

ASHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL



Council Offices,
Urban Road,
Kirkby in Ashfield
Nottingham
NG17 8DA

Agenda

Principal Select Committee

Date: **Thursday, 6th June, 2024**

Time: **7.00 pm**

Venue: **Committee Room, Council Offices, Urban Road,
Kirkby-in-Ashfield**

For any further information please contact:

Lynn Cain

lynn.cain@ashfield.gov.uk

01623 457317

Principal Select Committee

Membership

Chairman: Councillor Kier Barsby
Vice-Chairman: Councillor Julie Gregory

Councillors:
Jamie Bell Jodine Cronshaw
Warren Nuttall Phil Rostance
John Smallridge

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SUMMONS

You are hereby requested to attend a meeting of the Principal Select Committee to be held at the time/place and on the date mentioned above for the purpose of transacting the business set out below.



Theresa Hodgkinson
Chief Executive

AGENDA

Page

- 1. To receive apologies for absence, if any.**
- 2. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and/or Non-Registrable Interests.**
- 3. To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 April 2024.** 5 - 8
- 4. Corporate Plan Delivery - Year-End 2023/24.** 9 - 52
- 5. Overview and Scrutiny Statutory Guidance.** 53 - 88
- 6. Select Committee Work Programme 2024/25.** 89 - 94

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PRINCIPAL SELECT COMMITTEE

Meeting held in the Committee Room, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,

on Wednesday, 10th April, 2024 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Kier Barsby in the Chair;

Councillors Jamie Bell, Jodine Cronshaw,
Julie Gregory, Warren Nuttall, Phil Rostance and
John Smallridge.

Officers Present: Lynn Cain, Sarah Daniel, Mike Joy,
Trevor Middleton and Shane Wright.

In Attendance: Councillor Dave Shaw.

PS.21 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and/or Non-Registrable Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

PS.22 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 February 2024, be received and approved as a correct record.

PS.23 Select Review: Markets Update

The Chairman introduced the item and welcomed the Council's Assistant Director for Regeneration, Sarah Daniel and the Town Centres and Markets Manager, Trevor Middleton, to the meeting. Both officers were in attendance to give an update on how the various markets in Ashfield were operating, recent successes, any challenges the markets were facing, and what future plans the Council had in relation to the markets.

The Governance Manager reminded Committee that at the February 2024 meeting Members had asked for a Markets update which encompassed the following sites:

Indoor Markets

- Idlewells Shopping Centre in Sutton-in-Ashfield
- Moor Market in Kirkby-in-Ashfield

Outdoor Markets

- Hucknall
- Kirkby-in-Ashfield
- Sutton-in-Ashfield.

Committee Members then received an update from the Assistant Director for Regeneration and the Town Centres and Markets Manager in respect of the following aspects of the Council's markets provision:

Website Information

The Council's website offered a wealth of information regarding its market facilities, including days and times of trading and arrangements for special events.

Occupancy Rates

Post Covid, some markets had struggled with their occupancy rates and many traders had not returned following the pandemic. Currently the outdoor market at Hucknall was proving to be the most popular market site for traders with Sutton as the lowest. Nationally a reduction in market stall occupancy rates had been seen as customers shopping habits had changed and predominantly moved online. However, some speciality market events were still bucking the trend where artisan and speciality foods/goods were on offer.

Footfall

Hucknall figures continued to reflect the popularity of the High Street and the success of the pedestrianisation scheme. In Sutton, the closure of the large Wilko store had seen a reduction in footfall to the town and shop vacancies in Kirkby had impacted the success of the markets.

Updated Market Stalls

It had recently been acknowledged that some of the Council's market stalls looked tired and some had received an upgrade with new display tops and skirts. Fifteen new stalls had also been purchased (from Post Covid 'Welcome Back' funding) for use at the weekly Sutton Outdoor Market.

Costs

With the current climate, it was acknowledged that the Council needed to remain vigilant with their spending and some market days had been ceased to save money wherever possible.

Planned Events

The Council's plant & garden fairs and the food & drink festivals were popular and there was always a good market stall presence at the Council's Christmas festivals. These events were promoted widely and had fantastic support from officers with regard to the organisation and ultimate success of the occasions.

Following the Sutton town centre development works (with completion around November 2024), it was hoped that the Council could relaunch the market over the busy pre-Christmas period. Appropriate incentives were being considered to attract new traders including new stalls and favourable fees for start up and pop up businesses.

Idlewells Indoor Market

Occupancy rates were currently good at the indoor market and remain reasonably stable at around 90%. Traders continue to be supported by officers and the Council was currently looking at other ways to offer business support including some digital training as required.

Sutton Outdoor Market

For most of 2024, Sutton Outdoor Market would be relocated whilst the Towns Fund improvement works were being carried out on Fox Street and Portland Square. The market would be trading from Low Street close to the Costa Café.

Moor Market

The Council had struggled to attract traders to the new indoor market and so the location had been earmarked for the new banking hub with works commencing at the end of April 2024, to prepare the site for its new occupants.

Following the update, a lengthy debate and question and answer session took place and Members considered, amongst other things:

- the costs associated with erecting and taking down market stalls and the length of time to complete the process
- the provision of reduced or introductory rents for market stalls following the pandemic, whether such incentives were still available and what criteria was used for allocation
- the impact of rising energy costs for traders within the Idlewells Indoor Market
- an acknowledgement that the trader community was very supportive of fellow traders generally
- concerns surrounding the continuing loss of income from the Council's market provision, particularly following the pandemic, and whether it was sustainable in the longer term
- the importance of changing with the times and offering more specialised/artisan markets to meet customers changing desires and demands
- the support offered by the Council to new traders to assist them with their initial applications through to helping them build sustainable businesses
- the hidden costs of running indoor market stalls including energy provision and regular legionella and portable appliance (pat) testing
- possible reasons as to why the Kirkby market has failed to thrive including loss of shops in the pedestrian area, less footfall and the restrictive fence around Morrisons supermarket
- the competitiveness of the Council's market fees against neighbouring authorities
- the possibility of working with other local organisations and community partners to support the markets and provide extra funding

- the importance of the Levelling Up Funding for Hucknall being invested wisely to elevate the prosperity of the town
- ideas for the relaunch of the Sutton Outdoor Market late 2024 following completion of the Towns Fund relocation works
- acknowledgement that from a political perspective, decisions relating to reductions or closure of markets were difficult with a balance needing to be achieved.

Following the debate the Chairman thanked both officers for their attendance at the meeting and for their contribution to the discussion and insight into the Council's current market provision.

RESOLVED

that the 'Markets Review' be continued by the Principal Select Committee and both the Leader of the Council and the Executive Lead Member for Growth, Regeneration and Local Planning be invited to the next meeting of the Committee, to enable Members to gain insight into the Council's markets provision, and its impact, from a political perspective.

The meeting closed at 8.46 pm

Chairman.



Report To:	PRINCIPAL SELECT COMMITTEE
Date:	6 JUNE 2024
Heading:	CORPORATE PLAN DELIVERY – YEAR-END 2023/24
Executive Lead Member:	LEADER
Ward/s:	ALL
Key Decision:	YES
Subject to Call-In:	YES

Purpose of Report

This report presents to Principal Select Committee progress updates regarding delivery of the new Corporate Plan 2023-2027 and the April 2023 to March 2024 performance position against the associated Corporate Performance Scorecard.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. For Principal Select Committee to consider and proactively review the levels of delivery achieved against the Corporate Plan Priorities.**
- 2. For Principal Select Committee to consider and proactively review the levels of performance achieved against the Corporate Scorecard as of March 2024.**

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

The Council's ambitions for the next four years are clearly identified in a set of revised and updated Corporate Priorities which are presented in the new Corporate Plan. These have been developed by Cabinet.

The Corporate Plan sits above a wider strategic context which includes the Corporate Project Management Framework, Corporate Performance Indicators and a range of strategic documents relating to the Council and its services. The Corporate Plan aligns to the Council's overarching Strategic Direction.

Our priorities for the future, as identified in the new Corporate Plan, have been translated and cascaded into specific projects and initiatives, the successful delivery of which is being monitored through our Performance and Strategic Planning Framework, into Service Plans to facilitate focussed delivery.

The Council remains ambitious, and as such, the new Corporate Plan captures and reflects our ongoing ambitions for the next four years.

Our performance framework incorporates performance scorecards on three separate levels as indicated below.



The Council regularly engages with the Local Government Association (LGA) sector led improvement offer, for independent evaluation of the organisation, most recently (January 2023) a peer review of housing was completed. Key recommendations from the LGA support work have been integrated into the refresh of the Corporate Plan and Strategic Direction. A follow-up Corporate Peer Challenge is scheduled for 4-7 June 2024.

Through the Council's new Policy and Performance Function, a specific focus will be placed on continually improving the Council's approach to performance and improvement in line with the updated best value guidance and introduction of Oflog.

The Council's performance framework incorporates inputs, outputs, and outcomes, directly aligned to the Corporate Plan. This has been reviewed and enhanced, following the approval of the new Corporate Plan 2023- 2027, and in line with Best Value expectations and Oflog benchmarking dataset measurement. The revised Corporate Scorecard incorporates both place level measures and corporate delivery measures.

Alternative Options Considered

To consider and adopt different key priorities and themes within the review of the Corporate Plan and Strategic Direction. The proposed priorities, themes and actions best capture and reflect the future strategic direction of the Council.

Detailed Information

The Council's new Corporate Plan 2023 - 2027 was approved by Cabinet and endorsed by Full Council in September 2023. Our Council Plan sets out what we want to achieve in the next four years. Our ambition is to be 'Great' across all our services and to look forwards. Our 6 priorities have been developed based on knowledge and understanding of the needs of Ashfield residents and businesses.

The Corporate Plan sits above a wider strategic context which includes the Corporate Project Management Framework, Corporate Performance Framework and a range of strategic documents relating to the organisation and its services.

The Corporate Plan progress is monitored through both the effectiveness of successful delivery of key projects and initiatives and performance achieved against the Corporate Scorecard.

The Corporate Performance Scorecard has been developed alongside the delivery plan to help us monitor the progress of achieving our ambitions. Our scorecard is split into 2 sections, Delivery and Living In Ashfield. The Living in Ashfield indicators provide contextual data of Ashfield as a place. The Delivery indicators are used to track our performance against the Councils key priorities.

This report details progress against delivery of the new Corporate Plan, to date, and the April 2023 to March 2024 year-end performance position against the associated Corporate Performance Scorecard 'Delivery' key performance measures.

A summary Corporate Performance Scorecard Report is appended which includes benchmarking data where this is available. The Council is keen to understand performance against relevant peer groups, particularly aligned to Oflog published datasets, to drive our ambition to deliver great services. The detailed Corporate Delivery KPI Scorecard is also appended to this report.

Overall Position

Overall, the corporate scorecard position of corporate 'delivery' measures for April 2023 to March 2024 indicates the following positive position: -

- 75% of measures achieving or exceeding target, or within 10% variance of target.
- 94% of measures indicating an improved position compared to the same period in the previous year, or within 5% of previous year's performance levels.

(data awaited for 1 KPI)

Specific deliverables in 2023/24 are: -

Health and Happiness:

Best Start

- Increasing access to leisure services and activities for children, and young people
 - Star foundation funding is continuing to come into the local authority and now has a robust way of allocation, monitoring and making best use of funds by providing opportunities for some of our most vulnerable children and young people.
 - The U17s programme continues to be delivered by Everyone Active during school holidays.
 - A new learner pool was opened at Hucknall Leisure Centre on 15th July 2023.
- Increasing the number of breastfeeding community places - most Council owned buildings, our Leisure Centres and 13 businesses across the District are now breastfeeding community places. Due to changes within public health and the way in which breastfeeding is promoted and supported within the community. This has proven difficult to expand and reach its full potential.
- Through the work of the Ashfield Children and Young People's Network, capacity funding was secured to enable a focus on understanding children, young people and their family's mental health concerns. Conversations took place with families, education providers, mental health service providers, and commissioners. This information was presented to a subgroup, who have agreed short- and long-term actions to address some of the issues and challenges presented.
- More than ever before primary schools across the district participated within the Christmas light switch on within all three town centres. The schools have also got involved with the Art Explora Mobile Museum that came to Kirkby, Sutton and Hucknall. Some primary schools have also applied for UKSPF green grant and been successful with their application.

KEY SUCCESSES

- Leisure transformation – new learner pool at Hucknall, new sauna/steam room at Kirkby, and completion of Papplewick Sports Hub.
- £5.4m of social value has been delivered through the Leisure Operating Contract.
- Significant 18% increase in attendances at our leisure centres, which is a 50% increase over the last 2 years.
- 11 groups have been supported with a grant as part of the UKSPF Green Social Prescribing Fund and 130 families have received a growing pack to encourage them to grow fruit/vegetables at home.

Living Well

- The Money Management Advice Service has been reviewed along with processes.
- A new resettlement officer was successfully recruited in January 2024. They have been developing further links with existing and new providers of support for households accommodated under the numerous resettlement schemes. This includes, but is not limited to, setting up and running drop in 'advice surgeries' and conversation classes., working with voluntary and faith groups and developing existing relationships with partner agencies. We have established available budget and are currently examining the accommodation needs of those who have been placed and need to be rehoused and the likely numbers.
- Deliver Outdoor Sports Transformation Programme: -
 - Kirkby and Sutton Lawn Sports Hubs - both projects are progressing well with the facilities due to completion in 2025.
 - Papplewick Sports Hub - Everyone Active took over management of the facility in November 2023. Two changing rooms have been converted to a community room/

studio space. We are working with local football clubs with an interest in leasing single pitch sites.

- We have been working with Notts. FA and the Football Foundation to identify sites for new 3G pitch provision in Hucknall.
- A new sauna/steam room opened at Kirkby Leisure Centre in December 2023.
- Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) funded works to Hucknall Leisure Centre have now commenced with the offsite manufacture of the units and ancillary items required to replace the existing fossil fuel heating with air source heat pumps. The bid to the Sport England Swimming Pool Support Fund for solar panels for Lammas Leisure Centre was successful, works are being planned in for the autumn 2024.
- £5,396,142 social value has been delivered through the Leisure Operating Contract during 2023-24, an increase of half a million pounds delivered for the same period last year. Over 7,000 attendances have been recorded from April 2023 - February 2024 on the Active Communities programme. This includes GP Exercise Referrals, memberships for care experienced young people, seated exercise, MSK, Parkinsons, COPD and people experiencing domestic abuse.
- 1,587,573 attendances at the Leisure Centres between April 2023 and March 2024, an 18% increase compared to attendances in 2022/2023 (1,348,688) and nearly 50% increase since 2021/2022.
- The review of rural leisure provision has been completed which has identified gaps in provision. Discussions have begun with Everyone Active and Selston High School to consider how we can coordinate and increase provision. Selston has been included as a potential location for a Playzone.
- 3 x £1,000 grants have been awarded to encourage more walking within Ashfield, and 9 new Walk Leaders have been trained.

Ageing Well

- The Commercial and Environmental Protection Team have designed a leaflet and distributed it to local retailers to raise awareness about accessibility requirements for customers using their premises.

Health Inequalities

- Coordinating and influencing organisations and service providers in Leamington, Coxmoor, Broomhill/Butler's Hill.
 - Coxmoor - Significant progress has been made on the Coxmoor estate due to increase of partnerships capacity to directly work with residents and collaboration and trust continues to be developed.
 - Broomhill/Butler's Hill - two Community Interest Company (CIC) groups have received lottery grant money to enable stability for the next two years. Meetings have taken place and a framework around the 'building blocks of health' has now started to take shape with a 3 main hub approach for the local area.
 - Leamington – Work continues to develop within the community network. 'Tuesdays together' continues to happen in partnership with Ashfield Voluntary Action (AVA). A new group started at St Modwins court in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) communities' team for residents. Sport England are also starting a programme of work in partnership with the Council through the Place Expansion Fund. Community planters are also now in place for residents to maintain.
- Linking allotments to foodbanks to reduce food waste. - 11 groups have been supported with a £500 grant as part of the UKSPF Green Social Prescribing Fund. 130 families have received a growing pack to encourage them to grow fruit/vegetables at home. The Feeding Ashfield Network continue to meet quarterly.

Homes and Housing:

Housing Development

- A successful acquisitions programme has been delivered, with 12 ex-Council homes being bought and made available for residents in housing need.
- Successful bid has been made to DLUHC under their Local Authority Housing Fund Scheme which has enabled to buyback an additional 6 ex-Council homes.
- Warwick Close in-fill affordable housing development was completed at the end of January 2024.
- Energy efficiency of new homes is improving. Latest homes included SPV, electric car charging points, etc, with an ongoing priority to maximise carbon reduction measures in each new home.

KEY SUCCESSES

- The Affordable Housing Development Programme has delivered over 100 new homes and there are plans to develop on a further 5 sites.
- 20 self-contained flats have been made available for use as temporary accommodation, whilst over 650 families have been assisted and prevented from becoming homeless.
- Over 1,000 tenants have been supported with welfare and money management advice.
- Tenant satisfaction feedback is well above Housemark benchmark averages.
- Only 2.81% of our housing stock is assessed as non-decent, which is well below national averages

Tackling Disrepair and Poor Housing Conditions

- The Council have utilised a wider range of powers to take enforcement action against non-compliant landlords. Proceeds from civil penalty fines has been reinvested in the Environmental Health service.
- A new Re-let Standard for vacant Council homes has been introduced to ensure new tenants have an awareness of property condition before they view and sign for their new home.

Suitable and appropriate housing

- The Council have processed almost 500 referrals relating to local residents seeking carbon reduction and energy efficiency measures under the Government's ECO4 scheme.
- Following the introduction of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, multiple sections of the Council continue to work to ensure that the necessary compliance is in place to meet the new statutory requirements in relation to the Council's social housing stock. Work was also carried to ensure ongoing compliance with several pieces of new fire safety legislation, introduced in 2022/23.
- A Damp and Mould Policy has been written and endorsed at the Tenant Gateway. In addition, a new Damp and Mould Technical Officer will be inspecting and monitoring reports of damp and mould. A tenant's guide has also been produced including social media campaigns. Training has also been provided to technical and non-technical employees on damp and mould. The Council have responded to Awaabs Law consultation and work is underway to implement the targets in the reporting of repairs processes.
- Most carbon monoxide alarms have now been installed, there is just 1 remaining in a difficult to access property.
- We are currently in the final stages of agreeing with partners the implementation of a countywide private sector stock condition survey.
- Improvements have been made to the thermal efficiency of targeted properties, aided through Government funding (Social Housing Decarbonisation). £583k has been received associated with Devolution Retrofit funding from the Midlands Net Zero Hub (MNZH) to retrofit energy efficiency measures to social housing, which will largely comprise solar photovoltaic panels (SPV).

- As of 31 March 2024, only 2.81% of Local Authority housing stock is assessed as non-decent, which is well below national averages. Data continues to be cleansed and validated which is expected to reduce this figure further.

Reduce and prevent homelessness.

- A review of temporary accommodation needs has been completed. An additional 20 self-contained flats have been made available for use as temporary accommodation, reducing the Council's need to use unsuitable and expensive bed and breakfast type accommodation and ensuring homeless households have the support they need.
- We continue to work in partnership with other Nottinghamshire Districts and statutory agencies to deliver a range of measures under the Rough Sleeper Initiative Programme aimed at eliminating street homelessness. In Autumn 2023, data showed rough sleeping in Nottinghamshire has not risen at the same rates as nationally.
- Review of the Homelessness Strategy has been completed and associated action plan implemented. This is now monitored through the Strategic Homeless Group.
- 59% more applicants have been prevented from becoming homeless (652 April 2023 to March 2024, compared to 409 April 2022 to March 2023). The target of 300 per annum has been significantly exceeded due to the hard work of the Housing Options and Tenancy Sustainment Teams. The number of households assisted by the Housing Options Team to either remain in their current accommodation or secure alternative accommodation has increased quarter on quarter. This was particularly evident in the number of successful 'preventions' as defined by the homelessness legislation. There is an ongoing focus and work to try to assist households when they are threatened with homelessness rather than at point of homelessness.
- The Landlord Forum has been successfully reinvigorated with positive engagement with landlords in the selective licensing area. Our intention is to engage further as extra funding is received under the healthy homes programme.

Compliance with Social Housing Regulatory Act

- A significant amount of preparation has been made in advance of a potential inspection, including improvements to data and review of policies. This work is ongoing.
- The new Consumer Standards have been reviewed and a gap analysis is being produced to show what actions are required.
- The 2023/24 Tenant Satisfaction Measures have been collected and the results are being prepared for submission to the Regulator.
- The Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure have been reviewed in line with the revised Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. A self-assessment against the code and complaints performance report are being presented to Cabinet before publication and submission to the Ombudsman, to demonstrate compliance with the statutory Code.
- Work has also been carried to ensure ongoing compliance with several pieces of new fire safety legislation.

