies across Finance Services and this is not presently having a detrimental impact upon the delivery of Treasury Management Activities.

Treasury Management Strategies, Statement and Policies

- 4.3 The importance of Members gaining a comprehensive understanding of Treasury Management Activities was recognised and the Task and Finish Group felt there is a need for Members to be aware of Treasury Management Strategies, Statement and Policies in full, details of which could be promoted in a weekly edition of the Member bulletin.
- 4.4 The review commenced shortly after the annual training on Treasury Management had been delivered for Councillors of West Northamptonshire Council. The Task and Finish Group highlights the importance and the need for the annual training for Members on Treasury Management.
- 4.5 The Task and Finish Group notes that the segregation of responsibilities between statutory officers, finance officers, and democratic functions such as Cabinet and Full Council existed as a rigorous financial safeguard of policies and procedures to ensure that no single Officer can be responsible for any money leaving the Council.

Risk Management - Approach and Policies

- 4.6 After considering the evidence provided, the Task and Finish Group is satisfied that the right approach and Policies are in place in relation to risk management in accordance with the Treasury Management activities.

ESGs (environmental, social and governance) classification and sustainable finance

- 4.7 The Task and Finish Group acknowledges there is a need for ESG's (environmental, social and governance) classification and sustainable finance to be reviewed in a year's time. It will therefore request that Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers including a review of ESG classification and how the Council's investment policies and treasury management practices meet these issues on its work programme for 2023/2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The above overall findings have formed the basis for the following recommendations: -

- 5.1 The Treasury Management Strategy Task and Finish Group recommends that:
- 5.1.1 The Cabinet Member for Finance is informed that after considering the evidence provided, the Task and Finish Group is satisfied that the Council is undertaking Treasury Management in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Conduct and the right approach and

Policies are in place in relation to risk management in accordance with the Treasury Management activities.

- 5.1.2 That the Treasury Management Strategy Task and Finish Group recommends to the Cabinet Member for Finance that in order to increase awareness of the detail and intricacies of Treasury Management activity, all Members are encouraged to read the Treasury Management Strategy in full and gain a full understanding of its detail in order to maintain this understanding; details of which could be promoted in a weekly edition of the Member bulletin.

. **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 5.1.3 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider including a review of ESG classification and how the Council's investment policies and treasury management practices meet these issues on its work programme for 2023/2024.

West Northamptonshire Council

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report of the Treasury Management Strategy Task and Finish Group

1 Purposes and Rationale

- 1.1 The purpose of the review was to scrutinise the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and monitor progress on treasury management in accordance with CIPFA codes of practice and the Council's corporate priorities, in particular robust resource management.

Key lines of enquiry

- To be appraised on the delivery of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and review how the Council has complied with all elements of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement.
- To examine the policies, objectives and approach to risk management in accordance with the treasury management activities.
- To examine the treasury management practices that set out how the Council seeks to achieve the policies and objectives in the Treasury Management Policy statement.

A copy of the scope of the review is attached at Appendix A.

2 Context and Background

- 2.1 Following approval of its work programme for 2021/2022, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned the Task and Finish Group to undertake the review – Treasury Management Strategy. A review commenced in June 2022 and concluded in November 2022.
- 2.2 A Task and Finish Group was established comprising Councillor Stone (Chair); and Councillors Beardsworth and Keith Holland-Delamare.

Corporate Priorities

- 2.3 This review links to the Council's corporate priorities, particularly corporate priority - Robust resource management.
- 2.4 The Task and Finish Group agreed that the following needed to be investigated and linked to the realisation of the Council's corporate priorities:

Background data, including:

- Scene-setting presentation – To apprise the Task and Finish Group of the elements of the Treasury Management Strategy
- Council's Treasury Management Strategy

- Council’s Treasury Management Policy Statement
 - Minimum Revenue Provision Policy
 - Treasury indicators
 - Risk management
- CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes (Treasury Management Code) (2021)
- Presentation material from the Treasury Management Training session (May 2022)

3 Methodology and Evidence Collection

3.1 For this Review, evidence was collected from senior Officers of the Council.

3.1.1 Presentation to set the scene – Treasury Management Strategy and Activities

Salient points:

The purpose of the Treasury Management Strategy is to ensure effective and efficient management of the Council’s finances and investment portfolio to ensure compliance with legislative, regulatory, and best practice regimes.

The Council has a duty to balance risk against reward in the best interests of managing the public finances.

In setting out new areas for inclusion in the Treasury Management Strategy for the next financial year, there will be increased focus on:

- adapting the liability benchmark to support the financing risk of Capital Finance Requirements,
- creating new practices for non-treasury investments, addressing environmental, social and governance matters within the Treasury Management Risk Framework,
- amending the knowledge and skills register for Treasury Management staff to ensure proportionality around skills and training,
- implementing a new requirement to clarify reporting requirements for service and commercial investments, and
- implementing a business model to support long-term treasury investments.

The requirements underpinning the Council’s Treasury Management activities cover the power to borrow, the control of borrowing, affordable borrowing limits, and investments.

In undertaking its activities, the Council abides by legislation, government guidance, and CIPFA professional codes in order to maximise best practice and good governance.

The Treasury Management function was audited by both internal audit and external audit. Audit requirements, regulations and legislative requirements strengthened substantially following the 2008 financial crash.

3.1.2 **Presentation - Policies, Objectives and approach to Risk Management**

Key points:

The key risks in treasury activities were credit and counterparty risk, liquidity risk, interest rate risk, exchange rate risk, refinancing risk and legal & regulatory risk. Some of these risks, such as interest rates, are external and therefore outside the Council's control. The objectives of effective treasury risk management are to ensure the Council is best placed to respond to turbulent market conditions.

The Council has a policy of having no investments or loans that are not settled in pound sterling, negating any risks posed by variable and uncertain exchange rates.

Liquidity risk relates to the minimum liquid cashflow available to the Council at any given time and sets a minimum limit as the lowest level of liquid cash required to be available on any given day, to ensure the Council has adequate funds to discharge its functions.

The Council has access to short-term borrowing via local authority lending markets if required.

The Council has a portfolio of secure investments held with other Local Authorities across the country, which are constantly monitored and are not at any risk in respect of the financial situations of the Authorities in which money was invested.

3.1.3 **Presentation - Treasury Management Policy Statement**

Salient points:

The Council's Treasury Management Practices (TMPs) are divided into two key themes:

Main Principles

The Council's TMP Main Principles follows the wording recommended by the latest edition of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and are reviewed annually and approved by the Council's Section 151 Officer.

Schedules

Schedules set out specific details of the systems and routines in place. The records to be maintained are set out in the schedules to the Council's TMPs which detail how the Council will apply the TMP Main Principles in carrying out its operational treasury activities. It further sets out how the Council seeks to achieve its treasury management policies and objectives and prescribes how the Council manages and controls those activities.

TMP Schedules are drafted in accordance with the treasury management framework and reviewed annually by the Council's Section 151 Officer.

TMP 5 centres on organisation, clarity and segregation of responsibilities and dealing arrangements.

TMP 6 focusses on reporting requirements and the management information arrangements.

4 **Conclusions and Key Findings**

4.1 After all of the evidence was collated the following conclusions were drawn:

CIPFA states that *“effective scrutiny of treasury management is an important requirement of the Treasury Management Code of Practice. It supports good treasury management practice and better governance. It is a challenging task, and will require support, training and guidance.”* Therefore, having considered all of the evidence, the Task and Finish Group agrees that it has completed its key lines of inquiry of this review and is satisfied that the evidence highlights that the Council is undertaking Treasury Management in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Conduct.

Delivery of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy

4.2 The Task and Finish Group acknowledges that there are a number of unfilled job vacancies across Finance Services and this is not presently having a detrimental impact upon the delivery of Treasury Management Activities.

Treasury Management Strategies, Statement and Policies

4.3 The importance of Members gaining a comprehensive understanding of Treasury Management Activities was recognised and the Task and Finish Group felt there is a need for Members to be aware of Treasury Management Strategies, Statement and Policies in full, details of which could be promoted in a weekly edition of the Member bulletin.

4.4 The review commenced shortly after the annual training on Treasury Management had been delivered for Councillors of West Northamptonshire Council. The Task and Finish Group highlights the importance and the need for the annual training for Members on Treasury Management.

4.5 The Task and Finish Group notes that the segregation of responsibilities between statutory officers, finance officers, and democratic functions such as Cabinet and Full Council existed as a rigorous financial safeguard of policies and procedures to ensure that no single Officer can be responsible for any money leaving the Council.

Risk Management - Approach and Policies

- 4.6 After considering the evidence provided, the Task and Finish Group is satisfied that the right approach and Policies are in place in relation to risk management in accordance with the Treasury Management activities.

ESGs (environmental, social and governance) classification and sustainable finance

- 4.7 The Task and Finish Group acknowledges there is a need for ESG's (environmental, social and governance) classification and sustainable finance to be reviewed in a year's time. It will therefore request that Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers including a review of ESG classification and how the Council's investment policies and treasury management practices meet these issues on its work programme for 2023/2024.

Recommendations

5

- 5.1 The Treasury Management Strategy Task and Finish Group recommends that:
- 5.1.1 The Cabinet Member for Finance is informed that after considering the evidence provided, the Task and Finish Group is satisfied that the Council is undertaking Treasury Management in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Conduct and the right approach and Policies are in place in relation to risk management in accordance with the Treasury Management activities.
- 5.1.2 That the Treasury Management Strategy Task and Finish Group recommends to the Cabinet Member for Finance that in order to increase awareness of the detail and intricacies of Treasury Management activity, all Members are encouraged to read the Treasury Management Strategy in full and gain a full understanding of its detail in order to maintain this understanding; details of which could be promoted in a weekly edition of the Member bulletin.

