



## **AGENDA**

## **CABINET**

**Tuesday, 4th March, 2025, at 10.00 am**  
**Council Chamber, Sessions House,**  
**County Hall, Maidstone**

Ask for:  
Telephone:

**Georgina Little**  
**Tel: 03000 414043**  
**Email:**  
**georgina.little@kent**  
**.gov.uk**

### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

*(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)*

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 January 2025 (Pages 1 - 18)
4. Cabinet Member Updates
5. Late Changes to the 25-26 Budget and 25-2028 Medium Term Financial Plan (Pages 19 - 24)
6. Quarterly Performance Report, Q3 2024-2025 (Pages 25 - 100)
7. Cabinet Reconsideration of Decision 24/00093 - Future of Commissioned Services at Seashells and Millmead Family Hubs (Pages 101 - 104)
8. Home to School Transport - Presentation

### **EXEMPT ITEMS**

*(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)*

Benjamin Watts  
General Counsel  
03000 416814

**Monday, 24 February 2025**

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## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

### CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 30 January 2025.

PRESENT: Mr R W Gough (Chairman), Mr N Baker, Mrs S Chandler, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr R C Love, OBE, Mr D Murphy, Mr P J Oakford, Mr D Watkins and Mr R J Thomas

IN ATTENDANCE: Dr A Ghosh (Director of Public Health), Mrs S Hammond (Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education), Mrs A Beer (Chief Executive), Mr D Shipton (Head of Finance Policy, Planning and Strategy), Mr B Watts (General Counsel), Mrs C Head (Head of Finance Operations), Mr J Betts (Interim Corporate Director Finance), Mr N Abrahams (Area Education Officer – West Kent), Ms C McInnes (Director of Education) and McKay (Acting Chief Accountant)

IN ATTENDANCE VIRTUALLY: Mr S Jones (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport), Mr M Albiston (Director of Adult Social Care), Dr M Gogarty (Interim Strategic Lead for Public Health), Mrs L Gannon (Director of Technology)

### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

#### **84. Apologies** (Item 1)

Apologies were received from Mrs C Bell.

#### **85. Declarations of Interest** (Item 2)

No declarations of interest were received

#### **86. Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th January 2025** (Item 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 9 January 2025 were a correct record and that they be signed by the Chair

#### **87. Cabinet Member Updates** (Item 4)

1. Mr R Gough, Leader of the Council provided an update on the following:

(a) At the [Scrutiny Committee](#) held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025, Members considered the call-in of [Decision - 24/00093 - Future of Commissioned Services at Seashells and Millmead Family Hubs](#). At that meeting,

Members agreed to refer the decision to full Council. Mr Watts (General Counsel) confirmed that in accordance with s.17.73 and S.74 of the Constitution, that following a decision to refer an item to full Council, it would first be reconsidered by the next meeting of the Cabinet (scheduled to be held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025). The decision had been made to not refer the item to the meeting of the Cabinet on 30<sup>th</sup> January as this would not allow sufficient time for an informed decision to be made. The Leader expressed his thanks to Mrs S Chandler (Cabinet member for Integrated Children's Services) and the officers involved, in recognition of the challenges presented by the Decision.

- (b) The Leader confirmed that the gifts which were presented to him upon his visit to Ukraine in November 2024, had been received in the UK and had now been declared with the Monitoring Officer.

1. Mr Watkins, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, provided an update on the following:

- (a) Before Christmas, the Kent Integrated Care Alliance (KICA) and Mr Watkins wrote to the Minister of State for Care, Stephen Kinnock, regarding concerns with the autumn budget. Whilst the Council appreciated the government's recognition of the challenges in social care, especially for care providers, concerns remained high regarding the upcoming changes to employer national insurance contributions and the rise in the national minimum wage in April. These changes could increase staff costs by about 10 to 11 percent, and could have a detrimental impact on care providers, leading to higher wages for some workers and potential staff shortages due to staff finding alternative better-paid roles. Further anticipated impacts included additional pressure on the NHS, with increased A&E visits and delayed hospital discharges; and potential closure of care providers, affecting vulnerable people and straining the local healthcare system. The ask of Government was to exempt the care sector from the national insurance increases, to which a response was yet to be received.

- (b) The One You Kent service campaign continued to encourage people to set healthy lifestyle goals for 2025, through small, achievable goals to help build confidence and adopt healthier behaviours throughout the year. The One You Kent service supported people in getting more active, achieving a healthy weight, making better food choices, reducing alcohol consumption, and quitting smoking. This was set to be achieved through community initiatives such as walking groups and providing nutritious recipes. Mr Watkins asked members to promote the service through social media platforms and to encourage local residents to become Everyday Active Champions.

- (c) New smoke-free spaces were due to launch across Kent, including parks, play areas, high streets, and outside schools to protect children from second-hand smoke and vaping. This initiative aimed to reduce cigarette litter and discourage smoking around children. Work was being undertaken by local councils to design signs and to warn the public about the dangers of second-hand smoke. A number of district-level local authorities had joined the scheme, and it was also due to be implemented in healthy living

- centres in Dartford, Maidstone, and Gravesend. The project was funded by a £1.9 million grant from the previous government to reduce smoking rates.
2. Mrs Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, provided an update on the following:
    - (a) The Kent Youth County Council (KYCC) elections which were held at the end of 2024 saw a significant increase in youth engagement, with 22,866 young people voting, over 3,000 more than the previous year. This result exhibited a growing interest in local democracy among Kent's youth. In December 2024, over 100 young people, including new members and those concluding their term, attended a meeting to connect and share experiences. The KYCC met regularly, and the dates were available for anyone interested.
    - (b) The Department for Education had praised Kent's progressive approach to father-inclusive initiatives. In 2023, Kent in partnership with the Kent Safeguarding Children's Multi Agency Partnership (KSCMP) created a parent inclusion coordinator role and developed a multi-agency father-inclusive practice guide through the collaboration of Kent Fathers, the charity Dads Unlimited, and Young Apprentices. The project included system modifications, new guidance, and training to enhance father-inclusive practices, resulting in increased engagement with fathers in specialist services. The Department of Health and Social Care, in recognition of Kent's successful rollout of the initiative, had recommended that all local authorities in England and Wales adopt Kent's model during the rollout of family hubs. The role included two years of funding for a father-inclusive champion. The recognition from government highlighted the team's dedication and the success of their efforts over the past three years.
    - (c) The Children's Well-Being and Schools Bill, which was currently at the committee stage, proposed several changes to children's social care. It included a requirement for local authorities to offer family group decision-making meetings before applying for care or supervision orders. Kent County Council had already included this as part of their practice, known as Family Group Conferencing. The bill also sought to amend the Children Act 2004 to mandate that local authorities, NHS integrated care boards, and police include education and childcare agencies in their safeguarding arrangements. The current practice was that safeguarding partners were only required to make arrangements to work with the relevant agency if they considered it appropriate to do so. Additionally, it proposed improvements to information sharing to benefit children. While the bill was not yet law, preparations were being made for its potential implementation.
  3. Mr Love, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, provided an update on the following:
    - (a) In December Mr Love ran a competition for the best Christmas card design by a Kent Primary School pupil. The winning design was created by Sophie, a year five pupil from Minster and Sheppey Primary School, who was also the Arts Ambassador. The card was sent to education partners, key personnel, and government officials, including the Secretary of State

for Education and the Prime Minister. The card also featured designs of the two runners-up and listed all participating schools. There were 114 high-quality entries, and certificates were awarded to the winners. Mr Love also visited the school on December 18th, where Sophie shared her design process; and visited the school library, which had over 60,000 books and was highly valued by the students.

(b) On 17<sup>th</sup> December, Mr Love visited Seabrook Church of England Primary School and met Mrs. Carter, the Executive Head Teacher, Mr. Carter, one of the heads of school, along with other staff and governors. Mr Love attended the spiritual gardens, which was contributed to through his member grant.

(c) At the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024, [Decision - 24/00097 - Special School Review - Phase 1](#), which had been called in, was given approval to proceed to implementation. This decision was an important part of the Council's ongoing SEND reform.

4. Mr Baker, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, provided an update on the following:

(a) On the topic of buses, Mr Baker advised that the bus network (with the exception of subsidised contracted routes for school services) was operated on a fully commercial basis, which had been the case since deregulation in the 1980's, meaning that the Local Authority had very little control over the routes, timetables and services which the bus companies run. Should Kent County Council be accepted into the Devolution Priority Programme, it could help deliver future improvements in public transport.

(b) In regard to the extensive roadwork by utility companies, Mr Baker advised that whilst Kent County Council had a duty to keep roads flowing, utility companies had the right to access their assets for repairs, improvements, and maintenance, which often led to conflicts. This was a national issue, and the House of Commons Transport Select Committee was investigating it. The Council had submitted evidence and made several recommendations, as follows:

- Amending the definition of emergency street works to allow for better planning and coordination.
- A study on the economic and societal impact of street works by all parties, including local and national highways authorities, to determine if changes to working practices could reduce the impact on the public. KCC offered the A25 in Kent as a pilot area for this study.
- A proposal to widen the lane rental scheme to cover more areas based on local needs, as each region had different challenges
- The promotion of technology to reduce road closure times and improve communication, as well as recruiting and retaining trained operatives to minimise delays.

- The evolution of Kent's highways management and budgets with multi - year funding settlements which would improve the delivery of maintenance on the local highways network which would complement the strategic road network in the south east of England.

It was hoped that these measures would address the frustrations of residents and businesses and keep Kent and the country moving. Kent MP Katie Lam was on the inquiry panel, and Mr Baker looked forward to the committee's work and potential national solutions.

5. Mr R Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment, provided an update on the following:

- (a) Due to changes in managing soft furnishings with persistent organic pollutants (POPs), three HWRCs (Tovil, Dartford, and Sittingbourne) were currently unable to accept POPs. The situation at both Tovil and Sittingbourne was only temporary and once the necessary works had been completed the sites would be compliant and able to accept soft furnishings.
- (b) KCC has secured a new two-year textiles and shoe recycling contract with SAIT Recycling, a company based in Queenborough, Kent. SAIT Recycling ensured that 100% of textile waste was diverted from landfills and collaborated with many local charities, schools, and clubs across the south east.
- (c) The waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) zero-cost contract was due to be extended for 12 months from April 25 to ensure KCC had a collection service for WEEE from HWRCs across the county. REPC, a leading non-profit organisation, helped KCC comply with WEEE regulations by providing collection, treatment, and recycling solutions, ensuring environmental responsibilities were met via efficient means.
- (d) Work was ongoing at the HWRC reuse shops, a detailed update would be brought back to Cabinet in due course.
- (e) Recent adverse weather conditions had caused several issues. On 6<sup>th</sup> January, the River Medway flooded its banks, leading to the closure of the car park at Teston Bridge Country Park for one day. The floodwater backed up the pipes, causing the toilets to fail and necessitating repairs. As a result, the toilets were temporarily closed to the public. Additionally, the HWRC team was concerned about the extreme winds during the storm, leading to the closure of the Margate HWRC in the morning. The site was highly exposed, and there were significant health and safety concerns for both staff and customers. Furthermore, there was an issue at Horton Kirby that required attention. The team continued to work diligently on finding possible solutions and were collaborating with the local community to address the problem. Mr Thomas expressed his thanks to the teams dedicated and hard work in managing the weather-related impacts.
- (f) The public consultation on Kent's draft local nature recovery strategy, "Making Space for Nature," launched on 16<sup>th</sup> January and was due to run for eight weeks until 12<sup>th</sup> March. The strategy was expected to be

published later in the summer following consultation feedback. Additional information on consultation events could be found [Making Space for Nature in Kent and Medway website](#).

6. Mr Murphy, Cabinet Member for Growth and Economic Development, provided an update on the following:
  - (a) Mr Murphy paid tribute to Lyndon Gurr, a talented former officer, who sadly passed away last month. Lyndon had worked for Kent County Council for many years, and KCC had benefited from his fantastic skills and insight, particularly in supporting the Council's broadband initiatives. Lyndon played an instrumental role in the Council's efforts to improve digital connectivity across Kent. Through his dedication and hard work, he helped connect over 150,000 homes with faster broadband in collaboration with Building Digital UK. His contributions made a significant difference in the lives of thousands of residents, enhancing their access to digital services and opportunities. The Council remained deeply grateful for Lyndon's work and the positive impact he had on the community. Mr Murphy, on behalf of the Council, expressed his condolences to Lyndon's family.
  - (b) The integrated strategy for work and health was open for consultation until mid-March. The economy team, public health, and the integrated care system sought input from local businesses, employers, residents, and other groups on addressing economic inactivity, filling local skills gaps, and supporting people into work.
  - (c) Work was ongoing with the implementation plan for the Kent and Medway economic framework. Recent efforts included the creation of innovation partnerships, campaigning for the reintroduction of international rail passenger services from Ashford and Ebbsfleet, and running workshops and training events to support local firms and enhance the Kent and Medway growth hub's core functions.
  - (d) KCC's No Use Empty (NUE) scheme continued to gain significant media and external interest. Steve Grimshaw, who managed the scheme, recently presented at Bedfordshire County Council's Empty Homes Forum, inspiring them to develop their own scheme. Additionally, the Labour MP for Liverpool Wavertree and other MPs highlighted NUE as a best practice example in a letter to the Housing Minister, showcasing the successful organisation of a National Loan Fund scheme for empty properties. This was a testament to the excellent work by Steve Grimshaw and the team.
  - (e) The Kent and Medway Business Fund continued to support local firms with loans for job creation and growth. Since July 2024, the Small Business Board had approved over £2 million in loans, averaging £400,000 per month, benefiting businesses across the SME sector and boosting business in Kent.
  - (f) The County Council's Minerals and Waste Local Plan was submitted for independent examination in May 2024, with hearings in September 2024.



The Council was awaiting the Planning Inspector's Report, which was anticipated soon. Should the plan be deemed sound and legally compliant, KCC would be in a position to adopt it later this year. This would provide an up-to-date policy framework for planning applications, addressing the county's minerals and waste management needs while protecting the environment.

- (g) In December, Mr Murphy presented the Outstanding Achievements Award at the annual Best in Kent event, hosted by the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce. The leader was also present. Mr Murphy was pleased to present the award to Mr. Mark Quinn for his contributions to charitable causes across the county.
- (h) On 15<sup>th</sup> January Mr Murphy attended the launch of the UK Soft Power Council at Lancaster House in London, with Foreign Secretary David Lammy and Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy. The Council aimed to strengthen foreign relationships through UK participation in culture, creativity, sports, education, science, and technology. This aligned with the work of the KCC-sponsored Straits Committee, whose reputation led to the invitation. KCC would support and advise the Foreign Secretary as needed.
- (i) On 3<sup>rd</sup> December, KCC hosted David Maenaut, the General Representative of Flanders in the UK. His visit followed a recent trip by Flanders officials and business representatives, including the Governor of West Flanders, to KCC. The meeting was productive and focussed on boosting trade, as well as enhancing cultural and research connections between Kent organisations and the Flanders region.
- (j) On 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> December, Mr Murphy represented the Leader at the UK-France local government forum. The biennial conference focused on collaboration between British and French local governments to address future challenges such as cross-border cooperation. The 2024 forum, hosted by Leeds and Bradford, saw over 100 delegates from UK and French governments, local government associations, and major city officials. The British and French ambassadors were also in attendance.
- (k) Kent and the Department of Pas de Calais hosted a workshop on the Straits Committee, which was praised as an exemplary model of cross-border cooperation. The successful summit highlighted KCC's leadership in border relations, particularly with nearby regions and embassies. Notably, KCC and Pas de Calais were the only political bodies present from south of Bradford.
- (l) On the 21<sup>st</sup> of January, Mr Murphy spoke at Get Link's celebration of 30 years of the Channel Tunnel at Folkestone, which carried 18 million passengers annually. The event highlighted the tunnel's economic benefits to Kent. Additionally, last week, Mr Murphy also participated in filming at Ashford International Station to promote the economic advantages of Eurostar resuming services from that station for Kent businesses and residents.

(m) In February, Mr Murphy was scheduled to meet with the German Deputy Ambassador in Canterbury to discuss trade and investment opportunities between Kent and German regions. In March, KCC was also scheduled to host its French, Belgian, and Dutch colleagues for the first Straits Committee meeting of 2025, marking the fifth anniversary of the ARIS agreement that established the Committee.

7. Mr Jeffrey, Cabinet Member for Communications and Democratic Services, provided an update on the following:

(a) In Mrs. Bell's absence, Mr Jeffrey highlighted the outstanding work of KCC's Trading Standards and Communications teams. They collaborated closely to dismantle a gang involved in vehicle clocking, and worked with national trading standards and victims to provide comprehensive coverage of the case. This effort received extensive regional and national media attention, including on GB News. The comms team reassured victims and prepared them for media interactions, resulting in excellent coverage. The case was one of the most complex to be handled by trading standards and involved a gang that removed over two million miles from vehicle odometers. The success of the case highlighted the vital and often unnoticed work that KCC's Trading Standards undertook.

(b) In regard to recent campaigns and news updates Mr Jeffrey advised of the following:

- The Pensioner 'Just Missing Out' scheme
- Adult Social Care Recruitment
- Kent Fostering.
- Mental Health Initiatives – Release the Pressure
- Public Health Activities - healthy weight activities
- Stop Smoking Campaigns
- Clean Air Night held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January – addressing the effects of log burning on respiratory health.
- Domestic Abuse Campaigns
- Greener Kent Initiatives - recycling campaigns
- Storm and Bad Weather Preparedness

These campaigns and initiatives reflected KCC's commitment to improving community well-being, environmental sustainability, and overall quality of life in Kent.

(c) In regard to consultations, Mr Jeffrey advised of the following:

- Changes to wellbeing services – 26 November to 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025
- Postural Stability – 6<sup>th</sup> November – 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024
- Schools Funding Formula – 13<sup>th</sup> November to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024
- Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy – 16 January to 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025
- Blue Bell Improvement Scheme – 21<sup>st</sup> January to 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025

- Family Hub awareness survey – closes 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025
- Otter Street EV charging

(d) Regarding support for Members, training and briefings had been prepared for Members on devolution and Local Government Reorganisation. Additionally, eight to nine sessions had been conducted on cyber security which aligned to staff training. Upcoming training included three sessions on inclusion, equality, and diversity. Members' response to the training had been positive.

(e) Mr Jeffrey noted that whilst a decision was awaited from Government on Kent's inclusion on the Devolution Priority Programme, and the potential postponement of elections, the response was required imminently to ensure adequate preparation. The organisation of an election required 400 to 700 staff per district or borough council and involved significant recruitment and training.

The Leader thanked the Cabinet Members for their updates.

**88. 24/00108 - Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report – November 2024-25**  
(Item 5)

*John Betts (interim Corporate Director Finance) and Joe McKay (Acting Chief Analyst) and Cath Head (Head of Finance) were in attendance for this item*

1. Mr Oakford, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, introduced the report which set out the revenue and capital budget monitoring position as at November 2024-25 which highlighted a projected overspend of £23.3 million and represented 1.6% of the Council's total revenue budget. This was a reduction of £3.5 million compared to the end of Q2, however, it remained a significant concern for the Authority. It was essential to take action to reduce the forecast for 2024-25 and limit the need to draw from reserves. Key points included:
  - **Savings:** The forecast indicated that £80.3 million in savings would be delivered for 2024-25. This was a substantial amount, and thanks were paid to all officers and teams for their efforts. These savings were being closely monitored across different teams, with actions being taken to improve the robustness of savings proposals and their monitoring.
  - **Adult Social Care and Health** continued to have the largest overspend, projected at £35.4 million. Of this, £26.2 million related to savings that could not be delivered for 2024-25 but were expected to be achieved in future years. The remaining £9.2 million overspend was due to service-related pressures, driven by increases in the price and complexity of new social care placements. These financial challenges were similar to those faced by many upper-tier authorities, with 82% of local authorities with social care responsibilities experiencing similar issues.

- **The Growth Economic and Transport Directorate** was projected to overspend by £6.3 million. Unavoidable pressures included £3 million related to the national concessionary travel scheme. Extreme weather had also contributed to overspends in the Highways Department. These pressures would be addressed in the medium-term plan.
  - With regard to **Reserves** there was a need to draw down an additional £9 million from the corporate ICT reserve over the next two years to fund the update of the Oracle Cloud program. The system, which was over 20 years old, required more development than anticipated to meet business needs without adaptation. Investing in the system now was crucial to avoid future problems and higher costs.
  - The current estimated **capital program spend** for the year was forecast to be £315.5 million, representing 74% of the approved budget. The capital spend to date was £160.4 million. Directorates were projecting an underspend of £111.6 million against the budget, split between a £12.9 million real variance and £124 million of rephasing. Delaying prudential borrowing would help with short-term revenue savings, but rephasing could result in less funding due to inflationary pressures.
  - Any overspend was a concern for the Authority and remained a risk to the Council's future financial sustainability. Reserves were a one-off solution, and continued use without replenishment was unsustainable. The detailed financial challenges and the actions being taken to mitigate them were crucial for the Council's long-term stability.
2. Mr Watkins highlighted that the significant challenges within the Adults Directorate. However, the directorate remained on track to deliver £40 million in savings and income uplifts, which was a substantial achievement. A savings of £25 million was still required amongst an additional £10 million in demand, which was harder to manage. The focus was on addressing the £25 million shortfall. The team continued to work hard on various transformation projects, with some early successes in areas like reviews and technology and the directorate remained committed to improving the situation and keeping the overall budget on track.
3. RESOLVED that Cabinet agree to:
- A) Note the forecast revenue overspend of £23.3m (excluding Schools).
  - b) Note the forecast overspend on Schools' Delegated Budgets of £30.4m.
  - c) Note the forecast capital underspend of £111.6m.
  - d) Note the progress on the delivery of savings.
  - e) Agree the Capital budget changes.
  - f) Note the Reserves, Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators Monitoring

**89. Draft Revenue Budget 2025-26, MTFP 2025-28, Draft Capital Programme 2025-35 and Treasury Management Strategy**  
(Item 6)

*John Betts (interim Corporate Director Finance) and Dave Shipton (Head of Finance, Policy, Planning, Strategy) were in attendance for this item*

1. Mr Oakford, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services introduced the report and acknowledged the immense efforts from officers to produce the budget, particular in light of the challenges posed within the current financial year. Thanks were therefore expressed to finance colleagues, directorates, staff, and Cabinet Members for their contributions, emphasising that the budget was a collective effort.

The budget for the next financial year included a spending growth of £150 million, with £80 million allocated to Adult Social Care. Despite this, the council faced significant pressures, as over £60 million net in savings/income was still required for 2025-2026, on top of the £90 million saved for 2024-25. Mr Oakford noted that whilst the government's promise of additional funds was welcomed, the net growth in funding received from the government only amounted to £30 million, which was insufficient to cover the spending growth.

To address the shortfall, the council planned to raise council tax by 2.99% and an additional 2% for the social care premium, bringing in £47.3 million. However, this would still leave a substantial gap, which further highlighted the pressure on the council to make further savings. Whilst there was incremental spending in adults and children's services, other areas of the council had seen budget reductions to fund social care.

The government had announced a new recovery grant, however, the council received none of this funding, as it was allocated to areas with high levels of deprivation & lowest relative council tax base, which were not in the south of England. Mr Oakford noted that the growing costs of adult social care were not being adequately addressed by the government, leading to a situation where the council was close to only providing statutory services, with discretionary services disappearing.

Mr Oakford concluded by reiterating the systemic nature of the problem and the need for government intervention as the Council could not rely on reserves to fund the revenue budget; this was unsustainable and would lead to a financial crisis.

2. The Leader advised that the Council, along with other organisations, such as the County Council Network (CCN) would be making representations to government on the spending review regarding the allocation of funding.
3. Further to comments and questions from Members it was noted:
  - Members expressed their gratitude to Mr Oakford and his team for their diligent work, emphasising the significant effort required and thanked them

for their continued dedication. Further thanks were expressed to the Cabinet Members, along with the officers and staff throughout the whole of the Council for their continued hard work to deliver exceptional services under difficult circumstances.

- Without a resolution from Government on the funding issues in adult social care, new authorities with devolved powers would face significant challenges from the outset. Therefore, whilst Members were supportive of the devolution programme and the opportunities it presented, a government restructure would be futile whilst underlying challenges regarding adult social care remained.
- The Children, Young People and Education directorate had received additional government funding for prevention work in children's services. The additional funds allowed for the repurposing of previously allocated resources, ensuring that these crucial services could continue. This further related to the Children's Wellbeing Bill which would place additional duties on local authorities, and ensured funds were appropriately allocated.
- Concerns were expressed on the implications of local government reorganisation and funding realignment, particularly in relation to rural areas. Whilst there would be increased funding for urban and deprived communities, which was justified due to population density and the specific challenges these areas faced, rural communities also experienced significant levels of deprivation and should not be overlooked. There needed to be an equitable level of service provision across the country in recognition of the diverse needs.
- Members noted the challenges of managing limited funding from successive governments. Comparison was made between Kent's financial management and other councils, noting significant council tax increases were being requested elsewhere. Particular reference was made to:
  - Windsor and Maidenhead, 25%
  - Hampshire, 15 %
  - Bradford, 15%
  - Newham, 10%
  - Birmingham 10%
  - Cheshire East 10 %
  - Slough 8%

The Council continued to do an exceptional job in managing its finances prudently and effectively under very difficult circumstances and maintained the delivery of its services.

- Furthermore, comparison was made between Kent County Council and Birmingham City Council, which was 27% smaller in terms of population, however, Birmingham were set to receive £40million of the government's Recovery Grant, of which Kent were set to receive none. Additionally, Kent was due to receive a significantly lower allocation of the social care grant

within the proposed settlement. In monetary terms, Birmingham City Council were due to receive £64.00 per head compared to Kent's allocation of £16.00 per head.

4. RESOLVED that Cabinet considered the proposed amendments from Cabinet Committees and endorsed the draft budget to be presented to County Council on 13<sup>th</sup> February for final decisions.

**90. 24/00109 - Transfer the 18-25 section of the Strengthening Independence Service from the Children Young People and Education Directorate to the Adult Social Care and Health Directorate**

*(Item 7)*

*Sarah Hammond (Corporate Director for Children's Young People and Education) and Mark Albiston (Director of Adult Social Care) were in attendance for this item*

1. Mrs Chandler (Cabinet member for Integrated Children's Services) introduced the report on the transfer of statutory functions delivered by the 18-25 section of the Strengthening Independence Service (SIS) from the Children Young People and Education Directorate to the Adult Social Care and Health Directorate from 1 April 2025. The transfer of the service was to align with legal responsibilities, it did not impact on the level of service being provided by to those young people within that cohort. The council recognised the challenges inherent to the transition from young people's services to adult services and was working on a larger initiative to ensure the process was more coordinated and supportive. By addressing these needs earlier in the young people's lives, the council aimed to provide a smoother and more beneficial transition, ultimately improving outcomes for these vulnerable individuals and their families.
2. Mr Watkins (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care) re-emphasised the importance of the transition from children's to adults services and whilst children's services focused on protecting the child, adult services prioritised fostering independence. This strategic shift aimed to empower young people to live as independently as possible, giving them greater control over their lives.
3. Mrs Hammond (Corporate Director for Children's Young People and Education) elaborated on the responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services for a specific subset of young adults. Out of the total cohort of 920 individuals, 330 had an active Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP). These EHCPs would continue to be overseen and managed by the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) service within the Education Division. This ensured that the educational and developmental needs of these young adults were met appropriately. Additionally, there was a smaller group within this cohort who were previously in the care of the local authority as children. These individuals would retain their care-leaver status, which entitled them to continued support, advice, and services from children's services. Therefore whilst these young adults were to funded by adult social care and

were legally the responsibility of the Director of Adult Social Care, the collaboration between children's and adult services was essential. This joint effort aimed to resolve historical challenges in service delivery, ensuring that the transition from children's to adult services was a seamless transition and that the young adults received comprehensive support.

4. Mr Albiston (Director of Adult Social Care) advised that the transfer was to support better alignment with the new regulatory framework, particularly with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) as adult social care was to be included in their inspections. The recent assurance visit in Kent underscored the importance of this alignment. The transfer also acknowledged the fundamental change in the relationship between social care and parents once a young person become an adult, highlighting key legislative changes and assurance arrangements. The immediate focus was on minimising disruption for young adults, parents, carers, and staff, however, plans were in place for future strategic developments and the broader, long-term vision for transitions of young people. Communication with parents and young people would be enhanced to ensure they understood the implications of this decision.
5. RESOLVED that Cabinet agree to transfer the statutory functions delivered by the 18-25 section of the Strengthening Independence Service, including the transfer of workforce in services, from the Children Young People and Education Directorate to the Adult Social Care and Health Directorate from 1 April 2025; and that delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health in consultation with the Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education to take the relevant actions, including but not limited to, awarding, finalising the terms of and entering into the relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the decision

**91. 24/00115 - Kent County Council Integrated Care Strategy (KCC ICS) Delivery Plan**  
*(Item 8)*

*Anjan Ghosh (Director of Public Health) and Mike Gogarty (Interim Strategic Lead for Public Health) were in attendance for this item*

1. Dr Gosh (Director of Public Health) introduced the report and noted the extensive work undertaken on the Integrated Care Strategy, which began with the formation of the Integrated Care Board in July 2022. The strategy, also served as Kent's Joint Health and Wellbeing strategy, which was first produced in December 2022 and finalised in early 2024 after extensive engagement. The strategy involved a whole council approach, covering various areas such as early years, family hubs, adult social care, and workplace well-being. The strategy would act as the foundation for future work, especially in light of devolution and local government reorganisation.
2. Dr Gogarty (Interim Strategic Lead for Public Health) emphasised that addressing health issues required a collective effort beyond traditional health



services. The action plan, which included contributions from various directorates, aimed to improve health and well-being across Kent. Despite financial challenges, the council was committed to delivering these priorities, at low or no cost. Dr Gogarty highlighted the importance of the council's role as a system leader in health and well-being noted that the strategy was a comprehensive and corporately owned effort.

3. Further to comments and questions from Members it was noted:

- Members commented on the approach to children's mental health and emphasised the need for a fundamental review of how those services were addressed. There were potential benefits of local government reorganisation and devolution, particularly in terms of strategic thinking and service integration, which could improve the delivery of outcomes for the likes of children's mental health services amongst others.
- Mr Watkins and the Leader were part of the membership for the Integrated Care System Leaders Group meeting. This group, which included leaders from Medway Council and senior members of the Integrated Care Board (ICB), focused on addressing any issues with the indicators in the plan and finding solutions to ensure progress.
- Low-level interventions at the neighbourhood community level, played an important part in helping to keep people out of hospitals and statutory adult social care, enabling them to live fulfilling lives at home.
- A proposal from the Government's Working Party suggested council leaders should annually report on the state of the county, not just the council. The broader approach aimed to evaluate the county's performance relative to other regions. Despite current challenges, it was essential that the Council addressed the poor performance. The Delivery Plan and associated work would help resolve the identified issues.
- The Integrated Care Strategy remained a partnership effort and involved statutory organisations, the voluntary sector, NHS trusts, and individual responsibility. Whilst the various organisations supported healthy behaviours, individuals were expected to also make their own healthy choices. There needed to be a shared responsibility and personal commitment to health.

4. RESOLVED that Cabinet agree to:

(a) Adopt the Integrated Care Strategy Delivery Plan on behalf of Kent County Council

(b) Delegate authority to the Director of Public Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health and Leader of the Council to refresh and/or make non-substantial revisions to the Integrated Care Strategy Delivery Plan as appropriate during the lifetime of the document; and

- (c) Delegate authority to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the relevant Corporate Directors of affected services, to take relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of, and entering into required contract or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.

**92. 24/00096 - Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2025-29**  
(Item 9)

Christine McInnes (Director of Education) and Nick Abrahams (Assistant Director Education, West Kent) were in attendance for this item

1. Mr Love (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills) introduced the report which set out the Kent Commissioning Plan for Education 2025-2029. It was an annual rolling program which forecasted the number of school places needed across different phases and types of schools in Kent. The forecasts were based on collected data and meetings with local leaders and planners. Kent was noted for its accurate forecasting, with a 1.1% accuracy rate in 2023. A new factor in the latest plan was the monitoring of potential displacements of children from independent schools to the maintained sector due to the Government's decision to tax independent school fees. The plan was a live document. Mr Love expressed his thanks to the Assistant Director of Education, Mr Abrahams, and his officers.
2. Mr Abrahams (Assistant Director Education) elaborated further and advised that the document also touched upon other areas where the authority had statutory responsibilities, such as the post-16 sector and early years education, though these were not covered in as much detail. The overall trends in the plan reflected a continuation of patterns observed in recent years. Specifically, there was a declining number of children entering primary schools, which was linked to a decrease in birth rates in Kent since 2012. For context, the number of births in Kent peaked at just over 18,000 in 2012 and dropped to 15,000 by 2023. While birth rates significantly impacted the number of children requiring school places, other factors such as migration and house building also played a role. The decline in primary school enrolments was not uniform across the county; some areas had seen more significant drops than others. Projected forecast anticipated that there would not be a significant need for additional primary school places in the next five to ten years, depending on future birth rates. However, areas with substantial house building, particularly rural areas with limited existing school capacity, would potentially require additional places. In contrast, the secondary sector continued to experience pressures from larger cohorts moving through key stage 2; areas like Sittingbourne and Maidstone faced ongoing demand for year 7 places. Engagement with borough and district councils in developing the commissioning plan remained key. These discussions provide valuable local intelligence and helped align the plan with local strategic activities, such as local plans. Discussions regarding improved sharing and accessibility of the underlying data within the commissioning plan to better inform district and borough councils was ongoing.