Customer Focus

- 12% more tenants have been assisted with welfare and money management advice between April 2023 to March 2024 (1071) compared to April 2022 to March 2023 (955), significantly exceeding target.
- The project to modernise housing system solutions is currently progressing well. This is enabling the teams to deliver a fully agile service to tenants.
- The Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey has been completed and the results analysed. Benchmarking against peers through Housemark, shows a broadly positive position.

- Housemark annual performance benchmarking feedback shows service provision/value for money is good in social housing provision, some examples: -
 - 88% of Ashfield District Council tenants surveyed in 2023 indicated overall satisfaction, significantly above Housemark sector average of 72% satisfaction.
 - tenant satisfaction with the safety of their home and the home being well maintained is significantly above Housemark averages at 89% and 81% respectively.
 - Tenant satisfaction of being treated with respect and being kept informed were also significantly higher than Housemark averages at 92% and 83% respectively.
- A review of tenant engagement methods and opportunities have been undertaken alongside Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS).

Economic Growth and Place:

Businesses and Investment

- Deliver specialist business and skills events - an Automation for You event was delivered in May 2023 and a Green Business event in November 2023. The Council also recently delivered a further event on 23rd April 2024 themed around the UKSPF project of Global and Overseas Trading. Speakers from The Department of Business and Trade, Mentor City delegates from Ohio and a Global trading specialist adviser were well received. Work is now commencing on an event for early Nov-24 around innovation and this will be linked to the Council's UKSPF Ashfield Accelerator Project.
- The UKSPF Ashfield Accelerator contract has been awarded to East Midland Chamber of Commerce and is in delivery. The programme was launched at the Councils' Green Business event. We have agreed a target support 198 businesses by 31st March 2025 (in line with the Council's UKSPF investment plan) to help them develop new skills and expertise to launch new products or secure investment. We have also agreed to support 82 businesses to produce a decarbonisation plan for their business and assist them towards net zero, and to support 50 businesses to develop global trading opportunities (importing and exporting).
- The Council entered a Tail Spend arrangement for the ordering of low value/high volume goods which allows local suppliers to onboard through the supplier's marketplace when conditions have been met. The tail spend solution will also be able to report on the procurement impact on the carbon footprint with the first year's data available in January 2025.
- A re-launch of the Council's Local Supplier directory is being aligned to the new procurement legislation which will come into force in October 2024, with internal promotions taking place.

KEY SUCCESSES

- The Levelling Up Fund bid for Hucknall, for £9.2m, was approved by government in March.
- Footfall across all three town centres has increased by 9%.
- A significant number of events have been delivered attracting over 16,000 visitors.
- Regeneration projects continue to be successfully delivered - 14 Low Street and High Pavement House have been completed whilst construction is well underway at Kings Mill Reservoir and for the new Planetarium at Sherwood Observatory.

Infrastructure and Connectivity

- The Local Plan has progressed in accordance with milestones. On 29th April 2024 the Council submitted its Local Plan and supporting documents to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for independent examination.
- Approximately £18M in S106 has been received in the last 3 years which is being invested in infrastructure across the District, including approximately 5,200 jobs relating to industrial site developments.

- Processing of planning applications outturn average performance for April 2023 to March 2024 showed improvement compared to the previous year and was above national standards. Processing of minor applications within 8 weeks improved by 12% (83.56% 2023/24 compared to an average of 74.4% 2022/23), and processing of other applications also improved (88.69% 2023/24 compared to an average of 83.57% 2022/23). On average 79.31% of Major planning applications were processed within 13 weeks, which is above national standards of 75%.

Regeneration

- Work continues on the delivery of the Towns Fund, Future High Streets, Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund programmes. 14 Low Street and High Pavement House renovation work has been completed whilst construction work to enhance the area's visitor economy is well underway at Kings Mill Reservoir and for the new Planetarium at Sherwood Observatory.
- Delivery of the ADMC (Automated Distribution and Manufacturing Centre) - the site on Lowmoor Road is being acquired and included in the draft Local Plan allocations. Work is continuing to develop the building design and operating model. Engagement with potential suppliers and business beneficiaries is underway. A planning application has been submitted.
- The Levelling Up Fund bid for Hucknall, for £9.2m, was approved by government in March and planning for delivery is currently underway.
- Work is well underway to develop the Kirkby Long-term Plan, 10-year vision and 3-year investment Plan. The Kirkby Town Board has been created which will oversee the plan's delivery over the next 10 years, initial public consultation has been completed.
- The Council continues to focus efforts on bringing empty and dilapidated sites back into takes time and often the interventions that are taken by the Council are only seen several years later. Successful intervention has now been completed on five properties which were long standing problem properties across the district; The Wine Cellar – Kirkby in Ashfield which has undergone refurbishment; 1a Edward Street – Kirkby in Ashfield which has undergone a complete building overhaul; 30-32 Spring Road – Sutton in Ashfield which has been completely refurbished and now seeking a new premises licence for use as a convenience store, The Old Blue Bell – Lammas Rd, Sutton in Ashfield, a Grade II Listed pub which closed in 2010 and has now been completely refurbished into a 15-bed rented accommodation; and Greenwood Falls Farm – Huthwaite which had been subject to multiple ASB problems and arson attempts. The Council continues to intervene and take appropriate action for commercial residential dilapidated empty properties across the district.

Skills and Employment

- project involves working with selected primary and secondary schools to provide extra support in embedding quality and sustainable careers provision within their school curriculum.
- Futures continue to deliver 'Transform Your Future' (a UKSPF project) to support Ashfield residents who are economically inactive. The project aims to work with ex-offenders, residents who are 50+, single parents, those with a disability or health condition and young people not in education, employment, or training.
- Futures are also delivering The Essential Skills for Life Programme on behalf of Ashfield District Council, which will help unemployed residents develop key life skills such as confidence, budgeting, basic digital skills, and motivation to help them gain employment. Residents will be able to access in-person workshops, giving them the opportunity to mix and connect with other residents, whilst gaining support from dedicated Skills Tutors, and receiving one-to-one mentoring and guidance.
- Our digital support package delivered by Academy Transformation Trust Further Education (ATTFE) College, based in Sutton in Ashfield has already supported 32 people who have

attended training sessions and a further 15 referred on to employment and skills programmes. The project supports residents to develop the basic digital skills needed for day-to-day living, such as using a mobile phone, online banking and applying for jobs online.

- A contractor is about to be appointed to deliver the Council's UKSPF Ashfield Graduate Talent Match Project. The project aims to connect local businesses with Ashfield undergraduates that are studying at the East Midlands Universities (those due to graduate during Summer 2024 and Summer 2025). The appointed contractor will also support unemployed Ashfield graduates progress into employment within the district.
- Students from Vision West Nottinghamshire College are delivering a pilot project working with the traders in the Idlewells Indoor Market. The aim is to support the traders to use digital devices and marketing platforms effectively to expand their communication, help them to understand and reach out to their customer base, develop their skills, and allow them to take advantage of new and emerging technologies to enable their businesses to be sustainable and grow.
- A successful Careers Fair was held in October 2023, with 730 attendees, 68 exhibitors from across 10 sectors, 113 follow up appointments made, and 595 vacancies promoted through the event. Work has now commenced on preparing for this year's Careers Fair.
- Taxi licensing – successfully implemented English Language Qualification / Assessment Certificate for all new Taxi Drivers.

Town Centres and High Streets

- The Hucknall High Street grant scheme is being supported by a 6-month pilot project delivered by Save the High Street.
- A significant number of events and improvements have taken place in our town centres throughout 2023/24, some examples being Hucknall Food Festival with significant increases in footfall, and Idlewells Indoor Market is now over 90% occupied.
- Footfall data is now collated through our new visitor insight tool which allows us to capture anonymous data on dwell time, demographics and catchment information for our town centres, parks, and events.
- Town centre visits (April 2023 to March 2024) across all three town centres has increased by 9% (17,042,320) when compared to 2022/23 (15,637,980). Kirkby town centre has seen an 11% increase in footfall (6,008,344 compared to 5,404,092), Sutton has seen a 6% increase in footfall (6,336,385 compared to 5,987,898), and Hucknall has seen an 11% increase in footfall (4,697,5912 compared to 4,245,991).

Visitor Economy, Arts and Culture

- A draft Destination Management Plan (DMP) for the district has been produced in consultation with key stakeholders. The plan is due for adoption in July.
- A Place Partnership bid was submitted to the Arts Council earlier in 2024 with the outcome due by early June. The project would support arts activity across the District and bring over £1m of investment.
- Delivery of events programme 2023/24 – The events calendar was delivered in full, attracting over 16,000 attendances. An opportunity to host the Art Explora Mobile Museum tour was maximised, with over 3,000 attendances during the three-week period. The corporate events programme is being delivered by an external provider for the next three years, a Bonfire Night event has been added to the calendar as well as a three-day Ashfield Show.

Cleaner and Greener:

Cleanliness of the District

- The Council continues to drive forward recycling, local residents are currently achieving a magnificent recycling rate of 36% of all household waste generated, in line with CIPFA nearest neighbour averages.
- The team continue to extend knowledge of recycling and the environment across residents through initiatives such as the Big Ashfield Spring Clean which this year included new initiatives involving schools, volunteers and the public at large through tangible constructions such as pollinators and bug hotels. 4,053 free bulky collections were made as part of the 2024 Big Ashfield Spring Clean initiative.
- Between April 2023 and March 2024, the council emptied 3,757,979 refuse bins, collecting nearly 6,300 tonnes of garden waste, 2,500 tonnes of glass and over 7,100 tonnes of dry recycling.
- A number of interventions have been undertaken to address fly tipping, waste on land, littering, abandoned vehicles, graffiti and dog fouling across the District. The Council have issued Fixed Penalty Notices, statutory notices and undertaken environmental improvements over the past year to tackle environmental crime. This includes investigations, gating of alleyways, installation of additional streetlights, educational programmes, media campaigns and the delivery of the annual big spring clean. DEFRA last published data confirmed that the authority is ranked 80th out 309 local authorities for incident occurrences for fly tipping (second quartile).
- In response to wider concerns of environmental crime, including waste on land, littering and dog fouling, dedicated action days have taken place across the District since April involving targeted high visibility patrols to act as a deterrent for offenders, as well as community engagement to raise awareness and educate the public on the Council's approach to tackling environmental Crime.
- A variety of positive interventions have been undertaken in response to reported incidents, including school awareness and enforcement. Resulting in notices, engagement and community litter picks being delivered.
- Between April 2023 and March 2024, the council swept 691 km of highways and pavements and collected over 660 tonnes of litter and street waste including litter picking and emptying litter bins.

KEY SUCCESSES

- Over 4,000 free bulky waste collections were made as part of the Big Ashfield Spring Clean
- Keeping the district clean, the Council swept 691 km of highways and pavements and collected over 660 tonnes of litter and street waste.
- Over 1,000 trees were planted by the Council.
- Successful 7th Green Flag Award for Kingsmill Reservoir.
- The Council's Scope 1 and 2 footprint has reduced by a significant 21.3%

Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability

- The Council continues to work towards meeting the tasks contained within the Carbon Management Plan, including the development of a number of projects to further reduce the Council's scope 1 and 2 emissions. The Council continues to purchase zero carbon electricity certified under the Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin (REGO). The electricity is generated from wind, solar, hydro, landfill gas and biomass pellets.
- The Council continues to bid for Govt. funding associated with thermal efficiency/carbon reduction initiatives to meet Govt. emissions targets, including delivery where appropriate: -
 - Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) wave 2.1 funding project in development.

- £583k received associated with Devolution Retrofit funding from the Midlands Net Zero Hub (MNZH) to retrofit energy efficiency measures to social housing, which will largely comprise solar photovoltaic panels (SPV).
- Delivery of Decarbonisation works as contained in the Decarbonisation Plan: including Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) projects about to commence which covers replacement fossil fuel heating with air source heat pumps to the Council's Centralised Offices and Hucknall Leisure Centre. Anticipated completion later in 2024.
- A domestic Asset Strategy, incorporating carbon reductions, has been finalised and approved by the Tenants Gateway.
- The planning team has been securing opportunities to improve biodiversity throughout the year. Conditions and negotiations have either been placed on planning applications or contributions negotiated for an increase in biodiversity through S106 agreements.
- The Council continue to work in partnership with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Project Team in the development of a strategy.
- Delivery of carbon emission reduction schemes for the private sector – HUG2 and ECO4 specifically: HUG2 and ECO4 schemes remain on track and working well. Now looking to identify the benefits achieved through the schemes, including the measures installed and carbon savings.
- The Council planted circa 1,050 trees during 2023/24.
- The Council's carbon data for 2021/22 has now been updated to be used as a baseline against which to track performance. The Council's Scope 1 and 2 footprint as at March 2023 shows a significant 21.3% reduction compared to March 2022.

Parks and Green Spaces

- Selston Country Park – a new play area and works to refurbish and increase capacity of the café were completed in the spring.
- Green Space Assets Review - a review of cafes and visitor centres has been undertaken with recommendations due to be reported in early summer.
- The six Green Flag Awards for the main parks were retained this year with an additional Green Flag successfully awarded for the Kings Mill Reservoir site bringing the total to seven sites.
- Between April 2023 and March 2024, the council maintained 2,766,000 square metres of grass and planted over 5,000 bedding plants.

Safer and Stronger:

A Safer District

- The Council responded to 5,316 reports of anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood nuisance and environmental crime reports between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024. Based on the reporting period for the previous year of 4,890 reports, this is a 9% annual increase. Of these demands, 12% were resolved through specialist triage advice at the initial point of contact.
- In April ambitious plans of preventing demand and improving feelings of safety came to fruition, through the enactment of a local bylaw referred to as a Public Spaces Protection Order resulting in 8 Alleyways being shut and gating installed to reduce environmental crime and nuisance in these areas. The council have also recently produced a public notice and

KEY SUCCESSES

- Increased CCTV cameras from 29 to 59 devices across the District in the last two years
- Successful in securing £212,000 as part of the Safer Streets Round 5
- Successful in securing over £74,000 to support domestic abuse survivors and improve their safety, already resulting in 50 survivors being supported.

draft order relating to the renewal and variation of the District Wide Public Space Protection Order to include; vehicle nuisance and street harassment prohibitions, whilst increasing restricted areas for dog exclusion in parks and children's play areas.

- The Council and Police partnership initiative (Operation Springboard) continues to be effectively delivered to provide high visibility reassurance in neighbourhoods, town centres and public spaces through targeted patrols. This assists in obtaining local intelligence and taking positive action, resulting in the partnership successfully managing and tackling trends and emerging issues across the District.
- The Council, Police, Fire Service, and health services continue to deliver engagement events across the super output areas of the District building and fostering positive relationships to understand community need and assist them to become self-sustaining, through self-help and resident participation. Successful events have taken place in Sutton, Hucknall and Kirkby-In-Ashfield including the successful delivery of district wide 'Anti-Social Behaviour Roadshows' as part of ASB Awareness week in July.
- Operation safekeep is a multi-agency initiative set up by ADC, Police and NFRS that provides reassurance, promotes fire safety and tackle anti-social behaviour throughout the Halloween and Bonfire period. Throughout the operation, 21 incidents were responded to, 46 premises, off licenses and supermarkets were visited and received advice letters, and 6 notices, 3 seizures and 2 breaches of the PSPO were undertaken. Throughout the operations the teams also assisted vulnerable residents with concerns relating to the floods that took place over this period.
- In January 2024, the Council was successful in securing an additional £169,494 to assist the community safety partnership identify ASB offenders for the 'Immediate Justice Scheme' that is being delivered across the county. This is part of the HM Government initiative in trailblazing community payback and restorative justice techniques for anti-social behaviour.
- As part of the Council's statutory responsibilities to respond to serious violence, a new local response plan has been published which outlines how the Community Safety Partnership will share information and undertake measures to prevent and reduce serious violence. This includes identifying types of serious violence, the causes of that violence and preparing and implementing a strategy for reducing it.

Community Safety Strategy

- The renewed Community Safety Strategy has been agreed with partners and approved at Cabinet in January 2024.
- The Community Safety Partnership works together to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour through the facilitation of neighbourhood tasking meetings, community action days, problem solving activities, enforcement and joint patrols in neighbourhoods, town centres and public spaces across the District. The framework enables the Council to have a co-ordinated approach to tackle trends and emerging issues across Ashfield.

Our Communities Feeling Safe (projects)

- The Council has increased its public space CCTV cameras from 29 to 59 devices across the District in the last two years to help promote feelings of safety, detect, and deter crime and anti-social behaviour. The cameras are monitored from Nottinghamshire Police Headquarters 24 hours, 7 days per week and include 3 Safe Point Cameras in each town centre, which provides a means to request urgent assistance for anyone who feels in danger; before a crime occurs. The work has been commended by the Home Office and the Safe Point Camera's which were installed first in Ashfield has gained national attention.
- The Council, alongside partners and PCC secured £750,000 for the Ashfield and Mansfield CSP to deliver Safer Streets Round 4 and initiate community safety interventions to tackle anti-social behaviour neighbourhood crime and improve feelings of safety. The project has now been completed and Nottingham Trent University are finalising an academic report to

evaluate project delivery. As part of the Safer Streets 4 benefits analysis, perception of feelings of safety for women and girls in the two Safer Streets intervention areas are also being finalised.

- In November 2023, Ashfield District Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) have been successful in securing £216,094 in funding under Safer Streets round 5, to enhance community safety in the 'Carsic Estate' of Sutton. The new funding will be used in several proactive ways to improve feelings of safety for women and girls, tackle neighbourhood crime, and address anti-social behaviour. All interventions have now been delivered.
- In October 2023, £22,000 was secured under the PCC's fund to support the development of a 'shop watch' scheme safe spaces accreditation for local business and promote violence against women and girls' signage in Sutton-In-Ashfield. Following successful delivery of schemes for Kirkby and Sutton, the Council has also been working with businesses in Hucknall to develop a further Shop Watch and Safe Space Accreditation Scheme. The scheme provides retailers with radios, signage, lighting and cameras to improve safety across town centres and act as safe haven for local visitors to the town.
- £86,000 from the Councils' Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) and has successfully been delivered in Hucknall over the past 12 months, leading to 5 new re-deployable cameras being installed across ASB hotspots, 1 new Safe Point camera installation, QR coded signage developed and installed to report Environmental issues, and the roll out of the Shop Radio Scheme in the town centre.
- Over the last 12 months, youth engagement programmes have been delivered across Kirkby and Hucknall to divert young people away from crime and anti-social behaviour and create safe spaces for them in the heart of their communities.

Supporting Vulnerable People

- From April 2023 to March 2024, 168 referrals were made to MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) and other support agencies to safeguard vulnerable adults and children and protect them from further harm or abuse.
- Complex Case Panels take place monthly to discuss escalating safeguarding scenarios. Through the development of risk management action plans, targeted interventions are undertaken to assist those who are vulnerable or considered at significant risk. The Complex Panel reviews approximately 10 highly complex cases each month.
- Ashfield District Council Complex Case Team continue to deliver the Vulnerable Adult Support Scheme in partnership with the Police and Social Care to protect our most vulnerable individuals at risk of cuckooing, exploitation, drugs misuse and other criminal activity.
- The council has been successful in securing over £74,000 to deliver safer accommodation duties to support domestic abuse survivors and improve their safety. The scheme has resulted in 50 survivors being supported throughout 2023/2024. Ashfield District Council is proud to be White Ribbon accredited and is working towards the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation to further support survivors of domestic abuse. The Council has recently employed a second domestic abuse worker to support delivery of this work.
- In December 2023, it was confirmed that the Ashfield CSP secured a further £20,000 Home Office funding to help prevent radicalisation. The work will build critical thinking and personal resilience with young people in the area as well as targeted intervention work with residents who are susceptible to being radicalised towards violent extremism. The Council has produced a 'Prevent Plan' which is currently being reviewed by partners.
- Over the past 12 months, commissioned domestic service 'Equation' supported the Council to deliver healthy relationships programmes across selected Ashfield schools resulting in increased awareness, knowledge for learners and teachings.
- The Council have undertaken various initiatives to address violence against women and girls over the past year. Recent activities include working in partnership with students at Vision

West Nottinghamshire College to design and produce digital posters to highlight Violence Against Women and Girls. Posters have been digitally displayed across the district and provides national statistics as well as information on how to report incidents. The Council has also been working in partnership with domestic abuse services to run annual white ribbon campaigns and deliver healthy relationships programmes in primary schools.

- In addition, the Council has confirmed that it is undertaking the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) to further enhance the way domestic abuse incidents are reported and responded to. This will involve a review of safeguarding and support provision across services within the authority. The Council has secured external funding to deliver this, with a dedicated project worker employed by Juno finalising the coordination of our DAHA accreditation submission.

Innovate and Improve

Positive and Proactive Communications

- Our Aspiring Leadership Cohort have led a task and finish project reviewing the current embedding of logo/brand cross-Council and making recommendations for improvement which are now being incorporated into the Council's Improvement Programme.