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 5.1.3 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider including a review of ESG classification and how the Council's investment policies and treasury management practices meet these issues on its work programme for 2023/2024.

APPENDICES

Appendix A



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY TASK AND FINISH SCRUTINY REVIEW – SCOPE

1. Topic – Treasury Management Strategy

2. Responsible Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)

3. Purpose of the scrutiny review

The purpose of this Scrutiny review is to:

To scrutinise the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and monitor progress on treasury management in accordance with CIPFA codes of practice and the Council's corporate priorities, in particular Robust Resource Management.

Key lines of enquiry

- To be appraised on the delivery of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and review how the Council has complied with all elements of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement.
- To examine the policies, objectives and approach to risk management in accordance with the treasury management activities.
- To examine the treasury management practices that set out how the Council seeks to achieve the policies and objectives in the Treasury Management Policy statement.

4. Outcomes

To make evidenced based recommendations to inform the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

5. Approach

The scrutiny review will be carried out by a Task and Finish Group made up of the following councillors:

1. Councillor Sally Beardsworth
2. Councillor Keith Holland-Delamere
3. Councillor Danielle Stone (Chair)

Co-optees: None.

The Task and Finish Group will make use of the standard working methods applicable to scrutiny reviews, including evidence-gathering meetings (either in-person or virtual); desktop research; targeted evidence-gathering by individual members; and site visits, as appropriate.

6. Information required

Background data

- Scene-setting presentation – To apprise the Task and Finish Group of the elements of the Treasury Management Strategy
- Council's Treasury Management Strategy
- Council's Treasury Management Policy Statement
 - Minimum Revenue Provision Policy
 - Treasury indicators
 - Risk management
- CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes (Treasury Management Code) (2021)
- Slides from the Treasury Management Training Session (May 2022)

Views from internal expert advisors

- Cabinet Member for Finance
- Audra Statham – Assistant Director - Accountancy
- Richard Hughes – Strategic Finance Business Partner
- Biyi Adegbola – Senior Finance business Partner
 - Chair of the Audit Committee
 - Finance Spokesperson for Liberal Democrat Group

Views from external expert advisors

- Link Asset Management Services

7. Resources and support

- Audra Statham, Assistant Director - Finance
- Tracy Tiff, Deputy Democratic Services Manager for evidence-gathering and for production of the scrutiny review report

8. Timetable and key dates

	Date
Inaugural Task and Finish Group meeting	6 June 2022 (remote over Zoom)
Confirmation of the scope of the review by the Corporate OSC	4 July 2022
Evidence-gathering (specific dates for meetings and other activity to be set by the Task and Finish Group)	July to October 2022
Approval of draft report by the Task and Finish Group	
Agreement of draft report by the Corporate OSC	7 November/16 January 2023
Chair of the Corporate OSC to present the final report to WNC Cabinet	January 2023

9. Follow-up/Monitoring

Corporate OSC will review the impact of the scrutiny review 6 months after the presentation of the final report to decision-makers.

NB: Each OSC will have a monitoring Work Programme to monitor the impact of the accepted recommendations



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

16 January 2023

CLr Malcolm Longley – Finance Portfolio holder

Report Title	Quarter 2 – Revenue Monitoring
Report Author	Martin Henry Executive Director – Finance Martin.henry@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West MO	Catherine Whitehead	6 January 2023
West S151	Martin Henry	5 January 2023
Other Director/SME	Not applicable	Not applicable

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Appendix A – Cabinet report – Quarter 2 Revenue Monitoring

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To present to the Committee the Quarter 1 Revenue Monitoring report that was considered at the Cabinet meeting held on 23 September 2022.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Cabinet considered the Quarter 2 Revenue Monitoring position of the Council on the 20 December 2022.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Considers the attached Quarter 2 Revenue Monitoring report.

4. Reason for Recommendations

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

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The attached Cabinet report sets out the forecast financial position of the authority at the end of the second quarter.
- 5.2 The report goes into detail about the external pressures that have caused the financial pressure which could not have been forecast at the time of setting the budget and sets out the approach for managing those pressures.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 The attached Cabinet report sets out the main issues and choices for consideration.

7. Implications

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 There are no direct resource or financial implications stemming from this report as it is reporting the forecast financial position of the authority for information.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 The legal implications are set out in the attached Cabinet report.

7.3 Risk

- 7.3.1 The risk implications are set out in the attached Cabinet report.

7.4 Consultation

- 7.4.1 Consultation information is contained within the attached Cabinet report

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

- 7.5.1 The report comes to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny for information and comment.

7.6 Climate Impact

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

7.7 **Community Impact**

7.7.1 There are no direct Community Impacts stemming from this report

8. **Background Papers**

8.1 None

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

20 DECEMBER 2022

**CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR FINANCE: COUNCILLOR
MALCOLM LONGLEY**

Report Title	Revenue Monitoring, Quarter 2 - Financial Year 2022-23
Report Author	Martin Henry, Executive Director (Finance) Martin.Henry@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West MO	Catherine Whitehead	6/12/2022
West S151	Martin Henry	8/12/2022
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	6/12/2022

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Appendix A – 2022-23 Revenue Forecast Outturn by Directorate as at Quarter 2

Appendix B – Budget Savings Tracker

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The report provides an assessment of the Council’s financial performance against its approved 2022-23 budget, incorporating key financial risks, issues and opportunities identified since 1st April 2022 for General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

2. Executive Summary

- 1.2. West Northamptonshire Council provides a range of services to residents and businesses across the area including care to vulnerable adults and children, education, the collection and disposal of waste, household waste recycling, leisure and community wellbeing, highways, planning, economic development, collection of council tax and business rates, housing benefit, council tax support, housing and support for the homeless.
- 1.3. The Council successfully balanced its 2021-22 budget and published the details in the provisional outturn report that Cabinet has previously considered.
- 1.4. However, since the last year, the Council, alongside many other local authorities and organisations across the nation, has seen a significant impact on its finances as a result of external factors beyond its control. The main drivers of these cost pressures are highlighted below:
 - Inflationary and cost of living pressures impacting on the cost of providing services.
 - Ongoing financial impact of COVID allied with the withdrawal of significant COVID funds previously received.
 - Demand led and inflationary pressures within the Children’s Trust.
 - Significant pressures within Home to School Transport.
 - Demand led pressures within Adult Social Care.
 - Cost of living pay award significantly greater than the amount included at the time of setting the budget based on the latest national pay award offer made by the employers’ organisation.
- 1.5. As a result of these externally driven financial challenges, Directorate Management Teams continue to be focussed on reducing the cost-of-service delivery in their areas to support the council to forecast spend closer in line with the budget, while ensuring that services are still delivered and that there isn’t a corresponding reduction in service provision.
- 1.6. Table one summarises the revenue forecast currently being estimated for this financial year.

Table One: Forecast Outturn 2022-23 by Directorate

Directorate	Net Budget £'000	Forecast Net Spend at 31/10/22 £'000	Q2 Forecast Variance at 31/10/22 £'000	Q1 Forecast Variance as at 31/07/22 £'000	Movement Since Q1 £'000	% Forecast Variance against budget
Corporate Services	22,553	22,427	(126)	210	(336)	-0.6%
Chief Executive Office	3,305	2,832	(473)	0	(473)	-14.3%
Education Services	4,540	4,433	(107)	(385)	278	-2.4%
Children's Trust	70,664	77,366	6,702	4,441	2,261	9.5%
Communities and Opportunities	11,024	11,335	311	506	(195)	2.8%
Adult Social Care	105,631	113,897	8,266	6,889	1,377	7.8%
Place and Economy	83,211	88,756	5,545	6,487	(942)	6.7%
Finance Directorate	10,575	9,922	(653)	(362)	(291)	-6.2%
Cost of services	311,503	330,969	19,466	17,785	1,681	6.2%
Technical / Centrally Controlled Budgets	30,815	21,891	(8,924)	(6,510)	(2,414)	-29.0%
Total budgeted expenditure	342,318	352,860	10,542	11,275	(734)	3.1%
Less funding	(342,318)	(349,118)	(6,800)	(3,700)	(3,100)	1.9%
Net Position 2022-23	0	3,742	3,742	7,575	(3,834)	1.1%

1.7. The forecast outturn position for 2022-23 is an overspend of £3.7m, after use of £10.1m of budget contingencies, which were set aside in the budget for risks that have subsequently crystallised in the current financial year. This represents a favourable movement of £3.8m from the Quarter 1 position reported to Cabinet in September. The detailed forecast variations against budget are set out in section 6.

1.8. The main reasons for the underlying pressures which directorates are seeking to mitigate are as follows;

- Increasing levels of inflation, with RPI currently standing at 14.2% and CPI currently standing at 11.1% affecting contracts, operations and running costs.
- Increase in homelessness and the use of expensive nightly purchase temporary accommodation.
- Increase in adult social care demand at the end of 2021-22 due to demands from hospital discharges.

- More adults care packages at higher costs reflecting both increase in complexity following COVID and market conditions. Demand is outstripping supply which is directly pushing costs up.
- The Children's Trust is seeing increasing demand for limited, and expensive placements for children with complex needs. This is driving up costs.
- The staff pay award has now been agreed and is greater than anticipated when the budget was set.
- Significant pressures relating to Home to School Transport spend.