3. Further to comments and questions from Members it was noted:
- Members commented on the impact of the retrospective VAT on education and the upcoming High Court case by the Independent Schools Council challenging this decision. Forecasts predicted a 3-7% reduction in independent school pupils, potentially exceeding half a million nationwide, with some independent schools potentially requiring closure.
  - Members remarked on the plan's flexibility, noting the need to adapt to unintended consequences, such as accommodating Ukrainian families. Furthermore, Members commented on the potential impact from geographical pressures caused via governments devolution agenda.
  - In response to concerns regarding the new requirement for 9 to 36-month provision starting in September 2025, and Kent's ability to deliver and monitor this, assurance was provided that the staggered widening of eligibility for free nursery places had been beneficial for the sector. The final phase of this expansion was set for September 2025. The early years sector had adapted to changing parental needs and government requirements, allowing time for model adjustments and data collection. Continuous monitoring was essential, and while there were initial concerns about potential deficits in places, the situation had improved. Early years colleagues engaged with providers to assess and adjust provision, ensuring sufficient places for different age groups. Currently, there were no critical concerns about meeting demand, however, this would continue to be monitored.
  - With regard to proposed housing plans without planning permission and therefore did not feature in a borough's adopted local plan, it was noted that the current forecasts for school places only included housing developments that had received planning permission. This approach was driven by the Department for Education (DFE), which set the technical rules for the forecasts. Discussions were underway with borough and district colleagues regarding potential development of a parallel forecast to provide a broader picture of the likely longer-term impacts of housing developments that had not yet received planning permission. These scenarios however would only provide an indicative insight and carry less certainty.
4. RESOLVED that Cabinet agree the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2025-29

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From: Peter Oakford, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance,  
Corporate and Traded Services  
John Betts, Interim Corporate Director of Finance

To: Cabinet – 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Subject: **Late changes to the 2025-26 budget and 2025-28 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)**

Classification: Unrestricted

### Summary:

This paper provides details of late changes to the approved 2025-26 revenue budget which were not available in time for the County Council budget meeting. The net changes to share of Retained Business Rates growth/Business Rates Compensation Grant (+£42.7k) and Business Rates collection fund (+£313.3k) increase the net revenue budget requirement for 2025-26 financial year from £1,530,924.8k (as reported to County Council) to £1,531,279.8k, a small increase of £356.0k. The paper includes recommendation that business rates collection fund surplus balance is transferred to the local taxation equalisation reserve in accordance with existing policy and the remainder is added to the existing contribution to the general reserve. This paper also updates Cabinet on some other late changes to specific grants since County Council on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025 which do not impact on the net revenue budget requirement.

### Recommendations:

Cabinet is asked to:

- 1) **NOTE** the budget updates and **ENDORSE** that they be included in final 2025-26 budget in accordance with the [Budget Decision](#) made at County Council on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025.
- 2) **APPROVE** the net transfer of £356.0k into reserves (£42.7k increased contribution into the General Reserve and £313.3k contribution into the Local Taxation Equalisation smoothing reserve) to improve the Council's financial resilience.
- 3) **APPROVE** additional £6,067.8k of specific grant income along with associated spending with nil impact on net 2025-26 revenue budget.

## 1. Introduction

1.1 The 2025-26 revenue budget for the Council was agreed by County Council on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025. In accordance with the budget decision made at this meeting, this report provides information on late changes to the 2025-26 revenue budget, in relation to a net increase in the total budget requirement from Business Rates. In addition, this report provides information on other changes including the Council's Public Health grant allocation and other minor technical changes.

## 2. Business Rates

2.1 The retained business rates precept in our final 2025-26 budget must be based on the estimates from collection authorities' statutory government return (NNDR1s), along with estimates for any over/under collection of business rates from previous years notified to us through their collection fund balances. The NNDR1 sets out the business rate tax base including rateable values for new businesses, impact of any changes in rateable values due to change of use or following check/challenge/appeal process, and impact of discount/exemptions/collection rates. The final value of the County Council's share of retained business rates was not available in time to include in the final draft budget report for County Council published on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

2.2 Consistent with previous years and pending the final figures from the districts' NNDR1 returns, the funding estimate in the final draft budget approved by County Council on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025 included an assumed overall increase in business rate funding (from top-up grant, retained baseline and local share, and compensation grant) in line with the anticipated average inflationary uplift to business rates based on a mixture of September 2024 CPI (+1.7%) and no assumption on any changes in the tax base. In addition, we had increased the amount expected from the Kent Business Rate pool based on the latest 2024-25 monitoring. The Chancellor's Autumn Statement on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024 announced that the small business rate multiplier would be frozen, and therefore as has been the case in previous years, the funding plans included the assumption that we would receive additional business rate compensation grant to offset this.

2.3 The table below sets out the County Council's updated net share of business rates for 2025-26 compared to the estimates included in the County Council papers of 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025. The increase between the estimate included in the final draft budget presented to County Council and the updated amount notified to us by districts through their NNDR1 returns relates to changes in the composition of the rateable value within each individual district. These changes could not have previously been planned for. The combination of the increase in the NNDR1 retained business rate baseline and local share, and business rate compensation grant results in a small net increase in the available base funding for 2025-26 of £42.7k. One of the reasons for a small variance is we base the inflationary uplift in business rates on an average basis whereas there are now separate non-linked uplifts in small and standard business are multipliers which can only be confirmed following receipt of NNDR1 information.

|  | Estimate<br>included in<br>County<br>Council papers<br><br>£'000 | Updated<br>figures for<br>Cabinet<br><br>£'000 | Increase<br><br>£'000 |
|--|--|--|-----------------------|
| Business rates top up grant                      | 149,107.7  | 149,107.7                                      |                       |
| Retained business rates - baseline & local share | 67,238.1   | 69,097.6                                       |                       |
| Business rates compensation grant                | 52,795.4   | 50,978.6                                       |                       |
| Total  | 269,141.2  | 269,183.9                                      | 42.7                  |
| % increase from 2024-25                          | 1.87%  | 1.89%  |                       |

2.4 Collection fund estimated amounts are determined by collection authorities for over/under collection of the estimated business rates in previous NNDR1 returns. The County Council's share of the 2024-25 business rate collection fund surpluses and deficits notified to us by district councils is a net surplus of £313.3k. No surplus or deficit was assumed in the final draft papers presented to County Council on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025, and therefore this represents a one-off increase in the available funding for 2025-26, as set out in the table below.

|                               | Estimate<br>included in<br>County Council<br>papers<br>£'000 | Updated figures<br>for Cabinet<br>£'000 | Increase<br>£'000 |
|-------------------------------|--|---|-------------------|
| Business rate collection fund | 0.0  | 313.3                                   | 313.3             |

### 3. Other changes to the 2025-26 budget

3.1 The report taken to County Council on 13th February including an assumed increase in the Public Health grant in 2025-26 of £1,048.9k, to a total assumed grant of £76,783.7k. The Public Health grant for 2025-26 was published on 7th February 2025 and confirms the Council's grant allocation is increasing by £4,160.6k, which represents an increase of £3,111.7k on the earlier estimate. In addition, the announcement confirmed that the 2024-25 Public Health grant has increased by £1,574.1k. The table below summaries the changes.

3.2 The Public Health Grant announcement includes an average 5.4% cash increase in the national settlement, or a 3.0% real-terms increase, compared to 2024-25. The allocations for 2025-26 include a recurrent uplift for the additional pay pressures due to the higher-than-expected 2024-25 NHS pay awards through consolidating the additional funding in 2024-25 grant previously notified to local authorities. The quantum and distribution of this pay cost funding is based on a recent data validation exercise conducted with local authorities. It will be for councils to decide whether and how to allocate funding to their providers, in accordance with the terms of their local contracts and taking account of their own subsidy. Further funding has also been provided to support local authorities on other pressures facing the sector, including from potential additional costs relating to HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis. The 2025-26 allocations also include estimated impact of future NHS pay settlements.

| Public Health Grant<br>allocations | Estimate included<br>in County Council<br>papers<br>£'000 | Updated figures<br>for Cabinet<br>£'000 | Increase<br>£'000 |
|------------------------------------|---|---|-------------------|
| 2024-25 allocation                 | 75,734.8  | 77,308.9                                | 1,574.1           |
| Increase                           | 1,048.9   | 4,160.6                                 | 3,111.7           |
| 2025-26 allocation                 | 76,783.7  | 81,469.5                                | 4,685.8           |

3.3 In relation to the additional allocation for 2024-25, this will be reflected in the 2024-25 revenue budget monitoring position. The total increase of £4,685.8k in the 2025-26 allocation has no impact on the Council's net budget requirement, and the service is currently working through the detail and its impact on the Public Health budget, and this will be reflected in the final budget which we intend to publish before the start of the new financial year.

3.4 The Department for Transport issued a notification of the allocation and associated conditions and guidance for the Active Travel grant funding on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025. The Council's grant allocation is £5,728.2k, of which £4,376.2k (76%) relates to the capital budget and £1,382.0k (24%) relates to the revenue budget.

## 4. Summary

4.1 The combination of the business rates changes notified to us via the NNDR1 returns and the update to the business rate pool outlined in section 2; results in a small increase in the available net revenue budget requirement (core) for 2025-26 of £356.0k.

- In accordance with existing policy, it is proposed to transfer the one-off Business Rate collection fund surplus balance of £313.3k into the Local Taxation equalisation smoothing reserve.
- It is proposed that the increase of £42.7k from business rates retained baseline, local share and compensation grant, increases the contribution to the general reserve.

4.2 The additional Public Health funding and Active Travel funding outlined in section 3 are ringfenced and do not have an impact on the Council's core net revenue budget requirement. Public Health are undertaking a review of their budget which will include the impact of the 2024-25 NHS pay awards and the impact of increased employers National Insurance Contributions from the 1 April 2025. Both grants will be used to fund expenditure in accordance with the respective grant conditions.

4.3 Attached at Appendix 1 is an updated high-level budget for 2025-26, reflecting the late changes within this paper. The impact in later years (2026-27 and 2027-28) will be included when plans are updated as part of preparations for 2026-27 budget.

## Background Documents

- 1 [KCC's Budget webpage](#)
- 2 [2025-26 Budget approved by County Council on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025](#)
- 3 [Public Health Grant details published 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025](#)

## Contact details:

Report Author

Dave Shipton (Head of Finance Policy, Planning and Strategy)

03000 419418, [dave.shipton@kent.gov.uk](mailto:dave.shipton@kent.gov.uk)

Relevant Corporate Director:

John Betts (Interim Corporate Director, Finance)

03000 410066, [john.betts@kent.gov.uk](mailto:john.betts@kent.gov.uk)



# APPENDIX 1 - High Level 2025-26 Budget and Financing

| 2024-25            |                   |                    |  | 2025-26            |                   |                    |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Core<br>£000s      | External<br>£000s | Total<br>£000s     |  | Core<br>£000s      | External<br>£000s | Total<br>£000s     |
|                    |                   |                    | Original base budget   | 1,429,506.8        | 0.0               | 1,429,506.8        |
|                    |                   |                    | internal base adjustments  | -836.6             | 836.6             | 0.0                |
| 1,315,610.6        |                   | 1,315,610.6        | Revised Base   | 1,428,670.2        | 836.6             | 1,429,506.8        |
|                    |                   |                    | <b>SPENDING</b>  |                    |                   |                    |
| 31,721.5           |                   | 31,721.5           | Base Budget Changes  | 10,320.7           | -744.1            | 9,576.6            |
| 35.0               |                   | 35.0               | Reduction in Grant Income  | 3,234.7            | 11,276.2          | 14,510.9           |
| 10,798.4           | 505.1             | 11,303.5           | Pay  | 21,845.7           | 626.9             | 22,472.6           |
| 49,568.4           | 1,695.6           | 51,264.0           | Prices   | 41,407.1           | 1,944.4           | 43,351.5           |
| 85,349.7           | 284.7             | 85,634.4           | Demand & Cost Drivers - Cost   | 48,209.4           | 0.0               | 48,209.4           |
|                    |                   | 0.0                | Demand & Cost Drivers - Demand   | 22,989.0           | 24,150.3          | 47,139.3           |
| 16,393.1           | -10,327.3         | 6,065.8            | Government & Legislative   | -14,666.5          | 10,952.4          | -3,714.1           |
| 15,712.2           | -1,538.8          | 14,173.4           | Service Strategies & Improvements  | 17,831.2           | 2,136.2           | 19,967.4           |
|                    |                   |                    | <i>Public Health spending plans to be confirmed</i>  | 0.0                | 4,685.8           | 4,685.8            |
| 209,578.3          | -9,380.7          | 200,197.6          | <b>TOTAL SPENDING</b>  | <b>151,171.3</b>   | <b>55,028.1</b>   | <b>206,199.4</b>   |
|                    |                   |                    | <b>SAVINGS, INCOME &amp; GRANT</b>   |                    |                   |                    |
| -36,454.8          |                   | -36,454.8          | Transformation - Future Cost Increase Avoidance  | -30,834.5          | 0.0               | -30,834.5          |
| 2,068.7            |                   | 2,068.7            | Transformation - Service Transformation  | -3,616.0           | 0.0               | -3,616.0           |
| -16,195.0          |                   | -16,195.0          | Efficiency   | 574.6              | -65.0             | 509.6              |
| -15,406.6          | -281.3            | -15,687.9          | Income   | -20,109.3          | 0.0               | -20,109.3          |
| -10,967.6          |                   | -10,967.6          | Financing  | 1,001.0            | 0.0               | 1,001.0            |
| -11,910.2          | -9.2              | -11,919.4          | Policy   | -8,542.9           | 0.0               | -8,542.9           |
| -88,865.5          | -290.5            | -89,156.0          | <b>TOTAL SAVINGS &amp; INCOME</b>  | <b>-61,527.1</b>   | <b>-65.0</b>      | <b>-61,592.1</b>   |
|                    | 7,210.7           | 7,210.7            | Increases in Grants and Contributions  | 0.0                | -35,033.5         | -35,033.5          |
| -88,865.5          | 6,920.2           | -81,945.3          | <b>TOTAL SAVINGS, INCOME &amp; GRANT</b>   | <b>-61,527.1</b>   | <b>-35,098.5</b>  | <b>-96,625.6</b>   |
|                    |                   |                    | <b>MEMORANDUM:</b>   |                    |                   |                    |
|                    |                   |                    | Removal of undelivered/temporary savings & grant   | 34,555.7           | 30.8              | 34,586.5           |
|                    |                   |                    | New & FYE of existing Savings  | -72,573.5          | -65.0             | -72,638.5          |
|                    |                   |                    | New & FYE of existing Income   | -23,509.3          | 0.0               | -23,509.3          |
|                    |                   |                    | New & FYE of existing Grants   | 0.0                | -35,064.3         | -35,064.3          |
|                    |                   |                    |  | <b>-61,527.1</b>   | <b>-35,098.5</b>  | <b>-96,625.6</b>   |
|                    |                   |                    | Prior Year savings rolling forward for delivery in 25-26 *   | -19,045.4          | -9.2              | -19,054.6          |
|                    |                   |                    | <b>TOTAL Savings for delivery in 2025-26</b>   | <b>-115,128.2</b>  | <b>-35,138.5</b>  | <b>-150,266.7</b>  |
|                    |                   |                    | * the prior year savings rolled forward for delivery in 2025-26 will be updated as part of the outturn report, and those updated figures will be used for the 2025-26 savings monitoring process |                    |                   |                    |
|                    |                   |                    | <b>RESERVES</b>  |                    |                   |                    |
| 27,481.5           |                   | 27,481.5           | Contributions to Reserves  | 43,240.9           | 14,200.0          | 57,440.9           |
| -24,739.6          |                   | -24,739.6          | Removal of prior year Contributions  | -34,545.8          | -10,640.0         | -45,185.8          |
| -14,877.4          | -1,350.5          | -16,227.9          | Drawdowns from Reserves  | -10,607.1          | -25,598.1         | -36,205.2          |
| 5,318.9            | 3,811.0           | 9,129.9            | Removal of prior year Drawdowns  | 14,877.4           | 1,271.9           | 16,149.3           |
| -6,816.6           | 2,460.5           | -4,356.1           | <b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>  | <b>12,965.4</b>    | <b>-20,766.2</b>  | <b>-7,800.8</b>    |
| 113,896.2          | 0.0               | 113,896.2          | <b>NET CHANGE</b>  | <b>102,609.6</b>   | <b>-836.6</b>     | <b>101,773.0</b>   |
|                    |                   |                    |  |                    |                   |                    |
| <b>1,429,506.8</b> | <b>0.0</b>        | <b>1,429,506.8</b> | <b>NET BUDGET</b>  | <b>1,531,279.8</b> | <b>0.0</b>        | <b>1,531,279.8</b> |

| 2024-25         |                   |                    |  | 2025-26         |                   |                    |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|--|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Core<br>£000s   | External<br>£000s | Total<br>£000s     |  | Core<br>£000s   | External<br>£000s | Total<br>£000s     |
|                 |                   |                    | <b>MEMORANDUM:</b>   |                 |                   |                    |
|                 |                   |                    | <b>The net impact on our reserves balances is:</b>   |                 |                   |                    |
| 27,481.5        | 0.0               | <b>27,481.5</b>    | Contributions to Reserves  | 43,240.9        | 14,200.0          | <b>57,440.9</b>    |
| -14,877.4       | -1,350.5          | <b>-16,227.9</b>   | Drawdowns from Reserves  | -10,607.1       | -25,598.1         | <b>-36,205.2</b>   |
| <b>12,604.1</b> | <b>-1,350.5</b>   | <b>11,253.6</b>    | <b>Net movement in Reserves</b>  | <b>32,633.8</b> | <b>-11,398.1</b>  | <b>21,235.7</b>    |
|                 |                   |                    | <b>Funding per the Local Government Finance Settlement &amp; Local Taxation</b>                                  |                 |                   |                    |
|                 |                   | 11,806.0           | Revenue Support Grant  |                 |                   | 15,680.3           |
|                 |                   | 117,046.1          | Social Care Grant  |                 |                   | 137,143.6          |
|                 |                   | 26,969.4           | Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund   |                 |                   | 26,969.4           |
|                 |                   | 11,686.6           | Adult Social Care Discharge Fund   |                 |                   | 0.0                |
|                 |                   |                    | Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Grant  |                 |                   | 4,031.2            |
|                 |                   | 1,311.9            | Services Grant   |                 |                   | 0.0                |
|                 |                   | -                  | Children's Social Care Prevention Grant  |                 |                   | 6,759.8            |
|                 |                   | 147,382.5          | Business Rate Top-up Grant   |                 |                   | 149,107.7          |
|                 |                   | 50,014.7           | Local Authority Better Care Grant (previously Improved Better Care Fund and Hospital Discharge grant)            |                 |                   | 61,701.3           |
|                 |                   | 51,080.2           | Business Rates Compensation Grant  |                 |                   | 50,978.6           |
|                 |                   | 2,058.5            | New Homes Bonus  |                 |                   | 1,926.7            |
|                 |                   | -                  | Employer National Insurance Contributions Grant  |                 |                   | 10,072.7           |
|                 |                   | 3,544.6            | Other Un-ringfenced grants (Extended Rights to Free Travel Grant merged into Revenue Support Grant from 2025-26) |                 |                   | 0.0                |
|                 |                   | 65,740.7           | Local Share of Retained Business Rates   |                 |                   | 69,097.6           |
|                 |                   | 2,682.8            | Business Rate Collection Fund  |                 |                   | 313.3              |
|                 |                   | 800,320.3          | Council Tax Income (including increase up to referendum limit but excluding social care levy)                    |                 |                   | 838,406.1          |
|                 |                   | 135,347.0          | Council Tax Adult Social Care Levy   |                 |                   | 155,881.6          |
|                 |                   | 2,515.5            | Council Tax Collection Fund  |                 |                   | 3,209.9            |
|                 |                   | <b>1,429,506.8</b> | <b>Total Funding</b>   |                 |                   | <b>1,531,279.8</b> |

From: Roger Gough – Leader of the Council  
Amanda Beer – Chief Executive Officer

To: Cabinet – 4 March 2025

Decision No: n/a

Subject: **Quarterly Performance Report, Quarter 3, 2024/25**

Classification: Unrestricted

**Summary:** The purpose of the Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) is to inform CMT and Cabinet about key areas of performance for the authority. This report presents performance to the end of December 2024 (Quarter 3, 2024/25).

Of the 38 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) contained within the QPR, 17 achieved target (Green), and 12 achieved or exceeded the floor standard but did not meet target (Amber). Nine KPIs did not meet the floor standard (Red).

**Recommendation(s):** Cabinet is asked to NOTE the Quarter 3 Performance Report and the actions being taken to address areas where performance is not as targeted.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) is a key mechanism within the Performance Management Framework for the Council. The report summary for Quarter 3, 2024/25 is attached at Appendix 1, and includes data up to the end of December 2024.
- 1.2. The Quarter 3 QPR includes 38 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) where results are assessed against Targets set at the start of the financial year. 40 KPIs were reported in Quarters 1 & 2 but following changes in Ofsted's reporting of inspections of schools and early years' settings, two KPIs in the Education & Skills section have now been removed.

## 2. Quarter 3 Performance Report

- 2.1. Results for KPIs compared to Target are assessed using a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) status.
- 2.2. Of the 38 KPIs included in the report, the latest RAG status are as follows:
  - 17 are rated Green (one more than the previous Quarter) - the target was achieved or exceeded.
  - 12 are rated Amber (three fewer than the previous Quarter) – performance achieved or exceeded the expected floor standard but did not meet target.
  - Nine are rated Red (one more than the previous Quarter) – performance did not meet the expected floor standard.

2.3. The nine indicators where the RAG rating is Red, are in:

- Customer Services
  - Percentage of complaints responded to within timescale
- Governance and Law
  - Percentage of Freedom of Information Act (Fol) requests completed within 20 working days
  - Percentage of Data Protection Act (DPA) Subject Access requests completed within statutory timescales
- Growth, Economic Development & Communities
  - Developer contributions secured as a percentage of amount sought
- Children, Young People and Education (Education & Skills)
  - Percentage of Education, Health Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks
- Children, Young People and Education (Integrated Children's Services)
  - Percentage of foster care placements which are in-house or with relatives and friends (excluding UASC)
  - Number of foster households
  - Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)
- Adult Social Care
  - Proportion of new Care Needs Assessments delivered within 28 days

2.4. With regards to Direction of Travel, 10 indicators show a positive trend (one fewer than the previous Quarter), 22 are stable or with no clear trend (the same as the previous Quarter), and six are showing a negative trend (the same as the previous Quarter).

### 3. Recommendation(s)

Cabinet is asked to NOTE the Quarter 3 Performance Report and the actions being taken to address areas where performance is not as targeted.

### 4. Contact details

Matthew Wagner  
Chief Analyst  
Strategy, Policy, Relationships & Corporate Assurance  
Telephone: 03000 416559  
Matthew.Wagner@kent.gov.uk

David Whittle  
Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships & Corporate Assurance  
Telephone: 03000 416833  
David.Whittle@kent.gov.uk

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# **Kent County Council**

## **Quarterly Performance Report**

### **Quarter 3**

### **2024/25**

Produced by: Kent Analytics  
E-mail: [performance@kent.gov.uk](mailto:performance@kent.gov.uk)  
Phone: 03000 416205



## Key to KPI Ratings used

This report includes 38 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), where progress is assessed against Targets which are set at the start of the financial year. Progress against Target is assessed by RAG (Red/Amber/Green) ratings. Progress is also assessed in terms of Direction of Travel (DoT) using arrows. Direction of Travel is based on regression analysis across the **whole** timeframe shown in the KPI graphs.

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>GREEN</b> | Target has been achieved or exceeded                    |
| <b>AMBER</b> | Floor Standard* achieved but Target has not been met    |
| <b>RED</b>   | Floor Standard* has not been achieved                   |
| ↗            | Performance is improving (positive trend)               |
| ↘            | Performance is worsening (negative trend)               |
| ⇒            | Performance has remained stable or shows no clear trend |

\*Floor Standards are the minimum performance expected and if not achieved must result in management action.

## Key to Activity Indicator Graphs

Alongside the Key Performance Indicators, this report includes a number of Activity Indicators which present demand levels for services or other contextual information.

Graphs for activity indicators are shown either with national benchmarks or in many cases with Upper and Lower Thresholds which represent the range activity is expected to fall within. Thresholds are based on past trends and other benchmark information.

If activity falls outside of the Thresholds, this is an indication that demand has risen above or below expectations and this may have consequences for the council in terms of additional or reduced costs.

Activity is closely monitored as part of the overall management information to ensure the council reacts appropriately to changing levels of demand.



## Executive Summary

In Quarter 3, 2024/25, 17 of the 38<sup>1</sup> indicators are rated as Green, on or ahead of target (one more than last Quarter). 12 indicators reached or exceeded the floor standard and are rated Amber (three fewer than last Quarter), with nine indicators not achieving the floor standard and so RAG rated Red (one more than last Quarter). Ten indicators were showing an improving trend (one fewer than last Quarter), with six showing a worsening trend (the same as last Quarter).

The performance indicators giving greatest concern remain closely aligned with the services where the financial strains and demand are most acute (particularly those KPIs which have a link to cost in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, children in care placements and Adult Social Care). This affirms that the right indicators are being used to assess performance, with KPI results reflecting the areas of greatest challenge. Due to this being a reflective report on the last Quarter, performance may not always correspond to what people are experiencing at the current time, particularly when demand fluctuates on a seasonal basis, such as for Highways indicators.

|   | G         | A         | R        | ⬆         | ↔         | ⬇        |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Customer Services   | 2         |           | 1        |           | 2         | 1        |
| Governance and Law  |           |           | 2        |           | 2         |          |
| Growth, Economic Development & Communities  | 1         |           | 1        |           | 2         |          |
| Environment and Transport   | 4         | 2         |          | 1         | 4         | 1        |
| Children, Young People and Education<br>( <i>Education &amp; Skills</i> )         | 2         | 2         | 1        | 3         | 2         |          |
| Children, Young People and Education<br>( <i>Integrated Children's Services</i> ) | 3         | 2         | 3        | 1         | 4         | 3        |
| Adult Social Care   | 2         | 3         | 1        | 2         | 4         |          |
| Public Health   | 3         | 3         |          | 3         | 2         | 1        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>17</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>9</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>22</b> | <b>6</b> |

<sup>1</sup> Comparison with the previous quarter is included as usual, but it should be noted that two Education & Skills KPIs have been **removed** from the report following changes to Ofsted inspections, and one Public Health KPI is now **included** in the RAG ratings due to data now being available for that KPI for the first time this year.

**Customer Services** – Satisfaction with Contact Point advisors met target. The percentage of phone calls answered improved to move above target. The percentage of complaints responded to within timescale remains below floor standard and so is RAG rated Red.

| <b>Customer Services KPIs</b>   | <b>RAG rating</b> |                 | <b>DoT</b> |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
|   | <b>Latest</b>     | <b>Previous</b> |            |
| % of callers to Contact Point who rated the advisor who dealt with their call as good | <b>GREEN</b>      | <b>GREEN</b>    | ↓          |
| % of phone calls to Contact Point which were answered                                 | <b>GREEN</b>      | <b>AMBER</b>    | ⇒          |
| % of complaints responded to within timescale   | <b>RED</b>        | <b>RED</b>      | ⇒          |

**Governance and Law** - Freedom of Information (FOI) / Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests responded to in timescale, and Data Protection Act Subject Access requests completed within timescale, both improved but remain below floor standards.

| <b>Governance and Law KPIs</b>   | <b>RAG rating</b> |                 | <b>DoT</b> |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
|  | <b>Latest</b>     | <b>Previous</b> |            |
| % of Freedom of Information Act (FoI) requests completed within 20 working days              | <b>RED</b>        | <b>RED</b>      | ⇒          |
| % of Data Protection Act (DPA) Subject Access requests completed within statutory timescales | <b>RED</b>        | <b>RED</b>      | ⇒          |

**Growth, Economic Development & Communities** – The number of properties brought back into active use through the No Use Empty programme remained above target. The amount of Developer Contributions secured as a percentage of amount sought dropped below floor standard and so is rated Red.

| <b>Growth, Economic Development &amp; Communities KPIs</b>                   | <b>RAG rating</b> |                 | <b>DoT</b> |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
|  | <b>Latest</b>     | <b>Previous</b> |            |
| Number of homes brought back to market through No Use Empty (NUE)            | <b>GREEN</b>      | <b>GREEN</b>    | ⇒          |
| Section 106 developer contributions secured as a percentage of amount sought | <b>RED</b>        | <b>AMBER</b>    | ⇒          |

**Environment & Transport** - Two Highways KPIs failed to meet target which were routine highway repairs reported by residents completed within 28 days, and emergency incidents attended within timescale, though they only missed target by one and two percentage points respectively. Municipal Waste recycled or converted to energy, continues to be above target, and the reduction in Greenhouse Gas emissions also remains ahead of target and on trend towards net zero.

| <b><u>Environment &amp; Transport KPIs</u></b>   | <b>RAG rating</b> |                 | <b>DoT</b> |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
|  | <b>Latest</b>     | <b>Previous</b> |            |
| % of routine pothole repairs completed within 28 days  | <b>GREEN</b>      | <b>GREEN</b>    | ⇒          |
| % of routine highway repairs reported by residents completed within 28 days                        | <b>AMBER</b>      | <b>GREEN</b>    | ⇒          |
| % of emergency highway incidents attended within 2 hours of notification                           | <b>AMBER</b>      | <b>AMBER</b>    | ⇒          |
| % of public enquiries for Highways maintenance reported online                                     | <b>GREEN</b>      | <b>GREEN</b>    | ⇒          |
| % of municipal waste recycled or converted to energy and not taken to landfill – rolling 12 months | <b>GREEN</b>      | <b>GREEN</b>    | ↓          |
| Greenhouse Gas emissions from KCC estate (excluding schools) in tonnes – rolling 12 months         | <b>GREEN</b>      | <b>GREEN</b>    | ↑          |

**Education & Skills** – Completion of Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessments in timescale remains below floor standard, but with improved performance quarter on quarter. Annual EHCP reviews waiting over 12 months is ahead of target and on an improving trend. Pupils with EHCPs who are placed in independent or out of county special schools is on the floor standard. Permanent pupil exclusions remains on its floor standard. The rate of first-time entrants to the youth justice system is on an improving trend and has moved ahead of its target of the first time in over a year.

| <b><u>Education &amp; Skills KPIs</u></b>  | <b>RAG rating</b> |                 | <b>DoT</b> |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
|  | <b>Latest</b>     | <b>Previous</b> |            |
| % of Education, Health Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks – rolling 12 months   | <b>RED</b>        | <b>RED</b>      | ⇒          |
| % of annual EHCP reviews waiting over 12 months  | <b>GREEN</b>      | <b>GREEN</b>    | ↑          |
| % of pupils (with EHCP's) being placed in independent or out of county special schools | <b>AMBER</b>      | <b>AMBER</b>    | ↑          |
| % of pupils permanently excluded from school – rolling 12 months                       | <b>AMBER</b>      | <b>AMBER</b>    | ⇒          |
| Rate of first-time entrants to youth justice system – rolling 12 months                | <b>GREEN</b>      | <b>AMBER</b>    | ↑          |

**Integrated Children's Services** – Two of the eight indicators met target, the same as the previous quarter. The two Amber and four Red KPIs continue to reflect the financial and workload pressures within the services. Of the four Red KPIs, only one improved on the previous quarter (the percentage of case holding posts filled by permanent qualified social workers), with the other three all worsening and on negative trends.

| <b><u>Integrated Children's Services</u></b>  | <b>RAG rating</b> |                 | <b>DoT</b> |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
|   | <b>Latest</b>     | <b>Previous</b> |            |
| % of Early Help cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to social care teams within 3 months | <b>GREEN</b>      | <b>AMBER</b>    | ⇒          |
| % of case holding posts filled by permanent qualified social workers                                    | <b>AMBER</b>      | <b>RED</b>      | ⇒          |
| % of children social care referrals that were repeat referrals within 12 months                         | <b>GREEN</b>      | <b>GREEN</b>    | ⇒          |
| % of foster care placements which are in-house or with relatives and friends (excluding UASC)           | <b>RED</b>        | <b>RED</b>      | ↓          |
| Number of foster households   | <b>RED</b>        | <b>RED</b>      | ↓          |
| % of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)                  | <b>RED</b>        | <b>RED</b>      | ↓          |
| Percentage of reviews completed within timescale by the Strengthening Independence Service (18-25)      | <b>AMBER</b>      | <b>AMBER</b>    | ⇒          |
| Percentage of Learning Disability Young People in Settled Accommodation                                 | <b>GREEN</b>      | <b>GREEN</b>    | ↑          |

**Adult Social Care** – Two KPIs are rated Green for the latest quarter, three are Amber and one is Red. The Red KPI is the Proportion of new Care Needs Assessments delivered within 28 days which is one percentage point below its floor standard.

| <b><u>Adult Social Care KPIs</u></b>  | <b>RAG rating</b> |                 | <b>DoT</b> |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
|   | <b>Latest</b>     | <b>Previous</b> |            |
| % of people who have their contact resolved by ASCH but then make contact again within 3 months   | <b>GREEN</b>      | <b>AMBER</b>    | ⇒          |
| Proportion of new Care Needs Assessments delivered within 28 days   | <b>RED</b>        | <b>AMBER</b>    | ⇒          |
| % of people receiving a long-term community service who receive Direct Payments   | <b>AMBER</b>      | <b>AMBER</b>    | ↑          |
| Proportion of older people (65+) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement / rehabilitation services | <b>AMBER</b>      | <b>AMBER</b>    | ⇒          |
| Long Term support needs of older people (65 and over) met by admission to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000               | <b>GREEN</b>      | <b>GREEN</b>    | ↑          |
| % of KCC supported people in residential or nursing care where the CQC rating is Good or Outstanding                                    | <b>AMBER</b>      | <b>AMBER</b>    | ⇒          |

**Public Health** – Three out of five KPIs are exceeding target. The number of mandated checks delivered by the health visiting is below target but is no longer on a declining trend. The number of adults accessing structured substance misuse treatment is below target but on an improving trend. We now have data for the new indicator on sexual health screening and this is below target on a declining trend. The percentage of Live Well clients who would recommend the service to family, friends or someone in a similar situation remains above target.

| <b><u>Public Health KPIs</u></b>  | <b>RAG rating</b> |                 | <b>DoT</b> |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
|   | <b>Latest</b>     | <b>Previous</b> |            |
| Number of eligible people receiving an NHS Health Check – rolling 12 months   | <b>GREEN</b>      | <b>GREEN</b>    | ⬆️         |
| Number of mandated universal checks delivered by the health visiting service – rolling 12 months                    | <b>AMBER</b>      | <b>AMBER</b>    | ➡️         |
| % of all new first-time patients (at any clinic) receiving a full sexual health screen (excluding online referrals) | <b>AMBER</b>      | <b>AMBER</b>    | ⬇️         |
| Number of Adults accessing structured substance misuse treatment during a rolling 12-month period                   | <b>AMBER</b>      | <b>AMBER</b>    | ⬆️         |
| Successful completion of drug and alcohol treatment   | <b>GREEN</b>      | <b>GREEN</b>    | ⬆️         |
| % of Live Well clients who would recommend the service to family, friends or someone in a similar situation         | <b>GREEN</b>      | <b>GREEN</b>    | ➡️         |

| Customer Services  |               |       |     |   |   |   |
|--------------------|---------------|-------|-----|---|---|---|
| Cabinet Member     | Dylan Jeffrey |       |     |   |   |   |
| Corporate Director | Amanda Beer   |       |     |   |   |   |
| KPI Summary        | GREEN         | AMBER | RED | ⬆ | ⇒ | ⬇ |
|                    | 2             |       | 1   |   | 2 | 1 |

Customer contact through Contact Point (KCC's call centre) is provided via a strategic partnership, whilst Digital services are provided by KCC. In Quarter 2, the percentage of callers who rated their advisor as good continued to meet the target of 97%. The percentage of calls which were answered by Contact Point improved to move back above target.