Customer Experience and Customer Focus

- Average call waiting times have reduced by a substantial 25% (average 4 seconds in 2023/24 compared to an average 1 minute 6 seconds in 2022/23. Abandonment rates have also reduced significantly, by 37% (3.32% abandoned calls in 2023/24 compared to 5.3% abandoned calls in 2022/23).
- Creation of a new Customer Services function – Phase 2 and Phase 3 reviews are now making good progress. Customer journey mapping and process analysis in progress to identify potential for transfer of transactional interactions within Revenues and Benefits, Strategic Housing, Community Safety, Planning, and Housing repairs.
- A resident survey was successfully re-introduced in 2023, with more than 1,000 respondents. Analysis has now been finalised with additional context to be sought through face-to-face focus group meetings with our Citizens Panel scheduled for July 2024.
- A marketing campaign has now been finalised with the aim of attracting more residents to our re-invigorated Citizens Panel.
- Our Aspiring Leadership Cohort have finalised a review of customer service standards, researching best practice to provide recommendations.

KEY SUCCESSES

- Digital transformation successes continue with significant reductions in more costly channels - an overall 7% reduction in phone calls, 12% reduction in face-to-face visits, 11% reduction in Paypoint/Post Office payment transactions and a significant 86% increase in the use of council developed online forms. Over 20,000 residents are now signed up to Ashfield 24/7
- Over £2.1m social value delivered through our procurement activity since April 2021
- Sickness levels have reduced significantly by 19%.

Digital and Service Transformation

- The level of take-up for making payments easily, using digital channels, continues to increase with 90% of payments received during 2023/24 being made either by direct debit, online, automated telephone or recurring card payments. Paypoint and post office transactions which are more expensive for the customer continue to decrease with a further 11% reduction during 2023/24 (a significant 49% decrease over the last 5 years, resulting in over £118,000 cumulative transaction cost savings). Online payments have increased by

11% (64,828 payments made between April 2023 and March 2024 compared to 58,410 payments made between April 2022 and March 2023).

- Throughout 2023/24 the Council answered 79,504 calls, an overall 7% reduction on the previous year, of which there were significant reductions in calls to revenues (-17%), residential environmental health (-20%), and housing repairs (-13%). Face to face visits to the Council also reduced over the same period by 12%.
- The use of the council developed online forms, in our low code solution, have increased by a significant 86% compared to last year (9,379 forms 2023/24 compared to 5,043 forms 2022/23). Most of the increase in use has been for waste related requests such as bulky waste and garden waste collections, indicating successful ongoing development of the online form integration with the operational back-office system. There has also been a 14% increase in the use of revenues and benefits specific online forms.
- Several digital sessions have taken place at the Council Offices at Urban Road to assist residents in increasing their digital skills. 23% of Council Taxpayers and 83% of Business Rates payers are now signed up to the Revenues portal. The Ashfield 24/7 Customer Portal has been in place since February 2022 and now has over 20,183 residents signed up.
- The Digital Transformation Programme continues to deliver approximately £??m (*year-end data to follow for final report*) of financial benefits (cashable and cost avoidance) over the last 5 years. Work has progressed since July 2022 to migrate many key systems used by the Council to 'Cloud' based solutions to support improved access and resilience, alongside increased functionality. In house digital development is now also leading more modern approaches in community projects, including the intelligent automation of several operational processes.

Financial Sustainability

- The 2022/23 Audited Statement of Accounts is on the Council's website along with the unqualified audit opinion. The Accounts show healthy levels of reserves which are expected to be needed to smooth the transitioning to revised levels of funding once Local Government Funding Reform has been implemented.
- The 2024/25 Annual Budget Report includes details of savings and efficiencies included in setting the budget for 2024/25.
- A review of fees and charges has been completed and was presented to and approved by Cabinet in January 2024.
- The Service Review programme continues to identify cashable efficiencies and invest to save opportunities, which, once approved, will be factored into the 2024/25 revised budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The new Policy and Performance function are leading a revised, proactive, programmed approach to service reviews.
- Depot - we currently reviewing options for future service delivery requirements for the Neighbourhoods and Housing Repairs services, to feed into options for how the depot site is taken forward in the future. Consideration is also being given to how the site can be used to generate greater social impact beyond the public services delivered from there already including accommodating Vision West Notts College's vehicle maintenance and civil engineering departments.
- The Council Tax collection rate as of March 2024 is 96.3%, slightly higher than 95.79% collection rate in March 2023, comparable to our CIPFA nearest neighbour averages and higher than national averages. As this outturn is below target the recovery team have been working through reports and taking recovery action. The collection rate for Business Rates has remained static when compared to the previous year at 97.78% against a target of 98%.
- The collection of 97.8% of business rates is above national, East Midlands and CIPFA nearest neighbour averages.
- The procurement partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council has been in place for 9 months and during that period eleven projects were completed all within budget despite economic challenges in the market which was an achievement as they were mainly works

contracts where prices had increased. Joint procurement exercises have been undertaken in an effort to seek savings through aggregation.

People and partnerships

- The Council's People Strategy review is now complete and has been renamed Organisational Development Strategy. This is underpinned by a delivery action plan.
- We are on track to complete a workforce planning assessment against LGA Workforce Planning Maturity Matrix through a series of workshops with LGA support, producing improvement plans to reach level 4 maturity.
- 47 employees have been trained as Mental Health First Aiders, and 6 employees have also completed training to become Carer Champions. The access to mental health at work service has also recently been launched.
- A review of Ashfield's Strategic Partnerships is currently being undertaken and will feed into a wider Nottinghamshire review of strategic partnerships involving Local Authorities, Health, Police and Crime Commissioner, Universities, and the Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Average days of employee absence has reduced by 19% (8.88 days average per full time equivalent April 2023 to March 2024, compared to 10.93 days average per full time equivalent April 2022 to March 2023).

Performance, Data and Change Management

- A 'Knowledge Hub' dashboard of data and data analysis has been successfully developed using powerbi, which is accessible across the organisation and is used to understand performance delivery, eg the Corporate Plan, and benchmark against other local authorities (we have replicated and improved upon the Oflog Data Explorer). The Knowledge Hub also incorporates dashboards for place level data and other key datasets such as Education and skills, Economic Growth, visitor footfall insights and the resident survey. The data is updated frequently through API integrations with key external data sources. We are ambitious in our ongoing development of our datasets within the hub and continue to embed this new approach to data sharing to inform strategy and policy and decision making, whilst also driving our improvement journey towards excellence.
- A corporate approach to awards submissions has been introduced, an awards calendar created, and several submissions have recently been made for LGC and MJ awards.
- The Council's performance management framework is currently being reviewed in alignment with Best Value and Oflog approaches. An improved approach to Performance Board's has recently been introduced. The review of Corporate and Place scorecards has been finalised, aligned to the new Corporate Plan, incorporating output and outcome measures.
- Excluding the social value delivered from our leisure centre contract, cumulative social value delivered since the measurement via the Social Value Portal from April 2021 is now over £2.4m. Most of the procurement activities are delivering more than targets set. The two largest deliverables by outcome are: -
 - More people in local employment £1.4m
 - More opportunities for local MSMEs and VCSEs £754,381

Areas for Improvement and Development

- The Council's Major Works delivery partner for Housing Capital Investment works entered administration in July 2023, leaving projects unfinished and new projects unable to be started. The process of re-procurement is a long process so delivery of Capital works will be severely delayed. Interim arrangements are being put in place to complete the projects which were in progress but were left incomplete by the previous delivery partner. Works will be carried forward, predominantly under the new contract.
- Stock condition surveys of our housing assets are in progress. Access issues are requiring multiple visits, and there remain significant numbers of surveys to complete. Significant IT

developments are required, and actions are ongoing to improve data capture and system input. Once the data is collected, the Council will engage a consultant to undertake an independent validation of the data to develop an updated investment plan for major works and repairs. This independent validation and 30-year investment plan update is carried out approximately every five years.

- Average turn-around time for re-letting void Council homes has increased from 23.8 days (March 2023) to 28.1 days (March 2024). The causes of the delays continue to be assessed and improvement plans put in place, including weekly monitoring of key movements. More recent April 2024 out-turn indicates an improving position with re-let times reducing to 27.6 days.
- Rent collection rates have reduced slightly (97.02% April 2023 to March 2024, compared to 97.77% April 2022 to March 2023). Re-shaping of resources has focussed on increasing Income Officer capacity, with the introduction of area-based targets that give clear guidance. Rent arrears levels however continue to reduce as Income Officers and Money Management Advisors have continued to deliver improving performance in a challenging financial environment with an increasing numbers of tenants "migrating" from Housing Benefits to Universal Credit.
- The level of payments made via direct debits has reduced slightly by 0.7% (489,312 payments made in 2023/24 compared to 492,911 made in 2022/23). The Call monitoring service ceased in December 2023, having an reducing impact of between 800 and 1,000 direct debit transactions each month. This accounts for the reduction in direct debit payments from January to March 2024. All other services collecting payment by Direct Debit have seen an increase from the previous financial year.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

The report relates to the delivery of the Corporate Plan Priorities. The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's priorities for the period 2023 to 2027 and intended deliverables which were monitored and managed through the Corporate Performance Framework.

Legal:

The Council's new Corporate Priorities and strategic plans have been developed in consideration of current and forthcoming legislative requirements.

Finance: [PH 29/05/2024].

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	The new Corporate Plan has been developed in alignment with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the financial sustainability of the organisation. The 'Innovate and Improve' Priority incorporates key programmes and projects which are focussed on identifying and delivering efficiencies and more effective working practices to support financial sustainability, whilst concurrently delivering improved customer service.
General Fund – Capital Programme	
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	
	Financial performance during the 4-year term of the Corporate Plan has been considered on a regular basis via financial monitoring reports to both Cabinet and Council.

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Absence of a Corporate Plan would result in a lack of prioritisation and focus on delivering what matters	Agreed Corporate Plan every four years which is delivered via the organisation's project management framework and reviewed annually.
Poor performance would potentially result in inability to deliver the Corporate Priorities as specified in the Corporate Plan	Regular monitoring of performance and robust performance management through the authority's performance management framework.

Human Resources:

The 'Innovate and Improve' Priority incorporates key programmes and projects which will be focussed on delivering the Organisational Development Strategy and developing employees.

High levels of performance can have a positive impact upon employee engagement and retention which in turn can enhance performance further.

Environmental/Sustainability:

The 'Cleaner and Greener' Priority incorporates key programmes and projects which will be focussed on delivering environmental improvement.

Equalities:

There are no direct implications on equality and diversity as a consequence of the proposals and recommendations outlined in this report.

Other Implications:

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Urgency

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Exemption

Not applicable

Background Papers

Corporate Plan 2023-2027
Corporate Plan Performance Report

Report Author and Contact Officer

Jo Froggatt
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – POLICY AND PERFORMANCE
joanne.froggatt@ashfield.gov.uk
01623 457328

Sponsoring Executive Director

Craig Bonar
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - TRANSFORMATION
craig.bonar@ashfield.gov.uk
01623 457203

Welcome to our Corporate Plan Performance Report!

Our Council Plan for 2023 to 2027 sets out what we want to achieve in the next four years. Our ambition is to be 'Great' across all our services and to look forwards.

Our 6 priorities have been developed based on knowledge and understanding of the needs of Ashfield residents and businesses. This performance scorecard has been developed alongside the delivery plan to help us monitor the progress of achieving our ambitions.

Our scorecard is split into 2 sections, Delivery and Living In Ashfield. The Living Ashfield KPIs are highlighted with an asterix (*) at the end of the title. The Living in Ashfield indicators are use to provide contextual data so Ashfield as a place. The Delivery KPIs are used to track performance against the Councils key priorities.

All performance data is exported from Ideagen's Risk Management System (also known as Pentana). The last updated date can be found below.

For any queries please contact: ADCPentana@ashfield.gov.uk

**Health &
Happiness**

**Homes &
Housing**

**Economic
Growth &
Place**

**Cleaner &
Greener**

**Safer &
Stronger**

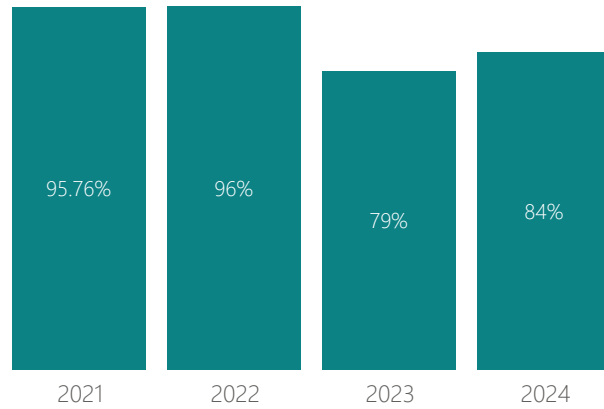
**Innovate &
Improve**

Corporate Level

Progress of Corporate Priorities

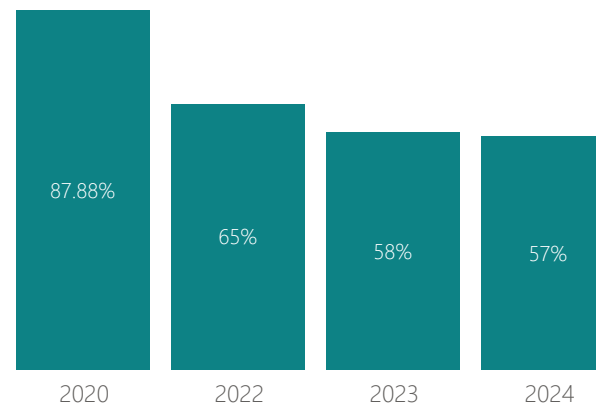
Corporate Actions Implemented or on track

Within Target & Improving



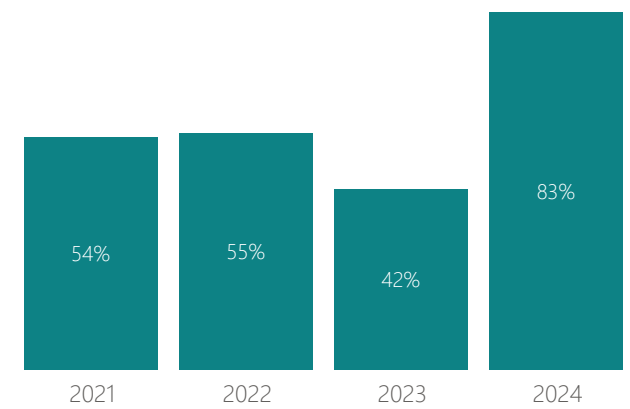
Corporate PIs met or exceeded target

Off Target & Getting Worse



Corporate PIs with an improving trend

On Target & Improving



Page 30

Audit Progress

New to 2023/24

Number of Moderate or Low Risk recommendations made

84

Number of Critical or Significant Risk recommendations made

1

Number of No Assurance or Limited Assurance Ratings issued

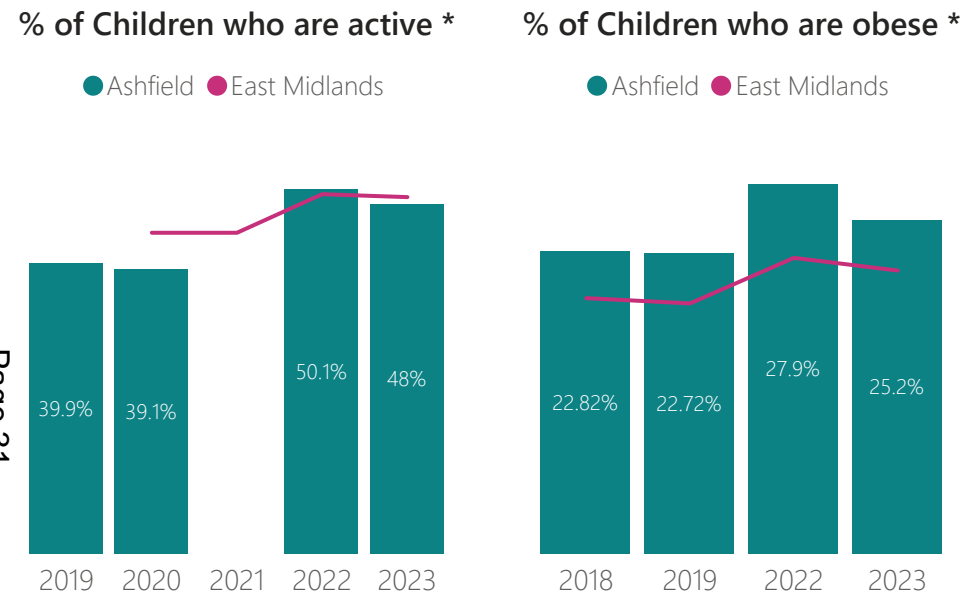
2

Number of recommendations overdue by 6+ months (All Risks)

40

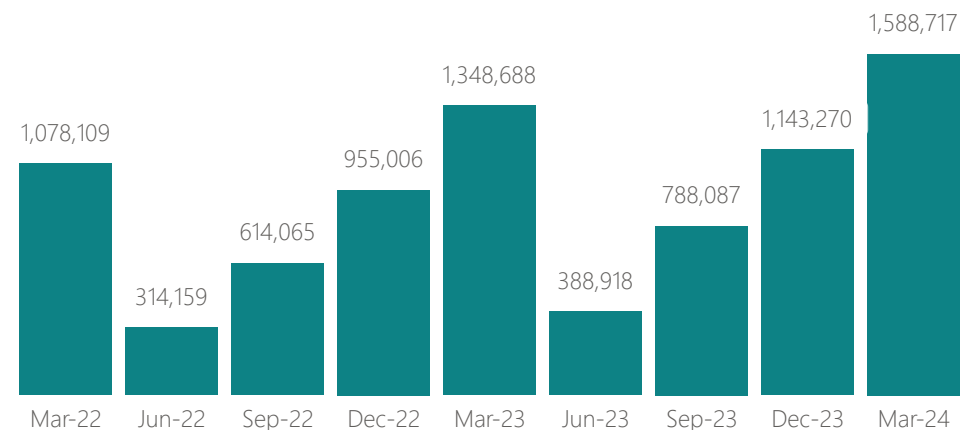
Health & Happiness

Best Start: Increase access to leisure services and activities for children and young people

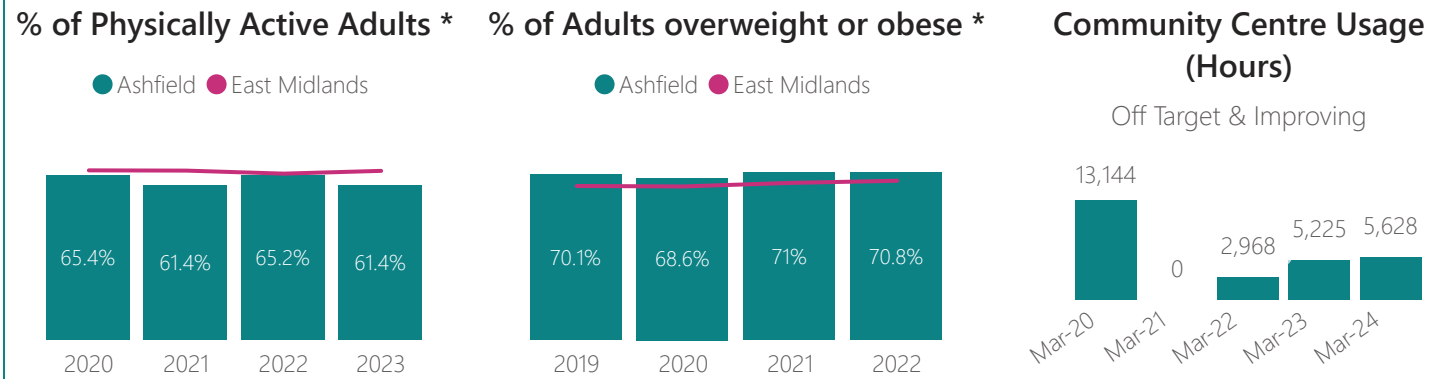


User Attendance at ADC Leisure Centres

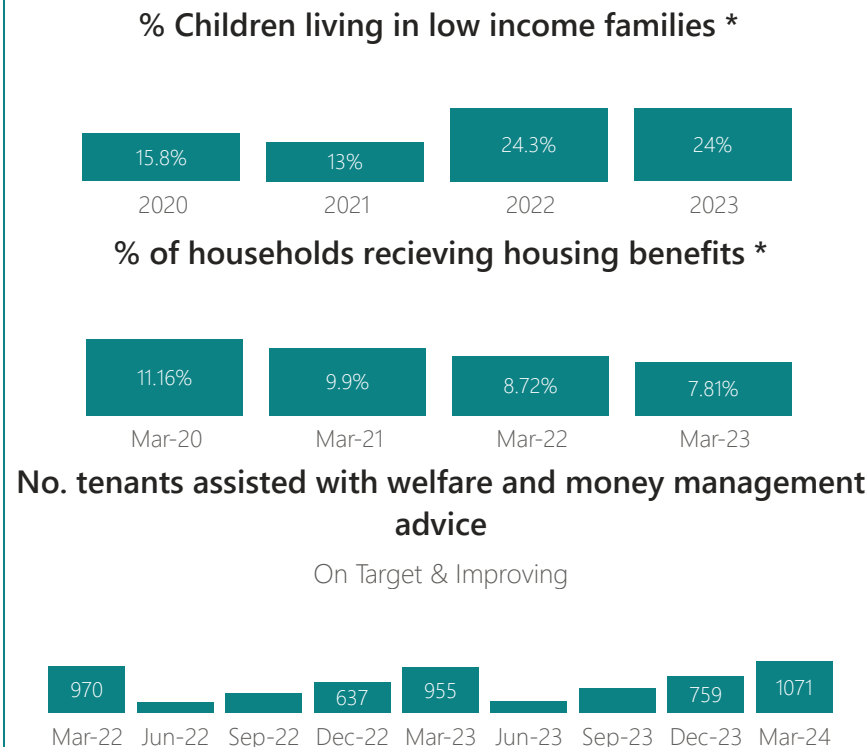
On Target & Improving



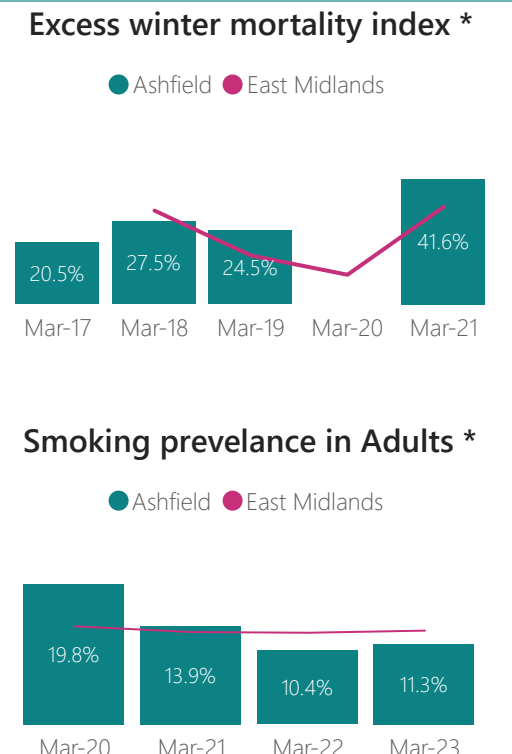
Living Well: Ongoing enhancement and continuing transformation of our leisure provision and health offer across the district