Housing Revenue Account

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

Table two: HRA Forecast Outturn 2022-23 by Activity

Other Funds (HRA)	Net Budget	Forecast Net Spend at 31/10/22	Q2 Variance at 31/10/22	Q1 Variance at 31/07/22	Movement
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Dwelling rents	(53,050)	(52,417)	633	619	14
Non-dwelling rents	(951)	(1,029)	(78)	(82)	4
Other charges for services	(2,435)	(2,592)	(157)	(149)	(8)
Contributions towards expenditure	(16)	(9)	7	(6)	13
Repairs & Maintenance	14,892	15,412	520	50	470
General Management	9,391	9,253	(138)	17	(155)
Special Services	5,277	5,342	65	0	65
Rents, Rates, Taxes & Other	302	302	0	0	0
Provision for Bad Debts	400	400	0	0	0
General Fund Recharges	2,650	2,650	0	0	0
Interest & Capital Financing	8,802	7,440	(1,362)	(1,277)	(85)
Depreciation (Major Repairs Allowance)	13,500	13,500	0	0	0
Rev Contributions to Capital	1,238	1,238	0	0	0
Budgeted Position	0	(510)	(510)	(828)	318
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	0	510	510	828	(318)
Overall Position	0	0	0	0	0

1.12. The HRA is experiencing forecast pressures mainly on reductions in anticipated dwelling rental income due to the delay in new properties being let to tenants, and pressures in repairs and maintenance due to the increased cost of sub-contractors and building materials, as well as increase inflationary pressures due to a shortage of skilled labour and disruptions in the supply chain. These pressures have been offset by reduced interest and capital financing charges as a result of slippage on the capital programme.

1.13. The forecast HRA position has worsened by £318k between Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 but is still reporting an overall underspend against the original budget. This has predominately been driven by the repairs and maintenance forecast overspend, and the increase costs of gas and electricity within Special Services. These forecast pressures have been offset by efficiency savings and reduction in borrowing costs due to the latest phasing of the capital programme.

Dedicated Schools Grant

1.14. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is a ring-fenced specific grant allocated to the Local Authority by the Government to support a range of education related services.

1.15. The Department for Education (DfE) currently operate a four-block funding model for funding schools and pre-16 education including early years as set out in the following table:

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

1.16. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) forecast at the end of Quarter 2 is as follows:

Table Three – DSG

DSG Block	Gross Exp Budget £'000	Recoupment £'000	Net Exp Budget £'000	Forecast Net Spend £'000	Quarter 2 Variance £'000	Quarter 1 Variance £'000	Movement £'000
Schools*	318,848	(253,204)	65,644	65,644	0	0	0
Early Years Provision	26,572	0	26,572	26,791	219	0	219
High Needs	63,557	(16,028)	47,529	49,261	1,732	393	1,339
Central Schools Services Block*	4,153	0	4,153	4,153	0	0	0
TOTAL	413,130	(269,232)	143,898	145,849	1,951	393	1,558

*Includes carry forwards totalling £657k

- 1.17. The DSG is currently forecasting an overspend of £2.0m, with £1.8m overspend forecast in the high needs block and £0.2m in the early years block. This is an adverse movement of £1.6m from the prior reported position, based on the increased demand for services.
- 1.18. The pressure in the main relates to increased demand for educational placements, and out of county placements provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) due to a growth in education, health and care plans, and a shortage of placements in county. The 2022-23 capital programme includes investment to increase resourced places in mainstream schools and special school expansions.
- 1.19. The early years block variance relates to demand above budgeted levels on the SEND inclusion fund for emerging and low-level needs.
- 1.20. DSG budgets are being reviewed to ensure that all of the education elements of funded placements are accurately forecast.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- a) Note the forecast outturn position for 2022-23 and associated risks
- b) Note the deliverability assessment of West Northamptonshire Council savings requirement for 2022-23 summarised in section 7 and detailed in Appendix B
- c) Delegate authority to the Executive Director – Finance in consultation with the portfolio holder to apply any budget virements required to effectively manage the overall budget during the 2023/24 year.

- d) Cabinet are requested to note and endorse the three requests made by the Children's Trust set out in paragraphs 6.4, 6.5 and 6.7 and supported by the Strategic Commissioning Group and recommend to Council that they should be approved and for the approval of further contract sum adjustments to be delegated to the Executive Director – Finance in consultation with the Finance Portfolio holder.
- e) To note the position on Capital Dispensations set out in paragraph 6.48.1

4. Reason for Recommendations

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

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The Council's budget for 2022-23 is £342.3m and was approved on 24 February 2022 by Full Council including £19.3m of savings proposals. This report includes an analysis of the deliverability of these efficiency and income proposals, and the in-year variations to budgeted assumptions.

6. Financial Overview by Directorate

- 6.1 This section of the report provides an update on the forecast variations against 2022-23 budget A more detailed breakdown of the 2022-23 forecast is included in Appendix A.

Corporate Services

Net Budget £22.5m

Forecast Outturn £22.4m

Forecast underspend £0.1m

Variance percentage -0.6%

- 6.2 The Corporate Services Directorate delivers services including human resources, customer services, Digital Technology and Innovation (DTI), legal, democratic, coroners, registration and transformation services.
- 6.3 The Directorate is reporting a forecast outturn position of £0.1m underspend, which is a favourable movement of £0.3m from the reported Quarter 1 position.
- 6.4 This position includes overspends of £1.5m of which mainly relate to increases in the costs of IT contracts, the additional cost of mobile phone usage, legacy council income targets which cannot be met, and several services with staffing pressures. These are part mitigated through one-off income and staffing underspends in other areas of Corporate Services.
- 6.5 To address this, the Corporate Services Management Team has identified efficiency proposals which will contribute £0.9m towards mitigating current budget pressures.

- 6.6 The favourable movement of £0.3m from Quarter 1 is driven by further pressures of £0.2m mainly due to IT license fees that were not anticipated, offset by £0.5m underspends of which £0.3m is due to staff vacancies, a revised estimate on members allowances, and reductions in non-essential spend.

Chief Executive Directorate

Net Budget £3.3m

Forecast outturn £2.8m

Forecast underspend £0.5m

Variance percentage -14.3%

- 6.7 Chief Executive Directorate includes the Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive, Executive Support, Communications and Business Intelligence Services.
- 6.8 The Directorate is reporting a forecast outturn position of £0.5m underspend, and a favourable movement of £0.5m from Quarter 1 reported position.
- 6.9 This position includes an overspend of £0.2m which in the main relates to a shortfall in service aggregation savings which was a result of assumed senior staff savings from bringing the legacy councils together not fully matching with the budgets that came across from the four legacy authorities.
- 6.10 This pressure is mitigated through one-off income and staffing underspends due to delay in restructure in Business Intelligence.
- 6.11 The Management Team in the Chief Executive Directorate has identified efficiency proposals which will contribute a further £0.3m to reduce the pressures reported in other directorates.
- 6.12 The favourable movement of £0.5m from Quarter 1 is largely driven by the identification of savings opportunities due to the release of £0.4m one-off budget and carry forward allocated to Business Intelligence no longer required due to delays in restructure, staff vacancy management and other minor variances across the directorate following recent review of budgets.

Education Services

Net Budget £4.5m

Forecast outturn £4.4m

Forecast underspend £0.1m

Variance percentage -2.4%

- 6.13 Education Services is made up of Council services within the People Directorate which deliver statutory education functions against approximately 200 duties as set out in various Education

and Children Acts, and regulations including, but not limited to, school quality assurance and intervention, pupil place planning and admissions, early years and special educational needs.

- 6.14 Education Services are reporting an underspend of £0.1m, which is an adverse movement of £0.3m from the reported Quarter 1 position.
- 6.15 Children and Education are forecasting overspends of £0.5m made up of £0.3m forecast traded income shortfall in Educational Psychology based on latest capacity available to fulfil service level agreement take up, £0.1m legal cost overspend relating to SEND tribunals and £0.1m disaggregation costs.
- 6.16 This is mitigated in part by underspends totalling £0.4m due to staffing vacancies underspends, mainly across Educational Psychologist posts, of which there is a national shortage of qualified staff.
- 6.17 In addition, Education Services has identified efficiency proposals which will contribute a further £0.2m of budget mitigations.

Northamptonshire Children's Trust

Net Budget £70.7m

Forecast outturn £77.4m

Forecast overspend £6.7m

Variance percentage 9.5%

- 6.1 The contract for Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) provides children's social care services across both West and North Northamptonshire Councils.
- 6.2 NCT is forecasting a total overspend of £11.9m against the approved contract sum of £137.45m. Based on the agreed contract split between West and North Northamptonshire Councils, WNC's share of the total is a forecast overspend of £6.7m against the contract sum of £76.75m (56%).
- 6.3 The main reason for the forecast overspend relates to placements for children in care which amounts to a total of £8m. There are increasing numbers of children coming into care in Northants due to the impact of covid and the national economic picture. The current levels of volatility, efficiency of joint funding process, flux of emergency placements and increasing complexity of need, in addition to inflationary pressures, represent a significant financial challenge for the year ahead. This is representative of the national picture where there is a shortage of appropriate places in children's homes and with foster carers, meaning that high prices are often being paid by local authorities who are responsible for placing children in appropriate settings. The key drivers of the overspend are residential and supported accommodation placements, with the top five placements costing in excess of £10,000 per week.
- 6.4 The staffing budget is forecast to overspend by £1.901m with a provision for national pay award. Increases have also been included in relation to the uplift in agency rates, which have seen an average increase of 5%. The Strategic Commissioning Group (SCG) received and supported a contract sum uplift request for this amount. WNC's share of this would be £1.062m and makes up part of the total forecast overspend.