For the activity indicators on average speed of answer, this remains quicker than expectations for calls to all services at 1 minute 7 seconds, with the average speed of answer for priority services at 42 seconds being at the lower end of expectations. Average call handling time at 6 minutes 26 seconds remained higher than an aim of 6 minutes 4 seconds.

Contact Point received 19% fewer calls compared to the previous Quarter and 6% fewer calls than Quarter 3 last year. The 12 months to December 2024 saw a 6% decrease in calls compared to the 12 months to December 2023.

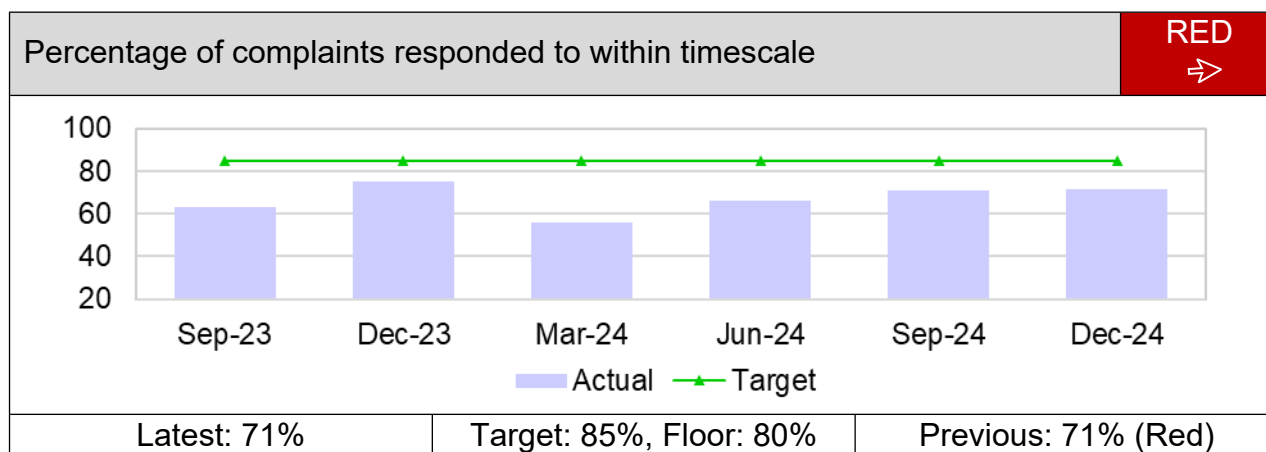
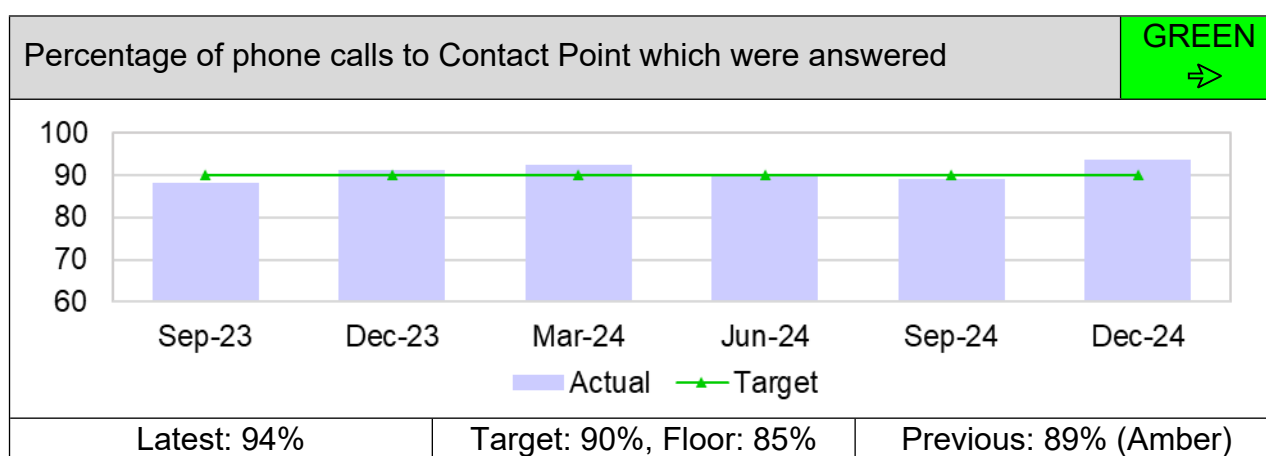
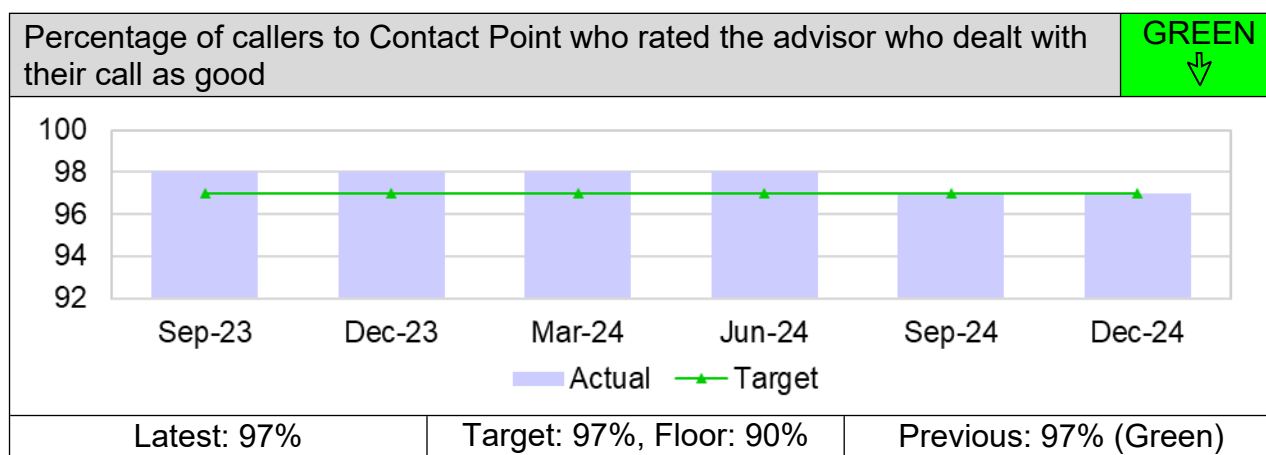
The number of visits (sessions) to the kent.gov.uk website was similar to the same quarter the previous year. The most visited pages continue to be those relating to Household Waste Recycling Centres which account for about a third of all visits.

Quarter 3 saw a 31% decrease in the number of complaints received compared with the previous quarter and a 19% decrease on the same quarter last year. Between October and December 71% of complaints were responded to within timescales. This is the same performance as the previous quarter.

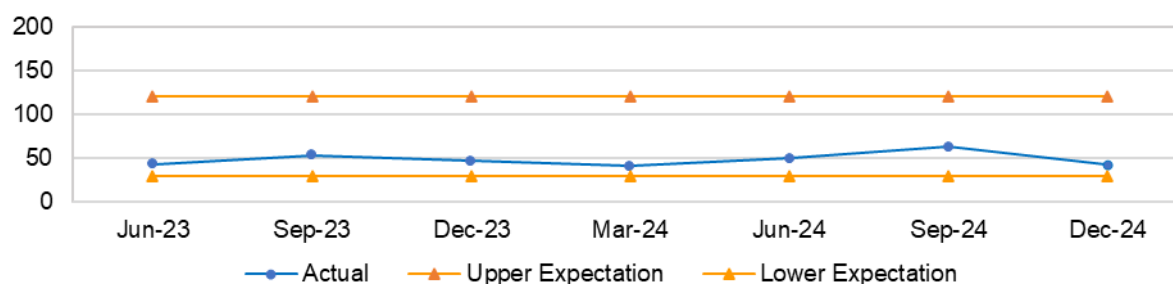
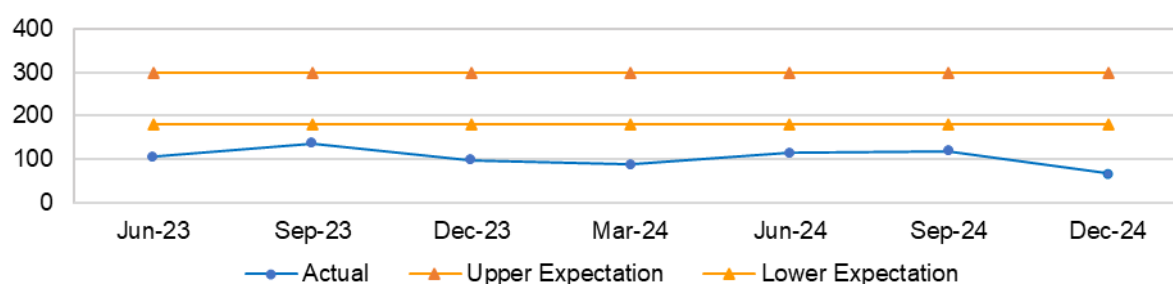
In terms of Directorate performance, the majority of complaints were received by the Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate who responded to 90% within timescale, the Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department, together achieved 96%. Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) saw 54% responded to within timescale (down from 70% the previous quarter), and Children, Young People and Education 57%, including complaints relating to SEN (21% responded to in timescale). Both of which are an improvement on the previous quarter (54% and 6% respectively).

**Further progress has been made in clearing a backlog of complaints which have negatively impacted on the KPI as these were already over the 20-day target period.** In addition, within ASCH, agreements are sometimes reached with customers to allow more time to investigate complex complaints, but this will often mean the 20-day target is exceeded. Work continues to improve timeliness whenever possible.

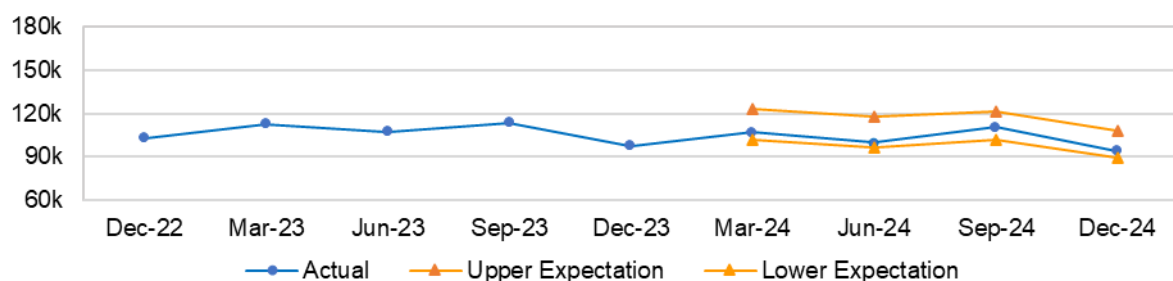
## Key Performance Indicators



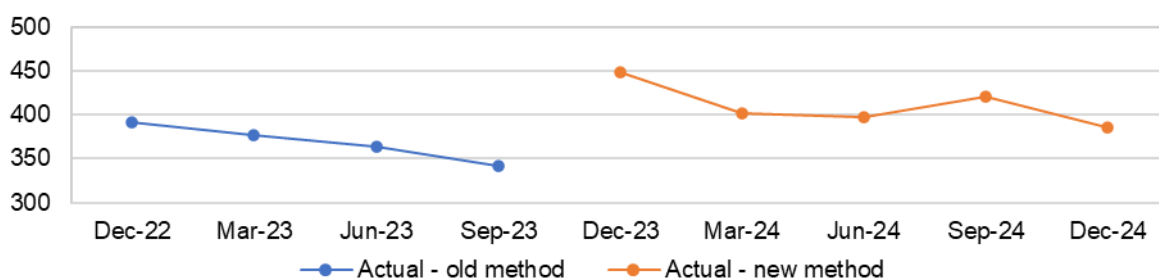
## Activity indicators

Average speed of answer (ASA) by Contact Point in seconds – **priority services**Average speed of answer (ASA) by Contact Point in seconds – **all services**

Number of phone calls responded to by Contact Point – Quarterly



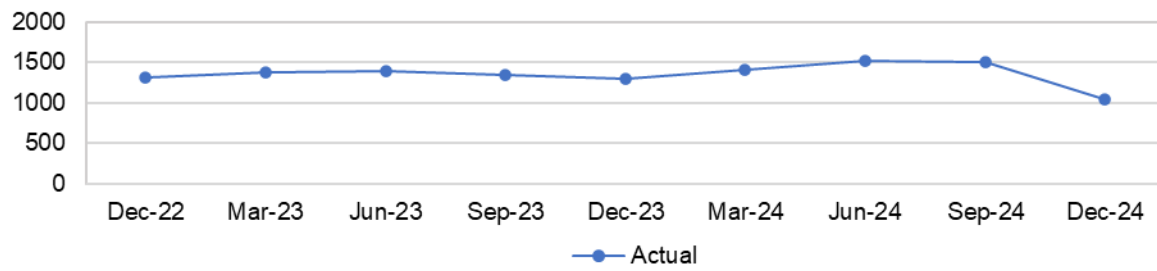
Average Contact Point call handling time in seconds – Quarterly



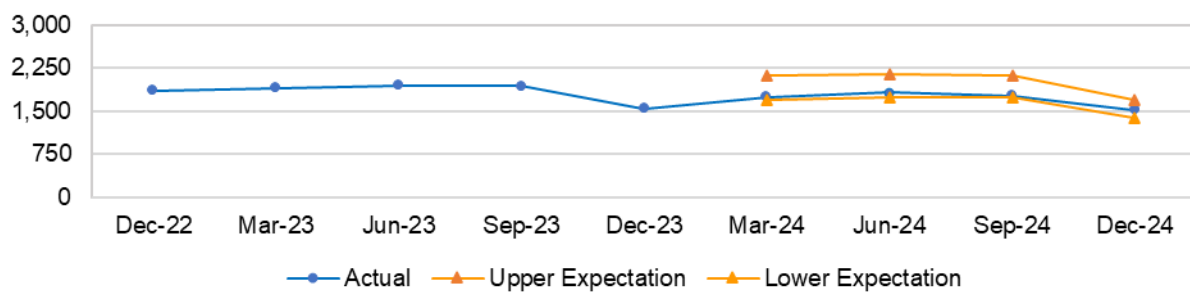
Agilisys changed the way call handling time was recorded from November 2023, by adding a set automatic aftercall time (the period of time immediately after completing the contact with a customer but where more work is required to finalise the transaction: e.g. entering details such as comments about the conversation, follow-up actions, etc). This has contributed to increased handling time in the Quarters from December 2023.



Number of complaints received - Quarterly



Number of visits (sessions) to the KCC website (in thousands) – Quarterly



## Customer Services – Call Activity

### Number of phone calls to Contact Point (thousands)

Contact Point received 19% fewer calls compared to the previous Quarter and 6% fewer calls than Quarter 3 last year. The 12 months to December 2024 saw a 6% decrease in calls compared to the 12 months to December 2023.

| Service area                   | Jan –<br>Mar 24 | Apr –<br>Jun 24 | Jul –<br>Sep 24 | Oct –<br>Dec 24 | 12m to<br>Dec 23 | 12m to<br>Dec 24 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Adult Social Care              | 26              | 24              | 25              | 24              | 100              | 99               |
| Integrated Children's Services | 18              | 18              | 19              | 19              | 75               | 75               |
| Highways                       | 16              | 13              | 13              | 11              | 61               | 54               |
| Blue Badges                    | 10              | 12              | 13              | 9               | 41               | 44               |
| Schools and Early Years        | 9               | 8               | 9               | 6               | 29               | 31               |
| Transport Services             | 7               | 6               | 12              | 6               | 41               | 32               |
| Registrations                  | 6               | 5               | 5               | 6               | 26               | 23               |
| Waste and Recycling            | 5               | 8               | 8               | 5               | 29               | 27               |
| Libraries and Archives         | 6               | 5               | 6               | 5               | 23               | 21               |
| Adult Education                | 5               | 3               | 7               | 3               | 19               | 18               |
| Main line                      | 3               | 3               | 3               | 3               | 14               | 12               |
| Driver improvement             | 2               | 2               | 2               | 2               | 10               | 7                |
| Other Services                 | 2               | 2               | 2               | 1               | 7                | 6                |
| KSAS*                          | 2               | 2               | 1               | 1               | 8                | 6                |
| <b>Total Calls (thousands)</b> | <b>116</b>      | <b>111</b>      | <b>125</b>      | <b>101</b>      | <b>484</b>       | <b>453</b>       |

Figures may not add up to totals due to rounding.

\* Kent Support and Assistance Service

## Customer Services – Complaints Monitoring

Quarter 3 saw the number of complaints received decrease from the previous Quarter by 31% and decrease by 19% on the same Quarter last year. Over the 12 months to December 2024 the number of complaints received has decreased by 4% compared to the same time last year.

In Quarter 3, frequently raised issues included SEN provision, Blue Badges, Public Transport and Roadworks. There is a seasonal trend, in which complaints typically decline in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter and is normally only impacted by inclement weather, issues with a particular service, or introduction of new policy. The level of complaints received in this quarter is comparable to the same quarter in 2021.

| Service  | 12 mths to Dec 23 | 12 mths to Dec 24 |  | Quarter to Sep 24 | Quarter to Dec 24 |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| Highways and Transportation  | 2,902             | 2,355             |  | 642               | 422               |
| Adult Social Services  | 969               | 1,066             |  | 318               | 250               |
| Integrated Children's Services                                       | 371               | 399               |  | 103               | 122               |
| SEN  | 596               | 615               |  | 162               | 92                |
| Environment and Waste  | 161               | 421               |  | 107               | 72                |
| Growth & Communities (inc Libraries, Registrations and Archives)     | 226               | 241               |  | 74                | 42                |
| Education & Young People's Services                                  | 148               | 135               |  | 55                | 22                |
| Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department | 227               | 134               |  | 39                | 20                |
| Adult Education  | 47                | 50                |  | 12                | 5                 |
| <b>Total Complaints</b>  | <b>5,647</b>      | <b>5,416</b>      |  | <b>1,512</b>      | <b>1,047</b>      |

### Customer Services – Digital Take-up

The table below shows the digital/online or automated transaction completions for key service areas where there are ways to complete other than online.

| Transaction type                      | Online<br>Jan 24 –<br>Mar 24 | Online<br>Apr 24 –<br>Jun 24 | Online<br>Jul 24 –<br>Sep 24 | Online<br>Oct 24 –<br>Dec 24 | Total<br>Transactions<br>Last 12<br>Months |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Renew a library book*                 | 83%                          | 80%                          | 83%                          | 85%                          | 1,043,275                                  |
| Report a Highways Fault               | 74%                          | 70%                          | 64%                          | 64%                          | 116,378                                    |
| Book a Driver Improvement Course      | 91%                          | 91%                          | 91%                          | 87%                          | 46,751                                     |
| Apply for or renew a Blue Badge       | 84%                          | 86%                          | 88%                          | 87%                          | 21,663                                     |
| Book a Birth Registration appointment | 91%                          | 92%                          | 92%                          | 91%                          | 18,066                                     |
| Apply for a Concessionary Bus Pass    | 78%                          | 76%                          | 78%                          | 78%                          | 17,798                                     |
| Report a Public Right of Way Fault    | 88%                          | 87%                          | 87%                          | 88%                          | 7,117                                      |
| Apply for a HWRC recycling voucher    | 99%                          | 100%                         | 99%                          | 100%                         | 6,159                                      |

\* Library issue renewals transaction data is based on individual loan items and not count of borrowers.

## Governance, Law & Democracy

|                           |               |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Cabinet Member</b>     | Dylan Jeffrey |
| <b>Corporate Director</b> | Amanda Beer   |

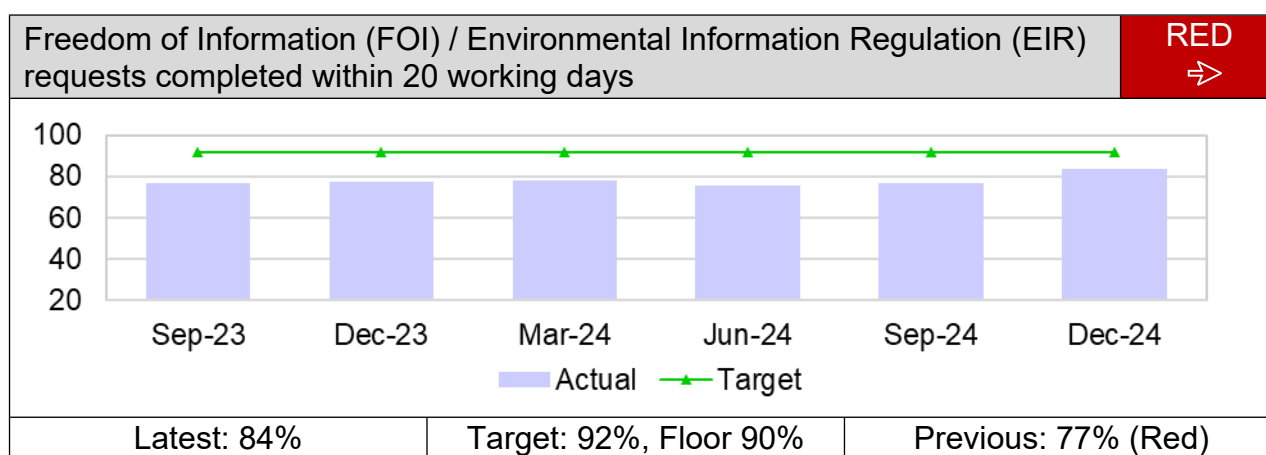
|             |              |              |            |   |   |   |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------|---|---|---|
| KPI Summary | <b>GREEN</b> | <b>AMBER</b> | <b>RED</b> | ⬆ | ⇒ | ⬇ |
|             |              |              | 2          |   | 2 |   |

The completion within timescale of both Freedom of Information (FOI) / Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests, and Subject Access requests made under Article 15 of the General Data Protection Regulations, remained below their floor standards, but are showing signs of improvement.

The percentage of FOI / EIR requests completed within timescale, improved this quarter to reach its highest level of performance in over four years. This is due to a concerted effort by staff and a greater awareness across KCC of outstanding requests following the reintroduction of a weekly report to the Corporate Management Team. However, again this quarter, no Directorate achieved target, with the best performing being the Chief Executive's Department with 82% completed in timescale. The highest number of requests (205) were received by the Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate.

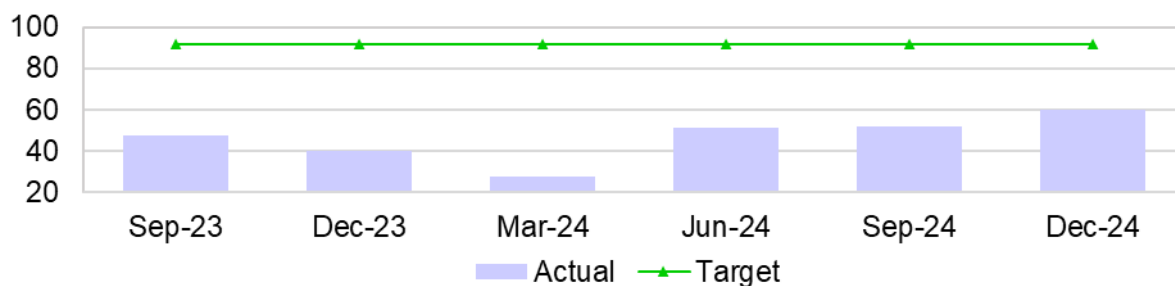
For Subject Access Requests (SARs), there is also an improvement, with the KPI achieving its highest quarterly performance in nearly two years. Over three-quarters of requests came under the Children, Young People and Education Directorate. Reasons for delays in responding to requests include lack of resources, particularly in some services, as well as delays in updating information on specific systems. The volume of requests also remains historically high.

### Key Performance Indicators



Subject Access requests, made under Art 15 of the General Data Protection Regulations, completed within statutory timescales

RED



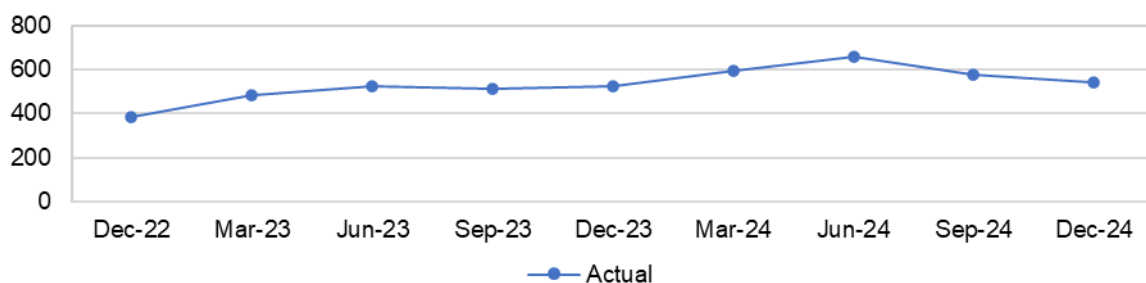
Latest: 60%

Target: 90%, Floor 85%

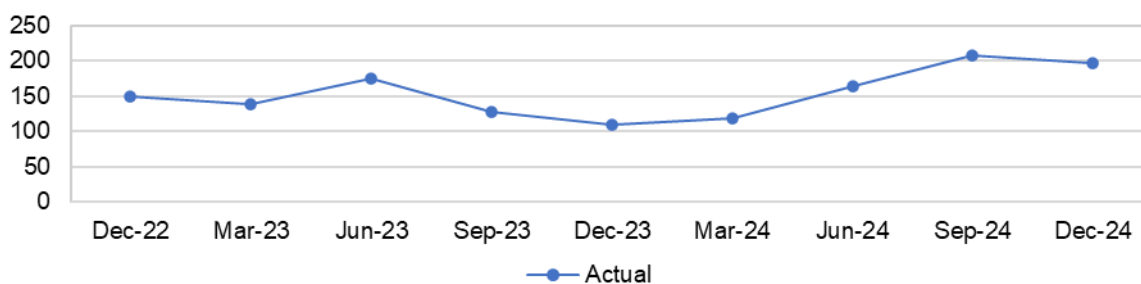
Previous: 52% (Red)

### Activity indicators

#### FOI/EIR requests responded to – by Quarter



#### Data Protection Act Subject Access requests responded to – by Quarter



## Growth, Economic Development & Communities

|                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Cabinet Members</b>    | Derek Murphy, Clair Bell |
| <b>Corporate Director</b> | Simon Jones              |

|             |       |       |     |   |   |   |
|-------------|-------|-------|-----|---|---|---|
| KPI Summary | GREEN | AMBER | RED | ↑ | ⇒ | ↓ |
|             | 1     |       | 1   |   | 2 |   |

### Support for Business

KCC continued to use funds from the Government's Regional Growth Fund (RGF) to create and sustain employment opportunities in Kent.

The Quarter 2 (Jul - Sep), 2024/25 monitoring cycle of the Kent and Medway Business Fund (KMBF) recorded a net decrease of 19.81 FTE jobs since the previous quarter (Apr – Jun), which is a notable decrease since the increase of 31.0 FTE jobs in Quarter 1. In the year to the end of Quarter 2, the total net decrease in job creation is 7.51 FTE, covering both jobs created and safeguarded. This decrease may be reflective of the impact of the UK Government budget as many have fed back that the additional national insurance and other costs have impacted on their ability to hire new staff.

Since the reopening of the KMBF Loan Schemes on 21st November 2023 until September 2024, 306 pre-applications have been received to a value of over £31.3m. Approximately 41.17% of pre-applications were not approved and therefore not invited to submit a full application during this period. There are a variety of reasons for those pre-application rejections: the most common being a lack of information being provided by the applicant to assess their proposals for business growth; a lack of innovation, contribution to net zero and/or impact on local supply chains; and the inclusion of ineligible expenditure. These could have been resolved by applicants reviewing the Guidance Notes. It should be noted that many rejected applicants, utilised the feedback provided positively and resubmitted a second pre-application, which they are permitted to do and have been subsequently approved. The Business Investment Team have taken remedial action to address this pre-application failure rate and are measuring its impact regularly, and offer an initial meeting online with the business, prior to them submitting their pre-application.

At the time of writing, 45 pre-applications are still active and 11 full applications to the value of £1.8m are currently being processed, with a further 11 pre-applications invited to submit a full application to a value just over £1.6m. The remaining 14 pre-applications are at various stages within the pre-application assessment process. The Kent & Medway Investment Advisory Board (IAB) have had eight companies present to it so far with eight approved to the value of £2.18m, though of these, three approved applicants later declined their loan offer. The Kent & Medway IAB Sub-Group (SBB) have had 34 companies present to them to date with 29 approved and five rejected. The total value of the SBB approved applications is £2.46m. The total value of investments approved to date and either paid or in the process of being paid by the KMBF across both schemes is £3.01m for thirty-one applications.

## **Economy**

During Quarter 3, the formal transfer of responsibilities from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) to KCC continued to be delayed for reasons beyond KCC's control although further progress was made on a required Deed of Variation and Transition Agreement.

The Economy Team continued to work with Medway Council to prepare on the ongoing monitoring of legacy capital programmes and submitted a joint response to MHCLG covering all live Local Growth Fund (LGF), Getting Building Fund (GBF) and Growing Places Fund (GPF).

KCC continued to manage the contract for the Kent & Medway Growth Hub and received confirmation that the service will continue for the 2025/26 financial year, meaning a procurement process will be launched in Quarter 4. It is now hoped that the full transfer of responsibilities to Kent & Medway as the Functional Economic Area will conclude in Quarter 4 to include responsibility for strategic economic planning, business representation and managing government programmes where directed.

Work has continued on the delivery of the Phase 1 Implementation Plan for the Kent & Medway Economic Framework with regular updates being provided to the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership on activities including developing a Kent & Medway Innovation Partnership, establishing a Strategic Partnership for Health & Economy, working on the 'Bring Back Eurostar' campaign, making preparations for the 'Connect to Work' supported employment programme and Made Smarter South East.

## **Developer Investment Team**

The trend of relatively low levels of planning applications received continued in Quarter 3 with a total of 26 being received in the three months. However, sixteen s106 legal agreements have been completed securing £20.6m with a 80.9% success ratio against the amounts originally requested. Larger applications included in this quarter are at Possingham Farm, Ashford, (655 dwellings) and Sevenoaks Quarry, Sevenoaks (800). The Possingham Farm application was determined through the appeal process at which officers from Legal, Education, Highways and the Development Investment Team were involved in defending KCC's requests. Whilst officers were able to defend many of the contributions, the inspector determined that the request for library services was not necessary and also reduced the amount of highway mitigation deemed necessary to meet the planning tests. It is the Possingham application that accounts for the reduced success ratio for this quarter. County officers will again be defending mitigation against the same applicant, Hodson Developments, in the forthcoming and well publicised s106B appeal for Chilmington Green due to sit in February. Officers will also be involved in a further appeal of national significance relating to the Highsted Park application, east of Sittingbourne. The application was called in by the Secretary of State prior to it being determined by Swale Borough Council. There are two applications being considered, totalling 8,400 homes. The appeal is scheduled for 12 weeks, sitting in sessions between March and July of this year.

## **No Use Empty**

In Quarter 3, a total of 106 long term empty properties were made fit for occupation through the No Use Empty (NUE) Programme, bringing the total over the last nine months to 363, and the total since the programme began in 2005 to 8,607.



The total NUE investment in converting derelict properties has increased to £107.6m (£61.7m from KCC recycled loans and £45.9m from private sector leverage). A further seven new applications were received during Quarter 3 adding to the twenty-one reported last Quarter making a total of twenty-eight applications for loan support. Twenty-four of these are approved and in contract. Four more are approved and awaiting final legal completion and registration of security.

NUE were awarded £2.5m under the SELEP Growing Places Fund (GPF) to convert additional derelict properties which is fully allocated. The target is to return 18 empty commercial units back into use and create 36 new homes. A total of 18 projects have been approved at the end of Quarter 3 and these will return 23 empty commercial units back into use (16 completed) and create 52 homes (49 completed).

KCC Treasury have made available £28m for NUE to bring forward empty/derelict sites with planning permission for new builds. Following the recycling of £18.9m loan repayments. At the end of Quarter 3, the number of new homes funded is 288 across eight Kent districts. A further two applications are currently being progressed which if both were approved would deliver an additional seven new homes. There remains a strong pipeline of projects across all NUE schemes.

Following a letter from Cabinet Member for Economic Development to the housing minister, which discussed NUE, the Strategic Programme Manager for NUE delivered a presentation to the housing strategy team at MHCLG via teams on 11 October 2024. They were interested in hearing about the obstacles and challenges with existing national policy, how NUE has worked, and thoughts on how central government could help make such strategies more effective.

NUE received national coverage being the lead item on the BBC One Show broadcast on 28 October 2024, which featured properties in Folkestone which NUE have funded or are funding,

### **Libraries, Registration and Archives (LRA)**

LRA saw continued growth during Quarter 3, despite this being a traditionally quieter quarter for our services. Over 771,600 visits to Kent's Libraries took place in Quarter 3 which represents a 4% increase on the same period in 2023/24, attendance at events and activities in particular increased by 15% over the same period. In addition to the regular activities such as social groups for adults, Rhyme Time and Story Time, customers enjoyed a number of events linked to initiatives such as Green Libraries Week, Black History Month and events delivered with local partners such as Maidstone LitFest. The popular Playground baby-led and family sessions resumed across 12 libraries and three family hubs.