Living Well: Provision of financial advice and support



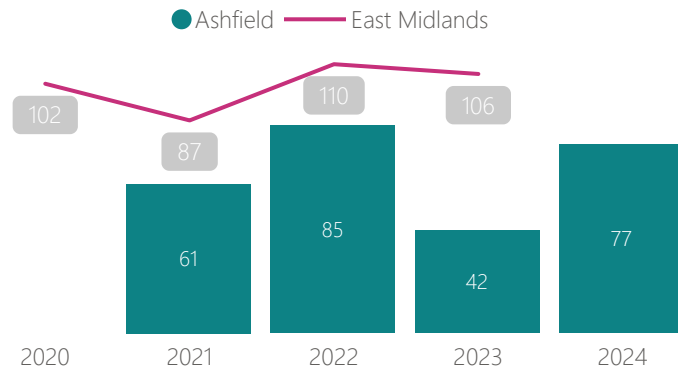
Health Inequalities



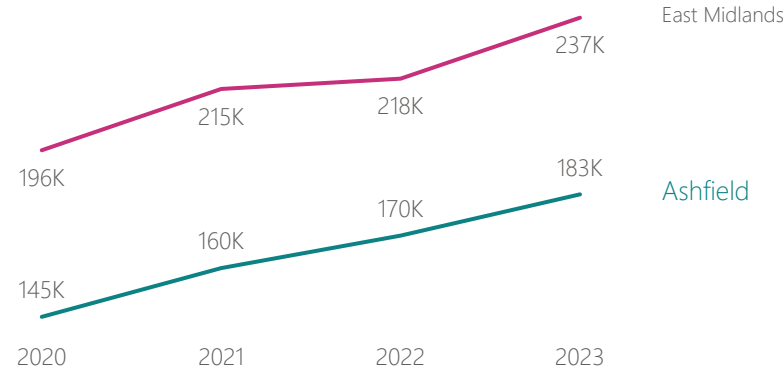
Homes & Housing

Housing Development: Delivering provision of affordable housing developments

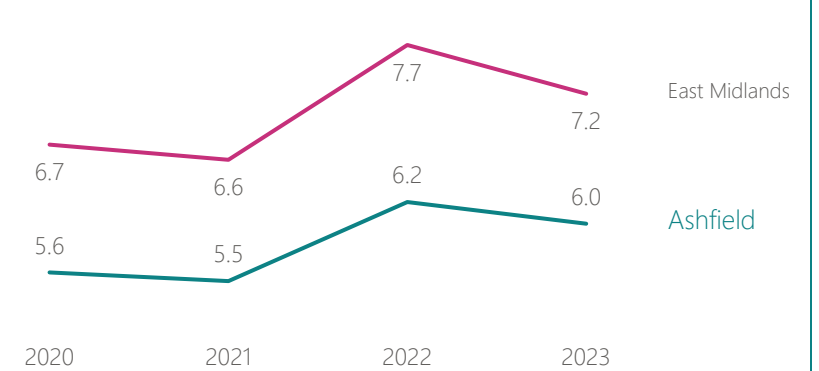
Affordable homes delivered



Median House Price *



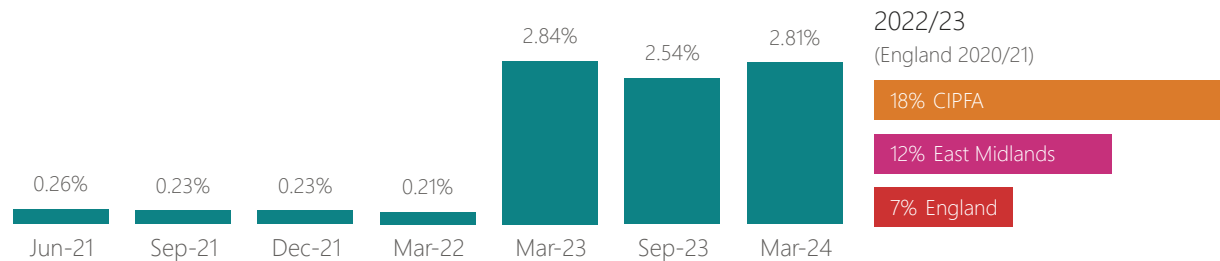
Affordability Ratio *



Tackling Disrepair and Poor Housing Conditions

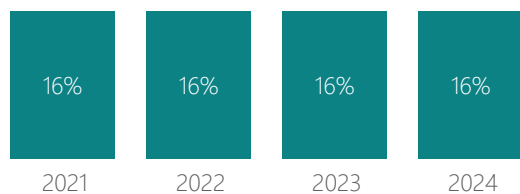
% of Council housing stock non-decent

Off Target & Improving



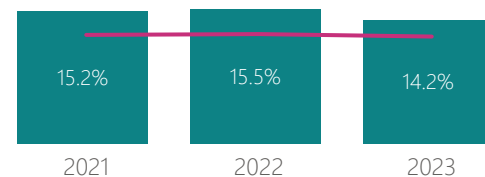
% of private sector homes non-decent *

On Target & No Change



% of households in fuel poverty *

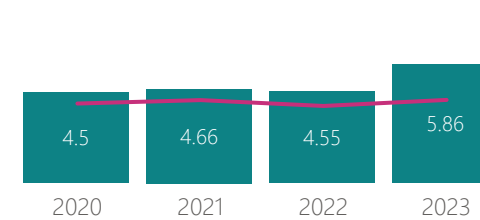
Ashfield East Midlands



Reduce and Prevent Homelessness

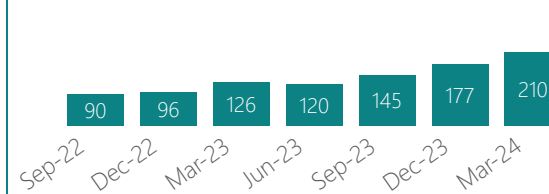
Households assessed as homeless * (Per 1,000)

Ashfield East Midlands



Number of applicants prevented from becoming homeless

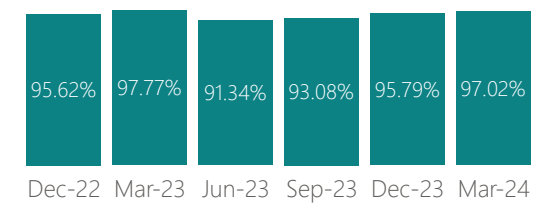
On Target & Improving



Customer Focus

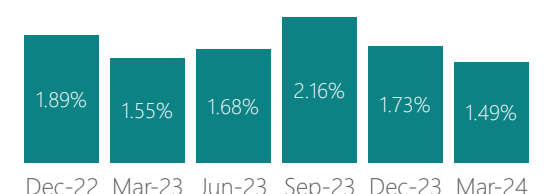
% of rent collected from rent due

Within Target & Getting Worse



Rent arrears as a proportion of rent roll

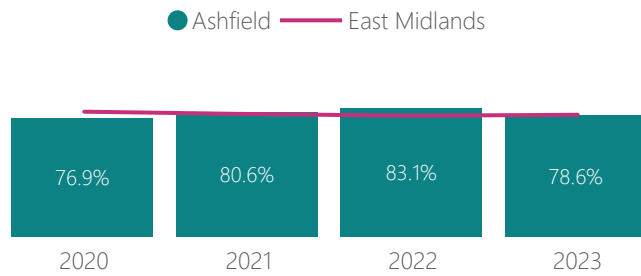
On Target & Improving



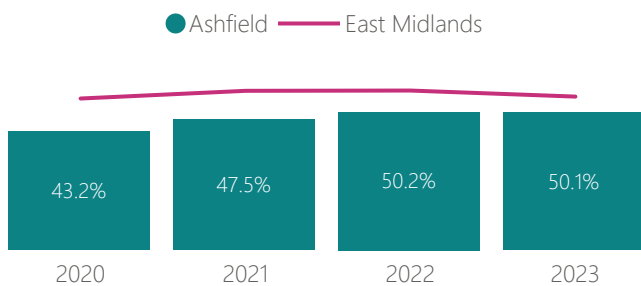
Economic Growth & Place

Skills and Employment: Development through the delivery of the Education & Skills Plan

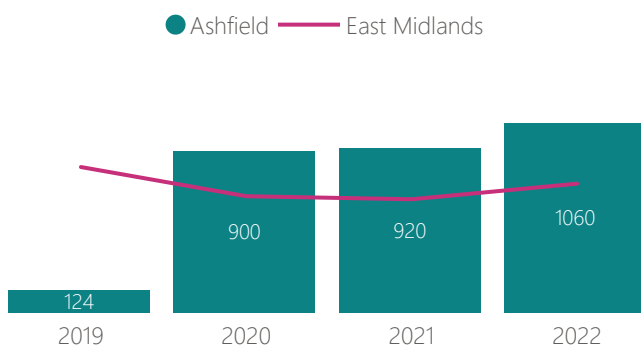
**% of population economically active *
(16-64 year olds)**



**% of population qualified to level 3 or higher *
(16-64 year olds)**

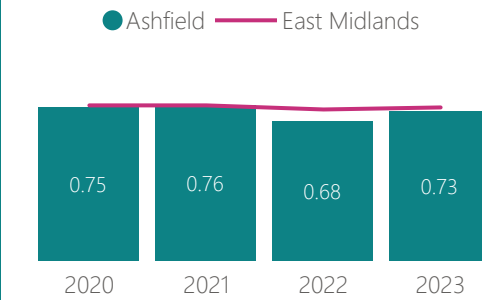


Number of Apprenticeship starts *

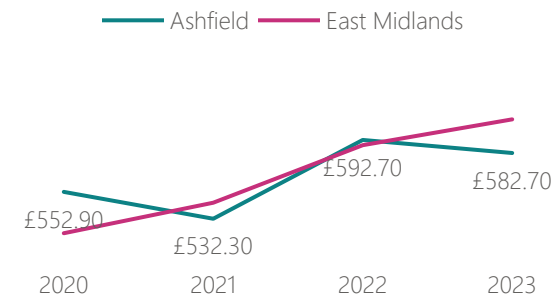


Businesses and Investments

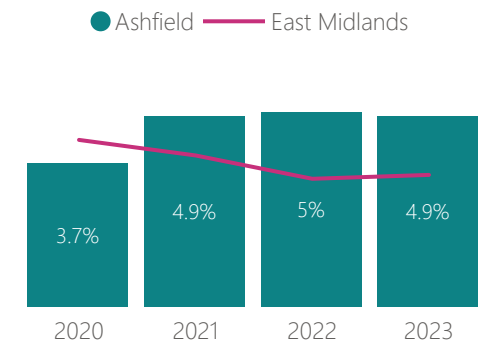
**Job Density *
(employees per working age population)**



**Median gross weekly pay *
(Residence based)**

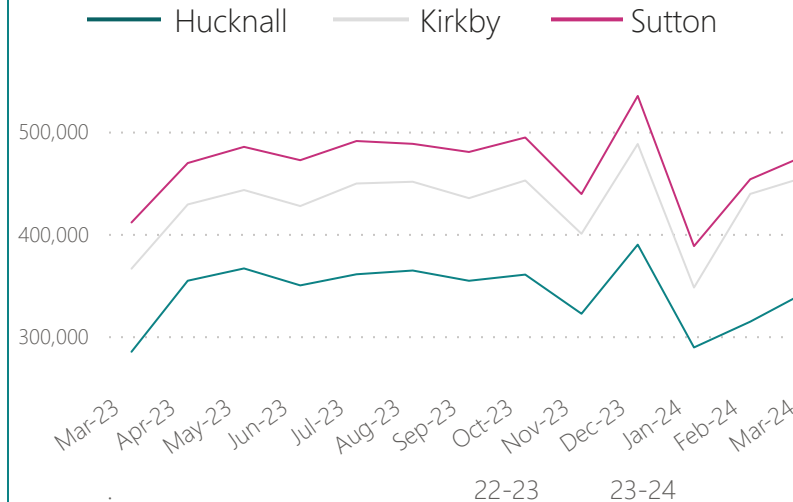


% of High Growth Enterprises *



Town Centres

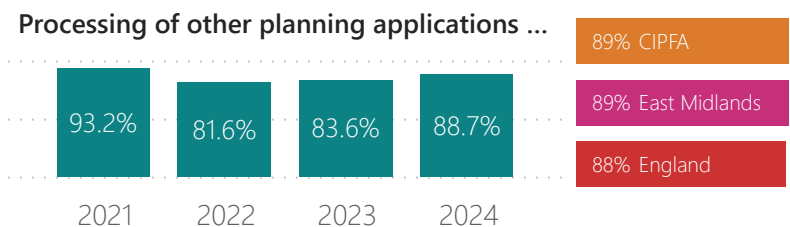
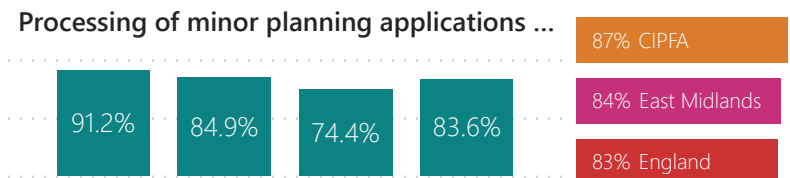
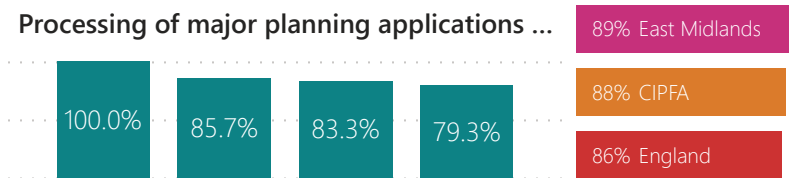
Town centre footfall



	22-23	23-24
Town centre footfall Hucknall	3,731,102	4,167,174
Town centre footfall Kirkby	4,639,238	5,216,549
Town centre footfall Sutton	5,264,792	5,671,518
Total	13,635,132	15,055,241

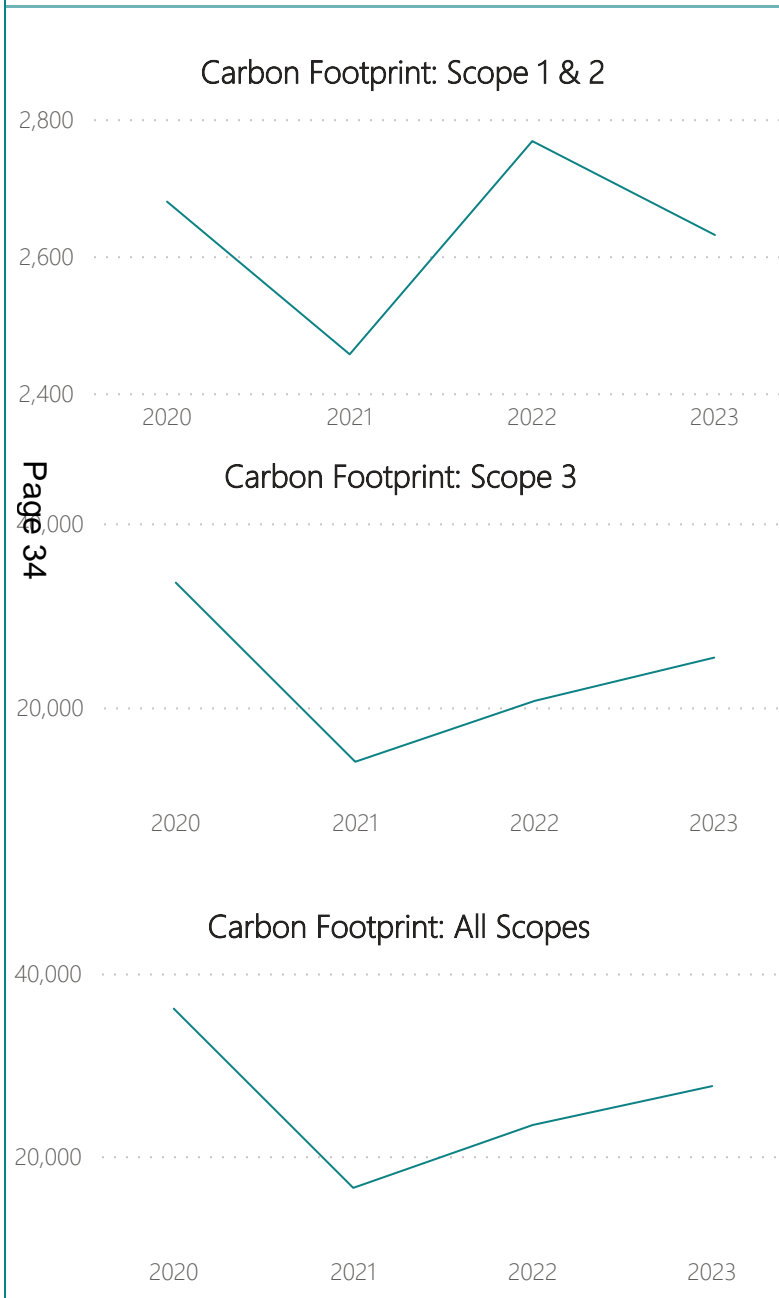
Regeneration

Processing of Planning Applications



Cleaner & Greener

Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability



Page 34

Cleanliness of the District



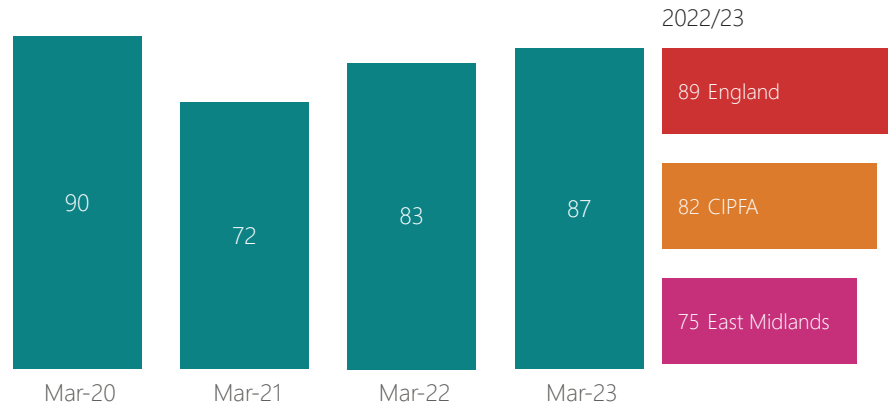
Parks and Green Spaces



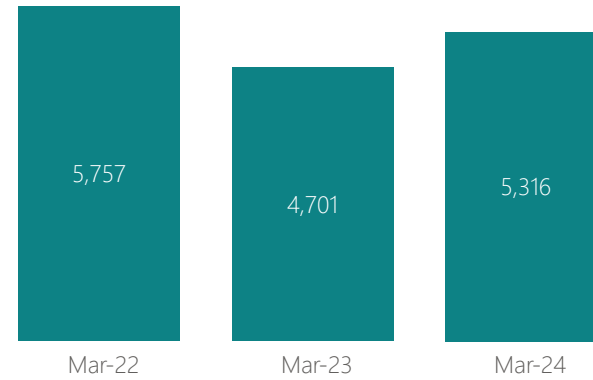
Safer & Stronger

A Safer District

Total Recorded Offences (per 1,000 population) *



Number of Service Requests into Community Safety



Number of reported serious violence incidents

Coming 2024/25

Communities Feeling Safer

% of Residents who feel safe outside during the day

Under development

% of Residents who feel safe outside after dark

Under development

% of residents who felt safer in their neighbourhood as a result of action taken by the Council