- 6.5 There is a forecast pressure of £0.844m relating to The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman decision on the historic treatment and compliance with Special Guardianship Allowance policy. The additional costs relate to the implementation of the Ombudsman decision and the backdating of payments to all Special Guardianship payments. The decision was made on 24 August, and the new policy and payments must be made within three months of the decision. The SCG received and supported a contract sum uplift request for this amount. WNC's share of this would be £0.471m and makes up part of the total forecast overspend.
- 6.6 There are also forecast pressures on transport costs of £0.7m which is a result of an increase in fuel costs. The impact of covid led to increased transport demand for supporting children in care. Whilst work is underway in implementing transition arrangements to reduce historic agreements, there is a risk that the inflation on transport costs could rise above current levels and the recent increase in covid infections may reduce the opportunities to lessen demand.
- 6.7 Internal foster care provision is more cost effective than paying for external placements, therefore to ensure the Trust can continue to recruit and retain internal foster carers it has been decided to provide a greater inflationary uplift to their foster carer payments (an increase from 1.5% to 4%, back dated to October 2022). This costs an additional £0.103m. The SCG received and supported a contract sum uplift request for this amount. WNC's share of this would be £0.058m and makes up part of the total forecast overspend.
- 6.8 The Trust will continue to use a managed social care team until the end of the financial year, which will provide additional capacity to the safeguarding service, ensuring that social care caseloads continue at a manageable level. This will result in an additional pressure of £0.7m, WNC's share is £0.4m.
- 6.9 The Trust continues to develop proposals to mitigate their forecast pressures, and this will be followed up as part of the governance arrangements between the Council and the Trust, which includes regular monitoring reports.
- 6.10 As detailed above the SCG received and supported three contract sum uplift requests for some of the pressures highlighted above. All three were contained within their forecast outturn position. Cabinet are requested to note and endorse these requests and recommend to Council that they should be approved and for the approval of further contract sum adjustments to be delegated to the Executive Director – Finance in consultation with the Finance Portfolio holder.

Communities and Opportunities

Net Budget £11.0m

Forecast outturn £11.3m

Forecast overspend £0.3m

Variance percentage 2.8%

- 6.11 The Communities and Opportunities Directorate includes Housing, Leisure, Libraries, Economic Development, Regeneration and Community Safety & Engagement. The Directorate is

forecasting an overspend of £0.3m, which is a favourable movement of £0.2m from the reported Quarter 1 position.

- 6.12 The favourable movement is driven by a lower forecast overspend on expensive nightly purchase Temporary Accommodation as management action to reduce the usage of expensive nightly purchase starts to take effect, the receipt of leisure contract management fee as per contract for the first six months of the year, various management actions in holding recruitment to non-statutory posts and general spending review panel effect. These favourable movements are partly offset by the non-delivery of service aggregation, and a worsening of forecast housing benefit subsidy loss.
- 6.13 The £0.3m directorate pressure in the main relates to four issues.
- 6.14 The first is the result of increases in the cost of temporary accommodation. The nightly costs of housing are increasing rapidly due to economic inflationary pressures totalling £0.3m, consisting of additional bed and breakfast costs and additional temporary private housing costs.
- 6.15 A £0.4m pressure relating to an increase in Housing Benefit subsidy loss due to the higher demand for temporary accommodation for the homeless and the increasing use of expensive nightly purchase accommodation. This pressure is being directed to the Housing service where Homelessness and temporary accommodation use is managed.
- 6.16 The service aggregation saving carried forward from 2021-22 is not achievable. When the current budget was set it was assumed that restructuring throughout the directorate would deliver the savings proposal, however as transformation work is still on-going, this is causing a savings shortfall of £0.4m.
- 6.17 The final key issue relates to a forecast reduction of £0.25m in management fee from a leisure facility in the South Northants area. The leisure facility advised that the impact of Covid has meant that they are operating at a loss, as such the management payment of 0.45m is forecast to be under recovered. A benchmarking exercise is underway and will dictate payments from Sept 2022 to March 2023.
- 6.18 The Communities and Opportunities Management Team has utilised a number of mitigating actions to improve the financial position of the directorate.

Adult Social Care

Net Budget £105.6m

Forecast outturn £113.9m

Forecast overspend £8.3m

Variance percentage 7.8%

- 6.19 Adult Social Care is part of the People Directorate and consists of services that provide support to older people or those living with disabilities or with mental or physical illness under the Care Act, to promote their independence and improve their well-being. This support enables them to manage their needs and live life to the fullest regardless of the challenges they may face as a result of their circumstances.

- 6.20 The Directorate also has responsibility for Public Health. This service was successfully disaggregated on the 1st October 2022 from the previous arrangement where Public Health was hosted in North Northants. Work is in progress to align budgets to the individual service areas.
- 6.21 Adult Social Care is forecasting an overall £8.3m pressure against budget for 2022-23 which is an adverse movement of £1.4m from the reported Quarter 1 position. The reported pressure of £8.3m is driven largely by significant demand and cost pressures since budget setting.
- 6.22 The adverse movement of £1.4m from the position reported in Quarter 1 is largely driven by independent care package cost pressures of £1.3m across client groups. This is where the cost of living pressures are being passed on from providers in placement costs outside of commissioned frameworks. There is a further £0.3m of pressure on client transport budgets where costs have risen significantly due to fuel prices. A further £0.2m of forecast vacancies have arisen due to the difficulty in recruitment across the social care sector that has mitigated the cost pressures forecast in the last quarter.
- 6.23 There are now 500 more clients requiring care than in April 2021, a considerable increase on the 3,500 clients at that time and a clear sign of the level of demand experienced. This has resulted in a significant upturn in the level and cost of independent care packages across client cohorts of £6.4m following the publication of the 2022-23 budget. £3.0m of this is driven by cost and volume increases within Learning Disability and Mental Health cohorts. This is as a result of both the long-term impact of the pandemic and the alignment of clients to West Northants based on their ordinary residence. £3.3m of the pressures in Older People's services driven by higher complexity of individuals. This pressure is the net impact of the client care costs and the contributions to care.
- 6.24 At the height of the pandemic, there was an urgency to clear hospitals of medically fit clients and the cost of the first four weeks of these Discharge to Assess (D2A) placements was covered by Health but this has since ceased. The cessation of the national funding from the beginning of this financial year has created a budget pressure of £1.7m. The service assumed that clients discharged from hospital could be covered within existing care budgets. In addition to this there is a residual pressure of £1.0m on the Older People's Residential budgets from the D2A placements, driven by a combination of the significantly high cost per week and higher than average length of time clients have remained in these placements.
- 6.25 On a related issue, following a detailed review, there is a significant risk to budgeted savings delivery of £7.0m. The Strength Based Working planned savings of £4.1m are at risk of delivery as even though tracked savings for 2021-22 evidenced delivery of £5m, independent care budgets are not seeing an associated reduction due to the increased demand the service is encountering the overall expenditure remained unchanged in the current year.
- 6.26 In addition, £2.9m of Admission avoidance savings, including undelivered savings brought forward from 2021-22 of £2.3m, is likely to be undelivered in year. This is due to insufficient evidence that the targeted reduction in acute admissions has reduced Adult Social care demand in this financial year. Current new demand through the acutes is outstripping the demand management interventions put in place.

- 6.27 There are external contract pressures of £0.4m from the Adult prevention contracts, from property voids mainly as a result of the inability to fill some beds due to compatibility issues and from increased legal costs due to an increase in the number and complexity of cases. In addition, the PFI contract budget is forecast to overspend by £0.3m due to a higher than budgeted indexation level. The social care transport service is also reporting a £0.5m pressure due to increased demand for transport from eligible service users to enable them to access services and promote independence. The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS) service is also reporting a pressure of £0.1m from statutory doctors' section 12 assessments.
- 6.28 In House Provider Services are forecasting an underspend of £0.04m, however, there is a potential risk around the delivery of the £0.9m savings target attached to improving utilisation rates due to the ongoing options appraisal around future MTFP savings.
- 6.29 The Adult Social Care teams are forecasting an underspend of £0.4m as a result of difficulties in filling social worker vacancies due in part to a nationwide shortage of care workers and regional competition for qualified and experienced staff.
- 6.30 There are also a number of further vacancies across Commissioning and Performance particularly in Financial Operations who are forecasting an underspend of £0.3m.
- 6.31 In addition to the above the Adult Social Care Management Team has identified efficiency proposals that will contribute £8.4m to reduce costs pressures within the directorate.

Place and Economy

Net Budget £83.2m

Forecast outturn £88.8m

Forecast overspend £5.6m

Variance percentage 6.7%

- 6.32 The Place Directorate delivers services including Waste Management, Highways and Transportation, (including Home to School Transport), Asset Management (including car parking), Environment Services, Regulatory Services and Planning. The Directorate has been significantly impacted by the long-term effect of covid and the rising cost of inflation on contracts and service provision. Demand has altered because of changes in people's behaviours, and the national labour shortage in the transport market has resulted in decreased competition and a subsequent increase in operator prices.
- 6.33 Overall, the Place and Economy Directorate is reporting a forecast a net overspend of £5.6m, which is a favourable movement of £0.9m from the position reported in Quarter 1. The movement from Q1 is predominantly due to an increase in Home to School Transport costs of £2.2m, and waste tonnage of £0.2m, offset by reduced utility costs, (£0.7m), reduction in staff costs pressure (£0.2m), reduction in property income pressure and other over spends of £0.2m, plus additional underspends of £2.4m as a result of spending restrictions and an increase in waste recycle income.