Library issues overall have risen by 1% in comparison with Quarter 3, 2023/24, and while physical issues have dropped by 2%, this is balanced out by an increase in eBook and eAudiobook issues of 5% and 19% respectively.

Visitors to the Archive Search Room decreased by 9% compared to Quarter 3, 2023/24 due to the closure of the service for two weeks in December in order for the team to carry out essential work on the collections to make them more accessible. Taking this into account visitors during October and November actually reflect an increase of 5% against these months last year.

Unusually for Quarter 3, the number of ceremonies has risen by 6% from the same period in 2023/24, with a total of 1,469 ceremonies surpassing the target of 1,400 for this quarter. Marriage and civil partnership ceremonies have risen by 7%, while citizenship ceremonies decreased by 10%. However, increasing numbers of citizens are attending the ceremonies, and 1,183 citizens were welcomed to the UK during Quarter 3, an increase of 38% in comparison with Quarter 3 2023/24.

Death registration appointments have increased by 4% against Quarter 3, 2023/24, with 4,222 deaths registered, while birth registration appointments have increased by 1%, with a total of 4,327 appointments. Customer satisfaction with Registration during this quarter continues to be 96% which is our target figure and reflects the hard work of the teams across this service to deliver an excellent service to customers at significant times in their lives.

### **Active Kent and Medway (AKM)**

On 16<sup>th</sup> October Active Kent & Medway held their annual conference at the Kent Showground - with a record attendance of 163. The delegates enjoyed a keynote from 4-time Olympian Donna Fraser OBE and a range of workshops on the theme of equality, diversity and inclusion.

The partnership has also confirmed that funding has been applied to from Sport England as part of their place-based expansion programme for Thanet and Gravesham. Further investment for the county, to promote getting more people more active more often, will be sought for areas where activity levels are lowest, later in 2025.

Finally, AKM is pleased to report that the National Active Lives Children and Young People's (CYP) survey report for the 2023/24 academic year showed that there had been a 5.8% increase in 'Active' CYP and a 5.4% decrease in 'Less Active' CYP over the last year.

### **Community Safety**

Focus areas during this period for the Kent Community Warden Service (KCWS) continued to be the cost of living, assisting with food banks, warm hubs, and supporting residents to access grants and funds. This includes signposting residents that are still eligible for Winter Fuel Payments and the Pensioner Just Missing Out Scheme. Wardens are also assisting residents and communities in relation to homelessness, environmental and financial crime (fraud and loan sharks), anti-social behaviour and scams. A number of multi-agency community events and activities were held in the lead up to Christmas.

KCC Community Wardens are being trained by the NHS through Public Health to deliver Very Brief Advice (VBA) on 'Stop Smoking' and enable them to signpost to the Stop Smoking service in the communities they support.

All Wardens (37 in total) across the county will be trained to give the advice as well as display posters and distribute leaflets at locations, clubs and events. Wardens can also refer individual residents identified as smokers to the stop smoking service during referrals or visits.

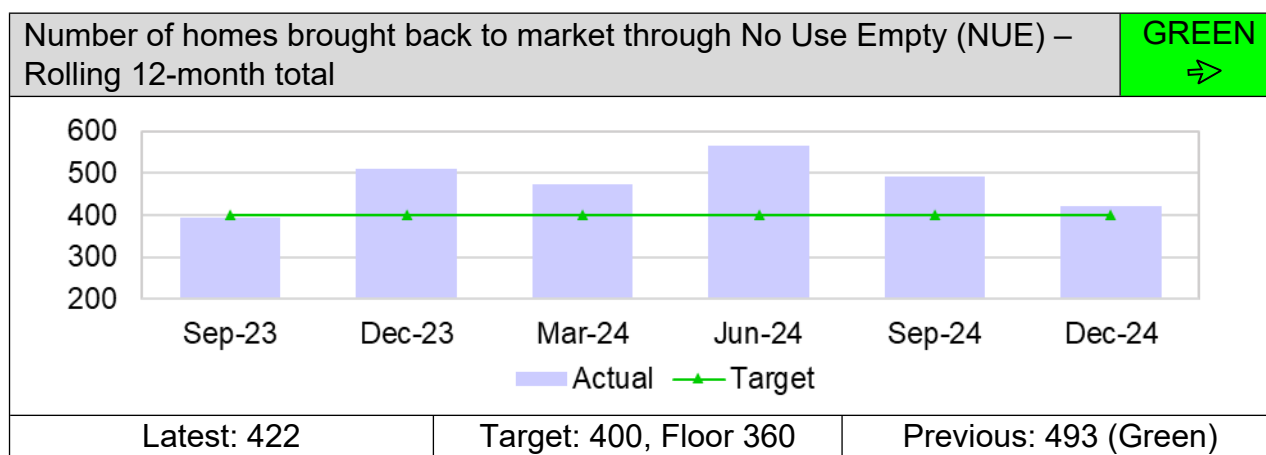
As part of the Kent Community Safety Trust's (KCST) role in sharing good practice and facilitating joint working, the team produces and circulates monthly E-Bulletins with the latest community safety updates and any relevant news, publications, and legislation which is circulated to over 200 practitioners across the county.

The KCST also delivers virtual Community Safety Information Sessions (CSIS) via MS Teams for community safety partners across the county. These are brief lunch-time sessions (max. 1hr) with a focus on one or two main topics each time. A total of Two sessions have taken place during Quarter 3 with almost 60 people in attendance covering a number of focus areas including the new male Independent domestic violence advisor (IDVA) service, fraud awareness and the healthy empowering relationships advisory (HERA) service.

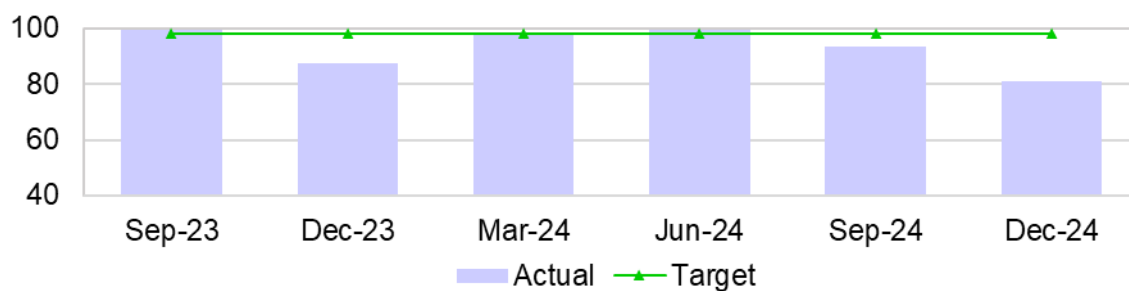
The KCST delivered a virtual Data Workshop on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024 for district/borough community safety colleagues to help with the annual strategic assessment process and inform the priority setting for Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) Community Safety plans. The biggest input on the day came from the Kent Police Central Analytical Team but other speakers covered Serious Violence, Youth Justice, Domestic Abuse, Probation, Mental Health and Road Safety crash/casualty data.

The KCST obtained funding for a Gender Diversity trainer, to deliver training sessions on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).. During Quarter 3, a total of three sessions took place with two focusing on what the issues are but how we can include Men and Boys in the conversation and a session on what community interventions might work. Almost 200 frontline professionals attended the three sessions with 94% of responding attendees rating the event as excellent or very good, but this increased to 100% when including the rating of 'good'.

### Key Performance Indicators



## S106 developer contributions secured as a percentage of amount sought

RED  
⇒

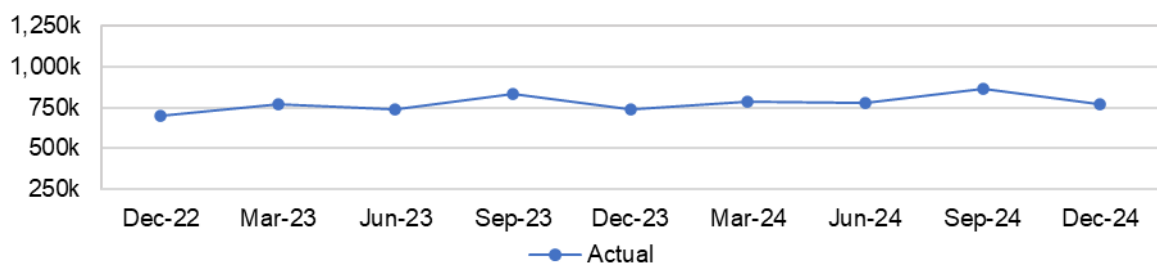
Latest: 80.9%

Target: 98%, Floor 85%

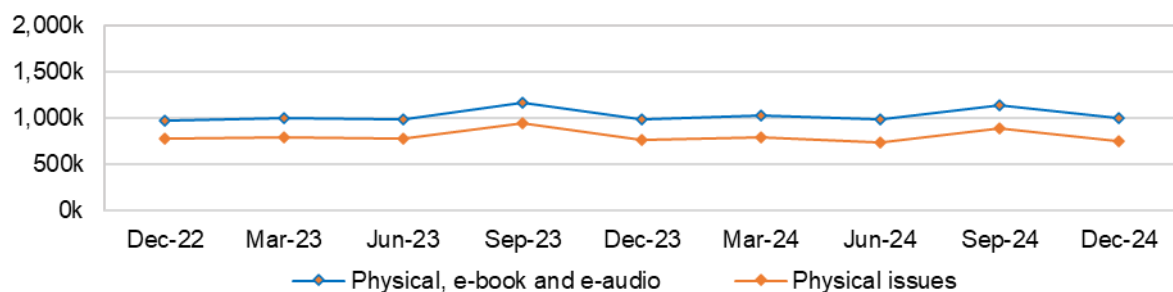
Previous: 93.2% (Amber)

## Activity indicators

## Total number of physical visits to Kent libraries



## Total number of book issues from Kent libraries



## Environment and Transport

|                           |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Cabinet Members</b>    | Neil Baker, Rob Thomas |
| <b>Corporate Director</b> | Simon Jones            |

|             |       |       |     |   |   |   |
|-------------|-------|-------|-----|---|---|---|
| KPI Summary | GREEN | AMBER | RED | ↑ | ⇒ | ↓ |
|             | 4     | 2     |     | 1 | 4 | 1 |

In Quarter 3 the RAG ratings for the four Highways KPIs show 2 Greens (pothole repairs and enquiries made online) and 2 Ambers (emergency incidents and routine faults).

This quarter saw several impactful weather events with a total of four named storms (Ashley, Bert, Conall and Darragh), resulting in above average rainfall throughout October and weather warnings for both heavy rain and gales in December. As a result, highways teams and front-line staff continued to work at a high capacity.

### Pothole repairs

The service continues to achieve faster responses to customer enquires since the introduction of KCC Highways staff completing minor and urgent repairs. The number of potholes repaired within 28 days this quarter was 3,058 out of a possible 3,243 giving a Green RAG rating of 94%. **The Pothole Blitz Programme was substantially completed at the end of October 2024 which successfully helped to decrease the previous backlog of work, although the ongoing unpredictable weather continues to put pressure on our service. We continue to monitor performance at the monthly Contract Board meetings.**

### Emergency incidents

Attendance at Emergency Incidents within 2 hours of notification was a Green RAG rating for both November and December, but for the quarter overall fell short of this target by two percentage points with 540 within time out of 565 incidents mainly due to the adverse weather this quarter. **We continue to work with Amey to improve response times and meet this target each month.**

### Routine Faults

The total number of faults reported for repairs this quarter was 12,491, of which 11,090 were completed in time, resulting in being one percentage point below target. **We continue to discuss and pilot strategies on performance improvement both with the Contract Board and the Strategic Partnership Board.**

### Public Enquiries reported online

The total number of customer contacts regarding highway issues in Quarter 3 was down on last year's totals with 35,791 (compared to 44,680 for the same period last year). 19,036 of these were identified as faults requiring action by front line teams (compared to 24,085 for the same period last year) and whilst both are down on last year, they were at expected volumes for a typical Autumn.

At the end of Quarter 3, there were 5,836 open enquiries (work in progress) which compares to 9,374 at the same time last year, reflecting the decreased workload in several parts of the business, which is normal during this quarter, but still represents a significant drop from where this has been over the last 12 months.

### Online fault reporting

Use of the online fault reporting tool remains high with 64% of all enquiries in Quarter 3 coming directly from the public via the tool which is a similar level to the same period last year, but 10 percentage points higher than the same quarter pre-pandemic (2019/20). Work to encourage more online reporting has been ongoing for several years and we have seen an increased take up of around 10% when compared to the same quarter in 2019. This has also contributed to a near halving of the number of calls to the highway's helpline over the same period. Work on a new and improved fault reporting tool (using KCC's existing Granicus platform) has been given the go ahead and it is hoped this will go live for Pothole and Drainage enquiries later this year and then other highway services following soon after.

### Street Works

Pressure on the teams remains high with ongoing high levels of emergency works. Following recent government consultations fines for breach of permit conditions are to be doubled and fines for overrun works to be applied at weekends. In addition, the government has concluded that a minimum of 50% of Lane rental funds can be used for highway maintenance.

### **Road Safety**

The casualty figures for Quarter 3, show an overall decrease of 63 casualties compared to the same quarter the previous year and a decrease of 215 compared with the same quarter in 2019/20 (pre-pandemic). For those casualties that were killed or seriously injured (KSI), these were up by 35 overall compared to the previous year and up by 70 compared to the same quarter pre-pandemic.

| Quarter 3 |         |        |       |         |         |        |       |         |         |        |       |
|-----------|---------|--------|-------|---------|---------|--------|-------|---------|---------|--------|-------|
| 2024/25   |         |        |       | 2023/24 |         |        |       | 2019/20 |         |        |       |
| Fatal     | Serious | Slight | Total | Fatal   | Serious | Slight | Total | Fatal   | Serious | Slight | Total |
| 4         | 215     | 650    | 869   | 8       | 176     | 748    | 932   | 5       | 144     | 935    | 1084  |

(Based on latest date received from Kent Police for 2024/25)

### Safer Active Journeys Team

Bikeability training continues across Kent and early indications are that we will have delivered more training than last year when we reach the financial year end. The number of live school crossing patrol sites active at the end of this quarter remains steady at 83, with 19 current vacancies out for recruitment at the start of January. We are working with the Safer Road User Behaviour Change Team to promote driver awareness of the four key positions the patrols use with the patrol sign ("lollipop stick") for to help with driver awareness of what to do when they approach a patrol site. We are hoping to increase our team of pedestrian trainers in the next quarter to improve on delivery of our pedestrian training scheme into next financial year.

### Active Travel Intervention Team

A ten-year plan and pipeline of future active travel schemes is being developed in conjunction with the Kent Cycling and Walking infrastructure Plan (KCWIP). This plan will provide both visual and data-led evidence to help prioritise funding opportunities. Several feasibility studies are being conducted in partnership with Districts and Boroughs to explore future active travel routes and zones.

The expansion of the School Streets programme, where there are temporary restrictions on motorised traffic, to two additional schools is progressing well, with implementation set to begin in Spring 2025. The Scootability initiative will deliver 27 scooter sessions, reaching up to 2,430 pupils by the end of this school year. These sessions will include delivery at both new School Streets sites.

#### Active Travel Infrastructure

Active Travel funded projects are continuing to be developed through the design and construction phase with several projects having now been completed. We are working closely with Active Travel England on design assurance procedures and are about to submit schemes for a further tranche of funding (ATF5) following the grant of £1.8m already received, with an expectation that the subsequent grant will be of an even higher amount if we are successful. There are also several S106 Developer contribution schemes at various phases of development. This all contributes to a healthy workload and some tight deadlines, which does put pressure on highway design resources.

#### Safer Speeds and Enforcement Team.

A report on the outcome of trial temporary average speed cameras is being finalised and the results will be analysed to determine if this work will continue.

Work continues to secure a new contract for maintenance and equipment of cameras after 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025 and is due to be heard at ET Cabinet Committee on 25 February 2025. The new average speed camera system is operational on the A20 at Farningham following investigations after a series of speed related personal injury crashes. Data shows that in the first two weeks, 331 offences were recorded, but also an overall reduction in average speeds by just under 5%.

The team also continued to deliver minibus assessments and training, mostly to school minibus drivers, as well as delivering key messages to business who have fleets of vehicles and how improving driving standards can improve overall efficiencies for their business.

#### Kent Driver Education Team

Client demand continues to grow year on year with 1,219 Courses delivered in Quarter 3 compared to 1,146 Courses delivered in the same quarter last year. December course demand was high, with additional courses added and higher client ratios agreed by the governing body for December

New National Speed Awareness Course (NSAC) training for our bank of trainers was successfully completed in readiness for the go-live date of 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024. A second set of training was arranged by our KCC Monitors/Instructors for three new trainers throughout December. These trainers are now awaiting their final assessment from UK Road Offender Education (UKROEd). This will then provide them with a full National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS) Trainer Licence for the NSAC course delivery.

### Safer Road Users Team

During this quarter, the Team delivered the following:

- 'Road Safety Club' (RSC) intervention to 5,104 Primary School Pupils across 55 different schools.
- Road safety week: 'Storytime in libraries' pilot - 4 Libraries visited; 52 young people reached with parental engagement after each session.
- Road Sense (RS) delivery to Year 7 (23 schools), reaching 3,699 pupils
- Road Sense (RS) delivery to Year 9 (17 schools) - reaching 2,811 pupils
- Young Driver & Passenger Course to Years 12 & 13 - 8 schools, reaching 598 pupils
- Young Driver Parent Webinar reaching around 75 parents.
- Parker Steel Health & Safety AGM – engagement with 15 Health & Safety leads across the County for Vision Zero and driving for better business.
- Mature Road User sessions - 2 delivered reaching 94 older road users.
- Young Driver 'Speak Out' campaign on Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat
- Winter 'Drink/Drug Drive' campaign for 3 weeks in December.
- Car seat clinic in October in Sainsbury Ashford & Morrisons Maidstone
- Tyresafe - Highways collaboration Maidstone Service Station - 30 checks multi-agency
- The top social media post related to the National speed limit and what this means to different road users, which reached 45k people.

In December, the Team received the prestigious Prince Michael of Kent International Road Safety Award for their Young Driver and Passenger Programme.

### **Crash Remedial Measures & Local Transport Plan (LTP)**

The 2024/25 Crash Remedial Measures (CRM) Cluster Site programme has now been delivered with 40 key cluster sites being treated with interventions across Kent. These CRM schemes range from minor signing and lining improvements to junction redesigns. The schemes have been designed at specific locations around the County where engineering solutions have been assessed to be able to reduce the risk of collisions occurring.

In addition to the Cluster Site programme, the Highway Improvements Team (HIT) are also carrying out analysis of routes and junctions that have been identified as 'high risk' by a series of factors that identify them as having a higher than 'normal' level of collisions compared with similar sites. Schemes are progressed through the design and associated engagement process for delivery next financial year. This cluster, junction and route review work forms a suite of Crash Remedial Measures (CRM) carried out by the authority in line with our Vision Zero approach.

The team have recently completed delivery of some large-scale CRM and Local Transport Plan projects. The A20 Farningham average speed camera scheme which is operating well and yielding positive results. The team delivered Phase three of Otford Traffic calming and also a new traffic island scheme to enhance junction safety and stop inconsiderate parking at Camer Parade in Meopham. The delivery of a new section of footway in Challock was well received.



The HIT are also continuing to work with elected officials, members and parishes to assist them in delivering items that have been prioritised within their local Highway Improvement Plans. The HIT is currently tasking their small but focussed Community Engagement teams to support parishes in their efforts to realise highway improvements that their communities are promoting. A high number of parishes are now engaging with the HIT to develop their own prioritised Highways Improvement Plans. The Parish seminars were very well attended and generated excellent question and answer sessions. We continue to issue a road safety and active travel group Newsletter to build upon our positive engagement with our parishes.

The team continue to support Speedwatch activity, school travel plans and business grants. The team have continued with regular dialogue to look at targeting their enforcement efforts based on representations received and on speed data. A bi-monthly meeting now takes place with Kent Police, the Kent Police Speedwatch Co-ordinator and officers in the Highway Improvements Team where Speedwatch results are reviewed and discussed.

The Active Travel team are continuing to work with the member walking and cycling group and assist districts and boroughs with their walking and cycling plans to develop a Kent-wide Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (KCWIP). The team are continuing to deliver the remaining schemes funded under Tranches 3, 4 and 4e extension of the Active Travel Capital Grant Fund and the more recently funded Tranche 5 is soon to be subject to a government announcement.

Our Capability Grant from Active Travel England has continued to support activities that will enable us to undertake ambitious and inclusive active travel programmes. This fund is being used to support local district and borough plans but also to deliver training and education about safe active journeys for residents of Kent.

### **Traffic Management**

Enforcement of Moving Traffic Offences commenced at Beaver Rd, Ashford on 23 September 2024. Over the first three months of operation, we have observed the volume of warning notices issued drop by 25% and the Penalty Charges Notices Issued fall by 22%, demonstrating enforcement has started to drive early improvement in adherence to the bus gate restriction. In November 2024, the Dover bus rapid transport system went live, and at the end of December, additional locations went live in Greenhithe, Ashford and Gravesend. The introduction of enforcement at the Clive Road Bus gate in Gravesend has been extremely busy, with over 800 warning notices issued in the first two weeks of January 2025 alone. Future potential enforcement locations are posted on our Moving Traffic Enforcement consultation hub on the Let's Talk Kent consultation page.

The Network Innovation team are working on developing Kent's strategy for the delivery of on-street charging infrastructure. KCC recently signed the grant letter for over £12m capital funding from the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI). This will support the delivery of electric vehicle chargers for those residents without access to off-street parking and driveways. The team are now in the procurement process with contract award expected late summer and first installations of LEVI funded chargers expected at the end of 2025 or early 2026.

## **Local Growth Fund (LGF) Transport Capital Projects**

KCC is now the Accountable Body for £128m of Government funding from rounds one to three of the LGF. There are currently two high risk projects: Sturry Link Road and the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (ITP). For Sturry Link Road project, the design and build contract has been signed and the contractor is progressing with the detail design. For Maidstone ITP, construction of the Coldharbour Roundabout was completed in December 2024, and detailed design for the remaining schemes is ongoing.

## **Transport Strategy**

### **Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) & Bus Connectivity Assessment**

KCC has been continuing to roll out its BSIP programme utilising funding awards in 2023/24 and 2024/25. This has seen the delivery of a number of bus interventions such as three new bus priority schemes, a variety of fares interventions, the introduction of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) at key sites, the award of community transport grants and a number of highway interventions to help with reliability. The funding has also been vital for supporting the Kent bus network, and a number of services across the county would no longer be operating without its existence. This programme will continue to rollout in the coming months with Real Time Information screens and a new interactive bus information portal coming shortly. In late 2024, the team learnt of a new BSIP allocation for 2025/26 of £23.1m. A key decision on the acceptance of this funding will be completed shortly and, if approved, a Delivery Plan will be submitted to the DfT by the end of March 2025.

The challenges impacting the sustainability of services for operators have not gone away and the costs of sustaining previously unsubsidised services is expected to exceed £5m per annum from April. This support can only be provided using BSIP funding which will need to moderate expectations around revenue funded (service) initiatives using the new BSIP allocation.

### **Community Transport**

KCC is once again offering its Community Transport Grant scheme for the 2024/25 financial year. The scheme closes for applications in mid-February and like past years we are anticipating a number of applications which will result in a variety of transport benefits across the county in the coming months.

### **Fastrack**

All 28 of the partially DfT Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) funded Kent Thameside Fastrack vehicles are built and have been delivered. The electric operation (Kent's first) is planned to commence in April on the E route through Ebbsfleet Garden City. This will shortly be followed by the remaining A,B,C, and AZ routes bringing the service to a full zero emission status.

Full electrification of Dover Fastrack will follow in the summer upon delivery of the five electric vehicles from the same DfT scheme.

The collapse of Galley Hill continues to have a severe operational impact on Fastrack. The diversion via the M2 has increased operating costs whilst also significantly reducing reliability of the service. This has resulted in a patronage decline. Fastrack has adjusted timetables and frozen fares at £2 to help offset the decline in numbers but a resolution is desperately sought.

## Resource Management & Circular Economy

The KPI target on diversion of waste from landfill continues to be met, with 99.2% of waste over the last 12 months being recycled, composted, or used for energy generation. The total volume of waste collected continues to increase, mostly due to increased volumes at HWRCs, but remains within expectations overall. Kerbside waste volumes are 9% above pre-pandemic levels with HWRC volumes increasing, but still 26% below pre-pandemic. The total volume of waste collected is similar to pre-pandemic levels.

## Energy and Climate Change

The greenhouse gas emission target for Quarter 2, 2024/25 has been met with a total of 10,323 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions compared with the target of 10,797. Energy consumption has reduced significantly from our KCC estate and traded services in the last two quarters. Electricity generated by KCC's Bowerhouse II, and Kings Hill solar farms are having a very positive impact on offsetting KCC's emissions and overall emissions currently remain ahead of the target. Solar PV generation for 2023/24 is approximately twice the emissions offset when compared to 2022/23. KCC and our traded companies still need to continue to progress the reduction of estate and vehicle emissions to ensure we remain on track to meet our Net Zero 2030 target.

All Kent and Medway Local Authorities, including Kent County Council (KCC), continue to promote iChoosr's *Solar Together* opportunity. Up to January 2025, the *Solar Together* initiative has facilitated installations of more than 15MW of total Solar PV system capacity, and more than 230 retrofit storage batteries across Kent and Medway. In the first year after each installation, these Solar PV systems are estimated to help avoid over 3,330 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e in total, with expected system lifetimes of around 25 years. Kent communities have invested more than £29.9 million into renewable energy technologies via Solar Together since 2020, with 3,485 installations completed up to the end of December 2024. Participating households and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) benefit from competitive prices due to the collective purchasing model, and greater energy independence. The next iteration will open for registrations in Spring 2025

## Natural Environment and Coast

### Kent & Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

Following the stakeholder workshops to review the draft strategy mapping, work focussed on refining these and creating the strategic map of nature recovery opportunities – areas that could become of importance for biodiversity. And following a workshop at the beginning of October, the priority species were finalised.

In November, the full draft strategy and maps were presented to the Supporting Authorities (all the county's local planning authorities, including Medway, and Natural England) for the mandatory pre-consultation review. No objections to the strategy proceeding to public consultation were received from these parties. The Natural England panel were very impressed with the quality of the work and particularly the engagement with the community.

Following the pre-consultation review, work continued in preparing the consultation document and preparations for the consultation itself. The project remains on track. All project outputs and further information can be found at [www.makingspacefornature.org.uk](http://www.makingspacefornature.org.uk)

### Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Work continues in supporting the county's planning authorities in discharging the requirements for BNG. The ecological advice service continues to provide support to all Local Planning Authorities on their development management, with advice increasingly required in respect of BNG following the extension of requirements to all sites.

All BNG resources can be found at [Biodiversity Net Gain for Kent and Medway | Making Space For Nature Kent](#).

### Plan Bee

The following documents have been finalised in the past 3 months:

- Pollinators of Kent County Council
- Kent's Plan Bee blueprint for low tier authorities
- Community pollinator toolkit

All are intended to support the work that Plan Bee is undertaking in terms of encouraging others to design their own actions for pollinators, whether that be district action plans, interventions at the community level to help pollinators or contributing to survey efforts. The documents will be designed before publication and launch – it is currently the intention to launch these at the Kent's Plan Bee 2025 summit in late spring.

The monitoring plan for 2025 has been designed, with the intention of surveying key KCC sites determine whether interventions are having an impact and to identify other measures that may be required. Other sites outside the KCC estate will also be included in the survey work.

### Plan Tree

Organised by The Tree Council, National Tree Week at the end of November typically marks the beginning of the tree planting season. However, by that stage, Kent County Council's Plan Tree initiative had already made significant progress, with 162 adult volunteers and 205 school children planting 10,980 trees across 14 sites with funding from round 3 Local Authority Treescape Fund (LATF). While these numbers are impressive, it is important to remember that there is no dedicated funding for land acquisition. We must engage with landowners to find space for every tree, each site presenting unique local and landscape challenges.

We made arrangements to partner with Gravesham Borough Council, Medway Council, Thanet District Council, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Dartford District Council, Canterbury City Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to plant an additional 13,500 trees in the new year (round 4 LATF). We have also worked with Ashford Borough Council to assist replanting trees that have been lost to disease and vandalism, to meet a 75% survival rate.

We are indebted to the Countryside Management Partnerships who are instrumental in delivering the volunteer planting days that are essential to making the project a success.

Kent Plan Tree drafted a partnership project scope statement with the High Weald National Landscape Partnership, titled: Monitoring Project on Deer Density and Movement Patterns

Plan Tree, in collaboration with Dan Tuson from Natural England and Roland Brown from Butterfly Conservation, is spearheading a strategic initiative to reintroduce disease-resistant elm trees. This effort aims to support three known colonies of the White-letter Hairstreak (WLH) butterfly across a corridor of ten farms in the East Kent Downs.

Plan Tree aims to replicate their successful efforts by targeting new sightings of the Large Tortoiseshell (LT) butterfly in West Kent next year. The LT butterfly, another species that feeds on mature elms, requires slightly more complex habitats compared to the White-letter Hairstreak (WLH). Although generally considered extinct in the UK, several sightings have been reported this summer. Many are hopeful that with appropriate habitat management, this stunning species will make a remarkable comeback.

Kent County Council is on course to enable an additional 151,211 trees this season, bringing the cumulative total to 377,315 trees since 2019/20. This includes 100,000 trees (of 200,000) planted by Countrystyle Recycling Ltd at Pleasant Farm to meet their social value commitments in their bulky waste treatment and final disposal contract with KCC. Together, we are on track to achieve Kent's ambitious goal of extending tree cover by 1.5 million new trees.

### **Explore Kent**

Explore Kent's digital channels which promote the great outdoors, continued to see strong engagement. At the end of Quarter 3, Explore Kent had over 6.9k followers on Instagram, over 11.3k followers on Facebook, 216 followers on LinkedIn, 560 followers on TikTok and 22.3k followers on X. Our website [explorekent.org](https://explorekent.org) had over 102k clicks and 3,542 route guide downloads. The new Facebook and Instagram channels for the Southeast Coast Path have continued to see growth with 1,090 followers on Facebook and 332 followers on Instagram.

In October, 46 partners attended the quarterly Green Social Prescribing Network where we further developed the collaboration and progress of the four workstreams; Mapping and Increasing Opportunities, Accessing Funding, Training and Capacity building, and Providing Clear Referral Pathways. We also presented to the Public Health Team on the benefits of Green Social Prescribing.

A new Public Rights of Way landing page has been launched for Kent residents, featuring content on the countryside code, a guide on reporting problems and a section highlighting improvements across some of the Public Rights of Way routes.

We promoted KCC's Adult Cycle Training through paid ads on Kent Online and social media, receiving 2,800 link clicks. As well as promoting cycle training, our first journey planner for Maidstone hospital launched, encouraging staff and visitors to travel on foot or wheel to the hospital.

In October we secured funding from the Southeastern Customer and Community Improvement Fund to connect Gravesham with the King Charles III England Coast Path. We have started work on designing two interpretation boards for Gravesend and Northfleet station detailing the walking route to the coastal path. We will also be running an events programme in Spring 2025.

At the start of this quarter, we created a Christmas Lights and Christmas Markets page to get people out during the colder months which saw a significant amount of engagement resulting in 16,900 page views.

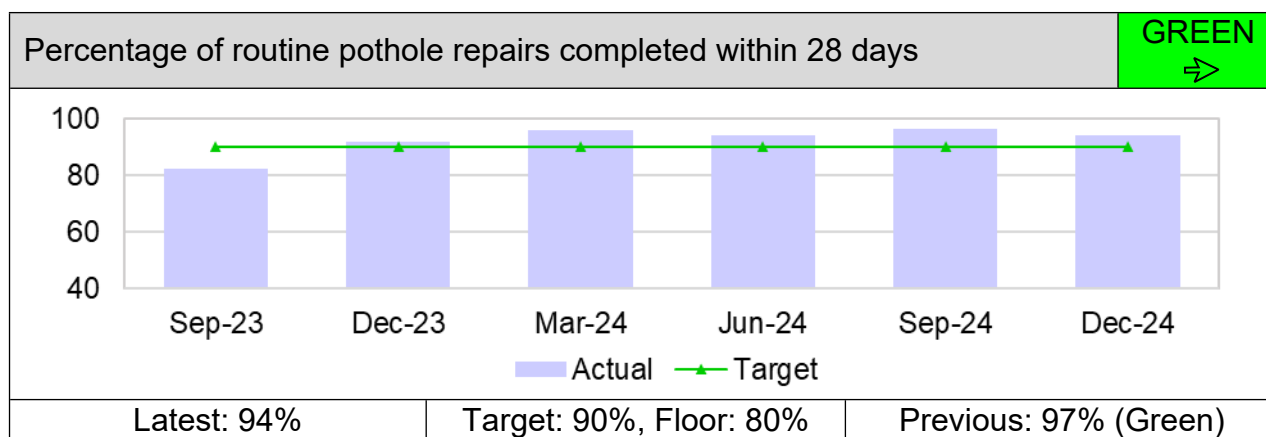
### Kent Country Parks (KCP)

A further 6,000 trees have been planted at Shorne Woods as part of the National Highways funded woodland understorey biodiversity enhancement project bringing the total up to 20,000 trees linking the coppice woodlands. The North Kent Woods and Downs National Nature Reserve has progressed through all the Natural England panels successfully. The likely timescale is for a launch as a Kings series National Nature Reserve in March with a full public launch on the 30th May. Work is underway funded by the Kent Downs National Landscape Geoparks project at Trosley to create a surfaced path to the woodhenge site enabling year-round access for all, this is part of a wider aspiration to create an access for all path around the Trosley trail route. Further works are happening at Brockhill to widen a bridge and create rest points on a steep path to improve access for all. Pegwell Bay hosted its first events organised by staff with support from the on-site café. Similar to the summer, there has been a noticeable drop in the numbers attending events across the Christmas period, compared to last year.