Under development

Supporting Vulnerable People

% of Residents experiencing domestic abuse in the last year *

Coming 2024/25

Domestic Abuse repeat victimisation rate *

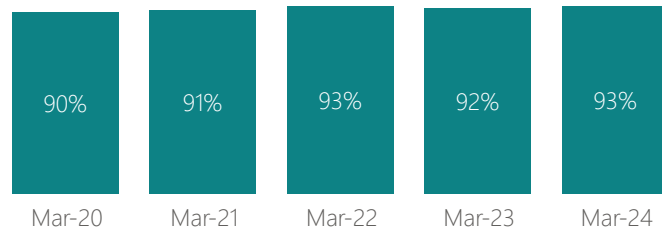
Coming 2024/25

Innovate & Improve

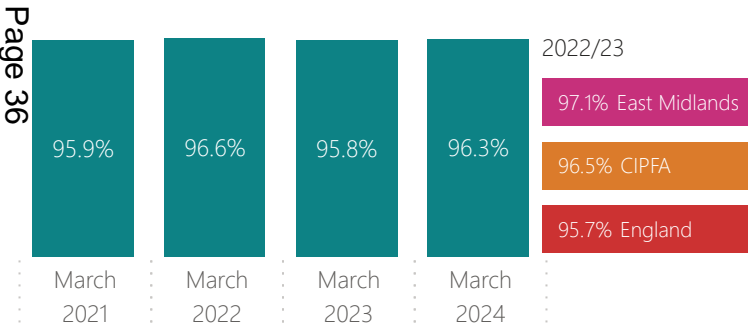
Financial Stability

Occupancy of ADC commercial property portfolio

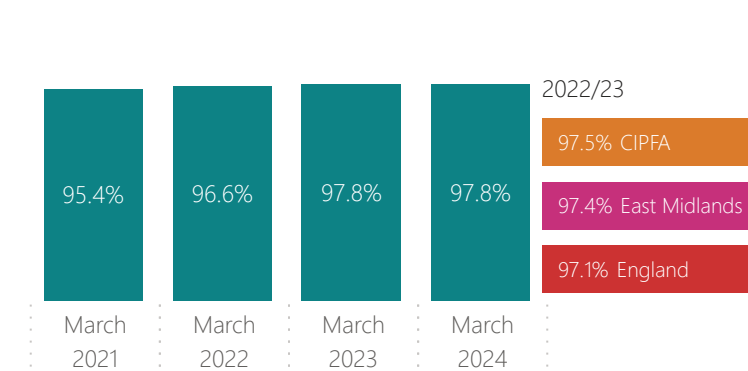
On Target & Improving



% of Council Tax Collected



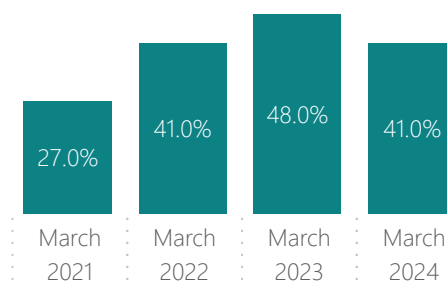
% of NNDR Collected



People & Partnerships

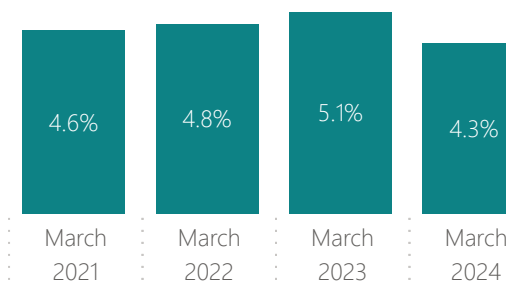
% of PDRs Completed

Off Target & Getting Worse



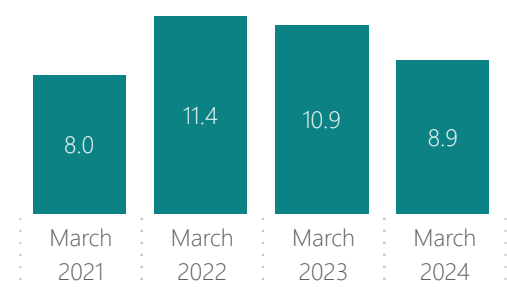
% of workforce that are young people

Off Target & Getting Worse



Average days absence per FTE

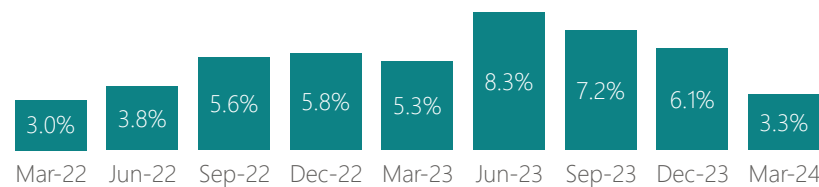
On Target & Improving



Digital Transformation

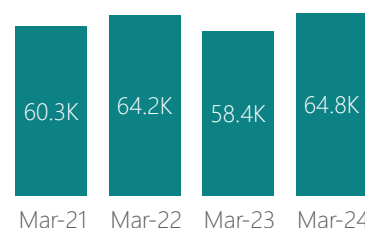
Call Abandonment Rate

On Target & Improving



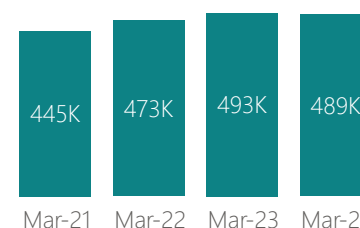
Number of Online Payments

On Target & Improving



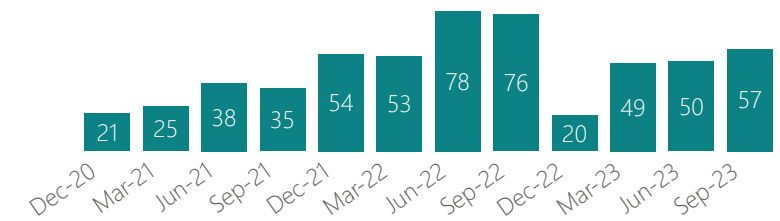
Number of Direct Debit Payments

Within Target and Worsening

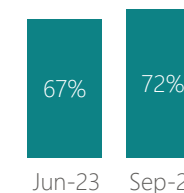


Customer Experience

Number of formal complaints received



% of Stage One Complaints dealt with in time



% of Stage Two Complaints dealt with in time



(ADC) Corporate Scorecard Delivery

Performance Indicators

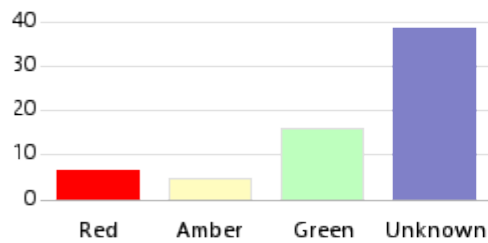
7 Pls at Red

5 Pls at Amber

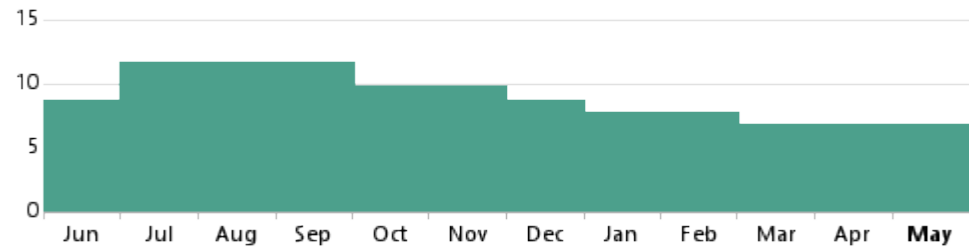
16 Pls at Green

67 Total number of Pls

Current PI statuses



Pls at Red








Page 37

Best Performing (PIs)	Value	Target	Gauge
(ADQ)CORP/HO/008 Number of applicants prevented...	210	75	
(ADQ)CORP/HO/014 Affordable homes delivered	77	30	
(ADQ)CORP/II/005 Call abandonment rate	3.32%	7.96%	
(ADQ)CORP/II/004 Average Call waiting time	47000.0	104000.0	
(ADQ)CORP/CO/003 Corporate Pls with an improving ...	83%	50%	

Worst Performing (PIs)	Value	Target	Gauge
(ADQ)CORP/HO/007 Percentage of Local Authority ho...	2.81%	0.30%	
(ADQ)CORP/II/010 Percentage of PDRs completed	41%	100%	
(ADQ)CORP/HH/010 Community Centre usage (hours)	5,628	12,000	
(ADQ)CORP/HO/011 Average void re-let time of Coun...	27.6	21.0	
(ADQ)CORP/II/009 % of overall workforce which are Y...	4.3%	6.79%	

Note there are 20 new KPI's in the scorecard for which data collection and/or trend analysis will commence in 2024/25.

**Theme ADC Corporate
Priority Objectives Delivery**

Code & Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Last Update	Next Update Due	Traffic Light Icon	Bullet Chart	Long Term	Short Term	Assigned To	Latest Note Date	Latest Note
(ADC)CORP/CO/001 Corporate Actions implemented or on track	84%	90%	Q4 2023/24	01-Apr-2021					Jo Froggatt	28-May-2024	Only 32 actions are overdue as of 31st March 2024, out of 194 actions across the Corporate Plan.
(ADC)CORP/CO/002 Efficiencies realised from service reviews	83,106	No target	2023/24	01-Apr-2018	No target				Jo Froggatt	28-May-2024	£83,106 cashable efficiencies have been identified as part of the service review programme for 2023/24. In addition, an investment of £136k has been made into the new Policy and Performance function with expected returns in excess of £250k per annum, plus additional investment of £60k in the tenancy management function should positively impact on rental income levels.

Code & Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Last Update	Next Update Due	Traffic Light Icon	Bullet Chart	Long Term	Short Term	Assigned To	Latest Note Date	Latest Note
(ADC)CORP/CO/003 Corporate PIs with an improving trend	83%	50%	Q4 2023/24	01-Jul-2024					Jo Froggatt	29-May-2024	29 of the Council's Delivery KPIs have improved compared to last year (out of 35 KPI's). As at 29th May there is 1 KPI awaiting year-end outturn data
(ADC)CORP/CO/004 Corporate PIs met or exceeded target	57%	75%	Q4 2023/24	01-Jul-2024					Jo Froggatt	29-May-2024	16 of the Council's Delivery KPI's have met or exceeded target. a further 5 KPI's are within 10% of target. As at 29th May there is 1 KPI awaiting year-end outturn data
(ADC)CORP/CO/005 Number of No Assurance or Limited Assurance Ratings issued	2	No target	2023/24	01-Jul-2024	No target				Connor Powell	04-Mar-2024	No trend data as new KPI and baseline outturn
(ADC)CORP/CO/006 Number of Critical or Significant Risk recommendations made	1	No target	2023/24	01-Jul-2024	No target				Connor Powell	04-Mar-2024	No trend data as new KPI and baseline outturn
(ADC)CORP/CO/007 Number of Moderate or Low Risk recommendations made	84	No target	2023/24	01-Jul-2024	No target				Connor Powell	04-Mar-2024	No trend data as new KPI and baseline outturn
(ADC)CORP/CO/008 Number of recommendations overdue by 6+ months (All Risks)	40	No target	2023/24	01-Jul-2024	No target				Connor Powell	04-Mar-2024	No trend data as new KPI and baseline outturn

**Theme Cleaner & Greener
Priority Objectives Delivery**

Code & Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Last Update	Next Update Due	Traffic Light Icon	Bullet Chart	Long Term	Short Term	Assigned To	Latest Note Date	Latest Note
(ADC)CORP/CG/004 % of residents that are satisfied with cleanliness of town centres				01-Apr-2024					Connor Powell		Outturn feedback being validated with Citizens Panel July 2024
(ADC)CORP/CG/005 % of residents that are satisfied with Parks and open spaces				01-Apr-2024					Connor Powell		Outturn feedback being validated with Citizens Panel July 2024
(ADC)CORP/CG/006 Number of Green Flag Awards	7	No target	2022/23	01-Apr-2024	No target		↑	↑	Connor Powell		
(ADC)CORP/CG/007 Percentage of household waste recycled and composted	36.18%	41.00%	2023/24	01-Jul-2024	🛑		↑	↑	David Marriott		
(ADC)CORP/CG/009 Fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 people	8.9		2022/23	01-Apr-2024			↓	↓	Connor Powell		Year-end data to follow
(ADC)CORP/CG/010 Carbon Footprint (scope 1 and 2) (A)	2,631	1,771	2022/23	01-Apr-2024	✅		↑	↑	Ian Bailey; Darren Wardale		Latest data
(ADC)CORP/CG/011 Carbon Footprint (scope 3) (A)	25,412	No target	2022/23	01-Apr-2024	No target		↑	↑	Ian Bailey; Darren Wardale		Latest data
(ADC)CORP/CG/012 Carbon Footprint (all scopes) (A)	27,678	No target	2022/23	01-Apr-2024	No target		↑	↑	Ian Bailey; Darren Wardale		Latest data
(ADC)CORP/CG/013 Total number of recorded Environmental Crime Incidents	New 24/25			01-Jul-2024					Lucy Lightfoot; Antonio Taylor		
(ADC)CORP/CG/014 Number of recorded flytipping incidents	New 24/25			01-Jul-2024					Lucy Lightfoot; Antonio Taylor		

Code & Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Last Update	Next Update Due	Traffic Light Icon	Bullet Chart	Long Term	Short Term	Assigned To	Latest Note Date	Latest Note
(ADC)CORP/CG/015 Number of recorded dog fouling incidents	New 24/25			01-Jul-2024					Lucy Lightfoot; Antonio Taylor		
(ADC)CORP/CG/016 Number of recorded littering incidents	New 24/25			01-Jul-2024					Lucy Lightfoot; Antonio Taylor		
(ADC)CORP/CG/017 Number of recorded graffiti incidents	New 24/25			01-Jul-2024					Lucy Lightfoot; Antonio Taylor		
(ADC)CORP/CG/018 Number of recorded abandoned vehicle incidents	New 24/25			01-Jul-2024					Lucy Lightfoot; Antonio Taylor		
(ADC)CORP/CG/019 Percentage of Street Cleaning Inspections graded B or above	New 24/25			01-May-2024					Andy Burgin; Mark Rickers		

Page 41

Theme Economic Growth & Place
Priority Objectives Delivery









Code & Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Last Update	Next Update Due	Traffic Light Icon	Bullet Chart	Long Term	Short Term	Assigned To	Latest Note Date	Latest Note
(ADC)CORP/EG/013 % of residents that are satisfied with council organised events				01-Apr-2024					Connor Powell		
(ADC)CORP/EG/009 Town centre footfall Sutton	477,084		March 2024	01-May-2024					Gillian Bradley; Trevor Middleton		
(ADC)CORP/EG/010 Town centre footfall Kirkby	455,891		March 2024	01-May-2024					Gillian Bradley; Trevor Middleton		
(ADC)CORP/EG/011 Town centre footfall Hucknall	343,455		March 2024	01-May-2024					Gillian Bradley; Trevor Middleton		

Code & Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Last Update	Next Update Due	Traffic Light Icon	Bullet Chart	Long Term	Short Term	Assigned To	Latest Note Date	Latest Note
(ADC)CORP/EG/014 Processing of major planning applications within 13 weeks	80.00%	75.00%	Q4 2023/24	01-Jul-2024					Melanie Berry; Jo Jones		
(ADC)CORP/EG/015 Processing of minor planning applications within 8 weeks	95.00%	75.00%	Q4 2023/24	01-Jul-2024					Melanie Berry; Jo Jones		
(ADC)CORP/EG/016 Processing of other planning applications within 8 weeks	95.52%	75.00%	Q4 2023/24	01-Jul-2024					Melanie Berry; Jo Jones		









Theme Health & Happiness Priority Objectives Delivery

Code & Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Last Update	Next Update Due	Traffic Light Icon	Bullet Chart	Long Term	Short Term	Assigned To	Latest Note Date	Latest Note
(ADC)CORP/HH/009 Number of user attendances at ADC leisure facilities	1,588,717	1,510,753	Q4 2023/24	01-Jul-2024					Andrea Stone	16-Apr-2024	445,447 equates to 29% of the total target figure for the year.
(ADC)CORP/HH/010 Community Centre usage (hours)	5,628	12,000	2023/24	01-Apr-2025					Ian Bailey; Darren Wardale	23-May-2024	Low usage is due to groups not recommencing post Covid. Also existing groups have reduced their bookings.
(ADC)CORP/HH/013 % of Residents that are satisfied with Council Run Leisure Centres				01-Apr-2024					Connor Powell		Outturn feedback being validated with Citizens Panel July 2024
(ADC)CORP/HH/014 Number of Council Tenants assisted with welfare and money management advice	1,071	950	Q4 2023/24	01-Jul-2024					Paul Wakelin; Paul Whittingham	17-Apr-2024	MMA - total this quarter 148 aggregated - 532 TSO - total this quarter 147 - aggregated - 539

**Theme Homes & Housing
Priority Objectives Delivery**

Code & Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Last Update	Next Update Due	Traffic Light Icon	Bullet Chart	Long Term	Short Term	Assigned To	Latest Note Date	Latest Note
(ADC)CORP/HO/007 Percentage of Local Authority housing stock that is non-decent	2.81%	0.30%	Q4 2023/24	01-Jul-2024					Ian Bailey; Neil Rowley;	15-May-2024	Data still to be cleansed and validated which is expected to reduce the figure.
(ADC)CORP/HO/008 Number of applicants prevented from becoming homeless	210	75	Q4 2023/24	01-Jul-2024					Ian Scholes	09-May-2024	The number of households assisted by the Housing Options Team to either remain in their current accommodation or secure alternative accommodation has increased quarter on quarter. This was particularly evident in the number of successful 'preventions' as defined by the homelessness legislation. 51 households who approached the Housing Options Team were either able to remain in their current accommodation or secure alternative accommodation before they actually became homeless. Historically ADC has had a large proportion of households who approach for assistance at the point of homelessness. There is an ongoing focus and work to try to assist

Code & Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Last Update	Next Update Due	Traffic Light Icon	Bullet Chart	Long Term	Short Term	Assigned To	Latest Note Date	Latest Note
											<p>households when they are threatened with homelessness and this seems to be having an impact. The Sanctuary Scheme and financial assistance for rent in advance/deposits to assist households into alternative (privately rented) accommodation are good examples of things working well. The Housing Options Team have also secured alternative accommodation for households who approached at the point of homelessness or were under the Relief Duty. These figures are included in this PI but, as mentioned, it is the upstream work that is the main priority.</p> <p>In line with the previous quarter there was also an increase in the number of ADC tenants assisted by the Tenancy Sustainment Team to remain in their homes.</p> <p>There are still ongoing, external factors, that make the environment challenging but this PI shows the success that</p>

Code & Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Last Update	Next Update Due	Traffic Light Icon	Bullet Chart	Long Term	Short Term	Assigned To	Latest Note Date	Latest Note
											ADC is currently having in tackling issues which are increasingly complex. The Complex Case Team themselves have contributed to the overall success this quarter.
(ADC)CORP/HO/009 Proportion of tenants who remain in their tenancy for 6 months or more following the completion of the support package	100%	95%	April 2024	01-Jun-2024					Claire Kilcommons; Paul Whittingham	14-May-2024	In Oct 2023, there were 46 cases where Tenancy Sustainment support ended. Of these, 43 tenants still remain in their tenancy. One tenancy ended due to death, one via mutual exchange and one via a transfer. This case has been excluded from the figures as the Tenancy Sustainment Team could not have prevented this
(ADC)CORP/HO/011 Average void re-let time of Council Homes (DAYS)	27.6	21.0	April 2024	01-Jun-2024					Caroline Greasley	20-May-2024	Continued weekly monitoring with the Voids Team to identify causes for any delays and put plans put in place to address any issues. Likewise, weekly monitoring with the Lettings Officers. Depot have had some issues with certain trades and likewise, Lettings have had some DTL properties whereby there have been multiple adverts and offers.