- 6.34 The underlying pressures in this directorate total £9.7m, of which Home to School transport is forecasting a pressure of £5.3m due to a combination of both the long-term impact of covid on the transport market and increased fuel prices.
- 6.35 There is a forecast pressure of £1.7m on energy costs across properties within Place & Economy, street lighting and traffic signals. Contract inflation is causing a pressure of £1m due to the inflation rates being higher than estimated during budget setting.
- 6.36 The service aggregation saving carried forward from 2021-22 is not achievable. When the current budget was set it was assumed that restructuring throughout the directorate would deliver the savings proposal, however as transformation work is still on-going, this is causing a savings shortfall of £0.8m.
- 6.37 There are a number of other pressures resulting from several income streams that have not yet returned to pre-covid levels due to a reduction in demand, an increase in tonnages of both domestic waste and at household waste recycling centres and additional play areas to maintain, totalling £0.9m.
- 6.38 The underlying pressures are being partly offset by underspends totalling £2.8m. These include additional income across the directorate of £0.8m, underspends of £0.9m in property management running costs and a reduction in reactive maintenance due to continued working from home arrangements, underspends on staffing as a result of the vacancy freeze and Highways & Transport disaggregation (£0.9m) and reductions in concessionary fare payments (£0.2m).
- 6.39 The Place and Economy Management Team has identified efficiency proposals that will contribute £1.4m to offset the reported position within the directorate.

Finance

Net Budget £10.6m

Forecast outturn £9.9m

Forecast underspend £0.7m

Variance percentage -6.2%

- 6.40 The Finance Directorate services include strategic finance, accountancy, revenue and benefits, procurement, and internal audit services. The directorate is reporting a £0.7m underspend, which is a favourable movement of £0.3m from the position reported to Cabinet in Quarter 1.
- 6.41 The directorate underspend is made up primarily of savings on vacant posts, additional unbudgeted income and savings attributed to bring the internal audit team back in house.
- 6.42 The movement since the last report relates mainly to an increase in vacant posts across the directorate.

Technical/Centrally Held Items

Net Budget £30.8m

Forecast Outturn £21.9m

Forecast underspend £8.9m

Variance percentage -29%

- 6.43 Technical and centrally controlled budgets include the treasury budgets, pension deficit contribution payments for West Northants and the contingency budgets. This area will also reflect any council-wide corporate cross cutting issues or opportunities. This area is forecasting an overall underspend of £8.9m against budget for 2022-23.
- 6.44 This position includes a budget pressure relating to the pay award agreed for staff which was greater than that assumed at the time of setting the budget. The Council's budgets were prepared and published in February 2022 and since then the national economic outlook has materially changed with rapidly increasing inflation rates. The pressure of £3.4m is the amount over and above what was included in the February 2022 budget, which for 2022-23 was linked to the national pay offer which has recently been agreed with the Trade Unions.
- 6.45 A council-wide contingency budget is managed within the centrally controlled budget which at the start of the year stood at £15.4m. This consists of disaggregation budget of £0.4m brought forward from 2021-22, pay inflation £4.9m and a general contingency of £10.1m. The Council's Quarter 2 position assumes the full utilisation of £10.1m contingency budget within the position.
- 6.46 There is a forecast underspend of £2.0m within treasury management. This underspend is due to several factors including an improved position on investment income due to higher interest rate yields, underspends on borrowing costs due to changes in the loan portfolio offset by pressures on finance and insurance charges.
- 6.47 Other forecast pressures include a pressure of £0.3m against a 2022-23 historic income target that is not expected to be achieved.
- 6.48 There is a £0.4m in year benefit identified following review of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) requirement and additional small underspends totalling £0.2m including additional grant income and an underspend relating to a saving on legacy audits.

Capital Dispersations

- 6.48.1 The Government has confirmed a capital dispensation for the authority and this can be used to fund costs that are ordinarily funded by the revenue account through capital borrowings. The dispensation covers the cost of redundancies and transformation costs. An exercise has been commenced to determine what costs currently charged to the revenue account may be able to be transferred to Capital. An example of this would be the recently agreed Children's Trust system which could be legitimately be charged against the dispensation. Cabinet are asked to note this position. It is likely that the use of the Capital Dispensation will be determined as part of the provisional outturn report for this year.

Funding

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

Table Five

Funding	Net Budget £'000
Council Tax income	224,146
Business Rates income (including S31 Grant)	64,696
Adult Social Care Grants	22,414
Transfer from Reserves	21,464
New Homes Bonus	5,152
Services Grant 22-23	3,457
Other Government Grants	989
Total Funding	(342,318)

- 6.50 Within the funding budget it has been identified that business rates income (including S31 grant) will be greater than the set budget by £6.8m and this is incorporated into the forecast outturn position.

7. Summary of savings delivery 2022-23

- 7.1 The Council has a savings requirement within its 2022-23 budget of £19.3m. Finance and Service Directors have undertaken a review of savings deliverability, with the summary forecast position reported in table six.

Table Seven

Directorate	2022-23 Savings Proposals £'000					
	Budgeted saving	RAG Analysis				Expected saving
		Blue	Green	Amber	Red	
Adults Social Care	(11,711)	(844)	(5,402)	(804)	(4,661)	(11,711)
Chief Executives Office	(248)	0	(248)	0	0	(248)
Communities & Opportunities	(660)	0	(390)	0	(270)	(660)
Children's Services	(762)	(664)	(98)	0	0	(762)
Corporate Services	(908)	(60)	(737)	0	(111)	(908)
Place and Economy	(3,215)	(980)	(1,453)	(457)	(325)	(3,215)
Finance	(837)	0	(837)	0	0	(837)
Centrally controlled Budget	(966)	(966)	0	0	0	(966)
Total	(19,306)	(3,514)	(9,164)	(1,261)	(5,367)	(19,306)

Blue = Delivered and Confirmed

Green = Deliverable, on target

Amber = Deliverable, with risks

Red = Unlikely to be delivered

- 7.2 Overall, there are seven savings (£5.4m) flagged as 'red' which are unlikely to be delivered and nine savings (£1.3m) flagged as 'Amber' which are deliverable but have risks. The largest red rated savings proposal is the Adult Social Care proposal for strengths based working efficiencies detailed in section 6.24. In addition to this there are £2,321k savings brought forward from 2021-22 which relate to strengths based working in adults that aren't being delivered.
- 7.3 These pressures are set out in the directorate section and included in the budget monitoring figures contained in the report. A detailed assessment of the individual savings proposals is set out in Appendix B.

8. Implications (including financial implications)

Resources and Financial

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

8.2 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

Risk

8.3 This report sets out the financial forecast for this financial year. The key risks associated with this report relate to continuing demand led pressures, COVID impacts and spiralling inflationary costs driving further financial pressures over and above the pressures already identified. These risks were identified earlier in the report.

Communications and Consultation

8.4 The Council carries out public consultation and communications on its annual Budget proposals. These activities took place in the months prior to the budgets being approved by Full Council in February 2022 for the 2022/23 budget.

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

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

8.7 Communications with staff has played an important role in identifying where efficiencies can be made along with suggestions for better, more efficient ways of working. Communications and engagement activities with staff will continue to ensure that the Council achieves a balanced budget in 2022-23.

Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

8.8 All 2022-23 budget proposals were consulted on prior to the budget being approved by Full Council in February 2022. Any management interventions that require a policy change will be subject to a consultation before any decision is taken. Where consultation is necessary, full details will be presented to Cabinet separately.

Climate Impact

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

Community Impact

8.10 This report will have a positive impact on the community by providing scrutiny on how public funds are being used to fund services for local residents in 2022-23.

9. Background Papers

- 9.1 The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report:
- 9.2 Final Budget Report and Medium Term Financial Plan, meeting of Council, 24 February 2022
[Agenda item - Final Budget 2022-23 and Medium Term Financial Plan - West Northamptonshire Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- 9.3 Revenue monitoring Quarter 1 Report , Cabinet meeting 23rd September 2022
[Agenda for Cabinet on Friday 23rd September 2022, 6.00 pm - West Northamptonshire Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