### Countryside Management Partnerships (CMPs)

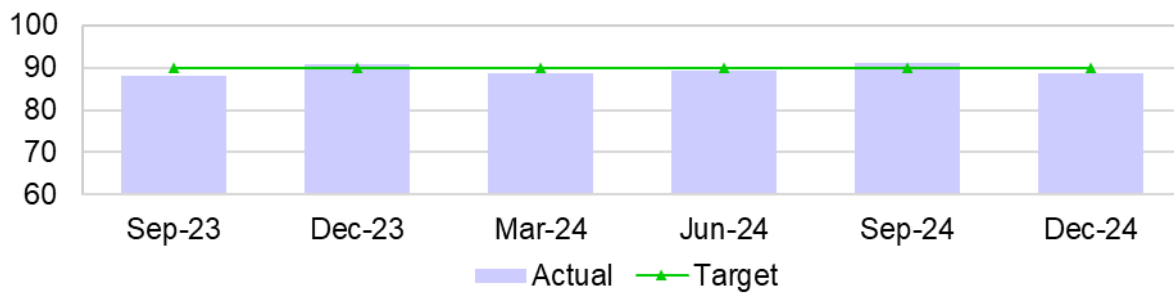
CMPs continue to deliver projects across Kent & Bexley with examples being the successful delivery of Colyer Fergusson grant funded family forest school programme for families in need, new tree planting programme in partnership with Kent Plan Tree and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council that includes planting new disease resistant elm trees. Completion of a habitat and access enhancement project in partnership with South East Water in Pembury. Doddington Natural Flood Management works have delivered 1km of hedge planting and new flood water storage. The Farm Cluster project enabled habitat reports for 7 farmers in the Upper East Stour Farm Cluster Group. Work is moving forward with an application for £1.6m Heritage Lottery Fund grant following a successful Expression of Interest submission in November. The project is called Stour Valley Restore.

### Key Performance Indicators



### Percentage of routine highway repairs reported by residents completed within 28 days

AMBER



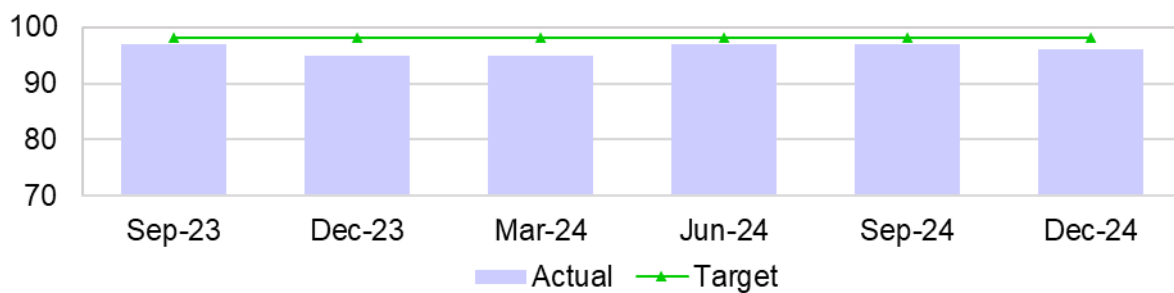
Latest: 89%

Target: 90%, Floor: 80%

Previous: 91% (Green)

### Emergency highway incidents attended within 2 hours of notification

AMBER



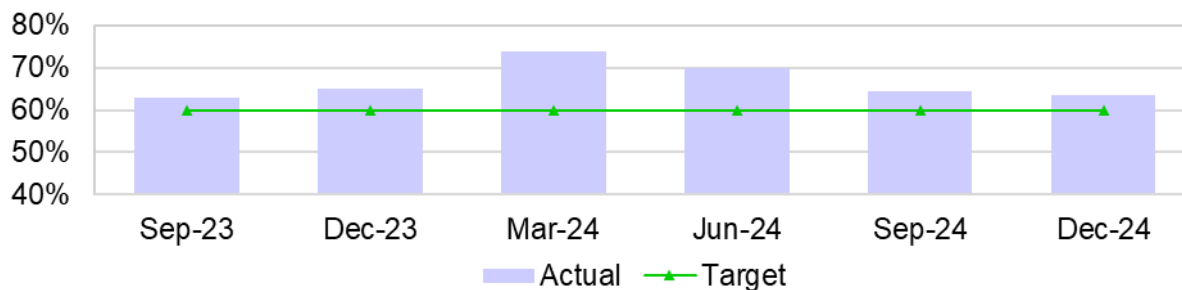
Latest: 96%

Target: 98%, Floor: 95%

Previous: 97% (Amber)

### Percentage of public enquiries for Highways maintenance reported online

GREEN



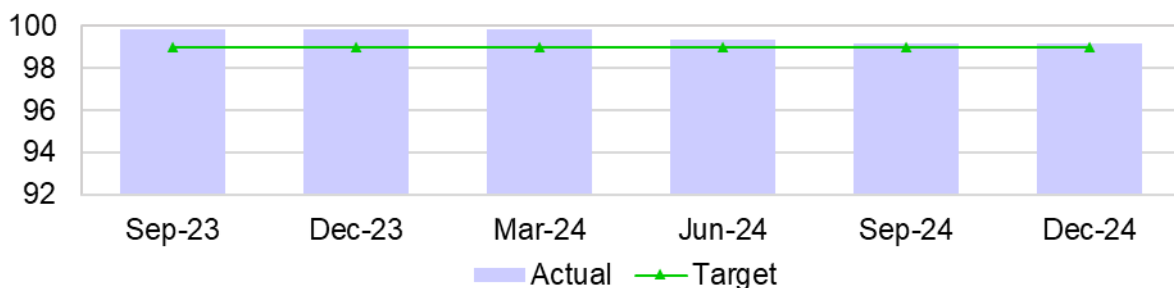
Latest: 64%

Target: 60%, Floor: 55%

Previous: 64% (Green)

### Percentage of municipal waste recycled or converted to energy and not taken to landfill – rolling 12 months

GREEN



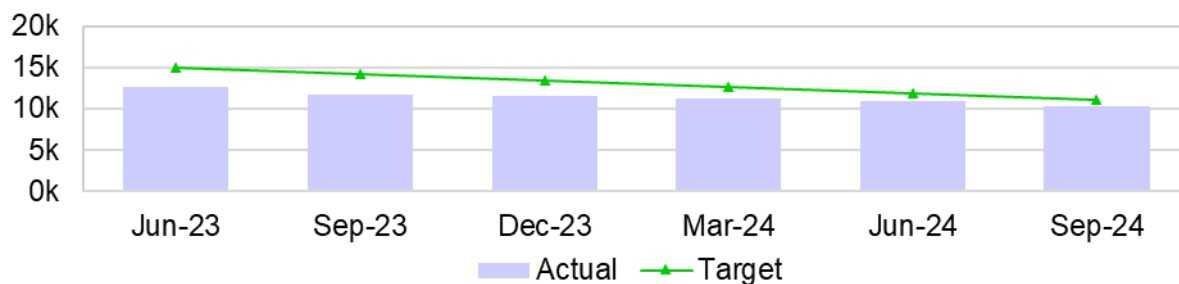
Latest: 99.2%

Target: 99%, Floor: 95%

Previous: 99.2% (Green)

Greenhouse Gas emissions from KCC's overall estate and operations (excluding schools) in tonnes – rolling 12 months

**GREEN**  
↑



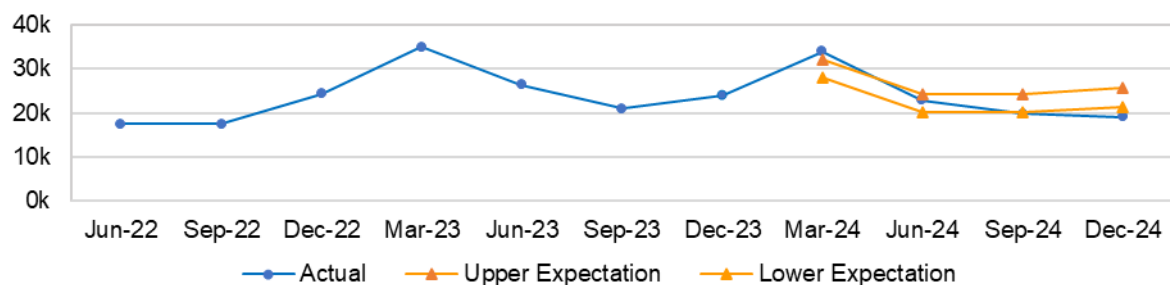
Latest: 10,323

Target: 10,797, Floor: 11,877

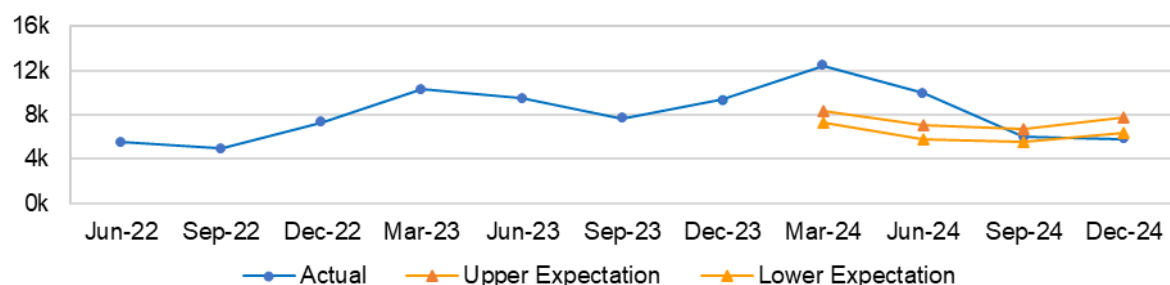
Previous: 10,985 (Green)

## Activity indicators

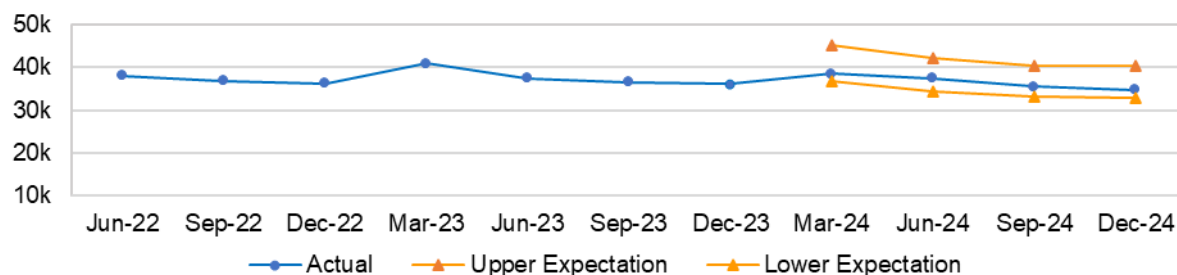
### Number of Highways enquiries raised for action – by Quarter



### Highways Work in Progress (active enquires/jobs)

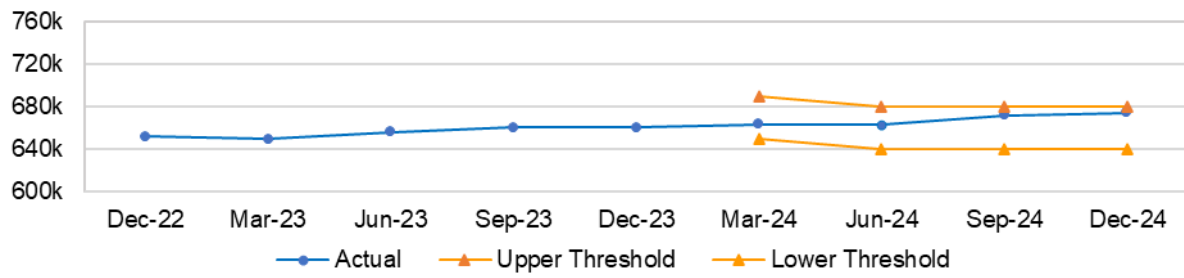


### Number of street works applications submitted





## Total municipal waste tonnage collected – rolling 12 months



## Children, Young People and Education (*Education and Skills*)

|                           |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Cabinet Members</b>    | Rory Love, Sue Chandler |
| <b>Corporate Director</b> | Sarah Hammond           |

| KPI     | GREEN | AMBER | RED | ↑ | ⇒ | ↓ |
|---------|-------|-------|-----|---|---|---|
| Summary | 2     | 2     | 1   | 3 | 2 |   |

### Schools

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024, Ofsted inspections of state-funded schools no longer include a judgement on overall effectiveness, and outcomes of ungraded inspections no longer refer to the previous good or outstanding grade. For inspections this academic year, parents will see four grades across the existing sub-categories: quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development and leadership & management. No aggregations of data are now published by Ofsted and no replacement measure has been devised, as Ofsted is consulting on a new approach to inspecting education providers and the introduction of report cards from September 2025.

Key issues from primary school inspection include whether there are suitable adjustments in place to enable all pupils to access knowledge across the wider curriculum and governance. The Education People (TEP) briefings continue to provide regular updates and advice to school leaders in these areas, whilst signposting support and guidance. Summary data showed that common areas for development in schools include achievement at greater depth, maths and, Grammar Punctuation and Spelling (GPS). There continues to be a comprehensive traded offer available to all schools including bespoke maths and GPS support. Our impact on pupil outcomes is reliant on schools commissioning our support.

Feedback from secondary and special school inspections suggests there is an increased focus on the ways schools maintain oversight of education and safeguarding for pupils not always at school – those who are on part-time timetables and who are accessing alternative provision.

TEP had responsibility for the Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) Conference held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024. A majority of schools in the county were represented, including 319 primary schools and 78 secondary schools, a significant increase from attendance in 2023 (231 primaries and 38 secondaries).

### Early Years

The Early Years and Childcare Service, working in partnership with KCC Management Information (MI) and Finance, continue to implement the Government's New Free Entitlements and Wraparound Provision initiatives. In the Autumn term, 10,718 codes had been issued to working parents of children aged between 9 months to two-years, of which, 9,770 have been validated by KCC, meaning a validation rate of 91%.

The take-up of Free for Two (FF2) claims for parents on certain benefits against those potentially eligible in the same period was 68% with 2,762 children being funded. This compares to 3,235 two-year olds being funded under the working entitlement scheme. This is a decrease in FF2 claims compared to the same period last year when the take-up figures for Autumn 2023 were 79%. To assist future planning, parents who are eligible but do not take up a place are contacted and asked why.

For early years group settings, The Education People (TEP) continue to support all settings through Annual Conversations but prioritises those due an Ofsted inspection, making clear recommendations where appropriate and offering the 'Securing Good' programme to those in their inspection and not meeting at least Good Ofsted grade descriptors. Settings with Requires Improvement or Inadequate judgements receive targeted and bespoke support, with support for plans of action and follow up visits as required. New settings are also offered support in readiness for their first inspection.

Established and regular communications and interactions with the Early Years and Childcare Sector continue, including quarterly meetings with the Provider Association (last meeting held in December), the scheduled termly (six times annually) generic Early Years and Childcare Bulletin, with communications in-between these being sent when appropriate and necessary with ongoing contact with individual providers as required. Three times annually, a county-wide round of briefing and networking sessions are offered, last held in October. The Early Years and Childcare Service's Threads of Success training offer continues to be delivered principally on virtual platforms, as recruitment and retention challenges continue to make it very difficult for providers to attend face-to-face training, even when this is funded and therefore free for providers to attend.

The Early Years and Childcare Service is also leading the implementation of the KCC Early Years Review Area Three: Implement the Revised Model of Universal Support, and KCC's SEND Inclusion and Support Manager for Early Years is co-leading Area Four: Develop Ordinarily Available Provision.

### **SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability)**

Based on the rolling 12-month average to December 2024, 34% of Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) were issued within 20 weeks excluding exceptions (813 out of 2,421). As recent performance rapidly improves, the rolling 12-month average will also improve but with a lag. In the single month of December 68% of plans (50 out of 73) were issued within timescale, which would have met target.

Trends outlined over recent reporting cycles have continued, raising the rolling annual average quickly month on month. Assessment decision outcomes peaked in November with 79% of decisions being made by the statutory deadline (90 out of 114). The slight regression in December reflects that the high number of public holidays and staff leave reduced team capacity, with no cessation of the progression of statutory timescales. There is strong expectation that rates will recover and continue to improve from January onwards.

The percentage of annual EHCP reviews waiting over 12 months is 35%, fifteen percentage points better than the target of 50%.

The percentage of pupils with EHCPs being placed in independent or out of county special schools, at 10.5%, remains higher than the target of 9.0% but equal to the floor standard.

Improvements are not limited to the assessment process, with large improvements in Annual Review timeliness and Phase Transfer delivery using the same principles outlined above.

### **Wider Early Help**

In the 12-month period to December 2024, 102 pupils were permanently excluded which equates to 0.04% of the school population. 20 were 'primary' phase pupils and 82 'secondary' phase pupils. The current level of pupils excluded is at its highest for nearly 9 years, although at 0.04% is still well below the 2022/23 national average for England of 0.11%. Tonbridge and Malling district accounted for 20 of the 102 pupils excluded across the County in the rolling 12-month period to December 2024, followed by Dartford with 15 and Sevenoaks with 13 pupils excluded.

Kent PRU and Attendance Service (KPAS) continues its work regarding suspensions and permanent exclusions. Common themes are identified, and additional processes developed to support schools to ensure all interventions are exhausted and exclusion remains a last resort as detailed in the DfE guidance on suspensions and exclusions issued in August 2024. This includes the development of practices such as an inclusion intervention checklist, the appropriate use of directions off-site (alternative provision) and using inclusion champions to support schools.

In addition, KPAS supports the work of CATIE (Countywide Approach to Inclusive Education). This includes the inclusive leadership programme, core training offer, whole school nurture approach provided by Nurture UK and Special School outreach work delivered by the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS) and Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT).

KPAS provides regular training to governing boards and academy trustees across the county's schools to ensure all cases of permanent exclusion are thoroughly scrutinised, as well as promoting the use of timely data to address cases where suspensions are occurring on a regular basis. The link Education Improvement Advisors (EIAs) support schools by:

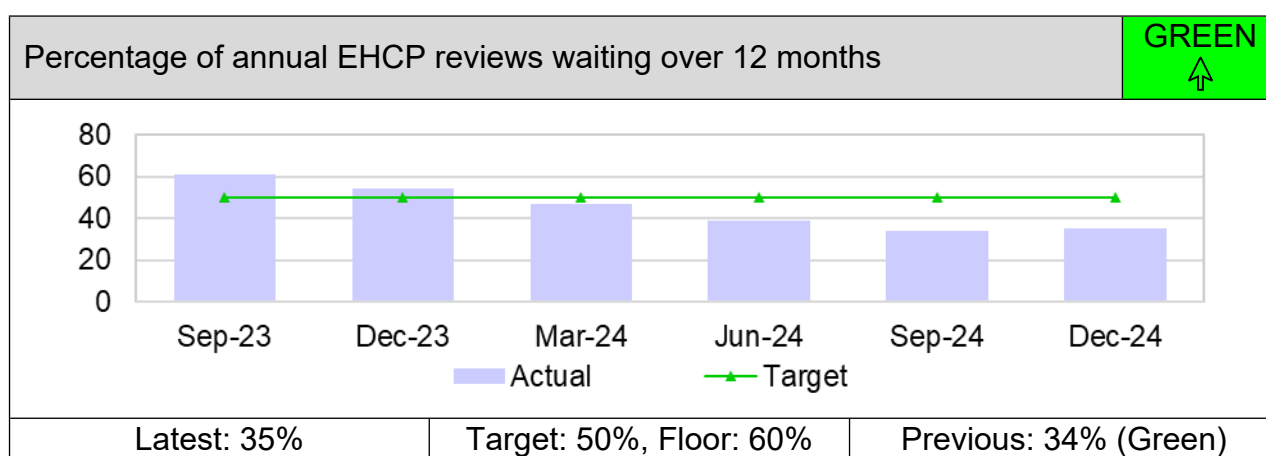
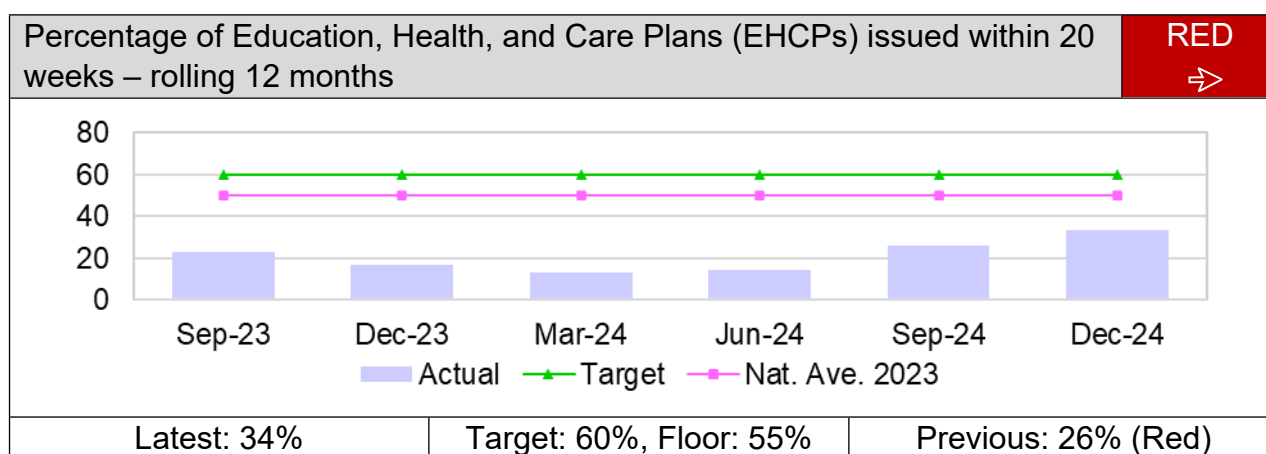
- Providing advice on the DfE exclusion guidance and processes as well as behaviour policies.
- Sharing ideas as well as signposting to resources and services who may be able to support schools and pupils in promoting inclusion where behaviour is a concern.
- Attending meetings in schools with parents (and partner agencies where involved) about individual pupils experiencing suspensions or at risk of permanent exclusion.
- Delivering training to governors and senior leaders on responsibilities in relation to exclusions set out in the DfE guidance.

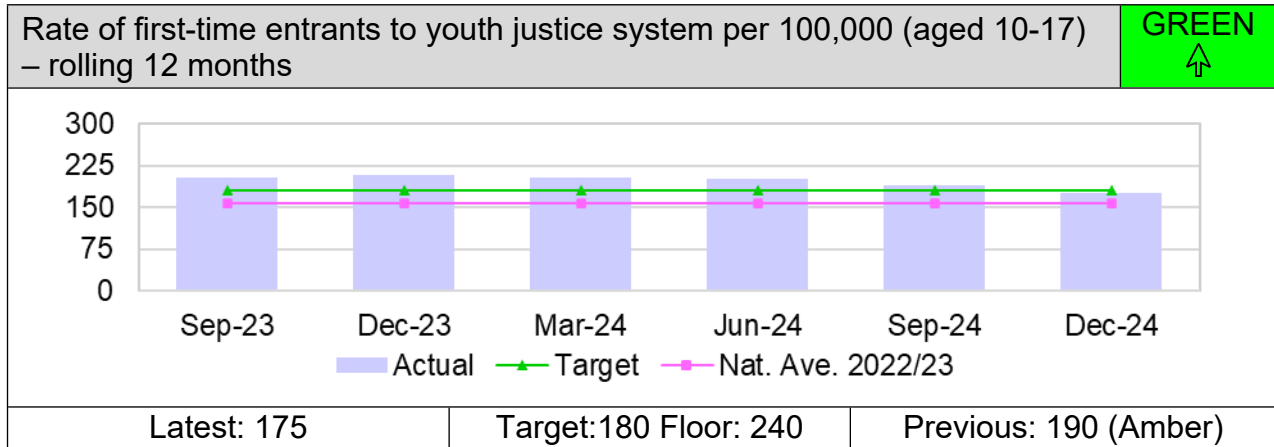
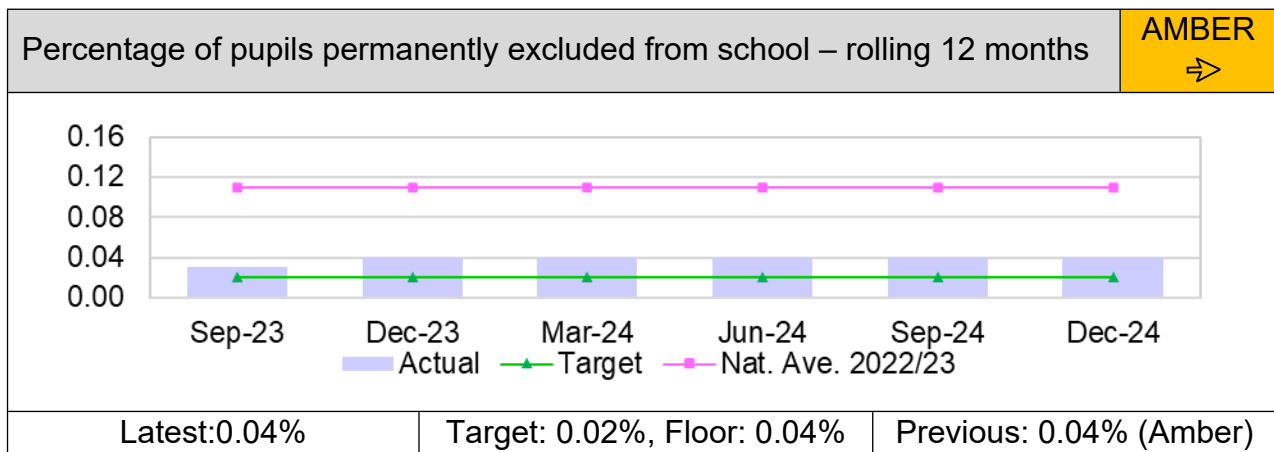
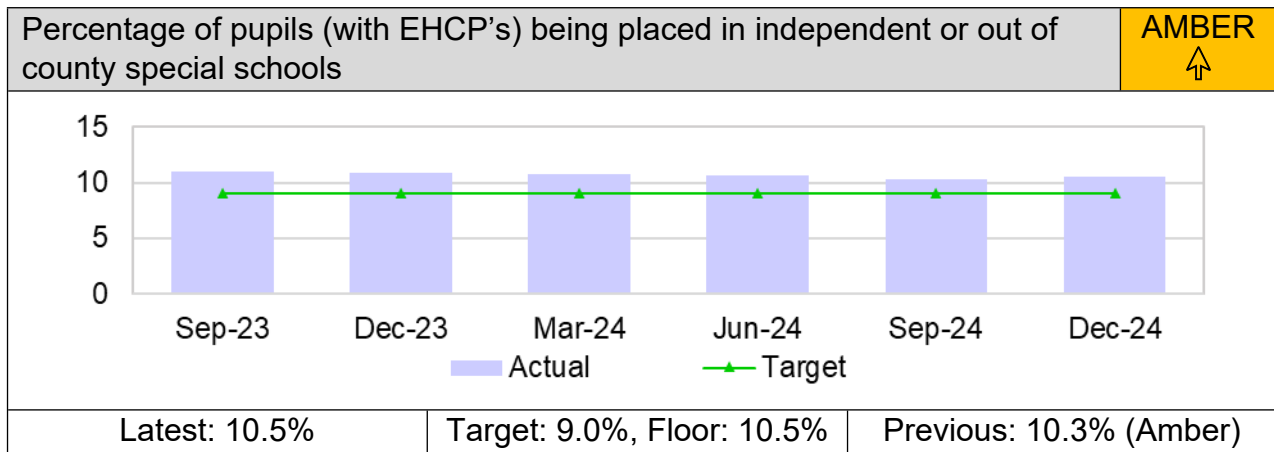
EIAs represent KPAS at a range of forums such as the Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT), LIFT Executive, In Year Fair Access panels and District Contextual Safeguarding Meetings.

Since the start of the academic year, KPAS continues to implement the new DfE guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' which became statutory in August 2024. Within this guidance, local authorities must offer schools attendance advice and guidance, facilitate Targeting Support Meetings (between 1-3 per school, per year), offer multi-disciplinary support for families and provide legal intervention.

The First-Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System per 100,000 in December was 175 (rolling 12-month figure) which equates to 284 young people. This is the lowest level reported since March 2023 and the measure is now RAG rated green. The implementation of Outcome 22 (a deferred outcome for children which replaces statutory youth justice outcomes) will have had a positive impact on this performance, although this has yet to be evidenced over a longer period of time and supported by the national data (yet to be published). The Kent Youth Justice Partnership has been identified to be part of an HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) thematic inspection in respect of prevention and diversion which will take place in February 2025.

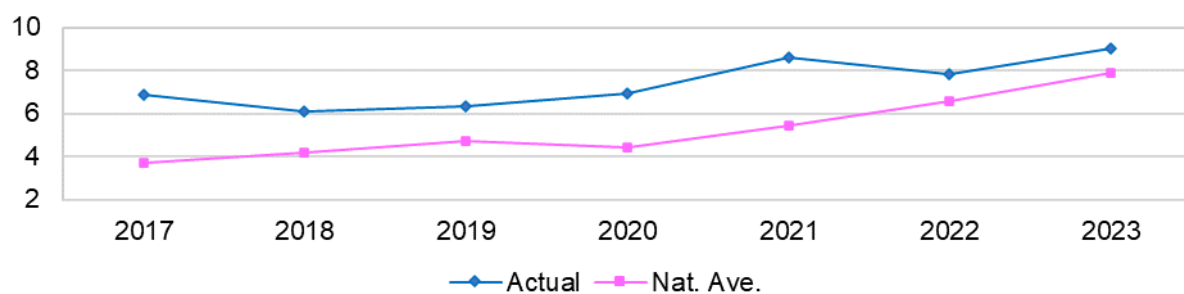
### Key Performance Indicators



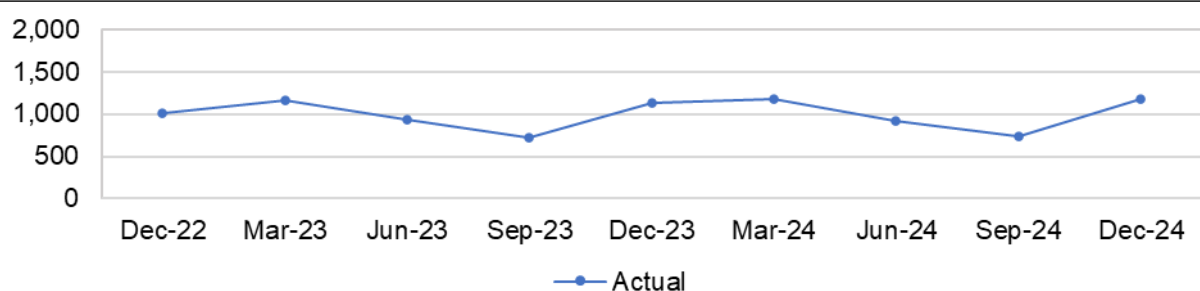


## Activity indicators

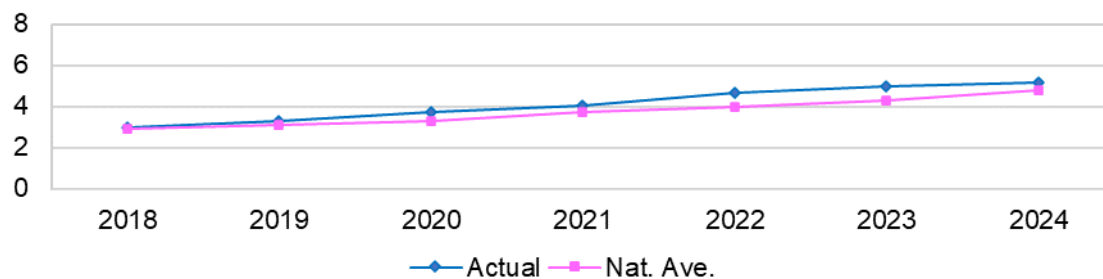
Number of initial requests for statutory assessment (for an EHC plan) per 1,000 population



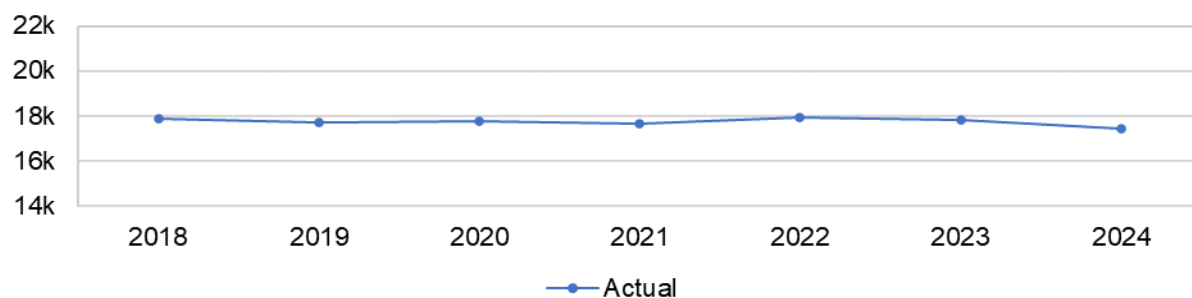
Number of initial requests for statutory assessment for an EHC plan (Quarterly)



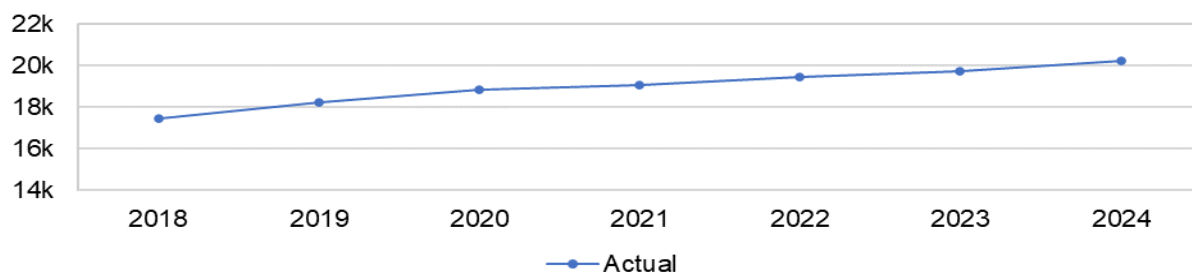
Percentage of pupils with an EHCP



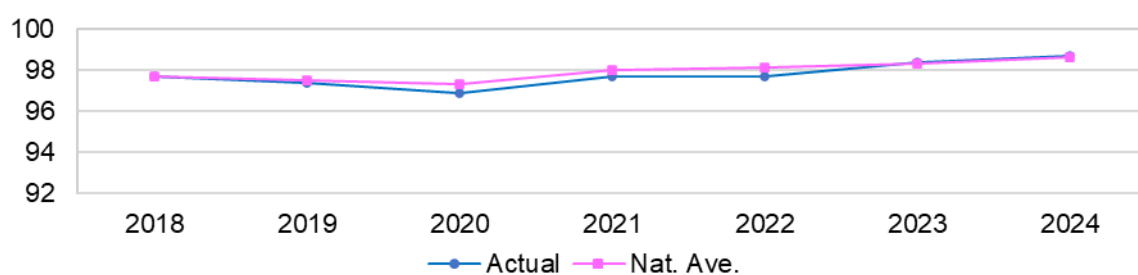
Number of pupils in Reception year (Kent state funded schools)