Code & Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Last Update	Next Update Due	Traffic Light Icon	Bullet Chart	Long Term	Short Term	Assigned To	Latest Note Date	Latest Note
(ADC)CORP/HO/012 Percentage of rent collected from total rent due	97.02%	98.00%	Q4 2023/24	01-Jul-2024					Paul Wakelin; Paul Whittingham	16-Apr-2024	
(ADC)CORP/HO/013 Rent arrears as a proportion of Rent Roll (excluding court costs)	1.23%	1.6%	April 2024	01-Jun-2024					Paul Wakelin; Paul Whittingham	14-May-2024	This indicator is within target and has also improved from 1.26% at the same time in the previous financial year. The recently appointed Income Coordinators have begun making contact with low level arrears cases in order to prevent them from escalating.
(ADC)CORP/HO/014 Affordable homes delivered	77	30	2023/24	01-Apr-2025					Gillian Bradley; Connor Powell	29-May-2024	Draft figure based on data received

Page 46





**Theme Innovate & Improve
Priority Objectives Delivery**

Code & Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Last Update	Next Update Due	Traffic Light Icon	Bullet Chart	Long Term	Short Term	Assigned To	Latest Note Date	Latest Note
(ADC)CORP/III/002 Number of direct debit payments made	489,312	492,911	2023/24	01-Jul-2024					Cathy Sands	05-Apr-2024	Call monitoring ended in December 2023, previous months this would have been between 800 and 1000 direct debit transactions each month. This accounts for the reduction in DD's this quarter. Calculating the other services collecting by



Code & Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Last Update	Next Update Due	Traffic Light Icon	Bullet Chart	Long Term	Short Term	Assigned To	Latest Note Date	Latest Note
											Direct Debit these have increase from previous financial year
(ADC)CORP/II/003 Number of online payments made	64,828	58,410	2023/24	01-Jul-2024					Cathy Sands; Rosie Taylor-Caddy		
(ADC)CORP/II/004 Average Call waiting time	0h 00m 47s	0h 01m 44s	Q4 2023/24	01-Jul-2024					Cathy Sands		
(ADC)CORP/II/005 Call abandonment rate	3.32%	7.96%	Q4 2023/24	01-Jul-2024					Cathy Sands		
(ADC)CORP/II/006 % of Residents that agree the Council has a website that is easy to use				01-Apr-2024					Connor Powell		Outturn feedback being validated with Citizens Panel July 2024
(ADC)CORP/II/007 % of Residents that agree the Council provides good access to online services				01-Apr-2024					Connor Powell		Outturn feedback being validated with Citizens Panel July 2024
(ADC)CORP/II/008 Average days' absence per FTE	8.88	10.50	Q4 2023/24	01-Jul-2024					Kate Hill; Nikki Morris	16-Apr-2024	
(ADC)CORP/II/009 % of overall workforce which are Young People	4.3%	6.79%	2023/24	01-Apr-2025					Kate Hill		
(ADC)CORP/II/010 Percentage of PDRs completed	41%	100%	2023/24	01-Apr-2025					Lorraine Powney	29-May-2024	organisational structure led to delays in PDR being undertaken within the annual performance cycle
(ADC)CORP/II/011 Number of formal complaints received	57		Q2 2023/24	01-Jan-2024					Rosie Taylor-Caddy		New KPI for 2023/24 for which there is no previous trend analysis. Year-end data to follow will be baseline for 2024/25 onwards

4/2024

Code & Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Last Update	Next Update Due	Traffic Light Icon	Bullet Chart	Long Term	Short Term	Assigned To	Latest Note Date	Latest Note
(ADC)CORP/II/012 % of stage one complaints dealt with in time	72%		Q2 2023/24	01-Jan-2024					Rosie Taylor-Caddy		New KPI for 2023/24 for which there is no previous trend analysis. Year-end data to follow will be baseline for 2024/25 onwards
(ADC)CORP/II/013 % of stage two complaints dealt with in time	100%		Q2 2023/24	01-Jan-2024					Rosie Taylor-Caddy		New KPI for 2023/24 for which there is no previous trend analysis. Year-end data to follow will be baseline for 2024/25 onwards
(ADC)CORP/II/014 % of Residents that are satisfied with how their enquiries are dealt with				01-Apr-2024					Connor Powell		Outturn feedback being validated with Citizens Panel July 2024
(ADC)CORP/II/015 % of Residents that are satisfied with their experience of getting in touch with the Council.				01-Apr-2024					Connor Powell		Outturn feedback being validated with Citizens Panel July 2024
(ADC)CORP/II/016 Occupancy of ADC commercial property portfolio	93.00%	90.00%	Q4 2023/24	01-Jul-2024					Matthew Kirk		
(ADC)CORP/II/017 Percentage of Council Tax collected in current year	96.30%	97.50%	Q4 2023/24	01-Jul-2024					Diane Mitchell	08-Apr-2024	The collection rate at the end of the financial year is 1.2% below target. The recovery team have been working through reports and taking recovery action i.e., Attachment of Earnings Orders, Attachment to Benefits and referrals to the

Code & Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Last Update	Next Update Due	Traffic Light Icon	Bullet Chart	Long Term	Short Term	Assigned To	Latest Note Date	Latest Note
											<p>Enforcement Agent, for unpaid accounts, but this takes time to receive the monies.</p> <p>We have had a setback as Reminders and Summons action were scheduled for March but due to system issues, Reminders & Summons could not be issued. This had an impact on collection.</p>
(ADC)CORP/II/018 Percentage of NNDR collected in current year	97.78%	98.00%	Q4 2023/24	01-Jul-2024					Diane Mitchell	08-Apr-2024	The collection rate at the end of the financial year is just below target by 0.22%. Changes made by the Valuation Office Agency at this point in the financial year have implications for collection given the limited timescale to collect by 31 March 2024.
(ADC)CORP/II/019 Number of formal Compliments received	4		Q2 2023/24	01-Jan-2024					Rosie Taylor-Caddy		New KPI for 2023/24 for which there is no previous trend analysis. Year-end data to follow will be baseline for 2024/25 onwards

**Theme Safer & Stronger
Priority Objectives Delivery**

Code & Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Last Update	Next Update Due	Traffic Light Icon	Bullet Chart	Long Term	Short Term	Assigned To	Latest Note Date	Latest Note
(ADC)CORP/SS/002 Number of service requests received into community safety	1,278	No target	Q4 2023/24	01-Jul-2024	No target				Lucy Lightfoot; Antonio Taylor		
(ADC)CORP/SS/003 Number of reported serious violence incidents	New 24/25			01-Apr-2024					Lucy Lightfoot; Antonio Taylor		
(ADC)CORP/SS/005 % of Residents who feel safe outside during the day				01-Apr-2024					Connor Powell		Outturn feedback being validated with Citizens Panel July 2024
(ADC)CORP/SS/006 % of Residents who feel safe outside at night				01-Apr-2024					Connor Powell		Outturn feedback being validated with Citizens Panel July 2024
(ADC)CORP/SS/007 % of Residents who felt safer in their neighbourhood or noted an improvement in their situation as a result of action taken by the Council	New 24/25			01-Apr-2024					Lucy Lightfoot; Antonio Taylor		
(ADC)CORP/SS/008 % of residents who after Council intervention stated they would feel confident to report community safety matters in the future	New 24/25			01-Apr-2024					Lucy Lightfoot; Antonio Taylor		
(ADC)CORP/SS/009 % of residents experiencing domestic abuse in the last year	New 24/25			01-Jul-2023					Lucy Lightfoot; Antonio Taylor		
(ADC)CORP/SS/010 Domestic Abuse repeat victimisation rate	New 24/25			01-Jul-2024					Lucy Lightfoot; Antonio Taylor		

Page 10

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Report To:	PRINCIPAL SELECT COMMITTEE
Date:	6 JUNE 2024
Heading:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY STATUTORY GUIDANCE
Executive Lead Member:	NOT APPLICABLE
Ward/s:	NOT APPLICABLE
Key Decision:	NO
Subject to Call-In:	NO

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to share with Members of the Principal Select Committee recently published statutory guidance from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities titled *Overview and Scrutiny: Statutory Guidance for Councils, Combined Authorities and Combined County Authorities*.

Recommendation(s)

Members of the Principal Select Committee are recommended to:

- a. Note the recently published statutory guidance from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities titled *Overview and Scrutiny: Statutory Guidance for Councils, Combined Authorities and Combined County Authorities*.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

It is important for the Principal Select Committee, with responsibility for management of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function, to keep up to date with the latest statutory guidance and best practices.

Alternative Options Considered

No alternative options have been considered. It is important for the Principal Select Committee, with responsibility for management of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function, to keep up to date with the latest statutory guidance and best practices.

Detailed Information

On 22 April 2024, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities published statutory guidance titled *Overview and Scrutiny: Statutory Guidance for Councils, Combined Authorities and Combined County Authorities*. The document is an update on previous guidance published in May 2019.

The statutory guidance has been published following the introduction of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and is aimed at councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities in England to help them carry out their overview and scrutiny functions effectively. In particular, it provides advice for senior leaders, members of overview and scrutiny committees, scrutiny officers and any officers with a role in supporting scrutiny committees.

The guidance covers:

- Introduction and context
- Culture
- Resourcing
- Selecting committee members
- Power to access information
- Planning work
- Evidence sessions

Along with the following annexes:

- Annex 1: Illustrative scenario – creating an executive-scrutiny protocol
- Annex 2: Illustrative scenario – engaging independent technical advisers
- Annex 3: Illustrative scenario – approaching an external organisation to appear before a committee

The complete guidance is appended to this report.

Members are asked to note the statutory guidance and consider any implications for the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

The Council is committed to ensuring the Overview and Scrutiny function, through the appointed Select Committees, continues to follow statutory guidance and best practice.

Legal:

Overview and Scrutiny: Statutory Guidance for Councils, Combined Authorities and Combined County Authorities has been issued under section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000 and under paragraph 2(9) of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and under paragraph 2(9) of Schedule 1 to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, which require authorities to have regard to the guidance.

Finance:

There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations within this report.

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	N/A
General Fund – Capital Programme	
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	

Risk:

There are no risks resulting from the recommendations within this report.

Human Resources:

There are no HR implications resulting from the recommendations within this report.

Environmental/Sustainability:

There are no environmental/sustainability implications resulting from the recommendations within this report.

Equalities:

There are no equalities implications resulting from the recommendations within this report.

Other Implications:

There are no other implications resulting from the recommendations within this report.

Reason(s) for Urgency

None.

Reason(s) for Exemption

None.

Background Papers

None.

Report Author and Contact Officer

Shane Wright
Governance Manager
shane.wright@ashfield.gov.uk
01623 457318

Sponsoring Executive Director

Ruth Dennis
Executive Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer
ruth.dennis@ashfield.gov.uk
01623 457009

[Home](#) > [Regional and local government](#)

> [Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities](#)

[Department for
Levelling Up,
Housing &
Communities](#)

Statutory guidance

Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities

Published 22 April 2024

Applies to England

Contents

[Ministerial foreword](#)

[About this guidance](#)

[1. Introduction and context](#)

[2. Culture](#)

[3. Resourcing](#)

[4. Selecting committee members](#)

[5. Power to access information](#)

6. Planning work

7. Evidence sessions

Annex 1: Illustrative scenario – creating an executive-scrutiny protocol

Annex 2: Illustrative scenario – engaging independent technical advisers

Annex 3: Illustrative scenario – approaching an external organisation to appear before a committee



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Ministerial foreword

The role that overview and scrutiny can play in holding an authority's decision-makers to account remains fundamentally important to the functioning of local democracy. Effective local authority decision-making is crucial for sector sustainability, and this updated guidance reinforces the role that overview and scrutiny has in making such decisions.

Effective scrutiny helps secure the efficient delivery of public services and drives improvements within the authority itself. Conversely, poor scrutiny can be indicative of wider governance, leadership and service failure.

It is vital that councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities know the purpose of scrutiny, what effective scrutiny looks like, how to conduct it and the benefits it can bring. This guidance aims to increase understanding in all four areas.

Authorities with effective overview and scrutiny arrangements in place share certain key traits, the most important being a strong organisational culture. Authorities who welcome challenge and recognise the value scrutiny can bring reap the benefits. But this depends on strong commitment from the top - from senior members as well as senior officials.

This guidance reflects new developments such as the further devolution of powers and funding to local areas and the establishment of combined authorities and combined county authorities. Just as the principles in this statutory guidance apply to the good scrutiny function of councils, they are equally fundamental to that of English institutions with devolved powers. The accountability of these institutions is core to the success of areas with devolution agreements, and they should use this guidance alongside that in the English Devolution Accountability Framework and the Scrutiny Protocol.

Government recognises that all authorities have democratic mandates, are ultimately accountable to local people and that authorities themselves are best placed to know which scrutiny arrangements are most appropriate for their own individual circumstances.

I strongly urge all councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities to cast a critical eye over their existing arrangements and, above all, ensure they embed a culture that allows overview and scrutiny to flourish.

Simon Hoare MP
Minister for Local Government

About this guidance

Who the guidance is for

This document is aimed at councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities in England to help them carry out their overview and scrutiny functions effectively. In particular, it provides advice for senior leaders, members of overview and scrutiny committees, scrutiny officers and any officers with a role in supporting scrutiny committees.

Aim of the guidance

This guidance seeks to ensure councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities are aware of the purpose of overview and scrutiny, what effective scrutiny looks like, how to conduct it effectively and the benefits it can bring.

As such, it includes a number of policies and practices all authorities should adopt or should consider adopting when deciding how to carry out their overview and scrutiny functions.

The guidance recognises that authorities approach scrutiny in different ways and have different processes and procedures in place, and that what might work well for one authority might not work well in another.

The hypothetical scenarios contained in the annexes to this guidance have been included for illustrative purposes and are intended to provoke thought and discussion rather than serve as a 'best' way to approach the relevant issues.

While the guidance sets out some of the key legal requirements, it does not seek to replicate legislation.

Status of the guidance

This is statutory guidance from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Overview and scrutiny committees of local authorities, combined authorities and combined county authorities must have regard to it when exercising, or deciding whether to exercise, any of their functions. The phrase 'must have regard', when used in this context, does not mean that the sections of statutory guidance have to be followed in every detail, but that they should be followed unless there is a good reason not to in a particular case.

Not every authority is required to appoint a scrutiny committee. This guidance applies to those authorities who have such a committee in place, whether they are required to or not.

This guidance has been issued under [section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/22/section/9Q) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/22/section/9Q>) and under [paragraph 2\(9\) of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/20/schedule/5A) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/20/schedule/5A>) and under [paragraph 2\(9\) of Schedule 1 to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/55/schedule/1/paragraph/2/enacted) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/55/schedule/1/paragraph/2/enacted>), which require authorities to have regard to this guidance.

In addition, authorities may have regard to other material they might choose to consider, including that issued by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, when exercising their overview and scrutiny functions. Areas with a devolution deal should further consider the Scrutiny Protocol issued by government on 22 November 2023 (see paragraph 7).

Terminology

Unless ‘overview’ is specifically mentioned, the term ‘scrutiny’ refers to both overview and scrutiny^{[\[footnote 1\]](#)}. Where the term ‘authority’ is used, it refers to councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities. Where the term ‘Council’ is used, it means a county council in England, a district council or a London borough council, this definition includes unitary authorities^{[\[footnote 2\]](#)}.

Where the term ‘scrutiny committee’ is used, it refers to an overview and scrutiny committee and any of its sub-committees. As the legislation refers throughout to functions conferred on scrutiny committees, that is the wording used in this guidance. However, the guidance should be seen as applying equally to work undertaken in informal task and finish groups commissioned by formal committees.

Where the term ‘executive’ is used, it refers to executive members.

For combined authorities, references to the ‘executive’ or ‘cabinet’ should be interpreted as relating to the mayor (where applicable) and all the authority members including non-constituent members and associate members as well as constituent council members.

For authorities operating committee rather than executive arrangements, references to the ‘executive’ or ‘cabinet’ should be interpreted as relating to councillors in leadership positions.

Expiry or review date

This guidance was published on 22 April 2024 and replaces guidance published on 7 May 2019.

This guidance will be kept under review and updated as necessary.

1. Introduction and context

Legislative context

1. Overview and scrutiny committees were introduced in 2000 as part of new executive governance arrangements to ensure that members of a local authority who were not part of the executive could hold the executive to account for the decisions and actions that affect their communities.

2. The requirement for councils in England to establish overview and scrutiny committees is set out in [sections 9F to 9FI of the Local Government Act 2000](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/22/part/1A/chapter/2/crossheading/overview-and-scrutiny-committees) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/22/part/1A/chapter/2/crossheading/overview-and-scrutiny-committees>) as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The Localism Act amended the Local Government Act 2000 to allow councils to revert to a non-executive form of governance - the 'committee system'. Councils who adopt the committee system are not required to have overview and scrutiny but may do so if they wish. The legislation has been updated since 2000.

3. Requirements for combined authorities are set out in [Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/20/schedule/5A) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/20/schedule/5A>)^[footnote 3] and those for combined county authorities are set out in Schedule 1 to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023^[footnote 4].

What overview and scrutiny committees do

4. Overview and scrutiny committees have statutory powers^[footnote 5] to scrutinise decisions the executive is planning to take, those it plans to implement, and those that have already been taken/implemented. Combined authority and combined county authority overview and scrutiny committees also have powers to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the mayor of any general (i.e. non-PCC) functions. Overview and scrutiny committees may make reports or recommendations to the authority or mayor about the discharge of their

respective functions, and also on matters that affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of the area. Recommendations following scrutiny enable improvements to be made to policies and how they are implemented. Overview and scrutiny committees can also play a valuable role in developing policy.

Effective overview and scrutiny should:

- provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge
- amplify the voices and concerns of the public
- be led by independent^[footnote 6] people who take responsibility for their role
- drive improvement in public services and strategic decision-making

5. Current overview and scrutiny legislation recognises that authorities are locally accountable^[footnote 7]. Authorities themselves are best placed to determine which overview and scrutiny arrangements best suit their own individual needs, and so gives them a great degree of flexibility to decide which arrangements to adopt.

6. In producing this guidance, the government fully recognises these authorities' democratic mandate and that the nature of local government has changed in recent years, with, for example, the creation of combined authorities and combined county authorities, and councils increasingly delivering key services in partnership with other organisations or outsourcing them entirely.

7. The ongoing deeper devolution of powers and funding to local areas brings the requirement and provision for greater accountability. It is crucial that the local scrutiny of institutions with devolved powers sets robust standards to hold them to account for delivery, as well as playing a critical role in policy and strategy development. This is particularly important when scrutinising devolved powers. To strengthen the scrutiny for those English institutions with devolved powers, government has published [the Scrutiny Protocol guidance \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scrutiny-protocol-for-english-institutions-with-devolved-powers/scrutiny-protocol\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scrutiny-protocol-for-english-institutions-with-devolved-powers/scrutiny-protocol) which can be considered a supplement to this advice for those institutions.

2. Culture

8. The prevailing organisational culture, behaviours and attitudes of an authority will largely determine whether its scrutiny function succeeds or fails.

9. While everyone in an authority can play a role in creating an environment conducive to effective scrutiny, it is important that this is led and owned by

members, including any directly elected mayor, given their role in setting and maintaining the culture of an authority.

10. Creating a strong organisational culture supports scrutiny work that can add real value by, for example, improving policy-making and the efficient delivery of public services. In contrast, low levels of support for, and engagement with, the scrutiny function often lead to poor quality and ill-focused work that serves to reinforce the perception that it is of little worth or relevance.

11. Members and senior officers should note that the performance of the scrutiny function is not just of interest to the authority itself. Its effectiveness, or lack thereof, is often considered by external bodies such as regulators and inspectors, and highlighted in public reports, including best value inspection reports^[footnote 8]. Failures in scrutiny can therefore help to create a negative public image of an authority as a whole.

How to establish a strong organisational culture

12. Authorities can establish a strong organisational culture by:

(a) Recognising scrutiny's legal and democratic legitimacy

All members and officers should recognise and appreciate the importance and legitimacy the scrutiny function is afforded by the law. It was created to act as a check and balance on the executive and is a statutory requirement for all councils operating executive arrangements and for all combined authorities and combined county authorities.

Scrutiny committee members have a unique legitimacy derived from their being democratically elected councillors in the first instance. The insights that they can bring by having this close connection to local people are part of what gives scrutiny its value.

(b) Identifying a clear role and focus

Authorities should take steps to ensure scrutiny has a clear role and focus within the organisation, i.e. a niche within which it can clearly add value. Therefore, prioritisation is necessary to ensure the scrutiny function concentrates on delivering work that is of genuine value and relevance to the work of the wider authority – this is one of the most challenging parts of scrutiny, and a critical element to get right if it is to be recognised as a strategic function of the authority (see [chapter 6](#)).

Authorities should ensure a clear division of responsibilities between the scrutiny function and the audit function. While it is appropriate for scrutiny to pay due regard to the authority's financial position, this will need to happen in

the context of the formal audit role. The authority's section 151 officer should advise scrutiny on how to manage this dynamic.

While scrutiny has no role in the investigation or oversight of the authority's whistleblowing arrangements, the findings of independent whistleblowing investigations might be of interest to scrutiny committees as they consider their wider implications. Members should always follow the authority's constitution and associated Monitoring Officer directions on the matter. See further [guidance on whistleblowing](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whistleblowing-guidance-and-code-of-practice-for-employers) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whistleblowing-guidance-and-code-of-practice-for-employers>).