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Directorate	Appendix A - 2022-23 Provisional Outturn position by Directorate	Quarter 1 £000	Quarter 2 £000	Movement from Quarter 1
Corporate Services	Savings Delivery Pressure: 2223-B6-020 - Pressure on staff savings due to the delay in the implementation of a project driving improvements in the telephony system	129	111	(18)
		129	111	(18)
	In-Year Budget Variations – Overspends:			
	Budget pressures on Data, Technology & Innovation staffing budgets	291	291	0
	Additional in year IT contract costs as a result of price and volume increases	295	295	0
	Increase in mobile phone and data usage due to remote working	212	212	0
	Additional cost for procurement of telephony cloud service and Abacus license fee	0	102	102
	Human Resources - historical income pressures	96	96	0
	Payroll pressures	97	97	0
	Members Allowances budget pressure	87	53	(34)
	Staffing / Agency pressures in Legal and Democratic services	115	178	63
	Income budget pressure in Legal and Democratic services mitigated by additional other income received within legal services	24	24	0
	Reduction in income forecast in Land Charges due to the slow down in the Housing Market		20	20
	Elections service - legacy income budgets not achievable	59	59	0
	Coroner Storage costs		20	20
	Information Governance - salaries pressure	15	15	0
		1,291	1,462	171
	In-Year Budget Variations – Underspends:			
	Overachievement of income in the Coroners and Registrations services	(55)	(55)	0
	Additional Legal Services income	(146)	(152)	(6)
	Professional fees budget saving	(183)	(245)	(62)
Land Charges income	(10)	(10)	0	
Miscellaneous small underspends across the directorate	(41)	(119)	(78)	
Transfer from consolidation contingency re staffing structure	(96)	(96)	0	
Staffing Underspends	(137)	(73)	64	
	(668)	(750)	(82)	
Management Actions:				
Mitigating action plans	(542)	(948)	(406)	
	(542)	(948)	(406)	
Net Position – Corporate Services	210	(126)	(335)	
Chief Executive Services	Savings Delivery Pressure: No variances to report	0	0	0
		0	0	0
	In-Year Budget Variations – Overspends:			
	Net budget pressures on service aggregation savings	247	193	(54)
	Other minor underspends	0	27	27
		247	220	(27)
	In Year Budget Variations – Underspends:			
	Release of one-off budget due to delay in restructure in Business Intelligence	0	(197)	(197)
	Additional staff savings in Communications	0	(19)	(19)
	Forecast staff savings through delaying recruitment	0	(38)	(38)
	Forecast savings on print		(23)	(23)
		0	(277)	(277)
	Management Actions:			
Mitigating action plans	(247)	(416)	(169)	
	(247)	(416)	(169)	
Net Position – Chief Executive Services	0	(473)	(473)	
Education Services	Savings Delivery Pressure: No variances to report	0	0	0
		0	0	0
	In-Year Budget Variations – Overspends:			
	Forecast shortfall in Educational Psychology traded income	174	260	86
	Forecast increase in legal costs due to SEND tribunals	0	123	123
Estimated shortfall on penalty income in Educational Entitlement team	47	0	(47)	

<u>Directorate</u>	<u>Appendix A - 2022-23 Provisional Outturn position by Directorate</u>	Quarter 1 £000	Quarter 2 £000	Movement from Quarter 1
	Forecast Staffing Overspend due to Interim DCS costs	54	54	0
	Estimated disaggregation costs	25	25	0
		300	462	162
	In Year Budget Variations – Underspends:			
	Forecast staffing underspends due to vacancies	(489)	(351)	138
	Estimated penalty income above budget in Educational Entitlement team	0	(30)	(30)
	Forecast underspend on non-pay expenditure	(8)	0	8
		(497)	(381)	116
	Management Actions:			
	Mitigating action plans	(188)	(188)	0
		(188)	(188)	0
	Net Position – Education Services	(385)	(107)	278
Children's Trust	Savings Delivery Pressure:			
	No variances to report	0	0	0
		0	0	0
	In-Year Budget Variations – Overspends:			
	Northamptonshire Children's Trust demand and inflationary pressures	4,441	6,702	2,261
		4,441	6,702	2,261
	In Year Budget Variations – Underspends:			
	No variances to report	0	0	0
		0	0	0
	Management Actions:			
	No variances to report	0	0	0
		0	0	0
	Net Position – Children's Trust	4,441	6,702	2,261
Communities and Opportunities	Savings Delivery Pressure:			
	2223-B6-012 Reduction in need for high cost temporary accommodation	270	270	0
		270	270	0
	In year variations - overspend:			
	Pressure on 2021-22 service aggregation savings	0	412	412
	Temporary Accommodation costs expected to exceed budget	345	169	(176)
	Overspend expected on management of Ecton Lane travellers site	70	105	35
	Forecast reduction in management fee income from Leisure Centre	428	242	(186)
	Daventry and Moulton Leisure centre operations exceeding the budget	43	43	0
	Other In year budget pressures on Leisure services	11	30	19
	Pressures on supported accommodation	237	366	129
	Forecast under-recovery of income relating to fines and fees in Libraries	11	17	6
	Disabled Facilities Grants: The overspend is again primarily driven by staffing costs	20	24	4
	Museums is forecasting an under achievement of income	0	36	36
	Shortfall of Income from Leisure Play Schemes that is not being generated due to a change in the running programme	0	29	29
		1,165	1,473	308
	In year variations - underspend:			
	Economic Development budget saving due to leveraging in external funding support and existing vacant posts that are yet to be filled	(123)	(123)	0
	Various Revenue budget savings within Leisure from venue hire and other budgets that relate to play schemes due to the change in programmes and also other small budget savings	(2)	(26)	(24)
	£20k underspend in Community grants.	0	(5)	(5)
	Museums have identified various budget savings by deferring activities to the next financial year	0	(57)	(57)
	Housing underspends from various areas including recruitment slippage leading to staffing underspends	0	(113)	(113)
	A Carry forward is no longer required for its original purpose so can be utilised to offset pressures	0	(44)	(44)
	Salary underspends from a vacant post not filled in Leisure and Community Grants	0	(68)	(68)
		(125)	(436)	(311)
	Management Actions:			
	Mitigating action plans	(804)	(996)	(192)

<u>Directorate</u>	<u>Appendix A - 2022-23 Provisional Outturn position by Directorate</u>	Quarter 1 £000	Quarter 2 £000	Movement from Quarter 1
		(804)	(996)	(192)
	Net Position – Communities and Opportunities	506	311	(195)

Directorate	Appendix A - 2022-23 Provisional Outturn position by Directorate	Quarter 1 £000	Quarter 2 £000	Movement from Quarter 1
Adult Social Care	Savings Delivery Pressure: Admission avoidance savings, including undelivered savings brought forward from 2021-22, is likely to be undelivered in year. This is due to current new demand through the acutes is outstripping the demand management interventions put in place The Strength Based Working planned savings are at risk of delivery as even though tracked savings for 2021-22 evidenced delivery, independent care budgets are not seeing an associated reduction due to the increased demand the service is encountering the overall expenditure remained unchanged in the current year	2,915	2,915	0
		4,067	4,067	0
		6,982	6,982	0
	In-Year Budget Variations – Overspends: Independent care demand pressure above original structural deficit identified as part of 22-23 budget process	5,062	6,410	1,348
	Loss of Discharge to Assess funding from 1st April 2022 that funded the first 4 weeks of care following hospital admission	1,691	1,691	0
	Cost of Discharge to Assess placements including those placed in March 2020 during Covid	1,000	1,000	0
	External Contracts pressures - Adult prevention contract disaggregation, Voids and Legal	493	414	(79)
	PFI Unitary charge budget pressure due to increased indexation	307	308	1
	Social Care Transport pressures	204	460	256
	Liberty Protection Safeguards Doctors section 12 Assessments	117	159	42
	Safeguarding & Wellbeing services, including provider services, quality and prevention	0	(46)	(46)
		8,874	10,396	1,522
	In Year Budget Variations – Underspends: Forecast underspends across Commissioning & Performance Teams		(325)	(325)
	Forecast underspends across care teams due to vacancies	(576)	(396)	180
		(576)	(721)	(145)
Management Actions: Mitigating action plans	(8,391)	(8,391)	0	
	(8,391)	(8,391)	0	
Net Position – Adults	6,889	8,266	1,377	
Place and Economy	Savings Delivery Pressure: The Northampton estate is currently being reviewed however with the current level of vacant properties it is unlikely that this additional income will be achieved The tenanted property development saving was reliant on a third party which is now unlikely Intensifying accommodation use - Delays in project	100	100	0
		15	15	0
		210	210	0
		325	325	0
	In year variations - overspend: Pressures on Home to School transport due to the long term impact of covid on the market (supply and price) and increased fuel costs	3,100	5,298	2,198
	Increased utilities costs for properties and non PFI street lighting.	1,264	1,233	(31)
	Increased utilities costs for PFI street lighting, traffic signals and closed landfill site	1,222	509	(713)
	The rate of inflation applied on several contracts within Waste is higher than the budgeted assumption, causing an overspend	610	629	19
	Unachievable service aggregation saving from 2021-22	797	797	0
	The rate of inflation applied on several contracts within Highways & Transport is higher than the budgeted assumption, causing an overspend	338	338	0
	Across the directorate there is a pressure against staffing budgets due to the use of agency for critical roles	258	0	(258)
	Following covid there has been an increase in both domestic waste and tonnages at household waste recycling centres	0	279	279
	Additional play areas have been added to the grounds maintenance contract resulting in increased costs.	218	218	0
	Vacant properties is resulting in a pressure on estate management income	135	0	(135)
	Loss of income from Northampton market	128	108	(20)
Net various small overspends across the directorate	10	20	10	
	8,080	9,429	1,349	
In year variations - underspend: Reduction in property & facilities management costs	0	(718)	(718)	