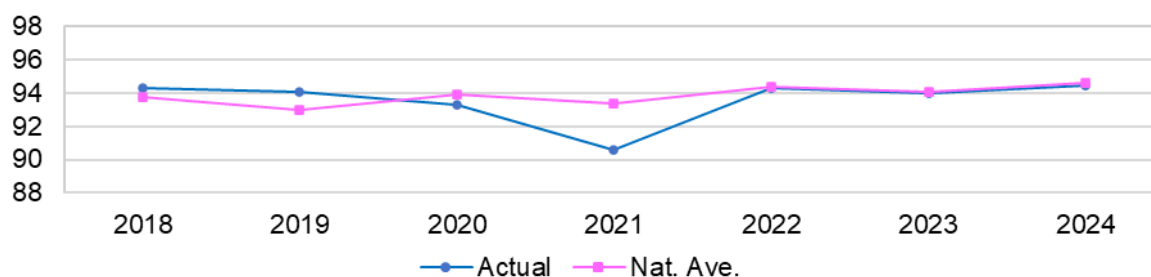
Number of pupils in Year 7 (Kent state funded schools)



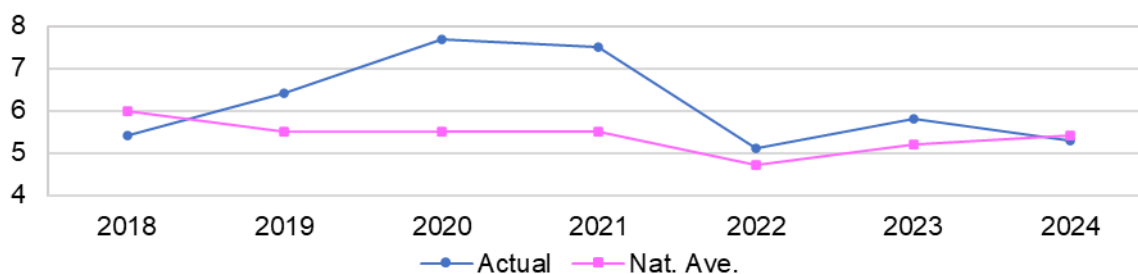
Percentage of Primary school applicants offered one of top three preferences



Percentage of Secondary school applicants offered one of top three preferences

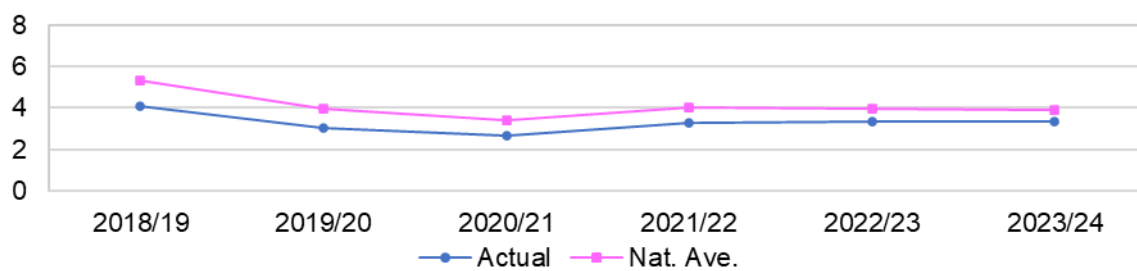


Percentage of 16-17 years olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) or whose activity is Not Known

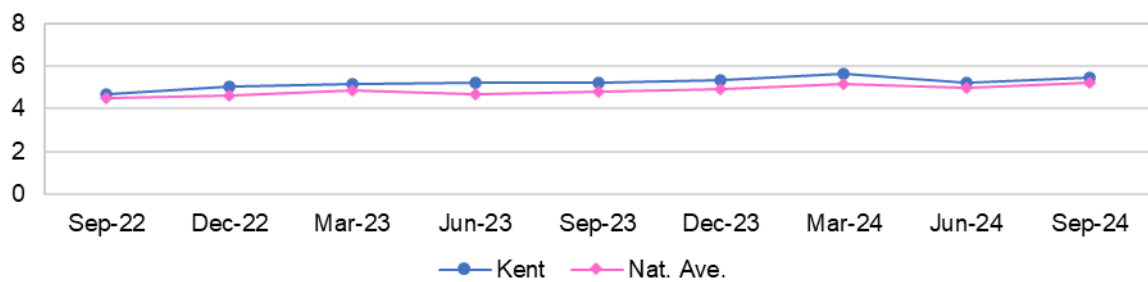




Percentage of 16-18 year olds who start an apprenticeship



Percentage of 18-24 year olds claiming Universal Credit



**Children, Young People and Education (*Integrated Children's Services*)**

|                           |               |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Cabinet Members</b>    | Sue Chandler  |
| <b>Corporate Director</b> | Sarah Hammond |

|         |       |       |     |   |   |   |
|---------|-------|-------|-----|---|---|---|
| KPI     | GREEN | AMBER | RED | ↑ | ⇒ | ↓ |
| Summary | 3     | 2     | 3   | 1 | 4 | 3 |

**Early Help**

At the end of December 2024, there were 2,287 family cases open to Early Help units, providing support for 4,637 children and young people under the age of 18. This is an 8.6% increase in the number of families supported when compared to the end of the previous Quarter (2,105), but 4.3% fewer families than Quarter 3 last year (2,389).

The performance measure for 'Percentage of Early Help cases closed with outcomes achieved returning to Early Help or Children's Social Work teams within 3 months was 14.9%, a reduction of 0.3% from the previous Quarter (15.2%) and achieving the target of being 15.0% or lower.

**Children's Social Care - Staffing and Caseloads**

On 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024, the number of open cases (including those for care leavers above the age of 18) was 11,165, an increase of 311 children and young people when compared to the end of the previous Quarter (10,854).

There were 6,357 referrals to children's social care services in the Quarter, an 8.3% increase when compared to the previous Quarter (5,869) and 10.8% higher than Quarter 3 last year (5,735). The rate of re-referrals within 12 months for the 12 months to December 2024 was 22.2%, compared to 23.4% the previous Quarter, continuing to achieve the target of 25.0% or lower. This compares to the England average of 22.4% for 2023/24.

The percentage of case-holding social worker posts held by permanent qualified social workers employed by Kent County Council (75.2%) has improved from 74.7% in September 2024 and is just above the floor standard of 75.0%.

The average caseload for Social Workers in Children's Social Work Teams was 21 children in December 2024. This is above the target caseload of no more than 18 children and an increase from the previous quarter, when the average caseload was 20 children.

**Child Protection**

On 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024, there were 1,109 children subject to a child protection plan, an increase of 14 children from the end of the previous Quarter (1,095). The rate per 10,000 children (aged 0-17) was 32.9, which remains below the last published rate for England of 41.6 (31<sup>st</sup> March 2024).

### Children in Care

The number of non-UASC children in care decreased by 25 in the Quarter to 1,409.

The number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) in care decreased by 80 to 475, with some of these young people awaiting transfer to another local authority under the National Transfer Scheme. The number of children in care placed in Kent by other local authorities (OLA) increased by 12 children over the Quarter to 1,238.

| Status           | Dec-23       | Mar-24       | Jun-24       | Sep-24       | Dec-24       |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Non-UASC         | 1,466        | 1,460        | 1,444        | 1,434        | 1,409        |
| UASC             | 531          | 480          | 476          | 555          | 475          |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>1,997</b> | <b>1,940</b> | <b>1,920</b> | <b>1,989</b> | <b>1,884</b> |
| <b>Gender</b>    |              |              |              |              |              |
| Male             | 1,329        | 1,273        | 1,266        | 1,327        | 1,222        |
| Female           | 666          | 664          | 651          | 660          | 659          |
| Non-binary       | 2            | 3            | 3            | 2            | 3            |
| <b>Age Group</b> |              |              |              |              |              |
| 0 to 4           | 253          | 239          | 237          | 247          | 247          |
| 5 to 9           | 231          | 235          | 227          | 232          | 218          |
| 10 to 15         | 665          | 655          | 647          | 628          | 607          |
| 16 to 17         | 848          | 811          | 809          | 882          | 812          |
| <b>Ethnicity</b> |              |              |              |              |              |
| White            | 1,344        | 1,330        | 1,318        | 1308         | 1,262        |
| Mixed            | 109          | 112          | 106          | 113          | 110          |
| Asian            | 23           | 26           | 26           | 32           | 37           |
| Black            | 110          | 114          | 141          | 104          | 122          |
| Other            | 411          | 358          | 329          | 432          | 353          |

The percentage of Children in Care (excluding UASC) placed in KCC in-house foster care or with family/friends has remained below the floor standard of 75.0%.

Performance for this measure was 73.2% for the 12 months to December 2024, compared to 72.7% at the end of the previous quarter. Performance against this measure is impacted by the availability of in-house foster placements which is a national issue. Since the legal judgement of July 2023, KCC has between 35-40 in-house fostering beds available for unaccompanied children under the age of 16 years being cared for whilst awaiting transfer on the National Transfer Scheme. **The number of in-house beds required was reviewed following the opening of the KCC Children's homes and supported accommodation. In December 2024, 12 in house beds were released from the UASC scheme and are now available for other children. Given this recent change in availability, the next quarter should see an improvement in this performance measure.**

Kent Fostering is part of a cluster of Local Authorities who received DfE funding to support a national approach to the recruitment and retention of Local Authority Foster Carers. A national recruitment hub, Fostering South East, launched on 8th July 2024, to be followed by national recruitment activity, encouraging people to foster for their Local Authority. Additional DfE funding was secured to develop the Mockingbird Scheme - part of a support package to retain our existing foster carers. The scheme launched in October 2024 with the first two Mockingbird home hub foster carers constellations now live for South Kent and East Kent. The ambition is to have four Mockingbird hub foster care constellations, one in each area of Kent, by the end of March 2025 with the recruitment for a North Kent and West Kent foster carer hub now taking place.

An additional performance measure regarding the number of fostering households was added for this reporting year to reflect the priority of recruiting and retaining foster carers. As of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024, there were 613 approved households against a target of 700 households. **Actions being taken to increase the number of fostering households include increased information events, recruitment stands at large community events, specific campaigns using social media and use of the “refer a friend” payment to encourage existing foster carers to support recruitment of family and friends to join Kent Fostering. Part of the recruitment strategy will be to look to our existing KCC staff group, to promote becoming a foster carer and completing the initial work on whether KCC can become a “Fostering Friendly” employer; to this end, a policy has been developed and is currently with legal services for advice prior to presenting to the Corporate Director for a decision. The service is at the initial stages of developing a “Create a Room” project, to support existing approved foster carers to create an additional bedroom for fostering, through supporting either dividing an existing room, converting a garage, having a small extension or loft conversion.**

From 1st April 2024, Kinship assessment and support services were centralised, with both functions moving into the fostering service to improve the offer to all types of kinship carers including Special Guardians and Kinship (Connected Person) Foster Carers. The aim of the new service is to increase the numbers of children safely placed with family and friends within their community network and reduce those needing a mainstream foster placement.

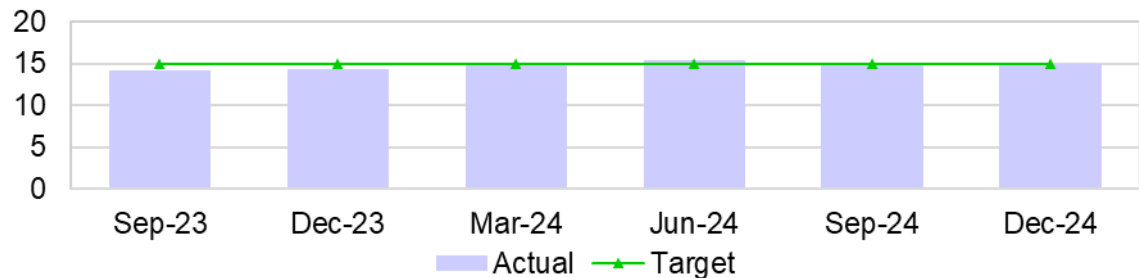
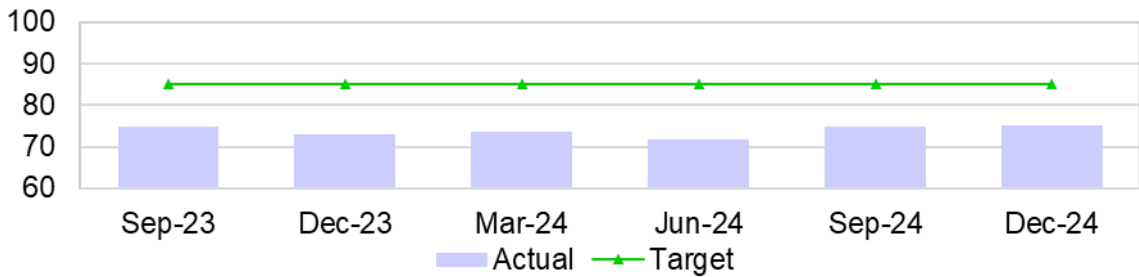
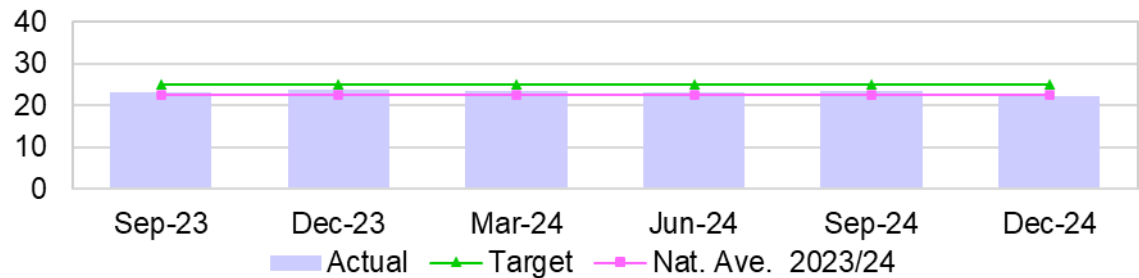
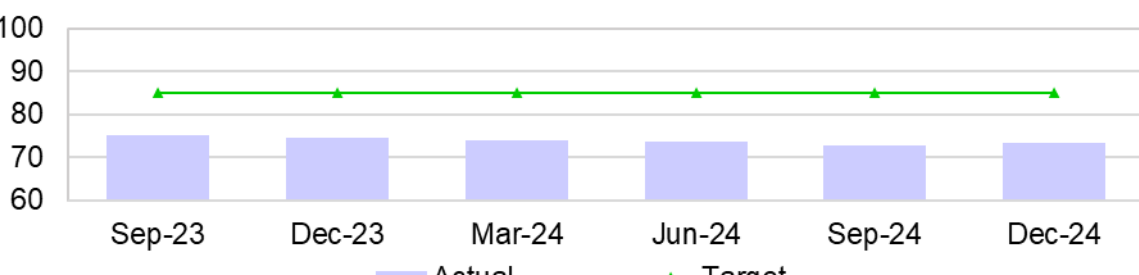
### Care Leavers

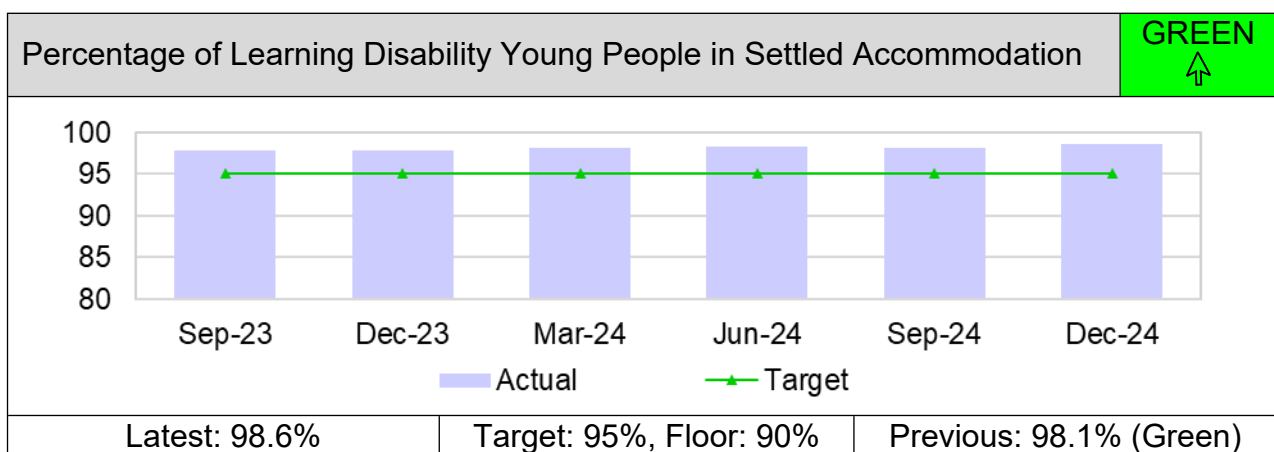
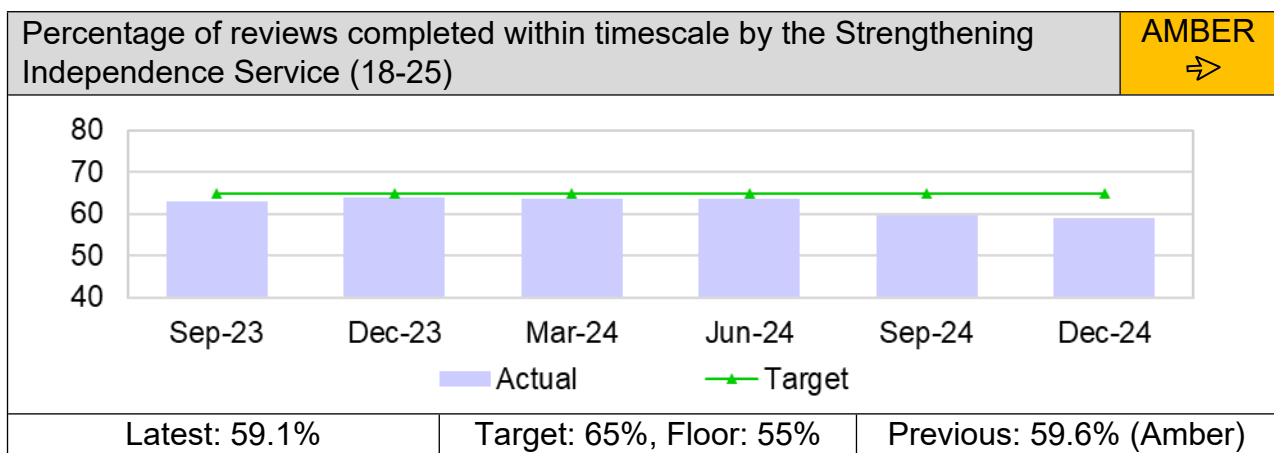
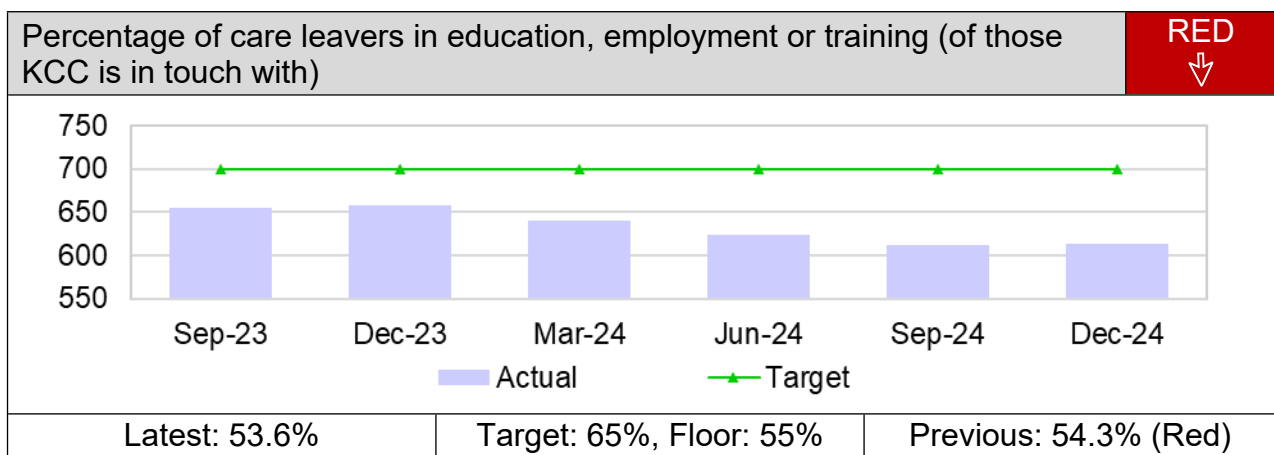
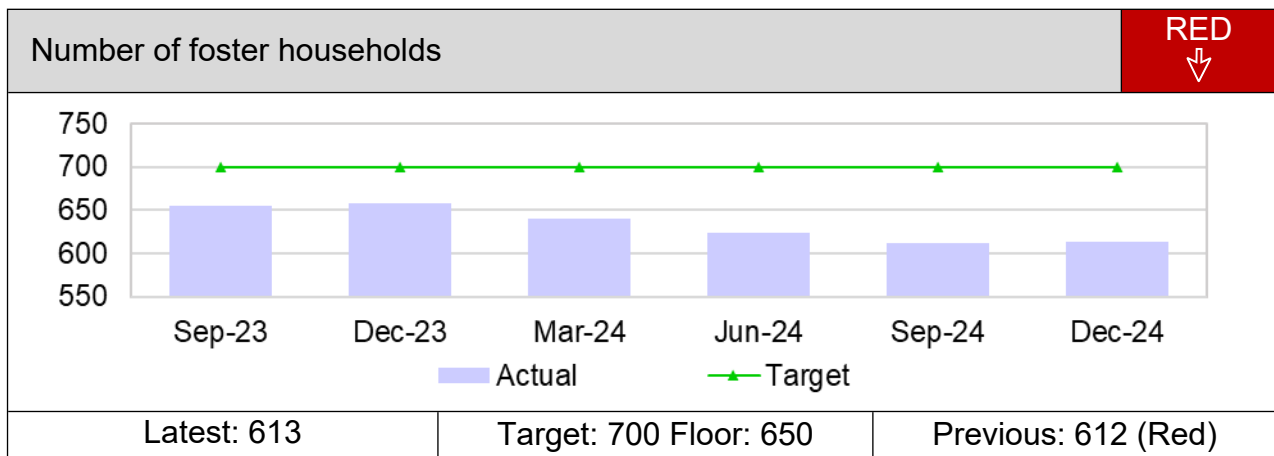
The number of care leavers at the end of December 2024 was 2,016 – an increase of 3 from the previous Quarter. Of the 2,016 care leavers, 1,036 (51.4%) were non-UASC care leavers and 980 (48.6%) were UASC. The percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training, at 53.6%, remained below the target of 65.0%. A number of our unaccompanied young people remain without status, having entered the country after 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2023 and impacted by the Immigration Bill (2023). This cohort of unaccompanied care leavers, with no status, are not able to remain in education or gain employment when they reach the age of 18, impacting upon the overall numbers in education, training and employment. **The Home Office confirmed unaccompanied children who entered the country during this period will have their applications prioritised, which should then lead to an improvement against the target.**

### Strengthening Independence Service

Two additional measures were added to this report for 2024/25 to cover the Strengthening Independence Service within CYPE and their support for 18–25-year-olds with a disability. For the 12 months to December 2024, the percentage of reviews completed within timescale was 59.1%, a decrease from the performance at the end of Quarter 2 (59.6%) and below the Target of 65.0%. The percentage of young people with a learning disability in Settled Accommodation is 98.6%, exceeding the 95.0% Target.

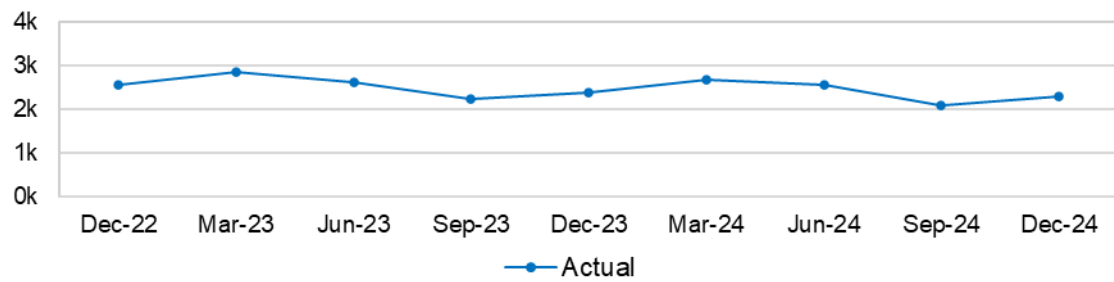
## Key Performance Indicators

|  |  |  |            |
|--|--|--|------------|
| Percentage of Early Help cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to Early Help or Children's Social Work teams within 3 months  |  |  | GREEN<br>⇒ |
|  <p>Bar chart showing Actual (blue bars) and Target (green line with triangles) for Early Help cases. The Y-axis ranges from 0 to 20. The X-axis shows dates: Sep-23, Dec-23, Mar-24, Jun-24, Sep-24, Dec-24. Actual values are approximately 14.9% for all periods. Target is 15%.</p>  |  |  |            |
| Latest: 14.9%  |  | Target: 15%, Floor: 20%      Previous: 15.2% (Amber) |            |
| Percentage of case holding posts filled by permanent qualified social workers  |  |  | AMBER<br>⇒ |
|  <p>Bar chart showing Actual (blue bars) and Target (green line with triangles) for case holding posts. The Y-axis ranges from 60 to 100. The X-axis shows dates: Sep-23, Dec-23, Mar-24, Jun-24, Sep-24, Dec-24. Actual values are approximately 75.2% for all periods. Target is 85%.</p>   |  |  |            |
| Latest: 75.2%  |  | Target: 85%, Floor 75%      Previous: 74.7% (Red)    |            |
| Percentage of children's social care referrals that were repeat referrals within 12 months   |  |  | GREEN<br>⇒ |
|  <p>Bar chart showing Actual (blue bars), Target (green line with triangles), and Nat. Ave. 2023/24 (pink line with squares) for children's social care referrals. The Y-axis ranges from 0 to 40. The X-axis shows dates: Sep-23, Dec-23, Mar-24, Jun-24, Sep-24, Dec-24. Actual values are approximately 22.2% for all periods. Target is 25%. Nat. Ave. is 30%.</p> |  |  |            |
| Latest: 22.2%  |  | Target: 25%, Floor 30%      Previous: 23.4% (Green)  |            |
| Percentage foster care placements which are in-house or with relatives and friends (excluding UASC)  |  |  | RED<br>⇓   |
|  <p>Bar chart showing Actual (blue bars) and Target (green line with triangles) for foster care placements. The Y-axis ranges from 60 to 100. The X-axis shows dates: Sep-23, Dec-23, Mar-24, Jun-24, Sep-24, Dec-24. Actual values are approximately 73.2% for all periods. Target is 85%.</p>  |  |  |            |
| Latest: 73.2%  |  | Target: 85%, Floor: 75%      Previous: 72.7% (Red)   |            |

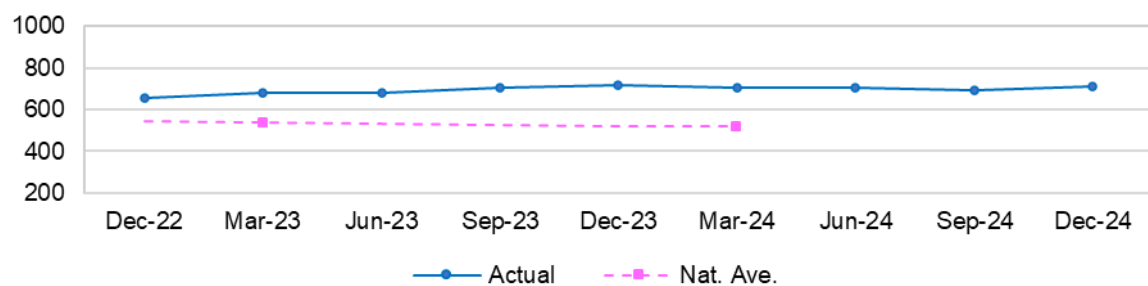


## Activity indicators

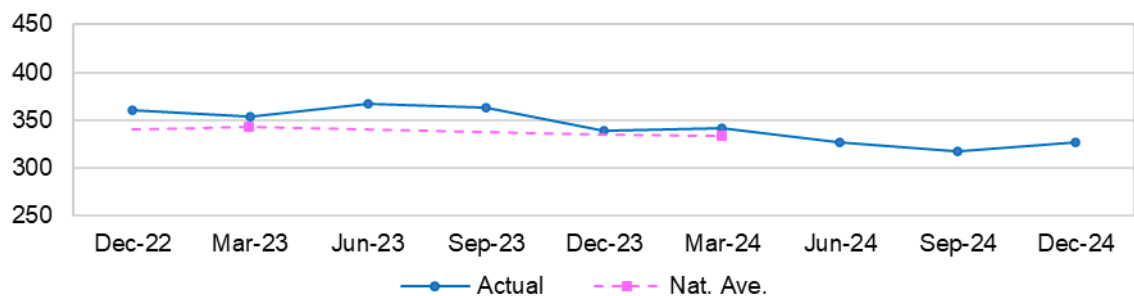
Number of open Early Help cases managed by Units



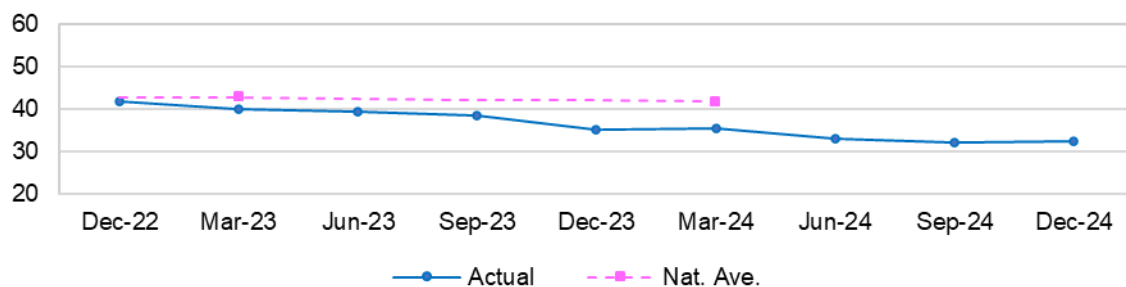
Rate of CSW referrals per 10,000 population aged under 18 – rolling 12 months



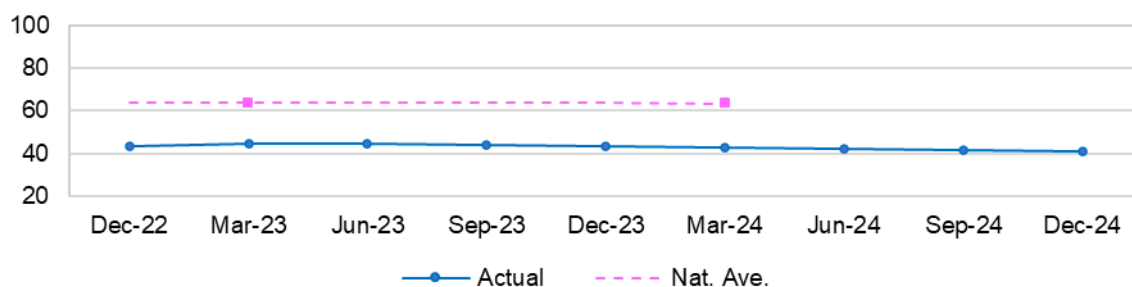
CSW caseload per 10,000 child population – snapshot at Quarter end



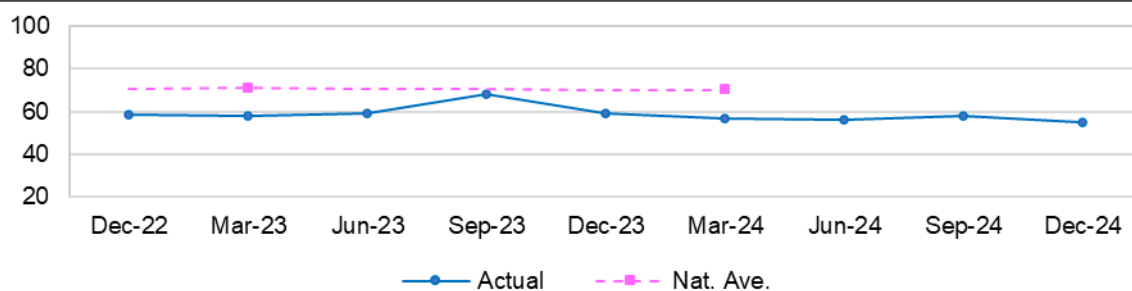
Rate of children with Child Protection Plans per 10,000 child population – snapshot at Quarter end



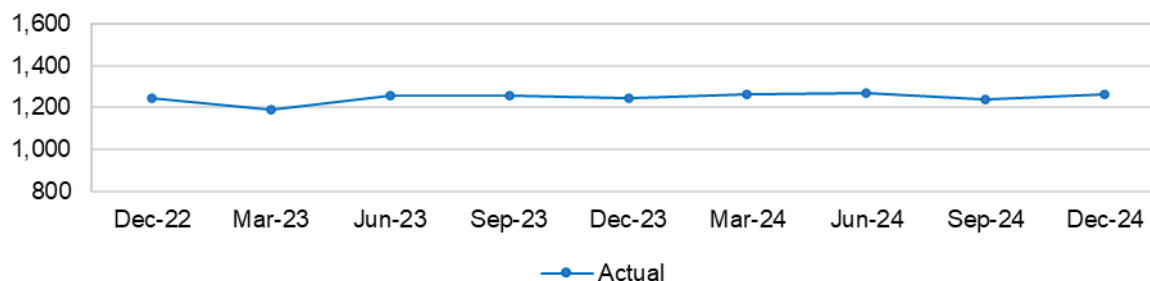
Rate of Children in Care (excluding UASC) per 10,000 child population – snapshot at Quarter end



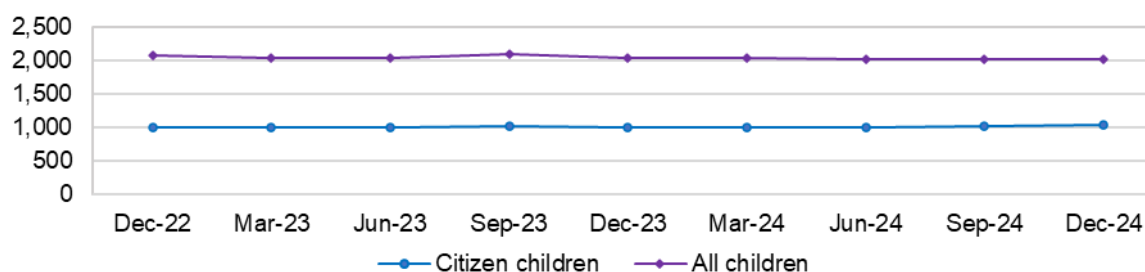
Rate of Children in Care (including UASC) per 10,000 child population – snapshot at Quarter end



Number of other local authority children in care placed into Kent – snapshot at Quarter end



Number of care leavers as at Quarter end





| Adult Social Care  |       |               |     |   |   |   |
|--------------------|-------|---------------|-----|---|---|---|
| Cabinet Member     |       | Dan Watkins   |     |   |   |   |
| Corporate Director |       | Richard Smith |     |   |   |   |
| KPI Summary        | GREEN | AMBER         | RED | ⬆ | ⇒ | ⬇ |
|                    | 2     | 3             | 1   | 2 | 4 |   |

### Contacts

Quarter 3 saw 20,087 people contact adult social care. When a new contact is received, adult social care look to resolve the contact, be it through offering information and advice, signposting to external agencies, offering enablement, or exploring options of care and support to meet the person's needs (for example through technology). Where possible, Adult Social Care aims to meet people's needs at the first point of contact. Where ongoing funded support is required, the service aims to meet these needs in the most proportionate manner. This approach reduces the number of repeat contacts adult social care receives from people in Kent. In Quarter 3, 4% of contacts were from people who have had their contact resolved by adult social care and then made contact again within 3 months. This is a reduction of 2 percentage points since last quarter and this KPI is now RAG Rated Green, moving below the target of 5%.