(c) Ensuring early and regular engagement between the executive and scrutiny

Authorities should ensure early and regular discussion takes place between the scrutiny function, the executive and any directly elected mayor, especially regarding the executive's or directly elected mayor's future work programme. Authorities should, though, be mindful of their distinct roles:

In particular:

- The executive or mayor should not try to exercise control over the work of the scrutiny committee. This could be direct, e.g. by purporting to 'order' scrutiny to look at, or not look at, certain issues, or indirect, e.g. through the use of the whip or as a tool of political patronage, and the committee itself should remember its statutory purpose when carrying out its work. All members and officers should consider the role the scrutiny committee plays to be that of a 'critical friend' not a de facto 'opposition'. Scrutiny chairs have a particular role to play in establishing the profile and nature of their committee (see [chapter 4](#)); and
- The chair of the scrutiny committee should determine the nature and extent of an executive member's or mayor's participation in a scrutiny committee meeting, and in any informal scrutiny task group meeting.

(d) Managing disagreement

Effective scrutiny involves looking at issues that can be politically contentious. It is therefore inevitable that, at times, an executive or mayor will disagree with the findings or recommendations of a scrutiny committee.

It is the job of both the executive (including any directly elected mayor) and scrutiny to work together to reduce the risk of this happening, and authorities should take steps to predict, identify and act on disagreement.

One way an authority can achieve this is by setting its own 'executive-scrutiny protocol' (see [annex 1](#)) which can help define the relationship between the parties and mitigate any differences of opinion before they manifest themselves

in unhelpful and unproductive ways. The benefit of this approach is that it provides a framework for disagreement and debate, and a way to manage it when it happens. Often, the value of such a protocol lies in the dialogue that underpins its preparation. It is important that these protocols are reviewed on a regular basis to demonstrate the impact of scrutiny and seek ongoing improvement of scrutiny functions.

Scrutiny committees do have the power to 'call in' decisions, i.e. ask the executive or mayor to reconsider them before they are implemented, but should not view it as a substitute for early involvement in the decision-making process or as a party-political tool.

(e) Providing the necessary support

While the level of resource allocated to scrutiny is for each authority to decide for itself, when determining resources an authority should consider the purpose of scrutiny as set out in legislation and the specific role and remit of the authority's own scrutiny committee(s), and the scrutiny function as a whole.

Support should also be given by members and senior officers to scrutiny committees and their support staff to access information held by the authority and facilitate discussions with representatives of external bodies (see [chapter 5](#)).

(f) Ensuring impartial advice from officers

Authorities, particularly senior officers, should ensure all officers are free to provide impartial advice to scrutiny committees. This is fundamental to effective scrutiny. Of particular importance is the role played by 'statutory officers' – the monitoring officer, the section 151 officer and the head of paid service, and where relevant the statutory scrutiny officer. These individuals have a particular role in ensuring that timely, relevant and high-quality advice is provided to scrutiny.

(g) Communicating scrutiny's role and purpose to the wider authority

The scrutiny function can often lack support and recognition within an authority because there is a lack of awareness among both members and officers about the specific role it plays, which individuals are involved and its relevance to the authority's wider work. Authorities should, therefore, take steps to ensure all members and officers are made aware of the role the scrutiny committee plays in the organisation, its value and the outcomes it can deliver, the powers it has, its membership and, if appropriate, the identity of those providing officer support.

(h) Maintaining the interest of full Council in the work of the scrutiny committee

Part of communicating scrutiny's role and purpose to the wider authority should, in a local authority, happen through the formal, public role of full Council –

particularly given that scrutiny will undertake valuable work to highlight challenging issues that an authority will be facing and subjects that will be a focus of full Council's work. Authorities should therefore take steps to ensure full Council is informed of the work the scrutiny committee is doing.

One way in which this can be done is by reports and recommendations being submitted to full Council rather than solely to the executive. Scrutiny should decide when it would be appropriate to submit reports for wider debate in this way, taking into account the relevance of reports to full Council business, as well as full Council's capacity to consider and respond in a timely manner. Such reports would supplement the annual report to full Council on scrutiny's activities and raise awareness of ongoing work.

In order to maintain awareness of scrutiny at the combined authority or combined county authority and provoke dialogue and discussion of its impact, the business of scrutiny should be reported to the combined authority or combined county authority board, and the committee should consider also reporting to the chairs of the relevant scrutiny committees of constituent and non-constituent councils, including councils which nominate non-constituent members.

At those chairs' discretion, particular combined authority or combined county authority scrutiny outcomes, and what they might mean for each individual area, could be either discussed by scrutiny in committee or referred to full Council of the constituent councils and councils which nominate non-constituent members.

(i) Communicating scrutiny's role to the public

Authorities should ensure scrutiny has a profile in the wider community. Consideration should be given to how and when to engage the authority's communications officers, and any other relevant channels, to understand how to get that message across. This will usually require engagement early on in the work programming process (see [chapter 6](#)).

(j) Ensuring scrutiny members are supported in having an independent mindset

Formal committee meetings provide a vital opportunity for scrutiny members to question the executive and officers. Inevitably, some committee members will come from the same political party as a member they are scrutinising and might well have a long-standing personal, or familial, relationship with them (see paragraph 26).

Scrutiny members should bear in mind, however, that adopting an independent mind-set is fundamental to carrying out their work effectively. In practice, this is likely to require scrutiny chairs working proactively to identify any potentially contentious issues and plan how to manage them.

Directly elected mayoral systems

13. A strong organisational culture that supports scrutiny work is particularly important in authorities with a directly elected mayor to ensure there are the checks and balances to maintain a robust democratic system. Mayoral systems offer the opportunity for greater public accountability and stronger governance, but there have also been incidents that highlight the importance of creating and maintaining a culture that puts scrutiny at the heart of its operations.

14. Authorities with a directly elected mayor should ensure that scrutiny committees are well-resourced, are able to recruit high-calibre members and that their scrutiny functions pay particular attention to issues surrounding:

- rights of access to documents by the press, public and authority members
- transparent and fully recorded decision-making processes, especially avoiding decisions by 'unofficial' committees or working groups
- delegated decisions by the Mayor
- whistleblowing protections for both staff and councillors
- powers of Full Council, where applicable, to question and review

15. Authorities with a directly elected mayor should note that mayors are required by law to attend overview and scrutiny committee sessions when asked to do so (see paragraph 45). In combined authorities and combined county authorities, mayors typically exercise specified functions; scrutiny functions in such mayoral authorities should consider how best to ensure that both the authority and the mayor are held accountable for the exercise of their respective functions. For example, should there be different committees for each?

3. Resourcing

16. The resource an authority allocates to the scrutiny function plays a pivotal role in determining how successful that function is and therefore the value it can add to the work of the authority.

17. Ultimately it is up to each authority to decide on the resource it provides, but every authority should recognise that creating and sustaining an effective scrutiny function requires them to allocate resources to it.

18. Authorities should also recognise that support for scrutiny committees, task groups and other activities is not solely about budgets and provision of officer time, although these are clearly extremely important elements. Effective support is also about the ways in which the wider authority engages with those who carry out the scrutiny function (both members and officers).

When deciding on the level of resource to allocate to the scrutiny function, the factors an authority should consider include:

- scrutiny's legal powers and responsibilities
- the particular role and remit scrutiny will play in the authority
- the training requirements of scrutiny members and support officers, particularly the support needed to ask effective questions of the executive and other key partners, and make effective recommendations
- the need for ad hoc external support where expertise does not exist in the authority
- effectively-resourced scrutiny has been shown to add value to the work of authorities, improving their ability to meet the needs of local people
- effectively-resourced scrutiny can help policy formulation and so minimise the need for call-in of executive decisions

Statutory scrutiny officers

19. Combined authorities, combined county authorities and upper and single tier authorities are required to designate a statutory scrutiny officer^[footnote 9], someone whose role is to:

- promote the role of the authority's scrutiny committee
- provide support to the scrutiny committee and its members
- provide support and guidance to members (including any mayor) and officers relating to the functions of the scrutiny committee

20. Authorities not required by law to appoint such an officer should consider whether doing so would be appropriate for their specific local needs.

Officer resource models

21. Authorities are free to decide for themselves which wider officer support model best suits their individual circumstances, though generally they adopt one or a mix of the following:

- committee – officers are drawn from specific policy or service areas
- integrated – officers are drawn from the corporate centre and also service the executive and/or mayor
- specialist – officers are dedicated to scrutiny

22. Each model has its merits – the committee model provides service-specific expertise; the integrated model facilitates closer and earlier scrutiny involvement in policy formation and alignment of corporate work programmes; and the specialist model is structurally independent from those areas it scrutinises.

23. Authorities should ensure that, whatever model they employ, officers tasked with providing scrutiny support are able to provide impartial advice. This might require consideration of the need to build safeguards into the way that support is provided. The nature of these safeguards will differ according to the specific role scrutiny plays in the organisation.

4. Selecting committee members

24. Selecting the right members to serve on scrutiny committees is essential if those committees are to function effectively. Where a committee is made up of members who have the necessary skills and commitment, it is far more likely to be taken seriously by the wider authority.

25. While there are political proportionality requirements that must be met^[footnote 10], the selection of the chair and other committee members is for each authority to decide for itself. In a combined authority or combined county authority, the chair must be either an independent person or an appropriate person – both terms are defined in legislation.^[footnote 11]

Members invariably have different skill sets. What an authority must consider when forming a committee is that, as a group, it possesses the requisite expertise, commitment and ability to act impartially to fulfil its functions.

26. Local authorities are reminded that members of the executive cannot be members of a scrutiny committee^[footnote 12]. Authorities should take care to ensure that, as a minimum, members holding less formal executive positions, e.g. as Cabinet assistants, do not sit on scrutinising committees looking at portfolios to which those roles relate. Local authorities should articulate in their constitutions how conflicts of interest, including familial links (see also paragraph 32), between executive and scrutiny responsibilities should be managed, including where members stand down from the executive and move to a scrutiny role, and vice-versa.

27. Members or substitute members of a combined authority or combined county authority must not be members of its overview and scrutiny committee(s)^[footnote 13]. This includes any mayor and any non-constituent members and associate members of the authority. It is advised that Deputy Mayors for Policing and Crime are also not members of the combined authority's or combined county authority's overview and scrutiny committee.

Selecting individual committee members

28. When selecting individual members to serve on scrutiny committees, an authority should consider a member's experience, expertise, interests, ability to act impartially, ability to work as part of a group, and capacity to serve. Combined authorities and combined county authorities may also want to consider the balance of committee members drawn from each constituent council.

29. Authorities should not take into account a member's perceived level of support for or opposition to a particular political party (notwithstanding the wider legal requirement for proportionality referred to in paragraph 25).

Selecting a chair

30. The Chair plays a leadership role on a scrutiny committee as they are largely responsible for establishing its profile, influence and ways of working.

31. The attributes authorities should and should not take into account when selecting individual committee members (see paragraphs 28 and 29) also apply to the selection of the Chair, but the Chair should also possess the ability to lead and build a sense of teamwork and consensus among committee members.

Chairs should pay special attention to the need to guard the committee's independence. Importantly, however, they should take care to avoid the committee being, and being viewed as, a de facto opposition to the executive.

32. Given their pre-eminent role on the scrutiny committee, it is strongly recommended that the Chair not preside over scrutiny of the decisions made by close friends or relatives^[footnote 14]. Combined authorities and combined county authorities should note the legal requirements that apply to them where the Chair is an "independent person"^[footnote 15].

33. The method for selecting a Chair is for each authority to decide for itself, however every authority should consider taking a vote by secret ballot. Combined authorities and combined county authorities whose chair is an "appropriate person" should be aware of the legal requirements regarding the party affiliation of their scrutiny committee Chair^[footnote 16].

Training for committee members

34. Authorities should ensure committee members are offered induction when they take up their role and ongoing training so they can carry out their responsibilities effectively. Authorities should pay attention to the need to ensure committee members are aware of their legal powers, and how to prepare for and ask relevant questions at scrutiny sessions.

35. When deciding on training requirements for committee members, authorities should consider talking to other similar authorities to share learning and expertise as well as taking advantage of opportunities offered by their sector membership bodies and external providers.

Co-option and technical advice

36. While members and their support officers will often have significant local insight and an understanding of local people and their needs, the provision of outside expertise can be invaluable.

37. There are two principal ways to procure this:

- co-option – formal co-option is provided for in legislation^[footnote 17]. Authorities must establish a co-option scheme to determine how individuals will be co-opted onto committees
- technical advisers – depending on the subject matter, independent local experts might exist who can provide advice and assistance in evaluating evidence (see [annex 2](#))

5. Power to access information

38. A scrutiny committee needs access to relevant information the authority holds, and to receive it in good time, if it is to do its job effectively.

39. This need is recognised in law, with members of scrutiny committees enjoying powers to access information^[footnote 18]. In particular, legislation gives enhanced powers to a scrutiny member to access exempt or confidential information. This is in addition to existing rights for members to have access to information to perform their duties, including common law rights to request information and rights to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

40. When considering what information scrutiny needs in order to carry out its work, scrutiny members and the executive should consider scrutiny's role and the legal rights that committees and their individual members have, as well as their need to receive timely and accurate information to carry out their duties effectively.

41. Scrutiny members should have access to a regularly available source of key information about the management of the authority – particularly on performance, management and risk. Where this information exists, and scrutiny members are given support to understand it, the potential for what officers might consider unfocused and unproductive requests is reduced as members will be able to frame their requests from a more informed position.

42. Officers should speak to scrutiny members to ensure they understand the reasons why information is needed, thereby making the authority better able to provide information that is relevant and timely, as well as ensuring that the authority complies with legal requirements.

While each request for information should be judged on its individual merits, authorities should adopt a default position of sharing the information they hold, on request, with scrutiny committee members.

43. The law recognises that there might be instances where it is legitimate for an authority to withhold information and places a requirement on the executive to provide the scrutiny committee with a written statement setting out its reasons for that decision^[footnote 19]. However, members of the executive and senior officers should take particular care to avoid refusing requests, or limiting the information they provide, for reasons of party political or reputational expediency.

Before an authority takes a decision not to share information it holds, it should give serious consideration to whether that information could be shared in closed session.

44. Legislation stipulates a timeframe for executives to comply with requests from a scrutiny member^[footnote 20]. When agreeing to such requests, authorities should:

- consider whether seeking clarification from the information requester could help better target the request
- ensure the information is supplied in a format appropriate to the recipient's needs

45. Scrutiny committees should be aware of their legal power to require members of the executive, including any directly elected mayor and deputy

mayor, and officers to attend before them to answer questions^[footnote 21]. It is the duty of members and officers to comply with such requests^[footnote 22].

Seeking information from external organisations

46. Scrutiny members should also consider the need to supplement any authority-held information they receive with information and intelligence that might be available from other sources and should note in particular their statutory powers to invite other persons to attend meetings of the committee and to access information from certain external organisations.

47. When asking an external organisation to provide documentation or appear before it, and where that organisation is not legally obliged to do either (see [annex 3](#)), scrutiny committees should consider the following:

(a) The need to explain the purpose of scrutiny

The organisation being approached might have little or no awareness of the committee's work, or of an authority's scrutiny function more generally, and so might be reluctant to comply with any request.

(b) The benefits of an informal approach

Individuals from external organisations can have fixed perceptions of what an evidence session entails and may be unwilling to subject themselves to detailed public scrutiny if they believe it could reflect badly on them or their employer. Making an informal approach can help reassure an organisation of the aims of the committee, the type of information being sought and the manner in which the evidence session would be conducted.

(c) How to encourage compliance with the request

Scrutiny committees will want to frame their approach on a case-by-case basis. For contentious issues, committees might want to emphasise the opportunity their request gives the organisation to 'set the record straight' in a public setting.

(d) Who to approach

A committee might instinctively want to ask the Chief Executive or Managing Director of an organisation to appear at an evidence session, however it could be more beneficial to engage front-line staff when seeking operational-level detail rather than senior executives who might only be able to talk in more general terms. When making a request to a specific individual, the committee should consider the type of information it is seeking, the nature of the organisation in question and the authority's pre-existing relationship with it.

Following ‘the tax-payer pound’

Scrutiny committees will often have a keen interest in ‘following the tax-payer pound’, i.e. scrutinising organisations that receive public funding to deliver goods and services.

Authorities should recognise the legitimacy of this interest and, where relevant, consider the need to provide assistance to scrutiny members and their support staff to obtain information from organisations the authority has contracted to deliver services. In particular, when agreeing contracts with these bodies, authorities should consider whether it would be appropriate to include a requirement for them to supply information to or appear before scrutiny committees.

6. Planning work

48. Effective scrutiny should have a defined impact on the ground, with the committee making recommendations that will make a tangible difference to the work of the authority. To have this kind of impact, scrutiny committees need to plan their work programme, i.e. draw up a long-term agenda and consider making it flexible enough to accommodate any urgent, short-term issues that might arise during the year.

49. Authorities with multiple scrutiny committees sometimes have a separate work programme for each committee. Where this happens, consideration should be given to how to co-ordinate the various committees’ work to make best use of the total resources available.

Being clear about scrutiny’s role

50. Scrutiny works best when it has a clear role and function. This provides focus and direction. While scrutiny has the power to look at anything which affects ‘the area, or the area’s inhabitants’, authorities will often find it difficult to support a scrutiny function that carries out generalised oversight across the wide range of issues experienced by local people, particularly in the context of partnership working. Prioritisation is necessary, which means that there might be things that, despite being important, scrutiny will not be able to look at.

51. Different overall roles could include having a focus on risk, the authority’s finances, or on the way the authority works with its partners.

52. Applying this focus does not mean that certain subjects are 'off limits'. It is more about looking at topics and deciding whether their relative importance justifies the positive impact scrutiny's further involvement could bring.

53. When thinking about scrutiny's focus, members should be supported by key senior officers. The statutory scrutiny officer, if an authority has one, will need to take a leading role in supporting members to clarify the role and function of scrutiny, and championing that role once agreed.

Who to speak to

54. Evidence will need to be gathered to inform the work programming process. This will ensure that it looks at the right topics, in the right way and at the right time. Gathering evidence requires conversations with:

The public

It is likely that formal 'consultation' with the public on the scrutiny work programme will be ineffective. Asking individual scrutiny members to have conversations with individuals and groups in their own local areas can work better. Insights gained from the public through individual pieces of scrutiny work can be fed back into the work programming process. Listening to and participating in conversations in places where local people come together, including in online forums, can help authorities engage people on their own terms and yield more positive results.

Authorities should consider how their communications officers can help scrutiny engage with the public, and how wider internal expertise and local knowledge from both members and officers might make a contribution.

The authority's partners

Relationships with other partners should not be limited to evidence-gathering to support individual reviews or agenda items. A range of partners are likely to have insights that will prove useful:

- public sector partners (like the NHS and community safety partners, over which scrutiny has specific legal powers)
- voluntary sector partners
- contractors and commissioning partners (including partners in joint ventures and authority-owned companies)
- in parished areas, town and parish councils
- in combined authority and combined county authority areas, constituent councils

- in combined county authority areas, councils which nominate non-constituent members
- neighbouring principal councils (both in two-tier and unitary areas)
- cross-authority bodies and organisations, such as Local Enterprise Partnerships [\[footnote 23\]](#)

The executive

A principal partner in discussions on the work programme should be the executive, including any directly elected mayor (and senior officers). The executive should not direct scrutiny's work (see [chapter 2](#), but conversations will help scrutiny members better understand how their work can be designed to align with the best opportunities to influence the authority's wider work.

Information sources

55. Scrutiny will need access to relevant information to inform its work programme. The type of information will depend on the specific role and function scrutiny plays within the authority, but might include:

- performance information from across the authority and its partners
- finance and risk information from across the authority and its partners
- corporate complaints information, and aggregated information from political groups about the subject matter of members' surgeries
- business cases and options appraisals (and other planning information) for forthcoming major decisions. This information will be of particular use for pre-decision scrutiny
- reports and recommendations issued by relevant ombudsmen, especially the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

As committees can meet in closed session, commercial confidentiality should not preclude the sharing of information. Authorities should note, however, that the default for meetings should be that they are held in public (see guidance on [Open and accountable local government](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-and-accountable-local-government-plain-english-guide) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-and-accountable-local-government-plain-english-guide>)).

56. Scrutiny members should consider keeping this information under regular review. It is likely to be easier to do this outside committee, rather than bringing such information to committee 'to note', or to provide an update, as a matter of course.

Shortlisting topics

Approaches to shortlisting topics should reflect scrutiny's overall role in the authority. This will require the development of bespoke, local solutions, however when considering whether an item should be included in the work programme, the kind of questions a scrutiny committee should consider might include:

- Do we understand the benefits scrutiny would bring to this issue?
- How could we best carry out work on this subject?
- What would be the best outcome of this work?
- How would this work engage with the activity of the executive and other decision-makers, including partners?