<u>Directorate</u>	<u>Appendix A - 2022-23 Provisional Outturn position by Directorate</u>	Quarter 1 £000	Quarter 2 £000	Movement from Quarter 1
	Net additional income on Northampton Schools PFI		(188)	(188)
	The staggered reduction of guaranteed payments to bus operators relating to Concessionary Fares will result in an underspend	(172)	(172)	0
	Underspend on Reactive Maintenance due to continued working from home	(171)	(171)	0
	Additional recycle income at household waste recycling centres and increased green waste and profit share income across the Waste Service	0	(365)	(365)
	Increase in estate management income including one-off back dated rent		(90)	(90)
	Improvement in car park income in Northampton	0	(83)	(83)
	Net additional highways income	0	(86)	(86)
	Net underspend on staffing by delaying recruitment activity, despite agency staff covering critical roles	(67)	(927)	(860)
		(410)	(2,800)	(2,390)
	Management Actions:			
	Mitigating action plans	(1,508)	(1,409)	99
		(1,508)	(1,409)	99
	Net Position – Place	6,487	5,545	(942)
Finance Directorate	Savings Delivery Pressure:			
	No variances to report	0	0	0
		0	0	0
	In year variations - overspend:			
	Subscriptions costs higher than originally budgeted	20	20	0
	Additional Income Management System costs	0	63	63
	Housing Benefit Subsidy Audit Costs		70	70
	Housing Benefit Overpayment Income less than budget	0	170	170
	Other minor variances	4	9	5
		24	332	308
	In year variations - underspend:			
	Forecast underspend on staffing due to vacancies	(95)	(457)	(362)
	Procurement underspends as a result of extra external income and staffing costs being lower than anticipated	(151)	(192)	(41)
	Savings anticipated on bringing Internal Audit service back in house, and staffing vacancies	(30)	(184)	(154)
	Net savings across shared services	0	(29)	(29)
	Other minor variances	0	(13)	(13)
		(276)	(875)	(599)
	Management mitigation:			
	Mitigating action plans	(110)	(110)	0
		(110)	(110)	0
	Net Position – Finance Directorate	(362)	(653)	(291)
	Cost of services	17,785	19,466	1,680
Technical /Centrally Held Budgets	Savings Delivery Pressure:			
	No reported pressures	0	0	0
		0	0	0
	In year variations - overspend:			
	Confirmed pressure on employers pay award	3,800	3,446	(354)
	Unachievable income budget	0	289	289
		3,800	3,735	(65)
	In year variations - underspend:			
	Other minor underspends	(86)	(86)	0
	In year benefit identified following review of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) requirement	0	(350)	(350)
	External audit fees currently forecast to be under budget	(35)	(34)	1
	Treasury management underspends and increased investment income	0	(2,000)	(2,000)
		(121)	(2,470)	(2,349)
	Management Actions:			
	Mitigating action plans	(50)	(50)	0
		(50)	(50)	0

<u>Directorate</u>	<u>Appendix A - 2022-23 Provisional Outturn position by Directorate</u>	Quarter 1 £000	Quarter 2 £000	Movement from Quarter 1
	Net Position – Technical/ Centrally held budgets	3,629	1,215	(2,414)
	Funding			
	Business rates (Including S31 Grants)	(3,700)	(6,800)	(3,100)
	Total Funding	(3,700)	(6,800)	(3,100)
Total WNC:		17,714	13,881	(3,834)
	<i>Use of Contingency</i>	(10,139)	(10,139)	0
	Overall Net Outturn Forecast 2022-23	7,575	3,742	(3,834)

uncil - Budget Proposals 2022/23 to 2024/25 - efficiencies and technical changes as at quarter 2

Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	Category	2022/23 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	Strengths based working	The continuation of transformation of adult social care pathways and processes to ensure focus on client outcomes, independence, better decision making and best practice approaches to reduce delays and spend.	Efficiencies	(4,067)		0	0	(4,067)
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	External funding review for Adults in house provider services	Full review of the funding opportunities for in house provider services within Adult services.	Income Generation	(2,300)		(2,300)		
Centrally controlled Budget	Increase Vacancy Factor	Increase vacancy factor to 4%	Efficiencies					
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	Increase Vacancy Factor	Increase vacancy factor to 4%	Efficiencies	(730)		(730)		
Chief Executives Office	Increase Vacancy Factor	Increase vacancy factor to 4%	Efficiencies	(79)		(79)		
Children's Services	Increase Vacancy Factor	Increase vacancy factor to 4%	Efficiencies	(98)		(98)		
Corporate Services	Increase Vacancy Factor	Increase vacancy factor to 4%	Efficiencies	(493)		(493)		
Finance	Increase Vacancy Factor	Increase vacancy factor to 4%	Efficiencies	(168)		(168)		
Place and Economy	Increase Vacancy Factor	Increase vacancy factor to 4%	Efficiencies	(598)	(249)	(349)		

Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	Category	2022/23 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	External funding review for Adults Communities and Wellbeing	Maximise external funding opportunities across the Directorate.	Efficiencies	(1,500)		(1,500)		
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	Progression and Improvement of independent outcomes within Learning Disability services	Progression and Improving independent outcomes within Learning Disability services. This can result in lower cost packages as individuals become more independent.	Efficiencies	(1,000)	(742)	(258)		
Place and Economy	Green waste income harmonisation	Harmonising green waste charges over the whole of WNC and bringing the management & administration of the service in house.	Income Generation	(992)	(413)	(579)		
Centrally controlled Budget	General contingency	Delete remaining base budget contingency	Efficiencies	(966)	(966)			

Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	Category	2022/23 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	Improvement in utilisation of in house residential provision	Increase utilisation of in house provider services with less reliance on the independent market for care provision	Efficiencies	(906)	(102)		(804)	
Children's Services	Specialist, hearing impairment and visual impairment services	Whilst services will remain at the current level, the proposed future funding of these services is through a top slice of delegated schools and academies budgets funded from notional SEN budget from the schools block.	Efficiencies	(629)	(629)			
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	Review of Direct Payment accounts across all client groups	Review of Direct Payment accounts and assess whether these are meeting eligible needs and the planned outcomes for customers.	Efficiencies	(600)		(600)		
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	Admission avoidance service	There is a system wide drive to reduce the number of clients being admitted into hospital and the likelihood of long term social care needs.	Efficiencies	(594)		0	0	(594)
Communities & Opportunities	Reduction in need for high cost temporary accommodation	Reduction in need for high cost temporary accommodation through proactive and preventative case working	Efficiencies	(270)				(270)
Place and Economy	Intensifying accommodation use	Intensifying accommodation use	Efficiencies	(250)	(17)	(23)		(210)

Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	Category	2022/23 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
Finance	Revenues and Benefits Restructure	Savings from implementing an in-house team	Efficiencies	(200)		(200)		
Chief Executives Office	Release of disaggregation contingency	Release of disaggregation contingency in relation to Business Intelligence - additional staffing requirement included in One Off Pressures	Efficiencies	(169)		(169)		
Place and Economy	Enterprise Zone Admin Budget Changes	Adjustments to budgets, funded from increased Business Rates income via the EZ Reserve.	Efficiencies	(167)		(167)		
Finance	Closure of Accounts resources	Reversal of one-off budget from 21-22. Resources to ensure legacy Northamptonshire Council's prior year accounts were closed	Efficiencies	(160)		(160)		
Finance	Review charges to other funds	Impact of increasing charges to other funds to properly reflect a fair share of corporate costs.	Income Generation	(150)		(150)		

Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	Category	2022/23 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
Place and Economy	Income from property	Generate additional income from WNC properties	Income Generation	(144)			(144)	
Corporate Services	Customer Services - Staffing	Reduction in the numbers of customer service staff through the deletion of vacant posts and replacement with apprenticeships as necessary. This is possible due to the more effective utilisation of resources across our four hubs and by improving online and self-service alternatives.	Efficiencies	(150)		(39)		(111)
Corporate Services	Removal of two senior management posts as restructure within Digital, Technology and Innovation	Deletion of two management posts	Efficiencies	(125)		(125)		
Communities & Opportunities	Housing	HRA recharge for leadership and management	Efficiencies	(120)		(120)		
Place and Economy	Building control - Increased demand and increased income	Increased income from additional building control work which offsets costs of providing service.	Income Generation	(120)			(120)	
Place and Economy	Saving from kitchen pods	Saving from kitchen pods due to expiration of the service	Efficiencies	(106)	(106)			
Communities & Opportunities	Housing	The Homelessness Service is expected to be able to deliver this saving by reviewing the accommodation and support for residents threatened with or who are homeless	Efficiencies	(100)		(100)		
Place and Economy	Rectifying Northampton Estate	A review of the Northampton estate could lead to increased rental income	Income Generation	(100)				(100)
Place and Economy	Outgoing post	Efficiencies from new hybrid mail contract	Efficiencies	(100)		(100)		

Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	Category	2022/23 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
Place and Economy	Incoming post	Efficiencies from combining post room services from the previous authorities	Efficiencies	(100)		(20)	(80)	
Place and Economy	Embedded lease	Embedded lease for waste transfer station now finished, cost budget can be removed	Efficiencies	(88)		(88)		
Place and Economy	Chester House Estate	It has been agreed the Council will exit the CHE shared service.	Efficiencies	(88)	(88)			
Finance	Procurement disaggregation budget not required	Contingency set aside to fund disaggregation impact not required.	Efficiencies	(84)		(84)		
Corporate Services	Registrars - Income generation / Fees & Charges review	Registrars - Income generation / Fees & Charges review	Income Generation	(80)		(80)		
Communities & Opportunities	Housing	Optimisation of Disabled Facilities grant	Efficiencies	(78)		(78)		
Finance	Finance disaggregation budget not required	Contingency set aside to fund disaggregation impact not required.	Efficiencies	(75)		(75)		
Place and Economy	Events to Northampton Town Council	Northampton Town Council will deliver these services in future. There will be a staged transfer of costs.	Efficiencies	(67)	(67)			
Place and Economy	Parking Payments	Council's parking payment systems being changed to remove the need for physical tickets and provide easier payment options for the larger car parks. This should increase use income and reduce some costs.	Efficiencies	(55)		(55)		
Place and Economy	Regulatory Services - Commercialised service with arms length company	Income from discretionary services within environmental health, trading standards and licensing	Income Generation	(50)		(20)	(30)	
Place and Economy	Closed landfills	Saving resulting from adopting a reactive and risk management based approach for closed landfills.	Efficiencies	(50)		(50)		

Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	Category	2022/23 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
Communities & Opportunities	Libraries	Maximising Libraries traded income	Income Generation	(42)		(42)		
Place and Economy	Aggregation of Development Management service	Aggregation of Development Management planning services across the new WNC area	Efficiencies	(40)		(40)		
Place and Economy	Planning and Climate Policy	Deletion of a conservation officer post, to offer an ongoing revenue saving	Efficiencies	(40)	(40)			
Children's Services	Fees and charges	Increase in proposed Fees and Charges	Income Generation	(35)	(35)			
Corporate Services	Paperless meetings, webcasting	Reduction in meeting management costs	Efficiencies	(35)	(35)			
Place and Economy	Street lighting	Revenue savings resulting from Street Lighting capital investment	Efficiencies	(34)		0	(34)	
Place and Economy	Increase to Highways Regulations fees and charges	It is proposed to increase Highways Regulations fees and charges by 5% to generate additional income for the Council	Income Generation	(34)		0	(34)	
Communities & Opportunities	Leisure Services	Move to consolidated Leisure centre contract management approach	Efficiencies	(30)		(30)		
Corporate Services	Legal and Democratic Service Efficiency Savings	Review of service to identify reductions in cost without impacting on service delivery	Efficiencies	(25)	(25)			
Communities & Opportunities	Libraries	Establishing Corporate approach to Library Wi Fi	Efficiencies	(20)		(20)		

Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	Category	2022/23 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
Place and Economy	Tenanted property development	Tenanted property development	Efficiencies	(15)				(15)
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	Saving from Fire and Rescue	Payment previously made to the Fire & Rescue Service for fleet management	Efficiencies	(14)		(14)		
Place and Economy	Staff catering consistency	Institution of the same core approach to catering for staff refreshments across the Council's corporate buildings, adjusted for scale of building.	Efficiencies	(12)		(12)		
Place and Economy	Regulatory Services consolidation of contracts	Reduction in costs from consolidating of existing service contracts	Efficiencies	(10)			(10)	
Place and Economy	Catering Enhancements	Improved catering offer at the Council's offices should improve income.	Income Generation	(5)		0	(5)	
Place and Economy	More effective fixed penalty notices	Increased income from more effective use of fixed penalty notices in environmental crime.	Income Generation	(5)		(5)		
Corporate Services	Transformation Team	Transformation team - removal of initial funding. Funding of the team beyond 2022/23 will be via the generation of savings from the Transformation Programme to cover any ongoing costs.	Efficiencies	0	0			
Place and Economy	Concessionary fares	Removal of surplus budget for Concessionary Fares based on updated passenger number forecasts.	Efficiencies	0		0		
Corporate Services	Investment in telephony system	The consolidation of Telephony & CRM systems will deliver saving on resources and reduce contract costs	Efficiencies	0	0			
Place and Economy	Home to school transport - Policy Change	Savings associated with proposed policy change	Efficiencies	0		0		
Place and Economy	Document Storage	Savings from reducing need for document storage contract	Efficiencies	0		0		

Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description and service impact	Category	2022/23 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
Corporate Services	Artificial Intelligence	Efficiency savings to be realised through the increased use of Artificial Intelligence	Efficiencies	0		0		
Place and Economy	Air Quality Officer to Increase grants	Employment of a specialist air quality to focus on development of action plans and development of grant funded work	Efficiencies	55		55		
		Net Position		(19,306)	(3,514)	(9,164)	(1,261)	(5,367)

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

Title	Proposed purpose	Date of Committee meeting	Cabinet Member and Executive Director	Proposed Task and Finish Group	Comments
Pay and Grading Review	To provide scrutiny input to the Pay and Grading Review	16 January 2023	Cabinet Member for HR & Corporate Services Executive Director – Corporate Services and Assistant Director – Human Resources	No - Whole Committee	The Committee to provide scrutiny input into the Pay and Grading Review
Revenues and Benefits Performance Update	The Committee to receive and review the performance of the Council’s Revenues and Benefits Service.	16 January 2023	Cabinet Member for Finance Executive Director for Finance and Assistant Director for Revenues and Benefits	No – whole Committee	The Committee to receive and review the performance of the Council’s Revenues and Benefits Service.

Budget Scrutiny	The Committee to confirm its budget scrutiny process and undertake budget scrutiny of the Council's budget 2023/24	<p>12 October 2022 – The Committee to consider its budget scrutiny process</p> <p>7 November 2022 - Children's Trust Budget</p> <p>Budget Scrutiny to continue over a number of meetings: Task and Finish Group meetings commencing in January 2023</p>	Executive Director for Finance	No	The Committee to confirm its budget scrutiny process and undertake budget scrutiny of the Council's budget 2023/24 - Task and Finish Group meetings scheduled for January 2023
Treasury Management	To scrutinise treasury management focusing on efficiencies – forward looking	<p>15 March 2022 – The Committee to set up a Task and Finish Group to undertake this scrutiny activity</p> <p>Prior to the setting up of the Task and Finish Group a briefing will be scheduled on Treasury management that will provide important information to Councillors. ACTIONED.</p> <p>The Task and Finish Group commenced its work in June 2022</p> <p>4 July 2022 - The Task and Finish Group presented its scope (Terms of reference) for consideration by the Committee. Actioned</p> <p>16 January 2023 – The Chair of the Task and Finish Group to present the final report to the Committee.</p>	Cabinet Member for Finance Executive Director for Finance	Yes	<p>A Task and Finish Group will carry out a review.</p> <p>The Task and Finish Group commenced in June 2022 and presented its scope to the meeting of the committee on 4 July 2022</p> <p>The Task and Finish Group has concluded its work and will provide its report to the Committee early in 2023</p>

Modernising Systems	The Committee to receive information regarding systems at the Council and to consider their value for money	15 March 2022 - A report to the Committee providing background information, to assist the committee in deciding how it will undertake scrutiny activity Modernising Systems Inquiry day(s) have been programmed from September 2022 onwards Reports to Committee November 2022 onwards	Cabinet Member for Finance Executive Director - Corporate	To be confirmed	The meeting on 15 March 2022 comprised a comprehensive question and answer session (Scrutiny Inquiry) to inform a potential scrutiny review. The Modernising Systems Task and Finish Group is evidence gathering and will conclude its work early in 2023.
Quarterly Budget Monitoring Reports	The Committee to receive regular budget monitoring reports at its meetings	12 October 2022 16 January 2023	Cabinet Member for Finance Executive Director for Finance	No	To receive a quarterly budget monitoring report which will inform the budget scrutiny role of this Committee.
Quarterly reports on the MTFP	The Committee to receive regular MTFP monitoring reports at its meetings	12 October 2022 16 January 2023	Cabinet Member for Finance Executive Director for Finance	No	To receive a quarterly budget MTFP report which will inform the budget scrutiny role of this Committee.

Performance Monitoring Report	The Committee to consider the Performance Monitoring Report to inform Performance Management Scrutiny	<p>12 October 2022 16 January 2023</p>	<p>Leader of the Council</p> <p>Assistant Chief Executive</p>	No	The Committee to consider the Performance Monitoring Report to inform Performance Management Scrutiny
The Children's Trust Budget	The Committee to receive a briefing on the Children's Trust budget	<p>15 September 2021 actioned</p> <p>7 November 2022 - Budget Scrutiny - Actioned</p> <p>Further meeting TBC To consider the Business Plan for the Children's Trust</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Finance</p> <p>Executive Director for Finance</p>	No but following the briefing the Committee may consider setting up a Task and Finish Group	The Committee received a briefing on the Children's Trust Budget at its September 2021 and November 2022 meeting and resolved to receive the business plan for scrutiny input at a future meeting

Asset Management	To undertake scrutiny activity of asset management	15 March 2022 - The Committee to set up a Task and Finish Group to undertake this scrutiny activity Actioned A presentation to be given to the Committee at its meeting 10 May 2022 and from there the Committee will consider Scrutiny work into this issue. - Actioned Date to be confirmed: The Sustainability Working Group is asked to report back to a future meeting regarding the alignment of workstreams around the development of the new Asset Management Plan to the Corporate Plan and the Council's commitment to carbon neutrality.	Cabinet Member for Finance Executive Director for Place	To be confirmed	It was resolved that the Sustainability Working Group is asked to report back to a future meeting regarding the alignment of workstreams around the development of the new Asset Management Plan to the Corporate Plan and the Council's commitment to carbon neutrality.
Transformation Projects	The Committee to review transformation projects: Definition of the Transformation Projects Spend on	Meeting dates in 2022 to be confirmed	Director – Transformation Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	No	

Potential cross-cutting themes for the Scrutiny Committees

Major Contracts and Capital Contracts	The Committee together with Place and People Scrutiny Committees to undertake scrutiny of major contracts of the Council including the Children's Trust	Corporate, People and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committees	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	
Housing	The Committee, together with Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee to undertake scrutiny activity of the housing costs and social value	Corporate and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committees	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting dates in 2022/23

➤ 6 March 2023

Development of Overview and Scrutiny work programmes for 2022/23

NB: The Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group considered the process to be used to develop Overview and Scrutiny work programmes at a meeting on 25 May 2022. The Group agreed that rather than go out to public consultation about suggestions for scrutiny topics as in 2021/22 it could be more useful to consider a survey of residents' views about Council services. This would enable areas to be identified where Overview and Scrutiny might help to alleviate issues. The Group also agreed that Cabinet Members should be asked to provide details of forthcoming issues within their portfolios that might be subject to pre-decision scrutiny. The chairs of the three Overview and Scrutiny committees have written to the Leader of the Council to progress these matters.