Adult Social Care Connect, the team responsible for receiving adult social care's contacts, engage people with professionally curious conversations at initial contact. Following extensive consultation and implementation plans, adult social care have built on the previous success of the service, to enhance proportionate Care Act compliant assessments, which focus on timely and preventative solutions in meeting assessed needs and outcomes.

Adult social care are enhancing community assets through digital technology, social prescribing, and mapping resources while addressing gaps with micro enterprises. Improvements are being made in collaboration with the KCC contact centre and partner agencies to ensure referrals to Adult Social Care are only for people needing care. Adult social care aim to direct individuals to appropriate services and are testing an integrated triage process with health, and voluntary and community sector partners.

### Assessments

74% of Care Needs Assessments completed in Quarter 3 were completed within 28 days of receipt. This is a reduction of 1 percentage point since the last quarter. Adult social care are prioritising those care needs assessments that are taking the longest to complete. As a result, the measure is now RAG Rated Red, falling below a floor threshold of 75%. **A key focus of adult social care internal improvement is to increase the number of people who have a care act needs assessment, reducing the length of time people have to wait, and reducing the median wait time for all assessments.**

Adult social care carry out Carer's assessments alongside commissioned Carers Organisations in Kent. In Quarter 3, 796 carer assessments were completed, with 898 requested in the quarter.

Adult social care recognises and values the critical role that unpaid carers play in supporting people to live independent, gloriously ordinary lives. Work continues through supervision, panels and in practice to promote carer assessments to help ensure carers are able to access support in their own right that helps promotes their wellbeing, meets their own assessed needs and outcomes, and supports them to continue to provide support for as long as they are willing and able to do so. The inclusion team has been engaging carers in work to recommissioning the new carer contracts; an aim of the new contract will be to redesign the way adult social care works with carer organisations to capture information which will help to better inform the support provided. Some benefits have already been seen from improved visibility in the support to carers, to reducing the need for crisis interventions caused by a breakdown in the informal support.

### **Care and Support Plans**

Following the completion of a care needs assessment, people who are assessed as eligible for care and support will receive a care and support plan, detailing how their needs will be met and the types of services available to them. At the end of Quarter 3, 16,872 people had an active care and support plan. The number of people with an active care and support plan at the end of the quarter remains at a similar level seen throughout this financial year. This is true of people supported by both Adult Social Care and people aged 18-25 with the Strengthening Independence Service (CYPE).

One way in which a person's needs may be met is through the provision of a support package of care, delivered either in a Residential/Nursing setting or in the persons' own home. 2,183 new support packages were arranged for people in the quarter, with an average cost of £712 per week. Despite the number of people supported remaining at a consistent level the last few quarters, the rise in the average cost of a new package has caused an increase in that the total cost of supporting people with a package of care.

### **Reviews of the Care and Support Plan (C&SP)**

The majority of individuals who contact adult social care for the first time do so following a significant change in their personal circumstances or at a point of crisis. This can create a significant challenge in understanding the individuals' long term support needs, as the focus will be on supporting them to resolve the issues that necessitated the contact. This can make it difficult to establish a proportionate response to assessed needs and outcomes at the first point of contact. Once a new support plan commences it will be reviewed within 8 weeks (first review) and then annually (ongoing review). In Quarter 3, the number of people requiring an ongoing review fell for the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive quarter, to 5,236, a figure that is over 800 reviews lower than the same quarter last year. The number of first reviews that needed to be completed also fell for another quarter to 1,797 – a reduction of more than 1,000 reviews in the space of a year. The positive movement in this area is due to targeted work to complete reviews with Quarter 3 seeing more than a 10% increase in review completions compared to the previous year, which was the highest quarterly review completion total on record.

## **Enablement**

Another form of support a person may be offered initially by adult social care is with an enablement service. The KCC enablement service, Kent Enablement at Home (KEaH), is where a person's independence is encouraged through the setting of goals and working with a person to promote their strengths and reduce their need for further support. In Quarter 3, 2,296 people received support from KEaH, an 18% increase compared to the previous quarter. In a large part this is due to more than 2,000 people starting the service in the quarter, the highest number for a quarter to date. The change from an external enablement provider to KEaH has contributed to this large increase in starts. Adult Social Care is exploring mechanisms to further increase the number of people who can benefit from enablement as this is key in delivering a sustainable model of Adult Social Care.

A short-term service in a nursing or residential setting can sometimes be utilised when assessing a person's long-term needs. In Quarter 3, 1,369 people were in a short-term bed. Short-term bed activity is driven both by hospital discharge and by the need to arrange support for an urgent situation in people's own homes. Adult social care is working closely with Health colleagues on the Better Use of Beds, which aims to ensure people are discharged on the right pathway using an 'own bed is best' approach. Good contingency planning helps to reduce the need for urgent placement in the event of a breakdown in informal care arrangements.

## **Hospital Discharge Pathway**

When someone is discharged from hospital, it is a priority of adult social care to ensure they are supported to live independently in their own home, after a period of reablement. In Quarter 3, the proportion of older people (aged 65 or over) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services rose 1 percentage point to 84%. This equals the best quarterly result in the last 2 years. This measure remains RAG Rated Amber, sitting just below an 85% target.

Kent has performed above regional and national comparators when looking at the proportion of older people who are still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into a reablement service in 4 of the past 5 years.

## **Direct Payments**

Adult social care's Making a Difference Everyday (MADE) strategy is built on three essential pillars of delivery with the first being the prioritisation of a person-first approach. This is critical in driving our ambitions of working to support people to live in a place they call home, surrounded by the people and things they love, and connected to the communities they live in. Self-Directed support describes the cultural change we are embedding across all methods of providing care and support and direct payments are a key delivery component. In Quarter 3, 26% of people receiving a long-term community service were in receipt of a Direct Payment; this proportion has now been maintained for three quarters, meaning the measure is RAG Rated Amber below the target of 30%. Ongoing work in response to a requested and targeted internal audit is ongoing to set out how we will reimagine and enhance the uptake of direct payments.

From 2019/20 onwards, Kent has remained at or above the national and regional proportions for people supported with a Direct Payment. This reflects the work which is ongoing to promote the use of Direct Payments as an option which gives people more flexibility. This also indicates that the MADE strategy remains live in the minds of practitioners when arranging support. The proportion in 2023/24 of 29% compares favourably to national (25%) and regional figures (26%) for that year.

### **Residential and Nursing care**

It is recognised that some individuals assessed needs and outcomes are most appropriately met by receiving support in a residential or nursing home. In the most recent quarter, long term support needs were met by an admission to a residential or nursing setting for 553 older people (65 and over) per 100,000 population. This is a further decrease when compared to previous quarters and means the measure remains RAG Rated Green for the second quarter in succession, below a target of 588. Please note this measure is subject to the effects of late inputting and backdating of information.

MADE principles aim to reduce the use of residential and nursing beds by helping people remain in their own homes; this is being assisted by more flexible use of support. Carers of people who use support are being provided with the assurance that assistance can be attained through monitoring technology. Use of the technology enabled care is also providing the opportunity to understand people's needs whilst they are in their own homes and therefore enables tailoring of support.

Following a peak in mid-2023, Kent has a higher rate of adults whose long-term support needs are met by admission to residential or nursing care compared to regional and national rates for the most recent financial year. In previous financial years, Kent was either in line or below the national figure. However performance has improved in recent quarters and, if the current trend continues, Kent will likely return to being in-line with national and regional comparators.

Residential and Nursing homes are inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and findings are shared alongside an overall rating. In Quarter 3, 76% of people supported by KCC in residential or nursing care in Kent were in a setting that was rated either Good or Outstanding by CQC. This proportion has not changed since last quarter. The measure continues to be RAG Rated Amber – above a floor of 75% but below a target of 80%.

Work to help care homes in Kent include the establishment of a new team to support the quality of provision, and in West Kent, there has been a focus on providing support to 13 homes that have been identified through the use of hospital admission data and historic CQC concerns. The Integrated Care Board (ICB) has also developed a programme of training which is being accessed by care homes in a range of care areas which is helping sustain and deliver good quality care. KCC contributed to a care home workshop with colleagues from across the sector which is being used to promote support for care homes, to ensure a high level of quality. This helps people in care homes to have equity of experience with those living in the community.

There are currently four Learning Disability, Physical Disability and Mental Health (LDPDMH) and four Older Persons residential homes with a Level 3 contract sanction preventing further placements. Ongoing monitoring of care homes with identified concerns is in place to support providers to deliver on action plans to improve the quality of the home and the CQC rating. It is important to note when a care home has completed their action plan and made necessary improvements, there can be a delay in CQC reinspecting the home and reviewing the rating. Where care homes fail because of quality and safety concerns this will have had a significant impact on people who will have experienced poor quality care and unsafe support, and when the home closes are required to leave their home. The further adverse impact is on the finance of adult social care.

### **Mental Health needs**

Quarter 3 saw the number of people accessing adult social care services who have a mental health need to increase to 1,530 in the quarter. Despite a slowing in upward trajectory, the volume continues to grow quarter-on-quarter.

The continued increase in the numbers of people with mental ill health who require support follows the national picture. The introduction of Mental Health Together in the Kent and Medway Partnership Trust (KMPT) and their new front door arrangements may have contributed to an increase in the numbers of people who contact adult social care for support. As a result, KMPT are reviewing their front door arrangements, but staff in Adult Social Care Connect do have the skills to help people access the right support for their needs and. A Mental Health Summit with key strategic partners is planned for 13<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

### **Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)**

Quarter 3, saw the highest ever number of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) applications received in a quarter, with 2,786 applications, an increase of more than 300 when compared to the same quarter last year. This continues a quarter-on-quarter increasing pattern of incoming requests since the beginning of the current financial year. 2,432 applications were completed in the quarter, an increase on Quarter 2.

The increase in demand in Quarter 3 was forecast by the Head of Service and so pre-emptive work was carried out to grow resource within the DoLS Authorisation process. This has delivered a benefit in this area, particularly for those people requiring the service. Best Interest Assessor (BIA) and Practitioner resourcing presents us with a significant challenge and work is underway with the Head of Service and Principal Social Worker to set out options for how the Corporate Director for ASCH can be assured in this area of statutory responsibility.

The number of DoLS applications received per 100,000 is now close to the national figure in the most recent financial year, following 4 years of successive increases. The number of applications completed in the county has also mostly been near the national figure, and has also increased year-on-year.

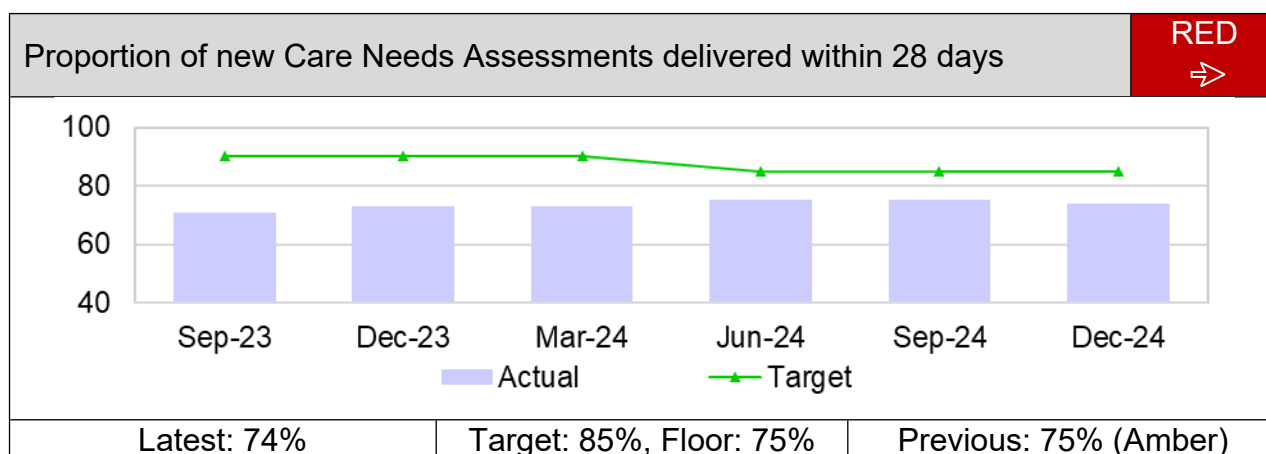
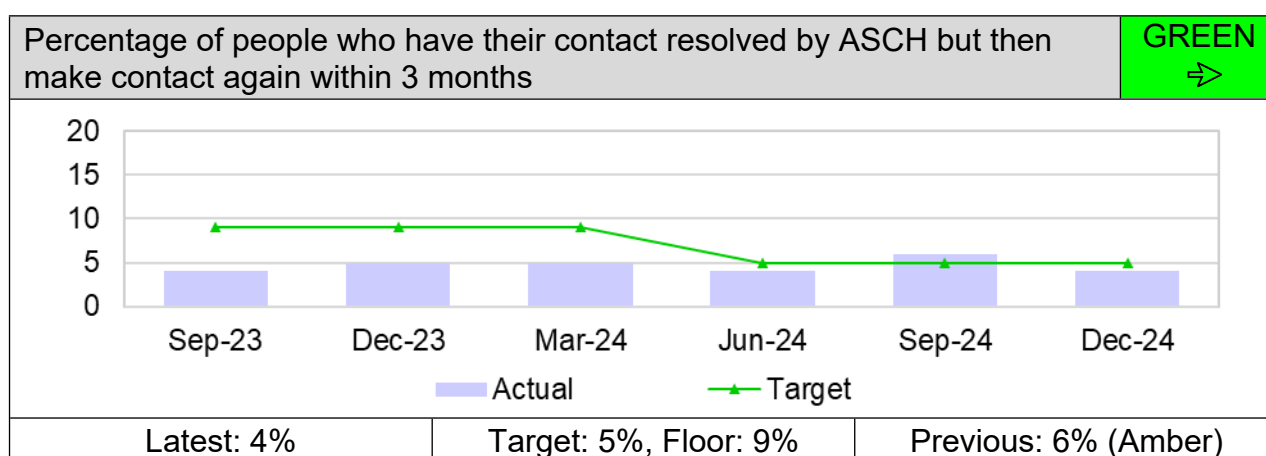
## Safeguarding

Safeguarding Concerns are raised with adult social care when it is believed that an adult is at risk of abuse or neglect. In Quarter 3, Kent saw the largest number of concerns received in a quarter, with 5,822 concerns being 6% higher than Quarter 2 and 48% higher than the same quarter last year. Despite the incoming demand, the number of Safeguarding Enquiries open on the last day of the quarter continues to fall. 1,727 enquiries were open at the end of Quarter 3, the third successive quarter of downward movement following targeted work within the adult social care teams.

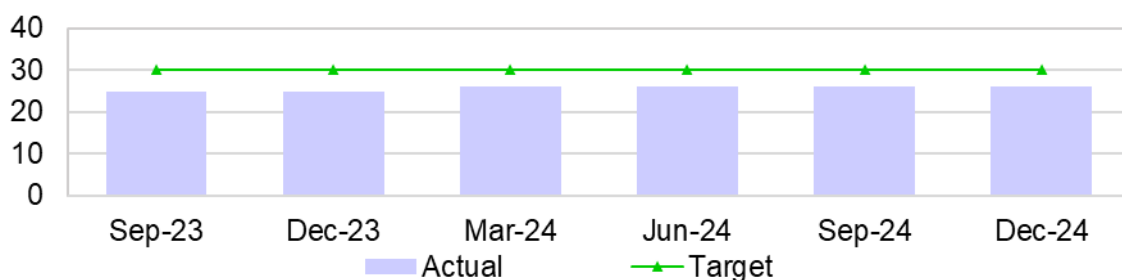
Kent has received a higher rate of Safeguarding concerns than seen nationally in the past two financial years. Kent also commences a higher rate of Section 42 enquiries following these concerns, with the highest rate coming in the most recent financial year. 501 per 100,000 population Section 42 enquiries were commenced in Kent in financial year 2023/24, compared to 350 nationally. While the rate at which Kent commences enquiries has remained steady, the rate in which it receives concerns has not, with an 85% increase when comparing the most recent financial year to 2019/20.

Focused and targeted work is ongoing to reduce the number of open safeguarding concerns, open risk assessments, and safeguarding enquiries open longer than 3 months. The current approach to safeguarding is not sustainable and work has commenced to take forward: (a) a quality concern pathway, as information indicates quality concerns are being raised through the safeguarding pathway; (b) oversight of the quality and safety of the market; and (c) a model of delivering adult social care safeguarding duties that occur in different settings.

## Key Performance Indicators



**Proportion of people receiving a long-term community service who receive Direct Payments**
**AMBER**  

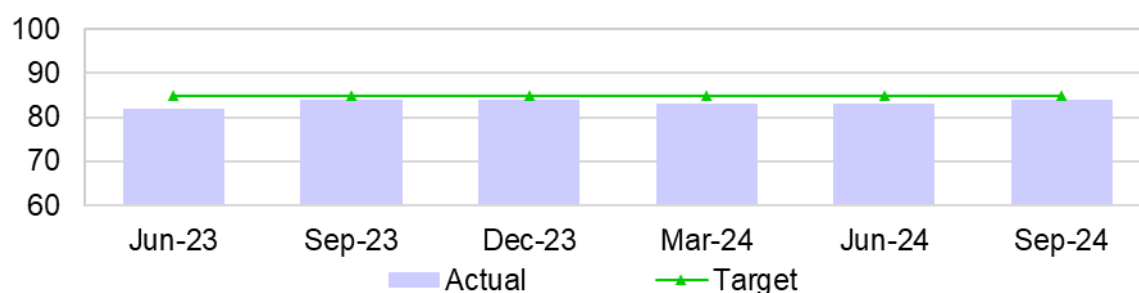


Latest: 26%

Target: 30%, Floor: 24%

Previous: 26% (Amber)

**Proportion of older people (65+) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement / rehabilitation services**
**AMBER**  



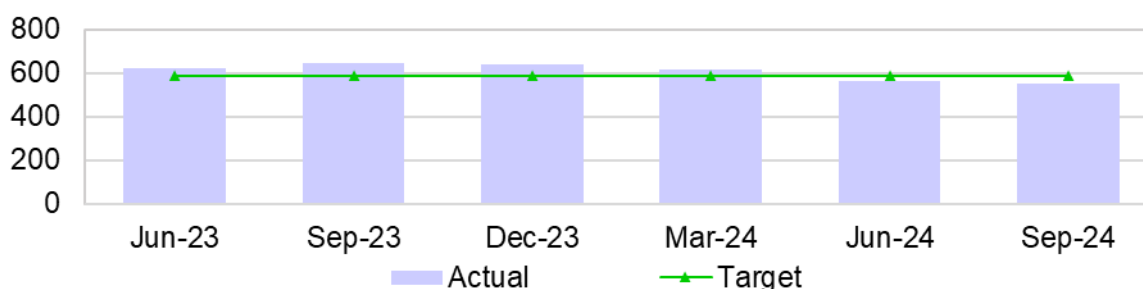
Latest: 84%

Target: 85%, Floor: 80%

Previous: 83% (Amber)

Reporting is based on the date in the Quarter that the hospital discharge occurs, with the 91 days commencing from that point.

**Long Term support needs of older people (65 and over) met by admission to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000 (Better Care Fund)**
**GREEN**  



Latest: 553

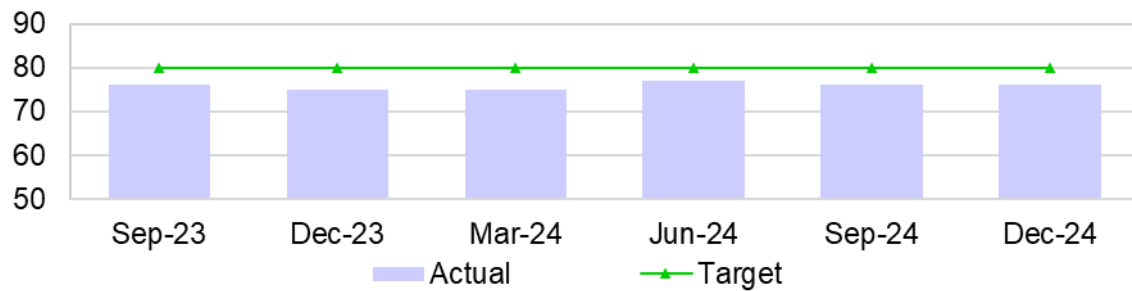
Target: 588, Floor: 617

Previous: 562 (Green)

To ensure consistent comparison with previous Quarters by removing seasonality, this KPI is reported on a 12-month rolling basis and one Quarter in arrears

Percentage of KCC supported people in residential or nursing care where the CQC rating is Good or Outstanding

AMBER



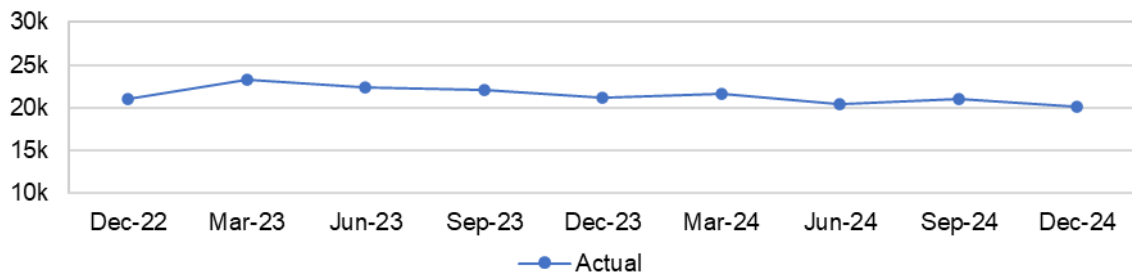
Latest: 76%

Target: 80%, Floor: 75%

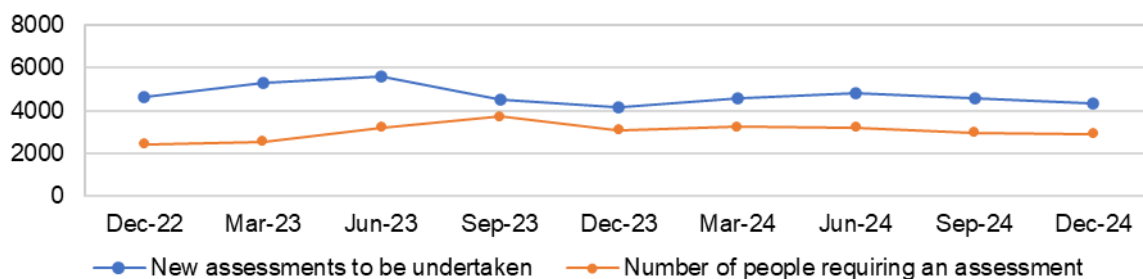
Previous: 76% (Amber)

### Activity indicators

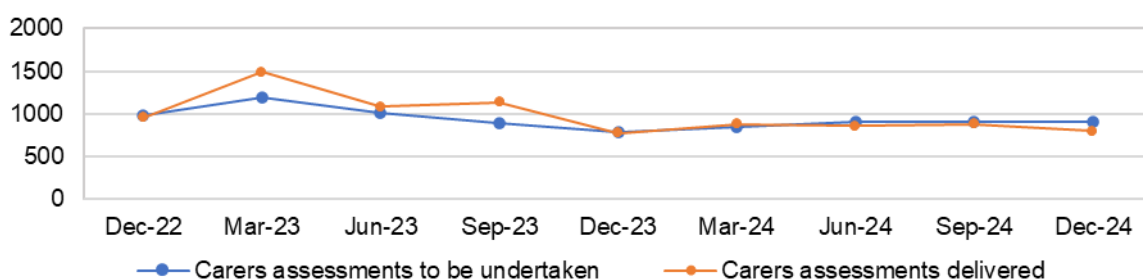
Number of people making contact with ASCH



Number of new Care Needs Assessments to be undertaken and the number of people requiring a Care needs Assessment on the last day of the quarter

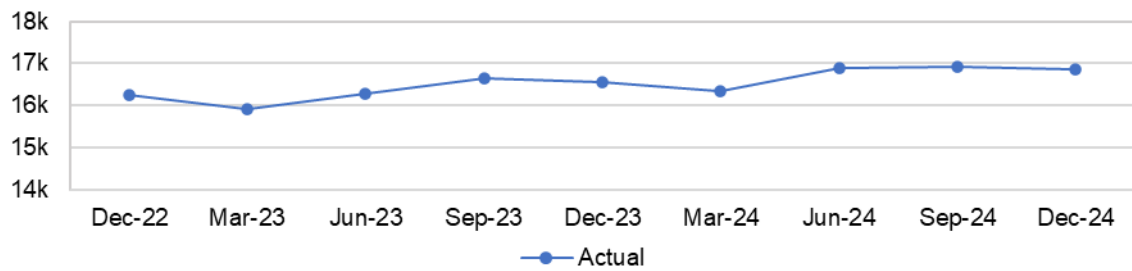


The number of new Carers' assessments to be undertaken and the number delivered

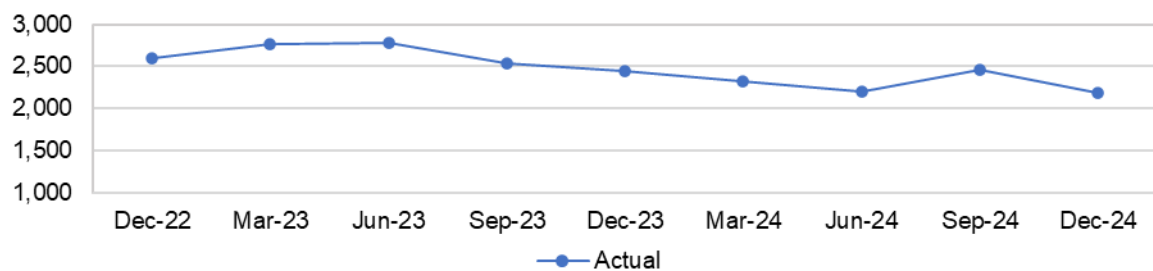




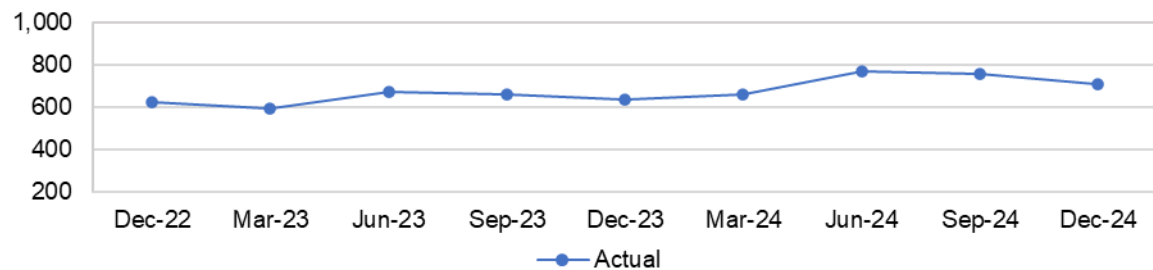
### Number of people with an active Care & Support Plan at the end of the Quarter



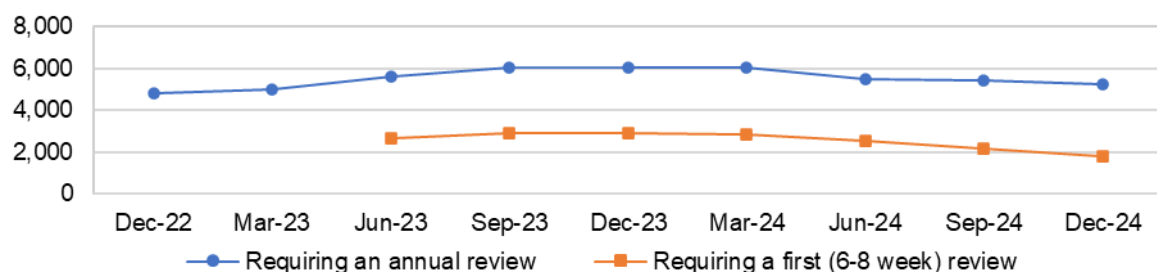
### Number of new support packages being arranged for people in the Quarter



### Average cost (£s per week) of new support packages arranged for people in the Quarter

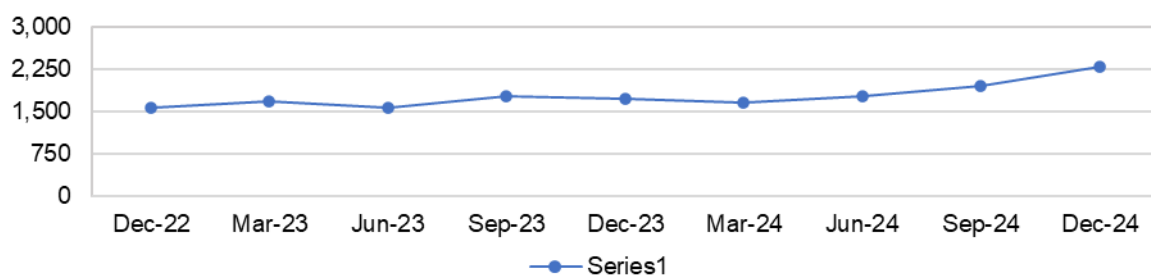


### Number of people requiring a review to be completed on the last day of the Quarter

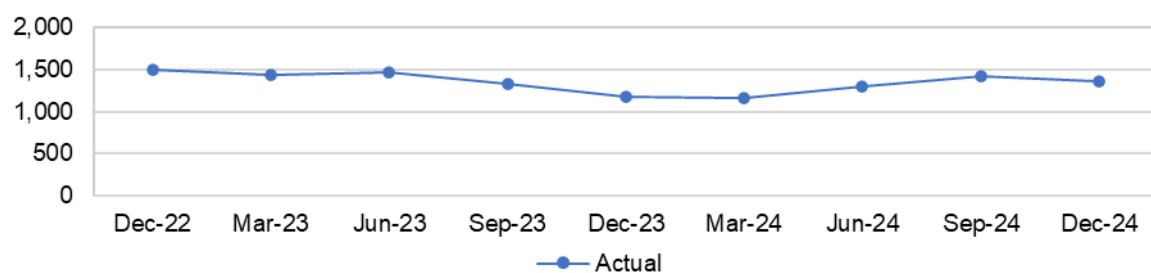


Data for requiring a first (6-8 week) review, added in Jun-23

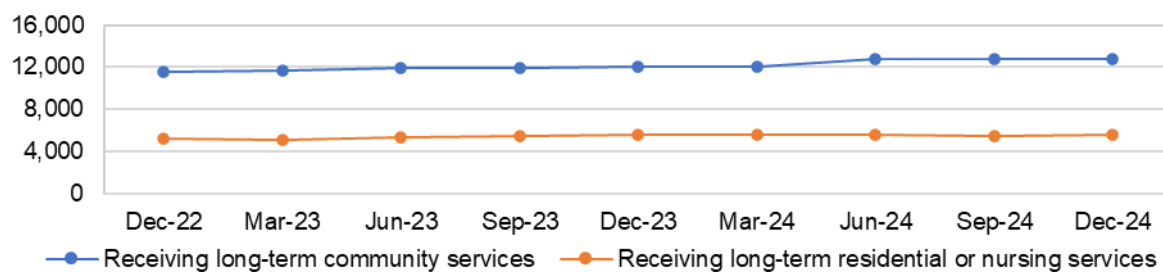
### Number of people in Kent Enablement at Home (KeaH)