57. Some authorities use scoring systems to evaluate and rank work programme proposals. If these are used to provoke discussion and debate, based on evidence, about what priorities should be, they can be a useful tool. Others take a looser approach. Whichever method is adopted, a committee should be able to justify how and why a decision has been taken to include certain issues and not others.

58. Scrutiny members should accept that shortlisting can be difficult; scrutiny committees have finite resources and deciding how these are best allocated is tough. They should understand that, if work programming is robust and effective, there might well be issues that they want to look at that nonetheless are not selected.

Carrying out work

59. Selected topics can be scrutinised in several ways, including:

(a) As a single item on a committee agenda

This often presents a limited opportunity for effective scrutiny, but may be appropriate for some issues or where the committee wants to maintain a formal watching brief over a given issue.

(b) At a single meeting

Which could be a committee meeting or something less formal. This can provide an opportunity to have a single public meeting about a given subject, or to have a meeting at which evidence is taken from a number of witnesses.

(c) At a task and finish review of two or three meetings

Short, sharp scrutiny reviews are likely to be most effective even for complex topics. Properly focused, they ensure members can swiftly reach conclusions and make recommendations, perhaps over the course of a couple of months or less.

(d) Via a longer-term task and finish review

The ‘traditional’ task and finish model – with perhaps six or seven meetings spread over a number of months – is still appropriate when scrutiny needs to dig into a complex topic in significant detail. However, the resource implications of such work, and its length, can make it unattractive for all but the most complex matters.

(e) By establishing a ‘standing panel’

This falls short of establishing a whole new committee but may reflect a necessity to keep a watching brief over a critical local issue, especially where members feel they need to convene regularly to carry out that oversight. Again, the resource implications of this approach means that it will be rarely used.

7. Evidence sessions

60. Evidence sessions are a key way in which scrutiny committees inform their work. They might happen at formal committee, in less formal ‘task and finish’ groups or at standalone sessions.

Good preparation is a vital part of conducting effective evidence sessions. Members should have a clear idea of what the committee hopes to get out of each session and appreciate that success will depend on their ability to work together on the day.

How to plan

61. Effective planning does not necessarily involve a large number of pre-meetings, the development of complex scopes or the drafting of questioning plans. It is more often about setting overall objectives and then considering what type of questions (and the way in which they are asked) can best elicit the information the committee is seeking. This applies as much to individual agenda items as it does for longer evidence sessions – there should always be consideration in advance of what scrutiny is trying to get out of a particular evidence session.

Chairs play a vital role in leading discussions on objective-setting and ensuring all members are aware of the specific role each will play during the evidence session.

62. As far as possible there should be consensus among scrutiny members about the objective of an evidence session before it starts. It is important to recognise that members have different perspectives on certain issues, and so might not share the objectives for a session that are ultimately adopted. Where this happens, the Chair will need to be aware of this divergence of views and bear it in mind when planning the evidence session.

63. Effective planning should mean that at the end of a session it is relatively straightforward for the chair to draw together themes and highlight the key findings. It is unlikely that the committee will be able to develop and agree recommendations immediately, but, unless the session is part of a wider inquiry, enough evidence should have been gathered to allow the chair to set a clear direction.

64. After an evidence session, the committee might wish to hold a short 'wash-up' meeting to review whether their objectives were met and lessons could be learned for future sessions.

Developing recommendations

65. The development and agreement of recommendations is often an iterative process. It will usually be appropriate for this to be done only by committee members, assisted by co-optees where relevant. When deciding on recommendations, however, members should have due regard to advice received from officers, particularly the Monitoring Officer.

66. The drafting of reports is usually, but not always, carried out by officers, directed by members.

67. Authorities draft reports and recommendations in a number of ways, but there are normally three stages:

i. the development of a 'heads of report' – a document setting out general findings that members can then discuss as they consider the overall structure and focus of the report and its recommendations;

ii. the development of those findings, which will set out some areas on which recommendations might be made; and

iii. the drafting of the full report.

68. Recommendations should be evidence-based and SMART, i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed. Where appropriate, committees may wish to consider sharing them in draft with interested parties.

69. Committees should bear in mind that often six to eight recommendations are sufficient to enable the authority to focus its response, although there may be specific circumstances in which more might be appropriate.

Sharing draft recommendations with executive members should not provide an opportunity for them to revise or block recommendations before they are made. It should, however, provide an opportunity for errors to be identified and corrected, and for a more general sense-check.

Annex 1: Illustrative scenario – creating an executive-scrutiny protocol

An executive-scrutiny protocol can deal with the practical expectations of scrutiny committee members and the executive, as well as the cultural dynamics.

Workshops with scrutiny members, senior officers and Cabinet can be helpful to inform the drafting of a protocol. An external facilitator can help bring an independent perspective. English institutions with devolved powers should consider the advice in the [Scrutiny Protocol](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scrutiny-protocol-for-english-institutions-with-devolved-powers/scrutiny-protocol) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scrutiny-protocol-for-english-institutions-with-devolved-powers/scrutiny-protocol>) to further inform development of their own protocol.

Councils should consider how to adopt a protocol, e.g. formal agreement at scrutiny committee and Cabinet, then formal integration into the Council's constitution at the next Annual General Meeting.

The protocol, as agreed, may contain sections on:

- The way scrutiny will go about developing its work programme (including the ways in which senior officers and Cabinet members will be kept informed).
- The way in which senior officers and Cabinet will keep scrutiny informed of the outlines of major decisions as they are developed, to allow for discussion of scrutiny's potential involvement in policy development. This involves the building in of safeguards to mitigate risks around the sharing of sensitive information with scrutiny members.
- A strengthening and expansion of existing parts of the code of conduct that relate to behaviour in formal meetings, and in informal meetings.

- Specification of the nature and form of responses that scrutiny can expect when it makes recommendations to the executive, when it makes requests to the executive for information, and when it makes requests that Cabinet members or senior officers attend meetings.
- Confirmation of the role of the statutory scrutiny officer, and Monitoring Officer, in overseeing compliance with the protocol, and ensuring that it is used to support the wider aim of supporting and promoting a culture of scrutiny, with matters relating to the protocol's success being reported to full Council through the scrutiny Annual Report.

Annex 2: Illustrative scenario – engaging independent technical advisers

This example demonstrates how one Council's executive and scrutiny committee worked together to scope a role and then appoint an independent adviser on transforming social care commissioning. Their considerations and process may be helpful and applicable in other similar scenarios.

Major care contracts were coming to an end and the Council took the opportunity to review whether to continue with its existing strategic commissioning framework, or take a different approach – potentially insourcing certain elements.

The relevant Director was concerned about the Council's reliance on a very small number of large providers. The Director therefore approached the Scrutiny and Governance Manager to talk through the potential role scrutiny could play as the Council considered these changes.

The Scrutiny Chair wanted to look at this issue in some depth, but recognised its complexity could make it difficult for her committee to engage – she was concerned it would not be able to do the issue justice. The Director offered support from his own officer team, but the Chair considered this approach to be beset by risks around the independence of the process.

She talked to the Director about securing independent advice. He was worried that an independent adviser could come with preconceived ideas and would not understand the Council's context and objectives. The Scrutiny Chair was concerned that independent advice could end up leading to scrutiny members being passive, relying on an adviser to do their thinking for them. They agreed that some form of independent assistance would be valuable, but that how it was provided and managed should be carefully thought out.

With the assistance of the Governance and Scrutiny Manager, the Scrutiny Chair approached local universities and Further Education institutions to identify an appropriate individual. The approach was clear – it set out the precise role

expected of the adviser, and explained the scrutiny process itself. Because members wanted to focus on the risks of market failure, and felt more confident on substantive social care matters, the approach was directed at those with a specialism in economics and business administration. The Council's search was proactive – the assistance of the service department was drawn on to make direct approaches to particular individuals who could carry out this role.

It was agreed to make a small budget available to act as a 'per diem' to support an adviser; academics were approached in the first instance as the Council felt able to make a case that an educational institution would provide this support for free as part of its commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility.

Three individuals were identified from the Council's proactive search. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the committee had an informal discussion with each – not so much to establish their skills and expertise (which had already been assessed) but to give a sense about their 'fit' with scrutiny's objectives and their political nous in understanding the environment in which they would operate, and to satisfy themselves that they will apply themselves even-handedly to the task. The Director sat in on this process but played no part in who was ultimately selected.

The independent advice provided by the selected individual gave the Scrutiny Committee a more comprehensive understanding of the issue and meant it was able to offer informed advice on the merits of putting in place a new strategic commissioning framework.

Annex 3: Illustrative scenario – approaching an external organisation to appear before a committee

This example shows how one council ensured a productive scrutiny meeting, involving a private company and the public. Lessons may be drawn and apply to other similar scenarios.

Concerns had been expressed by user groups, and the public at large, about the reliability of the local bus service. The Scrutiny Chair wanted to question the bus company in a public evidence session but knew that she had no power to compel it to attend. Previous attempts to engage it had been unsuccessful; the company was not hostile, but said it had its own ways of engaging the public.

The Monitoring Officer approached the company's regional PR manager, but he expressed concern that the session would end in a 'bunfight'. He also explained the company had put their improvement plan in the public domain and felt a big council meeting would exacerbate tensions.

Other councillors had strong views about the company – one thought the committee should tell the company it would be empty-chaired if it refused to attend. The Scrutiny Chair was sympathetic to this but thought such an approach would not lead to any improvements.

The Scrutiny Chair was keen to make progress, but it was difficult to find the right person to speak to at the company, so she asked council officers and local transport advocacy groups for advice. Speaking to those people also gave her a better sense of what scrutiny's role might be.

When she finally spoke to the company's network manager, she explained the situation and suggested they work together to consider how the meeting could be productive for the Council, the company and local people. In particular, this provided her with an opportunity to explain scrutiny and its role. The network manager remained sceptical but was reassured that they could work together to ensure that the meeting would not be an 'ambush'. He agreed in principle to attend and also provide information to support the Committee's work beforehand.

Discussions continued in the four weeks leading up to the Committee meeting. The Scrutiny Chair was conscious that while she had to work with the company to ensure that the meeting was constructive – and secure their attendance – it could not be a whitewash, and other members and the public would demand a hard edge to the discussions.

The scrutiny committee agreed that the meeting would provide a space for the company to provide context to the problems local people are experiencing, but that this would be preceded by a space on the agenda for the Chair, Vice-chair, and representatives from two local transport advocacy groups to set out their concerns. The company were sent in advance a summary of the general areas on which members were likely to ask questions, to ensure that those questions could be addressed at the meeting.

Finally, provision was made for public questions and debate. Those attending the meeting were invited to discuss with each other the principal issues they wanted the meeting to cover. A short, facilitated discussion in the room led by the Chair highlighted the key issues, and the Chair then put those points to the company representatives. At the end of the meeting, the public asked questions of the bus company representative in a 20-minute plenary item.

The meeting was fractious, but the planning carried out to prepare for this – by channelling issues through discussion and using the Chair to mediate the questioning – made things easier. Some attendees were initially frustrated by this structure, but the company representative was more open and less defensive than might otherwise have been the case.

The meeting also motivated the company to revise its communications plan to become more responsive to this kind of challenge, part of which involved a

commitment to feed back to the scrutiny committee on the recommendations it made on the night.

1. A distinction is often drawn between ‘overview’ which focuses on the development of policy, and ‘scrutiny’ which looks at decisions that have been made or are about to be made to ensure they are fit for purpose.
2. As defined in section 9R of the Local Government Act 2000.
3. Added by section 8 of and Schedule 3 to the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 and further amended by section 70 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023.
4. Further provision for combined authority and combined county authority scrutiny is set out in The Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) (S.I. 2017/ 68). Note this SI has been amended by S.I.2024/430.
5. Section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000; paragraph 1 of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009; and paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023.
6. Combined authority and combined county authority overview and scrutiny committees must have a chair who is either an “independent person” or an “appropriate person” – both terms are defined in legislation.
7. Combined authorities and combined county authorities may have directly elected mayors and their constituent council members are elected members of those councils appointed to the authority.
8. See Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1999.
9. Section 9FB of the Local Government Act 2000; article 9 of the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017.
10. See, for example, regulation 11 of the Local Authorities (Committee System) (England) Regulations 2012 (S.I. 2012/1020) and article 4 of the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017 (S.I. 2017/68).
11. “Appropriate person” is defined at para 3(5) of schedule 1 to the 2023 Act and art.5(6) of S.I. 2017/68 for combined county authorities and at para 3(5) of schedule 5A to the 2009 Act and art.5(6) of S.I. 2017/68 for combined authorities. “Independent person” is defined at art.5(2) of S.I. 2017/68 for both combined authorities and combined county authorities.
12. Section 9FA(3) of the Local Government Act 2000.
13. Paragraph 2(3) of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and paragraph 2(3) of Schedule 1 to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023.

14. A definition of 'relative' can be found at section 28(10) of the Localism Act 2011 and article 2(2) of The Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017.
15. See article 5(2) of the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017 (S.I. 2017/68).
16. Article 5(6) of the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017.
17. Section 9FA(4) Local Government Act 2000.
18. Regulation 17 - Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012; article 10 Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017.
19. Regulation 17(4) – Local Government (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012; article 10(4) Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017.
20. Regulation 17(2) – Local Government (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012; article 10(2) Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017.
21. Section 9FA(8) of the Local Government Act 2000; paragraph 2(6) of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009; paragraph 2(6) of Schedule 1 to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023.
22. Section 9FA(9) of the Local Government Act 2000; paragraph 2(7) of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009; paragraph 2(7) of Schedule 1 to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023.
23. Authorities should ensure they have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the effective democratic scrutiny of Local Enterprise Partnerships' investment decisions.

[↑ Back to top](#)

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Report To:	PRINCIPAL SELECT COMMITTEE
Date:	6 JUNE 2024
Heading:	SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25
Executive Lead Member:	NOT APPLICABLE
Ward/s:	NOT APPLICABLE
Key Decision:	NO
Subject to Call-In:	NO

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is for Members of the Principal Select Committee to approve a Select Committee Work Programme for 2024/25. This includes reviewing items remaining on the 2023/24 work programme and considering new topics to be added for the forthcoming year.

Recommendation(s)

Members of the Principal Select Committee are recommended to:

- a. Discuss and approve a Select Committee Work Programme 2024/25.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

As established in the Overview and Scrutiny Rules of Procedure within Part 4 of the Council's Constitution, it is the responsibility of the Principal Select Committee to maintain overview and management of the Select Committee Work Programme.

Alternative Options Considered

No alternative options have been considered. Approving and managing an effective work programme is a key responsibility of the Principal Select Committee as established in the Overview and Scrutiny Rules of Procedure within Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.

Detailed Information

PROPOSED COMMITTEE CHANGES

A report has been submitted for consideration at the Annual Council Meeting detailing proposed changes to the Inward and Outward Focus Select Committees.

Inward and Outward Focus Select Committees

Council is recommended to approve changes to the Inward and Outward Focus Select Committees. Over the past year, the Select Committees were aligned to the previous Cabinet structure. This structure has since changed, so it is proposed to change the name of the Select Committees and to realign the remit of both to be in line with the Council's Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027.

The Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027 sets out six key priorities that the Council is working towards for the established term of the Plan.

These priorities are as follows:

- Economic Growth & Place
- Safer & Stronger
- Innovate & Improve
- Cleaner & Greener
- Homes & Housing
- Health & Happiness

It is proposed that the above priorities are split into two groups and included within the remit for two newly named Select Committees, see below.

Place and Innovation Select Committee

It is proposed to rename the Inward Focus Select Committee to the Place and Innovation Select Committee.

This Committee would focus on the following Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027 priorities:

- Economic Growth & Place
- Safer & Stronger
- Innovate & Improve

Environment and Communities Select Committee

It is proposed to rename the Outward Focus Select Committee to the Environment and Communities Select Committee.

This Committee would focus on the following Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027 priorities:

- Cleaner & Greener
- Homes & Housing
- Health & Happiness

This realignment would mean both Committees can be more focused and enable appointed

Members to build up increased knowledge and expertise in these areas. It would also enable the Select Committees to monitor progress more closely against the Corporate Plan as Cabinet do.

The Principal Select Committee will remain responsible for oversight and management of the two other Select Committees, including setting and monitoring the work programme, ensuring the function meets statutory requirements, carrying out reviews when required, and receiving Executive Lead Member updates where appropriate.

If the above proposals are approved by Council at the Annual Council Meeting, the changes will be incorporated immediately into the Select Committee structure.

SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25

The Council appoints three Committees to carry out the Overview and Scrutiny Function:

- Principal Select Committee
- Inward Focus Select Committee (proposed to become Place and Innovation Select Committee)
- Outward Focus Select Committee (proposed to become Environment and Communities Select Committee)

Overview and Scrutiny, through the appointed Select Committees, is a member led function, driven by Member commitment to improve services and the lives of residents. Committee Members are asked to consider the following potential sources (among others) of suitable work programme topics:

- Issues of community concern
- Service delivery concerns
- Council outcomes, objectives, and priorities
- Partnership objectives
- The Forward Plan
- Peer Challenge outcomes
- Performance
- Emerging policy and legislation

Members are asked to use effective processes to select topics that will contribute towards the most effective work programme. This means having clear terms of reference in mind for each topic and considering many different sources of information to help inform topic selection.

This involves approving items to the work programme:

- Of community concern
- With defined objectives and clear outcomes
- That add value to the Council's performance and/or service delivery
- That contribute to the Council's Corporate Priorities

As a rule, Committee should avoid including items on the work programme that are unsuitable for review due to different factors that could include topics that are:

- Unmanageable
- Purely for informational purposes (though sometimes this is still beneficial)
- Have limited anticipated outcomes

- Fail to add value to service delivery
- Fail to improve community wellbeing or quality of life

During the meeting, Members will be asked to put forward topics for consideration for inclusion on the Select Committee Work Programme 2024/25. Committee will discuss each item proposed and decide if the topic is to be included on the work programme.

SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

In approving the work programme for 2024/25, Members are also asked to consider topics that remain on the work programme from the previous year and decide if the topics should be carried forward to the refreshed programme.

These topics include:

- Damp and Mould
 - Reviewed by the Inward Focus Select Committee at the beginning of 23/24. Proposed to be re-reviewed following recent Member Questions to Council.
- General Waste Bins
 - On hold until the full implications of the Environment Bill are known. Proposed that a Select Committee could be involved in developing the Council's Action Plan in response to the Bill.
- Regeneration Funding Update
 - Added to be considered as an Executive Lead Member update. An invitation to be extended to the Executive Lead Member for Regeneration and relevant Officer(s) to attend a meeting of the Principal Select Committee and provide an update on recent regeneration funding and the progress of projects being carried out with the funding.
- Markets
 - Principal Select Committee received an update from the Assistant Director, Regeneration and Town Centres and Markets Manager at the final meeting of 23/24 on the performance of the various markets across Ashfield.
- Customer Experience
 - Added as a topic for review at the end of 23/24, yet to be commenced by any Committee.
- Recruitment and Retention
 - Added as a topic for review at the end of 23/24, yet to be commenced by any Committee.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

Principal Select Committee Members are mindful of the Council's Corporate Plan and the priority objectives set out within when reviewing and selecting topics for the work programme. Pending approval at the Annual Council Meeting, the Inward and Outward Focus Select Committees will be aligned with the Council's Corporate Plan.

Legal:

There are no direct legal implications resulting from the recommendations within this report.

Any legal implications identified relating to items added to the 2024/25 work programme will be considered appropriately as part of the established review process, in line with best practice and guidance.

Finance:

There are no direct financial implications resulting from the recommendations within this report.

Any financial implications identified relating to items added to the 2024/25 work programme will be considered appropriately as part of the established review process, in line with best practice and guidance.

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	N/A
General Fund – Capital Programme	
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	

Risk:

There are no risks resulting from the recommendations within this report.

Any risks identified relating to items added to the 2024/25 work programme will be considered appropriately as part of the established review process, in line with best practice and guidance.

Human Resources:

There are no HR implications resulting from the recommendations within this report.

Any HR implications identified relating to items added to the 2024/25 work programme will be considered appropriately as part of the established review process, in line with best practice and guidance.

Environmental/Sustainability:

There are no environmental/sustainability implications resulting from the recommendations within this report.

Any environmental/sustainability implications identified relating to items added to the 2024/25 work programme will be considered appropriately as part of the established review process, in line with best practice and guidance.

Equalities:

There are no equalities implications resulting from the recommendations within this report.

Any equalities implications identified relating to items added to the 2024/25 work programme will be considered appropriately as part of the established review process, in line with best practice and guidance.

Other Implications:

There are no other implications resulting from the recommendations within this report.

Any other implications identified relating to items added to the 2024/25 work programme will be considered appropriately as part of the established review process, in line with best practice and guidance.

Reason(s) for Urgency

None.

Reason(s) for Exemption

None.

Background Papers

None.

Report Author and Contact Officer

Shane Wright
Governance Manager
shane.wright@ashfield.gov.uk
01623 457318

Sponsoring Executive Director

Ruth Dennis
Executive Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer
ruth.dennis@ashfield.gov.uk
01623 457009