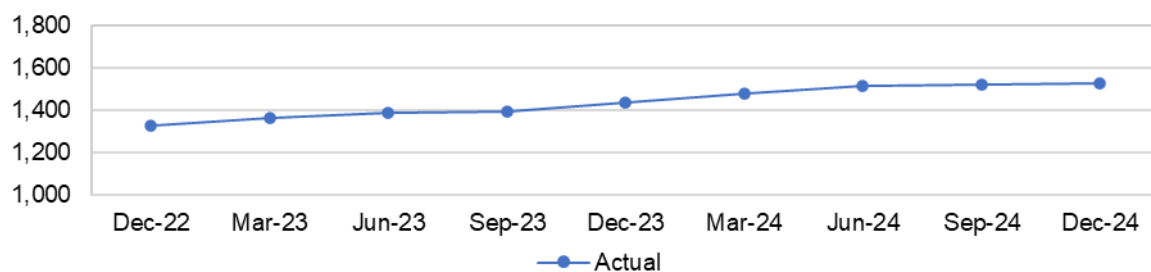
### Number of people in Short Term Beds during the Quarter



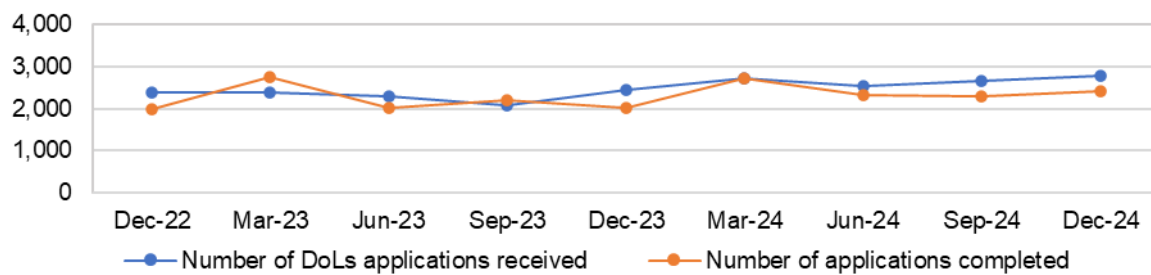
### Number of people in Long Term Services



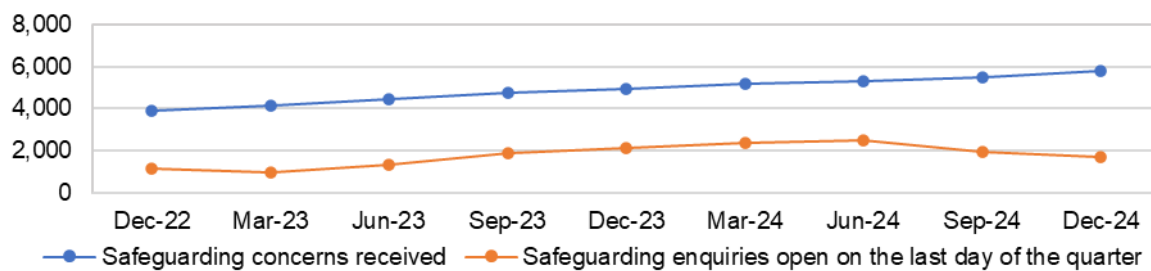
### Number of People accessing ASCH Services who have a Mental Health Need



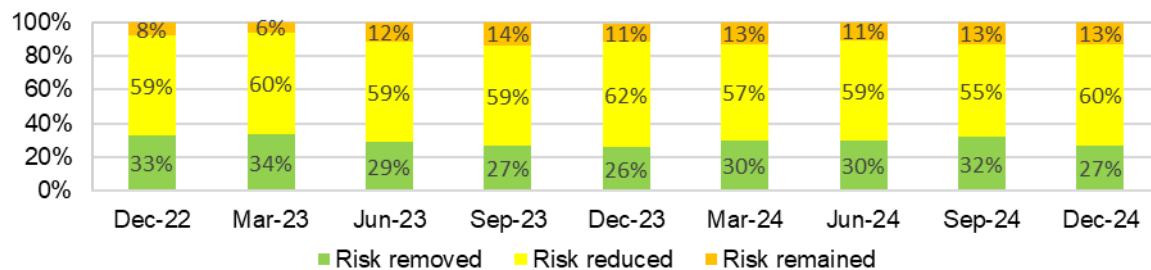
### Number of DoLS applications received and completed



### Number of safeguarding concerns received and enquiries open



### Outcome of concluded Section 42 Safeguarding Enquiries where a risk was identified



| Public Health  |             |       |     |   |   |   |
|----------------|-------------|-------|-----|---|---|---|
| Cabinet Member | Dan Watkins |       |     |   |   |   |
| Director       | Anjan Ghosh |       |     |   |   |   |
| KPI Summary    | GREEN       | AMBER | RED | ⬆ | ⇒ | ⬇ |
|                | 3           | 3     |     | 3 | 2 | 1 |

### NHS Health Checks

In Quarter 3, there were 7,678 NHS Health Checks delivered to the eligible population in Kent. This represents a reduction of 9.3% (-784) from the 8,462 checks delivered in the previous quarter in line with seasonal trends, however an increase of 4.9% (+356) delivered in the same quarter the previous year. The workplace NHS Health Checks pilot, funded by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), is continuing to support accessibility of the service by delivering checks to employees at their place of work, having delivered 582 cardiovascular disease checks so far including to KCC employees at various work locations across Kent.

### Health Visiting

In Quarter 3, the Health Visiting Service delivered 17,051 mandated universal health and wellbeing reviews representing an increase of 0.4% (+72) from the previous quarter (16,979). This accounted for 88.6% of those due, the highest proportion since Quarter 4, 2022/23. Four of the five mandated health and wellbeing checks met or exceeded target. The proportion of new birth visits delivered within 10–14 days at 94.2%, was slightly below the 95% target. The proportion of antenatal contacts delivered this quarter was 50.7%, surpassing the 50% target and again representing the highest rate since Quarter 4, 2022/23. With regards to the overall KPI for Quarter 3, the service conducted 67,008 mandated health and wellbeing reviews (12-month rolling), which represents 87% of those due (77,061). This is below the target of 68,000 and slightly lower than the total for the 12-months to the end of the same quarter the previous year, where 67,011 reviews were conducted (87.6% of those due).

It should be noted that KCC has excelled in health visiting performance compared to other local authorities (LAs) in the South East region, according to the most recent provisional data (Quarter 2, 2024/25) from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID). During this period, Kent was the second best-performing LA in the South East for delivering New Birth Visits within 14 days, demonstrating a commitment to timely support for new families. Additionally, Kent performed strongly in the delivery rates for the 6–8 week reviews (5th of 18 LAs), 12-month reviews (5th of 18 LAs), and the 2–2½ year reviews (3rd of 18 LAs), highlighting a consistent dedication to monitoring and supporting child development at early stages.

### Sexual Health Service

In Quarter 1 and 2, the cabinet committee metric for the Integrated Sexual Health Service was not available due to one of the providers experiencing unforeseen data extraction issues after having mobilised to a new clinical IT system. This has since been resolved and the performance data is as follows for the proportion of first-time patients **accepting** a full sexual health screen: Quarter 1, 65.0%; Quarter 2, 65.2%; Quarter 3, 64.6%. Although this trend is below the 72% target, the service is successfully **offering** full sexual health screens to the majority of first-time patients (Quarter 1, 94.3%; Quarter 2, 94.8%; Quarter 3, 95.9%).

The Sexual Health team is currently in discussions with providers to improve acceptance rates. In particular, one of the two providers has recently implemented a new clinical IT system and is reviewing the data and working with clinicians on enhancing coding practices. The other provider is undertaking a deep dive into performance for this metric to better understand service user preferences with a view to informing future practice.

Activity in other Sexual Health services include 10,348 kits being ordered from the online STI Testing Service, 2,538 packs of condoms issued to under 25s via the Kent condom programme, and 746 issuances of Emergency Hormonal Contraception via the Community Pharmacies for under 30s. Elsewhere, the Sexual Health team have finalised the Kent Sexual Health Needs Assessment (2024), which will form a key part of KCC's strategic planning and commissioning activity for Sexual Health.

### **Drug and Alcohol Services**

The Community Drug and Alcohol Services data for Quarter 3 had not been released at the time of reporting. OHID have communicated their intention to award grant funding (currently still indicative amounts) to KCC for 2025/26, linked to the 10-year national drug and alcohol strategy – 'From Harm to Hope'. Whilst the previous focus on improving the number of people accessing structured treatment remains, there will be an additional focus on quality including: ensuring the retention of people in structured treatment for at least 12 weeks, and increasing the number of people showing 'substantial progress' whilst still in treatment (i.e., reducing substance use, entering employment, or securing housing).

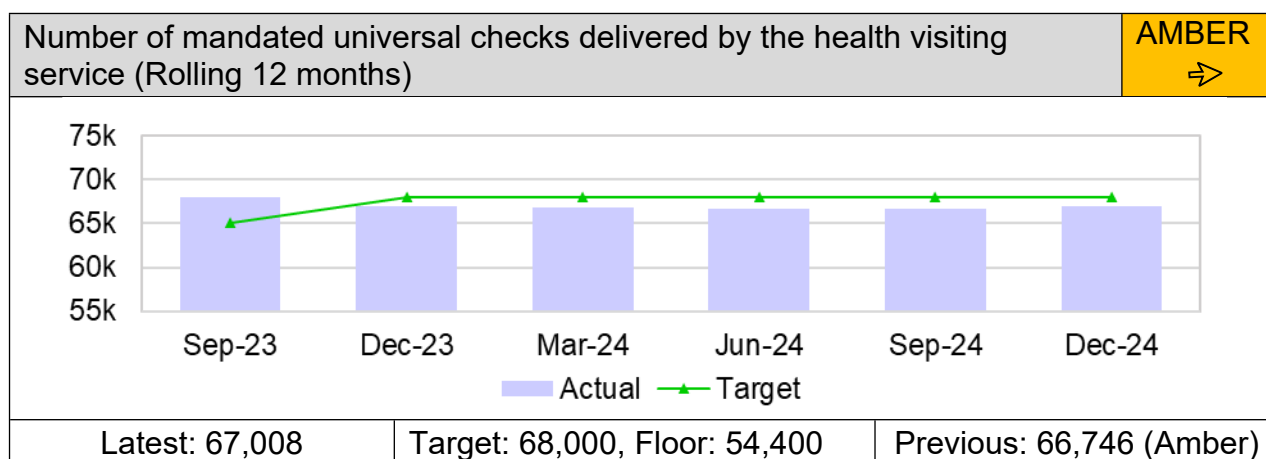
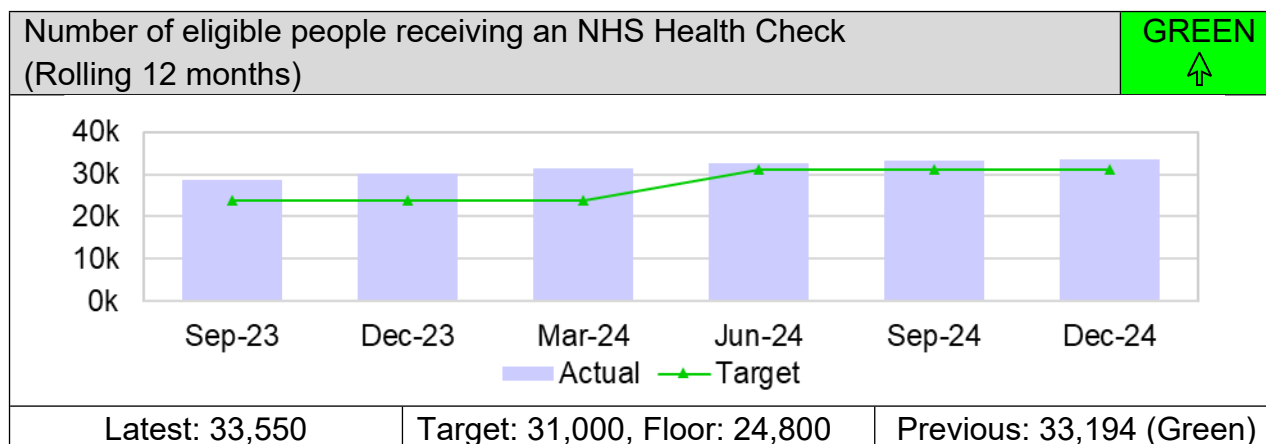
The new drug and alcohol contracts for adults and young people will commence on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025. Commissioners and providers are working together to confirm performance targets. Increased targets will be implemented around focus areas including:

- Reducing the average wait from the date of referral to intervention start date
- Number of people successfully completing treatment who are free from dependence on drugs or alcohol
- Reduced proportion of people who drop-out of structured treatment (unplanned exits)

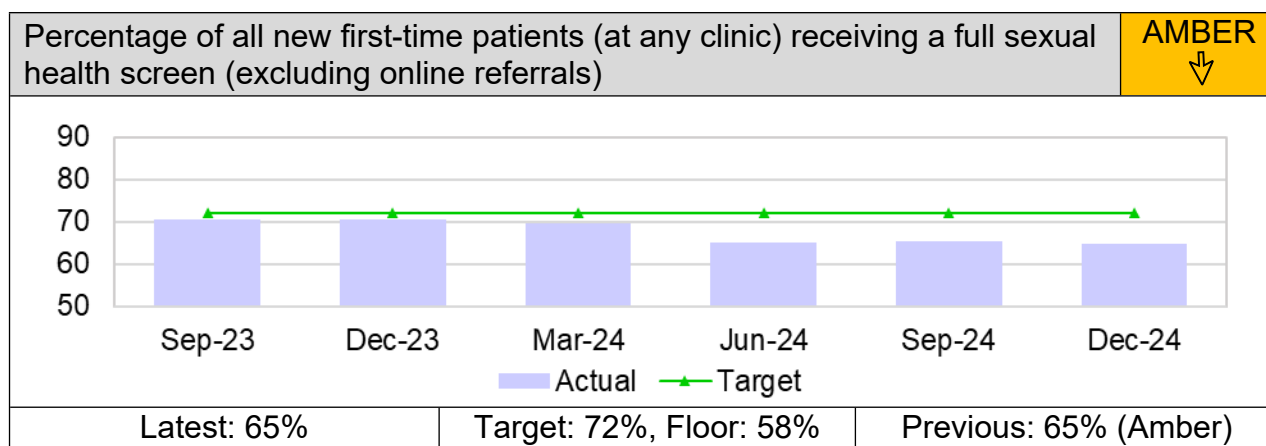
### **Live Well Kent and Medway**

In Quarter 3, LWKM (Live Well Kent and Medway) continued to see high demand whilst achieving good outcomes for those accessing the services, with 95% reporting improvements in their personal goals. Both Strategic Partners have made great steps in ensuring their network of voluntary and community sector partners are better connected, leading to closer working and reduction in duplication of support.

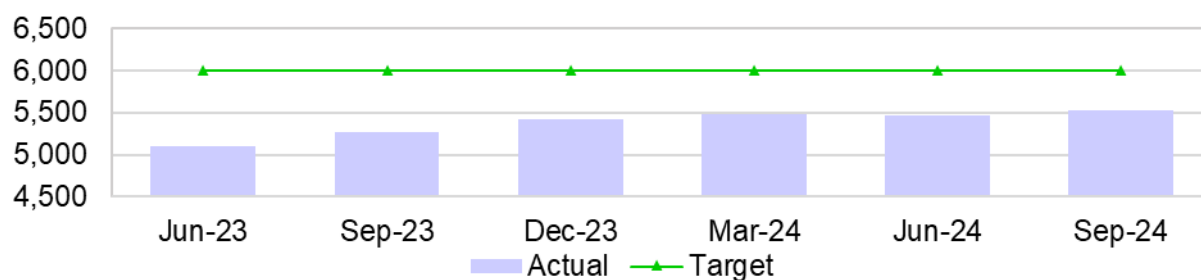
## Performance Indicators



\*A reporting error identified by the provider has resulted in a revision to figures back to Jun-23.



### Number of Adults accessing structured substance misuse treatment during a rolling 12-month period

**AMBER**

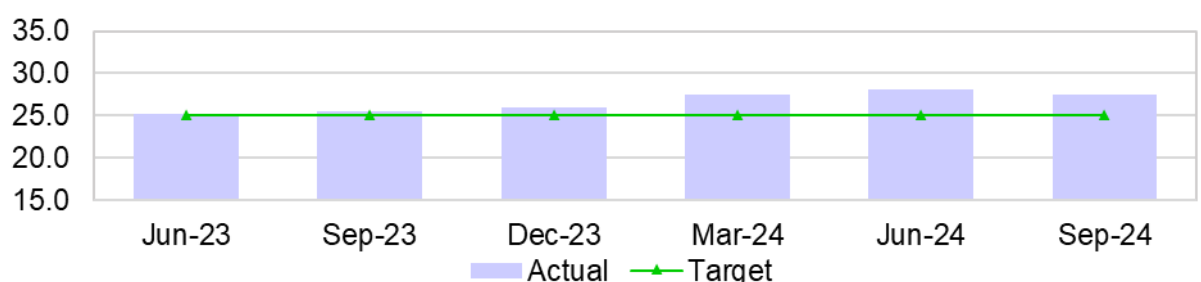
Latest: 5,534

Target: 5,998, Floor: 5,000

Previous 5,473 (Amber)

No data for Dec-24 available at time of reporting

### Successful completion of drug and alcohol treatment – rolling 12 months

**GREEN**

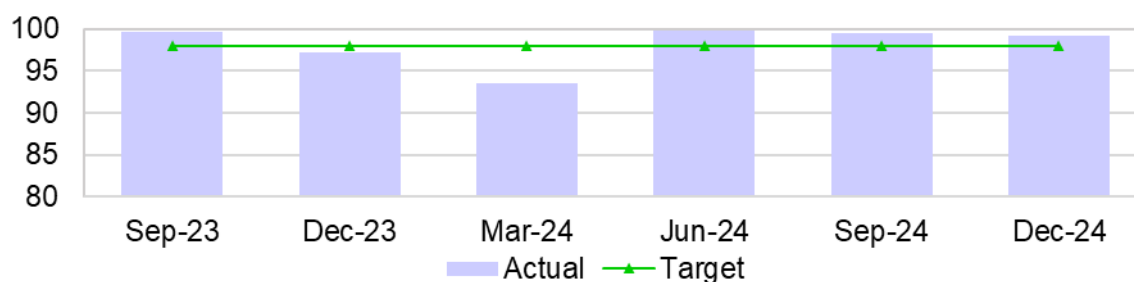
Latest: 27.4%

Target: 25%, Floor: 20%

Previous: 28.2% (Green)

No data for Dec-24 available at time of reporting

### Percentage of Live Well clients who would recommend the service to family, friends, or someone in a similar situation

**GREEN**

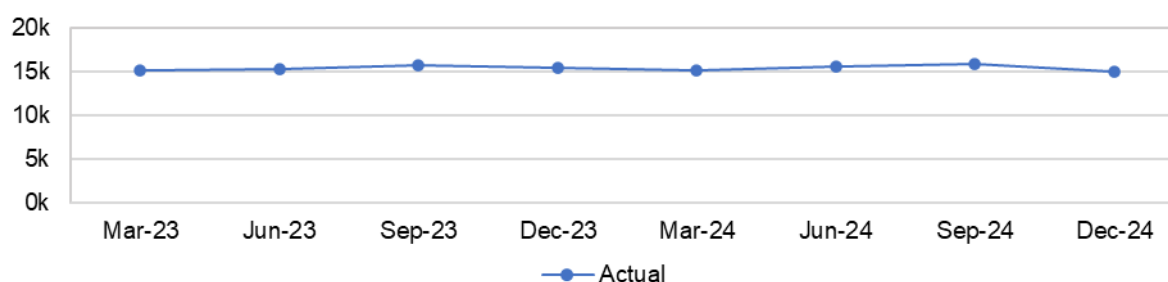
Latest: 99.2%

Target: 98%, Floor: 91%

Previous: 99.6% (Green)

### Activity indicators

#### Number of attendances at KCC commissioned Sexual Health Clinics



## Corporate Risk Register – Overview

The Council, along with the local government sector, continues to operate in an increasingly difficult financial and operating environment, which carries significant risk implications for the achievement of the Authority's objectives.

The table below shows the number of corporate risks in each risk level (based on the risk score) in February 2025, compared with November 2024.

|   | Low Risk | Medium Risk | High Risk |
|---|----------|-------------|-----------|
| <b>Current risk level November 2024</b> | 0        | 3           | 13        |
| <b>Current risk level February 2025</b> | 0        | 5           | 12        |

### KEY CHANGES DURING LAST QUARTER

#### New Risk

CRR0065: Implementation of Oracle Cloud Programme. This is a critical programme for the organisation, replacing the current outdated infrastructure. It is a large and complex programme, which carries with it significant inherent risk. There have been reports in the public domain about other implementations that have been fraught with difficulties, so it is important that this organisation-wide risk features on the Corporate Risk Register for visibility and that the programme demonstrates robust governance, change and programme management, especially at a time where organisational capacity is stretched, with several major change activities in train.

#### Risk Withdrawn

CRR0061: Care Quality Commission (CQC) Assurance has been removed from the corporate register for now, reflecting the fact that the first inspection under the Local Authority Assurance Assessment Framework took place at the end of September. This risk will be reviewed again once the outcome is known, as this will indicate whether there are further risks to be captured and at what level within the organisational hierarchy.

#### Risk Reductions

CRR0063: Capacity to accommodate and care for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). This is an area of risk where significant progress has been made to reduce the level of risk faced by the Council, working in partnership with external agencies such as the Home Office and Department for Education. Now that funding agreements are in place, accommodation has been sourced to receive those coming into our care, and improvements in the operation of the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) are being experienced, the risk rating has been reduced from High to Medium. However, it is recognised that certain factors e.g. volumes arriving in Kent and ongoing effectiveness of NTS, are still outside of the Council's direct control and will therefore require continued vigilance.



**CRR0042: Border fluidity, infrastructure, and regulatory arrangements.** The risk has reduced slightly from its maximum rating (although still High) due to the significant work that has been undertaken to plan for service impacts on KCC and providers, as well as the Council contributing to the work of the Local Resilience Forum with partners in preparation for the previous implementation date of 10th November 2024. KCC continues to work on preparedness and awaits further information on any revised implementation date and approach, which will instigate a further review of this risk.

### **Risk Revision**

**CRR0052: Adaptation of KCC Services to Climate Change impacts.** Following approval of the Environment Plan and Climate Change Adaptation Plan at Cabinet in November 2024, this risk was reviewed by officers from the Energy & Climate Change team. The risk was revised to ensure it relates to the adaptation of the services the Council provides to short, medium and long-term impacts of climate change and the need to embed environmental considerations in our operating model and meet our environmental commitments. Subsequently it was agreed that the risk rating would reduce to medium to reflect the 3-year Adaptation Plan timeframe and current deemed likelihood and impact following implementation of the mitigating controls.

### **MITIGATING ACTIONS**

The Corporate Risk Register mitigations are regularly reviewed for their continued relevance and urgency, and new mitigations introduced as required.

Updates have been provided for 19 actions to mitigate elements of corporate risks that were due for completion or review up to February 2025. These are summarised below.

| <b>Due Date for Review or Completion</b> | <b>Actions Completed / Closed</b> | <b>Actions Partially complete</b> | <b>Actions subject to Regular Review</b> | <b>Actions Outstanding</b> |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Up to and including February 2025        | 8                                 | 6                                 | 4  | 1                          |

### **CRR0003: Securing resources to aid economic recovery and enabling infrastructure**

#### Regular Review

#### **Make use of KCC's new role as Accountable Body for the Kent & Medway Functional Economic Area (post LEP landscape)**

Following completion of the Phase 1 implementation plan for the Kent & Medway Framework, use will be made of KCC's new role as Accountable Body and potential future transition to a Strategic Authority to liaise with key government departments to make the case for specific funding allocations to tackle barriers to growth.

#### Complete

#### **Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5) approved by County Council**

Following a summer public consultation exercise and all member briefing to discuss the results and subsequent changes, the final draft LTP5 was presented at County Council on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and members voted to approve its adoption. LTP5 sets out a balanced approach to improving transport across Kent within the context of the Council's overarching strategies for *Securing Kent's Future* and the longer-term *Framing Kent's Future*. By taking a balanced approach, the plan should remain relevant to any further shifts in policy and focus affecting the Council's future work.

**CRR0009: Future financial and operating environment for Local Government**Partially Complete

Improving financial resilience by developing better scrutiny of spending bids and more detailed savings plans to improve the overall robustness of the budget setting process. Initial work conducted, with the action target date revised to the end of the financial year.

**CRR0014: Cyber Information Security Resilience**Action Outstanding

Reviewing visibility of the Group's risk profile regarding cyber security, to provide reassurance that the use of any shared resources or other interdependencies from a cyber perspective are continually understood. The completion date has been extended to March 2025 to enable discussions to conclude.

**CRR0015: Sustainability of the Social Care Market**Partially Complete

Consideration of how the recommendations within the external consultant report can be addressed in the Council's recommissioning approach have commenced. The completion date has been extended to end of March 2025.

**CRR0039: Information Governance**Complete**Annual Governance Statement (AGS) Action Plan.**

There has been regular reporting to Governance & Audit Committee of implementation of the actions identified within Annual Governance Statements and actions raised at Governance and Audit Committee. In addition, Members and key stakeholders have access to a Microsoft Power BI suite which captures all actions and progress to date.

Complete**Data Mapping Exercise**

The data mapping capture form is in place. Policy guidance requires Information Governance leads to review data maps with the services on a bi-annual basis or as and when a new Data Protection Impact Assessment is created.

**CRR0042: Border fluidity, infrastructure and regulatory arrangements**Regular Review**Planning with Government**

The organisation is continuing to communicate with Government to develop short, medium and long-term plans for border resilience, looking at infrastructure and technological solutions.

Regular Review**Preparation for impacts**

The organisation continues to prepare for two separate but interconnected schemes that will affect non-EU citizens travelling to most EU countries; the EU Entry/Exit System (EES – implementation date TBC) and the EU European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS). Regular presentations continue to be given to Members on potential impacts relating to people and goods as a result of implementation of the EU Entry/Exit System. The due date for this action has temporarily been removed due to EES being postponed until newly required EU legislation has been introduced and notice of a new implementation date is provided.

Complete

**Presentations to Cabinet Committee** on potential impacts relating to people and goods. This item will continue to be presented to Cabinet Committee on a regular basis.

**CRR0045: Maintaining effective governance and decision making in a challenging financial and operating environment**Complete**Implementation of actions identified within 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement report**

Regular reporting to Governance & Audit Committee of implementation of the actions identified within Annual Governance Statements, and actions raised at Governance and Audit Committee, in addition Members and key stakeholders have access to a Microsoft Power BI suite which captures all actions and progress to date.

**CRR0049: Fraud and Error**Partially Complete

All tendering specifications will include a requirement for the tenderer to provide details on what procedures they have in place to prevent fraud from occurring within the contract, both in service delivery and invoicing into KCC. Support in evaluating these procedures will be obtained from the Counter Fraud Team as part of the overall evaluation process. (Action Target date: 31/03/25 – extended to coincide with the delayed implementation of the Procurement Act)

**CRR0052: Impact of climate change on KCC services**Complete**Climate Change Adaptation Plan**

Following presentation to Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024, the KCC Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2025-2028 and KCC Environment Plan were approved for adoption by Cabinet on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024. The Environment Plan has been designed to unify and enhance the organisation's environmental and sustainability efforts, whilst the Adaptation Plan sets out how KCC would start to adapt its assets and services to climate change over the coming years. The Adaptation Plan actions will be regularly reviewed, as below.

Regular Review**Delivery of the KCC Climate Change Adaptation Plan**

Delivery of the KCC Climate Change Adaptation Plan will be monitored regularly and will include service level climate change adaptation risks and incorporating climate adaptation into project and Business as Usual activity.

**CRR0058: Capacity & capability of the workforce**Partially Complete

Exit and retention surveys have commenced, with data collection to continue for a further 3 months in order to have sufficient information from which to draw conclusions and determine next steps.

**CRR0059: Significant failure to deliver agreed budget savings and manage demand**Partially Complete**Maximise scope of effective scrutiny by all Members**

A Governance Working Party has been implemented and has met regularly. The group originally anticipated reporting to County Council in 2024 but will now report in May 2025.

**CRR0063: Capacity to accommodate and care for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking children (UASC)**Complete**Home Office and DfE Negotiations**

Following intensive negotiations taking place with Home Office and Department for Education, funding was provided to KCC. It is recognised that certain factors e.g. volumes arriving in Kent and ongoing effectiveness of the National Transfer Scheme, are still outside of the Council's direct control and the risk will therefore require continued vigilance.

**CRR0065: Implementation of fit-for-purpose Oracle Cloud system**Complete

Oracle Cloud Board Members have confirmed that there are no proposed changes to the current Oracle system or associated 3rd party systems. This enables the programme to assess impacts and avoid incurring additional costs and also includes no changes across applications that interface with Oracle.

Partially Complete

A User Acceptance Testing (UAT) plan is in place stating what resource is required and when. The plan will be monitored to ensure the plan is effective.

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By: Anna Taylor, Scrutiny Research Officer

To: Cabinet - 4 March 2025

Subject: **Cabinet reconsideration of Decision 24/00093 - Future of Commissioned Services at Seashells and Millmead Family Hubs**

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Summary: Following the Scrutiny Committee's referral of this decision to Full Council for review as part of the call-in process, Cabinet must reconsider the decision, taking account of comments expressed by the Scrutiny Committee on 29 January 2025.

Cabinet may confirm, amend or rescind the decision.

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## Introduction

1. The power of call-in was established under the Local Government Act 2000, which provides for overview and scrutiny committees to review or scrutinise executive decisions.
2. At KCC any two members from more than one political group may give notice of their wish to call-in a decision. The Constitution sets out the criteria, at section 17.67 for calling-in a decision. Call-in delays the implementation of decisions and allows for members of the Scrutiny Committee to require that decisions are reconsidered by the decision-maker in light of the Committee's comments or to be reviewed by full Council (s17.72).
3. In accordance with s17.74 of the Constitution, prior to consideration by Council of a referred decision, Cabinet must first consider the comments of the Scrutiny Committee and determine whether the decision should be confirmed, amended (both resulting the decision still progressing to Council for review) or rescinded. In the latter case, the decision implementation is cancelled indefinitely, and the call-in process ends immediately, with the matter not progressing to Full Council.

## Background

4. On 29 January 2025, the Scrutiny Committee considered a call-in made by Mrs Jackie Meade and Mr Barry Lewis of decision 24/00093 (Future of Commissioned Services at Seashells and Millmead Family Hubs). The decision maker was Mrs Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services.
5. The Scrutiny Committee considered the call-in reasoning, with explanations provided by both Members responsible for the call-in. Members debated the issues, including usage figures of the Family Hubs, gaps in information provided and further clarification on the potential use of the Year 4 Family Hub funding and the materiality of the legal or procurement risks of alternative options.
6. Following the debate, the Scrutiny Committee unanimously agreed the following motion:

- a. That implementation of Decision 24/00093 be postponed pending review by the full Council.
7. Comments expressed during the debate are summarised below (these represent the views put forward by Members of the Committee):
  - a. Members claimed that the decision was inconsistent with the Council's Policy Framework in relation to Best Value Duty, in so far as it was argued that the high footfall and positive support for the Commissioned Hubs indicated they offered good and popular services, making them best value when compared with the less popular alternative Hub facilities.
  - b. Members considered that Seashells and Millmead provided the best value and served the community effectively, particularly vulnerable families, and it was important to consider community impact when decisions were made.
  - c. Members raised concerns about the financial analysis, including the lack of funding plans and lack of detailed costings for alternative service provisions.
  - d. Clarification was sought over differing usage figures available for the Family Hub buildings and the data on which this decision was based on, with queries arising based on information collected and shared by an individual member of the Committee.
  - e. Concerns raised about the lack of detail surrounding the savings made by not renewing the contracts.
  - f. Further information sought about existing contracts and contract extension requirements – confirmation was requested around legality of a contract extension.
  - g. Further information sought about what the Year 4 additional family hub funding from central government could be used for.
  - h. Clarification over whether the family hub funding could be used for 0-25years, not only early years.
  - i. Concerns over accuracy of the EqIA
  - j. Differing accounts of engagement with Swale Borough Council over the potential move of Family Hub services to the Sheppey Gateway.
8. After the debate, the Committee resolved, with a unanimous vote, to refer the matter to full Council for review.

### **Process – Review by Cabinet**

9. As a consequence of the Scrutiny Committee's decision, section 17.73 of the Constitution applies:
 

“If the Scrutiny Committee refers a decision to the full Council, it shall be considered at the next meeting of the Council when the Council may either:

  - (a) Agree the decision be implemented
  - (b) Express comments but not require reconsideration of the decision, or



- (c) Require implementation of the decision to be postponed pending reconsideration of the matter by the Cabinet, taking into account the Council's comments."

10. Section 17.74 of the Constitution requires that before a decision is reviewed by full Council, it must be formally reconsidered by Cabinet, in light of the comments made by the Scrutiny Committee. That provides an opportunity for the Executive to confirm, amend or rescind the decision before it is subject to any further debate by the wider Council membership.
11. The outcomes of Cabinet's reconsideration will be published and sent to all Members of the Council.
12. In the event of Cabinet confirming or amending the decision this will be further reviewed by full Council on 13 March 2025.

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### **Recommendation:**

The Cabinet is asked to consider the comments of the Scrutiny Committee and confirm, amend or rescind decision 24/00093.

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### **Attached documents**

- a) [24-00093 - Decision Report](#)
- b) [24-00093 - Record of Decision](#)
- c) [Appendix 1 Service Offer Comparison](#)
- d) [Appendix 2 Commissioned Family Hub Contracts Consultation Report](#)
- e) [Appendix 3 Draft Responses to Consultation Feedback](#)
- f) [Appendix 4 Commissioned Family Hub Contracts Decision EqIA](#)

### **Background documents**

- a) [Agenda for County Council on Thursday, 7th November, 2024, 10.00 am](#)
- b) [Agenda for Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on Thursday, 21st November, 2024, 2.00 pm](#)
- c) [Agenda for Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, 29th January, 2025, 10.00 am](#)

### **Contact Details**

Anna Taylor, Scrutiny Research Officer  
[anna.taylor@kent.gov.uk](mailto:anna.taylor@kent.gov.uk) 03000 416478

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